



# NEWS LETTER



DECEMBER 1999



**A**s Christmas draws near we can look back on a very satisfactory autumn, with some very worthwhile evenings and a particularly good autumn production. The membership now stands at exactly 90 and it looks as if we may be gaining several new members in the very near future. Incidentally, anyone who would like a list of members and their telephone numbers only has to ask me.



the mathematically inclined Valentine and Edward agreed to play both the young Lord Augustus and the mute Gus. It was interesting and pleasing to watch their acting skills develop as rehearsals progressed, and they both acquitted themselves exceedingly well. It is to be hoped that they enjoyed themselves and will return for more.

Of course, a successful production needs a good production team and this was no exception. All those involved in stage management, set, props, lights, sound, wardrobe, hair and make-up worked hard to make the show a success, but perhaps the hardest worker of all on this occasion was the wardrobe mistress, Jill Hudson, who brought herself to the point of near exhaustion preparing the enormous number of costumes. The results of her efforts were superb and we sincerely hope that she has now recovered.

Incidentally, the Chairman has asked me to remind everyone that all members are welcome to come to the celebratory party on the last night of a production, whether or not they have been involved in the play. In fact it would be much appreciated if members who come on the last night could make a point of staying, as it is a good opportunity for everyone to show their appreciation of the hard work that has been put in by the director, cast and production team. If you do come, though, a small contribution to the food would be welcome.

As a postscript to the production, one of the many things that makes being a member of The Players interesting is (in addition to watching talent develop) discovering hitherto hidden talents in people you have known for a while. I refer, on this occasion to the contribution overleaf, supplied by Michael Baatz.

### Players' Events

Apart from the autumn production there have been two evenings since I last wrote. In November Michael Baatz gave us a well-researched talk on the role of the director. Those present found it most informative and were reminded what a daunting task a director of a play takes on.

Our recent open evening, whimsically entitled ACT IV US, was probably a greater success than even the most optimistic of us had hoped. Twelve existing members were

present, just the right number to welcome without overwhelming the nine new faces that turned up. It was particularly encouraging to see that among them were four young men and three teenage girls—potential directors, please note. If you would like to meet them, do come to the rehearsed play readings on 26th January, as many if not all of these potential new members will be taking part. We will almost certainly plan another ACT IV US evening into next season's calendar.

### Forthcoming Events

Assuming you receive this at or soon after the Christmas party, the next Players' even-

## Prompt Corner

7.30 p.m. at The Crown Inn, unless otherwise stated.

Friday 17th December

### Christmas Party

With an entertainment entitled '1000 years of Christmas', arranged by Patricia Stewart. Silver Birches, The Avenue, Sherborne. Food £2.50 per person

Wed 5th and Thur 6th January

### Auditions for *The Constant Wife*

Tuesday 11th January

### Give us A Clue

Devised by Meg Whittingdale  
Cheap St Church Hall

Wednesday 26th January

### Rehearsed play readings

Arranged by David Smith and Steve Evans  
Cheap St Church Hall

Monday 31st January

### Auditions for *As You Like It*

Cheap St Church hall, 7.00 p.m.

Friday 4th February

### Annual APS Dinner

7.30 for 8.00 Black Tie

Wednesday 23rd February

### Nightingales Sing

An evening of folk music, arranged by Amanda McEvoy and Mark Lambert

9th-11th March

### Dorset Drama League Festival of one-act plays. Shaftesbury Arts Centre.

APS are not entering a play this year.

### Arcadia

The main event so far, of course, has been Tony Field's excellent production of *Arcadia*. Tom Stoppard's play is long and at times very wordy. A few members of the audience found it tedious, but the vast majority found the whole play highly entertaining, which says much for Tony and his team of actors, of whom, he tells me, he is very proud. About 360 people came to see the production and the gross takings were just under £1890. As yet a profit figure is not available as not all the bills have come in, but I understand that this production was a fairly expensive one and that the profit is consequently not going to be very large.

One of the main reasons for the play's success was, of course, the very strong cast. Mark Freestone as Septimus and Steve Evans as Bernard were outstanding leading men producing performances of tremendous energy and character. Rebecca Hill brought a maturity to the role of Thomasina that was far beyond her years, Amanda McEvoy's thoughtful portrayal of the academic Hannah was an excellent contrast to Bernard's bombast and Mally Lambert's Lady Croom had just the right balance of command (God, apparently, speaks through Lady C.) and flirtatiousness. They were very ably supported by Kieran Millar, Peter Wellby, Peter Thomas and Michael Baatz, all of whom produced notable cameo performances in the minor roles.

Special thanks are due to the new members who took part. Jan Bridgman auditioned for her part in the summer and made a very attractive Chloë for Bernard to ogle. Tim and Edward Messinger joined the cast somewhat later, neither having ever before appeared on stage. A month into rehearsals Tim was persuaded, quite possibly against his own judgement, to take on the role of



## Players' Lament After Final Curtain

Now rehearsals all are done  
And the critics had their fun

When shall we all meet again  
In Ibsen Shaw or Frayn?

Now next season's program's set  
Back to work, we now must get

What next should be our run?  
Shall we be audition— ed?

Round about the auditions ring  
Show of talents we will bring

Accents posh and gestures wild  
Expressive eyes and manners mild

Questions apt and all the lot  
Of our charms go in the pot

List — who calls us?

Please call us— Hail — Anon — Anon

Double treble times we'll hustle  
Why we'll even wear a bustle

Now its done we're in the cast  
Oh my God this part is vast

Days and nights plus thirty-one  
Learning learning's never done

Trouble trouble why did we trouble  
Is it fame? the transient bubble?

Builder's craft. Designer's skill  
Wardrobe search and growth of whisker  
Hoards of props and prompter's whisper  
Subject all to director's will

For us and them its partly fun  
And partly agony until its done

(MB fecit helpt by WS)

### Postscript

(MB to ML)

Did I send this in before?

Suddenly I find I am not sure!

(ML to MB)

No dear chap I have not seen

This eximious verse but gleefully agree

To publish it and beg for more

# The Constant Wife

by W. Somerset Maugham

When Mortimer Durham storms into the Middleton's home revealing that Constance's husband is having an affair with his wife, Constance refuses to create a scene. A year later, and financially independent, Constance feels entitled to sexual independence. She announces that she will, as John has done, take a short reviving break by having a holiday with an early admirer, leaving John at first outraged and then appreciative of his remarkable wife. Set in the 1920s.

## Characters

<b>Mrs Culver</b>	F	elderly
<b>Bentley</b>	M/F	butler/housekeeper, any age
<b>Martha Culver</b>	F	35-50
<b>Barbara Fawcett</b>	F	40-55
<b>Constance Middleton</b>	F	35-50
<b>Marie-Louise Durham</b>	F	30-45
<b>John Middleton, FRCS</b>	M	40s/50s
<b>Bernard Kersal</b>	M	same age as John
<b>Mortimer Durham</b>	M	40-55

All ages are flexible

## Auditions

Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th January 2000  
at The Crown Inn, Greenhill  
7.30 p.m.

If you cannot attend this meeting, but would like to audition,  
please telephone the director,  
Jessica Colson (01747 838807)

ing is the perennial Give Us a Clue on January 11th. Prior to this, however, Jessica Colson is holding auditions for the spring production, *The Constant Wife* on January 5th and 6th. And at the end of the month, on January 31st, Jason Hepple will hold auditions for the summer production of *As You Like It*. See the panels above and on the next page for details of cast requirements for both these plays. There is, of course, no reason why anyone interested should not take part in both plays; rehearsals for the summer production will not start until May.

The annual APS dinner is on Friday 4th February; please complete the coupon on the next page if you want to attend. There will not be a guest speaker this year; we had hoped to ask Gerald Pitman to speak, but sadly he is otherwise engaged that evening.

Finally, for now, on 23rd February Amanda McEvoy and I will present an evening of folk music; the title of the evening comes from a favourite song of mine, and should not otherwise be taken too seriously.

### Non-members and Player's evenings

Non members are always welcome to attend Players' evenings, whether or not they are

considering becoming full members. Indeed, on some occasions non-members have helped to swell audiences that would otherwise have been rather sparse. At various times in the past it has been the practice to charge non-members a small fee when attending a Players' evening, but since our move from the Eldridge Pope premises such charges have, for various reasons, only occasionally been enforced.

The committee has decided, however, that in fairness to members who have paid subscriptions, all non-members, including spouses, attending a Players' evening will henceforth be charged the sum of £1.00, and that it will be incumbent upon those organising evenings to ensure that there is someone whose task it is to collect such dues. The charge will *not* apply at the Christmas or Summer Party, nor to anyone who is kind enough to allow the use of their home, nor, of course, at the annual dinner.

See you at one or other of the forthcoming events, I hope. Meanwhile have a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous 2000th year of *this* millennium. 'Twas ever thus, in spite of what they say.

Mark Lambert