



***A Gomito Theatre and Polka Theatre  
Co-Production***

# **Chester Tuffnut**



## **Learning and Participation Pack**



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# About the Pack

This pack is for everyone coming to see Chester Tuffnut. Its aim is to support and enhance your trip to see the show by providing activities and resources which can be delivered and used in an education setting and at home. The activities are designed to give you ways in which to explore the themes from the play after your visit to the theatre. They will investigate ideas from Chester Tuffnut using arts and crafts and drama.

The pack supports the EYFS framework and engages with the characteristics for effective learning; playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically. The play responds to the prime areas of learning at the Foundation Stage: personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, physical development as well as expressive arts and design, and understanding the world.

Chester Tuffnut is a story about discovering new places, making friends and inspiring everyone to have at least one adventure a day. We hope you will be inspired by the show and these resources to have as many adventures as Chester does. We would love to see your creations so please do share your pictures with us by tweeting @GomitoTheatre #ChesterTuffnutAdventures.



# The Show

## Chester Tuffnut

An action-packed escapade with a one-of-a-kind creature.

Gomito have discovered a brand new type of creature: the treemole. Mischievous Chester takes centre stage in this celebration of individuality.

Chester Tuffnut isn't your ordinary treemole, in fact he is one of kind! Chester likes wearing jumpers and sitting in his armchair, but most of all he loves adventure – digging holes, reading books, making friends, climbing trees and being outdoors!

The woodland is home to lots of rare animals, but it's been so long since these curious creatures have had any fun or excitement, they've forgotten what to do. Luckily Chester is at hand to save his new woodland friends from boredom and bring happiness and laughter back to the forest.

Told with puppets, original music and imaginative antics, this show is full of humour, thrills, spills, near misses and great escapes. This is a story about discovering new places and making friends, while encouraging everyone to have at least one adventure a day.

Formed in 2001 and led by Producer Sam Worboys, Gomito Theatre is a collaboration of artists creating visual theatre full of fun, emotion and a homespun rough and ready feeling that is perfect to capture the outdoorsy atmosphere of Chester's Woodland home. For over 35 years, Polka have been producing theatre that sparks the imagination in children. A production that encourages discovery and playfulness in early years children is the ideal partnership between the two companies,



and an exciting way for Gomito to celebrate their 15th birthday.

Chester Tuffnut is directed by Matt Addicott and written by Rosanna Lowe, with design by Robyn Wilson-Owen and music by the company and Philippa Herrick. The show runs for 50mins, including the chance to explore Woodland, its creatures and their dens.

'This little show exudes charm, looks and sounds attractive'  
Susan Elkin

'created with palpable affection and care' The Guardian

'The set was filled with depth, the puppets and puppeteers were impeccable' Younger Theatre

'The set was beautifully done, the puppeteers were full of energy and put their hearts and soul into the performance.'  
Mumsnet

'I've always taken my child to see the 'big' west end shows but now I've seen this, it was fantastic and I don't know why I haven't been bringing him here since birth.' Audience member

'That was a great adventure" 4 year old Audience Member

'That was magical!' 5 year old Audience Member

'So lovely to see actual, quality Children's Theatre, it's been a great addition to our adventure!' Parent Audience Member

'Utterly magical, I shed a tear when one creature came out.'  
Parent Audience Member

'Thank you for offering us a brilliant morning out that engaged excited our pupils, whilst also offering really valuable learning experiences' Teacher Audience Member



## Designer Robyn Wilson-Owen tells us how she made Chester and Friends

*We already knew how Chester would look, so before we even knew who his friends would be I started to construct him.*

*I made him as a very basic calico puppet, so that the actors would have something to play with, in the auditions.*



*Then I experimented with different ways I could make his fur*

*And I gave Chester his skeleton, shoulders and hips, and carefully shaped his tummy.*







*By this stage we had decided that Chester's main friends would be a bat and a snail, so I made rough calico and cardboard and sock versions.*

*We took these away for a weekend of devising and playing which meant I started to understand a lot more about what the puppets needed to do.*



*To finish Chester I made his fur, which is sisal moss, which I glued and machine embroidered to calico.*

*His fur had to be sewn to his body in sections by hand.*





*Then I knitted his one of a kind jumper.*

*I modelled his eyes from polymer clay. I had to stand them in a stale panini while they baked so they stayed round all over!*



*Chester's hands were made from leather that I dyed pink then stitched to give them shape.*

*The last things to make were his flying hat and goggles.*



*Now that Chester was finished I started on the bat, I decided that blue leather would work best, with grey felt for her head and body. I sewed strips onto the wings to hold the operating rods.*





*The inside of the snail shells were made from cushion pads hand stitched into shape around plant pots with the bottoms cut off.*

*I then covered the cushions with pieces of suede, which were very tough to sew, so I had to use pliers. This part took a long time!*



*The main three friends were finished, just in time for the beginning of rehearsals. Then I just had to finish sewing the suede to the second snail make some baby bats and create all the other smaller creatures.*





*The butterflies are wire covered in fabric and the spider is a glove with extra legs and the head and body added*

*The baby snail is made in the same way as the big snails, but this time I opted for felt instead of suede.*



*Now the puppets were finished all I had to worry about was the set, the props and the costumes!*

## Things to do...

- Talk about which of Chester's friends you like the most and why
- Think about what animals you would make as Chester's friends
- Draw a picture of them
- Decide what you could use to make them



# Activities

## Adventure Book Making

### Materials

- A4 coloured paper folded in half with two holes punched on the fold. (Punch the holes in the same place on all) around 6 pieces in total
- A piece of ribbon approx 30cm long
- Selection of print outs of the drawings below
- Glue
- Scissors
- Pens
- Pencils
- Fabric scraps
- Feathers
- Tissue paper
- Any other collage bits you have to hand.

### Instructions

1. Choose which colours of paper you would like for your pages and cover.
2. Gather all the pages together in a stack, line up the holes and thread the ribbon through then tie in a bow on the outside of your book.
3. Fill your pages with ideas for adventures you would like to have, our drawings are just to get you started, create your own pictures too.
4. Adventures can be anything. They could be something as simple as jumping in a puddle, reading a story, climbing a tree, for Chester even just having a cup of tea is an adventure!





5. Decorate your drawings with fabric leaves and feathers just like Chester does.
6. Maybe you could put an acorn on the front of your book just like Chester has on his?
7. When you've finished ask an adult to take a picture of your book and tweet it to @GomitoTheatre #ChesterTuffnutAdventures.





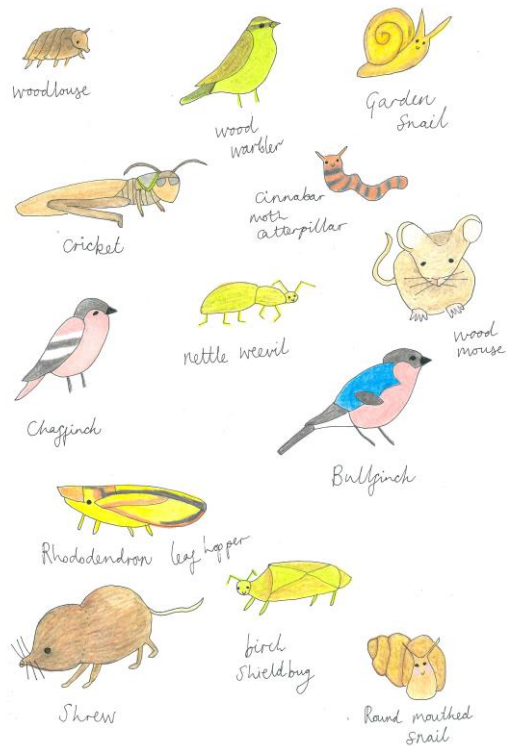














# Creature Den Building

## Materials

- Shoe box
- Plasticine (prepare into walnut sized balls for ease of distribution)
- Googly eyes
- Fabric scraps
- Tissue paper
- Cotton wool
- Feathers
- Glue
- Scissors

## Instructions

1. Think about the type of creature your den is for, what colours and textures would they like?
2. Create the floor of their den on the bottom of your shoebox, using fabric to make carpets or rugs or you could use tissue paper perhaps?
3. Next hang their wallpaper, using tissue paper around the sides of your shoe box. Does your creature like bright colours and patterns or do they prefer dark cosy colours? Have a look at the pictures below for some ideas.
4. Now your creature needs a bed. Make them a comfortable mattress by gluing down cotton wool where you want the bed to be. Then make some covers and cushions from scraps of fabric.
5. Now it's time to make your creature. Choose the colours of plasticine you need and build their shape. Press in googly eyes, stick in feathers for a tail or wings perhaps?
6. Now your creature needs something to eat. Take a ball of plasticine and stick your thumb into the middle, then put your forefinger on the outside of the plasticine. Pinch





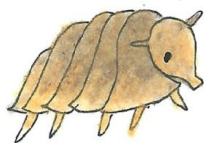
- around the circle to create a 'pinch pot' bowl for your creature. Fill the bowl with plasticine food.
7. If you have time you can create more details for your creature's den, maybe they'd like some pictures on the walls? Or a toy or some tiny books? Use your imagination!
  8. When it's time to go put everything inside the den, and put the lid on to keep your creature safe.
  9. When you've finished ask an adult to take a picture of your den and tweet it to @GomitoTheatre  
#ChesterTuffnutAdventures



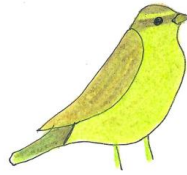


# Woodland trail

Have a look around your garden, park or woodland and see if you can spot the creatures below. Use this sheet to tick off when you've seen them.



Woodlouse

☐

Wood Warbler

☐

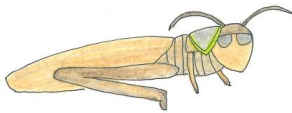
Garden Snail

☐

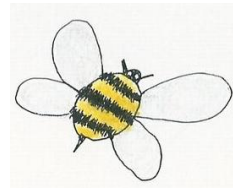
Caterpillar

☐

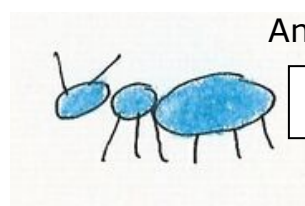
Cricket



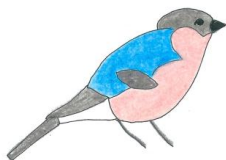
Bee

☐☐

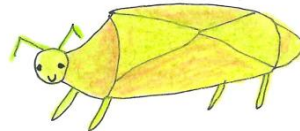
Chaffinch

☐

Ant

☐

Bullfinch

☐

Birch Shieldbug

☐

Round Mouthed Snail

☐

Ladybird

☐



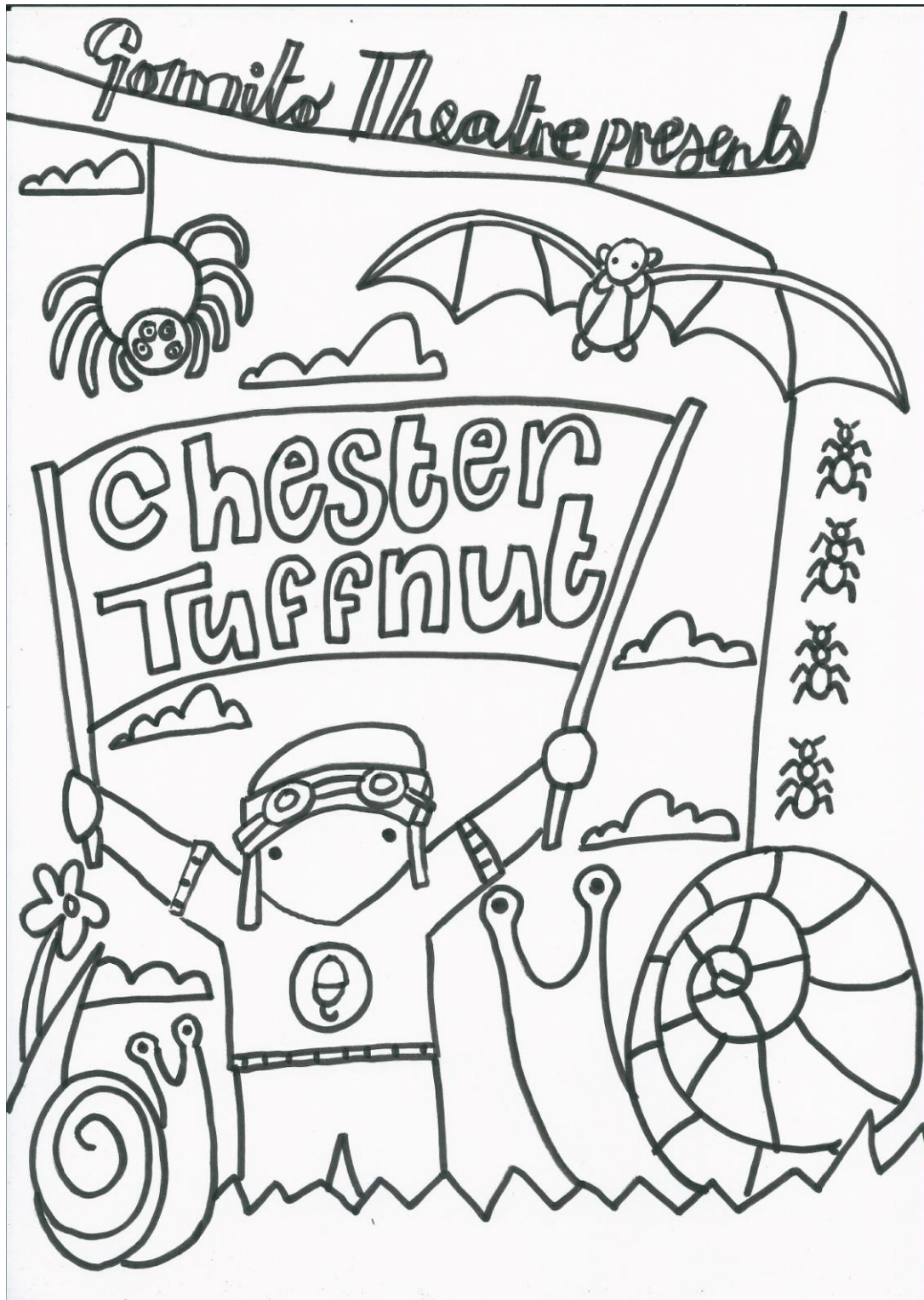
## Other things to do...

- Pretend you are Chester and his woodland friends
- Think about how they move then walk, crawl or 'fly' around your room
- What noises do they make, how would they talk and what would they say?
- Act out a conversation between two of the characters, maybe about an adventure they'd been on





## Colouring in





# Animal profiles

## Bats...

- are the only true flying mammal
- eat lots of insects
- can live until they are 30
- usually have one baby a year







## Snails...

- eat leaves, stems and flowers
- are one of the slowest creatures on earth
- can live for 5 – 25 years
- are eaten as a delicacy in France called Escargot!





# Spiders...

- have 8 legs
- make webs out of silk to capture their prey
- eat insects and other spiders
- make silk that is so strong it has been compared to steel







## Butterflies...

- have a lifecycle made up of four parts, egg, larva (caterpillars), pupa (chrysalis) and adult.
- attach their eggs to leaves with a special glue
- feed on nectar from flowers.
- Taste with their feet



Painted lady



Purple Emperor



# Useful links

## Websites

Gomito Productions [www.gomitoeatre.co.uk](http://www.gomitoeatre.co.uk)

Polka Theatre [www.polkatheatre.com](http://www.polkatheatre.com)

The Wildlife Trusts [www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org)

Bat Conservation Trust [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk)

BBC Nature Slugs and Snails  
[www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Gastropoda](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Gastropoda)

Buglife Spiders [www.buglife.org.uk/love-spiders](http://www.buglife.org.uk/love-spiders)

Butterfly Conservation [www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)



## **Social Media**

[www.facebook.com/GomitoTheatre/](http://www.facebook.com/GomitoTheatre/)

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#ChesterTuffnutAdventures