



WHO WERE THE MARCHERS ?

Creative writing from the children of
Jarrow Cross and St Bede's Schools,
Jarrow, commemorating the eightieth
anniversary of the Jarrow Crusade.

Edited by and with new Jarrow
Crusade poems by Tom Kelly



An acrostic poem

Justice
And
Rights
Reign
On
With

Crusade
Rest
Under
Skies
And
Dream
Everything.

Robbie Smith

St Bede's RC Primary School

Standing Up Together

We might think that everyone in the northeast of England knows about the Jarrow Crusade. Two hundred unemployed men marched 300 miles to London in October 1936 against the plight their town found itself in. It is rightly a source of local pride and a symbol of the fight of ordinary people for justice. We cannot assume that everyone does know about it.

This pamphlet came about because of a schools project to introduce a new generation of school children to the Jarrow Crusade. Children learned about the poverty, overcrowding and malnutrition that the 1930s generation had to face. They found out about the route of the march and differences between affluent market towns, prospering industrial cities and depressed coalfields. They were fascinated by the stories of the marchers, their travels, their lives and the dog that followed them on their way.

They looked at how to organise the food, accommodation, banners, petitions and mail. They then made their own banners and staged their own march. This all helped to make sense of an event that is commemorated in public monuments in their town and its part of their own history. It showed that ordinary people – like them – can make history and that the past is about more than kings and queens. Like the early trade unionists, the suffragettes or the Chartists, the Jarrow marchers were part of a long tradition of ordinary people standing up together to press for their rights and a more just society. This is an important thread in history for us all.

Matt Perry



Working on 'Who Were The Marchers' with Jarrow Schools

Myself, Librarian Catrin Galt and Historian and Author Matt Perry worked with two schools on the Jarrow Crusade 80th Anniversary Project at Jarrow Library during February and March, 2016



My task was to have the children write of how they may have felt seeing their fathers and grandfathers leaving Jarrow to march to London and how the rest of their family responded.

I asked the children to write diary entries, poems and lyrics as if they were in Jarrow in October 1936.

The diary entries begin from October 5th the day the Crusade left Jarrow on their epic journey to London.

Here is selection from the children's work which makes reference to the Crusade and the imagined lives of children at the time in Jarrow. They capture the sadness, uncertainty and pride they felt seeing their fathers and grandfathers marching away from Jarrow.

We all really enjoyed working with the schools and it underlined that we need to remember and tell our children of our history: we look at the past to see the future more clearly.

Tom Kelly

Jarrow Crusade 80th Anniversary Events

In addition to this pamphlet and work in the schools there will be an exhibition at South Shields Museum, Ocean Road on the Crusade and Ellen Wilkinson. It will run from October to February 2017.

A sound booth was set up in Jarrow Library in July which captured the people of Jarrow's feelings on the Crusade. Some of those interviewed had family connections.

On October 5th the Mayor of South Tyneside, Councillor Alan Smith, will hold a celebratory event at Jarrow's Town Hall where this pamphlet will be launched.

St Bede's RC Primary School, Jarrow

Year 4/5 children were invited to be involved, alongside local playwright and poet Tom Kelly, Dr. Matt Perry from Newcastle University and staff from South Tyneside Libraries, in an exciting project to mark the 80th anniversary of the Jarrow Crusade.

The Jarrow Crusade was a significant part of the history of the town and played a major role in shaping how Jarrow is viewed across the world and how the people of Jarrow view themselves today. A variety of approaches were used, including drama and creative writing, to spark the children's interest and imagination and to explore their responses to the Crusade, their heritage and in many cases their own family history. Amazingly, we discovered both Grace and Mrs. Hunt had relatives that marched in the Crusade!

The project included a range of cross-curriculum activities to find out what Jarrow was like in the past, to explain why the Crusade happened, to discover more about who the marchers were and where they lived and to discuss how people responded to it at the time and in the present day. In our final session we marched with our badges and banners through Jarrow, as you can see in the photographs.

See St Bede's RC Primary School, Jarrow website
Jarrow Crusade Project Saint Bede's, Jarrow
<http://www.st-bedesrcjarrow.s-tyneside.sch.uk/year-45-2/>

Dear Diary October 1936

It has been a really hard day in Jarrow. I had to light the fire. First I cleaned yesterday's coal and then put fresh coal on to the grate. I then put some newspapers and lit the fire. I did this so I could put a pot on the fire to make some soup for the family.

I then got the massive tin bath from the backyard so we could have a bath in front of the fire.

Jaydan Scott

Dear Diary, October 1936

I set the fire-without my sister helping. She never helps. I feel tired and I have just been to the toilet in the backyard and its freezing. I had to get the coal from the back yard and my sister was no help.

Its half nine now and I'm going to bed and I can see the bugs coming out the walls. I'll just have to bang on the walls to make them go next door.

6.30 am: I'm helping to make breakfast. And I have to get the coal again. It's raining and I feel devastated.

Jamie Laidler.

Dear Diary October, 1936

Today has been a terrible day because I have had to say good-bye to my dad because he has gone on the Jarrow March but I am really proud of him.

I had to go back home and help to make the dinner. I chopped up some carrots and potatoes, lit the fire and was really sad because my sister did not help.

Isabelle Laidler

Newspaper article

Dog Name Vote

Since the black dog has joined the march they have called him lots of names so the poor dog has no name!

We are going to make a vote to find a name for the dog in Northampton. So if you live there and if you would like to vote you are free to.

Florence Stockdale

Dear Diary - October 5th, 1936

My dad has joined the Jarrow March and I am so upset. I watched my dad leave from Jarrow Town Hall. They are marching to London. There are two hundred men walking three hundred miles. I'm upset and sad but happy for him. In a month I will see my dad again.

Lily Beth Matthews

Dear Diary

It's October 5th 1936 and I'm saying good-bye to my dad because he is setting off on the Jarrow March to London.

As soon as he left I felt really sad and felt lonely and at night I couldn't sleep so I wrote a letter to my dad to see where he was.

October 8th,

I got a reply from my dad. He says he is OK and feeling really tired. I was worried because the weather was really bad.

October 30th

I was just going to bed and my mam gave me a letter from my dad saying he was nearly in London. I was happy because he would be in a shelter and have some food and drink.

Robbie Smith

Dear Diary - 5th October, 1936

Today I helped my mam make the breakfast and then went to the Town Hall to see my dad leave for the Jarrow Crusade. I felt really sad but he left to tell the government that something had to be done for Jarrow.

12th October, 1936

I got a letter from my dad and I was excited. It said he was really tired and, "I am missing you. I can't wait to see you".

Eesha Khalid

October 5th, 1936

My diary:

My dad has not been working for a year but today I am going to see my father leave on the Jarrow Crusade. I have tears running down my face with the thought of him not coming back.

12th October, 1936

So now it has been a week since I have seen my father which makes me feel devastated and emotional.

15th October

I have just received a letter so I opened it with excitement because I knew it might be from my father. This is what he said, "Hello daughter. I am doing just fine so there is no need to worry about me and guess who I have seen on the way? Your aunt Ellie! She gave me a drink and then I went off to Northampton. Bye. Lots of love." Even though I have received a letter I still feel sad and worried.

Kalli Murphy

October 5th, 1936

Today is the worst day of my life because my dad is going to march 300 miles to London. Strangely I feel petrified but proud at the same time. My mam doesn't think that he will ever come back again. She feels devastated, proud and gloomy. Me and mam had a nightmare.

October 16th-the next week

My dad has not returned yet so mam feels like killing herself. Today was even worse than the last day. I want to live with my nana for a whole month since my dad with the other 199 men marched to London.

5th November, 1936

Dad finally comes back from marching for a month.

Joe Kerrigan

October 5th 1936

After helping to make breakfast I went to Jarrow Town Hall to watch my grandfather go on the Jarrow Crusade. I was waving good-bye and tears were dripping down my face. I feel proud because he is trying to tell the government that something should be done with Jarrow to make it a happier place.

October 12th 1936

Today I got a letter from my grandfather telling me where he had been and how he felt. His letter made me burst into tears. I ran downstairs to tell my mam. She was amazed.

November 5th, 1936

Today my grandfather came home by train. It was amazing.

Hannah Faye Wynne

Diary Monday, October 5th, 1936

My granda and dad are leaving our house to go to Jarrow Town Hall.

For the Jarrow march. I am going to miss them. They said you will be fine.

They are walking three hundred miles but it is for a good reason.

I am feeling gloomy but in-between I feel proud of them. For doing it.

October 17th

This is a letter I got today.

Dear child,

You have been a very brave while we have been gone, helping out with chores and cooking.

You are very intelligent so I know you can last a little longer without us.

Love from Dad and Grandad.

Bethanie Fulcher

Jarrow Cross C of E Primary School, Jarrow

Year 5WE: Jarrow Crusade Project

The Jarrow Crusade was a significant part of the history of the town and played a major role in shaping how Jarrow is viewed across the world and how the people of Jarrow view themselves today. Year five have been invited to participate in an exciting project to mark the 80th anniversary of the Jarrow Crusade.

This project will take place for a duration of five weeks, where the children will carry out a range of engaging activities.

This page will be updated on a weekly basis, to show you all of the wonderful things Year five have taken part in, as well as, samples of the excellent work they've produced.

See Jarrow Cross C of E Primary School website
<http://www.jarrowcross.co.uk/year-5we-jarrow-crusade-project/>

Dear diary, October 5th, 1936

Today my dad got up early and ran downstairs to meet his friends in the street. I was the only one awake out of my brothers and sisters. I could not climb out of bed because I was in the middle of my snoring brothers. I rolled around under the covers and I still could not get out. I followed the noise of my dad's footsteps. His loud stomping boots walking towards the door. I got out so I woke my brothers up to see exactly where he was going. I also woke my mam up and told her what I heard. She put on her panicking face on and got her clothes off the rack.

She said to me, "You must wake your brothers and sisters and tell them they must get ready to go to town. And get yourself ready." Then she cried. We managed to get out of the house in time.

All I saw was loads of men walking past, holding up banners, chanting, "Jarrow Crusade, Jarrow Crusade". My dad walked past and blew kisses to us. I wondered if I would see him again.

Dear diary, October, 12th 1936

I have not seen my dad for a week now. I am amazed at how quiet the house is without him. Without my dad it is like taking the 'baa' from a sheep or a bark from a dog. I just hope I will see him again.

Dear diary, October 20th, 1936.

I am so happy because yesterday I received a letter from my dad telling me not to worry about him because he is fine. He also mentioned that he already walked 100 miles. He is getting fed well and in his own words, "I'm getting good grub me".

Katie Robertson

October 5th, 1936

This is the day of the Jarrow Crusade. Today, my dad and grandpa walk all the way to London, the capital of England. I watched my dad walk off with my grandpa behind him. I feel very sad but proud at the same time. Now, I need to do all of the housework in place of my dad. By now he will be a couple of miles from the house.

Nathan Murray

Dear Diary 19 October, 1936

I have just had a letter from my dad.
"Hello I am missing you very much and I want to come home and I won't be long. Just try and wait another few weeks and I should be back.
You still have got your mam so make sure you tell her that I miss her to but nearly there now.
Just need to get to London and get our jobs back.
Ohh I forgot to tell you that half way to London we got these really comfortable boots and when you walk it feels like walking on a new pillow."
In a dream I see my dad resting at the side of the road. I thought that he was asleep and then I got excited because it was nearly time for him to come home.

Olivia Jean Lynn

Dear Diary, Monday October 5th, 1936
It is the morning of the Jarrow Crusade and my dad is packing now. I am scared that my dad might be put in prison by parliament. I wonder if he is coming back. I wonder if he will come back. What if he doesn't? He is confident but I wouldn't count on it.
He has just ran out the door and shouted, "Bye" I ran out but the marchers were gone. I felt so sad and that my dad was GONE.

Lillyella Smith

Dear Diary, 1936, 5th October.
My dad has just left for the march which is two hundred miles. I'm feeling sad, happy and scared. I'm feeling really sad because I won't see him. I'm feeling happy because he's going to get a job. I think he is feeling sad too because he won't see me but happy because he is fighting for jobs.

1936, 12th October. A week has past and I still feel a bit sad because I haven't seen my dad. I think, well I hope, he is missing me too.

Jake Ternent

Dear Diary,
Today my dad left for the march, he's going to London. He told me to look after the house. I was really sad that he left but I'm happy that he's fighting for a job, so we can finally buy food! My mam was really sad when he left as well. I loved having fun with him. I can't believe my dad left me in charge of the house, how am I supposed to look after everyone?
I am the only boy left in the house apart from my granddad but he's too old to look after us. I hope he comes back soon, I really miss him already.

Adam Sutherland

Dear diary, 5th October.

Today is the day I have been thinking about for ages. My dad just left on the Jarrow Crusade. I am mainly angry because if it wasn't for parliament then we wouldn't have to do this. The walk to London is three hundred miles, so I do have my doubts. As the eldest child, I have to do dad's jobs of making the fire, taking the bugs out of the wall and much more. There is a bug on this paper as I am trying to write. In case you are wondering I am doing my job (that used to be dad's) of whacking bugs out of the wall. Sorry, got to go. Bye!

Louise Sharp

October 5, 1936

It is really hard seeing me dad leave. My dad is nervous. I'm scared. If my dad gets hurt or collapses. I feel like everything is going to change. My mam is crying. I can't stand this. Does this have to happen? My dad is leaving noooooooo! This is happening too early. That's all from me.

Niamh Foy

Dear Diary,
I am writing to you to say that I am missing my dad. I am scared in case he gets hurt. I feel happy and sad at the same time. I miss him so much. I MISS HIM SO MUCH.
He has been gone for nearly two weeks. I hope he comes back soon.

Alex Williams

Dear Diary,
I'm so sad because my dad has just left for London. I gave him a good luck charm, a picture of me as a baby. And I gave him a bottle of water so he wouldn't be dry. My grandad gave dad some food to keep him going.
I ran ahead of the marchers and cheered him on. I screamed, "Go dad you can do it".

Caroline Dugdale

Dear Diary,
I am writing to you to inform you that I am feeling extremely emotional that my dad has just gone and everything is different. I miss him already.
I will not see him for a month and it has only been two days and mother was crying last night. I could hear her cry and put a brave face on it but it does not work.

Anna Louise Marshall

Dear Diary, October 5th 1936.

My dad has just left on the Jarrow Crusade and he has left a letter for me.

"My darling Eva,
I am so sorry this has happened so soon after I have lost my job. I am going on a long march to London to try and get a job. I might not see you for some time. So goodbye from your dear father."

After I read this letter I did not know how to feel. I was living in a nightmare. I could not sleep. Wish me luck.

October 19th

I wonder what will happen tomorrow. My father has now been away for two weeks and I'm dreading getting used to living without him. If only he had not lost his job. I am starting to wonder if I will ever see him again. I wish I could have gone with him. My entire life is falling apart. I wonder about all this when I am in the bath (lucky I am the first to go in) because I am the eldest. My mam has received a letter about people who have been injured on the march. My dad is not on the list.

Eva Morley

Dear Diary, October 4th 1936.

Tomorrow my dad and grandfather will be a part of the two hundred men marching to London. I'm proud but scared in case something happens to them. I'm glad my dad and grandfather are doing it to try and bring work to Jarrow. They want to take care of our family, I know it. October 5th 1936. Now it is time for my dad and grandfather to leave, they are getting ready now. We are going to say bye. I'm going to watch them out my window because I cannot face the send-off.

Harry Loughlin

Three song lyrics:

My Dad

*I feel so proud seeing the Jarrow Crusade walking by
There again I don't want him to leave and say good-bye
I wish he was staying, I wish he was by my side
I love you daddy and I shall never tell a lie.*

Alex Williams

One Day On The March

*Marching for the day we will get our way
We're doing this for jobs, some days it's hard
And we could be sad when the weather's bad
We'll stick together I hope it last forever
After what we've been through
We are doing it for him; her and you.*

Elsie Thomas

On the March: The First Day

*We are all walking
There is no talking
Hear our breath blow
There's four weeks to go
And we start to sing
As our boots ring
Now twelve miles have past
We hope that we last.*

Tyler Young

Tom Kelly - Eight Jarrow Crusade Poems

Monument

(Jarrow's MP, Ellen Wilkinson, in the House of Commons, 1936)

Today is mixed with yesterday,

Pathe News becomes flesh and blood,

men with Charlie Chaplin trousers

returning to where they once stood.

*In the Jarrow area there is 72 per cent unemployment,
in Jarrow Town the percentage nearly 80.*

*Jarrow must be made a special case. Jarrow is the victim
of ruthless rationalisation which is being backed by the
Government.*

Uncle Johnny gave me his badge,
I see him on the Edgware Road,
marching in rain-soaked Mackintosh
as my tears stick in me throat.

They presented their petition,
Jarrow's Mayor dropped his heavy chain,
*Wasn't defiance, he told me,
It was a slip I'd do again.*

*Is the President of the Board of Trade aware
that the government's complacency is regarded
throughout the country as an affront to the
national conscience?*

Some shed bitter tears, railed,
*Ya knaa we've been sold down the Thames,
has to be more, can't be just this,
Is this how our story ends?*

On Guy Fawkes they came home by train,
knowing their place, third class single,
they gave them cheap suits and cheers
but their pockets didn't jingle.

*In St Paul's Cathedral there is a memorial to Sir
Christopher Wren, which reads: "If you seek a
monument look around."*

*If the Attorney General wants to see a
monument to the capitalist system that he is so
proud of, I will take him to Jarrow and show it
to him.*

Tom Kelly

Uncle Johnny's

on my screen saver
walking down the Edgware Road,
chiselled cheeks, no smile,
he rarely told a joke.

Now I see him laughing,
gums exposed like salmon.
Auntie Winnie disappears,
free of having to care of her 'Poor Johnny',
vinegar clout clasped to his forehead,
cup of cold milky tea in a skeletal hand.

I see you every day,
the dutiful son you never had,
watching you walking into immortality.

Tom Kelly



Joe Symonds Eating Deprivation

You talked as if giving a speech,
clear as bell, loud.
I was young. Intimidated.
I didn't feel your warmth
lost in a life-time of meetings in church halls and
Parliament. I felt your organisation,
not love until you spoke of Jarrow in the 30's,
deprivation you wished you could have eaten.

Tom Kelly

Paddy Scullion

In your daughter's home,
sometime in the early 70's,
warm, like you.
Your tale neatly and passionately told,
a toby jug propped-up,
beaming as you told your story
for the umpteenth time,
"Jarrow was a prison; all it needed was the walls."
Your love of others' outshining the fire.

Tom Kelly

Jock Hanlon

I hear your Jarrow-Scottish voice
in our street, you lived next door.
Dad said, "That's Jock Hanlon."
A mix of pride and the untouchable,
a film star of hardship, a caring man,
I never spoke to.

Tom Kelly

Alderman Thompson

seemed as if he would float away,
hesitant as a clock running out of battery.
Uncertain, desperate not to offend,
to say the right thing.
The night was cutting in,
I left like the marchers,
not sure what to say or feel.

Tom Kelly

Uncle Johnny's Crusade Suit

"They gave us suits that we all tried to sell to the pawn.
There was so many in Jarrow we had to go to out of the town."

You are on the ferry to Howdon.
With a friend. Maybe two.
The suit is wrapped in brown paper.
A cigarette stuck in your fingers.

Your eyes prowl the Tyne,
looking for something.

Tom Kelly



Design and Artwork by Petér Dixon