

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO BRITISH THEATRE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

This is the first comprehensive guide to British theatre's engagement with the First World War over the last century, from 1900 to the Armistice Day centenary in 2018. Considering theatre as both an industry and literary-cultural artform, it provides a contextual grounding in the prelude to the conflict and coverage of post-war plays as well as wartime performances. Lively chapters from leading scholars explore diverse genres and practices, from Shakespeare to melodrama, while focusing on topics including regionality, national identity, propaganda, commemoration, gender, censorship and international influences. Presenting original scholarship in an accessible and engaging manner, this Companion establishes theatre as a vital means of understanding wartime experiences, and a central feature in commemoration and remembrance.

HELEN E. M. BROOKS is Professor of Cultural and Creative History at the University of Kent. Prior to working on First World War theatre, she published widely on eighteenth-century theatre. Her book *Actresses, Gender, and the Eighteenth-Century Stage: Playing Women* was published in 2014. She is an editor of the Exeter Performance Studies series and was associate editor of the *Wiley Encyclopaedia of British Literature: 1660–1789*. She was a co-investigator on the AHRC centre, Gateways to the First World War (2014–2019).

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Cambridge University Press & Assessment

978-1-108-48150-2 — The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre of the First World War

Edited by Helen E. M. Brooks, Michael Hammond

Frontmatter

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108481502

DOI: 10.1017/9781108673778

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of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place
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First published 2023

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Brooks, Helen E. M., editor. | Hammond, Michael, 1954– editor.

TITLE: The Cambridge companion to British theatre of the First World War /
edited by Helen E. M. Brooks, University of Kent, Canterbury ; Michael
Hammond, University of Southampton.

OTHER TITLES: British theatre of the First World War

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York : Cambridge University
Press, 2023. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2022062020 (print) | LCCN 2022062021 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781108481502 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108673778 (ebook)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Theater – Great Britain – History – 20th century. | World War,
1914–1918 – Great Britain – Theater and the war. | World War,
1914–1918 – Great Britain – Literature and the war. | English drama – 20th
century – History and criticism.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PN2595.I3.W67 C36 2023 (print) | LCC PN2595.I3.W67
(ebook) | DDC 792.09410904–dc23/eng/20230313

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022062020>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022062021>

ISBN 978-1-108-48150-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-72276-6 Paperback

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or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will
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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	page ix
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	x
<i>Chronology of Events and Productions</i>	xiv
Introduction: British Theatre and the First World War <i>Helen E. M. Brooks</i>	i
PART I MOBILISING FOR WAR	15
1 Foreshadowing the War: Future War and Invasion Plays, 1900–1914 <i>Ailise Bulfin</i>	17
2 Mobilising the Nation: The Comic Revue in Wartime <i>Robert Dean</i>	33
PART II THEATRE DURING THE WAR	53
3 Challenging Times: Making Theatre during the War <i>Claire Cochrane</i>	55
4 Everyone’s a Playgoer Now!: Theatregoing and Theatregoers 1914–1918 <i>Viv Gardner</i>	74
5 Theatre in the War Zone <i>Emma Hanna</i>	91
6 The Classics at War <i>Ailsa Grant Ferguson</i>	109
7 War on the Popular Stage: ‘Spy’ Plays and the One Act Domestic Comedy <i>Maggie B. Gale</i>	128

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
8	Cinema and Theatre in the Great War <i>Michael Hammond</i>	144
9	‘American Invasions’ <i>Philippa Burt</i>	160
10	European Theatre on the British Stage 1914–1918 <i>Eva Krivanec</i>	178
11	Resistance and Objection <i>Anselm Heinrich</i>	192
PART III THE MEMORY OF WAR		207
12	Reflecting on the War <i>Rebecca D’Monté</i>	209
13	Re-imagining the War <i>Helen E. M. Brooks</i>	225
14	Commemorating the War <i>Rebecca Benzie</i>	244
	<i>Further Reading</i>	261
	<i>Index</i>	265

Figures

1	‘The Performer’ Tobacco Fund postcard, featuring Miss Katharine Compton. (By kind permission of the University of Bristol Theatre Collection/ArenaPAL).	page 9
2	Scene from <i>An Englishman’s Home</i> , Wyndham’s Theatre, 1909. Frontispiece to Guy du Maurier, <i>An Englishman’s Home</i> (New York and London: Harper, 1909). Image from Library of Congress digital collections, www.loc.gov/item/09010962/	22
3	Vesta Tilley in <i>Six Days Leave</i> , 1917. (From the author’s private collection.)	43
4	‘Ye Dud Knights’, 101 Squadron (By kind permission of the Royal Air Force Museum).	100
5	The Shakespeare Hut’s stage from the postcard ‘Shakespeare Hut: Converting Concert Hall into Dormitory’, c.1916–17. (From the author’s private collection.)	124
6	A re-enactor pats Joey at Ypres 100, Passchendaele Memorial Museum, 2017. (From the author’s private collection.)	234
7	A commuter encountering a soldier in <i>we’re here because we’re here</i> , 2016.	248

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Notes on Contributors

xi

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[More Information](#)

Notes on Contributors

xiii

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Chronology of Events and Productions

With around 3,000 new plays written for performance during the war, and around a quarter of these addressing the conflict, a comprehensive timeline is impossible. The following chronology includes key productions referenced in the *Companion* and major contextual events. The date for performances indicates the first identified performance in Britain, whether professional or amateur. A database of all new plays licensed during the war is available at www.Greatwartheatre.org.uk.

Year	Historical and Political	Theatre and Culture
1870	Franco-Prussian War	
1871		George Chesney, <i>The Battle of Dorking</i> published
1891		J.T. Grein founds Independent Theatre Society and premiers Ibsen's <i>Ghosts</i>
1899	South African ('Boer') War begins	
1900		16 April: William Bourne, <i>The Invasion of Britain</i> (Grand Theatre, Glasgow)
1902	South African War ends	
1901	Death of Queen Victoria, Edward VII succeeds to the throne	Louis Tracy, <i>The Invaders</i> published
1904		Abbey Theatre Dublin opens Barker-Vedrenne season opens at Court Theatre and runs until 1907
1906		<i>Publications</i> L. Cope Cornford, <i>The Defenceless Islands</i> ; William Le Queux, <i>The Invasion of 1910</i>
1907		9 September: Wal Pink, <i>Beacon Bell</i> , (Shepherd's Bush Empire)
1908		H.G. Wells, <i>The War in the Air</i> published March: Maud Allen dances <i>The Vision of Salome</i> (London Palace)

Chronology of Events and Productions xv

Year	Historical and Political	Theatre and Culture
1909		27 January: Guy du Maurier, <i>An Englishman's Home</i> (Wyndham's, London) Joint Select Committee on Stage Plays
1910	Death of Edward VII and coronation of George V	
1911	Over 3,000 strikes take place between 1911 and 1914.	8 November: Israel Zangill, <i>The War God</i> (His Majesty's, London)
1912	Wars of Balkan States begins (1912–1913) Titanic sinks Shops Act	
1913		Birmingham Repertory Theatre opens December: Women's Theatre launched at the Coronet, London
1914	28 June: Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to throne of Austria-Hungary, assassinated in Sarajevo, Bosnia 28 July: Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia 1 August: Germany declares war on Russia 3 August: Germany declares war on France and invades Belgium 4 August: Britain declares war on Germany; United States declares neutrality 11–12 August: Austro-Hungarian troops invade Serbia 13 August: Japan declares war on Germany 23–24 August: Battle of Mons 26–29 August: Battle of Tannenberg August: Women's Emergency Corps founded; War Propaganda Bureau set up 6–12 September: First Battle of the Marne 12–15 September: First Battle of the Aisne; first trenches appear 1 October: First Battle of Arras 18 October–15 November: First Battle of Ypres 16 December: Hartlepool, Scarborough and Whitby bombarded by German Navy 28 October: Turkey joins war on side of Central Powers 25 December: Unofficial Christmas truce on Western Front	14 April: Montague Glass and Charles Klein, <i>Potash and Perlmutter</i> (Queen's, London) 8 August: Defence of the Realm Act passed Copies of Fenner Brockway's <i>The Devil's Business</i> confiscated 17 September: Edward Knoblauch and Seymour Hicks, <i>England Expects</i> (London Opera House) 21 September: Bertrand Davis, <i>A Call to Arms</i> (Chelsea Palace) 13 October: Ernest Temple Thurston, <i>The Cost</i> (Vaudeville, London) 26 October: John Masefield, <i>Philip the King</i> (Theatre Royal Bristol) 9 November: Frederick K. Melville, <i>One Way of War</i> (Brixton Theatre) 1 December: Lechmere Worrall and J. E. Harold Terry, <i>The Man Who Stayed at Home</i> (Royalty, London) 19 October: Arthur Wimperis and Hartley Carrick, <i>By Jingo if We Do; Europe</i> (London Empire) 21 December: J.M. Barrie, <i>Der Tag</i> (London Coliseum); Leonard F. Durell, <i>Kultur</i> (Manchester Hippodrome) 27 December: First professional concert party visits the Front

xvi *Chronology of Events and Productions*

Year	Historical and Political	Theatre and Culture
1915	Invalided men become more visible at home Munitions of War Act passed 19 January: First German zeppelin raid on England 10–13 March: Battle of Neuve Chapelle 22 April–25 May: Second Battle of Ypres; ‘Germans use poison gas for the first time’ 24 April: Armenian genocide begins 25 April–January 1916: Gallipoli campaign 7 May: Germans sink the Lusitania 12 May: <i>Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages</i> , ‘Bryce Report’ 23 May: Italy declares war on Austria 31 May: First German air raid on London 25 September–14 October: Battle of Loos; British use poison gas for the first time 19 December: Sir Douglas Haig replaces Sir John French as commander of the British Expeditionary Force	Twice-nightly performances introduced 25 January: Joseph Millane and Clare Shirley, <i>Women and War</i> (Salford Hippodrome) 18 February: First YMCA-Ashwell ‘Concert at the Front’, (Harfleur Valley) 22 March: J.M. Barrie, <i>The New Word</i> (Duke of York’s, London) 25 March: Gladys Hastings Walton, <i>A Woman in Khaki</i> (Glasgow Metropole) 12 April: Dorothy Mullord, <i>In the Hands of the Hun</i> (Willesden Hippodrome) May: Granville Barker begins tour of east coast America 1 June: Stephen Phillips, <i>Armageddon</i> (New Theatre, London) 19 July: G. Vernon Proctor, <i>The Unmarried Mother</i> (Elephant and Castle Theatre) 28 August: Willard Mack, <i>Kick In</i> (Vaudeville, London) 7 October: Walter Ellis, <i>A Little Bit of Fluff</i> (Devonshire Park Theatre)
1916	27 January: Military Service Act introduces conscription. 21 February–18 December: Battle of Verdun, longest battle of the war 24–30 April: Easter Rising, Dublin May: Second Military Service Act enforces conscription of married men; Amusements Tax (later Entertainments Tax) introduced; Daylight Savings Time introduced 31 May–1 June: Battle of Jutland 5 June: Lord Kitchener killed when <i>HMS Hampshire</i> is sunk. 6 June: Arab revolt begins 1 July–November: Battle of the Somme 7 July: Lloyd George succeeds Kitchener as Secretary of State for War 15 September: First large-scale use of British tanks, on the Somme. 7 December: Lloyd George replaces Asquith as British Prime Minister.	Twice daily performances introduced Women become more visible in theatre audiences. Shakespeare Tercentenary January: First ‘Firing Line’ concert parties set up 20 March: Sewell Collins, <i>The Conscienceless Objector</i> (Liverpool Olympia, introduced as a sketch within <i>Joyland</i>) 19 April: George Grossmith and Fred Thompson, <i>The Bing Boys are Here</i> (Alhambra, London) 21 August: <i>Battle of the Somme</i> film released 31 August: Oscar Asche, <i>Chu Chin Chow</i> (His Majesty’s) September: <i>The Birth of a Nation</i> released in UK 7 October: George Bernard Shaw, <i>Inca of Perusalem</i> ; John Drinkwater, <i>The God of Quiet</i> (Birmingham Repertory) 22 October: first performance by ‘Iron Rations’ concert party (Woincourt)

Chronology of Events and Productions xvii

Year	Historical and Political	Theatre and Culture
1917	Coal rationing begins 16 January: Interception of Zimmerman telegraph 31 January: Germany declares unrestricted submarine warfare 11 March: Baghdad falls to the British 12 March: Russian Revolution begins 6 April: USA declares war on Germany 9–14 April: Battle of Vimy Ridge 9 April–15 May: Second Battle of Arras June: First Gotha, (bomber aircraft) raid on Britain. Air raids intensify. 13 June: Daylight air raid on London 18 July–10 November: Battle of Passchendaele (Third Battle of Ypres) 7 November: October Revolution in Russia 5 December: Armistice signed between Germany and Russia 9 December: Jerusalem falls to the British	Increasing train fares and petrol prices make touring most costly Professional performers begin to be included in Divisional Concert parties Miles Malleson's <i>Black 'Ell</i> banned 9 January: Oliphant Down, <i>Tommy by the Way</i> (Alhambra, London) 10 January: R. Hope-Lumley, <i>Marie Sees it Through</i> (Tiverton Electric Theatre) 30 January: Evelyn Glover, <i>Bit of Blighy</i> (Queen's, London) 10 February: Miles Malleson, <i>D Company</i> (New Theatre, Oxford) 17 March: Eugène Brieux, <i>Damaged Goods</i> (St Martin's, London) 7 April 1917: J.M. Barrie, <i>Charwomen and the War, or The Old Lady Shows her Medals</i> (New Theatre, London) 14 April: John Drinkwater, <i>X = O: A Night in the Trojan War</i> (Birmingham Repertory) 23 May: Earl Derr Biggers, <i>Inside the Lines</i> (Apollo, London) 26 June: John Galsworthy, <i>The Foundations</i> (Royalty, London) 4 August: Bruce Bairnsfather and Arthur Eliot, <i>The Better 'Ole</i> (Oxford Theatre, London) 27 August: Raymond Graham, <i>The Tainted Woman</i> (Grand Cinema, Evesham) 5 September: Henry Arthur Jones, <i>The Pacifists</i> (St James's Theatre, London) 29 September: Old Vic season opens with <i>King John</i> Rebecca West, <i>The Return of the Soldier</i> published Chaplin, <i>Shoulder Arms</i> released in UK 30 March: Austin Page, <i>By Pigeon Post</i> (Garrick, London) 15 April: Dorothy Mullord, <i>Married on Leave</i> (Theatre Royal Woolwich) 28 June: J.M. Barrie, <i>A Well-Remembered Voice</i> (Wyndham's, London) 3 August: Arthur Wimperis, <i>As You Were</i> (Pavilion, London)
1918	Spanish Flu epidemic (1918–1920) 6 February: Representation of the People Act gives the vote to women older than thirty and men over twenty-one 21 March–18 July: German Spring Offensive 15 July–6 August: Second Battle of the Marne 16 July: Former Russian Tsar Nicholas II murdered by Bolsheviks 18 July–7 August: Allied Aisne-Marne counter-offensive and German retreat	

xviii *Chronology of Events and Productions*

Year	Historical and Political	Theatre and Culture
	8 August: Battle of Amiens (Third Battle of Picardy) and start of the Hundred Day Offensive	4 October: Maurice Maeterlinck, <i>The Burgomaster of Stilemonde</i> (Lyceum, Edinburgh)
	4 October: Germany and Austria ask for an armistice	
	5 October: Allies take Hindenburg Line	
	9 November: Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates	
	11 November: Armistice	
	14 December: Lloyd George wins British election	
1919	18 January 1919–16 January 1920: Paris Peace Conference	6 January: Royce Carleton, <i>The Secret Service Girl</i> (Palace Maidstone)
	6 May–3 August: Third Anglo-Afghan War	
	28 June: Treaty of Versailles signed	
	19 July: Temporary Cenotaph unveiled in London	
1920	January: League of Nations established	9 August: W.S. Maugham, <i>The Unknown</i> (Aldwych, London)
	11 November: Cenotaph unveiled in London by King George V	
1921	6 December: Irish Free State created	14 March: Clemence Dane, <i>A Bill of Divorcement</i> (St Martin's, London) and film release
		18 October: George Bernard Shaw, <i>Heartbreak House</i> (Court, London)
1922	Coalition government collapses	BBC founded
		25 April: John Galsworthy, <i>Windows</i> (Court, London)
1923		4 November: Harry Wall, <i>Havoc</i> (Regent Theatre, London)
1924	Ramsay MacDonald becomes first Labour British Prime Minister	23 Feb: Allan Monkhouse, <i>The Conquering Hero</i> (Leeds College of Music, Elocution and Drama)
		8 March: Hubert Griffiths, <i>Tunnel Trench</i> , (Princes Theatre, London)
		18 May: Ernst Toller, <i>Masses and Man</i> (Stage Society)
		8 November: Cicely Hamilton, <i>Old Adam</i> previously called <i>The Human Factor</i> (Birmingham Repertory)
1925	Benito Mussolini establishes dictatorship in Italy	<i>Ypres: The Story of the Immortal Salient</i> released
		29 March: <i>Black 'Ell</i> produced for the first time (Strand Theatre, London)
		5 July: J.R. Ackerley, <i>The Prisoners of War</i> (Court Theatre, 300 Club)
		11 November: Reginald Berkeley, <i>The White Chateau</i> (BBC radio)

Chronology of Events and Productions xix

Year	Historical and Political	Theatre and Culture
1926	26 April-12 May: General Strike in Britain	<i>Mons</i> film released
1927		<i>The Somme</i> film released 17 September: Joe Corrie, <i>In Time o' Strife</i> (Cowdenbeath, Village Players)
1928		<i>Publications</i> Erich Maria Remarque, <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> ; Edmund Blunden, <i>Undertones of War</i> 8 February: W.S. Maugham, <i>The Sacred Flame</i> (Playhouse, London) 12 June: John Van Druten, <i>The Return of the Soldier</i> , (Playhouse, London) 9 December: R.C. Sheriff, <i>Journey's End</i> (Apollo, London)
1929	New York stock market collapses initiating the Great Depression	<i>Publications</i> Richard Aldington, <i>Death of a Hero</i> ; Robert Graves, <i>Good-bye to All That</i> 11 October: Séan O'Casey, <i>The Silver Tassie</i> (Apollo, London)
1930	National Government wins election	<i>Publications</i> Siegfried Sassoon, <i>Memoirs of an Infantry Officer</i> ; Robert Graves, <i>But It Still Goes On</i> 28 May: Grafton theatre opens with Verona Pilcher's <i>The Searcher</i> 8 April: Patrick MacGill <i>Suspense</i> (Duke of York's, London) 18 August: Noël Coward, <i>Private Lives</i> (King's, Edinburgh)
1931		14 February: Joe Corrie, <i>Martha</i> (Town Hall, Kirriemuir, Central Area Drama Festival) 4 February: Gladys Bronwyn Stern, <i>The Man Who Pays the Piper</i> (St Martin's Theatre) 6 April: Dodie Smith <i>Autumn Crocus</i> (Lyric Theatre, London) 13 October: Noël Coward, <i>Cavalcade</i> (Drury Lane) c. October: Noël Coward, <i>Post-Mortem</i> (Bath Playgoers Society)
1932		25 August: Noël Coward, <i>Words and Music</i> (Manchester Opera House) 22 September: Hans Chlumberg, <i>Miracle at Verdun</i> (Embassy Theatre, Hampstead) 1 November: W.S. Maugham, <i>For Services Rendered</i> (Globe, London)

xx *Chronology of Events and Productions*

Year	Historical and Political	Theatre and Culture
1933	Nazis take power and Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany	
1934	Adolf Hitler becomes Führer of Germany	20 November: John Van Druten, <i>Flowers of the Forest</i> (Whitehall Theatre, London) 16 May: Dodie Smith, <i>Touch Wood</i> (Haymarket, London)
1935		January: M.E. Atkinson, <i>The Chimney Corner</i> (Bitteswell Women's Institute Dramatic Section) 28 February: Muriel and Sydney Box, <i>Peace In Our Time</i> (Newland Players, St John's Parish Hall, Hull) 24 February: Muriel Box, <i>Angels at War</i> (Lutterworth Women's Institute Dramatic Society)
1936	Spanish Civil War begins (1936–1939)	30 January: Horace Flather, <i>Jonathan's Day</i> (Technical College, Doncaster and District Drama League, Mexborough Green Room Club) 7 February: Joe Corrie, <i>And So To War</i> (Glasgow Corporation Transport Players, Glasgow Community Drama Festival) 24–26 February: E and D.E. Hickey, <i>Over the Top</i> (St John's Dramatic Society, Harrow Festival, Northwick Park Hall)
1937		26 August: J.B. Priestly, <i>Time and the Conways</i> (Duchess Theatre, London)
1938	Germany annexes Austria and seizes the Czechoslovakian Sudetenland	14 November: W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, <i>On the Frontier</i> (Arts Theatre, Cambridge) 11 February: Lawrence du Garde Peach, <i>Shells</i> (Community Drama Festival, Empire Theatre, Fraserburgh)
1939	Spanish Civil War ends with Nationalists gaining control 1 September: Germany invades Poland triggering the Second World War (1939–1945)	25 January: Noël Coward, <i>Design for Living</i> (Haymarket, London)
1945	6 August: Atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima 9 August: Atomic bomb attack on Nagasaki 24 October: United Nations established 2 September: Second World War ends Cold War begins	

Chronology of Events and Productions xxi

Year	Historical and Political	Theatre and Culture
1946	19 April: League of Nations disbanded	
1947	15 August: Partition of India	
1949	4 April: NATO established	
	29 August: Soviets explode their first atomic warhead	
1950	Korean War (1950–1953)	
1955	14 May: Warsaw Pact formed	
1958		Leon Wolff, <i>In Flanders Fields</i> published
1960		
1961		Alan Clark, <i>The Donkeys</i> published
		27 December: <i>The Long Long Trail</i> (BBC radio)
1962	16–28 October: Cuban Missile Crisis	Barbara Tuchman, <i>August 1914</i> published
1963	5 August: Nuclear Test Ban Treaty	19 March: <i>Oh What a Lovely War</i> (Theatre Royal, Stratford East)
1965	Vietnam War (1965–1973)	
1968	Irish Troubles (1968–1998)	
1972	30 January: ‘Bloody Sunday’	
	5 September: Munich Massacre	
1979	Margaret Thatcher becomes first female British Prime Minister	
1981		10 April: Peter Whelan, <i>The Accrington Pals</i> (Warehouse Theatre, London)
1982	2 April–14 June: Falklands War	Michael Morpurgo, <i>War Horse</i> published
1986	26 April: Chernobyl nuclear accident	
1989	9 November: Fall of the Berlin Wall	<i>Blackadder Goes Forth</i> (BBC 1)
1990	First Gulf War (1990–1991)	
1991	August–December: Collapse of Soviet Union	Pat Barker, <i>Regeneration</i> series published (1991–1995)
1992	Bosnian War and genocide (1992–1995)	
1993		Sebastian Faulks, <i>Birdsong</i> published
1994	End of Apartheid in South Africa	
1997	IRA ceasefire	
1998	10 April: Good Friday Peace Agreement	
	Kosovo War (1998–1999)	
2000		14 September: Nick Whitby, <i>To the Green Fields Beyond</i> (Donmar Warehouse, London)
2001	11 September: Al-Qaeda attacks the World Trade Center.	
	‘War on Terror’ begins	
	Afghanistan War (2001–2014)	

Year	Historical and Political	Theatre and Culture
2002	Memorial Gates at Hyde Park Corner, London, commemorate services of Indian subcontinent, Africa and Caribbean to both World Wars	
2003	Second Gulf ('Iraq') War (2003–2011)	Michael Morpurgo, <i>Private Peaceful</i> published
2004		7 April: Simon Reade, <i>Private Peaceful</i> (Bristol Old Vic studio)
2005	7 July: London Bombing	
2007	Global Financial Crisis (2007–2008)	9 October: Nick Stafford, <i>War Horse</i> (National Theatre, London)
2009	25 July: Harry Patch, last Western Front veteran dies	
2010		18 September: Rachel Wagstaff, <i>Birdsong</i> (Comedy Theatre, London) 7 October: Abigail Docherty, <i>Sea and Land and Sky</i> (Tron Theatre, Glasgow)
2011	Libyan Conflict begins Syrian Conflict begins	
2014	Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS established Centenary of First World War (2014–2018)	<i>War Horse</i> film released (Steven Spielberg) Tavin Shah, <i>Subterranean Sepoys</i> , (Tara Arts, radio play) <i>Tommies</i> and <i>Home Front</i> series (BBC Radio 4, 2014–2018) 7 February: Deborah McAndrew, <i>An August Bank Holiday</i> (New Vic, Newcastle-under-Lyme) 20 February Peter Gill, <i>Versailles</i> (Donmar Warehouse, London) 2 April 2014: English National Ballet, <i>Lest We Forget</i> (Barbican) June: Owen Sheers, <i>Mametz</i> (National Theatre of Wales) 4 August: Paul Cummins and Tom Piper, <i>Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red</i> , (Tower of London) 12 September: Howard Brenton, <i>Doctor Scroggy's War</i> (Shakespeare's Globe) 29 November: Phil Porter, <i>The Christmas Truce</i> (Royal Shakespeare Theatre)
2015		4 July: <i>Between the Crosses</i> , Edgar Huggins (Caerleon Arts Festival) 22 October: Alice Mary Cooper, <i>The Box</i> (Birnam Arts, Dunkeld)

Chronology of Events and Productions xxiii

Year	Historical and Political	Theatre and Culture
2016	Centenary of the Battle of the Somme	14 April: Ishy Din, <i>Wipers</i> (Curve, Leicester) July: Rob Heard, <i>Shrouds of the Somme</i> (Exeter, nationwide) 1 July: Jeremy Deller and Rufus Norris, <i>we're here because we're here</i> (National Theatre, nationwide) August: Michael Mears, <i>This Evil Thing</i> (Edinburgh Fringe Festival)
2017		22 February: Patricia Cumper, <i>Chigger Foot Boys</i> (Tara Theatre, London)
2018	Centenary of the Armistice	17 October: Daniel York Loh, <i>Forgotten</i> , (The Drum – Theatre Royal Plymouth) 4 November: <i>Beyond the Deepening Shadow: The Tower Remembers</i> (Tower of London) 11 November: Peter Jackson, <i>They Shall Not Grow Old</i> (BBC 2)