

## Up front from your Chairman

Good news this month, with much-needed improvement in the weather since my last message; I hope everyone's spirits are raised accordingly. We also have some attractive APS activities still to come before the end of the season. I was pleased to hear, at our Shakespeare's birthday celebration, that many of you have booked tickets for our Annual Dinner at the Mermaid on May 7<sup>th</sup>, the day after you-know-what. (Don't mention the war!...sorry, election.) Next come two unrehearsed play readings, one in May and one in June, where anyone can have a go and participate in what the Players are all about, - plays and theatre. We are much indebted to players who devise and run such enjoyable social evenings. Before our AGM and party in July, we'd love to hear from anyone who can offer to lead one next season. You might persuade a friend to pool ideas. If you like a particular aspect of theatrical entertainment, and would appreciate more of it in the programme, please tell any member of the committee. Finally, if you go down to the Pageant Gardens on May 8<sup>th</sup>, you're sure of a big surprise - APS members in Victorian dress celebrating trains!

Gill Manns



What an intriguing and fascinating evening, thanks to our skilful guides, Pat Harris and Maurice Freeland, who expertly led us through the maze of fact and fiction that was the life and works of one William Shakespeare. So enjoyable too was the excerpt from 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' acted by Gill, Ruth, Janet and Adrian. As Maurice said let us give thanks to William Shakespeare for all he has given us - whoever he was!

### Extra...

An additional page to this newsletter carries a remembrance of Elsie Lombard penned by Jason Hepple.



**Fri 7 May:** Annual Dinner at The Mermaid

**Sat 8 May:** APS perform at 150th Sherborne station anniversary celebrations.

**Wed 26 May:** Unrehearsed play-reading of 'The Garden Party' by Jimmie Chinn and Hazel Wyld, led by Pat Harris 7.30 pm at The Mermaid. See page 2 for more about the play.



Auditions for our autumn production of 'Wind in the Willows' will be scheduled to take place **before** our AGM in July. More details as soon as available.

## AGM & Summer Party

Our AGM - and Summer Party - will take place at **7.30 pm on Friday 23rd July** at Gainsborough House, hosted by Jim and Gwyneth Schofield.

This is your chance to let your Committee know what you think of the way they've managed the society over the past year and to air your views and ideas for the future. It is also your opportunity to vote for new Committee members. Not only that, but actually to propose and second candidates.



This year there will be vacancies for two Ordinary Committee Members and Membership Secretary. Yes, after seven years of dedicated service in the post George Pearson is stepping aside. So, now we're looking for someone happy on the computer to take on this well-established position.

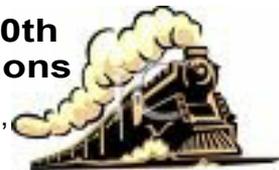
Nomination papers will be sent out with the formal notice of the AGM by Adrian, our Secretary, approximately three weeks beforehand.

## Sherborne station 150th anniversary celebrations

**Saturday 8th May at 10.30 am,**

dressed in our Victorian costumes, we will parade from the Senior Lunch Club, Digby Road down to the station to watch a steam train roar through and then proceed into Pageant Gardens, where we will deliver our railway-themed selection of prose and verse and where the Junior Wriggle Valley Players (thanks to Bev Taylor-Wade and Caroline Hart) will perform an excerpt from 'The Railway Children'.

Contact Jim Reville on 01935 814626 or email him at [jim.reville@btinternet.com](mailto:jim.reville@btinternet.com) if you need more information about what's happening and when.



## 'THE GARDEN PARTY'

an unrehearsed play-reading led by Pat Harris at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 26 May upstairs at The Mermaid.

It is Richard's 70th birthday and a party has been arranged in the garden of his home on the coast of the Isle of Wight. The family gathers to pay its respects, and the scene is set for a day and night of revelations, arguments and moments of tenderness as they seek to resolve their differences and put the past behind them.

We haven't had a play-reading for a while. Come along and take a part and join in the fun.



### THE SHOW MUST GO ON.....

It's time for us to be getting our thinking caps on and coming up with great ideas for our next season's programme of social events and productions. What about a themed evening, play-readings, musical evenings, theatre trips, quizzes - or something completely different.

Now, don't leave it until the day of our AGM, get in touch with any member of the committee well beforehand.

### PRODUCTIONS - OUR FUTURE

It's time to think ahead and map out a programme of future productions. So, if you have an idea for a play, your Committee would like to hear about it. Whether you would like to direct or not, all ideas for plays, and any other events, are very welcome.

In the not so distant future there will be a meeting where we can get together and decide what we want to do.

Check out the Samuel French website at [www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk](http://www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk) the latest releases of plays etc for amateur performance.



### DAVID COPPERFIELD WILL PLAY SHERBORNE

Now it can be confirmed, Bristol Young Vic will play 'David Copperfield' at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 22 June in the Digby Hall. Tickets £12 (£10 Artslink members); £10 (£8 members); Under 18s £8 from Tourist Information Centre Tel: 01935 815341.

Before then it is on at the Redgrave Theatre, Bristol Wed 5 to Sat 8 May, and at 7.30 pm on Friday 14 May in Frampton Village Hall (Contact Michael Wright on 01300 320459), the Tacchi Morris Arts Centre, Taunton at 7.30 pm on Tues 18 May. Tickets £8.50, concessions £5, students £4.50 and Wed 19 May at 7.30 in The Exchange, Sturminster Newton. Tickets £10, £8.



## noda SOUTH WEST CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN TAUNTON

The South West region of NODA will hold its AGM and Award Ceremony at 10.45 am on Sunday 18 July at the Holiday Inn, Taunton - just off junction 25, M5.

Lunch is optional but may be ordered in advance with Dennis Branton (01454 773145) at £12 per person. Cheques made payable to NODA SW and sent to Dennis at Holly Woods, 89 Stone Lane, Winterbourne Down, South Glos BS36 1DH



### A 'BEAUTIFUL THING' AT OCTAGON THEATRE

This urban-fairytale is a funny, bittersweet story about the sexual awakening of two boys growing up as next-door neighbours. Set during a heat wave in a rundown London Council estate, Jonathan Harvey deftly combines comedy with ardent drama. Full of characters that abound with attitude, energy, frankness and humour, Beautiful Thing captures what it is to be sixteen and in the first flush of love.

It's on at the Octagon, Yeovil for two nights only at 7.30 pm on Wed 16th and Thurs 17th June. Call Box Office 01935 283884 or [www.octagon-theatre.co.uk](http://www.octagon-theatre.co.uk)



### LONDON ASSURANCE IS COMING

The National Theatre's NT Live continues with **London Assurance**, the scintillating stage comedy from the 1840s. It's on at Cineworld Yeovil on Monday 28 June at 6.45 pm. Ticket £10, £9 senior.

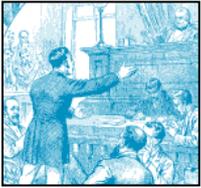
The Telegraph's Charles Spencer declares, "This is an absolute corker of a production, one that will be talked about, and chuckled over with reminiscent affection, for years to come."

### WINNING LOGO FOR COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE



Former Gryphon boy, Andrew Purnell, and now a Graphic Artist, has won the competition to design a logo for the new Sherborne Community Arts Centre.

You can see what the centre will look like, inside and out at [www.scact.org.uk](http://www.scact.org.uk). Click on 'Resources' and download the Conceptual Drawings PDF file. Now, all that remains is to raise the £950,000 needed to get the centre built!



## How William Terriss Met His Death at the Hands of a Madman at the Stage Door of the Adelphi

Archer was received into custody at Bow Street Station by Inspector Wood, whereupon, still possessing the knife concealed under his cape, he produced the weapon and stated, in a very calm and rational manner: "That's what I stabbed him with; he had due warning". When charged with the murder he simply nodded his head.

Mr Tom Terriss, the actor's son who was called upon to formally identify the body, later produced into evidence a letter which he had found inside the theatre, addressed to his mother, and making threats against his father. The letter was anonymous, but in light of the events that followed it seems certain that the author was Archer, and perhaps the letter represented the warning that Archer spoke of. If so, Mr Terriss was unaware of it at the time of his murder.

A post-mortem examination of the body revealed that in addition to the two wounds in his back, and a single wound to the chest, there was also a laceration to the right wrist, probably caused as Mr Terriss attempted to fend off the final blow. The two wounds to the back would not have been fatal, but the chest wound, which was on the left side between the fourth and fifth ribs had penetrated the heart causing the victim to bleed to death. It had apparently been struck with great force since one of the ribs was broken.

At the time of his arrest, Archer led the police to

believe that he was unmarried and requested only that his sister be informed of his condition. But when a telegraph was then sent to the sister she replied washing her hands of him, whereupon Archer proclaimed that she was "in league with the Terrisses," adding that she had refused him aid earlier that night and it was on her account that this had happened.

A coroners enquiry on December 20th, 1897, returned a verdict of "wilfull murder" and Archer was subsequently tried for the crime. Even before the trial there could have been no doubt that Archer was responsible for the crime, but in the course of the proceedings a little more was brought out about the motives behind it. It transpired that Archer had been insanely jealous of Mr Terriss' success whilst his own acting career had been a failure. Working as a lowly stage hand he was often heard to make sarcastic comments as to Mrs Terriss' acting such as "Fools often succeed in life where men of genius fail." He blamed Mr Terriss for preventing him gaining work as an actor and for causing him to lose his job backstage at the Adelphi, his only means of support. As a member of the committee of the Actors Benefit Fund, he also blamed Mr Terriss for preventing him gaining relief from that source also, despite his many requests for financial assistance. In fact in that respect Mr Terriss had done all he could to help Archer, only a month before his murder having written a letter to the secretary of the fund recommending Archer as a worthy case and pleading on his behalf.

On January 14th, 1898, the jury returned a verdict of ....

**Guilty or Not guilty? Read the exciting conclusion in your June APS newsletter**



**REHEARSAL:** Professional actors consider it a bad sign if a rehearsal is perfect. The play will have a very short run after a perfect rehearsal, or will go very badly. Similarly, it is unlucky to speak the tag line, or the last line of the play, during rehearsals. The line which completes the play must not be spoken until the opening night.

**The Origin:** After a perfect rehearsal a cast and crew tends to feel as if they are 'prepared' for the production. They lose their nervous edge and adrenaline and, believing themselves to be fully prepared, stop paying close attention while on stage. The last line of a show completes the play, and a production is never complete until it is before an audience.

*To be continued...*

## NAMES FROM THE STAGE

Timberlake Wertenbaker ((full pre-married name Lael Louisiana Timberlake Tucker) is not a name that trips lightly off the tongue. Born March 28, 1909, in Bradford, PA, she grew up in the Basque Country of France near Saint-Jean-de-Luz. She attended schools in Europe and the US before settling permanently in London. Having been the Royal Court Theatre's writer-in-residence in 1985, she had her most successful play, "Our Country's Good" (based on the novel "The Playmaker" by Thomas Keneally) and performed there in 1988 She is the author of many plays for the stage and for radio, and has translated works by Marivaux, Anouilh, Maeterlinck, Pirandello, Sophocles, and Euripides.



Her play 'Ash Girl', a retelling of Cinderella is on at the Studio Theatre, Salisbury Tues 1st to Sat 5th June. When an invitation to The Ball arrives at the Ash Girl's house, from Prince Amir, she can't bring herself to believe that she, like her sisters, can go. With her mother dead and her father away, she must learn to fight the monsters that have slithered and insinuated their way into her heart and mind in this drama.

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY****MAY 2010**

Sun 2nd	<b>Bill Paterson</b> Tales from the Back Green	The Exchange, Sturminster Newton 3 pm
Thurs 6th	<b>Comedy Club</b> Brendon Dempsey	Powell Theatre, Sherborne Doors open 7.30 Show 8.30 pm
<b>Fri 7th</b> 	<b>Our Annual Dinner</b>	 <b>The Mermaid</b> 7.30 pm
<b>Sat 8th</b> 	<b>Sherborne station 150th anniversary celebrations</b>	 <b>Pageant Gardens</b> Sherborne 10.30 am onwards
Mon 10th to Sat 15th	<b>Tom Conti in Wife After Death</b> Eric Chappell comedy	Theatre Royal, Bath Mon/Wed 7.30 Thurs/Sat 8 pm Mats Thurs/Sat 2.30
Tues 18th	<b>David Copperfield</b> Bristol Old Vic Theatre School	Tacchi-Morris, Taunton 7.30 pm (See page 2)
<b>Wed 26th</b> 	<b>'The Garden Party', an unrehearsed play-reading</b> Led by Pat Harris	 <b>Upstairs at The Mermaid</b> 7.30 pm

**JUNE 2010**

Tues 1st to Sat 5th	<b>Ash Girl</b> By Timberlake Wertenbaker	Studio Theatre, Salisbury 7.30 pm
Wed 16th	<b>As You Like It</b> Taunton Thespians	Glastonbury Abbey 7.30 pm, outdoors
Wed 16th to Thurs 17th	<b>Beautiful Thing</b> By Jonathan Harvey	The Octagon, Yeovil 7.30 pm (See page 2)
<b>Thurs 17th</b> 	<b>Unrehearsed play-reading</b> Led by Adrian Thorpe	 <b>Upstairs at The Mermaid</b> 7.30 pm
Thurs 24th to Sat 26th	<b>Women of Troy</b> Cygnet Theatre	Poltimore House, nr Exeter 7.15 pm, indoors
Sat 26th	<b>Romeo and Juliet</b> Chapterhouse Theatre Company	Bishop's Palace, Wells 7.30 pm, outdoors
Wed 30th to Sat 3rd July	<b>Silhouette</b> Simon Brett Thriller	Little Theatre, Wells 7.30 pm

**Studio Theatre, Salisbury:** Call 07789 or [www.studiotheatre.org.uk](http://www.studiotheatre.org.uk)

**Cygnet Theatre, Exeter:** Box Office 01392 277189. Credit cards: 01392 211080 [cygnetnewtheatre.com](http://cygnetnewtheatre.com)

**Powell Theatre, Sherborne Comedy:** Call 01935 810579 [www.powelltheatre.co.uk](http://www.powelltheatre.co.uk)

**Little Theatre, Wells:** Call Box Office 01749 672289 [www.littletheatrewells.org](http://www.littletheatrewells.org)

**Bishop's Palace, Wells:** Call 01749 678691 extn 200

**Theatre Royal, Bath:** Call Box Office 01225 448844 or [www.theatreroyal.org.uk](http://www.theatreroyal.org.uk)

**The Octagon, Yeovil:** Call Box Office 01935 283884 or [www.octagon-theatre.co.uk](http://www.octagon-theatre.co.uk)

**Glastonbury Abbey:** The Brewhouse (01823) 283244 or Taunton TIC (01823) 336344 [www.thebrewhouse.net](http://www.thebrewhouse.net)

**Tacchi-Morris Arts Centre:** Box Office 01823 414141 (10-4 pm & 6.30-7.30 pm) [www.tacchi-morris.com](http://www.tacchi-morris.com)

**The Exchange Sturminster Newton:** Box Office 01258 475137 [www.stur-exchange.co.uk](http://www.stur-exchange.co.uk)

**NB: As Diary Dates are compiled in advance, do check with the venue for any programme changes.**



If you would like any local performances advertised in the **Dates for your Diary** section please send any details to me at: [jim.reville@btinternet.com](mailto:jim.reville@btinternet.com) or give me a ring on (01935) 814626. If I'm not there, leave your message and I will ring you back.

**JUNE COPY DEADLINE: Thursday 27 May**

**Last Word...**

"Acting is a question of absorbing other people's personalities and adding some of your own experience."  
Paul Newman

Elsie would have loved the service in Yeovil Crematorium on Thursday 11th March: The Tempest, Ethel Merman and an excellent turnout of local thespians from both the APS and The Swan gave her passing the feel of a celebration rather than that of a solemn occasion. If she had been at The Crown afterwards she would have loved that too - chatting to everyone, making the most of it all, enjoying every last minute - I could almost sense her there....she was the last to leave.

This was how Elsie was. She lived in the present and the next couple of weeks. When is the next rehearsal, the next show, the next party? Elsie catalogued her life meticulously in the form of annotated photographs in a series of scrapbooks. These give a fascinating account of a courageous young showbiz woman travelling around the world twice in search of fame and fortune at a time when this was 'not the done thing'! Despite this past, she rarely looked back or indulged in that peril of old age, reminiscence. She was much more concerned with the here and now; the buzz, the glamour, the wine, the songs and the dancing!

Elsie was a fine person to know because she showed you how to make the most of any situation; how to have fun and push the boat out just that little bit further. She was also a very kind person and would do anything for you. At the risk of irreverence (I know Elsie would find this funny), they say the test of a true friend is someone who would, without hesitation, help you dispose of a body. I've no doubt at all that Elsie would be in this category - driving gloves on, white Vauxhall Nova revving up outside.... I'm pleased to say that I never asked that much of her but I know that she would have been there. How many people can you say that about?

When I last saw Elsie on the Thursday before she died, she had found a calm and dignified space to be in that allowed her one last mischievous encounter with the world of others. Daphne was asked to apply the eyebrow pencil and I entrusted with the blusher brush - "but not too much!" As she held a little mirror up to her face she seemed pleased and amused by her own reflection, at this time of death, and half playfully said, "it's a pity the undertaker won't know me."

A final curtain-call at the end of a long and distinguished run. I'm delighted we gave her a standing ovation because I think she really deserved it.

Bye, bye, Elsie

Sleep well.

Jason Hepple