

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS AT THE TIVOLI THEATRE

STEPPING OUT

By Richard Harris

1-2 June 2006, 7.30pm &
3 June 2006, 2.30pm & 7.30pm
Directed by Stuart Glossop

This warm and very funny play concentrates on the lives, laughs and loves of a group of women and one lone male attending a weekly tap dancing class

THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR

by Nikolai Gogol

2-3 November 2006, 7.30pm &
4 November 2006, 2.30pm & 7.30pm
Directed by Richard Neal

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**Graham
Hawkins**



This is Graham's second major acting role with Wimborne Drama having played Giles Lacey in our hugely successful production of *Rebecca* last October. Graham also appeared in *Murder in the Cathedral* in the Minster in May 2005. A budding poet, Graham has had a poem entitled *Half-Price Ticket to Nowhere* recently published in *South* magazine. Graham plays a minder in this production. "Micky Rale is illiterate in many languages," says Graham. "But he understands street fighting and how to follow instructions. This makes him an ideal enforcer. He was a boxer and could have been a contender, but he was carried from the ring so often, he had handles added to his shorts."

**Penny
Pearson**



Penny works for a printing company in Poole and lives with her husband, Steve, and their three-year-old daughter, Ellie. This is Penny's third play with Wimborne Drama. She played Fay in our critically acclaimed production of *Loot* in 2004 and was also in *Murder in the Cathedral*. Penny was a member of St Luke's Players for several years and acted in many plays with them. In *RolePlay* Penny plays Paige Petite, an ex-lapdancer. "My first stage role was as a nun, so I can definitely say I've not been typecast," says Penny, "although my husband would probably say that playing a mouthy tart shouldn't be too much of a stretch for me. In fact, Steve was very supportive of me during rehearsals and frequently offered to check out my lapdancing moves. Funny, he never offers to go through my lines with me..."

**Jan
Singfield**



Jan has previously played Donna Lucia d'Alvadorez in *Charley's Aunt* and Mrs Hurst in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. She also appeared in *Murder in the Cathedral*. Jan has been seen at the Tivoli in many musical productions including *Oklahoma!*, *Showboat*, *Me and My Girl*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Brigadoon*, and in the pantomimes *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Little Miss Muffett* and *Cinderella*. Jan plays Arabella Lazenby, Justin's alcoholic mother, in this production. "Having originally been cast and rehearsed for two months as Dee Jobson, it has been quite a challenge adjusting to the very different Arabella," says Jan. "I have had to carry out much necessary research - in the form of visits to the pub - to fully develop and understand her extraordinary character."

**Michael
Dishington**



Mike directed *Outside Edge* for Wimborne Drama in 2004 and crewed for *Murder in the Cathedral* in 2005. Also locally, Mike was Stage Manager for Swan Theatre's *Richard III* in 2002 and crewed for *Juno and the Paycock* in 2003. Mike has been involved with a number of drama groups, including The New Theatre Workshop, Barnstaple, where he met his wife Jean during a production of *The Crucible*. Mike explains his choice of *RolePlay*: "We need a comedy," said the Committee. "An Ayckbourn." Hence I spent several afternoons in libraries trawling through copies of Ayckbourn's many plays. *RolePlay* seemed to fit the bill, more situation-comedy than farce - although there have been some seriously farcical moments in rehearsal trying to interpret Ayckbourn's off-stage nonsense prose. 'Grob de luxe in fender'? - answers on a postcard please!"

Jeremy Austin



Jeremy played Thomas Becket in *Murder in the Cathedral* in the Minster last year. Previously he was Inspector Goole in our sell-out production of *An Inspector Calls* in 2002 and Inspector Colquhoun in *The Hollow* in 2003. Other roles include DS Troughton in *Run For Your Wife*, Pepys in *And So To Bed*, Headmaster in *Forty Years On*, Baines in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, Thomas Stanley in *The Roses of Eyam*, Charles in *Blithe Spirit* and Wicksteed in *Habeas Corpus*. In this production Jeremy plays Derek, a garden centre owner from Doncaster. "At first I wondered how to deal with various plant names Derek is so fond of. Then I realised Derek himself probably wouldn't really know how they should be pronounced. If Latin wasn't a dead language to begin with, after Derek had had a go at it, it would certainly be seriously wounded."

Jean Dishington



Jean studied drama at college in Manchester and has worked in theatre-in-education and performed with many drama and musical theatre societies. She joined Wimborne Drama in 1997 and has played Nellie in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, Catherine Mompesson in *The Roses of Eyam*, Mary Warren in *The Crucible*, Mrs Armistead in *The Madness of George III*, Mama in *David Copperfield* and Midge Harvey in *The Hollow*. She has also appeared in *Murder in the Cathedral* and in Swan Theatre's *Richard III* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. "After joining the cast of *RolePlay* as Derek's wife, Dee," says Jean, "I knew I had no choice but to be overshadowed by him! Poor Dee – always laughing at his jokes, avoiding his nudges and always looking up at him. (I often wonder why Jeremy and I are frequently cast together!) However, in this play, these two are a perfect match."

Boo Feltham



This is Boo's seventh play with Wimborne Drama. Her previous roles were Ginnie in *Outside Edge*, Henrietta Angkatell in *The Hollow*, Alais in *The Lion in Winter*, Sheila Birling in *An Inspector Calls* and Rosa Dartle in *David Copperfield*. She also appeared in *Murder in the Cathedral*. Boo has performed in several musicals, including *Fiddler on the Roof* in which she took the part of Chava. Boo, who plays Julie-Ann, feels it is a shame that 12 years of public schooling and private singing lessons have led her to speak with a northern accent and murder various songs from the musicals in front of a paying audience. Still, she consoles herself in the knowledge that her diction is somewhat better than her neighbour's from the penthouse!

Stuart Glossop



This is Stuart's third acting role with Wimborne Drama. He played Kevin in *Outside Edge* and a Temptor/Knight in *Murder in the Cathedral*. Stuart directed our highly acclaimed production of *Charley's Aunt* in February 2004. In Nottingham he appeared in *Charley's Aunt*, *Dial M For Murder*, *Annie*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Heiress*, *Allo, Allo* and *Jack And The Beanstalk*. He has toured with Labyrinth Theatre Company/English Heritage, performing *Alice In Wonderland*, *The Lion*, *The Witch & The Wardrobe* and *The Legends of King Arthur*. Stuart sees several similarities between himself and Justin, his character in *RolePlay*. "We both have a dry sense of humour, we can both sulk for England, neither of us can sing to save our lives and, if the truth be known, we are both rather pathetic people."

WIMBORNE DRAMA

presents

RolePlay

**A comedy by
Alan Ayckbourn**

**Directed by Michael Dishington
2-4 March 2006
TIVOLI THEATRE WIMBORNE**

Director's Notes

WELCOME to the Tivoli Theatre and Wimborne Drama's spring production.

RolePlay is the third in a trilogy (*Damsels in Distress*) which, it appears, was written as an afterthought during rehearsals in 2001 for the original twin plays, *GamePlan* and *FlatSpin*, and yet it turns out to have been the best of the three, according to the critics on the trilogy's transfer to the West End.

RolePlay sees something of a return to Alan Ayckbourn's more joyous moments of comedy, intertwined with poignant moments of real humanity.

Our very successful autumn production, *Rebecca* (directed by Paul Dodman), left me thinking: "Follow that!"

However *RolePlay* has benefited from being a real ensemble piece, with a talented cast with whom it has been a pleasure to work. Their hard work and sense of humour has kept us going through some quite sad personal moments, one requiring a change of cast as late as January.

No less can be said of those supporting the production, especially Richard Neal, Barry Baynton, Clare Downs, David Pile, Mark and Jackson Ellen, and the chaps at the Tivoli. Grateful thanks are also due to those supplying various bits of furniture and scenery, acknowledged elsewhere on these pages. I've enjoyed every rehearsal and I hope you will enjoy this presentation, too. Thank you so much for coming to support Wimborne Drama and the Tivoli Theatre today.

Michael Dishington - Director

The career of

BORN on April 12, 1939, in London, Alan Ayckbourn began writing plays at the age of ten. At seventeen, he began working as an actor and assistant stage manager with the acclaimed actor Sir Donald Wolfit (whose last words were reportedly, "Dying is easy, comedy is hard").

The next year, Ayckbourn met Stephen Joseph, founder of the Stephen Joseph Theatre company in Scarborough. He played the role of Stanley in Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, which Joseph directed. Joseph served as a mentor for Ayckbourn, and in 1971, Ayckbourn took over as Artistic Director for Joseph's company.

Almost all of the 60-plus plays Alan Ayckbourn has written to date received their first performance in Scarborough. More than 30 have subsequently been produced in the West End, at the Royal National Theatre or the RSC since his first hit, *Relatively Speaking*, opened at the Duke Of York's Theatre in 1967.

Major successes include *Absurd Person Singular*, *The Norman Conquests*, *Bedroom Farce*, *Just Between Ourselves*, *A Chorus Of Disapproval*, *Woman In Mind*, *A Small Family Business*, *Man Of The Moment* and *Things We Do For Love*.

His plays have won numerous awards - including seven London

The success of this led to a dock-building boom, and before the century was out, the Millwall Docks, St Katherine's, Surrey Commercial, Royals and Tilbury Docks were all completed.

In 1908 the Port of London Authority was established to secure the financial and operational future of the tideway and its docks. Trading continued to boom.

The Port of London endured 57 consecutive nights of bombing during the blitz in 1940, but despite the damage, the docks continued to prosper in the post-war years, handling a record of 61 million tonnes in 1964.

However, with the arrival of containerisation in the 1970s, roll on/roll off loading meant a decline in shipping to central London as the docks and waters were too small to accommodate the large vessels needed to transport these new large containers, and gradually the docks fell silent.

The West India and Millwall Docks finally stopped general cargo operations in 1980, followed by the Royal Docks in 1984, bringing unemployment and poverty to the area.

In 1981, the London Docklands Development Corporation was established to head the regeneration of the area. This corporation was given government funding to purchase and redevelop land. An enterprise zone was established in 1982 that allowed for tax exemptions for businesses, which made outside funding highly appealing to investors.

All of these incentives, however, did not always sit well with Docklands locals. Many felt that the new developments were elitist and favoured luxury and the wealthy over affordable housing for the existing Docklands communities.

When the redevelopment project finished in 1998, control of the Docklands was turned back over to the local authorities. The new Docklands area is now home to luxury apartments, various commercial enterprises, and some light industrial spaces. The Docklands Light Railway was constructed at a cost of £77million to connect the Docklands with the City of London.

The population of the Docklands has more than doubled since the regeneration project began, and it is increasingly considered a 'posh' place to live. Most of the old buildings along the docks have been converted into apartments, and the docks themselves are now mostly used for water sports, as the shipping industry has largely moved downriver.

The high-rise offices of the Docklands provide some of the most striking modern architecture in London. One Canada Square, the tower at the Canary Wharf complex, has 50 floors and is 800 feet (244 metres) high - making it the tallest building in Britain.

The history of London Docklands

AS LONDON became a hub for world trade in the late 18th century, there grew a need for large-scale official docking facilities. In 1799 Parliament passed an act allowing work to commence in the Isle of Dogs, and the West India Docks were built by the early 19th century.



Sir Alan Ayckbourn

Evening Standard Awards. They have been translated into 35 languages and are performed on stage and television throughout the world. They have also been filmed in French and English. Seven of his plays have been seen on Broadway attracting two Tony nominations.

His plays now feature on school curricula. Nihon University, Tokyo houses a permanent collection of his work.

He is an enthusiastic writer for children. Amongst his plays are the award winning *Mr. A's Amazing Maze Plays* and *Invisible Friends*, both staged at the Royal National Theatre. Other plays include *Whenever* and *Orvin - Champion Of Champions*. with music by Dennis King, *Callisto #7*, *The Boy Fell Into A Book*, *The Champion Of Paribanou*, *The Jollies* and *My Sister Sadie*.

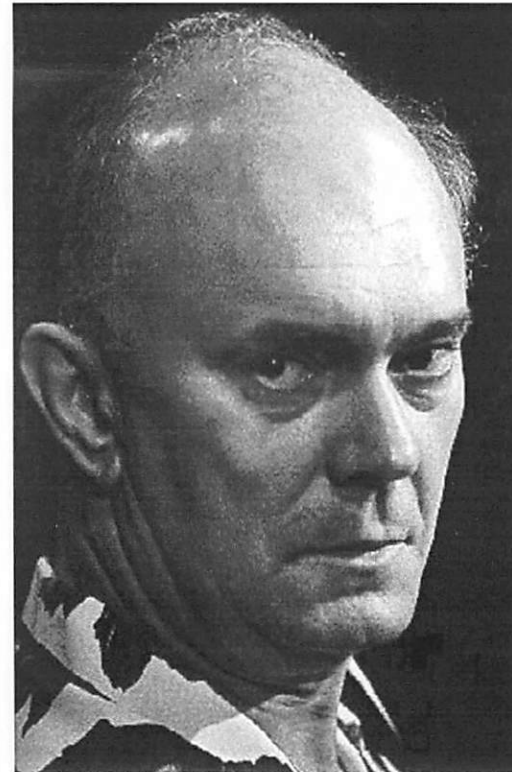
Alan Ayckbourn is also an established director, not only of his own work (since 1978, he has directed all of his London productions) but other people's. In 1986, at Sir Peter Hall's invitation, he directed his own company of actors in four plays

at the Royal National Theatre winning a Plays & Players Director Of The Year Award for his production of *A View From The Bridge* starring Michael Gambon.

In 1995, his production of Herb Gardner's *Conversations With My Father* transferred from Scarborough to London's Old Vic Theatre.

House and Garden, a 'double' play performed simultaneously in two auditoria, first seen at Scarborough in 1999, was staged at the Royal National Theatre in 2000.

In 2002 *Damsels In Distress*, a trilogy of plays using the same company and set, opened in the West End with the original Scarborough cast, the first of Ayckbourn's plays to do so. The achievement was marred when the



producer decided to run only *RolePlay* for daily performances, leading Alan Ayckbourn to state publicly he would not work in the commercial West End again. In 2003 *RolePlay* was nominated for an Olivier Award.

His 69th play, *Improbable Fiction* premiered at the Stephen Joseph Theatre last summer.

He was appointed a CBE in 1987 and in 1997 was knighted for his services to theatre.

Alan Ayckbourn would perhaps regard his greatest achievement to be the establishment of a permanent home for the company of which he has been Artistic Director since 1971 - the Stephen Joseph Theatre. Six years of fundraising and hard work culminated in its opening on April 30, 1996.

Girl power

ALAN AYCKBOURN has been labelled a writer of comedies laced with underlying tragedy. Also, we have become accustomed to important female characters, be they young, old, drunk, eccentric, weak or powerful.

Ayckbourn's essential view of the world was formed when he was still a relatively small child, influenced by a volatile, domineering mother, raised in an all-female environment, fussed over by "very pretty women".

His mother, Irene Maude Worley – nicknamed "Lolly" by Alan and his stepbrother, Christopher Pye, because she bought them lollipops when they were unwell – was a prolific writer who sold her first story to the *Co-op Journal* in 1919 when she was aged 13. She was born in Basildon, Essex. Her father was a Shakespearean actor, and her mother worked for a time as a music hall male impersonator. In the same year the precocious teenager also became intensely attracted to a musician called Horace Ayckbourn - who was nine years older than her.

Five years later, aged 17, she sent her first novel, *Off the Pavement*, to Michael Joseph who, not yet a publisher, sent it to a literary agent. The agent subsequently offered Lolly a five-novel contract. Although Joseph, too, was nine years her senior, he proposed marriage to Lolly. She was flattered but felt she could not accept because she did not want him to suffer the consequences of marrying out of his Jewish faith. Instead, she married Neville Monroe four years later, a relationship that turned out to be short-lived.

A brief encounter with Horace Ayckbourn at a concert convinced her that she was not in love with Monroe after all. So, acting on impulse, she left after splitting the earnings of her final novel *October Weekend* with him.

In 1938 Lolly fell pregnant with Alan. She panicked at the thought of having to give up her itinerant, journalistic lifestyle and suggested an abortion. Horace

It's A Long Way to Tipperary

AS JUSTIN discovers in *RolePlay*, strange things come to mind when you are on the spot and your mind starts to wander...

It's a long way to Tipperary,
It's a long way to go,
It's a long way to Tipperary,
To the sweetest girl I know!
Goodbye Piccadilly! Farewell Leicester Square!
It's a long, long way to Tipperary,
But my heart's right there!

It's A Long Way to Tipperary was written by Jack Judge (1878-1938), a fishmonger from Oldbury in Staffordshire who became a singer-comedian after winning a talent competition. The song was written in a pub in Stalybridge on January 30, 1912, as a result of a five shilling bet, and was first performed on the following day at the Grand Theatre in the town. Jack's grandparents hailed from Tipperary, although he never visited the Irish county himself.



During World War I, Irish infantrymen sang it as a marching song and its popularity spread as soldiers from Britain, Germany, and Russia became enamoured of its catchy tune. The British even added lyrics of their own:

That's the wrong way to tickle Mary,
That's the wrong way to kiss!
Don't you know that over here, lad,
They like it best like this!
Hooray pour le Français!
Farewell, Angleterre!
We didn't know the way to tickle Mary,
But we learned how, over there!

The crafty art of Ayckbourn

ROLEPLAY is the third play within Alan Ayckbourn's trilogy, *Damsels In Distress*. The plays are unrelated save for the Thames-side apartment in which they are set.

In *GamePlan* a disturbing drama of teenage prostitution turns into a hide-the-corpse farce. In the second play, *FlatSpin*, a lonely-gal romance becomes a spy thriller; and in *RolePlay* a meet-the-parents dinner comedy morphs into a piercing study of social class.

A trilogy might seem a daunting task to most authors, but by now Ayckbourn knows his craft inside out. So much so that he has published a how-to book, *The Crafty Art of Playmaking*.

"I don't exclude the muse," he says "but just letting the inspiration take you is a very risky way to write. You need rules to motor that inspiration."

Scholarly in tone, the book provides what he calls 101 "Obvious Rules" for successful writing and directing. Here are just a few choice morsels.

Obvious Rule No. 1

"Never look down on comedy or regard it as the poor cousin of drama"

Obvious Rule No. 5

"The audience needs to care about your characters"

Obvious Rule No. 11

"Never sell your characters short in order to meet the requirements of a gag or even the plot"

Obvious Rule No. 23

"Planning a show's structure — the time frame, for instance, and the number of characters — can take at least a year. You've got to plan the practicalities such as how dialogue will work within a set, where an audience will be looking"

Obvious Rule No. 33

"The best comedy springs from the utterly serious"

Obvious Rule No. 101

"No one ever set out to do a show with the intention of giving you a bad time"

wouldn't hear of it. However, soon after Alan Ayckbourn's birth on April 12, 1939 Horace became increasingly absent and tied up with work. As he spent less time at home, Lolly spent more and more time with Michael Joseph. As a consequence, her relationship with Horace broke down and eventually she moved away with her son to a rented cottage on a farm in Sussex. (In 1991 Ayckbourn found out that Lolly and Horace had never actually been married.)

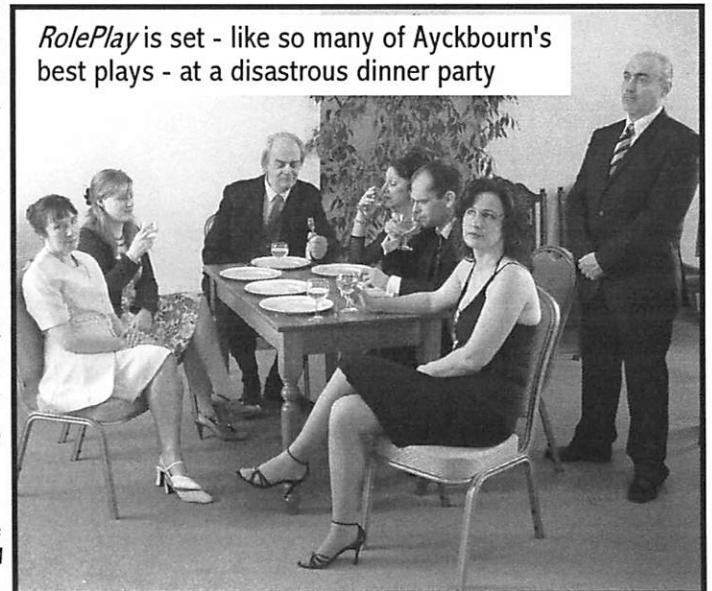
Ayckbourn's most formative years were spent watching his mother type away furiously on the kitchen table as he pounded a smaller typewriter she had bought him. Lolly was the female breadwinner through her writing. And so, at a tender age Ayckbourn began to interpret the adult world through a woman's experience. But the undivided attention of his highly strung mother, who "once threw my father's framed photograph at me in a fury and told me all men were bastards" came to a sudden end when he was sent off, aged seven, to the local boarding school, Wisborough Lodge, and plunged into a very harsh, all-male environment.

His mother hardly visited him, and although home was a stone's throw away he boarded at weekends too. In this macho, alien world Ayckbourn developed a unique, slightly tragic strategy for avoiding a beating: "I just used to smile at everyone all the time so nobody punched me."

The characteristic Ayckbourn grin thus became a physical shield, behind which lay, at times, true unhappiness. This experience at hiding his emotions gave the future writer not only something to write about, but also a way of writing it.

At his mother's funeral, Ayckbourn said: "To someone who gave me far more complexes, hang-ups, phobias, prejudices, inspirations and self-insights than any writer has a right to expect from a parent - many thanks, much love and farewell."

(Adapted from an article by Lucy Muss in *RSA Journal*, February 2003)



For the Company:

Director
MICHAEL DISHINGTON

Designers
JACKSON ELLEN STUART GLOSSOP
JAN SINGFIELD and MARK ELLEN

Stage Manager
CLARE DOWNS

Stage Crew
BARRY BAYNTON
ROY BIRCH and PENNY WHIPP

Set Construction
DAVID PILE
MARK ELLEN and THE COMPANY

Costumes
CAROLYN HEWITT and THE COMPANY

Transport
SIMON JACKSON

Publicity & Programme Editor
RICHARD NEAL

For the Theatre:

Production Manager
RUSSELL PARKER

Stage Management
ASHLEY THORNE & STEVE CHARTERS

Lighting & Sound
DON SHERRY

RolePlay

A comedy by
Alan Ayckbourn

CAST

in order of appearance

Justin Lazenby	STUART GLOSSOP
Julie-Ann Jobson, his fiancée	BOO FELTHAM
Paige Petite, an ex-dancer	PENNY PEARSON
Micky Rale, her minder	GRAHAM HAWKINS
Derek Jobson, Julie-Ann's father	JEREMY AUSTIN
Dee Jobson, his wife	JEAN DISHINGTON
Arabella Lazenby, Justin's mother	JAN SINGFIELD

With PAUL DODMAN and DAVE WILLIAMS



The action of the play takes place in
Justin Lazenby's London Docklands apartment

ACT I:

Scene 1: An evening in early March, 2006
Scene 2: The same – a little later

ACT II:

The same – two hours later

**THERE WILL BE ONE INTERVAL OF TWENTY MINUTES
BETWEEN ACT I AND ACT II**

Production Credits:

KITCHEN STYLE OF WIMBORNE
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(BROOMHILL, HOLT)
For the supply of plants

STURTONS & TAPPERS
For the supply of furniture

KELLIE SHEMILT
For original artwork for
riverside night skyline backdrop

Original paintings by
ANDY CRAGG
www.andycragg.com

Poster illustration by
SIMON PRIESTLEY
www.simonpriestley.co.uk

And thanks to
DANIEL PARKER