



The Prompter



Workington Playgoers' newsletter – April 2016

Welcome to The Prompter. We look forward to seeing you at the newly refurbished Theatre Royal in the near future.

'In one Era and Out The Other'

After many delays and a few traumas we are now back in the theatre. The transformation of the theatre has been amazing and all is looking very good and very positive for the future.

In order to mark the re-opening of the theatre we are hosting a special event on **May 7th** called '**In One Era And Out The Other**'. It will take the form of an illustrated narration undertaken by eight Playgoers actors (from one of our youngest to ones who were once young) and a narrator. It will trace the story of the Theatre Royal and Playgoers in a light-hearted way and will be illustrated by short excerpts from various plays. Also taking part will be members of our youth group, Second Star, members of Soundwave and one of the dance groups which hire the theatre.

The **invitation** event is for the various people involved in the building work and the refitting of the theatre; representatives from the media and other organisations in and around the area; Playgoers' members and guests; and regular patrons. It is completely free and will include a free drink and some nibbles. You will be able to question members of Playgoers Council about any aspect of the theatre.

Please reserve your tickets by contacting Pat Brinicombe

Tel: 01900 812318

pat.brin@talktalk.net



'Entertaining Angels'

Written by Richard Everett

Directed by Brian Young

May 24-28th2016 7.30 pm

'I've poured two hundred thousand cups of tea, made four thousand six hundred medium quiches and personally baked two tons of light crust pastry. And for what?'

At the start of another English summer join us in a delightful English country garden, aka the Theatre Royal, for a highly entertaining evening with Grace, a formerly well behaved clergy wife, as she decides that now her husband is dead, she can behave as she wishes!

Unfortunately when her eccentric, missionary sister Ruth returns home, Grace discovers that all has not been as idyllic as she thought in her marriage! Prepare for some amusing twists, shocking revelations and hopefully a runaway lawn mower!

Originally starring Penelope Keith at The Chichester Theatre, this play has now been performed worldwide including in Israel, Switzerland, South Africa and New Zealand. It is now the opening production in our newly refurbished theatre and it promises to get our season off to a great start.





Glynn Scurr and Heather Scholey bid farewell to the old theatre

NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN

It is hard to believe that after all these months of worry about asbestos, structural defects and damp walls that we are actually back in the theatre and ready for action. The problems we encountered during the building work over the last nine months were far, far worse than we could possibly have imagined and any members who saw James Watson's recent slide presentation will know just how bad the problems were. The most frightening report came from the building engineer who wrote to us saying "... I am surprised that localised collapse (of the auditorium floor) has not occurred in the past when the floor has been fully loaded." It is hard to imagine how Playgoers and the Theatre Royal would have survived if this had happened.



The team who have worked tirelessly over the last 4 years or so can be justifiably proud of what has been achieved. Phase 1 saw the replacement of the 55 year old boiler and heating system, thermal insulation of the whole theatre and



installation of solar panels on the theatre roof, now bringing in a regular income. Phase 2 with almost £600,000 of grant funding has resulted in major structural repairs to the auditorium floor, a restyled foyer with a newly equipped bar, and a complete restructuring of the Wilson Street properties, including the seriously derelict 30 Wilson Street. The workshop is now located in the old props store across the yard from the theatre. The refurbished, and thankfully asbestos-free, basement below the auditorium is our new props store, and the transformation of the Wilson Street properties to provide office space, enlarged dressing rooms, new wardrobe storage and working spaces, rehearsal / meeting room, sound-proofed rehearsal and recording facilities, and new toilets have to be seen to be believed.

Architects Plus from Carlisle have done a superb job in coping with the dereliction and different floor levels they faced. A new lift rising up through the core of the reconstructed space provides easy access to all areas for members or visitors with limited mobility and for moving heavy loads. Perhaps less evident but nonetheless important is the new fire, heat and carbon monoxide detection and alarm system throughout the building with automatic smoke vents which would open in the case of a major fire.

We are looking forward to a close relationship with Soundwave who are renting part of the Wilson Street side of the building - including the old Ice Warrior shop which will become their Youth Reception area, upstairs office and sound-proofed recording studio. They will rent other parts of the theatre from Playgoers from time to time, normally during the day and not at a time when these spaces are being used by Playgoers. I hope many of the

youngsters attracted by Soundwave might also be interested in becoming members of Playgoers and Dave Roberts of Soundwave has already joined the new group tasked with managing all aspects of running the Theatre Royal. I trust Members will make Soundwave welcome and I would urge you to visit them in their new office to find out at first hand about their activities and to explore ways of co-operating and working together.

Another exciting development is the blossoming of the Second Star Youth Theatre Group which is very active, well-supported and planning several productions in the theatre this year and next. We have many challenges ahead, not least when it comes to succession planning, so the presence of another group of enthusiastic and energetic youngsters in the theatre on a regular basis must be good news!

The Theatre Management Group (TMG) chaired by Paul Adams has been meeting regularly and they have done a terrific job of sorting out all the logistics and systems for the new world. This has freed up the **Playgoers Production** team chaired by Jenny Rushton to concentrate on the productions and membership activities of Playgoers. Although the final membership composition of these two groups has yet to be finalised, it does mean that **Playgoers Council** will meet less frequently and will concentrate on policy making decisions and future planning for both the Theatre Royal and for Playgoers and less on the day-to-day running of the theatre and Playgoers Club.

Is this the end of the building work and fundraising? Almost certainly not as we are already thinking about Phase 3 which would include replacement of our ancient flying grid, redecoration of the Washington Street facade, repairs to the

proscenium arch and fundraising to support the activities of Millie's Youth Theatre group.

I would like to record my own personal thanks to all those Members of Playgoers and other individuals who have worked so hard before, during and after the building work moving



props, wardrobe and equipment up to Moorclose and back again and for making sure that despite all the difficulties we have managed to put on some stunning productions while the theatre has been out of action.

I am also very grateful for the encouragement and support we have had from most of our members throughout this worrying and difficult period. We can look forward to the future in the sure and certain knowledge that our lovely old Theatre is safe, energy efficient and fit for purpose.

Welcome to the new theatre
Peter Inglis

Entertaining Angels – Director's Notes.

It's great to be back in our theatre and with a talented cast we have been busy breaking down this delightful play and rebuilding it to suit our theatre with its staging abilities. Rehearsals have been taking place in the new Meeting Room 1 with an eye on getting onto our stage to see how our ideas transfer. Quite exciting times as we all learn how the new work done will help our little theatre to thrive. This play has had very good reviews by the Little



Theatre Guild as umpteen clubs have had successful productions. We are hoping to add our production to this list.

The play is set in an English country garden where the clergy wife Grace (Grace Walker) has spent a lifetime on her best behaviour. Now following the death of her husband Bardolph – Bardy (Frank Cosgove) she is enjoying the freedom to do and say exactly what she pleases but she has to move out of her home for the new vicar (Imogen Barnfather) which she rather resents. Her daughter Jo (Anne Bowmer) is helping her with the move. The return of her missionary sister Ruth (Joan Hetherington) together with some startling revelations force Grace to confront her emotional ties with her husband and sister as well as her own guilt over her husband's death.

The play is spread throughout with some sharp edged comedy and probing wit but don't forget your hanky as each character has flaws that are exposed as the play progresses producing actions that we can all associate with.

We end up asking if God can be trusted to do anything right or is the whole thing a divine exercise in trial and error?

Come and see it and bring your friends, neighbours, strangers to come as well. You won't be disappointed.

Brian Young, Director.

Props

Well we're back home in our refurbished theatre and Sunday 10th April saw the return of all our dearly loved Props! Over the last few weeks we have managed to down-size a little in order to fit all we

wish to keep in our new storage area under the stage.

There is still a lot of sorting to do but already we have loaned out items to WADAMS, noted Whitehaven Theatre Youth Group's request for props to hire in June and donated several items to charity shops and Groundwork furniture up-cycling charity. We are in the process of compiling hire details and costs in order to generate much needed funds for Playgoers. An abundance of certain items, such as suitcases, has led us to sell vintage items for the rapidly growing market. As the saying goes, one man's junk is another man's treasure and our first sale today has been quite rewarding.

There is still a lot of sorting to do below stairs and some removal of old fittings to create more valued space. Plaster dust abounds after several efforts at cleaning up, think we need a mop and bucket brigade and a supply of dust masks. So if any member would like to join in the fun do let any of the committee or Council members know, you'll see areas of the theatre you never knew existed!

I'd like to thank all the members who have helped sort, pack and transport our belongings back to Washington Street and look forward to the next task of finding a place for it all.

Anne Chambers

You've Had Your Chips!

Council would appreciate it if you did not bring hot, smelly food into any part of the theatre as the smells tend to linger. Thank You.

Wardrobe Dept.

We have been working hard to again reduce the amount of stock in our wardrobe to make it easier to store and access. Many items have returned from Moorclose to our wonderful new 2 storey department on the 4th floor of the Theatre. This move has been greatly enhanced by our new addition 'The Lift'. What a difference it has made!

We are hoping there will be space for a fitting area and sewing space. We are looking forward to seeing you in our department soon. Thanks to all our members for their superb efforts so far. Still a lot to do - **all volunteers are welcome.**

Helen and the Wardrobe Department.

Saturday Coffee - help desperately needed!

Jane and Viv have, in the past, both done an excellent job running Saturday Coffee but now want to have a well earned rest. Both are still willing to 'do' a Saturday but would prefer not to organise the rotas.

Is there anyone willing to take it on?

Your job would be to organise the rota rather than to be there each Saturday. We will supply you with a list of volunteers.

Please consider taking on this role.

Don't fancy being in charge but would like to do your bit?

There is a sheet on the bar to sign if you would be willing to man Saturday Coffee on one or more Saturdays during the year. Simply fill in your name next to the date you wish to cover. You can do it on

your own, with a friend or we will put someone on with you. The choice is yours and we really do need your help.



Alternatively please contact either **Glynn Scurr** (Tel or text 07734 579297) or **Gillian Scholey** gillscholey@gmail.com

Welcome Back!

Glynn, Gillian and Heather would like to welcome you to the theatre's brand new bar. We hope you will enjoy plenty of craic, lively debates and healthy banter!

We are now a 'one stop shop' offering a much wider range of soft drinks, coffee with either cold or hot milk, and a selection of beers, wines and spirits. All are at very reasonable prices!

Of course we would also love it if you could offer your services **behind** the bar as well as sampling our wares as a customer.

A number of members have already learnt the new systems and 'had a go' during the recent Junior productions or Dance Festival and we are very grateful to them but we **always** need more helpers.

We now use a modern till rather than the trusty Tupperware boxes and it is **very** straightforward as is the glasswasher which has also been installed. (Use of the glasswasher **IS** optional!) One of us will go through everything with you and, if you want, you will be on with someone

who is experienced when you start. Please think about giving it a go. We really need you! Contact details below.

Heather Scholey

h.scholey1991@gmail.com

Gillian Scholey

gillscholey@gmail.com or text 07860 480306

Glynn Scurr

tel 01900 63018 or text 07734 579297

Giving Us Your Time?

With new buildings come new ways of working. Hopefully they are 'progress' and they will make us more look more professional in the eyes of the public and they will ensure that all who work in the theatre or visit the theatre are safe.

Council would like

- ✓ Front of House and Bar/Coffee Bar volunteers to wear predominantly black with, if desired, some red. Eg scarf, tie.
- ✓ On show/event nights, all volunteers to wear a 'staff' lanyard – provided by the Theatre Manager.

Both of the above make you instantly recognisable as someone working in the theatre that night as opposed to a Playgoer at a show. This helps the public.

- ✓ Everyone to sign in and out when working in the theatre. The book is on the bar.

This is for a variety of reasons, We have a number of young people in the building sometimes during the day and often in the evenings so we have to ensure they are safeguarded. We are also tightening up on fire regulations/procedures so for your safety, we need to know if you are in the building. Finally, for the Lottery we are trying to keep track of who uses the building and how many hours volunteers use the building for. We have automatic footfall counters now but 'the book' just puts a little meat on the bones of the bare figures.

Thank you.

Stage Crew needed!

Handy with a screw driver or paint brush? Please see Geoff Brinicombe if you have a couple of hours a week to spare to help on the stage crew.

Second Star Youth Theatre

We are busy rehearsing for "The Adventures of Pinocchio" which performs 11th and 12th June, at 6.30pm. We have a cast of 15 actors aged 10-18 and with 4 rehearsals already underway, it is looking to be a fantastic show. 10 year olds Luke Ritson and Emily-Rose Lane take the roles of Pinocchio and Nicolina, the cricket, respectively and newcomers Mim Pennington and Connor McClenan portray the Blue Fairy and Gepetto.

The show itself is based on the original Italian fairytale by Carlo Collodi, and tells

the tale of the wooden puppet who wishes to be a real boy and must prove himself brave, selfless and true in order to do so. He is challenged in many ways, including being kidnapped by an evil puppet master, tricked by two crooks, turned into a donkey and swallowed by a Whale!"



do us proud, I am sure. Other aspects, such as the bookshelf have disappeared.

What are your views?

Would you like to see a new set of shelves that could possibly also, at times, be used as display shelves for items linked to particular productions? These could be sited **above** table level so we would not lose seating room.

Or do you view them as unnecessary clutter and prefer cleaner lines with just noticeboards and framed prints/photographs? Are books old fashioned dust gatherers, unnecessary in this age of Kindles/e-readers? Would they spoil the new look foyer?

What do you think? It's your foyer as well. Please email me or let Peter Inglis or Paul Adams know your views ASAP.

Gillian Scholey

Bookshelves



As you will see, the foyer area is now radically different. Hopefully it now looks bigger, more modern and very welcoming. Some aspects are still 'under completion' such as the new Box Office which will be sited in the old coffee bar. Geoff, Gordon and Tony will



The Front of House team would like to say a huge THANK YOU to everyone who helped with the setting up of the new bar/foyer area.

Whether you helped hump stuff from the bar, wash dishes Hoover or dust, it was all greatly appreciated.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.



Playgoers is now greatly enhanced by our Youth Theatre section Second Star and our colleagues and Young People of Sound Wave. At Playgoers we aim to Safeguard and promote our Children and Young Peoples' welfare, safety and well-being. They will be guided by fostering an open and honest climate that makes them feel safe. The Children and Young Peoples' welfare and well-being are of paramount importance. Playgoers has a duty of care to these Young People. We have therefore initiated a comprehensive guide to Safeguarding through robust policies and procedures. Some of these include Code of Conduct for all, the wearing of ID when Young People are involved in all aspects of the Theatre, being aware of Government legislation covering length of time Children and Young People are allowed to perform, provision of appropriate dressing rooms etc.

The Theatre Management group have agreed on an age definition of a child for our Policies and Procedures. Children and Young People 16 and under are defined as 'A Child' for our purposes. We have still to be mindful that Cumbria Local Safeguarding Board (LSCB) use under the age of 18 years and in some circumstance this could include vulnerable adults under the age of 25.

Some Playgoer members will now have Enhanced Disclosure and Barring

Certificates (DBS) for Children and Young People to support our Safeguarding Policies. We also have our own Chaperone recognised through Cumbria County Council. Many already had DBS through other organisations. We also have to be aware the County Council can inspect our Policies and Procedures for Children and Young People at any time Safeguarding is now included in our Hire Documents and Fire Policy.

The Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually and amended if required.

The Safeguarding File has been compiled with the help of Millie (Second Stars) and Dave (Soundwave). I wish to thank them for their support.

The file and documents will be available in the Booking Office and online in the near future. If you need any more information please do not hesitate to contact me.



SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONES RESPONSIBILITY Help us to keep all Children and Young People Safe.

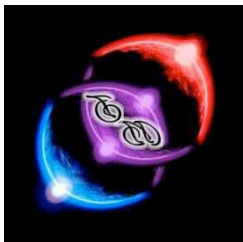
Helen Earl, Safeguarding Officer.

Quick Quiz!

1. What was the original name of the Theatre Royal ?
2. How many people did it seat?
3. What was its nickname during the Nineteen Twenties?
4. Why did it have that nickname?

5. Where was the inaugural meeting of the Playgoers held?
6. How much was membership?
7. What was the first Playgoers performance in the theatre,
8. What restrictions were placed on the Playgoers during the Nineteen Thirties?
9. By 1940, how many members were there?
10. Where were the old dressing rooms?

Answers – basic answers are on page 12 but for more fascinating facts attend the opening evening on May 7th ... but don't forget to **reserve your seat by contacting Pat Brincombe**. Tel 01900 812318 or pat.brin@talktalk.net



Parallel Worldz

The Theatre Royal was set to see its first celebrity visitor on April 2nd when well known thriller writer Matt Hilton hoped to join Parallel Worldz for a night of spiritual investigation. Author of the Joe Hunter action thrillers, published both in the UK and the USA, Matt has strong associations with both Cumbria and Parallel Worldz who were on their third visit to the theatre and hoped to have an active night as they thought the building work may have stirred up the spirit world.

Formed nearly two years ago, the group have a regular team of members but sell tickets costing £20 to the public for their

overnight stays at a variety of locations. All profit goes to charity with this year's charity being Cash For Kids. Last year they raised over £500 for the Air Ambulance. About 25 people were expected to stay in the theatre with visitors expected from other paranormal investigative groups including Bloodmoon, Phoenix Souls and SPIRIT. (Solway Paranormal Investigation, Research and Intelligence Team).

Leaders of Parallel Worldz, Sam Ellis and Amy Hollingsworth said that the group use a variety of high tech equipment such as EMF meters (Electro Magnetic Field) and EVP (Electronic Voice Phenomenom) recorders to detect paranormal activity. They would like to buy thermal imaging cameras in the future.

Activity/energy was expected to be strongest in the cellar where previous visitors have had stones thrown at them. It seems our spirits particularly dislike blonde ladies! The balcony area and dressing rooms have also shown evidence of activity.

Playgoer's member and member of Parallel Worldz, Scott Ferguson said, 'I have seen things that cannot rationally be explained. There have been bangs on the stage and the ladders have shaken as though someone has run up them. We also have photographs of orbs in The Gods'.

With all the upheaval of the last few months, who knows what the group will have encountered this time.

'Treasure Island'

'Happy Thoughts' Drama Company, led by Millie Hardie Sims staged this dramatic production during April stunning the audience with the energy and enthusiasm of the young cast. Performing four times in two days, the production improved with each performance, with Long John Silver being particularly outstanding. Lewis Hill is an actor to watch out for in the future!

With amazing sets designed by Jamie Hardie Sim and built by Jamie assisted by several dedicated Playgoers members and a fantastic collection of costumes which transformed the actors this was a visual display worthy of any theatre anywhere. Atmospheric and stirring music, some live, also really enlivened the show.

This was the last production by 'Happy Thoughts' but as many are members of our own Junior section, 'Second Stars', Workington can look forward to seeing some of these actors blossom. Sadly others will, no doubt, leave the area for pastures new and we can only wish them well. (Gillian Scholey)

Book It! As you can see, the theatre is becoming a very busy place! Pat Brincombe keeps a detailed diary of all bookings. Please check with her if you wish to be sure of a space for an activity!

'Much Ado About Nothing'

June 22nd-25th

Theatre Royal Shakespeare Players
present



Please note - tickets are £10 and £9 - ed.

All over the world, the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death is currently being marked by celebrations of his life and performances of his plays. Happily the Theatre Royal will also be hosting a special theatrical event to tie in with this anniversary in 2016.

Following hard on the heels of last year's very successful Workington Playgoers' production of Twelfth Night (at our temporary home at Moorclose Community Centre), the Theatre Royal Shakespeare Players will be performing

Much Ado About Nothing at the Theatre Royal from Wednesday 22nd to Saturday 25th June.

This play will be understood and enjoyed by anyone who has ever been in love or who has hoped to fall in love – in other words most of the human race! It is one of Shakespeare's liveliest comedies, though it also contains a very dark sub-plot. Its themes include the battle between the sexes, friendship, love, villainy, honour and deception.

The Theatre Royal Shakespeare Players have set this very accessible production in the present day in the UK.

Colonel Don Pedro and his officers arrive at the Messina Country Club to rest and recuperate after a tour of duty in a war zone. The owner, Leonato, runs the club with his niece, Beatrice and daughter Hero, and flirtation and romance appear to be on the cards. Unfortunately Don Pedro's villainous brother Don John and his sidekicks from the security services, Conrade and Borachio, are also staying at the club and they plan to cause as much trouble as possible! Security is in the incapable hands of Dogberry and his assistant Verges.

The play opens in the lobby of the Country Club as Don Pedro and his friends arrive. Beatrice greets them. Then Don John arrives (dressed all in black like a character from Spooks) and the temperature instantly drops...

Directed by Tony Parker, this production will feature several actors who have previously appeared at the Theatre Royal, including Andy Greenwood, Denise

Crellin, Frank Cosgrove, Geoffrey Hall, Hannah Lewis, Ian Quirk, Liz Mawson, Maggie Bedford and Morgan Sweeney. The role of Beatrice will be played by Kelly Davis and Stephanie Daly Parks on alternate nights.

Don't miss this show. Much Ado About Nothing is a laugh-filled, action packed emotional roller coaster that remains as relevant today as when it was first written over 400 years ago. (Kelly Davis)

The Productions Team

The newly formed Productions Team, chaired by the Productions Director is charged with looking after all aspects of Playgoers and their Productions at the Theatre Royal.

Play selection and casting and finding suitable directors for the following season is still one of their foremost duties.

The team is charged with making sure that rehearsal space and the auditorium for each production is booked and that the Technical Director, Wardrobe and Props Managers are fully informed at Pre production meetings.

Membership and Social Events Committee are now under the team's banner too.

A reminder that Membership Subs are due on June 1st. Membership stands at 122 adult members and 20 members of Second Star

2016 Season

The 2016 Season is in full swing and our first adult production "Entertaining Angels" goes on Tuesday 24th - Saturday 28th May.

2017 Season

The team has been busy reading a great number of plays and are managing to narrow the list down. It will be in a position to announce the 2017 Season of Plays by the end of May. The team is hoping that announcing the season this early will allow members much more time to consider accepting a part in a play. One innovation the team has introduced is 'Mentoring New Directors'. I did send out letter earlier in the year asking members if they would like to take up this offer. Jane Douglas said she would! Ron Dickens is going to work alongside her while she directs a rehearsed reading for a Members Night, which will go on in September. Next year the team are hoping to offer mentoring to two new directors.

Cumberland Drama Festival 2017

Morgan has been given Council's approval to organise a Drama Festival in August of next year. More information will be published at a later date. I am very excited about returning to the 'Theatre Royal' and believe that we can make this season, and the next two, of Playgoers best ever.

Jenni Rushton
Productions Director



Look Out For...The Green Room aka the old bar. At the moment this will be used for overflow seating on busy nights and possibly meetings.

Stop Press! 'The Rosehill Shakespeare Players' have now become 'The Theatre Royal Shakespeare Players! '. More next issue!

Quick Quiz Answers

1. The Lyceum
2. 700
3. Penny Macs
4. It was a cinema with tickets costing the princely sum of 1d.
5. Archers Café on Vulcan's Lane - opposite the library.
6. 5s
7. Outward Bound
8. Only 6 performances a year and no showing of films
9. 300
10. Under the stage.

Articles for The Prompter are most welcome. Please forward to the editor, Gillian Scholey. Gillscholey@gmail.com

Diary

May 7 th	'In One Era and Out The Other'.	Playgoers (Invitation)
May 24 th -28 th	'Entertaining Angels'	Playgoers
June 11 & 12 th Theatre	'Pinocchio'	Second Star Youth
June 22 nd -25 th Shakespeare Players	'Much Ado About Nothing'	Theatre Royal
July 16 th & 17 th Dramatics	'Sherlock Holmes'	Proscenium Amateur
July 24 th guests	Playgoers' BBQ at Branthwaite	Playgoers Members and
October 4 th -8 th	'The Perfect Murder'	Playgoers
October ?	'Frankenstein'	Second Star Youth Theatre
Dec. 6 th -10 th	'Dad's Army'	Playgoers
Dec. 17 th &18 th Theatre	'It's A Wonderful Life'	Second Star Youth

Workington Playgoers also hope to have some members' events including a rehearsed reading, dates of which will be announced later after the new social committee has met.