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Hi-De-Hi!

A stage play

by Paul Carpenter and Ian Gower

based on the TV series

by Jimmy Perry and David Croft

Samuel French — London
www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk



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HI-DE-HI!

First presented by Tring Festival Company at The Court Theatre, Tring, Hertfordshire, on 19th June 2007 with the following cast and creative team:

Gladys Pugh	Stephanie Bedwin
Betty Whistler	Pippa Nash
Gary	Matt Bowles
Dawn	Deborah Berry
Tracy Bentwood	Kelly Winter
Peggy Ollerenshaw	Maxine Reece
Jeffrey Fairbrother	Andy Faber
Fred Quilly	Ray Brown
Yvonne Stuart-Hargreaves	Eileen Reece
Barry Stuart-Hargreaves	Paul Stratford
Ted Bovis	Dennis Fugard
Spike Dixon	Colin Hubbocks
Mr Partridge	Steve Berry
Sylvia Garnsey	Regina Dobbs
Hilary Bovis	Ginny Faber
Bailiff	Ian Muirhead
Mr Pritchard	Dave Barratt

Executive Producer Ian Gower
Directed by Paul Carpenter
Designed by Bruce Sherring-Lucas
Lighting designed by Mike Sherring-Lucas
Costumes by Emma Bunting

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CHARACTERS

Gladys Pugh
Betty Whistler
Gary
Dawn
Tracy Bentwood
Peggy Ollerenshaw
Jeffrey Fairbrother
Fred Quilly
Mr Partridge
Yvonne Stuart-Hargreaves
Barry Stuart-Hargreaves
Ted Bovis
Spike Dixon
Sylvia Garnsey
Hilary Bovis
Bailiff
Mr Pritchard

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The action of the play takes place at Maplins Holiday Camp, Crimpton-on-Sea.

PROLOGUE “Radio Maplin” Desk

ACT I

SCENE 1 Staff Room and Office, morning.
SCENE 2 “Radio Maplin” Desk, that afternoon.
SCENE 3 Staff Room and Office, later that afternoon.
SCENE 4 Side Area of the Ballroom, that evening.
SCENE 5 Staff Chalets, later that evening.

ACT II

SCENE 1 Staff Chalets, the following morning.
SCENE 2 Ballroom Stage, later that morning.
SCENE 3 “Radio Maplin” Desk, later that morning.
SCENE 4 Staff Room and Office, that lunchtime.
SCENE 5 Ballroom Stage, three days later.
SCENE 6 Bar, later that afternoon.
SCENE 7 Ballroom Stage, later that afternoon.
SCENE 8 Staff Room and Office, later that afternoon.

Time — 1950s.

PROLOGUE

Radio Maplin Desk Area at Maplins Holiday Camp. 1950s

The Lights come up in front of the tabs on a radio desk with a chair, a xylophone and xylophone stick. There is a record player with a record on it. Late 50s music is playing and sounds like it's coming from a muffled tannoy

Gladys enters L and sits at the desk. She lifts off the record. The music stops

Yellowcoats Betty, Gary, Dawn and Tracy come on from each side of the audience and stand in front of the tabs. As Gladys speaks they indicate where the exits are and react to photography and mobile phone warnings

Gladys plays the notes C G E on the xylophone

Gladys Hello campers — hi-de-hi! (*She waits for the audience “ho-de-ho” response*). Oh, you can do better than that, HI-DE-HI!

“Ho-de-ho!”

That's much better. This is Gladys Pugh, your Radio Maplin's announcer. We've a packed programme ahead of you today at Maplins. But first of all some safety announcements. The fire exits are located either side of the stage and where you came in to the Hawaiian Ballroom. And while you are here, no flash photography, it's very distracting to the yellowcoats. We hope you have a lovely time here at Maplins Holiday Camp. (*Deadpan*) Oh. I nearly forgot, please make sure you turn off those mobile phones. Hi-de-hi!

“Ho-de-ho!”

(*She plays the notes C G E on the xylophone again*) Thank you, Yellowcoats, now to your places.

Gladys exits via the tabs. The Yellowcoats exit via the audience

The Lights go down on the desk area

Open tabs

ACT I

SCENE 1

The Staff Room and Office. Morning

The Lights come up on a composite set comprising the staff room and office. There are entrances to the staff room through a back door and a side door. There is another door between the two rooms. In the staff room is a table with tea and coffee utensils, cups, sugar cubes and a tray on it, chairs, an armchair and a transistor radio. In the office is a desk with two telephones on it, two chairs, a filing cabinet, duty board and a window

Jeffrey is standing in the office by the window reading a letter. He is wearing an overcoat over his shirt but has no trousers on.

Peggy enters the staff room by the back door carrying a pair of trousers. She knocks on the office door

Peggy Mr Fairbrother, are you decent?

Jeffrey Just a minute. *(He adjusts his overcoat and opens the door)*
Come in, Peggy.

Peggy I've brought your trousers. I've pressed them and they've got a knife-edged crease.

Jeffrey Good.

Peggy Fancy that kid getting porridge all down them. Oh, and there was a ten bob note in one of the pockets. It was a bit old, so I pressed that as well. *(She hands Jeffrey a note. It is stiff as a board)* Er, hi-de-hi!

Jeffrey Yes, and er, ho-de-ho!

Peggy leaves by the side door, as Gladys arrives by the back door

Peggy *(passing Gladys)* Hi-de-hi!

Peggy exits

Jeffrey Ah, good morning, Gladys.

Gladys closes the door behind her. Jeffrey lifts the trousers up against his body discreetly

Gladys You haven't forgotten the staff meeting is five minutes earlier today.

Jeffrey No, no, I haven't forgotten.

Gladys looks down at Jeffrey's trousers

Gladys Did you sleep well?

Jeffrey Yes, yes, the air here is marvellous.

Gladys (*still looking down*) From what I saw of you last night, it wasn't only the air that made you sleep.

Jeffrey looks down and rather nervously pulls up the trouser zip and holds them closer to his body

Jeffrey Some of the campers will insist on buying me drinks. I've been trying to avoid some lads down from my old university.

Gladys I hear Sylvia bought you one too, didn't she?

Jeffrey Yes, well, she had a win on the fruit machine.

Gladys Fruit machine's been out of order three weeks. You want to be careful. Joe Maplin doesn't like management drinking with Yellowcoats. Especially her. (*She turns to go*) You coming then?

Jeffrey No, no, I can't, Gladys. I haven't got any trousers on.

Gladys (*turning*) Oh, I'm sorry. I hadn't noticed.

Gladys closes the door behind her and leaves office and staff room by the side door as Fred Quilly enters by the back door wearing full jockey gear and carrying a shoulder bag

Jeffrey puts on his trousers and sits at the desk looking at paperwork

The Lights go down on the office

Fred goes over to the table ^{UL} where the tea and coffee cups are located. He looks about him and starts to collect sugar cubes and put them into his pockets

Peggy enters by the side door

Peggy Hello, Fred.

Fred is startled

What are you up to?

Fred N-nothing.

Peggy Come on, what have you been putting in your pockets?

Fred N-n-nothing.

Peggy Come on, show me.

Fred Just a few lumps of sugar.

Peggy (*looking in his pockets*) What are you talking about, there's nearly half a pound in there.

Fred It's for my horses, they don't get much out of life. They get up in the morning — well, they're already up. That's because they sleep standing up. Then they're out trekking everyday with them great heavy campers on their backs, and all they see is the back of the horse in front of them. How'd you like to spend your life plodding along, looking at the arse of an 'orse.

Peggy Oh, poor things. Oh, take the rest, I can get some more.

Smiling, Fred scoops up all the remaining lumps and puts them in his bag

Peggy arranges cups and departs by the side door as Yvonne and Barry waft in by the back door wearing their dancing gear. They head towards the tea and coffee table

Fred moves back slightly

Yvonne No, Barry, I just couldn't face eating that ghastly bacon, it was swimming in fat. If I ate it I would have one of my stomachs again.

Barry I do hope you're going to be fit tonight. Last night you were as stiff as a board.

Yvonne Well, as you know I have a very delicate back ...

Barry ... It was like dancing with a docker.

Yvonne You would have more experience of that than I.

They approach the coffee table. Yvonne picks up a cup

Just look at these cups, they're filthy.

Barry Well, as my mother always said, we all eat a peck of dirt before we die, dear.

Yvonne The way she ran the house, you must have fulfilled your quota years ago.

They turn away from each other at the coffee table

Ted enters by the back door

Ted (*calling off*) Spike! Spike! I told you that costume was a bad idea. What did I tell you? First rule of comedy, realism.

Spike enters by the back door wearing a dustbin costume, complete with lid hat. The bin has porridge drips down the side of it

(*Examining the costume*) This costume ... it's rubbish!

Spike What are you talking about? I was doing all right over breakfast, I had them all singing *My Old Man's A Dustman* until one kid started emptying his breakfast into me — then they all joined in the fun. I had to crouch down and put me lid on.

Ted approaches Barry and Yvonne

Ted How's Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers this morning?

Yellowcoats Sylvia, Dawn, Tracy and Gary enter and wait at the rear of the staff room. Each take a cup and talk amongst themselves

Yvonne Ignore him, Barry. (*She hands Barry a cup*)

Ted What are you doing ponced up at this time of day for?

Yvonne We happen to be doing some private tuition this morning.

Ted takes the cup out of Barry's hand and goes to sit in the armchair

Mr Partridge enters by the back door, obviously in a bad mood, muttering. He approaches Ted sitting in the armchair

Mr Partridge (*to Ted*) Oi! Do you mind! I always sit here!

Ted gets up out of armchair to allow Mr Partridge to sit

Ted You're in a crabby mood this morning.

Mr Partridge Yeah, and so would you be if you had to share a chalet with him. (*Pointing to Fred*) It's like living in a blasted stable.

Fred (*collecting two cups*) There's nothing the matter with the smell of horses, mate. I have to put up with your nightmares. (*He hands Mr Partridge a cup*)

Mr Partridge Oh, I had a terrible one last night. I was doing me Punch and Judy show and the crocodile kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger. And then it ate me. It was horrible. I shall have to stop working with that crocodile you know.

Gladys enters from the side door carrying a yellow envelope

Gladys Now, everybody, Mr Fairbrother will be along directly.

Sylvia (*mimicking*) Mr Fairbrother will be along directly.

Gladys stops to glare at Sylvia. She knocks on the office door

The Lights come up on the office

Barry I think she's got one of those letters from our founder, Joe Maplin.

Ted How do you know?

Barry I detected one of his tasteful envelopes. Yellow, with a pink candy stripe border.

Jeffrey rises, heads towards the door and opens it

Jeffrey Good morning, everybody.

All Good morning.

Jeffrey Thank you. I shan't be a tick, and erm, hi-de-hi!

All Ho-de-ho!

Gladys and Jeffrey step back into the office

Peggy returns by the side door and quietly replenishes the sugar bowl with lumps

Gladys (*handing over the letter*) Here's another letter from Joe Maplin for you to read to the staff.

Jeffrey Oh good lord, I find it so embarrassing. Can I use my own words this time? (*He opens the letter and scans it quickly*)

Gladys No. It might get back to him. He likes them read out exactly as he dictates them to his secretary.

Jeffrey Very well.

Jeffrey leads Gladys to the door

Gladys I see you've got your trousers on.

Jeffrey stops at the door and turns, a puzzled look on his face

They hang beautifully.

Jeffrey slowly leaves the office

The Lights go down on the office

The Staff all gather facing Jeffrey. Gladys joins him at his side. Peggy busies herself with some dusting behind the group

Jeffrey I'm going to start the meeting. I received a letter from Joe Maplin this morning. I don't know about you, but I really do enjoy reading these letters, 'cos, erm, 'cos Joe writes as he thinks, and they really are, er, sincere. (*Reading*) "Get this into your thick heads." That, that's the letter, it's not me ... (*Reading*) "You got to pull your socks up about your pool fun. Last week I dropped in on the Warmesley Camp, that was Sunday afternoon and their pool fun were pathetic. No one was ducking anyone, and no one was chucking anyone in. Get this. I want plenty of ducking and chucking, and not so much loafing around. Let's have some new gimmicks. Neptunes and octopusses is old hat." He means octopi, he's got pussies, it's not right. (*Reading*) "How's this for starters. Host throws comic in. Comic grabs host by ankle and pulls him in. Punch and Judy man dives in to save them.

Mr Partridge reacts

"Riding instructor dives in to save Punch and Judy man.

Fred reacts

"Dancing instructors do tango, slip on a banana skin, go in.

Yvonne and Barry react

"Continue dancing in the water. I want to see the whole surface of the pool covered in bobbing heads, shouting help and pretending to drown." Yes, well, I think we all get the gist of what Mr Maplin has in mind ...

Mr Partridge Well I'm not going in the pool at my time of life.

Fred He'll shrivel up.

Yvonne Who is going to pay for the costumes?

Barry What about my sinuses? The chloride'll play havoc with them.

Yvonne The whole idea's absurd.

Peggy (*rushing forward*) I don't mind going in the pool.

Gladys You're not supposed to be here, Peggy. Get on with your work.

Peggy I've got to wash these cups up.

Peggy picks up the tray and tidies up, then departs by the side door

Spike Look, I'm the one that gets thrown in the pool, Mr Fairbrother. If everyone goes in I shall look an idiot.

All turn to look at Spike in his dustbin costume

Jeffrey Well don't worry, anyone. What we have to do is adapt this to our own particular needs. If any of you do have any ideas about, er, pool wheezes, don't hesitate and bring them straight to me.

Ted That's a good idea. "Jeffrey Fairbrother — wheeze in the pool".

Jeffrey smiles. Then the penny drops!

Jeffrey Er, there's more. It's, er, not all bad news. (*Reading*) "Before I ends, you done a swell job last season. But this year you got to top it. And then some." ... And then some. It's still in his own words of course, it's not, erm, it's not me. Er ... (*Reading*) "Yellowcoats." Yellowcoats — that's you. (*Reading*) "You got to keep them smiles flashing. Last time I were around the camps there were too many funeral faces."

Mr Partridge It can't be me he's talking about. Nobody sees me. I'm always down here all the time with me Punch and Judy in the air. (*He demonstrates by putting his hands in the air*)

Yvonne I take it he's not referring to us.

Barry You can't demonstrate the slow foxtrot, grinning like Bugs Bunny.

Yvonne You have to have a dignified expression on your face.

Fred Yer, like you got a nasty smell under your nose.

Barry Mmmm, in your case, you usually have.

Betty He can't mean us either, can he, girls?

All the girls agree

Dawn No, we spend all day smiling at the campers.

Jeffrey Yes, yes, yes, I am sure there are exceptions. But what Mr Maplin says is right in principle. And that's why he's where he is today.

Ted Aye. That and paying us in washers.

Jeffrey All right, all right. I'll just read on. (*Reading*) "And don't forget to ram home my catchphrase, hi-de-hi. After all, I was the one what invented it."

Mr Partridge He never invented it. It was that mad colonel during the war. He shouted out hi-de-hi and the soldiers had to shout ho-de-ho back. He got court-martialled for it.

Jeffrey Yes, yes, but that's neither here nor there, Mr Partridge. (*Reading*) "From now on, every Thursday will be Sunshine Smile day, and any member of the staff found not smiling anytime from Wakey Wakey to Goodnight Campers will be out on their ..." yes, well, Mr Maplin certainly doesn't mince his words. (*Reading*) "And I don't want a smirk or a grin, but a full smile with flashing molars. Go to it, hi-de-hi! Joe Maplin." Well, of course you see Joe Maplin's advice is first class, and of course he's quite right. The world is a better place with a smile.

Ted What a great idea for a song. (*He sings operatically*) The world's a better place, with a smile ...

Gladys Oh, shut up, Ted.

Ted and Spike slip black card into their mouths to black out their teeth

Jeffrey (*enthusiastically*) Well, tomorrow's Saturday, but we need not wait till then, let's start now. It's quite simple, and what a difference it makes. (*He puts on a false cheesy grin. He turns to Gladys*)

Gladys does the same

Gladys Well, go on, Yellowcoats.

The Yellowcoats all put on false grins

Barry Right, with me, dear. A one, two, a one, two, three, four.

Barry and Yvonne both put on a grin and end it just as quickly with a look of derision

Gladys You too, Ted.

Ted and Spike both smile with blacked-out teeth

Jeffrey (*turning to Mr Partridge*) Now come on Mr Partridge, you can do better than than.

Mr Partridge (*unsmiling; rising out of chair*) Nahhhh, sod off!

Mr Partridge walks out of side door. The other staff pat or ruffle him on his way out

Jeffrey Now, please, we all have our jobs to do, so let's all get on and, er, hi-de-hi!

All (*not too enthusiastically*) Ho-de-ho!

Jeffrey goes towards his office

The others depart except Ted, Spike, Yvonne and Barry

The Lights come up on the office

Ted Come on, Spike, where's you bin?

Spike Very funny, Ted. Are you going to help me get this off? (*He tries to take the dustbin off*)

Ted I "refuse" to do it. D'you get?

Ted leaves

Spike Ted! Ted! Come back Ted!

Spike follows Ted out

Barry and Yvonne approach Jeffrey as he enters the office

Barry Mr Fairbrother, might we have a quick word?

Jeffrey Yes, yes, by all means, come in.

They all go into the office

The Lights go down on the staff room

Jeffrey Pull up a chair.

Yvonne sits and Barry pulls a spare chair to the table. Jeffrey sits

Jeffrey Now, what is it? Do you have an idea for the pool wheeze?

Barry No. We received this "note" from chalet maintenance. (*He holds out a note*)

Yvonne Most awful grammar.

Barry It says that we are to stop putting up wallpaper in our chalet.

Jeffrey Well, yes, I believe it causes damage to the walls.

Yvonne We don't paste it up, Mr Fairbrother, how could it possibly cause damage to the walls?

Jeffrey Well, I asked the very same question. Apparently you stick it up with sellotape, and when this is removed at the end of the season it leaves little squares of paint. (*He uses his hands to illustrate the square*)

Barry We have to do something, the chalets are so depressing. It's like living in Parkhurst.

Yvonne And it's very good quality wallpaper, it's cabbage roses. Pink on a beige background. Your predecessor, Mr Babberstock, never minded, he just used to turn a blind eye to it.

Barry Mind you with those roses we all had to turn a blind eye.

Yvonne You're only saying that because you wanted gold regency stripes. So common and *nouveau riche*.

Barry All I was saying —

Jeffrey Yes yes yes, all right. I don't think we should get involved at this stage with what sort of paper it is. What concerns us is the damage.

Barry How would it be if we put the paper up with drawing pins?

Jeffrey Well surely that would still cause damage?

Yvonne Yes, but only tiny holes.

Barry We could fill them in afterwards.

Jeffrey Yes, well, I mean that seems a fair enough compromise. I'll get on to maintenance about it.

They all rise

Yvonne Thank you, Mr Fairbrother, our chalet is so important to us. It's our refuge. Our oasis in the desert of vulgarity.

Barry replaces the chair. Yvonne and Barry leave

The telephone rings. Jeffrey picks up the receiver

Jeffrey (*on the telephone*) Hello, Jeff —

The phone continues to ring — it is the other phone. Jeffrey replaces the receiver and picks up the other one

(*On the telephone*) Hello, Jeffrey Fairbrother speaking. (*Pause*) Yes, yes, I see, well ... (*Pause*) You had better put her through. Ah, hello, Mrs West. (*Pause*) Yes. (*Pause*) Yes, but wh — what precisely is the problem you want the camp hypnotist to help you with, Mrs West? (*He rubs his hand over his head with embarrassment*) Well, in, in, in that case, wouldn't it be better if your husband saw him? Yes. Yes, I think so. I'll have a word with him. No. Not with your husband — the camp hypnotist. Yes, thank you. Good — goodbye. (*He replaces the receiver*)

The Lights come up on the staff room

Hilary Bovis, a smartly dressed middle-aged woman with a handbag, enters the staff room by the back door with the Bailiff who carries a

briefcase. She sees Jeffrey's door, indicates to the Bailiff to remain in the staff room, then knocks at the door

Bailiff reads notices etc. while Hilary is in the office

Jeffrey *(almost absent-mindedly)* Yes, yes, please come in.

Hilary goes into the office

Hilary Is this the Entertainment Manager's office?

Jeffrey Er, yes, yes, I'm Jeffrey Fairbrother — can I help you?

Hilary *(closing the door)* I'm Hilary Bovis.

Jeffrey Ted's wife?

Hilary Ex-wife.

Jeffrey *(amazed)* Well, how very nice to meet you. *(He stands)*

They shake hands

Please, please, sit down.

Hilary sits

(Sitting) Is he expecting you?

Hilary Is he on the camp?

Jeffrey Why, yes, of course he is.

Hilary Then he's not expecting me.

Jeffrey is looking intently at Hilary as she removes her gloves

What are you staring at?

Jeffrey I'm sorry, sorry. It's just that Ted has told me so much about you.

Hilary I bet he has. There's two sides to every story, you know. A comedian's wife runs a close second to his mother-in-law.

Jeffrey Oh, I'm sure your mother's charming.

Hilary No she isn't, she's a cow. He got that bit right.

Ted enters by the back door, nods towards Bailiff and knocks and enters the office

Ted Jeff, can I talk to you about — *(seeing Hilary)* Oh, er, I'll come back later. *(He goes to leave)*

Hilary Come here, Ted!

Ted (*slowly coming back in — now very nervous*) Hello, Hilary, you're looking bonny. How are you keeping?

Hilary (*getting up*) Poor.

Ted Sorry to hear that. Sciatica bothering you again?

Hilary No, I just haven't got any money.

Ted There's a lot of people suffering from that. That Macmillan says we never had it so good. He's totally out of touch.

Hilary I haven't had a penny from you for over three months.

Ted What are you talking about? I sent you a money order only last, er, wait a minute. (*To Jeffrey*) Who did I give it to to post?

Hilary Ted, it's me you're talking to. Your time's up.

Hilary goes to the door and opens it

Will you come in, please.

Bailiff enters the office, holding the briefcase

There he is. (*She indicates Ted*)

Bailiff Are you Edward Bovis?

Ted Me friends call me Ted.

Bailiff Take this, please, sir. (*He hands Ted a large envelope*)

Hilary He's a bailiff, Ted.

Jeffrey Oh, would you like me to leave?

Ted opens envelope to reveal official-looking documents

Ted It's a bit late for that. I wondered what you were doing out there. I thought you were auditioning for a comic.

The Bailiff reacts and leaves

Hilary closes the door behind him

Spike enters as the Bailiff leaves and sits in the armchair

Hilary That's a court order, Ted. You've got one week to cough up fifty quid. I'll be down next Friday to collect it. And if you don't divvy up you'll be in the nick.

Ted Hilary! Jeff, can you do something?

Hilary collects her gloves and bag as she departs

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