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The War Books Boom in Britain, 1928–1930

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ABSTRACT

Based on a dataset of unparalleled extent containing nearly 1500 books, this article for the first time offers an analysis of the War Books Boom that combines the qualitative and quantitative. The Boom did not simply rise and fall; an early peak in publication in 1928 was followed by a dip in 1929, as huge successes like R.C. Sherriff's *Journey's End* and Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Westen Nichts Neues* (*All Quiet on the Western Front*) dominated the market and were successful in the subsequent two years in a variety of media. The major peak, far exceeding that of 1928, was in 1930, as both publication and commentary trends spiked. The Boom was understood in commentary as such at the time, and the surrounding discourse saw this moment as a battle for the enduring memory of the conflict between the brutal realism of works such as Remarque's, his followers and imitators, and a more conservative focus on courage, fortitude and honour. We enrich the existing scholarly understanding of the cultural history of the War Books Boom, drawing on our dataset and the interwar journalism collected in the British Newspaper Archive, and situating these findings among existing scholarship. Taking as starting points Sherriff's and Remarque's texts, we identify key publication trends, drawing particular attention to the dominance by publication numbers of non-fiction texts, particularly in life-writing, history and regimental history. We conclude by suggesting further lines along which our method might be used to develop the scholarly understanding of this moment.

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It is a critical commonplace that there was a ten-year gap after the First World War in major writing about the conflict before a 'War Books Boom' from circa 1928–1932. However, whether there was such a boom, its shape and duration have not been researched, despite suggestions by Charles Carrington in 1965, Modris Eksteins in 1980, and Rosa Maria Bracco in 1993.¹ If there was a boom, was it a boom in terms of publication numbers, particular genres or forms, particular modes of representation, sales figures or critical esteem? This paper begins to answer these questions by gathering an unparalleled set of data about war books published between 1926 and 1933 and offering empirical support for observations about the War Books Boom, adding to and nuancing this by engaging with interwar journalism to outline critical reception and trends. We do not claim that this is a complete list of war books from those years. However, the nearly

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1500-book extent of this dataset enables us to draw meaningful and clearly substantiated conclusions. There was a demonstrable boom in publication, but there is a first spike of books published at the ten-year anniversary of the Armistice in 1928, a dip in 1929, and a further dramatic spike in 1930. Publishers responded to continuing political tensions in Europe, and the ongoing international successes of iconic works such as Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Westen Nichts Neues* (serial 1928; volume 1929; English translation as *All Quiet on the Western Front* 1929; film 1930) and R.C. Sherriff's *Journey's End* (first performance 1928; West End run 1929; publication 1929; novelization 1930; film 1930), which both inspired and held back other titles. The extent of the data means that routes through it in a single article are arbitrary. With that in mind, here we take Sherriff's and Remarque's texts as starting points to analyse lines through the data for creative works, before turning to examine non-fiction by genre, looking at life-writing, regimental histories, and more general histories.² We conclude by arguing that the Boom ends because of its critical ubiquity and suggest lines for future work on this vital moment in the historiography of war literature.

The War Books Boom is acknowledged in key First World War literary studies and cultural histories, if largely uninterrogated. Samuel Hynes sees 1926–33 as the years of 'mythmaking', following Wyndham Lewis and T.S. Eliot in taking the General Strike in Britain as a turning point, the manifestation of underlying social conflict which is also attested in the volatile UK politics of the 1920s.³ These were, as Hynes argues, the years in which 'the Myth of the War was defined and fixed in the version that still retains authority'.⁴ The language of myth alludes to Paul Fussell's work in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, in which he argues that soldiers mythologized the war as it continued.⁵ However, Hynes's claim that this moment broke 'the conspiracy of silence' has now been widely disproved.⁶ Jane Potter and Ian Isherwood point out that the War Books Boom of the late 1920s was the second, after the war years.⁷ Claire M. Tylee asserts in her pioneering study of women's writing about the First World War that there were many women's bestsellers about the war in the postwar decade, although her support for this is in terms of esteem rather than sales or publication numbers; she identifies the dates of the Boom as 1928–33.⁸ Rosa M. Bracco points out that there was a significant amount of war 'fiction of the 1920s and 1930s which did not have the literary quality to survive the test of time'.⁹ Her cataloguing of and serious engagement with popular fiction of the period remains invaluable. As Dan Todman puts it, the 'First World War was a cornerstone of British culture throughout the 1920s and 1930s', and 'with quantity came variety. That not only meant a variety of views of the war, but a variety of reasons for involvement with its remembrance and representation'.¹⁰ In his reassessment of the ground in the 1920s, however, Todman overcorrects. He rightly acknowledges the recuperation of the history of popular literature about the war in the 1920s. However, as we demonstrate here, this was not 'ten years of steady production'; the War Books Boom is no myth, but a demonstrable spike.¹¹ Randall Stevenson makes a similar claim, positing that 'Remarque's success is better understood not as a sole or sudden influence on war narrative at the end of the 1920s [...] but in the context of gradual developments throughout the decade'.¹² There was a developing acceptance of criticisms of the war and conduct in it, but we demonstrate that there was a clear publication and commentary boom ranging across forms and genres.

The War Books Boom dataset

Here, we focus on Britain in order to generate a manageable, significant, but finite dataset, and select the years 1926 to 1933 to give a sense of the rise and fall of the Boom. We count works that are published for the first time and make the war evident in their title, along with those described in lists of forthcoming books, reviews and spread advertisements as ‘pre-war’ or ‘postwar’, suggesting an active connection to the conflict. It is impossible to establish less tangible connections without extensive reading beyond the scope of this study.¹³ The data collects information from previous scholarly work,¹⁴ the catalogues of the British Library, the National Library of Scotland and the National Library of Wales, and the trade journal *The Publisher and the Bookseller*; Bracco and Isherwood highlight its importance in tastemaking and opinion forming.¹⁵ Data from a cognate project looking specifically at Scotland is incorporated.¹⁶ A wide range of genres are identified by cataloguers, advertisers, readers and scholars: we record creative and non-fiction works ranging across autobiography, biography, children’s fiction, criticism and analysis, economics, essays, history, letters and diaries, memoirs, novels, periodical reprints, plays, poetry, reference works, regimental histories, short stories and songs. Some of these categories inevitably overlap or are closely aligned: among the most closely overlapping genres we record autobiography as a first-person account of a life, and a memoir as a personal account that does not purport to narrate the whole life.¹⁷ Works with any fictionalization are recorded as creative forms. We take history as aspiring to objectivity, while criticism and analysis explicitly offer evaluation.

We are conscious of the limitations of this data, and do not claim that it is in any meaningful sense complete or infallible. More books were undoubtedly published in the UK which might be recovered by further archival work; this is before we start to consider the rest of the world. *The Bookseller* offers a clear view of the UK-wide picture, but it is London-focused and offers only a small amount of information about, for example, the children’s book market, on which further work is needed.¹⁸ While we record here only works that directly invoke the war, or are explicitly situated in its context by title or marketing, the pervasive impact of the war on the British public and its reading habits is registered far beyond the numbers that we provide here. Alice Kelly is right to describe ‘modernist culture in the heart of the modern period [. . . as] inherently a war culture’, and our data suggests that we can take ‘modernist’ there in its broadest possible sense.¹⁹ Despite these issues, the dataset we have collected is unparalleled, and in and of itself radically reshapes previous understandings of the War Books Boom.

We count 1483 war books published from 1926 to 1933. The number of publications increases from 1928 to 1930, but the trend does not simply rise and fall. While Vincent Trott cites 1929 as the ‘peak of the boom’,²⁰ we discern two significant peaks in publication in 1928 and 1930 (Figure 1). The years leading up to the peak do not follow a consistent upwards trajectory. There are fewer recorded titles in 1927 (108) than in 1926 (133), despite the fact that *The Bookseller* includes a forthcoming books section from 1927, making the identification of content and genre easier. The peak years of 1928 and 1930 saw 251 and 315 publications respectively. 1931 sees the greatest drop in numbers throughout the sampled years, almost halving to 176 titles. Market saturation leads to reader fatigue and ennui, and there is a backlash against the ubiquity of war writing and the disenchanting tone of many works. An advertisement for Faber & Faber

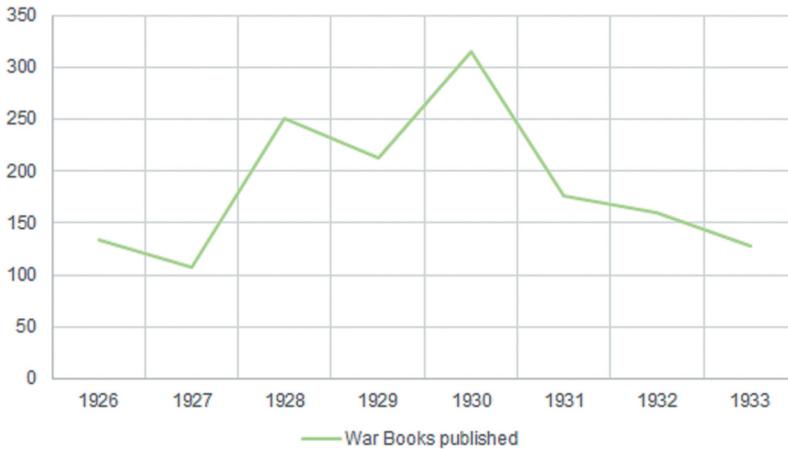


Figure 1. Number of war books per year in the War Books Boom.

points to a growing weariness towards war books, acknowledging the increasing ‘prejudice’ against them (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 15 May 1931). Our research suggests that by 1932 the number of war books published (160) was still substantially above the level of 1926; by 1933 it was only five books fewer (128). However, the focus shifts towards the global economic crisis, the maintenance of peace and avoidance of future wars, and the efficacy of the League of Nations²¹; the resonance of the previous war was channelled into fears about a future conflict.

That there was a moment for ‘war books’ is evidenced by the recuperation of that category for the postwar moment, tied in with an increasing volume of discussion. One way of tracking this is by searching the exact term ‘war books’ in the British Newspaper Archive (Figure 2). This demonstrates an even more striking boom in terms of criticism and commentary: 1930 sees 1264 articles containing this phrase, over three times as many as the preceding year (372), and over five times as many as in the subsequent year (243). The month-by-month breakdown of these articles suggests that the major critical boom lasts for barely over a year, from September 1929 to January 1931, with a peak in April

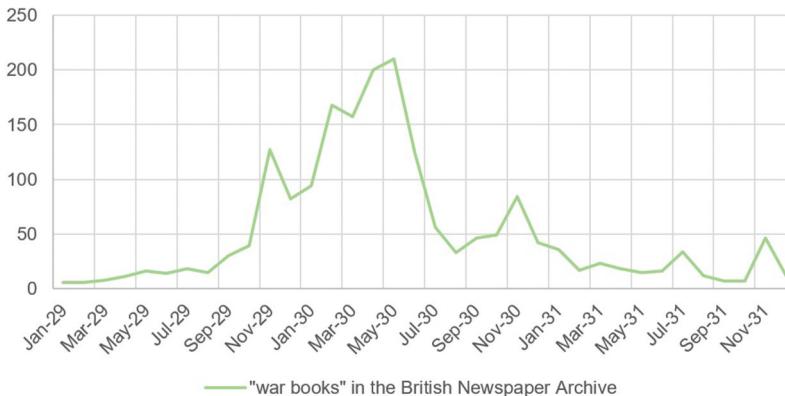


Figure 2. “War books” in the British Newspaper Archive.

and May 1930 (200 and 210 articles); there is also a demonstrable spike in November of each year at the anniversary of the Armistice, which itself dwindles in 1930 and 1931. As with the publishing data, we recognize the limitations of the method, but argue that the extent of the data supports claims about trends that are borne out by the commentary itself. As early as March 1928, Oliver Way wrote that ‘with each publishing season now, war books pour in upon us, but it must be adjudged that so far the war has proved to be poor in literature’ (*The Graphic*, 10 March 1928). The demand was such that newspapers advertised a £5000 prize for a high-quality war book offered by Houghton Mifflin and the American Legion (e.g. *Liverpool Echo*, the *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail* and the *Nottingham Evening Post*, 5 March 1928). By mid-1929, an advertisement for John Lane, The Bodley Head is headed ‘This is the Day of the War Book’, and claims that there is a ‘public demand for them and the demand has not yet been satisfied’ (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 31 May 1929). On New Year’s Day 1930, Leonard James wrote vividly in the socialist newspaper *The Clarion* that ‘the bombardment of war books goes on. [...] In the last few days I have narrowly escaped being killed by a number of “masterpieces” shot at me by publishers’. Military metaphors seem unavoidable. The boom in criticism and commentary corresponds with the most substantial publication spike, but the vertiginous spike in commentary attests to why the explosion of interest was felt so strongly as a boom at the time: discussion in the local, regional and national press gave it immediacy and proximity.

The War Books Boom was not only a retrospective critical construction but, we argue, was understood as such at the time. At least one author sensed that this was a key moment: as he was finishing his bitterly satirical novel *Death of a Hero* (1929) Richard Aldington cabled his publisher, Charles Prentice: ‘Referring great success *Journey’s End* and German war novels urge earliest fall publication *Death of a Hero* to take advantage public mood. Large scale English war novel might go big now’.²² On 2 January 1930, the *Daily Herald* headlined the inability of Stepney Public Libraries in London to cope with the demand for *All Quiet on the Western Front*, despite the purchase of 126 copies, as a ‘War Books Boom’; the *Yorkshire Post* reported the same story as the ‘Cult of the War Book’ (3 January 1930). The following month, the *Yorkshire Evening Post* reported that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle ‘was approached at an early stage in the war book boom, to write a story based on a war theme’ but would not due to ill health (6 February 1930). Later that month Vera Brittain wrote about ‘Women and War Books’ (*Time and Tide*, 21 February 1930), while the following month her friend Winifred Holtby began an article on ‘War books and women’ with the assertion that ‘I have just been reading a discussion of the War Book Boom, now about 18 months old. Indeed, it is hard to avoid the subject nowadays’ (*Yorkshire Post*, 19 March 1930). The following day, Gerald Gould contributed a feature on ‘This Boom in War Books’ to the labour movement newspaper the *Daily Herald*, and began by asking ‘When will the boom in war-books begin to break? I think the answer can be given in one syllable. I think the answer is “June”.’ This astute commentary, aligning with the tailing-off of the critical boom, attempts to make a qualitative distinction between books of enduring quality and worth, and the works produced purely for commercial gain. The literary books, he asserts, ‘will survive. More such books are needed. The war-book boom, the mere boom, the boom for boom’s sake, will end. There will remain the best books about the war’. This hope is echoed by the advertisements for war books that surround the feature: Jonathan Cape promotes ‘War

Books that will outlive a few weeks' popularity'; Peter Davies goes simply for 'War Books that will survive'. Our data begins to reveal the vast number of works that did not survive, the impossibility even at the time of having in view the range of available publications compounded by ever-present processes of literary taste-making and canon formation.

By March 1930, there were already reports that the Boom was declining and/or diverging. A double-page advertisement for Chatto & Windus stated that a 'grave danger of neglect now besets any war-book, however good, for there are too many' (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 14 March 1930). 'At last the boom in war books is beginning to weaken', the London diarist for the *Yorkshire Evening Post* wrote on 10 April 1930, suggesting the Boom's end by the end of the summer, and lauding Douglas Jerrold's 'magnificent challenge to the muck-rakers', *The Lie About the War* (1930). In the same week, an article on 'War on the Screen' in the *Yorkshire Post* asserts that 'the "boom" in war literature may be said to have captured the screen'; the article notes that 'although the height of the war book boom is now probably over, plenty of books dealing with the war in one form or another are to be found in the spring publishing lists' (15 April 1930). By 2 July, the *Nottingham Evening Post* critic sees it as 'daring' to publish another war novel, and notes that 'latterly the war book boom has shown signs of being distinctly on the wane, perhaps largely because those most interested in that epoch, the millions of ex-service men, have become absolutely fed up with pacifist and hysterical calumny'. By early August there are concerns that new war books 'will have missed the boat' (*Yorkshire Post*, 1 August 1930), while the following month Gould reviewed Ernest Raymond's *The Jesting Army* (1930) positively 'at a time when the war-book boom is supposed to be over' (*Daily Herald*, 11 September 1930). Raymond is emblematic of the glorifying mindset for his bestseller *Tell England* (1922). Heralding a shift to detective fiction, W.L.A. wrote on 10 March 1931 for the *Leeds Mercury* that 'the War Book boom has sunk into a deathly silence'. While our data shows that there was still a substantial level of additional war book publication in 1931, there is no doubt that Roger Pippett, reviewing Guy Chapman's *A Passionate Prodigality* for the *Daily Herald* on 12 January 1933, was correct: 'That barrage which was the war-book boom has passed over our heads'.

The War Books Boom and creative works

The War Books Boom is most strongly associated with the dominant creative successes of the late 1920s, although our data makes clear that the first peak of the Boom in 1928 preceded the successes that appeared late that year, rather than resulting from them. We begin, then, with these works that shaped the popular imagination of the First World War then as now, even though we recorded 610 creative titles (41.1%) against 873 non-fiction titles (58.9%) (Figure 3). This goes beyond Isherwood's claims that 'nearly half of Great War literature released was non-fiction', and that 'over 350 non-fiction war books were published and printed by British firms from 1918 to 1939', along with 'hundreds of war novels [. . . and] more general military and unit histories'.²³ However, further work is required to nuance the relationship between form and genre, publications, sales, readership and esteem. Isherwood observes that fiction 'was the mainstay of the publishing industry and almost always outsold non-fiction: this applied to war books as well'.²⁴ This is evidenced by sales figures for bestselling war books; these are not always easy to recuperate due to the destruction of many London publishers' archives in the Second



Figure 3. War Books Boom trends for creative works (lower line) and non-fiction.

World War. However, some information can be gleaned from contemporary advertisements and reports: for example, H.M. Tomlinson's *All Our Yesterdays* and Frederic Manning's *Her Privates We* (both 1930) both topped the bestselling books list in January 1930 (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 7 February 1930)²⁵; Manning had sold 30,000 copies by August 1931. Remarque's *All Quiet* had reached 375,000 sales by May 1931 (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 1 May 1931) and John Galsworthy's novel *Flowering Wilderness* (1932), the second volume of his *End of the Chapter* trilogy, set after the war but substantially informed by it, was among the best-selling books of 1932 (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 6 January 1933).

Not so quiet on the War Books front

Remarque was at the centre of the War Books Boom. *Im Westen Nichts Neues* was first serialized in Germany on the tenth anniversary of Armistice Day, published in volume form on 29 January 1929, then translated into English under A.W. Wheen's enduring title *All Quiet on the Western Front* for publication by Putnam in March 1929; on publication it sold 25,000 copies in a fortnight.²⁶ It was an Oscar-winning Hollywood film within 2 years, and a 15 May 1930 article in *The Stage*, on the coming film, situates it as 'the German story that began the realistic war-book boom'.²⁷ Remarque's novel was advertised by August 1929 as the 'Best Selling Book in the World', and 'The most talked of book in the world'.²⁸ By Armistice week of that year, the book reviewer for the *Northampton Mercury* bemoaned its banning by the Northampton Public Library and reported that 'there has never, I suppose, been any comparable book which in a short time has been so widely read as Remarque's "All Quiet on the Western Front". Months ago, more than 1,700,000 copies had been sold; the total now may have reached 2,000,000. Over 300,000 copies have been sold in this country' (15 November 1929). By the end of 1929 the novel had sold nearly a million copies in Germany; Putnam ran an advertisement in a number of local newspapers calling it 'The best gift for the season of Peace and Goodwill [. . .] The book that is bearing the message of Peace throughout the world'. Looking back as the Boom declined S.T.S., in an analysis of 'What Makes a Book Sell?', opined that its success was merely a matter of timing: *All Quiet* was 'assured of its

success the moment the manuscript was put into the printer's hands. It was simply a question of right book at the right moment'; if the novel had been published in the early 1920s, it would 'have been launched upon a world which was counting the toll and attempting to forget the horror of the war that had just ended. The public at that time had no wish to be reminded of all it had been through, and the book would in all probability have been rejected by it' (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 30 December 1932). This undoubtedly downplays the skill of Remarque in capturing that moment – and of Wheen's translation; Thomas F. Schneider outlines the hurdles that Remarque navigated to see the novel published at all, from rejection, to revision, to consciously situating the novel outside the literary sphere as the authentic testimony of an ordinary soldier.²⁹

Eksteins sees the novel as the key text in a 'War Boom',³⁰ and not only was it a primary catalyst for publication, but the controversy over its disenchantment was also a major factor in the commentary boom that amounted to a battle over how the war would be remembered a decade on. The novel was attacked from both political wings in Germany, as either being insufficiently pacifist by the left, or for disparaging German soldiers and ergo the nation by the rapidly developing Nazi movement on the right.³¹ The response to the novel was also fraught in the UK, and the attacks from conservative commentators loudest. A concerted campaign against disenchanted books in the manner of *All Quiet and the Western Front* seems to have been waged by the British Legion: veterans who continued to see military service as central to their identity opposed the perceived shift away from honour, glory, and heroism.³² There was also a backlash from religious leaders and organizations,³³ who saw the novel as a threat to proprieties, but perhaps also had in mind a defence of their own support of the conflict. Novels such as Roland Dorgelès's *The Cabaret Up the Line* (1930) were praised for 'a lightness of touch' and their lack of similarity to the 'unflinching realism' of Remarque's novel (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 2 May 1930). Some works overtly staked a claim to comedy, such as George Knight's *The Humorous Side of War!* (1929) and a collection of *Humorous Scottish War Stories* (1930). Colonel David Rorie's *A Medico's Luck in the War* was praised for its 'unfailing sense of humour', in contrast to the 'good deal of dirty linen [that] has been washed in high places' (*Dundee Courier & Advertiser*, 19 November 1929). Remarque's countryman Paul Alverdes's *The Whistler's Room* (1929) was directly compared to Remarque and praised for 'the same economy and crystallization of expression and something of the simple humour that relieved the bitterness of the earlier novel' (*Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 22 November 1929).

There were also direct responses to *All Quiet on the Western Front*, demonstrating that it was recognized as a phenomenon whose sales and readership success could be capitalized upon. The publication trend for novels followed the general boom, with peaks in 1928 (56) and 1930 (77) (Figure 4). Remarque capitalized on the international success of his first novel, writing a de facto sequel *The Road Back*, which was serialized in late 1930 and early 1931, before being published in book form in April 1931 (also translated by Wheen). Some responses are relatively oblique, such as John Worne's *Unrest on the Home Front* (1930), a contrast to the viscera of Remarque's novel. Perhaps the most prominent, and certainly one of the more compelling, is Helen Zenna Smith's *Not So Quiet: Stepdaughters of War*, another 1930 success story. The title directly alludes to Remarque, and the novel tells the story of a female ambulance driver during the war. Helen Zenna Smith was the pseudonym of Evadne Price,



Figure 4. War Books Boom trends for novels (lower line) against total war books.

a professional author, who drew on ‘the unpublished diaries of a real ambulance-driver, Winifred Young, to provide her colour’³⁴; the book implies that it is autobiographical, playing into the desire for ‘real war stories’. It also addresses a desire for more wide-ranging narratives of the war. Extracts from the novel were trailed in the *People* on 2 March 1930, and it was published on 27 March 1930; the first edition of this book had a print-run of 15,000 copies, all of which sold; a second and third edition were printed in 1930. The American edition sold 20,000 copies before publication (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 11 April 1930), the same as Sassoon’s *Infantry Officer*. In between those dates, on 19 March, Winifred Holtby wrote about women and war books, connecting nursing service with a desire to read about the war and asserting ‘an increasing demand for books which will show war as women knew it’ (*Yorkshire Post*, 19 March 1930). Brittain’s and Holtby’s articles highlight Mary Agnes Hamilton’s *Special Providence: A Tale of 1917* (1930) as a home front novel, along with works by American hospital worker authors Mary Lee and Mary Borden. One wonders if Holtby, in claiming that ‘the Englishwoman’s war book is still to come’, had seen the press coverage of *Not So Quiet* and another book due to be published the following week, the anonymous *W.A.A.C.: A Woman’s Story of the War* (1930); she may also have had in mind Brittain’s still-unpublished memoir. The anonymous author capitalized on the notoriety of this volume with two follow-ups, *My Journey’s End* (1931), a conspicuous nod to Sherriff’s play, and *W.A.A.C. Demobilized: her private affairs* (1932), undoubtedly hoping to entice readers with the prospect of scandal; the representation of pregnant W.A.A.C.s even led to legal action against Richard Aldington.³⁵ *Not So Quiet* led, according to Tylee, to ‘two sequels, each – incredibly – even more crudely overwrought and melodramatic than its predecessor’.³⁶ Price actually published three further volumes in this period as Helen Zenna Smith, all highlighting the role of women: *Women of the Aftermath* (1931), *Shadow Women* (1932), and *Luxury Ladies* (1933). This illustrates the commercial potential in this area alongside the necessity to earn as a professional writer.

The influence of *All Quiet on the Western Front* also manifests a bubble in translation, particularly from the German. Of the titles recorded in 1930, at least 34 were originally written in another language before being translated into English, and at least 17 of those (50%) were from German.³⁷ 1929 also saw a high number of works

translated from German; it is clear that 1929 and 1930 see by far the highest numbers of translations, particularly from German: the peak in translated works aligns with the peak of the Boom. When was also unsurprisingly in demand, translating Ernst Johannsen's *Four Infantrymen on the Western Front* (1930), and Edlef Koeppen's *Higher Command* (1931). There were also translations in 1930 from French (7), Hungarian (4), Czech, Danish, Italian, Russian and Romanian (one each), which attest to the interest in war narratives beyond British experience. There was an increase in translated German books in 1933, as the market responded to Hitler's rise to power, which many saw as precipitated by the First World War: six books in our dataset analyse the impact of the Treaty of Versailles, most strikingly Alfred von Wegerer's *Refutation of the Versailles War Guilt Thesis* (1930). Throughout the sampled years we noted, but did not record, many books focusing on German travel, 'modern' Germany and the German language, which demonstrate a lasting preoccupation in Britain with Germany, its culture and people.³⁸

Journey ends, boom begins

Just as big a success, and one originating in the UK, was R.C. Sherriff's *Journey's End*. First performed at the Apollo Theatre in December 1928 by the Incorporated Stage Society with Laurence Olivier in the title role, the play was immediately a success when it transferred to the West End, picked up by a little-known pacifist, Maurice Browne, after a lack of other interest.³⁹ Their timing was impeccable: the play was a huge box-office hit, and ran for 594 appearances at the Savoy theatre; it was broadcast as part of the BBC's Armistice Day schedule in 1929. When Victor Gollancz published the play text in 1929 it sold unusually highly for that form: sales were up to 175,000 within a year, 'an all time record for a new play', Sherriff claimed in his autobiography.⁴⁰ It also undoubtedly sold many further copies in Gollancz's anthologies *Famous Plays of Today* (1929) and *Six Plays* (1930, repr. 1933); such was its fame that it was adapted for a German audience as *Die andere Seite* (*The Other Side*, 1931), which was banned there after the Nazis took power. As with *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the success of *Journey's End* leads to adaptation and rewriting for other forms. The faithful 1930 film adaptation, directed by James Whale, retained Colin Clive as Stanhope; the play was novelized by Sherriff with Vernon Bartlett, who during the Boom published a volume of short stories, *Topsy Turvy* (1929), and two novels, *Calf Love* (1929) and *No Man's Land* (1930). The novelization's critical success was mixed: the *Dundee Courier* reviewer judged it as, 'despite the fragmentary form of it [...] on top of most of the others [war novels]' (10 March 1930), and the *Portsmouth Evening News* saw it as 'expected to become a war classic' (12 March 1930). However, Oliver Way, in the *Graphic*, offered a rather more objective assessment of its merits: 'a competent piece of work, but not calculated to set the literary Thames on fire' (15 March 1930). Pertinently, the perspicacious reviewer for the *Yorkshire Post*, Collin Brooks, observed the play's centrality to the furore over war books: it 'suffered both the adulation of the unthinking and the almost rabid attacks of those who construed its necessary dramatic limitations as the deliberate attempt of its author to pervert the characters of British officers. [...] The novel will doubtless re-arouse this combat of opinion' (10 March 1930). It remained a touchstone for comparison, and such was its success that Sherriff struggled to follow it up.

Our data for the number of plays is among the smallest by form/genre in the set, so it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions.⁴¹ We record peaks in 1928 (11) and 1930 (9), with the next highest year, 1932, recording 6 plays published. Notable among the 1928 publications was W. Somerset Maugham's *The Sacred Flame*, about the postwar misfortunes of a man who survived it. We record only 3 in 1929, suggesting that the ubiquity of *Journey's End* was such that other war plays were crowded out of the market, increasing in number as its West End success declined. The other two were Veronica Pilcher's *The Searcher: A War Play*, which received little attention or acclaim,⁴² and Stefan Zweig's *Jeremiah*, written in 1917, translated for Seltzer's in the US in 1922, but only available for the first time in the UK in 1929 in an Allen & Unwin edition from US-printed sheets. Notable authors produced plays in 1930, however. Robert Graves was commissioned by the producers of Sherriff's play and published *But It Still Goes On*, which takes place after the war. The title of the play nods to Graves's autobiography *Goodbye to All That* (1929), and to the difficulties of leaving behind the traumas of wartime – emphasized by the fact that the play was not first performed until 2018. Combining drama and translation, Sigmund Graff and Carl Hintze's *The Endless Road*, translated from the German, nods to Sherriff's play in its title, and is directly compared to *Journey's End* in its advertisement by the publisher George Allen & Unwin (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 28 March 1930). Sherriff's prominence is also demonstrated by his writing introductions to J.D. Gregory's *On the Edge of Diplomacy* (1929) and G.H.F. Nichols' memoir *Pushed* (1930). In tracing these connections we add to existing knowledge about the broader influence of these key creative works. The lack of publication data for this form – or, at least, publication data that is found in similar places and takes a similar shape to other forms and genres – is undoubtedly due to the fact that plays are primarily performance rather than publishing phenomena. Much of the valuable work that has been done to date on theatre of the First World War focuses on the war years. Further work such as Andrew Maunder's surveying the theatre of the period, or the development of a 'Theatre of the War Books Boom' database along the lines of Helen Brooks's Great War Theatre project will be vital in understanding further the impact of *Journey's End* at this moment in theatre history; work examining the review reception of war dramas in the late 1920s and early 1930s will also be welcome.⁴³

Non-fiction: writing lives and selves

Our data clearly reveals that non-fiction remained the dominant form by publication numbers, although further work combining publication data, sales and esteem is needed to assess the impact of this key finding on the construction of cultural memory. History and memoir are the dominant genres, with criticism and regimental history also substantial (Figure 5). Histories see pronounced booms in 1928 (47) and 1930 (53), while memoir shows a high peak in 1930 (67), over 50% more than the next highest year, 1932 (44). This suggests that memoirs were more readily produced, and that this genre was stimulated strongly by the earlier part of the Boom. Autobiographies and memoirs were staples of the market as readers looked for both distinctive and typical war narratives. The dominance of memoirs highlights the interest in the war as a subject, rather than the whole life (compare the total numbers of autobiographies (20) and biographies (61)). We comment on category trends only where we note over 50 volumes across these years; in

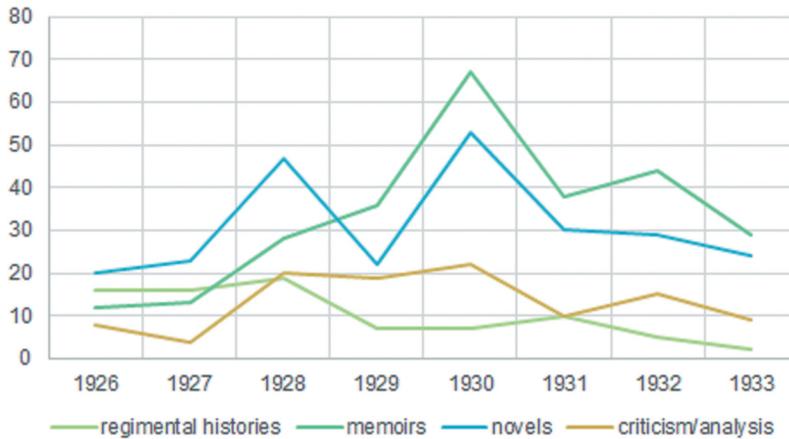


Figure 5. War Books Boom trends for non-fiction books by genre; novels included for comparison.

this section we analyse forms of life-writing, regimental histories, general histories, and the beginning of critique of the Boom.⁴⁴

Life-writing was a key aspect of the Boom. Literary figures were prominent among the authors writing memoirs, compounded by the close connection of many fictional works with lived experience: Sassoon's and Graves's most famous volumes are a case in point. Sassoon chose the security of thinly veiled fiction. Graves's choice of autobiography, however, was reacted against in private by Sassoon and Edmund Blunden, whose *Undertones of War* was an early success on publication in December 1928, and very publicly by Graves's father A.P. Graves in *To Return to All That*, published barely 8 months later in July 1930. Both Sassoon's and Graves's volumes were popular: Graves's, published in late November 1929, had sold 40,000 copies by the turn of the year (*Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 4 January 1930), and Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* was selling 1000 copies a day after its publication (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 26 September 1930). Blunden wrote of it that '[A]mong the war-books it will take the highest rank', and Harold Nicolson called it a book of 'deep beauty and abiding significance' (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 3 October 1930). The military service of Sassoon, Graves, Blunden and other memoirists undoubtedly contributed to their success, the hegemony of what James Campbell calls 'combat gnosticism' some way from being challenged.⁴⁵ Also well-received was the first UK edition of E.E. Cummings's *The Enormous Room* (US 1922; UK 1928), in spite of what was already felt as an excess of war books. In July 1928, a double-page advertisement by the publisher Jonathan Cape stated that they had been reticent to publish, 'believing that the public did not want another War book' (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 13 July 1928). T.E. Lawrence, whose memoir *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926) had been published privately, followed by the abridged *Revolt in the Desert* (1927), describes *The Enormous Room* as 'one of the very best of the war books. Modern in feeling and new-world in pedigree and all the more exciting in consequence' (*The Publisher & The Bookseller*, 6 July 1928). Lawrence's phrasing shows the awareness among readers and authors of the commonality of 'war books'; these titles focusing on the conflict were becoming so commonplace as to be a genre in their own right.

To look beyond these very familiar figures, R.H. Mottram's memoir *Ten Years Ago* (1928) points to the interconnectedness of publishing across genres and how professional writers reused material. The subtitle *Armistice and Other Memories, forming a pendant to the Spanish Farm Trilogy* makes clear the importance of the anniversary while also asserting Mottram's authority as a result of his successful realist fiction; several of the stories feature key characters from the *Trilogy*. The acknowledgements identify a wide range of periodicals in which the material has previously appeared.⁴⁶ The success of his trilogy enabled him to become a professional author, leaving behind his career as a bank manager, and he published 17 volumes with tangible connections to the war in the period of this dataset, plus a further co-produced volume of war memoir; the British Library catalogue makes it clear that many of these were republished in cheap and variant editions, and some of those 17 volumes reproduce individual or small collections of items already in print. Both the impact of war experience on Mottram and his level of industry are clear. In addition to this vast amount of activity, he also introduced works by H.W. Freeman, Henri Daniel-Rops, Ernst Jünger, and István Szegedi-Szűts; Freeman was a fellow East Anglian, while the latter three – French, German and Hungarian respectively – suggest that Mottram's introduction acted as a validation in the UK market for international and translated authors (Szegedi-Szűts required no translation as *My War* is a volume of illustrations).

Major events such as the deaths of key figures in the war effort played a part in stimulating publishing demand. Douglas Haig's funeral (he died on 29 January 1928) was a major national event precipitating widespread mourning given his prominence in the British Legion and United Services Fund.⁴⁷ Two biographies were published later that year, Sir George Arthur's *Lord Haig* and Ernest Protheroe's *Earl Haig*; the next year saw Brigadier-General John Charteris's *Field-Marshal Earl Haig* and Haig's batman T. Secrett's *Twenty-five years with Earl Haig* (1929); G.A.B. Dewar's 1922 account of Haig's command was reprinted by Constable. Protheroe also published a biography of the nurse Edith Cavell in 1928. Protheroe had previously published *A Noble Woman: The Life-Story of Edith Cavell* (1916), demonstrating the opportunistic nature of the Boom as authors and publishers reprinted and revised old material to profit from the increased demand for war books. Indeed, a charming piece of doggerel in the *Daily Herald* of 21 May 1928 bemoans the glut of memoirs of statesmen, concluding that 'the *War Book to End War Books* / Is urgently needed now!'

History and regimental history

Moving outwards to consider histories of particular groups, regimental histories represent a substantial number of titles (80), and have a distinctive shape in the narrative of the Boom. Unusually, the peak in regimental histories comes in 1928 (19), after two strong years in 1926 and 1927 (both 16) before the most notable creative successes make an impact. Regimental histories were published consistently throughout the 1920s, but the number drops dramatically in 1929 (to 7) and continues to be fewer than ten for the rest of the years in the dataset. However, the fact that one writer, Everard Wyrall, published eight regimental histories in this period suggests that there was the possibility for commercial success in the genre, or at least survival. Multiple volumes were also produced by Major C.H. Dudley Ward and Colonel H.C. Wylly (3 each), and C.T.

Atkinson and Thomas Chalmers (2 each). Thinking about our methods of collection, it is worth considering that these volumes were usually produced for a relatively finite readership, often a local one, meaning that they do not necessarily have the same prominence in marketing and public discourse as novels, memoirs and histories which purport to general interest. As a result, it is likely that there are more we have not uncovered to record; further research is needed into this striking divergence from the trends which hold across the majority of genres we examine.

Histories remained popular throughout the period, third by total number of publications behind novels and memoirs in the genres and forms we examined. Works published in this category ranged from military service in small towns, such as the *Sedbergh School Record of War Service, 1914–1918* (1926), to the roles of major cities, as in F.P. Armitage's *Leicester 1914–1918* (1933), to home nations, as in David T. Jones et al.'s *Rural Scotland during the War* (1926). Particular battles, campaigns, fronts and services across the world were represented. There was a clear recognition that army, navy and air force had been important, indicated most pithily in Admiral Mark Kerr's *Land, Sea and Air* (1927), along with many other books about the individual services. Five volumes mentioned Jutland in the title, while there was evidently some interest in the war beyond the Western Front, with volumes across the period about East Africa (1), West Africa (1), Turkey (4), Mesopotamia (7), Palestine (7), Gallipoli (13). Isherwood suggests that such books were 'especially popular with publishers' as they offered 'exoticism and adventure' compared with the 'typical trench tale'; Tylee's chapter on women's autobiographies and fictionalized war memoirs offers further support for this suggestion.⁴⁸ Beyond this, there were the attempts to survey the conflict in a single volume, from Craig and Scott's *Outline History of the Great War for Use in Schools* (1928) to the synoptic volumes published during the Boom's peak in 1930: Major-General Sir George Aston's *The Great War of 1914–18*, the war correspondent W. Beach Thomas's *Events of the Great War*, Lee Benn's *Europe since 1914*, and the French historian Élie Halévy's *The World Crisis of 1914–1918*. That title, translated for the English market, picks up Winston Churchill's series *The World Crisis*, of which volumes three to five were published in this period (1927, 1929, 1931), along with an abridged version (1931). There were other multi-volume histories that demonstrated both the appetite for works about the war and the sense of its historical import; HMSO published numerous volumes about a wide range of aspects of the conflict.

The trends for criticism and analysis broadly followed the overall shape of the Boom, with peaks in 1928 (20) and 1930 (22), although 1929 saw only the most negligible of dips (19). Notable among them are the number of works concerned about the current peace, or explicitly worrying about a future war such as the US academic John Bakeless's *The Origin of the Next War* (1926), the socialist Tom Bell's *Heading for War* (1929), the war correspondent Philip Gibbs's *The Day after Tomorrow: What is going to happen to the world?* (1929) and Major K.A. Bratt's *That Next War* (1930). The Nazi successes in the German elections of September 1930 precipitated further volumes in this vein including Sir Leo Chiozza Money's *Can War be Averted?* (1931) and Frank H. Simonds's *Can Europe Keep the Peace?* (1931), while after the Nazi election successes of mid-1932 Sisley Huddleston's *War Unless . . .* (1933) took an increasingly gloomy view. The Austrian-Swiss pacifist Ludwig Bauer's *Morgen Wieder Krieg* (1931) was translated the following year as *War Again Tomorrow*, warning of the prospect of another conflict;

just beyond the scope of this dataset, the German geographer and militarist Ewald Banse's *Raum und Volk im Weltkriege* (1932), was translated as *Germany, Prepare for War* (1934). Trott argues that 'fears of a future conflict may have encouraged' the increased output of war books, and our data clearly demonstrates that this was a substantial strand within the war books boom.⁴⁹

Conclusion: beginning of literary criticism, end of boom

Another small but important strand within works of criticism and analysis is the appearance of literary criticism about war books. These works also intervened in the battle for the memory of the conflict, the most prominent examples by conservative combatants. Cyril Falls contributed to *The War, 1914–1918: A Booklist* (1929), which led to the longer monograph *War Books: A Critical Guide* (1930), incorporated within our dataset. Falls guided his readers through an extensive bibliography of books published about the First World War to that date with an idiosyncratic one-to-three-star rating system; three-star ratings were very rare indeed. The critic for the *Yorkshire Post* posited the volume's appearance in March 1930 as a marker of the addition of 'a definite chapter to the history of English and European literature', suggesting that the chapter was already on its way to completion.⁵⁰ Falls and the conservative commentator Gilbert Frankau, notable for his curious bestselling war novel *Peter Jackson, Cigar Merchant* (1919) and his short-lived journal *Britannia* (1928), the latter of which gives a sense of the depth of his patriotism, both argued that the emphasis on the horrors of war in these books elided the patriotic values that had sustained morale during the war and in the postwar years.⁵¹ The official war reporter Philip Gibbs, who had made a success out of telling the *Realities of War* (1920) a decade earlier, railed against the new mode of war writing in an article entitled 'War Books: Are They Educating a Nation of Cowards?', while Douglas Jerrold denounced what he saw as *The Lie About the War* (1930).⁵² Todman argues that the 'dispute for critics of the "war books boom" was not that the war had been horrible. What was at issue was the balance of that horror with other emotions, the capacity of men – specifically British men – to withstand its worst extremities, and the meaning of such endurance. For men like Falls and Jerrold, the war had been the occasion for the reinforcement of traditional values of honour and loyalty as much as about the experience of the battlefield grotesque'.⁵³ Their books were reviewed alongside each other in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and the anonymous reviewer criticizes the 'obsession with the discreditable' in a fulminating list of grievances.⁵⁴ The US critic A.C. Ward, in his study of the literature of *The Nineteen-Twenties* (1930), assessed the situation with a precision that can only be achieved by an outsider looking in: 'British aggressive civilians (male and female) are not content to know that British soldiers have won a war; they want to believe that it has been won by an army of gentlemen in a gentlemanly way. Only when war is wrapped in a haze of romantic illusion has the British public sufficient moral courage to contemplate war'.⁵⁵

That there was a war books boom has always been assumed. Here, using the previously unmatched dataset that we have compiled, we add substantial nuance to the understanding of its shape and extent in the UK. Observing the separate publication peaks of 1928 and 1930 in the overall publication boom, and the varied intersections of different genre categories with the overall picture, helps us to understand better than ever before this vital moment in the history and historiography of the First World War; the moment

that shaped the memory of the war throughout the subsequent century.⁵⁶ Thinking about the intersection of publication and commentary and recognizing the connections between the two enhances our understanding of the Boom – and bust. Further work is undoubtedly needed, and indeed welcomed, on the data that we have amassed. Further quantitative work is necessary to understand the relationship between publication numbers and sales figures, while further qualitative work is needed on the nature of critical esteem and debate, and on further detail of the contents of these volumes: how do issues of representation, identity, and literary form contribute to the success or failure (by a variety of metrics) of the texts? Many of the texts we discuss were undoubtedly of European and even global interest, and Nicolas Beaupré’s claim that ‘the soldier-writer was a global figure and the boom in war books straddled the world’ is a compelling element of his argument for the necessity of a transnational history of war writing.⁵⁷ We welcome work on other nations that might lead to a truly transnational understanding of war literature at this time. What is certain, for the first time, is that there was in the UK a war books boom, which saw two peaks in 1928, and in 1930, and that there was an entwined boom in newspaper and periodical commentary on the subject.

While the existence of the War Books Boom has long been taken as a truism, our collation of this data enables the development of a more nuanced understanding of this key moment in the development of the literature and history of the First World War. Recognizing the sheer extent and breadth of literature published relating to the war around the end of the postwar decade has the potential to reshape our understanding of what mattered at the time, unpicking a mostly ossified canonicity and recovering diverse, popular and genre texts to the debate. Returning to the scene of this vital point in the historiography of the war not only develops our understanding of the First World War and responses to it in the interwar, but also makes possible new insights into the relationship between conflict and memory, and their enduring impact.

Notes

1. Carrington is quoted by Eksteins in “*All Quiet on the Western Front and the Fate of a War*”; Bracco, *Merchants of Hope*.
2. In terms of creative works, this means that we do not address in detail poetry. The shape of the poetry boom is somewhat anomalous, peaking in 1926 and 1929 but with consistently high levels of production (23 to 39 volumes with the exception of 1932 (13)). It is further complicated by the republication of key wartime works, often in new, revised or expanded editions.
3. Hynes, *A War Imagined*, pt. v.
4. *Ibid.*, 424.
5. Fussell, *Great War and Modern Memory*, ch. 4. Isherwood offers a good summary of questioning responses to Fussell in “The British Publishing Industry and Commercial Memories of the First World War”, 325–6.
6. Hynes, *A War Imagined*, 425.
7. Potter, “The British Publishing Industry”, 380; Isherwood, *Remembering the Great War*, 43. Bergonzi also describes a resurgence which he aligns with a stage of autobiography-writing in *Heroes’ Twilight*, 146. Todman identifies a further boom in the 1990s in *The Great War*, 146–7.
8. Tylee, *The Great War and Women’s Consciousness*, ch. 5; 189.

9. Bracco, *Merchants of Hope*, 1. Simmers's blog *Great War Fiction* has now looked at a formidable range of texts, taking seriously much neglected literature.
10. Todman, *The Great War*, 17.
11. *Ibid.*, 156.
12. Stevenson, *Literature and the Great War*, 88–9.
13. For example, Vincent Trott highlights that dustjackets of key texts of the War Books Boom such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* also make the war more evident than earlier in the response in *Publishers, Readers and the Great War*, ch. 1.
14. Incorporated in this work are entries from (in chronological order): Falls, *War Books*; Reilly, *English Poetry of the First World War*; Ouditt, *Women Writers of the First World War*; Kosok, *The Theatre of War*; Isherwood, *Remembering the Great War*; Budgen, *British Children's Literature and the First World War*; Ruzich, ed., *International Poetry of the First World War*. There will undoubtedly be further entries to be gleaned from examining more specialist bibliographies and those beyond the UK context such as Schaffer, *The United States in World War I*; Noffsinger, *World War I Aviation*; Lengel, *World War I Memories*.
15. Bracco, *Merchants of Hope*, 11; Isherwood, "The British Publishing Industry", 332–3. *The Bookseller* was published under that title until 1922, when it became the monthly *The Bookseller and the stationery trades' journal* (1922–7); it was then again *The Bookseller* (1927–8), before a stint as *The Publisher and the Bookseller* (1928–33), then reverting to *The Bookseller* (1933–).
16. Thanks are due to Louise Bell and Dr James Benstead for their work on that project.
17. On some of the problems of this genre, see Edwards, "British War Memoirs".
18. Recent work on children's literature and the First World War includes Blamires, "Children's Books"; Paul, Johnston and Short, eds, *Children's Literature and Culture*; Budgen, *British Children's Literature*. It is striking how comparatively few of the books in Budgen's bibliography are from 1926–33.
19. Kelly, *Commemorative Modernisms*, 2.
20. Trott, *Publishers, Readers and the Great War*, 29.
21. Potter discusses the League of Nations and books about peace in "The Bookman, the *Times Literary Supplement* and the Armistice", 159.
22. Aldington quotes his cable of the previous day in a letter of 11 May 1929 to Charles Prentice, a partner and his editor at Aldington's UK publisher Chatto & Windus. University of Reading, Chatto & Windus Archives, CW48/3. Quoted by Christopher Ridgway, Introduction to Aldington, *Death of a Hero*. See also Trott, "The market is getting flooded with them".
23. Isherwood, *Remembering the Great War*, 50.
24. Isherwood, *Remembering the Great War*, 50; Isherwood, "The British Publishing Industry", 328.
25. Manning's novel, which shares strong structural similarities with *Journey's End*, was also published in unexpurgated form by Piazza Press as *The Middle Parts of Fortune* in the final days of 1929.
26. Bracco, *Merchants of Hope*, 145. Todman highlights the importance of 'an innovative advertising campaign' in its success, *The Great War*, 19; see also Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 276.
27. The film is trailed alongside a positive review of the musical comedy film *Not So Quiet on the Western Front*, dir. by Monty Banks (British International Pictures, 1930).
28. Isherwood, *Remembering the Great War*, 45; Advertisement for Putnam in *North Wilts Herald*, 16 August 1929, p. 2. The advertisement records sales to date as England: 200,000; France: 219,000; America: 185,000; Germany: 750,000 [total of these: 1.35 million] and notes publication in 14 further European countries.
29. Schneider, "The Truth about the War Finally", 493–7. Steven Loveridge discusses the reception of *All Quiet on the Western Front* in New Zealand in 'Not So Quiet on the New Zealand Front'.
30. Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 275–7. A longer version of this material is available in Eksteins, "All Quiet on the Western Front and the Fate of a War". Isherwood sees the memoir boom as

- rooted in T.E. Lawrence's *Revolt in the Desert* (1927) and Edmund Blunden's *Undertones of War* (1928) but stimulated by *All Quiet on the Western Front. Remembering the Great War*, 44.
31. Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 287–8.
 32. See, for example, “War Books Condemned by Ex-Servicemen”, *Sheffield Independent*, 12 May 1930, 1; “The Prince and British Legion”, *West Sussex County Times*, 17 May 1930, 8; “Ex-Servicemen and War Books”, *Yorkshire Post*, 11 June 1930, 7; “Our London Editor”, “What I Hear in London”, *Leeds Mercury*, 11 June 1930, 4; “Recent War Books: Legion’s Justifiable Angry Protest”, *Northern Whig*, 11 June 1930, 8; “Union with England; British Legion Suggestion; War Books Criticized”, *The Scotsman*, 16 June 1930, 7.
 33. See, for example, “War Books”, *Mexborough & Swinton Times*, 29 November 1929, 11; “Harmful war books: an Edinburgh protest”, *The Scotsman*, 31 May 1930, 16; “Remembrance Day Services”, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 1931, 2.
 34. Tylee, *The Great War and Women’s Consciousness*, 197. Tylee offers further information on the figures who form the basis for characters in the novel. See also Trott, *Publishers, Readers and the Great War*, 46–7.
 35. Willis jr., “The Censored Language of War”, 483–4.
 36. Tylee, *The Great War and Women’s Consciousness*, 197.
 37. Up to another 7 are probably translated, 4 of these from German. It is not always possible to ascertain the original and the translator, which makes it difficult to provide precise statistics.
 38. See Einhaus, “Wyndham Lewis, Cicely Hamilton and Nazi Germany”.
 39. Sherriff, *No Leading Lady*, 49, 65–76.
 40. Sherriff, *No Leading Lady*, 192. On the development of *Journey’s End* as a commercial success see Walters, “Between Entertainment and Elegy”.
 41. We record publications, rather than productions, and welcome suggestions for developing this analysis.
 42. See Purkis, “The Mediation of Constructions of Pacifism”.
 43. Maunder, *British Theatre and the Great War*; Brooks, *Great War Theatre*; on British theatre and the war in the early 1920s, see Brooks, “Remembering the War on the British Stage”.
 44. Reference books (18), autobiographies (20) and studies of economics (29) do not make this threshold.
 45. Campbell, “Combat Gnosticism”.
 46. Mottram, *Ten Years Ago*.
 47. Sheffield, *The Chief*, 366–7.
 48. Isherwood, “The British Publishing Industry”, 329; Tylee, *The Great War and Women’s Consciousness*, ch. 6.
 49. Trott, *Publishers, Readers and the Great War*, 13.
 50. G.G., “Forthcoming Books”, *Yorkshire Post*, 5 March 1930, 8.
 51. Bracco, *Merchants of Hope*, 3.
 52. *Ibid.*, 179.
 53. Todman, *The Great War*, 22. See also Stevenson, *Literature and the Great War*, 196.
 54. “The Garlands Wither”, *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 June 1930, 485. See Frayn, *Writing Disenchantment*, 240–2.
 55. Ward, *The Nineteen-Twenties*, 143.
 56. See, for example, Ouditt, “Myths, memories, and monuments”.
 57. Beaupré, “Soldier-writers and poets”, 471.

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Data availability

The data that underpin this research are openly available in the Edinburgh Napier University repository at <https://doi.org/10.17869/enu.2021.2810868>.

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