



Having completed our successful run of our Youth production, *The Pied Piper*, we moved swiftly onto the preparations for *The Cemetery Club* by Ivan Menchell which ended our 2008/9 season. The play achieved very complimentary reviews and provided its audiences with a great evening's entertainment. Our thanks to Wendy O'Mahony, Trish Richings, Julie Madigan, Jackie Barrett and Mike Rourke for their hard work and commitment to the play.

We now look forward to a busy 2008/9 season beginning with our annual Youth Workshop directed by David Rowan from 18 to 23 August 2008. The Workshop is open to all members of our Society and was quickly oversubscribed. After the week of preparation, on the Saturday the youngsters will be performing David's adaptation of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* to an audience of family and friends. This will be the tenth anniversary of our Summer Workshop and coincidentally *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* was the first play David directed for us 10 years ago.

Unfortunately we have had to abandon *The Anniversary* owing to a lack of participating men of the appropriate age and our Autumn Production will now be *Benefactors* by Michael Frayn (15-18 October 2008). This is a play shot through with Frayn's wit and humour and is about the way the world changes around you just when you are trying to change it yourself. The plot centres on David and Jane, who are a happy and prosperous couple and by contrast, their neighbours, Colin and Sheila, who are a bitter and struggling couple. David, an architect, is currently working on the redevelopment of an inner city slum - this propels him and his wife to take on their neighbours as their next 'redevelopment' project. Michael Frayn's play explores the contrasting natures of those who help and those who are helped; those who create and those who destroy. Tickets can be obtained from the Ticket Secretary on 01883 724852 at £9.00 (£7.00 for students)

At the time of going to press we still looking to cast the two ladies. One is Jane, an anthropologist, who asserts her increasing emotional and career independence from her architect husband, David, as the play progresses; she has clear insights into the impact of the characters on each other's lives and on the community they believe they are helping. A strong character who perhaps is the only one to emerge with any credibility. The other is Sheila, originally a nurse, who lives in awe and some fear of her intellectual friends, Jane and David, and her domineering and cynical journalist husband, Colin. Sheila's journey through the play sees her gain self confidence and self awareness, via an infatuation with David. She remains, however, more a victim than an instigator of events. In the West End this character was played by Emma Chambers whom you may remember as Alice in *The Vicar of Dibley*. If anyone is interested in either part, please contact Peter Shore on 01883 741830 or solutions@shores.demon.co.uk.

Our pantomime for January 2009 will be *Robin Hood and His Merry Men* which runs from 9 – 17 January 2009. We are pleased to welcome back Neil Reynolds as Director and Fran Reynolds as Choreographer with Lawrie Houghton as Musical Director. The panto is a hilarious mix of fun, music and adventure which is guaranteed to please. A read through and auditions for members will take place on Sunday 14 September 2008 at Hurst Green Community Centre commencing at 10.00am. Unfortunately our junior membership is full at the moment but any adult not already a member but interested in auditioning will be able to join on the day. If anyone who is not presently a member would like further information about audition times please contact Pat Brown on 01342 893522 or pat@pat-mick.fsnet.co.uk

Following on from our successes in the 2008 Southern Counties Drama Festival where we won a total of 6 awards, we aim to enter two plays, one adult and one youth, for the February 2009 Festival to be held at The Barn in the last week of February.