
David Cotterrell: BBC Radio 4 : The Two Minute Silence (a)

Event Name: Remembrance Sunday 2009

Venue/Location: BBC Radio 4

Date: 8th November 2009

Chair/Other Speakers:

Clare Jenkins

A short Radio 4 feature exploring the contemporary relevance of the Two Minute Silence.

The programme includes David Cotterrell, professor of fine art at Sheffield Hallam University and official war artist for the British troops in Afghanistan, who has marked the two-minute silence both in Camp Bastion and, inadvertently, at Sheffield railway station, on his return from the front line; Billy Stanger from Orkney who has played The Last Post at Remembrance Day services in Kirkwall for the past 57 years; and Dave "Charley" Brown, a veteran of both the Falklands conflict and the Northern Ireland Troubles, who now works for the South Atlantic Medals Association which helps Falklands veterans and their families.

Every Remembrance Day, during the two-minute silence, Clare Jenkins's mother remembers her father, Clare's grandfather, who was wounded during the early days of the First World War on the Mons Retreat from Belgium.

Meanwhile, Bill Stewardson thinks of a far more recent conflict, the one taking place in Iraq. His 21-year-old son, Alex Green, was killed by a sniper in Basra two years ago. In this programme, Clare Jenkins talks to her mother, to Bill Stewardson and to David Cotterrell and others about their personal reasons for respecting the two-minute silence.

It may be 90 years since King George V decreed: "All locomotion should cease, so that, in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead." However, the silence still resonates with millions, not just in Britain but around the world.

Presenter and Producer/Clare Jenkins