



Welcome to May, and the Croak Newsletter . At long last it looks like there's some light at the end of what's been a very long tunnel for theatre and the arts. Congratulations to the committee for their sterling work...and lots of it, in every sense of the word! The cast of 'Allo,'Allo, set to be a summer sell-out production this year, is on page 2. The 21/22 Season is announced on page 3 . We also have some sad news about Robert Harrison, who sadly passed away in April. Read a moving tribute to him on page 4.

Bea Hutchings (editor) marketing@toads.co.uk

FROM THE CHAIR

We skipped April and now it's May! Positively summer-ish! So, what to report after a couple of months of peace and quiet ...

The committee has finalised season 2021/2022, the details of which you will find within this issue of Croak. We shall be kicking off with a summer of 'Allo 'Allo to get everyone back into a jolly mood – we could all do with a laugh considering the last 14 months of yuck! The brochure is about to be printed and an appeal for envelope stuffers will be made for volunteers to attend from 17 May onwards – check your email in the next couple of weeks for further details.

There are various minor maintenance jobs being concluded around the theatre prior to opening – a lick of paint here, a new kitchenette there (in the large rehearsal room doncha know). We are also employing an outside contractor to come in and clean all the carpeted areas as well as the auditorium seats – these will also be anti-bacteria treated for obvious reasons.

It has already been announced that track and trace will need to be in operation until September at least. The committee are currently gnashing their collective teeth on how to implement this as one of the requirements is that ALL patrons, not just those that book, will need to supply their contact details. There will also be a requirement for ALL volunteers, whether front-of-house or backstage, to sign in and out with their respective arrival and departure times. Anyone attending the theatre, for any reason, at any time, will have to sign in and out (this includes rehearsals). More on this once the fine detail has been finalised.

We have applied for and been granted another £8000 business grant. This is to help with restart costs. I am pleased to announce that, since the first lockdown in March 2020, TOADS Theatre Company will have received in excess of £30,000 in business grants + several thousands of £s in donations. The Little Theatre remains financially secure and has weathered this covid storm extremely well (so far).

And finally, we are hoping to organise some sort of social event in mid-July(ish). The format of this will be hammered out and announced, hopefully, in the June Croak.

As always, keep safe and well.

Jon Manley (ch[mostly-nitrogen-and-oxygen]man)

**TOADS THEATRE COMPANY...
BRINGING IT HOME.**

'Allo, 'Allo, Listen Very Carefully...'

Performances from 2nd August to 11th September. The first named actor covers until 19th August; the second from 24th Aug -11th September. There are anomalies.*

Director. John Miles. Asst Dir. Nichola Aldridge.

Stage Manager. Katy Tyler, with support from Paul Duffield.

Prompt /backstage /FOH Margaret Kirk. Suzy Miles.

Wardrobe Mistress. Jill Pettigrew and team.

René Artois.....Andy Killen.
Edith, his wife.....Anna Reynolds / Gill Poore.
Yvette*.....Jennie Hack / Olivia Vango
Mimi*.....Shannon Bartie / Dawn Western
Michelle.....Daniela Hopkins
Mama.....Glynis Thame / Sue Grey.
Colonel.....Steve Perks / Gordon Mellor
Herr Flick.....Stewart Molyneux.
Helga.....Collette Velarde
Alberto.....Eduardo Galeano / Andrew Prowse
Crabtree.....Steve Aldridge
Leclerc.....Alan Tanner / Alec Stokes
Gruber.....Chris Mitchell
Von Schmelling.....Chris Robson / John Hall
Fru-Fru and dog*.....Brenda Hutchings and Poopet
First airman.....Ian Dudley, Ed Stewart.
Second airman.....Sherry Dudley, Jason Davey
Musicians.....Chris Robson, Gordon Mellor
Café customers, peasants..Alex Garside, Kate Miller, Morwenna Killen.
FOH characters...Martin and Stephanie Austin, Sue Grey, Shannon Bartie, John Franklin.

The Wednesday Club. May 2021.

With life getting back to what might pass for the new normal, there's been a flurry of activity to finalise the casting for 'Allo, Allo', due to be staged as our Summer production. The cast list is included, and you'll see that we have a few new members from other local societies. This is such a busy play, running for six weeks, there's always space for more helpers.

It seems all the Wedders' members have had their first jab, and most have had their second. After I'd had my vaccinations I felt bubbly and refreshed, so it was no surprise when they told me it was the 'Tizer' jab. A friend who went to a different centre had no difficulty either, in fact he was cured of his constipation and a persistent headache. He'd had the 'Aspro-Senokot' version.

The Wednesday Club (International) still meets each week via Zoom and, once it's allowed, we will probably start again with outdoor meetings. We're hoping that by 21st June, we just might be back in the theatre. For one Zoom meeting last month we had Martin Waddington from The Netherlands and Ian Dudley from France!

On the 6th April we held a socially-distanced meeting at Brixham Museum to talk volunteer actors through the requirements for the Arts Festival which we are holding on 1st-3rd June. The idea is that we will have costumed actors in position in the old police cell, the Victorian parlour display and the fishing section of the museum. When the punters walk round the museum they will be drawn into conversation with these actors, playing a convict, a Victorian lady poet and a smuggler. This live interaction in character will give the visitors, particularly the children, a much better appreciation of local history, which doesn't always come over with old stuff in dusty glass cases. The cast is drawn heavily from Toads people, including Sherry Dudley, Julia Bale, William Herhlity and Andy Killen. Please come along to see us at Brixham Museum (at Bolton Cross...the traffic lights...) on 1st -3rd June. Doors open each day at 10.30am and we will close by 3.30pm. It's free!

With The Queen celebrating her ninety-fifth birthday and some wet stuff falling from the skies at the moment... long may it rain!

'Radio Devon gave me some space on their midday 'Fitz' programme., when I advertised our post-pandemic opening production of 'Allo, Allo'. Have a listen... I'm on after 2 hrs 34 mins. I have no shame.'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p099c9cfh>

John Miles

(Thanks, John. Apparently, Fitz is still getting over it...(ed).)

'HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN...'

Season 2021/2022

Monday 2nd to Saturday 7th August 2021: Initial Week **'Allo, 'Allo** – Director: John Miles

PLUS Tuesday 10th to Thursday 12th August

Tuesday 17th to Thursday 19th August

Tuesday 24th to Thursday 26th August

Tuesday 31st August to Thursday 2nd September

Monday 6th to Saturday 11th September – **'Allo 'Allo** Final Week

Sunday 19th September – **Unleashed Theatre film premier** (matinee and evening)

Monday 4th to Saturday 9th October **Ladies' Day** – Director: Mary Singleton

Thursday 21st to Saturday 24th October 2021 **What's So Amazing About Grace** – Unleashed Theatre, Director: Martin Harris

Monday 15th to Saturday 20th November 2021 **Deathtrap** – Director: Jill Pettigrew

Monday 13th to Saturday 18th December 2021 **The Ladykillers** – Director: Anna Reynolds

Monday 17th to Saturday 22nd January 2022 **Bedroom Farce** – Director: John Pierce

Sunday 30th January 2022 **Bully Wee Band**

Wednesday 9th to Saturday 12th February 2022 **Grimms Spectaculathon** – Tadpoles, Director: Becky Dobson

Monday 7th to Saturday 12th March 2022 **Funny Money** – Director: Alan Tanner

Monday 4th to Saturday 9th April 2022 **Laying the Ghost** – Director: Stephanie Austin

Friday 22nd April 2022 – **Abba Tribute**

Monday 16th to Saturday 21st May 2022 **Passing of the Third Floor Back** – Director: Andrew Kenyon

Monday 13th to Saturday 18th June 2022 **Strictly Murder** – Directors: Nicola Opie & Jon Manley

SUSPICIONS

by NJ CRISP

“ Following the closure of theatres and the cancellation of Suspicions by NJ Crisp, four Toads members (Ben Tisdall, Laura Rugg, Liz Loly and Matt Brown) have kept busy in the recent lockdown rehearsing it on zoom and have finally filmed the result with scripts in hand, props and costumes for the Bijou Theatre Company. The result is going to be screened to a socially distanced audience at the Palace Theatre on Tuesday May 18th or will be available online from May 17th – 24th. If you are interested, (and we are, to see the finished product!!) please do look at the Palace website for details.”

Jill Pettigrew

LADIES DAY

4th-9th October 2021

Director Mary Singleton (formally Fossey)

I'm looking for a prompt and someone to help with props. Rehearsals to begin in August.

If you're interested in being involved with this delightful comedy, please contact Mary on 01803 523115/marysingleton211@gmail.com

Thanks!

Cast List

Pearl.....Elaine Harvey

Jan.....Tracey Burton

Shelley...Sarah Mallett

Linda.....Kathryn Bamforth

Joe/Patrick/Kevin.....Jon Manley

Fred/Jim/Barry.....Andrew Malcolm

FROM ALAN TANNERS DRAWERS

Following a good old turnout of his contents -

Under instructions from his daughter to clear out a lot of his "rubbish"!! Alan came across these items:

From the NODA Bulletins of 1973 there were several reviews by the NODA drama Rep. Robert Broadley - Wilson.

At the end of April TOADS put on Noel Coward's *Nude with Violin*. Praise for Cora Gant for stepping in as the producer (that's what the director was called in those days) at a very late stage of rehearsals and achieving a reasonably successful result. Two actors who did succeed with performances worthy of high commendation were Doris Slee as Isobel Sorodin and Bob Westcott as Sebastian Larcreole. The cracking pace was maintained all the way through the acts and the set looked good enough for real. But some of the make-up of the supporting cast - Oh dear! - need I say more.

In the June 1973 Bulletin Broadley - Wilson's reviews included several productions by TOADS and *Shiphay D.S.* and for TOADS *Woman in a Dressing Gown* there were brilliant characterisations by Barbara Hiscock, Gerry Vale and Genevieve Goodrich. Young Andrew Kenyon, though a little unsure of himself in Act 1, warmed to his part in Act 2 to become very believable (he has a long way to go but with more experience will be an asset to the company.)

At *Shiphay D.S.* in *The Right Honourable Gentleman* the award for the Region's Best Individual Female Performance went to Janet Downer for her successful portrayal of Mrs Virginia Crawford.

So many excellent actors I knew in those days no longer with us.

Robert Harrison. 17th May, 1939 –10th April, 2021.

Known as Robert, Bob or Bobby, depending on which group he was with, Bob was well known in the local theatrical societies, taking part in many Gilbert and Sullivan productions and later in 'Pot Pourri'. He helped Reg and Julia Bale with their Romanian orphanage charity and played 'The Tramp' in the production of "Salad Days" by Paignton Operatic Society at The Palace Theatre.

He was an enthusiastic and reliable helper as part of the Reg Bale / Dave Greek scene shifting 'Heavy Gang' and a regular at The Conservative Club with Steve Salmon, The Robsons, The Bells, The Carters, Gill Poore and Andy Killen, Francine Knott. He had lovely sense of humour and was a very private man who wouldn't let his friends know when he was feeling bad.

Latterly, he worked on maintenance at Toads Little Theatre, and was a regular at Anne Jordan's Tuesday props team working parties.

Always a gently-spoken, decent and kind-hearted friend who touched the lives of so many of us, Bob was enthusiastically supportive; often to be seen in the front row at The Palace and The Little Theatre.

He died on Saturday, 10th April at Rowcroft Hospice, aged 82. Funeral arrangements are as yet unknown, but our dear friend Bob would want no fuss, no ceremony. His tribute will be his place in our memories, a feeling of fondness, his light chuckle and wry smile.

Listed here are some essential contact details:

Box Office 01803 299330
boxoffice@toadstheatre.co.uk

if you'd like to get involved in front-of-house duties

Jon Manley*

chairman@toadstheatre.co.uk

Jackie Tarney 07815 323982
boxoffice@toadstheatre.co.uk

if you'd like to help behind the bar

Jill Pettigrew* 01803 525071

secretary@toadstheatre.co.uk

if you'd like to join the wardrobe team

Anne Jordan 01626 330866

annepoppy@blueyonder.co.uk if you'd like to join the props team

Joy Book* 07704 584953

Joybook9597@gmail.com

if you'd like to help in the coffee shop

Brenda Hutchings 07800 644508

marketing@toadstheatre.co.uk

if you'd like to submit an article for Croak

John Miles 01803 858394

johnmilesandmiles@gmail.com

for Wednesday Club

Al Dunn 07880 734880

al.dunn@icloud.com

if you'd like to get involved with techy stuff

If you want to act, or get involved backstage in any production, or as props or prompt, contact the director in each case, whose number will always be listed in *The Croak* with the audition information. If you're still not sure who to call, any member of the committee will always help to point you to the right person. As well as those names marked with an asterisk above, the committee members are:

Alan Tanner Treasurer

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