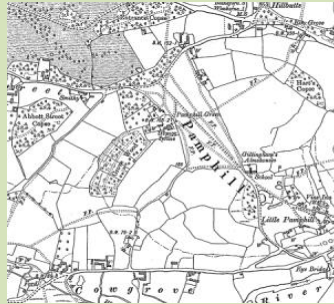
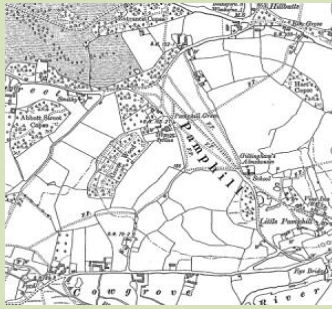


# WIMBORNE COMMUNITY THEATRE

## The Lie of the Land Pamphill Village 2006



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### **Scene 1: On the Green In Front of the School**

*Young people are gathered on the bench by the tree – relaxing, playing guitar, texting, etc.  
FREEZE as Storyteller/Max - Grandad (Tony) touches the seat or some other gesture.  
Storyteller walks around the tree and the seat.*

Storyteller:           A meeting point of time and space,  
                              a magic but a dangerous place  
                              where confusions unravel  
                              and the goddess of the underworld  
                              crouches, and before her and after her,  
                              the earth mother watches the comings and goings.

Until today, here at the crossroads sit new players,  
biding their time like all those gone before them.

‘Once upon a time’ begins the story,  
which grows as all stories do  
like a tree, into its own space,  
making itself known to the air, and the land,  
the birds, rabbits, people passing, resting,  
becoming themselves part of the story,  
as the tree stretches its roots deeper  
and its branches into the future.

Imagine a moment, four hundred years ago, imagine Anna Harris,  
one of the pious poor living at the new Alms House,  
steps out of her door, (*points*) walks over to this corner,  
looking out for her sister, this way and that way.  
And then here comes along Roger Gillingham,  
down from London to ensure himself that the new school master  
instructs Catechism as correctly as he should.  
Imagine how they meet and speak and pass on.

And on and on goes the Pamphill story,  
and the trees grow and are felled,  
and new ones planted  
and we arrive, once upon a time,

to scratch the surface  
this July evening.

*Granddaughter Sophie (Ella) is sitting reading a book  
The Storyteller settles to sleep.*

*Jake (Adam) starts playing riffs on guitar. Electronic abstract-style music.*

*James (Paul), Ruth (Alice) and Lizzie (Elly) mime being band members with parts of the car.*

Ruth: What's a burnt-out car doing on *our* green?

James: What's the smell of charred rubber mean?

Jake: What's happening here?

*Music continues, until two elder women appear with shopping. They stop and talk, grumbling about things. When the music stops, the teenagers retreat to bored positions on the bench.*

Doris (*Kenlis*): A burnt out car right next to the school! And all the grass scorched and dead! What next? Cars today – houses tomorrow? Pamphill's getting like New York! Don't feel safe anymore. (*looks at teenagers in band*) And all this ...

Joan (*Barbara T*): This what?

Doris: Lying about and ... the noise ...

Joan: It's their music!

Ken: Music!

Joan: Maybe it's part of the celebrations.

Doris: What celebrations?

Joan: For the new school hall. I heard they're gathering lots of people, of all ages, who used to come to school here.

Doris: Aren't we to be invited?

Joan: I don't know, Doris.

Doris: Or don't we count? I was young once. I remember the poems Miss Barclay taught us there! (*quotes a bit of a poem*) "Tiger, tiger, burning bright ..." My memory's still sharp as a pin. Don't you remember learning it, Joan?

Joan: I was a few years after you, Doris.

Doris: I thought you were the same age as me?

*Joan shakes her head. The women FREEZE. Teenage music starts from Adam's guitar.*

Doris (*looking at teenagers*): These young people, hanging around, they make me nervous.

Joan: We were the same when we were their age.

Doris: I was always up and about, playing in the woods or the meadows. Pamphill was a paradise then!

Joan: Perhaps they love it in their own way.

Doris (*irritated*): Why are you always so reasonable, Joan?

*Other Children appear on bikes - Jenny (Catherine), Heidi (Lily), Sara (Yolanda).*

Jenny: Hi, Gran. OK?

Joan: Jenny! How's your old bike been?

Jenny: It's OK ... we've been doing wheelies in the woods.

Joan: Does Mummy know where you are?

Jenny: Yeah, 'course.

Joan (*to Doris, as Jenny and friends put away bikes*): Wish she wouldn't say "OK" and "Yeah" quite so much.

Doris: Always reminds me of the Yanks in the War.

*Joan looks bemused. Elders go to sit down on the bench. Awkward moment as teens won't move. Doris eventually wakes James up with her walking stick and the teens move sulkily.*

Doris: "OK" - "Yeah". Remember how we loved to hear them talking – I'd sometimes go up to see Mary when she helped out at the field hospital in the grounds of Kingston Lacy, and they ...

Joan: I was very young in the War, Doris.

*Pause. War-time Music: "We'll Meet Again" from Peter.*

Doris: I was fifteen when war broke out. (*sighs*) And quite beautiful!

Joan: I don't remember that but I do remember how handsome the GIs were.

Doris (*nostalgically*): And those nylons they gave us, and chewing gum. And (*ambiguously*) ... other things. (*Suddenly breaking out of her reverie and starting to move. She sees the school.*) Now, what were we saying about the new school hall?

Joan: It's very modern and light and I like the view out of the window, the way the tree's framed ...

Doris: But I'm not convinced it's in keeping with the architecture of the school – and with the ... spirit of the place. (*Exits*)

Jenny (*running over to Joan*): Gran! What does Mrs Emsworth mean by 'spirit of the ... thingy'?

Joan: Spirit of the place. She thinks it might spoil the special atmosphere of Pamphill. By bringing something very modern alongside the old bricks.

Jenny: You mean spirits might be upset?

Joan: It's more the living that get upset when new things go up.

*Joan exits in the same direction as Doris.*

*Jenny thoughtfully goes back to her friends. They get some food and drink out, a picnic, and start to eat and drink.*

Sara: I know what spirits are. They're ghosts.

Jenny: Really?

Sara: Course they are.

Jenny (*thoughtful and slow*): The spirits of Pamphill. (*She looks around her*)

Heidi (*still on about the car*): Our Mum says what's happening is, people are bored.

Jenny: Bored of being ghosts?

Heidi: No, silly! I'm talking about the burnt-out car.

Ruth: She also says, "Too many computer games warp the mind."

James: Why'd they choose Pamphill to dump the car?

Lizzie: 'Cos they know they won't get caught in a one-eyed hole like this.

Heidi: How d'you know it wasn't someone who lives here?

Jake: 'Cos hardly anyone does anymore.

Lizzie: Except old people.

Ruth: Old people and their dogs.

Jenny: But a burnt-out car's what you see in the city.

James: And now Pamphill.

Lizzie: P'rhaps it was a kid from Bournemouth, maybe his parents brought him here when he was a child, to play on the green.

Jake: Yeah, so when he and his mates were thinking "Where can we dump this car then?"

Ruth: They said, "That spooky place, Pamphill."

*Adam plays spooky guitar chords.*

James (*laughing*): Nice one!

Jenny (*interestedly, not scared*): *What d'you mean spooky?*

Sara (*teasing her*): More ghosts!

*The next dialogue delivered in mock frightening tones, building up the idea to frighten the younger children.*

Ruth: Yeah! "That place under the pylon with its 'cosmic energy'.

*Adam plays cosmic guitar chords.*

Sara: What?

Heidi: Pylons bring electricity.

Ruth (*ignoring them*): Let's dump it in ... Pamphill – the time warp!

*Adam plays Time Warp Rocky Horror chords.*

Lizzie: So we'll never get caught.

Jake: 'Cos the car will ...

Lizzie: spiral down a black hole ...

*Adam plays spiralling down guitar chords.*

Ruth: ... and never be seen again.

Heidi: But that didn't happen.

Sara: We saw the car.

Ruth (*ignoring this, carrying on with their banter*): But before that happens, the ghost of the man who fell in the pond and drowned comes floating along this very path and sees them making their getaway ...

Jenny: What man?

Lizzie (*ignoring her*): And now he's coming back to tell us ...

Jake & James: ... who it was dumped the car.

*With Ruth they make spooky noises and run towards the Children.*

Heidi: Mum says there's no such thing as ghosts.

Sophie: Well, she's wrong. We've seen them and heard things!

*Everyone looks at her.*

Sara & Heidi: Who has?

Sophie: Grandad and me. We come walking here nearly every week. Grandad says it's good for getting rid of all your stress, coming here.

Jake (*looking at Grandad*): He certainly looks pretty chilled out.

Sara: What d'you do all the time you're here?

Heidi: And what've you seen?

Jenny: That we haven't seen.

Sophie: See that stone there, on the corner of the school. It's a pre-historic stone. Grandad says, a boundary stone between the ley lines!

Heidi: And what are ley lines when they're at home?

Ruth: Cosmic! Like I said!

James: And I always thought it was an asteroid!

*Adam plays mock sci-fi chords.*

Sara:           What's that mean?

Ruth (*into microphone, mock American sci-fi voice*):   It came from outer space.

*Adam plays Dr Who-type chords on guitar.*

Lizzie:         Like an alien.

James:         Maybe it's radio-active.

Ruth:           Yeah, maybe those pylons are really aliens beaming down mega death rays from the skies! (*Moving towards Sophie's stone*) To that stone!

*Adam plays spooky music with singing. All laugh. Some pretend to be aliens, moving over towards the stone in zombified manner, except Jenny and Sara who are scared.*

Sophie (*to Sara*):     Don't worry. They're just being silly.

Sara:           Who was the ghost who drowned in the pond?

Ruth (*running back with Heidi*):     We know all about him. (*to Heidi*) Don't we?

Heidi:          He used to live in the Alms Houses behind the stone. (*She points*)

Ruth:          And one night he was cycling home from the pub ...

*She jumps on one of the Children's bikes to imitate a ghost.*

Lily (*cutting in*): And he fell in the pond over there – and drowned ...

Ruth (*acting it out*):   'Cos he was so drunk!

Sara:           Sounds like my Dad.

Heidi:          Some people say he haunts the school.

James (*as though telling a very spooky story*): One night, the cleaners were in late and they heard strange scraping noises.

Jenny:          Really?

*Musicians make scary noises. Paul acts out the following speech with appropriate sound effects from the musicians.*



James: And the sound of keys clanking, then a thud, and a dragging sound like a body ... They were so frightened they ran out the door and down to the Vine as fast as their legs would carry them.

Sara: I would have screamed really, really loudly!!

Jenny: You always do!

Ruth: The next morning, a phone call came from the police and it wasn't a ghost after all. It was burglars ...

Heidi: And they'd nicked loads of stuff, computers, instruments ...

*Everyone laughs. Grandad stirs, perhaps he has been awake, unbeknown to the Children, for some time, listening to this talk of ghosts and changes to Pamphill.*

Sara: So why do people do that in Pamphill? Come from the outside and spoil things?

Sophie (*jumping up assertively*): We don't live here but we wouldn't hurt anything. This is my Grandad. He knows lots of things about Pamphill, don't you, Grandad?

Max (*Grandad*): I enjoy reading stories about the past. And d'you know, just now, I was dreaming the strangest dream ...

Sophie: What about?

Max: About here and now. I was at a crossroads – like this, yes, it was this place but far off like Italy, Rome, maybe, and it's hot, and I'm standing there, and on one side of me, is a strange person unlike anyone I've ever seen, who asks me, "Which way, which way to go now, decide quickly before it's too late?" And I can't decide, and I don't know which road to take, to get home, I want to get home to my family and I'm feeling scared, and I'm thinking – shall I dream on or shall I wake up?

Sophie: And you woke up!

Max: And here we are.

Jake: Weird or what?

Max: Not so weird – we all dream ourselves into other places and times and I bet you could all tell me a story about where you live, your home or your garden.

Sophie: Yes, they already have while you were asleep. About ghosts and about Pamphill.

Max: Of which there are many. A landscape of stories.

Sophie: Tell one about a far-off time, Grandad.

Sara: Let's just go and play.

Jenny: I want to hear the story!

Lizzie & Ruth: Me too!

Heidi: And me.

James: Go for it.

Jenny: Is it about medieval times? Or now?

Max *(to Children)*: It's your choice. *(He holds his arms outstretched, fists clenched, objects in either hand)* This one or that one?

*One of the Children, Heidi, chooses.*

Max: Very well. As this story begins, hundreds and hundreds of years unravel.

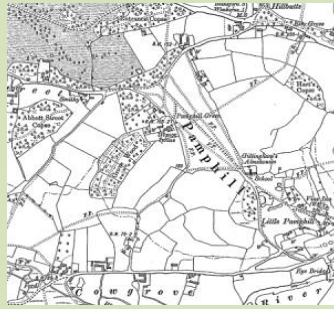
Ruth: Hope it's really spooky.

Max: And it starts *(he moves his cane around)* - Right behind us! *(He spins round)*

Heidi: Where?

Max: Over there near the marsh. Follow me and you'll see.

*Music. Max gets out temple bells and chimes them. Audience moves around to watch the medieval scene coming from the woods. The Children gradually fade out ready for the next scene.*



## Scene 2

### The Medieval Story

#### On the small green backing onto the woods

*The audience crosses from the village green.*

Max (*as Storyteller*): This ground, this land, this spot is where it began. A place before all the old Pamphill families. Before Cherretts, Chissells, Coates and Dumbleton. Before Buddens, Edwards, Evans and Ricketts. A place before these paths, bricks, greens, Alms Houses, school, pub, pylons.

*Music. The adult cast (Chris, Jackie, Clare, Barbara H, Jeff, Catherine, Dave, Tuppy) emerge from the woods, speaking to the audience directly.*

Max: This ground ...

All with Max: This land, this spot is where we began, a place ...

Chris: Before Cherretts, Chissells, Coates and Dumbleton.

Jackie: Before Buddens, Edwards, Evans and Ricketts.

Barbara: A place before these paths, bricks, greens,

Clare: Alms Houses, school, pub, pylons.

*Cast repeat each of above lines whispered as they move into formation spread out in lines of three facing the audience. SFX.*

Max: A place, where in the beginning, there was a man (*All point at Dave*), who was above all things wealthy, who found land and mapped it, starting from his own home hearth ...

All: He drew with a long stick, marked out squares on the ground.

Catherine: He knew how to carve up places into fields and furlongs, domains and denominations.

Dave (*moving across*): North field, South field, Stone field ...

Tuppy: He knew how to carve up people into class and status ...

*All move forward towards Dave and take up poses of different villagers as they speak.*

Clare: Villeins,  
Tuppy: Freemen,  
Barbara & Jackie: Cottagers,  
Catherine: Peasants,  
Jeff: Slaves.

Max: And to keep the dark presence with the scythe away from their doors, the Lord knew how to make allowances.

*Squire (Dave) mimes banging up notice. Others read the statements in a huddle as though reading this proclamation. The huddle gets closer and closer.*

Clare: If you're a swineherd, you can have the liver, lungs and heart of his pigs.

Catherine: And if you're a slavewoman, you have eight pounds of corn, one sheep and three pennies in winter.

Tuppy: Three pennies!

Chris: And a cowherd gets milk for seven nights after calving.

Jeff: And a shepherd, if he is very grateful, may have six nights of manure on his land at Christmas. Merry Christmas, Squire!

*All repeat "Merry Christmas, Squire" to Dave.*

Barbara: And what may the barnman be given? Whatever corn falls at his barn door, if he faithfully deserves it!

Jackie: And he surely does!

*Peasants break from the huddle and form a circle.*

Max: And so those lives passed – so gratefully, in the seven miles of woodland, across one hundred and fifty meadows, in the North field, the South field, in the Stone field.

*SFX and work actions. FREEZE.*

Chris: Until, on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1442, a man died in the South field.

*Peasants kneel in 3 movements on three drumbeats.*

Tuppy:           And his wife, Joanna, went to the court to claim her parcel of land, her own cottage, demand her tenancy ...

Clare (*angrily*):           And the Lord said to her: (*All look at Squire*)

Squire:           You may live in your cottage as long as you pay rents, services, dues  
(*All repeat "rents, services, dues"*)  
for ever until either you or your children are dead.  
(*All repeat "dead" three times and drop lower to the ground*)

Barbara:           These were times when the landowner kept people in the dark.

Max:             In dark times they lived and were utterly beggared by the deeds of the lords and agents and ...

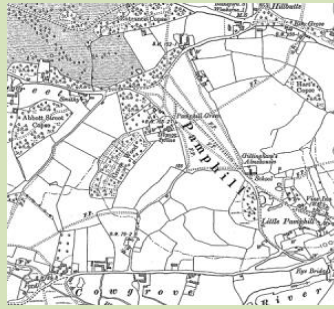
Jackie:           So their prosperity decayed or flourished according to the contracts and parcels of land that ... (*All rise slowly, tired and weary*)

Tuppy:           They worked, backwards and forwards, furrow across furrow.

*Drumbeat. Peasants move from either side with slow footsteps to the drumbeat, criss-crossing the area as if sowing seeds and pushing ploughs, repeating "furrow across furrow". Repeated three times.*

Max:             And went as they were guided by their Lord, nose to the ground, day after day. Digging deep and sowing in their tracks, sowing in long lines into the deep, dark earth.

*Music. Peasants break into a line and exit behind audience to the Left.  
Doris and Joan appear from Downstage Right.*



**Scene 3**  
**Utterly Beggared**  
**On the small green backing onto the woods**

- Joan: The good old days.
- Doris: It felt safe and ordered then
- Joan: Like a big family.
- Doris: Where everyone was looked after.
- Max: Not always. In medieval times, another monster stalked Pamphill – Hunger!

*They move to one side to observe the following scene.*  
*Trumpets. Enter Jeff as Court Official with scroll. He reads in a sing-song voice, like chanting a prayer at church.*

- Jeff: The year of the Lord 1592. This being a petition from the tenants of Pamphill to Her Gracious Majesty concerning the lease of the Royal Estate granted to Edward Rogers.
- Adam (*as though he is addressing a meeting*): Brothers and sisters, we have no option but to appeal to Queen Elizabeth against the cruel greed of our landlord.
- Jeff: Your Majestie's poore tenants being grievouslie terrified, doe stand in dowppte of his extreme dealynges towards them ... and will be utterlye beggared.
- Adam: Good families like yourselves are starving, while Squire Rogers rakes in more and more of our crop. He gets fatter while children die in our village. Is that right, brothers and sisters? No! Enough is enough!
- Jeff: We beseech you to call in the saide lease again into your own hands, Your Majestie, and to appoynte such a good man to be your gracis steward over us.
- Adam: Sign here, and take a brave step for the future of your families. The Good Queen must restore justice to our village. All those loyal to the village, say Aye, Aye!

Doris: You knew where you were then.

Joan: Everybody knew their place.

Doris: And there was respect.

*Charlie (Paul) and Annie (Jackie) sneak out from the trees. Charlie spots the Squire in the distance.*

Charlie: I'll kill that murdering swine.

Annie (*holding him back*): Charlie! Don't let him see us.

Charlie: If our Lisbeth dies, I'm holding him responsible.

Annie: If he looks this way, just look proper and nod at him.

Charlie: I'll have him nodding. I'll break his lily-white neck with my bare hands.

Annie: Ssh, Charlie! And that'll save Lisbeth, will it? (*spotting two sheep*) Look, there, caught between the hedgerows, two of them, just like your Mam said.

Charlie: Lamb stew tonight, Auntie Annie! (*he tries to do a victory dance with her*)

Annie: Ssh, Charlie! Strong meat broth'll save our Lisbeth from the fever.

Charlie: It's our greedy landlord there that's spreading the sickness.

Annie: Don't be going letting your feelings run away with you, Charlie.

Charlie: I'm not the only one.

Annie: You leave the protesting to the adults.

Charlie: If I'm old enough to steal a sheep, I'm old enough to sign a petition.

Annie: There's a price on the head of everyone who signs that petition.

Charlie: We're all going to die of hunger anyway.

Annie: Just think of your starving little sister and don't do anything foolish.

Charlie: There's also a death sentence on those who poach. Auntie Annie.

Annie: Keep your mind on the job and we won't get caught.

Charlie: Ready? You distract the Squire and I'll head for the sheep.

Annie: May the Lord help us both, Charlie. I'd rather be doing your bit, danger or not. If what those girls working up at the house say about his twisted pleasures ...

Charlie: I've said I'll risk it alone.

Annie: I promised your Mam, Charlie. We're in this together. 1, 2, 3 ... Go!

*Annie walks off towards the Squire. Charlie sneaks sideways to steal the sheep.*

Doris: Everyone knew one another.

Joan: Neighbour helped neighbour.

Doris: Much more tolerant then.

*Rose (Clare) and Juliana (Catherine) are on their knees on the ground, gleaning for scraps of wood. Agnes (Tuppy) strides out and sees them and watches them for a bit.*

Agnes: Slim pickings.

Rose (*nervously*): Oh, you startled me there, Agnes. Good evening to you. We were just ...

Juliana: Trying to find some scraps to sell to feed our children.

Agnes: Grovelling on your knees.

Juliana: It's not easy in these times.

Agnes: You'd know about easy.

Juliana: We've *all* become beggars, Agnes.

Agnes: But some of us are on our knees, while others of us stand upright.

Juliana: Some of us have been blessed with five children to feed, while those *without* have time to exercise their jaws.

Agnes: Better a decent Christian marriage than disgracing yourself up at the Big House for scraps from the Squire's table.

Juliana: Rose, let's try the lower pasture. The air here's stagnant.

Agnes (*laughs*): I'd be careful who you were seen walking with, Rose. You wouldn't want people talking about your morals.



Rose: No, well, excuse me, Agnes, sorry, I'd better try the lower pasture ... Edward says we should ...

Agnes: Your Edward. Well, well. Sending his wife out to scratch around with her bare hands in the company of ...

Juliana: Yes?

Agnes (*ignoring her*): Where was Edward on Wednesday night?

Rose: It's a busy time, Agnes. He's been walking miles every day to look for work.

Agnes: You can't run away from it, Rose.

Juliana: Ignore her.

Agnes: Two signatures, Rose, that's all we ask.

Rose: I don't know ...

Agnes: Your own cousin's child, Lisbeth, is dying of the hunger and you and Edward won't stick your necks out.

Rose: Edward says anyone who signs the petition is a marked man.

Juliana: Fighting those in power won't get us anywhere.

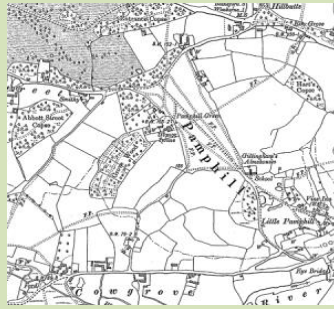
Agnes: And where's crawling to the gentry getting the likes of you, eh? Utterly beggared!

Juliana: You can't force anyone to sign your foolish petition, Agnes Wylmett. Come on, Rose.

Rose: The children are waiting for me, Agnes. We can talk about this later.

Agnes: You'll stand by and let your children become slaves! Traitors to Pamphill the both of you!

*They exit on different sides. Music.*



**Scene 4**  
**Rural Idyll**  
**On the small green backing onto the woods**

*Doris and Joan re-appear.*

Doris: Our squire was a kind man! He looked after us, mended our roofs.

Joan: Eventually.

Doris: We were one community, all pulled together.

*Helen (Barbara H) and Susan (Chris) enter from either side of the audience and stand at the front with backs to the audience.*

Joan: Even dug our own ditches, didn't we? For the pipes to bring running water to Pamphill.

Doris: All under the benevolent eye of the Squire. Hello, Helen, Susan. What are you two doing here again?

Susan: It's Pamphill, Mrs Emsworth. It always brings us back.

Helen: Must be the air.

Doris: The place isn't what it was, you know.

Susan: You've been saying that ever since we were girls, Mrs Emsworth.

Joan: Still living in Bournemouth?

Helen: Yes. We've come to meet my dad.

Joan: Best of luck! Lovely to see you both!

*Doris and Joan exit slowly. Helen and Susan turn around to face the audience.*

Helen: Funny hearing Joan mention the water coming through. It brought it right back to me ... I remember I splashed water all over my brand new Quality Street dress – Mum was furious!

Susan: When you think back to that time, Helen, how the sun always seemed to shine, those lovely days ...

*They move together and hold hands swinging their arms in a childlike way.*

Helen (*interrupting*): ... down at the river fishing ...

Susan (*interrupting*): We built dens out of bracken in the woods!

Helen (*interrupting*): Clearing a space and bending the tops and tying them together.

Susan (*interrupting*): All day living in the undergrowth.

Helen (*interrupting*): Taking our meals out there ...

Susan (*interrupting*): All summer days long ...

*Cast move on swiftly for movement piece.*

*Diamond Movement Piece. The mood is of play – free, safe, magical.*

*Everyone off. Adults in line at back for Chorus. Children in skipping line Upstage Left.*

*Tuppy, Jackie and Clare get ready as cows behind audience Downstage Right.*

*The Children chanting as they skip. Catherine and Yolanda turning the skipping rope, Ella and Lily jumping. Adults join in chanting from chorus line at back.*

All: One a zoll, zen a zoll, zig a zoll, zan,  
Bobtail vinegar, tittle tol tan,  
Harum, scarum, Virgin Marum, Blindfold.

Children (*skipping*): Onery, youery, ickery, Ann  
Phillisy, Phollisy, Nicholas, Jan,  
Queeby, quanby, Irish Mary, Buck.

Onery, twory, Dickery, Davy,  
Harry mo crackery. nickery, navy,  
Usque dandum, merry cum time,  
Humbledy, bumbledy, twenty-nine.

Hokey, pokey, winkey, wum,  
How d'ye like your teaties done?  
All to pieces, that's the fun -  
Can't ye now jest gie I wone?

Ena mena, mina, mo,  
Keska, lena, lina, lo,  
Eggs, butter, cheese, bread.  
Stick, stock, stone, dead.  
O.U.T. spells 'out' -  
And out goes 'she'!

Susan as Child (*Yolanda*): Where's John? He's been gone for hours.

Helen as Child (*Ella*): Birdsnesting for jackdaws in the woods up in the park.

Mary (*Lily*): He should be leading the cows down the avenue to drink at Cowgrove!

*Tuppy, Jackie and Clare as Cows wander about through the audience from Downstage Left to Downstage Right, mooing/lowing.*

Mary (*Lily*): Look at them! Wandering all over the place!

Norma (*Catherine*): John'll be in big trouble if his mam gets hold of him!

*They shoo the cows back into the woods towards Cowgrove.*

Helen (*Ella*): There he is! (*spotting John (Alice) running from Downstage Right, she calls out to him*) John Galpin!

All Children: John, John!

Susan: You come here and get the cows down the river!

John (*Alice*): You got to catch me first! Well, come on!

*All laugh and chase after him. He moves to Upstage Left where the Children join him in a semi-circle.*

John: Come on! What we going to play now?

*They mime playing catch.*

*Older Helen and Older Susan step forward from the back chorus. They turn to look at the Children, giving them the focus of the audience.*

Older Helen (*Barbara H*): Games without end. All the space in the world to kick a ball, all day into the evening, we played ...

Older Susan (*Chris*): In a space of pure magic!

Children (*playing catch*) & Adult Chorus: Onery, youery, ickery, Ann  
Phillisy, Phollisy, Nicholas, Jan,  
Queeby, quanby, Irish Mary, Buck.

Squire moves to Downstage Right to watch.

Max: And the man who lived in the Big House, that one particular man, in the house of marble and stone, watched people living their lives. And he noticed that the way they lived on his land was as though his land was their own land.

Older Helen (*looking at the Squire*): When you caught sight of the Squire, you raised your hat to him. Remember?

*Helen and Susan move back into the chorus line. The Squire comes up the centre line. Billy Budden appears from the back, noisily, towards the Children, carrying baskets of flowers.*

Billy (*Jeff*) (*under his breath to the Children*): Now make sure you're on your best behaviour!

*Children line up formally. Curtsey or bow.*

Billy: Good morning, Squire. Thank you for coming to visit us today. (*under his breath to John*) Put that cap on straight, John Galpin! You been birdsnesting again?

John: No, Mr Budden!

Billy (*to Squire*): The children have been picking primroses since early morning.

Squire: Goodness me! What a lot of primroses! Who are they for?

Billy (*to the Children*): Tell the Squire, Susan.

Susan (*steps forward curtseying nervously*): In the woods, Squire.

John: Not where, who!

Billy: Quiet, John! No, Susan, not *where*. Who are they *for*? Helen?

Helen: Em ... I'm not exactly sure ... (*sudden idea*) for the Squire?

Billy (*embarrassed*): Er, sorry, Squire, actually they're ...

Norma (*puts her hand up*): Oh please, Mr Budden! I know!

Mary: Me too!

John: I don't!

Billy (*shushes John*): Quiet, John Galpin! Yes, Norma?

Norma: Actually, Mr Squire, the primroses are for the poor sick children in the Children's Hospital in Great Ormond Street, London, if you please, Squire. Thank you.

John: Clever clogs!

Mary: We put them in shoe boxes, sir.

Squire: Excellent. Are you taking them up on your coach, Mr Budden?

Billy: Only as far as Wimborne Railway's Station, Squire.

Squire: I see. Well done, everybody. (*All bow or curtsey*)

Billy: Squire, being as how you're here and all, I was wondering whether you might be prepared to offer us a small donation for the raffle forthcoming at the school?

Squire: Why yes, of course, Mr Budden. Why don't you cycle up to the Big House tomorrow and I'll sort something out. We might perhaps share a packet of Woodbine. And there may be a few surplus pheasants hanging about.

Billy: Thank you kindly, Squire.

*Billy bows and goes off behind ready to come out for the cloak scene. Older Helen and Older Susan step forward out of chorus. They look at Billy Budden.*

Helen: Mr Budden! He could be a grumpy so-and-so. Remember how he drove the school bus?

Susan (*laughing*): Any trouble and he'd throw you off!

Billy (*to modern day children who cower in fear*): Oi, you! You young whipper snappers! Off! Now! Unless you want a good clip around the lug hole! And my boot up your backside! (*He exits*)

Helen (*smiling in spite of last memory*): No doubt about it. Pamphill was a magic place to grow up in.

Susan: A place that wrapped its arms around you.

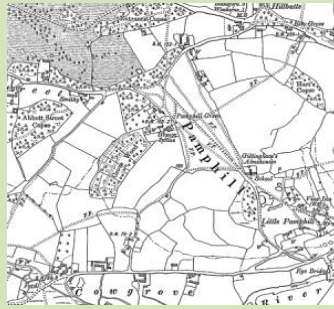
*Helen and Susan step back into the adult chorus line.*

*Ella goes around the Children chanting "Ena, mena, mina, mo, like one potato, two potato with adult chorus helping her.*

Ena mena, mina, mo,  
Keska, lena, lina, lo,  
Eggs, butter, cheese, bread.  
Stick, stock, stone, dead.  
O.U.T. spells 'out' -  
And out goes 'she'!

*The last person who's OUT runs and chases them all under the Squire's cloak with the other adults.*

*Music. Pause. Max/Storyteller steps forward.*



## Scene 5

### Death of the Squire

#### On the small green backing onto the woods

*Music. Squire positioned to centre at the rear. All come on and gradually group at the back sheltering under the 'cloak' of the Squire.*

Max/Storyteller:       And even though they rarely saw the man who lived in the Big House of marble and stone, and their cottages were in a constant state of disrepair, they loved him, in a way, like a father. And for him, it was as if he had hundreds of children and they were both close to him and needy of him, yet far apart, for they were forever pulling at his coat, yet never touching his skin ...

Norma (*peeking out of cloak*):       If it wasn't for the Squire ...

Susan (*peeking out from other side of cloak*):   Keeping this land safe from ... safe from ...

Eric:               Ruffians. (*comes out from cloak as he says it*)

Helen:             Louts. (*comes out from cloak as she says it*)

Norma:            Newcomers. (*comes out from cloak as she says it*)

Susan:            Incomers. (*comes out from cloak as she says it*)

Eric:             Cars on the green.

Norma:            Dog poo.

All (*to front*):   Rubbish.

*Everyone comes out from under the cloak and starts to move into a rectangular formation ready for forest.*

Norma:            If it wasn't for him, we'd all ...

Helen:            If it wasn't for him, all this land would ...



*As the Squire walks forward, everyone becomes trees in a wood, swaying gently.*

Max/Storyteller: And the man grew older and lonelier, and felt the fate of his land weigh like marble in his heart. He walked in his woods (*trees start to move, waving arms*), looking into the future, through the oaks and beeches into the future, planning asking himself ...

*The Squire walks through the woods.*

All (*still as trees*): Should I? Shouldn't I? Should I? Shouldn't I?

Max/Storyteller: He asked himself, Should I? Shouldn't I? (*all whisper in undertones, "Should I? Shouldn't I?"*) He imagined how he might wrap all the land and the trees

*Squire turns to the forest, opens his arms like he's embracing them. Everyone puts their hands down. All start moving into a circular huddle like being wrapped up as a parcel.*

and the houses and the people and the river and the grass up into a giant parcel. And then when he died he would give the parcel away like a gift.

*All gradually mass together around Squire (Dave) and cover him with costumes. Three drumbeats. Squire turns around. He stretches his arms up as in a cross and falls backwards into the huddle who catch him. All pick him up and carry him away - Paul, Tuppy, Chris & Jeff are key carriers.*

Doris: Everything changed the day the Squire died.

Joan: It was never the same again.

*Slow funeral procession with the Squire to drum beats. Off Downstage Right.*

Doris: Not our village anymore. Different.

Joan: There's always so many people about, on bikes, cars, walkers, outsiders.

Doris: Who don't really care about the village, do they?

Joan: People come here, it's a beauty spot, and they go home, leave their car tracks.

Doris: When we were children, John collected car numbers and he was lucky to see five cars a day.

Joan: But at least they bring some prosperity to the village .... they spread their spend around.

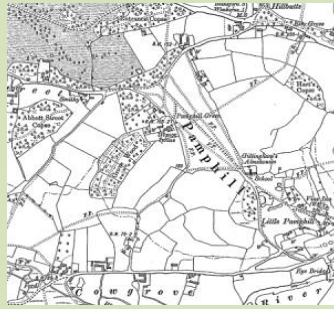
Doris:           And their rubbish!

Joan:           It's what they call progress!

Doris:           Progress? What's that brought to the village? Holiday homes at a thousand pounds a week! And pylons.

Joan:           But we don't notice them anymore, do we? I always look the other way.

*SFX. Very loud from the pylons make the audience turn.  
They are guided by the cast towards the pylons.*



## Scene 6

### **Pylons – Changes to Land and Landscape Under the Pylons**

*The audience and cast gather under the pylons and the audience is invited to lie on the grass looking up at the pylons. The cast stand around the edges against the pylon tower.  
Soundscape Plays.*

#### **SOUNDSCAPE:**

A collage of radio stations, weather forecasts, phones ringing, voices, electric machines with extract from text, with intermittent references to Pamphill. It also reflects the idea of voices breaking in like 'spirits' with layers of sound.

VOICES: Progress – Pylons – zzzzzz – shhhhh – Pounds – Prosperity

#### **LOUDSPEAKER:**

"East Dorset District Council.

Conservation Area Assessments, 28 September 2005

The landscape within many parts of the Conservation Area has changed little since Medieval times.

CHORUS: Our village, our village.

In the 1950s the Central Generating Board routed a high voltage power transmission line through Pamphill ...

CHORUS: lines, ley-lines, energy.

... with little regard for landscape features and the historic character of the settlements.

Just 20 metres in front of the school a pylon is sited between two informal ponds,

CHORUS: Progress, progress?

its size appearing gigantic in relation to the small-scale landscape and traditional buildings."

Movement of gigantic swellings; the spilling into authority machine.

VOICES:

Not dedicated as a right of way.

Please keep your dog on the lead, thank you!

Open to the Public.

Subject to the byelaws on the back of this notice.

Please avoid leaving litter, lighting fires, damaging trees or plants.

*Cast hold hands in a line. Peter starts music. They lead into the wood followed by Peter with the audience.*



**Scene 7**  
**Hide-Outs**  
**In the Small Wood**

*At the entrance to the wood. Music while audience settle. Children play tag at the back of the wood. Older Helen, Older Susan and Older Norma are seen exploring the wood. They have their backs to the audience. When the music stops the Children keep playing.*

*Sophie and Max appear with Heidi.*

Lily: Not many people know this place. The car burners and the burglars don't come here.

Helen: Oh yes, this was our tree, wasn't it, Susan?

Susan: Let's go in. Over there, that's where we played.

*Sounds of Children playing in the wood, calling, laughing. Max leads the audience into the wood and positions them. Helen and Susan see their den while the audience watches.*

Sophie (*leaping up and running to a tree*): You can be anything you want to be here!

Ruth (*running forward*): I can run like a cheetah!

Lizzie: Forget to be cool!

Jenny: Crouch like a tiger!

Heidi: Jump like a monkey!

Sara: Fly like a bird or a butterfly!

*Sara stretches up a tree. All the Children continue running around. The faint echo of a song is heard: Musician plays Elsie's Lullaby and Catherine sings behind tree cover. Children and adults on stage turn and listen.*

Max/Storyteller: Listen! (*Silence. He freezes them again*)

*Sound of sticks breaking. Helen, Susan and Norma are seen walking about. The music stops. They move towards the Children.*

Helen: That sound – reminds me of when we used to play here.

Susan (*beckons to the Children who come closer*): When the light began to fall. You thought you heard things.

Helen: Sometimes we'd think there was someone there, watching our game.

Susan: You'd get a feeling – up our spines like a shiver.

*She turns around and mimes shiver. Another refrain from Musician and Catherine. Everyone listens.*

Children: What was it? What did you see?

Helen: Hard to say. And I'm not sure we should ... talk about these things.

Norma: For heaven's sake, if it's what you thought you heard and saw and felt, then it's right ...

Ruth (*urgently to Helen*): What did you see, Auntie Helen?

Jenny (*to Susan*): What did you hear, Auntie Susan?

Helen (*dramatically*): Once or more, singing or crying, even laughter.

Children (*together excitedly*): Show us where! Please! Please! Auntie Helen!

Helen: Where I used to walk Jimbo, my little dog, most days, over there ...

*She points to the Left and the group wander to the Left, gradually moving to the Den.*

Sara: You dare go there?

Norma: Our land is full of sounds - and atmosphere. I reckon that's why people from all around sit on the Green and stare into space.

Sophie: You mean they feel the past?

Norma: You ask the young lads who lie on the green on summer nights staring up at the stars, night after night. There's something brings them here instead of Bournemouth clubs.

Susan: When have you seen young lads lying about? In your dreams!

Norma: At the weekend, I've seen them, when I walk the dog!

Sophie: D'you still see and hear other things?

Helen: Look! Here's where we had the den, about here, Susan and I.

Susan: With Pete and Daniel Brown, Rosie Evans and John Short.

*They get inside the Den. The Children stay back and sit and watch.*

Helen: We'd be in here all day and evening, safe as houses. Like it was our home.

Susan: We'd make our bedrooms here.

Norma: And here, this bit here, is our kitchen.

*The mood changes for the following scene: Elsie's Story.*



**Scene 8**  
**Elsie's Story**  
**In the Small Wood**

*SFX: mysterious music, bell chime. Helen, Susan and Norma start to behave like young children playing in their den. They chant "Ring-a-Roses" and all crash down laughing. The Children retreat to arched tree at the back in slow motion.*

Susan (*now as though they were young children again*): It'll be night soon. We must get supper ready.

*The three women sit down. Cue for singing.*

Helen: What's that, Susan? That noise.

Susan: Nothing that I can hear.

Helen: There again.

Susan (*calls to Norma who is playing nearby*): Norma, come over here, quick. Listen.

*They all listen, huddled together. Sound of a young girl singing. Then Elsie carrying baby comes into view, singing refrain. All scared. Elsie, a teenage girl from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, stands Centre Stage and finishes her song.*

*Elsie's Lullaby:*

Close your eyes and rest your weary head  
Sleep 'til morn – I'll guard your bracken bed  
Your father's so powerful, the squire of all around  
And I dread the dawn for then we will be found.

Tomorrow your Daddy's men will be here  
We'll face them all and try to show no fear  
But tonight by starlight at Pamphill on the green  
I'll hold you close, in the trees you won't be seen.

Sleep now, my babe, my child  
Sleep now, my babe, my child.

Elsie (*smiles at them*): Did you like that song?

Norma: Who are you?

Elsie: Elsie. Elsie Trickett from the Manor House. Where I worked. Once.

Helen: Is this your baby?

Susan: You must be cold. Come near the fire. Would you like to stay with us for supper?

Helen: Norma, put the tea on the hob. And more wood on the fire.

Norma: I've not seen you before.

Elsie: We've been walking round here for such a long, long time.

Susan: Why've we not seen you then?

Elsie: Perhaps you've not been looking.

Helen: And why're you in this dark place with your baby?

*Elsie moves up and down singing again while Norma and Susan speak.*

Norma: You know what?

Susan: What's she doing?

Norma: She's a spirit! That's for sure!

Susan: A spirit? What d'you mean?

Helen: Like a ghost, silly!

Susan: She don't look like a ghost!

Helen: How would you know what one looks like?

Susan: 'Cos I've seen loads of them up here! Wandering around – it's surprising they don't bump into each other!

Helen: Now you're really scaring me!

Norma: Don't need to be scared! If they're here, my grandma says, it's 'cos they want to tell you something!



Elsie: Restless, we get – when we've been badly treated or put upon. A spirit needs people to know about it or a spirit needs to put something to rest.

Helen (*bolder, moving forward*): What happened to you?

*Elsie turns and approaches Helen and gives her the child. Helen jumps but makes a cradle of her arms for the baby and rocks him.*

*Elsie starts miming scrubbing floors, rocking the baby next to her.*

*The Butler (Jeff) comes on – Music & Drumming - with Footmen (Adam & Paul). As soon as she hears them, she leaps up and grabs her baby. She tries to escape Stage Left but they trap her, Paul on her Right, Adam on her Left.*

Paul: Pass her to me now!

Adam: The wrong child in the wrong place will bring shame to the house.

*Elsie (with strong determination)*: Never, never, never, you will never take my baby! We'll run away and no-one will remember us – and you will find a new maid in the morning.

*The Footmen overpower her and take the child from her arms. She slumps to her knees. They head off Stage Left. She watches slowly. Gets up. Steps a few feet back. Looks to audience.*

Elsie: But being only a maid up at the Manor, I'd no family and they were kind for a while. Until *he* broke my heart, had his way, against my wishes. And when my baby was taken from my arms because of those times, because of the way people believed in what was right and what was wrong, or didn't believe or didn't know what they should believe, I died of a broken heart.

*Elsie slumps but then slowly picks up imaginary baby from the floor and starts to rock it.*

Elsie: And now I have come back to feel my darling child in my arms again.

*Elsie sings first line of refrain and then everyone joins in for three times "Sleep now, my babe, my child". Children sing it as they move from the tree at the back to the front.*

Susan: Oh, how sad.

Norma: If it was me, I'd come back and get my revenge.

Helen: Are there other spirits around here?

Elsie: Thousands upon thousands.

*Everyone starts humming and this continues until the end. Peter gives signal to ghost figures: Dave, Jackie, Clare, Jeff, Adam & Paul to start moving from the field. Ken & Barbara T join them from bush cover after the stile.*

Max: In the air you breathe, in your mind's eye, in the sounds of the place, in the lie of the land.

*He directs everyone to look towards the meadow to the Right, framed by trees – figures moving there. They slowly walk towards the wood. One is the Squire.*

Sophie: Isn't that man, with the hat, isn't that the Squire?

Elsie: Not the one I knew.

Max: There have been many squires, some good and some not so good. This is the one that gave his land away.

Ruth: Why'd he come back?

Sara: P'raps to find out if his gift got given in the way he wanted.

Norma: More like he wants to know which of his cottages fell down and which got saved.

Heidi: Or maybe he's a lonely old man and he wants to come home.

Lizzie: It's not his anymore to come to.

Jenny: Whose land is it then?

*Everyone falls into the line, joining in the humming, to follow the Squire and other ghosts who pass up the path through the audience. Elsie joins the line at the end and they leave the wood.*

*The End*