

Commemoration in Christian England

Queen Consort Eleanor of Castile

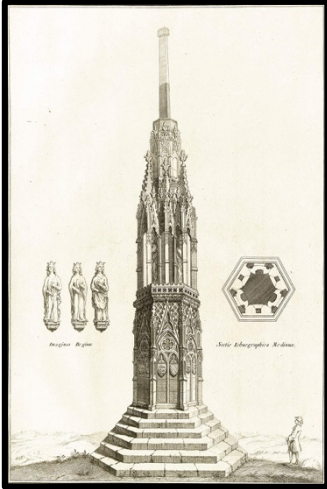


Image 1: Eleanor Cross at Waltham (Holder, Unknown)



Image 2: Eleanor Cross at Geddington (Holder, Unknown)

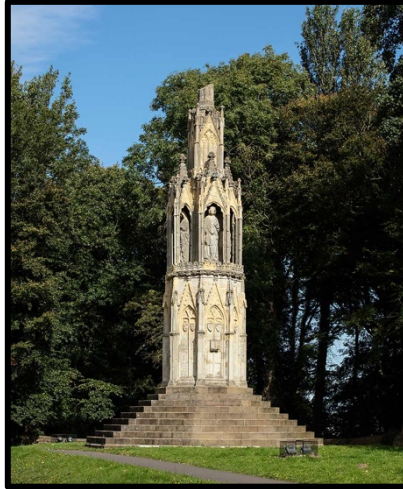


Image 3: Eleanor Cross at Hardington (Holder, Unknown)



Image 4: Eleanor of Castile's tomb effigy at Westminster Abbey (Westminster Abbey, Unknown a)



Image 6: Eleanor's effigy at Lincoln Cathedral (Lincoln Cathedral, Unknown)

The War Dead



Image 6: Bridstow War Memorial (Gaskell, 2021)



Image 7: Art installation from 2014 at the Tower of London Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red (Historic Royal Palace, 2014)



Image 8: Tomb of the Unknown Warrior at Westminster Abbey (Westminster Abbey, Unknown b)



Image 9: Alnwick War Memorial (War Memorial Register, Unknown)

Reflection

The above images highlight specific widespread acts of commemoration in Christian England. Eleanor of Castile was the Queen Consort to Edward I; she died in 1290 in Harby, Nottinghamshire (Holder, Unknown). To commemorate Eleanor, Edward commissioned three tombs, the body at Westminster Abbey, the viscera at Lincoln Cathedral and the heart at the Dominican Priory (Blackfriars) (Lincoln Cathedral, Unknown). Each stop on the procession back to London was marked by an elaborate stone cross, twelve in total with three surviving in part (Byrne, 1925). Edward's act of commemoration to his wife and Queen is still evident over 700 years later. War memorials illustrate commemoration that took place and continues nationally. Fox (2014 p.22) argues that commemorating the War Dead is treated as an 'ethical duty to the dead'. In 2014, the Tower of London was home to the art installation 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red' - which was praised as 'the most effective expression of commemoration in British History' - comprised of ceramic poppies signifying the loss of allied life in WWI 100 years later (Historic Royal Palaces, 2014 b and Heathcote, 2014). The Unknown Warrior is anonymous serving to represent all service personnel lost in war (Westminster Abbey, Unknown b). The above images demonstrate that commemoration can be an act undertaken by a nation to remember one or all serving as a reminder of lasting national mourning.

References

Image 1: Holder, N. (Unknown) 'THE ELEANOR CROSSES A Journey Set in Stone' Available at: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/eleanor-cross-geddington/history/> (Accessed: 14 October 2026)

Image 2: Holder, N. (Unknown) 'THE ELEANOR CROSSES A Journey Set in Stone' Available at: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/eleanor-cross-geddington/history/> (Accessed: 14 October 2026)

Image 3: Holder, N. (Unknown) 'THE ELEANOR CROSSES A Journey Set in Stone' Available at: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/eleanor-cross-geddington/history/> (Accessed: 14 October 2026)

Image 4: Westminster Abbey (Unknown a) *Queens Consort at Westminster Abbey*. Available at: https://www.westminster-abbey.org/history/coronations-at-the-abbey/queens-consort-of-westminster-abbey?_gl=1*8qzsv5*_up*MQ..*_gs*MQ..*_ga*MTY2MDQyNDMwOC4xNzkxNzk2OTAz*_ga_DHMS4WRT6Q*cze3OTE3OTY5MDMkbzEkZzEkdDE3OTE3OTY5NzUkajYwJGwwJGgw&gclid=CjwKCAjwirLWBhBBEiwAlItbEk3fenpsk0y3nKFianFYjqdJBuS48xu7BhUrx8IUya_jXQ6jxAdQMBoC2KAQAvD_BwE&gbraid=0AAAAAC9Jw4yaUx99lcFM5aMZmfFzLrSCa#i3436 (Accessed: 14 October 2026)

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Image 6: Gaskell, P. (2021) *Bridstow War Memorial*. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1462881?section=overview> (Accessed: 14 October 2026)

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Image 8: Westminster Abbey (Unknown b) *Unknown Warrior*. Available at: <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/unknown-warrior> (Accessed: 14 October 2026)

Image 9: War Memorial Register (Unknown) *Alnwick*. Available at: <https://memorials.iwm.org.uk/memorial/33377> (Accessed: 14 October 2026)

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