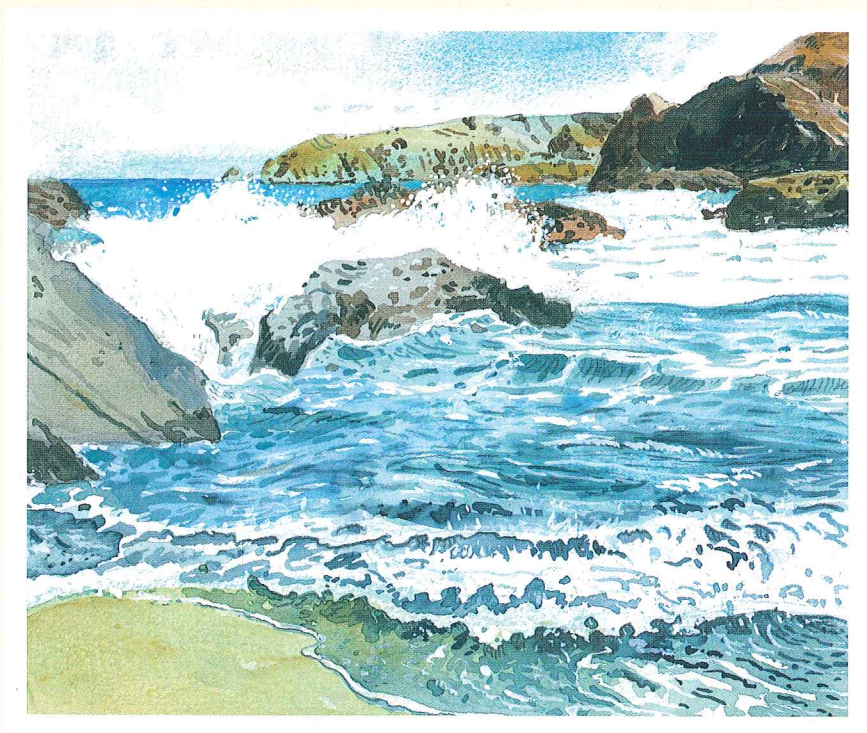


A SOUTHPORT DRAMATIC CLUB PRODUCTION

DAPHNE DU MAURIER'S

Passionate moving drama

SEPTEMBER TIDE



30th October - 7th November 2009

Directed by Michèle Martin



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Director's Notes



Michèle
Martin

When Margaret Mann, chairman of play selection invited me to direct my first full play to for the SDC I was determined to say yes whatever the play. Luckily for me 'September Tide' is a great story with wonderful characters. It's well written too. How can you tell? Well if you've read the play and seen it acted more than 35 times and still find new things each time, you soon realise the author knew how to write.

The play is set in Fowey (pronounced Foy) in Cornwall in 1948. A place and time unfamiliar to me so my first job was to research both. The internet and later some photos from a visit by Steve Pritchard who plays the village know-it-all (a visit to Cornwall - now that's dedication) revealed the beautiful harbour and Daphne du Maurier's home. This inspired our set, a water-side cottage with access down to the boats and water. Access that is vital to the plot as many of the characters come and leave via the harbour ferry and there's sailing, swimming and a good soaking for our leading man, Brendon Gillow. Brendon, one the SDC's real gentlemen, has unsurprisingly been inundated with offers to help him with his soaking.

Researching the period we found some great differences and possibly more delightful similarities to today. 1948 was the year of the London 'austerity' Olympics, rationing continued and whisky was reserved for export to pay off the National Debt. The newly formed NHS was trying to prevent a flu epidemic with public information films on catching coughs and sneezes in handkerchiefs. Make do and mend was the watchword, so our lovely leading ladies, Sandra Unsworth, Sally-Anne Smerdon and Corinna Davies will be relying on our very knowledgeable wardrobe mistress Sherel Coley, instead of

raiding their own wardrobes as often happens in our more modern plays.

The 1940's marked a huge change in the style of popular culture. Cinema and BBC radio - the home service and the light programme - were replacing the music hall as main sources of entertainment.

American culture arrived via Hollywood and big musicals such as Oklahoma, which was on in the West End in 1947. These revolutionised popular culture as we see in the play when Stella and her son Jimmy played by a newcomer Matthew Greenwood, reveal their taste in music.

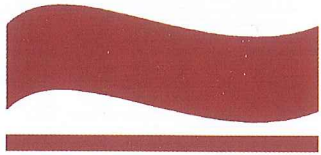
Stella's taste in music presented me with a dilemma as the piece in the script was not one that would appeal to modern audiences. As the main reason for putting on a play is entertainment I needed to find a suitable alternative. It had to have a decent melody, be in the right period and be easy to play and sing. Luckily our sound director Brian Hodge rode in on his white charger and together we picked another song. Brian then transposed it into a lower key and worked out the chords for Brendon to play (he's not a pianist).

One of the joys of directing this play has been hearing visitors to our rehearsals laugh at different funny bits as the actors try different ways of delivering lines.

Judge for yourself if our efforts have transformed du Maurier's words into real three dimensional characters. If we've been successful this classic tale of love, loyalty and morals will bring smiles and maybe a tear or two. I know I'll have my tissues handy ...and not just because I feel so proud to have worked with such a dedicated group of people.

DAPHNE DU MAURIER'S

SEPTEMBER TIDE



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Daphne du Maurier

Despite her lifelong association with Cornwall in both her writing and her life Daphne du Maurier was born into a very artistic London family.

Grandfather was caricaturist **George du Maurier**, mother actress Muriel Beaumont and father actor-manager-writer **Sir Gerald du Maurier**, and with frequent visiting friends such as J.M. Barrie and Edgar Wallace.

Her childhood was filled with voracious reading, writing and a fascination with imaginary worlds, to the extent that her uncle, a magazine editor published one of her stories when she was only a teenager and got her a literary agent.



Sir Gerald du Maurier
(1873 - 1934)

Hitchcock with a covering letter.

"If we do in motion pictures as faithful a job as Welles did on the radio, we are likely to have the same success the book did and the same success Welles had.

History shows they did!



Daphne du Maurier
(1907 - 1989)

Given that background it is no surprise she became the novelist, biographer and playwright we are familiar with, her best known work perhaps being *Rebecca* adapted in 1938 by **Orsen Welles** for radio and filmed by **Alfred Hitchcock** in 1940, after the producer David Selznick sent a transcript of the radio broadcast to

It seems Hitchcock became a fan, going on to direct *Jamaica Inn* and adapting her short story *The Birds*.

Other directors followed suit and many of her works were filmed.

In 1932 she married Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Arthur Montague Browning (later knighted) but a spirit such as hers was never really meant for the military life always being uncomfortable with

army wives.

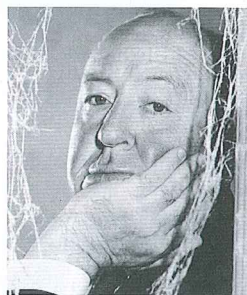
Nevertheless the marriage somehow lasted thirty three years, with three children along the way, until Browning's death in 1965.

Du Maurier was made Dame in 1969 for literary distinction. She died on April 19th 1989.

Her education both in this country and in France and the fact that she started to write *Rebecca* whilst travelling in Egypt showed she had some of the wanderlust but she will always be associated with Cornwall, the wild stormy weather and wild past seemingly firing her imagination.



Orsen Welles
(1915 - 1985)



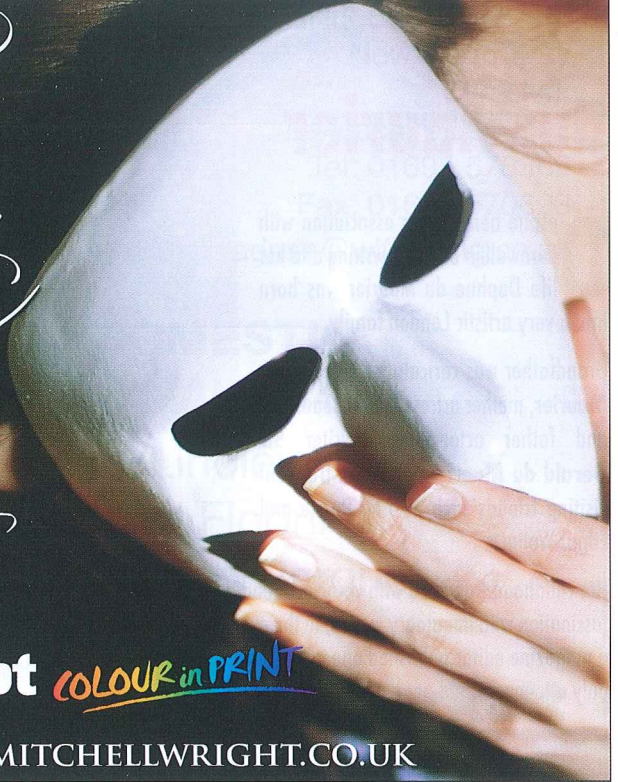
Alfred Hitchcock
(1899 - 1980)



"Here was the freedom I desired, long sought for, not yet known. Freedom to write, to walk, to wander, to climb hills, to pull a boat, to be alone".

As she wrote in her book Vanishing Cornwall

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Where does Stella Martyn live?

In 1926 Daphne went with her mother Muriel and her sisters to Cornwall with the purpose of buying a holiday home.

Daphne was not very enthusiastic about the whole idea. She would have preferred the family to have bought a holiday home in France. She had previously been to Cornwall on holiday with the family and she loved the area, but she could not imagine what Cornwall could offer compared to France.

Fowey was the answer.

Fowey is separated from Bodinnick by the estuary of the river Fowey. On the Bodinnick side was a house, which originally was part of an old boathouse. The house was for sale. Muriel bought the house and it was immediately renamed 'Ferryside' inasmuch as it was situated right next to the ferry, which connected Bodinnick with Fowey.

The house was in a terrible state and needed to have a lot of work done to make inhabitable, but the position of the house made it worth the effort: **it stood almost over the water which rushed dangerously past the front wall.**

By spring 1927 the renovation was completed and Daphne spent the summer there. She shared a room with her sister



Jeanne. It was a lovely room with windows overlooking the estuary and the open sea. ***She lay in her bed hearing the hooting of ships' horns and the constant cry of seagulls.***

Compare this with Daphne du Maurier's instructions for the scenery of September Tide:

The living room of Stella Martyn's house on a Cornish estuary The house is directly above the harbour. Throughout the play the screech of gulls and the wash of the tide below can be heard.

We need not be in any doubt which location du Maurier had in mind when she wrote September Tide.

The du Maurier Family - A brief history

The du Maurier family have a fascinating history, with many of its members leading distinguished lives in their own rights.

George du Maurier born in Paris was a well known illustrator and novelist, moving to London in 1851, eventually working for "Once a week" and "Punch" as a cartoonist, and also illustrating the novels of Thomas Hardy, Elizabeth Gaskell and Wilkie Collins.

His son, Sir Gerald du Maurier, Daphne's father, was multi-talented as an actor (stage and screen) and theatrical manager.

He was knighted in 1922 for his services to theatre.

His wife Muriel was a noted actress, based predominantly at three London theatres, the Theatre Royal, The Garrick and the Duke of York.

Silvia Llewelyn Davies (née du Maurier), Gerald's older sister was friendly with J.M. Barrie and with her five sons was reputedly the inspiration for the Lost Boys in Peter Pan.

Angela du Maurier was the eldest of the three du Maurier sisters, originally aspiring to follow the family tradition of acting but turned to writing, releasing a total of eleven books.

She lived at Ferryside, the family house in Cornwall for most of her life.

Scenes

The play takes place in the Living room of Stella Martyn's house in a Cornish estuary.

- Act 1 Scene 1 Late afternoon, Summer 1948
Scene 2 Two months later, late afternoon
Interval of 20 minutes between Acts 1 & 2*
- Act 2 Scene 1 The same the following morning
Scene 2 Six months later

Staging

Stage Manager	Chris Ratcliffe
Assistant to Director	Emma Haslehurst
Assistant Stage Manager (Book)	Sue Palmer Jean Watkinson
Set Design	Syd Coley
Lighting Design	Tony Berry
Operator	Roy Carr
Sound	Peter Beswick
Properties and Stage Dressing	Lynn Gosling Barbara Preston
Wardrobe	Sherel Coley Margaret Horne
Scenic Artist	Bob Jessamine
Set Construction	SDC Production Team including: Chris Appleton, Corinna Davies, Robert Jones, Alan Morris, Graham Williams
Musical assistance	Brian Hodge Margaret Mann

Acknowledgements

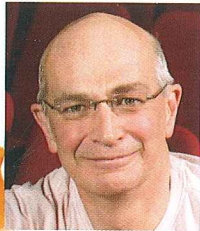
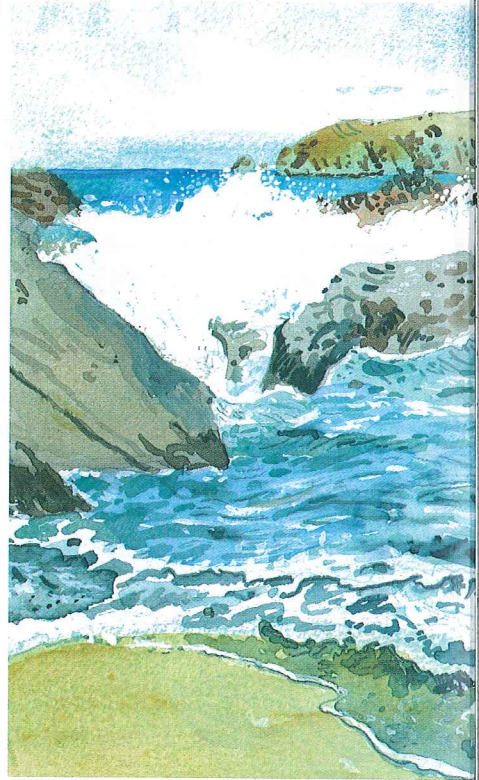
The director would like to thank everyone who offered advice and practical help with this production, particularly: Brian Hodge, Margaret Mann, Diana Smither and Brian Smither, Poppy Flanagan, Stephen and James Hughes-Alty. Also to Michael Yates for reading the shipping forecast in his best 'Herry Harpur Ace Air reporter voice' while recovering from an operation.

* Why not beat the rush and pre-order your drinks at the bar

DAPHNE DU

Passionate m
Directed by M

SEPTEMBER



Steve Pritchard
Robert Hanson



Sally-Anne Smerdon
Mrs Tucket

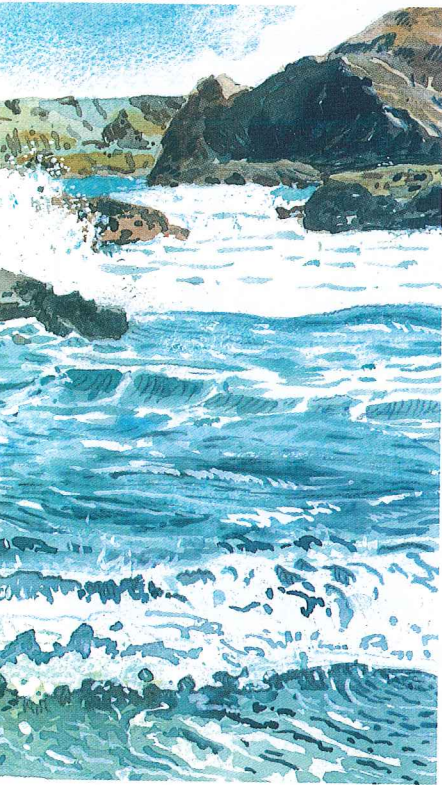


Corinna Davies
Cherry Davies

MAURIER'S

oving drama
chèle Martin

BER TIDE



Music played during this performance

- Act 1 *Allegro* by Elgar
Vilja from *A Merry Widow* by Franz Lehar
Piano piece from *Clowns in Clover* by Vivian Ellis
- Act 2 *Gymnopédie* No.1 by Satie
Radio music by Glen Miller
- End *Red sails in the sunset* by Nat King Cole

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Thank you.

DESIGNATED PREMISES SUPERVISOR,
ALAN NEWPORT



Brendan Gillow
Evan Davies

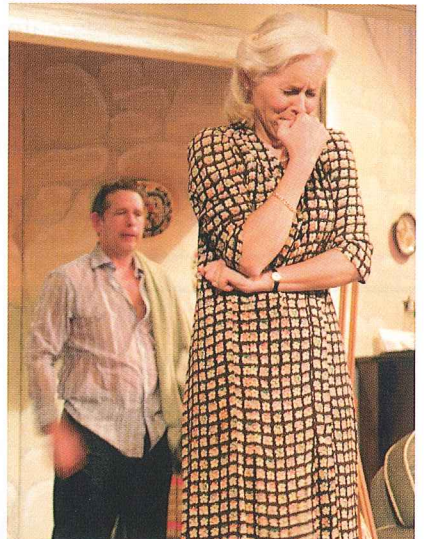
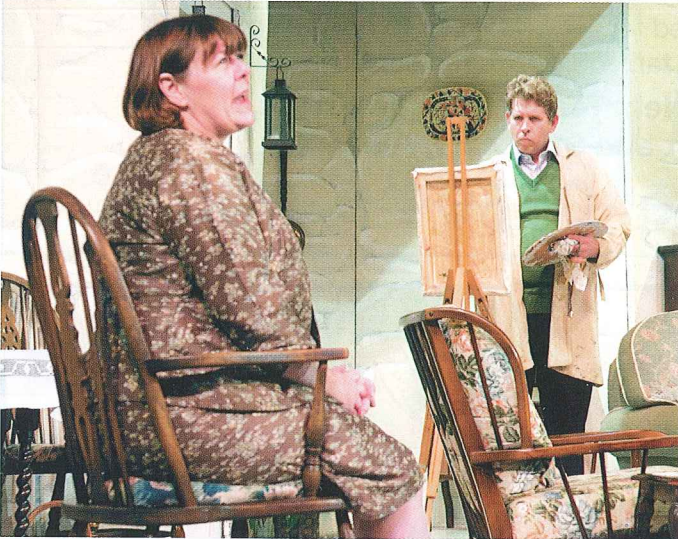


Sandra Unsworth
Stella Martyn



Matthew Greenwood
Jimmy Martyn





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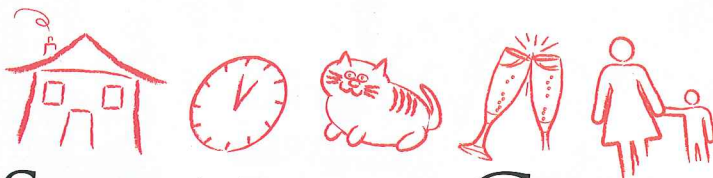
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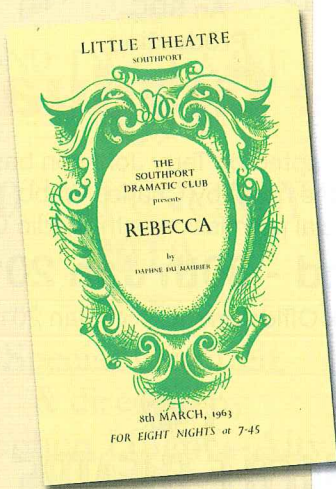
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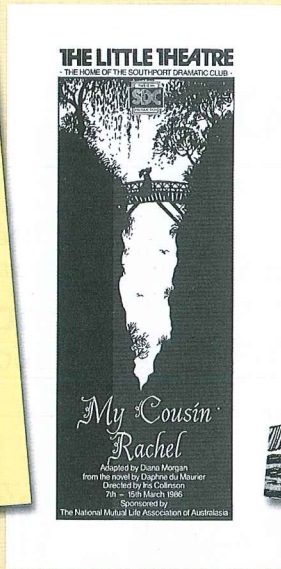
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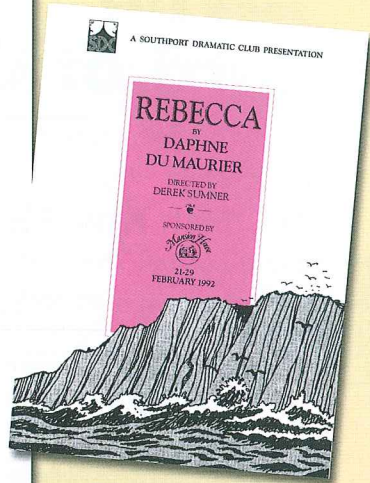
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March, 1986



February, 1992

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