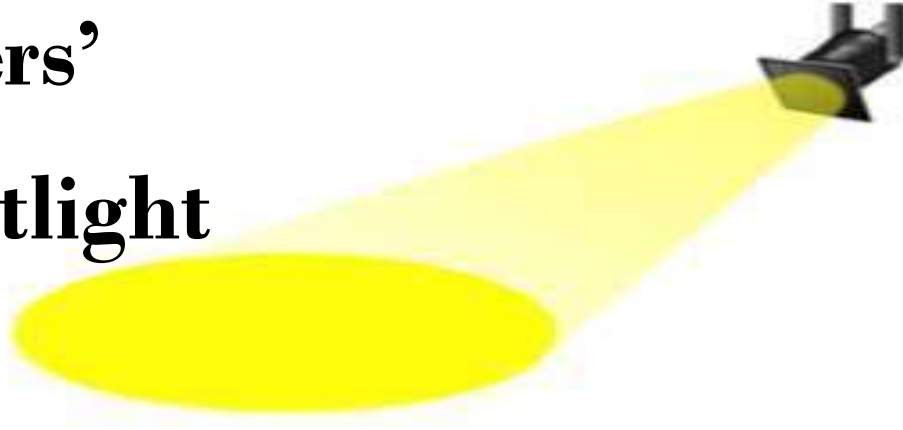


Stagers' Spotlight



January 2023

Chair's Message

I hope you all had an enjoyable end to 2022 and a restful and revitalising time over the festive period, though I know many people, myself included, were struck down with sickness. That made for a smaller than usual Twixmas gathering but I am reliably informed that those who were able to attend had a very enjoyable evening. Thanks especially to Martin Sims for his work in organising this.

As a society we had a strong end to the year with the very successful "Come on, Jeeves". It was such fun, with so many wonderful performances resulting in a lot of laughter every night, something which is even more impressive given that I know many of the cast were suffering with sickness by the time the curtain came down for the final time. They say 'the show must go on' and everyone involved with Jeeves really epitomised that spirit. You can get a great feel for the show from the very complimentary words of both the NODA review and the critique which you can find in the 'Full list and details of past shows' section of our [website](#). Huge congratulations must go to Sara Wilson-Soppitt who directed this show.

Now, here we are at the start of a new year and there are a lot of exciting things happening with two shows in rehearsal. The box office is open for the One Act Plays Supper evening. Not only will the plays provide a varied evening's entertainment with tense drama, comedic observations and even a musical interlude, but the audience will also be treated to a delicious dinner freshly cooked on site.

Seating is limited so book today to avoid disappointment.

[Book Here](#)

Rehearsals have also kicked off for Return to the Forbidden Planet but there is still a bit of space on board ship, so if you are interested in being part of the ensemble, please contact Kate Buxton:

kate.buxton@grayshottstagers.co.uk

Here's hoping that everyone has a very enjoyable 2023 and fingers crossed, we are able to put on many enjoyable shows,

Committee Profile

Who are you?

I am Buff Cooper. I was born in Haslemere, grew up in Chiddingfold and have lived locally all of my life.

What is your history with the theatre?

My interest in performing started with music in my teens back in the early 80's. I was lucky enough at 13 to be invited on a school trip to Germany, which also doubled up as a school band tour as the German teacher was also the school band leader. I didn't speak a word of German but with the tutelage of a friend's grandfather, local dance band legend, Chic Henderson, I was good enough on the trumpet to get on the tour. On one occasion, we supported the German national jazz band and playing in such a huge venue to a big crowd got me hooked.

Around the same time, as lead guitarist, I formed a rock band with some school mates and started writing music. I loved the process of writing all of the instrumental parts, showing the band and being off the scale excited when you heard the final version come together.

After school, I played with numerous line-ups, one of which supported Gaskin who had just toured with Wishbone Ash and Girlschool. My last gig before hanging up the axe to concentrate on my career was the seven band concert night held at the Rex Cinema in Haslemere on Friday 29 November 1986 to a sell-out crowd of over 1,000. This would be the last ever show at this iconic Building, which was demolished the next day to make way for a development of flats. A tragic loss to the community in my view.

I have such fond memories of that cinema with my first visit as a little boy back in 1969 to see "Paint Your Wagon" and taking my first girlfriend to see "Grease" in 1978. The cinema, first opened in 1938 with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in "Follow the Fleet". Our band came on second to last on that final night and remains my biggest and fondest memory of any performance I've been involved in.

For the next 10 years, I focused on my career as an accountant. I started my training with Roffe Swayne who at that time were based in Haslemere High Street. I finished my training and qualified with a top 10 firm in Baker Street, London, specialising in insolvency and business recovery. After qualifying, I have enjoyed some varied business ventures including a pub, property development, nutrition business, business and accountancy training and software development. In my late 20's, I met my long-suffering wife and we set about starting a family which has grown to three boys and a girl. My family are my proudest achievement and I enjoy as much time as possible with them, particularly travelling. For me, the best part of being a father is tagging along on your children's journeys and experiencing things to which you would not normally give a second thought. The bad bit is paying for everything! In my spare time, I captain the local darts team and I am a Level 2, Rugby Football Union coach, having coached the current Haslemere U16's for the last 10 years from U6's.

I first got involved in amateur dramatics via panto in 2009 when Beacon Hill put on "Pirates of Beacon Hill" I played a barman on the basis I had run a pub! My son Jack played my on-stage son Elvis. Peter Christopherson joined the cast to give us some credibility and he played the Admiral.

In 2014, I formed Beacon Hill Amateur Dramatic Company (BAD Company) with Ian Simpson who directed our first panto, Cinderella, in December of that year. I played one of the ugly sisters and have played the Dame in all subsequent Christmas productions. Jack joined me again on stage for our 2017 production of Wizard of Oz, as did my then 8 year old daughter Maisy, who I got to duet with when we did our version of Frozen with me as Elsa!



What is your history with the Stagers specifically?

I first came across Grayshott Stagers in September 2019 when Jennifer Charters collared me at the bar at the Beacon Hill Village Fete and said "you should do something with the Stagers". Before I knew it, I was doing a lock-down Zoom read through for Stagers next musical Honk! I ended up playing the Turkey and one of the Geese. It was so much fun to do my first musical. Skilfully directed by Helen Coyte, who ironed out my overly panto creases and a big thanks to dancing Debs for sorting out my two left feet.

Back to my first love panto, I am playing Mother Goose in Churt's January 2023 production and I am really looking forward to my first baddie role as Ebenezer No Goode in Grayshott's March production of A-Lad-In A Cave.

CADS presentation of Mother Goose

Venue: Churt Village Hall

Opening night Friday 27th January

Box Office: www.ticketsource.co.uk/cads



Membership News

It is a real pleasure at the start of a new year to welcome new members to the Stagers.

So it's "hello" to Olivia Buxton, Nigel Dams, David Greenwood, Diana Lovelock, and Adrian Stent.

We hope you will all be with us for many years to come.

Grayshott Tea Party. 6th December 2022

A small but enthusiastic group of Stagers entertained the Grayshott Tea Party at their Christmas Lunch again.

Thirteen of us had rehearsed but, sadly, illness meant our numbers had dwindled to seven by the particular afternoon.

However, we were warmly welcomed, sang heartily, and even encouraged the members of the club to join us in four-part 'round' singing of We Three Kings.

Thanks to everyone involved but especially to Laura Musco for organising this ever-changing 'production'.

We were so fortunate to have Jo Levy accompanying us, Susie Gow providing some of the musical arrangements and also Richard White singing a solo version, at short notice, of When Santa Got Stuck Up the Chimney.

In their thanks to all the Stagers, we heard from the Tea Party organiser that: "the members said how lovely it was to sing along to the carols, to hear you all and to sing one song in rounds!

We all enjoyed the singing and it made our Christmas lunch very special."

Please help us to continue to make this a regular part of our calendar of events and to entertain our community.

Twixmas. 29th December 2022

Many thanks to Martin Sims for organising another Twixmas event for us at the Social Club in Grayshott.

Advertised amusingly in verse and as "an evening of good conversation, jollification and perhaps even an impromptu sing song or party games", it certainly lived up to the first two aims.

Another event affected by illness, a small group of eight met to enjoy each other's company and partake of drinks and nibbles.

The sing song, party games and a reprise of last year's ukulele accompaniment were postponed until a future occasion!

One-Act Play Evenings 17 and 18 February 2023

The box office is now open for our evening of One-Act Plays on 17th and 18th February, featuring performances of:

- "Stake-Out": a crime thriller by Simon Brett
 - "Rude Awakenings": a comedy by Nicholas Ridley
- In addition, we will be presenting a foretaste of our next musical production, "Return To The Forbidden Planet"

You can find further details of the plays, including the casts, on our website at <http://www.grayshottstagers.co.uk>, from which you can also access the online Box Office.

As usual, the evening includes a delicious supper, this year catered in-house by Ruth Wilbraham and Heather Legat.

The menu, heavily influenced by the dramatic content of the evening, is:

- "Planetary Confusion"; – crudités and dip
- "Hidden Delights" - locally sourced sausages and mash served with a rich sauce and green vegetables
- "Kilburn Kebabs"; - fruit skewers drizzled with chocolate and served with a dollop of cream.

A vegan option is available, which must be ordered when booking your ticket.

Tickets are £18 each and must be booked in advance. Seating will be at tables of eight, allocated on "first come, first served" basis.

If you have any special seating requests, email boxoffice@grayshottstagers.co.uk, after purchasing your tickets.

If you have difficulty using the online Box Office, or any other booking queries, please email the above address or call Ruth on 07575 089322.

Return to the Forbidden Planet



Return to the Forbidden Planet has got underway at the start of this year following a very technologically advanced audition process with one of the directors connecting virtually from Japan. You can find a full list of the cast on the [Stagers' website](#):

Rehearsals have now started and we have begun rocking out to the most excellent music and are enjoying seeing how the cast are starting to bring their Shakespearean Sci-Fi characters to life. We have a strong ensemble joining the crew of the Starship Albatross but there is more room on-board ship should anyone still wish to join us on this space voyage – if you are interested please contact Kate.Buxton@grayshottstagers.co.uk

November Play 2023

The November 2023 play will be The School for Influencing Scandal, adapted from the renowned and brilliant comedy of Richard Brinsley Sheridan by Ellis Nicholls. The play was described by William Hazlitt as 'perhaps the most finished and faultless comedy which we have' and is updated to the social media age, embracing familiar media with

the wit, language and style of the original. The characters are largely unchanged as their attitudes and prejudices translate exactly to the first quartile of the 21st century. The fashions and technology will reflect the modern day, rather at the extremes of fashion, but will be married to the ideas and prejudices of the 1770s when the play was written. The characters in the play give acting challenges in all parts, indicated by the names of Lady Sneerwell, Mrs Candour, Sir Benjamin Backbite, Sir Peter Teazle, Lady Teazle and others. Age conflicts are highlighted in some aspects of the play, notably Lady Teazle as the much younger wife of Sir Peter, and Maria, a rich, young but strong ward. Some genders have been changed to balance the characters and reflect modern situations, for instance, the money lender is now Amelia Morris, a City banker. The various servants and messengers have been replaced by modern portable technology.

Performances will be on 23, 24, 25 November 2023, with the presentation and auditions shortly after the conclusion of Return to the Forbidden Planet.



20th- 21st Jan 2023 Haslemere Thespians' production of Dick Whittington -Haslemere Hall
Website: <http://www.haslemerethespians.com/>

24th-28th Jan 2023 FAOS Musical Theatre Group's performances of, "Sweeney Todd"-Farnham Maltings

27th Jan -4th Feb -CADS presentation of Mother Goose - Churt Village Hall

17th-18th Feb 2023 One Act Plays
[Book your Tickets here](#)

24th-27th May 2023 Return to the Forbidden Planet

23rd to 25th Nov 2023 The School for Influencing Scandal,