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■ The Rose Theatre, (1, 2) recently unearthed after 400 years, crammed a 2,000 strong audience into a space that today would allow for only 600 people.

● *Les vestiges du Rose Theatre (1, 2) ont été découverts après quatre siècles d'enterrement. A l'époque, on entassait 2,000 personnes dans cette salle qui, aujourd'hui, n'en contiendrait que 600.*

▼ Des kürzliche ausgegrabene Rose Theatre (1, 2) fasste 2,000 Zuschauer, in einem Raum in dem heute nur 600 Zuschauer zugelassen wären.

pages, some in colour. Every BBC bulletin, radio, and TV reported live from the site. The Rose had caught the public imagination. Round Three to People Power.

Why the furore? The sophisticated answer, unspoken by most except a pugnacious Labour Shadow Minister for the Arts, but probably thought by everyone, is that this is a metaphor for Thatcherite Britain. Wrote Marcus Binney, founder of Save Britain's Heritage, the best of the conservation pressure groups, in *The Times*: "If proof is needed that we are living in the age of the ostrich, the Rose Theatre provides it. At any other time the discovery of the stage of an Elizabethan theatre would have been a matter of rejoicing. This is sacred ground. Yet all the Minister will do is to arrange for it to be buried in sand. It is not reasonable to expect the developer to foot the bill. With a discovery of this dimension the buck stops at 10 Downing Street." Strong stuff.

The key word is "dimension". As a late convert to the Rose, having not seen it all until the evening of Friday, 12 May, I must report that the first view of what the archaeologists have discovered after four months of excavation is a revelation. This is because of the near completeness in plan of what remains. (One-third lies unexcavated under an adjoining site which is likely to become available). The ring of inner and outer walls with the line of not one, but two, stages is clear. Place oneself at the side of the theatre at a point as yet unexcavated, as if seated or standing in the third row of the second tier, and you can

reach out and almost touch the actor, the furthest seat being no more than 12 meters (40 feet) from the stage, and this in a theatre which must have held 2,000.

2,000?! The calculation, or rather informed guess, is summarised thus. The Swan held 3,000 said DeWitt in 1596, a figure repeated in respect of the Globe by the Spanish Ambassador in 1621. A complicated but strictly scientific calculation of Wenzel Holler's long view of 1644, by which time the Rose had disappeared, gives an outer diameter of the second Globe of 31 meters (102 feet) and of the Hope of 30.4 meters (100 feet), the contract for which specified that it was to be the same size as the Swan. The Fortune Theatre, apparently the only square theatre of the Elizabethan open air theatres, was 7.2 square meters (80 square feet). The Rose, the only one of these to be found and excavated, is 21.9 meters (72 feet) in diameter. There is an inner yard of 14 meters (46 feet) between faces, 15 meters (49 feet 6 inches) between points. Compare this with inner dimensions of 16.7 meters (55 feet) for the Fortune (known) and 21.3 meters (70 feet) for the Globe (surmised). Thus the Rose was two-thirds the size of the later and larger houses, ergo two-thirds of the capacity: 2,000.

This may be a surprise on the page but it is astounding in reality. We are in a theatre no bigger than the Criterion in London's West End with a facing gallery no further than that of the Cottesloe's. The scale of the polygon is no bigger than the

seven sided in-the-round 700-seat Royal Exchange, Manchester (14.5 meters -- 49 feet -- between inner faces of the galleries). In a space in which it would be difficult to get 600 people under modern regulations, 2,000 were compressed in 1587. No wonder today's actors were amazed. This was a theatre where a raised eyebrow would register and an aside need be no more than a movement of the mouth. This was a theatre where all could be held by a pair of glittering eyes. It's tiny and it was crammed, our Elizabethan forebears standing or sitting shoulder to shoulder. The tiers would be as tightly packed as those in the Inigo Jones Theatre of 1616 which shows "degrees" for raised seating at 45.7 centimeters (18 inches) back to back and probably allowed no more than 30.5 or 35.5 centimeters (12 or 14 inches) width per person. On such a calculation seated areas would be over three times as dense as those for a modern audience. With standing even tighter, plus no gangways, an Elizabethan Olivier theatre would hold 5,000 instead of 1,200, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden 7,000 instead of 2,150.

The Rose projects scale. It also projects style. Peter Hall did the movement a disservice by likening the intention to "Doze the Rose" as akin to turning the Parthenon into a parking garage (inviting comment that the National looks like one anyway). But the Rose is not a shrine, nor a thing of architectural beauty. It was run up by stage carpenters to get the maximum number of people as close to the