

Jessie Pope

Jessie Pope was a poet and writer who lived between the years of 1868 and 1941. She was born on 18th March 1868 at 11 Seymour Street as the second daughter of Richard George Pope. After going to school at North London Collegiate School for Girls from 1883 to 1886, she won the needlework prize, the English prize, and the scripture prize.

Pope began writing for Punch, where her first contribution was an article about the Bushey Heath beagles hunt. Between the years of 1902 and 1922, she submitted 170 poems to the magazine.

She often boasted of how she “never refused any work that was offered to her” and was a writer of many short stories and articles in other publications, including the Daily Mail, the Daily Express, The Queen, and more.

Pope was famous for her patriotic war poems which were published from 1914 in papers such as the Daily Mail.

Examples of her work include:

- “Who’s for the game?”
- “No!”
- “Marching to Germany”
- “Play the Game”

At the age of 61, Jessie Pope married Edward Babington Lenton, however not much is known about her later years. She died on 14th December 1941 at Broom Hill House, Devon, and was cremated at Plymouth.

Rupert Brooke

Rupert Brooke- was an English poet who lived between the years of 1887 and 1915. He was born on 3rd August 1887 at 5 Hillmorton Road and was named after a great-grandfather on his mother’s side. He was educated at a local prep school in Hillbrow, then went on to Rugby School. In 1906, he went up to King’s College, Cambridge to study Classics.

Brooke made friends with people from the Bloomsbury Group of writers, where some admired his talent.

In 1914, he enlisted to fight during the war. He became a public figure a year later as a war poet when The Times Literary Supplement published two sonnets – “IV: The Dead” and “V: The Soldier”

Other examples of his work include:

- “Peace”
- “Beauty and Beauty”

Brooke went on to sail with the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force on 28th February 1915, where he developed pneumococcal sepsis from an infected mosquito bite. After two operations, Brooke died on 23rd April 1915, aged 27.

Siegfried Sassoon

Siegfried Sassoon was an English poet, writer, and soldier. He was born on 8th September 1886 in Matfield, Kent as the second of three sons. Sassoon was educated at the New Beacon School, Marlborough College, and Clare College at Cambridge where from 1905 to 1907, he studied history, however he left Cambridge without a degree.

Motivated by love for his country, Sassoon joined the Army as soon as the threat of a new European war was detected. Siegfried was sent to France's 1st Battalion where he met Robert Graves. Sassoon and Graves became friends and over a mutual enjoyment of poetry, began discussing and reading each other's work.

Whilst his early work spoke of Romance, his war poems were written to show the horrendous truths of the trenches to people tricked by propaganda. He often wrote of rotting corpses, filth, suicide, etc.

Examples of his work consist of:

- "Suicide in the Trenches"
- "Aftermath"
- "Does it Matter?"
- "A Letter Home"

Although Sassoon received many decorations and had a great reputation, in 1917 he made the decision to speak out against war. One of the many reasons for his opinions against war was the death of one of his friends, David Cuthbert Thomas.

Siegfried Sassoon sadly passed away due to stomach cancer on 1st September 1967, one week before his 81st birthday.

Wilfred Owen

Wilfred Owen was an English poet and soldier. He was born on 18th March 1893 at Plas Wilmot, a house near Shropshire, as the eldest of four children.

He went to school at the Birkenhead Institute and at Shrewsbury Technical School. Owen discovered his passion for poetry in 1904 during a stay in Cheshire. His early poetic influences consisted of the Bible and many romantic poets.

In Wilfred Owen's last two years of education, he attended Wyle Cop School in Shrewsbury as a pupil-teacher. He passed the matriculation exam for the University of London in 1911.

He enlisted in the Artists Rifles on 21st October 1915 and trained at Hare Hall Camp, Essex for the next 7 months.

Owen is considered the greatest war poet by many. He is known for his verses about the terrors of trench and gas warfare. Although he had been writing poetry for years before the war, his war poems were what gave him popularity.

Although he wrote many great poems, examples of his most successful ones consist of:

- "Dulce Et Decorum Est"
- "Anthem for Doomed Youth"
- "Disabled"
- "The Next War"

Wilfred Owen was killed whilst fighting for his country on 4th November 1918 during the crossing of the Sambre-Oise Canal. He died exactly one week before the Armistice was signed, ending the war.

John McCrae

John McCrae was a Canadian poet, physician, author, artist, and soldier. He was born on 30th November 1872 in the McCrae House, Ontario.

For education, he attended the Guelph Collegiate Vocational Institute. McCrae became a master in English and Maths in 1894 at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph. He then returned to the University of Toronto and completed his Bachelors.

As Britain declared war on Germany, Canada was forced into it due to being a Dominion in the British Empire. McCrae was made a medical officer and Major of the 1st Brigade CFA.

McCrae wrote many poems, however the most famous of them is "In Flanders Fields" which first appeared as an anonymous submission in Punch, on 8th December 1915, however within the next year, he was listed as the author.

Other examples of his work include:

- "Anarchy"
- "The Hope of My Heart"
- "The Anxious Dead"
- "A Song of Comfort"

Whilst commanding the No. 3 Canadian General Hospital, McCrae died of pneumonia on 28th January 1918. He was buried the following day at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.