

## TOUR ORGANISERS PACK



### Arson About by Mark Wheeler

A theatre-in-  
education  
programme  
for Year 8 pupils to  
deter arson attacks

**STOPWATCH**  
THEATRE COMPANY



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**Thank you** for organising a tour of Arson About in your area. This pack is designed to help you sell the programme to your schools and organise the timetable for the week.

**WHAT'S INSIDE:**

How to book a tour in schools . . . . .	<b>3 page</b>
Publicity mailing . . . . .	<b>5 page</b>
Generic school booking sheet . . . . .	<b>6 page</b>
Teachers pack (including seating plan) . . . . .	<b>7 page</b>

The teachers pack is available as a separate pdf, so that you can e-mail it directly to teachers who have booked, or so that they can download it directly from our website.

**Good luck!**



Adrian New  
Director  
StopWatch Theatre Company

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## How to book a schools tour

At StopWatch Theatre Company, we have always believed that Theatre-in-Education is a special way to communicate with young people. The fact that you have decided to work with us suggests that you feel that way too. We hope that these 10 Tips will help ensure the run up to the tour goes as smoothly as possible.

### 1. START EARLY

Schools programme activities much further in advance than you think, so the more notice you can give them about a tour, the better chance of them taking it.

### 3. THE FIRST APPROACH

This pack includes a publicity leaflet that you can print in colour or B&W to distribute to your target schools. You should accompany it with a letter from your organisation explaining why you are promoting the programme and suggesting dates for our visit.

### 4. GET A CONTACT

If you don't already have a contact in a school, you may feel it is appropriate to make the first approach to the head teacher. It is unlikely that the head will actually organise the visit so when this task has been delegated to a teacher, make sure you get an e-mail address and even a mobile or home number for that teacher. Teachers are rarely near a phone in school time, so alternative methods of contacting them can really help.

### 5. CHANGEOVERS

Geography is an important factor when we are visiting 2 schools in a day. Please ensure there is plenty of time to get from one school to the next, allowing for traffic problems, and ensuring the team have time for a lunch break. Changeover journeys should be no more than 30 minutes if we have a full schedule in a day.

### 2. THE SCHOOL BOOKING SHEET

This is a mini-contract between your organisation and the school, and contains all of the information that we need to know in advance of our visit. A generic form is included in this pack, but you will be sent a personalised version by e-mail when your tour dates are confirmed. When the school has agreed I would recommend that you personally visit to complete the booking form. It can be done by e-mail, fax or post, but the personal approach can save lots of time chasing it up when it is not returned! Make sure that the schedule for each school fits in with our basic criteria, and allows sufficient time for the other school that day. Both parties should sign the sheet and each keep a copy. You will then send a further copy to us when they have all been completed.

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## 6. TO CHARGE, OR NOT TO CHARGE?

Many of our clients offer our programmes to schools free of charge. However there are a significant number who feel it important to charge a fee to schools, even if it is only a token amount. They believe that a school VALUES the programme a lot more if they have invested their budget in it, and, from experience, the likelihood of last minute cancellation is almost eliminated if a fee is charged. We agree with the principle of charging, but ultimately this is your decision.

## 7. TELL US ABOUT IT

We ask for the completed tour schedule and Schools Booking Sheets a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of the tour - the earlier the better. If there are any scheduling problems, they can be picked up and amended in plenty of time. We also ask for a location map for each school. We carry A-Zs for most areas that we visit, but schools often have split sites or strange accesses that a prepared map can help with.

## 8. KEEP IN TOUCH

Communication really does help the success of a tour. If there are any unusual requests or problems from schools, do check them out with us. And do drop schools the occasional e-mail reminding them of their booking and ensuring everything is going to plan.

## 9. DURING THE TOUR

We welcome your support on a daily basis and are always pleased to see you and your colleagues in schools, but we do understand that it is not always possible for you to come to every performance. We endeavour to collect a completed feedback form from every school, and these will be e-mailed to you after the tour.

## 10. IT IS EASIER NEXT YEAR!

Anecdotally, our clients always tell us that the first year is the hardest. Schools like things that they know, so when they have had one successful visit, it is much easier to convince them to do it again next year. As soon as you are ready to book the programme again, we will be delighted to allocate your dates and start the process again!



StopWatch Theatre Company presents

# Arson About

by Mark Wheeler

an arson prevention theatre-in-education programme  
for Year 8



## What's the story?

Ian, his girlfriend Molly and his best mate Stueey are on a night out to the fair. Hanging over the two boys is the accusation that one of them has been sending threatening notes to a teacher. They decide to go into their school after evening classes have finished to investigate. But when Ian has to make a choice between his girlfriend and his best mate, he is literally playing with fire. Who will he choose and what will be the consequences of the teenagers "just arsing about"?

## Is there a workshop?

Yes. When the play has finished the audience learn more about the problem of arson and resolve the story of the play. The first section uses forum theatre to establish the potential consequences of deliberately started fires. Then Ian and Stueey are interrogated by the audience to find out why they behaved as they did. When the audience find them both guilty, the consequences for themselves, their victims and the community at large are graphically demonstrated, and the audience are left with chilling proof that Fire Kills.

## Who are StopWatch?

A professional theatre-in-education company who have been touring the UK since 1990. Their reputation for quality performances and workshops is unrivalled.

## How does it work?

We come to your school to perform. We need access to the hall 1 hour before the performance time to set up equipment. The total running time is then 75 minutes. The play lasts 45 minutes, and is immediately followed by a 30 minute workshop to the whole audience. The maximum audience for each performance is 200 Year 8 students. It will then take us 20 minutes to vacate the space.

## How do I book?

Your local Arson Task Force or Fire Safety Officer will tell you the available dates in your area and allocate you a morning or afternoon slot.



**STOPWATCH**  
THEATRE COMPANY

More information can be found at [www.stopwatchtheatre.com/arson](http://www.stopwatchtheatre.com/arson)



# Your City Tour 1 - 5 July 2007 School Booking Sheet

Performance Date: .....

School Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Postcode: .....

Telephone Number: .....

Name of Organising Teacher: .....

Name of Back-up Teacher: .....

*(in case organising teacher is absent on the day)*

- We need access to the hall 60 minutes before the performance starts
- The performance and workshop last 75 minutes in total
- Please let us know if there is a time we cannot run over (ie if there is a lesson change or school break that we must stick to)

Schedule:	Please state times:
Sole access to hall from	
Performance starts	
Workshop must be finished by	

Please ensure you have read and understood the teachers pack which explains how the programme works and what you need to provide on the day.

Please also ensure that the back-up teacher has this information.

Signed:

.....  
Organising Teacher

.....  
On behalf of Fire and Rescue Service

**TEACHERS PACK**



**by Mark Wheeler**

A theatre-in-education programme for  
Year 8 pupils to deter arson attacks

**STOPWATCH**  
T H E A T R E C O M P A N Y

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**Thank you** for inviting StopWatch Theatre Company to perform Arson About by Mark Wheeler in your school. We understand that organising events likes this can cause significant disruption to the school timetable, so appreciate your help in making our visit happen. These pages should tell you everything you need to know about our visit.

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### **What is it?**

Arson About is a theatre-in-education programme for Year 8 students about the consequences of Arson. It tells the story of a typical incident in a school that culminates in tragedy.

### **How does it work?**

It is delivered in a single 75 minute session which comprises a 45 minute play and 30 minute workshop. It may only be performed to Year 8 students, with a maximum group size of 200 per performance.

### **What is the story?**

Ian, his girlfriend Molly and his best mate Stueey are on a night out to the fair. But hanging over the 2 boys is the accusation that one of them has been sending threatening notes to a teacher. They decide to go into their school after evening classes have finished to investigate. But when Ian has to make a choice between his girlfriend and his best mate, he is literally playing with fire. His wrong decision causes Molly's death and widespread destruction of the school. We see the consequences on Molly's family, and the boys themselves as the police investigation begins.



### **What will the students learn?**

When the play has finished the audience learn more about the problem of arson and resolve the story of the play. The first section uses forum theatre to establish the potential consequences of deliberately started fires. Then Ian and Stueey are interrogated by the audience to find out why they behaved as they did. When the audience find them both guilty, the consequences for themselves, their victims and the community at large are graphically demonstrated, and the audience are left with chilling proof that Fire Kills.



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## What do I need to do on the day?

- Don't tell the audience what it is about - the element of surprise is important!
- Do allow only Years 8 to participate – other age groups are not suitable and may be disruptive
- Do set up the chairs according to our seating plan before we arrive, or make some assistance available when we arrive
- Do ensure we have sole access to the hall 60 minutes before the start time. We will be setting up lighting and sound equipment, and require 3 mains power points
- The production uses one short blast from a smoke machine – COSHH data sheet is available
- Do bring the audience to the hall 5 minutes before the start time, ideally without coats and bags
- Do ensure we have a full 75 minutes to perform the play and workshop
- Do be aware that it will take us around 20 minutes to pack up and clear the hall
- Don't ask us to perform in a gym or sports hall unless there is no alternative. These spaces make very poor theatres and the audience will have difficulty hearing everything
- Don't ask the team to perform the play or workshop without teacher cover. There must be a teacher in attendance at all times
- Do make sure you have downloaded the follow-up pack from our website. This contains a number of flexible activities that are ideal for tutor or PSHE lessons
- Do try to allow form teachers and PSHE staff to attend the performance. This will maximize the benefit of the follow-up sessions



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## Arson About Seating Layout (208 seats)

