

NOISES OFF

'KEEPING OUR END UP'

We are half-way through our rehearsal schedule for *Keeping Our End Up*, and I'm delighted to report that our cast of five APS ladies have gelled well together onstage, to create a credible and lovable imaginary Longfield Bishop Bowls Team. They know all their words – mostly – and don't bump into each other any more. The dialogue works, and the teamwork shines through. Sherborne Bowling Club have kindly loaned us a huge number of props which will decorate the stage and, hopefully, will spirit you away to a Bowls Pavilion in Middle England.

When you come to see this, you will be watching only the second ever production of this play. It was written in 2019, by Mark Carey, a talented TV actor and occasional playwright, and

first performed at the Loft Theatre in Leamington Spa in April of that year. Then the pandemic struck, and other scheduled productions around the country were subsequently



postponed. We at APS are the first to pick it up and perform it since the restrictions were relaxed. The APS team read it as a Zoom play when we weren't allowed to meet in person, and instantly fell in love with

it. The clever but gentle humour, blended with the touching depiction of five ladies struggling with real-life problems, really struck a chord with us. Set against a background of a bowls team languishing at the bottom of the league, it neatly balances a sentimental vision of middle-class, middle-England with believable and often tragic stories bubbling just below the surface.

So, when you come to see it, I hope the women in the audience will laugh and maybe cry at the bits of these women that they recognise in themselves. And I hope the men, like me, will also laugh and cry and maybe understand a little better and empathise a little more.

Adrian Harding

Tickets will be available from the APS website on August 29th.

AUDITION CALL - "BETRAYAL"

Our December production is to be *Betrayal* by Harold Pinter, one of his finest plays, remarkable for its reverse chronology and the range of emotions constantly seething between the lines of a script which uses language with economy, precision and humour. The 'betrayal' in question begins as the seduction, by a literary agent, of his best friend's wife. Performed on a minimal set, it demands subtle acting, with careful attention to the significance of every word, gesture and pause. As the play runs backwards in time from the end of the affair to

its feverish but doomed beginning, audiences can see more into the characters and their motivation than they can themselves.

There are four parts: two men, Jerry and Robert - should be about the same age, 30-40, can look 40-50 (or vice versa); one woman: Emma, similar age, perhaps a little younger. (These are three substantial parts.) Also there is an Italian waiter/waitress, any age, in only one scene, with just a few lines.

Betrayal will be directed by Graham Smith (who also

directed *Educating Rita* earlier this year).

Rehearsals will start in October, and the performances will take place on 5th-10th December.

Auditions will take place at 7.30pm on Tuesday 13th September in the theatre - but if this is impossible (or if you have questions) please call Graham on 01747 855295 to express your interest and arrange an alternative time, probably in the week beginning 3rd October.

"BILLY LIAR" - LAST WORD

We have received two extremely complimentary reports on our July production of *Billy Liar* from the Rose Bowl Award adjudicator, and from the critic from NODA ("... an absolute triumph..."). Both visitors were fulsome in their praise for what APS has managed to create within the confines of our studio theatre, and were very impressed by the quality of direction, technical support and acting. There wasn't very much we could do about the stifling heat!

You can read both reports in full - see the "Last Production" section of the website.

SOCIAL

It has been difficult to get APS social activities up and running post-pandemic, and our four-productions-a-

year cycle limits the availability of the theatre and suitable dates. However we are planning to hold a **Quiz Night with fish & chip supper** on Saturday October 15th at 7.30pm. The October 100 Club draw will take place during the course of the evening. Details will follow in due course, but make a note in your diary. More play readings are also in the pipeline, together with a second Acting Workshop, with details still to be confirmed.

THE AGM AND SUMMER PARTY

This is a reminder that the **AGM** will take place in the theatre on Wednesday August 31st at 7.30pm, followed by the annual **Summer Party**. Details of the events, including agenda, minutes of last year's meeting, nomination forms, and candidates for officers, are all available on the APS website. Rest assured, the formal AGM is usually very short, and the focus of the rest of the evening is on having a good time with food and drink and good company. Who knows, possibly some top-notch entertainment as well!

THE 100 CLUB

The third draw of the 100 Club took place on August 13th, with the lucky prize-winner pocketing £31. We continue to urge all APS members who have not yet done so to join the 100 Club, and help us in our drive to replace the chairs in the theatre with new purpose-built seating. (After only six months, the Club is already showing a profit of over £700.) For only a few pennies a month, you can make a big difference, and, of course, stand a chance of winning cash prizes. Details are on the "Support Us" section of the APS website. The next draw will take place during the Quiz Night on October 15th.

FUTURE PLANS CONT...

sale from August 29th).

Betrayal by Harold Pinter, directed by Graham Smith, will be on 5th - 12th December.

Details of a production to take place in March 2023 are still being finalised.

Whose Life Is It Anyway? by Brian Clark, directed by Martin Williams, will be on 5th - 12th June 2023.

Bouncers and Shakers by John Godber, directed by Sarah Nias, will be on 18th - 23rd September 2023.

And Shakespeare's ***Twelfth Night***, directed by John Crabtree, will be on a date to be confirmed in November or December 2023.

Full details of all of these will, of course, be published both in *Noises Off* and in the website.

FUTURE PLANS

Plans for productions in the coming year are starting to take shape.

Keeping Our End Up

by Mark Carey, directed by Adrian Harding, will, of course, be on September 25th - October 1st (tickets on