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**BOYS & EMPIRE**  
PRODUCTIONS

a Boys of the Empire production

# SIDNEY FOX'S CRIME

20 April–7 May 2022

**Programme**

Above The Stag presents  
A Boys of the Empire  
production

# SIDNEY FOX'S CRIME

Written & directed by  
**GLENN CHANDLER**

Sidney Harry Fox  
**SEBASTIAN CALVER**  
Rosaline Fox  
**AMANDA BAILEY**  
James D Cassels  
**MARK CURRY**

Set & Costume Designer  
**DAVID SHIELDS**  
Choreographer  
**CAROLE TODD**  
Lighting Designer  
**JOSEPH ED THOMAS**  
Sound Designer  
**PAUL GAVIN**  
Stage Manager  
**JOEL KENDALL**  
Poster & Programme  
Design  
**JON BRADFIELD**  
Production Photography  
**PBG STUDIOS**

*A version of Sidney Fox's Crime was performed in 2021 as part of Above The Stag's "Not The Edinburgh Fringe" season, under the title The Establishment Versus Sidney Harry Fox. This new production was first performed on 20 April 2022.*



**AMANDA BAILEY**  
**Rosaline Fox**

Amanda is delighted to be working with Glenn Chandler at Above The Stag again, following her performance as Rosaline in *The Establishment vs Sidney Harry Fox* for their Not The Edinburgh Fringe Festival last summer, and as Rose in *The Good Scout* in 2019.

In 2020 she co-founded Hog In The Limelight Productions, providing online performances during the pandemic, and producing 20 shows from May 2020 to June 2021, playing Anna in *Antique Drawers* by Carolyn Pertwee, and Elizabeth in Githa Sowerby's lost play *Direct Action*. She also appeared as Jill in *After You* by Brendan Murray, Miss Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde, and Cecilia Crabtree in *Lord Dismiss Us* by Glenn Chandler. She played Rosalind Iden in one of Hog's previous online shows, *The Trial of Donald Wolfitt* by Michael McManus, at White Bear in September 2020.

In 2017/18 she reprised her role of Ethel Gumm in *Judy!* at both the Hippodrome and Arts Theatre. Other recent theatre credits include Creon in *Antigone* (The Hope), Ethel Gumm in *Through the Mill* (Southwark Playhouse), Maid in *Blood Wedding* (Bread and Roses), Mrs Birling in *An Inspector Calls* (Tin Shed regional tour), Mrs Bennet in

*Pride and Prejudice* (St James Theatre), Lady Bracknell in *Ernest* (Edinburgh Festival), Mrs Pugh in *Under Milk Wood* (Oval House) and *Angelo in Measure for Measure* (The Cockpit). Screen credits include Diane in *Cold Callers* and Police Officer in *Project: Library*. Amanda can currently be heard in *The Soul Breaker* on Audible.



**SEBASTIAN CALVER**  
**Sidney Harry Fox**

Sebastian trained at East 15 and RAM. His theatre work includes the role of Sidney Fox in four performances of *The Establishment Vs Sidney Harry Fox* in the Not The Edinburgh Fringe season at Above The Stag in July 2021, the play which evolved into Sidney Fox's Crime; Will Scarlett in *Robin Hood* (Camberley Theatre), David Armstrong in *Go Bang Your Tambourine* (Finborough Theatre) and Technician in *A Serious Play About W/WII* (Kings Head, Fringe Tour, Vault Festival).

During lockdown Sebastian appeared in various rehearsed readings for Hog In The Limelight Productions including Terrence Carleton in *Lord Dismiss us* (Glenn Chandler), Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Captain Daily in *Mansfield Park & Ride* (Brendan Murray) and Captain Jack Absolute in *The Rivals*.

Radio and screen includes

*Nordic Porridge* (Radio Commercial), *The Moon That Night* (BBC Radio 4) and *Noah* in *Truths* (Tom Smith Films).

Sebastian has also been working as a Fraud Prevention Specialist for a credit company and has finely tuned his con-artist capabilities.



**MARK CURRY**  
**James D Cassels**

Mark is from Yorkshire and grew up performing on television in the ITV children's show, *Junior Showtime*. Whilst still at school he played Oscar in the classic film *Bugsy Malone*.

He joined the Harrogate Theatre Company in the early 80's before presenting many BBC children's TV programmes including *Screen Test*, *The Saturday Picture Show*, *Record Breakers* and, for four years, *Blue Peter*.

Mark played one of the two leading roles in *Woman In Black* in the West End as well as appearing in *Company* and *Victor Victoria* at Southwark Playhouse. At the Menier Chocolate Factory he performed in *Talent*, written and directed by Victoria Wood.

UK theatre tour highlights include *Charley's Aunt*, and *And Then There Were None* in celebration of Agatha Christie's 125th birthday, plus *Far From The Madding Crowd*, *All Creatures Great and Small*,

*London Suite* and *Tons Of Money*. He played Gordon in *Neville's Island* at the Library Theatre in Manchester and at Windsor Theatre Royal he appeared in *Dangerous Corner* and several Alan Ayckbourn plays. At The Mill at Sonning Mark was in *Out Of Order* and *Move Over Mrs Markham* for Ray Cooney. Musicals include *Singin' In The Rain*, *They're Playing Our Song* and the London cast of *Wicked*, playing the Wizard.

Mark presented *Catchphrase* on ITV and played roles in *Doctors*, *Last Of The Summer Wine* and *Hollyoaks*. He won the BBC Children In Need *Strictly* special and has appeared in *Celebrity Antiques Roadshow*.

Mark is a tennis enthusiast and has presented at major tennis events including Wimbledon.

#### **GLENN CHANDLER** **Writer & Director**

Glenn is best known for the Scottish Television series *Taggart* which he created and wrote for sixteen years. That and writing for Granada's *Crown Court* stimulated his interest in crime and he went on to pen true-crime dramas for Yorkshire Television about George Joseph Smith, the Brides in the Bath killer; John George Haigh, the acid bath murderer; and William Palmer, the Staffordshire poisoner. He stopped writing for television in 2006 and returned to theatre, his first love. He produced his first play on the Edinburgh Fringe, *Boys of the Empire*, a comic book satire on the Iraq war, a sellout success which transferred to the Kings Head. He followed this at the Kings Head with a similar satire, *Scouts in Bondage*, about Boy Scouts becoming embroiled in geophysical events in Afghanistan. Eager to direct his own work, he went to the Tabard Theatre

with *The Custard Boys*, based on the novel by John Rae, about a love affair between a German refugee and a teenage evacuee, and *The Lamplighters*, a supernatural thriller. Attracted to writing on LGBT subjects, he wrote his first musical, *Cleveland Street*, about the infamous male London brothel, which was performed at Above The Stag during its tenure in Victoria. It was the start of a long association with Above The Stag, to which Glenn transferred all of his later Edinburgh Fringe productions: *Sandel* (2013), *Lord Dismiss Us* (2018) and *The Good Scout* (2019).

He has written three further musicals for Above The Stag, *Fanny and Stella*, *The Sins of Jack Saul* and the recent *The Pleasure Garden*. His book *The Sins of Jack Saul*, the true biography of a Victorian rent boy, is available from Amazon. Any recurring themes in Glenn's work is purely coincidental.

#### **PAUL GAVIN** **Sound Designer**

Sound designs include: *The Pleasure Garden*, *The Convert*, *Tommy on Top* (Above The Stag); for BYMT: *Cabaret Macabre*, *Nightshade* (Bridewell Theatre); for Aria Entertainment: *The Astonishing Times of Timothy Cratchit* (Hope Mill Theatre), *Night of the Living Dead* (Pleasance Theatre London); In The Wings' production of *Peter and the Wolf*, Trey Anthony's *Da Kink in My Hair*, *Sunday Selection*, *The New 291 Show*, Channel 4's *Nights at the Empire*, Steven Berkoff's *Sit and Shiver*, Louise Jameson's *Face Value*, Angie Le Mar's *Brothers*, Hackney Empire's pantomimemes 1997-2009, *Ushers The Musical*, *Judy* (Arts Theatre), Amnesty International's *Famous Compere's Police Dog* shows



(Duke of York's Theatre); Rawhide's *Slappers & Slap Heads* (Liverpool Empire/ Manchester Opera House); *Lotte's Journey* (New End Theatre); Birmingham Rep tour of *Once on this Island*; Trinity Laban productions *Sweet Charity*, *Spring Awakening*, Stephen Sondheim's *Cinderella*, *Godspell* (Blackheath Halls); *Grand Hotel*, *Our House*, *Witches of East Wick*, *City of Angels*, *Lucky Stiff* (Stratford Circus); *Bright Lights Big City* (Albany Theatre); Papatango's productions of Matt Morrison's *Through the Night*, Rob Young's *Crush*, Tom Morton-Smith's *Everyday Maps for Everyday Use*, Louise Monaghan's *Pack* (Finbrough Theatre); *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well*, *Grim The Musical*, (Charing Cross Theatre). Paul trained at RADA and works extensively as Associate Designer and Sound No.1 throughout the UK and Europe.

## DAVID SHIELDS Set Designer

Among David's many designs for Above The Stag are nine previous pantomimes, *The Pleasure Garden* (OFFIE Award Winner: Best Set Design), *The Morning After*, *Fanny & Stella*, *Closer To Heaven*, *Grindr: The Opera*, *Beautiful Thing* and *Maurice*. David has designed the set and costumes for plays, musicals and other spectacles at venues of every scale from arenas to studio theatres via international and regional producing houses and the West End, most recently with *Heathers The Musical* (Theatre Royal Haymarket, and UK & Ireland tour). Other credits include: *Mannen fra La Mancha* (Oslo); Scandinavian arena productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Hair*, *Fame*, *Grease*, *Chess* and *Saturday Night Fever*; *Saturday Night Fever* (UK tours, London, Johannesburg, Madrid



Room 66 at the Margate Metropole

and Spanish tour); *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Sister Act* and *Legally Blonde* (Aberystwyth); *Strictly Come Dancing: The Professionals* (UK tour); *Ice Age Live: A Mammoth Adventure* (arena world tour); Robin Cousins' *ICE* (UK tour); 13 world-touring arena productions for *Holiday On Ice*; *She Loves Me* and *The Clockmaker's Daughter* (Landor Theatre); Ant & Dec's *Saturday Night Takeaway on Tour*; *The Last Five Years* (The Other Palace); *End of the Rainbow*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Our House* (UK tours); John Cleese's *Bang Bang*, and *Snow White* (Best Costume Design nominee, Great British Pantomime Awards) at Mercury Theatre, Colchester; *Pippin* (Charing Cross Theatre).

## JOSEPH ED THOMAS Lighting Designer

Joseph trained at The ArtsEducational Schools London and RADA. He has designed shows in London and throughout the UK. Highlights include: *Jekyll & Hyde* (West End workshop), *Camelot* (London Palladium), *Lucie Jones at Christmas* (Her Majesty's Theatre/St Davids Hall Cardiff), *Collabro*, *Greatest Hits Tour* (London Palladium/

UK tour), *Julius "Call Me Caesar" Caesar* (Arts Theatre, West End), *Little Voice* (UK tour) as Associate Lighting Designer for Nic Farman, *The Pleasure Garden* (Above The Stag), *39 and Counting* (PARK Theatre 200), *Well-Behaved Women* (Cadogan Hall), *Our Girls Our Game* (Alhambra Theatre, Bradford), *Wind in the Willows* (Theatre Royal Norwich, Turbine Theatre and Latitude), *Evita*, *Moments in Time* and *The Liberators* (Eve Lyons Studio Theatre, PPA), *John Owen Jones Celebrating his 50th Birthday - Live at Cadogan Hall*, *Lucie Jones and David Hunter LIVE!* and *Collabro: Christmas is Here* (Cadogan Hall), *Rock Choir* (Birmingham REP), *Rags* (Park Theatre) as Associate Lighting Designer for Derek Anderson, *Lost Boys* (Unity Theatre/Tour), *Fight Like A Girl* (Mountview), *A Million Dreams* (O2 Arena), *AdLibido* (Soho Theatre) as Associate Lighting Designer for Peter Small, *Proof and Closets the Musical* (Hope Mill Theatre), *Tainted - A New Musical* (The Vaults, Waterloo), *The 43 Club* (The Other Palace), *The Blue Electric Wind* (Bush Theatre), *Status Update* (Soho Theatre), *Lobster* (Theatre503), *Down The Hatch* (RADA GBS Theatre), *Dogfight* (Capitol Theatre),

*Songs For A New World, Make Me A Song, A Chorus Line, Peter Pan, Calamity Jane* (ArtsEd), *La Clamenza di Tito, Lucia di Lammermoor, La Cenerentola* (Opera de Bauge 2017 rep season).

Joseph was nominated for the Offie for Best Lighting Design 2021 for his design for *Tommy On Top* at Above The Stag and Offie for Best Lighting Design 2019 for *Aisha* at the Kings Head, Old Red Lion and Tristan Bates Theatre.

### **CAROLE TODD** **Choreographer**

Carole's work at Above The Stag includes *The Pleasure Garden, Pinocchio: No Strings Attached, Goodbye Norma-Jeane, Grindr The Opera, Musical of Musicals, Mother Goose Cracks One Out, Beauty on the Piste, Get 'Em Off, The Sins of Jack Saul, Rent Boy The Musical, Bathhouse,*

*He Shoots! He Scores!* and *Fanny and Stella: The Shocking True Story*. She has directed/ choreographed in over 30 of London's West End Theatres and venues from *La Cenerentola* (Royal Opera House) to *Dreamboats and Petticoats* (Savoy, Playhouse, Wyndhams and UK tours) via *Wild Oats* at the National Theatre and *Return to the Forbidden Planet* at the Cambridge and Savoy. She has travelled the world with shows ranging from *Starlight Express* (Japan, Australia) to *Mikado* (LA, Australia) and has staged over 100 corporate shows performed from Iceland to the Bahamas. She has directed every pantomime subject including both Lily Savage and Jerry Hall in *Snow White* and *Aladdin* in Hebrew in Tel Aviv! Following *Jesus Christ Superstar* European tour, *Dancing in the Streets* UK and USA and *Bugsy Malone*, recent work included

*Cilla the Musical, This is Elvis* (UK tours), *Cats* and *Oliver!*. She enjoys directing charity galas and especially her "Tales of Toddography" talks which she normally does on behalf of Guide Dogs for the Blind.

**Rosaline and Sidney**



# THE STORY OF SIDNEY HARRY FOX

## Glenn Chandler

On 23 October 1929, a young man dressed only in a shirt rushed down the stairs of the Metropole Hotel in Margate and shouted for help. His mother's room was on fire and he couldn't get in for smoke. The hotel, past its best days, was full of commercial travellers that night. One guest bravely crawled beneath the pall of smoke and dragged the woman into the corridor. A policeman tried to resuscitate her but she was dead. It appeared she had been reading a newspaper in front of the gas fire and it had caught alight and ignited an armchair. Two doctors certified her dead of suffocation and shock, and the inquest the next day reached a verdict of death by misadventure. Her body was returned to the hamlet of Great Fransham in Norfolk where she and her son had both been born and she was quickly buried. Then it was discovered that her son had insured her life for £4000.

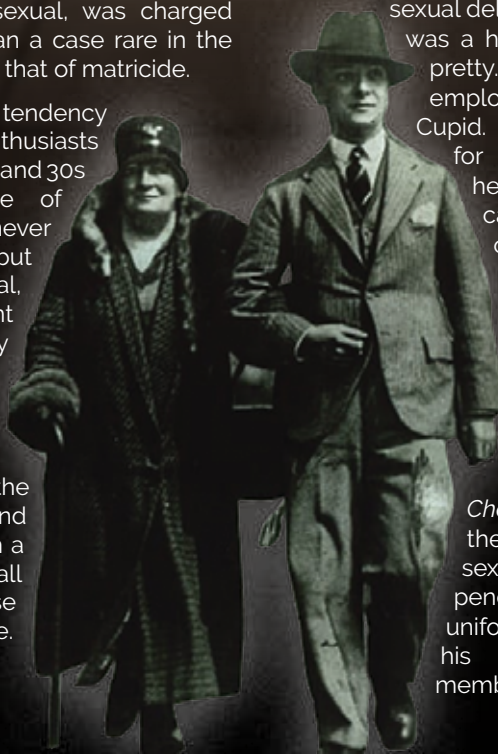
Rosaline Fox was exhumed. Sidney Harry Fox, who was homosexual, was charged with murder. So began a case rare in the annals of British crime, that of matricide.

There is a tendency among crime enthusiasts to look back on the 20s and 30s as the 'golden age of murder'. Murder is never golden of course, but the drama of a big trial, the acres of newsprint spent in reporting every word, the placing of the black cap on the judge's head, and the solemn hour when the prison bell tolled and the accused, hooded and restrained, fell through a trap door into oblivion all contributed to a sense of justice being done. Only it wasn't always.

At least they couldn't hang you for being gay. Not then, not in England. Or could they?

Sidney Fox was the youngest of four brothers. He was illegitimate, his mother Rosaline having taken up with a married railway porter after her husband, a signalman, disappeared up the line never to be seen again. Sidney attended the village school, a grubby one-room brick structure in the corner of a field. He was a bad lad even then, getting caught after collecting for charity and pocketing the money. Still, there was always the chance, with his mother's influence, he might make good and become a worthwhile member of society.

The war intervened, the family scattered, and Sidney and Rosaline ended up in London. As a page boy for a wealthy, aristocratic couple he discovered the sexual delights of the capital. He was a handsome boy, almost pretty. His doting elderly employers nicknamed him Cupid. He was fired by them for stealing. By the time he was twenty his looks caught the attention of one Gerald Hamilton, a man who was known to the police. Hamilton was a larger than life character, a raconteur and possibly a spy. In Christopher Isherwood's *Mr Norris Changes Trains*, he was the original Mr Norris, a sexual masochist with a penchant for men in uniform. Sidney attended his parties along with members of the Household





Cavalry who could be picked up, for a few shillings, in any number of pubs up the Edgware Road.

London was gay, in every sense. Immediately after the Great War, people wanted to live and forget the horror. Sidney got a good job in a bank and was a promising employee, but the sight of dashing young army officers with their cheque books (quite a new thing) was irresistible. Sidney got hold of a uniform and posed as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force. He turned his talents to forgery. And he went to prison, again and again. One of his older lovers, war hero Colonel Percy Holland, was cashiered and stripped of his CB after writing incriminating letters to the lad.

To his gay friends in London he was known as 'the kid'. He partied wildly, and aimed high, talking with an Eton accent and pretending to come from a privileged background. Lord Beauchamp of Walmer Castle in Kent crossed his path. Beauchamp was Warden of the Cinque Ports and a close friend of King George. He buggered his footmen, chosen for their looks, and held outrageous parties. When Beauchamp was exposed, King George was reputed to have asked "Don't men like that shoot themselves?" Sidney was never arrested for any of his own sexual activities, which was remarkable, as any activity between males was illegal and punishable by imprisonment. It was as though he had a charmed life.

Sidney's fall really began on the south coast when his mother and he took a flat in Southsea with a rich Australian lady called Charlotte Morse. Sidney and Rosaline were inseparable, more like husband and wife than mother and son. Charlotte Morse was a man-eater, separated from her husband, who doubtless thought she could convert Sidney and take him away to Australia. Sidney had other ideas. He insured her life, and did not object when she made out her will in his favour, but it all ended in the divorce court where Sidney, ironically, was cited as co-respondent. Her sons would accuse Sidney of trying to murder Mrs

Morse by gassing her in the flat. Sidney denied it.

There is no evidence Sidney ever committed a violent act in his life. His six prison sentences were all for fraud and theft. So how was it he came to be charged with the murder of his mother in a hotel room at the age of thirty? When Sidney fell down on his luck, and no longer had the looks and the funds, they travelled the country together staying in cheap lodgings but graduated to expensive hotels. They left without paying their bills. In short, they were a couple of hotel crooks, as bad as each other. It is also very likely Rosaline had been a prostitute in her early days. Sidney still slept with men, and tapped former clients for money, but the end of the good times was in sight. The Roaring Twenties - though no-one ever named the era that until much later - were drawing to a close. And then came the Wall Street Crash. It hardly affected Sidney and Rosaline. They had nothing to lose. They were homeless and had little more than the clothes they stood up in.

Sidney Fox's trial, at Lewes Crown Court in Sussex, created a sensation. Women, and some men, fell in love with his looks. How could such a caring and handsome young man do such a dreadful deed? To his barrister, James Dale Cassels, Sidney openly boasted about the men he had slept with. Inspector Hambrook, the policeman in charge of his case, was convinced he was a blot on society that had to be eradicated. And then there was Sir Bernard Spilsbury, the celebrated Home Office pathologist, who hated homosexuals and who found, at the autopsy, a bruise at the back of Rosaline Fox's larynx that proved Sidney strangled his mother. There was only one problem. Nobody else saw it, and by the time he got the larynx back to his laboratory it had disappeared.

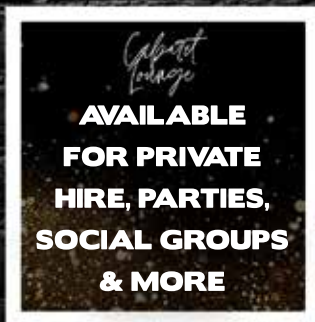
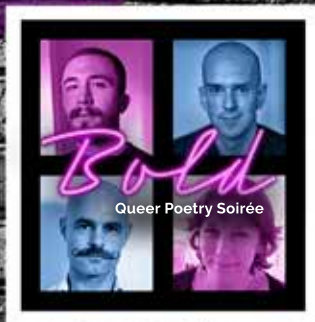
Nobody knows what happened in Room 66 of the Metropole Hotel, Margate. Sidney denied murder to his last breath. He declined to appeal, and was hanged at Maidstone Prison.

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