

# NOISES OFF



## EVE SIMMONDS

It was with very great sadness that we learned of the death of our former President, Eve Simmonds.

Eve joined APS in 1968 and first appeared on stage as Marjorie Frant in the 1969 production of *Berkeley Square*. She subsequently played a guest in *The Boyfriend* (1971), an unrecorded role in *St Aldhelm & Co* (1975), Olivia in *The Chalk Garden* (1976), at least one role in the revue *One Foot on the Stage* (1992) and Rosabel Fleming in *Venus Observed* (1993).



Eve directed two plays for The Players, *The Secretary Bird* in 1984 and *Pack of Lies* in 1987. Following the production of *Pack of Lies*, the report in the Western Gazette began with "Chill horrors of deceit under the veneers of

1960s suburbia were well evoked last week by the Amateur Players of Sherborne". And in 1994 Eve produced *Those Radio Times*, a 'wartime' revue celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings.

When not on stage, Eve was always willing to help out where she could. She was an experienced voice coach, having trained at The Central School of Speech and Drama in the 1950s, and her assistance in this respect was extremely useful in many APS productions. She is also listed in various past programmes under Publicity, Props and Box Office and often as not could be found helping front of house.

Eve was devoted to The Players and was a good and loyal friend of Joy Saunders, the daughter of our founder Fred Alcock. She served as a Committee Member from 1984 to 1987 and from 1992 to 1995. She was also the keeper of the APS archives until the mid 1990's when she handed over the task to me. She was elected President of the society in 2012 and served in that role until July 2019, attending nearly every Committee meeting during that period. When the 'Tin Tabernacle' was converted into the Sherborne Studio Theatre, she very generously offered storage space for scenery in her garage, just up the road. She loved the new Theatre and attended most players evenings that were held there, and every production bar one – sadly, she was not well enough to come to *The Day After the Fair*, but made do with a copy of the script and some photographs. Her funeral service, on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December, was planned by Eve herself and reflected her sense of humour. There were well known hymns to sing, some excellent readings and two amusing tributes, one from Patty Miller, an old drama school friend of Eve's, and the other from her daughter Elaine Snell. We left the church to the strains of Eric Idle singing 'Always Look on the Bright Side of Life'.

Eve was simply a lovely person -- unusually kind, gentle and self-effacing. I never once heard her get cross or say anything derogatory about anyone. I can only end by passing on

some of the comments I received when I sent out news of her death to the members who knew her:

"She was the most wonderful person and so encouraging to all actors";  
*I always found her very supportive. She will be missed;*

"She was always so kind, sympathetic and encouraging";

*We/I will miss her sorely;*

"Eve was one of those people who knew her dramatic craft but never pushed it onto other people. She was calm and I know she enjoyed everything she did with the APS. Her knowledge of speech and control on stage was brilliant. She will be missed";

*What a loss to APS. A trooper until the end;*

"...she was a lady that was full of warmth with a gentle fun loving nature";

*She was a very special, gentle person, so gifted and loving.*

**Mark Lambert**





**NEWS AND EVENTS**

Things have been busy since the last edition of "Noises Off". On November 20th we held another Quiz Night (the hope, you will remember, being that this would become a regular event). Hosted by Roy and Linda Catchpole, the additional option of a fish & chip supper was taken up by almost everyone present, and appears to have gone down very well. The Quiz was well attended - although slightly less so than last time - and it was noticeable that many of the participants were not APS members. It was a pleasure to welcome these visitors, which can only be good for spreading the APS gospel. What a pity, though that more APS members did not turn up.

Jessica Colson organised a play-reading evening on the 26th November in which she introduced "Passion Play" by Peter Nichols. Sadly, this was so poorly attended that the reading was very difficult to achieve. Play reading evenings are generally popular, and so it was a shame that Jessica's hard work and preparation received such scant return.

Auditions have been held for our next production, "Table Manners" by Alan Ayckbourn, the play has been cast, the set is under construction and rehearsals are in full swing. We have an excellent, talented and enthusiastic cast, and all the signs are that his will be a great success. Tickets will go on sale in late January, and, as ever, you are urged to get your seats early. Performances are 7.30pm on February 24th - 29th.

Hard on the heels of "Table Manners", we are also presenting Samuel Beckett's extraordinary "Waiting for Godot" on April 9th - 11th. The play has been cast, and, at the time of writing, rehearsals are just about to begin.

**TABLE MANNERS**  
by  
**Alan Ayckbourn**  
directed by  
**John Crabtree**  
for  
AMATEUR PLAYERS OF SHERBORNE

**Mon 24th - Sat 29th February, 7.30 pm**  
**at the Sherborne Studio Theatre,**  
**Marston Rd, Sherborne**

Tickets  
£10 (Students £8)  
available online at  
[aps-sherborne.co.uk](http://aps-sherborne.co.uk) or telephone 07585 278722

**WAITING**  
for  
**GODOT**  
by  
Samuel Beckett  
directed by  
Jerome Swan

Thur 9th - Sat 11th April 2020  
Sherborne Studio Theatre

As always, we continue to develop the Theatre: we have bought a CCTV system, which we hope to have installed before "Table Manners". This essential equipment will enable the backstage crew (and waiting actors) to be able to see what is happening on stage, and also, through infra-red vision, the lighting and sound crews will be able to time their cues precisely during black-outs.

We have acquired two new electric blower-heaters, which are both quiet and efficient, and have been much appreciated by all those involved in winter rehearsals!

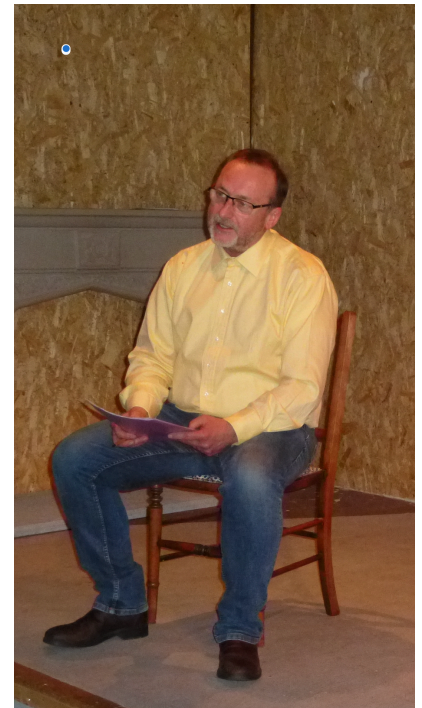
Our long-held ambition to raise the back rows of the auditorium seating to provide better views of the stage inches ever closer. We are currently awaiting the outcome of a bid for a grant to support this project.

The external lighting by the main doors is being improved, and, now that we have a wheelchair access ramp, front of house staff are being trained in emergency evacuation procedures.

Up in the gallery we have had a major sort-out, and constructed shelving systems to allow for the proper organisation of props and of set construction materials.

## CHRISTMAS PARTY

Despite the inauspicious date, we held our APS Christmas Party on Friday 13th December. Plentiful food and wine and excellent entertainment - not to mention sparkling company, of course! - ensured a thoroughly enjoyable evening for all concerned. Many thanks to Roy and Linda (again) for their organisation - and to Roger, Richard, Martin, Jane, Roy and Adrian for the entertainment - notably Roger's extraordinary recitations. Once again, however, we have to sound a note of slight disappointment at the attendance. It is such a shame that the hard work of committee members and just a few other stalwarts remains unseen by so many APS members - who presumably would be sad if such events were not able to be continued.



*Roger, Richard, Jane and Adrian, giving their all at the Christmas Party!*



## NEWS FROM THE BOX OFFICE

There are now three different ways of securing your tickets for APS shows:

The easiest is to buy them online with your credit card, at [www.aps-sherborne.co.uk](http://www.aps-sherborne.co.uk) Your tickets will be emailed to you, or you can collect them at the door.

OR you can telephone 07585 278722, with your credit card details ready. You can collect your tickets at the door. *(Please only use this option if you are unable to go online)*

OR you can call at the the Sherborne Tourist Information Centre in Digby Road. You can pay with cash or card, and your tickets will be given to you.

*The Chairman and Committee wish all APS members and friends a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year (and decade). We look forward to seeing you at our future productions and other social events.*

**Thur January 16th** Quiz Night

Tue January 28th Drama event CANCELLED

Wed February 19th Quiz night CANCELLED

**February 24th - 29th** *Table Manners*

**Wed March 18th** Quiz night

**Tue March 31st** Drama event

**April 9th - 11th** *Waiting for Godot*

**Wed April 15th** Quiz night

**Tue April 28th** Drama event

**Wed May 25th** Quiz night

**Tue May 26th** Drama event

**Wed June 17th** Quiz night

**Tue June 30th** Drama event

**Wed July 15th** Quiz night

Summer production - tbc