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The Grayshott Stagers

Newsletter

Chairman's Note

SOLD OUT! The last tickets for "Calendar Girls" were grabbed in the first week of this month, making this (as far as we know) the first full length production to completely sell out in the society's history! Not only does it mean that it will be highly successful financially, it is also hugely gratifying for Brezetta and her cast. They, together with the stage crew, have been responsible for selling a vast amount of tickets – there are obviously a lot of friends and relatives who are keen to see some of the cast sporting little more than a smile and an item of domestic science. However, I am sure that the audience will remember the play more for its warm heart and the actors performances.

We have had presentations and auditions for the One Act Play evenings and for "Nonsense – the Mega Musical", both of which have now been cast with the exception of some minor roles in the musical. Rehearsals for these will start as soon as the play is over. We hope to be able to announce next year's Autumn play in the New Year, as well as an intriguing social event for next summer. "Fantastic evening...totally brilliant!" (Bourne Players), "...a very good evening" (Haslemere Players) – two very pleasing reviews of the Inter-Society Quiz Evening that we hosted in the Village Hall last month. This proved to be extremely successful in terms of the organisation, presentation and entertainment, but slightly less so in terms of our team's performance. Defending the title were Susie Dean, David Landau, Ian Page, Hilary Lee-Corbin, Laura Musco and myself. Having scored very highly for several rounds, and within a few points of the leader, we proved to be too slow in the charades round, a setback from which we couldn't recover and we finished fourth. Taking part were the Haslemere Players, Haslemere Thespians, the Bourne Players, Farnham Amateur Operatic Society, and the Midhurst Players. The winners were FAOS, narrowly beating the Midhurst Players, and were duly presented with the trophy. The Thespians have gallantly offered to host next year's quiz. Many thanks to Tony Legat and Richard White for compiling and presenting the quiz and to their other halves Heather and Mel for marking and scoring. Also to Pauline Harries, Jennifer Charters and Marian Walker for organising the food and running the bar, which made a useful profit.

At the AGM in September committee members Mary Coyte, Sara Rowe, John and Pauleen Dowsett stepped down and were replaced by Marian Walker, Hilary Lee-Corbin and Barbie Badger. As previously reported, Jim Hegarty also resigned as Treasurer, but has nobly continued to look after our accounts until after Calendar Girls is over. I am pleased to say that Stephen Penny will take over the reins again on a strictly temporary basis, but we are not letting up on our search for a permanent Treasurer. My grateful thanks to the retiring committee members for their service and support and particular thanks to Jim for his diligent accounting over the last two years.

Finally, our dear old scenery and wardrobe store ("the shed" - our principal asset) requires some structural work so the builders will hopefully be starting work shortly to carry out the necessary repairs.

John

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Calendar Girls

A VERY SPECIAL EVENT INDEED!!

To have the opportunity to illustrate such an incredible and inspiring story as The Calendar Girls was always going to be a challenge. But what an honour too! I was so very pleased that The Stagers immediately agreed to put it to the Main Committee and their enthusiasm gave me lots of confidence. Casting was going to be interesting and to give all a very fair chance we took the majority vote for every character.

Rehearsals have been a mixture of hard work and fun and very successful partly due to the hard work the actors have put in to learning their lines well in advance (of possibly one of the best scripts I have seen in quite some time) and due to the crew willing to put in the effort to create the stage magic to illustrate this very wonderful story.

The courage the original Calendar Girls had has been beautifully and boldly duplicated by my Calendar Girls and I could not have done this without their very brave departure from their comfort zones!!

I know that all of us concerned hope that this play will present a sensitive, bold and inspiring message to all people directly or indirectly involved with cancer and would like to pass the message on that it is so very important to carry on research so we can gain the vital information so badly needed.

Brezetta

Membership News

We welcome Jane Short and Lisa Osborn Lea as new members of the Stagers. Their debut performances for us will be in "Calendar Girls".

Many congratulations and good wishes for the future go to Amy Turner and Simon Bailey and also Richard Batten and Kaye, whose weddings were celebrated in September.

More wedding bells are in the offing, as Tom Hilder and Emily plan to marry in March 2013.

Mary Coyte is now eligible for her 4th silver bar, recognising 45 years' membership of NODA. What an achievement!

We understand that George Streeter was well when visited by a friend from another society in the summer.

With apologies, as always, if I've overlooked anybody or any significant events. Do let me know if you have news. It's an easy way to share it.

Jennifer

We remember Peggy Blakeborough

You may recall we reported that long standing member Peggy died a year ago and an obituary would follow. Her daughter Jo has kindly provided the following summary of her long and active life.

Peggy was born in London in 1921. She and her family moved to Grayshott early in the war, just as a temporary measure, but liked it so much that they stayed. Peggy met, and in 1942 married, Ralph Blakeborough. Peggy became an early member of the Stagers, her first appearance in "Tony Draws a Horse" in 1954. She took part in many productions, often as a producer, and with Ralph sometimes helping to build scenery. Her production of "Doctor in the House", was the first to put the 'House Full' notices out. She served on the committee several times and was also a member of Grayshott Parish Council.

When Ralph became ill they moved to a smaller house in Haslemere, but she stayed with the Stagers. Peggy always enjoyed a good laugh but could be quite forthright, many may remember the "Top Hat Incident".

The "Top Hat Incident" arose when Peggy was directing "There Goes The Bride" in 1983. Needing a battered top hat for one of her cast, she dispatched someone to the shed to find one. They returned with the item, commenting that it didn't look battered enough. Peggy promptly grabbed it, punched her fist through the top and announced, "It does now!" Interestingly, her best remembered production is probably "Steel Magnolias" which in common with "Calendar Girls" involves a mainly female ensemble cast and a warm-hearted story revolving around the death of one of them.

As ill health and old age took their toll, Peggy was unable to participate or attend shows anymore, but she was delighted to have been made an honorary life member. Peggy died just a week after her 90th birthday.

The One Act Plays 2013

In the August newsletter we included details of the three plays to be part of our ever-popular One Act Plays and Supper evenings, next year to be on 15th and 16th February. This is just to update those who haven't seen the chosen actors on the website. We had a good turnout for the read-through and casting evening in September and all three plays were fully cast.

"A Jolly Sinister Jape", to be directed by Susie Dean, will be performed by : John Hilder (Stubbs), Sara Rowe (Fatty), Jane Short (Ophelia), and Ian Wilson-Soppitt (Biffy).

"Green Favours", to be directed by Brezetta Thonger, will be performed by: John Dowsett (Tom) and June Hegarty (Valerie).

"Have a Nice Day", to be directed by Jennifer Charters, will be performed by: Paul Bailey (David), Jane Clayton (Marjorie), Trudy Hathaway (Kirsty), Valerie Shears (Jo), Brezetta Thonger (Carol), and James Thonger (Sir William).

Marian Walker will be co-ordinating the sales of tickets again, starting in January, so look out for a message from Tony Legat announcing this. Remember that tables are quickly filled!

Nonsense The Mega-Musical

Firstly I'd like to thank those who auditioned for Nonsense. Rob and I were slightly concerned when we had just 5 auditionees – not quite what we had envisaged. However, we're delighted that those people did audition and believe that casting each of them as we have we're going to have a really strong cast. In case you haven't seen the results of the auditions they are:

Regina	Jane Clayton
Hubert	Rachel Perkins
Robert Anne	Heather Legat
Amnesia	Susie Dean
Julia	Brezetta Thonger

With one main part still to be cast Heather put us in contact with Naomi Ahmed, who can sing, act and dance en pointe. Mission accomplished we also have the perfect Leo. There are still 4 very small parts to cast, which will be taken from people in the chorus.

For those of you who aren't in the show there could still be the chance to dress up! I want to bring Mount St Helen's School to Grayshott, so as soon as the audience walk into the Village Hall they should feel as though they're there. We'll need people in habits selling raffle tickets, ushering etc. etc. These people could be nuns, or monks. The chorus could do some of these jobs, but I'm sure they'd be delighted if other people volunteered first.

I do hope everyone appreciates the decision to make this an all-female cast. This was something I had considered a while ago, but also realised that we should endeavour to make it all inclusive, and was looking forward to seeing which men came forward to audition. However, when no men turned up the audition panel decided that making it all female was probably the best way forward. I apologise now if you are male and had wanted to be in the chorus. Hopefully you'll still be willing to be involved in the audience's first impression of Mount St Helen's, as I've mentioned above.

One thing this show is going to need is some serious publicity. Not many people have heard of it – it doesn't have a familiar title; you can't say of any of the music 'so that's the show it comes from'; you can't say 'well it's Rodgers and Hammerstein/Porter/Gershwin'. What we can say is 'it is funny, with a few little poignant moments thrown in for good measure; the music is great; and as usual Stagers are going to do a great job of an unusual show'. I am sure that anyone who does come to see it will go home having had a thoroughly good evening's entertainment. So if anyone has any good ideas for getting Nonsense out there do please let me, or Peter Budd, know.

Laura

Dates for your Diary

2012		
22-24 Nov	"Calendar Girls"	Grayshott Village Hall
10 Dec	Society Pub Night	Fox and Pelican
2013		
14 Jan	Society Pub Night	Fox and Pelican
22-26 Jan	Farnham Operatic : "Guys and Dolls"	Farnham Maltings
15-16 Feb	One Act Plays and Supper evenings	Grayshott Village Hall
19-23 Mar	Haslemere Players: "Calamity Jane"	Haslemere Hall
24-27 April	"Nonsense: the Mega-Musical"	Grayshott Village Hall
29 June	Murder Mystery Play + Supper Evening	Grayshott Village Hall