

Tom Kelly

Writer in Residence at The Word March – May 2018

As Writer in Residence at The Word I have worked on short stories on the theme of ‘Our Town’ with a three schools: Hebburn Comprehensive, Jarrow School and South Shields School.

We had a lovely celebration event at The Word on Saturday 19 May as part of the WRITE Festival.

First up here are stories written by Hebburn Hackers who are a group of pupils from Hebburn Comprehensive, Campbell Park Road, Hebburn who meet on Wednesday’s after school at Hebburn Hub with Community Librarian Pauline Martin.

I met the group on two occasions and suggested that they write something on the theme of ‘Our Town’. I read the opening of my short stories and we discussed short story writing and ideas they might pursue. A number felt that would like to write about their families and stories that had been passed down from father to son and mother to daughter.

Here is their work which we are more than delighted to share.

These wonderful stories give an indication of the talented children on South Tyneside.

Tom Kelly

Writer in Residence at The Word

Carry These Memories

I've been in the army for a few years now. Starting to get used to how things work. I try not to make many friends because you never know when you might lose them. It's always the same. You talk to somebody, become friends and the next thing you know they're lying in front of you bleeding out because they've been shot. It's a shame; some of the people are quite nice. I have a wife back home in England, she's expecting soon again too. I hope I get to see her again.

Every day here is the same old thing. Nothing interesting ever happens. We wait around until we're told to go and then we attack for a bit until we're told to return and drop back. It's always the same. We never do anything different. When people aren't out in the front they're back in the trenches waiting for their next orders. Despite how boring it can be I'm glad I'm out here trying to stop this mess. I can't imagine what state England is in right now. It makes my stomach drop to think about what could happen to my family.

Every day was the same. Nothing interesting ever happened. Until one day I was out with one of my friends in a forest. We were hiding from some Germans. We didn't know where else to go so we just ran and hid in a forest nearby. We had been walking around for a bit until we discovered a little wooden hut. We were tired of walking and decided to go look at it. It was empty. We thought it would be good to hide in it for a bit and rest. I turned on the very dim light and shut the door. It wasn't very bright but at least we had a light. We sat on the floor talking and laughing over stories about our family's and what it was like back home. My friend pulls out an old pack of cards to help pass the time. We sit for a while just playing with the cards. We didn't hear the rain outside, which was nice. Then suddenly we heard a loud boom from outside. Darkness. The light went out. We looked at each other. We both had this look that said "They've found us. We're dead". We prepared for what was about to come.

Nothing. Nobody opened the door. I looked for my friend and faintly see he is by the door. I faintly see his head nod at me. We prepare to be attacked by people waiting outside for us. He slowly opens the door. Nothing. Nobody was waiting. We look around. Nothing. We look at each other, confused. Suddenly the sky lights up and another loud boom rumbled through the silence. I look at my friend and he looks at me. We start laughing. It wasn't the soldiers finding us. It was thunder and lightning.

Every day is the same. Nothing interesting happens. But I still have some good times of what happened during the war. I'm back home now with my wife and children. I will carry these memories with me until the day I die.

Abbey Willis

6th June, 1944. Normandy

John Ferry's Account.

I Can Never Forget

I grew up in Hebburn.

I lived there for my entire life,

There was only one time that I left,

And all of me didn't come back.

It was my 3rd deployment. I'd served as an RAF pilot for 2 years, then became a part of the ground troop after a minor head injury. I was in the second wave of attackers on the beach. All I could hear was explosions, guns and ringing. That's probably what I remember most. The ringing in my head. It drove me near to insanity.

The boat I was on was crammed full of people, so much I could hardly breathe. There was a taste of blood in my mouth, and a sense of fear in my eyes. My Sergeant was telling us what was going to happen, what we were going to do.

Then his head split in half.

I don't recall his name, or his face, but that moment is still with me after all these years. And the look of confusion the instant before he died. Somethings can't be forgotten.

We landed on the beach in our boats. Every man of us poured out onto the beach, heads down, eyes closed, hearts beating faster than a drum. The constant thrum of the machine guns and the shells exploding where they fell is all that any of us saw or heard. We reached a small block of metal, and the last of us grouped together. Two people out of the ten who left that boat, there was two of us left. I think that was the moment I just gave up. I just sat there, while my comrade tried to get me up. But I didn't move. For how long I couldn't say. It could have been 10 hours, or 10 seconds. But the next thing I know, I'm running. Towards the guns, the blood and the bullets. And I don't stop.

I keep going, and going, men being shredded around me. I saw the last man from my boat blown up in an instant. Then I was on the ground. It was strange really. I was running, then I just fell. And couldn't get up. When I looked down, at my right leg, I didn't see anything. There was just blood. I looked behind me and saw my leg and just thought, *that shouldn't be there*. I just stared at it. Then I passed out.

Then I was in a field hospital. But the pain in my leg was so extreme that I passed out again. The next time I woke up, my leg felt like it was burning. But the doctor put me back under.

When I woke up for the last time, my leg was aflame, but not as bad as it was. I slowly sat up and looked around. I was in a real hospital, where I couldn't say, but I was OK. I wasn't dead. But there was a small pup next to my bed. My little dog Ben. I was close to home if Ben was with me. I gave Ben a pat on the head and went back to sleep.

The next time I woke, they asked me if I wanted to go home. I went home the next day, with a small train ride with my son and my dog, then a car. A car! The first time I had ridden in a car, and it was on my way home from the hospital. When I got to my house, there appeared a dilemma. The car was gone, and I couldn't get up the stairs to my house in my wheelchair, but my son couldn't carry me either. And that was when I found out my wife had died. I called out for her, to get her to help my son get me up the steps. Then my son said "She's dead dad. Did they not tell you?" She had died two months prior, two weeks after my leave.

The next two months of my life, I remember only moving house. I moved to a bungalow, with my dog. Then, I went to look properly around the town that I had grown up in. And even though everything was similar, everything was completely changed. I went to my favourite restaurant, but it was closed. The owner had died in the war. I went to the shop that was at the bottom of the street and couldn't get in without the owner coming to get me. And at that moment I knew I couldn't stay there. I couldn't deal with all the memories that were here for me. I couldn't live with people I knew looking down on me with such pity in their face. So I left. I moved away, to live with my daughter and my dog, and I never saw that town again. I couldn't live there seeing ghosts around every corner.

You see, I was changed forever. And I could never forget.

Ben Ferry

Ouch! A Monkey

Carl Finnigan's travels in Australia

As told by Matthew Finnigan

It was an exciting day for footballer Carl Finnigan as he stepped out under the warm Australian sun. He would finally make himself a world famous football player. Sure his small town success had been great but time to become an instantly recognisable face, like David Beckham or that other guy...

Anyway, he stepped out into the blistering heat and was instantly greeted with swarms of natives, asking to help him with bags, help him find his hotel, and all sorts of other things. The natives seem nice at least, he thought to himself.

Now, an important thing to remember about Carl is that he is a great football player, but a terrible listener. He was told of the struggles in Australia by his family but his will to succeed, coupled with his naiveté, meant he was unprepared for the tirade that greeted him as he stepped out onto the pitch.

He walked out with his fellow teammates and was instantly greeted with a chorus of, "HONKY! HONKY! HONKY!" from the Australian crowd. Naturally his pride took quite a hit because of this but he played a respectable game and pulled out a win in his debut match! This was the plan, play like he did for St. Johnstone's and win the crowd's admiration all over again.

It is customary to go out and have a few spirits after a victory in a sporting event, and a defeat in a sporting event, not to mention while watching a sporting event... Basically the folks like their ale and that's how it's always been. Even in the days of football in the streets the bishops and beggars alike were partial to a snifter of some intoxicating fluids. Nowadays, we are no different.

Carl went with his new team to a local establishment they often frequented and enjoyed a 'few' refreshing beverages. It was later in the evening when he stumbled out and came across a little devil known as a monkey. When you hear monkey you probably think of a loveable ape swinging about, eating bananas and just generally being fun and goofy. The parallel is when you hear Australia, you think evil creatures that won't hesitate to kill you. Carl had been warned to watch out for any such animals, but he was a tad intoxicated. He tried to pet the ferocious little creature and it proceeded to rip the (pardon my language) heck out of his arm.

Carl screamed in agony and clutched the wounded limb, the blood poured like a waterfall from the gash across his arm and the monkey hissed, with blood dripping from its foaming mouth. Carl kicked at the fiend and it scuttled away like a bug, leaving Carl clutching the festering gash in his arm. Carl's Australian travels had been an adventure, yes, but ended with two razor sharp fangs piercing his tender flesh like bullets.

So, what became of Carl? Well he is now a successful striker for South Shields. Although, he isn't any less accident prone, only recently swallowing his tongue in a match. On top of that, he was only just returning from a suspension for putting his hands on a manager. Seriously Carl, chill... At the very least, he hasn't had contact with any apes for a while and to my knowledge, no racial slurs jeered at him. So, swings and roundabouts.

Disclaimer: This story has been edited for entertainment purposes. Carl, if you read this please don't kill me it's just funny that you were bested by a monkey.

Matthew Finnigan

That Dog

It was 1300 hours. I was crawling through hostile land trying to reach the German artillery, I was unnoticed, bullets flew over my head one after another and not one hit me. Occasionally you'd hear an explosion in the distance followed by the screams of one of my fallen comrades, the sound was haunting. I was in the heart of the little German town on border, after a while the noise of a gunshot became a rarity. I saw a Nazi patrol of about 6 walk past the battered building I was now hiding in. Then I heard it, the bark of a dog, this was no Yorkshire terrier either it sounded big.

The door, I'd left the door open that thought crossed my mind precisely the moment a large German Shepard came hurtling up the stairs. The mutt began to bark and then I knew it was me or the dog. It took a chunk out of my arm the first time but then it went in for seconds but I thought 'I'm not dying today' so I turned my wrist around and began to force it down the dogs throat.

The noises of struggle hurt me much more than wound it had left in my arm. Eventually the dog stopped struggling and I knew it was done. I didn't want to kill the dog but I knew I had to because if I didn't the siege on the town couldn't take place and their guns were taking down to many of our birds. I radioed back to my squadron to say there weren't too many German forces in the town.

They came, I wasn't the scout of course but I was one of only a few that made it others had been found and were about to be sent to war camps before they were freed again by our forces. I heard the tanks first the noise of tank treads ploughing through mud is quite distinct then I heard bullets thousands of them firing at Germans and few shots getting fired by unsuspecting soldiers. They eventually made it to German artillery and planted charges a boom the large guns were gone, at least in that town. That wasn't my job though I just scouted for enemy forces.

Countless lives were saved by me taking that dogs but it was something that would haunt me forever and id always have the scar to remember it by. A scar that was with me from the age of 17 until the day I died.

Daniel Archer

On the Jarrow Crusade

I used to help to build ships down at Palmers shipyard but now. Now I'm marching with 200 other men down to London to protest. Why? Well we have no jobs, no money and families who need to be fed. I have a wife and 6 young children at home the youngest is only 3 and my wife is pregnant again with our 7th child. The walk is long and hard, very hard. We began our march to London on the 5th October it's now the 20th. No one knows how much further we have to go. We have been walking for 15 days and we have only had 3 days' rest. My feet are covered in blisters it hurts to walk but I must keep going. I suppose that I'm one of the lucky ones some poor men are walking around in sandals. My friend George he's the oldest one marching is always in a good mood. He'd say "howay Ginky me lad not long now" my real names John Ginky's just a nickname I still don't know why they call me that but it makes them laugh and me also so I just go along with it. Our last rest day was about 9 days ago I can't really remember the days just pass by on the march. I really enjoy the days where we rest as we get to read letters from our loved ones and it makes us emotional but we know they will be proud. I have just finished writing my letter to my wife and kids and I'll post it next time we rest. If we ever get to rest again.

The thing that is constantly in my mind is what will happen when we do reach London. Will our campaign be accepted or will they just refuse to speak to us? Oh I do hope that they listen because I do want to make something of this march and to return to the North East with good news and cheerful, tired faces and not bad news and having to see the disappointment in our peoples' faces.

It's been nearly 4 years since Palmers closed down and I've been in and out of jobs ever since. My wife stays at home doing the housework and looking after the kids. Most of my friends are miners working at the colliery but I don't fancy doing that. I know that sounds harsh and I know that I might have to become a miner one day if this march fails but it's just the fact that I don't want to leave my wife alone without a husband and my kids without their father.

Who knows how long we have left on this march days, weeks. Everywhere we have been people have been giving us help and support along the way. I just hope that the people down London show the same support and listen to our cry for help.

Alice Collier

The Fifty Third Minute

It was the big day, the crowd was roaring, flags were soaring, smog covered the pitches' turf like a duvet. The smell of cigars and cigarettes' burned my nostrils accompanied by the smell of corner shop booze snuck in in trench coats and duffel bags. Middle aged "men" floating about the stands stumbling and clambering over supporter's legs to get to their sick stained seats. It was glorious, people of all shapes and sizes gathered together for 90 minutes of pure British greatness.

We lined up side by side like sardines in a tin, shivering with...excitement? Or maybe it was frostbite, waiting was the easy part though, the crowds roar with excitement. Adrenaline kicks in. heart pounding faster than the last beat. We walk out. A group of raucous, boys stick up two muddy fingers in a v shape, a few younger children stick their heads through the metal fence and shout obnoxious remarks at us, one child, barely able to stand joining in on the act.

"Geordie Bastards!" They chanted over and over again, understandably though as a month ago when we played against this lot at home one fella was stabbed after "misplacing" another bloke's pint. The match was in full swing by now and we slaughtered those pigs, goal after goal the opposition began to anger, it was the fifty third minute and the opposition had almost completely given up, as a mild joke I decided to take a punt at the ball from the half way line, unlucky for me it went in.

At that moment the whole opposition's supporters invaded the pitch, tsunamis of beer bottles and cigarette butts were flayed at us. A few lads on our team were later on taken to hospital with concussion, luckily for me I escaped with only a few cuts and bruises, to my face; however our manager says it's probably best to make sure I don't play any matches for the next few weeks as just to be safe.

Ethan White

The Tent's on Fire, The Tent's on Fire!

I was born in a small house in Boldon. Living in such a small area I knew a lot of people. One of my favourite people was a man I met in the mines, a man called Joe McIntyre. You see, he had a stutter but he could, he was a great singer was Joe. When he sang, the stutter kind of just vanished. I loved Joe McIntyre, he was a great laugh! Me, him and the rest of the Boldon Colliery Miners had a great time growing up. If I could, I'd revisit them every day. Like when I pulled a goalies pants down or made John poo his pants, literally poo his pants, that was a dark day for all.

But my favourite story has got to be the one of us all going camping and Joe giving us a lovely rendition of "Oooh, the tent's on fire, the tent's on fire, the tent is on fire it is." Let me tell you about the weekend when this all took place.

We had to walk for an hour with all of our camping stuff on our backs; we didn't have its all good. So we're walking along the path: me, Joe, John, Steve, Andrew and Barry and we come across a field, "Why don't we set up camp for the night here?" I ask, the only response I get comes from Barry, "Okay, fair enough, but I have something to admit." By this point we're all wondering what it is. Has he left his clothes at home? No. Is he secretly afraid of the dark? No. This is what he had to confess...

"I might have left my tent at home." There was a small groan that came from Steve but Joe tells him he can share with him, as long as he helps him set it up. So here we all, 6 miners in their uniforms setting up tents, now we can't see Joe and Barry's tent because it is on the other side of the group of trees. About 5 minutes later, I start to smell smoke, the others seem to have smelt it as well. We all exchange glances but, as the optimist I am, I say "probably just the farmer burning something." Everyone nods their head in agreement apart from Andrew who says, "yeah, or those idiots round there have burnt their tent." We all start to laugh until we see Joe come running around the corner, "ttttttt, fffffff, tttttt, aaaah!" He tries to say words but his stutter doesn't allow him to do so.

"Joe, stop, calm down!" I try to calm him but it doesn't work, in fact it does the opposite. "Bbbbbbbbut, but, but, ttttttent, fffffffire!" He responds with.

"For God's Sake, Tom, that won't help will it! Sing it Joe." Somehow Andrew is as calm as Joe is stressed.

“Oooh, The Tent’s on Fire, The Tent’s on Fire, The Tent’s on Fire, please help!”

He sings and we all turn and look at Andrew!

Tomas Dulson

JARROW SCHOOL SHORT STORIES

Here are twelve stories produced by Year 7 pupils from Jarrow School on the theme of 'Our Town.'

We discussed a number of possible people and events they could write about. The vast majority of the stories are about William Jobling, the Jarrow pitman who was gibbeted on Jarrow Slake in 1832 for his part in the murder of South Shields magistrate Nicholas Fairles.

There is one story on the Jarrow Crusade of 1936.

A life without Billy

I kept the newspaper from 1831, the first day the Pit Men went on strike. I can't believe that was a year ago now. How time flies. He always kept secrets, but I feel like there is something more to this story than Billy simply killing a man. I was always suspicious of Ralph; there was always something about him. Then again I'm probably just trying to take the blame off Billy. The last thing I heard about Ralph was him going off to America 'to visit his aunt' (that died 3 years ago). I need to let go and stop trying to defend Billy, he obviously did something wrong or he would not have been found guilty. Two weeks he's been up there. What are they going to do with him? We get it murdering people is bad, can we move on now? The threat has gone on long enough and all the pit men have gone back to work. It's yesterday's news. It is torcher seeing him hanging there every day. Billy was an idiot. Did he not think about the affect it would have on me? I'm pregnant heaven's sake! How on earth will I pay for food? How will I raise my child? There is no hope around here.....

Amy Holstead

A Mobile Dad

Another day without my father, but this is for his own benefits. The Jarrow crusade was on and my father was in it. He was going down to London to ask for a job. I don't know when or if he would come back. I was worried if he got a job or if he would of just wasted his trip down to London. All of these questions ran through my head.

I feel isolated without my father as he was really the only one who talked to me. Another worry is if he was still alive. So many questions that can't be answered.

It's almost been a month since he went away. Every day brought a new worry. If he did get a job, where the job might be is out of our control. If it was down in London, how were we supposed to get down there?

My dad worked at the Palmer dockyard until it got shut down. That is why the people started to get angry. They wanted jobs and then found out that there weren't any jobs available, so they started the Jarrow Crusade.

The troubles were worrying me. I didn't want any of these worries get me down. But one of the jobs might not be given to my father.

Cameron Marshall.

Ralph

I remember it clearly. We'd been striking miners. Celebrating. William was drunk, so was I, and we were chatting about the jobs being lost. Nicholas Fariles, we'd never met or even spoke – he was wealthy, we weren't. My head was crazy and I couldn't control it. Bam! I pushed him off his horse, grabbed a stick and a stone- hit him in the head. I escaped, hoping never to be found. William was caught running off South Shields beach.

Six weeks later, word spread that my good friend William was hung in Durham and, even worse, is being transported back to Jarrow to be presented for everyone! Oh how I wish I could visit him, his wife Isabella 'n' all. It's all a plan. I know the coppers will be waiting for me – my guilty conscience to pull me back. Back to the scene of the crime...

Darcie Tullin

Isabella's Dreads

I am Isabella, William Jobling's wife, and this is the story of his death. He shouldn't of died, he did nothing wrong.

One stormy night, I was sitting at home wondering where my husband was. Then one of my children spoke up "Mummy, where is Daddy?" She asked me that, but the truth was I didn't know where he was myself. "I don't know, he should have been home by now..." I was worried sick, I could only think that he had been injured. Then I heard a knock on the door, I opened it and saw he policeman standing there. I couldn't even speak to him. "Hi ma'am today your husband William Jobling committed a crime of murder, he is being chained up, good day." He walked off with a clip clop clip clop, before I could even say anything...

In the next few days there was shouting, "he did nothing, he is a murderer" and all I could do was sit and listen to these people saying he did it or he didn't. I had no choice but to listen to the shouting at night and at day, it was the worst at night because the children had to listen to it. He hung there for TWO WEEKS; finally his friends sawed through the chains and buried him after sailing him away. All this time I had to bring up three children as I had gave birth to a little one. I never thought that he would commit a crime, and then I figured that it was Armstrong who committed the crime... But it was too late to try and prove anything. Nobody saw Armstrong anymore, and my husband had already been killed...

Now I am dead at the age of 95, however I watch down on my children from heaven, and I help them make the right decisions. Also I help them to live through life without making the wrong decision...

Kimberley Frazer

Jobling's Gibbet

Ralph Armstrong's P.O.V

William Jobling & I were 2 of those miners forced to strike. It was the year 1832, off to a great start until June 1st.

I remember it like it was yesterday, In the town of South Shields we had been drinking at our favourite pub, we started walking home and approached a wealthy looking man. Nicholas Fairles was trotting by on a horse, we begged for money, to get a new job and help our families or my family.

Fairles refused and that annoyed me, I picked up a stick and a stone and beat him up, smashing his skull. 10 days later Fairles died in hospital, It should have been Jobling who killed the man. He kept secrets, I'd ask 'Do you have a family?' or 'have you found your lucky woman yet?' He would sheepishly decline, and quite instantly change the subject, but I knew all his secrets.

Later he was caught trying to flea, and got hung on a 21 foot high gibbet. By this time I had just reached America, and headed to New York. I changed my hairstyle, name and age. I was a fine young gentleman excited for my new life in America. 3 weeks after being hung, Jobling died...I wasn't a single bit guilty, not a grain of salt.

After about 1 month in New York I travelled to Texas, learning their accent after 'going to visit my relatives in New York'. Haha! £400 for me! This is working so well! I instantly made friends, who gave me a job earning \$2 a month! Stupid Americans...All the same...All clueless.

My closest friend, Edward Sanderson, worked with me but

Mille Carter

Escape Plan

Nicholas Fariles, 1832, dead. I was standing there panicking; I didn't have any ideas on what to do. "RUN!" Ralph yelled. But I didn't follow; I just stayed where I was, looking over an abused dead body, scared of what may come. After a couple of second I fled, far away from Nicholas. Ralph was only around a couple of blocks ahead of me. All of a sudden, he took a detour round the corner 'what a friend' I said to myself. I just kept running and soon forgot about him. I had to concentrate on getting away; ahead of me I saw a red and black figure with some type of silver stick in his hands – a soldier!

17 foot gibert in front of me. 3 weeks. 21 days. "It was Ralph! It was telling you!" I shouted. I've messed up – Ralph has messed up- he should have been caught not me. My pregnant wife and third child watching me suffer without knowing what an earth is going on. I couldn't watch my child grow up. I could see my wife again. I could be happy again. I couldn't even see my best mate again. Well... Ralph again.

Looking down I can see my body lying on a boat sailing away.

Paige Herrett

Far, Far Away

Guilt. That's all that consumes me. The death of an innocent man William killed for a murder he didn't commit. It was me I killed that man and now if they ever find out I have to run and far, far away.

When we got to court a few weeks ago I knew I was going to get the blame. There was too much evidence against me and I Ralph Armstrong did actually do it so I am so surprised that I didn't get killed it was him an innocent bystander. But in the back of my mind I am a small but relieved but mostly the crushing feeling of guilt.

That night is one I will never forget we were drunk that night we were acting the fool and the rich man from around here showed up and we were asking for money and when he said no I got so mad that I killed him with a stick and a stone.

Poor Isabella. His wife she is pregnant with a child and also has two more children at home. She was always nice invited us round every now and then for dinner and the children were the best behaved little things in the world. However I destroyed their family and their lives and now William jobbing is dead and it is my entire fault. I need to go far, away.

Shona Williams

Ralph Armstrong: Killer On The Run

Mist grows over the stormy blue sae, it blocks my vision but I'm free. Across the Atlantic, nowhere near my home on the Tyne. 400 pounds? They'll never get the money: I'm on the other side of the world.

Dig coal, sent it up the dusty chute, watch people die. Love the process of hard, quality of mining. We went on strike last year and ever since we wanted to do it again, so I went along and tried to get that wonderful glory back. Too bored of digging for a rock.

I tried my best on that night, 'Nicholas give us your money NOW.' I was drunk and mental, persuading old men like him for money. Aa the effects of a pint. He was adamant so me and Jobling think about smashing his head in, first with a stick and then with a brick. The crack and crunch of his skull thundered in my head. I'd killed a man, run, sprint. Get away. Jobling remains. What a fatal mistake.

Not a trace can be found about my escape. I'm west on a boat. Going to America, money, all of it. A new life without any suspicions about me being a murderer. Ten pounds for the boat ticket. Or stay and get executed.

I didn't feel guilty for Jobling, he was in it with me. Probably got him executed or something good and gruesome like that. He can rot and be shown up above the Slake. I don't care about him. I have a better life in America. He was in it for the kill.

I'm eventually safe, no clues to show I killed a man. Safe and sound.

Bradley Mayne

Guilt

Is all I can feel but I'm gone now.

Nobody knows where.

I'm in Australia, nobody will catch me.

That could've been me out to be hung! Ha 400

pounds for me...

Jobling probably deserved it. He should

have stopped me from killing him but no he let me do it.

All I could remember was me and William in the

pub,

We had a few pints. Next thing I'm on a boat to

Australia away from all that mess.

Australia is a big place nobody will find me here.

Nicholas Fairles was the name of the man that is no

longer alive.

I don't think it's bad that he's dead.

Now nobody cares or do they?

Emily Edwards

Isabella Jobling

There I was, watching him getting hung. I felt scared and alone but most of all confused. Why would he do such a thing? He isn't the person I thought he was at all. This is my story on how I lost my husband.

My husband was a striking miner until one day in the pub with his mate Ralph Armstrong and they came across Nicholas Fairles and hit him.

This came as shocking news to me as I thought he wouldn't do such a thing. A couple of weeks later William was found guilty and was hung. I was there, the day he died, not knowing what will ever happen then. I was heart-broken. I didn't know what to do. I was lost without him.

Ralph had suddenly disappeared as soon as he knew they had been caught out. I always knew there was something suspicious about him but didn't think he was capable of something like this. There is a 400 pound reward for anyone finding him. He has to be found as he needs to get what he deserves. He is running to keep his cover.

A week went by and nobody has found Ralph and the last I heard he was in America. He is always on the run, he will never be found. He got off free but William didn't he was taken away from me and now I don't know what is going to happen to me.

Weeks and weeks went by but still no sign of Ralph. Each day I felt more and lonely and scared of what will come with the next day. I have three children now and they are confused about where there father is. It remains a mystery to them. If he was here now he would be so proud. And it is a mystery what is in store for me now. Who knows where I will end up?

Kate Young

Armstrong

Ha. Thought they would catch me, didn't they? No one can catch me. I'm smart about these things, you see. I didn't want to leave Bill but he wouldn't come with me, what with having some important business here. Found out he had a family, not long after Fairles died. If only we weren't so drunk. I would never do such a thing...

It wasn't long after us miners went strike. We went on drinking with the lads and then some old man, Nicholas Fairles rode past on his horse. Bill wanted money from him (he was very rich) but Fairles refused. I was so angry and drunk I picked up a stick and a stone and beat him to death. He didn't deserve that, I know and I was shocked at what I had done once I was sober again. He was rushed to a doctor and ten days later he died. That's when I knew I was in trouble. So I made an escape plan. Bill went to South Shields beach that night (big mistake) where the police caught him.

Little did I know Bill was put on trial. Before Fairles died he had told the police it had been me and not Bill. But Fairles died before the trial and Bill was found guilty. I felt bad for not owning up but I didn't want to be in more trouble, he was the one that begged for the money anyway. I hid in Durham-in a house owned by a rich uncle, that's where I found that Bill had been put on trial and had been found guilty. It was a shame, his wife was pregnant and she would have to raise three children on her own. It wasn't until the week he was put on the gibbet she found out. Still clueless of why he was up there, I think they covered him in pitch and hung him on that deadly gibbet on Jarrow Slake.

I didn't think they would come after me. I told my uncle I was fleeing to America and he was not to tell anyone where I was. I got on a boat to America to New York where I could be an ordinary businessman and no one would question me about who I was. Immediately I picked up an American accent and found myself a job. I got a new hair colour and changed my name.

A few later my uncle sent me a letter with an enclosed leaflet from the Home Secretary who was offering £400 to anyone who could find me. He believed I was the guilty one: he wasn't wrong. Now I was worried that my uncle leaked my address and new life but I settled down with a family and passed away peacefully without them finding me.

I suppose I was lucky but I will always regret leaving Bill behind and not standing up and admitting I did it. The choice was his: he could have run away with me.

Alexandra Green

I am....hidden

My name is Ralph but you won't find me. I've been in the newspapers lately but I've covered my tracks well (I think).

It was 1832 and my friend and I, William Jobling, were on strike. The working conditions in the mines were terrible, so we and hundreds of other miners went on strike. We were drinking and coming out of the pub when we heard a horse. On its back was a man called, Nicholas Fairles and he was extremely rich or so we heard. We begged him for money, though he wasn't willing. This irritated me and I began beating him with a stick and stone and he died ten days later.

When the attack took place, William stood back, because I was hitting Fairles harder and harder. It was quite therapeutic, hitting away my worries about work and how to get money and food for my family.

We needed to escape, somehow and quickly. My idea was to hide in the open and escape on a boat to America. I think William liked that idea but he approached it differently. He was preparing to go down to South Shields beach because there were plenty of people at the horse racing. He was caught two hours later and arrested.

That brings us up to the present. He was hanged in public, after being tried in Durham, in court, for the murder. This just proves the court is completely wrong and unreliable because I committed the murder.

At the hanging I believed there was a man in the crowd who shouted, 'Farewell Jobling' just when Jobling was being hung. I am not sure who shouted it but I'm angry with whoever it was, because it drew out his suffering. I will find them one day.

I'm in America and drowning in guilt. If we hadn't been drinking, if we hadn't attacked Nicholas Fairles, if we hadn't ran maybe Will would be alive and would have hung on that gibbet for three weeks. Maybe I would be dead, for William was innocent.

All of this happened while I was on strike but they won't find me.

Emily Wilson

South Shields School

As with the other groups I discussed a number of ideas the pupils of Year 8 could cover. John Simpson Kirkpatrick, 'The Man with the Donkey' was the most popular.

And here is a selection of their work.

The Man with the Donkey

Blood and tears. The strain on my beloved donkey caused her excruciating pain and continued to slowly drain the life from her slate grey eyes. All the dead bodies flooded me when I left the med tent and then it hit me. Shock. The nerves in my bodies tightly wrapped around me and all my muscled turned to stone. Seconds, which felt like years, passed by and the clock was ticking, so I made my move and collected those in need of my assistance. However, the burden of death lay around in the air like a foul scent and effected all those left in it for too long. To keep my sanity, I put it in my mind of all the lives that would be saved and all the families would be spared. Gunshot and groans, bounced around in my ears and contributed to the feeling of loss of friends. As I compose myself, I heave a wounded soldier, by the name of Keith, onto my donkey and start to head back to the safety of the infirmary. The journey always seems so long when the fate of someone's life depends on you and the difference between their life and death is in your hands. As soon as I walk in, the warmth hits me and my hands start to tingle. I lay down the warrior on the soft cotton bed and called over a nurse to treat him and, hopefully, rescue him from death's grip. Again and again, I repeated the act to save as many people as I can before there soul is lost forever.

Every time I loaded up a body, they seemed to get heavier and I could feel my legs giving up. It was only a matter of time before my time was to come but I was satisfied with my work. Finally, I felt the bullet pierce my shoulder and the sound of gunshot rang in my ears and, suddenly, my body seemed to be tumbling to the ground and I had no control so all I could do was watch. As I fell, I slapped my donkey to keep her going and she sprinted to the infirmary alone while my blood abandon my body leaving me lifeless in the dead of night on the damp, chilling ground.

Daniel Mather

South Shields School

John Kirkpatrick

John Kirkpatrick was a young man who was born in South Shields on the 6th July 1892. John was an English citizen despite having Scottish parents. He had seven siblings and his favourite animal was donkeys throughout his life. He attended Barnes Road Primary School and Mortimer Road Senior School. He had a stable childhood until his father was in an accident when John was twelve and he died in 1909. John was like the father figure of the house.

He applied to be a gunner in the territorial forces as a gunner aged 16. He then joined the merchant navy aged 19, like his father. Shortly after, he deserted around Australia and worked as a: steward, stoker and greaser on Australia coastal vessels. When the war broke out, he enlisted as John Simpson so he could not be identified as a deserter. Simpson enlisted as a field ambulance stretcher bearer because he wanted to save many lives but this was a role only given to physically strong men. On 23 August 1914 at Swan Barracks, Francis Street, in Perth, and undertook training at Blackboy Hill Training Camp. He was eventually assigned to the 3rd Australian field Ambulance for the war. The Great War started for him on the 25th April 1915 in Gallipoli. Numerous soldiers were falling down wounded and were looking likely to die but Kirkpatrick saved dozens of men's lives. He used donkeys to carry the wounded to safety, there were five different donkeys used by Kirkpatrick to save lives. "John Kirkpatrick was my savior, my leg was blown off and the pain was unbearable. I thought this was the end but John and his donkey walked towards me and then carried me to the medical Centre." This is one of dozens of young men who were saved by John during the war at Anzac Cove.

His selfless act eventually came to a disastrous close when he was hit by Turkish machine gun fire whilst carrying a soldier. Kirkpatrick was killed but the soldier on the fifth donkey survived.

His quick thinking saved lives and helped him be remembered in South Shields and fondly remembered by the families of the men he

saved around the world. In the Centre of South Shields, there is a statue of him and the name, “The man with a donkey”.

George Mosley

South Shields School

What my Grandpa thought the war was going to be like.

It was my first mission on the front line, the boat just breached the shore and the silence was instantly shattered by an incoming spitfire ripping bullets through the sand to give us some cover. And for a boy that came from South Shields where it was quite peaceful other than the factories the noise was a bit overwhelming. Once the sand clouds cleared the mounted 10mm cannons opened fire on my squad mates. I distinctly remember the enemy soldiers screaming what seemed like gibberish to us at the time. Suddenly I ducked for cover as bullets skimmed my head from the cannon I stood bolt upright as I heard the cannon fire stop and realised it was only me and my best friend left from my squadron. I felt sick at the feeling of a 9mm pistols barrel digging into the back of my head. Almost instantly I felt the weight of the gun slowly fade away as I heard a bullet rip through the air right behind me. The other squads had arrived ... Or was that what I envisioned when I heard the news that war had broken out? When it came to it none of this ever happened in South Shields . My mind was playing tricks on me when I heard the news but it wasn't true , when I was recruited as a soldier all I did was guard the docks and the only time anything happened was when the Luftwaffe had decided to bomb the factories and they did some damage but not really many casualties, as soon spitfires were there fending them off and doing a great job at it . Soon, the war was over and I was expecting more as if I was scared we would all die but there wasn't much action except from the front lines.

Liam Sanderson

South Shields School

Lillian Garbert

My Grandma was an amazing, brave and tough woman. She was born in 1923 and unfortunately died in 2018. She was born a while after the first World War.

Grandma worked in an ammunitions factory in World War 2 when she was about 16-17 years old. This massive factory was based in Birmingham. There were loads of buildings turned from normal and peaceful places to war factories. The women would work here while the men went to fight in the war.

Suddenly she was sent to hospital due to breathing problems because of smoke from the destroyed buildings. Doctors and professionals told her she needed to move back up North near her home town South Shields. Instead she worked in an Italian prisoner of war camp where the prisoners would sing a song dedicated to her name (Lillian) everyone liked her because she was always kind, beautiful and always helpful. Even when she was in a care home she wanted to look her best. Her hair was especially bright and full of life.

After the war my grandma married twice but both of them died from cancer. When I was born in 2004, I would love to go around to her house and listen to her magnificent stories about the war and her experiences. In 2017 she had a stroke that shocked my family because she was fit and healthy. From then and on she was in a care home where we would visit her every day; she liked it there and all of her carers loved her and were truly saddened when she died. Rest In Peace grandma!

Bradley Wylam

South Shields School

Wrights Biscuit Factory

She looked up at the giant sign that read ‘wrights biscuit factory’. She walked up the steps towards the giant brick building, her blonde ponytail swaying left to right as she walked. She pulled open the giant oak door; this was impressive due to her petit physique. There was a delicious aroma as she walked inside. She grabbed the hair net from inside her bag and pulled it over her hair.

“Sheila!” Pamela yelled as she came out of the door at the other end of the corridor. Pamela was Sheila’s best friend. She was tall and had brown hair.

“Hey Pam,” she replied.

“From your cheerful tone, I suggest you haven’t heard the news?”
Pam asked

“No, what’s happened? Is everything ok?” Sheila questioned curiously.

Pamela sat her down on a stool and explained the factory was closing down. She had known it was coming as demand for biscuits had been very low lately. However, now that it was reality she was devastated. What could she do with her life now?

Mark Lehman

South Shields School

John Kirkpatrick

John Kirkpatrick, ‘the man with a donkey’ saved loads of suffering soldiers’ lives with his donkey (Duffy). Kirkpatrick was a legend in the Gallipoli war, WWI. His amazing and brave service gave dozens of soldiers hope for their own lives. He was born on the 6th July 1892 in South Shields and his life was ended on 19th May 1915 at the age of just 22. He was trained at black boy hill camp and became a private. His dad, Robert Kirkpatrick, was a merchant seaman and his mam’s name was Sarah Simpson, hence the name John ‘Simpson’ Kirkpatrick.

The man with the donkey has a well-deserved statue in king’s street. What this very important man did was helpful to everyone. In May 1910, John travelled widely in Australia, taking on various jobs, such as cane-cutting in Queensland and coal mining in the Illawarra district of New South Wales. In the three or so years leading up to the outbreak of World War I, he worked as a steward, stoker and greaser on Australian coastal ships. The legend surrounding Simpson, sometimes under the name "Murphy" grew largely from an account of his actions published in a 1916 book, ‘Glorious Deeds of Australasians in the Great War.’ He risked his own life multiple times running into “no man’s land” to carry wounded men out of the crossfire. There have been several petitions over the decades to have Simpson awarded a Victoria Cross (VC). There is a persistent myth that he was recommended for a VC, but that this was either refused or mishandled by the military bureaucracy. However, there is no documentary evidence that such a recommendation was ever made. The case for Simpson being awarded a VC is based on diary entries by his commanding officer that express the hope he would receive either a Distinguished Conduct Medal or VC. John Kirkpatrick was a savior to everyone in World War I, in the Gallipoli Campaign.

Stephen Gibson

South Shields School