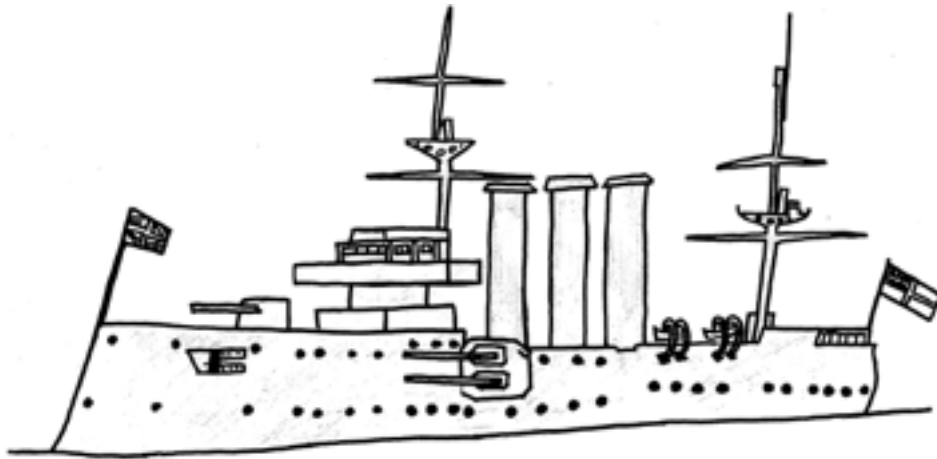




Prayers of Love and Longing:

Performance script and song lyrics from the
Battle of Coronel Commemoration Project 2015

Written by pupils from St. Mary's Middle School and Symondsbury School, Escuela D667 Playas Negras, Coronel Chile and Musiko Musika



Prayers of Love and Longing: A Commemoration of the Battle of Coronel 1st November 1914

The following script was used for the project's performances at St. Mary's Middle School, Puddletown. The script was developed from the research that had been undertaken and from the creative writing work that the pupils carried out. The songs and lyrics were written by the pupils of St. Mary's and Symondsbury schools, Escuela D667 Playas Negras in Coronel, Chile, and Musiko Musika.

This story is based on fact, with some additions in the script from other sources and historical events of the time, and an imaginative interpretation of material by the pupils using their creative writing work, including the letters that they imagined were written by those involved in the battle.

Welcome to St. Mary's Middle School. We are here to share our commemoration of the Battle of Coronel that took place a hundred years ago on All Saints Day, Sunday 1st November 1914.

As dusk progressed to darkness, in the two hours from 7 to 9 o'clock on that fateful evening, a small fleet of four British warships engaged a larger, more powerful fleet of five German warships. As a result of this confrontation, despite incredible bravery, two of the British ships, HMS Good Hope and HMS Monmouth, were sunk with the loss of all hands. It was the worst tragedy of the British Navy for a hundred years.

For this commemoration, it is not our intention to judge the wisdom or speculate on the tactics employed during this encounter. We want to learn from, and show respect for the brave men who lost their lives. It is almost beyond our comprehension to think of the 1600 men who perished on that terrible day, so we are going to commemorate the conflict through the story of one man who served, and lost his life, on HMS Monmouth.

Robert Frank Buckler was born and brought up in Burton Bradstock and was the great, great grand-uncle of two pupils of St. Mary's School.

This story is based on fact with some additions from other sources and historical events of the time.

Telegram Boy (*Enters*) 45 Orange Street: this must be the address. I can see by the mark on the envelope that it's bad news and I won't have to wait for a reply. (*Knocks on the door – Florence enters*)
Begging your pardon, ma'am. I have a telegram for Mrs. Florence Buckler.

Florence Buckler Thank you. (*Boy Exits*)

(*Reading*) **Admiralty, 31st December 1914.**

**This is to certify that, according to the records of this Department,
Robert Frank Buckler, Leading Boatman, Official Number: 159064 lost
his life when HMS Monmouth was sunk on 1st November 1914.
W H Nichols, Accountant General of the Navy**

(To audience) No “regret” or “sad duty to inform you”, just the facts:
Robert won’t be coming home!
I’m not surprised: I knew he’d never leave the sea. I remember his
mother telling me about when he was a Boy 2nd Class when he was
fifteen. *(Moves to meet Ann, Robert’s mother)*

Ann Buckler

You know Robert: he was born near the sea and was always either on it,
in it or within sight or sound of it. If he wasn’t fishing or repairing his
boat or his net, he was swimming!
I remember when he was on HMS Boscawen, when he was only fifteen
years old. Life was harsh, but he loved it and couldn’t wait to go to sea
to fight for his country. I’ve still got one of his letters.

(Reading) **17th November 1891, Mother,**
Just a few lines to tell you that I am well and still safely on board HMS
Boscawen. You may have heard that one of the boy sailors seemed to
lose his mind a few days ago and pushed his mate off the top of the
cliff, whilst on land-leave on Portland.
He said he wanted them to hang him because he couldn’t stand life as
a boy sailor any longer! The punishment is harsh and some boys
struggle with being so far from home.
As for me, the Royal Navy rules the waves and it’s going to be my life.
I can’t wait to use my skills to join a warship in battle. I’m going to be
a hero and make you proud.
Hello to father. Please write soon.
Your loving son, Robert.

Sailing the Seven Seas

Sailing the seven seas, through stormy nights and windy days
Sailing the seven seas, we're heading through the crashing waves
Sailing the seven seas, our ship is strong our crew is brave
Round the Cape Horn, all the way to Chile-O!

Scru-b the decks; it's an awful chore
Scru-b the decks; 'til your hands are sore
Scru-b the decks; for a cleaner war
Round the Cape Horn, all the way to Chile-O!

Stoke the coal, stoke the coal; stoke the boiler with the coal
Stoke the coal, stoke the coal; it's black as night down in this hole
Stoke the coal, stoke the coal; with all your might and all your soul
Round the Cape Horn, all the way to Chile-O!

Raise the flag up high; we'll fly it from the tallest mast
Raise the flag up high; the time for glory's coming fast
Raise the flag up high; we've been victorious in the past
Round the Cape Horn, all the way to Chile-O!

Fi-re the guns; hear the captain shout
Fi-re the guns; watch the water spout
Fi-re the guns; we can knock them out
Round the Cape Horn, all the way to Chile-O!

Drink the rum, drink the rum; drink the rum; the battle's won
Drink the rum, drink the rum; drink the rum; your work is done
Drink the rum, drink the rum; drink the rum until you're numb.
Round the Cape Horn, all the way to Chile-O!

Drink the rum, drink the rum; drink the rum; the battle's won
Drink the rum, drink the rum; drink the rum; your work is done
Drink the rum, drink the rum; drink the rum until you're numb.

Round the Cape Horn,
all the way to Chile-O!

Joseph Buckler	We always knew he'd go to sea. That son of mine had seawater running through his veins and he'd never have been happy working on the land or working in a factory.
Ann Buckler	Yes, you taught him how to respect the power the ever-changing sea ...
Joseph Buckler	... and to handle a boat and catch fish!

Ann Buckler

It's not always been plain sailing though: remember when he was newly married and serving on HMS Peacock and HMS Orlando off the coast of China. He got home-sick then and just wanted to come home to Burton Bradstock. I've still got that letter too.

(reading) **HMS Peacock, Wusang, China**

Dearest Mother,

Just a few lines to tell you that I'm fine and keeping in good health.

The Boxers are an ungodly lot and our guns are bombarding their strongholds before we try to land our forces to send them back to where they belong.

I'm missing the peace and comfort of home and wish I could be fishing off Chesil Beach with father.

I'm looking forward to being back in Dorset with my dearest Florence. Perhaps I could settle down and become a coastguard like her father, and live in West Bay.

Your ever loving son, Robert

Missing Home

I wish I could be at home	(at home)
I'm sick of the crashing waves	(of waves)
The deafening engines roar	(deafening)
I'm tired of this war	(engines)

I'm missing my Dorset home	(my home)
I long for my darling wife	(my wife)
My brother and sister too	(brother)
I'm missing all of you	(sister)

But shipmates are my friends	(my friends)
And glory will be ours	(be ours)
Proud heroes we will be	(heroes)
For bravery at sea	(at sea)

For glory and respect	(respect)
We put our lives at risk	(at risk)
For country and for king	(country)
This battle we must win	(must win)

So raise the flag up high	(up high)
To reach up to the sky	(the sky)
And drink a tot of rum	(drink for)
For victory will come	(victory)

So raise the flag up high
To reach up to the sky
And drink a tot of rum
For victory will come

Florence Buckler Robert did become a coastguard and spent many happy years using his skill and knowledge of the sea to ensure the safety of the shipping around Lyme Bay.
With the threat of war, he was mobilised to serve as a Leading Boatman, Coastguard back in the Royal Navy and we were billeted in Portsmouth. Within two days of Britain's declaration of war on Germany, Robert was proudly on HMS Monmouth, leaving Plymouth and heading for the South Atlantic.
I still have the last letter that he sent me from Valparaiso, Chile.

(Reading) **29th October 1914. My Dearest Florence,**
We are just about to leave Valparaiso, Chile. The weather is perfect now; much better than a few weeks ago as we rounded Cape Horn. We were hunting round there for a supposed German warship. We searched all amongst the islands and inlets for over a week but could not find any trace of her. Later, we heard she had given us the slip.

**We have been joined by HMS Good Hope and, when the armoured cruiser, HMS Defence, makes up our strength to five ships, we will be more than a match for anything the Germans can put up against us. Don't worry, but I expect to be in battle soon. Then, after seeing off the cowardly Germans, we can make sure that the South Pacific is safe for all our merchant shipping. I'll send another letter soon, with news of our coming victory.
Your loving husband, Robert.**

That was the last letter that Robert sent and he lost his life, fighting bravely in the Battle of Coronel, three days later.

The Battle of Coronel

Candombe

They had to go to the battle
The Battle of Coronel
The British Navy fighting
For freedom, home and peace

They lost their lives at sea
They gave their lives
For you and me

The Germans were bigger and stronger
The British were brave and bold
The only chance for victory
They had to get in range

They lost their lives at sea
They gave their lives
For you and me

They were fighting for their survival
But death came thundering on
The smoke of fire and shelling
Too much for these brave men

They lost their lives at sea
They gave their lives
For you and me

They slid beneath the ocean
To rest in a watery grave
They'll never be forgotten
Their memories living on

They lost their lives at sea
They gave their lives
For you and me
For you and me

It is not for us to comment on how or why Robert lost his life along with hundreds of other brave sailors from the Royal Navy. Four men from the newly formed Canadian Navy also lost their lives.

After the battle, Admiral Maximilian von Spee landed in Valparaiso on 3rd November and, being greeted by a jubilant German community, showed his respect for the men who lost their lives. At a reception at the city's German Club, one over-enthusiastic guest proposed the toast, "Damnation to the Royal Navy!" Admiral von Spee declared that neither he nor his men would make such a gesture.

Instead, he raised his glass, "To the memory of a brave and gallant enemy," and then returned to his flagship.

After four years and the loss of millions of more lives, Robert Frank Buckler's family would have read these words in the newspaper:

11th November 1918

The Prime Minister has made the following announcement: The armistice was signed at 5:00am this morning, and hostilities are to cease on all fronts at 11:00am today.

We wonder how his family felt – with so many men and women affected by the war, their emotions must have been a mixture of huge relief and tremendous sadness.

Stop the Battle

Stop the Battle of Coroneil
To give peace on Earth
Losing someone that you love
Is hard to forgive

Think of those who fought for us
Too many people died
Sing our dream of hope and peace
A dream of no more (war).

Stop the Battle of Coroneil
To give peace on Earth
Losing someone that you love
Is hard to forgive

Learn from loss to love again
The future of our world
Love from those who gave their lives
Is in our hopeful hearts

Stop the Battle of Coroneil
To give peace on Earth
Losing someone that you love
Is hard to forgive

The main themes for the commemoration of the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1 are education, youth and remembrance. Here is our letter to the world leaders:

Dear Mr. Cameron, Mr. Obama, Mr. Putin, Mr. Netanyahu, Mr. Mashaal ...

As children, we understand that conflict, argument and difference of opinion exist in our world. We know that people come from different ethnic backgrounds, different religious beliefs and speak different languages.

In all aspects of our young lives, we are taught to respect our differences and resolve any conflict without violence or without trying to force our opinions on others.

Our questions to you are simple.

If we can resolve our problems, why can't you? We are children – you are adults.

...

Our responsibility is to learn from the events and lessons of the past and to develop into compassionate human beings who try to resolve differences and conflict without violence or the use of force. Please help us to do this by setting a good example.

We are all aware of conflict and problems around the world and want to stress that we firmly believe that there is always hope. If we really believe this, we can always make things better. Our story is one of the sea – here is our song of eternal hope:

Every Seagull's Cry

Every seagull's cry you hear
Is singing that a sailor's soul
Is still alive

Our hope is not lost
Our love ever strong
Their souls are alive
In our hearts

Every seagull's cry you hear
Is singing that a sailor's soul
Is still alive

Love, peace and hope
Are our weapons against war
Look to the future
Never look back

Every seagull's cry you hear
Is singing that a sailor's soul
Is still alive

Draw back the clouds
Let the sunshine in
Let the children laugh
Life carries on

Every seagull's cry you hear
Is singing that a sailor's soul
Is still alive

This project has enabled us to link our lives in Dorset today with those of people in Dorset a hundred years ago and with children in Chile – a truly international project.

We are especially proud to have made links between British and Chilean culture and music with Rachel, Mauricio and Laura of Musiko Musika. Our final song tells of the links between Chile and Britain as an example of the links that could be made between all countries in the world.

We imagine a stately condor, soaring down from the Andes to travel over the sea to collect the last prayers of Robert Frank Buckler. It then carries these prayers over the Andes and passes them on to the birds of the Amazonian Rainforest, who take them to the Atlantic coast of Brazil. Migrating seabirds then carry them on to the Jurassic Coast where they call to the relations and descendants to deliver these prayers of hope for the future.

Here is the prayer that we think Robert Frank Buckler may have written:

I have given my life to the sea.

Don't let this be in vain.

I learnt to respect the power of the sea and tried to use it for peace and freedom.

I felt it in my heart and I did my best.

Learn to respect the power of the love and beliefs of all mankind and try to use it for the same end.

Feel it in your heart and do your best.

Prayers of Love and Longing

Can you hear the condor's cry
As he soars high in the mountain air?
He has flown over the ocean
To hear the dying prayer
Of a brave and noble fighting man
Drowned off the coast of Coronel;
He's calling to his loved ones,
His dying prayers to tell.

Prayers of love and longing are borne from coast to coast.
Prayers to the ones who miss him most

He climbs above the Andes tall,
O'er craggy, frozen snow-capped heights
And calls for lowland brethren
To travel day and night
To take the dying wishes on
To Atlantic's far-off stormy shore,
Where they call for sea-born comrades
To send them on once more.

Prayers of love and longing are borne from coast to coast.
Prayers to the ones who miss him most

These oily-feathered cousins stoop
And dive and soar and call and caw,
Swooping for the story
Of this hero of the war;
To take it to his family
On England's far off stony beach,
Who ache and mourn the sadness
Of his body out of reach.

Prayers of love and longing are borne from coast to coast.
Prayers to the ones who miss him most

When storms are raging angrily
And the sea is dark and wild,
Can you hear the seagull crying,
Bringing prayers from the child?
Of Burton Bradstock's Chesil Bank,
Lost far away off Chile's coast?
Prayers of love and longing
To the ones who miss him most.

Prayers of love and longing are borne from coast to coast.
Prayers to the ones who miss him most

End



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