

Time to take a deep breath as Studio gears up for a very busy couple of months with no less than four productions all vying for rehearsal space, an excitable gaggle of nominees and supporters heading to a posh hotel in Southampton to see if they've won a Curtain Call Award, and much head-scratching and brain-storming going on to think of ways of raising cash for our proposed extension, which has now been given the go-ahead. Phew and big woo-hoo!

## Thank you, Sir Terry...

But first, a shining endorsement from the late, great Sir Terry Pratchett, who became a fan of ours after attending a performance of *Going Postal*. Sadly, our association with the Disc World author, who lived but a stone's throw from Salisbury, was all too short. But we made enough of an impression for him to mention

us in his memoir *A Slip of the Keyboard*. This is what he said:

*'Stage adaptations go wrong when someone thinks they know better than the author – it's as simple as that. Otherwise, it generally works. Last year, locally a small company put on "Going Postal". They were amateurs, but bloody good and far more professional than the professionals. They got it exactly right, including the music. So I think I'll stick to amdram - I can beat them up if they get it wrong. But I don't need to because generally they get it right.'*

## Seven nominations...

The Oscars of the South aka the Daily Echo's Curtain Call Awards take place in Southampton at the end of January and take in any shows their critics have reviewed in the 12 months from December to December. Three of our productions get nods this year: *And Then There Were None* (Val Greathead/Best Supporting Actress; Joel Powney, Lesley Bates and Alistair Faulkner /Best Lighting, Sound, and

Special Effects; Pam Hanan and Rae Owen/Best Costumes), *The Crucible* (John Davis/two nominations - Best Actor and Best Newcomer; Peter Kelly/Best Director) and *Don't Get Your Vicars in a Twist* (Keith Edmund/Best Actor in a Comedy). Carriages and tables have been booked and glad rags are being dry cleaned even as I write.....

## Changes at the top...

Well, not quite at the top. George Goulding was elected for another two year stint as chairman at our AGM, but Hugh Abel gave a sigh of relief as he managed to relinquish the pen and notepad of secretary to Emma Young after umpteen years of sterling service. Peter Kelly and Linda Hayman agreed to share the role of Director of Productions for the 2016-17 season and are even now mulling over the options to delight you from September onwards.

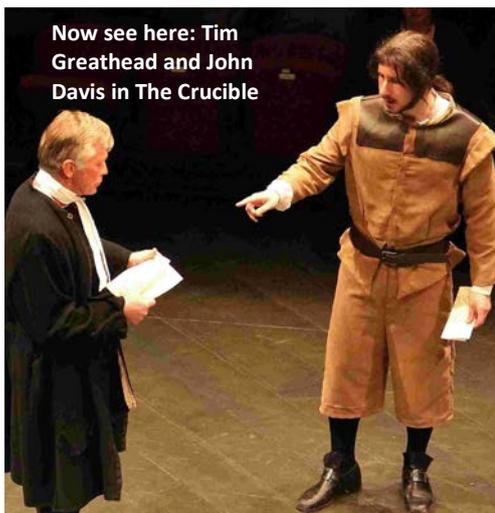
## Even bigger changes to come....

In October, we learned that we had finally been granted planning approval on our proposals for an extension to our current building, which will give us much needed additional dressing rooms and rehearsal space. The estimated cost is somewhere in the region of £500,000, so we are going to need all the help and support we can with fund-raising over the coming months.

## The season so far....

Last season finished with a production of *Lark Rise* in the very special setting of Dog Kennel Barn at Breamore. Our audiences were greeted by cast members in costume and picnics were enjoyed with the rain holding off most evenings until everyone was safely seated in the ancient barn, where our tech team had done a miraculous job of rigging lights without disturbing the bats.

Our next production, *Don't Get Your Vicars in a Twist*, was a box office hit and coincided with Studio hosting the Southern Region Conference of the Little Theatre Guild, of which it is a member. Before watching the show, representatives from LTG theatres across the south of England were entertained to workshops on stage make-up, stage photography and play-writing led by our own Val Greathead, Anthony von Roretz and Studio patron Barney Norris, plus a tour of Salisbury by historian George Fleming.



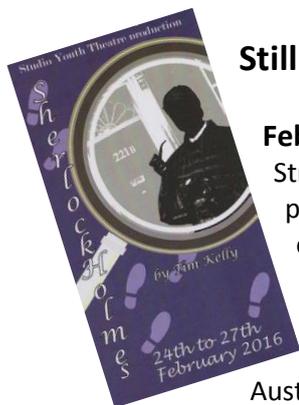
Now see here: Tim Greathead and John Davis in *The Crucible*



Don't blink: Natasha George and Val Greathead

Compliments flew throughout the weekend, much to the gratification of our LTG rep for many years and organiser of the event, Peter Mitchell, who is now handing over the reins to Tim Greathead. Finally, we joined Toad, Ratty, Mole and Badger on the riverbank as they tackled the Wildwooders in the battle for Toad Hall. Giant projections and some jolly singing brought Kenneth Grahame's much-loved classic to life and proved very popular with our audience.

### Still to come:



**February 24-27: Sherlock Holmes.** Studio Youth Theatre opens the doors on 221B Baker Street to tackle one of Holmes' stickiest cases. All the usual suspects will be present in the form of Dr Watson, Mrs Hudson, and Moriarty as well as host of others. Prepare to be baffled.....

**April 11-16: Female Transport.** Six women, convicted of petty crimes, are sentenced to transportation to the penal colony in Australia. Steve Gooch's stark drama follows their six month voyage in a cramped cell below decks, charting the friendships and alliances built up on the journey in the face of hardship and adversity. **NB Contains strong language.**



**May 23-28: Salad Days.** One of the longest running musicals on the London stage in the 1950s, Salad Days is perfect for the sunshine evenings of summer - a light musical froth about two young graduates, Timothy and Jane, setting out in life and in love, who are left in charge of a magic piano that makes everyone want to dance. **NB There will be a Saturday matinee at 2.30pm.**



**July 14-16 and 18-23: A Midsummer Night's Dream.** Perennially popular, Shakespeare's magical comedy of warring fairies, confused lovers and amateur theatricals from a band of chirpy workmen is always a crowd-pleaser. Join us for an evening of such stuff as dreams are made on in director Barry Matthews-Keel's bold revisiting of this classic favourite.



### PLUS

**A PLAY WOT SHE WROTE:** All female theatre group Juno is staging a showcase event at Salisbury Arts Centre on February 7 at 7.30pm. Five new short plays by "some of the South-West's brightest women writers" (it says in the blurb) will be performed on the theme of Circling the Square. One them is by Studio's Lesley Bates, who recently directed The 39 Steps.

**FESTIVAL FEAST:** In March and April, we plan to enter the **Dorset Drama League one-act play festival** held in Shaftesbury and the **Totton Festival of Drama** with the dinner party scene from Caryl Churchill's seminal play **Top Girls**. It gives some of our finest actresses a terrific showcase and feeds them at the same time. We are planning to give our friends and supporters the chance to see our festival entry at Studio in March. More details to follow.

**RAFFLE PRIZES WANTED:** We have a lot of money to raise for our new extension, so fund-raising supremo Peter Mitchell would be delighted to receive any of your unwanted Christmas presents that might make suitable raffle prizes. Contact him on 07986 133776 or via peter.mitchell203@ntlworld.com

All performances take place at Studio Theatre in Ashley Road, Salisbury, unless otherwise stated. Our box office is now Salisbury Tourist Information Centre in Fish Row. Tickets are £10, concessions £8, and performances start at 7.30pm, unless otherwise stated. Seats can be booked on 01722 342860.