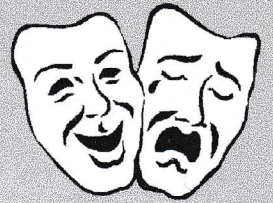




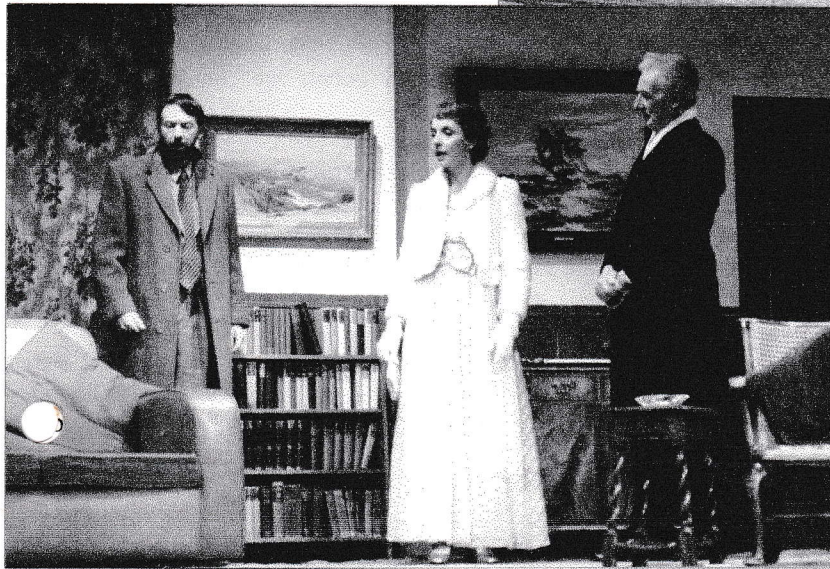
# NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 1998

**A**nother autumn production is over and all that is left are Des Armour's excellent photographs and the memory of what fun the last few months have been. My guardian angel is clearly looking after me as on the following Thursday my occasional back problem flared up for no obvious reason, leaving me *hors de combat* over what the previous week would have been the three performance nights!

Having been so closely involved I find it difficult this time to judge how it all went, but I have the impression that it has been at least a moderate success. Overall audience figures were reasonable—a total of about 370 people came to see it, and the overall take was £1666 of which £440 was profit. The Saturday performance was the most poorly attended, due almost certainly to the



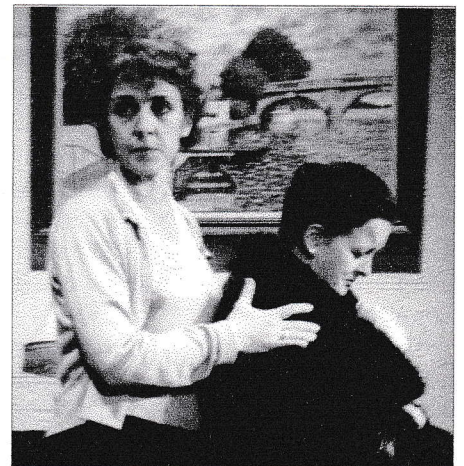
*Above: Janet Holt (Amanda McEvoy) and Stella Holt (Jessica Colson) set the scene.*

*Left: Maurice Holt (Mark Lambert) would like to get rid of the body in the cupboard, but can't because Janet has arrived home early with Colonel Forbes (Tony Field).*

*Below right: Iris Holt (Suzanne Ford), believing she has killed her husband, is comforted by Janet.*

*Below left: "...this is the only possible solution."*

*All photos by Des Armour.*



fact that several other events were going in Sherborne at the same time. This was a pity because we all felt that it was the best.

James Patrick's Rose Bowl Award adjudication has arrived very promptly and a copy will be available for perusal at members evenings. Overall it is quite positive. His criticisms on the whole seem fair, although some are clearly the result of the fact that he came on the Friday evening, which was not our best performance. I detect also a tendency to compare our production with the original in which Flora Robson and Andrew Cruikshank took the lead roles. He comments that "a touch of the Svengali was missing in Maurice", which with hindsight I feel may be fair comment, but on the other hand play



scripts can be open to different interpretations. I was pleased to see that he liked my performance in Act III.

He thought, as we all did, that Amanda McEvoy's portrayal of Janet was fascinating, with a character that "grew splendidly as she relaxed into closer contact with the



audience". I know that those of you who saw Amanda's performance will agree that she has great talent. What a range of moods and emotions she manages to show. I hope very much that she will remain with us for a long time to come.

Amanda and I owed a great deal to our supporting cast. Tony Field as the Colonel provided some lightness and humour in what were otherwise quite dark proceedings. Jessica Colson, was excellent as Maurice's more than loyal sister Stella. As James Patrick notes, she had one of the hardest roles (standing around on stage for long periods with little to say is not at all easy), and he thought that she conveyed her feelings with sensitivity. David Smith made a superbly unpleasant Colin, who was thus a pleasure to bump off every night. Suzanne Ford, in a quite different part to those she has played hitherto, was very convincing (even down to the painful-looking bruises) as Colin's abused wife Iris. Peter Thomas as Mr Howard gave the detective a amusingly casual, slightly Columbo-like style. Elsie Lombard used her talents to produce a delightfully exasperating Brenda, whom James Patrick describes as a "joyful little creation" And not forgetting, of course, Janet Vincent, who nobly stepped in to the role of Nurse Thomson with just two weeks to go. She delivered her few lines in her usual stylish way, bringing the house down every time with "I didn't know you intended it [the 'morphine'] for Mr Holt".

All our performances were, of course, coaxed out of us by our director Jennie Ward. James Patrick comments that Jennie's direction was "always technically and artistically creative" and over the three months of rehearsals Jennie worked on us very carefully, bringing to her directing her talents as an actress. When necessary she can demonstrate exactly what she wants in the way of movement or expression, while at the same time being happy and willing to listen to the actors' ideas. We had great fun during re-

*Colin Holt (David Smith) tells Stella, Janet and Maurice what he wants them to do.*

hearsals, collapsing with laughter on a surprising number of occasions, considering this was a psychological thriller. All in all a most enjoyable time. A very big thank you, Jennie, once again, from all of us.

Thanks also to the whole production team: Gill Manns for her sterling work as Production Manager, Robert Doling for the eye-catching publicity material (James Patrick comments that the Front of House and Publicity arrangements were outstandingly good); Chris Jessiman and Des Armour for the atmospheric set (also much appreciated by JP); and Tony Manns and the rest of the backstage team for working so hard on our behalf ("the show ran smoothly and professionally"). On the Sunday afterwards the set was struck in record time. We started at 9.00 am and by 10.30 the stage was completely clear. A leisurely cup of coffee and one more trip back to The Castle and the whole job was complete by about 11.30.

### APS Evenings

During the run up to the autumn production there has been only one members' evening, that of the autumn poetry conducted by Colin Mayes. I didn't attend myself, as I felt a night off was required at that point, but I understand it passed very pleasantly.

You will probably be reading this at or soon after the Christmas party, after which the next event is Meg Whittingdale's ever popular **Give Us A Clue**. Please note that this will be held in the **Griffith's Room of the Digby Road Church Hall**, as the Crown is unavailable on Jan. 13th. The **APS dinner** will be

## Prompt Corner

At the Crown Inn, 7.30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated

Tue. 5th and Wed. 6th January  
**Auditions** for *Theft* (see page 3)

Thursday 7th January  
**Preveza 1999?**  
A meeting to establish who wants to go

Wednesday 13th January  
**Give Us a Clue**  
Conducted by Meg Whittingdale  
Griffith's Room,  
Digby Road Church Hall 7.30 p.m.

Friday 29th January  
**Annual APS Dinner**  
Black Tie  
£10 per person excluding wine  
Book well in advance to secure places  
and at the latest by Friday 15th Jan

Friday 12th February  
**A celebration of St Valentine's Day**  
in music poetry and verse  
Led by Michael Baatz

at the Crown on Friday 29th January. The cost per person will be £10 excluding wine. A form on which to apply for places is attached. Please apply soon, so that we know how many people are coming. As before, you are welcome to bring a guest. Then, on February 12th, Michael Baatz will be hosting a celebration of St Valentine's day.

### Préveza 1999?

The visit of our Greek friends from Préveza last summer seems a long time ago now, but we have just had the official invitation to make a return visit next year. In fact they seem very keen that we should do so. Whether we can or not, however, depe

*Mr Howard (Peter Thomas) interviews Nurse Thomson (Janet Vincent).*



## Your Newsletter

I have recently received a comment to the effect that the type size I use in the Newsletter is too small to read easily. My correspondent tells me that he generally reads the boxed material, but not necessarily all of the main text, which seems a pity in view of the work involved. In fact the boxed material is exactly the same size, or sometimes smaller, so maybe it is the quantity of text in large blocks that is discouraging. However, the type size I use is in fact a size larger than that used in Daily Telegraph articles.

I could, of course, increase the type size by 1 pt (as in this paragraph) but this would mean either that the Newsletter covers more pages, which will increase the cost of production, or that the content has to be reduced. If you have a view on this, do let me know. Otherwise I shall assume that everyone else is content and carry on as now. ML

on several things. First we need to find out who is available and willing to go. Then we have to decide what sort of production to take, who is to direct it and when to go.

There will, therefore, be a meeting for anyone who is interested at The Crown Inn on Thursday January 7th at 7.30 (please make a note, this is not in your programme). As far as cost is concerned, each person going will have to find about £250 for their return flight to Prévèza. While there we will be looked after by our Greek hosts, no doubt right royally, but you will undoubtedly need some spending money for things such as odd snacks, shopping and sightseeing. I look forward to seeing as many of you at this meeting as possible. If you cannot attend, but are interested in taking part, please let me know beforehand (01258-817270).

### A home of our own?

Since having to vacate the Eldridge Pope premises, which I see has now been turned into 'superb apartments', we have been somewhat peripatetic. The Crown is a useful and very welcoming venue and the Cheap St Church Hall is a pleasant place to rehearse. However, the committee, and more particularly a sub-committee, have for some time been looking at buildings that might make a suitable 'home' for us—a place where we can leave things set up the way we want them and perhaps store some of the items that help to clutter up the wardrobe and set-building rooms at The Castle. The latest of these is the Rawson Hall in Westbury, which is about to be vacated by the Town Band. This is a distinctly dilapidated building, built largely of corrugated iron and timber, but we feel that with a bit of hard work it has

definite possibilities, being large enough to rehearse any production and even put on the occasional small show. At present the above mentioned sub-committee is investigating what sort of financial arrangement the owners might want—if indeed they would be willing to let it to us. So watch this space. If finances allow and we do decide to make use of it, we will need to put in a fair amount of work to make it more habitable.

### Dorset Drama League

Jason Hepple has now cast *Go To Sleep My Darling* (see panel below) and rehearsals have begun. Unfortunately, it appears that Jo Freestone, who was to have played Sally, is not allowed to do so, as the rules of the competition preclude anyone who has worked professionally in the last two years from taking part. A new member, Anna-Louise Rayner, is now taking over the role. A preview performance of this play is being arranged for Mon. 1st or Tue. 2nd March in the Digby Hall and the Festival will take place in Ferndown during the latter part of that week.

## Go To Sleep My Darling

Mrs P	Patricia Stewart
Ruby	Elsie Lombard
Father Jo	Anthony Stephens
Sally	Anna-Louise Rayner
Peter	Jonathan Stark
O'Neil	Stuart McCreadie

Written and directed by  
Jason Hepple

## Future Productions

As has so often been the case in recent times, finding a director and play for the next production has been a rather last minute affair. The committee apologises for this and we have every intention of making sure that this situation does not arise again.

Fortunately, on this occasion, Tony and Margaret Field have come to the rescue and our spring production is now to be *Theft* by Eric Chappell, which will be directed by Margaret. In the Autumn Tony will direct *Arkadia* by Tom Stoppard. Details of the

## Theft

by Eric Chappell  
Directed by Margaret Field

### Personae dramatis

Trevor Farrington, late 40s?  
Jennie Farrington, slightly younger  
John Miles, late 40s?  
Barbara Miles, older than Jennie  
Spriggs, a burgler, 50s  
(ages are flexible)

A tongue-in-cheek comedy thriller, packed with stinging one-liners, daring reversals and many sharp comments on marriage, money and crime.

**Auditions at the Crown Inn**  
**Tue. 5th and Wed 6th. Jan, 7.30 p.m.**  
Contact Margaret (01935-815427) if you would like to audition but cannot attend.

personae dramatis and audition dates for *Theft* are given in the panel above.

Now that we have the next two productions arranged we do fully intend to start planning for the year 2000 and perhaps even beyond. So if anyone feels they would like to direct a main production or a DDL play within the next few years, now is a good time to say so. Several possibilities have already been aired and so (I know this is hard to believe, but it is true) a queue is starting to form. The committee will welcome ideas for plays, and especially from potential directors, at any time.

A very happy Christmas to you all.

Mark Lambert