

Poems of Spring 2016

Northernhay Gardens

Taking the scenic route from Boots to Queen Street through Northernhay Gardens,
With its banks of daffodils and carpets of primroses,
And magnolia cups battered by the storm but unbowed.
The grand statues of worthy men stand guard,
While spire, pylon and crane pierce the western skyline.

But today it's the pointing hand of Peace holding an olive branch
Atop the Exeter War Memorial that commands my attention.
The 4 representatives, 3 men and a woman sit and stare resolutely
Past the horrors of war to the far horizons of hope.
Soldier, sailor, nurse and P.O.W. at their cardinal points since 1923.



John Angel was the sculptor, and on closer inspection
The high figure thrusting her bosom heavenward is Victory eight foot tall,
Holding laurel leaves aloft while treading down the Dragon of tyranny and evil,
The sword of justice at her side, standing there on twenty foot of Dartmoor granite,
Lest we forget that peace for selfish humankind comes with a price.

Today's youth enjoy the sunny grassy slope by old John Dinham,
And I make my quiet way past the houses of our colourful little Balamory.
Then sixteen steps and one step more onto the Iron Bridge
With its Narnia steelamps, turn left, hear the organ playing, and home for tea & scones.

Richard Barnes – Sat 2 Apr 2016, Northernhay Gardens, Exeter.

19240 Shrouds of the Somme – Fri 1 July 2016.

