

Institution: University of Hertfordshire		
Unit of Assessment: 27 – English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: Rediscovering World War 1 Theatre: Changing Perceptions of Wartime Era Entertainment		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010-2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Andrew Maunder	Reader in Victorian Literature	Sep 1999 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Dr Andrew Maunder's research into early twentieth-century theatre recovers forgotten plays and authors, introducing modern audiences to the lively theatrical industry of the wartime years: a largely unknown dimension of cultural life on the WWI Home Front and after. Through performances and community partnerships taking place between 2015 and 2019, audiences and participants were enabled to think well beyond the 'war poets' and to reappraise their understanding of the wartime cultural landscape and its legacies. The different productions have reached audiences amounting to 2,600 people across 68 performances and c.9,500 via online streaming; a further 250+ school-aged students have explored and experienced the plays' themes through workshops and their own production; an estimated 20,000 further visitors engaged with the research through a touring exhibition. A <i>BBC Online</i> article discussing the rediscovery of one of the plays reached over 1.9 million readers.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>Dr Andrew Maunder began researching First World War theatre in 2010. He was General Editor for the five-volume anthology <i>British Literature of World War I</i> (Pickering and Chatto, 2011) [3.1], which made available rare short stories, novels and plays from 1914–19, and looked beyond the iconic WWI texts and authors in the popular canon (Owen, Sassoon, Kipling et al.). Alongside hundreds of unpublished plays held in the Lord Chamberlain's Collection in the British Library, Maunder also came across neglected works by familiar names such as Barrie, Shaw and Galsworthy, some of which had not been staged since the war. These included the one-act spiritualist play <i>A Well-Remembered Voice</i> by J.M. Barrie (1918), which explored the death of a young soldier, dealing sympathetically with an aspect of war-time life which gets overlooked: the craze for spiritualism and attempts to contact the dead.</p> <p>Subsequent research into post-war theatre recovered further lost plays. Maunder's edited collection <i>British Theatre and the Great War</i> (Palgrave, 2015) [3.2] offered revisionist analysis of what war-time audiences were offered (including revivals of plays which never mentioned the war at all). Research into suburban war-time theatres revealed references to continuing productions of Lieutenant St John Ervine's 1913 play about an unhappy marriage, <i>Jane Clegg</i>. Written at the height of the campaign for votes for women, the play's plot about an unfaithful husband who embezzles his firm's money and his wife's decision to finally end their marriage seemed unusual war-time fare but was clearly popular at the time.</p> <p>Maunder discovered references to Robert Graves's previously unstaged <i>But It Still Goes On</i> (1929) while writing a GCSE guide to R.C. Sherriff's <i>Journey's End</i> (Methuen / Bloomsbury 2016) [3.3]. Graves's play had been commissioned by the producers of <i>Journey's End</i> who wanted a follow-up hit, but the play was rejected partly on account of its frank discussion of homosexual desire amongst soldiers.</p> <p>Because this body of work constituted such a rich source for understanding how the conflict and its challenges were represented, the next logical step was to investigate how today's audiences</p>		

would respond to them in their intended context: in performance on stage, and in doing so re-appraise their understanding of the war-time and early-twentieth century culture.

In 2015, Maunder advertised for a director with a good track record in period drama, raised production funds and co-ordinated the production of Barrie's *A Well-Remembered Voice* (1918) [3.6]. A prototype production was performed at an event organised by the AHRC Everyday Lives in War, First World War Engagement Centre at the University of Hertfordshire (June 2015). Positive feedback prompted Maunder to explore means of gaining wider audiences for the play. In 2016 he teamed up with Orleans Gallery, Richmond in a £20,000 project 'After Tipperary' through the AHRC-funded FWW Centre. The project a) partnered with local volunteers and schools to research war-time entertainment in the borough 1914-1919, disseminating their findings in a range of formats; and b) co-ordinated a small touring production of *A Well-Remembered Voice* for local secondary schools, in particular students studying GCSE drama. In October 2016 it had 2 performances at Twickenham Academy before going on tour including London's Leicester Square Theatre.

Following these projects, Maunder developed the commercial staging of two further rediscovered plays, each allocated four-week runs at London's award-winning Finborough Theatre. The Finborough is necessarily selective in its programming: "Space is given only to a small number of projects for plays that are genuinely striking, that have something different to say, but which also can be developed commercially with a modern audience in mind." Noting that *But It Still Goes On* (1929) had never been staged – and that its explosive mood of bitterness and anger was in interesting contrast to Sherriff's restrained play which has dominated the canon of WWI drama – Maunder approached the Finborough who agreed to stage it in 2018 as part of their 'Great War 100' series. Maunder acted as producer, recruiting directors and technical teams and overseeing rehearsals and production [3.7].

Based on this collaboration with Maunder and the interest generated by the Graves play, the Finborough were happy to work with him again as producer on a production of *Jane Clegg* in 2019 [3.8], noting that "the play's focus on female empowerment also meant that it could make a distinctive contribution to the renewed interest in 2018 in the suffragette movement".

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Articles and Books

- 3.1 Maunder, A. (ed.) *Drama*, volume 5 of *British Literature of World War I* series, General Editors Andrew Maunder and Angela K. Smith. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), 268p. ISBN (5-vol. set) 978-1-84893-042-1
- 3.2 Maunder, A. (ed.) *British Theatre and the Great War 1914-1919. New Perspectives* (London: Palgrave, 2015). Plus Introduction (1-39) and chapter, 'On the Edge of Town: Melodrama and Suburban Theatre in Brixton, 1915' (81-99). <https://doi.org/fmkp>
- 3.3 Maunder, A. *R.C. Sherriff's Journey's End*. GCSE Student Guide (London: Methuen/ Bloomsbury, 2016).
- 3.4 Maunder, A. 'Staging the First World War', *Teaching Representations of the First World War*. Eds. Douglas Higbee and Debra Rae Cohen (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2017), 228-34.
- 3.5 Maunder, A. 'Theatre: 1914 and after', *The Edinburgh Companion to the First World War*. Eds. Ann-Marie Einhaus and Katherine Baxter (Edinburgh: EUP, 2017), 62-76.

Theatrical Performances

Maunder's research furnished acting texts for several productions, including:

- 3.6 *A Well-Remembered Voice* (J.M. Barrie, 1918). Produced in collaboration with Io Theatre. Twickenham Academy, 4 October 2016 (audience 100). UK tour: OSO Arts Centre, Barnes, Surrey, 7-8 October 2016 (audience 90); Weston Auditorium, Hatfield, 17 October 2016 (audience 60); Leicester Square Theatre, London, 29 & 30 October 2016 (audience 250). <https://iotheatrecompany.wordpress.com/about/shows/a-well-remembered-voice/>

- 3.7 *But it Still Goes On* (Robert Graves, 1929). Finborough Theatre, London, 10 July-4 August 2018 (audience 1,155). <https://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk/productions/2018/but-it-still-goes-on.php>
- 3.8 *Jane Clegg* (St John Ervine, 1913). Finborough Theatre, London, 23 April-18 May 2019 (audience 950 / 9,500 online). <https://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk/productions/2019/jane-clegg.php>

Evidence of quality: All written outputs were peer-reviewed. 3.1 submitted to REF2014; 3.2 submitted to REF2021. 3.3-3.5 are published by academic presses. Published reviews or independent evaluation of all theatrical performances are available (see section 4).

Key grant funding: Jan – December 2016: 'After Tipperary: Theatre and Entertainment in Richmond 1914-1918.' £20,000 awarded from Everyday Lives in War, AHRC-funded First World War Engagement Centre (total award: £609,301).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words) [1556]

The main beneficiaries of this research are:

- Audiences who watched the plays. They have been moved, made to feel uncomfortable or amused and have encountered voices of WW1 rarely found elsewhere which have challenged them to reappraise their understanding of the war, its culture and legacies.
- Community Knowledge of the Past: communities have discovered and engaged with material which takes them beyond familiar narratives of WW1.
- Creative industries and cultural educators in London, Surrey and Middlesex. They have used the research to reach a range of audiences and have been made aware of the potential for productive collaboration with universities.

Public Engagement and reaching new audiences: Box-office returns show c.2,500 theatregoers have paid to see the plays *A Well-Remembered Voice*, *But It Still Goes On* and *Jane Clegg* [5.1; 5.2]. These productions took place in established venues (Finborough; Leicester Square Theatre); *A Well-Remembered Voice* was also performed at a school to an audience of 100 local students from a variety of schools, not all of whom would have had the opportunity to attend live theatre otherwise, including those who needed to write about a performance for their GCSE studies – thus enhancing their cultural participation. 65% of pupils surveyed said they thought the production was thought-provoking; 85% that they would go to something like it again; 76% thought it was important that it was happening at that moment [5.1]

A film of the stage production of *Jane Clegg* was made available on YouTube from June-August 2020 as part of the Finborough for Free season. It was a *Times*, *Guardian* and *Waitrose Magazine* recommendation and gained c.9,500 views. [5.3]. The film was also a finalist for an 'Off West End' award for best pre-pandemic recording with minimal editing. The productions were covered in local and national press and media including *The Times*, *The Stage*, *Time Out*, *Daily Telegraph*, *BBC Online*, *Jewish Chronicle* and local radio, and were extensively reviewed, particularly *But It Still Goes on* and *Jane Clegg*. *Jane Clegg* was reviewed in the *Guardian* by Michael Billington ('Forgotten suffrage era gem shines again,') and a *BBC Online* article featuring Maude discussing the play and its rediscovery reached over 1.9m readers [5.4; 5.5].

For audiences the 'lost' war plays demonstrated an alternative to familiar post-war representations such as *Journey's End* (1927) and *Oh What a Lovely War!* (1963). The Finborough Artistic Director reports of *But It Still Goes On* that "there was definitely a section of [the audiences] who were interested in its war themes. Another section recognised it as a ground-breaking example of twentieth century theatre's treatment of homosexuality and, to quote one of the critics, its 'providing glimpses into things that would not be fully explored on stage for another forty years'" [5.2]. Statements from audience members after *A Well-Remembered Voice* demonstrate this shift in understanding about WW1 entertainment:

- "Different to what I expected (in a good way)...I came with my 13 year old son – a great performance enjoyed by us both"

- “Not what I was expecting – was expecting something more blatantly anti-war.”
- “...exceptionally interesting because it presented a different perspective on death, the afterlife and love.” [5.6]

The production of *Jane Clegg* “brought a different audience [to the Finborough], many of whom were interested in the feminist dimension to the play” [5.2]. Audience comments noted its historical and contemporary engagement, a reminder of how our female ancestors had few choices:

- “the feminist themes [still] stood out...extraordinarily. The impact of Jane having power (money) and the furious reactions of those around her were like a microcosm.”
- “the determined wife absolutely hard, but pitiable as she had no way out of the situation but to endure it...”
- “as contemporary as #Metoo” [5.7]

Critics rated *Jane Clegg* highly (3* *The Guardian*, 4* *ActDrop*, 3* *The Stage*, 5* *The Upcoming*, 5* *London Pub Theatres Magazine*) and praised its rediscovery and contemporary relevance: “Thankfully Herts academic Andrew Maunder recently rediscovered Ervine’s 1913 controversial gem, *Jane Clegg*.... after sitting enthralled by this pertinent and timely melodrama, I can’t understand why this has been overlooked for so long” (*Stage Review*, 2 May 2019) [5.5].

Community knowledge of the past: *After Tipperary* was a 2016 research partnership between Maunder, Orleans Gallery and local history volunteers (a total of 318 project participants). It investigated an unusually rich diet of entertainment in Richmond and Twickenham in 1914-1919, and worked to change understanding about everyday life on the Home Front. Although volunteers had already known a good deal about the war, some were surprised by the variety of material offered to war-time residents, and by “the amount of effort went to by [local] residents to entertain troops and injured soldiers”. They also “commented on how the research had made them think about the lives of working-class people during the war....much of their prior knowledge related to middle class experiences”. A Heritage Assistant stated it “was exciting to be able to cover areas...that have previously taken a bit of a ‘back seat’”. Sharing this information has added to our understanding of people who lived locally at the time.” [5.1]

With the volunteers, Maunder and Orleans Gallery’s Project Co-ordinator co-wrote a short illustrated history, *After Tipperary: Theatrical Entertainment during the First World War in Richmond upon Thames* (2016) which was given away free of charge in museums and libraries in the borough. The research material also formed the basis of an exhibition held at Richmond Theatre and then Richmond Adult Community College (November 2016) before touring local libraries (to 13 January 2017), reaching an estimated audience of 20,000 [5.1].

Sharing the collaborative research helped enrich school-level education and challenge pupils’ understanding about the First World War. Dramatic Edge, a Richmond Council initiative aiming to raise the standard of drama and dance across schools, took some of the most striking local stories uncovered by Maunder and the team to create a new play set in WW1 for junior and middle school students to perform. Through workshop, the stories were combined with different performance styles – silent film, music hall, melodrama, song and dance – and shaped into a coherent piece. The final production took place at Twickenham Academy on 10 November 2016 and showcased the talents of 70 children with four professional actors, before an audience of 220 parents and pupils. The children involved “loved that they got to work with professionals. It made them feel special.” The emphasis on the Home Front rather than the trenches – on the social and cultural rather than exclusively the military – meant that **“the young people who took part in the Dramatic Edge workshops showed a clear difference in how they think about the First World War after taking part.”** [5.1] The success of this approach – learning about history through performance – led to Orleans House Gallery providing immersive workshops for primary schools (180 children and 20 teachers), which centred upon the role of entertainment to fundraise for local causes during the First World War. Copies of the KS2 Teachers’ Pack based on the community research were sent to all 150 primary schools in Richmond and Hounslow, and were made available on the Orleans House Gallery website.

An independent evaluation concluded *After Tipperary* was: “a successful project that engaged residents in Richmond with the everyday experiences of people during the First World War and made strong connections between academia, the cultural sector, formal and informal learning and researchers. ... **The knowledge of all participants was increased as a result of taking part, [making] them better able to understand culture and everyday life during the First World War**...[it] enabled participants to better explore the impact of the conflict by using theatrical entertainment as a lens.” [5.1] The Director of the National Lottery Heritage Fund First World War Centenary Programme – identifying ways in which their funded projects had influenced public understanding of the war and its impacts – stated “**the specialism of Everyday Lives in War in theatre studies was central to the success of Orleans Gallery in Richmond’s project** [5.8].

Creative industries and cultural educators: These projects have demonstrated the potential for mutually beneficial collaboration between universities, their researchers, the commercial theatre and theatre practitioners, providing models for future collaboration:

- The *After Tipperary* partnership between the University of Hertfordshire and Orleans House Gallery was evaluated as “**strong and effective in widening participation and ensuring knowledge transfer**,” with the “pivotal roles” of both the Project Manager and Andrew Maunders highlighted in its success [5.1].
- The Artistic Director of the Finborough Theatre stated: “The productions of *But It Still Goes On* and *Jane Clegg* are examples of how small productions at a fringe theatre of stage-worthy rediscovered texts, carefully planned, with expertise and ambition behind them, can help **change the theatrical landscape** - particularly as regards the First World War.....On a broader level, there is clearly an ongoing challenge in taking period-based subject matter and presenting it to twenty-first century audiences; the fact that this has been achieved suggests that there is a possible model for other organisations to follow.” [5.2]
- David Gilmore, Olivier-award winning director of *Jane Clegg*, stated “The opportunity to stage St John Ervine’s ‘Jane Clegg’ was **one of those events that so rarely come along. It was a chance to tackle a fine piece of work by a writer whose oeuvre could otherwise so easily slip into oblivion**. Like all the best drama it resonates with today’s audiences a century after it was written and was received with great approbation.” [5.9]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1 ‘After Tipperary’ independent project evaluation report (Sam Cairns Associates on behalf of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames)
- 5.2 Letter from Artistic Director, Finborough Theatre
- 5.3 Collated links, data and reviews for *Jane Clegg* on YouTube
- 5.4 Collated reviews, press and media for *But It Still Goes On*
- 5.5 Collated reviews, press and media for *Jane Clegg*
- 5.6 Audience feedback for *A Well-Remembered Voice* (copy available on request)
- 5.7 Audience feedback for *Jane Clegg* (copy available on request)
- 5.8 Letter from Director, National Lottery Heritage Fund First World War Centenary Programme
- 5.9 Email from Director, *Jane Clegg*