

# Bampton Players November newsletter



Well, how time flies! Here we are in glorious autumn with the gold colours and mellow sunshine all around. I hope you all had a great summer and are starting to wrap up now ready for winter. Following our most recent committee meeting please see below some notes.

To start with - a reminder of forthcoming events in chronological order:

## **Quiz Night**

Get your thinking caps on for Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November at Riverside Hall - 6.30 for 7.00 PM. Teams of 6. £42 for a table of 6. Eat your main course before you come and you will be provided with a dessert and coffee. Proceeds to be split between the Players and the Hall. There will also be a bar.

## **Players Christmas meal at The Ginger Peanut - 19 December**

This is a reminder for you all - please reply to Judi with your meal choice and deposit of £10 a head as soon as possible. Thanks.

## **Panto 2019 - 'Treasure Island'**

We had a read through at Avril's on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October and a casting session on Halloween night. Bodes well for the 'evil' cast of the panto. A rehearsal schedule has been issued with targeted rehearsals to be announced to the cast this week. Can you see a ghost??

Avril has asked for volunteers to help with the panto props. If you are able and willing to help please contact Avril directly.

Remind your friends and family to book their tickets early for this spectacular event next February!

## **Spring Play 2019**

The decision had previously been made at the AGM not to hold a supper theatre next year but to perform a play instead. Wendy had a read through for this at her house on Saturday 7 July and the play she chose is 'The Odd Couple' by Neil Simon which is very amusing. Riverside Hall has been booked from the 1<sup>st</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> June for final rehearsals and performances. We will let you know when tickets go on sale.

## **Résumé of recent events**

### **Medieval Banquet at Riverside Hall:**

This was a great success and good fun was had by all who attended. Thanks Claire for organising it.

### **Shakespeare in the garden - 'A Comedy of Errors'**

We couldn't have had better weather for these performances and each night was better than the last. There were a few unscheduled laughs as well as those that were scripted and the audience and cast all seemed to enjoy themselves. Thank you to Zara and Charlie once again for allowing us to use the beautiful setting of your garden and for allowing hordes of 'the general public' access to come and sit in it with their picnics etc. Congratulations once again to Avril for getting everyone into shape and character.

### **Players BBQ**

We didn't have such good weather for the BBQ as we hoped for but that didn't dampen our spirits and we had a lovely evening at 'Sherwood'. Many thanks to our hosts for the evening Avril and Hugh.

## **Theatre trip - 'The Comedy About A Bank Robbery'**

This play was well worth going to see. The stage and props were brilliant and the timing of some of the sketches was spot on. I haven't laughed so loud for ages! Thanks to Avril for organising this trip and to Jan for driving us all in the community bus.

## **Autumn production - Stone Cold Murder**

Unfortunately we were on holiday when this play was performed but we went to one of the rehearsals the week before we went away. Thank you all for allowing us to see it 'in the raw'. The report from the local NODA rep couldn't have been better - and all hail to Colin for stepping in at the last minute to save the day and cover for Charlie who was unable to continue due to a cracked rib. Everyone we have spoken to about it said how good it was. Well done Wendy for a very entertaining evening!

## **Play Reading**

We had a great evening at Jane's house reading through 'Murdered to Death' and I had a lot of positive feedback from it. I will arrange another one for some time after Christmas as everyone is far too busy in the run up to consider anything like this. Watch this space for details of the next date, venue and play.

## **Travels with our Treasurer**

As many of you will know Mick and Pat's travels have been somewhat curtailed during recent weeks but he is on the mend now. I asked if he was up to giving us another instalment as I thought it might distract him a bit - and he very kindly obliged. So here goes:-

"You have to cast your mind back to those endless hot days of summer. It's early July. We set off from Tewkesbury marina upstream towards Pershore where we managed to squeeze into the last available mooring before shopping for the riverside bbq that evening. We liked Pershore, it's just about the right size and has some lovely old buildings not to mention excellent moorings, but we needed to move on, and so cruised to Evesham through some wonderful old fashioned English scenery. Evesham looked promising from the river so we walked around the town ..... and hurried back to the boat. It has fast food, pawn shops and, well, that's it actually. And a couple of pubs that I'd only go into with 10 of my largest and meanest looking friends.

Cruised north again through mixed scenery and a dearth of available moorings. Lost another fender in a lock but recovered it with my trusty hook on a pole. Then lost another one to a poorly positioned tree (I was getting tired and hot) which disappeared faster than I could reverse. The fender, not the tree. Must develop a new fender deployment policy. Eventually stopped for lunch at 3pm two locks further than intended, at Bidford Grange lock, in the middle of nowhere. Watched a worried mum & dad moorhen with 3 tiny balls of fluff on the opposite bank of the lock cut.

Started the next day with an hour of sweeping away the arboreal seeds & helicopters that covered every nook and cranny. Cruised up to Stratford via several locks, the last of which was thronging with tourists. I'll never

know how some of them avoided falling in while taking contortionist selfies framing the gate, Pat with a windlass in her hand, and the boat, while trying to avoid framing any of the other tourists.

As the Scottish play was on that night we 'pushed up' in best jeans and popped over the bridge to the RSC for what turned out to be our favourite performance of that play.

Earlier start today to avoid the mid afternoon rush for good moorings, so turned round, waving the RSC farewell, and off we go. This is our first time going down in locks, so need brain in gear.

Met a man who had broken down, waiting for rescue service to arrive. Meanwhile he was helping boats through the lock. Every cloud....! We spotted our first terrapin on the way and found a very peaceful mooring at Offenham with more moorhens plus chicks for company. We are well away from trees so we can get a tv signal in and don't get sticky helicopters all over the boat. But nor do we get shade. I think I might melt today.

Just a hunch, hoped to find one of my lost fenders in some weeds on a particular bend this morning but no such luck.

Managed to use the breeze as my friend today rather than fighting it when entering locks, and it worked.

It's easier going down locks. The boat doesn't get thrown around as much as when going up so I can get off and help Pat with the paddles & gates. Talked to some boaters at a lock today and they blanked us. They had a baby on board so perhaps they didn't get much sleep last night. Met the antidote at the next lock - his life story in ten minutes! Very nice man from near Lutterworth so perhaps he sensed a kindred spirit. [we lived there in a previous existence]

Saw a cloud today. Keep seeing boat names that I wish I'd thought of.

Spotted a snake swimming alongside the boat just after we moored at Pershore. The consensus among boaters and walkers was an adder, but on later analysis we think grass snake. Beautiful though whatever it was.

Friday 13th and Pat fell downstairs into the boat and cut her arm through to the bone. 5 hours at Tewkesbury & Cheltenham A&Es.

Back to Gloucester mid July. Very high tides are washing debris ie tree trunks over the weir at Gloucester so we have to time our passage precisely to allow the receding tide to wash it back again but not so late that it washes us over as well. Got to the lock unscathed then wedged a log across the entrance gate with the stream trying to take the stern down to the weir on our right. And you can't get into a lock sideways. The lock was full apart from us so plenty of suggestions, gestures and shouting, none of which I could hear. Brute strength and ignorance got us there in the end. Jenny & Pat go shopping in Gloucester, meanwhile I caught the bus to Tewksbury and drove the van back to Saul, and biked back to Gloucester. Rain!

Friday 20th - Pat's stitches taken out at Frampton surgery. Apart from a bit of shock, all's well that ends well.

Held up for 20 minutes by BBC filming a kids' waterborne fantasy on the way to Sharpness where we had to be before 7pm to get through the last swing bridges before it closes.

Next day, up at 5am to get into Sharpness lock at 5.45 to pick up our pilot. Entered the Severn at about 6.30 and fought the tide for 30 minutes. Under the 2 motorway bridges which are HUGE. Into Portishead lock just on high tide at about 10.30. Jenny & Mark came over in the evening for drinkies in the marina bar and dinner on board.

Next day at 6.00am met our second pilot for Portishead lock to Bristol. Uneventful crossing but going under the suspension bridge was memorable. Moored opposite SS Great Britain for a few days' breather.

Moved up to Keynsham Lock (K,E,Y... etc - remember that?) then on towards Bath. Topped up the water tank on the way at the slowest tap in the world. Stopped in Bath for a few days and revisited the sights after 25 years of absence. It seems less innocent, busier and much more like everywhere else than I remember it.

Did the 6 locks at Bathwick with Tim's help. Dinner on board and walked into Bath centre for a couple of pints of cider.

Cruised from Bath to Limpley Stoke. Cycled to village and back. Unusual pains in chest, must be indigestion. Add Rennies to the shopping list.

Walked to Avoncliffe viaduct and caught train back to Limpley Stoke. This is a divine part of the world.

Cruised from Limpley to Semington. Soooo slow! Hippy boats moored everywhere and hireboats doing what hireboats do. Bradford very pretty but turned into a linear sink estate by tent city and boat dwellers shouting abuse in between swigs of export lager. They tell everyone to slow down, it seems to have become a pastime for them. Very sad, there are clearly social problems here. Some of the boats look in danger of sinking.

Very wet journey through 5 locks and 2 swing bridges with little or no help from other boaters who were all sensibly staying put. Arrived Caen Hill marina at 12.20. Nice hot shower, heating on and beans on toast to warm up.

Boat safely offline now so off to Scotland in the van for a couple of weeks.

Tuesday 28th - received esteemed visitors from Bampton for a couple of days. We all went to the Wharf theatre in Devizes to see the very funny Coulrophobia. Next day cruised to the first swing bridge, turned and moored for breakfast. Back to the boatyard for 1pm. Hugh had proved to be an excellent navigator and driver, and Avril very good company!

Prepared hull damage for painting. Painted coat one of primer. Cycling recce to Sells Green, Barge Inn & Semington for parking & mooring. Damned indigestion. Next day, routine check-up at Musgrove.

Chugged through 3 locks and 2 swing bridges to Barge Inn moorings. Moved the van from Sells Green to Semington, cycled back to Barge. This indigestion is getting worse.

Chugged to Hilperton Boatyard for diesel, water, pumpout & chandlery (more boyztoyz). Back to the pound just outside the marina for a few days leading up to our planned winter stopover.

25 September - routine visit to Bampton surgery, pharmacy, dentists, opticians and a Rotary audit meeting. Redirected by Dr Helen back to Musgrove for more tests, where they admitted me and wouldn't let me leave!

Not much happened for a few weeks so that's a good place to stop. Have a lovely Christmas everyone

Mick & Pat"

## Finally

Our next committee meeting will be in the New Year so for now may I take this opportunity - albeit early - to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I'll be in touch again re the next play reading if it pre-dates the next newsletter.



Merry Christmas

&

Happy New Year