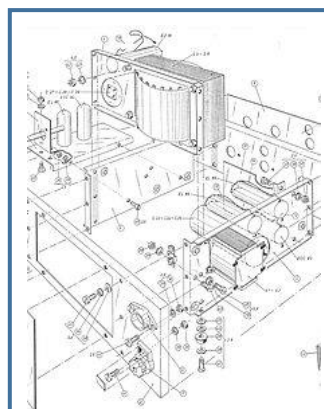
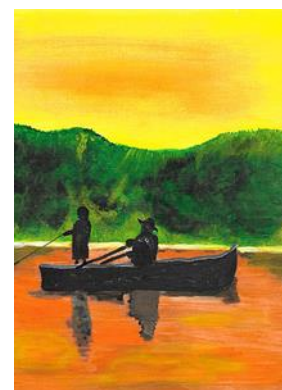


Your beautiful and modest Jester editors here, bringing you a new edition for April and May. It's all happening in the studio right now, as the cast of *Beaux Stratagem* get ready for their run. Lucy has been hibernating since the end of *Dinner*, whilst Rog has been donning tights and making merry in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century...and he's also been rehearsing for *Beaux*!

We would love to hear your suggestions, comments and ideas for future editions, so please email us at [jester@kelvinplayers.co.uk](mailto:jester@kelvinplayers.co.uk)



Lucy and Roger



### In this edition, you'll find:

- Message from the Chairman
- Production updates – ‘*Beaux Stratagem*’ and the ‘Devised Play’
- New members
- *Dinner* digested
- Kelvin and the LTG (what is that?)
- Devised play news
- New ‘Launch Night’ format – starts with *A View from the Bridge*
- Observations from the ‘Chair’
- Deadline fast approaching!
- Rehearsed Readings latest
- ‘What a bunch of amateurs!’
- Dates for your diary
- David Higson - Remembrances



# ...From the Keyboard of the Chair's Desk

**Hello and welcome!**

Tessa Garret's wonderful production of *Dinner* by Moira Buffini was thought to be a hard sell – a modern production by an unknown or little known writer with limited success in the West End. Well weren't we wrong! Although there were a couple of quiet nights we were otherwise pretty much sold out... and all with nearly all of the cast being ill. I have to give a special mention to Alex Needham, who after all the rehearsals had to drop-out the week before the show having no voice at all. Tim Whitten bravely stood in and no one noticed that he had not rehearsed for weeks or had 3 days to learn the entire role!

Next we have Martin Walsh's production of *The Beaux' Stratagem* by George Farquhar. Don't be put off by the title. It's a bawdy, rip-roaring romp of a restoration comedy in another fantastic set designed by Bronwen Grover, costumes designed, and built by Chrissy Fryers. Even if you still don't fancy it I strongly urge you to buy your tickets now a) because you want to support your club and your fellow actors and b) because you'll be annoyed if it sells out and you're too late (again) and c) you want to expand your horizons and experience by seeing different stuff. Its 16 years since our last restoration comedy. Who knows how long it will be before you get another chance like this!

Josh Cooper's mystery production of the devised play (which doesn't even have a script or a title yet) are now, at the time of writing, taking a break from 'workshopping' to get something down on 'paper'. More detail for all these productions will appear elsewhere in this *Jester*.

The new year's Rehearsed Readings got off to a good start (Thanks Rick) with a somewhat abbreviated *Richard II* and to companion it, a modern telling of the prequel to *Macbeth* called 'Prelude to *Macbeth*' directed by Sam Grayston and Roger Shutt respectively. If you haven't been to our Rehearsed Readings recently, I urge you to come along. I know it might sound weak (if you've not been) to have a bunch of actors reading a play. If that's what you think it is, you're wrong. These are pretty much full productions, fully staged (without lights, or long-planned costumes ... or set) but you forget that they're reading and just become immersed in a good play. You may have just missed the 1<sup>st</sup> April RR. The next is on 13<sup>th</sup> May.

I hope to see you there.

There is sad news of course, which you may have seen in *Digest* about the recent death of David Higson who has been a very long serving member of this club. Richard will be writing an obituary elsewhere in this *Jester*. David's joie de vivre and sense of humour will be sadly missed.

Lots to look forward to, lots to keep us busy, lots of Rehearsed Readings coming up.

Get involved, get busy, get happy!



**Jonny Wilkinson**  
**Chairman**

[chair@kelvinplayers.co.uk](mailto:chair@kelvinplayers.co.uk)

# THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM

by George Farquhar

## Update from Martin Walsh

**“Promises to be a pretty rumbustious and raunchy romp of an evening! “**

This is my directorial debut with Kelvin. A timeless late Restoration comedy of love, marriage, money and deceit, the play wears its age well and promises great fun.

I have been lucky enough to attract a talented cast of 15, a mix of new and familiar names, who are all throwing themselves into their parts with great panache.

Alex Knibb and newcomer Nathan Richards are two attractive and desperate Beaux down to their last shillings with a stratagem for chasing the wealth of two attractive and equally desperate ladies....: Rosie Inman and Fiona McClure.



Mat Rees has the enviable task of playing Fiona's drunken country blockhead of a husband.

Tessa Garrett is playing his mother, a country gentlewoman, who with her herbal potions has (allegedly) cured more people within ten years than the doctors have killed in twenty!

Never seen without a tankard in his hand, is Paul Richards, as the saying is, the landlord of the inn. Martha Graham is his daughter, ready to lead any young man in a merry dance, which she does for the play's finale.

No play of this period would be complete without a highwayman or two – and we have three! Our Highway “Persons” - Roger Shutt, Mike Luckett and Jenny Hills - are all equipped with swords and pistols and ready for a fight, under instructions from Tim Whitten, who also puts in a surprise appearance to ensure a happy ending.

Jon Bard is masquerading as an Irish priest masquerading as a Frenchman born in Brussels. You'll have to see the play to find out what all that is about! Tegan Westall, is wearing trousers as a downtrodden servant and Liz Kelly dings around the place as a scheming minx.

Bronwen Grover is busy conjuring up an imaginative stage picture; Chrissy Fryers is working wonders kitting out the cast with quoifs, chemises and corsets (and that's just the men!); Neil Bonnett is creating the sound world of Lichfield in the 1700s with tunes from John Playford's English Dancing Master, and Geoff Collard is having fun with the lights and programme as well as keeping us debt-free!

**Book your Beaux' Stratagem seats now! The performances are on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April. As usual, you can book by emailing our box office at [boxoffice@kelvinplayers.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@kelvinplayers.co.uk) on the website at: <http://www.kelvinplayers.co.uk/copy-of-tickets> or by phone on 0117 924089**

**Martin Walsh, Director**

## And another thing!

We need people to help during the run of the *Beaux Stratagem*, especially **backstage** with **props** and **hairstyling**, and operating the **sound** on the Tuesday and Thursday.

We are looking for a **pirate style treasure chest**, if possible with a curved lid, about 1ft (30cms) long, so if you have one, or know someone who has, which we could beg, borrow or steal (or even buy!), please let us know!

[We also are looking for an old **18<sup>th</sup> century/early 19<sup>th</sup> century-type wheelchair.....**]

Please email me if you can help with any of these ([geoffrey.collard@btinternet.com](mailto:geoffrey.collard@btinternet.com)), or indeed if you would like to help in any way with our show – the more the merrier!

Thanks!

Geoff

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## MEET SOME NEW MEMBERS

### Tegan Westall

Tegan has directed her first play in the past year and developed skills in stage management. She has acted in filmed commercials and has modelled professionally. She has joined Kelvin to gain experience in acting and develop her stage craft skills.

### Liz Barnett

Liz has a degree in performing arts, she has acted with two drama groups in Abergavenny where she has performed leading roles in *The Seagull* and *Lilies on the Land* amongst other productions.

She feels she will be able to bring energy, enthusiasm and a sense of fun to Kelvin activities, well we can never have too much of all of that Liz.

### Kate Phillips

Kate has been involved with a couple of amateur dramatic companies. Her favourite role was as Aunt Sponge because she had lots of cushions strapped around her, and had grotesque hair and make-up. She enjoyed expelling gas on stage, so perhaps we shouldn't stand too close. Kate was recommended to join Kelvin by friends who described us as friendly and of a professional standard. She says she can bring enthusiasm and silliness to the club. We love a bit of silliness Kate and you should feel very at home. Keen to take part in performance, she can not only act but sing and dance. She would also like to Direct and try her hand at writing.

Phil Joyner

Membership Secretary

[kelvinplayers\\_membership@hotmail.com](mailto:kelvinplayers_membership@hotmail.com)



# *Dinner* digested...

5 weeks on & *Dinner*

little more than a faint memory???



Oh, no! We have only just met to discuss the Rose Bowl adjudication this week, bringing back all the happy memories, - not to mention the very unhappy memory of Alex, our leading man, losing his voice so completely (for nearly 2 weeks) that he was unable to perform. Disaster! But, as many of you will know, Tim Whitten, our Production Manager came to the rescue, learning lines frantically over the get-in so successfully that audiences would have been unaware of the situation.

I knew things were going too well when, 10 days from first night, all was sweetness & light & Alex said he had never enjoyed doing a play so much! That very weekend he lost his voice, Mike also fell ill, followed a week later by Mat & Alistair. Alistair, on stage most of the time, needed to serve 80+ glasses of wine, not to mention a 3-course dinner during the show, but almost passed out backstage & was unable to serve the lobsters one night. Luckily the ladies, cast and crew, were made of sterner stuff and absolutely sailed through the proceedings!

Amazingly, the week passed smoothly with audiences running at 95%. The cast performed brilliantly, even when ailing, - but of course I would say that - I am biased! Luckily our adjudicator seemed to think the same, speaking very warmly of each performance in detail, with only the most minor niggles. He also highly praised the set & furnishings (Well done, Jonny), the costumes (how could he do anything else, John C?) and the lighting (Well done, Richard & Lucy). Unbelievably he failed to mention our fantastic props - the lobsters were all created by Bronwen, including extra lobster claws for the team to stuff with broken-up crab-sticks every night, - and as for the 3-foot 'French antique' Cupid now on top of the cupboards in the Morris Room ... Wow! The backstage props team, Caroline Mitchell & Anna Freire Camacho, were also busy working their socks off each night preparing drinks, lobsters, Primordial Soup, as well as the Frozen Waste dessert.

So - heartfelt thanks to all my splendid team: to Mike Lockett on sound, to Lizzy Kelly our dedicated SM, to our splendid PA, Lucy Payne, and to all those mentioned above, but WHO HAVE I LEFT OUT?

My superlative CAST, of course - the men: Alex, Mat, Mike, & Alistair, & Tim, who performed 2 roles over & above the call of duty!; and most importantly, the ladies who all excelled themselves - Rosie & Ali, & lastly but most importantly, FRAN, without whom the play would have been a very different & lesser creation. I can no longer imagine Paige played by anyone else. Thank you so much! I would love to work with you all again.

**Tessa Garrett, Director.**



# The LTG comes to KELVIN!

The what? - The LTG, formerly known as The Little Theatre Guild.

Clear? No? OK, I'll give you the back ground of who and what the LTG is and what it has to do with Kelvin.

## Background

The Little Theatre Guild was formed in 1946 as a way for small owner run theatres to have a say in rules and laws covering theatres – mainly of course the main theatres such as the West End in London and the big rep theatres across the country. Not all the legislation relevant to that group made sense nor was it even financially capable of being implemented by small theatre. The LTG acted as a lobbying body for its members from then until the present day and exists to represent the views of Amateur theatres across the UK. Membership of the LTG is open only to those amateur theatres that own or lease the theatre premises in which their productions are mounted.

## How big is it?

LTG currently has in excess of 100 member theatres right across the United Kingdom, ranging from a 64 seat auditorium to a 450 seat auditorium. The membership increases each year. This includes theatres that present only four plays per year to those that present a continuous repertoire. In most years LTG theatres present well over 800 productions to an audience approaching three-quarters of a million. This means that LTG theatres not only create a huge financial turnover of several million pounds a year, but make a significant artistic and creative contribution to live theatre around the country.

## How does it help Kelvin and the other theatres?

In a world of ever increasing legislation relating to such areas as Health and Safety, Premises Licensing, changes to the VAT regime, Children in Performance regulations plus the latest vetting and barring scheme, the LTG produces 'Grey Papers' to explain the law and regulatory requirements.

It holds regular national and regional conferences where there is the opportunity to network and share experiences, both good and bad, to learn from others experiences to help theatres avoid the pitfalls that others have experienced.

As a recognised national body, LTG is consulted by both the Department for Culture Media and Sports (DCMS) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) on matters that affect the amateur theatre sector and its members. It is also keen to promote new writing and the acquisition of high-quality skills in all areas of the Performing Arts.

LTG recognises that theatre practitioners and venue owners are stronger if they all work together.

### Why is it visiting Kelvin?

As part of its Regional Conferences it holds Relationship Meetings to allow the Membership to put to National Office their concerns about legislation and other matters so that LTG can take them up at a national level; check current guidance from Grey Papers and suggest topics for additional Grey Papers and to raise any other issues such as fund raising and grant opportunities.

### Can I help?

Well, yes you can. On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May the South Region will hold a Relationship Meeting at Kelvin Players as many members from the South to be able to attend and be involved in the meeting. You can play your part by coming along and setting up the hall; welcoming our visitors; helping with the bar; assisting with catering; giving short tours of our facilities. For details contact Ralf Togneri on [ralf\\_togneri@hotmail.com](mailto:ralf_togneri@hotmail.com).

### Where can I find out more about the LTG?

On the window ledge half way up the stairs to the Morris Room there is a selection of LTG News Letters and at least one copy of the Year Book which lists all the member companies and what plays they have performed in the previous year and what audiences they have had for each play. A handy guide to see what is currently attracting audiences across the country. Each member also gives a brief overview of their year gone by.

**Ralf Togneri**  
(LTG Rep)

**DON'T FORGET – WE NEED THE SUPPORT OF EACH  
AND EVERY ONE OF OUR MEMBERS FOR EACH AND  
EVERY ONE OF OUR PRODUCTIONS!**

# The Devised Play: Update from Josh Cooper, Director

## IT'S REHEARSING KELVIN, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT...

Something strange is afoot in the studio...

Given the timing of the last couple of Jesters, I have had to remain silent and mysterious on the casting and early rehearsal process for Kelvin's first Devised Play, but now all can be revealed!

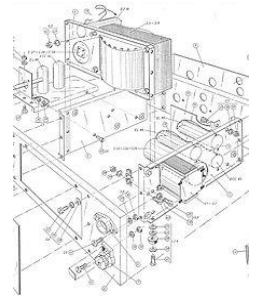
Alongside myself as director, I have two excellent Dramaturgs in Tim Whitten (writing) and Anna Marshall (Design & Technical) as well as the tremendous Nicky Rope as an assistant director, and our first intensive rehearsal period has just finished.

I have been absolutely delighted that the cast have thrown themselves into a range of interesting and exciting devising techniques, and in this first period we have had a strong emphasis on Physical Theatre (as you can see from some of the attached photos) which will play an integral part in this production. They have also not complained when I have made them run around and do press-ups and jumping on the spot (so much jumping). Incidentally I am available for personal training at a very competitive rate...

Exercises from companies such as Gecko, Frantic Assembly and New International Encounter have sat alongside research and discussion sessions on our stimulus (still top secret at present) and the cast have done their bit in finding texts, objects and images related to our ideas which have in turn informed our devising and creating of characters and stories to go alongside the techniques we have used.

We now embark on a month-long pause in rehearsals so that Tim and I can consult and write the first draft of our script and try to draw as many of these ideas and techniques together as possible to create an interesting and dynamic piece of theatre (plus maybe come up with a title - might be useful).

It really has been fantastic to try these ideas out with Kelvin members and teach them new skills and ways of making theatre, and it is great to have members new and old involved. We still don't know exactly where we are going, but we're on our way...Watch this space for more updates in future Jesters.







# NEW STYLE LAUNCH NIGHT FOR



## ***A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE***

Hello all Kelvinites.

There will be a **NEW STYLE** for **LAUNCH NIGHTS** starting with ***A View From The Bridge***.

The launch night will be at **7.30 pm on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May** in the Morris Room.

How will it be different? Firstly, the Launch Night is for the whole membership and if Rachael Lane has anything to do with it, it will be a fun night. This evening is for everyone so everyone is encouraged to come along. It doesn't matter whether you might want to act, work back stage, do a night on the bar, be front of house, lighting or sound operator or every one of those things, **COME ALONG!** Meet up with friends, support your club, have a drink – did I say the bar will be open? -and get excited about ***A View From The Bridge!***

The evening will begin with me, the director, laying out my vision for the play - the period, the costume, lighting, sound, set, props and furnishing – and why I want to do this play.

There will then be some reading of key scenes – I will provide script pages and choose people, who have indicated they are willing to read, to read the pieces. This will **not** be a full read-through.

We will then take a break for a drink – from the bar or tea or coffee.

There will then be a talk-back session about play – to take any questions and where possible provide answers.

Sign up - anyone interested in participating in whatever way can leave contact details with the Director or Production Manager (if I have one by then)

That's it for the launch night. Follow up for ideas for sound, lighting, set, furnishing, props and costume will take place in early June when final decisions will be made about which ideas to go with.

The 'read -through' will take place on 25<sup>th</sup> June in the Morris Room at 7.30pm. Audition dates to follow.

**Ralf Togneri**  
**Director**



## **Bursting at the Seams!** (an observation from our Chairman!)

Some of you may be aware of the constant struggle we have in finding space for all our 'stuff'. We ran out of storage space, years ago and now rent a damp church basement (for big stuff that's not going to rot) but that is not a long term or large solution to the problem.

Because of our considerable repertoire of work and the directing/acting skills within the company, we are able to mount a vast panoply of styles and periods of theatre which inevitably means that for a specific period production we may be looking for an unusual variety of props, furniture and costumes. From that perspective, it is always nice to have such interesting props and dressings within our own resources at the studio to save the time and expense of seeking to acquire them from outside sources (generally ebay!)

However, we have no room left to store new acquisitions.

It is and has been for some time, the generous nature of our members and Friends to donate scripts, clothes, furniture and props to Kelvin when the 'big clear-out' happens or when someone passes away. Don't get me wrong. We're grateful for such donations, particularly of unique or particularly interesting items.

We do have a problem though when someone dumps something like a bag full of cardigans on the stairs to the balcony thinking we might find a use for them, or a box full of empty beer bottles etc. We don't do house clearance.

Firstly, if unexpected, they can cause a hazard, secondly someone then has to sort through them and, if valuable, store them (in space we don't have) and then we're faced with disposing of items which may be of no or little use.

So this is a plea! This is not intended to stop donations of unique, antique or interesting props, or costumes, but I would ask that before you bring in a box or bag of stuff you no longer want, you consider whether it's something we may be able to actually use and usefully store. If you're not sure, ask the appropriate manager:

- Chrissy Fryers – Wardrobe  
(christinefryers@mac.com)
- Pat Needham – Library for donated scripts  
(library@kelvinplayers.co.uk)
- Roger Shutt – for furniture  
(stage@kelvinplayers.co.uk)
- Kate Buchan – for props  
(katebuchan@hotmail.co.uk)

We also must reserve the right to dispose of stuff which is considered to be too big, too new (easily acquired by borrowing), too common or too ugly! It won't simply be chucked but donated to charity but it shouldn't be our job to do so. If it's only suitable for charity, then please donate it yourself and don't ask us to do it for you.

It's a fine line, I know, between what may or may not be useful, so if you're not sure, ask!

Whilst I'm on it, please could I ask you not to simply bring along any old mugs you have at home and put them in our cupboard. We just keep on throwing them out!

Rant over.

Thank you, I feel a lot better now.

**Jonny**  
**Chairman**  
**Chair@kelvinplayers.co.uk**

# Deadline fast approaching!

YES, dearest Kelvinians! As I write this, there are only a mere **44 days** until the Deadline for your 2018 season proposals! Which may seem like a really long time but its not. Especially not to someone as impatient as me!



The APC have already started reading the early submissions, however, there is plenty of room for more. We literally cannot get enough. So – directors – what have you got for us? Some kitchen sink drama? A rip-roaring comedy? Classical tragedy? Or *Starlight Express*! Can someone please propose *Starlight Express*?

If you have a burning desire to direct a play for Kelvin, then please ensure you submit your proposal to me, plus a copy of the script, by **1<sup>st</sup> May**. Proposal forms, (plus other handy information) are available on the members' website. Don't forget – **the APC choice for 2018 is Anne Boleyn by Howard Brenton**. You would be most welcome to propose your ideas for this brilliant play. Again, check the website for more info and the script.

If you are a new director, you will need to have directed a Rehearsed Reading, and performed a significant backstage role in another show, to be eligible to direct a full production. New directors may also be required to direct a Black Box production. Any questions about these criteria? Please get in touch!

Tick tock, tick tock.... time's running out.... Deadline fast approaching...

(I'm really quite impatient)

**Fran Lewis**  
**Artistic Director**  
[artisticdirector@kelvinplayers.co.uk](mailto:artisticdirector@kelvinplayers.co.uk)

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## Update and RReminder...

**Dearest Kelvineers,**

As you're hopefully already aware the current season of Rehearsed Readings is well underway (upcoming RR shows already cast include **13th May and 17th June**, so please come along to those if you can - more info via the Digest email and the Facebook group, as and when) but in the meantime, just a quick mention of some future dates...

First and foremost, the next Rehearsed Readings Launch Night is on **Saturday 22nd July** - so get that in your diary if you'd like to act in one, in the second half of the year. There may also still be space for directors too, so if you fancy having a go at directing then please get in touch. The subsequent RR evenings are on **2nd September, 16th September, 28th October, 25th November** - which will all be cast at the launch on 22nd July. It's a way ahead at the moment, but I figured it would soon fly by so I'd give y'all a heads-up. Any queries about RRs, please feel free to get in touch with me on [rick.procter@icloud.com](mailto:rick.procter@icloud.com)

All the best,  
Rick.

# What a bunch of Amateurs!



We at Kelvin might be thought of as snobbish about being called 'AmDram' or 'Amateur', preferring the more acceptable 'Non-professional' i.e. implying that we're of a professional standard but just don't get paid for what we love doing.

A couple of definitions of Amateur include:  
noun

1. a person who engages in a study, sport, or other activity for pleasure rather than for financial benefit or professional reasons.
2. a person inexperienced or unskilled in a particular activity:

The origins of the word Amateur coming from Latin through Middle France:

Latin amātor lover, equivalent to amā- (stem of amāre to love) + -tor, replaced by French -teur.

It's undoubted that we love what we do and I like to think that we are indeed better than someone who may be 'inexperienced or unskilled in a particular activity'.

That leaves us with the first definition "a person who engages in a study, sport, or other activity for pleasure rather than for financial benefit or professional reasons".

So, at Kelvin none of us should be paid for what we do here, whether that's creating sets, costumes, doing hair and make-up, acting as Treasurer for 20years+.

## Our rules say:

Rule 2b: The income and property of the Society however derived shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the object of the Society as stated above and no portion thereof shall be transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit to the members of the society.

So, whilst of course if we have paid out money (with committee approval) on stuff for Kelvin, for which we're entitled to be reimbursed, no member should be paid for what they do for Kelvin.

For example, Dean is a builder by profession. If he digs holes for the new cycle racks to be installed, he does it as part of his membership without payment (other than for materials). If there is building work which is required, e.g. to build a new extension, we have to look outside the club.

IS THAT CLEAR?

Cool!

**Jonny Wilkinson**  
**Chairman**  
**[chair@kelvinplayers.co.uk](mailto:chair@kelvinplayers.co.uk)**



# Please note the following dates for your Kelvin Diary

## APRIL 2017

|                                      |   |                    |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup>                      | Rehearsed Readings Performances   | The Studio Theatre |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> to 29 <sup>th</sup> | Performances of 'The Beaux' Stratagem'<br>By George Farquhar (Dir Martin Walsh) | The Studio Theatre |

## MAY 2017

|                  |  |                    |
|------------------|--|--------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup>  | <b><i>Deadline for submissions for 2018 season productions!!</i></b>             |                    |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | Launch Night:- 'A View from the Bridge'<br>By Arthur Miller (Dir. Ralf Tognieri) | The Morris Room    |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> | Rehearsed Readings Performances  | The Studio Theatre |

## JUNE 2017

|                  |                                 |                    |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 17 <sup>th</sup> | Rehearsed Readings Performances | The Studio Theatre |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|

## JULY 2017

|                                      |  |                    |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| 11 <sup>th</sup> to 15 <sup>th</sup> | Performances of 'The Devised Play'                             | The Studio Theatre |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup>                     | Launch Night for 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session of Rehearsed Readings | The Studio Theatre |

Please now take a moment or two to read the remembrances of some  
of our members as we say a fond farewell to one of our own.

## David Higson

1932-2017



The following anecdotes have been provided by members:

### ***Jonny Wilkinson***

It is a sad loss to Kelvin and to the world to no longer have a David Higson in it. David's reputation greeted me when I first joined Kelvin in 1999. You could always hear him in the audience giving it full welly for any reaction required. I have tried to emulate that reputation when I come to see our shows. Moreover, you'd always know when he had been in the audience because he was inevitably in the bar afterwards on full charm and at full volume, telling quips and jokes and 'holding court' for the amusement of all. It is a dreadful thing to grow old and infirm and not be able to continue to bring the joy, exuberance and laughter that David gave throughout his long membership of Kelvin Players. Richard tells me that, until the end, although he was unable to talk, he used his alphabet board to spell out jokes – that was the David Higson we loved and miss.

### ***Raychel Hills***

My fondest memory is one I've told so many times but I'm going to tell it again. It is of David and his brother John, both used to drink at the Westbury Park Tavern which was just around the corner from my flat. They called this particular drinking establishment their "office". One evening I popped out to get some food for tea and passing by the 'office' I heard a familiar voice "would you care to join us in the office for a little drink?" It was David with John. Oh why not I thought, one swift glass of wine then I'll get my tea.... Several glasses later - such was the persuasion of these very generous gentlemen, I am very tipsy, the shops are all closed and I wobble my way back round the corner to my flat with nothing more than half a pack of Bourbon biscuits for tea and a bit of a headache the next day... Whenever I bumped into the Higsons at Kelvin we would often joke 'see you in the office soon.' I shall miss both David and John and whenever I pop into the 'office' I raise a glass to them both.

### ***Lesley Small***

I knew David for over thirty years and in that time he was a much valued friend to me, never forgetting a birthday card for me and my family. Always, a thoughtful gift at Christmas, Spring flowers on my doorstep at Easter. He was the first to ring up and book for any catering event I was doing. There is so much that can be said about David, his ability to charm everyone he met, his flawless character, his exuberance of getting involved in so many areas of life. He was talented in his acting, singing and generally being a great guy! I think David will be remembered most of all for his quick wit and his wonderful corny jokes, no one could tell a story like he could, he would have you hooked in a few seconds believing the plot, then give you the punch line with such sincerity. He never failed to deliver, right up to the end, he was making you laugh. David was a true gentleman, one of the very best and I for one will miss him tremendously.

### ***Christine West***

Having known David for over forty years, I am sure that myself and all who have known him, could write books filled with anecdotes and stories about this unique gentleman. People meeting him for the first time soon came to realise they would not be able to forget him easily. I witnessed this at first hand at the University of the West of England when David and I were part of a team that for many years was involved in role play for the law students. The work itself was taken very seriously but the meal breaks became hilarious when David became a self appointed Jeeves, insisting on playing a very attentive waiter and dishing out his usual corny jokes. The assessors and we staff would miss him if he was not around at any time, as will we all. I feel that David's unforgettable legacy will be just being David.

### ***Jacqs Graham***

Such sad news to hear about the loss of Kelvin's great friend and member, David Higson. He was a remarkable man for many reasons, not least his puns and 'witty' one liners. As well as his funny bones, David was a generous and friendly man who made a new and nervous member very welcome back in the day. When he discovered that we shared a birthday - well, that really was a source of great fun and pleasure to him. Without fail, he contacted me every year to wish me a Happy Birthday and send good wishes; even when he was rather frail and poorly, he still remembered me. I will miss his birthday messages from now on and will remember David with great fondness. A true gentleman.

### ***Mary McCallum***

David was one of the first people I met in Kelvin, approaching fifty years ago. He was part of a sort of 'Kelvin Dynasty' which included his late lamented brother John, John's then fiancée Yvonne Bryant, Vonnie's sister Helen and her husband Mickey Holdsworth who was a fine character actor.

Neither David nor John were ever committee men so they were not on the somewhat daunting audition panel aspiring members needed to impress before being accepted in this prestigious club but, right from the start, David and the others extended a warm and welcoming hand to a young and somewhat gauche arrival from north of the border. After being cast in a play requiring strong Australian accents it was a source of great wonder to them that I could go straight from Scots to Ozzie! They seemed to think that required much more skill than going to Oz from English!

Anecdotes about David would fill a library full of books with a large extension required to record his fund of shaggy dog stories. As someone who can't remember the punchline of a joke for five minutes his amazing store of funny and apposite tales was a constant source of wonder to me. Even in recent weeks and months when he had lost the power of speech he still managed to convey a joke or a pun by one means or another.

Amongst his many gifts perhaps the greatest was David's magnificent speaking voice. Deep and resonant and with perfect diction there was no fear of not being heard even in the back row of the Hippodrome or the Colston Hall. His voice led to hundreds of calls to perform and to act as Master of Ceremonies, all of which he did with his constant good humour and affability.

He was, of course, the perfect gentleman and didn't mind in the least if the more churlish thought him old fashioned or anachronistic. "Do you mind if I sprinkle?" he would ask when using salt at the dining table. And of course he was always there to help a lady on with her coat or open the door for her. In the age of feminism and equal rights for women it may have raised a few eyebrows but I never heard anyone complain.

In all the years I knew him I never heard David grumble or raise his voice to anyone and he was often a calming voice when discussions got heated. I mourn the passing of a lovely and unique man the likes of whom we're unlikely to see again.

### **Richard Jones**

I was proud to call David Higson my friend for many reasons. For a start he was always good company. Then he was a gentleman of the old school always observing established, although now fast disappearing, etiquette, particularly where women were concerned. He was generous, always being first to the bar, and a Kelvinite through and through; and has been since his first appearance on the Kelvin stage in 1953. He was a fine actor his stentorian tones gracing many a character part from vicars such as Canon Throbbing in *Habeas Corpus* to Selsdon Mowbray (an elderly, half-deaf pro with a drinking problem) in *Noises Off*. His last appearance for Kelvin was in the 2004 Seventy Fifth Anniversary production of *Nicholas Nickleby*. And his humour!! He was adept at 'throwing his voice' including imitating a boiling kettle or whistling to sound just like a hearing aid (usually mine). He was kind and always considerate, his punny sense of humour always guaranteed to sucker you in. In his last days when his lovely voice had cruelly deserted him and he was forced to use an alphabet board to communicate with his consultant in the BRI, when asked "What can I give you for your wind?" David beckoned everyone round his bed and spelt out, laboriously, that is spinning it out, "A Kite!!". David – we loved you and will miss you lots.

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