



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

- 'The Vicar of Dibley': auditions: Sunday 9 September, 2.30pm in the auditorium
- 'Bronte': read-through Monday 17 September, 7.30pm in Hancock House
- 'Bronte': auditions Sunday 30 September, 2.30pm in the auditorium
- 'The Weir' read-through: Monday 1 October, 7.30pm in Hancock House
- 'The Weir': auditions Sunday 16 December, 2.30pm in the auditorium

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

**DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT ISSUE:**

Wednesday 17 October

Other diary dates

Coffee mornings	1, 15, 29 September 13, 27 October
Jazz at the Apollo: Alan Barnes Quintet	Sunday 16 September, 3.00pm
Players' AGM	Saturday 24 November, 7.30pm
Red Tie production	8-10 November
Youth Theatre production	12-13 January 2019

# apollo

Issue no. 266

September 2018

## IT COULD BE ANY ONE OF US

The first play of this, the 47th Apollo Players season, has been directed by a newcomer to the Players, Mike Batcheler. Mike is also now to directing at the Apollo, and members and audiences alike will be impressed by the way he has risen to the challenge.

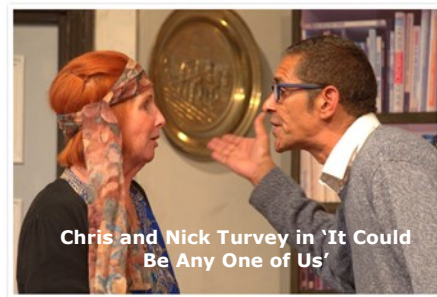
Mike says, 'Our first play of the season is a murder mystery, though with Alan Ayckbourn, the subject doesn't really matter! The play is a vehicle for showcasing a set of brilliantly observed and magnificently described characters. Ayckbourn, who has been compared to Noel Coward and Harold Pinter, is a master of painting scathing portraits of real people.

Are you ready to work out 'whodunnit' (guessing is fine!)? Are you ready to suspend disbelief (you will need to!)? Are you ready

to meet the dysfunctional Chalke family, with its head Mortimer, a failed musician, his sister Jocelyn, a failed crime writer, brother Brinton, a failed artist with arrested development, and niece

Amy, whose main talent is eating?! They live a quarrelsome life together with Jocelyn's partner, a would-be private detective called Norris.

Doing these characters justice, and straddling the line between comedy and farce, has been the major focus for the cast, who have risen to the challenge and vastly exceeded all expectations. At first sight the script is fairly straightforward, but every rehearsal, thanks to the cast, has revealed more layers and more and more humour!



Chris and Nick Turvey in 'It Could Be Any One of Us'

There are many people to thank for their contribution to this production. Staging a play is very much a collaborative venture involving actors, set designers, set builders, properties, costumes, sound engineers, special effects designers, lighting engineers, publicists etc etc. My sincerest thanks to everyone for their hard work. I hope you will be able to come and enjoy the fun!'

Mike Batcheler

## 'The Private Ear' and 'The Public Eye'



Maggie Cardew is very pleased to confirm that she has been able to cast the second production in the season, a double bill by Peter Shaffer comprising 'The Private Ear' and 'The Public Eye'. Each play has three characters, who will be

played by the same three actors in both plays. Rehearsals are going well, with an exciting and interesting two-room set. The cast is as follows:

- Ted/Charles: **Martin Ward**
- Doreen/Belinda: **Amy Burns**
- Bob/Julian: **Mark Duffus**

**The production dates are 19-27 October 2018.**

Paul will be looking to fill the rota for all the front of house roles, so now's your chance!



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

Some of you may say—indeed some of my best friends have been known to say—that I am not entirely on the ball when it comes to knowing what's going on around me. However, when I realised that the greatest chronicler of amateur theatre ever, the unique Michael Green, had died six months ago, it was a nadir even for my grasp on current events. In an attempt to remedy the situation at least in my own eyes, I felt that his passing could not go unmarked by anyone for whom his iconic description of an amateur actor—'one who knows the lines but not the order in which they come'—has been etched in their memory since first setting foot on the stage. It's a rare production

at the Apollo in which someone doesn't at some stage during rehearsals say 'The man on the left has read this book'—said book, of course, being 'The Art of Coarse Acting'. I return to it on a regular basis, and always find myself giggling helplessly—usually in public—at not only his perfectly-turned phrasing but the absolute accuracy of the situations he describes. I was reminded during a performance of the current show, 'It Could Be Any One Of Us', of one of the many cringe-making situations he describes. One feels that he must at some time have found himself among the group of actors playing a stage card game in which one actor had written his

lines on a card; they got so engrossed in the game that the card was absorbed into the pack, and when the cue came the actor had to scrabble desperately through the cards to find it and eventually bellowed it (incorrectly, as it happened) from under the table where the cards had fallen in the scrum. We all have stories like that, and the ghost of Michael Green is, I'm sure, hovering over us as we rush desperately from the dressing-room, having realised that the cue for our entrance has in fact just been spoken and we have a millisecond to arrive on stage. RIP Michael—who else could articulate the angst of the amateur actor as you did?

## News from the Apollo Theatre Trust



As I'm sure you can imagine, insurance is an issue rarely far from the minds of the Trust Council of Management.

For the last two years we have obtained our insurance via brokers Towergate. Their representative, Kenny Robinson, has a great deal of theatre experience (some of which could qualify as Coarse!); he has already arranged cover for a large proportion of the member theatres of the LTG, and with his help our cover is now tailored to the specific needs of a small theatre. Following discussions with Kenny the Trust and Players have agreed to take out Personal Accident insurance for all members. This covers a range of serious injuries (including death and temporary disablement) 'while taking part in any unpaid activity organised by the theatre including travelling directly between the insured person's home and the place of the organised activity', and there is no requirement to prove negligence on anyone's part. This cover is additional to our employers' liability insurance, which insures the Theatre against claims by

any member who suffers injury which is proven to be due to negligence on the part of the Theatre.

As always, there is plenty of activity going on in relation to the theatre:

- the rather exciting plans to join the theatre building with No 124 (ie Hancock House) at first floor level are at the stage of agreeing the fine detail before we go for final approval. Thanks to contacts Amy has developed we shall get professional help to complete the plans and hope to be going out to tender early in 2019;
- the rigging over the stage was not completed to our satisfaction and a further round of work over the stage is planned for the week after the current play finishes. This will cut short the time to build the double bill set so there may have to be additional work nights;
- the heater at the unit is now working properly and we are to be compensated for the delay. Currently access to control the heater is via a set of steps but plans to bring it to within easy reach are be-

ing considered although some of the controls will have to be locked off to prevent unwanted "fiddling"!

- There have been some security issues recently including the theft of tools and people hanging around outside the theatre for no valid reason. There was also a break-in at one of the shops in Pyle Street. It has therefore been agreed to install CCTV cameras and alarms around the theatre at a cost of £3.5k-£4k. Over the years the Trust has become almost entirely populated by active members of the Players. This could make it difficult for the Trust to fulfil its role in monitoring the performance of the Players. In order to address this we are looking for people with an interest in the theatre but not actively involved to become Guarantor members of the trust. If anyone knows of such a person please put them in touch with any member of the Council of Management.

*Paul Jennings, Chair, Apollo Theatre Trust*

# News from your Committee

Notes from the Committee meeting 3 September 2018

## THEATRE DIRECTOR

I'm very pleased that the 47th season of the Apollo Theatre Players has started without a hitch.

The Committee has approved the Membership Secretary's proposal to open the Theatre on more Saturday mornings; this will start in January for a trial period. If any member would like to help out you will be very welcome. There was a great 'buzz' at the Open Day, and it's great to see some of the our new members taking part in things straight away. Grateful thanks to a long-standing member, Mike Crowe, who has very kindly donated the cost of a new banner advertising our coffee mornings. Our sincerest thanks to Gwen Stevens and Pete Harris for their many years of hard work with the Youth Theatre. It's a really important part of what we do, and can make such a difference to young lives.

I have been tasked by the Trust to 'rationalise' the Unit. I shall be setting up a working party for this soon and I shall be very grateful for all offers of help.

The Trust have also confirmed that the second traverse bar will be put on a winch (like the first one) to make transitions between types of staging quicker and easier, as well as safer. The winch will be funded using some of the bequest from Maggie and Peter Bradsell

(and may therefore be called 'the Bradsell Winch!'). And finally, my thanks as always to all our membership for your support and commitment to keeping our lovely theatre going.

## BUSINESS MANAGER

I'm pleased to confirm that the Players have been able to pay over £10,000 to the Trust at financial year-end. Thanks to Amy and Hilary for doing the bar stocktake, which will enable the year-end accounts to be completed; and I'm delighted to say that Alan, our Treasurer, is doing well following his recent illness. The Committee has sent him good wishes for a speedy recovery.

## HOUSE MANAGER

There have been significant problems with filling the rota for front of house for the current play—and indeed for many plays recently. Please, if you'd like to be involved, contact me—I will arrange training and any other help you need—your theatre needs you! Remember also that if you're involved with a show in any capacity, whether front of house, backstage, bar, whatever, you're entitled to come to the final dress rehearsal.

## MARKETING MANAGER

Publicity for 'It Could Be...' has gone well—thanks to Dan Burns as always. The County Press have published everything to do with the production so far, and although they have not sent a

photographer to the dress rehearsal, photos have been sent in (thanks Paul Jennings for providing) to accompany their review—hopefully! And I am still awaiting artwork from directors of some of this season's shows ...

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Thank you all for your help on 4 August; it was a most rewarding day and I hope we can make it an annual event. We have recruited 21 new members since June—19 on Open Day—and I'm delighted to report that we now have 198 members. I am finding the fortnightly coffee morning gatherings very beneficial; more members are popping in and I think the time is right for expansion, so I have proposed opening the Theatre every Saturday morning. I want to make sure my email list is up to date—to ensure that you get all the communications from the Theatre, plus of course your copy of 'Apollonius'— so I should be very grateful if all new members would send me an email on

[carole.crow9@gmail.com](mailto:carole.crow9@gmail.com) just to confirm that I have their correct addresses.

## WARDROBE

The Wardrobe Manager is pleased to say that the team have had a welcome rest during the current show (the cast used their own clothes) and will be returning refreshed to the fray for the next production.

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> (2018-19) <a href="mailto:cardewmaglet@gmail.com">cardewmaglet@gmail.com</a>	<b>Technical Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Dan Burns</b> (2017-19) <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) (2016-17)	<b>Mark Duffus</b>
<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>Carole Crow</b> (2017-19) <a href="mailto:carolecrow9@gmail.com">carolecrow9@gmail.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>

*Casting call: 'Bronte,' by Polly Teale***From the director, Di Evans**

And now for something a bit different...

It all started when I said to Mr Jennings that I couldn't visualise this play on our stage. I thought it needed an 'in the round' setting. He suggested that we could put the front two rows of seats on the stage and perform in the front of the auditorium. 'Can we?' I asked and it seems we can and we are! So, if you fancy acting in this unusual and imaginative telling of the Bronte story in a very different space, read on.

Characters

Charlotte, Emily, Anne

Bertha (Mrs Rochester)/  
Cathy Earnshaw (one actor  
to play both these roles)

All these female roles  
would ideally be between  
20-30 yrs but this is the  
Apollo so it is all flexible

Branwell/Arthur Hunting-  
don/Heathcliff—one actor

(ideally 20-30 yrs)—plays  
these roles

Patrick Bronte/Mr Roches-  
ter/ Arthur Bell Nicholls—  
one actor (possibly older)  
plays these roles

Moving between roles is  
often rapid and would need  
to be achieved with mini-  
mal or no costume chang-  
es so will need clear char-  
acter delineation by the  
actors. There are also  
speedy changes in location  
and time that will require  
physical fluidity and com-  
mitment. I really hope that  
you will not be put off by  
all this but will instead be  
as excited as I am by the  
challenge.

Curious? Well, come to  
the READ-THROUGH on  
MONDAY 17 SEPTEMBER at  
7:30 pm in Hancock House

AUDITIONS: SUNDAY 30  
SEPTEMBER at 2:00 pm in  
the auditorium

Please come dressed for

free movement and able to  
recite a nursery rhyme. If  
you can't make this date,  
please contact me to ar-  
range an audition at an-  
other time.

Audition speeches

Emily and Charlotte: pp33-  
35

Anne: pp73-74, 'Do you  
ever wonder...'

Branwell: pp30-31

Cathy/Heathcliff/Emily:  
pp57-58

Patrick/Bell Nicholls: p80

Production dates

8-16 February 2019

**Director: Di Evans**  
**883023**

**diandclem@hotmail.com**

**Assistant Director: Amy**  
**Burns 07886 389561**  
**amy@masexodus.co.uk**

**THE  
WEIR**

'The Weir' is the fifth show in the new season, directed by Marylyn Ford. As she says, it sounds like the set-up for a joke: four men gather in a bar in Ireland to drink away their solitude—and in walks a woman. To find out what it's all about, come to the read-through on Monday 1 October at 7.30 pm in Hancock House. Like all read-throughs, this is NOT an audition; the auditions will be held in the theatre on Sunday 16 December (the day after 'The Vicar of Dibley' closes). The production dates are 29-30 March and 2-6 April 2019.

'Although the casting couch should be eschewed, there is no need to forgo the casting pint. I kept myself in free drinks one winter by dropping hints to people that they looked just right for the lead in my next show. Actually, I didn't even have a production, but they still kept buying me drink.' *Michael Green, 'The Art of Coarse Acting'*

**Welcome to our new members!** A very big welcome to all new members who have joined since my last report: Chris Hallam, Carol Torrens, Ellen Weeks, David Vince, Daisy, Mish and Karl Whitmore, David and Maureen Carr, Tia Jackson, Jim and Julie Elston, Zoe Magee, Tina Nichols, Julian Norris, Barbara Turner, Marlene Sayer, Linda East, Gail Duke and James Burroughs. There's lots to get involved in around the Theatre and it's great to have you all on board! *Carole Crow, Membership Secretary*



**And a very new member!** We are delighted to report that a very new potential member indeed has recently been introduced to the world. Carol Simpson and her partner Tom have had a baby boy, named Albert William Death. He was born on 31 July at 10:19 am, weighing in at 9lb 4oz, and both he and his proud parents are doing well. And congratulations too to the new, no doubt equally proud, grandparents!

**Another call for keys** If at any time you have been issued with a set of theatre keys and have by some oversight forgotten to give it back, could you please dig it out and return it to Roger Simpson as soon as possible? These sets cost a lot of money—quite apart from the security aspect—so it's important that Roger knows the whereabouts of all the sets in existence.

**Accident reporting** If you or someone else has an accident on theatre premises—no matter how small or apparently trivial—it's really important that a report is made in the Accident Book (there are 3, held in the Box Office, the ASM box and at the Dodnor Unit). Please make sure that the entry includes notes about what happened and statements from any witnesses, made as soon as possible after the accident. Please contact Dan Burns, Technical Manager, if you would like more information.



#### How to access 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 number. Your membership card has your number on it, but if you can't find it check with the Member-

ship 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 online diary

To check the diary, go to <http://diary.apollo-backstage.org.uk> (note there's no 'www' at the beginning, and it's not the normal Apollo website). To just see what is booked in, you do not need to log in - you can use the options on screen to select a view that will either show you a day, week or month for a particular area. Use the mini calendars at the top to choose which day/week/month you wish to view. The **day view** will show you all of the areas together, whereas **weekly** and **monthly views** will show a single room at a time - click on the title of the room at the top left to change the room you are looking at bookings for. To view more information about the booking, including who made the booking, click on the title of the booking which will then take you to the details page.

To make bookings (or

change your own - it will not allow you to delete or change other people's bookings), you will first need to log in by clicking on the login button at the top right of the page. This will open the log-in page, which needs you to use the same details as the members' area of the website. If you can't log in, double-check your details, and if you still can't log in, drop me an e-mail ([dan@apollo-backstage.org.uk](mailto:dan@apollo-backstage.org.uk))

**To make a booking**, check to see if the time is free. If it isn't, the diary won't allow you to make a booking.

Click the time you wish to start your booking - the page will change to the bookings page, where you need to fill in the details - brief description, room, start/finish times and type are the minimum, although you can provide other information. Remember that if you're booking the **stage**, you'll also need to book the **auditorium**. You can hold down the CTRL button on your keyboard to select more than one room under the same booking.

Once you have entered the details, there is a 'save' button at the bottom of the page with two green ticks to the right. This will save your

booking on the diary.

If you go to click 'save' and see a red cross instead of a green tick, this means that your booking conflicts with another. You'll need to double-check the date/times have been entered correctly. If you need to over-ride a regular booking such as work-nights, you will have to contact Dan Burns, Technical Manager, to do this.

#### How to access the Apollo Theatre wifi

When you want to access the wifi, you'll see on the list of networks one called either 'Apollo backstage' or simply 'Apollo theatre'. The password is 'apollotheatre'.

## 2018 AGM OF THE APOLLO THEATRE PLAYERS

Well, it's that time again—where do the years go? It may just be me, but it seems barely a nanosecond ago that we had the 2017 AGM. It was great to see the greatly increased turnout of members, and also to see that the system of online voting is doing its job of encouraging more members to help to elect their Committee. Let's hope that the trend continues.

This year the AGM will be held on Saturday 24 November, at 7.30 in the auditorium. See below for the official Notice and Agenda. If you would like to nominate someone for one of the vacant posts, or to stand yourself, the nomination form is attached to the email you received with this issue of Apollonius or will have been sent to you with your paper copy. Job descriptions are in existence for all the posts and can be found on the website.

**Notice is hereby given that the 47th Annual General Meeting of the Apollo Theatre Players will be held in the auditorium on Saturday 24 November 2018 at 7:30pm**

### Agenda

- 1) Apologies
- 2) Minutes from the 46th AGM
- 3) Matters arising from the previous meetings
- 4) Reports (it would be very much appreciated if reports could be submitted in advance by email to the Secretary, [michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com))
- 5) Accounts for the year (click here for the 2017-18 accounts)
- 6) Election of Officers:
  - a) Arts Manager 2019-20 (current holder: Maggie Cardew)
  - b) Business Manager 2018-2020 (current holder: Ginnie Orrey)
  - c) Players' Secretary 2018-2020 (current holder: Mike Whitehead)
  - d) House Manager 2018-2020 (current holder: Paul Stevens)
  - e) Marketing Manager 2018-2020 (current holder: Maureen Sullivan)
  - f) Members' Representatives 2018-19 (2 posts) (current holder: Mark Duffus)
- 7) Any other competent business notified in advance of the meeting

Nominations for all posts must be in the hands of the Secretary c/o Apollo Theatre or at [michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com) **by 10.00pm on Saturday 3 November 2018**. Nominations do not have to be made on the official form, but all nominations must have a Proposer and Secunder. **Proposer, Secunder and Nominee must be current, fully paid-up members of the Theatre and must have signed the nomination form.** All members wishing to stand must before the nomination deadline send the Secretary a 'manifesto', explaining why they are standing and what they will bring to the role. All manifestos will be circulated to all members to enable them to make an informed choice: in 'Apollonius' if time allows.

Members with an e-mail address will be sent a link for electronic voting shortly after the deadline date for nominations, along with copies of all the manifestos. Members who receive Apollonius by post will be sent a ballot form by post. **Only current, fully paid-up members may vote in this election.** If the number of candidates matches the number of posts exactly, members will be notified of this. If you have not received confirmation of these by 2 weeks after the close of nominations, please contact Dan Burns at [dan@apollo-backstage.org.uk](mailto:dan@apollo-backstage.org.uk) or by phone on 07401 306 577.

**The deadline for online voting and for completed ballot papers to be received at the theatre is 7:30pm on Friday 23 November 2018 (24 hours before the meeting).**

'It can be taken for granted that the annual meeting will provide the funniest performance of the year and the only time when most of the speakers will know their lines. But while a Coarse Actor should criticise freely, he must never make the mistake of being elected to anything.' *Michael Green, 'The Art of Coarse Acting'*



I am delighted to report that we can definitely put the Open Day down as a success!

At the end of June a sub-committee comprising myself, Amy, Dan, Helen, Maureen and Maggie was formed to plan the Open Day, and it is thanks to their help that it went so well. There were lots more volunteers on the day all working incredibly hard, and considering we didn't know what to expect I think the day ran really smoothly—though it's difficult to tell when you're rushing round in fifth gear!

The Theatre guides were really amazing! The team consisted of Paul Jennings, Mike Whitehead, Paul Hewson, Michael Arnell and Glenys Lloyd Williams, and they seemed to be taking people around all day. I shall be asking Paul or Mike to actually write a script to accompany the tour, because they are so knowledgeable about the history of the Theatre and that way newer members can help out with tours.

Throughout the day there were five different stage performances. The Youth

Theatre put on excellent piece and created a lot of interest in the Theatre, a credit to Gwen and Peter's years of hard work and a brilliant start to Mish Whitmore's tenure! Michael's workshop went very well and we gained at least two members through it. There were two new pieces expertly written and directed by Apollo Members and an energetic rehearsal of a fight scene!

Wardrobe exhibited a selection of costumes by era, creating a very positive response from visitors and some of the new members are interested helping out in that area. Paul Hewson busied himself set building throughout the day, Di Evans was sorting out props and all in all we gave out lots of energy and encouraged 19 new members to join who are already involving themselves in theatre life!

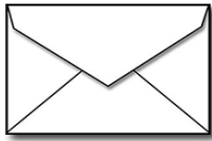
The evening BBQ was again a great success, although I think Amy had done quite enough during the day and we must recruit another cook next time! The music was brilliant, the band worked hard all night and it was much appreciated on the forecourt. Sadly, I'm afraid I didn't have any energy left for dancing!

In conclusion, it was great to talk to people and find out where their interests lie and listen to their ideas. A huge 'thank you' to everyone who helped to make the day such a triumph!



## Open day at the theatre

Report by  
Carole Crow,  
membership  
secretary



## Your letters

### From Michael Arnell

We must all congratulate Carole Crow for her organisation of the recent Apollo Open Day. Her stalwart team of helpers were on the go all day, welcoming visitors, leading theatre tours, serving refreshments, demonstrating stage rehearsals, etc. You will also be pleased to know that after the sad demise (from dehydration) of the two ornamental trees on our forecourt, their replacements will not need watering. I made the dreadfully painful decision to 'put them both to sleep' before our Open Day because they were really not a good advertisement for our theatre.

P.S. Please take great care when parking your car on the forecourt. Someone has already whacked and

cracked one of the pots!

### From Mark Southwell

Many of you may know Mark, but for those who don't, he's a stalwart of Cowes RNLI. He's not a member of the Theatre but he asked if he could submit a letter to 'Apollonius' to ask a favour. When you see what it is, I think you'll agree it's very much our 'part of ship'!

*The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea. We launch lifeboats to rescue and assist persons at risk on or near the sea. Every emergency is different, and practising emergency scenarios is key to our training and readiness to respond to real emergencies. We are looking for volunteer actors to help us with our training programme at the Cowes*

*RNLI lifeboat station. You will be asked to portray a variety of emergency situations. You could portray a suicidal person who is alone on a remote beach and the lifeboat crew need to coax you to come aboard and be taken to safety. You could have slipped on your yacht, hit your head and be confused. The scenarios will be varied. Can you rise to the challenge? You won't be paid—just as our volunteers aren't paid—but out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed. We thought this was a good place to look for potential participants—and of course we hope the experience will be invaluable to your careers! If you'd like to take part, we'd love to hear from you: please contact [Cowes@rnli.org.uk](mailto:Cowes@rnli.org.uk)*

## Rambling Rose



What is it with Shakespeare? I know I should clarify that statement somewhat. What is it with Shakespeare that sensible intelligent people think it is perfectly acceptable to go messing about with his carefully crafted plays? No other playwright seems to suffer in quite this way and so often. I recently watched a live screening of 'Romeo and Juliet' from Stratford-on-Avon at Cineworld in Newport, so the atmosphere was somewhat lacking which didn't add a lot to my enjoyment quite frankly; but I'm so grateful even so that we on the Island are able to access

good live professional theatre to encourage and inspire us at a fraction of the cost of travelling miles using expensive public transport. Now don't get me on ferry companies! I digress. Back to R & J. The main problem seemed to be the Director's insistence on trying to make Shakespeare appeal and be relevant to the 'Youff of Today'. So she dressed it in modern street style—you know, all black leather, tattoos and loads of attitude, as if young people need to identify with everyone portrayed on stage or else not understand what the play is

about. So patronising and basically inaccurate. Good, well-written plays cross age, gender and time boundaries if performed with integrity and sensitivity to the words as written. No gimmicks required, especially when trying to combine modern dress and behaviour with Elizabethan dialogue. Opposite ends of the spectrum. I would say that the staging was excellent however. Such clever use of a very simple set: worked a treat, very innovative. I think Will would have approved of that!

Rose Kelsey

'The very pinnacles of the Stage have set the example of mangling an author's work, from the time when Colley Cibber started pepping up Shakespeare (among other things he added the line 'Off with his head' in Richard III). Of course, if he had been a modern producer he would have added three entirely new characters and changed the locale to Italy as well.' *Michael Green, 'The Art of Coarse Acting'*



Once again, the Apollo was bedecked with rainbow flags and making a big fuss about welcoming members of the LGBTQ+ community into our little theatre. With IW Pride winning the bid to host UK Pride this year, we knew people from further afield would be visiting and wanted to make a good impression. But the main purpose of the week was to offer information, understanding, a listening ear and advice for anyone who needed support. Helen Reading from RedTIE theatre and Amy Burns, the Apollo Theatre director, hosted and ran the events throughout the week. Each day there were representatives from Age UK, The Samaritans, the Police (LAGLO), Citizens Advice and Youth Pride, providing support for people from the LGBTQ+ community.

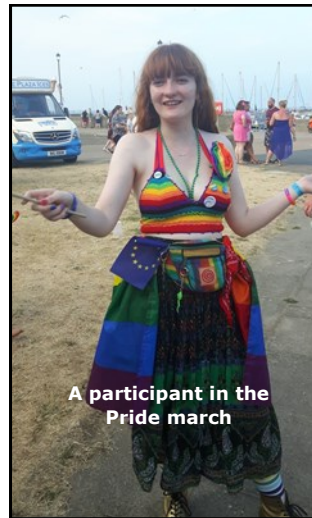
The first event was 'Queer Question Time' which, until we hosted it, had not taken place outside London before. David Robson (the chair of Wandsworth LGBTQ+ forum) was the chairman

and we had 4 members of the council from 4 different political parties on the panel. It was a heated but reasonably polite event and well attended. On

Tuesday, Donna Jones and her team of poets, singers and writers performed for 90 minutes on the Apollo stage, with some seriously thought-provoking spoken word as well as some hilarious prose. RedTIE Youth theatre performed an updated version of 'The Queer Bash' for 2 nights, raising over £600 for IW Pride. Organisers from London Pride attended after hearing about the show last year and preparations are now under way to take the show to London Pride 2019. So many people commented on how welcome they felt on their first visit to the Apollo, what a lovely venue it is and how hard everyone must work to keep it going. Both Helen and Amy were bursting with pride (appropriately!).

RedTIE and the Apollo were represented by several helpers during the week, notably David Barnard, Britney Kent, Esther Poucher, Steve Reading, Dan Burns, Hilary Simpson, Carl Burch, Mark Duffus, Maggie Cardew, Kay Green and Chrissie Blow. Thanks to all of you for helping to make it such a success.

*Helen Reading*



A participant in the Pride march

## PRIDE AT THE APOLLO

16-20 July  
2018



Members of the cast of 'Queer Bash'

wh

## UNSUNG HERO(IN)ES:

### news from the Apollo Youth Theatre

Avid readers of 'Apollonius' may remember that Gwen Stevens, who with Pete Harris and Amanda Robertson has dedicatedly run the Apollo Youth Theatre for some twenty years, has decided to call it a day—and as she put it, get her Saturdays back! We are very pleased that a successor to Gwen has been found—Mish Whitmore, who tells you a bit more about herself further down this page—but first of all it's important for Gwen to tell us a bit about the often unsung achievements of the Youth Theatre team.

*'The whole point of the YT is to give the kids confidence and the opportunity to take part in the adult productions, as well as appear in our own shows. I've written some of the shows, partly to avoid royalty issues but also to make sure we get the right ratio of age and sex for the kids, and*

*others were created through collaboration between the kids and myself. Michael Arnell and Edna Crosbie started the YT many moons ago, and when I took it over Hugh Dinsdale and his wife were running it. We started with a fashion show, which one of the local shops wanted to put on, followed by other productions over the years including, for example, the award-winning 'Seven Ages of Man' and taking part in 'Sheerluck Holmes' and other productions such as 'The Lion, the Witch and The Wardrobe'. The biggest challenge is providing a learning curve for children as young as eight, but at the same time keeping your fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds interested. The other challenge is getting a busy working theatre to find time to fit in a production for the youngsters, plus of course finding people to give up yet more of their valuable time to help stage*

*and light shows, find costume or just come and support the kids. Pete has been an invaluable assistant, with endless patience to help those who find it tricky to fit in. He has helped in all sorts of practical ways—printing things, finding things, unlocking doors, getting more lighting (despite 20 years of trying, I still can't get enough light in the theatre!); he often works with one group while I work with another—and he makes a lovely cup of tea! Amanda Robertson has also been a great part of the team; when I took time out to do my degree they took the YT over and ran it together, and Amanda has continued to keep the finances for us since. I've been very lucky to have such a supportive team and I wish my successor the very best of luck.'*

And now Mish Whitmore can tell us a bit about herself and her plans for the YT. We're really lucky that she has been able to take over; she's already taken part in the Open Day, and we look forward to seeing future productions.

*'I'm originally from Nuneaton; I'm married to Karl and we have a family (Daisy (18) and Zak (15), who attended the Youth Theatre for some years and are both now studying performing arts, and Kade, who's 8 and already dancing and attending drama classes). We've been on the Island since 2009 and we just love it here.*

*I always dreamed of a life on the stage and*

*when I was 25 I moved to Portsmouth to do an HND in performing arts at Southdowns College. However, a year later I went back to Nuneaton to work in the arts centre there, met my future husband and then stayed on, working with performing arts students at North Warwickshire college, teaching and assisting the head of department. When the funding for the post ceased (don't you just love the arts) I became a community arts worker and festival organiser for the Forest of Arden arts festival and the Greig community centre in Warwickshire.*

*I had always dreamed of moving to the Island, and after a really difficult period in my life—we lost a baby, Karl was made redundant and Zak was bullied at school—we decided it was time to make the dream a*

*reality. We've now settled in Newport and I've spent the past seven years home-educating my children.*

*I feel the time is now right for me to reclaim my own life, and to get back to what I love. In October last year I*



**Mish Whitmore, the new Youth Theatre Co-ordinator**

*began to run drama classes for home-educated children. They had some great successes in the IW Music Dance & Drama Festival earlier this year, and this is something I would like to do with the*

*Apollo youth theatre. When Gwen announced that she would like to pass on the reins, I jumped at the chance to work with the children and the theatre. In September I will be starting a degree in Drama & Performance at the University of Portsmouth. The skills I gain I will be able to bring to the youth theatre, and I'm hoping that we can create some exciting performances both for the actors and the audience. My dream is to create a performing arts school where students can train in all aspects of acting and performance, including musical theatre, circus, film and voice and technical theatre and media. Who knows what the future holds, but whatever happens, I'm hoping to give others a passion for performance and do some good along the way.'*

*'In adult drama players do not run off the stage sobbing because someone has a nicer costume; nor are they, as younger children are known to be, sick on stage. But grown-up actresses are quite capable of refusing to play because they don't like their dress; and if Coarse Actors are not sick on stage they are often sick off it, usually from sheer fright.'* Michael Green, 'The Art of Coarse Acting'

Having been in quite a few Apollo productions, I really think it's about time we considered how we might improve our staging. As story-tellers, a director's focus must be on guiding the actor to retell the playwright's story effectively. Ancillary to the words and movement are elements such as set, costume, props and furniture.

I have always found the sets, costumes and props an incredible help in achieving the director's vision and the audience's understanding. They have

been individually designed and made to match the character/play.

The same cannot be said of our considerable stock of furniture. Much of it is too heavy, too shabby or just inappropriate for stage use. For example, we have a beautiful chaise-longue designed to be lain upon and we use it as a sofa. The result is; Edwardian ladies trying to look elegant with their knees higher than their waists when sitting and looking anything but elegant when rising. Most of

our old saggy sofas are a nightmare for actors. I could go on. I believe we need to do what the costume department does brilliantly and that is, remodel a lot of our present stock to be lighter and adaptable: for example, a couple of two- and three-seater sofas with low backs, broad upholstered arms and a variety of covers in various styles. To do this, space and the necessary tools must be made available in the Unit.

Comments?

*Michael Arnell*

## Staging plays: a rethink?



As is becoming more and more frequent, there are lots of fabulous live screenings coming up at Cineworld in Newport (and other places too, of course—but the CP will tell you about those). Forthcoming shows include:

### Theatre

6 September: 'Julie' (NT Live)

12 September: 'Merry Wives of Windsor' (RSC)

27 September: 'King Lear' (NT Live)

9 October: 'The Importance of Being Earnest' (Vaudeville Theatre)

14 November: 'Troilus & Cressida' (RSC)

20 November: 'The Madness of George III' (NT Live)

### Opera

13 September: 'La Bohème' from Sydney Harbour

28 October: Die Walkure (Royal Opera Live)

### Ballet

20 September: 'The Merry Widow' (Australian Ballet)

15 October: 'Mayerling' (Royal Ballet Live)

11 November: 'La Sylphide' (Bolshoi Ballet)

13 November: 'La Bayadere' (Royal Ballet Live)

## 'Event

## Cinema':

live screenings  
at Cineworld,  
Newport



The man on the left has read this book.

And  
finally ...



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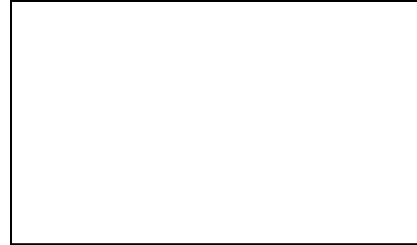
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**The Apollo Players' next production**

# **'The Private Ear' & 'The Public Eye'**

Two one-act plays by Peter Shaffer

**19-27 October 2018**