



Serving Your Country – Sydney Upton

Sydney Upton joined the 1/6th King's Liverpool Rifles in October 1915 even though he had been declared "medically unfit for Military Service" in August 1915.

At home recovering from wounds, he was given white feathers, symbols of cowardice, by two separate women in the street, but returned to fight with the Rifle Brigade and was declared missing in action after the Battle of Cambrai in November 1917. It was seven long weeks before his parents heard he was a prisoner of war.

From a POW camp in Germany, Sydney was moved around France and Belgium by his captors, escaping twice but being recaptured both times. Abandoned by the Germans two days after the Armistice, he made his way home, dodging recapture as forced labour, leaving the army in 1919.

Sydney Upton's wartime experiences affected him all his life. A Birkenhead native, his work with the Inland Revenue brought him to Chester, where he created a beautiful and tranquil garden at his Upton home

Earth to Spade by Sharon Forsdyke

Earth to spade, spade to earth, no earth
to dust.

This earth, full feeling through hands,
Not like that clogged, matted other earth.

No bone-meal compost here.

Forgive and forget?

Not will, not can

How can when on a half-way return to a
feather welcome

Little proud that I did not die.

Larkspur for Tom, foxglove for Albert
Geraniums for Charlie, snapdragon for
Jimmy.

Dahlias for the Belgian farmer

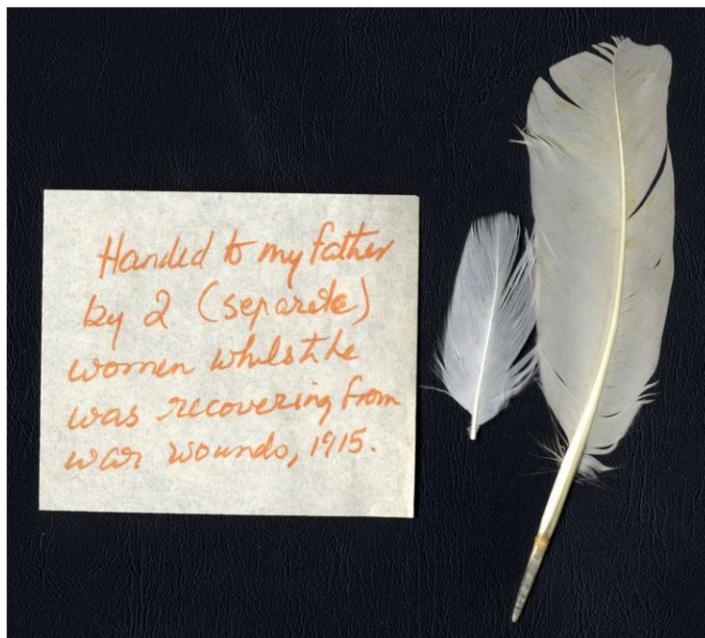
Roses for them all.

No poppies here.

None of their blood soaking earth

This will be a coming home epitaph.

My Uptonian garden.



*Handed to my father
by 2 (separate)
women whilst he
was recovering from
war wounds, 1915.*

White Feathers by Ann Dooney

All is kept to give away

Relics and reminders
Of stolen years.

Scattered body parts
Of fighters all.

United by the universal cry of death

What gain is War?
White feathers for whom?

The Garden by Sandy Boyne

Scent of flowers, nostrils tingle, rose thorns
prick.

Drops of blood, too much shed, can't forget.

Lupins rise up, peppery scent, memories of
poplars.

Dark times rear up.

Dig, dig to create beauty, not trenches to
hide,

Worms weave in, out, smoothly glide
nourishing the earth.

Cycle of life unstoppable.

Dig, plant, grow, beauty blooms

Happiness comes, then fade, dies, lies
dormant till spring.



Top left: Sydney Upton

Centre: White feathers given to Sydney Upton.

Bottom left: Sydney Upton, Prisoner of War on right

Bottom right: Doctor's letter 1915

