

Up front from your Chairman

The moral of this message is: *Nil Desperandum*. Just when some members might be forgiven for fearing that APS could be entering a terminal decline, an energetic young director turns up, assisted, what's more, by an energetic young stage manager/business manager. Together with their strong backstage team and cast, they pulled off a vintage APS classic. There's more. As so frequently happens in the theatre, there were those who feared, at a late stage, that the production would not work. It did. Concurrent with all this was the massive worry of losing our scenery and wardrobe store. Did this mean the end of award-winning sets? Would we have to sell or throw away all our costumes and props? Where could we go? You will read or hear details of our rescue elsewhere, but at present I can say it is looking likely that we will have the use of premises in Sherborne by the time we have to get out of the castle. Our founder, Fred, and his daughter, Joy, would be proud to know that, having passed our three quarter century, we are still on course to reach our Centenary. Please support the remaining events in this season's programme.

Gill Manns



Tia Carr - Charles' little helper



SAY GOODBYE TO THE STABLES...

Sherborne Castle Estates have plans to create a visitor centre, a museum and also to re-locate their estate office at the Stables. This means our twenty-six years rent free storage of our props, costumes, scenery and lights has come to an end. We have received notice to have moved out by the end of this year.

...SAY HELLO TO THE OLD CHAPEL

The task of finding a new home for all of our stuff has been resolved by the purchase of the Old Chapel by long-time APS member, Malcolm Cockburn, and enabling us to use it on the most generous of terms.

Formerly St Paul's Mission Church, built in 1883, it became redundant in 1929.

In West Dorset District Council's 2007 Sherborne Conservation Area Appraisal it features in the list of **Important Local Buildings**. Described as "a good example of a *tin tabernacle*", it boasts (as you will have obviously observed) lancet windows, a frilly bargeboard, a spired bell-cote and a central porch.



Inside, however, needs some attention, but nothing that the application of a bit of elbow grease, licks of paint here and there and a touch of TLC can't transform. It will take a summer of working parties to fix up and move everything from the Stables. Your support is essential to achieve this. Expect 'call-up' info to follow in due course.

EXCELLENT ENTERTAINING ENJOYMENT

What a thoroughly enjoyable production of murder and mayhem - and before very respectably-sized and well satisfied audiences, too.

Everyone pulled together to produce a splendid result - actors and production team. And, to Bev on her assured directorial debut, many congratulations.

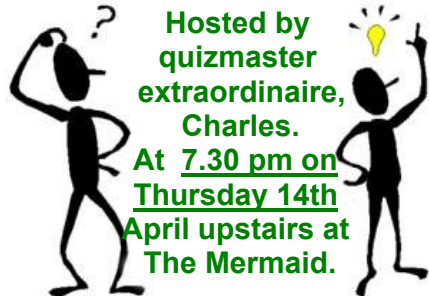
As handy with a paint brush



as a tape measure, 7 year old Tia Carr, Ruth's granddaughter, (see *photo left*) certainly earned her place in our production team.

APS social events in April and May

The fiendishly cunning Theatre Quiz



Hosted by
quizmaster
extraordinaire,
Charles.
At 7.30 pm on
Thursday 14th
April upstairs at
The Mermaid.

ANNUAL DINNER FRIDAY 13 MAY

Our Annual
Dinner will
be held on
the evening
of Friday

13th May in

the Arcadian ambience of the
Walled Garden Restaurant at
Castle Gardens.

The time: 7 for 7.30pm. The
cost: £17.50 for three courses or
£14.50 for two courses. A menu
choices form is either attached
for those receiving their
newsletter by post or available to
download from the Members
Page of our website.

Please forward the completed
form, together with you cheque,
payable to Amateur Players of
Sherborne to Helen Smith, 2
North View, Longburton DT9 5PH.
Tel: 01963 210824 email:
helen.smith49@googlemail.com

Do please book as soon as
possible and at the very latest by
Saturday 30 April.

And, for our after-dinner
entertainment, we will have the
pleasure of the inimitable Ruth
Rice.

Preferred dress is smart.
Wine and other drinks can be
bought from the bar.

NEW TOWN WEBSITE

There's a new website for
Sherborne town. As well as
featuring people and places,
there's a 'what's on' column, too.
www.sherbornedorset.co.uk

AUDITIONS SCHEDULED FOR OUR AUTUMN PRODUCTION



Auditions for our autumn
production, the Pulitzer prize-
winning play *Our Town* by
Thornton Wilder and to be
directed by Jennie Ward, will be
held next month.

The dates are: Wednesday
4th May (read-through) and
Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26
(try-outs) and all at 7.30 pm
upstairs at The Mermaid.

IT'S TIME FOR GREAT IDEAS



Yes, it's time for us to be
getting our thinking caps
on and coming up with
great ideas for our next
season's programme of social
events and productions. What
about a themed evening, play-
readings, musical evenings,
theatre trips, quizzes - or
something completely different.
**Also, most importantly, we need
to come up with a play for our
Spring 2012 slot.**

Now, don't leave it until the
day of our AGM, get in touch with
any member of the committee well
beforehand.

POSITIONS VACANT!!!

Our AGM - and Summer Party -
will take place at 7.30 pm on
Friday 22 July at Gainsborough
House, hosted by Jim and
Gwyneth Schofield.

This is your
opportunity to
vote for new
Committee
members. Not only that, but
actually to propose and second
candidates.

This year there will be
vacancies for Chairman and two
Ordinary Committee Members.

Nomination papers will be
sent out with the formal notice of
the AGM by Adrian, our
Secretary, approximately three
weeks beforehand.



CIVIC PLAYERS - PREPARE TO MEET THY TOMB

Yeovil-based
drama group,
Civic Players'
next production
is "Prepare to
meet thy Tomb", the recently-
written last of Norman Robbins'
black-comedy "Tomb" series.



Hecuba Tomb and her niece
Drusilla receive a series of
unexpected visitors as night falls
on their Monument House hotel.
Novelist Philippa and assistant
Daphne are seeking refuge from
a mysterious follower they fear
may be the notorious Norfolk
Strangler. Hot on their heels
come TV historian Quentin
Danesworth and vacuous
honeymooners Robert and
Miranda. The uninvited guests
are soon snooping around the
secret passages of the old
mansion and asking too many
questions for comfort, while the
body count grows.

It's on at the **Swan Theatre,
Yeovil, Wed 25th to Sat 28th
May at 7.30 pm.** More info at:
www.civicplayersyeovil.co.uk



The 5th season of The Met: Live
in HD features many of the most
popular operas.

Sat 23 April at 6 pm: Capriccio by
Richard Strauss.

Sat 30 April at 6 pm: Verdi's II
Trovatore.

Tues 17 May at 5 pm: Wagner's
Die Walkure

For performance details and
video sample go to:
www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/broadcast/hd_events_next.aspx
For Yeovil show times and
advance bookings go to:
www.cineworld.co.uk/cinemas/71

A Brief History of Theatre - in several parts: 8

The life of Shakespeare: AD 1564-1616



The mysterious death of Marlowe, the Cambridge graduate, and the brilliant subsequent career of Shakespeare, the grammar-school boy from Stratford, have caused some to speculate that his secret service activities make it prudent for Marlowe to vanish from the scene - and that he uses the name of a lesser man, Shakespeare, to continue his stage career. Others, similarly inclined to conspiracy theories, have convinced themselves that Shakespeare's plays are the work of the statesman and essayist Francis Bacon.

Snobbery rather than scholarship seems to underpin such arguments. Their proponents find it hard to accept that the unknown boy from Stratford should have created the crowning achievement of English literature.

The truth is that William Shakespeare is not such an unknown figure, and the education provided in England's

grammar schools of the time is among the best available. Shakespeare's baptism is recorded in Stratford-upon-Avon on 26 April 1564 (this is only three days after St George's Day, making possible the tradition that England's national poet is born, most fortunately, on England's national saint's day).

Shakespeare's father, John, is a leading citizen of the town and for a while a justice of the peace. It is a safe assumption (though there is no evidence) that Shakespeare is educated at Stratford's grammar school.

In 1582, at the age of eighteen, Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway. Their first child, Susanna, is baptized in 1583, followed by twins, Hamnet and Judith, in 1585.

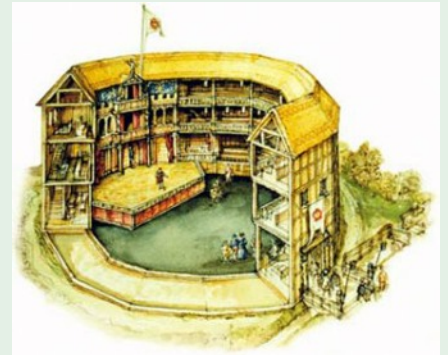
There is then a gap of several years in the documentary record of Shakespeare's life, but he is involved in the London theatre - as an actor trying his hand also as a playwright -

by at least 1592, when he is attacked as an 'upstart crow' in a polemical pamphlet by Robert Greene. In

1593 he publishes a poem, *Venus and Adonis*, following it in 1594 with *The Rape of Lucrece*. Meanwhile he has had performed the three parts of *Henry VI* and, probably in the winter of 1592, *Richard III*.

The London theatres are closed for fear of the plague during 1592

and 1593 apart from brief midwinter seasons, but in 1594 things return to normal and Shakespeare's career accelerates. He is now a leading member of London's most successful



company, run by the Burbage family at the Theatre. Patronage at court gives them at first the title of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. On the accession of James I in 1603 they are granted direct royal favour, after which they are known as the King's Men.

Shakespeare's share in the profits of this company, operating from the Globe on Bankside from 1599, makes him a wealthy man. Most of the subsequent documentary references relate to purchases in his home town of Stratford.

In 1597 Shakespeare pays £60 for a large house and garden, New Place in Chapel Street. By 1602 he has enough money to purchase an estate of 107 acres just outside Stratford, and he continues over the next few years to make investments in and around the town. In about 1610 he begins to spend less time in London and more in New Place, where he dies in 1616. He is buried in the chancel of the Stratford parish church.



A REALITY IN FIVE YEARS?



Sherborne Community Arts Centre took a step towards becoming a reality with the submission in February of a planning application to West Dorset District Council.

Sherborne ArtsLink, as the centre's likely significant resident, has been awarded a grant of £365,103 from the

National Lottery to fund its activities for the next five years.

Mr Peart, vice-chairman of SCAC Trust, said he is keen to welcome ArtsLink before the end of that funding period. "Fundraising will be a huge challenge. We hope to have it open in time to be of some benefit to the ArtsLink funding."

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**APRIL 2011**

Thurs 7 to Fri 8	Dancing at Lughnasa The Original Theatre Company	Octagon, Yeovil 7.30 pm
Thurs 7 to Sat 9	One flew ove the cuckoo's nest Frome Drama Club	Merlin Theatre, Frome 7.45 pm
Tues 12 to Sat 16	The Ghost Train 1920s drama	Studio Theatre, Salisbury 7.30 pm
Mon 11 to Sat 16	Journey's End R C Sherrif's WW1 drama	Theatre Royal, Bath Mon/Wed 7.30 Thurs/Sat 8 Matinees Wed&Sat 2.30
Mon 11 to Sat 16	Pirates of Penzance Wells Operatoc Society	Little Theatre, Wells 7.30 pm
<i>APS event</i> Thurs 14	The Theatre Quiz Quizmaster, Charles Napier	Upstairs at The Mermaid 7.30 pm
Tues 19 to Thurs 21	Hamlet Globe Theatre on tour	Strode Theatre, Street Tues/Wed 7.30 Thurs 2.30 pm

MAY 2011

Mon 2 to Sat 14	Evita Lloyd Webber Musical	Theatre Royal, Bath Mon/Wed 7.30 Thurs/Sat 8 pm Mats Wed to Sat 2.30
Mon 9 to Sat 14	Abigail's Party Mike Leigh	The Swan, Yeovil 7.45 pm
<i>APS event</i> Fri 13	APS Annual Dinner See page 2	Walled Garden Restaurant Castle Gardens 7.30 pm
Mon 16	Freaks and Fishnets The Circus of Horrors	The Electric Palace, Bridport Time TBC
Tues 17	Die Walkure Wagner	Cineworld, Yeovil 5 pm
Mon 19 to Sat 21	Look Back in Anger Creative Cow	New Theatre, Exeter 7.30 pm
Wed 25 to Sat 28	Family Circles Alan Ayckbourn	Backwell Playhouse, Bristol 7.30 pm
Wed 25 to Sat 28	Prepare to meet thy Tomb Civic Players	Swan Theatre, Yeovil 7.30 pm

Theatre Royal, Bath: Box Office 01225 448844 www.theatreroyal.org.uk

New Theatre: Box Office 01392 277189 www.cygnetnewtheatre.com

Electric Palace: Box Office 01308 424901 www.electricplayhouse.org.uk

Backwell Playhouse: Box Office 01275 392936 www.backwellplayhouse.co.uk

Little Theatre: Box Office 01749 672280 www.littletheatrewells.org

Strode Theatre: Box Office 01458 442846 www.strodetheatre.co.uk

Merlin Theatre: Box Office 01373 465949 www.merlintheatre.co.uk

Studio Theatre, Salisbury: Call 07789 858126 www.studiotheatre.org.uk

Cineworld, Yeovil: Call 0871 200 2000. Google Cineworld, Yeovil then select advance booking.

Swan Theatre: Tourist Information Centre 01935 845946. www.swan-theatre.co.uk

The Octagon, Yeovil: Call Box Office 01935 283884 or www.octagon-theatre.co.uk

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

NewsLetter
DEADLINE

If you would like any local performances advertised in the **Dates for your Diary** section please send any details to me at: jim.reville@btinternet.com or give me a ring on (01935) 814626. If I'm not there leave your message and I will ring you back.

May Copy DEADLINE: Thursday 28 April

Last Word...

Many plays - certainly mine - are like blank checks. The actors and directors put their own signatures on them.

Thornton Wilder