



# apollo

The in-house magazine of the Apollo Theatre Players, Newport, Isle of Wight

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

- 'Natural Causes' auditions: 2.30pm, Sunday 17 February in Hancock House (see p8 for more information)
- Directors' meeting: 7.30pm Monday 4 March (location TBC)

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

### DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT ISSUE:

Wednesday 26 March

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

Coffee 'n' Chat mornings	Every Saturday morning, 10.00-12.00
Drama workshop: 'Page to Stage'	Friday 22 February, 7.00pm
RedTie production: 'Goodnight Mr Tom'	7.30pm 28 February-2 March
Members' American Supper (with entertainment)	Saturday 23 March
Next drama workshop	Thursday 11 April
Celebration of Shakespeare's birthday	Saturday 27 April

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47th season

February 2019



The most difficult part of writing one of these is deciding who to thank first. However this time there can be no doubt at all. Top of my list must be all the technical team; not just because of what they have done but for the goodwill with which the extra work has been approached. It was a journey into the unknown. We knew what we wanted to achieve but not really how we were going to get there!! I am amazed by the problem-

solving abilities displayed by everyone. Our set-building team kept the faith and undertook all the changes needed, not only with their usual cheerfulness but there were many whose enthusiasm for the project matched my own. So to all the set-builders, Tris and Dan, Peggy and her team, all those helping with props and the front of house team, who have also had their lives disrupted by the changes, THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!



And so to my wonderful team of actors, and they really are a very strong team. It was a bond formed as



Peter Gale in 'Bronte'

we all shivered together while rehearsing at the Unit and by our shared love of cake. I think they are all superb but maybe I am a bit biased. Rehearsals were a joy. They were all prepared to do whatever was asked, often with no motivation other than that I thought it was a good idea!! Everyone brought so much imagination and commitment to this unusual piece. THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!

I saw this quote in the paper this morning: 'Where there is no risk there can be no pride in achievement and consequently no happiness' (Ray Kroc). Everyone committed to the 'risk' and, I think, achieved so much. Now my inner Bertha is twirling and twirling with happiness.  
*Di Evans, Director, 'Bronte'*

## 'THE WEIR'

Conor McPherson's atmospheric and powerful play, 'The Weir', is the Players' next production. The director, Marylyn Ford, is pleased to announce her cast, as follows:

Jack	Colin Ford
Jim	Michael Arnell
Brendan	Robbie Gwinnett
Finbar	David Vince
Valerie	Ginnie Orrey

**The production dates are 29 March-6 April.**

Marylyn says, 'Rehearsals are well under way in cool temperatures in Hancock House but I am warmed by the enthusiasm of my lovely cast. I haven't braved the Unit yet but I need to locate the following props:

- A solid fuel heating stove
- 2/3 beer pumps
- 3 tall bar stools, preferably wooden



Do please get in touch if you can help: 01983 811591.' As always, the House Manager, Steve Reading, will be looking to fill the rotas for the show, so if you'd like to help, do please contact Steve right away.

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

### News from the Apollo Theatre Trust



I was hugely entertained recently by a newspaper report of theatregoers being offered a refund because the pantomime they went to see was 'spectacularly bad'. Not that it didn't take place, or that some other unforeseen crisis prevented the audience seeing it; just that it was so bad that the arts centre unilaterally contacted everyone who attended and offered them their money back. Isn't that fabulous? I must say, the comments from audience members were particularly cutting: 'at one point they were talking to voices in

The Director of 'Bronte', Di Evans, was at first at a loss as to the staging of the play, as the script contains few stage directions and no suggestions for the set; she said that the only way it seemed to work in her head was 'in the round'. Luckily, our inimitable set-building team felt that this was totally possible despite the Apollo having operated for nearly 47 years as a conventional proscenium arch-style theatre exactly as it was conceived by John Hancock, our founder. Occasionally we have installed a fore-stage but the actors have always performed facing the audience. However, theatres built in the last 60 years (for example, the Olivier and Chichester) often situate the audience on 2 or even 3 sides; some (such as the Exchange in Sheffield) surround the stage with seating to bring the cast and audience into a very close relationship.

It's not possible to achieve a complete 'in the round' arrangement at the Apollo, but it was possible to provide what is known as a 'traverse' stage (sometimes used for performances in churches). The audience is divided into two groups

the wings as they ran out of people' was one of them, and another was 'it felt as though two of the cast had been pulled in at the last moment and it was their first live show.'

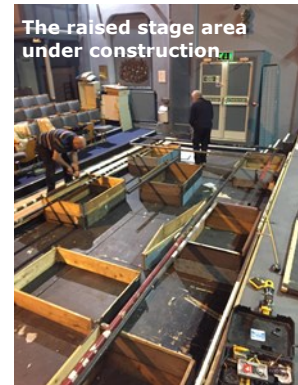
While we can indulge in a bit of schadenfreude (and let's face it, don't we all when a fellow cast member dries spectacularly on stage or falls over the furniture—and I speak as one who's done both) our hilarity is always tempered by a feeling of 'there but for the grace of god'. Nevertheless I like to think that, however much after the event we may feel that our

performances fell shall we say a tad short of perfection, we can be proud that we never feel that the audience hasn't had its money's worth. We are all probably occasionally guilty of over-thinking things, and I've heard many audiences saying how wonderful a show was when we perhaps feel it wasn't; but as actors we always strive to be the best we can. As the cast of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' also probably did—just they didn't quite achieve it!

So onwards and upwards for 2019 and being the best we can.

seated facing each other with the acting area in between. It all seemed very simple: move the front two rows onto the stage and place the actors in the space between the front of the stage and the third row. Given the sightlines from the Circle it was agreed that for this production we would not sell seats there and to compensate we would add a third row on stage. All the seats on the stage would be raked, as in the auditorium, to maintain good visibility. It was obviously vital that health and safety was maintained including access and egress for the audience, including those using wheelchairs. A 3-D computer model was created to help everyone visualise the end result and rehearsals were started on the floor area available. However, and as if to prove that computers aren't the total answer, some members of the cast were at the last night of 'The Vicar of Dibley', and when Geraldine went down into the auditorium to retrieve the bouquet they realised that the sightlines weren't very good; so it was decided the acting area would have to be raised. Now this is easy

to say but involves a lot of construction. A structure had to be built 18 inches (.45m) high over an area of 12ft by 22ft (3.6mx 6.7m), which had to be usable as quickly as possible so that normal use of the theatre



could continue. After two work nights the Dibley set had been struck and the seats moved to the stage leaving the acting area available for rehearsal, albeit at the wrong height. The following week work started on creating the raised area and with a combination of careful planning and sudden bursts of inspiration a usable stage was ready for rehearsals after two nights. We can feel pretty proud of ourselves: the auditorium is safely accessible and Di's vision has become reality.

# News from your Committee

**ARTS MANAGER 2018-19**  
'Bronte' is going well; the new staging is very impressive and we've benefited from the 'County Press's new timescale for reviews. 'The Weir' is in rehearsal.

**ARTS MANAGER 2019-20**

Di Evans, Arts Manager-elect for 2019-20, submitted her proposed season to the Committee and after some discussion it was approved. See page 6 for more information.

**MARKETING MANAGER**

Publicity for Bronte went well; focus was on the change of auditorium to provide a traverse stage, with Paul Jennings being interviewed on Vectis Radio and for the first time, online publicity in advance of the show from the CP. The CP also for the first time uploaded their review to their website after the first two shows, enabling us to share it on Facebook and Twitter in advance of the second week of shows. Greatly appreciated.

Huge thanks to Dan for collecting the printing on Friday when I was unable to do so.

Season leaflets are now in the theatre and will be delivered to our distributor by 1 March, when he will begin setting them out in tourist destinations across the Island.

We have submitted details of shows up to the end of the season to be printed in Holiday News; I will be contacting them in May hoping that details of next season can be included in their second edition which is normally printed in July.

**TECHNICAL MANAGER**

Despite the challenges posed by Bronte, and several changes to the design (together with several revisions to the Risk

Assessments and Fire Safety Assessments as a result!), the transformation of the theatre has been successful. My thanks and congratulations to Paul and the work night team for their achievements; as well as Peggy and her team who have to perform quick changes in all corners of the theatre. For this production, the lighting box has been moved to the circle as discussed some time ago—I have asked the committee to consider leaving it in its current location especially as the installation of the new fire exit allows us to reinstate the missing seats in the stalls. Work has started on the clearing of the workshop; thanks to Mark Duffus for 'volunteering' for this. Marylyn Ford has discussed the set for *The Weir* with Paul Jennings, and I gather that she already has a full production team.

**HOUSE MANAGER**

Little to report since December meeting (Christmas and New Year got in the way!). I'm delighted that we had a well-attended cheese & wine 12th Night party; it seems that given the right conditions, members are keen on these events. After a slow start it's good to see that bookings for Bronte have picked up. All the rotas have been filled, with plenty of members in reserve, which is very encouraging. Voice messages are now coming through to my e-mail and I'm responding within 24 hours or the same day, and I'm using my free mobile minutes to call patrons back to eliminate call charges. I also have access to Ticketsource, meaning I can book patrons from home. By next meeting I hope to have reviewed the job descriptions for FoH personnel and planned some training. My thanks to all

those who have helped me settle into this role.

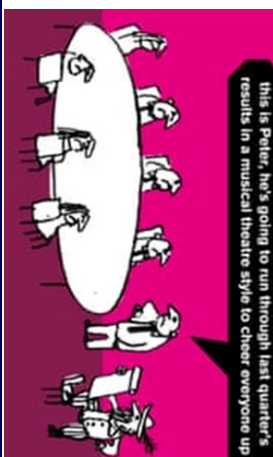
**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

Renewals have gone really well; a few people have dropped out for genuine reasons but we still stand at 200 members. 5 new members have joined us since my last report (see p.5). Having the theatre open every Saturday has proved very successful; the bar has been buzzing with members and passers-by, so a big 'thank you' to the Saturday helpers! It has also proved beneficial to staff the Box Office every week. At the last meeting it was agreed to the name 'Saturday Morning at the Apollo', so I'm proposing to launch that with a poster and signage for the billboard. Martin's play reading was well-attended and much enjoyed and I plan to organise more.

Michael's workshop will be on 22 February and the next one is scheduled for Saturday 11 April. I am planning a social evening with an American Supper on 23 March, when Keith Pritchard has agreed to entertain us with one of his talks from the stage; and on 27 April Maureen and I are organising a get-together in the bar to honour Shakespeare's birthday. I am thinking ahead to another Open Day, possibly in August. Watch this space.

**BUSINESS MANAGER**

A quiet month on the business front, I'm pleased to say. The Players' account is looking fairly healthy. Since the start of the season the Bar has contributed a significant sum, we've paid all the running costs of the theatre and donated £10,000 to the Trust and still—thanks to two reasonably and one very popular shows—have a good sum in hand. Alan will be preparing the half-year accounts soon.



## YOUR COMMITTEE

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

<b>Arts Manager</b> (elected annually in Nov for season beginning following Sept)	<b>Maggie Cardew</b> (2018-19) cardewmaglet@gmail.com <b>Di Evans</b> (2019-20) diandclem@hotmail.com	<b>2 Members' Representatives</b> (elected annually)	<b>Tom Hilton</b> (2018-19) <b>Mike Crow</b> (2018-19)
<b>Business Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Ginnie Orrey</b> (2018-20) gginnie@googlemail.com or info@apollo-theatre.org.uk	<b>Co-opted members</b>	
<b>Marketing Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Maureen Sullivan</b> (2018-20) msullivan58@me.com	<b>Bar Manager</b>	<b>Paul Stevens</b> postmaster@sleepite.force9.co.uk
<b>Players' Secretary</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Mike Whitehead</b> (2018-20) michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com	<b>Wardrobe Manager</b>	<b>Peggy Harcourt</b> peggy.harcourt@creekside.plus.com
<b>Membership Secretary</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Carole Crow</b> (2017-19) carolecrow9@gmail.com	<b>Apollo Trust secretary</b>	<b>Cynara Crump</b> cynara.crump@virgin.net
<b>House Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Steve Reading</b> (co-opted 2018-19) steverreading104@btinternet.com	<b>Apollo Trust Buildings Manager</b>	<b>Roger Simpson</b> roger.dodger45@yahoo.co.uk
<b>Technical Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Dan Burns</b> (2017-19) dan@masexodus.co.uk	<b>Youth Theatre Co-ordinator</b>	<b>Mish Whitmore</b> mish.whitmore@yahoo.com

From time to time I report in these pages on the sad loss of one of our members; however, it is with great sadness that I report that 2019 has already added no fewer than five to the number of fellow theatricals who have passed to the other side of the curtain.

### RITA HARMAN MBE



One of our long-standing stalwart members, Rita Harman, died peacefully at the Mountbatten hospice on Boxing Day after suffering a stroke at home just before Christmas. Fortunately, fellow Apollo member, June Hudston, was visiting her at the time and was able to alert the emergency services.

Rita was a shareholder of the Apollo Theatre Trust but chose not to redeem their value, donating the money to the Trust. She wanted to be an active Apollo member, but her other important

commitments restricted her contribution to decades of evening box-office duties. She was a Samaritan for over fifty years and was instrumental in establishing the first Island branch in 1986, becoming director at its initial East Street base before moving to the current purpose-built centre in South Street in 2009. She was awarded an MBE from the Queen in 2002 for her services to prisoner welfare when she undertook the training of inmate 'Listeners' at HMP Albany.

She will be missed by many Islanders for a variety of reasons: she taught at Denmark Road Junior and Solent Middle schools, but many will remember her 'holding court' in the Apollo bar among her coffee morning chums.

Among her many skills Rita was an accomplished artist in embroidery (you may remember her 'Art in the Bar' exhibition in February 2013). Just one example of her remarkable skill can be seen on the left.

*Michael Arnell*

### PADDY AND PETER CROYDON- FOWLER

You may have read in last month's 'Apollonius' that Peter Croydon-Fowler died just before Christmas, and that Paddy was increasingly frail and being cared for in a nursing home. Sadly just weeks later she joined him. They had been married for over sixty years and will now spend eternity together at the Woodland Cemetery, at Branstone Cross.

Paddy and Peter had been a fixture at the Apollo almost as long as anyone can re-

member, Paddy on stage and Peter in the lighting box. Trained in the Laban dance technique, Paddy used her skills to choreograph movement for several Apollo productions, in musicals like 'Oh, What a Lovely War' and dramas such as 'Sleuth'. She directed 'The Snow Queen', appeared as an angel in 'Follow The Star' and co-directed two of our biggest musical successes, 'The Pyjama Game' and 'Guys and Dolls'. When a

stroke hampered her mobility, Paddy organised and led a poetry appreciation group who met regularly in the theatre bar on Sunday afternoons. In latter years Paddy suffered from the onset of dementia, but she and Peter, both by then nonagenarians, managed to stay in their Cowes home until Peter's death, remaining independent through the help and support of professional visitors.

*Michael Arnell*

### BILL BUCKELL

Bill Buckell, who died just before Christmas, was scarcely familiar, even by name, to most of the current Apollo membership, but he played an important role in the very beginnings of our theatre and continued to have an influence within the Apollo Trust for many years after that. He had been part of the Newport Repertory Company which formed a large part of the membership of the infant Apollo, and he dealt with the legal work involved in the purchase of the Victoria Methodist Chapel, the formation of the Apollo Theatre (Isle of

Wight) Company Limited and of The Apollo Theatre (Isle of Wight) Trust Limited. The Company was formed so that the people who had put money into the pot for the building's purchase should become shareholders and thus could reclaim their money if the whole project failed; it subsequently issued more shares when additional money was needed for equipment or repairs. In 2002 he organised the Company's removal from Companies House Register. The necessary majority of the shares had by then been

acquired by the Trust either by gift or purchase at cost price. Bill's retirement from membership of the Trust's Council of Management is recorded in the AGM of 2003; he remained keenly interested in the Apollo's productions for some years, but was spending more time in France with his wife, Jeannette.

His death is for me a reminder of all we owe to those who set our precious building off on its new life which has now lasted for nearly fifty years.

*Cynara Crump*

### KAY MORTON

Kay Morton died before Christmas and was cremated after a private family service in January. She and Alan ran the old Post Office at Totland for many

years and were both active members of the Players, mainly involved in FOH duties. Kay took a few small parts on stage, but the pinnacle of her theatrical career

was winning the Island Theatre Award for Best Play in 2004 for her production of 'The Lion In Winter'.

A lovely gentle lady.

*Michael Arnell*

**DRAMA WORKSHOP****Friday 22 February, 2019, 7pm-9.30pm: Leader: Michael Arnell**

This first one will focus on the basic story-telling skill: 'PAGE TO STAGE'. Please wear comfortable clothes and sensible shoes. Coffee/tea/biscuits provided. Bring along a non-member friend; they could become acting members too! If you would like a future workshop with a particular focus, contact Michael ASAP

It's been a brilliant January for the Apollo, thanks to so many of you renewing your membership promptly and making my role so much easier! If you haven't renewed yet there is still time! In December we trialled the idea of having a Coffee'n'Chat in the theatre bar every Saturday morning instead of every other one. It has proved a great success with members and the general public, and it also allows the box office to be open between 10-12 each week, which is already proving a bonus! The first get-together of the year was the annual Twelfth Night party, which as always was a resounding success thanks to Steve, Helen, Amy and Hilary. Later in January around twenty members had a great time reading Martin Ward's new play 'White Rock'; we gave it top marks and had a thoroughly enjoyable evening. I hope to make play readings a regular event.

Lots of members' activities are planned for the coming months. On 22 February is the first of Michael's series of workshops: a great opportunity for experienced and would-be performers to practice stagecraft. Another is planned for 11 April. Come and be entertained on Saturday 23 March, when our very own Keith Pritchard will be treating us to one of his amusing talks from the stage. The evening will be in the form of an American Supper, so please bring a plate of food (salads will be provided). To celebrate the birth of the Bard there will be 'a bit of a do' in the Theatre Bar on Saturday 27 April; more information to follow.

We are delighted to welcome five new members since December: David Ballard, Julie Ham, Sandra Cruickshank, Linda Scotchbrook and Maggie Aldred. A big Apollo welcome to you all! I look forward to seeing lots of you around the Theatre.

**Carole Crow, Membership Secretary**

The following message recently landed in my inbox. We have lots of playwriting talent at the Apollo—if this interests you, you might want to follow it up. Over to you!

*'Wondering if you have any budding playwrights down there at the Apollo Theatre looking for a publisher. Silver Birchington Plays is a new online play publisher looking for original one-act and full length plays to add to its portfolio, in preparation for a nationwide launch at Easter. We would be pleased to hear from anyone interested. Contact us at [www.silverbirchingtonplays.com](http://www.silverbirchingtonplays.com)*

*Kind regards for 2019.*

*Malcolm Young'*

**'Shakespeare in Italy' Summer School, Florence, July 6-19**

And here's something else exciting from the inbox: a chance to spend a fortnight in Italy this summer studying Shakespeare with professionals. The organiser, Mary Chater, said: 'The summer school gives participants the rare opportunity to work with tutors who are leaders in their field in the UK theatre world. Royal Shakespeare Company and Globe directors Lucy Bailey and Chris Luscombe will lead work on *Julius Caesar* and *Romeo and Juliet* and acclaimed actor/director Philip Franks on *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The course is practical, not academic, and it is open to all, the only proviso being that you speak English fluently. The benefits are innumerable and people have a lot of fun as well as gaining great theatrical insight into the texts.'

Please contact the organisers at [shakespeareinitaly.eu@gmail.com](mailto:shakespeareinitaly.eu@gmail.com) or check out the website, [www.shakespeareinitaly.eu](http://www.shakespeareinitaly.eu), for more information. The advice is: don't delay booking because hotel rooms in Florence go like hot cakes! If you would like to take part, email them soon for the details you need to make your deposit and ensure a place on the course. And if you contact them before 15 February you will receive a 5 per cent Early Bird discount! It ain't cheap—but it sounds a brilliant way to spend a fortnight in Florence! **Shakespeare in Italy: 'country and playwright—exploring the relationship through performance.'**



Not content with packing the theatre out for the whole of the run, the cast of 'The Vicar of Dibley'—well, one member in particular—managed to bring the house down on the last night—in a very good way. Matt Osborne, who played Hugo, took the opportunity to propose marriage to his long-standing girlfriend, Jo, on stage as the cast took their final bow. We understand that he had one of his inimitable speeches ready for the occasion, but as always in these situations, it all went by the board and they both came over all unnecessary. Everyone was of course absolutely delighted and overjoyed for them—though I can't help wondering whether in years to come Matt will wonder whether he was wearing exactly the attire he (and Jo!) would like to look back on! O, and she said yes, of course! We wish them all the happiness in the world for their future together.

## APOLLO PLAYERS' FORTHCOMING SEASON: 2019-20

Well, here it is—the Big News everyone's always on tenterhooks about at this time of year. The Arts Manager-elect for next season, Di, Evans, came to the Committee meeting on 11 February and submitted a really interesting and varied season for Committee consideration. This stage in the process is all about challenging the Arts Manager about the proposed productions, the range and variety of styles and how they will fit with the theatre production crews and potential actors. As you would expect from someone of Di's experience the list was wide-ranging, with some classics and some lesser-known plays; the Committee has always to consider balancing income-generating productions with more challenging ones, and was satisfied that this season should provide that. Di's season was therefore approved, and as the Theatre Director had worked out the dates for the productions I'm pleased to be able to give you a full list of what to look forward to next year.

'Suddenly at Home' (Francis Durbridge) 4m 4f <b>Director:</b> TBC	6-14 September 2019	A man schemes to murder his wealthy wife for love of another woman, but is that woman her sister, her friend or the au pair?
Jeeves & Wooster in 'Perfect Nonsense' (the Goodale Brothers, after PG Wodehouse) 3m <b>Director:</b> Fiona Gwinnett	25 October-2 November	An inventive, fast-paced comedy. Winner of the 2014 Olivier award for best comedy
'Dad's Army' (Perry & Croft) cast of thousands <b>Director:</b> Amy Burns	13-21 December	Script contains 3 episodes of the television comedy adapted for the stage, of which I suggest we do two plus the short sketch written for a Royal Variety Performance, in which they have formed a choir and sing The Floral Dance. I suggest we change the song to a Christmas song
'The Thrill of Love' (Amanda Whittington) 1m 4f <b>Director:</b> TBC	14-22 February 2020	A dramatisation of the true story of Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain.
'When We Are Married' (JB Priestley) 7m 7f <b>Director:</b> David Vince	3-11 April	Three couples gather to celebrate their silver wedding only to discover that the parson who married them was not authorised to do so. Pandemonium breaks out!
'Liselotte in May' (Zsolt Pozsgai) 1m (playing 8 characters) 1f <b>Director:</b> Joel Leverton	22-30 May	A lonely woman tries desperately to find a mate by various means but somehow each of her prospective partners dies on the first date. The playwright has won the Hungarian Drama award three times and the European Drama award. Widely produced in Europe and now available in English translation
'A View from the Bridge' (Arthur Miller) 9m 2f <b>Director:</b> Steve Reading	10-18 July	A modern tragedy of jealousy and betrayal. The lives of Eddie Carbonne and his family begin to unravel when they take into their home two relatives who are illegal immigrants from Sicily.

### A message from Di

I have booked Hancock House for a directors' meeting on Monday 4 March at 7.30pm. As I've been able to include five plays in the season which were suggested to me by members keen to direct them, there are currently only two plays left without a director:

'Suddenly at Home' (Francis Durbridge) in September;  
'The Thrill of Love' (Amanda Whittington) in February.

I have copies of both these plays, so if you're interested in reading them before the directors' meeting, please email me: diandclem@hotmail.com. It would be really helpful if as many directors as possible attend the meeting; also anyone who is keen to act as assistant director. It's my hope to pair up directors with assistants at the meeting.



For those of you waiting with bated breath for information about the last play of the season, **'Every Christmas Show ever Told—and Then Some'**, the director, Amy Burns, and assistant director, Joel Leverton, have this message for you: 'As January fades like a sandcastle beaten by the waves of the unforgiving sea, and February gathers up the newly loosened sand to make its own crude castle, it's high time we thought about Christmas. And what better way for a theatre to celebrate Christmas than in true thespian style—in summer. Yes, the finale of the season decks the halls and seasons the turkey with a nifty three-hander that sees our actors attempt to show you how to drink up the festive spirit. From the American Street parades to the wintry alleyways of London, from the Australian outback to the mountains of Tibet, from Charles Dickens to the Bible, 'Every Christmas Story Ever Told' is simply that. Be prepared for bright lights, Christmas carols, countless baubles, tinsel galore, mulled wine, mince pies and the occasional Christmas present. And then go outside and get a tan.

For scripts please contact Amy Burns; audition information will be available in the next Apollo-nius.'



And she did say 'yes'!

And finally ...

Since I'm in the unusually well-off position of having some space to spare in this issue, here for your entertainment are a few photos from things that have been going on over the past couple of months.



The big news this month was the redesign of the stage—here are some of the set-building team taking a well-earned break



Pics from the Christmas coffee morning. A good time being had by all!



Wardrobe getting to grips with their new dressing-room for 'Bronte'



## Rambling Rose



Now let's get back to basics! No not a political statement but a heartfelt plea to directors and producers. I imagine that the reason a playwright pens a piece of work is so that the audience can enjoy the spectacle, hear the dialogue and understand the content. Simple. Well, the latest offering from NT Live (The Tragedy of Richard II) did not deliver in any of these categories. That was the tragedy! Not Shakespeare's fault you understand: he penned some great memorable lines in this play, but the treatment I witnessed. The spectacle: set designed as a metal box, grey steel with no features. Costumes of jeans,

T-shirts and trainers all shades of grey, except for brightly coloured working gloves, eg gardening or Marigolds. The dialogue was delivered at such a garbled pace, particularly in the opening scenes, that it shortened the running length considerably (hooray), and made understanding the plot impossible. The great Simon Russell Beale as the eponymous Richard did his absolute best with use of face and hand gestures but even he was delivering speeches at the speed of an express train, as presumably he had been directed to do. WHY? He did not look comfortable and soon worse was to come with the upending of various

buckets of stage blood, water and soil over random cast members (well, I hadn't worked out who they were!) throughout the play. The blood trickled down the grey steel walls, soon all the cast were wet and filthy and my mind was distracted hoping they would soon be allowed a good shower, but with no interval they soldiered on to the bitter end. No-one left the stage throughout the play and no-one entered. When not speaking the cast huddled in groups or lay on the floor in the mess. Yes obviously representational of a battle field, but without knowing who, what or why it was wasted, as was the ticket price, in every sense of the word!

## CASTING CALL: 'NATURAL CAUSES'

**AUDITIONS:  
SUNDAY 17  
FEBRUARY,  
2.30PM IN HAN-  
COCK HOUSE.  
ALL WELCOME!**



'Natural Causes' is a black comedy, featuring the attempts of Walter Bryce to poison his wife Celia so that he can run away with Angie, his mistress. To aid him in this venture he enlists the help of professional suicide merchant Vincent, who assumes from the start that Walter has called him in to aid Walter in his own suicide. Several misunderstandings later it is the pot plant in the corner of the room that suffers from the intended doses of poison, originally earmarked for various characters. The arrival of Withers, the Samaritan, only adds to the confusion. Who will survive to the end of the play?

Auditions will take the form of reading excerpts from the play.

Characters are as follows:

**Walter** - A man dominated by his wife, Celia. His prevarication and inability to take charge of any given situation plays into Celia's hands, and he very much relies upon his mistress Angie to keep him from changing his mind about carrying out the plans to poison Celia.

**Vincent** - Although he takes pride in his work, Vincent comes across as a rather seedy and unprofessional individual. He is prone to making mistakes, with almost catastrophic results, and is very aware of Walter's educational advantages.

**Celia** - An intelligent force of nature who is very much aware of

Walter's shortcomings and who loves the drama of the situation. When made aware of Walter's treachery, she plays on his prevarication in an attempt to change his mind.

**Angie** - Cool and level-headed, Angie is the real driving force behind Walter's plot to leave Celia. Whenever he shows signs of hesitation at the carrying out of the plan, she is on hand to keep him on course. A strong and resolute personality.

**Withers** - An earnest man who takes his Samaritan work very seriously, but who misunderstands the situations that he tries to take charge of.

If you haven't already read the script and would like to prior to the auditions, please contact Martin Ward on [martinward700@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:martinward700@yahoo.co.uk).

## Your 'how to do it' page

This page came about following repeated requests for information on 'how the theatre works'. Hope it's useful—and if you would like other information included, please let me know.



### DIGITAL MATTERS

#### How to access the members' area of the 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 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*

#### How to access 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), first log in by clicking on the login button at the top right of the page.

This will open the log-in page, which asks 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 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, though you can give other information. Remember, 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'.

### THEATRE HEATING/ COOLING SYSTEM

**JUBILEE ROOM** (dressing room) properties room and corridor are **heated** by balanced flue gas convector heaters. They are manually controlled and the pilot is kept alight. Switch back to pilot position after use.

**JUBILEE ROOM cooling** can be assisted by switching on the fan by the right-hand basin: pulling the cord 3 times will adjust rate and switch off. The centre roof light can be opened—please close it after use.

The other roof light contains a fan which can be used to extract or bring in air (depending the temperature). The 'high' setting can be used prior to the show starting and set to bring in cooler air which can escape

through the centre roof light. The fire door should be kept closed.

**The STAGE DOOR** over-door electric heater will **heat** or **cool** depending on the setting.

**The FOYER, AUDITORIUM and STAGE** are **HEATED** by 2 gas boilers located in the workshop. Each has a preset thermostat and electronic programmable control. The boiler output will be set according to the weather; the operating times are preset, but can be adjusted to suit requirements. Please ask the Buildings or stage manager to adjust it to meet your requirements. The boiler programmer can be overridden by pressing the **advance** button to activate the heating; after use press again. Heat rises so heating levels are adjusted to suit; if too high a temperature is

set for the stalls, it would result in an excessive circle temperature. Assistance in winter can be given by switching on the ceiling fans at a low setting eg No. 1 before the show starts and during the interval, which will even out the stalls/circle temperature.

**COOLING SYSTEM** in hot weather the ceiling fans can be used to even out the temperature but only on the lowest setting when the show is running. The over-circle cooling system can be used to bring in cooler air, but not on a setting higher than 1 when the show is running. Prior to the show starting and during the interval both sets of fans can be used at a higher level to assist in air circulation; opening the side passage exit doors may also help. Remember to adjust levels before the show starts.

**The FOYER** can also be **heated** by the over-door electric curtain heater, which in the summer can be used to assist in air circulation.

**HANCOCK HOUSE** is **heated** by a boiler located on the first floor, the boiler controls have been preset and will be adjusted according to the season. The boiler is controlled by a thermostat and programmer and can be adjusted by the Buildings or stage manager as required.

**HOT WATER** in all areas is on demand.

Any queries? Please contact me, Roger Simpson, Buildings Manager



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

tel:  
01983 527267

**ticketline:**  
**01983 210010**

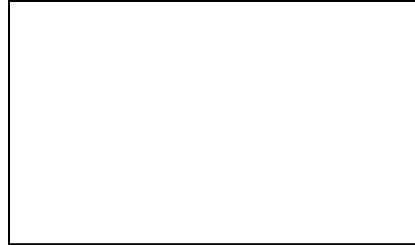
email:  
info@apollo-theatre.org.uk

To book tickets or find  
out more about our  
productions, go to:

[www.apollo-theatre.org.uk](http://www.apollo-theatre.org.uk)

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of the Editor,  
Ginnie Orrey, and  
expresses her  
opinions.  
Contributed copy  
must be signed.**

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



## The Apollo Players' next production



# THE WEIR

CONOR MCPHERSON

**29-30 MARCH  
& 2-6 APRIL 2019**

The wind howls outside and the spirits flow freely inside a pub in rural Ireland throughout Conor McPherson's play. Valerie, an outsider from Dublin, arrives and the men already gathered in young Brendan's pub for their regular pints and banter welcome her into their community with increasingly intimate ghost stories. The stories are at first a sampling of the local lore, but subsequently become more intimate portrayals of the storytellers themselves, evolving into a deep compassion after she shares her own powerful tale.