

Dunstable Rep 2026/27 Season

THE TRENCH

by Oliver Lansley

Directed by Alan Clarke

Auditions – Thursday 3rd September 2026 7.45pm (at The Little Theatre, Dunstable)

Performances 6th-14th November 2026 (excluding Sunday 8th & Monday 9th November)

Evening performances – 7.45pm

Matinee performance – 2.00pm (Saturday 7th November)

The play is performed in one act of approximately 60 minutes in length. However, after an interval the audience will be invited back into the auditorium for a 'Cast & Creative Team Q&A'.

Rehearsals – Mondays & Wednesdays 7.45pm-10.00pm (from Monday 7th September)

About the play

The Trench is a relatively new play, inspired by the true story of a skilled miner named Willam Hackett – the only tunneller ever to receive the Victoria Cross - who became entombed in a tunnel during World War One.

This fascinating, dark and compelling play follows a World War I miner (Bert) who finds himself trapped in a collapsed tunnel. As the horror threatens to engulf him, he discovers another world beneath all the mud and death.

Setting off on an epic journey of salvation, the boundaries between reality and fantasy blur as he questions what's real, what's not and whether it even matters?

The Trench first premiered at The Edinburgh Fringe in 2012 and was devised, created and produced by the renowned and unique 'Les Enfants Terribles' Theatre Company.

The play was devised from a long poem, also written by the playwright. He made the decision to deliver the play's dialogue entirely in verse. This is therefore a unique style of theatre and will be an exciting challenge for anyone wishing to be involved, on stage or off.

CHARACTERS

BERT (Male, playing age 40-45) – the central character in the play. Bert is a miner who was deemed not fit enough for active duty but was commissioned to help dig the trenches. He has a wife at home who is expecting their first child. He is a noble man and always puts the well-being of his team before that of himself. He loses far more than he could ever have imagined and grief leads him to make a pact with the supernatural.

COLLINS (Male, playing age 15-18) – a young man thrust into the horrors of war on the front line. He assists Bert digging the trenches.

SOLDIER 1 (Male, playing age 18+)

SOLDIER 2 (Male, playing age 18+)

CHORUS 1 (Any gender, age 14+) – has dialogue and will assist with puppetry

CHORUS 2 (Any gender, age 14+) – has dialogue and will assist with puppetry

CHORUS 3 (Any gender, age 14+) – has dialogue and will assist with puppetry

GUIDE (Any gender, age 14+) – this actor will deliver the voice of the puppet that will be the physical manifestation of this character.

DEMON (Male, 18+) – this actor will deliver the voice of the puppet that will be the physical manifestation of this character but will also be part of the chorus.

Percussionists (*percussion will be performed by the cast*) - auditionees will be required to demonstrate some (straightforward) rhythm skills at the auditions.

NOTE - there will be a minimum of four in the cast and a maximum of nine.