



# IN THE WINGS

Diamond Jubilee edition

## COBHAM PLAYERS NEWSLETTER CHRISTMAS 2008



FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

**Welcome** to the Christmas Issue of "In The Wings." Firstly I hope you all enjoyed our autumn production of *Noises Off*. As you know, Ian Ganderton returned from the professional stage to direct this revival of a popular play - and popular it proved, with sell-outs at every performance. (My thanks to the editor of this paper who did all the publicity!) The run to the show was quite fraught, with the cast challenged by the fast pace and of course the somewhat complex mime in Act 2... add to that one of the most complex sets which has to be switched round twice in the course of the evening and provide upstairs and downstairs entrances and exits, let alone a props list of considerable length and a Gala to arrange. Phew! However, it all came together in a highly successful and much enjoyed show, despite the opening night being the first time we managed to do all of it on stage! A huge thank you to Ian Ganderton for all his hard work and dedication to the play. A massive debt of gratitude to Albert Westover who made the set work and led a brilliant crew of backstage hands to get the set round in record time, and of course to Nan Sadler who did all the set dressing and props, supported us at every rehearsal and ended up prompting as well. Talk about multi-tasking! Finally thank you to Sam Myers and Karen Budd who masterminded Front of House and the Gala. A greatly enjoyed play by all our audiences. (See

later in this newsletter extracts of letters received – Ed.)

So now we are on to panto and Mel Cook is giving an update later on in ITW. Cinderella looks set to be yet another cracker of a panto with a wonderful team behind it, so do book your seats early; I know the matinée is over half sold already.

Other good news is that the Village Hall is now sporting a swanky new set of velvet curtains and matching blinds, thanks to Rosebriars Trust, the Village Hall and a donation from ourselves. This has really freshened up the look and will be invaluable in panto for those tab scenes. In the committee we have been busy on other projects, including looking at lighting, organising the shed and trying to document more of what we do. If you have visited our website recently, you will see it has had a facelift giving it a brand new, more contemporary look and lots more up to date information. My thanks to Andrew Mair for not only being the visionary, but also making it happen and keeping it updated.

Finally, for those of you who managed to come to our annual Christmas party at the Bear, Oxshott, I hope that you enjoyed it; but whether you came or not a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year to you and yours.

*Mary Taylor*



# CINDERELLA

This year's panto is *Cinderella* by Stephen Duckham and I'm very pleased to say it's already shaping up to be a fantastic show. It is a very traditional script with all the usual characters you would expect to see, lots and lots of audience participation and with the fantastic cast I have, I know it is going to be a panto to remember.

The action starts with our Fairy Godmother 'Dot' on her mobile phone to her boss. Well, obviously, a fairy's phone is her wand these days! Dot takes on the challenge of getting our beloved Cinderella to ball, where she subsequently bumps into her Prince Charming, whom she thinks is his Valet Dandini. (With me so far?)

Dot's job is not an easy one, with Cinder's stepsisters Gorgon & Zola doing everything they can to stop her 'living happily ever after'. But worry not; with the help of the lovable Buttons and the brokers men Snatchitt & Grabbitt, Cinders does go to the ball.

I have a wonderful cast who have thrown themselves into rehearsals and some very talented new faces. I'm pleased to have the delightful talents of new member Richard Johnson and our very own Phil Paul making their damely début and I can promise they will give you plenty of laughs. I would also like to welcome Heather Ganderton & Louise Myson back to the

Players for panto. Their childhood chorus parts have stood them in good stead. There are a few familiar faces too: Karen Budd, Sam Myers, Nick Hammond, Albert Westover and Mike Dawes, who make up a very enthusiastic and talented cast. No Cobham Players' panto would be complete without our chorus and this year's are brilliant . . . I can't wait. (Mel forgets to mention her own scintillating appearance as Buttons – Ed.)

Not only do I have a fantastic cast, I have the support of Roger Jones and Hilary Baker building and painting the set, the wonderful Andrew Mair on sound, Brian Hulme taking care of the lights and Mary Taylor looking after costumes. What more could a director wish for?

Tickets have been in Cobham Travel since 8<sup>th</sup> December, so please get in there early. I can promise a fun-filled couple of hours with lots of laughs!

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you all at Cobham Players 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary production of *Cinderella*.

*Melanie Cook*

*(There are flyers for Cinderella included with this Newsletter - please pass them on to your friends and members of your family who would be interested - Ed)*



## NOISES OFF Letters to the Editor

The following are excerpts from letters received by your editor following the performance of *Noises Off*:

*“Elizabeth and I thoroughly enjoyed our evening with Cobham Players and congratulate the company on providing 60 years of entertainment for the community.*

*Noises Off was an excellent choice, giving the cast a fantastic opportunity to show their fine timing and comic skills. This is one play where the back-stage crew and set-builders must equally share the applause as they played such an important part in the evening.*

*Thank you for inviting us and for a warm welcome. We wish you all every success for the next 60 years!”*

**Councillor Nigel Cooper,  
Mayor of Elmbridge**

*“Both my wife and I wanted to congratulate you on the wonderful production of *Noises Off*, which was not an easy production to do. I must say that you accomplished it as professionally as a West End cast. Particularly the second act, which must have been a nightmare, was absolutely outstanding.”*

**Gerry Acher, Chairman, Cobham  
Conservation and Heritage Trust**

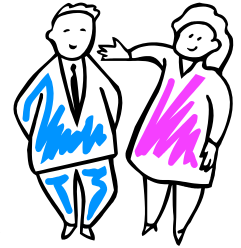
*“I am writing to thank you for the opportunity to see the Cobham Players’ recent production of *Noises Off*. It was an excellent evening and I thought that the actors performed a difficult comedy to a very high, professional standard.”*

**Alan Bott Secretary to the  
Governors and Bursar, Reed’s School,  
Cobham**



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We are delighted to welcome Robert Brewer as a new member.



Nan Sadler



## PUBLICITY ASSISTANTS – CAN YOU HELP?

Would any members be willing to help for a few hours each year in publicising our productions?

What would it involve? Simply being responsible for arranging for posters/flyers to be displayed in shops, libraries, clubs and other meeting places in your local area. The immediate vicinity of Cobham is fairly well covered but I should appreciate volunteers to cover some if not all of the following areas:

*Weybridge  
Stoke d’Abernon  
Downside  
Effingham  
Fetcham  
Esher.*

I would provide all the necessary materials at the appropriate time – so if you’d be willing to help please do e-mail me ([mike@aviation1st.co.uk](mailto:mike@aviation1st.co.uk)) or call 01932 868928. Thanks

*Mike Dawes*

# THE EDITOR ASKS....

## RICHARD JOHNSON

**Ed:** How did you first become involved with Cobham Players?

**R:** One day in October 2007 I saw a poster in Cobham which was advertising *Key For Two*. As this was a play that I had directed for The Whips in West Horsley in May 2006, I thought it would be fun to see Cobham Players' production. I was not disappointed - turning up on spec for the Friday performance to be greeted by the lovely smiles of the Front Of House ladies, how could I not fall in love with the intimate atmosphere created by the seating arrangements within the Hall itself? ..I had a very relaxing and enjoyable evening sitting comfortably at a table with a glass (or two) of wine and watching a very funny play. Oh, and the acting wasn't bad either!

After that I decided to apply for membership of Cobham Players but did nothing about it for a while as I was going to be in The Whips' 2008 Spring Production at the Electric Theatre Guildford. Then in mid July I received an audition notice for *Noises Off* from Nan Sadler in case I was still interested in joining. So I duly turned up at the audition and somehow hoodwinked my way into the part of Frederick/Philip.

**Ed:** What are your other experiences in amateur dramatics?

**R:** My first experience in amdram was 50 odd years ago when I was literally frogmarched on stage by two older friends who made me join them in a song auditioning for a local pantomime in Bournemouth. As I knew they were both tone deaf I was terrified that I would be tarred with the same brush, so the primaevial survival instinct took over and made me sing out loud to try to drown my pals' feeble efforts. At the end of the number to our great surprise we received rapturous applause. Presumably it was pure comedy - with two hulking fools who

couldn't sing a note between them flanking this wretch who was so deadly serious in trying to get himself heard. So I caught the bug and joined the local church dramatic society, appearing not only in pantomimes but also Youth Drama Festivals, religious pageants in Winchester Cathedral and also straight plays.

Later when I moved up to London to seek my fame and fortune (!) I joined a talented group of thespians who performed in various theatres in the City and East End. When I got married and moved to a village in Sussex, I became a member of Horsham Dramatic Society. There followed a two year spell in South Africa where I appeared in several productions of Johannesburg Dramatic Society. Returning to England we settled outside Guildford before moving to West Horsley 31 years ago whence I became a member of The Whips Dramatic Society.

**Ed:** Which role have you most enjoyed playing and why?

**R:** I particularly loved playing Bottom in an open-air production of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* some 20 years ago, not least because for the first time in my life Shakespeare came alive and I realised then that my English Literature teachers many years earlier had brainwashed me into thinking that the Bard's works were sacrosanct and to be treated with a sort of intellectual piety and respect, rather than to suggest that they were written to be *performed* by the masses for the masses. No clues there as to why I had dropped A-level English but continued with Latin and French.

**Ed:** How do you go about learning your lines/parts?

**R:** Confession time! In the past I've always tried to concentrate on getting to understand the character in preference to

learning the lines. The more I understood the play and the characters, the easier the lines became, or so I reasoned - a pathetic excuse for being lazy at learning words even though I prided myself on being word perfect by dress rehearsal and during performances. This bad reasoning was reinforced on many occasions in the past from my observation of an illogical pattern: he/she who was prompt in learning lines would invariably be prompt in taking a prompt in performance. Explain that. However in recent years I've come to realise (or perhaps been persuaded) that it was a very self-indulgent path not to learn lines asap, because of its negative impact on one's fellow actors. So I do try to learn by repetition.

**Ed:** What is your favourite play and film of all time and why?

**R:** Very difficult to give a definitive answer but probably: favourite play - *Private Lives*; favourite films - *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* and *Schindler's List*.

**Ed:** What is the most embarrassing situation you have ever been in?

**R:** When I was still a callow youth (or rather young man), I was Best Man at my friends' wedding in Bournemouth. As the bride's mother used to direct us in panto etc., it was decided that I should act as MC or Toastmaster by announcing the guests as they arrived at the reception. No problem - just ask for their names and then address them formally to the bridal party. Everything went well until a group of our mutual friends arrived, including this beautiful young lady (for whom I had long felt a certain "admiration"). Alas I had a "junior" moment - my mind went blank and I could not remember her name at all. So, crestfallen, I stuttered "Name please". She looked at me and laughed. "Name please", I repeated. "Come on, Richard, don't be silly" she replied. Timid cough: "Name please". Desperate and in a cold sweat I was looking in vain for that opening in the earth's surface into which I could dive and vanish from this horror of all horrors. "Please, name please". Finally,

after what seemed an eternity she graciously told me her name. There were no further hitches and my Best Man's Speech was well received. However the memory of That Moment haunted me for years afterwards. The young lady in question later became my Daughter's Godmother and has remained a close friend for many years. A year ago I called in to see her and her husband in Lymington where they live and we were reminiscing about the old days. So I happened to mention my "social gaffe" at that wedding and to my amazement and relief she could not remember the incident at all.

**Ed:** Tell me something about yourself that most people don't know

**R:** I once wrote a letter to Madonna in Hollywood inviting her to come to Britain to perform in Shakespeare under my direction. She never replied. Such a Material Girl. (Yes, she did come to Britain, not for Richard but for Ritchie).

**Ed:** What is your favourite leisure activity and why?

**R:** Amdram is the obvious answer. Why? For the sheer excitement of being part of a team trying to create/recreate a little bit of magic for others. On my own, I do enjoy relaxing in front of the television watching a good film or television play or maybe a grand sporting event and indulging occasionally in a Havana cigar.

**Ed:** What would be your number one holiday destination and why?

**R:** Italy - for the culture and the food and wine (not forgetting the sun and the sea) and the colour and beauty and chaos of the Italians. What wouldn't I do there? (I dread to think - Ed.)

**Ed:** How would you describe Cobham Players?

**R:** Warm, friendly, welcoming and talented. (Easiest question to answer and yes, I do take a cheque, thanks.) (Sorry, no money available - Ed.)

Richard Johnson  
Mike Dawes



# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2009

**8 – 10 January**

## **Cinderella**

By Stephen Duckham  
Directed by Melanie Cook  
Cobham Village Hall 7.30 p.m.  
(Saturday matinée, 10<sup>th</sup> January at 2.30 p.m.)

**19 January**

## **Audition for the spring production**

Cobham Village Hall (small hall) 8 p.m.

**23 – 25 April**

## **Spring production:**

### ***Something to Remember You By***

By Jimmie Chinn  
Directed by Sam Myers  
**and a complementary play directed by Rodney Pearson**  
Cobham Village Hall 8 p.m.

**11 – 16 May**

## **Leatherhead Drama Festival (senior section)**

(including ***Something to Remember You By***)  
Leatherhead Theatre  
7.30 p.m.  
(Awards evening 16 May)

**29 – 31 October**

## **Autumn production**

Details to be announced

# AUTUMN QUIZ WINNERS

The answer to the autumn quiz celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Andrew's/Cobham Players was "SHAKESPEARE."

The winner was Rodney Pearson and the runner-up by a short head was Victoria Franklin. (As I said there are no prizes – just the accolade of being mentioned – Ed.)

## AND FINALLY...

Just when you thought we had finished with quizzes, here are two caption competitions to set your mouth watering!

What is being said in the 'photos below? Two separate answers please – one for each 'photo.

One is of Victoria Franklin in *Lettice and Lovage* (at the Nomad Theatre) and the other is a scene from *The Comedy of Errors*.



Entries please to [mike@aviation1st.co.uk](mailto:mike@aviation1st.co.uk) by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008. Again, there are no prizes, just acclamation. The editor's decision is final. Results will be published in the Spring edition of In the Wings.

# COBHAM PLAYERS

## Renewal/Membership Application

I/we wish to renew/apply for membership of

# Cobham Players

**Names(s)**.....

.....  
.....  
.....

**Address** .....

.....  
.....

Postcode .....

**E m a i l**

.....

**P h o n e**

(Day) .....

(Eve) .....

If you do not wish your name and telephone number to be distributed to the members, please tick here:

	Subscription	No required
<b>Gold</b>	<b>£12</b>	
<b>Silver</b>	<b>£ 6</b>	
<b>Junior</b>	<b>£ 2.50</b>	
<b>Patron</b>	<b>£25</b>	

**I enclose payment of £.....**

**Gold** membership includes newsletter, performing rights, voting rights, and social events.

**Silver** membership includes newsletter & social events, but does not permit holders to perform on stage.

**Junior** membership includes newsletter and performing rights for those under 16 years.

**Patron** membership includes all Gold membership benefits, name on patron page in all programmes. Minimum patron level: £25.

Please return this form with cheque payable to Cobham Players to:

**Nancy Sadler**  
**Cobham Players Membership**  
**2 York Gardens, Walton on Thames**  
**Surrey KT12 3ER**