

"K.O.E.U."
SPECIAL!

NOISES OFF

APS SOCIAL EVENTS

We have not one but two social events coming up very shortly, and we hope for an excellent turnout at both.

PLAYREADING

On Wednesday 12th October, at 7.30pm in the Theatre, Bev Taylor-Wade will be hosting a playreading of *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13 3/4* by Sue Townsend. As always with our playreadings, this is a light-hearted evening in which you are invited to take part if you wish, but without any pressure to do so. It's fine just to sit back and listen.

There is a possibility that this play will go on to be chosen to be performed as our March 2023 production - dependent partly on feelings expressed on Wednesday, and, of course, by our ability to audition and recruit a suitable cast. If you wish to

attend, please email Bev bev.taylor.wade@gmail.com so she can send you a digital script.

For more information on the play, please see page 6.

QUIZ NIGHT

On Saturday October 15th, more than a year since our last one, we are holding the ever-popular Quiz Night (with fish and chip supper). Hosted by Martin Williams, who has promised a "fairly gentle" decades-based theme to the quiz, we hope for a bumper turnout for what should be a fun evening. Entry is £2.50 a head. You may enter as a team of (roughly) four, but don't worry if you don't have a team - you'll be drafted into one. When you arrive, you will be asked if you wish to place an order for fish & chips, which will then be delivered during the interval. Please note that the entry fee, and the supper money, has to be CASH ONLY.

If you wish to come along, please send an email to

Martin

mrw1105@hotmail.co.uk

so he has an idea of numbers. Nearer the day, you will be notified of the cost of the food, if you wish to order any.

Unfortunately we will not have an alcohol licence for either of these events, so please bring your own drink if you wish. We can provide glasses!

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome these new members to APS: **Chris Williamson, Alex Scrivenor, and Luke Harvey**. We hope you will have a long and active association with APS. We also welcome three new members of the 100 Club: **Janet Vincent, Janice Nast and Yvonne Ratcliffe**. Thank you for your support.

“KEEPING OUR END UP”

It's a wrap! - The Director's View...

Having returned to directing a play for the first time in 33 years, I approached *Keeping Our End Up* with some trepidation. Working closely with an entirely female cast and attempting, as a man, to convincingly portray their thoughts, insights and emotions, felt like it might be a bit of a challenge. But I needn't have worried. Jessica, Sarah, Jane, Caroline and Millie were a delight to work with and, to quote some words which recurred on several occasions, “we had a blast”. You can tell if the cast are enjoying themselves - or not -



except when the demands of the NHS A&E department imposed a couple of evening

characters. The play is billed as a comedy – to attract the audience – but it is far more than that; it touched on several sensitive issues of women’s health, interpersonal relationships, marital conflict and mental welfare. These have to be accurately and believably conveyed if the audience is to be drawn into the narrative and empathise with the life experience of the characters.



when you count the unexplained absences from rehearsals. In the case of *Keeping Our End Up*, all of these wonderful ladies attended every rehearsal,

shifts on Millie. They even volunteered to participate in extra sessions to hone the subtlety of some of the more sensitive interactions which are key to the credibility of the

It was always my intention to keep this production safe and simple, with no huge demands on set-construction and technical effects; no staircases, gardens, complex scene changes or pyrotechnics. However, we had some “firsts” which I am delighted to report worked well. It was Millie’s first dramatic performance since her schooldays, and it was pure joy to see her develop through the rehearsal process to a point where she



always lit up the stage at every entrance. It was good to welcome Beth Yates to the gallery in her first production as lead lighting technician, and to see how well she worked with Mark and Nick. It was also fascinating to see Mark experimenting for the first time with a new computerised sound system which enabled him to programme overlapping realistic sound effects which would not have worked with the previous system. Or (in Mark's words) "would have required him to have the arms of an octopus" to synchronise the cues.

We have performed our first matinée, which allowed some people to see the play who otherwise weren't able to come. To justify it in crude economics, it has made a significant contribution to APS funds without incurring additional costs. Our final 'first' is that we are taking a non-touring production on tour, for a one-off charity performance of *Keeping Our End Up* at Long Sutton Village Hall.

The highlight for all of us was the visit of the play's author, Mark Carey, and his wife Cecilia. He claims to have

thoroughly enjoyed the Friday night performance and felt that we had done his creation justice. And we believe him. All of us feel proud of our particular contribution to a play which we are sure has entertained the Sherborne audience, provoked some introspection about the middle-aged woman's condition, but also sent them away with smiles on their faces.

Adrian Harding

...and the View from the Stalls...

With its invitingly cheeky title, combined with the perky, seaside-postcard artwork (Beryl Cook's inimitable style just right for the occasion), we might have expected *Keeping Our End Up* to be a riot of Frankie Howerd/Benny Hill inspired sauciness. And it is true that the APS autumn play provided laughs aplenty, hugely enjoyed by the packed house (on the night I attended - and I understand all the other performances went down equally well.)

The situation is perfectly set for comedy - a disastrously unsuccessful bowls team; a pavilion with a roof so leaky that the many strategically-placed buckets require constant emptying during the inevitable rainstorm; a recalcitrant clock which refuses to tell the right time, but crashes to the floor with perfect punctuality; an off-stage football match believed to be being played by a team consisting entirely of "vets"; a young woman carrying on an



almost physically romantic association with a tea urn.... the list could go on and on.

The beautifully-balanced and highly talented cast of 5 ladies played the comedy for all it was worth, and more than did justice to the fun of this newly-emerging play, which is certain to become a great favourite. It was wonderful to welcome back Caroline Hart (Joan) after a fairly lengthy APS "holiday", and also to get the chance to see more of one of our newest members, MillieAnne Hyde (Jan), after her last year's cameo role and her backstage contributions to *Rita*. Jane Pitts (Fee) showed us once again why she so loves, and feels so at home, with comedy. Sarah Webster (Ursula), after a number of relatively small roles in APS shows, finally got the chance to tackle a lengthy and demanding part (not to mention some great singing!) with gusto and aplomb. And Jessica Colson playing Ronnie - a JP, senior member and captain of the team - wore the part like a beautifully-fitting glove.

So the laughs were there. But this play is not a farce,

and it would have been wrong to treat it as such. Much of the humour is very dark, and daringly touches on (sometimes more than touches on) areas such as domestic violence, infidelity, bereavement, loneliness, coercive control. None of the characters is untouched by at



least one of these, and the great achievement of this production - to the obvious credit of the Director as well as the actors - was to provoke both reflection, thought and sympathy as well as affection and laughter. All the ladies were victims in one way or another and sought to escape or improve their situations, yet all were also buoyant, and,

despite internal wrangling and disagreements, recognised that they were stronger together than apart. And so it was, naturally, that their bowls team avoided catastrophe and could look forward to a bright future.

The play was thus fun, provocative, and uplifting. Another great hit for APS - and thank you to the whole team for a great evening. Special mention should be made of the technical team (including our newest recruit, Beth Yates), who did a superb job with the demands of co-ordinating flashes of lightning, crashes of thunder, the sound of rain dripping into buckets, perfectly-timed goals being scored and cheered offstage and so on. Scene changes were slick and swift; the set perfectly designed and created with just the right two shades of institutional green.

One other unsung hero was Gilly Savage, who took over the masterminding of the bar and Front of House teams at short notice and with great skill. Thanks also to the teams of volunteers who helped Gilly each evening.

MW

THE 100 CLUB

The 100 Club has now been in existence for a little over six months, and has already distributed nearly £100 in prize money. More to the point, by the end of 2022, the APS will have benefited to the tune of more than £1000, making our medium-term aim of replacing the seating in the auditorium appear a very realistic one.

Membership is creeping upwards (and as it does so, the value of the prizes also increases), but there are still many tickets available before the limit of 100 is reached. We are very grateful to those APS members (and others) who have joined up, but it is a sad fact that as of now, **only around 25%** of APS members have done so. For the cost of a

few pennies a month, you could make a terrific difference - please, please go to the "Support Us" section of the APS website to download an application form, or email SST100club@gmail.com for more details.

The next draw will take place during the Quiz Night on Saturday 15th October. **You could join the Club there and then, and be in with chance of winning!**

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Betrayal by Harold Pinter, directed by Graham Smith, will be performed on 5th-10th December 2022.

Details of a production to take place in March 2023 are still being finalised, but we have hopes of it being *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13 3/4*, by Sue Townsend.

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.

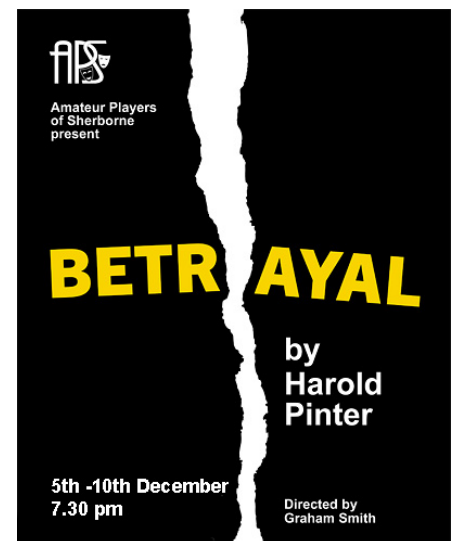
Full details of all of these will, of course, be published both in *Noises Off* and in the website.

OUR NEXT SHOW....

Betrayal is one of Pinter's most accessible plays, but also reckoned by many to be his masterpiece. The plot concerns the seduction of a best friend's wife and the course of the subsequent affair, but the theme is how human interaction is layered with duplicity and self-deception. Some scenes are consecutive in time, but Pinter largely reverses the chronology, beginning with the aftermath of the affair and running back to its passionate beginning. Because we already know how it all ends, the closing scenes acquire a fascinating depth of meaning. The script is sparse and plain, straightforward on the surface, but every syllable, look, pause and silence is significant, letting us see into the characters' inner feelings and manoeuvrings: competitiveness, dishonesty, evasion, jealousy, regret, anger – and love. When the single word 'betrayal' is dropped into a central scene it spreads its ripples all the

way through the taut structure of the play. Emma, Robert and his "best man" Jerry are all ultimately guilty of betrayal – of each other, and not least of themselves.

This play is both simple and complex, sad and funny, utterly engrossing to rehearse, perform and watch – truly a serious



comedy. The Studio Theatre is the ideal environment in which to follow the characters' most intimate emotions and marvel at Pinter's craft.

Betrayal will be performed in the Studio Theatre from 5th-10th December, with an additional matinée on Saturday 10th.

ROSE BOWL AWARDS

Once again, APS has been recognised as the high-achieving company we are by receiving a number of nominations for the annual Rose Bowl Awards - which recognise and reward quality amateur drama in Bristol and the South-West of England.

The Oscars-style ceremony will take place in Bristol on the 27th November, and the following nominations have been received:

Sarah Nias as Best Actress for her portrayal of Rita in *Educating Rita*

Roger Chadbourne as Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of Mr Mayhew in *Witness for the Prosecution*

Patrick Knox as Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of Mr Myers QC in *Witness for the Prosecution*

Richard Culham as Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of Geoffrey in *Billy Liar*

And the production of *Educating Rita*, directed by **Graham Smith**, has been nominated as Best Dramatic Production.

Congratulations to all these, and we very much hope to have some even better news to report after the ceremony.

7.30PM OCTOBER 12TH PLAYREADING = THE SECRET DIARY OF ADRIAN MOLE (AGED 13 3/4)

(Continued from p1) Poor Adrian: a budding poet and intellectual surrounded by the perplexing world of the adults in his life. Adrian must contend with his mother seeking a more fulfilling existence, his father's descent into despair – both helped along by the neighbours. His gran is a force to be reckoned with and he now must help look after a smelly old curmudgeon with a dangerous dog. The potential bright spark in his life is his love for the sophisticated Pandora,

although she has chosen his best friend.

This play is based on Adrian's diary, where he pours out his musings and opinions, whilst wrestling with the mysteries of adult behaviour. This is set in Leicester in the 1980's; we have references to Thatcher, Germain Greer and Vesta chow mein. Midlands accents are not required.

If you would like to join our play reading on Wednesday, please email Bev at bev.taylor.wade@gmail.com

