

# CROAK

Toads Theatre Newsletter November 2023

## FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



The cold weather is rearing its ugly head so let's all be thankful that our wonderful Maintenance Team have sorted the heating. A humongous task which required much time and money. Remember last year when everyone was swaddled in warm clothing? Hopefully this year we'll only be freezing when we go outside!

The AGM will have come and gone by the time you read this. At the time of writing, we've had one new nomination for the committee. I think that tells you everything. No one wants to take on the onerous task of leading Toads Theatre Company through the good times and bad. It can be a thankless task so please give us some slack and buy us a drink when you see us in the bar. I'll have on my badge 'Don't you know who I am', just in case you don't recognise me!

Let's keep going forward.

Anna Reynolds  
Chairman



### Packed houses say it all!

#### ***The Thoughts of Pliny***

The Hound of the Baskervilles is well known, mostly due to the original film starring Basil Rathbone - and more recently through the popular TV series.

This production, directed by Sara O'Conner, followed Ken Ludwig's stage play in good measure. His quirky comedic style was brought into being by Sarah's clear vision of what she wanted - both from her performers and the look of the set.

Five dedicated and talented performers gave a week of high energy, fast paced storytelling at its best, supported by a large backstage crew - creating a symbiotic and almost seamless production.

Thanks must go to David Warren and Paul Duffield for their amazing video work.

Notes:

The book of The Hound of the Baskervilles is available free on project Gutenberg e-book. The film is available on YouTube. Interviews with Ken Ludwig are also on YouTube.

#### ***From Front of House:***

'A brilliant play' 'The cast were fantastic'

'Very, very clever' 'Such energy!'

'Inventive and very funny'

## AND THERE'S MORE...

The Baskerville Team were particularly pleased to involve Toads' Youth Theatre, who created a Victorian London in the building ahead of the show – dressing up and acting out urchins, flower girls and other characters - to help the audience get in the mood before the performance.



## AUDITIONS COMING UP!



Sat 4<sup>th</sup> Nov 2pm /Sun 5<sup>th</sup> Nov 10.30am

Alan Ayckbourn's *Confusions* is series of five interlinked one-act plays: *Mother Figure*, *Drinking Companion*, *Between Mouthfuls*, *Gosforth's Fete*, and *A Talk in the Park*. Each play is entirely different - typifying Ayckbourn's particular brand of comedy and his ability to dissect human behaviour. Each, however, deals with the common themes of loneliness and relationships. The characters and their conflicts are immediately recognisable and are still relevant today.

This is a challenging project and I have decided not to cast each play separately, but to follow Ayckbourn's original plan (well, almost!).

He chose to use only five actors – 2 female and 3 male – each taking multiple roles.

My ideal cast will be 3 females and 3 males playing ages between 30 and 60.

It won't be possible to indicate definite roles until the auditions are over, as the matching of ages is important! So auditionees must be prepared to play any part.

Because this production will be quite complex, rehearsals need to begin in mid-February (Mondays/Tuesdays and Thursdays with extra rehearsals for tech and dress)

Performances will be April 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> – with a matinee on 13<sup>th</sup>.

Mary Singleton

A message for directors from  
OneCrea8tive

Please can you send out the below link to all the upcoming Directors? It's a simple form to provide me with info on their productions to help with the marketing.

<https://forms.gle/HBB7mLB5XfUKfWgd7>

Chris Matanlé  
Company Director and  
Designer

## MEMBERSHIP CORNER

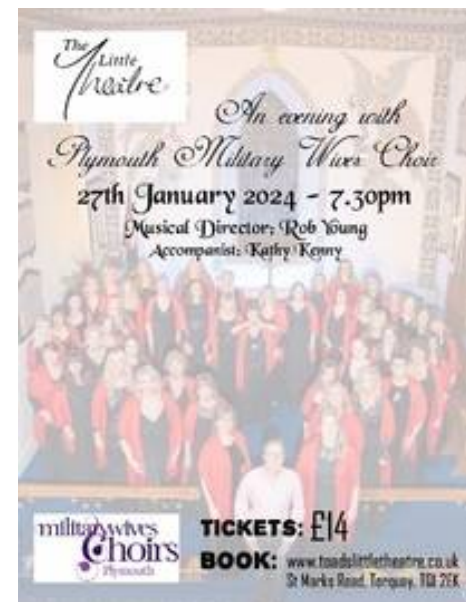
On Friday, 20th October several members, along with some season ticket holders, enjoyed a Folk Evening provided by Steve Gill, Andy Clarke (Totnes Folk Club) and Chris Robson - held in the bar with Suzy Miles as MC. We were treated to music from various parts of the UK with the players providing interesting background information to enrich our experience. We really appreciated having these three artistes to share their talents with us. The photo shows Steve, Andy (on an Irish bouzouki) and Chris.

As this will be my last column as Membership Secretary, I'd like to thank all of the members, with whom I've had contact over the past five years, for your enthusiasm and friendship. It's been a privilege to have met you and I shall look forward to seeing you around the theatre in the future.

*Sherry Dudley*



## UP NEXT!



Hello, Everyone!

I hope you enjoy reading this month's newsletter.

Any contributions for December need to be with me by 25<sup>th</sup> November and in WORD format, please – so over to you!

Mary Singleton (editor)

### GROAN TIME!!



There are two people who both say they live where Shakespeare wrote Romeo and Juliet...

They should put a plaque on both their houses...

### You know your plays - but do you know your playwrights?

Surname: WELL DONE

Surname + Forename: GOLD STAR



1. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*
2. *Look Back in Anger*
3. *Waiting for Godot*
4. *The Importance of Being Earnest*
5. *Cymbeline*

*Answers on page 5*

Our new season of meetings began in earnest with a review of 'Dad's Army' and a catch-up of 'What we did in the Holidays'. The play was well received by the patrons with a welcome return to good houses. We have recovered from Covid, it seems. The following week we reviewed 'Spider's Web' which also did well at the box office. We're on a roll!

Next we welcomed three of The Torbay Street Pastors, who gave us an inspiring talk about the community work in the town centres to help young people. We made a splendid donation to their funds of £85. Peter Whittle from Arne House Productions entertained us with 'Off the Cuff', a series of short sketches he wrote and directed. Again, we made a donation of thirty pounds to his charity.

The latest production, 'Baskerville' was discussed, with several members stating that it was the best production they had seen for years.... congratulations to all involved, plus the casts of the two plays we reviewed earlier in the month.

Sherry and Cora will be organising a session of 'Favourite Poetry' followed the next week by Steve Gill's 'Customs of the Calendar Year'.

There are two weeks as yet unallocated, followed by a review of 'Who Killed Santa Claus?' and Austin Hawkins' 'Moving Aside'. A packed month with lots of variety.

The first Friday 'Folk in The Bar' session was held on 20<sup>th</sup> October, with Steve Gill, Chris Robson and Andy Clarke entertaining a full house of members. This initial success will be followed up every three months or so, with a core of resident musicians plus invited guests.

John Miles

## WHAT'S ON IN NOVEMBER

9-11<sup>th</sup> November. 7.30pm

'B Confused' - three one-act plays.

'Mother Figure' and 'Gosforth's Fete' by Alan Ayckbourn.

'Plan B' by Robert Scott. SBADS. South Brent Hall. [www.sbads.show](http://www.sbads.show)

10-11<sup>th</sup> November. 7.30pm Sat mat 2.30pm.

'Macbeth' by William Shakespeare. South Devon Players Theatre and Film Co at Brixham Theatre.

01803 415987. [tickets.brixhamtheatre.uk](http://tickets.brixhamtheatre.uk)

13-18<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30pm Sat mat 2.30pm.

'Who Killed Santa Claus?'

by Terence Feely

Directed by Andrew Kenyon.

Toads Theatre Company.

01803 299330. [toadslittletheatre.co.uk](http://toadslittletheatre.co.uk)

20-25<sup>th</sup> November. 7.30pm.

The House of Bernarda Alba' by Federico Garcia Lorca

Directed by Richard Clark.

Dartington Playgoers, Studio 31.

22-25<sup>th</sup> November 7.30pm. Sat mat 2.30pm

'The Lady in the Van', by Alan Bennett,

Directed by Jude Earnshaw.

Unleashed Theatre. Royal Lyceum, Torquay.

<https://www.unleashedtheatrecompany.com>

22-25<sup>th</sup> November, . 7.30pm.

'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' by C S Lewis,

Directed by Maggie Campbell for 'Bijou' at

The Palace Theatre, Paignton. 01803 665800

Answers:

1. Edward Albee
2. John Osborne
3. Samuel Beckett
4. Oscar Wilde
5. William Shakespeare

## CAST ANNOUNCED!



Eric Swann

*Ben Field*

Linda Swann

*Alison Lee*

Norman Bassett

*Lloyd Bickham*

Mr Jenkins

*Adam Clark*

Uncle George

*Andy Killen*

Sam Chessington

*Paul Davenport*

Dr Chapman

*Martin Southard*

Mr Forbright

*Dave Grant*

Ms Cowper

*Jill Pettigrew*

Miss Dixon

*Rachel Field*

SM. Julie Hancock

Assistant to Director Nicola Margetts

Props Jackie Tarney

Prompt Margaret Kirk

## Your NEW Committee

### CONTACT DETAILS

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#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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**set building/painting, etc:**

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