

# Stagers' Spotlight



November 2022

## Chair's Message

When pumpkins are being carved and fireworks are lighting up the sky it is always the busiest time of the year for Stagers as we have three shows being worked on at the same time.

Come on, Jeeves is in the final month of rehearsals and is set to light up the stage from the 24th to the 26th of November. So please book your tickets today, if you haven't already, to support the cast and all of the hard work that everyone has been putting in to the show. You will hear more about it from its director Sara Wilson-Soppitt later in this issue but from everything I have heard it will be an amazingly fun evening's entertainment.

As the curtain falls on Jeeves for the final time, we will be starting to prepare for our May musical, Return to the Forbidden Planet. Often billed as "Shakespeare's forgotten rock and roll masterpiece" you will find more information about this fun and funky sci-fi extravaganza later in this edition of Spotlight but make sure you have the important dates booked in your diary.

November 30th for the presentation and December 10th for the auditions themselves

We are also working on the One Act Plays supper evenings which are now fully cast after Ingrid Collins was chosen for the role of Olivia in Rude Awakenings. I am also very excited that the food will be provided by Ruth Wilbraham ably supported by Heather Legat, so the supper part of the evening is sure to be delicious.

Finally thank you to Kate Buxton for sharing the first profile of our new committee members and to Jennifer for pulling together all of the tributes to Doreen Wylde shared by so many Stagers. She sounds like an incredible woman and a real asset

to the society, all of your kind words make me wish I could have known her.

Go well Joe

## Committee Profile

### Who are you?

I am Kate Buxton, I grew up near Carlisle, Cumbria and have gradually worked my way down the country, moving to Grayshott in 2005. I am married to Richard and have 2 teenage children, Sam and Olivia.

I qualified as a secondary class music teacher in 2001 and have had a range of jobs in music education. I currently work at Grayshott School as well as doing some private teaching and running a frequent, free taxi service for my children.



### What is your history with the theatre?

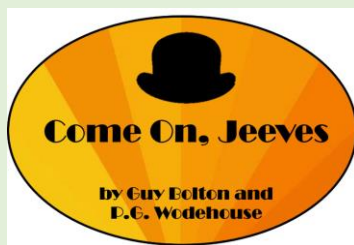
I enjoyed taking part in plays and musicals during Secondary school and at University. My dad was a keen member of our local society and for many years I enjoyed being involved back stage in his productions. I took a degree in Music, playing Clarinet, Sax and Piano. At this point I succumbed to the lure of the orchestral pit and had the chance to play in a few professional productions. As a teacher I have been the musical director in numerous productions. It has been great to be back on stage as part of Grayshott stagers.

## What is your history with the Stagers specifically?

I became involved with 'Stagers' in 2018 when Sam took part in 'O What a Lovely War'. He enjoyed it so much he was keen to join the cast of 'Made in Dagenham' and so I joined too as part of the chorus. Since then I played a role in Honk and have loved being part of such a friendly and warm society.

## Apart from Stagers what else do you do in your spare time?

I am still very involved in supporting my children in their various sporting and performing ventures. I love planning and going on holidays to interesting places and I am currently studying part time for a Masters in Vocal pedagogy - it keeps me out of mischief!



## A life in rehearsal – Sara Wilson-Soppitt

As I write this we are exactly two weeks away from our first night of *Come On, Jeeves* and about three months since we started rehearsing.

Although this is the first time I've directed a full play, I have been in a few and as I was lying awake this morning, pondering the great scheme of things, I recognised where we are in the life of a rehearsal. It goes something like this:

**First couple of weeks.....**I love this bit, everyone's thrilled to be there, it's new and fun and there's no pressure. We just enjoy getting a feel for the story and the characters, clumping about with our books in hand, pretending that chairs are tables and that empty spaces are doors and windows and fireplaces. There's a lot of jolly laughter. Learning to walk and talk at the same time.....This bit mainly consists of people saying things like "was I sitting here?", "I don't remember doing that", "where's the door again?". Confusion reigns supreme (or is it rains?). There's a lot of nervous laughter.

**Two steps forward, one step back.....**People have lives – they go on holiday, they move house, they get sick, their family needs them. The

rehearsal schedule becomes a work of fiction – and we have to get used to saying our lines to someone different every week, or coming back from an absence to discover that the lines you so learned so beautifully and are looking forward to showing off, have been cut. There is laughter but it's a bit hollow.

**The curate's egg stage.....**There are parts of the show that are brilliant – sparkling, pacy and ready for an audience. Then there are the other parts..... ha ha ha.



## **Almost there, but...**

There's still a lot to do – the nightmare of actual furniture to act with – you never know whether the sofa that has been cast will be able to take the strain, or whether that door is going to open inwards or outwards. The drinking of a cup of tea and eating of a biscuit which you have been miming so effortlessly is now a physical impossibility. The prompt is looking rather pale. There's a lot of nervous laughter again. Will we ever be ready?

**We're there.....**Ready for an audience. Excited, a bit scared. Looking forward to feeling the audience's rapt attention and hearing their sighs, their gasps, their chuckles, their roars of laughter.



*Come On, Jeeves* is no exception to the rule – this has been our story too. We hope that some of the laughter we hear will be yours.

*Sara Wilson-Soppitt*

## One-Act Play Evenings 17 and 18 February 2023

One-Act Play Evenings, 17/18 February 2023

The final piece of the casting jigsaw for the popular One-Act Play evenings is now in place, and the order of events has been decided.

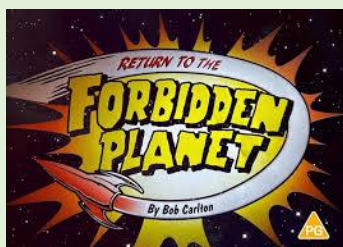
As you nibble on the crudités (and your fingernails), you'll be gripped by the crime thriller "Stake-Out" by Simon Brett, directed by Ann Bartholomew. Between the main course and the dessert, we'll be serving up a taster of next spring's musical, "Return to the Forbidden Planet"; and we will send you chuckling into the night with the comedy "Rude Awakenings" by Nicholas Ridley, directed by June Hegarty. See the website for full cast details, and save the dates

### Return to the Forbidden Planet

Return to the Forbidden Planet is set on a spaceship under the command of the chisel-jawed Captain Tempest. When a shower of meteorites hits the ship, it is pulled inexorably towards the planet D'Illyria - the Forbidden Planet. Here they meet Prospero, a great scientist with a troubling secret, his daughter Miranda and a robot called Ariel. What follows is high energy rock and roll adventure with betrayal, a love triangle, secrets coming to light and a monstrous alien presence that must be defeated.

Our plan is to take the sci-fi setting (lots of chrome and flashing LEDs), the Shakespearean sensibilities (it is based on the Tempest and has a lot of fun twisting well known quotes in knots) and the swinging sound track (you will know many of these classic tunes from Great Balls of Fire to Wipeout, Shake, Rattle and Roll and even the Monster Mash – this is sure to get toes tapping and maybe even have the audience singing along) and then everything up to 11. This show will work best when we embrace the over the top characters, delight in the melodrama and have a lot of fun with the audience.

Cast gender and age are not set in stone, and all parts are open to all – it will be about getting the right dynamic between the different characters. The only exceptions are Captain Tempest and



Prospero who will probably be male and Gloria and Miranda who will probably stay as female but we are open to being convinced otherwise. There is also the opportunity for a strong chorus as the crew of the ship, especially as there are some great close part harmonies in the backing vocals and we will be rocking many of the classic dance moves from the 50s and 60s!

You can find out more about the show and our vision at the presentation evening on Wednesday 30th November at 7.30pm in the Studio at Grayshott Village Hall.

Auditions rehearsals will be in the Common Room at Grayshott Village Hall on Friday 2nd and Wednesday 7th December at 7.30pm.

The auditions themselves will be held on Saturday 10th December at 2.00pm in the Main Hall at Grayshott Village Hall.

#### **The key parts which will be auditioned are:**

- Captain Tempest (M 30+) arrogant and confident in command but not the sharpest spanner in the tool box. Will audition in part with Miranda.
- Miranda (F 20-30) young and has led a sheltered life before coming onboard the spaceship and falling in love at first sight with the captain. Chemistry with Tempest will most important so she can be older than written as long as it works with the age of her parents, Prospero and Gloria. Will audition in part with Tempest.
- Prospero (M 50+) zealous scientist, needs gravitas but is also very emotional in the certain belief that his actions are righteous
- Gloria (F 45+) the foil to both male leads, she is smarter than Tempest and more passionate than Prospero
- Ariel (All Welcome) a (possibly roller-skating) robot providing a great opportunity for comedy and character work
- The Cook(ie) (All Welcome) this lovesick fool shows a darker side when their thoughts turn to revenge. Will audition in part with Bosun.
- Bosun (All Welcome) the sensible, steady voice onboard ship. Providing sage advice to the rest of the crew. Will audition in part with Cookie.
- Navigator (All Welcome) Always alert to danger and ready to respond.

We look forward to seeing you soon. If you have any questions send them to [chair@grayshottstagers.co.uk](mailto:chair@grayshottstagers.co.uk)  
Joe, Tony and Rob – the directing team

Visit our website : <http://www.grayshottstagers.co.uk/>

## Grayshott Stagers' Tribute to Doreen

### Wylde

Margaret Doreen Wylde M.B.E. was born on 4th July 1926. She sadly passed away on 22nd September of this year.

On 25th October Doreen's family was joined by members of local theatre groups and other friends to celebrate the life of this very talented lady who played an important part in the lives of so many. Her ability to bring out the best in others, her kindness, her northern 'directness' and her attention to detail are just some of the qualities which were talked about on this occasion and have also been noted in tributes that have been circulating over the past weeks.



100 roses from local societies for Doreen's 100th production, *Underneath the Arches*, in 1999 with The Grayshott Stagers.

Here are some of the memories which members of Stagers over the years have wanted to share: *Doreen was one of my favourite producers. As a principal, I found that she gave me just enough guidance & allowed me the scope to put my own interpretation into the part. However, if there was any aspect she disagreed with, she would always have a chat with you!*

*I remember her telling me that her big regret was that she had never had an opportunity to produce 'Man of La Mancha'. It does have some lovely music in it – 'The Impossible Dream' of course. Apparently, societies had doubts as to whether it would be box office.*

*We shouldn't forget to mention Doreen's husband Bill who sadly passed away some years ago. He was a very capable actor with a lovely tenor voice.*

### **Peter Jones**

*I have so many happy memories of working with Doreen. I was a new member, having been in 'The*

*Card' in 1977, when I heard other members talking in awe about the Producer for 1979, who was going to be Doreen Wylde. It was definitely looked upon as a step up the scale for the Stagers and, of course, we went from strength to strength after that!*

*So far as the Society is concerned, we had the honour of being one of her Special Productions (100) - it was when I was Chairman in 1999 and it was the musical 'Underneath the Arches' about the entertainers Flanagan & Allen **Audrey Siddle** Doreen directed or was musical director for several Haslemere Players' and Grayshott Stagers' shows that I was involved in. I have many memories of Doreen and those shows. But there are a few that are personal, or I still try and follow when doing a show, or that just make me smile.*

*Doreen was a talented director and MD. I would have loved to have heard Doreen sing when she was in her prime. Even as a mature lady she had a lovely voice. She could easily spot a singular wrong note, even in the chorus, as she had perfect pitch. I recall a chorus song being transposed for a show that she was MDing and she struggled as she had the original score and couldn't relate what she was seeing with what she was hearing. When my Mum moved to Haslemere, Doreen became a good friend to her. They were the same age and both had had an interest in am. dram. for many years. Mum valued that friendship and loved her time working with Doreen and Teresa Marsh in Haslemere Players costume department.*

*If I'm involved in a period show I have something in my hair or wear a hat and wear gloves. To fully understand the words of a song I read them as though they are prose.*

*If Doreen was choreographing a show she used to say that she didn't use box steps. This was from the queen of the box step! If you asked Doreen whether she'd enjoyed a show you needed to keep your fingers crossed that her reply wasn't 'the costumes were lovely'. She used to say that this was her standard response for a show that, for whatever reason, she didn't actually enjoy.*

*Stagers was privileged that Doreen's 100th show was a Stagers' show; 'Underneath the Arches'. In collaboration with other societies that she'd been involved in we presented her with a bouquet of 100 roses. Each rose had a label with a personal message from someone who had been in the cast of a 'Doreen' show*

**Laura Musco**

*Such a shame that she's left us but how lucky were we to have her in our lives.* **Tony Creasey**

*She did have a wonderful life and left many happy memories with very many people.* **Pauline Harries**  
*I won't forget Doreen's kindness to me when my mother died suddenly in the run up to 'Anything Goes' and how she encouraged me to still take part in the second week of our 'run'.*

*It seems like the end of an era but Doreen's 'pictures' formed by performers on stage and 'box steps' will always be remembered.*

**Jennifer Charters**

At Doreen's funeral, it was wonderful to hear recordings of her singing in her younger days, both as a soloist and particularly with her husband, Bill. Despite the rather poor acoustic quality of these, there was no doubt they both had lovely voices.

As Doreen grew into 'middle age' she used her knowledge of performing on stage, combined with her professional teaching experience with young people, to help develop the performance of others.

Thank you, Doreen, for giving so much of your time and talents to the Grayshott Stagers.

*Peter Budd, who worked as Director to Doreen's MD on both Lady Be Good and Sweet Charity, has researched Doreen's impressive work over 38 years for Stagers:*

1973	DESERT SONG COSTUMES (Bill Wylde directed)	
1979	HALF A SIXPENCE	DIRECTOR
1983	CHARLIE GIRL	DIRECTOR & MD
1986	CHRYSANTHEMUM	DIRECTOR
1987	LADY BE GOOD	MD
1993	ANYTHING GOES	DIRECTOR
1994	SWEET CHARITY (Stagers' 100th production)	MD
1996	LOCK UP YOUR DAUGHTERS	MD
1999	UNDERNEATH THE ARCHES (Doreen's 100th production)	DIRECTOR & CHOREOGRAPHER
2003	ANNIE GET YOUR GUN	DIRECTOR & MD
2004	GRAYSHOTT 24	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
2007	CAROUSEL	DIRECTOR
2009	SPEND SPEND SPEND	MD
2010	GRAYSHOTT 24	ASSISTANT MD

## Twax the night before Twixmas

Twax the night before Twixmas, and everyone knew,

Soon the Stagers would gather, for a mid-Christmas do.

With laughter, and merriment and festive good cheer,

To celebrate together at this time of the year.

Don't forget the Stagers' 'Twixmas Drinks' at the Grayshott Social Club on Thursday 29th December from 7:30 – 11:00pm.

Come one, come all, for an evening of good conversation, jollification and perhaps even an impromptu sing song or party games.

The bar will be open, you can bring your own nibbles, or even a guitar or therein for some festive entertainment!

So put the date in the diary and we'll see you there!



**24-26 Nov:** Come On, Jeeves ,

**Book your Tickets here**

**Wed 30 Nov. Studio** – Presentation, Return to the Forbidden Planet

**Fri 2 Dec. Common Room** - Return to the Forbidden Planet, Audition Rehearsal 1

**Wed 7 Dec. Common Room** - Return to the Forbidden Planet , Audition Rehearsal 2

**Sat 10 Dec. Main Hall 2-6 pm** - Auditions.

**Thu 29 Dec 7.30** - Twixmas- Grayshott Social Club

**17-18 Feb 2023** - One Act Plays

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