

Hi-de-Hi

To be staged by Viva Theatre Company at the Performing Arts Centre, Soham Village College, Thursday 30 May to Sat 1 June.

Performances will start at 7.30pm. It is likely that, due to ticket sales, a matinee performance will be added for 2.30pm on Saturday 1 June.

Script is available here: <https://www.samuelfrench.co.uk/s/1962/hi-de-hi>

Written by Paul Carpenter and Ian Gower, this is a stage adaptation of the hugely popular Croft and Perry TV series, set in 1959. The production revisits late 1950s Britain and Maplins Holiday Camp with its host of well-known and colourful characters.

It's the start of the 1959 season and founder Joe Maplin announces that he is setting up a camp in the Bahamas and needs female Yellowcoats (entertainers) to go and work there. The annual "Miss Yellowcoat" competition will decide who. Imagine the rivalry! Camp cleaner Peggy, meanwhile, is thrilled at the prospect of a vacancy for a new Yellowcoat and convinces Entertainments Manager Jeffrey that she is the ideal candidate for the job. Ted is forced to employ numerous money-making schemes when his ex wife turns up at the camp with a bailiff in tow and Yvonne and Barry Stuart-Hargreaves send the rumour mill into overdrive when Gladys is overheard escorting Jeffrey into his chalet late one evening. Hilarity ensues!

Hi-de-hi, campers!

PARTS

The script calls for 9 male and 8 female character parts although there may be an opportunity for some doubling up of performers for minor parts, script permitting.

Gladys Pugh, F, late 20s+

With her essential signature Welsh accent, Gladys is Chief Yellowcoat/Sports Organiser/Radio Maplin Announcer. Gladys was born in 1933 in Pontypridd, and spent her youth in the Rhondda Valley. She joined Maplins holiday camp in 1955 and rose through the ranks to become sports organiser and later Chief Yellowcoat. She wins the competition for the most popular girl Yellowcoat every year, so far...

Upon Jeffrey Fairbrother's arrival at the camp at the start of the 1959 season, she fell passionately in love with him, although he did not reciprocate this. On one occasion, she found herself in a situation where Jeffrey had unintentionally become drunk, and she helped him back to his chalet. The following morning he awoke naked with no memory of the previous night, and found Gladys' bra in his bed. Gladys dislikes all the other female Yellowcoats, in particular Sylvia Garnsey, whom she sees as competition in her fight for Jeffrey's affections. Like Jeffrey, she also disapproves of Ted's

schemes to scam the campers, even though she secretly once had her own scheme selling reconditioned tennis balls.

Professor Jeffrey Fairbrother, M, 38+

Entertainment Manager – Jeffrey was born in 1921 to a respectable upper-middle-class family. He was sent away to a boarding school at the age of 7 and later studied Archaeology at King's College, Cambridge, before joining the teaching staff and eventually becoming a Professor at Cambridge University. He later married Daphne. They were separated in 1959 and he became disillusioned with university life. He resigned from Cambridge and joined Maplins holiday camp as Entertainment Manager, hoping it would give him an insight into the lives of everyday people. He failed to connect with campers and the entertainment staff, and is exceedingly embarrassed about introducing the kind of lavatorial humour favoured by Ted Bovis and the campers, such as the "That's Your Bum" competition. He has to deal with issues outside his job description, such as Gladys' smouldering passion for him and being asked to carry out dishonest acts to further Joe Maplin's business. He regularly went out of his way to stop Ted Bovis's schemes to scam the campers.

Ted Bovis, Camp Host, M 43+

Ted is the camp host and is very popular with the campers. He runs every event – the entertainment manager just introduces the events. He was born in November 1916 and grew up in an orphanage. Little is known about his early life except that he was one of the four Mississippi Minstrels performing at "The Palace" at Attercliffe and had served in the army during World War II. He joined Maplins upon demobilisation in 1945, and has returned every season since. He spent the winter months performing at the Ideal Home Exhibition and the Motor Show. He married Hilary in 1951 but they separated soon afterwards. He is always running scams to cheat the campers out of money: these include fake birthdays, raffles and rigged bingo.

Ted is the longest-serving employee at Maplins. Ted shares his chalet with Spike and often says he hates his job at Maplins, as he believes his talents are wasted on the lower classes who holiday there. He often tries to better himself by performing as a comedian at upper-class functions, most of which are unsuccessful. This is a part for a larger than life performer who can carry the role of a northern comic with ease

Spike Dixon, Camp Comic, M 20s+

After leaving school he gained a good position in the Income Tax office, but resigned in 1959 and joined the entertainment staff at Maplins. Spike shares a chalet with Ted, and is often kept awake by Ted's snoring. Spike often tries to branch out into his own style of comedy, designing and making his own costumes and funny sequences. Spike is a very honest and law-abiding man, and is the only member of the entertainment staff who doesn't run his own scheme to scam the campers for money. Although he is loyal to Ted and willing to turn a blind-eye to his schemes, he was often shocked at the lengths Ted would go to in order to make money.

Peggy Ollerenshaw Chalet Maid, F 28+

Peggy is the maid who looked after the staff chalets under the supervision of the fearsome Miss Cathcart. She always aspired to be a Yellowcoat, and tries her hardest to get involved with the entertainment in any way she can. Born in Lancashire in 1931, her father worked for the coal and

gaslight company and had a passion for motorbike racing, and Peggy was an experienced rider who had a licence by the time she was 16. Her father had died by the time she joined Maplins, and Peggy is supporting her widowed mother from her wages. In addition to her regular duties, she often helps out the entertainment staff, and could always be seen in the evenings in the Hawaiian ballroom, enjoying (and often joining in with) the evening entertainments. She frequently tried to get involved in the entertainment events, but was always stopped by Gladys, who forbade Peggy's involvement as she was not on the entertainment staff.

Peggy has a rather vivid imagination and was often easily taken in by others' lies, particularly Ted's ridiculous tales when he needed a cover story. This is a part for a performer who can deliver Peggy with the right balance of over-the-top "Ooh 'eck" whilst also being seen as a thwarted character who has the audience behind her.

Fred Quilley, Riding Instructor, M 40+

Fred was an illegitimate child and grew up in an orphanage until he was adopted at the age of fourteen and went to live in Brighton. He began working at the Brighton Racecourse and eventually qualified as a jockey. He became involved with the daughter of the local undertaker but they split up when he refused to join the family business. During World War II he was conscripted into the RAF, where he trained as an instrument mechanic, but spent the entire war stationed at Catterick. After being demobilised in 1945, he returned to Brighton Racecourse and married the owner of a wet-fish shop, but the relationship was short-lived and they soon separated. He then fell into the employ of a small-time gangster known as "Big Mac", who began paying him to fix the races, either by pulling his horse or drugging it prior to the race. However, on one occasion the race officials caught him pulling the favourite and gave him an official warning. The following week he took £300 from Big Mac to lose a race but accidentally won, causing Big Mac to lose £5,000 in bets. Shortly afterwards Fred was caught in a horsebox with a syringe and his jockey's licence was revoked. He was forced to leave Brighton for fear of further reprisals from the underworld and began drifting, eventually joining the staff at Maplins in 1951 as the riding instructor. Fred shares a chalet with Mr Partridge, even though they both hate each other – Fred hated Partridge smelling of alcohol and Partridge hated Fred smelling of horses.

Yvonne Stuart-Hargreaves, Dancing Instructress, F 40ish

Yvonne was born in Southport in 1914, the daughter of a floor-walker at the Waring & Gillow Department Store. Yvonne is very supercilious and believes she is socially above all other members of the entertainment staff, with the exception of Jeffrey Fairbrother. It is questionable why she actually works at Maplins, as she believes it to be a "dreadful, common place". It is assumed that she behaves in this way to hide a somewhat promiscuous youth. Because of her snobbish personality, she is disliked by many of her colleagues, Ted in particular. She met Barry when they were staying in digs together in Sunderland, but after a brief affair she became involved with a Hungarian acrobat from the Magyar Trio and became pregnant. When he found out he left her and joined ENSA. She then returned to Barry and he agreed to marry her, taking her home to be looked after by his family. It is not known what happened to the child. Barry and Yvonne later became professional ballroom dancers. During World War II Yvonne worked as an Auxiliary nurse in a military hospital. In 1942 Yvonne and Barry became ballroom champions, winning many trophies for their performances, although Ted believed they became champions only because of the reduced ranks of the opposition owing to most of the men being away fighting. Yvonne's and Barry's careers

took a downturn after the war and in 1956 they were forced to join Maplins as dancing instructors. She always tries to keep her dignity and high-class values while at Maplins, but this is not made easy when she is forced to participate in the entertainment events. Yvonne dislikes most of the entertainment staff, Ted Bovis and Mr Partridge in particular. She refers to Ted's money-making schemes as "petty", although she and Barry ran their own scheme selling cheap dancing shoes to campers for high prices.

Barry Stuart-Hargreaves, Dancing Instructor, M 40ish

Barry was born Bert Pratt in Nottingham, the son of a bus inspector. By the late 1930s he was living in Sunderland where he met Yvonne and they began a brief affair, but she left him for another man. She later returned to him when she was pregnant, and he proposed. He took Yvonne's last name, and changed his first name to Barry, for the sake of their careers. During World War II he was conscripted into the Royal Navy and served as a stoker, though it is presumed he did not do this for long as he and Yvonne became ballroom champions in 1942. After the war, he and Yvonne continued dancing, but their careers were drawing to an end, and in 1956 they joined Maplins as a last resort. He is often heavily criticised by Yvonne for his etiquette, a habit which annoys him intensely. Although his official jobs were to teach dance and give ballroom demonstrations, Barry was regularly chosen against his will to be the victim of the campers in the entertainment events, such as getting covered in water while dressed as a granny, having spaghetti stuffed down his trousers, and dressing up as "Percy the Pixie" to entertain the children. Barry is quite camp and although hints are made that Barry is gay, this is never confirmed.

William Partridge, Children's Entertainer, M late 50s+

At the age of 74, Mr Partridge is the eldest member of the entertainment staff and the only one to be called by his honorific and surname out of respect for Victorian values. Mr Partridge was born in 1885. After leaving school he began a successful music hall career under the stage name of "Whimsical Willie, the Juggling Joker". At the height of his career he topped the bill at the Holborn Empire and performed for King George V in the Royal Command Performance at Windsor Castle. In 1914 he joined the British Army and fought on the Western Front until 1916, when he was badly wounded. He was shipped home to England but found that, due to the nature of his injuries, he was unable to return to his music hall career. Initially he tried a brief period as a comic, travelling the American circuit in New Orleans. He subsequently returned to England and started a children's entertainment business, performing Punch and Judy shows and magic tricks as Willie the Wizard. The business was a success and Mr Partridge found himself highly in demand performing for wealthy and respectable families. In 1939, at the outbreak of World War II, Mr Partridge left his business and joined ENSA, performing as a comic entertaining the troops in North Africa and France. After demobilisation in 1945, Mr Partridge found the demand for his services had dwindled and he was forced to take a job as children's entertainer at the newly reopened Crimpton-on-Sea Maplins Holiday Camp. As the years wore on, Mr Partridge became dispirited by the lack of respect he received from the increasingly bad-mannered children who stayed at the camp. By the early 1950s he was drinking heavily and slipping into seasonal alcoholic benders, and regularly taking it upon himself to discipline the unruly children in a harsh and often violent manner. He is often asked why he is a children's entertainer if he dislikes children so much, a question which remains unanswered. At one point he tried to strangle a boy who was spoiling one of his shows, and it was left up to Ted to save Partridge's job.

Sylvia Garnsey, Yellowcoat, F late 20s+

Sylvia was born in 1931 in Littlehampton, and by 1959 she was the second-longest-serving Yellowcoat at the camp. Known for her attractive appearance, she regularly clashed with Gladys over Jeffrey Fairbrother. Sylvia is a qualified swimming instructor, and enjoys flirting with Jeffrey Fairbrother. Out of all the female Yellowcoats, Gladys dislikes Sylvia the most.

Other characters

- □Betty Whistler - a Yellowcoat with some lines F 20s+□
- Dawn - a Yellowcoat with some lines F 20s+□
- Tracy - a Yellowcoat with some lines F 20s+□
- Hilary Bovis, wife of Ted. Described as smartly dressed and middle aged. F 40+□, has lines
- Gary - a Yellowcoat with some lines M 20s+
- Bailiff - M 40+, a couple of lines. Could double up with Mr Pritchard.□
- Mr Pritchard - M40+, a police officer on holiday at the camp, in love with Gladys. He has lines. Could double up with Bailiff.