

Remembrance Reflection

Almost a century ago on this day, the church bells of Jordanhill Parish Church rang out along with countless others up and down the country to mark the end of the Great War and 4 years of unimaginably violent conflict. Since then, countless other wars and conflicts have embroiled not just our country, but the world. Today, we take this opportunity to commemorate the centenary of the Great War and to look back to and remember events of the past. However, we also celebrate the freedom granted to us by the sacrifice of those who came before, and we look forward to the future, to our school's centenary in 2020 and embracing the continued opportunities for promoting tolerance and understanding that we will have.

In 1918 and the years following it, the Jordanhill community, like so many other communities at the time, were in mourning for the losses they had suffered during the war. Uncles, nephews, fathers, brothers, friends, husbands and sons who fell in that war would not be coming home, and the gap left by these losses was not one that could be filled lightly nor quickly. Yet at that time of loss and sorrow, a new place of learning, peace and understanding was formed which helped the community to come to terms with their losses, and helped to show them that there were indeed brighter days ahead.

That place was our school, founded in 1920 a mere 2 years after the guns fell silent on the Western Front of the Great War. The opening of the school transformed Jordanhill from a residential suburb to a community in its own right. Over the next 2 decades, the school would educate a great many children and young people, and would become a pillar of the community and a point of pride for all. Yet in 1939, fate would intervene to once again bring conflict and heartbreak to Jordanhill's doorstep.

24 former pupils of the school lost their lives in the Second World War. These were young men in the prime of their lives. They had futures ahead of them promising prosperity, happiness and maybe even children of their own to follow in their footsteps at the school. Yet when they marched off to war in 1939, they were barely older than ourselves. Some were as young as 17 when they made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

It is nearly impossible for us to imagine being called up to fight in a war. It is not something any child or young person should ever have to imagine. We are fortunate, far more fortunate than we know, to live in a place and a time that is largely free from such horrors, which is something we should always be grateful for. Indeed, there are a great many young people just like us across the world who do not share this fortune. From Syria and Yemen, to Sudan and the Congo, from terrified refugees fleeing warzones in hope of a better life to child soldiers, some barely able to read and write, being forced to kill others in combat. It is the desire to end injustices and conflicts like these, and the desire to protect that idea of a peaceful, free life for all that those pupils of the school held in their minds and their hearts as they left their hometown of Jordanhill for what would be the last time in their lives.

As we look forward to the School's centenary in 2020, I know that many of you will be thinking of how the School has shaped your own family's past and will shape your future. But as we look to our

future, so today we honour the memory of all those who have died in conflicts fighting for peace, freedom and a better world. We pray for those unable to live the fulfilling, rewarding lives they deserve due to conflict, and we pray they might one day experience those lives. But most of all, we commemorate our pupils who made the ultimate sacrifice so we might live to tell about it.

They gave their today so we might have our tomorrow, and for that we will remember them. We will remember them.

Fergus Blyth

Annie MacDonald