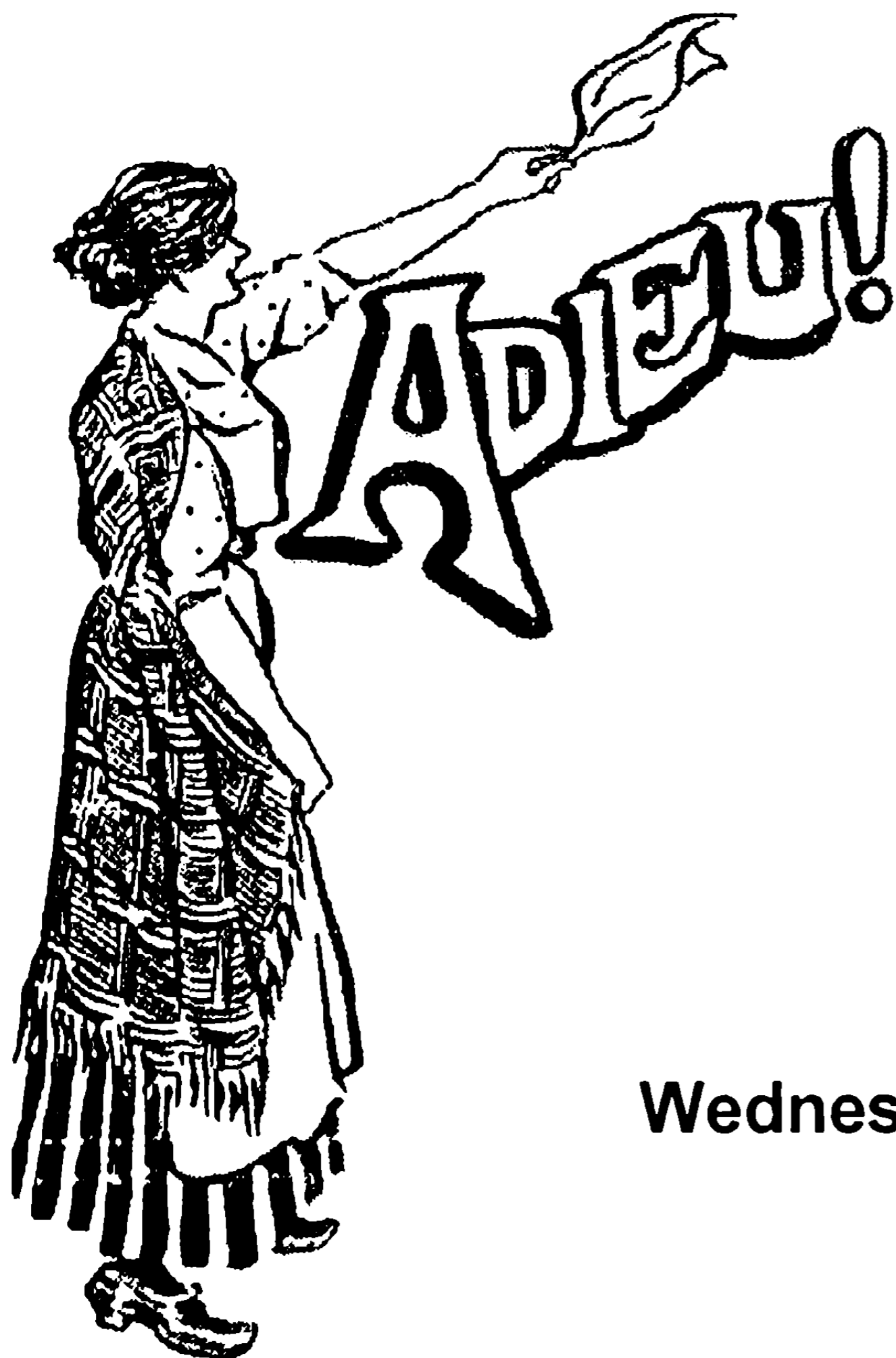


www.leedsartscentre.org.uk
Registered Charity No. HS503872R

The Accrington Pals



Written by
Peter Whelan

Directed by
Maria Kwater

Wednesday 2nd to Saturday 5th November 2011



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL



Leeds Arts Centre is a prestigious amateur theatre group founded in 1945. We are a friendly society, working together to maintain the high standards for which our productions are known. We produce four plays each year at the Carriageworks, as well as organising workshops to help members to develop their acting, directing and production skills.

We offer opportunities to all who are interested in becoming involved with any aspect of drama, including acting, directing, stage management, props, designing, costumes, lighting, sound, publicity and front of house.

New members are always welcome

If you are interested in acting, directing, designing or making scenery or costumes, helping backstage with stage management or props, or lending a hand with publicity, then why not speak to one of our members front of house this evening, or in the theatre bar after the show?

You can also write, with contact telephone number, for further information to:

The Secretary, Leeds Arts Centre
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Millennium Square, Leeds LS2 3AD
or e-mail us at: publicity@leedsartscentre.org.uk

To find out more about the activities and forthcoming productions of the Leeds Arts Centre visit our website at:

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Director's Notes


This play has a lot of personal resonance as my mother came from Accrington. I love the range of emotions depicted; from romance through to tragedy, with a fair dollop of humour and down-to-earth characters making the best of their circumstances. The contrast between the unrequited love of Tom and May, love's young dream of Ralph and Eva and the bitterness of Annie and Arthur's relationship, is particularly poignant. It should remind us to grab our chance of happiness whilst we can. The other characters are staunch in adversity, whilst the enigmatic Sgt. Rivers weaves his way through the plot.

Written in the early 80s, with more than a passing nod to the Thatcher era, the story also has underlying themes of capitalism and socialism. May, the tough businesswoman, encourages Reggie to work his way out of trouble, whilst Tom advocates the free exchange of skills. The humour and romance of the play and the fictional characters should not let us overlook the true story. Out of 720 men from The Accrington Pals at the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 584 were killed, wounded or missing. The ultimate tragedy of all Pals battalions was that, as the men were so closely knit, when they suffered major casualties, the whole community was shattered.

Historical context of the play

In the summer of 1914, Accrington in north-east Lancashire had a population of 45,525. The area was famous for its textile machinery, bricks, collieries and cotton mills. In June of that year, one mill closed for six weeks because of a lack of orders, and other mills extended their annual unpaid holiday. Workers at Howard and Bulloughs, makers of textile machines, were growing increasingly restive about low wages. Industrial unease developed into strike action, culminating in almost four thousand men being locked out and prevented from working by the closures.

Continued on page 4

G.  R.

Accrington "Pals"

Battalion.

(11th Service Batt. E. L. Regt.)

War Office has sent orders for the
6th Depot Company (Reserve) of
250 MEN TO BE RAISED
AT ONCE.

It is hoped that Accrington and Burnley boys
will fill up the ranks as soon as possible.
Recruits accepted at any Recruiting Office.
Height from 5ft. 2in., and chest measure-
ment from 34 inches. Age, 19 to 40.
Full Army Allowances, including Separation
Allowances to families.
Khaki Uniforms and full Kits provided on
joining Reserve Companies at Chadderton
Camp.

RALLY ROUND THE FLAG.

GOD SAVE THE KING.



Cast
(in order of appearance)

Tom Hackford

May Hassal

Arthur Boggis

Reggie Boggis

Ralph

Eva Mason

Annie Boggis

Sarah Harding

Bertha Treecott

Company Sgt. Major Rivers

Voices off: Zoe Freedman

Maria Kwater

Peter Sandles

Martin Cusworth

John Kendell

Joan Potter

Kevin Sutton

Oliver Brierley

Jack Loy

Hannah Murray

Pip Tibbetts

Fiona Galloway

Tori Morgan

Barry Green



*Don't be Alarmed,
the Accrington Pals are
on guard at Carnarvon.*



Production Team

Director	Maria Kwater
Production Manager	Peter Sandles
Stage Manager	Steve Fryatt
Assistant Stage Managers	Rich Francis, Emily Holloway
Prompt	Robin Thornton
Set design	Maria Kwater Peter Sandles
Set construction	Peter Sandles Sarah Coothoopermal
Set Painting	LAC Members
Costume	Zoe Freedman Hannah Hudson Martin Cusworth
Hair & Make-up	Amy-Beth Long
Props	Pauline Ashworth Rachel Vernelle Ann Schutte
Sound recording and operation	Lewis Sleeman
Lighting	Peter Waddicor and Carriageworks technical team
Publicity artwork	Dave Gannon
Publicity	Leeds Arts Centre publicity team
Fly operator	Edwin Barraclough
Front of House Manager	Joyce King

The Running time of this production is approximately two hours; there will be one interval of fifteen minutes during which the bar will be open

During the interval, trench songs will be played in the auditorium – some people may find elements of these songs offensive, but they illustrate the way that ordinary men kept up their spirits in extraordinary circumstances.



Almost unnoticed alongside this unrest at home, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo. By 4th August, Britain, France and Russia were at war with Germany. Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, appointed Secretary of State for War, proposed raising a new army of at least a million men, leading to a mass call for volunteers. In due course, the mayor of Accrington, Captain John Harwood, ambitiously offered to raise a full battalion of one thousand troops from Accrington and the surrounding areas. The prospect of regular work and an income of twenty-one shillings a week was an attractive prospect. The required number were recruited in only ten days. The 11th (Service) Battalion (Accrington) East Lancashire Regiment (or 'The Accrington Pals') was formed.

Initially, the men trained at home, moving on successively to Caernarvon, Penkridge Bank Camp in Staffordshire and Ripon, with spells on leave and a recruiting visit back home. Eighteen thousand people lined the streets to cheer the men on when they moved to Wales. In December 1915, they headed for Egypt to protect the Suez Canal. By March of 1916, they were in northwest France, spending several dismal weeks with trench working parties, repairing and building trenches or delivering ammunition and supplies and suffering some casualties.

The Battle of the Somme was a joint French and British offensive, aimed at gaining ground and destroying German manpower. It was preceded by an eight-day bombardment designed to shatter German defences. On 1st July, the first day of the battle, at 7.20 am, several battalions, including the Accrington Pals, prepared to take the German trenches. Unbeknown to them, the German barbed wire remained largely unbroken, the artillery bombardment had not realised its intended effect, and the Germans had gathered guns together to open a counter-attack. At 7.30, the first lines of British troops went over in 4 waves to be met by terrific machine-gun fire. On that day alone, the British Expeditionary Force suffered 58,000 casualties, making it the worse day in the history of the British Army. Over eighty percent of The Accrington Pals were killed, missing or wounded that day. Although the beleaguered battalion did continue at the Somme and later re-formed, it was never the same again. It was said that there was not a single house in the town that had not been affected by the losses.

Sources: Turner, W. (1998) Accrington Pals. The 11th (Service) Battalion (Accrington) East Lancashire Regiment

http://www.pals.org.uk/pals_e.htm - The Accrington Pals website



Advertising & Sponsorship

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To find out more, contact:

The Publicity Officer, Leeds Arts Centre
c/o The Carriageworks
Millennium Square, Leeds LS2 3AD
or e-mail us at: publicity@leedsartscentre.org.uk

The programme for this production was produced with the kind assistance of

Lewis Francis Blackburn Bray
————— solicitors —————

14-16 Paradise Square Sheffield S1 2DE

0114 272 9721

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following for their advice and support throughout this production:

Accrington Library Local Studies section, Accrington Visitor Information Centre, Andrew Lound, Curator, Avery Historical Museum, Debs Sandles, Elaine Minns, Flame Torbay (for costume hire), Horsforth Museum, Ian Haggas, Secretary, Yorks & Humberside Boys Brigade, Leeds Civic Arts Guild, Mr C Steadman, Lincolnshire Boys Brigade, The Carriageworks staff, Shoe Renew (Horsforth) Swiss Cottage Antiques, Tony and Mary Nelson, Andrea Hetherington and the Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery, Alan Williams and 'Your Accompanist' for the piano accompaniment.



Next Leeds Arts Centre Production

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by Oliver Lansley

11th, 12th & 13th January 2012

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at the Carriageworks**

ART

by Yasmina Reza

Translated by Christopher Hampton

14th to 17th March 2012

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by Edward Albee

16th to 19th May 2012

The Price

by Arthur Miller

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Limelight present

Ding Dong

~~Wednesday 16th - Saturday 19th February 2011 at 7.30pm~~

9, 10, 12th November