



A SOUTHPORT DRAMATIC CLUB PRODUCTION

# HUMBLE Boy

a comedy by  
Charlotte Jones

directed by  
James Hughes-Alty

29th October - 6th November 2010

7.45pm



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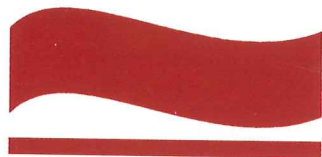


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# Charlotte Jones

We all know at anyone time most actors are out of work. Charlotte Jones, however, didn't just sit down by the telephone praying for it to ring - she sat at her computer and wrote a part for herself. The result was *Airswimming* and she played one of the two women incarcerated in an asylum awaiting news of their release, a metaphor, she claimed, for waiting for her agent to call.

Only five years and four plays later, *Humble Boy* premiered at the Royal National Theatre and transferred to the West End.

Her career has been described as meteoric, something which baffles her as she claims to have paid her dues after six years in rep and periods of waitressing.

Born and raised in Worcester and after a convent education she read English at Oxford where her love of acting was born.

She won the "Critics Choice" most promising new playwright award in 2000, but remains a self confessed cynic, often believing it will all be over in three years time and will look back on this time as the high point of her career.

Others don't agree, however, *Humble Boy* having been nominated for four Olivier awards and the critics comparing her with Stoppard, Ayckbourn and Frayn and calling her "a dramatist built to last".



**Charlotte Jones**

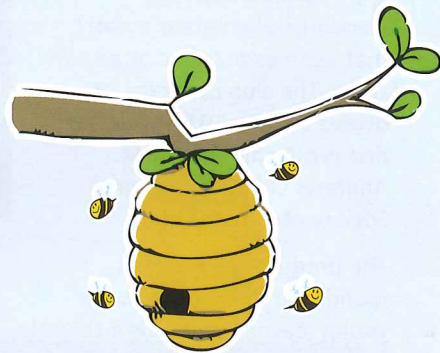
She admitted finding herself intimidated by Diana Rigg who played Flora Humble, finding Rigg very direct, but the feeling was short lived and later the part was taken over by Felicity Kendal.

She is proud of succeeding in what she describes as a male dominated playwright world but claims she is now "wearing the right shoes".

Interestingly, she describes herself as entering a whole new chapter in her life after standing in for an actress in rehearsals. She just felt she couldn't act anymore, claiming it was a thought that the acting muscles she'd had just froze.

All she could think of as she was reading was "does that line work there or should I write a different one?"

Her own worst critic.



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# SDC 90 Year Anniversary

## *The early years*

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Southport Dramatic Club under its present name. We are proud to continue to promote the traditions and high standards of amateur theatre that were established at an early stage. The club can trace its origins back to 1913, with the first production by the St. Andrews Old Girls Dramatic Society of Princess Ida.



**Elsie Leivesley**

The producer and indeed founder of the Society, was a young teacher called Elsie Leivesley at St Andrews School for Girls in Part Street Southport. She was by all reports a remarkable young woman with very definite views. A strict disciplinarian she taught and expected from her pupils a high standard of elocution. Elsie was an active committee member and principal producer until 1934. The society focused on producing well-presented plays – a guiding principle of the SDC to this day.

Following the introduction of men in 1919, the company was renamed the Southport Dramatic Club in 1920, initially performing at the Southport Opera House, subsequently at the Pier Pavilion Theatre and from 1933 at the newly opened Garrick Theatre. There was one production a year throughout the 1920's, increasing to two per year in the 1930's. Whilst the Club aspired to increase the number of productions a year there was comment at the time on the difficulty of finding suitable plays to perform. Clubrooms in Mornington Street were

used for additional productions but the imminent expiry of the lease focussed attention on obtaining a more permanent home.

Due to the foresight and energy of many members and supporters the Liverpool and Victoria Friendly Society was persuaded to construct the present theatre behind their new offices, in place of garages, and to provide this to the Club at a low economic rent. The foundation stone was laid on 24

October 1936 and the theatre opened on 30 September 1937 with the first play *Dear Brutus* by James Barrie. The programme ran to 72 pages and the number of members at that time was 271. What a heritage to support!

.....to be continued

*With acknowledgements to "A History of the Southport Dramatic Club and its Little Theatre 1913-1997" by Benny Darrah*



# Director's Notes

Welcome to the Little Theatre and tonight's performance of Humble Boy.

Sunday Times reviewer John Peter described Humble Boy as "a poem about people, bees and the galaxy", and even without meter or rhyme Charlotte Jones' play is very poetic in several ways. Like a poem, the play frequently draws attention to words themselves: the 'm's and 'b's in the two-word title buzz like bees; Felix struggles to find the precise words to capture his visions; his stutter underscores the physicality of language every time he stumbles on the letters 'b' and 'p'; and the polysyllabic Latin names for flowers and bees take on an exotic magic of their own.

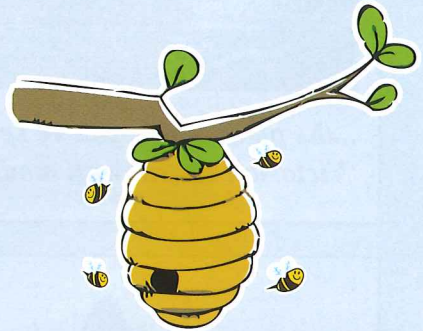


**James Hughes-Alty**

Charlotte Jones has written a play that positively buzzes with ideas - mothers and sons, superstring theory, beekeeping, astronauts and Cotswold gardens. It made me laugh out loud when I first read it, and it took my breath away at the bravery of its fearless heart.

I am delighted to be presenting it here at the Little Theatre and even more delighted with the extremely talented and experienced cast I have been lucky enough to work with. My thanks go to them, and to all the dedicated and hardworking people who have helped to bring this production to our stage.

*James Hughes-Alty*  
Director





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# Humble Boy A 20th Century Hamlet

Charlotte Jones has been compared with Stoppard, Ayckbourn and Frayn, but there is no doubt that when she wrote "Humble Boy" she was inspired by another famous playwright by the name of William Shakespeare and especially his most famous play "Hamlet"

The 30-something Felix Humble, an unworldly research fellow at Cambridge University, returns to his family home in the English countryside after the sudden death of his father James Humble. He is in a bad way distraught over his recent loss.

To make matters worse his attractive, vain and dominating mother, Flora, has removed all traces of his father's existence from the home, including his beloved bees. Felix makes the dreadful discovery that his mother is on the brink of marrying a man as unlike his father as possible. James

Humble had been an unassuming biology teacher with a passion for the quiet pastimes of gardening and beekeeping. George Pye, however, is a brash and randy entrepreneur, a materialist with a taste for big band music.

George has a daughter, Rosie, with whom Felix had a love affair seven years earlier. Rosie's heart was broken when Felix abandoned her to pursue his studies without even saying goodbye.

When Felix's mood grows darker Flora sends her self-effacing friend Mercy to probe into her son's state of mind, but Felix quickly sees through this strategy.

Does this scenario look familiar? If you are familiar with your Shakespeare the answer is probably Yes, but if you need a short brush-up of the Hamlet scenario here it is:

Hamlet comes home to Kronborg castle in the Danish town of Helsingor only to learn that his father, King Hamlet, is dead - probably murdered by Claudius, who is about to marry Hamlet's mother Gertrude. Ophelia is a young girl who is courted by Hamlet, but she is warned that he is not serious about her. Because of Hamlet's strange behaviour two of his acquaintances Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are asked to find the reason, but Hamlet soon finds out that they have been sent to spy on him.

This leads us to the following allusions:

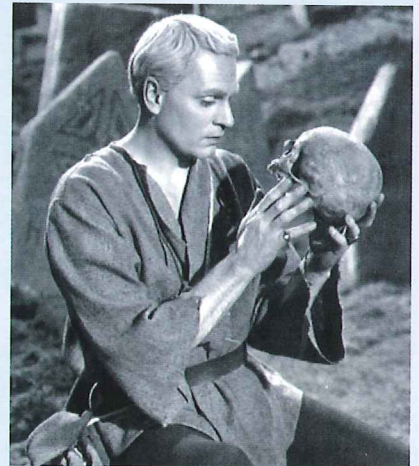
Felix / Hamlet  
Flora / Gertrude  
George / Claudius  
Rosie / Ophelia  
Mercy / Rozenkrantz and Guildenstern

## ? Brain Teaser ?

Which of the following Hamlet quotes is from this scene?

1. "Now get yet to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come, make her laugh at that."
2. "Frailty, thy name is woman!"
3. "To be or not to be, that is the question."

Answer on page 19



Olivier as Hamlet

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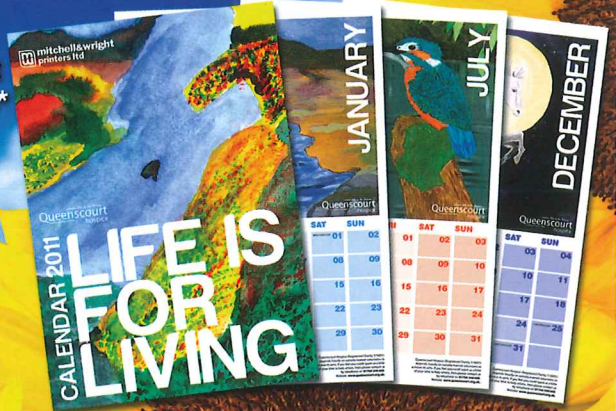
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# Introduction to Honey Bees

Bees are amazing insects. There are lots of different kinds but honeybees are the most common and they are the ones that make honey.

Feral honeybees build their nests in hollow trees or caves. Each nest is made up of several vertical, flat combs made of wax from glands in the bees' body. Each comb contains lots of six sided cells. These cells are used to store nectar or pollen and to raise their young.

People have kept honeybees in different hives for over 3000 years. The beehive you see on stage tonight is a WBC hive named after William Broughton Carr, who was a rector on the Wirral in Victorian times.

In a hive there is always one queen, several hundred drones during the summer and between 30 and 60,000 female workers. Worker honeybees use the sun and landmarks to find their way. They tell each other where the food source can be found by "dancing" different patterns. They each have different jobs according to their ages.

On warm days honeybees collect nectar from flowers to make honey and collect pollen which is the protein to feed the larvae. A honeybee can visit up to 10,000 flowers in a day, but all the nectar she collects will only make one teaspoon of honey. The honeybees collect nectar to make sufficient honey

for them to survive through the winter. The beekeeper shares the excess honey from the hive. Each colony needs between 30 and 60 lbs of honey to see them through a winter so the beekeepers are never greedy; they will always ensure the honeybees have enough. They only share the excess.

*This article was written by Barbara Roderick, who is President of Lancashire & NW Beekeepers' Association*

*The Editor would like to express his gratitude for this interesting contribution to the programme.*





**Stephen Hughes-Alty**

**Flora Humble** is Felix's newly-widowed mother; she is a former Playboy bunny who is accustomed to being the centre of attention. In her early 50s she has no plans to let the ageing process undermine the absolute power she has exercised over others. Her self-centredness has led to problems both in her marriage to James and in her troubled relationship with her son.

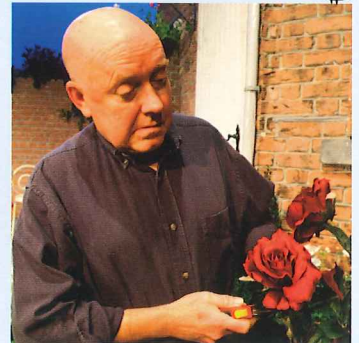


**Poppy Flanagan**



**Trudi Hirsch**

**Mercy Lott** is a kind-hearted but somewhat ineffectual woman in her 50s who circles in orbit around Flora while harbouring a secret crush on Flora's lover George Pye. A stereotypical English spinster, Mercy has dedicated herself to worthy causes and church work and relies on herbal remedies to help her cope with the ultimate disappointment of her life.



**Mike Stowell**

**Jim, the gardener**, is a thin, small man in his 60s. He remains on the periphery of the action, tending the garden and occasionally dispensing down to earth advice to Felix, until the final scenes of the play.

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**The action takes place over the summer in a Cotswold garden.**

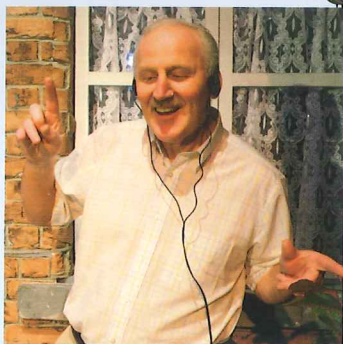
**Act 1** - Scene 1 Early summer, Scene 2 About two weeks later, Scene 3 Mid-July, Scene 4 Later that day

**Act 2** - Late summer

There will be an interval of 20 minutes between the two acts.

Why not pre-order your drinks in the bar prior to the performance?

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**Tom Hornby**

**George Pye** is a self-made man who likes listening to big band music, owning all the latest gadgets, and winning the affection of a classy and attractive woman like Flora. George holds a grudge against Felix for breaking his daughter's heart. What George lacks in subtlety, he more than makes up for in presence, which both attracts and repels Flora.



**Michelle Pappini**

**Rosie Pye** is in her early 30s She is rather plain but radiates an aura of good health and emotional maturity. The daughter of George and former lover of Felix, she has a seven year old daughter, Felicity. As blunt and plain-spoken as her father, Rosie tempers her straight-talk with an earthy wisdom and compassion.

**Music used during the production:**

*The Flight of the Bumble Bee* by Rimsky-Korsakov

*In the Mood; Don't sit under the apple tree; I've got a gal in Kalamazoo* played by Glenn Miller

*The Bee Song* by Arthur Askey

*The Wasp Overture* by Vaughan Williams

**Acknowledgements**

Dobbies Garden World for the loan of plants, Barbara Roderick for the beehive and Paul Crabtree for the apple tree.

**Staging** 

- Stage Manager ..... Chris Ratcliffe
- Prompt ..... Jenny Parker
- Set Design ..... Syd Coley
- Lighting Design ..... Tony Berry
- Lighting Operator ..... Michael Clarke  
Tony Berry
- Sound Design/Operator ..... Brian Hodge
- Props and Set Dressing ..... Gay Stowell  
Julie Whelan
- Wardrobe ..... SDC Wardrobe Department
- Set Constuction ..... The SDC Construction Team
- Scenic Artist ..... Bob Jessamine
- Photographs ..... Fletcherhill Photography

- 
- Programme Editor ..... Jorgen Petersen
  - Programme Layout & Design ..... Mitchell & Wright  
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# Cathy Milner

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# To Bee or not to Bee w.s.

Hundreds of volunteers are to be trained to teach amateur beekeepers how to keep their hives healthy over winter, the Government says.

More people are taking up beekeeping in the face of concerns about declines in honeybees.

But there are worries that inexperienced beekeepers do not have the skills to keep bees free from pests and diseases and are losing more colonies over winter as a result. Under a project as part of the Government's healthy bees plan, 400 people across England and Wales will be trained to teach beekeepers how to look after their hives.

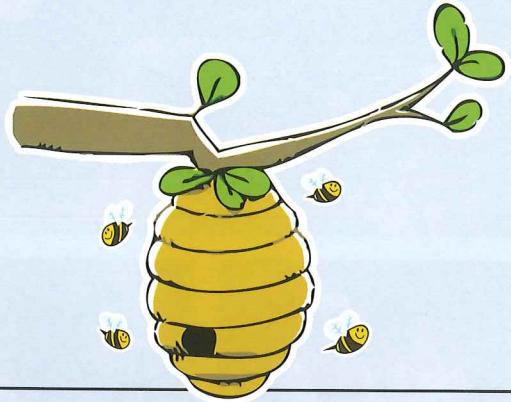
According to research, twice as many men keep bees as women and more than two thirds are over 50 and most keep bees as a hobby.

The Scheme will be run by the British Beekeeping Association and the National Diploma of Beekeeping Board.

Lord Henley, the Environment Minister, said: "Bees are essential to putting food on our table and worth £200 million to Britain every year through pollinating our crops.

This training will help the many beekeepers keep their hives healthy and bees buzzing" he added.

**The Daily Telegraph**  
**7th October 2010**



## The Lancashire & NW Beekeepers Association

is a registered charity and was founded in 1882 The Association is affiliated to the British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA) and is one of the oldest beekeeping Associations in England. The Association covers the counties of Lancashire and part of Merseyside and has 6 branches in total. Some of the branches run courses for beginners and some also provide assistance for new members.

If you feel beekeeping is something for you visit one of the following web sites:

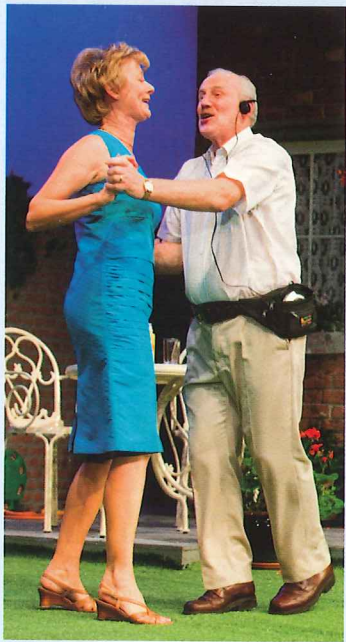
[www.southportbeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.southportbeekeepers.co.uk)

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[www.britishbee.org.uk](http://www.britishbee.org.uk) or contact the Lancashire Association's chairman John Turner (01509248674)



**This is not a recommended way of keeping bees**



# Astrophysics at Cambridge

Felix Humble is a research fellow at Cambridge University and his subject is theoretical astrophysics.

But does the University actually do such research? Yes they do and one of the more famous names in this field is Stephen Hawking whose work is not for us simple mortals to understand. But what is theoretical astrophysics?

I contacted Cambridge University to ask whether they could supply me with an explanation which would, to a certain degree, be comprehensible to non academics.

It is my hope that the answer to my request which is shown below will enlighten our audience.

## The Editor

*"Basically, theoretical Astrophysicists aim to use analytical models (i.e. equations) or numerical models (i.e. computer programmes) to make statements about what the Universe (or part of the Universe) would be like according to different theories of how it came about and has been evolving as it got older - or different cosmological models.*

*Suppose they have two theories about the way the Universe "works" which have a similar "basis*

*model" but some subtle differences. The theorist need to find ways in which these different theories give rise to differences in the universes that each would create; then they need to tell the experimental astrophysicist what sort of measurement they need to be able to make in order to tell the difference between the alternative models. If the data agrees with one model and not the other then the favoured model is adopted as the new basis model, and theories sharing this basis but with subtle differences can be developed. This way the cycle or prediction and measurement repeats itself, each time leading to more and more refined models of the Universe with a smaller and smaller number of question-marks attached.*

*Of course, this cycle could apply equally well to cosmologists (who look at th Universe as a whole) or to galactic astrophysicists interested in how galaxies evolve or to stellar astrophysicists who just study the life cycle of stars. The most relevant example depends upon the type of theoretical astrophysicist that your character (Felix Humble) is, but lifestyle wise, these days they will all spend the majority of their research time working on computers, writing papers and giving talks.*

**The editor would like to thank Dr. Rosie Bolton from the Cambridge University, Cavendish Astrophysics Department of Physics.**



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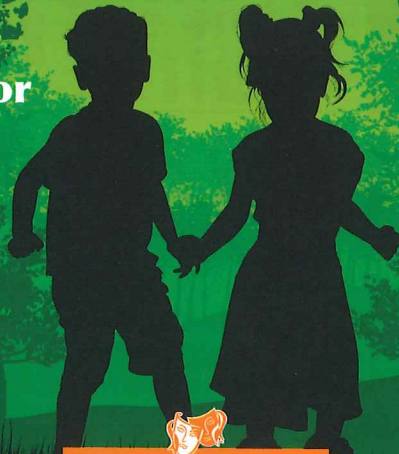
**21st December 2010 -  
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Directed by Michèle Martin.

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The talented cast and crew are really enjoying preparations for this play and we look forward to welcoming you next month for an enjoyable evening to banish the winter blues.



# FUTURE ATTRACTIONS AT THE LITTLE THEATRE

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## Going Straight

by Richard Harris  
*directed by Michèle Martin*

An SDC Production



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21st December 2010 - 9th January 2011  
The SDC's Glittering Family Pantomime

## Babes in the Wood

*directed by Tracey Batchelor*

An SDC Production



Box Office Opens:  
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## Game Plan

by Sir Alan Ayckbourn  
*directed by Poppy Flanagan*

An SDC Production



Box Office Opens:  
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## The Rise and Fall of Little Voice

by Jim Cartwright

An SDC Production



Box Office Opens:  
25th March 2011

1st - 9th April 2011

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by Arthur Miller

An SDC Production



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29th April - 7th May 2011

## Dick Barton, Special Agent

by Phil Willmott



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A SOUTHPORT DRAMATIC CLUB PRODUCTION

# GOING STRAIGHT

**Bienvenidos  
a la Costa  
del Crimen**

**STRONG  
LANGUAGE**

**by Richard Harris  
directed by Michèle Martin**

**26th November -  
4th December 2010**

**7.45pm**



Box Office Opens from: 19th November 2010 at 11.00am

Box Office Tel: (01704) 530521/530460

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