

March 2010



DATES FOR YOUR 2010 DIARY

PRODUCTIONS:

Run for Your Wife by Ray Cooney, directed by Benita Finch: Thursday 24 – Saturday 26 June 2010:

PLAY READINGS:

Tuesday 16 March: **The Noble Spaniard** (Somerset Maugham) - led by Don Scott

Tuesday 20 April: **Aristocrats** (Brian Friel) - led by David Edwards

Tuesday 18 May: **Intimate Exchanges** (Alan Ayckbourn) - led by Jim Robson

Tuesday 20 July: **When We Are Married** (J. B. Priestley) - led by Margaret McDonagh

Tuesday 21 September: **You're only Young Twice** (Ron Aldridge) - led by Geoff Entwistle

Tuesday 19 October: **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (Shakespeare) - led by Kath Bolton

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

Season's Greetings

In January, Grange Drama seamlessly drew audiences into the lives of one family at Christmas with a delightful production of "Season's Greetings". In true Alan Ayckbourn style, the play touched our hearts with the poignancy of four couples' dysfunctional relationships, then had us laughing through our tears.

Belinda and Neville, whose house we are in, were beautifully played by Benita Finch and Geoff Entwistle; Benita brought to life Belinda's frustration with her insensitive and thoughtlessly arrogant husband, who himself is so engrossed in his pointless and largely malfunctioning gadgets that we feel he barely remembers he has a wife and family.



Neville's sidekick Eddie (Steve Pollard) aspires to his friend's technical skill, but we feel deeply for him as nothing he ever does goes right, yet he is as wrapped up in his aspirations as Neville, and leaves his pregnant wife Pattie (Elise Booth) as embittered and bored as Belinda.

As Belinda's attempts to get her useless husband to put away some cutlery leave her increasingly furious they are interrupted by neurotic Phyllis (Marjorie Simon as a frighteningly convincing alcoholic) and her inept medic husband Bernard, played by Sandy Lofthouse at his best. Enter into the fray bloodthirsty and violent Uncle Harvey (Jim Robson) whose only contribution to Christmas is to buy guns for all the children, and nervously awkward Rachel (Kathryn Kay) who desperately tries to convince everyone that she doesn't care when her mysterious friend from the writing circle isn't on the train as he had promised.

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After much confusion, Rachel's writer Clive (Tony Parsons) arrives and is met in the hallway by Belinda, who clearly likes the look of him as, it appears, do the other women. Tony played this apparently shy and initially bemused young man with great panache, down to his amorous groping with Belinda amongst noisy Christmas presents at midnight, and his subsequent shooting by Harvey.

Central to the plot is Bernard's puppet show for the children, which we learn takes place every Christmas and is notoriously boring for children and adults alike, but Sandy's theatrical creations and enactments were the highlight of the show, with the audience laughing until they cried.



Congratulations and thanks to the cast, production team and backstage crew for this brilliant production, especially to Director Kath Bolton for her vision and talent in making the play such a success.

Dyane Silvester

Christmas Tree Festival

For the second year running Grange Drama have taken part in the Methodist Church Christmas Tree Festival. With the help of Peter Griffiths, Hilary Price & John Rowlinson, a freestanding plywood tree was created from a McDonagh design. The idea of a re-useable product; one which could act as a promotional tool for January

productions & Seasons Greetings in particular, was always behind the thinking.

It was anticipated that entrants, of which there were twenty two, would be asked whether they were willing to participate in a *third* successive festival. This event is becoming a popular festive occasion & could possibly form the foundation of a Grange over Sands "Christmas Tree Trail" involving all the churches working together. Should this be our comment to the organisers ?

Each participating group was encouraged to name a charity they were supporting and collecting boxes were provided. A decision was made on the spot: Eden House Children's Hospice was nominated and £15.00 raised.

Conversion of our 2009 tree can make life easier should we decide to enter next time around. The idea of something novel, flashing, sparkling & well lit depends largely on the overall theme adopted for the organisers. Should re-cycling of products be suggested to them, given that our comments have been invited. Perhaps the society should do the same & consider staging a favourite "past" production, one which the audience voted for with bums on seats!

Thinking caps on for 2010!!

Margaret McDonagh

Grange Drama's Public Image

Image making for the society, that is creating an "identity" for members, first occurred in the 1980s. Past chairman Sturgess Mills felt members should be easily identified by hotel staff but at the same time promoted to guests at the Cumbria Grand. Regularly rehearsing and staging productions there meant we frequented the bar as well. Thus is

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the tale of how the first GD sweatshirt was created - in pale blue overprinted with maroon - with a percentage of its cost borne by the society .

Currently your committee are concentrating on ways to attract new members, and in the process have identified the need for a stronger and more visual identity for GD members. At productions, in and around town, at local events in Cartmel Peninsula, South Lakeland and North Lancashire, our identity needs to be strengthened. We can wear a sweatshirt on a regular basis and personally promote our "team" without a lot of effort.

The day of the second GD sweatshirt is almost here. Our increasing association with Victoria Hall makes it more likely. Not only do we rehearse and erect stage sets there but since we are now committed to a regular play reading programme in the Council Chamber, a "green room" identity emerges as if by default. Importantly audience support is improving and we should capitalise – let regular patrons easily identify members front of house – they are as important to our drama image as those on stage or back stage.

We should then go on to strengthen this same image beyond Victoria Hall to the town, the villages of Cartmel Peninsula and the wider district of South Lakeland and North Lancashire. Annual events such as Cartmel Races, Holker Countryside Festival, PromArt, and Grange Edwardian Festival provide GD with publicity and selling opportunities given the support of members. Jenny Wheeler and Caroline Charnley set the ball rolling by confirming our regular presence at the Edwardian Festival and now people expect to see us every year. Past Chairman Ernest Northrop encouraged us to join in the very FIRST Edwardian Festival, a week long event initiated by Town Clerk Frank Brooks. Hilary Stubbs

encouraged people to dress up, promoting GD wardrobe, and ran workshops to show them how to make or adapt their own clothes to suit the occasion. Much later people remember the stir that the costumes for TWELFTH NIGHT made there? When we do not have a period play in rehearsal it is less easy to identify ourselves at the event.

At the 2010 Festival in Park Gardens – Saturday 12 June in fact – we will once again be telling people who we are and what we do, promoting the summer production and providing Box Office opportunities to those attending. It would add something if we are easily identified in the throng! The message on a sweatshirt has far to go in the dramatic scheme of things!

To be or not to be, that is the question?

Are YOU willing to wear a 'GD COMPANY' sweatshirt identifying you as a promoter of amateur theatre ?

YES is the answer we are hoping for... or words to that effect !

Margaret McDonagh

Run for Your Wife – play reading

The auditioned reading for our summer play, led by Benita, proved to be an evening with a difference. Benita arrived to find us sitting around the table in the usual manner and brightly commented "Well, we won't be needing that... come on, lets get these chairs cleared out of the way".

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After some reluctant chair shuffling and introductions - we welcomed Sandra who came along with a view to



joining our team of directors, and Greg and Ken who are keen to act – Benita launched us into a series of "drama games", starting with each of us introducing

ourselves and stating one thing we liked. Everyone else then had to strain their grey matter to remember the name and interest of everyone else in the room! It was a great ice-breaker and an opportunity for particularly the non-acting members present to drop a few inhibitions.

There followed a role play exercise: pairs were given a "first line" and had to ad-lib from there, then volunteers had to read out a mundane set of instructions whilst expressing a stated emotion. We were a little perplexed at first to see how it would work, and those of us who volunteered soon discovered how difficult it really was!

The games resulted in great hilarity and continued into a relaxed enjoyable evening of auditioned readings of excerpts from "Run for Your Wife".

Perhaps those of us leading future play readings should start their evenings in a similar manner; as it certainly makes a livelier social event.

Your Committee would appreciate your comments and thoughts; and might advise future reading leaders!

Dyane Silvester

Stage Whispers is YOUR newsletter: It shouldn't be written entirely by the Committee! Please let us have your suggestions, comments, jokes, articles, photos, letters etc to dyane100@hotmail.com