

1914-1918

Our Remembrance Service,
Mr Modica



Sunday 11th November 2018, 11:00am will be exactly 100 years since the horrors of the fighting in World War I came to an end. The legacy and impact of The Great War would however last much longer and indeed still lasts today. For this reason, we should remember, must remember, **will** remember! Rarely in history has there been a need for such a massive sacrifice to be asked for and given. This war was truly a world war and at home, touched every part of Great Britain. Fathers, husbands, brothers, uncles and cousins left their homes between 1914 and 1918 expecting to come home, expecting maybe even to be heroes; heroes where they could be loved and thanked in person. Whilst they did become heroes, for too many, they didn't make it home; 11am on 11th November 1918 was just too late.



Friday 9th November 2018 saw our school come together in an incredibly poignant and powerful display of respect, reflection and remembrance. We are proud of our student community daily, for a whole range of things, but on this day, they showed the very best of themselves. As well as the students, the adults within our school community gave their reflections and respect too and enhanced the reason and meaning for our remembrance service truly bringing every element of St. Clement's High School together. It was also a real privilege to see our Cadet and Scouts students attend in their uniforms reminding us of the many strands to the services that protect us on a daily basis.

We began our remembrance with Yr8 welcoming the school community into the sports hall with their rendition of some of the more recognised songs from the years of war. Mr Willingham opened the service with some very moving words and thoughts about what we were doing there, together, to pay our respects to the fallen. A video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_1qJ0mBu5g) of reflection made by Mr Modica highlighting the connection we have today, 100 years later, to the fallen of World War I. The reality that our soldiers came from our villages, they attended our schools and had their comparable lives changed forever proved powerful on reflection. Our Head Boy and Head Girl, James and Eloise, then read through many of the names of the fallen from our villages and local areas, the most poignant observations being that so many of the names of the soldiers belonged to so many of us in that hall. As we watched the names scrolling up the screen, it was clear so many students and adults could humanise them and reflect on them as more than just names. Eloise read 'The Soldier' beautifully, the words as powerful today as the day they were conceived by Rupert Brooke. Our service then heard an incredible solo song from Kasey (yr10), touching the whole hall on many different levels, a fantastic job!

The fact that we were all together in this service was further reflected by the contributions from every student and adult from our school. Year 8 students had been working on some

reflective written work in English that was read out by some of our Year 8 students during our service. The words they spoke raised the hairs on the necks of the whole room, they were deep, sombre, heart wrenching and indicative of the reasons we must never forget what these men and women went through. Year 7 then stood up in unity and sang their song which reverberated around the hall and gave a familiar but equally relatable message of 'the fight'. The impact of this moment of 130 of our youngest students standing facing the rest of the school community will leave a lasting imprint on all of us. We then reflected on more names of the fallen being read by Eloise and James followed by a recital of Flanders Field from James. The first part of our remembrance morning was brought to a fitting close by Harrison (Yr10) who sang 'Fields of Gold' beautifully bringing us all together on a deeper emotional level as we went back to tutor groups to reflect, question and discuss the significance of remembrance.



The previous month had seen every member of our school community making a poppy that would be put into the ground in our memorial. This massive undertaking was organised by Mr Falco and Miss Bates and produced the most stunning memorial that will be in the minds and thoughts of everyone for a very long time. Each poppy is as unique as the boys, men and women who have lost their lives, adding to the poignancy and power of this memorial.



In the days building up to Friday, each year group had gone out to place their poppy in the ground of our memorial which would make the final part of our service; The Last Post, even more significant as every person listening, thinking and reflecting have connected to the memorial. Special thanks must go to Mr Kew of Kew Grasscare for their work cultivating the ground and tree area enhancing the impact of our memorial.



Following the tutor time reflection, all students and adults made their way outside to our memorial for the final part of our remembrance service, The Last Post. The view of every member of our student body and other adults in the school standing proudly, respectfully and quietly around the memorial is a site that for many of us will never be forgotten. Our Last Post service was started by our Cadet and Scouts students laying the final poppies into the memorial reminding us all that "We will remember them" followed by the playing of the Last Post by Mr Reynolds as the Union flag rose. The two-minute silence was observed wonderfully and the mornings service ended by Mr Willingham laying his poppy in to the memorial.



On a personal note, I would like to thank all of our students and adults within the school for their contribution to this remembrance service. This really did show the best of us all and was so powerful in the unique gathering that we absolutely did our fallen proud. Special thanks to Miss Kemp, Mr Falco and Miss Bates for their work preparing the poppies and the musical presentation. Thanks to Mr Reynolds too for playing the 'Last Post' as well as to all staff who worked with the students during the reflection tutor time. Thanks to the students who sang or read and for the time you spent making your poppies.

Mr Modica

