

# WHEN WE ARE MARKED

A farcical comedy by J.B. Priestley

17 - 19 February 2022 Tivoli Theatre Wimborne

# **Director's Notes**

HELLO and a very warm welcome to the Tivoli Theatre for this production of *When We Are Married*. Hopefully over the next couple of hours you will be joyously entertained by this farcical comedy by J.B. Priestley.

I am sure many of you will be familiar with Priestley's most famous play, *An Inspector Calls*; indeed, you might have seen one or even both of our productions of the play here at the Tivoli over the past two decades.

Priestley was always incensed by, as he saw it, the smugness and hypocrisy of the Edwardian upper middle class. In

An Inspector Calls, written in 1945, he treated the subject with great seriousness. But in When We Are Married (1938), he tackled it comically.

Despite his reputation as a serious man of letters, Priestley had a great gift for comedy and he could be very funny himself. One of his great loves was the music hall. He respected comedians more than any other performers; people who had that gift to entertain.

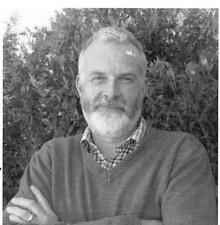
An interesting fact of the play's history is that Priestley played the drunken local press photographer Henry Ormonroyd in the first London production of the play, when the actor playing the part was injured in a motor accident, and there was no understudy, and so Priestley stepped in for 12 performances. By all accounts he acquitted himself well.

It could also be said that Priestley knew a thing or two about marriage, having tried it three times!

I am hugely indebted to my wonderful team of actors and creatives who have helped me bring this play to life. I send my heartfelt thanks to every one of them. We also as a company always appreciate the great support offered by everyone here at the Tivoli Theatre and of course by you our audience.

All that remains for me to say is sit back, relax and enjoy this wonderful comedy.

Richard Neal - Director



**Richard Neal** 

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## RICHARD SCOTSON

(Fred Dyson)

Place of birth: Manchester. Favourite comedy part: The Bead Seller in Murder On The Nile in 2018 with Wimborne Drama Productions, Absolutely loved it. The character became more flamboyant as the performances went on. Other highlights: I enjoyed playing the Policeman in Gaslight with fellow WDP actor Gary Paine. A non-speaking part, but we had the job of tying up the villain at the end of the play with a bit of rope. Trying to tie the knots in decent time with a shortish piece of rope presented a challenge for us both!

Comedy hero/heroine: Tim Vine as a stand-up is superb when it comes to quick fire one liners. On the TV, I don't think Fawlty Towers will ever be beaten. It was never about one character, as all the actors added to the chaos. And anything by Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer too. Last time you cried with laughter: I'm a gardener and one of my customers wanted me to use a seed spreader to sow grass improver on the lawn. Hadn't used it for a while so said "Don't worry, I've put some UB40 on it" ... we both fell about laughing. Dream menu at a celebratory meal: Chips and Gravy. Food of Champions.



# The Life of J.B. Priestley

JOHN BOYNTON PRIESTLEY - novelist, playwright, essayist, broadcaster, scriptwriter, social commentator, man of letters and enthusiastic amateur pianist - was born in Bradford in the West Riding of Yorkshire on 13 September 1894. His father, Jonathan,

was a schoolmaster; his mother, Emma, had been a mill girl. Emma died when he was very young, and he was raised by his stepmother, Amy.

Jack, as he was known to the family, enjoyed the rich cultural and social life of prosperous, cosmopolitan and relatively classless Bradford: music hall, football, classical music concerts and family gatherings.

Many of his finest novels, plays and memoirs draw on his feelings about this vanished time, particularly *Bright Day* (1946) and *Lost Empires* (1965).



He left Belle Vue School at 16 and worked as a clerk in a wool office, beginning to write in his spare time for publications including *The Bradford Pioneer*, published by the Independent Labour Party.

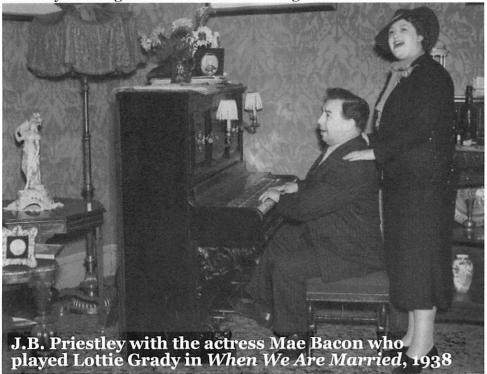
He volunteered for the army in 1914, joining the Duke of Wellington's West Yorkshire Regiment, and was sent to the Western Front where he was seriously wounded in 1916. After convalescing back in England, he was commissioned as an officer in the Devonshire Regiment and posted back to France in the late summer of 1918.

After the war, Priestley read Modern History and Political Science at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He excelled academically but decided to make a career as a writer. He moved to London and found work as a theatre reviewer with the *Daily News*, and also contributed to the *Spectator*, *Challenge* and *Nineteenth Century*. His earliest books included *The English Comic Characters* (1925), *The English Novel* (1927), and *English Humour* (1928). His breakthrough came with the immensely popular novel *The Good Companions*, about a touring concert party, published in 1929, and *Angel Pavement* followed in 1930.

In the 1930s, Priestley began a new career as a dramatist, with such plays as *Dangerous Corner* (1932), *Time and the Conways* (1937) and *When We Are Married* (1938).

The non-fiction book *English Journey* (1934) launched him into a new role as a social commentator, concerned about the welfare of ordinary people struggling in the Great Depression.

During the Second World War Priestley was a regular and influential broadcaster on the BBC. His *Postscripts* began in June 1940 in the aftermath of the Dunkirk evacuation, and continued throughout that year. They were popular with the public, but Priestley's strong socialist beliefs did not go down well with some



Gone Fishing with Paul Whitehouse, especially when Bob falls over, which he does regularly. **Dream menu at a celebratory meal:** My husband's salmon risotto followed by salted caramel ice cream.

## **GARY PAINE**

#### (Joseph Helliwell)

Place of birth: Weymouth.

**Favourite comedy part:** Playing John Smith in Run For Your Wife and in the follow-up Caught in the Net. I shall never forget having to eat newspaper! Other highlights: Playing Milo Tindle in Sleuth and Sydney Bruhl in Deathtrap. Both are excellent plays and the parts I played required me to be on stage the entire performance. I also had good fun portraying the character of The Hon. Peter Ingleton in Relative Values here at the Tivoli. Comedy hero/ heroine: Frankie Howerd - the ill-fitting suits, an extremely expressive face, and those catchphrases - "No Missus" and "Shut Yer Face". Last time you cried with laughter: One of my fellow cast members -Richard Scotson - recently had me crying with laughter when he told me that his beloved
Altrincham F.C. would beat my
team Weymouth F.C. in an
upcoming fixture. Mind you,
Scottie regularly has me falling
about laughing with his jokes
and deserves to have his own
one man show! He could fill the
Tivoli no problem. **Dream**menu at a celebratory meal:
I am partial to a bit of fish
(particularly salmon). I am also
very pleased to see lemon
cheesecake on a menu.

## **COLIN PILE**

#### (Herbert Soppitt)

Place of birth: Dorchester. **Favourite comedy part:** Norman Bassett in the farce Cash on Delivery for WDP at the Tivoli in 2014. Other **highlights:** Being in the chorus of The Producers by Mel Brooks, 2010, for BBLOC at Bournemouth Pavilion. Comedy hero/heroine: Ronnie Barker for his mix of word play sketches and comic acting. Last time you cried with laughter: I can't remember! Dream menu at a celebratory meal: I love sea food, so lobster, cray fish or monkfish, and a no-bake cheese cake to follow.

## **SIMON JACKSON**

(Rev. Clement Mercer)

Place of birth: Huddersfield in the West Riding of Yorkshire. **Favourite comedy part:** Major Courtney in The Ladykillers with WDP here at the Tiv in 2015. Other **highlights:** playing Carnoustie Bligh in Sailor Beware with Penistone Players in Yorkshire in 1965 and again with St Peter's Players in Bournemouth in 1985. Comedy hero/heroine: Les Dawson. Although he was from Lancashire, he had a very dry sense of humour like a Yorkshireman. Last time you cried with laughter: another comedy hero when I were nobut a lad was Norman Wisdom. He made me laugh so much I fell off the cinema seat. **Dream menu** at a celebratory meal: It would be have to be at Betty's Café in Harrogate for a 'posh' afternoon tea with la-di-dah dainty sandwiches, Fat Rascals and Yorkshire Parkin.

## **BETHAN MORRIS**

(Ruby Birtle)

Place of birth: I am a local girl, born in Poole Hospital.

Favourite comedy part: Well

**Favourite comedy part:** Well this is the first time having an

acting role on stage so I guess Ruby is my favourite one (so far!) Other highlights: Having grown up as a dancer I've been in more dance shows than stage productions...but I was Mary Poppins in our last show and that was a highlight! Comedy hero/heroine: Our family favourite is Miranda Hart - we just love how odd she is. Last time you cried with **laughter:** Embarrassingly recently over a Bulldog called Eggnog on Instagram...she was wearing crocs. Dream menu at a celebratory meal: My mum's famous pasta dish and a glass of Prosecco or two.

### CHRISSIE NEAL

(Mrs Northrop)

Place of birth: Slough.

Favourite comedy part: Mrs
Swabb in Habeas Corpus many
years ago at the Tiv – a peach of
a part! Other highlights: I
loved playing Mrs Danvers in
Rebecca and also Mrs
Hardcastle in She Stoops to
Conquer. Comedy hero/
heroine: Bob Mortimer – Bob
has an innocence about him and
is very funny. Last time you
cried with laughter:
Watching Bob Mortimer on
Would Lie to You and also on

politicians and commentators. The broadcasts were eventually cancelled.

Priestley chaired the left-leaning 1941 Committee and in 1942 cofounded the Common Wealth Party. In the 1945 general election he unsuccessfully stood for parliament as an independent candidate. In the same year he wrote his world-renowned play *An Inspector Calls*. As there was no theatre available in London at that time, it premiered in the Soviet Union before opening in London in 1946.

In the 1950s, Priestley became increasingly politically disillusioned, as he felt that the promises of the Labour success in the 1945 election had not been delivered. He instead focussed on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which he was instrumental in founding.

In 1962 he published Margin Released: A Writer's Reminiscences and Reflections.

Priestley continued to write and to publish well into the 1970s. His work invariably provoked thought, and his views were always expressed in his blunt Yorkshire style. He saw himself as a spokesman for the ordinary people, and was unashamedly middlebrow, patriotic, honest and opposed to the class system.

He was married three times. In 1921 Priestley married Emily "Pat" Tempest, a music-loving Bradford librarian. They had two daughters, but in 1925 Pat died of cancer. The following year he married Jane Wyndham-Lewis and they had two daughters and a son. The couple divorced in 1953 and Priestley then married archaeologist and poet Jacquetta Hawkes.

His marriage to Jacquetta was very happy: they collaborated on books such as *Journey Down a Rainbow* (1955), and together campaigned for nuclear disarmament. They lived on the Isle of Wight before settling down to a contented married life at their home near Stratford-on-Avon from 1960.

Among his many friends he counted H.G. Wells, Charlie Chaplin, Clement Attlee, Harold Wilson and Groucho Marx.

Having previously declined both a knighthood and a peerage, in 1977 Priestley accepted the Order of Merit, as this was the gift of the Queen. He died on 14 August 1984, aged 89.

Photos courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery. Sources: The JB Priestley Society, The British Library

# **Priestley In His Own Words**

#### On his home town

I belong at heart to the pre-1914 North Country. Part of me is still in Bradford, can never leave it ... something at the core of me is still in Market Street hearing the Town Hall chimes.

#### On family life

We lived as most of the Edwardian lower middle class did. Until I began to earn something (not much), we existed on my father's salary as a headmaster of a large new elementary school, and that was about £350 a year. We lived carefully, frugally if you like, but I was certainly well-nourished. Usually we took our main meal in the middle of the day, except when we had company, and then there would be the colossal Yorkshire high tea.



### On music hall

The music hall of those years, often called 'Variety', came from the industrial working class and never really moved a long way from it. Music hall humour and sentiment were always at heart working-class humour and sentiment. I often squeezed myself into the fourpenny balcony [at the Bradford Empire], from which I recognised and applauded some great talent.

Music hall star Little Titch

Music han star Little Titen

a multi-role play so I had to play many parts, which was great fun! Other highlights: Lynne in Stepping Out, for Wimborne Drama Productions at the Tiv in 2006. I loved the challenge of learning to tap dance for this role! Comedy hero/heroine: Victoria Wood. She was such an amazing writer and performer, full of talent! Last time you cried with laughter: Situations when I shouldn't laugh are the ones that make me laugh the most. The most recent one being a couple of weeks ago when a colleague leaned through an internal window into the school office to pass on a message, only to discover with a loud thud to her forehead that the window was shut! My response should have been to check she was ok, but I couldn't move for laughing! Dream menu at a celebratory meal: Scallops to start, then Pork Belly for mains, followed by Lemon Tart .... A dream combo!

# TONY FELTHAM

(Albert Parker)

Place of birth: Poole Hospital but grew up in Corfe Mullen. Favourite comedy part: Lord Fancourt Baberley in *Charley's*  Aunt at The Tivoli with Wimborne Drama Productions in 2004. Other highlights: Bill Snibson in Me and Mu Girl at The Tivoli with Wimborne Musical Theatre Society in 1999 - a special production in more ways than one as that was when I was lucky enough to meet my wife Boo who is acting opposite me tonight. Also Trotter in Journey's End for WDP at The Tivoli in 2007 and Herr Winklekopf in Lord Arthur Saville's Crime at Deans Court in 2013. Comedy hero/ heroine: Your sense of humour changes throughout life but someone who has always been there is Michael Palin. Not your classic stand-up but just an amazing comic actor who never disappoints with the characters he has portrayed throughout his life. Last time you cried with laughter: My amazing kids fill me with laughter and tears of joy and pride most days.

Dream menu at a celebratory meal: I will eat and enjoy virtually anything so that's a difficult one but I definitely prefer savoury to sweet so the pudding would therefore have to be cheeses. Maybe for starters and mains something new to try that I've never had before.

bonkers approach to presenting her Radio 2 show to her appearance on Taskmaster, I think she has a really great sense of humour and would be fun to be around. Last time you cried with laughter: Probably during rehearsals for this production. It has been an extremely enjoyable few months and a welcome relief from the world around us. Dream menu at a celebratory meal: You can't beat a proper cream tea. Lashings of jam, freshly baked scones so they're still warm and it's cream first where my family come from!

## **CHRIS DURHAM**

(Henry Ormonroyd)

Place of birth: London. **Favourite comedy part:** Crestwell the butler in Relative Values here at the Tivoli in 2016. Other highlights: Arthur Winslow in The Winslow Boy in 2018 and The Duke of Norfolk in A Man for all Seasons in 2014. Comedy hero/heroine: Ronnie Barker, a real comedy genius, who never needed to resort to crudity in order to get a laugh. His 'Four candles' skit is still a classic. Last time you cried with laughter: Last week, watching

a re-run of a Morecambe & Wise skit. Dream menu at a celebratory meal: Beef Wellington, Key Lime Pie, and a bottle of Chateau Musar 2012.

## **IO EVA EDINGTON**

(Nancy Holmes)

Place of birth: Cornwall **Favourite comedy part:** 

Fanny the fishmonger in Cinderella the panto - back in Cornwall when I was about 15! Other highlights: Playing Kay in Towards Zero last year was an incredible experience. I had so much fun with her character and interactions with the other cast members. Comedy hero/ heroine: I love all sorts of comedians, but Bill Bailey is probably one of the most talented comedians I've seen. He cracks me up so easily! Last time you cried with laughter: Often in rehearsals! For many reasons! Dream menu at a celebratory meal: Chinese buffet all the way!

## **BOO FELTHAM**

(Annie Parker)

Place of birth: Winchester. **Favourite comedy part:** Carol in Shakers, 1993, when I was in 6th Form College. It was

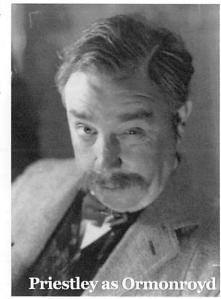
#### On the Edwardian upper middle class

▲ The people is this group might be described as being solidly and complacently middle-class, entirely satisfied with their style of life and deeply suspicious of any other. What they did, thought, felt, seemed to them just right. What they had enjoyed, they were desperately eager to defend. It is these people, I believe, who are responsible for the petty tiresome snobberies so characteristic of English life not only during those years but after the First World War. The upper-middles kept an uneasy eye on the working class, which numbered so many of their employees. But what really frightened and angered them was the revolt against their standards coming from [clever people with new ideas] within their own class. Their complacency was being gnawed away, hollowed out, by doubts and fears. They could not help wondering in secret if they were not in danger of becoming out-of-date.

#### On acting

Once I had to do some acting of a sort in the West End, for about ten performances. This was not a publicity stunt but an attempt to save a farcical comedy, When We Are Married.

that had just opened and finally had a long run. Frank Pettingell, who played the comic lead, a drunken West Riding photographer, was injured in a motor accident, so Basil Dean, a man not easily denied, rushed me on as a drunken West Riding photographer, at least a part not obviously beyond my physical and mental range, no Hamlet or Romeo. I cannot say if I was a good or bad actor, but I certainly knew my own lines, never fluffed or 'dried', and duly got my laughs.



# West Riding and Wool

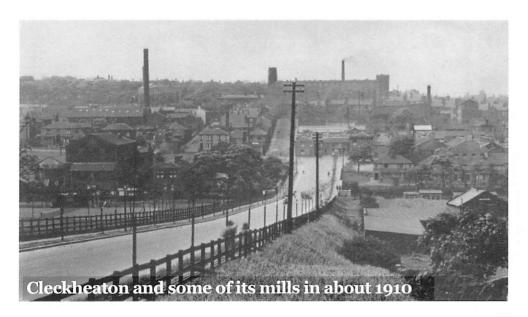
WHEN WE ARE MARRIED is set in the fictional town of Clecklewyke in the West Riding of Yorkshire where J.B. Priestley was born and grew up.

Priestley created the name by merging Cleckheaton and Heckmondwike, two mill towns near Bradford, that were part of the 'Heavy Woollen District', so called because of the heavyweight cloth manufactured in the area.

Heckmondwike was famous for manufacturing woollen blankets and Cleckheaton had 20 mills operating in the early 1900s.

The area became hugely prosperous in Victorian and Edwardian times due to mechanisation, good rail links and the manufacture of 'shoddy' and 'mungo', an early form of recycling. Reclaimed fibres were mixed with wool to produce heavy woollen goods such as blankets, cloth for overcoats, uniforms and horse rugs in an economical way.

Priestley had some knowledge of the wool industry as his first job on leaving school was as a junior clerk at Helm & Co, a wool firm in Bradford.



orange hair! **Dream menu at a celebratory meal:** Scallops, medium rare steak with a whisky, cream and mushroom sauce, dauphinois potatoes and vegetables, and a sticky toffee pudding for dessert. All washed down with some nice wine.

# TRACIE BILLINGTON-BEARDSLEY

(Clara Soppitt)

Place of birth: Wimborne, I grew up going to the Tivoli to see shows and films. Favourite comedy part: Cheeky Ruby Birtle in When We Were Married many moons ago when I was 17 at New Milton Arts Centre. I also loved playing the overbearing mum in Barefoot in the Park with WDP in 2020 great fun! And Celia (with the big buns) in Calendar Girls with Churchill Productions in 2013. I never thought when I came to the Tivoli as a little girl, I'd be getting my clothes off there many years later! Other highlights: Playing Cleopatra in Anhony and Cleopatra at the Lighthouse over 25 years ago. I met my husband John who played Antony and I also got to hold a real python in the publicity for the play. Comedy hero/heroine: Victoria Wood -

such a huge talent. And my husband's daughter Kate who is brave enough to do stand-up comedy in Paris. I am in awe of anyone who can deliver a joke. Last time you cried with laughter: A Christmas day singsong with John, best friends and my mum and dad seven years ago. We murdered Hark the Herald Angels Sing after copious amounts of wine. I videoed it and it always makes me laugh and cry. Such precious memories of my parents who are sadly no longer with me. Dream menu at a celebratory meal: With Italian descendants, I'm a huge fan of Italian food, so home-made meatballs and spaghetti please. Washed down with red wine.

### **ROB CORDING-COOK**

(Gerald Forbes)

Place of birth: Not far from here, Poole – a la-di-dah southerner! Favourite comedy part: Algernon Moncrieff in The Importance of Being Earnest – Deans Court, 2011. Other highlights: playing Simon Bliss (Hay Fever), Lord Arthur (Lord Arthur Savile's Crime) and directing Barefoot in the Park. Comedy hero/heroine: Not sure about 'heroine' but someone who I find hilarious is Liza Tarbuck. From her slightly

# Meet the Cast

### MICHELLE BARTER

(Lottie Grady)

Place of birth: Poole Hospital. Favourite comedy part: I always enjoyed being the Clerk of the Court in London Dungeons. I worked there on and off for 10 years. Who doesn't want to accuse people of witchcraft, send them to Traitors' Gate and generally terrify people? Other highlights: I still can't believe people gave me jobs in theatres and entertainment for 20 years! I loved every minute and now doing community theatre is equally amazing. I love playing Lottie - she's definitely up there on the list. Comedy hero/ heroine: David Jason as the one and only Del Boy. His timing alongside his dynamic busy acting, the pointed looks, plus he really reminds me of my Dad who always makes me laugh. Last time you cried with laughter: Watching After Life, a hot topic currently, but I had tears rolling down regarding a woman and her rice pudding. Dream menu at a celebratory meal: Chinese takeaway followed by butterscotch Angel Delight!

## **BEVERLEY BECK**

(Maria Helliwell)

Place of birth: Dorchester. Favourite comedy part: it has to have been Beatrice in WDP's open air production of Much Ado About Nothing. An amazing cast and director and a part I had wanted to play for years. Such a fun summer! Other highlights: I was lucky enough to get to play Amanda in a professional tour of Noel Coward's play Private Lives a few years ago. Memorable for many reasons, not least because it was the first time I had toured. but also because it was the last play my late Grandmother was able to come and see me in.

Comedy hero/heroine:

Hattie Jacques. Hugely underrated as an actress due to her size, but very funny, complicated and talented. **Last** 

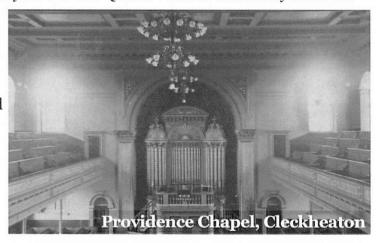
time you cried with

laughter: When my sister and I tried highlighting my hair with one of those silicone caps where you have to pull strands of hair through the holes. They aren't really made for long hair and when it came time to take it off, it got stuck and I ended up with a mix of brown, blonde and

# **Yorkshire Nonconfrmists**

YORKSHIRE had a strong tradition of religious nonconformity. Nonconformists such as the Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians and Ouakers had broken away from the

established
Church of
England in the
17th and 18th
centuries
because they did
not want to
conform to its
rules and
authority. Most
of the
Nonconfirmist
movements



wanted worship to be simple and unadorned, with an emphasis on preaching and bible reading. They claimed a devotion to hard work, temperance, frugality and upward mobility.

By the mid-19th century almost every town had a good number of Nonconformist chapels and meeting houses, and even quite small villages might boast one or two chapels as alternatives to the parish church. Methodism was particularly strong in those areas where the Church of England was weakest: the burgeoning towns and industrial districts, and among the rural poor.

The 19th century also witnessed an easing of the legislation which had continued to restrict Nonconformists. Laws which excluded all but practising Anglicans from government and municipal posts were repealed in 1828-9, and in 1871 it became illegal to stop Nonconformists from teaching or studying in English universities. After 1836 Nonconformists had the right to conduct marriage ceremonies, and in 1880 they were granted the right to conduct burial services in parish churchyards.

By the start of the Edwardian era, the Nonconformist denominations were at their largest and most influential. Source: Historic England

# WHEN WE ARE MARRIED

By J.B. Priestley

# The Cast in order of appearance

**Ruby Birtle** 

**BETHAN MORRIS** 

Gerald Forbes

ROB CORDING-COOK

Mrs Northrop

**CHRISSIE NEAL** 

Nancy Holmes

JO EVA EDINGTON

Fred Dyson

RICHARD SCOTSON

Henry Ormonroyd

**CHRIS DURHAM** 

Alderman Joseph Helliwell

**GARY PAINE** 

Maria Helliwell

BEVERLEY BECK

Councillor Albert Parker

**TONY FELTHAM** 

Annie Parker

**BOO FELTHAM** 

Herbert Soppitt

**COLIN PILE** 

Clara Soppitt

TRACIE BILLINGTON-BEARDSLEY

Lottie Grady

MICHELLE BARTER

Rev. Clement Mercer

SIMON JACKSON

# Period, Setting & List of Scenes

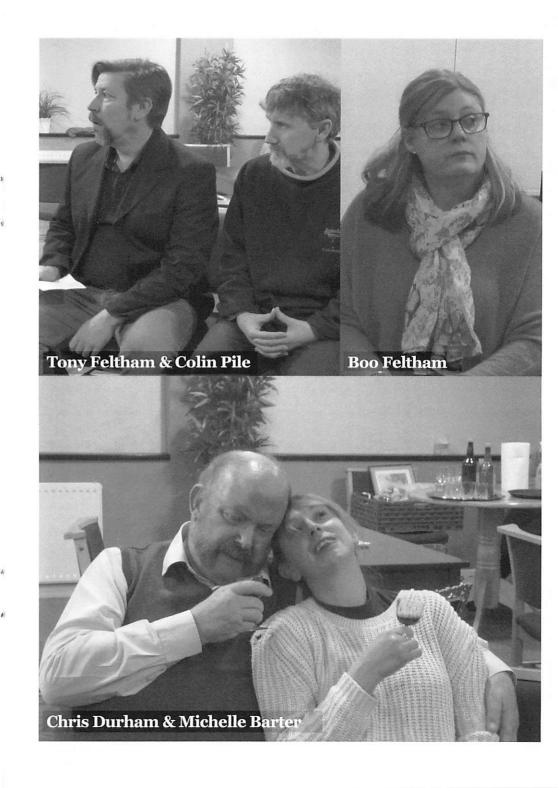
The action takes place in the sitting room of the Helliwells' house in Clecklewyke, a town in the West Riding of Yorkshire, on a September evening in 1908.

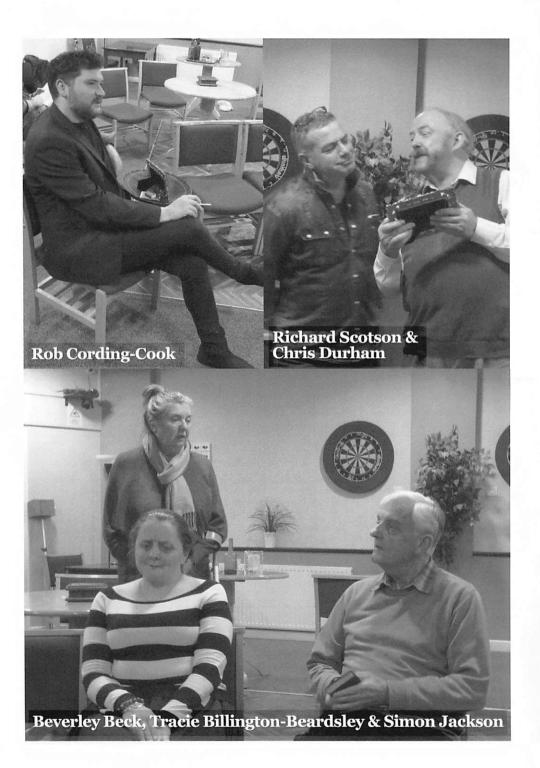
Act 1 - Early evening

Act 2 - About half an hour later

Act 3 - About a quarter of an hour later

Running time approximately 2 hours 20 minutes including interval





# The Creative Team

Director RICHARD NEAL

Stage Manager TRACEY NICHOLLS

Set Designer CHRIS DURHAM

ASMs & Properties **DEE HAWES** 

**SUZANNE VINEY** 

Hair & Wardrobe CHRISSIE NEAL

**SALLY WEBER** 

Book Cover HEATHER BIRCHENOUGH

Music & Sound SAM MOULTON

Publicity & Programme RICHARD NEAL

For the Tivoli Theatre:

Technical & Production

Manager

Head of Sound

KYLE BEST

CHANDLER WHITELOCK

# **Production Acknowledgements**

Costumes supplied by **Hirearchy Costumes** Camera supplied by **Keeley Hire** 

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