



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

- Auditions for 'Perfect Nonsense': Wednesday 24 July, 7.30pm in Hancock House
- Auditions for 'Dad's Army': Sunday 8 September, 6.00pm in Hancock House

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

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

Wednesday 28 August

Other diary dates (more info on the website)

Coffee mornings Every Saturday, 10.00-12.00

Youth Theatre production, 'Sparks' 20 & 21 July, 2.00pm and 7.30pm

Next drama workshop Friday 26 July 7.00pm-9.30pm

Play reading Friday 9 August, 7.30pm

Open Day Saturday 24 August

# apollonius

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

Issue no. 272

July 2019

## Every Christmas Story Ever Told—And Then Some!

Once 'Natural Causes' was over and we got on the stage, I can honestly say I have never laughed so much at rehearsals for a show. Peter, Maggie, H and Syd have brought so much energy and humour to bits of Christmas that have never seemed funny before!

Of course, we couldn't have put this production on without the help of all the hard-working members behind the scenes. The set crew did an amazing job, building a simple but moveable set for the many sections of

Christmas; and our sincerest thanks go to Tina and Paul for painting the most amazing Christmas scenes. Our thanks also go to Dan, who snuck out of his busy schedule at work to assist us with the lighting and madcap sound effects.

As always, Peggy and her amazing wardrobe team have gone above and beyond the call of duty. Rather than a conventional play, where each actor has one or two costumes, Peggy has had to find over 100 pieces of costume for the four actors to wear.

The other stars are Di, Teresa and the rest of the props team for their calm and reassuring presence. We have asked for some weird and wonderful props, and each has been gathered, made and supplied to



Helen Clinton-Pacey, Sydney Cardew, Peter Gale and Maggie Cardew in 'Every Christmas Story Ever Told ...'

suit the festive feel of the show. Between them, the props and wardrobe teams have been amazing backstage, making sure the actors got on stage wearing the right hat, scarf or other piece of costume and carrying the right prop. Between them and a fabulous cast of actors we have an amazing show; so whether you're a fan of Christmas or not, do come along and see the true magic of theatre.

Amy Burns & Joel Leverton



Maggie Cardew and Peter Gale

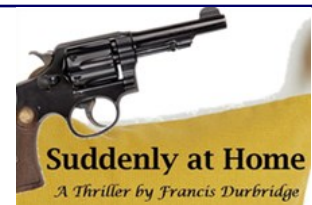
## 'Suddenly at Home'

The director of the first show in the 2019-20 season, 'Suddenly at Home', is Evelyn Hicks. Evelyn was a member of the Players in years gone by and is now returned, full of enthusiasm for this Francis Durbridge play. She is very pleased to confirm that she's been able to fill all the roles in what is a fairly large cast—no small achievement for the September show.

The cast is as follows:

- Maggie Howard: Sue Edwards
- Helen Tenby: Holly Squires
- Ruth Bechler: Carol Simpson
- Sheila Wallis: Helen Reading
- Glenn Howard: Carl Jacobs
- Sam Blaine: Nick Turvey
- Insp. Appleton: Garry Smith
- Remick: Mark Duffus

We're very pleased to welcome two brand-new members, Holly Squires and Garry Smith, to the cast and to the Apollo, as



well as welcoming recently-joined member Carl Jacobs to the Apollo stage for the first time. We hope they enjoy their time with us and their experience in 'Suddenly at Home'.

**Production dates: 6-14 September.**

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

I have once again been entertained by a recent Guardian article. The question posed by the article's author, the actor Michael Simkins, was 'how do you make a living as an actor?' Simkins, it turns out, is making a quite reasonable living writing articles and memoirs about how difficult it is to make a living as an actor—though actually he writes rather well so one mustn't be too catty (entirely jealousy-related, of course!).

The points he made in his article will have struck a chord with anyone (ie most amateur actors) who has aspired to actually earning money doing the thing we love best. The burden of his song was that only 2% of

actors actually make a living from their profession—the same 2%—and the remaining 98% get hardly any work at all. However, he makes a point which I'm sure will resonate with all of us: 'the defining difference between amateurs and those who pursue acting as a career isn't talent, but simply that professionals are prepared to endure the daily ritual of humiliation, rejection, financial anguish and grinding unemployment.' Sounds enticing, doesn't it?

Simkins—to whose name I couldn't put a face until I looked him up and found that he was one of those fortunate actors whose ubiquity means you never quite know their name but

know you've seen them in everything (like the chap with the eyebrows whose name recently escaped a whole group of us for hours)—has clearly cracked it, but the rest of us, who can't even aspire to be one of the 98%, can take comfort from two things: we probably get much better parts, far more often, than the professionals, and if we don't we can still pay the bills!

Mind you, speaking of actors making a living, what a joy to see Simon Russell Beale getting a knighthood! Though to my mind, anyone who can perform to three people and a dog in Shanklin Theatre and retain his sangfroid deserves every honour going.

## News from the Apollo Theatre Trust



Electrical work is now under way around the theatre; you may notice new exit signs and emergency lights.

There is plenty more to do including hopefully connecting up a water heater in the FOH toilets and simplifying the switch cupboard in the foyer but these have yet to be put out to contract.

The winch for the mid stage traverse (tab) track is now functional. This means that the stage can be set for a hiring with black legs and tabs by just one person although it's probably best not to be working in the theatre alone.

The AGM of the trust took place recently. Kate Fysh Louis Lawrence and Martin Ward having been nominated were duly elected to the Council of Management. I was privileged to be re-elected as Chairman. After

many years acting as Secretary and Treasurer Cynara has decided to relinquish the latter role. Martin Ward, who has past experience in dealing with formal accounts with a previous drama group, has agreed to take over as Treasurer. I am personally very grateful for Cynara's support since she took over the role when Ken Baugh left. She has ensured the Trust complies with all the regulations necessary for us to maintain our charitable status in particular preparing our accounts and navigating them through the annual audit.

We are still looking for some expert help to submit the plans to join the Theatre to Hancock House in order to obtain building control approval. A number of avenues are being explored but if any member knows some-

one with architectural or civil engineering experience please let the Trust know.

It's worth noting that the Trust is intended to be slightly independent of the Players in order to fulfil its governance role regarding the activities at the theatre which help us to maintain our charitable status. Over the years the composition has changed and the Trust is dominated by active members of the Players. It would be helpful if there were a few people not directly involved with the day to day running of the theatre who could provide a more objective input to Trust meetings. If anyone knows of people with an interest in theatre who might like to serve on The Trust please direct them to the Trust secretary, Cynara Crump.

*Paul Jennings, Chair, Apollo Theatre Trust*



There is a general move to tidy up all the theatre buildings, including throwing away anything which is cluttering up the place. If anyone is getting involved with this activity, would you please either dispose of the material or leave it tidily outside the bar and let me or Michael Arnell know and we will arrange to take it to the dump.

*Paul Jennings*

# News from your Committee

Notes from the Committee meeting 8 July 2019

## HOUSE MANAGER

Rotas for ECSET have once again proved a challenge to fill, particularly box office. Some FoH training was undertaken in early June with an encouraging turnout. We now need those members to put this into practice. Box Office training will be arranged in the new season. A total of 647 tickets were sold for Natural Causes which equates to 73% capacity.

I have had a couple of enquiries for the Housekeeper role. I intend to spend some time working on this role in time for the next play.

Hancock House is now in a reasonable state again. The kitchen area is clean and hygienic (thanks Marylyn Ford) and directors are asked to ensure that it remains that way. A big thanks to the members who turned up to help unclutter Hancock House and to remove much of the stored furniture to the Unit. The rehearsal room is now clean and tidy.

We have 2 major events before the next production in September. First is the Youth Theatre's production, Sparks, for which we need a good turn out from members in support of our future actors. Box Office, FoH and ushers will be needed over the 4 performances (20 & 21 July). Secondly we have Buggy, from the Mitre Theatre. This runs from Tuesday 30 July to Saturday 3 August. This is an opportunity to showcase the Apollo as a venue. I'm hoping that I can rely on committee members to support the many roles needed. Mitre will be providing box office staff but we need to provide FoH and possibly ushers (a strong member presence would be good) not to mention bar, which could be very busy!

It was disappointing that someone chose to steal float money from the safe. This was no banking error. As a precaution, the safe key is now kept in a separate key lock with a combination known only to a few users. This will be changed on a

regular basis. A possible replacement safe is too large to fit behind the box office but there are other options available that I need to explore.

## Bar report

Takings were good from 'Natural Causes' and from the last Jazz concert. The Bar account is healthy and Paul Stevens has indicated that he will pay a good sum over to the Players shortly.

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

There was a lovely atmosphere in the bar for Kate's 'Bit of a Do' and she was delighted by the number of people who attended. The last workshop was well attended and enjoyed by all; the next one is scheduled for 26 July. Martin will be holding a reading of his latest play 'Corner's Last Case' in the bar on Friday 9 August; I'm quite happy to run the bar. In preparation for Open Day Evelyn is going to use the stage for a rehearsal after the Youth Theatre's presentation and Michael do a workshop. Unfortunately Peggy and some of her team will be away; more discussion to be had after the present production! Mike Crowe has offered to lend us his large gazebo which will fit right across the forecourt providing it's not blowing a gale. Advertising the event still has to be arranged; I should have asked for a mention in the current programme but have printed out a small flyer to be included separately. Peggy Hewson is stepping down from coffee morning duties after many years, and I'd like to thank her for her hard work and especially for her support over the last twenty months. We have two new members and another two pending who are appearing in the September production.

## MARKETING MANAGER

Publicity for 'Every Christmas Story...' has gone well, with press release featured in the County Press, and good response to online publicity. 50 posters per show are being put up around the Island and I will

continue to monitor this. New season leaflets have been printed and are in the theatre and with our distributor. Along with other committee members, I am liaising with the group who will be performing 'Bugsy Malone' in July/August: we are promoting their show via posters and programme advert, and they will be promoting 'Suddenly At Home' in their programme. I have also liaised with Mish Whitmore over the publicity for the Youth Theatre production Sparks: posters have been printed and have sent her press release to the County Press for publication this week.

## 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)	<b>2 Members' Representatives</b> (elected annually)	<b>Tom Hilton</b> (2018-19) thilton1@hotmail.co.uk <b>Mike Crowe</b> (2018-19) mike.crowe1@btopenworld.com
<b>Business Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Ginnie Orrey</b> (2018-20) gginnie@googlemail.com or info@apollo-theatre.org.uk	<b>House Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Steve Reading</b> (co-opted 2018-19) steverreading104@btinternet.com
<b>Marketing Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Maureen Sullivan</b> (2018-20) msullivan58@me.com	<b>Technical Manager</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Dan Burns</b> (2017-19) dan@masexodus.co.uk
<b>Players' Secretary</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Mike Whitehead</b> (2018-20) michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com	<b>LTG rep</b>	<b>Cynara Crump</b> cynara.crump@virgin.net
<b>Membership Secretary</b> (elected biannually)	<b>Carole Crow</b> (2017-19) carolecrow9@gmail.com	<b>Apollo Trust Buildings Manager (co-opted)</b>	<b>Roger Simpson</b> roger.dodger45@yahoo.co.uk



Since the Easter holidays, the Apollo youth theatre has been busy rehearsing their first full-scale production in some years.

Written especially for the youth theatre, Sparks is set in the 'fictional' town of Bournville where everyone loves chocolate. The residents live side by side with elves who forage through bins for their engineering projects. It all changes when the elves steal and eat a baby. The whole town wants the elves gone, none

more so than Ms Snickers, who promises to rid the town of elves in return for a place at the prestigious chocolate tasting club. But is everything what it seems? What really happened that night, and who is good and who is evil? This family show is full of fun and laughter. There are four chances to see it, and the dates for your diary are 20 and 21 July at 2.00pm and 7.30pm. All tickets are just £5.00 each. Under-5s are free but must have a

ticket. All details are on the online booking site.

The production could do with some extra bodies for a few crowd scenes, so if you'd like to help them out by taking to the stage it would be very much appreciated. You would only be required for one rehearsal plus the dress.

Anyone happy to help please email the youth theatre co-ordinator, Mish Whitmore, on [mish.whitmore@yahoo.com](mailto:mish.whitmore@yahoo.com) or call 07941 101339.

**CYRIL AMEY  
1929-2019**



**Cyril in 'Gaslight'  
(with Mavis Mason)**

In 1949 the Isle of Wight branch of the WEA began a play-reading group in the old library in Node Hill. Young Cyril Amey was one of the first members. After a few months, Cyril, who has died at a Ventnor nursing home aged 90, made the radical suggestion that the group should actually rehearse and perform a play. And so was born the Newport Repertory Club.

For many years they staged their plays at the Queen's Hall in Lugley Street and Cyril soon became a regular and very popular cast member. When the Queen's Hall closed, the club went 'on the road', staging their plays in various school halls, etc. This was not very satisfactory, but the arrival of a married couple from the mainland, a certain Mr and Mrs Hancock, changed all that and thus the Apollo Players were born.

It is worth mentioning that Cyril lived happily all his adult life with his unmarried sister Rene. He worked in the fashion department of Fowler's Store in Ryde, then



**Cyril in 'Private Lives'  
(with Celia Elgar)**

as the Mayor of Newport's secretary at the Guildhall and finally as an executive PA at County Hall. His charming nature and good manners made him universally liked. He was always immaculate, from his polished shoes to his crowning glory of snow-white, beautifully coiffed hair. Few mortals saw him without a necktie or cravat.

Colin Ford tells how, during the blood-sweat-and-grime of the building programme to transform a Methodist chapel into a theatre, Cyril turned up one night *to help*, wearing a pink cashmere jumper and pale slacks. Cyril preferred elegant

melodramas or witty comedies and began to despair of the classical heavyweights or earthy modern plays that the Players seemed to prefer. However, he eventually discovered his metier in grand musical productions with operatic societies in Sandown, Shanklin and Cowes.

Although he 'retired from the stage' over twenty years ago, Cyril will be fondly remembered by a whole senior generation of Island theatre-goers, and we should all be grateful that a young Cyril Amey made that radical suggestion seventy years ago.



**Cyril in rehearsal for 'Private Lives' (with (L to R) Carmel Rooney, Sheila McBryde, Frankie Goodall, Mary Baker, Barbara Turner and Edna Crosbie)**

Nothing from me for years (since I was doing the Youth Group) and now here I am doing 2 entries! We recently went to see 'Hair' at the Kings Theatre Southsea, so here is a write-up for the interest of other members.

Firstly let me say what a lovely theatre it is; the atmosphere has a feel of the old theatre days, even to the extent that, as any of you who have been will know, the stalls have a completely different entrance, which is quite intriguing and all adds to the atmosphere of the place. It's well worth a visit just to see the theatre.

So to the musical: I'm pleased to say they kept it set in the time and the language was of the time; they did not shy away from anything and yes there was nudity (tastefully executed) and smoking. Unfortunately not a huge audience, but that did not affect the performance and the whole show was high energy from start to finish. It was surprising how many songs we actually knew. The performances were spot on, it was colourful and lively and very much summoned up the time. I suspect audiences were low because of the subject matter but it is so well done you can't be offend-

ed. The cast came out into the audience at the end and had us up on stage doing a number with them (they had clothes on again by then!) - wow, what an experience, and what a way to end a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

Also a little intrigue: does anyone know anything of the history of the theatre, as I noticed that we had a visitor with us watching the show - but not from this time! So I would be interested to know if there are any known stories of ghosts in the theatre.

Amanda Robertson



### From your Membership Secretary

There are a couple of dates for your diaries. There will be a play reading of Martin Ward's latest masterpiece, 'Corner's Last Case', at 7.30pm on Friday 9 August in the theatre bar; those of you who came to the last one will remember what an enjoyable evening it was. The bar will be open so if you don't want to read a part you can sit back and relax with a drink! On Saturday 24 August between 10am and 2pm we are having another Open Day. There will be lots going on in the Theatre, tours, rehearsals, workshops etc; there will be an auction of promises (see page 8) and a BBQ in the evening. Last year the Theatre was buzzing so do drop in and enjoy the atmosphere! And we have two new members, Bill and Diane York. Welcome to the Apollo!



#### A NEW MEMBER MAKES HER ENTRANCE!

Meet the newest member of the Apollo 'family'! Freyja Margaret Mary Cardew took us all by surprise by arriving a month before our expectations. Although mother and daughter were a little bit poorly after their ordeal they have both recovered well and are looking forward to future Apollo productions (as long as they are someone else's!). So welcome Freyja—and congratulations Eve!

### NEXT DRAMA WORKSHOP Friday, 26 July 2019, 7.00pm to 9.30pm

Leader: Michael Arnell

In this session we will plan and rehearse a group scene, looking at movement, business, props and, of course, characterisation. Please wear comfortable clothes and sensible shoes. Coffee/tea/biscuits provided. Bring a non-member friend; they could become acting members too!

#### NOTE THE DATE

(the Apollo Youth Theatre will be having their dress rehearsal on Friday 19 July)

### From your LTG Rep

I have just received the details of the Southern Region Conference, to be held at the Stables Theatre, Hastings on Friday 20 September to Sunday 22 September. Unfortunately, on those dates Mike and I are booked to be out of the country on holiday and so I am looking for someone (or possibly a couple) who would like to represent our Theatre for the weekend, which promises to be an exciting event since the Stables Theatre will be celebrating their 50th birthday. Please contact me (and Amy) if you are interested and I will send you the details.

Cynara Crump (email [cynara.crump@virgin.net](mailto:cynara.crump@virgin.net))

#### Updated access details

##### 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 a drop-down box will appear 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; if you can't find it check with the Membership Secretary;
- once you've done that, you should get straight into the members' area. If not, there's a problem and you need to let Ginnie Orrey (webmistress) know, but try these steps first.

##### Theatre wifi

**UniFi (WiFi Administration system) Dan Burns, Amy Burns, Steve Reading** All members are able to access the apollo\_public network without use of a password. The password protected 'apollo\_theatre' network is now for devices owned/used by the Apollo such as the box office PCs, Bar payment tablet and technical equipment. This is to ensure the security of data held on them as required by GDPR.

**Apollo Diary Admin Rights granted to: Dan Burns, Amy Burns, Carole Crow, Mike Whitehead** All members have access to add and edit their OWN entries. The above can over-ride and delete other users' entries and reset passwords.



## Your letters

### CASTING

Over recent years the number of drama groups on the Island has increased and yet the pool of actors has remained the same. We are therefore experiencing regular difficulties in casting our plays satisfactorily.

Perhaps it is time we published our programme of plays and audition details on many more media platforms and invited non-members to attend.

Maybe this subject would be a worthwhile topic for discussion at our next AGM or even for a Members Forum meeting? Comments welcome.

*Michael Arnell*

### A BIT OF A DO

7 June this year was special to me. To mark it, I approached the Apollo to see if the bar would be available for 'a bit of a do'. For want of imagination, and causing some puzzlement, this became the title of the function, open to all members and friends, that was publicized in the last edition of 'Apollonius'. I was delighted that over 30 of you were able to attend; and many more were kind enough, both before and afterwards, to explain that prior engagements prevented them coming. A number of old and new members came along: people I know well, and those I hope to know better.

I owe especial thanks to a number of people: Hilary Simpson and Kathryn Ward for staffing the bar; Carole

Crow and Margaret Arnell for help with organization and catering; Mike Crowe for the tableware; and Michael Arnell and Ginnie Orrey for their kind words. Thanks also to all of you who came and made it such an enjoyable night. Unusually for him, Michael Arnell, who as many of you know shuns social occasions, stayed for quite a long time—I felt deeply honoured!

As I said at the time, I take no credit for confounding my prognosis. All the credit is due to the wonderful institution that is our NHS—free at the point of delivery and without judgement as to the worth of any individual—and to all of the people who work in it in any capacity. My gratitude for this is shared by many other members, each with their own story to tell.

The evening made me realise how much the Apollo has become part of my current life, and how much I enjoy and appreciate still being here and belonging to this rather special organization. Above all, it gave me another, happier, reason to remember the date.

*Kate Fysh*

### SAMUEL ROBERTSON

I was asked to put a piece in this month's 'Apollonius' about Sam (Samuel Robertson), as when I am around the Theatre people often stop me and ask what he is up to. So here goes!

He is currently touring in

Germany with Whitehorse Theatre Company, who have run tours for 40 years and plays to audiences of over 30,000 a year. He is currently touring with 3 plays to help German students from ages 10-16 with their English. The plays include a farcical comedy, a detective story and anti-bullying play. It's hard work but enjoyable. The tour involves very early starts, often the start of the first show is at 8.00am, usually doing all three shows in one day. Samuel has had great fun doing the shows; part of the show is engaging with the German students for a Q and A session. Every day has new challenges as they have had to adapt a new space. The students are very excitable and are always eager to help with setting up and helping to carry equipment into the venue. The tour has taken Samuel to every major city of the north-west of Germany, so he has also had the opportunity to learn more about the country. He is going on to perform in 'Taming of the Shrew' with the same company but with a new cast in August for an 11-month tour, and will be also doing 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona'.

I know Samuel would also want me to mention that he is grateful for the opportunities and teaching the Apollo gave him when he was younger.

*Amanda Robertson*

## CASTING CALL: Jeeves & Wooster in 'Perfect Nonsense'



In a change to the published arrangements, the auditions for the second show of the 2019-20 season, 'Perfect Nonsense', will now be held on **Wednesday 24 July, at 7.30pm in Hancock House.**

In case you missed the announcement in the last issue of 'Apollonius', the play, by the Goodale brothers, won the 2014 Laurence

Olivier Award for Best New Comedy. It is based on PG Wodehouse's 1938 novel 'The Code of the Woosters': Bertie Wooster decides to stage a one-man show, only to discover on the evening that, in typical Wooster fashion, nothing has gone according to plan. In desperation, he enlists his valet Jeeves and his butler Sepplings to help him stage the production, but as you would expect, events quick-

ly spiral out of control, prompting Jeeves to step in to make sure all ends well. There is a cast of three males, each playing multiple roles, so some great opportunities for actors. Fiona Gwinnett, who will be directing the play, hopes to see plenty of people at the auditions on the 24th.

### Production dates:

**25 October–2 November  
2019**

Well, another season bites the dust—and what an interesting, varied and successful one it's been, with audiences continuing to support the Apollo in significant numbers. We've had some big hitters—'The Vicar of Dibley', of course, and the less well-known but unexpectedly popular 'Natural Causes'; some challenging plays—'Bronte' and 'The Weir', both of which made up in quality what they may have lacked in bums on seats; works by two renowned authors, Peter Shaffer and Alan Ayckbourn, and of course the 'wild card' of the season, 'Every Christmas Story Ever Told—And Then Some'. So now it's time to look ahead to the new season, with the challenges that will bring for directors, actors and all the support teams at the theatre. You'll probably all know by now what the next seven plays are to be, but just as a reminder, here they are, with dates, directors and a summary of the plot, so that we all know what to look forward to, and perhaps to audition for.

'Suddenly at Home' (Francis Durbridge) 5m 4f Director: Evelyn Hicks	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 Director: 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 Director: Amy Burns	13-21 December	2 episodes of the television comedy adapted for the stage, plus a short sketch written for a Royal Variety Performance, in which they have formed a choir and sing The Floral Dance (changing the song to a Christmas song).
'The Thrill of Love' (Amanda Whittington) 1m 4f Director: Chris Hicks	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 Director: 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 Director: Joel Leverton	22-30 May	A lonely woman tries desperately to find a mate 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 Director: Steve Reading	10-18 July	A modern tragedy of jealousy and betrayal. The lives of Eddie Carbone and his family begin to unravel when they take into their home two relatives who are illegal immigrants from Sicily.

On Sunday 14 July 'Quintet' (plus one!) will perform a 'Feast of Song' at 3.00pm in Bembridge Village Hall. The programme will comprise a range of well-loved music, from Rodgers & Hammerstein to Lloyd-Webber, with a selection of solos, duets and specially arranged ensemble pieces. The accompanist is Jane Carter and the cast consists of Samantha Howard, Bill Meatyrd, Anthea Weekes (one of our members, whose beautiful ethereal singing some of you may remember from 'The Selkie Wife') and Robert Jolliffe – all well-known performers in Bembridge, with newcomer Theo Rankine-Fourdraine. Samantha is the founder of her singing group 'Vocal Chords' and an influential vocal coach, with many students progressing to mainland colleges and the music industry. She can be contacted via [thedi-vadarling@gmail.com](mailto:thedi-vadarling@gmail.com). A delicious interval tea is included in the ticket price of £15 (if you have a specific dietary requirement please email her one week prior to the event). Raffle proceeds will be donated to Bembridge Library, Village Hall and Heritage Centre.

Tickets can be obtained from Anthea on 07761 607 181, from Samantha Howard on 07725 259 045, or from Warburtons Co-op, Lane End, Bembridge.

## NEXT SEASON AT THE APOLLO

*A musical  
treat at  
Bembridge*

## CASTING CALL: 'DAD'S ARMY'

**A message from the director and assistant director of the December show, 'Dad's Army', Amy Burns and Dan Burns.**

'Now that our extra Christmas is over, it's time to start looking at our 'real' Christmas. This year the production is to be a stage version of 'Dad's Army', by Jimmy Perry and David Crofts; and all men and

women who would like to be the protectors of Walmington-on-Sea are invited to the auditions in Hancock House on Sunday 8 September at 6.00pm.

The audition piece will be a poem—whatever poem you like—read in the style of your favourite Dad's Army character.

If you'd like more information, contact us as fol-

lows:

**Amy:** 07886 389 561 or amy@masexodus.co.uk

**Dan:** 07401 306b577 or dan@masexodus.co.uk

We hope to hear from you, and to see lots of you on 8 September.'

## NEWS FROM THE BAR



As you might have guessed, the theatre bar provides an important and not insubstantial income for the theatre. It provides an important social aspect to the theatre, and enables ideas and debate to be aired which ultimately help the theatre develop. It would always be nice to see more members using it after shows. Takings for 'Natural Causes' were over £1,100, which represents a significant income for the Players.

After many years of static prices (despite tax increas-

es) we are having to review our price list. As a result, in September we will be introducing a 2-tier price structure: one price for the public and another for members. You all have a membership number, so you will need to declare your membership when ordering at the bar for the lower prices to be applied. If in doubt, ask the membership secretary for your number (the bar staff will also have a list of paid-up members available if you've forgotten it). Please don't be offended if the bar

staff ask you for your membership number, as if you are not a paid-up member you won't be able to access the lower prices.

This is one benefit of being a member and regular users of the bar (ahem!) will be able to get their membership money's worth. And to make things even easier for you, we now have contactless/chip & pin too.

See you at the bar!

*Steve Reading, Bar Manager*



## MORE MEMBERS' PERKS!

And more members' perks! You may remember from the last issue of 'Apollonius' that Doris Pinks, the Newport florist, have very kindly offered a 10% discount on flowers (though not on delivery) for paid-up Apollo mem-

bers. This discount can be accessed by quoting the code 'ATP 1972'.

Remember also that if you're working on a production you can buy your Minghella ice-cream for the reduced price of

£1.20 instead of the full £2.

## AUCTION OF PROMISES: OPEN DAY 24 AUGUST



On Open Day, 24 August (see the Membership Secretary's article on page 5), as part of the entertainments held throughout the day we are going to hold an auction of promises.

For those of you unfamiliar with the concept, basically an auction takes place for the promise of a service—for example, walking someone's dog, doing an hour of cleaning, cooking someone a meal, mowing

the lawn, baking a cake and so on—you get the picture. The promises will be advertised during the day and sealed bids can be put for the items, and then the live auction will happen in the evening after the BBQ. All proceeds will go towards theatre funds.

In order for this to be a success, we need to have promises to auction—and this is where you come in.

Do you have a skill you could offer, or even have something in the back of the cupboard that you could donate? You'd be surprised how valuable the offer of services can be to people if they can't do the thing themselves!

So—if you have something to offer, please let Carole Crow or Amy Burns know.

You'll all be aware, I'm sure, that the Apollo belongs to the Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain: an organisation that represents 114 member theatres that control and manage their amateur theatre companies. The LTG publishes a regular newsletter with news from amateur theatres all over the UK; and we were lucky enough to have a photo from 'Bronte' published on page 2 of the latest issue. Fame at last! We get a number of copies; you'll see some lying around the theatre or on a notice-board, or ask our LTG rep, Cynara Crump, if you'd like to read one.

Also in that issue was an article entitled 'Directors—make time to read this'. It contains much useful guidance, so I'm reproducing it in full for any aspiring directors out there—or indeed anyone who likes to think around the many issues thrown up by the responsibility of directing a production.

'DIRECTORS—make time to read this ...

Arts Richmond is an organisation that hosts a number of awards each year—one being the Swan Awards—for excellence in all aspects of drama. They recently organised a Forum for directors, drama judges and others interested in learning more about the dark arts of directing, specifically within the buoyant amateur community. It was hosted at Hampton Hill Theatre, home of The Teddington Theatre Club, and the guest speaker was Wesley Henderson Roe, who spent most of his life working in amateur theatre as well as a stint in the professional theatre. He trained as a drama teacher, going onto be head of a well-known drama school before

retraining as a designer. He works now as a freelance director and designer. His theme was:

*'The weakest part of amateur theatre is weak directors.'*

This sweeping generalisation immediately caught the attention of the audience! Through anecdotes he explained some of the lessons he had learnt.

ORGANISATION & PLANNING are the key. This means:

- know your script & characters inside out;
- have a vision and stick to it;
- get the casting right. Don't accept just anyone for the role. Leave a role uncast and work tirelessly to find the right person

IN REHEARSAL:

- work with the cast rather than being in charge;
- lead but don't dictate;
- be open to suggestions but have the final say;
- question everything and be prepared to change your mind.

The difference between a good show and a great show is a combination of preparation and luck! Follow these tips to create a vision:

- read the script;
- read the script again;
- read it a third time & make notes on key facts & themes;
- research characters, places, unfamiliar phrases;
- give script to your designer with initial thoughts and ideas;
- read the script again and make notes about individual characters, such as gender, age, physicality, traits, accents, background, relationships with others and so on;
- read the script again and make notes about sound effects, lighting, props, set elements, costume. Note your changes to stage directions;
- create basic plot and cue lists for each of the above;
- meet with designer and

flesh out their ideas.

AND FINALLY:

Does the director have a responsibility for anything other than shaping the production in conjunction with actors and the creative team? Answer: Yes! We do this for the love of it, so it needs to be fun.

IN A NUTSHELL:

The good amateur director creates an environment in which the actors feel free to express themselves yet accept the vision within which they are working. In essence, there are three different approaches to directing (aka Actor Management):

**PRESCRIPTIVE:** these are meticulous planners but sometimes to the point that actors feel they have no say.

**ORGANIC:** these have little—or worse, no—plan or structure and make decisions on the hoof, often resulting in a production that only comes together just as the first audience arrives.

**COLLABORATIVE:** these have a clear vision but are open to actor interpretation during the process. They allow collective perception during development but retain the ability to prevent rehearsals straying too far from the original vision.'

Some very interesting thoughts here, don't you think? There's definitely a theme (did someone say 'read the script?') and some pretty obvious guidance—though it never hurts to restate the obvious!—but also some useful thought processes for directors to bear in mind when they set out on the journey.

Aspiring directors—and those who want to improve their skills—can also find some practical notes on our website.

Good luck!

**DIRECTORS:  
MAKE TIME  
TO READ  
THIS!**

## 'THE ART OF THE LARGE PART'

MUSINGS BY  
MARTIN WARD

As regular readers of this organ will know, Martin is a regular contributor to 'Apollonius'; always offering interesting and thoughtful insights into things theatrical, with an authorial slant, of course. This time, quite coincidentally, his 'musings' are very much in parallel with the article on page 9 from the LTG.

'As, I assume, is the case with most people, I have my favourite plays. Among these are 'Habeas Corpus', 'Equus', 'Breaking The Code', 'Network' and 'The Business of Murder'. There are others but at the risk of boring the faithful readers of Apollonius, I have kept the list short.

I have had the opportunity of directing the first three in the above list. They all presented challenges of varying kinds, but one thing they did have in common was that they relied to a greater or lesser extent on a key central character. For 'Habeas Corpus' it was Arthur Wicksteed, in 'Equus' it was Alan Strang and in 'Breaking The Code' we needed an actor who could play Alan Turing. I was delighted with 'Equus' and 'Breaking The Code', in part because we found actors who did those roles justice. Indeed, the actor who played Alan Turing not only learned his lines very quickly (some of them of a very technical nature) but also understood what he was learning because he was a mathematician.

You may already have guessed, as I have left 'Habeas Corpus' until last,

that things did not go as smoothly there. When I held the auditions, things went pretty well and my cast generally fell into place. I had one person audition for Arthur Wicksteed. He looked the part and would fit in with the other cast members. There was one problem. He didn't want a large part in the play. My instincts told me that he could do it. After a little gentle persuasion he agreed to take it on. In the words of Eddie the Eagle (perhaps), it was all downhill from then on. Notwithstanding that I had to play Sir Percy Shorter, as we were unable to find another suitable person of limited stature, the more rehearsals we had, the more evident it became that my Arthur was struggling with the part. The insurmountable problem was that at no stage did he exude any confidence that he would learn the lines before him. At the end of each attempt to cajole, coerce, persuade or otherwise encourage him to get to grips with the part - through various means - I drove home come believing that the casting gods had conspired against me.

The first night in front of a paying audience, I had to concede that we would all be walking that proverbial tight-rope, not knowing if what came out of his mouth was going to be correct or even in the right order. To say that the tension was visible was an understatement. In the end we got through it somehow, despite the fact that during one performance he exited when he should have remained, thus leaving the assembled players with expressions that were reminiscent of

those involved in the current Brexit negotiations. And the moral of this tale? I suppose there are several: taking a chance on an unknown quantity is one thing and sometimes it pays off. But there comes a time during the process when feelings need to give way to something more tangible and a decision then has to be made. Do you continue with the status quo or do you find a replacement? How easy is it to find that replacement? The most important aspect of that whole experience - certainly for me - was the choices made at the time of the auditions. What it told me then, and what has stayed with me ever since, was the importance of getting it right first time. During my directing career I have had to make some tough choices when it came to casting, usually because the standard on view has been so high. That is a good thing. However, when you have to make a decision to cast someone because he or she is the only option available, gut feelings are good but at some stage they need to be tempered with a little reality check. After all, the play's the thing ...

*Martin Ward'*

Having enjoyed Martin's last play, 'White Rock', we look forward to his next one, 'Corner's Last Case'. There will be a play-reading on Friday 9 August, at 7.30pm in the theatre bar, and all are very welcome.

'People who go to the theatre don't understand the extent to which the actors talk backstage about the audience. It's such a weird alchemy that certain types of people create one atmosphere, but the next day you can have a completely different one. When you're sitting in an audience, you're not aware of what kind of audience you are. But the actors sure know.'

*Andrew Scott (Sherlock, Fleabag ... )*

### JOBS AROUND THE THEATRE

We all spot things that need attention around the theatre, from the odd non-functioning lightbulb to walls that need redecoration. The problem is what we do about it. First choice should be to fix it ourselves, but a good second option would be to make sure someone who can fix it knows about it. Currently the best way of doing this is probably to put a note on the whiteboard backstage. Recently, however, the 'To Do' list, maintained by Roger, grew to 3 pages of A4 and there seemed little chance of it being addressed. Hence we are trying a new approach. The idea is that the list will be available on set building nights (normally every Monday and Tuesday leading up to a production) so that anyone who would like to help can turn up and be helped to tackle any of the jobs. A deal of progress on reducing the list has already been made by the set building team but there is still plenty to do, so do come along and help. You might even learn where all the replacement light bulbs are kept!

And finally ...

As I mentioned earlier, it's the end of a busy season and lots of people have put huge amounts of effort into our seven shows. Here are a few photos to remind you of what the season looked like—and to thank everyone who puts so much into our theatre, both those you can see in the photos and those invisible individuals behind the scenes without whom none of it would be possible.



Nick Turvey, Chris Turvey and Michael Arnell in 'It Could be Any One Of Us'



Amy Burns, Martin Ward and Mark Duffus in 'The Public Eye and the Private Ear'



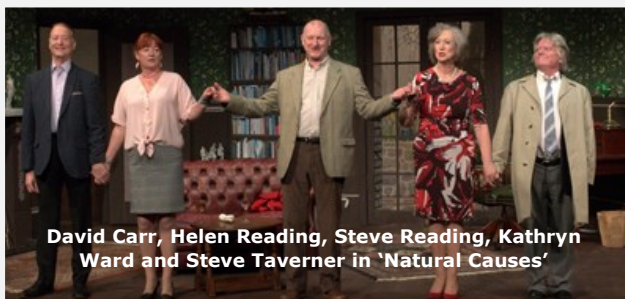
Susan Simpson, Matt Osborne, Hebe Gregory and Si Lynch in 'The Vicar of Dibley'



Abbi Leverton, Fiona Gwinnett, Susan Simpson, Peter Gale, Chris Hicks and Maria Wilkinson in 'Bronte'



Colin Ford, Robbie Gwinnett, Ginnie Orrey, David Vince and Michael Arnell in 'The Weir'



David Carr, Helen Reading, Steve Reading, Kathryn Ward and Steve Taverner in 'Natural Causes'



Maggie Cardew and Helen Clinton-Pacey in 'Every Christmas Story Ever Told ...'

So ... Here's to next season!



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**01983 210010**

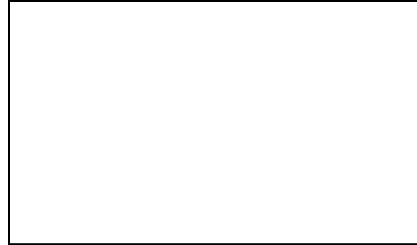
email:  
info@apollo-theatre.org.uk

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

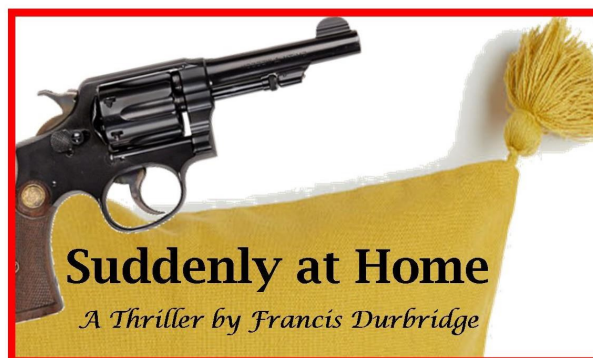
[www.apollo-theatre.org.uk](http://www.apollo-theatre.org.uk)

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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



*Friday 6  
September—  
Saturday 14  
September  
2019*

Francis Durbridge's 'Suddenly at Home' is an intricate classic thriller with unexpected twists and surprises, in which an avaricious scheming husband kills his wealthy wife in pursuit of his dream. The intrigue and suspense come from his clever attempts to evade justice as he manipulates situations and other characters to achieve his objective. Dramatic telephone calls and unexpected visitors heighten the tension.

Francis Durbridge, master storyteller, conquered television from 1950-1980 with baffling and complex thrillers that gripped audiences and kept them on tenterhooks. Record viewing figures were recorded for his best-known series featuring Paul Temple, one of the most successful characters ever created for broadcasting. His radio plays, with their famed 'cliff-hanger' endings, were always eagerly awaited. He is credited with over 35 novels, 22 TV series, 30 radio play serials and 9 stage plays, the most famous of which is 'Suddenly at Home'.