

# Samuel Pepys:

## *Peeps into the Past*

*A play about Samuel Pepys – and his diary*

### **Cast:**

TV announcer	Doctor Where	A crowd of people
Young Samuel	Older Samuel	Doctor Hollyer
Mrs Pepys	John Cade	Jane the maid
Lord Montagu	Sea Captain	King Charles II
Beggar	Three ladies	

(All other small parts can be played by members of the London crowd.)

### **Props:**

Two tables (plus chairs) for TV announcer and Samuel Pepys; extra chairs for theatre scene, and so on; a 'Sonic' Drill!; barbecue tongs; curtain/sheet; white tennis ball; quill pens; large 'ink' bottle; ruler; diary; toy dog; ship's wheel; king's crown; cardboard rosebush; a rose; a small bag of coins; several buckets; song sheets for the crowd.

### **Sound effects:**

'Time Travel' music; 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' music.

### **Setting:**

'Time Travel TV' studio; chairs and tables are ready to use...



*(Enter Announcer and Doctor Where.)*

**Announcer:** Good morning, and welcome to our Time Travel TV Studio. Today, we are going on a thrilling journey with a real, live Time Baron! Hello, Doctor... um... Doctor...er?

**Doctor Where:** I'm Doctor Where.

**Announcer:** So, Doctor Where – WHERE are you taking us today?

**Doctor Where:** *(Giggling.)* Hee, hee, hee. You say everything TWICE. You called me Where-Where! Hee, hee, hee.

**Announcer:** No, no! I said: 'Doctor Where – WHERE are you taking us?'

**Doctor Where:** Hee, hee, hee. You did it again!

**Announcer:** Stop it, stop it!

**Doctor Where:** Sorry, sorry. *(Tries not to giggle.)* Today, I'm taking you back to 1649. It's a cold winter's day, and we're going to meet a boy called Samuel Pepys.

**Announcer:** *(Giggling.)* Samuel PEEPS. Does that mean he PEEPS a lot?

**Doctor Where:** Not that sort of Peeps. It's P...E...P...Y...S. It just *sounds* like Peeps.

**Announcer:** So what *was* Samuel Pepys doing in 1649 then?



**Doctor Where:** Well, actually... He was PEEPING! I'll wave my Sonic Drill and you can see for yourself.  
*(Time Travel music is heard...)*

**Announcer:** And here we are in Old London Town, where a HUGE crowd is gathering.

*(The crowd enters noisily. Everyone is pointing stage-left. Young Samuel is at the back.)*

**Doctor Where:** Look! Look! There's poor King Charles.

**Samuel:** *(Jumping up and down.)* I want a peep! I want a peep!

**Crowd boys:** And here comes the Axe Man! *(Axe Man strolls across the stage cheerfully.)*

**Samuel:** Where? I can't see! Let me peep. *(He wriggles through the crowd.)*

**The crowd:** *(Looking off-stage and up.)* Oooh! *(Looking down.)* Aaaaargh!

*(They sing to the tune of 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.')*

Poor King Charles has lost his head,  
Cromwell's ruling us instead...  
No more Maypoles. No more plays.  
No more jolly holidays –  
We must dress in brown and grey,  
Pray all night and work all day.

*(They all exit gloomily. Samuel follows them.)*

**Doctor Where:** So Samuel Pepys peeped at his first AMAZING event.



**Announcer:** Peeped? Is that all? I thought famous people had to be BRAVE.

**Doctor Where:** Samuel Pepys *WAS* brave, and I'll prove it to you. But first, we'll have to jump NINE years. *(He waves his Drill, and the 'Time Travel' music is heard.)* Samuel has grown up, and it's OUR turn to do the peeping.

*(Older Samuel enters sadly. He is followed by a boy, a girl and Dr Hollyer. The Doctor wears a large 'DOCTOR' badge, and holds tongs behind his back.)*

**Announcer:** That must be Samuel. And we're in a gloomy room. With a table...

**Dr Hollyer:** Well, well, well, Sam. Are you feeling well?

**Samuel:** No. I've got terrible pains, Doctor Hollyer. Oooch! Ouch! Aaaargh!

**Dr Hollyer:** That means you have a stone inside you. I must operate at once. *(He waves a big pair of barbecue tongs at Samuel.)*

**Samuel:** Oh dear. Will it hurt?

**Dr Hollyer:** Yes. A lot. Now lie down on this table while I get ready. *(Snaps tongs.)*

**Samuel:** *(Climbing on the table, helped by boy and girl.)* Can you put me to sleep?

**Dr Hollyer:** Why? Are you tired?

**Samuel:** No. I'm TERRIFIED.



- Dr Hollyer:** Then you'll just have to be very brave.  
Curtain!  
*(Boy and girl hold up curtain to hide the table and the operation!)*
- Samuel:** *(As boy and girl count quickly to 50.)* Eeeek!  
Ooooooch! Help! Aaaaaah!
- Announcer:** And 50 scary seconds later...
- Dr Hollyer:** Curtain! *(Boy and girl remove the curtain.)*  
Here's the cause of all your troubles, Sam.  
*(He proudly holds up a white tennis ball.)*  
A STONE!  
*(Boy and girl clap. Sam climbs off the table.)*
- Samuel:** No wonder it hurt. Thank you Dr Hollyer.  
Can I have a sticker now?
- Dr Hollyer:** Sorry Sam. I'm afraid stickers haven't been invented yet. But you CAN keep your stone.  
*(Gives it to Samuel, and they exit with the boy and girl.)*
- Announcer:** I suppose Samuel was a BIT brave. But what did he do next? Climb a mountain? Fight a fire?
- Doctor Where:** No. He lived in a little house with his wife and worked for Lord Montagu.
- Announcer:** That's SO boring! Didn't he ever do anything important?
- Doctor Where:** Indeed he did – and we're about to see it happen. *(Waves Drill, 'Time Travel' music plays.)* It is January 1660 and Samuel Pepys is... SHOPPING!



*(Samuel enters with quill pens. John Cade enters with a book and a large diary.)*

**Samuel:** Hello. Are you John Cornhill of Cade?

**John Cade:** No. I am John Cade of Cornhill, and I sell books. Would you like a story book, a science book or a picture book?

**Samuel:** I would like an empty book, please.

**John Cade:** What? With no writing inside it at all?

**Samuel:** Yes. I mean no. I want to do all the writing myself.

**John Cade:** What a strange man. *(Gives the diary to Samuel and exits.)*

**Samuel:** Now to begin my famous diary. *(Sits at his table and begins to write...)* This book belongs to Samuel Pepys. London. England. The World. The Universe. Ummmmm. I'm stuck. MRS PEPYS! *(Mrs Pepys enters.)*

**Mrs Pepys:** *(In a panic.)* Yes Sam. What is it? A fire? A giant rat?

**Samuel:** No. I'm writing my famous diary and I've forgotten what we did today.

**Mrs Pepys:** Ummmm. We had leftover turkey for supper. And I burned my finger.

**Samuel:** Thank you Mrs Pepys. *(She exits crossly. Sam stays at his table.)*



**Announcer:** Samuel's *STILL* boring. Didn't he ever write about anything BIG?

**Doctor Where:** Yes he did. You see, Cromwell died and the people wanted a new leader. So a few months later...

*(Drill waves, music plays, and Samuel writes in his diary as The crowd enters...)*

**Crowd boys:** We want a new leader.

**Crowd girls:** Someone a bit like King Charles I.

**The Crowd:** What about King Charles II? *(They start to sing...)*

Cromwell's dead. We want a king.  
Who will let us dance and sing.  
We want Maypoles. We want plays.  
We want jolly holidays.  
Charles II is our man –  
Can we find him? Yes we can!

*(They wave and exit.)*

*(Lord Montagu enters with the Sea Captain. The Captain holds a ship's wheel.)*

**Montagu:** Put that pen down, Sam. We're off to Holland on a big ship.

**Samuel:** Certainly, Lord Montagu. But I must take my famous diary with me.

**Captain:** All aboard! *(He faces forwards, sways and turns the ship's wheel.)*



**Samuel:** *(Standing next to the Captain, and swaying.)*  
Why are we going to Holland?

**Montagu:** *(Standing next to Sam, and swaying.)* We're looking for a mystery man.

**Samuel:** *(Swaying.)* How mysterious... Do you feel a bit seasick, Lord Montagu?

**Montagu:** *(Swaying.)* Yes I do, Sam.

**Samuel:** *(Swaying.)* So do I!

**Captain:** *(Swaying.)* And me. LAND AHOY! *(They all stop swaying.)*

**Montagu:** That's better. Let's go ashore and look for the mystery man.

*(King Charles II enters. He has a toy dog in one hand and his crown in the other.)*

**Samuel:** Good idea. *(He steps backwards and bumps into King Charles II.)* Sorry!

**King Charles:** Don't worry. My crown is only slightly dented. *(Puts his dog down.)* Sit! Good dog. *(Puts on his crown.)*

**Samuel:** I think it's the mystery man.

**Montagu:** I think it's King Charles the Second. Would you like to ride home on a big ship, your Majesty? *(Montagu and Samuel both bow.)*

**King Charles:** Will it make me seasick? *(Pats his dog and picks it up.)*





**Samuel,  
Lord Montagu  
AND Sea**

**Captain:** *(All shaking their heads.)* No, no, no. Not at all.

**King Charles:** Oh – all right then.

**Doctor Where:** So they all sailed home and they all felt seasick.  
Even the King's little dog.

*(King Charles, Montagu, Samuel and the Sea Captain all stagger off stage.)*

**Announcer:** That was a bit more interesting. But did Samuel ever have any fun?

**Doctor Where:** Yes, he did. Pepys liked to peep at plays, and King Charles the Second soon opened the theatres again...

*(The crowd enters with Samuel. King Charles II enters and they all cheer. Everyone sits on a chair as if they are in a theatre. Samuel sits beside the King.)*

**Samuel:** What's the play called?

**Woman:** *The Beggar's Bush.\**

**Man:** And there are REAL women in it!

**King Charles:** *(Proudly.)* That was MY idea.

**Crowd:** Ssssh! *(A beggar enters, carrying a cardboard rose bush.)*

**Beggar:** I will sit by this rose bush and beg. *(Three ladies enter.)* Please help me!



**Lady One:** A hungry beggar. I shan't give him anything.  
*(Touches a rose.) Ouch!*

**Lady Two:** He's all scruffy. I'll laugh at him. Ha, ha, ha...  
*(Touches a rose.) Ow!*

**Lady Three:** A poor beggar. I shall give him ALL my  
money. *(Gives him a small bag.)*

**Beggar:** I am in fact... *(He throws off his cloak.)*... a  
handsome prince. Marry me!

**Lady Three:** Ooooh! It's my lucky day. *(He gives her a  
rose. The other ladies cry.)*

**Crowd:** Hooray! *(They clap as the actors bow. All  
exit. Samuel sits at his table.)*

**Samuel:** And that was the first time I ever saw a  
woman on the stage. *(Writes.)*

**Announcer:** So – Pepys enjoyed himself. But did he ever  
write about ordinary people?

**Doctor Where:** Oh yes. And in 1665, there was a sad story  
to tell..

*(The crowd enters as Time Travel music plays. Everyone looks  
very ill.)*

**Crowd girls:** We're all shivery.

**Crowd boys:** We're all shaky.

**The crowd:** Oh no! We've caught the Plague.  
*(They start to sing sadly.)*



Fetch the Doctor – Quick, quick, quick!  
We are feeling sick, sick, sick.  
We have caught the Plague and so  
We must stay indoors you know...  
We will moan and groan and cry –  
We don't want to die, die die.  
*(All exit, moaning and groaning.)*

**Samuel:** *(Writing.)* When will this terrible Plague end?  
Can nothing stop it?

*(He stops writing and walks sleepily to another chair. Mrs Pepys enters sleepily and sits beside him. They both fall asleep and snore quietly.)*

**Announcer:** Did anything stop the terrible Plague?

**Doctor Where:** You'll soon find out – we're jumping to 1666.  
*(Time Travel music...)*

**Jane the maid:** *(Entering in a hurry.)* FIRE! FIRE!

**Samuel:** *(Half asleep.)* What's happening?

**Jane the maid:** *(Crossly.)* FIRE! FIRE!

**Mrs Pepys:** We don't need a fire, Jane. It's quite warm enough.

**Jane the maid:** *(Wearily.)* That's because London's burning.  
Fire! Fire!

**Samuel:** Come on, Mrs Pepys. Let's go and peep at  
The Great Fire of London.



**The crowd:** *(They enter with buckets, and form a line. The buckets are passed along, then rushed back to the start of the line as everyone sings...)*

There's a fire in Pudding Lane,  
We must put it out again.  
Pass the buckets. Fill them fast.  
Watch the water whooshing past,  
While the flames fly round the town  
Burning all our houses down.  
*(They all race away.)*

**Mrs Pepys:** We must save our most precious things, Sam.

**Samuel:** You're right – quick! Let's dig a hole and bury my favourite cheese.

**Mrs Pepys:** Your cheese? Is that all?

**Samuel:** You're right again. I must save my famous diary as well. Come on! *(He grabs his diary, then runs away with Mrs Pepys and Jane.)*

**Announcer:** Oh dear – was everyone killed?

**Doctor Where:** No. Only nine people died, but thousands of people were homeless.

**Announcer:** What about the terrible Plague?

**Doctor Where:** It was TOASTED. And we know all about it because of Samuel's diary.

**Announcer:** So, in a way, Samuel Pepys was a Time Baron. Because his diary still lets us peep into the past!



**Doctor Where:** Exactly. But he had to stop writing in 1669, because he thought he was going blind. I think I'd better say goodbye to him now – and do my best to cheer him up.  
*(Time Travel music plays.)*

*(Samuel enters and sits at his table. He writes slowly, then puts down his pen.)*

**Samuel:** I'm going blind. I can't write my diary any more. My life is over.

**Doctor Where:** No it isn't, Mr Pepys. You'll have many more adventures – you'll even be locked in the Tower of London for a little while. But you won't go blind. You'll be a rich man – and you'll never be forgotten.

**Samuel:** But will my famous diary be safe? Will anyone read it?

**Doctor Where:** Of course they will.

*(The whole cast enters and sings a final chorus...)*

**The cast:** With your diary safe at last  
We can peep into the past...  
Charles comes home to wear his crown,  
Plays are seen in London Town,  
Plagues are feared and firelight leaps –  
Thank you, thank you, Samuel Pepys!

*(Everyone cheers. Samuel steps forward and the whole cast takes a bow.)*

\* **Note:** *The Beggar's Bush* was a real play, and the cast included real women... BUT the script in this show is imaginary.

