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Shakespeare's Globe

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# Research Bulletin

Issue Number 21

*May 2002*

## **The 2001 Globe Season The White Company**

*King Lear*

**By Dr Jaq Bessell**

(Globe Research)

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## ***King Lear – The White Company***

Lear, King of Britain	Julian Glover
Gonoril, Lear's eldest daughter	Patricia Kerrigan
Regan, Lear's second daughter	Felicity Dean
Cordelia, Lear's youngest daughter	Tonia Chauvet
Earl of Gloucester	Geoffrey Whitehead
Edgar, Gloucester's son	Paul Brennen
Edmund, Gloucester's bastard son	Michael Gould
Earl of Kent	Bruce Alexander
Lear's Fool	John McEnery
Duke of Albany	Harry Costelow
Duke of Cornwall	Michael Fenner
King of France	Andrew Whipp
Duke of Burgundy	David Caron
Curan, a gentleman	Roger McKern
Oswald, Gonoril's steward	Peter Hamilton Dyer
Edmund's captain/Cornwall's servant	Simon Hyde
Herald	Murray McArthur

Master of Play	Barry Kyle
Master of Clothing and Properties	Hayden White
Master of Music	Claire van Kampen
Master of Fights	John Waller, Rodney Cottier
Master of Verse	Giles Block
Production Manager	Richard Howey
Head of Research	Jacquelyn Bessell

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## SETTING

- 27 March 2001

BK told the company that *KL* is the story of a world in transition, and so he wanted to investigate the text poetically rather than historically, when making decisions about design. BK pointed to the significance of the “wheel of fire” that Lear describes, which can move from the mortal world into an inferno of chaos and suffering. Wheels are a strong metaphor in medieval art. BK was interested in the idea of a wheel of fortune, a roulette wheel for the reckless gambling king.

He was considering erecting three pillars in the yard, with wheels atop, that can be climbed, can be used as goalposts for a football match, or could have dead animals stuck on them.

Also BK wanted a strong ORGANIC element to the design – oyster shells, earth, water, straw, flowers, grass, sweet marjoram. The columns were going to be clad with wood. This will also help to neutralise the decoration and make it both organic and domestic.

- Production meeting: 30 March 2001

A model of the Globe stage showed a wooden cladding over the whole of the *frons scenae* and the columns. The stage floor was also covered in a plain wooden cladding. In the yard three tall poles held up wheels atop.

- HW noted that the existing doors in the central opening would not be used in this production, that they would be pinned back or taken off. An opening would be cut in the cladding façade. The Lords’ Rooms would probably not be used, as their sightlines would be blocked by the cladding masking of the flanking right and left portals. HW noted that it might be possible to cut short some of the planks using line of sight, to improve these double-restricted views, if the Lords’ Rooms needed to be used. MR also noted the depth of entries might pose problems with cueing – grilles had been cut in our existing *frons scenae* to get around this problem to help SMs cue the actors.

- The poles in the yard needed to have a strong, sturdy base, weighted by sandbags – it would not be possible to bolt them into the yard. The bags would provide a natural hillock that actors could climb up, to be able to be seen above the level of the crowd. This posed a slight issue of groundlings climbing up or sitting on the bags – RH thought the design would need to be run past the Globe’s licensing authorities. For time considerations (turnaround and strike times) these would probably need to be on trolleys with jackable wheels, though there was a cost implication.

- Steps needed to be attached to the stage at either side so that actors could move from yard to stage. MR recommended that the stairs be attached at a point level with the pillars (an already very obstructed view) so that they did not further discourage audience members from moving to the sides of the stage.

- RH noted that Jon Greenfield (architect) had discouraged him from using chemicals or an industrial sander to strip back the floor. He thought it unlikely that the floor would look as even and clean as the model.

- A table that spins as a wheel had been discussed, but BK thought that this could be sacrificed.

- Storage space and turnaround time of 1 hour: feasible? RH needed to consider this more carefully.

## CLOTHING

BK made notes (see below) from which SC and HW worked. BK saw the *Lear* world encompassing “3 Ts”:

- Totalitarian – Lear’s world, based on a single, central figure and idea of order.
- Timeless Pastoral – not a court look, horses and saddles, Breughel, Dover, Gloucester’s world
- Terrorist – end of play – machetes, crossbows, possibly one firearm for Albany
- BK’s Notes

### Movement Through Eras

A Totalitarian with a root in a basic Jacobean costume with a modern slant for the younger generation: Regan, Gonoril, Edmund, Cordelia, Edgar, Oswald. Lear himself to be more Celtic.

B Timeless Pastoral when the play thrusts its characters into the elements; the adding of echoes from the worlds of Breughel and Hardy

C Terrorist A freedom of expression begins to break up the totalitarian look of all the characters now in power: Cornwall, Regan, Gonoril, Regan and Edmund. By scene 7 Gonoril’s and particularly Regan’s clothes are associated with the word ‘gorgeous.’ As the play plunges towards civil war and a foreign invasion there is a move towards paramilitary. The final scenes may have hints of World War I with someone carrying a pistol; elsewhere machetés, cross-bows, hunting knives, leather and steel for Edmund.

## CHARACTERS

### LEAR

1. Power. He is the Dragon. Black basic and black boots. Huge cloak of bone colour – organic, celtic – feathers/scales/bone/tiny seashells, a link with the national map. An organic crown. Part man, part landscape.
2. Hunting, retirement, recreation – braces, skinhead boots, hunting cap, animal skins, gauntlets. He may carry a falcon.
3. Travelling - cloak added to 2, black sealskin trenchcoat with a worn look.
4. Strips in storm. Linen nappy. (‘old fools are babes again.’)
5. By now covered in mud. He becomes a Mockery King for the mock trial. Hessian cloak (echo of cloak in 1) and he has drawn on Cordelia’s spectacles. By now he should look like a mad spirit from Hieronymous Bosch.

6. 'Fantastically crowned with wild flowers' at Dover. Has bathed in sea. Cleaned up. Looks like a shepherd. Very simple one-piece. Christian overtones with the crown of thorns.
7. Put in fresh clothes and wheelchair. White. Dressed like Cordelia in scene 1. Soft sheepskin boots. The old Tolstoy.

#### GLOUCESTER

1. Black basic with grey robe of an earl, silver chain of office as a sort of Lord Chamberlain, black boots, Rakish, still proud of his body, Vain. Gloucester is Lear's security chief.
2. At home, with a whore, shirt out, chain over bare chest, sexy.
3. Night scene. As costume 1, plus hat and baton. Hint of military beret.
4. Add outdoor waterproof, rural, for storm. Perhaps a Barbour type coat with its hint of rural earl in Gloucestershire, but still not totally modern.
5. Blinded look, bloodied, Hardy-esque, social status gone.

#### KENT

1. Black basic plus grey robe of an earl – no chain of office, but perhaps a 'military' medal, may need a stage beard.
2. Caius. Beard replaced by actor's own grey stubble. Old soldier. Breughel-esque. Sleeveless quilted jerkin, brown beaver hat, belted, Godot boots, fingerless gloves.
3. Given a 'knight's' coat in scene 4.
4. Has emotional breakdown at end and goes the Poor Tom route, pale blanket.

#### FOOL

1. Stoned sixties hippy mixed with Breughel peasant, multi-coloured coxcomb with bells, a link to Lear's crown in scene 1.
2. A 'knight's' coat for travelling.

#### KING OF FRANCE

Dark blue version of black basic, with rich blue robes. Simple royal band for crown. A more modern man than Lear, sophisticated, but more beautiful tailoring and fabric. Emmanuel Petit- ex French midfielder for Arsenal!

#### BURGUNDY

Similar to France but more decorative and conspicuous. Indigo and burgundy colours. No gold. The only thing that's gold in scene 1 should be the coronet which is handed by Lear to Gonoril and Regan.

## GONORIL

1. Black and grey with silver jewels, whitened face, red hair. Hint of Elizabeth I but somewhat puritanical.
2. Head of household. Costume 1 in its simplest, no jewelry.
3. Fur coat, fox stole ('you she-foxes'), riding boots, fur hat with gold crown brooch, to emphasise her authority over Lear.
4. Fascist chic, military leader. Black leather coat, black beret.

## REGAN

1. Silver and shiny, a lush blonde, but accessorised with grey and black, still has to fit in to the totalitarian look. Regan is princessy, but childlike and emotionally unstable. Lear sees her as 'soft' compared with Gonoril's 'hardness.'
2. Travelling clothes: scene 6 – dark blue and splendid coat over basic 1.
3. The showdown with Lear scene 7. This appearance coincides with Gonoril 3. Lear has to describe this appearance as 'gorgeous.' Silver fur with the blue perhaps. Regan is trying to seem as though she could run half the country. May need black laquered hair combs for use in the blinding of Gloucester in scene 14.
4. Regan's fantasy of herself. Once her husband dies, she lets all her fantasies out. They centre on sex, Edmund and a vision of herself as a ruthless powerful woman.

## CORNWALL

1. Black basic, sleeveless grey quilt and jerkin, thigh length giving it a military 'bullet proof vest' look. Fine shiny fabric. White shirt. Black boots, small spurs. A grey wolf, dangerous man.
2. Travelling clothes. Add long grey coat. Will need a belt and sheath for a macheté. Hat dark blue, reminiscent of a colonel's beret.

## ALBANY

1. Black basic. Full sleeve blue woollen jerkin, giving him a more homely 'cardigan' look. If Cornwall has a touch of the Fascist about him, Albany has a touch of 'the professor.' Grey shirt, grey hat.
2. Albany at home and as CO of the Gonoril army – add a sleeveless sheepskin coat or jacket. Green beret.

## EDMUND

1. Our first clear look at the play's emerging generation. Maybe in the yard for scene 1 needs to mix with audience. Black basic trousers. 'Doublet' may not be needed. Doc Martins. He

has been banished – probably somewhere rural – so perhaps a sleeveless jerkin of fishing net, or fur. A lot of flesh showing. Tight trousers, cropped hair. Tough rural bastard.

2. Night scene – Black beany. Black sleeveless quilted jerkin, like Cornwall.

3. Like a Serb paramilitary. Leather trousers, bare chest with macheté straps and belts. Wears a rope and noose round his neck.

#### EDGAR

1. Starts as ‘Hamlet.’ A student, but strange. Black cloak, white shirt, white face, dishevelled, but with a sense of status and wealth – we need to see he is of a totally different status from Edmund.

2. Tom – body-pierced. He has mutilated himself, covered in mud, turned into a demon. Turned his white shirt into a nappy.

3. Add a blanket or something for Dover, and Godot boots.

4. Wears his father’s bloodied eye bandage round his neck in duel.

#### OSWALD

1. Jacobean serving man. Doublet and trousers. Sexy little bantam cock, black and red, relates to Gonoril..

2. Travelling addition to 1. Classy compared with Kent 2 and 3. Carries saddle bag on belts, and a knife. A reptile.

#### GENTLEMAN

The ‘Gentleman’ may be the same character as Curan- this has to be confirmed. He is like Marlowe was: a spy for the state. He works for Gloucester and knows everybody. Works to get Cordelia back to England. Black basic plus details to be confirmed.

#### KNIGHTS

Have the idea that those who become knights simply wear a dragon flag tied round their shoulders, worn over the basic. Suggest a dark green flag with a black dragon printed on it (like an England football supporter.)

#### SERVANTS

Rural. Details tbc.

## MUSIC

- 27 March 2001

BK told the Company that the music for the play would need a very human element. He related the story of the liberators of Auschwitz reporting that they could *hear* the place before they saw it. Moreover, they described the noise as confusing – they couldn't tell whether the noise was the wind or the wail of humans. The storm is not just a meteorological phenomenon, it represents a human “storm within” Lear. So, our band features trumpets (called for in the script, and associated with judgement) as well as a vocalist, whose voice will represent Cordelia's presence (after she leaves at the end of the first scene).

Battle in Act V could be a sonic event – a vocal battle. Gloucester can only go by what he can hear. Should we use this as a motif?

- 30 March 2001: Full Company with Claire van Kampen

CvK introduced the idea of an indigenous English folk song tradition that is rooted in the Catholic tradition and consequently “went underground” during Puritan times. She noted that for this reason the tradition was broken in a way that the Irish tradition wasn't. However, one of the “safe” counties for the tradition to go to when it went underground was Cornwall, and so these songs became bound up with the rural communities and the land itself.

The Company sang “Green Grow the Rushes-O” *ensemble*. After this CvK split the group into 4 sections, so that at times a small group only was singing, at times all sang together. This helped CvK to get a good sense of the range of voices she would have to work with.

Next, CvK taught the Company a song called *The Crane*. The Company was then split into groups, each beginning to sing from a different point in the song. This gave a great effect of people singing against each other.

Next, CvK conducted the Company in the same song, altering the relative volumes that each group sang at, so the song as a whole appeared to have a momentum in addition to a round-robin quality.

*Heigh-ho Nobody Home*: CvK repeated the above exercise with this new song in a minor key. She then asked each group to devise a rhythmic movement to accompany their singing of the song. These were incorporated, along with the varying levels of volume, to create a muscular and complex rendition of the song in a matter of minutes.

- 2 April 2001: Full Company with CvK

CvK brought in a song called *O, No John*, a song collected by Thomas D'Urfey in *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, a collection of folk and bawdy popular songs of this time. It is the kind of song that could well have sung by Kemp or Tarlton after an afternoon's performance, possibly the basis for a jig or other interlude.

CvK encouraged the cast to sing through the song in 3 groups (one group consisted of just the women) as a bawdy drinking song, with gusto and not a little obscenity. The women sang “O, NO John!” as a protest, and the fifth verse. The result was extremely amusing, and quite filthy.

Next, CvK very quickly taught the company a three-part round, *Gaudeamus Hodie*. Then she encouraged the different groups to approach the singing as a robust, almost aggressive act – to sing “at” each other. The effect was rousing.

CvK’s next showed the group how to perform a very simple “hey” which involved offering and then taking first right and then left hands, as you travel around the circle. One half of the circle travels clockwise, the other anti-clockwise. This done, CvK to do the same thing, but singing *Gaudeamus* at the same time. This was tricky because people met and shook hands with people singing very different harmonies.

These exercises developed the last ones in terms of strong ensemble singing.

• 9 April, 2001

Up to this point CvK had been developing the beginnings of a “storm chorus” in sound with the company members. In addition to this, preliminary explorations with movement had begun with RMc and BA. BK asked CvK to run through the work as it stood at this point. Then, he explained, the full company would engage with some group work to show the storm in terms of physicality and movement.

CvK noted that there would be oil drums out on the piazza to help suggest the sound of thunder. The group of actors began a kind of dirge, each beginning with a different pitch, with the phrase *gaudeamus hodie*.

Next, CvK and 4 actors ran through a quartet they had been working on, based on French, Ecclesiastical music. The piece had no vocalised lyrics, just an open ‘ah’ sound. BK was very interested in the sound relationship between the two pieces – it would be very interesting to use the Ecclesiastical music at the same time that Cornwall’s instruments of torture are being set out, for instance.

Next, BK asked CvK to take the full company through a sound improvisation to create a sound somewhere between a natural sound event (like the wind) and a human event (like a cry or moan).

To do this, CvK encouraged the actors to lie down on the floor so that the floor beneath them might serve as a natural resonator. She took the actors through vocalised breath exercises that began making low hums in the base of back, and finished with higher pitched sounds resonating in the head and cheekbones.

Next, CvK asked the actors to let silence descend upon them as they began to store energy of breath and sound – when they felt themselves tapped on the shoulder she wanted them to release the sound inside them and send it piercing out into space. PB chanted some of Edgar’s lines (‘Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind’) as the rest of the company released piercing and disturbing wails.

BK asked RMc and BA to revisit the physical work they had explored – how might we use the percussive effect of feet on wood to compliment the vocal work that CvK had demonstrated, wondered BK? Working with stamping the feet and clapping, CvK and the actors quickly devised an elementary march, upon which they layered sycopated clapping, to give a fairly complex-sounding percussive sound that felt like a wardance.

BK asked PK, TC and FD to each decide upon a movement or gesture with which they could show respect and honour to their father. Around the room, the company regenerated the clapping, stamping ritual. PK pulled herself, prostrate along the floor towards JG, until he walked into the centre of the space to lift her up to her feet. FD walked on her knees with her arms outstretched, palms upwards, until JG picked her up again. TC walked simply to the

centre of the room, touched her heart, and then placed her forehead to the floor and lay prostrate. JG picked her up to her feet and kissed her.

All described the ritual they had created as powerful, extreme, exciting and frightening. BK was interested to hear what it would sound like if the percussive element became fused with *gaueamus* dirge, the folk elements CvK had over-sung, plus PB's "hawthorn" text.

The dirge began first, then the percussive stamping began to gather momentum. The third element was CvK's melody, and PB's text completed the quartet. PB moved around the room varying his delivery and pitch in response to the other elements.

- 12 April, 2001: First rehearsal on stage

CvK rehearsed on stage with the full company and 3 musicians. After a run through of the *Gaueamus* round with Mike Gregory on drum and Tom Lees on sackbutt, CvK asked the actors to experiment with the idea of the round as procession. The company carried sticks with which to sound our percussive beats on the stage floor. Some beat in time with the drum, some beat syncopated rhythms.

The round was taken a step further with an exercise that involved a person standing within the circle of singers, holding a stick that became the "conductor" in a manner of speaking. When the stick was held in the centre, the song had to be sung *ensemble*: when the centre stick-keeper handed the stick to (say) a person in the first group, all of (and only) that group should sing, said CvK. This was a challenge for the groups not singing, as the round was continuous – i.e. those not singing had to keep in time and pitch in their heads.

BK noticed that there were a number of pigeons inside the theatre. As an extension of the organic and natural elements – the open sky, the foliage trimming the wooden beams – BK was interested in marking the move into the natural world (away from the Court) with a sound event. He suggested that each actor experiment with different bird calls. As PB walked out through the central opening to begin his first soliloquy, the faint bird calls rang around the auditorium, and Helen Neeves sang an old English folk tune from the attic, creating a delicate strain carried through the air. It was a delicate and moving effect.

- 26 April, 2001: Rehearsal on Stage, Full Company with Musicians

1. 'No, I'll not weep'(Sc.7)– this cue was produced by drum, cymbal and other percussion from the musicians' rooms. CvK asked for the oil drum to be taken out of the cue and for the other percussion to be taken down to about half its original volume to allow the exchange between Goneril, Regan, Gloucester and Cornwall to be heard.
2. Discordant voices – these began as soon as the thunder/lightning clap at the end of Sc. 7. CvK asked the discordant voices in the tiring house to be taken down several levels, so that each singer was simply intoning at regular breath level. The voices were to underscore rather than dominate the storm percussive effects from the musicians' rooms. The combined effect was very full, but BA and RMc were able to make themselves heard. The double layers of wood now forming the *frons scenae* with its added façade presented a challenge for those inside the tiring house listening for verbal cues.
3. 'Blow winds and crack your cheeks' – this cue - featuring percussion from the musicians' rooms, brass from the attic and discordant voices in both places - was heralded by the chiming of the bell as JG entered. A similar bell sounded as Kent entered through the yard. CvK adjusted some of the levels so that the sequence before JG began to speak was played at a much higher level, before dropping down to a much lower level to underscore his text. BK wanted the vocal element of the storm chorus to be raised a little – this would not interfere with the lines from on stage, BK thought. The cue was tried again with an increased vocal level.

4. 'I am a man more sinn'd against than sinning' – the surge or *crescendo* needed to be sudden and powerful, but CvK wanted the levels to drop greatly for the *decrecendo* so that JG could speak 'my wits begin to turn' at a normal speaking volume, rather than projecting it greatly. BK thought this moment could actually be completely silent. The solo vocal (or 'Cordelia voice') was quite prominent at the scene's close, and BK liked how this seemed to reflect the grace and generosity that Lear shows towards the Fool at the scene's close.
5. From Scene 10 into Scene 11, 'The younger rises when the old doth fall' the wailing voices in the tiring house underscored the music and the spoken text on the stage. CvK wasn't happy with the vocal element, and BK asked the actors to modify their vocal sounds to sound more like voices in mid-fall, rather than screams of pain. The cue was run again. This time the wailing voices were at a much lower level, and it was possible to discern the 'Cordelia voice' in the distance as a faint overlay. Again, BK thought it would be interesting to drop the level to almost zero for 'That way madness lies'. He gave the cue for the *decrecendo* as 'No, I will weep no more'. The cue was run again.

## VERSE

- 28 March 2001

BK asked the company to say a few words each about their practice, or their experience, or their relationship to verse and verse speaking.

One apprehensive actor confessed that this was his first experience with Shakespeare's verse. Another said that having encountered many different ways of approaching the verse, he was beginning to conclude that the reality of the moment surpassed any of the "rules" he might once have been satisfied to follow. It was translating these rules into action which counts.

Another actor likened verse to a dentist: if you have a good experience with a good dentist as a young child, you never learn to be scared of it. Another confessed to still feeling an occasional wave of resentment – she had grown up thinking it was the stuff of posh, English people, designed to make her feel stupid – her fear was decreasing as she got older, but it was still there every time she read a Shakespeare play for the first time.

The idea of there being "rules" about how to speak Shakespeare is off-putting; to make the leap into thinking that there are "clues" in the writing to help you, is much more beneficial.

Complete characters can be found in less than six lines, commented one actor: he thought that this might be because an actor wrote the plays. Another actor remembered experimenting with cuescripts.

Andrew Wade and Cicely Berry's work at the RSC was applauded by one actor, in making the connection between voice and verse. He said he wanted to be able to release the techniques he had learned, and be freer, letting his sense of the character, not construction of the line, guide him.

GB said that he learned a lot from Sir Peter Hall, but he noticed it didn't help every actor. Shakespeare became taken over by the academics, and continues to be enjoyed by many purely by reading. Verse, in fact, is nothing more than the most wonderful *speech*.

Another actor said that he had never received any formal instruction about verse, apart from being told "never to stress personal pronouns". He later went to the RSC and had a revelation when he realised that there were rules that you could feel free to use or not to use.

One actor revealed his trick: to lay a template of a dice over each line, which guided him and helped him deal with the pentameter. Everyone promptly tested this technique out and found it very helpful!

One actor who had been in only one Shakespeare play said she loved words and sounds, and enjoyed reading it on her own, but wanted to know more about how the language works. She felt glad she had not been “contaminated” with any particular method, and wanted to be able to learn but also depart from what she had learned.

One actor hoped that this rehearsal period would help him to pull the rug from under his own feet, instead of continuing to look for security in verse-speaking.

BK related the experience of hearing 12-bar blues bands in Los Angeles: the essence of their work is in the variations on the form – this is the story of Shakespeare and iambic pentameter – characters are contained in the variations from the norm. He wanted the Company to think not of *rules* but of *opportunities*.

BK rounded up the session by saying that the actor is usually trying to strike a balance between playing a motive, and communicating to the audience. The relationship between the actors is what will keep the reason or need as a vital part of the communication. Driving to the end of the verse line is necessary because you are driving towards affecting and changing the characters or world around you. Heightened language and poetry can sometimes hinder the actor, unless they have a personal intimate connection to the poetry – it should mean something to you, and it will be richer if it does.

- 29 March 2001: Verse session with Full Company and Giles Block.

GB started by describing what he thought was probably a common phenomenon – reading Shakespeare to oneself is sometimes a more rewarding experience than hearing it in the theatre. Actors often feel that the verse conflicts with the feelings and emotions they want to express.

GB maintained that there is in fact *no* conflict between the sound and the meaning of Shakespeare’s language – Pope “the sound must provide an echo to the sense” – both elements have to be fused together. If we use the verse well, we actually get closer to the way in which we *do* speak today. GB stressed the *naturalness* of what we call verse – it is actually *speech*.

GB resists talking about “heightened language” – he sees it instead as “heightened experience” in the plays, and the language has to match it.

GB wanted to look at *speech*, and compare that to *verse*. The lines have 10 or 11 syllables because that is the amount that we can comfortably say on one breath. A line corresponds to a breath – this happens naturally, because when we have a thought, we naturally intake breath to express the thought. So, roughly speaking, a line corresponds not just to a breath, but to a thought.

The English language naturally falls in iambics. We speak in iambics all the time. So there are lots of correspondences between speech and what we call verse.

GB then distributed some leaflets that gave examples of Shakespeare’s verse and prose. He maintained that Shakespeare was a great listener to the way in which people actually talk – look first at a passage from *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), which describes some of the ways in



- Why then is Shakespeare thought of as antiquated? Prose conceals thoughts, whereas verse reveals them. Drama moved into prose as this concealment came into vogue, and it is with us today. In life we tend to hide or conceal our thoughts, rather than express them.

- Why verse? Why prose? GB asked the company to read II.1 of *Twelfth Night*. Antonio and Sebastian speak together in prose – perhaps with a degree of concealment – the rest of the play they speak in verse. Perhaps Sebastian doesn't want to talk about his drowned sister, and he leaves because his emotions are about to overwhelm him. Prose can indicate a barrier to freely expressed emotion.

In the Quarto of *King Lear* sections of verse (in the Folio) often appear written as prose. GB thought that this might be the way that Shakespeare wrote, and it is the rhythms he used which came to be regarded by later generations as verse.

- Most of the time you don't need to worry too much about the *mechanics* – metre, etc – if you can dig to find the image because you need it, and speak because you need to change something.

JG pointed out the importance of shared lines, and half-lines. They give us explicit character notes if we care to observe them.

## RESEARCH

- 27 March 2001

MG asked JB to look into the laws of primogeniture, as part of his research into the character of Edmund.

JB brought in an essay, "The Base Shall Top Th'Legitimate": The Bedlam Beggar and the Role of Edgar in *King Lear*, William C. Carroll *SQ* 38 1986 pp 426-441

JB brought in books of paintings by Bosch and Goya, plus a host of modernist, apocalyptic landscapes and sculptures, which were distributed around the reading tables, to spark the actors' imagination.

Books brought in for reference:

*Wheel of Fire*, G. Wilson Knight

*Shakespeare our Contemporary*, Jan Kott

*Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature*, J. Danby

The Darker World Within

*Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos*

*The Book of the Courtier*

*The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*

*Shakespeare and the Gods*

*Herball – Gerard*

*Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*, Ted Hughes (includes essay on Cordelia: 'love and be silent.'

- 28 March 2001

BK asked the actors to conduct specific individual research projects, to be supported by JB. Not all of these would be directly relevant to their own characters. He wanted actors to bring in poetry that they found relevant to the play or the process in general, as long as this was not by Shakespeare.

- 2 April 2001

The actors reported on their ongoing research:

- BA noted that he was looking into punishment associated with the stocks, and other forms of punishment administered by the community as a whole on individuals. He also noted that “rough music” was often meted out by groups within a community outside the house of the offender – he likened this to the residents of the Paulsgrove estate rampaging against paedophiles, in recent news headlines.

If residents wished to take their grievances above local level, a travelling legal authority known as the ‘ayre’ could be followed and consulted.

BA on banishment – this includes not just being exiled from the kingdom, but being exiled from the law. Kent becomes an easy target for random and arbitrary acts.

- MF noted that Cornwall takes control in Lear’s absence because the law at the time understood him to be Lear’s deputy. BK said it was interesting that research could support motive in this instance, although it would also be appropriate for others to read the situation very differently.

BK noted that historical tensions between local and federal or central law are most evident and most destructive at times of political change. (see USA)

- PHD reported on his research on household management, inventories etc.
- SH reported that he had been researching Anglo-Saxon knights, their mercenary qualities, the expectation of land that enticed knights to join William the Conqueror’s armies. He also noted Richard III’s “bastardy” plot against his own mother, to advance his own career.
- MG reported the laws of primogeniture meant that second *legitimate* sons could expect only the charity of their older brother, and so the expectations of illegitimate sons were non-existent. Second sons were routinely sent away, and wet nurses were employed to raise children as a matter of course – strong bonds with parents as we would think of them today were rare if non-existent. Deference to the patriarch stood in place of love and affection.

MG also noted that patriarchy extended not just to families, but to the universe and to the human body – the head is the ruler over the lower appetites, etc. BK thought this might be useful for PHD to think about – Oswald represents that sense of order that it being damaged by Lear’s knights.

- BK talked about the bastardy of Edmund producing a “damaged gene” – it is a NATURE thing. By contrast, Gonoril and Regan are damaged by NURTURE, being brought up without a mother. He was interested in the nature/nurture conflict that Shakespeare explores in this play.
- BK thought the company should physically explore the ways in which status and deference can be communicated to Lear – and what happens when this breaks down.

TC noted how moved she was when she first read that Cordelia kneels to Lear at the end of the play, and that in turn her father knelt lower. BK was very interested in exploring the kinds of authority that can be deferred to – not just what you are born with, but that moral authority in a person, regardless of rank, etc.

- RMcK was looking at spies.
- TC was looking at the spring-flowering plants mentioned in the plays, and rituals connected to the land and earth.
- AW was looking at knights and how kings behaved when in the courts of other kings.
- DC was looking at medicine.
- HG was looking at the significance of the gods.
- GW – blindness
- FD – weaponry
- MF – social hierarchy
- MMc – how the common man fits into the social hierarchy

#### GENERAL REHEARSAL NOTES

- 27 March 2001: Day 1 of Rehearsal

The morning session was devoted to a read through of the play. BK asked the Company to say a few words each about how they now felt about the play.

PK said that she was trying to decipher what kind of world the play inhabited – she said she would have a clearer idea of her character (as something other than generically “evil”) when she understood the scheme and currency of the world of the play.

JG pointed out the importance of voice – to “speak well” is to “be good” - people make many mistakes about identity but they set great store by the words that people speak.

BK pointed out a parallel between life under Lear and recent political events – he reminded everyone that there was a time when life was unimaginable without Stalin, or even Thatcher (in the 80s) – Regan’s half-line “Sir you are old” is a real grasping of the nettle – an attempt to imagine the unimaginable.

BK brought up another parallel, with Tito’s Yugoslavia – Tito held the country locked in ice for almost 50 years, and when he went, the country turned in on itself.

TC noted her amazement that the events of the play escalate so quickly. Gonoril’s objection to Lear’s raucous knights is reasonable, but so quickly it becomes something much more sinister.

BK said Lear's opening line "Know that we have divided in three our kingdom" would have horrified Elizabethans. The succession of Elizabeth I was a very recent, painful memory for them. A political accommodation is to be made with the traditional enemy (France or Burgundy) which is perhaps Lear's only politically astute move, given that he is doing something unthinkable.

JG pointed out a slight hazard of bringing well-prepared work to a read-through, because it makes it very difficult not to anticipate not only what is going to happen, but *how* it is going to happen. It was going to be a challenge to rediscover the spontaneity that the amazing events of the story demand. Goneril and Regan should not be cast as evil from the beginning, they should be monsters only to Lear, not to the rest of the audience.

PHD noted the domesticity of the play surprised him. BK described the play as a very strong ensemble piece that "bats down to number 10" – Victorian criticism of *KL* as a flawed play betrays their predisposition to "leading actor" plays. Servants maintain integrity when their social betters lose control and lose theirs. Characters are distilled or defined in two or three lines.

MF was interested in the idea of Cornwall as a basically decent man who is quite prepared to commit atrocities under a corrupt regime. He wanted to know how he fits in domestically – whether he feels justified in his actions, or is in effect following orders.

BK said that he thought Strindberg and Hardy had a lot to offer readings of *King Lear*. Strindberg because the play is actually so much about sex (Lear curses his daughter's womb). The absence of mothers, of femininity in the play, is ominous and threatening. Abuse of women is another disturbing undertone – by Lear (his daughters are, or feel abused) and by Gloucester – and this might explain why Goneril and Regan are motivated to such primitive cruelty.

Pillicock and Pillicock Hill are euphemisms for the male and female sexual organs. BK was interested in exploring the idea of sex and sexual healing – Edgar, when pretending to be mad, speaks about pillicocks etc.

Violence: BK said there would be blood in the production – those who live in a brutalised world often turn to violence when they have the chance, or instead brutalise themselves. Like people who cut themselves in today's society, to make sure they can still "feel".

Nothing – a constant motif

Sight and Blindness – what is the relationship between sight and insight? Only after Gloucester is blind does he see the truth

Animal – there are an astounding number of references to animals in the play. Edward Bond's play *Lear* points to the discovery of the animal in us as a crucial balance to our desire to imitate the gods. The terrifying message of drama since the Greeks is that "man must in sorrow learn" – only through suffering can man find wisdom.

• 5 April, 2001

BK said he was intrigued by the links between *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. At the top of the show he wanted the three actresses playing the daughters to come out and assess a circular "earth map" on the stage, before the first scene begins. Cordelia will light a candle at the same time. This would serve as an allusion to the three Witches in *Macbeth*.

## Full Company Work

- 2 April 2001

BK was keen to develop a strong and nurturing bond within the company, that would balance and complement the high level of violence and brutality within the piece. He began to lay the foundations of this with a few simple physical exercises and games that built upon a strong sense of mutual trust.

- The company lined up along one end of the hall; one cast member stood at the opposite end. The lone actor was asked to close their eyes and run at full speed towards the group at the opposite end, trusting that the group would stop them before they hit the wall.

It was clear that after a point, the natural instincts fight against running blind in this way, and it was difficult for some to force themselves forward at an even speed.

- The company stood in a circle, and one person closed their eyes and walked into the circle, trusting that they would be caught before they ran into a wall or tripped. The “catcher” gently rerouted the “blind” person.

Next, another person joined in, and the company had to be very alert to prevent collisions between the two “blind” people. One actor remarked that he felt especially vulnerable, but also relieved of responsibility.

BK stressed at all times the importance of the other senses, urging the actors to use their hearing and sense of smell to guide and protect them as they moved around the room.

- Moving very slowly, each member of the company moved around the room with their eyes closed, gently colliding with each other. Once they had identified each other (without opening their eyes) they could move on.

The actors admitted that the urge to speak – as a means of identifying someone – was very strong indeed.

BK thought that when the sense is impaired, the ensuing vulnerability reduces us to more tentative, more animalistic behaviour. He also noted that there seems to be no place for such vulnerability in Lear’s world.

Intimacy and openness are not only found, but also given, taken, created and broken.

- The group sat in a circle and were asked to write on a piece of paper in front of them. BK asked them to write down the name of an animal that one of the other actors in the company reminded them of. They were told not to write down the actor’s name, but to give the paper to the actor who inspired it.
- Next, the company was asked to write down on another piece of paper an animal that is mentioned in the play. These were placed in the centre of the circle, and the actors retained the paper(s) they had been given by other actors. Then, they spoke out loud the names of the animals they had been given.

Next, the actors who had not been given an animal name picked one from the middle, and the actors who felt their allocated animal was inappropriate switched it for another in the middle. Everyone was to finish up with a single animal only.

Next, the company read out their retained animal – a mixture of chance and selectivity, or a combination of how others see you and how you wish to be seen. Human “civilisation” is removed from the play, and military leaders often have animal nicknames; BK wanted them to reflect on these animals and think how this notion might be of help in constructing their character – not in any obvious physical way:

Harry – giraffe  
Tonia – gazelle  
Michael F – scorpion  
Michael G – puma  
Murray – bear  
Roger – dog  
Paul – turtle  
Patricia – lionness  
David – rat (wanted to change this to magpie or fox)  
Andrew – fox  
Geoffrey – owl  
Peter – wolf  
Julian – bull, lion, bear  
John – snail  
Felicity – cat  
Simon - crow

BK said that this kind of improvisational work could give an edge to otherwise benign characters (like France, or several of the knights)

## **THE SCENES IN REHEARSAL**

### **Scene 1**

• 29 March 2001:

BK thought that the best way to think about the “kingdoms” of Albany and Cornwall was as states in pre- Garibaldi Italy.

The plural ‘kingdoms’ of Q1 (1.4) was changed for the single ‘kingdom’ of F1, as being less confusing.

Politically, James’s throne was shaky – the issue of government in a new era is paramount in the play as well as in Jacobean society.

JG noted it is his fury with Cordelia that causes Lear to divide the kingdom in haste and anger.

MG thought that authoritarian leaders of the stature and ego of Lear might not make proper arrangements for their successors – they wish to be seen as indispensable, and so leave themselves very vulnerable as they let power slip away.

Lear has been associated throughout his reign with strength of leadership. He wants to go out being told that he was also loved.

BK noted that this situation is unique and unprecedented. Lear is showing his vulnerability for the first time, and making the unheard of move of dividing a country. There is plenty of room for misunderstanding and misinterpreting by all onlookers, and this should enhance the scene: nobody could possibly predict what is going to happen.

BK wanted to leave the discussion of this scene by pondering on the use of the word “love”. Lear’s regime has been sustained by people pretending to show their love towards him because they fear the consequences if they don’t; they do not tell him the truth, for the same reason.

- 1 May 2001

BK talked about the difficulties presented by the love-contest in the scene. Why does it matter that Lear asks his daughters publicly to declare their love for him? Cordelia’s refusal to give Lear what he wants provokes a violent personal reaction which precipitates a constitutional crisis. He does everything but kill her. Lear’s hurt at her “betrayal” is like the jealous rage he might have felt for a wife.

BK thought Regan plays the scene in classic “younger daughter” mode – “flirting with daddy” to get what she wants. Lear responds favourably – he associates Regan with a softer, less austere style than Gonoril – but believes better is yet to come from Cordelia. (Perhaps before Cordelia was born, Regan was the favoured youngest daughter.)

BK noted that although the scene is politically potent, there is also a sacred element– Lear, invoking Apollo, assumes a divine role and exhibits divine fury. Kent is incensed that Lear speaks what he regards as heresy.

PK suspected she would have to simplify her response to Cordelia at the close of the scene. She had been trying to ensure that a degree of regret and sisterly concern could soften what is otherwise a definite rebuke. This had been extremely fruitful, but it was more important not to muddy the story.

The scene was put on its feet. Gonoril’s speech was halting, made from ‘breath poor and speech unable’. Regan’s had the quality of “a nine year old on Speech Day”, said BK. FD enjoyed scoring a point over her sister, and JG delighted in Gonoril’s obvious annoyance at Regan’s flirty performance. JG stood USC next to TC, obviously confident of a glowing testimonial from Cordelia.

BK asked JG to cross DS on ‘mend your speech a little’, to help the transition from Lear’s confident stance at Cordelia’s side, into the doubt and eventual rage of ‘thy truth then be thy dower’. BK asked JG to face DS (i.e. not to look at TC when asking ‘goes thy heart with this?’) before crossing DS of the map to circle back to USR of TC. He would then shove her SL on ‘thy truth then be thy DOWER!’

- 4 May 2001

BK worked with BA and JG on changes to the blocking. JG remained DS of BA for ‘Peace, Kent!’ so that BA could avoid upstaging himself for the bulk of the scene. JG proposed changes to his blocking for the love-contest itself. Instead of remaining in a generally USC position, near to the throne, JG wanted to try hearing Gonoril’s speech from a position beside FD (Regan) whence he could up the stakes for PK by listening to her through the more favoured Regan.

BK noted that the decorations above the *frons scenae* feature a panel depicting Apollo. JG thought it would be a good direction in which to indicate at ‘Now, by Apollo –’ and BA agreed.

BK wanted to develop an idea for a pre-show, perhaps with the Fool teaching Cordelia a song on his banjo, which would make sense in the light of the imminent betrothal and departure of Cordelia. BK asked TC and JMc to experiment, seated on the floor against the back wall,

USL. He also wanted FD and PK to settle on benches USC and USR respectively. TC would cross DS with the candle, and pause for a second to look at the map in the centre of the stage. Her sisters should also cross to CS to look at the map at the same time, just for a couple of seconds, after which time the entrance of Kent and Gloucester would break the “spell”.

## Scene 2

- 28 March 2001

After the scene had been read through, BK emphasised that Edmund belongs to the world of the people, of the yard, not of the court. BK thought it would be compelling if Edmund began the play in the yard, as though he were just another groundling. BK’s overriding sense was that Edmund’s energy is from the yard, and is sprung onto the stage, just as Edgar’s energy is insular at the beginning. (His journey is the reverse of Edmund’s.) Edmund’s entry into the world of the play changes it forever. He should be climbing all over theatre. He should come up through the yard to take over the great stage of kings, asking why he should be kept down. This would illuminate the idea of “baseness” MG agreed: Edmund has almost a political connection with the audience.

The gullibility of Gloucester was discussed: why is he so quick to swallow Edmund’s bait? Does it point to a weakness in the relationship between Edgar and Gloucester? TC thought it pointed to a vulnerability that accompanies love – the two old men need a love that is tender and nurturing, which makes them very vulnerable, since they have not laid the groundwork for it. BK noted that the old men have previously loved, or rather “harvested” women as and when it suited them, and now they need a different, more compassionate love.

There is no direct textual evidence about Edmund’s occupation, or his precise place in the society of the play.

- 3 April 2001

BK and MG worked on Edmund’s soliloquy, ‘Thou, nature, art my goddess’ – MG wanted to compare the F1 version to Q1, as the Folio’s additional “Fine word, legitimate” (l.18 in Q1) and the repetition of the ‘base’ theme in F1 helped him to find the drive of the character. BK said that he and JG were coming to the opinion that in between the publication of Q1 and F1, many things were added that came directly from ‘playing the text’ in rehearsal and performance. The additions of F1 could stem from flourishes or improvisations in front of an audience. BK reiterated that the actor should take from both texts what seemed most appropriate. F1’s additions were incorporated into the text (see ARDEN text for performance version).

MG asked BK why he thought Edmund switches from verse to prose when addressing the audience (the ‘excellent foppery’ speech at l.110 is in prose). BK said prose is a robust medium that suits Edmund, and there may be a stronger class connection between prose and verse than we have yet explored. He also thought Edmund represents the voice of a new generation. BK was persuaded of the merit of MG’s idea to reinsert the cut lines about ‘knaves, thieves...’ and to relate them to the audience. In a similar vein, “bastardy” (l.124) was changed to F1’s “bastardising”.

## Scene 3

- 28 March 2001

BK was interested in how Gonoril wants to “breed” :

‘ I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,  
That I may speak.’ (ll. 24-25)

BK stressed that this does not represent shrewishness, but a real need to reinvent herself in order to flourish, not wither under the abusive relationship with her father. Lear’s behaviour has deteriorated since we last saw him, we should imagine, and Gonoril must act if she is to avoid being swallowed whole by the riotous, anarchic king.

BK reminded everyone of the momentous task that Gonoril sets Oswald – to be the first person to show disrespect to the old regime: the fear that Lear inspires should never be underestimated. Oswald puts his life on the line, serving Gonoril, and Kent’s bravery is astonishing.

The relationship between Oswald and Gonoril was brought up. Albany has gone missing, argued BK, and it is Oswald who is there when it counts. He is upwardly-mobile, trusted, and is spoken to by both Gonoril and Regan in a respectful, intimate fashion. The possible comparisons between Oswald and Edmund intrigued BK, PHD and MG.

• 3 April 2001

BK asked PK and PHD to read through the scene, before giving him a few “headlines” about the relationship between their two characters.

PHD had been researching household inventories and management in Jacobean times, and thought he might be involved with some household task as Gonoril begins to speak to him, from which she needs to distract his attention.

The identity of the “gentleman” to whom Gonoril refers in the first line of the scene was unclear. BK thought a third party, PK, Oswald himself. She needed to create a strong bond with the wronged character, which would be easier if it were Oswald.

BK asked PK to approach the scene like a conversation in a railway station between two strangers , where one reveals much more, out of loneliness, than they had perhaps intended. Further, BK thought it would be interesting for Oswald to observe the conversation carefully as it becomes more intimate, a new situation for him.

PK was keen to reinstate two lines cut from this scene, ‘And let his knights...fellows so.’ (22-23). She repeats her instructions almost to the letter, because this is a momentous decision for her. BK agreed.

BK noted how important it is that Oswald listens in such a way that Gonoril is encouraged to continue speaking frankly. Oswald becomes indispensable to Gonoril over the course of the play, but BK wanted to resist making decisions that (for instance) implied a close, even sexual relationship already existing. BK wanted to develop the sense of professionalism and discretion that Oswald shows here, as a means of laying the groundwork for the “John Brown” relationship.

The marriage between Gonoril and Albany is not a happy one, it was agreed, and Gonoril is lonely. BK thought it significant that she is prepared to step across class and gender restrictions to confide in Oswald.

PK felt quite strongly that Gonoril is not physically intimate with anyone, and her relationship with Oswald is as intimate as she gets. BK thought it very likely, and was intrigued by the idea of the play's "secret" being that Gonoril dies a virgin. She is deluded about Edmund's suitability as a mate, and tends to fantasise about him rather than actively pursuing him.

- 1 May, 2001

The scene had developed in a direction that showed Gonoril in a more decisive mood, clearer about her decision to challenge her father, almost exhilarated about the prospect of success.

BK wanted PK to reintroduce a note of the old fear of her father. As she turned DS in the direction of the approaching knights, it was possible to see real fear in her eyes, as (momentarily) her courage left her. PK's line, 'The fault of it I'll answer' would be followed by a cheer from the knights (on the piazza), making sense of the line 'I hear him coming'.

#### Scene 4

- 28 March 2001

BA experimented with a rural dialect as the disguised Kent. JMc experimented with a Lancastrian accent as the Fool.

Oswald and Albany are on the stage at the same time, at the end of this scene; it is interesting that Gonoril speaks to Oswald first. BK thought it a momentous scene for Gonoril, as she tentatively finds her own feet, and the beginnings of her leadership potential.

BK noted that there is a possibility of peace in this scene, but what we get is a declaration of war. Gonoril tries to appeal to Lear's better nature, but Lear is finding it far too difficult to cope with the shift in the balance of power. He is too ingrained in the practice of wielding power – the Fool is whipped for pointing out that he can wield it no longer.

- 3 April 2001

BK used a reading of this scene to amplify the relationship between Lear and the Fool. BK described Lear as being "in denial", as the Fool relentlessly attempts to force him to acknowledge his actions and their consequences.

BK reminded the group that the number of crowns on stage at the beginning of the play is one (Lear's); the number of crownets is three (Albany's, Cornwall's and a third for the husband of Cordelia). The intention is that a tripartite republic with Cordelia getting the central swathe of England should be created, with Lear as symbolic titular head. The refusal of Cordelia to play the game means that Lear invites Albany and Cornwall to part the third crownet between them – a practical impossibility. This will be emphasised in the staging. The Fool's line about the "two crowns" (of the egg) should be stressed, to make that crucial connection.

BK reminded the actors that there needs to be a degree of self-preservation at the back of the Fool's mind, the situation being so patently unsteady.

The Folio's allocation of the 'Lear's shadow' line to the Fool was adopted, in place of the Q1 version, which allocates this to Lear, and makes the phrase a question.

JB was asked to trace the origins of *Little Bo Peep* – she found a reference that dated it at least as early as 1364.

- 5 April 2001

BK drew the actors' attention to the Fool's remark about Lear volunteering to make his daughters his mothers; Lear did, after all, seek a kind of second childhood in giving up the responsibilities of the throne. The Fool is an expert in pointing out cause and effect, and he influences Lear into seeing his daughters as harsh schoolmistresses – perhaps that is why Lear rails at Gonoril almost as soon as she enters and sees her relatively mild rebuke as chiding. It shows that Lear is actually open to what the Fool says.

The family psychology was discussed; BK thought the pauses between Gonoril's speeches could be employed to show the history of her relationship with her father. When she does get the opportunity to speak, perhaps she doesn't speak the words she had planned.

BK thought 'Now I grow fearful' betrays Gonoril's real nervousness in the moment that she finally says what she has been dying to say to her father for a long time.

BK asked JG about his silence before the line, "Are you our daughter?" – the gap is filled with the Fool's song about the cuckoo. BK thought it was fascinating that Lear so often comes out of a long silence with a question about his identity. He thought the silences in this scene are supremely menacing and can be used to amplify Gonoril's fear and Lear's gradual slipping into a void. As long as Lear is able to fight his ways to words, he feels he will stay sane, said BK. The Fool's songs slice through these menacing silences.

BK noted that Cordelia will light a candle in the pre-show. The Fool will blow out the candle at "and we were left darkling" – to strengthen the link between the Fool and Cordelia.

BK noted that there would be a small circular mirror on the stage at this point (the one that Gonoril uses in the scene with Oswald as she prepares for her "showdown" with her father). He thought it might be of use to JG for the "who am I?" rather antic section. Also, it might be broken in this scene, so that only the ring remained. BK was interested in seeing if this could then become a kind of halter for the Fool.

BK drew the actors' attention to the way in which Gonoril's language gathers heat and momentum very quickly, once Lear explodes.

- 11 April 2001

Two rehearsal tables were set in a T-formation between the rehearsal pillars. Long benches were placed along the tables, with a chair representing a throne for Lear at the short end, SL.

BK asked the actors to run through the scene on their feet; BK sat at one of the tables so that the actors would resist using the exercise to block their movements formally.

After one run – through, BK commented on how striking Lear's silence is; though he is silent on stage for a large part of this scene he still casts a large shadow.

BK said he hoped the rehearsal session could be used to address the practical issue of working with 4 actors to suggest 100 knights. The knights' entrance at the top of the scene would happen through the yard, their clothing suggesting they are returning from hunting. There should be an "excess of maleness", said BK – paramilitary clothing, games of football in the yard, urinating against one of the pillars, etc.

- 20 April, 2001

The knights' entrance needed some tinkering with – CvK asked them to enter singing snatches of songs. The striking and tripping of Oswald had been worked during the previous day's fight call, and went smoothly. Oswald was to exit DSR being passed over the heads of the knights and (it was hoped) several obliging groundlings.

JMc belted out 'Have more than thou owest', banging his fist emphatically on the table. It was all the more amusing because it was dismissed as "nothing" by Lear. JMc also played his 4-string banjo, and gave an excellent George Formby-style rendition of each of the Fool's songs.

JG attacked PK on 'Hark, nature, hear...' (265) by climbing onto the end of the table at which she sat and closing her in with his feet on her chair so that he perched above her, practically spitting in her face as he cursed her with sterility. He grabbed her face for 'sharper than a serpent's tooth...' so aggressively, that Albany's failure to intervene seemed truly reprehensible.

- 1 May, 2001

Lear and his knights could be heard singing in the distance (the piazza?) as Kent spoke the opening speech from the SR pillar. The initial burst of song dropped to a low level for the underscoring,

MMc's line 'Since my young lady's going into France...' could have come from anyone in the court, thought BK: the line expresses what all Lear's knights know, though none of the others feel brave enough to address the Cordelia issue so bluntly. BK wanted JG to respond much more quickly – to snap bluntly out of 'no more of that. I have noted it.'

BK noted that there should be a tangible expectation among the knights that the Fool's arrival should lead to an evening full of entertainment. The Fool becomes a bitter fool relatively quickly, and it would be effective if he thwarts a strong, enthusiastic expectation.

The outspoken Fool is written into the very fabric of the text, and this causes challenges in the staging. The Fool pushes his luck so many times in the scene it seems almost unbelievable that Lear would not punish him without a second thought. In our production Lear would attempt to strike the Fool immediately before 'Whoop! Jug I love thee'. JG also gave his whip to HG as if to say "Get your wife sorted out".

- 4 May, 2001

BK talked to the Knights about the necessity of not anticipating the decline of Lear. There is no reason for the Knights to suspect that the situation is going to get as bad as it does. BK also wanted to experiment with freer movements for everyone.

The Knights celebrated the Fool's arrival with more gusto, and improvised a hearty jig to one of the Fool's songs, joining in the chorus for the second. DC moved around the table to the US side rather than sitting on the bench on the DS side.

The scene was much more fluid, full of variation and detail. BK noted that the Knights could really relish the notion of a conflict with Gonoril's household. JG stayed away from the table for the bulk of the scene, which freed up his options terrifically. Making more noise in the yard would also be helpful, said BK. He thought it would be worth exploring the camaraderie between the Knights and Lear, developing those moments that show Lear "not being *King* Lear all the time". JG thought that the groundlings would supply some useful energy here, which should be tapped into.

BK liked all of the choices that the actors made during the run. He pointed to a few elements that he felt were particularly strong (see above) but stressed that in general he wanted the actors to remain free, able to create and enjoy playing off each other. Letting the serious import of the scene emerge gradually is a challenge.

BK encouraged all of the actors to explore the full range of the playing space; in the rehearsal room the extreme DS corners ran into the walls, giving a false impression of confinement – the corners, said BK, were perhaps the best areas of all, and should be used.

### Scene 5

- 28 March 2001

BK noted that in this scene, Lear isn't used to waiting for anything, yet we find him hanging around with the Fool, waiting for horses to head for Regan. Lear cannot pull back from what it is obvious to all is a catastrophic situation which he has been instrumental in creating.

The Fool has a strong need to show Lear (like a mirror) what he has done, but is not able to address this directly, perhaps because he'd suffer the consequences.

A line was changed for clarity – Lear asks Kent to take the letter to “Regan”, not “Gloucester”. (It is a coincidence that Lear meets Regan and Cornwall at Gloucester's house.)

- 3 April 2001

BK referred again to the notion of this as the “what now?” scene. Lear has stormed out of Gonoril's house, and there are no horses ready to whisk him away to Regan's. The scene has a definite *Godot* quality to it.

JG was much amused by the line ‘If a man's brains were in his heels, were't not in danger of kibes?’ (1.6). He thought it might actually be impossible to make this joke clear. BK reassured him that the explanation could be provided by “bad foot acting”.

JG also brought up the idea of the chair (carried by one of Lear's knights in an early scene) being thrown out of the tiring house onto the stage, seconds after the doors have been shut against Lear. This idea caused much amusement, and BK thought it would tell the audience exactly how Gonoril feels about Lear.

BK was interested in exploring the notion of the Fool smoking a joint in this scene, which Lear might also draw on from time to time. This idea released some wonderful comic business and a thoroughly apt sense of passing the time in avoidance of the depressing reality ahead of them. Odd links such as the Fool's line about the seven stars being only seven seemed suddenly to have a kind of logic. BK said he thought the Fool's overriding fear is that one day he too will lose his mind.

JG asked if a phrase from F1 could be combined with 1.41, so that the line reads, ‘O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!’ rather than Q1's ‘O, let me not be mad, sweet heaven!’ JG felt this better expressed Lear's fears. BK thought that the repetition of the phrase in F1 also hinted at the frailty of Lear's mind, and his vulnerability at the end of this scene.

- 11 April 2001

BK described a kind of climactic energy to this scene. Lear is incredibly impatient to be saddled and off, after the argument with Goneril. He should yell towards the tiring house for the horses to be made ready.

The actors read through the scene, and then put it on its feet. JMc carried a stool on his back, to represent the snail-shell - like backpack that he will carry. During his exchange with JG, he sat on his stool and began to eat something (a crab apple, he said). BK noted that at the end of the scene, it is possible that all of the knights will be standing in the central opening to the tiring house, with backpacks, ready for the journey.

BK thought that it might be very interesting if the knights entered quietly through the open centre, so that they could overhear Lear quietly pleading 'Let me not be mad'. He would only become aware of them later – when he is told the horses are at last ready.

The actors ran the scene a second time, with JG pacing the perimeter of the stage like a caged tiger. JG wanted to be US of JMc so that he could halt briefly and look at him for the line 'as a crab doth to a crab'. BK thought this was even more powerful if the Fool continued to look straight ahead, though aware of the king looking through the back of his head.

BK reminded JG that this is almost certainly the first time that Lear has ever admitted to making a mistake to anyone. It is a monumental moment for Lear, and perhaps he makes it slightly easier on himself by avoiding direct eye contact with the Fool. The scene was not about connection so much as cognition.

BK said that the Fool can really wound Lear if he sends out his criticisms "to the Globe": it was very effective to see Lear (physically) register being broken, and when JG paused to sit USR, looking out, the audience should see his realisation dawn as keenly as the Fool senses it.

BK worked in some detail with the flight patterns of JG, trying to get a sense of the ground he needed to cover. It was clear that BK was working from very strong pictures in his mind. Some of these could not be incorporated at this early stage, but BK was interested in a kind of symmetry in body and gestures between the Fool and Lear – the recollection of the wrong done to Cordelia can unite them in a very real sense.

BK suggested JMc should experiment with punctuating his gags with the crunch of his crab apple.

- 20 April 2001

JMc had a custom-made wooden frame that resembled two folding chairs, the one atop the other. He dragged it across the stage rather than wearing it on his back.

- 1 May 2001

BK noted that the scene marks a watershed in Lear's development. After the Fool tells him 'Thou shouldst not have been old before thou hadst been wise' Lear can no longer pretend to be ignorant of his mistake. From this point on, said BK, he works hard to "turn on the King Lear machine" to prevent himself from losing control altogether. Lear has to *really hear* the line, said BK.

## Scene 6

- 28 March 2001

BK noted that Cornwall calls Gloucester, “Our good old friend” (1.125) – how extraordinary that in such a short time he and Regan will feel absolutely justified in torturing him. Events are moving at an astonishing speed. The sense of paranoia that pervades the whole world cannot be overstated.

BK thought it might be a good idea to establish Curan as part of the Gloucester’s household in Scene 2.

BK noted that the rumours of a brewing conflict between Cornwall and Albany – a civil war – points to a power vacuum and a potentially unstable political state.

Oswald gets to Gloucester’s house at almost the same time as Regan and Cornwall, and receives a better audience. They are there having decided to leave home to avoid Lear (alerted by Gonoril’s letter.)

- 5 April 2001

BK noted that the scene takes place at night, and it is also the first time we see a machete on stage. Edgar would not “descend” from above, and so the word was cut from Edmund’s line. Torches would be used to help to signify the night-time darkness – one for MMc and one for RMc as Curan.

BK explained that the scene should run quite quickly, and he hoped that the cuts made would not diminish it *too* greatly.

BK thought that Curan should linger in the doorway (1.35) as Gloucester enters, to observe events. BK thought that if Curan (RMc) re-entered with Cornwall and Regan, it might be clearer that Cornwall has had advance notice of the trouble in Gloucester’s family. The word “intelligence” is used in the scene by Edmund, and BK thought that we could underline Curan’s role as an information carrier or spy if Edmund used the word in direct reference to him. Curan could reappear with likenesses of Edgar shortly before Edmund warns his brother of the “intelligence” operation against him.

MF wanted to know why Cornwall and Regan go to Gloucester’s house in the first place. BK told him it was to build a political alliance. BK also suggested that Regan finds it a logical leap that Edgar (as Lear’s godson) should be involved in a plot to kill his own father: he has been hanging out with the wrong kind of company. She feels she has uncovered a conspiracy.

MG thought there might be value in reinforcing the link between Edmund and Regan – it is he that confirms her suspicions about Edgar’s link with the riotous knights – MG wondered if Regan might be the only one to pay attention to the fact that he is wounded. This would give extra force to ‘However else.’ Edmund could say this to Regan, instead of Cornwall. BK thought this was a very interesting idea, and liked the idea of exploring Regan’s “Florence Nightingale” act. He saw Regan as a role-player in many different situations, according to her mood and what she thinks will suit her purposes.

BK thought that Edmund could have a “jackpot moment” after Curan leaves, “The better – the best!” – and that this offered a chance for him to behave very differently with the audience.

Edgar’s exit could be long or short, depending on whether it was valuable for Edgar to see Edmund cut himself, out of the corner of his eye. Since the next time we see Edgar, PB wanted to be cutting himself with a nail, this might be a useful possibility, thought BK.

MG proposed cutting from ‘...dost thou think...’ (67) to ‘I’d turn it all’ (72). The speech was overly long, he felt, since the audience already knew of the set-up against Edgar. BK agreed.

• 11 April 2001

The actors read through the scene on their feet. BK explained that the stage would be empty, and that the doors would open into the Gloucester household. BK reminded the actors that a lot of the scene depends on the giving and receiving of brand-new information, some of which is highly classified. BK explained that Edmund should enter from USL, as JMc would be exiting through the central opening at the end of the last scene. BK thought that if MG made a long entrance to DSC holding his machete it would be possible to pick up on the Fool’s threatening exit.

BK noted that we can tell that Edmund’s status has changed slightly since the beginning of the play by the fact that Curan asks him about sensitive matters concerning prominent members of society.

BK wanted the exchange between the two brothers to take place along the length of the back wall. At this point he was interested in beginning to shape the scene. GB noted that there is no indication in the Quarto that Edmund knows where Edgar is; in the Folio there are concrete references to lodgings that could provide a safe haven for the fugitive.

BK wanted MG to explore the sense of a "private theatre" that Edmund is creating in painting the picture of the imminent danger to Edgar. MG needed to be "in a totally different, action movie", from the unwitting PB. Accordingly, MG ducked down in front of the SR pillar, commando style, urging PB to do likewise. In a nice touch, PB "drew" a nail when urged to seem to defend himself. This would be one of the nails with which he would wound himself later.

MG decided to mime daubing his face with dirt, as part of his commando persona. BK thought this would be an excellent thing to do to PB, as this could begin the process of his transformation – his notion of Poor Tom might stem from this daubing. In addition, the two men exchanged play-acting warlike cries – this could provide a kind of keynote for the voice of Tom that will emerge in full very soon.

The Cornwalls are an image-consciousness couple trying to fill a power vacuum they perceive above them. Cornwall’s language is full of presumptions – including the royal "we" – and their polite insensitivity was fully exploited in the scenework here. MF and FD turned to toast MG, the only man in the room without a drink, who is also bleeding profusely, before turning their backs on him and addressing their own issues with his father. FD exited after giving GW a kiss – in itself nothing too suggestive, but enough to breed a few interesting ambiguous responses from the adulterous father and illegitimate son.

BK said that the scene struck him as a hybrid – a Kafka-esque peep at a world of espionage as well as a look at the manners of the aristocracy. A lot is at stake in this scene- it reminded BK of *Macbeth* in many ways. Gloucester has to juggle his own shock at Edgar’s apparent betrayal with his duties as an impromptu host, as well as take in the level of presumption that Cornwall and his wife are displaying.

BK noted that there is a particular value in seeking refuge with Gloucester: he is part of the old regime, and it is highly politic for the Cornwalls to seek his help when shunning Lear, rather than simply quitting their home and going off on vacation.

• 20 April 2001

PB struck the pillar several times and let out blood-curdling cries when urged to 'seem to defend' himself by MG. The notion of brothers playing at war was taken to full and comic effect. PB wafted MG's machete around wildly, before giving it up as he exited, in exchange for a nail.

FD did not tend Edmund's self-inflicted wound this time, but instead lingered over his shoulder. The kiss for Gloucester had also been dropped, and on the whole Regan came across as more aloof.

- 1 May 2001

BK wanted to change MG's entrance. JMc would be exiting through the same door as was originally used by MG. MG would enter through the central doors and shut them behind him, it was decided. He should also enter with more purpose, rather than just sauntering on.

Curan (RMc) lingered as he exited, giving MG a reason to tell PB to beware that 'my father watches'.

BK noted that there seemed to be a greater sense of *pathos* in the scene than had been explored lately. He didn't want the enjoyment of potential comic interplay between (for instance) Edmund and Edgar to become the focus of the scene – that would be a self-conscious comment on our own work. Everyone agreed.

BK worked with the actors on the moment when Gloucester "learns" of the alleged comradeship between Edgar and the riotous knights. Following up on the note above, BK thought that it would be appropriate for GW to become lost for a second in a reflection on his apparent failure as a father. Edmund tells him information that he doesn't already know, and this darkens the already bleak mood. It was disappointment ('too bad, too bad') that BK wanted GW to explore, rather than anger.

GW offered his tray for FD's empty cup on 'I serve you madam' – this was a better solution in that it tidied up the close of the scene, and allowed for the business of Cornwall handing his own cup to Edmund. BK then worked on the exits – Cornwall and Regan linking arms in a dramatic "First Couple" fashion, leading the way off, followed by Gloucester (lost in his own world, carrying the drinks tray) and Edmund. All exited through the central doors.

The scene was run through in full. The exchange between Edgar and Edmund had developed considerably. Edmund used a commando roll to cross from the SR pillar to the pillar SL; this move Edgar copied, somewhat clumsily. MG crossed to USC to supply the "sound effects" for the supposed fight between the brothers, as a bemused Edgar struck the SL pillar with Edmund's machete, frantically looking around for his next "cue".

BK wanted the embrace between the brothers to happen so that MG faced DS and PB faced US. BK wanted to ensure that the bulk of the audience saw a moment of remorse flash across Edmund's face as his brother kissed him – what BK referred to as Edmund's first 'Judas kiss'.

BK thought 'I hear my father coming' might be a nice foreshadowing of the Dover scene with Edgar and Gloucester – 'do you hear the sea?' BK noted that this is often how later moments develop – as memories of events earlier.

## Scene 7

- 28 March 2001

BK decided to divide the scene into 4 parts:

7a – from top of scene

7b – at l.166 before Edgar’s soliloquy

7c – at l.187 as Lear and Fool enter

7d – at l.287 as Cornwall and Regan enter

### Scene 7a

BK reminded the Company that messengers represented the aristocracy in the same way that diplomats represent countries today: to harm Kent is to harm Lear.

Cornwall is not just stepping in as an impartial dealer in justice – in insulting the king’s messenger he is advancing his own cause. BK wanted to keep a sense of balance in the scene, so that the audience can see why Oswald finds Kent intolerable, and *vice versa*. BK likened this conflict to a fight between a cat and a dog – Oswald refuses to stoop to the level of thuggery that Lear and Kent routinely employ to solve problems.

The scene is full of rumour, and the political situation is unclear – this is a turning point in the play, and Cornwall’s opportunism plays a key role in starting to redefine the political landscape. Perhaps he simply sees Kent as one of Lear’s marauding knights, worthy of being taken down a peg or two.

JG suggested that we can really emphasise with the thuggery and loutishness of Lear’s regime, as this will lend more righteousness to the Cornwall/Oswald faction – regardless, audience sympathies will be with Kent, and possibly with Lear.

• 4 April 2001

BK thought it was worth reiterating the degree to which Gloucester is associated with Lear: the civic disorder caused by Kent outside his gates would cause him embarrassment.

Another point BK wanted to bring up was the issue of “plain speaking”. Shakespeare writes exquisite poetry as well as insinuating that elaborate speech is not to be trusted. That said, Cornwall is equally mistrustful of what he sees as Kent’s affected roughness of speech.

BK noted that there are Globe theatre references in the implied simultaneous entrance of Kent and Oswald, and the opposition set up will help the scene run as a clash of social opposites, with each man having a good half of the audience behind them. Oswald also appears to be constantly on the move. (He is told repeatedly to “stand” by Kent).

A discussion developed concerning the weaponry. BK was keen to allow for a discrepancy in the weapons carried by each man, to reinforce the difference between the generations. The text might imply that both men are visibly armed with swords, but BK thought it was worth keeping the question open. Perhaps Oswald’s weapon is hidden? The more obvious the weapon, the more his reluctance to fight has to be positive choice.

MG was keen for Edmund to be actively involved in the *melee* as a means of proving himself to his new employer Cornwall. The stage directions indicate that Edmund enters ‘*with his rapier drawn*’ and MG thought it would help justify Cornwall’s explosive entrance if Edmund is attacking Kent as he enters.

For Oswald, this is a near-death experience, said BK. He literally cannot speak after the *fracas*, and this fuels Kent’s tirade, to which Cornwall must respond with strength and swiftness. BK noted that Cornwall’s reactions are a good indication of how the balance of

power is shifting , something Oswald perhaps recognises as he tries to save face in front of Cornwall and Regan.

BK thought it was interesting that Kent switches to verse (from his prose insults and toilet references) after Cornwall berates him for a lack of “reverence”. He uses even more elaborate insults towards Oswald, calling him a goose (whore or whore’s client.) BK asked if the “epileptic” face that Kent rails at might be a sycophantic smile.

BK noted that Cornwall appears to become infuriated with Kent, and Gloucester tries to intervene more tactfully – ‘How fell you out? Say that.’ He fares no better, and Cornwall’s impatience erupts once more.

GW thought it might be nice if Gloucester could chuckle to himself when Kent makes the disparaging remark, ‘I have seen better faces in my time...’ This would further inflame Cornwall.

Oswald finally manages to couch his version of events in appropriate, sober language that satisfies Cornwall.

After the scene had been discussed, BK asked the actors to run it on their feet, using a couple of chairs to indicate the position of the stage pillars. JB got the impression that the scene has to begin with a great deal of momentum, as it is difficult for Oswald to stand/sit still and say nothing if Kent’s lengthy insult is taken too slowly, and broken with too many pauses.

- 20 April 2001

BA and PHD played the scene across the width of the stage, in front of the pillars. BA advanced to DSC but still remained at some distance from PHD. When MG ran in with machete drawn, he taunted BA by lunging at him, roaring rather than wielding his weapon.

MG put BA’s legs in the stocks, but the timing of this – Regan prompts it in addition to Cornwall’s order – perhaps suggests that it takes some time. Do servants of the house do it reluctantly?

### **Scene 7b**

- 28 March 2001

Edgar’s soliloquy represents the first time this note of madness and degradation enters the play (*cf* a key change in music.). Edgar is already where Lear is going.

- 4 April 2001

BK noted that this speech is not in fact a soliloquy, though it feels like it, and it was necessary to remember that in performance at the Globe, Kent would be in the same light on the same stage for the duration of the speech.

- 14 April 2001

BK noted that the last experiment with sound on stage had made him mindful of the physical possibilities of the space and the need for movement that is as muscular as the language itself. He urged PB to use all of the available space, and to use the morning’s rehearsal to explore some physical possibilities – exploding through the central doors, for instance. How dangerous is an animal that has been repressed and is suddenly free?

PB thought that Poor Tom's text is like "action painting" – it cannot be analysed as a logical progression. BK thought that Tom's language represents a new technique for Shakespeare, rather like atonal music – it will be difficult for PB to evaluate in the same way as the other language he speaks.

PB was keen to avoid what he described as a disclaimer or cop-out: that Edgar is simply "putting it on" – that Tom is simply a façade, he thought, would be less interesting for him and for the audience, than exploring the fear that motivates Edgar to become Poor Tom.

Certain phrases might be sung, thought BK.

- 20 April 2001

PB used a piece of scaffolding in one corner of the room that usefully substituted for the yet-to-be-built "Wheel of Fire" structure that would be in the yard.

### Scene 7c

- 20 April 2001

The knights and Lear entered DSR from the yard, the knights carrying Lear's chair atop two heavy planks. BA remained in the stocks, at the foot of the SL pillar, facing front. JMc sat on his chair-back-pack on the US side of the same pillar. This would probably need to be adjusted for sightlines during technicals.

Lear's chair would need to be moved from CS to the DSL corner by the time he sits for 'My heart, my heart.'

### Scene 7d

- 2 April 2001

BK remarked upon the absence of Albany as a significant factor in the scene – it is here that Cornwall begins to act more like a King than a Duke: does Albany's absence make this easier? Gonoril, once again, has Oswald with her, not her husband.

The scene is pivotal to the play because it is "now or never" for Regan and Gonoril, as JG agreed. Lear is at his most dangerous (like an animal) when he is wounded – if they don't defeat him now, he will surely destroy them. He has never been outfaced like this, especially in public.

The 100 knights are like Lear's children, were this a divorce, said BK. The whittling down of the family unit to nothing is heart-breaking, and not negotiable, as far as Lear is concerned. Also, 100 *male* companions is a significant circumstance.

After the scene had been read through in full a rich discussion developed about the horrifying speed with which the situation escalates out of the domestic sphere into an apocalyptic, universal chaos. It was important to reinforce the idea that the two sisters do not know they will succeed, and that perhaps none of this is planned beforehand. They should both (said BK) be shaking like leaves by the end of the scene. They have risked everything to defeat their mutual enemy, because they need to exist in a sane, self-determined future. They feed off each other, but have no sense that victory will be theirs.

The domestic feel to this monumental scene surprised everyone. Perhaps the power and the horror of this declaration of war is precisely because it is rooted in family, in long-standing, almost contemptuous familiarity.

FD and PK worked very well off each other's energies, inventing the strategy as they went along, showing the sisters to have a strong sense of right on their side.

- The scene was repeated, and several of the actors read on their feet, Regan and Gonoril facing each other from opposite ends of the reading tables.

- 4 April 2001

BK noted that time did not allow for an intensive line-by-line reading of this scene, and he wanted to use this session to input some of the Folio version of the same scene into our performance version:

- Kent's line 'Yes they have' (199) was changed to 'By Juno I say aye' (F1)
- Lear's line 'They travelled hard tonight?' (254) was changed to 'They travelled all the night?' (F1)
- Gonoril's entrance (at 345) was changed to a silent entrance, and Lear spoke the F1 lines: 'Who stocked my servant? Regan, I have good hope/Thou didst not know it' (345-6)
- The Fool's "Not in the stocks, fool" (F1) replaced 'Not in the stocks.' (252)

One of the Fool's insights is to see the fool in everyone, and this might explain his apparent amusement at the sight of Kent in the stocks, said BK. The Fool also sees the universal man in every man - he understands that on one level all men are fools. BK said he was interested in the degree to which the Fool can see not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be; he has predicted that Regan will be as unsympathetic as Gonoril, and the sight of Kent in the stocks confirms his vision.

- JMc wondered whether the Fool knows that Caius and Kent are the same person. JMc noted that the Fool makes pertinent references to Kent when speaking to Caius, but he wasn't sure he recognised him. BK thought that this was an interesting idea and he asked JMc to keep the idea in the back of his mind.

The discrepancy between the references to Lear's 100 knights and the remarks by Kent about the paucity of the train led to a lengthy discussion. Though no concrete conclusion was reached, all agreed that it is only when alone in the storm that Lear finally realises he has lost his knights, along with everything else.

- 20 April 2001

FD stepped over BA in the stocks as she greeted JG in the DSR corner. RMc freed him a moment or two later.

FD also kicked at JG as he pretended to grovel at her feet, mocking the idea of apologising to Goneril. This seemed a harsh move.

On entering, PK marched to the DSL corner to grasp FD firmly by the hand.

JG frequently man-handled FD and PK, ranting and raging in a terrifying manner.

## Scene 8

- 2 April 2001

BK gave the company background to the scene. Kent's information comes from Cordelia's letter that he reads in the stocks. Kent is trying to get a message to the French forces to tell them that there are sympathisers with their cause in England, as a response to that letter. The Gentleman in this scene is played by Roger McKern, who also plays Curan. This was a deliberate attempt to give the impression of an organised network of information gatherers and carriers – those in the know on the inside and outside - rather than rampant rumour-mongering on a general level. This exchange should be very brief and business-like – the important “code-word” is “Cordelia” – a very loaded name in the circumstances, said BK.

- 4 April 2001

BK discussed the concept of Gloucester as a spy master with RMc and BA; Curan and the Gentleman in this scene could be one and the same person if Curan is in the employ of Gloucester. BK also thought that Gloucester's blinding in some way fits his “crime” of spying.

BK asked BA how he felt about the “weight of disguise.” Is Kent fighting an urge to throw off his disguise? If BA plays the scene as Caius, why does Curan impart so much information about Lear to him?

Another option is that Curan is searching for Lear in the storm, and stumbles across Kent (as Caius) who has left Lear and the Fool to seek help for the beleaguered king. RMc suggested that he had seen Kent in the stocks, and so felt he could probably trust him.

BK asked the actors to get the scene on its feet, and to imagine that they would be making use of the pillars as supports during the stormy weather. BK said that he was considering having the men separated by the entire width of the auditorium, and asked the actors to explore a physical language that dealt with their difficulty in connecting with each other. RMc crawled along the floor in his attempt to fight the storm and reach Kent, who hung on for dear life in the opposite corner of the room.

Next BK asked both men to isolate a single gesture each to use when travelling across the room through the storm. Both men chose strong gestures, frantically grasping the air for help. Next, BK asked them to devise similar travelling expressions of pain at a loud noise. All of these “storm masques” seemed to be human responses to irresistible forces of nature. BK thought it would be useful to consider using these kinds of movements as counterpoints to the text, when trying to create the storm.

- BA and RMc played the scene across the front of the stage, in front of the pillars. RMc fought his way through the storm to BA half-way through, gripping the pillar for support.

## Scene 9

- 2 April 2001: Text Work on Scenes 9-13

This, the beginning of what BK described as “the most sustained passage of Shakespeare's genius” (scenes 9-13) is where Shakespeare invites us to remember that the “storm within” is not just a stage direction or a weather report. The “natural order” of things is turned upside down, added MG. He went on to say that ‘nature’ to the Elizabethans includes the way in which humans should behave towards each other. We are aware today of the catastrophic

power that is released when we split the atom, and this is a related phenomenon, perhaps: human nature's atom is being split.

What Lear and Tom experience is an epiphany, a visionary event.

A discussion about the extent to which Lear is "a man more sinned against than sinning" developed, as well as anecdotes about hurricanes and related meteorological phenomena.

BK talked about the "perfect structure" of the 3 storm scenes sandwiched by the Kent/Gloucester subplot.

1. (scene 9) – Lear is protected from the elements by his own rage
2. (scene 10) – Lear recognises Tom as human nature distilled – the Fool's role is taken over by Tom. BK said he was interested in exploring the idea that the Fool hangs himself in the tiring-house at the end of this section, because after being replaced by Tom he has lost everything.
3. (scene 11) – the most surreal scene Shakespeare ever wrote – the re-run of scene I's trial, with joint stools for stand-ins. A chance for Lear to have his say.

How to do the storm? BK wanted the company's thoughts on what the storm represented to them, and how it might link to the various lines of research they were currently investigating. DC was intrigued by the notion of imbalance – he had been researching medicine and the idea of the (im)balance of the humours. BK said that the human storm would be explored in a vocal way – which is why music rehearsals with CvK had begun so early.

MG noted that it was revealing to read the scenes as a unit, as you can see how much Edmund's treachery is part of the storm. BK agreed, and said that he thought disaster unites people, while ambition isolates people.

• 4 April 2001

BK noted that in this scene he was considering having Lear and the Fool tied together by a length of rope that leads into the tiring house and could be anchored/pulled in by staff hidden in the tiring house. This image would be echoed by the proposed "stocks" that will bind the blinded Gloucester to his guide Edgar for the journey towards Dover.

BK noted that the preceding scene imparts expository information about the storm, which frees up the playing of this scene to focus on the internal storm in Lear's mind.

BK likened the relationship between Lear and the Fool to a very long marriage, in which one of the partners has gone mad, and the other partner (while appalled) cannot imagine not being married to that person.

BK asked JG to try the "blow wind and crack your cheeks" speech as a rebuke to the assembled people in the room – giving the storm a human element. This, he noted, would most closely replicate the performance conditions: there would be up to 1600 faces to play off in performance. JG tried this, as the onlookers made vocalised noises of the storm. The effect was quite startling, and gave the speech a direct and powerful resonance – BK was extremely pleased with the discoveries made in this exercise.

The counterpoint to Lear's rage and force is his need to come to terms with the fact that he is a poor, weak infirm old man, said BK. His ego may be the only thing that saves his life on the heath.

The second part of the Fool's song would be cut, as it was generally agreed that it was too obscure. The Fool's last line became 'So beggars marry many' (l.30).

• 9 April, 2001

BK and the actors continued work on establishing the nature of the storm. He encouraged the actors to write down a single word or sentence that related to them personally – a crisis or a fear or an illness, for example – the idea was to collate these fragments of ideas into a collective notion of the storm and its human cost. BK asked the actors to draw on their personal experience without describing the details of that experience, but rather leaving only an impression in a word or phrase. These went into the centre of the circle.

BK then asked everyone to choose a piece of paper that was not their own and to read it aloud. Below are a selection of the readings:

DEATH OF AN INNOCENT CHILD – RECREATION FROM IGNORANCE – FATHER BETRAYAL LOSS OF LOVE – CAN'T BREATHE, CAN'T BREATHE, TIRED – STEPPING OVER BOUNDARIES INTO UNKNOWN – ARRIVAL OF FEAR – GOD – LOSING YOUR FATHER WHEN YOU ARE A CHILD – THE URGE TO IMMEDIATE SUICIDE – LOSS – PURGATORY , APOCALYPSE, CLOTHES TOO HEAVY TO WEAR – NOT BEING ENOUGH – AT THE EYE DEPTH OF THE STORM IT IS DIFFICULT, SOMETIMES IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE IT ENDING – ARREST, CANCER – LEAVING THAT POSTCARD ON THAT TABLE – UNCONTROLLABLE MOB VIOLENCE AT A CELEBRATION – DIVORCE – THE OPPOSITE OF A STORM IS UNDERSTANDING

As well as personalising the scale of the storm in human terms, BK thought that the *sound* of the words used to describe these feelings and thoughts might be useful in creating the sound of the storm – the breath is shaped into the words we choose to describe how we feel. BK said he wanted us to look at the vocal creation of the storm not in terms of simply shouting, or wailing, but of expressing those impulses of despair, loss etc. The storm requires a private response from some of us, said BK.

• 14 April 2001

BK said he was interested in JG exploring different kinds of energies within the storm scene – at times Lear may appear to age, and become the frail old man his age would tell us he is – at other times, he rebels strongly against age and infirmity, and challenges the heavens themselves to a fight.

BA asked about the hovel. Why, he wondered, was Lear so reluctant to take shelter in the hovel? BK thought that Kent is basing his actions on the preservation of Lear's body, and Lear is much more concerned to preserve his *identity* – this demands that he fight the elements.

BK asked JG and JMc to explore the idea of Lear and the Fool being tied together with a length of rope as they plod through the storm. BK thought that a length of 8 or 9 feet should separate the pair. BK thought this could pave the way for the later image of the Fool hanging himself. JMc and JG experimented with figure-of-eight flight patterns, and JMc tried to "anchor" himself around the SL pillar. This halted JG centre stage, and provided a good position and cue for 'Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks'. BK wanted a small, ineffective, inverted umbrella atop the Fool's backpack.

JMc freed himself of the pillar, and let a 'gust' take him that 'blew' him across the width of the stage from SL to SR. JG caught his body weight and the rope went taut just before 'Rumble thy bellyful...' This gave JG a chance to show that Lear is fighting age and infirmity with savage irony on the line 'A poor, infirm, weak and despised old man'.

BK wanted JG to observe the implicit stage direction that Lear sits. He thought it made most sense for him to sit, Buddha-style, on 'I will be the pattern of all patience.'

BK wanted Gloucester to enter through the yard with a flaming torch, for 'Here comes a walking fire' though this was subject to fire regulations in the auditorium. He also thought it made sense for Kent to enter through the yard. BK thought that instead of a blanket, he could be wrapped in a loyalist dragon flag. This would possibly pick up on the need for Lear as a figurehead for the counter-coup to come.

Kent and the Fool both grappled with the rope for 'Let the great gods.' BK wanted all three men to be nearly on their feet by the time Lear proclaims himself 'more sinned against than sinning', at which point an enormous gust of wind would knock everyone off their feet again. BK noted that Nature has its revenge on Lear for lying in its way, at this point.

JG paused, stock still, facing BA for 'My wits begin to turn.' BK was interested in the impact of this statement on both Lear and Kent: it represents a chasm that Lear has fallen into, and that he has to climb out of very quickly. He tries to do so by attempting to care for the Fool. BK asked BA and JG to hold the moment slightly; after JG rose to comfort the shivering JMc, BA should remain still on his knees, DSC, for a moment or two. After that he should join Lear and the Fool, rope himself up like a pack-dog and pull them off the stage, walking into the wind.

## Scene 10

• 9 April 2001

BK drew GW's attention to the "storm" that Gloucester appears to be weathering at this point: he speaks in fragments, imperatives, interrupted fearful thoughts. MG said that from Edmund's point of view the storm represents only opportunities to be exploited. BK agreed, and pointed out that Edmund's decisions are all "dark side" decisions, in the night.

BK asked the stage management team to bring in the rehearsal pillars. Then he asked MG and GW to play through the scene each close to a pillar. He asked GW to use the audience to off-load the weight on his mind: to treat the scene as a soliloquy. BK also wanted MG to devise some physical means of communicating with the audience so that we see the degree to which Gloucester underestimates Edmund.

MG walked into the centre of the space and appeared to be about to speak a soliloquy to the audience as Gloucester enters. He stopped himself and retreated to the SL pillar, and let GW speak. This established a rapport with the "audience" outside the events of the scene, and we tended to watch Edmund receiving Gloucester's news even as he told it.

BK was keen to establish a sense of complicity between father and son. BK reminded both actors that the temptation to play in close proximity to each other would not pay off in the space itself – intimacy can be effectively created across considerable distance on the Globe stage, especially in two-hander scenes.

BK brought up the importance of surprise, and urged MG to explore the alternative reality that Edmund could have lived: he can at the same time both be sympathetic to Gloucester, and know he needs to pursue his own selfish aims.

## Scene 11

• 5 April 2001

The actors read through the scene. BK noted that the catastrophic weather and human events present not just hardship and anguish, but also the opportunity for transformation. As the disaster unfolds, the storm begins to affect everyone. BK thought a very close analysis of the language would benefit everyone. Nobody is impervious to the “storm within.” Even Kent has to deal with the worrying prospect that he may not be able to care for Lear in this instance. Kent speaks to Lear very frequently in the manner of a geriatric nurse.

The Fool’s challenge (reflected in the “fools and madmen” line) is to stay in close proximity to the creature whom he believes either to be a spirit or to be totally insane.

JG pointed out that Lear is not so mad that he doesn’t understand why he is having this breakdown. ‘Filial ingratitude’ is what is breaking him. He gets very fearful when he comes close to feeling utterly vulnerable (that way, he believes, madness lies) and fights back with rage.

BK was very amused that the Fool appears to overcome his fear of Edgar sufficiently to inquire his name. BK was interested to know whether or not Edgar recognises Lear. PB thought that, given the tremendous strain upon Edgar and the extent of his own transformation, he would be unlikely to register anything but blind terror at first. He described Edgar’s initial reaction as that of a cornered animal trying to appear bigger and more frightening than it really is. BK agreed that this was probably true, but he reminded PB that the “true” Edgar is a man prone to depression: his attempt to drive the others away involves references to suicide. PB thought that the “servingman” identity he concocts is a spontaneous outburst that breeds more of the same, rather than a carefully rehearsed ploy; BK thought Tom’s language impacts on the others like a totally new kind of music. BK pointed out the undertones of Christianity in the morality of the fiction he creates. It reminded him in parts of *Doctor Faustus*, full of ideas of crime and punishment. Is this designed to prick Lear’s conscience and condemn Gloucester, or is it simply another ruse?

Lear is convinced that he has found a new philosopher – the meeting of like minds – and everyone else is perplexed, horrified or both. All the “good” characters (Gloucester, Kent) are slipping into exhaustion and despair; conversely Lear feels his fortunes are on the rise once he meets the “learned Theban”. BK thought that Poor Tom might strike Lear with awe.

CvK noted that the strangely warped Christian mythology was useful in helping her compose the storm music – she had begun working with a few liturgical themes as a basis.

The anger that Edgar feels, said PB, transforms itself into a totally different form, a release or exorcism, as bile and venom comes pouring out of him. The perverted “10 commandments” style speech could have another voice altogether from Poor Tom’s, thought PB.

PB experimented with what BK described as “jump cut” voices, dropping rapidly into many different voices and speech modes. Edgar’s lines at the end of the scene – “Child Roland...blood of a British man’ are entirely visionary, epic in scale and tone.

• 14 April 2001

Edgar’s ‘Who gives anything to Poor Tom...’ could be spoken on the move, thought BK. Edgar might hear the “pelican daughters” phrase, and invent ‘Pillicock Hill’ from that. PB thought it would be interesting to experiment with the notion of the ‘foul fiend’ actually taking over the body of ‘Poor Tom’ and speaking in him. He thought he might invent a cockney persona for the ‘servingman.’ PB was playing around with the idea that Tom had

met another outcast, a cockney who had told him a story which he recycles as the servingman tale.

‘Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind’ could be a fragment of a song, thought BK. The ‘dolphin’, or dauphin in this speech is the foul fiend, thought PB, and the line is a fearful one, trying to avoid becoming possessed once more.

There would be a kind of pit or ‘wallow’ of mud that Edgar can retreat to, out of the weather – Lear will attempt to join him in it, said BK, at the point when he begins to tear his clothes. It would be formed by the earth map of the first scene, upon which water has been dropped (from the trap in the heavens?)

PB agreed that ‘This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet’ is an intuitive, rather than overt reference to Gloucester: he was not keen to signal too strongly that he recognises his father, as this would take the audience out of the story.

BK thought ‘Smolking’ might be addressed to his own anger. The ‘prince of darkness is a gentleman’ reference is surely to Gloucester, said BK. PB agreed.

- Later, JMc, BA and JG joined the rehearsal and the actors ran through the lines. Five stools had been placed in a close circle in the centre of the stage to represent the wallow. After the read through, BK commented again on the incredible power of the writing. Kent, Lear and Fool are joined first by Edgar, then by Gloucester, and a strange little society begins to develop. He explained that Tom is visited by three distinct spirits in the scene — Fibbertigibbet, Dolphin and Smolkin. BK noted that this would be the first chance to try some of the physical ideas that he and PB had discussed. It would be necessary for everyone to remain open to playing ideas in the moment.

BA, JG and JMc entered SL – a ‘long entrance’ around the SL pillar. BK wanted Kent to spend this time looking frantically around for the hovel. As he turns the corner he sees it and urges Lear to enter.

JMc’s whole frozen physicality should change when he is scared by the appearance of Poor Tom. He should belt out of the central opening, screaming, having quite forgotten he was frozen with cold seconds before.

BK said that he would like to run the scene again, with the expectation that formal blocking would be resisted so that all were free to respond to Tom’s movements and actions. Only the entrances would be fixed.

PB burst in this time clutching the nail with which Edgar damages himself in Scene 7b. He appeared to attack an unseen assailant. BK encouraged PB to use the available walls to bounce off, if possible. He asked the other actors to be very still.

The wallow dominated the centre of the stage, and JG and PB dealt used it for their long conversation. BK wanted PB to walk around in the wallow, using the same kinds of rhythmic stamps as BA, JG and JMc used in Scene 9.

BK said he wanted the pace to slow down almost to a standstill immediately before Tom’s entrance. JMc and BA should take a beat to consider the options – whether to stay in the hovel or flee the mad spirit therein – so that the contrast with Tom’s energy could be most marked.

JG suggested cutting 2 lines: ‘Now all the plagues...fall on thy daughters’ (60-61.) BK agreed.

BK commented on the way in which Edgar's 'Wine I loved deeply, dice dearly... False of heart, light of ear...' etc (ll.81-3) was "juicy" material for men like Lear and Gloucester – they have been all these things. He also wanted PB to play with the rhythms of this passage, to see if he could extend it to a kind of dance around the pillar. BK said Tom could become entranced with this dance, and snap out of it only when 'dolphin' appears.

Edgar's fear (that which makes him seek refuge as Tom) is infectious in this situation, said BK. By the time Gloucester arrives, the Fool is ready to believe that the landscape is peopled by spirits.

After Gloucester says 'Our flesh and blood is grown so vile, my lord,/That it doth hate what gets it.' Edgar has a difficult 'Poor Tom's a-cold' (132) half-line. BK thought this might be an outburst against Gloucester, masked to protect his identity. Edgar (as Tom) refers to his father as no less than the Prince of Darkness, so in a sense what Gloucester says is true.

BK noted that although the following scene is very short, he would like ideally for the group exit to be through the yard, out of the door SL.

The scene was run through in full again. PB wore a rope noose around his neck. He stabbed at the air in front of him, where the groundlings would stand.

The business at the close of the scene was clarified – PB went US towards the hovel, followed by JG, while GW, BA and JMc attempted to exit DSL.

- 20 April 2001

JG opened up 'Poor naked wretches...' to the Globe, making good use of angles that corresponded to where the upper galleries and open sky would be. He seemed to address the whole audience as his neglected kingdom.

JG and PB appeared to splash happily around in the mud wallow after Lear's 'Off...you lendings..'

PB sang portions of his speeches, particularly 'several small deer/hath been...'. He snapped out of his aria to identify his father Gloucester as the Prince of Darkness, 'a gentleman'.

The party exited through the yard, JMc singing 'Child Rowland' along with PB.

- 26 April 2001

BK worked in detail on the shape of this scene. PB delivered his 'Prince of Darkness' speech from the extreme DSL corner, and JG climbed out of the wallow (CS) and crossed to join him. PB and JG could then cross the stage from SL to SR in front of the pillars, along the "outer corridor", as they made towards the USR corner. This gave plenty of time for BA and GW to plead with JG to abandon PB and join them under cover.

GW crossed to the same DSL corner for 'Who can blame him...' before crossing to DSC and sitting on the steps.

**Childe Rowland to the dark town came** ... BK noted that Edgar is being led back to somewhere that used to be home, and now has become the 'dark town' of fear for him. PB would start to sing this on the exit, but it would be picked up by others in a kind of round.

## Scene 12

- 9 April 2001

MG and MF walked through the scene with the rehearsal pillars in place. At the moment when Cornwall bestows Gloucester's title on Edmund, BK was interested in MG mirroring his movements from Scene 10 with Gloucester – that is, he plays low status to another father figure in Cornwall.

BK wanted MG and MF to run the scene again, this time with Cornwall triumphant with the letter. He dominated the space, and MG played physical low status, dropping to his knees as though physically collapsing.

BK suggested that Edmund begin this scene in the yard, passing the letter up to the stage to Cornwall in a central stage position. MF could then grant MG stage space as he grants him an earldom, MG ascending to receive the honour. The actors tried it.

BK noted that to play Edmund is to play two characters, in effect. The asides need to be quite self-contained. MG agreed.

BK said he was interested in the *deus ex machina* quality of this and other letters in the play. Would it be possible, he wondered, to have the letter arrive on stage through the trap in the heavens?

- 20 April 2001

MF offered his hand for MG to kiss his ring for 'thou shalt find a dearer father in my love'.

- 26 April 2001

MG carried the letter on with him.

The nub of the scene, said BK, is Edmund's attempt to portray both the dilemma he's supposedly going through (loyalty to family or leader?) and the way in which Cornwall tries to make that choice easier for him.

BK wanted to experiment with action that showed how Edmund came by the letter. As the wallow from the previous scene was struck, MG should enter carrying a small strongbox that he would break open using either a nail (like Edgar's) or a machete, to discover the letter within.

- 1 May 2001

BK asked MG and MF to run the scene. Afterwards BK asked them both to declare their objectives at the start of the scene. MG said he wanted to find the letter in private, undetected, and MF said he wanted to meet Edmund without being observed. This clarified the start of the scene somewhat. BK also noted that Cornwall probably guesses at the content of the letter, but is a believer in procedure and realises that without its evidence Gloucester is unassailable.

BK reminded the two actors that they should bring two very different energies to the scene – Edmund’s is youthful, a little frantic, full of conspiracy theories; Cornwall is a more mature, authoritative presence. BK warned them not to bleed too much into each other.

### Scene 13

- 14 April 2001

The actors read through the scene. Afterwards, BK noted that at the end of the scene, PB would remain alone on stage to speak his soliloquy. During this time JMc will be offstage, preparing the hanging scene inside the tiring house. As Edgar will leave through the central opening, the audience in the centre of the yard and galleries will see the Fool has committed suicide.

BK said he would like at least one brazier, since Gloucester promised fire and food, and it would lend a great deal to the trial scene. GW could bring dry clothes for Lear, allowing JG to begin the scene in the same "nappy" that he ended Scene 11 in. All of the props for the scene would be brought on by the actors. BA volunteered to bring in all of the stools, haybales (the ‘cushions’) and braziers alone; he explained that Kent does not speak until about 30 lines into the scene, and this could indicate that he is busy making the room as comfortable as possible. BK thought this was a good idea. BK also wanted the Fool to have rope about him: he would need it for his suicide.

The braziers could be dustbins, inside which smoke-producing machines could be hidden. BK wanted these to be light enough to be lifted rather than wheeled on.

BK wanted PB, JG and JMc to explore the beginning of the scene as though they occupied three different tracks travelling down parallel but separate paths to madness. Only rarely do they cross.

JMc and PB sat on the haybales for the trial scene. BA thought that it would be appropriate for Kent to confiscate the joint stool, which Lear sees as Regan escaping justice. BK thought it should be Edgar who picks up the stool, because he has an aside coming up which is spoken without any trace of Poor Tom. BK thought that PB should steal the ‘Regan’ stool and run around to the edge of the stage SR with it. This left PB in front of the SR pillar for his aside ‘My tears begin to take his part...’

BK noted that it is only Edgar who can really help Lear, who is so far lapsed into psychosis that even Kent and the Fool are beginning to despair. As the others look on helplessly, PB should take the ‘Tray, Blanch and Sweetheart’ cue to transform himself into a dog and chase Lear’s visions of animals away.

When JG attempted to lie down on the makeshift bed of two haybales, he misjudged the length of the bales, and his head found no support. BA quickly caught his head to prevent it hitting the floor. BK thought this was a wonderful accident, and suggested it be kept in.

BK wanted PB to repeat the *Childe Roland* song several times before the central doors open and everyone enters.

- 20 April 2001

PB closed the scene by giving his final speech DSC “to the Globe”, in his regular ‘Edgar voice’.

• 26 April 2001

The party would enter singing the same *Childe Roland* round heard at the end of Scene 11. First to enter would be Kent (for the purely practical reason that the braziers he would be carrying have smoke pellets that would only last for around 45 seconds.)

BK noted that the quick change needed to rig up a harness for JMc to perform the hanging stunt at the close of the scene made it impractical for JMc to perform the stunt himself. Since the audience would only see the Fool's back, his coxcomb and boots, it would be possible for MMc to serve as a kind of "body double."

The Fool's 'Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint stool' is witty enough to jolt Edgar out of his Poor Tom persona for a second. This, thought BK, would help PB in his transition to 'my tears...mar my counterfeiting'.

'Purr the cat is grey' could be linked to Lear's vision of the three dogs, Tray, Blanch and Sweetheart. Poor Tom's vision of the grey cat could prompt Lear to create a mirror vision in the three dogs, moments later. BK thought it might be helpful if (in both cases) the vision was preceded by a sharp intake of breath from (first) Tom and (second) Lear. BK thought that Lear invents these creatures in a psychotic moment that nearly overwhelms him. He creates a vision of his view of the world, and he takes his main idea from Poor Tom.

Edgar's remark 'Tom will throw his head at them' (the dogs) needed some kind of trigger, said BK. PB agreed. BK thought it might be a sensitivity to Lear's inability to speak about "Sweetheart" (Cordelia).

The triptych of daughters/dogs in Lear's vision did not match up to the number of stools on the stage, and since one of these is removed by Edgar, it seemed pointless for JG to try to use the existing single stool as an inspiration for any part of the psychotic vision. BK thought it would be helpful if Kent saw Poor Tom's removal of one of the stools as a positive means of defeating the illusion that Lear is indulging in, and then himself removed the remaining stool. That meant that the front edge of the stage would be free of all obstacles and Lear could invent the vision out of thin air.

#### Scene 14

• 3 April 2001

BK wanted to spend a little time on the background to this scene. After Cordelia goes to France, the intelligence network that keeps her informed is very strong, with many spies. For instance, Kent's letter that he reads in the stocks hints at a restorative action. In addition, Gloucester receives a letter that he tells Edmund he has hid in his closet. He knows that that country has already been invaded by a French expeditionary force. Gloucester holds a position in the intelligence network and is identified as loyal to Lear. Whoever sent that letter is sure of Gloucester, and has no knowledge of Edmund's treachery.

Edmund has of course stolen it and presented it to Cornwall and when he does this, Cornwall has irrefutable evidence of spying which is directly against the national interest. Gloucester is proven to be a Kim Philby of his time, and Edmund is promoted on the spot. BK pointed out that though it is easy to be cynical about Edmund's motives, there is a case for seeing him as a patriot, as well as an opportunist.

BK reminded the actors of Lear's intention of dividing his kingdom. Albany and Cornwall are equally powerful at the beginning of the play, and it is Lear's intention that the third coronet

be given to whoever marries Cordelia. His notion is to create a kind of tripartite republic, with himself as a titular, symbolic head, able to retire, and yet also able to mediate between the three factions to prevent civil war.

The antagonism between Cornwall and Albany can be easily overstated, BK felt. He thought that at this point it would be better if Cornwall is working *with* rather than against Albany and Gonoril.

Edmund's ennoblement is an interesting factor: Gloucester is not dead, and yet Cornwall is investing the same title in Edmund. Is this Gloucester's death warrant? MF noted that Cornwall knows he cannot actually kill him, but he *can* maim him as a traitor or spy, take away his power and give it to Edmund.

BK noted that Oswald is increasing in stature in every scene: he has obtained accurate intelligence about Lear's 35 or 36 knights who accompany him, and here he is again in lieu of Albany.

MF wanted to know if all 3 servants in the scene are in Cornwall's employ, or if one or two might be in Gloucester's. The scene is in Gloucester's house, and Cornwall seems to have to repeat his order to bind Gloucester more than once. BK thought that DC should play a servant in the employ of Gloucester (suggested by his knowledge of Poor Tom) and AW should be in Cornwall's employ. This would make for an interesting echo effect, as the actors (who also play the outsiders Burgundy and France) are seen again in different guises. BK was also interested in this idea because it helped show uneasy coalitions in a time of perceived national crisis.

BK noted the voyeuristic element in the violence against Gloucester – each of the servants has to decide how they feel about the violence and act on his conscience. BK asked the actors to read through the blinding episode once more, trying not to anticipate their reactions and actions.

BK noted after the read-through that Regan's presence in the scene is undermining Cornwall's interrogation technique. It is she who tells Gloucester that Cornwall knows the answers to the questions he is asking. Time after time Regan picks up half-lines and jumps in on Cornwall as he grills Gloucester.

MF admitted that he didn't know what Cornwall was about to say after 'thou shalt find'. At this point Regan loses control and assaults Gloucester. Cornwall, BK thought, is keen to maintain control of what he sees as an anarchic situation. BK suggested that Cornwall might be considering telling Gloucester that he will find the world has changed, and that it is he who is now in charge.

BK thought that Gloucester's first eye is put out quickly, almost before anyone knows what is happening. It provokes a spate of violence, culminating with 2 mortally wounded men, and a final, much slower, deliberate taking-out of Gloucester's second eye. FD said she was interested in the idea of Regan needing to actually taste Gloucester's blood. FD said that she thought that nobody (including Cornwall) could have seen such behaviour from Regan before. BK agreed, but said that he saw Regan as equally perpetrator and victim in this scene: the internalised violence against the women in Lear's regime comes to the surface. PK agreed, and pondered on the extent of brutalisation that Regan must have endured for her to be able to find such violence in herself. BK thought the episode has something of the porn-shoot quality to it, when the chair is set in place.

- 20 April 2001

MF delivered his line 'Villain, thou shalt find..' to GW after AW, SH and DC bound him to the rocking chair. FD then spat in his face. JB wondered if it would be better to conduct this exchange over the business of tying him up. Gloucester, she thought, ought to struggle a little more.

FD offered her dagger to MF for the putting out of the second eye.

The rocking chair was brought back upright for 'then Edgar was abused'. This would allow the bulk of the audience to see Gloucester's bloody eyes. Gloucester's eyes would be bloodied by SH.

- 26 April 2001

MG and PK made a long entrance SL, MF and FD made a long entrance SR. MF passed a letter to PK DSC. FD spat in GW's face rather than plucking his beard (at l.31), and the lines, 'To pluck me by the beard/So white and such a traitor' (33-34) were cut accordingly.

RC was on hand to look at the new fight choreography. FD carried both a machete and a dagger, and SH used a dagger to deliver Cornwall's death wound. MF wore a spur on his left heel.

The scene was run, but the business and blocking did not gel too well. The entrances were retained as described above, but fell closer upon each other. The exchange between Oswald and Cornwall needed more space around it. It had been too cramped, US of the SL pillar, in a weak stage position, given the importance of the information imparted.

FD was experiencing some difficulty wielding the machete. She felt she was too slow with her upwards movement. BK reminded her that there was interest in her wielding the machete, as it is a weapon we first see with Edmund. BK hoped that RC could help FD to use the machete for SH's death blow in a way that she felt comfortable with.

BK decided to alter MF's entrance to a short, diagonal one. This helped to keep the momentum at the start of the scene. The stage was being cleared of the bales, stools and braziers of Scene 13 (by AW, SH and DC) which complicated the business.

BK asked PHD to switch his entrance to SR, which would allow him to take in Edmund's presence with Gonoril, without having to upstage himself. This also put PHD and MF in a stronger position to receive the news about Gloucester sending Lear towards Dover.

BK wanted FD to notice MG and PK as they turn to go. Additionally, he wanted MG to "eyeball" Regan across the stage as he departs. Finally, BK wanted MF to misinterpret the adulterous impulse as a filial impulse, dismissing Edmund before the interrogation of Gloucester begins.

BK worked with MF and FD on the moment when Cornwall justifies what is to follow 'Though we may not pass upon his life... blame but not control'. Both actors were to cross DS at this moment, but BK wanted to alter the move slightly so that FD, not MF, led the cross down. She looked straight ahead, her eyes full of blind determination to get revenge on her father. MF's "press release" is totally beside the point, said BK. Cornwall is giving Regan what he thinks she needs, but has again misinterpreted her.

The binding of Gloucester was taking a long time. RC suggested that it would be less time consuming to simply bind his arms to his sides and his feet together, rather than binding him to the chair.

The blinding itself had been signalled by a vocalised grunt from MF. BK warned that this might actually become a cue for nervous laughter in performance. BK reminded the actors that the audience would naturally look for such a moment to release their anxiety and therefore it would be much better to mark the actual act with no more than a sharp intake of breath, perhaps from the onlooking DC.

FD plucked a hair comb from her head, leading the initiative for Cornwall to put out Gloucester's other eye. BK wanted FD to drop to all fours like a dog, so that she could get a better view of the second eye coming out.

- 1 May 2001

'Seek out the villain Gloucester' is a line that MF had been directing to SH, one of Gloucester's servants. The business of clearing the stage of the hay bales and braziers meant that SH was not consistently on hand to address at this moment. Instead of having MF address AW as an alternative, BK rejigged the striking of bales etc.

PK entered from USL as before, but MG entered from USR with MF and FD.

MF wanted to know if the interrogation of Gloucester should begin while the servants are still in the process of binding him. BK admitted that there was a lot of business in the scene, but thought that a pause to let the rope-tying finish would be unnecessary.

BK thought that FD should cross US after spitting in GW's face, so that the interrogation did not close down the space; with Regan standing diagonally opposite Cornwall, with Gloucester's chair in the centre, the interrogation scene was opened up considerably.

BK reminded MF that the audience has already heard of the notion of plucking out Gloucester's eyes (from Goneril, at the beginning of the scene). Therefore, the 'See't shalt thou never' should chill us, and the moment should not be rushed. It is the moment when Cornwall is enraged to the point of abandoning the Geneva Convention, so to speak.

DC had a concern about what would happen if his machete stuck in its scabbard when FD tells him 'give me thy sword', since events in the scene happen at such speed. RC (fight director) advised DC to draw his machete from its scabbard a line or two beforehand, so that FD could take it from his hand. This would also speed up the process.

The body of the slain servant (SH) needed to be taken off earlier, said BK. Was it possible for AW and DC to pick up SH as soon as the command 'throw this slave upon the dunghill' was given, leaving RMc to release GW's feet from the rope and the chair? The solution lay in releasing GW earlier (on the first command, 'Go thrust him out at gates...'), leaving plenty of time for RMc to lead off GW and for DC and AW to return to the now empty stage to deliver the final lines of the scene.

The scene was run in full, incorporating the changes to the blocking. Afterwards, BK wanted to look at the exit of Edmund and Gonoril. As Gonoril's attention is turned to Oswald and the letter with news of Lear – as PK is halted in a short exit USL – BK wanted FD to take a step or two DS so that she could exchange a glance with MG, halted DSL in a long exit in the same direction.

## Scene 15

- 6 April 2001

This scene would fall at the beginning of the second act.

GB noted that Edgar speaks prose as Tom. The asides are verse.

BK commented on the pull of Dover. Gloucester has replied to the letters from the French army, and so may be drawn there for more than the simple geographical feature of the high cliffs for his suicide attempt.

BK commented to PB that Edgar uses the audience almost like a diary. Even when he reaches the depths of despair, he never fails to try to communicate what is happening to him.

RMc's physical change of character was noted – BK noted that it was very important to make the transformation as radical as possible, since RMc's other characters – Gentleman and Curan – have been merged successfully into one, *viz* Curan. RMc experimented with a West Country accent for this scene, which BK liked.

All the places where those who suffer misfortune can find relief, even laughter, should be exercised fully, said BK.

The significance of line endings was discussed, *eg* : 'Which made me think a man a worm. **My son/** Came then into my mind...' BK was very touched by the connection between these thoughts, and the dramatic possibilities of a pause for breath at the end of the verse line. A similar case occurs at the top of Edgar's opening soliloquy:

'Yet better thus and known to be contemned  
Than still contemned and flattered. **To be worst,**  
The low'st and most dejected thing of fortune'

A discussion about whether to adopt the F1 "poorly led" rather than "parti-eyed" developed. Q1 requires the actor playing Edgar to see his father, realise that he is blind, and then respond **immediately** to the audience. It seemed clear that F1's "poorly led" represents an actor-choice, in the interests of making a smoother transition. PB acknowledged this, but wanted to retain the Q1 version, and see if he could meet the implicit acting challenge therein. BK said he thought we should try to retain "parti-eyed" and reassess the situation when the scene was up on its feet.

BK then asked the actors to put the scene on its feet, with GW and RMc improvising an encounter between the Old Man and Gloucester in which the Old Man tries to persuade Gloucester to take shelter at his home.

After the run through the scene, BK reminded the actors that the conflict within the scene should be whether or not Edgar can retain his Poor Tom identity in the face of his father's suffering. BK thought that the short line "Come hither fellow" (51) should be honoured with a pause, to let that tension build a little. Edgar's response, 'Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed' (52) could be spoken by Edgar, or "Tom", said BK.

The F1's 'Looks fearfully in the confined deep' was preferred over the Oxford edition (based on Q1) version, 'Looks saucily...'. (72).

BK noted that Gloucester's extremely understated declaration, 'From that place/I shall no leading need'(75-6) is a short line followed by another short line, (Edgar's) 'Poor Tom shall lead thee'. This gives Edgar time to understand exactly what Gloucester is asking him to do.

BK wanted the Old Man's treatment of Poor Tom to be a little less tolerant : it is only as a result of Gloucester's reasoning that he decides to provide Poor Tom with his 'best parrell' for the journey.

- 20 April 2001

PB gave the opening soliloquy in “Edgar voice” to the Globe. Upon the entrance of GW and RMc he retreated to the SL pillar. The scene allows Edgar to comment to the audience in asides as he sees the tragic spectacle of his father, blinded.

- 4 May 2001

PB crossed to DSC and spoke the opening soliloquy in a quiet, sincere fashion. His demeanour changed upon sighting his father, and he retreated to the DSL corner and broke down for ‘O gods!...’ in a very emotional state. Crawling on all fours to DSC as the Bedlam (turning to face the front for his aside to the audience) he led GW off USL at the end of the scene.

### Scene 16

- 6 April 2001

The idea of the marriage of Gonoril and Albany being an unconsummated one was revisited. This led to the question of children, and the actors imagined that the production of a grandchild might once have solved the inheritance issue. Lear’s curse on her womb is a devastating one.

Albany seems like a patient rather than demanding spouse, the actors agreed. It was certainly possible for someone with the kind of damaged upbringing Gonoril had to simply side-step the issue of consummation, or at least postpone the act almost indefinitely.

BK referred to an article about Elizabeth I and the love-tests she periodically set her courtiers, and thought it might be useful to an understanding both of Lear’s and Gonoril’s predicament.

BK asked GB to comment on the shape of Albany’s verse: GB said he felt that Albany was having to deal with a completely unprecedented situation: an excess of unprecedented emotions produces his strange vocabulary and syntax. BK was interested in Albany’s short line ‘It will come,’ – a phrase that may refer back (if evil is not revenged quickly, it will be at leisure) or indeed forward – ‘Humanity must perforce prey on itself...’ to an apocalyptic future or day of judgement.

The tremendous inhibition that Albany suffers, even in his high rage in this scene, was remarked upon. There is a tension between his means of expression and the moral outrage he is beginning to feel. He runs from an explosive opening line of monosyllables before retreating into politer, latinate constructions (perhaps regretting his outburst) until his rage overwhelms him again.

BK commented on the nasty, sarcastic language of marriage breakdowns – ‘Milk livered man’ in particular. He noted that Gonoril is not engaging passionately. BK wanted PK to explore all the irony she could find in her put-downs to Albany.

The news of Cornwall’s death changes everything. The constitutional implications to Albany are massive, and so it was important not to make the Gentleman’s speech focus entirely on Gloucester’s blinding. It is an example of Albany’s prophecy – that evil will prey upon evil – and Albany leaps upon this as a sign of divine retribution. His interest in the gods was again remarked upon.

BK suggested that MMc be seen to be present at the blinding, so that the report he brings is first hand.

The awkward aside that Gonoril has ‘One way I like this well...’ (83-86) was analysed in detail:

One way I like this well;  
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,  
May all the building on my fancy pluck  
Upon my hateful life. Another way  
The news is not so took. – I’ll read and answer.

The ‘another way’ phrase seems redundant, initially. It seems to refer back to the position at the beginning of the speech. BK suggested that PK play it as a summary of everything she says from “But...” onwards. It is characteristic of Gonoril’s kind of neurosis, he thought, for her to talk herself into this kind of anxiety.

Albany’s language at the end of the scene has none of the tentative qualities of his earlier pronouncements. BK thought his declaration to devote his life to revenging Gloucester’s eyes marks a watershed in his development, when he comes into his own as a man.

- 20 April 2001

PK and MG entered from USR as though from a vacation on the beach. The kiss Gonoril gave Edmund was that of a courtly lady to a kneeling suitor. It was returned as an almost violent embrace, on the mouth, by Edmund, sweeping her off her feet and pinning her against the SL pillar. There was a threat of violence in Edmund’s ‘Yours in the ranks of death’. Edmund ran the tip of his machete across Gonoril’s front.

- 26 April 2001

BK was interested in ways in which the entrance to this scene should resonate with the exit of the last scene – hence, Edmund is blindfolded. PK was very keen that the signifier should be one of innocence and freedom, rather than of a sophisticated sexual game. BK agreed that her behaviour should be playful and not too knowing.

PK and MG entered USR using a long entrance with MG blindfolded and PK guiding him. As she took the blindfold off, she “presented” the space to MG. BK suggested that, since no light cue or similar effect could communicate this revelation of space, she would need to do this physically. He suggested she make a quick diagonal cross to USL, so that she spoke to MG (DSR) diagonally across the whole space.

BK noted that the scene sets up the relationship between Gonoril and Edmund; compares this to Gonoril and Albany’s relationship; and gives information to the play’s greatest neutral and changes him so that he becomes an active participant.

The big question is, how does the reticent Albany deal with confronting his wife? BK thought that the open nature of the stage may not be supporting this moment. BK noted that HG was at present responding to the strength of Albany’s language by trying to fill the space with it, but since Gonoril is profoundly unimpressed throughout, it might be more powerful if he came out with a stool, and ran quietly through a litany of abuse against his wife. BK wanted Gonoril to be the character out of control, rather than Albany.

He pointed out that Gonoril is not a completely unethical character. BK thought it would be richer if HG explored more sorrow than anger in this scene. His objective should be to get to

her, make her break down in tears and admit that what he's saying is correct. Everything Albany says is very carefully thought through.

HG entered through the central opening, bringing on a chair. He sat down on the chair in the CS. PK paced a figure-of-eight around the pillars as she listened, before crossing US to crouch against the wall, USL. BK thought that it might be possible for Oswald to bring on the chair, as an alternative.

BK was interested in what the presence of a weapon on stage (Edmund's machete?) would do to the dynamic of this scene. It might be justifiable for Edmund to buckle it on her during the 'give the distaff into my husband's hands' moment. BK wanted Gonoril to be able to imagine powerfully killing Albany, right at the moment when Albany confesses he is 'apt enough to dislocate and tear thy flesh and bones.' When the scene was run again, PK switched positions and crouched by the pillar DSR, looking intently at the weapon.

BK gave some suggestions about maintaining focus while a character soliloquises. He wanted to avoid the play grinding to a halt during moments like these.

- 1 May 2001

BK thought that there was no longer any need for PK to enter with one shoe off. This had been useful in helping to tell the story that Gonoril has changed since meeting Edmund, but now the same story was being told in better ways, and the business of putting the shoe back on seemed too distracting.

After the scene had been run through in full, BK looked in detail at the latter half of the scene. He and PK discussed the degree to which Gonoril was affected by Albany's insults, and the degree to which she shuts the door decisively on her marriage. BK was concerned that the relationship should not seem already so destroyed that the need for the scene itself ceased to exist.

HG agreed that it would be helpful and more interesting for him to play the scene at least in part as an attempt to salvage both Gonoril's conscience and their relationship. BK was troubled by the question of why Gonoril does not walk out on Albany at the end of this scene. PK felt that she could not do such a thing, given that Albany is needed as a military leader.

As an exercise, BK asked HG and PK to play through the scene as though it was a conversation on the telephone. HG and PK sat either side of a pillar, not looking at each other. PK used the line, 'France spreads his banner...' as a patriotic rather than purely sarcastic statement.

BK wondered whether it would be better for PK to drop the figure-of-eight blocking for this conversation, and instead to stay rooted to the spot listening to what Albany is saying. BK described the end of their exchange as something from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* but noted that the beginning needs to be quite different. BK asked the actors to try the scene again, with HG playing a strong objective to make Gonoril realise what she has done, but not intending to punish her from the start.

PK sat down on the edge of the playing area as BK suggested, her back to HG, seated CS. She stood and turned on HG for 'Where is thy drum?'

BK wanted HG to kneel and pray (as he is deciding to become a man of action) as PK spoke her soliloquy about Regan's letter. This would avoid having to create a "freeze", and given the circumstances BK thought it was appropriate.

- 4 May 2001

The entrance of Edmund blindfolded picked up on the image of Gloucester retreating with Edgar at the close of the previous scene.

MG made a mocking “charge” at PK, machete drawn, after their embrace. The effect was disturbing despite its playfulness: it is clear that Edmund is from the same mould as Lear.

PK came to DSC for ‘One way I like this well’ – HG and MMc froze in the CS area as she spoke to the audience.

### Scene 17

- 6 April 2001

BK asked the actors to read through the scene, which had been heavily cut. Here the play begins to move in a different direction. The Gentleman, uncharacteristically, does not seem to know why the King of France has departed home early. This may not be a full-scale invasion. BK thought it would be helpful if Curan was embarrassed about the lack of hard information, and if Kent played astonishment and apprehension about this turn of events. The King’s departure is a blow to the battleplan. BA was also keen to stress that Cordelia has remained in the country.

The subject of the letters referred to in this scene was discussed. Gloucester wrote the letters, telling that Lear is heading for Dover. Curan delivers them to Cordelia, along with Kent’s ring and a verbal message from Kent. Cordelia needs to make contact with Lear somehow. This would give the invading French army the figurehead necessary for it to be seen as a force of restoration rather than usurpation.

BK thought the scene should begin *in medias res*, rather than have the two men meet as a part of the scene. BA wondered how much Kent could reasonably doubt Cordelia’s intentions: perhaps Cordelia might be interested in resurrecting her own claim rather than helping her father. BK thought there were stronger choices to play in the scene.

Kent’s line ‘Else one self mate and make could not beget/Such different issues..’ (35) troubled BK. Not only was the gloss slightly unsatisfactory (‘make’ meaning “spouse”) but it undermined the fundamental choice already made, that the three daughters are products of three different marriages. This is the only instance of the word being used this way in the canon, and BK thought this strengthened the argument for adding an “r” as a suffix – so “make” became “Maker”. The sense of the line altered accordingly.

BK thought that Curan recognises Kent. Kent’s decision to stay in disguise longer than is absolutely necessary provoked a long discussion, but it was agreed that the matter should be addressed when working on the scene in which he reveals himself.

BK noted that this is a scene about needing to think quickly and make strategic decisions.

- 18 April 2001

Curan’s reaction to the news that Lear is in the town needed to communicate the fact that he wasn’t aware of this – an uneasy moment for a man who trades in information. Though this is dangerous news, it could also help advance Curan’s objective – to reunite father and daughter. BK wanted RMc to find some way of keeping up the pressure on Kent to tell him where Lear is and how to reach him.

'Tis so; they are afoot' refers to Albany's army, and puzzled BA and GB. BK was interested in the idea of a delay in Gonoril's forces reaching Dover. BK thought that the delay could be caused by Gonoril's decision to take the soldier's part, and by the inevitable complication involved with two commanders ostensibly coordinating their troops as a single unit. BK preferred this reading to an alternative, 'Tis **said** they are afoot'.

BK congratulated BA and RMc on the way in which they did not let a false fluency turn this into a purely expository scene. There are interesting, uncomfortable silences that seem to suggest two men of the military trying to talk to each other about the private emotions of great leaders. It feels awkward because it is.

Curan shows he recognises Kent in naming him in the same breath as Lear and his daughters.

- 4 May 2001

RMc carried a large map as he entered from USR. The scene was played in front of the SR pillar.

### Scene 18

- 6 April 2001

BK noted that the scene would have to begin with a definite military entrance, with drums and colours. Cordelia needs to take control, in lieu of her husband. BK noted that the scene is a minimum three-hander.

- 18 April 2001

TC asked JB to investigate information on earth and water rituals that she might be able to use for 'All blessed secrets/All you unpublished virtues of the earth,/Spring with my tears,' (II.16-18) BK said he felt that Cordelia brings back Nature into the play, and there was a possibility that the floral, organic decorations in the theatre could extend to the stage area, and she might be able to use some of these elements.

TC was troubled by her entrance. The Doctor is there, and she was not sure of the imaginative location. BK said that she has been crying (we learn that from Curan in the previous scene) and the Doctor is concerned about her. BK noted that Cordelia has not seen Lear yet, although she certainly makes a spiritual connection to him as a result of the information she receives. It is her intuition that tells her: 'Alack, 'tis he!' (I.1).

The Doctor advocates rest, recuperation and what BK called 'sanatorium-style psychotherapeutic care', whereas Cordelia turns her attention to pharmaceutical possibilities.

- 4 May 2001

TC carried a sword as she entered. She abandoned this on the ground only to pick it up with more resolution and purpose by the close of the scene, as if it were a standard to march behind.

### Scene 19

- 18 April 2001

The session began with a question about whether Oswald knows about Gloucester's blinding and Edmund's intention of killing his father. BK thought that this was one of those decisions that would be best answered on the rehearsal room floor.

PHD said he felt Oswald's perspective on the world has been altered since Edmund arrived on the scene. The offer of preferment that Regan gives him in expectation of his committing an act of violence also represents new territory for him.

If the news of Cornwall's death is a surprise to Oswald, does he believe that this opens up career possibilities for him? BK said he would like PHD to be seriously considering dumping Gonoril by the end of the scene.

BK and FD discussed Regan's erratic behaviour in this scene. BK remarked that because she is now a military leader, her kittenish ways of getting her own way makes her a very dangerous loose cannon from this point on. BK wanted FD to carry a machete in her hands, which Oswald could pick up as he exits intent on killing Gloucester : 'I'd show what lady I do follow'.

- 4 May 2001

FD carried a machete which she brandished with an alarming abandon. She threw the weapon to the floor, only to strike PHD across the face as punishment for not surrendering the letter. PHD picked up the weapon as he exited.

## Scene 20

- 3 April 2001

BK discussed the background of the scene. GW wondered whether Edgar actually does guide Gloucester to Dover, or whether he simply enacts a piece of powerful therapy. BK pointed out that the coast is a kind of magnet for many different parties in the play, but he agreed that the pair were certainly not on Dover cliffs. The importance lies in the journey, and the bond which that creates between them.

Edgar's failure to reveal his true identity to his father puzzles everyone who tackles the play, but BK stressed the interest Shakespeare's writing shows in the idea of a disguised agent of healing, guiding damaged souls through necessary journeys to understanding and peace.

BK wanted PB to guide GW on a short journey outdoors, from the rehearsal rooms in Southwark to Borough station.

The path to Dover is not just a geographical route, but a metaphor for life's journey – Edgar is trying to give himself unselfishly to someone else, that is, to show true love. Within the course of the scene, Edgar has to become "ripe" to purge the anger of Poor Tom, said BK.

BK talked the two actors through the events of the scene, noting the change of character that PB has to make– from describing the "cliffs" in Gloucester's imagination to the "passer by" who describes the miraculous deliverance of the would-be suicide.

BK asked PB to guide GW around the rehearsal room, negotiating several obstacles by a scheme of whistles. BK thought it would be interesting to experiment with a way of binding the two men together – perhaps a large wooden plank, reminiscent of the stocks, with two holes large enough for a man’s body to fit in.

PB experimented with different rhythms of breath and gait, trying to create an impression of a steep incline or rough terrain. BK liked the impression of great effort this created, and was interested in PB using a whistle in rehearsals, to create a strange, insistent drive forward.

PB thought “Hark, do you hear the sea?” (1.4) might indicate that at this point Edgar is pretending that they have reached the “summit”, and that the sea has opened up beneath them.

BK noted that Edgar moves away from his Poor Tom persona as the miracle of the natural world works also upon him, and so he begins to speak in verse, not prose as before on the heath. Staccato energy behind the prose dissolves into more open vowels in the verse, as the time that he has spent with his father has dissolved the anger that led to his schizophrenia.

The question of Edgar finding a “true voice” over the course of the play developed into a rich discussion between BK and PB. Both felt that at the close of this scene, Edgar finds a steady, true voice, that perhaps not even his father has heard before. He has been through different speech modes and his anger and pain have produced many different voices, but the journey has led him to ultimately to clarity and sincerity, a voice from his heart, perhaps for the first time.

The description of the frightful figure of Poor Tom, as described by Edgar himself, provides a fascinating moment as he takes his own antic disposition off, and speaks about what he was, in an objective way.

PB and GW experimented with a method of moving around that involved GW standing on PB’s feet as he “danced” him to the “edge” of the cliff.

- 6 April 2001

BK noted that Scene 17 describes how ashamed Lear is, and how reluctant he is to see Cordelia. This reluctance is proving problematic for the French, who need him as a figurehead to avoid being seen as a foreign invasion. BK thought that Lear might be enjoying a return to his former military prowess and agility: in part he sees the search parties as French invaders, and in part he is ashamed.

BK asked RMc what he thought he was going to say after ‘Your most dear – ‘ (177). BK thought it was most probably ‘daughter’.

The line ‘smug’ was borrowed from F1, so line 187 became ‘I will die bravely, like a smug bridegroom’. This helped to convey Lear’s joviality. BK noted that in this scene, Lear would probably have drawn impressions of Cordelia’s spectacles on his face. He could go so far as to see the search as simply a game of tag.

- 18 April 2001

A cardboard mock-up of the “giant stocks” was prepared, and the rehearsal began with PB leading GW (who had his eyes shut) around the room inside it. BK thought the timber version could be narrower and shorter. The idea for this prop came from the ‘wooden netherstocks’.

The scene attempts to create a complete environment with words. PB needed to invent sounds too, to represent his leaving Gloucester isolated on the cliff, as well as Edgar's new invented character who "finds" Gloucester on the beach. BK suggested that PB should use the extreme corner USR to watch Gloucester attempt to fall to his death.

After the scene had been played through, BK drew PB's attention to the notion of the change in Edgar's voice that Gloucester comments upon. He noted that PB had arrived at a very strong vowel energy for the Poor Tom voice – the howl is very present in all of his utterances – and BK thought that the new voice here relies more on consonants to create the landscape he needs. BK pointed out the strong onomatopoeia in 'the murmuring surge/That on the unnumbered idle pebble chafes' that perfectly evokes the sound of water running over stones, as an example of the importance of the consonants in Edgar's new voice.

BK wondered if GW should kneel (to pray?) before doing his fall forward. He wanted to capture a slightly absurd quality about the fall itself, as well as its spiritual beauty as a symbolic act.

BK also thought that PB should distance himself further from GW as he comments to the audience 'Why do I trifle thus with his despair?' BK thought he should cross to DS of the SL pillar, perhaps. Something in the move away and the return to Gloucester should suggest distance, too, said BK. It is a technically challenging scene.

- 18 April 2001: Afternoon session (Julian Glover joins)

BK wanted to know if it would be possible for GW to mirror JG's "Buddha posture" at the moment he realises he needs to bear his burdens patiently until he dies a natural death.

BK wanted JG to enter from USL rather as a general embarking on a military inspection. Marching onstage, he would hold aloft an imaginary coin for press money, which he would pause to present to an unseen soldier USC.

The mouse that Lear thinks he sees would be in or close to the "wooden netherstocks" CS. BK was interested in the idea of this hallucination coming from a much earlier and entirely different stage of his development (as a 5 year old, perhaps) into his current stage: a powerful 55year old general. The "challenge", when JG strikes his gauntlet on the SR, would be that of an 18 year old man. BK said that JG should not try to integrate one type of illusion with another. BK wanted JG to use some kind of personal prop as a gauntlet to attack the pillar. It ought to have some connection to the Fool, perhaps.

The issue of opening up Lear's monologue to the Globe audience was brought up. BK thought that the frame might be broken after Lear believes he sights Gonoril and Regan (actually Gloucester and Edgar). Thus, the switch was made on the line, 'They flattered me like a dog...(75). The effect of this direct address was to home in on the truth of it all. The most important thing for the audience was that they developed a sense of compassion for Lear, said BK; it remained to be resolved whether this was best achieved by directly addressing them or not.

BK then asked JG to change his action for 'They flattered me like a dog'. Instead of taking it out to the audience he wanted JG to halt GW as he attempted to clamber to his feet – catching him on all fours. Lear should drop on all fours and "bark" his lines aggressively like a dog, to Gloucester. This created a desperate picture of one old man mirroring another.

BK and PB agreed that the conventional wisdom about Edgar's role in this scene is that he is a detached observer. However, "Sweet marjoram" should come from an understanding of what Lear needs, even if Edgar is simply saying it to himself, as a kind of mild oath.

BK asked JG to try a sweeter, quieter, more humble exploration of the same speech, in an attempt to show a man on a personal journey of discovery. He also wanted the sight of Edgar crouching by the pillar to prompt him to this, rather like an *aide memoire*. Part of the reason for this is that Lear and Edgar shared the experience of the storm together, though Lear might not realise to whom he speaks. JG liked this, and wanted to deliver the line about Gloucester's bastard son being more loving than his own daughters to Edgar. BK thought this would be rich, and also helpful for Edgar: he hears how widespread the influence of his brother's treachery really is.

The 'yon simpering dame' that Lear indicates could be prompted by a face in the audience, but BK wanted JG to experiment with the idea of creating this character in physical terms. Coming out from behind the SL pillar he could mince across the stage before pausing CS to change the tone viciously. BK suggested JG take the antic mood a stage further. The abandoned "stocks" lying CS reminded BK of a double toilet seat, and he thought JG could momentarily mime taking a shit over one of the holes, as he describes what lurks in the lower halves of women.

BK encouraged JG to explore the extreme antitheses in this speech – contrasting the two halves that make up a woman.

JG ran through the "centaur" speech once more, clutching at his groin as though it was on fire or giving him pain. BK stopped him, and asked him to let that impulse take him sharply down to his knees; as he did so, facing DS, he provided another mirror image of GW who was at that point kneeling, facing US.

BK then asked PB to rise from his crouched position and walk across to Lear, crossing all the way behind the SR pillar. As he reached Lear, JG reached out to him as the 'apothecary'. GW then walked on his knees towards the two men for 'let me kiss that hand'. JG pulled his hand away and offered it to PB for 'wipe it first'. GW then embraced JG (both men on their knees) for 'do you know me?'

The hand that Gloucester wants to kiss has to be his right hand – the hand he eats and killed with. This meant that the blocking had to be changed so that the encounter and embrace took place DSC, with Gloucester and Lear facing each other, rather than at the SR pillar, with both men facing front.

BK described what he felt was a "vaudevillian" quality in 'a dog's obeyed in office'. JG waggled GW's ear in the direction that he might 'behold' this spectacle. Thereafter, JG marked the change from prose to verse (at line 155) with an absolute sincerity and seriousness – 'Thou rascal beadle...The usurer hangs the cozener'.

That Gloucester cries is probably because Lear has pinned down the faults and sins of both men, as 'Through tattered rags small vices do appear;/ Robes and furred gowns hides all.' (ll.158-59), said BK.

BK and JG talked about the possibilities of showing a degree of "Globe-awareness" at 'When we are born we cry that we are come to this great stage of fools.' This had to be carefully judged, however: the line could not be given as a sermon (as 'preach' might suggest.) The statement shows the breadth of wisdom that Lear has attained through his ordeal. JG summed up the discussion by calling it 'the opposite of rhetoric'.

The line 'It were a delicate stratagem to shoe/A troop of horse with felt' (173-4) needed to be grounded: BK thought that Lear says it because his former military sense warns him of the approach of Cordelia's soldiers before he sees them. He in fact hears their (bird call) whistle

signal. BK wanted the actors playing French soldiers to approach from various areas of the auditorium, creating a diminishing triangle as they corner Lear. AW should close down the area US of the SR pillar, RMc should approach from DSL, and DC from USL. JG should escape by “dummying” AW and running around the SR pillar and running off USR.

PB was still troubled by the fact that Edgar does not reveal his true identity to Gloucester after his father prays never to be tempted to suicide again. He praises his “father’s” prayer, and comes very close to admitting who he really is. BK advised him that though Edgar realises his father has reached some sense of completion, he himself has not. “Edgar” still has some distance to go before ‘ripeness is all’.

Gloucester’s last speech was cut (Hearty thanks...boot to boot’). The silent acceptance of Edgar’s help (as Character 5!) was agreed to be more beautiful.

BK noted that there was a question about Edgar’s identity at the point when he and Gloucester meet Oswald. Why could he not be the same fisherman that finds Gloucester on the beach? BK favoured the slightly comic “yokel” accent PB adopted (as a response to being called a peasant by Oswald.) BK thought that Oswald the social climber needs to be killed by a yokel. Also, the fact that Oswald is armed with a machete and Edgar has only a nail with him made room for many comic opportunities – Oswald has to lose! BK felt sure that there should be a comic tone to the killing of Oswald (even if it is bleak humour) after the heavy emotional drama of the scene to this point.

- 21 April 2001

PB delivered the speech “from the top of the cliff” from US, behind GW. His aside, ‘Why do I trifle thus with his despair’ he delivered from DSL, crouching in front of the pillar. When asked to leave he ran diagonally to the USR corner.

GW knelt before JG and whispered ‘adultery’ when asked ‘what was your crime?’. This literally prompted JG’s next line, and underlined Gloucester’s awareness of his flaw.

PB thrust the dying Oswald’s head into one of the holes in the oversized stocks as a final insult – BK was keen that there be no tragic quality to Oswald’s death.

- 4 May 2001

PB and GW entered from the “yard”, crossing to CS via the front of the stage and around the SL pillar. GW was rehearsing with eyes closed, and PB had to take care in helping him out of the wooden yoke or harness.

GW bent down from a kneeling position and half-rolled as he “fell” from the “cliff”. PB used his native Hartlepool accent to represent the fisherman who finds Gloucester on the “sand”.

JG entered wearing JMc’s coxcomb Fool hat.

JG kissed PB very gently on the forehead after hearing the “password” ‘Sweet Marjoram’, as though for a second the king recognised Edgar.

PHD entered through the yard, with his borrowed machete.

PB “went ballistic” after reading the letter from Goneril to Edmund, in a terrifying outburst.

## Scene 21

- 6 April 2001

TC thought it was strange that Lear is brought into the scene, rather than being visible from the beginning. She said she would rather have Lear on the stage and begin her speech hovering by one of the doors.

JG wondered whether there would be musicians arriving at any point. He thought the arrival above of a band would create an unnecessary distraction but BK said that the music's significance was that it forms a bridge between purgatory and heaven. It would be rooted in the English folk tradition, said BK.

When Kent says he will not drop his disguise Cordelia doesn't question him. BK thought that Kent is living for the moment when he will be able to reveal himself to Lear, but is generous enough to recognise that it is Cordelia's reunion, not his, that must happen now. There are also political reasons why a banished man would have qualms about being recognised, and it was further agreed that Kent would wish to see Lear restored as sovereign before telling him who he really is.

- 21 April 2001

Lear was brought on seated in a chair on the dolly. JG remained seated as TC spoke the 'restoration /hang upon my lips...' standing on the dolly, behind JG. BK said he thought we might experiment with lighted candles to suggest the "wheel of fire" motif that Lear refers to.

TC switched to kneel in front of JG for 'no cause...' etc.

- 4 May 2001

TC spoke her speech, 'O my dear father...' standing behind JG seated in the chair, as before. However, she spoke the words as much to herself as her father and the audience. This seemed to ground the stage picture in an emotional reality.

RMc spat on a sharpening stone and sharpened a machete as he shared the exchange with BA at the close of the scene. This foreshadowed the battle to come.

## Scene 22

- 9 April 2001

BK noted that there is an ambiguity about the war that breaks out: is it a civil war, or a foreign invasion? Different characters see the situation differently. There is a shortage of information but no shortage of rumour about Lear, about Edgar, about Kent. Things are happening quickly, and people are expecting blood. Albany considers it his patriotic duty to defend England's borders, but he fails to get involved in the factionalism within his own ranks.

BK noticed that Edmund speaks with the same type of authority as that which Lear begins the play. 'Know ..' is the first word Lear speaks, and the first word out of Edmund's mouth in this scene. The audience remains his primary ally, even above Goneril or Regan. Edmund casts himself as a decisive military leader in this scene, even to the point of playing higher status than Albany, arguably the most powerful man in the country since Cornwall's death.

- 21 April 2001

MG and the rest entered CS from the yard, MG firing a crossbow into the seat of Lear's empty chair as he did so.

MG, FD and PK fidgeted impatiently as Albany did his best to sound like a military leader. The text does not supply interruptions, but the derisory body language all three exhibited in Albany's presence had the same effect.

MG restrung his crossbow and took aim at the two pillars – SR for Regan, SL for Gonoril. Deciding to strike neither, he turned US to fire dead centre, on 'Lear and Cordelia'.

### Scene 23

- 9 April 2001

The battle as experienced by the blind Gloucester will serve as a template for the company's work in creating the battle and the storm – both will be primarily sound events. BK thought that most of the battle will take place behind the tiring-house doors.

Edgar does not guarantee that he will see his father again. Most of Edgar's journey in the second half of the play has been to help his father to salvation and to defeat his despair.

- 4 May 2001

TC leads JG and her "army" across the stage as the stage directions indicated. The battle as a vocal event was rehearsed. At times individual, key phrases rang out over the percussive din and the sound of blade on blade.

GW sat in front of the SR pillar and listened to the battle (in the tiring house)

### Scene 24

- 6 April, 2001

The fight featured machetés and a chain, as well as an attempt by Edgar to poke out Edmund's eyes. For the first rehearsal, PB and MG were taken through the sequence blow by blow, being reminded by the instructors of the "double-safety". This principle is that the blow must always aim to fall wide of the mark; at the same time the target must move out of the way. This way, accidents are preventable on two counts, plus the "misses" look reasonable, down to the agility of the target, rather than the inaccuracy of the attacker.

- 9 April 2001

Much has been made of the herald's trumpets and the atmosphere of the Last Judgement that pervades the close of the play. Nothing can be trusted as humans prey on each other. Love, charity and kindness towards others is such a rarity in this world, that the exchange between Lear and Cordelia stands as an oasis in the cruel landscape.

Because of the way Edmund stands up to Albany, we see that victory for the home side does not guarantee stability, but simply throws the leadership up for grabs again.

BK commented on the collapse of protocol: Edmund, in triumph, recognises no higher authority than himself; everyone (including Albany) is incredibly “driven”, said BK. Regan is doubled up in pain, but still feels she must stake her claim to Edmund quickly, before she misses her chance and Gonoril does so instead.

Gonoril is caught red-handed by Albany’s knowledge of the letter she wrote to Edmund. PK noted that other versions of the play attribute the line ‘Ask me not what I know’ to Edmund, not Gonoril. PK said she was slightly concerned about how she would speak this line out of the “desperation” that the play seems to require – she goes off to kill herself – but BK thought it was important that Gonoril exits undefeated by her husband, and makes sure she is mistress of her own destiny.

BK thought that the death of Gloucester signals the collapse of Kent, who until this point has shown extraordinary tenacity and purpose. BK commented on the exquisite irony of Kent’s journey. Kent serves Lear faithfully all of his life, goes into disguise to serve him without revealing his identity, and when he finally reveals himself to his king, Lear is barely conscious, seems not to recognise him, and doesn’t thank him. The reunion cannot possibly carry the weight of the expectation that we attach to it. BK thought this may be because Lear may not be able to come to terms with the implications of Kent’s devotion and continued good service. JG pointed out that it is highly unlikely that Lear is able fully to comprehend anything outside his own grief.

- 19 April 2001

Curan will have his throat cut on stage by Edmund. RMc would be “recycled” as another soldier. On Edmund’s side would be soldiers played by MMc, SH, MF and DC. AW would play a French captain, and carry a flag.

BK asked everyone to remember the consequences of which side you fight on – especially for those survivors from the losing side.

JG and TC were tied together, back to back, and wheeled in on a dolly by Edmund’s soldiers. A supporting pole was suggested to help steady them, but BK was interested in the repetition of the rope image. The Fool had been tied to Lear with a connecting length between them, but Lear and Cordelia should, he said, be united absolutely as one by the rope. This way, he said, it should be absolutely intolerable that Cordelia should be taken from him by hanging on a rope.

As Lear and Cordelia are brought on, Edmund finishes his ablutions before going US to a map table USC. His captains follow him, as the conversation between Lear and Cordelia is after all of no interest to them.

MG and SH played the exchange between Edmund and his captain on the extreme DSR corner. Albany, Gonoril and Regan entered from USL together.

BK noted that the unlikelihood of Albany as a military leader could be dangerous to overstate. Though he undoubtedly saw less combat than Edmund, it was important to remember that Edmund is commander *de facto*, not *de jure*.

The tone in which Gonoril and Regan argue is a difficult one to establish. Gonoril must feel reasonably confident (having poisoned Regan) but the exchange needs to fulfil the prophecy

of monsters of the deep, preying upon each other. BK said he imagined a fight between a leopard and a tiger.

HG asked if Albany would have any troops at hand to help him arrest Edmund. BK said that he thought it would be reasonable for Albany to have a man (PHD) on hand. MG spat on Albany's gauntlet before throwing it back in his face. Edmund has no truck with ritual and ceremony of this kind, he explained.

MG remained standing on the dolly while the Herald (MMc) read out the challenge. PB entered through the central opening. After Edgar announces himself the trumpet would sound, said BK, and the stage would need to be cleared for the fight.

PK said that she felt everything for her hinges on the fight, and that she might try to intervene on Edmund's behalf. BK thought that after the fatal wound to Edmund, Edgar could be pulled away by MMc. PK ran quickly to MG at the SR pillar.

BK pointed out that Albany's situation mirrors Gloucester's: a paper tells of a loved one who wants to kill him. Until Goneril tacitly admits it, he could cling to a hope that it is a forgery, said BK. Albany feels grief as much as fury, HG agreed.

The *denouement* required the onstage onlookers to invent for themselves the feelings of victorious soldiers who have had their glory snatched away from them: the war was fought for a group of corrupt and murderous tyrants. The flag might mean something different from this point on, said BK. Edgar's revelation should stun all of those present, he added.

Albany greets the news of Goneril's death with the assessment that it is a "just act". BK and HG discussed the idea that Albany is not impervious to pity, but in fact the news "empties" him of feeling.

MG asked what type of object he might send as his token of reprieve. BK thought it should be a ring, in keeping with other similar episodes in the production. BK noted that this is a strange moment in the play, when Albany and the rest suddenly remember Lear and Cordelia – much has happened since we last saw them.

- 21 April 2001

The fight began with both assailants holding on to the length of chain. Edmund is the first to abandon it. The conclusion of the fight had Edgar delivering a blow first to Edmund's belly, then to the back of his thigh, rather than by castrating him.

BK noted that he was struck by the fact that at the end of the play Lear ignores the bodies of Regan and Goneril – in a sad way he fails to recognise his error, even when it is too late.

JMc spoke the Third Captain's lines 'Edmund is dead my lord' – before Lear's line 'And my poor fool is hanged.'

The closing lines of the play would be spoken by Edgar in this production, in a departure from Q1. BK wanted to emphasise that Albany makes the same error as Lear by dividing the kingdom, though Edgar and Kent refuse to be part of it. BK did not want Edgar to wear the crown at the close of the play.

- 4 May 2001

TC sang the song the Fool taught her very quietly, under JG's "gilded butterflies" speech. Their "prison" was a square of 4 planks on the rehearsal room floor. This replaced the dolly,

and formed a nice focal point, CS, just in front of the pillars. PB walked into the centre of this square to announce his challenge to Edmund. He did not look at MG before beginning the fight. The planks were struck before the fight and the chain used a separator.

PB marched to DSC to unmask himself, to be recognised by all the characters on stage. He then crossed to his brother as before.

BA entered with a white flag, token of surrender: BA had noted that Kent could not simply stroll into what is effectively the enemy camp. He entered from the yard to wish his 'king and master for aye good night'.

## TECHNICALS

- 8 May, 2001: Day 1 of Technicals

BK worked on preshow music with JMc playing ukelele and TC seated next to him singing. CvK worked on the cue with SM: SM would poke TC with a stick from behind wood façade, so that TC could cue JMc to bring song to natural end. It was agreed that once SM cues TC, SM would cue drums, and singing.

- 9 May, 2001: Day 2 of Technicals

The earth-map of Scene 1 turned into the wallow of sodden earth in Act 11. In order to achieve this water was variously pumped, misted or dripped from the heavens, through the trap. The water was not heated, and caused PB no small degree of discomfort. The stage floor also became quite wet, although with bare boards rather than a painted floor to deal with, this was potentially less hazardous than it might have been. PB was extremely cold, however, and it was pointed out that he would be on stage for some time after getting soaked from above.

- To ease the problem of keeping the doors shut, BK requested that a handle be attached to the back of the doors USC to control shutting. SM attached two rope handles.

- GB worked with PK on rhythm and inflection of the line "His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us/ On every trifle"(Scene 3, lines 6-7).

- BK asked JG to encourage the audience to clap as PHD is carried offstage to yard by SH, MA, and AW (Scene 4, line 87).

- To steady bench on which JM stands to get on the table to sing BK asked DC kneel on the bench and pour drinks.

- BK asked PK to play "Nay, then" with more finality so as to silence Albany. He also asked HG to play "Well, well, the event" with an "I tried my best, we'll see" attitude, lines (Scene 4, lines 346 –47).

- MG and SMs worked the cutting and blood business so that MG could appear to slice his forearm and blood could be seen clearly, without getting it all over his clothing. (Scene 6)

- BK reminded BA that Fortune is a goddess, so BA should look up into the sky when referring to her (Scene 7 line 165).

- BK inserted drums under PB's soliloquy "Edgar I nothing am"(lines 166-186) to increase the speech's momentum.

- 10 May, 2001: Day 3 of Technicals

CVK adjusted position of the organum quartet (for Scene 11) in the attic; the singers were brought forward.

- Scene 12-13 transition needed to be run several times, because of a difficult entrance with the braziers.

- CvK asked for the snare to be taken off the drum, and bass drum added to drum music at JG's exit. She wanted a less military feel (Scene 13, line 94)

- 11 May, 2001: Day 4 of Technicals

BK asked JMc appear in attic for 'Edmund is dead, my lord' (Scene 24 line 289).

### NOTES AFTER PREVIEWS

- Notes after Preview 1: Sunday 13 May 2001

- BK likened the audience at the Globe to that of the Last Night of the Proms – incredibly enthusiastic but also potentially distracting – he complimented the company on the level of subtlety in relationships they found, despite the addictively distracting audience.

BK thought it was a myth that the groundlings are the great unwashed – witness the person who shouted out "Both!" – to Edmund. BK thought there were a lot of educated "Yale type" in the groundlings – they crave the contact, but if we use it too much they will withdraw, he said.

Challenge: 1<sup>st</sup> line of play to 1<sup>st</sup> line of storm should be 65 minutes, said BK. He thought that the company was 'not yet strong, hard, mad or fast enough'. He said a few of the actors would be surprised that they were too quiet (during the quiet moments) for the audience – big reason for this on a first preview is tension, thought BK. BK summed up last night's performance as a "bottle job".

BK described his job as that of a conductor – to find the tempo that is suitable in front of the audience. We often learn about the disproportion between volume and weight of scenes in previews.

Scene 3 and Scene 4, plus Scene 5 were all good in terms of drive and momentum. We started to get into trouble with Scene 6 and beginning of scene 7. Where is the conflict? Upping the stakes usually ups the tempo, said BK. Is the Kent/Oswald conflict one between a man who wants to fight and one that doesn't? Or is it one between two men who want to fight in different ways? The crucial thing is that there is a large group of people fired up because there is a huge fight happening, and it is identified as a LEAR PROBLEM. We need to clarify the reason why stocks are such a big deal – at this point the audience slightly withdrew. There should be a strong smell of blood, of rash and extreme actions to these scenes.

We have to feel how thin the line is between civilisation and utter madness/chaos. Madness is a theatrical metaphor in this play, but it is a very real possibility in life, for most, ordinary

people. Other people's actions can destroy a person's life, and sometimes later the person learns they were in fact responsible.

Madness comes when nobody can hear you, said BK. When madness comes, you have to decide what you need to survive. There is little depression in the play – it is more akin to manic depression or multiple-personality disorders. The urge to suicide is a real one, and not wholly negative. The black humour in “What, is HE dead?” is that Oswald represented Gloucester's salvation and Gloucester envies him.

The gods are just – we hear this. We also hear the reverse. Life does not explain its actions or answer our questions, but the play tries to find them nonetheless.

We are not angry enough, in general, thought BK. Oswald needs the pitfalls of life to affect him more deeply. Every character in the play is affected by a sense of injustice, BK thought. We will be forgiven for a *Lear* that is too angry, rough, hard - but we will not be forgiven for a *Lear* that is too warm-hearted, slow or sentimental. This does not mean that the wit and humour and the possibilities of playing with the audience should have to be sacrificed, said BK (with reference to MG).

“We lost the first dress rehearsal, won the second, and last night was a draw”, said BK.

Then BK opened the floor up to comments from the company.

- JG wanted to rehearse specifics in terms of the savagery BK wanted to find. He also noted that a lot of the laughs concern modern language connotations – we must not be unnecessarily disturbed by this when it happens.
- JMc thought that the audience concentration was terrific – laughs peppering the tragedy throughout is perhaps a remarkable achievement.
- BA noted that the audience has a lot of power, and can let you know what they feel, and what will please them. It is tempting to give them what they want, even if it isn't in the play's interest. BK agreed, but noted that this “smell of common humanity” does not take into account that the company is playing a series of extraordinary characters in extraordinary circumstances.
- PK thought that the daughters had been focussing on the “reasonable” aspect of not wanting to support Lear's enormous retinue – if only 2 scenes later Gloucester is to say ‘His daughters seek his life’ we have to see that there is a very strong vengeful personal element of wanting to hurt their father. BK agreed.
- MG wanted to spend less time giving sideways glances to the audience in the middle of scenes – BK agreed, and wanted him to be much more ruthless – watchable in the same way as Richard III. If the audience gets the idea that the actor is on a fishing expedition, as BK put it, they will hold back. MG added that he wanted his questions in the soliloquies to be real rather than rhetorical. He also noted that for all of the talk in rehearsal about Edmund being the voice of the groundlings, he didn't feel any empathy with them at all – they were not the ‘great unwashed’, after all. It is a problem with the part, he thought. It was his responsibility to make sure that the play doesn't stop for these questions, he said, because that is the golden rule.
- Could we review the light levels in the auditorium? One actor said he felt claustrophobic –a syrupy feel.

- One actor felt that as part of Lear's private army, he should be a more threatening presence.

BK's specific notes:

- RMc will do the pre-show announcement. After the round of applause, FD should go on. When she sits, PK should enter and sit. At this point JMc should exit.
- The door blew open a lot last night. Sand on the hinges slowed this down a lot, but it was still a potential problem. Great care should be taken when shutting the doors.
- Lear is not so strong as he thinks when he re-enters after handing the whip to Albany, thought BK. JG thought perhaps he should have the whip with him throughout Scene 4.
- The first cut that Edmund gives himself – followed by the words “Father” – should release all the evil in the play. The final cut that Edgar gives him has almost the opposite effect.
- The underlying objective to Scene 6 for FD and MF should be to get Gloucester as a political ally. The sympathy for Gloucester is not exactly feigned, but to an extent politic. Play the action, not the quality, said BK. Every time you play a quality it is less effective than when you play an action – try to find the strongest action you can. Both actors confessed that they found it hard to drive their objectives home in the atmosphere of geniality in the scene. GW pointed out that it might help if he registered unease and embarrassment on ‘Shame would have it hid’ rather than simply regret. He said last night he wished Regan would stop making the same point about Edgar's revolt, and that this might be a stronger choice, if it was to be followed through.
- Tension and caution ensued when certain actors began to paraphrase, but in Scene 7 we “have to let the dogs out”, said BK. That scene should show us that the daughters have to kill or be killed. This is also the last time in the play when the daughters really have a shared objective, and it would be interesting to show perhaps different reactions to their shared “victory”, said BK. FD had said she thought they should both be more triumphant – BK thought it would be good if *she* did, and if PK was still reeling.
- Physical acting of the storm was not generally as strong as the vocal acting of the storm. Question more of sustaining rather than having to invent new physical acting.
- MG needed to drive through ‘The younger rises as the old doth fall’.
- GW ‘His daughters seek his death’ – share this with the audience more.
- Interval – first half is too long (1 hour 56) but don't want to change the interval place – could consider it after *Childe Roland* ? Gloucester's bloody eyes need the intermission to be prepared, plus JG didn't want the interval moved. BK said he could cut a couple of minutes from the text without difficulty – the company did not object to this.

• **Notes after Preview 2: 15 May 2001**

BK noted that he found the second preview performance an altogether better experience – the audience was thoroughly engaged throughout. However, he wanted to put it to the company that a speed run (possibly one ‘Act’ only) or two this week might help pace, as long as it didn't blur strongly played intentions etc. He wanted to take out a total of 10-15 minutes from the show.

The Company would be looking at pace and staging over the week. There are a few places where we need to move a central action about three feet upstage because it has been caught in the line between the two pillars. BK asked the Company to try to find the “sweet spot” around the US edge of the stage floor trap.

Diagonals or circles tend to be more effective playing directions than, for instance, across the stage in a straight line.

However, the main priority remained clarity and intensity of objectives. BK was not keen to cut the play at this stage. He favoured speed runs for each half of the play over the next 48 hours as a solution. Speed runs would be just like runs, minus props and costumes – running as opposed to walking, etc. Actors should speak as fast as they can, but bear in mind that some people are naturally faster than others. Speed runs are strong medicine, said BK.

• BK’s specific notes:

- RMc to avoid negative gestures in the pre-show announcement
- Edmund – ‘my services to your lordship’ – there was an overlap with GW’s line
- Goneril’s speech was slow getting out of the blocks – start and end of play need particular work.
- Crownet – needs better business: it looks as though it is being disposed with – could it be flung on top of one of the castles?
- “washed eyes” – refers not just to tears, but to clear-sightedness on Cordelia’s part
- Kent – hit “large speeches” with a bit more weight. Give thought to exit.
- Cordelia, fractured speech through tears is difficult, but try to go for more balance between two elements – if broken up too much it forces TC’s voice into upper register and it sounds strained.
- Scene 1 fails to show the extremity of what has happened, though in terms of character relationships it is very strong indeed. It is a little old-fashioned in terms of staging at the moment – a bit too symmetrical, thought BK.
- The stage and its pillars mean that the space is more sympathetic to single-focus, “lead actors” than dialogues. This production is based on interaction between characters and so we have to work hard to ensure that the focus is shared.
- A “doors rehearsal” was requested by GW – to go through each cue and decide which direction the doors should open in, and who should open them and how. BK said that this would not be possible until later in the week. He also noted that when the doors open down (DS) they look more like stable doors, and when they open in (US) they look more like interior doors.
- Fool ‘...out there’ (end of song) should be darker. At the deepest level, the Fool is trying to save Lear from his fate, and will not ultimately act selfishly to save himself.
- Goneril’s reaction to ‘how ugly didst thou in Cordelia show’ could be stronger – perhaps a slap or kick to the pillar.

- Scene 6 – Edmund and Edgar were very strong, fast, funny and dangerous. PB wanted to come away from the pillar where possible and play more on the corners. Though BK agreed in principle he also noted that this was possibly the best use of the pillar in the whole production!
- Scene 7, Cornwall: ‘What art thou mad, fellow?’ - could try not saying this to Kent, but opening it up to Gloucester and co.. to insinuate: “the lot of them are mad”
- In the Kent soliloquy Cordelia’s voice is a little too strident on the first note.
- Kent needs to be asleep during the Edgar soliloquy. Also, if BA finishes the end of his speech strong and strident, it will help Edgar’s fast entrance into and through the yard.
- ‘The foul fiend flibbertigibbet’ – for the first time on Sunday BK said he connected the “gibbet” part of this with Gloucester – along with the explosive suicidal and homicidal overtones in Edgar’s lines. The line ‘How to prevent the fiend and to kill vermin’ should be very straightforward (from Edgar’s point of view) said BK. He should feel he is devoting his life to trying to beat suicidal tendencies and to survive at the lowest level of humanity.
- PB should shut the central doors after he discovers the hung Fool. This would give MMc a few extra seconds to get out of the harness, but it also made sense that Edgar should have to shut that sight out of his consciousness if he is to move on.
- Blocking of the blinding scene should be more or less set, thought BK. However, the scene will only carry the kind of emotional chaos it needs when the audience is fully aware of what is about to happen. To help this we need to see how ready Regan is to commit an act of violence that she has never even contemplated before. Scenes like these always involve finding a balance between extreme circumstances and emotions and clarity in playing, said BK, but he thought the balance could and should be tipped more in the direction of the extreme. That said, “precision is next to godliness”, said BK, and he didn’t want anyone to risk getting hurt.
- The wallow would be brought on before Edmund’s soliloquy, and a new music cue (a bass drum rumble) needed to be added. The new business could be rehearsed on the stage before the evening’s performance, said BK.
- BK wanted Edgar’s “Dover” soliloquy to be more bloody, hard and real, rather than lyrical or purely descriptive.
- JG brought up the subject of laughter- audiences laugh out loud at moments that would simply be registered silently as “ironic” in a “proper” theatre. Though this was welcome, PB pointed out that there was a devil in there as well. BK agreed and noted that laughter was welcome as long as we feel it is Shakespeare’s laugh, rather than our own embellishment.
- Gloucester needs to be further US for his attempted suicide.
- BK wanted PB to look at the audience, not at GW, when describing the “chalky bourne” – as this is in Edgar’s imagination there is no point in looking US.
- Cordelia/Kent scene – the slow nature of the beginning of the scene worked beautifully in rehearsal, but seemed sabotaged in performance. Perhaps the entrance could have a different, even triumphant energy to it. TC and BA realised that they were playing in a rather sombre fashion because they were mindful of the tone of their next scene to follow.

- BK asked TC and JG felt about crossing the stage immediately before the battle. BK felt it was an academic response to the stage direction in the text. Was there a way of showing the final moments of preparation for the battle in a different way? TC and JG both admitted they disliked the movement as it stood. It would be addressed before the evening's performance, said BK.
- The issue of the battle being from a blind man's perspective was brought up. BK thought the scene needed further development.
- *Gaudeamus Hodie* – as a curtain call. BK noted that he thought it was perhaps surplus to requirements after Sunday's performance. He wondered if the audience was confused about when to stop and recommence applause. GW said he really disliked it, but other cast members disagreed. The issue would be revisited the following day, said BK.
- Edgar's speech about Kent's disguise etc needed to be spoken more out of a real need, rather than a desire to bring the audience up to date, said BK. It was too late in the play to tax the audience's patience with an obvious "storytelling" episode.
- 'an excellent thing in woman' – the laughs this line had been getting over the last two performance divided the company.
- BK wanted to try the end of the play with three separate exits: Albany speaks, then exits; Kent speaks and exits, and finally Edgar speaks before exiting. We would then be left with the image of the father and his three daughters alone on the stage. This would have to happen after this evening's performance, said BK.
- We need to attack the play and try to take 5 minutes off the time, BK reiterated. Speed runs on Wednesday and Thursday would hopefully take off more. He didn't want to think about cuts or extra intermissions at this stage. He noted that the play would commence on time, and not be held. Same rule for intervals.
- The fight: RC was very pleased with the way Sunday's performance had gone. He wanted to add in an extra move, whereby Edgar would stick his machete into the cladding around the SR pillar after killing Edmund. This had to be approved by BK, HW and Stage Management. The move was tried at the Fight Call before the evening performance on 15 May.

• **Notes after Preview 3: 16 May, 2001**

After a very fast performance that took around 13 minutes off the playing time, MG asked that the discussion be shifted to ways in which to play intentions more strongly rather than playing them more quickly. FD thought it would be useful to focus only on specific, rather than general objectives. BK said that though it would take too long to go through each moment, he did want to sense that the madness in the play was being released through people's objectives.

PK worried that during the previous performance her playing had been reduced to one note, and that nuances and subtleties had been sacrificed. MF admitted he had slipped into just "being faster and shouting". BK retorted that, *au contraire*, he thought last night was one of his finest performances!

MF said he was beginning to lose his former conviction that Cornwall was like a "good German" (not a Nazi, in other words). BK reassured him that Cornwall was at root still a decent man.

• Notes after Preview 4: 17 May, 2001

BK noted that certain markers in the story needed to be made clearer for the audience. The first half of the show the night before had been strong, but the expectation that enlightenment would be rewarded was ultimately thwarted in the final stages of the play, and though this vision was a dark one the company needed to reinforce this, rather than succumb to lightness. The foul fiend comes back at the end of the play, said BK – Edgar’s last words have not banished the suicidal undertones they had earlier.

There is hope in the second half – smiles on people’s faces – and these need to be reinforced too. The enlightened people are learning, as Lear learns; at the moment we have not quite realised all of the spiritual elements of the play in its “pastoral” phase, said BK.

The *Gaudeamus Hodie* as a curtain call was to be changed – instead a counter-clockwise movement would ensure that all the auditorium has the chance to express their appreciation, and feels acknowledged. The band would of course be acknowledged, but BK felt that given the timbre of the play it was inappropriate to burst into song at the end.

Fortune’s Wheel as an idea is slightly underused, said BK. Though we have integrated it into the set it occurred to BK that very few characters in the play are allowed to live everyday, predictable lives – there are so very many chance occurrences and life-changing events.

JG asked if he could try the ‘Kill the physician’ line without brandishing a sword. BK said we could take a look at this on stage before the evening’s performance.

JMc brought up the notion of the Fool’s songs being improvised – why then did the knights join in on ‘apish...’. BK thought it was probably true that the knights were anticipating the word choice a little too early, but in principle he approved of everyone joining in as soon as the first vowel of the last word had been sounded.

Chains (RMc and DC) to put on Kent’s wrists are too noisy to hear words over the top. The business needs to happen after Cornwall’s line ‘I’ll answer that’ (a few lines later than before).

BK noted that the stage is wide enough to deal with double or split focus, in fact to go for single focus all the time is sometimes pedantic.

Wheel of Fortune rope is a tempting proposition for groundlings – is there a way to secure it so that the rope is in a correct state when PB has to pull it? FOH issue, perhaps.

There was a discussion about the meaning and possibilities behind the lines ‘I will do such things...’ BK wondered if it could be regarded as a “pre-Alzheimers” moment, that may be prompted by Gonoril giggling at Lear stumbling over his words and losing track of his argument. JG and PK were both cautious about the prospect of inserting a laugh before this line but PK certainly wanted to review her reaction to Lear’s behaviour at the end of this scene.

BK thought that the second storm scene was basically sound, except that JMc was upstaging himself as he reacted to the sight of Lear and Edgar in the wallow. He should adjust his position so that he is US of Lear for this part of the scene.

PK pointed out that the energy with which Edmund and Gonoril enter (blindfolded, etc) is entirely at odds with the exit music cue from the last scene. BK noted that theatrically the

entrance is parodying the scene before, and so it would be interesting to explore ways of undermining the music in terms of tonality in the entrance.

Regan whistling needed to be editorialised, said BK – it relates entirely to Lear’s whistling in the court scene.

BK wanted GW and JG to sit DS on the central steps – rather like Didi and Gogo. Sitting US on the jakes, they were in “long shot” for the entire time.

The contact between Edgar and Edmund needs to be maintained after the fight – more of Edgar’s story needs to be told to his brother, he thought. MG thought this was a good idea and realised he had been concentrating of acting his death to the exclusion of other elements of the scene.

### **CHANGES MADE AFTER THE RE-REHEARSAL PERIOD**

The 2001 Season featured a new experimental re-rehearsal period for each play. This was introduced so that the Master of Play and the Company could revisit the play after gaining valuable insights with the experience of playing before an audience.

A comparison was made between the performance on 22 May 2001 (7.30pm) and 5 August 2001(1pm), in order to record changes made after the re-rehearsal period.

The following changes had been made:

Scene 1

Cordelia enters centre stage after Regan and Gonoril. Gloucester enters alone followed by Kent.

Scene2

Edmund throws the ripped letter into the audience and walks, instead of dancing, to the chair to hang it up on the wall.

Scene 4

Line 161, only the fool says ‘apish’

Scene 7

Edmund has a sword which he draws after Gloucester exits.

Scene 11

Edgar enters carrying a cradle. Kent picks up cradle, line 153.

Scene 13

Gloucester brings on the cradle. Cradle placed between the two stools at the front of the stage.

Scene 15

Two soldiers enter after Gloucester and Old man and exit several lines later.

