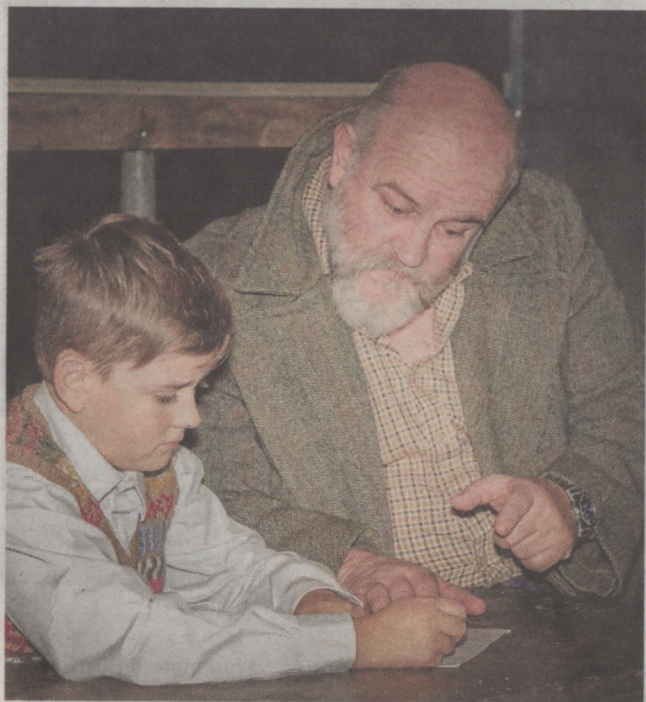


# An uplifting wartime tale to warm your winter evenings



**HEARTWARMING:** Young William Beech is evacuated to the countryside and forges a remarkable friendship with elderly recluse Tom Oakley

**A**N UPLIFTING story takes to the stage next week with the Workington Playgoers' Christmas production.

The amateur outfit will turn their hands to Michelle Magorian's modern classic *Goodnight Mister Tom*, running at the Theatre Royal from Tuesday to Saturday (December 5 to 9).

This adaptation by the UK's 'National Children's Dramatist' David Wood is set during the build-up to the Second World War, and follows young William Beech, who is evacuated to the countryside and forges a remarkable friendship with elderly recluse Tom Oakley.

All is perfect until William's mother suddenly summons him back to London.

Director Gwyneth Savage says it is a personal favourite, and that the audiences can expect an emotional ride.

*"Goodnight Mister Tom* has only been on amateur release this year, after the pro-



**AUTHENTICITY:** *Goodnight Mister Tom* is at the Theatre Royal from Tuesday

Picture: Chris Lewis

fessional run was extended by a couple of years, so I've been waiting a long time to be able to do it," she says.

"We've done a few David Wood plays, such as the *BFG*, and I really like a play with surprises.

"It goes from one extreme to another, so people need to bring their tissues and also their laughing gear."

Morgan Sweeney plays Mr Tom, and he is joined by many Playgoers regulars as

well as a number of junior members. With four of the characters played by under-18s, it means there are eight actors to cover those parts for the five-night run.

Gwyneth adds: "Having to double up has meant that we have had to rehearse everything twice, which has been a challenge, and it's been all hands on deck. One thing about this production is that it runs smoothly from one scene to the next, so there

aren't stoppages to change the stage.

"Wardrobe and scenery have done an amazing job, because we wanted to go for authenticity and let people know what it was like in wartime London and the countryside. It's been fascinating."

*Goodnight Mister Tom* begins at 7.30pm each day. Tickets from the venue and at [www.theatre-royal-workington.co.uk](http://www.theatre-royal-workington.co.uk)