

One hundred years on: The effects of World War One on Sheffield and contrasts between the origins of the conflict and events in the modern world.

In the years of 1914 to 1918 more than 50,000 Sheffield born men left home to fight in the conflict that would become the First World War. Thousands of these men would never return home, killed in the line of duty while protecting the country they called home. All the while the war at home raged on and with events such as the L22 Zeppelin raid which claimed the lives of 29 innocent men, women and children while shaking the steel city to its core.

However, the events of the First World War's conclusion (or armistice) are approaching their one handed year anniversary and many people believe that there should be a special memorial to commemorate some of the most terrifying times in Great British history. Sheffield city council, as of this article being written, have not planned to have any special memorials for the 100th anniversary of such a chaotic and nation defining conflict which led this publication to inquire whether the average person living in the United Kingdom would like to see such an event take place in their home city. A survey to gauge the opinions of the mass populous found that over 65% of the people would like to have a special memorial in their home city. Surely it should be clear to the council that if this may people want to have the service then it is in their best interest to provide it? It has been only five months since the people of Sheffield had to urge members of their city council not to fell trees that were planted in order to commemorate the dead of the war.

It is easy to point out similarities between the events that led to the outbreak of the first world war and those taking place in the world with the rise of nationalism once again consuming the world stage shown in events such as the United Kingdom voting to leave the European Union as well as The United States Electing Donald J Trump as the 45th president of their country. These events directly correspond with the rabid expansion of empires in the early stages of the 20th century.

In the early stages of the 1900's the age of imperialism was in full effect and may of the main reasons for the war breaking out was in direct consequence of imperial expansion. The two main empires on the world stage at the time were the French and British, known for their colonialization of parts of both Africa and Asia however their domination over the globe was being threatened by the new imperialist Germany led by the young and charismatic Kaiser Wilhelm II who promised the German people that soon they would be the most powerful Empire in the world. This led to several conflicts between the German Empire and others such as the French, British Serbian and Russian which led to huge rifts between the cultures and a lot of hostility between the different powers of the continent eventually resulting in the brutality of war erupting between them. Perhaps these events can be easily mirrored to the attitudes of modern day world leaders. One participant in a recent survey regarding this subject stated that "it is frightening how short peoples' memories seem to be.

It seems clear that the people of Sheffield want to see a special memorial however the occurrence of one seems to be in conflict at best.