

From Flanders

A carol for the 21st century by Anna R. Matthews

Frederick Niven's poem tells the story of Christmas in 1914. On Christmas Day, a truce was spontaneously enacted by the two sides fighting in Flanders in World War One. This was five months into the war, which until this point many in Britain had confidently believed would be over by that time. When the two sides lay down their weapons in the name of humanity and met in the middle of no-man's-land, they would not have realised the bloodshed that was to come as the war dragged on for a further four years - a conflict so atrocious that it came to be known as 'the war to end all wars'.

This carol conveys the unknowing innocence of those men and the joy of Christmas, yet explores the sinister context in which they met and the future which was to come. Ultimately, the events of the 1914 Christmas truce came to symbolise the universality of hope and peace at Christmas. This carol brings this message into the twenty-first century.