Marjorie Darke is an excellent writer who probably deserves as much credit for her painstaking research, so thorough that her novels seem almost like documentaries on their period. This is especially true in this one where Luke and Bella, twin descendants of Midnight, the freed African slave in *The first of Midnight*, are trying to survive not only the sufferings of the working classes at the time of World War I, but also their conflicting and shifting attitudes towards the patriotic (brutal and bloody) spirit engendered by the times. Bella goes into munitions but must cope too with Luke's decision to be a conscientious objector, with all the humiliations and sufferings that that entailed. This is a painful book to read, but a rewarding one for experienced, thoughtful older readers, including staff.