SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an excerpt - an appetiser, if you will - from a full Samuel French title.

This sample is just for you to try out, and it can't be used for performance, downloaded, printed or distributed in any way.

Take it for a whirl and see if it tickles your fancy!

For more information about licensing this or other shows, or to browse thousands more plays and theatre books to buy please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk
or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

SF PERUSALS

MAMETZ

by Owen Sheers

SAMUEL FRENCH

samuelfrench.co.uk

Copyright © 2016 by Owen Sheers
All Rights Reserved

MAMETZ is fully protected under the copyright laws of the British Commonwealth, including Canada, the United States of America, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-11277-5

www.samuelfrench.co.uk
www.samuelfrench.com

For Amateur Production Enquiries

United Kingdom and World
excluding north america
plays@SamuelFrench-London.co.uk
020 7255 4302/01

Each title is subject to availability from Samuel French,

depending upon country of performance.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that MAMETZ is subject to a licensing fee. Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to the appropriate agent before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

The professional rights in this play are controlled by Sayle Screen Ltd, 11 Jubilee Place, London SW3 3TD.

No one shall make any changes in this title for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. No one shall upload this title, or part of this title, to any social media websites.

The right of Owen Sheers to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

THINKING ABOUT PERFORMING A SHOW?

There are thousands of plays and musicals available to perform from Samuel French right now, and applying for a licence is easier and more affordable than you might think

---

From classic plays to brand new musicals, from monologues to epic dramas, there are shows for everyone.

Plays and musicals are protected by copyright law so if you want to perform them, the first thing you'll need is a licence. This simple process helps support the playwright by ensuring they get paid for their work, and means that you'll have the documents you need to stage the show in public.

Not all our shows are available to perform all the time, so it's important to check and apply for a licence before you start rehearsals or commit to doing the show.

LEARN MORE & FIND THOUSANDS OF SHOWS

Browse our full range of plays and musicals and find out more about how to license a show

www.samuelfrench.co.uk/perform

Talk to the friendly experts in our Licensing team for advice on choosing a show, and help with licensing

plays@samuelfrench.co.uk 020 7387 9373

Acting Editions

BORN TO PERFORM

Playscripts designed from the ground up to work the way you do in rehearsal, performance and study

---

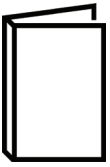
Larger, clearer text for easier reading

Wider margins for notes

Performance features such as character and props lists, sound and lighting cues, and more

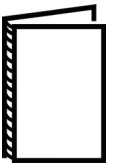
---

+ CHOOSE A SIZE AND STYLE TO SUIT YOU



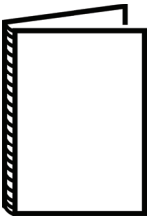
STANDARD EDITION

Our regular paperback book at our regular size



SPIRAL-BOUND EDITION

The same size as the Standard Edition, but with a sturdy, easy-to-fold, easy-to-hold spiral-bound spine



LARGE EDITION

A4 size and spiral bound, with larger text and a blank page for notes opposite every page of text. Perfect for technical and directing use

LEARN MORE **samuelfrench.co.uk/actingeditions**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Owen Sheers has written two collections of poetry *The Blue Book* and *Skirrid Hill*. His non-fiction includes *The Dust Diaries* and *Calon: A Journey to the Heart of Welsh Rugby*. His debut novel *Resistance* has been translated into ten languages and was made into a film in 2011. His plays include *The Passion* and *The Two Worlds of Charlie F.* which won the Amnesty International Freedom of Expression award. His verse drama *Pink Mist* won Welsh Book of the Year and was staged in Bristol and London by Bristol Old Vic. His latest novel, *I Saw A Man*, was shortlisted for the Prix Femina Etranger. He has been an NYPL Cullman Fellow, Writer in Residence for the Wordsworth Trust and Artist in Residence for the Welsh Rugby Union. He is currently Professor of Creativity at Swansea University.

Other plays by OWEN SHEERS
published and licensed by Samuel French

Pink Mist

The Two Worlds of Charlie F.

Unicorns, almost

FIND PERFECT PLAYS TO PERFORM AT
www.samuelfrench.co.uk/perform

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This play would not exist without having being fuelled by the lives and writings of David Jones and Llewelyn Wyn Griffith, and I am indebted to the estates of both writers for granting permission to quote and adapt from Jones's *In Parenthesis* (Faber) and Wyn Griffiths *Up to Mametz and Beyond* (Pen & Sword). I am also grateful to Chris Morris for first introducing me to these books, and for his research and guidance in the development of this play, and to Colin Hughes for his extensive writing on the battle of Mametz. The premiere of *Mametz* was produced by National Theatre Wales with the support of 14-18NOW. I'd like to thank all those who worked on this original production, especially John McGrath for commissioning such a risky idea, Jon Bausor for realising my vision of a set within a field, Matthew Dunster for so elegantly directing the words off the page and all the cast for lending their voices and bodies to the characters and their stories with such dedication and empathy.

Extracts taken from *In Parenthesis* © Estate of David Jones and reprinted by permission of Faber & Faber

Quotations from *Up to Mametz and Beyond* by Llewelyn Wyn Griffith, edited by Jonathan Riley, courtesy of Martin Wyn Griffith

Mametz was first performed by the National Theatre of Wales on 24 June 2014. The cast, in alphabetical order, was as follows:

Jack Ayres

Stephen Casey

Tara D'Arquian

Michael Elwyn

Daniel Graham

Chris Hoskins

Rhys Isaac-Jones

Mari Izzard

Rhodri Meilir

Kayed Mohamed-Mason

Nicola Reynolds

Rhys Rusbatch

Adam Scales

Catrin Stewart

Dafydd Llyr Thomas

Sion Daniel Young

Ensemble: Thomas David Carron, Christopher Charles, Jodie Currie, Lawrence Duffy, Aisla Margaret Dunn, James Ellis, Laura Green, Matthew Ingram, Michael Kelly, Catherine Shipton-Philips, John A Thomas, Naomi Underwood

Director – Matthew Dunster

Designer – Jon Bausor

Lighting Designer – Lee Curran

Sound Designer – George Dennis

Movement Director – Christopher Akrill

To all who lost at Mametz

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

Professor Phillips
WW1 historian and battlefield guide, fifties/sixties

Antoinette
Daughter of Mametz Wood gamekeeper, nineteen

Llewelyn Wyn Griffith (young)
Staff officer 15th Battalion RWF, mid-twenties

Taylor
Signals officer 15th Battalion RWF, forties

Llewelyn Wyn Griffith (old)
Writer and broadcaster, late sixties

General Evans
Commander 15th Battalion RWF, fifties

Private Dai Williams
South Wales miner, early twenties

Edith Williams
Mother to Dai Williams, late forties/early fifties

Private Ellis Jones
London dairyman, early twenties

Helen Jones
Wife of Ellis Jones, mother to Megan, early twenties

Private Aneurin Lewis
North Wales son of a farmer, eighteen

Siriol
Munitions worker from Llandudno, eighteen

Private David Jones
Student artist, Londoner of Welsh descent, twenty

Willem de Sitter
Dutch physicist, forties

Whitehall secretaries 1, 2 & 3
Of various ages

Colonel Bell
Colonel in 15th Battalion RWF, fifties

Sergeant Snell
Sergeant in 15th Battalion RWF, thirties/forties

Ensemble
Soldiers, rugby players, mothers, Watcyn, “John” and “Lucy” from skype conversation

PROLOGUE

A field beside a wood in Wales.

The audience are gathered and marshalled by employees of "Cook's Battlefield Experience Tours"

ACT ONE

Scene One

PROFESSOR PHILLIPS *steps onto a small platform. He is energetic and passionate. Serious, but with a hint of humour.*

PROF PHILLIPS Hello and welcome to another *Cook's Battlefield Experience Tour.*

And welcome too, to this beautiful part of Monmouthshire which, for the next few hours, we'll transform into one of the battlefields of the Somme. A battlefield on which thousands of men from this very countryside lost their lives.

My name is Professor Phillips, and with the help of my assistants this evening, I want to take you into the heart of a battle that's become just as resonant here in Wales as the Somme has become in the memory of Britain as a whole. The battle of Mametz Wood.

Right, "Fair stood the winds for France," as a poet once said. Let's get you across the channel!

Holding up an umbrella **PROF PHILLIPS** *leads the audience into the mouth of a rough support trench.*

The trench is constructed from farm material which might also be found on a battlefield – corrugated iron, wire, rough wooden struts and props. The walls of the trench increase in height. In the open field, before the mouth of the trench, a young messenger with a satchel, **WATCYN**, *runs through the grass. Another* **YOUNG SOLDIER** *stands motionless, waiting for him.*

The rumble of distant artillery fire.

As the audience makes its way along the trench members encounter other **YOUNG SOLDIERS**. *One plays a harmonica, another is brewing tea, another rolling a cigarette.*

Further along another is reading a weekly lads mag, while another, wearing contemporary British Army uniform, listens to hip-hop from a speaker connected to an iPhone. Another Skypes with his girlfriend on an iPad. See suggested Skype dialogue.*

The trench becomes single file.

Walking against the flow of the audience is an army padre, talking to himself in North Walean Welsh.

Above the trench stands **WILLEM DE SITTER**, *a man in his late forties wearing a turn-of-the-century suit with glasses and a bow tie. He is holding a pocket watch and stands beside a telescope on a tripod.*

When he speaks it is with a Dutch accent.

DE SITTER No hurry. Plenty of time. Plenty of time.

* *see page 85 for Skype dialogue*

Scene Two

At the end of the trench the audience are guided into a barn in which they discover a makeshift estaminet, a French pop-up cafe close to the front line.

Folding tables are covered with checked cloth. An accordion player sits in the corner. A menu in French hangs on the wall. French women serve **BRITISH SOLDIERS** *wine and food.*

As **PROF PHILLIPS** *enters, the makeshift cafe and those inhabiting it melt away around him.*

PROF PHILLIPS Bienvenue a France! But welcome, as well, to 1916. So, where are we exactly? Well, the countryside of Picardy beyond these walls is already familiar with the blood of Welsh fighting men. Agincourt and the battle of Crecy were both contested over this ground. At both these battles Welsh soldiers fell in great numbers. And now, in 1916, over the same French soil, they will again.

But why were there so many Welsh troops at Mametz?

PROF PHILLIPS *jumps onto a platform to illustrate his talk with photographs, maps, portraits.*

In 1914, when Lord Kitchener began raising his volunteer army, Lloyd George, the chancellor, saw an opportunity for Wales to have an army of her own.

But the appeal for a Welsh army came too late. Welsh men had already rushed to join existing regiments. As a result the hoped-for stream of volunteers for a new Welsh division was a trickle. In time though, and with the help of recruits from London and a reduction in the regulation height, eventually 50,000 new Welsh soldiers became the 38th Division of the British army.

But these were soldiers short on equipment, and short on time. For many months they trained with brooms instead of rifles. When they came to France, each man had fired just twenty-four rounds on the firing range. When they arrive *here* in July 1916 they've already had several months at the front. But they've never taken part in a large-scale attack. As they march in, more experienced soldiers consider them no more than "civilians in uniform."

In contrast, waiting for them in Mametz Wood is the Lehr regiment of the Prussian 3rd Guards. An elite fighting force with a minimum height of 5ft 7 from which the Imperial Guard is selected. And it is from these men that the Welsh 38th Division must take Mametz Wood.

For a few days it will also be the *only* major British offensive. From July 1st to July 5th the British had attacked along the entire length of their line in Picardy. But then they had to pause, as without taking the wood any further advance was impossible. For the next few days, Mametz will be the only show in town. It will be a uniquely literary battle too, the attack bracketed by two great war poets. Siegfried Sassoon is in the frontline opposite the wood just before, and Robert Graves will be wounded in its aftermath. There are even a couple of lesser known writers about to be involved in the attack itself. Lieutenant Llewelyn Wyn Griffith and Private David Jones, both of the 15th Royal Welch Fusiliers, the 1st London Welsh.

In time all of these writers will commit their memories of the battle to paper. It will become their past. But now, for the men of the Welsh division, as they march into the line, the battle of Mametz Wood is their imminent future.

So, I hope that gives you some context. But we're not called *Cook's Battle Context Tours* are we? No, no, no. We're *Cook's Battle Experience Tours*. So let's get on with the experience shall we?

Scene Three

PROF PHILLIPS *leads the audience into an adjoining barn with seating facing the back wall of a trench. Above this wall near and far blacks can open to reveal apertures the length of the trench. To the right of the seating is the end wall of a house, with three windows in which the following vignettes rotate:*

A young woman, **SIRIOL**, *poses for a photograph taken with a flash.*

A man in his fifties stands before a BBC microphone. A producer's voice tells him:

BBC PRODUCER'S VOICE In your own time Mr Jones.

DE SITTER *looks through his telescope.*

A young woman, **HELEN**, *cradling an infant, steams open a letter and reads.*

An older women, **EDITH**, *washes clothes against a washboard.*

In an exposed room to the right of these windows a British officer **LLEWELYN WYN GRIFFITH** (**YOUNG**) *runs a bath for his younger brother,* **WATCYN**, *a private* **SOLDIER**.

Over this action male voices sing "Calon Lân". As the audience settle **WYN GRIFFITH** (**YOUNG**) *brings his brother a cup of coffee and the women in the windows take up the hymn, replacing its lyrics with words of their own.*

WOMEN In case of loss, please return. In case of loss, please return.

The barn door closes.

An explosion. Blackout.

Scene Four

The upstage blacks part to reveal an aperture the length of the stage area, through which a field and a wood can be seen.

A young woman, **ANTOINETTE***, approaches through the field. She carries a basket of gathered small branches. Entering through the aperture, she stands on the parapet of the trench.*

Birdsong.

ANTOINETTE The wood was my father's job. And his father's before him. *Le garde forestier.* "Gamekeeper". I think that is the word in English.

She laughs.

But it was only ever me who played games in there. It was a blessing to me that wood. My mother, she was… not well. And my father, he was more interested in keeping the count happy than his daughter. So I used to go to the wood. For hours. I even slept there once. Wrapped up in my grandmother's coat. I lay there, under the roots of an old oak, listening to them call my name until midnight. "Antoinette! Antoinette!" But I didn't want to go home. I was already there.

It was summer when I did that. And you know what I learnt? The birds, they sing *before* they see the sun. They know the light is coming. And so they sing. They woke me, and I did not understand. Because it was still dark. But then the first light came. As if they had sung the sun into rising. I'll never forget that. Never.

I went there in all seasons. Not just summer. In the winter, once, I came across a young deer. There was snow. I'd left tracks across the field from the village to the wood.

The young messenger, **WATCYN**, *runs into view in the field beyond. He stops and stares at* **ANTOINETTE**, *who stares back.*

We just stared at each other. Me and that deer. It was so still, so I was still too.

WATCYN *runs on out of sight.*

But then it ran away. Jumping over the fallen branches. When it had gone, I felt so alone. I was alone before I saw it. I was often alone. But never as I was then, after the deer had gone.

SOLDIERS *of the 15th Royal Welch Fusiliers begin to drift into the trench. They are new troops, carrying their lives with them. Trench shovels, billy cans, rifles, packs and canteens.*

ANTOINETTE *watches the troops arrive. The birdsong fades.*

That was when I was a child. When only local people knew the wood, and its name was just the name of a wood, not a battle.

She watches more **SOLDIERS** *arrive.*

They came to take the wood, and they did. Even when they left, they still occupied it. With their bodies, their deaths.

She shakes her head, laughs bitterly.

"Mametz" they call it. "Mametz Wood." And that's what their grandchildren and great-grandchildren still call it too. When they come here looking for them. Sometimes they come as a family. But mostly it's just the men, on their own. Making tea in the boot of their car.

A camper van drives into view in the field beyond, parking up in front of the wood.

Sipping from a thermos as they look at the wood. What do they want it to tell them? Maybe they just want to see the trees that have grown from their ancestors. Or just to look on the last thing they saw. Whatever the reason, they still come. All the time. To look.

She gathers a couple more branches from the ground. As she stands she looks at the **SOLDIERS** *again.*

They think it is theirs. Just because they died in it. But it is not. And it is not "Mametz" Wood. It is *Bois de Mametz.* And it is mine. It has always been mine.

Scene Five

Early morning. **WYN GRIFFITH** (**YOUNG**)*, mid-twenties, and* **TAYLOR***, early forties, both officers, are surveying the wood through a periscope.* **TAYLOR** *occasionally takes sips from a mug of tea.* **WYN GRIFFITH** *occasionally compares his view with a map.*

TAYLOR What do you think?

WYN GRIFFITH It's a forest. I don't see how we'll do much damage to it.

TAYLOR One maxim team on that southern edge. That's all they need.

WYN GRIFFITH *lets* **TAYLOR** *look.*

WYN GRIFFITH I don't understand. Why keep us waiting in the lobby?

TAYLOR You mean Contalmaison?

WYN GRIFFITH Surely we should attack at the same time, not wait for the show to finish over there first?

TAYLOR Suppose they think that would spread our fire.

WYN GRIFFITH But it would spread theirs too. That's the point.

TAYLOR *comes away from the periscope and smiles at the younger man.*

TAYLOR You're being too reasonable. I'm not saying you're wrong. Even the general was cursing his orders this morning.

WYN GRIFFITH Of course he was. There could be ten of him in there or ten thousand. There's no way of knowing. And that ridge—

He takes the periscope again.

Between the Hammerhead and Flatiron Copse. It's a bare slope. No cover at all. I know they want a smoke screen, but if they've got machine guns in those copses…

TAYLOR *begins preparing a pipe as* **WYN GRIFFITH** *continues to survey the ground.*

TAYLOR Who's on your right?

WYN GRIFFITH 16th Welsh. 11th South Wales Borderers.

In the distance, through the aperture, the padre begins advancing through the field.

TAYLOR I saw the padre earlier. Just before dawn.

WYN GRIFFITH Morgan?

TAYLOR Yes.

WYN GRIFFITH What was he doing out so early?

TAYLOR Off to do some burying. Still lots of our lads out there. He'd just come back from Fricourt. Hadn't slept all night.

WYN GRIFFITH Why Fricourt?

TAYLOR He was looking for a grave.

He shakes his head.

I should have known. He was talking to himself. Praying I think. It was northern Welsh. I couldn't really make it out. I asked him whose grave he was looking for. "My son's", he said.

WYN GRIFFITH Christ. I knew young Morgan. We trained together.

The padre is closer now. The sound of his praying in Welsh is audible.

TAYLOR Killed near Fricourt. Day before yesterday.

WYN GRIFFITH Did he find him?

TAYLOR No. Couldn't find the padre who'd buried him either. So he came back here. Said he should at least bury other men's boys, even if he couldn't find his own.

WYN GRIFFITH He must have been walking all night.

WYN GRIFFITH *begins packing items from a large pack into his haversack – matches, a pipe, some biscuits.*

TAYLOR What could you say? You know my Welsh isn't good. But you can't speak English to a man who's just lost his boy can you? I managed a few words. Took off my helmet. Told him I was sorry.

WYN GRIFFITH (**OLD**) *enters. He is late sixties, casually but smartly dressed in 1950s clothes. He carries two string bags full of groceries. Seeing* **TAYLOR** *and* **WYN GRIFFITH** (**YOUNG**) *he walks towards them, stopping a few feet from his younger self who pulls a small brown package tied with red ribbon from his pack.*

WYN GRIFFITH Haven't seen my brother have you? I've been carrying this around for him for days. It's his birthday.

TAYLOR I saw him last night. In that old German dugout. He's been made a runner, for the battalion.

The sound of an artillery barrage opens up offstage. Both men look in its direction, as does the padre standing in the aperture and all the other **SOLDIERS** *in the trench.* **WYN GRIFFITH** (**OLD**) *continues looking at his younger self as he puts the brown package into his haversack.*

WATCYN *appears in the aperture, getting dressed after a bath. He finishes by putting on his messenger's satchel.*

WYN GRIFFITH (**OLD**) Taylor knew my younger brother Watcyn well. They'd joined up on the same day, in the same village. But that's where the similarity ended. Taylor was a Brigade Signalling Officer. Watcyn was still a boy, and just a private infantryman. He should have been wearing a school uniform, not a khaki one. He'd just turned nineteen.

TAYLOR *takes down the periscope. The aperture closes.*

TAYLOR I should get down to Pommiers. We've been laying lines all night and we're still not done.

WYN GRIFFITH Are you taking Danzig Alley?

TAYLOR Yes. They'll be replying soon enough.

WYN GRIFFITH I'll come. Evans will be wanting me.

Both men finish off packing their haversacks.

TAYLOR *finishes his tea, and takes some biscuits from his haversack. He offers some to* **WYN GRIFFITH**.

TAYLOR Go on. You never know where you'll end up today. Or when.

WYN GRIFFITH (**YOUNG**) *takes the biscuits. The sound of an answering German barrage. Shells exploding nearby throw soil into the trench.*

The two men shoulder their haversacks to leave. **TAYLOR** *exits. As* **WYN GRIFFITH** (**YOUNG**) *is about to go he pauses and looks towards his older self, as if aware of someone watching him. For a moment the two men look at each other.*

WYN GRIFFITH (**YOUNG**) *exits.* **WYN GRIFFITH** (**OLD**) *watches him go.*

The **SOLDIERS** *in the trench go about their duties around him.*

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk
or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and enjoy other theatre-related larks, do follow us on our spangley social media channels.



Samuel French London



SamuelFrenchLtd

SF **PERUSALS**