



Forthcoming read-throughs, auditions & other production stuff

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Remember: a read-through is not an audition!

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT ISSUE:

Whenever the Muse strikes!

Other diary dates (more info on the website)

Virtual coffee mornings Every Saturday, 11.00am



WISHING ALL MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES AN EXCEPTIONALLY HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS—AND HOPES FOR A BETTER NEW YEAR!

apollonius

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

Issue no. 281

December 2020

A message from the Theatre Director

Dear all, I am never very good at writing these as I never seem to find the right words, and everyone else seems to have such a better understanding of words and feelings, but I feel after so long of the Apollo family not really being together I would give it a go and let you know how we as a theatre have been making things happen and where we see the theatre moving forward to.

Back in March our Government made the decision to close the country down and since then the Committee and I have been trying to investigate ways of keeping the theatre alive and keep our lovely building safe.

Carole Crow has kept 'coffee n' chat' mornings going via zoom and for the brief time in the summer when the rules allowed, we had a few in the Apollo. With the help of Michael Whitehead she has been organising some monologues/duologues and even a radio play, which have all been recorded and are being uploaded to our very own and new YouTube channel. Thank you to everyone who has written or given a voice to these (if you have an idea for one you would like to do or just want to take part please contact Carole or Michael and they will help you out). Ginnie Orrey has been sort-

ing out our finances, getting licences changed and negotiating with utilities, so we get the best deals in these times, plus keeping our website 'live'. Mish Whitmore has been keeping the youth theatre going; some work took place via Zoom, and then when some restrictions changed she was able to arrange groups and go back to the Apollo. Hilary Simpson went into the bar and stripped out all the items, cleaning and clearing the stock, and some was sold so that we could recoup some of the monies. Some unfortunately was thrown away but we will have a fresh new stock when we open again. Roger Simpson and Paul Jennings, our links with the trust, have been doing lots of jobs to keep the theatre safe, organising contractors to come and do electrical work, safety checks on alarm systems, fire equipment, gas appliances and so on, plus working on the next phase of developing the theatre. The set-building team were able for a time to go in and do some maintenance on items of set as well as completing some much-needed maintenance jobs around the theatre. Martin Ward and a team of helpers have been sorting out the furniture at the unit, making it clean, safe and tidy to access and use. Steve Read-

ing has been investigating how we can sell tickets when we are able to open and perform, so that we keep everyone safe and happy. Dan Burns has been busy writing, rewriting, and rewriting risk assessments which we need for ALL activities at the Apollo, since every time a rule or guideline changes, so do these.

This is by no means everyone and everything but a glimpse into what has been happening during this 'unprecedented' time, and I would like to thank each and every one of them for all that they are doing and everyone else who has helped with these tasks.

On 25 November Steve and Dan did the first of our online quizzes, sent out live on YouTube and Facebook with Steve as the quiz master. There were 10 rounds of questions and households were asked to send in their answers. It was great fun and I think it went well; so well in fact that the next one is in planning. I have also heard on the grapevine that Michael Arnell may be doing some workshops on Zoom to make sure everyone is kept safe. Some of you may have heard that plans were underway to do a little something in December, but unfortunately due to this most recent lockdown (contd overleaf)

plans were put on hold. But never give up hope.

This has been a hard time for all of us and we thank you all for your support and understanding through it. We have never had to do anything like this before and we are learning every day what we can do and where we can do better. As a committee we have held our meetings on Zoom - a very strange situation, but we have at least been able to meet and plan.

So, that's where we have been. So where are we going? As you know, when the world changed we were half-way through a season of plays with three left to perform; the following season was set out and we were just about to begin the process of looking for directors for those seven productions. As you

may know, Di Evans is the Arts Manager for that season but had to take a step back due to personal reasons. The committee took on the role as assistant arts manager but over time have found with all our other commitments we really need someone who can be the deciding vote and help focus decisions and the productions artistically at the Apollo. I have been in conversation with Di and she feels the best course of action unfortunately is for her to fully step down from the post of Arts Manager. We are therefore looking for someone to take over this position. See the article below for more about this—it deserves its own space!

All that remains is for me to say 'thank you' all for your constant commitment

to the Apollo. It has not been the year that we all wanted but a lot has been so far out of our control that we could never have planned for this to happen—and I hope that we never have to again. I hope that you are all safe and well, that you have a pleasant Christmas and safe New Year, time where we can reflect on those that are no longer with us, with friendships that we have at the Apollo and look forward to the time that we will all be together again. I hope that your continued support and membership will be given to the Apollo— she needs us as much as we need her.

Amy Burns, Theatre Director

JOB VACANCY: ARTS MANAGER

As you can see from the Theatre Director's heartfelt plea above, the Committee, in liaison with Di, have made the difficult decision that the post of Arts Manager for the remainder of the 2020-21 season and the whole of the 2021-22 season is now vacant.

It has become increasingly clear that the gap in our artistic focus is not helping us to take the theatre forward in this difficult time; hence the decision to ask a member to step forward and stand for the job of Arts Manager. The role requires someone with the ability to think strategically about our dramatic offering and also to deal on a day-to-day basis with the challenges of sorting out plays, dealing with directors and all the practical issues around putting on a production, and to liaise with the Committee about what is needed and how to achieve it. It sounds quite challenging, and it

calls for someone committed to the success of the Apollo to take it on; but there will be lots of support and help from everyone to help make it work. There is a written job description, which may help, and if you'd like a copy please contact the Business Manager who will send it to you. However, in summary, the job would involve:

- finding plays for the season September 2021- July 2022 (using some of Di's if you like) and agreeing the season with the Committee;
- assisting in the organisation of Directors and Assistant Directors, and supporting them in anything that they want or need;
- being on hand for auditions, rehearsals, performances—whatever is needed as the process goes along. It is recom-

mended that the Arts Manager is not involved in any one production as they will be expected to oversee ALL productions;

- attending the committee meetings to report on the progress of the theatre and the plays;
- liaising with departments to get the best for each production;
- and for the remainder of this season's three plays, be on hand to help with planning to make it all work.

This is asking a lot, and the Director will be very happy to discuss it with anyone who thinks they might want to take on the role. If we have multiple applicants, the final decision will of course be down to the membership; but please contact Amy to discuss ideas or options so that we can set the artistic ball rolling.

Most of you probably know that our Theatre takes its name from the Apollo space programme which succeeded in putting a man on the moon in 1969, the year John Hancock and many others started the Apollo Theatre. Believe it or not, we have been confused with lesser known Apollo theatres, like the one in Shaftesbury Avenue, London—seriously!



So what do we know about our namesake? It is a Grade II listed building which opened in February 1901, the fourth theatre to be built on the then newly-created Shaftesbury Avenue, and one of the few theatres in London to remain freehold. It was completed and opened only a couple of weeks after the death of Queen Victoria, thus becoming the first theatre of the

Edwardian period. The theatre has a four-level auditorium, with three cantilevered balconies and a first floor central *loggia* decorated in the Louis XIV style. Each level has its own foyer and promenade, which was very much the European style at the time.

Originally it was designed to be a musical theatre, which is why it was named Apollo after the Greek god of music and poetry. The first production, *The Belle of Bohemia*, opened on 21 February 1901 to a private audience. There was uproar because *The Times* refused to review the private viewing, choosing instead to review the first public performance the following night (is that why we don't invite the County Press to review final dress??). A number of successful Edwardian musicals and follies followed as the theatre flourished. It was only in the 1920s that plays were performed.

The Apollo changed hands in 1944 and became more renowned for plays, with many of our more famous actors performing roles in plays that we find familiar

today. To this day the theatre remains one of the more successful venues in London.

Some of you will remember that a few years ago we had to evacuate costumes from the roof space which needed strengthening. There was a risk that the ceiling could have collapsed into the auditorium. That's just what happened in 2013 to our namesake during a production of *The Curious Incident*



of the Dog in the Night-Time. It was 19 December 2013 at around 8.20pm when about 10 square metres of ornate plaster ceiling fell onto the audience. Of the 720 audience members, 88 were injured, 7 seriously. The theatre was—unsurprisingly—closed and following repairs and renovations reopened on March 26 2014.

Today the theatre is part of the Nimax Theatre group.

APOLLO ON APOLLO

A bit of
history from
Steve Reading

The cause of plagues is sin, and the cause of sin is plays' (a preacher during the closure of the theatres because of plague during the early 17th century) [*it must have been somewhat dispiriting to find that the thing that makes you happiest is regarded as the source of all evil!!*]

'There are some programmes that make you wish there was a special award each year for 'Hardest Grafting Actors' ... actors who find themselves

in a second-rate production and can still be seen giving it their all, selling the s**t out of whatever lacklustre material they've been given' (Lucy Mangan in the *Guardian*) [*has any of us been there??*]

'The theatre is so endlessly fascinating because it's so accidental. It's so much like life' (Arthur Miller) [*or perhaps like some productions any of us may have found ourselves in over the course of an amateur theatrical life ... !*]



Editorial: the view from the Editor's chair

News from the Apollo Theatre Trust



'100 CLUB' UPDATE

Once again I am delighted to give you a relatively bumper issue of this organ, which given the current circumstances surprised me somewhat. I never underestimate the willingness of our members to appear in print with thoughtful and interesting pieces to entertain you all, and as always I thank them for rising to the challenge of an email with 'Apollonius' in the subject line!

Never again, as the Guardian so cogently reminds us, should live art, music or theatre be taken for granted. However, as they remark, the main beneficiaries of the relaxation of the rules have been 'an urban, able-bodied, committed, already

Even in these 'difficult times', the set-building team have been hard at work. They have standardised all the 14' and 10' door flats and the door frames to a common size, based on the most common dimensions. Having surveyed all the doors, we have 30, about 20 of which are small variations on internal house doors; however, only five of these conform to the standard. Almost all our doors are in a poor state of repair having been hacked to size and had locks and hinges

The 100 Club was founded as a means of fund-raising to help the Apollo Theatre Trust in its work of maintaining and developing the Grade 2* Theatre building. Under 'normal' non-coronavirus conditions the draw at the end of each month is done backstage on a work-night or rehearsal evening by Amy, plus numbered-squared board, numbered tiles, a black velvet bag, and the assistance of a group of volunteers. Amy and one of the group set out the board with tiles, the quantity and numbering of which agrees with the number of Club members. The

super-served audience'—not to mention North Island dwellers. As always, we, the amateurs, are overlooked despite the pleasure we give to millions of people outside that 'super-served audience'; but as always, we are committed to putting the effort in to achieving what the Guardian so rightly describes as 'the energy that flows between the stage and the audience, between performer and viewer'. We are all getting better at making the best of a terrible situation for the arts through a combination of innovation, energy and commitment, and long may it remain so.

Another article in the Guardian remarked that 'a mind

fitted in various positions over the years. The plan is that with standardisation we can avoid re-working doors for every production, so we have decided to start by building 4 new doors and have been given permission to spend the necessary money on materials.

You will remember that a small group is liaising with our legal adviser to work through issues related to the proposed merger of the Trust and the Players into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The

tiles go into the bag and the volunteer pulls out one single tile; Amy checks its number with her list and announces the name of the lucky winner, which is then passed on to me in order to deal with making out a cheque and sending it off. During lockdown this has not been possible but electronics came to our aid! Our theatre may be closed but the draw has to carry on regardless, so Amy and Dan have dealt with the draw at home using a random number generator system on a computer. I can't remember when I last reported the winners' names so I'll give

absorbed in a story is less likely to skitter into fragmented worries ... a way of making contact with someone else's imagination after a day that's all too real ... '. The article was specifically concerned with the rise in e- and audio-books, but it's just as relevant to us in the theatre, 'creating a safe space whatever darkness howls without'. As one of our Committee commented recently, we shouldn't forget 'that people are losing jobs and livelihoods, and in some cases their homes'; while we can't save the world, we can at least remember that the need for escape is always there and we can do something to help with that.

group had a good and productive meeting with our adviser recently and resolved some issues we had identified as needing his input. He said that the direction we have proposed is a good one, with the theatre run by an operational team of elected officers, four of whom would be ex-officio trustees alongside four or five independent charitable trustees. The Players are now in the process of working through the detail of such issues as terms of office, quorum and so on.

them for the whole year.

January: Mr Snellgrove
February: Paul Stevens
March: Mavis Bowmas
April: Mrs D Dixcey
May: George King
June: Gill Kennerley
July: Sarah & Nigel Talbot
August: Mrs S Rockhill
September: Ms D Summers
October: Peter Gustar
November: Martha James
When things are back to 'normal', forms to join the 100 Club will be found in the foyer. If you feel like giving your support or, otherwise please contact me on cynaracrump@gmail.com.
Cynara Crump, Trust Secretary

News from your Committee

Notes from the Committee meetings on 16 and 30 November

It would be lovely to be able to say, as I used to, 'lots of news for you from your Committee'. However, we are meeting regularly via Zoom and in fact quite a lot of useful business is getting done—partly because it's actually easier to meet more often virtually when things need discussion than when we used to have to meet in person. We are very concerned to make sure that our members know what's going on, even if not very much is going on, if you see what I mean!

Frustratingly, while this virus persists we have a duty of care to our members and the public to protect them. Until the virus is back under control and eradicated, things are going to be challenging. We just have to accept that and put up with it for a bit longer. However, we have a strategy for re-opening the theatre as soon as restrictions allow.

First of all, however, we had a discussion recently about whether members were in fact being kept sufficiently informed. It was noted that all Island theatre groups are having equal difficulty with member communication in this virtual age; we are of course very aware that some of our members are not online, but that applies to most groups now and most of their communication is of necessity electronic. Just to catch up on some of the other Island groups: one group have done a few online quizzes and shared 4 letters from the secretary; another haven't sent anything out; a third have posted some 'past productions'

posts on Facebook and planned one event which had to be postponed; a fourth have planned a Christmas production, plus they send out a newsletter from time to time and hold occasional coffee mornings; and another have held some Zoom play readings and sent out one email about next year's possible productions. Up to now, we have recorded some 'radio productions', held weekly Zoom coffee mornings, created Facebook and YouTube content, held coffee mornings when possible, planned a December 'Party Pieces' evening, issued 'Apollonius' and put stuff on our website ... Obviously it's not as much as we'd like to be doing, and we are trying our best to stay positive about what is and sadly is not possible and how to work round that. All suggestions very gratefully received!

On the other hand, of course, our finances are taking a bit of a hit during this malarkey. We are just about keeping our heads above water but it's a struggle; the Bar was able to make a good contribution recently but we're not out of the woods by a long chalk (pardon the mixed metaphor!). The Trust has also been able to access a bit more grant money from the IW Council—not a fortune, but every little definitely helps (see the members' page for an example of this!). Our sincerest thanks to Martin Ward for grappling, with his customary tenacity, with the Council on this one.

Unfortunately the second

lockdown proved too much of a hurdle to overcome for the proposed Victorian Christmas Entertainment and it has been put on hold. It has also been impossible to arrange the promised workshop, but hopefully this will now happen in January.

It was possible to hold an online fun quiz via our YouTube channel—see the members' page for news about that.

Work had begun on a Christmas production, but sadly it wasn't possible in the format we envisaged. The restrictions of virtual rehearsal mean that realistically we wouldn't be able to put together a show to a standard that we would be happy with, and that we owe to our audiences. However, there is a plan to record a Christmas Concert which will be streamed on YouTube for members; the date is still to be decided and the membership secretary has asked for contributions from you all so please keep them coming!

We will be keeping in touch with updates as and when they happen. Clearly Covid isn't going away any time soon, but we can and must adapt ourselves accordingly. The theatre is good at adaptation (see Peter Brook on the Open Space); we have that tradition to draw on, so let's hope there will soon be news of a grand reopening!

And meanwhile, just to cheer you up a bit, here's a link to a YouTube video by one of our members. Watch and enjoy!

<https://youtu.be/n1zrKL43ZxI>

YOUR COMMITTEE			
Theatre Director & Chair of management committee (elected 3-yearly): Amy Burns (2019-22) amy@masexodus.co.uk			
Arts Manager (elected annually in Nov for season beginning following Sept)	Currently vacant	2 Members' Representatives (elected annually)	Kate Fysh (2019-20) katefysh@gmail.com
Business Manager (elected biannually)	Ginnie Orrey (2020-22) gginnie@googlemail.com or info@apollo-theatre.org.uk	House Manager (elected biannually)	Steve Reading (2019-21) steverreading104@btinternet.com
Marketing Manager (elected biannually)	Maureen Sullivan (2020-22) msullivan58@me.com	Technical Manager (elected biannually)	Dan Burns (2019-21) dan@masexodus.co.uk
Players' Secretary (elected biannually)	Mike Whitehead (2020-22) michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com	LTG rep	Cynara Crump cynara.crump@virgin.net
Membership Secretary (elected biannually)	Carole Crow (2019-21) carolecrow9@gmail.com	Apollo Trust Buildings Manager (co-opted)	Roger Simpson roger.dodger45@yahoo.co.uk

'The Door'
A spooky
tale by
Louis
Lawrence

I was clearing out my old document case. It's just a beat-up old specimen I have had for years, probably as many as 50 because when I emptied it out, in a corner of the side pocket I found a list of food supplies that dates back to when I was managing a residential centre for a youth club: 120 chickens, 50 loaves and 50 kilos of potatoes. It set me thinking again of something that happened while I was doing that job. You know how something can make your blood run cold ...

Every time I begin to write this story, or even think about the event, I get a strange feeling of dread; what is sometimes described as a loosening of the bowels and I know the hair on the back of my neck starts to bristle. Let me now explain how, why and what.

When I was younger, I was a member of a Youth Club in Whitechapel, London. The club had a country house in Kent, called Skeet House, bought in the WW2 period as a weekend respite retreat. In due course, as I reached adulthood I became a voluntary manager and in the 1970s was in charge of the house. I had a regular job based in Edgware, and lived in Wembley with my family. The house duties meant that I would need to visit frequently, purchase supplies and do the accounting though it was run day to day by a local couple who lived nearby. On those occasions, it was an easy run most evenings through North London, the East End, the Blackwall tunnel and on to the house, which was near Orpington. Sometimes, depending on how late I was finishing tasks, I would stay overnight and go to work from there in the early morning, and kept spare clothes there for just such an event.

The house was originally the Dower House of Lullingstone Castle and dated back to Elizabethan/Jacobean times. There were large panelled rooms with impressive fireplaces and yes, it had a ghost story though

not necessarily part of this tale.

On this particular day I had finished work quite late in Edgware then drove down to the house to meet the staff and do the admin. They had set out coffee and sandwiches for me and when we had finished our meeting, they departed leaving me to finish up and go to a room I would sleep in. In spite of its reputed bloody history, I was never troubled over many such visits though the house tended to creak and groan as the ancient timbers settled in the cool of the night. I had known the place since first coming to it in 1945 as a boy and having explored every nook and cranny, I knew it well.

I woke to some unexplained noise. Looking around the ground floor, I entered one of the large rooms and noticed that beside the enormous fireplace there was a door, slightly ajar and a light beyond. I pushed the door open and entered the room. At the same time I knew this was impossible, since there is a roadway immediately behind the chimney stack on that side. It seemed to be a kitchen as there was a large fireplace with a stove and embers glowing. A table with the remains of a meal and on the wall coats hanging on pegs. An oil lamp on the table provided the room's light. At the far end of the room there was a staircase leading up. Going to the stairs I took the first four steps to a landing and then up more stairs to the left. At the top of the stairs was a door. I put my hand to the handle but something stopped me opening it. What would I find behind the door? I knew this door, this room could not possibly exist. I felt fearful so I retreated down the stairs, left the room and returned to my bed.

In the morning before I left the house I went into the main room where I had been the previous night and looked for the doorway beside the fireplace. There was no door and though I tested the panelling for any hollow sounds, it was as I

had always known, just solid walls. The wardens would not come on duty till much later so I could not speak to them till some days later when I enquired whether there had ever been an extra part of the house behind the fireplace. Their families had lived locally for generations and they asked around but could not confirm there had ever been additions or major alterations in the past and there had always been a roadway on that side. I did not tell them of my experience.

Some twenty years later I booked a gite in the Dordogne region of France. It seemed large enough for all my family, by then two sons, one with a wife and daughter. This house was quite old and probably dated back to mediaeval times. It stood at the end of a bridge and could have been a toll-gate keeper's house. As I entered the kitchen for the first time I saw that it was identical to the room I had seen at Skeet House that night twenty years before. My hair literally stood on end as I saw the fireplace, the table, the clothes pegs, and the staircase! This was *deja vu* with knobs on! With a sense of foreboding, I climbed the stairs and there was the door I was too fearful to open. Now with my family below squabbling about which bedroom was whose, I turned the handle and opened the door to find ... nothing. There was a small area of boarded floor and the rest was just a large attic with the rafters of the room below between which I could see the lath and plaster of the ceiling below.

I scrapped the list of 120 chickens, 50 loaves and 50 kilos of spuds but I still get that strange feeling of dread when I recall what happened in Kent and later in France. Why?

JOAN MATTHEWS 1929 - 2020

Some of our longer-serving members may remember Joan Matthews, who was an active member for many years, appearing in a couple of productions but mainly acting as Prompt/Production Assistant for many plays as recently as 'Theft' in 2006. Joan—whose daughter Jo is currently a member despite having moved to London—has sadly died, and Jo has sent us the following memories of her.

'My Mum Joan was born in east London and grew up in Aldershot as her father was a captain in the army. She

married Robert Matthews and moved to the island when I was nine as my father was transferred to Northwood with Decca Radar, later Plessey and now BAE Systems.

She joined Cowes Operatic & Dramatic Society and I remember seeing her in 'Oklahoma'. When she later moved to Shorwell she joined Shorwell Drama Club and loved acting and stage management too. I have a memory of her on stage dressed as a carrot (play—er—Veronica Anne???)

When the Apollo began it drew keen thespians from all over the island and initially Joan grumbled that it was tempting actors with cars to abandon their village companies for the bright lights of the County Town.

However, she moved to Newport herself in 1995 and knew it was sensible for her to join the Apollo and was impressed with the high standard of the productions. She made some good friends and enjoyed debating the merits of plays. She was never keen on 'sex and violence', but appreciated their key role in many brilliant dramas. She enjoyed being in Pygmalion as Mrs Eynsford-Hill in 1989.

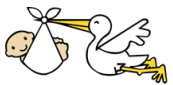
When I directed 'Same Time Next Year' her comment afterwards was that a picture 'was not quite right for the period', but I knew she was quietly proud of me.

Although at 91 Mum was not ready to die, as she said she had so much to sort out, she and we were glad that she died with us at home.'

FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

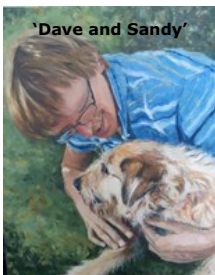
We now have a YouTube Channel! Search 'Apollo Theatre Isle of Wight' on You Tube, click the link on our website or go direct to <https://youtu.be/O9ms4BVYCY>. Click on Apollo Players under the video to take you to all the recordings. There you will find 'Tell Tales' a selection of monologues, read and recorded in the Theatre. Do have a listen—you won't be disappointed! It was possible to hold an online fun quiz via the YouTube channel and Facebook thanks to Amy, Dan and Steve's combined talents and it was a great evening's entertainment. Four teams were bold enough to submit their answers (and more of us who preferred not to go public!), and Mark's Ark (alias Martin and Kathryn Ward) was declared the winner. I will admit to getting some answers right and thoroughly enjoying the evening! Another quiz is promised towards the end of December.

I have to remind you that membership renewals are coming up and I hope you will continue to support the Theatre. Please believe that we are doing our best to keep things going in these most difficult and frustrating times. There is a lot of maintenance work going on, all within the present guidelines of course, so the downtime is being used to the very best advantage.



Some good news in this hug-free time of gloom and despondency! Abbi and Joel Leverton have sent us this Breaking News: 'we are in the throes of rehearsing the roles of Mother and Father for the upcoming event 'Little Leverton' due to premiere in April!' That's not news we hear very often at the Apollo and we are delighted for them and send them our heartiest congratulations.

Back in 2006 the Council of Management made a decision to help any of our youngsters keen to make a career in the arts, and particularly in drama, by means of a small grant to help with expenses, such as being able to afford necessary books or getting home from time to time. We are delighted to report that Carl Burch, a member of our Youth group for some years (appearing in, among other things, 'The Railway Children' and the Christmas show in 2007), has been accepted by RADA; he incurred a problem with buying the necessary books, so the Trust donated £250 to him and an Apollo member, who wishes to remain anonymous, matched that with another £250. Carl is extremely grateful to the Apollo for the donations, and we're pleased and proud that one of our alumni is doing so well.



'Dave and Sandy'

The very talented artist and Apollo member Sarah Talbot held an exhibition, alongside Brother Duncan, at Quarr Abbey from 29 October-3 November. The lovely Dave Talbot decided that he would put his books and cards up for sale at the same time and donate all money from the sales to the Apollo, and raised £56 for Apollo funds. We are so grateful for his generosity. A couple of Sarah's brilliant paintings are shown here.



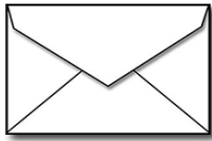
'Curiosity'

membership matters

Access details to 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 a drop-down box will appear containing the two areas 'username' and 'password';
- In the top area enter your 'username', which is first-name.secondname' (remember the dot between the words), and in the bottom box enter your password, which is your membership number.

Once you've done this 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.



Your letters

MEMORIES OF JOAN MATTHEWS

I was sad to hear that dear Joan Matthews had died. She was an apparently genteel elderly lady, but had a fearsome intellect, unshakable socialist convictions



Joan as Yenchna in 'Fools'

and a real understanding of the dramatic art. Her daughter Jo was a long-time Apollo member and appeared in many plays. She and I have been chums for years, though she now lives in London as The Globe Theatre manager, so I asked her to write a short obit for her lovely mother (see page 7).

Michael Arnell

I got a part in 'The Beast Must Die'. Originally I didn't really feel up to it and didn't apply, but apparently someone dropped out and they had to recast (i.e. they were desperate!). So naturally I felt obliged to help out. The formalities included two Covid tests, a costume fitting and a mountain of forms.

The production centre was a disused office block in Dodnor. When filming day arrived I had a car to collect me, a smart minibus with tinted windows. I arrived at Dodnor expecting to go to the place I had been for costumes, only to be shown,

I remember Joan as playing Mrs Eynsford-Hill; Jo was Clara, and Edward, Jo's brother, played Freddie. I played Mrs Higgins, and the memory prompted me to call John Carver who was Colonel Pickering alongside Francis Hall (Professor Higgins). It was such a lovely production, and we spent a long time over recollections. Our Eliza was a very expressive, lively girl called Sharon, daughter of another Apollo member, who left the Island to become a profes-



John Carver with Joan in 'Pygmalion'

sional actress in London. Doolittle was played, with great relish, by the late Ron Good. The production was a great success, both from the audience point of

view and financially, and I can't think of many other productions of ours when, as the tabs opened, we were greeted with applause for the set. Joan came to productions at the Apollo for as long as she found it possible but retained a strong interest in our doings.

Cynara Crump

Weirdly, I was in the midst of writing these pieces about Joan when up pops a news item from the County Press headed 'tribute to former teacher and magistrate', and blow me, there was Joan! When we know someone in a certain context it can be odd to think of them in a different life—and what a life Joan had! Rehousing East Enders displaced by the building of the Blackwall Tunnel, teaching at various Island schools including Upper Chine, a magistrate for 25 years, president of Shorwell WI, chair of Forestside WI, long-time active member of the Labour party ... the list goes on. We were privileged to have her as a member.

Ginnie Orrey

to my considerable amazement, to a luxury trailer with my name (almost) on the door (my character's name). My costume was in a wardrobe inside.

The set was in Ryde so I spent another 20 minutes behind the tinted black windows. The production company had had the whole street closed and it was stuffed with vans and technical gear and dozens of crew. There was a bit of waiting but I was given a proper film set seat and eventually escorted to the shooting scene. Words were no problem: I only had few lines and one of those

was "hello". We repeated the scene with about 7 takes—no screw-ups from me, fortunately. Then 'it was a wrap' and back to Newport (and my luxury trailer) behind the black tinted windows.

Details of the plot etc are absolutely embargoed so my lips are sealed. But just like when a theatre performance is complete, it takes a few hours to come down to normality. Now I have to find someone with Britbox so I can see the finished article!

Ian Moth

[can I have your autograph, please, Ian? Ed.]

Confessions of a (brief) movie star!

Once again our poet-in-residence, Steve Taverner's, muse has been working overtime, and he's sent us another batch of his incomparable poems for your entertainment. The times being what they are, he's also sent us his 'orange monster' collection, some of which I've prioritised as being to say the least timely! 'Trumpty Dumpty' was obviously written before the recent momentous events on the other side of the water, but Steve's comments are no less pointed for that; 'Donald the Orange Man' benefits from being sung to the tune of 'Nellie the Elephant' (and how appropriate is that?).

TRUMPTY DUMPTY

Trumpty Dumpty built a big wall,
Twelve feet thick and fifty feet tall,
Shut out the Muslims and Mexicans, then
Said 'Bugger the climate, let's burn coal
again.'

If only Trumpty Dumpty would fall,
The world would be safer, no doubt at all,
But Vladimir Putin wants him to remain,
So he can go in and conquer Ukraine.

Trumpty Dumpty's evil indeed,
Full of bigotry, hatred and greed,
But maybe I give him too much of the blame,
For half of his countrymen think just the
same.

Although we know that Humpty sucks,
We need the trade, we need his bucks,
So though his views are completely obscene,
Let's get him over to visit the queen.

Are we really nicer here,
We like to think so, but sadly I fear,
We've plenty of people like Mr Farage,
Who'd like to see someone like Trumpty in
charge.

And so, my friends, when you look at it,
We're up the creek and stuck in the s**t,
If we can't learn everybody's the same,
We'll fall and won't be put together again.

DONALD THE ORANGE MAN

One dark night
An orange man went insane,
He lost a vote in America, and couldn't stand
the pain.
His vain brain

Just couldn't accept the loss,
And as for truth and democracy, he couldn't
give a toss.

Sooooooooo -----

Donald the orange man won't give up, he's
locked himself in the White House,
How the hell will we ever get rid of this
Trump, Trump, Trump?

Donald the orange man lost the vote, but
won't get out of the White House,
How the hell will we ever get rid of this
Trump, Trump, Trump?

The Bidens would like to see him go far, far
away,
But he just won't go, so now they know
They'll have to let him stay.

So Donald the orange man packed his trunks
and moved them into the spare room,
It doesn't look like they will ever get rid of
this Trump, Trump, Trump.

*On the south west coast of the Isle of Wight,
in an area rich in dinosaur fossils, is a wave
cut platform containing what are believed to
be the footprints of the dinosaur, Iguanodon.
A friend of mine named Helen badly
twisted her ankle while walking over this
ledge, and I liked the idea that she may have
trodden on one of these footprints, and that
the actions of one individual animal could
have a direct effect on another a hundred
million years later.*

FOOTPRINTS

When dinosaurs walked on the land, they left
deep footprints in the sand.
As buried sand was pressurized, the foot-
prints became fossilized.
A hundred million years went past, when
Helen tried to walk too fast
Upon the rocks with footprints deep, with
flimsy shoes upon her feet,
Her foot went over, 'Ouch, she cried, I must
have stepped upon the side
Of a deep dent a dino made, with broken foot
the price I've paid.'

I wonder if Iguanodon, when making foot-
prints way back yon,
Assessed the risk of damage to poor Helen's
foot that he might do.
It's harsh to give him too much blame, for
what we do is just the same.
The footprints that we leave behind are
huge, yet we give little mind
To other species living now, let alone consid-
ering how
We might affect what's yet to come, and we
think dinosaurs were dumb!

POETRY
PLEASE!

As always, Dave Talbot
manages to sum up
life's complexities in
his straightforward but
often very deep poet-
ry. This time I've cho-
sen one from his third
volume, 'Thinkin'
Again'.

Such is Life
'Such is life' is something
most people seem to say
To cope with disaster and
tragedy, in any sort of day
It's difficult to accept
things for what they are
now

There's been many a
frown upon my facial
brow
I've got tired of looking
to the future, and the
changing way
How will it develop, oh
yes, no-one knows do
they?

DAVE'S
POETRY
CORNER



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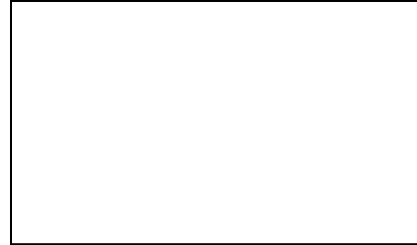
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To book tickets or find
out more about our
productions, go to:

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



The Apollo Players' next production

We are working tirelessly—well, some particular people are!—to put together a virtual Christmas concert. It will comprise all sorts of contributions from members, some Christmassy, some funny, some recitations, some videos—anything, in fact, to amuse, entertain and divert us as the end of this challenging year approaches. So please, if you have anything at all that you think might be suitable, get in touch with Carole Crow (one of afore-said tireless people) and offer your services. The concert will be accessible via the website and YouTube.

