

WIMBORNE COMMUNITY THEATRE

Undercliff and Over Heath Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth, 1997



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Scene 1
Overcliff Fair
East Cliff Promenade
Community Group

As the audience assembles on the East Cliff Promenade overlooking the sea, there is a Victorian-style fair taking place with the cast mingling with the audience. Fortune teller; Music Hall performers dressed as pierrots; fruit and other produce being sold from baskets; strong man and juggler performing; contemporary music and songs; Punch & Judy etc. Some members of the cast distribute Wish cards. Others invite the audience to choose post cards with quotations about Bournemouth from a rack. These are read aloud.

The Band comes up the path. Tony as the Barker follows with a tambourine. He mounts the raised platform at the top of the path and opens the play with welcome speech about the stories the audience can expect to see. A large box is discovered and the Barker invites the Strong Man to come forward and open the box.

The Strong Man takes out a giant crystal ball. The Fortune Teller is invited to read its meaning. She leads the audience down the path to the museum terrace.



Scene 2
New Old Legends of Bournemouth
Geological Terrace
Children of Pokesdown School – The Monster from Undercliff
or Children of St Clement's & St John's Infant School - The Dinosaur Wishbone

Children enact the legends they have written about Neolithic times in the Bournemouth area.



Scene 3
Looking out to Sea
In the Garden

The audience is led through the garden where a soundscape of voices is playing of people's collected memories of Bournemouth:

- VOICE 1: It was summer, walking through the gardens from Talbot Woods to the beach, hot and sunny, hearing the orchestra playing on the bandstand, people lying around on the grass ...
- VOICE 2: Oh, I was impatient, waiting for the Number Three Penny Bus to arrive to take us into the Square. I'd say to my mother "Can I ride upstairs?", then, the smell, marvelling at the smell of coffee at Lyons Café ...
- VOICE 1: Feet in the stream, a happy atmosphere of picnics, music, laughing and people dancing on the grass ...
- VOICE 3: It began snowing on Boxing Day in '63 and by New Year's Eve it was nine inches thick. I was in the choir at St Peter's and had to catch a trolley bus near Cemetery Junction but the poles kept springing off the wires ...
- VOICE 4: The wind at Hengistbury Head. That day we went there with our blue kite, such grey white clouds and deep blue sky and there were several other families flying their kites, lots of laughter as they sped over the skies and shrieks as the kites crashed ...
- VOICE 3: Traffic came to a standstill until the conductor took a long pole with a hook from under the bus and caught the contact pole swinging wildly around from the bus roof ...
- VOICE 4: When the wind became too strong making it hard to stand upright, we walked on round the headland, leaning into the wind and making a shelter and sat watching the racing windsurfers, leaving huge wakes behind them, like tails ...
- VOICE 5: I remember coming to Bournemouth on a shopping trip to spend my maternity grant. Jo and Ellie were toddlers then. We went into Mothercare in Commercial Road - it wasn't traffic-free in those days - to buy things for the baby I was expecting and ...
- VOICE 6: I was about seven and a half and I went to the Ice Show with my aunty and cousin. I remember waiting for the bus and she sat me on the garden wall while she folded my buggy ...
- VOICE 5: I remember the feeling of being a young mum, keeping an eye on two lively toddlers in the busy streets, and then we went into Debenhams for lunch. When I go there now I often think of it and see other young families. I always go to the window seat for that view over the Square - as we did then ...
- VOICE 7: Oh, all those lazy afternoons on the beach with friends, out on the pedalos by the pier, laughing, eating pizza, sunbathing; then, on warm evenings we'd look up at the stars and moon until our necks ached and then walk home along the beach happy, without a care ...
- VOICE 8: New Year's Day 1997. My boyfriend and I left a night club in the early hours and it was snowing and the sky was lit up with stars. We couldn't get a taxi and wondered if we'd encounter any trouble walking home but everyone we met was full of goodwill ...

This is followed by a short dialogue between Heather, Rose and Seeker.



Scene 4
Here We Come
Students of Portchester School

The scene is stylised with movement pieces in groups. There is an atmosphere of exuberance but also menace as the groups resemble rival gangs. The two groups approach each other in lines chanting:

“A place for the young”, “Our town by the sea”, etc.

A steady background sound of drum beats throughout the scene.

Seeker arrives as a newcomer to the town and the group enacts the desperate state of Bournemouth’s homeless population.



Scene 5
Bournemouth’s Changed
Community Group

Older women talk about Bournemouth before the war. Memories of childhood, family and school.

The school bell rings to introduce the World War II scene.



Scene 6

War

Children of King's Park School

The teacher rings the bell and the children come down the stairs and form up round the sculpture in the museum garden.

Teacher: Good morning, children. This morning we continue our work with the British Empire!
To your right, the African colonies.
Behind us, India whose gallant Ghurkhas are reinforcing the British war effort.
To your left, Australia and New Zealand. Diggers set ready to fight in the Mediterranean theatre of war.
And ahead, our own British army, air force and navy, leading our great empire into battle with the enemy.
Colonies of the British Empire please, children!

The children list names of the colonies.

Teacher: And class notices! Pay attention please, Billy! From June 20th 1940 – and when is the 20th June, children?

Child 1: Tomorrow, miss.

Teacher: Correct. From the 20th June evacuees from Southampton will be arriving here at St Paul's School. Children are requested to make these evacuees welcome. They will be leaving their homes and their families and will arrive in Bournemouth with 48 hours rations and hand luggage only. You children may be aware that Miss Frimmer and myself have toured the streets and found a number of houses where the evacuees can stay. The adults of Bournemouth are pulling together for the war effort. Now I want to ask you children to do the same and offer sympathy and friendship to our evacuees. Any questions?

Child 2: What kind of games do they play?

Teacher: Well, games just like you play, of course.
And into lines for drill. Just as those British troops will be doing! On the double!

The children line up and go through their drill routine. At the end the school bell rings for playtime.

Playtime groups form. Two or three groups with dialogue, the others movement based. Each reflects the children's thought on imminent arrival of evacuees, including:

Children: Will they have enough clothes with them?
Will teachers and parents give all their attention to the evacuees? That wouldn't be fair.

I've got two boy evacuees coming to stay at my place.
Will they want to play with us?
They might be really rough children.
They might be really frightened.

Air raid siren sounds. The children file into the shelter which is mocked up by canvas/cloth held up in front of the sculpture.

Heather acts as narrator based on Elsie's experience of wartime shelters.

Teacher: Everyone in? We don't want any of you to be bomb fodder for the enemy today, do we? Roll call! (*she goes through names as the children are voicing their thoughts*)

Children's Thoughts: What if they kill my family?
This war is spoiling the beauty of our town!
What if they have more troops than us?
What if they win?
Why are they here?
What if they do get past the wire?
Why did they want to start this war?
What will this war do to the beauty of this world?
I don't want to die!
I wonder if they will come?
How far away are they?
I wish it could be over!

All-clear air raid siren sounds and Teacher ushers all out except Helen and Young Heather. The other children get into lines behind sculpture.

Heather: There were four evacuees in our class to begin with – only we didn't think of them as evacuees because they lived with the sick children at 11 Derby Road at The House Beautiful. Helen Meakin was the eldest of the four from The House ...

Young Heather: ... Beautiful. Only Helen told me some of what went on at 11 Derby Road and I don't think it's a place to get well in. Helen, where are you all going on Sunday?

Helen: Nurse Ivy's taking us to Spencer Gardens. We can't go on the beach. Have you seen the rolls and rolls of barbed wire and scaffolding?

Older Heather has now removed herself from the scene and it is taken up by the children.

Young Heather: To keep out the enemy. Did you know they're even going to blow up the pier so the enemy can't reach us?

Nurse Ivy appears while calling.

Ivy: Helen! Helen Meakin! Always the last child to be in line. Helen, come along or the bogeyman will get you.

The House Beautiful children left to their own devices, start singing snippets of "Bye Bye Blackbird" and getting out of line while Ivy chivvies Helen along.

Ivy: Now, now, children. Matron doesn't allow singing of that kind from children belonging to The House Beautiful. Remember this is rest and recuperation time. Fresh air and exercise – you don't need to worry about the war. Take in the air as we walk, girls and boys, and think how lucky you all are to be here in sunny, safe Bournemouth. Mind how you go.

They walk singing "I'm H-A-P-P-Y" until Helen lets out a scream. She has caught her leg in some barbed wire in a bush. The children gather round her, horrified. Ivy tries to calm Helen and free her leg. It is so well stuck that the wire won't come out so eventually Ivy breaks it off and Helen has to hobble back with the others. They end up downstage left near the Gallery door.

Ivy: Matron, Matron Wright! Patrick, go and fetch Matron here quickly, please.

Helen: You could do it, Nurse Ivy, please.

Ivy: Matron needs to know, Helen. I'm sorry.

Matron enters from the Gallery obviously having been interrupted in her afternoon tea.

Matron: Whatever is this fuss about, Nurse? What are all you children staring at? If you've had your walk then it must be time for Sunday School – am I not correct?

Helen groans and Ivy comforts her. Matron is distracted from the children who draw back and peer round the tree at poor Helen.

Matron: What a great fuss! I should have expected this would be of your making, Helen. Nurse, fetch a bucket of water and a knife. I can see I won't be able to finish the report I was doing for Dr Robinson. And cover up the butter and jam while you're there!

She twists the wire in Helen's leg and Helen gasps.

Matron: How careless, Helen. You need to watch where you walk. The Lord can't always be your eyes. As if I haven't enough to do here without having to right clumsy mistakes like yours.

Ivy returns with the bucket. Matron puts Helen's leg in it and Ivy tries to remove the peering children.

Matron: You will need to think of something else while I cut, Helen. I'm sure you can be brave.

Helen: Matron, are you going to cut my leg?

Matron: I said not to think about what I am doing, Helen. And if you can't be brave then pray for a stronger character. You would undoubtedly benefit.

Matron works the knife inside the bucket and Helen whimpers and tries to concentrate on asking.

Helen: Heather ... I mean, Heather in my class at St Paul's says ...Ohhh ...Heather says they're going to blow up ...Ohhh ... blow up the pier. Have you heard that, Matron?

Matron: We won't worry ourselves about the war. It won't do your asthma any good.
And don't bother any of the other convalescents with that kind of tittle tattle

Matron gives a last slice and the wire comes out as Helen screams. The others wince in sympathy.

Matron: Don't fuss, Helen. You're very late for Sunday School.

The other children scamper off to Sunday School singing the refrain of the song "I'm H-A-P-P-Y", except one who is collared by Matron.

Matron: I told you to attend to your religious duties some time ago. As you are now wasting my time, tonight you will sit outside my room until 10 pm. Report to me immediately you have had your tea.

Matron exits and the boy rubs his ear and joins the others in front of the statue behind the sculpture. The song swells and comes to an end.

*The children move into the central space.
They voice their thoughts:*

Children's Thoughts: I spent most of the war at The House Beautiful.
Strangers were with us in Bournemouth.
I missed my Mummy and Daddy.
On 10th April 1942, I arrive at The House Beautiful. My big teddy is placed on the piano. I am not allowed to touch it.
We would jump up to touch a sailor's collar for luck.
Matron tells me my mother is no good and I should forget her.
In 1942 I sign the Total Abstinence Pledge. I promise, by God's help to abstain from intoxicating liquors.
One day American soldiers appear with tanks and jeeps all down Knyveton Road. I'm given proper American candy.
At Christmas 1944, I get a present all the way from California – and so does everybody at House Beautiful.

*The school bell rings.
Teacher marches the children in a crocodile for an announcement about the successful D-Day landings.*

Older Heather comes forward to the audience to continue narrating.

Older Heather: The war meant strangers were in town. At the beginning of the war it was evacuees and British troops stationed at all Bournemouth's hotels. Just prior to D-Day in 1944 there were Americans lounging all over the place – lads with nothing to do. I had a paper round – much against the school's wishes. The GIs saw ...

Young Heather comes down the path.

Young Heather: What they thought was the paper boy coming round ...

Older Heather: And they'd say ...

GI 3: Hey there, boy!

GI 1: Hey boy!

Boys around call to Young Heather.

GI 2: Hey, boy! Paper!

Young Heather: I'm sorry, I can't sell you the papers. They belong to someone else.

Older Heather: And they'd say ..

GI 4: Go on!

GI 3: Go on, let's have a look, honey!

GI 1: Let's have a look at the paper, honey!

Young Heather hands out the papers.

Older Heather: When they'd finished with them, they wanted to go to the cinema – they loved that. So they'd fold up the newspapers very carefully, and I'd say ...

Young Heather: Make sure they're right. I don't want to lose my job.

Older Heather: They would make sure they were right and I would deliver them to the people. And then one day I went up and there was nothing there. They'd all gone and all the ships had gathered in the bay.

The GIs go up the stairs to the Gallery.

Rose enters.

Rose: Oh, there you are. Where have you been?

Heather: 1940.

Heather and Seeker go into the Gallery (improvised dialogue).

Rose gathers the audience and leads them into the Gallery (improvised dialogue).

Through the Gallery to the Dining Room

As the audience passes through the New Gallery they see the Portchester boys circling the staircase and chanting. Voices repeat.

Voices: Lady Annie & Russell Cotes request the pleasure of your company in the dining room.

Time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past

A steady drum beat sounds.



Scene 7.

Inside the House: The Secrets of East Cliff Hall In the Dining Room and Hall

Annie enters the house through the Balcony and Morning Room and sets herself in the Dining Room in front of the fireplace. The audience enters from the Sunroom and people in wheelchairs from the door nearest the café. As the audience gathers, Annie can improvise with those there until she is given the signal that all are in the Dining Room.

Annie (improvisation suggestions): I do hope you have witnessed our wonderful sea views from the garden. Sir Merton and myself are so attached to the bay – from almost every single window one can enjoy the seascape. It is wonderful to see so many refined people here in our home, etc.

When all have gathered, she speaks.

Annie: May I take this occasion to welcome you, ladies and gentleman, to East Cliffe and the very dining room where Sir Merton Russell-Cotes and I have entertained peers and royalty from near and far. And here, in our home, you will sight a veritable treasure trove of artworks gathered from the darkest corners of the earth. Sir Merton has built me a home that echoes with our history and speaks of the tradition and ceremony we do espouse.

She indicates the windows (upstage left) depicting UK symbols.

Annie: Note the thistle of my childhood and the rose of Sir Merton's own background. And if you will humour me a while longer, such artworks I would enjoy taking your educated eyes towards ... to your left in the bay, a wine cooler used by Lord Napoleon himself – and one in which Sir Merton too has cooled his own wine.

She indicates a bust (stage right) on the small table by the entrance to the Sunroom.

Annie: The bust of our wonderful painter, Sir Frederick Leighton, whose fine taste has been an inspiration for much of the exotic features of East Cliffe Hall.

She indicates the painting "Always Welcome" hung in the room. Barker focuses the audience's attention on the paintings.

Annie: And a favourite painter of my own, Lady Alma Tadema. I do enjoy the contemplation of this intimate work. And its title "Always Welcome" – the very sentiment I endeavour to convey to the people of Bournemouth.

She indicates the still life double (stage right) on the wall at chest height which leads to the Sunroom. A seascape is set in the mantelpiece behind her.

Annie: And the favoured paintings of my good husband, Sir Merton, I hear you ask? Behind me one of his beloved seascapes, and to your left an example of his fine taste in still lifes – many of which he bought as gifts for friends.

She indicates a horse picture (downstage left).

Annie: And where possible, he favoured artists from hereabouts – such as Mrs Kemp Welch's painting. But come, please enter the main hall, setting of many a musical soiree. An imminently suitable backdrop to our collections from the many journeys made. Do follow me.

Annie leads the audience into the Hall, to the left of the rostra set almost directly outside the Dining Room door. She indicates that they should gather close to her in the centre of the Hall.

Annie: Do come closer together, both strangers and people of Bournemouth, and contemplate this seat of culture and wonderment. Amongst the architectural treasures and representations of Scotland, Italy, Morocco, reside men and women of history books.

She indicates the busts of Victoria and Cromwell.

Annie: Our own gracious Queen Victoria, Oliver Cromwell and, of course, representations of men who laid the foundations of Bournemouth. Behind these men lie stories, whispers and truths, some to be revealed, some to remain where laid.

Barker *(to Cut -out 1)*: The three Commissioners responsible for dividing the Bournemouth Heathland through the Enclosure Acts of 1802. The heath that was the domain of ordinary people for grazing their animals and digging turf. The Commissioners saw to it that the common land remained – so creating many of Bournemouth's attractive parks. Or was it their creation?

Barker *(to Cut-out 2)*: Captain Lewis Tregonwell, procurer of the very first house – be it mansion - on the heath at the mouth of the Bourne. In 1810, the Captain purchased eight and a half acres of land from Sir George Iveson Tapps. He sought peace and restoration of happiness along the sandy bay – and some would suggest an outlet for continuing ill-reputed smuggling.

Maid *(to Cut-out 3)*: Doctor Augustus Granville whose opinion of dear Bournemouth was keenly sought. And within his enlightened publication on the Spa Towns of England was forged Pulchritudo et Salubritas – Bournemouth welcomes visitors from London and afar to our town of health and beauty.

Maid (*to Cut-out 4*): A personal friend of Lady Annie's, Sir George Meyrick, - a man of upstanding class – a true founding father of this town. Respected and honoured for his deeds – as the Russell-Cotes honoured all of his ilk.

Annie: As for myself, I gave to you people of Bournemouth and all who visit her, this very building. A vision of tradition and imagination in which Sir Merton's gift of the artefacts nestle. A feast of treasures from across the seas lies in Bournemouth's very centre.

Annie moves to stage left of stairs.

Heather, Rose and Seeker to stage right of stairs.



The Commissioners' Scene

The Turvers are in a freeze as Annie brings in the audience. They come to life singing song (to the tune of "We Plough the Fields and Scatter").

Turvers' Song: You gentle folk of each degree
 I pray you listen unto me.
 To please you all I do intend
 So listen to my song
 From dawn to dusk as you must see
 The poor are frowned on in each degree
 And every day throughout the land
 They try to starve the labouring man!

 In former times as you must know
 The poor man cheerful he did go
 And neat and clean upon my life
 With his children and his wife
 And for his labours it is said
 A fair day's wages he was paid
 But now to live he hardly can
 May God protect the labouring man!

Half Group 1: Look how our boots carry the mud.

Half Group 2: Look how our hands carry the turf.

Voice: ... said the commoners.

Voice: Treeless paths were the health's veins.
 They led to our hearths and homes

Where we stoked fire
That grew in the turf.

Voice: If we wanted bread that was fit to eat
Or milk that was fit to drink
We walked out early with the lizards
We walked out early to our own grazing beasts
Heather and birdsong soothed our hunger.

Voice: Our mothers said:

Half Group 1: Look how our boots carry the mud.

Voice: Our fathers said:

Half Group 2: Look how our hands carry the turf.

Voices (*starting at a whisper and getting louder*): Not anymore! Not anymore! Not
anymore! Not anymore!

Voice: They try to starve the labouring man!

Voice: New heels on the turf
Talk of slicing up the land
With banks and boundaries
Ditches and dykes.

Voice: Who can help us escape our fate
Under cliff and over heath?
Who can help us escape our fate?

All: We can! We can!

Voice: ... say the commoners from Holdenhurst
Kinson
Iford and Throop.

Voice: To Muscliff
To ask Farmer West
Whose heels trample the turf?
Whose talk of splicing the land?

All (*repeat*): To Muscliff
To ask Farmer West
Whose heels trample the turf?
Whose talk of splicing the land?

All: To Farmer West! Farmer West! Farmer West!

Voice: May God protect the labouring man!

One round of music. All freeze. Then all move.

Crowd respond positively and start an abstract movement which travels.

Music of 4 different rhythms begins.

Actors move in 4 groups: Group 1: Naomi, Ian and Paul. Group 2: Sammy and Peter.

Group 3: Anastasia, Robert, David and Ros. Group 4: Helen, Tuppy, Louisa and Gill.

Sammy (*taking a step forward – visual cue for musicians*): That's his farm – over there.
(*Points in direction of the Balcony*)

Abstract travelling movement continues and builds up. Words are then added:

Turbary rights!
We want to graze our animals!
What about our traditions!
No enclosures!

The words build to a climax. The servants' arms are the cue for the music to stop.

Servant (*appearing over edge of Balcony*): What do you want? I don't want no troublemakers here at our farm. What do you all mean? You're disturbing the peace - there's a law against riotous behaviour.

David: We need someone who can write for us.

Anastasia: We want to graze our animals and dig our turf.

Sammy: Those Commissioners want to take away our long-held rights over the heath common land.

Charlotte: We want Farmer West.

The crowd backs her up.

Servant: We can't have troublesome people – you must know the Riot Law – no crowds gathered in places ...

Robert: Send out your master, Farmer West.

Servant: I'll no more send out Farmer West to you than ...

Crowd drowns her out. Farmer West appears beside Servant. Crowd noise quietens.

Sammy: That be good Farmer West I'm sure.

Servant: And a good man he is, and he'll have nothing to do with a mob like you.

West: What do they want?

Sammy: We ask you to take up the quill for us to write to the Commissioners. We ask consideration for our long-held turbarry and grazing rights on the heathland near the Bourne stream. Can you do that?

West: Don't worry. I can help you. The quill and paper.

Crowd whispers excitedly. The Servant gives West paper and pen. He begins writing and the crowd takes up the choral chant:

All: 425 acres of heathland granted to the commoners.
King's Park, Queen's Park, Meyrick Park.

*The chant is repeated as they dissolve into the audience.
The chant changes as they become the SFX of the sea and melt into the sea.*

All: I knew it in its wild state of heather
I knew its name from the little rivulet of Bourne

Before a Lord of the Soil drove up in his carriage and announced
"Let there be houses here and plant fir for shaded and sequestered spots."

I knew its name from the little rivulet of Bourne
I knew it in its wild state of heather.



Tregonwell Scene

Annie makes a still image on the stair.

Capt. Tregonwell holds a frozen pose in front of his cut-out on the platform.

Mrs Tregonwell: Lewis, Lewis, where are you?

Capt. Tregonwell breaks from freeze in response.

Mrs Tregonwell: Lewis, I've been down to the sea – I saw fish in the waves, truly!
(leans over to call him then starts moving round the balcony to descend the stairs) I wish you could have been there! You could have seen them darting through the foam as though being chased by the wind. Look at all this golden sand, Lewis, it stretches for miles. This place is beautiful – I love this

coastline already! Can we not stay, Lewis? (*she is now down with him on the raised platform*) Could we not come every year and perhaps build a summer residence here, near the sea?

Capt. Tregonwell: It is refreshing to see you in high spirits again, my dear, and I do agree there is a particular quality to the coastline. There may be much to be gained from this place.

Mrs Tregonwell: The atmosphere is so uplifting, Lewis. For just a moment my guilt almost disappears ... yet every time I close my eyes I see his little face, and it haunts me.

Capt. Tregonwell: I will not allow you to continue blaming yourself. Our child was ill – you did what you thought right. You must stop upsetting yourself. Now, where shall we site this south-facing house?

Mrs Tregonwell: Oh, Lewis, how can I forgive myself ... to end the life of our only child. Why did I not speak to the Nurse? How could I have been so foolish?

Capt. Tregonwell: How were you to know the medicine had already been given? (*gently*) Now enough of this, my dear. We will direct our eyes to this vista of sea and heathland, and you must turn your thoughts to the house I will build here for you. Agreed, my love?

Mrs Tregonwell: Oh, Lewis, perhaps you are right. I will try to leave the past behind me (*pause – she takes a deep breath*) Ah ... this coastland certainly is spectacular and I do prefer the wildness of this heath to that of Mudeford – despite King George's visit.

Capt. Tregonwell: That's the spirit, my dear. A summer residence near to the coast – and within palpable distance of France. If it will bring you happiness, then it shall be built!

Mrs Tregonwell: Thank you, Lewis, thank you! (*they begin to exit*) I can almost envisage a house with many windows facing the sea to catch the breezes and the sunset ... and the heathland behind it stretching open into the distance ...

Annie moves onto Doctor Granville's raised staging and refers to cut-out. She removes it when she leaves.



Doctor Granville Scene

Annie: And forty years after Mrs Tregonwell sniffed Bournemouth's recuperative airs, our town was in need of authentication. And who better to write of her

blessings than he who praised the towns of Bath, Brighton and Cheltenham. I believe a little encouragement was offered ...

The doorbell rings. Servant crosses Annie and Doctor Granville on the platform on the way to answer the doorbell. The servant answers it and ushers in Lady 1 and Lady 2 from 1919 doors to raised staging nearest the doors.

Servant: Do come in. Doctor Granville will be with you shortly.

Lady 2: It's very gracious of Doctor Granville to allow us to preview his speech prior to luncheon.

Lady 1: It's such a relief Doctor Granville saw fit to grace Bournemouth with his presence.

Lady 2: A relief? I always knew Doctor Granville would come – he and I share a “special” friendship.

Lady 1: Whatever do you mean, Clara?

Lady 2: Simply that a little persuasion does nothing to harm ones business prospects.

Lady 1: Well, we did give the doctor a bottle of rather fine Claret.

Lady 2: Claret? Hmm ... how quaint! Let's hope all our efforts will not be wasted, dear, and that the doctor will give our deserving town a favourable review.

Lady 1: Hear hear! Oh, here he comes now!

Enter Servant.

Servant (*to audience*): Doctor Augustus Granville.
(*to doctor*): Your sherry, sir.

Granville: Why, thank you. (*Servant puts glass on the table*)

During Doctor Granville's speech the ladies interrupt with “helpful” remarks.

Granville: I do appreciate your listening to my speech, good ladies. “Having examined Bournemouth in all its parts...”

Lady 2: Under sunshine as well as during the prevalence of wet and high wind.

Granville: “...I have no hesitation in stating that no situation that I have had occasion to examine along the whole southern coast possesses so many capabilities of being made the very first watering place in England...”

Lady 1: And not only a watering place, Doctor Granville, but what is still more important, a winter residence for the delicate constitutions requiring a warm and sheltered locality.

Lady 2: It might be converted into a perfect blessing.

Granville: "...For those who do not like to tear themselves from home to go in search of foreign and salubrious climates."

Lady 1: Bravo, Doctor.

Lady 2: Your writings will no doubt bring favour and future to the town.



Meyrick Scene

Piano playing. The crowd starts singing "All Things Bright and Beautiful" from inside the audience and moves into the Meyrick area taking cut-out figure and forming a clump through which the Vicar, Brown and Smith come. Crowd reactions, listening and congregation.

Vicar: Good day, Mrs Brown, Mrs Smith.

Mrs Brown & Mrs Smith: Good morning, Vicar.

Mrs Smith: I didn't see many of Sir George Meyrick's servants in church this morning, did you, Vicar?

Mrs Brown: People of Sir George Meyrick's household were certainly in attendance. I myself counted them as we left the residence this morning.

Vicar: Will you both be present at the stone-laying for the new cemetery on Thursday? Such an historic and necessary addition for our Bournemouth population.

Mrs Smith: I could not agree more, Vicar. Health-giving town indeed! Our graveyard space has been filled by those seeking a cure. Thank goodness for the new cemetery.

Vicar: Yes, indeed! God can be thanked for his ...

Mrs Smith: It's not God we should be thanking. Mr Clapcott-Dean has ...

Mrs Brown: That kind of commentary could only come from a housekeeper of the lower class. Thank you for your enquiry, Vicar. Indeed, our whole household is preparing for the occasion of the cemetery stone-laying – from the stable boy through to the lady’s servant. Our staff will be turned out fit to honour our master, Sir George Meyrick’s place in Bournemouth.

Mrs Smith: And just remember when you’re all turned out in your Sunday best up at Charminster who gave the land for the cemetery. Our Mr Clapcott-Dean may not be a “sir” but I’ll wager he’ll have given most of your household their very own burial plots!

Vicar: Ahem, yes, well, if you’ll excuse me ...

Mrs Smith: You must admit it’s not recognition of just rewards, Vicar – to invite old Sir George to lay the foundation stone when our Mr Clapcott-Dean gave the land!

Vicar: Ahem, I do have the choir to attend to ... Good day!

Mrs Brown: Good day to you, Vicar, and Mrs Smith.

Mrs Smith: I say there’s no recognition of just rewards in this town!



Russell-Cotes Scene

The focus of the audience is taken up to the gallery where the Matron and children from the World War II scene are walking around the balcony. Brief dialogue. A child coughing. They sing Bye Bye Blackbird / I’m Happy.

Annie: The town is a haven for invalids from London and afar who benefit from my husband’s vision of conversation halls, grand drives, pavilions and charming walks in every direction. And more than the sum of that vision, we seek to give Bournemouth a soul, to provide for those, like us, who reside here. And in that pursuit, Merton, my dear husband, had wisely suggested the building of a hospital which treats those with fever and its like.

A worthy venture one would have felt, but one upon which the town’s feelings were divided.

The crowd moves into the audience and begins to come towards the staircase menacingly with the cardboard cut-out of Russell-Cotes, murmuring and calling out.

Crowd Member 4: How will this hospital affect the value of our houses, if you please?

Baker/Manservant: We must think of our sick people surely, not our personal gains.

Crowd Member 5: That's all very well for the very privileged such as yourselves, but I don't want my small income threatened.

Crowd Member 3: And what about infections? Surely the good doctors behind this folly need to protect the health of the townsfolk of Bournemouth.

Maid: Yet another complaint about the hospital siting.

Annie: I have it on good authority there will be no more danger to you if a fever hospital is placed next door or several roads away. Imminent physicians have advised us ...

Crowd Member 2: There stands no reason for siting a fever hospital so close to our healthy families.

Baker/Manservant: This is the third anonymous letter today.

Annie attempts to continue speaking as murmuring from the crowd interrupts her until the cut-out of Russell-Cotes is held high in front of the stairs by the crowd.

Annie: A site has been chosen ... near to nursery gardens in Boscombe ... as easy distance from the centre of Bournemouth ... Sir Merton is giving the people of this town a gift to help save lives, to improve the health of the general populace ... you have no right to ... are we not together seeking to create a very soul for this sea and land we inhabit? Are we not...?

Crowd (*interrupting*): We don't want no 'fever' hospital under our noses!
What about our properties near to such a site?
Infections to spread from the sick aren't what we want in Bournemouth!
Have you thought about the depreciation in value of our land?
No fever hospital for Bournemouth – we don't want no fever spread here!

Crowd Member 1: Then put the hospital in the Royal Bath Hotel's garden, Lady Anne!

Crowd Member 2: Put yer 'fever' patients by Russell-Cotes' committee men!

The crowd supports and the cut-out is raised up.

Crowd Member 3: And see how they'd like it!

Crowd Member 1: Poisoned by the air that sick men breathe. We won't stand for it.
Burn his effigy!

Crowd Member 23: And burn his committee!

The crowd starts a chant of “Burn them” which ascends in volume. The crowd climb the stairs and the movement climaxes with the ritualistic destruction of the Russell-Cotes cardboard cut-out. They go up the stairs and past Annie and exit through the front doors.

The Seeker comes to check Annie is all right after the crowd has passed her on the stairs.

Annie: The incident was troubling – but Sir Merton, with the support of a few local doctors, was determined the hospital would be built. It seemed objection lay in the choice of the word ‘fever’ hospital and I suggested the word ‘sanitary’ be substituted to appease, which my husband agreed to, and a suitable site was acquired near to some nursery gardens.

Heather: The Royal Victoria Hospital in Boscombe. Served the sick of the town for over a hundred years.

Rose: Until they knocked it down and put up low cost housing!

Seeker: People need a place to live.

Heather: And just look at the beautiful new hospital we’ve got at Littledown.

Rose: But what was wrong with the old one? I spent months visiting father in that place.

Annie: As Sir Merton used to say, “This town will only grow through change. People won’t always like it. But change it must”.

Rose: Was that before or after they burnt his effigy in the streets?

Annie (*to audience*): We travelled to the Far East. The strain of the public rebukes ... we were advised to go abroad ... for his health. He had tuberculosis!

Dr Granville (*on Balcony*): “... a perfect blessing for those who do not like to tear themselves from home to go in search of foreign and salubrious climates”.

Seeker: But you came back to Bournemouth. There is something special here – the sea has a lot to do with it. People arriving, working, defending, threatening, changing – like the sea swelling and ...

Portchester Boy: Taking us with it. Not just us lads – but strangers like you. Come! It’s not just this stuff here that’s the town. Come!

Seeker follows him and calls out to Heather, Rose, Annie and the audience.

Seeker: I know there’s something special here. Come and see.

Dialogue as Heather, Rose and Annie start to leave and the audience moves:

Heather: Come and listen to some young voices! (*Sounds OFF are heard*). Every day fresh breezes on our sea. Let the wind ruffle your hair a touch. We're still alive! There's plenty to do in Bournemouth. (*She exits*)

Annie: Bravo! The spirit of improvement lives on! The town must face the challenge of the new!

Rose: But what if the past is better? Like your Victorian pictures?

Annie: So delighted you enjoyed our collection of contemporary art.

Rose (*amazed*): But father always said you were traditionalists.

Annie: If I listened to talk of that nature, madam, I should never have enjoyed myself so much travelling about overseas!

They exit followed by the audience to the New Gallery.

The Community Group move to the garden to set up for final song around the Tramp and Fox image.



Scene 8

The Wishing Well

The New Gallery

Portchester School

The audience is ushered into the New Gallery by Portchester Group. The boys make their wishes and invite the audience to cast their wishes into the net suspended over the spiral staircase. "And We Who Stay" played on the recorder 3 times.

SONG: And we who stay
In the rich turbulence of arrivals and departures
We must be, as the ever changing sea
Swelling, soothing, embracing
Enchanted by our place
Enchanted by our place and our people.

Song is heard from below and the audience follows the recorder player down the stairs. At the bottom of the stairs, the recorder tune changes to "By the Sea".

The Community Group are in position around the Tramp and Fox image and sing "By the Sea". The audience is ushered to move into the grass area facing the sea.



Scene 9

Finale

In the Garden Facing the Sea

The Company

When all the audience is in place, the Tramp and Fox voiceover is played.

Voice: "I love to walk along the sea front down by the sea cliff. One evening at sunset at the top of the Zig Zag, I met an old tramp enjoying his beer. We stood at the edge watching a fox patrol the undergrowth, sensing colours all around, lilac, pink and blue-green all around the sky and sea. We chatted and this man told me how every night he watched the fox and had become friends with it, feeding it pieces of sandwich when he had some. It came very close to him at times. It was beautiful moment, shared by two strangers enjoying the evening ..."

Tramp and Fox people move back with the group. Company sings "Where Do We Belong".

SONG: Where do we belong?
Where do we belong?
Look to the past to find the reasons for today.

Undercliff and Overheath,
In the town and on the streets,
On the cliffs
On the cliffs,
In the shops
On the beach,
In the Square
By the Bourne
By the sea.
Where we all come from
Where we all come from.

Where do we belong?
Where do we belong?
Look to the past to find the reasons for today.

Tuckton and Turbary
Southbourne and Springbourne
Boscombe and Moordown
Winton and Pokesdown
All make our town
Where all of us belong.

All of us can own

Final Chorus: sung quietly as a round as soloist sings.

Where do we belong?

Where do we belong?

Look to the past to find the reasons for today.

Solo:

Pulchritudo Salubritas

Populas Spiritus

Hodie Hodie.

FINALE:

This is where we belong

This is where we belong

Our song of parts make up the whole

Not just one view

Not just one view

But many hearts make up the whole.

Company bows.

*Then pick up samba instruments and move down the path to the sea in a samba rhythm to
"Where do we belong?"*

The audience moves out behind them and processes down the path.

The audience spreads along the fence to see the image of the boat being launched.

The End