

Up front from your Chairman

As I write, your committee members, led by Secretary Adrian Thorpe, are assembling the programme for the 2010 – 2011 season. It is always a race against the clock to gather all the items, sort out dates, and print membership cards in time for the Opening night. This year we have to be even speedier since the date in question, September 3rd, is earlier than usual. We hope for good weather so that we can have a barbecue at **Nether Compton Village Hall**. (All except the chefs indoors if wet!)

Work has started in earnest for our Autumn production, *The Wind in the Willows*. Rumours abound of elaborate plans for imaginative staging, and strange human animals prowl the streets. Time to start telling the people you meet about the delights that await them!

Excellent news of our Rose Bowl nominations for Lighting and Sound Effects in *Tons of Money*, which was our 75th Anniversary production last November. Congratulations to Adrian Hole and Mark Lambert, who do such splendid work for us, and to Charles Napier as Director of the play. Congratulations also to Jennie Ward, our new Life Member. See you in September and, I hope, throughout the season.

Gill Manns

'OPENING NIGHT'

Make a note in your diaries right now for **7.30 pm, Friday 3rd September at Nether Compton Village Hall**. All members are warmly invited to the launch of our 2010/2011 season. Let a member of the committee know if you would like a lift.

As well as enjoying a wonderful barbeque buffet, you can pick up your membership card, which lists our complete programme of social events and activities for the coming season. And, to entertain you, there will be a reprise of **'Here Comes The Train'**, the railway-themed selection of prose and verse performed as our contribution to the celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the coming of the railway to the town.



AGM AND SUMMER PARTY REPORT



A beautiful summer evening made for an enjoyable and well-attended 'al fresco' AGM and Summer party.

A highlight was making Jennie Ward a Life Member in recognition of her major contribution to the Players over so many years.

Another highlight was the surprise premiere of 'The true story of Orpheus and Eurydice'. Loosely based on the Greek myth, it was penned by Maurice Freeland in appreciation of the support he and Joan had received from the Players earlier in the year when she was in hospital, and also to celebrate the anniversary of their

Diamond Wedding. (And who could resist a slice of their tasty anniversary cake!)

Starring Ruth Rice as Eurydice, Charles Napier as Orpheus and Jim Schofield as Charon, the ferryman, the playlet raised many a laugh from its delighted audience. However, despite all his entreaties, Orpheus never did find out what Eurydice had done with his lyre.



[Exclusive APS photo by Kris Wessels]

All in all a memorable evening, and to our hosts at Gainsborough House, Gwyneth and Jim Schofield, very many thanks indeed.

THE ROSE BOWL AWARDS



BREAKING NEWS

Another season, another nomination! This time it's our stalwart sound and lighting team, Mark and Adrian, who have well earned a nomination in the Stage Electrics Award for Technical Achievement category for their contribution to our 75th anniversary triumph 'Tons of Money'.

The awards, announced Oscar-style, will be revealed at the Rose Bowl ceremony at the Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare on Sunday 17th October. Tickets cost £26. Contact our Secretary Adrian Thorpe now if you would like to be there.

COMING SOON

Can you trust your husband?

Lady Windermere's Fan

by Oscar Wilde



"I can resist everything except temptation." So says Lord Darlington in Oscar Wilde's famous comedy. Can you resist the chance to play one of the many fabulous characters in this unrehearsed play-reading led by David Smith at **7.30 pm on Wednesday 29 September upstairs at The Mermaid?** See you there!

TWO UNIQUE GENTS

Vakomana Vaviri Ve Zimbabwe or

'Two Gentlemen of Verona', transforms Shakespeare's comedy into a two-man Zimbabwean riot of love, friendship and betrayal. In a broad, loud, triumphantly energetic 'township' style, the two actors slip into all the play's fifteen characters.

It's on in Milborne Port Village Hall at 7.30 pm on Thursday 23 September.

Tickets £8, £5 under 21.

Contact Richard or Carly Barrett-Greening on 01963 250063. Email carlybarrett@aol.com or thedunners@hotmail.com Please type Take Art in the subject line. www.twogentsproductions.com



NT live

The new season of National Theatre Live will launch this autumn bringing the best of the National's theatre to a cinema screen near you.

Thursday 14 October 2010

Complicite's '*A Disappearing Number*', live from Theatre Royal Plymouth. Directed by Simon McBurney. Awards include the Olivier Award for Best New Play (2008), the Evening Standard Theatre Award for Best Play (2007) and The Critics' Circle Theatre Award for Best New Play (2007)

Thursday 9 December 2010

Shakespeare's '*Hamlet*', directed by Nicholas Hytner, featuring Rory Kinnear in the title role, David Calder as Polonius, Clare Higgins as Gertrude, Patrick Malahide as Claudius and Ruth Negga as Ophelia.

Thursday 13 January 2011

Currently playing on Broadway, the Tony-winning musical '*Fela!*' comes to the National with Sahr Ngaujah as Fela Anikulpa-Kuti.

Thursday 3 February 2011

The Donmar's production of '*King Lear*'. Derek Jacobi and Tony Award-winning Michael Grandage renew their working partnership following productions of *The Tempest*, *Don Carlos* and *Twelfth Night*.

Thursday 17 March 2011

Danny Boyle's production of '*Frankenstein*', a play by Nick Dear, based on the novel by Mary Shelley.

Spring 2011

Also in the new season will be Chekhov's '*The Cherry Orchard*', directed by NT Associate Director Howard Davies, whose recent productions of Russian plays (including '*Philistines*', '*Burnt by the Sun*' and '*The White Guard*') have earned huge critical acclaim. Zoe Wanamaker will play Madame Ranevskaya.

Tickets on sale late Summer. To learn more, visit www.ntlive.com and subscribe to their email updates and be in with a chance to win a pair of tickets to your nearest participating cinema for every broadcast in the second season of National Theatre Live.



Mr Toad's Blog

Ah, there you are. Naturally, you'd expect someone of my calibre and outstanding experience of the world to have my own blog thingy, wouldn't you.

Now, let me tell you what's going on. Human beings, bless them, are going into rehearsal mode from Tuesday 7th September onwards. I wish them well. And set building is taking place too (see photo below) every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon from 2.30 pm up at the Castle stables. You could pop up and help out. I would but I'm always too busy.



Going forward - that's what all the really important people say, don't they - anyway, I like going forward, and I can't wait to drive the motor car that's being built just for me. Poop poop.

By the way, did you know that earlier this year an autographed copy of the '*The Wind In The Willows*' sold at auction for £32,400 - more than 10 times its estimated value. Well, not surprising really as it's all about me... and my friends. Now, if I had autographed it...

You may be aware that me and all my friends will be coming to entertain you in your Digby Hall from November 18 to 20. But do your friends know? Don't let them put you off saying it's their knitting circle time or they're planning to hibernate. I'd say we're worth it, wouldn't you!

Must go now but join me in the blogosphere next issue. It's the only place to be really.

A Brief History of Theatre - in several parts I

Drama of a kind is present in the rituals of primitive tribes. While musical instruments provide a compulsive rhythm, and members of the tribe join in a communal dance, there is often also a dramatic figure who is the centre of attention. In mask and costume, strikingly fierce or mysterious, an unseen actor impersonates a spirit which either threatens or secures the fortunes of the tribe.

While such an encounter is undoubtedly dramatic, it does not involve theatre in the conventional sense. Theatre requires the addition of a sung or spoken text - which first occurs, like so many others, in ancient Greece.

Greek theatre from the 6th century

The origins of Western drama can be traced to the celebratory music of 6th-century BC Attica, the Greek region centred on Athens. Although accounts of this period are inadequate, it appears that the poet Thespis developed a new musical form in which he impersonated a single character and engaged a chorus of singer-dancers in dialogue. As the first composer and soloist in this new form, which came to be known as tragedy, Thespis can be considered both the first dramatist and the first actor. Of the hundreds of works produced by Greek tragic playwrights, only 32 plays by the three major innovators in this new art form survive. Aeschylus created the possibility of developing conflict between characters by introducing a second actor into the format. His

seven surviving plays, three of which constitute the only extant trilogy are richly ambiguous inquiries into the paradoxical relationship between humans and the cosmos, in which people are made answerable for their acts, yet recognise that these acts are determined by the gods.



Sophocles gains his first victory in 468 BC, defeating Aeschylus. He is credited with adding a third actor. Whereas Aeschylus tends to deal with great public themes, the tragic dilemmas in Sophocles are worked out at a more personal level. Plots become more complex, characterization more subtle, and the interaction between characters more central to the drama.

Sophocles writes many plays



Thespis, the 'inventor of tragedy' was born in Attica, and was the first prize winner at the Great Dionysia in 534 BC. An important innovator for the theatre, he introduced such things as the independent actor, as opposed to the choir, as well as masks, make up and costumes.

Thespis walked around Athens pulling a handcart, setting up a kind of one man plays, where he showed the bad behaviour of man. The word for actor 'thespian' comes from his name.

(perhaps about 120), but only seven survive intact. Of these 'Oedipus the King' is generally considered to be his masterpiece. The youngest of the three great Greek tragedians is Euripides. More of his plays survive but he has fewer victories than his rivals in the City Dionysia - in which he first competes in 454 BC.

History of Drama Timeline

c. - 600 BC: The chorus, originally danced by temple virgins, is centre piece of developing Greek theatre.
c. - 600 BC: Frenzied dances, in honour of the god Dionysus, become part of Greek theatre, deriving from Thrace.

- 534 BC: Thespis, traditionally considered the first actor, wins the drama competition in Athens.
- 484 BC: Aeschylus wins prize for tragedy at the City Dionysia festival in Athens.
- 468 BC: Sophocles wins the prize for tragedy.

Don't think for one moment that I actually wrote all of the above. It was downloaded and modified slightly from Historyworld.net and written by Bamber Gasgoine. Other web sources were also researched.



MAKE-UP: The upsetting of a make-up box is the certain forerunner of evil. It is unlucky to carry a make-up box, like an amateur actress. The make up with a new set of grease paints on an opening night is unlucky. Make-up boxes should

never be 'cleaned out', as this is said to bring bad luck. Powder, if dropped, should be danced upon to bring luck.



The Origin: All kinds of nasty stuff can get into make-up that's been on the floor. Actors and actresses who seem to be amateurs are less likely to be taken seriously and are in great danger of not being offered a contract. New and untested make-up on an opening night can be disastrous. You can never be certain of the quality of grease paint or how it's going to react under the hot lights.

The minute you throw away something in your make-up box, you will need it.

THREAD: When finding a thread on another actor, one should wind it around a finger without breaking. This, it is said, will bring a contract from the management bearing the initial suggested by the number of times the thread goes around the finger.

The Origin: No idea, though, there are many superstitions involving tying thread around a finger.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**SEPTEMBER 2010**

Thurs 2nd to Sat 2nd Oct	A Voyage Round My Father John Mortimer play	Salisbury Playhouse Times vary
Fri 3rd to Sat 11th (not Sun 5th)	Sextet	The Swan Theatre, Yeovil 7.45 pm
 Fri 3rd	'Opening Night' Launch of our 2010/11 season	Nether Compton Village Hall 7.30 pm
Tues 7th to Sat 18th	The Rivals Directed by Peter Hall	Theatre Royal, Bath Times vary
Tues 14th to Sat 8th	The Things Good Men Do Next Stage Theatre Company	Mission Theatre, Bath 7.30 pm Mat Sat 2.30 pm
Wed 15th	Moonfleet Angel Exit Theatre	The Exchange, Sturminster Newton 6.30 pm
Thurs 23rd	Two Gentlemen of Verona Two Gents production	Milborne Port Village Hall 7.30 pm
Fri 24th	The Caretaker Harold Pinter classic	Merlin Theatre, Frome 7.45 pm
 Wed 29th	Lady Windermere's Fan A play-reading led by David Smith	Upstairs at The Mermaid 7.30 pm

OCTOBER 2010

Tues 28th Sept to 2nd Oct	Romeo and Juliet Pilot Theatre	The Octagon, Yeovil 7.30 Mats Wed/Thurs 1.30 Sat 2.30
Thurs 30th Sept to Sat 23rd Oct	The Misanthrope Moliere's comedy of manners	Bristol Old Vic 7.30 Mats Thurs/Sat 2.30 - not 30th
Mon 4th to Sat 9th	West Side Story Taunton Amateur Operatic Society	Tacchi-Morris, 7.30 Mats Thurs/Sat 2.30 pm
Tues 5th to Sat 9th	Lloyd George knew my father William Douglas Hume comedy	Studio Theatre, Salisbury 7.30 pm
Wed 6th	Frankenstein: a year without summer Dorset Corset Theatre Company	Bridport Arts Centre 7 pm
 Wed 20th	An unrehearsed play-reading Led by Maurice Freeland	Upstairs at The Mermaid 7.30 pm
Wed 27th to Sat 30th	The Rivals Ilminster Entertainment Society	The Warehouse, Ilminster 7.30 pm

The Warehouse: 07502 189717 www.thewarehousetheatre.org.uk

Merlin Theatre: Call 01373 465949 or www.merlintheatre.co.uk

Milborne Port/Two Gents: Call Richard Barrett-Greening on 01963 250063

The Exchange: Call 01258 475137 www.stur-exchange.co.uk

Bristol Old Vic: 0117 987 7877 www.bristololdvic.org.uk

The Warehouse: Swan Theatre: Tourist Information Centre 01935 845946

Bridport Arts Centre: Call 010308 424204 or www.bridport-arts.com

Studio Theatre, Salisbury: Call 07789 858124 or www.studiotheatre.org.uk

Salisbury Playhouse: Call 01722 320333 www.salisburyplayhouse.com

Tacchi Morris Arts Centre: Call 01823 414141 or www.tacchi-morris.com

The Octagon, Yeovil: Call Box Office 01935 283884 or www.octagon-theatre.co.uk

Mission Theatre, Bath: Call 01225 428600 or www.missiontheatre.co.uk



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 or give me a ring on (01935) 814626. If I'm not there, leave your message and I will ring you back.

OCTOBER Copy DEADLINE: Monday 27 September

Last Word...

"The unique thing about Margaret Rutherford is that she can act with her chin alone. Among its many moods I especially cherish the chin commanding, the chin in doubt, and the chin at bay".

Kenneth Tynan