



Players Patter No 195 - Nov 2020

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Well, what a strange year this is turning out to be. When I decided to stand as Chairman again this certainly wasn't what I was expecting! I don't think anyone could have imagined that COVID-19 would have such an impact on our ability to rehearse and perform together. I remember back in March when my work moved from London to the Chelsea Magazine Liphook satellite office (my study!) I said to Chris Lloyd "well, I could be working at home for as much as 3 weeks". His reply was that he thought I could be looking at 3 months. Who could have imagined that 8 months later I'd still be here! Mind you, I prefer the commute.... every cloud and all that! However, despite what's going on in the world, the committee continue to meet regularly on zoom and, believe it or not, we have lots to tell you!

COMMITTEE

Everyone is settling in to their roles on the committee, some continuing with their existing job and others taking on new responsibilities. We're delighted to welcome **Mike Byrne** to the committee as our new treasurer, along with **Alexandra Boughton** and **Hannah Lucas** and have said a fond farewell to **Arry Burwood** who is currently living in Bath. Arry, thank you for all your work as treasurer and helping in all manner of ways (I'm still impressed with those sausages we had at the Spring Ceilidh!)

PLAYERS SING MAMMA MIA!

Well done to everyone who took part in this and a huge thank you to the production team Adrian Stent, Chris Snelling and Verity Foster. Not only did we sound amazing (and Chris assures me no auto-tune was used at any point!) but Verity's slick choreography and Adrian's new-found video-editing skills resulted in a very professional looking video that we should all be proud to have been a part of. We also managed to raise over £1,000 for wonderful Shooting Stars charity who provide such an invaluable service to children and their families. We were so pleased with the result that we've decided to do another number. You'll find full details elsewhere in the newsletter.

SHOWS

As you already know, back in March, just 10 days before opening night we had to take the tough decision to postpone **Legally Blonde**. Thank goodness we did as only a few days later the first UK lockdown was announced. Since then we've had to delay the show again to March

2021 but it's now looking like even that may be beyond our reach. With that in mind, we've agreed with the rights holders that we can move **Legally Blonde** to October 2021 and **Kipps, The New Half a Sixpence Musical** to March 2022.

As you all know, rules are continuing to change with the ongoing COVID-19 situation so it's impossible to say for definite what we will and won't be able to do in the coming months. However, the committee are looking at plans to stage a **Show Stoppers** style production with socially distanced seating **or a musical** with a very small cast in either March or June 2021....we may even manage both so watch this space!

SOCIAL

Fiona McGregor, our new Social Secretary, along with the social sub-committee, **Verity Foster**, **Becca McGregor** and **Arran Treacher-Evans** are working on some online social events for us all to get involved with. Full details are elsewhere in the newsletter but personally, I can't wait for a bit of Players Lockdown Bingo!!

As I write, I'm waiting to hear Boris's plans for Christmas. Sadly, whatever's announced, we won't be able to have our customary Mince Pies & Carols this year so all that remains is for me to wish you a very **MERRY CHRISTMAS** in the hopes we're all allowed to spend it with a few family members and friends and a **SUCCESSFUL AND SHOW FILLED 2021!**

Stay safe and well. Vicki Gavin
chairman@haslemereplayers.com

Treasurer's Report

Over the last three months, very little has happened that will be of interesting financial news for the membership. Costs have been minimal – some investments in the Studio plus various overhead costs. Income has been minimal – membership fees predominantly.

There is little to say other than that we have batted down the hatches whilst we move through these difficult times, but thanks in part to Government support during Covid and also due to your continued membership fees and Patron fees, the Society is in a good position to weather the storm.

With best wishes to you all and a Happy Christmas.

Michael Byrne

YOUR COMMITTEE

We've now had several committee meetings since the AGM in August and thought it would be useful for our members to know who's doing what. So, your 2020/21 committee is:

Hamish Donaldson, President

Vicki Gavin, Chairman.

Pamela Depledge, Secretary

Mike Byrne, Treasurer

Fiona McGregor, Vice-Chairman & Social Sub-Committee Chair

Sally Barr, Governance & Compliance

Alexandra Boughton, Show Selection Sub-Committee Chair

Verity Foster, Programme Advertising & member of the Show Selection Sub-Committee

Andrew Johnston, Fund Raising & Marketing

Mary-Lou Knox, Wardrobe

Hannah Lucas, Social Media & Marketing

Jane McMichael, Membership

Whilst no longer a member of the main committee, **Adrian Stent** continues as our Hall Trustee and looking after the Players studio.

PLAYERS SING!....AGAIN!

We had so much fun doing Mamma Mia that we've decided to give it another go with our Lockdown 2.0 song **RHYTHM OF LIFE** from the fabulous musical, Sweet Charity which was staged by Players back in October 2003. Since then, this number has appeared in not one but two Show Stoppers. Thanks to **Alan Thornhill** for the suggestion...we think it's an excellent choice.

This time, our chosen charity is **THE HASLEMERE HALL** which is facing a challenging time this year with so many shows having to be cancelled.

We're delighted to have managed to persuade the same team that did such a fabulous job with Mamma Mia to come together again so we have **Adrian Stent** on video editing, **Chris Snelling** as musical director and **Verity Foster** as choreographer with the addition of **Hannah Lucas** as production manager.

If you'd like to get involved please email players.sing@gmail.com to register your interest along with the voice part you'd plan to sing (SATB). This won't be set in stone....you can choose which you want to do when the music is sent out....but it will give the team an indication of the numbers of high and low voices we'll have.

The production team are already hard at work on the music and moves but we'll be giving you the Christmas break to record your part.

We can't rehearse together but 2020 has brought us a new way to perform together. Let's all be a part of something fabulous.

CHRISTMAS MULLED WINE

I feel we all need a bit of cheering up especially with this Covid virus keeping us all isolated. So here is my recipe for Mulled Wine to be drunk on Tuesday evenings (or in fact any evening will do!). The more the merrier and have a lovely Christmas. We shall be thinking of you while we drink ours.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS from Linda and Hamish



CHRISTMAS MULLED WINE

This recipe makes 8 glasses. It can be kept in the fridge for up to 3 days (and heated up in the microwave), so you could have a glass every evening if you wanted! Add a tot of brandy just before serving (optional).

1 bottle of red wine	150 ml water
150 ml orange juice	60 gr sugar
1 cinnamon stick	8 cloves
5 gr mace	1 orange/lemon for garnish

Pour the wine, water and orange juice into a pan, and add the cloves, mace and cinnamon sticks. Bring to simmering point. Stir in sugar to taste.

Strain and serve hot with the reserved orange and lemon slices floating on top.

Mamma Mia Target Reached

We reached our target of £1000 raised for Shooting Star Children's Hospices by our Mamma Mia YouTube video! Thanks to all the cast and the production team for making the performance such a success!



Ellie Constable of Shooting Star wrote the following in her letter accompanying the above certificate:

I wanted to write to you to personally thank you – on behalf of everyone at Shooting Star Children's Hospices – for supporting us with a very generous donation of £1,025.00, raised through your fantastic Mamma Mia charity video. It really was a joy to watch, and we hope you all enjoyed making it too! Your support really does mean so much to us, and is helping us through these incredibly tough times.

And...if you have not yet seen our Mamma Mia performance you can find it on our website at :

<http://www.haslemereplayers.com/haslemere-players-sing-mamma-mia>.

Social Committee News

We are delighted to report on the first social committee meeting.

The one and only question posed in this meeting was how on earth are we going to do any social events with all the social-distancing and lock-down going on? When we looked at the options we were under the "Rule of 6" and pubs and restaurants were open. We were hoping to get started on some Devil's punchbowl rambles and were looking at a "Couch to 5k" for charity but those will have to wait until after lockdown is over.

Zoom Christmas Quiz

We are hoping, instead to bring a Christmas Quiz with Christmas pies and mulled wine. If possible, we were thinking that teams could meet at each other's homes – we will be guided by government legislation on whether this will be allowed. We think this will be a bit more fun than trying to do the quiz on your own. Date and details to follow soon.

Zoom Bingo

This will follow early January – date to follow.

Members' Facebook

During last year, we set up a separate members' Facebook page which you should all have been invited to join. I think this may have caused some confusion as we already have a Facebook page! I urge you all to join this additional group as we will be posting social events on here. It is private group which we will be able to share costume requests, rehearsal schedules, meeting dates etc not necessarily information needed to be shared publicly. It is a great platform to be able to contact each other informally. Do not worry if you do not have Facebook. The social events will also be going up on the website.

GOING GREEN

This month, The Haslemere Players have taken an additional step to help to look after our environment by signing up to participate in the **Terracycle Recycling programme**.

Terracycle have collection bins in public spaces all over the UK for many products including writing instruments, rubber gloves and beauty products. We'll be contributing to these efforts by setting up a collection point for **Lavazza Eco Coffee Pods**. In return, as a charity, we will receive a donation based on the volume of coffee pods collected.

The more we collect, the more donations we receive so **please do donate your Lavazza Eco Pods to the collection bin situated outside The Studio**, and recommend us to your friends and families. It helps the environment and it brings a little bit of money in for our fantastic Charity too.

For more information on which coffee pods are accepted as well as for more information on the Lavazza Eco Programme please go to <https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/>

Other events

Coming up in 2021 ideas include: Murder mystery night, Tea Dance, Ceilidh, Zoom Charades, Devil's Punchbowl ramble, couch to 5K and loads more

Lizzie Hale's Zoom classes

Lizzie is providing dance and exercise classes for people of all ages and fitness abilities.

Thursdays 9am Figure 8

Saturdays 9:30am Broadway Burn

Sundays 9am Figure 8

Sundays 10am 5K My Way

When we are out of lockdown, these classes will be live as well as being streamed via zoom if you cannot join us in person.



From January 2021, Show Steps will start where we focus on choreography to certain musicals each month. January's musical is Chicago and February's Wicked. **People can either message her or sign up on the website**

The website address is

<https://www.haslemeremusicanddancestudio.com/>

Her number is 07809 767602 and the email address is haslemeremusicanddance@gmail.com

For online sessions she will send out a Zoom code about an hour prior to the class, and she is happy to assist with Zoom if anyone needs it

Keep an eye on Facebook for more updates

Calling all Members and Patrons

Many thanks to all who have kept their memberships up to date this year.

If you are able to maintain your membership at the moment in these difficult times it would be greatly appreciated to help keep the Players' ship afloat for better times ahead in 2021.

Best wishes, Jane McMichael, Membership Secretary



DOREEN WYLDE

Many of you will be sad to hear that Doreen has recently moved to live with her son in Southampton. She had been in hospital recently and felt that the time had come to be with her family. Fay Foster has kindly written about her life and involvement with the Haslemere Players over the last 50 years.



Shortly moving to Southampton after over fifty years in and around Haslemere, 94-year-old Doreen Wylde leaves behind a phenomenal legacy among amateur musical circles.

As a holder of the highest Gold Award for service to the National Operatic and Dramatic Association, in 2003 she was also honoured with an MBE for services to the amateur theatre, instigated by Farnham Operatic Society.

At that time she had directed 120 musicals over a wide area of Surrey, West Sussex and Hampshire. Although Haslemere always remained her 'first' company, Doreen was also a regular director for Farnham and Alton Operatic Societies and the Grayshott Stagers, with a long line of musical triumphs as guest director for companies stretching from Haywards Heath to Basingstoke. She was also responsible for a production of "Iolanthe", adapted to suit the venue at the Roman Palace at Fishbourne, near Chichester.

Doreen began her long association with amateur operatics in her native Sunderland where she met her late husband, Bill. Their involvement in Surrey began in 1967 when Bill took up an appointment as housemaster at the approved school in Peperharow and they bought a house in Godalming. Without delay they joined the Haslemere Players, appearing in the chorus of *White Horse Inn* directed by BBC producer, John Hobbs. Their talents were recognised immediately and both went on to play major roles in both Haslemere and Farnham.

Doreen's chance to produce came in 1973 when, as Head of Music at Broadwater School, Godalming, she directed the pupils in *The Sound of Music*. She was invited to try her hand with an adult cast in the same show and her

debut in Haslemere was an outstanding success. After that the prolific and popular director was in constant demand. On occasions too she undertook the duties of musical director and chorus master and, in most shows, preferred to choreograph her own productions.

Haslemere has also benefited from Doreen's service in many other ways. A member of the executive committee for over thirty years, she served as chairman and secretary, and has regularly undertaken the important roles of fund-raising and organising the catering for the company's annual Music Hall. After the acquisition of the Players' Studio in the former Infants' School in 1996, she was in charge of the wardrobe and many companies and individuals were grateful for her advice and knowledge on costuming a wide spectrum of shows.

Although not actively involved with any companies for the past ten or so years, Doreen has attended most of their productions and shown a keen interest in everything to do with the musical theatre. After a few years in a residential home in Haslemere – where she ran weekly musical evenings for the residents until the present lockdown – she has decided to move in with her eldest son Michael and his family in Southampton.

It is the end of an era for Doreen and for the wide circle of operatic and musical societies who have been lucky enough to have experienced her talents. Her rehearsals were always great fun and casts could rest assured that her productions would be as near professional as they could be. They all now wish her good health and happiness in her new home.

Fay Foster

Contributions to the Newsletter to
Linda Donaldson
Linda.haslemere@btinternet.com

DESERT ISLAND DISCS – Fay’s choice of eight songs from the shows

I am delighted to be asked to choose my favourite songs from the 71 operettas, musicals, music halls and reviews that I actually appeared in between 1963 and 2006 – and the dozen or so others where I was backstage. The most important to me are those that remind me of being alongside my family on stage over the years and I can wallow in the sentimentality of those days.

1. *There’s No Business Like Show Business* from *Annie Get Your Gun*. These words will resonate with anyone who has been on stage. I was fortunate enough to play Annie in 1979 and it was my luck to sing this barnstormer as a solo in Act II with all the cast then joining in around me. The part really was the highlight of my whole musical career. The one difficulty in the show was that, as a left-hander, it was murder for me learning how to fire a large number of guns using my right hand!

2. *Anthem* from the first *Chess* in 1996. This was a real challenge with Hamish directing the most modern show we’d ever attempted up to then. I was delighted my daughter Caroline was playing Florence, with me in the chorus. But it was Edward Roberts singing *Anthem* which really sent shivers running down my spine.



3. *The Overture from The Yeomen of the Guard* in 1994. I love G & S and have appeared in many of the operettas but the music for *Yeomen* is so majestic and patriotic. While I was in the chorus, Caroline played Phoebe and – although I say it myself – Jonathan was outstanding as Jack Point. His heartrending grief at the final curtain had most of the cast weeping with him. As director, Doreen Wylde had to admonish everyone that they were meant to be rejoicing that the heroine had married the man of her dreams, not sympathising with the rejected Jack Point who was dying from a broken heart!

4. *The King and I*, This is a lovely memory for me with Jonathan doing Louis in the 1973 version alongside Caroline and me. The show in 2006 is an even more memorable family occasion with Jon and Christine in leading roles, Peter as Prince Chululongkorn and Eric as Louis, Verity with a tiny part, and Michael and I in the chorus. (Michael loathed every minute but we wanted to create a record of seven members of the same family being on stage together). All the songs are great but, for my own pleasure, I really can’t choose between *Something Wonderful* sung by Christine as

Lady Thiang, and *I Have Dreamed*, a beautiful duet from Jonathan and Vicki Thornhill as the ill-fated young lovers.

5. *Meet me in St Louis*, the title song from Heather Legat’s show in 2004 saw 6-year-old Verity take to the stage. I had thought she was far too young to have such a role as the family’s youngest child, but she proved me wrong. She actually opened the show on an empty stage singing the title song unaccompanied until the orchestra joined in the after the first verse. It was real “Aaah” moment for everyone and the show which followed was absolutely lovely.

6. *Singin’ in the Rain*, the title song from Hamish’s 1998 production. This is memorable particularly for the incredible choreography, the entire cast having had tap dancing lessons for several months before the auditions were even held. I remember vividly the finale when the 40-strong cast were lined up on rostras on five stepped rows, all dressed in yellow raincoats and sou’westers carrying open black umbrellas and tapping for all we were worth. This was just one of the spectacular visual effects and Jennie Budden’s costumes were simply stunning throughout.

7. *Orpheus in the Underworld, The Hades Chorus*. The Players have done this wonderful show in both 1970 and 1987. In 1970 I was Diana, goddess of the Hunt, in a very short

tunic (which led on to the Thespians asking me to do principal boy role in the panto which was a lovely outcome). The next version was special in that Caroline played Diana this time – in the same costume – but also Jonathan first met Christine as they were playing Mercury and Cupid. All the choruses are brilliant but this one is particularly loud and brash as the bacchanalian celebrations take place.

8. I’ve cheated a bit with the last one and chosen a medley of songs from the review entitled *This is Your Life, Queen Elizabeth II*, put on for her Golden Jubilee in 2002. My much-missed friend, Teresa Marsh, worked with me to create a programme which included many sections representing all parts of HM’s life. I particularly enjoyed the scena of eight or so World War II songs. All of us in the chorus were dressed in army uniforms and the songs included some choreographed marching while other soft nostalgic numbers were sung in dimmed light by a soloist with a tableau of the cast behind. The three performances we gave were really memorable with lots of comedy as well as patriotic waving of flags.

Fay Foster