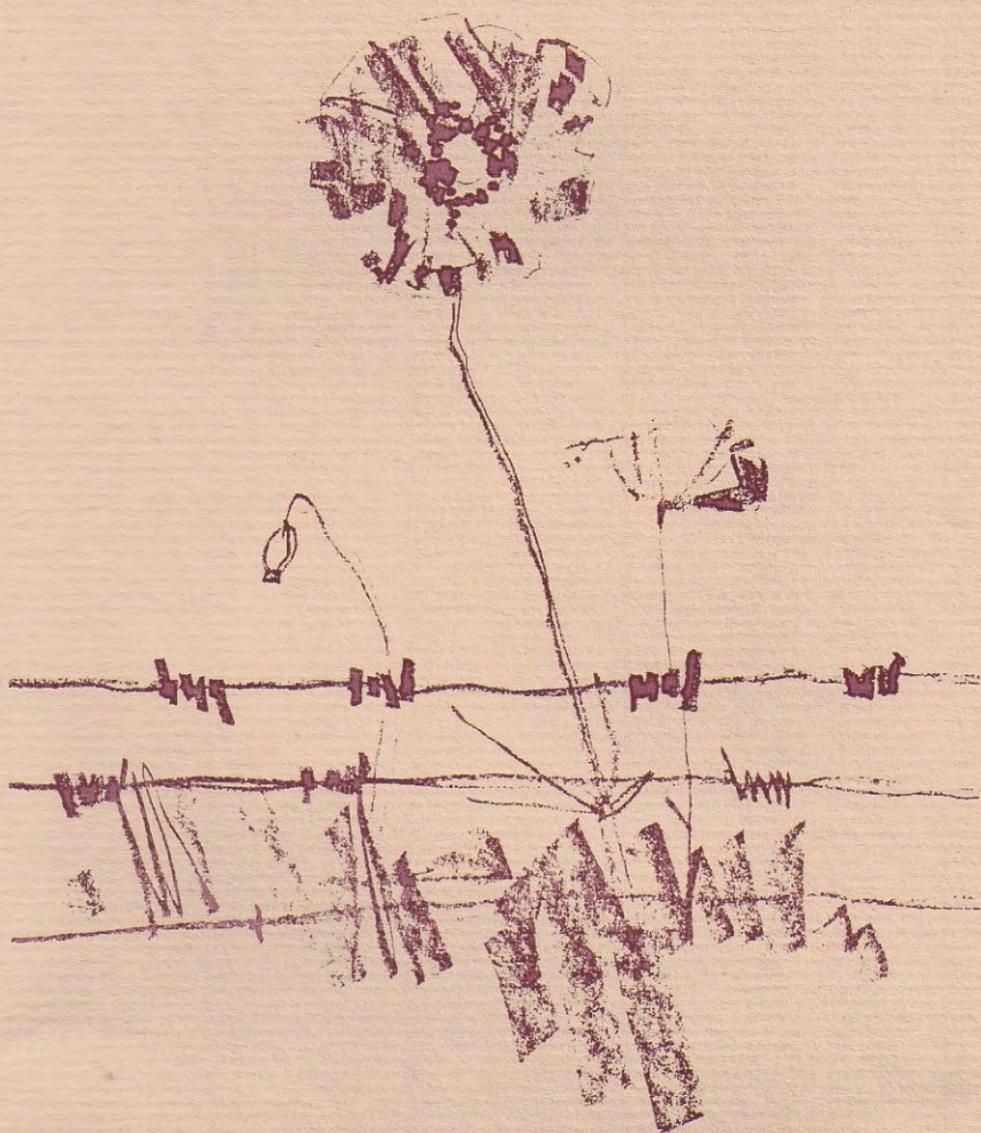


THE ACCRINGTON PALS

BY
PETER
WHELAN





THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY

First performance February 14th 1983

I joined The Questors in the mid-1950's just in time for the modern theatre as we know it to get under way.

I'd always wanted to write plays of my own, but suddenly there was such a torrent of new drama flowing around me that I guess I lost my footing, and was more than happy to go along with the current as actor, director or spectator.

There was Osborne at The Court, Beckett at the Arts, Brecht's Berliner Ensemble at the Palace . . . and a wave of Ionesco and the absurdists to follow.

Those of us who grumbled about The Questors new plays policy at the time should look back amazed at how much of the new writing came to our door. I met Jim Saunders, directed *Ends and Echoes* and appeared in the first production of *Next Time I'll Sing To You*.

Pinter came and sat, solemn and concentrated, at the back of the Shaw Room as we rehearsed *The Birthday Party* – (Practically booed off the stage after seven performances at the Lyric some months earlier).

With a party of Questors I went to Berlin to be, amongst other things, Rozencrantz (or was it Guildenstern?) in the first one-act version of Stoppard's play (Stoppard, like an intellectual Mick Jagger, directing).

Ted Whitehead came to sit in on rehearsals for a David Mowat play. He decided there and then to switch from novels to plays, because you didn't have to write all the chunks between the dialogue.

So, by the time I raised the effort of will and the courage to write my own plays, it seemed I'd had – through the Questors – a lifetime of getting involved in other people's. Though, of course, I'd learned nothing. You never really do.

A collaboration with Don Kincaid on *Lakota* in 1970, got me started. Another collaboration with Les Darbon on a thriller, *Double Edge*, got me to the West End . . . and generated the money for me to write my first solo play *Captain Swing*.

And so to *The Accrington Pals*, which goes on now as *Clay* closes at the Pit. I suppose I should have left some space to say something about 'The Pals' instead of indulging myself with a trip down memory lane. For 'The Pals' is not meant to be about memory lane. The shadow cast over my parents' youth in that war is the same shadow that is cast over the youth of today. I wanted the souls of those two generations to touch in knowledge and sympathy through the play. We are all crossing no-man's land now.

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Cast in order of appearance

TOM	Peter Field
MAY	Alison Pollard
ARTHUR	Norman Wilkinson
REGGIE	Stuart Rhodes
RALPH	Ian Pinkerton
EVA	Glynis Carter
ANNIE	Ffrangcon Whelan
SARAH	Sue Styles
BERTHA	Marian Malone
C.S.M. RIVERS	Robin Ingram

Directed by David Fletcher
Set designed by David Gilbert
Costumes designed by Lindsay Udell
Lighting and sound designed by Alan N. Smith

The action takes place between autumn 1914 and July 1916.

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

Patrons are respectfully requested not to take refreshments into the auditorium.

<i>Stage Manager</i>	Roger Sturm
<i>Deputy Stage Manager</i>	Steve Feather
<i>Assistant Stage Managers</i>	Helen Feather, Steve Hames, David Hovatter, Pete Mansell, John Spencer, Chris Roberts, Mary Sturm
<i>Wardrobe</i>	Jaqui Rolph
<i>assisted by</i>	Lindsay Udell, Anna Piet, Hilary Evans
<i>Properties</i>	Joan Curry
<i>assisted by</i>	Heather Dowling
<i>Construction</i>	Gordon Miller
<i>assisted by</i>	Members of the Crew
<i>Lighting Assistant</i>	Simon Taylor
<i>Sound Assistant</i>	Sue Crowson

Our thanks to the London Transport Museum, Covent Garden, for their assistance.

Bugle Band by the 10th Ealing Boys Brigade band.

OPEN DISCUSSION

on **TUESDAY, 22nd FEBRUARY**, at 7.45 pm in the **BERNARD SHAW ROOM**.

Has it been an interesting evening? Surely one that has stimulated thought and perhaps raised questions about the play, its background, its presentation?

Come and join others in this extension of this evening's entertainment. You do not necessarily have to join in the discussion, though all shades of opinion from members of the audience are valuable. Many come just to hear what others have thought, and in particular to hear the views of the Discussion Leader, who on this occasion will be

JOHN ELSOM

the distinguished theatre critic and author of many books about the contemporary theatre.

The author of the play, Peter Whelan, has also promised to be there. A stimulating evening is assured!

NOTE THE DATE

TUESDAY, 22nd FEBRUARY
at 7.45 pm
in the **BERNARD SHAW ROOM**

All are welcome

Admission is free

In the West Foyer there is a display of photographs and other material illustrating the work of Peter Whelan, both at The Questors and in the professional theatre.

THE ACCRINGTON PALS

The Accrington Pals was the nickname of the 11th Battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment who were formed as one of the Volunteer battalions of Kitchener's New Army in 1914, and fought on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, on 1st July 1916.

28 June 1914	Archduke Ferdinand assassinated in Sarajevo.
28 July 1914	Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia. The Great War begins.
4 August 1914	Great Britain enters the War.
September 1914	The Accrington Pals formed in 10 days.
February 1915	Training at Caernarvon.
May 1915	Training at Penkridge, Staffordshire.
August 1915	Training at Ripon.
September 1915	Training on Salisbury Plain.
December 1915	The Pals sail to Egypt to 'guard' Suez Canal.
February 1916	Ordered to the Western Front.
March 1916	Join the Front Line.
1st July 1916	7.30 am: Battle of the Somme begins. The Pals go over the top as part of the first wave.

ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

*What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, —
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.*

*What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.*

WILFRED OWEN

THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING HAPPENING AT THE QUESTORS

IN THE MAIN THEATRE

March 12 – 19

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

by Peter Stevens, from the translation by Brian Stone

A story imbued with the heroic atmosphere of the saga and the spirit of mediaeval romance, telling of Sir Gawain's triumph in almost insuperable ordeals.

April 9 – 16

A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY

by Ivan Turgenev, translated by Ariadne Nicolaëff

The pampered wife of a wealthy landowner falls in love for the first time – with her son's young tutor. Turgenev's masterpiece is a wry comedy about the extraordinary way people start to behave when infected by the virus of romantic love.

April 26 – 30

THE MIDNIGHT SUN

by David Mowat

A new play which tells the true story of a Polish seaman who, having absconded from his vessel and taken refuge on an English ship, finds himself stateless. Unable to return to his homeland, not permitted to immigrate into any other state, his dilemma is interwoven with the legend of the Flying Dutchman.

During all main theatre productions food is available from 6.30 pm at THE HOTPLATE in the upper foyer.

IN THE STUDIO

February 23 – March 5

SECOND YEAR STUDENT GROUP in MIXED BILL

Electra by Sophocles, translated by H.D.F. Kitto

Coda by Olwen Wymark

Black Comedy by Peter Shaffer

Don't miss this exciting annual event which gives you a chance to spot the new talent at The Questors.

JUMBLE SALE in aid of The Questors Development Fund, to be held in the Shaw Room, 1.30 – 2.30, on Saturday, February 19th. Please deliver any jumble to the theatre on Friday, February 18th, or ring Jackie Todd 994 2372 (daytime) or Kay Barwick 997 4522.

Open to all – so tell your friends!

Membership of The Questors entitles you to a ticket for ten major productions each season, plus the chance to book for numerous other events. If you would like to know more about The Questors activities, you are welcome to attend one of our **OPEN MEETINGS**, which are held every Wednesday at 7.45 pm.