

WIMBORNE COMMUNITY THEATRE

Mrs J Puts Out Her Bunting The Corn Market, Wimborne May 1995



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Scene 1: Celebrations

Churchill's Victory Speech is played over loudspeakers as Mrs J appears. Music by Big Band slows to sad melody. Mrs J climbs the ladder to put up bunting. Her large canvas bag is at the foot of the ladder.

Music changes. Pianist introduces loud conga-style rhythm: "Knees Up Mother Brown". All the cast come on in two groups from either side in a conga line singing and cheering, waving flags and holding newspapers. They move across the stage and around Mrs J. Form up in two halves opposite and then move into the centre hokey-cokey style. They make lines at the back. Freeze.

SONG: KNEES UP MOTHER BROWN

All: Oh, Knees up Mother Brown
Knees up Mother Brown
Come along, dearie, don't be slow
E-I, E-I, E-I-O!

This is your bloomin' birthday
So wipe away the frown!
Knees up, knees up
Don't get the breeze up
Knees up Mother Brown

Oh, Knees up Mother Brown
Knees up Mother Brown
Under the table you must go
E-I, E-I, E-I-O!

Oh my, what a rotten song
What a rotten song
What a rotten song
Oh my, what a rotten song
What a rotten singer
Too-oo-oo!

Music changes and Sammy sings "Lili Marlene". Cast wave flags and sway and join in with the chorus.

SONG: *LILI MARLENE*

Sammy: Underneath the lantern by the barrack gate
Darling I remember the way you used to wait
'Twas there that you whispered tenderly
That you loved me
You'd always be
My Lili of the lamplight
My own Lili Marlene

All: Time would come for roll call
Time for us to part
Darling I'd caress you and press you to my heart
And there 'neath that far off lantern light
I'd hold you tight
We'd kiss good-night
My Lili of the lamplight
My own Lili Marlene

Sammy: Orders came for sailing somewhere over there
All confined to barracks was more than I could bear
I knew you were waiting in the street
I heard your feet
But could not meet
My Lili of the lamplight
My own Lili Marlene

All: Resting in a billet just behind the line
Even tho' we're parted your lips are close to mine
You wait where that lantern softly gleams
Your sweet face seems to haunt my dreams
My Lili of the lamplight
My own Lili Marlene.

All cheer. Then immediately adopt patriotic poses and sing "There'll always be an England".

SONG: *THERE'LL ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND*

All: There'll always be an England,
While there's a country lane,
Wherever there's a cottage small
Beside a field of grain.

There'll always be an England,
While there's a busy street,
Wherever there's a turning wheel
A million marching feet.

There'll always be an England,
And England shall be free,
If England means as much to you
As England means to me.

All shout "Victory in Europe". All cheer. One by one cast step forward to shout out news as if sharing glad tidings.

Jeff: 'Germany Capitulates.' Daily Telegraph. *(All cheer)*

Jonathan: 'Europe at Peace.' Daily Herald. *(All cheer)*

Chris: 'It's All Over.' Daily Mail. *(All cheer)*

Sammy: 'Today is VE Day.' News Chronicle. *(All cheer)*

All: 'Mrs J Puts Out Her Bunting.' *(All cheer and point at Mrs J who freezes.)*

Barbara *(steps forward, putting on a coat)*: Of course, that would be perfect for my article on VE Day for the Sketch. "Mrs James is sixty ..."

Dawn, Lynnet, Adrian and Tracey come forward and look at a newspaper with extreme interest. Barbara sits at front of stage and writes her article as they speak. The narrative from the story is broken up as follows:

Dawn: Look, look, it's an article about my Mum. "Mrs James is sixty ..."

Lynnet: You know that woman Mum chars for? Well, she's gone and written an article!

Dawn: "Mrs James is small with rather a pointed face ..."

Tracey: And her eyes are dark and bright like a bird's ..."

Lynnet: By profession she's a charlady"

All *(whispering)*: Mrs J ... Mrs J ... *(they make informal comments about her to each other and to the audience)* I know her well ... she's my neighbour ... gave us a cuppa when we got bombed out ... ever so hard-working etc.

Alec *(stepping forward with his newspaper, shushing them)*: "That is not, you may think, a particularly distinguished or remarkable portrait ..."

Barbara/Alec: ... but for me, and I have known her for a good many years now, Mrs James is a symbol."

All cheer and focus on Mrs J.

Mrs J on the ladder comes to life, busily working. Barbara comes forward and speaks to her.

Barbara: You look very gay today, Mrs James.

Mrs J: I am. Well, we've got a lot to be thankful for, haven't we? After all, we've won the war!

Barbara: You're right, of course, Mrs James. We have won the war!

All (repeat): We won the war, we won the war, EE-AI-ADDIO, we won the war!

The chanting sound gradually changes to the wail of sirens. All turn their backs and continue to hum softly.

Tuppy joins Barbara as if giving her information for her article. Barbara writes.

Tuppy: "In 1939 Mrs James' three sons joined up. Dick was twenty-five, Tom was twenty-three and John, her baby, was only nineteen. Oh, and Lil, her daughter, she was twenty-one at the time"

One by one, the three sons (John, Adrian and Daniel) step forward. They help her to get the bunting out of her bag as they say their goodbyes, telling her they'll miss her and promising to write. They form a tableau while sister Lil (Lynett) sobs.

John: Bye, Mum.

Adrian: Cheerio, Mum.

Daniel: Take care, Mum.

John: We'll write, Mum.

Adrian: Every week, Mum.

Daniel: Soon be home.

Lynnet: Don't go, please don't go.

Mrs J: My baby John, you will take care of him, won't you?

John: He'll be all right, Mum.

Adrian: We'll look after him, Mum.

Daniel: I'll be all right, Mum.

Mrs J: Lil, stop all that sappy stuff, crying and all. It will do you no good. There's a war on. I'm very proud of you all.

Mrs J Puts Out Her Bunting, The Corn Market, Wimborne 1995
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Tuppy: "Mrs J was tremendously proud and like every other mother, a little frightened. Not that she ever said anything about that. It would have been 'soft' and Mrs James hated anything 'soft or soppy'."

Mrs J: Ah, my dear, dear boys!

All turn to form crowd cheering the departing troops in 1939. The three boys march round the stage to the cheering of the crowd. Each stops at the front to say:

John: Dick, aged twenty-five, to the Artillery.

Adrian: Tom, aged twenty-three, to the Infantry.

Daniel: John, aged nineteen, to the Navy.

The cast sing "Wish me Luck as you Wave me Goodbye", as the boys march off. Mrs J descends from the ladder. She and Lynnet tidy up the bunting and join in with the song. The ladder is moved ready for the Evacuees' Scene.

SONG: WISH ME LUCK AS YOU WAVE ME GOODBYE

All: Wish me luck as you wave me Goodbye.
Cheerio, here I go on my way.
Wish me luck as you wave me Goodbye.
Not a tear, but a cheer all the way.

Give me a smile
I can keep all the while
In my heart while I'm away.

Till we meet once again you and I,
Wish me luck as you wave me Goodbye.

Mrs J: Oh, come on, Lil, let's put the kettle on. *(They exit)*

As the song finishes, Sammy steps forward as The Billeting Officer and announces:

Sammy: 'October 1939. Evacuees are being sent to the safety of the countryside'.
Attention please, people of Wimborne. Prepare to receive your Southampton evacuees who will be arriving in Wimborne today.



Scene 2: Evacuees

Scene Synopsis dated 26th April 1995

UPSTAGE RIGHT in a *FREEZE* carrying tables and chairs are the *LEGG* family of Wimborne: Chris (*LILY*, the mother); Dawn (*IVY*); Amy (*DOREEN*); Daniel (*ROY*).

DOWNSTAGE LEFT facing the front in a *FREEZE* of confusion and concern are the evacuee family: the *DAVISES* of Southampton. They remain still during the first part of the scene.

- 1) *LILY* instructs the children to set the table and chairs out for the new guests. *DOREEN* wonders what they'll be like. *IVY* says she's seen them at school. *ROY* asks what they were like and *IVY* replies "scruffy".
LILY firmly instructs them to be as welcoming as possible to these poor people who've had to leave their homes because of the war.
DOREEN shouts that they've arrived. *ROY* turns to look and reports that one is picking his nose.
Others squirm and *LILY* shushes them. *FREEZE*.
- 2) The *DAVISES* come to life. *MUM* (*Julie*) complains about the noisy bells of the Minster. She asks the children what they thought of the new school.
Jessica (*MABEL*, the girl) says it was boring. *Jonathan* (the eldest boy *BERT*) says it had a lot to offer.
Ben (*HARRY*, the younger boy) asks when they'll be going home to Southampton. *MUM* hedges and reminds them to be on their best behaviour in the house or else.
- 3) *LILY* briskly welcomes the *DAVISES* in. An awkward pause. *LILY* prompts her children and they start to make friends, except *IVY* who hangs back. *BERT* stares at her.
ROY asks *HARRY* to come and play football outside. *LILY* tells him not to be long.
DOREEN tries to befriend *MABEL* but gets nowhere.
MRS DAVIS says she's parched. *LILY* says she's got the kettle on and will make a cup of tea. *MRS DAVIS* announces she'll just pop out to the pub while the kids play. She'll be back soon. *LILY* tries unsuccessfully to stop her.
BERT tries to come too. She pulls him back by his ear.
- 4) *LILY* is amazed. *MABEL* says she is starving. *LILY* says the food will be ready soon.
Pause. *LILY* suggests *DOREEN* takes *MABEL* to wash her hands. They go to the back.
BERT ogles *IVY* who is singularly unimpressed.

*LILY calls the boys in to wash their hands. She makes BERT go too.
IVY stays and alone with LILY she moans about BERT etc. LILY urges her to be patient.
OFFSTAGE - There is a commotion about the washing, mainly from MABEL.
LILY shuts them up and calls them to sit.*

- 5) *They are seated at the table. LILY brings food. The EVACUEES ask what it is. LILY says rabbit pie. Reaction.
EVACUEES are about to pounce on the food but LILY insists on Grace.
The EVACUEES are amazed but do as they are told. DOREEN says Grace.
All sit. Without talking, the EVACUEES grab and gobble the food.
The local children are horrified and whisper together, such as "Disgusting", "Like pigs", "Horrible", etc.
The EVACUEES are more noisy. An argument builds.*
- 6) *The BILLETING OFFICER (Sammy) interrupts to see how they are getting on.
She asks LILY to come DOWNSTAGE to talk.
LILY complains about the manner of the evacuees. The BILETTING OFFICER says "We must do our bit". She takes charge and sorts the noise out. She refers to a little problem already reported by the school. Chocolate has been stolen from gas mask boxes. BERT immediately protests his innocence – perhaps HARRY and MABEL might give him a shifty look, as if to say "Bert!"
ROY puts his hand up and is called closer. He says he saw BERT (points him out) sneaking through the cloakroom at breaktime.
BERT angrily protests. HARRY and MABEL turn on ROY. Sisters defend ROY.*
- 7) *MRS DAVIS reappears slightly inebriated. She demands to know what's going on.
The BILETTING OFFICER explains and MRS DAVIS Leaps to her son's defence.
LILY makes a critical comment and MRS DAVIS accuses LILY's brats of being the thieves and blaming her boys.
This immediately provokes a row with both women on either side of the table.*
- 8) *The BILETTING OFFICER breaks the fight up:
"Ladies, please. Don't you know there's a war on? We are supposed to be on the same side. Now we'll say no more about this chocolate incident on this occasion. Let's just try to rally the Home Front, eh? Put on a brave face!"*
- An awkward silence. No one budes. The children are still. The Mothers on either side fold their arms.
The BILETTING OFFICER is pleased with herself and goes to leave. She turns.
Looking at her clipboard, she reminds LILY about three Welsh soldiers arriving to be billeted next week.*



Scene 3: In the Street: Mrs J Shows her Mementos of her Boys

After the Evacuees' Scene, cast strike the set and Jeff steps forward to announce:

Jeff: 'February 1940 – The Allied Armies advance their brave campaign.'

SONG: *RUN, RABBITT, RUN*

All: Run, rabbit, run, rabbit, run, run, run
Run, rabbit, run, rabbit, run, run, run
Bang, bang, bang, goes the farmer's gun
So run, rabbit, run, rabbit, run, run, run.

Run, rabbit, run, rabbit, run, run, run
Run, rabbit, run, rabbit, run, run, run
Don't give the farmer his fun, fun, fun
He'll get by without his rabbit pie
So run, rabbit, run, rabbit, run, run, run.

All cheer and exit, singing "Run, rabbit, run, rabbit, run, run, run ..."

*Lynnet, Tony and Tuppy gossip about the evacuees and soldiers billeted in Wimborne.
Reference made to Mrs Davis going back to Southampton because of the bells.*

Mrs J enters, carrying her bag, and overhears remarks about the evacuees.

Mrs J: There's a war on, you know. We all have to do our part to beat Hitler. No use complaining and grumbling.

Tony: How are those fine lads of yours doing in the war, Mrs James?

Mrs J: Oh, they're good boys.

Tuppy: Oh yes, they are good boys!

Lynnet: Show them what they sent you, Mum! Go on! Lovely things!

Mrs J (*getting things out of her bag*): Well, here's a picture of my Tom – he's in France.

Lynnet: And just look at that girl he's got his arm round!

Tony: A French girl, I'll be bound.

Tuppy: Oh yes, she looks French. Very pretty!

All: Aaah!

Adrian and Tracey move out Stage Left to make a photograph of Tom with his arms around a pretty French girl's waist. Alec is the photographer.

Alec: Smile, mes amis! S'il vous plait!

Adrian: Can you take another picture for my Mum, Monsieur?

Alex: Encore, smile, say Fromage! (*Freeze*)

Lynnet: Ooh, I reckon there'll be wedding bells soon, Mum!

Tuppy: She is French though!

Mrs J: Time will tell.

Tony: And what about the other lad in the Army?

Mrs J: Dick, you mean?

Tony: That's the boy!

Lynnet: Show them what he sent you, Mum!

Mrs J reaches in her bag and brings out a brooch.

Tuppy: That's beautiful! What is it exactly?

Tony: It's his regimental badge, isn't it, Mrs James?

Mrs J: That's right. He sent me his badge. (*Freeze*)

John as Dick appears and stands Centre Stage writing letter to Mum.

John: We're a fine group of lads, Mum. I'm sending my regimental badge just for you. It's all quiet here but we expect to see some action in the next couple of weeks... (*Freeze*)

Tuppy: Nice that he remembered his mother.

Tony: A lot of young men don't bother.

Tuppy: And your youngest, Mrs James? How's he doing?

Mrs J: Oh, he hasn't forgotten me! He sent me something as well!

Mrs J gets a camel cushion out of her bag. Townspeople all exclaim.

Tuppy: Oh, I say. Quite exquisite.

Lynnet: I told you. Typical Johnny.

Mrs J: My baby, John.

Freeze. Daniel as John comes on and takes up position Stage Left.

Daniel: My diary by John James. Monday 28th February 1941. "It's my last day of leave today and me and some of the lads went round the local bazaar. Tommy got a smashing ivory pipe and I got a wonderful cushion cover for our mum. It's really hot out here although we hope it's going to be cooler out at sea. We ship out at noon tomorrow. We expect to see our first patrol just after nightfall. It's going to be my first taste of action and I really don't know what to expect. Touch wood I'm still going to be here tomorrow..." (*Freeze*)

Tony: Fine boy. And to think – all those miles away from home. Doing his bit for King and country.

Tuppy: Don't you worry about him, Mrs J? He's so very young!

Mrs J: Too busy for worrying. I'm proud of him. Proud of all of them.

Tony: So you should be, Mrs J! Fine lads, a credit to you and your late husband. Just like all those other fine lads fighting in France! A credit to their King and country!

They move back as all cast form lines to march and sing Tipperary.

SONG: IT'S A LONG WAY TO TIPPERARY

All (*marching on the spot*): It's a long way to Tipperary
It's a long way to go
It's a long way to Tipperary
To the sweetest girl I know!
Goodbye Piccadilly
Farewell Leicester Square
It's a long, long way to Tipperary
But my heart's right there!

The song changes to a hum as Ken comes forward to read the poem "War Song" by Vernon Scannell. Cast continue to march on the spot and hum gently throughout the poem.

Ken: "And then, down country lanes, the crop-haired sons
And nephews of the skeletons of Flanders
Made seance of their march, as, on their tongues,
The old ghosts sang again of Tipperary,
Packing kit-bags, getting back to Blighty,
But soon, bewildered, sank back to their graves
When other songs were bawled - a jaunty music
With false, bragging words: The Siegfried Line
Transformed with comic washing hanging from it."

Pause. All sing the following lines of Siegfried Line while continuing to march.

SONG: THE SIEGFRIED LINE

All: We're gonna hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line
Have you any dirty washing, mother dear?
We're gonna hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line
'Cos the washing day is here!

Ken reads the second part of the poem while cast continue to march and hum.

Ken: "Sergeants and Corporals were blessed, the barrel rolled;
But behind the grinning words and steady tramping
The Sergeant of the dark was taking names
And marking time to that lugubrious singing.
(sings) We're saying goodbye to them all: and, far away
From gunpit, barrack-square and trench, the mother
Sewed the dark garments for tomorrow's mourning."

Freeze.

*Gill as Death with scythe stands at the back on block above troops, marching on spot.
Mrs J stands watching by the tree.*

Jeff: 'Dreadful carnage in France as our Army is forced to retreat.'

Death swoops with the scythe as all move backwards in slow motion. Only Adrian is left with the French girl as in the photo. Death slices photo in half and the French girl runs off screaming. Death wraps Adrian in cloak and takes him off.

Drumbeat.

Barbara (writing): "One brilliant summer's morning in 1940 Mrs James came to work at my house a little late. She looked very small and pale in her old black coat and the hat she always wore with a dagger hat-pin and black osprey

trimmings. She took a telegram out of the old canvas bag and handed it to me.”

Mrs J enters and hands telegram to Barbara who takes it and reads aloud.

Barbara: “We regret to inform you that Thomas James has been killed in action.” Oh, Mrs James, Mrs James, I’m so sorry. Do sit down..

Mrs J: No, that’s war, that is. Now I’ve got work to do, Mrs S. I’ve got to keep going. There’s a lot to be done. I’ve got to do that bit of washing up and then I’ll go through the front room as usual. We can’t let Mr Hitler get the better of us, can we?

Barbara: You are a brick, Mrs James!

Work Sequence: Mrs J turns her back to audience and mimes washing up in a manic stylised way to a steady drumbeat.



Scene 4: Dunkirk

Jeff steps forward and announces.

Jeff: 'May 1940. Thousands saved in evacuation from Dunkirk beaches.'

The cast enter from both sides walking heavily and wearily. They form lines and perform the poem From Dunkirk by B G Bonnallack in three groups.

"We formed in line beside the water's edge.
The little waves made oddly home-like sounds,
Breaking in half-seen surf upon the strand.
The night was full of noise; the whistling thud
The shells made in the sand, and pattering stones;
The cries cut short, the shouts of units' names;
The crack of distant shots, and bren gun fire:

The sudden clattering crash of masonry.
Steadily, all the time, the marching tramp
Of feet passed by along the shell-torn road,
Under the growling thunder of the guns.

The major said "The boats cannot get in,
There is no depth of water. Follow me."
And so we followed, wading in our ranks
Into the blackness of the sea. And there,
Lit by the burning oil across the swell,
We stood and waited for the unseen boats.

Oars in the darkness, rowlocks, shadowy shapes
Of boats that searched. We heard a seaman's hail.
Then we swam out, and struggled with our gear,
Clutching the looming gunwales. Strong hands pulled,
And we were in and heaving with the rest,
Until at last they turned. The dark oars dipped,
The laden craft crept slowly out to sea,
To where in silence lay the English ships."

Alec on ladder delivers Churchill speech.

Cast continue to make rowing motion but change tableau during rendition.

Alec: From a speech by Winston Churchill to the House of Commons.
“But all the aid of the sand, and all the prowess of the air would have been in vain without the sea. The instructions given ten or twelve days before, had under the pressure of emotional events, born amazing fruit. Perfect discipline prevailed ashore and afloat. The sea was calm. To and fro between the shore and the ships plied the little boats gathering the men from their beaches as they waded out – or picking them from the water with total indifference to the air bombardments which often claimed its victims. Their numbers alone defied air attack. The mosquito armada as a whole was unsinkable.
(Cast start humming as final tableau is formed)
In the midst of our defeat glory came to the island people. United and unconquerable, the tale of the Dunkirk beaches will shine in whatever records are preserved of our affairs.”

Cast exit but John (as Dick) is left behind. Death reappears with scythe and claims him. Tuppy hands telegram to Mrs J and then leaves. Barbara on Stage Right and Mrs J on Stage Left.

Barbara: “A week after the first telegram, Mrs James received another.”

Mrs J hands telegram to Barbara. Telegram again read. Silence.

Barbara: “During the evacuation of Dunkirk Dick’s ship bringing him home had a direct hit. He was killed instantaneously. After that Mrs James began to work furiously.”

Work Sequence: Mrs J alone Centre Stage mimes working in manic stylised way to drumbeat.



Scene 5: Queues at the Canteen and Shops

Tuppy (to Barbara): “After her morning’s charring, Mrs James would go to a Forces canteen to wash up.”

All queue up on diagonal line. Each gives a catch phrase as they receive food from Mrs J. Sequence ends with Alec.

Alec: What? No bananas?

All (standing in line at back, facing front): Yes, we have no bananas
We have no bananas today!

Tuppy: “During the lunch hour she did her shopping and queued for fish and vegetables for her daughter who was having a baby.”

Cast all pick up bags and form queue at the shop moving into profile and singing Bananas Song again as they advance Offstage Right.

Mrs J and Lynnet (as Lil, her daughter) are discussing the imminent baby.

Mrs J: Lil, what are you doing on your feet? You ought to be sitting down.

Lynnet: I’m all right, Mum.

Mrs J: But you should take care of yourself in your condition.

Lynnet: You’re the one who needs to take it easy. After the news about poor Tom, and poor Dick and ...

Mrs J: Stop it, Lil. You’ve always been one to get upset and it’ll do you no good. I’ll put the kettle on and make a nice cup of tea. (exits)

Lynnet (crosses to Barbara): “Mum seldom talked about Tom and Dick. I don’t think she could trust herself and she was so frightened of being ‘soft’. But she wore Dick’s regimental badge proudly on her coat and a pendant with a picture of the Eiffel Tower on it which Tom had sent from Paris.” (exits)

Sound effect of war planes. Lynnet and Barbara pause and listen. Jeff, Tracey and Sammy come out with newspapers.

Jeff: 'December 1941. Pearl Harbour attacked by Japanese planes. Many US ships lost.'

Tracey: '8th December 1941. It's official! President Roosevelt says Americans to enter War!'

Sammy: 'March 1943. US troops will be billeted locally in the grounds of Kingston Lacy.'

American 1940s music.

Mime as all move either side of the stage in consternation. Jeff, Alec, John and Adrian run on as Yanks and build a 'jeep' Centre going Downstage with four chairs.

Boys: Look, it's a real jeep!

Americans: We've come over here to save you guys!
Hey, guy, is there a cinema, you know, c-i-n-e-ma here in sleepy old Wimborne? What's that? The T-i-voli!
Hey, baby, you're real cute. How d'ya like to go for a walk with me, doll?
We'll win the war for you – just you wait and see!

All react differently. Americans rush off and rest of cast follows.

Tony complains to Barbara about the Americans "thinking they're it" and fighting in the Cornmarket.

Mrs J interrupts to mediate.

Mrs J: Hello, Mr Budden. Did I hear you talking about those nice USA boys? They're doing their bit. Helping us win the war. We ought to welcome them here.

Barbara: You're right, Mrs James, right as usual!
"And so Mrs James continued, rallying us in difficult times. It seemed nothing could make her flinch. Until last year. 1944."

Jeff comes on with newspaper.

Jeff: 'Fierce fighting at sea. Many allied ships feared lost.'

Jeff delivers telegram to Mrs J as he exits. Tableau of Daniel as son John in boat with Death who paddles him across the stage with scythe.

Barbara: "After that I thought Mrs James was going to pieces. She became incredibly thin and nothing would induce her to stop working. She never talked about herself. But all the light had gone out of her bright bird's eyes."

Work Sequence: Mrs J backed by cast mimes frantic work movements while muttering the names of the dead sons. "Dick .. Tom .. John .." over and over. Manic movements build to a crescendo.

Work sequence draws to a climax. Sounds transform to make a doodlebug roar.

Flying Bomb. Men appear carrying Amy. They raise her up and lay her on the ground.

Jeff steps forward.

Jeff: '1944. Hitler's last threat! Flying bombs hit our cities!'

Loud explosions. Mrs J climbs the step ladder. She changes into an angry roar and a tirade against Hitler et al.

Mrs J: So you think you can frighten us, do you, you so-and-so? Can't even have the guts to come over here and fight us man to man, you, strutting little popinjay! Sending blinkin' bomb planes what haven't got proper pilots in 'em! You miserable moustachioed manikin! You dirty devil! You've had all of them. All my boys, even my baby. You come here and I'll show you what proper war is. I'd tan your blinking hide with my blessed broom ... so help me, I'd ...

Barbara: "All her old fighting spirit came back. Her invective and sarcasm against so unmilitary a weapon of war were a joy to hear!"

Jeff (*headline*): 'Hitler's armies on the retreat! Allied invasion of France imminent!'

All cheer.

Reprise of Songs: Run Rabbit/Siegfried Line. All cast march again.



Scene 6: Finale

VE Celebrations repeated: All shout "Victory in Europe". All cheer. One by one cast step forward to shout out news as if sharing glad tidings.

Jeff: 'Germany Capitulates.' Daily Telegraph. *(All cheer)*

Jonathan: 'Europe at Peace.' Daily Herald. *(All cheer)*

Chris: 'It's All Over.' Daily Mail. *(All cheer)*

Sammy: 'Today is VE Day.' News Chronicle. *(All cheer)*

All: 'Mrs J Puts Out Her Bunting.' *(All cheer and point at Mrs J who freezes.)*

Cast move into tableaux of different stages of Mrs J's life with lines repeated from previous scenes. Tableaux move and speak down the line until Barbara at end.

Barbara: You look very gay today, Mrs James.

Mrs J: I am. Well, we've got a lot to be thankful for, haven't we? After all, we've won the war!

Barbara *(after pause)*: I wanted to say - No, Mrs James, *you've* won the war!

*All turn to face the three Sons and listen in profile as they recite the poem:
Polliciti Meliora by Frank Thompson.*

John/Daniel/Adrian: As one who, gazing at a vista
Of beauty, sees the clouds close in,
And turns his back in sorrow, hearing
The thunderclouds begin.
So we, whose life was all before us,
Our hearts with sunlight filled,
Left in the hills our books and flowers,
Descended, and were killed.
Write on the stones no words of sadness -
Only the gladness due,
That we, who asked the most of living,
Knew how to give it too.

Mrs J Puts Out Her Bunting, The Corn Market, Wimborne 1995
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Finale:

All face front and change mood for Song: Knees up Mother Brown, which starts slowly with a single voice. Rest of cast gradually join in and pick up the tempo.

Bow

The End

Audience are invited to join in with communal singing of songs featured in the performance.