



THIS EVIL THING

written and performed by Michael Mears

...*the compelling, shocking and inspiring story of the men who said no to war...*

GREAT AYTON MEETING HOUSE

NOVEMBER 3rd, at 3pm

(to be followed by a Q and A session)

Friends Meeting House

High Green, Middlesbrough, TS9 6BJ

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'For God's sake! This protest of yours – is it really worth losing your lives over?'

Michael Mears believes he has inherited a 'pacifist gene' – but he's not sure where from – as his own father and grandfather fought in both world wars.

THIS EVIL THING explores the courage it took to be a pacifist in the First World War, one hundred years ago – following two men in particular :

Bert Brocklesby, a young schoolteacher, and preacher at his local Methodist church; and **Bertrand Russell** - one of the greatest philosophers of his time. With the advent of military conscription in 1916, their worlds are turned upside down.

THIS EVIL THING is the compelling, inspiring and rarely told story of the men who said no to war; and the men and women who supported them; involving a gripping journey from a chapel in Yorkshire to the House of Commons; from an English country garden to a quarry in Aberdeen; from a cell in Richmond Castle to a firing squad in France.

With military conscription still in force in many countries today, and prisoners of conscience still languishing in jails, the questions posed by **THIS EVIL THING** are as relevant and urgent as they were one hundred years ago.

Michael Mears – 'The Fringe-First Award winning master of the one-man show' (*The List*), portrays a gallery of characters from conscientious objectors to army generals, from Prime Ministers to world-famous mathematicians, with breath-taking physical and vocal dexterity, in a highly original piece of storytelling - using verbatim testimonies and interacting with an intricate soundscape. At its world premiere at the Edinburgh Fringe 2016 it received four-star reviews and acclaim from audiences and press alike:

'A moving and dynamic retelling of a hidden story' (The List)

'An inspirational and disturbing work' - (Festmag)

'Magnificent storytelling' - Amnesty International

Michael Mears has been working as an acclaimed professional actor for over three decades. Onstage, he has performed for the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre and the Peter Hall Company on numerous occasions, as well as in London's West End, most notably for nine months as Arthur Kipps in *THE WOMAN IN BLACK*.

'Michael Mears is that rare combination of fine writer and formidable actor.' - *Time Out*

Website: michaelmears.org www.facebook.com/thisevilthing