



The Liverpool University Players

Present

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight





Cast and Crew

Morgan Le Fay – Madelaine Smart

Sir Gawain – Joseph Ramsden

King Arthur – Geoffrey Johnson

Queen Guinevere and The Porter – Lucy Bullimore

The Green Knight – Connor Brown

Lord Bertilak – Lewis Smith

Lady Bertilak – Priya Odedra

Directors – Madelaine Smart and Sarah Peverley

Script – Gail Aubrey, Rebecca Drury, Geoffrey Johnson, Kathryn Porter, Joseph Ramsden, Madelaine Smart, and Beth Tynman

Props and Costumes – Janice and Stephen Brooks, Rio Matchett, and Sarah Peverley

Programme – Kimberley Nicholls and Sarah Peverley

With special thanks to:

Staff at The National Trust and Lady Lever Gallery; Catherine Jackman; Emma Devlin; The Friends of the University; Liverpool Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies; and The School of the Arts, Liverpool University. Images: British Library MS Cotton Nero A x.

Plot Summary

King Arthur's court is celebrating New Year when a giant green man interrupts the festivities, challenging the court to an ominous beheading contest, described as a 'Christmas game'. Sir Gawain, King Arthur's nephew, agrees to participate in the strange game to defend the honour of the Round Table. To everyone's surprise, when he cuts his opponent's head off, the supernatural Green Knight picks it up and leaves, warning Sir Gawain to keep his promise and seek him out in twelve month's time for a return blow of the axe.

Fast forward one year, and Gawain embarks on his quest to find the Green Knight at the 'Green Chapel'. Despairing of the bitterly cold weather, he rides across the perilous landscape of North-West England, where he fights dragons, trolls, wolves and bears, and finds refuge at a magnificent castle belonging to Lord and Lady Bertilak. Lord Bertilak knows the way to the Green Chapel and promises to direct Gawain there in time for New Year if he will rest at the castle. On each of the following three days that Gawain stays, he agrees to participate in a festive game with Lord Bertilak, whereby the two men exchange whatever they 'win' during the day. Lord Bertilak goes hunting each day, while Gawain remains at leisure with Lady Bertilak (receiving an increasing number of kisses and a magical belt). Each evening the men exchange what they have won, but on the third day, Gawain fails to give Lord Bertilak the belt, which he hopes will save him from the Green Knight's fateful axe.

On New Year's day, Gawain keeps his appointment with the Green Knight, and after two feints of his axe, receives a small cut from the third strike. The Green Knight reveals that he is Lord Bertilak, transformed through the magic of Morgan le Fay. Gawain passed his test by acting honourably at the castle, but received the small cut because he failed to deal fairly on the third day, when he kept the magical belt. Gawain returns to King Arthur's court feeling ashamed that he acted dishonestly, but the court welcome him home and adopt the green belt as a sign of his success.

