

# NOISES OFF

## LAST PLAYREADING

The playreading of *The Deep Blue Sea*, led by Richard Jones on Wednesday April 27th, was supported by just nine members, only three of whom (including Richard) were men, which resulted in some interesting (and sometimes slightly confusing) 'cross-dressing' towards the end. However the small number of attendees did mean that everyone had a good crack of the whip at reading. The title of the play comes from Hester's line "...when you're between any kind of devil and the deep blue sea, the deep blue sea sometimes looks very inviting", and the plot deals with attempted suicide and failed marriages. It is a well written, thought-provoking play, greatly enjoyed by those attending, and we are grateful to Richard for his efforts. What a pity more people were not present.

## ACTING WORKSHOP



In what was a new venture (at least in recent years) for APS, Sarah Nias kindly lent us the benefit of her experience, talent and skill as she led

an Acting Workshop on Saturday May 14th. The emphasis was very much on having fun, sharing and encouraging. It was a hugely enjoyable session, and we are very grateful to Sarah for her time, and look forward to another session at some point in the future. It was a great shame that so few members attended, and we are baffled as to the reason - this being, surely, at the very centre of what we at APS exist for! On the plus side, it was marvellous to welcome two of our newest members - both of whom were quickly recruited on to the team for *Billy Liar!*

## NEW MEMBERS

It is a real pleasure to report the arrival of a further three new members into APS. A very warm welcome is extended to **Robert Brydges**, **Robson Williamson** and **Beth Yates**. We look forward to them all having a long, and, hopefully, very active association with APS.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

The arrival of the warmer weather has meant that the never-ending job of repairing and maintaining the theatre has once again extended outdoors. We have carried out lengthy and detailed studies of the condition of the large "gothic" window at the stage end of the theatre - (never seen from inside, as it is hidden behind the stage sets, but a constant worry as to its state of repair). Also of great concern was the state of the wall on the Marston Road boundary, which had

been attacked and colonised by ivy over many years, and was in some danger of collapse. A local builder was employed to repair and make good this wall, and we are delighted with the outcome. Some rotten timber in the frame of one of the widows facing Coombe has been replaced, and further cosmetic work has been carried out on all of the Coombe windows and the fascia of the kitchen. The iron gates and railings are also currently in the midst of being re-painted. Meanwhile, indoors, intensive work is under way to ensure a rapid turnaround between *Educating Rita* and *Billy Liar*, with the dismantling and re-creation of the sets. As always, we owe an incalculable debt of gratitude to Adrian Hole, Mark Lambert and John Crabtree for their unstinting efforts.

The cost of the repairs to the building and its ongoing maintenance are a constant worry, and we once again would appeal to all members to think about joining our 100 Club, in order to boost our funds ensure that the theatre is still standing and in action for years to come.

## NEXT PLAYREADING

Our next playreading evening will take place on Wednesday 15th June at 7.30pm. Bev Taylor-Wade will be the host for an informal reading of *Single Spies* by Alan Bennett.

This is a double bill consisting of *An Englishman Abroad* and *A Question of Attribution*. Both plays depict members of the Cambridge spy ring, and touch on their moral, political and aesthetic beliefs. In her dressing-room in a Moscow theatre, actress Coral Browne receives an inebriated visitor, later revealed to be the disgraced spy, Guy Burgess. She is invited to dine at his Moscow flat, with only the instruction to "bring a tape measure..." Funny and engaging, *An Englishman Abroad* explores the fascinating world of a British double-agent as he comes to terms with his new life abroad.

*A Question of Attribution* follows Anthony Blunt, revered art historian, who accidentally encounters the Queen while trying to replace her much-loved Titian painting. A sharp exchange of wits ensues, but will he reveal to her what would later be revealed to the world - that the man who works at the heart of her household is also a Soviet spy? A sharp, pithy play that explores the murky shadows that lurk behind even the most familiar of facades.

A reminding email will be sent out nearer to the date. If you wish to attend, you will be asked to let Bev know, at [bev.taylor.wade@gmail.com](mailto:bev.taylor.wade@gmail.com)

## 100 CLUB

The 100 Cub is still very much in its infancy, and there is plenty of room for new members. All club members have committed themselves to an outlay of just few pennies a day, but even with this modest sum, the Theatre will have benefited to the tune of around £1,000 by the end of 2022 (more in future years). The first draw has already taken place and the prize has been paid to the lucky winner. The next draw will take place on June 11th. Subsequent draws are scheduled for August, October and December; also in December, one lucky club member will receive the annual bumper prize (currently standing at a minimum of £124, but this will increase as we get more members joining). The APS is in urgent need of additional funds - not so much for our productions, which are mainly funded through ticket sales, but for the repair and maintenance of the theatre and its grounds, and for capital investment in, for example, improved lighting and sound facilities, scenery storage, the bar area, and audience seating.

The best - and most enjoyable - way you can help, on top of your annual APS subscription, is to join the 100 Club. Please see the "Support APS" section of the APS website, or send an email to [sst100club@gmail.com](mailto:sst100club@gmail.com). It will cost you so little, you will never notice it. But you will be helping to secure the future of your theatre, not to mention putting yourself in line for some very nice prizes. If you move quickly, you will still be in time for the June draw!

## BILLY LIAR

We are delighted to announce that, following a very successful audition process, we have fully cast our next production. *Billy Liar*, by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall, directed by Jessica Colson, will take place on Mon 25th -

**Williamson** (Arthur), **Richard Culham** (Geoffrey) and **Jemima Cheleda** (Liz). It is especially pleasing to note that around half of the cast are either very new, or fairly recently-arrived APS members.



Saturday 30th July. The cast is as follows: **Liam Beard** (Billy), **Siân Spencer** (Alice), **Fiona Holt** (Florence), **Richard Culham** (Geoffrey), **Hazel Perrett** (Barbara), **Georgia Holder** (Rita), **Robson**

Tickets will go on sale on Monday June 27th. There is some evidence to suggest that many APS members do now understand the need to book early, but forgive us for once again making it clear: we ALWAYS sell out!

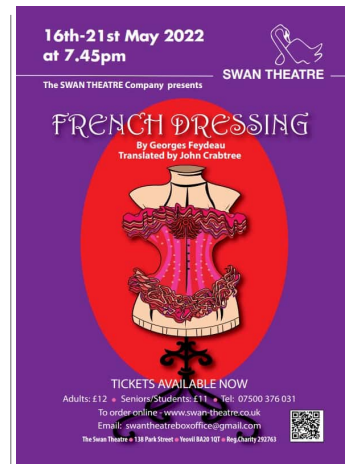
AN EXTRA PERFORMANCE

Regular readers of *Noises Off* will know that demand for tickets for our shows always outstrips supply (see above). This is perhaps not surprising, given the combination of our outstanding local reputation and the fact that the theatre holds a maximum of 52! This gives rise to two undesirable outcomes: a) a large number - possibly a very large number - of disappointed would-be customers, and b) a very low ceiling set to the amount of money it is possible for us to raise through ticket sales. This last is a major concern. We always make sure that our productions run within their budget, and generally return a modest profit, but this is nowhere near enough to allow us to save towards items of major capital expenditure.

An easily-achieved step which we hope will bring significant benefits, is to put on an extra performance. And so we have committed ourselves, on a trial basis, to running a matinée performance of *Billy Liar*, at 2.00pm on Saturday July 30th. We await the outcome of this experiment with some interest - if successful, it is probable that all future shows will have a matinée, and run for seven, rather than six performances.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JOHN...

After a successful online playreading of his translation of Georges Feydeau's *Tailleur Pour Dames* with APS, John Crabtree recently had a big hit at the Swan Theatre, Yeovil with his own adaptation, *French Dressing*. Several APS members were in the cast and crew, and many more in the audiences. Congratulations to John and all the participants for a great achievement.



...AND CONGRATULATIONS TO ADRIAN!



Many members will probably already know that our own Adrian Harding - the larger-than-life figure at the epicentre of so much APS activity, has set himself the challenge of walking one of the paths of the

*Camino de Santiago de Compostella* in Spain. He set off in early April, and the great news is, as we go to press, that he has just arrived safely in Santiago, a distance of around 900 miles. After a short break, Adrian will be continuing on a second Camino, in order to bring the total up to 1000 miles.

Many, many congratulations to Adrian for this achievement, which genuinely deserves the term "awesome". Once he's back, who knows, you might just be able to persuade him to have a beer and tell you all about it!