

Belmont Theatre
(amateur)

Agatha Christie's

THE HOLLOW



Belmont Theatre

Presents

Agatha Christie's

The Hollow

by arrangement with Samuel French Ltd.

Directed by **Paul Botly**



Wed 29th May to Sat 1st June 2013

THE PUMP HOUSE THEATRE

**LOCAL BOARD ROAD
WATFORD, WD17 2JP**

noda

Professional support for amateur theatre



Chairman's Chat

Welcome once again to Belmont Theatre's latest production – *The Hollow* by Agatha Christie. It originally appeared as a novel which was first published in the United States in early 1946 but not in the UK until November of the same year. It is a fine example of a "country house mystery" (in which almost everyone is a suspect!) and was the first of her novels in four years to feature our favourite Belgian detective, Hercule Poirot. Christie often admitted that she did not like Poirot (a fact parodied by her recurring novelist character Ariadne Oliver) and particularly disliked his appearance in this novel. His late arrival, given the established atmosphere, led her to claim in her Autobiography that she "ruined the novel by the introduction of Poirot". Consequently, when Christie decided to adapt the novel into a stage play, she disposed of Poirot altogether. So, sorry folks, but there will be no mincing Belgian exercising his little grey cells this evening! And we couldn't afford David Suchet anyway.



Now I'm sorry, ladies and gentlemen, but I really do need to be serious for a while.

Belmont, like many other amateur drama companies, is finding life increasingly difficult. Yes, we're still presenting high class entertainment and have a pleasant theatre in which to do that. We have money in the bank to cushion us and we have superb audiences (and thanks to you all for the latter as we couldn't do it without you)! Looking to the future, no company is safe – indeed, over the past few years, several companies have folded and the usual cause is a lack of members. Belmont's no different although we have a dedicated, yet ageing, central core of members: but we need new, younger blood to take the company forward. I know that Committee members (who, in the main, are covering two or more posts) would welcome the chance to step down but only if there are people willing to take over and, of course, they would still make themselves available to help and offer advice to their successors.

So, this is an appeal. You're here today because you enjoy Belmont and its productions and, I hope, want to see the company thrive. Please, if you can or are willing to give us any help – however little, either front of house, backstage or on stage – it will be really appreciated. I will be in the foyer after the show so please feel free to collar me and we can have a chat if you're interested.

Sorry for that bit of gloom and doom but it had to be said. And now to the business of the day – relax and enjoy *The Hollow*.

Bill Baynes

From The Director

I went along to see a marvellous Belmont production of *Charley's Aunt* in 1983 and immediately became interested in 'treading the boards'. Thirty years later after a number of acting and directing roles and a lot of grey hairs I'm still enjoying my time at Belmont Theatre. I have thoroughly enjoyed working on *The Hollow*, not only because Agatha Christie is such an excellent writer but, more importantly, because it afforded me the opportunity to work with some of Belmont's best. I hope you enjoy the show and it inspires you to explore more of Agatha Christie's work. At the end of the performance I hope you will, like me, put your hands together for the actors and backstage people who have worked tirelessly to provide quality live theatre entertainment for us all.

Paul Botsy

A few words on our next production:

Oscar Wilde's comedy masterpiece: ***A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE***

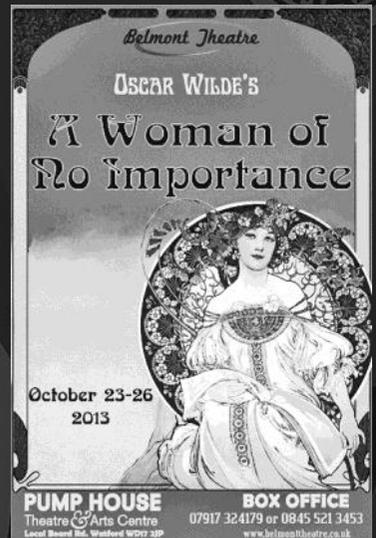
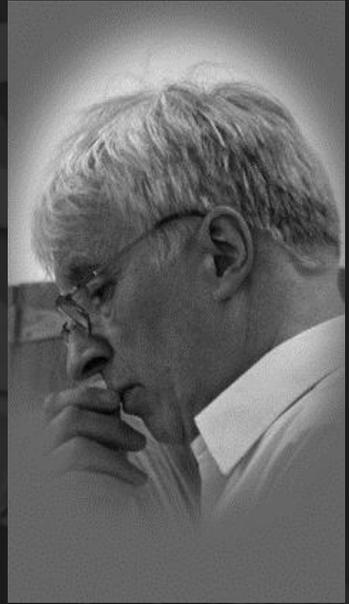
The setting is a country home near London in the late 1890's. A man, a woman and the child they had outside of marriage (oh, my!). Lord Illingworth has employed young Gerald as his new secretary. But when Gerald's mother, Mrs Arbuthnot, meets her son's new employer they immediately recognize each other from their youthful days of indiscretion.

Will Gerald learn his father's true identity?

What of Lord Illingworth?

How will Mrs Arbuthnot live with the result?

These are the ingredients that flavour one of Oscar Wilde's greatest works, a play full of his usual wit but spiced with human dilemmas that are as valid for our times as they were for his.



Agatha Christie and ...



Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller was born on 15 September 1890 in Torquay. Her father, Frederick, was an outgoing American with an independent income. Her mother, Clara, was rather shy; Agatha resembled her in personality. There were two other children - Madge and Monty, both older than Agatha.

Clara decided Agatha should not receive a formal education and intended she be taught to read when she was eight; however by the age of five Agatha had already taught herself to read. The rest of her education was shared between tutors, part-time schooling and French finishing schools. She trained as a singer and pianist and, but for her extreme shyness, had the talent to have made this her career.

When Agatha was eleven her father died and she became even closer to her mother. Without Frederick Clara became restless and began to travel, at times taking Agatha with her; these early trips began Agatha's lifelong love of travel. In 1912 Agatha met Archie Christie, her future husband, a qualified aviator who had applied to join the Royal Flying Corps. After a tempestuous romance they married on Christmas Eve 1914, by special licence, with Archie returning to the war in France on Boxing Day.

Agatha became a nurse at the Red Cross Hospital in Torquay - ultimately working in the dispensary where she completed the examination of the Society of Apothecaries.

Her writing career began after Madge challenged her to write a novel. It took several years to get her first book *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* published but the reviews were kind and the murder by poison so well described that Agatha received the unprecedented honour of a review in the *Pharmaceutical Journal*!

Agatha's happiness was complete when Rosalind, her only daughter was born on 5th August 1919 but by 1926 her life was in tatters: Clara died and Archie left her for another woman.

Christie slowly rebuilt her life and in 1930 she again visited Baghdad. It was here she met Max Mallowan. Max took Agatha on a tour of Baghdad and the desert. On reaching Athens, Agatha received a telegram saying that Rosalind was seriously ill. Agatha's only concern was to get home, however she had badly sprained her ankle on an Athens street and was unable to walk. Max chose to accompany her back to England. She could not have made the trip without him and when they reached home he proposed and she accepted.

Agatha accompanied Max on his annual archaeological expeditions for nearly 30 years. She continued to write, both at home and on field trips and her book *Come, Tell Me How You Live* wittily describes her days on digs in Syria. She and Max were happily married for 46 years. After a hugely successful career and a wonderful life Agatha died peacefully on 12 January 1976.

Material adapted from <http://www.agathachristie.com/>

The Hollow

After the success of *And Then There Were None* Christie stated that in future only she would adapt her works for the stage and that *The Hollow* would be her next play. Christie conveniently forgot her intervening plays - *Appointment with Death* (1945) and *Murder on the Nile* (1946) ..

Christie had always felt that *The Hollow* would make a good play but she came up against the opposition of her daughter, Rosalind Hicks, who Christie affectionately described as having "had the valuable role in life of eternally trying to discourage me without success". Christie was determined to turn the book into a play but was equally adamant that in doing so it would lose the character of Hercule Poirot whose appearance in the book she thought had "ruined it".

Bertie Meyer, a producer, signed a contract for *The Hollow* in 1950 and plans were made to open the play in London to coincide with the start of the Festival of Britain. These plans came to nothing. However Peter Saunders, a young and new theatrical producer, had sustained a significant loss when staging an adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 1913 book, *The Poison Belt*. Desperate to make up these losses, he cast around for a play that he could take on tour without too much expense and which would be sure to attract an audience. Charles and Toy's adaptation of Christie's *Murder at the Vicarage* was just about to finish a four-month run at the Playhouse Theatre and he decided that the name of the actors who starred in the production wouldn't really matter as Christie herself was enough of a name to draw an audience. He therefore deliberately advertised the play as *Agatha Christie's "Murder at the Vicarage"* rather than "*Murder at the Vicarage*" by Agatha Christie. The showmanship worked. He recouped his losses and, more importantly, brought himself to the attention of Christie who, annoyed with the slow progress of Bertie Meyer, gave *The Hollow* to Saunders instead.

The play opened at the Arts Theatre in Cambridge on February 10, 1951 although Christie was absent as she was in Iraq with Max Mallowan. She arranged for flowers to be sent to the female members of the cast. She was as nervous as ever at the public reaction although reassured by telegrams which told her that the opening night was a success. After an eight-week tour, the play opened at the Fortune Theatre in London on June 7, 1951 to an enthusiastic press response. It transferred to the Ambassadors Theatre on October 8, 1951 and ran for a total of eleven months and 376 performances - Christie finally saw on her return.

One special thrill for Saunders was a request by Queen Mary, a noted Christie fan, to see the play and she came to the Fortune Theatre to do so and met various members of the cast. Christie herself was so pleased at the efforts Saunders made that she gave him a brown paper package. Inside it was the script for a new play she had just written, *The Mousetrap*.



10, RUE DE LA PAIX, PARIS
7, OLD BOND STREET, LONDRES
398, FIFTH AVENUE, NEW-YORK

K=25

CAST

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Characters in alphabetical order:

<i>VERONICA CRAYE</i>	<i>MARY-ANNE ANARADOH</i>
<i>EDWARD ANGKETELL</i>	<i>NICK BALDOCK</i>
<i>INSPECTOR COLQUOHOUN</i>	<i>BILL BAYNES</i>
<i>JOHN CRISTOW</i>	<i>MIKE BLAND</i>
<i>SIR HENRY ANGKETELL</i>	<i>MICHAEL COLLINS</i>
<i>HENRIETTA ANGKETELL</i>	<i>TATIANA COOK</i>
<i>GERDA CRISTOW</i>	<i>BARBARA DAVIES</i>
<i>SERGEANT PENNY</i>	<i>BILL REBELLO</i>
<i>DORIS</i>	<i>LOTTIE REBELLO</i>
<i>GUDGEON THE BUTLER</i>	<i>BERNARD VICK</i>
<i>MIDGE HARVEY</i>	<i>MICHELLE GOUGH</i>
<i>LADY LUCY ANGKETELL</i>	<i>JANE WILLIS</i>

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES - Time: the present

The action of the play takes place in the garden room of Sir Henry Angketell's house, The Hollow, about eighteen miles from London.

ACT I – A Friday afternoon in early September

ACT II – Scene 1: Saturday morning

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

ACT II – Scene 2: Later the same day

ACT III – The Following Monday morning.

The lights are lowered during Act III to denote the passing of one hour.

Appointments



Director	Paul Botly
Stage Manager	Carole Baynes
Assistant Stage Manager	Lottie Rebello
Producer	Bill Baynes
Continuity	Laurence Conway
Lighting and Sound	Lorna Alder
Lighting design	Mick Dolan <i>hphmick@hotmail.com</i>
Properties	Helen Sherwood & Les Sutherland
Set design	Bill Baynes, Bill Rebello, Paul Botly
Set construction	Bill Rebello & Company
Costumes	Cast and Anne Sutherland
FOH Coordinator	Estelle Dell
FOH Duty Managers	Estelle Dell, Frankie Hogan, Judi Campion, Alec McAuliffe
FOH team	Members, Patrons & Friends
Box office	Gillian and Malcolm Weinberg
Marketing/publicity	Michael Collins, Malcolm Weinberg & Team
Programme/Poster designs	Mike & Maggie Morrow

Belmont Theatre Company wishes to express its gratitude to Sainsbury's, Watford for allowing us to display a large publicity banner on their premises. Sainsbury's co-operation is really appreciated and gives a great boost to our publicity. If you would care to buy your groceries from this friend of Belmont it would be a really welcome way to thank them for their support.

Artiste Portraits . . . by Anon E. Mouse

PAUL BOTLY (Director)

Paul directed *Gaslight*, our initial offering at The Pump House following our move from The Harrow Arts Centre to the leafy shire county of Hertfordshire. He has been a member for many years both as actor and director and this is his 'comeback' offering after taking a short break from the madness that is amateur theatre. Welcome back Paul and thanks.

MARY-ANNE ANARADOH (VERONICA CRAYE)

Mary-Anne joined us for *The Likes of Us* and followed that up by playing the part of Jan in *Bedroom Farce*. She then disappeared for a while doing other things (one of which was playing a 15 year old schoolgirl in *Once a Catholic*). We're delighted to welcome her as she takes on the role of the exotic film star, Veronica Craye.

NICK BALDOCK (EDWARD ANGKETELL)

In a previous incarnation, Nick wrote a dissertation that entailed reading the complete works of Agatha Christie - twice - so playing Edward is the fulfillment of a minor ambition! In 2012 in 90-degree heat in Riverside Park, New York, wearing an Edwardian butler's costume, he played Dromio of Ephesus in *The Comedy of Errors*. His stage 'twin' was played by a 21-year old, which was immensely gratifying. Nick is currently working on a musical version of *The Winter's Tale* which he believes to be brilliant and this summer, will be touring in *The Taming of the Shrew* (dates available on request)!

BILL BAYNES (INSPECTOR COLQUHOUN)

Bill's last portrayal of a copper was as Inspector Craddock in *A Murder is Announced* some three years ago (a part which has also been played by Alexander Armstrong - though they didn't compare notes as it would have been POINTLESS!). In that one he was Welsh, this time - well, let's just say he's relocated. Bill has recently signed with an agent and is looking forward to a bit of paid work in the future.

MIKE BLAND (JOHN CRISTOW)

Mike was press-ganged into the cast of our recent *Jack the Ripper* (someone twisted his wife's arm)! The same someone twisted his wife's other arm and here he is again in another Belmont production. It won't spoil anything if we tell you that he's the murder victim but who shot the gun? We're really pleased to have him treading the boards with us again.



Artiste Portraits (contd.)...



MICHAEL COLLINS (SIR HENRY ANGKETELL)

Michael is enjoying this cameo role as one of numerous Angketells (where did Agatha Christie find that name?) The role gives him the opportunity to be suitably pompous. He's pleased to be working with Paul Botly again (one of his favourite plays with Belmont was *The Odd Couple* playing opposite Paul). Other favourites have been *Charley's Aunt* and *Ghosts*, the heavily dramatic Ibsen play.



TATIANA COOK (HENRIETTA ANGKETELL)

'Tats' joined us only last year and her first role with us was as Ida in *The Cemetery Club*, in which she did a brilliant job - including keeping a straight face when her leading man's moustache and beard both decided to go walkabout. Prior to joining Belmont she completed a drama degree and appeared in several musicals for Questors. You should watch out for Inspector Colquhoun attempting to say her character's full name - you might find it interesting!



BARBARA DAVIES (GERDA CRISTOW)

After joining Belmont in 2010 and playing the rather neurotic Susanna in *Bedroom Farce* and then the strange and rude housemaid Mitzi in *A Murder is Announced*, Barbara is now back treading the boards - this time as the down-trodden wife of Dr John Cristow. These are possibly the three people you wouldn't want to put in a room together - but she's loved every minute of playing them all. She hopes you'll enjoy her latest foray as much as she has.



BILL REBELLO (SERGEANT PENNY)

Bill manfully strode the boards for the first time as Ronnie Sheldon in *The Small Hours*, then swore he would never do it again. So here he is again, this time on the right side of the law and giving great support to his Inspector. He will no doubt say 'never again' again - but we think he's just biding his time until he gets the chance to play King Lear.



LOTTIE REBELLO (DORIS)

Lottie tends to be more back stage than on stage but over the last couple of years she's been Sadie Croft in *Laying the Ghost*, Dinah Linden in *The Linden Tree* and one of our leading dancers and whores (sorry, ladies of the night) in *Jack the Ripper*. This time, she's doubling up as Doris, the housemaid, who has something to tell the police and, yet again, being our ASM.

Artiste Portraits (contd.)...

BERNARD VICK (GUDGEON THE BUTLER)

Bernard's previous appearances with Belmont include *Twelve Angry Men*, *Inherit the Wind*, *On Golden Pond*, *When we are Married* (as Ormonroyd, the drunk photographer who stole the show), our first production of *Jack The Ripper* (as a dirty old tramp) and *Ten Times Table*. He's now pleased to be tackling his first Agatha Christie role with Belmont, butling at *The Hollow*. Did the butler do it? Not telling - just wait and see.

MICHELLE GOUGH (MIDGE HARVEY)

Michelle has recently performed with East Lane Theatre Company where she played the roles of Mary McGinty in *Once a Catholic* and Alice in *Hobson's Choice*. *The Hollow* is Michelle's second Agatha Christie play as she also played Greta in *Witness for the Prosecution* for a Brooklyn based theatre company whilst studying at drama school in New York. This is Michelle's debut with Belmont and we hope that she'll have an enjoyable time with us.

JANE WILLIS (LADY LUCY ANGKETELL)

The Hollow is Jane's debut with Belmont although she has played a variety of roles over the years - her most recent being Mrs Higgins in *Pygmalion* and Ruth in *Entertaining Angels*. She is not just an actress but writes as well. Bill Baynes has had the pleasure of recording three of her short stories for HEARABOUTS a talking magazine for the blind and partially sighted.



For more information on Belmont

Visit our website:

www.belmonttheatre.co.uk

our Facebook page:

belmonttheatre

or Tweet us at:

@belmonttheatre1

Belmont Theatre Company

Committee

Bill Baynes - *Chairman*
Malcolm Weinberg - *Treasurer & Publicity*
Gillian Weinberg - *Secretary*
Michael Collins - *Memberships & Publicity*
Bill Rebello - *Production*
Mike Morrow - *Newsletters & Design*
Mary Woolf - *Sans Portfolio*



Life President - Kathy Aldridge
Presidents - Anne & Les Sutherland
Life Members - Tom & Mary Power

Patrons

Clr C & Mr A Bath	Patrick McAuliffe
Robin & Lynn Benton	Harker Moor
John Burchell	Arthur Orchard
Margaret Chatfield	Monica Parsons
Jeffrey Clarke	Eileen Paton
Jill Davis	Tom & Mary Power
Anthony Dell	Pauline Salway
Lesley Etkind	John Stevens
Eileen & Graham Fowler	Jackie Stringer
Mrs Peggy Gilbert	Anne Sutherland
David Gregory	Les Sutherland
Geraldine Anne Farrell	Christine Thomas
Geoffrey Hulett	Gunna Vangenderen
Prof D.G. & Mrs J.H. Larman	Shirley Wardell
Edna Marshall	Winifred Wilkins
Alex McAuliffe	Peter Williams

WE WANT YOU



Belmont
Theatre



Belmont Theatre is always looking for members to join our
sociable, friendly and active company.

You don't need any previous experience - just an interest for
amateur theatre!

For more information visit our website at

<http://www.belmonttheatre.co.uk>

or call us on 07917 324179



The Belmont Legacy

1947	Charity Begins	1975	Lunch Hour & Black Comedy	1994	Blitz
1948	Ladies In Retirement		The Day After The Fair	1995	Come Blow Your Horn
1949	Wasn't It Odd	1976	The Diary Of Anne Frank		Pardon Me, Prime Minister
	The Maitlands		The National Health		The Forsyte Saga
1950	The Blue Goose	1977	Tonight At Eight	1996	Time Of My Life
	Dear Brutus		Don't Just Lie There-Say Something		Out Of Order
1951	I Remember Mama		The Life & Death Of Almost Everybody		A Christmas Carol
	Happiest Days Of Your Life	1978	1066 And All That	1997	All My Sons
1952	Death Takes A Holiday		Absurd Person Singular		Tons Of Money
	Playbill		Glasstown		Lend Me A Tenor
1953	Travellers Joy	1979	Habeas Corpus	1998	The Winslow Boy
1954	When We Are Married		Robinson Crusoe		Thank You Hollywood
	Light Of Heart		Night Must Fall		Rock Nativity
1955	Quiet Weekend	1980	Big Bad Mouse	1999	A View From The Bridge
1956	Heaven And Charing Cross		The Erpingham Camp		Funny Money
1957	Summer In December		Ring Round The Moon		Oliver!
1958	Saloon Bar	1981	Reluctant Heroes	2000	The Ghost Train
	Fresh Fields		And A Nightingale Sang		Don't Dress For Dinner
1959	A Question Of Fact	1982	A Christmas Carol		Communicating Doors
	Sailor Beware		Move Over Mrs Markham	2001	Separate Tables
1960	Fly Away Peter		Golden Pathway Annual		Twelve Angry Men
	Speaking Of Murder	1983	Charley's Aunt		The Intruders/Black Comedy
	Doctor In The House		How The Other Half Loves	2002	Inherit The Wind
1961	Search By Night		Hobson's Choice		Lettuce and Lovage
1962	Wild Goose Chase	1984	Rock Nativity		Party Piece
	Night Must Fall		Witness For The Prosecution	2003	Death of a Salesman
	Watch It Sailor		Two And Two Make Sex		There's A Girl In My Soup
1963	Pink String And Sealing Wax	1985	Blithe Spirit	2004	Private Lives
	Happiest Days Of Your Life		Bedroom Farce		On Golden Pond
1964	The Brides Of March		Time And The Conways		A Chorus of Disapproval
	Women Are Like That	1986	The Heiress	2005	The Coarse Acting Show 2
1965	Rock-A-Bye Sailor		An Inspector Calls		A Tomb With A View
	Billy Liar		Outside Edge		Jack The Ripper-The Musical
	Bell, Book And Candle	1987	Laughter In The Dark	2006	Arms and the Man
1966	Duet For Two Hands		Absent Friends		It Runs in the Family
	Simon And Laura		Confusions		House Guest
	Wanted One Body	1988	Pack Of Lies	2007	Gaslight
1967	Separate Tables		My Friend Miss Flint		Oh What A Lovely War
	Breath Of Spring		Mixed Doubles	2008	Plaza Suite
1968	Something To Hide	1989	Ghosts		When We Are Married
	The Full Treatment		Hay Fever		Fourplay
1969	Murder Mistaken		Billy Liar	2009	Sweet Revenge
	Beside The Seaside	1990	Abigail's Party		We'll Meet Again
	Blithe Spirit		No Sex Please, We're British		The Likes of Us
1970	Boeing, Boeing	1991	Murder At The Vicarage	2010	Bedroom Farce
	The Heiress		The Coarse Acting Show		Rebecca
1971	Present Laughter		Relatively Speaking		A Murder is Announced
	Dear Octopus	1992	Oliver!	2011	Laying the Ghost
1972	Say Who You Are		Barefoot In The Park		The Linden Tree
	The Same Sky		Key For Two		Ten Times Table
1973	The Chalk Garden		Seasons Greetings	2012	The Small Hours
	You Too Can Have A Body	1993	The Odd Couple		The Cemetery Club
1974	Not Now Darling		Lord Arthur Saville's Crime		Jack The Ripper - The Musical
	Hotel Paradise		Stepping Out	2013	California Suite
	Mixed Doubles	1994	One For The Road		
1975	Semi-Detached		Run For Your Wife		

Belmont Theatre

OSCAR WILDE'S

A Woman of No Importance

October 23-26
2013



PUMP HOUSE

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BOX OFFICE

07917 324179 or 0845 521 3453

www.belmonttheatre.co.uk

