

Stagebyte 2019

September



Believe it or not it is five years since I last produced Stagebyte, November 2014 to be precise.

Your present committee have decided to revive the Players' newsletter and here you will find reports on our 2019 activities and plans for the near future. Judith Watson



David with Carrie Bedford in *Beauty and the Beast* 2003

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

Pantomime January 2020

Readings/auditions were held on Monday, September 16th of the pantomime *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, by Ben Crocker. The panto is nearly cast and it is planned that rehearsals start on Monday October 7th

After some years working abroad, director David Eyes is back in the UK for at least a year and is full of enthusiasm for getting the panto up and running.

Production dates are 22-25 January 2020, and include the usual Saturday matinee.

David first came to the Players in 2002 and acted in plays and pantos in parts as varied as Buttons in *Cinderella 2004*, Lockit in *The Beggar's Opera 2006* and the Judge in *Sweeney Todd 2010*. David also directed two pantomimes, *Snow White and the Seven Fairies 2007* and *Calamity Dame 2011*. JW

Full details of Eydon Players history, past productions and news are to be found on the web site eydonplayers.co.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

JULY 24TH 2019

at Eydon Village Hall 7.30 pm for 8

Reports on the society's activities during 2018-19 were delivered by the Chairman and the Treasurer and the committee were re-elected.

Treasurer Don Hussey would like to retire next year from his post on the committee.

The main topic of the evening was raised by Matthew Tasker and it concerned the cancellation of the 2018 pantomime at short notice. Several people had spoken to Matthew and it is clear that the reason for the cancellation had not been understood within the village. To lose not only a main member of the cast but six members of his family from other parts two weeks before the performance date proved an insurmountable problem. It had not been made clear that the committee had tried very hard to replace the main character, but it had proved impossible. None of these people were present to hear the committee's explanations.

There were thoughts that the society might have

to consider a Christmas play with a smaller cast, if there were severe problems with finding the large cast usual for a pantomime

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Chairman: Tia Kerby-Camps (tiakerby@hotmail.co.uk)

Treasurer: Don Hussey (01295 660797)

Secretary: Gary Denby: (gjdenby@btinternet.com)

Membership Secretary : to be appointed

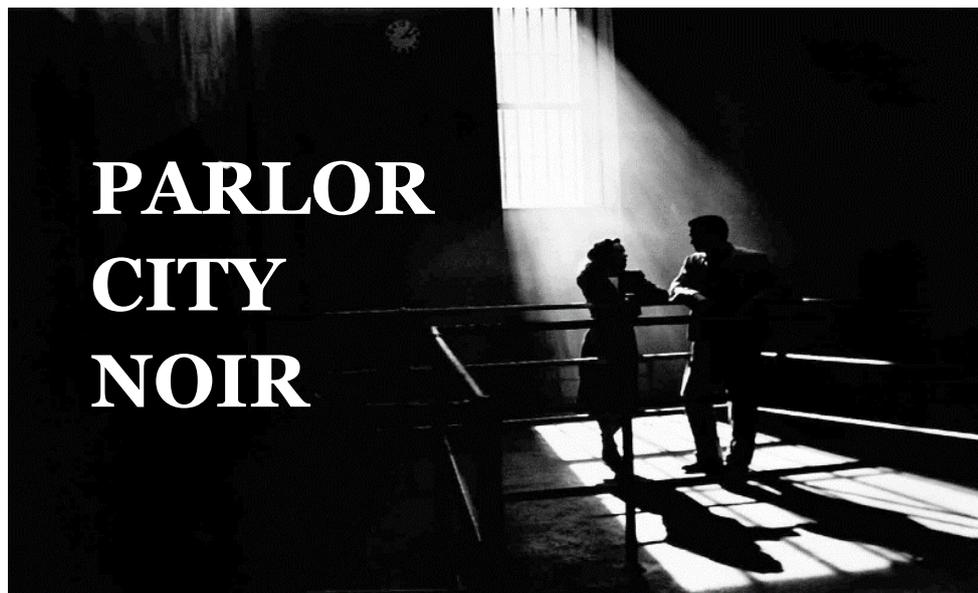
Social Secretary: Geoff Stretton (01327 264489)

It is said that the most efficient committee is a committee of one, but not when you not only run the society but provide plenty of the support for every production, so how about considering helping out?

Eydon Players are currently looking for a new Membership Secretary to join the committee, meeting every month to discuss current and upcoming projects.

Please contact Tia at tiakerby@hotmail.co.uk if you are interested.

JW



2019 production

by

David Schmidt

A Nick Holliday PI
mystery

Directed by

Matthew Tasker

Some pics from Parlor City Noir



Above:

Nick Holliday's (David Kent) investigation into the death of Peter DeLucci causes him to run foul of the local Numbers gangsters, with the inevitable result. Dora Chase (Suzanne Smith) finds him badly beaten up.

Below: Nick survives unmasking the widow DeLucci (Penny Avery) as the main villain. Detective Mike Shields (Mike Jackson) attends the late gangster mastermind..



Review of Parlor City Noir

I'm delighted to have been asked - but it's a little bit strange, having been so closely associated with the production - to be reviewing this play for Stagebyte. One can already hear the cries of "self-serving" and "well he would say that wouldn't he".

So, let's get this straight before we begin - this isn't an objective review, but a Director's appreciation of all the hard work that the extended company put in to ensuring that the play was a success.

The play was chosen by your Committee's script reading group as being the right balance for a Summer's evening audience. It was also: -

a readable and entertaining script with some nice humorous touches .
It had the estimable virtues that it was a one-set play and
that it was apparently castable from within the resources of Eydon Players .

The set for the play looked brilliant and drew compliments from our audiences. I felt that you could almost smell the fustiness of the offices. I'm so grateful to Geoff and his set-building colleagues for interpreting my very scruffy designs for how it should look so deftly and to Judith for adding the wonderful forties style view out of the window. And I learnt some lessons about getting the colour palette just right - to get the right grey hue you don't just mix black and white!

For what was really quite a static play it was important to get the atmosphere of the set right and, with limited resources, Richard did an amazing lighting plot with some lovely subtleties of tone, and Gordon's help with sourcing the sound effects (particularly the street scene) was invaluable. Polly's make-up and hairstyling were excellent - borne out by the gasps of concern from the audience on seeing the mess that Ricco had made of Nick in his beating.

And what of the cast, I hear you asking? To a man and woman they were a delight to work with. The script turned out to be much harder to deliver on stage than it was to read - it was almost as if it had been written as a novel and then rather crudely adapted for the stage. The dialogue frequently involved long passages that were challenging to learn (and not to mention holding a U.S. accent) which caused stress levels to be higher than they needed to be - not that this showed during the production run, but a number of audience members commented on how well actors had coped, particularly David. The cast were a lovely mix of some of EP's most experienced staggers and some much newer arrivals. It was quite difficult to complete the casting of one of the key cameo roles but we were saved by Anna Darlow coming galloping over the horizon on her white charger and delivering an excellent maiden role with Eydon Players. The cast as a whole delivered above the levels that even they might have been expecting; their hard work in rehearsal and willingness to go the extra mile was exhilarating - and boy did it show on performance nights!

A really challenging and enjoyable show to direct and deliver - thank you to everyone. And we had good houses and made (by all accounts) decent money on ticket sales as well as through our hard-working bar operators and raffle ticket and programme sellers.

So what's next? Wouldn't it be grand if we could plan ahead so that our members and audiences could plan their involvement and visits a bit more in advance? It might make casting a play quite a lot easier as well....

MHT

Social events during 2019

Garden Party:

Eydon Players held their annual Garden Party on 28th July at 10A Lime Avenue by kind permission of Barrie Griffin. With the weather being a bit up and down, we mostly stayed inside but the event was enjoyed by all. As usual, Bring and Share resulted in a wonderful selection of dishes.

We even had a surprise visitor, with the arrival of an 'old' player, David Eyes. David has returned from America for a year to deal with visa issues and is keen to help the Players with a Christmas production. Tia Kerby-Camps

Summer BBQ:

The annual Summer BBQ took place at the Eydon Sports Pavilion this year as the weatherman predicted a downfall that never came. There was a nasty wind, however, so it was nice to be out of it. Regardless, the food provided by Tim and Lynn Williams was superb as usual. TK-C



Tim at work

Eydon Fete

There was a big EP presence at the fete this year. To name a few, we had Geoffrey Stretton running the Skittles and 'Play your cards right' stands, Matthew Tasker keeping everyone entertained on the mic, and Gary Denby in full costume running the bric-a-brac. The total profit from the EP stands was £74.50 after the adult skittles winner, Rob, donated his £15 prize money back to the Fete. A lovely day filled with plenty of cake and the total raised was an amazing £8,700, to be divided equally between church, village hall and sports field TK-C



Theatre visit

We thank Geoff Stretton our Social Secretary for suggesting and arranging a Players trip to see *The Mousetrap*

After decades of playing to packed houses in the West End of London, this year *The Mousetrap* was on tour locally (one week only) at Milton Keynes Theatre. Four of us were able to attend the Friday performance, preceded by an excellent Italian meal. A great time had by all!

It was a fixed stage set and since based in an isolated mansion, cut-off by a snow storm, most characters arrived covered in VERY REALISTIC snow - amazing! There was also snow gently floating down behind the bay window, used later as an exit. The casting and production was excellent, with the plot revolving around the nursery rhyme 'Three Blind Mice'. At the interval, we know that two of the 'mice' were already dead (...cut of their tails with a carving knife!), so there was great speculation over who the third 'mouse' would be, as well as the possible perpetrator... anyone could have done it, in best Agatha Christie form. The ending had a great twist (indeed, there may be different twists on different performances... who knows!) and we all went home smiling. Next time we host a Players outing, don't be shy... get your name on the list.

Gary Denby, Eydon Players Secretary



Re-setting after each competitor makes running the skittles hard work