



KNEEHIGH

T · H · E · A · T · R · E

Firing the imagination

A co-production with

PLYMOUTH

THEATRE ROYAL

THE KING OF PRUSSIA

by NICK DARKE



INVESTMENT SOUTH WEST ARTS



THE CATCH



In 1982 I wrote a play called *The Catch* about a share fisherman called Swiddles who can't make ends meet catching shellfish. At the behest of his son Leadwell he takes to the import-export trade and runs a consignment of cocaine for a

shadowy offstage drug-dealer called Goggo. The enterprise comes to grief and the play ends with Swiddles activating a powerful fan and covering the audience with powdered chalk whilst singing *The Road to Mandalay*.

John Carter, the King of Prussia, was a drug-runner. He imported brandy. His drug was more acceptable than cocaine and he and his brothers were heroes. It was an activity that young men aspired to and practised openly whilst the authorities and the gentry (by and large the same thing) colluded. Everyone was at it. The prosperity of the community was built on uncustomed goods. To be a 'free-trader' was a social calling. Cornwall was a very different place. The coastline wasn't 'managed' (I don't know whether Carter would have thought a beach looked prettier after it had been divested of its strandline and raked, my assumption is that his opinion would have been the same as mine - unprintable), there were no roads to speak of and houses were built to be lived in and not left empty for nine tenths of the year. Of course times were hard and life was cheap but in *The King of Prussia* Edward, John Carter's kid brother, abandons smuggling to go fishing. For Swiddles in *The Catch* it's the other way round. **Nick Darke** 1995.

I ain't sure if there's a God,
E never showed itself to me,
But I shall keep an open mind
So long as lobsters swim in the sea.

It might be Neptune or Poseidon
I don't care what name e's got,
So long as I can stand beside 'n
When I'm haulin' up that pot.

CAST

Tristan Sturrock
Giles King
Bec Applebee
Mary Woodvine
Charlie Barnecut
Carl Grose

Nick Darke

Mike Shepherd
Bill Mitchell
Jim Carey

All other parts will be played by the company

Sean Donohoe
John Voogd
Sue Hill
Natasha Buckley
Allan Drake
Jon Oram,
Richard Bonehill
& Emma Rice
Amanda Harris
Jane Sutherland
Graphic Design &
Sue Hill
Steve Tanner
Tony Crosby
Ali Firth, Trudi Stallard
& Romer Robins

The King of Prussia
Harry Carter, John Stackhouse
Bessie Bussow
Suzanne Stackhouse
John Knill, Charlie Carter
Edward Carter

Playwright
& Assistant Director
Director
Designer
Musical Director

Costume Maker
Set Maker
Props Maker
Set & props making
Lighting & Stage Management

Training
Administration
Publicity

Poster
Photography
Programme

Catering

Frank Guy made the lobster pot from withies grown in his back garden in Gorran Haven. He was born in the village in 1913 and, apart from a brief spell at sea in the Navy, has lived there ever since.

The action of the play takes place in Cornwall, France and the seas between.

Running time approx. 80 minutes with no interval.

THE KING OF PRUSSIA

NICK DARKE



Funded by
THE
ARTS
COUNCIL
OF ENGLAND

INVESTMENT
SOUTH WEST ARTS



BIOGRAPHIES

Bec Applebee trained at Liverpool Poly. Co-founded Bedlam Theatre and has worked extensively with Kneehigh for seven years. Shows include *Peer Gynt*, *Windfall*, *Ship of Fools*, *The Bogus* and *Carmen*. She has also worked with *Desperate Men* and *Circus Burlesque*.

Charlie Barnecut gained a very useful degree in geography at Nottingham University and returned to Cornwall where he now farms. A founder member of Kneehigh in 1979, he has a long association with Nick Darke's plays.

Carl Grose is a newcomer to Kneehigh and currently mid-training at Dartington. He is a founder member of Grinning Gargoyle Theatre. Achievements include performing in *Hell's Mouth*, directing *The Body* and writing *Scorched*, which won the Questors Theatre Student Playwright Competition.

Giles King left Dartington in 1986 and has performed in 15 Kneehigh shows since then. He took time out to tour the coast of Britain on *The Fitzcarraldo* in a commissioned show by Adrian Mitchell and Radio 4's adaptation of *My Cousin Rachel*.

Tristan Sturrock trained at Falmouth School of Art and has worked with Kneehigh for the last nine years. Shows include *Tregeagle*, *Ship of Fools*, *Danger My Ally* and many more. Other work includes performing with Orchard Theatre, Kaboodle, Public Parts and The Crucible Theatre, Sheffield.

Mary Woodvine left the Welsh College of Music and Drama in 1989 and has since done a wide variety of work. Her theatre work includes productions with Kneehigh and Orchard Theatre and The Gate in London. Her TV credits include *Eastenders*, *Heartbeat*, *Casualty*, *Shrinks*, and *Officer Took* in Jerry Anderson's *Space Precinct*.

Nick Darke was born and bred near Padstow. Nick has written over twenty plays including *The Body*, *The Dead Monkey* and *Landmarks* which have been produced throughout Britain and the world. His most recent play *The Man with Green Hair* was commissioned by the RSC.

Mike Shepherd is the founder of Kneehigh. He has worked both as an actor and director on previous plays by Nick Darke - *Ting Tang Mine*, *Hell's Mouth*, *The Bogus* and *Danger My Ally*, and he is pleased to be further developing this relationship. Mike has always lived close to the sea and currently deplores the increased military activity around the coast of Cornwall.

Bill Mitchell is a designer and director from London who has worked with Kneehigh since *Tregeagle*. He still finds time to work in London, Birmingham and Nottingham.

Allan Drake is a founder member of Kneehigh, has performed, played music, plotted the lighting or generated the sound in most productions since then. Also works with many other companies and performers.

Future Work

Figgle Hobbin

An illumination of poetry by Charles Causley tours village halls in Cornwall, Devon & Dorset in the Spring.

Tregeagle

Returns to sizzle and stagger the summer stage after lying dormant for 8 years in all but people's memories. A tale of passion and revenge, dark forces and redemption arising from Cornwall's own granite legend.

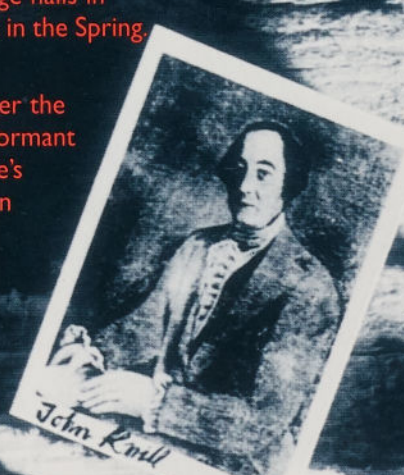
THE KING OF PRUSSIA

loop about 16 or 18 tons built for me
cutter a
been a
conviction
if any of the

INVESTMENT
SOUTH WEST ARTS

SOUTH WEST
THEATRE
CONSORTIUM

In the Kingdom of Prussia
There lives a great clan
Of Free Trading brothers
Who don't give a damn



18th Century
Rummer
Cornwall
18th Century

CORNWALL
ARTS COUNCIL
OF ENGLAND

Funded by
THE
ARTS
COUNCIL
OF ENGLAND

KNEEHIGH

As the millenium approaches we are now actively planning to ensure the artistic integrity of the company amidst the rigours of the modern market place.

We have extended our pool of multi-faceted practitioners and re-affirm our commitment to Cornwall, the South West and the World. The Company will continue to explore ways of creating theatre and will look to keeping shows in repertoire as well as producing new work. We shall look to fund research and development and to work with other artists and organisations.

Kneehigh has thrived for 15 years. The struggle for survival has, quite rightly, been of secondary importance to the realisation of our artistic dreams. We have produced a wild and wonderful array of theatrical activity: over 40 major touring shows, 20 shows for schools, countless educational projects, many large and small community events and an ever-increasing presence in Cornwall, Britain and Europe.

We will continue to surprise and delight you - our audience - into the next century. Meanwhile, enjoy *The King of Prussia*!

Mike Shepherd, Co-Artistic Director

Both Kneehigh Theatre and The Theatre Royal, Plymouth are members of the South West Theatre Consortium

PLYMOUTH THEATRE ROYAL

The Theatre Royal opened in 1982, since when it has earned an enviable reputation as one of Britain's leading producing theatres. The Theatre Royal has generated such highly acclaimed drama productions as *The Seagull*, *The Winslow Boy*, *Shadowlands*, *The Provoked Wife* and *What a Performance* alongside many successful musicals which have transferred to the West End and national tours.

In Spring 1996 the Theatre Royal will co-produce 4 world premières, Kneehigh's *King of Prussia*, Orchard Theatre Company's *Halfway To Paradise*, an adaptation of William Wharton's extraordinary novel *Birdy* and *Tolstoy* - starring F. Murray Abraham.

The Theatre Royal is proud to be collaborating with Kneehigh Theatre on this exciting production. The support of new writing by companies within the region is vital to the development of theatre in the South West. The Theatre Royal looks forward to further collaborative ventures with Kneehigh and other companies in the future.

THANKS

Kneehigh is very grateful to everyone who has helped with this production, in particular: Plymouth Theatre Royal for co-producing, Sylvia Roskilly, Captain George Hogg and Joanna Mattingly at Falmouth Maritime Museum, Hazel Berriman & Roger Penhallurick at The Royal Cornwall Institute, Richard Winkworth, Penrose Marquees, Donald Hill, Hilary Larson, Alan Davis Automatics of St Austell, Richard Marlowe, Delia Lancaster, Frank Carter, Robin Davies, Brad Caine, Gary Rowe, Philippa Kersey and Dave Luck of Charlestown Harbour, Martin Parker for underwater photography, Lynn Miller for French translation, Lew Jones St Austell Brewery, Sean Hooper Performing Arts Cornwall, Tony Davies, Dave Hunter, Sharon at Deborah Services, Steven Horsecroft, Bit Computers, English Partnerships, Richard Ternouth, The Cornwall Studies Institute, Jan Ruhrmund & Morrab Library, Mo Imms, Dave Mynne, Graham Mills, Don Wilkins, Tom Critchley, David Bacon, Ian Fletcher and all our families and friends.

HISTORY

The King of Prussia is loosely set in the late eighteenth century ... a time of revolution! George III was King. America claimed independence. The French revolution sent a shudder through Europe. Desperate to raise revenue, the Government of William Pitt the Younger placed heavy duty on almost everything. People were desperate. Free-Trading, or 'smuggling', flourished.

John Carter lived in Porthleah Cove, Cornwall. He was one of eight brothers who were renowned Free Traders. As a child he called himself the 'King of Prussia' after Frederick the Great - a hero at the time. The name stuck and Porthleah is now known as Prussia Cove.

'If you call yourself a king there will be no King! Cus we'm all kings. And if we'm all kings there's no Kings don't you think? Long live kings all! Death to all Kings!'

Suzanne Acton married John Stackhouse and they built Acton Castle on the cliffs just west of Porthleah for him to pursue his studies of seaweed. They were very well connected and extremely wealthy. John Carter was their tenant and held keys to the castle when they were away. There was a tunnel from the basement to the beach ...

John Knill was Collector of Customs in St. Ives. Although a law-abiding man there was suspicion that even he was involved in the smuggling trade.

Harry Carter was a devout Methodist and a first class seaman. He spent time in French prisons and worked amongst slaves in the cottonfields of America. He spent much of his life with a price on his head ... a lifetime's earnings. No-one ever turned him in.

Bessie Bussow ran the Kiddleywink at Porthleah.

'smuggler; a person who no doubt blameable for violating the laws of his country is frequently incapable of violating those of natural justice and would have been in every respect an excellent citizen had not the laws of his country made that a crime which Nature never meant to be' - **Adam Smith** - author of *'The Wealth of Nations'*.

THE SEA

With its 300 miles of coastline, Cornwall has been a trading nation since the Bronze Age. Whether importing coal or exporting pilchard, the sea has been Cornwall's lifeline. The land was too poor to support the population, so many took to the sea, mined underground or both.

Dating back to before the time of the Carter brothers there has been friction between the Navy and other sea-users. A catalogue of arrogance, accidents and near misses which continues into the present day. Since the Royal Navy has moved from Portland to Devonport in this past year, there has been an enormous upsurge in military activity in Cornish seas and over Cornish land. The increase in military operations involving the combined Forces & NATO threatens Cornwall's fishing, tourism, shipping, leisure pursuits and identity.

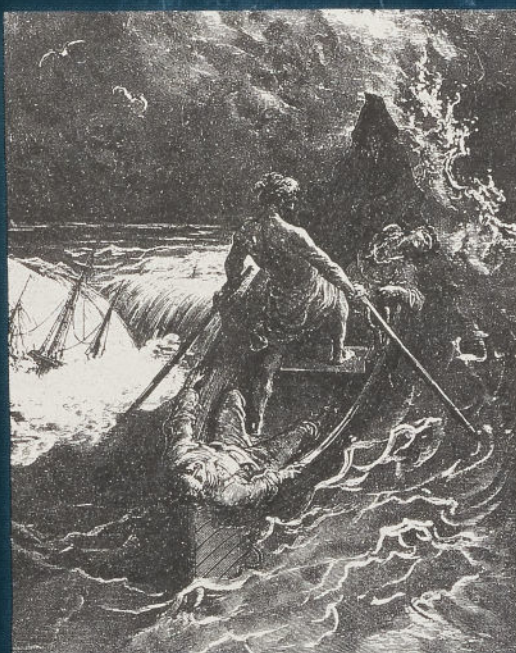
"The Cornish fishing industry is being given away"
a Mevagissey fisherman.

In 1995 the Cornish fishing industry is in crisis. Fish quotas are so low that fishermen are forced to exceed them in order to avoid bankruptcy - hence the market in 'black fish'. Other European fishermen, due to historical precedent, have larger quotas and so can fish more. Cornish fishermen feel morally right in fishing their own waters.

"There's no money to be made in building wooden boats anymore ... only in chain-sawing them in half".

Tom Dudley - wooden boat builder.

"More than 20 Cornish fishing boats are to be scrapped as owners take advantage of government decommissioning payouts of up to £60,000 a vessel". The West Briton, October 1995.



Francis Antony Ltd

Customs & Excise Registered
COLOUR PRINTERS
 Telephone: 01726 61264

Truro Fabrics

The Finest Silks, Dress, Evening & Bridal Fabrics ~ all duty paid!
 Several Thousand different Fabrics available from Poly Cottons to Silks including Liberty,
 Rose and Hubble, James Hare, Microfibres, Velvets, etc.
 Also a comprehensive range of Haberdashery and Patterns (inc. Vogue)
105 Kenwyn Street, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3BX. Telephone: (01872) 222130

The King Of Prussia - The Town Quay, Fowey

Steeped in folklore, historic Fowey is a fabulous holiday retreat, all 6 bedrooms are ensuite, with colour T.V. and tea & coffee making facilities.

(01726) 832450 AA Listed ETB



LICENSED

OPENING HOURS: MONDAY TO SATURDAY: 10 AM - 5 PM
 FRIDAY NIGHT AND SATURDAY NIGHT: 6.30 PM - 10.00 PM
15 KENWYN STREET, TRURO TR1 3BU
TELEPHONE: (01872) 72546



NETWORK

To receive regular information about Kneehigh's work, just send us your name and address. Please state if you are interested in training courses. In return we ask you to distribute a few leaflets and posters in your neighbourhood.

MERCHANDISE

This is also available by mail order from the office.

T-shirts: Ravenheart £6.50 large £4.50 small
 Cassettes: Ravenheart £6.95, Ship of Fools £4.00, Jump & Moxey £2.00
 Videos: Ravenheart £15.00, Tregagle £15.00
 Postcards: selection pack of 10 £2.00
 Please make cheques payable to Kneehigh Theatre and add £1.00 p&p then send with your order to: 11 Castle Street, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3AF. Tel 01872 223159.

TOUR

December 1995

- 8 & 9 Acorn, Penzance
- 12 Forest of Dean College
- 13 Herefordshire College of Art
- 14 Guildhall Arts Centre, Gloucester
- 15 & 16 New Victoria Theatre, Newcastle-u-Lyne
- 19 Wadebridge Town Hall
- 20 Mevagissey Jubilee Hall
- 21 & 22 Princess Pavillion, Falmouth

January 1996

- 10 - 13 City Hall, Truro
- 16 & 17 Tavistock Town Hall
- 18 & 19 Lostwithiel Community Centre
- 20 The Plough, Torrington
- 23 The Corn Exchange, Dorchester
- 24 Weymouth College
- 25 - 27 QEH, Bristol
- 30 Corfe Castle Village Hall, Dorset
- 31 Gillingham School, Dorset

February

- 1 & 2 The Brewhouse, Taunton
- 3 Croft House School, Shillington, Dorset
- 7 & 8 The Merlin Theatre, Frome
- 9 Mullion School
- 10 The Park House, Bude
- 14 St Luke's College, Exeter
- 15 Bridport Arts Centre
- 16 & 17 The Acorn, Penzance
- 20 & 21 The Barn, Dartington, Totnes
- 22 Ashcroft Arts Centre, Fareham
- 23 The Corn Exchange, Newbury
- 27 South Holland Centre, Spalding
- 28 Trinity Arts Centre, Gainsborough
- 29 Deanne High School, Thurnscoe

March

- 4 - 9 Donmar Warehouse, London
- 15 Queen's Hall, Narberth
- 16 Torch Theatre, Milford Haven
- 19 - 30 The Drunk, Plymouth Theatre Royal

Kneehigh Theatre is a registered charity (No. 290216)

