

### **Historical Farce is Hysterically Funny**

*Philip de Glanville director writes:*

*Habeas Corpus* has got to be one the FDC's favourite plays. Our Spring Production will be its third outing since it was written nearly 40 years ago.

The first was back in George Ritchie's time, and just before mine I think. I certainly didn't

see it. A young David Holt played pimply Dennis, the Wicksteed's hypochondriacal son and a teenage Nick White helped backstage. Now David is playing Dr Arthur Wicksteed himself, and

relishing it, and Nick is playing the suicidal Mr Purdue.

Its second outing with the Club was some 8 years later, directed by Pip Utton, when Leslie Swinburn played Muriel Wicksteed and Gillie Richardson played Lady Delia Rumpers. Now Leslie is playing Mrs Swabb (hoover-hoover-hoover), the part she says she always wanted, and Gillie is revisiting the role of 'Rumpers' with great delight.

This time my Heather is playing Muriel, and David Riley is playing Canon Throbbing. David North is taking on Sir Percy Shorter, and Claudia Pepler is the delectable Felicity Rumpers. Aynsley Minty, glimpsed in a tiny role in

*Three Sisters* in November, is doing a great job with Dennis, and we have two very talented newcomers—Juanita Chedzoy as the downtrodden Connie

Wickstead, and Richard J Thomas as Denzil Shanks. They are both excellent. It is such a funny play. Not side-splitting in the manic mayhem way of last year's *Noises Off*, though there is plenty of action in this one too, but much more genuinely humorous – Alan Bennett's genius shines through every delicious line, and the cast are loving it!

We are now just over halfway through the rehearsal period, books are



*Dates for your Diary*

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March**

**Playreading**

***One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* by Dale Wasserman**

*See page 4*

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>, Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

**Auditions for *Equus***

*See page 2*

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April**  
**Playreading**

***Separate Tables* by Terence Rattigan**

*See page 4*

**April 21<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> 2010**  
**Spring Production**

***HABEAS CORPUS***

*See page 1*

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**Auditions for key roles in *The Picture of Dorian Gray***

*See page 2*

pretty much down, the Production Team is swinging into action with set-building and prop-gathering over this next month, Migs is gearing up the publicity machine and we are on schedule for what should be a really memorable production and four full houses.

***Time to think about getting your tickets?***

**Box Office 01373 465949**

**Habeas Corpus at the Merlin 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> April**

## *Audition opportunities*

### **Equus by Peter Shaffer will be Frome Drama Club's Summer production and will be staged as part of the 2010 Frome Festival on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> July.**

In the play, **Dr. Martin Dysart**, (35-65) a psychiatrist, is confronted with **Alan Strang**, (16-20) a boy who has blinded six horses in a violent fit of passion. The play follows Dysart's attempts to understand what has driven Alan to commit such a crime, and as he proceeds in his interviews with Alan and his parents he is forced onto a journey of self discovery. Dysart, already riddled with self-doubt, opens a psychological Pandora's box that leads both doctor and patient to a complex and disturbingly dramatic confrontation.



The play was inspired by a true crime, but is importantly a work of fiction. Shaffer heard of a crime in which a young man had blinded several horses. Without researching any of the details of the case, he set out to construct a fictional account of what might have caused the

incident. Other parts are **Frank Strang** Alan's father (35-50); **Dora Strang** Alan's mother, a great part with some brilliant speeches (35-50); **Hesther Solomon** A medium sized part, she is close to Dysart; **Jill Mason** The girl who falls for Alan, confident (17-25); **Harry Dalton** Stable owner; A Nurse  
We will be holding open auditions for the play at The Lamb on **Sunday 21st March from 12pm -3pm** with a second audition on **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March from 7:30 – 9:30pm** at The Lamb. If you are interested in auditioning but cannot make this date please contact Calum Grant (director) on 01373 455533. It would be appreciated if you can contact Calum by Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> so that alternative arrangements can be made.

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### **Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde will be Frome Drama Club's autumn production and will be staged from the 17<sup>th</sup> till 20<sup>th</sup> November 2010 at The Merlin in Frome**

The production is an exciting adventure for the club. Director, Geoff Hunt has developed a rolling wave rehearsal technique in collaboration with producer Mike Witt and Life on Mars writer Matt Graham. This process enables technical and creative content to stay more fluid and calls for strong commitment from cast and crew. Geoff promises that this will not be a standard costume drama. "We intend to use the language of Oscar Wilde to take the audiences breath away and make the production exquisite, exotic, beautiful and dangerous". The part of **Dorian Gray** is the central focal character and is best played by an 18 -28 year old. He is described as a man of outstanding beauty but what we are looking for is stage presence. The actor will need to portray the journey of an innocent man who dabbles in the unknown which drags him to the lowest moral depths. Lord Henry is a titled gentleman who corrupts everyone he meets. He tempts Dorian to make a fateful wish that he should stay forever



young in exchange for his portrait growing old. Unbeknown to Dorian his desire is granted and Henry wastes no time in showing Dorian the thrills of a decadent lifestyle behind the veneer of Victorian society. The picture not only ages on Dorian's behalf it absorbs all of his sins with horrendous consequences. The part of **Henry** is the king pin of the plot and the actor playing him will need to deliver the razor sharp dialogue of Oscar Wilde with pin sharp accuracy.

Age range 20-35

The auditions for the roles of Dorian Gray and Lord Henry Wotton will be held at:

**7.30 on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**The FireStorm Studios**

**Unit 3 (next to Roman Glass)**

**Manor Way, Marston Trading Estate**

**Frome BA11 4RB**

For details of the auditions please call Geoff on 01373 472981.

The rest of the casting will be finalised in August.

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## Notes

News & Gossip from around the club

### **Film Feature**

Jade Taylor writes:

With the assistance of the "Bargus boys" Adam and Simon and our very own Felix; Ed, Jade, some gorgeous ladies, talented crew, puppies and snakes created a "Fashion strip".

On a budget of £180 we have managed to create a film featuring the fashion of local retailers.

Please enjoy the "Deadly is the female" film found at this following link <http://vimeo.com/8647647>.



### **What happened at FDC's Amazingly Gleeful Merrymaking (i.e. its AGM!)**

We held our AGM in the welcoming upper room of The Lamb on Monday, Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> and there was a very good turnout. 'Could this be because of the sneakily changed name which confused everyone and lured in those unsuspecting souls?' I asked myself. Probably not, as I guess they probably saw through the disguise.

Anyway, it was a rather different meeting this year. The most obvious thing was that Migs designed an excellent PowerPoint display which reminded us of the various events through the year. As your chair, I confess to fluffing many a line as I became a bit over excited – and was somewhat forgetful about pressing the buttons at the right time – but it was fun nevertheless and amongst other things, we all enjoyed seeing that wonderful Noises Off set waltzing round to the Blue Danube once more.

Michael's report as the treasurer reassured us that we were doing everything right from a financial point of view and he was able to thank Ally Buchannan (née Maryon) for auditing the books for 2009. We are very grateful for Michael's hard work and attention to detail which keeps the club on an even keel.

We had the sad news that we are losing three committee members to external influences; Trixie, Claudia and Milly have all found that pressures of work, house relocation and/or family commitments have meant that they have had to resign. We are very grateful for their hours of loyal and diligent service, and they will be sorely missed. However, we are really pleased that a new club member, Penny Scotford, has joined us and Philip de Glanville is able to return, so all is looking well. Michael agreed to continue as the treasurer and I'm afraid you have me for another year as chair. (*Editor note – we are delighted not afraid!*) Calum will continue as vice chair.

The main part of the evening ended by 9.00 and we then tucked into scampi, chicken legs and chips - with not just tomato sauce, but tartar sauce, too. Everyone had the chance to enjoy the caption competition again and was encouraged to take a small gift from the lucky dip to make their evening complete.

Gillie Richardson

### **News of two of our extremely talented actors who have left Frome and are becoming (or have become) professionals....**

One is Keely Beresford who starred in many of our productions including *Streetcar*, *The Crucible* and *'Allo 'Allo*. She went to study at Bristol's Old Vic Theatre School and has now landed a contract with the BBC! She has already done one afternoon play on Radio 4 and you can hear Keely in a comedy series on **Wed** evenings at 11pm for 15 minutes, again on Radio 4. Enjoy having a giggle with your cocoa!

Our other great piece of news concerns Martin Coat who is completing a three year course in Oxford. He was in many FDC productions including *Of Mice and Men* and he took the lead in *The Crucible*. He texted to tell me that he will be acting in *Macbeth* at the Globe Theatre in London on March 21<sup>st</sup> and the production is open to the public. Apparently each drama school had been invited to send two promising students to have this amazing experience - and Martin was one of them!

So - you never know where your experiences with FDC will lead....!

**Play Readings** – these are usually on the second Monday of the month at the Lamb Inn.

**On Monday 11th January we read *Harvey* by Mary Chase**

Jade Taylor writes:...

That six foot rabbit is a card!, but I can't help but love him.

It was 19:40 hrs when we arrived at the lamb and we had been laughing so hard, it was because I could only see his dicky-bow tie in the snow and he would not stop spinning it in jest to my words and giggles! I had barely got in through the door, stamped the snow from my shoes when he disappeared; he does this from time to time. So I sat alone with my trilby tilted and resigned to the bar, when the clock showed 19:55 hrs.

As the second hand hit its mark, the doors of The Lamb began opening and familiar faces started to pour in from the snow. It was a shame, and I will always remember this, but Harvey was nowhere to be seen. Wondering where he could have got to and not wanting to cross over into the quiz night corner I became agitated.

Then the clock struck 20.00 hrs, the play reading was about to start, I gulped and then with not a second to spare - he was there the great hare! (Personally I think he likes a bit of an entrance).

Introductions went well and no-one was taking offence to his bad habit of looking at people in that funny way he does, until he decided to head to the bar during Act one Scene one.

Again, I do apologize and I have had words with him. Voices of old and new came out to play and I eventually retrieved Harvey from the bar to rejoin us at 21:40 hrs. He looked up from under those ears and said he felt overwhelmed that people had come to listen to words written around him. I fluffed up his ears, told him to stop being so goofy and got him to sit in for the rest of the play reading.

At the end of the evening we propped ourselves at the end of Nick's bar and Harvey said the damndest thing to me, he said to me "It's the faces that light up the night, they are the stars of the evening". Well.....

I looked at Harvey as I watched members of the group leave and thought of those who had texted, called and emailed to send wishes that evening and I thought "You are a card Harvey!.. You're a real card!.

**On Monday 8th February we read *Bouncers* by John Godber.**

*Bouncers* is an hilarious comedy set in a northern nightclub in the late 1980s The cast comprises four men who play a host of characters including the bouncers, the lads out on the town, the teenage girls, hairdressers, barbers, hot-dog salesmen and a number of others whom we encounter along the way. It shows the characters throughout the day getting ready, the evening itself and the inevitable drunken cab ride home. Playreadings can be confusing because we swap around the people reading parts – but this demanded real concentration as the parts themselves changed! However Calum kept us on our toes and there was real pace – and worrying how many of the stereotypical clubbers we all recognised. It was fun! MJ

**Forthcoming Playreadings at The Lamb Inn at 8 p.m.**

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* by Dale Wasserman**

This was adapted from the novel by Ken Kesey. The protagonist, Randle Patrick McMurphy, is a wildly funny rebel who feigns insanity in order to finish his prison sentence in a mental ward rather than a work farm. However, when he meets the fellow members of the asylum, he discovers that they make a lot more sense than the restrictive and conformist establishment, embodied by the cruel and controlling Nurse Ratched. Large mixed cast.

**To be led by Calum Grant**

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April *Separate Tables* by Terence Rattigan**

This classic play which is, in fact, the collective name of two one-act plays both taking place in the Beauregard Private Hotel, Bournemouth. The first play, entitled "*Table by the Window*", focuses on the troubled relationship between a disgraced Labour politician and his ex-wife. The second play, "*Table Number Seven*", is set about eighteen months after the events of the previous play, and deals with the touching friendship between a repressed spinster and a retired English army officer, Major Pollock. The secondary characters - permanent residents, the hotel's manager, and members of the staff - appear in both plays. Large mixed cast.

**To be led by Michael Hoskinson**

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