

Issue 101

March 2010



THE GRAYSHOTT STAGERS'

Newsletter

Chairman's Note

As this is the first Newsletter of 2010, a rather belated peaceful and happy New Year to everyone.

Despite rehearsals being disrupted by the heaviest snowfall I can remember in this area (and that includes 1963), the directors of the One Act productions and *Little Shop of Horrors* rallied their casts and were soon back on schedule. The One Act evenings have just taken place, having sold out several weeks beforehand, and were again a resounding success. Many thanks to the directors, who give their impressions elsewhere in the Letter, and particularly to Barbie Badger and her team who again pulled out all the stops to provide the meals on both evenings. In fact, there were very few of our active members who were not involved in some way or another, so thanks to all of you.

Angie organised our stall at the village Christmas Fair in the Hall and made a useful profit. Thanks to her helpers and to those who generously donated items.

At the end of November Brezetta skilfully directed an excellent Ayckbourn play *Improbable Fiction*, and she gives her thoughts on it later in this bulletin. Apart from the obvious delight in such an artistically and financially successful production (a profit of almost £1200!), it was heartening to see two new members among the cast.

Now to future productions. Rehearsals for *Little Shop of Horrors* are in full swing; the loss of our musical director Anne Bradley has been overcome by the noble breach-stepping of Tony McIntee, Simon's infectious enthusiasm remains undimmed, and we have now acquired the major part of the necessary vegetation! Tickets are now on sale – book early to avoid disappointment!

Some of you may have noticed from the flyer about *Little Shop of Horrors* that has just been circulated that Tony Legat has set up an arrangement with PayPal to buy production tickets online at a relatively low cost. This will hopefully ease the burden on telephone ticket sales, and make things easier for our potential audience.

Further ahead, I am delighted to announce that our November play will be *Dark Lucy* an intriguing thriller by Philip King, to be directed by June Hegarty. Read-through and audition dates are in the Diary section. Also, following her very successful production of *Cowardy Custard* a couple of years ago, Heather Legat makes a very welcome return to direct *Red Hot and Cole*, our musical for April 2011. A revue style show celebrating the life and work of Cole Porter, one of the greatest songwriters of the twentieth century, *Red Hot and Cole* is a scintillating mixture of biography and song featuring over 25 classic numbers such as *Night and Day*, *I Love Paris*, *Anything Goes* and *Just One of Those Things*. Make a date with wit and "swellegance" at the presentation in September!

Looking forward to seeing you all soon,

John

Grayshott Stagers go electronic



21 - 24 April 2010

Get your tickets for this fantastic tale of carnivorous vegetation now

For the first time, for *Little Shop of Horrors*, Grayshott Stagers are offering their audiences the opportunity to order and pay for their show tickets online. Orders can be made through the website and payments can be made through Paypal, using a Paypal account, a credit or debit card, or directly from a bank account.

We are charged for this service, so there is a small additional charge on the ticket price, but there is no need to send things through the post, thereby saving the cost and effort of providing stamped addressed envelopes.

Further details are on the website at www.grayshottstagers.co.uk

The Grayshott 24



The third Grayshott 24 will take place on Friday & Saturday 25th & 26th June.

For anyone who is not familiar with the concept, this is what will happen:

On Friday 25th June, all those who would like to take part gather in Grayshott Village Hall from 7.00pm, and at 7.30 they will be told the name of the show that they will perform, in front of an audience, at 7.30 on the Saturday evening. Casting will be arbitrary, as there will be no time for auditions, and rehearsals will get under way by around 7.45, and will continue, with breaks, around the clock. During the 24 hour preparation period we will also need to prepare the set, find all the props that we need, prepare the sound effects, get everyone costumed, prepare a programme, etc. etc..



I know it sounds impossible, but we've done it before, in 1998 and 2004, and everyone involved has always had a good time.

Put the date in your diary!

Improbable Fiction

It took some pretty gutsy drama enthusiasts to make this Improbable Fiction, probable!!!

When I decided to direct this I knew I would need a team of people who would be prepared to go outside the safety zone! Green wigs, alien space pods, Victorian carving knives and a crazy dance all in one play could have been a recipe for disaster!

This proven by the fact that several societies came to actually see how we handled it! But, the Stagers had the guts to put this project together with the help of, to name but a few, Laura composing a tune, John and Judy creating the Pod, Stephen, Barbie and Peter designing the set and exciting lighting by Tony to name but a few of all the backstage/front of house members.

It was great to see Stagers members keen to support this play and it paid off judging by the audience response. But what was best for me was the hysterical laughter during rehearsals which reduced grown men and women to tears - yes, you know who you are!!! We figured out the complicated script together and with some very hard work managed to give justice to the script, so cleverly written, and entertain the folks. John D, Mike, John H, June, Laura, Sara, Jane and AdamThank you!

Bring on the next one.....Brezetta

Social

The Social Committee would like to thank everyone for the way that they supported the One Act Play evenings. We were so pleased that so many of you (too many to name individually) turned out to help on both evenings to ensure that the performances were a great success. We hope that you all enjoyed it too.

We will be working hard to try and get a number of events up and running throughout the year and will let you know as soon as we can what the options are that you might be interested in. If anyone has any ideas, we would welcome any suggestions and consider them.

Once again "Many Thanks" We couldn't do it without your support.

Social Committee

A little space filler...

A man lay sprawled across three entire seats in the posh theatre. When the usher came by and noticed this, he whispered to the man, "Sorry, sir, but you're only allowed one seat." The man groaned but didn't budge.

The usher became impatient. "Sir, if you don't get up from there I'm going to have to call the manager." Again, the man just groaned, which infuriated the usher who turned and marched briskly back up the aisle in search of his manager.

In a few moments, both the usher and the manager returned and stood over the man. Together the two of them tried repeatedly to move him, but with no success.

Finally, they summoned the police. The cop surveyed the situation briefly then asked, "All right buddy, what's your name?" "Sam," the man moaned. "Where ya from, Sam?" With pain in his voice Sam replied "The balcony."

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Since last summer, through *Improbable Fiction*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and the One Act Plays, we have welcomed several new members to the Society:

Paul Bailey, Chloe Baldock, Hilary Lee-Corbin, Linnet Onslow, Cheryl Pawlitta, Mike Pennick, Claire Rivers, Sara Rowe, Jack Silk and Amy Turner. We hope they'll be with us for many productions to come.

We were delighted to learn of the safe arrival in November of James Patton's son, James.

Over the past few months some of the Stagers have lost close family members and our thoughts continue to be with Peter Gardner, the Legat family and Peter Budd.

If we have overlooked anybody or any events, our apologies. Please let us know.

Jennifer

NODD

The NODD organisation now produces monthly newsletters by email rather than hard copy magazines, which obviously makes it much easier to circulate. If you would like to receive the newsletter please contact me with your email address and I will add you to the circulation list.

John

john.hilder@grayshottstagers.co.uk

Apology

It has been brought to my attention that the envelopes used to deliver the last newsletter caused some inconvenience to several members. They were bought in good faith as 'usual post size'. Please accept my apology and I hope that this copy has reached you problem free. Alex

Dates for your Diary

2010

8 March, Fox & Pelican

23-27 March, Haslemere Hall

12 April, Fox & Pelican

21-24 April, Grayshott Village Hall

10 May, Fox & Pelican

13-15 May, Haslemere Hall

8-12 June, Farnham Maltings

12 June, Fox & Pelican

8 July, Grayshott Hall Common Room

12 July, Fox & Pelican

24 July, Grayshott Village Hall

8 September, Grayshott Hall Common Room

15 September, Grayshott Small Hall

22 September, Grayshott Hall Common Room

25 September, Grayshott Village Hall

9 October, Grayshott Village Hall

11 October, Fox & Pelican

26-30 November, Haslemere Hall

8 November, Fox & Pelican

18-20 November, Grayshott Village Hall

13 December, Fox & Pelican

Society Pub Night

Haslemere Players' *Annie*

Society Pub Night

Little Shop of Horrors

Society Pub Night

Haslemere Thespians' *Cold Comfort Farm*

FAOS' *Phantom*

Society Pub Night

Dark Lucy readthrough

Society Pub Night

Dark Lucy auditions

February One Act Play Evenings readthrough

Annual General Meeting

Red, Hot and Cole presentation

February One Act Play Evenings auditions

Red, Hot and Cole auditions

Society Pub Night

Haslemere Players' *The Music Man*

Society Pub Night

Dark Lucy

Society Pub Night

2011

18-19 February, Grayshott Village Hall

13-16 April, Grayshott Village Hall

February One Act Play Evenings

Red, Hot and Cole



www.grayshottstagers.co.uk

One Act Plays - Directors' Notes

Day Trippers

The Stagers have performed several of the Deckchairs series of plays by Jean McConnell, one of which I have taken part in. They have proved very popular with our audiences and I was pleased to get the opportunity to direct this one. I wanted a play with a small cast and basic setting and this fitted the bill ideally.

Pauline Harries and Jane Clayton (Beryl and Doris) quickly learnt their lines and developed their characters, working well together and making my job comparatively easy. They both made useful suggestions, thus making the production very much a team effort. I hope they found the experience as enjoyable as I did. I was also very grateful for the support of Barbie (props) and Brezetta (prompt). We all felt well rewarded with the warm response from the audience.

Angie Hilder

A Cut in the Rates

I couldn't resist saying 'yes' to directing Alan Ayckbourn's *A Cut in the Rates* when the opportunity was offered to me. A beautifully crafted short play with three interesting characters and a great twist at the end; an exciting challenge.

I had directed my first play for the Stagers in 2009 but the main characters hardly spoke, it lasted less than 10 minutes and the set was very simple. How to stage a more complex production?

The script was taken care of by the casting of three excellent actors but what about the three different locations to be set on the Grayshott stage? The study scene was straightforward, thanks to the ubiquitous bookshelves and desk which have become 'friends' on the Stagers' sets. I consulted my elder daughter on the planning of the complete set and lighting effects which, as always, were then very skillfully provided and supported by the crew - Barbie, Peter, Stephen and Tom.

Crucial to the play was the cabinet for the 'Saw a Lady in Half' trick. A sleepless night was followed by a call to John Preskett, who immediately agreed to build one, complete with a trap for the head and a slot to guide the saw!

An intensive rehearsal period, during which two of the cast moved homes, led up to what proved, judging by the laughter, to be a very well-received production by the audiences. The play introduced, in Cheryl, a new young actress to the Society and gave Trudy and John another opportunity to display their talents.

I found the whole experience exhausting but very rewarding. It was in the true spirit of our February productions, which is to allow members of the society to 'stretch' themselves or try something new in the context of a congenial, social event.

Jennifer Charters

The Shakespeare Review

Little Shop of Horrors has quite a small cast and the committee didn't want members 'going to waste', so the decision was made to have music in one of the One Acts. In the summer of last year I choreographed *The Shakespeare Review* for Farnham Shakespeare and as Ellis was involved several Stagers went along in support. Shortly afterwards I was approached to try my hand at directing for the One Acts and when deciding on a 'short' musical The Review came to mind.

Having been given the amount of time to fill I selected pieces from The Review that I thought, and hoped, Grayshott audiences would enjoy. You didn't need to be a Shakespeare buff, schooldays' knowledge would suffice, so I hope our audiences weren't misled by the title. On the other hand I wonder if those in the know managed to count all the farewell lines, and the plays from which they came, in the final song, *Put Out the Light* (It's ten plays!). I hope some were surprised at how much, and the selection, we managed to get into the allocated time. It is very much an ensemble piece so dividing up music and sketches between a strong cast, as evenly as possible, is quite a task in itself. I hope I succeeded in that and didn't upset anyone too much.

I viewed my first shot at directing with some fear, but once I knew my cast following the auditions (some old-timers, some returnees and one new member) I was confident that between us we'd be OK. Unfortunately, the winter weather had other ideas and we lost three rehearsals due to snow. We began rehearsing the music before Christmas so that in the New Year we could go on to put moves to some numbers and learn the sketches. One of the biggest challenges seemed to be learning words for the songs which then needed to be really clear to the audience or their wit would be lost.

I must say thank you to Peter and Stephen for easing me through the final process, particularly when I was 'flapping' over back curtains, music, pianos on/off stage etc. They simply took the problem on and solved it - thanks guys. Also thanks must go to the cast for seeing me through this experience. I've actually quite enjoyed most of it. All in all I'd like to think we achieved what we set out to do - give our audiences a lively end to a thoroughly enjoyable evening of wining, dining and entertainment with friends.

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Laura Musco