

GUILD NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF OXFORD THEATRE GUILD



June 2005
60p (.90 Euro) where sold



OXFORD THEATRE GUILD 50th ANNIVERSARY PRODUCTION **THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR**

19 - 30 JULY 2005,
MERTON COLLEGE FELLOWS' GARDEN

The production draws ever closer: the last stitches are being added to the costumes, the music has been recorded, lines have been committed to memory... All we need now is an audience!!

Helping with Publicity - Can you display a poster? Distribute some flyers? Promote the show to your friends via email? It only takes a few minutes but makes a huge difference to the production. Contact Felicity for more posters/flyers.

CAST LIST

Sir John Falstaff - Peter Mottley
Fenton - Thomas Richards
Shallow - Kevin Elliott
Slender - Christopher Outen
Ford - Tim Younger
Page - Tim Eyres
William Page - Max Dorey (also playing Robin)
Sir Hugh Evans - Michael Ward
Doctor Caius - Colin Burnie
Host of the Garter Inn - Michael Dacre
Bardolph - Marco Ward
Pistol - Michael Curran (also playing Rugby)
Nim - Steve Wright (also playing Robert)
Simple - John Adrian-Vallance (also playing John)
Mistress Ford - Merial Patrick
Mistress Page - Alex Reid
Anne Page - Susanne Sheehy
Mistress Quickly - Barbara Denton

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director - Simon Tavener
Production Managers - Felicity Peacock, Tim Eyres
Technical Director - David Long
Lighting Director - Steve Whitaker
Stage Manager - Gareth Morris
Props - Judith Fantozzi
Set Designer - Michael Ward
Poster Designer - Lauren O'Connell
Costume Designer - Antonia Parnaby
Costume Assistants - Sue Tibbles, Merial Patrick
Front of House - Ray Dennehy, Louis Spiteri
Refreshment Manager - Diana Kilburn
Publicity Co-ordinator - Felicity Peacock
Publicity - Kevin Elliott, David Guthrie
Programme - Bill Moulford

FRONT OF HOUSE: We still need helpers for each of the performances. If you are able to help, get in touch with Ray Dennehy at raymond.dennehy@admin.ox.ac.uk,

Tickets are available NOW from the Oxford Playhouse,
by phone on 01865 305305 or online at www.ticketsoxford.com.
Prices £14 (£10 concessions). Group concession - Buy 10, get 1 FREE!

We would ask all Guild Members to help us celebrate 50 years by telling as many people about the production as possible - friends, family, neighbours...
Help us make it a summer to remember!

50th Anniversary Dinner



The anniversary dinner on 21 May was attended by 43 people, most of them current or past members, from those who were in at the Guild's inception, to those who have just joined. The list of productions in which they had taken part included almost every play listed in the Guild archives! Brookes Restaurant provided an elegant modern setting, and the food was excellent - especially a selection of mini-desserts to die for!

Three members from those early years, before the Guild even adopted a name for itself, have given GN their views on the evening.

It was a most cheerful, cheering and enjoyable occasion, as tantalising as it was delightful, with so many friends from days (and plays) past whom I scarcely managed even to greet. I think we all could have talked all night - catching up on old acquaintance and remembering so many 'chimes at midnight'. A very gracious and jolly celebration, deeply appreciated. Thank you!

Daphne Levens - founding Director, 1955



Daphne recites some favourite verse

So often when one is asked to write something about a special occasion there is inward sighing and racking of brain, but such were the delights of the Guild dinner that no such torment is necessary. To enjoy a few convivial hours amongst so many old friends and to laugh so much over the highlights and the minor disasters of past productions was a real tonic. To meet new members was a joy, and the mini music hall provided a gilded crown to the evening. Dick and Bob and Barbara along with Macbeth and a certain marrow were all fantastic, Peter's poem was spot on, but of course the plaudits must go to the extraordinary Daphne whose acting talent and energy - to say nothing of her memory - are still as keen today as they were 50 years ago when she founded the Guild. Bravo Daphne and thanks for everything you have done for theatre in Oxford.

Anita Wright, joined 1960

When your circumstances change and the time comes to move on and away it does not take long to realise that few places can match the sheer quality and diversity of amateur theatre in Oxford. One has to live on a fund of very happy memories.

I remember some wonderful people who became good friends and a number who had the ability to totally inspire, off the stage as well as on it. Little snapshots of long forgotten scenes linger still. I know I can creep up behind one or two people, mutter a particular line and immediately hear the laughing response. The opportunity seldom arises now however - over thirty years have gone by in my case!

Sue and I were delighted to return to Oxford for the Celebration Dinner. Before us stood good companions of long ago, bringing news of so many others. Thank you to all of you who organised it. Nostalgic it may have been but you gave a lot of pleasure to those of us who will always fondly recall that moment when the curtain went up and we had to step forward, hopefully to entertain but to enjoy ourselves a little bit too. It is good to see the Guild thriving and growing apace fifty years on. Those gynaecologists gave birth to more than they ever knew.

David Mander - Falstaff, 1955



Bob Cambrey entertains



Friends Reunited - Merry Wives 1955
Bob Cambrey (Host), Daphne Levens (Director), Gerry Warner (Shallow) & David Mander (Falstaff)

O'REILLY THEATRE, Keble College
1 - 5 November 2005

Truth or Dare

World premiere of a satirical comedy by Mike Coleman

AUDITIONS

Tuesday 16, Thursday 18 & Wednesday 31 August
URC Hall, Summertown
7.30pm

TV writer Mike Coleman's new play comes to the O'Reilly Theatre for its premiere in November. 'Truth or Dare' is a satirical piece focusing on three couples in their 50s who meet up after thirty years. At University they were practically inseparable but now the atmosphere is strained, and with good reason. The meeting takes place in a remote cottage with some mystery about which one of them has arranged it. Maggie, the taciturn but efficient housekeeper, tends to their every need. As the play progresses, we discover the reason why they haven't met up for so long - a secret the men have kept from their partners for all this time; one which shatters their illusions about themselves and their ideals.

Auditions for this exciting new production will be in late August and early September so please do come and read through for a role. We are looking for three males and three females to play characters in their early to mid fifties and one female to play a housekeeper in her early thirties. There are also still vacancies on the Production Team - all volunteers welcome for whatever skills they can offer!

Aldyth Thompson (Director) aldytht@hotmail.com

OLD FIRE STATION STUDIO THEATRE
6 - 10 December 2005

Sherlock Holmes and the Limehouse Horror

by Philip Pullman

AUDITIONS

Tuesday 6, Thursday 8 & Monday 12 September
URC Hall, Summertown
7.30pm

It's an honour to be asked by one of our foremost authors, Philip Pullman, whether I would be interested to direct one of his plays, **Sherlock Holmes and the Limehouse Horror**. This will be the first amateur production of what Philip describes as a 'lively, affectionate parody' of one of the great detective's thrilling adventures, complete on this occasion with a giant rat! It will be exciting and fun, like most of the author's work, for children of all ages - a veritable Christmas treat!

Realising the author's intentions will be a challenge in terms of staging, lighting design, creation of sound effects (gun-battles, hansom cabs, eerie footsteps, clanging doors etc), props and costume (including a workable dummy of Holmes, a not so workable dummy of Professor Moriarty and of course the afore-mentioned rat!) as well as acting, so a very strong, creative team is required. It would be good to assemble people interested in the practical aspects of production as soon as possible so feel free to contact Felicity or myself when you can (see below). I would like to work closely with an Assistant Director, so again please be in touch if interested. Finally there is some interesting doubling of characters which will demand a versatile cast!

Roles available:

Holmes	the 'eccentric visionary'*. Ideally tall and thin 'with piercing eyes and an aquiline nose', brilliant, languid, capable of periods of reflective analysis and moments of great energy, both mental and physical. In the second act he must transform convincingly into a 'wizened old Cockney tramp' Playing age: late 30s - 40s. Smoker preferred.
Watson	the perfect foil for Holmes. A qualified doctor he is honest, straightforward, reliable, brave and something of a ladies' man! Playing age: as Holmes
Mrs Hudson	their housekeeper, 'at least as dignified as Queen Victoria and might well look just like her', does her best to keep Holmes and Watson in order. She has a very dry sense of humour. Playing age: late 30s - late 50s
Colonel Sebastian Moran	A sinister villain, with cruel, threatening demeanour. Playing age: 40s(?) - could be older
Miss Murray/ Kate Moriarty	Miss Murray is 'timid, sweet, helpless and pretty. She is also 'vivid, strong and full of passionate life' Playing age: 20s
Professor Moriarty	another villain even more sinister than Colonel Moran, 'pale and ascetic looking, with rounded shoulders from much study'. He is also
Julius Reichenbach	who resembles him exactly Playing age: as Holmes or older
Jabez Lockett	a 'stout middle-aged' cargo ship owner, a pragmatic Cockney type
Sir Henry Murray	'an absent minded scientist, thin and elderly, obsessed by his strange discovery' ...
Inspector Lestrade	a straight forward 'middle-aged policeman'/detective, rather obviously lacking the genius of Holmes
A stout Police Constable	playing age: any
A giant rat	'a figure of nightmare, with glowing red eyes, a snarling mouth full of yellow fangs, a dirty matted coat, a lashing tail' Playing age: any

The character descriptions in quotation marks are the author's.

For further information please contact me: email: keirsjackie@hotmail.com
See you at the auditions!

Jackie Keirs (Director)

**ODN/OTG Workshop on Theatre:
Directing for actors and directors
led by David Tudor
Sunday 29 May 2005**

I had not been to a WOT before but over the last few years I have begun to edge my way into directing, so the opportunity to attend *Directing from Planning to Performance* led by David Tudor was an opportunity not to be missed. I arrived not knowing how the day would unfold — did we just listen, did we participate verbally or physically?

After a comprehensive introduction from David charting his 30 year progress through acting into directing I had a good feel for the depth of experience he possessed and his love of his work. David recommended it needed 50 hours of work to rehearse a full length play. We did point out he was using full time students working from 10 am to 5 pm 6 days a week. We were using club members one or two nights a week who were bringing lots of outside baggage with them to rehearsals: a bad day at the office, children who wouldn't go to bed, the list is endless. A good suggestion from one director was to address people by their production name throughout rehearsals to make them respond only to their *character*.

The morning session was listening to David using volunteers to demonstrate techniques. I volunteered to read a little from the script I had taken with me only to be completely pole-axed when on my feet to be asked to do it in a Scottish accent!

Following from this came the discussion on accents and dialects and the use of them. We also covered the selection of plays. David advised always try to direct a play you like so you can be enthusiastic about it with your cast. Before auditions and rehearsals study the script for lighting, costume, props, special effects and characters as well as the written content. A tip about timing when considering a French's script you don't know is to allow 1½ minutes per page — so much easier quicker and apparently more accurate than reading it aloud by yourself.

I have been told by other directors always to block your play with a chess board or similar. David said he used to spend hours blocking in detail but now only blocks 'skeletal'. That is the entrance and final destination on stage with the moves in between evolving with the actor — but make the

actor justify why he moves and where. If you ask the actor "why" he has to look into his character and explain his thought processes so extending his knowledge and understanding of his character.

At lunch time we trooped outside to sit in the car park and to eat and discuss drama — drama — drama. So nice to be with like minded people!

We began the afternoon session with lots of do's and don'ts on the practicalities of direction — upstaging, masking, grouping people and mannerisms (your natural walk is as personal to you as your fingerprint). Warm-ups need to be done with amateurs at the beginning of rehearsal to release tension which can close the windpipe so making talking difficult. If someone can't get the feeling into a speech try the distraction theory. Get them to move something as they say the lines, so the brain is distracted away from the unwanted speech imprint. Another good piece of advice was to use the word "we" not "I". For example, "shall *we* work on that action", not "*I* would like you to do so and so". Always try and take your cast with you willingly! If you want to make negative comments say "*we* as a team need to work on ..." if making positive comments say "*you* were good". Always try to sandwich negative comments with positive ones.

We finished the afternoon with a practical session trying to follow a technique explained in the morning. From the very first rehearsal when you have the book in your hand, memorise up to 10 words — thumb against the text — book down to your side — look at the other actor as you deliver the words — book up — look at the next 'bite' — book down — deliver. It has multipurpose objectives. You break the text down into sensible phrases, speak more slowly, have eye contact with the other actors from day one and start to learn the words in small chunks from the very beginning. We had a session of a director plus two actors and I tell you its not so easy as it sounds to keep putting the book 'down'!

All in all lots to think about, lots of good advice, lots of new acquaintances and lots of enjoyment on my day out.

Thank you WOT.

Kate Schomberg (The Wootton Players)

50th Anniversary Events



50th ANNIVERSARY TEA PARTY

Sat 23 JULY in the Mure Room at MERTON COLLEGE

after the matinee performance of *The Merry Wives*
(starting at around 4.30pm)



All Guild members past and present welcome! Please let Sheila McKean know if you intend to come so that catering can be provided.

email: sheilamckean@btopenworld.com

Please book tickets for the matinee and/or evening performance of *The Merry Wives* at Oxford Playhouse Box Office 01865 305305, www.ticketsoxford.com

DELVE INTO 50 YEARS OF GUILD HISTORY on our anniversary DVD

A wealth of material has been put together from the archive on this multimedia DVD. Programmes, press reviews, photos and even video clips are there for you to browse through, together with interviews of some of the interesting members from the past 50 years. This is absolutely FREE to members to mark the Guild's 50th anniversary. Apply to Felicity for YOUR copy!

To play it, you need a PC which has a DVD playing function. Full instructions are included in the READ ME file when you insert the DVD. Select a production to look up either by date or by title. Then use the forwards and backwards arrows on the screen to find all the items relating to each production.



WOT - Workshops on Theatre Oxford Theatre Guild 50th Anniversary Programme

DATE	LEADER	TITLE	VENUE	WOT ORGANISER
Sunday 3 July	Peepolykus	Eccentric characters through physical states	Chadlington Village Hall	Sheila McKean sheilamckean@btopenworld.com
September 18 or 25 (tbc)	Jan Russell	Handling crowds on stage	European School, Culham	Susi Dalton susietal@tesco.net
Saturday 8 October	David Thomas	Acting for beginners	Northmoor Village School	Susi Dalton susietal@tesco.net
Sunday 27 November	Sue Haffenden	From page to stage: Ibsen	Chadlington Village Hall	Felicity Peacock felicity.peacock@which.net

Further information on any of these events can be obtained from the relevant organiser. OTG members on the email list will receive a booking form electronically for each workshop as it becomes available.

WOT workshops are supported by Oxfordshire Drama Network and Oxford Theatre Guild.

WHO MURDERED WARREN TAYLOR?

Are you a budding detective? Do you like solving a good mystery? If so, BBC Oxford's interactive murder mystery game is coming back to www.bbc.co.uk/oxford - and it's better than ever! (It has to be - it features our very own Tim Younger! Ed.)

Log on to www.bbc.co.uk/oxford and YOU become the detective! It's your aim to solve the mysterious murder of a fictitious Oxford Footballer - Warren Taylor.

The Murder Mystery format was originally launched in 2003 with the hugely successful Who Murdered Marilyn Spencer? The game was feature on the BBC homepage and attracted over 28,000 users from all over the world.

Now, in 2005 another unfortunate Oxford resident has met with a grisly end and it's down to the website users to track down the killer.

The game offers a unique way for the audience to actively participate in the story by solving clues and interacting with an online community. The whole investigation is run in real time with the direction of the investigation completely determined by the reactions of the users.

Log on to www.bbc.co.uk/oxford on from the 29th of July and see if you can discover who murdered Warren Taylor...

Tim Bearder

GUILD GRANTS FOR WORKSHOPS

If you want to improve your skills in a particular technical area you can apply for a grant to cover the cost of the workshop fee.

It would be particularly useful to extend the number of members able to help with lighting, sound or make-up, so if you are interested please contact Felicity Peacock.

GUILD NEWS

As editor of Guild News, I am always on the look out for interesting articles, anecdotes and news about activities in the area.

Please email them to me at simon.tavener@gmail.com

GUILD BURSARIES

Guild bursaries are open to mature students who have a place at an accredited drama school which will qualify them to work in the professional theatre. To be eligible for an OTG Bursary, you should already have been involved in theatre in Oxfordshire and be able to demonstrate your ongoing commitment to drama in the area. Closing date for applications this year is 30 June. Bursaries are awarded by a Panel independent of the Guild. For further details contact Bill Moulford.



Oxford Theatre Guild Committee 2005-2006

Chair: David Long,
e-mail david.long@oxfordtheatreguild.com

Vice-Chair: Gareth Morris,
e-mail gareth.morris@oxfordtheatreguild.com

Secretary: Felicity Peacock,
e-mail felicity.peacock@oxfordtheatreguild.com

Treasurer & Membership Secretary: Bill Moulford,
e-mail bill.moulford@oxfordtheatreguild.com

Webmaster/Archivist: Steve Whitaker,
e-mail steve.whitaker@oxfordtheatreguild.com

Minutes Secretary / Hall Bookings: Diana Kilburn,
email diana.kilburn@oxfordtheatreguild.com

Non-portfolio: Estelle Buckridge
e-mail estelle.buckridge@oxfordtheatreguild.com

Non-portfolio: Kevin Elliott,
e-mail kevin.elliott@oxfordtheatreguild.com

Non-portfolio: Tim Eyres,
e-mail tim.eyres@oxfordtheatreguild.com

Non-portfolio: Colin Macnee,
e-mail colin.macnee@oxfordtheatreguild.com

Non-portfolio: Cathy Oakes,
e-mail cathy.oakes@oxfordtheatreguild.com

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