



Meopham Players Newsletter

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Chocks Away: Flare Path ready for take off

Meopham Players are staging Terence Rattigan's classic RAF drama of love, temptation and loyalty set against the backdrop of the Second World War. The play features a stellar cast and is directed by Paul Doust.



Flare Path (1942), was written in the darkest days of the Second World War and based on Terence Rattigan's own experiences as a rear gunner in RAF Coastal Command. The action is set in a hotel lounge, the favourite haunt of a bunch of RAF pilots before they go on their bombing raids on enemy territory. Against this backdrop, Rattigan uses personal relationships to test loyalties within the group. Patricia, an actress, is recently married to Teddy Graham, an outwardly confident young pilot, full of energy and the life and soul of any party. However, when Peter Kyle, a waning Hollywood film star turns up Pat's life, marriage and moral compass are thrown into heart breaking turmoil. Be prepared to be moved by this compelling tale of love, temptation and the darkness of war.

'Rattigan's Flare Path is a truly remarkable play and I'm lucky enough to have a truly remarkable company and crew in The Meopham Players' says the Director, Paul Doust. 'if you don't know the play you are in for an absolute treat. If you do know the play, you'll know to bring the kleenex.'

The hottest ticket in town, book early to avoid disappointment.

Have you tried our 'Theatre Experience' which offers a two course meal at any of three local restaurants and a theatre ticket for £22?

Flare Path

by Terence Rattigan



"A masterpiece" - Winston Churchill

Meopham Players proudly present
the classic RAF drama of World War Two

24, 25 & 26 May, '18 - Meopham village hall
8:00 pm (doors open 7:30 pm)

£7.00 / £6.50

Telephone: 0844 288 9708

Or online: www.meophamplayers.co.uk

Poppy Cock's



Column

Hello Darlings!

I may not be on the front page, but I've been

given lots of space to tell you about all the exciting things we have planned for the coming months.

Of course, first up is **FLARE PATH**, which has been dealt with on Page 1, which means I don't need to say much more except it will be

absolutely fabulous, not least because of the amazing set that will be built by you, our wonderful and willing volunteers. Building

begins 8 pm **Friday 18th May** and will continue on as necessary until **Sunday 20th May**. Even if you can only spend a couple of hours, it will help us enormously. Any questions you have about this, please contact John Winson on:

0781 231 8893

Now, while we are on the subject of telephone numbers John Ogden has asked me to issue, on his behalf, an **apology** for an error made in his otherwise excellent article in the **Meopham Review** about our forthcoming production. Unfortunately the error was with the Box Office telephone number, which should have been:

0844 288 9708

The mistake was with the middle three digits which were published as 228. We are all very sorry for any confusion this might have caused.

Thursday, Friday and

Saturday 24th, 25th

and 26th May

FLARE PATH

Performances start

8 pm at

The Village Hall

NB HELP! Lesley will be a bit short of Front of House staff for this production so if you could offer some help on one or more nights, please contact her on:

0793 123 6058

Sunday 27th MAY

SET BREAKING

Starts 10 am and won't take too long if we have enough helpers, so please come along for just an hour or so.

Saturday 2nd June

Guess what?

We need volunteers to help with the clear-out of **Henry's Hut and the loft**. We'll make a start at around 10.30, working through to the point of exhaustion until sometime in the afternoon when we will have a barbecue. Drink and some veggie food will be provided, but you can bring your own as well if you wish. Again, just an hour or so will be fine, if that's all you can spare. We'll be grateful for it however long or short.

Wednesday 6th June

Auditions to be held for **Improbable Fiction** by Alan Ayckbourn. This will be our October production directed by Anne Horrocks. There are parts for four women and three men in this unusual

comedy about a writers' circle held on an evening when the chairman seems to wander into the imaginations of the other writers.

Wednesday 4th July

Monthly Meeting - nothing planned yet, but hey! What about an American theme of some sort? If you can think of a good idea, let the editor know at

tfairhead@aol.com

Saturday 1st September

Othello 2 pm at the Globe - Brenda Ogden - soon to play the part of Mrs Oakes in *Flare Path* writes:-

I have tickets for this performance, with Mark Rylance in the role of Iago. Mark Rylance is a particularly talented actor with a style perfectly attuned to the Globe and its very individual demands. Unsurprisingly, this has proved to be a very popular production and tickets melted away at an astonishing speed. As a result, I have only been able to obtain seats with a restricted view. The upside of this is that the tickets only cost £22.00, which is a bargain. As usual, I will arrange coaches to and from the theatre and there will be plenty of time after the performance to stroll around the South Bank and get a meal. Our visits to the Globe have always provided a very pleasant day out with outstanding drama thrown in as a bonus. If you would be interested in coming, please contact me on 01474 812745 or email on

nanaogg99@gmail.com

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Editor's Observations

As I am sure you will all be aware Players, as with most other organisations, behave a bit like an iceberg - only 10% is visible above the surface. Over the years we have had a good many very accomplished actors on our stage entrancing us with their skills, but behind and supporting them have been many, many more helping to provide the essential framework for a successful production. One such is **Mowgli**, seen here helping Maureen to make curtains for *Flare Path*



Sally Forth

our film critic reviews *The Way to the Stars* shown at the May Monthly Meeting.

Stars shown at the May Monthly Meeting.

It was a real pleasure to see this old (1945) black and white film again which, despite its age, still has the capacity to stir the emotions. Sadly, the necessity of attending rehearsals elsewhere probably reduced the audience size, but I think those of us who were able to go had a most enjoyable evening. Preceding the main film was an 8-minute trailer for the documentary, *Spitfire* which will have its premiere in July. The sight of this iconic aircraft filmed against a background of burgeoning

white cumulus clouds was a moving sight. Moving too were the words of one of the Battle of Britain veterans, Geoffrey Wellum who said: "You can't fly a Spitfire and forget about it - it stays with you forever."

Our thanks go to our Equipment Manager, Graeme for so expertly setting up the projector and sound system to provide a thoroughly entertaining show for The Few (i.e. the very small band in the audience.)

Situations Vacant

Rumour has it that **Murder 57** the UK's leading murder mystery entertainment company, is looking for actors. If you are interested you can contact them at: - actors@murder57.com see also the website:

www.murder57.com

Pottham Regional Amateur Theatre Society





Penny Pinching contemplates the afterlife.

When you get to my age - and I'm not saying what that age is - you start to wonder what, if anything, comes next. Most people, even the most pious, can look back on their lives and regret things they have done and said in the past that they wished they hadn't. Some may even think they were so bad they might even end up in Hell. But, What are we to make of the idea of Hell? Is it an invention of Man or of God and, if it was the latter, shouldn't there be a more consistent understanding of what it is and what it's like? Not all religions actually have a concept of Hell and even those that do provide vastly differing visions of ghastliness. For many, including Christianity and Islam, it is depicted as fiery and sulphurous, while for others, such as the Tibetan Buddhists, it is bitterly cold. Either way though neither could be considered as a particularly desirable form of afterlife. But then again, isn't any form of afterlife somewhat terrifying? We know life can be sweet, particularly if we

live in what we like to call the *Developed Countries*, but surely what makes it so precious is the fact that at some point we know it will be snatched away from us; we know that one day we will die; an afterlife means we won't.

Can anyone imagine what it would be like to live forever? What would we do with a limitless amount of time; and in what form would we be doing it if only our souls end up in Heaven? Presumably copulation would be out of the question, as would playing football, travelling abroad and doing anything involving bodies.

Early Judaism had no concept of an afterlife until it was introduced in the Hellenistic Period, i.e. from the death of Alexander the Great until the emergence of the Roman Empire (323 BC to 31 BC). Instead - as written in the Book of Daniel - we are told: *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

The Quran, on the other hand, though it talks of Paradise and sketches out some vague description of gardens and running water and living in fine mansions, sounds somewhat boring, unless the new arrival is a male ISIS martyr who can expect to be provided with 72 virgins (presumably female) for his personal use, though female martyrs just get their husbands. So, in death it seems everyone is equal, but some are more equal than others.

But, back to Hell; to a certain extent it seems to have been rather late to the

party; certainly the version involving fire and brimstone combined with everlasting damnation was. It wasn't in the Christian Old Testament, nor in the Greek language New Testament so it seems to be a more recent addition, which begs the question why? Could it be the promise of immortality was not enough; could it be the multitudes were not following the path of righteousness with sufficient rigour and needed less carrot and more stick? It is, I think, a possibility for through the ages religious belief hasn't only provided comfort to its followers, it has also bestowed great power and wealth on its leaders. This has often led to groups breaking away from the main body, sometimes for worthy motives; sometimes not, but whatever the reason, the new body will set itself up with its own subtle variations to the original simple theme of belief.

Such a schism has not always been responded to by the parent organisation with kindness and understanding. Indeed the reaction was sometimes as cruel and malevolent as the worst descriptions of Hell itself. Witness the horror of the Spanish Inquisition and more recently, the hideous conflict between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims.

So, no matter that the original belief is based on divine love, it has to be remembered it will be proclaimed by fallible human beings who, to encourage loyalty will promise goodies to the obedient and damnation to the rebellious with little regard to the veracity of what they preach.