



# IN THE WINGS

COBHAM PLAYERS NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2009



## FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the autumn edition of In The Wings. Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mary Taylor on behalf of the Cobham Players for the three years she dedicated to the society as Chairman. Mary worked tirelessly over that period to ensure that the society grew and prospered. Although she has now stepped down from the committee I know for a fact that Mary will continue to be a dedicated supporter of the society. A little bird tells me that she already has a number of projects on the boil for next year, so watch this space. Mary, we wholeheartedly thank you for everything you have done and achieved for the society.

The spring production was shared between myself and Rodney Pearson and was received well by audiences, although sadly attendance rates for each performance were low. *Something To Remember You By*, by Jimmie Chinn was a thought provoking production that challenged the audience. It was not the easiest of plays to direct or act in, but the cast should be commended for their hard work and dedication to the production. Some of the characters took the actors completely out of their comfort zones, but I am sure you will agree they gave sterling performances and did Mr Chinn proud. Some of you may not be aware that Mr Chinn actually came along to the Saturday night performance. He was so impressed with the way we edited and cut the play that he is in the process of republishing it as a one act play with Samuel French. In fact a member of the French publishing team came along to see the show and gave it their full approval. He has very

kindly said he will credit us in the publication.

*Something to Remember You By* was our entry for Leatherhead Drama Festival. Although we were not successful in any of the award categories we had a very pleasing report from the adjudicator. I would like to thank all members of the society who came along and supported us during the festival week. The second half of the spring production was *The Canterbury Tales*. I think Rodney described the plays he had chosen as a deliciously bawdy retelling of four plays and boy was he right. Quite a baptism of fire for our new members Jason Lambert and Gavin Bell, who found themselves in some quite outrageous and at times compromising positions! The more than saucy cast entertained the audience leaving them crying for more. I don't think we shall forget Loz Mears's shrubbery for quite some time.

None of our productions would ever go ahead if it was not for our dedicated backstage teams so our thanks go to Nan Sadler, Roger Jones, Hilary Baker and Nicky Barnes, to our prompts Chris Kendall and Heather Ganderton and to our technical team Andrew Mair and Steve Farr. Each member of these crews worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure both productions were a great success. Let us not also forget the fabulous Front of House team that was run by Mary Taylor. Huge thanks to all those who gave up their time to support us.

The AGM was held in June. As many of you were there I will not drone on about it, but I would like to point out that we now have a new constitution, which was compiled by Mary and passed at the AGM. I believe a copy of this can be obtained from our website.

At the end of June Karen and Graham Budd very kindly organised and hosted a weekend in Normandy. By all accounts it sounds like those who were able to attend had a total blast. So merci to Karen and Graham for another successful trip to France.

With October fast approaching rehearsals are underway for the autumn production (*A Bird in the Hand*) which is being directed by Victoria Franklin. This is Victoria's début as a director for Cobham Players and we wish her well. She has a fantastic cast and an excellent script so get into Cobham and book your seats early - this will be a sell out.

Hot on Victoria's heels we have another directorial début from Naomi Johannes who will be directing *Aladdin* for pantomime in January 2010. Auditions for this will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Keep your eyes peeled for news on upcoming events. Karen Budd is in the process of organising the Christmas event (see "Dates for your Diary"). Please could I ask you all to respond as soon as possible when she sends out the information so we can book early.

So it only leaves me to say welcome back from the summer, keep supporting and make sure you get your tickets for the autumn production - you won't be disappointed.

Samantha Myers



## **IF IT'S LAUGHTER YOU'RE AFTER – TRY *A BIRD IN THE HAND***

I laughed out loud the first time I read *A Bird in the Hand* and now that my fabulous cast have begun to take on their roles, I'm laughing even louder. The story line is irresistible. Two guys, Max (Jason Lambert) and Harry (Graham Budd) embark on a mid-life mission to relive the excesses of their bachelor days. The evening is set: the booze has arrived, the lights are dimmed, the music is playing and the girls are on their way. Then, however, there is a major hitch: just 24 hours after walking out, Max's wife, Sylvia (Melanie Cook), walks back in and, not only that, she has brought her secretary (Vicki Stevens) with her. Surprisingly Sylvia chooses not to make a fuss, but insists instead "helping" the guys with their romantic plans. I wonder why her way of helping seems to have more of a sabotaging than supportive effect!

*A Bird in the Hand* is a great fit for Cobham Players: the range of characters plays to our strengths, lively ladies with plenty of attitude and roguish guys who still yearn for the good things in life: food, booze and birds. Throw a few seductive women into the mix, plus a spoilsport and a mischievous man in a uniform (Harry Sadler) and you have the perfect recipe for an evening of surprises, fun and loads of laughter.

Setting *A Bird in the Hand* in the late 70s has allowed me to indulge myself hugely, replaying the music of my own bachelor years and choosing great tracks from the likes of "Hot Chocolate", "Creedence Clearwater Revival", "Canned Heat" and "Dusty Springfield" to punctuate the action. I have quite a few ideas, to be revealed at a later stage, for sweeping our audiences into the groove from the very moment they arrive. By the end of the evening, I want everyone to go home feeling uplifted and entertained, with a spring in the step and a chuckle in the chest.

# COBHAM HERITAGE DAY

Planning the set too, with the brilliant help of Roger Jones, has been a treat. The curtain will rise on a throwback to the elegance of retro-revival. The look we are going for is sumptuously smart with big panel effects, clever lighting and the spacious feel of a posh apartment in expensive central London. Thanks to Hilary Baker's legendary genius with an artist's palette, we will have some gorgeous views from our huge picture window and some lovely Andy Warhol type portraits on the walls. Nan Sadler is already sending us into our lofts and hidden recesses to look for suitable props and items to dress the set, ranging from a cheese plant and chunky suitcases to a dansette record player and vinyl LPs.

The playwright, Derek Benfield, was both a comic actor and a prolific author of stage hits. Arguably his best known character portrayal was as transport company foreman Bill Riley in the 70s TV series *The Brothers*. In more recent years he was also familiar to viewers as Patricia Routledge's long-suffering husband in the BBC detective series *Hetty Wainthropp Investigates*. *A Bird in the Hand* clearly demonstrates his genius for creating situations and characters that portray the comic foibles of human nature. If the hilarity of our rehearsals is anything to go by, I have every confidence that those who come to watch *A Bird in the Hand* this autumn will enjoy laughing a little at themselves while being unable to resist laughing helplessly at the antics being played out for them on the stage.

*Victoria Franklin*



The sun shone for the third year in a row on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September and this certainly encouraged the good citizens of Cobham to venture into Church Street and St Andrew's Churchyard to support Cobham Heritage Day.

From 11 am crowds were drawn by the sight of bunting draped from one end of Church Street to the other, a variety of colourful, interesting stalls, the smell of

onions and sausages sizzling and the sight of a strange lime-green wiggled fairy (yours truly) handing out leaflets about the day. The Town Crier (Alan Wiseman), resplendent in bright red tights, did a splendid job of announcing the day's events to all.

Cobham Players, once again, had a high-profile stand at this event. A second-hand book stall outside Le Papillon boutique, manned by a troupe of Players, raised £200 for the Shooting Star Hospice and the funds were given to their representatives at the end of

the afternoon. Shooting Star were also delighted to receive the books that we had not managed to sell.

Everyone who purchased books was given a flyer about the society and the autumn production and the photo board and banner also helped to publicise the Players' current and past productions.



**Cobham's Town Crier**

# THE EDITOR ASKS... MARY TAYLOR

Perhaps the prize for the best dressed 'Star of the Day' on the bookstall should go to Brian Hulme, who - purely by chance we are led to believe - dressed up to look exactly like one of the Village People (who can forget their all-time hit record 'YMCA')! Several ladies approached him to ask if they could be photographed with him.

Seriously though, the Players worked so hard to make their stall a success. Books were saved, stored for months and sorted on the day by a dedicated group who gathered at 9.30am on Saturday morning, dressed in all sorts of fancy costume and who gave their all until at 5.30pm, when everything had been cleared away.



The bookstall

A huge "thank you" to Nan, Sam (with her sons William and George), Andrew, Brian, Rodney, Mike, Nicky (with her sons Oliver and Hamish), Mel and Mary who were all involved on the day and many thanks to the members of the society who donated their books.

Time to start saving those books again for next year's stall; unwanted children's books and DVDs are especially welcome.

(Millie, thanks to you for doing all the organising – Ed.)

*Millie Hart (The Lime Green Fairy)*

**Ed:** How did you first become involved in Cobham Players and why?

**M:** When I first ended up in Cobham, I didn't know anybody at all and a friend at work persuaded me to call the Cobham Players as I'd professed an interest in

acting although hadn't done any since Uni. I rang a number on a flyer I'd picked up and got Karen Budd who got Ian Ganderton to call me who instantly offered me the part of Principal Boy in Mother Goose! I was a little surprised to receive a part

without being seen or heard, but subsequently found out the panto was going to be canned if they didn't find a Principal Boy... I had a pulse, female and under 60 so got the part!

**Ed:** When did you first think/find you had a talent for acting? Who told/encouraged you? What did you think?

**M:** As a small child I wanted to act. I remember writing plays and forcing friends to perform with me. At senior school when I started to get reasonable parts I guess is when I began to think I could do it, but nobody really encouraged me and of course in my day a drama O or A level was considered too unacademic to be on the curriculum, hence why I think I stopped doing it for so many years. The Cobham Players have probably encouraged me the most, that and Andy trying to get me out from under his feet!

**Ed:** Of your experiences with Cobham Players which are the three most memorable and why?

**M:** Gosh - so many to choose from and so many different types of 'memorable'. I guess the ones that stand out fall into three areas: the ones that have challenged me personally the most and I have had to take a personal journey to achieve, those where the society has come together to go further than it usually does and the ones where the teamwork has been superlative. *Cabaret* and Sally Bowles has to be one for primarily the first two reasons. Singing, dancing, acting and eating a raw egg, let alone a commercial and audience hit. Not sure I could weave round that chair these days! *Visiting Hour*, for all three really; doing the monologue was a personal challenge, getting in touch with poor old Pauline, but it was such a great team effort for the whole piece. *The Glider*: it was a hard piece to pull off and our first success at festivals. Also getting my award from Sir Michael Caine was an all time high!

**Ed:** How important is acting and Cobham Players to you and how do you balance it with your business and home /social life?

**M:** Cobham Players is inextricably linked with our life as most of our friends are players! Acting for me is a great opportunity to express a more creative side of myself that the other areas of my life don't really allow. I would love it to be more important, but the challenges of making a living in my chosen career battle for time and focus. The balance comes with commitment. Once you commit, you find a way, it's the choices that count and that's the difficult bit.

**Ed:** Who are your favourite two authors and books? (Whatever nationality, living or dead)

**M:** Only two! You'll be lucky. Jane Austen, *Persuasion*. A perfect novel, great characters, insights and the most moving love story; Stella Gibbons – *Cold Comfort Farm* for humour, Louisa May Alcott – *Little Women* and *Good Wives*: my favourite books as a child and which I still

re-read. The central character Marmee still has the ability to be my moral compass. Finally, Mary Wesley's *Part of the Furniture* - Mary Wesley was the best at that sort of novel. I loved lots of her books for the quirky characters, but that last novel had a simple perfection to it; I think Kate Atkinson, etc., owe a lot to her then unique style of construction and narrative.

**Ed:** Whom do you most admire in the fields of a) sport b) entertainment c) politics?

**M:** In Sport it would have to be my trainer, who is an ex England athlete (pole vault I think). He gets up at 4.30 every morning and drives for 45 minutes so that some ageing working women can try and keep fit and stop the ravages of time! As for entertainment, outside of the obvious greats, Dame Judi, Maggie and Kevin Spacey, I think it is all the less well known entertainers who manage to carve a career out year after year. It's a tough business and the unknown talents pop often lesser talented but 'famous' stars. I'm not generally a fan of politicians, so I would say all the women who have given of themselves to allow me to make my own choices and earn my own money, still amazingly recent in the scale of things and so many women across the globe still don't have those basic rights.

**Ed:** What did you learn most from being in the chair at Cobham Players?

**M:** That the talents and dedication of the various members are huge and as long as you can get the commitment most things are possible. Don't sweat the stuff people are less interested in. If there isn't the interest... let it go...

**Ed:** What has been your most embarrassing experience? (Something that Cobham Players' members would not know about)?

**M:** I had decided not to mention to parents that I was being paid to be a martini girl for a deputy head who was leaving a local school. I donned a skimpy outfit and sang for this deputy head and

got on his knee, etc. Then one of the staff members piped up that they knew the martini girl and there was a bloke who used sing in the choir of my father's church! My cool demeanour slipped instantly.

**Ed:** If you lived somewhere else in the world and lived a different lifestyle where would it be and what?

**M:** Not sure I'd want to change my lifestyle that much. I'd like to live somewhere a little more rural: Shropshire or Dorset, but only if all my friends and the Players can come too please! I would also like to have the time and money to spend some of the year in the south of France enjoying the sun and a different way of life, but in general I am very blessed and content.

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

**M:** Fun, loyal, down to earth, talented. Coz we are!

**Ed:** How would you describe the future for Cobham Players?

**M:** I would like to think another 60 years of delivering entertainment for both its members and audiences! We are primarily here to give people the opportunity to practise the theatrical arts and perhaps stretch some boundaries; the plaudits and awards are very secondary although nice!

*Mary Taylor/Mike Dawes*



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**14 October 2009**

### **Auditions for Aladdin**

Cobham Village Hall (small hall)  
Juniors 7.30 pm, Adults 8 pm.

**29–31 October 2009**

### **A Bird in the Hand**

#### **A comedy**

by Derek Benfield  
Directed by Victoria Franklin  
Cobham Village Hall 8 pm

**30 November–5 December 2009**

(with a matinée on 5 December)

### **Scrooge**

By Leslie Bricusse  
Walton and Weybridge Amateur Operatic  
Society at The Walton Playhouse  
For booking details see: [www.wwaos.org.uk](http://www.wwaos.org.uk)

**5 December 2009**

### **Christmas get together**

At The Bear, Oxshott, 7.30 pm (more details  
to follow)

**7–9 January 2010**

### **Aladdin**

By Peter Denyer  
Directed by Naomi Johannes  
Cobham Village Hall 7.30 pm  
(Matinée on 9 January at 2.30 pm)

Tickets from Cobham Travel from mid- November  
Tel: 01932 867181

**22–24 April 2010**

### **Two One Act Plays**

**Lifeboat** by Nicola McCartney  
(Entry for the Elmbridge and Leatherhead  
Drama Festivals)

**Quake** by Anthony Booth  
Directed by Rodney Pearson  
Cobham Village Hall 8 pm

Further details in the Christmas edition of ITW

## Rose Theatre, Kingston presents

### **Bedroom Farce**



1 October - 28 November

By Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by Peter Hall

Cast includes: Jane Asher, Tony Gardner,  
Nicholas Le Prevost & Finty Williams.

Box Office 0871 230 1552 or visit

[www.rosetheatrekington.org/bedroom-farce](http://www.rosetheatrekington.org/bedroom-farce)

### **Miss Julie**

8 October - 28 November

By August Strindberg

Directed by Stephen Unwin

Cast includes: Rachel Pickup, Daniel  
Betts & Lucy Briers.

Box Office 0871 230 1552 or visit

[www.rosetheatrekington.org/miss-julie](http://www.rosetheatrekington.org/miss-julie)

Tickets £7 - £29.50 , Groups (10 or more  
people) £5 off top and second ticket  
price!



## SPRING QUIZ WINNER

The winner of the spring ITW quiz was Kim Groom. Congratulations, Kim. The correct answer was "Molière."



## AND FINALLY....THE AUTUMN QUIZ

Identify these books/actors/plays/musicals/ other entertainments and select the appropriate letter. Re-arrange the letters to form the name of a much loved English stage and TV actor. (First name and surname: 7 and 6 letters respectively).

- Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's most famous work (1<sup>st</sup> letter)
- Romantic comedy featuring the Duke Orsino, Malvolio and Sir Andrew Aguecheek (3<sup>rd</sup> Letter)
- 1952 production where a silent film company makes the difficult transition to the "talkies" (watch the spelling here!) (12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> letters)
- Published in 1843, it features Jacob Marley and Tiny Tim. (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> letters)
- His 1971 autobiography was "The Moon's a Balloon." (4<sup>th</sup> letter of his screen name)
- 57<sup>th</sup> year and still going strong in the West End. (7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> letters)
- 1978 film with Danny Zuko and Sandy Olsson (Tell me more Like Does He Have a Car?) (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> letters)
- In Moscow this theatre is home to world famous ballet and opera companies. (1<sup>st</sup> letter)

Good luck – as always, no prizes – just a congratulatory note in the Christmas edition of ITW (Ed.)

Replies please to [mike@aviation1st.co.uk](mailto:mike@aviation1st.co.uk) by 23 October 2009.