



# The Prompter



*Workington Playgoers' newsletter – November 2014.*

Welcome to The Prompter. We look forward to seeing you in the theatre in the near future.

*Our Next Production...*

## *When Did You Last See Your Trousers?*

**Written by John Antrobus and Ray Galton**

**Directed by Brian Young**

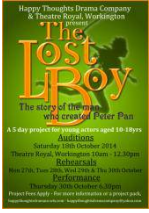
**Tuesday Dec. 2nd – Saturday Dec. 6th 2014**

When a burglar steals Howard's suit while he is asleep with his long-suffering girlfriend, Penny, the stage is set for a hilarious evening of side-splitting fun. This action packed, fast paced farce written by John Antrobus and Ray Galton ( co-author of 'Hancock' and 'Steptoe and Son'), includes a Danish au pair, a trouserless Home Secretary, a punk, a gorilla and other crazy, oddball characters who all combine to create scenes of mayhem and merriment. Starring Playgoers old and new, this play is just the tonic for a cold, December night.



*( Photo – G Rushton )*

## Youth Theatre Project



Earlier this year when collecting my grandson from Nursery I spotted a notice advertising "Beauty and the Beast" by Happy Thoughts Drama Co. My curiosity was roused, I made enquiries and discovered this was a youth group led by Millie Hardy Sims who happens to be a teaching assistant at my grandsons' school. I suggested to Council that perhaps we should meet up with Millie with a view to encouraging a youth group to become involved with Playgoers. This was agreed, meetings were held and together we organised a youth project over the half term week, "The Lost Boy", written, directed and stage managed by Millie. For those of us involved it was wonderful to see the cast of 11 youngsters come together on the Monday morning and by Thursday evening the theatre witnessed a brilliant performance. A breath of fresh air for us and just the kind of project to assist us in the funding bid we all anticipate receiving, fingers, well everything, crossed!

With such enthusiasm and willing offers from Millie and her mum, Maria, to run a youth group the partnership was sealed at November's Council meeting and plans for setting it all up in the New Year are under way. We know that there are youngsters out there who prefer drama to musicals, some do love both, and who wish to develop their theatre skills too. Millie and Maria offer Drama award courses and Playgoers are so in need of youngsters to learn the ropes and hopefully continue to provide live theatre in Workington. If you know of any youngsters aged 8 to 18 who are keen to join us do let us know and we can let them have further details. Having such a group will also introduce more people to our theatre. Theatre Royal provides a great opportunity for these youngsters and we look forward to an exciting 2015 on all fronts.

Anne Chambers

P.S. We had some ideas for naming the new group, one suggestion TRY Happy Thoughts! (if you haven't guessed -Theatre Royal Youth). Jury's out on that one -----suggestions on a postcard please.

## The Lost Boy

"3 months? The length of time it takes to rehearse a West End show.

6 months? The length of time it takes to rehearse a Happy Thoughts Drama Company main production.

5 days? The length of time it took eleven young actors to stage a full length play at Workington Theatre Royal in October Half Term.

When Theatre Royal approached us in March to stage a youth production, it's safe to say we displayed a range of emotions. Excitement, nervousness, apprehension...

But when the time came, all fears disappeared.

"The Lost Boy", a touching play based on the real life events of the man who created Peter Pan, was something I had always wanted to stage. Though it seemed ambitious, the group of young but very talented and dedicated young actors we had in the cast saw the project through to completion. The cast worked incredibly hard and showed levels of professionalism required for professional productions. They reached levels of emotions which should be difficult for their age range, they took on board all direction and were not afraid to suggest and to change, and through them these long dead characters came back to life on the stage.



Despite some never having met before day one, the Happy Thoughts Drama Company at Theatre Royal cast gelled together and it was through them that this ambitious project was seen to completion. After my 4 year experience of putting on amateur dramatic plays, even this project daunted me. There were many times during the project when I doubted the sheer enormity of the task we had undertaken, but as the curtains opened on performance night all fears melted away. I enjoyed every second of the experience and I was so proud of the young actors for working so hard for such long hours. It seemed as though every member of the Company, cast and crew, thoroughly enjoyed the experience and there have been many comments about continuing the group and staging more plays in this beautiful theatre space.

Millie Hardy-Sims, ( Director and Writer)

## Some comments from the Cast of *The Lost Boy*

"The whole experience was exciting and exhilarating! I enjoyed every moment!" – Emily-Rose Lane, 9 years old. (Michael Llewelyn-Davies)

"I loved meeting new people and making friends! And the time schedule was good too, I learned a lot in putting on a play in four days." – Georgia Douglas-Brown, 14 years old (Emma DuMurier)

...As a young actor I found *The Lost Boy* production hugely rewarding and a great experience...The play itself came together magically in time, and left me saturated with emotion, satisfaction and pride at the accomplishments of the people that I had formed fast friendships with. *The Lost Boy* was superbly written and directed by Millie Hardy-Sims, and was just a fantastic way to spend a week in great company, and produce a little gem of a performance." - Rowan Morgan, 16 year old (J. M. Barrie)

### Some comments from the Audience:

"The play was so professional, I can't believe how slick the performance was from such a short rehearsal period!"

"I was very impressed with the performance of all the actors. It was easy to forget that we were watching a youth theatre!"

## 'Only Fools and Boycie'

Over a hundred Boycie fans, many of them new to The Theatre Royal, enjoyed a night of anecdotes and film/TV clips detailing the life and exploits of John Challis, better known as 'Boycie' from *'Only Fools and Horses'*. The actor and raconteur surprised the audience with the breadth of his experience having appeared in the West End, on Broadway and in Shakespeare with the RSC, as well as featuring in TV shows including *Z Cars*, *Open All Hours*, *Citizen Smith*, *Dr Who*, *The Sweeney* and *The Green, Green Grass*.

Telling his stories with relish, he had his audience in the palm of his hand and, when the time came for questions, there was no shortage of volunteers with a wish to find out more. After the show Mr Challis stayed for photographs and to sign books posters and other memorabilia brought along by staunch fans. An excellent evening.



( John Challis with bar manager, Heather Scholey and, below, signing books for fans.)



## Pass It On!!

Did you know that anyone can hire part of the theatre or the whole of it at very reasonable rates.

The charges are

Studio	£5 per hour
Theatre	£15 per hour
Theatre	£100 full day or night
Lights and sound	£50 per performance

Contact Pat Brinicombe for bookings or Gilda Wells to discuss finance.

# Shakespeare Comes To The Theatre Royal

On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2014, the Rosehill Shakespeare Players organised a Shakespeare workshop weekend with Bardy Thomas and Jennie Buckman, two expert acting coaches.

The Saturday session took place at the Haven Club, Whitehaven, where we rehearsed 'Fanfare for the Common Wo/man' (selected scenes from Shakespeare plays, focusing on the common folk). Several members of the Playgoers will be appearing in this show, including Geoffrey Hall, Tony Parker, Andy Greenwood, Rebecca Wilson, Maggie Bedford and me (Kelly Davis). We have also persuaded Ben Brinicombe to join our motley crew.

On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November, we were at the Theatre Royal, where we will be performing our show on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> January (with a matinée and evening performance on 10<sup>th</sup>). Tickets are on sale now, via the Carnegie Theatre website, and we hope you will book without delay.



The entire Sunday session was devoted to 'Twelfth Night', as the Workington Playgoers will be putting on this play in Autumn 2015, directed by Laurie Mansfield. We were joined by several members of the Playgoers, and the day started with some warm-ups, including a game where you have to throw a ball and say your own name at the same time. (This was surprisingly difficult!) We then broke up into two groups and read individual scenes, focusing on some of the main characters, such as Viola, Olivia, Orsino, Sir Toby and Malvolio. After lunch, we read the final scene in the play, in which all the separate storylines are resolved. This is a very complex scene, with one group of characters interrupting another, and we

talked about the challenges of 'choreographing' it.

With each section, we discussed the language and read the text, then 'put it on its legs'. With help from Jennie and Bardy, we found that we were able to speak the lines with feeling and understanding. At one point, Bardy mentioned a helpful technique called 'cartooning', where you think of Shakespeare's images quite literally as you say them.



In the final part of the scene, Viola (played by Hannah Lewis) was reunited with Sebastian, the brother she thought drowned (played by Jesse Binns). Despite the fact that they were reading the text for the first time, these two young actresses gave such an extraordinary performance that many of us were moved to tears. They showed us what was possible, made Shakespeare's text live and breathe, and provided a very inspiring end to the weekend.

Kelly Davis

## Fanfare for the Common Wo/Man

This production brings Shakespeare right down to earth by focusing on the common folk, rather than the kings and queens. The Rosehill Shakespeare Players present a selection of funny, moving and thought-provoking scenes from some of the Bard's best-known comedies, tragedies and history plays

There will be revolting peasants, lovelorn lasses, warring spouses, feckless servants, philosophical drunkards, jokes and songs, and all kinds of mischief and mayhem. This show proves that Shakespeare wrote for everyone - not just 'posh people'!

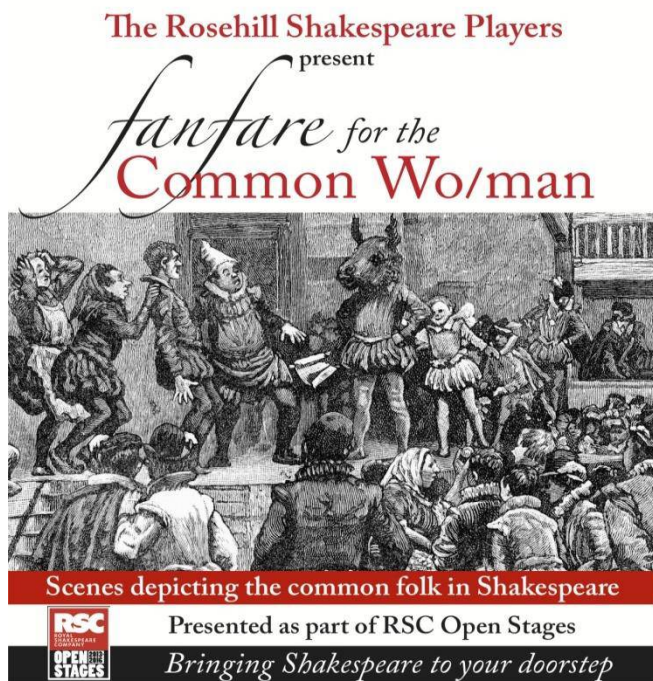
'Fanfare for the Common Wo/man' has been



selected by the Royal Shakespeare Company for their Open Stages Scheme, and the cast have benefited from mentoring by RSC professionals

*(This promises to be a lively and entertaining evening. Please see Kelly Davis, Geoffrey Hall or Tony Parker for more details about the January production and Laurie Mansfield for details of Twelfth Night. You can also visit Rosehill Shakespeare Players on Facebook. Ed.)*  
*( photos courtesy of Ben Brinicombe)*

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## Social Scene...

Are you going to see 'Strictly Kirkgate' at The Kirkgate Centre ( December 16<sup>th</sup> - December 18<sup>th</sup>)?

They promise sequins and glamour along with local celebrities. Whilst there, watch out for some of our costumes!

## Subs

These are due for renewal each June. Many thanks to those who have paid...and a gentle reminder to those who have forgotten!



## Quick Quiz – Festive of course!

1 What is the name of the original author of the Christmas Eve set story of *The Nutcracker* ?



2 What was in the meadow of the temperate valley when T. S. Eliot's Magi journeyed towards Bethlehem?

3 In Narnia, who says, ' It's always winter and never Christmas'?

4 "Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house/ not a creature was stirring..." was written by whom?

5 Who wrote *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*?



6 What was the name of Scrooge's fiancé ?

7 Who wrote the one act play *The Long Christmas Dinner*?

8 Bernard, Phyllis, Neville Belinda are characters in which play and who is the playwright?

9 Name John Godber's 'festive fairytale for grown-ups'.

10 What play do the following lines come from: "Cratchit, you're late. What time do you call this? Don't give me any of your excuses." ( Mercedes enters at her customary pace)

11 ...and these words come from which story:

*One dollar and eighty seven cents.*

*And the next day would be*

*Christmas. There was clearly*

*nothing to do but flop down on the*

*shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it*



12 Christmas is approaching and William Garrett's Shakespeare Study Club (!) meets for its weekly session. Name the play.



13 Mike Harding's painful and amusing depiction of a family Christmas is entitled?

14 Dead Detective Jake Marley features in which play?

15 George Hernan's play about Mary and Joseph is entitled...

## Playgoers Members' Evening

As a result of a suggestion made by the Chairman at the AGM, a very well-attended meeting of Members took place in the Theatre auditorium on November 4th to discuss concerns and ideas about the future of Playgoers.

Many of those present felt that modern day pressures have reduced the social contact between members and especially between those rehearsing or preparing for a play. More Members' evenings and other social events have been suggested as a partial solution to this. The next meeting will be held on **January 20<sup>th</sup> in the theatre bar** when we will discuss the procedures for selecting plays, choosing directors and casting. Please come along and share your thoughts!

The BBQ is always fun and well attended and we are grateful to Ron and his team for this fine event. Morgan also held a fine dining event on the stage which was well supported, but we do need more ideas for social events and volunteers to help run them. Don't be shy!

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## Quiz Answers

- 1 E. T. A. Hoffman
- 2 An old white horse
- 3 Mr Tumnus
- 4 Clement Clarke Moore
- 5 Dr Seuss
- 6 Belle
- 7 Thornton Wilder
- 8 Seasons Greetings - Alan Ayckbourn
- 9 Christmas Crackers
- 10 The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Production of A Christmas Carol.
- 11 The Gift of the Magi – O Henry
- 12 All Through The House by William Gleason
- 13 Comfort and Joy
- 14 A Christmas Cactus by Eliot Byerrum
- 15 Two From Galilee

## Your Prompter

Your newsletter has been in its current format for some time now

Is it time for a change?

What would you like to see included/omitted?

Its aim is to keep you up to date with what has happened in your theatre and what is about to happen. Does it do that successfully? How could it be improved?

Please let me know your views.

[GillScholey@aol.com](mailto:GillScholey@aol.com)

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## Galliarda



A reminder about this renowned group of highly respected performers who play Renaissance and Baroque music. Playing a variety of instruments including violas, recorders, flute, lute, early guitar,

theorbo and percussion, they have recently completed a tour of Great Britain where they played in a range of country houses and historical settings. Interspersing their musical numbers with 'witty readings' and demonstrations of their instruments, they promise to be 'highly entertaining'.

Tickets £11.00. **Date - December 12<sup>th</sup>**

This event is being sponsored by Trevor Roberts of Cockermouth.

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**Volunteers** needed for Front of House, Bar and Saturday Morning Coffee. Can you help?

## Wardrobe

*(The following information was taken from our website.)*

Playgoers are reducing the content of their vast wardrobe. There are a number of items on ebay –

<http://stores.ebay.co.uk/Lakes-Fashion-and-Collectables>

There are hats, bags, Victorian jackets, and jewellery. If you see WP at the end of the description, it is an item being sold on Playgoers behalf by Sue Hern of Lakes Fashion and Collectables.

Addisons Auctioneers of Barnard Castle will be selling items on behalf of Playgoers on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2014.



### Gift Tokens

Do you have a friend or relation who loves theatre?

Struggling to think of a Christmas present?

Why not give them a Theatre Royal gift token?

This could cover one play, a play and a drink or a season ticket.

Ask Glynn for details.

## Carnegie Bookings.

Fingers crossed, we hope that recent glitches with the Carnegie booking system have now been resolved. This means that you should be able to book over the phone, in person or on-line at the Carnegie. You can also buy tickets at the door or book through an agent (Glynn, Pauline or Gillian).

## RMBI Concert

RMBI ?

Royal Masonic Benevolent Association!

November 15<sup>th</sup> saw the theatre packed for this charity concert in aid of the RMBI. The evening featured Steve Whetton, Mandi, Steve Falcon, Kim Fisher, Christian Novak and several guests and they delighted their audience with renditions of well known numbers from musicals including Les Miserables, The Jersey Boys, Phantom of the Opera and Mama Mia.



With a rousing 'Last Night of the Proms' finale, the audience participation level was quite stirring. It was a joy to see the theatre so full – let's hope the audience return to see some of OUR shows!



*(Photographs courtesy of M Woodman)*



## We Want YOU!

Young (ish)?

Male?

Willing to act?

We need you for our Playgoers/CADS production of the WW1 Drama, *Tommy's Story* which will be staged during April. There are speaking and non-speaking parts available playing either German or English soldiers. Experience not essential.

If you would like to take part or you know of anyone who would be suitable for these parts, please contact Paul Adams, Brian Young or Gillian Scholey.

The play is Lottery Grant funded and is very moving, telling the story of some young soldiers who have been sent to war and their families left at home. The play will hopefully have a full run at The Theatre Royal and also be performed at Dean School.

## Theatre Diary

<b>December 2<sup>nd</sup> -6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>'When Did You Last See Your Trousers'</b>	<b>Theatre Royal</b>
December 12 <sup>th</sup>	Galliarda – classical music	Theatre Royal
January 9 <sup>th</sup>	Fanfare for the Common Wo/man	Theatre Royal
January 10 <sup>th</sup> 2pm and 7.30	Fanfare for the Common Wo/man	Theatre Royal
January 20 <sup>th</sup>	Members' Evening/Playgoers' Chat	Theatre Royal Bar



*Merry Christmas*