



# LITTLE THEATRE

A  
Southport Dramatic Club  
Production

**Alan Bennett's**  
outrageous comedy



# HABEAS CORPUS

Directed by Ray Mann

**25th January -  
2nd February 2008**  
7.45pm

Sponsored by

 **mitchell&wright**

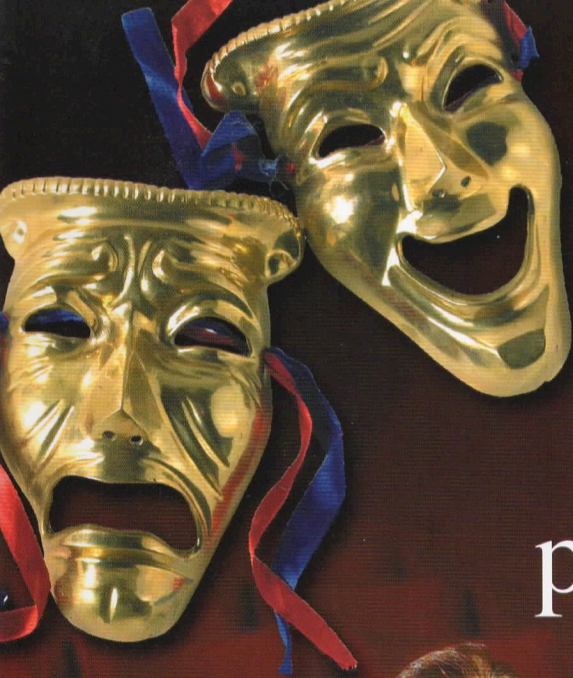
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*box office opens 18th January 2008*



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performance

*come to...*

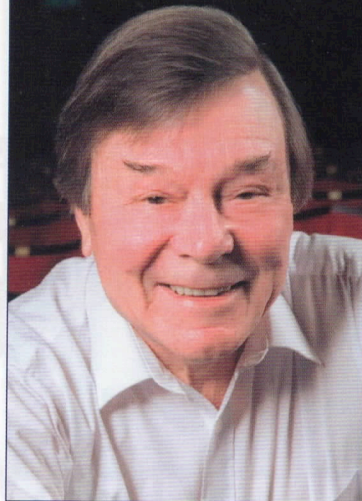


**mitchell&wright**

**COLOUR in PRINT**

Telephone 01704 535529

or Email [sales@mitchellwright.co.uk](mailto:sales@mitchellwright.co.uk)



I was delighted to be invited to direct *Habeas Corpus*, a play I remember with great affection from seeing it when it was first performed by the SDC in 1978. Thirty years later, I feel certain that you, our audience, will not be as shocked by the subject of the piece (S-X) as many were the first time around. But even then the play's irreverent humour pierced the armour of the most conventional thinkers who attended.

The key for me is Alan Bennett's unique sense of humour; he conjures up all the sauciness of the archetypal British seaside picture-postcard. Rude, even bawdy, but not too daring to send back home to friends and relatives!

There will be many of you tonight who have personal memories of the 'swinging sixties' and the so-called 'Permissive Society', the target of Bennett's examination. Great fun, wasn't it? For those of less mature years, I trust tonight will provide a light-hearted insight into that brief period which appeared to challenge the very fabric of the British mores.

My colleagues, in the cast and crew, have thoroughly enjoyed preparing the production for your consumption. It has been an interesting, creative experience because Alan Bennett chose to break another convention-that of the traditionally staged play. Tonight we perform on an open stage with furniture and properties largely absent; the characters are actually caricatures and much of the dialogue is delivered straight to the audience.

So there you are! Now we need your laughter, chuckles and smiles to make our endeavours doubly pleasureable.

In true seaside post card style, I should conclude by writing 'Wish you were here!' But you are, so thanks for coming!

Ray

1978  
Joan Pettitt  
and Josephine  
Yates



## HABEAS CORPUS



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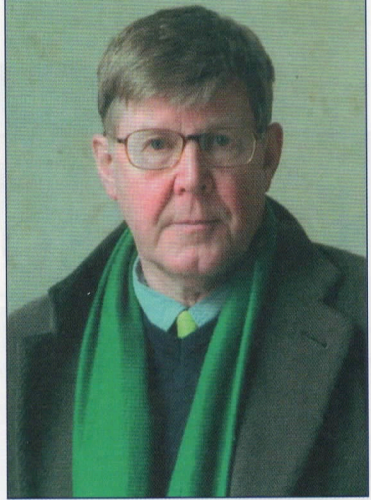
**Amico**



 **Tarkett**

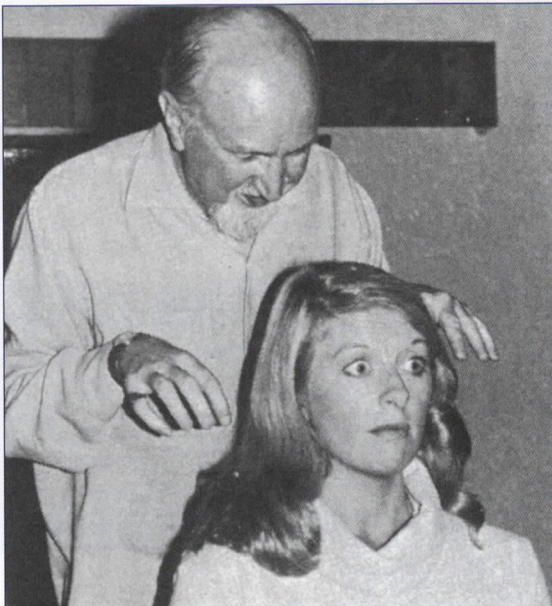
Alan Bennett has been one of our leading dramatists since the success of *Beyond the Fringe* in the 1960s.

His television series *Talking Heads* has become a modern-day classic, as have many of his works for the stage, including *Forty Years On*, *The Lady in the Van*, *A Question of Attribution*, *The Madness of George III* (together with the Oscar®-nominated screenplay *The Madness of King George*) and an adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*. His most recent play, *The History Boys*, won *Evening Standard* and Critics' Circle awards for Best Play, the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play and the South Bank Award.



*Habeas Corpus* was first produced at the Lyric in 1973, with Alec Guinness playing Dr. Wicksteed and Alan Bennett taking over the role of Mrs. Swabb the following year. This play was taken to New York in 1975.

1978  
Bill Finn and  
Viv Tyrer



## HABEAS CORPUS



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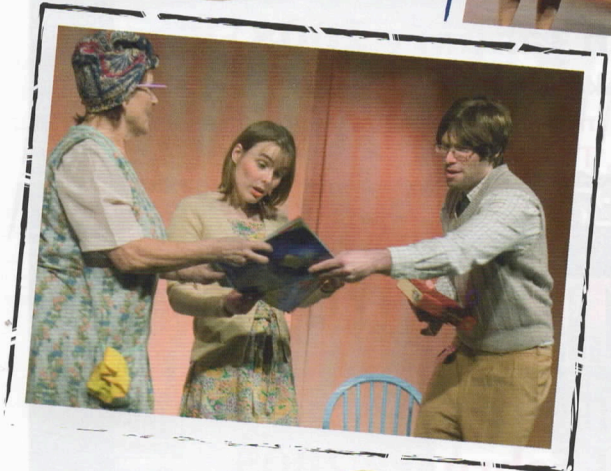
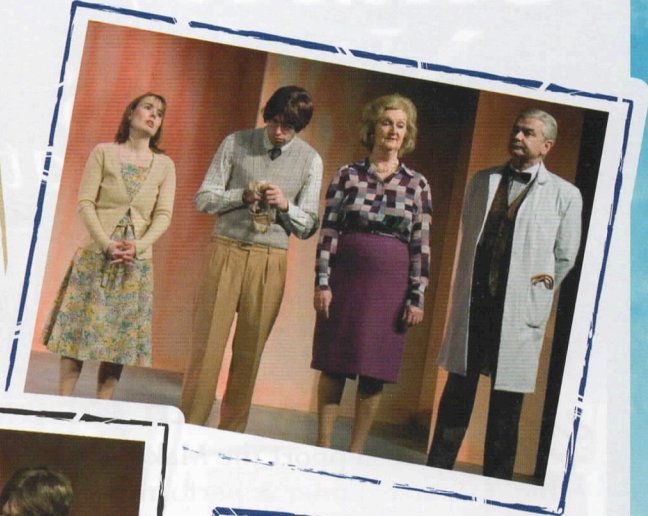
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# HABEAS CORPUS

Rehearsal photographs by Neil Hickson



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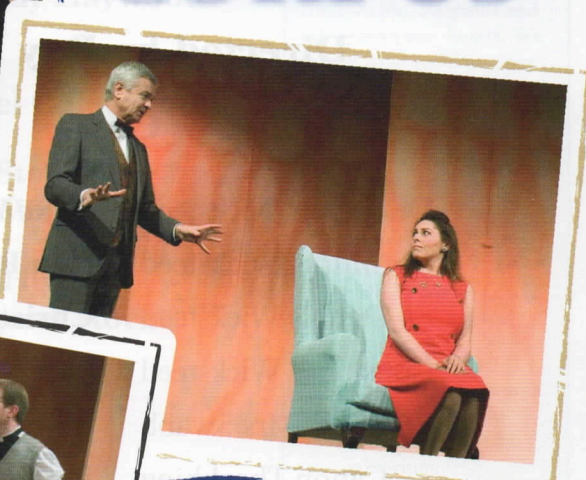
**£5.00 off**

£5.00 off a meal for 2 from A la'Carte Menu on production of this voucher commencing 17th January and throughout February (excluding Sunday lunch or Valentines Day)



# HABEAS CORPUS

Rehearsal photographs by Neil Hickson



# Alan Bennett's **HABEAS CORPUS**

**Directed by Ray Mann**

## **Cast**

Dr. Arthur Wicksteed	<b>Mike Yates</b>
Muriel Wicksteed	<b>Ann Richards</b>
Dennis Wicksteed	<b>Christian Verite</b>
Constance Wicksteed	<b>Ceri Watkins</b>
Mrs Swabb	<b>Margaret Hodge</b>
Canon Throbbing	<b>Peter Buck</b>
Lady Rumpers	<b>Pat Ball</b>
Felicity Rumpers	<b>Cate Leight</b>
Mr Shanks	<b>Chuck Forbes</b>
Sir Percy Shorter	<b>Mike Stowell</b>
Mr Purdue	<b>Pete Slater</b>

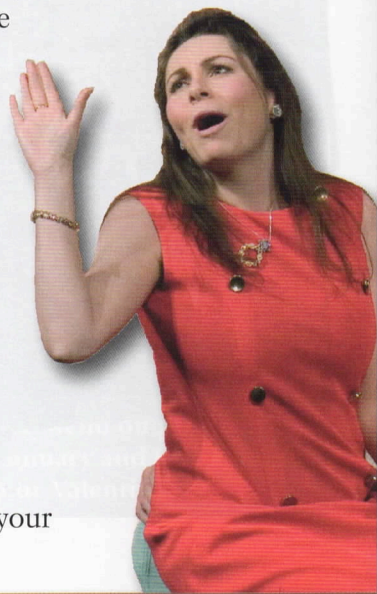
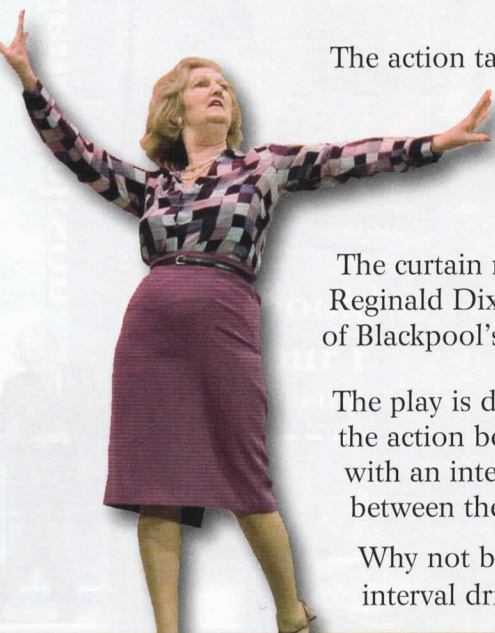
The action takes place in and around the Wicksteed's house in Brighton.

Time - Spring in the mid 1960s

The curtain music is played by Reginald Dixon on the Wurlitzer organ, of Blackpool's Tower Ballroom

The play is divided into two Acts, the action being continuous, with an interval of 20 minutes between the two acts.

Why not beat the rush and pre-order your interval drinks in the bar?



## Staging

Stage Manager	<b>Lindsay Haywood</b>
Assistant Stage Manager (Book)	<b>Sherel Coley</b>
Props	<b>Gay Stowell Julie Whelan</b>
Wardrobe	<b>June Hunter Margaret Horne</b>
Set Design	<b>Syd Coley</b>
Lighting Design	<b>Tony Berry</b>
Lighting Operator	<b>Stephen Moran</b>
Sound	<b>Brian Hodge Roy Carr</b>
Set construction	<b>SDC Production Team</b>
Stage Crew	<b>Phil Hutchinson</b>
Scenic Artist	<b>Bob Jessamine</b>
Photographs	<b>Neil Hickson</b>

## Acknowledgements

The director would like to thank personally: David White, Birkdale Cycles, for the folding cycles, Brian Hodge for providing the vocal accompaniments, David Ballinger for creating specific props and, especially, Mary Forbes and Thelma Falls-Hand for their generous assistance with movement and voice, respectively.

## The Little Theatre - Home of the Southport Dramatic Club.

The SDC wishes to ensure that all our patrons enjoy a comfortable, enjoyable and safe visit to our theatre. We should be grateful for your cooperation in helping us to achieve this. Please note the following:

- Should you arrive after the performance has started, you will be guided to your seats when a suitable opportunity occurs.
- At the end of the performance, exits will be open at both the front and back of the auditorium.
- First Aid assistance is regularly provided by volunteers from the St. John's Ambulance Brigade. Should you require help, please advise our stewards on duty in the Foyer.
- Patrons with hearing impairments should note that the auditorium has an Induction Loop System for your assistance. Hearing wands are also available from our stewards.
- Cameras and recording equipment may not be operated during performances
- KINDLY ENSURE THAT YOUR MOBILE PHONE IS SWITCHED OFF.

Thank you.

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SUPERVISOR, ALAN  
NEWPORT



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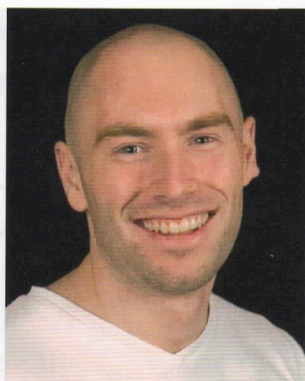
## Mike Yates

Mike is delighted to be working once more with those two stalwarts of the British Theatre, Alan Bennett and Ray Mann. His last Bennett performance was in *A visit from Miss Prothero*, the bar production several years ago. He last worked with Ray as director of last year's bar production *Sitting Pretty*. Anything centred on the bar always interests him!



## Ann Richards

In her youth, Ann experienced the 'Permissive Society' first hand! She is therefore delighted to re-live all the fun and excitement, which has been had by all, in *Habeas Corpus*



## Christian Verite

Christian was thrilled to join the SDC in November and surprised to be cast in the role of Dennis two days later! This has certainly tested his acting skills (not to mention singing and dancing) as Dennis is a shy, spotty, nerdy hypochondriac, while in reality Christian is a hunky fitness trainer. Welcome to the SDC Christian. (Ed.)



## Ceri Watkins

Ceri last appeared as Cecily in *The Importance of Being Earnest* who found love, romance and happiness at the tender age of 18. Connie, on the other hand, has to go to great lengths to attract members of the opposite sex in the hope of being rescued from an ever-dustier shelf and fast-approaching spinsterhood.

Ceri can't help wondering if increasing her bust size and wearing suspenders under a Cub Leader's uniform might improve her chances in real life...!



## Margaret Hodge

This is the closest thing to pantomime that she is likely to do. Apparently Alan Bennett himself played her part when the play was performed professionally. That fact, and her particular affinity with hoovers (ask her husband), guaranteed her interest in this role.



## Peter Buck

As a relative new comer to the SDC, Peter is delighted to be playing not only a humorous character, but one with quite a large part, too!

Besides mastering the art of assembling a fold-up bicycle (at the speed of a formula one mechanic), Peter hopes that he will do justice to this character - striking the right balance in portraying the double-life of what you might call 'a bit of a loose cannon'.



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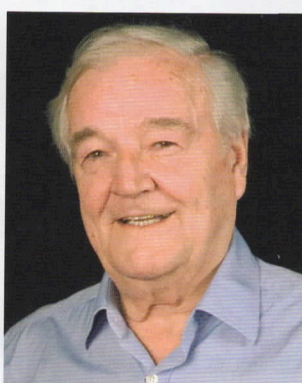
**Pat Ball**

Pat says that she only landed this part because she knew who Hammond Innes was! Nevertheless, she has thoroughly enjoyed the experience and is glad to have worked on such a witty and clever script.



**Cate Leight**

Cate is delighted to be playing the part of Felicity and working with Ray again - although she has noticed the trend of stripping off in his plays! Cate was well cast in this role and certainly didn't need the help of Connie's 'contraption'. The rehearsals (and discussions) have proven to be an education for Cate, and she hopes that by the end of the run she will understand all of the humorous references in the play.



**Chuck Forbes**

This is Chuck's first play with SDC having spent the last 50 years treading the boards in Manchester and the Fylde coast performing in musicals and plays. He is looking forward to playing Mr Shanks in *Habeas Corpus*. Welcome to the SDC Chuck. (Ed.)



**Mike Stowell**

Regular members of our audiences who are of a certain age may well remember Mike playing this same role in our 1978 production of *Habeas Corpus* (see page 16). The 2008 Sir Percy is still very much the same character he was 30 years ago - though his grey hair (what remains of it) and wrinkles are now all Mike's own and do not come courtesy of Max Factor!



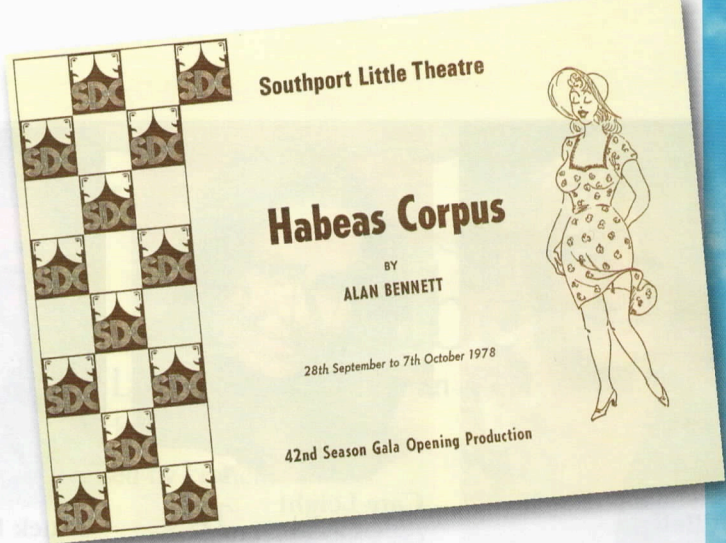
**Pete Slater**

For reasons that will become clear during the play, Pete has set aside a significant amount of cash for buying the technical crew drinks after each performance.

Having previously played a Pantomime baddy, a camp butler, an even camper dress maker, a rapist, an incompetent detective and even a Yorkshireman... Pete has at last found a role which requires no acting ability on his part. A depressed suicidal failure that no one pays any attention to.

## HABEAS CORPUS 2008





**Habeas Corpus**  
28th September to  
7th October 1978

**Cast**

- Arthur Wicksteed .....BILL FINN
- Muriel Wicksteed .....ANNE SYKES
- Dennis Wicksteed.....MIKE ROGERSON
- Constance Wicksteed .....MARIANNE HARDY
- Mrs. Swabb .....JOSEPHINE YATES
- Canon Throbbing .....MARCUS WALKER
- Lady Rumpers .....JOAN PETTITT
- Felicity Rumpers .....VIVIENNE TYRER
- Mr. Shanks .....JOHN HALE
- Sir Percy Shorter .....MIKE STOWELL
- Mr. Purdue .....JOHN MURPHY

Directed by DON ANDERSON

**Habeas Corpus**, n, Writ requiring body of person to be brought before judge.  
(Latin = you must have the body)  
Concise Oxford Dictionary

**Stage Staff**

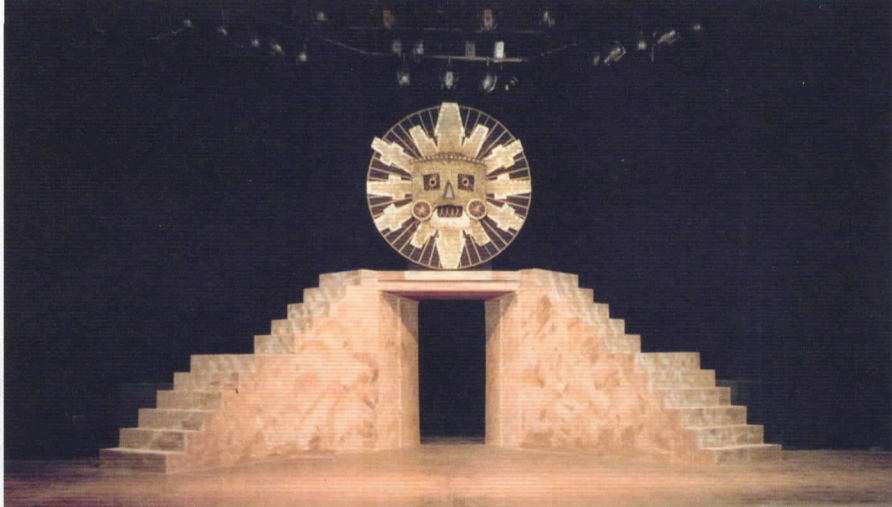
- Stage Manager .....PETER BESWICK
- Deputy Stage Manager .....PAUL ROWE
- Asst. Stage Manager (Book) .....PAT FOULDS
- Asst. Stage Manager (Cast) .....NANCY FRASER, DYLLIS BONNEY
- Properties .....KAY McCALLEN, ANNE DRESSER, CAROLYN EVANS, BARBARA JAMES, NORMA ROGERSON
- Lighting .....SYD COLEY
- Sound .....PETER GRUNDY
- Wardrobe .....JAYNE BARTY, DIANE RIGBY, SUE EMSLIE, MARIA D'ALLESSANDRO
- Set Design .....DAVID CHARTERS
- Constructed by .....JOHN HAYNES
- Built by .....THE PRODUCTION TEAM

1978  
Marianne  
Hardy &  
Mike  
Stowell



**HABEAS  
CORPUS  
1978**





**D**uring the seventies, the Southport Dramatic Club hosted the Little Theatre Guild Conference in our theatre, choosing as their showcase presentation the Peter Shaffer play *The Royal Hunt Of The Sun* to be directed by **Don Anderson**.

Don approached me to design a simple set that would represent various scenes of the play, such as a cathedral, a market place, the ascent of the Andes and an Inca palace. My idea of a ziggurat construction surmounted by an eight foot gold disc was accepted. To represent Pizarro's conquistadors sacking of the Inca temples, for gold, the gold disc had to be dismantled in full view of the audience and to be reassembled for the next performance. With the able assistance of **John Haynes** and the use of his large cellar at his home in Duke street, we set about constructing this edifice.

The main support was a disc cut from two four foot wide pieces of plywood (pre MDF) which was then painted black. With the use of some old stair-rods, assorted shapes cut from plywood off-cuts sprayed a metallic gold, numerous metal bottle tops, wire coat hangers, yards of gold raffia, plus jubilee clips to secure the removable items, we set about constructing the Jaguar Sun God.

John and I were satisfied with the finished product, but nothing was compared with the thrill I experienced

on the opening night as the ear-piercing shrill of an incan paeon announced the appearance of Atahualpa - **Mike Yates** adorned in his magnificent feathered serpent robes, (designed and made by **Ray Evans** and **Sheril Coley**) backed by the massive gold symbol that had been created in the cellar.

Sadly both Don and John have now passed away. Don will be fondly remembered for his fresh approach to directing plays. Many of us learned greatly from his tuition. John certainly left his foot print. His three youngest sons, Philip, Radley and Colin appeared on the Little Theatre stage from an early age. Radley and Colin as adults like their father have worked to our benefit back stage on many productions.

*David Charters*



*Don Anderson*



*John Haynes*





# LITTLE THEATRE

22 Feb -  
1st Mar  
2008



## The Memory of Water

by Shelagh Stevenson  
directed by Margaret Mann  
box office opens 15th Feb 2008

12th Mar -  
15th Mar  
2008



## Blood Brothers The Play

by Willy Russell  
directed by Hilary Thomson  
box office opens 5th Mar 2008

4th Apr -  
12th Apr  
2008



## A Party to Murder

by Maria Kash & Douglas E Hughes  
directed by David Charters  
box office opens 28th Mar 2008

2nd May -  
10th May  
2008



Sponsored by



## The Full Monty

**The Musical**  
by Terence McNally  
Lyrics by David Yazbek, directed by Alistair Hewitt  
box office opens 25th Apr 2008

17th May -  
24th May  
2008

**Birkdale  
Orpheus  
Society  
Production**

## Thoroughly Modern Millie

by Richard Morris & Dick Scanlan  
by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Ltd.  
box office opens 10th May Advanced booking 01704 564042

27th May -  
31st May  
2008



## A Day in The Death of Joe Egg

by Peter Nichols  
directed by James Hughes-Alty  
box office opens 20th May 2008

### Box Office

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4th Jun -  
7th Jun  
2008

**Maghull  
Musical  
Theatre  
Production**

## **Oklahoma!**

*by Rodgers & Hammerstein  
by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Ltd.  
box office opens 28th May 2008*

12th Jun -  
14th Jun  
2008

**Too Friendly  
Theatre  
Company  
Production**

## **Murdered To Death**

*by Peter Gordon  
by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Ltd.  
box office opens 2nd Jun 2008 Advanced booking Tel 01704 541306*

18th Jun -  
21st Jun  
2008

**Waterloo  
Society  
Production**

## **Return to the Forbidden Planet**

*by Bob Carlton  
by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Ltd.  
box office opens 9th Jun 2008  
Advanced booking Tel: 0151 924 0231*

27th Jun -  
28th Jun  
2008

**Lorreto  
Bamber  
School of  
Dance  
Production**

## **Lorreto Bamber School of Dance**

*Advanced booking Tel: 01704 538351*

29th Jun  
2008

**Old Hall  
Brass Wigan  
in Concert**

## **Old Hall Brass Wigan in Concert**

*Advanced booking Tel: 01942 715684*

9th Jul -  
12th Jul  
2008

**Southport  
Operatic  
Society  
Production**

## **Some Enchanted Evening The music of Rodgers & Hammerstein**

*by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Ltd.  
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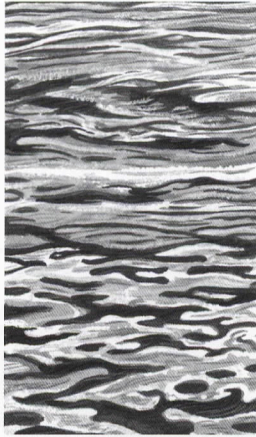
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# LITTLE THEATRE

A  
Southport Dramatic Club  
Production



# THE *Memory* OF WATER

• Funny • Heart-warming • Moving • Poignant •

*by Shelagh Stevenson*

*directed by Margaret Mann*

**22nd February -**

**1st March 2008**

**7.45pm**

box office opens 15th February 2008

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