



**DATES FOR YOUR 2011 DIARY**

**PLAY READINGS:**

**2011 Play reading dates:**

**11 October:** Badger's Green: (led by Don Scott)

**15 November:** The Titfield Thunderbolt: (led by Jim Robson)

**All play readings will be 19:30 in the Council Chamber in Victoria Hall.**

**PRODUCTIONS:**

**Memory of Water: (Shelagh Stephenson)** - Grange Drama: 29, 30 September & 1 October 2011. Tickets £7. Starts 19.45

**Relatively Speaking** (Alan Ayckbourn) – Grange Drama: 19 – 21 January 2012. Tickets £6 / £3. Starts 19.45

**Hobson's Choice** (Harold Brighouse) – Warton Drama Group: January 2012 (dates TBC) at Warton Village Hall. Tickets £6 first night / £7 thereafter. Starts 19.30

**Edwardian Day**

The weather was remarkably good to us again for this year's Edwardian Day so we were able to attract visitors and get a tan in the bargain! We didn't have many Society volunteers to run the stall so the decision was made not to hold a competition for adults (which usually raises about £40 for Society funds). We did run a Tombola and had

our Box Office in place. In fact we sold 15 tickets for "Relatively Speaking" which is the highest number of ticket sales we've ever achieved on Edwardian Day. Unfortunately, as you will all know, we had to cancel the play and refund the income, but the high number of sales on the day was very encouraging. With only seven volunteers to run the stall for the day it was hard work - but good fun - and we achieved an income for the Society of about £130. So well done to all those who attended our stall or contributed prizes for the Tombola. Put the date in your diary for next year (second Saturday in June) - and start collecting Tombola prizes as soon as possible!

*Geoff Entwistle*

**Relatively Speaking**

There were heavy hearts all round when the decision was made to postpone "Relatively Speaking" but there was no other way to go if the remaining cast of 3 wanted to put in a credible performance.

Happily, we were given the January 2012 spot, so we will be recommencing rehearsals in late November and the performances will take place on January 19th., 20th. & 21st.

Margaret McD. is now fully recovered and driving her brand new car to prove it! Happy motoring, Mags!

*Kath Bolton*

**Memory of Water**

Since last Stage Whispers we have had a change of personnel due to Jim Robson's unfortunate ill health. Geoff has switched from "Mike" to Jim's part

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"Frank" and Steve Pollard has kindly taken on "Mike". Jim however still has an involvement coaching Geoff in an Irish accent.

Despite the changes and because we have such an experienced cast, rehearsals are progressing well.

Also, Peter Nightingale has taken on the role of producer and Sally Haines stage manager and I thank them for taking of those responsibilities.

The play is set around three sisters coming home to attend their mother's funeral and as one would expect childhood memories come flooding back. There is an old adage that a funeral can either bring a family together or send them all to hell and Shelagh Stephenson's script explores this using both humour and poignancy. I hope that our audiences will forgive the strong language and enjoy this slightly edgy dark comedy.

*David Edwards*

## **Badger's Green**

R. C. Sherriff is perhaps best known for the highly acclaimed play 'Journey's End', although he also wrote the screenplays for 'Goodbye Mr Chips', 'The Four Feathers' and 'The Dambusters', amongst many others. One of his stage works is 'Badger's Green', which was filmed twice, in 1934 and 1949. (By the way, if anyone has a copy of the 1934 version the British Film Institute would like to hear from you as it has been lost and is on their Most Wanted list!)

The play was due to be read on 18th October, led by Don Scott. **The date has had to be changed to 11th October** but will still be held at the Council Offices at 7.30pm.

The play is a gentle comedy but the subject matter could be considered highly appropriate in the present circumstances. As many will know, Grange is one of the places in the area where considerable re-development,

both of housing and light industry, has been proposed. If they go through, in whole or in part, the character of the town will change. This is not the place to go into the pros and cons of the proposals but it is where the relevance of the play comes in. Briefly, it concerns Badger's Green, an idyllic village in pre-World War 2 England, happy with life in every respect. Centred around the village green and cricket pitch, the folk are untroubled by the outside world until they are rudely brought into it by the proposal to "develop" the village with a new housing estate. What follows may be guessed, or if you want to find out for real come along to the play reading, to participate or just listen. There are a good range of character parts for all to enjoy but no bouncing bombs.

*Don Scott*

## **A Trip to Stratford**

We just had to go... Some years ago we watched with trepidation as the first giant iron ball swung across the void between the high rise crane and the wall of the old Stratford RSC Theatre...a mighty bang, the noise of splintering wood and the crunch of dislodged brickwork and amidst the cloud of dust we saw the first piece of the demolition take place!

Over the ensuing years we have made our yearly pilgrimage to the hallowed land of "The Master Playwright" but this year was to be different in that the New Theatre was open and together with the Swan now boasted two thrust stages with all the updated comfort of the redesigned seating .

On the first of our two evenings we attended the play that is causing more than a little matter for discussion: "Cardenio" a play written in 1612/13 by Fletcher and Shakespeare, but, with an accepted acknowledgement to Cardenio in Don Quixote by Cervantes! The lavish programme notes give times and dates of possible meetings twixt Cervantes and Shakspeare and

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scholars will no doubt continue to debate the matter for some time to come. The plot and the action were very well received with some solid performances from a strong cast as you would expect. We particularly liked the Flamenco singing that interspersed the scenes from time to time.

The second night was "The Merchant of Venice" and we had no idea what sort of setting the producer had decided to adopt but hoped that it was not to be a modern dress production as, given the choice, we would both prefer the classical approach, you may imagine our disappointment to find a very modern programme with a fruit machine on the cover together with rather an ugly face, bedecked in a Stetson hat, looking over the top of the instrument.

We had arrived early in order to take some interior photos of the new layout, so you might imagine our surprise to find the thrust stage dressed as a Las Vegas casino, on stage was a croupier and a lone client playing the table, just talking as one might, if the client knew the croupier, and as we watched, so the stage set began to increase in activity: first another complete table was put in place and a very sexy feminine croupier swayed into view and set up the chips and card decks. Then in the background more characters appeared down the double sweep staircase that made up the rear of the stage set. In all that followed in the next twenty minutes before the start of the performance, all the house lights were full on and characters included a number of waitresses carrying trays of drinks, more croupiers, a wide variety of clients, both black and white, all very well turned out in outrageous outfits in which to swank, which they did during this period of the pre-play in a fantastic and carefully choreographed movement of the thirty or so characters now moving around the thrust stage. In the background a complete small jazz band could be seen through a grilled section, keeping

the pace of this part of the evening buzzing along.

The production that followed was marvellous to witness with riveting performances from Patrick Stewart (Shylock) and Susannah Fielding (Portia) - a name to watch folks! Interestingly the whole play, though set in Las Vegas with an Elvis Presley character as a singing linkman between scenes, was strictly to the text with only the very smallest changes to allow the visual settings to be acceptable, for example 3000 ducats became 3 million dollars !

*Mary Walker and Tony Kent*

## **All My Sons (Arthur Miller)**

Florence and I took a trip to this Bingley Little Theatre production, directed by Sandra Williams and lit by son Steven.

The play is set in the Keller garden, with the house centre stage and other properties hinted at. This gives several directions for the cast to move in and out of the powerful acting area at front centre.

It is clear soon after the start that this is a family still dealing with pain suffered during the war. But as the play progresses it reveals that it is not just the son 'Missing in Action' that is the cause of the pain. It is the batch of faulty aero engines shipped by Keller and his partner which cause the tension within and between the families. Miller, ably assisted by director Sandra and a stunning cast, racks up this tension until finally, Joe Keller, after fifteen years of public and self denial, is forced to accept his responsibility for that lethal shipment. The drama is totally absorbing with set, lighting and acting maintaining the focus on the play right to the end.

Could we hope that Sandra might be prompted soon to direct an Arthur Miller play at Grange?

*Jim Robson.*

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## **Directors' Meeting**

There will be a Directors' Meeting on Saturday September 3rd. at Hampsfell House Hotel beginning at 10.am, with coffee/tea and biscuits to help us on our way. We will be trying to devise a programme of plays and Directors for late 2012 to 2013/14 and also a list of plays for play readings - and leaders of them. Any member who feels able to contribute will be very welcome, without the necessity to be a 'director', so to speak. Please phone Geoff (32391) or Kath (33470) to indicate that you wish to be there.

Afterwards there will be lunch available for a general get-together, from 12 noon for 12.30 pm. meal. Again, please let us know so that we can finalise the booking.

*Kath Bolton*

## **Memberships**

Finally – a reminder that subscriptions for 2011 / 12 are now due. Please contact Pete Nightingale (33470) or come along to one of our play readings.

*Pete Nightingale*

*Please send any articles for the next issue of Stage Whispers (December 2011) to [dyane100@hotmail.com](mailto:dyane100@hotmail.com)*