

Issue 90

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(Affiliated to the National Operatic & Dramatic Association)

THE GRAYSHOTT STAGERS'

Newsletter

Chairman's Note

The Day After The Fair was well received by the audiences, and you can read the review that appeared in the 'Herald' elsewhere in this newsletter.

Thanks and congratulations to Director, Shirley Jelliss, to all the cast, and to the Stagecraft Team for the wonderful set.

The presentation evening/read through for our November play, *Night Watch*, by Lucille Fletcher, will be held on Wednesday July 12th, at 7.45pm in the Common Room at Grayshott Village Hall. As usual, all are welcome, members and non members alike, and I hope to see a lot of you there. Our Director, Peter Budd, has prepared a synopsis, and character sketches of the cast, and you can also read this elsewhere in this newsletter.

A number of people have asked me recently about when the next *Grayshott 24* might be. Subject, of course, to the agreement of the new committee, I was thinking about, maybe, June/July of next year. If you have any thoughts or ideas on the subject, positive or negative, please let me know.

Postcard Piece

Back in January, this time taking advantage of an offer from Easyjet, Heather and I made our first ever journey to the Emerald Isle, flying from Gatwick to Cork on a Friday evening. On the Saturday we drove to Killarney, and then around the 'Ring of Kerry'. I have to say that if you haven't been there, you should go. The scenery is breathtaking, and if you drive down to the lighthouse on Valentia Island, well, I can't describe it - just go and see it for yourselves.

On the Sunday we drove around the 'Ring of Beara' on our way back to Cork, encountering every sort of weather through sleet, rain, fog, to bright sunshine, and a bizarre detour through farm tracks to get around a road closure in aid of a horse racing event, to arrive in Kinsale for dinner before heading back to the airport.

Arriving back at Gatwick we were horrified to see that the queue to get through passport control was miles long, but were then relieved to find that the 'special relationship' between the UK & Ireland meant that we were able to bypass immigration and get on our way.

Tony

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of The Grayshott Stagers will be held in the Small Hall of the Grayshott Village Hall on Wednesday 13th September 2006 at 8.00pm. The Agenda, Nomination Form and a copy of the Minutes of last year's meeting will be sent to you nearer the time.

Please remember that only fully paid up members are eligible to vote, take part in the A.G.M. or to submit nominations.

Also, don't forget that if there is any matter that you wish to be discussed formally and added to the Agenda it must be submitted to me, the Hon. Secretary, in writing, properly proposed and seconded, not later than 7 days prior to the Meeting (ie: by 6/9/06). Any other matter may be discussed at the Meeting without notice being given, by leave of the Chairman or on demand by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting, of any matter which may have arisen meanwhile subject to Rule 13.

Following the main business, members are invited to stay on after the Meeting and partake of some wine and cheese.

Melanie

Your Committee Needs you

Do your bit for the Society - it's your chance to have a say and shape the way things happen. We need new people (and older ones too!) and fresh ideas.

All current Officers and Committee Members resign at the end of each year and have to be nominated for re-election, although not everyone will be re-standing this year, so please get recruiting or nominate yourself! Remember, any fully paid up member is eligible to stand for election to the Committee.

At the 2005 A.G.M. both Tony Legat and Stephen Penny indicated that they would be standing down in 2006 and would not be seeking re-election. Therefore a NEW CHAIRMAN and NEW HONORARY TREASURER are required.

Please don't be shy, there's not too much commitment (one meeting per month maximum) and loads of support. Talk to any Officer or Committee Member.

Dates for your Diary & Membership News

Since the last newsletter we are pleased to learn that Mary Little is now back at home and feeling better after a spell in hospital. We wish her well.

Liz and Malcolm Dobson are well and send best wishes to everyone.

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

Melanie

2006

12 July, Grayshott Village Hall Common Room

22 July, Grayshott Village Hall

13 September, Grayshott Village Small Hall

20 September, Grayshott Village Hall Common Room

05-07 October, Haslemere Hall

07 October, Grayshott Village Hall

24-28 October, Haslemere Hall

23-25 November, Grayshott Village Hall

29 November, Grayshott Village Hall Common Room

10 December, Haslemere Hall

2007

23-27 January, Farnham Maltings

23-24 February, Grayshott Village Hall

10-12 May, Grayshott Village Hall

17-19 May, Haslemere Hall

Night Watch Readthrough

Night Watch Auditions

Annual General Meeting

February One Act Plays Readthrough

Haslemere Thespians' *Three Cheers for Mrs Butler*

February One Act Plays Auditions

Haslemere Players' *The King and I*

Night Watch

Carousel Presentation

Carousel Auditions

FAOS' *Yeoman of the Guard*

February One Act Plays

Carousel

Carousel



NIGHT WATCH

23-25 NOVEMBER

Night Watch is a play of suspense. A melodramatic psychological thriller in two Acts set in 1970's Manhattan.

Unable to sleep, Elaine restlessly paces the living room of her Manhattan townhouse. Seeing a body of a man in the window of an abandoned tenement opposite, she calls the police, but they find nothing. Elaine's terror grows as shortly thereafter she sees another body - this time a woman - but by now the police are sceptical and pay no heed to her frantic pleas. Suspense and mystery infuse the play as it draws inexorably towards its riveting and chilling climax

The play has a cast of five men and four women, although women could, if it was necessary, play two of the male characters. The characters, as described in the script, are listed below.

Elaine Wheeler* - an heiress; gives the appearance of a person of high social rank but with an air of insecurity; lonely, unhappily married, neurotic. Large leading part - on stage for the whole play. Elizabeth Taylor played the role in the 1973 film version.

John Wheeler* - her neglectful, emotionally abusive husband - handsome, rugged. Large leading part - on stage for nearly the whole play. Laurence Harvey played the role (his last) in the 1973 film version.

Helga - a nosy German house keeper, irritable.

Vanelli - a nice young Italian/American cop (could possibly be played by a woman - as indeed it has been) who has a surprising knowledge of great paintings. Small part.

Appleby - inquisitive and rather sinister and odd looking older man who lives next door (could be played as a woman). Small/medium part.

Blanche Cooke* - a pleasant looking efficient woman of about Elaine's age, Elaine's house guest, nurse and best friend. Medium sized part. Billie Whitelaw played the role in the 1973 film version.

Lieutenant Walker - a typical New York police officer, sceptical, has seen it all (or thinks he has). Small part.

Dr. Tracy Lake - a psychiatrist, middle aged, sympathetic. Smallish part.

Sam Hoke - a large shabby man, middle aged; put upon. Store owner. Very small part.

* No specific age is suggested for the three leads. As long as the three characters 'match' they could be any age from 30 to 50.

Read through: July 12th in Common Room at 7.45pm

Auditions: July 22nd in Large Hall at 2.30pm

The Day After The Fair

The Grayshott Stagers' latest production, *The Day After the Fair*, was a brave choice. The stage adaptation by Frank Harvey, based on Thomas Hardy's 1891 short story *On the Western Circuit*, told a tale of poignant sadness. The script, with its occasional punctuation of humour, moved slowly and inexorably towards its inevitable and devastating conclusion, as one would expect of a Hardy novel.

The play told the story of a simple, passionate, yet illiterate young housemaid, Anna, in Victorian rural England who was seduced by a young London barrister, Charles, she met at a country fair. Edith, Anna's elegant and sophisticated mistress, was trapped in a stilted and sterile marriage to autocratic brewery owner, Arthur. Arthur's sister Letty was always there to help her, but Edith's main comfort and interest was provided by her maidservant Anna. When Charles wrote to Anna, Edith, with reservations, consented to respond and thereby began the fateful deceit. As the frequency of correspondence increased Edith poured out her own unrequited fantasies in the letters, which became increasingly lyrical and intimate. Over time, the correspondents fell in love, Charles mistakenly believing the written eloquence and articulation to be Anna's.

Throughout the play Hardy's merciless prose hit the heights of hope and sounded the depths of despair. As Charles put it, "To love and to know that one is loved in return is to breathe the very air of heaven." Sadly Edith's words proved more prophetic: "A marriage built on deceit ... is the most bitter and loveless existence imaginable."

Without the usual ingredients of humour, farce and innuendo to engage and sustain the interest of the audience, *The Day After the Fair* provided much challenge to the director, Shirley Jelliss, and her cast. In this challenge they succeeded admirably.

Real life husband and wife team John and Angie Hilder, brought considerable depth and plausibility to the roles of Arthur and Letty. Arthur's seething frustration at his ability to succeed in business, but not in love, and Letty's growing concern of her own misplacement within the household were neatly portrayed.

Jennifer Charters, excelled as the unfulfilled Edith, and extracted much pathos with a measured performance befitting the role. John Dowsett portrayed well the quiet assurance of Charles, and conveyed fully Charles' desolation following the disclosure of the deceit.

The pretty, but woefully naïve, Anna, was admirably played by Lynn Mitchinson in her first major role with the Stagers. She brought a freshness and simple exuberance to the stage in welcome contrast to the staid Victorian demeanours splendidly portrayed by other players, save one, Sarah, the maid. This role was played with great excitement and hopefulness by Barbara Netherwood.

Shirley Jelliss is to be congratulated for her sensitive direction and for succeeding in capturing the atmosphere and social commentary of 19th century England. The costumes, stage properties, make-up and hairstyles complemented perfectly the splendid stage set, which together were meticulous in every detail and provided a facsimile snapshot of life in a Victorian drawing room.

AJDB