



## *Tales from the Thames*

### A Creative Estuary Co-commission with Queen's Theatre Hornchurch

A new play will bring live theatre to parts of South Essex where it is rarely, if ever, staged. From a village hall in West Tilbury to a historic pub on Canvey Island, a Heritage Barn in the Wat Tyler Country Park to a Leisure Centre in Pitsea, *Tales from the Thames* charts its way along the Estuary, visiting ten diverse, intimate community locations and telling the epic story of five lives colliding on a single day along the banks of the river, and their futures changing forever.

The production is the first of a new series of exciting Creative Estuary Co-commissions – the initiative which aims to showcase 60 miles of the North Kent and South Essex region as one of the UK's most dynamic and creative areas in the whole of the UK – working on this occasion with Queen's Theatre Hornchurch (QTH).

Written by QTH Associate Artist Rebecca Brewer and playwright Vickie Donoghue, both from Thurrock, with Southend-based songwriter M G Boulter, *Tales from the Thames* begins as the sun rises over the river, and everything's coming to life. The soundtrack of the Estuary is heard, from the dawn chorus of birds to engines starting, front doors closing and metal containers being loading onto waiting ships; across South Essex journeys are about to be made.

But today is different...

As the play develops, the audience is confronted with the emerging philosophical question: Can fractured relationships and fears of the future be overcome by stopping for a moment, taking in the view and listening to the water as it brings stories and memories to the shore?

*“This is an epic story of the majestic Thames and its community. It’s about the power of coming together. And about winning a pop quiz,”* teases Douglas Rintoul, Artistic Director, Queen’s Theatre Hornchurch.

Featuring live music and songs by M G Boulter – whose new album *Clifftown*, has contributions from musicians in bands such as Bellowhead and Spiritualized - this newly commissioned piece is deeply inspired by the Essex Thames Estuary and is made for and by the people who live and work alongside it.

Mathew Russell, Executive Director for Queen’s Theatre Hornchurch says *“We’re taking it to ten community venues across South Essex and Tales from the Thames will be free to attend for everyone. The venues and locations have been chosen as places where local people rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to see live theatre performed. They’re all intimate settings, so the atmosphere will be electric.”*

The venues and dates of performances of *Tales from the Thames* are:

- Saturday 26 June at 7pm - West Tilbury Village Hall
- Monday 28 June at 7pm - St Stephen's Community Trust, Purfleet
- Tuesday 29 June at 7pm – The Place, Pitsea Leisure Centre
- Thursday 1 July at 7.30pm - The Corringham Hall
- Friday 2 July at 6pm - Aveley Community Hub
- Saturday 3 July at 2pm - Wat Tyler Centre, Pitsea, Basildon
- Sunday 4 July at 6.30pm - St Edmunds Community Hall, Southend-on-Sea
- Tuesday 6 July at 7pm - Tyrrells Hall Working Men's Club, Grays
- Thursday 8 July at 7pm - The Lobster Smack Pub, Canvey Island
- Saturday 10 July at 7pm - South Ockendon Royal British Legion

The free tickets, for any of the performances mentioned above, will be available from Monday 7 June from Queen’s Theatre Hornchurch’s website [www.queens-theatre.co.uk](http://www.queens-theatre.co.uk) or by calling their Box Office on 01708 443333.

The production of *Tales from the Thames* brings together writers, performers, musicians and technicians from South Essex, co-ordinated by Creative Estuary and Queen’s Theatre Hornchurch. The team was brought together via a widely publicised Open Call for creative practitioners to get involved in the project.

After Rebecca, Vickie and M G had written the script and music, the job of creating the show is being undertaken by Rebecca as co-director, working alongside QTH's Artistic Director, Douglas Rintoul. The set and costumes are being designed by Southend’s Rachel Dingle with choreography by Nikki Watson, from Gray’s CoDa Dance Company. Southend – on – Sea based Harry Fitzpatrick is Assistant Director, while Michael Bennett, Romford, is creating the sound design and Ed Guest, Dagenham, is lighting the show. M G Boulter is Musical Director.

Emma Wilcox, Creative Estuary Project Director says: *“As we grow the Thames Estuary’s potential as a cultural and creative hub, we are committed to supporting our local artists and engaging our communities to contribute to their creative identity. In everything we do for the Estuary, we want to capture imagination and provide opportunities. Tales from the Thames is fantastic project to kick off two years of Estuary Co-commissions - a new collaborative piece of place making theatre that’s accessible and cross generational, touring to community venues, and reaching under served and underrepresented audiences across our region.”*

For more information about Creative Estuary, visit [www.creativeestuary.com](http://www.creativeestuary.com), **Twitter** [@creativeestuary](https://twitter.com/creativeestuary) / **LinkedIn** [/ creative-estuary](https://www.linkedin.com/company/creative-estuary/) / **Instagram** [@creativeestuary](https://www.instagram.com/creativeestuary)

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

**Creative Estuary** has a vision to forge a new future founded on creative energy and innovation, along the length of the Thames Estuary. Our ambition is clear: To transform 60 miles of the Thames Estuary across South Essex and North Kent into one of the most exciting creative clusters in the world. We're going to do this by developing the places where the creative industries can build a vibrant and prosperous future, enriching communities and strengthening the region. The creative and cultural industries contribute more than £100bn per year to the UK economy, helping to attract investment, catalyse innovation, and enhance distinctive places and communities. The £6.5m Creative Estuary programme will transform the visibility, identity and future of the region's creative production infrastructure, supporting more than 400 new jobs, delivering new skills, qualifications, and apprenticeships across an area of 1.5million people, providing skills and training for more than 500 people. By using culture as the catalyst for growth, the Thames Estuary will provide much-needed space for expanding creative businesses and provide the scale of services, skills and infrastructure sought by both UK organisations and international creative producers. The success of Creative Estuary will contribute to wider national programmes to generate investment, jobs and creative industry opportunities for the whole Thames Estuary, making it one of the most attractive places to live and work in the UK. Creative Estuary is supported by The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and led by a consortium of public sector and cultural organisations. The project is led by the University of Kent on behalf of a consortium of public sector and cultural organisations. They include the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), Kent and Essex County Councils, the Greater London Authority, 11 local authority areas represented by Thames Gateway Kent Partnership and Opportunity South Essex, South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN), University of Essex, Locate in Kent and cultural organisations Metal and Cement Fields.

**Creative Estuary Co-commissions** will support a wide range of cultural projects with new commissions for Estuary-based producers and artists, from activity for emerging cultural activists to large scale commissions with a diverse mix of partners. Creative Estuary Co-commissions will raise widespread awareness of existing creative talent across the region and support creative practitioners and organisations to make and present new work. We are committed to helping all our creative practitioners and engaging our local communities to contribute to their creative identity and will give artists, organisations and creative practitioners opportunities and support to help them realise their creative ambitions. The Co-commissions will create opportunities for creative innovation and new cultural production - we want to capture imagination and provide opportunities for greater collaboration and knowledge sharing.

**Queens Theatre Hornchurch (QTH)** is a vibrant producing theatre, working in outer East London, Essex and beyond. As a cultural hub, over 210,000 people enjoy the programme each year. Audiences are guaranteed a warm welcome from a three-year winner of UK Theatre's Most Welcoming Theatre (2016 - 2018) and London Theatre of the Year 2020 (The Stage Awards), the first Greater London theatre to receive this prestigious award.

[HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES FOR MEDIA USE CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE](#)

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES**

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