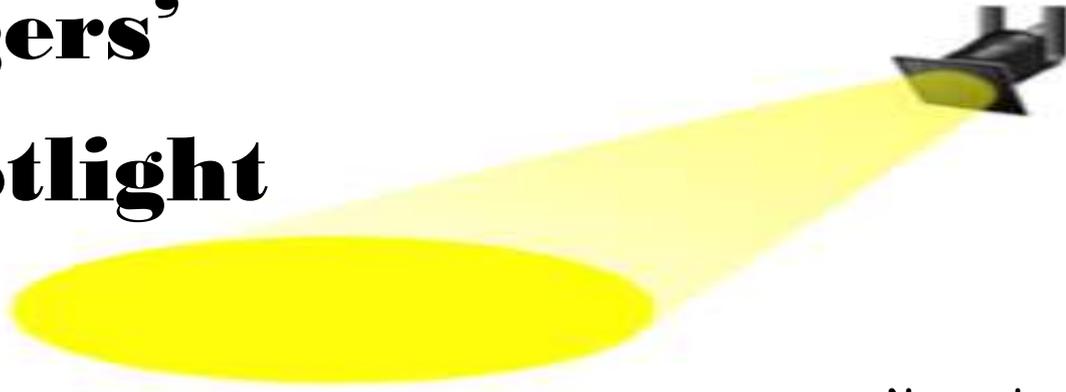


Stagers'

Spotlight



November 2021

Chair's Message

The time is here so the first thing I have to say this month is if you have not got your tickets to come and see 'There's No Business Like Show Business' stop reading and [click here to go and buy them now!](#)

The show, which brings together many musical and dramatic highlights from shows that you will have enjoyed from Stagers' past, is sure to be a brilliant evening and the cast, the directors and everyone involved with the show have been hard at work to make sure that when you come out to see us, you have a great time!

Performances are at the Grayshott Village Hall from 7.30pm on Friday 26th and Saturday 27th November 2021. There is also a matinee starting at 2.30pm on Saturday 27th.

Right, have you got your tickets... I can wait...

OK, thank you! As well as preparations for our next show there have been a few other important activities to let you know about.

The AGM was held on Monday 8th November and I am delighted to say we were able to proceed this time - thank you to everyone who joined us - and you can find a summary of the key points covered later in the newsletter.

However one thing I would like to say again here is, that this coming year will mark Stephen's 25th year as Treasurer and he continues to do such an amazing job for us all. As he enters retirement he will have more opportunities for things like holidays and so we would appreciate you thinking if you are well placed to shadow him - all it takes is passion and a knowledge of the society and he can help teach you the rest. So if you are interested in learning the ropes and potentially taking over at some point in the future please message

Jennifer.charters@grayshottstagers.co.uk and let us know.

The teams behind both the February One Acts and Honk! have been busy planning how to build on the previous work done on these shows as both had been cast and were underway before they had to be cancelled but now have new opportunities for people to be a part of these performances. So have a look later in this edition of Spotlight for those updates if you are interesting in joining the cast of either show.

I look forward to seeing you at 'There's No Business Like Show Business' and hope you have a wonderful time.
Go well,
Joe



26th November 7.30 pm :

27th November 2.30pm and 7.30pm:

There's No Business Like Show Business

Wednesday 1st December: Read through and Auditions for Lockdown in Little Grimley . NLJ Room

Monday 6th December: Casting Call for Cat! 7.30pm in the Common Room

Wed 29 December: Stagers' Twixmas Get-together. Social Club, Grayshott. Further details to follow.

18th & 19th February 2022: One Act Plays

26th-28th May 2022: Honk

Visit our website for more Information

<http://www.grayshottstagers.co.uk>

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There's No Business Like Show Business

Grayshott Stagers
return to the stage
with Murders, Memories and Music

THERE'S
NO BUSINESS
LIKE
SHOW BUSINESS



Grayshott Village Hall
Friday 26th and Saturday 27th
November 2021 at 7.30pm
Saturday Matinée at 2.30pm
Tickets available from
www.grayshottstagers.co.uk
or 01428 605464

With only 1 week to go, cast and crew are focused to do the best they possibly can, to give you a wonderful evening, as we look forward to being back on stage.

Words and music have been learnt and we are eager to welcome you back to what promises to be a very enjoyable evening.

Costumes and sets are organized, the cast and crew are doing regular Lateral flow tests in order for the show to go ahead and the audience to feel safe attending.

A sneak preview in pictures of what has been going on in rehearsals.

All we need you to do is, buy tickets.



26th-27th November 2021



Front of House

- ushering
- raffle
- bar
- refreshments

Back Stage

- Hair
- Costumes
- Makeup

If you feel you can help in any way, please contact the Production Secretary

jennifer.charters@grayshottstagers.co.uk .

Thank you!

Jennifer



Honk! 26-28th May 2022

We are delighted to welcome Rob Miller as Musical Director for Honk! '22. Rob has directed musicals for Stagers before, most recently Acorn Antiques - The Musical! (2016) and Nunsense (2013) and we are very pleased to have him back with us again for our long awaited production of Honk! We are also very pleased to welcome Helen Bendall who joins us as our pianist.

Casting Call for Cat! - We are also re-opening auditions for the part of Cat. As the original cast member is no longer available (all best wishes to Dan for drama college) we are re-auditioning this part on **Monday 6th December, at 7.30pm in the Common Room.**

Please contact Caroline Thompson, Production Secretary, if you would like to audition and she will provide all information. Email: ct.phoenix@yahoo.co.uk, Mob: 0774 7780848.

The cast are looking forward to restarting rehearsals in February. If you feel you would like to help in some capacity at the show (before or during) please do let Caroline know.

That's all for now!

Helen Coyte (Director)



Profile of Ellis Nicholls

My parents met on a theatrical holiday in the summer of 1948, where they both played parts in a repertoire of plays during a short tour. I joined their 'acting company' the following year. My father, the first Ellis Nicholls, was active in am dram groups in the Mitcham area of South London from the mid-1930s, had run a drama group based around his air raid wardens' post in Fulham and produced scout 'Gang' shows.

We moved to Bedford in early 1950 where my parents soon joined the Bedford Dramatic Club, my father becoming a leading actor, director, committee officer and president. My mother also acted, but mostly did those essential unsung supporting functions, such as catering, front of house and costume making. Our household revolved around the cycle of four annual plays, joined after a few years by musicals with the locally prominent group, the Marianettes. I became involved from about the age of 12, helping to construct, paint, erect, then dismantle and remove, stage sets in the council's Civic Theatre.

My first appearance on stage was at the age of 4 when I was brought on to present the mayoress with a bouquet of flowers. I played the lead in a Sunday school play when I was 10 years old, before going to my secondary school, Bedford Modern School, in 1960, but being very young for my school year and on the small side (*plus ça change!*) it was 1965 before I participated in the annual school play, playing a comedy shepherd in our huge production of the *Chester Miracle Plays*. I more usually worked in the backstage crew, including a production of *The Winter's Tale* where real girls were brought in!



In autumn 1968 I went to a law college in central London and very soon became involved with the dramatic society, appearing as Ancient Gower (the chorus) in a production of *Pericles* which played at the Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre in Southampton Row in early 1969, my West End performance. I became chairman of the Dramatic Society and was involved with various productions, including directing my first play, *Black Comedy* by Peter Shaffer. During this time Yvonne arrived in my life and became aware of what she was taking on!

I returned to Bedford and joined the Bedford Dramatic Club and, a little later, the Marianettes, being in demand simply as a young man (then 23). I played various roles in *Robert and Elizabeth*, *See How They Run*, *Separate Tables*, *Not Now, Darling*, *The Murder of Maria Marten*, *Trelawney of the Wells*, and with the Marianettes in *Lilac Time* and, notably, *Mister Cinders*, appearing both on roller skates and naked, clad only in a barrel!

In 1977 I moved to Oxford to pursue my legal career as a solicitor with Thames Valley Police, then to south-east Reading, but there was not a drama group convenient and too much work to do. However, my work as a prosecuting solicitor and a crown prosecutor, gave me daily acting opportunities for which I was better paid than most professional actors.

I came to Guildford in 1996 as a regional manager, when we moved to our current house in Headley Down. During that move I joined the Farnham and Bourne Choral Society, which included a certain Ian Wilson-Soppitt. In 1999 the Labour government abolished the regional managers, I took the money and left the CPS. Shortly afterwards, I saw an advertisement for the Farnham Shakespeare Company, who performed annually a Shakespeare play in the open air. I went along to a presentation and found myself in a production of *The Winter's Tale* (again) in July 2000. I was invited to join the Bourne Players in Farnham for their November 2000 production of *The Herbal Bed* by Peter Whelan, where I played Dr John Hall (who married Shakespeare's daughter). That began a long association with Farnham Shakespeare and the Bourne Players, which has continued after their amalgamation with the Tilford Players.

Margot Tringham suggested that I become involved with the Grayshott Stagers. I was cast as the Heavenly Friend (and in the chorus) in the 2007 production of *Carousel*, which introduced me to Mary Coyte, Susie Dean (now Gow), Rachel Perkins, Laura Musco, Jennifer Charters and many others. I could not be in *Cowardy Custard* in 2008 because it clashed with Yvonne's parents' diamond (60 years) wedding anniversary, so my next Grayshott appearance was in *Red Hot and Cole* in 2011 and numerous shows since then. Following three plays I had directed for the Bourne Players, including in 2011 *The Deep Blue Sea* by Terence Rattigan, starring Sara Rowe and Ian Wilson-Soppitt (whatever became of them?), in 2013 I directed *A Laughing Matter* by April de Angelis, which was awarded a NODA Accolade of Excellence. I was very fortunate to be cast in the 2017 production of *Quartet* by Ronald Harwood, so ably directed by Brezetta Thonger, which also included Sara Wilson-Soppitt and Suzie Gow and the much missed (because he has moved away) Bernard Whelan, who was also, with Brezetta, a survivor of Farnham Shakespeare.

Alongside this, I have done two productions with the Alton Operatic and Dramatic Society, notably as Doolittle in their production of *My Fair Lady* in 2017, and with the Alton Fringe Theatre in their productions of *The Fireraisers* and (again) *The Winter's Tale*, this time as Autolycus. Recently, I have joined the Haslemere Players for their much delayed production of *Legally Blonde*. I am planning to direct a play for Stagers in the future, possibly November 2023 which will be ten years on from the last time. Since 2000 I have used the theatrical name of 'Ellis', which is one of my given names, to keep separate my professional career, from which I fully retired in September 2018. I joined the committee of the Stagers in October 2020 and was asked to become convenor of the play selection committee, ably assisted by three diligent members. I was pleased to direct the short play which signalled our return to the stage in July 2021 after 16 months away, which we joined in a double bill with the Tilbourne Players .

Ellis Nicholls



AGM

Our AGM reconvened on Monday 8th November and the business was completed.

Thank you for the support of those who were able to attend and apologies that time didn't allow us to provide any refreshments for you.

There were no questions following any of the reports and further discussion was not required. No items were brought up under Any Other Business.

The following Stagers will be your Committee for the year to come: Chair: Joe White, Vice-Chair: Heather Legat, Hon. Treasurer: Stephen Penny, Hon. Secretary: Jennifer Charters.

Also: Peter Budd, Eric Collins, Barry Levy, Ellis Nicholls, & Ruth Wilbraham. The Committee can co-opt up to 2 further members as required unless anyone has a burning ambition to join us now!

I can also report that all current Stagers' fees, as agreed at the AGM of 7th September 2020, will remain unchanged for the year from 1 July 2022. The related proposal was agreed unanimously.

One-Act Plays

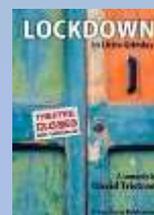
18 and 19 February 2022

As set out in the October Spotlight, a read-through and audition for *Lockdown in Little Grimley* by David Tristram, to be directed by Brezetta Thonger, will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 1st December 2021 in the NLJ room (the former parish council office) at Grayshott Village Hall.

The play has four characters, with two men and two women, all members of the amateur drama group in Little Grimley. Gordon is the driving force who pushes the projects for the group. Bernard is the practical, behind-the-scenes man, who rather lacks a sense of propriety. Margaret is a stylish woman with rather limited tolerance of restrictions and policies. Joyce is the more nervous but inventive member of the group.

Gordon conceives a plan for the drama group to return from lockdown with a spectacular show intended to raise money for the NHS, featuring a love affair between the brilliant plastic surgeon and his glamorous patient, all under the title of *Phantom of the Opera – ting Theatre*. Somehow, it does not go according to plan.

The two previously cast plays will also proceed – *The Highwayman* written and directed by Martin Sims, with Caroline Thompson and Richard White, and *Accommodation Haunted*, to be directed by Ellis Nicholls, with Eric Collins, Jennifer Charters, Mel Tyrrell and Ingrid Collins.



A reading and auditions of *Lockdown* will be on Wednesday 1 December 2021 in the NLJ room at Grayshott Village Hall (the former parish council office, upstairs) from 7.30 pm. Advance copies of the script can be obtained from Ellis Nicholls (ellis.nicholls@grayshottstagers.co.uk).