



June 2018

# Newsletter

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**H**ello dear members,

Welcome to another newsletter. Summer is here and Polegate Drama Group is looking forward to more exciting productions.

## **SOMETHING TO HIDE**



Our spring play, a thrilling murder mystery directed by Sylvia Dobell, was well acted and well received by everyone who came to see it.

Unfortunately our audience numbers were low and, hampered by the sudden

breakdown of our ice cream freezer, the group made a small overall loss.

Dear members and friends, please come and support our plays. So much effort goes into every production; the directing, acting and production skills are really very good and there is always a better atmosphere when we have a lively audience. Don't forget: members and friends receive £1 off their tickets for each spring and autumn play and our pantomimes when you book at Archers and present your membership card.

Anne Lawson, regional representative of NODA, wrote the following positive review:

*A very good front cover on the colourful A5 programme for 'Something to Hide', depicting the all-important 'little red car', well laid out and easily readable. I was delighted to meet F of H Manager and Director Sylvia Dobell, a stalwart of the group. For the last two months she steered the cast through the twists and turns of this murder mystery – what a guessing game but I did manage to deduce that the first victim was indeed still alive!*

## **Key Dates**

### **Murder Mysteries**

3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> August  
Box Office opens Tuesday  
3<sup>rd</sup> July

### **Autumn Play**

24<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> October

### **Snow White**

12<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> January 2019  
Auditions 26<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> June

### **Spamalot**

29<sup>th</sup> May-1<sup>st</sup> June 2019

### **Coffee Mornings**

23<sup>rd</sup> June, 11 August,  
8<sup>th</sup> September

### **Christmas Dinner**

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> December

*It was disappointing for everyone that there were just a handful in the audience to be kept on their toes. From the rear of the hall every word was quite audible and encouraging to see young people taking control of sound/lighting, designed by Ryan Tate, operated by Dan Rich, ably assisted by Becky Kearns, with plenty of well cued noises off.*

*The set was an excellent well finished living room. Good background wall colouring, three good doors, one leading into a hall to the front door. Furniture was a pure 60's look with plenty of attention to detail with numerous props arranged by Diane Brooks – a pukka soda syphon on the drinks tray, ashtray in appropriate place, photographs, vases, paintings on the walls, a wireless etc - all so well thought through.*

*Action was natural and fast moving with balanced use of space. A particularly wordy piece, studied well, with a couple of minor prompts from Jane Morris on the book. With complex lines at times, our key figures Howard and Karen were played solidly, with presence. Stephen Edwards was confidently supported by Helen Griffin, initially in control, gradually crumbling but in the end pulling the trigger on the philandering Howard. Used, worried mistress, Julie Grant aka Terry was played by Rebecca Tanner. What a lovely character role for Denise Rose as the rather trodden on 'daily' Stella, whilst Cris Haniver had a ball becoming Miss Cunningham, the 'eyes and ears' stalwart member of various societies of the village, whilst garage proprietor, well kitted in his overalls was characterised by Jim Dobell. Completing the cast was Geoff Shorman playing a wily pipe puffing Inspector Davies. A really good effort from all concerned.*



By popular request from members and friends, this summer will see a welcome return of the Murder Mystery plays. These evenings are great fun as audience members have the opportunity to guess whodunit. There will be great prizes for the team who spots the most clues, plus a jolly quiz and a raffle.

There are two plays, one each on Friday and Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> August. You can book a table with friends, play along on your own or share a table – a great way to meet people and make new friends! Tickets will be on sale from 3<sup>rd</sup> July and cost £8 per night or £15 if you come to both.

Friday night's play is 'Who Killed the Secret Agent', a murder mystery in the style of James Bond, with Helen Griffin making her directing debut. Her cast is:

Marcus Moulton-Lightly P Miss Fillyfenny	Ian Parratt Charisse Goddard Jane Parratt	Doctor Natalie Tinker Glitz Honeypot Narrator	Kathy Long Sarah Hole Maria Bayne
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Saturday night's play, directed by Cris Haniver, is 'Who Killed the Headmaster', a classic murder mystery set in the 1930s and acted by:

Narrator & Inspector Montgomery Rex Ophelia Rex Philippa Lemon	Denise Rose Trevor Fuggle Ann Taylor Rebecca Tanner	Barbara Forbes-Marshall James Tonic Brute Savage Harry Smith	Alison Attwood Geoff Shorman Jim Dobell Bill Haniver
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## AUTUMN PLAY

As we go to print with this newsletter, the autumn play is still something of a mystery, although it's more likely to be a comedy!

Potential scripts are currently being explored and will be read and selected next month. Watch this space!



## PANTOMIME 2019



From the team behind the 2018 pantomime 'Beauty and the Beast' and the sell-out production 'The Vicar of Dibley', we bring you the fairest pantomime of them all! Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs will be spectacularly brought to life with an abundance of comedy, sensational song and dance numbers, fabulous costumes and stunning scenery.

Throw in a magical Mirror, a beautiful princess, a handsome prince and plenty of audience participation as we outwit the Wicked Queen, and let love prevail in this glittering treat for all ages!

Our panto will be directed this time by the infamous David Buck ably assisted by choreographer Sue Wood, musical director Marc Charlton and production manager Ryan Tate.

Auditions will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> June but if anyone cannot make these dates and would like to read for a part, please email [infor@polegatedramagroup.com](mailto:infor@polegatedramagroup.com) as David Buck will be happy to make an alternative arrangement.

Our panto will be on stage from Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Tickets cost £10.50, children 15 years or under £7.00, and there's a £1 discount for members and friends when you present your membership card at Archers.

## **SPAMALOT 2019**

And now for something completely different ...!!

A departure from our usual spring drama, next year we will be presenting Spamalot, a musical comedy based on Monty Python and the Holy Grail.

The original 2005 [Broadway](#) production received 14 [Tony Awards](#) nominations, winning in three categories, including [Best Musical](#), and audiences around the world have been roaring with laughter ever since.

David Buck will be directing this production and he is looking to involve many members on stage. There really are parts for everyone who wants to be involved so, whether you are a seasoned musical performer or just fancy having a first go at treading the boards, this is your opportunity. Go for it! Please note that 'actors packs' will be available with a copy of the full script and musical score at a charge of £20 per cast member.

Spamalot will run from 29<sup>th</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019, which is slightly later than usual due to the community centre's own 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.





## THE DOBELL AWARDS

**Jim Dobell** has been given a special accolade for his long and loyal service to the community centre where he has been a founder member and president for the past 25 years, until standing down at last November's AGM. Jim was invited to become the association's patron, which he was pleased and proud to accept.

Our coffee morning in early June was something of a swan song for **Sylvia Dobell** as she hung up her dishcloth and retired from front of house. Ryan Tate and Cris Haniver said thank you to Sylvia for so many years of dedicated service to the drama group. Maria Bayne is taking over responsibility for front of house and Helen Griffin is taking charge of wardrobe. If any other members wish to get involved, we'd love to hear from you.

You can read more about Sylvia's long and active involvement with the drama group in our Spotlight feature below.



Ryan Tate says a big "thank you" to everyone who helped with clearing our scenery store. Your hard work was much appreciated. Never has it looked so clean!!

We now have a well organised store with sets for pantos and plays easily accessible. Long may it continue!

## SPOTLIGHT

The Spotlight this time is on one of our longest standing members, **Sylvia Dobell**, who joined in 1966. In those days it was not so much a drama group but a small band of people led by a scout master, meeting in people's houses and putting on skits and concert parties.

Sylvia's first public acting was in the group's first full length play, 'Love's A Luxury', when Sylvia and her co-female actor were aptly both pregnant!



Sylvia was bitten by the acting bug at the young age of ten after she heard a comic song and started doing some herself. Through school and Sunday school Sylvia could be heard delivering excerpts from Shakespeare and taking part in small plays. It was while singing a comic song at a hospital fund raiser that a friend said "why don't we sing something proper" and, with the help of other musical friends including Peter Hoare and Joyce Rose, they put on concerts around Polegate.

With husband Jim and two daughters Susan and Julia at home, Sylvia gave up drama for a while to focus on her singing. She won a gold medal at the Eastbourne Festival and had the opportunity to join a masterclass and concert with acclaimed international baritone John Carol Case. Latterly she studied opera with Elizabeth Muir Lewis, a professional singer and founder of the Eastbourne Choral Society.

As her family grew up, Sylvia happily returned to drama. She has been involved in forty productions with Polegate Drama Group, acting in twenty four and directing sixteen. I asked Sylvia if she had an all-time favourite and she quickly cited 'Pink String and Sealing Wax' where she directed four young people. "It was an absolute joy because of their enthusiasm and interest." Other favourites are 'Hobson's Choice' "because of its interesting set and characters" and 'Entertaining Angels', set in a garden with a river. "It has great characters and it was wonderful to work with the actors."



Actor, director, front of house and wardrobe manager - I asked Sylvia which role she found most enjoyable. "Directing", Sylvia says unequivocally. "I like working with people and trying to get the most out of them with the characters involved." And the most challenging role? "Costumes for panto. I played Little Red Riding Hood in Polegate's first pantomime and it put me off for life!"

Outside of theatre, Sylvia spent many happy years in nursing, firstly on a medical ward in St Mary's in Eastbourne and subsequently in coronary care. She helped set up the Intensive Care Unit at the DGH and, now qualified as a sister, ran training courses in coronary care alongside her ward duties. Sadly a work-related back injury led to six months off work and eventual early retirement. "That was in 1983," Sylvia explained. "I desperately missed work; it was like a bereavement."

Nowadays Sylvia focuses on her family, which has grown to include two grandchildren, and her love of gardening. "The front garden is mine," she says. "The rest is Jim's!"

Returning to the drama group, what are Sylvia's hopes for the future? "I'd like to see youth drama group again," she says. "That's where it all grows from."

Sylvia may have hung up her dishcloth but never fear, as she hopes to stay involved with Polegate Drama Group in some capacity and is still interested in directing plays. We look forward to the next one!

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Well folks, that's all from me this month. I hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter and look forward to the next one, which will be issued in the autumn. As always, I welcome any feedback, contributions or suggestions on anything you would like to see included.

With best wishes,  
Alison

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