



AMATEUR PLAYERS OF SHERBORNE

Newsletter

AUGUST
1996



Dear Member,

The 1996-97 season is about to get under way, so we hope you are all raring to go. The Opening Evening will be on Thursday 5th September and will take place in the **Age Concern Hall**, Digby Road, Sherborne. A fork supper will be available, but please bring your own fork and spoon! This hall will also be the venue for the Christmas party (10th December) and the Summer party (5th July). All other meetings will be the **Cheap Street Church Hall** unless otherwise notified. The committee has decided that this year we may as well start as we mean to go on and cease to use the clubroom before we are actually compelled to leave and to this end we intend clearing all APS belongings out of the clubroom (see below).

As usual, please remember that subs are due on or before the opening night; it really does make life easier for the Treasurer and Membership Secretary if subs are paid promptly. Anyone hoping to take part in a production, in any capacity, is reminded that, for insurance reasons, you may only do so if you are a fully paid-up or life member.

The membership fee has remained the same--only £8.00 per person (young students £1.00) for the third year running! However, in order to increase our revenue slightly it was decided at the AGM that we should make a mandatory charge of 50p per person (to include coffee) for play readings and other members evenings--except for the Opening Evening, Christmas and End of Season parties.

The club programme has now been planned. Apart from the AGM and the social evenings mentioned above there are a further 11 evenings scheduled--fewer than before as the committee felt that the large number we had last year may have contributed to the low attendances on some occasions. Early offerings include an American Evening presented by Peter and Marilyn Hawkins on Wednesday 25th September and a rehearsed playreading presented by Jessica Colson on Monday 14th October. If you want to know what else is in store, come and join us on September 5th, when membership cards/ club programmes will be issued as usual.

Some progress has been made on the wardrobe. You may remember that a few of the most valuable items were taken for sale by auction. Some of these were recently sold in Sherborne and so far the proceeds amount to about £900. The sorting process produced three categories--'keep', 'sell' and 'otherwise dispose of'. The latter category has now all gone and in fact nothing was wasted as it all went to the Sue Ryder shop and will either be distributed to those in need or recycled--a very satisfactory outcome. During this month other items are being sold, from the clubroom, to other local groups, hire shops etc and at the time of writing the net proceeds of this amount to £420.

Incidentally, you will be pleased to hear that, in view of their sterling work on the wardrobe and long service to The Players, Pam Richardson and Mary Micklewright have been offered Life Membership. They have both written to express their delight and thanks.

The 'keep' category of the wardrobe, together with everything else that belongs to APS is to be moved to a room in the Castle stables, very close to the room we currently use for storing and working on scenery. The move will take place as soon as a date can be arranged, and you will be notified via the telephone grapevine system. The task will be made much easier if we have a lot of help, so Chairman Jakki is asking everyone who can attend on the day to do so. There is a great deal of stuff to move, all of which has to be carried down the stairs, loaded into cars, ferried to the stables, unloaded, carried upstairs and stored. We can do it in one day if plenty of people turn up. We need a team of people at each end and people with cars to ferry. So, please, please come and help if you possibly can..



Officers and Committee 1996-1997

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Prompt Corner

Dates for your diaries

Thursday September 5th
Opening Evening
Age Concern Hall, Digby Road. Fork supper,
please bring your own fork and spoon

Wednesday 25th September
An American evening
presented by Peter and Marilyn Hawkins
Cheap Street Church Hall

Monday 14th October
A rehearsed playreading
presented by Jessica Colson
Cheap Street Church Hall

THE DIRECTORS

A feature of this year's Newsletters is to be a series of short articles by five different Directors. The idea is to give the rest of us some insight into how different directors work and how they see the role of director, thus perhaps encouraging us to try our hand. This month's offering contains some practical tips and encouragement from our Chairman, whose directing debut was Pity About Kitty at the 1996 Dorset Drama League Festival.

My First Attempt

As most of you know, I am not over-qualified for this job, as I have only produced one play (with no editing—it wasn't allowed) and was *not* due to being asked but because, as usual, I opened my big mouth!

The best way to attempt a first production, I feel sure, is with a one-act play. Small cast. Simple set. Limited props and costumes. Oh! And don't forget the lighting.

Having read through the chosen play you will have envisaged what you want to achieve and the type of characters you want to convey in your interpretation.

First (something I didn't find out until after it was all over) strip down the

script into a folder interleaved with a clean A4 sheet of paper on which to note *all* directions and alterations. This way you avoid an illegible scrawl all over your copy!

Next arrange the music (intro and finale, plus any incidental music required) and lighting. Most scripts have lighting plots at the back, but these might need some adjustment to suit your own needs. Your lighting and sound technicians are invaluable members of your team. Give them plenty of time to allow them to do a good job.

Props obviously play an important part and need to be acquired ASAP to enable the cast to become familiar with them.

Back stage. I didn't need any extra people, as my trusty cast helped. But obviously, again, the backstage crew are a vital part of the team that needs to be recruited at an early stage, along with someone to deal with costumes, and such people as scenery erectors and painters.

For my first attempt, I was exceedingly lucky to have the strong, quiet and knowledgeable Eve Snell, a very able, professional producer, to guide me.

My cast (this gives me my opportunity) were great. We talked about the production, discussed our own ideas, threw them about, tried them and discarded as

necessary. We were all involved and everyone contributed, if somebody felt uncomfortable, they said so and we tried to alter it.

I was very aware that I had a team of highly qualified actors/actresses and that I was as green as grass as a director, but as an actress aware that there could be difficulties. To this end I think tact, understanding, discussion and compromise is essential to achieve a happy and workable atmosphere—a must for a first class performance, which it would appear that we achieved.

It has been suggested that we put on more rehearsed one act plays at club nights. I think this is a great idea to get the shy and inhibited involved, and, more importantly, to get a selection of possible Dorset Drama League plays chosen earlier, which would avoid a last minute rush just before our Spring production.

I thoroughly enjoyed my work, but must emphasize to those 'thinking about it'—take the plunge. Yes, I worried about it all the time, but we're not asking you to enter a competition! Just to entertain us, enjoy yourself and gain confidence and satisfaction from achieving.

There will always be somebody more experienced willing to guide and help you

Jakki Gregory

This season's Autumn production, as you all now know (if you don't please report the fact, as it means that the Grapevine system has not worked properly!) is Arthur Pinero's *Trelawny of the Wells*, which Jennie Harvey-Hull is directing. Auditions were held in July and Jennie would like to thank everyone who came. The play has now been cast, except (at the time of writing) for the part of Arthur (Rose Trelawny's fiancée) and a few small 'actor' parts in the last act. Production week begins on Saturday 23rd November, with performances in the Digby Hall at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 28th, Friday 29th and Saturday 30th November. I have not yet been informed whether or not there will be a Matinée performance on the Saturday. A full list of the cast of 23 will appear in the next Newsletter.

The Spring production in April will consist of three one-act plays by John Mortimer. The committee is currently reading plays before deciding which ones to put on. Three different directors will be involved; Jessica Colson and Stuart McCreadie will direct two of the plays and we are seeking a volunteer to direct the third one; so here's your chance! Nearer the time one of the plays will be chosen to go into the Dorset Drama League Festival in March.

Do you have a hankering to be Front of House Manager, Wardrobe mistress/master, Stage Manager or Lighting/Sound Technician but are never asked? A list of the things people that people have expressed a wish/willingness to do—acting, directing, stage management, front of house, etc, has now been added to the membership database on the Membership Secretary's computer, with the aim of helping future directors find the people they need. The list has been prepared using the 1995 survey and (in the cases where surveys were not received back) members original application forms. However, people change and ambitions grow (or recede). So if there is anything that you would like to be asked to do and never seem to get the chance (or something that people ask you to do and you wish they wouldn't!), do let the Membership Secretary know.

ML

STOP PRESS

News just in from the Rose Bowl Award

Members will be delighted to learn that Jill Hudson has received a nomination for Best Actress for her performance as Emily Brent in *And Then There Were None*. We wish her the best of luck when the awards are finally announced.