

Woodley Players Theatre Group



<http://www.woodleyplayers.co.uk>

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Members of the Greater Manchester Drama Federation

Newsletter No.60 - May 2004

Editorial

Kate Holt's editorial introducing the 2003-2004 season informed us that it had started with a bang with our Gilbert and Sullivan Extravaganza workshop and you wondered whether that success could be maintained as the season progressed.

Well, any doubts were discarded with our recent "Mikado" production 29th Mar-3rd April. House-Full signs were the order of the day (or should that be the night!) for most of the week. When did we last have House-Full for a matinee?

The Mikado was again a spectacular success from both the audience and performers view. Our audiences were very appreciative and all our performers benefited from the warm atmosphere generated throughout the week. New friends were made and old acquaintances renewed. The warmth and friendliness that are the trademarks of The Players were obvious not only during the week of the show but permeated throughout the whole rehearsal schedule from last October.

Great success came as a result of the contributions of many. I think though everyone would agree that without the leadership of John Humphreys our Producer and Roger Pearce our Musical Director, our triumph would have been more limited. Our sincere thanks to both of them.

On a more mercenary note, Mike Bailey our Treasurer informs me that the Mikado was a financial success as well and the profit generated will result in the Society being in a very healthy financial position. Good news when so many other local societies are in very straightened circumstances (small is beautiful).

We now look forward with enthusiasm to our next production - Blithe Spirit which will be directed by Miranda Nicholls 17th-20th Nov 2004. Miranda has been involved with The Players for many years dating back to her first major role as Phoebe in Yeoman of the Guard in 1996. We wish her major success in her debut as a director for The Players.

The Yeoman of the Guard will be our next Gilbert and Sullivan production in the Spring of 2005. Both John Humphreys and Roger Pearce after their acclaimed success with the Mikado have agreed to undertake their respective roles again.

So, we look forward to another packed season and extend a warm welcome to all our old friends and new ones alike to come and join us in one or both of our productions.

Have a good Spring and Summer

Brian Maguire (Vice Chair)

The Mikado - GMDF Critique

(Extracted from the Greater Manchester Drama Federation written assessment)

"I very much doubt whether anyone could have improved on the stage presentation of this show - always bearing in mind the size and limitations of the acting area. I liked the oriental wall hangings each side of the stage. The difficult corner off stage left was cleverly transformed and the door to the dressing rooms given a pagoda look. The willow screen, which allowed us to see through, was a delightful innovation....It was an attractive setting and one which didn't pall."

"The company had gone to a great deal of trouble. It showed and was appreciated."

"The overture set the standard and the pattern for the show. It was lively with a good bright sound that positively said Gilbert and Sullivan. ...both finales were fine and everyone on stage worked well and appeared to enjoy every moment of the singing - as well they might. The orchestra created a very good sound and were an entertainment in themselves."

"The whole show was a testament to hard work - to making it come out right - to someone going home and worrying about it and then coming to the next rehearsal and putting it right."

"It was a very wholesome, happy and enjoyable show."

"This show was one hundred percent dead right for this venue. It was exactly what the audience had come to see and, like me, they enjoyed every minute of it."

Woodley Players - planned change to charitable status

For some time, the management committee has been thinking of changing the structure of the society to become a charity. This has a number of attractions:

- Income Tax refunds can be claimed from the Inland Revenue under the Gift Aid Scheme
- Recovery of tax currently being paid on the society's investment income
- Limiting the financial liability of individual members in the event of a large uninsured loss
- Broadening the society's scope by making it eligible for grants to undertake community support work

The mechanics of moving to charitable status are well laid out by the Charity Commission and we have started on the necessary actions. It is hoped that these can be completed in time for the AGM on 21 June so that the members can be asked to approve the dissolution of the existing Woodley Players society and the transfer of its assets to the new Woodley Players charity.

You are unlikely to see major changes when we operate as a charity. There will be a little more formality over things like membership details, subscription payments and notice of meetings. In addition, formal accounts will have to be prepared and submitted in a specified format. However, the benefits of operating as a charity will be worth this extra effort.

Look for further information nearer to the date of the AGM in June.

Mike Bailey (Treasurer)

Vacant Posts

The following is a list of all the posts and the (2003-2004) holders who make up the management committee:-

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Chair | Lesley Parkinson |
| Vice Chair | Brian Maguire |
| Past Chair | David Cooper - co-opted on to the committee as and when required |
| Secretary | David Parkinson |
| Assistant Secretary | Kate Holt |
| Treasurer | Mike Bailey |
| Membership Secretary | Jenny Davies and Margaret Bailey |
| Newsletter Secretary | Bryony Somers |
| Ticket Secretary | Jenny Rippin - co-opted on to the committee as and when required |
| Publicity Secretary | (Undertaken by a sub-group of committee members) |
| Members without portfolio | Roy Davies |
| | Margaret Bailey |
| | Kathy Moorhouse |
| | Avril Wilson |
| | Melanie Oliver |
| | Hazel Jones |

Our thanks go to the committee members, listed above, who have put in many hours of time, effort and skill on behalf of Woodley Players. As set out in the constitution, and taking into account individual circumstances, the following posts will become vacant commencing in the 2004-2005 season:-

Treasurer
Secretary
Publicity Secretary

Please give thought to whether you, or someone you know, may be able to help the society in these roles. If it would help, please talk to any member of the committee, listed above, about what would be required to fulfil that role. There is a tear off nomination slip at the end of this newsletter, which must be handed in to the Secretary (David Parkinson) no later than 14 days before the AGM on the 21st June.

AGM - 21st June 2004 at Yellow Room, Hatherlow Church Hall - 7:45pm

- 1 Open Meeting (Chair)
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Approve Minutes (All)
- 4 Reports:-
 - Chair (Lesley Parkinson)
 - Treasurer (Mike Bailey)
 - Membership (Margaret Bailey)
 - Adoption of Reports (All)
- 5 Background information and discussion on the change of the Society status to a charitable company, limited by guarantee
- 6 Society status change
- 7 Election of Officers (All)
 - All posts are up for re-election
- 8 Proposed Programme for 2004-2005 season (Chair)
- 9 AOB (All)
- 10 Meeting Close (Chair)

Subscriptions/rehearsal contributions - your views

Over the last few years, Woodley Players has built a solid financial foundation. This allows us to put on a performance secure in the knowledge that we have a financial reserve to cover all the costs. Careful operation and a watchful eye on individual costs has achieved this financial position.

There are two areas where some of the management committee feel that changes are needed and we would like to take members' views into consideration before taking a final decision. These areas are subscriptions and rehearsal contributions.

The annual administrative cost of running the society (secretarial, newsletter, insurance, storage) is currently running between £10 and £15 per member. Our current annual subscription of £10 must be one of the cheapest in the area. Some of the committee feel that all adult members should pay this subscription with no concessions. What do you think?

We collect contributions at each rehearsal, primarily to cover the cost of room hire. The present rate of £0.50 per person only covers about half the hire cost. £1 per person is what we ought to charge to cover the room hire (plus the tea & coffee, of course!). Do you think £1 per rehearsal is unreasonable?

The committee would like to hear your views on these 2 proposals. Whether you support or disagree with the proposals, please make your views known. You can use the Woodley Players email address (at the start of this newsletter), pick up the phone, or talk to one of the committee at the next social event. Whatever the final decision, no change will be made until the new financial year starts in September.

Mike Bailey (Treasurer)

Dates for your Diary

BLITHE SPIRIT by Noel Coward - Auditions 24th June 2004 - Romiley Methodist Church

Performance Dates: 17th - 20th November 2004

Director: Miranda Nicholls

Charles Condomine, an author whose first wife Elvira has been dead for seven years, has been reasonably happy with his second wife Ruth. To collect material for his new book, he invites Madame Arcati, a local medium, to conduct a séance at their home. Unfortunately, Elvira returns from death and promptly proceeds to make life exceedingly uncomfortable for Charles. As Elvira is visible and audible only to Charles, he has great difficulty convincing Ruth that he is neither mad nor drunk! Elvira is willfully determined to get Charles to herself forever and so arranges several 'accidents', culminating in her tampering with his car. Ironically, it is Ruth who drives first and joins her rival. Now plagued by **two** jealous squabbling spirits, Charles enlists the help of Madam Arcati, who finally disembodies the spirits but cannot quite exorcise them. Charles bids them farewell, saying he will escape forever by putting water between himself and his two wives, who are left petulantly tearing the house apart!

This is a funny, witty, wordy play with good clear characterisation and wonderful dialogue. Noel Coward wrote it in 1941, to help the public escape from the horrors of the first Blitz. "People must laugh. I have got an idea and must get on with it as soon as possible", he said. He rented a house in Portmeirion, an ideally peaceful setting, where he was able to write and sleep undisturbed by bombs. Blithe Spirit was written in just five days! There was as little delay as possible in casting, rehearsing and producing Blithe Spirit. On the first night the audience were forced to do the last part of their journey on foot as there was a large bomb crater outside the front of the Piccadilly Theatre, where the play started to fulfil the author's wish to make people laugh. Sixty-three years later, Blithe Spirit is still fresh and as entertaining as ever.

Characters:

Charles - 40ish. Suave, intelligent, witty. Long-suffering underneath his cool and calm exterior. Middle-class.

Ruth - 30 to 40. Complex. Intelligent, cynical, supercilious. Can be edgy. Middle-class.

Elvira - 30 to 40. A 'ghost', therefore nothing worries her! She is petulant, but also charming, witty, intelligent, languid. Middle-class.

Madame Arcati - 40+ (but could be played by someone younger). Very strong character. Eccentric. Think Margaret Rutherford and Joyce Grenfell. Middle-class.

Doctor Bradman (male) - 40+. Genial, cynical in an easy-going way. Smallish part but a rounded character. Middle-class.

Mrs Bradman - 40+ (could be younger). Gullible, kindly, amiable, silly but endearing. Smallish part but a nice character cameo can be built up. Middle-class.

Edith - 20-30. Maid. Desperate to please and does everything at high speed. Has only been working for the Condomines for a few days. Not very bright but has supernatural abilities. A lovely cameo part. Local 'country' accent required. Working-class.

Miranda Nichols

We look forward to seeing both regulars and newcomers at the auditions. If you are interested in auditioning, then please contact Bryony Somers (0161 367 7442) who also has copies of the script.

Calling all volunteers - We are now looking for people who would be interested in helping out with the following:

- Behind Stage
- Props
- Set Design/Building

Please contact Bryony Somers on 0161 367 7442 if you are able to help

Visits to the Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in Buxton

I have arranged visits to the 2 following productions:



- *'The Yeomen of the Guard'* by the Bluecoat/Trent Opera group on Wednesday 11 August at 7.30pm. (Woodley Players 2005 production)
- *'The Sorcerer'* on Thursday 19 August at 7.30pm. (A possible future production by Woodley Players)

I'm afraid that the group discount bookings for these two shows are now complete but we would be delighted if you could join us at either or both of these productions. Bookings can be made by ringing the Buxton Opera House on 0845 127 2190. We are in the stalls, rows N and O, at a cost of £14.50. In any event we can all meet up during the interval outside the front of the theatre on what is sure to be a warm and pleasant evening.

For any further details, please contact me on 0161 430 3170

Roy Davies

Easter Monday Walk and Meal



What a turnout! Two separate walks, both starting and finishing at the Lantern Pike Inn, that took into account some who preferred a gentler stroll, and others who enjoyed a more brisk pace. This resulted in around 30 of us (some pictured here), having a “reet good” walk, talk, meal and a drink on that Monday morning.

I went on the longer walk, where some were straining at the leash at the front, while one or two were taking in the scenery, and taking the odd photo more at the rear of the group. It was a time for chit-chat, recalling the success of the Mikado, and getting to know others in the group a bit better. As it got closer to 1 o'clock, tummies started to rumble, and legs began to ache a little, and some whose names I will not mention discussed short cuts

back to the Lantern Pike. They did not get their way however, and we were treated to a more green and varied path back to the hostelry as a result, away from the bleak moorland encountered earlier. The other party had already returned to the Inn 10 minutes before we arrived, and had time to review the menu and have a well earned drink, in which we joined them! More talking and warming by the fire while the food was prepared and then consumed. An event enjoyed by all - thank you for making it so.

David Parkinson



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Finally, to help us distribute this Newsletter, we store the names and addresses of members electronically. This information is held solely for this purpose and is not disclosed to any other parties. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this then please contact Bryony Somers on 0161 367 7442.

Nomination Form

Name of proposer:

I would like to nominate for the position of:

- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Publicity Secretary

Please detach and return to David Parkinson by 7th June 2004