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**Bletchingley
Players** 

present



A comedy by Michael Frayn

Bletchingley Village Hall

October 19th, 20th & 21st 2006

Curtain 8.00 pm

50p

The cast



Peter Shore

At Blethingley, Peter has appeared in *Pygmalion* (as Higgins) and *Waiting in the Wings*, and directed the last production, *Haywire*. Other acting roles locally include parts in *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Crucible*.



Craig Phelan

Craig has been involved with Blethingley Players for some years and has played a variety of roles. His most recent appearance was as the layabout son in the last production, *Haywire*.



Liz Tomlin

After directing "*On Golden Pond*" and "*Pygmalion*" for the Players, Liz is delighted to be returning to acting. The character of *Jocasta* is a complete contrast to that of *M'Lynn*, her last role, in *Steel Magnolias*.



Sally Harling

Sally joined Blethingley Players in 2000 since when she has enjoyed roles in seven productions. These include *Blicke Spirit*, *The Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, *Waiting in the Wings* and, most recently, *Haywire*.



Robert Miller

Robert is a new recruit to Blethingley Players. He is looking forward to his first production after returning to acting following a break of nine years. His past experience includes writing and appearing in satirical revue shows.



Susan Sarti

Susan has played a variety of parts in her years with the Players, and the last time she was on stage she played a sharp-tongued southern American – a complete contrast to her role as *Charmain* in this production.



Tim Mumby

Now a retired police officer, Tim is a long-serving member of the Players and has performed many roles. He prefers comedy, especially pantomimes and was last in the Players' production of *Waiting in the Wings*.



John Buck

John says that having been around for more years than he cares to remember – and retired (from the stage) at least once – he is flattered to finish up as "the man in charge!"

The cast



Wendy Whittaker

Wendy had played a variety of roles with Blethingley Players. However, as learning words is one of her least favourite activities, she has rather enjoyed her part in "*Toasters*" – you will see why!



Marian Buck

Marian and her family have 'trodden the boards' in Blethingley since the 1960's. Teaching qualifications including Art and Drama - Marian has enjoyed set design, acting, directing and backstage ever since.



Barbara Saunders

Barbara's interest in drama started early with some embarrassment, missing an entrance in a school production because she was playing cards backstage! Fortunately her role as a rock was not greatly missed!



Di Brooke

Having enjoyed acting since childhood, with parts ranging from serious to comedy, farce and pantomime, Di is now finding herself cast in the roles of elderly mothers – great fun!

Are you on our mailing list?

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.

Alternatively post it to our Secretary: **Jenny Barnett**
Church Cottage
Church Lane
Blethingley

There is no charge for this service.

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Setting the scene

Alarms

John & Jocasta's dining room. Evening.

Leavers

John & Jocasta's dining room – some hours later.

MAIN INTERVAL

Heart to Heart

A party

Toasters

A corporate conference

SHORT INTERVAL

Immobiles

Public telephones at a variety of locations, and Chris & Nikki's answerphone

A fish'n'chip supper will be served during the main interval

House managers	Jackie Lucas/John Tomlin
Bar manager	Ron Napper
Box office	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.

ALARMS & EXCURSIONS -

More than one play

by Michael Frayn

The cast

Alarms & Leavers

John	Peter Shore
Nicholas	Craig Phelan
Jocasta	Liz Tomlin
Nancy	Sally Harling
The voice of Peter Pinch	Robert Miller

Heart to Heart

Peter	Robert Miller
Charmain	Susan Sarti
Clifford	Tim Mumby

Toasters

Speaker	John Buck
1st delegate	Tim Mumby
2nd delegate	Marian Buck
3rd delegate	Wendy Whittaker

Immobiles

Dietrich	Robert Miller
Chris	Peter Shore
Nikki	Barbara Saunders
Nikki's mother	Di Brooke

Director



Felicity Lund

Having acted for many years, "Alarms" is one of Felicity's rare excursions into directing. Juggling four different casts has proved a challenging experience and she appreciates the support given by all those involved.

Stage Manager



Cyril Mighall

Lighting



Rodney Bain

Sound	Martin Davey
Stage crew	Jeremy Lund/John Gent/Alan West/Sean Phelan
Continuity	Eileen Shore/Jenny Barnett
Props	Jenny Barnett

The Bar

In some of our advance publicity for this production we announced that we had been unable to obtain a licence to sell alcohol on the night of Thursday 19th October.

We are delighted to confirm that as a result of a late cancellation by another organisation, we have been granted a licence for all three nights after all.

Interested in joining us?

*Just fill in this form and hand it to one of the Players, or mail to:
The Secretary, Bletchingley Players, Church Cottage, Church Lane,
Bletchingley, Surrey RH1 4LP*

SURNAME _____

FORENAMES _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ POSTCODE _____

TEL _____ (Home)
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Brief details of any previous experience



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NEXT AUCTION

24TH, 25TH & 26TH OCTOBER 2006

PREVIEW

20TH & 21ST OCTOBER 2006

Norfolk House, 80 High Street, Bletchingley, Surrey RH1 4PA
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Thank you Jeremy!

Jeremy Lund, who has designed many of the sets for Players' productions, recently turned his talents to redesigning the interior of our rehearsal hut in Grange meadow.

Originally the Scout Hut, this building is invaluable for storing our props and sets as well as rehearsing. However neither of the two store rooms were big enough to manoeuvre the large flats that are an essential part of our set building.

Earlier this year Jeremy proposed that we knock the two rooms into one as well as refurbish the disused kitchen to create a small store room for front of house items. This sounded like a very ambitious project but his enthusiasm carried the day and work began in the summer. Within an amazingly short time, we had a greatly improved hut.

Jeremy carried out a great deal of the work himself and The Players would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank him, both for having the vision to think of the project in the first place, and all the time and energy he put into seeing it through.



BLETCHINGLEY Players could not have made a better choice than *Alarms & Excursions* for their autumn show. Michael Frayn wrote a total of eight short playlets under this umbrella title. Some of the pieces remind me more than anything of a television sketch show or, perhaps, belong to the near-forgotten era of revue.

Director Felicity Lund and her team brought out all the humour from the five pieces the Players selected and put together the sort of genuine 'laugh a minute' production that is all-too rare on the stage.

Alarms is the most difficult for both the actors and the

Alarms & Excursions

Bletchingley Players,
Bletchingley Village
Hall

Reviewed by
Tony Flook

backstage team. The four performers skilfully picked up the pace, gradually, as a relaxed evening shared by four friends becomes more and more frenetic. Cue bite was impeccable and the cast managed the fast-paced,

farce-like comings and goings with precision. *Alarms* is no less demanding on the sound engineer. There are over 50 cues, ranging from telephones and car alarms, through to the persistent, unexplained, 'chink' that started the chaos. Martin Davey brought each one in with split-second timing.

Leavers reintroduces the same characters, a few hours later, in a calmer but equally amusing scene. My only comment here is that this piece could have been placed later in the programme to give a better indication of the passage of time.

Heart to Heart and *Toasters*

are reminders of situations most of us will have been in at times. In the first, three people try to have a conversation above the din of a noisy fancy-dress party. In the second, conference delegates have to juggle folders, plates, cutlery, wine glasses and handbags as the offstage speaker directs them to find pages in their notes and to toast almost everyone he can think of. Both these pieces revolve around one joke and the writer had the skill to know precisely when to stop before it ran out.

Immobiles is unlikely to happen today, in this age of mobile phones, but it was still

fun to see four people trying, unsuccessfully, to communicate from a number of different public telephones and through a home-based answerphone. The many locations were simply established by using rotating boards and were changed almost unnoticed by stage manager Cyril Mighall and his alert team. Rodney Bain did the rest with lighting that unerringly focused where it was needed.

Bletchingley Players hit on a winning formula with this evening of non-stop comedy coupled with a fish & chip supper.

Bletchingley Players

“ALARMS and Excursions” and fish and chips are being offered by the Bletchingley Players on October 19, 20 and 21 in the Village Hall.

“Alarms and Excursions” is the title of a Michael Frayn comedy being performed, and there will also be a fish and chip supper with bar facilities included with each ticket. The price is £12; £10 for senior citizens.

To reserve tickets, people can contact the box office on 01883 742177 or write to Bletchingley Players' box office, Cockley Cottage, Big Common Lane, Bletchingley RH2 4QE.

5 OCT 2006

Rehearsals

Starting beginning of August. Probably, at least initially, one night a week for "Alarms" and "Leaving", one night for "Immobiles" and a third for "Heart to Heart" and "Toasters" (half an evening for each). Subject to change, depending how it goes.

Vital dates

Get-in and first stage rehearsal Sunday 8 October.

Technical rehearsals Sunday 15 and Monday 16 October.

Full dress rehearsal Tuesday 17 October.

Production: 19, 20, 21 October

Strike set: 22 October

Auditions

Tuesday 25th July – 8 p.m. at the Drama Hut.

Apologies for the rather long letter, but I wanted to provide as much information as possible.

If you are not sure whether or not you want a part – or even if you simply want an evening away from the television - do come to the audition night anyway. Maybe I can persuade the committee to lay on some wine!

If anyone would like a script in advance, or any further information, please call me – 01883 [REDACTED] or email on [REDACTED]. Equally, if you are unable to attend the audition but would like to be considered, give me a ring.

Hope to see you on 25th July.

Kind regards

Felicity Lund

Toasters: A corporate function, where the Chairman (unseen) is giving a speech at the end of the evening. The scene focuses on three of the attendees, who are now tired and bored. They are listening, and responding, to the speech whilst juggling, as best they can, a plate, knife and fork, napkin, wine glass and a folder full of papers.

Cast: Although the Chairman is unseen, the speech will have to be “live” in order to get the timing right. The other three can be men and/or women (ideally a mix) and the acting is purely visual – they only speak to join in the toasts that the Chairman announces. Sounds easy? Wrong! This requires top-class visual actors capable of doing involved business with superb timing.

Again, not very long – just 5 pages.

We will then have a short break for the raffle, thereby giving the stage crew time to set up for the final play:

Immobiles. We read this a couple of years ago at a social evening, and everyone seemed to enjoy it. It concerns telephones. We see public telephones at airports, in a pub, at an underground station, in a hospital, at a police station, in the street and goodness knows where else and, centre stage, an answer-phone. Theoretically, this play wouldn't really happen as we all have mobile phones – but it was only written in 1998, so it obviously didn't bother Michael Frayn!

Dietrich has arrived in England to visit his friends. Chris has gone to the wrong airport to meet him. Messages are left on the answer-phone, creating more confusion and Chris and Nikki getting more annoyed with each other. Dietrich, despite lurching from one crisis to another, remains unerringly polite and patient. In addition, Nikki's mother is due to arrive but, finding no-one at home, goes to the nearest pub – unfortunately, not one of the nicest ones in the area.....

Cast: Nikki and her husband Chris; their German friend, Dietrich (an impeccable accent is a must); and Nikki's mother.

Technically, a nightmare.

So – anyone up for the challenge?

The original professional production was done using the same four actors throughout. We can obviously use more, but equally doubling up is possible if necessary.

Rehearsals

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Bletchingley Players



7 Elm Cottages
Godstone Hill
Surrey
RH9 8AH

8 July 2006

Dear Members

I have - somehow - managed to agree to direct the October production. To begin with, I thought I had dreamt it, but when Barbara started to email me and ask if I had chosen a play yet, I realised that somewhere reality had crept in.

So, have I found something easy and straightforward for us to do? Umm..... well, no.

I have selected Michael Frayn's "Alarms and Excursions", which is an evening of playlets with the central theme of chaos caused by modern-day technology. There were originally eight separate plays, but I have selected just five. We can, for once, send the audience home at a reasonable time.

Only two plays are linked and they will make up the first half of the evening.

Alarms takes place in the home of John and Jocasta, who are having a dinner party with their friends Nicholas and Nancy. Gradually their evening is interrupted by various noises – smoke alarm, car alarm, telephone etc. – and their longing for a glass of wine is thwarted by a new-fangled corkscrew which results in Nancy injuring herself.

Leavings is the continuation of the evening after they have returned from Casualty.

Cast: Ages are immaterial, as long as each pairing look realistically like a couple. The script is fast and furious in places and requires expert cue-bite and a fair bit of rushing around.

In addition to the on-stage cast, we will need to cast people on the sound cues as it is too complicated and too risky to have them pre-recorded – there are 59 sound cues in "Alarms"! So, someone will need to be cast as "the smoke-alarm", someone else as "the car alarm" etc. These people will need to attend every rehearsal. So, ideal for anyone who is tentative about acting but who would still like to be a vital part of the team.

After the fish and chips, we will have:

Heart to Heart: This concerns two strangers, Clifford and Charmian, who meet at a particularly noisy party and attempt to have a conversation but cannot actually hear what the other is saying, resulting in crossed wires and misunderstandings.

Cast: Again, these two can be any age. Charmian's husband, Peter, features at the beginning and end of the play.

This play is only 4 pages long.

Booking Form



Alarms and Excursions

...and Fish'n'Chip Supper
19th, 20th & 21st Oct 2006

Date	Number of tickets @ £12	Sen. Citizen tickets @ £10	TOTAL COST
Thursday Oct 19th at 8.00 pm			
Friday Oct 20th at 8.00 pm			
Saturday Oct 21st at 8.00 pm			

Last bookings: Monday 16th Oct.

Postal applications to: Bletchingley Players Box Office,
Cockley Cottage, Big Common Lane
Bletchingley RH1 4QE
Tel: 01883 742177

Please send a stamped addressed envelope with all postal applications

Please send me tickets as above:

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Alarms & Excursions

a comedy by MICHAEL FRAYN

19th, 20th & 21st Oct 2006

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*** IMPORTANT NOTICE: A CHANGE IN THE LICENSING LAWS, MEANS THAT BLETCHINGLY PLAYERS ARE UNABLE TO OBTAIN A BAR LICENCE FOR THE THURSDAY PERFORMANCE. ACCORDINGLY ONLY SOFT DRINKS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THURSDAY.**

Dear All,

Whilst it was very gratifying ,although embarrassing , to be "mentioned in despatches" in the recent programme re the work done in the HUT, it was not a one-man-band.

I would therefore like to thank the following:

"The wrecking crew"-John Buck ad John Lucas, who put so much effort into removing equipment from the storage rooms and demolishing the partition wall. (my contribution was to sever the lighting cable with my jigsaw)

Thank you Rodney for re-routing the lighting and power cables. I appreciate how hot it was up in the apex of the HUT.

Far be it from me to suggest that any of our lady members are scrubbers, but you have only to see how clean and tidy the old kitchen area and the toilets are to appreciate how much work Felicity, Jackie and Barbara put in to achieve this.

Jenny- Thank you for sorting out all the props and arranging their storage, and to Di for your assistance.

We now come to Peter (the doors) Shore. Thanks for your help in re-hanging the doors to the storage area, I could not have done it alone.

I hope I have thanked everybody involved, but all members contribute to the running of the society and long may it continue.

Jeremy

Nov. 06