

Newsletter July 2026



Eeeeeek! What have I done!

Sue Shaw after many years producing our informative, amusing, light-hearted and interesting newsletter has passed compiling the Newsletter over to me, Sylvia Wakeham. As one of the regular communication links with our members it seemed sensible for the Membership Secretary to put together and distribute our Newsletter. A big thank you to Sue for all the time and commitment she has put into the many editions over the years.

Succession Planning

Welcome to our new 'Assistant Stage Manager'. Peter James has been shadowing Hugh, which is never an easy task. He has been wood working under Hugh's supervision and already has produced four flats for 'Rumours', our next production in October (see below for more details). Well done Peter! Keep up the good work, we are all looking forward to seeing the final set.



If you'd like to be involved with the Bampton Players but don't think acting is for you there are plenty of opportunities to hone or exploit your skills in the many and varied activities which make a production.

If you'd like to learn more please contact Avril: avril.saxby@gmail.com

Caption Competition

Doesn't Peter's photo lend itself to a 'Caption Competition? Amusing, short, kind, repeatable suggestions to my inbox sfwakeham@aol.com and we will include the best ones in the next newsletter.

Players 50th Anniversary Celebration



1976 to 2026

For fifty fun years Bampton Players have been entertaining the people of Bampton, Devon and the surrounding communities in Devon and Somerset.

We rehearse and perform in private houses, pubs, gardens and the former Territorial Army Hall which is now the Riverside Hall and our main indoor venue. We have fundraised in the past for our portable outdoor and indoor stages.

Our modern archives go back reliably to 2005 since when we have performed three or four productions annually. During COVID times we organised a play writing competition and afterwards presented the two best entries the 'The Ghosts of Martha Rudd' as a straight play and 'Trouble on Olympus' as a supper theatre. Followed last year with 'The Mysterious Mr. M' which also emerged from that competition.

Bampton was awarded a Royal Charter in 1258 and now holds a Charter Fair annually on the last Thursday in October. The Players perform a Mummers Play at venues round the town.

We had a 'players plus significant others' celebratory with over forty 'players' enjoying a Fizzy Cream Tea; well, we are in Devon! This included a spoof presentation of appropriately designed awards for various achievements. Thanks go to the organisers, the maker of the awards but most importantly to the wonderful support of all who came along and those who couldn't but sent congratulations.

We are looking ahead to the next ten years and another significant anniversary.

(This is an extract from an article for the NODA Newsletter by Wendy Boothroyd with a few amendments for our newsletter. Ed)

And another reason for celebration.....

Local Playwright Strikes Gold at NODA Gala



The spotlight shone brightly on our very own Sylvia Wakeham at the annual National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA) Southwest Gala Night in May. In a room filled with the region's finest theatrical talent, Sylvia secured one of the evening's awards: the **Certificate of Excellence - for Recognition of Original Writing of New Dramatic Work**. This was for "The Mysterious Mr M" which the Bampton Players performed in May 2025.

The award recognises the outstanding creativity, wit, and structural excellence of the company's homegrown production. For a community theatre group, staging brand-new writing can be a gamble, but NODA's recognition cements what local audiences already knew—Bampton is harbouring some fabulous writing talent.

The announcement was a highlight of the glamorous gala evening, met with a resounding cheer from the local contingency in attendance. However, in true dramatic fashion, there was a twist. The winning playwright was unable to attend the ceremony as she was away on holiday, meaning the award had to be accepted in their absence by a fellow member of the Bampton Players Committee.

(an extract from a Signpost article by Sue Shaw)

("I was really bowled over to be given this award and thrilled to take it for the team! If it hadn't been for COVID, if it hadn't been for the Players "Write a Play" competition and if it hadn't been for all the support and guidance then the script would still just be a file on the laptop. Huge thanks to everyone who made the play happen and especially to the wonderful actors who really brought my characters to life and more!" Sylvia/Ed!)

FUTURE PRODUCTIONS

"Rumours" by Neil Simon

Production dates 22, 23 and 24 October

Bampton Players Present

RUMOURS

by
Neil Simon



Riverside Hall

22 - 24 Oct 2026

Thurs, Fri & Sat evenings 7:30

£10 Tickets available from Bampton Fresh

The casting is complete; the actors are already getting on with running their lines as they have to be 'off the book' by the first rehearsal in September – no pressure then! Tickets will be on sale from Bampton Fresh after 12 September.

Mummers Play

You probably know Bampton Fair will be on Thursday 29 October 2026. During the day, the Mummers will be performing a new script created by Peter and Wendy (no, not the ones from Peter Pan) who will also be guiding the Troupe. There will be more information and call for players coming soon!

“A Doll from the Past”

A 2027 date for the diary! “A Doll from the Past” by Sylvia Wakeham will be staged on the 18, 19 and 20 March 2027. There are three possible read through and casting dates which are on the evenings of 18 November, 2 December and 6 December. With a cast of 13 - 6 male and 7 female characters – there is plenty of opportunity for parts. Rehearsals will start in January.

FUTURE EVENTS

Last call for the Summer BBQ 25 July at Sherwood



Are you coming? Are you bringing sweet or savoury?

“TELL AVRIL BY FRIDAY 17 JULY”

The Summer BBQ will be held on Saturday July 25th at midday at Sherwood. If you are planning to attend you need to let Avril know no later than FRIDAY 17 JULY: avril.saxby@gmail.com and let her know whether you will be bringing along something sweet or savoury. Don't forget to bring along some drink, you don't need to bring a chair as there are plenty and there will be SHADE!

Agatha Christie Commemoration – Friday 21 August

This is a FREE event as a ‘thank you’ to past and present players and to all who have supported our efforts for the past 50 years

On Friday 21st August, 7:00pm for 7:30pm, at Riverside Hall we will be holding an event to commemorate 50 years since the death of one of our most prolific crime writers, Dame Agatha Christie. Please pick up free tickets from Bampton Fresh from 21 July, (We need to know numbers wishing to attend so you will need to have a ticket!)

An interesting fact: Do you know the pen name she used to write six romance novels?



The Unexpected Guest

A Screening of the 2013 Bampton Players production
of the Agatha Christie Play

Friday 21st August 7:00pm for 7:30pm,
Riverside Hall, Bampton

Free admission; tickets available from Bampton Fresh

Autumn Quiz tickets on sale after 12 September



Bampton Players QUIZ NIGHT

Friday 30th October

Riverside Hall, Bampton

6:30 start

Table of 6 for £42

Bring your own drinks
and nibbles



Tickets from Bampton Fresh



Players Christmas Party



As I write this during the heatwave it seems like December can't come too soon!

Christmas Party

Wednesday 9th December at Riverside Hall,
Jason Toft will be entertaining us, and
Julia Meyer will be catering.

Note the date and more details will follow after the summer

And finally....

Agatha Christie used the pen name Mary Westmacott to write six romance novels and kept it secret for 20 years!



Phew!