

**MARCH 2015****Diary of Events for March**

- Sat 7th                               **“Gone Girl”** (Screen at the Phoenix) 7.00pm
- Sun 8th                               **Phoenix Youth Theatre** showcasing their talents 4pm
- Sat 14th - Sat 21st               **“The Beggar’s Opera”** by John Gay (Phoenix Theatre Co) 7.30pm
- Wed 25th                           **Phoenix Youth Theatre** Drama Festival entry at the **Phoenix** 7.30pm
- Fri 27th                              **PYT** at the **Herefordshire Drama Festival** at the **Courtyard** 7.00pm
- Fri 27th & Sat 28th               **“The Imitation Game”** (Screen at the Phoenix) 7.00pm

**Diary of Events for April**

- Sat 11th                              **“Callaghan”** (Ross Roots) Folk Concert 7.30pm
- Wed 15th                            READING of **“The Way to Mandalay”** by Christopher Kell 7.30pm
- Wed 22nd                            AUDITIONS for **“The Way to Mandalay”** 7.30pm

(please see our website for possible future cinema screenings)

**Nikki Wilson & Wendy Ing**

As many of you will already know, Nikki and Wendy have passed away. Obituaries to Nikki and Wendy appear later in the Newsletter.

**Website**

The theatre website is in the process of being upgraded. We have enlisted Ross-based GMP Web Design to carry out the work. I shall be responsible for editing the website in the future.

**Graham Russell** (editor)  
e-mail: manchester.house@btinternet.com  
tel: 01981 540749

## Production co-ordinator's column

“**The Beggar's Opera**” by John Gay, will take place from 14th to 21st March. Brian Jackson is directing the acting and Mary Brigg is directing the singing. The cast comprises Les Davis, Gordon Brigg, Gareth Wigg, Roger Williams, Philip Field, Sam Callen, Ray Smith, Kevin Passey, George Tait, Ruth Woodliffe, Michelle Cooper, Tanya Jacobs, Amanda Smith, Jacky Bedford, Penny Field, Chantal Poole, Lynn Tait, Suzanne Hill, Anne Palmer, Ellen McManus, Diana Tubb and Marian Francis.



The set is up, the costumes are in place and the acting and singing are a delight.

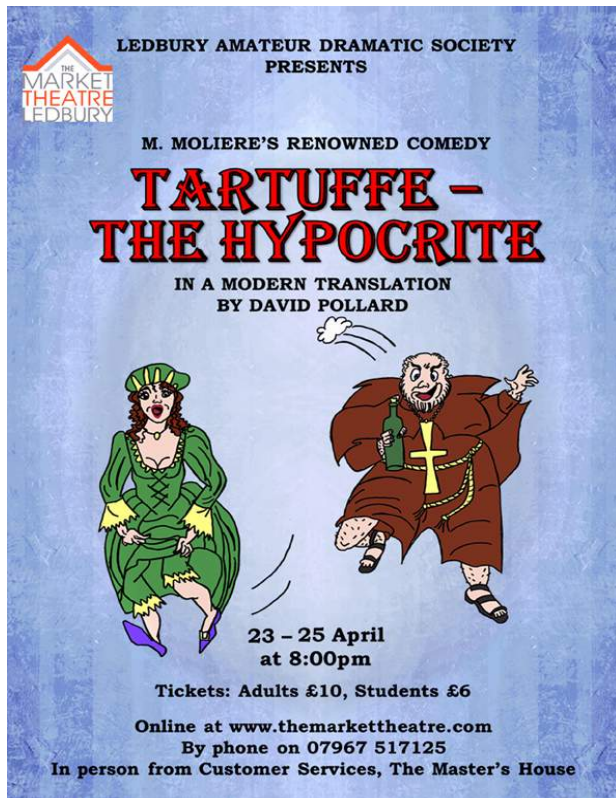
To see the **set construction team at work**, follow this link: <https://vimeo.com/118521885>

Tickets are on sale now! Book early to avoid disappointment!

The **Phoenix Youth Theatre** are entering the Hereford County Drama Festival. They will be performing at the Courtyard Theatre, Hereford on **Friday 27th March**. The evening starts at 7 pm. The play to be performed is “**The Six Wives of Calais**” by L du Garde Peach. Tickets are £8 each. If you wish to attend please contact Suzanne Hill who will be purchasing a block booking of seats. The Phoenix Theatre will get a donation based on the number of seats sold through us, so do please come and watch the show. We are holding a performance of the play at the dress rehearsal on **Wednesday 25th March** at 7.30 p.m. at the Phoenix Theatre to an invited audience of members and friends. There will be no charge for the performance. The idea is to give the actors experience of performing before an audience before the festival at the Courtyard. Please let Suzanne Hill know if you will be attending on Wed. 25th March so that we have an idea of how many will be attending.

The May production is to be “**Day of Reckoning**” by Pam Valentine, and will be directed by Renee Field. The production will run from **23rd to 30th May**. The cast comprises Jane Bovell, Amanda Smith, Anna Ricks, Penny Field, Suzanne Hill, Ruth Woodliffe, Lucy Davies and Tim Betts. In the village hall, the fete committee includes nosey Ethel, middle aged country woman; Pauline, in her

50s, the long suffering wife of the vicar; horsey Marjorie, in her 30s; elderly Mavis, deaf when it suits her; middle aged exhausted Gloria, who cares for her mother; brisk army wife Sally, in her 40s, always looking immaculate, and the shy new teacher, Angela, who is in her 20s. Also, there is the vicar, Geoffrey, in his 50s, likes a drink, a forbidding man, but capable of great charm. Six months later the hall becomes the command centre for the fete. Much has changed revealing a world of gossip, innuendo, secrets and a hidden agenda. If you have ever seen a committee in action you cannot fail to enjoy Pam Valentine's comedy of life in a village.



Our own **David Pollard** is directing “**Tartuffe**” by Moliere, produced by **the Ledbury Players** in Ledbury on **23rd to 25th April**. Tickets are online at <http://themarkettheatre.com>.

Our **September** production is to have a **World War 1** theme. The production will consist of a one-act play entitled, “**The Way to Mandalay**” by Christopher Kell, followed by songs and poems from the era, ending with a rousing finale. **Gordon Brigg** will direct the play and we are having a **reading on Wednesday 15th April**, followed by **auditions on Wednesday 22nd April, both at 7.30 p.m.** The cast comprise 4 male and 2 female actors, playing multiple parts. Horace, a wounded soldier and entertainer; Sophie (Nurse) and mother, also plays Vesta Tilley; Doctor, also plays Recruiting Sergeant and Guard; Harry, also plays Commanding Officer and Guard; Will, wounded soldier, also plays Stan Jefferson; and Alice, Horace's wife.

The play is set in a field hospital, somewhere on the Western Front in WW1. A soldier struggles to regain his memory after being found shell-shocked and with no identification tag. The soldier, Horace, had been an actor and entertainer and his identity is confused with many characters, real and imaginary - Harry Lauder, Vesta Tilley and Stan Jefferson (later to become Stan Laurel). The action moves between harsh reality and surreal scenes in Horace's imagination, where he performs popular songs and monologues. He struggles to remember the words of “Mandalay”. Slowly he remembers fragments of his true identity and his disillusionment with his restrictive marriage thwarting his theatrical ambitions. When he faces the choice of being prematurely sent back to the Front or facing a Court Martial, Horace comes to a dramatic decision about his future - but is it real or imaginary? **DO COME ALONG TO THE READING!**

**Acting workshops** - We will be holding acting workshops on 3 consecutive Monday evenings in April. **Richard Curnow**, a professional actor, will run the workshops which will be from **7.30 to 9.30 p.m** on **Monday 13th, 20th and 27th April**. The evenings will comprise theatre games i.e. ice breakers, trust and status affirmation, followed by improvisation and then work on scenes and breaking into groups to prepare short pieces to perform before the other participants. The workshops are aimed at new aspiring actors and experienced actors who may wish to freshen their skills. **Please let Suzanne Hill know if you would like to attend. There will be no charge for the workshops.**

Our November production is to be “**A Night on the Tiles**” by Frank Vickery. It will be directed by David Pollard. The dates will be **21st to 28th November**. There will be a **reading on Tuesday 2nd June and auditions on Friday 5th June both at 7.30 p.m.** A perceptive, entertaining and highly comical play. Gareth and Shirley's wedding day does not get off to an auspicious start. Gareth egged on by his cocky, good looking brother, Kenneth, has a post stag night hangover so bad that he can barely speak. The bride is 3 months pregnant and Grandad, confused after getting stuck in the outside loo, is unsure whether Shirley is marrying Gareth or Kenneth. Things do not improve when Gareth overhears his bride getting rather intimate with Kenneth, apparently not for the first time. Over the next few months relations are somewhat strained between Gareth, Shirley and Kenneth until, on the night the baby is born, Kenneth overhears something which will shatter his life! The cast comprise Gareth, Shirley and Kenneth, Mum, Dad and Grandad and Mrs Morris, the nosey next door neighbour. **DO COME ALONG FOR A FUN READING!**

**Ross Roots** will be holding a folk concert on **Saturday 11th April at 7.30 pm** featuring “**Callaghan**”, an up and coming female artiste. Tickets available on our website.

**Suzanne Hill**  
tel: 01989 770428

## **Wendy Ing**

Those of us who knew her were sad to hear, at the end of last year, of the death of Wendy Ing.

Wendy was a great stalwart of the Ross Operatic and Dramatic Society (ROADS) and the Phoenix Theatre for many years. She joined the Society in the mid-seventies when the old Ross fire station had just been purchased and frantic fund raising was taking place to convert it into our own Phoenix Theatre. Wendy played a very active role in organising and helping with all the various events that took place to achieve this objective.

Wendy did some acting in small parts in a few plays, but her forte was directing and she directed several plays over the years, notably "A Lady Misplaced"(1978) and "Plaza Suite"(1986). She had a great sense of humour and it was always a pleasure working with her. She also served on the Committee for several years, being mainly responsible for finding plays for production.

Wendy's interest in the theatre continued for as long as possible and she attended all the productions in recent years, including those of the Youth Theatre and the Phoenix Singers, until ill health made it impossible. She made a great contribution to the Society and to the establishment and running of the Phoenix. She will long be remembered by those of us who had the pleasure of knowing her.

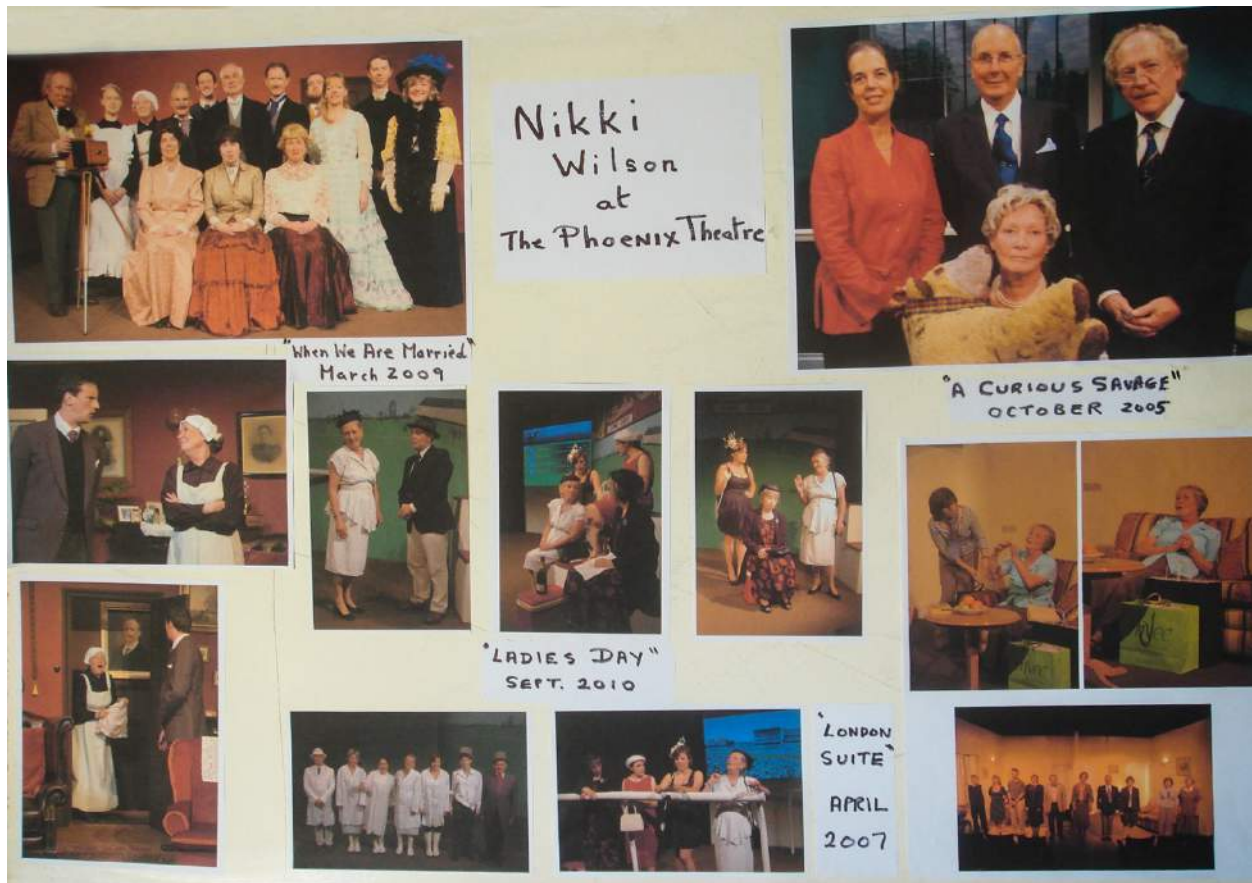
**Howard Owen**

(A lasting memory to Wendy is the aluminium ladder used by the set construction team - Ed)

## Nikki Wilson

Nikki joined the Phoenix Theatre in 2003. It was not long after this that she took over the running of The Phoenix Youth Theatre. Nikki gave much time and enthusiasm in bringing our young members to a fine standard of performance and teamwork with sessions every Saturday morning culminating in a full scale production running for a full week each year.

Nikki was a fine actress and appeared in many productions at the Phoenix. In October 2005 Nikki took the lead role in "A Curious Savage" by John Patrick. A fine performance, with Nikki being on stage most of the time. In 2007 Nikki appeared as Mrs Semple in one of the series of one-act plays



in "London Suite" by Neil Simon. In 2009 we performed "When We Are Married" by J. B. Priestley, where Nikki played the cook, Mrs Northrop. "Ladies' Day" by Amanda Whittington was performed in 2010. Nikki played one of the ladies employed as fish packers in Grimsby who go off for a day at the races. A very funny and poignant production. The last play Nikki appeared in was "Beyond Reasonable Doubt" by Jeffrey Archer in May 2012, where she played the housekeeper. Nikki also directed "The Tump" by Peter Terson in 2008, "The Sound of Murder" by William Fairchild in 2009 and "Steel Magnolis" by Robert Harling in 2012. She was on the committee for many years and took a full part in the running of the theatre, both before and after her husband Michael passed away.

Nikki will be missed at the Phoenix Theatre and our thoughts are with Nikki's family and friends at this time.

**Suzanne Hill**

## The Phoenix Youth Group

The Youth Group are very busy preparing for their latest projects and there is a definite divide amongst the camp!! The boys and our two youngest female members are busy preparing for their mini showcase in early March and the Seniors girls are beavering away in rehearsal with Brian Jackson preparing for the Hereford One Act Play Festival at The Courtyard at the end of March.

### SHOWCASE REVIEW - SUNDAY 8TH MARCH FROM 4PM

It is the first time the group have been separated during a rehearsal run and it is proving to be a fruitful experience for all concerned. The Youth Group will be showcasing their talents for parents and friends on **Sunday 8th March at 4pm** and it is sure to be an exciting event. They have written and devised their own mini plays and were given free choice on the material they chose. We have a comedy sketch **Monty Python style about The Romans**, as well as our own in-house written mini musical based on "**Bugsy Malone**". Our final piece is also a comedy sketch set in the wild west town of "**Tumbleweed**"! There will be a few solo performance numbers as well to top off the bill from some of our more experience members and it promises to be an entertaining afternoon. Theatre members are also invited to attend and if you would like to come along and share in our work then please email me so that we can be sure we have a seat for you. There is no charge for this performance - all welcome. (e-mail: sarahoneill362@btinternet.com).

### ONE ACT PLAY FESTIVAL - YOUTH GROUP ENTRY



Several of our members are once again going to be treading the boards of The Courtyard Theatre in March for the prestigious Hereford One Act Play Festival. An all female cast are being lead by the

supreme and multi-talented director Brian Jackson in their production of "**The Six Wives of Calais**". This is a brilliant and witty play and the girls are doing an amazing job at carrying off their characterisations with aplomb and boundless talent. The festival runs from **26th - 28th March** at The Courtyard and tickets are online direct from the theatre.

There will be an opportunity to see the play before it arrives at The Courtyard for all theatre members and this is an opportunity not to be missed . If you are a member of the theatre and you would like to attend this event, then please contact Suzanne Hill (no charge for this performance). There will be a dress run performance of the play on **Wednesday 25th March at 7.30pm** at the theatre and all friends, family and theatre members are welcome. To book a seat at this event you will need to pre-book. Please contact Suzanne Hill on 01989 770428.

### **YOUTH GROUP SHOW - MAIN EVENT**

From March onwards, the group will be reunited and work as a team - a strong cast of 20 members who will be putting on the production of "**Private Peaceful**" adapted from **Micheal Morpugo's** novel by Simon Reade. The performances will run from **18th - 21st October 2015**. Matinee 18th October at 2 pm. The other performances are evenings and will begin at 7pm.

We are extremely excited about this production as it is based on World War One and will challenge the performers involved. We look forward to showing you the fruits of our labour later in the year.

### **HOLIDAY WORKSHOPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

If you are interested in one of our workshops during the Easter and Summer holidays, The Drama Company (lead by Sarah O'Neill) is running their ever popular holiday workshops for children aged 5 - 18+ at The Phoenix Theatre once again this year. To find out more, contact myself or visit the website: [www.dramacompany.co.uk](http://www.dramacompany.co.uk). We look forward to hearing from you - book your child's place now!

**Sarah O'Neill**

e-mail: [sarhoneill362@btinternet.com](mailto:sarhoneill362@btinternet.com) or tel: 01989 720627