



### Forthcoming read-throughs & auditions

- 'The Birthday Party'  
Auditions: Monday 14 December, 7.30pm in the theatre
- 'Little Gem'  
Read-through: Monday 8 February, 7.30pm in the bar
- 'Allo Allo'  
Read-through: Monday 28 March, 7.30pm in the bar

**Remember: a read-through is not an audition!**

#### Other diary dates:

Sunday 13 December: Newport Jazz Club FREE concert (see p7)

Tuesday 15 December: Platform One annual show

January 8, 15, 16 & 17: the IW Shakespeare company present 'As You Like It'

Saturday 9 January 2016: 12th Night party (see p7)

Sunday 10 January: Newport Jazz Club present 'Jazz at the Apollo'

Monday 11 January: meeting about back-stage practice (see p8)

Friday 12 February: 'Dangerous Corner' goes up

# apollonius

Issue no. 247

December 2015

## 'The Witches' goes up!

Amy and Dan Burns are very excited about their production of 'The Witches', which went up on 4 December.

Amy said, 'It's been wonderful to bring a book that I read as a child to reality. It was one of those stories that stuck in my mind when I was young and it's been so exciting to have the opportunity to direct it. It's been a challenge to bring it to the stage - there have been some technical limitations to what we could do, but the majority of images and concepts we discussed over the summer have been able

to be realised.'

Amy was also delighted that the people who auditioned for the play were happy to play whatever was available, so she and Dan were able to fit the people into the parts they felt them to be best for.

And the last question - did they feel they had realised the dream? A smile came over Amy's face. 'Oh yes - particularly after Wardrobe had worked their magic! The Grand High Witch in particular was a very vivid image from the book - and she looks just as I imagined her.'



Amy & Dan Burns making last-minute adjustments to the set of 'The Witches'

## Your new editor

The sharp-eyed among you may notice that your Apollonius looks a little bit different this month. Those members who were at the AGM will know that Paul Stevens has decided to stand down as Editor after a number of years doing the (often thankless!) job, and we are very grateful indeed for his hard work. I have rashly agreed to take on the role, so if you don't like the new look, I'm the one responsible! I plan to use Apollonius not only as a source of information for you, the membership, but also as a way of getting our message out to a

wider audience and hopefully thus attracting new members into the fold. And do please give me lots of interesting stuff to put in it - thoughts, ideas, letters, articles, ideally in electronic format but a note in my pigeonhole will do it! Basically I don't mind what shape it's in—just keep those contributions coming! But remember—the deadline for contributions is the first Saturday of the run of each show.



New Editor of Apollonius, Ginnie Orrey

Contact details:  
gginnie@googlemail.com  
or\_info@apollo-theatre.org.uk

## Editorial: the view from the Editor's chair



Benedict Cumberbatch as Hamlet: do we 'get' it?

For many of you, the point I want to make in this article could be described as 'stating the b\*\*\*ing obvious'. However, it's still worth making—not least because we're all in the business of supporting and more to the point enjoying the arts. Not that it's easy for Islanders! Which of us hasn't experienced the angst of going to London for a show—do we go for a matinee because there isn't a late ferry? Or do we go for an evening performance and spend a fortune on staying overnight? Do we spend the last half of the show in a state of nervous tension in case we miss the train/ferry? Or do we just feel it's too much effort and go with whatever's on at the

Mayflower? Or indeed Shanklin Theatre? Because of all this, I think we're enormously fortunate to have the opportunity to see live transmissions of fantastic productions from the likes of the National Theatre, the RSC, the Met and others at cinemas and film clubs across the Island. Some of you may have seen correspondence in the Guardian recently, when Peter Bradshaw said he *'didn't get people wanting to watch live theatre beamed into a cinema. But there it is: everyone except me loves it. These events are box-office gold, especially for hot-ticket events'*. Obviously he doesn't live on the Isle of Wight! Grr! I—and I'm sure many of you—have seen so many of the NTLive

and other transmissions that I sometimes get confused about whether I've seen the show live or in Cineworld—and frankly I'm none the worse for that. So let's hear it for live transmissions, I say—and with that in mind, here are a few of the treats we can look forward to over the next month or two (all at Cineworld):

A Winter's Tale (Kenneth Branagh): 3 January 2016

The Pearl Fishers (Met Opera): 16 January 2016

Les Liaisons Dangereuses (NTLive): 28 January 2016

La Traviata (ROH): 4 February 2016

As You Like It (NTLive): 25 February 2016



Stuart Egan with Robbie Gwinnett in 'The Kitchen Sink'

### From the director of 'The Kitchen Sink': a belated thanks to all the team

This item was unfortunately omitted from the last issue but I felt it important to say a big 'thank you' to the production team for 'The Kitchen Sink'. Most of the cast will have been familiar to you, but we were delighted to welcome Stuart Egan on stage. He has been in several Strolling Players' pantomimes and we hope he

will also become a regular at the Apollo. Every member of the team, on stage and backstage, demonstrated total commitment from the outset to 'telling the story', collecting and organising the myriad of props, stage dressing, planning costumes, set building, lighting and actually running the show.

Typical examples of this commitment and teamwork were new members, young Joel McSorley and Ed Lancaster, backstage. The Apollo Players have always maintained that we have no 'stars', and this production exemplified that. Thanks team, you are all stars!

Michael Arnell

### DVD LOANED: a plea from the Wardrobe Manager

Some time ago I lent a DVD on wig care and wearing them to one of our actors; but unfortunately I can't remember who.

We had nine witches

to be-wig in the current show and I wanted to share the DVD with my wardrobe team.

If you have it, please can you ring me?

Many thanks!

Peggy Harcourt,  
Wardrobe Mistress  
882031

## Notes from the Committee meeting: 7 December 2015

Many very interesting issues were discussed at the Players' Committee meeting on 7 December, and this article tells you about some of them, in particular those where members' input would be especially helpful.

### SET-BUILDING

A number of items which were raised at the end of the AGM were discussed and the Committee were very grateful to members for bringing them up. A case in point was the concern raised by a member of the set-building team, that they are not always given sufficient practical information to enable them to build a set. The Committee would therefore like to remind directors that they should come to their pre-production meeting armed with a the very least a drawing or floor plan for their set; a model, of course, is ideal, though not all of us are gifted in that direction, but the more information directors can give to the team at an early stage, the easier they will find it to realise your plans, and the less stressful it will be for everyone.

### FIRE SAFETY TRAINING

As you can imagine, fire safety is a major issue for us and for all theatres. We have recently received notification of a range of fire training available to us and we wondered whether any member(s) would like to take the opportunity to be have Fire Marshall and/or Fire Extinguisher training.

The first is a one-day course more suitable for stage managers, covering a wide range of issues, while the other is a half-day course involving practice on real fires, but both would be useful for those in positions of responsibility during productions. The Committee has agreed to fund either the full cost or part of it (so if you have fire responsibility in your working life as well as in the theatre you might like to take this opportunity). Please contact Dan Burns, Technical Manager, in the first instance.

### PARKING ON THE FORECOURT

This is an issue which comes up pretty regularly. The basic rule is—if you're a member and you have business in the theatre, you can use the forecourt to park on while you're in there. Unfortunately there have been instances of people parking on the forecourt for days, which limits its legitimate use by other members. For this reason it has been decided to issue parking permits, to be displayed in your windscreen while you're there. This will enable others to know that you are in fact a member—since we can't know everybody's car—and that you have the right to be on the forecourt. A permit will be put in the members' area on the website; print it out and

use it whenever you're in the theatre and any unpleasantness will be avoided. If you don't have access to the website, please let any Committee member know and we'll have one sent to you.

### POSTER DISTRIBUTION

The distribution of posters is a significant part of our marketing activity, and we have a large number of A3 and A4 posters printed for every show which can be found in a pile under the pigeonholes in the foyer. Sadly many of them are usually left unused when a show is over, which is a waste of (a) money and (b) a marketing opportunity. Peggy Hewson is in charge of poster distribution and has put a clipboard beside the pile, so two pleas to members:

- please could you take a few posters for each show and put them up wherever you think they'll be visible and you have access—for example, your front window, a friendly shop, your library and so on;
- and if you take some, please could you add your name to the list on the clipboard and a note of where they will be put up, to help us identify 'black holes' in our marketing.

## 44th AGM of the Apollo Players: your 4-page spread

Arts  
Manager for  
2016-17  
elected

The 44th AGM of the Apollo Players took place on 28 November, and opened with a remembrance of Maggie Bradsell, who passed away in September after decades of membership of the Players.

The meeting provided the opportunity for the officers of the Society to give their reports on the year past. Unfortunately some weren't able to attend,

and only a very small number of members managed to make it. This is sad, as the AGM is a chance to celebrate the Players' achievements over the previous year; and of course also to elect the Arts Manager for the coming year. There were three candidates for the post: Maggie Cardew (currently Arts Manager 2015-16), Cynara Crump and Ginnie Or-

rey. Cynara's and Ginnie's seasons had been published in the last issue of Apollonius and Maggie discussed some of her thoughts for future plays during her presentation.

After the vote Maggie was elected; congratulations, and we look forward to another interesting season.

*From the  
Theatre  
Director,  
Amy  
Burns*

Thank you to Michael Arnell for a fabulous season. A great selection of plays, which I hope were all enjoyed by audiences, casts and crews alike.

Thank you to the committee who over this year have kept me on my toes and have ensured (I hope) that the Apollo is moving forward getting bigger and better. There are still areas where we can and will improve but

we are always trying.

Thank you to the Trust for giving us the funds to improve the bar; and special thanks to Roger and Hilary Simpson and Michael Whitehead and their team of workers for making the fab improvements. There still is a little work to do but it's looking good and the official renaming and opening will happen soon.

Michael Arnell has been undertaking our community outreach programme and has been giving tours and presentation to different groups around the island. So thank you, Michael, for your hard work in getting our name out there.

And finally - sincerest thanks to all of you for your continued support and dedication to making the Apollo what it is.

*From the  
Business  
Manager,  
Ginnie  
Orrey*

Maggie Bradsell's husband Peter has very generously made a significant donation to the theatre in her memory.

The Players' accounts for 2014-15 unfortunately were not able to be presented on the night in the usual way, as some information necessary for

their completion was not available in time; however, as soon as they are ready they will be published in the Members' area of the website, so if you're interested, do take a look. In summary, though, the Players are doing OK: some smaller houses have meant a reduc-

tion in ticket income, but this was largely offset by an increase in hirings and also some excellent Bar takings (thanks in no small part to the enthusiasm of jazz and blues aficionados!).

*From the  
House  
Manager,  
Paul  
Stevens*

My thanks to all those who have volunteered for any rota during the last season, and in particular to Cynara and Bernard for dealing with the box office rotas. If anybody wishes to be trained in running the box office, please contact me.

During the last year we have upgraded the box office computer system and have introduced payment by card. Unfortunately, electronic checking of tickets has had to be put on the back burner but hopefully in the new year we

can have another go. I would like to thank everybody for their support in the smooth running of the box office and a big thank you to Dan. As far as I know we have only had one instance where somebody was sitting in seats bought by somebody else!

At the last AGM I said that I was concerned about the filling of the front of house rotas. I still have to beg people to fill the various roles although strangely we have no problem in filling Y3 for any play! Begin-

ning with The Witches the number of coffee staff/ushers will be cut from 5 to 4 so we will see how that works. Another email is going out tomorrow so please step forward. Don't forget that the sheets for the next production are always available in the theatre. If you are ever in doubt about anything please don't hesitate to ask.

If there is anybody I have forgotten to thank, please excuse me; I do appreciate all your help.

*From the  
Bar  
Manager,  
Paul  
Stevens*

Hilary has continued to keep us well stocked up, and has introduced some new drinks. On the whole, Steve has managed to fill the rotas with little trouble and we hope to hand over to the Players in

the region of £10,000 this year.

I would personally like to thank Roger, Mike and Hilary for all the changes in the bar; I hope you agree that it looks excellent. We

would like to thank everybody who has helped in the bar in any way and hope that you have enjoyed the experience. We are always happy for anybody to offer their help so please contact us.

*From the  
Buildings  
Manager,  
Roger  
Simpson*

Many thanks to all who have helped with the Theatre's maintenance. Apart from day-to-day repairs, the main thrust has been the improvements to the bar area, funded by the Trust, where we will have spent around £4,000. The final phase is adding the gents facilities and decorating the

existing toilets. We have also had to replace the gas boiler which supplies hot water to the props room and dressing rooms at a cost of £800, once again paid for by the trust. However, with the exception of the assistance of plumbers to move radiators, all the work has been done in house.

A specification for the external repairs and decoration to the front of the theatre has been prepared and we are currently waiting for quotations, and various other schemes are in the pipeline, including improvements to ventilation, sound insulation and security.

*From the Membership Secretary, Pam Cranefield*

As of 2 November, the Players have 195 paid-up members including Patrons and Life Members. Since last November we have gained 28 new members, many of whom have immediately involved themselves in the theatre. However, we failed to entice 45 of last year's members to rejoin this year. It has become clear over the last year that although some people join primarily to be cast in productions, we do need all members to contribute in some other way as

well - front of house, backstage activities and participation in workshops and social events. The responsibility should be shared and we must not rely on the few volunteers to do everything. I continually badger Directors to ensure their cast are all Apollo members but I also know, from the feedback I have received, that current members appreciate that there is a need for all actors to be part of the 'Apollo family'. I would yet again encourage Directors to make sure

their actors are members either immediately on being cast or very soon after. I have always been pleased to receive phone calls or emails regarding all aspects of the theatre, often being the first point of contact with new members, and have happily researched a range of problems or queries - please feel free to contact me about any issue in the future.

*From the Marketing Manager, Kate Fysh*

Over recent years it has become obvious that in the new fast-moving world of self-promotion, the role of Marketing Manager is simply too big for one person; so we now have a marketing team, drawing on the particular skills and talents required for the various aspects of the job. We also have a written description of what needs to be done, by whom and when, along with a template for the posters and programme. In no particular order I would like to

thank the following for their help and support as we have worked on this (any bouquets are rightly theirs - brickbats to me!):

Kevin Wilson: for press releases and radio interviews;

Paul Jennings: for photographs - essential for the website, the boxes outside the theatre and illustrating press releases;

Michael Arnell: for designing many of the posters and designing and making banners;

Maureen Sullivan: for her work to give us a social media presence;

Peggy Hewson: for organising the distribution of posters and flyers;

Ginnie Orrey: for proof-reading and collating material for other media outlets, and of course for the website;

and last but definitely not least, Paul Stevens: for laying out the posters, flyers, programmes and season leaflets and liaising with the printers.

**AGM REFLECTIONS**

A personal view by  
MOG

Having just attended my thirty-seventh A.G.M., it was reassuring to note that nothing changes very much, except that the nostalgia-spectacles seem to get a little rosier.

There is still abundant evidence of a core membership group doing an awful lot. There is still a clear commitment shown by each production team to improve standards and maintain our reputation and there is still

a wonderful accepting camaraderie and mutual respect demonstrated by the vast majority.

Of course, there are still the regular observations like 'why don't we do this' or 'wouldn't it be a good idea if we did that', with no offer from that wise person to actually be involved with the 'doing'. Hey ho, nothing changes.

And finally, one thing that

has often concerned me is that, yet again the turnout was only a small percentage of our membership so does that make our elections truly democratic? Maybe important elections could be to be recorded online, or whatever. What do you all think?

By the time you read this our third production of this season will be nearly over. It has been a very interesting first half and we have some good audience percentages throughout. The first three plays have been well received so a huge thank you to everybody backstage and front of house who have realised this success, not least for the remarkable sets, extraordinary costumes and the warm welcome extended by the front of house staff; a phenomenal

team effort.

To all members old and new, please come along to auditions, read-throughs, last night parties, coffee mornings or anything else you see advertised; even if you are not interested or are unable to commit to a production it really is the best way to get together with like-minded people and become, or remain, a part of this very substantial theatrical family! See you there!

The next read-through of a play will be on February 8<sup>th</sup> at 7.30. 'Little Gem' is by Elaine Murphy and represents a year in the life of three generations of women, showing the highs and lows of their lives over the course of a year. It is sad, funny, nostalgic and occasionally downright outrageous. Come along and have a read.

*From the  
Arts  
Manager,  
Maggie  
Cardew*

### Community Outreach update

Two Women's Institute groups, Gurnard Bay and Ventnor, have recently visited our theatre. Both groups expressed their admiration for the obvious hard work that volunteers invest in maintaining this wonderful Island asset.

However, an observation

common to most of the groups should give us food for thought. They have asked if there is any significance in the fact that the Wardrobe Department is organised by women and the Backstage Department by men. They have obviously

noted the disparity in the efficiency with which the storage and working areas of each department are managed. Could we possibly comment? See article on page 8 for more info ...

*Michael Arnell*

'Is there any significance in the fact that the Wardrobe Department is organised by women and the Backstage Department by men?' Discuss ...

### Jazz at the Apollo—FREE concert, Sunday 13 December 3.00 pm

To Island jazz aficionados the Jazz at the Apollo (JATA) concerts at the theatre on Sundays need no introduction. However, if you haven't yet discovered the joy of listening to brilliant jazz in the lovely surroundings of the Apollo, you have a treat in store! The concert on Sunday 13 December is FREE, as a bit of a treat for those who have been loyally sup-

porting the Newport Jazz Club all year (not to mention the Apollo bar!!), so this might be your opportunity to see what it's all about.

The concert features, among others, one of the UK's top jazz guitar players, Nick Page. His programme will contain blues and jazz standards to delight us and he will be ably supported by the

NJC trio of Peter Trueman, Mike Whitehead and Bill Wills. In addition, there will be a guest appearance by one of the Island's exciting sax players, Roger Mason.

To obtain your free ticket phone 523879 or 730601—you won't get in without one!



## A message to directors from the Business Manager

**CALLING DIRECTORS, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE – THIS IS IMPORTANT!**



This is a call to all members who either are down to direct a show, have already directed one this season or are planning to do so in the future. You may be familiar with the Performing Rights Society, or PRS, whose job is to collect royalties on music played in public and pay them to the artists who wrote it. The Apollo is registered with the PRS and we are obliged to send them information about the music, both recorded and live, that we use in shows; and to pay the appropriate fee for using

it. In the past we have been charged on an 'estimated' basis – a bit like when you don't send your meter readings to the gas company – but from here on in I need to make sure that we are correctly billed, as the difference can be quite significant.

And that's down to the directors, I'm afraid, as I need you to give me the information I need to make our return to the PRS. I am in the process of collating information from a couple of past seasons and I may be in

touch with you to ask about the music you used if you directed a show then, but for this season, 2015-16, I am asking all directors to let me have some details about the music you used/plan to use in your show. I will be writing to you individually, so this is what I believe is called a 'heads-up': to let you know I'll be asking for the information, and equally important, if you're planning to direct a show, that that will be one of the jobs I will be asking you to do.

### ART IN THE BAR update



Art in the Bar during the run of the Witches was the brainchild of the innovative Michael Arnell. He visited many schools inviting pupils to enter their witch-themed paintings for competition and exhibition. The talented winner would receive a family ticket to attend the per-

formance of their choice. At first entries were slow but suddenly as the play drew nearer we had a sudden flurry resulting in the pictures showcased in the Apollo bar. I hope you will join with us in commending all these budding artists; however ... there can only be one

winner and Paul Hewson had the extremely difficult task of judging. In the end the winner was George Sales, aged 6, and his winning entry is shown left. Congratulations to him!

*Paul Hewson, new 'Art in the Bar' co-ordinator*

### Improving backstage practice: a message from Michael Arnell

To save both money and our most valuable resource, time, we need to improve the efficiency of our backstage working practices. The Players' Committee have therefore given consent for Michael Arnell to head up a team of volunteers to work on this.

To ensure that any proposed changes are democratic and match the

needs of the production teams who actually stage our plays, Michael's team will need input, ideas and volunteers.

First of all, a meeting will be held to agree:

- the ideal working purpose of the workshop and props/crew room;
- a code of working practice in relation to tools, equipment,

clearing/cleaning etc;

- a plan for economic but realistic management of waste.

If you would like to join the team, please come along to the planning meeting on **Monday 11 January at 7.00pm** (also a work night, so you can meet the 'regulars') or contact Michael on 296388.

## Twelfth Night party!

All members are invited to a Twelfth Night party at the theatre on Saturday 9 January 2016.

It will be held in the theatre bar, starting at 7:30pm, and will include things like wall quizzes and lots of table games. The bar will be open, but everyone is asked to bring a contribution to the food (leftover nut roast and roast turkey welcome!).

There will also be a 'Secret Santa'! For those unfamiliar with the concept, bring a present – use up those unwanted gifts! (ideally valued at no more than £5) – and they will all be put in a bag and at the end of the evening you choose a different gift to take home.

Remember - All Welcome!

## The newly refurbished bar!

You may have seen reference to the new bar a number of times in this issue—well, here are a few pictures to show you what all the fuss is about. It's particularly special because a team of volunteers, led by Roger Simpson, Buildings Manager, and including Mike Whitehead and Paul Stevens among others, have put in countless hours to completely upgrade the facilities in the bar, as well as removing the old coffee bar to make more space for seating and installing shutters. Most of you will remember the old arrangement and I think you'll agree it's a huge improvement! And better still—come along and have a drink and admire!



## And finally ...

... as they say, it only remains for me to wish you all, members and other readers, and all your friends and relations, the happiest of Christmases. I hope you've enjoyed your and my first 'new look' Apolloni-

us; do please contact me and let me know what you think, and ideally let me have some ideas for future editions. Letters are very welcome—provided they're not rude or scurrilous!- as well as articles or any-

thing you think our members would like to read. All suggestions very gratefully received!

*Ginnie Orrey*





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## Next production



**'Dangerous Corner',  
by JB Priestley**

**12-13 & 16-20  
February 2016**

To let sleeping dogs lie or not, that is the question ... The Apollo's next production will be JB Priestley's 'Dangerous Corner', one of his

renowned 'time plays', in which a chance remark by one of the guests ignites a series of devastating revelations, revealing a hitherto

undiscovered tangle of clandestine relationships and dark secrets, the disclosures of which have tragic consequences.