



Welcome to VILLAGE IDIOT at Theatre Royal Stratford East

RELAXED PACK & A VISUAL STORY

All performances of Village Idiot will be performance in a Relaxed Environment.¹

The running time² of Village Idiot is 125 minutes with a 20-minute interval³.

Act 1 will last approximately 80 minutes

Act 2 will last approximately 45 minutes

This visual story⁴ is for visitors attending Village Idiot.

This pack also contains a Glossary with definitions at the end.

Relaxed Environment performances are open to all audience members, and can be useful for those with an Autistic Spectrum Condition, sensory and communication disorder, learning disability and anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed theatre environment.

For Relaxed Environment performances, there won't be any changes to the show itself but movement in and out of the auditorium is allowed, there is less emphasis on the audience being quiet during the performance and there will be a separate chill-out room for any audience members that require it.

Getting here

Our address is:
Theatre Royal Stratford East
Gerry Raffles Square
London, E15 1BN

The theatre is a short walk via the Great Eastern Road from Stratford railway station and Stratford bus station.

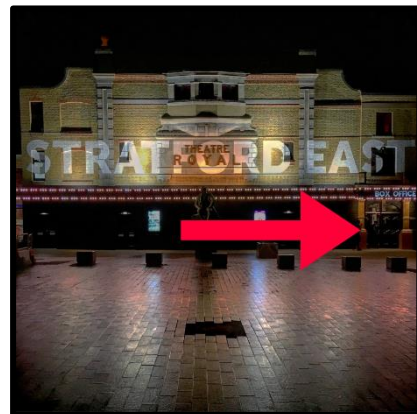
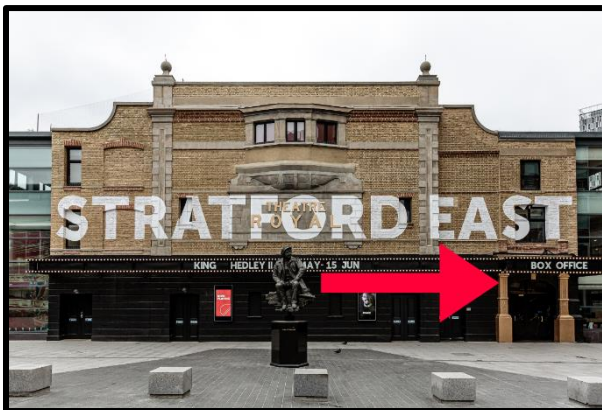
Stratford railway station is served by London Underground, DLR, TfL Rail and London Overground services.

The theatre does not have onsite parking. The nearby multistorey car park at the Stratford Centre is available, as well as limited parking spaces in the Stratford Picturehouse car park.

Entrance

Here is our building. The **red arrow** is pointing to the main entrance. These doors will be open from 12pm.

These photos show you what the outside of the building looks like during the day and at night.



The entrance is step free and the doors have an assistance button to open the door if not already open, and there is a ramp.

These doors will lead you into the **Ground Floor Foyer**.

Inside the theatre



Ground Floor Foyer

This is the main Ground Floor Foyer⁵. You may be asked to wait here before entering the **auditorium**⁶.

This area can get rather busy before the show starts.

At this point, the entrance to the **Box Office** will be to your right.



Box Office

This is the **Box Office**⁷. This is where you can collect your **ticket(s)**⁸ from one of our Box Office assistants⁹ and find information about other shows and events, as well as book tickets. To meet accessibility needs, we have a lowered section of the counter. Our amazing Front of House team can also look after any large bags or items during your visit if needed.

If you have an **eTicket**⁹, you will not need to collect your ticket(s) from the Box Office as they would have been emailed to you or can be downloaded from your online account¹⁰ on the Theatre Royal Stratford East website. However, visitors with an eTicket booking are still welcome to stop by the Box Office. As you leave the Box Office, you'll return to the Foyer. Feel free to take a seat or visit our shop – which can be found on the second right in the Foyer.



Shop - The Avis Bunnage Foyer

This is our **shop**, situated in the Avis Bunnage Foyer, named after the actress. You can buy a selection of sweets and merchandise¹¹ to enjoy. There is also a limited seating area available.

For Village Idiot, there will also be a display of the show including a Model Box, which is a small-scale version of the show's set design.



Lift

A lift is available within the Avis Bunnage Foyer to take you to First and Second Floors. The Dress Circle is on the First Floor. The Upper Circle is on the Second Floor.

If you find there is no available seating in the Foyer/Shop areas, you will find seating spaces in our bar.

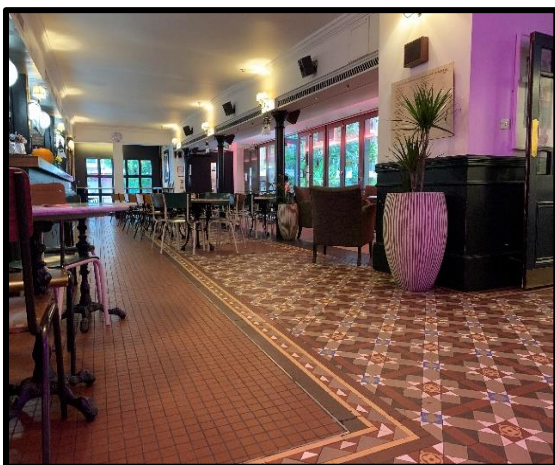
As you leave the Avis Bunnage Foyer and turn right, you will be able to see the door that leads to the Ground Floor toilet facilities.



Accessible Toilets

Here is the door to the toilet facilities. We also have an unlocked gender neutral accessible toilet facility available. If the door to the accessible toilet is locked, please ask a member of staff for the key. There are gender neutral accessible toilets located on every level, which you can reach via the lift.

There are also male and female toilets located throughout the building. The male toilets contain a mix of urinals and cubicles. The female toilets contain cubicles. There are also period disposal bins available in female toilets and accessible toilets.



Theatre Bar and Restaurant

Here is the theatre bar and restaurant¹², which is called Island Vibez Kitchen Stratford.

It has an open and friendly atmosphere with plenty of seating available and dimmed lighting.

This area can also get busy before a performance, and you may hear some loud noises.



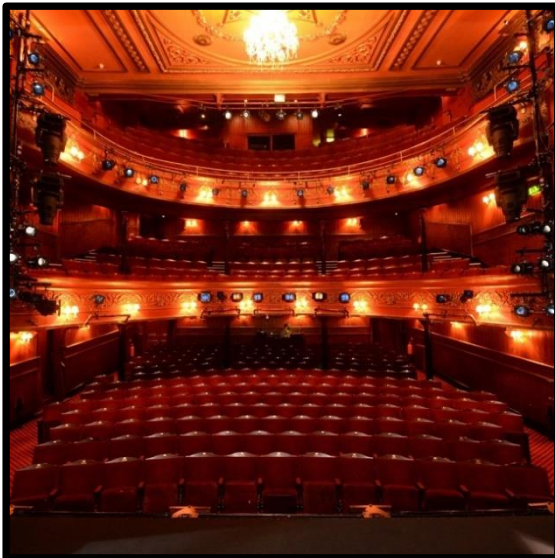
The bar sells a range of drinks, and food is also available to order.

Visitors can take their drinks into the auditorium. However, drinks must be in a plastic cup or bottle, as no glass is allowed inside the auditorium. Hot drinks cannot be taken into the auditorium.



Entrance and Exit from the Bar

The bar and restaurant can also be accessed from Gerry Raffles Square. A button-automated door and accessibility ramp is in place for those who may wish to enter/exit the building via the bar.



The Auditorium

The auditorium is where the audience¹³ sit when watching the performance. The stage¹⁴ is a space in the auditorium where the performance will take place.

The auditorium will open about 45 minutes before the show starts. You can find the time the show starts in your confirmation email and on your ticket. You will need your ticket to enter the auditorium. Your ticket will tell you your seat number¹⁵.

One of our Front of House Assistants¹⁶ will check and scan your ticket. They can help guide you to your seat and assist you during your visit.

Seating

There are three different seating areas within the auditorium.

The Stalls¹⁷

The Dress Circle¹⁸ (also called the Jean Brown Dress Circle)

The Upper Circle¹⁹

There will be plenty of time for you to get comfortable before the show. If you find that you want to be seated in different part of the auditorium, one of our Front of House team will be on hand to help you.

Stalls

The Stalls seats can be accessed on the **GROUND FLOOR**. Actors²⁰ may come into this area during the performance. For Village Idiot, the actors do not come into the auditorium.

If you are a wheelchair user, one of our Front of House Assistants can help direct you to your seats. The accessible entrance to the Stalls is via the fire exit door situated in Gerry Raffles Square.

ROW G within the Stalls offers a wider seating space to meet accessibility needs. Space is also available at the rear of the Stalls. There are six wheelchair spaces within the Stalls.

Jean Brown Dress Circle

The Jean Brown Dress Circle is a raised seating area, and may not be suitable for audience members with mobility issues. The Jean Brown Dress Circle is on the **FIRST FLOOR** and can be accessed with the use of the stairs or the lift. There are 16 steps from the ground floor foyer to the Jean Brown Dress Circle. There are further 6 stairs to the First Floor foyer where the toilets are located – including an accessible toilet. There are steps inside the Jean Brown Dress Circle.

Upper Circle

The Upper Circle is our second, and highest, raised seating area. This can only be accessed on the **SECOND FLOOR** with the use of the stairs or the lift. Accessible toilets are situated in the **Foyer Area** on this floor. There 14 steps from the Dress Circle to the Upper Circle. There are 4 steps between the Foyer Area and the entrance to the Upper Circle.

Accessibility

We encourage people to feel comfortable with sharing their access requirements with the Box Office team when booking tickets. We have accessible toilets on all levels of the building.

If you find that your designated seat does not meet your accessibility requirements, please raise this with our Box Office team and Front of House team member.

Chill out zone

If you find the theatre experience overstimulating during your visit, everyone is welcome to visit our **CHILL OUT ZONE**.

Chill Out Zones offer a comfortable and spacious environment where you can relax. The chill out zone is on **Level 1** in the **Ken Hill Bar**.

If you are seated in the Stalls and decide to leave the theatre early, you can exit via a back door at the rear of the Stalls. This will lead you to Gerry Raffles Square.

Glossary

1. **Relaxed Environment Performance:** Relaxed Environment performances are open to all audience members, and can be useful for those with an Autistic Spectrum Condition, sensory and communication disorder, learning disability and anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed theatre environment. For Relaxed Environment performances, there won't be any changes to the show itself but movement in and out of the auditorium is allowed, there is less emphasis on the audience being quiet during the performance and there will be a separate chill-out room for any audience members that require it.
2. **Running Time:** This is the length of time a performance will last.
3. **Interval:** This is a short break in the middle of a performance where the audience can enjoy a drink, visit the toilets or exit the auditorium for a short while.
4. **Visual Story:** A story that uses images to tell the story of the play and highlight key moments within it.
5. **Foyer:** A waiting area at the entrance of a building.
6. **Auditorium:** A large area where the performance takes place and the audience watch
7. **Box Office:** An area where tickets can be purchased and collected from, as well as ask for more information about the theatre, current productions and upcoming shows.
8. **Ticket/Tickets:** A small piece of card, which has specific details written on it such as names and seating arrangements, and allows the named person to enter the auditorium.
9. **eTicket:** Like a card copy of a ticket, only a contactless version on your phone, tablet or computer. It contains the same information, and would have been sent to you via text or can be access through your Theatre Royal Stratford East online account. You will need to access this in order to gain access to the auditorium.
10. **Online account portal:** This is the section of the website where you can view your details, bookings and eTickets.
11. **Merchandise:** Goods that are sold in the shop.

- 12. Theatre Bar & Restaurant:** A service in our theatre that provides a range of drinks and food to be consumed during your visit.
- 13. Audience:** A term given to the group of people who have come to watch a performance.
- 14. Stage:** This is the area of the auditorium where the performance takes place. Many actors and performers may be on stage at one time.
- 15. Seat Number:** Each seat in the theatre has a specific number. You can find the number on the top of each seat.
- 16. Front of House Assistant:** Members of staff who are placed throughout the theatre to assist our customers during their visit. They're here to check everyone's tickets, provide access assistance, provide information and guide people through the building.
- 17. Stalls:** The name given to the seats on the Ground Floor that are directly in front of the stage. This seating area also provides wheelchair accessibility.
- 18. Dress Circle:** The name given to the raised seating area on the First Floor. This is also known as the Jean Brown Dress Circle.
- 19. Upper Circle:** The name given to the second raised seating area on the Second Floor.
- 20. Actors:** A term given to a person who performs different characters. You will see them appearing on stage.

About the show and Content Warnings

Village Idiot is a new play by Samson Hawkins. The story is set in a (real) small countryside village called Syresham in Northamptonshire and follows the events of the village, which is going to be demolished by HS2 (high-speed rail). Our story focuses on two families – the Mahoneys and the Honeybones – and how they are coping with threat of losing their homes.

There are two distinct performance styles within the show. Some scenes are performed in a more traditional – or ‘naturalistic’ – way. Some scenes are performed in a more variety or cabaret style.

Village Idiot uses outrageous comedy to tell the story. It will certainly shock and offend some people. Some will be upset by the very strong language, which includes swearing, and jokes about race, sexuality, gender and disability. We're aware that it won't be to everyone's liking. The will hopefully challenge you and it may well make you reconsider your comfortable view of the world.

There are several moments in the show that contain loud noises, atmospheric sounds and flashing lights. There are also two instances of the smoking of herbal cigarettes and there is a prop gun (not fired on stage). These are detailed in the scene-by-scene breakdown below.

Language used within the show

The show contains strong language that some may find offensive. This includes repeated use of the ‘c-word’ and the ‘f-word’, fatphobia, as well as racist language including ‘pikeys’ and ‘oriental’. There are homophobic, biphobic and transphobic references such as ‘poof’, ‘bender’, ‘lady boy’ and ‘soft lad’. There are several instances of sexual references relating to anal and oral sex.

The show does not aim to condone the opinions expressed but aims to expose them for what they are (generally fear or ignorance) and acknowledges that these terms are used in real life and that people have different experiences and opinions.

Age Guidance

We advise that the show is suitable for those aged 14 and above.

Filming and photography

Filming and photography are not permitted during the show.

Latecomers

If you arrive after the show has started, a member of the Front of House team will show you into the auditorium.

Relaxed Environment Performance

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disorder, learning disability and anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed theatre environment. For Relaxed Environment performances, there won't be any changes to the show itself but movement in and out of the auditorium is allowed, there is less emphasis on the audience being quiet during the performance and there will be a separate chill-out room for any audience members that require it.

Captions

All performances of Village Idiot will be captioned. This means you can read what the actors are saying throughout the show by watching the caption units displayed either at the sides of the stage or above the stage.



Recorded Audio Description

Audio description is a verbal commentary via headphones on the visual elements of a production as it unfolds for blind and partially-sighted people. Performances from 19 Apr – 06 May of Village Idiot will have recorded audio description. If you require recorded audio description please collect a headset from Front of House.

About the Characters

Barbara Honeybone

Barbara is Peter's and Harry's grandmother. She raised both her grandchildren and loves them very much. She is very strong willed and is willing to fight for what she believes in. Barbara doesn't want her house to be knocked down by HS2.



Peter Honeybone

Peter is Barbara's oldest grandson, Harry's brother and Liam's best friend. He moved away from the village and thinks a lot of the ways people live in the village are wrong. Peter is trying to make a success of his career, but feels insecure that no one takes him seriously. Peter works for HS2 and wants the railway to happen.



Harry Honeybone

Harry is Barbara's youngest grandson, Peter's brother and Debbie's boyfriend. Harry likes things to be done a certain way and can become overwhelmed if things change. He is very much in love with Debbie. Harry doesn't want HS2 as it would stop him and Debbie being together.



Kevin Mahoney

Kevin is Liam's and Debbie's dad. He runs a fencing contractors, and owns a house, both of which are being bought by HS2. Kevin is a very forceful, and that can scare some people, but he is very loving to his daughter. Kevin is okay with HS2 as it is giving him the money to move to Thailand.



Liam Honeybone

Liam is Kevin's son, Peter's best friend and Debbie's brother. Liam is sad that most of his old friends have left the village. Liam is laid back and doesn't want to take things so seriously. He doesn't want HS2 as he will have to leave Syresham and move to Banbury.



Debbie Honeybone

Debbie is Kevin's daughter, Liam's sister and Harry's girlfriend. She is outspoken, passionate and will fight for what she believes in. She is very much in love with Harry. Debbie does not want HS2 as it would stop her from being with Harry.



What happens? Scene-by-scene breakdown

Please note that this contains spoilers.

Prologue – the opening



When the show is about to begin, music plays and Debbie Mahoney appears onstage in front of the closed curtain to greet the audience. Harry Honeybone enters with a clipboard and asks for the music to be cut. They both introduce the world of the play, telling the audience they will be watching a romantic comedy adventure that chronicles a battle against the evil HS2 (High-Speed Rail 2) in the countryside, specifically the village of Syresham.

They demonstrate how the captioning works and ask people to turn their phones off so as not to disturb others. They explain the performance is in a relaxed environment so people can leave and re-enter the auditorium if they need to. Debbie calls her father, Kevin Mahoney, to see if he is ready for the meat raffle. He pokes his head onstage, and he says he is not yet ready, but that there will indeed be a meat raffle. He leaves. Debbie encourages everyone to enjoy the show and exits.



Act 1 Scene 1



The curtain lifts as jaunty, upbeat music plays. The scene takes place in the sitting room of the Honeybone house. Barbara is unwrapping china plates from boxes, which are packed with bubble wrap. A very loud, profane song is playing on the radio (sound warning), which Barbara dances to. Peter Honeybone enters and turns the music off. They discuss her medication. Barbara makes a comment on her nurse's weight. She mocks Peter and tells him that Harry is in a relationship with Debbie. Peter teases his younger brother about his new relationship. Harry gets Camilla, his pet tarantula, to scare Peter, who is frightened. (This is not a real tarantula; it is a puppet.) Peter and Barbara argue about packing the boxes. Barbara and Harry need to leave their house because of a Compulsory Purchase Order (where a public authority can acquire land without the consent of the owner), as HS2, the high-speed rail company, is planning to demolish their house, which is also where Peter grew up, to make way for a new train route. Peter works for the high-speed rail company. Barbara becomes very angry and refuses to ever leave. Harry has a meltdown while singing the Syresham folk song 'Take Your Seats for Syresham' and breaks a plate. Barbara comforts him as the curtain goes down. (Please note that the actor is perfectly safe during these moments, and they are not having a real meltdown.)



Village Hall variety scene – The Award Show



A voiceover introduces Harry as the host of the Syresham Village Awards at the annual village fair. He enters in front of the curtain to present the last ever awards due to HS2's development, and Barbara comes onstage and interrupts him to express her support. He presents three awards, including the winner of The Syresham Scarecrow of the Year. Harry and Barbara win for their giant scarecrow of Queen Elizabeth II, which appears by being lowered in from the ceiling. Harry gives an emotional tribute to the departed monarch. They sing their own version of the National Anthem to say farewell to the Queen. Harry calls offstage to Kevin to see if he's ready for the meat raffle. Kevin crosses the stage with his gun and a shot and thud are heard offstage. Nothing is actually harmed by this.



Act 1 Scene 2



The curtain comes up and the setting for this scene is outside in a field where Kevin Mahoney and Liam Mahoney are eating Pot Noodles. Kevin and Liam discuss having to leave Syresham, and Kevin moving to Thailand where Kevin's new wife Sue lives. Liam is concerned that his dad, Kevin, is not prepared, and that moving will have a bad impact on Debbie. Peter enters the scene and is wearing lots of high visibility clothing. Kevin has to move out of his house due to the high-speed rail, thus he is irritated with Peter.

Kevin leaves the scene leaving the two boys alone. Peter and Kevin used to be friends but their relationship has changed since Peter left the village for university in London. They start building a fence and talk about how their lives have changed, particularly for Peter who has been exploring his sexuality since moving away from Syresham. They talk about their relationship and their past. The scene ends with Peter and Liam kissing against a tree as the curtain comes down. Neither of them has realised that Barbara has been watching them from the back of the stage.

Village Hall variety scene – The Rap



Please note – this scene includes loud music, flashing lights, violent language and high-energy dancing and the actors are wearing masks and balaclavas. We are now back at the Village Hall for the variety show. Liam performs a drill rap about the effects that high-speed rail will have on the countryside. The rest of the cast are dancing in the back as support. At the end of the rap Liam realises that he may have been over the top and regains his composure. He asks all those interested in nature to join the village's nature club, Pocket Park Pals. He also checks whether Kevin is ready for the meat raffle. Kevin is not ready yet.



Act 1 Scene 3



Debbie is sitting on a roundabout in the Pocket Park, waiting for Harry. Harry arrives late with flowers. They are in love and discuss how the destruction of the village is going to affect them. Harry explains that he's going to move away to Milton Keynes to live with his brother Peter. Debbie is worried about moving to Thailand. They talk about their relationship and Debbie's desire to take it to the next level - physically. Debbie dances for Harry flirtatiously. Harry gets flustered and isn't sure what to do. Debbie holds his hands, calms him down, kisses him, and puts his hand on her breast. They talk about how the world views them as disabled people and how unfairly they are treated. Debbie and Harry decide that they should lie to their families, run away together and get married. Neither of them has realised that Barbara has been watching them from the back of the stage.

Village Hall variety scene – Drag Show



We're back in the Village Hall for the next variety act. There is a loud boat horn as Peter enters the stage dressed as a Drag Queen. He sings Cher's famous song 'If I Could Turn Back Time'. It's very over the top and extravagant and good fun! During the song a glitter canon is fired. The rest of the cast are back-up dancers. Liam joins Peter and they sing the song together. At the end of the song, Peter asks Kevin whether he's ready for the meat raffle. Kevin is not ready yet.



Act 1 Scene 4



Kevin and Debbie are at home playing a video game. There are various boxes and bin bags scattered around their room. Kevin talks to Debbie about how much she'll love Thailand and how he's excited to start his new life. He's sad about how Syresham has changed and blames the 'townies' for ruining their way of life. Debbie tells Kevin that she doesn't want to move to Thailand. She says she wants to move to Banbury with Liam so that she can live her own life and be an adult.

As Debbie leaves, Barbara enters. Kevin and Barbara have known each other for a long time and they do not like each other. Barbara says some horrible insults to Kevin and is disappointed that he's not fighting to save Syresham. As they continue to argue, Barbara reveals that she's been spying on Debbie and Harry, and tells him the truth that they are in a relationship and plan on getting married. Barbara makes several lewd comments about Debbie and Harry having sex. She then simulates them having sex by clapping her hands and making sounds. Kevin is enraged and runs off.



Village Hall variety scene – Not Syresham



We're back in the Village Hall for another variety performance. This time Barbara sings a song about not wanting to leave Syresham. The rest of the cast provide back-up vocals and dance moves. It's a jazzy, old-school song with very strong language. At the end of the song Barbara continues to declare that she will never leave Syresham. The curtain comes down for the interval.

END OF ACT 1 – there will be a 20-minute break.

Act 2 Scene 1



Harry, Debbie, Peter and Liam are sitting in the beer garden of a pub. Kevin bursts in and grabs Harry by the neck. Barbara follows. Debbie tries to convince Kevin to calm down. Harry explains that he is madly in love with Debbie and that he'll do anything to protect her. He announces he wants to marry her. Kevin realises how happy Debbie is with Harry and celebrates their relationship. Kevin is happy with Debbie and Harry living together with Peter in Milton Keynes. Barbara is irritated that things seem to be working against her and the preservation of the village and tries to cause an argument. She announces that Liam is gay, in the hopes that Kevin will be angry. But Kevin doesn't mind. They all moan to Barbara that she's not being very nice and that she needs to leave because of the village getting demolished. Kevin tells her he hopes she dies. Harry starts to hum the tune to 'Take Your Seats for Syresham' signalling that he's getting distressed. Debbie takes his hand and he calms down. Barbara is furious that no-one is defending the village and exits. No-one knows where she has gone.



Village Hall variety Scene – The Magic Show

Please note – this scene contains mild jeopardy. The tricks performed are perfectly safe and no-one is harmed. Please do not recreate any of the tricks performed.

The next scene is a Magic Show where Debbie and Kevin perform a series of magic tricks. Debbie is The Great Debdini, and Kevin is her glamorous assistant. There are some loud sounds of a motorcycle revving and music, and Kevin appears on the stage playing the guitar. Debbie makes the guitar amp burst into flames. Liam puts it out with a fire extinguisher, which makes a whooshing noise. The next trick is then set up. Debbie has three brown bags. Kevin places a sharp nail into one of them, leaving a block of wood in the other bags. She mixes up the bags so that Kevin doesn't know where the nail is. Debbie tells the audience that Kevin will slam his hand on top of one of the bags. The audience are to decide which one. After the audience have decided, Kevin slams his hand down on the bag. This is repeated.



For the next trick, Debbie announces that she is going to chop Kevin's head off in a guillotine. Kevin places his head in the guillotine and places a carrot in the bottom compartment to show how sharp the blade is. The guillotine falls and chops the carrot. Kevin reveals he has not been hurt. For the final trick Debbie makes Kevin disappear to Thailand.



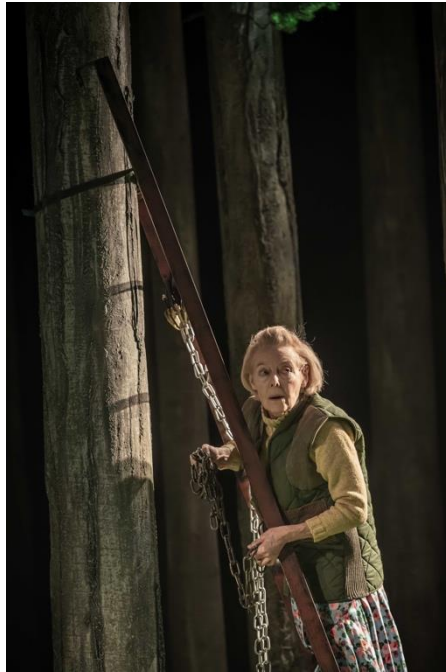
Act 2 Scene 2



Liam and Peter are by the brook. Neither have been able to find Barbara. Liam asks Peter if he'd be interested in moving to Milton Keynes together and becoming boyfriends. Peter rejects him and they argue. They start to fight and Liam punches Peter. Neither have spotted that Barbara has been watching this happen from behind a tree. She enters the scene to break up the fight. At this point, Harry and Debbie enter carrying a tea tray and an array of chains and padlocks.

Barbara climbs a ladder and has chained herself to a tree and starts to convince the group, one-by-one, to stay and fight for the village. They each chain themselves to the trees. Only Peter refuses. She then asks him to sing the song of Syresham, 'Take Your Seats for Syresham', which he does. Peter asks Barbara to sign the Compulsory Purchase Order, but she refuses. He then states that it doesn't matter as he has power of attorney over her and signs it regardless.

Liam then thinks of a plan to save the village where they put the newts into the brook as they're endangered. The scene ends with Barbara falling out of the tree. There is a flash of light, pulsing sounds and a black out (where the lights turn out completely).



Act 2 Scene 3 – The Revolution

Please note - this scene contains loud sounds, atmospheric noises and flashing white and red lights. The scene builds and builds to a climax. We are caught between two performance styles – the traditional theatre play and the Village Hall variety scenes.

The cast are dressed as animals. They dance with high energy and sharp movements throughout the scene to some loud heavy metal music. They move towards the front of the stage. Peter is a great crested newt, Debbie is a moth in cocoon. Harry is a red squirrel. Liam is bearded false darkling beetle. Kevin is a wild boar. Barbara is a druid badger. She is in control and declares her power over the world. The animals characters represent the fight to save the village and



the power of nature.

Act 2 Scene 4

The atmosphere changes and things begin to settle. Kevin starts to make a speech and Debbie enters the stage wearing a wedding dress. Harry and Debbie kiss. Peter begins a eulogy for Barbara (who died when she fell). He talks about how Barbara has sacrificed herself to save the village. The village has now been saved and HS2 re-routed.



The Bow

As the actors start bowing, Kevin finally runs on the with the meat raffle. He announces the two winning seat numbers. THE END.