THE SECRET ADVERSARY
Education Pack
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This Education Pack was written and designed by Heidi Bird, with contributions from Sarah Punshon and Holly Mazur.

All production and rehearsal photographs by Philip Tull.
Introduction

This education pack has been designed to support your visit to see The Secret Adversary at The Watermill Theatre or on tour in 2015.

The pack is aimed primarily at those studying Drama or English, with articles of interest for anyone with a curiosity about the play. While there are some images, the pack has been deliberately kept simple from a graphic point of view so that most pages can easily be photocopied for use in the classroom.

Your feedback is most welcome, please email (heidi@watermill.org.uk) or call me on 01635 570934.

Don’t forget that we offer workshops on most aspects of drama, and visit many schools in the surrounding area to work with hundreds of students every year. For a workshop menu, please visit the Outreach pages on our website, or contact me.

I hope you find the pack useful.

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Agatha Christie

Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller was born on 15 September 1890 in Torquay, Devon, South West England to an English mother and American father. Agatha loved to read English poetry and began writing poems when she was still a child. Her education was a combination of being tutored at home (mainly by her parents) and then being sent to teaching establishments in Paris. Along the way she became an extremely accomplished opera singer and pianist.

In 1912 Agatha met Archie Christie, a qualified aviator who had applied to join the Royal Flying Corps; they soon married. It was war time and Agatha became a nurse at the Red Cross Hospital in Torquay. When the Hospital opened a dispensary, she accepted an offer to work there and completed the examination of the Society of Apothecaries. Thus began her lifelong interest in the use of poisons, which made a huge contribution to her first novel *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. The murderer’s use of poison was so well described that Agatha received an unprecedented honour for a writer of fiction — a review in the *Pharmaceutical Journal*.

During the First World War there were Belgian refugees in most parts of the English countryside, Torquay being no exception. Although he was not based on any particular person, Agatha thought that a Belgian refugee, a former great Belgian policeman, would make an excellent detective for *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. Hercule Poirot was born.

1919 was a momentous year for Agatha. With the end of the war, Archie had found a job in the City and they had just enough to rent a flat in London. Later that year, on the 5th August, Agatha gave birth to their daughter, Rosalind. It was also the year that publisher, John Lane, contracted Agatha to produce five more books. She went on to be one of the first authors Penguin ever published in paperback, with fantastic results.

Following the war Agatha continued to write and to travel with Archie, though sadly they were later to divorce. Agatha married again, this time to Max Mallowan, the world famous archaeologist - a marriage that would last forty-six years.

By 1930, having written several novels and short stories, Agatha created a new character to act as detective. Miss Jane Marple was an amalgam of several old ladies Agatha used to meet in villages she visited as a child. When she created Miss Marple, Agatha did not expect her to become Poirot’s rival, but with *The Murder at the Vicarage*, Miss Marple’s first outing, it appeared she had produced another popular and enduring character.

One of Agatha’s lifelong ambitions had been to travel on the Orient Express; her first journey took place in 1928. The atmosphere of the Middle East was not lost on Agatha, as can be recognised in books such as *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Death on the Nile*, *Murder in Mesopotamia*, *Appointment with Death* and *They Came to Baghdad* as well as many short stories.

After a hugely successful career and a very happy life Agatha died peacefully on 12 January 1976.
Tommy and Tuppence

It's a partnership that begins as young Tuppence Cowley bumps into her old friend Tommy Beresford at Dover Street tube station. This being just after WW1, jobs are very thin on the ground so Tuppence comes up with a plan to form Young Adventurers Ltd - "Willing to do anything. Go anywhere... No unreasonable offer refused."

Struggling for work after the war was something Agatha Christie had experience of first-hand and finding a new sense of purpose was a common plight for the upper middle class of their generation. Tuppence's idea, to hire themselves out as adventurers, becomes a lifelong journey for the duo and takes them through four novels and one short story collection. Their stories were the ones Agatha Christie enjoyed writing the most; she took real pleasure from her bright young things, much like the couple in Why Didn't They Ask Evans? They are also the only detectives in Agatha Christie's arsenal to age with each story, keeping approximate pace with Christie herself.

From their chance re-encounter in The Secret Adversary, Tommy and Tuppence proceed to get married, raise three children, hunt spies during the Second World War and eventually retire having had, of course, many other adventures along the way. Agatha Christie describes Tommy's face as "pleasantly ugly – nondescript, yet unmistakably the face of a gentleman". His slow, considered manner serves as the perfect foil to Tuppence's impetuous nature. They marry at the end of the first book.

Christie uses the Beresfords to experiment with thrillers, playing with and often parodying the genre. The short story collection Partners in Crime takes this to an extreme; each case is solved in the vein of a different famous literary detective, including a certain Belgian.

The Secret Adversary was the first Agatha Christie feature film ever made; adapted by the Fox Film Corporation in 1928 as a silent movie for Germany titled Die Abenteuer G.m.b.H, which translates asAdventures Inc. It wasn't until 1953 that the couple appeared in an English adaptation, this time on BBC Radio in a series of half-hour episodes adapted from the collection Partners in Crime. They were played by Richard Attenborough and his real-life wife, Sheila Sim, and took advantage of their (then current) starring roles on stage in The Mousetrap.
In 1984, the *Partners in Crime* TV series aired on London Weekend Television, starring James Warwick and Francesca Annis. It featured ten of the fifteen short stories from the book of the same name. The two actors made a convincing couple and the lavish sets and costumes from the 1920s made this a popular series (particularly Annis’ hats). They appeared again in 1985 with the LWT full length television film of *The Secret Adversary*.

It wasn't until 2005 that another screen version of the couple would appear, this time in France. Adapted by Pascal Thomas, the names were altered, Tuppence reverting to her full name, Prudence, and Tommy changing to Bélisaire. The duo appeared in two films, *Mon petit doigt m’a dit... (By the Pricking of My Thumbs)* in 2005 and *Le crime est notre affaire* (*4.50 from Paddington* - originally a Marple novel) in 2008.

From [www.agathachristie.com](http://www.agathachristie.com).

*Emerald O’Hanhrahan as Tuppence and Garmon Rhys as Tommy.*
Adapting *The Secret Adversary*

Sarah Punshon (below), Director and Co-adaptor of *The Secret Adversary*, gives us an insight into the creation of the script.

It's January 2001. Tony Blair is Prime Minister, the Twin Towers are still standing, and some guy called George W Bush has just been inaugurated as President. I'm in the bedroom of one of my best friends at university. We're staring at a wall completely covered in pieces of paper, on each of which is scrawled something like “DANVERS GIVES JANE THE PAPERS”, or “TOMMY RECOGNISES MR CARTER”. There are arrows connecting them together, creating a hectic flow-chart, a complex wiring diagram. The two of us stare at these pieces of paper, willing them to make sense.

We've taken on a ridiculous task. We want to adapt Agatha Christie's novel for the stage. It's never been done before. We're barely into our twenties, with hardly any experience of making theatre. But we've got a couple of things on our side: total ignorance of how hard this will be, and Johann's chutzpah. Alone, I might never have screwed the courage up to call the offices of “Agatha Christie Limited”, to ask permission to adapt the book. But Johann has no fear, and we find ourselves in a cafe talking to a nice lady called Lucy, who seems bemused and rather entertained by us. We get permission.

The whole thing started with a conversation about crime fiction, late one night in the college bar. Johann was discussing the deep political implications of the genre: I was holding forth on how much I loved Agatha Christie's books. (I've read everything she wrote. At least four times.) Johann talked about the way Christie tapped directly into the fears of her age, about the big social changes after the First World War, and how disturbing they would have been for many. I realised he was onto something. Christie fans have always loved the period detail: Miss Marple wouldn't be Miss Marple without the lovely frocks and cars. But there's more to it than just the trappings. In her thrillers, Christie puts her finger directly on the pulse of her age – creating a document of exactly what was frightening her readers at that particular moment.

Consider this extract from *The Times* of 3 November 1920, headlined “LENIN'S COURIER SENTENCED”: “The mysterious foreigner who was arrested last week with documents in his possession addressed from members of the revolutionary party in this country to persons connected with the Soviet Government in Russia appeared again at Bow-street Police Court yesterday.”

The article goes on to reveal that this “mysterious foreigner” has been caught leaving the London house of Colonel Malone, Britain's first Communist MP. In his pockets were found letters from Sylvia Pankhurst to senior Bolsheviks in Moscow. The letters referred to thousands of pounds of Russian money promised to pay for agitators to spread the revolutionary message in Britain. Another document referred to expenditure on machine-guns and rifles. Yet another gave instructions on how to take control of and defend a factory: “Mount machine-guns well hidden”.

![Image of Sarah Punshon](image.png)
Imagine reading that over your cosy family breakfast. Could there really be a revolution in Britain? Factories taken over by armed militants? Communist agitators stirring up trouble in the Army? Only two years before, sailors in the German Navy had refused to obey orders, sparking a revolution that brought down the Kaiser. Many of those who read that column on 3 November 1920 must have felt a *frisson* of genuine alarm. It’s that alarm which fuels Tommy and Tuppence’s first adventure.

And what an adventure it is. Johann and I wrestled for months with its plot, struggling to reduce 320 pages of energetic prose to less than 120 minutes of stage time. As we worked, we developed a healthy respect for Agatha Christie’s genius. Her plotting is extraordinary. Each small piece rests on several others – remove one cog and the whole clockwork grinds to a halt. Somehow we found ways to strip out a strand or two wholesale, and simplify one particularly complex red herring. Next we had to convince our student drama society to give us a few hundred pounds for props and costumes. Then we found a company of fourteen enthusiastic performers, and persuaded them that a trip to the Edinburgh Fringe was how they wanted to spend their summer. We headed north.

That summer seems a very long time ago now. For years afterwards, Johann and I would occasionally wonder if we might one day find an opportunity to revisit the story. In 2013 that opportunity arose, and I dusted off the script which had moved house with me for twelve years. Reading it again, it seemed far more directly relevant than it had before. As I read it, the newspapers were full of revolutions and the European financial crisis – columns about inequality reaching 1920s levels – revelations about undercover police and secret diplomacy. I winced at the ineptitude of much of our writing, but found myself once again rejoicing in the sheer vim and vigour of Tommy and Tuppence. We determined to do a better job by them this time. We found ourselves making some very different decisions. Back in 2001, we didn't know how to stage some bits of the book – so we just cut them. Now, in collaboration with our fantastic creative team, we've been much braver, restoring thrilling escapes and car chases to their proper places, creating all kinds of technical challenges for ourselves. Music, magic, and movement are part of our storytelling now, and allow Tommy and Tuppence to dash across stage at their proper pace. Back then, we thought we needed fourteen people to tell the story: now, our multi-talented team of seven are achieving miracles (as are our backstage team, creating the quickest of quick changes). Back then, we were terribly serious – now, we've allowed ourselves rather more joyful silliness.

We've been determined, though, to stay true to the essence of her characters. Neither Johann nor I are shy, retiring types, and by now we feel we know these people intimately. We’ve each had favourite inventions argued over and eventually cut because “Julius just wouldn’t say that!” Again and again we've returned to Agatha Christie’s original text. What's the vital point of this scene? Why does Tommy make this decision, and what does Tuppence know at this moment? Once again, we’ve found ourselves scrawling plot points on pieces of paper and arguing about how to arrange them. Often, we’ve restored Christie’s original dialogue to the script. Her characters are so vivid; her plot twists and turns so stupendous, that it would be foolish to meddle too far.

It’s been a long journey from that cold student bedroom to this welcoming theatre. We’re so excited to share this all-new version of *The Secret Adversary* with you. We hope you enjoy it.

SARAH PUNSHON
Meet the Cast

Kieran Buckeridge | Julius
Theatre includes Pinafore Swing and Thieves’ Carnival for The Watermill Theatre. Other theatre includes The History Boys, Our Country’s Good, The Recruiting Officer, Private Lives, The Deep Blue Sea, Loot, The Woman in Black, The Good Companions, All My Sons and Grimm’s Tales for Keswick Theatre by the Lake; Two and Merlin for the Dukes, Lancaster; Blithe Spirit, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Moonlight and Magnolias and The Mikado for the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough; David Copperfield, Travels with my Aunt, Wind in the Willows, Return to the Forbidden Planet and Dick Barton for Oldham Coliseum; Hamlet and Alice in Wonderland for the Nuffield Theatre, Southampton; Threepenny Opera for Bury Theatre Royal
Film and Television include Dementamania (Ronin Pictures) Ye Olde Dragon’s Den, Pearly Gates and Worried about the Boy (BBC), Heartbeat (ITV) and Coronation Street (Granada).
Radio includes Jane and Prudence (BBC).
He was one of three recent recipients of the Cameron Mackintosh Resident Composers’ Bursaries which led to a 6-month post at Bristol Old Vic.

Nigel Lister | Sir James
Trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.
Theatre includes: Much Ado About Nothing (The Hague International Shakespeare Festival); Sex and Docks and Rock ’n’ Roll (Red Ladder); The Comedy of Errors (Stafford Shakespeare Festival); Second from Last in the Sack Race (Esk Valley theatre); A Christmas Carol (Kings Head Theatre, Islington); Play Up! Play Up! (I love West Leeds Festival); Thomas Saves the Day (Hammersmith Apollo/UK and Asian tour); The Taming of the Shrew, Macbeth, The Merry Wives of Windsor and The Importance of Being Earnest (Oxford Shakespeare Company); Cider with Rosie (Bristol Old Vic).
Television includes: WPC 56; Doctors; The Bill; Steel River Blues; Murder Investigation Team; Dream Team; Footballers Wives.

Emerald O’Hanrahan | Tuppence
Emerald trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Theatre credits include Daisy in Daisy Pulls It Off (TheWatermill), Cecily in The Importance of Being Earnest and Travesties (Birmingham Rep) and A Christmas Carol (Royal & Derngate).
She plays Emma Grundy in The Archers, and is regularly in radio drama across the BBC. Television and film include Silk and Casualty (BBC), Doc Martin (ITV) and the lead in Queen’s Mile, a short film due for festival release this year.
Elizabeth Marsh | Rita and Kramenin

Elizabeth has performed at the National Theatre, in the West End, in film and television, and at theatres all around the country.
Previous productions at The Watermill include: Daisy Pulls it Off; Merrily We Roll Along; Gondoliers; Carmen; and Pinafore Swing.
Favourite theatre roles include: Marquise de Merteuil in Les Liaisons Dangereuses; Eleanor in Dead Funny; Rebecca Marshall in Playhouse Creatures; Myra Yerkes in Road Show; Mary in Merrily We Roll Along; Betty in Blonde Bombshells of 1943; Beverly in Abigail’s Party (twice!); Vanni/The Mathematician in A Life Of Galileo; Midge in Watching the Living; Miss Hannigan in Annie; Jenny in The Threepenny Opera; Mephisto in The Vaudevillains; Ymma in Silence; Yitzak in Hedwig and the Angry Inch; Annie Wilkes in Misery; Fay in A Chorus of Disapproval; Pamela in The 39 Steps; Suzanne in Don’t Dress For Dinner; Rose in Brighton Rock; Jean Rice in The Entertainer; Louisa in Hard Times; Joan in Dames at Sea; Felicity in Habeas Corpus; both Florinda and Rapunzel in Into the Woods; Elizabeth in Moll Flanders; and Fabia in Twelfth Night.
Film/Television includes: Miss Fanshawe in The Falling (BBC/Malady Films); Mary Mullen (Typhoid Mary) in Filthy Cities – New York (BBC); and Coronation Street (Granada).
Elizabeth also works as a director and choreographer.

Garmon Rhys | Tommy

Garmon studied at LAMDA. He played the lead role of Wilfred Owen in Simon Godwin’s production of Regeneration which toured the UK in Autumn 2014.
Theatre while training includes: I Love You Because, On The Razzle, As You Like It, Boys, Macbeth.
Film includes: VP (Take Cover Films); Pushaway (LAMDA)
Morgan Philpott | Whittington
Morgan trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.
Other Theatre: Henry V (Creation Theatre); Larisa and the Merchants (Arcola); Macbeth, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Merry Wives of Windsor (Guildford Shakespeare Company); The Sound of Music (Kilworth House) Dick Turpin’s Last Ride (Bury St. Edmunds Theatre Royal); Larkrise to Candleford (New Perspectives); Twelfth Night and George’s Marvellous Medicine (Birmingham Stage Company); James and the Giant Peach (Northampton Theatre Royal); Pinocchio (Polka Theatre); Much Ado About Nothing, Othello and Sir Jonathan Miller’s production of Hamlet (Shakespeare at The Tobacco Factory).

Sophie Scott | Jane
Sophie trained at The Oxford School of Drama after studying at Cambridge University.
Theatre includes: Mary in It’s A Wonderful Life (Bridge House Theatre); Woman in Red Sky, Blue Sky (Bridge House Theatre); Mrs Dearly in The Hundred and One Dalmatians (New Vic); Dusa in Dusa Stas Fish and Vi (Finborough Theatre); The Kreutzer Sonata (La MaMa E.T.C., New York); Radio Times (The Watermill); The Comedy of Errors (Shakespeare’s Globe and International and American Tours); Lark Rise to Candleford (National Tour); Othello (Ludlow Festival); The Kreutzer Sonata (Gate Theatre); A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Rose Theatre, Kingston); Twelfth Night (Donmar at Wyndham’s Theatre); The Portrait of a Lady (The Peter Hall Company at Theatre Royal, Bath); Uncle Vanya (English Touring Theatre); Blood, Only We Who Guard The Mysteries (Royal Court Theatre); Emily in A Stab in the Dark (Osip Productions).
Television includes the forthcoming ITV series Breathless, Spit Game, and Distant Shores.
Radio includes Bajazet, Home Front.
Sophie plays the Piano, Clarinet and Saxophone to Grade 8 standard.
Inside the Rehearsal Room

Assistant Director Holly Mazur gives an insight into the rehearsal process.

**Week One**

We began on Monday morning with a ‘Meet and Greet’, involving the whole theatre, at which we democratically agreed on how to pronounce the word ‘Adversary’. One decision made... tick.

Swiftly after, it was straight to work for the company. Sarah (the Director) had asked us all to bring in facts relating to the time in which our characters lived - things that they would have read about in the newspapers. The first thing we noted was how much happened in the first twenty years of the Twentieth Century. From inventions, to revolution, to war; it was a time of secrecy and scandal with uncertainty about what the future held.

The cast began rehearsals with the Musical Director, Alex Silverman. We started with the opening number, ‘Look for the Silver Lining’. There was, however, no need to look for the silver lining as the cast took to the song vocally and with instruments in record time. It’s worth mentioning that most of the cast play at least two instruments in this number alone. It’s very impressive.

Added to this was the impressive 1920s-inspired choreography of Lucy Cullingford. Lucy taught the cast the Charleston, a few variations of the Grapevine and the Suzie Q, to name but a few. (There were many more, the names of which escape me. Suffice to say they're joyous.)

Next up was some magic, courtesy of John Bulleid (AKA 'Magic John’). We learnt a number of intricate tricks, none of which I can explain to you. #MagicCircle. To complete week one, Movement Director John Nicholson provided us with vital choreography to help navigate the space, clowning techniques and lessons in how to successfully fall off a chair.

I am genuinely amazed by the amount of information Sarah and the cast have absorbed this week. It is the busiest and most cheerful rehearsal room that I have ever been in. There is a very exciting combination of talent contributing to this production. It's shaping up to be a jolly good show, dash it all!

*From left: Nigel Lister, Sophie Scott, Garmon Rhys and Kieran Buckeridge.*
Week Three

Week three has begun and time is flying by at an extraordinary rate. The company has achieved an enormous amount and now we are starting to see chunks of the play really come together.

Last week ended with the actors looking at the final scene of the play. This means that in two weeks we have looked at the whole play. Gosh.

The world of Tommy and Tuppence is really coming to life, not least because of the beautiful 1920s set and props, courtesy of our Designer Tom Rogers and The Watermill Stage Management Team, that are filtering into the rehearsal room. It’s fun coming in each morning to find new bits of set and props to play with (yesterday was feather fans, today was a table, which has been cleverly designed to represent Tommy’s perspective).

Tom and the team are also finding cunning ways to swiftly transform the actors into their many characters. Backstage costume changes include an American millionaire transforming into a Cockney thug, an evil Bolshevik into a sexy nightclub singer, and many more.

As well as set, props and costume, some of the cast also have new haircuts. Emerald O’Hanrahan has had her long hair cut into a very chic bob for Tuppence. In the age of The Beard (if you don’t believe me Google ‘Beard Baubles’), Garmon Rhys has gone clean shaven for Tommy. They’re both looking very much the part!

Today we are fitting some of Alex Silverman’s music to the scenes. One of my favourite things about this play is that there are some genuinely sweet moments, but they’re never allowed to turn sickly because of the comedy and peril that are close by, in equal measure. Such are the lives of the Young Adventurers Limited. The music and Sarah’s seamless direction are working well together to move the action in a filmic manner from one mood to another. Whilst I’m on music, look out for the minute-long ‘Money Medley’, you might recognise a few of the numbers.

As we look ahead to running the play in chronological order next week, I am anticipating the transitions from one scene to the next. The content of the play is really looking wonderful, but backstage is a big challenge for the cast and stage management. The intimacy of The Watermill brings the audience close to the action, but also brings the actors very close to each other in the compact backstage area. Sometimes they are changing costume, playing an instrument, preparing to bring on some set and moving to their next entrance point in the space of a few lines. This all adds to the excitement as we race towards week four!
Final Week of Rehearsals
The Watermill has many strings to its bow, and time travel is absolutely one of them. This week it’s the 1920s. The Young Adventurers are moving in as glamour and wit trickle through every door.

Usually, that would only happen in tech week, but as we’re the first show of the season, we’ve been lucky enough to get the set up a little early and have some time to play on stage. With such a complex show, it’s been really useful for everyone to get this sneak preview.

The first thing we looked at on set were the magic cues, with Mr Magic John Bulleid. Without giving away any official Magic Circle secrets (who knows what the consequences might be), a lot of the tricks are about what the audience can and can’t see. The success of the magic tricks is reliant on the audience’s sight lines and, fortunately, they all work and the tricks are creating many ‘oohs’ and ‘aahs’ from observers.

We have also been moving the chase sequence onto the stage. This scene uses every entrance and exit on the stage. The cast pop up through traps, dash up ladders and in and out of doors – all at great pace.

Wednesday night, after a mostly physical rehearsal, our choreographer Lucy Cullingford joined us to finish the day with a dance call. Lucy brought a warm up that everyone needed. There were neck, back and leg massages. As Lucy’s partner for this exercise I got two goes, so that she could demonstrate to the others. So. Much. Zen.

The dances are brilliant fun and will look even more amazing with the costumes and set in place. The opening dance is particularly cheery, warm and funny. It’s a combination of a hug from your Gran mixed with a healthy splash of comedy. It welcomes us into Tommy and Tuppence’s world right away.

To me, this sets the tone for the whole story. No matter what is thrown at The Young Adventurers, and the cast of actors, they maintain a smile throughout. And we love them for it!
The Design Process

1. Research
The first step in creating the set is for the Designer to research the era of the piece. Often the Designer will create a scrap book of images, materials and textures that may inspire their design. Initial ideas are discussed with the Director to make sure they fit with the Director’s overall vision.

2. White Card
The White Card is an unpainted model of the set which is sent to the production team who make sure it fits the space and the budget that is available.

3. Model Box
The designer then creates a model box. This is made on a 1:25 scale to give the team a clear picture of the set. The production team use the model for the building process, ensuring that the final set replicates exactly the designer’s original model.
3. Scale Drawings

The designer then draws a ground plan of the model box to the scale of the theatre. This gives the carpenter the exact dimensions to work from.

4. Building The Set

The carpenter then starts to make the set. At The Watermill the set is built off-site in a large barn in Coventry and then brought to the theatre and constructed during the weekend before the show opens.

5. The Final Set

The final set is fitted into the theatre. During the fit-up the designer will work with the production team to ensure that all the final details are perfected on the set before the show opens.
Meet The Stage Managers
Heidi Bird spoke to The Watermill’s Company Stage Manager, Ami-Jayne Steele Childe, and Assistant Stage Manager, Sara Shardlow.

How did you become a Stage Manager?

Sara: I became involved with student drama as a Stage Manager at university and realised it was good fun! Once I’d finished University, I did an internship with a theatre company in Sheffield and then I applied to Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama to do the Post-Graduate Diploma in Stage Management. After completing my course I did a placement at The Watermill Theatre. They then invited me back and I’ve not left!

Ami-Jayne: I originally wanted to work in lighting. I went to a rock concert when I was eleven and said to my Dad “That is what I want to do!” I volunteered at local theatres in their lighting department, but got more opportunities to work backstage. I decided to train as a Stage Manager and got a place at Rose Bruford. In the last term, professionals came to interview us and I got offered my first job.

Can you talk us through a day in the life of a Stage Manager?

Sara: It’s pretty varied! The first thing you do, if you’re in rehearsals, is read the rehearsal report from the day before (see page 17-18 for an example of one of these).

Ami-Jayne: We then try to get the rehearsal room ready for the cast and creatives. We make sure they’ve got all the props that they need and check they’ve got enough tea and coffee!

Sara: Then we start finding props.

Ami-Jayne: We research or buy items online, look round charity shops or go to The Watermill’s props store; working through the big “To Do!” board.

The Stage Management “To Do” board

Sara: We’re also trying to think ahead to the technical rehearsal. We try and solve problems in rehearsals to make it as easy as possible when we get into the technical rehearsal.

What do you enjoy the most about being a Stage Manager?

Sara: How varied the job can be! It can be quite hectic and stressful, but often you’ll be having fun at the same time. It sometimes feels like you’re back at school doing a big creative project.

Ami-Jayne: We often have to find or make something really random. For example, for
this show we’ve got to make a bit of old fish. We’re always thinking “how can we create that?” When you finish making or finding a prop it’s really satisfying to tick it off the big list!

**Do you prefer the rehearsal process or the performance?**

**Sara:** I find the rehearsal process more challenging. Once you’re in performance and you know the show, it becomes like a well-oiled production line. Equally, if something goes wrong during a show, it can be quite an exciting challenge because you have to work out how you’re going to solve it.

**What’s gone wrong for you?**

**Sara:** I’ve been kicked in the head and then not set a prop in time! Also, in Peter Pan, one of the actors came off-stage and said “my guitar string’s broken, we need a different guitar.’ I had thirty seconds to run up to the dressing room and solve the problem; when it goes to plan it’s a great feeling.

**Ami-Jayne:** You’re really pleased when the audience haven’t noticed that something’s gone wrong.

**What have been your biggest challenges for this production?**

**Sara:** I think the magic would be one of the main things.

**Ami-Jayne:** Yes - finding out how to do the magic and make it look good! For example, we’ve got a book and we need to make cocktail glasses come out from the inside. We’ve got to work out how to make the glasses come out, but also actually make it look like it is just a book. At The Watermill, because the audience are a lot closer, you’ve got to make sure props are just right.

**Sara:** There are a lot of different locations in this show. We started with a big list that the production team wanted, but during rehearsals the list has been whittled down as they discover the logistics of getting it on and off stage. It’s a challenge to decide whether we should spend money on something that may potentially later be cut.

*The Secret Adversary* is going on tour. Does that change anything for you?

**Ami-Jayne:** Everything needs to be more robust because you know it’s going to be chucked into a van every week. You need to make sure props are going to last longer and be hard-wearing. We also need to know what’s coming out of Watermill stock and whether we will need those items to be used on the next show.
Rehearsal Notes

Rehearsal notes are taken by the Deputy Stage Manager, Victoria, everyday. Victoria makes a note of everything that happens in rehearsals that the production team need to know about. The notes are emailed to the team each evening. Below is a typical day’s report.

Secret Adversary
Rehearsal Report 4
Thursday 15th January 2015

General
1. The opening number was choreographed in a session with Miss Cullingford this morning. In the afternoon session the opening magic trick was worked with Mr Bulleid along with the Rita/Tommy swap on p.47. During the magic session, Mr Silverman led a music call with the other performers.

Design
1. Please see Stage Management Notes 3 and 5.
2. Please see Lighting Note 1. Miss Punshon would like the tablecloths/dressing for the two tables to be a darker colour so that they do not see upstage during the scene.

Wardrobe
1. Tommy will need a pocket in his first costume to hold a small hand bell. Approximately, 10cm (height) by 5cm (diameter).
2. Tuppence will also need a small pocket if possible in her first costume to hold a triangle beater.
3. Mr Buckeridge will require a holster for the gun he will use as Julius. Please see stage management for details on what gun will be used.

Stage Management/Props
1. The bottom of Miss Scott’s clarinet was kicked and fell off during the choreography session this morning. Fortunately, we were in the Sackler so it landed on the carpet. She checked it over and it appears to be playing fine.
2. The union jack flag (sheet for opening magic trick) needs to have a pocket with a removable pole at both the top and the bottom to give it some weight and structure. Please can this change be made for the next magic session?
3. For the disappearance/swap of Rita and Tommy on p.47, we will need a plain sheet as if covering a dead body. This needs to be 360cm in length and 270 cm wide. Please can we have something in rehearsals for this by the next magic session?
4. A folder of classified documents for one of the Boffins to give to Sir James was added to p.20. There will also need to be some money set with this.
5. We are currently using two chairs and two tables for the Candlelight Club.
6. As indicated in the script, Mr Buckeridge will require a gun “little willy” and a holster. The wardrobe department have been asked to liaise with you regarding the holster.
7. Miss Punshon thinks the telephones may need to be held separately to the usherette trays as she is concerned that they might be too weighty and cumbersome.

Lighting
1. On p.5 after Tuppence’s line “How do you feel about an I.O.U?” Miss Punshon would like the lighting on the two tables set on the platform to drop down such that we focus in on the DS half of the stage, which becomes the kitchen area where Tommy and Tuppence will be washing up. She would like to restore the Candlelight Club during the chase on p. 9 and as such bring the lights back up on the two tables on the platform.

Sound/Music
1. After Mr Buckeridge has played the piano for Rita’s number, Miss Scott is available to swap with him and play some incidental club music during the course of the following scene.

Production
1. No notes.

Risk Assessment
1. No notes.

From left to right: Nigel Lister, Kieran Buckeridge, Sophie Scott, Garmon Rhys, Elizabeth Marsh, and Morgan Philpott.
Credits

Written by Agatha Christie
Adapted by Sarah Punshon and Johann Hari
In Association with Eleanor Lloyd Productions

**Director** Sarah Punshon
**Designer** Tom Rogers
**Original Music and Musical Arrangements** Alex Silverman
**Movement Director** John Nicholson
**Lighting Designer** Howard Hudson
**Sound Designer** David Gregory
**Magic Consultant** John Bulleid
**Choreographer** Lucy Cullingford
**Fight Director** Philip d’Orléans
**Assistant Director** Holly Mazur
**Assistant Designer** Tom Oldham

Cast in alphabetical order

**Julius** Kieran Buckeridge
**Sir James** Nigel Lister
**Rita / Kramenin** Elizabeth Marsh
**Tuppence** Emerald O’Hanrahan
**Whittington** Morgan Philpott
**Tommy** Garmon Rhys
**Annette** Sophie Scott

**Production Manager** Lawrence T Doyle
**Company Stage Manager** Ami-Jayne Steele-Childe
**Assistant Production Manager** Nelly Chauvet
**Theatre Technician** Josh Robinson
**Deputy Stage Manager** Victoria Horn
**Assistant Stage Managers** Ellen Lewis, Jaime Ho
**Wardrobe Supervisor** Amanda Dooley
**Wardrobe Assistants** Eloise Short, Becky Ryan
**Sound Operator** Jaye Dodds
**Set Construction** Belgrade Production Services

**Production Photographer** Philip Tull
**National Press and Publicity** Mark Senior

For Eleanor Lloyd Productions
**Producer** Eleanor Lloyd
**Associate Producer & General Manager** Tom Powis