

APS NEWSLETTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF AMATEUR PLAYERS OF SHERBORNE / NUMBER 16 / OCTOBER 1980

STRONG CAST FOR 'TABLE MANNERS'

Rehearsals are now well under way for the Players' autumn production: Table Manners by Alan Ayckbourn. David Webb has selected a particularly talented cast for his production, headed by Peter Wellby as Norman, the part created in London by Tom Courtenay and played on television by Tom Conti. Peter will get strong feminine support from Christine Stones as Sarah, Janet Vincent as Annie and Christine Hatch as Ruth. The cast is completed by Alan Howard as Reg and Stuart Carter as Tom. The set design and lighting will be in the capable hands of Hrolf Trump, and Madeline Farrant will be looking after stage management. Props - which seem to consist mainly of lettuce - will be managed by Margaret Morris, and David Richardson will be in charge of publicity for this production. Joy Saunders is to prompt, and Robert and Clare Lake will be responsible for front-of-house and programmes.

Table Manners will take the stage of the Digby Hall from Thursday 27 November to Saturday 29 November. Any play by Alan Ayckbourn can be relied upon to attract large audiences, so be sure to book early if you want good seats. Tickets will be available at Carter's from Thursday 6 November.

'ABELARD AND HELOISE' TO BE SPRING PRODUCTION

In complete contrast to the domestic comedy of Table Manners, Stuart Carter has chosen Ronald Millar's fine play, Abelard and Heloise, for his spring 1981 production. Members who saw the original London production, with Keith Michell and Diana Rigg as the tragic 12th century lovers, will welcome another chance to see this strong and spectacular drama. Because of the particular nature of this play, Stuart has decided to produce it on a thrust stage, with the audience seated on three sides of the acting area. Those who recall Stuart's exciting staging of Tess of the d'Urbervilles in 1978 will look forward to seeing this success repeated with Abelard and Heloise.

Audition details will be circulated in the next newsletter but make a note now of the audition date: Tuesday 6 January 1981. The production will require well over twenty varied speaking parts, with some non-speaking actors needed as well, so there will be a better than usual chance of being cast in this challenging production.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?

Members are reminded that subscriptions are now due, and should be paid to Madeline Farrant (Sherborne 9999) as soon as possible. The subscription is still only one pound, for which ridiculously low sum members are entitled to take part in or assist with productions and other events, and to attend thirteen special evenings during the coming year. Where else can you find such good value for only a pound? So don't delay: let Madeline have your subscription now.

JUNIOR PLAYERS REVIVED

Thanks largely to the enthusiasm and initiative of Jim Schofield, the Junior Players are now active once again. Regular meetings are being held, and a production of Aladdin is in rehearsal under the direction of new member John Branch. JAPS are a vital and very important aspect of our activities and deserve the fullest support from all our members. Contact Jim (Sherborne 9999) if you want to help in any way, or if you would like to have any further information about JAPS activities.

ROSE BOWL RESULTS

Members will remember that Lance Salway's production of Wait Until Dark was entered in the Bristol Evening Post Rose Bowl Contest for 1979-80. Despite the glowing adjudication from the Rose Bowl judge [reprinted in full in the January newsletter], our production did not feature among the winning entries. The award for the best production went to Blankford Players for their production of John Webster's The White Devil, with Cabbageford Dramatic Society runners-up with Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard. The best performance awards were given to Fuchsia Floog of Exville Players for her portrayal of Shaw's St Joan, and to Sidney Flump as Jimmy Porter in the Turnip Players staging of Look Back in Anger.

Despite this lack of success, the Wait Until Dark producer and cast enjoyed the additional challenge presented by the Rose Bowl entry. It's a pity, though, that the adjudication offered no constructive criticism. Entry in drama competitions of this kind is only worthwhile if the judges provide detailed criticism of the failures and shortcomings of a particular production, and if the cast and producer are able to learn practical lessons from the experience.

DON'T FORGET . . .

Petronella Macnaghten's playreading of Treasure Hunt by M.J. Farrell and John Perry will take place in the Club Room on Tuesday 14 October at 8 pm. Please support this, and all our other functions.

On Thursday 30 October, Margaret King will be staging Veterans' Vagaries, an entertainment by senior members of the society. This evening promises to be great fun, so make sure of a good seat in the Club Room at 8 pm.

On Tuesday 16 December in the Old Music School, Hospital Lane, Daisy Mangnall will be offering another helping of Christmas Crackers at 8 pm. Daisy's first Christmas Crackers evening was one of the big successes of 1977, so make a note now of the date of the second instalment. Remember: it takes place in the Old Music School.

PLAYERS ENTERTAIN THE ELDERLY

On Saturday 25 October, a small group of members presented an entertainment at the request of the Red Cross. Songs and monologues were performed by Bewsey Dyke, Jenny Hall, Alan Howard, Christine Stones, Daisy Mangnall and Stuart Carter, and the performance was greatly enjoyed by the audience. The Committee often receives requests from organisations for informal entertainments of this kind. Any member who would like to take part in any future performances is asked to contact Joy Saunders (Sherborne 9999).

WELCOME . . .

to two new members who have recently joined us. PEGGY ASHCROFT has moved to Sherborne from Stratford-on-Avon where she was active with a local drama group. Peggy is anxious to help with painting scenery and making coffee at our events. THELMA PRESCOTT has joined us from West Hartlepool where she produced several plays for a local society. She has offered to produce a Greek tragedy for us - in Greek. Thank you, Thelma!

. . . AND FAREWELL

MILLICENT PLINTH has now left Sherborne for her new home in Holloway after eighty-six years active membership of the Players. Older members will recall her production of Blithe Spirit, staged in Japanese costume on a raft in the middle of Sherborne Castle lake. The fact that the play was completely inaudible and that there was a thunderstorm halfway through did not detract from the devastating impact of the production. We'll miss you, Millicent!

LOST PROPERTY

The member who left a Viking helmet in the Club Room after the playreading on 16 September may claim this object from Meg Whittingdale (Sherborne 9999).

HELP!

MARGARET MORRIS, in charge of props for Table Manners, is anxious to borrow a mediaeval Bulgarian nose-flute for use in the production. Any member who may have a spare that they are willing to lend is asked to contact Margaret (Sherborne 9999).

WENDY FARLEY and PAM RICHARDSON need volunteers to help make the sixty-three nuns' habits needed for Stuart Carter's production of Abelard and Heloise. Please ring Wendy (Sherborne 9999) or Pam (Sherborne 9999) if you are able to help.

CHRISTINE STONES is looking for a trapeze artist to take part in the entertainment she is organising for the Beer Hackett Branch of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Christine would also like to hear from any members able to sing Latvian madrigals. Her number is Sherborne 9999.

MADELINE FARRANT is calling for volunteers to help redecorate the Club Room on Saturday 16 November. Meet there at 10 am, or contact Madeline for further details (Sherborne 9999). Help is also needed on Saturday 22 November to transport flats and equipment from the Stables to the Digby Hall, and to erect the Table Manners set. Please come along to help in any way you can - don't leave all the hard work to the willing few. Meet at the Stables at 10 am, or at the Digby Hall later in the morning.

OVER TO YOU

This Newsletter is designed to keep you informed about Players events, news and activities. If you have any news, items of interest, complaints, requests or correspondence, please get in touch with Lance Salway (Sherborne 9999) and help to keep all our members in touch.