

The Chiltern Player



October 2007

After the euphoria of the summer when Peter O'Sullivan won his 'best actor' crown at the Kenton Drama Festival, it's back to the grind of rehearsals for the autumn production.

As everybody obviously knows by now (after all, for the first time in our 40+ year history, we actually had a play already chosen and cast BEFORE we came back after the summer holidays) the next offering is *RolePlay* by Alan Ayckbourn.

Performances take place at Peppard Memorial Hall on November 23/24 and November 30/December 1 at 8pm. Tickets at the usual £6 will be on sale shortly from me or Village Yarns.

We are very pleased to welcome a quartet of new members, all of whom will be involved in *RolePlay*.

Fleur Holmes and Nick Moore (who are engaged in real life) also happen to be playing the engaged couple in the play. Serena Jones is one of the backstage Props team. Both Fleur and Serena have past involvement with the youth group. James Hasler is making his comeback to the Chiltern Players' fold after a gap of around 15 years. Longstanding members will remember him in classics as diverse as Neil Simon's *California* (or was it *Plaza*?) *Suite*, the Candy Man in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and various pantomimes. (I, personally, will never forgive him for dragging me on stage for a group sing-song in one of those memorable shows – but that's another story!)

Several local amateur dramatic groups will be featuring Chiltern Players in their cast lists over the next few weeks.

Our own 'sweet-natured' Peter O'Sullivan (as described in last week's Henley Standard) will be showing his darker side in *Jamaica Inn* as über-baddie, wife-beating, bullying landlord Joss Merlyn for Henley Players.

In the same play (set in the glory days of Cornwall's smuggling past) Pete Woollcott is playing two roles: a lawyer's clerk who's a clandestine 'wrecker' in his spare time. James Hasler is Black George, another wrecker, and Richards, who's a groom.

Performances take place at the Kenton Theatre, Henley from October 9-13 at 7.45pm. Box Office 01491 573887.

Peter Smithson is much in demand with Wallingford's Sinodun Players. He's appearing at the Corn Exchange in Alan Bennett's *Habeas Corpus* from Oct 17-20 and the award-winning *Art* by Yasmina Reza between Nov 28 and Dec 1. Tickets available from the Box Office on 01491 825000.

The South Chiltern Choral Society have asked the Chiltern Players to do some readings from *A Feast for Christmas* by Allan Bullard as part of their annual Christmas Concert. Performances take place on December 16/17. Those interested in taking part should contact Roger Kendal.

Since Di Soden's successful foray into writing plays, other Chiltern Players are to unleash their own literary talents on an unsuspecting public.

Rosemary House (who first shot to fame writing-wise several years ago with her never-to-be-forgotten *The Mystery of the Yellow Muffler*) is now the author of our entry into next year's drama festivals. Of a completely different genre, *The Dress*, is a clever insight into love, friendship, relationships, deception – and perception. It will be staged at next year's Kenton and Abingdon Festivals and, if it is re-instated, Wallingford.

Jane Brough's *Nearer to Shakespeare*, a witty and stylish look at what really goes on behind the scenes of academe, has been chosen for our spring 2008 production. Performances will be held on April 18/19 and 25/26.

As most are aware, forward planning has never been part of the Chiltern Players' make-up – until now. Starting from December 5, regular play readings will be held so, hopefully, we will always know what play is coming up, without having to rush at the last moment to find something suitable.

Tiff Saul has already done her own forward planning and is producing *The Sleeping Beauty* for the post-Christmas panto audiences in January. More details later.

Village Yarns, our very supportive 'ticket agency' in Peppard Road is on the market. However, the owner has offered to continue selling our tickets from her other shop, Occasions in Wood Lane, once a buyer has been found. Tickets for *RolePlay* will be available from Village Yarns, but please check before producing any publicity, etc. for future productions.

A theatre trip to see *Spies* by Michael Frayn at the Oxford Playhouse has been organised for February 29. A gripping World War II mystery, a slice of quiet suburban life is changed for ever when a young boy finds his mum is a German spy. Tickets £18.40, first-come, first-served from our 'sweet-natured' chairman, Peter O'Sullivan.

The Muscular Dystrophy Campaign is holding a Trail of Trials on October 14. It's a trail walk or run from Reading to Pangbourne via Mapledurham for a very good cause. Those interested, please contact Peter for information.

Coming events:

December 12: Christmas meal.

A Chiltern Players' Murder Mystery evening is being planned in the New Year to raise funds for Peppard Hall.

Quiz evening: Peppard Hall, Dec 8.

Autumn Production 2008: November 21/22 and 28/29.

A reminder - £20 subs now due.

That's all folks – Carol Evans