



## Up front

from your Chairman

We've been promised the coldest November weather for 17 years; Christmas is one month away. But those of us who were involved with, or saw, 'The Wind in the Willows', are still warmed by that 'magical production', (the verdict of many in the audience who spoke to me about it.) What a gorgeous spectacle and experience it was. So many people put in exceptional effort, pulled together, and created real theatre. I believe it is very important for children today to see live acting on stage, and to be gradually drawn into the story, as an antidote to the fast, loud, gimmicky entertainment offered by so much modern technology.

Congratulations to Pat Harris and to everyone who contributed, on and off stage. It was delightful to have some very talented young people taking part; please do stay with us, we will need you again for future productions.

Looking ahead, we have the auditions for Busman's Honeymoon, December 8th and 9th at The Mermaid, and the Christmas Party, December 10th, appropriately enough at Toad Hall, (or Adrian's house.) I hope to see you there. And now, to one and all, my very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Gill Mams

## A magnificent achievement!



Never in the history of APS productions was so much achieved by so many. As Badger (aka John Bowles) announced from the stage at the Saturday evening performance, it was the largest APS cast to perform in the Digby Hall. Coupled with the dedicated contribution from APS members in all the other departments, the result was a production of which we can be justifiably be proud.

It was a highly ambitious undertaking in every respect, yet not only did it record our highest audience figures (227 on Friday evening and 145 for the matinee), but also one of our biggest profits.

A big round of applause to everyone.

Last word goes to Pat Harris, our Indefatigable director: "Everybody pulled together as a team. And it really was a team,"



Keep an eye on the 'Past Productions' page of our [website](#) for a glittering gallery of fine photographs from the production. Not only for you to view but also to order prints.

Expect an email in the not-to-distant future with further news about the above and another exciting chance to view the entire performance in the comfort of your own homes .

### From our *noda* rep

Thanks and congratulations to everyone involved in this production for a fascinating, very enjoyable and quite different evening. The extent of the effort that had obviously put into creating the magic and atmosphere of the woodland scene and its occupants was most impressive, and I hope that the good people of Sherborne were duly appreciative.

It was really nice for me to see Janet and Jennie and Malcolm, all active participants in my dim and distant era, still strutting their stuff, and knowing personally the constraints and limitations of the Digby Hall stage for the set designer, Charles and his lighting and sound associates played a blinder in creating so many striking visual and aural effects.

Peter Wheeldon  
NODA Regional Representative

Wishing you all Happy Holidays from your Committee

# Busman's Honeymoon

There will be a read-through at 7.30 pm on **Wednesday 1st December**, with auditions at 7.30 pm on **Wed 8th and Thurs 9th December upstairs at The Mermaid**. Do come along, it's not really that scary.



## COMING SOON

### Jennie's Workshop

APS 2011 starts with a theatre workshop, especially concentrating on mime.

Jennie will be directing next Autumn's production, a special and unique play: Thornton Wilder's 'Our Town'.

This play requires really good and careful acting - there is no set, no props, just acting. So come along [in your droves please!] **for 7.30 pm on Wednesday 5th January upstairs at The Mermaid.**

### 'Opera as Drama'

Adrian, our Secretary, has put together a series of three presentations using new video recordings to demonstrate the drama of modern opera performance. If you love theatre—and you wouldn't be reading this if you didn't—please come. Come even if—no, *especially* if—you think you don't like opera! **7.30 pm on Monday 24th January at Nether Compton Village Hall.** If you need a lift do contact a Committee member.



The 5th season of The Met: Live in HD will feature many of the most popular operas.

11 December: Verdi: Don Carlo

8 Jan: Puccini: La Fanciulla del West

12 Feb: Adams: Nixon in China

26 Feb Gluck: Iphigenie en Tauride

For performance details and video sample go to:

[www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/broadcast/hd\\_events\\_next.aspx](http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/broadcast/hd_events_next.aspx)

For Yeovil show times and advance bookings go to:

[www.cineworld.co.uk/cinemas/71](http://www.cineworld.co.uk/cinemas/71)

## XMAS PARTY Fri 10 Dec

It kicks off at 7.30 pm, at The Cider House, Over Compton, home of our generous hosts, Adrian and Miyoko Thorpe. Cost £5 - pay at the door - includes food and your first drink. Subsequent drinks at APS prices. This year's theme is "BLUE & SILVER" with a prize for the best outfit. Bring KFS, bowl and plate. Glasses provided. The Cider House is directly opposite Trencherman's at Over Compton. Parking in the courtyard for essential deliveries only - food and drink - and those with walking difficulties. Parking available along the wall outside and in St Michael's Church car park on the other side of the church.



### SEE MERRY WIVES PLAY IN BATH

Following a highly-acclaimed sell-out run of **The Merry Wives of Windsor** in 2008, the Globe now visits the Theatre Royal, Bath as part of its first ever large scale UK Tour.

Gutsy, colloquial and bustling with vivid characters, Shakespeare's hilarious and brilliantly constructed farce gave birth to a tradition that reaches down to the modern TV sitcom.

It's on from Mon 6-Sat 11 December. Mon/Wed 7.30 pm, Thurs/Sat 8 pm. Matinees Wed & Sat 2.30 pm. Box Office: 01225 448844.



### JWVP PLAY R&J AS MODERN MUSICAL DRAMA

The Junior Wriggle Valley Players present their first Shakespeare and first teenage show.

Their musical version of Romeo and Juliet takes place in London in 2010, where the tension is racial; the Capulet being of Hindu origin and the Montague being of Western descent. Live music from local band Popeye and the Pixies.

Performances **Fri 3rd and Sat 4th December at 7pm in Leigh Village Hall.** Tickets: Adults £6, concessions (oaps, under 16) £5. Under 5s Free (but may have to sit on parents' lap) available from Bridge Garage, Leigh and Oak House Stores Yetminster. For more information call Caroline Hart on 01935 872471.

### THEATRE VISIT 2011 -----

Thursday 7 April is the expected date for our annual theatre visit to Salisbury Playhouse. The play is Marivaux's **The Game of Love and Chance**. This is French farce with a makeover and with a

Sixties house party where nothing – and no-one – is to be taken at face value.

Full details next newsletter. Meanwhile, expressions of interest to David Smith 01935 817439 [drysmith@btinternet.com](mailto:drysmith@btinternet.com)

# A Brief History of Theatre - in several parts 4

## Liturgical drama: 10th century

During the centuries of upheaval in Europe, after the collapse of the Roman empire, theatre plays no part in life. But with the approach of the first millennium, in the late 10th century, Christian churches introduce dramatic effects in the Easter liturgy to enliven the theme of resurrection.

The gospels describe Mary Magdalene and two other women visiting the tomb of Jesus and finding it empty. In about 970 the bishop of Winchester, eager to emphasize this important moment, introduces a custom which is already in use (he says) in certain French monasteries.

During the Easter morning service in Winchester three monks enact the arrival at the tomb of the three women, while another (as the angel in the story) sits beside the high altar (the holy sepulchre). The angel, intoning in Latin, asks the women whom they are seeking? Jesus of Nazareth, they chant in reply. He says Jesus is not here, he has risen, go and tell the people. The three turn to the choir with a joyous *Alleluia!* *resurrexit Dominus* ('the Lord is risen'), and the choir launches into the *Te Deum*.

From these small beginnings there develops the great tradition of medieval Christian drama. More and more scenes are enacted during church services, some quite boisterous. Herod, in particular, tends to make a lot of noise.



## Mystery plays: 12th - 16th century AD

In about 1170, priests somewhere in France decide to move a performance to a platform outside their church and to give it in the language of the people. Their



French play, the *Mystère d'Adam* ('Mystery of Adam' - illustrated above), introduces some very popular characters in medieval imagination - the wicked devils, who can be vividly enacted in the street but not inside the church. The play ends with devils arriving to tie Adam and Eve up in chains, before dragging them off with a great clatter of pots and kettles. They and their victims vanish into a hole from which smoke belches forth.

The flaming mouth of Hell is set to become a standard and increasingly spectacular element in the mystery plays.

Over the centuries the narrative of such plays extends from Adam and Eve to encompass the entire Bible story, from the Creation to the Last Judgement. The lives of saints are also much performed, in what are known as miracle plays. The torments suffered by saints in their martyrdom give these stories a special appeal for medieval audiences.



## IT'S BEHIND YOU!

In the UK, the word "Pantomime" means a form of entertainment, generally performed during the Christmas season. Most cities and towns throughout the UK have a form of Pantomime at this time of year.



The origins of British Pantomime or "Panto" as it is known date back to the middle ages, taking on board the traditions of the Italian "Commedia dell'Arte, the Italian night scenes and British Music hall to produce an intrinsic art form that constantly adapted to survive up to the present day.

Pantomime has been attempted abroad, usually with a small amount of success. Not surprisingly it has proved popular in countries such as Canada,

Australia and South Africa - recently a production of "Babes in the wood" ran at the Rainbow Seven Arts Theatre in Harare, Zimbabwe!

In America this very British art form has fared less favourably, although in 1868 a production of "Humpty Dumpty" ran for over 1,200 performances at the Olympic Theatre, New York, making it the most successful Pantomime in American history.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### DECEMBER 2010

Fri 3rd to Sat 4th	<b>Romeo and Juliet</b> Junior Wriggle Valley Players	Leigh Village Hall 7 pm. See page 2.
Mon 6th to Sat 11th	<b>Merry Wives of Windsor</b> Globe Theatre Company	Theatre Royal, Bath See page 2 for times
 Thurs 9th	<b>Hamlet</b> National Theatre Live	Cineworld, Yeovil 6.45 pm
Thurs 9th to Sat 11th	<b>The Dracula Spectacula</b> Next Stage Youthers	Mission Theatre, Bath 7.30 pm Mat Sat 2.30 pm
Thurs 9th to Sat 18th	<b>Dear Brutus</b> Cygnet Company	New Theatre, Exeter 7..30 pm
 <b>Fri 10th</b>	<b>APS Christmas Party</b> Theme: Blue & Silver	<b>The Cider House</b> 7.30 pm
 Sat 11th	<b>Don Carlo</b> Verdi	Cineworld, Yeovil 5 pm
Wed 15th to Sat 15 Jan 2011	<b>With a song in my Heart</b> A celebration of Rodgers and Hart	Salisbury Playhouse Times vary
Fri 17th to Sat 2 Jan 2011 Not 24, 25 and 31 eve Dec	<b>Peter Pan</b> Pantoni Pantomimes	Octagon, Yeovil 2.30 and 7.30 pm
<b>JANUARY 2011</b>		
Sat 1st to Sat 15 Jan 2011	<b>Swallows and Amazons</b> New musical version	Bristol Old Vic Times vary
 Wed 5th	<b>Jennie's Workshop</b> Acting techniques	The Mermaid 7.30 pm
Wed 5th to Sat 8th	<b>Dear Brutus</b> J M Barrie comedy	New Theatre, Exeter 7.30 pm
 Sat 8th	<b>La Fanciulla del West</b> Puccini	Cineworld, Yeovil 6 pm
 Thurs 13th	<b>Fela!</b> No ordinary musical	Cineworld, Yeovil 6.45 pm
Thurs 20th to Sat 29th	<b>Water</b> Multimedia experience	Salisbury Playhouse Times vary
 Mon 24th	<b>Opera as Drama</b> Adrian Thorpe	Nether Compton Village Hall 7.30 pm
TBA	<b>Stevie</b> A play about Stevie Smith	Swan Theatre, Yeovil TBA

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

**Cineworld, Yeovil:** Call 0871 200 2000. Google Cineworld, Yeovil then select advance booking.

**Bristol Old Vic:** 0117 987 7877 [www.bristololdvic.org.uk](http://www.bristololdvic.org.uk)

**Swan Theatre:** Tourist Information Centre 01935 845946.

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

**Salisbury Playhouse:** Call 01722 320333 [www.salisburyplayhouse.com](http://www.salisburyplayhouse.com)

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

**Mission Theatre, Bath:** Call 01225 428600 or [www.missiontheatre.co.uk](http://www.missiontheatre.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.

**January Copy DEADLINE: Wednesday 5 January**

### Last Word...

As a child I was taken to the pantomime or the theatre and I would always, always fall in love with somebody on the stage.

**Ewan McGregor**