

Society: Lichfield Players
District 11 – Cannock Chase & Walsall
Title: The Fulstow Boys
Type: Play
Reviewed by John Nicholls
Date: 11th February 2026
Venue: The Studio, Garrick Theatre
Town/City: Lichfield
Director: Chris Stanley
Written by: Gordon Steel

The Fulstow Boys, is inspired by the true story of the village of Fulstow, in Lincolnshire, which did not have a war memorial until 2005. When it was originally offered one in 1918, villagers were told it would not include the name of a soldier shot for desertion – so they turned it down, insisting all seven of the men from the village who lost their lives in the conflict should be included. When community stalwart Nicola Pike questioned the lack of a memorial and started a fundraising campaign for a plaque on the village hall to honour the First World War heroes, it attracted local, national and international media attention.

This is a very clever script by Gordon Steel, intertwining action from 1914-1918 and 2005, the way it was portrayed by Lichfield Players was very clear, and removed any possible confusion that there may have been.

There was a mixture of experience and debutants on stage for this production but there was not an obvious difference. Matt Beebee as Charles Kirman took us on a journey through a mix of emotions, each of them really plausible and gave the audience a lot to think about. Freya Sholl was someone else making their debut as Dora Kirman, she was very clear in everything she did, movement around stage and reacting to what was happening around her. Theo Fryer was the third member of the cast making their debut as George Marshall Jnr, with each appearance he made, his confidence and stature grew, especially when he had joined the army. Congratulations to all three of them, and I'm sure I'll be seeing much more of each of them in future productions. The cast of the 1914-1918 section was completed by Terry Sharrock, as Charles' father, and Ian Davies as George's father. Terry played the part reflecting how a father of someone going off to war would expect to react, I really enjoyed his characterisation.

In the 2005 cast of the play, most of the action was led by the forceful Nicola Pike, played by Sarah Stanley. Sarah used all of her experience to portray someone who was not going to go down without a fight. She commanded the stage and everyone knew who was in charge, although they didn't want to admit it! There was great rapport between Graham, who suffered with his bowels, and Maurice, the wannabe singer, played by Lee Williams and David Stonehouse respectively. They bounced off each other with great timing and brought some really funny lines to life. Mandy Davies as Moira, completed the committee and was the opposing party in Nicola's campaign for the war memorial. Together, the four of them kept the plot moving forward and brought an element of realism to the play. Nicola's husband Tim, was

played by Simon Smith, feeling neglected by his wife in her campaign, he played the part with such calmness. James Williams, as Danny, completed the cast.

The play blends everyday village life with the serious, tragic history of the forgotten soldiers and leaves the audience to draw their own conclusions, to make up their own minds about the moral dilemmas at the heart of the story.

There was an added bonus this time, as the entire cast treated us to a choral rendition of Karl Jenkins' 'Benedictus', the harmonies were lovely to listen to and showed another depth of talent amongst this group.

The set is always simple but effective, with props and costumes reflecting the era of both parts of the story. The use of projection and a subtle lighting plot helped the audience to differentiate between the different time zones.

This was a super production. Special congratulations to Chris Stanley for his direction, his experience certainly rubbed off on the cast, and it fully deserved the standing ovation it received on the evening I attended.