

Pulse Records Limited in association with Bill Elms present



# FULL CAST ANNOUNCED FOR BRAND NEW TOURING STAGE PRODUCTION OF HELEN FORRESTER'S 'TWOPENCE TO CROSS THE MERSEY'

Cast features Mark Moraghan, Lynn Francis, Parry Glasspool, Jenny Murphy and Daniel Taylor

Show will visit 15 venues nationwide during Autumn 2022

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The **full cast** for the first major UK national tour of Helen Forrester's **Twopence To Cross The Mersey** has been announced.

**Twopence To Cross The Mersey UK Premiere Tour 2022** opens this September in Wirral, a place which features heavily in Helen's million-selling books.

The hit stage drama has been revamped and updated as it gears up to visit **15 venues nationwide** during **Autumn 2022**. The **9-strong cast, playing over 40 characters**, has now been announced and includes five cast members who have appeared in its sister show *By The Waters Of Liverpool*.

The new touring production of **Twopence To Cross The Mersey** is produced by **Rob Fennah and Lynn McDermott** for Pulse Records Limited in association with Bill Elms and Directed by Gareth Tudor Price.

The creative team are delighted to reveal the cast **Mark Moraghan, Daniel Taylor, Parry Glasspool, Jenny Murphy, Lynn Francis, Lynne Fitzgerald, Robert Hudson, Roy Carruthers, and Chloe McDonald.**

The tour opens on **Tuesday 6 September** at the **New Brighton Floral Pavilion in Wirral** and will continue through to mid-November visiting a further 14 venues in **Rhyl, Stockport, Crewe, St Helens, Blackpool, Warrington, Darlington, Halifax, Croydon, Coventry, Lichfield, Bolton and Southport, before closing in Liverpool.**

**Mark Moraghan will play John Forrester (Helen's father).** Mark previously played 'Father' in the 2007 and 2009 adaptations of **Twopence To Cross The Mersey**, and reprised the role in the follow-up stage drama of Helen's book **By The Waters Of Liverpool** in 2018 and 2020. Mark is best known for his roles in **Holby City, Coronation Street** and **Brookside.**

**Daniel Taylor plays Mr Ferris and is also part of the Ensemble.** He is an award-winning actor, producer and director, and was most recently seen on stage in **Blood Brothers.** Daniel appeared at **Liverpool Theatre Festival 2020** in his show **The Very Best Of Tommy Cooper**, and returned the following year in **Something About George – The George Harrison Story.**

**Parry Glasspool will play Helen's brother Alan.** He is best known for playing **Harry Thompson in Hollyoaks.** He was born and raised in the Midlands, before moving to London to study for his BA Hons in Acting for Stage and Media at the University of West London. After five years, Parry made a dramatic exit from Hollyoaks in 2020 when he was murdered.

**After an open call for auditions to find Helen, Jenny Murphy was awarded the role.** Jenny wowed the panel and now joins the touring production. She trained at Mount view Academy of Theatre Arts. Theatre credits include **Oliver Twist, Pride & Prejudice, Merry Wives of Windsor, The Jungle Book, Cilla – The Musical, Julius Caesar, The Little Match Girl, and The Decameron.**

**Lynn Francis** plays Helen's mother Celia Forrester, **Roy Carruthers** (Ensemble), and **Chloe McDonald** (Ensemble) – and all return having appeared in previous stage productions of Helen Forrester books presented by **Pulse Records Limited.**

**Lynne Fitzgerald** plays **Mrs Foster** and (Ensemble), and **Robert Hudson** (Ensemble) complete the cast. Both are appearing for the first time in a Helen Forrester adaptation.

Millions of people around the world know **Helen Forrester's** life story told through her **best-selling volumes of autobiography, Twopence To Cross The Mersey, Liverpool Miss, By The Waters Of Liverpool, and Lime Street At Two.**

Helen's literary achievements were celebrated in 2020 when an iconic **Blue Plaque** was unveiled at the **late author's family home in Hoylake, a place which featured heavily in her work.**

**Playwright and producer Rob Fennah explained:** *"Twopence To Cross The Mersey is such a poignant true story and, although based in the 1930s, it tackles many scenarios people can still relate to today. It's the*

*main reason why it has remained so popular across the UK and around the world. Now we have our cast in place we can actually start believing we are taking the production on its first major tour after such a challenging few years for live theatre and entertainment.*

*“Helen Forrester was an incredible woman, and we are proud to continue to be custodians of her fascinating stories. Some years ago Helen and I grew to be good friends, and we shared many letters and lengthy telephone conversations about her life story. There were some real gems in amongst those conversations which I have now written into this new adaptation – fascinating memories of the late author that didn’t find their way into her books.”*

**Director Gareth Tudor Price added:** *“We’d not long opened *By The Waters Of Liverpool* – sister show to *Twopence* – when the pandemic brought everything to a standstill. But I now have the privilege to direct the first instalment which sets the scene for Helen’s life. The cast is strong, and a few already have special links with Helen’s work, so anticipation is high. We’re now counting down the months until we all gather in the rehearsal room and once again bring Helen’s work to life on stage.”*

**This year’s nationwide tour of *Twopence To Cross The Mersey* will be followed by a tour of *By The Waters Of Liverpool* in Spring 2023.**

**Adapted by Rob Fennah · Directed by Gareth Tudor Price  
Produced by Pulse Records Limited in association with Bill Elms  
Fully endorsed by the Helen Forrester Estate**

**Website:** <http://twopencetocrossthemersey.com/Tickets.html>  
**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/TwoPenceThePlay](http://www.facebook.com/TwoPenceThePlay)

## **LISTING INFORMATION**

**HELEN FORRESTER’S  
TWO PENCE TO CROSS THE MERSEY**

### **FLORAL PAVILION**

**Tuesday 6 September – Sunday 11 September 2022**

Marine Promenade, New Brighton, Wirral, CH45 2JS

Website: [www.floralpavilion.com](http://www.floralpavilion.com)

Box Office: 0151 666 0000

### **RHYL PAVILION**

**Wednesday 14 September – Friday 17 September 2022**

East Parade, Rhyl, Denbighshire, LL18 3AQ

Website: [www.rhylpavilion.co.uk](http://www.rhylpavilion.co.uk)

Box Office: 01745 330000

### **STOCKPORT PLAZA**

**Monday 19 September – Tuesday 20 September 2022**

Mersey Square, Stockport, SK1 1SP

Website: [www.stockportplaza.co.uk](http://www.stockportplaza.co.uk)

Box Office: 0161 477 7779

#### **CREWE LYCEUM**

**Wednesday 21 September – Saturday 24 September 2022**

Heath Street, Crewe, CW1 2DA

Website: [www.crewelyceum.co.uk](http://www.crewelyceum.co.uk)

Box Office: 0343 310 0050

#### **ST HELENS THEATRE ROYAL**

**Tuesday 27 September – Saturday 1 October 2022**

Corporation Street, St Helens, WA10 1LQ

Website: [www.sthelenstheatreroyal.com](http://www.sthelenstheatreroyal.com)

Box Office: 01744 756000

#### **GRAND THEATRE BLACKPOOL**

**Tuesday 4 October – Thursday 6 October 2022**

33 Church Street, Blackpool, FY1 1HT

Website: <https://www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk/>

Box Office: 01253 290190

#### **WARRINGTON PARR HALL**

**Saturday 8 October – Sunday 9 October 2022**

Palmyra Square, Warrington, WA1 1BL

Website: <https://parrhall.culturewarrington.org/whats-on>

Box Office: 01925 442345

#### **DARLINGTON HIPPODROME**

**Tuesday 11 October – Wednesday 12 October 2022**

Parkgate, Darlington, DL1 1RR

Website: [www.darlingtonhippodrome.co.uk](http://www.darlingtonhippodrome.co.uk)

Box Office: 01325 405405

#### **HALIFAX VICTORIA**

**Thursday 13 October – Friday 14 October 2022**

Fountain Street, Halifax, HX1 1BP

Website: [www.victoriatheatre.co.uk](http://www.victoriatheatre.co.uk)

Box Office: 01422 351158

#### **CROYDON FAIRFIELD HALLS**

**Monday 17 October – Tuesday 18 October 2022**

Park Lane, Croydon, CR9 1DG

Website: [www.bhlivetickets.co.uk](http://www.bhlivetickets.co.uk)

Box Office: 0300 500 0595

## **COVENTRY ALBANY**

**Wednesday 19 October – Friday 21 October 2022**

Albany Road, Coventry, CV5 6JQ

Website: [www.albanytheatre.co.uk](http://www.albanytheatre.co.uk)

Box Office: 024 7699 8964

## **LICHFIELD GARRICK**

**Saturday 22 October – Sunday 23 October 2022**

Castle Dyke, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 6HR

Website: <https://www.lichfieldgarrick.com/>

Box Office: 01543 412121

## **BOLTON ALBERT HALLS**

**Tuesday 25 October – Thursday 27 October 2022**

Victoria Square, Bolton, BL1 1RU

Website: [www.alberthalls-bolton.co.uk](http://www.alberthalls-bolton.co.uk)

Box Office: 0343 208 0500

## **SOUTHPORT ATKINSON**

**Tuesday 1 November – Friday 4 November 2022**

Lord Street, Southport, PR8 1DB

Website: [www.theatkinson.co.uk](http://www.theatkinson.co.uk)

Box Office: 01704 533333

## **EPSTEIN THEATRE LIVERPOOL**

**Saturday 5 November – Saturday 12 November 2022**

85 Hanover Street, Liverpool, L1 3DZ

Website: [www.epsteintheatre.co.uk](http://www.epsteintheatre.co.uk)

Box Office: 0844 888 9991

**ENDS**

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**For more information, interviews or images please contact Erica Dillon at Bill Elms Associates on [erica@billelms.com](mailto:erica@billelms.com)**

### **EDITORS NOTES**

#### **About the show**

**Twopence To Cross The Mersey** is a stunning period drama set in the early 1930s in the midst of the Great Depression. In 1931, Helen's spendthrift father was declared bankrupt forcing the family to leave behind the nannies, servants, and beautiful middle-class home in the gentler South West of England. With nothing more than the clothes they stood up in, the family of nine took the train to Liverpool where they hoped to rebuild their shattered lives. It came as a terrible shock to find the thriving, wealthy port Helen's father remembered as a boy, the place his own father made his fortune, had long since gone.

While 12-year-old Helen's inept parents searched unsuccessfully to find work, she was taken out of school to look after her six younger siblings and the full burden of keeping house fell on Helen's young shoulders. Having never had to manage a family budget in their previous life, the Forresters found themselves relying on meagre hand-outs from the local parish, charity organisations, and the kindness of strangers.

At the age of 14, Helen had finally had enough of her miserable existence and so began a bitter fight with her mother and father to attend evening school in an effort to educate herself and make her own way in the world. But Helen's parents had no intention of releasing their unpaid slave. They had other plans for their selfish daughter.

### **Playwright and producer Rob Fennah talks about his friendship with author Helen Forrester**

#### **How did you first meet Helen?**

My background is in pop music and during the late 1980s I was given a book called *Twopence To Cross The Mersey* to read while I was waiting to go into a radio interview. In the book Helen referred to her father, a man who had lost his fortune during the Great Depression, as a "butterfly in the rain", a beautiful image that inspired me to write a song of the same title for an album I was working on. Helen got to hear the track, really liked it, and asked if she could use it when promoting her books around the world.

#### **How did you collaborate artistically?**

First and foremost, we got on. There was a picture taken on the day we met – it's a lovely photograph and says everything about the friendship that was to follow. We referred to it as "when leather met tweed". Once we'd got to know each other, I asked if I could adapt her book *Twopence To Cross The Mersey* into a stage play. She agreed, but on the strict understanding she had final approval. "After all Rob", she reminded me, "This is my life!" During the writing process she would tell me a lot more about the characters in her books and this really helped me bring them to life on stage. I still have a pile of faxes and letters from her describing these people in great detail, and some drawings too. We had a lot of fun doing it. Helen flew from her Canada home to attend the premiere of *Twopence* at the Empire Theatre in Liverpool. She loved it. Although Helen is no longer with us, she is always in my thoughts. While I am writing, I always imagine her peering over my shoulder to check all the little details are correct and in order. It's a real privilege to be entrusted with her most famous works, but also a huge responsibility.

#### **More about Helen Forrester**

Helen Forrester was born June Huband in Hoylake, Cheshire (now in Merseyside), the eldest of seven children of inept, socialite, middle-class parents who lived on credit. When her father was made bankrupt during the Great Depression, the family was thrown into poverty. Evicted from their comfortable home in an English market town and with nothing more than the clothes they stood up in, the large family took the train to Liverpool where they hoped to rebuild their lives. While Forrester's father searched unsuccessfully for work, the family were forced to live together in a single room. As the eldest child, the 12-year-old Helen was kept away from school to look after her six younger brothers and sisters. For the next few years the family were forced to rely on meagre hand-outs from the parish, and the kindness of strangers. At the age of 14 Forrester rebelled against her life of drudgery and her parents agreed to allow her to attend evening classes to make up for her missed years of education.

Throughout her teenage years, Forrester worked for a charitable organisation in Liverpool and Bootle, which provided background for her novels *Liverpool Daisy*, *A Cuppa Tea and an Aspirin*, and *Three Women of Liverpool*. After surviving the Blitzing of Liverpool and losing two consecutive fiancés to the Second World War, she met and in 1950 married Dr Avadh Bhatia; her life with him in India provided background for *Thursday's Child* and *The Moneylenders Of Shahpur*. The couple travelled widely, eventually settling in Edmonton, Canada, in 1955, where Dr Bhatia became the director of the Theoretical Physics Institute at the University of Alberta. He was a pioneer in electronic transport theory and the study of diffraction of light by ultrasonic waves. The best-selling memoir of her childhood was *Twopence To Cross The Mersey*. It was later turned into a successful musical. Living in Alberta provided background for Forrester's novels *The Latchkey Kid* and *The Lemon Tree*. *Yes Mama*, which takes place mostly in late 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Liverpool, also includes a section about Alberta. She died on 24 November 2011 in Edmonton, Alberta.