



**Forthcoming read-throughs, auditions & other production stuff**

- 'Forget-Me-Knot' auditions: Sunday 12 February, probably in Hancock House
- 'Ghost Train' read-through: 13 March in the bar
- 'Ghost Train' auditions: 2 April in the auditorium

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

**An apology from your Editor**

My apologies for the early arrival of this issue: I'm off on a rather exciting adventure and so must send it out a few days early. I hope you enjoy it; and as always, if for future issues you feel moved to contribute a letter, an article or something else of interest to other members, I should be delighted—do please send it to me and enjoy the frisson of seeing your name in print!

**SOCIAL SECRETARY WANTED!**

The Players would still very much like to hear from any member(s) who would like to act as Social Secretary. The duties are not onerous, involving thinking up and organising social events for the membership. Good fun, satisfying and you get to go to all the best parties!

**Other diary dates (more info on the website)**

'Good Old Days' Music Hall in aid of the British Heart Foundation (in memory of Alain Smith). See p 5 for more information

# apollo

**Issue no. 255**

**January 2017**



**An update from the director, Di Evans**

I am finding it difficult to write about 'Ladykillers' when there are nearly three weeks still to go before opening night. My head is still full of the challenges that are ahead ... and I feel that to be too congratulatory is to tempt Fate!

So, as I have said once before ... so far, so good!

The extremely complicated set has been constructed in record time by the set building team led by Paul Jennings, who managed to design this amazing set in spite of my interference [see page 4 for more about the set-building team's achievements: Ed].

The set is just about ready to paint. Paul Hewson has already created clever moulding on the fireplace

with painted gold highlights. How does he do that?!

We have just had a long rehearsal and the cast managed to get through the whole play without books—plenty of prompts, but no books—and we still have three weeks to go.

The cast have all worked tremendously hard and have had to cope with many 'tweaks' to blocking when transferring to the split-level set revealed horrendous masking problems. However I think (I hope!) that they are now sorted and we can move forward to the fine detail. Given that much of the comedy in this play is physical and we have only been on the set for six rehearsals an enor-

mous amount has been achieved.

Tristram has been into rehearsals to make sure his lighting and sound ideas will work, and today he played us the 'robbery' track ... brilliant!!

Peggy and her team are well into furnishing us with the usual high-quality costumes, and Teresa and I have sorted most of the props.

What can possibly go wrong?!

As ever it has been a privilege to work towards a common goal with so many enthusiastic and creative people and I would like to thank them all ... but quietly, so the fates don't hear us ...

*Di Evans*

**'The Ladykillers' is on from 3-11 February 2017.**

## **The Loves of Cass McGuire: from the director, Maureen Sullivan**

*The Loves of Cass McGuire* is now well into rehearsal and if the emotions felt by the cast - both laughter and tears - are communicated to the audience, we will need to provide tissues on the door! The cast is as follows:

Cass - Fiona Gwinnett  
Trilbe - Carole Crow  
Alice - Glenys Williams  
Mother - Cynara Crump  
Tessa - Ellen Lamplough  
Mrs Butcher - Ginnie Orrey

Harry - Stuart Egan  
Ingram - David Stradling  
Pat - Graham Brown  
Dom - Andrew Butcher

Several excellent actresses auditioned, though few men - Di appeared to have taken them all for *The Ladykillers*! - but having recruited some equally excellent actors, I feel so lucky to have a talented cast, all ideally suited to their character; I am delighted with the work they are doing so

far and I know they will do justice to the nuances of this amazing play. I am now looking for crew members to support the play too ...



**'The Loves of Cass McGuire' is on from 28 March—1 April 2017**

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

### News from the Apollo Theatre Trust



To paraphrase the work of that renowned poet and eulogist, EJ Thribb (17½), 'So/farewell then/2016'—and as he might well have added, 'And/good rid-dance'. After a year when one began to dread looking at the news for fear of finding out who was the next beloved person to have shuffled off this mortal coil, it is perhaps helpful to remind ourselves that theatre, at least, has continued to thrive (even though without the divinial Alan Rickman and the equally wonderful though somewhat craggier John Hurt).

At this time last year the title of the Guardian's leader was 'This year, more than ever, the play's the thing'. As the year has unfolded, one unpleasantness after another, we can I think hold on to the fact that the play is still the thing. There have been unmatched performances on the London stage, more and more of them streamed live so that Islanders can enjoy them without having to pay hundreds of pounds for the privilege; the great and thankfully still breathing Mark Rylance is now Sir Mark; and we at the Apollo

continue to offer good theatre to the Isle of Wight as we have for nearly 45 years, going, financially at least, from strength to strength.

Reasons to be cheerful? Of course. Who knows—other than on paper—what 2017 holds for any of us; but our commitment to support the arts on the Island holds good as it has since 1970. We have a new season to look forward to and a successful season to look back on, and the second half of the current season is looking good. So—onwards and upwards!

Three quotes have been received for the new emergency exit, with one more expected shortly. We will then be in a position to let the contract. Work will be scheduled to take place immediately after a play comes down. The opening will have to be kept secure during the work but it is hoped that non-public activities can continue to be held in the theatre. In any event we will attempt to reduce the impact on the use of the building to a minimum.

Future plans include remedial work to the roof of the dressing room—the flat roof is very sick and we have the choice to either have it refurbished or take the opportunity to go up a floor into a new pitched roof. We have planning permission to complete the work associated with developing No 124 by joining it to the main theatre at first floor level and Roger is in the process of agreeing building control permission for both these projects.

And a really good piece of news—as explained on page 6 we have been very generously offered a gift of a piece of sculpture relating to Lawrence Olivier. Assuming we agree to accept the gift, the Trust, in co-operation with the players, will be making plans to mount it in a secure location on public display in accordance with the sculptor's wishes.

*Paul Jennings, Chair, Apollo Theatre Trust*

### 'Forget-Me-Knot' - from the director, Steve Reading



'Forget Me Knot' by David Tristram ranks among the funniest plays I have ever read. I am a big fan of his plays (I've performed in and directed two or three for RedTIE Theatre), and I thought it was time the Apollo had a crack at one of his best.

As a playwright, Tristram's premise is quite simple—to write plays that are comical, engage the audience, send them away happy and enable the play to be performed in spaces ranging from village halls to top-notch theatres by ei-

ther professionals or local groups.

The plot: Robert is picked up by the police at 4am wandering the streets of Leicester without the slightest clue about how he got there, with total amnesia and only a bruised head and a suspicious policeman for company. Perhaps Robert is not what he seems, perhaps he has something to hide, perhaps he hasn't lost his memory at all. Perhaps it's an elaborate cover-up for something or other. As our intrepid po-

liceman digs deeper the more confused he gets and finds himself wrestling with a plot that has more twists than a buckled slinky toy.

But the truth always comes out in the end. Or does it? One thing is for sure, you won't forget this play.

Forget Me Knot is a four-hander (2M & 2F): Monroe (policeman) 40-50, Samantha (his wife) 35-45, Robert (amnesiac) 35-45, Julia (Roberts' wife) 40-50. All ages are '-ish'.

## Notes from the Committee meeting on 6 February 2017

Those of you who have read the front page will know that your Editor will be off jaunting in a far-flung corner of the Empire by the time this month's Committee meeting takes place. I have therefore taken the liberty of mentioning a number of items which will be discussed at the meeting, though obviously not the outcomes.

**NOTES FROM THE DIRECTORS' MEETING**

The Arts Manager for the 2017-18 season, Cynara Crump, held the Directors' meeting on 17 January. She tells us, *'After the meeting on the evening of Tuesday 17th, I felt considerably cheered. There were certainly more people attending than I had expected, and at the end of it I was able to go home and feel that I had the bones of a season, 6/7 plays there. I need to get in touch with one person who had offered me a play which I want to include, but who didn't come to the meeting, and I have to make a decision about a pre-Christmas production, where I have a superfluity of options.*

*I left one or two people with scripts and I've not*

*contacted them yet to see how they got on.'*

Cynara will formally present a possible season to the Committee shortly.

**IN OTHER NEWS ...**

The Marketing Manager, Maureen Sullivan, reports that generally our marketing strategy is going well, with plenty of interest on social media. We are currently exploring options for having leaflets at Red Funnel terminals. The question for the Committee is, 'where is our marketing effort/time/money best spent?' If any members have suggestions, Maureen would be delighted to hear from you.

The Committee also discussed the generous offer of a bas-relief from Laurence Holofcener (more about this on page 6). The Apollo Theatre Trust have to approve the acceptance of the gift, since technically the sculpture will belong to the Trust.

**THE LAST PLAYS IN THE 16-17 SEASON**

For the benefit of new members (and current ones who have forgotten!), here are details of the final

two shows to be cast in the 2016-17 season:

**'Forget-Me-Knot'** (12-20 May): director Steve Reading, [steveread104@btinternet.com](mailto:steveread104@btinternet.com). Audition date 12 February.

**'The Ghost Train'** (30 June-8 July): director Mike Whitehead, [michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com). Read-through 13 March; audition date 2 April.

In both cases, if you'd like a script to read do please contact the director.

**AND FINALLY ...**

A reminder that there are still plenty of the Apollo Theatre cotton bags available for sale. At £2.50 they're a steal and dead handy for carrying about with you for those unexpected purchases. Ask at the bar, or drop me or any of the Committee a line to obtain yours.



**Theatre Director & Chair of management committee (elected 3-yearly): Amy Burns (2016-19)** [amy@masexodus.co.uk](mailto:amy@masexodus.co.uk)

<b>Arts Manager</b> (elected annually in Nov for season beginning following Sept)	<b>Maggie Cardew</b> (2015-16) <a href="mailto:cardewmaglet@gmail.com">cardewmaglet@gmail.com</a> ; <b>Cynara Crump</b> (2016-17) <a href="mailto:cynara.crump@virgin.net">cynara.crump@virgin.net</a>	<b>Technical Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Dan Burns</b> (2015-17) <a href="mailto:dan@masexodus.co.uk">dan@masexodus.co.uk</a>
<b>Business Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Ginnie Orrey</b> (2016-18) <a href="mailto:gginnie@googlemail.com">gginnie@googlemail.com</a> or <a href="mailto:info@apollo-theatre.org.uk">info@apollo-theatre.org.uk</a>	<b>2 Members' Representatives</b> (elected annually) (2015-16)	<b>Helen Reading</b> <a href="mailto:redtiethatre@hotmail.co.uk">redtiethatre@hotmail.co.uk</a> ; <b>Steve Reading</b> <a href="mailto:steveread104@btinternet.com">steveread104@btinternet.com</a>
<b>Marketing Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Maureen Sullivan</b> (2016-18) <a href="mailto:msullivan58@me.com">msullivan58@me.com</a>	<b>Bar Manager</b> (co-opted)	<b>Paul Stevens</b> <a href="mailto:postmaster@sleeptite.force9.co.uk">postmaster@sleeptite.force9.co.uk</a>
<b>Players' Secretary</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Mike Whitehead</b> (2016-18) <a href="mailto:michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com">michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com</a>	<b>Wardrobe Manager</b> (co-opted)	<b>Peggy Harcourt</b> <a href="mailto:peggy.harcourt@creekside.plus.com">peggy.harcourt@creekside.plus.com</a>
<b>Membership Secretary</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Drew Adcock</b> (2016-18) <a href="mailto:apollotheatremembership@outlook.com">apollotheatremembership@outlook.com</a>	<b>Apollo Trust secretary</b> (co-opted)	<b>Cynara Crump</b> <a href="mailto:cynara.crump@virgin.net">cynara.crump@virgin.net</a>
<b>House Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Paul Stevens</b> (2016-18) <a href="mailto:postmaster@sleeptite.force9.co.uk">postmaster@sleeptite.force9.co.uk</a>	<b>Apollo Trust Buildings Manager</b> (co-opted)	<b>Roger Simpson</b> <a href="mailto:roger.dodger45@yahoo.co.uk">roger.dodger45@yahoo.co.uk</a>

## 'The Ghost Train' - the Players' final production in the 16-17 season

A preview from  
the director,  
Mike  
Whitehead

Written by Arnold Ridley, once a very well known playwright but best known these days for his portrait of the elderly Private Godfrey in 'Dad's Army' (see photo below of his young and old selves), this play is set in a Cornish railway



station where a group of travellers are stranded overnight. The station is reputed to be haunted by a ghostly train speeding through at the dead of night and by the ghost of the engine driver that haunts the platform. After both hauntings are experienced by the travellers, the situation is resolved by a final twist in the plot.

As much as is possible, I intend to present the play as it was originally performed but with modern lighting and sound effects.

The latter, in the original script, took ten stage-hands to perform! The characters will be asked to perfect a 1920 or 1930's inflection so if you intend to read for this, get looking at vintage films, radio recordings and anything else you can find from that era.

8 men, 4 women and a couple of extras will be required—details will be published later. There will be a read-through on 13 March and the auditions are on Sunday 2 April.

**The set-builders' latest challenge—building the set for 'Ladykillers'. Paul Hewson tells us how they did it!**



'First of all, the set designer, Paul Jennings, produced a wonderful 3D animated computer model for this set. With the click of a mouse we could adjust heights, angles, move doorways. It made it all just so easy peasy!

The build started with an all-day session on 2 January, which saw half the stage covered with a 4-foot high triangular scaffold framework which weighs about 3 tons. Gosh it looked tall! We spent the following 3 days lowering it and sloping it down at the front—just a mere 1000 clamp adjustments—and the next challenge was to board it over to create a wobble-free decking. Only a day's work underneath on hands & knees

bolting it all together, but it worked, meaning that we could start positioning the flats and all the sets of stairs for access.

Leaving the set provided another challenge. In the story some of the actors die. That's the easy bit! Because we only have a limited supply of actors we had to make 'health & safety'-compliant exits to keep cast losses to a minimum.

Painting will start shortly to make it look, as instructed, like a well-lived-in house in need of some TLC. Do come and see the play—it will be great, and you can see our workmanship in action!

*Another amazing part of the work the set-builders and -painters do is that they are wonders at recycling—every set contains elements of previous sets, a positive palimpsest of former Apollo productions. In the photo below you can clearly see a flat covered with some of the finely detailed 'wallpaper' from the set of The Selkie Wife, plus some of the amazing trompe l'oeuil stonework from the prison cell in Wyrd Sisters, while in a corner a set of steps retain the painted stars from Nunsense. Until the set-painters work their magic, it can be somewhat unsettling for actors to find themselves emoting in a set from a completely different play!*

GO



## From our new Membership Secretary, Drew Adcock

As I missed the last edition, I felt compelled to make a concerted effort to make sure I had something in this edition of 'Apollonius'. Firstly let me just thank those that voted for me to be the new Membership Secretary; you all have my thanks.

Secondly I would like to extend thanks for all the offers of help and support in this new position, most notably from Michael Arnell and David Barnard.

Now, onto Membership stuff [is that a word? Ed]. Since the last Apollonius was released we have welcomed Bob and Maxine White as well as Megan Turner (directors be warned, this girl is keen to tread the boards!). If I haven't already done so please expect your membership numbers to be sent to you very soon.

Do please remember that subs were due on 1 Janu-

ary—and you have to be a paid-up member to take part in a play. Standing order is by far the easiest way to make sure you're paid up to date; if you need a standing order form for your bank you can either download one from the members' area of the website or email me or the Business Manager to get one.

On a sadder note I had an e-mail from Julie Read recently. Julie has had to bring her time with us to a close for a while and I'm sure you will all join me in wishing her well and in letting her know that she will always have a home with us at the Apollo.

As we are a social group I am hoping to get input from the membership about social events. I know we have a few planned but what else do you want to do? I would say answers on a postcard

but it would be easier if you could e-mail me instead. In the same vein, would we have any volunteers to help organise and host these events? See the 'advert' on page 1—the job could be done by a small team rather than just one person, which might be easier.

Finally, updating the membership list has brought to my attention a number of out-of-date contact details. If anyone has changed address or telephone numbers in recent days, weeks, months or years please could you drop me a message so I can amend our records (thank you if you've already done this).

Kind regards,  
Drew Adcock, Apollo Players  
Membership Secretary  
07870 480693  
[apollotheatremembership@outlook.com](mailto:apollotheatremembership@outlook.com)

membership matters

## THE LATEST THEATRE WORKSHOP

It's become traditional after each production to have a theatre workshop on a Sunday. These are open to all members regardless of aptitude and ability, which here means experienced actors and performers are just as welcome as beginners. Everybody has the opportunity to learn something. The latest workshop, led

by Michael Arnell, entitled 'It's not just the words', challenged the participants to produce a TV advert for a new 'must have' product: The Acme Old-Age Pensioners' Multi-Purpose Cleaning Device with additional safety features. I fully expect to see this featured on QVC some time in the next millennium!

Among the other activities was the opportunity to direct and perform excerpts from a proper play, which certainly illustrated how differently different groups of people can interpret exactly the same text. Illuminating, entertaining and a few hours well spent.

*Ian Moth*

### From the workshop leader

Over many years I've often wondered why members express their desire to act, but seem reluctant to do anything about improving their acting skills. Even amateur sports-people train regularly.

The last two workshops I've organised have not exactly been oversubscribed.

Perhaps a different workshop leader is what's needed. In any case, whoever runs the next one, I will certainly be

there to take advantage of the opportunity of developing/sharing those skills that are fundamental to the whole *raison d'être* of the Apollo Players.

*Michael Arnell*



'Illuminating, entertaining and a few hours well spent.'



One of the 28 busts of Olivier in Larry Holofcener's sculpture

## A generous offer to the Apollo

Members may remember an article in issue 249 in which I mentioned that your editor had had the honour of being present at Larry Holofcener's 90th birthday party. Among his many talents—including being the songwriter behind *Mr Wonderful*—Larry is an internationally renowned sculptor: his most well-known work is probably *Allies*, which depicts Churchill and Roosevelt sitting together on a bench (there is a cast in the grounds of the former Priory Bay Hotel); and he recently donated a sculpture of Shakespeare to Stratford-on-Avon Council.

Larry and his wife Julia now live in Florida, but they spent many happy years on the Island, were engaged in a number of Island initia-

tives including the Apollo and remain keen to support Island projects. We recently received a very generous offer from them of a bronze bas-relief sculpted by Larry, called *Faces of Olivier*. Some of you may be aware of Larry's sculpture *Faces of Golf*, featuring portraits of well-known golfers down the ages, which hangs at St Andrews; the not dissimilar Olivier sculpture dates from 1984 and is a wall-mounted piece, about 3'x2', consisting of 28 small bronze busts depicting Laurence Olivier in various roles. Perfect for display in a theatre! Only two castings were ever made of the piece; this is the second one, as the first was originally installed at Chichester Festival Theatre where Olivier unveiled it in

May 1985. It hung in the front lobby for almost 30 years, but the theatre decided to change the focus of the entrance area so it was returned to Larry, meaning that the one offered to us would be the only one on public display.

Members of the Trust and the Players Committee recently viewed the sculpture and are currently assessing insurance and location issues. It needs cleaning but otherwise it's a remarkable piece; we hope to accept the offer as soon as possible, and are discussing a gala event to mark its arrival at the Apollo. We are hoping that Larry's name is sufficiently well-known that we get national coverage, so we must make sure we do him justice!

## CLOSURE OF LLOYDS BANK ACCOUNT

Members may remember that the Players no longer use an old Lloyds bank account because the bank charged us fees for using it. We have been holding off closing the account because a small number of members still pay their subs by standing order into it, but the situation had to be sorted out eventually and

### the account is therefore now closed.

If you are one of the people who were still paying in to that account, you may get a notification from your bank that your subs have been returned. If that happens, please could you set up a new standing order to the Players'

HSBC account? The details are:

Sort code: 40-34-26

Account no: 01715186

As a reminder, subscriptions are due on 1 January each year: £20 for single membership and £30 for a couple.

## ART IN THE BAR: NEXT EXHIBITION



One of John's watercolours, 'On the Medina'

Younger members may not know that one of our founder members, John Underwood, was not only one of the 'rocket men' at the Needles rocket site, but also an accomplished artist. To mark the first anniversary of the official naming of the new 'John Underwood

Bar' (see Apollonius issue 248), the next 'Art in the Bar' exhibition will consist of John's paintings. Pam Underwood and other Apollo members have been very supportive of this event, and Paul and Peggy Hewson, A in the B organisers, are asking members

to loan any of John's paintings that they own. For future exhibitions they would welcome suggestions & ideas to make sure the displays continue to be interesting & fresh.

Paul and Peggy can be contacted on [paul@paulhewsonart.co.uk](mailto:paul@paulhewsonart.co.uk)

The LTG or, to give its full name, 'The Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain', of which the Apollo Players has been a member since 1975, was set up pre-WWII with a membership of just 6 who had a vision of a mutual help association. Now there are 111 member theatres and the LTG keeps an eye on new legislation which may affect what the member theatres may be planning: for example, to do with children in performance, which has been the subject of many talks between LTG National Committee members and the relevant ministers over the past year or more (though just as they felt they were getting somewhere the Jimmy

Savile scandal broke and it was back to square one); or perhaps ensuring that all persons who use dangerous equipment are fully trained before using it; or decisions within the Charities Act which everyone should be aware of. This kind of information is summarised and sent out to all members.

The member theatres have been grouped into three regions, Northern, Southern and Central, and within those, groups of theatres in an area form a Hub to keep in closer contact with each other with meetings, exchange of newsletters and local contacts for help with loan of props, etc. We are part of the Hub stretching from Bournemouth

to Salisbury and Hayling Island. A National Conference and AGM are held annually in each of the regions in turn, while each region also holds its own Annual Conference and AGM. Alongside the formal business, these gatherings enable members to meet people from other areas, take part in workshops, some physical, some informative, see a production and be shown round another member theatre, and, usually, participate in an Open Forum for discussion of common issues. The quarterly LTG newsletter is available at the theatre for all members to read.

*Cynara Crump, Apollo Players LTG representative*



*The LTG:  
what's it  
all  
about?*

## 'The Good Old Days': Old Tyme Music Hall & Variety Show at the Apollo 24-26 February

Helen Clinton-Pacey is organising a fundraising event in support of the British Heart Foundation, in memory of our own dear Alain Smith. In H's words, 'We wanted to get involved to remember Alain, who sadly passed away after a sudden heart attack last year. Alain was involved in a great many shows at the Apollo and it felt right to do something in his honour. It's been wonderful to see so

many of Alain's friends come forward to take part, and great fun to organise. It promises to be a great show for all involved.'

The show will feature local performers including Apollo members and a programme of songs, sketches and variety acts. It runs from 24-26 February (with a matinee on the 26th) and tickets can be bought from the theatre box office; tickets are £10 and 50% of each ticket sold will

go to the BHF, helping them to fund the research that is so urgently needed to fight heart disease.

Through the public's generosity, the BHF will fund half a billion pounds of new research over the next five years which will be central to discovering vital treatments for people living with heart and circulatory conditions. Come along to the show and help them achieve even more.



### How to get into the members' area of the website: a standing item

Instructions for accessing the members' area of the Apollo Theatre website.

- Go on to the website and hover over 'membership' and the 'members' area' tab should drop down;
- click on that and you'll get the message 'We're sorry, the content you are trying to reach is restricted to members only';

- click on 'member login' and you'll get the drop-down box containing the two areas 'username' and 'password';
- in the top area enter your 'username', which is 'firstname.secondname' (remember the dot between the words), and in the bottom box enter your 'password', which is your membership num-

- ber. Your membership card has your number on it, but if you can't find it check with the Membership Secretary or me;
- once you've done that, you should get straight into the members' area. If not, there's a problem and you need to let me know, but try these steps first.

*Ginnie Orrey, webmistress*





The Apollo Theatre Players  
Apollo Theatre  
Pyle Street  
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Isle of Wight PO30 1JT

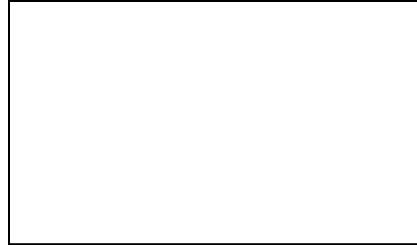
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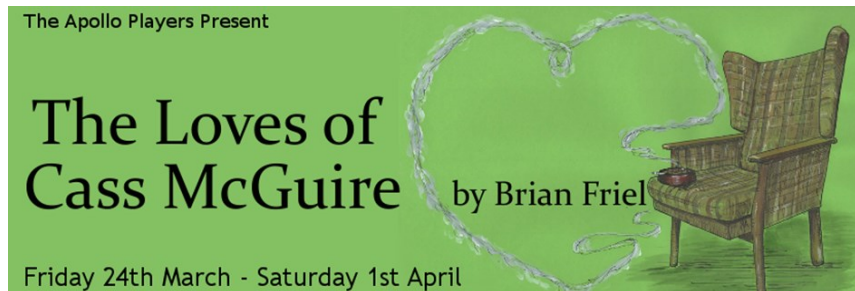
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Bringing good theatre to the Isle of Wight for more than 40 years



## The Apollo Players' next production



**For more than fifty years Cass McGuire has worked a block from Skid Row, among deadbeats and washouts - people who live in the past. This vital, compassionate play deals with her return to Ireland and her genteel family's rejection of her. It follows her lonely struggle to rediscover the home she's dreamt of all her life and her eventual surrender to the make-believe of Eden House, rest home for elderly people.**

Book your tickets online: [www.apollo-theatre.org.uk](http://www.apollo-theatre.org.uk)