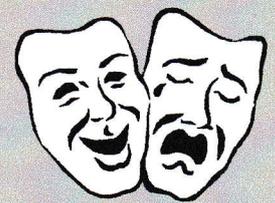




NEWSLETTER



MAY 2001

Many of you may be thinking that you may have missed out on a Newsletter. But fear not, you haven't; this is first Newsletter since January. As a result, there is much to report. As usual, I will begin with what has been happening.



Lost & Found

The APS Modern production of Jason Hople's play was a great success, despite rehearsals being interrupted by Christmas and New Year and the somewhat cramped conditions of the venue. In the end it was performed in what was formerly a small classroom at Newell House School, with the audience having to enter over the stage and the cast confined to a room that measured some 6 ft x 8 ft.

Two performances a night meant that the cast and crew got plenty of practice, but from the point of view of getting audiences, it was with hindsight perhaps not the wisest move. Jason's theory that people would pour out of the pubs at 9.00 to come to the second show proved optimistic and first house audiences

were consistently larger than those for the second house. Unfortunately, the play did not make a profit, but the loss was only a very small one.

Cast and crew worked hard to turn the classroom into a cosy little theatre and in spite of slightly uncomfortable seating audiences seemed to enjoy themselves. The BVM gave Jason's play an excellent review and the Rose Bowl adjudicator had a lot of good things to say too, in spite of not getting a cup of coffee. Individual performances came in for much praise from these and other quarters and Jason and his team had much to be proud of. In retrospect it was probably a wise decision not to put this play on as a main production, as it is not the type of play likely to appeal to our usual audiences. But it is plays like this that will attract new audiences and hopefully widen our audience base.

Arms and the Man

Jennie Ward's spring production of this delightful comedy by Shaw was also well received. It is not often that a BVM review contains a remark like "some of the best performances the region will see this year". The

Prompt Corner

Tuesday 5th June

Fish and Chip Quiz Night
(with a twist in the tail!)
Arranged by David Smith
7.30 pm, Griffith's Room,
Digby Memorial Hall

Thursday 14th June

An unrehearsed play reading
Arranged by Jessica Colson
7.30 pm, APS Clubroom,
Sherborne House

Friday 29th June

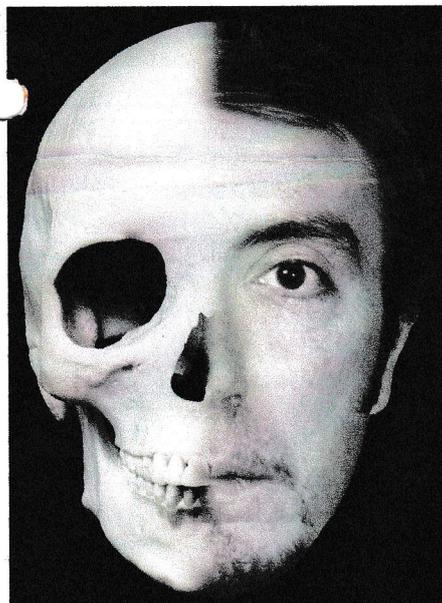
Annual General Meeting
7.30 pm at the APS Clubroom,
Sherborne House
followed by

APS Summer Party
in Sherborne House garden, if dry

Monday 9th July - Saturday 14th July

Hamlet, by William Shakespeare
Directed by Mark Freestone
The Courts, Sherborne School
Performances start 7.30 pm

HAMLET



Directed by
Mark Freestone

Assistant Director
and Production Manager
Gill Manns

CAST

Barnardo	Tony Stephens
Francisco	<i>to be cast</i>
Marcellus	John Sutherland
Horatio	David J. Smith
Claudius	Patrick Knox
Laertes	Jonathan Stark
Polonius	David R. Smith
Hamlet	Mark Freestone
Ophelia	Felicity Trew
Ghost	John Sutherland-Smith
Gertrude	Fizz Lewis
Player King	Tony Manns
Player Queen	Elsie Lombard
Lucianus	Tony Birks-Hay
Gravedigger	Michael Welland
2nd Gravedigger	Tony Stephens
Priest	Tony Birks-Hay
Osric	Mark Lambert

Other parts are being played by members of the cast, with Adam Birks-Hay, Shane Clothier, Jean Harrap, Dod Pearson, Ann Russell and Patricia Stewart.

Rose Bowl adjudicator, whose job it is to criticise whenever remotely possible, also found very little to complain of and on the whole found the play most enjoyable. Audiences, too, really enjoyed themselves, and it is nice to think that we were doing our bit for the health of the residents of Sherborne by making people laugh. The production made a profit of about £190, which was a little disappointing as we had good audience figures.

As with the previous play, I do not intend singling out any member of the cast, but I would like to give particular thanks to Jim Schofield for the set. I know that he worked for hours on that quite splendid mountain backdrop and his moving scenery worked superbly well, deserving the nightly applause that greeted the start of Act II.

Jennie, as those who have worked with her know, is a hard task master (mistress?), but she knows what she wants and how to get it out of even the most recalcitrant actor. Actually, she didn't shout at us very much this time, which either proves that she is mellowing or that we weren't too bad. Either way she put on a show that was widely acclaimed and deserves much congratulation.

Club evenings

Nightingales Sing proved a popular evening once again, particularly for those in the back row as the evening wore on. The performers had a very good time too, although a bit more rehearsal of some of the songs would probably have been a good idea, a fact confirmed by listening to the recording later. My thanks to Mandy, Kathy, Jason, John and Fred for all their hard work and the fun we had.

I wasn't present at Michael Baatz's Ensemble Acting Workshop, so I don't really know what happened, but Michael has asked me to say that it was enjoyed by the 21 who came for the evening of impromptu acting and self-directing, and that some very notable performances resulted.

Margaret Dixon's Evening with Peter Shaffer marked the first occasion that the new clubroom (of which more later) was used for one of our entertainment evenings. Acting with a book in your hand is not easy, but a crowded room saw some remarkable performances of abridged versions of *Equus* and *Lettice and Lovage* (Act III). There is nothing to laugh at in *Equus*, but Kevin Beer had the audience mesmerised with his performance of Alan Strang, with Jason Hepple as a convincing psychiatrist (some typcasting here I think). They were ably supported by Jennie Ward as Alan's mother, Jessica Colson as the magistrate and Mally Lambert as the nurse. *Lettice and Lovage* was a complete contrast. A talented trio--Janet Vincent, Jennie Ward and Tony Field--had us all in stitches. Wine was available during the interval and overall Margaret put on a really excellent evening that was a truly fitting 'opening night' for the clubroom.

Events that didn't happen in May

We apologise for the fact that eventually all of the May events were cancelled, but this was not a conspiracy; they were cancelled for a variety of different reasons. Steve Evans is leaving us soon as he has decided to go to university for a few years to study drama. We wish him well and will miss him a great deal, hoping that eventually he will return to give us the benefit of some of his newly acquired knowledge along with his undoubted energy and talent.

The Revue was cancelled as it was felt that, although there was much that was excellent in its content, there were really insufficient numbers to make up a workable chorus. There was and is so much else going on that not enough people were available. Rather than put on a show that might be considered to be not up to the usual APS standard, it was decided, with regret and after considerable thought, to call the production off.

Finally, you will have recently been told that the Experimental Drama evening planned for May 18th was cancelled. The rea-

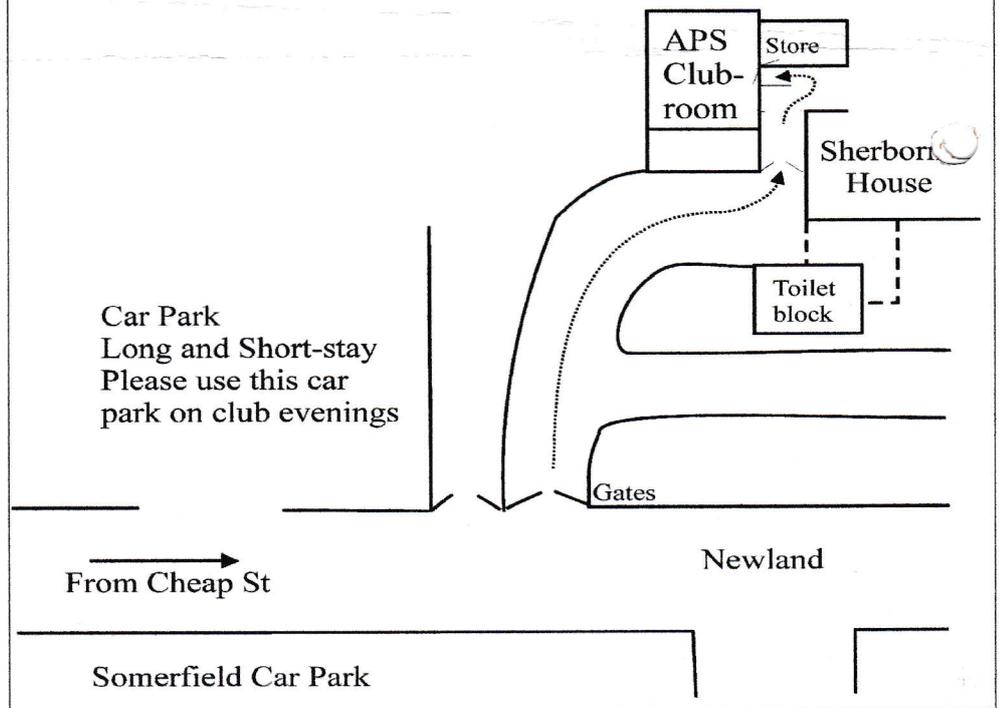
APS Clubroom

The evolution of our new clubroom proceeds apace. We have painted and carpeted it and acquired chairs, tables, a noticeboard and some other accoutrements. It is now used regularly for rehearsals, and the first social evening to be held there, Margaret Dixon's powerful presentation of two Peter Shaffer plays, was a great success and a fitting debut for APS at Sherborne House.

Much remains to be done, of course, particularly on the domestic front. We are currently working out systems for dealing with coffee and washing up, and members attending rehearsals and meetings should note that they need to bring, and be responsible for washing, their own mugs! We still await the ceiling panels needed to make the room warmer and more attractive. At the time of writing we invite donations or loans of mugs, a kettle, a small fridge, and table or standard lamps for when we want soft lighting.

We are aware that the outside lighting is less than satisfactory, and suggest that members bring a torch until the Trustees of Sherborne House have completed the necessary work. Information about the room and its facilities will shortly be put up on the notice board, which should help until we are all used to its little ways. Many thanks to those who have worked on the room so far.

G.N.M.



son for this was that after *Lost & Found* the numbers attending the APS Modern evenings began to dwindle, again due largely to people having other commitments. Jason felt that the only course was to suspend APS Modern for the remainder of the season.

APS modern

I would like to thank all the members for their support for this new project. It was due to the commitment of the cast, crew and many other APS members and supporters that *Lost and Found* proved so successful. I have decided to give APS modern a short holiday due to the already heavy schedule APS has planned for the summer. Please look out for details regarding future APS Modern meetings and events at the start of the new season in September.

Jason Hepple

Forthcoming events

You will be glad to hear, however, that the remaining events are all still on. The **Fish and Chip Quiz**, which David tells me has a novel twist at the end, will take place in the Griffiths Room, Digby Memorial Hall (formerly known as The Digby Road Church Hall) on Tuesday 5th June. Fish and Chips will be provided at a cost of £3.50 per head, and you are welcome to bring alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages to wash it down. David plans that we should be in teams of six, so please feel free to make up a team beforehand or wait and join up with others on the night, as you wish.

Jessica Colson's **Unrehearsed Play Reading** will take place on Thursday 14th June at the APS Clubroom and The **AGM** will follow on June 29th. A notice about the AGM is enclosed, together with nomination forms for Committee Members and Offic-

At least three new committee members are needed and our current Chairman, Gill Manns has reached the end of her term of office. At the time of writing, it is known that the present incumbents of the offices of Treasurer and Membership Secretary will be standing again for re-election, but this should not deter anyone else who would like to stand for these posts. Please feel free to stand for any post or to nominate someone else (having first checked that they are prepared to stand, of course). If you would like additional nomination forms, please let me know.

The AGM will be followed immediately by the **Summer Party**, which, if it is a fine evening, will be held in the garden of Sherborne House (in the Clubroom if wet). Clubroom chairs will be available for use outside, but do bring garden chairs if you wish. Please also bring a little food and a bottle.

Finally, there is the summer production of *Hamlet*. The cast list is on the first page of this Newsletter. Rehearsals have been underway for some time, and Mark and Gill are working overtime to ensure the success of this production. If you are not yet involved but would like to be, there are still off-stage roles and small parts for men available. Contact Gill Manns (01935 474206).

Wardrobe

It is some time now since we had a Wardrobe Mistress--someone to look after our store of costumes. You will be delighted to hear that Elsie Lombard has agreed to take on this role. Many thanks, Elsie. Members wishing to use costumes from the store should from now on do so in consultation with her.

New Clubroom

Our new lodgings are proving a great success (see panel on page 2). Gill has asked

me to tell you that Daphne Clapperton has kindly agreed to be Clubroom Manager, making sure that stocks of coffee, tea and other essentials are available as needed. Gill has also asked me to remind everyone that washing up is not at all easy at the moment. Would those attending rehearsals and requiring coffee please bring their own mugs and take them away again when they leave. For those of you who are still not quite sure where the clubroom is I have drawn a crude map to help you find it. Finally, would those using the

clubroom, please try to ensure that they leave it clean and tidy after use.

See you at the AGM and Summer Party, I hope, if not at one of the evenings that precede it. It is important that you attend the AGM if you can. I know that by the end of June we will all feel that we have had quite enough of elections, but it is the one time in the year that you can exercise your right to vote for the officers and committee that will guide the course of The Players during the next season.

ML

Bits and Bytes

A steadily increasing number of members are acquiring computers. Those of you with access to the web can now look at our website (<http://beehive.thisisdorset.co.uk/aps/>). This is really intended as an extra form of publicity for potential audiences and those considering becoming members, but do feel free to use the bulletin board if you would like to start a discussion or make a point. Please use real names rather than nicknames and remember that the whole world has access to the site. Scurrilous messages and comments that we consider deleterious to the good name of The Players will be rapidly removed.

Many of you have already provided e-mail addresses and this is proving to be an excellent way of passing on information quickly and cheaply. Please, please inform me of new or changed e-mail addresses and do remember to check your e-mails regularly. In case there is anyone who is not sure how to do this, just click on the send/receive button in Microsoft Outlook Express (or equivalent if you are using other e-mail

software); e-mails are not sent automatically to your computer unless you do this.

I am often asked what software I use. For those interested, this Newsletter is prepared using Adobe Pagemaker, a program I also use for preparing leaflets. Illustrations and posters are usually edited in Photoshop, sometimes combined with CorelDraw, which I also use for simple drawings like the clubroom map in this Newsletter, and for making up signs and banners. For editing music and sound effects I use Cakewalk Express, Noteworthy Composer and Cool Edit 2000. I know that most of you use the wordprocessor Microsoft Word, but I prefer Lotus Word Pro. I organise database files in Lotus Approach.

Speaking of which, I have recently realised that in order to make sure of complying with the Data Protection Act 1998, I have to inform you that I hold details of members on my computer. These details were mostly provided by yourselves and I'm pretty sure that most of you were already aware that I maintain membership records in this way.

ML

Members are reminded that this Newsletter is designed for private circulation to paid up members only and its content, while not strictly confidential, should not be regarded as necessarily being in the public domain.

ML