

# SCENARIO OF WCT / ALLENBOURN MIDDLE SCHOOL SCENE

As per Wed 16 July 2014

## Letters to the Living, Songs to the Dead

### START:

#### In gravel car park, outside MAIN ENTRANCE to FOREST GARDEN

- Audience assemble facing entrance.
- SOLDIER appears from one side, wearing blue uniform.
- He walks slowly towards gate. Picks up pre-set stick and bangs on gate.

SOLDIER looks at audience. Puts his finger on lips and - thinking they are his platoon – beckons them to follow him into forest garden. He leads audience into garden through wooden gate.

All WCT hidden around site, except Ken who is seated on the 'throne'

#### As SOLDIER walks the path he triggers WCT members to set off

**SFX recording 1 – Drones and recorded voices - when close to hidden groups.**

SOLDIER climbs the hill and salutes, first away from audience, then towards audience.

#### **SFX - SOLDIER triggers Barbara's SFX**

SOLDIER comes down hill & leads audience to centre around "fire place "

OLDER WOMAN on large chair (KEN): *Sit down, come on, take a seat, quickly now.*

SOLDIER (to audience): *Get down, get down.*

He watches Ken and listens to recorded voices for a while.

SOLDIER goes to hill and salutes again.

#### **SFX cue WCT to turn down volume on speakers.**

KEN recites Rupert Brooke poem

*"If I should die, think only this of me"*

**SFX– drones TRACK 2, volume up** - live voices begin in sequence around site – people move in closer while remaining hidden, if possible

Tuppy: *Name....occupation...belief...*

Ellie: *My sweetheart is in France; I haven't heard from him in 2 months.*

Tam/Jean (*singing*): *To be a farmer's boy...*

Tony (*plus drum beats*): *In August 14 we sailed to France...*

Jeff: *Smashed and broken...*

Gill: *August 4<sup>th</sup>. Gassed....hand gone...chest wound...*

Alec: *Name....occupation...belief...*

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Charlie: *Ow! my leg!*  
Clare: *Dear Nurse Coggin, thank you for your kindness in looking after me.*  
All: *Dear Nurse Coggin.....(add their own letter extract & listen to each other's)*  
David S: *Poem about soldier.*  
Barbara: *Rubber overshoes ...cordite factory ...column of fire.*

DRUM BEAT - FREEZE

**NEXT SECTION, all pop up from hidden position when speaking their own line, maybe moving around perimeter in & out of audience's view.**

Tuppy: *Name?*  
Alec: *Henry Hall*  
Tuppy: *Occupation?*  
Alec: *Carpenter*  
Tuppy: *Belief?"*  
Alec: *King and Country.*  
Ellie: *My young man is at the front...have you heard from him?"*  
Jean (singing and moving in): *Farmer's boy ...*  
Tony (roll on drum): *Soldier's ballad again. (popping out.)*  
Jeff: *Bruised and battered...*  
Alec: *Name?*  
Tuppy: *Tommy Arnett.*  
Alec: *Occupation?*  
Tuppy: *Butcher.*  
Alec: *Belief?*  
Tuppy: *No longer have any.*  
Barbara: *Cordite speech*  
David: *Poem*  
Charlie: *Thank you, nurse, for my new leg.*  
Clare: *Letter of thanks.*

ALL CLAP.

Cacophony of voices speaking all at once as all move to the back of the hill or around.  
They pick up sticks.  
Slowly march up hill. Stop on summit. Slowly descend.

### ??? PROXEMICS - WHEN TO MOVE THE AUDIENCE PRIOR TO CHILDREN'S SCENE?

**OPTION 1.** DAVE BECKONS AUDIENCE TO STAND AND FOLLOW HIM ACROSS TO MAKE LINE FACING HILL WHERE ARMY IS GATHERING??  
ACTORS PASS THROUGH AND SIT HEADS DOWN.  
THEN, DAVE TURNS AUDIENCE TO SEE SOLDIERS SITTING HEADS DOWN. PAUSE. ALL RAISE HEADS TO STARE AT AUDIENCE.  
AS CHILDREN ENTER, DAVE GETS THEM TO TURN AND WATCH FROM THERE.

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THINK THIS VERSION SOUNDS GOOD, THOUGH WILL BE A LITTLE MORE COMPLEX WITH MOVING THROUGH AUDIENCE, SO WHICHEVER YOU FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE WITH...

**OPTION 2.** AUDIENCE STAY SEATED AROUND FIRE AREA, UNTIL *AFTER* SOLDIERS HAVE COME DOWN HILL AND GONE IN TO SIT IN WOODEN STRUCTURE THEN DAVE AND KEN GET THEM TO STAND AND GO ACROSS TO WATCH SOLDIERS IN WOODEN STRUCTURE. HEADS DOWN....THEN THEY LIFT HEADS, STARE AT AUDIENCE. DAVE THEN CALLS OUT AND TELLS AUDIENCE TO TURN ABOUT – HE HEARS CHILDREN COMING – CHEERING.

ON THIS SOUND CUE – CHILDREN ENTER FOREST GARDEN SINGING "PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES" NOISILY. THEY BEGIN LOOKING FOR CONKERS.

## Children's scene outline

Audience facing front, with hill and tunnel.

Children led into Forest Garden by TEACHER (Marion) & REV FLETCHER following – preferably through gate in CLARC playground – unless they can wait in hidden space at back near emergency exit.

TEACHER (helped by elder students) gets children standing in rows with adults behind them, standing facing wall.

REVD FLETCHER (Tony), with back to the wall, gives talk to assembled children and audience.

At end of his talk, TEACHER (MARION) orders children to get to work, And leaves with REV FLETCHER, perhaps via other door (adjacent to Forest Garden playground)

Children send one child to check they've gone.

Children relax and sing gutsy version of 'Pack up your troubles' towards end of their scene, as children make a lot of noise, playing war game version of grandmother's footsteps,

Shell-shocked SOLDIER calls out and moves forward into children's scene. They see him and speak to him.

NURSE COGGIN appears from far gate, looking for missing shell-shocked SOLDIER. She talks to children, tells 2 sisters that their mum has just received a telegram and they need to go straight home.

2 children leave at same gate as entrance.

Nurse then leads SOLDIER away through audience into car park entrance.

TEACHER returns and collects children – gets them to sing as they return to school. They go off singing 'Pack up your troubles'

WCT CAST **COULD GO THROUGH AUDIENCE AGAIN TO HILL, TAKING 'DEAD' POSITIONS STREWN ABOUT IT, WITH NAMES OF DEAD RECITED WITH DRONE ON SOUNDTRACK???**