



NEWS LETTER



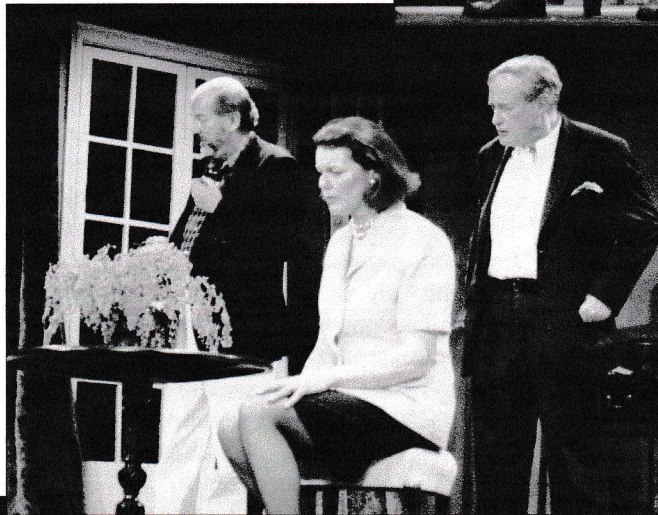
APRIL 1999

What fun our spring production was; I discovered something new in the play and laughed anew every night. It was by any standards a most successful production and the total audience figure was about 380, marginally up on last year and really very good for a spring production. As I write the accounts have not yet been disclosed, but I'm sure that we will have made a reasonable profit.

Choosing a modern comedy was an excellent idea of Margaret's. The audience clearly enjoyed the up-to-date humour—even the risqué bits—and the strong cast covered their lines with great panache. Margaret's casting was inspired. John Sutherland Smith gave a strong performance as the self-made, irascible John Miles; John Bowles provided a very real portrait of the mild (except for his superb confrontation with John) and likeable Trevor Farrington; Kathy Messinger gave a sharp portrayal of the lovely but slightly flawed Jenny Farrington; and Jessica Colson gave a carefully measured performance as the quietly scheming lush, Barbara Miles. However, the star of the show—and I hope the others will forgive me for saying this—was David Smith, who immersed himself in the part of Spriggs, originally written for George Cole, and made it his own. From the

moment he made his first entrance from the confines of the window seat cupboard to his final telephone call, he had the audience in fits of laughter and his delivery of the line "I was that little boy in glasses" never failed to stop the show. A brilliant performance.

The high audience turnout was due in no small part to Robert Doling's eye-catching publicity. Robert, unfortunately, is moving back to Surrey shortly and we shall be very sorry to see him go.



The set worked well—it was Margaret's first boxed set incidentally—and my thanks go to Des Armour for his invaluable assistance and to all those who came and helped to install it. Colin Mayes and his team provided a flawless backup to the actors (flawless, that is, except for the sound technician's slightly strange musical intro to Act II on the Friday night!). All orchestrated, of course, by Margaret Field, to whom many congratulations are due.



Prompt Corner

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

Thursday 8th April
Quiz Night
Conducted by
Stuart McCreadie

Tuesday 13th April
Preveza meeting for all those
who wish to go
Cheap St Church Hall

Friday 23rd April
A-Pair One on the Avon
A rehearsed play reading
Prepared by Vivian Vale
Cheap St Church Hall

Tuesday 18th May
A Musical Evening
Led by Kathy Messinger

Tuesday 1st June
A Play Reading
with sound effects
Arranged by Mark Lambert

Friday 18th June
Annual General Meeting
Nether Compton
Village Hall
Summer Party
Horns Hill,
Nether Compton

Recent APS Events

Our annual dinner in January was once again a successful event, enjoyed very much by the 36 members who attended; James Patrick entertained us with some thoughts and reminiscences. In February Michael Baatz celebrated St Valentine's day in great style, with a wide range of well chosen pieces of prose, verse and music. In this he was ably aided and abetted by Steve Evans, Eve Snell and Mally Lambert.

Our Dorset Drama League entry was a slightly controversial affair; not everyone liked Jason Hepple's play and the adjudicator admitted to not even understanding it, which explains why, somewhat unfairly in my opinion, we came away without even a Certificate of Merit. However, Elsie Lombard and Jon Stark did both receive nominations for best actress and actor. One of our problems was that we also had some quite unnecessary technical difficulties, both at the technical 'rehearsal' and on the day and a letter of remonstrance is being sent to the DDL committee.

Forthcoming attractions

Coming very shortly is the Quiz Night on Thursday 8th April. This year we are reverting to a quiet, 'family affair', in the crown—i.e. no fish and chips and no other groups invited. I'm told the questions will be much simpler than last year and, of course, drinks will be available. So do come and enjoy a relaxed evening out.

Vivian Vale's evening on April 23rd has now had to be cut down to just 'One on the Avon' (a rehearsed reading of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*), due to lack of rehearsal space beforehand, but should be nonetheless enjoyable for that. Do come and help to make all Vivian's hard work worthwhile.

Following that Kathy Messinger is organising a musical evening on 18th May and on 1st June I plan to present a play-reading (rehearsed or unrehearsed, I'm not sure yet) in which I hope to demonstrate a new way of generating sound effects.

The AGM will be held at Nether Compton Village Hall on June 18th and



Muriel Davis

Sadly, two more former members of the players have died. Muriel Davis was one of our founder members; she played the maid in the first APS production, *Tons of Money*, in 1934. Muriel and William Cordy, who played the butler, began the play and thus were the very first Amateur Players of Sherborne to speak their lines on stage.

Right: Muriel Davis and W.Cordy in *Tons of Money*.

Below: Michael Quinn (*Old Marley*) and David Smith (*Scrooge*) in *A Christmas Carol*.



Michael Quinn

Michael Quinn joined the players in, I believe, 1990. Formerly a professional actor, he brought great stage presence to the productions he took part in. He took the role of Inspector Goole in the 1991 production of J.B.Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, a part that he played with great distinction, and in 1994 he played a very effective Marley's Ghost in Margaret Field's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*. He was also the Players' Treasurer in 1991. He died recently after a short illness and our condolences go to his wife Janet. ML

will be followed by a party in Jenny Ward's garden next door (weather permitting).

It is with great sadness that I have to tell you that at this year's AGM we must elect another Chairman. Colin Mayes has held this office during the 1998-99 season and, despite his protestations to the contrary, the committee are of the unanimous opinion that he has done a really excellent job. He feels, however, that changing personal circumstances make it impossible for him to carry on for a second year and it is with much regret that the committee has accepted his decision to step down.

1999-2000 Season

As you may be aware the programme for the new season is drawn up by the committee in July and August. In recent years, the practice of encouraging members to submit ideas for evenings has fallen by the wayside somewhat and the committee would like to rectify this. Therefore, if any member has an idea for an evening they would consider presenting next season, please would they let the Chairman or Secretary know, preferably before the end of June.

Among the ideas already being consid-

ered for next year is a series of workshops aimed at encouraging members to become more familiar with a range of onstage and backstage techniques. To this end, a slip has been enclosed with this Newsletter; if you are interested in joining any sort of workshop, please fill the slip in and return it to Michael Baatz—and feel free to make suggestions for other topics if you wish.

Préveza 1999

Our trip to Préveza is now definitely going ahead. Jason Hepple has cast *The Tempest*, and a meeting is to be held at the Cheap Street Church Hall on Tuesday 13th April at 7.30 p.m. Please will all those planning to go to Préveza, in whatever capacity, attend this meeting. If you really cannot come, please contact me as soon as possible and confirm that you are committing yourself to going, as tickets will have to be booked shortly afterwards. If anyone else would like to go, there are still small parts available and backstage jobs to be taken on.

Future Productions

As I mentioned in a previous Newsletter, it is the serious intention of the committee not to leave decisions about productions until the last moment. To this end I have taken on the task of attempting to coordinate ideas for plays and potential directors. If you feel that you would like to direct a play sometime in the future but have not yet been asked, please do let me know.

Mark Lambert