

NOISES OFF

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

There is light at the end of the tunnel. With the first vaccine about to be rolled out, I confidently expect APS to be up and running again by the end of next year. It will clearly take time for all restrictions to be lifted, and realistically we cannot hope to be able to organise rehearsals for a Spring production. But we may well be able to do something in the summer, albeit perhaps outside again, and a November production the Sherborne Studio Theatre seems to me to be eminently possible. To that end I intend that the Committee will start making serious plans early next year. Meanwhile, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas. Stay safe and look forward to better things in 2021.

Mark Lambert

ONLINE PLAY-READINGS

As long as we have been unable to make use of the Theatre for meetings and rehearsals, work on the stage, scenery, seating and fabric of the building has been progressing every week, thanks to the usual team of dedicated workers.

As reported previously, the rehearsals for the outdoors performance of *Waiting for Godot*, were made possible through the marvels of internet communication. Following this, members have had the opportunity to take part in and enjoy three online "virtual play-readings". On the 4th and 5th November, we logged-on to participate in John Crabtree's translation of Georges Feydeau's hilarious farce "The Dressmaker". This proved so enjoyable that we then decided to give an online "dry-run" to one of the plays we hope to perform live in the theatre at some point in the future. Brian Clarke's *Whose Life Is It Anyway?*, which we read on

December 2nd, could not by any stretch of the imagination be called "hilarious", but all participants agreed it was fascinating and thought-provoking - and eminently suitable for a future airing on the stage.

Further play readings are planned, and will be advertised. Do please take part - it does tend to be the same old faces at the moment! All you need is the "Zoom" app (free) and a means of reading from a downloaded document.



Whose Life Is It Anyway?, on
December 2nd

ROY CATCHPOLE

The remainder of this newsletter is dedicated to our dear friend Roy Catchpole, who died on November 6th.

It was with much sadness that we learned of Roy's death. As you may know, he had been suffering from cancer for about four years. By the late summer of this year the treatment he had been receiving, combined with the cancer itself, had compromised his immune system to the point that a normally minor stomach bug became a major infection. Towards the end, Linda tells me that he was aware that he hadn't long to live and was ready to go. He died peacefully in hospital on November 6th.

Roy and Linda joined APS in 2011. Roy was 'discovered' by Jennie Ward at St Paul's Church, where he worshipped, preached – and played the drums. Roy's first appearance on stage was therefore in Jennie Ward's November 2011 production of *Our Town*, in which he appeared as Howie Newsome, the milkman. Sadly, I don't have a photo of him in that role, as at the time I was busy creating the sound of clanking milk bottles for him as he walked across the stage miming carrying a crate.

Roy hadn't actually appeared on stage since he was a teenager, but he took to it again like a duck to water, and

always enjoyed performing. His next role was as The Chamberlain in *Wyrd Sisters* (March 2012), which should have been followed by the part of Autolycus in the autumn production of *The Winter's Tale*. Sadly, that production had to be cancelled, which I know was a great disappointment to Roy, as he was very much looking forward to playing the role in front of an audience.

In April 2013, in Eric Chappell's *Heatstroke*, Roy took the part of Moon, a hardened criminal intent on recovering his suitcase-full of money. For me this has always been Roy's most memorable role. He played Moon with verve and gusto, and his confrontation with Howard Booth (Andrew Cross), who at the time was pretending to be the criminal because he also wanted the money, was truly hilarious.

Roy subsequently played Ted Washbrook in *A Chorus of Disapproval* (November 2013), Pistol in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (April 2014), Richard, Duke of Gloucester in *Shakespeare in the Garden* (July 2016), Mr Hubble and a Watchman in *Great Expectations* (April 2016) and an Attendant in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (June 2018). He was also a member of the ensemble cast of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* in June 2019.

When not on stage, Roy could generally be found front of house, behind the reception desk, serving drinks and handing out programmes. He always dressed very dapperly for the occasion and his cheerfulness and banter enhanced the theatre experience for all members of the audience.

Roy had other talents. As well as being an actor he was also a writer and musician. He was especially keen on the drums, which he played as a member of 'The Palace of Varieties Orchestra' in *Red Peppers*, the final one-act play in *Tonight at 8.30* (April 2015). His deliberate eccentricity drew amused attention, and he will always be remembered for his kindness and consideration for others, even when, during the last few years of his life, he was beset with other problems in addition to the cancer. He bore those with fortitude, helped by his faith and philosophical view of life. He never lost his enthusiasm, his sense of humour, his zest for life or his interest in and concern for other people, especially those less fortunate than himself.

Our heartfelt condolences go to Linda. Roy is greatly missed.

Mark Lambert



Roy Catchpole

1st March 1946 - 6th November 2020



These images featured in the Order of Service on November 30th. After attending, Adrian Harding submitted the following tribute.

There was nothing normal about Roy, and I mean that in the nicest possible way. And, as his life never followed the straightest path, neither did his passing.

In a funeral that never felt like a funeral, the eulogy delivered by the Rev David Dunning mapped out the twists and turns and bumps in the road in a true celebration of a life full of unimaginable suffering and unbounded joy. Roy was undeniably unpredictable, but he was always full of love for his family, sharing laughter with his friends, and showing true Christian compassion when it was really needed for those who had fallen on hard times.

So, when it is normal for people to wear black at a funeral, Roy had insisted that the mourners should wear a blaze of colour, and bright reds and purples were in abundance. The Church was filled with the brightest of colours, defying anyone to even try to be miserable on a cold November morning as we fondly remembered one of life's great jesters. His trademark embroidered "ROY" cap was perched in pride of place on his coffin, and his pink-and-white bandana was worn proudly and lovingly around Linda's neck. The restrictions of the Covid pandemic had limited the numbers in church, all suitably socially-distanced of course, and the hymns had to be spoken, not sung. That would have really niggled him. But even the masks which covered the faces of the congregation couldn't hide the broad smiles of everyone he had touched in his life.

When we thought that a poem which featured the lines "You can shed tears that he is gone, or you can smile because he has lived" couldn't be topped, we found that we were in for a surprise. Both his granddaughter Leah imploring her beloved granddad to "Fly up and inspire us", and a final committal to the jolly tune of "Always look on the Bright Side of Life", epitomised the simple, joyous irreverence of the Reverend Roy Catchpole. A philosophical deep-thinker on the inside; an inveterate joker on the outside. Eccentric to the last, even in his passing. Unique, much-loved and sorely-missed.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Linda, who knows that we will welcome her back to the community of APS with loving arms, whenever the time is right for her. Linda, we hope that time will come very soon.

Adrian Harding

