



At Westbury to King at 10.15 a.m. on 1911
beg to report that the driver of a lorry on Saturday
was engaged in business in the town of Lancaster
at 10.15 a.m. & left in a lorry for the barracks about 11.30 p.m.
he made no complaint about the driver who is in charge of the
telephone at night house on the main road about the passage to the barracks
LANCASTER BOROUGH POLICE OFFICE
J. H. J. J.

TIME AND TIDE

WRITING TO CONNECT PEOPLE WITH WW1

Palatine } DEPOSITIONS of JONAS taken on 1911
of Lancaster } Lancaster
TO THE before me Lawrence Neville, Solicitor one of the
the said County Palatine upon the death of
death of



POST OFFICE TELEGRAPH

If the Receiver of this Time and Tide Telegram enjoys its contents, they may find more inspired fictions or poems on other Telegrams or read more original transmissions online. Special conditions are applicable to Foreign Telegrams.



Office of origin and special instructions:

Charges
to pay

Handed
in at

Received
here at

A young woman, pregnant and desperate, is last seen jumping from Morecambe Pier, blue coast flapping in the wind.

During a friendly boxing match a soldier dies before he makes it to the front.

Elsewhere another body is found on the beach with a steamship ticket from Ireland, a rosary and a recruitment pass.

These and other lives from archival coroners' inquests
retold in new poems & stories.

This edition is published in Great Britain 2015 by Lancashire Archives
Lancashire Record Office, Bow Lane, Preston, PR1 2RE

All the work in this book remains the copyright of the individual author

Web site: www.timeandtide.xyz

Lancashire Archives
Record Office
Bow Lane
Preston
PR1 2RE
Tel: 01772 533039

www.lancashire.gov.uk/archives

Friends of Lancashire Archives: www.flarchives.co.uk



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Introduction

The writing in this pamphlet was produced in a series of workshops run in Lancaster and Morecambe libraries by writer Sarah Hymas and senior archivist Vicci McCann on behalf of Lancashire Archives.

Coroners' inquests from 1914-1918 held at Lancashire Archives were used as source material to explore connections between our lives now and those a hundred years ago. The project intended to reveal how World War One impacted within the local community, bringing to light untold stories of everyday life.

Our thanks go to artist Lisa Wigham of *2am Press* for hosting the 'making' workshops and producing a fabulous art piece, which toured through Heysham, Hest Bank, Morecambe, Lancaster and Preston.

Special thanks also to Sarah Hymas a wonderful and truly inspirational poet, without whose enthusiasm and creativity this project would not have been such a great success.

We would also like to thank the staff at Morecambe and Lancaster libraries for accommodating the workshops, and all the participants who engaged so wholeheartedly with the project.

The following work is dedicated to all the people of Lancaster and Morecambe who lost their lives during World War One.

Time

The past, starched
in a thick wad of papers,
relents to careful handling.

Edges blackened
by air, a hundred year old,
colour exploratory fingers

as they open each story.
Its stiffened hinges shy
in the face of the curious.

Inked in the dark
hours of coroners' courts,
the writing is too fast

or too slow to catch
the jolt of death
and its long unravelling.

Among the formal statements:
a scribbled note reduces desire
to address, age and timings

of her final movements;
a medical report
strips flesh leaving a spine of dates;

words boxed and stacked
In telegraphs sent across country.
words spoken and those unsaid.

Each a concertina, expanding
and contracting with the breath
of witnesses, of the reader.

Sarah Hymas

Contributors

Anselm Anderson
Mandy Bannon
Andrew Beet
Sean Binning
Marcus Blackett-Ord
Kate Bower
Philip Burton
Kai Conway
David Eastham
Moirra Hallam
Christine Henderson
Beth Houldsworth
Susie Hughes
Rachael Krier
Mavis Lee
Barry McCann
Vikki McCann
Isabella Quinn
Ankur Singh
Tom Slominski
Tina Smith
Rafella Stefari
Zylpha Thomson

also members of Lancaster PYRO and students from
Lancaster Royal Grammar School

Ralph Smith

The punching bag shudders from my blow. I hit it again and again. An unrelenting attack of thrusts, uppercuts and straight blows. Sweat drips into my eyes as I keep my chin tucked into my neck, eyes straight ahead. Stance square, light on the toes, always pulling the punch back before my arm locks in at the elbow. A good punch is all in the shoulders.

Me and Bennett have been practicing every night for a month now. The boys in the knaffy are taking bets on the big fight. William says I haven't got a chance, actually most of the lads say I haven't got a chance, runt if the litter and all that.

The punching bag is still shuddering, vibrating a soundless cry for help to no one. I'm quick, so quick, Bennett may be bigger but all that weight is just going to slow him down.

The Captain says this is a fight till the end. Twenty rounds. No break. No problem. When my arms come up and my head comes down, I'm ready.

Beth Houldsworth

Bicycle Boys 1916

For John Hargreaves (aged 26), rejected from enlistment on medical grounds who later took his own life.

Hey there bicycle boys!
You're having too much fun
Cycling on Sundays!

Those bicycles give you wings
Flying you along innocent lanes
Between nostalgic fields...

...But not for much longer.
It'll be khaki lanes for all of you save one
And fields deep-ploughed with trenches.

Hey there stay-at-home boy!
No more cycling on Sundays for you
Just greenhouse duty at weekends

And week-day fingers powdered black
Packing shells for Kitchener.
You dreamt of bicycle wings,

Until the day a feather drifted loose:
Ghastly present from a pretty lady,
Mausoleum white, heart-stopping.

Sean Binning

The Finishing Sea

Having lost her lover to the cold parade
lost his warm hands to the stock of a gun
lost all joy of summer's lilting blue dress
she felt unhooked from the frightened line
of untouched girls and their strange farewells.
Even her unborn child had less hold on her
than the hug of the pier and the ocean.

How many times had she climbed the rails,
measured the fall, broken step with
family, church, friends, the sensible view,
felt the breaking wave caress the break
in her heart, embraced the startled deep
as it washed the slate clean, dissolved
her misery, ended all need of dreams?

Philip Burton

The Sea at Night

The sea at night is disquieting
Darkness enveloping
Inviting

I turn my back on the houses, on the gossip
of small hearts and small lives.
You have never loved as I have loved
untamed.
I turn my back on you and step forward.

Rachael Krier

Eva

Nausea. Overwhelming nausea. It doesn't go away – not so much morning-sickness as all-day-sickness which ebbs and flows. Nausea. Waves pounding, retreating. Hypnotic sound. Anxiety swelling, rising and falling. Sinking feeling. George. Wretched. Wretched. Wretched. Only way out.

Rachael Krier

Witness account: Robert Townson, fisherman

Sorry, Sir, but it shakes you up. The first time I ever. I wondered what it would be like and now it's happened for real, she's in my head, playing out again and again, like one of those films in the Pavvy Theatre. The white flash of her arm, the billowing hair like a plume of oil. At first I thought it was a porpoise caught in sailcloth, or a small basking shark. The smooth skin, blue and mottled. But as I peered closer, I knew. She's lying wedged up against the sound net. Half on her back, half on her side. Like a bloody mermaid. Forgive me, Sir. Her skirts are ridden up, revealing her, her - undergarments. Poor lass. My stomach lurches and I use my stick to move her head. I spring back when I see her face: like a fairground mask, Sir. Her eyes are hollow and her lips are gone.

Mandy Bannon

First Day

The machinery all makes the same sound
Casings stack higher
When this was a wagon-works
they shunted carriages slow along runways
into big empty rooms
Greasy workbench with thumbprints in oil

My apron is very flat against my back
Not much to breathe in here
Things judder
A tiny metal shaving lands on my lip and cuts it
Sweaty blood
One conveyor belt strap rises
and drops a shell

Isabella Quinn

The above poem came out of a workshop we spent exploring the munitions factories - the shelling factory on Caton Road, Lancaster and the filling station at White Lund, Morecambe. These were dangerous places, full of new equipment, inexperienced workers, not to mention the poisonous and unstable TNT.

The Landing Stage

I know they are talking about me. I can see their glances even if I can't hear what they are saying. In my head I scream - or maybe it is out loud. It is a terrible sound. And it should be. She is dead because of me. Me. That is what they are saying. Dead because I thought she was swimming when she was really drowning. I am on the landing stage. Alone. Good. I look out to sea. This is what she must have seen. Did she see me? Did she think I would save her? The last thing that she must have seen. Did she think I would save her? I move closer to the edge. So decisive her movements. Courageous. Paulie always said I should stand up for myself. One single step - it would be so easy. I look out to sea.

I know they are talking about me. I can hear them but the drugs make it hard to concentrate. So many people. So much noise. I drift off to sleep and dream of my landing stage.

Rachael Krier

Eva

my last hope gone
the sea lures me
cool wind blowing
teasing
tempting
a siren call
pulling me in
I respond
one step
and then another
one foot in front of the other
...one foot...in front of...the other...

Kate Bower

Time and Tide

The Irish Guards needed new recruits
To fight in WWI disputes,
John Carr who laboured on some farms
Decided he should take up arms.
But his life changed as time elapsed
He left the farms – his fate was cast.
No soldier's uniform would clothe his frame
No letters home would bear his name,
The misadventures on his way
Were not recorded, no-one could say.
It seems he travelled on a boat
Ill-prepared without a coat
Slipping and sliding on the deck
Fearful he would break his neck.
Standing, defiant, against the storm
His hob-nailed boots (not one bit worn)
Conspired to knock him off his stance
And slowly, steadily, as if by chance
Tossed him gracefully over the side
To be found much later on the tide.

Zylpha Thomson

John Carr

The sea was dull and grey
The fields and bogs receding from view.
Remembering her lovely smile, made him glow inside.
Leaving home to fight England's cause was daunting.
He closed his eyes and offered up a silent prayer.
He never saw it coming, the end of his short, sweet life.

A violent gust of wind plucked him up and blew him
overboard.

Susie Hughes

Eva's Song

Eva's Lover

She just turned up on the doorstep, like a memory come back to haunt. We had been an item, but she were back in Sheffield and I were here. Then I get the letter saying it would be better if she got a boy in her own town. I felt the same way and didn't even reply. She were a chapter closed and my life turned a new page.

So I walked her back to her digs in Morecambe and things were fine enough. Met her next day on the prom and we spent a few hours. Then day after, she reappears as words. A note suggesting suicide. But her last letter had not resulted in the new boyfriend it promised, so I didn't heed the heartbeat of this one. I never thought she'd really do it.

Eva's Witness

Just before ten, was on my way home along Marine Road when I saw her. She was stood on the landing stage by clock tower with her hat off and holding it in her hand. She seemed somewhere else. Like a ghost. I knew she couldn't be going for a walk on the beach, not with tide in. But then she suddenly jumped into the water, in her clothes. I got nearer and could see her head above the water. Being such a warm evening, I reckoned she were bathing and modesty prevented her from undressing first, so I walked on and left her to it. Did wonder what happened to her hat, though.

Eva's Father

There was no warning, not even a hint. On the day she went, she was full of her usual spirit. Did chores as normal, even spoke of joining the W.A.A.C.

Then she went out and never came back. And I hear nothing for three days. Then the letter arrives, postmark Morecambe. It's signed by her but from someone else. Someone troubled. Not my Eva.

Suddenly, constable turns up. As soon as I opened the door to him, I knew it were trouble. They're like lawyers, always bearing bad news, especially when they take their helmets off. Quiet chat, consoling cups of tea. Then I follow Eva to Morecambe. And the next time I see her, is the last time.

Eva

You had expectations of me, Dad, as any father would.
However, truth was, there were two of me. There was dutiful
Eva, the one I let you see. The one you cherished. But
beneath her ran deeper waters, an Eva with desires elsewhere.
And that elsewhere was George, who drifted beyond
my reach.

I thought releasing him would be my release, but the longing
became more and more. So I made a pact with myself and
swam after my George, even if this meant the way back
would no longer be open. In the end, I had to let him go forever
and the promise of a future was broken. A crossroads
where I could only bury my heart.

You see, Dad, there could be no return to the life we had.
George had changed everything, and that changed me. And
the change in me, changed you in my eyes. So, I surrender to
the sea and drift away with the outgoing tide. A siren
without a song.

Barry McCann

Pristine

A small frail man
Was a withered shadow of himself.
Upright in the greenhouse
Hands raking at a tub of soil
Like a damp field his father's values irrigate his veins.
A bullet from the factory weighs down his pocket,
Clean and shiny as the day it was made,
Never to be fired from a gun.
Pristine, in its unfulfilled destiny.
He was going to be a hero, staring down a barrel,
Finding God and glory amongst mud and dirt.
Digging, he looks for pieces of redemption suffocated
under the earth
Only to take out his hands and realise they are still clean.
A withered shadow,
In its unfulfilled destiny.

Beth Houldsworth

Dawn is the Time

an aubade

This is the time for rescuing, from the train of dreams,
the odd carriage of old masters, namely
a nest of intimations, a pill-box of little conceits
looted from the first erection / excitation.
How can such treasure not crush adolescence?

One face in a crowd, a blink, a transcendence -
all other visages - pale imitation.
Eyes of a colour on no colour wheel,
I'm left-luggage and you've come to claim me.
Let's miss our connection. We'll live on beans.

Philip Burton

John Hargreaves—June 1916

John had wanted to fight, he really had. But when he tried to join up they'd declared him unfit. So he'd gone to Bradford, to work in a munitions factory instead. He'd hated it there – the sense of being shut in, the noise, the smell...the unkind words... He was sure they were all talking about him behind his back.

Eventually they'd sent him home.

It had been good to be outside again, in the open air, helping his Dad with his gardening job where he could breathe and feel free from the suffocating confusion of people. But it still wasn't enough.

In the growing quiet of the greenhouse, he sought escape through the neck of an old brown bottle. When he judged he'd drunk enough, he arranged his belongings neatly on the nearby ledge – the bottle, his pocket knife, the photograph of his mother he always carried with him.

Finally he stretched out on the cool brick-lined floor and stared up at the blue, blue, sky waiting for peace to find him.

Kate Bower

The Finishing Room

Powder covers everything.
Hair, eyelashes, bare fingertips.
The mask pinches jaw and brow,
slows your breathing; makes you cough.
Sweat trickles its ticklish way to your mouth,
teases taste buds with rubber and salt.
Canary hands perform your task:
pour the powder into a flask;
click the casing lid.
Each missile shell, an upturned egg:
a leaden Easter gift.

This one may save Alfie's life;
a direct hit behind enemy lines.
Pain barbs your lower back;
your throat is dry as mortar ash.
Twenty minutes before the break,
four more months til home.
Mamma and Babby on the sand, paddling in Larne Lough.
Then you remember. Salivate.
The last few left, bought before Lent.
Each bonbon in your pinafore pocket:
a lemon pebble of powdered promise.

Food is Forbidden.

The forewoman turns,
a hand drops to your hip.
You imagine the sherbet kissing your lips.
Your fingers feel the dusted sweet,
then fly up to your waiting mouth,
meet the mask and squeeze beneath:
this plumped-up Eucharist wafer.
You close your eyes, you pray to God.
Each blissful blast upon your tongue:
an unexploded bomb.

Mandy Bannon

In memory of Letitia "Etta" Henderson, who died aged 27, from TNT poisoning at White Lund Munitions Factory, Morecambe, April 14th, 1917. She fell ill four days before Easter Sunday.

Lost at Sea

I write this piece in hope
It will reach you soon.
I come afar
From County Down.
By train, and now by boat.
Where guards enlisted me:
A fate I do not want.
The bay I arrive
With one quest in mind:
To find you, my family.
I yearn for help,
To escape this fate.
Now I am lost at sea.
I sense your will set me free.
A tear stains this page.

Anselm Anderson

Eva

He does not want me anymore. I'm pregnant and feel lonely.
What should I do? Should I have told him I am pregnant?
I could never love any one like I love him. He was my everything.
I can't go home. How can I tell my father I'm pregnant?
My baby won't have a father.
I should never have split up from him.
I'm not married. What will people think of me?
I can go back to the BnB but what will she say?
Nobody wants me. I'm preppers. I feel so worthless.
It's so peaceful on this pier.
I could just sleep forever and never wake up.
There's nobody about. It's just me.
This is all the baby's fault. I wish I was never pregnant.
That water must be freezing.
It's now or never.

Alex and Leigh

Eva's Missing Hours

There are 36 unaccounted for hours in the story of Eva Annie Wilcox.

Below is one possible version of events, written as Eva's diary...

4th June 1918

I left Lavinia's this afternoon as I had received news from France. I met him at the Clock Tower and had every intention of telling him our news but things did not go to plan. He was not the same. He said the war had not been kind; many friends had died. He was not the gentle man I once knew. I tried to begin a conversation for the future but it never came. I never had the courage to bring it up. I did not see a future with him.

5th June 1918

We spent the night at the soldier's quarters in Lancaster. It was very cold and basic. I got up and left early without saying goodbye.

I do not know what to do so I decided to walk back to Lavinia's. On my arrival I could get an answer. I made my decision. I do not want to upset my family. He cannot be my husband, the father. George does not see a future with us because of his love for Hilda. I have to do this. Please forgive me. God forgive me

Naomh

Hilda Gray

I didn't really see Eva Wilcox. I heard about her death in the paper. I just wanted someone to pay some attention to me for once. My father doesn't care. Of course I wasn't out at 9.30pm on my own. That's ridiculous. I said I was quarter of a mile away when I got scared the police would ask me more questions I didn't have the answers to.

Tom Slominski

Eva

She almost knew it would come to this. It had been getting harder and harder to smile. Each day she pretended to be happy, she broke a little more.

Sometimes she wondered whether she was already dead inside, had been for a long time, and was just waiting for her body to catch up. There was a certain peace that came with knowing. There was no future, no worries.

It was the most relaxed she had felt in a long time, not happy, but calm. It was as if she had been living on the edge of panic and was finally able to let it go.

She met her reflection in the glass window of a shop. Glass. It's fragile and one knock away from falling apart. Like her. She shut her eyes, and could almost hear the baby's cry, could almost see its tiny hands reaching out to her. It only served to reaffirm her faith in her delusion; she wouldn't, couldn't bring a child up in this world. It wasn't fair to condemn it to a life with no hope, where people are just statistics and individual lives don't matter. She wanted her child to be a person who mattered. Not a number. And it would be. They would be people together, somewhere better.

Rafella Stefari

White Lund—1st October 1917

Oh, my hat! Will this shift ever end? The noise in here is so maddening I'll lose my reason before evening's out. No point looking at the clock again, I swear they keep it slow. Besides, if I get clocked watching clock, it's ha'penny fine.

Hello, time must be getting close as here come those dainty madams with their big ledgers, counting shells filled and making sure shift has met its quota. They'd be more use getting their hands dirty and filling a few themselves, but suppose they don't want to stain those prissy white dresses of theirs. Nice work and they got it.

Ah, at last. Hooter finally relieves us and it's off to canteen for supper break and a well-earned smoke outside. There is something so restful about dragging on a fag in the fresh air, well away from that oily stench and clanging bedlam of the shop floor.

So here I stand under the silent white stars, chatting to my friends and having a few laughs. Then, suddenly, everything's gone bright. 'The sky's lit up!' shouts a voice. So up we look and it's red as Lucifer, turning night into day.

What be this calamity? Is it hell breathing out?

Barry McCann

A View to Identifying the Body

The tide was coming up.

In the nets,
about a mile from the coast
a woman
lying partly on her back, partly on her side.

Heavy blue woollen coat,
white cotton camisole and combinations.
Mouth and eyes slightly disfigured.
Crabs.

Sheffield savings bank book
purse
pocket knife

Inside the clothing, next to the skin, was the photograph.

Rachael Krier

Black Earth

He is tall with dark hair; his mood, like his hair,
is not lightened by the sunshine in the greenhouse.
His soul remains unnourished by the ultra violet light.

While his body is firmly rooted, it is flaccid and resigned,
weighed down by his melancholia, like a leaf under pouring water.
A bottle, small and black contains insecticide and surely pain relief.

Cold glass touches his lips; he lets the liquid irrigate his mouth,
while a troubled mind turns to a letter and its rejection.
For a moment he tries an alternate reality, it doesn't fit.

Laying there his outstretched arm points to a broken bottle;
a mirror of his broken mind. Depression like weeds got in through the
cracks; crowded out his thoughts and suffocated healthy growth.

The sunlight piercing through a pane of glass, finally
Illuminates his dark hair, like so much black earth.

Vicci McCann

William Albert Marshall

In 1917 eighteen-year-old William Albert Marshall lived in John Street, Warrington with his father, also named William, and described as an ice salesman in the 1911 census, his mother, Frances Mary, two sisters aged fifteen and twelve, and a brother, James, aged seven. On January 4th 1917, William became an Ordinary Seaman on board HMS Champagne. He had previously joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve. HMS Champagne was an Armed Merchant Cruiser of 5,300 tons, built in 1895 and operated by the Royal Navy.

At 6.10 a.m. on October 9th 1917 the Champagne was torpedoed when she was 8 miles Southwest of the Calf of Man. The ship was struck twice, but although she was badly damaged, was able to return fire towards her attacker, a German U-boat, number U96. The order was given to abandon ship, and the rigid lifeboats were launched. A third torpedo struck the Champagne at 6.30 a.m., causing her to sink. The sea was rough, and the lack of steam power meant that it was difficult to get the additional collapsible lifeboats over the side.

When the order came, William had time to put a life belt round his waist, but was evidently hurrying to get off the ship, as although he put his shoes on, he didn't waste time pulling his woollen stockings on first.

The fact that William was wearing a life belt must have given him a small amount of hope, to start with, at any rate. The North Sea in the early morning in October would be bitterly cold. We can only imagine the terror of the ship's crew, wondering if they would be rescued, shouting out to each

other to hang on. In fact many were rescued and taken to the Isle of Man, but out of a complement of 305 men, there were 58 casualties, including William.

We know this because his lifeless body was pulled out of the sea on October 27th by two fishermen from Morecambe. They found it floating about a mile offshore, opposite the Bathing Pool at Bare. His cap and right shoe were missing, and his hands, face and feet were so battered that Percy Baxter and his son Edward, who found William, thought that he was aged thirty to forty.

William's body was identified by a leather disc attached to his clothing that was stamped with the number Z-3326 and the name W.A.Marshall, RNVR Mersey. Further identification came from an envelope in his pocket addressed to him at the Royal Naval Barracks at Devonport. The postmark on the envelope showed it was posted in Warrington at 2.30 p.m. on October 5th. The letter inside was signed 'Winnie'. As his sisters were called Sarah and Frances, it is likely that Winnie was his sweetheart.

William was buried at the Anfield Cemetery, Liverpool.

Christine Henderson

William Marshall

Lost at sea, an exhausted sailor drifts into the tide's fatal embrace.
His future snatched away by the rage of war.
His final thoughts, the fragmented dreams of a life not lived.

Back home, a girl folds her past into a bedroom drawer,
Her future taken by the rage of war.
Then,
on softly stockinged feet,
she turns away and
quietly
closes the door.

Kate Bower

Elsie Boddington

By 1917, three years into the war, it was difficult to keep up with some of the rules. As the war got more and more intense the demand for munitions grew. Workers have to start coming in early and finishing later to be able to fulfil the army's demand for shells. Eventually we had given up the strict searches upon entering the factory and confiscating sweets in the finishing rooms. I just have not had the time to do it. Of course I still made them wear masks and keep to the other rules in case someone like Christine Barrowman the M.O. came in. She was always very keen to try bettering her position through the misfortune of others and I don't have a doubt she would've used anything she could against me. Most workers kept to the rules anyway. They were afraid for their health and the security of their jobs. I cannot comment on what happened to Letitia Henderson. I didn't see her do anything wrong

Tom Slominski

Rule: Don't eat sweets in the workplace

Week 1: There is a strict rule set here: no food in the finishing room... I find that rule to be somewhat nonsense. Me and another woman decided to take some in with us today. Getting through the searches wasn't difficult. They don't do it very well, sometimes a couple of women get taken away but we usually don't see them again. Letitia and I enjoyed the sweets.

Week 2: Another week of TNT work. No sweets this week. Not in the workplace.

Week 3: This week was worse... started having stomach pains. Letitia went to see someone, didn't get to ask her if anything was wrong. This couldn't have been the sweets, could it?

Week 4: April 15th. Rumours have been spreading, and they have turned out true. Letitia is dead. TNT poisoning or something. The pain is getting worse. Maybe those sweets were a bad idea

Curtis Griffiths

Respirator to be boiled and washed after each use

This week I have worked 60 hours in this godforsaken factory with no thanks from these ungrateful gossiping little girls. How dare they? My husband Charlie is a sergeant major in the army and if he knew how I was being treated, well...

My Charlie being away at the front is hard on Arthur and Ellie, and with me being a forewoman and taking on such a big responsibility it makes keeping the home life together difficult. That's what these stupid little girls don't understand.

Well, here I am left with these stupid respirators, left to sort out their dirty washing while my babies are at home without their mother or papa. Well, this is ridiculous. Don't they realise I have other things to do? These don't even look dirty. They can go into the clean pile. And these can too.

Wait until my husband hears about the way I'm being treated. I'm going to write to him in the morning

Gemma

**Not Washing:
the woman who dies eating sweets**

It's great to be at work
Why does it have to be in these circumstances?
I hope I'm making a good impression
I'm hungry
I managed to sneak in some sweets
I wonder if I can get away with it
One sweet isn't going to do any harm
I hope nobody noticed
I broke a few rules. What if someone tells?
I ate on shift
I didn't wash
That sweet didn't taste right
I feel sick
It's just nerves
I should go back to the M.O.
I will lose my job for eating
I can't go. They won't notice
No, I'd better go
Why she saying this? I don't want to go to hospital.
I should be at work.
I am letting people down
Why didn't I wait till lunch
Why did I eat a sweet?
I wish I didn't feel like this
I can't cope with this pain
What is wrong with me?
My skin looks funny
Why...

Leigh

Hair should be done up and covered

I take off my cap and let just a few locks fall down over my forehead. It's hot and my head sweats where the cloth cap touches my skin. I feel an urge to let more hair go. There is a breeze from open windows at the top of the finishing room. If I let my hair down the breeze will blow through it and cool my head down. I remove a hairpin, more hair falls, then another pin and another till the hair lays across my shoulders and tumbles down my back. It feels surprisingly liberating. I hear Elsie the forewoman coming. I quickly gather up my hair and replace my cap. I put my respirator back over my mouth and quickly return to work. Thankfully she doesn't notice. I can't wait till the end of the shift when I can go outside and let my hair down properly.

Vicci McCann

Three Angles. One Voice

Lavinia Sutcliffe

I'm waiting to give my statement. Didn't think they would want to speak to me, I wasn't the last person to see her alive, was I? It was just gone 2 o'clock when I said goodbye to Eva, she was going to catch the 3 o'clock train to Sheffield, other people must have seen her.

We'd talked at breakfast about her going home and being honest with her family, after all I have known them all for five years and I did feel that after the initial shock they would rally round, accept what had happened and work out a solution of some sort

I hope the police don't question me too much.

I gave Eva some things to take back with her, don't know where they are and, to be honest, I am too scared to ask in case it reveals her secret. But I will write to her family in a couple of weeks.

Statement

I am Lavinia Sutcliffe. I am a widow and reside at 29 Sea View Parade Morecambe, Boarding House keeper. At 10pm on Monday 3rd deceased came to my house and said she had missed her train. I had known deceased for 5 years. Deceased took lodgings with me and appeared in good health and spirits. Deceased only stayed one night and I last saw her at 2.20pm on Tuesday 4th when she left saying she was going home to Sheffield.

Letter

Dear Mr. Wilcox,

William, I know how difficult the last few weeks must have been for you all. However, now the burial has at last taken place I want to give you more information about the last time I saw Eva. This comes as a friend of five years standing in the hope you will accept it as such and feel less bitter about the whole affair.

As you know Eva became almost like a member of my family when she came to work for Henry. After his death I tried to persuade her to move to Morecambe with me and help run the business, and, as I have no children was prepared to include her generously in my will. When she turned up that evening in June I repeated this offer. Her reply was the same as before, emphasising her loyalty to you all and her new employer. Really, William, I wonder if things may have been different if she had accepted a few years ago.

Now to get to the point, on the next morning Eva was very subdued as she sat with me in the kitchen. When we were on our own she explained her visit to Morecambe, telling me of her pregnancy and that the father, who does not know of the predicament, is a soldier now fighting somewhere in France. She also told me of calling at George's house in Lancaster, that he had walked here with her, and that in the six months since she broke off their friendship he had found a new sweetheart. Tearfully Eva then asked if she could stay with me until after the baby was born, perhaps telling people she was a war widow.

What I had wanted! But now I persuaded her to go home and be honest with you. We agreed that eventually you would become reconciled with the situation and work out a way to help her through this ordeal. Before Eva left in the early afternoon I gave her some baby clothes, you know of my miscarriages, and the family brooch I had worn. Although she said she had let many people down, when she left she appeared to be happier for making the decision to return home.

William, I have no more words for you except to hope I have not added to your anguish, as that is not my intention.

Once again accept my sincere condolences,

Lavinia

Telegram to Lavinia: January 2015

You knew Eva was pregnant. Please don't let any feelings of guilt stay with you. At the time you felt you knew how her father would react to the news when you persuaded her to go home. She covered up her feelings very well.

M

Mavis Lee

White Lund

10.30pm

am standing in the doorway watching the workers on their break. They look like children in the school playground, some are in huddled groups talking and shuffling their feet, others pace the yard to stretch their limbs; all shadows in the cool dark evening until they become outlined clearly when the sky is suddenly illuminated. There must be about fifty or sixty, women and men all rushing towards the gate followed by many others from inside the factory. The gates are closed. People are rushing towards me, 'STAND BACK'... A few hear me but they can't move.

10.31pm

More and more people are pressing in on me, wedging me against the gates, surrounding me with sweet, sour, obnoxious and bad smells; machine oil, cordite and sulphur, their breath, their sweat. Some are silent too stunned to speak others are screaming, shouting, a couple of women try to calm down the intense atmosphere whilst some men start to scale the gates. A few echo my command, 'STAND BACK, THE GATES OPEN INWARDS'.

10.32 pm

I see all this clearly by the flames sparkling and crackling upwards into the night sky from the factory roof. Now the crush of people parts like the Red Sea as someone drives the factory car to clear a path through, allowing the gates to be opened. They rush through, more and more, so much noise.

10.33 pm

Then... the explosion... muffled voices.

Mavis Lee

The Warning

I shouted, 'Hey up there',
everyone heard. Why didn't you?
'Get out of the way', I shouted,
blew the whistle again and again.
Everyone heard, but you,
taking the short cut so often used,
stepped from the platform when shunting occurred.
I sounded the alarm,
heard on the factory floor, but you,
crushed between buffers, held your arms in the air.
Not deaf your widow later said, the warning was heard.
Is it something you chose to ignore?

Mavis Lee

Letitia is the Name

Ireland to England, money is the game,
Ireland to Morecambe, Letitia is the name,
Her mother was crazy, but the daughter wasn't lazy,
She worked through illness, working through the pain,
But her body wasn't able to take the strain,
On the 14th she died,
No malice was implied,
Explosive was to blame,
It wasn't ignited by a flame,
Ireland to England, money was the game,
Ireland to Morecambe, Letitia was her name.

Andrew Beet

William Marshall: Aboard HMS Champagne

I spot the periscope in the water. The one thing that any sailor dreads more than anything. Swiftly, efficiently it cuts through the water, heading for the ship. Suddenly, the thoughts begin to cross my mind. Why am I here on this ship? For King and country? For Lord Kitchener? For my lover, Winnie? For the people down my street in Warrington, to give my life for their freedom? This confusion has plagued my mind ever since I have left Warrington and seems to continue to do so. I am only a young man, of eighteen years of age, and I think this contributes to my way of thinking. As many others talk of things such as 'King and country' and the 'evil Germans', I daydream about a world without war. Why do people fight? Why can't peace flourish? I wish to return home. The realisation hits me. I am not a man, just a young boy, far from home, longing to return to the familiar streets. Longing to return to my childhood.

The telltale sign of the wake created by a torpedo is spotted by a crew member, and immediately an alarm is sounded. I feel myself being carried by my body, my consciousness detached from it. Then the question enters my mind? Am I to die? What would happen to my parents? What of Winnie? Fear begins to grip me as I scramble, along with the many others, to carry out the torpedo drill.

I am suddenly flung, along with my fear to the other side of the ship. The calls sound to 'abandon ship' and to 'surrender'. Is the end, I wonder? The cries of men, flung to all parts of the ship fill the air. Without hesitation, I hurl myself off the ship and enter the cool water of the Irish Sea. My body disappears. My mind fills with images of white doves, flying in formation. I remember the last time I was happy, signing up with my friends to join the navy. All laughing, joking, smiling together. Little did I know then that this was to be my end.

Ankur Singh

Morecambe Promenade

Darkness encroaching, the last of the sun's rays only now disappearing. A hunched figure, lit by the first of the moon's rays. Hilda, standing still, looking at her watch. Almost ten. If he were going to arrive, he would have done so by now. She, looking at the distant figure through her peripheral vision, began walking home: her father would punish her severely if she were even slightly late again. The huddled figure stood up straight, holding her hat in her hand. Her face glistening with tears as Hilda approached.

The figure took a great stride off the landing stage into the swirling mass of water below. Hilda, rushing to help, though too far to help. Shaken, she staggered on; feeling nauseated drowning under the tidal wave of emotion, sweeping her away. The figure's hat floated forlornly upon the brine. Hilda recognised that it was her fault: she could have helped, talked to her. No, actually, Hilda couldn't have reached the figure in time. She must be okay; she's bathing or.... something.

A cry from the sea broke the air. Desperate for air, the figure treading water. Hilda was too far, she fled. As hope died in the woman's eyes, Hilda fled. Fled, left a person to die in the tide of Morecambe. She failed to help. Her abysmal and abhorrent failure to help, reach out do anything. No, again, it must be an accident; she was caught on a rock or something. Of course, it was an accident. Clearly it was not her fault. It was an accident.

David Eastham

Dear Diary

It felt amazing. I drowned her in the sea; I won't let anyone take her away from me.

She looked beautiful in the fading light, standing on the landing stage in her coat, her brown hair illuminated by the moonlight. I felt a feeling I had never felt before as I crept through the darkness towards her. My heart pounded faster than ever before. I took a deep breath and embraced her tightly. I could feel the warmth of her body and the tenderness of her lips against my own. I waltzed towards the edge of the stage and dove into the shining sea, our bodies entwined with each other.

As the cold water engulfs us, she begins to protest but I clung onto her even tighter, our breasts pressing against one another's. Surrounded by the serenity of the sea, this moment seemed to last forever. The feeling from earlier grew more intense, even as she grew limp in my arms. I cherished the moment for as long as I could before I had to surface for air. I took one last look at her perfect body before swimming back up.

My body still has not stopped trembling but I must think of an alibi soon as what I've done is illegal.

But it was all worth it.

Anon

The Sunken Blade

The peaceful water chills my metal skeleton. Any longer, and rust will claim my hollow body. The harsh, sharp edge of my blade parts the soft current of the icy water. Damp emptiness echoes below the waves and envelopes me, swallowing my lifeless form whole. At last, I am at peace. At last I can rest. No more shall die by my sharpened blade. I have been passed on by different hands, each one accompanied by a new marking, a new name. My current and final marking reads, "EVA".

She seemed to be kind girl. Quiet, with few friends, yet happy, nonetheless. At first, I could not move her hand; I held no power over her. Yet, recently, the poor girl has become damaged, and my will seeped through the cracks.

It started when she realised she was with child, carrying another soul against her will. This broke her, and my influence grew. She told the father of the child of his new responsibilities. He rejected her, and the child. This broke her, and my influence grew. She told her husband to be that her child belonged to another man. This broke her, and my influence grew.

She was changed. Cold and alone. The desire to cut, to slice, to stab started to flow through her veins, the stems of rage, with my blade as the root. She had lost all, except her memories, and her knife. I was her final chance for redemption, for revenge. She could take the lives who her life, by plunging me deep into their vulnerable flesh.

And yet, for some reason, she would not turn to violence. I am unaware whether my power had dwindled, or if her resolve had grown, but either way, she would not kill. Instead, she banished herself to the watery prison. Her cold, stiff hand would be my coffin, my final resting place. I am now at peace. I can now sleep.

Kai Conway

Poem

Alone, she waits for her man,
Saving her wages wherever she can,
She works everyday and is never off ill;
There is no sign of stopping, she'll never give in.
The pain she endures will never end,
She won't speak out, only pretend,
Inside she yearns for home;
Outside she needs no friends.
Every day she suffers more,
Her yellow skin always sore,
The good wages keep her going;
Her husband's gone, taken by the war.
She will never ask for help.

Marcus Blackett-Ord

Poem

They march around in order
They march around so calm
They march without regret
They march around the Somme
They march for loves forgotten
They march for those back home
They march for father's pride
And I wish I had marched along

They work with heavy machinery
They work with bullets and guns
They work for cargo for ships
They work for those that are gone
They work for those they once knew
They work for what love had gone
They work for heroes of war
And I'd never worked along

I thought I was of sound health
I thought I was completely fine
I thought I knew what's best
I thought the doctor had lied
But I didn't gauge my anguish
I didn't wonder if I worried too much
I didn't think I was wrong
When I drank the nicotine
So now I'm gone

Anon

Ode to Letitia

She crossed the wintry Irish Sea,
A new life beckoned.
A way to break from want; be free.
But for escape to be short-lived
She hadn't reckoned.

Her work was dreary; nights were long,
With danger present.
Rules, regulations, right and wrong...
That toffee, sweets, were not allowed
Seemed unimportant.

When feeling ill she didn't know
The thing that caused it.
With the heat her throat was dry, so
Fingers with their lethal dust were soon
Inside her pocket.

Reaching in to find refreshment,
Sweets brought such relief.
Risking just that brief contentment
She had signed her own death sentence.
It is beyond belief.

Christine Henderson

*I chose to write about Letitia because we share the same surname,
but as far as I know we are not related.*

*Letitia Henderson, Munitions Worker. Died from TNT poisoning
aged 27, on 14th April 1917. She had worked at the National
Filling Factory, White Lund for only 3 months.*

Fight

He could feel it in his bones it was going to be a good night. Knew it as soon as he woke up that morning and smelt the bacon frying downstairs. Talk about getting lucky with this billet. The weather was good too, bright and fine, so training out on the field would be a doddle. Not like last week when the wind from across the bay had torn right through them and the rain had soaked them through. He smiled to himself when he thought of Matty, so sure he was going to win the fight tonight. Well he'd show him, the cocky little sod. Losing wasn't an option, not with what he stood to earn if he won. Enough to treat his girl at the weekend. A bite to eat, flowers and the best seats at the pictures. He'd send his Mam something too. Lord knows she'd had a time of it since his Dad left. Do her good to have a few bob to cheer herself up a bit.

Well no good lying there spending his winnings before they were in his pocket.

After all, time and tide wait for no man.

Tina Smith

John Hargreaves

Bottle of Nicotine
He suffered. I brought him home.

...

Everything sees
his thin back bending,
a hawthorn bough weighted down with rain.
He hears
their voices in the machinery
shame is his breath
clean air has fled the room
Sweats.
He wants Dad.
Shell-caps come apart in his fingers
releasing dark smells
and goodbyes to the world

...

I like to sit with the plants. All that light soaking in, warm
and loving.
I turn you in your uniforms back to front, so you don't have
to look at me.

Isabella Quinn

Factory Fatality

NEWSREADER

The National Projectile Factory based in Lancaster has come under scrutiny following a fatal accident yesterday. Mary Ellen Clarkson, aged twenty-eight from Bolton, was knocked from a crane ladder and suffered multiple injuries after a fall at the factory. She died within hours of reaching hospital. Miss Clarkson's best friend and fellow crane operator Mable Bowker gave her evidence...

MABLE

Well, it were the normal day shift. We'd been going a couple of hours, and sometime after nine Mary had put her arm up to signal me to stop. I stopped me crane, as normal so she could get on t'ladder as normal and I would take 'er to 'er crane and then t' lassie's crane came out of nowhere.

NEWSREADER

Miss Bowker went onto explain the actions of eighteen year old Margaret Finnelly, who had been a crane driver for only two weeks.

MABLE

I shouted for 'er to stop 'cos I knew she 'adn't seen Mary but it were useless she couldn't 'ear me it's so noisy in there. That's why we do the 'and signals. Mary were looking down at 'er feet on t' ladder. She never 'eard me, I felt sick, I panicked and just kept shouting but it were no use. That lassie's crane came from nowhere.... (Starts to cry) It just caught the back of 'er, knocked 'er off balance and she fell all that way down onto the girder. Never 'eard a scream like it, went right through me. I knew it were bad 'cos she just lay there, eyes closed and 'er body were all squint. Poor, Mary

NEWSREADER

In response to questioning from the Coroner Miss Bowker suggested that the standard of training for crane drivers could be improved.

MABLE

Well she were looking down at controls. It may not be my place to say sir but they don't train new ones right. They should 'ave more time to learn. She's only been at it a couple o' weeks. She's a bit young an' all.

NEWSREADER

Margaret Finnely, the driver of the crane that knocked Miss Clarkson off her ladder, gave her explanation.

MARGARET

I never saw her. She couldn't 'ave done 'er 'and signal. I know when proper care is taken there is no damage. (crying). I did take proper care honest I did sir. It's not my fault. I didn't mean to cause no harm and now she's, she's ... (cries)

NEWSREADER

The Coroner spent some time establishing her employment history and training.

MARGARET

Me first job was in canteen but they were short in factory, so they asked me to learn the crane. I didn't really want to, but money's better.

'Utchie, I mean Mr 'Utchinson, showed me 'ow things worked a couple of weeks back. 'e was in a right rush and I couldn't 'ear half of what 'e said with all the noise and that. I asked to go back to canteen but 'e said I'd get the 'ang of it

in time (cries). We 'ad to get more shells, there were cranes everywhere. I were always scared som'at bad would 'appen but never thought owt like this. (cries). God not this.

NEWSREADER

The inquest heard from the foreman, Mr Hutchinson, about his training and that of his staff

HUTCHINSON

My knowledge is from tractors, not much different to cranes really, depends on individual, some pick it up quicker than others. I normally give 'em half an hour. It's too busy in there, I've told the Inspector time and again we need a proper system but he's done nowt about it. Why isn't he here? I do what I can.

NEWSREADER

The final witness, Albert Wilkinson, was only three yards away from the crane when the accident happened

WILKINSON

I was in my crane about three yards from foot of Mabel's crane. It was chaos yesterday we'd had orders to move the shells faster or else.

Well Huchie I mean Mr Hutchinson would be onto us like a ton o' bricks. It was that busy, everybody was rushing. I'd stopped because I saw Mary on the ladder. Then that lassie's crane came from nowhere. She got too close to Mable's crane and knocked Mary clean off. She didn't look.

I fetched Mary down with Arthur. She were out cold and lying across the girder all limp like. She came to on stretcher. That look in her eyes will be with me all my days ...and her words.

‘This is the ruination of me ‘.....Som’at should be done,
Inspector’s never there and there’s no order, there’s waste
and rubbish all over the place. It’s a wonder more lives haven’t
been lost.

NEWSREADER

The Coroner findings were that Miss Clarkson suffered multiple
injuries from her fall and recorded ‘accidental death’. He concluded that
he would submit a report to the government about this fatality and
request that the appropriate inspection of the factory is carried out
forthwith.

Moir Hallam

Night Foreman

My duty is the night.
I tuck the darkness 'round you.
the tremors of production
grip none
beyond my watch's reach.
I never sleep
Cranes and girders
buildings succumb.
My flesh remains.
For you, I will put my hands in fire
For you, I will suffocate it.

Isabella Quinn

Tide

When moonlight strikes
the water's skin
shadows roll under the surf
to crimp low ripples,

the bay is dragged
by the tide,
pulled thinner by the hour
out to sea,

and the swell tugs
its watery sheets
rumpled by

rosary beads
cashmere socks
unlaced boots
photographs
love letters
prayer books
and the office key.

The waves' riffling fingers
break the surface
sparkling with oxygen,
as if heaving
your hands, arms, chests, out.

In these hours
of deepening black
light glimmers beyond
the sun's reach
and none of you are dead.

Sarah Hymas



Morecambe, c1910 | Lancashire Archives reference DDX 420/8



Detail from *Time and Tide* designed and created by Lisa Wigham

