

# The Howling

A NEW community play by MED Theatre, featuring a contemporary take on 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'



FRIDAY 10TH MARCH: Manaton Parish Hall

SATURDAY 11TH MARCH: Manaton Parish Hall

TUESDAY 14TH MARCH: Southpark Centre, Buckfast

THURSDAY 16TH MARCH: Nicholls Hall, Lydford

FRIDAY 17TH MARCH: Moretonhampstead Parish Hall

SATURDAY 18TH MARCH: Moretonhampstead Parish Hall

ALL PERFORMANCES BEGIN AT 7:30PM

TICKETS £8 / £5 CHILDREN UNDER 16

*To book your tickets please contact:*

[info@medtheatre.co.uk](mailto:info@medtheatre.co.uk)

01647 441356

or visit our website:

[www.medtheatre.co.uk](http://www.medtheatre.co.uk)

registered charity no. 1119302



# THE HOWLING

text by Mark Beeson, with scenes written by Helena Cronin, Jonny Hibbs and Silas Welsh

## *Contemporary characters*

Jonah Thomas (son of a teacher in a local secondary school)

Emily Newcombe (an illustrator)

Aphra (from Jonah’s drama group)

Caitlin (from Jonah’s drama group)

Sandy (from Jonah’s drama group)

Vicky (friend of Sam)

Sam Newcombe (younger brother of Emily)

Charlie Creber, (a contractor and farmer)

Hawise Creber (farmer, married to Charlie)

Jeff Hamlyn (father of Hawise)

Sarah (great niece of Jeff)

Emma (great niece of Jeff)

Elizabeth (widow of Daniel, late owner of North Farm)

Henry Cabell (from America)

Virginia Cabell (English, married to Henry)

Roderick Moss (an explorer)

April (from the village)

Fleur (April’s friend)

Freddie (from the local Planning Office)

Heather (from the local Planning Office)

## *Historical characters*

Richard Cabell (son of the lord of Brook Manor)

Jacob Hamlyn (yeoman farmer at North Farm)

Hepzibah (married to Jacob)

Mary (daughter of Jacob and Hepzibah)

Ruth (younger sister of Mary)

Edward (brother of Mary)

John (younger brother of Edward)

Richard Cabell Senior (father of Richard, lord of Brook Manor)

Violin

Keyboard and vocals

Keyboard while audience enters

Original incidental music composed by

Song composed by

Costumes

Publicity design

Set design

Dance workshop

Physical theatre workshop

Research workshop

Stage management and props

Front of house

Assistant direction

Direction

Thank you to all our volunteers. Thank you to our partners on ‘The Hound of the Baskervilles and the Last Wolf on Dartmoor’ project: Paula Clarke from the National Trust at Castle Drogo, Emily Cannon from South West Lakes Trust at Burrator, Viv Styles from Devon History Society and Kirsty Peake with the UK Wolf Conservation Trust. Thank you to Dr Kevin Cox for hosting a visit to Brook Manor, and to Mark Norman for a talk on Black Dog sightings. Thank you to Sheila Phillips at the Pengelly Centre for acting as our guide around Buckfastleigh churchyard. Thank you to Animal Crackers for prop help. Thank you also to Lucy Hirst for her work and encouragement on the inception of this play, along with the rest of MED Theatre’s Wild Nights Young Company, and Abby Stobart and Helen Gilbert for their script suggestions..

JONNY HIBBS

ELLIE HEAD

ISABELLA NASH

AMY JAGGS

SAFI JOSCELYNE

GEORGIA SMALL

BEN CAVERHILL

SAUL JENNER

AMBER PUGH

STEPHEN TERRY

MAE HOUSEGO

LAURA WILSON

CLAIRE SMITH

TOM GREEVES

KAY ARWEN

TIM HALL

INDIGO EDWARDS-TOOKE

KIMBERLY INWOOD

SILAS WELSH

HELENA CRONIN

OLIVER STRATH

MARK WOOLNER

CONNIE BOLTON

JESS BOLTON

POPPY BECK

ANGELO ARWEN

LILO ARWEN

DAVID PANTON

JONNY HIBBS

SAFI JOSCELYNE

AMY JAGGS

GILLIAN WEBSTER

SUVI REHELL & LUCY HIRST

FIONA AVIS

SUVI REHELL

SOPHIA CLIST

ROHANNA EADE

CLIVE MENDUS

TOM GREEVES

BECKY DOBSON

GILLIAN WEBSTER

ABBY STOBART

SUVI REHELL

HELEN GILBERT

MARK BEESON



*The tomb of the Cabell family in Buckfastleigh churchyard*

## Notes

The Cabell family came originally from Frome in Somerset, but acquired property in Devon during the sixteenth century. Richard Cabell was the last of three Richard Cabells who were lords of Brook Manor, an imposing dwelling situated in a secluded valley on the River Mardle above Buckfastleigh. As well as their lands in Buckfastleigh, the family’s Devon estate had extensive holdings in Widecombe parish, including the manors of Blackdown Piper and Widecombe Town and the farms at Stone, Rowbrook, Tor and Hannaford. After his death in 1677, Richard Cabell gained a mythical reputation supposed to have been the starting point for Arthur Conan Doyle and Bertram Fletcher Robinson’s famous story *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. In this myth, Cabell’s soul is said to have been carried off by a pack of fire-breathing hell-hounds, while his body was later fenced into a mausoleum in Buckfastleigh churchyard by iron railings, allegedly to stop him from wandering as a vampire. The myth portrays him as the perpetrator of unspeakable wickedness. Far from being the epitome of evil, however, Cabell may well have been the victim of misrepresentation linked to local enmities that were generated by the unpehvals of the time. Rather than preventing him wandering as a vampire, it is most likely that the railings were designed to keep people from desecrating the family tomb.

The English Civil War stirred up passionate hatred on both sides at a period when spreading malicious stories was one of the few ways ordinary people could take revenge for the suffering that the war had caused. We know from an entry in the House of Commons Journal for December 25th 1647 that Richard Cabell’s father had had his estates sequestered for his activities in ‘assisting the enemies of Parliament’ and for the fact that his son ‘took up arms’ against Parliament. In obtaining a pardon the Cabells were fined very heavily (£1430, roughly the equivalent of £52,000,000 in today’s purchasing power). But there is no evidence, other than his allegiance to a defeated cause, to support Richard Cabell’s reputation for extraordinary wickedness. In the legend he is supposed to have murdered his wife Elizabeth, but from the documentary record it is clear that she outlived him by some fourteen years. She was the daughter of Edward Fowell, the Parliamentarian agent who had confiscated Richard’s father’s lands in 1646. It seems that Richard may have been compelled to marry her in order to recover the family fortunes.

There is no documentary evidence, either, to connect Richard with hounds. His daughter Elizabeth’s son by her second marriage, Thomas Fownes, who moved into Brook Manor at the end of the 17th century, did however gain a reputation as an obsessive huntsman around the time that wolves were becoming extinct on Dartmoor (the last wolf is said to have been killed at Brimpts or Drewsteignton as late as 1780, as discussed by Eric Hemery in his book *High Dartmoor*). Could this be where the myth of being carried off by hell-hounds originated, and not with Cabell at all? Richard Cabell had no male heir - but his younger brother William may well be the father of William Cabell who emigrated from Warminster in 1721-2 for a new life in the colony of Virginia on the east coast of America.

Almost in antithesis to the ever-present issue of rural housing, the concept of re-wilding has become a hot topic over the last few years. In Britain re-wilding would essentially involve allowing semi-natural areas of vegetation, often protected by fencing, to return to an unmanaged state, together with the re-introduction of recently extinct keystone mammal species such as the beaver, the lynx and most controversially the wolf - this was argued for on Dartmoor by George Monbiot in a talk given at Exeter University on January 17th, 2016. As wolf expert Kirsty Peake pointed out recently at the Dartmoor Society Debate on re-wilding, such a re-introduction under current circumstances takes no account of the well-being of the wolves themselves, let alone the farmers and their stock. In Yellowstone National Park in the USA, a much bigger area than Dartmoor, re-introduced wolves come into conflict with ranchers when they cross a notional human boundary the animals do not recognise and suffer as a result.

MED Theatre's work is currently supported by: Big Lottery Reaching Communities, Heritage Lottery Fund, People's Health Trust, Claude and Margaret Pike Woodland Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Tippett Foundation and Teignbridge Youth Network.

The following have supported MED Theatre as Friends: Christopher Beeson, Garlinda Birkbeck, Euan and Su Bowater, Allison and Cameron Caverhill, Elizabeth Constantine, Anne and Martin Duckworth, Tom and Elisabeth Greeves, Jane Hayter-Hames, Wendy Head, Vivienne Hodges, Sharon Holley, Linda Lemieux, Fiona Lofthouse, Julia Oliver and Tim Hall, Peter and Charlotte Randall-Page, David Panton and Claire Smith, Bob and Tracy Small, Christopher and Sandy Southgate, Harry Webster, Mark Woolner.

*The Howling* is part of 'The Hound of the Baskervilles and the Last Wolf on Dartmoor' project, supported by a grant from Heritage Lottery Fund Young Roots scheme. *The Howling* is sponsored by Helpful Holidays and Bovey Castle.

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*The Hound of the Baskervilles* was originally published in serial form in *The Strand* magazine in 1901-2. It tells the story of the machinations of the villain Stapleton to scare away his Canadian relative Sir Henry Baskerville from the mansion he has recently inherited, playing on the rumour of a family curse with the aid of a large dog which Stapleton keeps sequestered in a kennel in the centre of the Great Grimpen Mire. The novel's description of Grimpen Mire with its reference to the butterfly *Cyclopides* (now known as the Chequered Skipper; *Carterocephalus palaemon*), a flowering bog orchid and cotton grass seeding, all in October, provides a puzzle for naturalists. All three of these are characteristic of June and July and it seems likely that a desire to make the setting more Gothic, in the manner of Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Fall of the House of Usher*, may have persuaded Conan Doyle to move the action into autumn when it had originally been imagined based on observations made in high summer. Additionally, the inconsistencies may have something to do with working alongside Bertram Fletcher Robinson, the Devon author who suggested the idea to him.

