

FESPA NEWS

Friends of East Suffolk Performing Arts

34th issue

November 2009

When putting together the 'Autumn' issue of FESPA News, I am always faced with a glut of pictures - Not just photos from the season's productions but snaps from the Friends' Garden Party and the Westons Fete, pictures of the celebs who visited us during the season, not to mention the candid shots taken surreptitiously in workshops, at rehearsals, parties, celebrations and the many social events that keep the summer season properly lubricated. This autumn the harvest of images has been a bumper one. There are far more than I can hope to print.

I have tried to do some sort of justice to this surfeit with a roundup medley of snaps on the back page. But please remember these and many more photos may be seen at a larger size (and in colour!) on the FESPA website:

www.fespa.co.uk. Click on 'FESPA Album' to see the social shots and on 'The Season' to see stills from the shows and some behind-the-scenes 'candid'.

A small number of *Friends* have opted to be notified when each new issue of FRIENDS NEWS goes on line. They will have been able to read this issue at least a week before the printed edition hit the streets. If you'd like to join these early birds, just send me your email address. Simple! Don't worry, for the foreseeable future you will still receive your printed copies.

Barry Tolfree (barrytolfree@tiscali.co.uk)

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Jill writes...

"THANK YOU, Dr THEATRE!"



Jill Freud as Miss Barwick and Penelope Rawlins as Sally Veitch in *Crooked Wood*, a spectacular success in Aldeburgh, Southwold and, later Guildford.
(Picture: Jim Laws)

Looking back on the 2009 Season, apart from saying how proud I am of the remarkable production and acting standards we achieved, I hope you will allow me to speak from the heart... my heart.

I have been told so many times that our Theatre Company has an important place in the local communities we serve and in the lives of many who love us.

This year it has been my turn - the theatre has sustained and comforted ME as never before. There was a complex season to be arranged for two towns and a large and demanding part to learn. On top of this, the print deadline for the all-important programme cards (all 30,000 of them) fell on 17 April - just two days after Clement died.

The unavoidable pressure of work and the unfailing support of Tony, Mark, Peter and later the entire Company, sheltered me and gave me time to adjust to an extraordinary loss.

I can only say thank you, Dr Theatre and God Bless my wonderful team.

Jill Freud

Chairman's report



Picture: Peter Adshead

Once again, greetings to my fellow *Friends*. Autumn is definitely here now, but I trust your memories of the past season are with you as they are with me as I tuck away my programmes, glancing through the 2009 Company names, before they go in the box with all the others.

One name, Emma Bennett, one of this year's FESPA Bursary recipients (see opposite page), must now be hard at work at Exeter University on her Drama course and we wish her well. I had the great pleasure of working with her during the summer and found her to be not only talented but with a delightful personality.

Now to another Bursary holder, Charlotte Barker whom I met and spent some time with recently - talking about herself and her RADA Foundation course on which she had already embarked thanks to our help.

She is the youngest on the course and was surprised at the amount of experience some of the other more mature students had under their belts. However, she is a blank canvas as far as the tutors are concerned, eager to learn new things and with not so many bad habits to discard. So she is tackling everything with great enthusiasm. She is a very attractive girl with a bubbly personality, intelligence and drive and an interest in all the Arts especially painting and photography at which she is quite adept, so we wish her luck in her new life in London.

Our Bursaries are a great help to these young people as they pursue their chosen careers. Well done FESPA and thank you Fespians for your continued support.

May I wish you a happy, healthy Christmas and New Year?

Sidi Scott

THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Our Hon Treasurer, Peter Gibbs writes:

Thanks to those *Friends* who donated over £2400 this year in addition to their annual subscription. We are particularly grateful to the following who gave £20 and more.

• Miss A Ainscough • Mr & Mrs D Baggott • Mr & Mrs B Bradnum • Mr P Burnford • Mr G Burnett • Mr J Clayton • Mrs P Cuerden • Mr W Davis • Mr J Girling • Mr M Goodwin • Mr & Mrs Green-Cramb • Mrs J Morricks • Mr C Newens • Mr & Mrs G Palmer • Mr & Mrs J Pears • Mr & Mrs A Ryley • Mr & Mrs G Tinnion • Dr R Watkins

HANNAH GORDON "For All Occasions"



A very special occasion in the 2009 'Sunday Theatre at Seven' programme. The much loved actress, Hannah Gordon, took the stage on 9 August with flautist Clive Conway and pianist Christine Croshaw. Hannah is seen here being welcomed by Jill Freud and Stephen Hancock. (Picture: Maurice Rubens)

GASLIGHT WAS A HIGHLIGHT!

Writes Maureen Long of Folkestone

We recently had a break in Suffolk and, on our journey up, we stopped off at the Farmers Café (on the A12 near Woodbridge) for lunch. We picked up one of your Southwold theatre brochures and, whilst we were browsing it, an elderly gentleman sitting near us leaned over and told us, if we got the chance, to go and see the play *Gaslight*. He had been the night before and was full of enthusiasm about it. As luck had it there was a 5 pm matinee the following day so we decided to go to see it.

My partner and I thoroughly enjoyed it; the theatre itself, stage set, the acting from all concerned were superb. The dialogue (you could hear every word), the atmosphere of the play, everything about the production was first class.

Also, the person running the box office when we rang was extremely helpful and friendly – makes such a difference!

We just felt we had to let you know it was a highlight of our break and we will certainly return next year.



Ann Wenn as Mrs Manningham, Nia Davies as Elizabeth and Ian Barritt as Rough in the 2009 production of *Gaslight*. (Photo: Stephen Wolfenden.)

APPEAL TO FRIENDS

Does any *Friend* by any chance have a spare copy of the programme for *Gaslight*? FESPA Trustee, Jack Clayton, did not manage to purchase a copy, leaving an annoying hole in his otherwise complete collection.

Call Jack on 01986 872425 or email jackclayton@keme.co.uk if you can help.

FESPA BURSARIES 2009

The Trustees are delighted to announce two new FESPA Bursary recipients for 2009. The Bursaries are designed to provide financial support and encouragement to deserving students of the performing arts who either live in East Suffolk or have strong local connections and who have already obtained a place at a recognised college.

Our congratulations to Charlotte and Emma and we look forward to following their fortunes over the coming year.

Charlotte May Barker

If the face looks familiar, you are probably from the Lowestoft area and remember 18-year-old Charlotte's 'coronation' as the Lowestoft Journal's Carnival Queen 2009. Charlotte, from Carlton Colville, describes herself as having a "passion for drama" and being "fascinated by the creative process".



For as long as she can remember she has been determined to be an actress whilst also excelling academically in a wide range of subjects.

At school she took every opportunity to participate in theatre and music projects and was also an active member of the Gorleston-based drama group, Dasmagrik.

Having successfully completed her A levels at East Norfolk Sixth Form College, Gt Yarmouth, this summer she was amazed and "absolutely ecstatic" to be offered a place at RADA on their one-year Foundation Course in Acting.

"I almost didn't make it to the second audition. The tubes and buses were down due to heavy snow and I had to walk from Liverpool Street to Gower Street with my boots falling apart in the slush. After seeing the quality and talent of some of the other 800 applicants for the 30 places, I didn't dream I'd make the third round of auditions, never mind the fourth. However,

whilst backstage at a Hamlet production at college, I had a call from my father saying the head of the course at RADA had rung to offer me a place without even having to attend the fourth round."

No happy ending in sight yet, though! Charlotte is not from a greatly moneyed family and course fees, payable up-front were an eye-watering £11,000; that's before you take the cost of living in London into account. Charlotte herself put all her personal savings into the pot as well as taking out a student loan and her father helped heroically by selling his beloved motorbike and caravan. It was still touch and go and FESPA has been delighted to help Charlotte finally attain the total required.

Emma Louise Bennett

Emma is no stranger to the performing arts scene of East Suffolk having worked first as Student Stage Manager and then as Assistant Stage Manager at Southwold and Aldeburgh Summer Theatres in 2007 and 2008. These were her final sixth form years at Queen's Gate School, South Kensington which culminated with 'Straight As' in Drama and Theatre Studies, Religious Studies and History. Her Head of Drama describes her as "one of the most energetic, motivated and committed students that I have taught."

Her energy extended beyond the stage into sport; she excelled at kayaking and scuba diving and gained a Silver in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

A gap-year followed during which Emma gained work experience with the BBC, working with the post-production team on *Doctors*, taught English in Thailand and did a variety of bar and waitressing work. Then, this September she started her first year on the Drama course at Exeter University.

"The FESPA Bursary is going to be a considerable help," says Emma. "The combined teaching and self-study time in the first year is over 40 hours per week. The money will allow me to focus on my academic work whilst easing the worry of living costs without relying on a part-time job."



... meanwhile 2008 bursary winner, Alun Vaughan, has had "a fantastically busy year"

Over the past two issues we have run progress reports on our 2008 FESPA Bursary winners, Francesca Currey and Maxim Calver. This time it's the turn of Alun Vaughan, now in his second year of a BA Stage Management Course at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. He writes:



Since the end of *The Lady Vanishes* in Guildford, following its transfer from Southwold and Aldeburgh last September, I have been enjoying a fantastically busy year in Bristol studying towards my B.A. in Professional Stage Management.

Unlike normal university students who have to attend approximately ten hours of lectures in a week, I found myself immediately thrust into full eight-hour days, divided into two tutorials,

approximately three-and-a-half hours long, with an hour in the middle for lunch. Thankfully, as a result of working with the Jill Freud Company, I had become accustomed to long hours of fairly physical work. So I was not surprised when lunch breaks got shorter and tutorials got longer as a necessity in getting the school's

productions up and running.

During this early period of my course, the bursary I had so kindly been provided with was particularly appreciated and useful, as it gave me an extra feeling of financial stability at a time when I was trying to find my feet.

The first two terms provided me with an increased understanding of the technical disciplines that interest me most, as well as a new knowledge of various other departments, such as scenic construction and prop making. During this time we were not allowed to have any specific roles of responsibility on the shows, which was frustrating after being so involved with *Salad Days* and *The Lady Vanishes* in the summer. However, in the summer term I was finally given the opportunity to get back to assisting with public performances. I was appointed sound operator on the play *Machinal*, a modern piece of writing featuring many dramatic and stylised moments. The design for this conceptual performance was a monochromatic, minimalist set which, in turn, required a great deal of inventive lighting and sound effects to bring it to life. This resulted in an incredibly hectic show for me, but I loved every minute of it.

The moment that run was over I headed back to Suffolk, ready for another Southwold season which I saw out until the very end, before promptly starting my eagerly anticipated second year in Bristol. In the next few months I hope to broaden my technical abilities even further.

Your chance to join the angels with

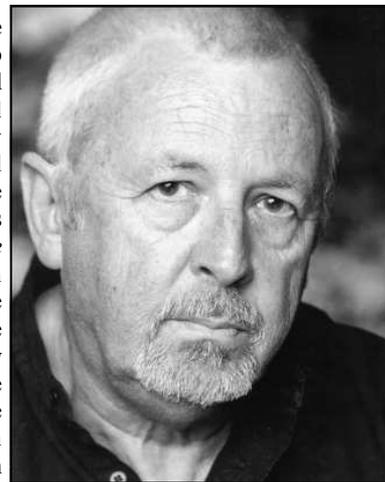
THE LADY VANISHES

Mark Sterling writes

The train is stoking up a full head of steam now as final arrangements come together for the Spring Tour of last year's production: THE LADY VANISHES. Triode Productions, the producers of this tour, have been working hard to put together a viable itinerary which currently stands thus: 18 January – 2 weeks' rehearsals in Southwold; the week of: 1 February – Hull New Theatre; 8 February – Winchester Theatre Royal; 15 February – Newcastle Tyne Theatre; 22 February – Poole Lighthouse; 1 March – Chelmsford Civic Theatre; 22 March – Bury St. Edmunds Theatre Royal. We are still hoping to fill the middle weeks of March.

From the original cast, we are pleased to welcome back **Penelope Rawlins** as Iris and **Clive Flint** as Charters. They will be joined by Southwold regulars: **Jane Evers** as Miss Froy; **Nia Davies** as

Gladys; and **Andrew Bone** as Caldicott. We are also delighted to welcome aboard two newcomers: **Darrell Brockis** and **Terry Molloy** (right). Darrell – who will play Gilbert – is a versatile actor and musician who has recently been touring in *The BFG*. Terry is well-known from radio as milkman Mike Tucker in *The Archers*. He has also appeared perennially in *Dr. Who* as Davros, the creator of the Daleks. A fine background for Dr. Egon Hartz, the sinister Austrian brain specialist.



Triode Productions is indebted to FESPA for providing us with grant funding to get us this far. We are operating on a very tight budget and are grateful to AKT Productions for sponsorship. If there are any individuals or companies among The Friends who would like to join the Angels and help sponsor the tour, please contact Mark Sterling at 4, Wood View, Sibton, IP17 2NH.

Mark@triodeproductions.co.uk www.theladyvanishes.co.uk

Many thanks.

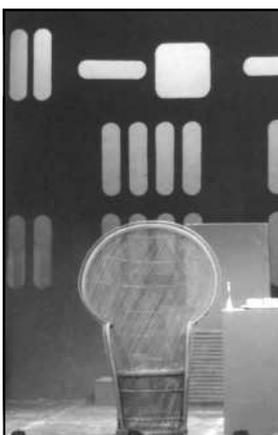
From Snoopy to Gaslight

MAURICE HITS HIS CENTURY

This was the year that Maurice Rubens celebrated his one hundredth set for the Company. Since *Snoopy* in 1991 He has designed every one of the sets. In the process he has used approximately 250 litres of fire-retardant emulsion paint, 150 litres of white priming and five sacks of plaster and generated an unspecified tonnage of sawdust. (The statistics are Maurice's own and are unaudited!)

This year, his 16th assistant, Amy Blaskett, was also helped by what Maurice describes as “a particularly good crop” of work-experience students – not altogether surprising in view of their impeccable provenance ... Martha Freud (Jill's granddaughter), Harry Emerson (Richard's son) and Lawrence Leonard (Paul's son)! Maurice was particularly grateful that, for once, the days when he really needed extra help just happened to be the days they were available.

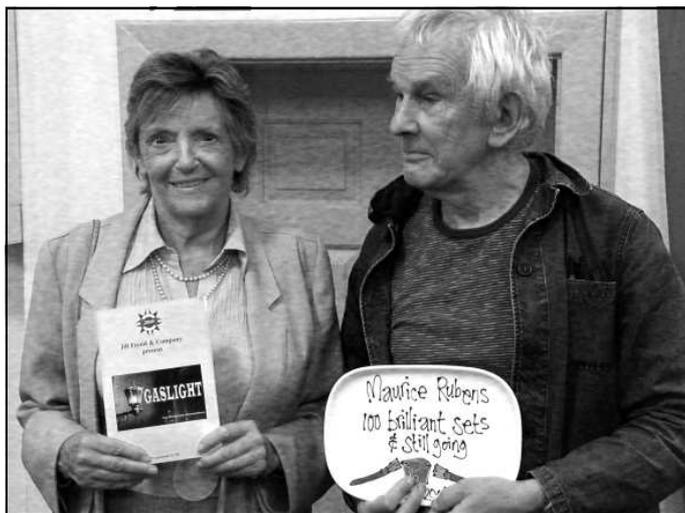
NAME THAT SET FOR A BOTTLE OF BUBBLY



Does this set look strangely familiar? Can you name the play for which Maurice designed it? Write your answer on a picture postcard of your own choosing (Maurice collects them!) and send to:

Maurice Rubens, c/o FESPA News, 22 Field Stile Road, Southwold, Suffolk, IP18 6LD.

The winner of the bubbly will be the first correct entry selected at random on 29 January 2010.



Jill presents Maurice with a commemorative plaque on the last night of Gaslight – his hundredth set. (Photo: Peter Adshead)



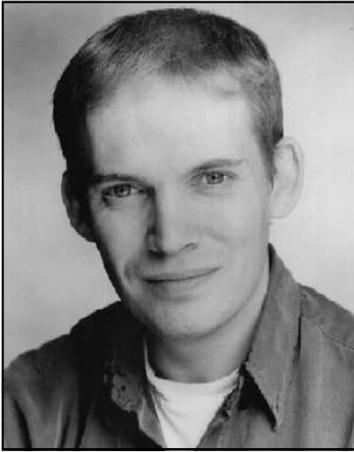
Above: Amy Blaskett applies lace to a flat for Gaslight.



Right: Lawrence Leonard paints the all-important chest for Crooked Wood

Photos: Maurice Rubens

PETER ADSHEAD, GENERAL MANAGER



During the season, Pete seems to be everywhere at once. He'll be there at the door to welcome you; he'll serve your interval drinks while discreetly managing front-of-house crises. Unaccountably he's mostly smiling. He chats to everyone; everyone treats him like an old friend. But who is Peter Adshead? We thought it was

time to ask him. This is what he said...

Coming from six generations of brickmakers and builders I can confidently say that 'theatre' wasn't high on my list of likely careers. Indeed, apart from Christmas pantos – my first memory being *Jack and the Beanstalk* with Hilda Baker and Frank Ifield – my knowledge of the stage was non-existent.

Two months after completing my A-levels I began work as a trainee building surveyor. Eighteen months of preparing plans for house conversions, fighting Compulsory Purchase Orders and endless legal paperwork demolished any enthusiasm I had for the building trade. So, in a move that took me as far away as possible from the tedium of the daily commute, I went to sea!

The North Sea to be precise. There I spent a very happy two and a half years being very well paid to undertake sea-bed surveys and pipeline inspections for the booming oil industry.

While on holiday in 1986, I was reluctantly dragged by my sister to the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester to see a Feydeau farce, *Court in the Act* starring Gabrielle Drake, Michael Dennison and Lee Montagu. At some point during the evening bells went off in my head and I left the show knowing I wanted to work in theatre.

Learning from the front line

Almost immediately I joined the front-of-house team, working part-time as my off-shore schedule allowed, and so began learning about 'the business' from the front-line. Within the year I had become one of three Assistants to the FOH Manager and had returned 'to shore' to study for a degree in Drama & English Literature at Manchester University.

Unfortunately during rehearsals for our graduation show, *Abigail's Party* (playing Lawrence), I was floored by a bout of meningitis, which, for the time being, put paid to any hopes of graduating.

By this time I had narrowed down my long-term goal to stage and company management. Once I had recovered, the management at the Royal Exchange, appreciating my predicament, employed me as a trainee Assistant Stage Manager. The company manager gave me one-to-one tuition on the non-practical aspects of the work, and subsequently gave me my first professional contract and the much sought-

after Equity card which, at the time, was a prerequisite to working professionally.

Ten years of miscellany ensued – walking the fine tightrope between earning enough to live on and doing a job I enjoyed. So my theatre work had to be combined with more mundane jobs such as administration for the Institute of Field Archaeologists, catering management for Whitbreads and office management for the University of Manchester. I even resorted once more to the dreaded building sector, working as a director of a successful construction company.

However the allure of the theatre world proved too strong and in 2000 I re-trained as an actor/director. Three relatively successful years of acting work followed, - in mainstream theatre as well as with the BBC.

Hiss & Boo

Eight years ago I started working in Pantomime for Ian Liston of 'Hiss & Boo' fame and, through this, met Carol Carey, who talked enthusiastically about Jill and the Southwold season.

At that time, though, I was fully employed, teaching at various drama schools, directing student productions, stage managing, acting and later, production-managing for Drama Centre London. Given my business background and love of the theatre it was only natural that my interests moved into producing shows myself.

I was voted into the Theatrical Management Association and, in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company and the West-End actor, Andrew Jarvis, I set up 'Hollow Crown Productions'.

Then, three years ago the 'delights' of Southwold came knocking at my door. I met with Jill and Tony and found myself on-board as Production Co-ordinator. The rest, as they say, is history. Jill, Tony and Mark have all been inspirational and have provided invaluable knowledge and experience for me as a Producer.

Three years on I now work with the Company full-time (except for panto season) and am part of the Management team. But, never one to let the grass grow under my feet, I am also currently setting up a Winter 2010 - Spring 2011 tour for Hollow Crown Productions. So watch this space!

I'm very pleased to say that my gamble to re-train - again - seems to have paid off. At last, as my parents would say, I am doing a 'proper' job.

Bells went off in my head and I knew I wanted to work in the theatre

FOR YOUR 2010 DIARY

Friday 23 April - FESPA AGM. Walberswick Village Hall. 6.30 for 7.00

Friday 25 June - *Friends'* Evening at Westons. 6.30. Bring a plate of eats. Collect your supply of programme cards

Sunday 27 June - FESPA Theatre Fete at Westons. Gates open at 1.00

Thursday 8 July - Southwold Season opens

Friday 23 July (provisional) - Aldeburgh Season opens

Saturday 28 August - Last night in Aldeburgh

Saturday 11 September - Last night in Southwold

THE BIRTH OF THEATRICAL LIFE IN SOUTHWOLD

Part 1 – 1800s to the 1950s by Paul Scriven, MBE

Southwold in the 19th Century was not exactly one of East Suffolk's cultural high spots. The great theatrical Fisher family in the early 1800s, didn't even include it in their itinerary. Their visits were to Lowestoft, Beccles & Bungay, where they built their own substantial theatres, and to Halesworth which they included in their circuit in alternate years. David Fisher knew "exactly which place could be counted on for the best patronage, particularly from the local aristocracy and gentry". Presumably, Southwold did not meet this criterion.

Ethiopian Singers

That avid chronicler of Southwold in the 19th Century, James Maggs, makes only a few references to entertainment in the town in his diaries. Apart from the occasional local town hall concerts, he records a visit by Atkins Theatrical Co in 1837 and Abbotts Theatre in 1849. In 1847, he notes "the second appearance under the patronage of the Mayor, of the Ethiopian Singers in consequence of the great applause and the overflow to witness (their) performance."

The Southwold Museum Library contains a number of theatrical programmes and notices, the earliest of which is dated 1 September 1808 when a performance was given at the Town Hall of a tragedy, followed by 2 comic songs, and a farce. The prices were: Boxes - 3 shillings, Pit - 2 shillings and Gallery 1 shilling. This was often the pattern of the entertainment; the songs were rendered by members of the cast, with the same actors playing in each of the plays.

An unattributed, undated note in the Library states: "Southwold Theatre used to be at Haddenham's Barn at the back of the Marquis of Lorne (Junction of High Street & Field Stile Road). Later a barn at the end of Lorne Road opposite the Common and also the Fish Office, where Cumberland Terrace now stands". The latter is, of course, almost exactly opposite the present theatre.

In September 1809, a farce and "an historical opera by T.Dibdin, *English Fleet in 1342*" were performed and, a year later, two more plays were presented with the cast also performing three songs.

A programme from October 1810 for the 'New Theatre', Southwold, whose location is a mystery, advertises three plays mounted "for the benefit of Mr. Waldgrave". Waldgrave also took the lead in each of the plays which were interspersed with 2 songs by members of the cast.

We need to jump over 20 years for our next evidence, to Saturday evening Sept. 22, 1832 "Under the patronage of Mrs Acton" with the familiar format of three plays and songs with performers playing the parts in each of the plays. This programme opened with a comedy, *Charles II or the Merry Monarch*, concluding with what was described as "a very laughable farce".

A number of programmes in the museum collection date from the end of the 19th Century. Many of these relate to amateur performances. The venues are of interest. At the

Volunteer Hall (location uncertain) in November 1887, three short plays were presented in which the cast included Lady Augusta Fane and her husband Mr Cecil Fane, Lady Hilda Rous, Mr A MacKinnan and Mr.Arthur Bouchier. Mrs Hickling & Mr. Price were "the orchestra"!

Private theatricals at Henham Hall

Both Lady Augusta & Lady Hilda (later McNeill) were daughters of the 2nd Earl of Stradbroke of Henham Hall. In her memoirs, Lady Augusta recalled how, as they grew up, they "could help with the entertainment...a small theatre was built at the end of the ballroom, and we acted plays of every description, which I hope amused the spectators as much as they did the actors, though amateur theatricals seldom rise to that height of success". She states that she and her husband were keen on private theatricals, giving performances at all sorts of out-of-the-way places... "Our company consisted of... Mr Allan MacKinnan & Mr. Arthur Bouchier." The latter, she observes, was never word-perfect at rehearsals but "all right at the performance". Bouchier was the master of the ad-lib gag and, at the end of the presentation of one play, a man leapt up in the audience and asked the name of the play they had given. Being told by Bouchier, the

man said he would never have recognised it and "I am the author!" However, later, Lady Augusta was asked by the famous (or infamous) Lily Langtry if she knew of a good amateur actor who would go on tour with her to America. Bouchier was recommended and went on, apparently, to become a professional actor.

There were amateur concerts presented at the Sailors' Reading Room in 1877 and 1879 with several well known local names, Capt. & Mrs Wilmer, Mrs Grubbe and Mr George Grubbe, Mrs Marriott, Rev.E.J.Alvis, Mrs.Hickling & Miss Burleigh (the latter probably the sister of Mrs Hickling both being the daughters of R.W.Burleigh, the Halesworth maltster, River Blyth developer and Southwold Railway shareholder).

In May 1894 a concert was given in the Drill Hall (where the Conservative Club is now) for the funds of the Nursing Benefit Association "under the patronage of the Countess of Stradbroke, Lady Constance Barne and the committee of the Nursing Assn". Tickets at 2/6d, 2/- and 1/6d were obtainable from Critten & Hanner, the Market Place chemists.

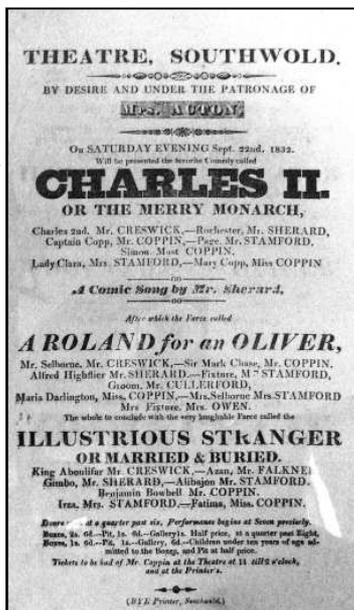
The Drill Hall was also the venue for the "Great & Continued Success of Miss Linington's Dramatic Company under the management of Mr. Fred Beckett" in March 1898 "under the distinguished patronage of His Worship the Mayor (E.M.U. Adnams Esq.) & the Southwold Lodge R.A.O.B" (Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes). One play, described as "the success of the century", was *Trilby*, in which Mr. Beckett himself played Svengali.

The Bigotphone & String Band gave an "Entertainment" in the Drill Hall in April 1900 for the Southwold Lads Club. (A Bigotphone was a variant of what we know as the

This article is based on a paper, entitled 'Treading the Boards' by Paul Scriven, MBE, published in the Southwold Museum and Historical Society Newsletter No. 9, June 2009, available to view in the Museum library, 01502 72609.

As a sequel to this, in our next issue we will feature a memoir of Southwold Theatre in the 1950s by Michael Rowan-Robinson whose father, Christopher, was an important early influence on the theatrical life of Southwold as we know it today.

If you have any memories or memorabilia concerning the history of the performing arts in this area, we will be delighted to hear from you.



kazoo!) A Peace Concert was given there in June 1902 and the Drill Hall was also the setting for "Miss D'Auvergne Upcher, a new contralto of the leading London & Provincial concerts & Miss Gwendolen Lally of His Majesty's & the Royal Court Theatre, London" who gave "a vocal & Shakespearian Recital in August 1908.

March 1905 saw Recitations & Songs & the Southwold String Orchestra at the Assembly Rooms which later became Southwold's cinema on the site where the York Road GP practice now stands. This concert took place under the "patronage of the Mayor & Mayoress (Mr & Mrs Foster) & others" and the following month there was a "Grand Evening Concert" with the same orchestra at the Drill Hall.

The Annual Concert of Southwold Choral Society was given at the Centre Cliff Hotel in May 1906 with proceeds shared by the Southwold Cottage Hospital and the Choral Society.

The Constitution Hall on South Green (destroyed in WW2) was the venue for Mr. Fred Bennett's Company in July 1914. "Our Boys" was described as "a grand, fashionable performance under the patronage of His Worship the Mayor (Charles W. Fowler Esq.) & other leading gentry of the town and neighbourhood".

The New Pier Pavilion which had been built in 1936 offered an excellent venue and, for a season in 1937, Walter Parkin presented *Come to the Show*. It is well known that in the early days of their career "Gert & Daisy", Elsie & Doris Waters (sisters of Jack Warner) appeared there with the "White Coons" Concert Party. They were paid £4 per week each and Southwold's well known photographer, Frederick Jenkins, took their first professional photograph.

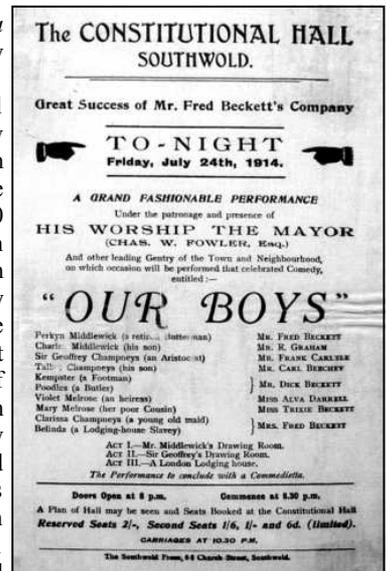
In June 1946, The Country Repertory Company presented a comedy, *The Rotters - a tale of a respectable family* by H.F. Maltby

and *If Four Walls Told - a Village Play* in three acts by Edward Percy.

The Geraldine Nash School of Dancing presented a show at the Pier Pavilion in December 1946 in aid of the "Southwold £1500 Thanksgiving Fund" with many familiar local names in the cast. There were many local entertainments in those post-war years; Margaret Allen appeared in some of them, Reggie Mumford with another group and Jane Davey directed the Southwold Drama Group in St. Edmund's Hall in a series of plays from 1949 to c.1966.

From 1953 until the Jill Freud Company took over in 1983, several repertory groups gave seasons of plays in St Edmund's Hall including those run by Christopher Rowan-Robinson, Caryl Jenner, Richard Graham, JR Projects Ltd and Joan Shore. In 1954 the prices were 4/6d. 3/6d & 2/6d - not much different from those which applied in 1808!

We are very grateful to Southwold Museum & Historical Society for permission to publish this article and to reproduce posters and programmes from their collection.



2009 FETE DOES IT AGAIN

Organiser, Val Anderson writes:

A big thank-you to all involved in our fantastic fundraising Summer Fete.

All our fretting about the weather, the possible drop-off in public interest, the effects of the recession and everything else came to nought. People poured in, enjoying a beautiful day, the amazing range of stalls, the gorgeous refreshments and the great programme of entertainment which culminated in the big climax of the Grand Draw.

We even made slightly more profit than we did last year - in other words, another record!

Of course, this terrific achievement is due to the loyal band of workers who turn up year after year, augmented by the many new helpers who volunteered this year and who all did such a splendid job.

Particular thanks must go to Joy and Michael Venn for organising the Grand Draw - no mean task - and to you for buying tickets.

I'd also like to offer my personal gratitude to Ben Marriner for taking over the organisation of the fete day because of my ill health; he did such a magnificent job. I am even more delighted to tell you that Ben has agreed to take on the Organiser role for the 2010 Fete! I have become his willing assistant and will remain the Walberswick point of contact as well as continuing to offer temporary storage space for sale goods.

Ben Marriner writes

We all owe Val Anderson a huge debt of gratitude for the hard work and dedication she has put into the FESPA fete over the past eight

years. From small beginnings it has now become very much part of the summer season.

Although I will be taking over the general organisation, I am glad to say that Val will still be very much involved. We have an excellent committee who have been together for a number of years and regular helpers running the stalls on the day. We always need more help - gate-keeping and car-parking, to name just two important areas - so, please keep supporting us and put **Sunday 27 June 2010** in your diaries as a reminder for you to come along and lend a hand.

If you'd like to join the team for the 2010 Fete or offer your support, it is not too early to ring Ben Marriner on 01502 722488.



2009 Draw: main winners

Cheque for £300 - Mrs A Jones, Rothley, Yorkshire

5-night holiday in Walberswick (Donated by Val Anderson) - Mr A Hall, Woodbridge

Cut-glass decanter and brandy glasses (donated by Wendy Cooper) - Allison Clark, RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus

Meal for two donated by the White Lion Hotel, Aldeburgh - Mr N Brooker, Wangford

Lunch for two donated by the Swan Hotel, Southwold - Mrs R Jordan, Bungay

Two top-price theatre tickets donated by the New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich - Mr M J Vaughan, Walberswick.

Our grateful thanks to the donors of the above and the many other generous donors of prizes including: The Anchor Inn, Walberswick; The Red Lion, Southwold; High Lodge Leisure Ltd, Hinton; Weavers Tearooms, Peasenhall and Potters Wheel Restaurant, Walberswick.

SUMMER ROUNDUP 2009



1,2,3 - *Company and Friends at the pre-season garden party at Westons (Photos: Peter Adshead).*
 4,5 - *scenes at the FESPA Theatre Fete at Westons.*
 6 - *Ann Wenn, Richard Emerson and Jemma Churchill in Caught in the Net. (Photo: Jim Laws).*
 7 - *Author of Caught in the Net, Ray Cooney, 4th from right, celebrates with the cast. (Photo: Peter Adshead).*
 8 - *Andrew Bone and Angela Dixon in Green for Danger.*
 9 - *Jemma Churchill and Clive Flint in Love's a Luxury (Both photos: Jim Laws)*

Many more photos - in colour - on www.fespa.co.uk