

She Stoops To Conquer

WIMBORNE
DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

The classic comedy
by Oliver Goldsmith



DEANS COURT
WIMBORNE

27th - 30th JUNE 2019

Welcome

A very warm welcome to Deans Court and this open air production of *She Stoops to Conquer* by Oliver Goldsmith.

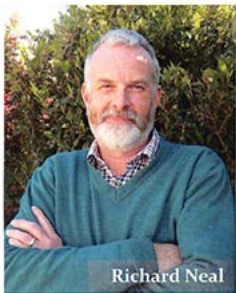
I first read this play about 20 years ago and had almost forgotten how good it was, until in 2012 my wife and I watched the NT Live broadcast of the National Theatre's production starring Katherine Kelly, Harry Hadden-Paton, Steve Pemberton and Sophie Thompson. The cast brought the script to life in a fresh and spirited way, obviously enjoying themselves, and playing to the audience. At that moment, I thought the play would be very well suited to performing in the open air. And so seven years later, you have the opportunity to judge if I was right!

She Stoops to Conquer, which Goldsmith sub-titled *The Mistakes of a Night*, is a warm-hearted comedy almost entirely free from malice, in which affection, good humour and romance prevail. But it is also sharply observant, and raises all sorts of questions about class and snobbery.

Theatre productions are a team effort and never more so than when we bring the theatre outdoors. So I am indebted to the hard work and dedication of everyone — our front of house volunteers, those working behind the scenes and the actors on stage. My heart-felt thanks go to every single one of them. It is wonderful to be returning to Deans Court for the sixth time — and I can announce we will be back again in 2020 — and we are very grateful to the Hanham family for allowing us the use of their glorious grounds for one week every summer.

Now, sit back, relax and enjoy this classic comedy of manners.

Richard Neal, Director



Oliver Goldsmith: laughing at the world

Novelist, playwright and poet Oliver Goldsmith was born in Ireland in either 1728 or 1730 — he was always very vague about the exact date — with a protruding forehead and upper lip, and a receding chin. At the age of nine, he contracted smallpox which left his face pitted and red. He walked with a rolling lurch, and children would throw stones at him in the street. He had a gulping stutter, and a tendency to ludicrous dandification (despite his perpetual poverty). It is no wonder he was frequently a figure of fun.

Even his friends, despite their affection for him, mocked 'Poor Noll'.

But Goldsmith was aware of his imperfections; he liked to "laugh at the world and at myself — the most ridiculous object in it".

She Stoops to Conquer was inspired, if Oliver Goldsmith is to be believed, by an incident in his boyhood. His father, a Church of Ireland curate in the damp midlands of Ireland, sent Oliver, his fifth child, to a secondary school in Edgeworthstown.

At the end of a summer term, a friend gave him a guinea and Oliver set out to ride the twenty miles home to Lissoy. But he dawdled, looking at things on the way, and night had fallen by the time he reached the village of Ardagh. Unwilling



Oliver Goldsmith

to go on, and with money in his purse, he asked a passer-by to direct him to “the best house in the village”. The enquiree, a local wag, saw the chance of a jape, and sent the schoolboy to the house of the squire, a Mr Featherstone who, you could argue, did indeed own “the best house” in Ardagh.

Outside his door Goldsmith dismounted and went straight to the parlour where he found Mr Featherstone sitting by his fire. The squire was a civilised man, with a good sense of humour, and when the awkward but likeable schoolboy asked for wine and victuals, “something comfortably good and in a hurry,” Mr Featherstone obliged. Nor did he bat an eyelid — except to wink — when Goldsmith bade him, his wife and family to share dinner, with more wine, and lastly ordered a hot cake for his breakfast as he climbed the stairs to bed.

Goldsmith only discovered his mistake when he asked for his bill the following morning, and even though the incident gave him great embarrassment, it also gave him the plot for his most famous play.



Covent Garden Theatre

She Stoops to Conquer had its premiere at Covent Garden Theatre in March 1773 when Goldsmith was in his early forties. By then he was an established literary figure in London — *The Vicar of Wakefield*, his most popular novel, had been published in 1766 — although his life had been an endless round of debt, deadlines and disaster. He was frequently on the edge of destitution, frittering away what little money he had on gambling (which he was very bad at), elaborate and rather tasteless clothes, and other extravagances.

He wrote the play in 1771, again under the pressure of debt, and had great difficulty in getting it staged because the play's overt attack on the theatrical fashions of the day made it too risky. Eventually George Colman, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, reluctantly agreed to stage the play at the fag-end of the season. The play was a triumph against all the odds.

The play was what Goldsmith called a "laughing comedy" when "sentimental comedy" — combining the pathos of tragedy with the domestic, often urban and contemporary setting of comedy — was the fashion. It was very much about people "as they ought to be", Goldsmith wrote, "not as they are."

The characters in sentimental comedies were almost always "good and exceedingly generous," he complained. "If they happen to have faults or foibles, the spectator is taught not only to pardon, but to applaud them, in consideration of the goodness of their hearts; so that folly, instead of being ridiculed, is commended... Humour at present seems to be departing from the stage."

He wanted to write "something to make people laugh", to give them some "low comedy", to depict the lower ranks of society speaking a colloquial language (as Goldsmith's servants and country-folk do) and to get one over gentlemen such as Marlow and Hastings (as Tony Lumpkin does).

The public loved this new comedy — the opening night was a great success — and the play continues to be enjoyed to this day.

Town and Country

One of the themes of the play is the divide between town and country, which Goldsmith satirises so cleverly.

In the 18th century, London transformed itself. The clearances of the Great Fire had opened opportunities for new architects to create a gleaming new city of fine public buildings, houses and shops admired throughout the world.

During the winter, London became the resort of the fashionable (and those aspiring to be fashionable) who came to see the latest clothes, shop at the latest shops, see the latest plays, and attend the balls and masquerades that were at the heart of what Goldsmith termed "polite society".

Visits to London knocked off the provincial edges and country visitors might need time to "Londonise" their dress before appearing in public.

Visitors might attend concerts or take refreshment at the pleasure gardens of Vauxhall or Ranelagh where elaborate garden buildings, illuminations and international performers were all set to dazzle. Alternatively the Pantheon in Oxford



Ranelagh Pleasure Gardens

Street offered a range of attractions, including concerts and balls. Exclusive clubs like Almacks or Whites provided a glamorous setting where the wealthy could lose as much as £20,000 in a night's gambling.

In the countryside, change was beginning to reshape the rural landscape.

Land remained the mainstay of wealth, and agricultural reform and the process of enclosure meant that land values doubled



An 18th century land owner on his farm

through the century and estates were now more productive. New technology and improved farming methods made land ownership far more profitable, leading to a growth of country house building.

But there was fear too. The main roads leading out of London were beset by highwaymen. The writer and politician Horace Walpole, himself a victim of robbery, advised that "people travel at noon as if they were going into battle".

The state of the roads, set to improve as the century progressed, caused the isolation of many rural communities where potholes rather than today's traffic jams kept visitors away. Arthur Young, the writer, who travelled the country in 1768, summed up the situation in his description of the road between Preston and Wigan in Lancashire:

"Travellers will here meet with ruts which I actually measured four feet deep. For a thousand to one but they break their necks or their limbs by overthrows or breakings down."



Clockwise from top left: James Bourner, David Pile, Russ Guillaume, Colin Pile, Paul Dodman, Gary Paine, Sam Moulton, Chrissie Neal,
 Rob Cording-Cook, Tony Feltham, Jan Stevenson, Judy Garrett, Simon Jackson, Bethany Barfoot and Michelle Barter.

The Characters

At Liberty Hall, the home of the Hardcastles

Hardcastle	PAUL DODMAN
Mrs Hardcastle, <i>his wife</i>	CHRISSIE NEAL
Kate Hardcastle, <i>Hardcastle's daughter</i>	MICHELLE BARTER
Tony Lumpkin, <i>Mrs Hardcastle's son</i>	JAMES BOURNER
Constance Neville, <i>Mrs Hardcastle's niece</i>	BETHANY BARFOOT
Diggory, <i>head servant</i>	TONY FELTHAM
Thomas, <i>servant</i>	DAVID PILE
Roger, <i>servant</i>	SIMON JACKSON
Pimple, <i>maid</i>	JUDY GARRETT
Maud, <i>maid</i>	JAN STEVENSON

At The Three Pigeons

Stingo, <i>the Landlord</i>	RUSS GUILLAUME
Tom Twist	COLIN PILE
Jack Slang	SIMON JACKSON
Dick Muggins	TONY FELTHAM

From London

Charles Marlow	SAM MOULTON
George Hastings	ROB CORDING-COOK
Sir Charles Marlow, <i>Marlow's father</i>	GARY PAINE
Jeremy, <i>servant to Marlow</i>	COLIN PILE

The action of the play takes place during the course of a single day and night
Running time: approximately 2 hours 30 minutes (including interval)

The Creative Team

Director	RICHARD NEAL
Set Designer	CHRIS DURHAM
Assistant Director/Book Cover	ANN MCCOLGAN-CLARK
Set Construction	CHRIS DURHAM COLIN PILE ANN MCCOLGAN-CLARK and members of the company
ASMs/Properties	MOIRA HAWEY HELEN YOUNG
ASM	CHRIS DURHAM
Costumes Coordinator	CHRISSIE NEAL
Sound & Lighting	COLIN PILE TRACEY NICHOLLS
Song Arrangement	SAM MOULTON
Publicity and Programme	RICHARD NEAL
Front of House Coordinator	TONY PARKINSON

Front of House Team

JOHN BILLINGTON , TRACIE BILLINGTON-BEARDSLEY, JAN BURSBY,
JEMMA CABLE, SHEILA DOVE, BOB HUCKLESBY, JACKIE MCGUIRE,
TRACEY NICHOLLS and RICHARD SCOTSON

Production Acknowledgements

Special thanks to:

Jonathan Cornish (Events Manager) & **the Hanham family** at Deans Court

Hierarchy Costumes for the supply of costumes

Pete Alcock's Presentation Services for the supply of sound & lighting equipment

We also thank the following for their assistance:

Nick Clark, Steph Jones, Broadstone Players, P&P Productions,

Dumpton School, Wimborne Royal British Legion,

St Mary's Church Ferndown, Daisy Graphic, Gullivers,

Wimborne Tourist Information Centre and The Tivoli Theatre

Produced by Wimborne Drama Productions at Deans Court, 27-30 June 2019

Cast Biographies

BETHANY BARFOOT (Constance Neville)

Betsy returns to the stage after a break of four years. She played Mary Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* here at Deans Court in 2015 and also appeared at the Tivoli in the same year, playing Doris the maid in *The Hollow*. One of her favourite roles was Mungojerrie in a school production of *Cats*.

MICHELLE BARTER (Kate Hardcastle)

This is Shelly's fourth appearance for Wimborne Drama Productions, having played Felicity Rumpers in *Habeas Corpus* at the Tivoli in 2016, Margaret in *Much Ado About Nothing* at Deans Court in 2017 and Louise in *Murder on the Nile* at the Tivoli last year. Last month she played Shelby in *Steel Magnolias* for Broadstone Players.

JAMES BOURNER (Tony Lumpkin)

James appeared in our productions of *Single Spies* and *Murder on the Nile* at the Tivoli last year. This will be his first time performing open air at Deans Court, although last year he played Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Bournemouth Shakespeare Players. Other acting highlights

include Slightly in *Peter Pan* at the Lighthouse and appearances in productions of *Crazy For You* and *The Hot Mikado*.

ROB CORDING-COOK (George Hastings)

Rob has appeared in all five of our previous open air productions here at Deans Court – *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. His favourite roles however have been Simon Bliss in *Hay Fever* and Jan Warwick in *The Unexpected Guest*, both with WDP at the Tivoli Theatre. Other recent plays include *Single Spies*, *Travels with My Aunt*, *Relative Values* and *The Ghost Train*.

PAUL DODMAN (Hardcastle)

Paul has directed two of our productions here at Deans Court—*Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. He played Orsino in *Twelfth Night*. At the Tivoli he has appeared in numerous productions including *Single Spies*, *The Hollow*, *The Ghost Train*, *Present Laughter*, *And Then There Were None*, *Unexpected Guest*, *Journey's End*, *On the Razzle* and *A Voyage Round My Father*. His favourite part was Leonard Vole in *Witness for the Prosecution*.

TONY FELTHAM
(Dick Muggins/Diggory)

Tony appeared at Deans Court in 2013 when he played Herr Winkelkopf in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*. Last year he played Guy Burgess in *Single Spies* at the Tivoli. Other favourite roles have included Lord Fancourt Babberley in *Charley's Aunt*, 2nd Lieutenant Trotter in *Journey's End* (for WDP) and Bill Snibson in *Me and My Girl* (for Wimborne Musical Theatre Society). Other plays for WDP include *The Government Inspector*, *Rebecca*, *The Lion in Winter* and *An Inspector Calls*.

JUDY GARRETT
(Pimple)

Judy played Antonia in our 2017 summer production of *Much Ado About Nothing* at Deans Court, Mrs Gardiner in *Pride and Prejudice* in 2015 and Maria in *Twelfth Night* in 2012. Last year she played Grace Winslow in *The Winslow Boy* and Miss Ffoliot-foulkes in *Murder on the Nile*. Other recent highlights include Mrs Swabb in *Habeas Corpus*, Miss Erikson in *Present Laughter* and Costanza in *Enchanted April*.

RUSS GUILLAUME
(Stingo)

Russ joined WDP way back in 1962. But this is his first role in one of our summer plays at Deans Court. His most recent roles, all at the Tivoli, have included the shop assistant in

Single Spies, Saul Hodgkin, the Stationmaster, in *The Ghost Train*, Forbright in *Cash On Delivery*, Narracott in *And Then There Were None* and Colonel Julian in *Rebecca*. Other plays include *The Hollow*, *On the Razzle*, *An Inspector Calls* and *David Copperfield*.

SIMON JACKSON
(Jack Slang/Roger)

No stranger to open air theatre, Simon has appeared in *Much Ado About Nothing* (WDP and BSP), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (BOAT and Swan Theatre), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (BSP), *Twelfth Night* (Swan Theatre and WDP), and *Becket* (BOAT). Other highlights have been Major Courtney in *The Ladykillers* and General Mackenzie in *And Then There Were None* (WDP).

SAM MOULTON
(Charles Marlow)

Sam played Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* here in 2017, Baines in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* in 2013 and Fabian in *Twelfth Night* in 2012. He directed our production of *Pride and Prejudice* in 2015. For WDP at the Tivoli, Sam has appeared in several comedies including *The Ladykillers*, *Hay Fever* and *Present Laughter*, but his favourite roles have been the dramatic ones: Sir Robert

Morton in *The Winslow Boy*, CS Lewis in *Shadowlands* and Thomas More in *A Man For All Seasons*.

CHRISSIE NEAL
(Mrs Hardcastle)

Chrissie played Mrs Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* here in 2015. Last year she played Elizabeth in *Gaslight* and Violet in *The Winslow Boy*, both at the Tivoli. Other favourite roles include Mrs Swabb in *Habeas Corpus*, Queen Charlotte in *The Madness of George III*, Madame Knorr in *On the Razzle*, Mrs Danvers in *Rebecca*, Clairee in *Steel Magnolias* and Sybil Birling in *An Inspector Calls*.

GARY PAINE
(Sir Charles Marlow)

Gary played Mr Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* here in 2015. Other roles for WDP have included John Watherstone in *The Winslow Boy*, The Hon Peter Ingleton in *Relative Values* and Rev. Harry Harrington in *Shadowlands*. Before hooking up with WDP five years ago, Gary had a long association with Broadstone Players, Milo Tindle in *Sleuth* being one of his favourite roles for them.

COLIN PILE
(Tom Twist/Jeremy)

Colin has been involved in all of our productions here at Deans Court, acting in *Much Ado About*

Nothing and *Pride and Prejudice* and operating sound on *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Other highlights include playing Desmond Curry in *The Winslow Boy*, Jacob in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Melchior in *On the Razzle* and appearing in Bournemouth Operatic Society's *Kiss Me Kate*.

DAVID PILE
(Thomas)

Here at Deans Court David has appeared in *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In recent years David has been very busy mainly as a director with WDP, including producing several successful Agatha Christie thrillers, and his personal highlight, *The Ladykillers* in 2015.

JAN STEVENSON
(Maud)

Jan played Lady Lucas in *Pride and Prejudice*, Lady Clementina Beauchamp in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* and Miss Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Other recent roles include Miss Bourne in *The Ghost Train*, Lady Cynthia Hayling in *Relative Values*, Ouiser Boudreaux in *Steel Magnolias*, Mrs Rogers in *And Then There Were None* and Madam Arcarti in *Blithe Spirit*.

Verena Smith



At the end of last year, we had to say a very sad farewell to a much-loved member of the WDP family, Verena Smith, who passed away, aged 95. Verena adored participating in our open air productions at Deans Court. Here she is pictured in our production of *Twelfth Night* which her husband Michael directed in 2012. Verena was clever, caring and colourful, and will be sorely missed by us all.

President of
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Malcolm Angel

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By Craig Warner

Based on the novel by Patricia Highsmith



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