

BREAKING GROUND - Rehearsal Pack | Wolds Wonders 25/5

Part 1 – The Prompt Play

Recurring Elements Across All Scenes

- **Props:**

- *The Dented Kettle*: Appears in every scene, slightly moved each time.
- *The Wobbly Wheelbarrow*: Always veers left.
- *Steamer Trunk*: Planted in the centre of the lake.

- **Potential Catchphrases:**

- “That’ll never hold water.”
- “Give it a polish, it’ll be fine.”
- “We’re ahead of schedule - so we’ll have to slow down.”
- “Measure twice, dig once!”
- “Spade in, spade out, that’s what it’s all about!”
- “Don’t just stand - lend a hand!”
- “Tea first, questions later.”

Characters:

The Tea Fanatic: Obsessed with tea-making rituals.

The Architect: Wields an “official” blueprint and insists on adjustments.

The Animal Expert: Keeps predicting which animals will live in the lake, all wildly inaccurate (polar bears, kangaroos, flamingos).

The Supervisors: Always serious, obsessed with timelines, budgets, and projections.

The Gossipers: Loves to gossip, especially about the Stewarts. Their stories get more and more ludicrous each time they’re shared.

The Foreman: Tells the Workers to do the silliest of things.

The Money Person: Always talking in numbers, questioning the cost of things.

The Builders: The only ones who seem to do any hard labour while everyone else stands around.

PROMPTS:

Scene 1 – First Look

Prompt: Empty space, wooden bench, dented kettle centre stage. Builders arrive, react to the open field. Introduce quirks: Tea Purist claims they can “taste the soil in the air,” Architect immediately starts “measuring” with string, Animal Expert declares something ridiculous like the lake will be home to “the majestic sea otter”.

Some builder solemnly plants *The Trunk* in the centre - everyone else pretends it's sacred and very secret.

Scene 2 – Tea, Tools, and Tall Tales

Prompt: Morning soundscape, exaggerated gossip about the Major's travel plans. A wobbly Wheelbarrow appears.

Scene 3 – Digging Trouble

Prompt: Physical digging and hauling chaos, wheelbarrow accidents, blueprint upside-down, tea rituals interrupt work.

Scene 4 – The Foreman's Inspection

Prompt: Over-critical foreman, absurd fixes, arguments about lake rotation, tea judged harshly. Foreman struts in, over-critical.

Foreman complains the soil is something silly like “too pointy” or “not inspiring enough” Orders ridiculous fixes: polishing invisible stones, moving the same dirt pile five times. The architect insists they've built the whole lake 3 inches too far east and suggests rotating the entire lake.

Scene 5 – Water! ...Sort Of

Prompt: First trickle arrives. Water is only described via silly comparisons. The trunk is ceremoniously dipped.

Scene 6 – Tea Break Olympics

Prompt: Competitive tea pouring, biscuit dunking, complaint competitions, wheelbarrow relay race.

Scene 7 – The Swim

Prompt: The lake is filled with water, the job is done. The workers all have a playful lake swim to celebrate.

Scene 8 – The Suitcase

Prompt: The Steamer Trunk is centre stage. Builders add keepsakes, and close it shut.
Final callback: “That’ll never hold water.”

Part 2 – Builder’s Scrapbook

Slang & Lingo from 1920s Yorkshire

“By ‘eck” – surprise.

“Chuffed to bits” – delighted.

“Claggy” – sticky mud.

“Nithered” – freezing.

“Chuntering” – muttering complaints.

“Fair caper” – mischief.

“Nowt so queer as folk” – bafflement.

“That’ll never hold water.” – a plan that won’t work.

“Like pouring water into a sieve.” – effort that’s wasted.

“All’s out o’ t’window when it rains.” – nothing goes to plan in bad weather.

“He’s wetter than a newt.” – absolutely soaked.

“There’s nowt so daft as swimming wi’ yer boots on.” – making work harder than it needs to be.

“Shift it sharpish.” – hurry up with the work.

“Put yer back into it!” – give it some real effort.

“It’ll tek some doing.” – it’ll be difficult.

“Many a mickle makes a muckle.” – lots of small efforts add up.

Historical & Local References

- Major Percy Stewart, eccentric gentleman, obsessed with hunting and cars
- Katharine Stewart, a keen collector of waterlilies and avid painter.
- Lotus flowers in Yorkshire, imported lilies, goldfish from Japan.
- Horse-drawn carts, steam trains, unpredictable weather.
- 'Primus' was a local legend 20 pound fish - rumour was that Percy fed Primus by hand. Primus was eventually caught after years of attempts.

Sensory Details

- **Sounds:** squeaky wheelbarrow, clink of flasks, puff of steam train.
- **Smells:** damp soil, sawn timber, pipe tobacco.
- **Textures:** slick lily leaf, grit in tea flasks, heavy clay.

Comedy Seeds

- Mishearing orders.
- Over-exotic animal predictions.
- Measuring things that don't need measuring.
- Protecting the kettle as though it's royal property.

Part 3 – Warm-Up & Devising Games

1. The Wobbly Wheelbarrow Relay

- In pairs, mime pushing the famous Wobbly Wheelbarrow around the room, over-exaggerating its refusal to go straight.
- Add obstacles (imaginary mud, puddles, foreman inspections).

2. "That'll Never Hold Water" Improv

- One actor delivers the line. Others must justify *why* whatever the object is won't "hold water" - each justification must be stranger than the last.

3. Tea Purist Challenge

- Players must mime making tea under bizarre conditions (high wind, upside down, being chased by ducks) while keeping a deadly-serious Tea Purist persona.

4. Lake Wildlife Documentary

- One actor narrates as the Animal Expert while others act out increasingly absurd “wildlife” arriving at the lake.

5. Heart of the Lake Ceremony

- Actors improvise bizarre, solemn rituals for placing or protecting the Heart of the Lake Object. Make these ridiculous!

6. Foreman Says

- Like “Simon Says” but in a foreman style. Commands are illogical (“Dig faster with your left eyebrow”) and must be obeyed instantly.