

Southport Dramatic Club

In commemoration of the centenary of World War One



THE ACCRINGTON PALS



*powerful, funny,
intimate and moving...*

By Peter Whelan

Directed by Paul Wilkinson

Based on the true World War One story of the men who left together as Pals, and died together as heroes

19th - 27th September 2014

7.45pm

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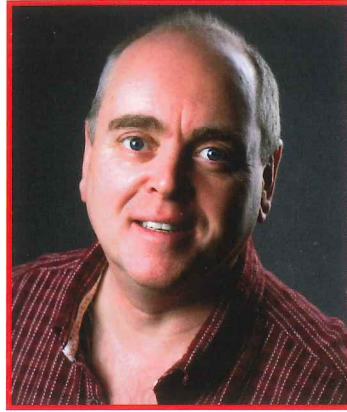
for bookings telephone: 01704 543354
9b Hoghton Street, Southport PR9 0TE

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The process of rehearsing a play is a little like reading a really good book. We discover new characters and stories along the way, and anticipate the end - the performance – with a sense of nervous excitement; eager to share the tale with an audience, but a disappointment that the reading, the rehearsal, is over.

Despite its sometimes dark themes, we have laughed a lot, cried a little and learnt something of the heartache, frustration and anger that many women experienced as they watched their loved ones go to war. Sadly, many families still have to go through this heartache.

I have had an amazing time working with our cast and crew to bring the story to life. The team of people listed in the



Paul Wilkinson
Director

credits are simply incredible, devoting so much of their free time to design, build, paint and construct scenery, source props, design lighting, edit video, learn lines, prompt lines, create costumes, produce sound effects and promote, sell and staff each performance.

I'm not used to having so many people helping me to put a play together and I'd like to thank them all for making it such a smooth and rewarding experience. A special thanks to the Play Selection and Casting Committee for inviting me to direct the play, especially Jan Hale who has supported and advised me along each Little Theatre step.

Above all, thanks to the cast for their hard work and humour, which has helped to make rehearsals such a joy.

We're excited to share our production with you, thank you for coming. I hope it inspires, delights and moves you. As one character in the play says 'There are tear-dimmed eyes in the town today.' – You may need a hanky...

Paul Wilkinson, Director



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THE INSPIRATION FOR THE PLAY

Peter Whelan was inspired to write *'The Accrington Pals'* after reading how, during the Great War, the women of Accrington, driven desperate by rumours of disaster and angered by ludicrously optimistic newspaper reports of progress at The Front, surrounded the local Mayor's house to demand the truth. These mothers, wives and lovers of the 'Pals' were not prepared to accept the official war information; they resented government secrecy as much as we do today and suspected a cover-up of blundering at the top.

First performed by The Royal Shakespeare Company in 1981,

Whelan's play has become a classic portrayal of the effects of the First World War on working class families. The pride and excitement of the early days of the war as men from relatively poor backgrounds suddenly found themselves training with better food and wages than they could ever receive at home, and the promise of travel and excitement enticing them to leave their families behind. Back home, women discovered and learnt new job skills leading to a revolution in employment.

Lord Kitchener called for a New Army of 'Pals' – battalions of men enlisted from the same town, whose confidence would

be strengthened by the knowledge that they were fighting alongside their own family, friends, neighbours and workmates.

Accrington became the smallest town in England to raise a volunteer 'Pals' brigade and in just ten days the Lancashire town sent 1000 of its men and boys to war. In just ten minutes, most of them were slaughtered at The Battle of the Somme.

The women of Accrington were left devastated and alone, nothing could ever be the same again.

Paul Wilkinson, Director

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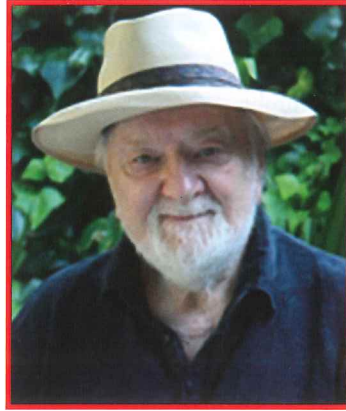
THIS AMATEUR PRODUCTION IS PRESENTED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH JOSEF WEINBERGER LTD.
ON BEHALF OF MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL AND CAMERON MACKINTOSH LTD.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

The award-winning playwright Peter Whelan was born in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, in October 1931 and was the son of a lithographic artist. He was brought up at Bucknall, Stoke-on-Trent and attended Hanley High School. He completed his Army National Service in Berlin after the war.

At Keele University, Whelan read English and Philosophy and whilst studying he met his wife Frangcon Price. When Whelan graduated he tried a number of different jobs but settled in employment as an advertising copywriter. He was the man behind the Stones' Bitter slogan, *"Wherever you may wander, there's no taste like Stones."*

He co-wrote his first play *'Double Edge'*, a thriller, in 1975 with his advertising colleague Leslie Darbon. It was performed at the Vaudeville Theatre in 1978 and starred Margaret Lockwood.



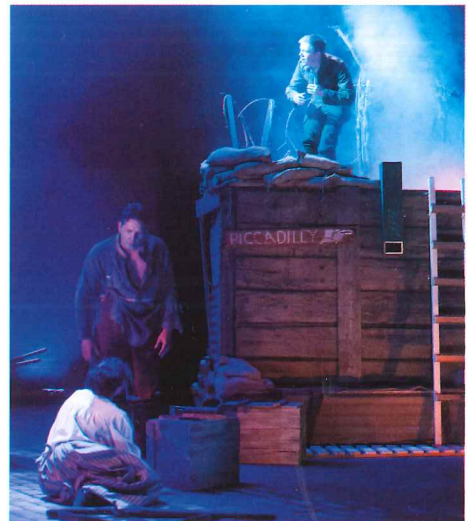
Peter Whelan
Author

His next play *'Captain Swing'*, a historical play, was his own work. It was presented in 1978 by the RSC at The Other Place in Stratford-upon-Avon with Alan Rickman and Zoe Wanamaker in the cast. It was very successful and transferred to London. Whelan then wrote the play *'The Accrington Pals'*, which was presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the London Warehouse on April 10, 1981.

Whelan's best known work is *'The Herbal Bed'* about the melancholy life of Susanna, the daughter of William Shakespeare. Written in 1996 the original production starred David Tennant and Joseph Fiennes and was directed by Michael Attenborough.

Other plays written by Peter Whelan include: *'A Revolutionary Marriage'*, *'The Earthly Paradise'*, *'A Russian in the Woods'*, *'Overture'*, *'Divine Right'*, *'Shakespeare Country'*, and *'The School of Night'*. He wrote a total of seven plays for the RSC. In 1997 he was awarded 'Playwright of The Year'.

The playwright had three children with Frangcon namely Tim, Larry and Megan. Sadly he died this year on July 3rd at the age of eighty-two.



STAGING

Stage Manager	.....	SDC Team
Assistant Stage Manager (Prompt)	.....	Lynne Hawksworth
Properties	.....	Muriel Leefe & Amy Farrar
Wardrobe	.....	Kate Hargreaves & The SDC Wardrobe Team
Lighting Design	.....	Michael Clarke
Lighting Team	.....	Team LX
Sound	.....	Chris Ratcliffe
Scenic Artist	.....	Bob Jessamine
Set Design	.....	Syd Coley & Paul Wilkinson
Set Construction	.....	Pete Beswick, Alan Gosling and The SDC Construction Team
Photographs	.....	Fletcherhill Photography
Programme Editor	.....	Jacque Bolshaw
Programme Content & Research	.....	Henry James
Press Promotion	.....	Ron Ellis & Ellen Campbell
Programme Layout and Design	.....	Mitchell & Wright (Printers) Ltd

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Zack Johnson for his help with video editing, Brian Hodge for his invaluable assistance with sound, Lynn Gosling and Syd Coley for their help and advice with props, Margaret Mann for her musical contributions and Jan Hale and Marilyn Fletcher-Hill for their support and advice. We would also like to thank Queenscourt Hospice, David Plum and members of the SDC for their valuable assistance with providing props for this production.

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The action takes between autumn 1914 and July 1916

Act One

The scenes overlap between:

- A Town Square in Accrington
- The Recruiting Office
- May's Kitchen
- A Training Camp in England

Act Two

The scenes overlap between:

- The Western Front
- May's Kitchen
- Sarah's Back Yard
- A Town Square in Accrington

There will be an interval of 20 minutes during the performance



The Little Theatre - Home of the Southport Dramatic Club.

The SDC wishes to ensure that all our patrons enjoy a comfortable, enjoyable and safe visit to our theatre. We should be grateful for your co-operation in helping us to achieve this. Please note the following:

- Should you arrive after the performance has started, you will be guided to your seats when a suitable opportunity occurs.
- At the end of the performance, exits will be open at both the front and back of the auditorium.
- First Aid assistance is regularly provided by volunteers from the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Should you require help, please advise our stewards on duty in the Foyer.
- Patrons with hearing impairments should note that the auditorium has an Induction Loop System for your assistance.
- Please ensure that all mobile phones and electronic devices are switched off during the performance.
- Photography and video recording are not allowed during the performance.

Designated Premises Supervisor, Alan Newport



THE ACCRING CA



Catherine Leight

May - a stall holder



Robbie Fletcher-Hill

Tom - an apprentice



Chris Seery

Ralph - a clerk



Alice Burns

Eva - a mill girl



Ceri Powell

Sarah - mill worker

THE TON PALS ST



Georgia Daly
Bertha - a mill girl



Sabrina Regazzoni
Annie - a house wife



Nick Lloyd
Arthur - Annie's husband



Charlie McMullan
Reggie - Annie's son



Brendan Gillow
*CSM Rivers
- a regular soldier*



Simon Hawkins
*Recruiting officer
- Horatio Bottomley*

LINKS WITH THE I

As part of the rehearsal process, we explored our own links to the First World War; it was a way of bringing the characters and events of the play a little closer to our own lives.

Ceri Powell (*Sarah*) - My great-grandfather Edwin Lowe and his two older brothers were in the Kings (Liverpool) Regiment. The eldest was killed shortly after arriving in Flanders, the other, Corporal James Lowe died in June 1918 also in Flanders. Edwin was sent home after being gassed in Flanders, he was the sole brother to survive the Great War.

Catherine Leight (*May*) - My family name is Juburous originally from Lithuania. My great-grandfather being Jack El Juburous. They were influential members of the community (land owners, farmers and priests) with a £40million fortune and their own coat of arms. During World War One, Lithuania was taken over by Russia and the Juburous family fled to England and America leaving everything behind. Following naturalisation they changed their name to Light, however due to a spelling error it became Leight. The family became an influential part of the Liverpool music scene with Jack Leight and his Jazz Band.



Fred Wise with Rose & Winifred

Lynne Hawksworth (*Prompt*) - My great-uncle Joe (Joseph Meyrick), on my dad's side, was in the 3rd Battalion of the Monmouthshires. The Accrington Pals script, made me think so much of him. He was the 'Victor Ludorum' of his school; a sportsman, academically talented and above all an artist like Tom. He died in May 1915, at Ypres, and although he does not have a grave, his name is on the Menin Gate. The family have several of his paintings, one of which hangs in my house. RIP, great-uncle Joe.

Paul Wilkinson (*Director*) - My great-grandfather Fred Wise was a driver in the Royal Engineers during the First World War. He came under fire at The Battle of Ypres in 1914, and was fortunate to survive and return to his wife Rose and their three girls, including my grandmother Winifred.

Mike Clarke (*Lighting designer*) - My great-grandfather, John Roundell Haworth was in the South Staffordshire Regiment. He died on 21st November 1916 from injuries sustained at the Battle of the Somme.

Robbie Fletcher-Hill (*Tom*) - My great-grandfather Arthur Samuel Hill, was a stretcher bearer in the trenches and injured whilst carrying others to safety. The family also lost a mother and very young sister on a passenger ship that was sunk by torpedoes. My great-grandmother's brother, Edmund Saunders, was sent home from the trenches suffering from shrapnel wounds to his head and shell shock, but was still sent back to fight.

Chris Ratcliffe (*Sound*) - My grandfather John James Ratcliffe served in the Royal Artillery during World War 1.

Brian Hodge (*Sound advisor*) - My mother's brother, Jack, eldest of a family of eight, as a teenager volunteered for military service and was sent to the front line in France. Shortly after his 19th birthday he wrote a letter home...here is an extract:

FIRST WORLD WAR

Sat ... June 29/18

Dear Father and Mother,

Just a few lines to let you know I am still A1 hoping all at home are the same. I received a packet of cigs from Auntie Lizzie just before we went into the line & I received the wallet & fags when we were up there. We are out of the line now for a bit so you needn't worry about me. (After more personal messages to family and friends the letter ends:) Well I haven't much news this time as it is the same old topic every time The war and the weather. Kindly remember me to Bertie & all at home.. & tell Pollie I have received a letter from her & will write as soon as possible. I will now close hoping to be home soon (what hopes).

I remain Your loving son

Jack xxx

xxx

xxx

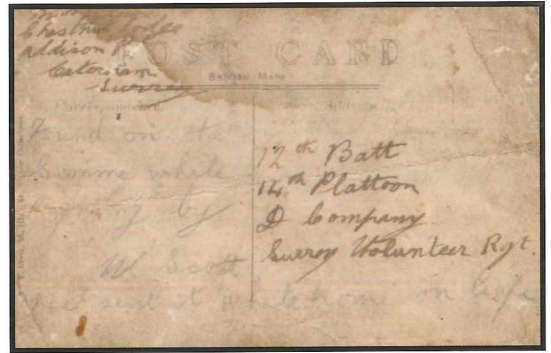
It was the last letter my grandmother received from him before he was reported missing, and it was some years before she finally accepted that he had not survived.

Alice Burns (Eva) – My great-grandfather Sergeant William James Squires of the Lancashire Fusiliers was awarded the military medal for being in charge of a Lewis gun during a reconnaissance at Ypres on 6th September 1917. When all of his team became casualties he worked his gun alone allowing the operation to be carried out successfully. His devotion and conduct throughout this action was described as most exemplary, and a source of encouragement to his comrades.

Simon Hawkins (Horatio Bottomley – off stage character) My great-uncle Harry Blows fought with the 11th Battalion, West Kent Regiment at the battle of Flers-Courcelette during the 1916 Somme offensive. The attack was notable for the first use of tanks. Harry's battalion fought in the attack on the village of Flers, which was eventually taken after heavy fighting. He was one of more than 600 men

who died at Flers that day. He has no known grave, but his name is listed on the Thiepval Memorial, about six miles from where he was killed. He left a wife and small baby.

After Harry died a postcard was discovered inscribed; 'Found on the Somme while fighting by W Scott. He sent it while home on leave.' The postcard shows members of the Surrey Volunteer Regiment including Frederick Hawkins, a bachelor who had raised Harry's wife Florence. She had been virtually abandoned when a child by her parents who were distant cousins of his. A few years after the war Harry's sister Nelly married Frederick Hawkins. I am their great grandson.



Harry's postcard found on the Somme



Harry Blows

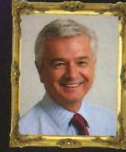
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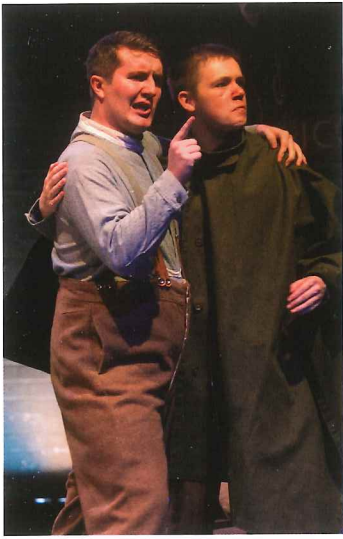
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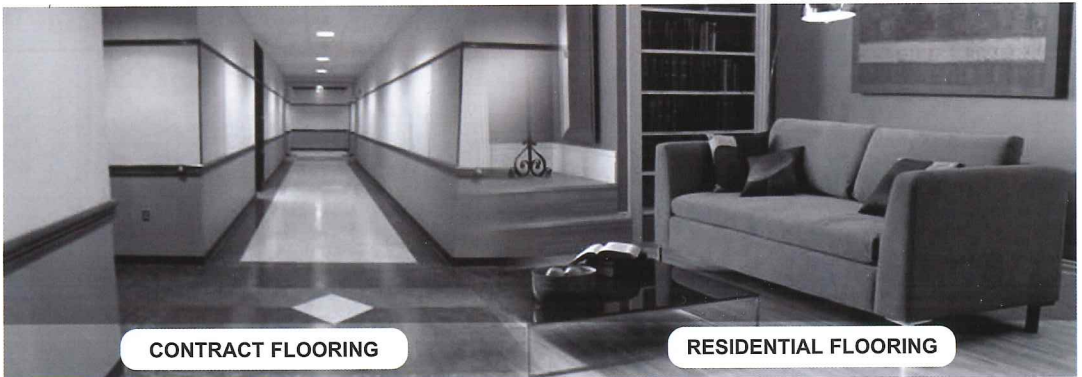


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SPOTTY

by F. Chatterton Hennequin and Phyllis Norman Parker (1914)

Performed by Bransby Williams, actor, comedian and monologist

Spotty was my chum, he was, a ginger-headed bloke,
An everlasting gas-bag and as stubborn as a moke.
He give us all the 'ump he did before it come to war,
By sportin' all 'is bits of French, what no-one asked him for.
He says to me, 'Old son,' he says, 'you won't have 'arf a chance,
When I gets in conversation with them demerselles of France.'
I says to 'im, 'You close yer face,' he says, 'All right bong swore,'
Don't 'urt yourself mong sher amy,' then 'so long! oh re-vore!'
When we got our marching orders you can bet he wasn't slow,
A-singing, 'Tipperary! it's a long, long way to go.'

On the transport 'ow he swanked it, with 'is parley vooing airs,
Till I nearly knocked 'is 'ead off 'cos he said I'd 'mal de mares'.
When we landed, what a beano, how them Frenchies laughed and cried,
And I see old Spotty swelling fit to bust 'iself with pride,
He was blowin' of 'em kisses and was singing, 'Vive la France,'
Till the Sergeant-Major copped 'im, then he says, 'Kel mauvay chance!'
But we didn't get no waitin', where we went no-one knows,
And it wasn't like the fighting that you see in picture shows.
We 'ad days of 'ell together, till they told us to retire,
And then Spotty's flow of language set the water carts on fire.

'Im and me was very lucky, for two-thirds of us was dead,
With their greasy 'black Marias' and the shrapnel overhead.
And every time they missed us when the fire was murderous 'ot,
Old Spotty says, 'Honcore! Honcore!' that's French for 'Rotten shot.'
And then at last there came the time, we got 'em on the go,
And 'im and me was fightin' at a little place called Mo
A-lying down together in a 'ole dug with our 'ands
For you gets it quick and sudden if you moves about or stands,
We was sharing 'arf a'fag we was, Yus! turn and turnabout,
When I felt 'im move towards me, and he ses, 'Oh mate I'm out.'
'Is eyes they couldn't see me - they never will no more,
But 'is twisted mouth it whispered, 'So long matey, Oh Re-vore!'

There was no one quite the same to me, for 'im and me was pals
And if I could 'ave 'im wiv me you could keep your fancy gals
But he's taking French in 'eaven, and it's no good feelin' sore
But Gawd knows 'ow I miss 'im - "So long Spotty, Oh Revore!"



Margaret Mann
Director

NOW IN REHEARSAL

The Chalk Garden

A Tony-Award Winning Play
By Enid Bagnold

In contrast to this evening's play, our next production is set in the late fifties in a peaceful England! Mrs. St. Maugham, a wealthy, former society hostess, resides in a country manor house in Sussex. Having lived in some style and mixed in the 'best' circles, she now counteracts her relative boredom by trying to tame and develop both her large garden and her spoiled, wayward granddaughter, Laurel! Into her life comes the enigmatic Miss Madrigal, who becomes Laurel's companion and, subsequently, sparks fly! A well-meaning, diffident manservant, an estranged daughter and a prestigious Judge also add to the intrigues of this dramatic and humorous play. An excellent evening's entertainment, the play reflects an England recovering from the deprivations of war and the breaking down of social barriers. Come and experience a different life style, set in another time – a period which many of our long-standing patrons may remember!



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by Enid Bagnold

Directed by Margaret Mann

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Follies

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Directed by Adrian Roberts

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Southport Dramatic Club

A Tony Award Winning Play

The Chalk Garden

A Stimulating Piece of Theatre

By Enid Bagnold

Directed by Margaret Mann

24th October -
1st November 2014

7.45pm

Produced by
special arrangement
with Samuel French Inc.


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