

# British Literature of World War I

General Editors: **Andrew Maunder** and **Angela K Smith**

Volume Editors: **Andrew Maunder**, **Angela K Smith**, **Jane Potter** and **Trudi Tate**

5 Volume Set: c.2000pp: March 2011

978 1 84893 042 1: 234x156mm: £450/\$795

Given the popular and scholarly interest in the First World War it is surprising how little contemporary literary work is available. This five volume reset work aims to redress this balance, making available an extensive collection of short stories, novels and plays from 1914–19, the majority of which have not been reprinted since the early twentieth century.

From the moment Britain's involvement in the First World War began, the activity of writing and reporting the war became a national obsession. 'The Pen IS mightier than the sword', announced the October 1914 issue of *The Bystander* magazine, explaining that this would be a war not fought not only 'across battlefields by the nation's soldiers, but at roll-top desks....'.

Many of the iconic WWI texts in the popular canon come from the 1920s and 1930s, when the years separating the writer from the conflict allowed a certain amount of studied reflection. The material presented here reflects public perception of the conflict from the time, showing the early focus on heroism, giving way to the darker sentiments of later works. Significant, too, is the focus on writers often overlooked in Great War literature, with female writers and those of working class origins presented alongside the more familiar officer-class gentlemen.



*"Fall in" Answer now in your country's hour of need* [1915],  
Hill, Siffken & Co, London  
© LOC Prints & Photographs LC-USZC4-10987

- Will help to broaden historical and cultural research on literary propaganda, pacifism, gender, popular fiction, class and nationhood
- Provides the first scholarly edition for the majority of texts
- Includes a bibliography of over 400 pieces of drama (plays, sketches, musicals, pageants, revues) submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's Office during 1914–18
- Full editorial apparatus, including substantial general introduction, volume introductions and endnotes

**RESET  
EDITION**

**Volume 1: The Short Story and the Novella**

Florence Barclay, 'My Heart's Right There' (1914), 'In Hoc Vince' (1915); Flora Steel, 'Sunrise' (1914); Berta Ruck, 'The Shirker' (1915); 'The Purple of the Shoulder Strap' (1915); Richard Bird, 'The Schoolboy Ranker' (1915); Ford Madox Ford 'Fun! – it's Heaven' (1915); Arthur Machen, 'The Soldier's Rest' (1915); Frank Richards 'Coker's Conscript' [A Billy Bunter story] (1916); Stacy Aumonier, 'The Match' (1916); Evelyn Sharp, 'The Apple Tree', 'Patriot's Day', 'Frightfulness' (1916/7); Ian Hay, 'Full Chorus' (1917); John Galsworthy, 'Defeat', 'The Bright Side', 'The Juryman' (1917); Jessie Pope, 'The Allotment Bride', 'Cornstalks', (1917/18); H R Read, 'Killed in Action' (1918/19); Frank Harris, 'The Last Kindness' (n.d.); Richard Aldington 'Deserter' (1930)

This volume examines some of the different kinds of war experiences which manifested themselves in the war-time short story and novella. The texts chosen represent a range of short-story writing styles and are as much focused on the home front as the battlefield. The texts reveal the very distinctive nature of the fiction produced out of extreme circumstances, but also highlight some of the ways in which those writing the 'Great War' revisited themes, tropes and techniques that had been central to the late-Victorian period in both its 'New Woman' fiction and its tales of imperial adventure.

Not surprisingly, the stories that found most favour to begin with were either recruitment stories or tales of bravery on the front line. But whilst one strain of WWI short story has its roots in propaganda, adventure and romance, another strain accommodates the growing post-1915 need to talk about the darker effects of the conflict and its fallout. The war was a catalyst for human suffering and some short story writers began to focus on the sense of uncertainty and vulnerability it provoked – both at the front and at home. There are stories which focus not on soldiers but on the 'outsider' – the persecuted, the immigrant, the mentally-ill, the widow, the prostitute. Other stories try to sidestep pat definitions of patriotism and heroism; others transfer moral authority away from those in positions of power to those without a voice and hint at alternative values.

**Volume 2:** Ruby M Ayres, *Richard Chatterton, VC* (1915)

The story of how one man is transformed from wastrel to hero. Initially, Chatterton has to be prompted into enlisting by his fiancée, who is excited by the war, but he soon reveals his bravery and is wounded in action. Propagandist and structured on the conventions of (women's) romance fiction, the novel contains striking descriptions of combat, the message of which seems to be that brutal violence is being done in the name of England, but that it is necessary to uphold civilized values. A best-seller in its day, with a powerful message, the novel was reprinted constantly, with sales reaching 85,000 copies by 1918.

**Volume 3:** Marie Belloc Lowndes, *Good Old Anna* (1915)

In a small market town, an elderly German servant (Anna) has served her employer loyally for many years. WWI breaks out and Anna decides to remain where she is. She gossips and is ensnared unwittingly into a spy ring run by a local shopkeeper and is arrested. The authorities realize that she is innocent but by this time it is too late and Anna has hanged herself whilst in custody. The novel looks at the difficulties of trusting appearances, as well as being a response to the newspaper-driven obsession with spies and spying.

**Volume 4:** Rose Allatini, *Despised and Rejected* (1918)

The main character – a young man called Dennis Blackwood – is a would-be composer and member of a comfortably-off middle-class family. His pacifism provokes adverse comment from neighbours and causes his family embarrassment. During the course of the novel Dennis falls in love with Alan, a socialist and a miner's son, though educated at Oxford. They become part of a group of like-minded people, 'inverts' or persecuted outsiders, living a kind of subterranean existence and meeting in a basement cafe. The story is interesting for its handling of a controversial subject, and shows how pacifism and homosexuality were often elided. It was prosecuted at the time of its publication under the 1914 Defence of the Realm Act (DORA).

## Volume 5: Drama

Includes:

E T Goulding, *God Save the King* (1914)

A recruiting drama with a spy plot involving a selection of 'Great' Britons appearing in ghostly form.

Edward Thurston, *The Cost* (1914)

An example of a 'well-made play', in which a middle-class family attempt to come to grips with the changes wrought by the conflict. Initially swayed by newspaper rhetoric, they are forced to reassess their earlier prejudices as the war progresses. It ends with the declaration, 'As long as there is fearlessness in the soul of a man, there will always be war – always.'

E Knoblauch, *The Way to Win* (1915)

A sculptor makes a statue of 'Victory' but it looks amateurish. He does not understand why until, in discussion with his model, he realises that one can only create art with 'meaning' if one has 'lived' life. As a consequence he enlists and vows to complete his work after the war.

J G Brandon, *For those in Peril* (1916)

A spy drama set inside a convent in which the Mother Superior and nuns outwit the plotters and save the day.

B Thomas, *For My Country* (1917)

A mother discovers that the man on leave from the front is not really her son but a lookalike imposter. She prepares to denounce him to the police but wavers when the man (a German agent) tells her that if she does so, her son back in Germany will be shot if his impersonator fails to return. The woman chooses to denounce the spy anyway, knowing her son will be killed. The country's need is greater than hers.

Gwen John, *Luck of War* (1917)

A soldier (believed missing) returns to find that his wife has re-married.

Herbert Tremaine, *The Handmaidens of Death* (1918)

A group of women war-workers attempt to come to terms with a life of impending sexual deprivation and spinsterhood. The play culminates with an encounter with the spectres of dead German soldiers.

Bibliography of First World War drama

### Editors

**Andrew Maunder** is at the University of Hertfordshire

**Angela K Smith** is at the University of Plymouth

**Jane Potter** is at Oxford Brookes University

**Trudi Tate** is at the University of Cambridge



'The Worcesters going into action'

© LOC Prints & Photographs LC-USZ62-136096

## Related titles

### **Reassessing John Buchan: Beyond The Thirty-Nine Steps**

Editor: **Kate Macdonald**

This is the first collection of edited essays on the novelist John Buchan (1875–1940), author of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915), *Witch Wood* (1927) and *Sick Heart River* (1940) among many other works.

**Contributors:** Rev J C G Greig, Michael and Isobel Haslett, David Goldie, Simon Glasscock, Bill Nasson, Michael Redley, Hew Strachan, Nathan Waddell, Peter Henshaw, Ahmed K al-Rawi, H E Taylor, Douglas Kerr, Kate Macdonald, Alan Riach, Paul Grant, John Miller, Tony Williams

304pp: 234x156mm: 2009

**HB:** 978 1 85196 998 2: £60/\$99

**e** 978 1 85196 586 1

[www.pickeringchatto.com/buchan](http://www.pickeringchatto.com/buchan)

### **The Correspondence of H G Wells**

Editor: **David C Smith**

Consulting Editor: **Patrick Parrinder**

This is the first major scholarly collection of the correspondence of H G Wells (1866–1946), one of the most prolific and significant writers of the twentieth century.

Wells's private correspondence extends from letters to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Prime Ministers Winston Churchill and A J Balfour, to the rich correspondence with his many female friends and lovers. These include Rebecca West, Eileen Power, Gertrude Stein and Marie Stopes.

There is also prolific letter-writing to a variety of newspapers, including extensive material on the First World War. Wells's letters to *The Times* express his ideas for civilian mobilization which pre-empt the Second World War's 'Home Guard'.

**'Wells comes multifariously, outrageously, seductively and toweringly alive.'**

– Eric Korn, *The Guardian*

**'an invaluable compendium.'**

– Simon J James, *The Times Literary Supplement*

4 Volume Set: 1900pp: 1998

978 1 85196 173 3: 234x156mm: £350/\$625

[www.pickeringchatto.com/hgwells](http://www.pickeringchatto.com/hgwells)

## Order Information

### **North or South America**

Ashgate Publishing Company  
PO Box 2225, Williston  
VT 05495-2225, USA  
Telephone toll-free (US & Canada):  
(800) 535 9544  
Other enquiries: (802) 276 3162  
Fax: (802) 864 7626  
email: [ash.orders@aidcvt.com](mailto:ash.orders@aidcvt.com)

### **Rest of World**

Turpin Distribution Ltd  
Stratton Business Park  
Pegasus Drive  
Biggleswade, Bedfordshire  
SG18 8TQ, UK  
Telephone: +44 (0) 1767 604 951  
Fax: +44 (0) 845 009 5840  
email: [books@turpin-distribution.com](mailto:books@turpin-distribution.com)