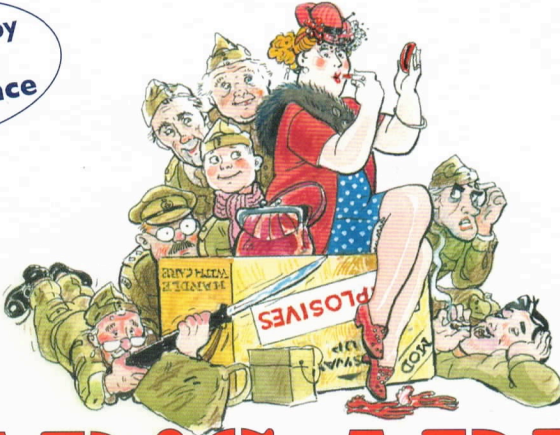




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PRESENTATION

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DAD'S ARMY

BY JIMMY PERRY
AND DAVID CROFT

DIRECTED BY MARGARET MANN

20TH - 28TH

APRIL 2007

7.45PM



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DIRECTOR'S NOTES



When I first read the script of *Dad's Army*, I noted that little time had been provided to either change scenes or for the actors to change clothes! I then read in the playwright's notes that any songs from the wartime period could be included to enhance the production. This was music to my ears! It has been a real pleasure to research my late mother's collection of musical scores and play and sing the songs once heard regularly on 'wireless' or gramophone'.

I've been blessed with an excellent, dedicated cast, who have clearly enjoyed perfecting their acting, singing and movement skills, and a hard-working, good-humoured stage crew who have created the sets of that well-known Church Hall and its environs so realistically. My thanks go to every member of the team, including our designer, prompt, wardrobe mistress, props, sound and lights; they have all cooperated so willingly to bring this particular comedy to life. Indeed, Christine Ratcliffe of the Sound department has attended almost as many rehearsals as the cast itself!

Lastly, thank you, our audiences, for supporting the Southport Dramatic Club and our Little Theatre so loyally; we couldn't continue to flourish without your patronage.

Keep the flag flying!

Margaret Mann
Director



OH, WHAT A SILLY WAR...

The threat of imminent armed invasion and the preparations undertaken to deal with it, might seem unlikely subjects, for a TV sitcom, even after a distance of many years from the original events which, for most people, have become the stuff of history books rather than personal recollection. But the success and lasting popularity of the BBC's *Dad's Army* reminds us that all aspects of human experience are capable of comic treatment, and that tragedy and comedy are just different ways of telling the same story.

Dad's Army does not simply send-up what was a deadly serious time in our history, but instead uses the element of the ridiculous - a bunch of mostly elderly British eccentrics prepared to take on the Nazi war machine - to elevate the Home Guard to heroic status. We are never in any doubt about the sincerity of either their bravery or their often misguided and sometimes just plain stupid efforts to protect their country; as a result they inspire our affection - there is something instinctive about wanting to root for the underdog, and to see the bumbling but well-meaning innocent overcome the clever and sophisticated bully.

Shakespeare's "shallow fools", the local constables, Dogberry and Verges, are the dramatic ancestors of the Walmington-on-Sea platoon. But the more immediate predecessors of a show like *Dad's Army* are to be found in the Music Hall acts and films of such pre-war entertainers as Will Hay, George Formby and the Crazy Gang, and in the later Baling Comedies. One source of inspiration for writer Jimmy Perry, who had served in the Home Guard and came up with the original idea for the show, was a Sunday afternoon TV showing of the classic Will Hay film, *Oh! Mr Porter* with its "pompous man, old man, and young boy". Bill Pertwee (who played ARP Warden Hodges in the series) recalls that Arthur Lowe often chatted about the Music Hall. Despite Lowe's reported condescension about Clive Dunn's Variety background, and his refusal to be involved in such "low comedy" as losing his trousers (look out for the scene in the film version where everyone apart from Lowe is marching along in long-Johns!), Pertwee believed Lowe's comic timing and mannerisms were particularly influenced by Robb Wilton and Sandy Powell. As a child in the 1960s, I saw Powell in a Variety Show in Blackpool, and was once almost persuaded to learn Wilton's famous monologue, "The Home Guard" (which opens with the immortal line, "The day war broke out"), so I may be one of the few people under 50 who can appreciate this comparison!

The communal spirit of wartime Britain provided *Dad's Army* with the perfect excuse for bringing together what the late Peter Tinniswood described as "a pageant of characters who are near-Dickensian in their richness and warmth". But the wartime setting also served to remind viewers of one of the most dramatic moments in our history, when the "British way of life" was threatened with a very literal destruction by bombs and foreign occupation. It gave the show its extremely effective - and unashamed - feeling of nostalgia and even patriotic pride. Punctuated by contemporary songs and music, there was the added bonus of Perry's wonderfully pastiche opening number sung by Bud Flanagan (his

last professional undertaking), which resulted in false-memory syndrome on the part of a number of viewers who insisted they'd heard it during the war.

Uniquely for a TV sitcom, the show also gained immeasurably from a close attention to the language, manners and attitudes of the time. In his book, *Dad's Army: The Story of a Classic TV Show*, Graham McCann reveals how David Croft (co-writer with Perry) "was determined to make the programme seem as true to its period as was humanly possible. Any line that sounded too 'modern', such as 'I couldn't care less', was swiftly removed from the script".

Besides relying on an extensive repertoire of the eccentric habits of the British, that very British trait of snobbery about class and social position provided a key element in the natural comedy of the show. The relationship between Mainwaring and Wilson was frequently fuelled by Mainwaring's indignant awareness of having humbler origins than the public-school educated Wilson. Mainwaring's class-consciousness was made yet more pronounced and funnier, by having him shoulder the captain's pips as well as a fully-developed chip. This departure from the expected social hierarchy in the military, memorably caught out Huw Wheldon, BBC TV Controller of Programmes at the time, when he dropped in on one of the early rehearsals. He later confessed (without any trace of irony) how he had made the wrong assumption about the casting:

"I had taken it for granted that John Le Mesurier, elegant, intelligent, sardonic and rather weary, was the officer [in the scene]; and that Arthur Lowe, brisk, belligerent and bustling, was the sergeant. But [it was actually] the other way round...! was delighted. It was the first note of unpredictability in a series that has been fresh and creative ever since"

The scripts and performances of *Dad's Army* still hold the power to persuade the viewer to accept a comforting and beguiling picture of a departed Britain (more specifically England), one much less complicated, fractured and cynical than the present, where it seems there was such a thing as shared "traditional values", at a time when the nation was united in the face of a foreign foe. It is the magic kingdom which George Orwell describes in one of his essays: *"the King is on his throne and the pound is worth a pound [and] over in Europe the comic foreigners are jabbering and gesticulating, but the grim grey battleships of the British Fleet are steaming up the Channel"* ("Boys Weeklies").

So what is the lasting appeal of the show? Well-loved actors, believable characters and a genuine feel for the period are certainly key parts of its success. But perhaps the type of humour which lights up the scripts and performances is the most important factor. Over on the other side of the Atlantic, at the same time as the later episodes of *Dad's Army* were first aired in Britain, American TV audiences were responding appreciatively to the smart, wise-cracking cynicism, and not a little pain, of their own war-time inspired comedy, *MASH*, set during the Korean war but very much attuned to the attitudes provoked by the Vietnam conflict. For British viewers, however, *Dad's Army* perhaps reveals that we prefer our satire and anti-war message to be good-humoured, gentle and, above all else, wrapped in the impenetrable armour of the ridiculous.

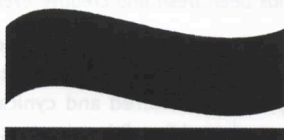
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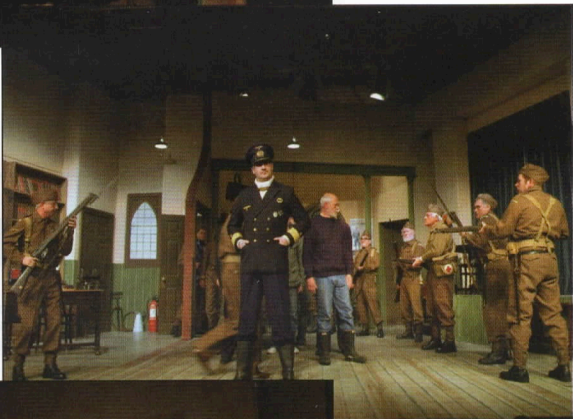
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DAD'S ARMY



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DAD'S ARMY





DAD'S ARMY

BY JIMMY PERRY
AND DAVID CROFT
DIRECTED BY MARGARET MANN

CAST

Captain Mainwaring.....	MIKE STOWELL	Private Sponge	ERIC W. RIMMER
Sergeant Wilson.....	RAY MANN	Private Meadows.....	SYD COLEY
Lance Corporal Jones.....	STEVE EMERSON	Mrs. Pike.....	DIANE MACKLEY
Private Frazer	LES GOMERSALL	Mrs. Fox	ANN RICHARDS
Private Godfrey	DAVID CHARTERS	Mrs. Grey.....	HELEN PICKAVANCE
Private Walker	BRENDAN GILLOW	Ivy Samways	LIANNE NAUGHTON
Private Pike	ANDREW KAYE	Edith Parish	CATHERINE LEIGHT
Colonel / Private Day	BILL BRIGHT	Miss Ironside.....	VIV TYRER
Chief Warden Hodges.....	STAN HAGAN	Mrs. Prosser	ANNE SYKES
The Verger / Soldier	ERIC CHADWICK	Mrs. Hart.....	JEAN FLINN
U-Boat Captain.....	SIMON ARMSTRONG	Waitress.....	SABRINA REGAZZONI
Private Cheeseman.....	CHARLES PRESTON	U Boat Crew.....	STAGE CREW & GUEST "ARTISTES"
Private Hancock.....	PETE SLATER	Piano Forte	MARGARET MANN

The action takes place in Walmington-on-Sea. Time: 1940

ACT I

THE DEADLY ATTACHMENT

Scene 1	The Church Hall, Home Guard Headquarters, Walmington-on-Sea. Early one evening.	Scene 5	The Church Hall. Later that night.
Scene 2	In the office. A little later that evening.	Scene 6	The Office. Immediately following.
Scene 3	The Church Hall. Later that evening.	Scene 7	The Church Hall. Immediately following.
Scene 4	The Church Hall. A little later that night.	Scene 8	In the street on the way to the Harbour.

MUM'S ARMY

- Scene 1 The Church Hall. Night.
Scene 2 In the Office and the Church Hall.
Scene 3 In the Church Hall and Office.
Immediately following.
Scene 4 In the Church Hall and the Office. The following night.
Scene 5 Ann's Pantry. Day.
Scene 6 The Church Hall and the Office. Night.
Scene 7 The Station Waiting Room and Platform. A little later.

ACT II

THE GODIVA AFFAIR

- Scene 1 In the Office and the Church Hall.
Scene 2 In the Office. Immediately following.
Scene 3 Frazer's and Godfrey's, Pike's and Cheeseman's houses at night.
Scene 4 Ann's Pantry. Day.
Scene 5 The Office and the Church Hall.
Scene 6 In the Office.
Scene 7 The Church Hall.

THE FLORAL DANCE

- Scene 1 Captain Mainwaring and Mr. Hodges in Discussion.
Scene 2 The Church Hall.

*The Play is divided into four episodes interspersed with music. Two of the episodes form the first act of the play and two, the second act. There will be an interval of 20 minutes between the two acts.
Why not beat the rush and pre-order your interval drinks in the bar?*

STAGING

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| Stage Manager..... | Phil Hutchinson | Lighting | Tony Berry |
| Deputy Stage Manager..... | Debbie Moss | Sound | Chris Ratcliffe |
| A.S.M. (Book) | June Hunter | Set Constructed by | SDC Production Team |
| Properties | Gay Stowell
Julie Whelan | Scenic Artist | Bob Jessamine |
| Costumes..... | SDC Wardrobe & Cast
Sherel Coley
Margaret Horne | Photography by..... | Neil Hickson |
| Set Design..... | Syd Coley | Stage Crew | Lindsay Haywood
Colin Haynes
Jeremy Myers
Andrew Connard
Roderick Beardsell |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The director would like to thank: Penrith Little Theatre for Morris Dancing Costumes, Bolton Little Theatre for Guns, Flame Costumiers of Torquay for the uniforms etc. and Helen Pritchard and Brian Hodge for their valuable assistance in recording music.



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DAD'S ARMY

Cast

Mike Stowell *Captain Manwaring*

This is only the third military role that Mike has played at the Little Theatre, having previously appeared as the mercenary Pedro de Candia in *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1978) and as 2nd Lt. Trotter in *Journey's End* (1982). He is delighted to have received promotion at long last!



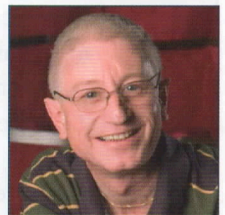
Ray Mann *Sergeant Wilson*

How do you solve the problem of Le Mesurier? (with acknowledgements to *The Sound of Music*).



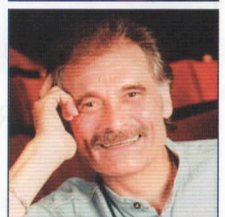
Steve Emerson *Lance Corporal Jones*

Steve says, "It has been a real pleasure to be a part of such a happy show." He hopes that he does justice to the part or its panic all round! (Don't panic Steve) Ed.



Les Gomersall *Private Frazer*

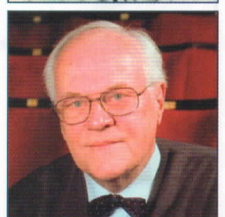
What an enjoyable way to end a busy SDC season for Les. Having played Pa Larkin in *Darling Buds of May* and Jim in *Brassed Off*, he is delighted to be playing Frazer with such a talented cast and crew.



David Charters *Private Godfrey*

According to Jimmy Perry and David Croft, Private Charles Godfrey served during the first world war in the Army & Navy, as a gent's outfitter.

2782907 L.A.C. Charters D.R. served part of his National Service in Malaysia, during the last days of the British protectorate on R.A.F. signal units, as a painter and doper.





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DAD'S ARMY

Cast

Diane Mackley *Mrs. Pike*

Diane has had no problems in playing the part of a nagging mother, a role that comes quite naturally, as her two sons will testify! Singing is also second nature, so rehearsals have been a joy!



Ann Richards *Mrs. Fox*

Ann says, "One can experience all levels of society at the SDC, Lady Bracknell last season - now Mrs. Fox! Quite a challenge, but what fun!"



Helen Pickavance *Mrs. Grey*

Helen is continuing her World War II involvement by crossing the channel from Rene's Café in *Allo' Allo'* to the quieter delights of Walmington-on-Sea.



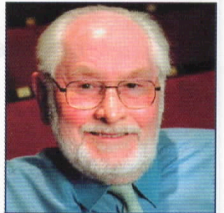
Andrew Kaye *Private Pike*

Andrew continues his run of main season parts as the dim witted Private Pike, after playing Professor Higgins in *Pygmalion*, the Youth Theatre production.



Stan Hagan *Chief Warden Hodges*

Stan wishes to remain anonymous in case he is recognised for what he is.



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DAD'S ARMY

Cast

Brendan Gillow *Private Walker*

Brendan has finally found his role in life as the 'Spiv' Private Walker, after playing romantic leads, dockers, coal miners and murderers, in recent productions.



Bill Bright *Colonel / Private Day*

Bill reached the dizzy heights of Corporal in the RAF, but now he is promoted at last to the Colonel in this production or *Dad's Army*, then he's demoted to a Private, and finally becoming a Vicar. (Such multi tasking is to be applauded) Ed.

Eric Chadwick *The Verger / Soldier*

Last time Eric went back to WWII he sported a shocking handlebar moustache, an accent and a silly hat. This time, thankfully there is no moustache!



Simon Armstrong *U-Boat Captain*

Simon is pleased to be playing a German character again, so that he can practise his German. He is enjoying being part of this talented cast.



Jean Flinn, Catherine Leight, Ann Sykes,
Viv Tyrer, Lianne Naughton, Sabrina Regazzoni



Syd Coley, Charles Preston, Pete Slater,
Eric Rimmer



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Production*

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