

WW1 nurse died from meningitis

Written by Donald Fullarton

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HELENSBURGH paid its annual tribute to the fallen of two World Wars and other conflicts on Remembrance Sunday 2018, and this was a particularly special occasion as it was the centenary of the World War One armistice.

The service took place in front of one of the most elegant war memorials in Scotland within the superb Garden of Remembrance, all refurbished as part of the Hermitage Park improvement project.

The 40 feet high white freestone memorial was designed by distinguished local architect Alexander Nisbet Paterson, and it was completed in 1922.

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It bears the names of 314 who lost their lives in wartime. From World War One there are four names from 1914; from 1915 40; 1916 29; 1917 62; 1918 58; 1919 12; and 1920 one.

When the memorial was dedicated on June 25 1922, the speakers all referred to the brave men and women who had given their lives in the service of the country.

Only one woman is named in the World War One on the Cenotaph, Acting Sister Emily H.Cole, who lost her life in 1915.

The Helensburgh connection is that her widowed mother lived in the town at Sunnyside Cottage, 36 West King Street, from 1905-14.

Born Emily Helena Cole on June 11 1882 — the family used the name Helena, not Emily — she was the second daughter of Colonial Government contractor C.G.Cole and Mrs E.H.Cole, who lived in Cape Town, South Africa, at the time.

After her father's death, Mrs Cole and her daughters returned home to Bournemouth, and Helena was educated at Knole Hall High School in the seaside town.

After leaving school she decided to become a nurse, and she trained at the British East India Company's Poplar Hospital in the East India Dock area of London from January 1908 to January 1911.

She worked there as a Staff Nurse for a further year, before enrolling into the Queen Alexandra Imperial Nursing Service on January 15 1912.

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