

MAY 2016

Diary of Events for May & June

Sat 7th May	“Spectre” (Screen at the Phoenix) 7.00pm
Mon 16th May	Drama Club - reading of “ Between Mouthfuls ” by Alan Ayckbourn 7.30pm
Sat 21st May	“ The Danish Girl ” (Screen at the Phoenix) 7.00pm
Thurs 26th May	“ Playground Games ” (The Drama Company) 6pm
Sat 28th - Sat 4th June	“ Summer of the 17th Doll ” (Phoenix Theatre Company) 7.30pm
Sun 5th June	“ Bridge of Spies ” (Screen at the Phoenix) 7.00pm
Weds 8th June	Annual General Meeting 7.00pm
Sun 12th June	Keith James - the music of Cat Stevens 8.00pm
Weds 29th June - Sat 2nd July	“ All You Need is Love ” (Phoenix Theatre Singers) 7.30pm

(please see the Members calendars for May and June at the end of this Newsletter)

President

I am pleased to announce that Howard Owen has been elected, by an overwhelming majority, as our new President. Howard is one of our longest serving members having been chairman and appeared in many plays over the years. An article about Howard is to be found later in the Newsletter.

Our past President Brenda Smith, having been a founder and lifetime supporter of the Youth Theatre, has kindly bequeathed £1000 to the Phoenix Youth Group. In discussion with the Committee, Sarah O’Neill is considering the purchase of a follow spot to augment the technical capability of the Youth Group productions.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will take place on **Weds 8th June**. There will be an opportunity to elect members to the Committee and raise matters for discussion. If you wish to be nominated, please notify our secretary Trevor Jones by **18th May** at the latest. Trevor should also be notified of matters for discussion by **18th May**. Any other business (AOB) cannot be raised at the AGM. Nominations and matters for discussion will be notified to the membership 2 weeks before the AGM. The Committee posts and current holders are as follows:

Chairman	Sue Edwards
Secretary	Trevor Jones
Treasurer	Amanda Smith
Production Co-ordinator	Suzanne Hill
Publicity Officer	Alison Clarke
Building Manager	Graham Russell (VACANCY for 2016)
Members without portfolio	Mary Brigg
	Sarah O'Neill
	Catriona Pearson

Graham Russell is standing down as Building Manager. Hence there is a vacancy in this position.

Graham Russell is to stand for election as Publicity Officer.

Alison Clarke is to stand for election as a Member without portfolio.

Catriona Pearson is standing down from the Committee.

An agenda of the AGM, including details of nominations and matters for discussion will be notified to members 2 weeks before the AGM. The Committee looks forward to seeing you on **Weds June 8th at 7.00pm**. To contact Trevor Jones, please e-mail: tjones@trevorjones3.wanadoo.co.uk

Graham Russell (Newsletter editor)

From the new President

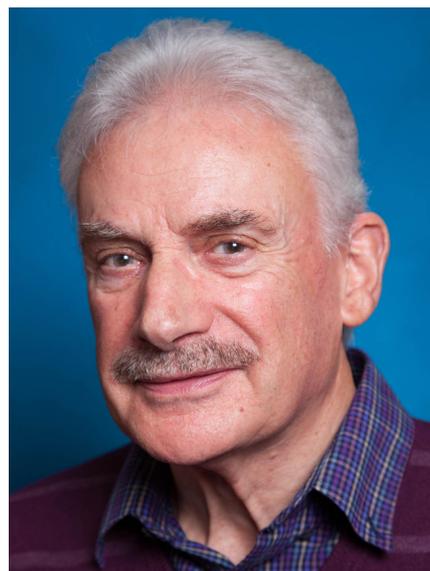
I am very honoured to have been appointed your new President, having been a member for over fifty years and appeared in more productions than I care to remember, the most recent being "A Night on the Tiles" last November. While on the subject of productions, I had the privilege to work backstage on the recent outstanding portrayal of "Anastasia", directed by Brian Jackson. This was a brilliant production and deserved much larger audiences.

All sections of the Phoenix seem to be thriving well at the moment and I feel part of my remit is to unite the company and help us realise that we are **all in it together**, (to quote a well known phrase!), so I hope to spread myself around as much as possible, (I can hear the "Oh dears" already).

Finally I must pay tribute to Brenda Smith, our former President. Brenda was very keen that the origins of the Company, namely ROADS, should not be forgotten and I share her sentiments on this. Those people who met in 1922 to create the Society from which our Company has developed were the pioneers of theatre in Ross and would be proud of what has been achieved to date. So here's to a prosperous future for the Phoenix!

With best wishes to everyone.

Howard



Production Co-ordinator's Column

“Anastasia” by Marcelle Maurette, directed by **Brian Jackson**, was a huge success. We achieved 71% seat occupancy which belies the fact that his was an exceptional production. A representative from NODA, the National Operatic and Dramatic Association, of whom we are new members, came to see the show and was most complementary. Her review follows in this Newsletter. Congratulations to Brian, his cast and crew for a memorable production.

BBC Hereford and Worcester recorded 4 bands at the theatre for their **“Introducing Show”** on Sunday 27th March. This was a public event and was very successful. The bands recordings were played on air on the 4 Saturdays in April.

“Summer of the 17th Doll” by **Ray Lawler** is our **May production**, and is directed by **David Pollard**. The cast include Lucy Davies, Penny Field, Jane Bovell, Gareth Wigg, Phil Field, Tom Lee-Hynes and Georgia Gill. **The production dates are Sat 28th May to Sat 4th June. Tickets are now on sale.**

The Phoenix Youth Theatre entered the **Herefordshire Drama Festival** and performed **“The Monkey’s Paw”** by **Brian Jackson** on 10th March at the Courtyard Theatre, Hereford. PYT won two awards – **the Stennet Trophy for Best Youth Team**. **The Hereford Players Trophy for the Best Individual Youth Performance** went to **Zoe Doughty** as the mother. Gaining second place at Hereford enabled the team to go forward to the Quarter Finals held at The Swan Theatre, Worcester on 9th April.

The March Drama Club read **“A Doll’s House”** by **Henrik Ibsen**. This will be our November production, and be directed by **Gordon Brigg**. Auditions have been held and the cast comprise David Pollard, Di Hughes, Tim Betts, Ray Smith, Amanda Smith, Diana Tubb and Jacky Bedford. The play will run for 5 nights only from Tues 22nd to Sat 26th November.

The Drama Club will hold its next meeting on **Mon 16th May at 7.30 p.m.** This will be a reading of **“Between Mouthfuls”**, one act from **“Confusions”** by **Alan Ayckbourn**. **Amanda Smith** will be directing this play as a rehearsed reading at the **Members Evening on Tues 2nd August**. Amanda wishes to direct a full scale production and this will give her the opportunity to direct before taking on a larger undertaking. At the reading Amanda will be wishing to cast this one-act play and plan rehearsals prior to the members evening in August. **Do come along to read and act in a less demanding setting.**

Keith James who performed his Leonard Cohen show recently at the Phoenix will be performing a **UNICEF concert entitled – “The Music of Yusuf – Cat Stevens” on Sun 12th June**. Tickets £12 from our website and Rossiter Books.

The Phoenix Theatre Singers summer show entitled, **“All you Need is Love”** will run from **Weds 29th June to Sat 2nd July**.

The Phoenix Youth Theatre will perform **“Stags and Hens”** by **Willy Russell** from **21st to 23rd July**.

Suzanne Hill

Review of Anastasia at the Phoenix Theatre

I have seen many superb productions at the Phoenix Theatre but not many have reached the level of excellence I witnessed last week for their production of “Anastasia” by Marcelle Maurette. It was a great cast with some outstanding individual performances that rival anything you will see on the professional stage. The plot concerns whether one of the Tsar’s daughters, Anastasia, survived the execution of the Russian royal family in 1918. If she can be found, a fortune is waiting to be claimed. A group of fortune hunters discover an impoverished girl called Anna Broun who they aim to pass off as Anastasia. The only problem is that they have to convince not least Anastasia’s grandmother, The Dowager Empress of Russia. To give weight to their claim, the fortune hunters employ the (rather expensive) services of Prince Bounine. Under their tutelage, Anna Broun uncannily takes on the personality of Anastasia seeming to recall facts only the real Anastasia could have been privy to. But can she convince the Dowager Empress? The first meeting between Anna (Michelle Cooper) and the Empress (Suzanne Hill) is a charged with high emotion in which the Empress initially rejects and then ultimately accepts Anna to be the real Anastasia.

This particular scene encapsulated some of the finest acting it is possible to see on the amateur stage. But such scenes can only be achieved if the audience is brought to this denouement by the supporting roles of the other actors. Gareth Wigg as Prince Bounine brought a forceful and inspiring confidence to this part. Les Davis and Robin Haig gave excellent support as his doubting fellow conspirators. Two nice cameo parts stood out. Firstly that of Gordon Brigg as Anna’s doctor and secondly Amanda Smith as a charwoman who was one of the first to recognise Anna’s true identity. Presumably she spent most of her time cleaning the Russian Steppes. I must also mention a very accomplished performance from Sam Callen playing Anastasia’s childhood sweetheart. Sam is a product of the Phoenix Youth Theatre and it was good to see him stepping up to act with the senior group. The set was, as is always at the Phoenix, a delight to behold and the lighting and sound of the usual high quality overseen by Trevor Jones, the technical manager. I was fortunate in being able to read a copy of the script before seeing the production and I was totally amazed at the transformation from the printed to the spoken word that director Brian Jackson had achieved. Congratulations to the Phoenix Theatre for an excellent production. I look forward to the May production of the Australian classic “Summer of the 17th Doll” by Ray Lawler.



Rachel Divine

NODA Review



This was my first visit to the Phoenix Theatre, Ross-on-Wye, who are new NODA members and we welcome them to the NODA “family”.

Following a very warm reception by members of the small, but beautiful, 64 seater Phoenix Theatre I was introduced to Anastasia’s Director, Brian Jackson, who very kindly gave us a potted history of the theatre and the various groups who perform in the venue. I have to say I am very jealous, as it is a wonderful gem tucked away in a corner of the town.

The cast of Anastasia should be congratulated, not only on a first class production, but for learning and regaling huge passages of some of the most difficult dialogue I have heard in a very long time. The accents were good too. By the interval I was completely convinced by Michelle Cooper that she was indeed the Grand Duchess Anastasia: what a performance! Her portrayal of a vulnerable and slightly maniacal woman who becomes disillusioned by the money grabbing group who found her was captivating. The final scene between her and the superbly cast Suzanne Hill as the Dowager Empress was so moving that my sister was sobbing beside me; so consumed by their performance.

Every member of the cast gave a great performance and again I congratulate them, but I must also mention the outstanding set, with props that I would love in my house, atmospheric music that wasn’t too intrusive but set the scene beautifully and the most gorgeous costumes that were so right for the period. It was a wonderful production and I look forward to seeing more of the Phoenix Theatre Company. Thank you for a lovely evening and your warm welcome.

Louise Hickey MBE

(National Operatic & Dramatic Association)

Sally McConnell

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Sally McConnell who died on 11th April after a brave fight against cancer. Sally was one of the founding members of the Phoenix Singers in 2008 and was a loyal and constant supporter over the years. In addition to singing Sally helped in other areas of the theatre, including front of house and organizing the Bar Rota for shows and plays. With her outgoing friendly personality, she will be sorely missed both as a singer and also as a friend. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to her husband Gordon and the family at this time.

Marion Contreras



Phoenix Youth Theatre Score a Hat-Trick (The Monkey's Paw)



(photo of cast & crew)

In this year's Hereford Drama Festival, held over three days at the Courtyard Theatre, Phoenix Youth Theatre won a hat trick of awards and are through to the Quarter Finals of the All-England Theatre Festival. Performing "**The Monkey's Paw**", an original play written for them by their Director Brian Jackson (adapted from the Edwardian short story by W. W. Jacobs) they won the Stennett Trophy for Best Youth Team, while Zoe Doughty collected the Hereford Players Trophy for Best Individual Youth Performance. That makes it "three-in-a-row" for Phoenix Youth who have won "Best Youth Performance" in each of their three years appearing in the Festival. They crowned the evening in being awarded the County Adult Drama Festival Challenge Cup against all-comers to go forward to the Quarter Finals at the Swan Theatre in Worcester.

Brian Jackson

Phoenix Youth Theatre News

PYT begin the countdown to their rabbit hole adventure!

The PYT company have just begun rehearsals for their main show that will be performed in October this year. "**Alice's Adventures in Wonderland**" is well under way and the company of 35 members are working hard in rehearsal to ensure this is an amazing show. We look forward to showing you some photos of us in the near future.

Sarah O'Neill

THE **Phoenix**
THEATRE

Playground Games

A collection of short scenes with a verbatim twist

THURSDAY 26TH MAY - PERFORMANCE STARTS 6PM

@ THE PHOENIX THEATRE

What would happen if we listened to children like they were adults?

Set in different areas of our beautiful town of Ross on Wye, Playground Games makes a different kind of sense from the words of little voices in a big, adult world.



PERFORMED BY THE DRAMA COMPANY
DEvised AND DIRECTED BY ZOE HUTTON
AS PART OF A WORK PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITY WITH SARAH O'NEILL

Members Calendar for May

2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	Herefordshire Carers in foyer 10:30 am - 12:30 pm The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm Singers rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	Screen at the Phoenix - Spectre 7:00 pm	Phoenix Youth Group 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm PYT rehearsals for 'Stags & Hens' in auditorium 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm Singers rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm		Phoenix Youth Group 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm PYT rehearsals for 'Stags & Hens' in auditorium 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Drama Club in foyer 7:30 pm	The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm Singers rehearsal in foyer 7:30 pm	The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	Screen at the Phoenix - The Danish Girl 7:00 pm	Phoenix Youth Group 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm PYT rehearsals for 'Stags & Hens' in foyer 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm Singers rehearsal - out of theatre 7:30 pm The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Summer of the 17th Doll rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm Singers rehearsal - out of theatre 7:30 pm	Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	Screen at the Phoenix - Bridge of Spies 7:00 pm

Members Calendar for June

30	31	1	2	3	4	5
Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	Performance night, 'The Summer of the 17th Doll' by Ray Lawler 7:30 pm	Screen at the Phoenix - Bridge of Spies 7:00 pm
			Singers rehearsal - out of theatre 7:30 pm			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm PYT rehearsals for 'Stags & Hens' in auditorium 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Can Malone Die - rehearsals in auditorium 8:00 pm	Singers rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	Annual General Meeting in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm Singers rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	Can Malone Die - rehearsals in auditorium 7:30 pm		Phoenix Youth Group 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm Keith James UNICEF Concert - The Music of Yusuf - Cat Stevens 7:30 pm
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm PYT rehearsals for 'Stags & Hens' in auditorium 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Can Malone Die - rehearsals in auditorium 8:00 pm	Singers rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	Herefordshire Carers Training Event in foyer 11:00 am - 12:30 pm Can Malone Die - rehearsals in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm Singers rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	Can Malone Die - rehearsals in auditorium 7:30 pm	Screen at the Phoenix regular film night 7:00 pm	Phoenix Youth Group 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm PYT rehearsals for 'Stags & Hens' in auditorium 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Can Malone Die - rehearsals in auditorium 8:00 pm	Singers rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	Can Malone Die - rehearsals in auditorium 7:30 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm Singers rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	Can Malone Die - rehearsals in auditorium 7:30 pm		Phoenix Youth Group 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm Dress rehearsal for Singers Show 6:00 pm
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm PYT rehearsals for 'Stags & Hens' in auditorium 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Can Malone Die - rehearsals in	Singers rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm	Phoenix Theatre Singers Summer Show 7:30 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers Summer Show 7:30 pm	Phoenix Theatre Singers Summer Show 7:30 pm	Phoenix Theatre Singers Summer Show 7:30 pm	Phoenix Youth Group 1:00 pm - 6:00 pm Screen at the Phoenix regular film night 7:00 pm