

**Directed by
Johnathon
Brown**

**Liverpool Performing Arts Ensemble in association with
Upstage Productions, Liverpool Powerhouse,
Liverpool Regional Museum and Liverpool City Council
Proudly Presents;**

‘BUNYIP BARONS’

A Play by Timothy Smith

Thank you for your interest in joining the cast of Bunyip Barons.

In this audition pack you will find details about the play, an outline of what is involved in being a cast member, and how you can prepare for your audition.

Audition Dates and Times

Saturday and Sunday - 16 and 17 May 2026 - 10am to 4pm
(By Appointment)

How to book an audition

Send Email to treasurer.lpae@gmail.com

Please include, bio, headshot, Theatre resume and role/s auditioning for.
An audition time will be allocated to you.

Please call 0408 095 216 if there are any concerns.

IMPORTANT DATES

August 2026

Bump-IN: Mon 10 Aug; Tech Tues 11 Aug; Dress Wed 12 Aug

Shows: Thurs 13 Aug at 11:00*, Fri 14 Aug at 11:00 and 7.30pm, Sat 15 Aug 2:00pm and 7:30pm, Sun 16 Aug 2pm* (*Dependent on ticket Sales)

REHEARSALS

Sundays and Fridays at Liverpool Powerhouse when called



SYNOPSIS

Louisa Anne Meredith, writer, botanist and painter, arrives in Sydney in October 1839 at the age of 27 to start a new life in her husband's country. She is writing her latest book "Notes and Sketches of New South Wales," and is eager to interview as many of the locals as possible to 'capture the essence of Australia.' She is invited to a welcome party hosted by the fictional Coy family, at their grand villa in Elizabeth Bay; "Evergreen House." Here she discovers a series of troubling revelations including the cruelty of a multi-tiered society, the bitter class struggle between convicts and free settlers, the greed of the land-owning classes and most alarmingly of all: the exploitation of convict servants.

In a chance encounter with the escaped convict Wallace Hopkins she is asked to publish stolen documents which will expose a scandal that plagues the colony: the prolonged exploitation of convict labour through false allegations and incitement to crime made by greedy landowners. Will Louisa help expose this scandal? Will the servants of Evergreen House ever gain their freedom? Are Bunyips real? What is 'the essence of Australia?'

CAST

Louisa Anne Meredith

Silas Hegarty

Mary Dawes

Minnie Coy

Everard Coy

Arabella Coy

Wallace Hopkins

Officer Josiah Brownrigg

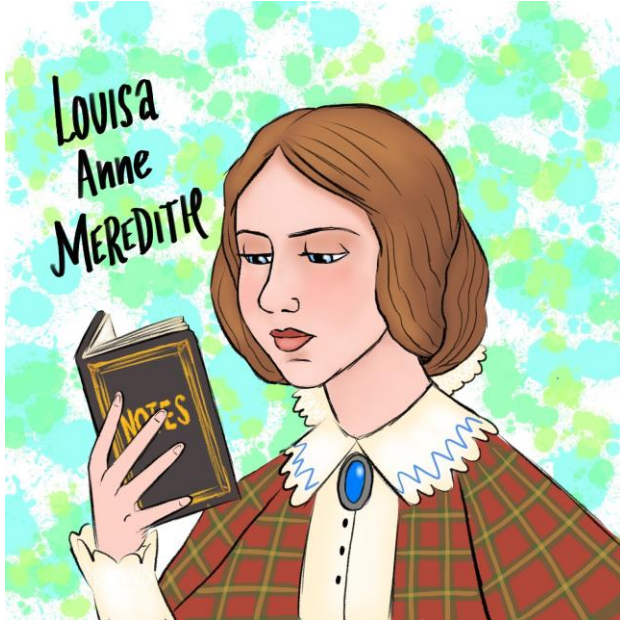
Colonel George McClintock

Charles Meredith



LOUISA ANNE MEREDITH

In her late twenties, received British accent delicate, adventurous, refined, botanist, author, artist, introverted, self-effacing, creative.



LOUISA. I think I should like to meet Mr. Wentworth.

(Shock from Minnie and Arabella.)

I must confess that I am entirely fascinated by the system of transportation and would relish any opportunity to converse with a convict or an emancipist or indeed free settlers like yourselves. I feel there is a book to be written here, one that would seek to capture the very essence of the penal system. I have no doubt that such a book would be of great interest back home.

MINNIE. But surely Mrs. Meredith a book about Australia should focus chiefly on the day-to-day lives of the free settlers. If I were to write a book about the colony I should like to stress the similarities between Australia and England. If one has a discerning eye one will soon discover that they are entirely alike. No, a book about convicts would never sell.

LOUISA. Pardon my bluntness Mrs. Coy but are not all the servants in your household convicts?

MINNIE. They are what we call “assigned servants” Mrs. Meredith.

LOUISA. But they are in fact convicts, are they not?

MINNIE. Well ... yes Mrs. Meredith but one doesn't like to dwell on such things.

LOUISA. Mrs. Coy I hope you won't think me too forward but I should very much like to interview your servants if I may.

MINNIE. But Mrs. Meredith ...

LOUISA. Do call me Louisa.

MINNIE. But Louisa they have nothing to say! You should interview us - my daughter and me - and you must call me Minne from now on.

LOUISA. Thank you Minnie, I should be most delighted to interview you both but I feel I shan't have captured the full picture of colonial life till I've spoken with the convict classes.



SILAS HEGARTY

65 years old, Cornish accent,
assigned servant, prematurely aged,
bad joints, scrupulous, alcoholic.

HEGARTY. Save your benedictions, Miss Dawes, for those who be deceased! (*Emerges stiffly from the window seat, with the help of Mary and picks up the empty rum bottle off the floor.*)

MARY. Oh, thank goodness Mr. Hegarty you're all right! (*Whispers*) Is this some kind of convict punishment?

HEGARTY. No, Miss Dawes it is a self-inflicted punishment brought on by the consumption of too much rum. (*Hegarty sits down in the large armchair.*)

MARY. But I thought you said that the Lady keeps all temptations locked away in the cellar.

HEGARTY. Aye, Miss Dawes it weren't on account of the Lady that I came into contact with the dreaded vice last night but on account of them devils. (*Points out the window.*)

MARY. Them devils? What do you mean them devils?

HEGARTY. The Bunyips, Miss Dawes. The Bunyips! You must have heard of 'em. The native water demons that haunt this island. The aborigines are wise to the Bunyip and most careful to avoid them around creeks and Billy-bongs.

MARY. But ... if you don't mind me asking how did them Bunion things manage to transport you from your bedchamber, fill you with rum, and place you in the window seat?

HEGARTY. Well, Miss Dawes, in my troubled state of mind, last night, I left me chamber and made for the main house, recalling that the Lady keeps a Bible in the library. Not having one of me own I thought it best to borrow hers for additional protection against those ugly demons. Not stealing mind! Just borrowing. But upon my arrival what did I find? A bottle o' rum. One thing led to another and I can't remember the rest.

MARY. Dear, dear, dear, Mr. Hegarty you must exercise discipline in these matters.

HEGARTY. Discipline! Aye, Miss Dawes, a most important virtue it be and one that I have never mastered. *(Stands and places hand on breast.)* Upon my honour I swear never again to touch the principal vice of the colonies lest I be shipped off to Van Diemen's Land in chains.

WALLACE HOPKINS

25 - 30 years old, escaped convict, descended from nobility, Ned Kelly beard, true blue Australian Legend, trickster.



HOPKINS. Not a bad poem by my reckoning. What do you make of it? *(Louisa drops the pipe in fright.)*

LOUISA. I, I have no money, if that's what you want.

HOPKINS. Money? You insult me Madam, nothing would interest me less!

LOUISA. Who are you?

HOPKINS. I Ma'am? A humble lad looking for the writer Louisa Anne Meredith from Birmingham and I suspect that you are her.

LOUISA. I am.

HOPKINS. And are you a sensible woman or are you prone to hysteria?

LOUISA. Of the two of us I would suggest that the intruder brandishing a weapon is the more prone to hysteria.

HOPKINS. Ha! A sensible woman after all. Now shut that door. That's right. Bolster it with that chair. Good. And if you do anything to alert the Coy family to my presence I will not hesitate to shoot you.

LOUISA. Well then, you leave me no choice.

HOPKINS. You are wise Ma'am, even if you are extremely rude.

LOUISA. Rude? How am I rude exactly?

HOPKINS. Why, just a moment ago you asked Hegarty why he became a convict. Have you no manners?

LOUISA. I misspoke.

HOPKINS. Do you like humiliating convicts, Mrs. Meredith?

LOUISA. Is that what you are sir, a convict?

HOPKINS. I am guilty of no crime.

LOUISA. I put it to you that you are the escaped convict Hopkins, the man who caused a great deal of trouble for the Coy family.

HOPKINS. They are the source of trouble, not me.

LOUISA. Please sir, whatever quarrel you have with your employers can have nothing to do with me. I beg you, leave in the same manner as you came and I shall never speak of this again.

HOPKINS. Employers? Employers? They employ no one! They use prisoners for free labour. That is why I have come here tonight and you are going to help me. That notebook of yours, hand it over. (*Louisa does as directed*). Huh, I see that Hegarty has introduced you to the Bunyip. It is rather a good rendering. I wonder Ma'am, do you believe in Bunyips?

COLONEL GEORGE MCCLINTOCK / CHARLES MEREDITH

McClintock:, Scottish accent, jovial, domineering, athletic, brash.

Charles: Pragmatic, dependable, farmer / politician, Welsh accent.



McCLINTOCK: (*laughing*): Mrs. Meredith you must come and visit my wife and me upon your return from Bathurst. Like you, she is much enamoured by the local wildlife and insists on making pets of the most untameable creatures.

MINNIE: A country retreat, how lovely.

LOUISA: My husband and I would be delighted to visit you Colonel.

McCLINTOCK: And you must bring Twamley along with you too.

HOPKINS: I should consider it the highest of honours Colonel.

McCLINTOCK: Do you hunt Mr. Twamley?

HOPKINS: In a manner of speaking.

McCLINTOCK: I'm glad to hear it! You must join me in a foxhunt. Though I should warn you that in this country we make do with dingoes instead of foxes. They make for good enough sport. In fact they are much alike the fox and the dingo...

I suspect that they are distant cousins.

CHARLES. Ahhhh ... *(takes in the audience)* it's good to be back. I see the people haven't changed much.

LOUISA. What was that dear?

CHARLES. I said the people haven't changed much. Look at them all, round-shouldered, under-fed, idle.

LOUISA. Charles, these are our new neighbours. Do try to be courteous. *(Louisa spots a political pipe on the ground and goes to pick it up.)*

CHARLES. You'll soon come round to my way of thinking. This island has a peculiar way of coarsening people the longer you stay. Mark my words: you'll be a very different Louisa in one year's time.

LOUISA. Charles. Look at this. A slanderous little article about Governor Gipps.

CHARLES. Let me see that. Ahh yes. You've found yourself a pipe, my dear.

LOUISA. A pipe?

CHARLES. Yes, a kind of political poem. Slanderous things they are, pay them no heed.

LOUISA. This one appears to have been written by a Lord Alistair Whitlock of Kent. Wasn't he the fellow who fought alongside the Duke of Wellington?

CHARLES. A pseudonym merely, dear wife. Probably someone's idea of a joke. Throw it away.

LOUISA. No, I think I shall keep it.

CHARLES. For your new book?

LOUISA. Yes, for my new book. Charles?

MINNIE COY

55-70, homesick for mother England, garrulous, money focused, received pronunciation, gossipy.



MINNIE. So, tell us Mrs. Meredith what are you currently working on? Another poem perhaps?

LOUISA. Perhaps, but I think my notes and sketches would be far better suited to a book.

MINNIE. A book! Oh how charming! You must give us a little foretaste before it reaches the public.

LOUISA. Oh, it contains nothing particularly grand, just the details of my journey here, sketches of strange birds and fish. *(Produces her diary and shows Minnie some of the sketches.)*

MINNIE. Oh what a likeness! You are evidently a very talented artist as well.

LOUISA. Botanical drawings are my favourite.

MINNIE. Well, if you care to turn your head you will see a most exquisite watercolour painting depicting Sydney Harbour, done by none other than Arabella. Come child bring us your painting.

ARABELLA. Oh Mama, it isn't very good. I did that one years ago.

MINNIE. Come, come child! It is my favourite. Mary! Where is that girl? Mary!

(Mary comes in flustered with dirty hands wiping them on her apron.)

MINNIE. Would you be so kind as to bring my daughter's painting?

(Mary takes the painting off the wall to reveal a large huntsman that no one notices. She hands the painting to Minnie.)

MINNIE. No, no, Mary hand it to our guest.

LOUISA. This is a most excellent painting, Miss Arabella you have a gift.

MINNIE. And upon the reverse side you will see a delightful inscription from dear Arabella when she was just sixteen!

(Louisa looks at the back of the painting.)

ARABELLA. Oh please it's just a silly little thing.

MINNIE. Silly? It's delightful!

LOUISA. "In honour of her grace, Lady Coy, Baroness of Elizabeth Bay."

MINNIE. Baroness of Elizabeth Bay! What cheek!

EVERARD COY

50 - 70 years old, received British accent, tall, dark, distinguished, ruthless, money-focused.



EVERARD. Mr. Hegarty, Miss Dawes, I must speak with you both at once! *(Pause.)* What are you doing idling about?

MARY. Mr. Hegarty has been taken ill sir. I was merely tending to him.

EVERARD. Is that so Hegarty? Are you taken ill?

HEGARTY. No sir, my hip be playing up is all.

EVERARD. I'm afraid we have no time for ailments of any kind today, there is much to be done. Hegarty, our supplies of cured cod are severely depleted. See to it that they are restocked.

HEGARTY. Aye sir.

EVERARD. Miss Dawes, you will darn the linen, polish the silver and anything else Mrs. Coy might ask.

MARY. But sir, the silver has already been polished.

EVERARD. Oh well... do it again. And pray do not trouble Mrs. Coy today she is in a most delicate state. I will not have you singing ditties or reciting poems. Is that understood?

MARY. Aye sir.

(Everard goes to leave then pauses.) Oh, and one more thing. Mr. Hegarty would you be so kind as to inform me as to the whereabouts of my rum bottle?

HEGARTY. The ahh ... The what bottle sir?

EVERARD. The rum bottle sir! I placed it upon this very table last night.

(Mr. Hegarty reveals the empty rum bottle and hands it to Everard.)

EVERARD. Dear, dear, dear! Something appears to have happened to my rum since last I saw it! Miss Dawes, how can we account for this strange occurrence?

MARY. I couldn't possibly say sir.

EVERARD. Mr. Hegarty, step forward please. Produce a puff of breath in the vicinity of my nostrils. A proper PUFF Mr. Hegarty!

(Hegarty produces a puff of breath and Mr. Coy recoils disdainfully.)

EVERARD. I think Miss Dawes I have cracked the case of the missing rum. I assert that the rum is somewhere between the esophagus and the bladder of our unfortunate friend Mr. Hegarty.

ARABELLA COY: Youngest daughter of the Coy family, speaks in a proto-Australian accent (Less than British), Gausche, pampered, bored with her life.



ARABELLA. What a strange woman!

MINNIE. Arabella! We must not speak slightly of our guest. She is evidently a very serious woman of high intellect and a keen observer of life, which means that anything

we say or do may also end up in print. Therefore we must conduct ourselves in the most intellectual of manners. What book are you currently reading?

ARABELLA. Book? I have no time for books Mama!

MINNE. Well that may be but I should ask that for the duration of Mrs. Meredith's stay, you be seen, reading a book in her presence.

ARABELLA. Yes Mama, I will do as you say. I shall condescend to pick up a book and turn the pages but I shan't read a single word!

MINNIE. (*Goes to leave.*) Oh, and one more thing. That comment you made earlier about only marrying a "Pound Sterling," man; you don't really mean to say that you wouldn't settle for a native-born of good breeding?

(*Arabella looks coyly at her toes.*)

MINNIE. Not even the very eligible Mr. Josiah Brownrigg.

ARABELLA. Perhaps ... I am not opposed to his solicitations but he is rather awkward, Mama. If only he would improve the quality of his conversation. All he ever talks about is war! The battle of Hastings, of Agincourt, of Waterloo and when a topic of genuine interest arises, like love, he somehow manages to connect it back to some trivial fact about Genghis Khan. And you have to admit that he always shows up unexpectedly and at the most inopportune times.

MARY DAWES: Young Irish convict maid, new to the colony, dim-witted, gullible, devout Catholic, day dreamer.



MARY. It's all quite exciting isn't it?

HEGARTY. What is?

MARY. This political pipe thing.

HEGARTY. How do you know about that? You been eavesdropping again?

MARY. I can't help myself the ceilings in this house are too high.

HEGARTY. And what do you make of it?

MARY. The wicked Everard Coygels. Tut-tut-tut. What do you make of it? (*Notices the wine bottle.*) Mr. Hegarty! What have you got there!

HEGARTY. Nothing.

MARY. For shame Mr. Hegarty for shame. You must resist sir! There's nothing to be gained by indulging in this vice. (*Mary grabs the bottle from Hegarty.*)

HEGARTY. Oh, leave it alone Miss Dawes! Let me have me comforts. (*Hegarty grabs the bottle back and walks over to the big armchair.*)

MARY. You would risk your freedom all for a glass of wine? Let me tell you this, sir, it is my ambition to return home, once I'm granted my pardon, and see my brothers and sisters again and I shall be needing a chaperone on the journey back. It isn't right for a young lady to travel alone and I shall want a companion.

(*Mary places hand on Hegarty's shoulder.*)

HEGARTY. You are a gentle soul Miss Dawes. Too gentle for the likes of me.

MARY. Come, come now you're the gentlest stable groom I ever knew. Now get ye to bed before that queer lady finds you.

LIEUTENANT JOSIAH BROWNRIGG: Young military man, obsessed with military history, awkward around women, (Proto-Australian accent) a sycophantic supporter of the Coy family.



EVERARD. Let us raise a toast, Brownrigg, to the unfortunate Lord Alistair Whitlock, soon to be the Lord of the chain-gang.

BROWNRIGG. Mmm, very pleasant. What vintage is this?

EVERARD. Hegarty here is our resident wine merchant. What grape is this Hegarty?

HEGARTY. An Italian grape, sir, 1815.

BROWNRIGG. Now that is canny!

EVERARD. Oh yes?

BROWNRIGG. Well, we are toasting to the downfall of Lord Alistair Whitlock of Kent who, if I am not mistaken, served at the battle of Waterloo, which was in 1815.

EVERARD. A somewhat protracted connexion but I see your thinking.

BROWNRIGG. Miss Arabella is very fond of such trivia. She almost enjoys talking about the military more than I do - which is a most agreeable quality in a woman. In fact I had meant to convey her a gift upon my arrival but entirely forgot. (*Produces a book.*)

MINNIE. That is very kind of you, Brownrigg. I shall summon Arabella at once.

(Minnie leaves the stage.)

EVERARD. You have been most solicitous towards my daughter of late Mr. Brownrigg. One wonders whether your intentions are purely intellectual or perhaps a little more ... domestic.

BROWNRIGG. Intellectual I assure you sir! I would never assume to make solicitations towards the daughter of such an esteemed family.