

## Resources for further information

Mark Honigsbaum 'Living with Enza: The forgotten story of Britain and the great flu pandemic of 1918' Macmillan London & New York 2009

Laura Spinney 'Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and how it changed the world' Vintage (Penguin Random House) London 2018

(both available at Wolverhampton Library)

Richard Collier 'The Plague of the Spanish Lady' first published 1974 – stories of individuals' experience drawn from letters written to the author (these letters are now stored at the National Archives) Available on request from Wolverhampton Library

Online resources:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQ9WX4qVxEo&index=1&list=PLhyKYa0YJ\\_5BZ3gQleTk-PJqlejFf4Rh2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQ9WX4qVxEo&index=1&list=PLhyKYa0YJ_5BZ3gQleTk-PJqlejFf4Rh2) US-centric and simplified, but a useful overview, with a lot of information in six 10-minute episodes. An oddly fascinating mix of apocalyptic text and often hilarious graphics!

also [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyyes\\_IMNoo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyyes_IMNoo) a follow-up episode with minor corrections and more information

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3cswdhh> BBC World Service documentary from January 2018, with vivid accounts from 1918. Presented by John Oxford, who favours the Etaples theory of origin (and interrupted by a news bulletin!)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b6m9k8> BBC 'All in the Mind' episode with an item on mental health issues among flu survivors

[http://influenza.sph.unimelb.edu.au/MOH\\_TOC.php](http://influenza.sph.unimelb.edu.au/MOH_TOC.php) Full text of the GB Chief Medical Officer's report on the pandemic from 1920 (University of Melbourne website)

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/influenza-pandemic-1918> The story of New Zealand and Samoa (contains the only photograph I have ever been able to find of a memorial specific to flu victims)

[https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=2044857](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=2044857) Text of PM Helen Clark's speech including an apology to Samoa

[https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/influenza\\_pandemic\\_africa](https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/influenza_pandemic_africa) The pandemic in Africa

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pandemic-flu> UK pandemic preparedness strategy

TV drama 'Spanish Flu: The Forgotten Fallen', broadcast by the BBC in 2009, following the work of Manchester MOH James Niven during the second wave.

Medical Officer of Health reports for the period are mostly held by the Wellcome Trust ( [wellcomelibrary.org](http://wellcomelibrary.org) ) and many have been digitised and are available online, though the collection is far from complete. Some may also still be held at local archives, which are also a good source of contemporary information in the form of newspapers, council minutes, etc.

I would also suggest that you ask the congregation beforehand – it may well be that people have stories handed down through their families that they would be willing to share.

Susan Readshaw 2019

## Quotes

This duty has arisen as regards influenza among the belligerent forces, both our own and of the enemy, milder cases being treated in the lines; it has arisen among munition workers and other workers engaged in work of urgent national importance; it has arisen on a gigantic scale in connection with the transport during 1918 of many hundreds of thousands of troops to the country and to France from overseas. In each of the cases cited some lives might have been saved, spread of infection diminished, great suffering avoided, if the known sick could have been isolated from the healthy ... but it was necessary to 'carry on', and the relentless needs of warfare justified incurring this risk of spreading infection and the associated creation of a more virulent type of disease or of mixed diseases.

**Chief Medical Officer Arthur Newsholme explains his decision not to take measures to reduce impact of predicted second wave in terms of the duty to 'carry on'**

It's like a film in my head. There were the black horses with the plumes made of ostrich feathers, then the gun carriage with my dad's coffin covered with the union flag. My mother's coffin was in a big glass hearse with Noel's coffin under the driver's seat. My grandma told us my mother had gone to Jesus, but I said, 'Jesus has got plenty of people, I want my mummy

**Ada Darwin, nee Berry, aged 7 in 1918, recalls the loss of her parents and baby brother**

The disease simply had its way. It came like a thief in the night and stole treasure.

**From Chief Medical Officer George Newman's introduction to the 1920 report on the pandemic**

It stalked into camp when the day was damp  
And chilly and cold;  
It crept by the guards  
And murdered my pards  
With a hand that was clammy and bony and cold;  
And its breath was icy and mouldy and dank,  
And it killed so speedy  
And gloatingly greedy  
That it took away men from each company rank.

**'The Flu', Private Josh Lee, US Army 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 1919**

Every number has a name.

**Lyse Doucet, BBC Breakfast, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018 (talking about Yemen and how statistics don't convey human suffering, but applicable to any large-scale event)**

**A doctor at Camp Devens, signing himself only as 'Roy', writes to a friend about his experiences (worth reading in full)**

Camp Devens, Mass.

Surgical Ward No. 16

29 September 1918

My dear Burt,

It is more than likely that you would be interested in the news of this place, for there is a possibility that you will be assigned here for duty, so having a minute between rounds I will try to tell you a little about the situation here as I have seen it in the last week.

As you know, I have not seen much pneumonia in the last few years in Detroit, so when I came here I was somewhat behind in the niceties of the Army way of intricate diagnosis. Also to make it good, I have had for the last week an exacerbation of my old "Ear Rot" as Artie Ogle calls it, and could not use a stethoscope at all, but had to get by on my ability to "spot" 'em thru my general knowledge of pneumonias...

Camp Devens is near Boston, and has about 50,000 men, or did have before this epidemic broke loose. It also has the base hospital for the Division of the Northeast. This epidemic started about four weeks ago, and has developed so rapidly that the camp is demoralized and all ordinary work is held up till it has passed. All assemblages of soldiers taboo. These men start with what appears to be an attack of la grippe or influenza, and when brought to the hospital they very rapidly develop the most viscous type of pneumonia that has ever been seen. Two hours after admission they have the mahogany spots over the cheek bones, and a few hours later you can begin to see the cyanosis extending from their ears and spreading all over the face, until it is hard to distinguish the coloured men from the white. It is only a matter of a few hours then until death comes, and it is simply a struggle for air until they suffocate. It is horrible. One can stand it to see one, two or twenty men die, but to see these poor devils dropping like flies sort of gets on your nerves. We have been averaging about 100 deaths per day, and still keeping it up. There is no doubt in my mind that there is a new mixed infection here, but what I don't know. My total time is taken up hunting rales, rales dry or moist, sibilant or crepitant or any other of the hundred things that one may find in the chest, they all mean but one thing here — pneumonia — and that means in about all cases death.

The normal number of doctors here is about 25 and that has been increased to over 250, all of whom (of course excepting me) have temporary orders — "Return to your proper station on completion of work" — Mine says, "Permanent Duty," but I have been in the Army just long enough to learn that it doesn't always mean what it says. So I don't know what will happen to me at the end of this. We have lost an outrageous number of nurses and doctors, and the little town of Ayer is a sight. It takes special trains to carry away the dead. For several days there were no coffins and the bodies piled up something fierce, we used to go down to the morgue (which is just back of my ward) and look at the boys laid out in long rows. It beats any sight they ever had in France after a battle. An extra long barracks has been vacated for the use of the morgue, and it would make any man sit up and take notice to walk down the long lines of dead soldiers all dressed up and laid out in double rows. We have no relief here; you get up in the morning at 5:30 and work steady till about 9:30 p.m., sleep, then go at it again. Some of the men of course have been here all the time, and they are tired.

If this letter seems somewhat disconnected overlook it, for I have been called away from it a dozen times, the last time just now by the Officer of the Day, who came in to tell me that

they have not as yet found at any of the autopsies any case beyond the red hepatitis stage. It kills them before it gets that far.

I don't wish you any hard luck Old Man, but do wish you were here for a while at least. It's more comfortable when one has a friend about. The men here are all good fellows, but I get so damned sick o' pneumonia that when I eat I want to find some fellow who will not "talk shop" but there ain't none, no how. We eat it, sleep it, and dream it, to say nothing of breathing it 16 hours a day. I would be very grateful indeed if you would drop me a line or two once in a while, and I will promise you that if you ever get into a fix like this, I will do the same for you.

Each man here gets a ward with about 150 beds (mine has 168), and has an Asst. Chief to boss him, and you can imagine what the paper work alone is — fierce — and the Government demands all paper work be kept up in good shape. I have only four day nurses and five night nurses (female) a ward-master, and four orderlies. So you can see that we are busy. I write this in piecemeal fashion. It may be a long time before I can get another letter to you, but will try.

Good-by old Pal,

"God be with you till we meet again"

Keep the Bouells open,

Roy