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THEATRE
Ipswich

The
**KITCHEN
SINK**

by tom wells

a family .. a year .. a sink



May
15-20
2023

in rehearsal



photos:- mike kwasniak

Directors Note

A modern spin on the **Kitchen Sink** drama genre of the 50's and 60's, Tom Wells' lovely play is all about love, life, family, dreams and change. It was first staged at *The Bush Theatre* in 2011 and has since become a firm favourite.

It has been an absolute pleasure to direct and there has been much fun, laughter and discussion at rehearsals.

When I first read *The Kitchen Sink*, it ticked all my boxes of being funny, poignant and full of insight.

I fell in love with Tom Wells' writing when I staged a production of his play *Jumpers For Goalposts* for Gallery in 2016 and for Headgate Theatre Productions in Colchester. Nothing is overstated but he manages to capture a beautifully British sense of humour in such a normal setting.

In the past I have enjoyed directing 'issue' plays such as *The Long Road* which dealt with knife crime or *Be My Baby* which explores Mother and Baby Homes in the 1960's. Directing *The Kitchen Sink* has been a salutary lesson in being reminded that the best plays can often be about the smallest things.

Set in a typical kitchen in a normal household of a family in Withernsea, Hull, the play depicts a year in the life of a family unit of individuals in their struggles with their own dreams and making adjustments to the changes happening around them. Full of heart, affection and Wells' signature comic touch, we see how small changes in our lives can have a big impact.

The underlying questions posed in *The Kitchen Sink* are about our individual happiness and dreams. How many of us have dreams that we do not fulfil? How many of us achieve the dreams that we have when we are young? How many of us have to change paths? What happens to us? Do we grow as result or do we fall apart? How do we deal with disappointment? To whom do we turn? And what actually binds a family together?

In *The Kitchen Sink* Tom Wells shows what happens when a family's dreams do fall apart. He does so in a way that is poignant but also with a sense of humour. It shows that there is always hope.

A special thanks to our resident genius, Dave Borthwick, for his ingenuity with our set (and the water effects!)

I should also like to thank my lovely cast and crew for their unflinching energy, time and talent. Its been a blast.

Steve Wooldridge - Director

Kitchen Sink Realism

Kitchen Sink realism is a term coined to describe a British cultural movement which developed in the late 1950's and 60's in theatre, art, novels, film and television.

The term '*kitchen sink*' derived from an expressionist painting by *John Bratby* that contained an image of a kitchen sink.

Written in 2011, *Tom Wells'* play is a modern spin on the kitchen sink genre. Plays and films such as *Look Back In Anger*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning*, *Kes* and many others changed the landscape of the middle class escapist plays and films that were prevalent at the time and presented audiences with an unfettered, authentic realism that had largely been missing up until that point.

Often these plays, films and novels were set in the North and tackled taboo subjects such as adultery, racism and homophobia; they were also bleak in outlook and lacking in humour and hope.

The same can definitely not be said of *Tom Wells'* play! It is funny, touching and full of insight into how families work. It is also full of hope.

The title of the play is a conscious tease, in that it might lead you to expect a gritty drama about belligerent working-class disaffection. But the family here is confused and anxious rather than bitter or angry and the play is a celebration of its oddities and its inability to confront social change.

Predominantly focused on the lives of the working classes, with broad regional accents thankfully intact, the *kitchen sink* films and plays had no time for traditional, rose-tinted celluloid visions of England's supposedly green and pleasant land. Instead, these raw human stories revolved around crumbling marriages, the drudgery of unskilled work, sexual orientation, stymied aspirations, backstreet abortions, disenfranchised youth, homelessness and gender, class and race discrimination.

During the 1950s younger working class playwrights began to write plays that included ideas and problems they themselves were concerned with. One of these playwrights was *John Osborne* who wrote *Look Back in Anger*.

The theatre critic, *Kenneth Tynan*, coined the phrase 'angry young man' and wrote, 'I hate theatre which is too much about escape. I prefer theatre to write about real life, about real people who have no money, no power and no influence'.

Like *Shelagh Delaney's A Taste of Honey*, *Osborne's* play is concerned with characters from the working classes. *Delaney's* protagonist is the young, working class *Jo* and *Osborne's* hero is the working class *Jimmy Porter*. *Jimmy* is angry about the way society treats him and he wants things to change.

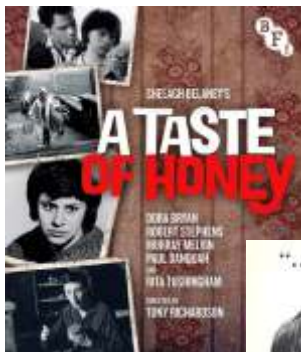
Look Back in Anger caused some controversy when it was originally produced and the impression *A Taste of Honey* made was the same. Not surprising as *Delaney* confronted her audience with a young girl who becomes a single mother as a result of a relationship with a black man and whose best friend is homosexual.

There is a school of thought that points to *kitchen sink* drama paving the way for the soap operas of today.

Steve Wooldridge



kitchen sink by john bratby



The Demise and Resurgence of the Milk Round

I am sure many of us have memories of the milkman and home deliveries. I certainly remember that whole roads of the council estate in London where I grew up had their milk delivered. There was no such thing as buying milk in a supermarket.

During our rehearsals and research the question was asked when did the decline of the milk round actually begin? Phil Cory (Martin) and I paid a visit to Foulgers Dairy at Tuddenham.

According to Adrian Foulger who owns and runs the Dairy it was around the late 1990's. However, he also said that the milk delivery industry experienced a "turnaround" throughout the coronavirus pandemic after 25 years of decline.

Adrian, who has managed Foulgers Dairy since 1999 and has worked in the industry for more than 40 years, said his business has experienced something of a revival over the past few years as more people opt to have their groceries delivered at home.

Adrian started delivering when he was 21 and back then he said they would go out at five or six in the morning and deliver until lunchtime. But, as more and more people have started going out to work, the whole industry has had to adapt and get milk on people's doorsteps before they head out to work. Now they go out between midnight and 3 am.

Adrian feels that it is because of this that the job is nowhere near as interactive as it was 10 or 15 years ago – there's just not the same amount of people around at 3am as there is at 8am. Adrian says he misses the way it was – meeting people face to face is good for business, and he loved having a chat with the customers.

Having said that, the peace and quiet can be a wonderful thing. Very early morning is a nice time to work: there's no hustle and bustle and he and his employees can get the work done quicker when they are not stopping to chat to every customer. The dawn sky is really something too: it can be full of red, full of stripes, he says. He often thinks to himself: the whole country is asleep now, they're never going to get to see this.

Steve Wooldridge



Production Team

Director Steve Wooldridge
Set Design Dave Borthwick
Lighting Design James Aleksic
Wardrobe Lucy Mellamphy
Stage Manager Georgie Beard
Properties Maggie Mudd, Mike & Judy Wadman
Choreography Lucy Mellamphy
Sound Design Steve Wooldridge
Dialect Coach Joe Leat
Sound and Lighting Operator Rachel Doy
Photography Mike Kwasniak
Publicity & Programme Design Steve Taplin
Programme Content Steve Wooldridge
Set Construction Dave Borthwick, Ruben Hood, Cavelle Leigh, Jenni Horn, Georgie Beard
Social Media Wade Ablitt

Steve Wooldridge, Director

Steve has directed extensively for *Gallery* and for a wide variety of companies at various theatres. He enjoys directing both musicals and straight plays, relishing the different challenges that these different types of theatre bring. He has a huge passion for the rehearsal process.

Favourite musicals directed include *Spring Awakening*, *Rent* and *Love Story*.

Other credits include *West Side Story*, *Grease*, *Hairspray*, *Into the Woods*, *We Will Rock You*, *Barnum*, *Fame*, *Footloose*, *42nd Street* and *Ordinary Days*.

Favourite plays directed include *The History Boys*, *Di and Viv and Rose*, *Of Mice And Men*, *The Lady In The Van*, *Kindertransport*, *Beautiful Thing*, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, *Blue Remembered Hills*, *The Long Road*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Memory of Water*, *Talking Heads*, *Colder Than Here*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Heroes*, and *Be My Baby*.

Steve is no stranger to performing himself; roles include Tony in *West Side Story*, Émile in *South Pacific*, the King in *The King and I*, the title role in *Macbeth* and James Leeds in *Children of A Lesser God*.

Steve is proud of his part in the *Gallery Players* story and reckons he has now directed upward of thirty shows for them, winning the company some awards along the way and contributing to its acclaimed reputation.



Cast

Kath Samantha Horsfield

Billy Dan Moore

Sophie Rebecca Hutchison

Pete Glyn Lee

Martin Phil Cory

***Place: Withersea, seaside town near Hull,
around 2012***

(there will be an interval of 20 minutes)

Sam Horsfield

Sam is no stranger to amateur dramatics (so her husband says!). She did her first show with Gallery in 1996 when the great Pat Taplin asked her to play one of the three Ronettes in *Little Shop of Horrors*. She has had the privilege to be in some fantastic shows and has made lots of wonderful friends over the years. She particularly enjoyed playing Viv in the musical *Spend, Spend, Spend* and also a character with the same name in *Jumpers For Goalposts* another play by Tom Wells. Recently she has taken a break from the stage to set up her own business but is so pleased (and slightly nervous!!) to be back with Gallery in this gem of a play!



Dan Moore

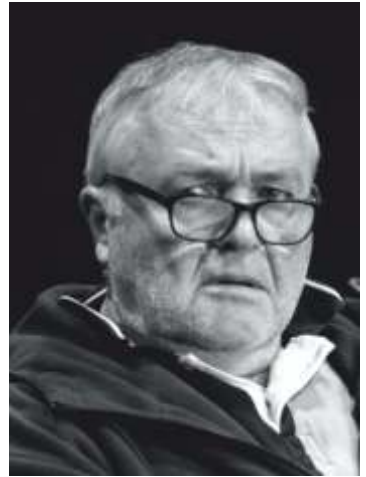
Dan performed locally for several years before moving away to train at *Bird College*. Dan is thrilled to be back with Gallery; previous roles include Posner in *The History Boys*, Luke in *Jumpers for Goalposts* (also by Tom Wells) and Otto in *Spring Awakening*. Dan has recently been involved in several shows in West Suffolk including, *The Addams Family*, *The Wind In The Willows*, *Legally Blonde* and most recently was a creative on *Shakespeare In Love*. He is so pleased to be working with such an incredible cast.



Phil Cory

Phil has performed in many Gallery Players shows and was most recently seen as Bert Baxter (a grumpy old man - typecast so some say!) in *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole* and previous to that as the Chairman in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which alongside Warney in *Shadowlands*, must rank as one of his favourite parts.

He has recently been on tour performing as Cardinal Wolsey in *Thomas Wolsey, the Rise and Fall*. It will be the second time he has played Cardinal Wolsey, having previously been in Gallery's production of *Wolf Hall*. Phil is now starting to think it is because he is the right shape! He is very much looking forward to appearing in *The Kitchen Sink* together with a very talented cast.



Rebecca Hutchison

Rebecca trained at UCC and graduated with her Musical Theatre degree in 2018. This will be Rebecca's 2nd show with Gallery after recently performing in *Adrian Mole*. Rebecca is looking forward to bringing the character of Sophie to life and sharing her stubborn, moody, personality with the audience. Rebecca has also recently worked for *Al Fresco Theatre* in their 2022 summer panto *Robin Hood* and looks forward to doing the same this year in *Snow White*. Other credits include: Elle in *Legally Blonde*, Ensemble in *Ghost*, Miss Dorothy in *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and Cosette in *Les Mis*.



Glyn Lee

Glyn has previously performed in a number of musicals including *Rock of Ages* and *Footloose*. Most recently he took part in *Sunday in the Park with George*, with Gallery Players. This is his first outing in a play, and is incredibly excited to be part of the experience.

Playing any new character is fun, but understanding a character in a play creates much more depth in the depiction on stage. Pete is a complicated character, yet has so much development through all four seasons of the show.



An Interview With Tom Wells



In six words only, how would you describe your new play, *The Kitchen Sink*?

A family. A year. A sink.

What attracted you to writing a play about family life?

*I think I just find my family quite funny. And lovely. Sometimes on purpose, sometimes by accident. So that's what started it. And a lot of the comedy I love, things like *The Royle Family* and *Home Time* and *Gavin and Stacey*, really good, compassionate comedy, is centred around families, and it works because you see a bit of your own family in there, hopefully. Mostly though, I'd just moved to London and I was feeling a bit homesick. It all sort of added up.*

The play is set in East Yorkshire, as was your first play – *Me, As A Penguin* – is it important for you to root your plays in a place you are familiar with, having grown up in the region?

*It's helpful to know the world you're writing about, I think, because then you can make it detailed, and be a bit mischievous with it, and hopefully not make too many mistakes. But also: I love Withernsea and I love Hull. They both feel like very particular places to me, with their own sets of stories to tell. Withernsea is a sort of fading seaside town, but it's smaller than the others, the Scarboroughs and the Bridlingtons, sort of a seaside underdog. Once the train stopped going there it got a bit lost, I think. A bit eccentric. And it does sometimes feel like a bit of a dead end. But also, it's very flat with the sea and this big big sky and it is the sort of place – I think, anyway – where you've got space to dream big dreams, and look out at the world and imagine a slightly different life for yourself. So it felt right to set *The Kitchen Sink* there really. And Hull is a bit like Derby and a bit like Coventry and a bit like Wolverhampton, a bit like a lot of places, sort of scruffy and funny and a bit of an anti-climax. But there's definitely something special about it too. A 'Hullness'. It felt like that to me anyway.*

How would you describe your approach to writing plays, and where do you draw your inspiration from?

I just try to start writing and sort of go for it. Properly. It's not much of an approach really. Drink tea. Eat biscuits. Panic. Then, once I've got to the end, spend a lot of time trying to make it better. Read it out loud. Do the voices. Show it to people I trust, who are always much better at knowing what to do than I am. Listen to Belle and Sebastian. Weep. That sort of thing.

Inspiration is lots of things: stories people tell you, stuff you hear on buses, letters from my Nan, knitting patterns, photographs by the Caravan Gallery, recipes, the three-minute pop song. Mostly, though, it's just things that happen to you, or the people you love. You just have to colour it in a bit differently. Change the names.

Acknowledgements

Des McHugh for providing us with his used kitchen.

Ryan and Jon for sourcing the all important sink.

Claire Staddon at the Charity Emmaus for the fridge.

Adrian Foulger of Foulgers Dairy for talking to us milk rounds and providing crates and empties.

Mike Brooks at Suffolk County Council Transport Dept for loan of Lollipop and Lollipop Lady coat.

Oli Bailey of Wave Plumbing for helping Pete with plumbing skills!
(The Kitchen Sink performed by agreement with Nick Hern Books)



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Future Productions:-

For the remainder of our exciting 2023 season see more details in this programme or for more info on all these wonderful shows please see our website.



Gallery Players started back in 1985. *Pat Taplin* decided, with a group of friends, that in order to get the kind of *Theatre* they wanted to see performed locally, they'd have to do it themselves. Mounting lesser known, rarely produced plays and musicals has always been our forte and we'd like to think we've been doing it rather well for close to 40 years! Although this direction brings many freedoms, to uncover hidden and forgotten gems of theatre that other groups wouldn't tackle, it can also be financially challenging for us, as we inevitably take more box office risks.

In 2021 we took another 'leap', moving into our very own premises, **The Gallery Studio Theatre**. A dream for a decade had been realised.

The opportunities the **Studio** gives us are immense, no rushed get-ins a couple of days before opening night, the ability to rehearse and build a show in the same space it will be performed in - all huge positives.

The 'flip' side, of course, will be paying a 'commercial' rent and all the associated costs that go with running and maintaining the building.

Since 2019 **Gallery Players** has been a *Charity* and every penny we make goes back into the shows and the upkeep and improvement of **The Studio**.

So, we're asking for a little help from you, our dear friends and supporters.

We don't just want to 'get by with a little help' as the Beatles sang, we want to Thrive and Flourish!

We were hoping you'd consider making a manageable monthly donation?

Perhaps **£2.50, £5 or £10**, nothing silly (unless you wanted to!) which over a year would build to be incredibly useful to us and most welcome. Furthermore, if you are a tax payer this amount could grow 25% at no cost to you through *Gift Aid*.

More details of the scheme are on our website (www.galleryplayers.co.uk) along with a link to join it. There's also leaflets in the Studio foyer .

Our current *friends* are:-

**Hattie Bennett, Di Borthwick, Sarah Caddick, Lisa Cheadle, Theo Clarke & Sonia Duncan,
Stuart Hume, Teresa & Paul Jennings and Brian Theodore Ralph**
What a lovely bunch you are!

Thank-you all for supporting our shows and perhaps you to will consider becoming a 'Gallery Friend' too?

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