



Shaping  
Voices

Creative Reminiscence

Life in Eastbourne from the  
1950s to the mid 1960s –  
the town, events, tourism,  
entertainment, the people

# A WEEKEND AWAY

A Heritage Lottery Project

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# Life in Eastbourne from the 1950s to the mid 1960s – the town, events, tourism, entertainment, the people

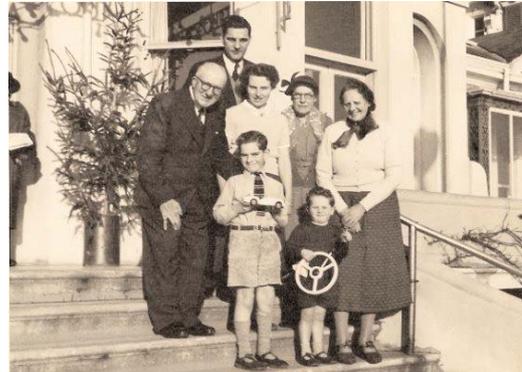
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# A WEEKEND AWAY

## THE PROJECT

The A Weekend Away project began life in the winter of 2008. The idea was to explore Eastbourne as it was in the 1950s to the mid 1960s – a post-war period which saw many changes take place in the town. Our focus was on tourism, transport, entertainment, shops, residents and visitors and we aimed to contact people who had either lived in or visited the town in that time. Over a period of 18 months we met with a variety of groups and individuals, listening with fascination as they shared their colourful stories and anecdotes with us. The project also offered young people the opportunity to learn how to take photographs using Box cameras.



Original images from Tim Priddin

## THE PLAY

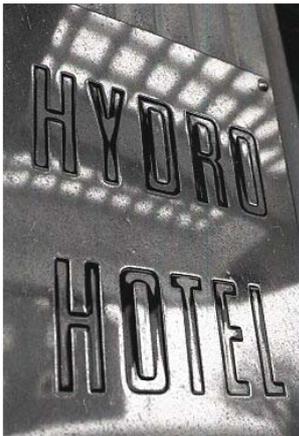
Our next stage was to write an hour long play based on the many rich memories we had gathered. We decided to set the play in a more contemporary period, constructing a fictional scenario where a group of strangers, thrown together by chance, discover they all have connections with Eastbourne. This provided a platform from which older fictional characters could share in their mutual memories of the town. Wherever possible the script uses the actual words spoken by the people we interviewed.

Through the medium of the play we have endeavoured to present a series of snapshots of the town: how it was for people from all walks of life to live, love, work and play in Eastbourne in the 1950s to the mid 1960s.



## PHOTOGRAPHY

Students from two local schools, Bishop Bell and Willingdon Community School, took part in the project. They learnt the skills of non-digital photography using a traditional camera and dark room technique, and photographed many of the sites in the town relating to peoples' memories. They also joined in reminiscence sessions with Eastbourne residents and took photographs of them.



## THE PERFORMANCE

The first performance of A Weekend Away took place in The Wedgewood Room at the Hydro Hotel, Eastbourne on April 14th 2010 to an invited audience, which included participants in the reminiscence sessions. There was also a montage and exhibition of the photographs taken by the school children. The second performance took place on 25th June at The Redoubt Fortress as part of a day organised by the WRVS for primary school children and older Eastbourne residents.

Hydro Hotel



The Redoubt Fortress

REDOUBT FORTRESS PERFORMANCE





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## THE PROJECT TEAM

### **Writer**

Jane Metcalfe

### **Director**

Clare Whistler

### **Producer**

Rachel Lewis

### **Photographer/tutor**

Danielle Brooks

### **Puppetry**

Christopher Leith

### **Technical support**

Steve Ward

### **Pianist**

Louise Denny

### **Designer**

Tamsin Currey

### **Graphic Design**

Raphael Whittle

### **Assistant Stage Manager**

Christina Lemon

### **Administration**

Vicky Richards

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## CAST

**Freddy- early 60s**

Denis Delahunt

**Doll- early 50s**

Maxine Roach

**Jon- early 30s**

Lloyd Ryan-Thomas

**Helena - late 20s**

Freya Wynn-Jones

**Michael - mid 60s**

Christopher Leith

**Brenda - mid 60s**

Philippa Urquhart

**Timothy- late 40s**

Neil Sellman

**Seaside Landlady - late 30s**

Freya Wynn-Jones

**Kath - (Helena's mother) late teens**

Freya Wynn-Jones

**Phil - early 20s**

Lloyd Ryan-Thomas

With

**Radio weather/interviewer**

Michael Gould

**Radio show "Guest"**

Rachel Lewis



**Dr John Bodkin Adams**

So I see you had your own  
pet murderer here then?  
“The most famous murder  
trial of the century”.  
Any of you lot know him?

Glove puppet by Christopher Leith



**BREAKFAST**

**SATURDAY**

**MORNING**

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Set in mid April 1997 in an imaginary Hotel in Eastbourne.  
The action takes place between Saturday morning and Monday  
morning in the dining room and the bar

## SCENE I

**Saturday morning: Breakfast in the dining room.  
Five guests seated at tables, reading papers;  
waitress serving coffee; radio on.**

### WEATHER REPORTER...

Following unprecedented weather conditions for April the following warning has been issued by the Met Office: Heavy snowfalls and freezing temperatures have caused severe travel conditions by road and rail in the south east. Particularly badly hit is the town of Eastbourne. For your own safety you are strongly advised not to use the roads until conditions improve. Emergency services are engaged in a large number of rescue operations. Snowdrifts on the downs and by Terminus Junction have caused many cars to be abandoned and helicopters are delivering medical supplies to hospitals. Animal Rescue workers have dug out a number of sheep and cattle...

(Sounds of annoyance and glances out of the window at the snow)

(Enter FREDDY, well-wrapped up, stomping imaginary snow  
off shoes and brushing down coat.)

FREDDY.

Blasted weather. Not a hope in hell. (He flops down on chair at table.) Ah well! (To waitress). How about some coffee?

(Waitress – DOLL - turns radio off)

FREDDY.

Oi, keep that on for the weather, there's a good girl



“You’re not the only guest here sir. (Shouts)  
Does anyone else mind the radio on?”

DOLL.

You're not the only guest here sir. **(Shouts)** Does anyone else mind the radio on?

**(ALL talk at once)**

TIMOTHY.

That's fine by me.

JON.

Probably a good idea.

BRENDA.

Might as well hear...

**(DOLL turns radio on, pours coffee for FREDDY and tops up others,  
as programme about Eastbourne starts)**

INTERVIEWER.

And now in the studio we have social historian Christine Pullen who is making a study of post-war Eastbourne. Miss Pullen, welcome to Life as it Was, the programme about Eastbourne for the people of Eastbourne. Miss Pullen, how has the town changed over the years?

CP.

Well, Eastbourne has always been an elegant town. The seafront had an order on it not to be changed, so it's very much as it was in the 19th Century. If you look at old postcards of the seafront you will notice very little difference. Hotel names have changed, and of course there the new buildings replacing those that were bombed; but mercifully we still have imposing and elegant hotels such as the Grand gracing the front...

**(Radio goes down)**

JON.

My uncle tells this story about how he came all the way to London by coach from the Ukraine; got off one coach, saw Eastbourne written on another and got on it. He had no idea where he was going. He just bought a ticket and went there. The coach arrived at 3 pm right opposite the pier next to the statue with all the hotels, and he said he just fell in love with Eastbourne completely. That image, "forever stuck in my memory". Then he walked around the streets, found a hotel, booked for two weeks, and never left.

HELENA.

My mum's from Eastbourne.

JON

(**facetiously**.) I didn't know you had a mum.

HELENA.

She died when I was a baby.

JON.

You never said.

HELENA.

You never asked. Matter of fact (**draws journal out of bag**). Auntie Marion gave me this the other day when I told her I was coming down. Mum's Diary from when she was a girl.

JON.

That goes back a bit!

HELENA

(**reading**). Here's the first entry; 1953: Dear Diary... Do you mind?

(JON indicates it's fine)

HELENA.

Yesterday we had a party in the street for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second's coronation. Mum said everyone from Langney would come and they did! What a day! We had a mug with a picture of the Queen on. There was a lot of food: tinned fruit, jelly, and blancmange and lots of squash and a great long table that went right along the whole of the road. My grandparents were there and my aunts uncles and cousins and all my friends. Dad took a picture of us all. It was such fun. I think I'll remember it forever (picture stuck in diary)

JON.

Which one is your mum?

(Radio up...)



We had a party in the street for her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second's Coronation. There was tinned fruit, jelly and blancmange and lots of squash!

INTERVIEWER.

Now as a young lad I remember lots of shops that are no longer in the town centre.

CP.

Yes, the shops in and around Terminus Rd have changed a good deal in recent years – particularly since the Arndale was built.

INTERVIEWER.

Perhaps you would be so good as to take us on a guided tour of the town centre shops in the 1950s and '60s?

CP.

By all means. Let me see. Where Argos was used to be Sainsbury's, Emily's Tea Shop Leasons, Rockwells Bakery was Wards Greengrocery, Specsavers was Liptons and McDonalds was the entrance to Terminus Place

(CHRISTOPHER comes in clutching bag.)

DOLL.

You're too late for breakfast sir.

MICHAEL.

Sorry. My alarm – er – .Coffee? (Looks around and decides to ask BRENDA if he can share with her) Do you mind?

(BRENDA reading paper peers over and indicates that it's fine.)

CP.

... In Junction Road - gone within the Arndale Centre - there was Baby Day, Eastbourne Photographic, Sayers Furniture, Paine & Betteridge...

BRENDA

(putting paper down). Oh that's where my cousin George worked!

CP..

Panto's and Miller's. From Prezzo to the Post Office was Louis G Ford and on the corner of Terminus Place, Dunn & Co and the Brighton Arms...

**FREDDY.**

Blimey, Dunn and Co. Got a few sharp suits there in my time after which It'd be straight into the Brighton Arms to show 'em off! Mind you, the tailor'd say: Fits you well sir, but he'd be holding it in at the back!

**CP**

... On the other side of Terminus Road was The Scotch Bakery, Coffee Importers, Normans, Gamleys, Farnhams Estate Agent, Westminster Bank, Bewleys, MacFisheries, Russell & Bromleys, Brufords, Dale & Kearney, Plummer Roddis, Camerons, Smiths, Victor Value, Stacey Marks, International, Martins Bank, John Collier, Freeman Hardy & Willis, Barrartts, Joe Lyon's, Bobbies...

**(Radio list ends – radio is turned off.)**

**BRENDA.**

There used to be a hat shop with a curved concave mirror which reflected all the people looking in. They just sold hats, Vickers, very posh. On the other side of the road there was a piano shop, big half glass moon window. Now what was it called?

**MICHAEL.**

The Hermitage?

**BRENDA.**

Ah yes.

**MICHAEL.**

There were potted palms and sometimes someone would be playing the piano.

**BRENDA.**

And there was Bobbies. One would be afraid to go into Bobbies. It was a nose-in-the-air shop. Once when I was about 18 or so I plucked up courage, went in and bought a green and gold powder compact.

**FREDDY.**

Are we all from Eastbourne then?

MICHAEL.

Er - not from exactly, but I did live here once

FREDDY.

Oh yeah. What vintage?

MICHAEL.

Oh, um, 1951 for about 8 years.

BRENDA.

So what has brought you back to these parts if I may venture to be so bold?

MICHAEL.

Oh, er, (rummages in bag, gets out postcards holds them up like a deck of cards)  
A Seaside Postcard Fair.

BRENDA.

Fascinating!

MICHAEL.

Only it's been cancelled because of the - er - (nods towards the window) - and yourself?

BRENDA.

I've come back to see if I might like to live here again now that... It's been so long... quite fond of the Old Town

TIMOTHY

(to Doll who's pouring more coffee). I didn't live here but I stayed every year when I was a boy.

DOLL.

Where was that then?

TIMOTHY.

The YMCA hotel.



I played Henrietta many moons ago at the Devonshire Park and The Hippodrome.

**DOLL.**

My mum used to clean rooms there

**TIMOTHY.**

Happiest of times they were...

**FREDDY.**

So what brings you two love birds down to these parts? Bet you were expecting some nice spring weather eh?

**HELENA.**

Well actually I'm down to do an Agatha Christie at the Devonshire Park. And Trevor, well, he's just with me. He's a writer, researcher.

**BRENDA.**

Agatha Christie? Which one?

**HELENA.**

The Hollow.

**BRENDA.**

I played Henrietta many moons ago at the Devonshire Park and at The Hippodrome.

**HELENA.**

How fantastic!

**BRENDA.**

Agatha Christie was very popular then. We were always doing them. That's when reps were real reps and we turned out a different play every week for the whole season. I so adored the Devonshire Park. They say there's a ghost there now. Plays the violin in the stalls.

**JON.**

Really? I'd like to know more about that!

**HELENA.**

Maybe you can help me with my lines. I'm playing the maid but understudying all



Agatha Christie was very popular then. We turned out a different play every week for the whole season!

the other female parts – apart, that is, from Lady Angatell!

**BRENDA.**

It's awful how they do that! What on earth would they do if everyone went sick at once?

**DOLL.**

**(to no-one in particular)** I used to do lots of Am Dram. EODS. That was when Avril Parry and Stephen Brewer were leading lights. I've been in all the shows: Showboat, Oklahoma, Brigadoon, Carousel, The King and...

**FREDDY**

**(interrupting).** I thought I knew that voice! Doll it's me - Boysie - your old juve lead from Brigadoon. We rolled in the hay together. How many years has it been? **(Throws his arms out wide and bursts into song, dances with DOLL):**

*What a day this has been,  
What a rare mood I'm in,  
Why it's almost like being in love!*

**DOLL**

**(singing).** *There's a smile on my face for the whole human race...*

**BOTH.**

*Why it's almost like being in love*

**DOLL.**

So what brings you back here? It's like seeing Dirty Den come back from the dead!

**FREDDY.**

Thanks a bundle darling. I'm here to visit my old dad; he's in a home. Bit – you know... **(points finger at head).**

**DOLL.**

We used to have them living here. Permanent residents is what they were called.

**FREDDY.**

Thought I'd make a weekend of it. Visit some old haunts... and here you are!



Doll, it's me – your old  
juve lead from Brigadoon!  
We rolled in the hay  
together. How many years  
has it been?

(BRENDA goes over to HELENA and looks at play. They go out together.)

TIMOTHY

(to DOLL and FREDDY). I've come down to see if I can find the hotel – if we ever get out of here (Looks out of window. He's clutching some notes, waving them around)

DOLL.

I don't think it's there any more.

(JON wanders over and joins in conversation.)

JON.

What's that then?

TIMOTHY.

Oh just some notes. I'm trying to write down my memories. Pass them on to the kids sort of thing

JON.

Mind if I take a look? I'm doing a bit of research for a TV project whilst I'm here... the '50s and '60s. Might be useful.

TIMOTHY

(hands his notes over). Be my guest

JON

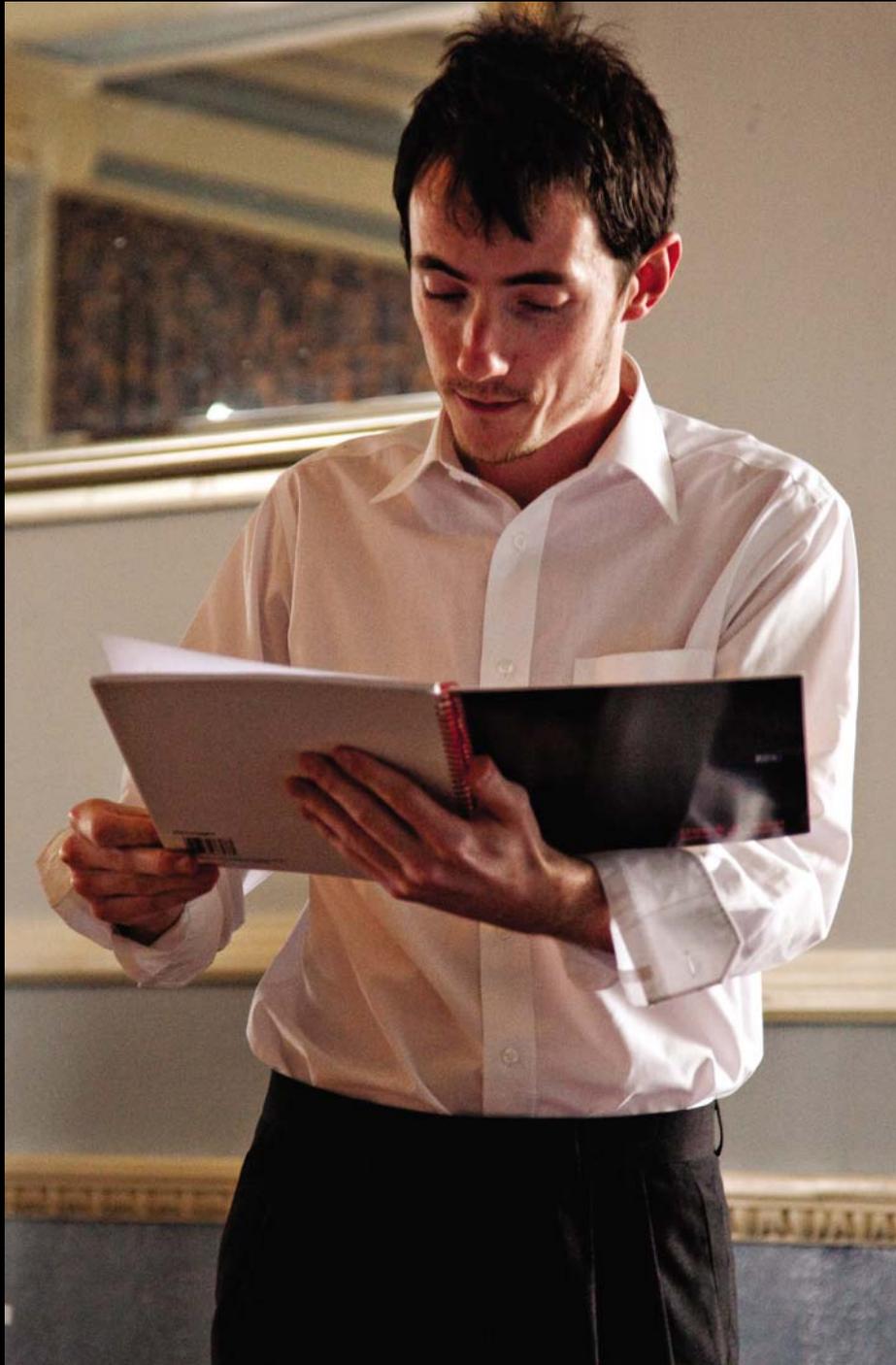
(reading). From the year I was born I spent the first 13 Christmases of my life in Eastbourne and had a middle class Christian upbringing; My parents were involved in youth work and we went every Christmas to the YMCA Hotel, Victoria Court ...

TIMOTHY.

I can still see the hotel entrance. It had a revolving door and a lift with old gates that clanged. We'd all get in the car and drive down to Eastbourne.

JON.

You had a car? Wasn't that unusual back then?



**A WEEKEND AWAY  
Eastbourne in the 1950s and 60s**

I spent the first 13  
Christmases of my  
life in Eastbourne...  
at the YMCA Hotel,  
Victoria Court.

TIMOTHY.

Well, yes, it was, but we had a rich Aunt and Uncle in Herne Hill who let Dad borrow it. Dad's pride and joy that car was; a Ford Consul with bench seats covered in vinyl. You changed gear on the steering column. I remember my brother Chris had a toy triumph TR2 white car and I had a plastic steering wheel stuck to the dashboard. I have a vague memory of us coming back from Beachy Head with 13 people crushed in the car. Registration: UYU 99.

JON.

Did you only come down at Christmas?

TIMOTHY.

No, we came in the summer most years too. I remember I had this helicopter. It had a disc; you'd pull the string and it would go up, and it went up to the top of the Wish Tower and I lost it. I remember one time Billy Butlin arriving in a real helicopter. I remember the Prince's Park train. My brother drove the train one year; sat next to the driver and held the control thing. My big brother driving it and I was behind him! He's an engineer now.

JON.

Boy, you've got a good memory!

TIMOTHY.

Things make more impression on you when you're a child, don't they? Go on, read some more. I like listening!

JON

**(reading).** We had another rich Aunt and Uncle who lived in Eastbourne in a flat. Whenever we saw them they gave us 10 bob each. When we were a bit older Uncle Tom took us into Bobby's to eat. They laid on cream cake teas. Uncle had a favourite waitress called Edith who he used to slip money to. We always had our usual table and we felt like royalty.

TIMOTHY.

That's right! I remember the beach and the stones. Dad went in the sea in all weathers. I remember the gnawing cold in the bones. Every year from 1950- 1963. I remember Beachy Head and Birling Gap and being in the car and stopping for

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picnics, and pleasure boat trips on the Skylark ...

(BRENDA and HELENA enter with copies of *The Hollow*)

BRENDA.

Here you are. We're going to start at the top... You (indicates MICHAEL) play Sir Henry and you, (indicates HELENA) of course, Henrietta, and I will be Lady Angate...

END FIRST SCENE.

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EASTBOURNE GAZETTE: HEADLINES

1950

**FIRST COACH TOUR  
GOES FROM EASTBOURNE.**

**END-OF-WAR BABIES  
ARE BUDGET WORRY.**

**POLICE STOP  
BIGAMOUS WEDDING:  
WILLINGDON MAN'S ONE  
CHANCE OF HAPPINESS.**

**HOLIDAY CRUISE ENDS  
ON ROCKS AT BIRLING GAP.  
MEN SING HYMNS AS  
YACHT SINKS**

AFTER DINNER

SATURDAY

EVENING

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## SCENE 2

### Saturday evening – after dinner in the bar

Guests regrouped, tables pushed back and people sitting in chairs. DOLL off duty, dressed in civvies, next to FREDDY. A pianist is playing a medley of songs from the 1950s

(Enter BRENDA)

BRENDA.

They always used to have live music in the better hotels. Henry Hall and his Palm Court orchestra played every Sunday night at the Grand. It was broadcast on the radio. (pause) Am I interrupting anything?

DOLL.

We were just talking about all the characters on the seafront.

FREDDY.

Remember the lady who camped out on the beach - near Allcorns Boats? Very short hair, bent double, fed all the drunks?

DOLL.

You mean Stella!

BRENDA.

I remember her. She'd have concerts with visitors.

DOLL.

I'd always say "Hello Stella". I was never frightened of her.

FREDDY.

She was very red in the face; had a pram or whatever washed up.

**BRENDA.**

And she had a stick she used to wave at the seagulls! She'd say "Orf you go dickie birds".

**FREDDY.**

I can see her now in a bright green jacket, close fitting hat, hobnail lace-up boots. Never looked any older, always ever so polite, well brought up.

**DOLL.**

They say she was a solicitor or an accountant.

**MICHAEL.**

I remember her singing to herself - up and down the seafront.

**BRENDA.**

She was passionately clean; spotless; used to wash in the toilets on the seafront or in Pevensey Rd, or Seaside. A proper strip-wash, mind.

**DOLL.**

Some say she was a millionaire.

**MICHAEL.**

She was part of the scenery.

**FREDDY.**

Yeah, there was the pier and there was Stella.

**(Pause)**

**TIMOTHY.**

Does anyone remember a hairdresser in Terminus Road? Whenever we came down my Dad always insisted I went to him. 'You get a proper hair cut there, lad.'

**FREDDY.**

Oh God yes! The man who ran it was Scottish. Jock Shears we called him. Now he was a character and a half! Famous for his 'regulation' haircuts; smoked like a chimney. He'd put the leather apron around your neck take a long drag of his Craven



Does anyone remember the Hairdresser in Terminus Road? Now he was a character and a half!

A, which he'd then place neatly in the Craven Ashtray, then he'd swoop down on your locks in a flurry of arms, scissors and combs, whilst his own hair rose above his head in thick undulating folds, and fell around his collar like – like a well groomed brush's.

**TIMOTHY.**

I can just see him now!

**FREDDY.**

In the course of ten minutes he'd reduce your Tony Curtis to a Yul Brynner, and there was simply nothing you could do. You could only sit and watch as the electric razor moaned its way up and down the neck, sweeping higher and higher until a chill descended slowly around your once protected ears.

**TIMOTHY.**

I remember it cost 2/9.

**FREDDY.**

Talking of characters, do you remember Ma Pugh's? 24, Seaside – a doss house for ne're-do-wells.

**BRENDA.**

She was well known for taking in iffy characters.

**FREDDY.**

There was a place off Friday St called The Knoll where all the "diddy coys" hung out.

**DOLL.**

My mum used to say, "Don't you go near them diddy-coys."

**JON**

(**who has been half reading, half listening**). Who, or what are diddy-coys?

**FREDDY.**

Gipsies, son. And what about "Dr" Swaddling?

MICHAEL.

He had a working man's café up Albert Rd, didn't he?

FREDDY & BRENDA

And we all know what he did!

JON.

I don't. What?

BRENDA.

They used to say: "If you're waddling go to Swaddling." (JON looks blank)

DOLL

(**spelling it out**). He was the local (**stage whisper**) "back street abortionist."

FREDDY.

Got caught once but never got charged.

DOLL.

Bill Swaddling was the nicest man you've met!

BRENDA.

How do you know? (**All look at DOLL knowingly**)

DOLL.

Cos I worked at his café: the Classic Coffee Bar.

JON.

It says in this book that there were 14 brothels in Eastbourne.

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EASTBOURNE GAZETTE: HEADLINES

1953

**FIRST COACH TOUR  
WINTER GARDEN PLANS  
TO BE DROPPED —  
EXPENSES TOO GREAT**

**VISITOR DIVED TO RESCUE BOY  
— THRILLING BANDSTAND INCIDENT**

1953

**THE WISH TOWER DEBATE:  
DODGEMS IN PLACE  
OF THE WISH TOWER?**

1954

**A SUNDERLAND FLYING BOAT  
AT AIR SHOW MISJUDGED  
THE LANDING AND SANK  
JUST OFF THE BEACH.**

(MICHAEL sorting out his postcards)

BRENDA.

May I look? (MICHAEL puts some on the table) Oh you've got lots! And all in order: 1950, 1951, 52, 53, 54 and 55. (Looks at post card) Ah the Carpet Gardens. So lovely in bloom. (Reads) Been raining all week. Had enough of brass bands and huddling in shops. Margaret and I have been on a mystery tour, and guess where it took us? Back home!! Mrs Wilson's breakfasts are a treat. Yours, Mr and Mrs H.

(Enter SEASIDE LANDLADY sweeping)

SEASIDE LANDLADY.

We run a B&B. You put a notice up in window and they knock on your door. We get people who want a holiday but can't afford a hotel. It's a little terrace house with an outside loo. I take up hot water for the wash in the morning. There's an old brick copper in the corner of the kitchen with hot water over the tank that makes alarming noises In the living room there's a sideboard with fancy carvings, lino with rugs and always a smell of mansion polish. Guests – well – you get pleasant ones, rude ones, cheeky ones – all sorts really. One character came several times and she died in the house. The policeman came and he said, 'We get a lot of this sort of thing.' We even had the funeral here. It wasn't my food that did it, I told the coroner!

My friend Eileen in Seaside Rd said one lady stole the top tier off her daughter's wedding cake and the camp coffee bottle kept on vanishing, so she put gravy browning in and that put a stop to it!

I shop every day and I cook whatever they want; one wanted egg custard without sugar. (makes a face).. Sometimes they bring fish in for evening meals. I've never poisoned anyone with my cooking. (pause) Sometimes I feel a bit sorry for them when it's raining. But rules are rules: 10 – 6 it is. They always send us Christmas cards.

There's a husband and wife come down every year. My children call them auntie and uncle, though of course they're not. And there's that young Irish lad come to work on the buses. He just wouldn't go, till I booted him out! I do all my washing by hand. My friend goes to that new-fangled place where machines do it for you: The laun-der-ette.

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I have Bandsmen from the Bandstand. 4 of them come every year. The kids sleep with us and we let the bedrooms. My husband plays tenor horn and the kids are on the drums! Can you imagine?

My son, who was 7 at the time, had a budgie that died when he was at school. I asked one of the bandsmen: 'Do you think the bird's dead?' 'Yes,' he said. 'Can you get it out?' They argued about who would do it; then one took it out, wrapped it all up and another dug a little hole in the front garden and buried it. Then we had a little ceremony and one of them played the Last Post on his Cornet. Just fancy: me and 4 bandsmen in the front garden, playing the last post!!

**(The cast form a solemn tableau as The Last Post is played).**

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EASTBOURNE GAZETTE: HEADLINES

1956

**DR JOHN BODKIN ADAMS CHARGED  
WITH MURDERING 3 PATIENTS.  
DAILY MAIL SAYS THERE  
WERE 400 ALLEGED VICTIMS.**

JON.

(waving book at them) So I see you had your own pet murderer here then? Quote: The most famous murder trial of the century: unquote. Any of you lot know him?

(ALL talk at once)

BRENDA.

Oh Yes, he was my doctor,

TIMOTHY.

Dr Bodkin Adams!

DOLL.

Accused of murdering elderly ladies.

FREDDY.

The local rag did very well that year!

JON

(taking out small tape recorder). Ok one at a time please!

BRENDA.

He lived in Trinity Trees. My father cleaned his windows.

DOLL.

Aunty Eileen worked as a secretary at the Cumberland Hotel and she said he used to visit the permanent residents.

TIMOTHY.

I cut my big toe on some glass on the beach and he sat me on his knee and sorted me out. He made such a fuss of me.

DOLL.

He was president of the YWCA. He came there on a Thursday and watched us dancing, sat beside me and asked if I was enjoying myself.

FREDDY.

I knew him before all the trouble. My brother was a clerk at his solicitors: Coles and James.

**BRENDA.**

He was our doctor. He syringed my ears once. It was autumn and I remember the crackle of leaves on the pavements after I came out.

**DOLL.**

He performed an appendectomy on my brother on our kitchen table. There was no time to go to the hospital

**JON.**

So what was he like?

**FREDDY.**

He had a head that would go into his neck and pebble glasses. He always wore a black coat and a big black trilby, drove a big black car and lived in a big white house.

**BRENDA.**

He was Irish and charming.

**DOLL.**

But you couldn't fancy him!

**BRENDA.**

He was a single man with a housekeeper.

**FREDDY**

**(knowingly).** They say he wasn't the marrying type.

**DOLL.**

He used to ride a bike.

**BRENDA.**

Sometimes he'd be the anaesthetist in the dental surgery in Hyde Gardens. My friend was a dental nurse there and she said he used to fall asleep on the job!

**FREDDY.**

I feel he was sometimes judged harshly. If someone hadn't got enough money he didn't take it.

**BRENDA.**

He certainly had a bedside manner.

**FREDDY.**

He was never convicted.

**JON.**

Why was that?

**FREDDY.**

Witnesses were travelling up by train and they were talking about the case, so it got thrown out.

**JON.**

What do you think about it?

**BRENDA.**

I think he helped people out. He didn't fit into the circle.

**DOLL.**

My Mum knew him very, very well. A fortnight before the last one died we went to a wedding and there was this woman. There was nothing wrong with her and 2 weeks later she was dead.

**BRENDA.**

I read somewhere that he didn't think of himself as a murderer, but a dispenser of death. People wanted to die if they were ill. There was a saying: "If the morphine doesn't get you the cancer will".

**(ALL talk at once)**

**TIMOTHY.**

Everyone says he was a good doctor.

**BRENDA.**

He helped people on their way...

**DOLL.**

He was kind...

FREDDY.

Jolly but secretive

JON

(reading poem written by Fleet Street journalist):

Adam's Eves

It's the mortuary chapel

If they touch an Adam's apple

After parting with a Bentley as a fee

So to liquidate your odd kin

By the needle of the bodkin

Send them down to sunny Eastbourne by the sea.

JON

(quoting Eastbourne Gazette headlines).

In 1957 Dr Bodkin Adams found not guilty at the Old Bailey. (To audience) Ladies and Gentlemen, consider carefully from the evidence you have heard. What do you, the people think? Guilty, hands up. Not Guilty – a show of hands please.

(Audience responds accordingly)

JON.

Case dismissed

## END SCENE 2

Music: Help yourself to Happiness – Henry Hall

**SUNDAY**

**TEATIME**

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## SCENE 3

### Sunday Teatime. All seated.

**BRENDA**

(**looking at trolley of cakes**). Not a very exciting selection. Haven't you anything more fancy? You know, a cream horn, a custard slice, that sort of thing?

**DOLL.**

No, sorry. We only do bought cakes on a Sunday.

**BRENDA.**

I suppose one just has to get used to it these days. I have fond memories of tea in Bondolfis.

**FREDDY & MICHAEL.**

Ah Bondolfi's. Mmm. The cakes, all that cream!

**DOLL.**

I used to work in there!

**HELENA.**

I've just read that my mum worked there once on Saturdays. She complained that she got very fat from eating the cakes that weren't sold and that she couldn't get into her dance dresses so she had to leave. What was it like? Sounds like heaven to me!

**DOLL.**

They had wonderful chocolate figures! Mr Bondolfi was Swiss. It used to be so busy people'd queue – thirty to forty people in the summer: morning coffee, lunch or tea; Danish pastries, cheese rolls, ham salad, sardine salad and herring roes on toast. Emmy was the cook. I'd go in the in door and shout 'Two roes on toast Emmy.' She

hated doing them so she'd turn round and say 'Balls!'

Chocolates were hand-dipped upstairs. There was a girl either side of the sink. They had moulds and made birds, elephants, cats, dogs, Scotties, – really big – 18 inches high, displayed on a shelf up above down in the lobby. I don't remember anyone buying them.

Mr B was always there and wore a white coat – like a posh dinner jacket, only white. We wore overalls and headwear. Inside was a screen 8ft wide. Mr B stood beside it and when a table came free he'd take customers over.

There were Danish pastries, doughnuts, chocolate éclairs, cream horns, slices, cream puffs, meringues with cream in. Ooooh! The meringues. When we finished we were allowed to buy them cheaper. There was a chill cabinet at the back with charlotte russe and coffee and walnut cake. Mr B sent his pastry chefs to Switzerland. The hardest job I've ever had: 8 till 6. Had a short break in between busy periods and would eat a salad. I was 18. Most other waitresses had been there for years. One was called Trudy, another younger one was going out with a chef, and another drove us mad because she always got the In and Out wrong!

Somehow I always thought I'd do something with my life but I got married when I was 18 – had to – and after the divorce, well, there was waitressing and hotel work, and a bit of cleaning, then this job came up and – here I am right back where I started

**BRENDA.**

I remember 1950: Bank Hols, days out on steam trains to Hastings, Brighton.

**FREDDY.**

A dozen of us round a small telly screen watching the coronation.

**DOLL.**

Mother cutting hair with a pudding basin.

**BRENDA.**

Picking winkles at Cow Gap.



One waitress drove us mad because she always got the In and the Out wrong!

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**TIMOTHY.**

Icecream treats at Fuscirdis, Nottrianis and Ditripanis.

**DOLL.**

My mother with TB; the Gildredge Hospital; the smell of surgical spirit.

**BRENDA.**

Borrowing books from the Boots library in Terminus Road.

**(RADIO ON)****WEATHER REPORT.**

Severe snow and icy conditions continue to hit the south coast. An Arctic belt gripping Europe and the south east of England shows no sign of letting up and looks all set to stay with us for the weekend.

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EASTBOURNE GAZETTE: HEADLINES

1958

**A STEAM-HAULED TRAIN  
FROM GLASGOW RAN  
INTO AN ELECTRIC TRAIN  
AT EASTBOURNE  
5 KILLED, 23 INJURED.**

DENIS.

I'm not going to risk my car in this. That girl in reception said that a train had a narrow escape – something to do with icy tracks and a sheep.

DOLL.

Makes me thinking of the big crash in '58.

FREDDY.

Indeed it does.

JON.

What's that? Another local drama? (**Moving over to them, hunting for his recorder**).

FREDDY.

Well I wouldn't put it that mildly, son. I was working for British Rail then – part of the extra gang who got all the tracks ready for renewals. We had a job up the Cuckoo Line and we were sitting on the siding in the steam train waiting to go up there. We saw this train come straight down into the station into the back of the waiting train on Platform No 4 – no longer there. There was an almighty crash. We all got up and looked – twenty odd men – to see what we could do. I was helping get 4 people out of the train onto the platform; one was quite seriously hurt, and we wanted to put him somewhere. Basically we only had our hands to carry him. We were issued heavy duty raincoats so we used them like a stretcher and carried him to an ambulance. I like to think we saved a few, but I've never seen anything like it since and never want to...

MICHAEL.

I was living near Cavendish Bridge and I remember the sound of the wheels scrunching on metal.

DOLL.

My brother was on the train. It was full of commuters waiting to go to London. They think he got diabetes and heart problems caused by shock; his whole life was affected.

FREDDY.

The boy Caffyn was on it too.

DOLL.

When I heard the crash I just knew my brother was on it... He died when he was 34.

(Reflective pause)

MUSIC: She Shall Have Music - Jack Hylton Orchestra

FREDDY.

They say the big thaw starts tomorrow.

HELENA

(with journal, but not reading from it). I feel as though I'm getting to know my mum. She loved dancing. Her favourite place was the pier – all those dresses and the music and the boys, live bands and dancing everyday of the week and always big queues for tickets. Sometimes there were at least 400 people in there. But there was one in particular...

DOLL.

On New Years Eve we'd get tickets to The Winter Garden and the Pier and go on from one to the other.

BRENDA.

We'd do Row, Row, row, sitting down on the floor with all the actions. You all sat in a line, one in front, legs to side, I to back, I to side, I to left.

DOLL.

The Pier had a lovely sprung floor.

BRENDA.

After the dance we would walk home and sing Happy New Year outside my parent's house.



I used to go to dance classes at the Winter Garden. When we got to the foxtrot the teacher said to me “You can’t dance”!

MICHAEL.

I loved The Winter Garden. They had big, big bands: Ted Heath, Jonny Dankworth. Sometimes we'd just stand and listen...

FREDDY.

I used to go to dance classes at the Winter Garden. When we got to the foxtrot the teacher said to me: You can't dance!

(FREDDY, DOLL, BRENDA, MICHAEL, TIMOTHY Freeze)

(PHIL & KATH I)

(Flashback scene: KATH – HELENA's mum as a young woman - and PHIL, a young chef, dancing the WALTZ at a beginner's class).

Music: Around the World in 80 Days – Victor Sylvester

(PHIL stands on KATH's toes)

KATH

(stopping and holding her foot). Ow!

PHIL.

Sorry! It's my first time

KATH.

Obviously.

They start again looking down at their feet

PHIL.

You're good.

KATH

I should be I've been coming for a while. I help with the beginners

PHIL

(looking awkward.) That's nice. (Music stops, they wander to a seat). Mind if I... ?

(KATH shrugs; they sit)

So where do you work?

KATH.

The Dental Estimates board.

PHIL.

You mean the mental estimates board!

KATH.

Very funny! But I'm not staying there for ever; that would drive me mental. I've got plans...

PHIL.

Plans?

KATH.

I'm going to open my own dance school. What about you?

PHIL.

I'm a chef at the Kenilworth Hotel

KATH.

A chef? Never met one of those before.

PHIL.

Well now you have!

KATH.

Have you always been a chef?

PHIL.

Yep, since school. After training I landed the job at The Grand Hotel.

KATH.

The Grand! Wow! It's an amazing place - the size of it. I've never dared go in! What's it like inside?

PHIL.

Well I can't tell you about the front cos I never ventured out into the restaurant and I never went through the door at the front of the hotel, or saw anyone.

KATH.

Why was that then?

PHIL.

We weren't allowed. I can tell you all about the kitchen though. I practically lived in it!

KATH.

Go on then

PHIL.

The kitchen was a world all of its own. It had individual departments: sauce, pastry, larder and veg. Larder was where the chickens were gutted, the meat butchered and the salads prepared. I was on the sauce section, doing all the main courses, all the roasting meats. It was high class traditional. The waiters are all Italian, probably charming to the customers but not to us. There was always a rivalry between kitchen and restaurant. But as long as the food went out and tasted good it was fine. The Head Chef was a wonderful old boy called Paul Vosper. He never stopped eating - big, jolly. Typical chef. When Vosper retired a chap called Les King took over.

KATH.

Did you live there?

PHIL.

Yes - down in the basement, out of sight, out of mind. The room was a little one - a bed, a wardrobe a chair and the window looked out on to a brick wall, dark and dismal. I was blooming miserable.

KATH.

Poor you

PHIL.

It was hard work. Very stressful. Time is your boss. If lunch is 1.00 pm you have to do it. I've seen knives come flying through the air. I was innocent and ignorant, frightened of saying anything. It's a world that is always moving on. Kitchen porters, dish washers etc were 90% alcoholics, drifters. There was this well spoken man who only had 4 or 5 shirts. He used to wear the whole lot at once. He never washed them! He'd just swop them around. Now and then he was told to wash his clothes. There was another who'd gone funny in the head since the Train Crash. **(Milking it)**. Quite a lot for a young, innocent, inexperienced lad such as me to cope with!

KATH

**(laughing)**. Stop it!

PHIL.

The kitchen was very clean: hosed down every evening. I always enjoyed doing the veg side, and the one good thing about it is you always got a good meal.

**(Next dance music is played: QUICKSTEP)**

**Music: A Foggy Day -Victor Sylvester**

KATH.

I'll take you to my favourite dance place sometime: the Pier, but you've got to learn to...

**(Grabs his hand and they start dancing again).**

**(KATH and PHIL freeze).**

FREDDY.

My favourite was Saturday night on the Pier! Strictly ballroom, then Latin American and you could jive. It was beautiful!

**BRENDA.**

The Burlington. They had proper Ballroom dances, long dresses and evening shirts. Lots of spot waltzes.

**MICHAEL.**

Roller skating in the Winter Garden. Gordon Rider's band used to play: Popular music, a little bit of jazz. It was a dance band - mainly silver and drum.

**DOLL.**

I loved the Dixieland on the Pier. There was a juke box, a square for a little dance floor; sixpence for 3 records. I wore jeans and a baggy jumper and liked Billy Fury. (Sigh)

**(PHIL & KATH 2)**

**(PHIL and KATH sitting at table with a drink, coke in a bottle Billy Fury playing)**

**KATH.**

I like it here at the Cont. My Dad thinks it's a den of iniquity!

**PHIL.**

I like the Cobana and Maximes. The Pier Hotel's good for rock and roll! I have fun when I can now. At the Grand my social life was virtually non existent. We worked from 8.00 am to 2.30, then back again at 5; we would finish any time between 9 -10 at night, and if you had banquets you just went on till it was done.

**KATH.**

Sounds like you were slaves.

**PHIL.**

I suppose in a way we were. You hardly ever went out because you were too tired, so you never met anyone outside the hotel environment. On my day off I'd relax in the staff bar, have a drink... I never got to see the sea, let alone the pier. For 2 years all I ever got to do was spend an hour in the afternoon in the Trinity Place cinema watching endless news reels and cartoons, then back to work. It's a wonder I stuck it so long.



KATH:  
I like it here at the Continental.  
My dad says it's a den of iniquity.  
PHIL:  
I like the Cobana and Maximes

KATH.

That explains your 2 left feet!

PHIL.

Watch it!

KATH.

And you really never saw any of the people who stayed there?

PHIL.

There was this old brother and sister who lived there: The Myers, as in Myers Rum. They had peculiar eating habits. At dinner in the evening they'd order 2 whole plaice steamed with steamed broad beans. Very strange. They had a Rolls Royce and lived in a suite with 2 bedrooms and had a horse. Their chauffeur used to ride the horse round from the stables at the back of the hotel and the brother would ride it along the seafront.

KATH.

So you did see them!

PHIL.

Oh no. I never saw them. There was just talk. I used to imagine them. There wasn't much else to do.

KATH.

Tell me about some of the food. I want to know what grand people eat!

PHIL.

A typical English Banquet Menu would be:  
Prawn Cocktail, Main Roast - chicken or turkey with all the usual veg. Pudding was a Vacherin: two pieces of meringue with fruit and cream and ice cream. There might be a fish course in the middle - plaice or sole, poached, white wine sauce and grapes. Once we had a special banquet for the Carlsberg people. They brought in Danish chefs to help. We did Parisian potatoes.

KATH.

What are they?

**PHIL.**

Little balls of potatoes cooked with butter and sugar; it took hours and hours to prepare.

**KATH.**

Mmm. Making me drool...

**(Rock and Roll music comes on. KATH pulls PHIL up for a few moments of dance).**

**Group**

**DOLL.**

There was this tin shack above the station on the left hand side where hey had jazz bands. That joint was bouncing!

**MICHAEL.**

I took Shirley there. She was one of the best jivers I knew...

**FREDDY.**

There was a Rock n Roll Band, played 6 -11.30, but we had to rush out at 11.00 to get the bus back to Polegate.

**DOLL.**

I wore multi petticoats that stood out when I danced.

**FREDDY.**

There were rows of buses ready to go. We were so drunk we could hardly catch up with them!

**PHIL & KATH 3)**

**(PHIL and KATH sitting).**

**PHIL.**

Can I walk you home after?

KATH.

What all the way to Langney?

PHIL.

Yes. I'd like to.

KATH. Well make sure we get there before 12. My dad says if you're in after midnight it means you're a whore.

PHIL.

I'll get you there. Don't worry.

KATH.

I'm used to walking up Pevensey Bay Road, no lights on the path. I can tell you where every puddle is. Rabbits on one side, bushes on the other.

PHIL.

Tell me about you. I don't know much about you.

KATH.

Well, there was my first school – I remember the smell of varnished wooden floors and sitting cross-legged on the floor of school assembly. Then I went to Bedewell which was struck by lightning. I wasn't much good at school. I thought I wanted to be a hairdresser so I worked on Saturdays at Mr Leslie's in South Street shampooing ladies' hair. But that didn't work out so then I got a job working in The Redoubt Lodge Guest House as a chambermaid emptying chamber pots and making milky drinks. After that I thought I'd learn to type and get a sensible job and so here I am...

PHIL.

You don't like talking about you do you?

KATH.

I like dancing and listening to others talk. Especially you...

(They kiss)

MUSIC: I'm Into Something Good - Hermann's Hermits

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**BRENDA.**

My favourite was the waltz:

**DOLL.**

Mine was the tango - until he dropped me!

**FREDDY.**

I liked jiving.

**BRENDA.**

Waltzing in the Clouds with Deanna Durbin. Ah...

**END SCENE 3**

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EASTBOURNE GAZETTE: HEADLINES

1959

**ALL SAINTS HOSPITAL TO GO NHS**

1960

**CRUMBLES BEACHES -  
DOCTORS WORRY OVER POLLUTION**

**WOMAN MAYOR IS INSTALLED.  
MISS GLADYS LILLIAN PARKER,  
FIRST WOMAN MAYOR SINCE THE WAR**

**URGENT APPEAL TO WVS  
FOR 26,000 LAYETTES**

**SUNDAY  
EVENING**

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## SCENE 4

### SUNDAY EVE – THE BAR

(All sitting at Bar. Pianist playing Teddy Bear's Picnic.)

MICHAEL

(reading postcard). Dear Auntie Vy, I am having a lovely time on holiday in Eastbourne. I played the mouth organ for Uncle Bertie on Saturday and came first!!! Mum said to say she is very, very, very proud of me. Steven. PS I got sweets.

JON.

Who was this Uncle Bertie character? He keeps popping up all over the place!

MICHAEL.

Uncle Bertie was Santa Claus, Mickey Mouse, Harpo Marx all rolled into one. He was the children's entertainer. He wore a sequined bow-tie - nearly as red as his make-up, white shirt, white trousers, and white patent shoes ... even his hair was white. For half an hour he would bear down on the children with a manic grin, pull streamers out of hair, coloured balls out of ears, and through a clenched fist release an endless clothes-line of hankies.

DOLL.

My granny once went up on stage along with a row of other grannies to join in the balloon blowing competition. To my utter embarrassment she blew her false teeth out. I could see them - flying straight into the audience.

MICHAEL.

He was a marvel! You certainly got your two shillings worth with Uncle Bertie ...!

DOLL.

His real name was Betram Otto and Aunty somebody or other helped out.

**MICHAEL.**

She helped keep the children in order and I did his props.

**BRENDA.**

My little sister learnt to play the tambourine with him.

**TIMOTHY.**

He had a big bucket of sweets. He said, "Take a sweet, and then a sweet - just the one."

**BRENDA.**

Uncle Bertie had children up on stage. You'd sing a little song, then he'd touch you on the head and ask the audience: What do you think of this one? The one who got the loudest clap won.

**TIMOTHY.**

My Mum was totally embarrassed about me going up and winning a competition singing "Where shall we be in a 100 years from now?" (Sings.)

**MICHAEL.**

There was Punch and Judy near the Wish Tower too. Ray Elgar ran it.

**DOLL.**

After Uncle Bertie was the model village.

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EASTBOURNE GAZETTE: HEADLINES

1961

**INDIAN PAVILION DEMOLISHED  
FOR NEW 1600 SEAT CONGRESS THEATRE**

**OVERSEAS HOLIDAYS SPOIL  
OUR TRADE, SAYS HOTELIER**

**BRENDA**

(moving centre stage). I was brought up in a hotel. I used to take up early morning teas on a tray before I went to school. The hotel was situated next to the Cavendish. Small-ish. It held 20 people. We were a family business. We did full English breakfasts and evening dinners – the whole works. Mum did the cooking, a chamber maid did the rooms and my father did the waiting. It was fun. In the '50s we got people staying who performed at the Hippodrome. There was Forsyth, Seaman and Farrell a comedy trio who stayed with us quite regularly and David Masculin of Masculin and Devant. I was thrilled!

My parents were enthusiastic theatre-goers which is where it all started. I used to go to everything that was on. I went to the Hippodrome, even the strip tease. I saw Jane from the Mirror strip cartoon. Well, she was actually a series of blonde ladies. They couldn't move, but they could pose. The town was full of entertainment in the '50s. Tommy Trinder worked the theatres, and a very large lady called Bessie something or other used to sing bawdy songs. I remember the Fols de Rols and lots of girls who came out on stage with lovely dresses on at The Devonshire Park – an upmarket version of what went on down at the Redoubt Bandstand. There was Variety, the Black and White Minstrels, Denny Willis, comedy slap stick and of course Sandy Powell – “Can you hear me mother?” He did everything! He was a ventriloquist too... and Norman Meadows, once known as England's answer to Bing Crosby was Sandy Powell's straight man.

There were all star names on the Pier, and at the Hippodrome, the Devonshire Park: Max Wall – he was a good cricketer – Frank Benson, Cyril Fletcher. They had men in skirts. Danny la Rue made his first appearance at the Hippodrome as a singer. Bruce Forsyth had a very, very clean summer variety show. Jimmy Jewell and Ben Warriss had a double act, and there was Claude Dampier: “Oh I didn't think it would be like that”. Oh it was marvellous! But variety was dying in the mid 50s. Lots of famous people lived in Eastbourne. There was Tommy Cooper and Ronald Shiner and Henry Hall. Tommy Cooper and his wife were always arguing. Oh and even Gigli came to the Winter Garden in 1954!

A touring theatre company used to come every year to do a Molière play at the Winter Garden. We all went to them, Grammar schoolboys, High schoolgirls. We chatted each other up and I don't remember one single thing about the plays, but all that theatre going must have got into my bones, because that's the only thing I've

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ever wanted to do, and that's what I did, until but that's a story for another time.

**DOLL.**

I remember the cinemas. There was the Classic and the ABC. I went at 10 on Saturday morning; there was always a serial.

**TIMOTHY.**

You had Pathé News, a B movie and the main picture.

**MICHAEL.**

There was a lady who had a tea-urn strapped to her chest and served it during the interval.

**DOLL.**

I went to the Picturedrome. My grandfather worked there so we got in for nothing. Red carpet, very plush.

**FREDDY.**

The back seats at the Luxor were double; you had to get there early!

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EASTBOURNE GAZETTE: HEADLINES

1963

**PIER HAS NARROW ESCAPE  
AS BURNING SHIP COLLIDES WITH IT**

**PRINCESS MARGARET  
OPENS CONGRESS**

**HELENA**

**(Reading from mothers journal).** September 22nd 1964. Haven't written in here much since Joe and I split up. It was my fault really. Always restless for something - different. Wish I knew what. He said: if you don't set a date for the wedding, I'll have to let you go. Like I worked for him. So I said, Let me go then, and that was that. But I'm over it now. Marion made me go out with her last night to Frascos, all dolled up with my Dusty Springfield eyes and hair and the tightest skirt you've ever seen and that's where I met him. Marion said, You do pick em! - meaning he's got a reputation, but I don't care. I think he's the one

**(Pianist plays Music While Work)**

**JON.**

Just wondering what kind of work did you do down here? **(puts tape recorder on)**

**FREDDY.**

I've had more jobs than you've had hot dinners, son! It was different in those days - always lots for the taking. Let me see? When I was a lad there was O'Hara's the Butchers down by the Winter Garden, then the Scotch bakery. Old Percy Taylor - he was a character. You could go round the back after midnight and get what you wanted from him; then I went on the buses as a conductor - just a seasonal job. Southdown, not corporation. We were a bit above it all. The passengers were rough and the staff were always polite! They started open tops when they started the Beachy Head services. Everybody wanted to ride!

**MICHAEL.**

I enjoyed my trips to Beachy Head. Once I remember going up and it was all cordoned off...

**FREDDY**

**(ignoring the suicide insinuation).** They were old stock - guide buses revamped from the war with the lid sliced off. It was pretty draughty on top. They put tarpaulin across the seats. If it got wet you wiped the seats or sat on it.

**MICHAEL.**

I helped out one summer at the Devonshire Baths. Victor Birkett went up and down night after night practicing for his Channel swim. I remember a boy diving in off the

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side breaking his tooth and the water filling with blood. Nobody was ever allowed to dive from the side again.

**FREDDY.**

Then there was The International stores in Bolton Rd, deliveries, Victor Values, stock, and J Sainsbury on fish. All marble and pats of butter. Very posh! 1950. I've got muddled up with my dates I think. Oh yes, and then the Waterworks co. That was boring –sticking stamps on envelopes – and of course there was the Cuckoo Line in 1958.

**END OF SCENE 4**

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EASTBOURNE GAZETTE: HEADLINES

1964

**TOWN CENSUS COUNT: 60,918.  
MORE BACHELORS THAN SPINSTER GIRLS**

**MORE MONEY WANTED,  
SAY WOMEN**

**NEW ROUNDABOUT ON  
THE WAY AT LOTTBRIDGE DROVE**

**EASTBOURNE'S FIRST TRAFFIC WARDEN TAKES UP  
DUTIES**

1965

**STAR BREWERY CLOSES ITS PUMPS**

**BREAKFAST**

**MONDAY**

**MORNING**

---

## SCENE 5

### BREAKFAST – MONDAY MORNING

(Radio on)

#### WEATHER REPORT:

After an unprecedented weekend of snow and ice the big thaw has begun and travel by road and rail is slowly returning to normal.

(End of breakfast. Guests getting ready to leave).

#### FREDDY.

It says here that it was the first time we've had snow that bad in April since 1898. (Looks at watch, folds paper, gets up) Must be off. Nice meeting up with you all... (DOLL looks longingly in his direction, He takes a step towards her then turns and waves) Bye now.

#### BRENDA

(gets up goes to HELENA). So now remember, don't let them walk all over you. You're the important one. If you go off sick, they're done for. (Sweeps out).

#### HELENA.

Yes, thank you. I...

#### DOLL

(to TIMOTHY, still sitting with his memoir). You staying on?

#### TIMOTHY.

Might as well. I thought I'd take a look to see if I can find the hotel.

DOLL.

It meant a lot to you didn't it?

TIMOTHY.

The atmosphere was wonderful. I remember the Christmas presents, coming down in the car. There was a huge great Christmas tree, a Father Christmas. We had presents at breakfast. We sat around a great big table with everybody. Had family, friends, 2 girls who came most years with us - the same ages as brother and me. I remember a fancy dress competition where I was dressed up as a devil. We had lots of games and dancing. I remember a big table and a good atmosphere, my Dad cracked jokes and made speeches. Everything was organised, games. There was one where you changed tables...

JON

(to HELENA). You ok?

HELENA.

I think so.

JON.

Why did your aunt never tell you about your mum before?

HELENA.

Well I don't think she ever would've if I hadn't said I was coming to Eastbourne. When I told her, she just went all quiet and went upstairs and came back down with this (indicates journal).

JON.

But why - I mean how did she die? She must've been quite young.

HELENA.

She was ill. After having me. Depressed. Apparently she left me with Aunty Marion, said she needed some fresh air and never came back...

JON.

Just disappeared? Where?



We used to go to Beachy Head on the open top bus. My brother would dangle me over the edge.

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DOLL

(to TIMOTHY). We used to go to Beachy Head on the open top bus. My brother would dangle me over the edge...

MICHAEL

(enter). Sorry. Overslept. Am I too late for breakfast?

(Play: Waltzing in the Clouds – Deanna Durbin)

END



There was a Rock and Roll band, played 6-11.30, but we had to rush out at 11 to get the bus back to Polegate.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

### **Philippa Urquhart**

Philippa has worked extensively in theatres throughout the UK. She has played in London's West End, and with both the RSC and the National Theatre Companies. Her one woman play of Henry James' *The Turn Of The Screw* takes her around the world. TV Credits include *Tenko* - series 2 (Lillian Cartland), *Vanity Fair* (Miss Briggs), *East Enders*, *Casualty*, *The Bill* and *Doctors*. Films include *Laughter In The Dark*, dir. Tony Richardson, *Children of Men*, dir. Alfonso Cuaron and *Flush*, dir. Jack Jewers.

### **Freya Wynn-Jones**

Freya Wynn-Jones is an actor, singer and director, she trained with the University of Exeter, National Youth Theatre of Great Britain and Glyndebourne Youth Opera Group. She runs theatre company *The Moon On A Stick* as well as fringe opera group the GYG. Previous ensemble work includes *Knight Crew* (Glyndebourne Opera ), *A Few Good Men* (Boot Camp Theatre), *Navigators* (Eastbourne Festival 09), *Frothy Coffee at the Pam Dor* ( Shaping Voices ) and *Beautiful Thing* ( Grassy Knoll Theatre.)

### **Lloyd Ryan-Thomas**

Lloyd trained with award-winning companies Teatro della Contraddizione, Dah Teatar and Prodigal Theatre. His most recent work includes *The October Revolutions* (touring), *A Few Good Men* (Eastbourne) *Knight Crew* (Glyndebourne) and *Frothy Coffee at the Pam Dor* (Shaping Voices). He is currently rehearsing a production of *The Iliad* (Brighton Fringe) and *Toms A-Cold* (Orange Tree).

### **Christopher Leith**

Christopher studied acting at Dartington College of Arts, and puppetry with John Wright at the Little Angel Theatre in London, where he later became Theatre Director. As a puppeteer he works in film, TV, and also the theatre, where he directs, designs, carves, composes, writes, performs and teaches. He makes his own theatre productions, and has also produced work for many companies including the National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Co, Royal Opera House, English National Opera and the London Palladium.

**Denis Delahunt**

Denis has just returned from a tour of the Middle East, playing Feste in *Twelfth Night* with the Birmingham Stage Company. He divides his time between acting, directing, writing, singing and... golf. His character's accent in *A Weekend Away* was honed on the playing fields of North London, where he lived as a boy, Oxford, where he lived as a student, and Bexhill, where he lives now (as a grown-up).

**Maxine Roach**

Maxine has been involved in local Theatre since 1975, playing major roles in many musicals and plays in East Sussex and Kent. Her favourites roles include Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*, (Stables Theatre) Mama Rose in *Gypsy* (White Rock Theatre) Annie Wilkes in *Misery* (Stables) and two Alan Bennett Monologues: *A Lady of Letters* and *Bed Among the Lentils* (Smallhythe Theatre)

**Neil Sellman**

Neil has worked locally for many years in plays and musical theatre. He has performed major roles in shows such as *Chess*, *Camelot* and *Guys and Dolls* (White Rock Theatre), *Cabaret* and *A little Night Music* (St. Mary in the Castle) and *Sweeney Todd* (Stables) as well as plays such as *Translations*, *Macbeth* and *A Dolls House*. For Shaping Voices he has performed in *Second Thoughts* (St Mary in the Castle) and more recently in *Frothy Coffee at the Pam Dor* (Hastings Museum and Art Gallery).

**Shaping Voices**

Shaping Voices is an East Sussex- based charity working within the local community. Founded in 1999 by Rachel Lewis, Jane Metcalfe and Clare Whistler, Shaping Voices' current focus is on creative reminiscence: working with groups of people over the age of 50 and creating performances based on their memories. Since 2004 SV has presented numerous creative reminiscence projects throughout Sussex and Kent. Last year SV collaborated with the National Youth Theatre on an intergenerational reminiscence project on the theme of Flight. We would like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund for having provided this opportunity to work on the *A Weekend Away* project.

## PARTICIPANTS

**We have heard the memories of many people who have lived in or have visited Eastbourne and our special thanks go to the following.**

George Bell  
 Kathleen Pearl Bell  
 Doris Smith  
 Vera Holloway  
 Ella Kenward  
 Marjorie Wotton  
 Sylvia Harker  
 Meg Wooler  
 Trish Marshall  
 Barbara Warren  
 Freddie Lewis  
 Valerie Lewis  
 Margaret Howell  
 Veronica Stalk  
 Jenny Stock  
 Jean Whiting  
 Jean Wainwright  
 Doris Novis  
 Doreen Baulcomb  
 Doreen Harrie  
 Nancy Martin  
 Dorothy Abbott  
 Kris Fennel  
 Alice Britt  
 Mary Gottlieb  
 Ernest Robert Bryant  
 Cyril Frankham  
 Ken Smith  
 Galdys Smithers  
 Pat Warren

Val Linsell  
 Margaret Pipe  
 John Crane  
 Valmai Crane  
 Gillian Ackerman  
 Jean Trebble  
 Rosemary Hardwick  
 June Davies  
 Amy McCaw  
 Sheila Smith  
 Pam Robinson  
 John Villiers  
 Stefan Gemski  
 Charles Watling  
 Joan Canfield  
 Dorothy Richards  
 Trish Larmer  
 Beryl Healey  
 Brian Jones  
 Leslie Smith  
 Tim Priddin  
 John Pick  
 Philip Sommers  
 Glen Dann-Gibbon  
 Ray Sparks  
 Eileen Harffey  
 Clive Francis

And many others...



U3A, Hydro Hotel

## PARTICIPANTS



Independent group,  
Hydro Hotel





Independent group  
Hydro.Hotel

## PARTICIPANTS

Eastbourne Blind Society





PARTICIPANTS

WRVS



Philip Sommers

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## PROJECT QUOTES

It brought back wonderful memories of my childhood and teenage years. Excellent afternoon.

**A thoroughly enjoyable performance that brought back many childhood/teenage memories of the 50's/60's of growing up in Eastbourne. Well done!**

An excellent script, which brought the 1950's and 1960's to life! Well rehearsed and acted. A wonderful afternoon. Thank you!

**Fun, entertaining and very interesting. People who were nodding and agreeing and remembering – not to mention smiling broadly – surrounded me!**

Excellent, gripping, entertainment. An ingenious script, energetic performance and super chorography.

**I hope there will be many more of these enterprises.**

A fascinating project beautifully performed and imaginatively staged.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

A slide show of the images taken by students and collated into an album can be seen on the following link: [www.shapingvoices.org/aweekendaway\\_slideshow.htm](http://www.shapingvoices.org/aweekendaway_slideshow.htm)

To see all the images from this project visit:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/15993435@Noo/sets/72157622999799956/>

and

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/15993435@Noo/sets/72157623442206214/>

### **Willington Community School**

Tom Mison

Seb Pye

Matt Ginno

Shannon Zilioli

Louis Thursfield

Jade Dyer

Emma Message

Lawrence Dengate-Roe

Georgia Dudley

Natasha Cornell

### **Bishop Bell School**

Hannah Castle

Zakari Comyns

Katherine Davy

Megan Hand

Heidi Harlow

Sonia Holman

Rebecca Message

Joseph Parker

Caitlin Pickett

Carmelita Quarcco

### **Photography tutor**

Danielle Brooks



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## PHOTOGRAPHY COMMENTS FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE

I would love to do many more photography projects.

**I LOVED IT! Best experience of photography I ever had.**

I really enjoyed it, I am very interested in photography and I would like to be a photographer when I am older.

**I enjoyed everything about the photography course.**

The trainer was really helpful.

**I enjoyed the whole experience.**

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## ASSISTANCE AND HELP

Eastbourne Pier  
The Hydro Hotel  
The Friends of the Hippodrome  
The Eastbourne Heritage Centre  
Fusciardi's  
Eastbourne Homes  
Age Concern  
WRVS  
Eastbourne Blind Society  
Eastbourne Historical Society  
University of the 3rd Age – Eastbourne Branch  
Eastbourne Hotels Association

## WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO

Hydro Hotel  
Bishop Bell School  
Willingdon Community School  
Norman Couzens  
Ray Sparks  
Denise Leary  
Helen Kennett  
Veronica Payne  
Eileen Williams  
Gladys Smethers  
Fran Stovold

FUNDED BY



SUPPORTED BY





Life in Eastbourne from the  
1950s to the mid 1960s –  
the town, events, tourism,  
entertainment, the people

# A WEEKEND AWAY

Shaping  
Voices

Creative Reminiscence

A Heritage Lottery Project

[www.shapingvoices.org](http://www.shapingvoices.org)