

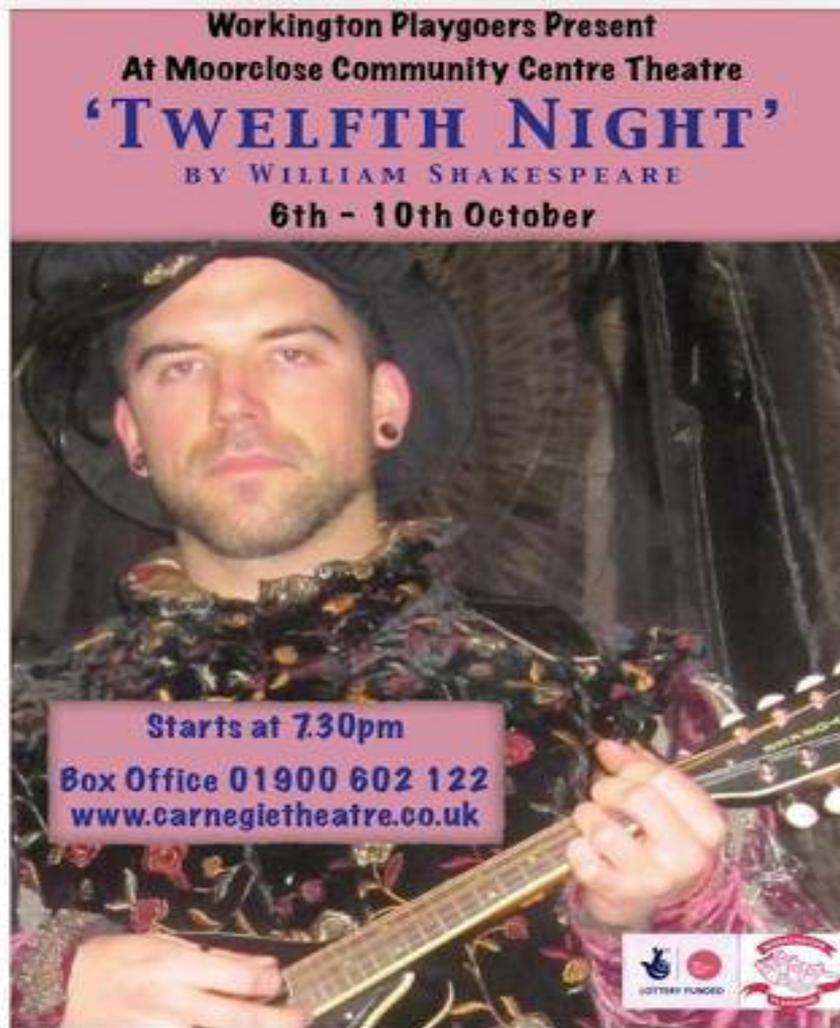


The Prompter



Workington Playgoers' newsletter – September 2015.

Welcome to The Prompter. We look forward to seeing you at **Moorclose** in the near future.



With cross dressing, mistaken identities, fights, passion and jealousy this drama is one of the great comedy plays by Shakespeare. Join Sir Toby Belch, Malvolio, Maria, Viola, Orsino and many other characters as they search for love and happiness in a delightful Elizabethan extravaganza. Directed by Laurie Mansfield and featuring a host of seasoned and well- loved Playgoers actors, this promises to be an evening to remember. Listen to the specially composed music, admire the sumptuous, period costumes and revel in the fun with The Playgoers at Moorclose Community Centre Theatre.

Twelfth Night – Director’s Notes

The title Twelfth Night or 'What you will' suggests that this most popular of Shakespeare's plays has some connection with Christmas. However, the only possible connection appears to be that one of the first performances took place in London on twelfth night in 1601. Suggestions for any closer link will be warmly received.



However, the opening lines from Duke Orsino - "If music be the food of love - play on", are entirely appropriate, as music and love are at the heart of the whole play. Thus we are delighted that composer Phil Wood has arranged the music for us, including an original overture. All of which will be performed by members of the Cockermouth Early Music group.

Shakespeare is bawdy. At his Globe, the audience in the pit would have been standing, rather like the Arena audience at the Albert Hall proms, eating snacks, (probably oysters - which were the poor man's equivalent of our chips) and making loud comments about the play. I don't expect our audiences to be quite so liberal!

Performing at Moorclose gives us the opportunity to present the action in a state approximating to the open sided stage of the Globe, with the audience looking down on the stage, in a very open style. We have attempted to create an area reminiscent of the Globe (according to modern reconstructions), with simply three main entrances and two pillars, which would have supported the roof that kept rain off the actors, (but not the audience in the pit!)

We very much hope that you will enjoy our play. Twelfth Night has been subject to all sorts of interpretations, focussing on the great variety of themes that surface during the action. We do not profess to be authentic, but we do hope that we are fun!

Laurie Mansfield

Workington Playgoers AGM - 8 September 2015

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am pleased to welcome you to this Annual General Meeting of the Workington Playgoers

Club and would like to thank the Helena Thompson Museum for hosting the event whilst the Theatre Royal is out of action. This is the 80th year that Playgoers has been in existence and I am confident that the momentous changes taking place in the theatre will strengthen the club and secure the future of Playgoers for many years to come.

You will hear later about the progress of the refurbishment work and some of the problems we have encountered, but I must record our sincere thanks to all the organisations and individuals who have funded this work. These include grant monies from the following :

Big Lottery Fund	£364,736
Monument Trust	£ 60,000
WREN	£30,000
J P Getty Junior Trust	£ 20,000
Francis C. Scott Trust	£ 10,000
Sir John Fisher Foundation	£ 5,000
Councillor Joe Holiday	£ 5,000
Hadfield Trust	£ 3,000

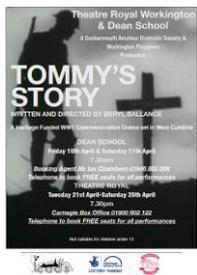


In addition, the Big Lottery Fund have awarded us £25,750 to aid the launch of the refurbished Theatre Royal and to build capacity within the organisation. We hope that the “new” Theatre will be used by an increasing number of community groups, providing revenue and freeing up Playgoers by removing the need to be overly commercial in their choice of plays. Some initial discussions have already taken place about a new management structure.

We simply could not have raised all this funding without the guidance and hard work done by James Watson. James is project managing the development and is already thinking about raising further funding to revitalise the Washington Street facade, to repair the proscenium arch, to replace our aged flying grid and to support the Theatre Royal junior section.

Moving on to activities in the theatre, It has been a busy year starting in September with Ron Dicken’s memorable performance in “*The Ghost of Tommy Atkins*” by Lawrence Nelson, followed in October by the Second Stars production of “*Lost Boy*” written and directed by Millie and “*Ladies Down Under*” by Amanda Whittington. John Challis visited the Theatre in late October

with his show *“Only Fools and Boycie”*. In November, Bardie Thomas and Jennie Buckman ran two days of Shakespeare Workshops and later in the month we hosted the Steve Whetton Charity Concert in aid of the Royal Masonic Benevolent Association. Galliarda presented *“A Merry Wassail”* of medieval Christmas music in early December. This show was very kindly sponsored by one of our regular supporters Trevor Roberts. This was followed by our Christmas show *“When Did You Last See Your Trousers”* by Ray Galton and John Antrobus which was enjoyed by all who saw it. The Rosehill Shakespeare company presented *“Fanfare for the Common Woman”* in January and the Rocket Theatre Company presented an excellent rendition of *“Lord Arthur Savile’s Crime”* in early March.



“Tommy’s Story” written and directed by Beryl Ballance was one of the highlights of the year. It was a joint production venture with Cockermouth Amateur Dramatic Society (CADS) and involved several actors who were performing in

the Theatre Royal for the first time. The production was generously supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and meant that we were able to offer free tickets to everyone who attended. Significant sums were raised at the performances for The Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes charities. The final performance in the Theatre before it closed for refurbishment was another Second Stars production of *Sleeping Beauty* in June.



Our temporary move to Moorclose whilst the work is going on in the Theatre has proved to be very successful and I would like to thank Pat

Brinicombe for arranging the venue and to Geoff and the stage crew for all their hard work making it fit for purpose. The tremendous success of *“Bouncers”* by John Godber in August vindicated the decision to move to Moorclose and rehearsals for *“Twelfth Night”* are well underway for October.

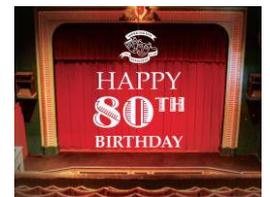
A welcome introduction this year has been the pre-production planning meetings which now

take place with members from all departments at a very early stage of the planning process for each new production. These have proved to be very effective and help to keep everyone informed and involved from the start.

The wardrobe and props teams have worked very hard this year on a massive clear out in preparation for the refurbishment work and wardrobe raised almost £3,000 from the sale of redundant costumes and other wardrobe items. Thanks to Gordon Rushton and the team, the workshop has already been moved into the old props store across the yard and looks very professional and will be much more efficient and safer than the cramped conditions behind the stage.

We are all very excited about establishing an active and vibrant youth theatre group this year. This has been spearheaded by Millie Hardie Sims who is running the *Second Stars Theatre Royal* youth group on a Saturday morning. Millie is writing plays for the youngsters to perform and has successfully produced two shows in the theatre this year and is working on *“The Nutcracker and the Mouse King”* for December. Apart from the cost of becoming Youth Members of Playgoers, which entitles them to free tickets for all of the Playgoer shows, members of *Second Stars* are not required to pay anything more for the Saturday sessions and workshops and will hopefully become active adult members of Playgoers in the future.

There have been a number of social events for Members this year including a dinner in Cockermouth in March, 80th Birthday Celebrations in the Theatre in June and the Annual Barbeque in July - all were well attended and very successful. There were also two meetings for Members during the year to discuss the developments in the Theatre and the future organisation of Playgoers.



We must congratulate our Vice Chairman Paul Adams who has recently been awarded an Honorary Fellowship from the University of Cumbria in recognition of his lifelong outstanding contribution to education and to the folk and jazz music scene. Paul arranged a very successful

DVD recording for Greg Russell and Ciaran Algar in the Theatre Royal during the year and as usual organized the hugely popular Jeff Barnhart concert.

Finally, I would like to thank the Members of Council who have worked so hard all year, to all the helpers who run Saturday morning coffee, to the actors, directors, stage crew, set builders, Prompter editor, ticket sellers, to Jenni Rushton for looking after the website and to all the other volunteers who make Playgoers what it is and who keep our Theatre running. We quite simply couldn't do it without you.

Thank you too to our Auditor Glynis who keeps us on the straight and narrow and who has done so much extra work this year to establish our VAT registration, to James Watson once again for all his support, and to Gwyneth and Nicola who walked from Carlisle to Grangemouth raising about £1,000 which will be split between the Theatre Royal and the Henderson Suite at West Cumbria Hospital. Thank you to you all.

Peter Inglis
Chairman

.....

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN THE HELENA THOMPSON MUSEUM ON TUESDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 7.30 pm

The Chairman. Peter Inglis, took the Chair in the presence of 23 members.

Apologies received from 23 members.

Minutes of the last AGM were approved and there were no Matters Arising.

Treasurers Report- given. Acceptance of accounts proposed by Geoff Brinicombe and seconded by Gillian Scholey

Election of Officers, Committee and Council Members – the following were elected:

- President** Geoff Hool* (Prop. P. Inglis, Sec. G. Walker)
- Chairman** Peter Inglis* (Prop. P. Brinicombe, Sec. G. Wells)
- Vice Chairman** Paul Adams* (Prop. G.. Scholey, Sec. J. Rushton)

Secretary Grace Walker* (Prop. P. Inglis, Sec. A. Chambers)

Treasurer Gilda Wells *(Prop. J. Rushton, Sec. P. Adams)

Assistant Treasurer Anne Hindmoor (Prop. G. Wells, Sec. P. Adams)

Company Secretary Geoffrey Hall *(Prop. G.. Walker, Sec. P. Inglis)

Productions Director Jenni Rushton* (Prop. P. Inglis, Sec. H. Earl)

Youth Leader Millie Hardy-Sims *(Prop. A. Chambers, Sec. B. Young)

Technical Director Geoff Brinicombe* (Prop. P. Inglis, Sec. P. Adams)

Maintenance Manager T McGorrian (Prop. G. Brinicombe, Sec. G.Walker.)

Properties Manager Anne Chambers* (Prop. P. Brinicombe, Sec. G. Scholey)

Wardrobe Manager Helen Earl *(Prop. G. Walker, Sec. P. Inglis)

House and Social Committee Rep Glynn Scurr* (Prop. G. Scholey. Sec. G. Walker)

Bar Manager Heather Scholey (Prop. G. Scholey, Sec. G. Scurr)

Publicity Manager Pat Brinicombe *(Prop. G. Walker, Sec. G. Wells)

Prompter Editor Gillian Scholey* (Prop. G. Scurr. Sec. H. Scholey)

LTG Rep Geoffrey Hall (Prop G. Walker. Sec. P. Inglis)

Those denoted * to serve on Council.

One member pointed out that there appeared to be no position of Membership Secretary and the Chairman explained that this should be taken care of by the proposed new management structure which will be outlined to Members following the first meeting of the newly elected Council.

Any Other Business

- 1 There was some discussion about Playgoers having priority in the refurbished theatre and the Chairman reassured Members that this would always be the case.
- 2 The Chairman reminded Members that the BIG lottery Fund has also offered us £25, 750 to help develop the management and marketing of the Theatre and to fund the relaunch.
- 3 Paul Adams outlined a proposal for the first event in the new theatre. (See pg 10. Ed.)
- 4 The Chairman summed up the current position on the building project. Architects Plus were appointed and 3 tenders were received. Jacob Stobbarts Ltd. won the contract and work started at the end of June. Details of all the funding

received are in the Chairman's report. Playgoers/ website is regularly updated with photographs of the work which is scheduled to be completed by 8th of December 2015 although this may change as some difficulties have been encountered along the way (e.g. asbestos, dangerous chimney in upstairs theatre). This is not unusual with old buildings and these are being resolved.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

A Personal Perspective

As Vice-Chair of Playgoers I have had only minimal, peripheral, input to the Lottery bid – I was charged with overseeing another project. Therefore I feel I can offer an unbiased vote of gratitude to Peter Inglis and Geoff Brinicombe for all the work they have done on it. Both Peter and Geoff have publicly paid tribute to James Watson who has overseen the bid and is now Project Manager and his help has been invaluable, but I feel the input of Peter and Geoff also ought to be acknowledged. They have attended, innumerable meetings, met for deliberations and read pages of transcript to get us where we are today - special mention also ought to be made of Gilda Wells who has ploughed through the figures and sorted out the VAT registration.

It has been a massive undertaking and I don't think any of the Playgoers team quite realised how massive. Now, though, we are there, bid accepted and builders started. People rarely like change and this is going to be a big one: some people will always be unhappy and some people will always feel it has not gone far enough. Whatever your views we are where we are and the only way is forward.

In no small way the situation has been forced on us. Some months ago we had a meeting of members and there was a proposition that whatever the outcome "Playgoers must come first". I would suggest that the concept needs changing slightly: the building must come first. I have always detected the building gets taken for granted, but without it Playgoers would be putting on plays in church or village halls. The problem is we have an ageing building, a third of which was not being used



and is crumbling. Because of an earlier grant we were able to install a heating system – no heating beyond the back of the stage throughout the rest of the building is a nonsense in this day and age – and make the building watertight. If we had not been able to do that we would not have a theatre now. Very few people realise that, but the heating system, such as it was, was about to expire and we had no funds to finance its replacement.



That is our main problem: lack of finance. Our revenue stream derives from the plays we produce and a few hirings (plus the Saturday coffee bar). Some people want us to do more plays (more on this later), but currently we do four plays a year, which we have difficulty casting, to a dwindling audience. We would have had to lay out more money as the building got older – even with what we've got this time we still need more to refurbish the stage (just have a look up the next time you're on the stage and look at the condition of the 'grid') so there will be another round of grant applying before we're finished. The toilet facilities, the general fabric of the building were becoming an embarrassment. The workshop behind the stage limited our hiring possibilities (we might mutter about Health & Safety, but most of it is common sense and tools lying around and children do not mix); we lost one group who had used the theatre because they didn't like the back stage/dressing room area.

We needed funding, but no-one is going to give us money simply because we are nice people. The fact that we had a youth based group looking for premises swung it for us. Now we are going to have a restructured front and rear of the building which with luck will make it more welcoming and inviting; we will have a slightly spruced up auditorium and we will have another organisation paying rent and using part of the Wilson Street premises. Some members seem to think that there will be all sorts of people all over the building all day and evening. This is not the case. The other organisation will have its own designated areas as will we.

Will Playgoers come first? Of course we will: these things have been done to put Playgoers on a more secure footing and enable its

continuation. Playgoers will control the building and the decision to separate play production and the general day to day running of the building into two committees answerable to the Council ensures that the play side will have a loud voice. There will have to be more give and take as we will still need to secure hires, but that is simply a question of organisation. Those who think they can just come in at any time will have to check that something else is not happening. Once the Playgoers programme is in place everything else will work round it. Also we should have additional rehearsal space away from the auditorium.

The earlier mention of plays being difficult to cast and the audiences dwindling almost sound like reasons for giving up, but for too long we have had to play safe so as not to frighten off the core audience. That, though, does not necessarily encourage a new audience. With luck a more sound financial footing might enable us to be more adventurous in our programming: a couple of recent productions brought in new young actors and we need to ensure that we have things to offer them; we need to offer more challenging things for our existing pool of actors; at the same time, though, we need to keep the core audience on board. The answer is a mixed and varied programme. I applauded Gwynneth Savage doing 'Bouncers' back in the early summer. Certainly not in the Playgoers 'comfort zone' but we've got to try things like that every now and again. Theatre should be thought-provoking, challenging (for actors as well as audiences), and entertaining in various combinations with not one of those aspects dominating

What I am hoping is that the refurbished theatre will attract a lot of attention once it is completed and I would like to think that we become invigorated and can breathe new life into the old place, make it a place where people want to come because it is welcoming and the surroundings are pleasant and where they know that whatever they've come to see the quality will be good. We face a lot of competition for audiences and there will be a few challenges, but if we rally round and meet them head on I am sure we can tackle most things.

On the subject of tackling most things one other vote of thanks to all those who helped move all

our goods and chattels up to Moorclose. Team spirit was invoked and came up trumps.

Paul Adams

Notes from the Treasurer

The majority of members have now paid their subscriptions for 2015/2016 we are however still accepting late subscriptions.

The Golden Jubilee continues to be a good source of income so could I encourage you and your friends to join if you haven't already done so as there are still several tickets available. Prizes are £12 per week two prizes of £250 one of £500 and one of £1000 so well worth the annual subscription of £12 per annum. If you would like more information please contact Louise Richardson on 01900 601231 or Pauline Harkness on 01900 824563.

We are registered for VAT from the 1st of June which is complex due to the varying rates we can claim back related to the use of the building. Our registration will also affect our bar and coffee bar prices which will be liable for VAT.

Thanks. *Gilda Wells*

Thanks to Geoffrey Hall for the following fascinating, in-depth look at several aspects of Twelfth Night. I feel much more 'equipped' to appreciate the production now. Ed.

Boys will be girls, and girls will be boys

(and a Steward may be a Zany!)

Twelfth Night has one of the most famous and poetic opening speeches of all Shakespeare's plays. A lovelorn aristocrat announces a novel if bizarre 'cure' for his unrequited love. He commands his musicians to keep playing, in the belief that an 'excess' of music may so sicken the seemingly insatiable demands ('the appetite') of his passion, that his passion will die (the word 'die', incidentally, would also have been understood by Elizabethans to refer to 'orgasm'). It is a 'cure for love' which quickly fails; after barely six lines of verse, the tune is no longer "so sweet", and the music therapy ends abruptly.



In this first speech of Duke Orsino, Shakespeare gives clues to what is usually considered the

dominating theme of *Twelfth Night*. Love is not only an overwhelming emotion, but has *transformative* power: like the vastness of the sea, love has immeasurable capacity to change and reduce the status and value of all who 'enter there', exercising the highest power of imaginative creativity, as it reveals to those engulfed by it, the many 'shapes' which love can assume.

As if on cue, the very next scene brings out of a real ocean of water, the shipwrecked Viola, a character who decides to disguise her gender by taking on a masculine 'shape': she dresses in male clothing and takes a male name, 'Caesario'. In so doing, she will become the object of growing affection in the heart of Orsino, and of unlooked for desire in the heart of Orsino's own austere object of desire, the Countess Olivia.

20th Century studies and productions of *Twelfth Night* have made it a commonplace to see in the character of Viola/Caesario and her/his developing emotional relationships with both male and female admirers, a dissolving and questioning of conventional assumptions as to gender and sexual identity. (The fact that a boy actor played a girl (Viola) playing a boy (Caesario) in the original production, would no doubt have added additional blurring of gender identity.)

The play's treatment of what attracts one person to another, is sophisticated and challenging, creating an empathetic and thoughtful kind of comedy, in contrast to that of the bawdy sub-plot involving "Sir Toby and the lighter people". The mixing of high and low comedy; the proportions of 62% prose to 38% verse; the sudden changes of mood and tone - all these elements add to our sense of *Twelfth Night* sharing the once-a-year anarchic folk holiday excesses implied by its title.

The 'female-disguised-as-a-boy' plot device was not unique to Shakespeare. One of the likely sources for *Twelfth Night* is an Italian prose farce, *Gl'Innannati* ('The Deceived Ones'), dating from 1531, which was translated into French, Spanish and Latin - but not English - in the Bard's lifetime. (This last fact is not lost on Anti-Stratfordians who see it as just the sort of 'evidence' to cast doubt on the belief that a lad from a 16th Century Midlands backwater could have written the plays.) Extracts from a 19th Century English

translation of *Gl'Innannati* can be found on the internet, and provide – as the sources for the other plays often do – the most direct means to appreciate how well Shakespeare performed his literary alchemy:

Leila [the Viola character]: " ...*What would become of me, if any one of them should suspect my sex?...I serve one who does not know me; and for more bitter grief, I aid him in his love for another, without any other hope than that of satiating my eyes with his sight.*"

(Compare that with Viola's soliloquy at Act 2, Sc 2, 16 -40.)

An Italianate influence may also be detected in the names of at least eight of the characters, and could also have supplied indirectly the named location of *Twelfth Night*. Italy's Adriatic coast looks toward what was once *Illyria*, the ancient name of a region of the Balkans; the name also suggests Elysium where Viola imagines her drowned brother to be; and the sound perhaps evokes too, an illusory, imaginary realm, not entirely of this world. In recent weeks, whilst rehearsing the role of Malvolio in Playgoers' forthcoming production of the play, I have come to wonder about another Italian source of possible inspiration for one element of the play's humour.

The *Commedia dell'Arte* of Italian theatre had a number of stock characters, representing a range of social types. The *Zanni* was the comic servant figure, and the origin of the English word, 'zany'. Some credit for the word's first recorded appearance in English may be due to Shakespeare, it occurs in both *Love's Labour's Lost* and (in the plural) in *Twelfth Night*: Malvolio sneers that "these wise men" who laud professional fools are "no better than the fools' zanies". In performance, the *Zanni* exploited his legs for comic effect, employing a number of distinctive 'funny walks'. The potential for producing absurd and ridiculous physical comedy from a pair of human legs has long been recognised in stage and film history, of course: Chaplin built a universal character on a waddling walk. Like the modern stand-up comedian, the *Zanni* also enjoyed, more than any other character in the *Commedia*, an intimate



relationship with his audience, speaking to it directly.



And what do we find in *Twelfth Night*? Shakespeare puts the servant Malvolio's legs into yellow stockings, complete with garters; has him deliver, all unknowing, possibly the most obscene joke in any of the plays; gives him not a single intimate scene or relationship with any other character, save for the 'Dark House' episode when he is beset by an insincere interlocutor; but instead has him reveal his innermost fantasies to the audience. Is the suddenly ludicrous behaviour of the unlovely steward (perhaps the most hard working and long suffering member of Olivia's household), in showing off his yellow, gartered legs to Olivia and confiding all to the audience, unwittingly aping the antics of the *Zanni*? Act 3 Sc 4 seems to show the "wise man" become no better than a "fool's zany", a 'comic' servant with funny legs.

That Shakespeare was influenced by the *Commedia* is apparent from other plays in the canon, although the source of his knowledge, as with the mystery of where and how he might have learned to read Italian, French or Spanish (unless perhaps he read *Gl'Ingannati* in the Latin he would have learned at the Stratford Grammar School), can only be speculated: a possibility is the first notable comic actor in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, Will Kemp, had contact with *Commedia* players when on tour in Europe in the 1580s.

But there is also melancholic despair at work in *Twelfth Night*, and not only in Feste's songs. The 'Dark House' scene (Act 4, Sc2) reveals Malvolio as the play's only tragic role, the character who thinks "nobly of the soul" but for whom there is no convincing promise of reconciliation at the play's end. (Sir Andrew is a victim of Sir Toby's drunken manipulation, too, but his simplicity seems to shield him from any real self-awareness of his being gulled.)

Sir Donald Sinden wrote a famous blow by blow account of his own performance in the role at the RSC in 1969, and revealed his thoughts on the subject. Sinden, a very gifted comic actor who became a great Shakespearean, records how he almost handed back the part when he realised

that Malvolio was such a tragic figure; he genuinely believed suicide would have been Malvolio's only option after the pathetic threat of his last line. (One production of the play, performed in a Chekhovian style and setting, even had an off-stage gunshot after Malvolio's final exit: shades of *The Seagull*.)

Someone asked during one of our rehearsals whether anyone "cared" about Malvolio's fate. The answer is that *the audience*, at any rate, should care about what happens to him. Shakespeare shows a human life, one perhaps made deliberately unattractive by the playwright, destroyed by a joke, despite all the blind-fold shootings of Cupid through the air of Illyria - and by a joke which, until Act 4, Sc 2, both characters and audience had found 'funny'. Elizabethan attitudes to mental illness may have been to laugh and lock the sufferer away in darkness, but I struggle to believe that Shakespeare intended any audience to find comforting amusement in the baiting and torment of the 'Dark House' scene. To return to Orsino's opening imagery of deep water, Malvolio is swept out to sea and drowns in full view of everyone.

Perhaps humour is, at root, only cruelty patched with laughter (to borrow Feste's turn of phrase in Act 1, Sc 5), and the French philosopher Henri Bergson correct in claiming there can be no laughter once sympathy and the emotions are engaged for the object - or should that be 'the victim'? - of a joke. *Twelfth Night* is often thought of as the last of Shakespeare's plays to be most obviously a 'Comedy', and catalogued as such in the First Folio; but for all the farcical aspects of love which *Twelfth Night* conjures up, perhaps in its darker moments, the playwright was already beginning to look towards 'the Problem Plays' of the final decade of his career. *Geoffrey Hall.*

Success!

Yes - We've done it - 198 miles from Carlisle to Grangemouth

That's The Annandale Way, part of the Southern Upland Way, The Clyde Walkway, The Kelvin Way and about 3/4 of the Forth and Clyde Canal. Also West to East across Scotland and we've filled in the bit between Glasgow and Carlisle - Only 1 section to do to complete LEJOG! Thank you for sponsoring us.

Gwyneth Savage & Nicola Woodier



**Theatre Royal's
Second Star Youth Theatre
OCTOBER HALF TERM
PROJECT**

The 5-day project for MONDAY 26TH October – THURSDAY 29TH October 2015, to be held at Moorclose Community Theatre, Workington as part of Theatre Royal's Second Star Youth Theatre.

**PERFORMANCE THURSDAY 29TH
OCTOBER**



This is a 5-day project in October half term 2015. Therefore dedication is key for auditioning, as you will be required at rehearsals 10am-4pm on Monday 26th -Thursday 29th October 2015.

Auditions: Saturday 17th October 2015, 12.30n-2.30pm, Moorclose Campus

To be a part of this production, you don't need any previous experience and we guarantee everyone who auditions will get a part, as long as they are dedicated and focused and aged 10-18. It costs £10 a year to be a member of Theatre Royal's Second Star Youth Theatre.

Dad's Army



As most members will already know, this has been postponed until Christmas 2016. There will be no adult Christmas production this year – a rare chance for wardrobe, FOH, stage and actors to have a slightly easier Christmas although hopefully we will all soon be busy relocating back to our brand new, old theatre and we will be helping Millie with her productions.

**Theatre Royal's
Second Star Youth Theatre**



6.30 pm Box Office 07826 519000 or 602122

No Playgoers' Christmas production this year ... but you can still have a Christmas treat! Come to Moorclose and see the Youth Theatre's Christmas production.

This play, adapted for stage by Millie Hardy-Sims, is based on the 1892 ballet by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and the 1816 story by E. T. A. Hoffman. The music of the Nutcracker is known by everyone, and the story which accompanies it is a beautiful tale of growing up, sacrifice and love. This version combines the Russian themes of the Ballet, and the French and German themes of the original fairytale.

A beautiful tale of adventure and love, seasonally styled to be a Christmas sensation!



'Bouncers' Triumphs!

Gwyneth Savage's superb direction of John Godber's 'Bouncers' meant that audiences

at Moorclose enjoyed a slick, energetic and very funny evening in the company of a small but perfectly formed cast.

Nicola Woodier, Morgan Sweeney – looking incredibly intimidating with his tattooed head – Andy Greenwood and Stewart Grant portrayed around fifty characters, seamlessly switching sexes, locations and personas with the mere flick of a wrist or addition of a handbag. The quick pace and lack of realism meant that the actors had only themselves to rely on in making each character and location come to life and they succeeded brilliantly.

'Bouncers' contd.

Interacting with the audience throughout the evening, beginning even before the actual play commenced, their use of space, orchestrated by the director, was innovative and meant that the audience felt part of the proceedings from the minute they entered the venue.

Perceptive social commentary veiled in humour was evident throughout the play. Some of the language was crude and not for the faint hearted but it was totally in keeping with the themes of the play. Although written over thirty years ago, much of the script can, unfortunately, be overheard on Washington St. on most weekend nights. It could certainly be heard in Trader Bills, The Slypt Disc and The Rendezvous during the 1970s!

There too you would find the Cheryls, Elaines and Suzys of this world dancing around their handbags and hoping not to go home alone...again and, along with some hilarious oneliners and visual humour, this talented cast also managed to poignantly portray the angst that was felt by these seemingly confident young women. No mean feat when the part is being played by a burly, macho bruiser! (Not you, Nicola!) The bruisers themselves also had terrific depth and this was powerfully yet subtly brought out by all four actors, once again proving the adage, 'Don't judge a book by its cover'!

Gillian Scholey

Proposal for an Official Opening of The Theatre Royal

At the recent AGM Vice Chairman Paul Adams put forward the following idea for the official opening of our newly refurbished theatre.

Concept: The history of the Theatre Royal presented as extracts from one play from each decade linked by narration.

Format: * Several actors plus a narrator to do all the excerpts. * Minimal stage set.* Props/pieces of furniture to denote scenes.* Possible use of back projection. * Aim for 2x60 mins sets.

General notes/aims. * It is a celebration of the past/ start of a new era so it needs to be reasonably light. * Excerpts rather than full scenes. * See if there are opportunities for music. * small team to select scenes.

Presentation *It ought to be an 'official opening'.

* Time - some time after the completion of the building so that we have time to get organised but before the first full play. *The first performance to be invited guests * A guided tour and some sort of nibbles and drinks. A short official opening. * Two public performances with paying audiences. * Break with tradition and use Friday, Saturday and Sunday. * Public guided tours/open days.

Implementation. * Paul Adams to script and narrate it. * A possible assistant director? * Aim for script to be completed by some time in November.

Other Musings. * Might it be possible to trail the first play of the season? * It might be possible to involve Soundwave and Second Star ? * Involve a cross section of members.

Season 2016

Jenni Rushton and the productions team are well on with the planning of the 2016 season. It is hoped that the Playgoers will perform 'Entertaining Angels' (Richard Everett), 'The Perfect Murder' (Based on the novel by Peter James and adapted by Shaun McKenna) and Dad's Army (David Croft and Jimmy Perry). Further details and firm dates later.

Transforming our Theatre

It is impossible for The Prompter to portray all the work being undertaken in the theatre at the moment however our website is doing a marvellous job. Visit workington-playgoers.org.uk, click on **BIG Lottery Fund** and you can then see a detailed refurbishment diary with a host of fabulous pictures. Some parts are unrecognisable, some are frightening, others are just 'Oh Wow!'

Please remember the theatre is a closed site at the moment and viewing the website is the ONLY way you can get a close up view of what is happening. It is well worth a visit. G Scholey

All contributions to The Prompter are welcome. Contact Gillian Scholey: Gillscholey@gmail.com

Thanks to Gordon Rushton for permission to use his photographs. Other photographs – G Scholey. Apologies to Pat and Geoff Brincombe who submitted reports which have not been used in this issue due to lack of space. They will be in the December issue.