

Spring Grove Fringe – 2018

The Ghost Train

by Arnold Ridley



Friday 18th May at 8.00pm
Saturday 19th May at 8.00pm
St John's Parish Hall, Grove Lane, KT1 2SU

Reg. Charity No. 1150982

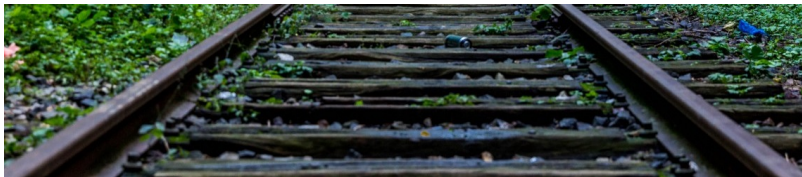
The Ghost Train

by Arnold Ridley

directed by Tony Tresigne & Scott Milligan

The action of the play takes place in the small General Waiting Room at Fal Vale Station, during the course of four hours of an evening in 1925.

SAUL HODGKIN	Veronica Birley
RICHARD WINTHROP	Chris Brookes
ELSIE WINTHROP	Janice Smith
CHARLES MURDOCK	Adrian Treloar
PEGGY MURDOCK	Karina Ramnarain
TESSIE DEAKIN	Suzanne Nail
JULIA PRICE	Vicky Maunder
HERBERT PRICE	Nigel Bellwood
JANE STERLING	Sandie Glennly
JACKSON	Mark Springthorpe



Set	Mark Springthorpe & Adrian Treloar
Stage Management	Mark Springthorpe
Catering	Jenny Robson
Costumes	Jenny Robson & Sandy Gavshon
Sound and Lighting	Nigel Duffin
Bar	Mike Charlton
Tickets and Door	Tessa Kind & Matt Sexton
Front of House	Bethany Birley

Fal Vale

Fal Vale is a small branch railway station in deepest Cornwall, between Truro and St Blande. It is 1925, long before Dr Beeching, indeed long before railways were nationalised.

It is a good thing that there are no night trains at Fal Vale station. For old Saul Hodgkin the stationmaster wants to get home to his wife and children. And there is a Cornish superstition – you know what Cornish people are like – that seeing a train on that line at night may bring death.

But it's not so good if you aren't Cornish, or superstitious, and have missed your connection. Especially if, like newlyweds Charles and Peggy Murdock, you want to get to your hotel now and don't have long together before work separates you. Elsie and Richard Winthrop, who can agree with each other on little else, also find Fal Vale station most disagreeable. In contrast Tessie Deakin, who caused them to miss their connection in the first place, seems to find it amusing and diverting, at least until some well dressed locals turn up.



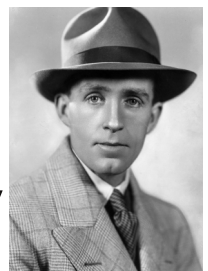
Arnold Ridley

Arnold Ridley (1896–1984) was an actor, playwright, theatre manager, director and producer.



He is fondly remembered as the elderly private Godfrey in the TV series *Dads Army*. He had in fact served in the Home Guard, after service as an officer in both World Wars. He fought in the Battle of the Somme and was injured three times, with one serious bayonet wound leaving him with no strength in his right arm, and he was also on the last British destroyer to escape from Boulogne in May 1940.

Unable to get work as an actor on his return from the First World War, he turned to writing plays. He wrote more than 30, but *The Ghost Train* was the most successful, running for 665 performances in the West End from 1925. There have been two revivals, it has been filmed twice and its popularity endures over 80 years on. Ridley may not have had much luck with money – his theatre and film company went bust. He felt he had lost a fortune by selling the amateur rights to *Ghost Train* cheaply.



Sound effects

Arnold Ridley was very insistent that live sound effects were a 'must'.

He lists the following as necessary for producing the train effects: one tubular bell (E flat), one garden roller propelled over bevel-edged struts screwed to the stage 30 inches apart, one 18-gallon galvanised iron tank, one thunder sheet, air cylinders, one bass rope drum and a pair of sticks, two side drums, one small padded mallet (auctioneer's hammer), one large padded mallet (for beating tank) one medium mallet, one wire-drum brush, one milk churn, one train whistle (for mouth), one whistle on cylinder, two electric or hand driven motors, two slides cut to give shadows of carriage windows of train, two flood arcs on each side of stage, one tin amplifier for steam with a counterweight placed in its mouth.

The instructions for operating this little selection required no fewer than eight stage crew. Unfortunately, austerity and shortage of stage crew means that we have had to resort to the Internet.

Our charity for this show



Following this production, a donation will be made to Kingston Samaritans.

Kingston Samaritans have been providing emotional support to callers in the local community since

1968. As well as speaking to people via telephone, email and text, they also see visitors face to face in the branch.

The volunteers are trained to be good listeners, to be sensitive to callers' distress and to explore feelings, including those which may lead to suicidal thoughts. By listening and talking through your feelings, hope they will be able to help you get through difficult times.

The branch also provides support locally through its various Outreach activities, which include working in partnership with the YMCA in Surbiton, Network Rail and Wandsworth Prison. They also attend and run workshops and events in schools throughout the community and support events at both Kingston University and Kingston College.

Kingston Samaritans does not receive funding from government nor from the national Samaritans charity so rely heavily on the generosity of the public and the fundraising efforts of volunteers and their friends and families.