

Siegfried Sassoon violin created

A while back we met Thoren Ferguson playing a violin in Waverley Station which was dedicated to war poet Wilfred Owen. Now, instrument maker Steve Burnett, has crafted a second violin from the same branch used for the first violin and has made a Siegfried Sassoon violin.



The two war poets met in Edinburgh when they were sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital to convalesce and recover from shell shock in June 1917. They will have walked together in the grounds of the hospital where the sycamore tree which the two instruments are made from stood.

The former war hospital is now an integral part of the Edinburgh Napier University and there will be a week of celebrations to make the meeting of the two revered poets in Edinburgh.

The two violins will be played in a duet at Craiglockhart on 15 August at a Royal Society of Edinburgh lecture by Neil McLennan author of a book about Wilfred Owen which is about to be published.

Edinburgh-based Mr Burnett said: "The Sassoon violin was made in a more traditional way, using seasoned wood, but like the Owen violin it was created as a symbol of peace and reconciliation through the power of music and it will be played as a tribute to two great poets and a lost generation.

"The Wilfred Owen violin has travelled widely over the last three years, being played in schools and at First World War

commemoration events. It has also been played at a Royal Shakespeare Company production in Stratford and at a service to mark the Quintinshill rail disaster. Now we have the Sassoon violin too, it will be great to hear them being played in duet at events.”

The Wilfred Owen’s Edinburgh 1917-2017 [programme of events](#) will also include the premiere of a new Jackie Kay poem about Owen at the Edinburgh International Book Festival (16th), a talk with music played on the violins at the City Art Centre (17th), a screening of Craiglockhart film Regeneration at Edinburgh Filmhouse (17th) and readings of Owen and Sassoon’s poetry, diaries and letters at the Craiglockhart campus (18th).

The Sassoon and Owen violins will be heard by a UK-wide audience for the first time in BBC Radio 4’s World War One: The Cultural Front at 10.30am on Saturday August 19.

Catherine Walker, curator of the Craiglockhart-based War Poets Collection, which offers an insight into war through the words and memories of officers, medical staff and relatives, said: “Both Owen and Sassoon loved and appreciated music, so the two violins are a wonderful and fitting tribute.”

