



Meopham Players

Newsletter

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Sylvia Stickings remembers our Eileen



I first met Eileen about 40 years ago. The players usually entered a one act play into the Medway Little Theatre Festival - later known as the Duncan Rand Festival. She was a very enthusiastic "techy" from whom everyone sought advice about the lighting facilities. All down the years, Eileen has been a driving force on all aspects of amateur theatre. Sonia Williams and I made a friend of Eileen and finally managed to persuade her to join the Players in 2006. Apart from lighting plays, she offered to direct, her first

production for us being *The Lights are Warm and Coloured*. Many plays followed including *Outside Edge*, *Peggy for You*, *Snake in the Grass* and lastly, *Dead Guilty*. But her most successful production was *Calendar Girls* in 2013, which was so much fun to do! Although very encouraging and enthusiastic to new recruits, she sometimes had a short fuse. On one occasion, after a long rehearsal, someone had forgotten to take on a prop and she was heard to shout: "where's the effing bottle?" Another time, a cake tin was carried on sideways and after a few choice comments, she shouted "For crying out loud, there is supposed to be a bleeding cake inside that tin!" She was not a happy committee member, preferring to work on the side lines, but she did serve many years, always coming up with ideas for recruiting new members and bringing in several actors from other societies. She organised our Wednesday meetings with play readings and workshops with Paul Doust, who has become a firm friend of the Players. Any problems, Eileen would always come up with an answer, sometimes at very

short notice.

Together with four other Player friends we met for lunch monthly, trying out local hostelrys. She always arrived first, enjoying a glass of wine. Her droll, dry wit, sometimes a bit caustic, always amused her friends. One always got a straight answer from her - offend or please - with no nonsense advice.

I visited her several times during her illness and marvelled at her stoic acceptance of her fate, able to talk quite openly and giving us her scripts and books. We have lost a truly charismatic friend who will be sorely missed. Our thoughts are with Stephen and Jaqui.

Sylvia Stickings

Footnote

Thanks to everyone who sent in their condolences. There are far too many to quote here, but they were all appreciated and as a further act of appreciation, our October production: *A Wilde Night Out*, will be performed in her memory, the proceeds being shared with cancer research charities, so please be generous.

OSCAR SAVES THE OCTOBER PRODUCTION WITH

I'm sure you will find the experience to be well worth the extra cost. And remember, a proportion of the proceeds will be going to Cancer Research charities in memory of our Eileen.



FREDA STARE EXPLAINS



Hello everyone! You might be somewhat surprised to find that we will NOT now be performing *Breath of Spring* in October as stated in the last newsletter. For various reasons we have had to postpone

it until Autumn 2019. However, we have instead had the great good fortune to engage the talents of Paul Doust who will present His one-man show entitled *A Wilde Night Out*. As you will see from the poster above, Paul will be giving readings from a number of Wilde's best-loved works in the first half, following in the second half with a performance of *Lady Bracknell's Confinement*. And here she is in the next column, looking very confined and perhaps a little bit like Frankie Howerd in drag. This is a must-see performance and although we have had to increase our seat prices,

POPPY COCK'S COLUMN



Hello darlings!

Yes, I'm back from my holiday and I suppose I should thank Freda for standing in for me - but is she trying to take over?

Never mind, I'm not one to shy away from a

But perhaps, you might be thinking you would prefer something a little more modern than the First World War. In which case what about going to see the Willington Players production of *The Ghost Train* at the Hazlitt Theatre. This was written in 1923 by Arnold Ridley, who you may remember played the part of Private Godfrey in *Dad's Army*.

TERROR ON THE TRACKS!

THE GHOST TRAIN
BY ARNOLD RIDLEY
by arrangement with Samuel French

WILLINGTON PLAYERS PRESENT
THIS IS AN AMATEUR PRODUCTION

BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED!

6TH - 10TH NOVEMBER 7.30PM

HAZLITT THEATRE MAIDSTONE | **BOX OFFICE 01622 758611**

WILLINGTON PLAYERS PRESENT

THE GHOST TRAIN
BY ARNOLD RIDLEY
by arrangement with Samuel French

When a group of strangers find themselves stranded at a rural train station in the remote Cornish countryside their overnight wait for their connecting train takes a turn for the worse, with chilling consequences.

Isolated in the station's waiting room until early morning with a storm raging outside, they are visited by the local station master who had seen flittering lights through the heavy rain. He shares a shocking story of a fatal train crash that happened a little further down the tracks some years earlier, on an evening as treacherous as this. The train that crashed and killed all on board is now said to haunt the tracks and can often be heard screaming past the station as it races to its fate. Keen to lock up the station, he strongly warns the travellers to seek shelter elsewhere as legend says, if seen, the Ghost Train will bring death to all those who set eyes upon it. Will the passengers make it through until morning or will the evening be one they will live to forget?

Written by English actor and playwright Arnold Ridley, widely known for his portrayal of Private Godfrey in the classic television sitcom *Dad's Army*, this suspense thriller is bound to have you on the edge of your seats!

TICKETS: £14 & £13 CONCESSIONS

HAZLITT THEATRE MAIDSTONE | **BOX OFFICE 01622 758611**
www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk/Hazlitt-Theatre

BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED!

Frédéric's

2 COURSE MEAL DEAL

Each ticket entitles you to a 2 course theatre dinner for £15 at Frédéric's Bistro, Market Buildings, Maidstone. Please book directly with Frédéric's Bistro on **01622 297414**.
Book early to avoid disappointment.

Charity Performances*

The Willington Players proudly support the following organisations during our production week. For tickets ordered directly through these organisations, £5.90 is returned to their funds.

Tuesday 6th
Cancer Research UK
St. Margaret's Church, Barming
Maidstone Riverside Rotary

Wednesday 7th
Maidstone Winter Shelter
St. Philip's Church and Community Centre
United Reformed Church

Friday 9th
Maidstone Vineyard Church
Town Malling Cricket Club
West Malling Community Choir

* No concessions are available when ordering through fund raising organisations

BREAKING NEWS - AN INVITATION FROM SYLVIA STICKINGS!

THERE WILL BE A SING SONG AND READ THROUGH OF THE PANTO AT THE VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER. EVERYONE IS INVITED, JUST TO COME AND SPEND AN EVENING AND HAVE A CUP OF TEA EVEN IF YOU DON'T WANT TO AUDITION ON THE 3RD. BUT, PLEASE THINK ABOUT BEING IN THE CHORUS IF YOU DON'T WANT A MAIN PART. THERE ARE PLENTY OF BACK STAGE JOBS AND HELP IN MAKING PROPS. WE WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL FOR HELP WITH THE COSTUMES, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE CLEVER WITH A NEEDLE!

WE WILL HAVE THE SERVICES OF OUR FRIEND, SYLVIA MANN, WHO WILL BE PLAYING FOR US.

DO COME ALONG AT 8 PM AND LET US HAVE A SMASHING EVENING!

OUR DIRECTOR, LINDA O'BYRNE IS ITCHING TO GET STARTED, SHE HAS WRITTEN THE SCRIPT AND WOULD APPRECIATE LOTS OF SUPPORT FROM YOU ALL!