



Meopham Players Newsletter

November 2017/ issue 37

e: MeophamPlayers@gmail.com

John Ogden sees "A splendid production"

DEAD GUILTY By Richard Harris



The end of October saw a splendid production of "Dead Guilty" by Richard Harris directed by our very experienced Eileen Bush. It played to almost full houses for the three nights which, unusually for Meopham Players, ran from Wednesday to Friday. The production featured three new members of Players, one of whom, Margaret Gardner, brilliant in the lead rôle of Julia Darrow, *had never acted before*, and another Jan Coombs who had not been on stage for some 12 years. In addition, a further new member Paul Tomkies, very ably supported by a Players stalwart Brenda Ogden created for three nights an increasingly dramatic scenario leading finally to the murder of Julia. All three of the other characters could have been the

murderers and all were thought to be guilty by many of the audience which clearly indicated the skill of the Director and the acting talents of the three other characters concerned. The level of suspense was palpable and increased as the play progressed until the final denouement. It just goes to show, you can get away with murder!

Eileen Bush comments:

I cannot praise everyone involved with Dead Guilty enough. A brilliantly strong cast, three of them new to us, gave the audience a very good evening out and will have enhanced our reputation considerably. Graeme Horrocks worked wonders. He has never done lighting before so I gave him a very basic lighting plot, no real direction and little rehearsal time. Graeme added subtlety and mood in a very sensitive way which enhanced the production.

Paul Doust - Director of the forthcoming production *Flare Path* said: Fantastic team effort; a credit to the direction and the skill and obvious talent of all the actors.



Poppy Cock's Column

Hello Darlings!

Couldn't agree more with the assessments opposite, but I think we should also mention the value of our, by now, well-established Theatre Experience where patrons can enjoy a ticket to the show, AND a two-course meal at The Cricketers, The George, and the Railway Inn, in Sole Street, for just £20 a head. On this occasion, some 97 patrons participated in this Experience, more than a third of the overall audience over all three performances. It will of course be also available for our next show in **February** which is a completely new production of ***Jungle Book*** to be directed by John Winson - see page 2 of this newsletter for more information. Finally, we would like to thank our faithful audience for their continuing support which is a constant encouragement to our actors and crews, and to wish them all a very Happy Christmas and hopefully a prosperous New Year, whatever it may bring!





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It's me again, Poppy Cock, here to help you keep abreast of things.

Oh yes, I can handle more than one column, especially when I have so much to tell you.

7th December Christmas Party at The Three Daws.

If you would like to join us, please bear in mind there are only 20 places available and that tickets are going quickly. If you haven't got around to booking yet, contact John Ogden as soon as possible on **01474 812745** or **john@looking-forward.co.uk**

Wednesday 3rd January 2018 Our good friend Paul Doust will be presiding over auditions for **Flare Path** at 8:00 pm taking place in the Village Hall. Members and non-members are invited to attend

Wednesday 7th February 2018 Monthly meeting at 8:00 pm, Village Hall.



Not sure what we have planned at the moment, but we'll let you know in the December

newsletter.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday 22nd, 23rd, 24th February: The new JUNGLE BOOK

This old favourite is produced and directed by John Winson.

Of course, we will be calling on volunteers for set-building and breaking, before and after the week of the play, but we'll give you more details in the next newsletter.

Well, that's it for now my darlings. I'll be back next time unless I have blotted my copybook in some way... but, what the Hell, copybooks are made to be blotted. I'm sure you'll see more of me later - now, where have I heard that before?

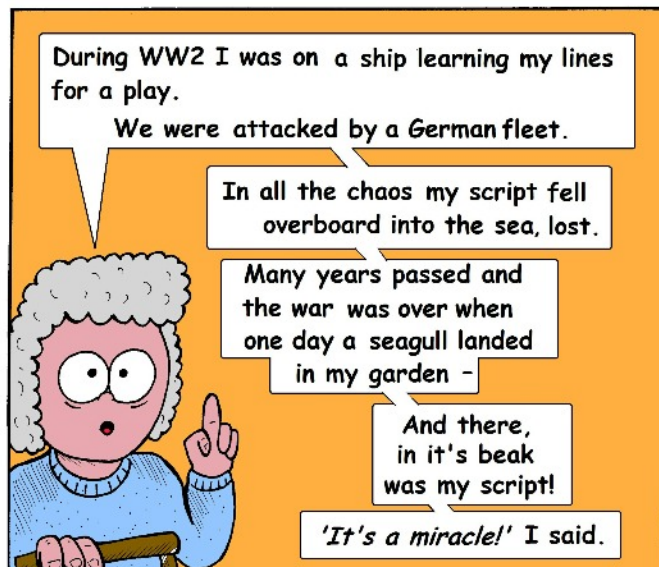
Au revoir,
Poppy xxx.



Pottham Regional Amateur Theatre Society



By
Matt
Dallas



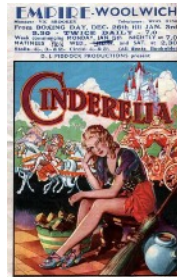
Matt Dallas 2017

The Empire doesn't strike back.

By Terry Fairhead



If you are under 80 years old it is highly likely you have never heard of Pauline Penny. Indeed it is by no means certain you would have if you were over that age for she performed in those halls of entertainment catering for a mainly male audience in need of some erotic titillation. I only saw her once, probably at the Woolwich Empire in the mid-Fifties, when to say the least, her best days were behind her. I had gone there with a group of young reprobates from work, celebrating somebody's prenuptial's. Whoever had organised the outing may have been misled by the publicity in thinking we were going to somewhere grand. Sadly, The Empire fell rather short of expectations. When it was built in 1920 it had a capacity of 1,425, in 1956 though it was lucky if it got an audience of a few hundred despite the price of even the "best" seats being about 2 shillings (10p in today's money). It was a dark, dingy place; to have called it seedy would have been to over praise its décor; it really was a run-down dump. But, buoyed by our expectations as well as a not inconsiderable amount of ale we took our places and ignored the decay.



The curtains opened to reveal a substantial, fully clothed lady of a certain age smiling warmly at us. She was our presenter; she was also Pauline Penny who coquettishly told us, we would see more of later. But before that main event there would be lots of different acts of indifferent quality all, as I recall, performed on a stage almost bare of scenery. But, despite this and perhaps to our surprise, there was one act that had us in stitches. It was a routine I'd not come across before. It was performed by a couple of comedians singing the old Al Jolson song *Sonny Boy*. It was a duet of sorts with the older man singing it straight and the younger answering as *Sonny Boy* himself. Not easy to put into print but here goes:-

Dad: *When there are grey skies,*
Son: *What don't you mind?*
Dad: *I don't mind the grey skies.*
Son: *What will you still have?*
Dad: *I'll still have you.*
Son: *What, s my name?*
Dad: *Sonny boy!*

Try singing through the whole song like that and you'll see what I mean.

Sometime later Penny reappeared and we did see more of her; and indeed there was such a lot to see as she posed for us, unclothed and unmoving as the law at the time required. But did we really want to see her like that?

I suppose, at the time, being young, silly and without access to the immense stock of stimulating images available everywhere today, we might have felt ourselves to have become blasé men of the world. On the other hand some of us were probably a bit shocked to see a member of the older generation reduced to having to get her kit off to make a living in such an unsavoury place.

Mind you, *The Empire* was on its last legs and before the end of the decade it had been demolished taking memories of entertainers down the ages with it. I have no idea what happened to Pauline Penny, nor apparently does Google. It seems she just faded away.

