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0521838576 - Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914

Julie-Marie Strange

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Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870–1914

With high mortality rates, it has been assumed that the poor in Victorian and Edwardian Britain did not mourn their dead. Contesting this approach, Julie-Marie Strange studies the expression of grief among the working classes, demonstrating that poverty increased – rather than deadened – it. She illustrates the mourning practices of the working classes through chapters addressing care of the corpse, the funeral, the cemetery, commemoration and high infant mortality rates. The book draws on a broad range of sources to analyse the feelings and behaviours of the labouring poor, using not only personal testimony but also fiction, journalism and official reports. It concludes that poor people used not only spoken or written words to express their grief, but also complex symbols, actions and, significantly, silence. This book will be an invaluable contribution to an important and neglected area of social and cultural history.

JULIE-MARIE STRANGE is Lecturer in Modern British History at the University of Manchester.

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In loving memory of Sylvia Ann Bamber 1944–1993

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Abbreviations

BALS	Bolton Archives and Local Studies
BOHT	Bolton Oral History Transcript
GRO	Gloucester Record Office
LRO	Lancashire Record Office
LVRO	Liverpool Record Office
Man. OH	Manchester Oral History
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
PP	Parliamentary Paper
PRO	Public Record Office
WRO	Wigan Record Office
YRO	York Record Office