

pilot theatre

slung  
low

york theatre  
royal



# BLOOD+CHOCOLATE

A citywide adventure through the streets of York



written by Mike Kenny and directed by Alan Lane

Education Resource Pack

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# Introduction

It started with a tin. Or rather several tins. The tins of chocolate which were sent from the firm of Rowntree to every serving soldier in the First World War.

Marcus Romer, artistic director at Pilot Theatre and Sophie Jewitt at York Cocoa House both, unbeknown to the other, became fascinated by the story of these gifts of chocolate and what became of the men and women who were sent them.

Playwright, Mike Kenny, came on board and began to research the war and its impact on York and on the workers at Rowntrees in particular. Alan Lane at Slung Low joined in and began to visualise the streets full of people and the stories of men and women in wartime playing out between the historical buildings of York.

The community cast of 100's arrived, then the costume makers and the choir. The professional actors joined in and the piece began to take shape.

These resources were brought together to give school and college students an insight into the historical background to Blood + Chocolate and to signpost you to further resources about how the show was created.

Watch out for regular updates and a whole range of forthcoming digital resources about how the production was created at [www.pilot-theatre.com](http://www.pilot-theatre.com)



click on the link to  
watch the video  
**Factory to Front**

# About the Production

**BLOOD + CHOCOLATE**    **Written by Mike Kenny**  
**Directed by Alan Lane**    **Designed by Anna Gooch**

**PRODUCTION DATES:** 3 - 20 October 2013 @ 7 pm (not Mondays)

**LOCATION:** The City of York (Starting from York Theatre Royal)

Three of the region's most dynamic theatre companies, Pilot Theatre , Slung Low and York Theatre Royal team up for the first time to take audiences on an epic journey through the streets of York as they present the ambitious and visually exciting promenade production **Blood + Chocolate** from the 3-20 October.

The large scale professional and community production will tell the inspiring stories of the workers and owners of York's chocolate factories during the First World War alongside those of the young men involved in the terrible conflict.

During the Christmas of 1914 the Lord Mayor of York sent out a chocolate tin, designed and made at the Rowntree's factory, to every soldier from York who fought at the front.

As news came of the young men who would never return home the women of the city stepped into the jobs at the factories and the landscape of the city changed forever as its people struggled to reconcile beliefs of conscientious objection against family loyalties.

Bringing the modern city of York alive the production will give audiences a unique experience as they follow the story through the city's streets as well as listen in via headphones to the characters' intimate conversations.

Directed by Slung Low's Artistic Director Alan Lane and written by Olivier Award winning playwright Mike Kenny, author of *The Railway Children* and the *York Mystery Plays 2012*, **Blood + Chocolate** will feature a cast of 180, made up of professional and community actors from the city and the region.

Besides its large cast, **Blood + Chocolate** will also feature up to 600 further community volunteers across all departments including costume making, stage management, a full choir, and photographers who will be documenting the process from beginning to end.

**Blood + Chocolate** will be performed in the City of York from 3 to 20 October 2013. For more information and to book tickets, priced £18, concessions available, please call York Theatre Royal Box Office on **01904 623568** or visit [www.yorktheatreroyal.co.uk](http://www.yorktheatreroyal.co.uk)

Go to [www.pilot-theatre.com](http://www.pilot-theatre.com) for show photos, interviews and a whole range of digital resources.

# York and the outbreak of the First World War

## 1914: World News

28th June assassination of Archduke Ferdinand.

28th July Austro-Hungary declares war on Serbia.

30th July German army mobilised.

1st August Germany declares war on Russia and France mobilised her army.

4th August Britain declares war on Germany



Recruitment posters on a fence in Bootham, York



## 1914: York

By Aug 1st panic buying had emptied the shelves of many York grocers.

5th Aug York papers announce "WAR DECLARED ON GERMANY" it is the end of the August bank holiday weekend, one of the few holidays that workers got.

1st East Yorkshire Regiment sets off for Cottingham singing "The Army of to-day is all right".

3rd and 4th West Yorkshires recalled from Wales to Fulford Barracks, Scots Greys also stationed there.

200 naval reserves gather and depart from York Railway Station.

York becomes crowded with service personnel. Horses commandeered from drivers, farmers etc.

8th Aug Kitchener's "Your Country Needs You" appears in York newspaper for the first time. Calling for volunteers aged 19 - 30.

Most of the 100s of men queuing at the 2 recruiting stations turn out to be from outside York's boundaries.

York is one of the hardest places to recruit from in the country. Various financial incentives are offered from employers. Rowntrees state that families of enlisted employees will be looked after until the end of the year, pension contributions paid and jobs kept open for member of the TA and Reservists.



Idea for drama



It is the bank holiday, Aug 1914. Your family are having a picnic, who knows whether there will be a war? What thoughts go through each family member's mind?

# The War continues....

<p><b>1914: World News</b></p> <p>Soldiers and sailors from Britain and the British Empire are deployed, mainly in Europe, from now until the end of the war in 1918</p> <p>The First battles of the Frontiers and Battles of the Western Front take place around the German Borders with France and Belgium.</p> <p>August: Mulhouse is captured by the French and later recaptured by the Germans</p> <p>12th August Great Britain and France declare war on Austria-Hungary.</p>	<p><b>1914: York</b></p> <p>21st September - Stoker Petty Officer George F. Banks, born in Lord Mayor's Walk, killed on active service.</p> <p>Height and chest measurement of recruits dropped from 5' 6" 36 ins to 5' 5" 'with proportionate chest measurements' - recruitment in York begins to increase.</p> <p>Anyone of German birth is rounded up and put in York Castle. In September, a concentration camp is built at Leeman Road for enemy aliens and prisoners of war. Local people throw food and gifts over the fence to them.</p> <p>October - the Archbishop makes a plea for soldiers in the garrison to keep their hands off the local girls and the booze. The licensing magistrates announce pubs etc will close at 9pm and not re-open until 6am.</p> <p>The Friends Ambulance Unit is founded.</p>
<p><b>1915</b></p> <p>January 19th The first Zeppelin raid on Britain took place</p> <p>February 19th Britain bombarded Turkish forts in the <u>Dardanelles</u></p> <p>April 25th Allied troops landed in <u>Gallipoli</u></p> <p>May 7th The "<u>Lusitania</u>" was sunk by a German U-boat</p> <p>May 23rd Italy declared war on Germany and Austria</p> <p>August 5th The Germans captured Warsaw from the Russians</p> <p>December 19th The Allies started the evacuation of <u>Gallipoli</u> (with thanks to the History Learning Site)</p>	<p><b>1915</b></p> <p>All over the country, anti-German feeling was running high and businesses run by people with even the slightest hint of German heritage were attacked.</p> <p>In York, shop-keepers with German sounding names wrote to the paper to reassure the public that they were not German, to prevent attacks on their businesses.</p> <p>Discussions about whether there should or not be conscription became passionate on both sides.</p> <p>The MP for York, Arnold Rowntree, received severe criticism in the letters pages of the local paper for his anti-war stance.</p> <p>By May 1915 750 Rowntree workers have signed up to join the Armed Forces.</p> <p>Sergeant T.J. Williams writes from the Front that his life has been saved by a Rowntree's Elect cocoa tin in his pack stopping a bullet.</p>
<p><b>Point for Discussion</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p>	<p><b>Conscription or volunteering?</b></p> <p>We don't have conscription in the UK, but in other countries, such as Israel and Russia, it still exists. Which do you think is the better system?</p>

# The War continues....

<p><b>1916: World News</b></p> <p>In Britain, conscription is introduced (the act allows for exemption on conscientious grounds)</p> <p>Battle of the Somme: Lasts from July to November</p> <p>December: David Lloyd George is elected British Prime Minister</p>	<p><b>1916 York</b></p> <p>Conscientious Objectors - Arnold Rowntree is MP for York and vociferously against the conscription bill - he is described as one of 'these 36 paltry friends of Germany' "Slacker" - commonly used term for those who hadn't enlisted.</p> <p>As well as Quakers, the Independent Labour Party in York opposes conscription (and the war in general) until The Armistice. (Parliamentary Labour Party votes for conscription).</p> <p>At the first tribunal in Jan 1916, 70% of CO applications were refused. Applicants included a teacher, a land agent and wood yard labourer at 'a cocoa works'.</p> <p>5th Feb 1916 'Two White Feathers' article in Herald names a John J Wilson as one who refuses to fight and to whom feathers had been sent.</p> <p>May 2, 1916 Zeppelin raid on York. 10.30pm. In 10 mins 18 bombs are dropped, destroying houses, killing 9 people and injuring 40 more.</p> <p>May 1916 Lawrence Rowntree, the grandson of Joseph Rowntree enlists in the army and sees action at the Front. In September he is involved in the first ever tank offensive.</p>
<p><b>1917</b></p> <p>The War continues on the Western and Eastern Fronts</p> <p>In Britain Food shortages are made worse by the German U-boat blockade</p>	<p><b>1917</b></p> <p>The York Food Committee was set up and the campaign to Eat Less Bread got underway.</p> <p>A lack of sugar affected chocolate production at Rowntrees and workers were laid off.</p> <p>A Communal Kitchen was set up in Clarence Street by the Educational Settlement.</p> <p>25th November, Lawrence Rowntree killed at the Ypres Salient.</p>
<p><b>1918</b></p> <p>An influenza epidemic</p> <p>11th November The Armistice</p>	<p><b>1918</b></p> <p>Percy Rosewarne was the last CO to go before the Tribunal in York. He worked for the NER and was an 'absolutist' - ie he would not accept any service that contributed to the war effort. He served a prison sentence.</p> <p>Bells ring, general partying. Theatres gradually re-open Women who had been employed in munitions and other factories are laid off.</p> <p>Severely disabled and shell-shocked ex-servicemen attempt to re-settle in their communities.</p>

# To Fight or Not to Fight

## Recruitment and Conscientious Objectors in The First World War

When war broke out in 1914, men were encouraged to enlist in the armed forces. It was not compulsory, but there was heavy social pressure to do so.

### Askham Richard Recruitment Notice 1914

It is the duty of every unmarried man of right age, and medically fit, to fight for his country; if he won't do this, he is no man and his neighbours should shun him and the women look down upon him.

To any man in my employ who enlists for active service abroad for the period of the war I will give a bounty of £5, and keep his place open for him on his return.

To any man in my employ who enlists for home defence, I will give a bounty of £2, and keep his place open for him.

W.F. WAILES- FAIRBAIRN

Askham Richard, August 29th, 1914

Askham Richard was a large agricultural estate just outside York. Wailes-Fairburn published further articles encouraging young women to ostracise men who wouldn't join up. Other commentators suggested passing a bill where vagrants (presumably those in the workhouse or in receipt of benefits from the 'guardian of the poor') would be forced to join up.

Those who did not join up were targeted by campaigners, including those who handed out white feathers, a symbol of cowardice. But were objectors cowards? Here are some of the reasons people chose not to fight:

- They were the only bread-winner in the family or worked in a family business, such as a shop or a farm and were worried what would happen if they went away.
- They did not want to fight on religious grounds, Quakers and others chose not to fight for this reason.
- They felt that the war was wrong for political reasons. In York the Independent Labour Party has a strong anti-war stance in 1914.
- Some men were unfairly targeted by the white feather brigade, when in fact they had been prevented from joining up on health grounds.



# War and the Chocolate Factory

## In the Rowntree factory

The numbers of men and women employed at the Rowntree Cocoa Works fell during the War. Men went away to fight or to work in the munitions factories. Women worked in munitions too or took on other jobs, for example in shops, which had been left vacant by conscripted men.

Belgian refugees were employed to fill the gap and men over thirty-five, who hadn't previously been recruited, were encouraged to apply.

## From Dining Block to Hospital

The factory dining block first became a billet for the Yorkshire Regiment and then the Leeds Rifles followed by the Kings' Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. It later became a hospital for wounded soldiers, run by the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU), a Quaker organisation staffed by those who felt in their conscience that they could not fight, but who wanted to help those who had been injured in the war. The FAU also ran dressing stations in France and Belgium and provided first aid at the front.

## At the Front

The famous chocolate tins were sent as a gift by the Lord Mayor, JB Morrell and the High Sheriff, Oscar Rowntree. Morrell was on the board of the Cocoa Works. He was a Quaker and the first non-family member to sit on the board of the Rowntree and Co.

Soldiers who were employees at Rowntrees were also sent tins of Elect Cocoa and other sweets produced at the factory. The grateful recipients wrote letters to the Cocoa Works Magazine (CWM) to say 'thank you.' The letter-writers always signed their names followed by the name of the department they had worked in before they went away to fight.

"I am pleased to see the peppermints are in a tin box this time, as the rats eat their way through the cardboard." Private W. Haxby (Cream)\*

For more letters from the front go to the Letters Home resources (page 12 - 16)

\* 'Cream' was the department where the soft-centres, known as creams, were made. Extract from CWM p. 1922 1917-18

In April 1916 Rowntrees had 2644 male workers and 3341 female workers

By March 1917 they had 1855 male workers and 2655 female workers.

Lawrence Edmund Rowntree, grandson of Joseph Rowntree, who died in action in 1917



# Women and War

Women did not join the army, but their lives were altered dramatically by the war.

For women whose husbands had gone away to war, it was a time of hardship. Army pay was usually less than men had been earning before. Some women had to rely on the separation allowance to feed their families, when it was not enough, they had to swallow their pride and accept the help of the Communal Kitchens.

The death toll of the war left many widowed with children to bring up on their own. For others, the return of an injured or shell-shocked husband was the beginning of a new chapter of hardship in their lives.

For other women there were new opportunities to take jobs which hadn't been open to them before, in factories and shops, offices and farms. The munitions factories (making bombs and bullets) employed thousands of women and often paid better than the other factories, such as the Cocoa Works.

Many women volunteered as nurses and some served in the dressing stations of France and Belgium with the Red Cross, the Order of St. John and the Friends Ambulance Unit. Women in these roles were paving the way for a massive shift in how women were perceived in society.



Girls in the Folk Hall, New Earswick, engaged in craft activities and possibly, first aid classes (notice the girl front left).

'Bombs the whole night, bombs and shells. Under fire from air, land and sea... Sometimes people say, 'Were you frightened?' I say, 'Oh, of course not, I was doing my job... Word came round, you're not to take your men to the dugout, you must stay on the ward with your men. The men were frightened, but I wasn't... I'd only two hands, I couldn't hold more than two.'

Rachel E Cadbury (nee Wilson) Friends Ambulance Unit, remembering the bombardment of Dieppe 1917

Rachel, back row, 3rd from left, in FAU uniform.



## Ideas for drama

Create a character of a woman in the First World War. Think about her life before the war and then how it changes. Create the scene of her first day in a new role: a factory, a hospital, a farm. Has she ever worked before? Or is she very used to a hard day's work?

# Letters Home: Lesson Plan

created by Sophie Woodward, Sophie Herring, Anna Henley and Becky Darley of York University

Link to audio



**Learning Objective:** To learn about letter writing in World War One and to produce your own letter from the front.

Letters have maintained relationships and connections for generations, through the best and worst of times. Even today, to receive a letter in someone's own hand is more special and meaningful than a text or email. In World War One, letters were more important than ever, the few brief lines containing the only information about a loved one a family could expect to hear for months at a time.

- 1) Listen to the letters by the soldiers (and Rowntrees Workers) Williams, Clayton, Groves and Jackson as well as those from Dorothy and Eleanor. Picture the conditions in which these letters would have been written.

**Think About:** What kind of language did they use? What information did they include? What was the tone of the letter? Does anything surprise you? Discuss this with the people sitting next to you.

- 2) If you can, go to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission at [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

The screenshot shows the CWGC website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About Us, Find War Dead, Find a Cemetery, Learning and Resources, News & Events, and Contact Us. Below the navigation bar, there is a large banner image showing a group of soldiers in uniform. To the right of the banner, there is a search bar and a 'GO' button. Below the banner, there is a section for 'Find War Dead' and 'Find a Cemetery'. The 'Find War Dead' section has a form with fields for Surname, Initials, Service, and War, and a 'SEARCH' button. The 'Find a Cemetery' section has a form with a dropdown menu for 'Please select' and a 'SEARCH' button. Below these sections, there is a 'News' section with two articles. The first article is titled 'Commission at the Heart of the Centenary of First World War' and the second is titled 'Gaza War Cemetery Returns to Former Green Glory'. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with a 'Windows Media Player' logo and a link to 'Find out more about the scope of our organisation today by clicking on the links above.'

Find War Dead		Find a Cemetery	
Surname	Initials	Service	War
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Please select <input type="button" value="v"/>	Please select <input type="button" value="v"/>
Advanced Search			<input type="button" value="SEARCH"/>

Type in your surname, (don't worry about your initials or the service). In the war box, select "WW1". Click "Search".

Choose a soldier (if possible from the Yorkshire regiment) and imagine yourself in his boots. Think of a story for them: how old were they? Who might they be writing to?

- 3) Take this Tommy (or, if you haven't been able to use the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, choose one of the people from the letters you heard or from the Letters Home: additional resources pages) and write a letter from the front to home from their perspective.

These letters would have been informal as they were written to loved ones; so think about the language you use and how you structure your work.

Here's an example, using a letter you may have heard earlier:

Decide who you are writing to- this could be a friend or family member

Remember to introduce your letter and say why you are writing.

Include the date\*

Use para-graphs

Dear Miss Huffam,

I wish to write a few lines to thank you for the magazine and postcard which you sent me a week ago. I also wish to thank the Directors for the box of chocolate I received from them. There are one or two chaps from the old firm with me, and I can tell you that the gifts are greatly appreciated. It also proves that we are not forgotten when we are away.

I am pleased to let you know I am in the pink of condition, seeing as I have been in the trenches all winter. I have been out in France nearly going into eight months, and glad to say I have never had a scratch, but I have had some narrow escapes; if you walk into the trenches you never know your luck. In the mornings when men go for water they are risking their lives for the comrades to get their breakfasts. The German snipers are always looking out for our fellows to get a shot at them, but we always give them a hot time by volleys.

I am sorry to tell you that a German shell dropped right on top of B Company and killed seven and wounded 33. It was a sad thing to look at; they were passing their time away in playing cards at the time of the terrible accident... we have a concert every time we come out of the trenches, for the sake of our poor comrades who have gone to rest; the money goes to their graves to keep them in perfect order. Still we are not downhearted, only fighting for what we are sure to win- and that will not be long now.

Well, I hope the firm is doing splendid business. Give my best respects to all.

Yours,  
Matthew

25<sup>th</sup> October, 1915

# Letter Resource 1

In some cases soldiers weren't even allowed to write full letter because of censorship. All families would have received is something like this postcard:

**NOTHING** is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.

[Postage must be prepaid on any letter or post card addressed to the sender of this card.]

---

*I am quite well.*

~~*I have been admitted into hospital*~~

~~*{ sick } and am going on well*~~

~~*{ wounded } and hope to be discharged soon.*~~

~~*I am being sent down to the base.*~~

*{ letter dated } Dec.*

~~*I have received your telegram ,,*~~

~~*{ parcel } ,,*~~

*Letter follows at first opportunity.*

*I have received no letter from you*

*{ lately.*

~~*{ for a long time.*~~

**Signature only** } *Hugh R. Vintell*

**Date** 11. 3. 18

(19. 62) Wt. W1566/P1619. 10,000m. 1/18. E. & S. Ltd. (E2367).

## Letter Resource 2

Mr. Joseph Rowntree's Christmas letter 1914

Dear Mr. Editor

Today the war is the thought uppermost in the minds of all, and we at the Cocoa Works cannot forget that nearly 500 of our men have already joined the forces. Our thoughts and hopes are with them, especially those who are exposed to dangers and hardship abroad. We follow their fortunes with interest and sympathy, and shall welcome them on their return.

Two of those who used to work here – H.S. Wadsworth (Reservist), Melangeur Department, and W. McLellan (Reservist), Gum Department – have sacrificed their lives in fighting for their country, and our hearts go out in warm sympathy to their families and friends.

The Cocoa Works is entertaining guests little dreamt of four months ago. We shall unite in hearty Xmas greetings to the 1,000 men if the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment (Territorials) quartered in the New Dining Room Block, and to the families of Belgian refugees who are the guests of the Cocoa Works employees.

...every Christmas greeting becomes a wish for a truer and more abiding peace than the world has yet known...We believe that it will come – across the Europe of today we look for its coming – and it is with that conviction that we greet one another now.

With cordial thanks to one and all for the help given us in a difficult time, and with best wishes for Xmas and the New Year.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

J. Rowntree

# Letter Resource 3

Extracts from letters from Rowntree employees from the Front to the Cocoa Work Magazine in 1915

Mud! Mud!! Mud!!!

The ground is usually frozen hard in the mornings, but by ten o'clock is it's 9 to 10 inches deep in chalky puddle. The mud is stupendous. You walk about in mud, you march in mud, you wade through mud to your meals, and you have to set men to work with shovels to dig mud off the floors of our huts. The mules and wagons get stuck in the mud, the tyres are pulled off the wheels of the ambulance wagons, and the whole camp is simply one mass of mud from end to end... We are 6 miles from a railway station, 2 miles from a village, 1 mile from a post office and 2 miles from a dry canteen.... I think this is really all the news, just simply mud, mud, mud, from morning till night.

E. Clayton (Offices).

## SIXTY YARDS FROM THE GERMANS

The Germans are only sixty yards away from us, and when they are so close they use bombs, rifle, grenades and trench mortars, and the trenches are not healthy then. However, we do not have such a bad time, and the troops can always be merry. We are quite used to roughing it, and if the Zeps. have blown up all the houses when we get back, we'll be able to live quietly under the earth like a mole.

J. Robinson (Cream)

## GALLIPOLI

There are one or two things that bother you here. First the flies, flies, flies everywhere. Everything is black with them. Every meal you eat a dozen or two, and the drinking water is not very good or very plentiful...

William Walker (Cream)

Sid Batters' grave is just near to the trenches where we are. I have been to see it once or twice. It is well looked after.

W. Munday (Almond Paste)

# Further Resources and Bibliography

A fantastic range of information around this are exists and video resources, images and interviews are being uploaded all the time to the Pilot website, giving a behind the scenes insight how Blood + Chocolate was created.

<http://www.pilot-theatre.com/?idno=1183>

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The Rowntree Society <http://www.rowntreesociety.org.uk>

York Cocoa House <http://www.yorkcocoahouse.co.uk/>

Yorkshire Film Archive <http://yorkshirefilmarchive.com/>

The National Memorial Arboretum <http://www.thenma.org.uk/>

York Libraries and Archives Images Project  
<https://cyc.sdp.sirsiidynix.net.uk/client/yorkimages>

## **Books**

War Comes to York Summer 1914 by David Rubinstein (Quack Books, York 2010.)

York in the Great War 1914-1918 by A.J.Peacock (The York Settlement Trust 1993)

A Question of Conscience by Felicity Goodall (Sutton Publishing 1997)

With thanks to the Borthwick Institute for access to the Cocoa Works Magazine Archive.  
<http://www.york.ac.uk/library/borthwick/>