

# Meopham Players Newsletter



www.meophamplayers.co.uk

e: meophamplayers@aol.com

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## Panto time, Oh yes it is!

Magical Meopham, the genius without a lamp, is our next production with the cast immersed in all things panto including dames busy bustling and villains being dastardly boo-hards. And who knows in these enlightened times you may find the handsome hunk doing the dishes waiting to be rescued by his Lara Croft, taking a break from Tomb Raider...

**Linda needs your help** - if you are able to assist her with any of the items requested below, please contact her by phone on 01474 535302 or email [l.obyrne@mac.com](mailto:l.obyrne@mac.com)



Magical Meopham is produced, directed and written by Linda O'Byrne writes **Poppy Cock**, confidante to the stars. I managed to have a word with her to find out how things were going with the panto and she gave me a very upbeat progress report: 'Rehearsals for *Magical Meopham* are well underway. It is a large full cast - 20 at the last

*count - and everybody is working very hard and having fun. Sylvia Mann is providing wonderful musical accompaniment and even members of the cast who told me they couldn't possibly ever sing, are joining in with the choruses.'*

Linda still needs help backstage - someone to oversee the costume changes would be useful.

Props-wise, she need a lady's bicycle that we can customise, especially one with a basket on the front. Some pirate bunting and any toy parrots that needn't be returned would be very useful too. She is also looking for onesies outfits (adult size), grey or brown, that could pass as mouse costumes. And lastly we need everyone to make a note of the date

and get as many friends and family as possible to buy tickets. Buy early, especially for the Saturday matinee, if you are bringing little children.

Thank you Linda - sounds like you are building the foundation for a great success.

**Poppy Cock reveals all - page 2**

**Panto rehearsal in pictures - page 3**

Meopham Players  
present a new panto

## Magical Meopham

Written, produced &  
directed by Linda  
O'Byrne

Magical Meopham will be performed on the evenings of Thursday, Friday and Saturday 24, 25 and 26 January, 2019, with an additional matinee performance on Saturday afternoon. The booking Office will be open on 1 December and you can order tickets either from the web site: [www.meophamplayers.co.uk](http://www.meophamplayers.co.uk) or by telephone on: **0844 288 9708**. Seat prices will be £8.50 for adults and £5.00 for children under 12 years of age.

**Booking office opens DEC 1:** [www.meophamplayers.co.uk](http://www.meophamplayers.co.uk)  
**25, 26 & 27 January, 2019** Tel: **0844 288 9708**.



# Poppy Confidential

## Poppy Cock

**Showbiz correspondent of the year and confidante to the stars returns with all the latest hot gossip and news. Remember folks you heard it here first!**

*Hello Darlings!*

Yes, I'm back; the little local difficulty that kept me from last month's issue has been resolved and we're once again working like a well-oiled - but, for now, sober - machine.

Anyway, moving on: our next significant date is for the Monthly Meeting on *Wednesday 5 December*, when you will be able to come along and see the rehearsals for *Magical Meopham* proceeding. And you never know, you might be encouraged to boo and cheer at appropriate moments. But whatever happens, you can rest assured that tea and biscuits will as usual be served during the interval.



Then on *Wednesday 19th December at 9 pm* we will be having our **CHRISTMAS PARTY** straight after rehearsals. Of course, if you'd like to arrive earlier to see how the rehearsals are going, you'd be very welcome - don't hold back.



And indeed, while on the subject of not holding back, Sylvie Stickings tells me that a plan is being hatched to paint the back wall of the stage white on the same evening as the party. Ambitious perhaps, but if we can get enough volunteers, it could be done in a trice and think what a splendid Christmas **GOOD DEED** that would be. So, if you can lend a hand, contact Sylvie for details on 01474 812598 or by email on [ssupersylv@aol.com](mailto:ssupersylv@aol.com).

Then of course there is Christmas and the New Year to celebrate - if you are young - or to endure if you're not. Don't worry though, it will soon be over and we can all look forward to set building for *Magical Meopham*. More about this in the next newsletter.

As you would already have seen in the earlier

pages of this newsletter, *Magical Meopham* will be playing from January 24<sup>th</sup> to January 26<sup>th</sup>. Then, on 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> May, we will be performing *Nobody's Perfect* by Simon Williams - the same playwright who wrote *Nobody's Fool* which we produced in 2008. Auditions for this will be held during the Monthly Meeting at 8pm on February 6<sup>th</sup> at the Village Hall.



This will be followed (we hope) by Peter Coke's *Breath of Spring* on 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> October. You may recall we tried to cast this last October, but were unable to do so. Maybe we'll have better luck in 2019.

Now the next item is a bit strange because I have been asked to let everyone know that our New Year outing to Brick



Lane is now fully booked. *Why is it strange?* I hear you ask. Well, perhaps it's just me, but I don't think the Brick Lane outing has been promoted in the newsletter previously, so why would you care whether it's fully booked or not...? But, as I say, it's probably just me. At least you know now.

And finally, I'm sure that you - those who are bit hard of hearing - will be delighted to learn that due to the efforts of our Equipment manager (and all-round technical genius) Graeme Horrocks, the hearing loop is now fully functional and in perfect working condition.

That's all for now darlings. I'm off for a hot bath and an ice cold Martini.





**Meopham Player's present  
a new panto  
Magical Meopham**

*Written, produced & directed by  
Linda O'Bryne*

## Panto Rehearsal in Pictures

**It's not behind them (not yet):** [CW from top left]:

1. Music maestro Sylvia getting down and dirty;
2. Geoff brushing-up his lines with Hatted Sylvia;
3. Another rehearsal? Hit me with the bottle, smiles director Linda.
4. Which is it tonight, wonders Father Ted, sermon and script?
5. Alexa, Anne asked for a prince not parrot;
6. Emily's *Three Little Maids from School Are We* leaves Jess and Margaret bewildered;
7. Rodney, hell's angel or dressed for the weekend?
8. Ollie jubilant at finding the homework his dog ate.



# The Lady's not for turning

**Star Turns:** Our last production featured a tour de force by Paul Doust as Lady Bracknell and glittering performances by regular and newer members of Meopham Players.

## Lady Bracknell's Confinement:

Written and performed to  
perfection by Paul Doust.

We ventured into a different style of production for our October presentation by providing "A Wilde Night Out!" for our patrons at the end of last month, **writes John Ogden,!**

To a select couple of audiences, and effectively in the round, various members of Players in the first part gave selected readings from the great man's most loved works, from the glorious comedy of "The Importance of Being Earnest", to the heart-breaking sorrow of "The Ballad of Reading Gaol".

The second part of the evening was a brilliantly professional one-man presentation by the well-known Kent actor and director, Paul Doust, who had directed our last excellent production of Rattigan's "Flare Path".

During the first half of the evening, various members of Players and a couple of friends from the 'Flare Path' cast gave a wide variety of quotations from the master, as well as

some slightly more dramatised readings from a variety of Wilde's work. These varied from the most well-known, 'The Importance of Being Ernest' to a few children's stories such as 'The Selfish Giant' and 'The Remarkable Rocket', which are much less well-known, but which both presented strong moral messages in an intriguing manner.

Other prose works presented surprisingly modern situations. The Cabinet Minister being berated by his wife for taking money for betraying Government secrets in "An Ideal Husband" was a sadly recognisable situation! We also were treated to a very expert rendering of the wonderful "A handbag" scene which created a long round of applause! The reading of just some of the verses of his probably the most poignant element of Wilde's work, 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' was very well presented by all the readers and demonstrated their ability in choral



speaking! Wilde wrote this poem on the just one piece of paper he was allowed in prison each day, yet it became and remains one of the most important elements of his work.

The first half was rounded off by a wonderful display of cattiness from the famous 'Tea Scene', from 'The Importance of Being Ernest', and a final selection of some of his most favourite quotations, illustrating Oscar Wilde's brilliant contribution of English literature.

The second half was a masterful presentation by Paul Doust, of his own unorthodox interpretation of "Lady Bracknell's Confinement". The concept of the formidable Lady Bracknell actually being a man, for some time in his formative youth

being used in the theatre to performing totally female roles; was easily believable. So was, the idea that Lord Bracknell would, in his rather demented way fall totally in love with "her"! The consequent descriptions of the various situations that this presented and the substitution of an illegitimate child as their very own, reduced the audience to continuous bouts of hysterical laughter. A masterful hour of entertainment from a very special artist.

Interestingly, the audience members all recognised the value of this different style of entertaining production and many commented that they would like to see more of these more intimate evenings from Players. We shall see!!

# Adrian Mole comes of age

It doesn't seem possible, that it is more than 4 years, **writes John Ogden**, since Sam left to go to Southampton University to read for a Masters in Modern Languages.

His 4 year course in German and French included a full year at the University of Bayreuth, where among other joys, he was taught French, in German!

Sam was a very active member of Players in his early youth. He appeared in a number of pantos, then 'The Railway Children'. His tour de force was as Adrian Mole, in 'The Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13 ¾, when only 13½ himself! He also appeared in 'A Damn Fine Road', and 'A Dogs Life', which was later

performed at MLT. He was also given a special award for Stage Managing the performance and the awarding judge commented that he kept thinking that Daniel Radcliffe, Sam's lookalike, was backstage!

After Meopham Secondary School, he continued his school career at Gravesend and Dartford Grammar Schools where he was an excellent advert for both schools achieving excellent results at GCSE and International Baccalaureate level. From there he went to Southampton.

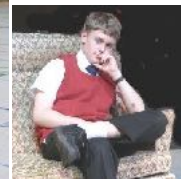
Sam has been a keen fencer since the age of 9 and hardly ever missed a Wednesday evening training session at the MAD Fencing Club!

On arriving at Southampton, he immediately presented himself at the University Fencing Club, where his arrival was greeted with incredulity, when the President informed him that they had never had a new member arrive with a complete set of kit, including helmets, blades and clothing, etc. Two terms later he was elected President! He continued the practicing three nights a week for the rest of his time in Southampton, and in Bayreuth, he also joined their Fencing Club, and the City club, as he put it, to improve his German vocabulary, both academic and colloquial!

After an eventful year in Germany, and a few encounters with his old club at various



**Growing pains:**  
Mole to Epee Man



international competitions, he returned to the UK for his final year at Southampton, where the club appointed him Captain!

After a strenuous and taxing academic year we were delighted, as he was, with the award of a 2.1 Honours Masters degree in Modern Languages.

He is currently back home, regaining his breath before deciding on his future, which could follow an academic path, but who knows? With an MLang(Hons), the world is his oyster.

## Pottham Regional Amateur Theatre Society By Matt Dallas



Matt Dallas 2018