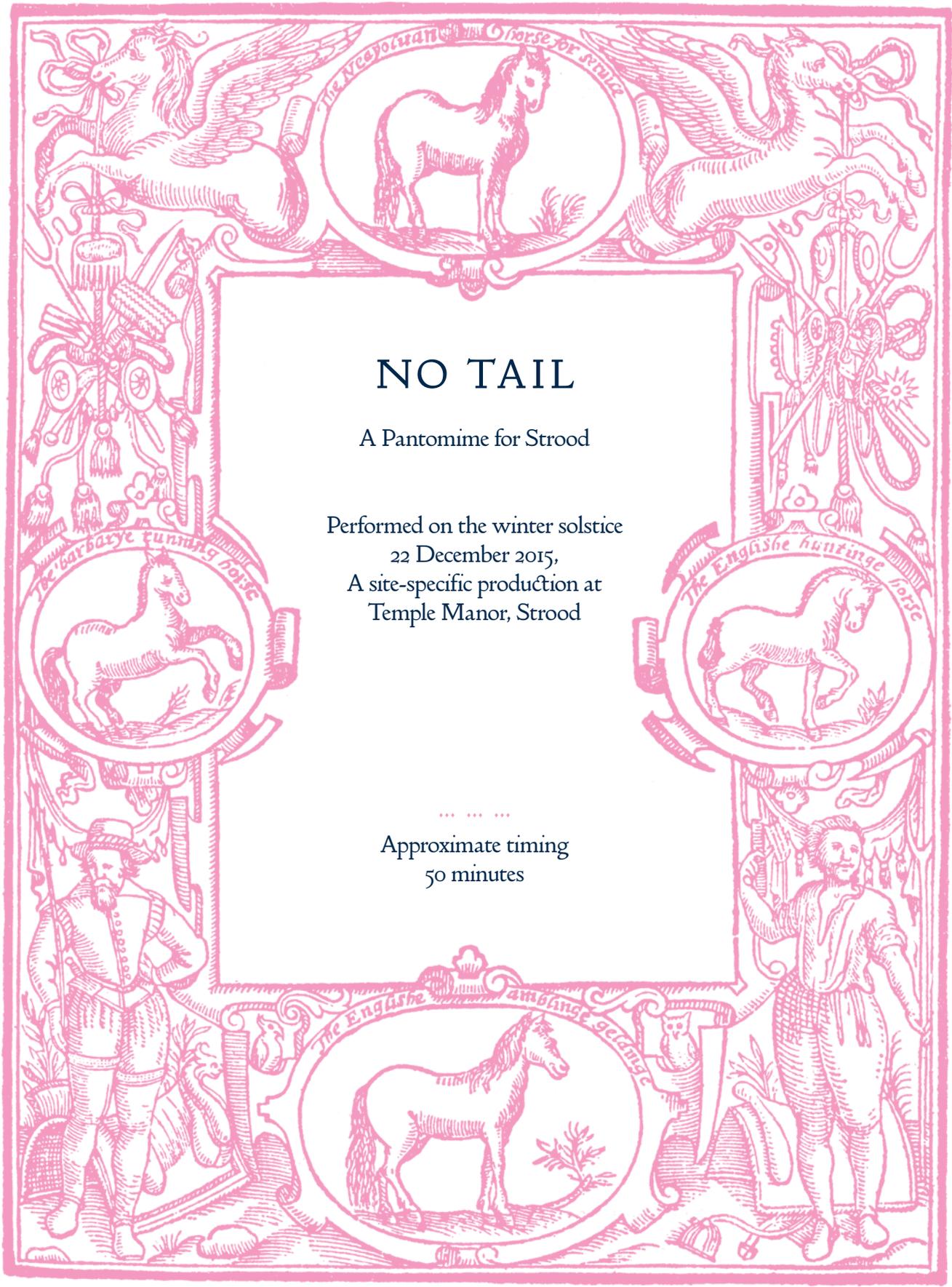


NO  
TAIL



# NO TAIL

A Pantomime for Strood

Performed on the winter solstice  
22 December 2015,  
A site-specific production at  
Temple Manor, Strood

.....  
Approximate timing  
50 minutes



Panorama of Stroud, 1808  
courtesy of Couchman  
Collection, Medway  
Archives



NO TAIL is a pantomime conceived by artist Ruth Ewan for Strood, Kent. It has been researched, written and developed in response to Temple Manor, a 13th century building now found inside a 21st century industrial estate. The script has been written collaboratively with the director Penny Cliff and the production has been created with a creative team including producer Rachel Anderson, lighting designer Cis O'Boyle, musical director and composer Dom Coyote, musician Ian Cutler, puppet maker James Frost and production manager Bernd Fauler. The script draws on local history, folklore and conversations with the community in Strood. The pantomime is narrated by actor Nia Davies and performed by a cast of Strood residents who have worked closely with the creative team on all aspects of the production.

## CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION TEAM

CONCEIVED BY	Ruth Ewan
DIRECTED BY	Penny Cliff
WRITTEN BY	Penny Cliff & Ruth Ewan
MUSICAL DIRECTION	Dom Coyote
LIGHTING DESIGN	Cis O'Boyle
PRODUCER	Rachel Anderson
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS	Phoebe Davies & Sam Trotman
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Bernd Fauler
PROJECT COORDINATOR	Claire Orme
PROPS AND COSTUME	James Frost, Sophy Millington & Christine Hanson
RESEARCH	Astrid Johnston & Geoff Doel
MARKETING COORDINATOR	Joanne Matthews

## CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

FIDDLER	Ian Cutler
NARRATOR	Nia Davies
MUSICIANS	Dom Coyote & Heather Hanson
MS RULE	Donna Hazleton
STROOD	Christine Hanson
MOLLIE	Jamieleigh Cox
ROCHESTER	Malcolm Hazleton
WAGGONER	Azad Soud
DR HOPELESS	David Soud
MR GRABBER	Calum Gabrielli-Hazelton
DR THEATRE	Heather Hanson
PONY CHORUS	All the King's Horses
SAINT THOMAS	Len Feist



## CONTRIBUTORS

RACHEL  
ANDERSON

Rachel is a creative producer she is co-founder and caretaker of idle women. She was previously Producer, Collaborative Projects at Artangel and established the education and outreach programme at the South London Gallery.

CIS O'BOYLE

Cis is a collaborative performance maker who specialises in lighting and spacial design. She is co-founder and caretaker of idle women and an adventurer who cycle tours in challenging parts of the world and is a racing crewmember on an historical Thames sailing barge.

PENNY CLIFF

Penny is a theatre-maker living in Hackney. As a Horse born at the Spring Equinox she enjoys strolling, grazing and sometimes bolting off to see what's in the next field. This has led to careers in classical music, stage writing, directing, and theatre nurturing with professionals and communities. She's directed new writing, old plays, opera, panto. After this NO TAIL adventure, she plans some stable-time with her nosebag until the grass grows.

DOM COYOTE

Dom writes music, reads comic books, plays the banjo and guitar, warbles with his voice, delves into electronica and makes sounds for people to perform to. Dom has spent time over the last few years working with artists in South Africa, travelling across the Capes, exploring the musical landscape. Dom is currently making his own show, *Songs for the End of the World...* barnstorming, post-apocalyptic gig-theatre with some of the UK's most exciting musicians and theatre makers.

JAMIELEIGH  
COX

I am a 16 year old student who enjoys Drama and Singing. In the future I want to work in acting and theatre. After attending sixth form I plan to go to university and get a degree in Drama and Theatre Studies, so that I can pursue my goal of being an actress in the future. The reason that I wanted to do this pantomime is because I wanted to explore my options and try something new as I have never done a pantomime before.

IAN CUTLER

Ian is best known as the very young fiddle player in the 1973 cult film *The Wicker Man* with Christopher Lee and Edward Woodward. Since then he has pursued his musical career playing all over the world with varying line-ups including Feast of Fiddles, Bully Wee Band and The Strawbs, finally settling right here in the Medway towns.

- DR GEOFF DOEL Geoff has a PhD on Thomas Hardy and is joint author with his wife Fran of fourteen books on folklore including *Folklore of Kent*; *A Kent Christmas*; *The Kent Hooden Horse*, *The Hop Bin and Mumming*, *Hoodening & Howling*. Geoff is an Associate Lecturer for University of Kent and University of Canterbury Christ Church. He is organiser of The Tonbridge Mummers and Hoodeners and has made several TV appearances including *Time Team*.
- RUTH EWAN Ruth is an artist who works alongside a wide range of people and contexts. Her projects include varied forms such as events, installation and printed matter, asserting overlooked histories in order to question how we might live today. Always engaging with others, her works involve a process of focused research and close collaboration – recent projects have led her to work with schools, prisons, hospitals, libraries, London Underground and institutions including V&A, Tate Britain, Camden Arts Centre and Cambridge University.
- BERND FAULER Bernd works as a freelance production manager on a variety of theatre and performance projects with organisations ranging from The Young Vic Theatre to the performance collective Duckie. He used to be in a rock'n'roll band but runs and cycles these days instead.
- LEN FEIST In Strood he was born and bred  
History, he reads a lot of, in bed
- JAMES FROST James worked as a puppet maker and performer with his company Theatre of the Small for around 12 years. He has been an active participant and initiator in many community and heritage projects in the Sandwich area and is chairman of the community groups Small Beginnings and Bringing Alive Sandwich Heritage. He is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Media, Art and Design at Canterbury Christ Church University.
- CALLUM GABRIELLI-HAZLETON Callum never moved to Strood full time but became a very welcome and frequent visitor when not in school on the other side of the Thames. Has his own room and an iPad.
- CHRISTINE HANSON I have years of theatre costume experience though usually just the sewing, not the wearing, I have played a horse once before as part of Medway's carnival, I am not sure how or why on that occasion either!
- HEATHER HANSON Heather is Christine's daughter. Despite having a proper name many at school refer to her as 'Hevatron', she's not

sure why. She's pretty sure she isn't a robot but she might have dated one once...

DONNA  
HAZLETON

Donna moved to the area five years ago. It was always her intention to become involved in Strood life; shopping, working, exploring... but she never quite imagined she would make friends with a talking horse named Strood!

MALCOLM  
HAZLETON

Malcolm wanted to live nearer a river, some countryside and a great Saturday market for fruit & veg. Joined a local yacht club but owns a canoe. Has delusions of grandeur. Now finds it hard not to speak in rhyming couplets and seeking professional help. Can be contacted for Christenings, Bar Mitzvahs, children's parties and funerals. Been here at least five years as far as we can tell.

ASTRID  
JOHNSTON

Astrid is a researcher and designer based in Cambridge. She has previously collaborated with Ruth Ewan on several projects, including *The Darks*, an alternative audio guide for Tate Britain (2014) and *Memorialmania* for The Collective Gallery (2013).

JOANNE  
MATTHEWS

Jo works with artists, producers and companies to deliver artists projects. Projects include working with Ideas Test, SICK! Festival, Artsadmin, Up Projects, London Word Festival and artists Geraldine Pilgrim, The Haircut Before The Party and Jim Woodall.

SOPHY  
MILLINGTON

Sophy is a prop maker, finder and general all rounder creative baker. What a blast this has been helping create a visual feast. In this wonderful historic place, encaged like a beast. Loving every moment working with the lovely people of Strood to lift their mood. Did I mention I live in... Rochester!

NATALIE  
MORROW

Hello my name is Natalie Morrow I am a very creative person. I recently did a playwriting course with the WEA. Back in 2014 I took part in Sittingbourne's Chalk It Up Festival organised by Marvelous Murals.

CLAIRE  
ORME

A few years ago Claire studied Fine Art at the University of Kent, then moved back to London with my parents 'cos I couldn't afford the rent.

I'm an artist, musician and general handy girl, I do performances and sculptures, but I'll give anything a whirl. The Medway magnet has brought me back over the river, to be involved in the most fantastical panto ever!

BRANDON  
PARKIN

I'm working alongside the lighting designer. I have many hobbies and talents. I enjoy music, martial arts and a lot more fun, creative activities. I love comedy and doing stupid impressions of celebrities and people I know; my inspiration being Michael McIntyre. I have loved working with these amazing people involved and it has been an incredible experience.

AZAD SOUD

Azad is a lifelong resident of Strood and proud to be able to play a part in NO TAIL in support of the town. I recently graduated with a degree in law, and my passions are writing and weightlifting.

DAVID SOUD

David is the world's leading utility management expert, but the world doesn't know it yet.

PHOEBE  
DAVIES &  
SAM  
TROTMAN

Phoebe and Sam work together as independent producers, with artists and communities across the country. Together they create, programme and produce new work with a strong emphasis on engaging marginalised groups and opening up a dialogue around social and environmental justice. They support projects that create spaces for public interaction, conversation and action to take place. Recent projects include working with Artsadmin, Tate, Serpentine Galleries, Whitechapel Gallery, Whitstable Biennale and Fierce Festival.



## HIDDEN HISTORIES

Strood is often overshadowed by its more famous neighbour across the River Medway—Rochester. Rochester has the flags waving, the Castle, the Cathedral, the Museum. Strood seems to be a more ordinary, modest sort of place. But ordinary places have their own histories too, and landmarks. Being Strood, and not Rochester, means that these histories aren't always obvious, or highfalutin, or talked about, or much written down. But they are still histories: Strood's own past. What place doesn't have histories?

In an art museum in Hamburg, Germany, there is a painting showing an event said to have happened in Strood on Christmas Eve, 1170. Against a background of red and gold, three horsemen move to the right of the picture. But the white horse in the centre has no tail. Instead, in its place, blood spurts out. On the left of the scene is a rabble of men, who are residents of the town. One puts his sword back in its scabbard and another clutches the horse's tail, freshly hacked off.

The rider of the tailless white horse is Thomas Becket, then Archbishop of Canterbury, later Saint Thomas. Becket was passing through Strood when his group of riders were besieged by men loyal to King Henry II, with whom the Archbishop was in dispute over the power of the church. Although it may not have been Becket's own horse that was attacked—it seems that it was another 'Canterbury horse' being ridden by one of his attendants—the violence was intended to humiliate and threaten Becket. In anger, he is reported to have cursed those who had insulted him. These men of Strood seemed so keen to acquire tails: Becket declared that their descendents would be born with them. This is perhaps one root of the 'Kentish Longtails' myth, where Kent folk were believed to have tails. Another version has St Augustine issuing a curse against the county, after having fishtails pinned to his clothing.

Back along the road in Canterbury, the Archbishop prepared for what he believed would be an imminent and more serious attack. Five days after the scene shown in the painting he was murdered in the Cathedral, by followers of the King. There appears to be a blood link, in more than one sense, between the incident in Strood and the murder: members of the same family were allegedly involved in both. In death Thomas Becket became St Thomas of Canterbury—he was canonised in 1173—just three years after his death.

The painting of the scene at Strood, known as *The Shaming of St Thomas*, was part of the *St Thomas Altarpiece*, painted by an artist and friar called Master Francke and finished in the 1430s (a postcard of this painting is included inside this programme). It was commissioned for St John's Church, Hamburg, by a group of merchants from the city, who traded with England—appropriately their altarpiece included events from the life of the English St Thomas, along with scenes from the life and death of Christ. Eight panels survive, including the scene at Strood, and all are now in the collection of Hamburg Kunsthalle.

Thomas Becket was just one person who passed through Strood. Countless others moved through the town before him, and have done since. Prehistoric

trackway, Roman roads, pilgrim routes, busy thoroughfares (sometimes more than one of these has been true at the same time, of the same bit of road), and of course the river and its quays—all have brought people to Strood. These days people might pass through quickly in trains or cars, on the way to a channel crossing, but in the past visitors stopped. And they left their mark, in a way that is still visible today.



Temple Manor, following its 1950s restoration by the Ministry of Public Building and Works, view from north-west.

In fact the venue for NO TAIL is one of these ‘marks’. Temple Manor was built by the Knights Templar, to provide accommodation for members of their order, and other travellers and pilgrims—many of whom were on the way to the Holy Land via a Channel crossing at Dover. The Templars themselves were an increasingly powerful organisation, taking part in bloody battles during the Crusades but also creating an innovative financial network. They had been given land in Strood in 1159 by Henry II, with whom Thomas Becket had so dramatically fallen out. By 1230 there was a two-story medieval hall, which forms the core of Temple Manor, built in part with local chalk from Frindsbury. The land around the hall was a large, productive estate and stretched into what is now the town, providing a good income for its owners. Today Temple Manor sits within a different—yet still productive—sort of estate: neighbouring yards and warehouses are home to car recyclers, conservatory builders, couriers, timber merchants and a drain centre. The Manor only survived the threat of post-WWII demolition because of the local campaign to save it.

Temple Manor would have originally hosted travelling knights, and other dignitaries, but the luxuries of this place were not available to more the modest pilgrims and other travellers who arrived by road and river. Thomas Becket himself contributed to this traffic, not just as a visitor, but because of his sainthood: his shrine at Canterbury became a major destination of pilgrimage within a few years of his murder.

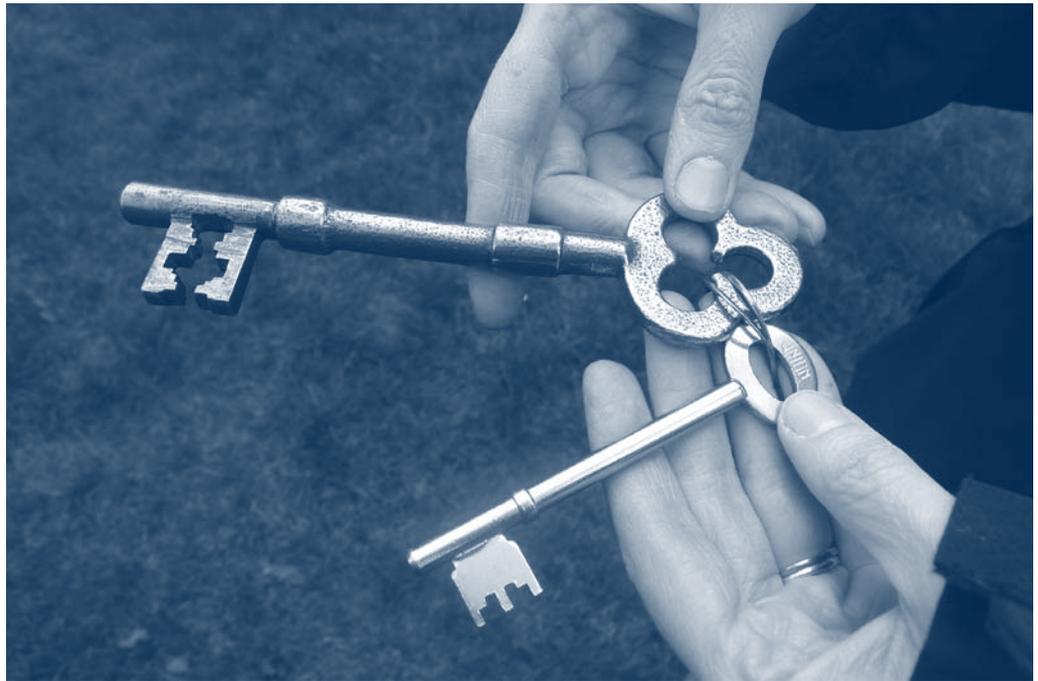
This shifting, transient population began to further shape the town. To cater to the passing trade, Strood came to have a large number of inns and taverns, some of which still exist as pubs today. Up where Old Watling Street (the Roman road) enters the town, was a spring used by pilgrims to collect water. At some point an inn appeared nearby, becoming The Three Crutches, which is still trading today. Down in the town The Crispin & Crispianus, although badly damaged by fire in 2011, still stands. There has been a building on its site since at least 1203—the name indicates that it may have been owned by a shoemaker at the time, being named after the patron saints of that trade. Later, it became an inn. More than four hundred years after the first building on the site got its name, the writer Charles Dickens was a regular at The Crispin & Crispianus, walking down from his house, Gad's Hill Place, at Higham. What brought Dickens to the pub was not well-to-do folk, but ordinary pub customers: locals from the town and visitors passing through. These people were just as interesting to Dickens as the grander residents of Rochester, across the water. In his collection of sketches *The Uncommercial Traveller*, a travelling clock-mender, and stranger to the area, spends a night at the Crispin & Crispianus, arriving there with relief (and no reservation)—a typical, itinerant patron of the inn. Hopefully this historic pub will soon welcome customers again. Along with tradesmen and pilgrims, it is quite likely that the streets and taverns of Strood saw groups of 'players'—travelling actors and musicians (or locals dressing up at particular times of year to entertain). Dickens may also have been intrigued by the life of 'darkest Strood', a part of the riverside where crime and prostitution were rife; health reports on the area from Dickens' time make grim reading.



*The Queue at the Fish Shop* by Evelyn Dunbar, 1942 - 45.  
Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

Others too have found the daily, ordinary life of Strood interesting and inspiring. Evelyn Dunbar, an official WWII war artist, grew up in Strood. Dunbar was commissioned by the government to record activities on the home front, in particular the women's war effort, and many of her paintings feature activities of the Women's Land Army. There are several of her works in the collection of the Imperial War Museum, some showing scenes in the fields of Kent. But we get a glimpse of life in Strood itself during the war in Dunbar's *The Queue at the Fish Shop*, where a long line of customers has formed outside the fishmonger Hill & Son on the High Street. Fish was not officially rationed during WWII, but it was very scarce, and queuing for food became a normal part of life. A more personal piece of work by Evelyn Dunbar is held in the collection of Tate: *Winter Garden* (c.1929–37), a scene showing the garden of The Cedars, the home of

Dunbar's parents. The house still exists, but is now divided into flats. Dunbar's work has recently been 'rediscovered', and is now the subject of renewed interest.



Keys to Temple Manor  
photo Ruth Ewan

For working people, being by the water meant that fishing and related activities were important trades. But there was other, heavier industry in Strood, too. Aveling & Porter's important Invieta Works made agricultural machinery, at one point being the world's largest manufacturer of steam rollers. The factory also had a reputation for being a fair employer, encouraging education and interest in politics. The badge on the steam rollers, which were exported across the globe in the late 19th century, featured the rampant horse of Kent (with tail!); the name 'Invieta' is also the Kentish motto—'unconquered'. Invieta engines rolled out the world's roads, but in 2010 the remaining red brick buildings on the waterfront (occupied laterly by Medway Council), were, to much local consternation, demolished.

These are just a few small details from the story of Strood. There is so much more, a fact which has been recognised by local residents over the years. Some have written histories and investigated (Henry Smetham, Charles Roach Smith), some have simply collected interesting documents and ephemera (EH Couchman) and made sure they are kept in the Medway Archives. This important recording of Strood's history continues today, by many local residents. And new histories are being made every day—by the people of Strood.

The winter solstice in 2015 sees a one-off performance of a pantomime especially for Strood, made in collaboration with local people, and drawing on the fascinating Kentish traditions of mummers plays and the hooden horse. Although you may have to look a little bit harder for History in this town (medieval buildings are nested in industrial estates)—in Strood NO TAIL does not mean No Tale.

Astrid Johnston — with thanks to the Medway Archives



## SYMPATHETIC MAGIC

Ruth Ewan asks writer and director Penny Cliff, folk expert Geoff Doel and Strood resident Azad Nalbandian about the ideas which led to NO TAIL

*Azad, as someone who has grown in Strood can you describe it for us?*

**AZAD** Strood is a place to live, not a place to visit. Families come here, settle, and help the town to grow. People who come to Strood seeking adventure or excitement may leave disappointed, but those looking for the right place to start a family likely won't find anywhere better.

*I remember in the first workshop you recalled a teacher of yours at school who rather shockingly referred to the town as a 'cesspit'*

**AZAD** Rochester has a certain style and reputation that lends it an atmosphere of class and elegance. It has history, tradition, and pride. Strood doesn't; it's a humble town in spite of its value. People often mistake that humility for insalubrity, and in doing so insult Strood, but those same snobs are the ones visiting its supermarkets, gyms, cinemas, and so on. They simply believe that they're above those things, whether or not they need them.

*Has taking part in this project affected your ideas of Strood?*

**AZAD** More than anything it's reinforced how I think about Strood and about Pantomime. Panto is perfect for Strood: it's fun, down to earth, edgy, and topical. Strood is all of those things if you know where to look, and nothing could be better to represent it.

*Penny what would you say are the key ingredients of pantomime?*

**PENNY** Key characters — the Dame, the Principal Boy, the Villain — these have evolved from *Commedia dell'Arte*, and have very specific traditions such as the Dame is always played by a middle aged man, the hero by a woman dressed as a man. Why? — IT'S TRADITIONAL! Second, the story has to be moral and full of action — familiar fairy tales such as Puss in Boots, Jack and the Beanstalk, Cinderella are the perfect vehicles to contain the characters desires and conflicts. Third, there must be magic. Theatrical transformation is so exciting, even when achieved with the tiniest of resources. Finally, a good panto should make everyone laugh, cry, boo, cheer — and go home happy.

*What makes it interesting to you creatively?*

**PENNY** It's my first time — so that's pretty exciting and challenging. As a writer, it's great to have certain traditional character and story telling limitations in place, to find ways to play with them, to subvert expectations (I mean, we've turned the main characters into towns, as well as horses!) As for directing — I love working with big groups, lots of elements, bringing it all together — I directed the opera *Hansel and Gretel* recently and that was a good training for the scale of this. That also featured broomsticks! In this case, where we are mixing up panto with mumming traditions, working in a tiny, non-theatre space, I'm enjoying working out with the actors and team to discover how we make something that is instantly recognisable as a 'panto' but also is uniquely something new and special, in this extraordinary space.

*Geoff, can you tell us about these performative folk traditions of Kent?*

**GEOFF** Among the earliest recorded are the Miracle Plays of the Middle Ages. These were often scripted by a cleric and checked by the church authorities for doctrinal conformity, but organised and performed by city and town communities, often funded by the guilds. Sometimes one or two professional actors were used for important dramatic roles such as the devil, but ordinary townsfolk took the less demanding roles.

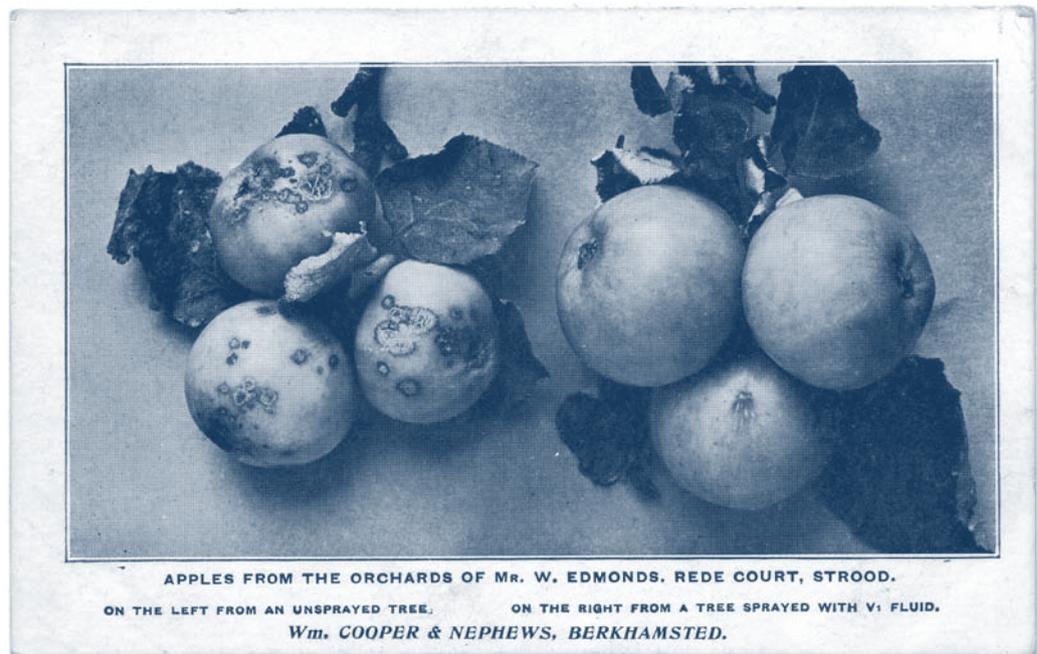
More secular were the May time and whitsuntide celebrations, often as a part of the 'May Games'. These included Robin Hood plays at Lydd, maypoles and May garland; and later of Jack in the Greens (connected with the chimney sweeps) in the Kent London boroughs and Rochester.

*Can you describe local customs linked to the Winter Solstice?*

**GEOFF** Many are probably pagan solstitial customs in origin at the turning year, linking up to death and resurrection and sympathetic magic to bring back the power of the sun and the growing season. The most important are/were the mummers plays in West Kent, the hooden horse in East Kent, wassailing and apple wassailing.

The Mummers play probably originated as a miming piece of sympathetic magic, with a death and resurrection element to magically bring about regeneration at the Winter solstice. Once the Christians had chosen the same period for Christ's birth it merged in neatly with the new religion and took on characters with Christian reference.

Later, begging characters were added and it survived as social and comic and a means for young men and boys to get free food and drink and some money. There were many local teams with variant 'texts' (often memorised).



Found  
postcard  
09.06.1917

The hooden horse links in with the ancient and universal superstitions about spirits appearing at Midwinter, often in animal guise. Again, the survival is comic and social and of economic seasonal importance before the WWI. Thanet, Walmer & Deal were the main geographical areas.

Wassailing is Germanic, brought in by the Anglo-Saxons – in legend by Hengest and his daughter Rowena. It comprises of two Anglo-Saxon words-‘wæs’ and ‘hael’ meaning ‘be of good cheer’. Bands of young men progressed through farms & villages singing good luck ‘wassail’ songs in exchange for food and drink, and sometimes money. They preceded the carol-singing traditions and most carol singers have some wassailing songs (which are secular) in their repertoire. In cider-growing areas, such as Kent, the apple trees were wassailed by groups of ‘howlers’ who awoke the trees from their winter lethargy and poured cider on them as sympathetic magic to spawn a bumper crop of cider apples.

*When you visited our workshop in Strood you quoted an early church ban on dressing up as animals.*

GEOFF

Archbishop Theodore’s Penitentials (7th century) were thought to have decreed penance for three years for ‘any who on the kalends of January clothe themselves with the skins of cattle and carry heads of animals; as this is

daemoniacum' (devilish). This has been shown to be an interpolation of a couple of centuries later in the Byzantine world. Although not then specifically Christian it is an early reference to a pan-European tradition.



The Whitstable Hooden Horse, created in 1970s for the Oyster Morris Mayday Procession, refurbished by James Frost in 2005, photo by Malcolm Hazelton

The early church was particularly opposed to animal disguise, which it thought linked with idol worship. In other areas the Catholic church tended to Christianise and amalgamate early customs with their own beliefs.

*What is the significance of the horse in Kent?*

It is the symbol of the Inviċta badge and the word 'Hengist' means stallion and his brother was Horsa. So it is tempting to see an ancient symbolic link between Kent and a horse cult, linking in perhaps with the hooden horse... I think the hooden horse and the pantomime horse ultimately link back to early European traditions of ritual animal disguise.

*What do you think the people of Strood will make of it?*

AZAD

I don't know if the people of Strood will even care. They're very busy, and always looking up. I hope that they'll enjoy our performance and see in it how much we care about our home; maybe it'll inspire them to care a little more too.

PENNY

Who knows! I hope they will love the experience of coming into this secret building on a special night. I hope they will enjoy the ideas in the piece, will see how it has emerged from shared work with the artists and the community. All we can do is work to make it the best it can be, we have a lot of energy, will and talent here!

## NO TAIL

By Ruth Ewan and Penny Cliff

*A tale about a tail. It's a fantastical tale based on asking 'What if?' About an event long ago in Strood. What if Strood, having been cursed by Thomas Becket in 1190, still felt the effects? What if Strood's humble status today - relative to Rochester, whose history is well-known and celebrated - is an echo of that curse? What if - harnessing the traditional Kentish tradition of 'hoodening' plays featuring a horse - Strood is personified by a horse who has lost his tail, a tail which embodies its history and identity? And what if, since this a winter performance, the tale is told by mixing up traditional mumming elements with pantomime characters, magic, slapstick and a happy ending?*

### CHARACTERS

NARRATOR	Speaks, sings, plays, leads audience.
STROOD	Hero. A principal boy (woman dressed as a man). A scruffy young horse with no tail. His stable is the Undercroft.
ROCHESTER	Villain. A Dame (man dressed as woman). She is grand, wealthy, boastful and arrogant. Flashy dressage horse with a huge, glamorous tail. Lives in the Great Hall.
MS RULE/SUE	Friend of Strood. Buttons character. Cheerful, bold, risk-taking
WAGGONER	Slave of Rochester.
MOLLIE	With a bucket, Rochester's slave.
DR HOPELESS	Politics
MR GRABBER	Property
DR THEATRE	Culture
PONY CHORUS	All the King's Horses
THOMAS BECKET	OS voice

### PRE SHOW

*The audience arrive - walk from station via Morrisons - fiddler-led procession to Temple Manor. The narrator greets, sings with jig dolls, the fiddler/ other musicians join him. They build up the pace. Drinks may be served - indoors or out tbc.*

*Narrator invites the audience into the undercroft*

## SCENE ONE

*The audience stand in the undercroft, a gloomy, empty space.  
Strood is hidden amongst the audience or in a corner*

NARRATOR        Room, room! Here gallants, give us room to rhyme  
                         Greetings to you this Solstice time!  
                         Stir up the fire and give us light  
                         For this truly is the darkest night.

                         But who is this, with bucket and broom?  
                         Come in, come in, make room, make room!

*Enter Ms Rule with a broom*

MS RULE            In comes I, The Lady of Yule  
                         Ready for mischief and ridicule  
                         Ms Rule is my official name,  
                         And I'm dying to play the solstice game!  
                         It's the longest night so hunker down  
                         Thrills and spills are coming to town.

                         But first things first, my duck, my mouse,  
                         We must tidy this horse's house.

*Sweeping - silent, authoritatively, ritually - opening up the space*

NARRATOR        And on this night we can flip and reverse  
                         The acceptance of fate and a terrible curse.  
                         This magical night shall now take form  
                         Let us discover our hero, so forlorn!

*Violent sneezing is heard*

MS RULE            Hang on... what is this thing I see...  
                         A feral beast in front of me?

*She discovers strood, a book in his hand*

STROOD            Stop it, stop it! Stirring the dust!  
                         My eyes are watering, fit to bust.

MS RULE            And what is that revolting smell?  
                         What is this thing, I can't quite tell...

STROOD            Get out, get out, stop raising hell!

MS RULE            I'm cleaning up your filthy hovel.  
                         I should have brought a great big shovel.

I am scrubbing it to the bone  
So listen mate, just drop that tone.

*Strood sneezing and weeping*

STROOD           Who are you? What are you doing here?

MS RULE           I am Ms Rule, I work as a char  
But on solstice night, I am a star.

*Strood staggers. Ms Rule takes a closer look*

MS RULE           Covered in dirt, so tired and pale  
Hooves, a mane, but wait - no tail?

No tail, I say how can this be?  
He's fading right in front of me!

Here, take it easy, lean on me...

There, there, don't be a ninny,  
I've got a hanky in me pinny.

*Ms Rule wipes Strood's nose with her duster*

MS RULE           Feeling better?  
What's your name?

STROOD           Strood.

MS RULE           Oh Strood, why the long face?

STROOD           Get lost!

MS RULE           Did you hear the one about the depressed horse?  
It's a tale of "Woe"....

STROOD           I've lost my tail!

*She looks - we all look*

MS RULE           Oo look, see that?  
Been clean cut off.

*Pause*

Anything else missing?

STROOD           NO!

*She produces a fly swat*

MS RULE            Here you go...

STROOD            What on earth is this?

MS RULE            To swat those pesky flies, my pet...

STROOD            Flies? They're not part of my woe!  
You don't get it! Please - just go!

MS RULE            All right, keep your mane on...  
So what's the story?

STROOD            This nightmare's a blur,  
From which I never stir.  
Long, long ago... when?  
I discovered my tail, previously attached  
Had left my bum, become detached.  
From being on  
It was utterly gone.  
Where was my tail?  
Ripped off! Destroyed!

MS RULE            Poor little colting!  
How revolting!

STROOD            My precious tail, my horsy glory  
It held my identity, my whole life story...  
Brutally cut off, taken...  
STOLEN! I WANT MY TAIL! (*Howls*)  
I want my tail, I WANT MY TAIL!  
I'm staying here with my self-help book  
Leave me alone - sling your hook!

MS RULE            What's this book then? 'Dealing with Loss'?  
Load of old psycho-babble - total dross.

*Throws it into the corner. Strood collapses*

MS RULE            (to the audience) Honestly folks, don't he annoy?  
Help me shift this silly boy!

NARRATOR        The time has come to help this steed  
So let's call loud and clear indeed...

MS RULE            (to Strood) You'll come with us, oh yes you will!

STROOD            Oh no I won't

EVERYONE            Oh yes you will

*After a few of these...*

STROOD              Ok you win!

EVERYONE            Hurray!

MS RULE              Come on then, quick!

*Ms Rule heads to the door*

STROOD              But where are we going?

MS RULE              We're off to hunt a tail long lost,  
To throw a party and I trust, defrost.  
Up above this floor  
There's a great, big door.  
Come, let's start looking  
And see what's cooking!

Follow me, Ms Rule, the Lady of Yule!  
For a night of mischief and ridicule!

NARRATOR            Come this way everyone...

#### TRANSITION

*Actors and audience go up the stairs to the closed door of the great hall.*

STROOD              Whose house is this?

MS RULE              Knock hard, my Strood.

STROOD              I'm not in the mood

MS RULE              Oh yes you are

STROOD              Oh no I'm not

MS RULE              Oh yes you are  
Chop, chop, CLIP, CLOP!

*Strood knocks*

*Silence*

*Strood and Ms Rule knock together*

*Silence*

*Strood, Ms Rule and narrator knock together*

*Silence*

STROOD            No-one's home, let's go

*Ms Rule turning the handle*

STROOD            Ms Rule, Ms Rule, you vandal!  
Take your mitts off that door handle.

*(He starts to go down stairs)*

Make room, make room,  
I'm coming through...

MS RULE            What a spoilsport, where's your spirit?

STROOD            They say 'Curiosity killed the cat'

MS RULE            That silly old proverb applies to the feline  
What are you, Strood boy? Equine!

Summon up your inner carthorse  
Give this massive door some force!

STROOD            Dare I? Dare I?

NARRATOR        DARE HE? YES

AUDIENCE        *(encourage)* YES!!!

*Strood makes a huge effort and pushes the door open.*

MS RULE            Come in everyone!

## SCENE 2

*Actors and audience enter the great hall. Inside, a very different scene - lush decorations, glamorous "objets", mirrors, greenery, lights - it's warm!*

STROOD            What a palace!

*They creep around, looking*

MS RULE            (quietly) No-one here.  
How strange.  
But like they say...

When the cat's away

The mice do play...

(yell) Everyone, come on!

STROOD SHHHHH!

MS RULE (whisper) Let's have a good nose...!

*Actors and audience wander about inspecting and admiring the room.  
When everyone is in...*

NARRATOR Stir up the fire and give us light  
For in this room there will be a fight  
Ladies and gentlemen, make yourselves comfortable!

*Audience gets seated on benches in window alcove and around the walls.*

MS RULE Who's home is this?  
Who can it be?  
Let's look for clues.

*They pick things up, involve the audience in wondering who lives here -  
get responses to 3 things such as:*

*Mirror*

MS RULE Who would need a mirror like this?  
A beautiful lady? Snow white?

*A gold cup*

MS RULE Who would need a gold cup like this?  
A sportsman or woman, a very big boozier?

*A book: 'Renewing Your City Status'*

MS RULE A book - 'Renewing Your City Status'  
A civil servant? Or... an ex-mayor??

MS RULE Friends, I'll tell you one thing,  
This whole place reeks of cash.  
So why ain't the lord or lady  
Here to enjoy the bash?

*Strood finds a horse's tail*

STROOD Oi Sherlock! Look at this giant mop  
MS RULE What kind of cleaner would let this drop?  
That sort of error would lead to the chop.

You know what this is, young Strood?  
This, I tell you, this is a tail;

MS RULE           The tail of a HORSE - A horse like you!

Clever Ms Rule - it's a horse's house!

What horse would live in such a stable?  
Can I get my feet under this posh table?

*Strood discards the tail. Ms Rule picks it up*

MS RULE           Come on Strood, don't be a snail  
Hurry up and try it on  
We'll have a solstice tail-o-thon!

*Ms Rule helps attach the tail*

STROOD           How does it look?

MS RULE           Oh Sir Strood, it's a spot-on fit  
Tonight we've made a perfect hit

STROOD           This thick abundance isn't mine,  
Its quality is far too fine.  
This tail's so shiny, thick and floppy  
Mine was matted, tangled, sloppy.  
This is too long, it trails on the floor  
Come on Ms Rule, let's sneak out the door.

MS RULE           Oh no, no, no, no, not so fast  
This lovely venue is such a blast

STROOD           Take it off now, un-pin me please.

MS RULE           Strood, you're a dreary little pony,  
Whiny, groany, sad and moany

STROOD           You're a thief Mrs Mop...  
Take it off, clip, clop!

MS RULE           Ungrateful donkey!

STROOD           MS RULE'S A MULE!

### SCENE 3

*Gigantic crashing/stamping/racket at the door.  
Strood and Ms Rule run around in panic - they hide.*

*Rochester barges in, wearing elaborate, glittering evening dress.  
Mollie runs ahead, clearing the space,*

MOLLIE            Make room, make room!

ROCHESTER        In comes I, Rochester, that noble champion bold  
My thundering hooves, I win cups of gold  
Racing purebreds at the derby  
Who takes me on? I dare you. Try me!

WAGGONER        My lady's a winner  
She'll have you for dinner  
But for he who is bold  
In books 'twill be told.  
Stay up on this thorough-bred  
And you'll win a gingerbread.  
Roll up, roll up!  
Form an orderly queue!

*Rochester creates a 'horse field'. 1 or 2 people have a go at getting near  
her: they are repelled*

ROCHESTER        Ah that's enough, I'm feeling quite beat.  
Fetch me my slippers and pump up the heat.

Good evening, dear paupers, peasants and plebs  
You're lucky tonight, for as the year ebbs  
My high-end gaff is dressed to the max  
Bright lights and lanterns, bevies and snacks,  
Gussied up with mistletoe, silvery balls,  
Feast your eyes, look around - it never palls!

*Waggoner brings Rochester's slippers*

ROCHESTER        The reason for my secret charm, my high calibre?  
It is this TAIL - unique! Of quality, heritage fibre  
*(Swishes it about)*  
See it? - so glossy, untangled, silky like seal  
Anyone want to cop a feel?

*Rochester offers it to the narrator - who admires - then the audience*

ROCHESTER        This is not your everyday beautification  
It is a monument to civilization

For every one of these lustrous strands  
Tells stories of kings and knights and bands  
The Dame's extensions, this hairpiece of art,  
Would you look? You may touch... ow, don't start!  
Don't tweak, don't pull, don't snatch - that's enough!  
Or Dame Rochester may have to get rough!

*Rochester sings/speaks a version of 'I've Been To A Marvellous Party'.  
During it, unbuttoning, relaxing*

ROCHESTER        I've been to a wonderful party  
                      With Waggoner here and Moll  
                      We went in my vintage pink Capri  
                      On the Riviera - Medway that is  
                      The castle lit up  
                      It was fancy dress  
                      10 Tiny Tims, 3 Little Nells...  
                      The wine was Grand Cru  
                      The mayoress wore blue  
                      Her chain got entangled  
                      In my mane!  
                      Oh we laughed till we cried  
                      And Jools tinkled away...  
                      And I couldn't have liked it more!

*Waggoner brings a drink*

ROCHESTER        Mollie! Where's my book?

*Mollie hands him '50 Shades Of Hay'. He starts to read  
Loud crash*

#### SCENE 4

ROCHESTER        What was that?  
                      A spy!  
                      In my house!  
                      Find him!

*Waggoner and Mollie search.  
Strood and Ms Rule creep out and head for the door.*

ROCHESTER        Come out come out, wherever you are!

*Audience joins in aiding and abetting, shouting out...*

Behind you!

*Waggoner catches Strood, drags him to Rochester  
Ms Rule runs out the door, followed by Mollie*

STROOD            Help help!  
                    Let me go!

WAGGONER        Empty your pockets,  
                    You filthy young rogue!

STROOD            Your ladyship, madam, please let me go free  
                    It's not me you want, it's SHE who brought me

ROCHESTER        Where is this accomplice  
                    Who trespasses in my edifice?  
                    (about Ms Rule) I'll whip you, you sinner  
                    I'll have you for dinner!

*Mollie dragging in Ms Rule*

MOLLIE            Wicked lady, over here, quick  
                    Stop that, stop - don't kick!

ROCHESTER        Time for your interrogation!  
                    Followed by - annihilation!

WAGGONER        Who are you? What are you doing?

STROOD            (inaudible squeak) Strood... I wasn't...

ROCHESTER        Speak up boy, I'm waiting!

MS RULE          This lad is Strood, a horse quite sad  
                    He's lost his tail, and feels so bad.  
                    I am Ms Rule (sometimes called Sue)  
                    Tonight I found him utterly blue.

MS RULE          So as his best mate  
                    Taking pity on his state,  
                    I brought him up here,  
                    Seeking help and repair  
                    Or even reinstatement  
                    Of the afore-mentioned... tail.

*She strokes Rochester*

MS RULE          On the solstice night things go in reverse.  
                    So please forgive Strood and don't make it worse.

ROCHESTER        I'm feeling so mellow

I'm not going to bellow  
(to Ms Rule) Escort your poor serf  
Off my posh turf.

MOLLIE Oi, Strood-boy from the slum!  
What's that stuck onto your bum?

WAGONNER Thief thief!

ROCHESTER Ah-ha! So now we see  
Lies, deceit, depravity!  
How dare you nick my lucky end-piece  
Look at it now - is that a crease?

*Rochester rips the tail off*

STROOD I'm sorry I'm sorry  
It wasn't me, it was her...

MS RULE We were just having fun, we are not bad!  
Honest honest, please don't get mad

ROCHESTER My second best tail, I love it as my life  
How dare you butt in and put me to strife?

STROOD Can't you see it was just a little joke?  
By the way, are those ribbons bespoke?

WAGGONER You equine yob, you taking the mick?  
Madam Rochester, let's call the cops  
The place for these crims is in the nick.

ROCHESTER Oh no, oh no, I love D.I.Y,  
I'll cut him and mince him as small as a fly  
Send him off to the kitchen to make a horse pie!

STROOD Quick, Ms Rule, can you really do magic?  
Quick, hurry up, before it turns tragic.

MS RULE Yes... well... well...  
Come on brain! What is that spell?

*Mollie brings in a large kitchen knife*

MS RULE Oo-er, oo-er, I feel quite unwell...  
Oh yes... it comes...  
On the tip of my tongue...

*They grab Strood*



MS RULE            Stop snivelling, you mule and listen here  
                      You've survived being beaten  
                      And nearly been eaten  
                      You failed in the race  
                      The answer stares us in the face

*Rochester strolling around, plumping up the place, humming, jeering*

ROCHESTER        I am the champion, the super-duper Dame  
                      All the others are bland, insipid, tame.

*Ms Rule hands her broom to Strood*

MS RULE            Go for it Strood!

STROOD            You're wrong there, Dame Roch  
                      Here's one who is not  
                      Come on, come on, let's have it out  
                      When roused I can be quite a lout!

ROCHESTER        Ho Ho Ha Ha, I quiver with fear

*Waggoner and Mollie hand her a giant weapon.*

ROCHESTER        Stand guard, say goodbye to the year!

*They fight  
Strood is knocked down and dies.  
The audience boo.*

## SCENE 5

NARRATOR        Is there a doctor in the house?

*Doctor Hopeless enters with a pint in his hand*

DR HOPELESS     Good evening, I am Doctor Hopeless  
                      Surgeon to the feckless, the silly and the reckless

NARRATOR        Young Strood has taken a bash to the head.  
                      We worry he might well be dead.

DR HOPELESS     Do not despair, Hopeless is here.  
                      My bedside manner never fails  
                      To get them up demanding ales.  
                      Strood old boy, open your gob.

MS RULE            What's wrong with him Doctor?

Poor Strood has got issues  
They aren't solved by tissues.

DR HOPELESS      Ah yes, just as I thought  
Feckless, reckless, careless, useless.  
The only cure is - get a job.  
Are you Polish? Turkish? Lithuanian?

*(Strood shakes his head)*

The future's bleak for you old chap  
Strood needs a job, they've all been taken  
But give it a boost, give it a slap  
Close his channels to immigration!

MS RULE            I'd never vote for you!

DR HOPELESS      I must catch the last orders  
And patrol those borders  
Ladies and gents, Good night

NARRATOR        I call for a second opinion!

*Enter Mr Grabber*

MR GRABBER      Mr. Grabber here.  
Note the MISTER, I'm a consultant

ROCHESTER        A consultant? For that bag of glue?  
Whatever is this coming to?

STROOD            Do something, do something...

MR GRABBER      I'll just take a tour  
Ah yes, well appointed  
Small and unmodernised  
Cramped and unheated  
I'll find you a buyer  
In the bat of an eyelash  
Buy to let landlord, offering cash...

MS RULE            Is that your remedy for such diseases?  
Rob the poor, control the leases?

MR GRABBER      We have the cure, we'll raise the rent  
That's how we'll improve this Kent!

ROCHESTER        I must agree with you Ms Rule  
This suited vampire's a total fool.

Get out!

*Mr Grabber exits*

ROCHESTER        Oh I'm exhausted, I could do with a hack.

STROOD            AHHH...

NARRATOR        LAST CALL FOR DOCTORS

*Dr Theatre enters diffidently*

DR THEATRE       I'm Doctor Theatre - oh - love the space!  
If you've got to be ill, this is the place!  
What Strood needs is poetic vision  
Music, dance and thespianism...

*(They all look baffled)*

DR THEATRE       Culture! That is what we need!  
Come on, let's put some in his feed!

*Dances around Strood  
Everyone looks embarrassed  
Strood doesn't move*

ROCHESTER       Not that arty-farty, silly stuff  
Strood isn't ready, he's really rough  
He's a half-breed, a cesspit, a total disgrace.  
Look at him, he's not fit to race.  
Something happened long ago,  
Nothing can fix him now you know.

*A noise of hooves*

ROCHESTER       What on earth is that horrible din?  
Who else can be wanting to steal my gin?

*Enter All the King's Horses  
They are ponies with paramedic touches  
They canter about - then salute  
They share the lines between them*

HORSES            (1st line All) We're All the King's Horses of nursery-rhyme fame  
We've had expert training  
To put things together again  
We've just come from an incident  
Regrettably, inclement.  
A certain young gent, who happened to topple

Down from a ledge and quite lost his bottle  
We gave CPR  
Pill, plasters and splints,  
But, sadly, you see,  
The Kings Men are escorting him to A&E.

So tell us -  
What height did the lad fall from?  
Did he jump or was he pushed?  
Has he been given  
Stay-safe tips for the season?

*One gives Strood a leaflet*  
*One inspects the beams above*  
*The others lift Strood up - they try to revive him*

ROCHESTER        We were having a barney, just for a laugh  
                      The kid fell down, an early bath!

MS RULE            Come on you guys!  
                      He's opening his eyes...  
                      Strood, focus, focus...  
                      Come on lad... just do it!  
                      Yes...

*Strood collapses*  
*Ms Rule sobs*  
*The Kings Horses look sheepish*

ONE HORSE        We regret to say, that on this day  
                      All the King's Horses have failed in their task  
                      To put Stroody Stroody together again.

NARRATOR        Ladies and gents, in panto mood  
                      Can you shout out COME ON STROOD?  
                      One two three....

ALL                COME ON STROOD.

NARRATOR        And again

ALL                COME ON STROOD.

NARRATOR        And again

ALL                COME ON STROOD.

SCENE 6

STROOD            *(as if in a dream)* What's wrong with me?  
I long to get well  
Be happy and strong  
Be better, and smarter  
If Rochester can be so fine

STROOD            Why can't I?  
Long long ago, what did occur?  
I wish I wish, I wish I knew  
How I lost this piece  
I miss it so  
I feel such grief.

*Voice of St. Thomas (os)*

THOMAS            Strood, Strood! Harken to me!

STROOD            Yes, Yes, I'm here. Who calls?

THOMAS            Make room, I'm the ghost of martyred Thomas Becket  
And don't you Stroodians dare to forget it  
For I must fill you in on a lost piece of history  
So that we might begin to solve this mystery

Long ago I travelled from London to Canterbury  
Via horseback and in a terrible hurry  
I'd fallen out with my friend King Henry you see  
And at Strood something dreadful happened to me

The townsfolk here were on Henry's side  
Poor horse, he was just there for the ride  
We traversed the bridge across the Medway  
And my horse, well he got quite unsteady

The ruffian mob - they assaulted my steed  
They hacked off his tail and it started to bleed  
Afterwards, I Thomas, canonised... a saint!  
But I couldn't quite ever forget this event...

As a saint I was granted mystical powers  
To make changes to this world of ours  
I smite this Medway town!  
Your spirit has been crushed and you'll always feel down!  
HA HA HA (evil laugh)

STROOD            So that's what happened?  
That's how it was lost...

My poor tail.  
Help me, help what can I do?

MS RULE            Oh what a scandal, you poor dear  
I had no notion, no idea.

ROCHESTER        His tail was cut off, he's lost his story  
He has no history, I have the glory!  
It was given to me by this saintly chap Thomas  
And I swore I'd never break that promise  
He left us with this wonderful curse -  
Rochester shall be better, and Strood always worse!  
So I keep his tail in pride of place  
That's what helps me win the derby race!

STROOD            Rochester, I am disgusted  
But I will see you busted!

*Strood throws himself at Rochester - Ms Rule pulls him away*

MS RULE            Hold your horses - she's bigger than you  
Slow down, while I think this through.  
(Quietly) What's the shelf life of your average curse?  
To last for a millennium seems very perverse.  
Call him, Strood, call Thomas again!

STROOD            Thomas, Thomas, help, help, HELP!  
Come on everyone...

NARRATOR        1,2,3...

ALL                Thomas, Thomas, Thomas!

THOMAS            Yes? Who wakes me now?

STROOD            Rochester has done a dirty deed  
She's kept my tail, it gave her speed.  
She abused its power for sporting gain  
While I, Strood, went down the drain!

Please would you use your saintly skill  
To lift the curse? Would be such a thrill!

THOMAS            Hmm. Normally I do not like people who grass.  
But you asked me so nicely I may let this pass.  
Rochester!

ROCHESTER        Saint Thomas, how lovely of you to drop by  
Can I offer you a sherry, or perhaps a mince pie?

THOMAS            Rochester, it's time you did your duty.  
Restore to Strood this stolen booty!

ROCHESTER        What???

THOMAS            Do it now - if not - YOU'RE NEXT FOR THE VOODOO!  
My curse is past its sell-buy date  
It's cancelled, go and celebrate!  
Your tail is vital, so keep it safely  
Events today are tomorrow's history.  
On your bottom the tail must remain  
And don't let anyone steal it again!

STROOD            Goodbye, goodbye! Thank you, thank you!

THOMAS            Goodbye...

### FINALE

*Rochester gives strood the tail*

ROCHESTER        I keep the bargain. Here it is.

*Mollie and Waggoner comfort Rochester  
Ms Rule helps Strood to put the tail on.*

STROOD            In comes I, historic Strood the horse,  
Welcome, welcome am I not?  
I hopes this Strood will never be forgot

MS RULE            I comes I, The Lady of Yule  
Maker of mischief and ridicule  
Where is Rochester, our grand old Dame?

*She has to be dragged forward*

WAGGONER        My mistress, come on, give them a verse

MOLLIE            Everyone's waiting, don't make it worse

ROCHESTER        The stuffing's gone out me, I'm utterly shot!

WAGGONER        You daft old lady, you're still our Dame Roch

MOLLIE            Do it for us, your faithful minions,  
Address the masses, here in their millions!

*Rochester pulls herself together*

ROCHESTER        In comes I, Rochester, once noble champion bold.  
Now I will put my hooves up, admire my cups of gold,  
Epsom, Goodwood, Aintree, those days are in the past  
My winning streak? I was a cheat, and it could never last.

*Mollie and Waggoner hand him the things*

And so before he returns to the undercroft  
I offer Strood greenery, plus stuff from my loft  
The olive branch, the hope Dame proffers  
Is to savour, not envy, what Rochester offers.

NARRATOR        This tale of a tail is now complete  
Our hero's lost pride re-attached to his seat  
Strood's ancient tragic mutilation  
Is turned instead to jubilation

We've brought in the magic, the noise and the light  
To brighten the darkness of the longest night.  
We'll end with a knees up, to liven the hall.  
Thank you Temple Manor, for having us all.  
Let's join together for drink and food  
And a toast to all who live in Strood.

*A song & dance*

END

*Fish, chips, ales, inside or out.*

The following pages contain excerpts from written exercises, created during the open public workshops for NO TAIL.

Once upon a time in  
Strood there was a...

FISHERMAN

Who met a...

SOLDIER

at...

GUN LANE

He wore...

A BROWN TIE

She wore...

a white dress

He said...

"Blimey it's a old  
night!"

She said...

HOW MUCH FOR THE  
BOGOF?

And they ended up...

singing 'A SA DO DO DO'

The locals said...

HOW DID YOU KNOW

Once upon a time in  
Strood there was a...

dancing bear

Who met a...

PRINCESS

at...

The Railway Station

He wore...

a dirty apron

She wore...

A GREEN BRET

He said...

Have I seen  
you here before

She said...

"You're telling me!"

And they ended up...

SWAPPING THEIR  
SPECIAL DEALS

The locals said...

What a scandal!

Once upon a time in  
Strood there was a...

elephant

Who met a...

apple picker

at...

THE DOCKS

He wore...

A PURPLE SUIT

She wore...

A white suit

He said...

"I hope my wife didn't  
hear you say that"

She said...

ATE THAT ONCE AND  
IT MADE ME VERY  
ILL!

And they ended up...

barking like rabid dogs

The locals said...

WE ARE NOT AMUSED

Once upon a time in  
Strood there was a...

horse called Joe

Who met a...

BLIND PERSON

at...

THE CAR PARK

He wore...

a red dress

She wore...

An off the shoulder  
evening strap.

He said...

DON'T SEE MANY OF  
THEM AROUND HERE!

She said...

NO, DON'T TAKE MY FREEDOM!

And they ended up...

AT THE CHURCH

The locals said...

He wears a petticoat

GROUP EXERCISE *If Strood was a... what would it be?*

CAR	Fiat Panda with souped up engine Scratched Metro Toyota Corolla Mini Minor	An old car, not working well Old Nissan Micra Fiat 500
VEGETABLE	Swede Beetroot Pizza Crown prince squash	Boiled potato Jacket potato Jacket potato
ANIMAL	An underdog Dachshund Small yappy dog Badger	A patchy but nice mongrel Friendly mongrel Fox
BUILDING	A large Asda Corner shop Train station Post Office	The ghost of Invieta Works Terraced house Gambling place
PIECE OF CLOTHING	Leggings Anorak with fur Jeans Fingerless gloves	Morrison's uniform Tracksuit bottoms Suspenders
PLANT	Japanese knotweed Bouquet of carnations Sunflowers Wild sage	Flowering weed Daisy Dandelion
CAKE	Incredible jam doughnut Battenberg Jaffa Cake Treacle tart	A plain sponge An iced bun Battenberg
SONG/MUSIC/ SOUND	Football chant Railway hooter/car horn Prog rock experimental Mocking bird mill	Wicker Man intro A nursery rhyme Papa Don't Preach
ITEM OF FURNITURE	Chest of drawers – to be upcycled Chest of drawers A floor cushion Shelf	White plastic garden chair Armchair Feather bed
PANTOMIME CHARACTER	Genie-style hero Jack - of the beanstalk Aladdin Aladdin	Cinderella Cinderella Wicked step mother

GROUP EXERCISE *If Rochester was a... what would it be?*

CAR	Diamond encrusted vintage Ford Capri A white 4 wheel drive Range Rover Morris Oxford	Ford saloon – quite new Red BMW Classic vintage car
VEGETABLE	Baked potato Avocado Carrot Pumpkin	King Edward roast potato Aubergine Sweet potato
ANIMAL	French Bulldog Giraffe Large shaggy dog Fox	Pedigree Golden Retriever Cheetah Owl
BUILDING	Castle Cathedral Castle Fort	Castle Castle Church
PIECE OF CLOTHING	Gold leggings Tweed coat Tie Snood	Satin waistcoat Fur coat Waistcoat
PLANT	Aspidistra Rhododendron Hydrangea	An oak tree Vines Foxglove
CAKE	Big birthday cake and candles Pavlova Wedding cake Battenberg	Lemon meringue pie A 4-tiered cake Victoria sponge
SONG/MUSIC/ SOUND	Take My Breath Away (Topgun) Oratorio Lacrimosa You Are My Sunshine	A song by Genesis An anthem Red, Red Wine
ITEM OF FURNITURE	Wooden throne A velvet sofa Leather recliner sofa Chaise longue	A Victorian mahogany wardrobe A Chippendale something Rocking chair
PANTOMIME CHARACTER	Dame Fairy godmother Jafar Cinderella	An arrogant king Wicked witch Puss in boots



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The cast and creators of NO TAIL during rehearsals at Strood's Temple Manor photo by Felicity Crawshaw

We would like to thank everyone who supported NO TAIL in particular: Keely Augustus, Mick Hendrick — Strood & Frindsbury Working Mens Club, Paul Robinson — Strood Community Project, Judy Frayne and Richard Pemberton and the team at Strood Community Hub, Abby Found and Sarah Belsom — English Heritage, Medway Council, Tim Meacham — University of Kent, Alison Cable and Cindy O'Halloran — Medway Archives & Local Studies Centre, Flo's Fryer Fish and Chips and 10:50 from Victoria.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the creative process of making NO TAIL: Alison Broom, Mikka Brown, Shirley Carlton, Jamie Leigh Cox, Gillian Davies, Marie Deleslie, Aimee Deleslie, Jess Deleslie, Maggie Drury, Muriel Feasey, Len Feist, Christine Hanson, Heather Hanson, Callum Hazleton, Malcolm Hazleton, Donna Hazleton, Val Lovatt, Sophy Millington, Natalie Morrow, Joanne Murray, Michael Olawetayo, Russell Palmer, Brandon Parkin, Maureen Shannon, Azad Soud, David Soud, Phyllis Stunt, Lioness X.

NO TAIL is an Out of the Ordinary Places commission produced by idle women.

Out of the Ordinary Places (OOTO Places) is an Ideas Test flagship programme working across North Kent, commissioning artists to create projects shaped by people and place. OOTO Places explores how local residents and artists can co-create new, exciting and experimental work that reimagines and challenges perceptions of place and in turn raises wider social and political questions.

Idle women initiates, creates and produces contemporary art with women.

Ideas Test is one of 21 Arts Council England funded Creative People & Places programmes. Ideas Test is a grassroots arts organisation that is increasing opportunities for everyone in Swale & Medway to take part in arts and creativity in ways they choose. They are doing that by supporting people to test out their ideas for getting others enthused and involved in the arts, listening and learning as they go so that in 10 years time Swale & Medway is recognised as a vibrant, creative place to live, work and invest in.

Published by Field Notes,  
Field Notes,  
Medway Feather Co.,  
Brasenose Road, Gillingham,  
Kent, ME7 4JR

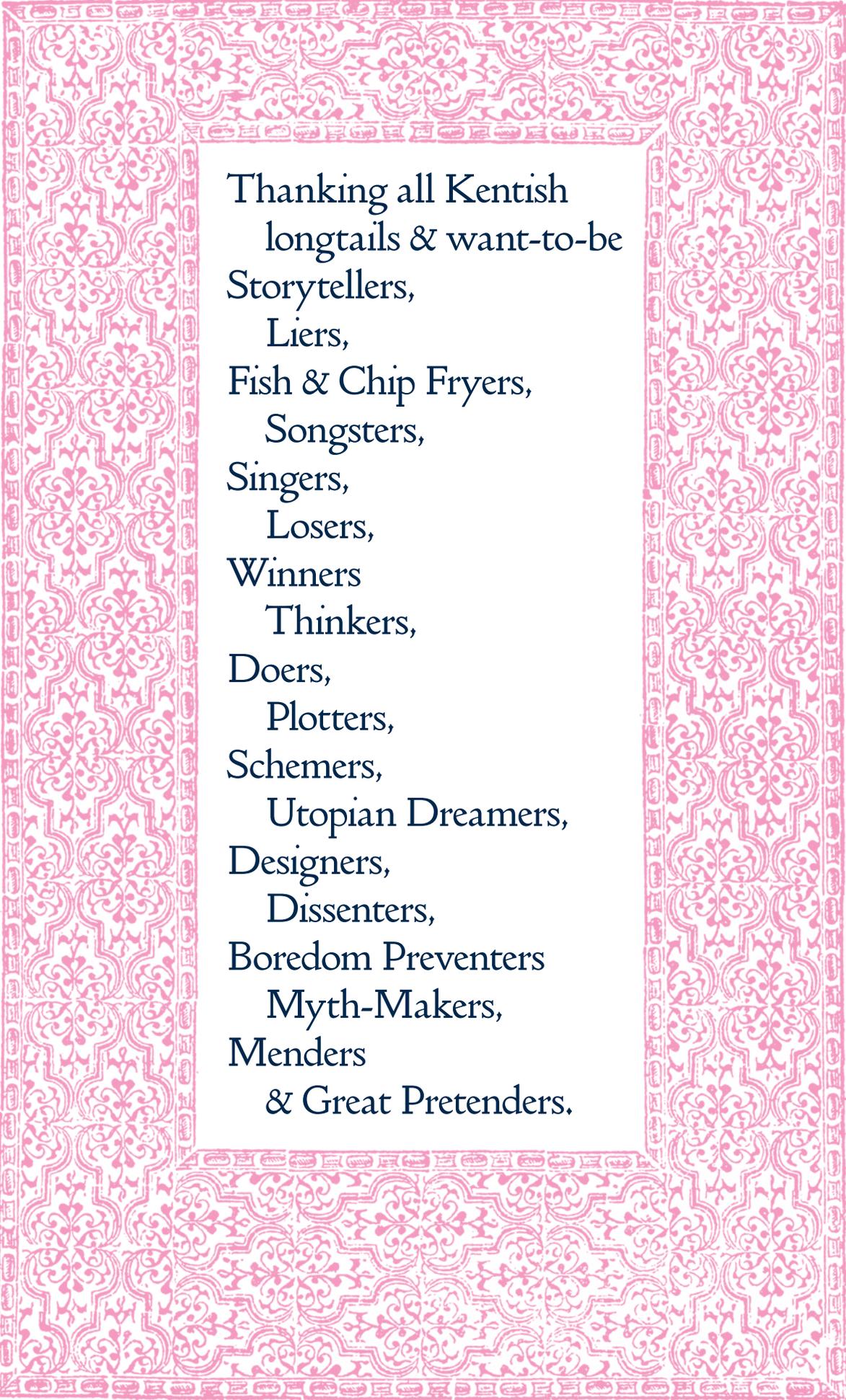
ISBN 978-0-9935123-0-8

Copyright Ruth Ewan, Penny Cliff and all contributing authors and artists.  
All rights reserved. No part of this publication can be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission from the publishers or in accordance with the Copyright Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

Edited by Ruth Ewan  
Design by Sam Blunden  
Printed by Barkers Litho Printers, Rochester  
Typefaces used: Doves Type, Goudy Old Style Italic & Letter Gothic MT  
Decorative title panels from *200 Decorative Title-Pages*. Cover lettering taken from *Decorative Title Alphabets and Initials*, both Edited by Alexander Nesbitt, published by Dover Publications.



[www.ootoplaces.co.uk](http://www.ootoplaces.co.uk)



Thanking all Kentish  
longtails & want-to-be  
Storytellers,  
Liers,  
Fish & Chip Fryers,  
Songsters,  
Singers,  
Losers,  
Winners  
Thinkers,  
Doers,  
Plotters,  
Schemers,  
Utopian Dreamers,  
Designers,  
Dissenters,  
Boredom Preventers  
Myth-Makers,  
Menders  
& Great Pretenders.