

Whitefield Garrick Newsletter

Summer 2019



P.G. WODEHOUSE SOCIETY VISIT WHITEFIELD GARRICK.

P. G. Wodehouse Revival

When P.G Wodehouse's play 'A Damsel in Distress' was selected for production in our 2019 season it hadn't been produced in this form for well over fifty years. It was a massive leap of faith in Wodehouse's craftsmanship to put on such a relatively unknown play. **Andrew Close**, a Wodehouse enthusiast and very experienced and talented director was the man to take on this task and tangle with a huge cast and complex script on our tiny stage.



He had met members of the PG Wodehouse society in the past and was thrilled to be contacted by them when they saw that we were reviving a Wodehouse gem.

Andrew Close told us -

Tony Ring is one of the main movers in the **P G Wodehouse Society**, and author of many published books on the subject, and I first met him when I appeared in the Wodehouse play "Good Morning, Bill" in 2003. He brought a group from the Society to see the play and we had a wonderful Q and A session afterwards.

Fast-forward 16 years and when Whitefield Garrick announced their production of "A Damsel in Distress", Tony contacted me and a larger group visit was planned. Logistics involved combining the visit with family reunions; holidays and trips up North.

A splendid afternoon ensued at the matinee, followed by discussions with the cast and plenty of photos. A rave review of the production appeared in the Society's magazine, and the cover photo above shows the Whitefield company, together with Tony and his wife.'



If you are interested in joining the P.G. Wodehouse society visit
www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk



Whitefield Garrick



@GarrickWfld



@whitefieldgarrick

Award Winners



This year we were fortunate enough to get the following nominations from the Greater Manchester Drama Federation for our productions

Best Actor:
John O'Connell for 'The Weir' & **Peter Schofield** for 'Dandy Dick' .

Best Supporting Actor:
Chris Elkes for 'The Winslow Boy' ,
Jason Dunk for 'The Weir' ,
Steven Edward Maylott for 'The Weir' & **Mark Leigh** for 'A Damsel in Distress'

Best Youth Performer:
Matthew Howells for 'The Winslow Boy'

Technical Award:
'The Weir' and 'A Damsel in Distress' for the 'fantastic use of space to create realistic and atmospheric presentations with creative scene changes'.

Best Director:
John Cunningham for 'The Weir' & **Andrew Close** for 'A Damsel in Distress'

Many congratulations go to all of our nominees but particularly to our **winners** who were **John O'Connell** and **Jason Dunk** for their performances in 'The Weir'. We would of course like to also thank our audiences, volunteers and everyone involved in making our theatre the success that it is.

The Gallery

If you would like to exhibit with us please contact us via email
whitefieldgarrickmail@gmail.com

For the duration of each play we make our gallery space available to local creative people. We hope that you enjoy their artistic endeavours whatever form they take. We have been lucky to see some lovely work exhibited so far this season. We hope you have enjoyed seeing their work as much as we have.



Don't forget that you can follow us on all social media and review us on **TripAdvisor!**

"How do you learn all of those lines?"

This is the question that so many of our audience members ask our actors when they see them emerge from backstage after a play. It is true that there are some very lucky actors who *seem* to merely sniff a script and their lines are ingrained in their mind with almost immediate effect but the honest answer is that line learning for most is no easy job.



There are many different methods that individuals choose to use and the six- seven week rehearsal period is obviously key to this as it allows for repetition of lines but it also gives the actors the opportunity to associate the lines with physical actions and the position of themselves and others on stage. This can act as a great boost to the memory. Repeatedly reading the lines and saying them aloud allows the actor to hear the lines they are attempting to learn and makes it much more likely that they will remember them.

Most actors spend a lot of time outside of actual rehearsals attempting to learn their lines via the read, speak, cover and repeat method and it is important that rather than internalising they read the lines aloud to themselves. This may be a daily activity and it has been suggested that practising lines little and often is more beneficial than spending prolonged periods of time line learning. Some people swear that first thing in the morning is the best time to go through their lines whilst others say that last thing at night is the perfect time.

Whatever time, outside of the 3-4 rehearsals a week, that they have to focus on lines can only help the process. As they become more familiar with their lines many actors, who are fortunate enough to be able to call on the good will of others, get another actor, close friend or family member to go through lines with them. This person can correct any mistakes and repeatedly go over any 'sticky bits' with them thus enabling them to further practise in preparation for the week of the show.

For those really tricky lines and speeches it is known that writing out the lines of dialogue focuses the actor's mind on the actual words and can be very helpful in the line learning process. This works in much the same way as the archaic school punishment of being given 'lines'. The actor handwrites the lines repeatedly whilst also saying them out loud and somewhere along the way the lines embed themselves in their mind.

Many actors record their lines and their 'cue' lines and play them over and over to themselves - in the car on the way to work, on their phone whilst they are out and about or doing household chores and even when they go to bed at night - to familiarise themselves with them. Some choose to record their lines with no characterisation or tone whilst others record in the accent, tone etc they will use. Many use one of the numerous line learning apps that are available to assist them in this and swear that this is the best method.

A number of the actors I asked said that they move around whilst speaking their lines out loud and apparently this has been scientifically proven to help the memory. So, if you see someone wandering the streets talking out loud to themselves it is possibly one of our many actors trying to memorise their latest script!

By **Janet Leather**



Manchester Fringe



In June we were once more used by The Manchester Fringe Festival as a venue for a number of shows. **Rachel Creeger** revisited the theatre with her hilarious one woman endeavour 'Hinayni' which was previewing prior to her visit to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and the Israeli group '**Thespis**' visited Whitefield Garrick with an interesting and intriguing presentation of Shakespeare's Sonnets (in Hebrew with subtitles). We hope that some of you were able to catch these exciting events.

Do feel free to review our facilities on '**TripAdvisor**' and spread the word about our fantastic '**hidden gem**' of a theatre.

From the Archives

If you have any anecdotes or archive materials about our theatre from on stage, behind the scenes or even as an audience member please let us know and we may be able to include them in future newsletter.

This time we have a newspaper review of the last time **The Odd Couple** was produced at the theatre in **1990**. It seems our stage hands have been accustomed to getting applause since then!

We would love to hear from you. Please email whitefieldgarrickmail@gmail.com with any of your stories.

The Odd Couple - Sanctuary for a Schmendrick

The trouble with taking in a friend whose wife has thrown him out is that he brings with him all the faults that impelled her to put the boot behind him.

And two men living together can get on each other's nerves just as much as a man and wife.

That is the theme of 'The Odd Couple' playing this week at Whitefield Garrick, although I don't suppose you need to be told. By now I should think everyone in the entire universe has seen the play or the film or the tv series.

Everyone but me, that is, writes **Mike Badham**. When I went along to Tuesday night's performance I brought an open mind to the job - apart from wondering which one was supposed to be Jack Lemmon and which Walter Matthau.

Michael Tatman was splendidly irascible as Oscar, the poker-playing slob who lives to regret the impulse that prompted him to offer a roof to the displaced Felix.

But, as Felix, the prissy All-American fuss-budger, **Geoffrey Shindler** seemed somehow unhappy.

But then it was a pretty unhappy role he was playing: lugubrious about sums it up, so perhaps that explains it. The poker-playing cronies - **Paul Acton, Simon Porter, Martin Fisher** and **David Tonge** - all played up splendidly: partly as a sounding-board for the two leads, partly as a kind of Greek chorus.

Merely getting around the Garrick's cramped stage without falling over each other was a work of art.

The Simon one-liners - fruit of his long apprenticeship in writing for TV - were very much in evidence and provoked a steady stream of laughs.

Which is as it should be, because this piece stands or falls on its one-liners rather than its insights into the nature of existence. In fact, one insight is about all you get (see paragraph two above), but was enough to keep the audience laughing as they recognised familiar family frictions.

Finally, **Kath Cheetham** and **Karen Porter** should get a mention, I feel, for the way they handled their smallish roles. We didn't see much of them, but I for one would have liked to see more.

It is the first time, incidentally, that I've seen stage-hands applauded. I don't know who they were, but they got a round for the swift way they cleaned up all the potato chips, beer cans and cigar butts strewn around after the Act I poker game. Direction was by **Lilian Johnson**.

The Final Curtain

This season we have been saddened to hear of the deaths of two of our close-knit theatre family.

Noel Hurley performed in many different amateur theatre groups and we were lucky to have him make memorable appearances on our stage in both

'**The Accrington Pals**' and '**Wuthering Heights**' in 2014 .



He was a cheerful, witty and gifted family man whose death at such a relatively young age was a great shock to us all. He is very sadly missed by everyone who knew him.



Audrey Lias had lived a full, adventurous and bohemian life spending much of it immersed in amateur theatre. She was

well known to us as both an extremely talented actor and a fabulous director. Her contribution to the amateur theatre world was immense and we were lucky enough to have Audrey direct and act with us here at Whitefield Garrick on many occasions over the years.



You may remember her involvement in some of them including -

'**The Cherry Orchard**' in 1990, '**Arms and the Man**' in 2004, '**Kindertransport**' in 2007 and '**The Chalk Garden**' in 2009 .

Audrey was a wonderful lady who is missed greatly by all who knew her.



Thank you

Our immense thanks go to the very efficient **Jane Murphy** who has been Chair of Whitefield Garrick for the past three years. She has done a sterling job working tirelessly, with the help of our diligent committee, to ensure that our theatre continues to thrive.



She is passing the mantle on to **Janet Leather** who we welcome back once more to this role. We look forward to working with her for the next three years on creating a great future for our wonderful theatre.



If you have any ideas or suggestions you feel may benefit our theatre please email us. We are always happy to hear from you.