

Issue 95

February 2008



THE GRAYSHOTT STAGERS'

# Newsletter

## Chairman's Note

Well January has certainly kicked off 2008 on a damp and gloomy start, but there are plenty of bright and exciting things to look forward to in the coming months.

Firstly though, *Party Piece*, our November play by Richard Harris, ably directed by Betty Penny, was much enjoyed by those who came to see it, although audience numbers were rather disappointing. However, we made a passable profit, and the cast enjoyed themselves with a good quality script.

Auditions have been held and the cast appointed for *Cowardy Custard*, and there is more on this later in this newsletter.

Sadly we have had to postpone the Murder Mystery evening due to unexpected commitments by the organisers, and the Make-up Workshop has had to be postponed till March, again more later.

Rehearsals for the One Act plays are in full swing, and I am very pleased to announce that our Autumn play will be *The Odd Couple* (female version) by Neil Simon. This was scheduled for Spring '06 but the play was unexpectedly withdrawn by the licence holders, as there was the possibility of a West End production. However, it has now been released again, and Shirley Jelliss is looking forward to directing this very amusing play. The original was made into a film starring Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon, and the author went on to rewrite the script for a mainly (but not exclusively!) female cast. There are excellent opportunities for women of various ages in well drawn character parts, and the chance to deliver some great lines penned by one of the world's leading contemporary playwrights. The presentation and auditions are in July.

After much deliberation we have also chosen the musical for 2009; *Spend, Spend, Spend* is the true story of Viv Nicholson, who, with her husband, won £152,000 on the pools in 1961 (equivalent to £3 million today), then proceeded to blow the lot and live a rollercoaster of a life. The show follows her rags-to-riches and then-to-rags again story, full of exuberance, despair, triumph, humour and tragedy. Based on her own book of the same title, the show had a very successful run in the West End in 1999/2000 with Barbara Dickson in the lead role, and winning several awards for best musical. There are super opportunities for principals, cameo roles and chorus, and we are fortunate in securing Tony Creasey as our director for this exciting show – more news in future newsletters.

In recent months Angie and I have seen a stunning production of *West Side Story* by Petersfield Youth Theatre, with Will Keith (Bill in *Me & My Girl*) as one of the Jets gang – get to see their shows if you can. Also the F.A.O.S January production of *Hot Mikado*, with Alex Yates outstanding as Yum Yum, in a jazzy and very colourful show. In November several of our members went to see Gavin Ebsworth (Billy Bigelow in *Carousel*) on his home turf of Gosport in his local society's production of *Pirates of Penzance* where he took the part of Frederick. He also "won" the lead part of Curly in Alton's March production of *Oklahoma* in an enterprising X-Factor type competition run by that society, ending up opposite Susie Dean again who played Julie in *Carousel*! As a charming footnote, Gavin and his wife Becky discovered during rehearsals for *Carousel* that they were expecting their first child. The babe made his appearance on life's big stage on New Years Eve, and has been christened.....Billy! We wish the three of them all the best for the future.

That's all for now folks, have a very happy, peaceful and healthy 2008!

*John*

## One Act Plays, 22-23 February

A reminder that tickets for the February One Act Plays are on sale at £10 each and at the time of going to press were 80% sold. As well as a great evening of entertainment, you'll be treated to the following menu;

*Pork Loin in a Mushroom Sauce ~ Vegetarian option (Quorn)*  
*Buttered New Potatoes ~ Vegetable Macedoine*  
*Chocolate Cream Pie ~ Apple Galette*  
*Coffee and Mints*

A variety of nibbles will be on each table to go with the pre – show drinks.

Tickets are available from Marian Walker –get them before it's too late.

## Membership News

We say a belated 'Congratulations' to Gavin ('Billy' in *Carousel*) and Becky Ebsworth, on the birth of their son on 31<sup>st</sup> December.

We say a belated 'Get Well Soon' to Katy Boddington and Pauline Harries who were unwell before Christmas and hope they are now much recovered!

We send her our best wishes to Mary Little (Patron Member) who is still recovering after a fall before Christmas.

Some of you may have spotted George Streeter (Patron Member), now a Chelsea Pensioner, on TV for Remembrance Day – he was at both the Royal Albert Hall and the Cenotaph. Shirley also had a chatty letter from him around then too. He is doing well and remembers Stagers fondly.

For those of you who remember him, Curtis Dabek is still performing with the Carl Rosa Opera Company doing G&S's. They currently have a run in the West End.

*Shirley Jelliss writes:*

Having sold the house at Green Lane, and if all goes according to plan, I shall be moving to a new home in Grayshott in a few weeks. The house is in Crossways Road, and is right opposite 'Heathside', where Liz and Malcolm lived pre Pencraig. So, fingers crossed that it all proceeds smoothly, and I shall be living in my first choice location. Very handy for most of my shopping and social activities. I shall let you know the address, t/p no., etc., once I am actually there. Don't want to tempt Providence!

If we have overlooked anybody or any event, apologies, please let us know.

*Melanie*

### Murder Mystery Evening

Due to circumstances beyond our control we have had to postpone the Murder Mystery Evening until the Summer. The date will be announced in due course.

## Cowardy Custard



Rehearsals for *Cowardy Custard* are well underway and it is great to have such a talented bunch for this fast moving ensemble piece. Amid much laughter the cast are learning the 65 musical numbers and associated moves. I worked out that it is like rehearsing 4 musicals without the dialogue! As well as many of the instantly recognisable Coward songs, there are extracts from several of his plays and autobiographies which help to trace Coward's theatrical journey from child actor to accomplished playwright and lyricist to celebrity raconteur.

Our cast of 15 are working extremely hard to master 'The Master's' words and melodies and we are looking forward to a cracking show at Grayshott. Do spread the word ~ it would be lovely for every performance to be sold out.

*Heather*

## Dates for your Diary

### 2008

22–23 February, Grayshott Village Hall  
25–29 March, Haslemere Hall  
10–12 April, Haslemere Hall  
17–19 April, Elstead Village Hall  
23–26 April, Grayshott Village Hall  
15–17 May, Haslemere Hall  
05–07 June, Haslemere Hall  
10–14 June, Farnham Maltings  
09 July, Grayshott Hall Common Room  
26 July, Grayshott Village Hall  
10 September, Grayshott Small Hall

February One Act Plays  
Haslemere Players' *Summer Holiday*  
Haslemere Thespians' One Act Festival  
PETS' *The Cemetery Club*  
*Cowardy Custard*  
Haslemere Thespians' *There Goes The Bride*  
Haslemere Players' *Music Hall*  
FAOS' *My Fair Lady*  
*The Odd Couple* read through  
*The Odd Couple* auditions  
Annual General Meeting

### Constitution

Following members' agreement at the AGM to make some small changes to our constitution, these have now been made and the document updated. It is now available to view on our website. If any member would like a paper copy of their own, please let me know. A copy is always sent to new members on confirmation of their membership. *Melanie*

[www.grayshottstagers.co.uk](http://www.grayshottstagers.co.uk)