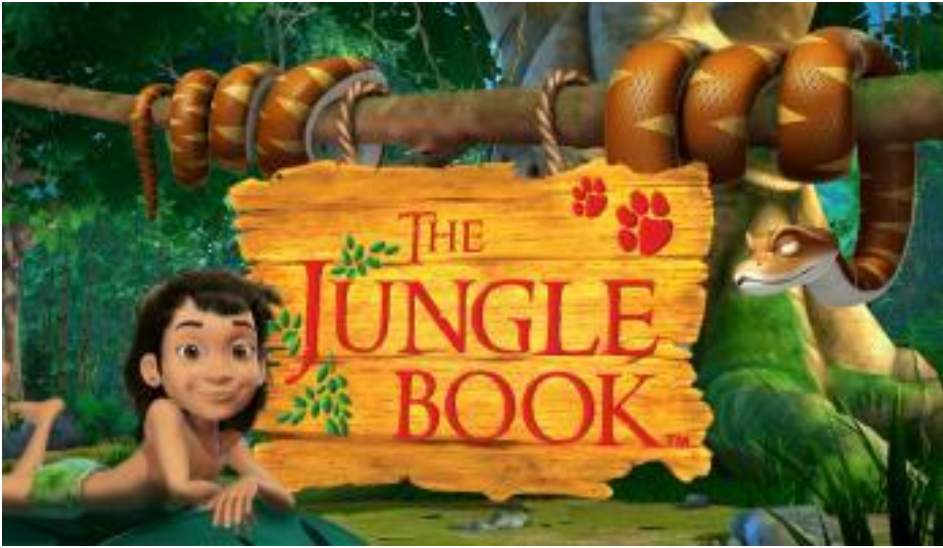




e: MeophamPlayers@gmail.com

Meopham Players Newsletter

July 2017/ issue 34



Masterly Workshop



Auditions

The Meopham Players' Festive production scheduled for early 2018 is the ever popular classic 'The Jungle Book' which recently received a Disney makeover.

Open Auditions will be held on 27 July at Meopham Village Hall. Members and non-members are welcome to try for any part so if you are a budding Baloo, a hissing Scarlett Johansson Kaa or a lovable Mowgli the casting couch awaits you.

If you intend auditioning for a singing part, please send a copy of the music you will be using to the director John Winson ahead of time. John is also able to provide advance copies of the script if required. email: jwinson1955@hotmail.co.uk

Open Auditions:

Meopham Village Hall 27 July, 8am until 10pm

The perquisites to successfully Playing Coward are 'repartee', 'listening forward' and 'pace and pause' explained Paul Doust at the last monthly meeting.

By running through a series of vignettes, in his own inimitable style, he demonstrated the importance of each of these to bringing the texts of Noel Coward alive and fizz that left the assembled gang agog.

Playing Coward

Paul Doust Workshop

June 2017

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Art Attack!

Salvador Dalek



Abstract art often perplexes its admirers and is guaranteed to send its detractors into an swivel eyed rant about unmade beds and pickled fish. Our fine arts correspondent argues that although it may not be as easily accessible as the realistic masterpieces of yesteryear, the rewards are bountiful if you are prepared to invest some time and effort.

Study for Improvisation V, 1910
Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944)
Oil on pulp board
National Gallery, Trafalgar Square

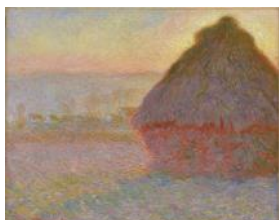


Wassily Kandinsky was a Russian born painter who abandoned a promising law professor career after two pivotal events when he began to 'see' things. Whilst listening to a Wagner opera his imagination conjured up a riot of wild, vivid mental images which left him wondering if it was possible to produce a parallel experience where colours were the notes and their composition the tonality. Throughout his journey towards total abstraction he was interested in analogies between colours and sound.

Shortly after, a touring exhibition in Moscow of French 'Impressionism' produced an equally powerful reaction when he was confronted by series of paintings by Monet depicting haystacks in a field. Previously he had only known realistic art but here he was blown away

Needle in a haystack?

The Stacks of Giverny
Claude
Monet 1891



by canvasses with no discernible object, an epiphany that opened the eyes of the young amateur artist to whole new world.

Kandinsky wanted painting to function like music, using colours and forms like melodies and rhythms to summon emotion and as a pioneer of abstract painting thought art could make inner truths visible. He combined aspects of Art Nouveau, with the feverish colours of the Fauves and formulated a philosophical justification which was underpinned by his views on mysticism and his almost missionary attachment to the doctrines of Theosophy.

In his seminal tome 'The Shock Of The New' - based on the eight part BBC blockbuster series of the same title - the distinguished Art Critic and Broadcaster, Robert Hughes, writes: *"He felt some colours as strongly as others feel sounds – the heehawing of a police siren or the hateful squeak of a knife dragged across a plate – and his obsession with the 'pathetic fallacy,' the attribution of human feelings to what was not human, rivalled Van Gogh's."*

Kandinsky began a series of 'improvisations', early in the 20th Century which he regarded 'a largely unconscious, spontaneous expression of inner character'; and gradually eliminated representational content to arrive at pure abstraction. 'Study for Improvisation V' of 1910, stops just short of becoming abstract. This landscape evokes Biblical stories of the Apocalypse, which foretold Christ's second coming. In the foreground, a veiled woman in blue kneels before a standing Christ-like man with streaming golden hair, while in the upper right two men on horseback gallop across the landscape, recalling the biblical horseman of the Apocalypse. In his call for artists to explore the emotional and spiritual values of pure colour and abstract form, Kandinsky continued an artistic legacy that Delacroix had come to define in the 19th Century.

You say you want a revolution?

Liberty Leading The People
Eugene
Delacroix 1830





Daunting

"Daunting isn't it?" I offered inadequately To the sweating workman Who grunted like a weightlifter attempting to lift a bus And offered me an eye full of evil and contempt in reply

"Are you sure there isn't another way?"

"Perhaps a block and tackle? You know, lift it?"

Pointing up to the first-floor window

That was the focus of the workman and his mate

Sensing contempt I retreated

Abandoning the worn heirloom wardrobe

Swaddled in protective cloth

Standing half on and half off

The garden path

A while later

A loud rasping sound followed by a cacophony of tearing dry Timber and despairing shouts Roused me and shook the house

"I said it was daunting."

"It was the weight."

"No, it was the rope."

"We should have tried the staircase again."

As ancient naptha rose into the morning air I surveyed the ruptured splintered Box of childhood memories "I never much cared for it myself."

I said

And turned and walked away

David Alexander

Serial Killer 9011

Terry Fairhead, *an offer I can refuse*

Now I don't want to alarm you, but I think you should know your lives may be in great danger because we – Meopham Players have a contract out on us.

How do I know this? Well we have been notified by someone calling himself serialkiller9011 at the Meopham Players email address.

It seems 9011 has been commissioned – by someone we apparently called "our family" – to dispose of us, although he makes it clear he has no personal animosity; it is just his duty to carry out the deed because he has been paid to do so.

So, why then does his email carry the subject heading: I WANT TO HELP YOU!!!!?

Well it turns out this particular hit-man is a bit of a softy as he has very generously offered to hold off from carrying out the dastardly deed for a mere \$58,000. This is somewhat surprising particularly as – to demonstrate his ruthlessness – he claims responsibility for both 9/11 in New York as well as 7/11 in London.

He also claims his "boys" have bugged our phone which I found particularly surprising as I always thought serial killers were loners – live and learn, eh?

In the interests of brevity I haven't given you the whole message to read, but I can reproduce my response:

"How very kind of you to contact us – a serial killer with a kind streak; that must be a first. However I have to say there are quite a number of flaws contained within your message – and I'm not talking about your grammar, which is abysmal. No, I'm referring to the fact you have addressed your threat to an organisation, not an individual. Now, okay, an organisation is comprised of individuals, but unless we know which one you are contracted to kill it is somewhat difficult to know which of us is supposed to cough up the \$58,000. There is also another little problem with regard to your request for dollars as this is not the currency we have access to. And whose phone have you been bugging because Meopham Players as such doesn't have one. What we do have, however, is your email address: jmpreach@aol.com.

You need to think about that."

Open House

Wednesday 5 July
Meopham Village Hall, 8pm

"We will be having a cheese and wine to wind up the season on our Wednesday meeting in July" writes the Meopham Players Chairman, Sylvia Stickings. "Eileen Bush is preparing a one act play for us to read, should be a nice sociable evening!"

This is an ideal opportunity if you are considering joining the Meopham Players to come along and find out more about what we do in an informal relaxed atmosphere. So, don't be shy come along and have a chat, we will be pleased to see you!

PIECES OF EIGHT



It has been impossible to contain the life of **John Ogden**, to one page as has been the *Newsletter* custom up to now. Even after judicious editing the adventures of Big

Ogg - rather like those of Toad - cannot be held back, it remains to be seen if he has found the wide world beyond the wild wood.....*continued on page 5*

When I was 9 or so, I succumbed to a fairly slight bout of Scarlet Fever, and was



visited daily by my local GP, Dr Livingstone. He had a brand new Hillman I was a mere stripling, but I lusted after that new car! My mother simply said, If you want a car like that you will have to become a Doctor. Hence my eventual entry to the Medical School at Liverpool University.

Then, during the summer before going up to University, I went with a couple of mates to see Dirk Bogarde in *Doctor in the House* and thought



"Wow, if it is just half as good as that I'm going to enjoy myself." My religious inclinations to become a medical missionary disappeared in a puff of blue smoke and a coughing fit after my first Olivier cigarette at a 'Freshers' dance in the Children's Hospital! I spent almost 5 years in Liverpool, so that even now I can do a passable Scouse accent. I learned to write appallingly through scribbling notes during lectures and ward rounds. I also discovered the 5 fastest ways out of the Myrtle Street Nurses Home after lights out, but unfortunately, when it came to the punch, all the examiners were interested in was what an aspirin was, and other unfathomable pharmacological facts. So I joined the ranks of all other ex-medical students it seemed, and entered the unspeakable world of commerce in the drug industry with May & Baker Ltd in beautiful downtown Dagenham, Essex.

I spent my first New Year's Eve in London with an alcoholic Doctor friend from M&B, going to a party in Barons Court given by one of our new colleagues recently graduated from Nottingham University. I was then a much more confident smoker (as we all were in those days) but inevitably during a long evening a packet of 20 (cigarettes) didn't go very far, especially with my friend helping himself to a fair number. So as the evening wore on, I spotted this attractive redheaded young lady, another graduate from Nottingham, sitting in an armchair smoking a newly lit cigarette, and engrossed in deep conversation with a fellow M&B chap, a Pakistani pharmacist, so I asked her if I could borrow her cigarette, and she, thinking I wanted to light my own, handed it over to me, behind her chair and continued her conversation. When I had smoked it down almost to the end I generously handed it back to her. Within a mere few months afterwards we had consolidated the smoking into a much more serious relationship which I am delighted to say, lasts until the present, though happily without the fags!



Honeymoon leads to our first house in Nursery Road, Meopham, There's a coincidence! A first young son Ben born just a few days after President Kennedy was assassinated. Then a second young man Matthew, came along and after about six years or so in the first house we moved across to Norwood Lane. I had also joined Round Table and changed my career direction during this time having entered the field of Personnel Management in 1964, because people were still 'my thing' and have been ever since. I had joined Clarnico in Stratford E15, famous for its chocolate peppermint creams. I still carry the scars under my belt to this day! Being a non-driver then, I had a six change journey each way to work daily including the Gravesend-Tilbury Ferry twice a day. I soon learned to drive!

There then followed a stint in the London Docks in a private dock company, as the Assistant Personnel Manager during the London Dock Strike over decasualisation and next door to the Ford Motor Company where the Bell ringers were famous for starting regular strikes. A totally fascinating experience which coloured my work experience for ever!

Eventually, common sense prevailed when I got my first job in Kent and I was appointed Personnel Manager at Empire Paper Mills in Greenhithe, and three years later at Imperial Paper Mills in Gravesend. In fact my office was on the spot now oc-

cupied by Lidl!

After some very entertaining years with the print unions I was headhunted into Manbrè and Gartons, the 'other' cane sugar refiners and agreed to join them in Battersea. On the day before I was due to join them, a takeover by Tate & Lyle was announced and all hell broke loose. Eventually the takeover was complete and after a few days in brown corduroy trousers, the new T&L MD asked me to be his Personnel Director, a real challenge but a very splendid opportunity. Three years later I moved on to become Personnel Director of Tate & Lyle Refineries Ltd and was almost immediately inextricably involved in the closure of 4 out of our 6 large sugar refineries across the country to comply with EEC regulations. At the end of 1986 I left to set up my own Personnel Consultancy which I still run, providing a service to small companies without an HR department of their own. I am now the longest continuously serving Fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development in the UK with over 54 years total membership.



To keep myself occupied during all these times, and as a side-line I was appointed as a Non-Executive Director in the NHS in the late 90s, becoming the Vice-Chairman of the Dartford, Gravesend & Swanley Primary Care Trust, and then a Director of the West Kent PCT following the amalgamation of a number of similar smaller organisations.

At Empire and Imperial Paper Mills, I had become intimately involved with the Gravesend Community Relations Council and the Sikh Community because over 850 first generation immigrant Sikhs worked at both Mills. I was very fortunate to be sent on a detailed month long study tour mainly to the Punjab, but was also very happy to see much of other parts of India, including the Taj Mahal, (where I vowed I would take Brenda at some stage, a plan completed for our silver wedding) and The Golden Temple in Amritsar which we have visited since. Both proved to be never to be forgotten experiences.



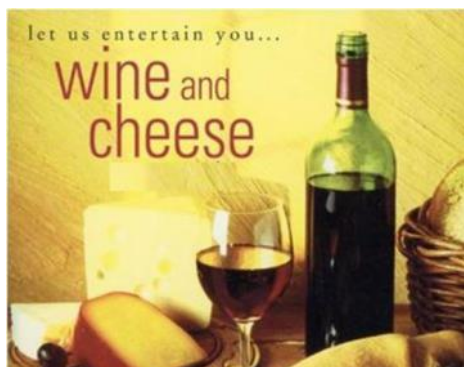
(This visit stimulated me to get even more involved locally, and as a result of sitting on various community related bodies I found myself

What to do, what to see

Ima Starstruck



Our Showbiz Correspondent with her ear to the keyhole & pulse to the iPhone provides a pick of the upcoming hot ticket shows and events not to be missed!



July 2017

5 July: Cheese & Wine

An informal relaxed end to the year where friends, guests and non-members are welcome

29 July: Henry's Hut Clean Up

Volunteers needed, to help please email Sylvia Stickings: ssupersylv@aol.com

September 2017

6 September Meopham Players AGM

The Committee is going through a rejuvenation this year and seeking a Chairman, Newsletter Editor, Publicity Manager & Box Office Manager.

Email Sylvia Stickings at the address above for details.

7 December 2017

Meopham Players Christmas Dinner for friends & family at the Three Daws.

February 2018

22, 23, 24 February

Festive Fun with the Meopham Players production of the Jungle Book.

October 2018

Producer needed for our October show - email Sylvia Stickings at address above



Meopham Players

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PIECES OF EIGHT

John Ogden, *continued from page 4*

appointed to the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee supporting the North Kent Magistrates benches. under the Chairmanship of the then Lord Lieutenant, Lord Kingsdown. It was he who recommended me to Her Majesty for the role which I still am very honoured to hold, that of a Deputy to the Lord Lieutenant. I have been delighted to serve from 2001 to the present. The role is largely ceremonial but also incorporates a most interesting and important role in among many other things helping to conduct Citizenship Ceremonies across the County and Medway.

In 2001 I was also appointed as the independent Chairman of Kent County Council Standards Committee where I served for 8 years and the Kent and Medway Fire &

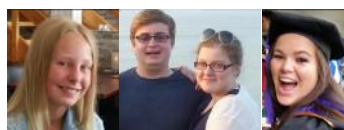


Rescue Authority Standards Committee for 12 years and the Chair of the KCC Member Remuneration Panel until the end of last year.

Family, Ben went to Los Angeles in 1982 ironically to study English, and still lives in the USA, now in Chicago. Matthew has been in Denmark now for some 12 years, and our grandchildren, are Christi, who graduated a year last June from the Vermont Law School with a Masters in Environmental Law and Policy, Sam is currently in his third year of a 4 year Master of Languages course at Southampton University, and for this year is at the University of Bayreuth (where among other things he is being taught French in German!) Having been President of the SUFC, in his second term, he is continuing his fencing activities in both the University Club and the city's fencing club.

Katie is in her

final year at Mayfield Grammar School in Gravesend and has just finished her GCSE A levels Both Sam and Katie have been active members of Players, in a variety of



roles. Rose has just begun her secondary education in Denmark.

We are blessed with very intelligent kids and grandchildren. I stopped arguing with them when Sam was 14! Anyone who saw him as Adrian Mole will know why!

Home Having spent 54 years in Meopham, 21 of which were at Norwood Farmhouse

three years ago, we moved round the corner, back into Nursery

Road, leaving behind three flights of stairs, all weird, and a lovely garden. We inherited a bomb site of a garden! After some considerable work with our good friend Howard, we produced a great result which you can now see. Then, feeling idle I began to get involved in village affairs and for my sins was elected onto the only form of local Government with unpaid Councillors as a Parish Councillor and then as Vice Chairman. Meopham Parish Council has all the hallmarks of J K Rowling's book "A Casual Vacancy" but that's also another story, perhaps I'll write a book about it sometime!

So the story continues..!



What's in a Name?

Terry Fairhead



Odd sounding professions are the object of this month musings by our man on the spot.

In the quite early days of BBC television there was a very popular Panel Game inspired – if that's the right word – by an American show of the same name called *What's My Line?*

It was an early, immensely popular programme that ran from 1951 to 1964 when television was, to some extent, just emerging from its infancy. Indeed, you could say its popularity was as much due to the lack any significant competition as to the quality of its content – there was after all, only one channel (BBC) in 1951.

The object of the game was for a panel of four personalities of the day to guess the occupation of an ordinary member of the public (OMOTP) who would mime what he/she did at work. The panel was then allowed to ask the OMOTP questions, but he/she could only answer either *yes* or *no*.

Generally speaking, they were pretty good at identifying the OMOTP's occupation but amongst the jobs that stumped them was one that still has some resonance today, at least in terms



All in a days work, the panel getting down to sleuthing

of its name. It is *The Saggar Maker's Bottom Knocker*.

Now, while I'm sure I don't need to spell out to everyone what this particular job entails there may be one or two, who weren't born in The Potteries, who could be a little puzzled. So for them I will explain that a saggar is a round or oval pot fashioned very skilfully out of fireclay by the Saggar Maker. When he has completed his work he hands it over to his apprentice – the Bottom Knocker – to fit the base.

But what's it for? I hear you non-

Potteries people cry. Well, it's actually for protecting unfired pottery from flame and smoke in the kiln.

Very interesting, you might be saying, but what's this got to do with performing arts? Well, not a lot, but that's only because I have run out space. I was going to go on to other odd-sounding professions that abound in the film industry, such as *Best Boy* and *Key Grip* and *Focus Puller* (which actually sounds a bit rude – or is that just me?).

May be next time.

Pottham Regional Amateur Theatre Society



* And star of Going Green!



Matt Dallas 2017