



Notices

Prompt Required from 17th Oct

Nick has already volunteered, but would like to share the role. Please be in touch with Gareth at garethwynhammond@gmail.com to arrange.

Wardrobe help

Costumes help required particularly as we get closer to showtime. Sally is doing a sterling job, but would appreciate some support.

Whats's on

Rehearsals - Every Mon & Wed

Eynsham Village Hall every Monday and Wednesday. Come down and see the progress.

October

17th at 7.30pm - Publicity Pics & Pub

Come down to the hall and see the progress we've made on the set and the performance. Stay and watch the progress and after we will nip down to the Red Lion for a catch up drink.

21st anytime between 12-4pm

Help with lighting is required, even if it is just for holding ladders.

29th at 7.30pm - Blokes of a Feather

This should be a really enjoyable evening of showbiz stories from our patrons Laurence Marks & Maurice Gran.

November

19th from 9am-6pm - Set build

28th at 7.30pm - Dress rehearsal

30th to 3rd Dec - Performance nights

December

4th Dec 9.30am-12.00pm - Set strike

Date TBC - Christmas party

The Noda life time achievement award goes to Steve Ashcroft

Congratulations Steve!

For those of who you don't know Steve well, he has been a member more or less from the beginning. 47 years' service to one amateur dramatics group is pretty remarkable in itself, but what makes it exceptional is that for many years Steve has been mainly resident in Sweden.

In honour of Steve Ashcroft's life time achievement award to Amateur Dramatics we thought it would be good to get to know him a little better with an interview.

Am I right in thinking you were one of the founding members of BP in 1975?

I wasn't quite a founding member. When I came to Eynsham in 1975 the BP had just been founded by teachers at Bartholomew School and they were putting on their first play (Blithe Spirit). I went along to watch and promptly joined the group - I then played the Stationmaster in their second production (Ghost Train). I've always been interested in amdram, having done a bit of acting at school and university.

What do you think the biggest change in Amdram and/or BP if you compared 1980's with today?

Amdram has undoubtedly become much more expensive to put on. When the BP started at Bartholomew School it did so as an Evening Class and there were no charges for the space as the rehearsals and performances were in the school. In the early days there were several school teachers in the group (including the headmaster for one play!) which certainly helped to get an audience. However as time went on and teaching became a more stressful occupation there were eventually no teacher participants and audiences began to decrease. The saving factor (and the biggest change for BP) was the move to the Eynsham Village Hall where we now routinely play to capacity audiences.

Have you ever tried to join an amateur dramatics group in Sweden?

Yes, I've been in a very active theatre group both as an actor and as a musician. This group, however, is more of a revue group - their productions feature sketches and songs rather than serious drama. It's quite fun - but I really prefer 'proper' plays!

The first time I met you was on zoom as I found out you live 50/50 between Sweden and the UK! How have you found participating in BP over zoom?

Having the Zoom meetings during the COVID pandemic was a very valuable way of keeping the group together. And there were new skills to be learned from the digital performances we recorded. I was very grateful to the group for being able to keep in touch with them all via Zoom (and I learnt a lot about video editing).

Have you ever had any embarrassing moments on stage that you can share with us?

One memorable moment occurred many years ago during a BP performance of *When We Are Married*, which I was directing. At the end of one of the Acts a character called Lottie makes an unexpected and not very welcome entry. What is supposed to happen is that after a shocked silence at her arrival one of the characters gasps 'Lottie! And there is a quick curtain. However, on one night the curtain did not close on cue as the curtain operator had left his post, probably to have a quick smoke. There was therefore a horrified pause while the cast frantically wondered what to do. Then with great presence of mind one of them improvised the line 'Lottie, no, this is too much', rushed off stage and pulled the curtain himself (much to the relief of the Director).

Is there a play that you would still like to perform but haven't had the chance?

I've always fancied having a go at *Whose Afraid of Virginia Woolf* - but sadly I'm now too old for the part...

What is your favourite thing about BP / what are you most proud of in BP?

I think that what I most like about BP is that by and large we are a very friendly group with none of the prima donna antics that beset some am dram groups. And everyone, old or young, is treated equally. What I'm most proud of is that the group has survived for so long and has become so highly professional in the productions we put on. I think we are justifiably proud of the standard of performance we achieve.



Have you always been a member of BP or was there another group before?

No, BP is the first and only group I have been in (at least in the UK)

What has been your favourite play and why?

As an acting role, Alan Ayckbourn's *Bedroom Farce* in which I played Ernest is one of my favourites. I treasure the memory of the scene where I as Ernest was in bed with Eve Hollis, my wife in the play, eating pilchards and reading Tom Brown's *Schooldays* to her. As a Director, Ayckbourn's *Absurd Person Singular* was pretty special. The set in particular presented a real challenge as each of the three acts takes place in a different (fully-fitted) kitchen. I remember that, for months beforehand, my garden gradually filled up with the various white goods we were going to use on the set.

Do I recall correctly that you were in a band? Can you tell us a little bit about this? What was the name of the band, what did you do in it and how did you manage to start it up?

I've been in several bands. While I was in Bristol (1965-1975) I played piano in a Big Band (The Joy Hill Jump Band) playing at various functions and in pubs. Here in Sweden I am keyboard player in a small jazz group (piano, bass, guitar and singer) playing a mixture of songs from the Great American Songbook plus a lot of Swedish numbers. I was also in a Big Band for a while but my frequent absences to be in England eventually became a problem.

THE NIGHT ONLY · ONE NIGHT ONLY · ONE NIGHT ONLY

Bartholomew Players present an evening with our patrons –
AWARD WINNING SCRIPT WRITERS

Laurence
Marks & Gran
Maurice

Blokes of a Feather

Saturday
29th October

7.30PM

Tickets £15

An evening of:
anecdotes
indiscretions
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insights

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