

Programme 2025

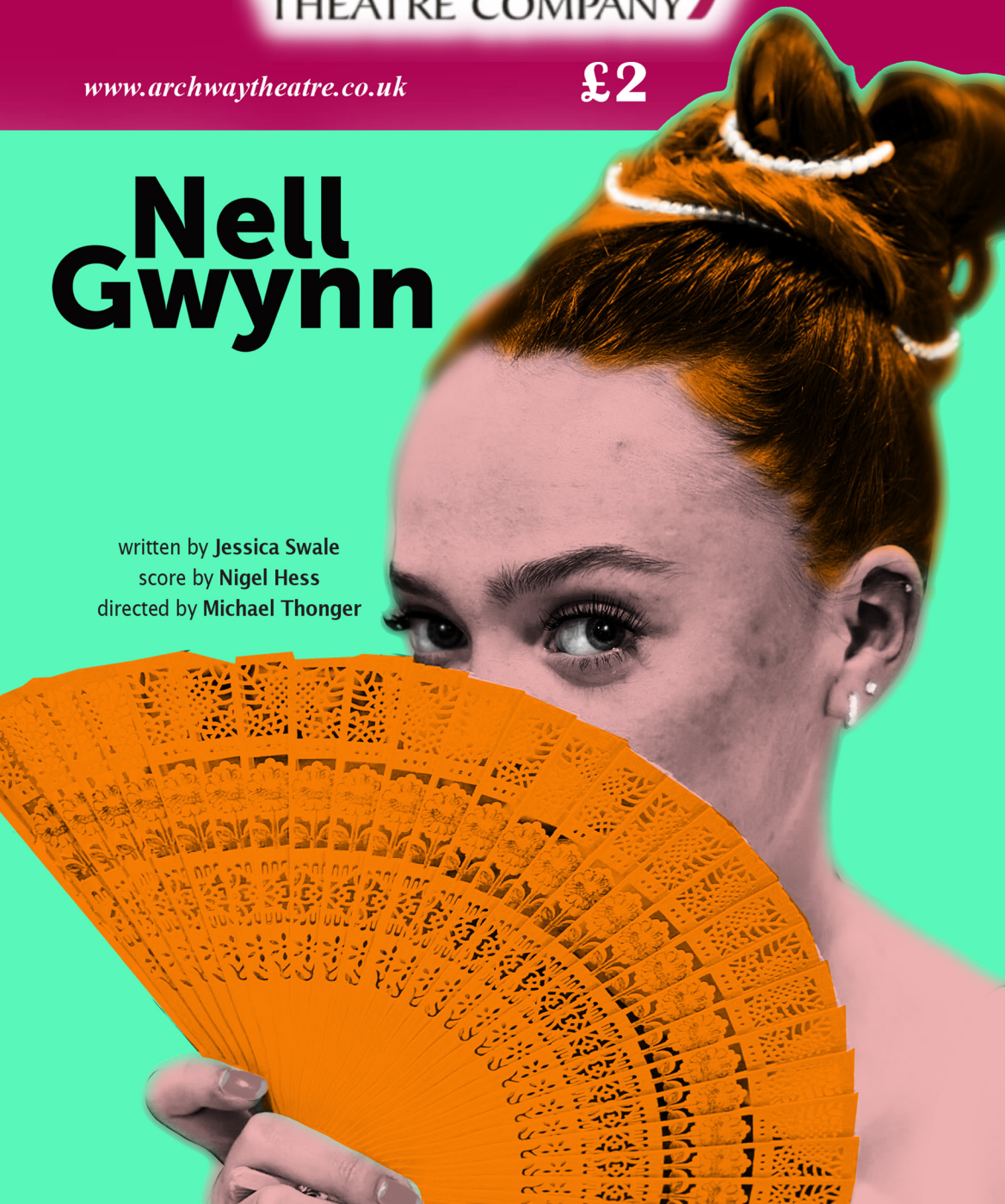
THE Archway THEATRE COMPANY

www.archwaytheatre.co.uk

£2

Nell Gwynn

written by Jessica Swale
score by Nigel Hess
directed by Michael Thonger



Chair's welcome

Welcome to The Archway Theatre. Whether this is your first visit or your 50th, I hope that have enjoyed a drink in the bar before settling into your seat to have a read through the programme.

As Chair of The Archway Theatre, I am very proud of the huge team who are required to open our doors and put on a show. Everyone you will have met this evening, from the friendly face on box office to the person who sold you the programme and the team behind the bar, are all volunteers.

All of the people on stage performing, the crew backstage, the person behind you in the lighting box are also all volunteers.

Performances with children require a team of volunteer chaperones and our brilliant sets are built and painted by a team of volunteers and The Archway simply wouldn't be what it is without them all.



We are always looking to welcome new volunteers and you can see that there is something for everyone - so why not get involved? Our yearly programme comprises a real mixture of theatre from classic, well known plays to brand new playwrights.

You can expect comedies and tragedies, Shakespeare to Pantomime. Our theatre is invested in giving opportunities to our younger

members to perform – both from our Saturday Youth Workshop and our Monday evening Young Adults group. I have been a member of The Archway Theatre for almost 30 years and you might have seen me on stage performing or in the programme as the director.

I believe strongly that access to live theatre is life-enhancing and culturally enriching and as a theatre, we offer you 11 varied plays in our main house. We are also just about to start a summer outdoor residency at our new partner Tilgate Park. In addition we occupy further archways which include a studio theatre and a function room (which is available for hire). This further space gives us a venue for shorter runs of plays which may not have mainstream appeal or for music gigs and visiting productions. So there are plenty of ways to get involved and to enjoy our varied output.

Mandi Dunford

Archway Theatre Council

Chair Mandi Dunford

Secretary Eddie Redfern

Treasurer George Duda

Membership Secretary

Alison Stuart

Bar Management

Elizabeth White, Dave Humphrey

Marketing and Promotion (MAP)

Elodie Bass, Lisa Last, Paul

Tester, Mandy Humphrey, Howard

Miller, Bryony Lock, Rachel

Westmacott*, Gary Andrews* and

Peter Tucker* - *co-opted

Facilities Management (FM)

Alex Gibson, Eddie Redfern, Neil

Hankin, Elizabeth White (chair)

Repertory (Rep) Jo Ord (chair),

Mandi Dunford, Eddie Redfern,

Gary Andrews (co-opted), Ali

Hannant, Robert Gregory, Mike

Fenn, James Murtagh, Tulin Udul

Production Treasurer

Paul Tester

Studio Co-ordinator

Gary Andrews

Web Master

Rachel Westmacott

Premises Manager

Steve Haley

Company Stage Manager

Jacque Redfern

Company Electrician

FM Pod

Wardrobe Mistress

Sue Sherwin

Assistant

Wardrobe

Mistress

Sue Sherwin

Box Office Paul Tester

LTG Representative

Elodie Bass

Programme Design

Mark Dunford

Poster Design

Gary Andrews

Solicitors

Ormerod Wilkinson

Bank HSBC

Costume hire

Sue Sherwin

Patron

Dame Judi

Dench



WARDROBE HIRE

Our opening times are Sunday 10am until 11.30am.
Contact us through the website pn on our Facebook page

The play

Play Setting

It's the swinging 1660s. We begin in the playhouse in Drury Lane, London.

There will be one interval of approximately 15 minutes.

This play contains themes of a sexual nature.

Cast

Nell Gwynn, *our heroine*

King Charles II, *the Merry Monarch*

Charles Hart, *leading actor in the King's Company*

Lord Arlington, *Charles II's most trusted adviser*

Nancy, *dresser at the King's Company*

Rose Gwynn, *Nell's sister*

Edward Kynaston, *an absolute diva in the King's Company*

Thomas Killigrew, *actor-manager of the King's Company*

Lady Castlemaine, *Charles II's most ambitious mistress*

John Dryden, *playwright and poet at the King's Company*

Ned Spiggett, *actor-in-training with the King's Company*

Ma Gwynn, *Nell's mother, a brothel madam*

Catherine of Braganza, *The Queen Consort*

Louise de K rouaille, *Charles II's mistress*

Wilhelmina, *woman of many faces*

Lauren Fielding

Rachel Westmacott

Chris Hannaford

Gary Andrews

Steph Reeves

Kira Whitcombe

Harry Hunter

Arthur McKechnie

Eve Ainsworth

Robin Dixon

James Hine

Karen Phillipson

Fatima Madureira

Jadonne Meredith-Smith

Becca Inman

Crew

Director Michael Thonger **Stage Manager** Ella Sowton

Assistant Stage Manager Olly Taylor-Welch

Lighting & Sound Designer Thom Humphrey

Set Designers Gary Andrews and Michael Thonger **Musical Director** Maddy Jowett

Production Uncle Elodie Foray **Crew** Olly Taylor-Welch, Jenna Simmonds-Wood,

Sally Gilgeours **Prompt** Marsha Benson, Daniel Taylor-Welch

Properties Ella Sowton **Costumes by** Felicity Westmacott

Costumes Assistant Bryony Lock **Music by** Andrew Donovan

Other Sound by Thom Humphrey **Intimacy Coordinator** Elodie Foray

Master Carpenter Bob Cherry **Construction** The Scenery Citizens

Master Painter and Set Dresser Gary Andrews

Lights & Sound Operated by Thom Humphrey

Profile Photography Michael Thonger **Rehearsal Photography** Ella Sowton

Dress Rehearsal Photography Ruby Lockey **Guest Hecklers** James Ferguson,
Olly Taylor-Welch **Special thanks** Elizabeth Callow, The Miller Centre Theatre,
Saphron Morgan, Julia Skar, Amy Putt

Meet the director

Michael Thonger

Michael has been performing at The Archway since 2021.

Over the last couple of years you may have seen him in *What You Will*, *Wild* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. He has a predilection for historical theatre, particularly works from the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries.

This is Michael's first time directing for The Archway, although he has directed for various groups throughout Surrey.

His last production as director was 2023's *The Tempest* with Pitchy Breath Theatre Company.



Sylhet Spice
BANGLADESHI & INDIAN
Takeaway & Restaurant
Incorporating Acorn Lodge Gatwick

30% OFF
COLLECTION
or
20% OFF
DELIVERY

sylhetspicehorley.co.uk

ARTWORKS
PAINTING PARTIES
CARTOON WORKSHOPS
WELLBEING WORKSHOPS
SKETCHING WALKS
with Gary Andrews

Bespoke workshops that help you tap in to the restorative, calming and healing power of art - and they are good fun too!



www.artworkswithgaryandrews.com

Meet the stage manager

Ella Sowton

Ella most recently appeared as Olivia in the production of *What You Will (Twelfth Night)* in March 2025 and *Wild* in September 2024. Ella also runs The Young Adults Workshop group at The Archway and directed their last production, *The IT* in June 2025 and *DNA* in October 2024. Ella has previously staged-managed the production of *Alive or Living* in August 2024 and for Pitchy Breath Theatre Company their production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* back in November 2022. Ella has enjoyed working with such a talented bunch of people and hopes you enjoy the production as much as she has!



ARCHWAY MERCH



Have you bought any of our lovely Archway Merchandise yet?
Our super comfortable pens for just £2 - perfect for writing those glowing reviews in the comments book.
Our subtle badges for just £1 - your lapel will feel naked without one.
Our beautiful water bottles for £15 - hydrate your way through your day in style!

All available from the theatre - just ask the Front of House team and they will be only too happy to help you.

Cast profiles



Lauren Fielding

Nell Gwynn

This is Lauren's ninth production at The Archway. Despite Nell's dislike for Shakespeare, Lauren actually quite likes him, having played Maria in *What You Will*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Celia in *As You Like It*. Other Archway roles include Jubilee in *Saucy Jack & The Space Vixens*, Harriet in *Colder Than Here*, Lt. Kay Summersby in *Pressure*, Margaret/Mr Memory in *The 39 Steps* and Dracula in *Dracula*. Lauren also performs with Pitchy Breath Theatre Company and most recently played the titular role in *Hedda Gabler* at The Hawth. Lauren has had a great time stepping into Nell's shoes and encourages you all to 'raise a brimmer' in the interval!



Rachel Westmacott

King Charles II

Rachel is delighted to be returning to The Archway stage in a play about the triumph of love and the human spirit in a time of the absurdities of patriarchy, hierarchy and international tensions. Sometimes it's easy to forget that the heart of theatre is revolutionary, but author Jessica Swale clearly knows that theatre is inherently subversive and thus political. Plays remind us how arbitrary human society is and how - in our current UK situation of growing wealth inequality, a rollback of human rights and complicity in genocide - we all can (and must) strive to build a better one.

Chris Hannaford

Charles Hart

Chris has gone for the hat



Gary Andrews

Lord Arlington

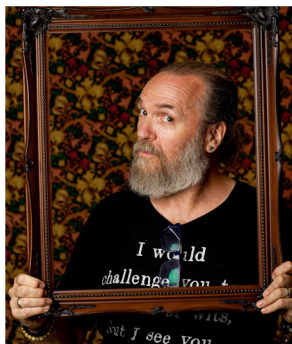
trick this year, and *Nell Gwynn* will be his third show at The Archway. He hopes the audience won't throw tomatoes at him like the last two times. In his spare time he loves improv, art, music, and dressing up as medieval wenches (he gets paid sometimes too). He has had a thoroughly wonderful time working on *Nell Gwynn* and is super proud of the amazing work and talent everyone has put into creating it.

Gary Andrews

Lord Arlington

Gary was first seen at The Archway back in 1991 as Oswald in *King Lear*. Most recently he strutted around in a silly uniform on the open-air stage at Tilgate as Duke Solinus in *A Comedy of Errors*. Between the two he has popped up on many, many

Cast profiles



occasions. Favourite roles include Smike in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Salieri in *Amadeus*, Puck and Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Rooster in *Jerusalem*.



Steph Reeves Nancy

Steph last appeared at The Archway in *Enchanted April* in 2017, and has since been in Sydney. While *Down Under*, Steph directed *Love Me Tinder*, a Highly Commended play for the Sydney Short

& Sweet Festival, and co-founded Dark Matters Theatre Co, which produced several Australian works. Her playwriting debut *Home Country* was staged at the 2023 Sydney Fringe. Some Archway credits include *The Vagina Monologues*, *Lend Me A Tenor*, *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, *Dad's Army* and *In Basildon*.



Harry Hunter Edward Kynaston

This is Harry's second Archway production after *What You Will*. He has also performed with Pitchy Breath Theatre Company in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *The Tempest*. Nell Gwynn, his first modern play, sees Harry portraying a character firmly stuck in the past. Edward Kynaston is a paragon of magnificence, a respite from boorish inelegance,

a raving narcissistic misogynist. You will have no choice but to love Kynaston, though Harry wants to stress that such misogynistic views are "less than ideal", that they are proved to be wrong-headed over the course of the play, and that Harry himself is actually a really lovely guy who holds remarkably little ill-will towards womankind.



Kira Whitcombe Rose Gwynn

Kira studied Musical Theatre at Bird College, performing in *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Millie Dillmount), *Phantom Of The Opera* (Meg Giry) and *How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying*. Kira has since performed in Pantos including *Cinderella* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*,
continued on next page...

Cast profiles

as both dance captain and understudy for the front of the cow. Kira was a backing dancer at the Eventim Apollo, in *Britain's Got Talent: The Champions*. Kira played Julia at the Fringe Festival in *I told my mum I was going on an RE trip*. Kira's extremely excited to be debuting as Rose Gwynn at The Archway Theatre.



Arthur McKechnie
Thomas Killigrew

Arthur knew he wanted to be involved in *Nell Gwynn* as soon as he read it. The witty script and eclectic cast of characters were a big draw for him, and he has had a lot of fun seeing all the larger-than-life characters develop during rehearsals. Arthur has loved getting into the mindset of a Restoration-era middle manager as Thomas Killigrew,

although it's definitely been a challenge to keep a straight face during some scenes. Hopefully the audience will find the show just as funny.

Arthur has been a member of The Archway for three years, his recent past productions include *What You Will*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Blackadder*.



Eve Ainsworth
Lady Castlemaine/Actor

Having not been involved in theatre since A Level (I know - only a few years ago, surely?), Eve rediscovered the love for stage after a near death experience made her realise her ambitions to embrace her passions. Eve performs regularly for the improv company Dingbats and is part of troupes including Miss Behaviour and Who Killed The Plot (who performed at Brighton

Fringe this year). Recently she appeared on stage for Pitchy Breath Theatre Company at the Hawth; performing in *Hedda Gabler* and a monologues project. Eve also has written pieces for stage and, last year, performed in *Lords at Ladies* at The Archway.



Robin Dixon
John Dryden

Robin has appeared in a number of productions: mostly with the Archway, and one with Pitchy Breath. As a neurotic would-be writer (who, like all such poor, benighted creatures, has actually written remarkably little) the role of the anxious and idea-starved Dryden didn't seem to require a lot of acting.

Cast profiles



James Hine
Ned Spiggett

James has been at The Archway for nearly four years, previously being involved in a few productions for the Young Adults Workshop like playing the Dad and Barrister in *The IT* and playing the role of John Tate in *DNA*.

This is James' first time being in a show that isn't a workshop production and he really looks forward to showing you the finished production, hoping it will lead to many more opportunities in the future.

Karen Phillipson
**Ma Gwynn/Actor/
Heckler**

Karen has performed in several productions here and in France.

She is delighted to be performing at The Archway



for the first time, in this fabulous play with the most amazingly talented and welcoming cast and production crew.



Fatima Madureira
**Queen Catherine of
Braganza/Actor**

Fatima joined The Archway Theatre in 2022 and was part of *Binderella's* ensemble in 2023, followed by *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Wyrd Sisters* and *Saucy Jack and the Space Vixens*.

2024 was her behind the

scenes year, being ASM and making props for *Much Ado About Nothing*, and being part of the production team for *Brassed Off* as set designer, set dresser and props. Later, in 2024, she was part of the ensemble in *Oliver!* in the first ever 24-hour Musical by ESPA Productions. In 2025, Fatima was in *What You Will*. Fatima is very excited to be playing the part of Queen Catherine of Braganza, the Portuguese wife of Charles II.



**Jadonne
Meredith-Smith**
**Louise de Kéroualle/
Attendant/Actor/
Croquet Ball**

Jadonne is an aspiring performer whose dream has been always to bring all kinds of characters to life.

Continued on next page..

Cast profiles

Jadonne has been involved with one previous production here and her passion for performing (and literally everything about this play!) has called her back to The Archway. She wishes that all who come to show s'amusent et profitable du spectacle. Bonne journée!



productions. She's delighted to be back where she belongs under the lights and dodging corsets.

Becca would like to thank the cast and crew for making her laugh far too much in rehearsals, and hopes you enjoy the scandal and sparkle of tonight's performance.

Becca Inman

**Wilhelmina/Attendant/
Actor**

Becca is thrilled to be making mischief again

in *Nell Gwynn*.

She was last seen on stage in *What You Will*, with earlier adventures including pantomimes and Youth Workshop

Are you sitting uncomfortably?

We can Help!

Visit us at **Horley & Crawley Spinal Health**

Book today for your **New Patient Special Offer**

Including a Full consultation, examination AND on site X-Rays (if required) **Save over £140!**

"Lovely practice with great people. They're so friendly and welcoming and really listen to your needs. I always feel so much better after an appointment and can't rate them enough" Charlotte



Back Pain

Neck Pain

Sciatic Pain

Slipped Discs

Headaches & Migraines

Sport Injuries

Arthritis

Joint pain

Posture concerns

And much more

For Inquiries, Contact Us at :



Horley: 01293823444

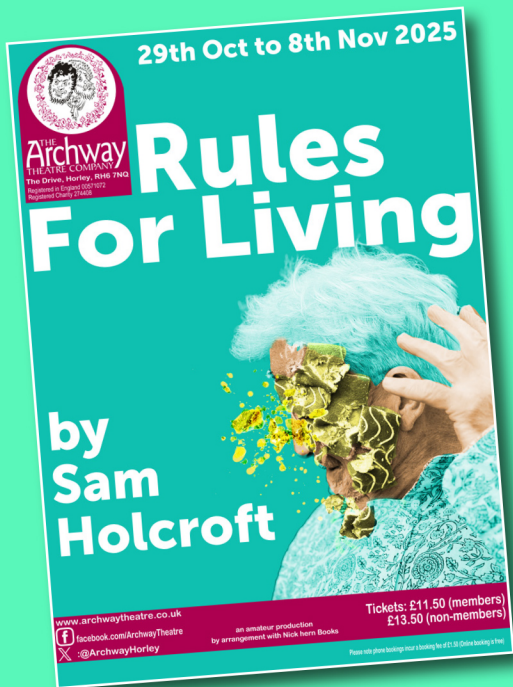
Crawley: 01293510210

clinic@horleyspinalhealth.com

clinic@crawleyspinalhealth.com

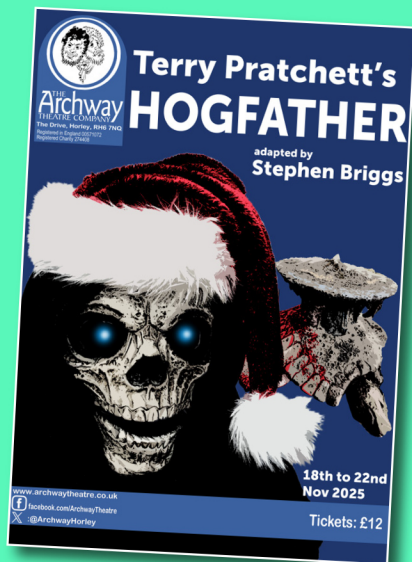
Website →





Coming soon..

Book your tickets by calling 0333 666 3366,
visit www.archwaytheatre.co.uk or find us on Facebook




Moves
FITNESS



**SUPER FUN
FITNESS CLASSES!**

A **unique** style of aerobic dance
class

**Welcoming, fun and
unintimidating.**

Combine **fun** with **fitness**, and get
hooked on health.

Call Marie for more info:
07768382716

Dinner and a Show? **SERENDIPITY** Italian Restaurant & Bar

are offering 30% off all food
ordered between 6 & 7 *

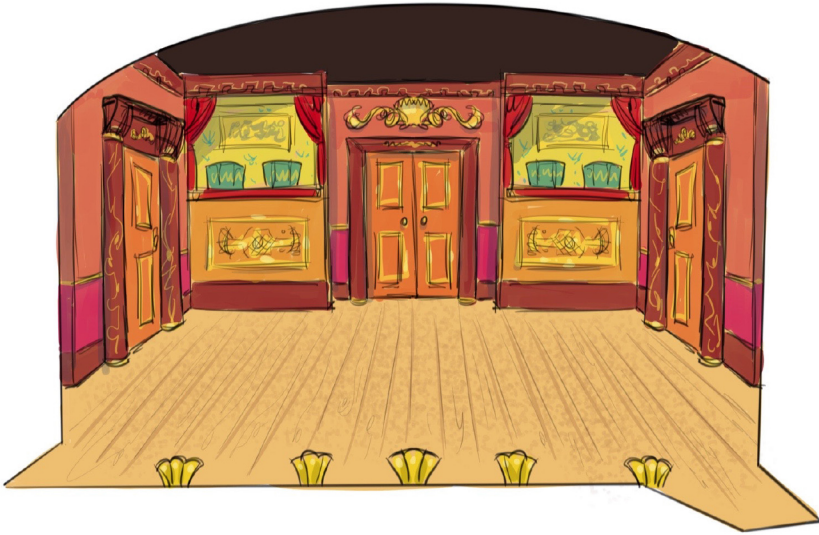
if you show your ticket for that day's
performance at the
ARCHWAY THEATRE



(*excludes alcohol)

21-23 High St,
Horley RH6 7BH

Set design



Set design

Nell Gwynn is all about the theatre. It is critical to the story, and much of the play's impact relies on a clear sense of what it would have been like.

For the set of this production we thought it'd be fitting to take audiences straight back to the Restoration with a replica of an indoor stage from the time.

Our set features a large symmetrical layout drawn from pre-Palladian classicism, decorated with baroque detailing. Warm earthy colours reflect the fashion of the time, punctuated with gold to reflect Drury Lane's royal patronage. Footlights and sconces fit right into the set and enable dramatic lighting effects during the scenes which take place 'on stage'. Boxes on the upper levels allow for important characters (not least the King!) to look down on the action. Keeping everything within a single space allows for speed, room and flexibility: ideal for a play which has 15 cast members and some 25 scenes.

**LEARN TO IMPROVISE
GAIN CONFIDENCE
HAVE A LAUGH**

- Improvise scenes and stories in our friendly and supportive workshops
- Every week at The Archway in Horley & The Hawth in Crawley
- Beginners welcome

HEAD TO DINGBATSIMPROV.COM
FOR MORE INFO ABOUT OUR IMPROV CLASSES



Helping those suffering from *grief*
to feel *joy* again

BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING

Specialising in bereavement following a death,
as well as anticipatory grief



Find out how I can help you:
www.mayarthurcounselling.co.uk

SERVICES ON SUNDAYS

SERVING
HORLEY WITH
THE **LOVE OF
CHRIST**

St Francis

St Barts

St Wilf's

Week 1	10am Family Service 6pm Evensong	8am Holy Communion 10.30am Morning Praise	10am Holy Communion
Week 2	10am Holy Communion	8am Holy Communion 10.30am All Age Worship	10am Morning Praise
Week 3	10am Morning Prayer	8am Holy Communion 10.30am Holy Communion	10am Holy Communion
Week 4	10am Holy Communion	8am Holy Communion 10.30am Morning Praise	10am Cafe Style Church
Week 5	10am Celtic Morning Prayer	8am Holy Communion 10.30am Holy Communion	10am Morning Praise

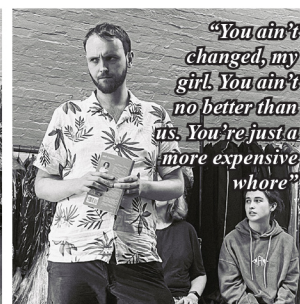
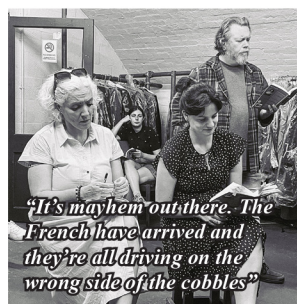
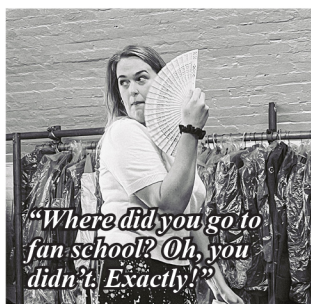
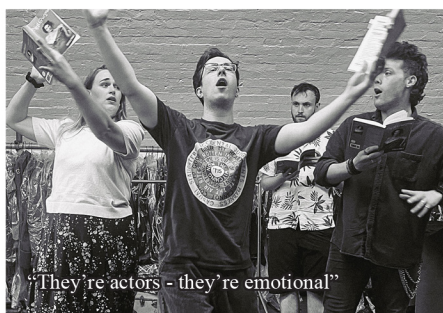
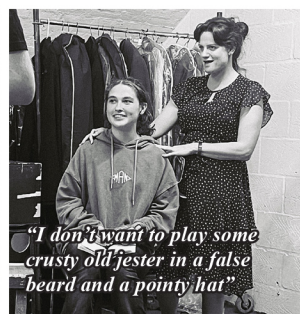
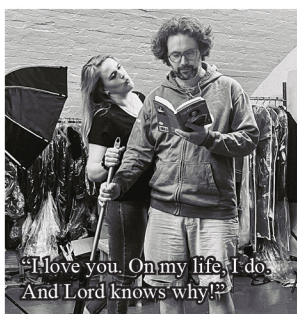
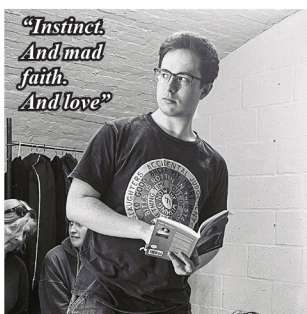
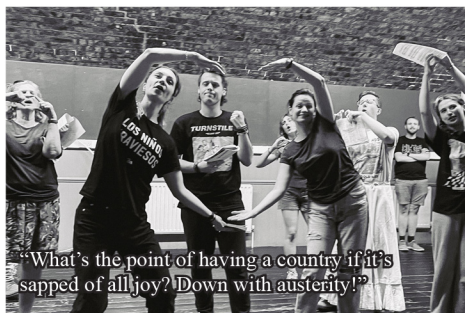

HORLEY
TEAM
MINISTRY



 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Parish Office
St Bartholomew's Church
Church Road
Horley
01293 782218
parishoffice@horleyteamministry.org.uk
www.horleyteamministry.org.uk

Rehearsal pictures



Director's notes

Nell Gwynn is a play I have loved ever since I was among the first audiences for its 2015 run at Shakespeare's Globe. There are many wonderful aspects to it, and so much that could be talked about, but for this production I have found myself guided by two main points of fascination.

Firstly, the play serves as a magnificent warts-and-all love letter to the theatre. We experience it through Nell's eyes, as an 'outsider' seeing the excitement but also how chaotic and dysfunctional it can be. Towards the beginning there is a focus on the egos, the difficult personalities, the insidious commercial influences, the unreasonable deadlines, the taking of ignoble shortcuts. You might be forgiven for thinking that playwright Jessica Swale doesn't think much of theatre at all. But something rather magical happens once the friction subsides. We feel the camaraderie of the theatre folk when they are in their element. We learn about the theatre's social and political importance, and the way it becomes a home for all sorts of creatives. The plays themselves are frequently portrayed as ludicrous, but that's not the point. We never lose sight of how important it all is.

Secondly, the relationship between Nell Gwynn and King Charles II. Their dynamic is electric, a mutual sense of authenticity and a shared bawdiness fuelled by genuine wit. Their romance is compelling to explore theatrically, and it has been particularly interesting to navigate the story's depiction of power dynamics as well as the wider political context. This is an enthralling slice of history, and some of the characters are rarely depicted as meaningfully as in this play.

Jessica Swale has said of *Nell Gwynn*: "The play should be an entertaining homage to Nell rather than an attempt at documentary ... and if it's a play that Nell



would have enjoyed, that's enough for me". This has been a guiding light for me as a director. Nell herself is often treated by historians as a sort of totemic embodiment of the attitudes and values of the Restoration. Someone who captured the hearts of the people and upset the established order through her wit, her humour and her talents as a performer. I suppose my objective with *Nell Gwynn* was to infuse as much of this production as possible with the joy of creating, and hopefully invoke some of that stage magic which Nell gave to the world. It's been a busy rehearsal period, but we have enjoyed this so intensely and are deeply proud of the results.

Michael Thonger

Spotlight on costume



Fashion History 1660-1690

With the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 came a flowering of fashion trends so long suppressed by the puritan Government of Oliver Cromwell. Flirtatious women shed the wide plain collars and wore low cut bodices with necklines exposing décolletage and most of their shoulders. Sleeves were often short to the elbow or even higher. Skirts became voluminous and layered with top skirts hitched up to reveal expensive fabrics beneath. Flamboyant men adopted long curling wigs and groomed fancy facial hair. The sober doublet of previous years became a short waistcoat above puffed breeches, and a full skirted coat with many buttons was a step change in men's fashion - the long time forerunner of what became the frock coat and much later our modern suit jacket. Men wore shirts with full sleeves and frilled cuffs of lace which featured enormous bunches of ribbons tied at wrist, elbow and knees. Both sexes wore satin, brocade and coloured silks,

constellations of patches on made-up faces, and huge hats with ostrich feathers.

Theatre costume in the 17th century

Of course the lower classes could not afford the new clothes and fabrics of their masters, but they emulated all that they could within their means. Actors - and of course the new lady-actresses - led working people with fantastical fashions on the stage. Costumes followed conventions of theatrical style - contemporary audiences understood referencing mythological and historical figures. Gods and goddesses with their symbolic motifs and props, wore gold, silver, bright colours and risqué, body-exposing garments. Satirical fashions of the stage often commented on the aristocracy's excess, but more in celebration than condemnation.

Real historical sources for real people

When designing for a play like *Nell Gwynn* a designer is blessed with wonderful historical sources in the form of

Spotlight on costume

portraits of the real people involved. King Charles II, his wife Queen Catherine and all his mistresses, including Nell Gwynn, were painted at the time showing their looks and personal style. Though from a lower class, Thomas Killigrew also had his portrait made and even actors like Charles Hart were represented in contemporary illustrated pamphlets still available to us today. Interestingly it was fashionable to be depicted wearing costumes or *deshabille*, which literally translates as 'dishevelled' but was used as a romantic way to describe informal 'half undressed' or draped fabric portraits. So one has to be careful when using contemporary paintings even of wealthy people to be sure their clothes represent real fashions and not the popular 'dressing up' of the time.

Costuming for amateur theatre

Working within the very tight budget for a small amateur theatre presents challenges when faced with any specific historical era, and not least one of fashion-

able flamboyance and excess. And both I as costume designer and the director, Michael, value historical accuracy in so far as it is possible with our means. I am also supportive of historical fantasy or mix-and-match modern plus history where such choices forward the style and story of a play or film, but in this case we decided to aspire to as little anachronism as we could. The Archway Theatre is fortunate to have a large costume store of items donated, created and stored from decades of previous productions. Also, Elizabeth Callow hires out wonderful costumes. She hires to amateur and professional productions all over the South-East so her treasure trove has benefitted our stage tonight. Lastly, my own training in costume design was a degree at Wimbledon School of Art in 2005 and then a 20-year career in creating wild and wonderful garments in the bridal industry. I love dipping my toe back into costume every so often and most enjoy an historical banquet such as this one!

Felicity Westmacott



Director's notes

Theatre during the Restoration

“I drink, I huff, I strut, look big and stare;
and all this I can do, because I dare”

Drawcansir, *The Conquest of Granada* (1672)

Theatre during the Restoration was pagentry, both sumptuous and shonky. For 18 years the Puritan regime and the Commonwealth saw England's playhouses closed, its maypoles axed, public entertainments and holidays banned, and dancing, singing and musical instruments forbidden. The Restoration changed all that. Under King Charles II the arts were back in a big way, and people wanted to explore a side of themselves that had been long repressed.

Charles considered the theatre a royal prerogative. His association with it ensured there was plenty of cash to grease the industry's wheels, and in return the tone was set by the hedonistic nature of his court. Whilst some of the old Jacobean tastes for bloodbaths remained, plays generally became more concerned with affairs of the heart.

The introduction of female actors inspired writers to explore different approaches to scenes of romance and pursuit, and there was a preference for light satirical comedies.

The spirit of the period was exuberant. Playful verbal sparring was the name of the game, usually in rhyming verse. Characters were often simply named after whatever archetype they represented, for example: Sir Fopling Flutter, Manly, Mrs Dainty Fidget, Mrs Squeamish, Handy, Busy and Pert. There is a heightened reality to everything,

perhaps an air of the burlesque.

The way theatre worked on a technical level evolved as well. During his exile Charles had frequented the playhouses of Europe, and wanted to see the things he had enjoyed brought to England. This meant intimate indoor theatres, proscenium arches and drop curtains. It meant experiments with lighting, realistic scenery and innovative backstage machines.

Theatre would have felt like a totally new experience.

The changing fashions of the time also dictated how actors performed. It was considered sexy to be a bit dishevelled, conveying a hint of wantonness. However the clothing was also large, heavy and over-trimmed, requiring movements of the whole body

in order to be properly seen. We're talking swagger: huge physical flourishes and a reliance on gesture-based props such as fans or handkerchiefs. A kind of 'physical grammar' developed, in a similar way to *commedia dell'arte*.

In addition to learning the ropes of this specific performance style, actors were expected to be proficient dancers and sing to a high standard. This was the theatrical world that Nell was thrust into. Its attitudes and quirks became an inextricable part of her legend.



Director's notes

Who was the real Nell Gwynn?

Eleanor 'Nell' Gwynn was born sometime between 1642 and 1650. She grew up in a slum off Drury Lane. As a child she worked a variety of jobs: by day she hawked oysters, herring and turnips in Covent Garden, and by night she fetched water for the guests at a bawdy house run by her mother.

When Nell was a teenager she and her sister Rose were hired to "vend, utter and sell oranges, lemons, fruit, sweetmeats and all manner of fruiterers and confectioners wares" at the Theatre Royal. We don't know exactly what happened over the following months, but less than a year later she was performing on the stage.

Nell began her career opposite famous actor Charles Hart, her then real-life lover. They specialised in playing the 'gay couple': a pair of witty, antagonistic lovers that were an archetype in many Restoration comedies. Performing in the theatre was tough. Audiences could be unruly and fickle. Runs were very short, and one might expect up to 50 different productions in a single nine-month season. Moreover Nell was illiterate, so would have had to learn her lines by rote. As an actor Nell became renowned for her sense of humour, strong voice and good looks. She was adept at both traditionally feminine roles and 'breeches' roles (where female characters disguise themselves as male), and was a talented dancer. Her performances in male attire may have even sparked a brief fashion trend of women cross-dressing in Whitehall. The diarist Samuel Pepys was a fan, writing effusive praise of her performances ("there is a comical part done by Nell ... that I never can hope ever to see the like done again, by man or woman"). She certainly preferred comedy, once stating to the audience in an epilogue that "I know you in your hearts hate serious plays - as I do serious parts".

Nell's growing celebrity was reflected in the company she kept, and her relationship with Hart did not last. She caught the attention of

King Charles II, who courted her devotedly and eventually became her lover. She had two children with him: one of them lived a full life and became the first Duke of St. Albans (a title his descendants hold to this day), and the other sadly died aged nine of an infection.

Nell is widely believed to have been Charles' greatest love. The royal mistresses (of which there were about 13) lived a strange life of semi-officialdom, and Nell's acting career slowed as her commitments to the King increased. Nevertheless she remained a folk hero to the public. They loved her because she was one of them, and many humorous anecdotes were attributed to her. Perhaps the most famous one concerns Nell's on-off rivalry with another of Charles' mistresses, the French aristocrat Louise de K rouaille. Tensions with France were high at the time, and de K rouaille was unpopular. An angry mob mistook Nell's carriage for de K rouaille's and began jostling it. Nell leant out the window and cried "Pray good people be civil! You are mistaken, for I am the Protestant whore", causing the crowd to cheer and celebrate. This sort of winking self-deprecation features in many of her famous sayings.

Nell was not granted a title or any formal marks of nobility, and there is little evidence that she sought them. However she made some astute dealings with the properties that Charles gifted her. She was popular in the court but never forgot where she came from. She ensured that her mother and sister were lifted out of poverty, gave generously to charity and is believed to have been responsible for the foundation of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Charles died in 1685 of a stroke. His last words included a simple plea: "Let not poor Nelly starve". His brother James II honoured the request, paying Nell's debts. Less than three years later Nell died from heart failure (likely a delayed consequence of syphilis caught from Charles). She was aged somewhere between 37 and 45.

Coming up next....

29th Oct to 8th Nov 2025

Archway Theatre Company
The Drive, Horley, RH16 7NQ
Registered in England 0071072
Registered Charity 214658

Rules For Living

by **Sam Holcroft**



www.archwaytheatre.co.uk
facebook.com/ArchwayTheatre
@ArchwayHorley

an amateur production
by arrangement with Nick Hern Books

Tickets: £11.50 (members)
£13.50 (non-members)

Please note phone bookings incur a booking fee of £1.50 (Online booking is free)

Archway Theatre Company
The Drive, Horley, RH16 7NQ
Registered in England 0071072
Registered Charity 214658

Terry Pratchett's HOGFATHER
adapted by **Stephen Briggs**




18th to 22nd
Nov 2025

Tickets: £12

www.archwaytheatre.co.uk
facebook.com/ArchwayTheatre
@ArchwayHorley

Archway Theatre Company
The Drive, Horley, RH16 7NQ
Registered in England 0071072
Registered Charity 214658

3rd to 13th
Dec 2025



adapted by David Wood
from the novel by
Michelle Magorian

Goodnight Mr Tom

www.archwaytheatre.co.uk
facebook.com/ArchwayTheatre
@ArchwayHorley

Tickets: £11.50 (members)
£13.50 (non-members)

Please note phone bookings incur a booking fee of £1.50 (Online booking is free)

9 to 24 Jan
2026



Alice in Wonderland

A Limerick script
adapted by
Gwyneth Boorer and Amy Blane

Archway Theatre Company
The Drive, Horley, RH16 7NQ
Registered in England 0071072
Registered Charity 214658

Tickets: £11.50 (members)
£13.50 (non-members)

facebook.com/ArchwayTheatre @ArchwayHorley



Baird Consulting is not about selling you a pre-built package of services.

We build a bespoke package of services around your specific needs. Whether you're just looking for advice on starting a business, or you're an established business looking at your options, please feel free to get in touch.

We'd be very happy to discuss your accounting needs.

We work with, rather than for, our clients - tailoring our services to deliver you a great service, at a great price.



**MULTI-AWARD WINNING
ACCOUNTANCY PRACTICE**



FREE YOUR TIME

GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Bookkeeping & Accountancy
Business & Personal Tax Returns
Outsourced Finance Function
Outsourced Credit Control
Finance Directorship
Advice for Startups

**Baird
Consulting**

**TAILORED ACCOUNTANCY
SERVICES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES**

01737 457321

info@baird-consulting.co.uk

www.baird-consulting.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP

The different types of Membership at the Archway Theatre

We are excited to have introduced different levels of membership and are sure there is something to suit you!

At all levels, our members are able to enjoy the discounted price for tickets and have open access to the bar and other facilities.

All of our members are also welcome to offer their assistance in the volunteer roles needed for each production night including operating Box Office, or running Front of House or by serving drinks by doing Bar or Coffee.

By purchasing one of the higher levels of membership there are more benefits available including opportunities to be involved in productions on stage or as part of the essential backstage and production crews.

More details about our different levels of membership are available on our website.

Bronze £15	Silver £35	Gold £70
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

Junior associate
£10

Young patron
£25

All memberships run from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025

The Archway Youth Workshop

Children's theatre workshop sessions run every other Saturday during term time. All aspects of theatre are covered, including improvisation, mime, mask work and stage craft. Sessions are available 9-12 years and 13-16 years. As a club theatre, only children of Archway Theatre Club members are eligible for membership of the Youth Workshop. Contact Jacquie on 07885760153 or further details.

THE ARCHWAY THEATRE

YOUNG ADULTS GROUP

FOR AGES 16-21
EVERYONE WELCOME!

£1 PER SESSION
PAY ON ARRIVAL

EVERY OTHER MONDAY, 7PM - 9PM
STARTING 11TH

Come and join our Young Adult's Theatre group and explore all things drama and theatre in a creative, safe and fun space!

For more info, contact ella.sowton@mail.com

To attend you must fill out the online sign up form which you can find by scanning the QR code



Little Theatre Guild

Archway Theatre is a member of the Little Theatre Guild. Our representative is Elodie Foray
www.littleguildtheatreorg.co.uk



If you would like to become a member, please visit our website www.archwaytheatre.co.uk for more information. You must be 18 years or over.



Archway Theatre Company Limited, The Drive, Horley, Surrey, RH6 7NQ
01293 784398 Registered Charity number 2774408



Club policies

■ **No cameras, videos, recorders or mobile phones:** The use of cameras, video cameras, audio recorders and mobile phones in the Auditorium is not allowed. Please make sure that mobile phones are switched off during the performance. We would also remind you that the sound of coughing, rustling paper, talking and the beep of digital watches may distract the actors and your fellow audience members.

■ **Late admission** to the Auditorium is only possible if there is an appropriate break in the performance. The House Manager will let you know.

■ **No smoking:** Smoking is illegal anywhere in the theatre. There is a designated smoking area outside the theatre entrance beyond the yellow line. For clarification please speak to one of the Front of House managers.

■ **Interval drinks:** The Bar Staff will appreciate receiving your orders for interval drinks before the performance starts. Pre-ordered drinks will be available near the stairs at the start of the interval. Ice creams can be purchased from Front of House staff in the interval but they are not permitted in the Auditorium. Food and drinks are not permitted in the Auditorium.

■ **Bar service:** Patrons are respectfully reminded that licensing laws do not allow us to serve under 16s at the bar. We would therefore ask for your co-operation that only adults purchase from the bar. Where this is unavoidable we have a designated area for use by under 18 year olds. Please do not take offence if we ask youngsters to move away from the immediate bar area.

Staffing

Volunteers: Our theatre is staffed by volunteers. On a performance night, the Box office, Front of House, Bar and Coffee are all run by volunteers. If you would like to become a volunteer please speak to the Front of House staff.

Box Office

■ **Online bookings** visit www.archway-theatre.co.uk. Tickets for all of our productions in the Main House and the Studio can now be booked online 24 hours a day. You will be able to view our seating plan and pick your seats from those available.

■ **Box Office:** Tickets can still be purchased on performance nights by visiting the Box Office from 7pm (subject to availability).

■ **Personal bookings:** The theatre will be open on Saturday mornings between 10.30am and 11.30am for us to take your booking for you there and then.

■ **Facebook bookings:** visit us at [facebook.com/Archway Theatre](https://facebook.com/ArchwayTheatre) and click Buy Tickets logo at the top.

■ **Permanent bookings:** In November we offer our club members the opportunity of booking seats for the forthcoming (excluding pantomime) nine productions during the following year.

This allows you to book the same seats, on the same evening, for each play, and payment can be made singly or by instalments. Permanent bookers don't need to do anything with online bookings, it is all done for you.

Acknowledgements

The Archway Theatre would like to extend its thanks for the members of The Archway Sponsors' Club, which contributes to the funding of at least one production each year. Our appreciation also goes to all our advertisers, whom we hope you will consider when seeking goods or services. Please mention the Archway Theatre if you utilise any of our advertisers' services.



rhpriory.co.uk



FLEXIBLE

CONVENIENT

CONNECTED

Co-Working Space - Meeting Rooms - Private Offices



01737 457747

info@rhpriory.co.uk

Conveniently located at Priory House, 60 Station Road, Redhill RH1 1PL