1914 2014

WORLD WAR ONE

BBC

1918 2018

The importance of WW1 songs

Narrated by Gareth Malone

Video transcript

It wasn't just 'Pack Up Your Troubles' that got us through the war, there were a whole range of songs that had the same spirit. Here's a song which is so familiar that can be sung at the same time as 'Pack Up Your Troubles' and the two songs would fit together. This is 'It's A Long Way To Tipperary'… (plays on piano and sings) 'it's a long way to Tipperary, it's a long way to go, it's a long way to Tipperary to the sweetest girl I know'. Very popular song.

Another very popular song of the era written in 1914 by a very young Ivor Novello, is one of my favourites, 'Keep The Home Fires Burning'… (sings and plays piano) …'keep the home fires burning while your hearts are yearning, though your lads are far away they dream of home, there's a silver lining through the darkest clouds shining, turn the dark clouds inside out til the boys come home.' It's rousing stuff that I think would have really comforted people and got them through the worst time in our history.

After the First World War we see the same kind of songs emerging for the Second World War. (Sings) 'We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when, but I know we'll meet again some sunny day. Keep smiling through, just like you, always do, til the blue skies drive the dark clouds far away.' The mood of 'We'll Meet Again' is more plaintive than 'Pack Up Your Troubles' but the message is absolutely the same. Keep smiling through.