



# The Prompter

*The Theatre Royal & Workington Playgoers' newsletter – June 2019*

*You are cordially invited to*

## Dinner

Written by Moira Buffini

Directed by Morgan Sweeney

June 11<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>

**'Darkly delicious, cutting-edge comedy' at  
Workington's Theatre Royal**



'Moira Buffini's play *Handbagged* was a huge hit at the Theatre by the Lake in 2017, and the Workington Playgoers are confident that their production of *Dinner* will be equally entertaining. They warn that the play contains some strong language. But, if you don't mind a bit of swearing, this chilling black comedy will have you laughing one moment and flinching in disbelief the next. (Presented by special arrangement with Samuel French Ltd.)' *(Kelly Davis)*

**Tickets are £11.50 (£10.50 concessions). Book online at <http://www.theatre-royal-workington.co.uk/dinner/> or leave a message for the Theatre Royal Box Office on 01900 603161.**



## Director's Notes

Director Morgan Sweeney says: 'This is a play of ideas and a social satire with some very sharp dialogue and some psychologically twisted characters that the cast have really enjoyed portraying. We think the audience will find it exposes issues that are well worth discussing long after the play is over and will also enjoy the frequent moments of tart observation and broad comedy.'



Cast rehearsal of 'Dinner'.



## TRY Success!

On 26<sup>th</sup> April, some members of Workington's Theatre Royal Youth (TRY) went to Northern Stage in Newcastle to audition for the national Monologue Slam competition in the Youth Round, for actors aged 11 to 17, where they each performed a 1-minute monologue. Georgia Douglas-Brown, TRY's Youth Leader, said she was very proud of all the TRY members who took part in the auditions, **and she has now heard that three of them have been selected for the national competition.** This is an amazing chance for the young actors to showcase their talent in front of industry professionals.

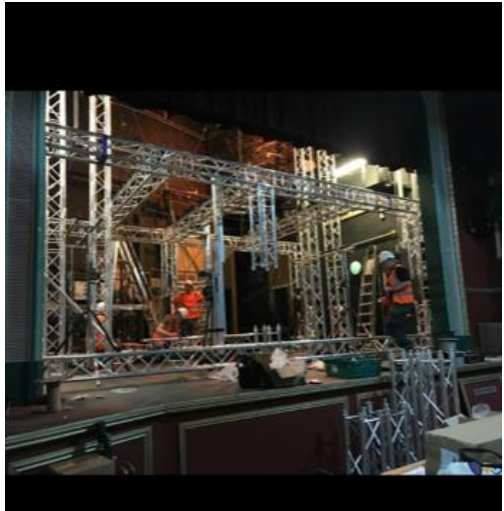
This event will take place at Northern Stage on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019, in front of a public audience and a panel of judges, including Lorne Campbell (Artistic Director, Northern Stage), Janet Plater (Agent), Sam Claypole (Casting Director) and Graeme Thompson (Creative Producer, Live Theatre). Georgia says the three young West Cumbrian actors who have been chosen, Caysie Ray, Tristan Wise and Morgan Goodfellow, are all looking forward to this exciting opportunity.



## Flying High



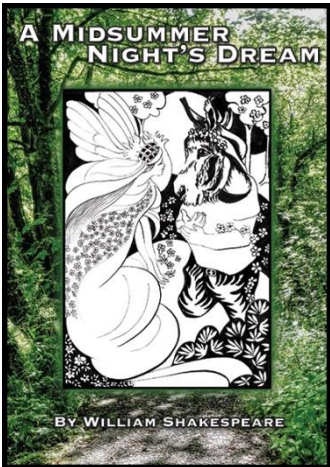
Workington's Theatre Royal is now the proud owner of a new Flying Grid. Technical Director, Geoff Brinicombe, has fought hard over the last few years to bring this to fruition and now, thanks to Steve McGuckin Audio and Lighting, it is finally in place. The sky is now the limit for our intrepid technical crew!



(Photos by S McGuckin)



## A Midsummer Night's Dream



Our Shakespeare play this year is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. One of the Bard's most loved plays, the magical world of *Dream* has beguiled adults and children alike since it was first performed at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and it is now performed around the world by amateurs and professionals alike.

Characters such as Oberon, Titania and Puck, plus Bottom and the 'Rude Mechanicals', are known even by those who have never seen a full Shakespeare play, but in addition the tempestuous affairs of the four lovers – Hermia, Lysander, Helena and Demetrius: 'the course of true love never did run smooth'! – provide an absorbing diversion from the jousts of the fairy monarchs. 'Ill met by Moonlight' indeed! The efforts of the Mechanicals to put on their own play (sometimes maybe a bit too near the mark for those involved in Am Dram) to please the Duke of Athens provide some of the best humour in Shakespeare, and of course there is the iconic image of Bottom in his ass's head. This play will also make use of the new flying grid, adding a further dimension to our renowned sets.

A strong Playgoers' cast will bring you drama and comedy, and with music and dancing this will be an entertainment for the whole family, as much for Shakespeare 'virgins' as for aficionados. Don't miss it, on from **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July to Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 each night.**

*Tony Parker*





## Did You Miss It?

### '3 by 2': Fundraising Event

Thanks to members, families and friends of Playgoers for their valued support on the occasion of the recent fundraising event for the replacement of a stage lighting system which has become old, obsolete, very expensive to use and worse ... environmentally unfriendly.

The evening was headed up by Vivien Young who, along with a group of enthusiasts were willing to help Pat Brinicombe kick off the fundraising, against all the odds, for the much-needed replacement stage lighting.

The privileged audience who had paid £10.00 per head to attend were treated to a delightful evening with an alcohol beverage on arrival, scrumptious nibbles provided by the 'Mary Berry' of Playgoers, Vivien Young, and her two assistants, Jenni Rushton and The Fundraiser ... not to mention the entertainment.

The entertainment was brought to us from North of the Border by a small group called The Happy Hour Theatre. The large but little known playwright and film maker, Ben Ross B [BRB] provided a contact number and Hey Presto, another link was forged with the Theatre Royal and, if the response of the audience was anything to go by, the group was extremely well received.

The group provided a programme of three short sketches/playlets all of which were extremely amusing and the consensus of opinion was totally endorsed by the audience as it cheerily disgorged itself out of the theatre into the eerily silent Washington Street with nary a drunk in sight.

Thanks go to the following:

GMB Union Sellafield, Carnegie Singers, WAOS, T&S Lynne Wild, RLNI, Playgoers' members, Families, Friends and the lovely ladies from St John's Church.

Refreshments were donated and funds raised on the night were in the region of £700.00.

*Pat Brinicombe*

\*\*\*\*\*



**Welcome to our new membership secretary**

Lorna Wilson, a parent of one of our Theatre Royal Youth members, has volunteered to become our new membership secretary. Thank you so much, Lorna! Speaking of

membership, it's that time of year again and membership fees are now due (£20 per person, £10 for those aged 18 and under). If you don't pay your subscription by standing order, please think about doing so, as it makes the membership secretary's role so much easier. Many thanks.

*Gilda Wells*

## Little Theatre Guild National Conference 29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 at the Highbury Theatre Centre, Sutton Coldfield

After a difficult journey on a Friday afternoon, during which my satnav thought it was in Ireland and a tanker most inconsiderately broke down in the middle lane of the M6, I finally reached my Travelodge in Sutton Coldfield. Despite most of it being a building site, I took the chance of a quick rest before travelling to the theatre for the start of the conference.

We started as usual with a buffet supper, and then saw a studio production of a play written by a Highbury member called 'Rubbish' (the play that is, not the member), about a man who never throws anything away. The author, Martin Walker, did a question-and-answer session afterwards. Highbury have a group, the Highbury Players Academy (nothing to do with the Arsenal!), that works on self-writes, through semi-improvised workshops, rather like the Fit'n'Active Company, and it seemed an interesting home for those who don't want to or no longer can learn large parts or perform in full-scale productions.

The next morning we had a theatre tour; it's always interesting to see how other theatres cope with remarkably similar problems to our own. There followed workshops. I went to one given by Jenny Landreth, who has written a book about Am Dram and related some amusing anecdotes. After coffee, we had the AGM, which was much as AGMs always are.



After lunch the whole conference was involved in what was called the Greatest Show on Earth – no modesty there then! It involved lots of dressing up and impro, and I ended up at one point dressed as a circus ringmaster conducting circling hordes of actors, like Dothraki in Game of Thrones. It was actually more fun than maybe it sounds.



There followed a book launch for *The Ecologies of Amateur Dramatics*. The three co-authors (Helen Nicholson, Nadine Holdsworth, Jane Milling) had done extensive research and this was a comprehensive history of Am Dram. One interesting point one of them made was that amateur productions actually kept many modern plays alive after the end of their initial professional run. Whereas the next professional production may be years later, amateur productions often spring up as soon as the licence is released.

After dinner, we saw a full production of *Rules for Living*, the Sam Holcroft black comedy of the Christmas Day family reunion from hell! We had considered this play for production a couple of years ago. I was very impressed both by the play and the production, and we have decided to include it in our programme next year.

On the Sunday morning we had some interesting case studies on raising money for theatrical projects, including one on building an amateurs theatre in the centre of London (good luck with that, I thought, but they managed it). Then to finish we had a keynote speech by author, comedian and BBC Radio 4 presenter Natalie Haynes. Presenter of *Natalie Haynes Stands Up For The Classics*, Natalie spoke very entertainingly for an hour, in between sips of Coke, on Greek classical theatre, and how it influenced modern soaps, especially *EastEnders*.

All in all, a most enjoyable and informative experience, and one I can thoroughly recommend to all Playgoers (any member may attend, not just reps or officers).  
(Tony Parker)



*Theatre of Herodes Atticus, Athens*

## Can You Help?

### Bar rota organiser needed



Would you like to organise the rota for the bar when Playgoers' shows and guest shows are on? This job involves contacting members and volunteers by email or phone approximately two weeks before each show/event and ensuring that we have a theatre manager and bar

staff to cover each performance. (You won't need to worry about stocking the bar. Glynn Scurr is happy to continue handling that, as we are going to start having stock delivered.) Our wonderful theatre costs a considerable amount of money to run and the bar is a vital source of revenue, which enables us to continue producing good theatre. Please consider volunteering for this important role.

*(Gilda Wells)*

**(If this isn't your cup of tea/coffee, there are plenty of other areas where help is needed – stage crew, coffee mornings, costume, chaperoning, bar work, tech crew, props, prompting, selling raffle tickets on show nights ... the list is endless! Send your contact details to [news@theatre-royal-workington.co.uk](mailto:news@theatre-royal-workington.co.uk) and I will put you in touch with the right person.)**



## Bits and Bobs



Congratulations to the *Stepping Out* team who, under the experienced direction of Pat Brincombe, gave us another excellent show. Very e-leg-ant they looked too ... Well done to Joel Indiana for his first shot at directing with TRY and *The Railway Children*. An ambitious effort and well worth his hard work. Our TRY actors always work with enthusiasm and we look forward to what Joel will tackle next ... Do try to follow us on Facebook as our page contains all the latest news and is regularly updated ... There is new stock in The Book Nook currently situated in the old



Mezz Bar. Please have a browse. More donations always welcome – just leave them in the front office or by the bookshelves ... Congratulations to Ian and Marlene



Johnston who, through their marvellous work with the Carnegie Theatre Trust, have attended a garden party at Buckingham palace AND received the Volunteer of the Year Award at Workington's recent Mayor-Making



ceremony. Certainly well deserved. ... Going to Theatre by the Lake? Watch out on certain nights for a couple of Playgoers' members in the Community Chorus of *The Ladykillers*. Blink and you'll miss them (Jenni Rushton and Gillian Scholey) ... The front office – please TRY to leave it



tidy. It is not a dumping ground!! ... Many thanks to those who work tirelessly behind the scenes/FOH at the theatre and never get to take a curtain call. Your work is essential and often unthanked ... Feedback on plays is appreciated – positive or negative – you can write, text email ... or contact any Council



Member or FOH Duty Manager. Your views help shape our programme of plays. ... Planning for 2020 is already underway. Hint – aged under sixtyish? Learn your imperial measurements. How many grams are there to a pound? ... Grateful thanks to Viv Young who has agreed to oversee Props providing each director is responsible for their own play. You're a star!



## Who's Who?

Members responsible for the running of Workington Playgoers at the Theatre Royal

President: GEOFFREY HALL

### **The Board known as Council**

Chairman: MORGAN SWEENEY

Secretary: GRACE WALKER

Company Secretary: GEOFFREY HALL

Treasurer: GILDA WELLS

Productions Director: TONY PARKER

Technical Director: GEOFF BRINICOMBE

Publicity Director: KELLY DAVIS

### **Other useful contacts**

Theatre Bookings and Sponsorship: PAT BRINICOMBE

Front of House Manager : GLYNN SCURR

Maintenance Manager: TONY MAGORRIAN

Properties Manager: VIV YOUNG

Wardrobe Manager: HELEN EARL

Box Office: ANNE BOWMER [tickets@theatre-royal-workington.co.uk](mailto:tickets@theatre-royal-workington.co.uk)

Membership Secretary: LORNA WILSON [membership@theatre-royal-workington.co.uk](mailto:membership@theatre-royal-workington.co.uk)

Editor of *The Prompter* (Newsletter): GILLIAN SCHOLEY [news@theatre-royal-workington.co.uk](mailto:news@theatre-royal-workington.co.uk)

If no contact details are given, please address your query to [news@theatre-royal-workington.co.uk](mailto:news@theatre-royal-workington.co.uk) and it will be forwarded to the correct person.

## Watch Out For ...

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**

**16 – 20<sup>th</sup> July**

**Comedians**

**15 – 19<sup>th</sup> October**

**Swallows and Amazons (TRY)**

**31<sup>st</sup> October – 2<sup>nd</sup> November**

**The Vicar of Dibley**

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> December**