

Reflections on the National Service of Thanksgiving

On Sunday 11th November 2018, I had the honour of attending the Centenary Service at Westminster Abbey to commemorate the end of the First World War. I was given this chance due to my involvement with the Lest We Forget Lottery Funded Project, which was so brilliantly executed by Joan and Keith Butcher, Hilary Morris and the Willaston Village Festival Society. I would like to thank them for the opportunities they have given me both with the project and in recommending me to attend the service.

The service itself was one of the most incredible events that I have ever attended. I met some remarkable people who shared incredible stories about their involvement in honouring the fallen. Their enthusiasm for investigating and remembering those who had died was inspirational. The event was extremely poignant, especially in the choice of readings delivered by the Prince of Wales and the Prime Minister, as well as the involvement of people from many organisations and school children. I also felt it was an important acknowledgement that the President of the Federal Republic of Germany was involved, as many were lost on all sides of the conflict. The echoes of the voices ringing around Westminster Abbey while reading the memoirs and reflections of those who gave their lives, as well as those who made the decisions, gave me shivers down my spine, while bringing a tear to many around me. The tone was one of respect and gratitude which obviously resonated with everyone in the congregation. As we filed passed the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior there was a strong and lasting image of the price paid so that we have the lives we now live. We should be particularly grateful to those from our village who made the ultimate sacrifice. I felt I was able to pay my respects to every soldier who has fought in any conflict and for the sacrifices they made. It is important to remember that all gave some, while some gave all.