

In returning to editorial and publicity roles, albeit temporarily, for Grange Drama, wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year is the FIRST thing on my CHECK LIST. So do have a good one. Perhaps by way of explanation, the SECOND is an 'archival' mention, an introduction from one who was involved in producing the first Grange Drama news sheet GRAPEVINE during the 1980's. So seemingly 'what goes around comes around' as they say! However since the boom days of the Cumbria Grand Hotel era, the printers long time methods of manual cut and paste have moved on. What news there is reaches you electronically and thanks to many members, informative copy has continued using latest technology as well as changes to the news sheet title along the way. Distribution to members by hand or post was long overtaken as IT finally reached the northern shores of Morecambe Bay. Despite associated modernisation of the 'publishing' process one still has to chase up sufficient 'dramatic' content to make it worthwhile.

Today does one compile AmDram through personal contact, use of a land line telephone, mobile + text conversation or email, I ask myself? Endless choices. The latest **email** news is that by New Year modernisation of our web site / introduction of Facebook communication should be complete and maybe booking of play tickets on line will become more than just wishful thinking. So beyond this issue one can safely foretell 'glad tidings' of a whole new ball game but, just in case my computer goes down, I wish you all the best for **next** Christmas !

*Margaret McDonagh (temporary editor)*

## **GRANGE CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL AT ST PAUL'S CHURCH**

Partaking in this annual festival has kept three members busy of late. Always a 'sparkling' event wherever it is held, we racked our brains over the actual theme chosen this year, finally settling on making paper doves in keeping with the 'peace and goodwill' church message. Nevertheless we could not resist some low key publicity for our next production and tongue in cheek one might say we bit the bullet with the following message:

*"There may be truth in the rumour that two 'stage' racehorses are to be named 'Peace and Goodwill' for our April play, LADIES' DAY. However there is truth in the message that we wish everyone a very happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year".*

Please do support this community event which also helps us keep Grange Drama's name in 'lights' as well. Open daily (not Christmas Day) until 1 January between 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. except for Sundays and Wednesdays when it is open from noon to 4.00 pm. You can check online to be certain: **[www.grangepcc.co.uk](http://www.grangepcc.co.uk)**

## **FIRST COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE NEW YEAR**

7.30 pm Wednesday 14 January 2015 Grange Institute when Jim Robson [jim@jtrobson.co.uk](mailto:jim@jtrobson.co.uk) will chair the meeting. Items for the Agenda should be sent to Secretary John Clark [jmclark.2@virgin.net](mailto:jmclark.2@virgin.net) and please notify Treasurer Peter Nightingale [katybgos@hotmail.com](mailto:katybgos@hotmail.com) if you have not claimed for monies owed to you following the last

production. The April play, LADIES' DAY, heads the agenda when director Benita Finch [benita@bf.gmail.com](mailto:benita@bf.gmail.com) takes the opportunity to confirm her final casting and discuss rehearsal arrangements. Discussing how to improve interest in play readings beyond 21 January will no doubt feature as Grange Institute bookings are already made for February and March. Whether the society, as a whole, is able to pursue an invitation to stage a WW1 event, ONE YEAR ON, at Grange Library in August 2015 is in question and AWAY DAYS look set to make a comeback to mull over where Grange Drama is heading. Of importance is that the passing of our President Reg Parker will be recorded and our sympathy has been extended to Shirley and family with a card, flowers and a personal call to her home.

*John Clark (Secretary)*

## **FIRST PLAY READING OF THE NEW YEAR**

**GOOD THINGS**, a comedy by **Liz Lochhead** starting at **7.30 pm, Wednesday 21 January 2015 at Grange Institute**. This is the first reading of the New Year, an opportunity to get together to participate and have a chat over a cuppa. The play can be described as a poignantly funny mid-life crisis and the setting is a charity shop. With a cast of four including a fairy tale heroine, more of a Cinderella of forty something. Telephone 015395-32879 for information.

*Jim Robson (play reading organiser)*

## **THE FUTURE OF PLAY READINGS**

Play readings are one way of interesting potential and new members to Grange Drama. During the past twelve months these Grange Institute events have been regularly advertised in Grange Now, the Library and the Information Centre at Victoria Hall as well as Stage Whispers. This has made little or no difference to attendance which is declining except when promoted as an Audition Reading.

It was particularly disappointing, almost embarrassing, when a brand new play was introduced to the committee by the author and subsequently read by a very few. In fact four people in Grange Institute rattled around having umpteen cups of tea, mulling over the lack of interest. Incidentally the writer later travelled from Morecambe to watch *Educating Rita*. The latest news on play readings is that even Alan Ayckbourn's work failed to attract people along. What is going on? Committee could be forgiven if they decide in the future to drop the more general readings, save the money they cost to run and concentrate on plays for production only. Let us know what you think?

## **NEXT PRODUCTION : LADIES' DAY 16-18 April at Victoria Hall**

The play is an exuberant, heart warning comedy which Benita Finch, with her previous experience of it, will direct. Some of the playwright's work features on the National Curriculum which may interest local students involved with Performing Arts in schools and colleges. If you are not already aware the theme of the play revolves around horse racing. The proximity of Cartmel Racecourse might be exploited and could bring additional publicity and photographic opportunities into the AmDram arena if desired. What about inviting would be patrons to don hats normally only seen at Ascot? This might pull in a few new punters into the audience though these would have to be removed during performances - the hats not the patrons !

Casting is ongoing. To date Stella Coxon, Vivienne Curtis, Deborah Powell, Nicola Quinn as well as John Clark, Jim Robson and Steve Pollard have expressed interest to take part. Director Benita Finch is busy putting together scene linking music and if this is

anything like that chosen for Educating Rita it will mean tapping feet nights for those watching is ensured!

A second Audition Reading Night to be held in Grange Institute will finalise casting on **Tuesday 13 January 2015 at 7.30 pm**. This information has been sent to Grange Now for publication in their 'What's On' column but, like items for the 'Arts and Music' column, is always subject to available space.

*Benita Finch (director)*

## **PREVIOUS PRODUCTION : EDUCATING RITA**

This two handed play produced marathon performances from Benita and Steve, two acting members who deserved better houses for their efforts. On stage the pair played in front of a set which made this play come to life as did the scene linking music. Special mention to Bob Somerset and sound apprentice James who played a blinder as did those travelling from Kendal and Carnforth, to prompt. Kathy and Deborah dropped everything to help out and shared the job. The going as always gets tough at the last rehearsals and it was not an easy task. A very big thank you to them both. A first time audience member, Tony Quinn of Ulverston, was asked for comments about this production and how he felt about the venue. It makes interesting reading and our thanks to him for agreeing to put 'pen to email'.

*“A nice friendly welcome FOH. The building and hall were impressive, with character, but, in my opinion, rather large for such an event as stage voices seemed to carry away in the huge space. I wonder if the actors find this happens to their dialogue and imagine it is difficult to create a suitably intimate atmosphere because of that. My hearing is not good these days – even with my hearing aids in - and although I was concentrating on the cast missed some of the dialogue. The two actors played well on the night, seemed experienced, knew their lines well and with few hesitations.*

*Am I right in thinking that those two are not permanent regular members of the Grange Company but, because of their abilities, are invited to take part in specific productions with yourselves and other regional societies? Or is this how AmDram sometimes operates these days? If I lived locally and became a regular patron I would expect to see the resident members both running and performing in their own productions – as this is what I would be supporting. If I got hold of the wrong end of the stick (as this happens all too often) then you have my permission to hit me with it! Anyhow I know where you are and will come over again whenever possible. Good luck with your future productions ...”*

*Tony Quinn*

We also received three crits from Furness College students who attended the play. They are studying it as part of their HND course.

*“After attending your recent production of Educating Rita, we feel that it really helped us as students to gain an insight into the characters and the context in which the play was*

written. The Grange production of the play put meat on the bones for us and we feel gave a greater understanding of the intricacies happening between the two characters. Our group thoroughly enjoyed the evening and thought the actors created a great interpretation of Willy Russell's entertaining play. "

*Paul, Rebecca, Charlotte, Sarah*

The Grange Drama production of *Educating Rita* was very beneficial to me. It was great to watch the play locally as we are currently studying it at college. The actors played the characters superbly and gave me a greater insight in to the book. It was a fantastic evening and very well organised.

*Charlotte*

"A small group of us who are studying English at Furness College recently came to watch the Grange Drama Society's production of *Educating Rita*. We all agreed the stage setting was fantastic, just as we pictured it should be after reading the description in the book. The big white door, which is very symbolic, stood out just as it should have done and as a dramatic device we found it very relevant right throughout the performance.

Rita and Frank were excellent actors and were a pleasure to watch although we did find Rita's character more true to the book. She was very well played with good use of accent, language, mannerisms and personality. Frank's arrogance was portrayed in the way we would have expected but he had more humour than our own perceptions of the character in the book.

The modern twist on the drama with the extra additions of humour and the shaving of Frank's beard as opposed to cutting his hair was interesting and something as a group we had mixed views on. Some of us found it refreshing and others found it was rather too contemporary and did not fit well within the play.

We did recommend to the other students, if they had the chance, to go to watch this production of *Educating Rita* as we found it provided a great insight to the book and we had a lovely evening out."

*Vicky and Kim*

## **2015 and FUTURE .... THE REVIVAL OF AWAY DAYS**

Some years ago, at a time when the society was badly in need of new ideas and more importantly new blood, the then chairwoman Christine Deering set up AWAY DAYS. These were brain storming sessions held at her home where committee members and directors chatted and lunched together. Badly in need of something similar today it has been suggested by Kath Bolton that these might be reinstated to revive interest amongst members, many of whom travel to perform here even though living in the wider area of South Lakeland. Looking ahead is there a 70<sup>th</sup> JUBILEE CELEBRATION in the offing for

2017 and might such a group work towards it? Ring 015395-33470 if you want to contribute ideas and join in.

**GRANGE NOW and PUBLICITY IN GENERAL - word of mouth costs nothing !**

Given regular inclusion in Grange Now ensures news of plays and drama events is delivered to the households of Cartmel Peninsula as a whole. Friends, former members and others not able to take such an active part as they once did read that we are still in the business of staging productions – just.

Copy deadlines fall well ahead of issue

**16 January for FEBRUARY, 13 February for MARCH and 13 March for APRIL ISSUE**

LADIES' DAY performances will be staged just after Easter 2015, in fact Thursday to Saturday 16, 17 and 18 April. Looking even further ahead a booking has been made at Victoria Hall for a possible October production but there is no news about this.

Other performing groups here are well reported and fortunate to present their performances in the same weeks each year, something Grange Drama has never achieved. As a society we are not alone needing new and younger members and there is no sign of ever joining together. However we do our bit advertising musical shows and pantomimes in Grange and Flookburgh as every little helps, as does selling tickets for plays and being there supporting AmDram in Grange over Sands. The parallel of problems repeatedly facing the Furness Railway Line is mirrored in AmDram - use it or lose it!