



Meopham Players Newsletter

www.meophamplayers.co.uk

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Stellar Cast Appeals to Fans to Leave Smartphones at Home

The Star Studded Line-Up of October's 'Snake in the Grass' production pleads to fans to refrain from filming them as they don't want to be distracted during their soliloquies

Three Players 'A LISTERS' were filmed outside the Stage Door of Meopham Village Hall urging fans not to distract them with cameras during the eagerly awaited 'Snake In The Grass' production scheduled for 22, 23 & 24 October.

In an impromptu speech, the all star-trio told the crowd that a red light in the third row is 'very, very obvious' and that they would 'hate to be mortified if forced to restart a performance and thereby unable to give you, our fans, what you want.'

The three stars, who unlike the rest of us are not mortal beings and live in a celestial universe, said that 'we can't give you what we want to give you, which is a live performance that you will remember and hopefully in your minds and brains, rather than on phones. So please don't.'

The actors went on to warn that new measures were being introduced to detect and remove audience members using cameras.



However our *Technology Editor* comments that this initiative may backfire and subsequently prove to be an embarrassment for the theatre as the current detection equipment lacks the sophistication

to be able to distinguish between a camera and a hearing aid with a red flashing light.

The highly anticipated production by Alyn Ayckbourn is about a middle aged older sister who returns to the family home where her younger sister still lives.

The play 'is an exciting thriller quite unlike his better known comedies' said Eileen Bush the Director of the play.

In an exclusive interview with the *Newsletter*, Eileen revealed that :

'The three female characters have complicated relationships and the balance of power between them changes to provide a surprise ending. With Brenda, Sylvie and Terri we have a very strong cast who will provide you with an amazingly suspenseful evening.'

Snake in the Grass

Meopham Village Hall

22, 23 & 24 October at 8pm.

Box Office Tel: 0844 288 9708

Email: meophamplayers@aol.com

Cartoonist Matt Dallas Newsletter team

The editorial team of the *Players Newsletter* - which was named newspaper of the Year at the Café Royale awards in August - was given another boost by the signing of Matt 'Mr Muddles' Dallas, widely recognised as the leading cartoonist of his generation.



The team is strengthened further by the welcome addition of star columnist and opinion writer **Terri Horton** ready to inform and entertain with her analysis and commentary on how people live and work today together with her musings on the world at large.

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News or comments, please email:

MeophamPlayers@gmail.com

Mysecretlife

Mr. Muddles, the counterpart of Matt Dallas, reveals a love of magic, puppetry, transformers & treading the boards



Not a secret but as some people know I have an alter ego being Mr Muddles performing magic and puppet shows at children's parties, fetes, schools and other events. It's such a rewarding job and it's so nice to bring some wonder to children watching. I absolutely love doing it all.

I have a huge collection of over 2000 Transformer toys that I've been amassing since 1984. Sort of hidden around my house.

I enjoy acting of course (or pretending to be some one else for a while as I call it). It's so nice being in a room with people for a couple of hours in the evening where they have to talk to you because it's in a script. But seriously, I have met so many wonderful people over the years because of this so it's very rewarding. I love being on stage too as it really does feel like you are somewhere else and also sort of feels safe in a strange way - I guess because you know what's going to happen next.

I also love spending time with my daughters either on days out to the coast, riding bikes or just staying in and watching films/TV and having a drink.

I like drawing - something I need to do a bit more of actually. I've done comic strips and covers for various convention magazines over the years and am co-hosting a panel on creating comic strips at a convention next month actually.

Also like to exercise a bit. Going to the gym, swimming and riding to work when I can.

IN SHORT

◆ Herbal tea or stiff drink?

Cannot decide - both are very important. Tea. No - drink! No - Tea! Drink! Cannot decide.

◆ Dream lunch date?

I'll say Nigella Lawson as I wouldn't want to embarrass anyone who may be reading this...

◆ What annoys you?

People just standing still on escalators, That annoying 'video piracy is crime' advert at the beginning of DVDs, People who stand in doorways, Approaching a crossing with lots of people already there waiting and finding out none of them have pushed the button for the lights to change, drivers who don't signal and of course Hitler.

◆ Desert island record?

'Behaviour' by the Pet Shop Boys. It's an album that's been my favourite since my late school days. It's a sad and sometimes bitter album but it's very mellow and so full of emotion.

◆ Best play you've ever watched?

I have two - 'Strangers On a Train' performed by Rats in 2011 and 'Gaslight' performed by MLT in 2010.

◆ Your greatest luxury?

I tend to think of everything I have as a luxury but I guess my work hours are good.

◆ Best Players Moment?

Too many to choose from and I keep giving more than one answer! Coming back after a difficult time and doing Dangerous Corner and then everything else I have done with different teams over the years. Playing Jack Manningham in Gaslight has to be one I'll always remember.

◆ What are you listening to?

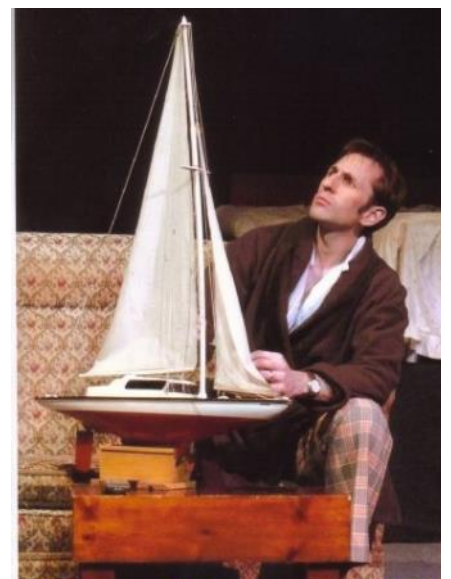
At the moment 'There Is A Light That Never Goes Out' by The Smiths.

◆ Which actor most inspires you?

It's actually characters that inspire me but actor wise I'll say Hugh Laurie - it would have been easy for him to have been typecast when he first started out but he has managed to portray so many very different characters and personalities.

◆ Anything your mother taught you?

How to really appreciate what you have.



Matt as George Mole in 'Toad of Toad Hole'

MY FAVOURITE THINGS

- ◆ My daughters and spending time with them including days out.
- ◆ My home (and the housework that goes with it believe it or not)
- ◆ The Amdram scene and everything that goes with it - especially all the friends I've made over the past 5 years.
- ◆ Drawing.
- ◆ Transforming robots.

Matt starts a brand new comic strip in this month's Newsletter - see page 4

Bijou Tales of Theatre Folk

"Polly" by Les Peters

In the late seventies I was working at the Adelphi and we had been dark for a couple of months with no show on the horizon.

Our General manager, we will call him Polly, (everybody else did), had been showing prospective hirers around and today two gentlemen turned up to look at the place for a new musical.



First I should explain that Polly was an old fashioned manager who could be prudish at best. Sometimes he was positively Victorian in his views.

Today the tour lasted longer than most with the visitors asking lots of questions and walking around with a tape measure.

Afterwards we asked Polly how it had gone. He explained that although they were keen he was a little worried as they wanted to do some structural alterations which might not be a good idea if it did not run or lost money, he did not think much of the idea.

He then told in his most pompous tone that he did not think it was the kind of show for the Royal Adelphi theatre. He

turned them down.

Soon after the Theatres finances collapsed and we were taken over by an American company. Polly was not kept on and retired to the south coast bitter and disappointed.

Oh' what was the show, well our visitors were a Mr Webber and a Mr Nunn who were working on something called "Cats". I believe it did rather well!



CATS cast with Trevor Nunn, Andrew Lloyd Webber & Gillian Lynne

Meopham Players Treasure Hunt

By our special correspondent Lesley Boycott

Way back in April a group of intrepid Players and friends hopped on our trusty "Grange Travel" coach and headed for London. Our aim, once again to tax our combined brains to find our way through the twists and turns of the streets and alleyways of Covent Garden.

"Hang on" I hear you say. "Didn't we do Covent Garden a few years ago?" Yes indeed but those clever Treasure Hunt people have devised another version taking in The Seven Dials. Similar walkways but different questions.

So, blessed again with good weather (albeit we were a month early) we were dropped off at the underground, our teams raring to go. (Some decided to start with coffee and discuss "The Plan")

Of course as we progressed around the route we kept meeting the "Opposition" and immediately everyone began pointing and looking in every direction hoping to put each other off the scent. The competitive spirit rising to the fore!!!



The Seven Dials, Covent Garden

At the end of 2 / 3 hours we met up at The Coal Hole in the Strand for some well deserved refreshment.

While everyone indulged the "cards" were "marked". Surprise, surprise JW's team won again! Will we ever beat them? Prizes awarded, glasses emptied we departed to find more solid refreshment.

About 9pm our trusty transport arrived to take us home. Another grand day out!

I wonder where we will venture next year. A big thank you to everyone who took part. Your enthusiasm helps to make it all worthwhile

IN SHORT

Can you help?

A 'Prompter' and 'Props' person are needed for the 'Snake in the Grass' production in October. If you are able to help please contact Eileen Bush.

Monthly Meeting -2 Sep

The next monthly meeting is a recital of the one act (20 minute) play 'Between the Soup & Savoury' by Gertrude Jennings. Guests Welcome.

Googlegroups emails

In future the Newsletter will be sent from a googlegroups email address and you should have received an invitation to join this group. You must click the **IAC-CEPT** box to continue receiving the monthly editions. Only 12 of you have done so at the time of going to press.

If you know of anyone that would like to join the circulation list to receive the Newsletter, or if you need the invitation to be sent again, please email: MeophamPlayers@gmail.com

Acting on a different kind of stage

Terri Horton , the Newsletter's Roving Reporter provides a different take on performing for an audience

I don't know how many of you enjoy visiting old houses, castles or other place of interest but I find them fascinating. One of the things I love the most is where there are guides who "act out" a presentation to give you information about the place or events that occurred. I admit it is my lazy way of absorbing the information about the place as I wander about but I really feel that these people add something special to a visit.

One particular example that stands out in my mind was when I went with a group of friends to Chatham Dockyard. We spent several hours there as there is so much to see and do but the thing I will remember the most is the visit to the ropery.



We were met on the ground floor by a lady in period costume from early 1900's. She was "in character" throughout the tour downstairs explaining the initial processes involved in rope making and the conditions both in the dockyard and Chatham at the time. She was humorous and lively but suddenly was interrupted by a loud harsh shout from above "to stop your yammering and get them up 'ere".

She instantly froze and hurriedly explained that upstairs "Mr Steve" was waiting. She hissed "be careful, mind your-



selves and do as you're told" and then with a fearful glance up the stairs she gestured for us to go up.

Although the group contained only two children, we all giggled nervously as we got to the top of the stairs and passed by a very thin, lanky man in costume with piercing eyes, thin greasy hair and a sneer. Wow did he have "stage presence"!

He motioned for us to sit on the bales of hemp and then stared at us until we all began to fidget a little nervously. In his sneering, harsh voice he stated "if, and only if I speak to you, you will answer me thus "yes, Mr Steve", understand?"

Again, giggling nervously we nodded or said "yes Mr Steve" provoking a further sneer.

After explaining the processes of "forming" and "laying" the rope on the hand-powered machines, Mr Steve asked for three volunteers; I pushed Ian forward, much to his alarm, my friend Sue her husband Geoff and a third friend Brian made up the required number.

Mr Steve duly sneered at them and asked if they thought they were strong enough to make rope tight enough to pass his inspection?

Both Ian and Brian entered into the situation and answered "yes Mr Steve" but Geoff just smiled and said "yes". Mr Steve was not impressed, he stood and

sneered at Geoff and said "What?" Failing completely to pick up on his cue Geoff smiled again, looked slightly puzzled and said "oh, yeah" provoking a roar from Mr Steve following which Geoff remembered his cue and meekly answered as required!



The three guys operated the machines as instructed as Mr Steve kept up his mildly insulting commentary, and produced a piece of rope that did pass Mr Steve's inspection, to his obvious surprise!

We left the ropery as Mr Steve checked our pockets for any stolen material, he was not out of character for a second, and then he gave a final sneer and slammed the door. It might have been a show designed to amuse the kids but we "big kids" enjoyed it immensely and we still prompt Geoff with "yes, Mr Steve" at appropriate moments.



Pottham Regional Amateur Theatre Society By Matt Dallas

