

NOISES OFF

HEDDING YOUR WAY

There are strange demons in all human psyches. But almost all humans learn to bury their demons under layers of charm, politeness, good manners. We behave. There are others, though, who use their charm not to suppress the demons, but to enable them.

Meet Hedda Gabler...

Actors dream of 'playing the Dane' as Hamlet, but it is Ibsen's Hedda (another brilliant, deranged Scandinavian) that most actresses would give their souls to perform. Ingrid Bergman, Diana Rigg, Maggie Smith, Fiona Shaw, Cate Blanchett, Rosamund Pike and Ruth Wilson have created their own Heddas. Lily Allen is about to create hers. Lucky them - and lucky Sarah Nias, who is to play the iconic role for APS in March.

Graham Smith (*Art, Betrayal, Educating Rita*) is directing, and has assembled a talented supporting cast: Freddie Wopat (*Twelfth Night*) as Tesman; Mary Flanagan (*Twelfth Night*) as Thea; Alex Scrivenor (*Art*) as Løvborg; Robert Brydges (*Whose Life*) as Brack; Sally Matthews (*Earnest*) as Aunt Juliana; and Fiona Holt (*Adrian Mole*) as Berthe.



Tickets for *Hedda Gabler* go on sale at 9am, Monday, 24th February

Sherborne Studio Theatre 24th-29th March

www.aps-sherborne.co.uk

THE 39 STEPS - OUR JUNE PRODUCTION



On a cold evening in December, with the applause for 'Earnest' still echoing around the Studio Theatre, APS was already looking ahead to its Summer 2025 production – Patrick Barlow's knockabout adaptation of Hitchcock's classic thriller *The 39 Steps*. Jane McKenna, the Director, introduced us to 'Angus' - a bearded Scotsman of her own creation, who glowered beadily down at us Southerners from the stage. This will be a bold departure for APS – physical theatre, puppetry, lighting and sound effects all choreographed to the millisecond. Jane has assembled a brilliant, energetic cast of four, as lithe and limber as the show will certainly demand! They are Freddie Wopat, Jeremy Small, Hazel Perrett and Gary Brooks.

Tickets for *The 39 Steps* will go on sale from March 25th.

APS PRESENTS
'THE 39 STEPS'

"Riotously funny!"
- Patrick Barlow

Adapted by Patrick Barlow
Directed by Jane McKenna

Sherborne Studio Theatre
Monday 2nd - Saturday 7th June | 7.30pm
Matinée Saturday 7th | 2.30pm

The poster features a stylized illustration of a man in a black hat and suit, looking towards a red steam train. The train is emitting a large plume of white smoke. The background is green with a black diagonal line. The title 'THE 39 STEPS' is written in large, bold, yellow letters. A red banner at the top right contains a quote: "Riotously funny!" - Patrick Barlow. At the bottom, a yellow banner contains the theatre name and showtimes.

Amateur Players of Sherborne.

Join our monthly social evening, at Sherborne Studio Theatre.

Last Friday of the month from 7 to 10pm, (unless it clashes with a production or other event).

Come to the theatre for a drink (the bar will be open) and a chat. Meet and make friends, bring ideas and find out what the group is doing.

BEING SOCIAL

Glance left and you will see that we look forward to welcoming you to the theatre for informal social get-togethers on the last Friday of every month, starting on the 28th February. Of course if we are producing a show on the last Friday (as we are with Hedda Gabler in March), there won't be a social evening that month. Otherwise, come and join us!

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome three new members to APS - hello to Christiana Bingley, Trevor Redpath and Annie Price. We are also pleased to welcome back returnees Alex Scrivenor and Gary Brooks. We hope that all five of you enjoy a long and productive association with APS, and look forward to meeting you onstage, backstage or just socially.

100 CLUB

Since we last reported, there have been three draws, and three lucky winners. The December draw took place on December 8th, followed immediately by the bumper Christmas draw for 2024. The respective winning tickets were number 48 (prize £47.70) and number 7 (prize £268.70). The February draw took place on February 8th, with the lucky ticket number 86 bringing its holder a prize of £46.20.

There are still plenty of tickets available, and we would love for more APS members to become 100 Club members. For only a few pennies a day, you have the chance to win these cash prizes, and, more importantly, the 100 Club contributes enormously (and exclusively) to the upkeep and development of the Sherborne Studio Theatre. As the club approaches its 3rd anniversary in March, the theatre has already benefited by more than £6000. For details of how to join, please go to

<http://www.aps-sherborne.co.uk/support.html>

MAKING IT HAPPEN

You are reading this because you are a member of APS. You like high quality drama. You're in good company – we all do. And we like meeting people who share our enthusiasm. You may never have acted, or directed, but the thought has crossed your mind, hasn't it?

Come and talk to us – perhaps after a show, or at one of the new last-Friday social gatherings. We can offer guidance and support to those interested in learning the craft of acting, or who might be interested in following a production from start to finish as an assistant Director. If you know anyone on the APS Committee, talk to them. If you don't, ask for Robert, or (a much better idea, really) Adrian. We look forward to meeting you.

WELCOME OR WELCOME NOT

OUR DORSET WINTER WARMER

I never imagined when I left the house that by 8 o'clock I'd be singing 'While shepherds watched' to the tunes of 'On Ilkley Moor' and 'The Laughing Policeman' alongside a near-capacity audience quaffing beer and mulled wine.

I was watching - no, experiencing - Dorchester-based actor and folk singer Alastair Braidwood and his mentor, esteemed singer and folk musician Tim Laycock, for an evening full of festive cheer.

Our conventional idea of a Victorian Christmas is Dickensian – and urban: Scrooge in his top hat passing bow-fronted shops in foggy, gaslit London. Alastair and Tim gave us an equally nostalgic rural Christmas, drawn from the works of two sons of Dorset: Thomas Hardy and William Barnes. We saw and heard the grumpy vicars, benevolent squires and grizzled farmhands in the pews of a village church – all of them fuelled by barrels of cider and warmed beer.



As the evening progressed, humorous stories alternated with poems, traditional songs and folk tunes to tap your foot to, accompanied by Tim's concertina, melodion or cello, and Alastair's whistle and tambourine. They are masters of audience participation; they knew precisely when to invite us to sing along, and when to leave us hanging on every spoken word, read and acted in an authentic Dorset accent.

The result was a medley of words and music which evoked the authentic tradition of a Victorian Dorset Christmas in the language of the two literary masters who were there to see, hear and feel it for themselves.

We heard extracts from Hardy's novels, 'Under the Greenwood Tree' and 'The Woodlanders', both of which describe the festive season in Dorset. How wonderful to hear that 'A good evening is defined by



the hollow sound of the barrels'. Hardy's 'A Few Crusted Characters' - a Dorset version of the Canterbury tales - transported us into the lives of the colourful personalities of our county in 1850.

We heard of the choir and musicians in the curtained gallery who, having fallen asleep in the church service due to imbibing too much, were roused from their slumbers and, thinking that they were still at last night's party, broke into 'The Devil Amongst the Tailors' to get the congregation up on their feet and dancing after the sermon. The affronted parson banned them for all time from the church – but they were soon forgiven and welcomed back into the hearts of the parish.

We heard of 'The thieves who couldn't stop sneezing', Hardy's shaggy-dog story about the hapless burglars whose hiding place was finally exposed by clouds of snuff hanging in the air.

The other major influence on the master raconteurs was the dialect poetry of William Barnes, who spoke and sang of Dorset, of its people and their homes, of their plain lives and of the things that moved their hearts. In his words the Dorset dialect is "a pure, ancient language, rich and expressive, and as free from artificiality as the speech of a child". He was particularly drawn to the ancient traditions of the Mummers Plays, and the tradition of Wassailing, the ancient custom of visiting cider orchards and singing to the trees to promote a good harvest for the coming year. That gave the audience the best opportunity to raise our voices in the simple chorus, and to genuinely feel the spirit of a rural Christmas coursing through our veins.

When the show ended, nobody moved. An encore was demanded, providing a rousing finish to an excellent evening's entertainment – Alastair and Tim's first visit to APS, but certainly not the last!

Adrian Harding

**By popular demand, Alastair and Tim will return in the Spring to conjure up another vision of old Dorset through the seasons: 'O Flow'ry May'.
Tuesday 29th April at 7.30pm.**

MARK CAREY

IS BACK

APS is delighted to welcome back an old friend to the Studio Theatre in April. Mark Carey wrote our 2022 production *Keeping Our End Up*, and returned here with his one man show *Into the Breach*, in which he played a Great War veteran on a mission to bring Shakespeare's Henry V to a quiet Devon Village. It was moving, beautifully written, and very, very funny.

Mark's new one man show also has a Shakespearean connection. *Dead On Cue* is a ghostly thriller, set in the dressing room of a provincial theatre during a production of *Hamlet*. Or rather, two productions of *Hamlet*, 60 years apart. Some very spooky coincidences begin happening... It's clever, and it will tingle your spine. Don't miss it!

GSP GILES SHENTON PRODUCTIONS PROUDLY PRESENTS

DEAD ON CUE

SAME PLAY. SAME THEATRE. SAME DRESSING ROOM.
60 YEARS APART

"TIME IS OUT OF JOINT"

A NEW GHOSTLY THRILLER
WRITTEN BY
MARK CAREY
(INTO THE BREACH & WHAT'S WRONG WITH BENNY HILL?)

FROM THE PRODUCER OF
OLD HERBACEOUS
THREE MEN IN A BOAT
FAGIN?
MY DOG'S GOT NO NOSE

"THERE ARE MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH..."

NATIONAL TOUR STARTS SPRING 2025

DIARY DATES

SHERBORNE STUDIO THEATRE

APS Social Evening

Fri 28th February 7.00pm

Hedda Gabler

Mon 24th-Sat 29th March 7.30pm

Dead On Cue

Fri 11th April 7.30 pm

Sat 12th April 2.30pm & 7.30pm

APS Social Evening

Fri 25th April 7.00pm

Folk Evening: O Flow'ry May

Tue 29th April 7.30pm

APS Social Evening

Fri 30th May 7.00pm

Play Reading – Bouncers

Date tbc

The 39 Steps

Mon 2nd-Sat 7th June 7.30pm

Sat 7th June 2.30pm

APS Social Evening

Fri 27th June 7.00pm