

# The Stonesfield Players

## Come to the Stonesfield Players AGM

On a summer there is no better place to be than with your fellow Players, so come along to the **St James Centre at 8pm on Tuesday 29 June** (please note this date has been changed since the last newsletter). We'll be sharing wine, fruit juice, nibbles, gossip, tales of past performances and news of those planned in the year ahead. It's your Stonesfield Players, so put the date in your diary and come along to share your ideas for the coming year.

## Blithe Spirit

It is quite something for the Players to have discovered a new venue after decades of performing in the village, and everyone who came to Blithe Spirit will have enjoyed the novelty of the setting as much as the timeless humour of this Noel Coward classic. Ros's house was perfect.

Being already in a drawing room with the characters was brilliant. Becki's imaginative direction made full use of the three exits and entrances available, so when Madame Arcati came in with her bicycle from the garden, or the maid came in with her tray from the kitchen, or Mrs Condomine came down from the bedroom, their world appeared entirely credible. Very clever, to get such interest into such a small space, and to create a real illusion of grandeur.

They were two stunningly beautiful evenings at the end of May, and great praise has to go to Chris for the lighting. He somehow funnelled golden evening sunlight through the French windows for a good hour after the sun had set, proving once more that he can create any world, and any atmosphere, we need, under any circumstances.

The costumes were superb. Hats to die for, frocks to live it up in, and terrifically period hair-dos. Well done Ros and Chrissie: a triumph of period detail, borne out by the wonderful make-up (Mel and Caroline) which surely had benefitted from a course on technique: we had classic beauty and the Adams Family on stage at the same time – brilliant.

It was a brave decision, to stage a performance with the actors still on-script. Anyone who acts knows full well that the script is a darned nuisance and one just longs to be rid of it. Having it is a tempting security blanket, but it is also a shackle.

Having said that, moving away from a huge performance in the village hall, with all the intimidating barriers of the proscenium arch, into the intimacy of Ros's sitting room, was a stroke of genius and suited the play really well. And all the actors showed huge courage, acting so close to their audience.

Madame Arcati was fabulously eccentric, flamboyant and fay. She believed very strongly in herself and was therefore entirely credible to us: Griselda did her the honour of not sending her up, which was highly professional. Beth provided a lovely contrast in Elvira, playing her with a really wicked streak and tongue firmly in cheek; you really felt she was determined to wield her sexual power from beyond the grave and by golly, she succeeded. Mr and Mrs Condomine were quintessentially Noel Coward. They grounded the play so firmly in the 1930s, with their dry martinis and their mannered voices. Laura was wonderfully languid and coolly beautiful, but also very expressive; Tim splendidly flustered. As for the gay doctor and his wife, I just hope David and Mark have had time to de-brief their wives on what was an unnervingly convincing

## June Newsletter 2010

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Tuesday 29 June, 8pm Players AGM  
at St James Centre

performance.

A last word for the maid, whose earnest seriousness anchored the whole production in the realms of a thoroughly enjoyable Sunday evening serial: Cranford, eat your heart out – well done Lucy.

Becki brought all her customary hard work to this production, and it showed. The characters were well-rounded, they moved with great stage presence (which can't have been easy in that tiny space), and they knew exactly where the humour lay, all of which reflected Becki's direction. A big thank you to her, and to Ros, for putting on a truly delightful and very different production. Oh – and how lovely that Pat is now proved to be undeniably indispensable to any and every production we have ever done and will ever do; I think she'd be our prompt even if we went into ballet

### Caroline Friend

## Players' events

The last Safari Supper didn't take place. Although a number of people were interested there was not quite enough response to make it a profitable fundraiser. We'll think about running another at a later date. Look out for information later in the year about a Treasure Hunt – the one we ran two years ago was great fun. Though we haven't got another production to announce yet, read on for other local performances that are worth catching this summer.

## The Mermaid Princess by Teresa Ludovico

This "visually ravishing family fairy tale", suitable for 8 years plus, is inspired by Hans Christian Anderson's Little Mermaid. It is on at the Oxford Playhouse from Thursday 24 to Saturday 26 June. Tickets are available from the Oxford Playhouse box office 01865 305305 and their website is [www.oxfordplayhouse.com](http://www.oxfordplayhouse.com).

## Oxford Theatre Guild – Shakespeare's Anthony & Cleopatra

The Theatre Guild's past performances have been very good and the location for this production, Trinity College Gardens, is sublime. Their version is set "in the heat of the British Raj, opposing forces pull the two lovers and their countries into a collision course with tragic consequences." Performances run 13-24 July, tickets are £10 and £14 (concessions available) and can be booked in advance through the Oxford Playhouse box office (01865 305305) or online at [www.ticketsoxford.com](http://www.ticketsoxford.com) and are also sold on the door at performances if available. There are group discounts (buy 7 tickets and get another free) if people are interested in going as a Stonesfield Players group.

## Please check your wardrobe

I think I am missing a couple of evening tail suits from the Players' costume collection and am wondering if anyone has them at the back of their wardrobe from a previous production – I know how easy it is to have this happen and I don't always check things in and out as I rely on people to let me have costumes back. It could have been a while ago as well!! If you have one of the suits, please get in touch with me. Thanks!  
Ros Mengech, tel. 898276

## **Finally, our website**

Don't forget that the website at [www.stonesfieldplayers.org.uk](http://www.stonesfieldplayers.org.uk) still needs any pictures you might have of previous productions. Contact or email them to Mark at [s@villefamily.com](mailto:s@villefamily.com)

We also now have an email address - **info@stonesfieldplayers.org.uk** - for all your overwhelmed friends and relatives to send their sparkling performance reviews!

Mark Saville

Please send contributions for the next newsletter to [nicky.holland@btinternet.com](mailto:nicky.holland@btinternet.com)