



Meopham Players Newsletter

e: MeophamPlayers@gmail.com

August 2016/issue 24

Bitter breaking of the Shrew



If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves? Mary Astell (1666-1731)

tral protagonists. Kate, so defiant at the start suddenly bends her will to the oafish Petruchio, perhaps at the realisation that being tamed was the price to pay to escape the stifling family ties and social mores she would have to abide by if she did not. But it is a heavy price- she is paraded as a prisoner in a cage of her own hoop skirting , yanked every which way by societal stays, her marriage dissolving in a pool of stagnant water. Her desolation at the end a stark reminder that we may have come long way but there still much, much more to be done.

The energetic cast, half of whom were women, together with an outstanding musical accompaniment excelled themselves and ably suckered the groundlings into the bawdy humour of the play. References to Irish writers abounded, particularly to Samuel Beckett with the opening scene littered with abandoned boots and battered bowler hats a nod to *Waiting for Godot*, the marital bed located atop an ashen mound redolent of the knoll that engulfs the hapless Winne in *Happy Days*, another tragic woman trapped by her circumstances.

Our thanks once again to Brenda Ogden for all her hard work in arranging the day.

Brenda (centre, white trousers) & her motley crew



Dame Kurtan Razor Critic Of The Year



The Globe gives *The Taming of the Shrew* a modern take but it makes for uncomfortable viewing

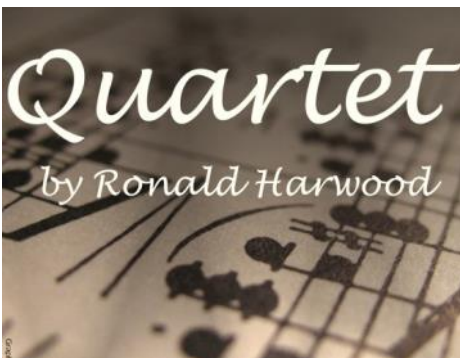
Written by Shakespeare early in his career with his skills not yet fully honed, *The Taming of the Shrew* with a plot line of a forced marriage, and the barbaric subjugation of a wife by a brutal dowry chasing suiter has left the play totally out of whack with contemporary attitudes and led to its unpopularity on stage, although it has received two Hollywood make-overs – first in Cole Porter’s *Kiss me Kate* (1953) and a little more recently *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999).

At first sight it would appear to be an odd choice even for the Globe, but not altogether surprising given its rivalry with its intellectually muscular superior, the RSC.

The Taming of the Shrew starts where many Shakespeare plays usually end, dealing with the aftermath of a wedding and whichever way you read it, Shakespeare offers a fairly savage indictment of married life. Bliss it certainly ain’t.

Recent productions have broadly split in to two camps on how to interpret the relationship between the two lead characters Kate and Petruchio - on the one hand the emphasis is given to the cruelty, violence and misogyny with the mental and physical abuse played for laughs.

The Globe opts for the other, more palatable option for modern audiences. The action is located in 1916 Ireland, a heavy hint that the Irish struggle for independence mirrors the battle that is to ensue between the cen-



Next show to be Quartet not Inspector Calls

The next production on 27, 28 & 29 October will now be **Quartet** as the Performing Rights for *An Inspector Calls* were refused due to the play being licenced for a professional tour in Autumn. As a result our production will now be staged next May when a licence is available.

An equally star-studded cast is already in rehearsal for a light hearted drama likened by one critic to a lolloping Labrador that ‘bounds over to you, eyes bright and tail wagging, and you smilingly allow it curl up on your feet, despite the faint smell of damp fur and digestive biscuits.’ See page 2 for complete cast list.

Are you able to help with the costumes which are a key part of this production? We would like to hear from you if you can, email MeophamPlayers@gmail.com



Marrakech

Grey clouds rolling at our backs
 We hurry through torpid air
 Past gaudy trinkets and necklaces of ripe figs
 As stallholders make ready to Leave and honour God

A drop of water the size of a bee
 Tumbles out of the sky
 And hurls itself onto a paving slab
 Bleached and bleached again
 Under the Moroccan sky
 And cracked like the face of a wizened old man

Another and another
 Falls to the street
 And explodes
 Droplet fragments rising upward
 To fall again in a last agony of creation

Suddenly
 The storm is upon us
 The sun usurp'd in its domain of sky
 As the clouds empty and disburse their cargo
 And the ground Dust, and brick and storm
 drain Drink and gulp Until full to overflowing

We watch
 Sheltered beneath the ancient tower
 As new rivers appear in the street
 And men hurrying to the mosque
 Splash and splash their way
 to God

David Alexander

What to see, what to do...



Ima Starstruck

Our Showbiz Correspondent with her ear to the keyhole & iphone to the pulse

September

Capel Le Ferne outing - 3 Sep

Annual General Meeting 7 Sep.

AGM with wine, then an evening of fun and jollity. Come and show your appreciation for the Officers that keep the group afloat.

October

5 Oct - Workshop

Quartet - *please note these dates*

{15 Oct - Flats preparation & painting then...

{22 & 23 Oct - Set building, help wanted!

27,28 & 29 Oct -Quartet production

December 2016

Christmas Social Meal at Three Daws-

provisional dates 9 or 7 December

January 2017

Panto - Jan 2017

May 2017

An Inspector Calls - May production

Globe trip interloper



Marr (centre) console's himself with a pizza; 'Jeremy' (l) lets rip, Pauline (r) wants to disappear

This year's Globe Trotters were surprised to find the BBC's Andrew Marr seated next to them at ZiZi's, where they had adjourned to after seeing The Taming of the Shrew.

It would appear Mr Marr had been tipped off that the Labour leader was among our party only to find that it was our own "Rodders" Buckland who is regularly mistaken for the politician

A Bolt From the Blue – Act One's production - from page to stage



Act 1 peacocks confront a bolt struck Edward

This show had so many challenges for the director, cast and crew as we had to get used to using a very small space as most rehearsals were held in living rooms .

The set building weekend arrived quickly to hang stage curtains, rig the lights . A pylon was built and drawn on the backdrop to create a focal point and the rostra erected.

After 11 weeks of rehearsals we were at that awful stage where something that had seemed hilarious at the first read-through no longer seemed funny and we desperately needed an audience. On the first night we had a fairly small audience but they all thoroughly enjoyed it and we were delighted. The Friday night audience was huge and they laughed so much that it was difficult for the cast to get a word in! But they weren't phased by this and it was a terrific night. Was it worth all the hard work? It certainly was!

Margaret Bown, Director



STELLAR CAST LIST ANNOUNCED

Director: Sylvia Stickings

27, 28 & 29 October,

Box Office opens 1 Sep



Diane Dixon
Jean



Rodney Buckland
Reggie



Brenda Ogden
Sissy



S Sangha
Wilf

PIECES OF EIGHT

My life in eight pieces, by **Rodney Buckland** Players' Thespian & Webmaster. He is playing Reggie in *Quartet*, 27, 28 & 29 Oct



The Elders of Planet ZOG finally lost patience with our hero, when he insisted he had seen Elvis, and banished him. Talking in maths he fetched up on Earth to continue his search for the King which explains his chequered career- Antarctic expeditioner, astronaut candidate (failed...twice), NASA Deep Space Network

engineer, spacecraft designer for European Space Agency, Open University Tutor, Research Fellow and Course Team Chair, founder of Space School, Mooc-aholic and bon vivant.

1. Spacecraft I have known and loved

This is Mariner 7. Launched in March 1969, she made a close flyby of Mars in August 1969, two weeks after Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin made the first landing on the Moon. Largely forgotten by the media at the time, she allowed me to practice my celestial mechanics modelling skills in my first job with NASA.

2. Nella Dan

The Danish icebreaker 'Nella Dan'. Affectionately known as 'The Little Red Ship', she took me and fellow expeditioners to Mac-Robertson Land, Antarctica in February 1971, and returned in early 1972 to pick us up. The cook's Danish pastries were excellent!

3. From Woomera with Love!

The nose cone of a Skylark rocket, launched from Woomera, South Australia in 1968, adorns my back lawn – along with the usual bird bath.

4. The Boys

In the good old days before 'Health and Safety', we scorned mechanical aids such as caterpillar tractors and skidoos. Two sledges, 14 dogs, three explorers – now, that's team work.

5. Caution Gravity

Health and Safety again! This sign is at the Gravity Discovery Centre north of Perth, Western Australia.

6. Sylvie's Cake Tin

Sylvie's cake tin was a vital prop in 'Calendar Girls'. I think it would be fair to say that I didn't always use it to its full potential – at least in rehearsals

7. ANARE Code Book

Being a member on an Antarctic expedition in 1971-72, I was limited to 180 words of WYSSAs (see below) each month, sent by HF radio to Melbourne. But thanks to our collection of 5-letter codewords, our meagre word ration could 'say' quite a lot.

Examples:

YAPUL – Have had minor frostbite

YAUSP – Deep snow drifts have accumulated in the lee of the huts

YIHKE – I have grown a beard which is generally admired

YIKLA – This is the life!

YITUB – Not sure whether men training dogs or dogs training men

And our families had the codebook too:

YAPOK – All at home are well

YAPHE – Grandmother hasn't been well

WYSSA – All my (our) love darling.

8. The Road Ahead

This sign on a rather dilapidated building in Baikonur, Kazakhstan reads 'The road to the stars is open'. The Soviet Union and then Russia have not achieved much that would please their early visionaries, but I expect (and hope) that we will soon see a 'Race to Mars'. Perhaps the first words from the surface of the 'Red Planet' will be 'Дорога к планетам открыта!'



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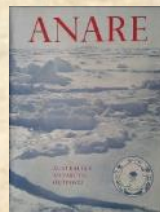
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Captives on the carousel of time



Terry Fairhead

The circle game of reincarnation has ensnared many but our correspondent would prefer to give it a miss

I suppose it could be argued that all religions promise some sort of continuation of life after death and it would not be too much of a misjudgement to suggest it was originally their *raison d'être*. This is hardly surprising when we consider how miserable life must have been for the vast majority of people when the idea of such a thing first began to develop thousands of years ago.

Even in the earliest times, the thought that a better life awaited after this one was over may well have been what kept them going.

But believing in an idea that death is not the end doesn't mean that all faiths have the same expectation. Christians and Muslims think there is a place they can only enter after they die and are resurrected. For the former it is called Heaven, while for the latter it is Paradise but quite what happens in either place is open to considerable speculation. Certainly I have never heard anyone explain how one deals with an infinite after-life.

On the other hand the Hindu religion, along with Buddhism and Sikhism, is founded on reincarnation. As I have always understood it this means after death, our spirits



We can't return we can only look behind
From where we came
And go round and round and round
In the circle game

will be reborn in new bodies. A cursory moment of research however reveals this is just part of the story for this recycling will go on for many lifetimes with the condition of the new body being dependent on how the spirit has behaved in its previous life. Not only that, there is no guarantee the body itself will be human or even animal.

Nevertheless, if the spirit strives to improve in each new life, it will eventually become one with the cause and foundation of all existence. In the Hindu case this will be Brahman.

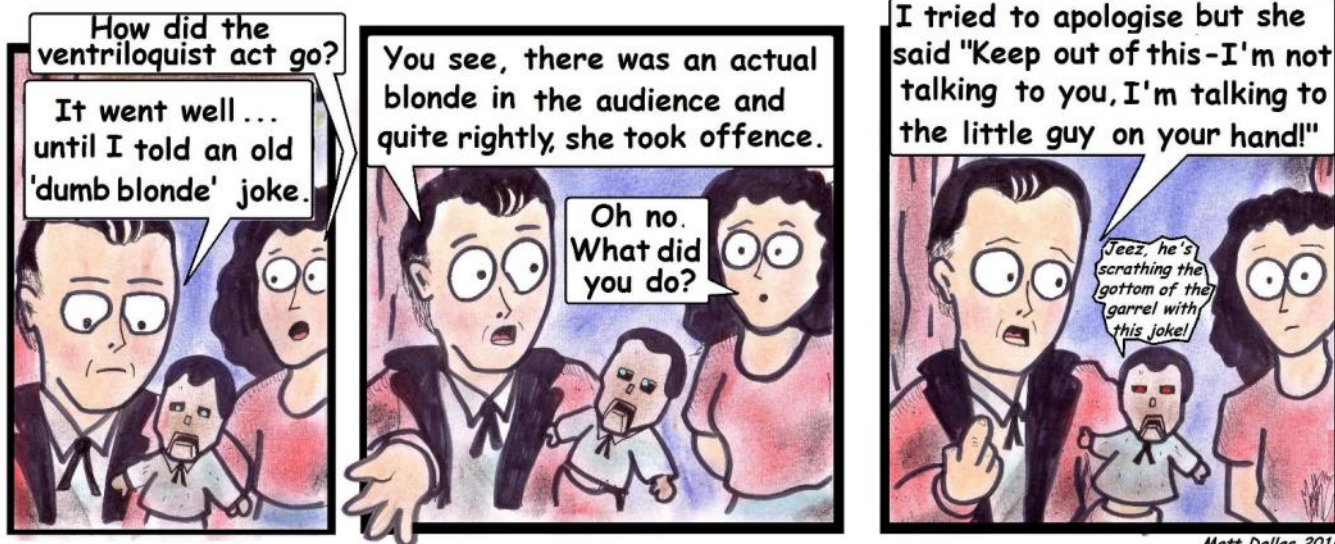
But you don't have to be a believer of any faith to give consideration to the basic idea of reincarnation because, superficially at least it is not an unattractive prospect; at

least not as long as you return in human form – or is it?

I suppose it depends on what sort of life you've had. If like me you've had the incredible good fortune to have been born in a country which, for all its faults, has been a largely compassionate and benign place; had the love (though not always appreciated) of two devoted parents; been married to the one woman who could put up with me for 55 years, not to mention being blessed with having children and grandchildren I would willingly sacrifice my life for, well... it really couldn't get much better than that. And being really selfish about it, I can't see me being that lucky next time.

So if it's all the same to you I'll pass on reincarnation

Pottham Regional Amateur Theatre Society By Matt Dallas



Matt Dallas 2016