

Issue 96

June 2008



THE GRAYSHOTT STAGERS'

Newsletter

Chairman's Note

With summer now truly here we have a lot to report as two of our three main productions have taken place since our last newsletter.

The One Act plays in February were another resounding success with three very enjoyable comedies playing to full houses on both nights, and superb food to boot. The very tidy profit of £1,448 has boosted our finances considerably, making our treasurer a most happy fella! Many thanks to our directors Jane Sargeant and Brezetta Thonger, to Sylvia Boddington and her hard working team who produced the delicious food, and to everyone who helped to make the evenings such a success. The plays and directors for next year's event are currently being chosen and will be announced shortly.

With hardly time to draw breath, *Cowardy Custard* was upon us. A small (but perfectly formed!) ensemble cast were allocated various pieces from the Master's huge and brilliant body of work and were mercilessly drilled in them by Heather, Angela and dance captain Laura. The result was extremely enjoyable for the cast, and to judge from the feedback, the audiences as well. As you know, this was the first time for many years that the Society has not taken the show to Haslemere, and as a result the outcome was better than projected, our loss being limited to £446. Audience numbers were slightly disappointing, but they were appreciative. A big thanks to all who helped to make the show a success, particularly our directors.

The NODA South East Region is holding its annual "Day" at our own village hall this year, on the 19th July. Apart from AGM business there will be morning workshops in Safety in the Theatre, Make-up, Dance Movement and Singing, all conducted by experienced tutors. There will be a talk on the subject of the King's Theatre, Southsea, one of our finest Edwardian playhouses, by a former President of NODA, Eileen Dobson, and the whole event will be attended by the current President, Michael Hinks. The cost of attending ranges from £6 for a workshop to £25 for the whole day to include lunch. This is an unusual opportunity to attend an interesting day (or part of) without having to travel far. If you would like to know more details please contact me. The day concludes with half an hour of entertainment and the NODA committee have asked us to provide it. As a result, with most of the cast available, Heather has kindly agreed to organise a cohesive selection from *Cowardy Custard*.

Angie and I have seen first class productions of *Summer Holiday* and *My Fair Lady* by our friends The Haslemere Players and FAOS. *The Odd Couple* is next on our own agenda, so please come along and be part of it, more elsewhere in this newsletter. Next year's musical is *Spend, Spend, Spend* and Tony Creasey will be joining us again to direct.

Have a good summer, see you at the AGM on 10th September.

John

The Odd Couple, 20-22 November

Our November play is to be Neil Simon's female version of *The Odd Couple*, in which the characters are six girlfriends who get together once a week to play 'Trivial Pursuits'. The play is set in New York and I intend to keep it American as it would be an impossible task to change either the setting or the script, so brush up your accents!

The dialogue suggest that the ages of the female characters are more or less the same. They knew each other at school, though were not necessarily in the same year. Certainly they are over 35, and one is in the very early stages of pregnancy. She will possibly be a 'mature' mother in our production!

I feel that the two Spanish brothers could perhaps be a little older, maybe mid to late 40's. They are described as being 'extremely polite, good-natured, and have engaging personalities'.

Please don't be put off by the 'age' thing...as always, we have to be flexible in our casting, though within reason. Also, make-up, body language and distance from the audience can work wonders! So, if you are interested, go for it!!

This is a very amusing, well-written play, full of humour and witty repartee. All the characters are great from a cast point of view, offering plenty of interest and opportunity to develop the roles as the story progresses. Each of the female characters is different; the two brothers are alike, and that is deliberate. These two roles will stand a certain amount of over-playing, but won't withstand 'hamming' them up.

The read through will be on Wednesday 9th July and the auditions on Saturday 26th July, with rehearsals starting fairly soon afterwards, so as to make allowance for holidays.

I'm looking forward to directing *The Odd Couple* - and am hoping for plenty of interest from all you talented Stagers. *Shirley*

AGM

The Annual General Meeting of The Grayshott Stagers will be held in the Small Hall of the Grayshott Village Hall on Wednesday 10th September 2008 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.

All current Officers and Committee Members resign at the end of each year and have to be nominated for re-election - remember, any fully paid up member is eligible to stand for election to the Committee. Stephen Penny has indicated that he wishes soon to stand down as Treasurer. We are therefore looking for a volunteer to 'train-up' as a NEW HONORARY TREASURER. Please don't be shy, there's loads of support. Talk to any Officer or Committee Member.

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 3/9/08). 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

Make Up Workshop

On a rainy Saturday in March five Stagers set off to Farnborough for the make-up workshop which had been postponed from last November. At the last moment several of our group had been unable to go, so we were a little apprehensive as to how this might affect the day. We needn't have worried. The six hours flew by and the reduced numbers meant we had more individual help and were all able to experiment on ourselves. The studio was very well equipped and Marion, our tutor, a fount of knowledge, practical advice and anecdotes.

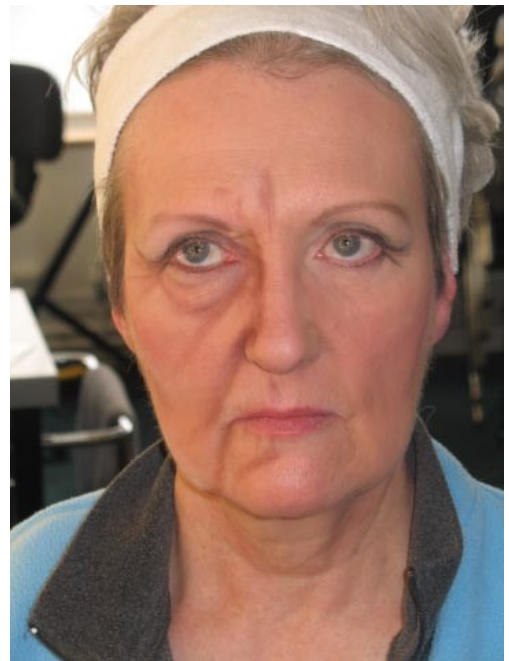
She spoke at some length about the aspects of health and hygiene we need to observe when faced with the challenges of make-up in amateur theatre.

We watched as Lynn had basic make-up applied and were then let loose on our own faces, with the use of an extensive range of cosmetics. A class in another room were learning about face painting for children but I'm sure they didn't have more fun than we did.

I then volunteered to undergo the aging process – the disconcerting result can be seen in the photo. I hope a long time elapses before both sides of my face look as old! After all having the opportunity to try to predict our own facial fate we adjourned to the 'shop' before leaving.

We have to thank Nicky Irvine for her generous bequest to the Stagers which enabled us to share such an enjoyable day at very little personal cost. We are trying to put into practice lessons learned, particularly the more hygienic approach and the fact that, when applying stage make-up, less is often more. We are now using the "Three Kings Theatrical Supply Group" as our main supplier of make-up and would recommend a visit, if only to see all the cosmetics available.

Jennifer



Membership News

Since the last newsletter we have welcomed returning member Geoff Hunt who rejoined us to Stage Manage *Cowardy Custard*.

We say a belated congratulations to Katy Boddington on her engagement to Paul Cotton. We also send our congratulations to Peter Jones and Sue Brown who were married on 20th June.

We must sadly report the death of Stan Sharp who was a great Stagers supporter and served on our committee for a few years. Stan also directed several Young Stagers productions and *How the Other Half Loves* for the Society.

Hopefully, you will have spotted Jeremy Legat on TV recently in *Filth: The Mary Whitehouse Story* with Julie Walters and Alun Armstrong. Jeremy is now playing 'Boq' in the West End production *Wicked* – make a date to catch the show soon, a group trip is being organised.

The Dobsons, Maguires and Threadgolds are well and send best wishes to everyone.

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

Melanie

Spend Spend Spend

In 1961, before The Beatles, moonwalking and the mini skirt, housewife Vivian Nicholson became a public figure in Great Britain overnight when she won £152,319.00 (estimated to be worth between £3 to £3.5 million today) on the football pools. When the papers asked her what she'd do with her fortune, her answer turned her into a household name: "I'm going to spend, spend, spend!" And spend, spend, spend she did – her fortune rapidly dwindled to nothing.

This riveting musical charts the tragedy, comedy and the love story which saw Viv Nicholson through five husbands, fast cars, bankruptcy and booze. It is a modern rags to riches and back to rags again story which will make you laugh and cry.

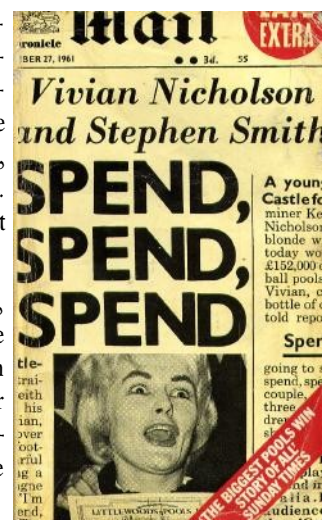
The show opened at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in May 1998 and won 'Barclay's Best Musical of the Year' award before it transferred to the Piccadilly Theatre in the West End where it ran from October 1999 to August 2000 and won many awards. It starred Barbara Dickson.

The Stagers are once again treading where other societies fear to go by being one of the first amateur companies in the South of England to stage the show. I am honoured and delighted to be asked to direct it and warmly invite you to come along to the presentation which is on Wednesday 24th September at 7.45pm in Grayshott Village Hall. You will then have the opportunity to hear more about the staging of the show, the characters portrayed in it, the fantastic music and songs it contains and even a chance to brush up on your Yorkshire accents (by listening to some of the dialects of our fellow 'northern' Stagers!).

Just to whet your appetites you can hear a small selection of the songs if you click on the following link <http://www.vivnicholson.co.uk> There are parts in the show for all ages and for all abilities so do please come along on the 24th September – put the date in your diaries now! The auditions for the principal characters will take place from 2pm on Sunday 5th October at Haslemere Hall. (Between those dates there will be three audition rehearsals - Thursday 25th September, Wednesday 1st October and Friday 3rd October – note those dates as well while you're about it!). Rehearsals are scheduled to start on 26th November. Performances are 22nd to 25th April 2009 at Grayshott.

In my view, this is a typical 'great' Stagers show. Something different, bold, challenging but, above all, hugely enjoyable for cast and audience alike. Lynn and I ventured to Rotherham to see a production of the show in February and were delighted to find ourselves sitting two rows in front of Viv Nicholson. We chatted to her after the performance and were bowled over by her obvious 'bouncebackability', elegance and down-to-earth Northern charm. We invited her to attend our production next April which she has accepted!. It was very poignant seeing Viv's life portrayed in front of our eyes with her sitting two seats behind us. See you on 24th September!

Tony



Dates for your Diary

2008

09 July, Grayshott Hall Common Room
18-19 July, Haslemere Hall
26 July, Grayshott Village Hall
10 September, Grayshott Small Hall
17 September, Grayshott Common Room
24 September, Grayshott Common Room
27 September, Grayshott Village Hall
02-04 October, Haslemere Hall
05 October, Haslemere Hall
21-25 October, Haslemere Hall
30 Oct - 01 Nov, Frensham Heights
20-22 November, Grayshott Village Hall

The Odd Couple read through
Next Generation's *Wizard of Oz*
The Odd Couple auditions
Annual General Meeting
February One Act Plays read through
Spend, Spend, Spend presentation
February One Act Plays auditions
Haslemere Thespians's *Murdered To Death*
Spend, Spend, Spend auditions
Haslemere Players's *Broadway Pirates*
Junior FAOS's *Adventures of Mr. Toad*
The Odd Couple



www.grayshottstagers.co.uk



Dear all,

As many of you will know by now, Jeremy is currently playing the part of "Boq" in *Wicked* at the Apollo Victoria in London.

A number of people have expressed interest in a group trip to see the show, and I am preparing to organise this.

I know that some people would prefer to go to the Saturday matinee, returning in the early evening, whilst others would prefer an evening performance, and if there is sufficient interest, I am happy to accommodate both groups.

The costs are expected to be around £40.00 for an evening performance, and around £49.00 for a Saturday matinee (group tickets being more expensive for the Saturday matinee). These figures include coach travel from and to Grayshott, and seats for the show that would normally be £60 each. The exact cost will be dependent on the size of coach that we need to hire and how many (if any) seats on the coach are unsold. If enough people are interested, the cost could be a pound or two less. Please also note that group rates are apparently not available on Saturday evenings.

The dates we are going for are Thursday 18th September, leaving Grayshott at 17.15, and returning shortly after midnight, and/or Saturday 11th October, leaving Grayshott at 12.15 and returning at around 7pm.

I should be very grateful if you would let me know if you are interested as soon as possible, and whether your preference is for the matinee or evening performance.

More information about the show is available by following the links on Jeremy's website:

<http://www.jeremylegat.com>

Tony

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