

**Our next production will be on  
19th, 20th & 21st October, 2006.  
Watch out for further details.**

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*If you would like to receive advance notice of our productions and a booking form, please fill in the details below and hand the coupon to any member of the Players.*

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**Bletchingley  
Players**



*present*

**WAGGING  
THE  
TONGUE**

**A comedy by  
ERIC CHAPPELL**

**May 4th, 5th & 6th  
at Bletchingley Village Hall**

**P R O G R A M M E 5 0 p e n c e**

## Bletchingley Players

### The bar

The new licensing law means we will be unable to sell alcohol on the first night of our next production in October. Under the new law venues such as the Village Hall are allowed to hold events where alcohol is supplied on only 15 days each year.

The Village Hall management has been unable to allow Bletchingley Players the six days we would need to have our usual bar on all production nights in both May and October. We will therefore be providing a soft drinks bar on Thursday 19th October and our normal bar on Friday 20th and Saturday 21st. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this may cause you.

### Hearing loop

We would like to apologise to members of our audience who use hearing aids and who have been disappointed to find that the hearing loop fitted at the Village Hall does not work during our productions. This is because Bletchingley Players have always relied on the traditional theatre skill of projection in order to make our voices heard at the back of the hall, and do not use microphones on stage.

However, we feel that the comfort of our audience is more important than tradition and we are hoping to have the necessary equipment in place to allow the loop to be used in time for the October production.

### The raffle

The funds raised from our raffles at this production will go towards The Princess Alice Hospice Trust, charity no. 1010930. Thank you for your support.



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The action takes place in the upstairs living room above Alec Firth's bookshop

ACT I – SCENE 1: Good Friday – late afternoon  
SCENE 2: late Saturday morning

ACT II – SCENE 1: early Saturday afternoon  
SCENE 2: Saturday evening



john tomlin

John has acted in and produced several plays with Bletchingley Players, and directed the last production *Steel Magnolias*. His last appearance on stage was as Norman in *On Golden Pond*. He also was the lead in *Blithe Spirit* and *The Peacocks Must Go*.



sally harling

Since joining Bletchingley Players in 2000, Sally has taken on a variety of characters and enjoyed them all very much. Liz is another challenge and Sally says she is looking forward to the performances, as it will be a strong contrast to her last role as Annelle in *Steel Magnolias*!



jackie lucas

Jackie joined Bletchingley Players in 1998 and since then has appeared in many productions in a variety of roles. This is the second time she has played opposite John Tomlin as his wife – the first was in *The Peacocks Must Go* in 2001.



di brooke

Playing a variety of characters over many years has been of great interest to Di, and more recently eccentric types have come to the fore. She says that Phoebe is great fun to play, and, as his grumpy old mother, very different from John Tomlin's supportive wife in *On Golden Pond* only three years ago.



craig phelan

Craig has been involved with Bletchingley Players for some years and has played a postman, a doctor and a detective, so he is relishing a role as a work-shy, lazy layabout with no uniform! Craig has just finished performing at the Harlequin Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, in the role of Don Pedro.



kirsten miller

Kirsten has lived in Bletchingley for two years. *Haywire* will be only her second production – she had a much smaller role in *Pygmalion* in 2004, her first play since school! Kirsten works for the British Red Cross in East Grinstead.

*A fish'n'chip supper will be served during the interval between Act I and II.*

House managers  
Bar manager  
Box office

**Marion and John Buck**  
**Renate Butler**  
**Sue Walker**

*Thank you to all our other helpers... front of house and bar staff and other behind the scenes helpers who all contribute to the success of the evening.*

# Haywire

by Eric Chappell

*Cast in order of appearance*

Alec Firth  
Liz  
Maggie Firth  
Phoebe Firth  
Jamie Firth  
Mandy Firth

John Tomlin  
Sally Harling  
Jackie Lucas  
Di Brooke  
Craig Phelan  
Kirsten Miller

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Peter has crossed the footlights to make his directorial debut with this play. "Eric Chappell will be familiar to many as the author of the 1970's TV series *Rising Damp* and *Haywire* is written with all Chappell's customary wit and ingenuity. We certainly had a lot of fun rehearsing this play: I hope the audience has as much enjoyment watching it".

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director  
peter shore

## PRODUCTION TEAM

stage director



jeremy lund

lighting & sound



rodney bain

### PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE

LIGHTING & SOUND ASSISTANT

– martin davey

SET CONSTRUCTION

– john gent

– alan west

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

– elieen shore

– jenny barnett

– barbara saunders



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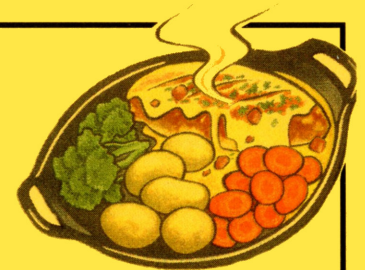
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## *Licence to Perform a Play* *(Amateur)*

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ARE HEREBY AUTHORISED TO PERFORM  
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ERIC CHAPPELL  
AT THE VILLAGE HALL  
BLETCHINGLEY  
SURREY

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- 4 This licence does not cover recordings of the said play by video taping or any other means.

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DATE OF ISSUE 30/11/05

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MR P. SHORE  
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SURREY  
RH1 4QE



## **Our Next Production**

Our next production will be *Haywire*, a comedy by Eric Chappell, here at the Village Hall on **4 to 6 May 2006**.

Bookseller Alec Firth is having an affair with his assistant, Liz, and has craftily organised his domestic life so that they can go to Spain on holiday without making Alec's wife, Maggie, remotely suspicious. What could possibly go wrong? The answer: plenty.

Alec's attempts to resolve the many obstacles put in his path and escape with Liz are charted to hilarious effect in *Haywire*, written with all Eric Chappell's customary wit and ingenuity.

Make a date in your diary now for another convivial evening with the Bletchingley Players.



As ever, some difference between actors' real ages and playing ages is acceptable, particularly in the case of Phoebe, where some creative "aging" can be done with make up, etc. The ages of the Firth family need to fit together, but there is no reason why Liz could not be a little older.

The time is modern, so no special challenges will arise with costumes. The setting for the whole play is the upstairs living room above Alec's bookshop.

The play is a comedy, but not a farce. It relies for its humour on the ever more complex intricacies that Alec employs to try and preserve his opportunity for the escapade with Liz and the ironic wit (both conscious and unconscious) used by Alec and other characters. Much of the dialogue consists of "one liners", so good timing and rapport between the cast will be essential. It should be a lot of fun to do.

**There will be a get together and read through for anyone interested in playing a part at the Drama Hut on Sunday, 8 January at 2.30pm** and I would plan to start rehearsals in the week beginning 16 January. I am provisionally planning to do Monday and Wednesday nights, but am happy to alter this (to Tuesdays and Thursdays) if either of these nights is consistently no good for anyone cast.

If anyone would like to borrow a copy of the script before the read through, or would just like a chat about the play or any of the characters, please contact me.

If you cannot make the date of the get together, but would like to be considered for a part, do please let me know before 8 January so I can make alternative arrangements to see you.

Peter Shore  
01883 741830  
[solutions@shores.demon.co.uk](mailto:solutions@shores.demon.co.uk)

# **Haywire by Eric Chappell**

**Production: 4-6 May 2006**

I am very excited to have the opportunity to direct this extremely funny play, written by the author of *Rising Damp* and many other TV comedies. This note describes the characters and gives the details of the read through meeting in January. I hope lots of you will be interested. The parts are:

**Alec Firth** *playing age early fifties*

Owns a bookshop. Is married to Maggie, but is having an affair with his Assistant, Liz. The play centres around Alec's continually thwarted attempts to get away on an illicit holiday to Spain with Liz, without Maggie finding out. This is a big part and Alec is on stage for virtually the whole play. Alec has an ironic, wry sense of humour, which he uses to the full, often against himself.

**Liz** *playing age early thirties*

Works in the bookshop as Assistant to Alec, with whom she is having an affair. She is an attractive woman of the world and has realistic, perhaps resigned, expectations of Alec. Script requires her appearing in a swimsuit in one, very short, scene. (May be possible to do some adaptations of the script if this is too much of a challenge!).

**Maggie Firth** *playing age early fifties*

Married to Alec. Pleasant, well meaning, slightly anxious. It is her own trip to "three capitals in five days – and the tulip fields" that has given Alec the opportunity for his secret trip to Spain with Liz. But Maggie has a secret of her own, revealed at the end of the play.

**Phoebe Firth** *playing age late seventies*

Alec's mother. Walks on a stick and, later, on a Zimmer frame. Is not as incapable as she seems, in either mind or body. Wicked sense of humour. It is her unexpected arrival, having walked out of her old people's home with no intention of returning, that is the first obstacle to Alec's plans.

**Jamie Firth** *playing age mid-twenties*

Son of Alec and Maggie. Has broken his ankle and therefore has to play all scenes using crutches (but does get to sit down some of the time!). Bright and likeable, but a bit of a drifter. Irritates his father. Lives away from home and his unexpected arrival adds to Alec's problems.

**Mandy Firth** *playing age early twenties*

Daughter of Alec and Maggie. Heavily pregnant and has no intention of marrying the father. Headstrong, determined character. Protective of her mother and aware of Alec's propensity for affairs. Her unexpected arrival and condition provide further challenges for Alec.

Alec has about half of the lines in the play and the rest are fairly evenly distributed between the other five characters, whose actors therefore have a reasonable, but not too daunting, amount to learn.





Church Cottage,  
Church Lane,  
Bletchingley,  
Surrey, RH1 4LP.

To Members of Bletchingley Players

3<sup>rd</sup> November 2005

Dear Member,

Peter Shore will be producing our next play, ***Haywire* by Eric Chappell** which will take place in May 2006.

Please find enclosed a note from Peter giving information regarding the play and proposed read through and rehearsal dates.

Regards

Jenny (Barnett)  
Sec

Enc.

Bookseller Alec Firth is having an affair with his assistant, Liz, and has craftily organised his domestic life so that they can go to Spain on holiday without making Alec's wife, Maggie, remotely suspicious. What could possibly go wrong? The answer: plenty.

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# reviews

## Haywire

Bletchingley Players,  
Bletchingley Village Hall

Reviewed by  
Tony Flook

BOOKSELLER Alec Firth can't wait to pack his wife, Maggie, off on a coach trip to Europe so that he, in turn, can fly to Spain with Liz, his assistant.

There would be no story if everything went smoothly but, of course, events go – well – haywire no matter how many 'Plan B's' Alec comes up with.

Maybe he should have remembered a quote from one of the books in his shop – 'O what a tangled web we weave...'

The plot is far from original and the play is loaded with stock characters. It is, though, an often-witty comedy with a fair number of good one-liners plus some amusing situations.

John Tomlin as the adulterous husband, Alec, was constantly in the thick of the action. He always showed

resource and unwarranted optimism as one scheme after another bit the dust and made the most of some of the play's best jokes. His modulation was better when speaking conversationally than when he, occasionally, let rip.

The other characters came and went a fair bit. Craig Phelan's ready smile made Jamie, the drop-out son, appear as a likeable personality. When he first hobbled onto the stage with a crutch, it looked as if he actually had injured his leg but it then became apparent that it was all part of his role and he held this 'injury' convincingly.

Di Brooke stole her scenes as Phoebe, Alec's crabby mother, whose sharp-tongued retorts were particularly well delivered.

Kirsten Miller could have used more vocal variation in her portrayal of Mandy, the family's rebellious daughter. She did, though, hold her heavily pregnant pose well.

Sally Harling as Liz, the object of Alec's lust, and Jackie Lucas, his long-suffering wife (who, we learn, turned back from an



Jamie (Craig Phelan) and Mandy (Kirsten Miller) wonder what their father is up to

intended dirty weekend of her own only at the last minute), did all they could with their relatively brief appearances.

The set, sensibly, had all the furniture placed around the walls, to help movement. Some was, if anything, too near the wings with the result that

the actors were hidden by the curtains in some positions.

Directed by Peter Shore, this was the sort of production Bletchingley Players audiences enjoy – a well rehearsed, funny play wrapped around one of the group's popular fish and chip suppers.



Alec (John Tomlin) and Liz (Sally Harling) plan their illicit weekend

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2006

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**ERIC CHAPPELL**

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at Bletchingley Village Hall

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