



HAROLD PINTER UNCOVERED?

"I can sum up none of my plays. I can describe none of them, except to say: That is what happened. That is what they said. That is what they did." So said Harold Pinter.

And what about the rest of us? Well, led by Maurice Freeland and wonderfully aided on stage by APS members, we watched four on the surface, simplistic snippets of life: 'That's Your Trouble', 'That's All', 'Night' and 'Landscape'. Sad and funny by turns, they were light and dark, filled with dramatic tension. There were the hints of menace, the pauses, often comic, more often excruciatingly drawn out and characters given to sudden outbursts of anger or quietly trapped in their memories. It was....an evening...as baffling.....as it was.....entertaining.



Top left: Charles and Adrian in 'That's Your Trouble'

Top right: Sue Francis and Joan Freeland in 'That's All'

Bottom left: Maurice Freeland and Sue Francis in 'Night'

Bottom right: Fizz and Geoff Lewis in 'Landscape'

LAST MONTH'S OTHER SOCIAL EVENT

A very lively and entertaining evening was had by all as we romped through the second part of 'Wind in the Willows'. What with Mr Toad escaping from prison, the battle to take back Toad Hall, and then a party in the grounds, oh, if only life could be so jolly.

GRAND THEATRICAL QUIZ

On Wednesday, May 20th, Charles will host a **Grand Theatrical Quiz** at 7.30 pm in Nether Compton Village Hall. Questions will range from the fiendish to the not-quite-so-fiendish (no, nothing too difficult, I promise – and no Shakespeare. Well, not very much Shakespeare...).

There will be ten categories of ten questions each, on the following topics: People, General Knowledge, Superstitions and Traditions, Local History, Mathematics, Cryptic Titles, Current Affairs, the World of Work, Hellos and Goodbyes, and Music – but don't be misled, it's a theatrical quiz, so all the questions in those categories will be about the theatre.

We'll answer questions in teams of 5-6 – you can make up a team in advance, or join a team when you arrive. The bar will be open, and there will be prizes for the winners (though I don't know where I'm going to get them now that Woolworth's has closed down...)



Our AGM -and Summer Party - will take place at 7.30 pm on Friday 24th July. Jim and Gwyneth Schofield have very kindly agreed to host the event again at Gainsborough House.

This is your chance to let your Committee know what you think of the way they've managed the society over the past year and to air your views and ideas for the future.

It is also your opportunity to vote for new Committee Members and Officers. Not only that, but actually to propose and second candidates! This year there'll be vacancies for Chairman, and two Ordinary Committee Members. Nomination papers will be sent out with the formal notice of the AGM approximately three weeks beforehand.

COMING SOON

News of our autumn play, which this year falls on exactly the same opening date as APS's very first production in 1934. Yes, folks, we will be 75 years old! Also news about our spring 2010 play.



A BUNCH OF AMATEURS *et al.*.....

Did you miss it first time around? A Bunch of Amateurs, the Royal Film Performance 2008, is out now on DVD. Described by the Queen as 'quite amusing', Burt Reynolds as a faded Hollywood star comes to the UK for what he believes to be a high-profile Stratford production of King Lear. Only it's the tiny village of Stratford St John, Suffolk and it's a local amateur dramatic society production. The DVD is available for hire through both Sherborne and Yeovil Libraries.

Other films based around amateur dramatics are: A Chorus of Disapproval available through Yeovil library, and Kenneth Branagh's In the Bleak Midwinter on VHS available through Amazon or eBay.

Welcome new members

A belated welcome to new members Rosie Buxton, Zac Graham - Dyson in 'When We Are Married' and future APS member, Holly Burbage's son, Archie-Jacob, born 12th February

MERCHANT OF VENICE AT MONTACUTE

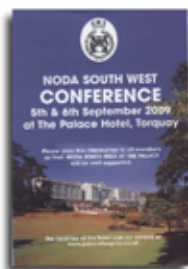


The Festival Players Theatre Company brings you the Bard's great comedy of Riddles, Romance, and Revenge, **The Merchant of Venice** at 7.30 pm in the grounds of Montacute House, Yeovil, Friday 12th June. This play of both comedy and passion delivers the most suspense-filled court scene of all the great plays. Once again, an all-male company will perform a Shakespeare classic with startling clarity, energy, and brilliance in a richly costumed production designed to appeal to all ages.

Tickets in advance £12.50, under 17 £8.50 on the night £14.00, under 17 £10.00. Tel: 0844 249 1895

noda SOUTH WEST CONFERENCE

This year's conference will be held on 5th and 6th September at The Palace Hotel, Torquay. Full details of accommodation and workshop packages available online at: www.noda.org.uk or from our Secretary, Adrian: Tel: 01935 422141



MOWGLI IN BEAMINSTER

A young man emerges from the jungle and leads a Forest Officer straight to where the man-eating tiger has hidden. But how? He says he grew up in the jungle, speaks all the animals' languages and learned their laws. But is this true?

Mowgli's REAL adventures are more extraordinary and a lot more exciting than any cartoon film! In this brand new production, Illyria uses an ensemble chorus, masks, puppetry and song to evoke the amazing world of Kipling's jungle.

Open air performance Beaminster Manor Sunday 28 June at 2 pm. Call 01308 862943



ALL ABOARD FOR HAMLET at Brownsea Open Air Theatre

Enjoy a boat trip to the island, picnic on church field and performance of Hamlet presented by Brownsea Open Air Theatre. Performances at 7.30 pm from Wednesday 22 July to Friday 7 August

Tickets £19 but going fast! Tel: Brownsea Open Air Theatre, 01202 251987.

noda REVIEW

By our NODA representative Peter Wheeldon

THE LOVE OF FOUR COLONELS

The Amateur Players of Sherborne Digby Hall

Director: Charles Napier

21st November

As the curtain rises to a prolonged uneasy silence between four post-second world war Allied military officers, there is little hint of the fairy tale to unfold. Writer Peter Ustinov based his humour - well exploited by the Players - on a pointed comparison of the national idiosyncrasies of the Anglo/US/Franco/Russian administration seen through the demeanour and fantasies of colonels from each country. The four colonels, in the form of Stuart McCreadie, Roger Chadbourne, Patrick Knox and Adrian Thorpe, did very well in clearly delineating their distinctive characteristics, as well as their accents, and maintaining them throughout the play. Faced with the multi-role task of playing to each colonel's individual fantasy, Lenna Webster was a convincing, and engaging, Beauty. The greatest burden, though skilfully executed, fell on Charles Napier who, in addition to directing the play and designing the set, had to step into a principal role at short notice. The set presented a stiff challenge to the extent that it required the reproduction of a fully-curtained-and-lit set as part of the main set wherein each colonel in turn acted out his Sleeping Beauty fantasy. Yet another competent production from the Amateur Players of Sherborne.



Theatrical Anecdotes



"She's not so great," a fellow actress once proclaimed of the legendary Tallulah Bankhead. "I can upstage her any time."

"Darling," Tallulah retorted, "I can upstage you without even being on stage!"

At their next performance, Bankhead resolved to prove her point. In one scene, while her rival was engaged in a prolonged telephone conversation, Tallulah was to put down the champagne glass from which she had been drinking and make her exit upstage.

That evening, she carefully placed the half-filled glass in a precarious position, teetering at the very edge of the table, half on and half off... The audience - gasping, riveted by the endangered glass - completely ignored the other actress.

Bankhead, it turned out, had surreptitiously affixed adhesive tape to the bottom of the glass!

FAMOUS NAMES OF THE STAGE

Lillie Langtry, born on Jersey 13 October, 1853 was a successful British actress. A renowned beauty, she was nicknamed the "Jersey Lily" and had a number of prominent lovers, including the future King Edward VII.



At the suggestion of one of her close friends, Oscar Wilde, Lillie embarked upon a stage career. In December 1881. She made her debut in 'She Stoops to Conquer' at the Haymarket Theatre. The following autumn, she made her first tour of America, an enormous success, which she repeated in subsequent years.

She lived at 21 Pont Street, London from 1892 to 1897. Although from 1895 the building was actually the Cadogan Hotel. A blue plaque on the hotel commemorates this, and the hotel's restaurant is named *Langtry's* in her honour.

She was also the subject of The Who's 1967 recording, Pictures of Lily about a young man infatuated by her image. A line from the song states "She's been dead since 1929".

She died in Monaco in 1929, and was buried in the graveyard of St. Saviour's Church in Jersey the church where her father had been rector.

IN THIS MONTH

H.M.S. Pinafore; or, The Lass that Loved a Sailor a comic opera in two acts, with music by Arthur Sullivan and libretto by W. S. Gilbert. was the first big hit by Gilbert and Sullivan. It opened at the Opera Comique in London on 25 May 1878 for a run of 571 performances, which was the second longest run of any musical theatre piece up to that time (after the operetta *Les cloches de Corneville*). *H.M.S. Pinafore* was Gilbert and Sullivan's fourth operatic collaboration.

Poetry Corner

Poems about the theatre are somewhat rare but I did find a few. Here's one by A P Herbert. Not only an author and a regular contributor to Punch, he was also an MP and largely responsible for the bill (1937) liberalizing English divorce law. And now, the poem:

Dear Madam, you have seen this play;
I never saw it till today.
You know the details of the plot,
But, let me tell you, I do not.
The author seeks to keep from me
The murderer's identity,
And you are not a friend of his
If you keep shouting who it is.
The actors in their funny way
Have several funny things to say,
But they do not amuse me more
If you have said them just before;
The merit of the drama lies,
I understand, in some surprise;
But the surprise must now be small
Since you have just foretold it all.
The lady you have brought with you
Is, I infer, a half-wit too,
But I can understand the piece
Without assistance from your niece.
In short, foul woman, it would suit
Me just as well if you were mute;
In fact, to make my meaning plain,
I trust you will not speak again.
And---may I add one human touch?---
Don't breathe upon my neck so much.

Perhaps you have a notion to write a rhyme, on any subject, not more than 42 lines. If so, you could be in line to win the top prize of £5000 in **The Bridport Prize 2009**. There is also a short story category - maximum 5000 words - with the same top prize. The overall proviso is that entries must be entirely the work of the entrant and must never have been published anywhere.

Even if you don't win top prize, or 2nd £1000, or 3rd £500, there are ten runners up prizes of £50.


There is also the **Dorset Award** of £100 and a perpetual trophy to the highest placed local Dorset winner or runner up.

Judge of the poems will be Jackie Kay, Professor of Creative Writing at Newcastle University and author Ali Smith will judge the short story entries

Entry fee is £6 per poem, £7 per story submitted. You can send as many entries as you like. Closing date is midnight Tuesday 30 June. Prize winners will be notified in writing by the beginning of October 2009.

For full details, lots more information and entry form go to www.bridportprize.org.uk or pick up a leaflet from the library.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**MAY 2009**

Mon 18th to Sat 23rd	Spiders Web Agatha Christie	Theatre Royal, Bath Mon/Wed 7.30 Thurs/Sat 8 pm Matinees Wed, Thurs, Sat 2.30 pm
Wed 20th	A Grand Theatrical Quiz Led by Charles Napier	Nether Compton Village Hall 7.30 pm
Thurs 21st	 Sherborne Comedy Henning Wehn	Powell Theatre, Sherborne Doors open 7.30, show at 8.30 pm
Thurs 21st to Sat 23rd	The Cemetery Club SNADS (See Page ?)	The Exchange, Sturminster Newton 7.30 pm
Tues 26th	Tess of the D'Urbervilles Bristol Old Vic Theatre School	Little Theatre, Wells 7.30 pm
Fri 29th	Dorset Extravaganza Friends of Weldmar Hospicecare Trust	Sherborne Boys' School and nearby From 10 am

JUNE 2009

Mon 1st to Sat 6th	Alphabetical Order By Michael Frayn	Theatre Royal, Bath Mon/Wed 7.30pm. Thurs/Sat 8pm
Fri 12th	Merchant of Venice Festival Players	Montacute House 7.30 pm
Tues 16th to Wed 17th	The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui Somerset College Performing Arts and The Operating Theatre Company	The Brewhouse, Theatre, Taunton 7.45 pm
Thurs 18th	A play-reading Led by Eve Simmonds	Nether Compton Village Hall 7.30 pm
Wed 24th to Sat 27th	 Double Death Ilminster Entertainment Society	The Warehouse Theatre, Ilminster 7.30 pm
Fri 26th	Romeo and Juliet Chapterhouse Theatre Company	The Bishop's Palace, Wells 7.30 pm open air.
Sat 27th	Tess of the D'Urbervilles Bristol Old Vic Theatre School	Bridport Arts Centre 7.30pm
Sun 28th	The Mowgli Stories Illyria	Beaminster Manor, North Street 2 pm, gates open 12 noon

Bridport Arts Centre: Call 01308 424204 or reserve online at www.bridport-arts.com

Powell Theatre: Call 01935 810579 or www.powelltheatre.co.uk for tickets.

The Brewhouse Theatre: Call 01823 283244 or www.thebrewhouse.net.

Theatre Royal, Bath: Call 01225 448844 or www.theatreroyal.org.uk for tickets and matinee times.

Bishop's Palace, Wells: Call 01749 678691 extension 200.

The Warehouse Theatre: Box Office opens 6-8 pm Mondays, 10-12 noon Fridays. Call 070502 189717

Little Theatre, Wells: Call 01749 672280

Beaminster Manor: Call 01308 862943

NB: As Diary Dates is compiled well in advance, do check with the venue for changes in programme.

**From Jim, your editor**

If you would like any local performances advertised in the *Dates for your Diary* section in future newsletters, please send any details to me at:

jim.reville@btinternet.com or give me a ring on (01935) 814626. If I'm not there, I will ring you back.

JUNE COPY DEADLINE: THURSDAY 28 MAY

Last Word...

"If you want to see your plays performed the way you wrote them, become President."

Vaclav Havel, last President of Czechoslovakia and first President of the Czech Republic, has written over twenty plays.