

Welcome Dear Friends...

'The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.'

L.P. Hartley

We invite you to take a journey into the past; into the world of Charles and Anne Fairfax. A world which, at first glance, appears unlike our own. The splendid trappings of a Georgian family perhaps seem at odds with the character of our own homes. We might conclude from our lofty 21st century vantage point that we have 'moved on'; that these privileged people of the past bear no relation to our own present selves.

But is that true?

The Georgians prized order and symmetry, but the lives of the Fairfaxes, despite their wealth, was marked by chaos and imbalance. The house was solid, their position was not. The unstable journey you are about to take is not a clean and easy narrative. You have not been invited to listen to a straight story...

Instead, in each room you, like a historian, will choose an object. Each object will trigger an alternative glimpse into the private and personal worlds of one of the characters. You will hear and see things from different perspectives. Certain choices may even alter your route through the house itself, changing the very order of events. In this way, using pieces of the past, you will reveal fragments of the characters who once lived there.

But, will you believe it?

A fiction has been created from the letters, bills, portraits and histories of the time and we're particularly indebted to Gerry Webb's *Fairfax of York*. We have endeavoured to imagine and faithfully recreate the thoughts, feelings and views of real people. That said, we've refused to present a single authoritative version.

Instead you will witness chaos and contradiction. What is the true character of this beautiful house and its inhabitants? What are the historical issues that prove to actually be closer to home? How do they objects we own define our lives and beliefs?

We ask you to be the judge.

It may well turn out that you live closer to the past than you might think.



PAUL BIRCH
Writer

Paul's work as a writer includes *The Nuisance Inspector* (York Explore), *Legacy* (York Theatre Royal), *Cross Words* (York Theatre Royal/Birmingham Rep/Polka/Plymouth Theatre Royal), *Filled with Phantoms* (Cheltenham Everyman), *Less Than Human* (York Theatre Royal/Out of Character), *Rise of the Shadow Stealers* (Suitcase & Spectacles) and *The Narrow Road* (Riding Lights). His first audio dramas, *Sanctuary* and *King of Sherwood*, were produced by Spiteful Puppet/ITV and he recently adapted James Leasor's spy novel, *Passport to Oblivion*, as an audio drama with George Lazenby and Terence Stamp in the cast. This production won the Best Drama prize in the New York Festival Radio Awards 2020. He is currently working on an audio adaptation of *Baron Munchausen* with Richard O'Brien as the lead. Paul is also Artistic Director of Out of Character, a York-based theatre company comprised of artists with lived experience of mental illness and is currently devising a play centred around the controversial history of Bootham Psychiatric Hospital.

Cast & Creatives

EDITH KIRKWOOD

Anne Fairfax

Theatre: *The Mousetrap* (UK Tour 2019 & 2020); *Peculiar Distractions* (York Theatre Royal); *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare's Rose Theatre); *The Princess and the Sprout*, *Billy Shakes: Wonder Boy*, *Peter Pan in the Park*, *Three* (Wrongsemble); *Austen the Musical* (Old Hall Theatre); *Simeon's Watch*, *Baked Alaska*, *Inheritance*, *Fantastic Acts* (Riding Lights); *Blood and Chocolate* (Slung Low/Pilot); *The Star Child* (Tell Tale Theatre); *York Mysteries 2012*, *Two Planks and a Passion* (York Theatre Royal/Riding Lights).

Edith is also a freelance writer and voice artist, as well as Associate Artist for the Leeds-based family theatre company, Wrongsemble.



JULIAN FINNIGAN

Charles Fairfax

Julian studied Drama and Literature at York St. John's University. He has worked in theatre, television, film and radio for over 20 years.

Theatre credits include the *Edward Albee Plays*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf* and *Zoo Story*, Harold Pinter's *Dumb Waiter* and Agatha Christie's, *Witness for the Prosecution* for Theatre Mill in York. Since 2009, Julian has played the part of Sherlock Holmes touring nationally in the play, *Holmes and*



Watson the Farewell Tour and is delighted to be reviving this role next year in the sequel, *Holmes and Mrs. Hudson: For One Night Only*, which will tour nationally next autumn. Screen credits include, Yorkshire Television's, *Emmerdale* and *The Visitor*, a ghost story filmed in the Yorkshire Dales. Most recently Julian played the part of Lord Hastings in ITV's *Victoria*. He is delighted to be playing another aristocrat, Viscount Fairfax of Emley, in the magnificent surroundings of Fairfax House.



THOMAS FRERE

Director

Thomas has worked in theatre, TV and film for more than 30 years and, as well as acting, works as a director, writer and presenter.

He was an Associate Director of North Country Theatre, playing Hannay in the original and now famous version of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, and appeared in countless other of their productions including *A Month in the Country* and *Twelfth Night*.

Elsewhere, Thomas has performed in rep theatres in Lancaster, Bolton, Leeds, York, Exeter, Southampton and Harrogate, plus numerous tours ranging from the first UK national tour of Bob Carlton's *Return to the Forbidden Planet* and the ground-breaking *Candide* at Liverpool Everyman. Last year he played the leading role of Henry Senior in *The Sandhouse* at the Cast theatre, Doncaster which it is hoped will be revived and toured in 2021.

On TV he has appeared in programmes such as **The Royal**, **Emmerdale** and **Gentleman Jack** (often playing clergymen!). His greying hair & mature years means you can now catch him on daytime TV, advertising comfortable chairs.

