

ROTHERFIELD PLAYERS
presents

Richard Everett's
**Entertaining
Angels**



A Comedy

Directed by Derek Holland
£2.00

18th, 19th and 20th May 2017 Rotherfield Memorial Hall



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ROTHERFIELD PLAYERS
presents
Richard Everett's
**Entertaining
Angels**



Director Derek Holland

Producers Anna Thompson, James Gallifant

Grace, a clergy wife Barbara Laird

Ruth, her sister Lynn Lunn

Bardolph, Grace's husband Robert Chesterton

Jo, Grace's daughter Jess Lunn

Sarah, the incoming vicar Louise Coe

Stage Manager Larry Robinson

Stage Hand Simon Virgo

Sound/Lighting Brian Hampton

Front of House Judith Hardy

Box Office Nikki Dawkins

Photography Mark Kennedy

Props Niamh Beard

Bar David Robinson and Trevor Laird

Prompt Anna Thompson

Set Design, an interpretation of Rosemary Greig's set by Robert Chesterton

Set Build Robert Chesterton, Derek Holland and Brian Hampton

New Members

The Rotherfield Players is a vibrant village dramatic society. We have a healthy membership but we always welcome new faces both on stage and back stage. Many different skills are required to put on a show apart from acting, singing and dancing. There's carpentry, painting, sewing and even computer skills. If you are interested in joining our group please contact James Gallifant Tel: 01892 654219

Email: members@rotherfieldplayers.co.uk

For more information about Rotherfield Players, go to www.rotherfieldplayers.co.uk Programme Printed by Units D-G, 18 Chapman Way, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 3EF

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Richard Everett's Entertaining Angels

Directed by Derek Holland



The play is set in the garden of a vicarage

“ Grace is struggling. She has lost her husband and is about to lose her home and she's not going to go quietly. But at least her pain “keeps everyone amused and alert”. Family and newcomer alike are the target for the acerbic wit with which she hides her emotions as she battles through. If I ever manage to learn all her lines, Grace will be one of the most fun and challenging characters I have ever played. ”

Barbara Laird



“ Barty - Is he a ghost or a figment of Grace's imagination? In the flashbacks to events by the stream he is the latter. But in the scenes by the greenhouse he could be either. The clue comes in his last appearance..... ”

Robert Chesterton

“ I loved the character and the thought of playing Ruth from the minute I read the play. She's a mischievous person who's been carrying the burden of a huge secret for a very long time. It's been fun getting to know her well over the past months and now it's your turn to make up your own mind. ”

Lynn Lunn





“Despite spending the majority of the time exasperated by her mother’s behaviour, Jo is pained to see her hurt. Rather than dealing with her own grief and personal issues, she covers up her feelings by doing what she knows best - trying to sort out everyone else’s problems instead. I have thoroughly enjoyed playing Jo as she has close relationships with everyone, including her Auntie Ruth with whom there’s an almost suspiciously believable family resemblance!”

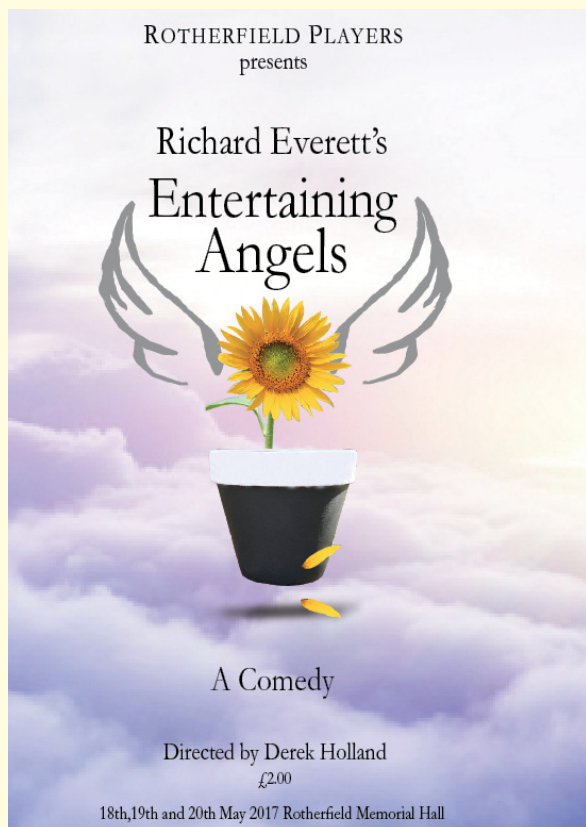
Jess Lunn



“Playing a vicar has been a first for me, although the more that I get to know Sarah, the more that it becomes obvious” she is just getting through life the best she can, a bit like all of us. She does have doubts, and encountering Grace along the way makes for a far more entertaining journey.”

Louise Cole





Entertaining Angels by Derek Holland

I first saw *Entertaining Angels* in 2014 at The Arches Theatre in Horley and loved every minute of it.

This version, first staged at Theatre Royal Bath in 2009 and starring Penelope Keith, concerns Grace, a clergy wife who has spent a lifetime on her best behaviour. Now, following the death of her husband Bardolph, she is enjoying the newfound freedom to do and say exactly as she pleases. However, the return of her eccentric missionary sister Ruth, together with some disturbing revelations, force Grace to confront the truth of her marriage. With sharp-edged comedy and probing wit, this play asks whether God can be trusted to do anything right at all. "Or is the whole thing a divine exercise in trial and error?"

Everett handles the comedy well. Grace's bon mots are extremely funny. Her relationships between her dotty sister Ruth, her daughter Jo and the new priest Sarah are also hilarious and sometimes a bit heart tugging too. Oh--- and her dead husband Bardolph keeps drifting in and out of the greenhouse as she still chats and reminisces with him in the garden – very funny, as well as touching. I have been very fortunate in directing a fantastic cast and I hope you enjoy this play as much as I did when I first saw it. I wish you all a very pleasant, laugh out loud and thought provoking evening.

Derek Holland Director

PS I am indebted to my good friends Clive Greig who directed The Arches production, and his wife Rosemary for letting me use her set designs.



Richard Everett

Richard Everett was educated at Mill Hill School, and began his career as a professional actor in 1970.

He appeared on TV, the West End, Broadway and in many films, notably the "**Cry of the Banshee**", starring Vincent Price, and "**Hamlet**", which starred Anthony Hopkins and Marianne Faithful.

He later formed his own fringe theatre company, **The Upstream Theatre**, near the Old Vic, and was the artistic director there for several years.

He began to write in the 1980s, and is the author of 8 produced stage plays - these include **Close To The Wind**, **Present From the Past**, and of course **Entertaining Angels**. The plays have been translated into several languages, and are regularly performed, both in the UK and abroad.

In 2002 Richard's first feature film, **Two Men Went to War**, went on general release, and was one of the films selected for the Hollywood Film Festival. It is now shown regularly as a BBC feature film.

He has also written extensively for animation, with over 200 scripts to his credit, and 3 plays for Radio 4 - **A Little Behind On the Video**, **Grace and Favour**, and **Something to Say**.

More recently Richard has published **Sound Bites**, an anthology of mini plays, monologues and meditations for seasonal events. He also runs a weekly workshop for special needs adults in Goldalming and is a popular speaker at events and conferences.

Alison Organ sponsored this page



CONTINUED IN NEXT PROGRAMME

the pantile PLAYERS

The Pantiles Players was formed in 1943 to provide amateur drama in the Tunbridge Wells area during the Second World War. The first production was *Without The Prince* by Philip King. For many years it ran as an informal group. Its aim was present good plays with high production values.

As its reputation grew it needed a more formal structure and in 1961 a committee was elected. It still remained a select group and people were invited to take part in productions. When I first knew them in the 1970's they performed at the Assembly Hall in Tunbridge Wells. The productions were always to a very high standard. I recall their performances of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* in 1976, *Separate Tables* in 1977 and *Ring Round the Moon* in 1979.

In 1981 I was invited to play Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and my connection with the Players began.

Since 1951, the year of the Festival of Britain, the Tunbridge Wells Drama Club had presented open air productions of Shakespeare's plays on the bandstand in the Pantiles. The plays were then taken to the village of Lurgashall in West Sussex

with performances in the grounds of the pub, The Noah's Ark. In 1983 Trinity Church in Tunbridge Wells was converted into a theatre. The Drama Club changed its name to Trinity Theatre Club and started to perform plays in the summer in the garden beside the church. The Pantiles Players were invited to take over the productions on the Pantiles. Our first production was *The Merchant of Venice*.

In 1985 there was a change in management at the Assembly Hall. The new managers felt that they could no longer let us perform there because of the economics of running a large theatre. We moved to Royal Victoria Hall Theatre In Southborough. Our first play, Agatha Christie's *A Murder Is Announced*, was chosen to be popular in a new venue. *Robert Chesterton*



Edir scene rehearsal: Pantile Players' from left to right, Val Galbraith, Robert Chesterton, James Bishop and Alexandra Galbraith in *A Midsummers Night's Dream*

ROTHERFIELD PLAYERS TIME LINE

In the last programme we started a timeline of plays that the Players have performed. It ended on "*Murder in Company*" performed in 1988. We continue reminiscing... - you never know you may have attended one of those shows.



Key For Two
OCTOBER
Directed by
Felicity Gallifant
Performed in the
village hall



1988

1989

Pinocchio
JANUARY
Directed by
Kate Organ
Performed in the
village hall





Memories of a Ham Actor

by James Gallifant

Memories flood back whilst looking along the time-line, below, of productions past. It doesn't seem to be a long time ago until I look at the Players website for the number of productions that have occurred since then.

Back in 1989 we performed "Pinocchio". I was cast as a clown for some reason and didn't have a single line to learn. Initially that was a great relief to me but, come the production, it was really frustrating to say absolutely nothing when the audience was laughing. I work on the basis that if I can't recall my lines then I make them up. It makes me really popular with those with whom I am sharing a stage!!

The following winter I directed "Cinderella"; probably the most popular pantomime going. The brilliant thing about this show is that there were three dames to amuse the kids and thus less of the soppy stuff. We persuaded Alison Organ to play the Fairy Godmother in the style of Margaret Thatcher (to Alison's utter disgust) and her opening line was "We are your fairy godmother". Thatcher had recently emerged from number 10 to announce "we are a grandmother". The Curless/Burnett partnership of ugly sisters wound the kids up, at the matinee, to such an extent that the show had to be stopped to restore order. I contend that pantomime is real theatre; never mind that Shakespeare stuff. Mind you, it is not that

different from A Midsummer Night's Dream when I come to think of it!

In April 1990 I was cast as Major Sergius Saranoff in "Arms and the Man"; written by G Bernard Shaw. Well, I thought that a play by GBS was a serious comment on life and attitudes that pertained at the time only to find out that the audience fell about when I walked on stage. The role characterised an upper crust soldier who displayed total pomposity. As my wife said "you don't have to act". Indeed, the role became me at home as I developed the part!

By January 1991 I realised my true destiny when cast as Mother Goose in "guess what?". They say that pantomime is trivial stuff. Come on please! This is a Faustian story of selling one's soul to the devil in exchange for beauty and youth. The story was that Mother Goose would turn from ugly to beautiful by crawling through a magic garden whereupon she re-appeared in a blond wig and glamorous red dress. (I rather fancied myself in the mirror actually!!). Come the Saturday night show and I emerged from the magic garden in a basque, stockings and suspenders. Looked a bit racy I suppose! The audience fell about but so did the cast unfortunately as the lines just disappeared into mayhem. The director was furious after the show but we didn't care because we got the biggest laugh of the night and, indeed, the week!!



Left: 1992 Pageant - the stage is built.

The Brute FEBRUARY



Cinderella

JANUARY

Directed by James Gallifant



Out Town

OCTOBER

Directed by Mike Organ

Something Borrowed

FEBRUARY

Directed by Jennifer Ward

1989

1990

A Festival of Short Plays After Magritte Between Mouthfuls The Brute

APRIL

Directed by Alison Organ,
Frances Smith
and Jennifer Ward



Getting On

OCTOBER

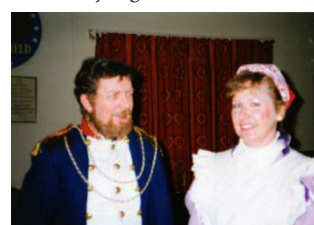
Directed by James Ward



Arms and the Man

FEBRUARY

Directed by Nigel Burnett





My Toy Theatre

by Robert Chesterton

As you can well imagine, I was not involved in “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat”. It contained a massive cast of juniors and was directed by Sue Burnett. To see all those youngsters throwing their hearts and lungs into that show was so moving that I cried! Note to wife; I have emotions!

Now the Rotherfield Pageant was a village production in the summer of 1992 but it was led by the Rotherfield Players with Andrew Fermor at the helm. He aged 10 years during those six months of the production preparation. There was a cast of 145 people. We performed it al fresco on the lower recreation ground. The stage was constructed from 52 pallets obtained from an apple farm near Goudhurst. There was a marquee containing 450 costumes. Another marquee held all the stage properties. We built the stage on 30th May and it was half destroyed by a storm three days later. We had three banks of tiered seating that held 500 people per performance and we sold out three performances. Night fell and the audible sound of German bombers was heard followed by three enormous petrol explosions that heated the faces of the audience. I was the stage manager and I will never forget it. The exultation at the end of each performance was incredible. We had radio contact with the belfry where the campanologists tolled the bells. I was so excited on the last night that I failed to tell them to stop!! Well, a beer had beckoned.

My house, The Mansion House opposite The Courtyard in the High Street, was converted from two shops. The street facade has three large shop windows.

Over the years my partner, Alan, and I have amassed a collection of toy animals. When we moved into The Mansion House we placed a blanket box in front of the window in the front room. Somehow the animals found a place on the blanket box and it amused Alan to arrange the animals on the box. Thinking that it might entertain children he changed the arrangements from time to time, and he was right, it did entertain the passing children.

Things escalated from there. Our house is in the centre of the village, and one Christmas we thought that we should put on a display. I remembered that I had a toy theatre in the attic with scenery and

characters for Cinderella and Aladdin, and so over the Christmas period we could show scenes from the plays. When I ran out of plays I created scenery and characters for Alice in Wonderland, Winnie the Pooh and The Wind in the Willows from the classic illustrations in the books. We always set the toy theatre on the blanket box at children’s eye level. Parents have to stoop to see the show.

Sadly Alan died two years ago and I want to carry on the tradition of keeping a display in the window. For many years I have designed scenery for productions in the area and I have models of many of them in my attic. For the last few weeks I have shown some of these models in the window and this week the model of the set of Entertaining Angels has been on display. The toy animals are still there to look on.



Shown here is the staging for **Hasel and Gretel**

A Resounding Tinkle

FEBRUARY

Directed by Kate Organ

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

JULY

Musical Director and
Directed by Sue Burnett

Sinbad the Sailor

JANUARY

Directed by Felicity Gallifant

The Rotherfield Pageant

JUNE

Directed by Peter Sowerbutts
Producer by Andrew Fermor

1991

Mother Goose

JANUARY

Directed by Mike Organ

How the Other Half Loves

APRIL

Directed by Deirdre Cornford

A Coat of Varnish

OCTOBER

Directed by Julie Toben



SEE MORE IN THE NEXT PROGRAM



Our Charity Collection –

Raising the Roof

Our project to raise the ceiling above our stage is gathering even more pace. Thinking back over the past few years, and the shows that we have done, it seems amazing that we were able to cope with the stage facilities that we have to work with. All of our musicals and pantomimes are a squash simply because of the scenery and the number of people on stage, let alone all of the electrical equipment that is needed. We remember “A Little Shop of Horrors” that had a revolving shop and an enormous puppet plant. Brilliant show but we do look back and wonder how everything managed to fit backstage. Let’s face it, when we move canvas backdrops and pieces of scenery, they do tend to impact upon the ceiling! And the lights burn down on the actors heads because there is so little room above the stage compared to what you see above you in the main part of the hall.

Most importantly, we are aware that our audiences can’t see very well whilst our stage is just two feet above the floor level. We have tried to obviate this problem by hiring tiered seating for the big shows but we cannot afford that for the smaller productions.

We have now finalised a design for a new structure with the trustees of the Village Hall and we also have the positive support of the Rotherfield Parish Council. In essence we wish to build a tower to the approximate maximum height of the existing roof of the main hall. The illustration provides an idea of how it will look from the outside. Once we have achieved that then we will be able to raise the proscenium arch, and the stage to improve the sight lines for our audiences.

Our next step is to obtain planning permission and then we can start the challenging task of fund raising. We estimate the total cost to be in excess of £160,000. We already have about £22,000 from existing funds and personal donations but we will be seeking grants from appropriate places when planning permission has been granted. If any of our audience would like to contribute to our fund on a confidential basis then please email me on plays@rotherfieldplayers.co.uk Oh yes, we would also really appreciate your contributions in our buckets as you leave this evening.

James Gallifant



WORDS from the chairman

FIRST OF ALL, welcome to another wonderful Rotherfield Players production. Again we’ve managed to find a play that is subtly different from previous ventures in this genre, but that still has a superb mix of laugh-out-loud comedy balanced against thought provoking pathos.

And now a word about the society generally. You may be aware that we have had a very friendly merger with the Pantiles Players. This has brought some well-respected talent of all sorts, from actors to the production side, and definitely strengthened our ability to put on first class and adventurous productions. We hope to keep to the Rotherfield Players programme of winter panto, spring play and autumn musical production of some kind. We also intend to include a junior production roughly every two years. Now of course we have the exciting prospect of the Pantiles tradition of an outside production in July, which this year is A midsummer Night’s Dream, which will go ‘on tour’ to Lurgashall Village in West Sussex after its run outside the King’s Head!

You will also see elsewhere in the program an update on our plans to ‘Raise the roof’, another exciting part of this society’s dynamic approach to Am Dram.

So why not join us in our ventures? We always have room for, and make very welcome, new members, in whatever capacity whether direction/production, back-stage, set construction, front of house and of course treading the boards. Feel free to talk to any of our members here today or phone me (01892 852389). And enjoy the show!

Andy Miller, Chair





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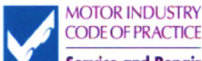
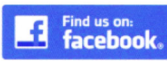
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PRESENTS

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by peter quilter

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a theatre back to life

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By arrangement with Samuel French

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

At the end of January this year the Rotherfield Players and the Pantiles Players combined. In July we are putting on an open-air production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" on the Millennium Green behind the King's Arms in Rotherfield. It will then move on to be performed in the gardens of the Noah's Ark public house in Lurgashall in West Sussex. Don't miss the opportunity to see Shakespeare's magical comedy – bring the family. It will be a fun show.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday 20th – 22nd July 2017 in Rotherfield.
Thursday, Friday and Saturday 27th – 29th July 2017 in Lurgashall