

"When this lousy war is over..."

*Aftermath*

*Have you forgotten yet?...*

For the world's events have rumbled on since those gagging days,  
Like traffic checked while at the crossing of city ways:  
And the haunted gap in your mind has filled with thoughts that flow  
Like clouds in the lit heaven of life; and you're a man reprieved  
to go,

Taking your peaceful share of Time, with joy to spare.

*But the past is just the same - and War's a bloody game...*

*Have you forgotten yet?...*

*Look down, and swear by the slain of War that you'll never forget.*

Do you remember the dark months you held the sector at Mametz -  
The nights you watched and wired and dug and piled sandbags on  
parapets?

Do you remember the rats; and the stench

Of corpses rotting in front of the front-line trench -

And dawn coming, dirty-white and chill with a hopeless rain?

Do you ever stop and ask, 'Is it all going to happen again?'

Do you remember that hour of din before the attack -

And the anger, the blind compassion that seized and shook you then

As you peered at the doomed and haggard faces of your men?

Do you remember the stretcher-cases lurching back

With dying eyes and lolling heads those ashen-grey

Masks of the lads who once were keen and kind and gay?

*Have you forgotten yet?...*

*Look up, and swear by the green of the spring that you'll never forget.*

Siegfried Sassoon

March 1919

(By permission of George Sassoon)

**Sources:**

Brian Gardner (ed). Up the line to death: the War Poets, 1914-1918. Methuen, 1986  
Phillip J. Haythornthwaite. The World War One source book. Arms and Armour Press, 1992  
Arthur Marwick. The deluge: British society and the First World War. Macmillan, 1965  
Martin Middlebrook. The Kaiser's battle. Penguin, 1983.

# PROSCENIUM

## OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR



BY ARRANGEMENT WITH SAMUEL FRENCH LTD  
JOAN LITTLEWOOD'S MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

Composed with her fellow artists in Theatre Workshop, London.  
Researched by Gerry Raffles and Charles Chilton.

Title suggested by Ted Allan

ELLIOTT HALL, HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END  
JANUARY 13th, 14th, 15th AT 8.00p.m.

## "If you want the old battalion, we know where they are..."

Military battle-deaths of the First World War (all numbers are estimates):

Germany	1,800,000
Russia	1,700,000
France	1,300,000
Austria-Hungary	922,000
Great Britain	888,000
Total	6,510,000

- In addition to dead of 9 million, the wounded for all countries totalled 21 million.
- An average of one British soldier was killed every 45 seconds during 1916.
- A line of the British wounded and dead of the First World War, standing four abreast, would stretch from the Cenotaph in London to Edinburgh Castle.

"One would have thought, before the War began, that the single report of the killing or disablement of any friend or acquaintance would be terribly disconcerting. So it was, at the beginning. The first eight or ten casualties had as much publicity as all the rest put together. People discussed deaths of young second lieutenants with bated breath. Gradually the familiarity of the thing became apparent. You receive the news of the death of your friends as a matter of fact."

R.D.Blumenfeld, Editor, Daily Express, 24 October 1914

## "Stille Nacht, heilige nacht.."

"The Christmas of 1914 was a curious one. The Saxons opposite to us wanted a truce and we exchanged souvenirs and gifts. They promised not to fire until we did. This was kept up for a day or so when we sent over a note to the Germans saying our artillery was going to begin and would they please stay under cover! So ended the truce..."

Private Henry William Williamson, London Rifle Brigade

"In Flanders in late 1917, Hermann Schiffer (Gunner, 463 Regiment, German Army) remembers that at 9am every day the shooting would stop for an hour and soldiers on both sides - German and British - would walk freely into no mans land to collect their wounded and dead. "There was no formal agreement about that, and, although we came very close, we never talked to each other. Then at 10am precisely, the war would begin again. Absolute insanity..." "

The Independent, November 11th 1993

## Charles Carr and the War

(by a member of the cast)

In the summer of 1914 Charles Carr and his brother volunteered to join the Army, and within a few months they were in the trenches in Northern France. The basic details of their War records appear in a book that was presented to their mother in 1919 - "Colfe's Grammar School and the Great War, 1914-1918". These are as follows:

*CARR, Leslie George, MC and bar. Joined 4.8.14. Private, 2/20th London Regt.; Captain, 1st London (Royal Fusiliers). Served in France and Belgium. Wounded at the Somme, 1916. Mortally wounded at Kemmel Hill and died 27.4.18.*

*CARR, Charles Evans. Joined 23.10.14. Cpl, Queen's Westminster Rifles; Lieut., 20th Battalion. London Regt., attached 3rd Londons. Served in France and Belgium. Twice wounded. On the second occasion, 23.3.18, he was shot in the face and captured and sent to Mainz Hospital and Camp. Repatriated 3.12.18.*

Charles was my grandfather. For the rest of his life he rarely spoke about the War, and he died nearly ten years before I was born. So I must depend on family documents, and his own words, to get an impression of what he experienced during the War. In addition to the Colfe Memorial Book, the family has some letters, a Christmas card and a diary he kept in Germany from March 1918 onward. This is his account of being wounded on March 23rd 1918:

"With an enemy plane hovering at about 300ft above us and firing white signals for the benefit of his mortars & artillery, our flanks were seen to fall back and for a great distance to left & right we could see thousands of troops retiring..I was just wondering what would happen to us all when a German fired from the outside of the quarry which was our HQ & hit my face (the bullet passing through my neck and out of my cheek). I can only describe my first feelings as that of a sledge hammer hitting my head. I naturally collapsed like a log, just as I saw blood pouring down my trench coat, wondering how long I should live..I awoke to find a German Doctor and a French Doctor leaning over me...they told me the bullet had missed my carotid artery for which I felt very thankful.."

Charles survived the journey to Germany, and spent the rest of the War in a prison camp; for the rest of his life, like millions of others, he suffered from the effects of being gassed and wounded. He died of lung disease in 1951.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas

and may we all meet in the

New Year.

Christmas, 1915.

*Kindest Regards every  
best wishes from  
Charles*



## "Hush, here comes a whizzbang..."

On March 21st 1918 the Germans launched their last great offensive of the War, using the greatest amount of artillery ever collected together in one place. All told, 6500 guns fired 1,160,000 shells in the space of five hours (the British at the beginning of the Battle of the Somme used 1,500 guns to fire 1,500,000 shells in seven days). The barrage began at 4.30am; Private Plimmer was a machine gunner in the front line, who had arrived less than a month earlier:

"Then it happened. It seemed as though the bowels of the earth had erupted, while beyond the ridge there was one long, continuous yellow flash. It was the suddenness of the thing that struck me most; there was no preliminary shelling but just one momentary upheaval..it was the first time I had ever heard a shell fired..I just crouched there listening to the shells bursting, and to those screaming over..there was stuff exploding all around. I expected to be blown out of this world."

## "Gassed last night, and gassed the night before.."

### *Dulce et Decorum Est*

...  
Gas! Gas! Quick boys! - an ecstasy of fumbling,  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  
And floundering like a man in fire or lime. -  
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, -  
My friend you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori.

Wilfred Owen  
Killed in action, November 4th 1918



## "On Saturday I'm willing, if you'll only take a shilling To make a man of any one of you"



Christmas Card, December 1917

"I placed my body and soul in God's keeping, and I am going into battle with his name on my lips, full of confidence and trusting implicitly in Him. I have a strong feeling that I will come through safely; but nevertheless should it be God's holy will to call me away, I am quite prepared to go: and... I could not wish for a finer death; and you, dear Mother and Dad, will know that I died doing my duty to my God, my Country and my King. I ask that you should look upon it as an honour that you have given a son for the sake of King and country..."

2nd Lieutenant J.S.Engall  
(in a letter to his parents the night before he was killed)

"It is really a fine record for such a school as ours to have so lengthy a roll of honour - running into many hundreds of names - and to have a list of well over a hundred of those who have made the supreme sacrifice of life itself. We of a former generation are exceedingly proud of the way in which our successors rose at their country's call and sustained our honour; and we thank not only them, but God also, Who was the real Inspirer of the principles which led them to act as they did."

Rev.G.J.Bayley  
(Memorial Service, St Mary's Lewisham, July 1919,  
in memory of Old Boys of Colfe's Grammar School)

"My emotion today is of thanksgiving to God that I'm here to remember. I'm thinking about the boys I knew who didn't make it. The war was an abominable waste, a terrible price, but if we hadn't rescued Belgium and France we would have lost more than a generation - we would of lost respect for freedom, for the truth and for treaties, all the abstract things that are more important than material ones. I mourn but I also remember that laughter was never far from tears..I suppose we spelt duty with a capital D in those days.."

Donald Hodge, aged 99  
Daily Telegraph, 12 November 1993

# OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR

## THE PIERROTS

## THE MEN

Colin Hickman, Anton Jungreuthmayer,  
Mark Sutherland, Duncan Sykes, David Watkins,  
Peter Taff, Tom Glover, Tom Brown, Philip Smyth,  
Morris Suckling, Sam Thornton

## THE LADIES

Crystal Anthony, Jeanne Hawkes, Claire Rappaport,  
Evelyn Moutrie, Rosie Moutrie, Janet Suckling,  
June Watkins, Nikki Gardner, Luisa Teather,  
Alison Taylor, Isabelle Cartwright, Susie Thornton,  
Elizabeth Masterton-Smith

## MUSICIANS

ORGAN	Paul Joslin
VIOLIN	Nick Moutrie
IRISH WHISTLE	Peter Kelly
PIANO	Duncan Sykes
DRUMS	Brian Taff

## STAGE STAFF

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	Barney Daley
STAGE MANAGER	Peter Wilton
LIGHTING	Neil Baker
CREW	John Dickinson
	Edward Glover, Peter Kelly

## COSTUMES

Evelyn Moutrie, June Watkins

## PROPERTIES

Margaret Rudolf, Jenny Glover,  
Alison Carey, Maria Suckling

## BOX OFFICE

Morris Suckling

DESIGNED AND DIRECTED BY  
COLIN TUFNELL

MUSICAL DIRECTION BY  
DUNCAN SYKES  
CHOREOGRAPHY  
SUSIE THORNTON

