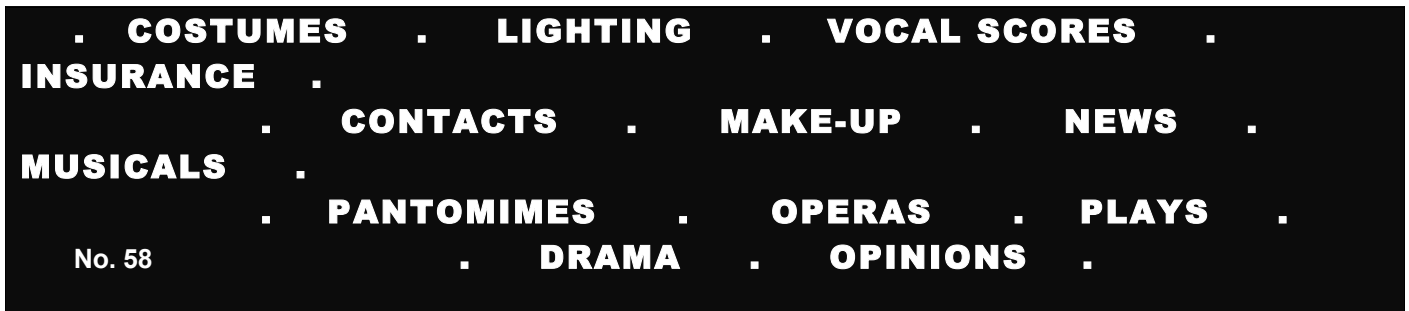


*National Operatic & Dramatic  
Association  
South West Amateur Theatre  
Magazine*

**“Lost in the Wilderness”**

**district 8  
AUTUMN 2008**

**. REVIEWS . STAGE MUSICALS . OPERETTAS .  
SCENERY .**



**IAN WICKENS reports on District 8**

Oklahoma! South Pacific Habeus Corpus	Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society Cary Amateur Theatrical Society Wells Little Theatre	Oliver! Blithe Spirit	Polden Productions CUDOS
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<b>OKLAHOMA!</b>	<b>Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society</b>	<b>Octagon Theatre, Yeovil</b>
<i>Director/Choreographer: Ray Jeffery    Musical Director: Mark Thomas</i>		<i>14<sup>th</sup> March 2008</i>

“Oklahoma!” was the first of the successful collaboration of Rodgers and Hammerstein in the forties, and is probably their best. With some many unforgettable numbers how could they lose ? This was a good production that was well presented and had been well rehearsed. The opening tableau, underscored by the overture, gradually moved to tell the whole Oklahoma story in movement and dance. All the principals gave us convincing performances the best, in my opinion, was Andrew Helson’s portrayal of Jud Fry which was frighteningly dark and physiological. The singing and dancing were of the usual high standard we have come to expect from Y.A.O.S. I did think “Kansas City” lacked a little something, but the Dream Ballet was delightful. Technically the production was very good with excellent scenery (*Stage Electrics, Bristol*) moved effortlessly and unobtrusively under the Stage Manager’s control, whilst costumes (*Homburg’s, Leeds and Westcliffe, Southend*) were colourful and accurate. The sound, however, was a little disappointing with some poor diction accentuated by the system. This seems to be a common problem from time to time at this theatre. Lighting, by the Octagon’s professional team, was to its usual high standard with some lovely visual effects produced. Music, from the large orchestra was well balanced and supported the vocals. This was another sound production from this talented group which gave the audience some foot stomping moments.

<b>OLIVER!</b>	<b>Polden Productions</b>	<b>Edington Village Hall</b>
<i>Director/Musical Director: Ros Dolding    Choreographer: Carol Applegate</i>		<i>7<sup>th</sup> March 2008</i>

Lionel Bart’s musical adaptation of Dickens’ classic Victorian melodrama has some delightful music and is always a hit with the audiences. This production was confidently staged and performed with good use made of the small stage by the large cast. Set changes were constructed well if sometimes noisily and the scenery was sound and excellently painted. The mood took us right back to London of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Staging and direction were good with some good individual performances. The chemistry between Bill Sykes and Nancy, just before her demise, was particularly menacing. Chorus work was good, especially the boys who doubled as workhouse boys and Fagin’s boys. It is so good to see youngsters really belting out songs with gusto. Costumes, from *Bath Theatrical Costume Hire* and the Society were generally in keeping with period and props were well made and appropriate. Nice to see a real dog as ‘Bullseye’, with make up and extremely well behaved! The large orchestra (for such a small venue) produced some nice sounds that were all under the MD’s control at all times. Considering the number of musicians the volume was just right and never undermined the vocals. All in all a good production that kept the audience entertained throughout.

**SOUTH PACIFIC**

**Cary Amateur Theatrical Society     Ansford Community College, Castle Cary**

*Director: Les Stevens     Choreographer: Sue Taylor     Musical Director: Alison Stevens     22<sup>nd</sup> February 2008*

Rodgers and Hammerstein's "South Pacific" is one of their better known collaborations and tells the story of love and bravery in the South Pacific during World War II. Ahead of its time, it bravely deals with the delicate problem of mixed race relationships in a time when they were severely frowned upon. The two key roles in this musical are Emile de Becque and Nellie Forebush. As individuals the characterisations were very good with some charming individual performances. However, when together I felt the large age gap between the two actors worked against them and at times made me feel uncomfortable. Notwithstanding this, the rest of the casting was very good with some delightful performances from all of the principals. Direction was good and I liked the slide show of the credits during the overture. It made it seem like the start of a movie! Singing in all quarters was very good and the chorus was delightful. Especially the men who gave us a rip roaring rendition of "There is Nothing Like a Dame". The set was sound and with some lovely back drops and the scene changes executed with some use of the cast which I condone wholeheartedly. Again, I felt some of the scene changes could have been quicker. Lighting was well executed with good use of the follow spot. Musical Direction was good whilst the costumes were generally in keeping with the period of the piece. Choreography was carefully executed and sound at just the right level. An agreeable evening's entertainment that was enjoyed by the whole audience.

**BLITHE SPIRIT**

**CUDOS**

**The Victoria Rooms, Crewkerne**

*Director: Diana English*

*7<sup>th</sup> May 2008*

**Stuart Lyddon reports:-**

With this absorbing script the director has to ensure that the play doesn't outwit the cast in its performance or portrayal. Care relating to the development of the storyline was well observed by the director who got to grips with the relationships between all on stage. The décor was appropriate with pictures and ornaments busying the room ensuring that the viewer was drawn into the world of the Condomine's. Construction of the set allowed for all cast to be seen whenever required. Wardrobe displayed an eye catching correctness and surreal wealth for the 'ghosts'. Description of the dialogue was presented with an invigorating pace creating many memorable moments. At given opportunities the banter was brisk and direct as the cast got to grips with the language and its intended meaning. Facial and reactive expressions added to the generous amount of energy and enthusiasm delivered by the cast as the plot thickened. This play certainly has an endearing quality which builds momentum. Pleasing therefore, that the sweet yet haunting singing by Alex McCallum of 'Always', that atmospherically exorcised 'the wives', was followed by a well crafted poltergeistal stage managed ending. A ghost story of notable pedigree presented by an engaging team.

**HABEUS CORPUS**

**Wells Little Theatre**

**The Little Theatre, Wells**

*Director: Richard Wright*

*18<sup>th</sup> July 2008*

Alan Bennet's clever farce about love and lust within the house of Dr Arthur Wicksteed in "Brighton's Hove" in the early 1970s is a classic. Expertly written, with such wit and understanding of human nature it is indeed a masterpiece. The Director and his talented cast at the Little Theatre gave us a fantastic evening's entertainment that had the audience roaring in the aisles. This was classic Bennet directed and performed with such understanding and attention to detail. The very simple set consisted of a backwall with two doors. But this simplicity was totally transformed by the delightful black and white mural of a bikini clad girl expertly painted on it. This was enhanced by a striking white spiral that illuminated on demand with swirling lights and music to accentuate the action. The acting was flawless. It would be unfair to pick out any individual but Neal Mather must be commended for his portrayal of Dr Wicksteed in mid-life crisis. The eyebrows were wonderful. Emma James kept the action going with a delightful portrayal of Mrs Swabb the housekeeper whilst the remainder of the cast's characterisations were equally excellent. It is so easy to be laid back when

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**District 8 – Mid & South Somerset – Ian Wickens**

you are presenting such a good script. This was not the case. From Mrs Swabb,s “Hoover, Hoover, Hoover” to Lady Rumpers’s “..post coital Craven A” the dialogue was delivered with total commitment. From light up to the final curtain this was a perfect evening’s entertainment. Superb!

***Ian Wickens retired at the AGM at the end of August 2008. The District was split into two new groups. Listed below is the new arrangement.***

**DISTRICT No. 8** [elected 31.08.08]

**Regional Rep:** Mrs Trudy Dyke, [trudy@thedykes.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:trudy@thedykes.fsnet.co.uk)  
12a South View, BRADFORD ABBAS, Dorset DT6 6RS 01 935 428 382

THE BENHAM ACADEMY OF DANCE & PERFORMING ARTS  
BRUTON PLAYERS  
CARY AMATEUR THEATRICAL SOCIETY  
CREWKERNE UNITED DRAMATIC & OPERATIC SOC.(CUDOS)  
GLASTONBURY & STREET MUSICAL COMEDY SOCIETY  
KASSMATT PRODUCTIONS  
POLDEN PRODUCTIONS  
STREET THEATRE  
STRODE MUSICAL THEATRE SOCIETY  
STRODE PRODUCTIONS  
THE COMPANY  
TINTINHULL DRAMA GROUP  
WELLS OPERATIC SOCIETY LIMITED  
WINSCOMBE YOUTH THEATRE PRODUCTIONS  
YEOVIL AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY  
YEOVIL YOUTH THEATRE

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Mrs. Mary Hobbs Past National President

• **Individual Members**

Mr. A. R. B. Hobbs Mrs. Mary J. Parker Mrs. Pamela Price Mr. K. Saunders  
Miss M. C. Valantine Mr. Raymond Wright

**Joint Individual Members**

Mr. Ken & Mrs. Jean Mentern Mr. Ian & Mrs. Helen Wickens

\*\*\*\*\*

**DISTRICT No. 8A** [elected 31.08.08]

**Regional Rep:** Mrs. Jo Wilson-Hunt, [jwilsonhunt@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jwilsonhunt@yahoo.co.uk)  
5 Garden Terrace, Tonedale, WELLINGTON, Somerset TA21 0AE 01 823 663 257

ALIVE  
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CHARD LIGHT OPERATIC SOCIETY  
CHARDSTOCK AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY  
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FIVEHEAD DRAMA SOCIETY  
KINGSTON PLAYERS  
MILVERTON DRAMATIC SOCIETY  
SOMERSET OPERA  
TAUNTON AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY  
TAUNTON SCOUT & GUIDE GANG SHOW  
TAUNTON THESPIANS  
WAYFARERS PANTOMIME SOCIETY, TAUNTON

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   **Mrs. Monica Spalding**              **Mrs. Frances Walker**

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