

# STAYING CONNECTED

SUN 15<sup>TH</sup> NOV '20

WEEK 35

## REMEMBERING REMEMBRANCE: EVERY ACT OF REMEMBRANCE COUNTS



**We can all have small acts of remembrance in different ways.**

*These photos were taken last Nov in Tuesday Friends as Mr Blackburn & Mrs Gibson from Pool House brought their class dressed as wartime evacuees.*

Head Teacher, Mrs Cole, who was there that day, tells us on P2 what it is like to lead Pool House during this pandemic

Back in May we remembered the 75th anniversary of VE Day & the story of 102-year-old Prestonian Staff Sergeant Ernie Horsfall who served in Egypt & Italy. In these strange COVID times, last week was most unusual, where as a nation we have had many, all necessarily curtailed, Remembrance events. As I read the Royal British Legion posters EVERY POPPY COUNTS, so too does EVERY ACT OF REMEMBRANCE. The important thing is that we do remember.

Last Saturday night's BBC showing of the Royal British Legion's Festival of Remembrance was much changed but very enjoyable to watch. I loved their reading of the words of Revd Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, affectionately known as Woodbine Willie, a Chaplain on the Western Front in World War One. Willie won the Military Cross for his reckless courage, running repeatedly into "No Man's Land" to help the wounded and dying men on the frontline. Historians estimate

that he met over 800,000 men on the battlefield in France. One injured soldier, shocked to see him out there helping asked him, 'Who are you?' Willie replied, "the church". Then the soldier asked, 'what is the church doing here?', he answered, "Its job".

On Sunday during the NWBA service, Phil jump had a 15-minute break to allow people to stand outside their doors as an act of Remembrance suggested by the British Legion. There are many other different ways to have simple acts of remembrance. The important thing is that we do give thanks for our freedom that came at great personal cost to many millions of people who lost their lives. We are grateful to those generations.

In the famous moving words of John Maxwell Edmonds from 1916, "WHEN YOU GO HOME, TELL HIM OF US AND SAY, 'FOR YOUR TOMORROW, WE GAVE OUR TODAY'", so we honour their memories and their willing sacrifice.

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The word **REMEMBER** is used 230+ times in the Bible. In the story of Jesus in the gospels, we see that His sacrificial death & resurrected life gives us hope for the future. He says in John 14:6, "**I am the Way, the Truth and the Life**". Later in John 11:25-26 Jesus proclaims those wonderful words that I enjoy repeating at a Christian funeral, "**I am the resurrection & the life. Whoever believes in me, though they die, yet shall they live, and everyone who lives & believes in me shall never die!**"

In this life and in our memories we will see suffering and death, but there is ALWAYS HOPE because in the living Lord Jesus we find life, indeed everlasting life. This must help us all gain perspective during our current challenges and as we discover what really is important: our relationship with our Creator God through Jesus and our relationships with each other are paramount.

This time last year we had 3 Pool House Community School classes visit Tuesday Friends & TCF, followed by that amazing Carol Service in December. When I visit school in addition to working with children in classes, in my role as Chair of Governors I spend time working with Mrs Cole & her Senior Management Team, especially in the confusing intensity of the last 9 COVID months. I enjoy the professional relationship we have. After a career in banking, Mrs Cole has been teaching in Pool House for 22 years, the last 16 years as Head Teacher.



## MRS COLE SAYS

The school has transformed massively during these 22 years. At the beginning we were really just being firefighters rather than educators. We were in the bottom 5% of national SAT's but within a short time, we moved to the top 5%, a 90% improvement!

Our school aims to *"nurture by example, a caring attitude in our young people & a desire to be involved in the world around them. We begin to prepare them for the challenges in life that will face them in years to come... Everyone is taught as an individual: all pupils have individual needs, some learn more slowly than others, some have exceptional ability, others learn more readily in one area of work than another. Pool House allows for these different rates & ways of development in seeking to ensure that all its pupils achieve their full potential through pursuing excellence in all its forms.*

*Everyone has an opportunity to develop morally, culturally & spiritually". So, what you & I, & my staff teach these children, & how we live our lives by example, and even how you evangelize, will positively affect them in the years ahead & in ways we will not see as we will be out of their lives then.*

We have been through many difficult and challenging times before but this has been by far the strangest time. COVID has allowed me get things more into perspective. It makes us re-prioritize what is important & what is not. The main thing is keeping children & staff safe. If we can keep the staff safe initially, then they can keep the children safe. The school environment does feel very calm & safe & stable for the children. They are in their routines & know what is going to happen each day. When the pandemic ends many of the practical things that we have put in place will remain.

During the pandemic people look to leaders like us for answers & solutions & to make it right because they can't do it themselves. But none of us can. This is a virus that none of us have any knowledge of but people see us & need us as security. As some are agitated or angry or anxious at this time, I think that **for us in our role as leaders in our community this is the opportunity to show unconditional love.** Despite whatever they say or however they behave, we can always be there for them. We cannot turn our back on them, our door is always open. I'm generalizing here and unfortunately there is a small minority who don't acknowledge the fact that we've got our own lives going on, we've got our own issues, our own fears, and none of us know what tomorrow will bring.

People think of the role of the Head Teacher as someone who sits in an office doing school stuff but it's much more than that. I have to be a social worker, marriage guidance councillor, mental health support worker, nurse, doctor & so it goes on. I do like to know what is going on in school,

but I'm now much happier to delegate responsibilities. I realize that I cannot suit or please all of the people all of the time, which I have probably strived to do in the past. Having to close for 10 days in September was dreadful and affected me massively, but in hindsight I think that it has been a good thing and has created our own fire break.

We haven't been able to have school assemblies nor afterschool clubs, but I spent some time on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> Nov with my Year 6 class (10-11 year olds) doing Remembrance Day work, and with the 2-minute silence. It was an extremely poignant tear-filled lesson which the children visibly benefitted from, respected & enjoyed.

My dad Colin who is now 90, was their age 10 when the Second World War began. You can imagine a teacher coming into dad's class one day & telling them that the country was now at war. As a 10-year old dad would have had no idea what was going to happen & they went on to have 6 years of war. Children were thrown into absolute horror, having to move homes, some across the country. Their lives changed massively for their own safety, with no end in sight & communications almost non-existent – they couldn't ring their parents at night or skype them, but those children got through that, and we as a nation got through that. In this pandemic we are not even a year into it yet. Hopefully it will get better, but I don't think that it is nearly as traumatic for today's children.

## HAZ SAYS

Let us all remember to pray for Mrs Cole, her ongoing work in Pool House, for the safety and wellbeing of all her staff and the children.

Pray too for Julie's elderly Christian parents June & Colin, who are both in increasingly frail health.