

128 Heathwood Gardens

London SE7 8ER

13th November 2017

Dear Greenslade School

I was privileged to come to your Remembrance Day assembly on Friday. It was a very moving and respectful occasion. Mr Ashley's words brought home the awfulness of war, told us of the bravery of those who have to serve, and reminded us of the thanks we should give to those who died or whose lives were affected forever afterwards. Their sacrifices have made Britain a safer place to live in.

I served for a while in the Royal Air Force, although not in wartime, and I know the sense of comradeship that binds people together. That feeling was in your school hall on Friday, the whole school sitting as one silent and respectful body thinking our own thoughts about the sacrifices people have made.

In the minute of silence I thought about a young man I knew when I was a boy. His name was Ernest Pocknell and he used to go, as I did, to Wesley Hall Methodist Church in Timbercroft Lane. In the Second World War he served in the RAF and was shot down over Germany, and killed. He used to play the violin at Wesley Hall, and when it was clear he was never coming home his mother gave his violin to me. I learned to play it, although not very well, and I later gave it to a local school.

I hope it is still being played by someone somewhere. That person won't know about Ernest Pocknell but he or she will be playing that instrument in the freedom that Ernest and others helped to preserve for us more than seventy years ago.

Thank you for making your Remembrance Day so special - coming in and going out of the hall impeccably, and making the occasion truly memorable. I shall not forget it.

Yours sincerely



RAF Senior Aircraftsman 2703145 1953-55