

SCOUSETRAP!

IT'S THE SPAT OF THE DECADE...

One woman left with her suspicions vindicated, the other with her reputation destroyed, and soon everyone's dirty laundry will be interested on a national scale. Was there a level of self-deception or compulsive lying, or was there some

they needed to win this case, so the only way they were going to win was to absolutely destroy Vardy's credibility. I understand why they had



VARDY v ROONEY

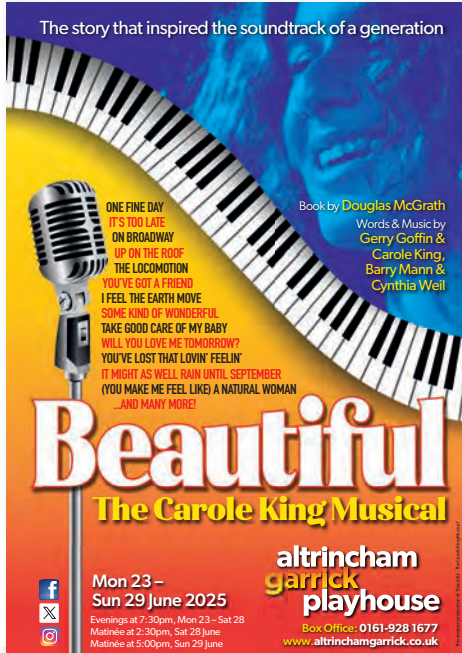
THE WAGATHA CHRISTIE TRIAL

Monday 2 –
Saturday 7
June 2025

altrincham
garrick
playhouse

SHEER ENTERTAINMENT - TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

The story that inspired the soundtrack of a generation



ONE FINE DAY
IT'S TOO LATE
ON BROADWAY
UP ON THE ROOF
THE LUCKY MOTION
YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND
I FEEL THE EARTH MOVE
SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL
TAKE GOOD CARE OF MY BABY
IT MIGHT AS WELL RAIN UNTIL SEPTEMBER
YOU'VE LOST THAT LOVIN' FEELIN'
(YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A NATURAL WOMAN
...AND MANY MORE!)

Book by Douglas McGrath
Words & Music by
Gerry Goffin &
Carole King,
Barry Mann &
Cynthia Weil

Beautiful

The Carole King Musical

altrincham
garrick
playhouse

Monday 23 –
Sunday 14
September 2025

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Evenings at 7:30pm, Mon 23 – Sat 28
Matinee at 2:30pm, Sat 28 June
Matinee at 5:00pm, Sun 29 June

Seventeen stories. Eight chances. One Singular Sensation.

a chorus line

The legendary musical

Conceived and originally Directed & Choreographed by
Michael Bennett

Book by James Kirkwood & Nicholas Dante
Lyrics by Edward Kleban
Music by Marvin Hamlisch
Co-choreographed by Bob Avian

Original Broadway production produced by the New York
Shakespeare Festival, Joseph Papp Theatre
in association with Plum Productions Inc.

Directed by
Joseph Meighan
Musical Director:
Mark Goggins
Louise Pettitt

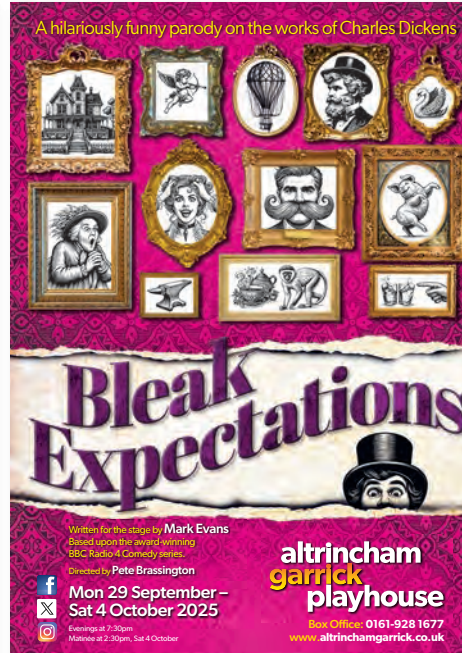
altrincham garrick playhouse

Monday 8 –
Sunday 14
September
2025

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Evenings at 7:30pm, except Sun 14 Sept
Matinee at 2:30pm, Sat 13 Sept
Matinee at 6:00pm, Sun 14 Sept

A hilariously funny parody on the works of Charles Dickens



Bleak Expectations

Written for the stage by Mark Evans
Based upon the award-winning
BBC Radio 4 comedy series

Directed by Pete Brassington

altrincham garrick playhouse

Monday 29 September –
Saturday 4 October 2025

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Evenings at 7:30pm
Matinee at 2:30pm, Sat 4 October

Escape to a world of pure imagination!

ROALD DAHL'S

CHARLIE

AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Music by Marc Shaiman
Lyrics by Scott Whitman & Marc Shaiman
Book by David Greig
Based on the novel by Roald Dahl
and the Warner Bros. film

Director
Joseph Meighan
Musical Director:
Simon Mercer-Murray

altrincham garrick playhouse

Thursday 23 –
Sunday 26 October &
Wednesday 29 October –
Sunday 2 November 2025

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Evenings: 7:30pm (except Sunday 26, Sunday 27)
Sunday 26 October at 6:30pm
Sunday 25 October at 2:30pm
Sunday 26 October at 1:30pm
Saturday 1 November at 2:30pm
Sunday 2 November at 4:00pm

A heart-warming story of love, hope and community.

It's a Wonderful Life

Written for the stage by
Mary Elliott Nelson
Based upon the classic
Christmas movie by
Frank Capra

Directed by
Charlie Tomlinson

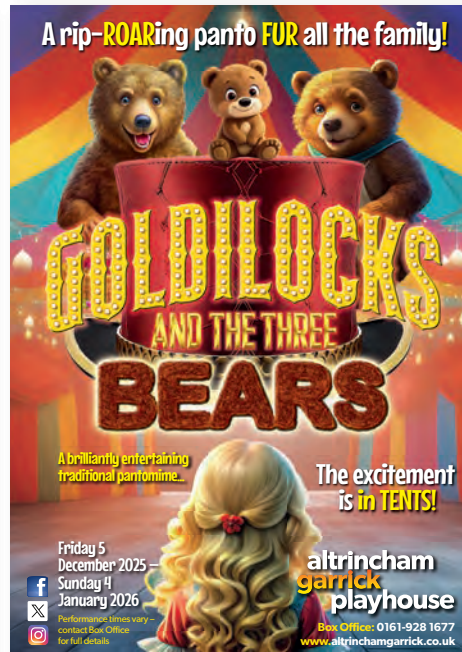
altrincham garrick playhouse

Monday 17 –
Sunday 23
November 2025

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Evenings at 7:30pm, except Sunday 23 Nov
Matinee at 2:30pm, Sat 22 Nov
Matinee at 6:00pm, Sun 23 Nov

A rip-ROARING panto FUR all the family!



GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS

A brilliantly entertaining
traditional pantomime...

The excitement
is in TENTS!

altrincham garrick playhouse

Friday 5
December 2025 –
Sunday 4
January 2026

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Performance times vary –
contact Box Office
for full details

"A thrilling blend of entertainment, politics and justice today"

The Sunday Times

QUIZ

by James Graham

A: COUGH B: HACK
C: BARK D: RASP

Based on the book
"Bad Show: The Quiz, the Cough,
the Millionaire Major"
by Bob Woffinden and James Paskett.

Directed by
Joseph Meighan

altrincham garrick playhouse

Monday 2 –
Saturday 7
February 2026

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Evenings at 7:30pm
Matinee at 2:30pm, Saturday 7 February

A smashing, positively dashing, simply lovely musical



My Fair Lady

Adapted from George Bernard Shaw's play
and Gabriel Pascal's motion picture "Pygmalion"

Book and Lyrics by
Alan Jay Lerner
Music by
Frederick Loewe

Original production directed and staged by Moss Hart

Director:
Joseph Meighan
Musical Director:
Mark Goggins
Choreography:
Louise Pettitt

altrincham garrick playhouse

Monday 22 –
Sunday 28
June 2026

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Evenings at 7:30pm, except Sunday 28 June
Matinee at 2:30pm, Sat 27 June
Matinee at 4:00pm, Sun 28 June

When the world stopped, their stories moved us all

COME FROM AWAY

Book, Music and Lyrics by Irene Sankoff and David Hein

Directed by
Joseph Meighan

altrincham garrick playhouse

Thursday 10 –
Saturday 19
September 2026

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Evenings at 8:00pm, except Sun 13 September
Matinee at 3:00pm, Sat 12 & Sat 19 September
Matinee at 4:00pm, Sun 13 September

Welcome and Introduction

In the annals of modern celebrity culture, few legal battles have captivated public attention as intensely as the 2022 libel case between Rebekah Vardy and Coleen Rooney. Dubbed the “Wagatha Christie” trial – a clever portmanteau blending “WAG” (wives and girlfriends of footballers) with the name of famed mystery writer Agatha Christie – the case unfolded with all the intrigue of a detective novel, complete with social media sleuthing, leaked stories, and dramatic courtroom revelations.

Playwright Liv Hennessy has brought this sensational saga to the stage in **Vardy v Rooney: The Wagatha Christie Trial**, a verbatim theatre production that meticulously reconstructs the courtroom proceedings using actual transcripts from the High Court. The play offers audiences an unfiltered glimpse into the legal showdown that pitted two high-profile women against each other in a battle over privacy, reputation, and the perils of fame in the digital age.

The origins of the dispute trace back to 2019, when Coleen Rooney, suspecting that someone was leaking stories from her private Instagram account to the press, devised a cunning plan to identify the culprit. By selectively restricting access to her stories and planting false information, she concluded that Rebekah Vardy’s account was responsible for the leaks. Rooney’s public revelation of her findings on social media ignited a media frenzy and led Vardy to sue for libel, setting the stage for a courtroom drama that would enthral the nation.

Hennessy’s adaptation captures the essence of this real-life drama, transforming the courtroom into a theatrical arena where the lines between public and private, truth and perception, are scrutinised. The production cleverly incorporates elements of football culture with the inclusion of two pundits who provide commentary and context throughout the play. This innovative framing device not only adds a layer of humour but also underscores the spectacle that the trial became in the public eye.

In bringing this high-profile legal battle to the stage, Hennessy has crafted a play that is both timely and thought-provoking. By staying true to the actual court proceedings while infusing the narrative with theatrical flair, **Vardy v Rooney: The Wagatha Christie Trial** offers a compelling exploration of fame, media, and the complexities of modern identity. It’s a play that not only entertains but also prompts

reflection on the ways in which we engage with the lives of public figures in an increasingly connected world.

Unbelievably, mid-summer is just a few weeks away, but before our 2024-25 Season draws to a close there are still a couple of fantastic productions to be staged. Our Irish Season in the Studio concludes next week with Brian Friel’s modern masterpiece **Translations**, a hauntingly lyrical play set in Donegal in 1833 about the fractious relationship between people and nations through the lens of language and (mis)communication. And our final production on the Main Stage is a joyously entertaining ‘jukebox musical’ telling the inspiring true story of Carole King’s remarkable rise to stardom. With countless classics such as *You’ve Got a Friend*, *One Fine Day*, *So Far Away*, *Take Good Care of My Baby*, *Up on the Roof*, *You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feeling*, *The Loco-Motion*, *It’s Too Late*, *Will You Love Me Tomorrow* and *(You Make Me Feel like a) Natural Woman*, the Tony® and Grammy® Award-winning musical phenomenon **Beautiful – The Carole King Musical** is filled with the songs you remember and a story you’ll never forget.

And that’s not all – we’re already planning for 2025–26 (and beyond), and to the left you’ll see what we’ve announced (so far). Once again we’ve put together another season that offers “*something for everyone*”, with musicals, comedy, drama and our hugely-popular annual panto running in tandem with a series of one-night concerts, comedy nights and National Theatre Live screenings. We’re really proud to be an artistic centre of excellence at the heart of the Altrincham Community, and are constantly grateful for the support we receive both from our dedicated band of volunteers, without whom we couldn’t do what we do, and from our wonderful audiences. Thankyou everyone, and I look forward to welcoming you all back to the Garrick very soon.



Joe **Joseph Meighan**
Artistic Director, Altrincham Garrick Playhouse.

**altrincham
garrick
playhouse**

Barrington Rd, Altrincham WA14 1HZ
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

Box Office Phone: 0161-928 1677



/AltrinchamGarrick



@AltrinchamG



@altrinchamgarrick_playhouse/

Board of Trustees:

Hugh Everett (Chair)
Charlie Tomlinson
David Mazurkiewicz-Citrine
April Millar
Trevor McKie
Nick Sample

Theatre Management Team:

Artistic Director Joseph Meighan
Operations Director Sarah Reilly

Front-of-House Management:

Front-of-House Manager Neill Walker
Deputy Front-of-House Manager /
Studio F-o-H Manager Eileen Smith

Theatre Administrators:

Finance Manager Siobhán Linnett
Diane White Patsy Newhouse
Judi Quirke Diane Ashton
Lauren Groves

Theatre Membership:

Secretary John Gibson

Productions:

Head of Stage Paul Simpson
Head of Lighting James Merrington
Head of Sound Josh McMillan
Head of Wardrobe Mike Shaw
Head of Design Barry Purves
Head of Props Claire Eddleston-Rose
Workshop Manager and Maintenance Supervisor
Steve Cox
Scenic Artist Amanda Cooke

House Keepers:

Sandra Smith Janine Barratt

Garrick Academy of Performing Arts:

Principal Peter Birch
Principal Helen Lawrence
Senior Tutor Dean Sumner
Assistant Tutor / LAMDA Tutor Grace Gonet
Assistant Tutor Olivia Walsh
Assistant Tutor Lottie Warburton

The rise of the **WAG**

How English Footballers' Wives and Girlfriends Became Cultural Icons

Over the past quarter-century, the term “WAGs” – short for wives and girlfriends – has evolved from a cheeky tabloid label into a cultural phenomenon that has redefined celebrity, fashion, and media influence in the UK and beyond. Once relegated to the role of glamorous plus-ones, the women behind England’s top footballers have leveraged their public visibility to launch high-profile careers of their own, becoming television personalities, influencers, entrepreneurs, and fashion icons.

The Origin of the Term and the “Golden Era” of the WAGs

While footballers’ partners have always attracted some attention, the term “WAGs” gained widespread currency during the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany. The English team, led by Sven-Göran Eriksson, was accompanied by an unusually high-profile entourage of wives and girlfriends who made as many headlines as the players themselves. Paparazzi captured their shopping trips, nights out, and designer outfits, creating a media circus that sometimes overshadowed the actual football.

At the centre of this was Victoria Beckham, known globally as “*Posh Spice*” from the Spice Girls, who had married David Beckham in 1999. Victoria Beckham was not just another footballer’s wife – she was an established pop star and, eventually, a globally respected fashion designer. Her relationship with Beckham elevated the status of footballers’ partners, showing that these women could command their own share of the spotlight.



The 2006 WAG cohort included the likes of Cheryl Tweedy (later Cheryl Cole), then a member of *Girls Aloud* and married to England left-back Ashley Cole. With her own career as a pop star and later as a judge on *The X Factor*, Cheryl became a national icon and a mainstay in British pop culture. Other prominent names included Coleen Rooney, wife of Wayne Rooney, who rose to fame with her own column in *Closer* magazine and later fronted fashion and lifestyle deals.

It was a moment when football intersected with celebrity culture, tabloid journalism, and reality TV in a potent mix. For many of these women, dating or marrying a footballer was not the pinnacle – it was the launchpad.

WAGs as Media Stars and Entrepreneurs

After 2006, many WAGs proved they were more than just eye candy in the stands. They began building brands and cultivating their own identities in a media environment that was increasingly hungry for celebrity-driven content.

Coleen Rooney used her visibility to author lifestyle columns, release a fitness DVD, and ink endorsement deals with George at Asda, Littlewoods, and more. She also presented TV shows like *Coleen’s Real Women*, which aimed to



find everyday women to model in ad campaigns instead of professional models – an early gesture toward inclusive representation in fashion.

Abbey Clancy, wife of former England striker Peter Crouch, started her career as a lingerie and catwalk model before rising to prominence as a finalist on *Britain’s Next Top Model* in 2006. She later won *Strictly Come Dancing* in 2013 and became a TV presenter and host. Her career trajectory was a testament to how WAG status could amplify already budding talent into mainstream recognition.

Alex Curran, wife of Steven Gerrard, also became a fashion columnist and launched her own fragrance. Her status as a WAG brought heightened interest in her fashion sense and home life, which she skillfully translated into media opportunities.

From Pop Stars to Social Media Influencers

In the 2010s, as traditional celebrity platforms like tabloid magazines and reality TV began giving way to social media, a new generation of WAGs emerged – savvy, more self-aware, and skilled at managing their public personas through Instagram, YouTube, and brand collaborations.

Rebekah Vardy, married to Leicester City and England striker Jamie Vardy, became a controversial and high-profile figure, not only for her TV appearances – including *I’m a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!* – but also for her social media presence and her much-publicised legal feud with Coleen Rooney, dubbed “Wagatha

Christie" by the press. The saga played out in both the tabloids and the courtroom, underlining how WAGs had become headline-makers in their own right.



Megan Davison, the long-time partner of England and Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford, and Anouska Santos, partner of Manchester United's Luke Shaw, represent a newer wave of WAGs who have built significant followings online. Their Instagram accounts serve as curated windows into their lives – complete with designer wardrobes, family moments, travel diaries, and sponsorship deals.

Dani Dyer, daughter of actor Danny Dyer and partner of footballer Jarrod Bowen, also exemplifies this crossover between influencer culture and WAG life. She rose to fame after winning *Love Island* in 2018 and has since become a media personality in her own right.

From the Sidelines to Centre Stage

Many modern WAGs have embraced their visibility to pursue serious business ventures and personal brands. Victoria Beckham, of course, is the standout example: her eponymous fashion label has shown at New York and London Fashion Weeks, earning her critical respect and high-profile customers from the fashion elite.

Christine Lampard (née Bleakley), wife of former Chelsea midfielder and current Coventry City manager Frank Lampard, was already a well-known TV presenter before her relationship with Lampard. She continued her career on shows like *The One Show* and *Loose Women*, and her media presence remained distinct from her husband's football fame.

Tanya Bardsley, married to Phil Bardsley, became one of the breakout stars of *The Real Housewives of Cheshire*, using the platform to share her experience with anxiety and promote her wellness and lifestyle brand.

Meanwhile, Millie Savage, former fiancée of John Stones, and Annie Kilner, wife of Kyle Walker, have made headlines for their fashion choices and outspoken personalities, showing that even those without traditional media careers can still command attention in the WAG ecosystem.

The Evolution of Image: From Tabloid Fodder to Empowered Influencers

The media's treatment of WAGs has shifted dramatically. In the 2000s, tabloids often portrayed them as vapid shopaholics or trophy wives. Their every move – shopping in designer boutiques, clubbing until the early hours, or sunbathing in Marbella – was chronicled with a voyeuristic fervor.

But today's WAGs are often portrayed through a more empowering lens. Many are mothers, businesswomen, activists, or entrepreneurs who challenge outdated stereotypes. They use social media not only for fashion and lifestyle but to share personal struggles, raise awareness, and even speak out on social or political issues.

Some, like Coleen Rooney in the "Wagatha Christie" trial, have demonstrated strategic media savvy and strength under public scrutiny. Others have balanced motherhood, career ambitions, and public life with a sense of self-determination that subverts the original shallow stereotypes of WAG-dom.

Criticism and Controversy

Despite their evolving role, WAGs have not escaped criticism. Some commentators argue that WAG culture promotes materialism and an unhealthy obsession with celebrity. Feminists have long debated whether WAG status empowers women or reinforces dependency on male fame.

Still, it's clear that the women themselves are increasingly reclaiming the narrative. They are not just reacting to media portrayal; they are shaping it. In a digital world where personal branding is king, many WAGs have turned what was once a limiting label into a powerful platform.

Conclusion: More Than Just a Label

From the manicured spectacle of Baden-Baden in 2006 to the influencer-saturated world of Instagram and TikTok, the role of the English footballer's partner has undergone a profound transformation. What began as a media sideshow has matured into a dynamic, multifaceted phenomenon.

Today's WAGs are not just appendages to famous footballers – they are models, TV stars, business owners, influencers, authors, and icons in their own right. Whether they found fame before or after their relationships, they've harnessed their visibility in ways that have redefined what it means to be a celebrity partner in the modern age.

As football continues to globalise and celebrity culture further intertwines with social media, the profile of the WAG is only likely to grow. And with it, perhaps, a broader understanding that behind the tabloid headlines and Instagram filters are women navigating fame, ambition, and identity on their own terms.



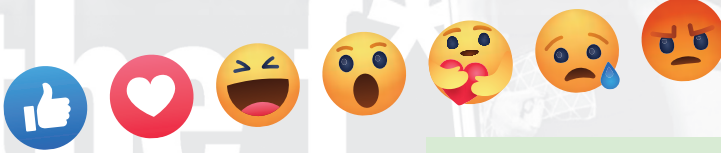
Opposite page, left: The WAG Queens of 2006 at the World Cup in Baden Baden, Germany: (Left to right) Cheryl Cole (front), Coleen Rooney and Victoria Beckham.

Opposite page, top: Cheryl Cole pictured with her then husband Ashley in a 'lifestyle' photo.

Above, top to bottom: Anouska Santos and Megan Davison pose for a selfie; Dani Dyer and her partner Jarrod Bowen; Former Man United defender Phil and Tanya Bardsley.

Vardy vs Rooney

A Timeline of World Events



2,800,000 BC

Humans first appear on the earth, managing to express themselves and communicate without using memes and emojis.

1792

The telegraph is invented.

**2,800,000 BC
& 1792**

1839-1891

1839

The world's first "selfie" is taken by amateur chemist and photography enthusiast Robert Cornelius.

1890

The first (photo and text-less) telephone is invented.

1891

Spotify's precursor - the radio - is invented.



sixdegrees*



friendster

1940s The world's first "super-computers" are built.

15th September 1964 The Sun is first published.

17th February 1982 Rebekah Vardy (nee Miranda, previously Nicholson) is born in Norwich.

3rd April 1986 Coleen McLoughlin is born in Liverpool.

August 6th, 1991 The worldwide web is unleashed upon an unsuspecting public.

1997 The world's first social networking site: "Six Degrees" is born.

1998 Coleen McLoughlin meets Wayne Rooney.

1940-1998

2001-2005

2001 Six Degrees shuts down forever.

December 2002 LinkedIn is born.

March 2002 Friendster is launched.

August 2003 Myspace is founded.

October 2003 Wayne proposes to Coleen on a garage forecourt. She then lands a small role in the Merseyside soap *Hollyoaks*.

February 2004 Facebook goes live.

June 2005 The world's angriest website, Reddit, is launched.

February 2005 YouTube is born.

July 2005 Myspace reaches 22 million users and is growing at a rate of 2 million per month.



March 2006 Twitter goes live.

September 2006 The Facebook "Newsfeed" goes live.

October 2006 YouTube is acquired by Google for \$1.65 billion.

August 2007 The hashtag (#) debuts on Twitter.

June 2008 Coleen and Wayne are married in a lavish wedding held in the picturesque Italian Riviera's Villa Durazzo, a 17th-century palace.

October 2008 Spotify goes live.

September 2009 Facebook announces that it is cashflow positive for the first time.

November 2009 Coleen and Wayne welcome baby son Kai Wayne. They have gone on to have three more children together.

March 2010 Pinterest goes live.

October 2010 Instagram is launched and hits 1 million users by December.



2006-2010

2011-2016

July 2011 Snapchat is launched.

April 2012 Facebook acquires Instagram for \$1 billion.

October 2012 Facebook reaches 1 billion active users.

2014 Whilst working as a nightclub promoter, Rebekah meets the footballer, Jamie Vardy.

June 2015 Friendster shuts down.

September 2015 Snapchat introduces its "filters" feature, allowing users to add animal ears and rainbow puke to their snaps.

25 May 2016 Jamie and Rebekah marry at Peckforton Castle. Between them, they now have five children.

September 2016 Snapchat re-brands itself as "Snap inc".



November 2017 Rebekah Vardy is a contestant on the 17th series of the ITV reality show I'm a Celebrity...Get me Out of Here!

March 2018 It is revealed that Cambridge Analytica harvested troves of user data without their consent for political purposes. Facebook stock plummets.

April 2018 Mark Zuckerberg testifies before Congress.

September 2017 to October 2019 The Sun newspaper publishes a number of articles about Coleen Rooney, including that she travelled to Mexico to look into baby "gender selection" treatment, as well as plans to revive her TV career and the flooding of her basement.

October 9, 2019 Coleen Rooney accuses Rebekah Vardy of selling stories from her private Instagram account to the tabloids in a dramatic series of posts on her social media accounts. Rooney was dubbed Wagatha Christie after her plan to catch out who was selling personal stories to The Sun newspaper.



This has been a burden in my life for a few years now and finally I have got to the bottom of it.....

For a few years now someone who I trusted to follow me on my personal Instagram account has been consistently informing The SUN newspaper of my private posts and stories.

There has been so much information given to them about me, my friends and my family - all without my permission or knowledge.

After a long time of trying to figure out who it could be, for various reasons, I had a suspicion.

To try and prove this, I came up with an idea. I blocked everyone from viewing my Instagram stories except ONE account. (Those on my private account must have been wondering why I haven't had stories on there for a while.)

Over the past five months I have posted a series of false stories to see if they made their way into the Sun newspaper. And you know what, they did! The story about gender selection in Mexico, the story about returning to TV and then the latest story about the basement flooding in my new house.

It's been tough keeping it to myself and not making any comment at all, especially when the stories have been leaked, however I had to. Now I know for certain which account / individual it's come from.

I have saved and screenshotted all the original stories which clearly show just one person has viewed them.

It'sRebekah Vardy's account.

2020

**PLOT
SPOILERS**

February 13, 2020 Rebekah appeared in a tearful appearance on Loose Women to deny the allegations. Coleen Rooney issues a statement saying that she did not want to "engage in further public debate" on the matter.

June 23, 2020 Mrs Vardy starts libel proceedings against Mrs Rooney with her lawyers alleging she "suffered extreme distress, hurt, anxiety and embarrassment as a result of the publication of the post and the events which followed".

September, 2020 Rebekah Vardy is announced as a contestant in the 13th series of *Dancing on Ice* in 2021. She was eliminated in week 6.

November 19-20, 2020 The libel battle has its first High Court preliminary hearing in London. Mr Justice Warby rules that Mrs Rooney's October 2019 post "clearly identified Mrs Vardy as being guilty of the serious and consistent breach of trust."

2022

February 8-9, 2022 The case is back in the courts where a series of explosive messages between Mrs Vardy and her agent Caroline Watt – which Mrs Rooney's lawyers allege were about her – are revealed.

February 14, 2022 Mrs Rooney is refused permission to bring a High Court claim against Ms Watt for misuse of private information to be heard alongside the libel battle.

April 13, 2022 The High Court hears Ms Watt is not fit to give verbal evidence and has revoked permission for her witness statement to be used.

April 29, 2022 Mrs Rooney's barrister David Sherborne tells the High Court Mrs Vardy "appears to accept" that her agent was the source of allegedly leaked stories.

May 10-19, 2022 Mrs Vardy and Mrs Rooney came face to face in court as the Wagatha Christie trial finally gets under way at the Royal Courts of Justice in London before Mrs Justice Steyn.

May 20, 2022 A 313-page bundle of evidence is released – including pictures from Mrs Rooney's Instagram account and screenshots, where Mrs Vardy complains to her husband Jamie that she was being made a "scapegoat" during Euro 2016.

July 29, 2022 Mrs Justice Steyn delivers her verdict, dismissing the claim made by Mrs Vardy, finding Mrs Rooney had proved that the meaning of the post was "substantially true".

October 2022 Rebekah Vardy was ordered to pay up to £1.5 million towards Coleen Rooney's legal costs after losing the "Wagatha Christie" High Court case she brought against her.



**The
Royal
Courts
of
Justice**

2017-2019

2025

April 9, 2025 Following Rebekah Vardy's appeal against paying Coleen Rooney's extortionate £1.8m total legal bill, Rooney's lawyers are cleared of misconduct after being accused by Rebekah Vardy's lawyers of "deliberately" understating some of her costs.

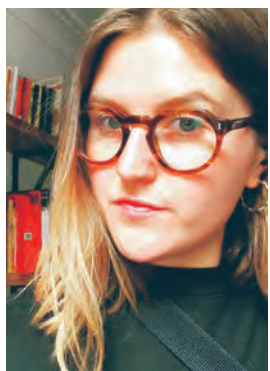
May 6, 2025 In a final judgement in the case, Rebekah Vardy is ordered to pay £1.4m of Coleen Rooney's legal costs.

Writer

Originally from Hereford, Liv is an Olivier award-nominated TV and theatre writer who penned her first short play as part of the Pentabus Young Writing programme in 2015.

Formerly the story producer and script editor of Emmerdale, Liv is currently developing original TV series with Boffola Pictures, Tiger Aspect, West Road Pictures & Moonage Pictures/BBC. Liv's debut play, ***Colostrum***, was on the shortlist of 7 for the Paines Plough Women's Prize for Playwriting 2020. As part of the BBC Writer's Room Pilot Scheme in 2022-23, Liv created ***Everyone's Street***. At the same time, her first full length play, ***Vardy v Rooney: The Wagatha Christie Trial*** ran in the West End and was subsequently nominated for (and won) the Noël Coward Award for best new entertainment or comedy play at the Olivier Awards 2024.

In January of this year Liv returned to her roots by taking up a year-long residency as Pentabus Theatre Company's first-ever Jerwood Writer in Residence. Liv is spending time with the company at their new home in Ludlow Assembly Rooms, where her first ever short play was performed, teaching on the Young Writers programme that she came up through and also being supported to write a brand-new play for the Company.



Daniel Ellis

Director

Daniel studied drama at Liverpool John Moores University and has continued to act and direct since graduating in 2011. He has previously performed with Altrincham Garrick in ***Queers***, ***The History Boys***, ***Peter Pan***, ***Jumpers for Goalposts***, ***Shakespeare in Love*** and as *Idle Jack* in our 2022 panto ***Dick Whittington***, as *Chester the Jester* in 2023's ***Sleeping Beauty*** – both of which he also directed – and as *Simple Simon* in 2024's ***Jack and the Beanstalk***. Last year, Daniel also appeared as *Hugo Horton* in the sell-out stagings of ***The Vicar of Dibley*** and ***A Vicar of Dibley Christmas – The Second Coming***.

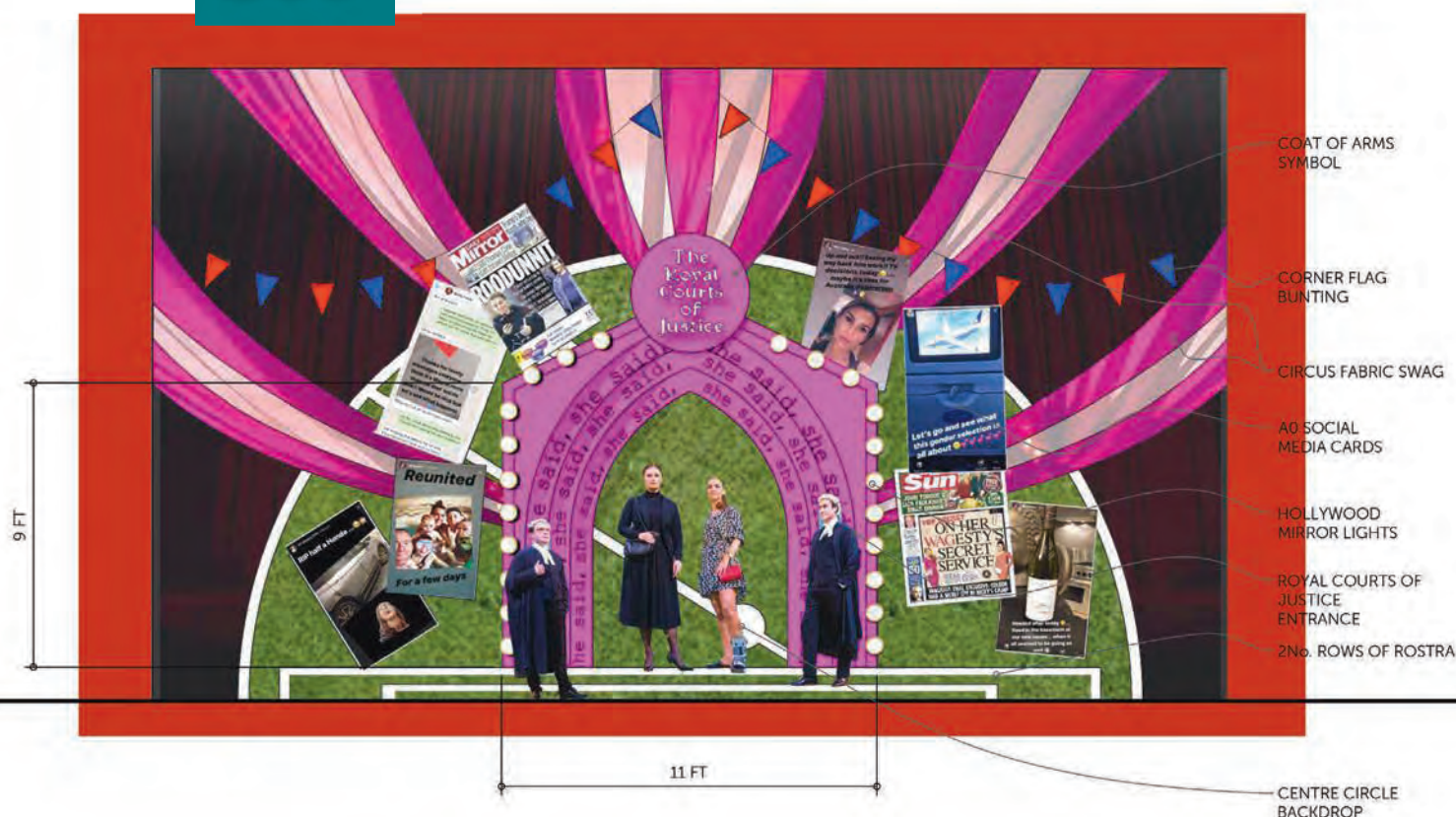
Daniel is the Co-Artistic Director of Green Carnation Company, a theatre company specialising in LGBTQ+ productions which he co-founded in 2018. Through Green Carnation, Daniel has co-directed *Vincent River*, a tour of *My Night With Reg*, *The Pride* and a number of short films created during lockdown and released online.

Elsewhere he has also directed *The 39 Steps*, *Whipping It Up*, *The Weekend* and *The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged)*.



The Set

Designed by **Ian Scullion**, the concept behind the set for **Vardy v Rooney – The Wagatha Christie Trial** is based around the concept of the 'Media Circus' that surrounded the long-running event. So, the set includes elements of a circus tent and banners, backed up by a huge football pitch centre circle, a bright pink entrance to the High Court, newspaper graphics and tweets, and show-style lighting.



The Cast

Rebekah Vardy

Parissa Zamanpour

Coleen Rooney

Lauren Brown

Pundit 1 (Jeff)

Wayne Rooney

Jamie Vardy

Robert Crumpton

Pundit 2 (Jem)

Harpreet Robertson

Caroline Watt

Beverley Stuart-Cole

Hugh Tomlinson QC

John Keen

David Sherborne

Jonathan Higgs

Mrs Justice Steyn

Tracy Mitchell

The Production Team

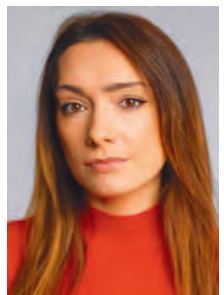
<i>Director</i>	 Daniel Ellis
<i>Set Design</i>	 Ian Scullion
<i>Lighting Design</i>	 James Merrington
<i>Sound Design</i>	 Josh McMillan
<i>Stage Manager</i>	 Paul Simpson
<i>Asst. Stage Manager</i>	 Helen Sallabank
<i>Rehearsal Prompt</i>	 Rosemary Smalley
<i>Properties</i>	 Claire Eddleston-Rose
	 Claire Corneill
<i>Costume Production</i>	 Mike Shaw
<i>Assisted by</i>	 Stella Blackburn
	Julie Shaw Betty Farmer
	Lynne Saleh Catherine Phillips
	Helen Phillips Sarah Steer
	Noel Watson Jen McEvoy
<i>Head of Stage</i>	 Paul Simpson
<i>Production Carpenter</i>	 Steve Cox
<i>Scenic Artist</i>	 Mandy Cooke
<i>Assisted by</i>	Barry Purves Trevor McKie
	Jane Milner Charlotte Leigh
	Rob Robinson Ruth Stocks
	 Holly Cooper
<i>Set Graphic Panels</i>	 Nick Sample
<i>Set Construction</i>	Paul Simpson Steve Cox
	Trevor McKie Alan Jones
	Barry Borgen Mark McEwan
	Nick McKie John Murphy
	Andy McHugh John Ross
	Cliff Mills Dave Bailey
	Bob Green Drew Lightfoot
	 Alistair Duffy
<i>Rehearsal & Production Photography</i>	 Martin Ogden
<i>Publicity & Programme Design</i>	 Nick Sample

All information was believed to be correct at the time of going to press.
Some names or designations in the Creative Team may have since changed.

Thank You
VERY MUCH

Without our incredibly dedicated, enthusiastic team of **Volunteers** and **Staff**, whose sheer hard work often goes un-noticed, Altrincham Garrick Playhouse would simply be unable to continue providing such a range of top-quality productions for you everyone enjoy. **With their continuous commitment to excellence, we owe them all a huge debt of gratitude. Thankyou all so much!**

The Company



Parissa Zamanpour

Rebekah Vardy

Parissa trained professionally as an actor at The Arden School of Theatre, and has worked on numerous projects both in theatre and film.

Her acting credits include *The Chain* where she played the lead role in a feature film that premièred at the Toronto Film Festival 2018. Theatre credits include *The Seance*, performed for the Greater Manchester Fringe Festival 2018. Parissa is no stranger to the Garrick, where she has acted in many performances such as playing *Bella Mannigham* in *Gaslight* by Patrick Hamilton, *Carla Crale* in *Go Back for Murder* by Agatha Christie, *Charlotte Brontë* in *Brontë* by Polly Teale, *Elizabeth Law* in *When The Rain Stops Falling* by Andrew Bovell and, most recently, *Blanche Ingram* in *Jane Eyre* by Polly Teale. Parissa won a NODA award for Best Actress in her performances as *Carla Crale* and *Charlotte Brontë*.

Not only is Parissa an actor, but she is also a writer and director, and set up her own production company *Starry Night Productions* and produced *I Remain* at the GMF 2022, a play inspired by her great, great, grandfather who died at the Battle of The Somme, 1916. Her other plays include *Somme Men* which was performed in commemoration of 100 years since the end of WWI.

Parissa has also directed at the Garrick, such as Agatha Christie's *Verdict*, *These Shining Lives* by Melanie Marnich, and *Swallow* by Stef Smith.

Most recently, Parissa has worked in Production Management at the BBC in Children's TV, and is currently acting in a short film *Billy Brickfield* by 2scoops Productions.



Robert Crumpton

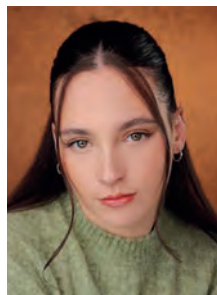
Pundit 1 (Jem)
Wayne Rooney
Jamie Vardy

Robert played *Pozzo* in *Waiting for Godot* at the Garrick Studio in January, having moved back to Manchester after more than a decade in Spain. He trained as an actor at Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in London.

Robert's theatre credits include: *Henry V* (Oxford Playhouse), *Attempts on Her Life* (Underbelly, Edinburgh Fringe), *Romeo and Juliet* (Nottingham Playhouse), *The Emperor Jones* (The Gate, Notting Hill); five national/international summer tours with the open-air British Shakespeare Company; leads in *Rope* and *Everyman* (The Madrid Players); *Betrayal*, *Crave*, *Miss Julie*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Present Laughter*, and the title roles in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* (English Theatre Madrid).

Television: *El Ministerio del Tiempo* (HBO/La 1), *In From the Cold* (Netflix), and the Spanish soap opera *Servir y Proteger* (La 1).

Film: *The Vault*, *Cracking the Shakespeare Code*.



Lauren Brown

Coleen Rooney

Lauren is a recent graduate of Shockout Arts, having trained on their Musical Theatre degree course. She began dancing at the age of 4 and found her passion for Musical Theatre and Acting during high school.

Her previous performance credits at Altrincham Garrick include *Jim Hawkins* in *Treasure Island*, *Ensemble/ News Presenter* in *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Ensemble/ Dancer/ The Jitterbug* in *The Wizard of Oz* as well as *Ensemble/ Dancer* in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. Earlier this year she played *Siobhan* in the Garrick Ensemble's memorable staging of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*.

Other Theatre Credits include *Lily St. Regis* in *Annie*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Fame*, and most recently she appeared in *Opening Up! A Musical Showcase*.

Lauren has also danced around the country at many prestigious venues including Her Majesty's Theatre, London, The Empire Theatre, Liverpool and The Lowry, Salford, and last year performed at *Move It*.



Beverley Stuart-Cole

Pundit 2 (Jem)
Harpreet Robertson
Caroline Watt

Beverley has been a member of the Garrick for 38 years, and has enjoyed a wide variety of roles in that time. Favourites include *Dotty Otley* in *Noises Off*, *Elsie Tanner* and *Bet Lynch* in *Corrie!*, *Mrs Birling* in *An Inspector Calls*, *Lily St. Regis* in *Annie*, *Mrs Robinson* in *The Graduate*, *Viola* in *Twelfth Night*, *Helena* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Viv* in *Jumpers for Goalposts*, *The Stage Manager* in *Our Town*, *Anne* in *The Father*, and *The Fairy* in several of our fabulous *Pantomimes*.

Altrincham Garrick Studio credits include *The Blonde* in *Hitchcock Blonde*, *Sylvia* in *The Thrill of Love*, *Truzy* in *Steel Magnolias* and *Bette Davis* in *Bette and Joan*.

Elsewhere, Beverley has appeared in *Say Who You Are* and *Murdered to Death* at Altrincham Little Theatre, and *Dead Guilty*, *A Kind of Alaska* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* at Sale Nomads.

She is thrilled to be appearing in this hilarious play which really is a story stranger than fiction!



John Keen

Hugh Tomlinson QC

A long-standing member of both Weaver Valley Cycling Club who still competes in road races – and recently gained a creditable second place in the Ras Ffordd Llandyrnog, organised by Ruthin CC on a rolling circuit

near Ruthin – and Altrincham Garrick Playhouse's performing company, John is delighted to be zooming back onto a stage he's graced many times before in the pre-pandemic era.

Previous appearances with the Garrick have included "a beautifully understated performance as the disarmingly decent Dr Henry Mead" in *Ladies in Lavender*, John in *Rutherford and Son*, Amyas Crale in *Go Back for Murder*, Sir Robert Chiltern in *An Ideal Husband* and John Proctor in *The Crucible* (SAM Best Actor), while elsewhere John has played roles as diverse as *Charles Dickens*, Fred and the *Ghost of Christmas Future* in *A Christmas Carol* at Cheadle Hulme ADS to George in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and, more recently, Tom Donohue in *These Shining Lives* at Wilmslow Green Room Theatre.

Back in 2013, John also helped to coach three long-standing Garrick alumni – Jon White, Mark Jephcott and Graham Simmonds – for their 500-mile cycling fund-raiser on the trail of Henry V, from Harfleur to Agincourt, in memory of two popular Garrick acting colleagues, Terry Chandler and Roger Metcalfe.



Tracy Mitchell

Mrs Justice Steyn

Tracy has been involved with the Garrick for the last 3 seasons. She joined as an Assistant Stage Manager working on the Garrick's productions of *George's Marvellous Medicine*, *House of Ghosts*, *The Sound of Music* and *Dick Whittington*.

The March 2023 sell-out production of *The Laramie Project* in the Studio Theatre marked Tracy's first ever production actually treading the boards at the Garrick, and she made her main stage debut in Mike Shaw's production of *Witness for the Prosecution* as *The Clerk of the Court* in May 2023. Since then, she's also appeared in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* before appearing as Margaret 'Bobo' Macdonald, the Queen's childhood nanny, in Mike Shaw's unforgettable production of *The Audience* earlier this year.

Between those two previous shows, Tracy worked behind the scenes as an A.S.M. on *The Vicar of Dibley* in April of last year, and she was back with the same team again in the follow-up production *A Vicar of Dibley Christmas – The Second Coming*, when she also appeared as a Vet.

Having been a lowly *Clerk of the Court* in *Witness...*, Tracy's rise through the ranks of the legal profession has been absolutely meteoric, and she's thrilled to be playing *Mrs Justice Steyn* in this production.



Jonathan Higgs

David Sherborne

Jonathan made his Altrincham Garrick debut earlier this year as the title character in *Oppenheimer*. He has been acting in various forms for over 25 years, most often at another Garrick Theatre, in Stockport, with appearances there this year in *Glengarry Glen Ross* and *A Bunch of Amateurs*.

Other previous roles include *Garry Essendine* in *Present Laughter*, *Richard Hannay* in *The 39 Steps*, *Bertie Wooster* in *Jeeves and Wooster* in 'Perfect Nonsense' and *Hamlet*, in *Hamlet*.

Recently, on screen, Jonathan has worked with Macclesfield-based film company Loud Voices, Silent Streets, appearing in their award-winning short films 'How to Avoid Death Forever' and 'Completely Well Adjusted', and in their forthcoming short, 'Killer' and feature 'The Places We Leave Behind'.

Jonathan is delighted to be able to return to Altrincham so soon. Since last time he was here he was responsible for blowing up two cities and a sizeable chunk of desert, he's especially pleased to take on a role that puts him - in Sherborne's own words - "on the side of the angels". (Opinions on that may vary.)



Ian Scullion

Set Design

Ian is a practicing qualified Architect and multi-disciplined designer based in Altrincham and has been working with The Garrick since 2023. He approached The Garrick not expecting to be given an

opportunity to design a set, but more for a chance to understand the design process. He has relished designing sets for *Blue Stockings*, *The Girl On The Train*, *The Father* and *Oppenheimer*.

Ian is also part of a small professional theatre company, *Ignition Stage* that specialises in translated contemporary drama from central and eastern European nations. Since its inception in 2007 he has designed the sets and posters for Ignition Stage for shows at The Lowry, Hampstead Theatre, Media City and the Royal Northern College of Music.

His creative interests and skills inform the debate and exchanges between the cast, director and production team to find the right creative response with attention to budget and logistics. Ian's approach to set design is to create a set that engages the audience with the story without compromising it, responding appropriately and concisely.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

We value your feedback, and would like to invite you to share your thoughts about the Altrincham Garrick Playhouse. Have you enjoyed a recent performance, or didn't enjoy it for some reason? Perhaps there's something we could improve on? Are there specific plays, musicals, or shows you'd love to see on our stage? Any visiting acts you'd like to recommend? What do you think of this programme? How did you find out about what you came to see? We would love to receive your reviews and suggestions.

This season, we've partnered with Star Feedback to make it easy for you to share your opinions. Simply scan the QR code (right) and let us know what you think. Thank you for helping us create the best experience possible!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Spat's Entertainment!

Some of the best Celebrity Feuds and Vendettas...

Celebrity feuds have always been a fascinating aspect of the entertainment industry, offering a glimpse into the dramatic lives of our favourite stars. These feuds can be fuelled by a variety of factors, including professional rivalries, personal grudges, or simply clashing personalities. Some of the most notorious and memorable celebrity feuds that have captivated audiences over the years include...



Bette Davis vs. Joan Crawford

One of the most iconic and enduring feuds in Hollywood. In the red corner: Joan Crawford, who put rocks in her pockets in preparation for a scene in which Davis had to drag her across a floor in the film *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* In the blue corner: Bette Davis, who said: "(Joan) slept with every male star at MGM except *Lassie*." There were no winners in this decades-long bitter feud, but their pranks and putdowns were top-drawer. Their rivalry became the stuff of legend, symbolising the cut-throat nature of Hollywood and the lengths to which stars will go to maintain their status.

A.S. Byatt vs. Margaret Drabble

In the literary world, A.S. Byatt and Margaret Drabble are two prominent figures whose sibling rivalry has been well-documented. The sisters, both acclaimed authors, had a complex relationship marked by both admiration and competition. Their feud gained public attention when Byatt's novel *"The Children's Book"* was criticised by Drabble, who accused her sister of plagiarising elements from her own works. The sisters maintained a frosty relationship until Byatt's death in 2023, with their feud serving as a reminder that even the most talented and respected figures in literature can be driven by sibling rivalry.

Kim Cattrall vs. Sarah Jessica Parker

The feud between Kim Cattrall and Sarah Jessica Parker, co-stars of the iconic TV series *"Sex and the City,"* has been a source of fascination for fans. Their on-screen chemistry as best friends *Carrie* and *Samantha* belied the tension off-screen. The feud came to a head in 2018 when, following the death of Cattrall's brother, Jessica

Parker sent her condolences, for which she was rewarded with a ferocious dressing down from Cattrall via Instagram. Parker, in turn, expressed her disappointment and hurt, leading to a very public falling-out. Despite attempts at reconciliation, the two have largely maintained a distance, leaving fans to wonder if their friendship will ever be repaired.



Amanda Holden vs Phillip Schofield

It started in November, 2018, when Amanda was preparing to fill in for Holly Willoughby on ITV's daytime flagship *This Morning*, but lost out to singer Rochelle Humes. A source told The Sun that the choice to ditch Amanda had been "heavily influenced by Phil". Phillip firmly denied the allegations, but the following summer Amanda confirmed the feud on her radio show, telling co-star Jamie Theakston that an "olive branch" had been offered via text. Apparently, Phillip never replied...

Philip Schofield vs. Holly Willoughby



Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby were once thought of as one of the UK's most dynamic TV duos, alongside Ant and Dec and Mel and Sue.

But their long-running, hugely successful partnership came crashing to a halt after a series of events – Schofield coming out as gay, his brother being convicted of child sex offences, and the Queuegate scandal when they strongly denied jumping the queue to file past The Queen – culminated in Schofield's shock revelation in May 2023 about his extra-marital affair with a younger male co-worker, and his subsequent resignation from ITV. It's safe to say that the pair's long friendship has well and truly soured.

Schofield recently reappeared on our screens in a poorly received Channel 5 reality TV show *Cast Away*, where he appeared to mock his former co-host. Rumours of Schofield and Willoughby's friendship breakdown have been fuelled further by reports of heated text exchanges and Schofield reportedly referring to his ex-BFF as "the witch" to close friends.



Piers Morgan vs. Little Mix

Piers Morgan is no stranger to celebrity spats, having picked fights with everyone from model Emily Ratajkowski to actress Jameela Jamil.

His feud with Little Mix began in November 2018 when the Good Morning Britain host accused the girl band of using nudity to promote the release of their single, Strip.

Little Mix responded in an interview by claiming they have no time for Piers, to which he tweeted: *"I can't hang out with those foul-mouthed, talentless, clothes-allergic little dimwits? Gutted"*.

Ariana Grande then joined in, slamming Piers for his comments, saying that women can be *"naked and talented"*.

The war continued in 2019, when Little Mix threw some not-so-subtle shade on stage during the opening number of their world tour in Madrid, by airing clips of Piers demanding an apology.

He shared the video on Twitter and accused the band of using him to *"make their tour a success"*. But Little Mix called his bluff, saying that both Piers and ITV had signed off on the footage.



Elton John vs. Madonna

One of pop culture's most high profile beefs has recently been squashed. High profile because there were two legendary artists involved: Elton John and Madonna. And they've been nasty to each other for over 20 years. Or, rather, Elton's been nasty to Madonna. For the most part, she's been much more diplomatic about him – acknowledging that he hated her, for sure, but leaving the insults off the table.

It started in 2002 or so when Elton called Madonna's Bond song *"Die Another Day"* the *"worst Bond tune ever"*. Then in 2004 he got up on stage at the Q Awards and made his win about her:

*"Madonna, best live act? F**k off. Since when has lip-syncing been live? Sorry about that, but I think everyone who lip-syncs on stage in public when you pay like 75 quid to see them should be shot. Thank you very much. That's me off her Christmas card list, but do I give a toss? No."*

In 2012, ahead of Madonna's Super Bowl performance, Elton was asked on Good Morning America if he had any advice for her. His response: *"Make sure you lip-sync good."*

It was Madonna who apparently initiated the reconciliation. Having found out that Elton would be appearing alongside Brandi Carlisle on Saturday Night Live in April of this year she decided she'd go and settle it once and for all. When she went backstage to see him, the first words out of his mouth were, *"Forgive me"*.



Liam Gallagher vs Robbie Williams

In 1995, Robbie had a blossoming friendship with Oasis brothers Liam and Noel, but by the noughties things had soured, and this is now one of the longest-standing feuds in celebrity history.

During the 2000 Brit Awards, Robbie asked the crowd *"Would anybody like to see me fight Liam?"* At the time, the Oasis singer was dating Robbie's ex fiancée Nicole Appleton. The public attacks continued, with Liam calling Robbie a *"fat f***ing idiot"* after the former Take That singer insulted his brother, Noel.

During his Las Vegas residency in March 2019, Robbie asked fans to start a hashtag for *"Liam Gallagher was s*** tonight"*. It almost resulted in real fisticuffs - with Robbie planning to book a professional boxing match and promising to *"knock him out in the third round."*

But Robbie's wife Ayda called a stop to the whole thing when she publicly labelled the spat as *"embarrassing"* and *"lame."*

...And many, many others – want to know more?

A quick online search will bring up a myriad of celebrity spats, in a wide range of fields, including film (*Joan Fontaine* vs her sister *Olivia De Havilland*, *Reese Witherspoon* vs *Kate Winslet*), music (*Axl Rose* vs *Kurt Cobain*, *One Direction* vs *The Wanted*, *Ariana Grande* vs her ex-fiancée *Pete Davidson*, *Kanye West* vs *Taylor Swift*), literature (*Norman Mailer* vs *Gore Vidal*), Lifestyle (*Gwyneth Paltrow* vs *Martha Stewart*), TV (*Danny Dyer* vs *James Jordan*, *The Kardashians...*). Wherever there are egos, there will also almost always be disputes, disagreements, jealousy... and as they're in the public eye, they invariably keep the public hugely entertained..!

What the case can teach you about

Avoiding Libel on Social Media

The legal battle between two media personalities married to former England footballers proved at least one thing – that social media is a high-risk area for defamation claims.

Historically, successful defamation claims have involved two steps. First, establishing what the ordinary, reasonable reader would have taken a statement (a press publication or social media post) to mean. Second, proving that the meaning of the statement is defamatory – namely that ordinary, reasonable members of the society would think less of the individual referred to. Recent changes to the law require that a publication must have caused, or is likely to cause, “serious harm” to the claimant’s reputation.

In a preliminary hearing for this case, the judge examined the level of seriousness of Coleen Rooney’s allegations. He ruled that the whole purpose of her post was to point to the individual responsible for the alleged “serious and consistent breach of trust”. The meaning of her words was judged as very serious, and thus Rooney would face a high bar at trial in proving her accusations as substantially true.

Regardless of the outcome, Vardy v Rooney illustrated the extent to which social media has become a liability landmine. The trial also has valuable lessons for observers about avoiding libel in your own posts.

Steer clear of ambiguity

There is a degree of unpredictability in libel proceedings, especially about how a judge decides the meaning of the published words. A court will often need to decide on a single meaning of a publication or post by considering the impression the words are likely to make on those reading it. This is not necessarily the meaning intended by the author – in this case, Rooney could not claim “I did not quite mean it this way”. Try to eliminate ambiguity by communicating with precision.

In her original post, Rooney appeared convinced of her statement’s truth and identified Vardy as having been responsible for leaking private posts to the press. Rooney’s position might have been different, had she made use of the language of opinion – phrases that are a genuine comment, not a factual assertion.

Honest opinion is one defence against defamation, and including words like “appears to” or “I reckon” can open the door to it.

Consider who you post about

Anyone can sue for defamation, but celebrities, business people and high-profile public figures are more likely to sue than others. Although defamation is not simply a numbers game, there is a greater likelihood of reputational damage if a statement is circulated to a wide audience via social media.

It seems that the general (on and offline) conversation that followed Rooney’s allegedly defamatory post mattered hugely to both parties. Vardy and Rooney were repeatedly encouraged to settle out of court, but neither side backed down. Their remarkable resolve may not have earned the court’s sympathy, but it showed their determination to be proven right in open court and restore their social standing.

Remember, social media can be serious

Various case law has taken the view that users on a fast-moving and dynamic medium like X scroll rapidly, skim content and quickly absorb (or ignore) messages. Courts generally see social media as a conversational medium where words are used in the context of a casual conversation (like people chatting in a pub) rather than a carefully chosen expression.

If allegations on social media are generally to be taken with a pinch of salt (compared to those in a newspaper for example), the reputational harm suffered will often be less serious.

However, social media users are not absolved from their responsibilities when it comes to other people’s hard-earned reputations. Food writer and anti-poverty campaigner Jack Monroe won £24,000 damages (plus legal costs) in a libel action against columnist Katie Hopkins over a tweet. And Sally Bercow, the wife of the former Speaker of the House of Commons John Bercow, apologised for “irresponsible use of Twitter”. Her libellous post was found to have pointed the “finger of blame” at Tory peer Lord McAlpine in the wake of a media report wrongly linking him to child sexual abuse claims.

Take a risk, spend big

The financial implications of losing a defamation action can be so punitive that even the winner can end up with a considerable loss.

Although a court will usually order the unsuccessful party to pay for the legal costs, the successful party will most probably recover only a percentage of their bill. What’s more, damages tend to be much lower than the legal costs of defending a libel case.

Think before you post

Social media posts do not usually benefit from the same level of editorial or legal input as traditional media or online publications, so it is always advisable to be cautious about what you post. Unless you can afford legal counsel before tweeting, it is important to have clear, credible, and reliable evidence for your allegations before sharing them with the world online.

If you do not have enough material to prove a statement is substantially true, avoid taking the risk. You will probably be in a stronger position if you consider whether your post will be defensible if a trial follows.

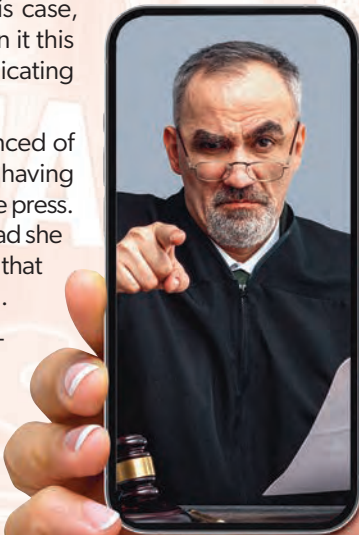
Alexandros Antoniou

Lecturer in Media Law, University of Essex.

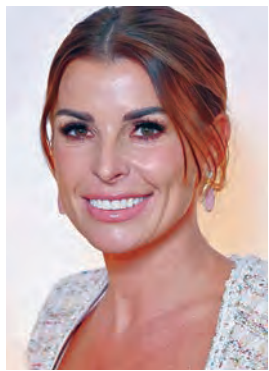
The Conversation.

We believe in the free flow of information.

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Coleen Rooney



Coleen Mary McLoughlin was born in Liverpool to Tony McLoughlin, a bricklayer who also ran a boxing club, and Colette McLoughlin, who worked as a part-time cleaner at St John Bosco Arts College. Coleen is the eldest of four children; her sister Rosie, who had Rett syndrome, died on 5 January 2013 at the age of 14. Coleen attended St John Bosco Arts College and left school with 10 GCSEs, including an A* for Performing Arts.

She met her future husband, Wayne Rooney, at age 12 in the Liverpool suburb of Croxteth. They began a relationship when they were 16, after they had left secondary school. The couple married in Portofino, Italy, on 12 June 2008; Britain's OK! magazine paid them a reported £2.5 million for exclusive wedding information and pictures. The Rooneys now have four sons, born in 2009, 2013, 2016 and 2018.

Coleen has worked as a writer for *Closer* and *OK!* magazines and has presented and made TV series for ITV. She was paid £3 million to front the *George at Asda* campaign, has released an exercise DVD, and several books. Her autobiography, *Welcome to My World*, was released in March 2007. This was followed by *Coleen's Real Style* in 2008, and she has also published a four-book series called *Coleen Style Queen* from 2008 to 2010.

In October 2023, a drama documentary about the Wagatha Christie court case *Vardy v Rooney* was released on Disney+, which documented and told Rooney's side of the case and the details leading up to the social media posting. A year later, Rooney appeared as a contestant on the twenty-fourth series of *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!*, finishing in second place after 22 days in the jungle.

Rebekah Vardy



Rebekah Miranda was born in Norwich on 17 February 1982. Her parents Carlos and Alison divorced when she was 11 and she moved from city to city, living in Norwich, Reading and Oxford. Rebekah's father, Carlos Miranda, was born in Madeira, making Vardy half-Portuguese.

At 17, Rebekah met electrician Mark Godden. They later married in Mexico, but split in 2003. Vardy then married Steve Clarke, a 59-year-old timeshare company boss, in 2005, but the couple were divorced the following year.

In 2014, while working as a nightclub promoter, Rebekah organised footballer Jamie Vardy's 27th-birthday party. She became pregnant three months later with their first child. The Vardys subsequently married on 25 May 2016 at Peckforton Castle. The following year she was a contestant on the seventeenth series of the ITV reality TV show *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!*. Vardy was the third celebrity to be eliminated. She has made appearances on *Loose Women*, *Jeremy Vine* and *This Morning*. She was a competitor in the thirteenth series of *Dancing on Ice* in 2021. She was eliminated in week 6.

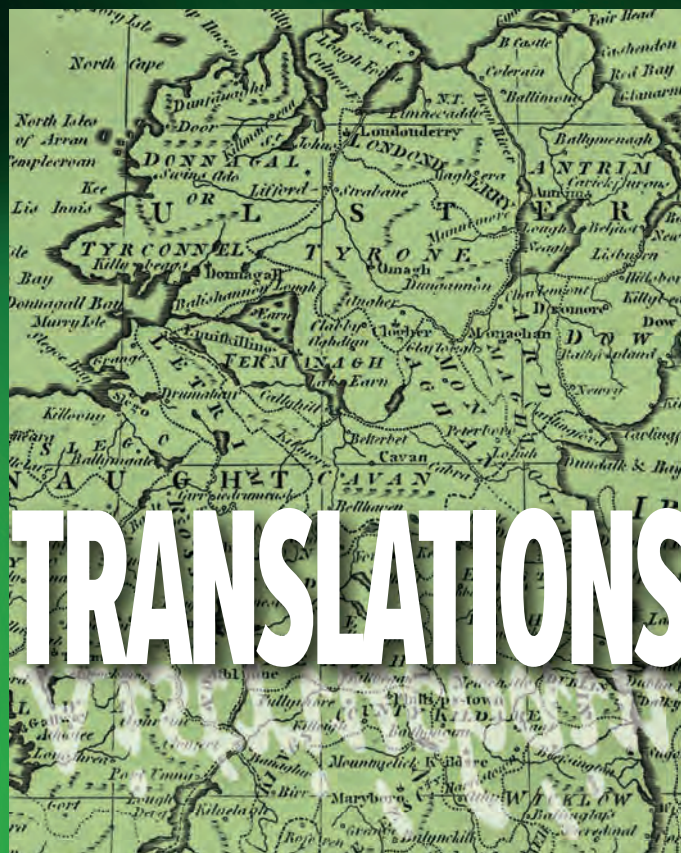
Rebekah has five children: a daughter (born 2005) and a son (born 2010) fathered by footballer Luke Foster, and a daughter (born 2014), a son (born 2017), and a daughter (born 2019) with her third husband, Jamie Vardy. She is stepmother to Jamie's daughter from a previous relationship.

Rebekah and Jamie Vardy are both Family ambassadors to *Barnardo's*. Vardy is also a patron of the *Dorothy Goodman School* in Leicestershire. She has supported Leicester-based homelessness charity *Homelessness To Hope*, having officially opened the Hope Centre, and has supported the *Jeans For Genes* charity campaign.

Next in the Studio

Tuesday 10 – Sunday 15 June

"You can learn to decode us"



by **Brian Friel**

Directed by **Carole Carr**

From the acclaimed playwright of *Faith Healer* and *Dancing at Lughnasa*, this hauntingly lyrical play is about nothing less than language as the soul of a nation.

In 1833 Baile Beag, County Donegal, a hedge schoolmaster gives his Irish-speaking students a classical education, versing them in Ancient Greek and Latin – but not in English. Meanwhile, the British Army arrives to create a new map of Ireland that will 'standardise' the Irish place-names to English. With the schoolmaster's son returning home from Dublin to serve as the Army's translator, local farm girl Máire finds herself torn between the affections of the local school teacher and the love of a British soldier, between her native tongue and a new language, between the comfort of the world she knows and the excitement of foreign possibilities. The resulting clash of two worlds threatens the very heart of the community as they struggle to interpret a new language and each other. What gets lost in translation?

Brian Friel's modern masterpiece examines the fractious relationship between people and nations through the lens of language and (mis)communication.

This play appears on the recommended Secondary School Reading List.

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This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Nick Hern Books Ltd.
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The story that inspired the soundtrack of a generation



ONE FINE DAY
IT'S TOO LATE
ON BROADWAY
UP ON THE ROOF
THE LOCOMOTION
YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND
I FEEL THE EARTH MOVE
SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL
TAKE GOOD CARE OF MY BABY
WILL YOU LOVE ME TOMORROW?
YOU'VE LOST THAT LOVIN' FEELIN'
IT MIGHT AS WELL RAIN UNTIL SEPTEMBER
(YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE) A NATURAL WOMAN
...AND MANY MORE!

Book by **Douglas McGrath**

Words & Music by
**Gerry Goffin &
Carole King,
Barry Mann &
Cynthia Weil**

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Sun 29 June 2025

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Matinée at 2:30pm, Sat 28 June
Matinée at 5:00pm, Sun 29 June

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