

1955 "The White Sheep of the Family"

The Play



"The White Sheep of the Family", under the direction of **Mr. Leonard** (photo left), was undoubtedly a huge success. All the actors, from the smallest part to the largest, lived their roles. The scenery of the set, particularly the view from the window, is well worthy of mention: the scenes all proceeded smoothly and only two faults were noticed. Although the audience of Wednesday night were slow to appreciate some of the jokes, audiences of Thursday and Friday were more sympathetic. Finally, judging from a certain person's opinion, the play must have left some impression; "I can see that we shall have to watch our pockets the next time we visit the School".

Three conclusions may be drawn from the Staff Play: Mr. Taylor is highly domesticated - he proved it by washing up without one break throughout the Play period; Magazine reporters are regarded as the lowest of the low, if one can judge from the questions and remarks thrown in their direction; finally, not only humans seem to like plays. An owl hooted continuously during the greater part of the last Act, and it is to wondered whether it was giving the play its applause or giving it "the bird".



Photo contributed by Miss. Ward. Thank you.

L-R: Mr. Farrar (Sam Jackson), Miss Collins (Janet), Mr. Walker (The Vicar), Miss Kilner (Mrs. Winter), Mr. Hamilton (Mr. Winter), Miss Elliot (Pat), Mr. Owen (Peter), Miss Whitworth (Angela Preston), Mr. Bulley (Mr. Preston)

The Dress Rehearsal

What is this coming down the corridor, a member of the Queen's Gentlemen or a Diplomatic Courier? No, just Mr. Farrar hiding behind a glaringly loud tie, the ownership of which he vehemently denied - "Good Lord, No!" He comes swinging down, eyes twinkling, bowler hat at a jaunty angle: suddenly, he squeals "like a struck pig", his bowler wobbles precariously over his left ear contemplating the suicidal drop to the ground, then skids round his greased locks and perches on his up-lifted eye-brows. The reason was Mr. Walker. Moustache shorn, hair curling down his neck, and bow-legged in his tight trousers, he answers Walt's questioning eyes, - now careering round and round, now dashing away to hide - "I feel like a strangled duck in these darned things".

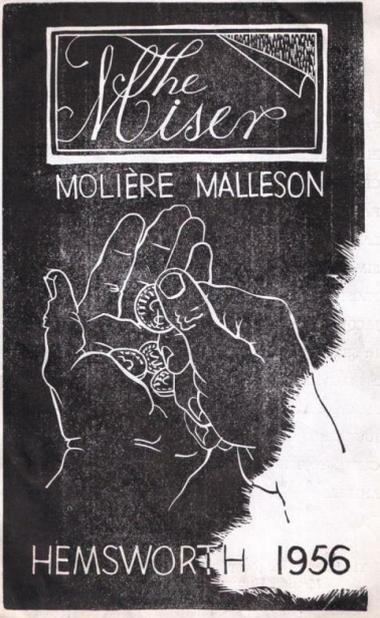
With lips tightly pinched, skin stretched taut, and fingers splayed, the actors go to work. Mouths twitch; nostrils contract and dilate; lips, once bloodless, flood crimson as fangs are bared; eyes now mere slits, now start from heads, bulging like over-full coal-sacks (i.e. eyes); not a pretty sight, but not as one would think, the after-effects of murrain or cholera, but just a group of Nature's experiments trying to better themselves, using greasepaint and powder. The effect upon Mr. Leonard was varied; at times, with hands clasped piously before him, he stepped slowly back three paces and gazed longingly and lovingly at his own handiwork; on other occasions, with shielding hands held up before his face, stunned and shocked, he stumbled away to avoid looking at the efforts of some of the actors and actresses.

Mr. Owen, bent, seeking in vain for a reflection which he considered did him justice, went in danger of being propelled head-first through the mirror every time the door, opened; whilst Mr. Bulley, towel over his shoulders and eyes red-rimmed, stood glaring, rather like the fighter Jeremy Todd, waiting to enter the fray. Miss Elliott continued casting cursory glances into her own private mirror - requisitioned from the Staff Room and adorned with the "fleur de lis" - and giving surreptitious tugs, up and down, this way and that, on her evening dress, all the while looking guiltily round at the rest of the cast.

1956 "The Miser"



The staff play this year was one of Moliere's best-known comedies. It was adapted, in translation, by Miles Malleson, and produced by **Mr. Owen** (photo left). The plot is concerned with the love affairs of Harpagon, the miser; Cleante, his son and Elise his daughter. Harpagon's sole occupation is looking after his money, which is eventually stolen by La Fleche, Cleante's servant. Mariane, with whom Cleante is in love, and Harpagon's steward, Valere, with whom Elise is in love, find that they are brother and sister, and also better off in material wealth, their father being Anselm, a rich local gentleman. The lovers marry; Harpagon now has no wish to prevent them. His own flirtation with Mariane is a thing of the past. The play opened with a short introduction of music of the period (or near it), which was received by the audience with apprehension, by the actors with prolonged anxiety, and by the producer with righteous pleasure.



The Staff is to be congratulated for giving three successful performances, especially since they had only a very short term in which to rehearse. They were also tragically hit by the death of Mr. Combs. Three weeks before the opening night, the producer's earnest plea to the non-acting staff was heard by one of its most recent members, Mr. Wharton. He took the part of Clerk to the Justice, thereby freeing Mr. Sale for the vacant part of Jacques. This meant the learning of new words, the learning of new moves and called for personal re-adjustment by the entire staff, though re-adjustment was refreshingly impossible to Mr. Wharton's meanderings on stage, so effectively unrehearsed were they. Mr. Bulley played his exceedingly heavy role with ever-increasing assurance; the faces new to the HGS boards, those of Miss Hampshire, Mr. Colley and Mr. Boyd we now know we want to see again, while "old-timers" Mrs Podmore (Miss Collins) and Miss Elliot, Messrs Stewart, Johnston, Hamilton and Farrar, wizard of the keyboard, gave excellent, dependable support. As always, we have to extend our thanks to many more staff and pupils headed perhaps by Mr Collins and his 4T manhandlers, who built the set; Miss Fleming the costumier; Miss Parkin who completed the painting of the set; Miss Ward and Joan Martin for their property control. The programme covers were designed by the late Mr. Combs. Thank you Mr. Owen.
Alec Wall, U6S

VALERE (steward to Harpagon)	E. C. COLLEY	ACT II	
ELISE (daughter of Harpagon)	D. E. ELLIOT	Scene 1.—The same. Afternoon.	
CLEANTE (son of Harpagon)	A. STEWART	Scene 2.—The same. Early evening.	
HARPAGON (the Miser)	J. A. BULLEY	
LA FLECHE (servant to Cleante)	R. S. JOHNSTON	PRODUCER	Mr. C. H. OWEN
SIMON (a money-lender)	W. FARRAR	STAGE MANAGER	Mr. P. F. COLLINS
FROSINE (a scheming woman)	A. I. COLLINS	ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	Mr. J. A. SWINBANK
JACQUES (a servant)	K. B. SALE	BUSINESS MANAGER	Mr. G. O. YOUNG
1st SERVANT	A. D. TAYLOR	DECOR	Miss J. E. PARKIN
2nd SERVANT	G. R. BURNETT	Assisted by	GOODLIFFE, EDWARDS
MARIANE	E. R. HAMPSHIRE	WARDROBE	Miss B. FLEMING
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE	R. W. HAMILTON	PROPERTIES	Miss K. WARD
CLERK TO THE JUSTICE	J. H. WHARTON	Assisted by	ANN COOKE, JOAN MARTIN
ANSELM	C. M. BOYD	LIGHTING	Mr. W. FARRAR
		Assisted by	LOCKETT
		MAKE-UP	Mr. W. J. LEONARD
			Mr. A. W. WALKER
		PROMPTERS	Miss M. SMITH
			Mr. L. N. COLLETTE
		STAGE STAFF	HARDY, OLIVER,
			MANSFIELD, VENTOM
		CALL-BOY	Mr. E. G. LOCK

The action of the play passes during one day in the house of Monsieur Harpagon in Paris, in the year 1668.

Programme Cover and Set designed by the late Mr. J. D. Combs

1958 "Hobson's Choice"



This year's Staff Play, a Lancashire comedy by Harold Brighouse produced by **Mr. Kennedy** (photo left), drew full houses on all three nights. The reaction of the audience left no doubt about its success. Much of this, inevitably, was due to lively and intelligent production and to the ability of the leading actors. A vigorous and polished performance was given by Mrs. Whittaker as Maggie, and a strongly dour Lancastrian representation by was given by Mr. Bulley. His character was of her father, the tyrannical and alcoholic 'Obson. The difficult role of the ingenious Willie Mossop was taken by Mr. Owen, whose coy awakening to the delights of kissing Maggie's sisters was equalled only by the comic pathos of his early relationships with his wife. No play, however, survives on the performance of its principles alone and this year they were strongly supported by other players. Maggie's vain and selfish sisters were played with fairy-tale venom by Miss Harrison and Miss Walker. Mrs. Sharpe was the representative of genteel patronage. Miss Hampshire, as the pathetic, jilted Ada Figgins, added competently to the Grimm realism of the plot. Mr. Farrar and Mr. Boyd, dandy suitors to the sisters, tripped with elegant embarrassment (which they clearly enjoyed) from one dilemma to another. Mr. Leonard, as Hobson's drinking crony did well to bring a "feed" part to life. Mr. Wharton gave a good, rheumatically character performance as Tubby, Hobson's aged employee. The Headmaster, with customary energy enlivened the last act with a forthright performance of the Scots doctor at loggerheads with Hobson. The costumes were excellent, the sets ingenious, the make-up convincing (one will not easily forget the Headmaster's truly patriarchal whiskers). To all those who contributed in any way to the production, we offer our sincere thanks for their generosity and hard work.



Winnie Taylor L6A

1959 "Shadow and Substance"



After last year's memorable comedy, the staff turned this year to more serious matters with Mr. Kennedy's (photo left) production of "Shadow and Substance" - a tragedy by Paul Vincent Carroll. Set in Ireland, the play revolved around Canon Skerritt and the anachronistic world of church infallibility and fawning parishioners which he had built around himself at Ardmahone - a world destined to be shattered by the death of his maid, Brigid. Though never fully understanding her, the Canon had looked upon Brigid almost as a daughter, and it is ironical that she is killed finally by stones intended for her only loyal, friend, Dermot Francis O'Flingsley, whom the Canon had previously dismissed from his position of local schoolmaster, after the publication of his book which supposedly decried the Catholic Church.

This was not the kind of theme likely to appeal to the younger members of the audience and it presented the cast and producer with the difficult task of holding the audience's attention, especially at the beginning of the play.

The first scene was mainly explanatory, and consequently appeared a little disjointed as the various parts of the plot emerged from the conversation - namely, the maid's affinity to St. Brigid, her affection for the schoolmaster, public hostility towards a certain book and the strictness of the Canon. After the initial suspense felt by the audience and sustained by the assured acting, the story appeared to progress slowly, but as its strands were woven into a unity to provide the dramatic ending, so the audience was increasingly 'held'. Indeed, it is reported that the feelings expressed on the stage were so vividly portrayed that certain members of the audience were moved to tears.

It is therefore to the credit of the producer and his team that the difficulties of presenting a tragic theme were overcome so impressively. Mr. Bulley, as the obstinate, scheming and old-fashioned Canon, fulfilled all that the introductory scene led us to expect from the stern churchman. His first appearance matched perfectly the powerful image the audience had of him in their minds. He was the dominating figure on the stage, whenever present. When necessary, his mood and feeling could be altered by a change of tone - he showed a convincing sympathy towards Brigid in spite of his stern inflexibility in matters of Church politics. Throughout, he showed a command of his part. The naive and innocent maid - the Irish 'Joan of Arc' - was interpreted by Mrs. Whittaker with moving sincerity, and the effectiveness of the conclusion depended a great deal on her success in winning the sympathy of the audience. Only O'Flingsley understood her - a fact which Mr. Reed communicated clearly. He portrayed the educated rebel with the intelligence and self-confidence which such a role demanded, aided by an inflection of voice which underlined equally his compassion for Brigid and his bluntness towards the Canon.

The Schoolmaster was in a better position to defy Canon Skerritt than were Fathers Corr and Kirwan who, as representatives of the modern approach to religion, often found themselves clashing with the Canon's love of tradition. But their rebellion was an inward thing. Mr. Boyd as Father Kirwan and, particularly, Mr. Crompton as Father Corr, were able to disclose their simmering tempers and pent-up emotions to the audience by vivid intonations and gestures of exasperation. The two were evenly balanced. The bluntness of O'Flingsley also provided alleviation from the cowering attitudes of the parishioners, as represented by Jemima Cooney, a typical spinster, realistically portrayed by Miss Harrison, and her obsequious nephew, Francis Ignatius O'Connor, whose weak-will and hesitancy were well brought out by Mr. Owen, helped by a most becoming hair style. These were adequately supported by Miss Walker as Thomasine Concannon, the Canon's step-niece, and comic relief was ably supplied by the Headmaster and Mr. Wharton as the Mullahone brothers who were members of the petition directed against O'Flingsley's book. Mr. Kennedy is to be congratulated on his casting, his success in perfecting the Irish accents of the staff (though a slight Yorkshire twang was apparent in one case) and in helping the actors to live their parts with sincerity and humour.

Finally, we must not forget the work of those behind the scenes - Mr. Powell's efficiency as Stage Manager, Mr. Burnell's convincing decor, Mr. Farrar's arrangement of the lighting, and the work of Mr. Twigg and Mr. Leonard in connection with Properties and Make-up respectively. The setting was simple but effective. The position of the furniture at all times gave the Canon pride of place. The decoration of the Canon's room was appropriate and helped to emphasise the picture of the Sacred Heart which proved to be the subject of difference between the members of the household. The white curtains and white dress (of which Mrs. Bradshaw would have been proud) seemed to bring out Brigid's purity and closeness to Heaven.



Bernard Connolly, U6A (Talbot)