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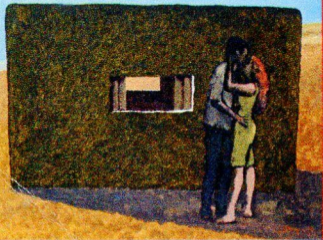
TOP EDGE PRODUCTIONS

present

the first UK performance of

THE PILLBOX

a new play by Simon Rae



In
Bampton
Village Hall
on
Wednesday
25th May
7.30pm

Ticket No 32

Mal	Steve Hay
Bill	Andrew Bolton
Alf	David Thurston
Francis	Sam Alexander
Amy	Amy Enticknap
Director	Tom Blackmore
Music	Sue Casson
	Lily Blackmore
	Robert Blackmore
Images	Nik Stanbridge
Set	Mike Wareham

A lot of people have pulled together at very short notice to make this happen.

I would first like to thank our brilliant - and busy - cast for coming on board so enthusiastically, fitting in our rehearsals around other commitments. They have been wonderfully led by Tom Blackmore who came in as director when I found I had double booked myself. And with Tom came Sue Casson and Lily and Robert to bring music to the show.

Mike Wareham has been a mainstay throughout and has built our pillbox. Nik Stanbridge has given us the run of his splendid pillbox photographs. David Inshaw let us use his wonderful painting for the posters. Janet Rouse lent us her projector. Jo Lewington and Pauline Hawkins have given us moral – and practical – support throughout.

Finally, my thanks go to those of you who have taken a punt on an unknown play. I hope you enjoy it!

I wrote *The Pillbox* several years ago. A small company was interested in putting it on and it was given a rehearsed reading. Then other things happened, and it went back in that famous bottom drawer that all writers have. It was when the opportunity to put on an exhibition on pillboxes in the Vesey Room arose that I remembered it – and that is why you are about to see its first ever performance, in Bampton Village Hall.

My original idea was to write a trilogy of short plays all based around the same pillbox in the same community set at twenty year intervals: 1940, 1960 and 1980. The intention was to explore changes in society through the post-war period while following the consequences of certain dramatic events for the individuals and families involved. I may still complete the project, but for the time being we just have the 1940 instalment, which sees four very different men of the Home Guard waiting around their newly built pillbox for what seemed the inevitable German invasion. The tensions that build among them are explosively intensified when a young woman from the village shows up at the pillbox with a picnic basket for her fiancé...

Simon Rae

Simon Rae set his first stage play on Millennium Eve, and has been writing and producing plays ever since. His theatre company, Top Edge Productions, has toured the length and breadth of the UK and have been invited to take part in this year's Gdansk International Shakespeare Festival. Simon is also a poet, biographer, broadcaster and novelist.

Tom Blackmore has been developing new work for the theatre for 20 years, adapting and presenting material for performance and directing new work by writers such as Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Jean Findlay, Simon Rae, and Sue Casson. His own first play, *Making History*, an intimate history of the Nuremberg Trials, based on recently recovered letters exchanged between chief British prosecutor David Maxwell Fyfe and his wife in 1946, was premiered in Britain to critical acclaim, and is currently under development for a film entitled *Under an English Heaven*.

Music performed by Sue Casson, with Lily and Robert Blackmore

- There'll always be an England (Ross Parker & Hughie Charles, 1939)
- Would you please oblige us with a Bren Gun (Noel Coward)
- They can't black out the Moon (Art Strauss, Bob Dale & Sonny Miller, 1939)
- The White Cliffs of Dover (Nat Burton & Walter Kent, 1941)
- If I had lots of Coupons (Alf Ritter, 1943)
- I'm going to get lit up (when the lights go up in London) (Hubert Gregg, 1943)