



Stage Whispers

May 2017
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EDITORIAL

Well, after about 27 of the plays I've directed for the Whips over the years, the last one, Lord Arthur Savile's Crime which, by all accounts was one of our best, made a loss compared with all the others in profit.

This was due to our declining audience numbers which I'm told is a sign of the times and ever increasing costs for performance, rehearsal use of our hall, the royalty, playset costs and period costume hire costs way apart from set construction and insurance expenditure.

Do we increase the ticket price as our competitors do which at £10 is very reasonable especially as we only receive £9 due to the online booking costs, there's no doubt about it though, the Thursday supper nights at £16 are very popular and has to be very good value for money.

After our AGM and June Bailey's departure as secretary, a job she did extremely well, we have no volunteer to take her place. Hey Ho despite all of this we plod on, still keen to support our society in this, our 70th year.

PLAYREADINGS

The next playreading will be on Thurs June 15th at Pam Campbell's house, Tioga, Forest Rd EH KT245BA tel 01483 282245.

Then on thurs 13th July at Pat Davis's house Summer Hill, Chalk Lane,KT246TJ tel 01483 281990.

Then on Thurs 14th Sep at Barbara Firth's house Rosemount, Woodland Drive EH KT245AN Tel 01483 283262

We need volunteers to host future playreading evenings. Oct, Nov, Dec, Please contact Jack

AUTUMN PRODUCTION

Not finalised but looks like two 1 act plays, one being directed by Jan Hudson

MEERKAT NOTES

Nothing to report as the committee doesn't meet until 19th June

AGM

Jeremy Miles our president, presented cups for the past years performances, however since so few folk attended only June who won the biggest cup for her wonderful support she gave as secretary for so many years plus two young Whips, Greta Butcher & Tommy McClung were the only people present to received their cups. All the committee members apart from Secretary, stood yet again. The secretary position still needs to be filled. Declining audiences, members and various suggestions to combat this slide were discussed plus non-controversial subjects were mentioned and wine with nibbles finished off what was quite an enjoyable 69th AGM



SPRING PRODUCTION

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime Review by The Humble Scribe



Young Lord Arthur Savile's future seems set to be a rosy one. Not only is he a member of the upper class and thus privileged, he is set to marry his sweetheart Miss Sybil Merton. That is until palm-reader Mr Podgers reads Lord Arthur's hand and sees murder on the horizon, a murder that Lord Arthur himself must commit. Fearful that the tendency to hurt those we love might endanger his Sybil, Arthur is encouraged by Podgers to murder someone else instead.



First published in 1891, Oscar Wilde's original was a short story rather than a play but it has all the ingredients of a good old Victorian melodrama. Constance Cox first published her stage adaptation of the novel in 1952. The fact that 65 years on it still elicits laughter from today's audience is testament to quality of writing from both authors. Jack Griffith's expert direction ensured that the cast were able to generate the audience's laughter to no lesser degree than that of first night audience back in 1952.

The curtains opened to reveal Lord Arthur's drawing room (set design by Brian Aitcheson), which was to the high standard that is a trademark of a WHIPS' production. Considering the relatively small stage at WHVH, the set gave the impression of wealth without being over cluttered and allowed for ease of movement by the cast. The rather muffled off stage door knocking heralding a character appearing lacked clarity. Perhaps a doorbell sound effect could have been employed instead. Lighting was in the experienced hands Chris Cathles.



In his role as Lord Arthur, Mathew Chapman in his first appearance for the WHIPS gave a confident performance especially considering the amount of lines that his role required. His increasing desperation as each attempt to kill a relative failed was never overplayed but the gallows humour was deliciously under the surface.

His foil was Baines, expertly played by Phil Embury whose portrayal of the diffident but worldly-wise butler allowed Wilde's jabs at society to be delivered with precision.

Lord Arthur's love interest Sybil, was sweetly played by Anna Price. The set pieces between herself and Lord Arthur bordered almost on a "Brief Encounter" pastiche but were not overplayed and her facial expressions were delightful.

Her mother Lady Merton was expertly portrayed by Carol McGlone, who also was making her debut on the WHIPS' stage. Her delivery of her lines with equal measures of surprise, disgust and incredulity was the epitome of Wilde's grand Victorian matriarch.

Stuart Smith's cheiromantist, Podgers oozed all the dodgy character traits of the melodrama villain. The animated anarchist Herr Winkelkopf was portrayed with great energy by Stuart Tomkins. His lines were clear although occasionally the German accent did

slip. The smoking bomb was a very impressive stage prop.

In support Colin Bailey gave us an entertainingly befuddled Dean of Paddington with the hint of pomposity that the character requires. Lady Windemere (complete with her fan) was crisply brought to life by Frances King, whilst Jan Hudson in the role of Great Aunt Lady Clementina was delightfully dotty. Jill Davis completed the strong ensemble as the slightly saucy maid Nellie.

As has come to be expected from a WHIPS production, costumes are always of a high standard. In staging a play such as this opulent costumes make the icing on the cake and certainly Margaret Pearce must be congratulated.

This was the third outing for this play by the WHIPS and by the end of the evening the audience felt that they had been thoroughly entertained.





Lord Arthur Savile's Crime April 2017



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

15 th June	Playreading Pam's house
13 th July	Playreading Pat's house
14 th Sept	Playreading Barbara's house
18-21 st October	Autumn Production
18 th November	Quiz night
14 th December	Whips Christmas Bash



AND FINALLY

What goes up hill with 3 legs?

A lawyer and a pensioner are sitting next to each other on a long flight. The lawyer is thinking that pensioner are so daft that he could put one over on them easily. So, the lawyer asks if the pensioner would like to play a fun game.

The senior is tired and just wants to take a nap, so he politely declines and tries to catch a few winks.

The lawyer persists, saying that the game is a lot of fun. "I ask you a question, and if you don't know the answer, you pay me only £5.00.

Then you ask me one, and if I don't know the answer, I will pay you £500.00," he says.

This catches the pensioner attention and, to keep the lawyer quiet, he agrees to play the game.

The lawyer asks the first question. "What's the distance from the Earth to the Moon?"

The pensioner doesn't say a word, but reaches into his pocket, pulls out a five pound note, and hands it to the lawyer.

Now, it's the pensioner turn. He asks the lawyer, "What goes up a hill with three legs, and come down with four?"

The lawyer uses his laptop to search all references he could find on the Net.

He sends E-mails to all the smart friends he knows; all to no avail. After an hour of searching, he finally gives up.

He wakes the pensioner and hands him £500.00. The senior pockets the £500.00 and goes back to sleep.

The lawyer is now going crazy not knowing the answer. He wakes the pensioner up and asks, "Well, so what goes up a hill with three legs and comes down with four?"

The pensioner reaches into his pocket, hands the lawyer £5.00, and goes back to sleep.



This has been another 'Rush it out swiftly To see if anybody notices' production!



