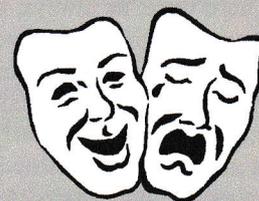




NEWSLETTER



JUNE 2000



Another busy summer lies ahead. The main feature is of course our production of *As You Like It*, but don't forget *Elsie and Friends*, the AGM and this year's Summer Party.



Players Events

A grave omission from the last Newsletter was any mention of the Annual Dinner, held in February. Some 40 members attended and as always the Crown produced a very reasonable meal for the price. The dinner is not an easy evening to organise and Tony Manns did a really efficient job, and on the occasion itself acted as an accomplished Master of Ceremonies. Thank you Tony for all your hard work; it was well worth it.

Our Spring production, *The Constant*

Wife, came together remarkably well, considering the difficulties Jessica Colson had in finding a cast and backstage team. Rehearsal time was short, but everyone in the cast worked hard to learn their lines, particularly Kathy Messenger, who had by far the largest part to learn--she was hardly ever off stage--and, in spite of a cold and sore throat, produced a performance that well deserved the praise in the Blackmore Vale Magazine review. Also praised was the set, a result of the combined efforts of Jim Schofield, John Thompson and Jessica. I have to say that there were those of us in the cast who had our doubts when the black and white set design was originally described to us, but the end product was stunning and I had no difficulty with the line "I love your room".

Costumes, too, came in for praise. Unable to find anyone else to take on the task,

Obit.

Margery Morgan

Margery Hall was one of the founder members of The Players and one who rapidly made her mark as a person who was prepared to roll up her sleeves and get stuck in. In 1938, while paying money in at the bank, she was recruited by Fred B. Alcock to take on the role of Property Mistress for *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, a daunting task by any standards as it involved dealing over 200 props. The following year she was cast as The Lady in *Its Autumn Now*, a one-act play being entered in The British League Festival of Community Theatre, during the preparation for which she set out to obtain for The Players their first lighting equipment, which she and other members paid for themselves--this was before the days of reserve funds. By now she was quite definitely 'one of the management' and throughout the war she was one of those who kept The Players going, becoming Secretary and Business Manager in 1942. Fred B. Alcock, who by his own admission hated committees, records that she was "much too given to holding committee meetings!" In 1945/6 she played Lady Caroline in *Dear Brutus*, and in the process fell in love with and married Bob Yaxley, who played her husband Matey in the play. She and her husband moved away in 1947, but after his death and her subsequent remarriage she came to live in Castle Cary and has in recent years managed to come and support us on a number of occasions.

Margery Hall and Bob Yaxley in *Dear Brutus*



Members will also be sad to learn of the death of Eve Snell's husband Bill, who had been unwell for some time. Eve is one of our longest standing members and Bill was a loyal supporter of The Players. Our sympathy and condolences go to her. ML

Prompt Corner

Sunday 11th June

The Tempest

performed by

Festival Players Theatre Company
at St Antony's-Leweston School, 6.00 p.m.
Grounds open for picnics from 4.30 p.m.
Tickets £10 (£5 Students 16 or under)
from the School Box Office 01963 210691

Wednesday 14th June

Elsie and Friends

A celebration of modern English writing
from Betjeman to Bennett
7.30 p.m. The Crown Inn

Tuesday 4th July

Auditions for Country Life

7.30 p.m. The Crown Inn

Friday 7th July

Annual General Meeting

7.30 p.m., followed by

APS Summer Party

Lyon House, Richmond Rd, Sherborne
Bring a bottle, some savoury food (see
main text) and a chair or rug to sit on

Sunday 30th July. All day

Setting up for As You Like It

St Antony's-Leweston School

Monday 31st July - Sun 6th August

Technical and dress rehearsals

St Antony's-Leweston School

Monday 7th - Saturday 12th August 7.30 p.m.

Performances of As You Like It

St Antony's-Leweston School

Jessica took on the role of wardrobe mistress herself, aided considerably by our prompt, Jill Hudson, and Suzanne Ford, who was also a member of the cast. Some of the most remarkable achievements were the 'cut and stitch' 1920s style hats that appeared.

Jill Hudson worked hard for this play. Not only did she have much to do with getting the costumes right, but on performance evenings she arrived early, made everyone up and then with seconds to go made a dash for the prompt corner, where she sat and concentrated for the next two hours. What a trouper! Thanks Jill.

There were, as always, some criticisms. Some members of the cast were, I believe, not always easy to hear and there was a reference to 'stuffed pouter pigeons' in the BVM review, though whether this was referring to our acting or our characters was not altogether clear. This review was clearly written from a strongly feminist viewpoint and there were those in the cast who were disappointed that this play was not entered for The Rose Bowl Awards, as it would have been interesting to have seen a more expert critique.

Following hard on the heels of the Spring Production came the Acting Workshop arranged by Michael Baatz, very ably assisted by Eve Snell and Steve Evans. Some 20 members were there and considering that acting is what our society is really all about, it was surprising and disappointing that there weren't more. It is probably fair to say that that this occasion was a trifle over-ambitious in that it tried to encompass rather too much in one session, but as an introductory workshop it was excellent. Please do try to come to any workshops that are arranged next season; there are few, if any, of us who have nothing to learn.

The most recent event has been Tony Stephens's unrehearsed play reading on May 24th. Tony chose *Heartbreak Hotel* by George Bernard Shaw, and 25 members--a very good turnout for a play reading--had a most enjoyable and entertaining evening.

Newsletter

I am not digressing too much here if I bring up the subject of the Newsletter. I receive many complimentary remarks about the content and appearance of this publication, which is very gratifying. However, there does seem to be a tendency for people to read it, file it away in the miscellaneous heap and forget the content almost instantly. All too often people tell me that they are not aware of a forthcoming event or piece of news that has featured quite prominently in the Newsletter--the above workshop was a case in point. It is probably a good idea to read the Newsletter more than once and keep it somewhere handy. Make a note of dates in your diaries or kitchen calendars. If you don't take in the information I impart then my efforts are all in vain!

Forthcoming events

On that note I can pass seamlessly into what's coming up. By now you should have had details of the Festival Players Theatre Company production of *The Tempest* (if you haven't, please let me know, as it means that the new grapevine system hasn't worked). This will take place on Sunday 11th June, 6.00 p.m. at St Antony's-Leweston School, the venue for our own production of *As You Like It* in August. The school is being very good to The Players about hosting our production, so I do hope that as many members as possible will go and support this production of *The Tempest*. I am told that the production of *The Taming of the Shrew* by the same company at the same venue was very well received, so *The Tempest* should be well worth seeing; an interesting comparison with our own version last year, perhaps.

Soon after that, on Wednesday 14th June, in fact, Elsie Lombard and some of her friends will entertain us with what she describes as a celebration of modern English writing from Betjeman to Bennett. Sounds good.

After that there is the Annual General Meeting on Friday July 7th, about which there is more later. As usual your incentive to come to the AGM is that it is followed immediately by the summer party, which this year is kindly being hosted by Sue and Patrick Francis at Lyon House. For those who have not been there before there are directions in a panel overleaf. You are requested to bring a bottle and some sort of savoury food (finger food, cold meats or a savoury dish), as Sue has kindly offered to provide salads and sweets. And please remember to bring something to sit on; Lyon House cannot provide enough seating for us all.

Next, on Tuesday 4th July are the auditions for our autumn production, now entitled *Country Life*. Details are given overleaf.

As You Like It

Rehearsals for *As You Like It* are under way. Details of the cast are below and are correct at the time of writing. There are still one or two small parts available if anyone would like them; two of the Lords have already been redistributed, but could be reinstated as separate parts; if no one else comes forward, Jason himself may well play Jacques de Boyes and perhaps also Dennis the dusty butler, but he would prefer not to have to do so.

Tony Field is Front of House Manager; we are not yet sure how many front-of-house staff will be needed, but as over 40 members are already involved in the production in one capacity or another, you may well get a phone call if you are not already involved. As you can see we are performing for six nights in the lovely setting of the grounds of St Antony's-Leweston School. If by some miracle you don't find yourself involved, do come and support us if you are around that week, and bring all your friends.

As You Like It

Duke Senior
Duke Frederick
Le Beau
Charles
Touchstone
Oliver
Orlando
Jacques
Adam
Amiens
Jacques de Boyes
Corin
Silvius
William
Sir Oliver Martext
Rosalind
Celia
Phebe
Audrey
Lord (Court)
Hisperia
Dennis
Lord (Forest)
Page 1
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Hymen

Tony Birks-Hay
David R. Smith
Tony Steph
Ben Woolf
Peter Thomas
Steve Evans
Fred Collier
Mark Freestone
John Sutherland
Mark Lambert
to be cast
John Bowles
Kevin Beer
Adam Birks-Hay
Madeline Lambert
Jo Freestone
Charlotte Colson
Tamsin Lambert
Jan Bridgman
Madeline Lambert
Elsie Lombard
to be
Gill Manns
Amanda McEvoy
Kathy Messinger
Amanda McEvoy

Court Attendants
(The Brat Pack)

Adam Birks-Hay, Andrew Dawn
Rebecca Hill, Felicity Trew

Forest Attendants

(Hippy Lot & Chorus) Adam Birks-Hay, Jessica Colson
Daphne Clapperton, Andrew Daum,
Jean Harrap, Rebecca Hill
Elsie Lombard, Dod Pearson
Kathy Messinger, Dave J. Smith
Felicity Trew

Director: Jason Hepple
Production Manager: Mark Lambert
Stage Manager: Monica Parsons

Resolution to amend the Constitution

Resolution proposed by Anthony Stephens and seconded by Mark Lambert is to amend the constitution by deleting the present Article 5 which reads:

“5. This [i.e. the Annual] General Meeting shall elect a President who shall serve for one year and shall be eligible for re-election.”

and by substituting:

“ 5. The Society shall have a President who shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting for a term of three years and shall thereafter be eligible for re-election for one further term of three years. The President shall take the chair at General Meetings of the Society.”

Reminder: Under Article 14, amendment of any part of the Constitution requires a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting at the gen-

E-mail

Communicating with members via e-mail is proving to be most useful, its chief benefit being that it is fast, cheap and effective--as long as people check their e-mails fairly regularly! About 40 per cent (more than I originally imagined) of our members are now reachable by e-mail, one way or another, and I do recommend it to the rest of you. Not only does it make easier for us to keep you

How to find Lyon House (AGM and Summer Party)

From Horsecastles (off Acreman St, opposite Trendle St) turn right up Richmond Rd (opposite the former Abbey Primary School). At the top, just before Richmond Green, turn left (still Richmond Rd) and find somewhere to park). Lyon House is on the left side; enter via the second pair of blue gates.

informed, but it is also an excellent way of keeping in touch with family and friends, particularly if they live abroad. It is not even essential to have a computer; there are now special telephones that can receive and send e-mail (but not attached files, of course) and I have recently seen advertisements for e-mail via television--oh the wonders of modern technology! If at any stage you do acquire an e-mail address please be sure to let me know.

Annual General Meeting

As always, the AGM is the time when we elect officers and new members of the committee. This year the committee is proposing to make a change concerning the Presidency. Hitherto, the President has been elected annually, a situation that been something of an anomaly in view of the fact that the President is not in fact a committee member and that we elect the Chairman for two years. The question of the President's position vis à vis the committee and the society in general has recently been the subject of much thought and discussion by the committee, the upshot of which is that we are proposing that in future the President shall be elected for a three year term (with the option standing for second term if so desired) and that the President, as in other societies, shall take the chair at General Meetings. As this involves a change in the constitution, the statutory no-

tice appears on this page and a vote will be taken at the AGM.

Among the remaining officers, Gill Manns is due to continue for another year as Chairman, and Jessica Colson and I will be standing for re-election as Treasurer and Membership Secretary respectively, but remember, of course, that anyone who wishes to can stand for either of these posts.

The Secretary, Tony Stephens, on the other hand, is not standing for re-election this year; after eight years in the post he has decided that it is now someone else's turn. During his time as Secretary, Tony has undoubtedly become the mainstay of the committee and a total of five chairmen have relied upon his knowledge and sound advice. Not only has he patiently and meticulously recorded and reproduced the verbal meanderings of countless committee meetings, but he can always be relied upon to produce thoughtful and considered contributions to discussions and his summing up of lengthy (sometimes heated) debates has often been inspired. He will be greatly missed at committee meetings and for all the hard work most of us know very little about that he has quietly put in 'behind the scenes'.

Two new committee members will also need to be elected, as Sue Francis and Patricia Stewart, have completed their three year stint and are retiring. Nomination forms for officers and committee members accompany this Newsletter. Don't be shy; if you feel you have something to contribute and would like to be involved, get someone to nominate you.

We had a good turn-out at last year's AGM--holding the summer party immediately afterwards does, for some reason, seem to encourage people to come. So do join us this year. Remember that this is your opportunity to find out what has been going on during the last year--not everything finds its way into the Newsletter. Among other things you will hear about are changes to next year's programme of productions and a new experimental drama group that is being set up within APS. And if you have complaints, this is the time to voice them. If you say nothing, then we have to assume that you think all is well.

The next Newsletter should reach you in August, and will include, among other things, details of the casting for *Country Life*, more information about the new experimental drama group and dates for the start of the new season in September. Until then, have a good summer.

Country Life

A new adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*
by Geoff Lewis

Personae Dramatis

- Alexander** (formerly Serebryakov); Professor emeritus; 50s-60s
Helen (formerly Yelena); his wife; late 30s-40s
Sonia (formerly Sonya); his daughter by his first marriage; late 20s-40s
Julia (formerly Maria Vasilyevna);
the widowed mother of the Professor's first wife; 60s-70s
Jack (formerly Vanya); her son; late 40s-50s
Max (formerly Astro); a doctor; early 40s-50s
Horace (formerly Telegin); an impoverished landowner; 60s-70s
Maria (formerly Marina); the old nurse; 60s-70s
Farm worker (very small part)

The play is set in 1950s Dorset; hence the name changes. The text is largely the same as the original, although it has been cut and modifications have been made to suit the new setting. Age ranges given above are very approximate and are really shown only to indicate the balance required. Note that Julia, Horace and Maria are all relatively small parts.

Auditions will take place at The Crown Inn

Tuesday 4th July, 7.30 p.m.

If you cannot attend but would like to audition for a part, please contact
Geoff Lewis on 01300 345521