

Borlase Remembers

Sir William Borlase's Grammar School staged a very effective exhibition and play in November, to commemorate the outbreak of the First World War and, in particular, the boys from the school and from Marlow who gave their lives in the conflict.

With support from us, the school organised and held a very successful exhibition on Sunday 9th November 2014. The exhibition ran between midday and 4pm, following the Royal British Legion annual commemorative service in the town that morning. The exhibition included research by History, English, French, Geography, PE and Music students as well as contributions of artefacts from staff and students. Our display worked well, complementing the work of the students. The inclusion of John Hilton's memorabilia and Michael Eagleton's photographs, Rolls of Honour and original newspapers from the time provide further insight into life during the early 20th century. There was also a very effective poppy sculpture built by pupils, which emulated that at the Tower of London.

The school also held a chapel service which was repeated during the day. The service, including readings, music and an address by the Headmaster, was particularly moving and effective. The chapel was full for both services.

In addition the school presented a technical theatre installation and staged poetry readings with pupils reciting poems they had written in

French and English. Some of the poems were based on the life of Wilfred Owen and others were inspired by the imagined lives of Old Borlasians who died in the War.

In addition to the exhibition the school devised and staged a play, 'Borlase Remembers', on the evening of 11 November. The play was presented three times at hourly intervals, attracting audiences of 50 people each time. The action was set around the school grounds and told the story of the war through fourteen scenes. The action started with the shooting of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 'Sarajevo' and moved through scenes such as 'Recruitment', 'Courage' which was set in a 'trench', 'Punishment' where a soldier was shot for insubordination, to 'Bloodshed', a dance by some of the current boys at the school, 'Reflection', a voiced number by the boys choir and finally 'Remembrance'. 'Remembrance' was held in the chapel and included a roll call of the Borlase fallen in the conflict, some readings and music, concluding with 'I vow to thee my country'.

The play was innovative and very effective, particularly in its use of the whole school. Pupils and staff had clearly worked hard on devising the material and on staging and producing the play.

The events together were a fitting tribute in this commemorative year to the boys from Borlase and from Marlow who joined up and died in the War and an effective way of encouraging the younger generation to engage

A tribute to those who died

Over 230 men and boys from Marlow and the surrounding area served and died in the War. As a fitting tribute to their sacrifice, we will be planting a Remembrance Cross for each of them by the memorial in The Causeway on the 100th anniversary of their death. Over the course of the next four years, we believe this will build to serve as a poignant reminder of the impact of the War on the town.

We are very grateful to colleagues in Marlow Camera Club who will provide a photographic record of the development of this tribute over the coming months and years.

