



Players Patter No 198 - Sept 2021

www.HaslemerePlayers.com

Chairman's Letter

SHOW STOPPERS, The Show Must Go On was a roaring success, loved by cast and audience alike. A huge thank you to Alex Boughton, our Creative Director and Lizzie Hales our MD who put together such a great and varied programme with just the right mix of traditional and modern musical numbers. Thanks also to all the cast and crew who worked so hard to bring our first show in 21 months to the stage!

The cast of **LEGALLY BLONDE** are back and "bending and snapping" like never before! (if you don't get that reference, you'll need to see the show!). This promises to be an absolute **AMAZING** production with the fun and absolute joy at rehearsals being palpable. Most of the original cast have been able to remain in the production (even Hannah Lucas who is travelling from her new home in Cambridge!) but we've had to make a few replacements and are delighted to welcome back Tim Spindler and Zac Rasulian and hope that Ella Asbridge, Richard Ashton, Izzi Collins and Rob Lloyd enjoy their first Players musical.

15 August saw the **AGM** and our first **PLAYERS PICNIC**. Concerns were raised when the day started with rain but by noon the sun was shining and a good time was had by all. The committee all agreed that homemade sandwiches and cakes were a LOT less challenging than our usual BBQ so the picnic is likely to become a regular feature! Thanks also to Debbie Bowyer who kindly hosted the event...I think we're all hoping we can come back next year!

Congratulations and an enormous **THANK YOU** to **Sally Barr** who stood down from the committee after 20+ years of service to the society and was, very deservedly, awarded **LIFE MEMBERSHIP**. Sally has taken on many committee roles including Treasurer, Marketing and Governance and we will continue to benefit from her years of experience as she moves to our marketing Sub-committee.

A thank you also to Andy Johnston who will no longer be serving on the main committee and has been replaced by Arran Treacher-Evans. More elsewhere in the newsletter on committee roles.

Our March 2022 show will be **Kipps – The New Half a Sixpence Musical** directed by Kim Seymour along with Justin Luke as Musical Director. This is a great company show, retaining many of the fabulous musical numbers from the original. Come along and find out more at the presentation evening on Thursday 4 November at 7.30pm (venue TBC – please check the website) with Auditions on Sunday 14 November at 3 pm at the Haslemere Hall.

Please do continue to look after yourselves and we look forward to seeing you at **LEGALLY BLONDE 26-30 October**

Vicki Gavin
chairman@haslemereplayers.com

Treasurer's Report

It is so good to be back in business again! Compared to last year the levels of theatrical activity has absolutely blossomed. I went to see Showstoppers and I was blown away by the quality of the acts and standards of production; it was an excellent evening catching up with friends and seeing others shine on stage!

Show Stoppers was the first show of 2021 post lockdown and in spite of limited seat capacity it still turned a profit.

We sold 349 tickets in total which was a great result and from the proceeds we were able to make a profit of £470 and make our promised donation to support Haslemere Hall of just over £400. A great result all round!

The receipts are beginning to pile in for Legally Blonde now too and it is great to see some of captivating social media on Facebook which is certain to help fill the seats with both old and new audience members alike.

In general terms, we have weathered 2020 pretty well which is good as there are various bits of grounds and building maintenance at the Studio that have needed to be funded.

That said, this report wouldn't be complete without also mentioning some of the fantastic revenue earning that is being done by Mary-Lou and the Studio gang. Not only have the team managed to support and clothe our own shows and actors but they have also yielded some excellent sales from third party costume hire supporting Amesbury school and the Goodwood Festival goers to name but two. Now that the Studio is armed with our latest 'minor' investment (the credit card machine), the future for costume hire is looking even more positive!

Mike Byrne Treasurer (mb.hp.treasurer@gmail.com)

Legally Blonde 26th to 30th October 2021



5 weeks to go!!! As a remarkable coincidence we open 20 years to the day after the release of the film, by the same name, which was released on 26th October 2001.

We are still rehearsing at Conford village hall which has fabulous accoustics making up for the lack of parking! The cast are fine tuning (or in my case racking my brains to remember what we did way back in March 2020). Costumes, scenery, lighting and sound are also being finalised all with the aim of bringing together this fabulously uplifting and upbeat musical.

In the next couple of days you will start to see the Legally Blonde posters going up, so huge thanks to Caro for all her hard work getting these ready. Hannah is running our digital marketing campaign. Keep your eye on Facebook and like and share our show posts as much as you can.

If you are coming to see the show and you do not yet have your tickets, please do so now using the link below:

<https://tickets.haslemerehall.co.uk/sales/genres/theatre/legally-blonde>

Fiona

News from the Studio

With the demise of payment by cash or cheque, the committee has agreed to purchase a card reader to facilitate payment for costume hire and for other occasions such as raffles at shows.

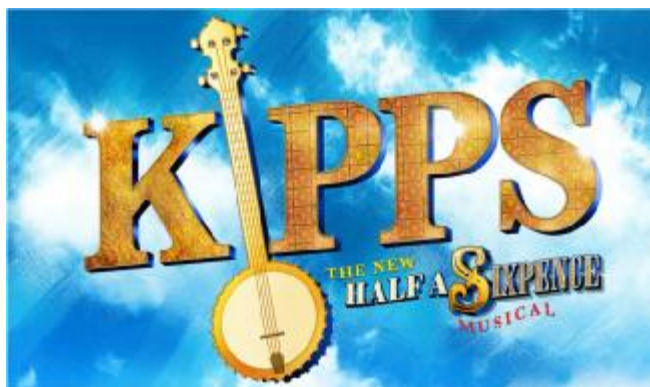
Your wardrobe team is now in the 21st century!!

This week has been manic with so many people wanting outfits for Goodwood. Many of these requests have come in very last minute dot com and I do ask that if you require something for that special occasion, you give us plenty of time to help you. I am sure that members of the public think that I am at the Studio on a full time basis and cannot understand why I can't always see them at their convenience but you all know better!!

and on the subject of raffles we did well with the raffle for Showstoppers and I am convinced that having an array of good prizes (as opposed to last Christmas's unwanted bath salts) really does impact on ticket sales. It is obviously advantageous to Players if we don't have to spend money on prizes so if you are able to donate something suitable, please let me know and I can arrange a time for you to come to the Studio to drop it off or ask another committee member to collect it at a rehearsal.

Thank you.

Mary-Lou and the Wardrobe Team



Believe it, or not, Legally Blonde may actually be about to be over. But worry not, our next production is awaiting in the wings.... Kipps, The Half a Sixpence Musical is set to hit Haslemere in March 2022.

As many of you know, Kipps is a reworking of Half a Sixpence; a musical based on the 1905 novel, 'Kipps' by H.G.Wells. It premiered at Chichester, before transferring to the West End.

The basic plot....

Arthur Kipps, an orphan, is an over-worked draper's assistant at Shalford's Bazaar, Folkestone, at the turn of the last century. He is a charming but ordinary young man who, along with his fellow apprentices, dreams of a better and more fulfilling world. When Kipps unexpectedly inherits a fortune that propels him into high society, it confuses everything he thought he knew about life and love.

The characters....

The main male parts are Arthur Kipps (the lead Baritone), Chitterlow (Tenor), Mr. Shalford (Bass-baritone), James Walsingham, Sid Pornick, Pierce and Buggins; smaller parts are Foster, Mr. Maxwell & Carshot.

The main female parts are Mrs. Walsingham (Mezzo), Ann Pornick (Mezzo), Flo Evans (Mezzo) and Helen Walsingham (Alto); smaller parts are Lady Punnet, Lady Dacre and Mrs. Bindo-Botting.

The team....

Director and Choreographer- Kim Seymour

Musical director - Justin Luke

Production Manager - Fiona McGregor

What next....

We will be hosting a presentation evening on Thursday 4th November (venue tbc) to share our vision for the show, introduce the characters and give out audition pieces. This will be followed by two (optional) audition rehearsals on Tuesday 9th and Thursday 11th November. Auditions for principals will then be held from 2.30pm on Sunday 14th November.

I hope you will come join us. It's a great show with some fantastic chorus numbers. In fact, here is a link... have a listen... https://open.spotify.com/album/4V5O53VMKC8LIDks15P2cm?si=s_ATG5wlQeOfMrAuMw8O9g&dl_branch=1

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to make contact.

Kim 07810443566/Kimchivers@hotmail.com



GRAPEVINE NEWS OF MEMBERS

Sadly I have to report the death of two of our members.

Roger Holmes just missed the last Newsletter having died last March from Alzheimer's. He had been in a Home for his last few months and died peacefully. Roger was our Stage Manager for many years and was greatly missed when he and Julia moved to South Harting.

Sadly we have also lost Fran Greenwood who died very recently after a long battle with breast cancer. She had been in a Hospice but was able to be at home when she finally passed away. We all send our love and thoughts to husband David.

Her funeral will be at Our Lady of Lourdes church on Tuesday, 12th October at 1.30 p.m.

SOCIAL

A very warm welcome to Arran Treacher-Evans who is taking over as chair of the Social Sub-Committee. Moving on from our online events of lockdown, Arran is already looking at organising a Christmas event so keep your eyes peeled for more about that.

You'll also be delighted to hear that Jessica-Alice McCluskey (Nellie Forbush in South Pacific and Delores in Sister Act) has re-joined the cast of Wicked in the West End so we'll be organising a trip to see that in late November/early December.

We'd love to hear your suggestions for social events so please get in touch with Arran on social@haslemereplayers.com.



Dates for Your Diary

30 Sep – 2 Oct	Nell Gwynn by Haslemere Thespians
26 – 30 Oct	Legally Blonde by Players in the Haslemere Hall
Thurs 4 Nov	Read-through of Kipps
Sun 14 Nov	Auditions for Kipps in Haslemere Hall
26 & 27 Nov	There's No Business Like Show Business by Grayshott Stagers

YOUR COMMITTEE

Following the AGM on 15 August, your committee is as follows:

- Hamish Donaldson**, President
- Vicki Gavin**, Chairman
- Pamela Depledge**, Hon. Secretary
- Mike Byrne**, Hon. Treasurer
- Fiona McGregor**, Vice Chairman and Marketing Sub-Committee Chair
- Alexandra Boughton**, Show Selection Sub-Committee Chair
- Verity Foster**, Programme Advertising and Show Selection Sub-Committee Member
- Mary-Lou Knox**, Wardrobe Custodian
- Hannah Lucas**, Social Media Co-ordinator and Marketing Sub-Committee Member
- Jane McMichael**, Membership Secretary
- Arran Treacher-Evans**, Social Sub-Committee Chair

In addition to the main committee, we are lucky to have additional support from:

- Sally Barr**, Marketing Sub-Committee member
- Tony Creasey**, Show Selection Sub-Committee member
- Linda Donaldson**, Newsletter Editor
- Graham Ferris**, Front of House Organiser
- Andrew Johnston**, Marketing Sub-Committee member
- Carolyn Lane**, Marketing Design and Marketing Sub-Committee member
- Becca McGregor**, Social Sub-Committee member
- Gary Moorshead**, Studio Coordinator
- Steph Ridler**, Props Custodian and Wardrobe
- Adrian Stent**, Website Manager, Show Selection Sub-Committee member and Haslemere Hall Trustee

More information about their roles and how to contact them can be found at

<https://www.haslemereplayers.com/meet-the-team/>

Parking at the Studio

May I respectfully ask that if you park at the Studio during the week, you put your name on the windscreen so that members of the Studio teams can identify your car. We have an ongoing issue with members of the public using our spaces but it's embarrassing when I go to ask the nursery staff if they have parked there, only to discover it was one of the Players.

In addition, it would be helpful, if you see the Studio door open, to pop in to enquire if we are expecting potential hirers. People are coming a fair way now to hire from us. They seldom take more than an hour but I do expect that they can park and in the case of larger hires such as schools, load up, rather than carrying their things down to one of the town car parks. Team members try to park one another in rather than using up all the spaces so your assistance in this would be much appreciated.

Mary-Lou Knox

Desert Island Discs with Brian Cockell

Many of you will remember Brian who must be one of the most talented and versatile actors in the Players in all my 45 years with the company. His sense of timing was second to none and he was so greatly missed when he decided to retire.

Here he gives us his favourite 8 shows, plus a few more he would have liked to add.

DIE FLEDERMAUS

I have to start a list of favourite shows with an overture and there is none better than the overture to this show, with the lovely Strauss melodies.

I have had the pleasure of being in two productions, both times playing the drunken gaoler. My mother used to ask why I usually played someone who is either a drunk or an idiot when I was lucky to get a part. There are those who might say that no acting was required!

ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD

I was in the Bognor Regis Society for this show. Everyone was finding the music rather dreary, we were singing 'Mortals below, Gods up above' for most of the rehearsals and it was not a very interesting melody. I was in charge of the social events and arranged a trip to see a local production of the show. Luckily, we chose Haslemere and, for the first time, we realised that this was a fun show. Rehearsals really picked up after that.

MY FAIR LADY

This was a superb show to be in, with a very good cast, it was nice having Anne Manning as my daughter. One of the outstanding contributions to the show was the wonderful scenery made by the very talented Chris and Hubert Forde.

SHOW BOAT

This is another of my favourite shows. It was one of the first shows to break away from the old style musical comedies or lush operettas. It has a very strong story line and lots of lovely songs and great performances by Bill Wylde and Maureen Hardaway and many others. One sad aspect of this show is that is very hard for societies to perform as it does need a black chorus. Die Fledermaus is another show that is hard to do, as it needs a big cast and orchestra plus lots of glamorous costumes and scenery. I count myself lucky to have been able to be in both these wonderful shows.

SOUTH PACIFIC

A very good show with fine music and a good story. In one scene I was given a shrunken head by Blood Mary, a heavily disguised Anne Manning. I was (stage) horrified and threw it offstage. Sadly, on one night, my aim was poor and it hit the surrounds of the exit and bounced back which caused some unintentional amusement. It was a great show for amusement as there was one scene in Act 2 when everyone corpses with uncontrolled, but silent laughter. I think it was the soldier uniforms, or more particularly the



Brian as Luther Billis in South Pacific, wearing a grass skirt and a white top.

helmets. They were all so big that they could be spun around on the soldiers heads like a top. The soldiers were on the beach, playing cards and Peter Marsh had to face the audience and speak some lines, then he hurriedly turned his back to the audience with shoulders shaking with controlled laughter. I don't know how he managed it, but he got through it every night.

THE ARCADIAN

Robert Cantan, the previous supplier of the show list, reminded me what a fun show this is, with lots of good parts. Haslemere had a very good stage for this show, as it has a trap door which we were able to utilise. I was dressed as an English businessman, who fell into the well and emerged as an Arcadian, wearing a smock. When Farnham performed the show, for some strange reason when I emerged from the well, I was dressed in a hideous pair of bright green satin shorts which amused the cast at the dress rehearsal when they had the first sighting of this costume. It was never explained to me why no-one else was dressed in similar clothes, still, the main thing is that it did get a laugh

KISS ME KATE

This is probably Cole Porter's most successful show, based on Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew. The story goes that a stagehand involved in the production of the play was very much aware that the two leads spent as much time quarrelling off stage as they did in the play. He thought it would be a good idea for a musical and told a librettist who brought it to Cole Porter to write the music and lyrics

I was lucky to be involved in the duet, Brush up your Shakespeare, a very clever song that introduces several play titles. However, once again, I had a strange costume, because I was one of the gangsters who had to be disguised as a bridesmaid when the leads were getting married.

MUSIC MAN

This has to be my favourite show as I was lucky enough to play the lead.

Although he was a con man, it was a romantic part. and for once I did not

have to dress up in a bizarre costume, or play a drunk or idiot. I

was very lucky to have the lovely Maureen Hardaway as the leading lady. The show was not a great success. It had lovely music and the more you heard, the more popular it was.

Unfortunately, the audience was hearing it for the first and only time. As I started this list with a lively overture, I will end with the rousing song 76 Trombones.

Well, I seem to have chosen 8 shows and horrified to find that there is no room for Half a Sixpence, Pajama Game, Oklahoma and Brigadoon and many other shows.

I have had a lot of fun being involved with all of these shows and had the chance of making friends with a lot of nice people, so many thanks to everyone I have met over the years.



Brian as Harold Hill, conducting the youth band he had 'trained'