

Noises Off

AGM AND SUMMER PARTY

The AGM and Summer Party took place on Friday 16th August. They were extremely well attended (it is thought, by a record number of members!), and provided an ideal opportunity to admire the developments which have taken place both inside and outside the Theatre in recent months. The Minutes of the meeting have been published, and may be read, on the APS website.

100 CLUB

As you will see from elsewhere in *Noises Off*, the 100 Club has achieved its first goal which was to enable the purchase and installation of the new seating in the Theatre. We are hugely grateful to all 100 Club members, as ever, and are still

on the lookout for new members to increase our fundraising efforts even further.

Please see "Support Us" on the APS website, or email sst100club@gmail.com in order to join.

The most recent draw took place on August 10th, and the lucky winner was awarded a prize of £46.20.

The total amount raised since the Club was established in March 2022 is now very nearly £5000.

The next draw will take place on October 12th.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many thanks to all APS members who have renewed their annual subscriptions recently, and especially those of you who pay by Standing Order and contacted your bank to arrange for the amount to be

increased to £20. If you have not done so, and if your Standing Order is still set at £15, then unfortunately your APS membership will lapse shortly, or may have done so already. However, you will be contacted by email and late payment will be accepted.

THEATRE DEVELOPMENTS

Each of the last few editions of *Noises Off* have contained items headed "Work in Progress". We are delighted to be able to report (see more details below) that most of the projects planned to be undertaken during our closure between January and June have been successfully finished. With the transfer of ownership of the building now complete,

and with continuing healthy income streams through the 100 Club and through ticket and bar sales, you will not be surprised to hear that we are now turning our attention to other areas of improvement and development.

Discussions and research are ongoing to establish priorities. and you will, of course, be kept up to date in future newsletters.

Meanwhile, please read on for details of the completed projects.

INSULATION AND WALLS

The great majority of the insulation work and the creation of new internal walls has now been completed. It is planned that the final part - the insulation of the northern wall, behind the stage, will be completed before the cold months.

The whole of APS, and particularly future winter audiences, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Mark Lambert, Robert Yeo and Adrian Hole. The task has not only involved the

creation of new walls and installation of new insulation, but also the temporary removal and re-installation of the existing heating and lighting, emergency exit signs and so on.

The high quality of the woodwork and painting is testament to the time and patience which has been devoted to this project.



Work in progress (1)

FLOOR

The new floor in the auditorium and foyer (as reported previously) was laid by Steve Jackson Carpet and Flooring of Sherborne, but involved the removal and later replacement of the entire contents of the auditorium, by a team of willing APS volunteers. As well as its visual appeal, draughts have now been eliminated - or at least



The new floor

greatly reduced, and it is very much easier to keep the floor clean.

OUTSIDE



Thank you, Theatres Trust Small Grants Programme supported by The Linbury Trust



The replacement of the broken and potentially dangerous flagstones and steps, and the weed-infested gravel, was undertaken by Kingsmere Surfacing of Gillingham during July. At the time of writing, the enhancement of the outside is in process of being completed

with the purchase and installation of permanent planters, with attractive plants, and new benches. (See picture at the end of this newsletter)

We anticipate that interval drinks outside the theatre in the summer months will in future be a much more pleasant experience.

Once again, we wish to express our gratitude to the Linbury Trust and to the Small Grants Programme of the Theatre Trust, for their generous award of the grant which enabled this project to be undertaken.



Work in progress (2)

STAIRS

Most audience members will have given scant attention to the precipitous and potentially very dangerous stairs, which used to lead from the bar area to the gallery (hence only used by technical crew, bar and wardrobe staff). But we are delighted to report that those



The old stairs

much-hated stairs have now been replaced by a magnificent new bespoke staircase, designed, built and installed by Maurice Watts of Dorchester. This



Work in progress (3)

project turned out to be considerably more challenging than initially expected, involving the input of a structural engineer who advised us on how to prevent the ceiling collapsing! We are pleased to report that all the work was carried out safely and

successfully, and we are delighted with the improvement to the appearance of this corner of the auditorium.

Wi-Fi AND ELECTRICITY

As a result of herculean efforts by Adrian Harding, Richard Culham and Sarah Webster, wrestling with mountains of red tape and bureaucracy, we have a new, green energy supplier in Octopus Energy, together with an efficient smart electricity meter, and also a reliable Wi-fi signal from BT, thus enabling, among other things, speedy and robust connection for our card payment system behind the bar.

We look forward also to being able to enjoy reduced energy costs in the future.

SEATING

After many years of research, planning and fundraising (the first enquiry was raised in 2019!), our new auditorium seating was purchased from Evertaut Ltd, of Blackburn, Lancashire; it was delivered and installed in late July. The

environmentally-friendly disposal/recycling of the old seating was undertaken by Dorset Reclaim. of Dorchester.

The seating has already been trialled and met with great approval.



“In situ” - new seating, floor, walls and staircase

NEXT?

As mentioned above, the insulation and re-walling are not fully complete yet, but should be so soon. The new staircase - presently bare wood - will be treated so as to preserve it and make it blend in aesthetically. Lastly, the bar/reception area, including the bar itself, is due for a complete re-design so that bar stock, glasses etc

are more easily accessible for bar staff, and hopefully the congestion which occurs when audiences arrive will be eased. This project ought to be under way very soon. Longer term, we also feel it is

going to be necessary to give attention to the main double entrance doors, which are really in need of some TLC. And then there is the upgrading of the stage lights.....!

SHERBORNE ROCK CHOIR

We were happy to be able to welcome the Rock Choir in the Studio Theatre for their special workshop session on August 9th.

The evening was a big success, the venue proving ideal for their purposes. We look forward to being able to host further similar events in the future.

THREE MEN IN A BOAT

GSP proudly present
Three Men in a Boat
 (to say nothing of the dog)
 adapted from the hilarious book by Jerome K. Jerome
 Starring Giles Shenton
 (Old Herbaceous & Fagin?)

"the nearest thing I've heard to audio slapstick"
 "seriously funny"
 The Guardian

"a masterclass in stagecraft & delivery"

"amazing, energetic & totally engaging"
 "timeless appeal"
 The Independent

"95 mins of pure delight"

"Giles Shenton draws us into his world making the characters so real you feel you have known them forever"
 Edinburgh Fringe Review

Sherborne Studio Theatre
 Fri 13th September, 7.30 pm
 Sat 14th September, 2.30 pm & 7.30 pm
 www.aps-sherborne.co.uk 07786 070093

As you will realise, this show from Giles Shenton was very much a last-minute arrangement, but we are all looking forward to what is sure to be a great evening (and afternoon). At the time of writing, Saturday evenings is sold out; there are only two for Friday, but there is reasonable availability for the matinée - **Saturday 14th September at 2.30pm.** Tickets from the APS website, or 07786 070093

EARNEST

Following a very successful playreading evening and auditions, the director John Crabtree is happy to announce that the December production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* has been cast as follows:

Lane - Mike Stanley
 Algernon - Chris Williamson
 Jack - Richard Jones
 Lady Bracknell - Tanya Ogden
 Gwendolen - Samantha Elgar
 Cecily - Hazel Perrett
 Miss Prism - Sally Matthews
 Dr Chasuble - Patrick Knox

Rehearsals are scheduled to begin in the week beginning 23rd September, and the construction of the set is already under way. Performances will be in the **week beginning December 2nd**, and tickets will go on sale through the usual channels on **November 4th**.


Amateur Players of Sherborne

APBS

The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde

directed by John Crabtree



Sherborne Studio Theatre

Mon 2nd - Sat 7th Dec, 7.30 pm
 Matinée Sat 7th Dec, 2.30 pm

www.aps-sherborne.co.uk 07786 070093

HEDDA GABLER

We are excited to announce that our next major production planned, following *The Importance of Being Earnest*, is to be Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*,

directed by Graham Smith (*Educating Rita*, *Art*). A playreading evening of the play is going to be held in the Theatre at 7.30pm on **Wednesday October 9th**, and auditions will take place on **Wednesday October 23rd**. Reminders and further details of these events will be emailed out in

due course. Meanwhile, given the vital necessity of being able to recruit the "right" actress to play the title role, please see below some details of our "Finding Hedda" campaign. Performances are scheduled for **March 24th - 29th 2025**.

FINDING HEDDA

APS will be staging Ibsen's masterpiece at the Studio Theatre in March 2025. Hedda is self-centred, mercurial, bored, fiery, manipulative, entitled, charming. She demands attention as her right, both from other characters and from the audience. Hedda seeks diversion, preferably by amusing conversation - or failing that, gunfire. No wonder the role of Hedda Gabler is often spoken of as the 'female Hamlet!'

If you have a playing age of 30-40, and are interested in joining the likes of Ingrid Bergman, Maggie Smith, Fiona Shaw, Cate Blanchett, Rosamund Pike and Ruth Wilson in performing this iconic role, please email findinghedda@mail.com for further details.

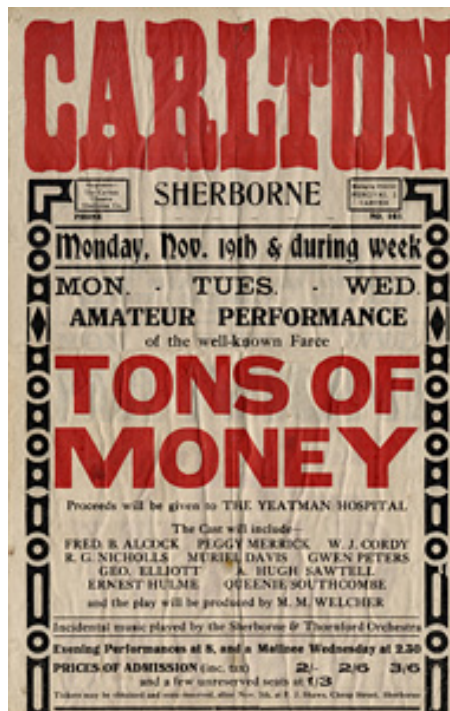
FUTURE PRODUCTIONS

Further productions in the pipeline for the first part of 2025 include *The Thirty-Nine Steps* by Patrick Barlow (**June 2nd - 7th**), and *The Servant of Two Masters* by Carlo Goldoni (**August 25th - 30th**).

In addition we are looking forward to staging a musical and dance entertainment from David Pileri (date to be confirmed). Of course, much more information on these productions will be published in due course.

APS 90TH BIRTHDAY

It is with both pride and excitement that we look forward to celebrating the 90th anniversary of the Amateur Players of Sherborne! It was on Monday 19th November 1934 that the newly-formed group opened with their performance of *Tons of Money*, by Will Evans and Arthur Valentine, at the now-defunct Carlton Theatre, in Newland, Sherborne.



We could not let this anniversary pass by unnoticed, and so are planning a special joint Christmas and Birthday celebration. This will take

place in the Theatre on **Friday November 29th**. In honour of the event, Martin Williams has adapted, shortened and simplified the script of *Tons of Money*, to create a new "radio play" entitled *Loads of Lolly*. The performance will be in the format of a rehearsed reading by 8 APS actors, which hopefully will retain the fun, farce and nonsense of the original. The bar will be open, and the second half of the evening will be the annual Christmas Party.

Since numbers are limited to the capacity of the Theatre, it will be necessary to purchase tickets for the event (at a very low cost, and to contribute towards the cost of refreshments), and will initially be restricted to APS members and their guests only. More details to follow, of course.

GILLY'S FILM QUIZ

Back by popular demand! Gilly Savage will be hosting her ever-popular Film Quiz (with Fish 'n Chip Supper) on **Friday 25th October**. More details to follow.

POETRY EVENING

FOR YOUR DIARY...

We are proud to be able to say that the Sherborne Literary Society have asked to hold their Poetry Evening in the Studio Theatre on **Friday November 22nd**, and, of course, we are delighted to accept.

The Literary Society will be circulating information relating to this event, which will include some APS members' poetry readings. Tickets will be available through the APS website.

Friday 13th - Saturday 14th September *Three Men in a Boat*
Wednesday 9th October *Hedda Gabler* Playreading
Wednesday 23rd October *Hedda Gabler* Auditions
Friday 25th October Gilly's Film Quiz (with fish 'n chips)
Friday 22nd November Sherborne Literary Society Poetry Evening
Friday 29th November APS 90th Birthday and Christmas celebration - *Loads of Lolly*
Monday 2nd - Saturday 7th December *The Importance of Being Earnest*
Monday 24th - Saturday 29th March 2025 *Hedda Gabler*
Friday 11th - Saturday 12th April *Dead on Cue* (details to follow)
Monday 2nd - Saturday 7th June *The Thirty Nine Steps*
Monday 25th - Saturday 30th August *The Servant of Two Masters*
 Musical and dance entertainment (tbc)

All start at 7.30/2.30 pm unless otherwise notified



Theatres Trust

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