

NELL GWYNN

By Jessica Swale

A Theatre by the Lake, Shakespeare North Playhouse and Storyhouse production

A VISUAL STORY

RELAXED PERFORMANCE: TUESDAY 21 JULY AT 11AM

This visual story is designed for visitors to the Relaxed Performance of Nell Gwynn. This pack contains information about the play and lots of images to help prepare anyone who may be anxious about their visit. This visual story also has information to help you to find your way around Theatre by the Lake.

SPECIAL TOURS OF THE BUILDING

We offer special tours of the theatre to customers booking for our Relaxed Performances. On a day of your choice, one of our friendly members of staff will show you around the theatre so you can get to know it a bit better. You'll see the Front of House areas, including the café, toilets and where the 'chill-out space' will be on the day of the performance. You'll also see the auditorium, including where you'll sit to watch the show.

TO BOOK A TOUR

Please contact our Customer Experience Manager, Mary Elliott by email on mary.elliott@theatrebythelake.com or by telephone on 017687 81103.

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- About Theatre by the Lake
- About the play – Nell Gwynn

SECTION ONE: THEATRE BY THE LAKE

WHERE IS THE PLAY?



The play is being shown at Theatre by the Lake in Keswick. The theatre is located next to a lake called Derwentwater. To walk to the theatre from the town centre, follow signposts for 'The Lake'. If you wish to use a satnav, the postcode is CA12 5DJ.

There is a car park next to the theatre. This is a council car park so you have to pay to park there – make sure you have plenty of change, or you can pay by card. There are a limited number of parking spaces for Blue Badge holders, where the first three hours are free.

Here is a picture of the theatre from the outside:



ACCESS

Lift access is available to all floors of the theatre. There is only one lift, it is 79cm wide, and is located in the café on the ground floor, shown here:



There are toilets on each floor, suitable for wheelchair access. On the first floor, there is an additional ambulant disabled toilet. These are clearly signposted.



INSIDE THE THEATRE

This is the foyer (the inside entrance area):



The theatre will open at 10am and the auditorium will open at 10:30am on the day of the performance. Lakeside Café Restaurant next door is open from 9:30am. If you would like to book a space to sit and eat a packed lunch then please get in touch with us and we'll be able to arrange.



If you would like somewhere to sit, there are seats on the second floor on the circle. This will be a quiet area if you wish to have some 'chill out time' before, during or after the performance.

On the ground floor, there is a café (called The Spotlight Café) which will be open from 10:30am. The café sells hot and cold drinks and snacks. You can pre-order drinks for the interval, which will be waiting for you when you come into the café during the break.



Ice creams will be on sale in the Spotlight café and you can take them into the auditorium. Groups can pre-order ice creams and we can bring them into the auditorium for you at the interval, if you would prefer not to leave your seats. Please speak to Box Office staff for details.

You might notice some people walking around with walkie-talkies. This is the Customer Experience Team and they are there to make sure that everything runs smoothly. They will check your tickets and help you to find your seats. They can also answer any questions that you may have about the play or about the theatre.

You can take your bags and coats into the auditorium with you. You can just pop these on the backs of your seats or underneath them. You may also take in any hand held electronic devices that you may need.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUDITORIUM, THE STAGE AND THE SET

The auditorium is the part of the theatre where the audience sits when they are watching the play.

The stage is the area where the actors perform the play.

The set is the name for all the scenery, furniture and objects used on stage in a play.

WHAT DOES THE AUDITORIUM LOOK LIKE?

This show is played 'in the round', with the stage at one end and the audience seated in front.



Because this is a relaxed performance you can get up out of your seats if you need to and move around, but be aware that the actors use all the entrances. You won't be allowed to go on to the stage unless you are asked by the actors. You can leave the auditorium if you need some quiet time or if you need to use the toilet, but please be aware of the actors when you go in and out, as they use the same entrances and exits.

You will have some time before the show to find your seats and get comfy before the play begins. These are the seats in the auditorium where the audience sit.

HOW LONG DOES THE PLAY LAST?

The play is about 2 hours and 50 minutes long including a 20 minute interval. Plus a 15 - 20 minute introduction where the actors introduce themselves.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SHOW?

When the play has finished you are welcome to stay as there will be a chance to meet the actors. You can leave the auditorium at any time, and you can still use the toilets and chill-out area after the show.

SECTION TWO: THE PLAY

NELL GWYNN

ABOUT THE SHOW

This play has nine actors in - they sing and play musical instruments, and some of them play two or three characters. It's set during the 17th Century in London.

THE SETTING

The action takes place at an open-air theatre in London, onstage and backstage, as well as the royal court of King Charles II.



KEY CHARACTERS

Here is a description of the main characters in the play.



Nell Gwynn

A funny, clever and determined young woman who dreams of a better life.



King Charles II

The charming and playful King of England who likes going to the theatre.



Mr (Charles) Hart

An actor with the King's Company and a friend of Nell's.



Edward Kynaston

An actor who plays the women's roles (before women were allowed on stage).

Thomas Killigrew
The director of the
King's Company.



John Dryden

The writer who
writes the
plays.

Ned Spigget

A young
actor in the
company.



Rose Gwynn

Nell's
younger
sister.



Nancy

The dresser
and
seamstress
for the
company.



Lord Arlington

A politician at
court and an
advisor to the
king.

Lady Castlemain

The King's
mistress before
he meets Nell
Gwynn.



THE STORY



Nell is selling oranges at the theatre when Mr Hart spots her talent for acting and decides to give her acting lessons.

Nell auditions for the King's Company. They are excited to have a woman join them as women have not been allowed on stage before. But not everyone in the company is happy about this.



Nell is a big success and becomes a star of the London stage.



One day King Charles II comes to the theatre and sees Nell perform. He is smitten with her.

Nell becomes the king's mistress. He gives her a house to live in and money to live on, and she leaves behind her poor life.



At the royal court, Nell has to deal with jealous people, gossip and tricky choices. She is threatened by Lord Arlington to leave the king alone.



One night, Nell's sister, Rose, is beaten up by Lord Arlington's men. It is meant as a message to Nell to warn her off the king and her meddling in politics.





Meanwhile, Nell has been missing lots of rehearsals and the director, Mr Killigrew, asks her to leave the company.

Some years pass and Nell has a child by the king.

One day in the garden, the king collapses and dies, leaving Nell on her own again.



In the end, Nell rejoins the King's Company and they're very glad to have her back.

We look forward to welcoming you to Theatre by the Lake.
We hope you enjoy the show!