



Bournemouth Little Theatre News



Issue #27

2000/2001 Season

Friday, 19 January 2000

Bournemouth Little Theatre Club Presents
Monday 12 to Saturday 17 February 2001
At Jameson Road at 7.45 pm



A Time Play

I Have Been Here Before

By J B Priestley

Directed by Don Cherrett

For more about the play
and for details about booking, please turn to page 2

I Have Been Here Before — the cast includes:



Andrew Whyatt



Angela Whyatt



Neil Gwynne



Tess Hutton



Rod Gilbert

The Play

The play is set in the lounge of one of those pubs in the Yorkshire countryside that we all wish still existed. Run by a young widow and her father, and providing warmth and a bed for the night for the lucky few who manage to book in time for the long weekend, it offers good food, good company and a great atmosphere. The establishment would have been a star entry in *The Good Pub Guide* if that excellent book had been around when the play was written, shortly before World War II.

Into this quiet retreat come a number of individuals looking for quiet comfort over the Easter holiday. But one of them is an outsider, a German intellectual forced out of Hitler's Germany. He seems to know more about the other guests than they do themselves. He even seems to

know something about what may happen to them in the near future. The pub landlady is particularly disturbed about the effect the German is having on all of them. The remaining guests are all affected by this mystery man as the play develops.

Well, who is he? What does he know? How does he know so much about people he has never (apparently) met? What effect will he have on the occupants of the pub? And what will happen to their relationships among themselves?

By the end, you will begin to wonder whether you yourself have lived in the past or in the future as well as in the present.

The Author

BORN in Bradford in 1894, John Priestley (he adopted the middle name Boynton later in life) never lost either his Yorkshire accent or his connection with his roots. The son of a schoolmaster, he worked as a junior clerk in a wool office before serving in the infantry in World War I. He then took a degree at Trinity Hall Cambridge.

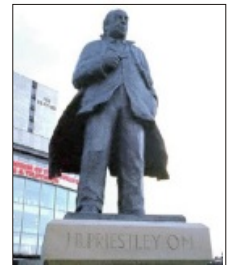
In 1922 he settled in London, where he quickly made a name as a journalist and critic. His first major success as a novelist was with the high-spirited, rambling *The Good Companions* (1929), a picaresque novel about a group of travelling performers. This was followed in 1930 by his most solidly crafted novel *Angel Pavement*, a depiction of the lives of a group of office workers in London that was sombre and realistic.

He was also a prolific dramatist who achieved early successes with such robust comedies as *Laburnum Grove* (1933) and *When We Are Married* (1938).

Influenced by the time theories of John William Dunne, he wrote three plays which were, when subsequently published in one volume described as "Time Plays".

These were *Dangerous Corner*, *Time and the Conways* and *I Have Been Here Before* (1937). He further used time distortion as the basis for *An Inspector Calls*, a mystery drama with moral overtones.

When We Are Married, *An Inspector Calls* and *Time and the Conways* have all been presented by BLTC to great acclaim in recent years. We believe that our present production of *I Have Been Here Before*, though lesser



From this To this
The young Yorkshire Free thinker becomes
the elder World Man of Letters

ADVANCE TICKET BOOKINGS Tickets £6, (with concessions) Members £2.

1. WRITE enclosing cheque and S.A.E. to
Box Office, BLTC, 11 Jameson Road, Bournemouth BH 9 2QD OR
2. CONTACT Sue at home ONLY between 7.30 pm and 9.00 pm EITHER
Monday 29 January to Friday 2 February OR
Monday 5 February to Friday 9 February
on her home number 01202 424640

IMPORTANT NOTE — BOX OFFICE AT JAMESON ROAD IS NO LONGER OPEN FOR CALLERS BY PHONE OR IN PERSON THE WEEK BEFORE ANY SHOW

If you are booking for the One-act Plays, you still need to use the booking system on this page, as indicated to the left of this message.

PLEASE NOTE
Tickets for early bookings (with money and SAE) will be dispatched within two weeks before the show in the order in which the bookings were received.

Bournemouth Little Theatre Club Presents
For TWO NIGHTS only
Friday 23 and Saturday 24 February 2001

Two One-act Plays

Both by George MacEwan Green
Directed by Jack Snell

Don Gent, Alan Jarvis, Peter Dawson and Lin Denning

in

One Season's King



and

Ginnie Waters, Don Gent, Jason Green and Jack Snell

in

Sequence of Events

Both of these plays will be entered in local and
national drama festivals during 2001

For booking arrangements, see page 2

More about these plays on page 4

What are our Two One-act Plays about?

One Season's King

On a cold day in October, one woman and three men meet in a graveyard in front of a newly dug grave.

Their lives have all been intertwined, all three men having at one time or another courted the woman. This is a play of rivalries between the three men and the class war between them.

The question to be answered at the end of the play is — Of what significance is the newly dug grave?

Sequence of Events

This play revolves around a hangman, a prostitute, a murderer and the murderer's parents.

In three separate areas on stage, they play out the murder — the effect on the parents — the effect sexually and socially the murder has on the hangman and his family — and the psychological reasons for the murder.

Support the One-act Festival!

Lyn Richell, Chair of the Dorset Drama League makes this plea

I am writing to ask for your help in the coming Festival 2001. As you will appreciate it is vital, in order for us to continue, that we have a paying audience and in the main this is not happening, therefore I am asking you — the teams that enter — to bring along your own support and for the groups that do not or are not entering in 2001 to support the Festival.

We only have enough money in the bank to pay the venue. The teams' entry fee (which we have kept as low as we dare) does not cover the adjudicator's expenses. We rely solely on audience numbers to fund the deficit. Over the last few years we have made a consistent loss and therefore unless in 2001 we not only cover our expenses but make a profit I am afraid it is likely to be the last Dorset Drama League Festival.

I have been involved with the Dorset Drama League since 1975,



some 25 years but only a short time in the history of the Festival. It would be extremely sad and a bad day for Drama if it ceased to exist.

Please, please promote the Festival in 2001 and if you can't enter a team yourself perhaps you could get your members together and bring a party to at least one night. If you are entering, please encourage your own members to support you on the night you play and possibly come to other nights as well.

I do hope you will take this letter seriously and talk to everyone in your group as well as like-minded friends and relations and make Festival 2001 the best ever, in order for there to be a Festival 2002.

Thank you for reading this letter and I sincerely look forward to seeing you in March.

New ideas

NEW Ideas, New Committee, New Labour — no, no, we got that wrong! But in future we are going to try and tell you what your BLTC Executive Committee (henceforward "BLTC Exec!") is doing. It will also tell you why it is doing it, subject to the laws of defamation and the Human Rights Act. So, then — what's new?

Well, we have been tackling some basic problems. One is the mens loos. They were mended, then they caused more problems. But they are noisy, which doesn't matter in a comedy, but can really disturb when they make a noisy comment on the plot during a really serious dramatic moment. Scientists are being assembled to tackle

this shattering problem.

Then we have extended the Mens' Dressing Room, which is upstairs on the right, from the audience's point of view, which is why we call it 'Stage Left'. So for the first time, believe me, a member of the cast can get to the loo during a performance. This is a milestone in human endeavour right up there with manned flight, the H-Bomb and reaching the moon. Your Committee (sorry — BLTC Exec) thought you needed to know.

We are also dumping the Committee Room. Henceforth it will store flats — the large painted things at the back of the set — and much more will be stored under the auditorium. That means all the old furniture will be under where you sit!

And this newsletter needs a shakeup. So BLTC

Exec has decided that when audition notices appear in these columns, they should be accompanied by directors' notes, briefly telling potential auditioners what the play is about, and describing individual characters. This doesn't mean that those directors who wish to do so are stopped from putting notices up in the Green Room Bar: but they will be expected to provide the Play Selection Sub-Committee (henceforth called "OffPlay") with this information when they submit their plays for consideration. This ought not to be a problem for directors — after all they should know how to describe the characters in their shows.

We will hope to put more Exec news in these columns, subject to not boring you all to death.



Members! Playgoers! — Here's a competition — Please write a funny caption for the above picture. The winner will receive two free tickets for any one of our shows this season. The Editor's decision is final
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Overheard in the Green Room Bar

"No Keith, I'm not a member of a political party — I'm a Conservative."

"Hugh, aren't you tired of cleaning the loos, sweeping the stage, and picking up the beer cans at BLTC? Wouldn't you like to retire?"

"What?! And give up show business?"

Two January Auditions: Please Come!

A third reminder: Pat Gray's audition for *The Day After the Fair* is on Wednesday 24 January at 7.30 pm. There are 4 female and 2 male roles. Performances from Monday 2 April. Pat is reachable on 01202 737747 (home) or 01202 442755 (work).

A third reminder: Tony Orman's audition for *Separate Tables* is on Friday 26 January at 7.30 pm. There are 8 female and 3 male roles. Performances from Monday 21 May. Tony is reachable on 01202 554291.

Theatrical survivors

We examine the careers of Adrian Noble and David Hare

Adrian Noble — survivor at the RSC

RECENTLY Adrian Noble, the Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, could be seen in buoyant mood, gleefully experimenting with the complicated dimmer switches in a brand new Sadler's Wells rehearsal room. A seasoned director of the classics, he nevertheless exhibited at 50 a youthful enthusiasm as he rehearsed his latest project, a musical based on Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*.

Only a few years ago his every decision was being criticised: the RSC was said to have lost its way when he curtailed the company's London season at the Barbican, expanded the touring programme and introduced separate winter and summer seasons in London and Stratford. He is delighted to announce that today he feels fully vindicated. Of course, no one much is listening, the spotlight having swung on to the National Theatre where Trevor Nunn's leadership is being dissected weekly in the newspapers and on television. The two major theatre companies are in and out of the cold by turns. For now, though, Noble is enjoying the sunshine.

New theatregoers, many from the West Midlands, have been attracted to the RSC in their thousands, he says, seeing it for the first time as "a local theatre as well as a national and international company". Eager to quote statistics, Noble says that two years ago *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the first children's show on the Stratford stage for 30 years, was an important catalyst, attracting "40,000 new attenders in its first year and 48,000 in its second, which led to increased ticket sales for Shakespeare, with family attenders up, overall, by 19,000 and school attenders up by over 30,000."

The epic staging of all Shakespeare's history plays is well under way, a "millennium project" which could not have happened, says Noble, without the flexibility of his new regime. And he is delighted to say that sales for *The Secret Garden* are already outstripping those for *Wardrobe*.

Having never read Hodgson Burnett's book as a child, and with his own children, at three and five, being a bit young for it, Noble is bemused by the near-reverence with which many adults refer to *The Secret Garden* as their favourite childhood story.

Written in 1911, the novel follows nine-year-old Mary Lennox from India, where she is orphaned in a cholera epidemic, to the Yorkshire moors. Spoilt and lonely, she is taken into the gloomy, rambling house of her uncle, Archibald Craven, who is locked in grief for his late wife, the mother of Colin. Mary discovers the reclusive Colin, who thinks himself deformed, and finds the abandoned garden which was once the favourite retreat of his mother, Lily. Together with two young local people, Martha the maid and her Pan-like brother Dickon, she restores the garden and his father from their misery.

Noble has kept to the period, presenting a starchy, hierarchical household, ruled by the obsessive housekeeper, Mrs Medlock, but there is a degree of freedom outdoors. The garden is "a real neglected garden, but it is also a metaphor for a frozen heart".

Noble's collaborators on this very English project are Americans Marsha Norman and Lucy Simon, respectively writer and composer of the prize-winning Broadway version.



Natalie Morgan, Craig Purnell, Luke Newbury and Linzi Hateley in *The Secret Garden*

€ *The Secret Garden* opened last November 28 at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon (01789 403403)

David Hare — survivor at life

PLAYWRIGHTS are rather like Hollywood starlets. It all happens in their twenties, when they are young and sexy and vital. They become successful quickly, and make a name for themselves. Then, somewhere in their thirties, they turn a corner. Youth can no longer be counted on to cast its vigorous spell. To stay in the game, to ensure they are not turfed out by the next generation of whippersnappers, they need something else: technique, a more profound allure. For most film actresses, and many playwrights, the party is over by 40.

This nearly happened to David Hare. In 1978, at 31, he wrote *Plenty*, at the time his most ambitious play by far. It embodied a classic theme of Hare's work — that Britain won the war but lost the peace. The critics savaged it, and nearly killed off Hare's career altogether.

Having never previously questioned his mission to write for the stage, he took his wife and three young children to America. For several years everything he wrote went into the dustbin. His marriage failed and he admits he had a sustained nervous breakdown for about four years in which everything in his life got thrown out. He made those around him unhappy and he now looks back on the period in horror.

Eventually, though, Hare got back in the saddle. He co-wrote *Pravda*, in which he had his say about ruthless newspaper magnates, then produced *Racing Demon*, the intensely moving

portrait of the modern Church of England. That, along with *Murmuring Judges*, was part of a state-of-the-nation trilogy which ended with *Absence of War*, a tragic account of Labour's failure at the ballot box in 1992. And in the same year he remarried, to the designer Nicole Farhi. A trilogy of plays about love ensued.

Hare's career as a playwright had started with a play called *Slag*, which shocked his parents, though they supported him all the way. He had knocked out the script in only four days.

His 1990s' return to form was confirmed when in 1999 New Yorkers could see David Hare in triplicate. There was Dame Judi Dench in *Amy's View*, Nicole Kidman in *The Blue Room*, and, in *Via Dolorosa*, they could see Hare himself, delivering an impassioned monologue about the Israeli-Palestinian impasse. Nicole Kidman, a world famous film star had, surprisingly agreed to act scenes in the nude in *The Blue Room*: not surprisingly, the play when performed earlier in London's West End had been an instantaneous sell-out.

Since then he has written the critically acclaimed *My Zinc Bed*, which aired last year for a short season at the Royal Court Theatre. Again he was able to obtain an actress of the standard of film star Julia Ormond aided by *The Full Monty*'s Tom Wilkinson.

Hare has survived *Plenty*, has survived 40, and survived divorce and, at the age of 53 has a knighthood. He has even written a play, *Acting Up*, a diary of his year as a novice actor in *Via Dolorosa*.

Today, David Hare is once more articulate. He speaks as he writes, in paragraphs. The passion is also there. In person he is affable and amusing. But his work is somehow not lovable. He is not revered like Harold Pinter, adored like Alan

Bennett, or applauded like Tom Stoppard and Alan Ayckbourn.

Why is this? Perhaps the reason is that he has never written about his upbringing: the public has no sense of his vulnerability, or the forces which made him. He was born in 1947, and brought up at Bexhill, East Sussex, which in the fifties was, he says, "incredibly dull".

He had liberal teachers at Lancing College, and attended Cambridge in the swinging sixties. But despite that, he married too early, at 23.

The trauma of his divorce occurred in the USA just after he had fathered three sons, including twins. He had become an absent parent, just like his own dad. He has now seen them educated and launched into careers and is now free to pursue a future devoted to plays about lost causes — "the Church of England, the British Empire, the theatre".



David Hare



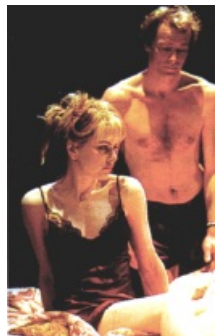
Steven Mackintosh, Julia Ormond and Tom Wilkinson in *My Zinc Bed* (2000)



Kate Nelligan (right) in *Plenty* (1978)



Michael Gambon and Lia Williams in *Skylight* (1996)



Nicole Kidman and Iain Glenn in *The Blue Room*

Theatre Quiz by Mike Satchell

"Pas devant les domestiques" Servants and domestic staff are regularly major characters as well as walk-on parts in theatre through the ages. However their names are often forgotten, so how well can you remember them? Please name the following:

1. Professor Higgins' housekeeper in Pygmalion?
 2. The two butlers in The Importance of Being Ernest?
 3. The butler and maid in Lord Arthur Saville's Crime?
 4. The cook and the maid in When We Are Married?
 5. In Pinero's one-act play Playgoers all the female servants resign including the parlour maid, who subsequently appears in a little known one-act play A Seat in the Park. What was her name?
 6. The butler and maid in Relative Values?
 7. The French maid in Private Lives?
 8. The butler in Agatha Christie's The Hollow?
 9. The butler in The Chiltern Hundreds who subsequently appeared in The Reluctant Peer?
 10. The school handyman and the cleaner in Intimate Exchanges?
- Answers at bottom of page.

Audition

Jack Snell is holding an audition for the Irish Drama Donny Boy at the Club on Wednesday 28 February at 7.30 pm.

There are 2 male parts and 1 female part. The lady must be "older" and, of the two gentlemen, one is middle-aged and the other is younger. An ability to perform with an Irish accent is essential.

Production dates are Monday 2 to Saturday 7 July 2001.

Interested actors may contact Jack on 01202 519994.

Mrs Joyce Caton

Joyce Caton, who died recently, was involved in local amateur theatre in the Bournemouth area from the time when she and her husband moved here in approximately 1948, until she retired from "amdrams" to concentrate on her painting in 1983. She joined BLTC in early 1950 first as an actress, then progressing to her greater love — directing.

Some of the plays in which she appeared (usually as a lead) were The

Review

Linda Kirkman had this to say in the Daily Echo about How The Other Half Loves:

"AS if to confirm Alan Ayckbourn's enduring popularity as a comedy writer, this production opened to a satisfyingly packed house on Monday night.

It is a difficult play set-wise, as it requires two separate rooms in one, but thanks to an ingenious design by Mike Satchell, the tiny stage proved no obstacle and it worked a treat — although a vital second-act prop which was mistakenly on stage at the beginning was unfortunate. I was also a little bemused as to why a chair from one room suddenly had its cover removed to become part of another's furniture — particularly as its bright colour and prominent position made it extremely noticeable.

However, this detracted only slightly from Lin Denning's witty production about three couples, two dinner parties and many misunderstandings.

The laughs soon come thick and fast, many of them generated by Don Gent's delightfully vague Frank Foster. Jacqui Keyse created a realistic character as his wife, Fiona.

Patricia Richardson's mouse-like Mary Featherstone employed a masterful use of body language, and there were well-judged performances too from Don Cherrett, Tom Swadling and Tess Hutton."

'Donny Boy' revived

WHEN a charismatic director like Jack Snell is thwarted by a casting problem, as he was last Autumn, when the drama Donny Boy collapsed two weeks before it was due to open, he does not give up. Since that unhappy failure, which caused him some embarrassment and the Club a small financial loss — to say nothing of an empty theatre — Jack has been determined to revive the production. The Committee agreed, but of course, it could not be certain that the two remaining members of the cast who had originally been available last October would still be available next July.

Accordingly, as you will see by delicately moving your eyes to the left, the show is being re-auditioned. Jack will also need to confirm who is available to assist backstage.

We wish him (and ourselves) better luck this time. The dates are also set out in our Reminders column, if you will delicately turn your eyes to the right hand side of this page.

By the way, does anybody ever use the Reminders column to actually remind themselves of what we are proposing? I do hope so.

Lady Asks For Help, Corinth House, Carrington, VC, The Miser, Farewell Eugene, The Day's Mischief, Will Any Gentleman? and September Tide.

Among plays she directed at BLTC were The Lark, Master of Arts, The Firstborn, Arms and the Man, And So To Bed (1967 — stage-managed by her son, Paul), Angels in Love, Semi Detached, Lavender at Dusk, Black Chiffon, The Love of Four Colonels (starring inter alia Keith Rawlings), Spring 1600, and Young Wives Tale.

Her first loyalty was always to BLTC. But she was also the doyenne of Brownsea Open Air Theatre, which she founded in 1964 with other BLTC members. She directed

One-acts go major

NEXT season's shows will be considered by the Play Selection Sub-Committee on Friday 23 March in the Green Room Bar at 7.30 pm. More details in our March 9th edition. BUT the Executive Committee has already decided that next year there will be two one-act plays in the February slot, as a full six-night airing. One of the plays will be performed later in the Dorset Drama League's Festival, in the 'A' category — which leads onward and upward to area, regional, English and UK levels. Remember, we have won the UK title before, in 1983, in the late Elsa Jacob's production of Little Eyolf, so all things are possible. Directors who would like to offer one act plays are asked to put them to the Sub-Committee. If you have one, call Chairman Don Gent on 01202 389725.

So, where's the Committee?

YOUR Committee isn't hiding from you — no way. So, when we hear from one of our keener members, that it would be useful if all Committee members' phone numbers could be set out in every newsletter, we rush to comply.

Why should you need our numbers? Well, you might want to complain bitterly about the ghastliness of our productions, or the ambiguous taste and quality of our teas and coffees.

But perhaps you might have bright suggestions as to how we might improve our product.

Or you might just want to offer to help out front of house for, say, one evening of one of our performances. Well, you might.

So, from now on you will see the Committee members' posts and phone numbers on this page.

As below:

Don Gent, Chair	389725
Noel Davenport, Treasurer	766690
Hugh Norris, Secretary	761400
Lee Tilson, Stage Director	874072
Hilary Jefferys, Wardrobe	298356
Derek Hyder, Publicity	424640
Marcia Caton, Bar/FOH	430039
Tony Orman, Members/ newsletter	554291



The late Mrs Joyce Caton

the first 19 Brownsea plays, her son Chris appearing in 17 of them. Additionally, she was often asked to direct elsewhere and occasionally she was persuaded to accept. For example she directed (among other shows) Annie Get Your Gun for Poole & Parkstone (as it then was).

She also wrote sketches and one act plays, and would run theatre workshops in conjunction with the professional company at Palace Court Theatre. She also adjudicated at festivals both locally and further afield including the Channel Islands.

Mr Aubrey Pratt

MANY older members of the Club will fondly recall Aubrey Pratt who has recently died, survived by his wife, Rose, now aged 90.

Both were active in the Club in the 1960s and 1970s. When we moved into our present premises, which were completely empty, it was Aubrey and his good friend Don Colley who together beat the interior into shape. They built the stage, the counter in front of the kitchen, lined all the walls in the Green Room Bar, and then constructed the liquor bar itself. Some highly imaginative wit named the bar "the Aubreydon Bar" which name it still bears.

Of course, Aubrey was also involved heavily in all the areas generally referred to as "backstage" — set building, painting, design and stage management.

All in all, we have much for which we should be grateful to him.

Reminders

Wed 24 January, 2001 Audition The Day After the Fair at 7.30 pm
Fri 26 January, 2001. Audition for Separate Tables at 7.30 pm.
Mon 12-Sat 17 February, 2001 Performances of I Have Been Here Before at 7.45 pm
Fri 23/Sat 24 February, 2001. Performances of 2 one-act plays at 7.45 pm
Wed 28 February, 2001. Audition for Donny Boy at 7.30 pm
Mon 2-Sat 7 April, 2001 Performances of The Day After the Fair at 7.45 pm
Mon 21-Sat 26 May 2001 Performances of Separate Tables at 7.45 pm
Mon 2-Sat 7 July, 2001. Performances of Donny Boy at 7.45 pm

Answers to quiz

1. Mrs Pearce. 2. Merriman, Lane.
3. Baines, Nelly. 4. Mrs Northrop, Ruby Brittle. 5. Miss Beechcroft.
6. Crestwell, Alice. 7. Louise.
8. Gudgeon. 9. Beecham.
10. Lionel Hepplewicke, Sylvia.