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1920s

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1950s

1960s

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1980s

1990s

WILLY RUSSELL

OUR DAY OUT



B L O O M S B U R Y

Methuen Drama Modern Classics

The Methuen Drama Modern Plays series has always been at the forefront of modern playwriting and has reflected the most exciting developments in modern drama since 1959. To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Methuen Drama, the series was relaunched in 2009 as Methuen Drama Modern Classics, and continues to offer readers a choice selection of the best modern plays.

Our Day Out

Our Day Out displays all the chaos and hilarity that result when Mrs Kay's 'Progress Class' are unleashed for a day's coach trip to Conway Castle in Wales – via the cafe, the zoo, the beach and the funfair.

'Fast, funny and curiously moving.'

Guardian

'Fresh, lively and natural.'

Daily Telegraph

Adapted from the television play, the script published here, complete with songs by Willy Russell, Bob Eaton and Chris Mellor, is Russell's musical version, written for Liverpool's Everyman Theatre and staged there and at London's Young Vic in 1983.

Willy Russell was born in Whiston, near Liverpool. Leaving school at fifteen, he worked variously as a ladies' hairdresser, warehouseman and girder cleaner until, at the age of twenty-one, he returned to education. It was while training to become a teacher that he wrote his first plays for both stage and television. *Playground*, *Keep Your Eyes Down* and *Sam O'Shanker* were premiered at St Katherine's College in 1972. Under the collective title *Blind Scouse* these were presented later the same year at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, where they were seen by playwright John McGrath and led to Russell writing *When the Reds*, adapted from an original script by Alan Plater, for the Everyman Theatre, Liverpool (1973). Subsequently he has

written *John Paul George Ringo . . . and Bert* (Everyman and Lyric, London, 1974; winner of the *Evening Standard* and London Theatre Critics' Awards for Best Musical), *Breezblock Park* (Everyman, 1975; Mermaid and Whitehall, London, 1977), *One for the Road* (Contact Theatre, Manchester, 1976; Lyric, London, 1987), *Stags and Hens* (Everyman, 1978; Young Vic, 1983; revised and presented as *Stags and Hens – The Remix*, Royal Court, Liverpool, 2008), *Educating Rita* (RSC Warehouse and Piccadilly, London, 1980, winner of SWET Best Comedy Award), *Blood Brothers* (play version, Merseyside Young People's Theatre Company, 1981), *Blood Brothers* (musical version, Liverpool Playhouse and Lyric, London, 1983; Albery and Phoenix, London, 1988; Music Box, New York, 1993), *Our Day Out* (play version, Everyman and Young Vic, 1983; musical version, Royal Court, Liverpool, 2009), *Shirley Valentine* (Everyman, 1986; Vaudeville, London, 1988, winner of Olivier Award for Best Comedy; Booth Theatre, New York, 1989).

For television he has written *King of the Castle* (BBC, 1973), *Break-In* (BBC, 1974), *Death of a Young Young Man* (BBC, 1974), *Our Day Out* (BBC, 1976), *Lies* (BBC, 1978), *The Daughters of Albion* (ITV, 1979), *Politics and Terror* (ITV, 1980), *The Boy with the Transistor Radio* (ITV, 1980), the *One Summer* series (Channel 4, 1983), *Terraces* (BBC, 1993). Feature films and screenplays include *Educating Rita* (winner of *Evening Standard* Award for Best Screenplay, 1983), *Shirley Valentine* (1989), *Dancin' Thru the Dark* (1990), *Blood Brothers* (with Alan Parker, 2006). As a composer Russell has written for the TV series *Connie* and the feature film *Mr Love*, as well as for his own films, *Shirley Valentine* and *Dancin' Thru the Dark*. He wrote music and lyrics for *Blood Brothers* and (with Bob Eaton and Chris Mellor) music and lyrics for *Our Day Out*. With the poets Adrian Henri, Brian Patten and Roger McGough, he wrote and performed *Words on the Run* (1995–97), and with playwright Tim Firth he wrote and performed *In Other Words* (2004) and *The Singing Playwrights* (2004). In 2003 he wrote and recorded the CD *Hoovering the Moon*. His novel *The Wrong Boy* was published by Doubleday in 2000.

Willy Russell

Our Day Out

with songs and music by

Bob Eaton, Chris Mellor and Willy Russell

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© Willy Russell 1984, 1991

Songs and music © Bob Eaton, Chris Mellor and Willy Russell 1984

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Our Day Out

Author's Notes

Language and Setting

For the purpose of publication I have retained the play's original settings of Liverpool and Wales, but this is not intended to imply that productions of the play in other parts of the country should strive to observe the original setting or reproduce the idiom in which it is written. If being played in, say, Sheffield, the play would, I feel, be more relevant to both cast and audience if adapted to a local setting and the local accent.

Following the play's original production in Liverpool it was staged at the Young Vic where it became a cockney play: the setting of the school became Hackney, the Mersey Tunnel became the Blackwall Tunnel, Conway Castle became Bodiam Castle, the Welsh Coast, the South Coast, and so on.

I can foresee a problem where the play is set in an area which has no road tunnel or bridge and, if this is the case, would suggest that you simply cut this small section of script.

Staging

Although it would be possible to present the play on a proscenium stage I think it's much better suited to a more flexible area. The play was originally presented in the round, with a set consisting of a number of simple benches. These benches were used as the seats on the coach and then rearranged by the actors to suggest the various other settings – the café, the zoo, even the rocks on the beach.

Two platforms were built at a higher level and were used as the castle battlements, the cliff and the headmaster's study.

In both the Everyman and Young Vic productions the coach carried about fifteen to twenty passengers. Obviously this number could be increased for large-cast productions.

Music

Again, in the original productions of the play, the production budgets demanded that the musical accompaniment be kept to an absolute minimum – i.e. piano and percussion. Should you be in the happy position of knowing no such constraints and have at your disposal a band or orchestra, please feel free to arrange the music accordingly.

Willy Russell

Our Day Out was originally written for television and transmitted as a BBC 'Play for Today' in 1976. It was later adapted for the stage and first performed at the Everyman Theatre, Liverpool, on 8 April 1983, with the following cast:

Mrs Kay	Linda Beckett
Bus Driver/Zoo Keeper/Les	Carl Chase
Colin/Headmaster	David Hobbs
Briggs	Robert McIntosh
Susan/Cafe Owner	Christina Nagy

Kids

X and Y Companies performed on alternate nights

X Company: Sue Abrahams, Michaela Amoo, Danny Ayers, Maria Barrett, Angela Bell, Andy Broadhead, Maxine Cole, Vernon Eustace, Brian Hanlon, Michael Kagbo, Andrea Langham, Victor McGuire, Mary Shepherd, Paul Spencer, Charlie Thelu, Jason Williams

Y Company: Hannah Bond, Peter Bullock, Shaun Carr, Mary Fanner, Danny Jones, Anne Lundon, Ritchie Macauley, Keith Maiker, Jacqui McCarthy, Victor McGuire, Jocelyn Meall, Joanne Mogan, Joanne Oldham, Joanne Pennington, Ben Wilson, John Winstanley

Directed by Bob Eaton and Kate Roland

Musical direction by Chris Mellor

Designed by Sue Mayes

Lighting by Kevin Fitzsimons

Our Day Out was subsequently seen at the Young Vic Theatre, London, opening on 20 August 1983, with the following cast:

Mrs Kay	Rosalind Boxall
Bus Driver/Zoo Keeper/Les	Martin Stone
Colin/Headmaster	William Gaminara
Briggs	Stephen Lewis
Susan/Cafe Owner	Christina Nagy

Kids

Matthew Barker, Paul Billings, Gillian Blavo, Maura Hall, Michelle Bristol, Richard Cotterill, Brian Warrington, Tony Fuller, Jane Gibbs, Claire Mitchell, Paul Harbert, Roy Spicer, Sally Hobbs, Tony Jones, Darragh Murray, Darryl Niven, Marie Quetant, Jason Robertson, Jaqueline Rodger, Elizabeth Toone

Directed by Bob Eaton

Musical direction by Stuart Barham

Designed by Sue Mayes

Lighting by Andy Phillips