



**Hurst  
Festival**

Proudly Presents:

**WINNING THE PEACE**  
***THE DANNY ARMISTICE***

Performed by Hurst Festival Players

24, 26, 28, 30 September 2018

Written by Kevin Carey

Directed by Bob Sampson

Act 1: The garden of Danny House, 8 August 1918

Act 2: The Great Hall of Danny House, 13 October 1918

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**Cast (in order of appearance)**

William Grimson - <i>Butler at Danny House</i>	Douglas Wragg
Anne Dunn - <i>Cook at Danny House</i>	Belinda Sharp
Gertrude Champion - <i>Wife of the owner of Danny Park</i>	Liz Gibson
Daisy Randell - <i>Daughter of Mr Randell</i>	Hannah Levene
Soldier	Sebastian Taite-Ellis
Sailor	Corbin Perry
Airman	Vincent Whittaker
'Colonel' William Champion - <i>Owner of Danny Park</i>	Bob Sampson
Arthur Balfour - <i>Foreign Secretary</i>	Frank Thomas
Andrew Bonar Law - <i>Chancellor of the Exchequer</i>	Phil Balding
David Lloyd George - <i>Prime Minister</i>	Kit Wood
Mr Randell - <i>Leading Hurst Trader and Liberal</i>	Nigel Cook
Frances Stevenson - <i>Secretary to and mistress of Lloyd George</i>	Ruth Saunders
Philip Kerr - <i>Private Secretary to Lloyd George</i>	Sebastian Taite-Ellis
Winston Churchill - <i>Minister for Munitions</i>	Dan Russell
Viscount Milner - <i>Minister for War</i>	Stephen Waters
Earl Reading - <i>British Ambassador to the United States</i>	Vincent Whittaker
Sir Maurice Hankey - <i>Cabinet Secretary</i>	Martin Hall-Smith
General Wilson - <i>Chief of the Imperial General Staff</i>	Nigel Cook
Admiral Wemyss - <i>First Sea Lord</i>	John Kearns

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Stage Manager	Pip Sampson
Properties	Pip Sampson
Set Design	Bob Sampson

Technical

Alex Sampson

Music Research

Kevin Carey and others

Costumes

Margaret Carey, Val Olszewski, Liz Young – supplied by Harveys of Hove and others

With Thanks to Richard Burrows and the residents of Danny House have generously loaned items for the set.

### **Author's Notes:**

Such was the relief when the terrible carnage of the First World War ended that the intricacies of the Armistice were soon forgotten. But at Danny House, Hurstpierpoint, where he was living during the 1918 Parliamentary Recess, Prime Minister Lloyd George learned on 12th October that Germany and the United States were on the verge of reaching an armistice agreement to the detriment of British and Imperial interests. An impromptu 'War Cabinet' meeting was held the next day, consisting of all the major British politicians and military leaders but lacking Imperial representation, during which the Prime Minister was isolated in his proposal to fight on until Germany territory was occupied by the Allies; nobody was more sensitive to casualties than Lloyd George, but he over-estimated the German capacity for continuing the War. But the meeting agreed Armistice proposals which were to form the basis of the final document signed on 11th November. The Minutes of this meeting are jumbled but vivid and provide the core of the Second Act.

The historical novel writer Robert Harris has said that the task of the writer in this genre is not to write something that could not have happened. Whereas this applies only slightly in the Second Act, the First is largely a work of imagination except for the journal of Daisy Randall whose father was the leading Liberal in Hurstpierpoint and a personal friend of Lloyd George who cut a familiar and hopeful figure in the High Street during his residences at Danny House. Much of the rest is based on contemporary accounts of the home front but characterisation is necessarily more open, particularly in respect of my portrayal of Colonel and Mrs. Champion, who de-camped to Hove to accommodate Lloyd George and his party, and their domestic staff. Daisy's journal records that a garden party was held at Danny "early" in August whose Saturdays were 1 and 8. I have inferred from this that the second Saturday would be better characterised as "early" than the first and it was, fortuitously, on this day that the Allies finally broke through at Amiens, surging across the enemy line into open country, never to be halted by the Germans who characterised this as "Black Saturday" As far as we know, Lloyd George's 1918 residence at Danny was the only occasion on which his wife, Megan and his mistress/Secretary, Frances Stephenson, slept under the same roof but the latter was so ill during the period of the dual residence that no indelicacy could have taken place.

The Hurst Festival's Commission was clear that the focus should be on our village and Danny House, but this should not obscure the sheer horror of the First World War whose realities were necessarily down-played by the authorities to sustain morale and by the returned combatants who could not bear to talk about them. The tragedy of the conflict is twofold: first, British men flocked without thinking to recruiting stations, often goaded by their womenfolk; and, secondly, nobody then and nobody of note even now, in spite of the benefits of hindsight and perspective, have any idea of what the War was for. The slaughter on both sides was pointless in a way, for example, that the fighting of the Second World War was not.

***Kevin Carey***

### **Director's Notes:**

I had known about the armistice meeting at Danny House for many years but had not known the details of the meeting until I read this play. Kevin Carey has managed to set the scene for the meeting and the time leading up to it superbly.

I was honoured when Hurst Festival asked me to direct it. My only real concern was whether we would be able to cast it. Knowing the difficulty many amateur theatre groups have finding men for their plays, the thought of having

to cast 16 male parts was a bit daunting. Fortunately, we had a lot of people who were willing to be a part of telling this momentous story - some of them seasoned performers and some of them treading the boards for the first time.

I am sure you will leave this performance with a greater understanding of the work that Lloyd George and his War Cabinet put into 'Winning the Peace' by reshaping President Wilson's famous '14 points' to make them acceptable to all who fought in that terrible war.

**Bob Sampson**

## **Biographies** *(in alphabetical order)*

### **Kevin Carey – Playwright**

Kevin Carey, author, has published two previous plays, three novels, four collections of Christmas verse and three theological works, with Sacristy Press ([www.sacristy.co.uk](http://www.sacristy.co.uk)). He has acted and directed with Hurst Players. He was a classical music critic for ten years and sings in two church choirs. He has wide cultural interests including Gustave Mahler, Marcel Proust and TS Eliot. In a varied career, he worked in overseas development and then specialised in information technology, gaining a NESTA Fellowship and a Royal Television Society Award for Engineering. He sat on the Ofcom Content Board and chaired its Community Radio Panel. He was Chair of the RNIB from 2009-17.

### **Phil Balding - Andrew Bonar Law**

Phil has been a member of the Hurst Players for some time and his appearances on the Players Theatre stage have included *Bouncers*, *Romeo & Juliet* and *Macbeth*. Who will forget his brilliant Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland* or his Willie Mossop in *Hobson's Choice*.

### **Nigel Cook – Mr Randell and General Wilson**

Nigel lives in Albourne with his Birman cat Bailey. His main passion is active sport – tennis golf and skiing – and he is a cricket umpire after many years of playing. Nigel is (almost) retired from a career in the Law so now has more time to devote to sport and travel. He is a virtual novice on the stage having last acted in a college production of *Antony and Cleopatra* many years ago!

### **Liz Gibson - Gertrude Champion**

After moving from Southwater, Liz was a Hurstpierpoint resident for some years before moving to Henfield two years ago. She is a member of several local amateur theatre companies and has appeared recently in various roles by playwrights including Shakespeare and Alan Ayckbourn, as well as in comedy parts in sketch shows. After *Winning the Peace*, you can next see her in panto at Southwick. Oh yes you can!

### **Martin Hall-Smith - Maurice Hankey**

As a long time resident of the village who is interested in history and with a bit more time on my hands he was persuaded by Kevin and Bob to take part in this play. This is his first adventure on the boards since school and he says he has thoroughly enjoyed the venture. Martin's interest in drama has been reinforced by his daughter Rose who teaches drama locally.

### **John Kearns - Admiral Wemyss**

Forced to do a school play, aged 12, in lieu of mimicking his teacher, John has pursued it ever since! He appeared in numerous plays and revues with various companies including Michael Green's *Coarse Acting* and in *Lark Rise to Candleford*, both with Questors Theatre. As a professional he performed in various Pinter plays in Chichester and the West End through to *Rocky Horror Show* throughout Europe. Since moving to Hurstpierpoint he has acted in many Hurst Players' Productions and now his memory is failing he has turned to Directing and remembering his name!

### **Hannah Levene - Daisy Randell**

Hannah has been involved with the Players since 2009. Her last performance on this stage was in *Hay Fever*, after playing Wendy in *Peter Pan* last Christmas. Hailing from the "Hecht Dynasty", she is very pleased to be cast as Daisy.

### **Corbin Perry - Sailor**

Corbin was a member of local youth group, Centre Stage, for many years and appeared in numerous pantomimes with the Players. He graduated to adult parts when he played the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*. This is not his first role in a 'serious' play, as he was also in *Hobson's Choice* last year and *Hay Fever* earlier this year.

### **Dan Russell - Winston Churchill**

Dan has previous performing experience as a singer/songwriter as well as appearing in a show with Plumpton pantomime. He eagerly joined the Hurst Players in his first play as Sandy Tyrell, a lovesick and thoroughly confused boxer, in *Hay Fever* earlier this year. Playing Winston Churchill was a challenge he couldn't resist.

### **Bob Sampson – Director, and Colonel William Campion**

Bob joined Hurst Players in 1986. Since then he has acted in many productions, including: *Habeas Corpus*, *Loot*, *Educating Rita*, *Season's Greetings*, *Talking Heads* and *An Inspector Calls*. He has also directed shows including *Lock Up Your Daughters*, Chekhov's *The Seagull*, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Ayckbourn's *Henceforward* and *Snake In The Grass*, as well as *Top Girls*, *Dancing At Lughnasa*, *Single Spies*, *Vagina Monologues*, *Calendar Girls*, *Under Milk Wood*, *Murderer* and *Hobson's Choice*.

### **Belinda Sharp - Anne Dunn**

From playing many a glamorous role, Belinda has now cornered the market in nurses and cooks having done so for Hurstpierpoint Players and Lewes Theatre Club over the last few years. She comes from a theatrical family, with connections to the Players back as far as the 1940's. Belinda also sings, on her own or with the Lea Graham Quartet, who raise money for good causes (also available for weddings, funerals, etc)

### **Sebastian Taite-Ellis - Philip Kerr and Soldier**

Having lived in the village most of his life, he is in his first and last production living in Hurstpierpoint before he heads off to Drama School in London. He has just finished his A-Levels at Hurst College, and during his time there he was a very active member of the drama department, both in performance, production, and academically. He says "I look forward to the future but will miss the village a lot".

### **Frank Thomas - Arthur Balfour**

Frank has been on stage with Friends & Neighbours in Hassocks and joined the Hurst Players August 2017 when he auditioned for (and got) the part of Tubby Wadlow in *Hobson's Choice*. In October he participated in the Hurst Players' *Non-Stop Shakespeare* and read five of the Bard's thirty-five plays. Last Christmas he was Mr Smee in *Peter Pan*.

### **Stephen Waters - Viscount Milner**

After a career in teaching including as Head of Mathematics at Hurst College, Stephen has retired back to West Sussex. Musical interests have included Brighton & Hove Operatic Society, Wandering Minstrels, Hurst College Choral Society and 'Cantemus'. Currently, he sings with the Angmering Chorale. He plays and teaches bridge, and is an active Methodist Local Preacher. As a supporter of the Players' Theatre, Stephen is delighted to be a part of this specially commissioned play.

### **Vincent Whittaker - Earl Reading and Airman**

Made his debut on this stage as Albert Prosser last September *Hobson's Choice* followed quickly by *Hay Fever* and *Habeas Corpus*. He is a diverse performer and has appeared in various roles in productions of *Dr Faustus*, *Marat/Sade*, *Qua Qua Qua*, and *Irvine Welsh's Ecstasy*. He is a comedic performer and in recent years has bounced around personas such as Rockstar Christopher Marlowe, Cee-Cee the Creepy Clown and has taken on dragons in the comedy podcast *The Dragon Slayer of Brighton*, which he also wrote and directed.

### **Kit Wood - David Lloyd George**

Kit has been a member of Hurst Players for more years than he cares to remember. He has twice won the Best Actor Award at the Drama Festival (in Peter Shaffer's *Public Eye* and Rattigan's *Before Dawn*). He has been in plays as varied as *Habeas Corpus*, *La Bête*, *Accidental Death Of An Anarchist*, *An Englishman Abroad* and *Henceforward*. He has also directed great productions of *King Lear*, *Well That Ends Well* and a memorable version of Brecht's *Resistible Rise Of Arturo Ui*.

### **Douglas Wragg - William Grimston**

The acting "bug" bit Douglas quite early in life with a "show-stopping" performance of Herod in the school Nativity Play, at the tender age of 10!! His first "real" play in his teens was *Pride and Prejudice*, in which he played the part of Mr. Bingley. Recent plays have included *Hobson's Choice* – Hobson, *Fumed Oak* – Henry Gow, *The Dock Brief* – Morganhall and his debut at LLT was playing the evil Dr. Frobisher in *The Browning Version*. Also at LLT, he had the joy of playing the patient in *The Sunshine Boys* and the vicar in *Gosforth's Fête*. He has thoroughly enjoyed rehearsing this play, and is looking forward keenly to the performances.

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