

Tony & Gill Steplems,

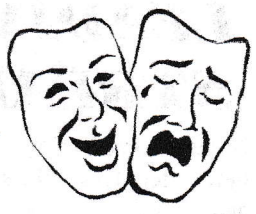
23 Feb - Feb: Sweetie 1000



AMATEUR PLAYERS OF SHERBORNE

Newsletter

JANUARY
1996



Dear Member,

The autumn production is over and those of us involved feel a glow of satisfaction. And well we might. *She Stoops to Conquer* has been acclaimed by many who should know as being one of the most successful APS productions ever—praise indeed when one considers the very high standard of past productions. There were one or two people who said they didn't like it done in the round (which just shows that you can never please everybody), but by far the majority were very complementary. Over 500 people came to see it and we made an overall profit of just under £1000.



Prompt Corner

Wednesday 10th January
Give Us Another Clue
with Meg Whittingdale

Tuesday 23rd January
A rehearsed playreading
presented by Tony and Gill Manns

Thursday 8th February
Kieran's Comic Cuts
with Kieran Millar

Wednesday 21st February
Festivals and Adjudications; Dreams or Nightmares
with James Patrick

Monday 4th March
Dorset Drama League Festival begins

Monday 18th March
Paddy Field introduces two Irish plays

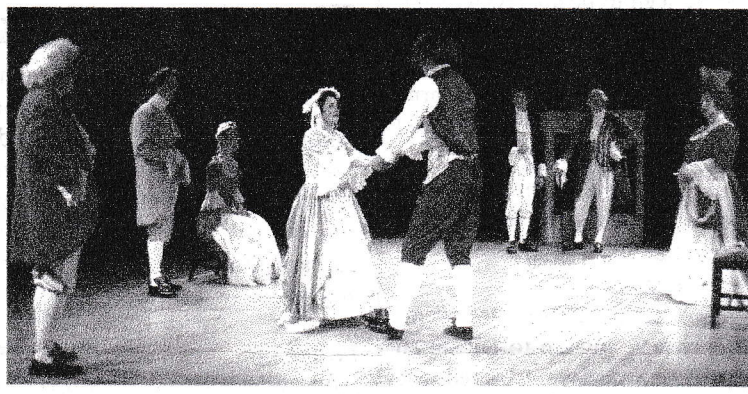
Wednesday 27th March
An unrehearsed playreading
from 'A Man Born to be King',
with Margaret Field

Friday 12th April
The Sneeze, Act 2
presented by Geoff Lewis and BADS

She Stoops to Conquer, Autumn 1995



There were, of course, several reasons for this success. First, 'She Stoops' is a well-known play; those who had seen it before welcomed the chance to see it again and those who had never seen it were glad of the opportunity to do so. Second, the publicity so excellently orchestrated by Gill and Tony Manns ensured that potential audiences were very well-informed. It was a good idea to show mug-shots of the cast



around Sherborne; the knowledge that such familiar faces as Gerald, Jennie and Andrew were to appear must, I'm sure, have attracted many people. Third, the fact that Geoff Lewis

was the director almost certainly brought in many people who had seen and enjoyed his production of *Murder in the Cathedral* a few years ago. Last but by no means least, the quality of the production itself played an important part; after the Thursday night, which itself was well attended, word went round and ensured that the few seats that were still available for Friday and Saturday sold like the proverbial hot cakes.

Success does not, of course come without hard work and thanks are due to all those involved for their efforts. The whole production team worked smoothly and efficiently and the cast produced performances that would have looked good in a professional production. But of course, the lion's share of the plaudits must go to Geoff himself. As a director he was at once knowledgeable, creative, inventive, inspiring, demanding, helpful and understanding. Under his leadership we formed a



LEADING APS MEMBER STREAKS IN CHEAP ST

At last! Some hard news to report in the newsletter. This is the story of the year, and I know you are all agog to know who, when and why.

But before I go into this I should like to digress a little, while I have your attention. We have, so far had nine club evenings and it is now clear that APS is suffering from a bad case of apathy this season. Attendances have been poor to say the least.

Jane Tapley's talk in October could not really have had more publicity--in the programme, in the Newsletter and on posters. Even so there were members who, the night before, claimed not to know that the evening was on, which makes me wonder if publishing this newsletter, not to men-

tion the programme, is actually worth the effort!

There is a saying applied to many things-- 'use it or lose it'-- and this probably applies to APS evenings as much as anything else. If members do not support the evenings then those who organize them may understandably feel that their work (and it does take a lot of work) is in vain and may not feel inclined to make the effort again.

Probably the most successful evenings are play readings. Although they too do not bring in huge numbers they do generally attract enough people to make up a cast and an enjoyable evening. So maybe we should just concentrate on play readings and forget about everything else.

I must stress that these are my thoughts and do not necessarily represent the views of members of the committee or any of those who have organized events--although other members of the committee have expressed concern at the lack of support. What do you think? If you have strong (or even weak) views on this subject, let's hear from you. Do you think that the entertainments side of the APS programme is a waste of time, and, if not, have you any suggestions as to how we can attract more support?

So what about the stalker? Well if you want to read about that sort of thing you should be reading the Sun. This is a high-quality Newsletter not a cheap tabloid, so I shall not be saying any more on the subject. And if you have skipped to this last paragraph in order to find out, please go back to the beginning and read the rest!
M.L.

happy team and it was his vision that produced the play that we all either saw or took part in. Thank you, Geoff. 'Twas well done.

Since you last heard from me there have been five members evenings. On October 3rd Janet Vincent offered us *Dear Octopus* to read. This was an enjoyable evening, with 18 participants making up what was quite a large cast.

This was followed by 'It'll be All Right on the Night' with Jill Hudson and Jakki Gregory. Well, it certainly was all right on the night and all I can say is that those of you who didn't come missed a treat. Jill and Jakki, together with their able stage manager, Tony G., worked their socks off to present us with an extraordinary number of hilarious sketches. These two talented actresses have to be seen to be appreciated and it really was a shame that the audience contained only 14 people.

On Tuesday 24th October we brought Jane Tapley to the Powell Theatre to give a talk on the history of theatre. She had, it is true, given this talk in Sherborne before, but it had, in the intervening time, been modified and improved and it was well worth seeing a second time. Some 44 people turned out on a wild, wet evening and so the event was not a complete disaster. However, even though the member's ticket price was a mere £1, only 20 members came. More people were needed to make the evening a real success and in fact we made a fairly substantial financial loss. As a result, it seems unlikely that we will be able to repeat the experiment.

The entertainment group still survives, although the original 22 interested members have dwindled to a hard core of eight--just, but only just, enough to put on an entertainment if required. Interest among members does seem to have subsided--the 'Evening of Song and...' on Friday 10th November was performed to just nine other members. However, we understand that several members have been unable to be involved recently for various reasons and so we have not given up hope of increasing the size of the group. Ideally, it would consist of, say, about 16 members, making it possible to be reasonably certain of being able to call on about eight or more of them at any one time. The committee is currently investigating possible venues and if all goes well members who have shown interest in the group in the past will be contacted again. Meanwhile keep polishing up the acts!

Since the production there have been two more evenings. Jessica Colson's playreading on December 7th was attended by 12 people. Jessica produced *Lord Arthur Saville's Crime*; a very amusing play with well-defined and varied characters that was fun to read.

The Christmas party on December 18th was a very enjoyable and well-attended evening. About 30 members came and after a glass or two or Hrolf's excellent grog, we settled down to listen to a very varied range of poetry and prose that people had brought to read.

Digby Road Church Hall quiz night

APS entered a team of four--Tony Field, Tony Stephens, Tony Gregory and Mark Lambert-- in the quiz night organized on November 17th to raise funds for the restoration of the Hall. Our team came a very creditable second, beaten only by a team of clergymen, but we feel that we might have fared even better if the question master had managed to get all the answers right!

Backstage chat

APS is in danger of losing its identity. The Newsletter openly promotes other groups and organizations. We now have outside groups and individuals coming to entertain us and the only evening advertised on the club notice board is for one organized by another group! Shouldn't we go back to being just APS, organizing events and by our own members?
A. Member

I personally disagree with you. I cannot see that APS has to exist solely for the benefit of its own members. After all, the main reason for our existence is to entertain others! I feel strongly that we should not try to exist in isolation, and I see no reason why we should not have links with other, similar organizations. The 'Whats On' section of the Newsletter is merely designed to inform members--the purpose of the Newsletter itself. As for the noticeboard, as far as I am aware it is there for anyone to promote any relevant activity. Perhaps others would like to promote their evenings.

Ed.

Actually, the above letter was not sent. But it is based on remarks made in my presence, which were, it was said, based on comments made by members. Has anyone else any comment to make?

Now, of course, we start to look forward to the next production. The committee has chosen *And Then There Were None* (originally entitled *Ten Little Niggers*, subsequently retitled the above, for reasons of 'political correctness'--no comment.). Barbara Beak will direct and will be holding auditions in the clubroom on Tuesday 16th and Thursday 18th January. Details of the play can be found on page 4.

Before this production, however, there is the Dorset Drama League Festival. This year APS is entering *Pity About Kitty*, by Jimmy Chinn. Jakki Gregory will direct, with the assistance of Eve Snell, and auditions for this will take place on Monday 22nd January. Details can be found on page 3.

Meanwhile, do come to the late winter members' evenings. During this month Meg will be running another session of her popular 'Give Us a Clue' and Tony and Gill Manns will be organizing a rehearsed playreading. What Kieran Millar will come up with in February for 'Kieran's Comic Cuts', I have no idea--you will have to come and find out for yourselves. It will be followed by a talk by James Patrick, who as some of you will recall, was the adjudicator at last year's DDL. This is one of the events that Mally and I will have to miss and we will be very sorry to do so; He is a most entertaining speaker, and I do urge you all to come. In fact, it is very important that members come to this evening. James Patrick lives in Sherborne and came to 'She Stoops', after which he wrote us an extremely complimentary letter, full of encouragement and support. Having invited him to come and talk to us (and we are paying him a fee) we do need to make him feel welcome and appreciated. So your committee has decided that a three-line whip is in order for Wednesday 21st February. Please mark it in your diaries and on your kitchen calendars!

Shortly after this, in early March, the Dorset Drama League festival takes place. Last year members were given a free preview in Sherborne, which was possibly why there were so few supporters at the DDL itself. I have no idea what the arrangements will be this time, but if there is a preview, please do go along and support the cast in Wimborne as well. It does make a difference. Later in March, a gentleman who seems to have adopted the name 'Paddy Field' will celebrate St Patrick's day with a couple of Irish plays.

Last season, just before Easter, Margaret Field organized an unrehearsed reading of extracts from Dorothy L. Sayers' *A Man Born to Be King*. This was so popular and there is so much more to read that the evening is being repeated again on March 27th. Then in April BADS will present Act 2 of *The Sneeze*. This comprises three plays; *The Sneeze* itself, which is performed in mime; *The Inspector General*, a very short piece about an inspector trying to travel secretly to inspect a town; and *The Proposal*, in which an unlikely suitor tries to propose to the daughter of his neighbour. I have a personal interest in this evening, so I do hope you will come.

A very happy 1996 to you all.

M.L.

PITY ABOUT KITTY

The Players' entry in this year's Dorset Drama league Festival

**Auditions in the clubroom
Monday 22nd January, 7.30.p.m.**

1 man (middle-aged)
3 women (40s)

An intriguing, sensitive play; humorous, articulate and painfully observant of human nature. Against the background of a medical tribunal, Kitty is carried along by with the help of events she hardly comprehends and we see the pattern of her life in flashbacks, created with the help of imaginative lighting and heightened dialogue.

WHAT'S ON

Monday 12th -Saturday 17th February
Sturminster Newton Hall
SNADS present
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
7.30 p.m. nightly

Friday 12 January 7.30 p.m.
Sturminster High School
Horse and Bamboo Theatre in
Visions of Hildegard
An Artsreach Production

Tuesday 23rd- Sat 27th January
Octagon Theatre, Yeovil
Yeovil Amateur Pantomime
Mother Goose
7.30 p.m. nightly. Matinees on Sat

Saturday 3 February 7.30 p.m.
Croft House School, Shillingstone
Kneehigh Theatre in
The King of Prussia
An Artsreach Production

Wednesday 7th- Saturday 10th February
Octagon Theatre, Yeovil
Yeovil College present
Chicago
7.30 p.m. nightly

Friday 1 March 7.45 p.m.
Halstock (F.V.P)
Kneehigh Theatre in
Figgie Hobbin
An Artsreach Production

Tuesday 12 March 7.30 p.m.
The Drax Hall, Bere Regis
Forest Forge Theatre Co. in
Much Ado About Nothing
An Artsreach Production

Saturday 23 March 7.30 p.m.
The Portman Hall, Shillingstone
Theatre Alibi in
Little White Lies

This Newsletter may seem to be looking rather far ahead, but the reason is that I am not sure when the next one will reach you. Our excuse for missing the James Patrick evening is that we shall be a long way away--sailing on a tall ship in the Caribbean, in fact--and it will be a little difficult to get back! We are away from January 20th to March 10th. If anyone has any query regarding members or membership while I am away, please contact Tony Field.

M.L.

And Then There Were None

by
Agatha Christie

Auditions will take place in the Clubroom
Tuesday 16th January 7.30 p.m. Thursday 18th January, 7.30 p.m.

If you cannot attend on either of these dates but would like to audition, please telephone
Barbara Beak on 01935-816350

THE PLAY

Ten people are invited by unknown hosts to a lonely house on a remote island. In the house are ten china figurines and on the wall is the verse 'Ten Little Indians'. A mysterious, recorded voice accuses each one of them of having committed murder. One by one they start to die--in ways that recall the verse--and the figurines start to disappear. There is no way of escaping from the island and there is no one else there but themselves. Clearly, one of them is a murderer, but who is it? The tension grows and the suspense is maintained right up to the last moment.

Ten little Indians
Going out to dine,
One choked his little self
And then there were nine.

Eight little Indians
Going down to Devon,
One got left behind
And then there were seven.

Six little Indians
Playing with a hive,
A bumble bee stung one
And then there were five.

Four little Indians
Sailing out to sea,
A red herring swallowed one
And then there were three

Two little Indians
Sitting in the Sun,
One got frizzled up
And then there was one.

Nine little Indians
Sat up very late,
One overslept himself
And then there were eight.

Seven little Indians
Chopping up sticks,
One chopped himself in half
And then there were six.

Five little Indians
Going in for Law,
One got in Chancery
And then there were four.

Three little Indians
Going to the Zoo,
A big bear hugged one
And then there were two.

One little Indian
Left all alone,
He went and hanged himself
And then there were none.

THE CAST

Rogers	competant manservant. (40s-50s)
Narracot	the boatman
Mrs Rogers	worried, nervous (40s-50s)
Vera Claythorne	(20s)
Captain Lombard	adventurer type (30s)
Anthony Marston	rich, spoiled, not very intelligent (20s)
William Blore	(40s-50s)
General Mackenzie	upright, soldierly (60s-70s)
Emily Brent	disagreeable, suspicious (50s-60s)
Sir Lawrence Wargrave	a judge (50s-60s)
Dr Armstrong	(40s)

