The Remembered Dead explores the ways poets of the First World War – and later poets writing in the memory of that war – address the difficult question of how to remember, and commemorate, those killed in conflict. It looks closely at the way poets struggled to meaningfully represent dying, death and the trauma of witness, while responding to the pressing need for commemoration. The authors pay close attention to specific poems while maintaining a strong awareness of literary and philosophical contexts. The poems are discussed in relation to modernism and myth, other forms of commemoration (photographs, memorials), and theories of cultural memory. There is fresh analysis of canonical poets which, at the same time, challenges the confines of the canon by integrating discussion of lesser-known figures, including non-combatants and poets of later decades. The final chapter reaches beyond the war’s centenary in a discussion of one remarkable commemoration of Wilfred Owen.

Sally Minogue is a retired academic who is still writing. She has taught in both further and higher education. On retirement she was Principal Lecturer in English Literature at Canterbury Christ Church University. Her research interests have been eclectic, stretching from Philip Sidney’s poetry to Alan Sillitoe's fiction. A common theme has been an interest in the demotic, as reflected both in colloquial language, and in the representation of working class life, in literature. This has informed her work with Andrew Palmer on First World War poetry.

Andrew Palmer is Principal Lecturer in Modern Literature at Canterbury Christ Church University, where he has taught since 1996. He is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. His teaching and research are focused on the literature of the twentieth century. With Sally Minogue, he has published, in addition to this book, articles on modern fiction and poetry. He has also published papers on Ray Davies’s seminal Kinks album, Arthur, and the travel writing of Bruce Chatwin. He founded the MA in Creative Writing at Canterbury Christ Church University in 2003, and served as its Programme Director for eight years.
THE REMEMBERED DEAD

Poetry, Memory and the First World War

SALLY MINOGUE

ANDREW PALMER

Canterbury Christ Church University
To the poets
that man's face will be / a mass of matter, horrid slime – and little brittle bits –

In that rich earth a richer dust concealed

Carnage incomparable, and human squander

There is a grave whose earth must hold too long, too deep a stain

Somewhere they must have gone

What use / To have your body lying here?

these dead, who soon will have their dead for burial clods heaped over

We turned and crawled past the remembered dead

* * *

The songs I had are withered / Or vanished clean,
Yet there are bright tracks / Where I have been

Mary Borden
Rupert Brooke
Wilfred Owen
Charlotte Mew
Isaac Rosenberg
Margaret Postgate Cole
David Jones
Arthur Graeme West
Ivor Gurney
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Figures

Cover: Image from the series Aftermath I. © K. J. Shepherdson. For this image of the Broadstairs War Memorial, Shepherdson took a Polaroid photograph, then lifted its fragile surface away from the backing and carefully transferred it onto watercolour paper. She describes the surface image as being ‘like a small piece of fine silk or layer of skin’ and the rough texture of the paper can be seen through its translucent film. This re-presentation of a public war memorial recalls the qualities of Charlotte Mew’s poetic response to the Cenotaph (discussed on pages 119–22) and conjures many of the themes in this book.

1.1 Isaac Rosenberg’s amendment to ‘Dead Man’s Dump’, included in a letter to Gordon Bottomley, 20 June 1917. © The British Library Board, Loan 103/77 f31. page 20

4.1 The Buttermarket War Memorial, Canterbury. Photograph © Nina Carrington. 112

4.2 Memorial tablet to the 16th Queen’s Lancers, Canterbury Cathedral. Photograph © Nina Carrington. 113

5.1 ‘Dead Man’. Sketch by Keith Douglas. © The British Library Board, Add. 33775A No. 88. 158

7.1 ‘Ever Wilfred x’, La Maison Forêtière Wilfred Owen (under renovation). Photograph © Nina Carrington. 190

7.2 Shot-blasted letters, La Maison Forêtière Wilfred Owen (under renovation). Photograph © Nina Carrington. 192

7.3 Transitioning stanzas of ‘Exposure’, over etched facsimile of ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’, La Maison Forêtière Wilfred Owen. Photograph © Nina Carrington. 193

7.4 Reflective interior, La Maison Forêtière Wilfred Owen. Photograph © Nina Carrington. 194
Acknowledgements

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