



LEWES THEATRE CLUB
Newsletter No.48 March 2014

Richard III

by William Shakespeare
directed by Nicholas Betteridge



Saturday 29 March to Saturday 5 April 2014
at 7.45 pm except Sundays
Matinee Saturday 5 April at 2.45 pm



Editor's notes

Welcome to 2014, wet and windy but with an exciting year ahead. *Richard III* is our next production with two comedies to follow. *My Boy Jack* was a great success – acting, setting, costumes, lighting, sound and projection have all been widely praised. We had a great team who worked together to produce a good show for our audiences. 'And,' as one correspondent commented, 'the direction wasn't bad either!' Modesty forbids me to dwell on this but, despite the awful weather, the box office did exceptionally well with 96% of seats sold over the week. Thanks are due to Peter Wellby who organised a window display in the town and delivered flyers to many of the houses in the locality. We will be taking part in Lewes' celebrations of 750 years since the Battle of Lewes by performing a mystery-style play *The Day of the Battle* around the town on 17 May (see page 7 for details of audition).

Micheal Turner
michealturner@btinternet.com

The Committee of the club would like to make it clear that Lewes Theatre Club as an entity is still going strong after 75 years. The Club produces plays, musical events and holds lectures and seminars at its much-loved home base, Lewes Little Theatre. The Club also is host to Lewes Cinema and is available for hire to touring companies and occasional radio shows. In its publicity material and in its relations with the Little Theatre Guild, and as a theatrical venue, the Club prefers to use the nomenclature of 'Lewes Little Theatre'.

IN THIS ISSUE...

- 3** PREVIEW *Richard III*
- 6** REVIEW
My Boy Jack
- 7** CLUB DIRECTOR'S NOTES
- 8** AUDITION ALERT
The Day of the Battle
- 9** LETTERS
- 10** OBITUARY
Donald Bishop
- 11** PREVIEW
Enjoy
- 12** BOOKING FORM

DIARY DATES

PERFORMANCES

Richard III
 29 March - 5 April 2014

Enjoy
 24 - 31 May

Café Sunday
 13 April

AUDITION - *The Day of the Battle*
 12 April 10.30 a.m. in the Foyer

Announcement

Anyone who would be interested in being involved in recording crowd scenes for our BBC Radio 4 production of *War and Peace* please contact
 Jane Ellison at Pier Productions
 on 01273 691401
jane.ellison@pierproductionsltd.co.uk

PREVIEW

Richard III

By William Shakespeare directed by Nicholas Betteridge

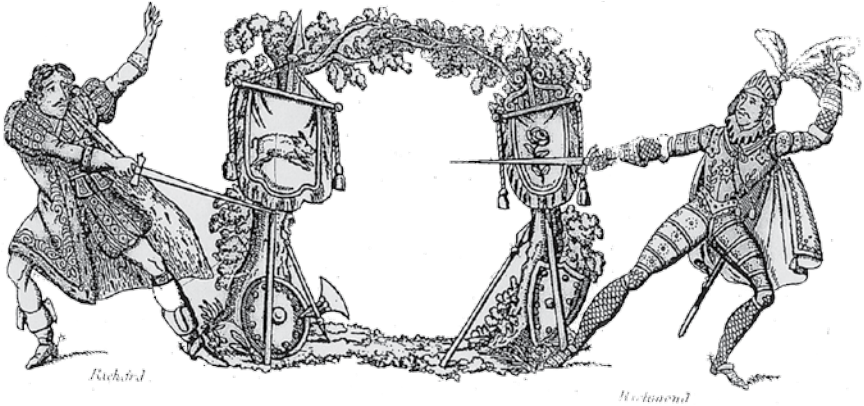


Illustration from Green's *Characters and Scenes from Richard III* (1814). Showing Mr Kean as Richard and Mr Cooper as Richmond

It is a great pleasure to return to directing Shakespeare in our theatre's 75th Season. This year could not be more fitting as it is the 450th Anniversary of Shakespeare's birth and exactly 200 years since Edmund Kean took London by storm playing Richard III – his most enduring role – at Drury Lane. From my own perspective, it is 50 years since the Royal Shakespeare Company's epic *Wars of the Roses* Season when John Barton and Peter Hall presented the cycle of seven history plays commencing with *Richard II* and culminating in *Richard III*. Like them, I have extensively cut the Shakespeare folio text to distil the very essence of *Richard III* into a two hour performance. Add to this the recently discovered

remains of Richard beneath a Leicester car park and we have a production that is most apposite.

Miles Jenner takes on the role of Richard with a strong cast of both seasoned performers and newcomers to the Lewes stage. We are also blessed with a wealth of experience in our technical and backstage teams. We have enjoyed a very fruitful rehearsal period and bring some fresh perspectives but, more importantly, a clear-cut, exciting production of one of Shakespeare's best loved history plays. We look forward to welcoming you.

Nicholas Betteridge

Evening performances at 7.45pm. Matinee at 2.45pm on Saturday 5 April.

THE BOX OFFICE 01273 474826 will be open daily except Sundays from Monday 24 March to Saturday 5 April 10.30 am until noon and from 7pm to 7.30pm. Postal bookings received before the Box Office opening period will be given priority. Tickets not paid for 15 minutes before the performance is timed to start may be resold.

In any case seats booked in advance but not taken up must be paid for if not resold.

REVIEW

My Boy Jack



Born in 1865 in Bombay, Rudyard Kipling was one of England's most popular writers during the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1907 he won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Today he is still very much a part of the fabric of our culture even though his imperialist fervour and nationalism sometimes sits uncomfortably with our modern world view.

The play takes its name from the poem *My Boy Jack*, written in 1915, popularly believed to be about the loss of his son John. This is disputed by The Kipling Society who claim it is about 'Jack Tar' and the naval losses in general. However no one denies that in writing this famous poem, Kipling drew on his own well of pain following the death of his 18 year old son in WW1 at the Battle of Loos.

Written by actor David Haig in 1997 and first performed at The Hampstead

Theatre, *My Boy Jack* has been widely staged. A successful TV film with David Haig as Kipling, Daniel Radcliffe as his son John and Kim Cattrall as Carrie Kipling followed. This excellent play, illustrating the torment of families seeing their sons going to the battle front, is based on the true life story of the Kipling family and begins on the brink of WW1.

In Mike Turner's production Kipling, played by Peter Wellby, was compelling and entirely believable as this famous figure. He effortlessly got under the skin of a man who though an attentive, loving father was also an egotist whose patriotic fervour enabled him to force through a plan to get his son to the battle front even though he had been deemed unfit due to his eyesight. Cast alongside him was Owen Daugherty as his son John. Owen has a strong 'period' look and feel and this, coupled

REVIEW

My Boy Jack



with a vulnerability and ability to be emotionally brave on stage, made for a strong core in this production. John's mother Carrie and his sister Elsie do not want him to be deployed to the front line. Elsie tells her father forcefully that she thinks it is wrong and that in fact John wants to enlist to get away from an oppressive home life. Jenny Lloyd Lyons as Carrie brought an outward calm and uneasy endurance that was a perfect foil for the fervour of her husband, and Lauren Nicole Little used her natural energy and forthright style to great effect when confronting her controlling father. In a well-played tragi-comic scene with Robert Woodbridge as the Army Doctor and Roger Murray as Col Pottle, John is put through the embarrassment of a full body examination while his father discusses his son's military future. Kipling is enraged when the Army confirm that his son's eyesight is too

poor for active duty. Not content, he pulls some strings with an old military friend of his and John goes to front line France.

The pre-offensive scene in the trenches was convincingly played by Robert Woodbridge, David Grimston and James Meikle. They had clearly worked hard on rough and tumble camaraderie and the reality of life in the trenches. Well cast, they made an authentic and affecting picture of the ordinary soldier finding ways to survive horrific conditions. John is reported missing in action.



REVIEW

My Boy Jack

Over the next three years his distraught parents track down surviving members from his battalion and interview them. Mr Franklin, played with sensitivity by James Meikle, visits the family bringing with him Guardsman Bowe, played by Daniel Grimston, one of John Kipling's men we have seen in the trench scene. He is horribly shell shocked and in a beautifully written scene he recounts what happened to John Kipling when he was blown up. Daniel as Bowe, the central character in this scene, was moving and detailed and his commitment to keep the drama truthful was commendable. In a harrowing scene some sense of peaceful resolution was conveyed well by all the cast.

The play suggests that Kipling, the ultimate story teller, was entranced by the drama and heightened reality of war. That perhaps he summoned up the ultimate story of courage and glory by sending his son to war, thereby ensuring he had an intimate but, in reality, remote experience of the battle

front. It was his son who suffered the horrors of war which Kipling spoke about in glorified terms and not he himself.

The play ends with Kipling reciting his poem *My Boy Jack* which suggests that for Kipling his need to believe his son died a courageous, patriotic death, outweighed the sacrifice of a young man's life.

Special mention should be made of the high production values. The set design called for a period panelled room in Kipling's home and a WW1 trench. Both were very well executed by Dominic Ramos and his team. The quality of the costumes including various military uniforms was high.

The audience applauded after every scene and were clearly entirely convinced and involved. Mike Turner cast well and with care produced a confident and accomplished show.

Lucy Fitchett



Club Director's notes

Mike Turner's production of *My Boy Jack* was very well received by the audiences and we are pleased to say that there was a waiting list for seats on several nights. Peter Wellby gave an excellent performance as Rudyard Kipling and many people commented that he even managed to look like him! He was well supported by the rest of the company and it was good to see Jenny Lloyd Lyons and Lauren Nicole Little back on our stage. We welcomed two new members James Meikle and Daniel Grimston and with Owen Daughtery playing Jack Kipling they were the right age for the young soldiers who volunteered for the First World War. Robert Woodbridge, playing two roles, Roger Murray and Dom Ramos also appeared in this very able cast. With a difficut set to build, the backstage team made a great reconstruction of Bateman's following photographs of the room and I think it's the first time on our stage that we have been able to have actors "going over the top".

The backstage team plus wardrobe, lighting, projection and sound departments worked well with the actors under Mike Turner's able direction.

Rehearsals for *Richard III* are well under way and the backstage team are now working on the set. The wardrobe ladies have to cater for a large cast with various costume changes so they are going to be busy for the next few weeks. I have a feeling that there may also be a demand for tickets for this production so perhaps it would be wise to put in an order before the Box Office officially opens.

We have been asked to take part on 10 May in an event, where King Henry III rides into Lewes and greets the Mayor and dignitaries as part of a re-enactment of the Battle of Lewes. As Miles Jenner has been cast as Richard III, I thought he might as well be Henry III as well, to which he has agreed. This event will be part of the May Fair. It appears there will be much activity on the streets of Lewes that day as so many groups are to be involved in all manner of presentations. On the following Saturday 17 May there will be three performances of Mike Turner's mystery play *The Day of The Battle* which will be Lewes Little Theatre's contribution to the celebrations.

Café Sunday 13 April.

In order to raise funds for Anne of Cleves House, a group of us will perform a *Miscellany of Readings*, using material taken from a series of scripts devised by the late Francis Carr on behalf of his widow Jane Carr-Gomm. Readings will include work from Francis Bacon, Lady Mary Holland, Samuel Pepys, Oscar Wilde, Daisy Ashford and Aubrey Beardsley. Tea will be provided by Sally Jenner for those who wish to stay after the reading.

We have a number of play scripts which I would like to sort into alphabetical order. If anyone has wall cupboards they no longer need, please could you let me know?

Many thanks, Pat Shrimpton
Contact
lewpatshrimpton@sky.com
or the Theatre.

AUDITION ALERT AUDITION ALERT

THE DAY OF THE BATTLE by Mike Turner

On 12 April at 10.30 in the theatre foyer Mike Turner will be auditioning for actors to take part in the Lewes Theatre Club's contribution to Lewes' 1264 Battle of Lewes celebrations. The play will be performed out of doors in three locations in Lewes on 17 May. There are 10 male roles (all ages) and three female roles. The play is short – about 25 mins – and the script is in rhyming couplets. It is an ensemble piece and all will be involved in acting and scene shifting. Rehearsals will be Saturday mornings and there will be only 4 ; 19 and 26 April and 3 and 10 May.

The characters:

Leading role - more than 50 lines, minor role - less than 50 lines

Shepherd	leading role	Miller	leading role
Squire	leading role	Miller's wife	minor role
Shepherd's daughter	leading role	Alewife	minor role
Simon de Montfort	minor role	Pilgrim	leading role
King Henry III	minor role	Blacksmith	minor role
Prior	minor role	Gilbert de Clare	minor role
Sentry	minor role	Richard,	
Prince Edward	minor role	King of the Romans	minor role
		Rebel Soldier	minor role

If you wish to see the script before auditioning I will send it by email if requested. I will be producer on this show with Kate Turvey directing. Kate is a recently retired teacher who has directed many plays including *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Please prepare a piece from the play to read and any other piece of your choice to show your acting skills and email us saying which roles you would like to audition for. We are also looking for a stage manager – let us know if you are interested or turn up on 12 April.

michealturner@btinternet.com and kateturvey@hotmail.com

YOUTH THEATRE

Please note that the Youth Theatre's advertised Cafe Sunday on 23 February has been postponed until later in the year. The theatre website www.lewestheatre.org will announce details of the next Youth Theatre event as soon as a date can be confirmed.

Letters...

Dear Editor,

I would like to agree with Jan Newbury in her recent letter to you, supporting the use of the hyphen in the phrase 'novel-reading' I am not merely being pedantic or following Fowler or any other authority on English Language, in this case it affects the sense. 'Novel' can either be an adjective e.g. 'a novel approach to grammar' or a noun e.g. 'we all like to read a good novel'. In the example given, 'the novel reading habits of the young', 'novel' functions as an adjective, and the meaning is 'the new reading habits of the young'. But this is plainly not the intended meaning. The writer is referring to the public's habits of reading novels, 'the novel-reading habit', so the hyphen is essential to the sense. I enjoy reading the newsletter and offer this in the spirit of light hearted seasonal banter.

Yours truly,

Dorothy Harrison

Well I'm dashed! You have made your point - most eruditely. Thank you. Ed

Dear Mike,

Congratulations on a superb production. You and your wonderful cast did justice to Kipling's complex character, the feel of the period and the tragedy of the war. We and our friends were very moved, as I'm sure everyone in the audience was and the play continues to reverberate in our minds. Our thanks to you and the whole company for an unforgettable experience.

Audrey Longman

Dear Mike,

I didn't manage to catch you after the show on Friday to tell you what a splendid production I thought it was all round. Congratulations! It has restored my faith in Lewes Little Theatre. 'This is more like it,' I thought. Not always an easy play to watch, but well worth it and very thought-provoking. Peter was of course excellent, and all the cast were pretty even, not always the case at LLT, especially when dealing with young actors. Dan Grimston is a great find! I hope he comes back and does more. The sound, lighting, set, use of film, and music were all so good. Well done again - you can feel very pleased. Job well done.

A long term member (name and address supplied)

Dear Editor,

I really enjoyed the delightful adaptation by Jack Shepherd of the novel of *Under the Greenwood Tree* by Thomas Hardy. This charming production by The Players Collective was a fitting choice for the Christmas season. Congratulations to everyone involved.

Sue Smirthwaite

OBITUARY

Donald Bishop 1919 - 2013



Theatre Club members will be sorry to hear of the death of Donald Bishop, who died just before Christmas at the age of 94. Donald joined the Little Theatre in 1950 and many people will remember him for his dedicated work backstage, particularly in the Box Office, where for six years he was the efficient and good-humoured manager. As to acting, Donald saw himself, in T.S. Eliot's words, as

"An attendant lord, one that will do /
To swell a progress, start a scene or two."

Though it is said he made a memorable *Wishy-Washy* in the theatre's first ever pantomime.

Donald was born in Hailsham in 1919 and was educated at a Dame School in the town (where he began learning piano), Bexhill Grammar School and Eastbourne Technical College. He worked at County Hall in Lewes, mainly in the Treasurer's Department, until retirement in 1982.

As a conscientious objector in World War II Donald did non-combatant work and later, to combat taunts of cowardice, bomb disposal work. He ended the war, less dangerously, acting as interpreter for Italian prisoners of war.

Donald moved to Lewes in 1949 and in 1951 became organist at St. Michael's Church. There he met Joan, his future wife. They married in 1956, had two daughters. He contributed to the Christian life in Lewes as a server and as an organist whose musical gifts enhanced services wherever he played. As a pianist he was always in great demand and for many years was rehearsal pianist for Lewes Operatic Society. Donald was an enthusiastic cyclist and believed that it contributed hugely to his long and healthy life. He communicated his enthusiasm to countless children through the cycling proficiency scheme. The high point of his cycling life came in 1984 when he successfully completed the Land's End to John O' Groats bike ride.

Donald's interest in trains began when he was twelve on a station platform waiting, in high excitement, for the arrival of the *Flying Scotsman*. Some 60 odd years later, for a special birthday treat, he drove a steam train on the Bluebell Line. His word for that was "Glorious." Donald loved Lewes – its architecture, its history, and its lovely setting in the incomparable Downs. Above all he loved the people of Lewes, a love which those of us who were privileged to know this gifted, kind and generous man, warmly returned.

Arthur Tapp

PREVIEW

ENJOY

ENJOY by Alan Bennett
24 - 31 MAY

I am excited to be directing one of Bennett's early plays, first performed in 1980. Now seen as a blackly comic modern classic, the play anticipates the burgeoning heritage industry, official snooping into private lives, and even reality television shows - and though it is often wonderfully funny, *Enjoy* is also strange, sad and disturbing.

Alan Lade, seen as Inspector Rough in *Gaslight* two years ago, plays Dad, while newcomer Sue Shephard plays Connie, his wife. Two others making their Lewes debuts are Lala Redin, who plays their

daughter Linda, and Peter Whitton, who will double as Sid and Charles.

Daniel Hardwick and Gem Bennington-Poulter step up from the Youth Theatre and it is good to welcome back Christine Murphy as Mrs. Clegg. Douglas Wragg appears as Harman, the Council man, and Kirrily Long, fresh from stage-managing *My Boy Jack*, will play the enigmatic Ms. Craig.

This is an interesting and engaging piece by one of Britain's leading playwrights. Don't miss it !

Derek Watts

INFORMATION

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION £10 Double £16
Over 60s, Student & Juniors £6 Double £10
ADMISSION PRICES Evenings £8.
Matinées £6

THE FALSTAFF CLUB

Anthony Jenner Bar; all L.T.C. members are automatically members. The Bar is open before, during and after all evening performances and on special Club social occasions. Interval drinks may be ordered in advance.

THE NEWSLETTER

Published before each production. Contributions in the form of articles or correspondence are welcomed and should be addressed to The Editor, Lewes Little Theatre, Lancaster Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2PX.

MEMBERSHIP

Applications should be sent to the Membership Secretary. Acting Membership involves no extra subscription. Members wishing to act are invited to attend auditions announced in the Newsletters.

CAR PARKING

Limited space at the theatre is available to those with disabilities. Municipal Car Parks, close by in Brook Street and the Needlemakers Centre, are open free of charge after 6pm.

THE WORKING PARTY

This hard-working group undertakes set building, costume, repairs and maintenance, both inside and out, meeting every Tuesday evening.

THE WARDROBE

Hiring of costumes – phone the Wardrobe Team. Alison 479471 Kate Palmer 472622 or Gerry 479432 ten days before to make an appointment. Deposit required.

DISABLED PEOPLE

Members who have difficulty negotiating stairs and steps may enter the Theatre by the former entrance on the east side of the building. Seating close to this entrance is in Rows G9-11, H10-12 and J5-7. We can accommodate one wheelchair at certain performances. For details, ask at the Box Office. A disabled persons' toilet is located between the two main doors to the Auditorium. A fully operational induction loop has been installed. Aids should be adjusted according to the manufacturer's instructions.

OFFICERS

Chair Joanne Cull
Director Pat Shrimpton
Treasurer Bob Leeds
General Secretary Derek Watts
Membership Secretary Bob Leeds

Richard III

OPENING

Saturday 29 March 2014
7.45pm

BOOK NOW



NAME

MEMBER NO

ADDRESS

TEL DAY TEL EVE

Please complete the form legibly and send it with remittance and S.A.E. to Box Office, Lewes Little Theatre, Lancaster St. Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2PX. Cheques should always be made payable to LEWES THEATRE CLUB.

TELEPHONE BOOKINGS: 01273 474826. See page 3 for Box Office hours.

PLAYS	Preferred Date	Alt. Date	Matinee or Evening	No. of seats	Preferred Location	Total
Richard III	First night only 2 for 1	X				
Richard III			Evening £8.00			
Richard III		X	Matinee £6.00			
Enjoy	First night only 2 for 1	X				
Enjoy			Evening £8.00			
Enjoy		X	Matinee £6.00			
Grand Total						

Please note. If the Box Office is able to fulfil only part of a request, a refund may be collected from the Box Office during opening hours. Alternatively, members may prefer to enclose either separate cheques or an open cheque crossed with a maximum amount.