

Join Us

If you enjoy theatre, why not join us and benefit from membership:

- ✓ Half price personal tickets for Questors productions*
- ✓ Discounted Guest tickets when you bring friends to Questors productions*
- ✓ Children's FREE tickets†
- ✓ Opportunities to be actively involved in our productions
- ✓ Opportunity to audition to join our company of actors
- ✓ Exclusive or discounted training courses
- ✓ Access to *iQ* – the members-only website: members.questors.org.uk
- ✓ Receive a full-colour members' magazine three times a year
- ✓ Access to exclusive news on *iQ* and email newsletter
- ✓ Receive the regular programme leaflet
- ✓ Membership of The Grapevine Club
- ✓ Special invitations, events and offers not available to the public
- ✓ Ticket reservation facility (conditions apply)
- ✓ Voting rights in the company

**Reduced prices exclude certain events. †Under 18, excludes certain events, maximum four per event. Must be collected at the performance and accompanied by the member.*

Getting the most from your membership

We have a wide range of opportunities for you to become actively involved front-of-house or backstage. Volunteer help is always needed for selling programmes or stewarding, and training is provided if you'd like to work in Box Office with our computerised system. To meet members in a social setting, volunteer to help behind the Grapevine bar. Backstage staff including stage managers, prop makers, set builders, sound and lighting designers and operators, painters, wardrobe and costume and set designers are always welcomed; whatever your skills, we'll find a place for you. We also have courses for those wishing to direct.

The Questors has a high standard of acting and, to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – call the Theatre Office for details of forthcoming auditions.

The Questors Youth Theatre – QYT

Our Youth Theatre, QYT, runs weekly drama classes for all ages from 6 to 18. Younger groups meet on Saturday mornings and older ages at weekday teatime. There's often a waiting list for membership, so put your name down now! Details are online at questors.org.uk/qyt.

The Questors Theatre
Box Office: 020 8567 5184
Email: enquiries@questors.org.uk

Programme: Nigel Bamford
12 Mattock Lane, Ealing, W5 5BQ
Theatre Office: 020 8567 0011
Registered Charity No. 207516

Questors, Ealing's Theatre

**SLEEPERS
IN THE FIELD**
by Peter Whelan

**The Judi Dench Playhouse
26 January – 3 February 2018**

Fields at The Questors

Fields at The Questors serves Italian coffee, fine teas, hearty meals and handmade cakes, and is the perfect spot for a pre-theatre meal or intermission ice-cream.

Order interval drinks before the show to beat the crowds.

Regular opening hours:
Monday to Saturday,
9:00 am to 7:30 pm

Also open before and during the interval of all Judi Dench Playhouse evening and matinee performances.

Find **Fields** on **Facebook**.



The Grapevine Bar

The Grapevine is our friendly club bar open to Members and Friends of The Questors Theatre and their guests, as well as audience members on show nights.

The club is open seven nights a week and Sunday lunchtimes, and is managed and staffed entirely by volunteers.

We are the proud holders of a Cask Marque award for the quality of our real ales, we appear in the 2018 edition of The Good Beer Guide and we are **CAMRA West Middlesex Club of the Year**. A choice of at least three real ales is usually available, including Fuller's London Pride. We also provide a range of draught lagers and ciders, as well as wines and spirits – all at very reasonable prices.

Opening Hours:

7:00 pm – 11:00 pm (10:30 pm close on Sundays)

Sunday lunchtime: midday – 2:30 pm

See questors.org.uk/grapevine for more details.

Fields and the Grapevine accept payments by card.



SLEEPERS IN THE FIELD

by Peter Whelan

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26 January – 3 February 2018

SLEEPERS IN THE FIELD

Peter Whelan (1931 – 2014) was one of the most distinctive playwrights of his time, although he turned to playwriting relatively late in life. Despite an early success (*Double Edge*, a thriller written with Leslie Darbon, which enjoyed a long run at the Vaudeville in the West End in 1975) he was never a writer who courted popular success. When *Captain Swing* (1978) was accepted as an unsolicited script by the RSC (an unusual event in itself) he formed a particular bond with that company and, in particular with one of its directors, Bill Alexander. Alexander directed the first production of *The Accrington Pals* (1981), one of Peter's best-known plays, still frequently performed, and subsequent premieres of *Clay* (1982), *The Bright and Bold Design* (1991) and *The School of Night* (1992). When Alexander left the RSC to work for the Birmingham Rep, he directed Peter's *Divine Right* there in 1996. In the same year the RSC presented another of Peter's most celebrated plays, *The Herbal Bed* (directed by Michael Attenborough) which dealt with the historically true story of how Shakespeare's daughter, Susanna, was accused of adultery. The RSC production starred Joseph Fiennes and David Tennant, and moved from the RSC into the West End, before transferring to Broadway. In 1996 Peter was also appointed an Honorary Artistic Associate of the RSC – and also won the Writers Guild Award for *Divine Right* and *The Herbal Bed*. In 2001, the RSC premiered *A Russian in the Woods*, based on Peter's own experiences in post-war Berlin in 1950, during his period of National Service.

His other plays include *Lakota* (1970) – a musical written in collaboration with long-standing Questors member, Don Kincaid – *A Cold Wind Blowing Up* (1983, another collaboration with Leslie Darbon), *World's Apart* (1986, adapted from José Triana), *Shakespeare Country* (1991, a commission from the Little Theatre Guild), *Overture* (1997) and *The Earthly Paradise* (2004). He also occasionally wrote for television, including *The Trial of Lord Lucan* (ITV, 1994).

Peter was also a long-standing member of The Questors, joining in 1956 and becoming an outstanding actor and director. He actually created the part of Guildenstern in Tom Stoppard's original one-act version of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (then entitled *Guildenstern and Rosencrantz*). One of tonight's cast, Robin Ingram, played the part of the Boy in the 1961 production of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in which Peter played Vladimir. Peter's last appearance as an actor was in 1992 in a rehearsed reading with his wife, Ffrangcon. It is to Ffrangcon, herself a long-standing acting member of The Questors, that we owe a debt of gratitude for the opportunity to present tonight's play. In 2016 I was commissioned by Methuen to write an introduction for their new edition of Peter's *The Accrington Pals*, having previously written one for their 2011 edition in the Drama Modern Classics. In 2011 I was able to

benefit from interviews with Peter, who was extremely supportive and informative. In 2016, I went to talk to Ffrangcon, who was equally supportive and informative. In the course of our conversation she mentioned the title of one of Peter's plays I'd never heard of – *Sleepers in the Field*. Peter had written it in 2010, but it had never been 'placed'. I read it and couldn't understand why it hadn't been snapped up. Other readers at The Questors were equally enthusiastic, as was Anne Neville, our Artistic Director. Ffrangcon was kind enough to grant us the right to stage the World Premiere – and here we are tonight. This is the eighth of Peter's plays to be produced at The Questors; the others being: *The Accrington Pals* (1983 & 2004), *Clay* (1989), *Shakespeare Country* (1993), *The Bright and Bold Design* (1998), *The Herbal Bed* (2000), *A Russian in the Woods* (2003) and *The School of Night* (2013).

Sleepers in the Field is a very characteristic Peter Whelan play. Like *The Accrington Pals* and *The Herbal Bed*, it has a historical setting which it exploits to explore the attitudes and dilemmas which belong to our own time. Peter once said that all plays were concerned with the question which Socrates posed – 'How shall we live?' – and it is interesting to find that quotation in the mouth of Ted, one of the play's central characters. The concern with personal morality, responsibility to one's self and to others is palpable in the play. It's been said by more than one commentator that Peter's plays are 'epic in scope, but domestic in nature' – that is, he is able to localise and realise major issues in the minutiae of real lives. Although this is not an autobiographical play, Peter does draw (as he did in other plays) on his own experience and on his own family background for creating the characters. Perhaps this to some extent accounts for what the writer of The Telegraph obituary referred to as his '*gift for tenderness towards his characters*' – but it seems to come from a more general understanding of, and sympathy for the human condition. Peter was a lifelong socialist and republican and, in real life, could be very robust in debate. But in his plays he displayed a wonderfully tolerant view of the characters he created; as in Chekhov, there are no villains. Dominic Dromgoole puts it very well in *The Full Room*, his book about modern playwrights. Having discussed Peter's capacity for giving a truthful representation of life, Dromgoole adds: '*His other remarkable quality is his treatment of human kindness... The small, personal and domestic moments of progress that Whelan charts, and the skill with which he evokes life as lived, are immensely reassuring*'. This puts its finger on the humanity at the heart of this play, and of all Peter's plays.

Ffrangcon tells us that Peter spoke of this play as 'the play he wanted to write'. After working on so many commissions as a writer in demand, it's good to think that Peter sat down and did just that, and to feel that we have the opportunity of realising that wish on stage. So, thank you, Ffrangcon for letting us do this play – and thank you, Peter, for writing it. We hope that you, the audience, will enjoy it as much as we have.

John Davey, Director

SLEEPERS IN THE FIELD

by Peter Whelan

The World Premiere of this play performed at The Questors Theatre on 26 January 2018

CAST

in order of appearance

Ted Walsh	David Sellar
Joe, his son	Henry Knox (26th, 28th, 31st, 2nd) Gregory Stanier (27th, 30th, 1st, 3rd)
Binnie, his wife	Despina Sellar
Dinty Moss	Mark Redrup
Roy Minshall	Marcus Carr (27th, 30th, 1st, 3rd) Dylan Lewis (26th, 28th, 31st, 2nd)
Marion, Joe's sister	Claudia Carroll
Mr Sand	Robin Ingram
Leslie Nicholson	Victor Mellors
Sergeant Jill Williamson	Lisa Varty
Captain Gryff East	Felix Grainger

The play takes place in three locations: the back garden of the Walsh family's bungalow on the edge of a midlands town; an anti-aircraft (ack-ack) site; and a disused World War 1 army hut.

The play begins in July 1940 and ends in late 1941.

The performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes including a 15-minute interval.

Please turn off all mobile phones and similar electronic devices.
The use of cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited.
Thank you.

PRODUCTION

Director	John Davey
Set Designer	Ray Dunning
Costume Designer	Sarah Andrews
Lighting Designer	Robert Walker
Sound Designers	Alan N Smith, Paul Wilson
Production Manager	David Emmet
Production Advisor	George Savona
Stage Manager	Cathy Swift
Deputy Stage Managers	Sadie Crowder, Abena Weston
Assistant Stage Managers	Steven Cowan, Josh Perry, Andrew Whadcoat
Properties	Peter Salvietto
Prompter	Anne Sawbridge
Dialect Coach	Dorothy Lawson
Movement Advisor	Nicholas Jonne Wilson
Wardrobe Assistant	Mary Davies
Lighting/Sound Operators	Oliver Potter, Paul Wilson
Set Realisation	Doug King, Stephen Souchon, Rob Willin
Get-In Team	Jeff Benny, Toby Burbidge, Angus Duke, Bernd Gauweiler, Paul Souchon
Hair and Make-Up	Sarah Andrews
Photographer	Peter Collins
Thanks to	Jane Arnold-Forster, Alec Atchison, Jean Derby, Mike Hadjipateras, Harriet Parsonage, Stephanie Pemberton, Dorrit Pollard-Davey, Iain Reid, Ruth Simpson, London Motorcycle Museum

We are all indebted to Robert and Lisa Gordon Clark for their generous financial support of this production.

Biographies

Sarah Andrews – Costume Designer

Sarah joined The Questors in 1977 as a member of Student Group 32 and since graduating has appeared in many plays, most recently *The Comedy of Errors*. Sarah has designed and dressed a countless number of shows, most recently *The Country Wife*, *Boeing-Boeing*, *An Ideal Husband*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *The Winslow Boy* and *The Talented Mr Ripley*.

Marcus Carr – Roy Minshall

Marcus has been an active member of Questors Youth Theatre for five years. He has appeared in *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Grimm Tales*, *Cinderella* and *Emil and the Detectives*. Marcus has also taken part in Questors Youth Theatre holiday courses.

Claudia Carroll – Marion Walsh

Claudia has been a Questors member for some time; training here for two years and working as a Youth Theatre teacher. She has appeared in numerous Questors productions, most recently playing the title role in *The Country Wife* (at The Questors and Minack Theatres). She has also recently embraced the challenge of setting up her own company: Orange Moon Theatre, inspired by women, the moon and magic.

John Davey – Director

John has been directing and acting at The Questors since the 1970s and has been both Artistic Director and Chair of the Theatre. Recent productions have been *Uncle Vanya*, *The Master Builder*, *The Country Wife* and a double-bill of David Greig plays at the Jermyn Street Theatre, Piccadilly. His first acting role at Questors was in D. H. Lawrence's *Touch and Go*, directed by Peter Whelan.

Ray Dunning – Set Designer

Ray has been designing for The Questors since 1985. Starting with *The Daughter-in-Law*, *Bartholomew Fair* and *The Glass Menagerie*, he has worked on numerous productions in the Playhouse and the Studio. More recently his sets have included *The Winslow Boy*, *After October*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Master Builder* and *The Country Wife*.

Felix Grainger – Captain Gryff East

This is Felix's first production with The Questors. A recent graduate from the University of Oxford (where he performed in a number of productions with OUDS) Felix has been living in London, acting and performing as much as he can with hopes of training further. Acting at the Tower Theatre Company in *Nell Gwynn* and working on the *Cloak and Dagger* tour in Borough, Felix is aiming to find his way in the world of London theatre.

Robin Ingram – Mr Sand

Robin was tutored by Alfred Emmet in Student Group 21. After training at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Manchester Metropolitan School of Theatre, Robin returned to The Questors where he has had a long association with the plays of Peter Whelan, appearing in *The Accrington Pals*, *The Herbal Bed* and *A Russian in the Woods*. He is delighted to be taking part in this world premiere.

Henry Knox – Joe Walsh

This is Henry's first production at The Questors. Previous performances include the Wolf in *Grimm Tales*, Joe in *Fame Junior* at Hampton Hill Playhouse, West End Stage Summer School's production of *Alice in Wonderland* at Her Majesty's Theatre and *The Worst Gift*, an immersive film installation at Matt's Gallery, London. Henry trains at The Central School of Ballet, loves American street tap and playing the drums.

Dylan Lewis – Roy Minshall

Dylan has been an active Questors Youth Theatre member for three years and is currently attending the Year 9 Youth Class. He has performed in a number of Questors productions, including the 2017 Youth Theatre production of *Emil and the Detectives* and the 2015 pantomime, *Dick Whittington & His Cat*.

Victor Mellors – Leslie Nicholson

Victor is very pleased to be returning to The Questors. His theatre credits include: *The Cherry Orchard* (20th Century Theatre); *Measure for Measure* and *Macbeth* (Bloomsbury Theatre); *They Had a Dream* (Cochrane Theatre); and *Twelfth Night* and *The Country Wife* (The Questors).

Mark Redrup – Dinty Moss

Mark has been acting for The Questors since 1990, appearing in over sixty shows. Recent parts include Alfred Doolittle in *Pygmalion*, Kerry in *The Exonerated* and Reverend Parris in *The Crucible*.

David Sellar – Ted Walsh

This is David's first appearance at The Questors. Roles with previous companies include Rance in *What the Butler Saw*, Goldberg in *The Birthday Party* and Mel in *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*. Roles in musicals include Billy Flynn in *Chicago*, Nathan Detroit in *Guys and Dolls* and Fredrik in *A Little Night Music*.

Despina Sellar – Binnie Walsh

This is Despina's first role at The Questors. Previous acting roles over 40 years include Mrs Manningham in *Gaslight*, Mrs Kendal in *The Elephant Man*, Maggie in *Outside Edge*, Amanda in *Private Lives* and Beatrice in *View from the Bridge*. Directing credits include *Shirley Valentine*, *What the Butler Saw*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Stones in his Pockets*, *Moonlight and Magnolias* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Alan N Smith – Sound Designer

Designs include *The Accrington Pals*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Great Expectations*, *The London Cuckolds*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Seagull*, *Festen*, *Voyagers & Lovers*, *A Flea in her Ear* and *Brassed Off*. Alan has worked closely with Paul Wilson on creating soundscapes for *All My Sons*, *Uncle Vanya* and *The Master Builder*.

Meet the Company – Wednesday 31 January

Come and meet the Director, Cast and Crew for an informal discussion in the Upper Foyer as soon as possible after the Wednesday performance

Gregory Stanier – Joe Walsh

Gregory has been a member of Questors Youth Theatre for two years. He was a detective in *Emil and the Detectives* in 2017 and has participated in numerous school productions at Brentside High School. He is intent on making acting his career.

Lisa Varty – Sergeant Jill Williamson

Lisa studied Theatre at the University of Glasgow, and joined The Questors in 2011 to train in Student Group 66. Since then, she has appeared in *Trojan Barbie*, *On the Razzle*, *House and Garden*, *Be My Baby*, *Futures*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Dead White Males* and *As Time Passes By* (Questival II). Elsewhere, she performed in *Hedda Gabler* with The Tower Theatre and, most recently, played Hebe in *Galatea* with Orange Moon Theatre at The White Bear.

Robert Walker – Lighting Designer

Having been involved with various amateur theatres over the past 10 years, Robert was quick to join The Questors two years ago after moving to West London for work. He has operated lights for Questors productions such as *Twelfth Night* and *When the Rain Stops Falling*, but *Sleepers in the Field* is his first as Lighting Designer.

Paul Wilson – Sound Designer

Paul has been a member of The Questors since 1999. Paul has either operated or designed the sound for no fewer than 75 shows, most recently *Larkin with Women*, *Trelawney of the 'Wells'*, *Endgame*, *The Last of the Haussmans*, *Boeing-Boeing* and *Stags and Hens*.



**Ravenor Farm,
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**Open Saturdays, Sundays and
Mondays**

10am - 4.30pm

Last Entrance 4pm

Next at The Questors

A PRIEST IN THE FAMILY

by Tony Rushforth
from Colm Tóibín

THE BEAR

by Brian Friel
from Anton Chekhov

2 – 10 February 2018

The Studio

A double bill from two Irish literary
greats.

ANIMAL FARM

by Peter Hall
from George Orwell

21 – 24 February 2018

The Judi Dench Playhouse

Questors Youth Theatre presents this
allegory of the corruption of the
Communist ideal as the animals on
Manor Farm rise up against their cruel
and drunken human master. But power
is corrupting and soon the pigs have
their noses in the trough.



Learning through plays?

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