

**FOR THE FALLEN**

**REHEARSAL DRAFT 24 AUGUST 2016**

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From the original letters, diaries, photographs and artefacts from WWI brought  
to the Chester Grosvenor Museum's WWI Roadshow events;  
and with the peerless research assistance of Grosvenor Museum Roadshow  
Volunteer, Nigel Meyrick.

## INTROIT: OPENING THE BOX

*A room of boxes and old suitcases. Slowly, as the SOUNDSCAPE 1: Opening the Box begins, the CHORUS moves through the space and then slowly they open the boxes, the suitcases. Pieces of paper, diaries, letters and photographs are lifted from the boxes. Drifts of old foxed paper.*

*We see slowly appearing as the crowd lift the papers high into the air and they move like a slowmotion swirl of papers caught in the wind.*

### CHORUS

In attics, and boxes  
Underneath beds and tucked into books in long forgotten  
bookcases, there are pieces of lives  
Fond remembrances inked onto foxed papers.  
Recollections carefully recorded in diaries  
Faded photographs pasted into crumbling albums  
Copperplate handwriting.  
Names and ages,  
Addresses.  
Postcards and letters and forms.  
Let the dust fall away.  
Let the dust fall away.  
Here is a button from a uniform,  
A medal  
A sweetheart locket  
A ribbon  
A silver spoon  
A brass buckle and a cap badge  
And a shell case and a bullet.  
A death penny.

Here is an embroidered postcard,  
Stitched with silken sprays of pink roses and purple pansies  
Daisies and tiny blue forget-me-nots  
Forget-me-not.  
And here is the torn fragment of the hymn found in your  
pocket.  
Forget-me-not.  
Commemoration in fragments of paper,  
Carefully kept,  
Like priceless treasures  
Like sacred relics  
Because they were yours

Forget-me-not  
Let the dust fall away.  
Let the dust fall away.  
Let the dust fall away.

*The choir begin with long dissonant notes, sliding into...*

## **REQUIEM AETERNAM**

CHOIR                      Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine  
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

*More dissonant notes and then...*

Let the dust fall away  
Requiem aeternam dona defunctis, Domine.  
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

## **OATH**

*They lift the oaths up and begin to read:*

VOICES                      The Oath

VOICES	I	Wilfred Hulse
	<i>(names divided out)</i>	John Tudor
	Robert Wrench	Harry Jacks
	Frank Walker	John Brookes
	Ernest Tinkler	Albert Bowers
	William Hughes	Fred Threadgold
	Harry Lloyd	Charles Dean
	George Evans	William Molloy
	Charles Shepherd	Edward Molloy
	Arthur Bentley	James Brown
	Joseph Shepherd	George Wickham
	William Brown	John Brookes
	James Wheeler	Tom Sankey
	Bertie Crossley	Eli Astbury
	Frank Crossley	Joseph Procter
	Albert Darlington	Henry Landley
	Reginald Peers	Richard Coke
	John Hulme	John Hickson
	Edward Leftbridge	Richard Gribbin
	Abraham Street	William Dickenson
	Thomas Kendrick	William Morrey
	Joseph Kirkham	
	John Robinson	

swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true  
Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs,  
and Successors,

and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully  
defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, In person,  
Crown, and Dignity against all enemies,

and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His  
Heirs, and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set  
over me.

So help me God.

### **SONG: TIPPERARY / PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES**

VOICES                      And then they get onto packed trains to travel to camps  
and barracks to learn how to use bayonets and rifles, and  
then they go to places we've never heard of.

*A lively WW1 song... and marching and drilling.*

CHORUS                      It's a long way to Tipperary!  
It's a long way to go

CHOIR                        Pack up your troubles in old kit bag  
And smile etc.

*They look at more papers and lift out a diary*

### **BERTIE CROSSLEY'S DIARY 1**

VOICES                      Bertie Crossley's Diary, March 1917

VOICE                        Joined 21 March 1917. Moved under canvas March 25th.  
Weather fine rather windy. Pals rotten and not too much  
food. One day during week orderly, one day fatigue work  
remainder usual parades. 29th Instead of Church Parade  
we had a lecture from Serg Major which was a very good  
one. May 10th inoculated and had forty-eight hours off  
duty. May 11 it rained nearly all day and the rain came in  
all over the tents. This wasn't the first wet day since  
coming under canvas. One night during week went to  
concert in YMCA which was very good. Remainder of week  
usual parades and were drilled hard and long hours.

## **REQUIEM REPRISE 1**

CHOIR                      Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine  
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Let the dust fall away  
Requiem aeternam dona defunctis, Domine.  
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

## **POSTCARDS & LETTERS**

VOICES                      The things they sent back.

VOICE                      The one-way conversations of letters and postcards.

VOICE                      The photographs.

VOICES                      Young faces, neat clean uniforms, the orderly lines of men,  
smiling, smoking, leaning on one another in soft sepia  
photographs.

VOICES                      And scraps of fragile lined paper folded into tiny envelopes

VOICE                      And two pressed daisies fall from between the pages of a  
letter

VOICE                      Daisies from the parapet in the trench

VOICE                      And cards of white lace embroidered with flowers and  
words from far away

VOICE                      je t'aime

VOICE                      Sweet Remembrance

VOICE                      To my dearest

VOICE                      Dinna Forget!

VOICE                      Stitched daisies and embroidered sprigs of tiny blue  
forget-me-nots

VOICE                      Cornflowers

VOICE                      Yellow blossom

VOICE                      Purple pansies and pink roses

VOICE                      A moon

VOICE	A horseshoe
VOICE	A sailing ship
VOICE	A tree of red and blue parrots
VOICE	A church
VOICE	A lace fan
VOICE	A Company Flag and the red white and blue
VOICES	Anything but the duckboards and the rain and the mud and the shells and the dying and the wet boredom of waiting.
VOICE	Pencil handwriting
VOICE	Careful ink
VOICE 2	To my dear wife Nell
FRANK	Dear Father, Mother and all
JACK	Dear wife
WALLIE	My own dearest wife
ALBERT (BOWERS) <sup>1</sup>	Just a line to let you know I am in the best of health.
FRANK	Many thanks for [the] parcel of socks received a few days since. Sorry I have not had a chance to write before, but you must be satisfied with a field postcard now and again, especially at such busy times.
JACK	I am in the pink
WALLIE	Please accept my very best and most sincere good wishes for a happy Birthday
FRANK	No doubt you will know that we have been in the thick of it and have come out of it rather lucky and with flying colours.
ALBERT	We are having some very stormy weather at present.

<sup>1</sup> NESTON NL01

JACK	hoping you are the same
WALLIE	and very many happier reruns of the day, which I trust to spend with you.
FRANK	At present we are...
VOICES	Censored!
FRANK	I cannot say much about it as I will be getting in the censor's bad books.
ALBERT	Hoping you are in the best of health
JACK	will write tomorrow all being well
WALLIE	From your ever true loving and devoted Husband, Wallie
FRANK	Oh by the way, will you send in the next parcel a tin of health salts and one of Lunts patent loaves, you know; one of those that last a long time.
ALBERT	With love from Albert
JACK	Give my love to all
FRANK	Fred is quite well, also Swifty. I haven't heard anything of Jo Long but I suppose he will soon be on his way out here. Well I've haven't much news so must close. Hoping all are quite well
JACK	from your husband Jack
FRANK	I remain, Your loving son and brother, Frank
VOICE 3	From your ever true loving and devoted husband

### **REQUIEM REPRISE 2**

CHOIR	Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine Et lux perpetua luceat eis.
	Let the dust fall away Requiem aeternam dona defunctis, Domine. Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

### **BERTIE CROSSLEY'S DIARY 2**

VOICES	Bertie Crossley's Diary, May 1917
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VOICE May 12<sup>th</sup> it rained all night and the rain came through all over. May 16<sup>th</sup> we went to Brown Moss, which is a very pretty place. At night I went to the pictures for an hour and then came to camp. May 18<sup>th</sup> the officers complimented our company for its smartness in arms drill. Weather still dull and camp like a mud hole. May 19<sup>th</sup> we were served out with full equipment and spent most of weekend in cleaning it. Sunday Church parade as usual. May 20 inoculated for second time weather still wet. Put in pass for weekend leave. Had a good meal, one of the very few. Weekend pass refused. May 22 the camp is drying up a bit. Saturday I washed tent boards as usual, and paraded as usual until twelve, and then we had an equipment inspection. Whit Sunday, it rained nearly all day.

### **PIE JESU (ACCORDIAN)**

#### **NURSES**

VOICES	The nurses
VOICE	The Handbook For Hospital Sisters, By Florence S. Lees
VOICE	Every woman applying for admission should be required to fill up the form of application supplied to her by the superintendent of the hospital.
VOICE	Should this and the references given be satisfactory, the superintendent will appoint a day and hour for a preliminary examination.
VOICE	After admission, every probationer should,
VOICE	if possible,
VOICE	be placed in a surgical ward.
VOICE	Here she should be employed in making the beds, and in the commonest and severest ward duties;
VOICES	spare moments should be devoted to the cutting out and making of bandages, lining of splints and the like.
VOICE	In the case of disobedience or hopeless stupidity, the probationer should be reported by the sister to the matron or the superintendent.



VOICES                      Every trained English Nurse knows that all things can be done for a patient “decently and in order”

### **THE NURSES' HYMN**

O Father, by whose servants  
Our Corps was built of old;  
Whose hand hath crowned her children  
With blessings manifold;  
The days of old have dowered us  
With gifts beyond all praise;  
Our father make us faithful,  
To serving the coming days.

### **BERTIE CROSSLEY'S DIARY 3**

VOICES                      Bertie Crossley's Diary, April 1918

VOICE                      Monday 8 April, we fell in at 6.30pm and moved off for the station. We boarded the train at Yarmouth at 8.30pm and arrived at Folkstone at 3am. We were put in billets until 8am when we had breakfast (a good one). We embarked at about 2pm and arrived at Boulogne about 4pm. After waiting a short while we were taken in motor transports to a rest camp about 20 miles away. The ride from Boulogne to the base was awful, shook our insides out almost. After waiting about with full packs on we were given 2 blankets each and put in tents 16 per tent. Next morning we were issued with an oil-sheet. Weather fair. Wednesday fine. Breakfast 6am. We were issued with iron rations and got ready to go up the line.

VOICE                      We boarded a train at Etaples at 5pm, well cattle trucks they were. We arrived at a little village at 9am next day. After marching for about 15 miles without having had anything to eat we came to a place where the Manchesters were stationed. We were put 16 men in each truck during our journey but were held up on account of an air raid.

### **SONG: HUSH HERE COME A WHIZZ BANG / I WANT TO GO HOME**

### **NURSES 2**

VOICE                      A sister, after seeing that the beds are properly made and aired, and giving out fresh sheets and draw sheets where required, and noticing that the wards are properly ventilated, should pay careful attention to seeing that all

nuisances are removed, and the wards, closets, and lavatory swept.

VOICE                    The sister must take especial care that urinal bottles are washed with warm water and soda every morning, and kept bright and clean.

VOICE                    Whatever passes from a patient should be at once removed, and the vessel itself rinsed with cold water. (83)

VOICE 1                I hereby certify that I have this day examined

VOICE 2                Miss Ellen Nixon

VOICE 3                Miss Alice Robertson

VOICE 4                Miss Mary Watkin

VOICE 1                and find her to be in a fit state of health to undertake nursing duties in a military hospital abroad.  
Signature, F.S. Genney, 25<sup>th</sup> November 1916

VOICE 2                And out she goes to the vast camp that is Number 24 General Hospital, Etaples.

**PIE JESU WITH FLUTE**  
**INTO**  
**DIES IRAE WITH SAXOPHONE**

### **BERTIE CROSSLEY'S DIARY**

VOICES                Bertie Crossley's Diary, 1918

VOICE                    2 companies were in our billet which was an old barn, and we couldn't move. I slept in an old cart in the yard. We did not get a meal for 46 hours. Next morning we got up at 2.30am and the division moved to another place as the French were taking over that part of the line. The day was bitter cold, and we camped in a wood that night. Monday 15<sup>th</sup>, got ready to go up the line, which was about 15 kilometres away.

VOICE                    After some excitement we arrived there at about 4pm. A shell burst in the road and killed an officer and wounded 15 men in company. Tuesday, heavy shellfire all night.

VOICE                    Tuesday night our platoon went digging trenches just in front of our front line. Wednesday April 17 raining all day

at night was on ration fatigue taking rations & water up to the front line. Food not very good, Heavy shellfire all day.

VOICE                      Friday 19<sup>th</sup> weather cold and snow. We moved into another trench, which was knee deep in mud. He shelled us heavily all day & night.

VOICE                      Friday & Saturday in reserve. Had a bath with about a pint of water. Shell dropped on hut.

### **REQUIEM WITH CLARINET**

### **NURSES 3**

VOICE                      Strange really, that while the soldiers are busy killing, the nurses are busy healing. And while they wait for the casualties, they are busy folding clean blankets and scrubbing out the tent wards, and making up the trestle beds, waiting for the next big push.

VOICES                    And they all thought the war would be short.

VOICE                    And when each Big Push comes, each ward is a battlefield where nurses and surgeons and men all fight for lives: a battlefield of bandages and dressings and linen and blood filled bedpans and shrapnel and x rays and compresses and splints and amputations and tincture of iodine and brandy for anaesthetic when supplies run low, and the enemy is gas gangrene and frostbite. The enemy is shrapnel. The enemy is too much blood lost to the boards beneath. The enemy is splintered bone and shell torn flesh and mud caked bullet injuries too deep to clean.

### **SONG: SHADOWS ALL AROUND ME**

### **BERTIE CROSSLEY'S DIARY 4**

VOICES                    Bertie Crossly's Diary, July 1918

VOICE                    Went on working party to frontline at night. Was on gas guard when Jerry started sending over a lot of gas shells. This was my first experience with gas.

VOICE                    We had helmets on for about 6 hours.

VOICE                    We had 5 casualties out of our platoon.

VOICE                    I saw one of our aeroplanes and a balloon brought down.

VOICE	11 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup> July our artillery fairly hammered Jerry.
VOICE	13 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> and 16 <sup>th</sup> wet during our stay in front line.
VOICE	We were stood to from 9.30pm to 4.20am and then had sentry to do during the day, 4 hours on and 2 hours off.
VOICE	He made a bit of a raid on our post 15 <sup>th</sup> but we saw in time.
VOICES	August 1918
VOICE	Had eight days in front line.
VOICE	10 <sup>th</sup> August, we were relieved.
VOICE	He fairly gave us a bumping.
VOICE	We went in reserve to Beaulencourt same day he hit the cookhouse, so we lost our midday meal. No casualties.

*There is a whistle*

VOICE	Aug 23 <sup>rd</sup> we went over the top. We advanced about a kilometre and gained our objectives without many casualties. Our company also took a fair number of prisoners. A lovely barrage was put up for us by our artillery.
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## **DIES IRAE**

*SOUNDTRACK 2: The soundtrack begins to depict distant guns.  
The polythene cloths lift and fall like plumes of distant smoke.*

VOICES	Bertie Crossley's Diary, August 1918
VOICE	We stayed in advance shell holes all day. August 25 <sup>th</sup> we advanced about 6 kilometres and our company took about 30 prisoners.
VOICE	A big attack came off on our front preceded by a five hours bombardment started from in front of Havrincourt Wood.
VOICES	Tanks, cavalry and infantry took part.
CHORUS	DIES irae, dies illa, solvat saeculum in favilla, teste David cum Sibylla.

*Interwoven with:*

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,  
shall heaven and earth in ashes lay,  
as David and the Sybil say.

Oro supplex et acclinis,  
cor contritum quasi cinis:  
gere curam mei finis.

Before You, humbled, Lord, I lie,  
my heart like ashes, crushed and dry,  
assist me when I die.

Lacrimosa dies illa,  
Solvat saeculum in favillo.

VOICES

The break-the-news letters

VOICE

It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has been  
received from the War office notifying the death of:

Name.....

The report is to the effect that he died of wounds sustained  
in action.

By His Majesty's command I am to forward the enclosed  
message of sympathy from Their Gracious Majesties the  
King and Queen. I am at the same time to express the  
regret of the Army Council at the soldier's death in his  
Country's service.

I am, sir, your obedient servant.

### **THE BREAK-THE-NEWS LETTERS**

VOICE

And in the Casualty Clearing Stations, between the  
incoming chaos of the wounded and the dying and the air  
raids and the shelling, the nurses write letters.

VOICE

I have great regret in writing to confirm the sad news of  
the death of your husband, Gunner R. Peers.

VOICE

He was so severely wounded in the chest and abdomen  
that there was no chance of his recovery.

VOICE

Everything possible was done for him, and he did not  
suffer much pain.

VOICE                    He was conscious until a few hours before the end.

VOICE                    I don't think he realised how serious his condition was.

VOICE                    He did not leave any message before the end.

VOICE                    With sincere sympathy.

VOICE                    And still they come, the clay-caked casualties, lifted from trains and barges, driven in by fleets of ambulances and carried in on blood-soaked stretchers. Still they come. More than the doctors and the nurses can help, and sometimes they choose who will die and who will not.

VOICES                  And like midwives,

VOICE                    Ellen Nixon

VOICE                    and Alice Robertson

VOICE                    and Mary Watkin

VOICES                  ease them through from one world to the next.

### **REQUIEM REPRISE**

### **THE THINGS THEY SENT BACK**

VOICE                    Gunner Thomas Nicholson Wright, died 20th October 1917 at Casualty Clearing Station number 47.

VOICE                    63721 Gunner Reginald Peers, died of wounds, 29th November 1917 at Casualty Clearing Station number 47. Aged 25.

VOICE                    13123, Private Albert Darlington, killed in action, 19 May 1916. Aged 18.

VOICES                  The things that were sent back.

VOICE                    A Bible

VOICE                    A packet of letters

VOICE                    A pair of socks

VOICE                    A pair of spectacles

VOICE	A Vest Pocket Camera
VOICE	A last will and testament
VOICE	Dear mother, There are not many faces left now, Reginald Peers is in the second relief now, there's only Jonny, Phil and myself left in the 1st. I am alright, no such luck for a Blighty when I got hit; Brodie got wounded the other day. Your son, Thomas.
VOICE	Dear Mrs Peers, I expect you will have heard by know the sad news for which I prepared you in the last letter, your husband passed away last night, and I buried him this morning. He told me he had a clear conscience and only hoped his illness was not causing you any worry. He received Holy Communion before he died. With sincere sympathy, yours truly, Alfred G. Harris, Chaplin
VOICE	Dear Mrs Peers, The deceased, Gunner Reginald Peers, was a good and lovable lad, who always did his work thoroughly well, the battery has lost a good soldier.
VOICE	Dear Mrs Darlington, I enclose the fragment of paper found in your son's uniform pocket after his death. He had copied out the words of a hymn...

**ALBERT DARLINGTON'S HYMN**

Guide me, oh my heavenly father,  
By thine arms of mighty love,  
Guide me, guide me, lead me, teach me,  
Till I reach thy throne above.

Lead me, lead me, gracious father,  
Lest my feeble steps should slide,  
Take me by the hand and lead me  
Till I reach my father's side.

Lead me, teach me, tender father,  
Lead, oh lead me till I die,  
And when this short life is ended,  
Lead, oh lead me to the sky.

**PIE JESU - ALL VOICES – CHOIR AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

ALL	Pie Iesu Domine, dona eis requiem. Amen.
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ALL Lord, have mercy, Jesus blest, grant them all Your Light and Rest. Amen.

SOLO VOICE Pie Iesu Domine, dona eis requiem.

### **BERTIE CROSSLEY'S DIARY**

VOICE August 24 1918, we stayed in advance shell holes all day. August 25<sup>th</sup> we advanced about 6 kilometres and our company took about 30 prisoners. A big attack came off on our front preceded by a five hours bombardment they started from about a kilometre in front of Havrincourt Wood. Tanks, cavalry and infantry took part and weather fine after heavy rain during night.

VOICE We moved to frontline where we went over. We advanced about 3 kilometres gaining all objectives, also 300 prisoners and some field guns and horses. We were complimented on our success by almost everyone.

VOICES October 1918

VOICE Morning of October 7<sup>th</sup> we moved up to front line passed through *Indecipherable place?* (Nigel?) and spent night.

VOICE 8<sup>th</sup> continued our journey but Jerry was retiring faster than we could keep up.

VOICE We passed scores of captured guns and thousands of prisoners. Weather cold, but dry.

VOICE 10<sup>th</sup> October, we put up in a wood for the night and went on next morning.

VOICE 11<sup>th</sup> we came to a village called Fontaine au Pere. This place was not knocked about much.

VOICE We moved forward the following day and put up at a farm where we remained four days. We were quite close to the line and we could hear the machine guns fire quite plainly.

VOICE 16<sup>th</sup> wet cold.

VOICE 17<sup>th</sup> same.

VOICE 18<sup>th</sup> we went in the line. Our company was in Support.



VOICE 19<sup>th</sup> wet cold. We stayed in a drain during the day. At night ,11pm, we assembled in our places ready for going over at 3am next morning. It absolutely poured down all the time. We were drenched to the skin and no shelter at all.

VOICE The barrage opened at 2am and we went over at 3am. We had advanced about two kilometres when I got hit.

VOICE I arrived in England 28<sup>th</sup> October, and in Liverpool on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1918.

VOICES Discharged in Liverpool, 13 June 1919.

### **NUNC DIMITUS: FALL INTO SLEEP**

VOICES For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return  
 And like photographs undeveloping,  
 Like knitted sleeves unravelling  
 Like letters unwriting themselves  
 Like clocks running backwards  
 Like flowers furling back into buds  
 And the memory, The living connection  
 Fades away, And becomes history  
 And passes into the dusk of things that have passed  
 And falls into endless sleep,  
 Falls into forever,  
 Falling endlessly to stillness in the deep, dark earth,  
 As softly as a fall of poppies.

CHORUS Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace  
 according to thy word.  
 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,  
 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;  
 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people  
 Israel.

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum  
 tuum in pace:  
 We fade into history  
 We fall into darkness  
 We fall into sleep.

*A fall of poppies.  
 Everything fades to silence.*