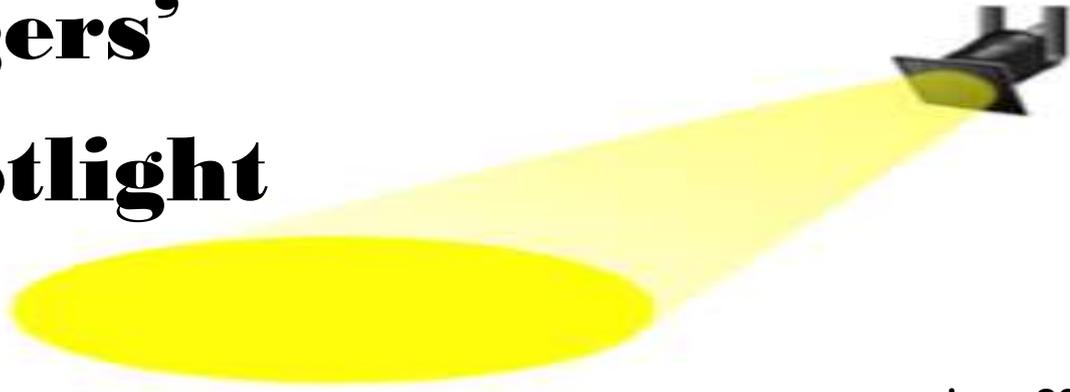


Stagers' Spotlight



June 2021

Chair's Message

Welcome to the June edition of *Spotlight*. This is a very exciting, hopeful edition as it is jam packed with plans that should let us see each other soon and begin to bring shows back on to the stage at Grayshott.

In this *Spotlight* you can find information about the One Act Evening we are co-producing with Tilbourne Players (book tickets today!), news about the upcoming auditions for 'There's No Business Like Show Business' (come and be part of an exciting ensemble cast!) and also an invitation to a Stager's Summer BBQ. It has been a long time but hopefully things are starting to happen and normal service will soon be resumed.

As things start to come back, one thing it is important to remember is that all of our shows are only able to happen thanks to the support of many pairs of hands and especially thanks to people stepping up into the Front of House Manager and Production Secretary roles. These really are vital and I hope you will consider submitting your name and taking on what is always an extremely rewarding position.

Finally, please join me in offering our congratulations and support to all of the local societies that are putting on shows in the next few months. Theatre embodies so much of what is wonderful about our vibrant communities and I for one am really excited to go along and start laughing and crying, clapping and cheering again.

The calendar on our website not only has details of our own shows but it is also kept up to date with the plans of many drama groups in the local area so please visit there to find a new production to go and see. Also feel free to let us know if something is missing from the calendar that you think other Stagers would like to know about.

Whether you are an experienced Stager or have found us and joined during lockdown I hope to see you at something fun soon!

Go well
Joe



Dates for your Diary

Wed 30 June – Presentation of November celebration in the Main Hall and via Zoom

Sat 7 August - Auditions for singing parts in the November celebration in the Studio

Wed 11 August – Auditions for acting roles in November celebration

23rd and 24th July Plays with Tilbourne Players

Sun 1st August Stagers Barbecue (28 Tyndalls)

15th September - Stagers AGM

26-27th November - November Celebration

“There's no Business Like Show Business”

Treasurer's Profile

Who are you?

I am Stephen Penny; I have lived in Grayshott for 50 years and currently reside in The Avenue, which is conveniently (or sometimes inconveniently) close to the Village Hall.

What is your history with the theatre?

When I was about nine I played Ratty in a school production of Toad of Toad Hall which was presented at the Haslemere Hall. While I quite enjoyed being on-stage when it came to show week I was fascinated by the back-stage workings and a passion was ignited that (probably thankfully) put an immediate end to my acting career and focused my attention on lighting, sound and set-construction. By the time I started work in the mid-80s I was involved with most of the local music and drama groups either overseeing lighting or forming part of 'rent-a-mob' which was a group of mainly Stagers that 'crewed' for other societies – I think my personal 'best' at that time was 18 shows in one year. In more recent times my involvement in amateur theatre has mostly been confined to the Stagers due to other commitments.

What is your history with Stagers specifically?

My history with the Stagers began before I was born! My father was involved from the Stagers' inception and met my mother in the 1963 production of Mr Cinders – they were married soon after. As a small child I was involved on the periphery; helping my parents during 'get-ins' and 'get-outs' then graduating to programme seller, aged eight (Waltz Dream – 1974) before finally being allowed to help back-stage at the grand old age of twelve (Uncertain Joy – 1978). Consequently I think I have either watched or been involved back-stage with every Stagers' production since 1973.



Stage lighting was my initial focus and I took responsibility for lighting my first major show when I was sixteen (Lilac Domino – 1982). In the 1980s we were still using large wire-wound dimmers that gave you an electric shock if you grabbed them in the wrong place and got red hot if you left them 'on-dim' for too long together with flood-lights made from old Huntley and Palmers *biscuit tins*. Technology has moved-on several times since then and we will shortly be commissioning our new 'Control Room' which will allow the lighting operator to see the stage, rather than being hidden-away back-stage during performances, and make full use of the new lighting equipment we purchased in 2019.

Over the years my interest has broadened and now I tend to spend more time on set construction and design than I do on lighting but sadly I have not inherited my mother's skill in terms of scenic artistry.

I joined the Committee in 1986 and was initially involved in musical selection, production management and publicity. In 1997 I was asked by the Chairman if I would take-on the role of Treasurer as the incumbent, John Marshall, felt that he deserved a rest after 25 years 'in office'. I accepted on the strict understanding that I would serve a maximum of 5 years; so much for good intentions!

Apart from Stagers what else do you do with your free time?

For the last 24 years I have worked for Surrey County Council in the Schools' Finance department helping schools to make the best use of their funding and to comply with accounting requirements.

Much of my free time is spent overseeing the running of Grayshott Village Hall which is an independent charity administered by a small group of volunteers. I've had the privilege of being Chairman of the Management Committee (otherwise known as 'jack of all trades' or 'head of complaints' depending on how things are going!) since 2007 and never cease to be grateful for the foresight of the Villagers who constructed such a large and well-appointed hall nearly 120 years ago.

When not otherwise occupied I'm a fair-weather gardener, hoarder of 'anything old that might come in useful one day' and never tire of living and walking in such a beautiful part of the country.

Membership News

In Joe's message at the beginning of this issue of Spotlight, he mentions Stagers who have found us and joined during lockdown. We are very pleased to welcome Rachel Mawditt, another person who has done just that!

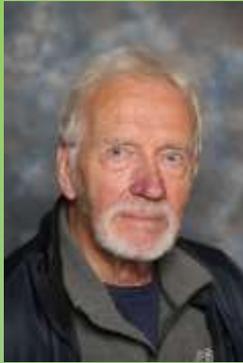
We hope you enjoy living in this part of the country and being a Stager, Rachel.

Jennifer



Membership News

Following the sad news of Richard Tytler's death in May, we now publish this tribute and send our condolences to his family.



Richard joined Stagers in 1997 and for 21 years was a regular supporter, either treading the boards or coming to shows. He usually performed with Haslemere Players and many of us have been part of their audiences thoroughly enjoying watching him.

It was a privilege to have Richard join us on stage for Stagers' productions. From his debut in 'Lady Be Good' and through 'Little Shop of Horrors', 'Chicago', 'Underneath the Arches', 'La Cage aux Folles', 'Cabaret', and 'Cowardy Custard', Richard brought his considerable talents to a variety of roles.

Heather Legat writes the following, perfectly summing up Richard's qualities:

"I was lucky enough to work with Richard several times at Grayshott. He was an accomplished actor who always took great pains to transform himself into his character. Precision is a word I would associate with Richard. When rehearsing the role of Mushnik, the florist, in 'Little Shop of Horrors', he was required to dance a tango and spent ages rehearsing the steps and his body language until they were 'just so'.

He was able to play a range of contrasting roles from the blustering, ultra conservative M. Dindon in 'La Cage aux Folles' to the practically invisible Amos Hart in 'Chicago'. The last time I worked with him was when I directed him in 'Cowardy Custard' – this revue style show enabled him to play a range of characters and sing a variety of songs in his usual, inimitable style. Ever the gentleman, even when his memory was starting to leave him, he never failed to ask after the family when we met socially, usually at some sort of theatrical event.

He also had the knack of very nicely putting one in one's place. I have a card he sent me after 'La Cage . . .'; it thanks me for my work etc and then says, 'always a pleasure to work with (this word is then neatly crossed through and replaced with the word 'for') you.' I must have been exceptionally bossy and he didn't make mistakes. Whether on stage or directing you, Richard, it was always a pleasure."



Alex Yates has also known Richard for many years, working with him in productions for both the Stagers and Haslemere Players. She writes: *"I first met Richard when he played Captain Von Trapp, in 'The Sound of Music', and I played Leisl – I was 15. We thoroughly enjoyed performing together, especially the singing which we both adored. Richard and I quickly established a father-daughter friendship that was to continue for years. It became a running joke that we were always 'family' on stage. After 'The Sound of Music' came 'Calamity Jane' in which Richard played my uncle, then there was perhaps the most special moment when he played my grandfather in 'Meet Me In St Louis'. When we sang 'Fascinating Rhythm' together in 'Lady Be Good' we decided that, although the show wasn't written that way, we could pretend we were related!*

Off-stage, there was always a hug and a chuckle. We would seek each other out at social events and exchange news. He was often there at the end of a show to offer congratulations and, without fail, I would receive an email the next day expressing how much he'd enjoyed my performance (I'm pretty sure he enjoyed everyone else's too!).

It was inevitable that Richard and Sue should be at my wedding and they always took an interest in Danny and, later on, our boys.

In a couple of weeks' time my youngest son, Edward, will be performing, for the first time, with FAOS – something I know Richard would have enjoyed. I'll remember Richard with fondness, always."

If you didn't know Richard personally, we hope the above will have given you an idea of the special man he was.

So, from all The Grayshott Stagers we say: 'Thank you, Richard, and we're so glad you were a member'.



'There's No Business Like Show Business!'

By the time you read this we shall have begun the process leading up to our November 2021 production, which will be staged at Grayshott Village Hall on Friday 26th and Saturday 27th November, the three performances to include a matinee on the Saturday.

The concept for the show was presented on Wednesday 30 June, the directors explaining their plans for both the musical and dramatic items. Mary Coyte is directing the musical sections, with Lizzie Hales as her MD and choreographer. Heather Legat and Ellis Nicholls are each directing a section of drama, Heather's consisting of a 'medley' of short excerpts from various plays and Ellis presenting a scene from 'Blithe Spirit'.

You will understand from information we circulated last week that, due to the Covid restrictions being extended, we have postponed our auditions until August. The auditions for singing parts (solos and ensemble numbers) and comperes will be held during the afternoon of Saturday 7th August, with audition rehearsals offered on 2nd and 4th August. The dramatic roles will be auditioned on the evening of Wed 11th August. You are welcome to audition for as many sections as you would like.

We envisage forming a 'company', several members of which will be 'multi-roleing'!

Please note that, if you were not able to attend the Presentation either in person or via Zoom, you can contact Jennifer Charters for detailed information as follows:

Jennifer.charters@grayshottstagers.co.uk or on 01428 605635. You may feel your talents lie elsewhere and want to offer your help in another way. Do be in touch.

Plays with Tilbourne Players

23rd and 24th July

We are returning to the stage! We will join with the Tilbourne Players and each present a one-act play for one performance at Grayshott Village Hall on 23 July 2021, followed by one performance at the Tilford Institute on Saturday 24 July, both evenings starting at 7.30 pm. We will present *Afterplay* by Brian Friel, one of three plays he wrote under the title *Three Plays After*.

The two parts will be played by Steffen Zschaler, last seen with us in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* in 2015, and Ann Penfold, a new member to the Stagers, and be directed by Ellis Nicholls. Tilbourne will present *Two Purple Gloves* by Michael Park, with the parts played by Helen Phillips and Ian Wilson-Soppitt, both also members of the Stagers, and directed by Sara Wilson-Soppitt



Tickets at £10 each will shortly be available through the websites of the Stagers and the Tilbourne Players for the respective venue. Although plans are being made to comply with current social distancing requirements, we hope that those regulations will have ended by the performance dates.

Front of House helpers will be needed for 23 July. Please contact Heather Legat as soon as possible with your offer to help. We are planning, therefore, for a cash-only bar and hot drinks (not contactless cards), expecting that the social side of the evening will be nearly as important as the plays. It is time for us to get out again and this is your chance to support the Stagers' and the Tilbourne Players' return to performing. See you there!

Situations VACANT

15A

IN CINEMAS 4TH DECEMBER

Front of House

You will have read elsewhere in this copy of 'Spotlight', the exciting news that the Stagers will once again be treading the boards of the Grayshott Village Hall. On Friday July 23rd (for one night only) we need to staff the auditorium with ushers, raffle-ticket sellers, bar staff and tea-people. If you are willing to help please let me know – heather.legat@grayshottstagers.co.uk

There's No Business Like Show Business – November 2021

This show needs a Production Secretary – someone very organised who can co-ordinate all the jobs that need to be done!! It would suit someone who is excellent at delegation - once you have found a Front of House Manager they have to organise their staff (see above). BONUS; Jennifer and Caroline have already done the first part of this job by organising everything up to and including the auditions. There is a job spec. available. If you are interested: let anyone on the committee know or you can email me – heather.legat@grayshottstagers.co.uk



Stagers' Summer BBQ

We are planning a Stagers' barbecue at the home of David and Ruth Wilbraham on Sunday 1st August at 1.00pm in Hindhead .The cost will be £5.00 per head for food, and bring a bottle.

Places may be limited dependent on the latest guidelines, please can you let Ruth know if you are planning to come and any dietary requirements.

ruth.wilbraham@grayshottstagers.co.uk

More information to follow:

WANTED!

LOOKING FOR

Raffle Prizes. We are going to run a raffle on Friday July 23rd - depending on the latest guidelines it may be a real-life raffle or it may be a 'virtual' raffle. If you would like to donate a prize – bottle, box or jar – please let me or any of the committee know. You should have worked out where by now. I'm happy to arrange a pick-up, particularly if I'm going to photograph it for a 'virtual' raffle! - Please email- heather.legat@grayshottstagers.co.uk

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Play of the Week can be found on the website at www.boxofficeradio.co.uk “

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