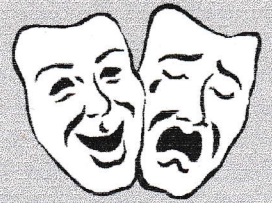




NEWSLETTER



JANUARY 1999

This newsletter comes to you a little earlier than usual and the next will not appear until after the Spring production. The reason for bringing this one forward is that we must decide soon whether or not a trip to Prêveza is viable. Please read the panel overleaf carefully and take action (or not) accordingly.



APS events

The Christmas party was a great success. The venue provided by our hosts, Ian and Patricia Stewart, provided a wonderful party atmosphere, complemented by Jessica Colson's splendid meal. Jakki Gregory and Jill Hudson got everyone into a party mood by organising some really silly party games, followed later by some hilarious sketches scripted by Chris Jessiman. The 40+ members who came clearly enjoyed themselves very much and thanks are due to all the above mentioned.

The Give us a Clue evening went with its usual swing and we all learned of a number of books, plays and films that we had never heard of before. Sadly, although the titles were compiled by Meg Whittingdale, she was unable to officiate and her place was ably taken by Jennie Ward. We all wish you a speedy recovery, Meg.

Jim Saunders

Sadly, I have to report the death of Joy Saunders's beloved husband Jim. Although not really an actor, Jim was one of the unsung heroes—those who put up with their wives or husbands disappearing for several evenings a week over a period of several months to rehearse and perform plays. Jim did this for over 50 years, which says much for his devotion to Joy. Jim did appear on stage on one occasion; in the 1947 production of *Spring 1600*, in which he was persuaded to take on not one but two roles. However, as he was courting Joy at the time, one suspects that his motive for appearing with her was not entirely due to a desire to act. He certainly never appeared on stage again, but for many years was a loyal supporter, regularly putting his low-loader and himself at The Players' disposal for transporting scenery, regardless of the weather. I know that he will be greatly missed by his family and friends and that everyone sends Joy much sympathy. M.L.

Jim and Joy in Spring 1600.



The t

Trevor Farrington John Bowles
John Miles John Sutherland-Smith
Jenny Farrington Kathy Messinger
Barbara Miles Jessica Colson
Spriggs David Smith

directed by
Margaret Field

Stage Manager
Colin Mayes

While on this subject, many of you already know that Gerald Pitman is currently undergoing hospital treatment. We all wish you the very best, Gerald, and hope to see you fit and well soon.

The annual dinner takes place in a few days. Bookings for this are now closed. Don't forget Michael Baatz's celebration of St Valentines Day on 12th February. I have had a sneak preview of the script and it promises to be very entertaining.

Dorset Drama League Festival

Rehearsals for *Go To Sleep My Darling* are progressing satisfactorily. The play will be

performed in the Digby Hall on Tuesday March 2nd at 8.00 p.m. Entrance is free, but voluntary offerings to help offset expenses will be welcome.

Our slot in the Festival is on the last night, Saturday 6th March. The venue is The Barrington Theatre, Ferndown Community Centre. Tickets (£4.00 or £4.50, we think) will be available on the door. A good turnout of supporters is important, so do come if you can; I can send, fax or e-mail a copy of the directions to you if you would like one; call me on 01258 817270.

Prompt Corner

At the Crown Inn, 7.30 p.m.
unless otherwise indicated

Friday 29th January
Annual APS Dinner
Black Tie

Friday 12th February
A celebration of St Valentine's Day
in music poetry and verse
Led by Michael Baatz

Tue 2nd March
Preview of *Go To Sleep My Darling*
Digby Hall, 8.00 p.m.

Saturday 20th March
Move set into Digby Hall, 9.00 a.m.
Production week for *Theft* begins

Mon. 22nd – Wed 24th March
Technical and dress rehearsals

Thur. 25th – Sat. 27th March
Performances of *Theft*
Digby Hall, 7.30 p.m.

Sunday 28th March
Strike and return set 9.30 a.m.

Thursday 8th April
APS quiz night
Conducted by Stuart McCreadie

Friday 23rd April
A Pair on the Avon
Two rehearsed play readings
Prepared by Vivian Vale
Cheap St Church Hall

Spring production

Margaret Field has finished casting *Theft* (see panel overleaf). I am building the set, which we will move in on Saturday 20th March; please come and help if you can. Performances take place on Thursday 25th, Friday 26th and Saturday 27th March. Tickets will be £5.00 each and will be available

early in March. Tony Field is Business Manager and will be dealing with ticket sales, so contact him nearer the time on 01935 815427. Tony and Gill Manns (01935 474206) are running Front-of-House and Jakki Gregory (01935 850708) will be organising refreshments. Do contact them with offers of help.

Please note that there will not now be a coffee morning during the production. The last one made a profit of around £80, but as this came almost entirely from the pockets of APS members rather than the general public (not the intention at all), it has been decided to discontinue the event.

Mark Lambert

Préveza 1999

Not many members turned up to the meeting on 7th Jan, but enough people seem to be interested to make the project worth pursuing for the time being. Jason Hepple has said that he is willing to direct a play for us, which solves one problem but still leaves us with the task of choosing a suitable play and casting it.

Dates have not yet been finalised, but it seems likely that we would go sometime during the last two weeks of August. The cost of the flight will be about £250 per person and we would need to stay for a minimum of one week. Five days would be spent with Greek hosts and the remainder at hotels, the cost of which, Kostas informs us, is about £12.00 per night. Altogether we estimate the total cost of the trip to be about £350 per head.

To make the project viable we feel we must have a play with a largish cast. Some sort of comedy is the preferred genre, but the choice of play is limited by several factors. First, we have a high proportion of women interested in taking part. Second, it has to be a play with accoutrements that we can transport easily and that we can perform in a Greek amphitheatre on a warm (probably hot!) evening; i.e. one that requires little or no scenery and does not involve wearing too much in the way of costume. Third, it has to be reasonably easy to comprehend by people whose English is limited. For these reasons we have ruled out such things as farce, restoration comedy and modern authors such as Ayckbourn, and come to the conclusion that a Shakespeare play is the only viable proposition. Several people have suggested that Shakespeare is too obvious a choice, which may be true, but as yet no one has come up with a viable alternative. If anyone has any positive, workable suggestions, please would they let me know immediately.

In the absence of any other alternative we are working on the assumption that we will attempt *The Tempest*. On paper this, like most of Shakespeare's plays, appears to have a cast that mostly consists of men. However, Jason, who has directed this play before, feels he can reduce the need for men to a minimum by cutting out several of the male roles and substituting women for men in a number of the remainder. Jason reckons to cut the script to a running time of about one and a half hours.

Auditions for this (and/or any other workable play that is suggested in the meantime) will take place in the Griffiths Room, Digby Road Church Hall on Sunday 7th February at 2.30 p.m. **All those interested in taking part in a play must attend if possible. If you really cannot come, you must let me know beforehand, even if you have already indicated that you are interested; if we cannot cast a play, the project will be abandoned.** A proposed *minimum* cast list for *The Tempest* is given below. However, do not let this list put you off in any way; as there are a number of male and female parts that could be reinstated—and, of course, we could still choose another play. Please note that anyone taking part must be available to rehearse during July and August, and maybe part of June too. Anyone who is only interested in doing backstage work need not attend, but do let me know that you are interested if you haven't done so already.

M.L.

The Tempest

Alonso (M, 60s); **Prospero** (M, 50s); **Ferdinand** (M, 20s-30s); **Gonzalo** (M/F, 50s); **Caliban** (M/F, youngish); **Ariel** (M/F, under 40); **Trincolo** (M/F, any age but large); **Stephano** (M/F, any age but thin); **Miranda** (F, 17-25).



You can contact me on 01258 817270

Come to sunny Préveza. Apart from the play, which will probably take up very little of our time once we are there, there will be plenty to do—sights to see, islands to visit, food and wine to drink, entertainment to watch and sun simply to soak up—what a tempting thought as we shiver in the cold and wet of Dorset in January!

Once the play has been cast and we know that the visit is definitely taking place, it will, of course, be possible for anyone to join us just for the trip if they wish.

Anthony & Meryl Stephens