

Meopham Players Newsletter



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January 2019_ issue 48



Knickered? You will be with breaths coming in short pants.

A glittering cast has been assembled for our bespoke Magical Meopham Panto with puns so dire you will be gagging for air.

This is Meopham as you have never imagined full of larger than life characters set to make you hiss, boo and cry in equal measure. Oh yes, it will!!

**Don't miss Meopham Players
brand new pantomime
at Meopham Village Hall on
Thursday, Friday and Saturday,
24th, 25th and 26th January.**



**She'll become dependent & want
a mobile phone next**

**Meopham Players
proudly present
a new panto**

Magical Meopham

**25, 26 & 27 January,
2019**

*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 Saturday matinee starts at 2pm and the evening performances at 8pm.

The booking Office is now open and you can order tickets either from the web site or by telephone .

**BOOKING OFFICE
NOW OPEN:**

Book online at
www.meophamplayers.co.uk

Or by telephone
0844 288 9708.

Or email
mp.bookingoffice@gmail.com

Prices are £8.50 for adults and £5.00 for children under 12 years of age.



Hello Darlings!

Hope you all had a lovely Christmas and a fabulous New Year. I had a simply super time and did all sorts of delicious things I should have been ashamed of; and wasn't. Never mind, I can always seek redemption and resolve not to do them again - we'll see how that goes. One thing that did go very well was our Christmas party held after rehearsals on 19th December.

Our roving reporter Brenda Ogden was there and this is what she had to say about it:

The final rehearsal before Christmas of our great original pantomime "Magical Meopham" was foreshortened so that we could hold a Christmas celebration together after the hard work through the autumn. Cast and crew and some other members of Players brought along festive food to share and Lesley and Bill provided wine and soft drinks.



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!

The table was awash with food everybody was able to relax a while before the onslaught of Christmas.

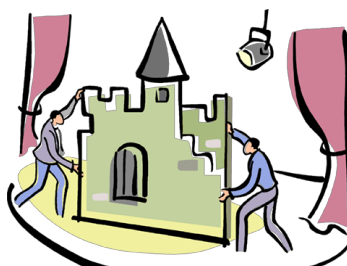
Linda O'Byrne has written a rollicking traditional pantomime (....and I'm not going to say "Oh yes....") with a topical and local twist and the large cast is enjoying the madness of the rehearsals. To give you just a flavour, Sylvia Stickings brought along her newly-acquired rescue dog, Cassie, to the last rehearsal and she turned out to be a natural actor, stealing all the scenes with aplomb.

The party was the perfect way to round off Players' working and social year and to look forward to a busy and creative time ahead.

And now, a very Happy New Year to you all.

Thank you Brenda - Now, you may have noticed, we have a Pantomime to perform in a few days' time; and of course we need lots of people to help make it a success and not just on stage. One of the areas where we could really do with reinforcements is Front of House. So, if you can spare an hour or two serving behind the bar on one or more of the performance nights, Bill or

Lesley would love to hear from you. Please ring 01474 832409.

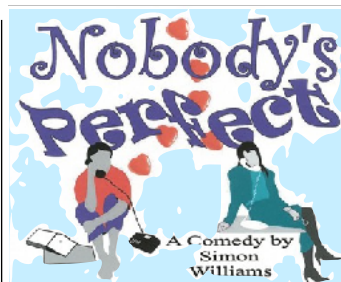


As ever, we will also need help in setting up the stage the weekend before the production i.e. Saturday 19th to Sunday 20th January. So, if you've a few hours you could devote, please contact our Panto Stage Manager on terencegardner@gmail.com, or Producer Linda O'Byrne on 01474 535302.

Similarly - and I know you know what's coming - we would also appreciate some help on the Sunday (27th) to take everything down again.

After that you can all have a bit of a breather until the Monthly Meeting on Wednesday 6th February when will be holding auditions for Nobody's Perfect, our May production (see panel).

I think that will do for now; there's quite enough for you to take in. So, without more ado, I wish you all a very Happy New Year and as much fun as you can handle - I'm off now for a bit of fun handling myself.



The Players next production in May is Nobody's Perfect to be jointly directed by Diana Dixon & Maureen Gardner.

Storyline:

Single father Leonard works at home as a statistician. He has a rebellious daughter whose difficult behaviour is further encouraged by his "growing old disgracefully" father who has come to live in their home. Leonard writes a romantic novel which wins first place in a competition and a substantial cash prize. There is one snag! The writing competition is only open to women authors! Leonard manages to overcome this problem with hilarious consequences which involve his father and daughter in much subterfuge!

Cast:

Leonard is middle aged. *Dee Dee* his teen-aged daughter with "attitude." *Gus* who is Leonard's father and has been banned from a retirement home due to his outrageous behaviour. *Harriet* aged late 20s to 40s single, editor of a woman's magazine. *NB the ages are a rough guideline as make up can be a wonderful thing!*

Diana Dixon & Maureen Gardner

Of Mice and Fruitcakes



In the Oxford Dictionary of Slang, Fruitcake is described as: Origin US: from the phrase nutty as a fruitcake writes **Penny Pinching**, our correspondent from the last century

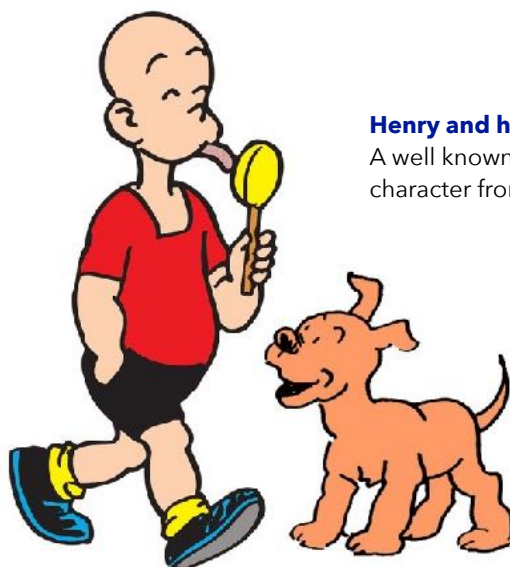
Fruitcake apparently dates from around 1945 so it wouldn't have been a description I – or any of my schoolmates – would have used in the 1930s when I was in elementary school, although there would have been a few candidates to whom it could have been applied.

No, we would have used a word like batty or loopy or barmy about anyone who didn't measure up to the primitive intellectual standards the school tried to thrash into us. I don't know if such epithets were any more gentle than fruitcake; probably not, for kids through the ages always probe each other with some venom looking for weaknesses they can exploit; which means it is more about how the word is delivered than what it actually implies.

You could say this is just human nature, and in a sense, this may be true, but children pick up most of their traits, good or bad, from their parents. A child who is bullied at home, for example, may become a bully at school. But to be one – a bully that is – you need a victim and a victim is someone who is a little bit different in some way.

I had a friend in those long-ago school days who was different. Nowadays you would say he had learning difficulties; he might even have been autistic. I can't remember a lot else about him now – it was very nearly 80 years ago after all – and even his name is not recalled with any degree of certainty; it might have been Peter, but I'm not certain. Similarly with his appearance; I think he might have had fair, curly hair and I'm pretty sure he was even more of a scruff-bag than the rest of us. He was certainly undersized though even for the 1930s when the average height for adult males in the UK was about 5 foot 6 inches.

He wasn't someone you could have a normal conversation with, but he was a cheerful little character and we used to walk towards our homes together after school quite happily, so I must have quite liked him. However, not everyone did and I well remember the day we ran into a gang of older boys at the top of the road leading from the school. I didn't recognise them, but they might have been in one of the senior classes at our own school. They



Henry and his pooch:

A well known cartoon character from the 1930's

weren't interested in me; they just wanted to torment Peter for no better reason than his backwardness.

Peter was holding a cigarette card bearing the image of Henry, a popular cartoon character of the day. It was a treasured possession that he had brought in to show the rest of the class.

"What's that then?" one of the boys demanded.

Peter held it up for him to see, perhaps pleased he was interested. The boy looked at it for a few seconds and then snatched it out of Peter's hand and tore it up into as many pieces as he could manage flinging them on the ground. Peter seemed more bemused than upset and looked at the pieces for some moments before bending down to pick one of them up. He held it up to the sky with a look of wonder on his face.

"Oh look," he said, "a fairy!"

This seemed to goad the older boy into a paroxysm of fury and he snatched

the fragment from Peter's hand tearing it into even smaller pieces.

The memory of that incident fades and I can't, try as I might, recall if Peter was reduced to tears. I'd like to think he wasn't; I'd like to think his ever-so-slightly fuddled brain protected him from such a brainless, pointless, vicious attack... But I think it unlikely and in any case I'll never know now.

Nor will I be able to find out how Peter coped with the rest of his life, how ever long – or short – it was. When it happened, a few years before the outbreak of World War II, we were probably 7 or 8. The boys who confronted us were 10 or 11. It would have been quite impossible for me to have done anything about it. But, however illogical it may be I do still feel pointlessly ashamed that I just stood there and watched my fruitcake friend's humiliation.

It is probably why I still remember it so well.