

**Southport Dramatic Club**

presents

# *The Ghost Train*

**By Arnold Ridley**

**26th SEPTEMBER to 4th OCTOBER 1980**

**Nightly at 7.45**



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# Chairman's Message

Dear Patron,

May I extend to you a very warm welcome to the first play of our 1980/81 Winter Season.

In the months ahead we shall present as varied a programme of plays as possible in an endeavour to cater for all tastes.

We offer our grateful thanks for your loyalty and support over the years, and to those who are visiting us for the first time we look forward to welcoming you again.

Yours sincerely,

JEAN WRIGHT,  
Chairman, S.D.C.



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## **WHAT'S ON** *at the LITTLE THEATRE*

24th October to 1st November

### **THE CORN IS GREEN**

by Emyln Williams

Directed by Stanley Ellis

An S.D.C. Production

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12th to 15th November

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST**

by Oscar Wilde

Directed by Pat Ball

A Garrick Players Production

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28th November to 6th December

### **LLOYD GEORGE KNEW MY FATHER**

by William Douglas Home

Directed by John Evans

An S.D.C. Production

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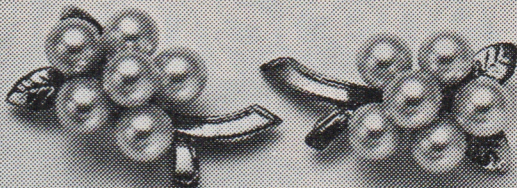
30th December to 17th January 1981

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## *From the Director*

The 'Ghost Train' was first performed at the St. Martin's Theatre, London, on 23rd November, 1925. Originally written by Arnold Ridley—('Godfrey' in 'Dad's Army')—as a thriller with occasional touches of comedy of situation and character—the play now becomes almost melodramatic in its 1920's setting. The very stylised dialogue of that period, which we have tried to preserve, brings in an added dimension of humour today. This has arisen naturally in rehearsal without, we trust, detriment to the atmosphere of suspense and excitement.

The characters remain true to themselves and each other within the rather bizarre context of the play as it reads today. They are stylised into 'types'. Take our stranded passengers for example: the rather eccentric 'fun' character of Miss Bourne with her parrot: the 'newly-weds'—so much in love: the couple at separation point: the stupid ass 'type', almost reminiscent of the Aldwych farce: old Saul, the stationmaster of Fal Vale, adding a touch of local colour, while the remainder of the cast heighten the tension and mystery as the plot unfolds.

The cast have worked with great patience, attention to detail and altruism towards a standard of finesse and precision which the play demands.

David Charters has designed a setting of great atmosphere and authenticity, while Ron Treanor has given endless thought and time to creating the recorded sound effects which are so vital to the success of the production.

This is, essentially, a 'backstage' play and our team behind the scenes must take fair credit with those on stage. The atmospheric lighting from the imaginative design of Sid Coley, the meticulous set-painting of Roy Blatchford, the attention to detail given by Kay McCallen in the Properties' Department, with the valuable help of the local Steamport Museum and Jayne Barty's ingenious costume creations from Wardrobe have all combined to present the play which you have seen tonight.

All in all, we have tried to keep the balance between any humour arising and the essential mood of suspense, and so, if you, our audience, having played your part in this revival, feel that you have had a night at the fairground — with moments in the 'House of Fun' and on the 'Big Dipper'—to say nothing of the 'Ghost Train' itself—we shall all be well rewarded.

JOYCE GOLDSWORTH

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# THE GHOST TRAIN

by ARNOLD RIDLEY

“The Ghost Train” was first performed at the St. Martin’s Theatre, London, on 23rd November, 1925. The following extract is taken from an account of this original production, written by B. W. Findon and published in ‘The Play Pictorial’ of January, 1926:—

“I am not going to provide you with a solution of ‘The Ghost Train’, in as much as the management has given me a good lead in not providing me with one single picture that “gives the show away.” Therefore, if the management deem it not fit to enlighten the readers of ‘The Play Pictorial’ I will have to recourse to the editorial umbrella, and under its safe protection, ignore the “denouement.”

The programme is marked: Act I — 10 pm, Act II — 11.30 pm and Act III — 12.30 pm. In this instance, whatever faults Mr. Ridley may have as a dramatist, he has not neglected the teachings of Aristotle as to unities.

“The Ghost Train”—the very title is of the creepy kind that thrills young people when they begin to talk about the supernatural at an hour when they should be retiring to their beds. And what the title suggests, the play proves. The countryside was racked by the terrible accident and the ghostlike stories that time weaved around it. The stationmaster tells you all this before he mounts his bicycle to go home.

. . . . Now, dear friend the reader, what are you going to make of this?”

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## Acknowledgments

Amazon Green Parrot—Polly—Lent by kind permission of  
Mr. Petrie of Southport Zoo.

Properties and valuable authentic information received  
from the Steamport Museum, Derby Road, Southport

Interval music specially chosen by Gerry Williamson from  
his own Jazz Collection.

Southbank Road Methodist Church for furniture.

Cedric Greenwood for posters.

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Stage Manager ... .. **Peter Beswick**

Asst. Stage Manager (Book) ... .. **Judith Chalmers**

Asst. Stage Managers (Cast) **Rosie James, Jennifer Young**

Properties ... .. **Gay Saunderson**

Lighting Design ... .. **Sid Coley**

Lighting ... .. **Fran Percival**

Sound ... .. **Ron Treanor**

Wardrobe ... .. **Jayne Barty**

The set designed by **DAVID CHARTERS**,  
constructed and painted by **ROY BLATCHFORD**,  
and built by the **CONSTRUCTION TEAM**

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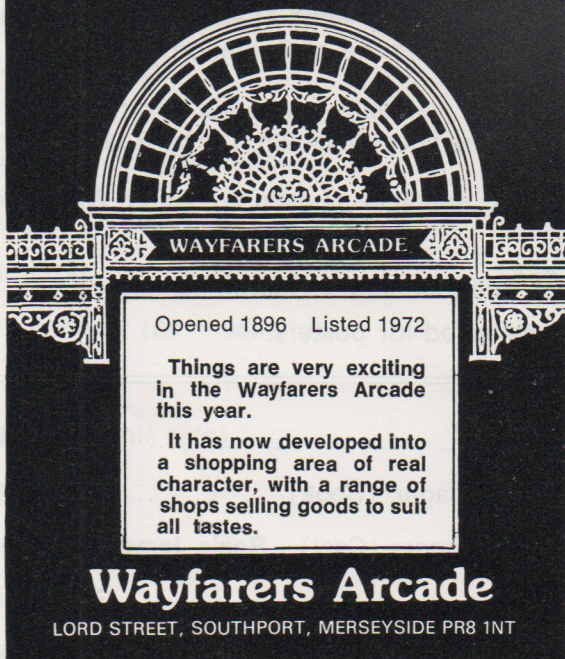
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# *Southport's Own Steam Service*

We are grateful for the technical advice and practical help from another local bunch of enthusiasts — The Southport Locomotive and Transport Museum Society. We thought you might be interested in their story and, by the way, why not let the kids take their dads to Steamport, Derby Road on a Sunday. The locos in steam are a marvellous sight.

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## **HOW IT ALL BEGAN**

The idea of forming a Transport Museum at Derby Road was conceived by a small group of Southport Bus and Railway enthusiasts in 1971. An appeal in the Southport Visiter that year attracted sufficient interest in the project that as a result the Southport Locomotive and Transport Museum Society was formed. The Motive power depot at Derby Road had been disused since 1966 when the last steam locomotives at Southport were withdrawn from service. It had been thoroughly stripped by British Railways and subsequently vandalised so that by 1971 there were no doors, windows or roof glass left unbroken. There was no water, electricity or other services, the shed and yard were full of rubble and worst of all from a railway point of view, no track remained on site.

Whilst negotiations for the lease of the building went on members of the Society engaged in various fund raising activities and slowly began to clear the shed, restore services and to start to lay track. Notably track was lifted and transported from redundant industrial sidings in St. Helens and six pairs of doors salvaged from the former electric stock repair shops at Meols Cop were hung across the end of the shed. By 1973 agreement was reached with British Rail on the lease of the shed and the first locomotives, buses and other exhibits were on site. At this point Steamport Southport Limited, a company limited by guarantee, based on the Society was formed to administer the project. In addition agreement was also reached on a rail connection between British Rail and Steamport enabling further locomotives to enter the shed.

The Museum opened to the public at the Spring Bank Holiday in 1974, since then further exhibits have been received, more track laid and further work done to the building, although much remains left to do.

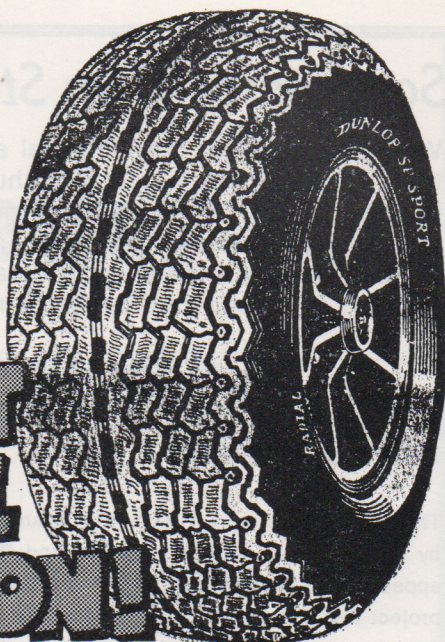
Particular thanks must be made to the Southport and now Sefton Councils, for their help in providing a small grant to assist with initial building work and for guaranteeing part of the rent payable to British Railways in the first two years of the Museum's life. Thanks are also due to the Merseyside County Museums for the loan of various items from their collection and to the large number of individuals and groups who have also loaned exhibits.

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## “SOUNDS PECULIAR”

When the play was first produced in 1925, there were no sophisticated electronic effects to create the train passing through the station and everything had to be co-ordinated on a manual basis. The original, very comprehensive instructions to the stage manager make very interesting and almost incredible reading:—

### TRAIN EFFECTS

- 1 tubular bell (E flat).
- 1 garden roller propelled over bevel-edged struts screwed to stage, 30 inches apart.
- 1 18-gallon galvanized iron tank.
- 1 thunder-sheet.
- Air cylinders (obtainable from British Oxygen Co., Wembley, or local agents).
- 1 bass **rope** drum and pair of sticks.
- 2 side-drums.
- 1 small padded mallet (auctioneer's hammer).
- 1 large padded mallet (for beating tank).
- 1 medium mallet.
- 1 wire-drum brush.
- 1 milk-churn.
- 1 pea-whistle
- 1 train whistle (for mouth).
- 1 whistle on cylinder.
- 2 electric or hand-driven motors.
- 2 slides cut to give shadows of carriage windows of train.
- 2 flood arcs on each side of **stage**.
- 1 tin amplifier for steam with a counterweight placed in its mouth.

### TO WORK FIRST TRAIN

- Screw whistle into nozzle of cylinder.
- 1 man sits astride this and another cylinder with amplifier ready to work (A)
- 1 man stands stands by roller (B).
- 1 man stands by tank with large padded mallet (C).
- 1 man stands by thunder-sheet (D).
- 2 men stand by motors (E).
- 2 men stand by flood arcs with slides focussed on exterior of windows (F)
- 1 man stands by with wire brush and small side-drum (G).
- 1 man stands by bass drum.

On the rise of the curtain the STAGE MANAGER hits the tubular bell twice with small padded mallet. When Stationmaster lights gas, C and H beat on tank and drum gently, gradually increasing in volume. Then E and G start, followed by D. Finally A starts air release, and as the total volume of sounds increase, B starts to pull his roller over the struts as rapidly as possible, gradually slowing. When noise is at its height, **all stop dead** except A, who continues to blow off air. While train is in station, Stationmaster shouts "All change!" while C repeatedly beats milk-churn with its lid. He stops as STAGE MANAGER blows pea-whistle. A gives two sharp blasts on his whistle (H has carried his bass drum to O.P. (R) side of stage while train is in station). STAGE MANAGER then grasps medium padded mallet and beats second side-drum (which should be fairly slack) 1 beat. Then another beat, then another, gradually increasing in pace and diminishing in volume as train is supposed to leave station. **Simultaneously, and keeping in time with him.** D gives a shake to sheet, A gives puff of steam, B gives beat on tank, E works motors and B starts roller. H also does roll on drum. These effects should be carried on until noise of train dies away in the distance in an indistinct murmur. As train leaves station F slide their slides across the window in turn, gradually increasing in pace to give the effect of the train lights passing the waiting-rooms. **The whole success of the Effect depends on each unit being together and the rhythm preserved.**

Future programmes will feature articles on theatrical terms and further 'backstage secrets.'

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October 9th—25th

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October 18th—25th

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by Terence Rattigan

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October 23rd—November 1st

## **HOME**

by David Storey

**WIGAN LITTLE THEATRE**

September 26th—October 4th

## **DEATH OF A SALESMAN**

by Arthur Miller

**BINGLEY LITTLE THEATRE**

October 6th—11th

## **ABIGAIL'S PARTY**

by Mike Leigh

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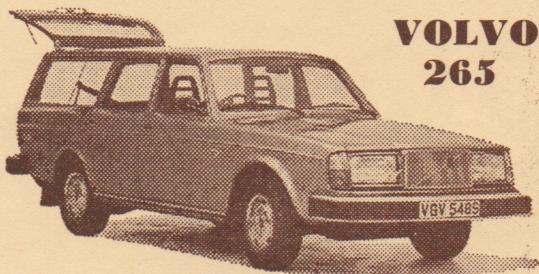
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