

Bonnet and Belt Theatre Company Announces a New Stage Show - Canals of Old England.

“..a stunning and original musical history of England’s canals.” –York House Centre

An exciting new show by musician and writer Phil Underwood celebrates the heritage of the English canals in music, song and verse, accompanied by melodeon, concertina and fiddle.

Stirring original songs and evocative poetry weave together with real canal tales and history to tell the stories of the working people on the early canals and the incredible society they created. Step dancing and puppetry complement the music to create a powerful, imaginative and entertaining theatrical event which brings home the vital part the canals played in the industrial development of Britain.

From the true story of the Horse that Jumped at the Moon to the almost true story of the boatman who nearly prevented World War Two, the history of the canals and the people who worked the boats unfolds. Personal stories emerge of struggle, tragedy, hardship and competition with the railways, offset by beautiful artwork and inspiring tales of love, family bonds, resilience and courage. Come prepared to sing along in this both moving and fun retelling of the canal story.

The Cast

Phil Underwood (National Theatre, Bill Bailey) grew up on the Isle of Wight in a theatrical family and now lives on a traditional narrow boat on the Grand Union canal. A folk/roots singer all his adult life, he trained for the stage with the War Horse production at The National Theatre in 2012. Phil’s many stage and screen appearances include Bill Bailey at Wembley Arena, Songs of Praise, BBC Breakfast, Robson Green’s Tales of the Coast, Eastenders and the BBC World Service.

Nancy Potts (Morris Offspring, Royal Opera House) has played fiddle and sung all her life, and started morris dancing at the age of eight. Her canal credentials are impeccable – she first learned to walk on a narrow boat. She became the youngest tutor ever for Shooting Roots, the youth folk arts organisation. Nancy has recorded at Pinewood studios and performed live at the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall and Royal Opera House. She toured the UK, USA and Canada as musician for Morris Offspring. She performs regularly at Sidmouth International Festival and runs workshops on ceilidh dancing.

Bonnet and Belt has recently acquired two important traditional narrow boats – Ultima and Thule – on which we plan to tour the show on the canal system in 2018. Full details may be found on our website.

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Note to Editors: jpg images available on request from info@bonnetandbelt.com

Promotional video: <https://vimeo.com/221650066> **END**