

**SC 1 SIBLINGS ON THE SHORE AND ARRIVAL**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| USHERS: ROSE, DAISY & JASMINE, <i>Allotmenters</i> | Tuppy Hill, Anna Hillmann, Clare Small                                 |
| ANGLER   | Julian Skellett  |
| SAM, <i>Eldest Grandchild</i>                      | Amy Pickford (WED/FRI); Annemarie Hodgson ( <i>THURS/SAT</i> )         |
| JAY, <i>Younger Grandchild</i>                     | India Murray (WED/FRI); Sammuel Koppel ( <i>THURS/SAT</i> )            |
| LESLEY NECTARBEL, <i>A Celebrant</i>               | Barbara Hart   |
| CHILDREN   | Rushcombe School, Yr 4s  |
| CHOIR  | Palida plus Jeff Hart; Jackie May; Kat Courtauld; Amy Pickford (Thurs) |

SPIRIT GUIDES (carrying the river PUPPETS) 1. OTTER (Stewart Bullen) 2. WATER CROWFOOT (Sue Bullen); 3. CADDISFLY (Luke Davies ) 4. EEL (Dave Morgan) 5. SALMON (Helisha Lindon) 6. KINGFISHER Sammuel Koppel (WED/FRI) India Murray (THURS/SAT)

MUSICIANS

**SC 2 FIRST PORTAL**

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| JAY                                      |               |
| OPAL TRUING Guardian of the First Portal | Kat Courtauld |
| ADAR TRUING Guardian of the First Portal | Shaine Singer |

**SC 3 FIELD OF SHRINES**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| MUSICIANS                               |   |
| THE GREAT PLAFONDOLI                    | Nichola Christie  |
| CIRCUS FOLK                             | All playing SHRINE Guardians & Spirit Guides, Jane & Dave, Jeff & Barbara |
| GUARDIAN OF THE SPRING BUTTERCUP SHRINE | Jeff, Barbara   |
| GUARDIAN OF THE SUMMER MAYFLY SHRINE    | Eva, Jane, (India/Sammuel )   |
| GUARDIAN OF THE AUTUMN FROG SHRINE      | Heather, Helisha, Jackie  |
| GUARDIAN OF THE WINTER HERON SHRINE     | Alan/ Tuppy   |

|             |                                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| THE MONSTER | Clare / Anna / Luke /Kat/ Shaine |
|-------------|----------------------------------|

**Sc. 4 THE TREES THAT TALK**

|                                     |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| LORD WIM                            | Dave Morgan        |
| LADY WIM                            | Jane Skellett      |
| QUERCUS RIBUR, The Oakman, a Singer | Ed Bersey (Palida) |
| COURTIERS, MESSENGERS               | All cast           |

**Sc. 5 THE DANCE ON THE HILL**

CHOIR  
MUSICIANS  
THE MONSTER

**Sc. 6 ON THE SHORE AGAIN**

The Great Plafondoli (Nichola)  
Lesley, the Celebrant (Barbara)  
SPIRIT GUIDES (GUARDIANS OF THE RIVER)  
1. OTTER/AKA GRANDAD (Stewart) 2. WATER BUTTERCUP (SUE); 3. CADDISFLY (Luke) 4. EEL (Alan) 5. SALMON (Helisha) 6. KINGFISHER (India/Sammuel)  
**Pre-set** Ushers greet **audience** by gate and entrance to the site.

- *They put them in role as people coming to celebrate DAN GARD (Grandfather) 's rich and colourful life.*
- *TOUCH TOUR OF JANE 'S MODEL FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED AUDIENCES*
- *Audience bring (if they attended workshop) or asked to find a spirit animal talisman from a selection secreted close by – each has one of 4 colours of ribbon attached to be put round neck. These will correspond to Scene 3 SHRINE groups.*
- *Escort audience to site of celebration, where a table is set, with props on it.*
- *ANGLER sitting on opposite riverbank.*
- *SAM seated facing river, watching ANGLER on the other bank.*
- *JAY is among audience in first scene site, awkward, looking at phone.*
- *USHERS become ALLOTMENTEERS guiding audience into position for first scene*
- *USHERS hand out tiny glass of Pea-pod wine to audience. Tell them not to drink before toast)*

### SCENE 1 SIBLINGS ON THE SHORE

**Location - 'Beach' area facing river, island to right.**

*Table is set. Dark soft cloth covering it. Microphone and amp placed on it ready for the celebration. Not far off, SAM is sitting, staring across the river at an angler. As audience approaches CHOIR enter from either side of audience, in front of SAM & JAY, face audience, backs to river.*

#### SONG

*THE WATER by Jonny Flynn.*

All that I have is a river  
The river is always my home  
Lord, take me away, for I just cannot stay  
Or I'll sink in my skin and my bones

[Chorus]

*The water sustains me without even trying  
The water can't drown me, I'm done  
With my dying...*

[Verse 2]

Please help me build a small boat  
One that'll ride on the flow  
Where the river runs deep and the larger fish creep  
I'm glad of what keeps me afloat

[Chorus]

[Bridge]

Now the land that I knew is a dream  
And the line on the distance grows faint  
So wide is my river, the horizon a sliver  
The artist has run out of paint

[Verse 4]

Where the blue of the sea meets the sky  
And the big yellow sun leads me home  
I'm everywhere now; the way is a vow  
To the wind of each breath by and by

[Chorus]

*CHOIR parts smoothly to sides, revealing JAY & SAM facing the river –sitting.*

SAM: Look, J! *(Stands up. Turns to JAY)* Doesn't he look like Grandad? *(Moves forward)*

JAY *(walking through audience to get closer to SAM)*: Don't go so close to the water, Sam. *(Pause)*  
It's not safe.

*(SAM ignores JAY, moves further towards river)*

JAY: Sam! Did you hear me?

SAM *(turns to face JAY and including audience)* It is safe. *(Gesturing angler without turning)* I'm sure that's him. *(Now turn to look at angler)*

JAY: Of course, it's not. *(Moves to get SAM away from water - in profile)* Come and stand here with me, Sam *(Grabs her arm)*

SAM *(shaking JAY's arm off her)*: I'm not a child. Remember, I'm older than you. I don't like it when you talk down to me.

JAY: I'm not...*(moving closer. Stage whisper)* Don't show me up in front of all these people, Sam. //

SAM: // You shouldn't be on your phone all the time. You know Grandad didn't like it.

JAY: I'm not.

SAM: You were. I saw you.

*(LESLEY, A CELEBRANT arrives through audience, carrying notes on clipboard with AUDREY, carrying Granddad's Diary extract 1, which they place at front centre maybe on a table. Welcoming audience as they move)*

LESLEY *(TO SAM)*: Hello, Jay, Sam! *(Gets closer, stage left of SAM. A little concerned)*. All ok? Are we ready?

SAM: I think so ..And, d'you know? I thought for a minute that was Grandad over there .

LESLEY *(to SAM)*: Well, Sam – I'm sure he is here...in a special way. Would you mind moving a tad that way, Sam *(Points stage right)* SAM moves left a bit. JAY moves away into audience, embarrassed, LESLEY Adjusts microphone. *During LESLEY'S speech, cast members make audible responses in relation to GRANDAD)*

LESLEY: Do gather round, everyone. *(wait till they do and encourage)* I'm Lesley Nectarbel, the Celebrant for today's commemoration. Lovely to have so many people here to celebrate the rich, colourful life of our dear departed friend, Dan Gard, *(All go Aah!)* in the presence of his beloved grandchildren, Sam and Jay. Sadly, we weren't able to do this when Dan died, because of the Pandemic. *(Pause)* But now we can! *(Look at notes)* Born and bred in Wimborne, Dan went to the old Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School and was a choirboy at the Minster. He loved words, puzzles and natural history. Later, he became a much-loved teacher. And for relaxation he took an allotment by the river *(indicates adjacent allotment)* – in his final years, just over there!- and was well known for his giant peas! He was also a keen diary writer, as we shall hear. But his abiding passion was this river, the River Stour – fishing, walking beside it, looking into its ever changing waters. And *(Drops notes)* ...oh dear, excuse me a moment...

*(MUSIC. SAM takes mic to help LESLET. AUDREY helps to recover notes. Business).*

ROSE, ALLOTMENTEER 1: And who's going to tend his allotment plot now, eh? Jay?

DAISY, ALLOTMENTEER 2: No. Never leaves the house. Maybe Sam?

JASMINE, ALLOTMENTEER 3: Too challenging....what with her *problems*....

DAISY, ALLOTMENTEER 2: Seen the state of it now? All dried up and gone to seed.

ROSE, ALLOTMENTEER 1: Dan must be turning in his grave...

JASMINE, ALLOTMENTEER 3: He was cremated, no?

SAM//(*interrupting, taking microphone to AUDIENCE*) : Grandad knew everything about the river – all the names of the creatures living in it, all the plants ...we used to come here together...and we had adventures...with Trixie...his dog! I loved Trixie. She smelt...musky.

JAY (*under breath*): Gross!

SAM (*to audience*): She used to comfort me ... if I was sad.

JAY: Sam!

LESLEY (*getting back into position*): Don't worry, Jay. It's lovely to hear Sam's memories.

JAY (*to LESLEY*): But we agreed she'd speak later.

SAM (*to JAY*): You didn't even want to come today!.... (*JAY embarrassed*)  
S/he's always in his/her room, playing computer games, (*To JAY*) You never go out.

JAY: // That's not true! (*To audience*) The only reason I haven't been out much is 'cos of the COVID.

SAM (*to CELEBRANT*): When I talk to J, s/he doesn't even look at me – just stares at his/her phone. I hate it!

JAY: Sam!

SAM: I don't think you even loved Grandad in the way I // (*did*).....

JAY: // That's a lie! I did love him...just as much as you...

LESLEY (*awkward, to audience, takes microphone from SAM, changing subject*): Oh dear, it was all going so well, until...Let's move on, shall we? (*To audience*) Expect you all know that Dan 'Grandad' was a bit of a practical joker? Once he got four fresh fish and 'planted' them in his allotment and when he called his neighbours over to see the new 'vegetable' he'd grown - he pulled them out - shouting "Blimey! These must have jumped right out of the river, into here!".

ALLOTMENTEER 1: True enough – I was there!

ALLOTMENTEER 3: And you fell for it!

ALLOTMENTEER 1: Course not.

ALLOTMENTEER 2 & 3 (*laughing*): You so did!

SAM: I remember! So funny!

JAY: You weren't even there, Sam!

SAM: I was! You weren't born then! //

LESLEY (*To audience*) Now to remember Dan Gard's work as a teacher, Year 4 Children from a local First school, where he used to volunteer, helping with reading and gardening, have been studying The Environment and how to protect it - something very close to Dan's heart. With their teacher, they've made a song and dance in Dan's memory. Please give them a very warm welcome!

GIRL 1: One of Mr Gard's favourite picture books was The Lorax by Dr. Seuss. The Lorax is a spirit who cares for the lovely Truffula Trees in the land of Gricklegrass

BOY 1: In the story, the selfish Onceller cuts them all down.

GIRL 2: In our song, we imagine planting new seeds to bring the Truffula trees back.

BOTH: THE SEED-PLANTING SONG.

*(Music. MIME. A child enters with a trowel to make the hole. Two others come and place compost in the hole. Two more bring the seeds and place them carefully. Lastly, a girl brings a watering can and waters them.*

*Then the children dance and sing their seed planting song)*

SAM: Thank you very much, Grandad would have loved that! Brilliant!

LESLEY: Delightful. Now, time for a toast. let's all raise our glasses of Dan's homemade pea wine to our dear friend – Dan Gard!

ALL: Dan Gard!

*(As we drink something magical happens. LIVE Music, **The Choir** sing a chant to welcome the masked spirit guides. LESLEY leads SAM to mid stage left next to her. JAY moves down stage right*

*OTTER (AKA GRANDAFATHER), arrives first, by boat. He steps onto the river bank and slowly moves forward. He animates the totem OTTER, leaning forward and sweeping otter to the sides in a figure of eight. This cues the others SPIRIT GUIDES, previously concealed down a path at DSR.*

*CHOIR CHANT: Latin names of creatures appearing, followed by English name 'Lutra, lutra, Anguilla, Salmo, Ranunculus Aquatilis, Alcenidina, Tricopetra, Otter, Eel, Salmon, Water Buttercup, Kingfisher, Caddis Fly.*

*WATER CROWFOOT, EEL, CADDIS FLY, SALMON, KINGFISHER at the rear, all carrying river creatures/plants on poles like totems. They each do a short figure of eight along the line at the rear.*

*Then, without a word WATER CROWFOOT (SUE) leads them downstage, followed by the others up the bank. CROWFOOT presents Sam with a magical totem and escorts her off diagonally through the audience they head towards a portal that opened for them and they disappear.*

*Meanwhile, JAY notices that SAM is going too. Tries to follow).*

JAY (*shouting*): Sam! Where are you going? Sam! I'm not chasing after you?! You're on your own! I'm going home!

LESLEY (*approaching JAY, in much more dramatic manner*): Jay! You can't leave Sam to go alone through the portal? She needs you.

JAY (*to AUDIENCE*): Why do I always have to look after her! Like she says, she's older than me!

LESLEY: She's your sister, Jay. Follow her!

JAY (*crossing stage to left through audience*): Excuse me, excuse me... I want to go home.....This isn't my kind of thing...

LESLEY (*stopping JAY with the umbrella*): Here (*gives J multi-coloured umbrella*). Take this – it'll keep you safe on the journey. Just put it up if you feel in danger and you will be protected.

JAY: I can't do this...I don't know how.

LESLEY: You won't be alone on your quest, Jay.

JAY: Huh?

LESLEY (*gestures to audience*): They're all coming with you – through the Portal.

(*To AUDIENCE*) Aren't you?

(*AUDIENCE agree – hopefully!*)

LESLEY: Good luck to one and all!

(*To MUSIC, J & AUDIENCE set off towards the Portal*).

## **SCENE 2 PASSING THROUGH THE FIRST PORTAL**

*As the audience following AYJ approach the portal, OPAL & ADAR TRUING, Guardians of the Portal appear, raised up.*

BOTH: STOP!

OPAL TRUING: I said STOP! I am Opal

ADAR TRUING: And I am Adar.

BOTH: We are the guardians of the First Portal!!

OPAL: We're here to help you to sift through your thoughts and feelings

ADAR: and chuck out what doesn't work.

JAY: But we have to get through.... ...I've got to find my sister, Sam...

OPAL: Jay, you cannot pass through the Portal, // until you..

Jay: // How do you know my name?

ADAR: We know everything. We are the Guar...//

OPAL: // Adar! I haven't finished!

ADAR: Whoops! Sorry, Opal!

OPAL (*To J*): You cannot enter...until you prove to me that you are properly atuned.

JAY: Attuned to what?

ADAR: Balanced

OPAL: Attuned to the natural world, of course – in the way your grandfather was!

JAY: Oh...I can stand on one leg – look!

ADAR: Good start, Jay!

JAY: Is this another of Granddad's tricks? A sort of game?

ADAR: You could say that.

JAY: I just did.

ADAR: Yes.

JAY: Yes, I did? Or yes it's a game?

BOTH: Yes. Both.

JAY: This riddling's bugging me....(*Pause*) But it reminds me of a computer game I've played...you had to open windows by...by...pressing a buzzer to make a sound! And if you do it right...you get something...a sort of reward...is that it?

OPAL: No.

ADAR: Sort of.

JAY: Which?

BOTH: Both.

OPAL: Keep going, Jay.

ADAR: You're very warm.

JAY (*to audience*): Granddad Dan loved practical jokes ...he knew about the computer games I play... thought it was crazy spending so much time indoors...but... he was interested....

OPAL: Come on, Jay! What is it that sparkles in the sunlight?

ADAR: Like an opal, eh Opal?

OPAL: Or an Ada-mite, Adar.

JAY: Sparkling? Treasure!! That's it! Grandad's hidden some treasure...and we have to find it! Is that it?

OPAL (*motions to audience*): Maybe. But you need to be atuned, Jay.

ADAR: Do you know any 'tunes', J?

JAY: Well.....

OPAL: You can ask your friends here to help you!

JAY (*to audience*): Can anyone here sing?

OPAL & ADAR: Everyone!

ADAR: Sorry, folks! All or nothing.

OPAL: "To make the Portal open, Jay,  
Make mouths into full moons

ADAR: An Earth C must show the way,  
Until each one of you is well attuned.

J (*to audience*): Earth C?

(*Audience – including choir*) sing *Earth C*.  
All gradually join/ When done, OPAL gestures them to stop.

OPAL & ADAR:  
Music to our ears!

ADAR: With C, you see,  
The Portal's open - to you it yields!

OPAL: Go off on your quest, feeling free  
To find the secrets of the field.

BOTH: And may the rhythm of the River Stour  
grant you balance, wisdom and power.

OPAL: One last thing, Jay! (*pause*) Hand over your phone!

JAY: No way!

OPAL: You must make this quest alone.

JAY: I can't manage without it!

OPAL: It's the price of entry through the Portal, Jay.

JAY: No! That's so not fair.. Why // not?)

ADAR:// Please don't moan! Or we'll tell Auntie Joan!

OPAL: Who's Auntie Joan?



*(ADAR shrugs.)*

ADAR: Please pretty please?

*(JAY hands over phone)*

OPAL: Well done, Jay.

ADAR: Sorry, Jay. Have a lovely day! All of you!

*(Music plays as everyone passes through the Portal)*

### **SCENE 3. THE FIELD OF SHRINES AND THE MONSTER.**

*As OPAL and ADAR raise flags, JAY followed by Audience walk through first portal.*

*They see flags, shrines in distance.*

*MUSIC: Band strikes up and plays circus music for procession through path to shrines.*

*CHILDREN in fish headdresses dancing freely – in circle or playing games e.g. tag*

*HALF ENSEMBLE = circus performers preparing for their show They don't initially see the audience and continue to practise their acts and talk with each other.*

*On a cue from band – whistle - ? Ensemble catch sight of the audience and jump into position, then making a procession across the field to the shrines, encouraging the audience to join in the choreographed steps and finally forming a circle at the shrines.*

*As cast jump into position, children form a fish shoal and move towards the centre of the shrines*

*OTHER HALF ENSEMBLE stay guarding shrines. Dancing about, waving flags.*

*AUDIENCE are led into mown centre of the 'RING' surrounded by SHRINES, where some of ensemble are dancing.*

PLAFONDOLI *(climbs onto raised dais)*: Roll Up! Roll up, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls. Gather round. Welcome! I am The Great Plafondoli! Your *Field* Marshall, you might say. *(Wait for laugh)* Or not – because you are standing in a Great Floodplain which, once upon a time, was part of the River Stour.

JAY: Excuse me, *(wait for reaction from PLAFONDOLI)*, but how long is this going to take?

*(All cast shocked)*

PLAFONDOLI: You must be Jay!

JAY: How did you know?

PLAFONDOLI: Are you ready for the Test?

JAY: Test? Had enough of those at school

PLAFONDOLI: The Test's part of your quest, Jay. A game. *(To audience )* I hope you brought your tents, my friends, because this game goes round in circles – one calendar year to be precise.

JAY: No! we can't possibly stay that long! I have to find what happened to Sam. Where's she got to? Sometimes she gets carried away and confused... and...

PLAFONDOLI: To understand our world really and truly, you need to go through the seasons, Jay – spring, summer, autumn, winter.

JAY: But Grandad’s hidden some treasure – and maybe Sam...//!

PLAFONDOLI (*jumping down and circling*): // Thing is, time works differently here.

JAY: We don’t have time! (*jumps onto raised dais, addressing all audience, in round.* ) You see, I was mean to Sam... and I need to find her ...to make it right ...and...//

PLAFONDOLI (*advancing on JAY*): // Listen, young Jay- you’ll not find Sam, unless... you slow down and spend more time with....nature.

JAY: I don’t like nature!

(*PLAFONDOLI mock faints and is caught and fanned by cast*)

PLAFONDOLI: But you like games, Jay – don’t you?

J: Yeah, on my computer, but...//

PLAFONDOLI//: Don’t worry, Jay, the audience will play the game with you! Won’t you? They’ll be like the Argonauts to your Jay-son. Here are the rules. Music, maestro!

(*PLAF. pushes JAY off the dais and re-mounts it herself. Drum Roll or shaky instrument*)

We have four shrines going clockwise - North, East, South, and West. (*SHRINE MEMBERS echo this in turn, repeating names to orient audience*) Each shrine is dedicated to a creature or plant, living in this river area. Your task – to discover how they are all connected..... by looking for clues in the shrines. But you won’t have long, cos “...*Summer’s lease hath all too short a date*” – as... **who** said, Jay? No helping him on this, audience...

JAY: That’s easy – Shakespeare.

PLAFONDOLI: Correct! Well done, Jay! (*Encourage audience & cast to cheer*)

JAY: I remember Grandad used to recite that off by heart. “*Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?*” How many points do I get?

PLAFONDOLI: Sorry, Jay – that was a pointless round!

JAY: That’s not fair! (*Down to the ground, thumping earth*)

PLAFONDOLI: Life rarely is! Shall we get on with the main game, and not play the blame game, cos it ‘d be a flood-plain shame if...? //

JAY: Stop!! Let’s get on! No more wordplay, please!

PLAFONDOLI: Very well. (*To audience*) Now, audience, we’re going to divide you into four groups. Please check the colour of the ribbon on your lucky talisman. Hands up...Purples? Yellows? Reds? Whites? (*Wait for response from each*) Start with the shrine that matches your ribbon colour. You have 5 minutes to explore each shrine. And, when I ring this bell (*Demonstrates*), you move on

clockwise to the next shrine. *(Repeat clockwise, cast doing Mexican wave, starting with Winter shrine people, Tuppy/Alan).* (To audience) So - are you ready to help Jay win the challenge by working out what connects the four shrines?

JAY: Yay! Let's go for it!

PLAFONDOLI: ...Let's play .....

SFX Drum Roll

PLAFONDOLI & ALL CAST : '**Secrets of the Stour**' ! *(Loud and long S-t-o-u-rrrr!)*

*(All cheer. Music, as audience led in groups to first station, according to their colours. JAY goes around, moving from one to the other and ad libbing as appropriate. MUSIC stops so audience can hear each Guardian and the pre-recorded SFX.)*

*Audience in **four** groups visit the four shrines: - (SPRING - Common Water Buttercup/Crowfoot ; SUMMER – Mayfly ; AUTUMN – Frog; WINTER – Heron; in no particular order as audience in groups go to each clockwise in carousel)*

*As audience approach each shrine, they hear recorded sound effects.*

### 1. SPRING SHRINE Common Water Buttercup/crowfoot. JEFF/BARBARA

**SFX. Visual – Pollination cycle of Water Crowfoot. Poem and Grandad's diary extract in shrine.**

SPRING GUARDIAN *(Jeff)*: Welcome to the Spring Shrine. Come closer. *(Wait till they do)* Behold this lovely river plant. Ranunculus - her Latin name. So, for your first question: *(Pause to build tension)* by what name is she **commonly** known?

*(B moves the puppet. Pause as they think & and listen to SFX).* Here's a clue from a poem by Edward Thomas: *(or...if they guess quickly... You're right! Listen to what the poet Edward Thomas wrote):*

JEFF *(by heart)* : "Clearer than any goddess or man's daughter...  
... while it combed the dark green hair  
And shook the millions of the blossoms white  
Of water-crowfoot..."

*(B makes puppet shiver)*

JEFF: Well? *(Pause)* Yes, it's .... *Common Water Crowfoot!* *(slowly)* Maybe she got this strange name because she travels upstream by hitching a ride on birds' feet. A true fact, ladies and gents. So for your next clue – *(getting out granddad's diary extract from shrine)* an extract from Grandad's diary, written when he was 72, in May 2002. *(Reads)* "Sam and I took Trixie down by Julian's Bridge last week and came across a floating bed of ranunculus coming into flower, thousands of busy bees pollinating. But I was worried how much lower the water flow has become".

BAR *(off book)*: ' "Why's that a problem?"'

JEFF: 'asked Sam. I told her: " Low water levels build-up silt which means less oxygen, less sunlight reaching the roots, threatening the plant's future and the creatures who depend on it.. Sam went quiet. Then she said:

BARBARA *as Sam*: “I Wish Jay had come with us. He needs to know this too.”

*(B manipulates puppet once more)*

*(When bell rings, JEFF ushers audience on clockwise, to YELLOW summer shrine)*

## 2. THE SUMMER SHRINE - with Guardians 1 (JANE) & 2 (EVA)

*(SFX of Mayflies)*

**G.1:** Welcome to the Summer Shrine. Gather round and look at this river insect.  
*(indicates puppet)* Can you guess what it is? Listen for a clue!

**G.2:** *(manipulating puppet)*

G 1. Mayflies! Short-lived and sensitive creatures - they prefer chilly water and as the temperature rises, it gets harder for them to breathe. Did you know, water pollution kills up to 80 percent of their eggs. Now, to help with your challenge, let’s hear what Granddad wrote about mayflies in his diary. *(Takes out diary extract from shrine)*. July 2010 he wrote this, when he was 80.

*(reading from the diary page)* “Hardly a mayfly to be seen on the river. I told Sam about the first time I saw them, when I was a nipper, with my dad. There were thousands about and the trout went bonkers, leaping out of the water to snap them up. Some got away - headed straight for the willow and disappeared. “They’ll be back” Dad said. After about two hours they were - they’d shed their skins and transformed into Spinners!

G2: “Like magic”,

G1: said Sam. “No!” I said “That’s nature”. The male Mayflies swarmed in a strange dance, luring in the females, so they could mate before flying off and dropping their eggs on the surface of the river. Then died, gobbled up by trout. Meanwhile, the males flew back to the trees and were gobbled up by birds. And to cap it all, Dad caught a whopping trout -over 20”!

BOTH: Nature!

*(Ad lib until bell rings then guide audience on to red Autumn shrine)*

*(When PLAFONDOLI'S bell rings, they encourage audience to move on to the Autumn shrine).*

## 3. AUTUMN FROG SHRINE (GUARDIANS – Heather; Jackie; Helisha)

**VISUAL:** *life cycle of frog = frogspawn – Tadpole = Froglet – Frog = eating flies*

HEATHER: Come along, welcome to the amazing Autumn Shrine. Gather round to pay your respects to the fabulous, shape-shifting frog!

JACKIE: Star of fable and fairy-story! *(speaking to the puppet frog, manipulated by Helisha)* : First, a riddle: Where does a frog keep its money?

*(Pause for audience to answer)*

HEATHER: In the riverbank.!

*(FROG PUPPET sighs)*

HEATHER: This one’s harder... True or false.... A Frog breathes underwater through its skin?

JACKIE: Yes, through its skin and lips! *(To puppet)* True, isn't it?

*(FROG PUPPET nods head, as if to say 'True')*

HEATHER *(gets out diary extract from shrine)* : And now for your next clue – an extract from Grandads' diary: October 2015, He was 85, and still a true froggie fan.

JACKIE: Went down the allotment today. As we were shovelling leaves onto the log-pile, Sam whispered 'Frog'! And we saw two tiny eyes flashing, and a dark patch like a mask and pebbly olive skin. Then it vanished.

*(Puppet jumps and 'vanishes.')*

HEATHER: Sam couldn't believe frogs sleep through autumn and winter and mate in the spring to produce... frogspawn... which become ...tadpoles, and so forth. I told her I played a frog in a Greek play at school, and we had a laugh when I remembered the chorus. It went:

*(PUPPET reappears and joins in 'Ko-ax-koax-koax')*

HEATHER/JACKIE:

*When we splashed in the sun*

*Oh wasn't it fun*

*Mid the weeds and the sedge*

*At the pond's muddy edge.*

*'Ko-ax, koa-ax, ko-ax!*

HEATHER: All the way home, Sam went.

HELISHA: 'Ko-ax, ko-ax, koax'

JACKIE: very croakily. *(All laugh)*

ALL: How we laughed.

HEATHER *(steps forward to audience)* : All the labels they give Sam at school, but with me, close to the river,

ALL: She's a bright button.

*(ad lib until bell rings)*

#### **4. WINTER HERON SHRINE (GUARDIANS - Alan & Tuppy)**

ALAN: Welcome to the Wonderful Winter shrine.

TUPPY Come close and pay your respects. (*Goes to be puppeteer*)

ALAN: Question: What brilliant bird moves from stillness to stillness? (*TUPPY Manipulates puppet*). A heron. (*More puppeteering/ We listen to heron's call SFX*) Who knows what a heron will do if you feed her bread? (*Pause. HERON moves head*) Answer - It uses the bread as bait to catch a tasty fish!"

(*PUPPET Moves fast*)

ALAN: Clever, eh? Not many birds do that!

TUPPY (*after putting puppet down: Now here's your next clue. (picks up diary extract from shrine)*)\_ From Grandad's Diary : December 2019 - he was 89 then. (*Passes diary to Alan. Returns to manipulate puppet*)

ALAN: Unseasonably mild weather again. Feeling stiff in my joints. Slow walk with Sam. Jay didn't want to come - as per usual. Almost at once, we spotted a Grey Heron on the edge of the riverbank, hunched down, neck bent over chest, cape of grey feathers over white breast. "Like a statue" Sam said. Then some idiot came past, shouting: 'Look at that thing!' Sam started shaking with fury. I touched her shoulder gently, to calm her down.

(*TUPPY does more puppeteering for next phase*)ALAN: The heron croaked loudly, spread her long wings wide, flapped them once and rose into the white sky. No fish for her today. Hope she makes it through the winter. Hope I do too.

(*ad lib as necessary until bell rings*)

### **AT END OF SEQUENCE OF FOUR CYCES**

(*THE GREAT PLAFONDOLI rings bell and summons us over. When all arrive...*)

PLAFONDOLI: Are we all gathered back in the ring? Good. Time to find out how you got on. First up... Jay – What have you found out about the Secrets of the Stour??

JAY: Heard lots about Sam – but I didn't find any treasure...

PLAFONDOLI: Maybe yet to come, Jay. Did you get the answers to our little riddles?

JAY: Well...yes..sort of...

PLAFONDOLI: Let's check shall we? Question – (*speaking hurriedly to build tension*) What do herons do if you feed them bread?

(*CAST making ticking clock sounds*)

JAY: Er...eat it?

PLAFONDOLI: Tell him, audience? (*Wait for right answer or say*) Use it as bait to catch fish. What about this one, Jay: What percentage of mayfly eggs are killed because of pollution? Is it 30%, 50%, or 80%?

(*CAST repeat clock sounds*)

JAY: Er...30...no 50%

PLAFONDOLI: Audience? Yes 80%. Tut-tut! Wrong again, Jay. Not doing very well, are you? Never going to find Sam at this rate!

JAY: I knew frogs kept their money in the river-bank! Ask me another...

PLAFONDOLI: Too late, Jay! Only the audience can save you now, Sam. *(To audience)* Who thinks they've worked out how all the four shrines are connected?

*(While 4 or 5 MEMBERS OF ENSEMBLE probe audience (JEFF; TUPPY; JANE; HEATHER; SAMMUEL/INDIA), PLAFONDOLI leads OTHERS in clock countdown sounds fx. PLAFONDOLI ad libs gathering answers until ready – not too drawn out process!).*

PALFONDOLI: The answer is: each creature and plant depends on each other in a seasonal cycle. herons eats frogs, frogs eats flies, flies live off ranunculus and dead herons rot down to become part of plant-life....all go round and round in a circle! But there's more, Jay, over here .....

*(PROBE TO GET AUDIENCE TO ADD 'They are all threatened by pollution and climate change', repeat that too. Audience may also allude to JAY opting out of GRANDAD and SAM's nature rambles? If not, PLAFONDOLI will introduce this herself)*

PLAFONDOLI *(and CAST close in on JAY)*: Sam was always there for grandad but Jay...Jay stayed away!

ALL: Jay stayed away!

JAY: Because...//

PLAFONDOLI: // Climate change means lower water levels, Jay...

ALL Draining away, Jay!

PLAFONDOLI: And as the temperature rises, it gets harder for organisms to breathe, Jay!

ALL: To breathe....

PLAFONDOLI: And Blooms of algae form, staining the river like pea soup, Jay!

ALL: *(Gulp for breath, 'aaaaah!' sound)*

PLAFONDOLI: Over extracting gravel destroys the spawning grounds for fish and insects, Jay.

ALL: *(Crescendo, Gulp for breath, 'aaaaah!' sound)*

PLAFONDOLI: Sewage overflow and pesticide run-off polluting the river, Jay...

ALL: *(Loud, Gulp for breath, 'aaaaah!' sound)*

JAY: Stop! Stop! Can't cope with this. I'm stressed out! Don't want to know...!

*(We hear the roar of the MONSTER as it approaches)*

JAY: Huh?

PLAFONDOLI: The Monster!

JAY: What? What shall I do?

(CAST run for it, leaving JAY and audience. *(MUSIC as MONSTER approaches.*

JAY: *(puts up umbrella and flutters it at MONSTER. To audience)* Come on! Run for it!

(JAY hurries away, followed by audience. MONSTER watches them go, then moves off towards river and finds hiding place)

***(END OF SCENE 3)***

*(The creature remains in the offing, around the Shrines, noises from it.*

#### **SCENE 4 THE TREES THAT TALK**

*Rest of cast has run from shrines' area to become Courtiers to LORD & LADY WIM, ready to be lines of communication between trees. In middle between the oaks.*

*LORD and LADY WIM are gathering/assembling the COURTIERS as they arrive, handing out flags etc.*

*Meanwhile, JAY leads the audience via a different route, across field towards smaller oak tree.*

*SAM is hurrying towards JAY*

*QUERCUS ROBUR, The Minstrel, is sitting, perhaps on a tree trunk, facing the little oak tree, warming up his voice and singing softly into it 'O-O-O-O-O-A-K!' repeatedly, close to the Second Portal*

SAM: Jay! Jay! Over here! Come quickly!

*(JAY runs over to SAM. They hug. JAY points to the monster. As audience arrive, STEWARDS show them where to stand.*

JAY: I messed up, Sam!

SAM:- You're safe now. And I've got some news. I've seen grandad again.

JAY: Where?

*(SAM points to QUERCUS, near small oak tree)*

SAM: Over there.

*(As JAY walks towards oak tree, LORD and LADY WIM approach from different direction after inspecting the courtiers)*

JAY: Grandad?

*MUSIC. QUERCUS (OAK MAN) turns around slowly. Not grandad. Shakes head slowly)*

JAY *(disappointed)*: Oh.

SAM: I thought it was him, Jay.

JAY: Me too.

*(LORD AND WIM arriving)*



LADY WIM: Is Quercus ready to sing, dear?

LORD WIM: Warming up nicely!

SAM: Who are you?

LORD WIM: I am Lord Wim. And this is my wife...

LADY WIM: Lady Wim. We're the Guardians of the Oak Portal. This is our land.

LORD WIM: Don't be frightened. We want to help you.

JAY (*pointing at QUERCUS ROBUR, by the smaller oak tree*): And who's that?

LADY WIM: That is Quercus Robur. The Oak Man.

LORD WIM: Our Singer.

LADY WIM: He sings to the oak trees – (*to small oak tree*) this one is a young 'un – not even a hundred yet - that tall beauty (*pointing*) is the Mother oak. (*To LORD WIM*) Tell them how old she is, dear.

LORD WIM: Over two hundred years.

LADY WIM: She watches over the Minster and the Grammar School, the sheep and cows. The birds come to her, make nests in her crown and sing. And as for the bugs...

LORD WIM: Hundreds of tiny insects tickle her skin!

LADY WIM: Bark, dear.

LORD WIM: Woof! Woof!

LADY WIM: Not *that* sort of bark! Oh, Lord Wim –

SAM: That's as bad as Grandad's jokes.

JAY (*fidgety*) No disrespect, but we're pressed for time...

SAM: We're on a quest.

JAY: Our grandfather's left some hidden treasure and we have to find it.

LORD WIM: And we'll help you!

LADY WIM: So we have another game for you to play – but no circles. This time, it's straight lines!. Now, my little acorns, if your grandfather was here, what would you say to him?

(*SAM & JAY look surprised*)

LADY WIM: Come along!

SAM: "Where can we go to remember you best, Grandad?"

LORD WIM: That's a good question. And you, Jay?

JAY: Er...”Where is the treasure you hid. Grandad?”

LADY WIM: Very well. Those are the messages we shall send.

JAY: How do we send the messages?

LADY WIM: Through the trees’ roots!

LORD WIM: Yes, it’s an underground route! Ha! Ha!

JAY: Eh?

SAM: Trees send messages through their roots, Jay.

JAY: Oh, course. I knew that!

LADY WIM: Sam and Jay! We need you to be messengers too. Take these flags. *(SAM & JAY get flags)* Now I’ll explain the rules of the game.

LORD WIM: Yes *–(loudly)* ‘Flag’ ‘em up, dear!

*(All show flags up line).*

LADY WIM: He’s at it again! *(To JAY and SAM)* Using a flag, I pass the message to you, Sam. *(Action)*. You copy me, then turn around and passes the same message on to Jay. *(Action SAM sends message to JAY)* Now Jay copies you *(Action)* before turning and passing it on to the next messenger. *(Pause – no-one standing close)* Bother, Lord Wim!

LORD WIM: What is it, Lady Wim?

LADY WIM: We have a messenger gap! What to do?

LORD WIM: We need reinforcements! *(To audience)* Who’ll volunteer?

LADY WIM: To help Sam and Jay send their two messages up the line, till we reach the Mother Tree? *(Ad lib. Help choose some volunteers and take them to their places)*

*(To QUERCUS)*. Quercus! While we prepare, instruct the other guests how to sing the chorus to your Song.

QUERCUS (ED) Yes, Milud and Milady.

*(Ad libs into teaching audience the chorus. The WIMS prepare the flag-bearers up the line)*

LADY WIM: Are we all ready? Steady? Issue the command, Lord Wim!

LORD WIM *(very loudly)*: Messengers! Send the message!

LADY WIM: Sing up the land! *(She waves her flag).*

*(As QUERCUS starts to sing, the messengers start passing the messages up the line. When the messages reach the other end, a saxophone replies to QUERCUS. Then one message comes back down the line).*

QUERCUS: (sings) Remember, remember,  
a song to the oak  
and long for that tree  
to remain.

A song to the oak,  
the strong old oak  
who stands in the fields,  
so long she stands,  
her leaves and trunk  
and bough,

beside the river Stour  
above the old Grammar School  
and Minster tower

Wish health and renown  
to her broad green crown  
and her fifty arms so strong.

I see fear in her shade  
when the sun goes down,  
and the fire in the west fades out  
as she waits in the dark  
and wakes in the light  
and the birds in the nests  
sing in the spring

CHORUS  
Remember, remember  
a song to the oak  
and long for that tree  
to remain.

*(Once the message has arrived back)*

JAY: What is the answer to our question?

LORD & LADY WIM: “You must go to the mound! There you will find the treasure. The Secrets of the Stour.”

SAM: Where is the mound?

LORD WIM: Through the Oak Portal.

LADY WIM: Open the gate, Quercus

*SFX MUSIC*

JAY: Come on, Sam! *(They hurry to enter portal)*

*(LORD WIM and QUERCUS open the portal gates.)*

LORD WIM *(to audience)*: As you pass. Hold high your Talismans!

*Audience enters the second field. They walk up to the bottom of the mound.  
Sam and Jay lean on the accessible vehicle.*

*MUSIC here.*

*When all ready, engine off, the choir start to sing.*

### **SCENE 5 THE DANCE ON THE HILL**

*In front of the mound in the second field. On top of the mound, in the long grass stage right, is a large, treasure box*

*SFX A speaker situated nearby – to play Grandad's voice*

*(QUERCUS and ROBUR open the portal gates. The CHOIR are invisible at first, hidden behind the hillock)*

**CHOIR:**

our river

still sounding

is your river

still flooding

is their river

still ebbing

is my river

still flowing

is her river

still lulling

is his river

still drowning

all our rivers

still running

our rivers

running through (us?)

*(Second WCT choir joins them from stage left, entering through the upper entrance CHOIR disperse singing names of creatures we're about to see)*

*Otter, Eel, Salmon, Kingfisher, Caddisfly, Water Buttercup)*

*Towards the audience.*

*(Once all audience are assembled, The CHOIR part to let JAY and SAM ascend. SAM goes st left to look at view; JAY searches for treasure)*

SAM: It's so beautiful here!

JAY (*sees the TREASURE CHEST*): Look, Sam! There it is! (*SAM hurries over to JAY*) That has to be Grandad's treasure! (PAUSE)

SAM: (*To audience*) Look what we've found!

JAY (*carries treasure box downhill towards audience*): Shall I open it?

*(JAY gets audience to count '1-2-3, then opens the biscuit tin, A joke snake jumps out, making a hissing noise. JAY is angry.)*

JAY: Why did he do that? We've come so far....done everything the Quest said! And for what? A stupid Joke! Typical grandad!

SAM *(puts arm on JAY's SHOULDER)*: Don't get upset, Jay. *(Looking in box )* Look there's something else inside the treasure chest!

JAY: What is it?

SAM: A letter – *(looks at envelope)* addressed to us.

JAY: Open it then.

*(They open up and read the letter aloud)*

SAM: It's from grandad!

JAY: Read it, Sam.

SAM: “ Dearest Sam and Jay. If you're reading this, then you've completed your quest. Well done. I hope you're not too disappointed– that there's no treasure, at least not in the piratical way. ‘A-HA!’”  
*(To JAY)*: You read on...

JAY: *(reading)*” I've been a bit worried about you of late, Jay, and thought an adventure outdoors might be good for you “

*(SAM and JAY freeze. While they read the letter):*

*SFX We hear a recording of GRANDAD, speaking the words of the rest of it)*

GRANDAD'S VOICE: I've been a bit worried about you of late, Jay, and thought an adventure outdoors might be good for you. Do you like this mound? No-one knows exactly who lived in it or around. It may be a neolithic Bronze Age barrow – like up at Badbury. Remember? *(SAM nods)* Or maybe a mediaeval Motte and Bailey. I like that it's still a mystery. I found this place when I was a boy. And something about it has always called me back. It's where I felt most atuned to nature. I saw Swans, Ducks, Moorhens, Coots, Water Voles, Otters (hunted in those days), Grass Snakes, Frogs, Herons and all sorts of river fish. And rabbits and hares. At dusk, a Tawny Owl would prowl up and down the riverside, looking for something to pounce on.

*(Recording finishes)*

JAY: Sam....I wish...

SAM: What?

JAY. I wish I could love nature like you and grandad. It's just...But all this open space .....makes me feel....anxious....

*SFX MUSIC. the GIANT monster puppet reappears in distance from the second portal.*

JAY: Look! Even here! I can't cope, Sam! The whole world's in a mess...pandemics, war, climate change...pollution.....everything's a nightmare! *(Drags SAM uphill towards top of mound)* Let's go home, please!

(The MONSTER stops at base of mound – looks at audience. The roars turn into piteous whining, howls)

SAM: No! *(Pause)* It's in pain – trapped in rubbish, Jay! That's what's making it crazy. We've got to help. Can't just give up.

*(JAY is too frightened)*

LESLEY *(appears)*: The umbrella, Jay!

*(MUSIC. Movement. SAM & JAY go to the MONSTER with the umbrella. Using their umbrella and hands, they pull off the rubbish cloak. The monster disintegrates into several pieces – each a human. Each looks around as if reborn. They approach JAY. A tableaux.*

*(MUSIC. Gently, the ex MONSTERS lead JAY & SAM up the mound and over the top and down the other side towards the river, followed by the audience. ALTERNATIVE – audience walk around the base of mound).*

## SCENE 6 ON THE SHORE AGAIN

*(Trailer comes around edge of mound. At the shore there is a boat. **The Band** plays, and **The 6 Spirit Guides** reappear, positioning audience in front of river. Guides stand in front. JAY & SAM to one side).*

GUIDE 1 (OTTER): Jay, Sam, everyone. Have you enjoyed your quest?

SAM: Yes.

JAY: But there was no treasure.

*(All GUIDES tut)*

GUIDE 1 (OTTER - Stewart): That statement is as obscure as an otter

GUIDE 4 (EEL- Alan) Eclectic as an eel.

GUIDE 6 (KINGFISHER India/Sammuel): Colourful as a kingfisher.

GUIDE 3 (CADDISFLY Luke): Changeable as a Caddisfly.

GUIDE 5 (SALMON Helisha): Slippery as a salmon.

GUIDE 2 (WATER CROWFOOT Sue): Wistful as a water crowfoot.

OTTER: Not all treasure is shiny, Jay.

CADDISFLY: Not all treasure can be counted.

SALMON: The salmon is treasured for its thick pink flesh

KINGFISHER: But they can no longer live in the river Stour because of the poisons.

EEL: And the eels are struggling to find clear water to breathe in.

KINGFISHER: So, less food for the Kingfisher and the heron.

WATER CROWFOOT: Even the water crowfoot is struggling to breathe. Without clean water, where will the insects live?

EEL: If it carries on like this, most species will be gone.

OTTER: So, we've decided to take them away to a place of safety. A sanctuary.

SALMON: They will return when it is safer.

KINGFISHER: When you have reduced the pollution and made the environment habitable again.

CADDISFLY: We need you – all of you – to help.

ALL: Do you pledge to make this happen?

SAM /JAY: Yes.

*(AUDIENCE follow suit)*

JAY *(walks across to stage centre)*: Sam, you know what? The quest isn't over yet, is it?

SAM *(following to centre stage)*: No. You're right, Jay. There's work to do. I want grandad to be proud of me. Of us.

OTTER *(moves to centre, behind JAY & SAM. All other creatures/plant move in and form tableaux partially covering OTTER who removes mask, revealing it is GRANDAD)*:

SAM & JAY *(not really looking at him – but very aware of him)*: Grandad! Is it? *(Freeze)*

GRANDAD: I am not really here. But I want you to know I am proud of both of you. And now I must go. Down the river to the sea.

*(SAM & JAY nod)*

GRANDAD: Remember you can always come here to feel close to me. It's time to leave. But before I go, I have one last gift for you. *(Passes them a compass)*

JAY *(looking at it)*: A proper compass!

SAM: Thank you, Grandad!

PLAFONDOLI *(appears at DSL and addresses all the audience)*: To wish them well, please remove your talismans – and we will collect them.

CADDISFLY: We need to take them with us on the journey up river.

*(The guides collect the talismans that we found on the shore from the audience and place them on the boat. To the sound of mournful horns GRANDAD steps into boat and they row away. The other SPIRIT GUIDES leave by path. Smoke and a flare.)*

(moving to stage centre) JAY: Sam – you know Grandad’s old allotment? What do you say to us keeping it on?

SAM: Yay! We can grow peas on it. And make more pea-pod wine!

JAY (*sceptical*): Hmmm. Maybe. I’ve heard **blackberry** wine is quite tasty.

SAM: Shall we try out Grandad’s compass?

JAY: Yes – let’s see where it takes us. (*They exit up path to left or through audience and maybe up mound again. Stop to look at compass during song*)

LESLEY: The umbrella, Jay. You don’t need it now. (*Jay gives the umbrella to Lesley*)

(*CHOIR and CAST sing new version of hymn from scene 1  
Or another song??*)

The river is flo~wing, Flowing and gro~wing The river is flo~wing, Down to the sea Mo-ther ea~th  
carry me, Your child I will always be Mo-ther ea~th carry me, Down to the sea

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMTVhY2XwFI>

## **THE END**

(*All Cast bow*)

*Audience referred to walk back by river, listening to sounds of voices talking about the river, etc.*

*Audience also invited to stay for refreshments and a discussion about the future of the river with expert.*