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FAIRY POWERED PRODUCTIONS



WHAT'S GOOD TO DO

SPITFIRE GIRLS

A PLAY BY
KATHERINE
SENIOR



In aid of



The Generate Programme

**National
Theatre**

TO EDUCATORS

Thank you for your interest in *Spitfire Girls* and for bringing it into your classroom. We hope you will find this pack useful as a means of introducing your students to the world of the play before you visit, and as a tool to engage with it in your classroom afterwards.

It is so important for us to champion the story of these incredible women in the conversations around the sacrifices that so many civilians made during the war. One way we endeavour to do this is to find ways for young people to engage with these stories beyond their visit to the theatre. We hope this pack enables that to happen and provides a useful springboard for your classroom discussions.

Inside you will find:

- A synopsis of the play and key themes
- Historic and contextual information which inspired the narrative
- Quotes and interviews from the writer and producers
- Spotlight focus on the roles involved in bringing the show to life including:
 - Actor
 - Writer
 - Movement Director
 - Sound Designer
 - Director/Dramaturg
 - Historian
- Original photographs from World War II
- Artefacts and articles from the time
- A poem written by a real life “Spitfire girl”
- Links to the History and Drama curriculum at A Level and GCSE, to help you think about how you could use the play as a discussion point or stimulus in your lessons
- Exercises for students to complete
- Rehearsal images
- Designer’s notes and early drafts
- Terminology banks
- Live Production Analysis guidance and note-taking tools
- Paragraph structures and writing frames

You can also find lesson plans specific to the History and Drama curriculum on the schools area of our website to download and use, visit tiltedwigproductions.com/schools

Thank you for choosing *Spitfire Girls*!

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SECTION 1: WELCOME TO SPITFIRE GIRLS!



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We are delighted to bring this wonderful show back and share it with audiences all over the UK.

INSPIRED BY REMARKABLE TRUE EVENTS; THE WOMEN WHO DARED TO FLY.

“It’s built for us, isn’t it? The Spitfire. Built for women.”

New Year’s Eve, 1959.

Decades after answering the call, two women separated by the war meet again as the rain hammers down on the windows of The Spitfire pub. As we hear their story, we are transported back to a time when female pioneers defied expectations and soared through the skies.

Spitfire Girls is inspired by the extraordinary true stories of the women who dared to fly during WWII and the incredible bond that tied them together.

Funny and heart-warming, this is an untold story of strength, courage and loss. But above all else, hope.

**‘IT IS ABOUT THEM FLYING AEROPLANES, BUT MORE THAN THAT,
IT’S ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP.’**

KATHERINE SENIOR, WRITER

‘IT’S THE HUMAN ASPECT OF WAR, THAT’S WHAT’S PARTICULARLY INTERESTING’

BETHAN NASH, ACTOR

Synopsis of *Spitfire Girls*:

Spitfire Girls by Katherine Senior is a play inspired by the true stories of female pilots in the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) during World War II. The play opens on New Year's Eve 1959, at The Spitfire pub, decades after the war. Two sisters, **Bett** and **Dotty**, who served as ATA pilots during the war, reunite. As they reminisce, the play transports the audience back to 1943, when the sisters decided to escape their lives on their father's pig farm and answer the call to join the war effort.

ACT 1 focuses on the sisters' journey into the ATA. It depicts their initial excitement and their father's resistance to their decision to enlist. The play follows them through training and their deployment to the all-female base at Hamble Ferry Pool. Their experiences ferrying different aircraft, including the iconic Spitfire, are portrayed. The play also highlights the challenges and dangers they face, including navigating treacherous weather conditions and confronting societal expectations of women. Dotty's budding romance with a fighter pilot, Tom, adds another layer to the story.

ACT 2 takes a darker turn as the realities of war hit home. The sisters grapple with loss and trauma, particularly Dotty, who is deeply affected by Tom's death in combat. The play explores themes of grief, resilience, and the complexities of sisterhood. It also touches upon the lasting impact of war on those who served, and the challenges they face in reintegrating into civilian life. The play ends in 1960, back at The Spitfire pub, leaving the audience to contemplate the sisters' journey and their enduring bond.



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The Tour:

We are making our way across the country again, sharing this story with audiences young and not so young, celebrating the contributions of these incredible women to our nation and to our history. Join us as we venture to the following cities:

**THEATRE ROYAL
WINCHESTER**
THU 26 - SAT 28 FEB

**ROYAL & DERNGATE
NORTHAMPTON**
WED 4 - SAT 7 MAR

**BUXTON
OPERA HOUSE**
TUE 17 - SAT 21 MAR

**YVONNE ARNAUD THEATRE
GUILDFORD**
TUE 24 - SAT 28 MAR

**CAMBRIDGE
ARTS THEATRE**
TUE 7 - SAT 11 APR

**THEATRE ROYAL
BURY ST EDMONDS**
TUE 14 - SAT 18 APR

**THEATRE
CLWYD**
TUE 21 - SAT 25 APR

**WATFORD
PALACE THEATRE**
TUE 28 APR - SAT 2 MAY

**SALISBURY
PLAYHOUSE**
TUE 5 - SAT 9 MAY

**THEATRE BY THE LAKE
KESWICK**
TUE 12 - SAT 16 APR

**STEPHEN JOSEPH THEATRE
SCARBOROUGH**
THU 21 - SAT 23 MAY

**BOLTON
OCTAGON**
TUE 26 - SAT 30 APR

The producers of *Spitfire Girls* are proud to be working with The Royal British Legion once again this year. We are proud to have had them with us throughout the tour in 2025, with our audiences donating significant funds to support their incredible initiatives.. Find out more about their vital work at www.britishlegion.org.uk



How did the show come together?

Our writer Katherine Senior discovered the stories of these women many years ago and she was so inspired by their bravery and strength that the idea for *Spitfire Girls* was born.

"I SUPPOSE IT HAS BEEN RATHER A LONG PROCESS... I MET THE DAUGHTER OF ONE OF THE PILOTS, THEN I MET MARY ELLIS ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT, ALMOST 9 YEARS AGO."

KATHERINE SENIOR

"WHEN I FOUND OUT THE STORIES OF THESE WOMEN WHO FLEW SPITFIRES AND ALL THESE OTHER AIRCRAFT, I'D NEVER KNOWN ANYTHING ABOUT THAT, AND I THOUGHT WOULDN'T IT BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW YOU COULD ACHIEVE THAT ONSTAGE?"

KATHERINE SENIOR

Years of research and interviews have shaped Katherine's understanding of these women and the challenges and triumphs they faced, and all of these stories have heavily influenced Katherine's portrayal of Bett & Dotty, because it was important to Katherine that the play does justice to the real women who served Britain during the war.



SECTION 2: CONTEXT

What are the main themes explored in *Spitfire Girls*?

- **Sisterhood:** The complex bond between Bett and Dotty is at the heart of the play. Their relationship is tested by rivalry, love, loss, and secrets, highlighting the enduring strength and challenges of sisterhood.
- **Resilience:** Faced with the harsh realities of war, personal tragedies, and societal expectations, the characters demonstrate remarkable resilience. Their journey highlights the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity.
- **Female empowerment:** By joining the ATA, Dotty and Bett challenge traditional gender roles and contribute to the war effort in a meaningful way. Their actions exemplify the growing recognition of women's capabilities and contributions during wartime.
- **The lasting impact of war:** The play explores the profound and enduring consequences of war on individuals and relationships. It highlights the emotional scars, unresolved grief, and the struggle to find peace and happiness in the aftermath of conflict.

Introducing the role of Dramaturg:

A dramaturg is a member of the creative team who usually works on a new theatre project and is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and detail of the historical elements of a production. Their role can vary depending on the production but often includes the following responsibilities:

- Conducting in-depth research about the play's historical, cultural, and social background.
- Collaborating with the playwright during the development offering suggestions about what would have been realistic during the time period.
- Analyzing the dialogue of the script to ensure coherence and historical accuracy, particularly when the play is set in the past.
- Working closely with the writer, director, actors, and designers to align the vision of the production.

We were lucky to have lots of people who were passionate about the accuracy of our storytelling on *Spitfire Girls*. Katherine Senior, Writer and Producer worked closely with Director & Dramaturg Seán Aydon, and Historian Mark Green to ensure the story reflected the true experiences of the people of the time. Together they were dedicated to highlighting the vital role played by the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) during World War II, noting that its pilots ferried nearly a third of a million aircraft of various types without the benefit of radios or instrument training. Their research emphasises the play's exploration of the psychological toll the war took on these women.

"MARK HAS BEEN IMMENSELY HELPFUL OVER THE LAST YEAR OR SO AS HE'S A FOUNTAIN OF KNOWLEDGE ON ALL THINGS AVIATION AND ATA. HIS ENTHUSIASM AND BELIEF IN THE PROJECT HAS BEEN SO ENCOURAGING. I CAN MESSAGE HIM ABOUT AN ASPECT OF THE FLYING OR ATA AND GET A DETAILED DESCRIPTION BACK- HE'S BEEN INVALUABLE"
KATHERINE SENIOR - WRITER



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What really happened?

Whilst *Spitfire Girls* is fictional, it is inspired by significant research into the real lives of several women like Bett & Dotty who genuinely experienced the life-changing adrenaline of flying Spitfires in service to their country. Some of them are:

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Mary Ellis:

"Mary Wilkins (Ellis) was born during the First World War when brave pilots in delicate but feisty Sopwith Camels and other lightweight military aircraft were in combat with the enemy German aircrews at the controls of Fokker aeroplanes over the trenches of France and Belgium."
MELODY FOREMAN IN 'A SPITFIRE GIRL'

"So off we all went, pleased and proud - us women pilots of the Air Transport Auxiliary wearing our dark blue navy tunics, trousers and fur-lined boots, and parachutes strung haphazardly over our shoulders"
MELODY FOREMAN IN 'A SPITFIRE GIRL'

Jackie Moggridge:

"Jackie Moggridge learned to fly at age 16 in Pretoria South Africa where she met Doreen Hooper, the first woman to pass her Commercial licence. Jackie was inspired so she came over from South Africa at age 18 to study to be a commercial pilot at Witney Aeronautical College Oxford. A year into her course war broke out. She offered her services to the RAF who didn't want women so she became a WAAF and was trained at Rye on RADAR until Pauline Gower requested her release to join the ATA on 29th July 1940. Stationed at Hamble, she was Pilot No. 15 at No.15 Ferry Pool. She flew her first Spitfire 13/10/1941 from Cowley to Ternhill. She went on to make 1438 deliveries for the ATA and flew 83 different types of plane in her lifetime."
JACKIE MOGGRIDGE IN 'SPITFIRE GIRL - MY LIFE IN THE SKY'



jackiemoggridgespitfiregirl.com



Facts and figures:

You might like to use some of these facts to begin your own research or as a stimulus for your own devising work!

- The ATA employed women pilots from 25 different countries during World War II.
- A total of 168 women served as pilots in the ATA
- The ATA was formed in 1939, to address the shortage of qualified pilots needed to ferry aircraft during the war.
- The women pilots of the ATA ferried a remarkable variety of aircraft, totalling 147 different types. They transported these aircraft between factories, maintenance facilities, and airfields across the country. The women of the ATA were not allowed to fly in combat missions.
- They faced significant risks, including flying without radios or instrument training. They also contended with the unpredictable and often treacherous British weather.
- Despite these challenges, the women of the ATA flew over 309,000 aircraft during the war, playing a vital role in the Allied victory.
- The women of the ATA challenged traditional gender roles, proving their competence and skill in a male-dominated field. They faced prejudice and discrimination, including negative press coverage and dismissive comments from some members of the public.
- In 1943, the women of the ATA achieved equal pay to their male counterparts, a landmark victory for gender equality. This made the ATA one of the first organisations in Britain to implement equal pay.



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SECTION 3:

SPITFIRE GIRLS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

History curriculum links

Each specification includes optional units and so it is important that you speak directly with your teachers about how the material in the show can help build contextual understanding for your studies, but the following gives you a general guide of areas which have crossover between the show and the UK History curriculum.

A LEVEL:

AQA: The AQA specification includes several options that could encompass elements of *Spitfire Girls*. For instance, “Challenge and transformation: Britain, c1851–1964” offers a broad period that includes World War II and the play’s setting in 1959. Subtopics within this option, such as “The impact of war on society” and “Social and cultural change” align with the play’s themes. The play’s focus on women’s experiences could also be relevant to several optional topics for investigation & research. These sections, while not directly related to World War II, could provide historical context for understanding the evolving roles of women in British society. The AQA specification also allows for a Historical Investigation, a personal study on a topic of the student’s choice, which must cover a period of approximately 100 years and not overlap with the content of other chosen options. *Spitfire Girls*, with its setting spanning from 1943 to 1960, could potentially be used as a starting point for an investigation, for example, on the role of women in the war effort and its social and cultural implications in post-war Britain.

OCR: The OCR specification offers numerous thematic studies that could relate to *Spitfire Girls*. For example, the “Changing Nature of Warfare 1792–1945” theme directly addresses the period of the play and includes the impact of factors like “the involvement of civilians”. This theme could be used to analyse the role of the ATA, and the women within it, in contributing to the war effort from a non-combatant perspective. The OCR specification also emphasises student choice and independent research, particularly in its topic based essay component. This component, which encourages exploration of an issue from units 1-3 or an entirely new topic, could readily incorporate the play’s themes. For instance, students could investigate the role of women in 20th-century warfare, comparing the experiences of the ATA pilots to other women’s roles on the home front or in other countries.

Edexcel: Edexcel’s specification also presents potential links to *Spitfire Girls*. Options like “Britain transformed, 1918–97”, which covers a broad period encompassing both world wars and their aftermath, provide a relevant context for examining the play’s themes. Specific areas of study within this option, such as the impact of war on society and the changing roles of women, directly resonate with the play’s focus. Additionally, Edexcel’s specification includes a coursework component focused on analysing and evaluating historical interpretations. *Spitfire Girls* could serve as a starting point for investigating different interpretations of women’s contributions to the war effort or the social and cultural changes in post-war Britain.

Eduqas: The Eduqas specification, like the others, features options that could incorporate elements of *Spitfire Girls*. Options such as “POLITICS, PEOPLE AND PROGRESS IN WALES AND ENGLAND c.1880-1980” broadly encompass the time period relevant to the play. More specifically, its subtopic “The extent of change in society 1880-1951” aligns directly with the play’s exploration of women’s roles during and after the war. Eduqas also mandates a Historical Interpretations component as its non-examination assessment, which encourages exploration of an issue through a study of different historical interpretations. *Spitfire Girls* could be a valuable resource for such an investigation, prompting students to examine varying perspectives on the significance of the ATA, the impact of war on women’s lives, or the post-war adjustments to civilian life.

GCSE

AQA: The AQA GCSE History specification does not have any topics that directly relate to the content of *Spitfire Girls*. However, the specification does state that students are required to study one British depth study, and it’s possible that a student could choose to focus on the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) as their depth study. The AQA specification also includes a study of the historic environment, which could be linked to the ATA. For example, a student could study an airfield that was used by the ATA during World War II. However, the specifications do not mention any specific historic sites.

Edexcel: The Edexcel GCSE History specification does not have any topics that directly relate to the content of *Spitfire Girls* either. However, there is one option that could potentially be linked to the play. The thematic study “Warfare and British society, c1250–present” and its paired historic environment “London and the Second World War, 1939–45” could be used to explore the role of women in the war effort.

Eduqas: The Eduqas GCSE History specification has one option that could be linked to *Spitfire Girls*. The thematic study “The Development of Warfare in Britain, c.500 to the present day” covers the period of World War II. As part of this option, students are required to study an historic site connected with this theme. For the assessments in 2025, the nominated historic site is RAF Biggin Hill, 1916-1959.

Cambridge IGCSE: The Cambridge IGCSE History syllabus allows students to study a self-devised depth study for coursework. This means that a student could choose to focus on the ATA for their coursework.



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Primary & Secondary sources:

Use your A03 History skills to ask yourself what evidence you can gather from these images. Annotate the key points of interest and what it could tell you about the events of the time.

Primary sources:

Secondary sources:

Drama Curriculum Links:

The story of the *Spitfire Girls* and the women who inspired it serves as a brilliant stimulus for your devising component, as it evokes strong characters, historic links and dramatic situations. Below you will find some excerpts and ideas that you might like to use in your devising work:

Consider how the extracts below might form the initial ideas of a monologue and have a go writing or devising a scene from them.

Extract 1:

MY FIRST SPITFIRES

FROM A SPITFIRE GIRL, BY MARY ELLIS & MELODY FOREMAN

Air Transport Auxiliary Ferry Pool No.15

The Operations Room

As I arrived for work one brisk autumn morning I parked my old black ford car in a space near the Ops Block as usual and noted that the weather was calm and offered up the use of a pale, clear sky in which to fly my quota of aircraft deliveries for the day. As usual none of us girls ever knew what was on the agenda, so there was often a crackle of excitement in the air. That particular morning, I picked up the chitty with my name on it as usual and looked at the information outlining my aircraft deliveries for the day. Then I spotted such a longed-for word - "Spitfires".

All I could do was stand silent and stunned as I revelled in a quiet, surreal ecstasy. My eyes had seen the instruction but my brain was in a swirl as I had not just one but two of these beautiful fighter aeroplanes waiting patiently for me to fly to the RAF boys who urgently needed them. My first ever Spitfires! Finally, I had my chance to pilot the aircraft everyone raved about and loved. Along with the trusty Hawker Hurricane the graceful and super-fast Supermarine Spitfire had played a seminal role in winning the Battle of Britain in 1940, and now I was to fly one. I'll never forget the rush of adrenaline that hit me that morning - the excitement was overwhelming and I might have even let out a small scream when I finally realised my dream had come true. I checked my name on the chitty again... yes sure enough it said "Mary Wilkins".

...

Within a few seconds my excitement had calmed into a steady concentration and I realised I was really quite snug and extremely comfortable in the cockpit. I looked over the instrument panel which did indeed tally with the illustrations in my Ferry Pilots Notes. I also thought about my training and noted the sleek black coated dials which housed, behind circles of glass, such bright white numbers and indicators which were impossible not to notice. There were among forty controls to watch and be aware of including the various knobs and switches. I went through them all in my mind. They were easy to reach

and to handle. I noted the red metal crowbar fixed to the side of the cockpit door on my left. It was a stark reminder of a potential emergency and I averted my eyes from it as I was determined I would never need use of it to break open the canopy. Yes, all seemed above board and so far, so good. It was strange how it took only a few seconds for me to feel completely at home in this beautiful aircraft. Everything sort of fell into place. It was wonderful. I breathed deeply and closed the canopy over my head. I saw my blonde curls faintly reflected in its Perspex.

Extract 2:

FLYING HIGH POEM BY JACKIE MODDRIDGE

Flying High
My wings rise high
To join the race
Of scudding clouds across the blue
Exhilarating sky and space
That's filled with heavenly peace and grace.

Earth why should I return to you?
The sky is such a lovely blue
Oh Earth, must I return to you?



jackiemoggridgespitfiregirl.com

Draft your monologue here:



SECTION 4: BEHIND THE SCENES

Spotlight: **Seán Aydon - Director**

"It's so thrilling to see it go through various incarnations, as we know the characters so well, and we can make little changes and big changes and see the thing grow. It's thrilling to be a director and be able to shape this thing over a really long period of time, and to work directly with a writer, to get that immediate response. To be able to push the story further, to say 'this is awesome, I'd love to see this scene as well. To have that long journey of a play is really special, really exciting."



"In developing the language of the play, how we communicate the experience of flying and particularly the spirit of the Spitfire, this amazing plane that is almost described as feeling like something between a bird and an aeroplane, that people felt it was so responsive that they could almost just breathe on the controls and they would respond to them."

Spotlight: **Eamonn O'Dwyer - Composer**

"Flight is an absolute gift for a composer. It's such a great image and it's got such energy. The moments of lift off, and the build up to them really excite me [the most]. We've got sequences where the girls are training and they're learning how to use the aircraft and then suddenly they take flight and that moment of suspension in the air, we hope the audience will be holding their breath for it."



"To develop the sound tracks we listened to lots of stuff, from contemporary music to period music. We were really interested in British music of the time, things like Vaughn Williams and all that big symphonic music, but also more contemporary loop based music too. We wanted something with drive, and obviously flight is at the centre of the sound world we are trying to create, so something with that real sense of liftoff and suspension."

"Theatre is such a collaborative art form and we all have to be creating the same images, the same story, the same narrative, so myself, Seán [Aydon], Stephen [Moynihan] we are really chatting an awful lot about how we make these flight sequences work."

Spotlight: **Stephen Moynihan - Movement Director**

In terms [inspiration for movement direction] of something like flying, I find it really helpful to look at paintings or sculpture where it's not necessarily a direct representation of something. So it's not just about looking at something and saying 'that's a plane' but often a painting or a sculpture is able to suggest flight without actually doing it. So in terms of then taking that idea into movement, where its suggested but not actually doing it is extremely helpful [as inspiration].

What it feels for the two main characters, for them to fly for the first time. Kind of the sense of freedom that they would feel, how we can transfer that to the story and the narrative and help the audience to connect to that lift, that flight, the weightlessness and excitement. We are using bodies and movement and lifts [to achieve that sensation].



Still from development week
at National Theatre Studio,
2024

Production shot by
Robling Photography



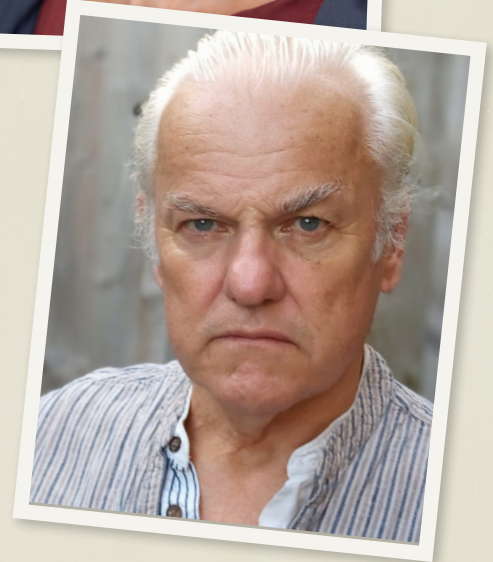
Spotlight: Actors Kirsty Cox and Jack Hulland

We sat down with Kirsty and Jack to talk about their roles on *Spitfire Girls*.

1. CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE IN SPITFIRE GIRLS?

Kirsty: I play two roles, the C.O. and Joy. The C.O. (Commanding Officer) is in charge of number 15 ferry pool near Southampton where an all female ATA team are based. She has to plan and coordinate all the journeys that her ATA team make during each day to ensure that aircraft are delivered to various locations around the country. And Joy is one of the female ATA pilots at number 15 ferry pool who flies aircraft between factories and bases as required, and when she isn't working she is definitely the life and soul of the party!

Jack: I also play two characters in *Spitfire Girls*, Dad and Frank. Dad is the father of the two main protagonists, sisters Bett and Dotty. They live on the farm with their dad and help him with his day to day running of the farm. I also play Frank who is a local at the Spitfire Pub which Bett runs after the war. He is a regular visitor, he comes in every day. He even has his own stool at the bar and drinks a lot of beer. He is married and has a small son and they live just on the next street from the pub. Frank is a simple and honest sort of character, but later in the play we discover that he has a lot more depth to him than he first appears to.



2. WHAT HAS THE PROCESS BEEN LIKE WORKING ON THE SHOW FROM DEVELOPMENT RIGHT THROUGH TO PRODUCTION?

Kirsty: It has been an absolute joy and a privilege to be part of the team working on '*Spitfire Girls*'. I was lucky enough to be involved in the R&D at the National Theatre Studio in 2024, when we worked with Eamonn and Stephen, the composer and movement director, on how to create the moments of 'flight' in the show. And following on from that I was part of the original production which toured in 2025. It has been just amazing to be part of the journey of Katherine's words coming off the page and, in collaboration with a fabulous team on and off stage, being transformed into such a special production.

Jack: The process for me also started at the National Theatre Studio where we worked on the pieces for a week. Primarily we worked on the movement sections. What we wanted to do was simulate Dotty's first flight so we used movement and our bodies to orchestrate this. It was a very effective way of getting her to fly. It was very exciting to work on a brand new play right from the get go. The play opened at Mayflower Studios

in Southampton which was very fitting as it was the birth place of the Spitfire. The play then moved onto a tour around the UK.

3. HOW HAVE YOU PREPARED TO PLAY YOUR ROLE ON THE SHOW? WHAT RESEARCH DID YOU NEED TO DO?

Jack: To prepare I spent some time looking back at the Second World War and books and articles. Also a lot of the original ATA ladies have written autobiographies so I read a few of those which gave great detail about what they had to do, what they had to put up with and the dangers they faced. Frank was easier to prepare for as he spent most of his days sat in the pub drinking beers and I could relate to that. I drew on my personal experience, he was a father, he liked to be around people and he liked to sit and ponder life. But as I said before, there is a lot more to Frank than first meets the eyes. For Dad, he was an aerial photographer in the First World War so I looked into what this entailed. He was a civilian, like Bett and Dott, and his job was extremely dangerous. He had to fly over France and Belgium taking pictures of enemy squadrons so the Germans were very keen to shoot down enemy photographers, so in a way his job was even more dangerous. Miraculously he survived the war but he saw some hideous sites and that left him scarred and unable to talk about his experiences with his daughters. Dad's only weapon on his plane was his camera.

Kirsty: Katherine had already done so much research in writing the play and she very generously shared some of that with us before the initial rehearsals. So I think we all did a lot of reading and watching of documentaries about the ATA and its work and also looking at footage from the time before we started! During the R&D and rehearsals we were also very lucky to have the chance to meet and talk to the daughter of one of the female ATA pilots and also Mark, a pilot connected to the ATA Museum at Maidenhead, who kept us right on all the technical aspects of flying!



4. WHAT ARE THE BEST AND MOST CHALLENGING THINGS ABOUT YOUR JOB?

Kirsty: The most challenging thing is probably being on the road all the time. It is fun to travel and to be constantly visiting new places and meeting new people but it can also be incredibly tiring and means you are away from home a lot. But the best part of the job, hands down, is working with an amazingly talented team of people to create an incredibly special piece of theatre and having the chance to share that with audiences night after night.

Jack: The most challenging thing about my job is walking on stage - I don't think I'm alone on that one! To actually be those characters, to feel those people flowing through my blood. One gets a good buzz from that. Of course it's not just about performing, when you're on tour there are lots of other challenges, one being that you're in a different town every week, you are going into digs (hotels), are you going to sleep? That builds up an anxiety that you have to deal with. The highlight though is that it's great to promote these wonderful women of the ATA - it's a warm feeling to share their story.



5. HOW DO YOU WANT AUDIENCES TO FEEL WHEN THEY LEAVE THE SHOW?

Jack: I hope people leave this production feeling deeply moved and enlightened of the work that these amazing women did. These civilian ladies who stepped up to the plate in Britain's time of need. We should put them on a pedestal.

Kirsty: I would hope that they are uplifted and inspired by the stories of these incredible women and that they leave wanting to find out more about these women's lives. And hopefully then, they will tell other people about the ATA women and we can keep their stories alive...

Highlighting Set Design

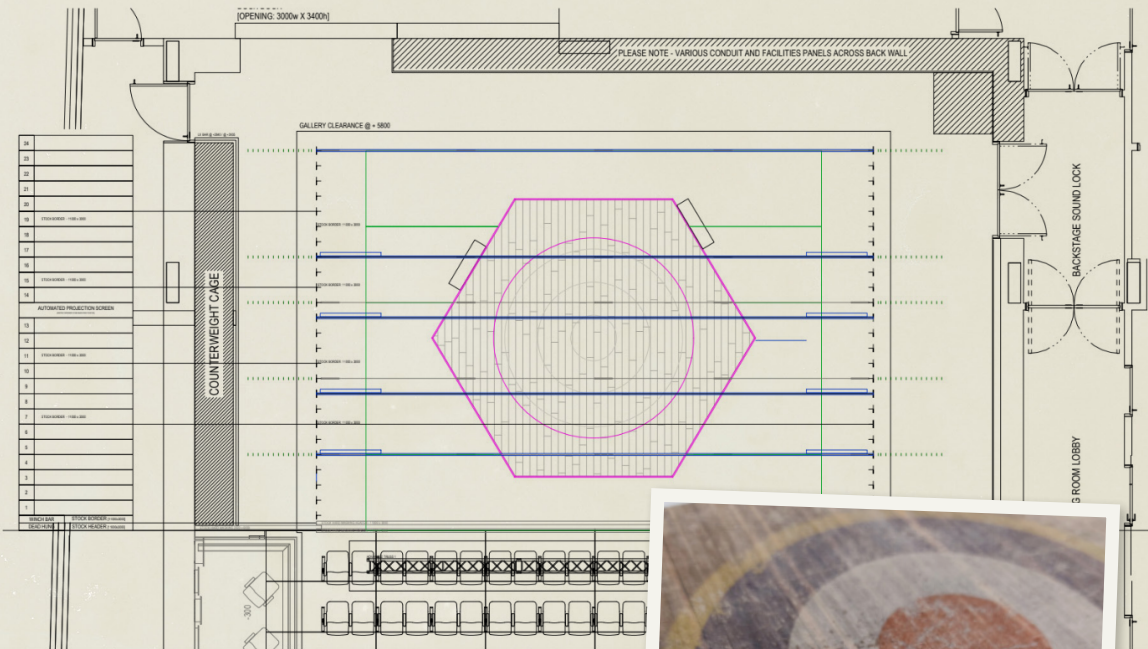
Our set has been designed by **Sarah Beaton**.

She worked with the following terminology bank as her inspiration -

MEMORY	TRAUMA, LIMBO
METAL	COLD
WOOD	AGED, DISTRESSED, WORN



You can see below some of her planning documents and mood boards:



1:25 MODEL PHOTOGRAPH
Roundel painted on wooden floor
and being worn away by footfall



DESIGN TERMINOLOGY BANK:

*Colour Texture Shape Scale Intensity Distribution
Distortion Direction Variation Fabric Fit Shade
Tone Tint Wear Materials Levels Elevated
Downstage Upstage Stage Right Stage Left
Centre Stage Projectious Cyclorama Flats
Automations Revolve*



PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPH
And here you can see the stage in
action during the 2025 tour

Section 5: Live Production Analysis

When writing about a Live Production you've seen for your GCSE or A Level, it's important to take detailed notes in the interval and immediately after the performance in order to recall specific examples for your essays. Use the templates below to add your own notes when you see the show, and take a look at the writing proformas and terminology banks to structure your ideas.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

NAME OF PLAY	
PLAYWRIGHT	
DIRECTOR	
DESIGNERS	
VENUE	
DATE ATTENDED	
ACTOR NAMES & ROLES	
KEY THEMES	
HOW DID THE SHOW MAKE YOU FEEL?	

ACTING

Use the terminology bank to record your observations in the grid below immediately after watching the show.

DESIGN TERMINOLOGY BANK:
<i>Pitch Pace Tone Volume Accent Emphasise Projection Diction Articulation Breath control Accent Posture Eye contact Mime Carriage Facial expression Levels Gesture Body language Proxemics Stillness</i>

VOCAL SKILLS	PHYSICAL SKILLS	CHARACTERISATION

KEY MOMENTS

Use the terminology bank to record your observations in the grid below immediately after watching the show

TERMINOLOGY BANK:
<i>Narrative Tension Humour Relationship Communication Characterisation Convey Portray Contrast Compare Align Polarise Dramatic Irony</i>

KEY MOMENT	ACTOR'S SKILLS	CONTRIBUTION TO NARRATIVE

LIGHTING

Use the terminology bank to record your observations in the grid below immediately after watching the show.

DESIGN TERMINOLOGY BANK:
<i>Colour Texture Shape Scale Intensity Distribution Distortion Direction</i>

SET DESIGN

Use the terminology bank to record your observations in the grid below immediately after watching the show

DESIGN TERMINOLOGY BANK:
<i>Colour Texture Shape Scale Materials Levels Elevated Downstage Upstage Stage Right Stage Left Centre Stage Projections Cyclorama Flats Automations Revolve</i>

SOUND DESIGN

Use the terminology bank to record your observations in the grid below immediately after watching the show.

DESIGN TERMINOLOGY BANK:
<i>Texture Shape Scale Variation Intensity Distribution Distortion Direction</i>

COSTUME DESIGN

Use the terminology bank to record your observations in the grid below immediately after watching the show

DESIGN TERMINOLOGY BANK:
<i>Texture Shape Scale Colour Variation Fabric Fit Shade Tone Tint Wear</i>

Live Production Analysis writing:

When writing about Live Production Analysis in your assessments, your teachers and the examiners are looking to see that you understood both WHAT you saw on stage, and also the IMPACT it had. In order to ensure you communicate both these priorities, you need to make sure that your descriptions, explanations, analysis and evaluations have a balance of both AO3 and AO4 terminology. This means:

AO3: Knowledge and understanding of how theatre and performance is made and developed.

AO4: Analysis and evaluation of the ideas of others (in this case, Live Production).

AO4 TERMINOLOGY BANK

Humour Empathy Fear Affection Pride Tension Shock Disapproval Nostalgia Familiarity

Effective Impressive Engaging Precise Amusing

Contextually appropriate Narrative links

Effectiveness of intent

Playwright's intentions

Director's intentions

To indicate the original context

To make relevant to a contemporary audience

To recontextualise

To highlight a specific theme

To reinterpret historic facts

To reframe an assumption

To ensure each of your Live Production references adequately balances these two outcomes, the model below can be used to structure your notes:

- Describe what you saw/heard on stage.
- Explain how that moment was created using in-depth AO3 terminology.
- Analyse how this moment impacted the audience.
- Evaluate how this impact was achieved and what the outcome was.

Draft your paragraph here:

THE PRODUCERS

Tilted Wig

Tilted Wig have been producing and touring plays throughout the UK both for over 18 years. The company now stages at least two tours a year.

Recent productions include national tours: A fresh take on *The School for Scandal* (co production with Malvern Theatres in association with Theatre by the Lake); a brand new telling of *Frankenstein*; *Around the World in 80 Days* (co production with York Theatre Royal); *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (co production with Malvern Theatres); *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Murder Margaret and Me*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Great Expectations* (all co production with Malvern Theatres and Churchill Theatre, Bromley).

Other national tours include: *The Lover*, *The Private Ear and The Public Eye*, *The Knack*, *The Anniversary*, *Travels With My Aunt*, *Dumb Show*, *The Farmer's Wife*, *Two*, *Look Back in Anger*, *The Fair Maid of the West*, *Hard Times*, *Born in the Gardens*, *The Rivals*, *Charley's Aunt*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *She Stoops to Conquer* (all UK tours); *A Christmas Carol* (a co production with Exeter Northcott for their Christmas season in the main house).

Mayflower Southampton

Mayflower, Southampton comprises of Mayflower Theatre and Mayflower Studios.

Mayflower Theatre is the largest presenting theatre on the south coast and is a charitable trust which was set up in 1986 when the Gaumont Theatre was threatened with closure. The theatre reopened in 1987, renamed Mayflower Theatre, and has become one of the most successful independent theatres in the UK with a capacity of 2,271.

Mayflower Studios opened in May 2021 in the city's cultural quarter and is an arts complex comprising a 450 seat theatre and a 130 seat flexible studio.

Under the leadership of Chief Executive Michael Ockwell, over 550,000 annually attend performances across both venues and a further 40,000 take part in the community and outreach programme.

Mayflower were Associate Producers on Music & Lyrics production of *Fiddler on the Roof* directed by Craig Revel-Horwood and starring Paul Michael-Glaser, the Leicester Curve production of *Beautiful* with Theatre Royal Bath, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* with Crossroads Productions and *Titanic the Musical* tours in 2018 and 2023 directed by Thom Southerland. They also produced the mid-scale tour of *The Santa Trap* and *Here Be Monsters* in association with Belfield Slater Productions and Sizwe Banzi is Dead with John Pfumojena.

Their co-production of *Fantastically Great Women Who Changed the World* with Kenny Wax Family Entertainment had its world premiere at Mayflower Studios and went on to win the UK Theatre Award for Best Family Entertainment. They co-produced Frantic Assembly's *Metamorphosis*, and in 2024 co-produced *The Lion Inside* and *The Mountaintop* with Leicester Curve and *Coming to England* with Nicoll Entertainment.

They also produce their own Christmas Productions in Mayflower Studios which include *Peter Pan*; *An Awfully Big Musical Adventure*, *Second Star to the Right*, *Alice*; *A Musical Adventure in Wonderland*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Down the Rabbit Hole* and *The Wind in the Willows: Toad's Musical Adventure*.

www.mayflower.org.uk

Bibliography

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jackiemoggridgespitfiregirl.com

We'd love to hear from you! Join in the conversation

 Tilted Wig Productions  tiltedwig  @tiltedwiguk

#SpitfireGirls

CONTENT CREATED BY **SINEAD O'CALLAGHAN**
FOR **TILTED WIG PRODUCTIONS**

Tilted Wig
productions