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*ARMS*

*AND*

*THE*

Bernard  
Shaw

*MAN*



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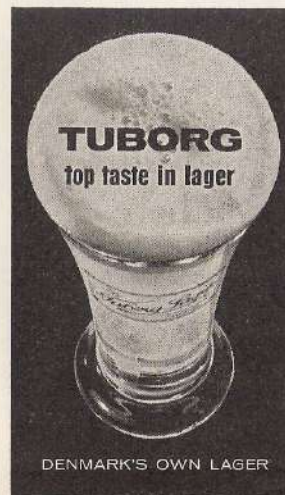


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## The Mermaid Theatre

Puddle Dock Blackfriars London EC4  
Box Office CITY 7656 Restaurant CITY 2835  
General Offices and Stage Door CITY 6981

Founders and Artistic Directors: Bernard Miles Josephine Wilson

Trustees: Sir G. J. Cullum Welch BT OBE MC  
Major Richard Smith MC Denys King-Farlow MBE  
Bernard Miles CBE

The Mermaid Theatre Trust presents

# ARMS AND THE MAN

Bernard  
Shaw



Directed and Designed by Colin Ellis

This production opened at the Mermaid Theatre  
on Tuesday 20 March 1962

The Mermaid Theatre gratefully acknowledges  
financial assistance from the Arts Council of  
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that  
man!**



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## *arms and the man* — the first production

*Arms and the Man* was originally called *Alps and Balkans*. It was Shaw's fourth play, and the first to be produced commercially in the West End. It opened at the Avenue Theatre (later rebuilt as The Playhouse) in Northumberland Avenue on 21 April 1894, the production having been financed by Miss Annie Horniman, of Gaiety Theatre, Manchester fame.

The play was produced by Florence Farr who also created the part of Louka. The cast included A. E. W. Mason (Plechanoff), the future novelist and writer of *The Four Feathers*, and Bernard Gould (Sergius), the future Sir Bernard Partridge of *Punch* fame. Also in the cast were James Welch (Petkoff); Yorke Stephens (Bluntschli); Orlando Barnett (Nicola); Mrs Charles Calvert (Catherine Petkoff); and Alma Murray (Raina).

The play was published in 1898 in a volume of *Plays Pleasant* together with *Candida*, *The Man of Destiny* and *You Never Can Tell*. In a preface to the volume Shaw wrote: 'Readers of the discourse with which the "Unpleasant" volume commences will remember that I turned my hand to play writing when a great deal of talk about "the new drama", followed by the actual establishment of a "New Theatre" (the Independent), threatened to end in the humiliating discovery that the New Drama, in England at least, was a figment of the revolutionary imagination. This was not to be endured. I had rashly taken up the case; and rather than let it collapse I manufactured the evidence . . . .

'I, having nothing but unpleasant plays in my desk, hastily completed a first attempt at a pleasant one, and called it *Arms and the Man*, taking the title from the first line of Dryden's *Virgil*. It passed for a success, the applause on the first night being as promising as could be wished; and it ran from the 21 April to the 7 July. To witness it the public paid £1777.5.6, an average of £23.2.5 per representation (including nine matinees). A publisher receiving £1700 for a book would have made a satisfactory profit; experts in West End theatrical management will contemplate that figure with a grim smile.'

The play was highly praised by the brighter of the critics. William Archer in *The World* said: 'There is not the least doubt that *Arms and the Man* is one of the most amazing entertainments at present before the public. It is quite as funny as *Charley's Aunt* or *The New Boy*; we laughed at it wildly, hysterically; and I exhort the reader to go and do likewise.'

On 17 September 1894, the play opened at the Herald Square Theatre, New York, and became the first Shaw play to be produced in America.

Writing to Ellen Terry in 1896, Shaw said: 'When I used to read the play before it was produced, people used not to laugh at it as they laughed in the theatre. On my honour it was a serious play — a play to cry over if you could only have helped laughing.'





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## shaw from the sidelines

The following extracts from *Shaw the Villager*, a biographical symposium narrated and edited by Allan Chappelow, are reproduced by kind permission of the publishers Charles Skilton Ltd. Copies of the book are available at our Foyer Bookstall, price 42s.

'Every year, a week before his birthday, Shaw would always have his hair cut and his beard trimmed specially. It was his way of celebrating his birthday. But I never wished him Many Happy Returns of the Day. I knew he hated being reminded of his age.'

*Frederick William Harvey, Shaw's barber for 15 years*

'Often Shaw would ask me to print his postcards. He had a whole series of them laid out in small piles on his desk and as he read the post each day he was able to answer many letters by sending the appropriate printed postcard. These cards dealt with such subjects as his ideas on capital punishment, temperance, a stock reply for appeals for money, his ideas on the alphabet, his opinions on hardship and poverty, a simple route of how to get to Ayot St Lawrence, and a poignant request to people not to celebrate his birthdays.

Mr Bernard Shaw implores his friends and readers not to celebrate his birthdays nor even to mention them to him. It is easy to write one letter or send one birthday cake, but the arrival of hundreds of them together is a calamity that is not the less dreaded because it occurs only once a year.'

*Harold White, printer*

'Shaw once rang me up on the telephone asking me to send him a book that would "put him wise" - as he expressed it - to modern poetry, which he said he did not understand. I selected and sent him one immediately, but it did not meet with his approval, for he sent it back to me with the following cryptic message in it:

My dear J.G.W.

N.B.G.

G.B.S.'

*J. G. Wilson, a leading representative of the bookselling trade*

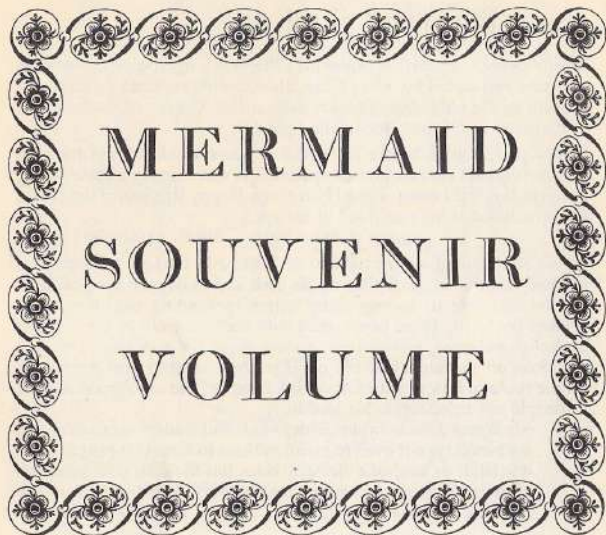
'I renew my offer to defray the cost of removing the three trees which now hide and disfigure the classic front of the church as soon as labour can be found to do it.

The parishioners will not consider this generous on my part, as they believe me to be a millionaire. You, being a banker, know better. A windfall of £29,000 (estimated in the newspapers as £55,000) has cost me £50,000 in taxes. I shall live this year on overdraft, and may yet die not only in this parish but on it.'

*Extract from a letter from G.B.S. to Mr A. W. Tuke,  
Chairman of Barclays Bank Ltd*

'In the village Bernard Shaw was thought of mainly as just an ordinary person - I don't know of any villagers who have read any of his books.'

*F. W. Blowey, Farmer*



MERMAID  
SOUVENIR  
VOLUME

The Westerham Press, printers to the Mermaid Theatre, are proud to announce that they have been entrusted with the production of a comprehensive work which is a survey of the first three years of the theatre's progress. It is due for publication on the third birthday of the theatre in May of this year

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cast list

*arms and the man*

<i>Bhuntschli</i>	JOSS ACKLAND
<i>Raina</i>	JANE MERROW
<i>Sergius</i>	DAVID KNIGHT
<i>Catherine</i>	ELSPETH MARCH
<i>Petkoff</i>	RICHARD WORDSWORTH
<i>Nicola</i>	RORY MacDERMOTT
<i>Louka</i>	SALLY SMITH
<i>Russian Officer</i>	DAVID LLOYD MEREDITH

*act 1* Night. A Lady's Bedchamber in a small town near the Dragoman Pass late in November in the year 1885.

INTERVAL

*act 2* The 6th of March, 1886, morning. The garden of Major Petkoff's house.

INTERVAL

*act 3* In the library after lunch.



## ARMS AND THE WOMAN

You are a housewife, equipped, most probably, with only two arms and two hands. How often, when you're busy about the house, have you longed for another pair of arms, an extra pair of hands! Stoking, for instance . . .

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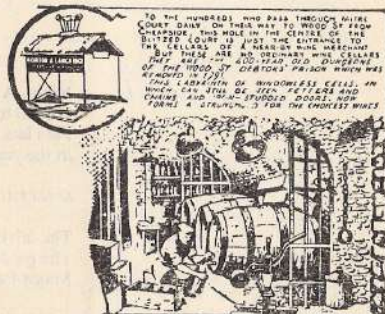
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## credits

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Programme editor Gerald Frow

Production photographs by John Miles

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*Artistic Directors* BERNARD MILES and JOSEPHINE WILSON

*Manager and Production Manager* E. R. TODDS

*Assistant Manager* MICHAEL ANDERSON

*Production Assistant* ANTHEA LYNEX

*Stage Manager* CAROLINE SMITH

*Assistant Stage Managers* CHRISTINA LEES and RALPH TURNER

*Chief Electrician* DAVID KAYE

*Master Carpenter* CHARLES TOFTS

*Wardrobe Mistress* JOAN HOLCOMBE

*Press/Publicity* KEVIN O'SHEA (CITY 6981)

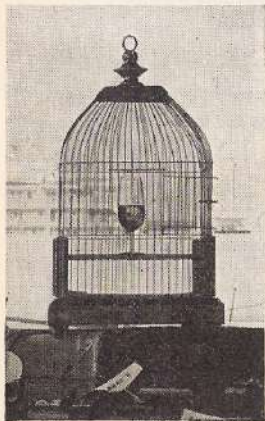
*Front of House catering and Bar Manager* JOSÉ MORENO

*The management reserves the right to refuse admission and to make any change in the cast necessitated by illness or other unavoidable causes.*

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In accordance with the requirements of the Lord Chamberlain - 1. The Public may leave at the end of the Performance by all exit doors and such doors must at that time be open. 2. All gangways, passages and staircases must be kept entirely free from chairs or any other obstructions. 3. Persons shall not in any circumstances be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any of the other gangways. If standing is permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating it shall be strictly limited to the number indicated by the notices exhibited in those positions.





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## G.B.S.— a potted biography

1856 Born 26 July at 3 Upper Synge Street (now 33 Synge Street), Dublin. 'What was done to me in my childhood was nothing at all of an intentional kind. I wasn't spoiled; and I wasn't helped.'

1871 Enters a firm of Dublin land agents where he becomes chief cashier.

1876 Leaves Ireland to join his mother and sister in London.

1878/9 Writes his first novel *Immaturity* – not published until 1930.

'In the last two years, I have not filled any post, nor have I been doing anything especially calculated to qualify me for a business one . . . I wrote a few articles, but they were not accepted, and did not deserve to be . . . I also studied harmony and counterpoint, and finally I wrote a novel . . . It cost me five months' labour, and I have no means of publishing it when it is finished.'

1879/80 Joins Edison Bell Telephone Company where he becomes manager of the Way-Leave Department.

'I was, I believe, the only person in the entire establishment who knew the current scientific explanation of telephony.'

1880/83 Lives on his parents and writes four more novels – all of them rejected. Failure seems complete.

'No, thank you; no more novels for me. Five failures are enough to satisfy my appetite for enterprise in fiction.'

1884 Joins the Fabian Society.

'I have just drafted an Election Manifesto for the Fabian Society. It is still far from complete; yet it runs to 11,600 words . . . Whether the society will swallow it or not I cannot say . . . But if they will not have it, I can still publish it on my own account as a personal election manifesto, I being a party of one.'

1886 Becomes Art Critic to *The World*.

1890 Becomes Music Critic to *The World* (5 guineas a week).

'It is the capacity for making good or bad art a personal matter that makes a man a critic. The artist who accounts for my disparagement by alleging personal animosity on my part is quite right: when people do less than their best, and do that less at once badly and self-complacently, I hate them, loathe them, detest them, long to tear them limb from limb and strew them in gobbets about the stage . . . The true critic . . . is the man who becomes your personal enemy on the sole provocation of a bad performance, and will only be appeased by a good performance.'

1892 His first play, *Widower's Houses*, is performed by the Independent Theatre Society.

'It is clear that I have nothing to do with the theatres of to-day: I must educate a new generation with my pen from childhood up – audience,

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actors, and all, and leave them my plays to be murdered after I am cremated.'

1894 *Arms and the Man* first produced in London and New York.

1895 Becomes Theatre Critic of *The Saturday Review* (at 6 guineas a week). 'In this world you must know ALL the points of view, and take one, and stick to it . . . The theatre is my battering ram as much as the platform or the press: that is why I want to drag it to the front. My capers are part of a bigger design than you think: Shakespeare, for instance, is to me one of the towers of the Bastille, and down he must come.'

1897 Becomes a vestryman in the Vestry of St Pancras.

' . . . it is good for me to be worked to the last inch while I last; and I love the reality of the Vestry . . . after the silly visionary fashion-ridden theatres; but the machine, Shaw, is not quite perfect yet . . . '

1900 *Candida* first produced in London.

1902 Writes *Man and Superman*.

1904 Stands as Progressive Candidate for St Pancras South in the LCC elections — is defeated.

The Vedrenne-Barker season opens at the Court Theatre, Sloane Square. Shaw is established as the leading playwright in London.

'My plays are mixtures of seventeenth century rhetoric, of modern thought and of that barbarous English humour which shocked Voltaire in Shakespeare. They are full of politics, religion, biology, and all sorts of terrestrial things except adultery.'

1906 Shaw moves to Ayot St Lawrence.

1913 *Androcles and the Lion* produced at the St James's.

1914 *Pygmalion* becomes a sensational success in London.

1923 Writes *St Joan*.

1926 Receives the Nobel Prize for Literature.

1946 Shaw's 90th birthday.

'My life has rushed through very quickly: I have seen very little of anyone who has not worked with me. Except with my wife, I have no companionships: only occasional contacts, intense but brief.'

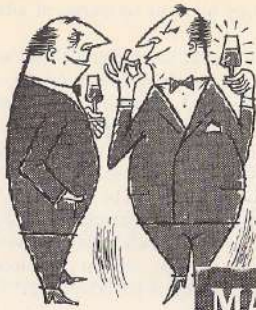
1950 2 November. Shaw dies at the age of 94.

## A PRIDE OF TERRYS

by MARGUERITE STEEN

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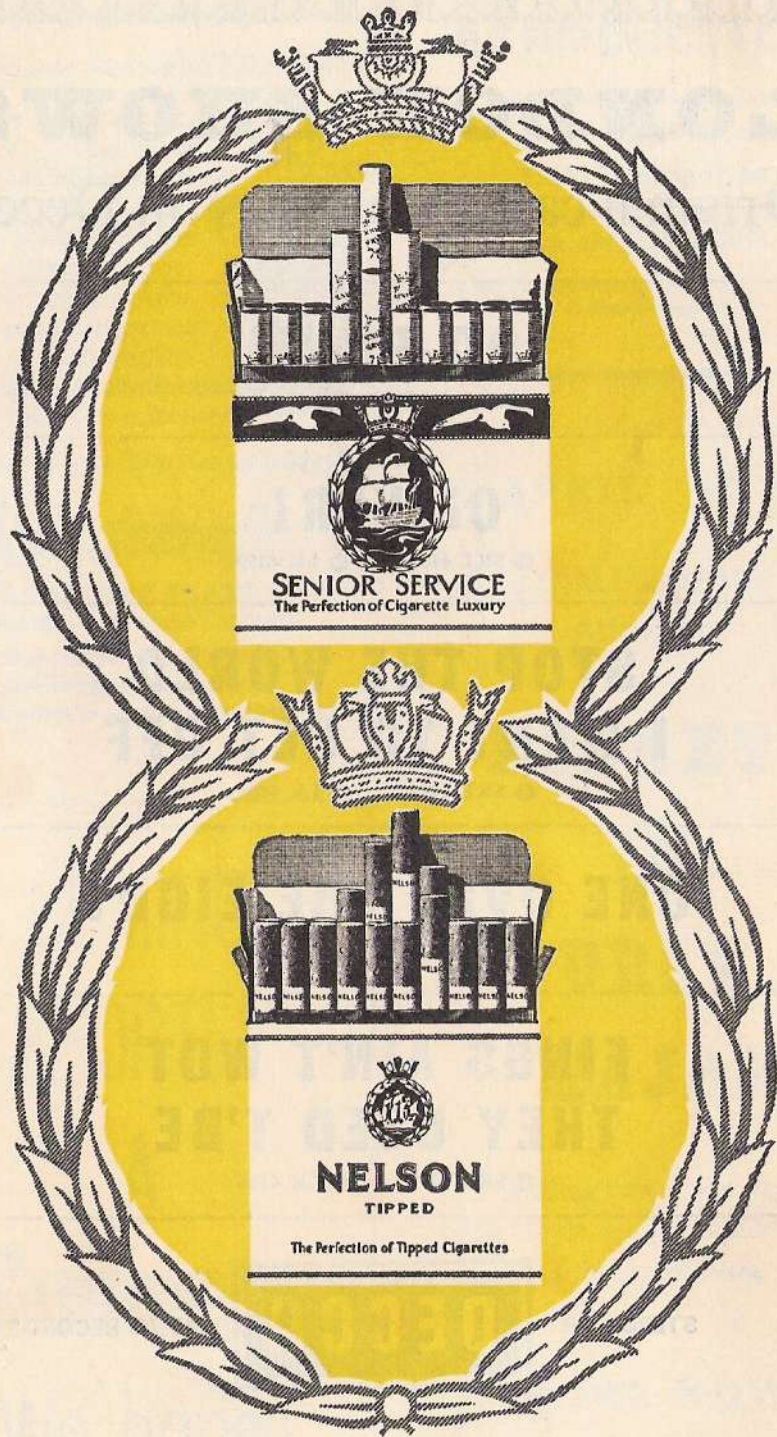
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