



LITTLE THEATRE

Home of the
Southport Dramatic Club
Presents



THE SHELL SEEKERS

A story of a family and the passion and heartbreak that kept them together.

From the novel by Rosamunde Pilcher

Adapted by Terence Brady and Charlotte Bingham

directed by James Hughes-Alty

20th - 28th February 2009

7.45pm



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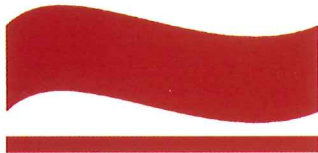
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Director's notes

Ro samunde Pilcher's "The Shell Seekers" is such a popular novel, and a long one, that I wondered if the play adaptation could possibly do the original justice. As it happened, I needn't have worried, the play by Terence Brady and Charlotte Bingham manages to capture the detailed characterisations and nuances of the plot perfectly.

It tells the story of Penelope Keeling and the relationship she has with her children, how their lives have pleased, worried and disappointed her and how the events of her younger days shaped both the woman she is now and the expectations she had for her children.

The sudden arrival of two young people into her life causes Penelope to examine her past and the choices she made. Central to this self examination is "The Shell Seekers", a painting by her father, the celebrated artist Lawrence Stern. It was the last work he completed before arthritis put an end to his career and was given to Penelope as a wedding present. Selling it now would mean financial security for her children, but for Penelope the painting means much more.

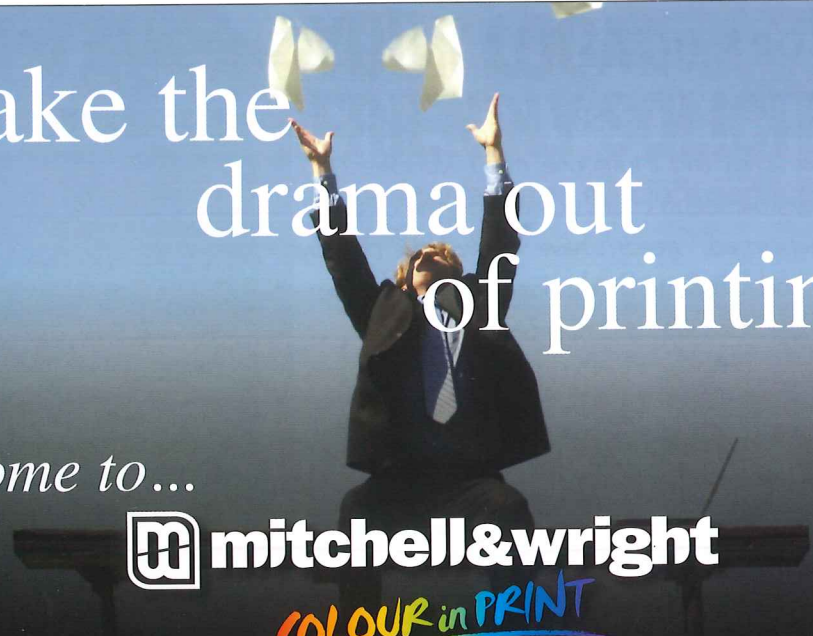
I would like to take this opportunity to thank my cast who worked so hard to bring this story to life and to all those who gave their time and expertise backstage. Special thanks go to Michelle Pappini, who has shadowed me as Director, for all her support and enthusiasm.

Finally, we would like to thank you, our audience. Whether you are a regular patron or a new visitor to the Little Theatre, we welcome you and hope you enjoy the play.



James Hughes Alty
Director





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Terence Brady and Charlotte Bingham

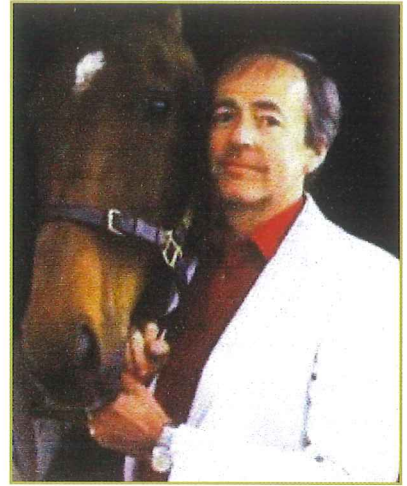
Husband and wife Terence Brady and Charlotte Bingham have been writing scripts and plays together since their early twenties and also enjoyed considerable success with their individual endeavours. Either together, or individually their TV and stage productions include "Upstairs Downstairs", "Robins Nest", "Yes Honestly", "Birds of a Feather", "Three Piece Suite" and "Pig in the Middle", plus many TV and film appearances which stir the memory - "Hawaii Five-O", "The Avengers", "Z-Cars", "Father dear Father" and "Fort Apache, the Bronx".

Charlotte the author toured the US appearing on many top chat shows and panel games, as well as being cover-featured in Life magazine, Paris Match, Tatler, Vogue, Town and Country and interviewed by many US newspapers, most notably the New York Times and the Herald Tribune. One of her braver offerings was the best selling Coronet Among the Grass, describing the first ten years of her marriage to Terence, later adapted by both of them for the hit television comedy series "No Honestly".

They now live the rural life in a converted 18th century refectory in Somerset with an accompanying menagerie and a great interest in their garden, including the excavation of a lake. Another great interest is breeding race horses and eventers, and this country life style has now crept into their literary work.

Recent works "To hear a Nightingale", "The Nightingale Sings" and "The Kissing Garden" are inspired by their hobbies and surroundings.

Either as a partnership or individually, literary talent and success go hand in hand with Terence Brady and Charlotte Bingham.



Terence Brady



Charlotte Bingham



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Rosamunde Pilcher



Rosamunde Pilcher has had a long and distinguished career as a novelist and short story writer, but it was her phenomenally successful novel, "The Shell Seekers", that captured the hearts of all who read it, and won her international recognition as one of the best-loved storytellers of our time.

Rosamunde Pilcher was encouraged to write from an early age and had her first story published in 'Woman and Home' at the age of 18. During the Second World War, she worked first in the Foreign Office, and then in the Women's Royal Naval Service, serving in Portsmouth and Trincomalee, Ceylon, with the East India fleet. After the war she married and moved to Scotland. She and her husband live near Dundee. They have four children and eight grandchildren. Throughout this time Rosamunde Pilcher has been writing continuously, for magazines as well as 13 novels.

Her two bestselling novels, "The Shell Seekers" and "September", became the best-loved novels of the decade. Her most recent bestseller, "Coming Home", was also made into a television film, whilst her short story collections, "The Blue Bedroom" and "Flowers in the Rain", have also been wonderfully popular.

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Preparing for “The Shell Seekers” painting

Scanning through many art books and the works of the Scottish colourists: Cadell, Fergusson, Hunter and Peploe, even Vettriano’s Beach scenes, David Charters finally settled for a snap he had taken two years ago of his grandson and nephews on Formby beach, in order to achieve the desired effect.

Using gouache paint he transformed the three young boys into Edwardian girls by adding period dresses and bloomers.

To prepare for the finished artwork that was to be used for publicity purposes, a gilt frame was added by computer imaging.

For the huge reproduction featured on the front cloth yet another scotsman’s services was called upon, in the name of Bob Jessamine our scenic painter.

The original painting was now set into a genuine gilt frame and suspended within the stage setting.

All the rest was done with lights.





THE SHELL SEEKERS

From the novel by Rosamunde Pilcher
Adapted by Terence Brady and Charlotte Bingham
directed by James Hughes-Alty

Cast

Penelope Keeling..... Val Pedlar
Olivia..... Helen Pickavance
Nancy..... Dyan Ensenat
Noel..... Brendan Gillow
Penny / Antonia..... Ceri Watkins
Richard / Danus..... Scott Rowan
Lawrence..... Jim Longworth
Roy Brookner..... Ray Mann
Ellen..... Sue Thomas
George..... Barry Johnson

Time: around 1985 and in flashback from WWII

Places: Gloucestershire, Cornwall and London

The play is set in two acts and there will be an interval of 20minutes between the acts.
Why not beat the rush and pre-order your drinks in the bar?



Staging

Director's Assistant	Michelle Pappini
Stage Manager	Patrick Bowes
Assistant Stage Manager (book)	Sheila Furlong
Set Design	Syd Coley
Lighting	Phil Hutchinson Roy Carr
Sound Design	Brian Hodge Chris Ratcliffe
Properties	Julie Whelan Gay Stowell
Wardrobe	James Hughes-Alty and Cast
Set Construction	SDC Production Team
Original Painting	David Charters
Scenic Artist	Bob Jessamine
Photographs	Neil Hickson
Crew	Michael Clarke Christian Barisio Mike Yates Michèle Martin Roderick Beardsell Colin Hardwick Emma Hazelhurst

Music

The Music for this evenings performance is:

Après un Rêve by Fururé

and

Cello Concerto in E Minor - Adagio by Elgar

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.

**DESIGNATED PREMISES
SUPERVISOR, ALAN NEWPORT**



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If you represent a company or institution you might be interested in supporting Southport Dramatic Club by sponsoring one of our productions.

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LITTLE THEATRE
Home of the
Southport Dramatic Club



The Shell Seekers

The Ladies

Val Pedlar - Penelope Keeling

Playing Mrs Danvers in "Rebecca" for Sefton Theatre Company last year Val ended up in a burning house. Her last major role at the SDC was in "Amy's View", when the play concluded with water being poured over her. Val finds herself in an equally interesting situation at the end of "The Shell Seekers", however, she is delighted to be acting again at the Little Theatre.



Dyan Ensenat - Nancy

Since she first trod the Southport boards over twenty years ago, as a ninety year old nun in "Abelard and Heloise", Dyan has played a variety of parts, her favourite being Velma in "Chicago" long before the musical became a hit on Broadway and in London. Then followed numerous appearances for "Centre Stage" based at the Arts' Centre and now, after indulging her musical side for a few years, Dyan returns to SDC to play the part of discontented daughter Nancy in "The Shell Seekers". She says she was particularly pleased to be offered the part as it meant she would be re-united with Helen Pickavance, playing her sister Olivia, whom she first met in "Sweet Charity" – more years ago than they both care to remember!

Helen Pickavance - Olivia

Helen says it has been twelve months since she appeared on the SDC stage in "Memory of Water" which was also about Mother and family relationships. Unlike many families all of the cast have got on fabulously and Helen says she has made some great friends..



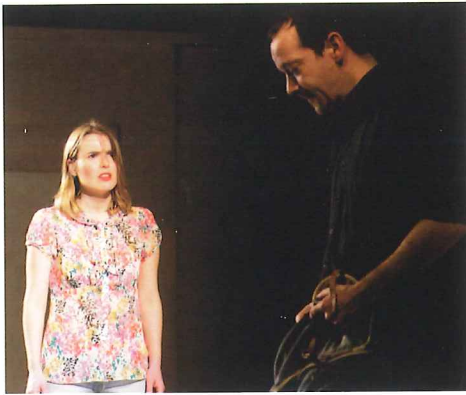
Sue Thomas - Ellen

Sue is enjoying playing the part of Ellen, 'the lady that does'. To the amazement of her family she wears a pinny and is reputed to be a good cook. What acting!

Ceri Watkins - Penny / Antonia

Ceri has really relished the challenge of playing two different characters from two contrasting eras. She has enjoyed the entertaining (if slightly confusing!) rehearsal process and hopes the audience appreciates her efforts!





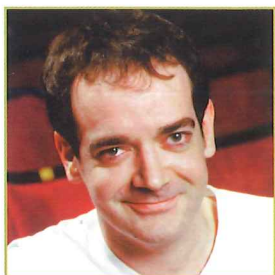
The Shell Seekers

The Gentlemen

Brendan Gillow - Noel

Noel is basically a kind hearted soul who just wants to make sure that his mother's money is put to its best use in the event of her death.

Although art isn't his strong point he knows the value of a good production when he sees it!



Scott Rowan - Richard / Danus

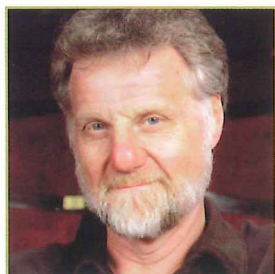
In Scott's last appearance on the Little stage, in "Season's Greetings", he produced puppet shows.

In this production he is playing two characters, a young gardener and a young army officer, and he still hates puppets.

Ray Mann - Roy Brookner

Ray has always thought that an attractive occupation would be that of a fine arts expert working for Sotherby's. Now he gets the chance to pretend to be one.

Ray's previous role was that of a successful writer of crime fiction – another of his interests. No wonder we call this hobby 'theatre of dreams'!



Jim Longworth - Lawrence

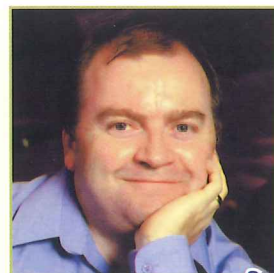
Jim's previous appearances in SDC productions have been in: "Katherine Howard", "Shadowlands", "Amy's View", "A Chorus of Disapproval" and "A View from the Bridge" and he is very pleased to be back on the Little Theatre stage with SDC.

Barry Johnson - George

Barry has been a member of the SDC for over 25 years and has played a host of character parts over the years from Mr Mole in "Wind in The Willows" to a rear gunner in "Flare Path", along with a host of pantomime characters.

His last appearance on the SDC stage was over two seasons ago in "Brassed Off" as Harry one of the miners. You may remember him trying to cope with a large Tuba!

He is making a welcome return to the SDC stage tonight with his portrayal of the long suffering George.



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LITTLE THEATRE

2nd Half Season

**11th - 14th
Mar 2009**
Box Office opens:
4-3-09

**An SDC
Youth
Production**

Tales from the Melling Road

Written and directed by Alistair Hewitt

**27th Mar -
4th Apr 2009**
Box Office opens:
20-3-09

**An SDC
Production**

The Cemetery Club

by Ivan Menchell
directed by Robin Hirsch

**24th Apr -
2nd May 2009**
Box Office opens:
17-4-09

**An SDC
Production**

Joan Littlewood's Musical Entertainment Oh What A Lovely War

By Theatre Workshop, Charles Chilton, Gerry Raffles and
Members of the Original Cast

Title suggested by Ted Allan
by arrangement with Samuel French Limited
directed by Margaret Mann

**9th -16th
May 2009**
Box Office opens:
2-5-09

**Birkdale Orpheus
Society Production**

South Pacific

by Rogers & Hammerstein
adapted from "Tales Of The South Pacific"
by James A Michener

Advanced booking 01704 564042

**19th - 23rd
May 2009**
Box Office opens:
T.B.A.

**An SDC
Bar Production**

The Danger of Tobacco

An SDC Première
of a new play written and directed
by Alistair Hewitt

**3rd - 6th
Jun 2009**
Box Office opens:
27-5-09

**Maghull Musical
Theatre Company**

Pajama Game

an Amateur production by arrangement
with Josef Weinberger Ltd

Advanced booking 0151 547 3025

**11th - 13th
Jun 2009**
Box Office opens:
4-6-09

**Too Friendly Theatre
Company
Production**

It's Now Or Never

by Mike Tredinnick
Advanced booking 01704 560229





LITTLE THEATRE

2nd Half Season

**17th - 20th
Jun 2009**

Box Office opens:
8-6-09

**Waterloo & Crosby
Theatre Company
Production**

Separate Tables

by Terence Rattigan

by arrangement with Samuel French Ltd

Advanced booking 0151 924 0231

**26th - 27th
Jun 2009**

Box Office opens:
26-6-09

**Loreto Bamber
Dancing Academy
Production**

Loreto Bamber Dancing Academy's Summer Production

Advanced booking 01704 538351

**1st - 4th
Jul 2009**

Box Office opens:
22-6-09

**Southport Amateur
Operatic Society
Production**

Boogie Nights

Written by Jon Conway, script associates Shane Riche & Terry Morrison

an Amateur production by arrangement
with Josef Weinberger Ltd

Advanced booking 01704 228936

**5th
Jul 2009**

Box Office opens:
5-7-09

**Old Hall
Brass - Wigan
Production**

An Evening of Music with Old Hall Brass - Wigan

Advanced booking 01942 715684



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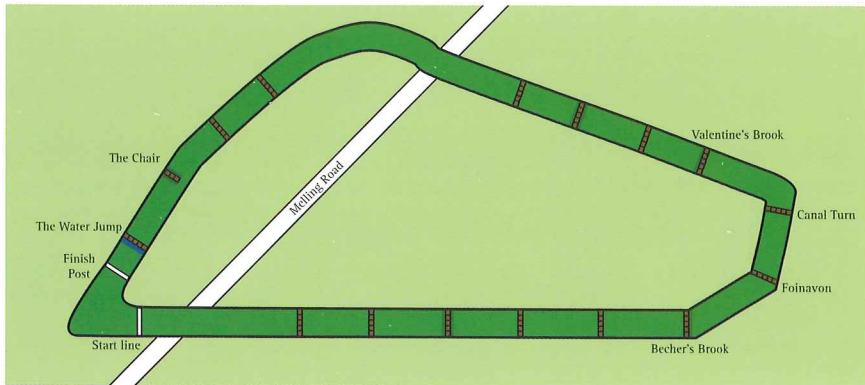




LITTLE THEATRE

Home of the
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Presents An SDC *Youth* Production

Tales *from the* Melling Road



The story of community spirit evoked by the 1997 Grand National bomb scare

Written and directed by
Alistair Hewitt

11th - 14th March 2009
7.30pm

Box office opens: 4th March 2009



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*By Joan Menchell,
directed by Robin Hirsch*

**27th March -
4th April 2009**
7.45pm

Box office opens: 20th March 2009



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