

# Woodley Players Theatre Company



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

[info@woodleyplayers.co.uk](mailto:info@woodleyplayers.co.uk)

Members of the Greater Manchester Drama Federation

Newsletter No.62 - March 2005

## Editorial

With Christmas behind us and a new year ahead, we have much to look forward to in 2005. Our rehearsals have re-started for "Yeomen of the Guard", this year's musical production, and we have assembled an excellent cast who promise to make this show a worthy successor to last year's sell-out "Mikado". This Gilbert & Sullivan operetta is more poignant than many of the others; its ambivalent conclusion will be familiar to many. It also represents a landmark for me, personally, because it was my first production with Woodley Players some 9 years ago. Does that make me a "veteran" now?

More details follow about the production and we welcome participation by anyone in any capacity; backstage and production crew are always needed so you don't have to be a singer to be a vital part of the show!

Hope to see you at a production or at one of our social events and wishing you a peaceful and prosperous 2005 from all at Woodley Players.

*Kate Holt*  
*Secretary*

## Blithe Spirit - GMD F CRIT Highlights

### The Play

Blithe Spirit is a 20th century classic, Coward's own favourite play, which he wrote and in which he starred, in a flush of almost supernatural inspiration in 1941. It remained the longest running comedy in British theatre for three decades.

### Technical Presentation

My first visit to Hatherlow Church Hall to see a production by Woodley Players Theatre Company proved that you shouldn't make any assumptions in this job - the playing space was quite large compared to some that I have seen recently. However, there were problems - with a leaking roof - and I was pleased to see that the production team and cast were able to soldier on without any obvious ill-effects.

The set provided for us represented the living room of the Condomine's house in Kent, and it was a solid-looking set that appeared to have been constructed to a generally good standard. Decoration was also

good..... The set was dressed with some nice furniture, which was reasonably close to the period if not definitely in period, although ideally it could have been more sumptuous.

Lighting was, generally, to a good standard, with no obvious dead-spots or distracting shadows and the use of green light, with smoke, for Elvira's entrance was effective because it wasn't overdone. . The triple pendant light was a nice touch, and the occasionally flashing standard lamp was very spooky - but I didn't see any reference to that in the script! Or did the rain get to it?

This play did not make any great demands on the sound department, but the opening music (A Fine Romance) and the use of recordings of the master's voice were both effective and evocative.

The wardrobe department are to be congratulated on providing a set of costumes that gave us the right feel for the period of the play. Everybody looked to be both comfortable and in character, which is not the easiest of feats for a play such as this.

### Direction

I noted from the director's notes, in the programme, that this was her first attempt at direction. It is a very brave person who chooses one of the modern classics on which to cut their directorial teeth, for the reasons already covered in the introduction to this adjudication. I always admire people who are prepared to take on a challenging piece, rather than sticking with simpler, more mundane plays, so I must congratulate the director on making a good attempt at what is quite a difficult play to produce successfully.

We thoroughly enjoyed our first visit to your theatre, and I sincerely hope that your problems with the roof have now been sorted out. We look forward to our return, and wish you all a happy festive season and an entertaining and prosperous New Year.

*John Fletcher*  
*Adjudicator*  
*Greater Manchester Drama Federation*

**Next Production - "The Yeomen of the Guard" 11<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> April 2005**

*Please help us to advertise "The Yeomen of the Guard" - at the end of this newsletter you will find a publicity poster - please print off a copy and place it either in your car, on a community notice board or at your place of work. All help is greatly appreciated.*

Many congratulations to all who auditioned and were successful and welcome to all new members who have joined Woodley Players for this production.

### Cast

Sir Richard Cholmondeley (Lieutenant of the Tower)  
Colonel Fairfax (under sentence of death)  
Sergeant Meryll (of the Yeomen of the Guard)  
Leonard Meryll (his son)  
Jack Point (a strolling jester)  
Wilfred Shadbolt (head jailer)  
First Yeoman  
Second Yeoman  
Elsie (a strolling singer)  
Phoebe (Sergeant Meryll's daughter)  
Dame Carruthers (Housekeeper of the Tower)  
Kate (her niece)

Mike Bailey  
Brian Considine  
Graham Eagland  
Richard Goodall  
Richard Huggett  
Mike Nash  
David Parkinson  
David Whitehead  
Katharine Brown  
Rachel Fyles  
Liz Humphreys  
Kate Holt

## Synopsis

### Act 1

Colonel Fairfax has been falsely accused of witchcraft and has been imprisoned in the Tower of London, awaiting execution. Sergeant Meryll, of the Yeomen of the Guard, and his daughter Phoebe, who has fallen in love with Fairfax form a plan to free him. Phoebe's brother Leonard will join the Yeomen that day: instead he will go into hiding and the Colonel will take his place. Fairfax will live, disguised as Leonard, until he can escape or his name can be cleared.

Fairfax knows nothing of the plan and asks the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir Richard, to arrange a secret marriage for him which will prevent an avaricious kinsman from inheriting his lands. The Lieutenant agrees and sets off in search of a wife. Anyone will do.

Two strolling players, Jack Point and Elsie Maynard arrive. Sir Richard quickly ascertains that Elsie is single and sufficiently disposable to become Fairfax's bride. Point and Elsie cannot resist the financial inducement and, when Elsie is led away to her strange marriage, the Lieutenant buys Point's silence by engaging him as his jester.

Phoebe and Meryll hatch a plan to release Fairfax by stealing the keys of his cell from Wilfred Shadbolt, who is consumed with a jealous passion for Phoebe. Fairfax is duly passed off as Meryll's son but when Fairfax's escape is discovered the Lieutenant arrests Shadbolt for dereliction of duty. Nearly mad with the realisation of what she has done, Elsie swoons as Point berates her greed and stupidity. Fairfax comes to the rescue and carries her off to safety as the crowd explodes with accusations of treason, treachery and witchcraft.

### Act 2

Jack Point is in low spirits. He seems unable to please his new master and is preoccupied with the dilemma of Elsie's marriage. Wilfred is released from gaol and allies himself with Point; Jack Point offers to make him a jester in return for a simple lie: he must pretend to have shot and killed Fairfax.

Colonel Fairfax bitterly regrets his new found freedom that keeps him imprisoned in a loveless marriage. He is, however, delighted to discover that his unknown wife is the lovely young woman he has rescued. Fairfax sets about wooing her as "Leonard" and is about to reveal everything when they are interrupted by a shot. Shadbolt and Point then relate the cock-and-bull story of Fairfax's escape and assassination.

Elsie, believing that she is a "widow", gives in entirely to "Leonard" who clearly adores her. Phoebe realising that Fairfax will never love her, agrees to marry Shadbolt. Sergeant Meryll reveals his part in the escape of Colonel Fairfax and is promptly blackmailed into marriage by Dame Carruthers !

In the final scene, the happy couples prepare to celebrate their union, leaving a heartbroken jester to fall senseless at Elsie's feet.

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
- Front of House
- Refreshments

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

## Important News - New ways to purchase tickets

As from March 2005, tickets may be purchased either by contacting Jenny Rippin on 0161 430 4480 or via our new email address [tickets@woodleyplayers.co.uk](mailto:tickets@woodleyplayers.co.uk)

## Reminder - Subscriptions & Rehearsal Contributions

As agreed at the committee meeting held in July 2004, our new annual membership rates are as follows:

Individual Adult Membership - £10

Family Membership (with dependant children) - £20

We have also agreed on the following rehearsal fee structure to ensure that the Room Hire costs can be met:

Members appearing in musical productions - £1 per week

Members appearing in plays - £1 per rehearsal

## WPTC Website <http://www.woodleyplayers.co.uk>

Just a reminder to all past/present members, that Graham England would be delighted to hear from you if you have copies of programmes/critiques and photographs of past productions. He may be contacted via the website. Alternatively Graham can be found at rehearsals for "The Yeomen of the Guard" at Hatherlow UR Church Hall on Thursdays between 7.45pm - 9.45pm.

## Members News

Congratulations to Bill, one of our sound and lighting experts who recently celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Bill has been a dedicated member of the Society for many years and has worked on countless productions for us. Happy Birthday Bill!

Congratulations to David and Lesley Parkinson who recently celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary.

## Dates for your Diary

*Easter Monday Players Walk* - 28<sup>th</sup> March 2005, Hyde

2 walks, one "buggieable" circa 2 miles, and the second circa 5 miles - Meet at Werneth Low Visitor Centre, Higham Lane, Gee Cross at 10:30am.

A stop for lunch is being looked into, possibly at the Hare and Hounds. Contact either Brian Maguire (0161 494 9496) or David Parkinson (0161 406 6132) for more details.

*Autumn Production 2005 - 'Grandma's Party'* - 19<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> October

Grandma's Party is a comedy in 2 acts written by Bob Vass. Auditions will be held at Hatherlow UR Church in the Yellow Room on 23<sup>rd</sup> June at 7.30pm.

### Characters

All the characters are of a similar length with the exception of Mr Boyson who says very little.

**Grandma** - a very extrovert character. Whoever plays her needs to be over the top and be prepared to wear a leotard.

**Jack** - the father. He is the one who knows best but constantly gets exasperated with the members of the family - particularly his mother.

**Jean** - the mother. A very steady person who has spent all her married life calmly running the family home but who is now looking to do something different.

**Philippa** - the daughter. Aged in her early twenties. Works in a bank and is very ambitious for herself and her boyfriend. She also has a little bit of a twinkle in her eye.

**William** - the son. aged in his early teens. He has plenty of 'go' about him and gets on very well with Grandma. He is a bit of a prankster especially when it comes to Philippa's boyfriend.

**Philippa's boyfriend** - same age as Philippa but acts as though he is 20 years older. He also works at the bank, is very ambitious and has a very high opinion of himself.

**Mr Boyson** - Grandma's 'friend'. A blank canvas.

**Kimberley** - the next door neighbour, non specific adult age. Lives with her father. Constantly opening her mouth before engaging brain. Totally clueless as to the effect her words have.

To register interest in a part and get a copy of the play, please contact David Parkinson on 0161 406 6132



Are you online? If so, you can help us to save time and money by receiving these newsletters via e-mail. To be added to our electronic distribution list, please send an e-mail containing your name to [matthew@somers.my-bulldog.com](mailto:matthew@somers.my-bulldog.com) with the subject line "WPTC Newsletter".

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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.

# BOOKING FORM

**Production:** Gilbert & Sullivan's THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD  
**Dates:** 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> April (starts at 7:30pm every night, plus 2:30pm Saturday matinee)  
**Venue:** Hatherlow Church Hall, Romiley  
**Ticket prices:** See below [price includes refreshments]

Date	Number of tickets	Ticket price (£)	Total (£)
Mon. 7:30pm April 11th	@	£5	
Tue. 7:30pm April 12th	@	£6	
Wed. 7:30pm April 13th	@	£6	
Thu. 7:30pm April 14th	@	£6	
Fri. 7:30pm April 15th	@	£6	
Sat. 2:30pm April 16th	@	£5	
Sat. 7:30pm April 16th	@	£6	
<b>Total</b>			

- I enclose cash / cheque (payable to Woodley Players Theatre Company )

for £

OR

- Please leave tickets at door in the name of: .....  
for payment on the night

(Note - tickets not cancelled at least 24 hours before the performance may still be charged for. Also, tickets that are reserved may be released for sale on the door if not collected at least 15 minutes prior to the performance)

Name ..... Phone .....

Send the completed booking form to:  
**Ticket Secretary, 1 Charnwood Road, Woodley**, or telephone your requirements to **0161 430 4480**  
 (Answerphone available)

Or e-mail to:  
[tickets@woodleyplayers.co.uk](mailto:tickets@woodleyplayers.co.uk)

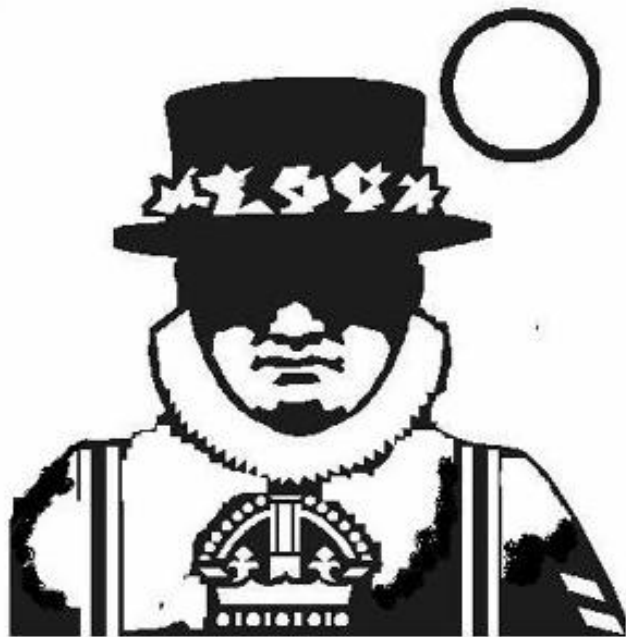
**Woodley Players Theatre Company**

**THE** presents

**YEOMEN**

**OF THE GUARD**

**Hatherlow Church Hall**



**11th to 16th**

**April**

**2005**

**7.30pm**

**Phone 0161 430 4480**