

Dates for your Diary

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by J B Priestley
At the Packhorse
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December 7th

FDC Christmas Party

Have you seen Charley's Aunt?

There have been rumours in the press that Charley's Aunt has been seen around Frome and surrounding villages. She will be the guest of Frome Drama Club during the Frome Festival.



Val Atkinson takes on the role of the real celebrity aunt but it is stalwart veteran Alan Burgess who has to impersonate her. Dressed like a taller version of Queen Victoria, he has to chaperone two girls (Donna Matthews and Fiona Taylor) when they visit their student boyfriends, Jack and Charley, (Dan Bolton & Mark Stroud) at their Oxford college.

Slippery solicitor, Stephen Spettigue, (Alex Webb) and retired impecunious colonel, Sir Francis Chesney (Robert O'Farrell) propose to the imposter. Both men, of course, just want to get their hands on the money of Charley's aunt who, with his trousers firmly buttoned beneath his black skirts, reminds them that he is no ordinary woman! When the real Donna Lucia appears the pace gets fast, furious, frantic and funnier by the minute but all will be revealed by the end!

If you want to be sure of seeing her and all her chums then you need to get tickets for Frome Drama Club's production of this famous farce which will be fast, furious and frantically funny.



Friday July 3rd	Beckington Village Hall
Saturday July 4th	East Woodlands
Wednesday July 8th	Rook Lane Chapel
Thursday July 9th	Rook Lane Chapel

This production is dedicated to the memory of FDC member Bryan Williamson 1939 - 2009

All performances start at 7.45 p.m.

Tickets £6 / £5 from Festival Booking Office Tel: 01373 455420
Also Beckington-01373 830541 & East Woodlands-01373 466136
Or at the door

Get your tickets now

Three Sisters has a Cast!

Robert O'Farell, director writes

It took a little time to sort it out, but our Autumn production of Anton Chekhov's bitter-sweet masterpiece, *Three Sisters*, has a cast.

The Prozorov household

Irina Prozorov: Sarah Richards
Masha Prozorov: Jade Taylor
Irina Prozorov: Naomi Parnell
Andrei Prozorov: Tom Cant
Natasha (his wife): Emily Lewis
Fyodor Kilyginn: Paul Laville
Anfisa: Migs Jacques

The Military

Dr Chebutykin: Philip de Glanville
Lt. Col. Vershinin: David Holt
Captain Solyony: Calum Grant
Baron Tuzenbach: Richard Thomas

There are still a few parts to cast. There are two officers, Fyedotik and Rode, who might well be combined into one, and Ferrapont, a messenger from the local council, a part calling for an older actor.

I am delighted to have recruited such a strong cast, and one that has so many actors who are new to FDC. Sarah Richards, Naomi Parnell, Paul Laville and Richard Thomas will all be appearing with us for the first time, while Emily Lewis returns after many years. Juanita Chedzoy, who will be helping me as assistant director, is also new.

As soon as I have shed the role of Sir Frank Chesney in *Charley's Aunt*, I will be bringing the cast together for a briefing and then holding a reading. After that, the cast will be 'put to bed', so to speak, until we start full-cast rehearsals in September, although I plan to work with groups of actors over the summer, mainly on character development. Time will be scarce in the Autumn; we shall have to work hard to bring this exciting project to fruition in November.

RO'F

Three Sisters is at the Merlin Theatre 12th, 13th & 14th November

Could you be a producer?

The FDC committee have decided that our directors need help with the organising part of putting on a play, and have decided that each production should have a producer. The job would be to support, call production meetings, encourage team working and generally take from the director the day to day organising and leave them free to be creative.

You do not need experience – just organisational skills and an ability to communicate well.

If you think you would like to do this for Three Sisters then get in touch with Gillie Richardson

Rebecca at Monkton Farleigh Manor

This is not a new adventure book for girls but a heading to introduce the fact that a number of us went last week to see the Bradfordians Dramatic Society perform the play version of Daphne du Maurier's famous novel.

Our principal reason for going was to see FDC member Felix Byrne in the main role of Maxim de Winter (as well as stuff our faces with picnic grub in the beautiful manor grounds). Felix played the part with great authority, comfortable with the stylish 1920's costumes and manners, and good characterisation of a complicated part. Congratulations to him, the chilled Chablis and, of course, the paté de foie gras which played superb supporting role. **MH**

Machinal At The Tobacco Factory.

At the end of June, many of us went to see The Old Vic Theatre School's production of Machinal by Sophie Treadwell. I confess that I had not heard of the play before and may not have chosen to go, but our own Keely Beresford was in it so there was no contest. And was I pleased that we did!

The play is set in Chicago in the 1920s and shows the ever relevant story of a young woman mistakenly marrying a wealthy man to escape poverty. There was an uncomfortable building of tension in the play, well developed by the talented cast, which led us to the awful ending.

I love the Tobacco Factory as an acting space but what this group designed for their final production was really exciting with a wonderfully original set. Watching the brilliantly choreographed scene-changes added to the whole experience. The props and costumes were truly fabulous, perfectly in keeping with the period. (I'd love to know what their production budget was!)

Sadly, by the time the news-letter hits the streets, the play will be over so I'm not able to encourage you to get tickets. However, my congratulations go to Keely and the rest of the BOVTS for giving us a superb evenings entertainment. **GR**

The Big Clear-Out!

Advance notice that on Sunday Sept 6th all hands will be needed at Rodden Farm when we plan to clear out a lot of obsolete set and props – to make room to store our current items. There will be wood to take away! More detail to follow by email

Notes

News & Gossip from around the club

West Side Story at The Merlin

Frome College are putting on West Side Story 15th, 16th, & 17th July. This is directed by FDC member Claudia Peplar Berry and Dan Bolton and Sarah Wingrove are in it. Tickets selling fast.

Merlin box office 01373 465949

FDC member - author Janet Tanner

Her new multi-generational saga came out in February in paperback (the hardback was in November). It's called 'Dance With Wings', published by Headline, and it's under the pseudonym Amelia Carr. It's been doing very well, and still available. At present she is hard at work on the next one, which she is due to deliver by the end of August for publication next year.

Prizes for FDC Members

Somerset Fellowship of Drama's annual Cinderella Competition Awards

The Merlin Theatre Company entered its Christmas show The Wizard Of Oz and managed to scoop eight awards including the Cinderella Trophy Runners Up award. FDC member Claudia Peplar-Berry, director of the Merlin show, was thrilled. She said: "It is a great event for everyone to get together and celebrate the achievements and creativity by both individuals and companies. "This year, I was extremely pleased for **Cara Baker** (also an FDC member) who won Best Stage Manger, as she is about to go to university to do a stage management course".

The excellent hand-crafted Tin Man outfit, worn by **Felix Burne**, (another FDC bod – see left) took the Speciality Costume award.

Can you fill this empty space? We would like to tell club members of interesting things that are happening to you. Births, Marriages, even deaths, - plays you have seen, plays you are going to be in, anything that you think we would like to know about. Email to migsj@talktalk.net. Next Newsletter is on September 1st Copy by August 30th please.

The Talking Newspaper

There are over 500 local talking newspapers across the United Kingdom - mainly run by volunteers. They record local news and information into audio format for blind and partially sighted people.

FDC has been producing a tape for local subscribers for many years and the readings are hosted every few weeks by Meg Oliver or by David Riley. Alan Fone as anchor man does the recordings. At present there are nine groups in the Frome area, so we read every nine weeks. (The number of reading groups varies from year to year). In general listeners look forward to FDC's readings because we've done a lot of it and we are pretty good at it too. You may imagine that it takes all of our artistry and experience to bring the Somerset Standard to life!

The newspaper readings go on to side one, but side two is an opportunity for any of our members to contribute a reading which takes their fancy and which wouldn't shock their grandmother. So we have filled the side two's with short stories, anthologies of Christmas readings, poetry and travel narratives.

All the readers are volunteers and they come from all kinds of backgrounds. The regular readers are Janet Mills and Hilary Daniel who with the hosts are pleased to welcome new voices too. A number of members have contributed on an occasional basis which is all to the good. It adds variety and a change of emphasis which is refreshing to the listeners.

If you would like to be involved your contact for side one is David Riley and the coordinator for side two is Michael Hoskinson. If you feel inclined to catch up on the local newspaper or give the listeners your best rendition of Bertie Wooster or Jane Marple please let us know.

david@galleon.eclipse.co.uk

m.hoskinson@virgin.net

Play Readings – This month's Play Reading is on **Monday July 13th at The Pack Horse** Christchurch Street West
All welcome - to read or just listen.

June 14th - Absent Friends by Alan Ayckbourn

The six characters in this dark comedy were seriously outnumbered by those who attended the play reading in June. The evening was led by Denise Hunt who masterfully allocated roles throughout to ensure an even distribution.

It is a relatively short play on paper (only 48 pages) but it has an interesting pace and a lot of laugh lines so that the whole session was easily filled. There were some great characterisations and a lot of laughter. Among those attending were a number of new members as well as people who came to read and left properly stitched signed up by your treasurer.

MH

Tuesday July 14th 8 p.m. The Lamb Inn

An Inspector Calls by J B Priestley

On an evening in early April 1912, we join **Arthur Birling**, his wife Sybil, their daughter Sheila and son Eric in the drawing room of their home just after dinner as they celebrate Sheila's engagement to Gerald Croft, son of Sir George Croft. The Birlings are a prosperous, nouveau riche family who live in the industrial Midlands.

The tranquil celebration is suddenly interrupted when Edna, the parlour maid, announces the arrival of a stranger, Police Inspector Poole. The Inspector has come to the Birling home as part of an inquiry into the suicide that day of a desperate young woman. As the Inspector's investigation unfolds, we discover how the life of the dead woman had been intertwined with that of the Birling's and we observe how these revelations affect each of them.

Mixed cast of 7.