

WIMBORNE COMMUNITY THEATRE

Where the Waters Meet Christchurch Priory, 1994



Outline of Scenes 2 & 4 by Christchurch Infant and Christchurch Junior Schools

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Narrative links throughout play: Fisherwoman, Grandad, Rebecca

Scene 1 ([link to Scene 2](#))

*The Fisherwoman leads procession off through the Priory Gardens to the site of Scene 2:
World War II (Christchurch Infants)*

Scene 2: World War Two

Fisherwoman: So here we are back at our first port of call
 The Priory over fifty years ago
 With the same towering stone walls as now
 Behind us the water flows gently by
 As Grandad feels his childhood stirring

Luke: Where are we, Grandad? Will we find Rebecca here?

Grandad: I'm not sure, Luke. There's something familiar about this place.
(Reference to sandbags or relevant World War II monument on site.)

The band strikes up the refrain from 'Run, Rabbit, Run'.

Grandad: I remember that song! We used to sing it, Luke, during the War! *(he joins in)*

Luke: Who are they, Grandad?

Children enter, singing, then sit down. One boy, Steven, is crying.

Miss Little: Stand up, boy!

Grandad: Why, it's Miss Little, my old headteacher, from the Infants School.
Yes, Miss Little, alive again – with my class teacher ... now, what was her name?

Miss Little *(to Miss Evans)*: Come along, Miss Evans ...

Grandad: Miss Evans, of course! Poor Miss Evans!

Fisherwoman: And who's the boy looking so forlorn
With a jumper that is rather worn?
Grandad?

Grandad: My goodness, Luke ... it's me and I'm a boy again!

Miss Little comments on the evacuees and, in particular, Kevin.

Miss Little: Miss Evans, what on earth is wrong with this boy and why is he snivelling so?

Miss Evans: Well, he is an evacuee.

Miss Little: I don't care, boys are not supposed to cry, we've all got to be brave!
We're all missing our mummies and daddies in London.

Two Girls: Yes, we are. *(the other children agree)*

Miss Little: I know you are, but we must not let Mr Hitler upset us. Cottage Home children, stand up! Now look how smart these children are! At least you've got mummies and daddies back in London! They're not going to let that Mr Hitler beat them! There is a war going on, children.

Miss Evans starts crying.

Miss Little: No, Miss Evans! Not in front of the children!

The children laugh in the background but are silenced by Miss Little.

Miss Evans: Oh, but it's my Sidney, he's off fighting somewhere.

Miss Little: On the front?

Miss Evans: Yes.

Miss Little: You should feel proud, woman! This country is in our hands, come on, Miss Evans, stiff upper lip!

Miss Evans: Oh yes, I'll try my best.

Miss Little (*to the children*): Well, I hope that you're all very happy to be here in such a lovely place as Christchurch, especially our friends from London. Would you like to hear the story of the 'miraculous beam'? One of the Cottage children can tell them. Yes, you, Karina.

Karina: When they were building the Priory ... (*she tells the story of the miraculous beam*) ... so that is why Jesus came to Christchurch.

Kieron: How did Jesus get to Christchurch?

Miss Little: He came down from Heaven, in the sky. Why, dear?

Francesca: We saw someone coming down from the sky the other day. Was it, Jesus?

Chloe: It's true. We saw a trail of blood in the playground.

Sarah: Maybe it was a squashed tomato. (*the children giggle*)

Fiona: So was it Jesus?

Rebecca: Maybe it was the German parachute.

Miss Evans: Oh yes, that's probably right. Everyone's talking about the parachute!

Miss Little: Yes, Miss Evans, but not in front of the children! Now, children, we all should know why we're here today. Don't we? We're here to practise our play for the Reverend when he comes to see it. I'm here to see how it looks.

Miss Evans: Yes, we have been practising, Miss Little.

Grandad speaks while the children get into costume to act out Bible story.

Grandad: Do you remember, Luke? I told you about this ... every year we had to act out a play when the Vicar came to the school to do the Scripture inspection ... we had some fun, I can tell you! Yes, that year we did the story of how Jesus chose the fishermen to be his Disciples. 'The special friends' Miss Little called them. I still remember it – do you know, I do believe that was when I first grew interested in fishing, Luke!

Miss Little: The title of the play please, Miss Evans.

Miss Evans: 'How Jesus Chose His Friends'.

The Infants act out the story as it is narrated:

How Jesus Chose His Friends

Narrator: This story happens on the Sea of Galilee.

It was a wild night,
There was thunder and lightning,
The waves crashed,
The fishes swam and danced.

Four fishermen were in their boat on the Sea of Galilee,
Their names were James, John, Simon and Andrew.

They cast their nets into the sea and the waves lashed,
And there was thunder and lightning,
And their boat swayed from side to side.
Their net tore and they caught nothing,
And the fishermen said ... *(children speak)*

Now at this time Jesus was preaching to a crowd on the beach,
Jesus saw the fishermen's boat so he went over and got onto the boat
and spoke to the crowds.

Jesus: This is the word of God.

Narrator: Then he said to the fishermen,

Jesus: Launch out into the deep and let down your nets.

Simon: We have toiled all night and have caught nothing.

Jesus: Trust in me.

Narrator: So they did as Jesus had said.
And the waves crashed,
And the fishes danced,
And the fishes were caught,
And the fishermen were amazed!
Thunder and lightning.

Fishermen: It's amazing! I can't believe it!

Simon: Leave me, Jesus, we are not good enough for you.

Jesus: Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

Narrator: And so James, John, Simon and Andrew gave up everything they had
and followed Jesus.



Scene 4: In the Priory

*Christchurch Juniors' Scene: The audience is seated in the round.
Rebecca appears dressed as a Saxon Worker. She becomes the narrator.*

Grandad & Luke: Look! There's Rebecca! We've found her at last! Rebecca!

Fisherwoman & Chorus: She can't hear you
You'll have to wait
And watch our final tale
Of nine hundred years ago
Rebecca's journeyed far tonight
For a miracle to come to light.

Rebecca (*Narration*): The first time it happened
We were not sure
We looked in awe at the moving stones
The Normans were angry
The Normans were our Lords
We were Bishop Flambard's serfs
His to command
So all through the next days
And all through the next nights
We slaved until those stones
Were back up St Catherine's Hill.

Movement sequence begins. Front half dragging ropes. Back half pushing cart with stones up the hill to music.

Sam, as the Monk, steps out and shouts.

Monk: Lord wants a church!

Group 1: The Lord wants a church
So we must build it
Flambard wants a church
So we must build it.
(*Front half*) Heave! (*Back half*) Ho!
Up the hill
Up St Catherine's Hill.

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Normans: The Lord wants a church
Saxons: Push the stones
Normans: Flambard wants a church
 Crack the whip
Saxons: Heave-Ho!
 Up the hill
 Up St Catherine's Hill.
Normans: The Lord wants a church
Saxons: Push, push, push!
 Flambard not God!
 Hush! Hush! Hush!
 Crack the whip
All: Heave-Ho!
 Up the hill
 Up St Catherine's Hill.

Monk: Stop, rest, all of you!

All collapse in the centre. Nuns distribute bread.

Monk: Thank you, Lord, for our Daily Bread. Brother Thomas will you lead our prayers?

Thomas: Dear God, is this what you want? If so help us. We've been working so hard, we need your help. Please protect us against the Normans. Tell our masters we are good people.

Monk: Let us sleep.

All sleep. Music. Gradually Saxons awaken each other and sing as they circle around to follow imagined goings on.

James (*in pulpit with Rebecca*): We woke up to a flash of light (*all shield their eyes*)
 Saw him walk through the doorway of the clouds (*eyes and point*)
 The new foreigner
 Carpenter, with scars on his side,
 His hands and feet.
 He was walking, (*still seated move torsos around*)
 Walking up the hill
 AND THEN THE ...

All: Stones moved, moved and rolled,
 Down the hill, down the hill,
 Down St Catherine's Hill.

Zoe & Emma: Now this carpenter's kind and good
 Works with us for nothing in return

He's a silent man.

All: Stones moved, moved and rolled,
Down the hill, down the hill,
Down St Catherine's Hill

Zoe, Emma & Rebecca: He has twelve friends with circles of light
Glowing above in the dead of night.
He's a silent man.

All: Stones moved, moved and rolled,
Down the hill, down the hill,
Down St Catherine's Hill

Rebecca: We were filled with wonder
But also with fear at
What the Normans would say
Now Flambard had a sister
A powerful lady
Determined to have her way
I remember we gathered
Where the waters meet
And sought God's guidance that day.

The Builders (Tony, Jamie, Mrs Duddell, Michael, Kelly, Jennifer and Tom) gather together.

Tony: So you're quite sure, friends, brothers, what you saw last night?

Jamie: I saw a foreign carpenter walking up the hill.

Crowd: Yes. yes, so did I.

Tony: How will Mademoiselle Flambard ever believe us? We don't want to
upset her.

Mrs Duddell: I think we should make a stand!

Some agree.

Tony: Can't you remember what happened to you?

Michael: Yeah, I remember! My sister had her eyes poked out!

Kelly: They chopped my brother's hand off!

Jennifer: I was put in the stocks the other day.

Mrs Duddell: Why?

Jennifer: Because my pig got loose!

Tom: I think we should make a fight for freedom!

A few more agree.

Michael: Hush, they're coming.

The Norman Guards (Sam, Beth and Joanne) arrive.

Sam: What's all this?

Beth: Move! Mademoiselle Flambard will be here very soon.

Joanne: Be quiet!

Mademoiselle Flambard's Ladies in Waiting (Zoe, Hayley and Joanne) arrive.

Zoe: Place the chair over there!

Hayley: Put the goblet down!

Joanne: Mademoiselle Flambard's entourage is coming.

Mademoiselle Flambard (Sharon) arrives.

Mlle Flambard: Make them stand!

Zoe: Would you care for a drink?

Mlle Flambard: Yes, and, Hayley, fan me!

The Saxons stare at Mademoiselle Flambard.

Mlle Flambard: I don't want to see their faces.

Sam: Saxons, get up! Go over there now!

Lucy: Hide your faces!

A Monk (Daniel) presents a salmon to Mademoiselle Flambard.

Mlle Flambard: What is this? One of your pagan Saxon rituals?

Tony: No, one of your brother's orders.

Mlle Flambard: Ah yes, that reminds me. I had a letter from my dear brother, Bishop Flambard, just the other day, and he was very disappointed at the progress of the church. Very disappointed!
(turning to the guards) Are they working hard enough?

Sam: No, not really.

Beth: They're working all right for Saxons, I suppose.

Mlle Flambard: Yesterday? Were they working hard yesterday?

Sam & Beth: Yes.

Mlle Flambard: Perhaps they don't understand the plans. Show them the plans.

Erika: Stupid lazy Saxons. These plans are really clear. It is Bishop Flambard's vision to build the church at the top of the hill with the finest stone. Do you not understand, you Saxon fools. You Saxons are so lazy.

Mlle Flambard: Quiet! You see, I've had a letter from my brother, Bishop Flambard, a great friend of the King's. He says "The Priory must be built on top of St Catherine's Hill as I commanded, as close to the Heavens as possible. This is his vision. So why are the stones at the bottom of the hill?"

Saxons come forward to explain.

Saxons: Last night we saw a foreign carpenter walking up the hill.

Mlle Flambard: A foreign carpenter?

Saxons: Yes, and he had twelve men with him and they had circles of light round their heads.

Mlle Flambard: Circles of light?

Saxons: And last night when we saw the foreign carpenter walking up the hill we thought it was Jesus and his Disciples.

Mademoiselle Flambard and the Normans laugh loudly.

Mlle Flambard: They thought it was Jesus and his Disciples! As if Jesus would visit you peasants! If Jesus came, he would visit us Normans, who are your Lords. Get rid of them! Make sure the strangers are not allowed into the camp again.

Zoe: Mademoiselle, can't you see they are trying to trick you?

Hayley: They are jealous of you, that's why.

Joanne: Saxon fools! Liars!

Saxons: We're not liars!
We're people of God!
We do not deserve this!
Spare us!
We are good people!

Mlle Flambard (*to Monk*): My brother, the bishop, and I have high hopes of you. Look up and see! There are treasures on earth as well as in heaven. We are relying on you. Make sure that that Priory is built on the top of St Catherine's Hill or you may forget any dreams of becoming Prior.

Mademoiselle Flambard and Ladies-in-Waiting exit.

Tony: Get back to work, all of you.

Repeat of dragging the stones work sequence. This time in short staccato bursts along diagonal, punctuated by drumbeats from Normans.

Tony: Brothers, friends, tonight we must keep watch. Rest now.

All sink down again but this time in the corner to allow for the entrance of effigy.

Music. Rebecca speaks from the pulpit.

Rebecca: Weary as we were
We stayed awake that night
And it happened again
We were bathed in light
Around me I heard
My brothers and sisters
Singing in the night.

All (*singing*): The Disciples and the Lord
Want the church built where two rivers meet
Hold us in their flow

Chorus: Stones moved, moved and rolled,
Down the hill,
Down the hill,
Down St Catherine's Hill.

River of hope and rivers of peace
Rivers of love the Avon and the Stour
Hold us in their flow.

Sam, Stuart, Simon and Victoria carry on large stone they have found. They call everyone. The Monks arrive too and all gather into the centre. The stone is held aloft.

Sam: Godwinus! Everyone! Look, what we've found – down between the two rivers.

Stuart: There's a strange footprint carved into it! Look!

All form a circle around the stone.

Simon: And there's words cut into it too! Read what it says, Victoria.

Victoria: 'Dear Normans: I have decided that the Priory must be built between the two rivers not on top of St Catherine's Hill. Yours fatherly, God'.

All are amazed. Mlle Flambard and her entourage appear hurrying around in a circle. They surround the Saxons. She is furious that the stones have been moved again.

Mlle Flambard: What is that?

Hayley: It's one of the Priory stones.

Stuart: It's got a foot carved in it.

Simon: We found it by the river.

All: We believe it has been sent as a message from Jesus.

Mlle laughs and orders them to place their foot in the footprint. Mrs Duddell refuses – she is too scared. All the others refuse. Mademoiselle Flambard puts her foot in it and freezes.

Rebecca: We all watched Mademoiselle Flambard's eyes
Glowing with something like warmth
We all heard the secret words she spoke
Even though her lips never moved.

Thought Tracks

Sam: How can it be?

Kelly: I've been wrong!

Stuart: Should I take their side?

Hayley: God should have sent the signs to us!

Erika: I know! I'll say it's one of their Saxon jokes!

Mlle Flambard (*loudly*): You can't fool me! You made the footprints yourselves! There has to be an explanation! I'll send a letter out immediately to my brother Bishop Flambard. He will sort you out! You will all wish you had never done such a thing!
(*to servants*) I must rest now. It has all been too much for me. Take me to my chambers. I must sleep. I feel strange.

The Normans exit murmuring their concerns. The Saxons make a decision.

Mrs Duddell: We must place this stone in some safe place immediately. Come.

They leave praying.

All begin to hum Lullaby as Norman servants bring on bed and place it under the canopy in the centre, covered with a bedspread. Thomas, Katherine, Emma and Donna play music.

Lullaby

Sleep, sleep as the waters meet
Mademoiselle Flambard, you're safe in this Keep
Out Saxons discord and pray to our Lord
And think of Normandy your dreams will be sweet
Sleep, sleep as the waters meet
Mademoiselle Flambard, you're safe in this Keep

All the Norman servants leave. Dream Sequence begins slowly.

Dream Sequence

Rebecca: That day they say she had a dream

All enter slowly to music and form hill and church surrounding Mademoiselle Flambard kneeling.

Through a swirling mist
She saw the Priory built
On St Catherine's Hill
And as the doors opened
She went inside

Holly enters as Mademoiselle Flambard.

But then she heard a noise
A deafening roar
And the church fell down
With Mademoiselle still inside!

All collapse.

But to the earth's darkness
Came a ray of light
And Jesus appeared
She couldn't hide!
But saw him point and say ...

James: The Priory must be built
Where the waters meet
Between Avon and Stour
Not up St Catherine's Hill.

Community Group enters as rivers and ocean. Jonathan sings.

Jonathan: When you pass through deep waters I am with you
When you pass through rivers
They will not sweep you away!

Mlle Flambard: I have changed my mind! Build the Priory at Twynham! Where the
Waters meet.

Rebecca: She heard the rivers
She learnt their song
Her heart was changed
The plans re-arranged.

All celebrate. Dance round and off.

Grandad: Yes, that's how they came to build the Priory on this very spot!
Helped by a foreign carpenter, who mysteriously disappeared at
mealtimes and on pay days!

Luke: And who stretched the beam when they cut it too short, Grandad!

Grandad: Yes, Luke! You've learnt the story well! The story of how
Christchurch came to get its name! You know, when I first heard it
from Miss Little back in 1940 it made me feel that Christchurch was a
very special place. A place where everything was possible.

Fisherwoman (*to audience*): That's how I like to see things
The old and the young
Stories being passed down
From one age to another
Like they always have been
Here in Christchurch
The rivers have gone on
Flowing into the sea
The salmon have gone on

Swimming up and down
From gravel bed right
Up to the Arctic waters
And back again, back again
As long as they go on doing that.

Luke: Can we have Rebecca back now, please?

Fisherwoman: I think you deserve that, Luke. She's had a long journey and needs a rest.

She goes up to Rebecca and sings to her as before. She takes her robe from her and returns her to present-day clothes.

Rebecca: Grandad, Luke! How did we get here inside the Priory?

Grandad: That's a long story, Rebecca! I'm not sure whether you'll believe me if I tell you.

Luke: It all started with the Fisherwoman on Castle Hill.

Grandad: But it ends with us. We've work to do.

Rebecca: What?

Grandad: To make sure those rivers stay clean.

Luke: So the salmon can go on swimming.

Grandad: And the waters can go on flowing ...

Rebecca: I so loved travelling back in time. Can't I stay there in the olden days?

Grandad: Rebecca, may you always keep your love of the past alight within you, as a torch to light your way to the future.

The song is heard as the whole company appears for the Finale.