

The Fabric of our Town
Draft 03

By

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Cast of Characters

Actor 1: Richard Roberts, Elizabeth,
William Cuffey, John Knight

Actor 2: Man, Tom Sayers, Major Burns,
Thomas Cooker,

: Joseph Pearson, Dr Peter
Murray M'Douall,

: Jon Paterson, Rev Applegath,
Fergus O'Conner,

: Inspector Mark, Richard
Cobden, Sgt. Baxter

: Prince Albert, Magistrate
Percival

Actor 3: Woman, Sir Edward Filmer,
Bobby, Swaisland, John
Mitchel

: Eliza Hayes, Peter Hoey,
Henry Gardner, Roayl Servant

: Richard Ellis.

The Fabric of our Town

Modern Day: A MAN enters. He sits down and starts to play X-Box.

Enter a WOMAN. She is waving a piece of paper in the air.

WOMAN

Look I've just voted! What are you doing the polling booth will be closing soon if you don't leave now you will not get to vote.

MAN

I can't be bothered. Voting is stupid. What difference can I make! Who cares about voting anyway?

WOMAN

I care! And you should too. If you had of been born in the 1800's you might not have been able to vote.

MAN

What are you talking about? Everyone can vote!

WOMAN

Yes now we can. But back then you had to be rich and own land to be able to vote and if you were a woman...well, you had no chance whatsoever even if you were a land owner.

MAN

Now you're just talking rubbish.

WOMAN

If you won't listen to me maybe you will listen to someone who lived back then.

MAN

And how am I going to do that...eh smarty pants...? What we are going to do travel through time to meet someone who lived back then. Huh!

WOMAN

We don't need to there's one right here.

Enter RICHARD ROBERTS jumping out onto Man scaring him.

Man jumps with fright and hides behind Woman.

MAN

What? Who are you? Where did you come from. You're a ggg...ghost?

RICHARD ROBERTS

Yes I am! But you...you are a fool for not voting! I would have given anything to live in a free society where everyone has the right to vote. And here you are not voting and throwing your chance to have a voice away. In 1904 I ended up in the Dartford Union Workhouse. I'm going to show you all the things that happened to me and how I got to that point.

MAN

What are you going to do to me?

RICHARD ROBERTS

I would like to take you back to 1859. There was a vote that day too. I want to show you what life was really like back then. I'd like to take you on a journey and show you the importance of being able to vote. You'll meet lots of people on the way, some you won't forget and some you will never want to meet again. How about it, are you with me?

MAN

Yes...?

RICHARD ROBERTS

I said are you with me?

MAN

Yes.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Good! Let's get started. Follow me.

Exit Richard Roberts followed by Woman pushing Man along.

It is the 12th May 1859. A market square in Dartford. Outside the Royal Victoria and Bull Pub. Enter RICHARD ROBERTS 34yrs, running.

He speaks to the audience.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Phew! I made it. I've walked all the way from Crayford to here in Dartford to see the voting take place today. I'm sorry I haven't even introduced myself. My name is Richard Roberts. I'm here today because I'm so angry that I'm not allowed to vote. It's not like in your time when everyone over a certain age can vote. No, in 1859 it was very different. Only the wealthy landowners were allowed to vote, not the average working man like me. And it was very corrupt, people would be intimidated and forced to vote for someone they didn't

(MORE)

RICHARD ROBERTS (cont'd)

want to vote for. I heard at the vote today they are going to have some really mean prize fighters that are going to force everyone to vote for Filmer. Edward Filmer is the meanest of them all. They're such bullies. I'm going to need a few volunteers to help me out when they come to try and intimidate me. You look like a mean bunch...maybe some of you could join with me and help get my voice heard. Who would like to help me try and make sure everyone gets the vote?

He chooses three volunteers from the audience.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Are you sure your not going to get scared and run away and leave me to face these fighters by myself? I hope not. Show me your meanest face so I can see how scary you can be.

Enter TOM SAYERS. He is a prize fighter.

Frightened, Richard hides behind his volunteers.

TOM SAYERS

Oi you there?

RICHARD ROBERTS

Me?

TOM SAYERS

Yes you! What are you and that ugly lot doing here? You better not be here to ruin the vote. I have strict orders from Sir Edward Filmer to beat up any of you trouble makers if you try and get in the way of his victory.

RICHARD ROBERTS

No...no trouble here sir.

TOM SAYERS

Huh, sir...its not sir...they call me...The Brighton Boy...champion prize fighter of all England! The man the whole of London comes to see fight at the Long Reach Tavern on the Dartford marshes.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Honestly...Brighton Boy...we won't cause no trouble.

TOM SAYERS

Just keep quiet and stay out of my way, got it?

RICHARD ROBERTS
Got it.

Richard Roberts instructs his group to shout out and heckle Sir Edward Filmer during his speech.

Tom Sayer talks to the audience.

TOM SAYERS

Right you horrible lot, who else here do I need to speak to about causing trouble? You...you look like a trouble maker, just look at his face, look. Any lip from you lad and I'll...And you stop your sniggering. Hee hee hee, hee hee hee, it's pathetic. Look at these Muscles. I should just beat you all up now and get it over with. This is what's going to happen...when Sir Edward Filmer arrives he's going to give us a speech, and you lot are going to listen. If I hear a peep out of any of you there will be trouble! When you are asked to vote, you lot have to raise your hands for Sir Edward Filmer...got it? If you don't vote for Filmer I won't get my money. He is paying me to force you lot into voting for him so make sure you do, or I will be very angry. Don't make me angry, you won't like me when I'm angry. Grrrr. Here he comes now, best behavior or else!

Enter Sir Edward Filmer. He walks to the centre of the stage and calls Tom over to his side.

SIR EDWARD FILMER

There you are Tom. Has there been any signs of trouble.

TOM SAYERS

Don't worry sir, I've got my eye on this bunch of toerags for you. The first sign of trouble and I'll break out the boys.

Tom shows off his muscles by putting up his fists and kissing his knuckles and boxing the air. He hits Sir Edward by accident.

SIR EDWARD FILMER

You clumsy oaf! Be that as it may we are expecting a lot of people so you might want to get some other strong men to help you just in case some of those sad old Chartists who used to live around here turn up. We may need to give them some 'gentle persuasion'.

TOM SAYERS

Gentle persuasion? But I thought you wanted me to...you know...hit them...beat them up...knock them out...

SIR EDWARD FILMER

Be quiet you fool, no-one is supposed to know that. Just get some of these stronger looking ones whilst I prepare myself.

TOM SAYERS

I'm going to need some strong men who can help me intimidate those Chartists. Who would like to help me?

Tom chooses two volunteers from the audience. He instructs them to stand either side of him and look mean.

SIR EDWARD FILMER

Lets get you voters up here to the polling booth. Who here has come to vote? Any volunteers?

Sir Edward Filmer chooses six volunteers from the audience. He hands them a voting card instructing them to come forward when the vote takes place.

The voting slips state if they are a landowner or not.

SIR EDWARD FILMER

These are your voting slips. You may have noticed you can only vote for one person. Me! That shouldn't be a problem as I am by far the best person for the job! Good, now that is settled we can get this vote started. As you all know I am Sir Edward Filmer and I am here today to win back the West Kent seat. My dear father god rest his soul, held this seat in parliament from 1838 until his death in 1857 and I'm determined to win the seat back for my family. And no it's not actually a seat that I can sit on, but if I win, it means I will have the power to do what I like and there will be nothing anyone can do to stop me. Whaaa haa haa. My father made sure those Chartists never got the vote and I intend to follow in his footsteps. I mean who ever heard of a poor man voting! Not me that's for sure and I want it to stay that way. I'm prepared to go to any means to win.

Richard instructs a volunteer to shout out:

VOLUNTEER

Votes for everyman!

TOM SAYERS

Who was that? Come with me boys.

Tom and his volunteers walk over to Richard and his volunteers.

TOM SAYERS

Which one of you dares to disobey me? Was it you?

RICHARD ROBERTS

No...it wasn't me. I swear.

TOM SAYERS

Ahh...so it must have been one of you. I knew you would be trouble. Come on which one of you did it?

RICHARD ROBERTS

It was this one...he's not with us. We were just listening to the speech when he shouted out.

TOM SAYERS

You, get back over there I don't want to see your ugly face around this place again. Go on sit back down. Now don't let me hear another word from you two or there will be hell to pay.

RICHARD ROBERTS

I'm sorry...I didn't mean to get you into trouble but don't worry I have a plan. watch this...

SIR EDWARD FILMER

As I was saying. Those Chartist fools wanted votes for every man over the age of 21 even if they didn't own any land. They wanted an election every year and the funniest thing they wanted...a secret ballot. That wouldn't work, I mean we couldn't even intimidate them at the polling booth because we wouldn't know who they were voting for. This way is much better, you see this way when I ask how many of you agree with me, if you don't raise your hand in agreement I can get my bare knuckle bother boys to knock some sense into you.

Richard instructs his two volunteers to shout out:

VOLUNTEERS

Secret ballots, secret ballots!

Tom and his volunteers walk over to Richard and his volunteers.

TOM SAYERS

That's it! I warned you lot.

RICHARD ROBERTS

It was those two!

TOM SAYERS

Just as I suspected, you two were with that other trouble maker weren't you? Well now you can go and join

(MORE)

TOM SAYERS (cont'd)
 him. Go sit back down and stay out of my sight. And you
 I've got my eye on you!

Tom takes his volunteers back.

RICHARD ROBERTS
 Phew, that was a close one. It's not that I'm scared or
 anything its just that it's really important we get the
 vote.

TOM SAYERS
 What did I say! Not a word or else! The voting is about
 to start. My two helpers you get amongst the crowd and
 make sure they vote for Filmer when the time comes.
 Thanks for your help up here.

Tom instructs his volunteers to sit back down.

*Tom and Richard stand on opposite sides of the
 stage with Filmer in the centre.*

SIR EDWARD FILMER
 So come on then you horrible lot, it's time to vote.
 Come up here to the polling booth with your slips.

Tom moves towards the audience menacingly

TOM SAYERS
 Come on get up! Hurry it up!

*Tom ushers the six voting volunteers with their
 slips over to Sir Edward Filmer.*

*Once they have finished voting one by one Tom
 menacingly ushers them back to their seats.*

SIR EDWARD FILMER
 Remember if you are rich and are a landowner you will
 be allowed to vote. If you are poor and you don't own
 any land you will not be allowed to vote. Give me that
 voting slip. Let me see...You are a landowner I see.
 Very good, you are allowed to vote. If you can just put
 a nice big cross next to my name, that means you have
 voted for me well done. You can sit back down. Now
 next. You are a woman. you can not vote, sit back down.
 Go on! Know your place woman! Next...ah another
 landowner, you can vote by just putting a big cross
 next to my name there. Good. Next..ah another
 landowner. Wait a minute your a woman, you can't vote,
 even if you do own land. Women voting I've never heard
 such rubbish. You hand that slip over. No wonder you
 didn't want to hand ot over...you're poor. You don't

(MORE)

SIR EDWARD FILMER (cont'd)

own any land. Get back over there. And finally you hand over your slip...good! Another rich landowner to vote for me just put a big cross there next to my name...

Richard moves towards the volunteer pleading.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Don't do it, don't let them intimidate you. You don't have to vote for him if you don't want to. If we all stand together we can really make a change. Quick go and sit back down I'll deal with the 'Brighton Boy.'

Richard ushers the last volunteer to sit down.

TOM SAYERS

Oh now he has a voice...I knew you were the ring leader all along, hiding behind your ugly friends. Well we'll soon see about that...

Tom lurches for Richard. Richard avoids him. They begin a physical routine. Filmer gets caught up in the action and flipped in the air.

Exit Filmer running.

Tom manages to capture Richard and restrain him.

TOM SAYERS

Ha! No-one out runs 'The Brighton Boy' I'm a Champion prize fighter and you're just a poor working man with nothing. Time for us to leave I think.

Tom drags Richard across the stage.

Richard talks to the audience.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Remember what I said. Don't let them scare you or bully you. I'll be back and I'll tell you all my story. Will you help me? Will you? Shout out 'We want secret ballots!' Keep saying it 'We want secret ballots!' We want secret ballots!'

The audience respond.

RICHARD ROBERTS

That's it! 'We want secret ballots!' We want secret ballots! Keep shouting!

TOM SAYERS

That's enough out of you come on. Get out of it.

Tom drags Richard off stage.

Enter a 'BOBBY' running. He blows his whistle

BOBBY

Quieten down. We won't be having no riots here! You there, I said quiet. That's more like it. Now run along home there's nothing to see here. Go on. And if I find any of you were associating yourself with those that disrupted the vote today I'll have you all locked up.

Exit Bobby.

Ricard enters sneaking from the opposite direction.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Good, you're still here, I was worried they would have scared you away. I'm glad you stayed. As you know I strongly believe the working man should get the vote and that's because I've worked nearly all my life. I had to leave school at twelve and I've worked in Swaislands factory ever since then. Let me take you back to April 8th 1842 when I was only 15yrs old and working at Swaislands the calico printing company. We made beautiful printed fabrics. My father found me the job mixing dyes. It was hard work, but I was treated well and enjoyed my job. But there were rumors that in up in Lancashire life for the children in the mills was very different. They were beaten if they made a mistake in their work. Well around the time that I was 15 and working in the Mills, a Major Burns turned up to inspect our working conditions...

Exit Richard.

Enter MAJOR BURNS. He inspects the stage as he walks around.

Enter CHARLES SWAISLAND. He walks over to Burns.

SWAISLAND

Ah Major Burns you've arrived safely I see. Would you like a tour of our factory now?

MAJOR BURNS

We will get to that soon enough. First I need to talk to you. I have traveled here because I am horrified at the stories I have heard of how children are being exploited across the country. I have been to Scotland where Reverend John Dempster runs a small school attached to his parish church in Denny. He is worried that too few children are finishing their schooling and

(MORE)

MAJOR BURNS (cont'd)

are forced to work instead of learning to read and write. We believe the factory owners such as yourself are using children as young as five as cheap labour.

SWAISLAND

This is an evil practice and one that I assure you I am not a part of. I would be happy to show you around my factory. The small amount of children I have working here are very happy and paid accordingly.

MAJOR BURNS

In Lancashire the employers are keen to install these 'new calico printing machines' they are supposed to be so easy to use, they can employ young children instead of men to operate them and cut costs...which as you know can be very dangerous.

SWAISLAND

I understand your concern, I have made every effort to ensure my factory is a safe place to work for everyone I employ. And as for cutting costs...I have found it increasingly hard to compete with these companies using new machines that can be minded by children. The only way I can compete is on the quality of my products because I cannot compete on price.

MAJOR BURNS

As you may know I work with Lord Ashley and he is committed to trying to stop the exploitation of children in Britain's factories. I need to collect as much evidence as I can to try and persuade parliament to restrict the hours that children can work in a factory to 10hrs per day.

SWAISLAND

Well I am very happy to hear that. I hope your good friend Lord Ashley's 10 hours Act goes through as it would stop the other factory owners from undercutting me by using child labour. Please follow me I have lots to show you.

Exit Swaisland leading Major Burns.

Enter Richard Roberts. He is now 15yrs old.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Guys it's me Richard. Well...me when I was 15. I told you I work here mixing fabric dyes. The boss Mr Swaisland is on his way with a very special guest. He said it's extremely important we make a good impression. I'm going to need some of you to come up here and help me work in the factory. Who would like to help me?

Richard chooses six volunteers from the audience. He stands them in a line and gives each a working movement to repeat. Once the volunteers all have their individual movement and are practicing, Richard conducts the other audience members in a factory sound scape.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Are we all ready? They're coming, get ready...Now.

Richard stands in the centre and conducts whilst mixing his dye.

Enter Swaisland and Major Burns. They watch the children working.

Slowly Richard conducts the children to a rest.

SWAISLAND

And as you can see here in the dye mixing, we do have some children working however they are all treated very fairly. We believe in using craftsmen to block print our designs by hand. You won't find machines minded by children here. What do you think? You can speak to one of our 7 child workers if you wish...

MAJOR BURNS

Mr Swaisland what I have seen here in Crayford so far today is...a revelation...this is the model of what should be happening in the rest of Britain. You have only seven children under the age of 13 and your factory is not only clean but the employees seem well looked after. Well done. But now for the final part of my visit and evaluation of your factory I would like to interview some of the children.

SWAISLAND

Everyone can take a break for half an hour. Major Burns here would like to test some of you children. But well done workers, you can sit down now. You can give yourselves a big clap. Well done.

The volunteers are ushered to sit down.

MAJOR BURNS

First up...Richard Roberts...

Richard steps forward.

MAJOR BURNS

How old are you Mr Roberts?

RICHARD ROBERTS

15yrs old sir.

MAJOR BURNS

How long have you been here?

RICHARD ROBERTS

About two or three years.

MAJOR BURNS

And you work in the colour house is that correct?

RICHARD ROBERTS

Yes sir. I attend to a copper, boiling fustic chips, and I carry gum from the next place to the colour house and I wash out the pans and brushes.

MAJOR BURNS

How many hours do you work?

RICHARD ROBERTS

Come to work at six and leave off at seven in the evening; sometimes longer, till nine.

MAJOR BURNS

And how often do you get breaks?

RICHARD ROBERTS

An hour and a half for dinner, half-an-hour breakfast, I go home to meals and I have time to play at breakfast and dinner, sometimes I have holidays...not very often.

MAJOR BURNS

Can you read or write?

RICHARD ROBERTS

A little, I go to a Sunday school attached to St Paulinus Church.

MAJOR BURNS

And what are you paid for your hard work?

RICHARD ROBERTS

It ain't very hard work. It does not tire me, I can sit down whenever I like. Pay is 6s a week and I get paid for extra work. Mr Swaisland hired me, he pays my father who pays me.

MAJOR BURNS

How is your health?

RICHARD ROBERTS

I have very good health, the smell of colours don't hurt me, never hardly smell 'em.

MAJOR BURNS

Good, very good indeed. That's it...I think I have enough for now...You are dismissed.

Exit Richard Roberts.

MAJOR BURNS

If the M.P's can't see that this is the only way I don't know how else I will persuade them. I must be returning to Lord Ashley now and tell him my findings.

SWAISLAND

Of course Major. I will escort you out of the factory. And you all can take an extra long break for being so wonderful.

Exit Major Burns followed by Swaisland.

Enter Richard Roberts 34yrs. He talks to the audience.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Swaislands works treated us it's workers well compared to other factories across Britain. But in 1843 only one year after Major Burns came to visit us a terrible trade depression hit the country and here in Crayford people didn't have enough money to live. Swaisland's factory was struggling to sell it's printed cloth. The new Poor Law meant that if anyone found themselves in hard times the only place they could go was the workhouse, and these were not very nice places to live, horrible, disgusting places. You might not believe me when I tell you how horrible these workhouses could be, but believe me the prisons today are nothing compared to the workhouses back then. Life was very different in 1843. Let me show you what I mean. This is Thomas Cooker, master of the Dartford Union Workhouse. He has been told he will lose his job if he doesn't keep the costs of the workhouse to a bare minimum. His first job is to cut the number of inmates by any means...

Enter THOMAS COOKER. He is dragging JOHN MITCHELL a 12yr old boy by his ear.

Exit Richard Roberts.

THOMAS COOKER

You little toe-rag, that's the last time I will ever catch you sleeping on the job.

JOHN MITCHELL

I wasn't sir I swear...

THOMAS COOKER

How old are you now? You've been here so long I forget.

JOHN MITCHELL

I'm twelve sir.

THOMAS COOKER

Twelve you say...and your family?

JOHN MITCHELL

My three sisters and two brothers are here with me sir.
My father died in an accident and mother couldn't take
care of us. She'll be coming for us though...just as
soon as she can...

THOMAS COOKER

Well lad, I'm sending you to Chatham. They need boys to
train as drummers for the Kings Own Scottish Borderers.
They will shortly be departing to India.

JOHN MITCHELL

But sir...If I go to India I'll never see my family
again... I won't go.

THOMAS COOKER

Ha! You think you have a choice? You are property of
the workhouse lad, and I say you go.

JOHN MITCHELL

I won't!

THOMAS COOKER

You will!

JOHN MITCHELL

I won't!

THOMAS COOKER

You will!

JOHN MITCHELL

I will!

THOMAS COOKER

You won't!

JOHN MITCHELL

Great!

THOMAS COOKER
Good!

John starts to skip away. Thomas starts to leave when he quickly realises what has happened.

THOMAS COOKER
Wait!

John stops in his tracks.

THOMAS COOKER
This is no laughing matter boy, you will be leaving tonight and if you refuse, your life will not be worth living!

Exit Thomas followed by John.

Enter Richard Roberts.

RICHARD ROBERTS
Do you see now how things were very different in my day. People sometimes were forced to make difficult decisions. Let me tell you another story to show you the effects of the terrible Poor Law.

Exit Richard Roberts.

Enter ELIZA HAYES 25yrs old from Ireland, she is carrying a small baby.

ELIZA HAYES
Could anyone help me please...please can anyone help me? I've just given birth to my baby in a barn, a barn! can you believe it? I can't believe it myself...but it just happened. My baby needs food and clothes and a place to sleep. I've walked here to Dartford all the way from Wales. I've had to beg for food the whole way. My husband was killed whilst building the railway a year after we fled the famine in Ireland. I was pregnant when he died and I had no money for me or the baby. I heard there was a workhouse at West Hill Dartford. Is this the right place?

Enter Thomas Cooker.

THOMAS COOKER
This is the Dartford Union Workhouse madam, how can I help you?

ELIZA HAYES
I've just given birth in a barn I need food and a bed for me and my baby.

THOMAS COOKER

And you are a resident of the area.

ELIZA HAYES

Of course not! If I was a resident of the area then I would be at home with my baby right now. I've walked all the way from Wales. My feet ache. I have just given birth, in a barn! My baby is hungry, we both need sleep and a warm place to do it.

THOMAS COOKER

Ah! You see...only local people can seek help here. You must leave. We have no place for you.

ELIZA HAYES

Have a heart mister, it's pouring of rain outside and my baby is less than day old with no clothes on its back.

THOMAS COOKER

That may well be, however...I am not let anyone in who is not a local no matter what their circumstances.

Exit Thomas Cooker.

ELIZA HAYES

Mister...sir... Don't worry little one, we'll make our way to London.

Exit Eliza humming a lullaby to her baby.

Enter JOSEPH PEARSON 65yrs old and his wife ELIZABETH following behind.

ELIZABETH

Joe...Joe...JOE! Wait for me. My legs don't work like they used to.

JOSEPH PEARSON

Well if you didn't stop to talk to every tom dick and harry on the street maybe you'd keep up. Nosey old bag!

ELIZABETH

What was that dear?

JOSEPH PEARSON

Nothing my darling wife I was just saying I think we're here.

ELIZABETH

So we are...ahhh look at all these poor children out on the street. They should be tucked up safe at home with their families not living in this awful place. It just

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

break my heart...and us how are we to live in such a place, once we enter that workhouse we will surely not leave until it is in a coffin...oh it breaks my heart...

JOSEPH PEARSON

Elizabeth will you stop wagging that tongue for one minute. What other choice do we have? Come along...

They go to exit when Elizabeth stops.

ELIZABETH

Oh...oh...oh...

JOSEPH PEARSON

What now?

ELIZABETH

All hope abandon ye who enter here...

JOSEPH PEARSON

What are you waffling about woman?

ELIZABETH

The sign...the sign...the sign above the door to the workhouse...its a sign.

JOSEPH PEARSON

I know it's a sign.

ELIZABETH

Not that type of sign...it's a sign...an omen...a bad omen. I'm not going in there and you shouldn't either.

JOSEPH PEARSON

What's an old fool like me to do. I'm 65, I'm not a spring chicken. Since there's no work for me anymore at Swaisland's factory the only place we can go for help is the Dartford Union Workhouse.

ELIZABETH

You go and see what they have to say, I'll wait here for you. Maybe these young scamps can keep me company.

JOSEPH PEARSON

Yes, yes...I mean...only if you're sure darling. I wouldn't want to leave you alone too long I know how your ailments have been playing up of late.

ELIZABETH

You go, I'll be fine right here until you get back. You'll look after me won't you deary..? Won't you

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

deary! Yes of course you will. Hurry along now Joe, all your fiff faffing, we ain't getting any younger.

JOESEPH PEARSON

Of course dear.

Exit Joe hurriedly, apologizing to the audience as he leaves insuring them he will be quick to save them from his wife Elizabeth.

Elizabeth talks to the audience.

ELIZABETH

That old fool, wouldn't know a good place to stay if it jumped up and bit him on the bottom. It's a shame for him though, he's a good man, worked in the printing trade since he was 10yrs old. How old are you lot? Well imagine working in the same place from your age until you were 65. Then you are told to leave but you are too old to find another job. Let me tell you it's not easy. I don't want to live in a workhouse, oh my old bones won't be able to do it...Oh...oh no something in my back just...If you there in the front could just...help...help...help.

Elizabeth wobbles and does a slow motion fall to the floor.

ELIZABETH

What's wrong with you? You're more useless then my husband. Help me up then...deary me...children today...no manners...you there give him a hand.

Following a struggle. Elizabeth is helped to her feet by the audience members.

ELIZABETH

Thank you...I can manage...some help you lot are I thought one of you might have had a nice house somewhere, where me and my Joe could of stayed for the remainder of the few short years we have left...But maybe Joseph is right and the workshop is our only option. It's the workhouse or starve. Starve we will. What's the matter with you lot? I said we'd starve...a bit of sympathy would be nice.

Elizabeth prompts a panto ahhhhhhh from the audience.

ELIZABETH

Ah give it a rest, I don't need your sympathy.

Enter Joseph Pearson.

JOSEPH PEARSON

I'm sorry, I'm sorry I took so long.

ELIZABETH

That's fine dear.

JOSEPH PEARSON

I wasn't talking to you you dear.

ELIZABETH

Oh...what did they say dearey? Do we belong to the workhouse now?

JOSEPH PEARSON

I walked out.

ELIZABETH

You did what? Never send a man to do a woman's job. Where else will we go? Oh...we'll surely starve!

JOSEPH PEARSON

They were going to separate us. I would rather starve than be separated from you. But if you would rather stay I'll understand.

ELIZABETH

Oh you sentimental old fool let's get our old bones back up this hill to Crayford. Till death do us part, that was our vow, I too would rather starve. We best get walking. Thanks for keeping me company. Cheerio.

Exit Elizabeth with Joseph walking slowly behind saying goodbye to the audience and apologizing for his wife. Elizabeth shouts from offstage.

ELIZABETH

Will you hurry up, or I will be leaving you here.

JOSEPH PEARSON

I'm coming, not a minutes rest with that one, talk, talk, talk, that's all she does. See you soon.

Exit Joseph shouting at Elizabeth to be quiet.

Enter Richard Roberts.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Now you've seen these stories you must have a much better idea about what work and life was like. I want to show you some of the things people right here in Crayford were trying to do to help change all that. The

(MORE)

RICHARD ROBERTS (cont'd)

Chartists were one such group. Their protests paved the way for workers everywhere to have the right to vote regardless of wealth. There were Chartist groups all over the country but the first Chartist meeting in Crayford was held in June 1844 at the One Bell pub. Since that meeting things have worsened and there is much hardship in the town. It is now October and winter is setting in and many of the calico printers are on starvation wages. That means the money they are paid is so low they cannot afford to feed themselves or their families. Peter Hoey is the leader of the block printers union at Swaisland's factory, he is also a committed Chartist.

Exit Richard Roberts.

Enter PETER HOEY talking to the audience.

PETER HOEY

I believe the time has come for the men in Crayford to fight back. I know I have only worked at Swaisland's factory with you all for a short time. However in my position as the leader of the Block Printers at Swaislands, I can see what needs to change. We work all the hours that god sends and keep this factory running. Without us production would grind to a halt. I had to move all the way from Stratford to find work and I am sick of the way working people are treated. The conditions we face will never change until the working man has a voice in parliament. You may be scared to stand up and be counted but nothing will change unless we do. I have invited a very special guest to Crayford today and I hope you will listen to what he has to say. Dr Peter Murray M'Douall...Dr Peter M'Douall...where is he..?

Enter DR PETER MURRAY M'DOUALL.

PETER HOEY

Ah there you are Dr...These are the finest workers in the area and they are here today to listen to your story.

DR PETER M'DOUALL

What a fine turnout you have for me...How many of you know who the Chartists are and what we do? You there, can you tell me the 6 Points of Chartism? No? I see I will need to start at the beginning. Let me begin by explaining my part in the story. I am a trained surgeon. I came to Chartism when I began campaigning for factory reform because I believed the way workers were treated in factories was unfair. In July 1839 I

(MORE)

DR PETER M'DOUALL (cont'd)

was arrested for my beliefs and placed in jail. That didn't stop me. On my release from jail I helped to organise the general workers strike of 1842. A strike is when a large group of workers refuse to continue working until they are listened to and changes are made in the workplace. Sometimes the only way an employer will listen to the demands of the worker is if that worker lays down his tools and refuses to work. The government did not approve of me helping to organise the strike and there was a reward of £100 offered to anyone who would hand me into the police and I would go back to jail, so I fled to France. I've lived there until September only last month. In France they had a big revolution and together the poor rose up and overthrew the rich. I believe we can also make a change here in England. I have come back from France to seek this change. I came here first to Crayford as I hear from my good friend Peter that the printers here are on starvation wages...

PETER HOEY

That's correct Dr. I brought you here today to help me persuade the workers to strike for better wages. I fear if we do not then we shall be starving like my family in Ireland. The government there is allowing people to starve.

DR PETER M'DOUALL

The time is now friends...I strongly urge you all to become Chartists.

PETER HOEY

Join with me in the newly formed Crayford Chartist branch. Together we can make a difference. We have a newspaper you can read if you'd like to learn more it's called the Northern Star and it will tell you everything you need to know about our important cause. Nothing will change until the working man has the vote! I need some volunteers right now to get up here and join us. Who would like to help?

Peter Hoey chooses six volunteers from the audience, stands them in a line and numbers them 1 - 6.

PETER HOEY

There are six points of the peoples charter and each of you are going to recite them now so you can spread the word. Repeat after me...Number 1 - A vote for every man. Number 2 - A secret ballot. Number 3 - No Property Qualification. This means anyone can become an M.P whether they own land or not. Number 4 - Payment of

(MORE)

PETER HOEY (cont'd)

members. This will allow poor people to become M.P's. Number 5 - Equal constituencies. And finally number 6 - Annual elections. Now let me hear you recite them in order. Starting with number one working our way down the line. That was great. Now sit back down in-case any spies are watching...and remember to spread the word of the Chartists.

Peter ushers the volunteers to sit back in the audience.

PETER HOEY

We will see you all at our next meeting and don't forget to buy your copy of the Northern Star as you leave. Thank you so much Dr M'Douall, we hope you can come and speak to us again soon.

DR PETER M'DOUALL

It would be my pleasure. The more people we have to speak up the better.

Exit Dr Peter M'Douall.

PETER HOEY

And remember we don't want the authorities and the government to know what we are planning. They would surely put a stop to our meetings and even worse we could all be arrested and put into jail. So remember don't tell a soul. There are spies for the government and police everywhere so if any strangers ask your name just give them a fake one like Queen Victoria. Got it? Good!

Exit Peter Hoey.

Enter JON PATERSON a spy.

JON PATERSON

You there, what were those men doing here? You better tell me the truth. I'm a spy working for the Duke of Wellington and the head of the Metropolitan police. Oh...oh no I wasn't supposed to tell you that was I...what I meant to say was...hey I think employers are poo! BOO! The working man is the best YEAH! Oh never mind...I'm a spy so what. You still better tell me what they were doing here or else I'll have you all arrested for even taking part. Anyone..? So, you won't tell me, well that's fine, you see I was sitting at the back taking notes during your meeting with that Irish Nationalist and his guest speaker, the doctor chap. I was asked to look out for trouble makers and particularly Chartists. Now all I need are their

(MORE)

JON PATERSON (cont'd)

names...You there what's your name? And you the shifty looking one beside him, what's your name? That's a funny name...Mmmmm, well I'm going to take this information back to the police and see what reward I get.

Exit Jon Paterson.

Enter Richard Roberts. He talks to the audience.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Has he gone? Good, those spy's are the worst, they volunteer to go around and collect the names of all the Chartists to give to the authorities. So you see it was important to keep the movement of the Chartists secret, for a time at least. The Chartists were planning a mass protest and on the 10th April 1848 they did just that. They set out for Kennington and planned to march on to parliament and present a petition 6 points of the charter, calling for the the vote to be given to the working man. It was signed by 5 million people. All these people signed their names as they believed the vote should be given to the working man. Some of the people who signed however were too scared to sign their real names and gave a fake name instead. Even so the March was planned to go ahead and here's what happened.

Exit Richard Roberts.

Enter Rev. Applegath and Crayford Chartist HENRY GARDNER.

HENRY GARDNER

The recent strike that I led, in protest at the wage cuts, was a failure. Reverend, I'm not sure there is anything I can do alone. However I believe this protest on Kennington Common will lead to a revolution and bring an end to the exploitation of working men everywhere.

REV. APPLGATH

You are the leader of the union at David Evan's Factory in Crayford and know very well how important this is. As you know my father ran the factory you work at for many years and I got to know many of the men. They are good people, who are now my parishoners. I believe we are all equal in the eyes of god and for that reason I am committed to work for a more fairer and equal society. I recently visited the Dartford Union Workhouse and well, I have never been so angry in all my life...they way people were treated there is awful just awful. Goodbye and god speed Henry Gardner I will await your return with news of the protest.

HENRY GARDNER

Thank you Reverend I will be back as soon as possible
and with good news I hope.

Exit Rev. Applegath.

Henry talks to the audience.

HENRY GARDNER

Hello there, I see you are all here to go to the
Kennington protest too. Well before we go we should
learn the song that everyone has been singing to march
there 'The Chartists Anthem'. You can all learn the
song but I need a few volunteers to come and march up
front with me. Who would like to help?

*Henry chooses four volunteers from the audience to
join him. He teaches everyone the song.*

HENRY GARDNER

Repeat after me:

(Verse 1)

A hundred years, a thousand years,

We're marching on the road,

The going isn't easy yet,

We've got a heavy load,

Oh we've got a heavy load.

(Verse 2)

Speak with one voice, we march, we rest,

and march again upon the years

Sons of our sons are listening,

to hear the Chartists cheers,

Oh, to hear the Chartists cheers.

HENRY GARDNER

That's the spirit. We will be heard. Come on, follow
me. Everybody sing as loud as you can.

*Henry leads the volunteers in a march around and
through the audience singing as they go.*

HENRY GARDNER

That was great! Thank you for your help. You can go
back to your place in the crowd now.

Henry ushers the volunteers to sit down.

HENRY GARDNER

There are lots of us here today, what a great turn out. Fergus O'Connor will be attending, he's the Irish leader of the National Chartist Association and has helped organise this meeting at Kennington. I also heard rumors that William Cuffey one of the main organisers of the protest will be here too. I'm so excited. Here they come now.

Enter FERGUS O'CONNOR and WILLIAM CUFFEY.

WILLIAM CUFFEY

Look at all these people, this is what was needed Fergus. If we are to march on parliament we are going to need some strong men, we may need to use force.

FERGUS O'CONNOR

That is what I fear. Men we have gathered in Kennington today to protest and I am overwhelmed with the amount of you that have marched all the way from places near around and far, however there are 200,000 police special constables signed up and soldiers guarding the bridges over the Thames to parliament. I urge you not to challenge them.

WILLIAM CUFFEY

Are you mad! That is the whole reason why we are here. Don't listen to him, he's just scared. We can do it. We need to get our petition seen by parliament and the only way to it is by force.

FERGUS O'CONNOR

I have spoken to the commissioner of the Met Police personally and believe me when I say if the the protesters attempt to march on parliament it will only end in bloodshed.

WILLIAM CUFFEY

Coward...Traitor! You have duped us all...having secret talks with the police. You are supposed to be a leader of the Chartists. We will march on parliament today with or without you! Now get out of my way, I need to find people to help me.

William pushes Fergus out of the way.

Exit Fergus.

William talks to the audience.

WILLIAM CUFFEY

Who is going to stand up and help me? We need to defy the orders of our so called leader Fergus 'scaredy cat' O'Connor and storm parliament today. Who would like to help me?

William chooses two volunteers from the audience and then notices Henry Gardner.

WILLIAM CUFFEY

You there...what about you? Are you with me? Or are you too scared.

HENRY GARDNER

I'm Henry Gardner from Crayford, Mr Cuffey sir and I'm not scared. I'm a Kentish Chartist like yourself, I'm here to help anyway I can. What's the plan?

WILLIAM CUFFEY

We need to get across the Thames in order to get to parliament however we have a small problem. According to Fergus there are thousands of armed police guarding the bridges. I think our best chance will be crossing at Blackfriars bridge right here. What we need is a distraction. I know you two can distract the police whilst me and Henry here sneak past them and across the bridge. Here come the brutes now. Look at them with their truncheons, they think they are so tough. We will hide, you two stand over there and look shifty like you're about to cause some trouble and when they are distracted we will run across the bridge.

William and Henry hide.

Enter Inspector Mark, swinging his truncheon.

INSPECTOR MARK

Well hello, hello, hello. What are you stinking lot doing round here? This is a nice place we don't need any of your kind round here causing trouble...go on get back. Go on. Sit down, don't make me arrest you son. Or worse beat you senseless with this e're truncheon.

Inspector Mark ushers the volunteers to sit back in the audience.

INSPECTOR MARK

I am Inspector Mark of R Division Metropolitan Police and I have been monitoring a group of Kentish Chartists that call themselves the 'Wat Tyler Brigade' for some time now. My spies in Greenwich have warned me about William Cuffeys revolutionary aims...have you seen him. Horrible little man he is.

William and Henry try to escape across the bridge.

Inspector Mark sees them and tries to stop them. A physical chase ensues.

Henry is caught by Inspector Mark and is beaten with the truncheon.

William tries to lure Inspector Mark away from Henry by stealing his helmet.

WILLIAM CUFFEY

Oi, Bobby, where's your hat?

INSPECTOR MARK

Give me back the hat son, that's property of the Metropolitan Police and whats more it's an arrestable offense to steal a Policeman's hat. Give me my hat!

WILLIAM CUFFEY

What are you going to do about it?

William holds the hat above his head where Inspector Mark can not reach it.

Inspector Mark runs towards William and tries to jump to retrieve his hat.

INSPECTOR MARK

It's not fair...give me hat!

WILLIAM CUFFEY

Come and get it!

Exit William waving Inspector Mark's hat in the air.

Exit Inspector Mark chasing William.

HENRY GARDNER

Phew that was close. I better get back to see the Reverend Applegath and tell him what happened. You guys should lay low and don't try to cross the bridge to parliament tonight, it's not safe!

Exit Henry Gardner

Enter Rev. Applegath.

REV. APPLGATH

I wonder how Henry got along at the protest yesterday. I pray he is safe I've heard awful stories of riots and bloodshed.

Enter Henry Gardner.

HENRY GARDNER

Reverend. I've been looking everywhere for you. I'm sure you've heard of the trouble that broke out amongst the police and the protesters. It was a disaster. Well as I was leaving I came across this. I think you should see it. It's an anti Chartist pamphlet written by your father in which he is condemning all of the protesters as menaces and violent ones too. He says he wants any inquiries into Chartism to be postponed until reason gains its sway and the men of violence are totally banished from it's council.

Rev. Applegath reads the pamphlet as he listens to Henry.

REV. APPLGATH

This is outrageous how dare my father condemn these poor men. We must compose a response to his lies. Intimidation and Menaces indeed...they are the one's using intimidation not us. Come tell me more about the protest I need details.

Exit Rev. Applegath followed by Henry Gardner.

Enter Richard Roberts.

RICHARD ROBERTS

I was at the failed Chartist demonstration at Kennington in 1848. In 1851 Mr Swaisland decided to enter smaples of their work into the Great Exhibition that Prince Albert had orginised. I'm sure he hoped this would raise moral amongst the men working in the factories. Mr Swaisland paid for 28 children from the Sunday School at St Paulinus to see the exhibition. I was glad to hear this as this was the same school that taught me to read and write.

Exit Richard Roberts.

Enter a ROYAL SERVANT.

ROYAL SERVANT

His Royal Highness Prince Albert is on his way here to announce the winner of the 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations. You must be the children from the schools that have been paid for by local employers to come here. You're very lucky, you see today they are going to announce who the winner of the prestigious Gold Medal. I am going to need a volunteer to come up and be the announcer. Who would like the job?

The Royal Servant chooses a volunteer to be the announcer of the award.

ROYAL SERVANT

You will take this envelope and when the Prince arrives and asks for the winner you will open the envelope and read what is on the paper. I have the Gold Medal right here...Oh no where is it? I'm sure I put it in this pocket...Ahh there it is phew. That saved my neck! I've been given the really important job of keeping the Medal safe until Prince Albert is ready. He's always late, I bet he's...

Enter Prince Albert. When he is not announced he clears his throat to be noticed by his Royal Servant.

PRINCE ALBERT

Uh-urmmmmmmmmmm!

ROYAL SERVANT

Urm...may I introuduce his Royal Highness Prince Albert.

PRINCE ALBERT

Give me that Gold Medal you imbicile before you lose it. Get back to work.

ROYAL SERVANT

As you wish you highness. Here's the Medal.

Exit the Royal Servant.

PRINCE ALBERT

The work I have seen at this Exhibition today has been extordinary. Great Britian is an Industrial leader and we have shown the world just that. When the Factory owners arrive and the winner of the Gold Medal is announced we must applaud their efforts. I believe these men are the backbone of our country.

Enter Charles Swaisland.

SWAISLAND

Oh my Prince Albert is here...Your Highness....

PRINCE ALBERT

Ahh one of the very men I was just talking about. Which Factory do you own?

SWAISLAND

I am Charles Swaisland, your Highness and I own Swaisland's in Crayford, Kent.

PRINCE ABLERT

And what piece did you enter Mr Swaisland?

SWAISLAND

I asked a Mr Carter, who has worked in Crayford as a designer for 50 years, to come up with a design for a woollen shawl. Upon seeing it for the first time I truly believed it could bring the Gold Medal back to our villiage.

PRINCE ALBERT

I wish you the best of luck. The winner is now to be announced. If you could read what is says inside the envelope.

The volunteer is prompted to read out the announcement.

VOLUNTEER

And the winner is...Swaislands in Crayford.

PRINCE ALBERT

Well done! A big round of applause please everyone. And here is your Gold Medal to take back to your factory and villiage.

Prince Albert gives Swaisland the Gold Medal. He ushers the volunteer to sit back down.

SWAISLAND

Thank you your Highness and thank you to all the children. I'm glad I paid for you to see this Exhibition.

Exit Swaisland.

PRINCE ALBERT

This really has been a celebration of modern industrial technology and design.

Exit Prince Albert.

Enter Richard Roberts. He talks to the audience.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Mr Swaislands entry into the Exhibition may have won the Gold Medal but moral was soon to plummet to an all time low when all the workers had their wages cut again. It's now 1852, 4 years later and along with majority of my fellow workers at Swaisland's Factory, I am on strike and have been for several months. This is our last chance. My wages have been cut again and now I no longer earn enough money to eat or live. My boss Mr

(MORE)

RICHARD ROBERTS (cont'd)

Swaisland is trying to break the strike. He is worried that with so many of his workers on strike it will make him bankrupt. The factory will have to close. The block printers union heard that Swaisland is so desperate he has contacted his friend Richard Cobden to ask for his help in breaking the the strike. Richard Cobden is a famous politician and M.P for Manchester. He owns a calico printing factory in Lancashire. He really, really, really hates trade unions and he is also the leader of the Anti-corn Law Leauge. He is sending men from Lancashire to work at Swaisland's factory in Crayford. This will not only break the strike but crush the block printers union forever. We can't let that happen! If there are no unions, they can pay us anything they want and make us work in dangerous conditions. We have to stop the men that are coming from Manchester by train today to start work in our factory. I'm off to Dartford Station now with the rest of the strikers. I'll see you there.

Exit Richard Roberts running.

Enter Richard Cobden followed by Richard Ellis.

RICHARD COBDEN

Ellis, Richard Ellis...I may have a job for you...

RICHARD ELLIS

Oh you do Mr Cobden sir? I would love to come and work for you again...the workhouse is a horrible place.

RICHARD COBDEN

There's a catch.

RICHARD ELLIS

I would do anything you ask, anything. Give a chance Mr Cobden sir. I have been out of work for a year and in and out of that awful workhouse. I'm a skilled printer, I can do it sir. I can come back to your factory in Chorley and...

RICHARD COBDEN

That's the catch...the job's not at my factory in Chorley...it's at Mr Swaislands factory in Crayford. They're erm...short a few workers down there. I have a contract for you...if you just sign here we can have you on the next train.

RICHARD ELLIS

What about my family?

RICHARD COBDEN

The work at Swaislands will provide you with sufficient wages to feed and take care of your family.

RICHARD ELLIS

I'll do it.

Richard Cobden hands Richard Ellis the contract and he signs it. They shake hands.

RICHARD COBDEN

Good, off you go and collect your belongings, you are due at the station in an hour.

RICHARD ELLIS

Yes Mr Cobden sir.

Exit Richard Ellis.

Richard Cobden talks to the audience.

RICHARD COBDEN

That fool...what he doesn't know is that he will be one of my strike breakers. When you're desperate you will believe anything.

Exit Richard Cobden laughing.

Enter Richard Roberts.

RICHARD ROBERTS

This is it. The men are arriving. The train has just pulled into the station and we are ready for them. Well almost. I'm going to need some volunteers to help me. We need to persuade them not to break our strike by working at the factories.

Richard chooses five volunteers from the audience.

RICHARD ROBERTS

You are going to help form the picket line at the station exit. Your job is to not let anyone through, by blocking the way but not touching anyone. Let's give it a try I will pretend to be one of the men getting off the train and you have to try and stop me getting past you.

Richard and the volunteers demonstrate how the picket line works.

Enter Richard Ellis.

Richard positions the volunteers.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Here comes one of them now. You hold the line and I will talk to him. What are you doing here?

RICHARD ELLIS

Excuse me? I don't know what you mean...I'm here to work. I got a job offer from my old employer Mr Cobden to come here and work at Swaislands. He said they were short of workers...I'm a skilled block printer.

RICHARD ROBERTS

So are we!

RICHARD ELLIS

I don't know what you're talking about. Let me through.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Stop him!

Richard Ellis attempts to get past the picket line.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Do you want to see our families starve. We need this strike to work if we want to get paid a decent wage.

Richard Ellis stops trying to break through.

RICHARD ELLIS

You are on strike? I never knew that. I was never told I would be breaking a strike. I swear. I know how hard it can be for a family to survive on nothing. That's the reason I took this job. I will go back. I don't want to be responsible for breaking a strike.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Thank you. If all of us workers stick together we really can make a difference. Thanks for helping me everyone you can go back now.

Richard Roberts ushers the volunteers to sit down.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Thanks again. I hope you find work back home. Maybe more men have been lied to about what they are doing here. I'm going to see if I can persuade anybody else to leave and not break our strike.

Exit Richard Roberts.

Richard Ellis turns to leave but is stopped by Inspector Mark.

INSPECTOR MARK

And where do you think you are off to my lad?

RICHARD ELLIS

I'm going home. I never knew I would be breaking a strike by working here. I can't do it.

INSPECTOR MARK

I am here to tell you...you can...and you will!

RICHARD ELLIS

But...

INSPECTOR MARK

May I remind you, you have signed a contract and cannot break it.

RICHARD ELLIS

Yes sir.

INSPECTOR MARK

I have orders that you, and the other men intended to work at Swaisland's and Evans' Factories, are to be escorted safely. No exceptions. You all are to come with me now. I have ordered there be mounted police and if there is any sign of trouble...from either them or you...they will draw their sabres. You know what a sabre is don't you? You there what's a sabre? It's one of these...

Inspector Mark pulls out his sabre.

INSPECTOR MARK

It's time we were on our way to the factories. Let's have you all in a line then. You are at the front and then we'll have you...and then you...and then you...

Inspector Mark chooses three volunteers from the audience to join the line.

INSPECTOR MARK

What are you waiting for. The work isn't going to do itself...start walking.

Richard Ellis leads the line as they walk around the stage. Inspector Mark Ushers them along from behind.

INSPECTOR MARK

Stop. This is David Evens Factory. You, you and you. This is where you will be working. Now get in the factory.

Inspector Mark ushers the volunteers to sit down.

INSPECTOR MARK

You come with me. You will be working at Swaisland's Factory. We are expecting a lot of trouble there. The trade union picket could become violent, they have a lot of those Chartists you know. I have our nice sharp sabre if they try anything.

Exit Inspector Mark followed by Richard Ellis.

Enter Richard Roberts talking to the audience.

RICHARD ROBERTS

They are on their way here to the factory gates. All of our efforts have been thwarted so far. They got the police involved. They are escorting them here now and are obviously expecting us to fight as they are coming armed with sabres riding their horses. We won't fight them but we will make a stand. Who is with me. We are going to make another picket line. We will stare them down and show our strength in silence. I'm going to need a lot of you to help with this one. Who would like to volunteer?

Richard Roberts chooses enough volunteers from the audience to form a picket line across the length of the stage.

RICHARD ROBERTS

When the police arrive to escort the men through the factory gates, we have to stand tall...shoulder to shoulder, like this, and stare at them in defiance as they enter. They will not intimidate us to go to work for reduced pay. The police are looking for fight just like in 1819 at Peterloo, when innocent protesters were slaughtered by troops. We won't give them the satisfaction. Get ready...here they are...and remember the masque of anarchy:

Stand ye calm and resolute,

Like a forest close and mute,

With folded arms and looks which are,

Weapons of unvanquished war.

With folded arms and steady eyes,

And little fear, and less surprise

Look upon them as they slay,

Till their rage has died away
 Then they will return with shame
 To the place from which they came.
 And the blood thus shed will speak
 In hot blushes on their cheek.
 Rise like lions after slumber
 In unvanquishable number,
 Shake your chains to earth like dew
 Which in sleep had fallen on you-
 Ye are many - they are few.

*Enter Inspector Mark waving his sabre followed by
 Richard Ellis hanging his head in shame.*

*When Inspector Mark sees the picket line he gets
 scared and moves across the stage cautiously,
 jumping at every slight noise on the way.*

INSPECTOR MARK

This is it, the factory gates, we just need to get you
 through them and past this mob. Watch it! I've got my
 eye on you lot...what are they doing...they're going to
 pounce any minute...quick...move quicker man...they
 look clam and defiant...I don't like it...it's not
 right...come on move it!

Exit Inspector Mark pushing off Richard Ellis.

RICHARD ROBERTS

Thank you all for helping form the picket line. For now
 there is nothing we can do. Thanks again for helping.
 We should be really proud of what we did today.

Richard Roberts ushers the volunteers to sit down.

Exit Richard Roberts.

*Enter Charles Swaisland pacing up and down the
 stage.*

Enter SGT. BAXTER a policeman.

SWAISLAND

There you are Sgt. Baxter. I need your assistance. And urgently. I just found out that one of the men I hired from Lancashire has broken his contract and caught a train back home. This just won't do. I need these workers. I have paid for the man and I want him brought back immediatly to face prosecution at court. I am in the middle of a bitter strike and I cannot afford for the union to beat me in their dispute over the wage cuts I have imposed. These workers from the north are the only people keeping my factory open.

SGT. BAXTER

Of course Mr Swaisland, I will be on the next train to London and will get to Manchester before tomorrow morning.

Exit Sgt. Baxter

SWAISLAND

This just won't do. I have enough on my plate with the strikers without worrying about my new workers leaving and breaking their contracts. They have broken the Masters and Servants Act and this law makes the breaking of a contract a criminal offense and I will have them arrested for it.

Exit Charles Swaisland.

Enter Richard Ellis running.

RICHARD ELLIS

Quick you have to hide me. I came back to Manchester because I didn't want to break the strike for those men back in Crayford. Early this morning a burly police officer came looking for me and well I ran. He's coming now you have to hide me. I know...can hide amongst you? Don't tell him where I am.

Richard Ellis hides in the audience.

Enter Sgt. Baxter.

SGT. BAXTER

Where are you? I know you are here somewhere. Come on show yourself. You have broken the law sonny lad. The Master and Servants Act to be exact and breaking your work contract is in violation of the law. If you don't show yourself now things will be worse for you when I do catch you. You there, have you seen a Mr Richard Ellis? Rotten little fellow he is, looks like an ugly little fish. No? What about you have you seen him? He's about yey tall with a scrunched up little face all

(MORE)

SGT. BAXTER (cont'd)
teeth and eyes and cheeks and stuff. No! Well you're no help are you. I'll be back to find you. You better have eyes in the back your head sonny lad.

Exit Sgt Baxter.

Richard Ellis cautiously returns to the stage.

RICHARD ELLIS

Thank you all for not handing me over to the police. I really don't want to go back to Crayford and break the strike and I certainly don't want to go to jail.

Enter Sgt, Baxter.

He sees Richard Ellis and attempts to sneak up on him.

RICHARD ELLIS

I hope that awful policeman doesn't find me. I'm done for of he does. What...he's behind me?

Richard and Sgt Baxter have a 'he's behind you routine.'

Sgt Baxter catches Richard Ellis.

SGT. BAXTER

Got you! It's off to the Dartford Town Hall to face the local Magistrate, Sir Percival Hart Dyke, if I have to walk you in there myself. Move it...we have a train to London to catch.

Exit Sgt. Baxter dragging Richard Ellis.

Enter MAGISTRATE SIR PERCIVAL HART DYKE.

MAGISTRATE PERCIVAL

The court will now hear the case of Richard Ellis Vs Charles Swaisland.

Enter Richard Ellis.

MAGISTRATE PERCIVAL

Richard Ellis you have been charged with breaking the Master and Servants Act. This Act states that if you break a contract with your master you are committing a criminal offense. Firstly you refused to work the very morning you arrived, at Mr Swaislands expense I may add. You were then deemed drunk and unfit to work. Then you ran away back to Manchester and had to be escorted back by a Sgt. Baxter. You were apprehended at 4

(MORE)

MAGISTRATE PERCIVAL (cont'd)

o'clock in the morning, you left Machester under arrest at 1 o'clock and brought here to the Dartford town hall. Do you have anything to say in your defence?

RICHARD ELLIS

I was not told I would be breaking the strike here in Crayford when I signed the contract. I am not a criminal, I am a husband and a father with no means to support my family. I accepted the job yes but they lied to me. I do not want the job.

MAGISTRATE PERCIVAL

Regardless, you signed the contract and you have broken the law by not honouring that contract. It is now 5 o'clock and I want to get home to Lullingstone Castle and I have another case. You are sentenced to a months hard labour at Maidstone gaol. Case dismissed.

RICHARD ELLIS

Your honour that law is just legalised slavery...

MAGISTRATE PERCIVAL

Case Dismissed!

Exit Richard Ellis.

MAGISTRATE PERCIVAL

Next Case...Mr John Knight...

Enter JOHN KNIGHT.

MAGISTRATE PERCIVAL

Mr John Knight you have been charged with stealing vegetables. A quantity of peas from a field belonging to a Mr Dunn. It seems Sgt Baxter was responsible for your capture too. I will have to congratulate that fine officer of the law. Do you have anything to say in your defense?

JOHN KNIGHT

I don't magistrate, except I only stole the vegetables to feed my children who were starving...I've been on strike for several months you see and we can't afford to eat.

MAGISTRATE PERCIVAL

That is no excuse to steal. You will also pay a fine of 11 shillings.

JOHN KNIGHT

I don't have 11 shillings...

MAGISTRATE PERCIVAL

How dare you challenge my authority! You will pay the fine and are also sentenced to one month's hard labour in Maidstone Prison.

Exit John Knight.

MAGISTRATE PERCIVAL

Ah what a good day putting all the criminals in jail. Mmmm I'm hungry after all this talk of starving children, I have a banquet tonight at Lullingstone Castle.

Exit Magistrate Percival.

Enter Richard Roberts. He talks to the audience.

RICHARD ROBERTS

After three months of being on strike with no funds to fall back on, we returned to work in October 1852 as broken men. We had to accept wages that were not enough to put bread in our bellies. The block printer's union was broken and the Chartist movement was all but dead. The Crayford printers were desperate. With no hope of gaining the vote to help bring about change it was left to a handful of men to continue the struggle on behalf of the working man. One of these men was William Morris who built The Red House in Bexleyheath, just a few miles from Crayford. Why should some men have the vote and others be deprived a voice? William Morris dared to ask this question and more at a time when the working mans voice had been silenced. He also spoke up for the skilled craftsman and many Crayford men were able to find work at the factory he later set up at Merton Abbey Mills. With both his words and his actions he gave us hope that our struggles had not been in vain and that one day we would have the things we fought for.

Enter Man and Woman.

MAN

Richard...Richard, there you are. I thought we'd lost you. You were right, it is really important to vote. I'm glad I was born in a free society where I and every man has the right to...

WOMAN

And woman!

MAN

Every man and woman has the right to vote. But why are we back here at the Dartford Union Workhouse? I don't like this place one bit.

RICHARD ROBERTS

My story comes to an end here at the workhouse. I have nothing left but my pride and that's something they will never take away from me. I know that even though I'll die a pauper, I can take pride in leaving behind something far richer than gold. I fought for those six points of the Charter and that's my gift for those that will live in this town in the future. Goodbye, and don't forget my story.

Exit Richard Roberts.

WOMAN

On December 29th 1904 Richard Roberts died in the Dartford Union Workhouse. Eventually by 1918 all of the demands of the people's Charter were made law, except the annual elections. It was with thanks not only to the Chartists but to the people who followed in their footsteps, people like William Morris, who played a major role in fighting for freedom of speech and protest. Richard and the Chartists didn't only make the finest fabric in the country, together they made up the fabric of our town. What they did back then made sure everyone has a say in how our county is run. They helped to build our Jerusalem in England's green, pleasant land.

Jerusalem plays quietly in the background.

Exit Woman.

MAN

Wait! How long have we been away? Do you think the polling booth will still be open when we get back? Hold on...how do we get back to our time? Hey wait for me!

Exit Man.

THE END