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November 2009

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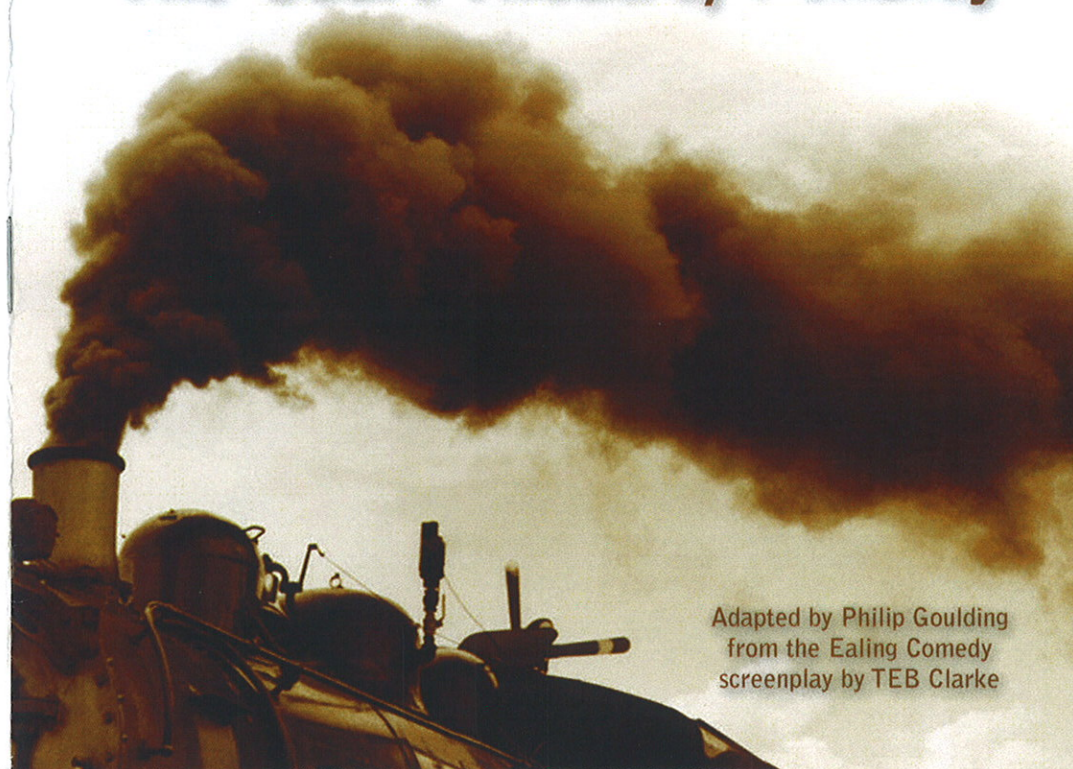
Frayed Knot Theatre Company in association with Samuel French (London) Ltd
presents



The Titfield Thunderbolt

11-14 November 2009

The Court Theatre, Pendley



Adapted by Philip Goulding
from the Ealing Comedy
screenplay by TEB Clarke

Crew

Director	Dan Clucas
Producers	Naomi Glasser and Sarah Amsden
Stage Manager	Emma Blyth
Lights	Chris Cooper and Natalie Mellors
Sound	Will Jamieson
Musical co-ordinator	Lindsay Smith
Costumes	Emma Blyth
Make up	Paint by Numbers
Set design and construction	Dan Clucas and Bob Randall
Box Office	Ian Wells
Poster design	ImageHouse
Front of House	The Court Theatre Limited

Thanks to: Hemel Hempstead Theatre Company and the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre for the supply of costumes, props and advice. Thanks also to the King's Arms and Simon Blanchard.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle by Bertolt Brecht Translated by Frank McGuinness

*the morning
danced
she was
entranced
and she stole away
yes
she stole away*

19th, 20th & 21st November

Even 7.45pm ~ Sat mat 2.30pm

Tickets from £8 Concessions available

Tickets: 01442 234004

Also available from www.boxmoorplayhouse.co.uk

Director's Notes

The original version of this play, based upon the TEB Clarke film created in 1952, was written for a rural touring theatre scheme meant for audiences in village halls. Consequently the play was taken up by other production companies and adapted to other venues. The play was then adapted to fit large touring theatres to accommodate a production starring TV celebrities Kate O'Mara and Steven Pinder. We thought about lots of different ways to stage this production in the Court Theatre and have probably fallen between the small intimate village hall set up and the large impressive "with bells on" West End theatre type production. But we hope our production makes best use of the space specific to the Court Theatre.

The original play was written for a cast of five who doubled up and in some cases tripled up playing three roles in the play. With the wealth of talent and cost-free casting within Frayed Knot, we have been able to cast all parts separately. This may result in some loss of wonder, that one person can be so many characters. But we hope that you will enjoy the variation and unique charms that each actor brings to their character.

If we had a budget equivalent to the TV celebrity version, we might have brought on a real size train into the production. Instead of which we have kept more to the spirit of the village halls version, less is best! We hope that your imagination will fill in the gaps. A strong theme throughout the film version was all about that plucky British spirit that could overcome anything if we all pull together. There will be a few moments in this play where we call upon your help. Help bring that spirit back to life! It's been a fun rehearsal period and we hope that you enjoy the show. All on board for the Titfield Thunderbolt!

- Graphic design & artwork
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- Posters
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- Pop-up displays

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chat about your next project

**Image
House**

The Titfield Thunderbolt

Lady Edna Chesterford
Clifton
Mr Blakeworth
Dan Taylor
Vernon Crump
Harry Crump
Joan Weech
Sam Weech
Mr Valentine
Miss Coggett
Mr Ruddock
Mrs Bottomley
Mr Clegg

Lindsay Smith
Sharon Allum
Ian Wells
Roger Emery
Colin Tovee
Wayne McLaughlin
Kate Blanchard
Steve Berry
Rob Farrow
Regina Dobbs
Derek Rookley
Margaret Sabatini
Debs Berry

The action takes place in and around Titfield in June and July 1952.

Biographies

Lindsay Smith - Lady Edna Chesterford

Lindsay has appeared in sundry plays, operas and musicals and waved a conductor's baton at people in and around Tring over the years. She has worked for BBC radio, performed at the Edinburgh Fringe and toured the Middle East with Lilliput Opera as chorus mistress. She still performs professionally in Aylesbury, Tring and the surrounding villages.

Sharon Allum - Clifton

This is Sharon's third show with Frayed Knot and unlike the other two, this is the first one where she plays the same character all the way through. It makes a welcome change!

Ian Wells - Blakeworth

Ian is making a welcome return to the stage after an absence of nearly three years. He has played numerous roles in the Marreau series - most notably Maurice Hearty - as well as parts in other Frayed Knot productions. He has, in the past, also performed with the Vale Gilbert and Sullivan Society, Tring Festival Company and Chuckles.

Roger Emery - Dan Taylor

Roger plays the character part of Dan Taylor, an irascible old codger, retired from the railways. It was last year that Roger came out of seclusion to join the Frayed Knot Theatre Company in Guards! Guards! having many years previously been a member of the Gaddesdon Society Drama Club where his roles ranged from Parson Evans in the Merry Wives of Windsor, The Inspector in The Ghost Train, Music Hall and many other parts including the dame in pantomime.

Colin Tovee - Vernon Crump

Having just done Rebecca, Colin is in the middle of a very busy period as he is also writing, directing and appearing in the TFC Christmas Cabaret in December - along with many talented people - as well as appearing as Sir Fredrick Fiddle in the Chuckles Christmas panto - Jack And The Beanstalk. Colin has found this role in Titfield quite challenging as the character is quite close to home - the accent, not the skullduggery!!

Wayne McLaughlin - Harry Crump

Wayne is the result of an experiment of Glaxo Industries and was found in a skip. He is Britain's third best Bob Carolgees impersonator and tours his Bob-based musical 'Spit: Horse Wallah' round the villages of Middle Earth. He is an active member for the 'Campaign for Real Badger Ham'.

Kate Blanchard - Joan Weech

Kate is pleased to be taking a break from being behind the scenes to stretch her legs on stage for a change. All those hours spent reading Enid Blyton as a child did not go to waste when it came to bringing life to the character of Joan Weech. Kate's next projects include directing Frayed Knot's next production of Glengarry Glen Ross in March and Buggy Malone for Tring Festival Company next year.

Steve Berry - Rev Sam Weech

As Director of the Programming Department of Court Theatre Ltd Steve has spent the majority of the last year on the other side of the theatrical process. As such, the part of Sam Weech (the second time he has played a vicar at the Court!) gives him a welcome return to the stage. It also gives him another opportunity to act alongside Debs - his wife - who plays the part of Clegg - the Railway Inspector, as well as a chance to enjoy acting in a wonderful adaptation of a much loved Ealing Comedy.

Rob Farrow - Mr Valentine

Rob has been acting in Tring since 1987 firstly with Phoenix Theatre Company from which Frayed Knot was formed in 1991. Rob writes the popular Marreau detective comedies, the latest of which 'The Grey Dagger', will be on at the Court in April next year. Rob has also appeared with Tring Festival Company, The Vale Gilbert and Sullivan Society and Pendley Theatre Company, but has mostly performed with Frayed Knot in numerous roles, most recently as Mr Birling in An Inspector Calls.

Regina Dobbs - Miss Coggett

Regina has been away from the stage for a few years so she is happy to join in again. Despite resting, Regina has put her skills to good use as a fairy tale reader in primary schools across the county, with children's favourite parts including 'wicked stepmother', 'big bad wolf' and a variety of sinister and harrowing witches! Regina has found teaching to be a great inspiration for these parts. More challenging however were the roles of 'Baby Bear', 'Goldilocks' and 'Little Red Riding Hood', parts displaying an innocence long forgotten.

Derek Rookley - Mr Ruddock

Back with Frayed Knot following his roles as Roy in Neville's Island, Rev Humphrey in See How They Run and Sgt Colon in last year's Guards! Guards! Derek will be seen here at the Court Theatre for the Christmas Cabaret and in the panto, Jack and the Giant Beanstalk in December.

Margaret Sabatini - Mrs Bottomley

After having a brief rest from this type of character Margaret is back to playing an old soak! It's a role she has become very accustomed to playing over many years with Frayed Knot and numerous other local companies. In fact, it is sometimes difficult for her to remember whether life is imitating art or vice versa!

Debs Berry - Mr Clegg

This is Deb Berry's second Frayed Knot production, her first in "Guards Guards" she played a female 'Brother' and now she is really playing a man! Hope the moustache doesn't tickle! It is always fun for Deb to be in a production with her husband Steve, once again playing a member of the clergy. What a great team to be part of!

Ghost train

Tring could have been a regional railway hub if some key decisions had not been derailed in the mid-Victorian era.

If you want to travel the 30-odd miles from Tring to Oxford by public transport, you'd better allow at least a couple of hours for the journey. A bus will take you to Aylesbury and another thence to Oxford city centre. The rail option is truly tortuous: bus to Aylesbury again, and train via changes at Princes Risborough and Banbury. It might have been so much simpler. Between 1845 and 1852, a direct link between Tring and Oxford featured in not one but four schemes for new railways. This was the period known to rail historians simply as The Mania, along the lines of The Terror in France a little earlier. But The Mania was less effective: few of the new railways were built and none reached Tring.

A feature of The Mania was the fierce rivalry between the early railway companies. Tring found itself a pawn in the contest between the London & North Western and the Great Western, where bluff was a regular tactic. Tring was a notable point on the first railway through Hertfordshire, the London & North Western (L&NWR), and was attractive to the railway barons for its position just beyond the Chilterns. Most of the failed railways based on Tring headed west or southwest. Coincidentally, Tring's station opened in the same year (1837) as Crewe's. But where the latter has become synonymous with the railways, Tring became a stop on a commuter line.

Westward Ho!

The importance of routes to the west was that they led eventually to Bristol, which was England's second city as late as the mid-eighteenth century. They also served South Wales, one of Britain's powerhouses through the Industrial Revolution. Oxford itself was also a far more significant city than now.

How would Tring have changed if one or more of these schemes had been completed? Could it have become the

Crewe of the South?

It seems unlikely. None of the failed schemes would have brought the railway an inch closer to the town. It's more likely that the station would have become known as Aldbury & Tring Parkway, a sure sign that it was miles from either of the two places it purported to serve. The chances are that Pitstone would have become the focal point: closer to the junction, well-situated vis-à-vis the canal and perhaps slightly better placed in the 20th century communications infrastructure.

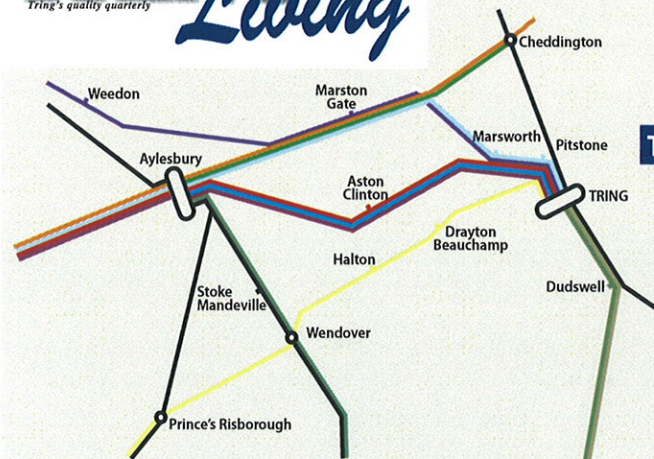
"Coincidentally, Tring's station opened in the same year (1837) as Crewe's"

Article reproduced in association with David Guest and

TRING

Tring's quality quarterly

Living



TRING OVERGROUND

Dead lines:

The Tring rail network that might have been

(and in black, the lines that remain)

● Aylesbury Railway

This one was actually built. It ran from the mainline at Cheddington into Aylesbury from 1839 to 1953. The closest it came to Tring was Marston Gate, originally a level-crossing but later a fully-fledged station. Its presence in this feature is slightly tenuous given the distance from Tring; it was, however, a factor in one or two other schemes.

● Cheltenham, Oxford & London & Birmingham Union Railway

This dates from the earliest period of railway building. The citizens of Cheltenham wanted a direct line to London. Anxious about being left behind by nearby Gloucester, they embarked on their own scheme to run from Cheltenham, skirting the north of Oxford and via Aylesbury to the London & Birmingham line at Tring. When, by 1845, the necessary capital had proved elusive, the section from Oxford to Tring was removed from the plans. This made little effective difference and the company was wound up in 1847.

● London, Worcester & South Stafford Railway

The line would have gone from Tring through Marsworth, joining the Aylesbury branch (above) before turning northwest short of Aylesbury and heading for Waddesdon. A branch would have approached Oxford from the north and possibly continued to Didcot and Worcester. How South

Staffordshire was to be served, or why, is not clear.

● Buckinghamshire Railway

Tring would have been involved in this magnificent scheme as the tip of a branch from Aylesbury. The main structure of the railway was to have been a cross, with the vertical joining Banbury and Harrow and the crosspiece connecting Bletchley and Oxford. When the inevitable economies had to be made, Aylesbury to Harrow was sacrificed and hence the Tring branch.

● Cambridge & Oxford Railway

The University line was to have run through Luton and on to Aylesbury and Thame, following the course of the Aylesbury Railway from Cheddington to Aylesbury.

● Tring, Reading & Basingstoke Railway

This plan lasted barely a fortnight, being deposited on 30 November 1845 and the company dissolved after a meeting on 12 December. It would have added the metropolis of Drayton Beauchamp to the railway network. Researches have failed to turn up any serious reason to go to Basingstoke in 1845.

● Tring & Reigate Railway

One of no fewer than seven schemes to link railways north and south of London, the Tring & Reigate has a half-baked sound. The line was to leave Tring in the direction of Northchurch and strike out towards

Chesham and Amersham to Slough, Weybridge, Leatherhead and Reigate, aka Redhill.

● London, Oxford & Cheltenham Railway

Mooted in 1846, this would have been more direct than its proposed predecessor. It certainly failed more quickly.

● Tring & Oxford Railway

Proposed in 1852, this is as fine an example of Victorian self-confidence as you could wish to find. My Lord Carrington, dissatisfied with the L&NWR's service between Oxford and Bletchley, resolved to build a railway to show them how it should be done. But not just Oxford to Bletchley. Ah, no. Lord Carrington's railway was to serve Oxford, Aylesbury, Harrow and Brentford. The Tring & Oxford was L&NWR's response. Neither, of course, was ever built.

● Aylesbury & Rickmansworth Railway

When the Metropolitan Railway reached Chesham, the tentacles of Metroland looked set to stretch out into the Midlands. Chesham to Tring was regarded as a priority, and it was the second project considered by the A&R. Gradients and dividend prospects defeated it.

● From *The Railways of Hertfordshire* by FG Cockman