

# NOISES OFF

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

2019 finds us with work well under way for our Spring production, and plans in place for at least two further play-readings to follow last year's "The Darkness of the Moon". Meanwhile, the Theatre edges ever closer to final completion; although work is still continuing, this does not prevent our making good use of our new facilities. See below for further details.

This edition also contains tributes to Tony Field, long-time stalwart and friend of the Players, who sadly died recently.

## AGM

**Please note that the date for this year's AGM, combined with our Summer Party, has been fixed for Friday July 12th.**

## THE SHERBORNE STUDIO THEATRE

Although the Sherborne Studio Theatre was opened for business last summer, a fair amount of work remained to be done before we could consider it "finished." We are enormously grateful to all members who have given their time, efforts and skills to move the project forwards, but special thanks should go to Adrian Hole, Mark Lambert and John Crabtree, without whose tireless labours we would really struggle. Since the last report, the wall around the stage/green room door has been finished, the stage itself is now at its full extent with a permanent step into the green room. The wiring and sockets have been improved, and a handsome new sign installed above the main entrance. The entrance porch has been beautified and a new noticeboard erected in the foyer. We have additional space in the auditorium following the sale of the piano. We are installing a state-of-the-art communications

system (to enable dialogue between the gallery, backstage and front-of-house during performances). We have a new hot-water urn in the kitchen, and will shortly be improving the storage arrangements in there.

All this has been going on at the same time as construction of the set for "The Birthday Party", which, it is hoped, will be a semi-permanent generic arrangement, suitable to be re-used and adapted for any number of future productions.

As soon as all work is completely finished, we intend to make the theatre available as a venue available to be hired by the public, and to be made use of by other artistic and cultural bodies in and around Sherborne. If any members are aware of potential users of the venue who might be interested, please contact [theatre@aps-sherborne.co.uk](mailto:theatre@aps-sherborne.co.uk)

**NEXT PLAY-READING**

Our next play-reading evening, hosted by Jessica Colson, will take place in the Sherborne Studio Theatre on **Thursday 24th January at 7.30**. We intend to advertise this an event to which ALL are welcome, not just APS members, so do please let your friends and family know and encourage them to come along. Refreshments will be provided, and, as always, we aim to have a friendly sociable and light-hearted evening.

The play is "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime", by Constance Cox, and is an adaptation of a short story by Oscar Wilde.



*Everything seems set for the marriage of Lord Arthur Savile to Miss Sybil Merton. A few days before the event, however, Sybil's imperious mother, Lady Julia, introduces a new acquaintance, Mr Podgers, the*

*renowned chiromantist, who is to read Arthur's palm. With the family present, Podgers says he can find nothing untoward in Arthur's past or present. But, in confidence, he reveals to Arthur what he has really seen: Arthur will commit a crime. Thinking to spare Sybil unnecessary humiliation when they are married, Arthur resolves to get the crime over with before tying the knot. Much to Lady Julia's annoyance and her daughter's dismay, Arthur postpones the wedding. With the help of his resourceful butler Baines and the happy-go-lucky anarchist Winkelkopf, Lord Arthur lays his plans....*

As always, reading will be shared amongst all present (if wished - there is no obligation to read!)

We very much hope for the evening will be well-supported. It should be a lot of fun - do come along!



*Photos are of a performance by the British Embassy Players in Bonn (approx 1988)*

**FROM A FORMER MEMBER**

We publish a formal obituary for Tony Field later in this newsletter.

However, we have also received this letter from Andrew Cross, a former and very long-long-standing member of APS, and reprint it here with his permission.

*Although not a current member of the Players I have been involved for over 30 years. Most of that time Tony Field and his wife Margaret were absolute stalwarts of the Players. They were involved on every front, directing, acting, backstage and committee work. Tony was Chairman for a good number of years. Both he and Margaret were so supportive of members who needed help and encouragement and indeed if it wasn't for them I would not have had the confidence to do and achieve what I did. I have many, many happy memories of acting with Tony. He was the ultimate professional, always gave of his time to help me and always of such good humour. Above all he was a great friend and for many years he and Margaret were the Amateur Players of Sherborne. With very fond and happy memories.*

Andrew Cross

## TONY FIELD

Tony Field joined APS in 1981 and soon became a leading light in the society. He took part in many productions during the 1980s and 1990s, either as an actor, director, business/production manager or stage manager, often as not teamed up with his wife Margaret, and together they made a formidable partnership. When not acting or working backstage, he frequently took on the publicity and could generally be found front of house, neatly dressed in a dinner jacket and black tie.

Tony's characteristic upright bearing meant that he was often cast in military or aristocratic roles, but he was equally at home in any other part. The roles he played for APS included George Melbury in *The Woodlanders* (1982), Colonel Selby in *Waters of the Moon* (1983), Frost in *Cat's Cradle* (1983), Badger in *Toad of Toad Hall* (1985), Porter Milgrim in *Deathtrap* (1986), Wilfred Morganhall in *The Dock Brief* (1987), Fergus Crampton in *You Never Can Tell* (1987), The Bishop of Lax in *Pools Paradise* (1988), Mr Gilchrist in *Follow That Girl* (1988), Brigadier Albert Rayne in *Breath of Spring* (1990), Arthur Burling in *An Inspector Calls* (1991), Elias Spinks in *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1991), The Duke of Altair in *Venus Observed* (1993), 2nd Gentleman, 1st Businessman and Old Joe in *A Christmas Carol* (1994), Sir Lawrence Wargrave in *And Then There Were None* (1996), Tom Marjoriebanks in *Edwin* (1997), Sir John Pontefract in *A Woman of No Importance* (1997), Colonel Forbes in *The House By The Lake* (1998), A General in *Ring Round the Moon* (2001) and The Mock Turtle in *Alice* (2003)

Tony directed three plays for The Players, *The Day After The Fair* (1989), *Dangerous Obsession* (1995) and *Arcadia* (1999), all of which were a great success. And in the powerfully intense *Dangerous Obsession*, due to the sudden indisposition of one of the three actors, he found himself having to read in the part for the second and third performances. He knew the part so well that the audience hardly noticed that he was reading.

Tony spent many years on the APS Committee. He was first elected as an ordinary member in 1982, and subsequently served as Chairman (1985-77) and Treasurer (1987-90, 1993-98). He was President of the Society from 2000 to 2006.

Tony was a kind, self-effacing man with much charm. He was a gentleman in more senses than one. He was always willing to help out where he could and he had a delightful and sometimes slightly wicked sense of humour. I first met him when we played together in a 1991 Shoestring production of *Halfway Up The Tree* by Peter Ustinov. He played the General and I played his 22-year-old hippy son (OK, I was in my 40s, but let's pass over that). The General decided that if you can't



beat them, join them, dressed himself up as a hippy and went to live in a tree. At one point he claimed to have walked to the nearest town for supplies. I said "But, Dad, you can't possibly have walked that far!", to which he replied "I didn't walk, I marched!", and strode across the stage singing 'It's a long way to Tipperary'. However in the last performance, he decided to make a slight change; instead of singing what we expected, he marched across the stage towards me to the words "Did you ever catch your goolies in a rat trap?". I had to turn my face away from the audience for several seconds, and it's a moment I have never forgotten.

Tony will be much missed by all of us who knew him, and our heartfelt condolences go to Margaret and the rest of his family. I will end with these words I received from Sue Francis just before Christmas: "I had the great pleasure and privilege to work with Tony on many occasions when I was in the APS - notably Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*, directed by Margaret, in which he played a very believable villain. He was also a stalwart and very professional support in any players evenings I organised. He could recite poetry and deliver words with



authority, sensitivity and panache and could put over a song too when asked to do so, both as a soloist and in an ensemble. He was a total rock - so talented and professional in whatever he undertook. He was also a lovely man and a genial, lively personality with a great satirical sense of humour - a perfect gentleman in every way."

**Mark Lambert**

*(Photo is of the 1993 performance of "Venus Observed", directed by Margaret Field, and with Vivian Vale)*

**"THE BIRTHDAY PARTY" - FIRST REHEARSAL PICTURES**



**Performance dates:  
March 11th - 16th**

