

*William
Shakespeare's*



*Much Ado
About
Nothing*

DEANS COURT

6 - 9 JULY 2017

WIMBORNE
DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

Welcome

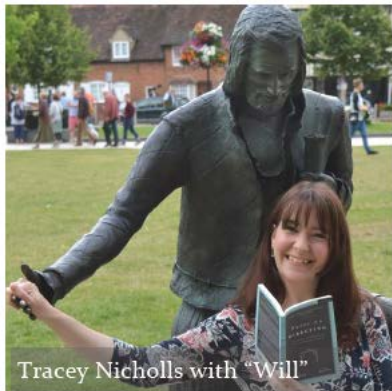
A very warm welcome to Deans Court and WDP's production of *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare. "Much Ado" has held a special place in my heart for many years. I studied it for A level and I instantly fell in love with Beatrice and Benedick whose electric repartee remains as lively and humorous today as the day it was written. It is Shakespeare's most frequently performed comedy and with its wonderfully witty characters and whirlwind plot, it is not hard to see why.

I was inspired by a production of the play by the RSC in 2014 which was set just after World War I. Despite being 320 years after the play was written, the social and gender issues, disturbingly, still apply. Beatrice transfers particularly well as an independent spirited woman caught up in a male dominated world after a period where women had taken on many "male" roles during the war. But when the war was over and the men returned, the gender and social battles re-commenced. Marriage was still the only really viable prospect for women (of which both Hero and Beatrice are painfully aware) and a woman's reputation was as precarious as it was precious. It is a testament to Shakespeare's genius observation of human nature that the characters he created in 1599 still speak to us in 2017, even when set in an era in between - not to mention using some of the most beautiful language ever written, in my humble opinion anyway!

One of the things I love about theatre-making is that it is an ensemble effort and I have had the privilege of working with the most dedicated and hard working team that I could have wished for. My heart-felt thanks go to every single one of them. It is wonderful to be returning to Deans Court and we are very grateful to the Hanham family and to Jonathan Cornish for all their support.

Finally, thank you, dear audience, who make all our "much ado" worthwhile. Now, sit back, relax and enjoy the show.

Tracey Nicholls, Director



Deans Court : A link through history



Deans Court, the hidden jewel in Wimborne's crown, has been home to the Hanham family for 470 years. When Shakespeare wrote *Much Ado About Nothing* around 1599, Deans Court was held by John Hannam. He attended and was knighted at the coronation of King James I in 1603, who very soon after became the royal sponsor of Shakespeare and his players, The King's Men.

Sir John Hanham (he changed the spelling of his surname after he was knighted) went on to serve as High Sheriff of Dorset and was no doubt involved in the governing body of both the Royal Peculiar, the Minster church, and the Queen Elizabeth Free Grammar School in Wimborne, which his father had built.

Our production of *Much Ado About Nothing* is set in the summer of 1919 and we wanted to set the play actually at Deans Court. The 10th Baronet at Deans Court was Sir John Ludlow Hanham and he fought in World War I as a Captain in the Grenadier Guards and was

wounded. He went on to be an Aide de Camp to his uncle, Viscount Bledisloe, Governor of New Zealand, for two years, and then entered the law. Sir John also served in World War II before becoming Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Dorset.

In 1928 Sir John took the opportunity to join an Oxford University expedition to Greenland. He and his younger brother Henry kept a diary and returned



Sir John Ludlow Hanham

home with two polar bear skins, which can still be seen in the house.

Sir John's sudden death in April 1955 aged only 57 was deemed a great loss to Wimborne and the wider community. His obituary notes: "What endeared him to his innumerable friends was his wonderful kindness of manner to one and all. A very old friend recalls seeing him on numerous occasions walking about his home town of Wimborne with a basket containing flowers, under which would be a few eggs, going to visit some sick resident."

We have tried to pay a small homage to Sir John via Leonato, our fictional Baronet of Deans Court, at the beginning of the play - see if you can spot it!

William Shakespeare : *“Not of an age but for all time”*

Shakespeare's Life

Very little is known for certain about William Shakespeare. What we do know about his life comes from registrar records, court records, wills, marriage certificates and his tombstone in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon.

William Shakespeare was baptised on 26 April 1564 at Holy Trinity in Stratford-Upon-Avon. Traditionally his birthday is celebrated three days earlier, on 23 April, St George's Day.



William Shakespeare

Education

William almost certainly went to one of Stratford's 'petty' or junior schools. From the age of seven or thereabouts, he would have progressed to the King's New School where the emphasis would have been on Latin, it still being the international language of Europe in the 1500s. Shakespeare probably left school at the age of 14 or 15. Shakespeare's plays reveal a detailed knowledge of the curriculum taught in such schools which were geared to teaching pupils Latin, both spoken and written. The classical writers studied in the classroom influenced Shakespeare's plays and poetry.

Marriage and Children

In 1582, when he was 18, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway. Their first child, Susanna, was born in May 1583. Twins, Hamnet and Judith, were christened in February 1585. Sadly Hamnet died aged 11, possibly of the plague. Anne's home, now known as Anne Hathaway's Cottage, still stands in the village of Shottery.

Writing and Acting

In Shakespeare's youth, Stratford was often visited by travelling troupes of professional actors. These players probably sparked his interest in the stage, and he may have entered the London theatre world through contacts made with them in Stratford. We don't know when or why Shakespeare left Stratford for London, or what he was doing before becoming a professional actor and dramatist in the capital. There are various traditions and stories about the so-called 'lost years' between 1585 and 1592, a period for which there is virtually no evidence concerning his life.

In 1594, Shakespeare became a founding member, actor, playwright and shareholder of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Under James I, the company was renamed The King's Men. They performed at court more often than any other company.

Last Years

Sometime after 1611, Shakespeare retired to Stratford. On 25 March 1616, Shakespeare revised and signed his will. On 23 April, his presumed birthday, he died, aged 52. On 25 April, he was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford. In 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, John Heminge and Henry Condell (two actors from The King's Company) had Shakespeare's plays published by William Jaggard and his son, Isaac. This first folio contained 36 plays and sold for £1.

Quoting Shakespeare

by Bernard Levin

If you cannot understand my argument, and declare **"It's Greek to me"**, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you claim to be **more sinned against than sinning**, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you recall your **salad days**, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you **act more in sorrow than in anger**; if your **wish is farther to the thought**; if your lost property has **vanished into thin air**, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you have ever refused to **budge an inch** or suffered from **green-eyed jealousy**, if you have **played fast and loose**, if you have been **tongue-tied**, **a tower of strength**, **hoodwinked** or **in a pickle**, if you have **knitted your brows**, **made a virtue of necessity**, insisted on **fair play**, **slept not one wink**, **stood on ceremony**, **danced attendance** (on your lord and master), **laughed yourself into stitches**, **had short shrift**, **cold comfort** or **too much of a good thing**, if you have **seen better days** or **lived in a fool's paradise** -why, **be that as it may**, **the more fool you**, for it is a **foregone conclusion** that you are (as **good luck would have it**) quoting Shakespeare; if you think it is **early days** and **clear out bag and baggage**, if you think it is **high time** and that that is the **long and short of it**, if you believe that **the game is up** and that **truth will out** even if it involves your own **flesh and blood**, if you **lie low till the crack of doom** because you **suspect foul play**, if you have your **teeth set on edge** (at one **fell swoop**) without rhyme or reason, then - to give the devil his due - if the truth were known (for surely you have a **tongue in your head**) you are quoting Shakespeare; even if you **bid me good riddance** and **send me packing**, if you wish I was **dead as a door-nail**, if you think I am an **eyesore**, a **laughing stock**, the **devil incarnate**, a **stony-hearted villain**, **bloody-minded** or a **blinking idiot**, then - by Jove! O Lord! Tut tut! For goodness' sake! What the dickens! But me no buts! - it is all one to me, for you are quoting Shakespeare.

Much Ado About Nothing: *Synopsis*

Part One

The Soldiers Return

It is the summer of 1919 and Don Pedro's demobilized regiment is returning to England after the war. The soldiers are welcomed to the stately home of Leonato, where memories of conflict give way to a life of parties and masked balls. Benedick, a confirmed bachelor, and his friend Claudio find themselves reacquainted with Leonato's niece, Beatrice, and his daughter, Hero. Love is in the air as Claudio and Hero fall head over heels and their engagement is arranged. Meanwhile Benedick and Beatrice reignite their altogether more fiery courtship.

Eavesdropping

Benedick and Beatrice both claim to despise the whole notion of love and marriage. The others plot to trick them into falling in love. Benedick overhears Don Pedro, Claudio and Leonato talking of Beatrice's supposed love for him and is completely taken in. Meanwhile, Hero and her lady's maid, Ursula, trick Beatrice with the same result.

An Evil Plot

Don John, the illegitimate half of brother of Don Pedro, has a more malicious plot in mind. With the help of the servant Borachio, he tricks Claudio into believing that he has witnessed Hero in a compromising situation on the night before their wedding. In fact it is her other maid, Margaret, with Borachio.

INTERVAL

Part Two

The Worst Wedding Ever

The local police force overhear Borachio boasting to Don John's friend, Conrade, and the evil plot is exposed. The foolish officers, Dogberry and Verges, take them in for questioning but fail to inform Leonato in time before the wedding. Claudio shames and rejects Hero at the altar. She faints, and on advice of the minister, Leonato announces that his daughter is dead. Beatrice and Benedick confess their love for each other and Beatrice persuades Benedick to challenge Claudio and avenge his shameful treatment of Hero.

Love's Labours Won

When the truth is revealed Claudio promises to make amends to Leonato. He demands that Claudio publicly declares Hero's innocence by mourning at her tomb and that he marries a cousin of Hero in her place. Claudio agrees. The following day when the bride is unmasked, she is revealed to be Hero herself. Finally, with the encouragement of their friends, Beatrice and Benedick admit their love for each other and the play ends with a dance before the lovers are married.





From left to right, top: Gary Paine, Michelle Barter, Rob Cording-Cook, Chris Durham, Judy Garrett and Ann McColgan-Clark. Middle: David Pile, Jenny Hughes, Beverley Beck, Sam Moulton, Anthony Wyld and Beanie Wyld. Bottom: Richard Neal, John Sivewright, Calum Hearne, Beanie Wyld, Beverley Beck, David Beddard, Simon Jackson and Colin Pile

The Cast

The Army

Don Pedro, *a Prince, friend to Leonato*

Don John, *Don Pedro's illegitimate brother*

Claudio, *friend of Don Pedro and Benedick*

Benedick, *friend of Don Pedro and Claudio*

Conrade, *friend of Don John*

Messenger

CHRIS DURHAM

ROB CORDING-COOK

DAVID BEDDARD

SAM MOULTON

CALUM HEARNE

RICHARD NEAL

The Family at Deans Court

Leonato, *Baronet of Deans Court, friend of Don Pedro*

Antonia, *Leonato's sister*

Balthasar, *son to Antonia, also in Don Pedro's battalion*

Hero, *daughter to Leonato*

Beatrice, *niece to Leonato and Antonia*

ANTHONY WYLD

JUDY GARRETT

COLIN PILE

BEANIE WYLD

BEVERLEY BECK

The Servants at Deans Court

Borachio, *a footman*

Margaret, *a lady's maid*

Ursula, *a lady's maid*

JOHN SIVEWRIGHT

MICHELLE BARTER

ANN MCCOLGAN-CLARK

The Town's Folk

Friar Francis, *the local vicar*

Sexton, *the local magistrate*

Dogberry, *a village constable*

Verges, *Dogberry's friend and assistant*

Jack Feeble, *a member of The Watch*

Hugh Oatcake, *a member of The Watch*

George Seacole, *a member of The Watch*

GARY PAINE

RICHARD NEAL

DAVID PILE

JENNY HUGHES

SIMON JACKSON

ROB CORDING-COOK

COLIN PILE

Setting - Deans Court, the summer of 1919

Running Time - Approx 2 hours 50 mins (including interval)

The Creative Team

Director	TRACEY NICHOLLS
Set Design & Construction	CHRIS DURHAM and members of the company
Company Stage Manager	PHYLLIS SPENCER
ASMs	CHRISSIE NEAL
	TONY PARKINSON
	JAN STEVENSON
Continuity	CAROL BRUTON
Costume Suppliers	HIREARCHY COSTUMES
Costume Supervisor	MOIRA HAWEY
Music	Composed by NIGEL HESS (used by permission of Bucks Music Group)
Sound & Lighting	PETER GRAY
	MARK ELLEN
	CALUM HEARNE
Front of House Coordinator	PAUL DODMAN
Publicity and Programme	RICHARD NEAL

Production Acknowledgements

Special thanks to:

Jonathan Cornish (Events Manager) & the Hanham family at Deans Court
Rob at Psychling, 44a East St Wimborne, for the loan of the tandem bicycle
Pete Alcock's Presentation Services for the supply of sound and electrical equipment

Kerry Jackman, Tina Nicholls, Dumpton School, Wimborne Royal British Legion, St Mary's Church Ferndown, Daisy Graphic, Forest FM, Wimborne Model Town, Gullivers, Wimborne Tourist Information Centre and The Tivoli Theatre

Produced by Wimborne Drama Productions at Deans Court, 6-9 July 2017

Cast Biographies

MICHELLE BARTER (Margaret)

This is Shelly's second appearance for Wimborne Drama Productions, having played Felicity Rumpers in *Habeas Corpus* at the Tivoli in 2016. She has worked on outside productions at LEGOLAND, stage managing the high dive stunt show, at Chessington World of Adventures, working with Dennis the Menace, and numerous street theatre pieces. She loves working in the open air as it gives a whole new dimension to the performance.

BEVERLEY BECK (Beatrice)

Bev is no stranger to Shakespeare, having appeared in *Comedy of Errors* (Swan Theatre, Bournemouth Shakespeare Players and Bournemouth Little Theatre); *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (BSP); *Pericles* and *Julius Caesar* (Brownsea Open Air Theatre). She has toured as Amanda in *Private Lives* with Wessex Actors. Other highlights include playing Di in a production of *Di and Viv and Rose* at Bournemouth Little Theatre, and appearing in an

episode of *Torchwood*. This is Bev's first role for WDP.

DAVID BEDDARD (Claudio)

This is David's first full Shakespeare play, having previously portrayed Shylock in a half-hour version of *The Merchant of Venice* in 2005 as part of the Shakespeare Schools Festival at Lighthouse, Poole. His only previous open air role was Wickham in WDP's *Pride and Prejudice* in 2015. Recent local stage roles include Mr Shanks in WDP's *Habeas Corpus* and Bobby Franklyn in BLTC's *Run For Your Wife*. In September David will be heading to Australia for a year-long antipodean adventure!

ROB CORDING-COOK (Don John / Hugh Oatcake)

Rob has appeared in all four of our previous open air productions here at Deans Court – *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* and *Pride and Prejudice*. His favourite roles however have been Simon Bliss in *Hay Fever* and Jan Warwick in *The Unexpected Guest*, both with WDP at the Tivoli Theatre.

CHRIS DURHAM
(Don Pedro)

This is the first Shakespeare play Chris has acted in since he studied Shakespeare for O level, many, many years ago! He built the set for our open air production of *Pride and Prejudice* in 2015. Highlights with WDP have been playing Crestwell, the butler, in *Relative Values*, and Warnie, CS Lewis's brother, in *Shadowlands*.

JUDY GARRETT
(Antonia)

Judy played Mrs Gardiner in our production of *Pride and Prejudice* here in 2015 and Maria in *Twelfth Night* in 2012. Last year she played Mrs Swabb in *Habeas Corpus* at the Tivoli. Other recent highlights for WDP include Miss Erikson in *Present Laughter* and Costanza in *Enchanted April*.

CALUM HEARNE
(Conrade)

This is Calum's first part in a Shakespeare play, although he has appeared here at Deans Court before, in *Pride and Prejudice* in 2015. His favourite roles for WDP have been Roland in *Present Laughter* and Dennis in *Habeas Corpus*.

JENNY HUGHES
(Verges)

This is the sixth time Jenny has been part of a Shakespeare open-air production, having appeared in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Richard III* and *The Merchant of Venice* with the Bournemouth Shakespeare Players. She also appeared in BSP's 2016 production of *Much Ado About Nothing* playing Antonia and Ursula. This is her second outing with WDP, having played a doctor's wife with a challenging libido in *Habeas Corpus* at the Tivoli last year.

SIMON JACKSON
(Jack Feeble)

Simon has previously appeared in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (BOAT and Swan Theatre), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Bournemouth Shakespeare Players), *Much Ado About Nothing* (BSP), *Twelfth Night* (Swan Theatre and WDP), and *Becket* (BOAT). Other highlights have been *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and *Anything Goes* (Highcliffe Charity Players); and Major Courtney in *The Ladykillers* and General Mackenzie in *And Then There Were None* (WDP).

ANN MCCOLGAN-CLARK
(Ursula)

This is Ann's fourth production with WDP since joining the company in 2015, having previously been with The Tower Theatre in London and The Southbank Players in Belfast. Her favourite roles have been Lynda in *Death Of A Salesman* and Margaret in *My Mother Said I Never Should* with The Tower. She appeared in two Shakespeare plays with The Southbank Players, playing Miranda in *The Tempest* and Viola in *Twelfth Night*.

SAM MOULTON
(Benedick)

Sam played Baines in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* here in 2013 and Fabian in *Twelfth Night* in 2012. He directed our production of *Pride and Prejudice* in 2015. For WDP at the Tivoli, Sam has appeared in two Noel Coward comedies, *Hay Fever* and *Present Laughter*, but his favourite roles have been the dramatic ones: CS Lewis in *Shadowlands* and Thomas More in *A Man For All Seasons*.

RICHARD NEAL
(Messenger / Sexton)

Richard has worked on all of our previous open air plays at Deans Court, either front of house or

backstage, but this is his first time treading the gravel! Highlights in the twenty-plus years with WDP include *The Ghost Train*, *The Hollow*, *The Ladykillers*, *An Inspector Calls*, *And Then There Were None*, *Pack of Lies*, *The Unexpected Guest*, *Rebecca*, *Loot*, *Present Laughter*, *Hay Fever* and *On the Razzle* - the last three as director.

GARY PAINE
(Friar Francis)

Gary played Mr Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*. Other roles for WDP have included The Hon Peter Ingleton in *Relative Values* and Rev. Harry Harrington in *Shadowlands*. Before hooking up with WDP three years ago, Gary had a long association with Broadstone Players, Milo Tindle in *Sleuth* being one of his favourite roles for them.

COLIN PILE
(Balthasar / George Seacole)

Colin has been involved in all of our productions here at Deans Court, acting in *Pride and Prejudice* and operating sound on *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Other highlights include playing Jacob in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Melchior in *On the Razzle* and appearing in Bournemouth

Operatic Society's *Kiss Me Kate*. Colin is also much in demand as a set designer, his credits including *The Ghost Train*, *The Hollow*, *The Ladykillers* and *An Inspector Calls*.

DAVID PILE (Dogberry)

David's Shakespeare experience includes *Twelfth Night* (twice, WDP and Swan Theatre) and *Richard III* (Swan Theatre). Here at Deans Court he appeared in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In recent years David has been very busy mainly as a director with WDP, including producing several successful Agatha Christie thrillers, and his personal highlight, *The Ladykillers* in 2015.

JOHN SIVEWRIGHT (Borachio)

John played the seedy chiromantist Mr Podgers in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* and the pompous Mr Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*. As the scheming Borachio in *Much Ado About Nothing*, John is getting the feeling he is being typecast as the villain! His favourite role with WDP was Cromwell in *A Man For All Seasons* in 2014.

ANTHONY WYLD (Leonato)

Anthony played Admiral Hayling in *Relative Values* last year, his first outing with WDP. Since then he has appeared in the panto *Treasure Island* at Ansty and acted with daughter Beanie in Roundabout Theatre Company's *In By the Half*, where they got into the semi finals of the All England One Act Plays. In the 1960s Anthony was hot on Gilbert and Sullivan, playing Buttercup in *Pinafore*, Queen of the Fairies in *Iolanthe* and Empress of China in *Mikado*.

BEANIE WYLD (Hero)

This is Beanie's first appearance for WDP. Her first main roles were playing Baby Bear in *Goldilocks* the panto and a very smiley *Cheshire Cat* in a school production of *Alice in Wonderland*. From non-human roles she moved on to mythical ones, playing Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and The Witch in *Into the Woods*, until finally landing human roles as Susanna Walcott in *The Crucible*, Kitty in *Pride and Prejudice*, and Belinda in *The Public Eye*. She is currently about to head off to Oxford Business School while at the same time trying to get into a drama school.

Some Interesting Facts

- *Much Ado About Nothing* was written by William Shakespeare around 1598-1599
- It may also have been performed under the title of *Love's Labour's Won* and as a sequel to *Love's Labour's Lost*
- *Much Ado About Nothing* was an instant success and has remained one of Shakespeare's most popular comedies. In a 1640 publication of Shakespeare's poems, writer Leonard Digges wrote:
"Let but Beatrice and Benedick be seen, lo in a trice
The cockpit, galleries, boxes all are full."
The cockpit, galleries, boxes all are full."
- *Much Ado About Nothing* has certainly stood the test of time with multiple professional theatre productions, where A-list actors from John Gielgud & Peggy Ashcroft to David Tennant and Catherine Tate have taken on the leading roles.
- Settings have varied from Renaissance Italy to 50s Cuba, 80s Gibraltar & Noughties India.
- The play has also been adapted for film and television, notably by Kenneth Branagh in 1993, the BBC in 2005 (starring Damian Lewis and Sarah Parrish) & Joss Whedon in 2012.

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From the novel by Graham Greene adapted by Giles Havergal

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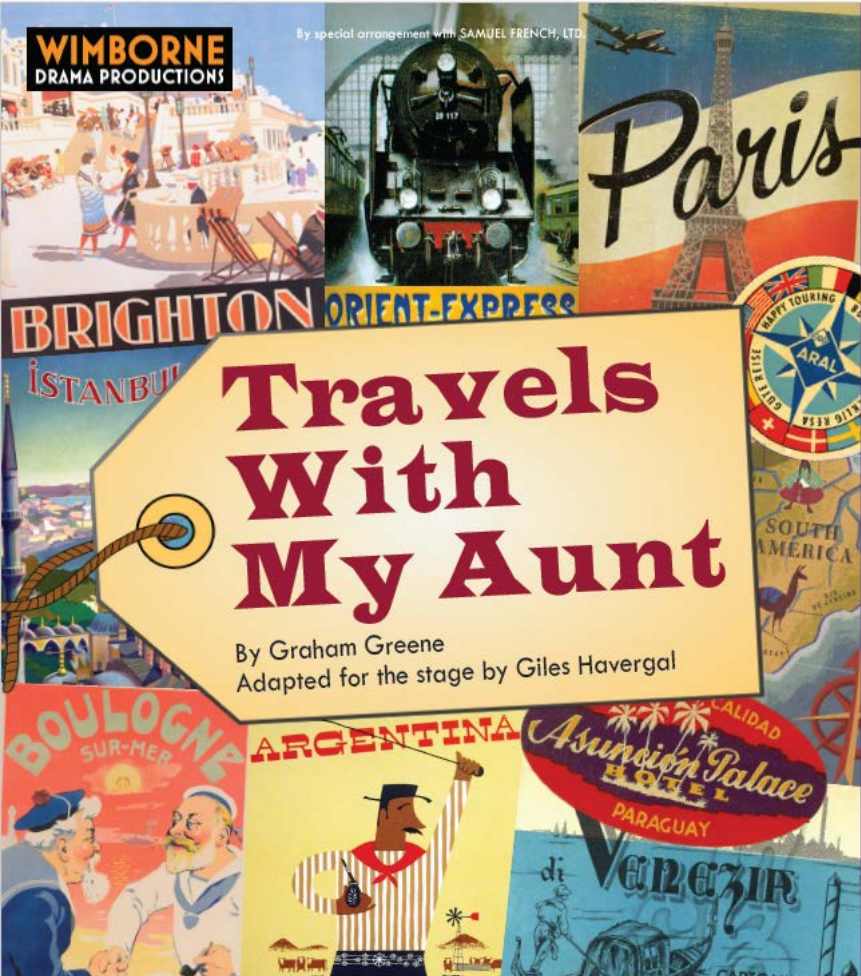
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19 - 21 OCTOBER 2017

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