

PAUL SCOFIELD

1922 – 2008

The members and friends of the Victory Players were very sad to hear of the death of Paul Scofield. The entire company sends its condolences to his wife Joy and the other members of his family.

One of the first acts of the newly formed Victory Players was to ask Paul to be our Honorary President. We were delighted when he agreed, and he and Joy regularly attended our shows until ill health sadly intervened.

In 2004 Paul agreed to contribute to *Oh What a Lovely War*, the production that led to the formation of the Victory Players, by recording two of the famous poems of the First World War which were used to open and close the show. His recording of one of these poems, *Futility* by Wilfred Owen, will be played at the opening of tonight's performance as our tribute to Paul.

I well remember going to Paul's house one Sunday morning with the director, Jim Knight, and my sister who had managed to borrow the appropriate broadcast quality recording equipment from the BBC. First we sat in his study and enjoyed the freshly brewed coffee and homemade flapjacks that Joy had prepared.

Paul then recorded the poems and having done so turned to Jim and enquired, "Was that alright or is there any different emphasis that you would like me to put on it?"

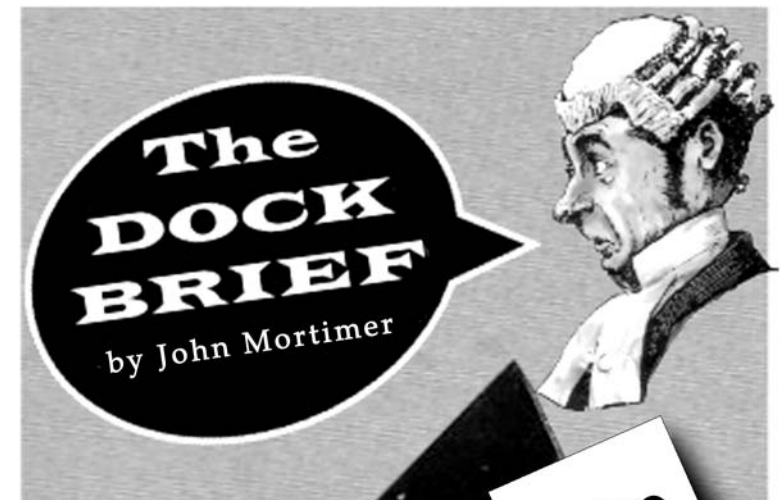
Jim was somewhat lost for words but, as we left the house, he observed, "If there is a nicer man, I haven't met him yet."

I can think of no better epitaph to a great actor and a man of Balcombe.

Rodney Saunders



P R E S E N T S



30 APRIL – 3 MAY 2008

THE VICTORY HALL · BALCOMBE

THE DOCK BRIEF

by John Mortimer

The dock brief was a system which, from the early 19th century until the middle of the 20th century when legal aid was introduced, allowed people accused of a felony (a serious crime) who were not already represented by a barrister to choose a barrister to represent them from those who happened to be sitting in court as the case began. In the 1950s, when John Mortimer's play is set, young barristers who wished to practise at the criminal bar still used this system to launch their careers; an efficient and impassioned plea on behalf of their client could catch the eye of solicitors sitting in court for other cases so leading to further briefs.

In this play, John Mortimer (creator of Rumpole of the Bailey) puts before us a situation in which the barrister appointed is, though often impassioned, neither young nor efficient. Wilfred Morgenhall (Douglas Wragg), the barrister appointed by the court to defend Mr Fowle (Chris Walker) is zealous but also desperate and, though knowledgeable, incompetent; he was called to the bar a long time ago but, since being called, has had no actual courtroom experience. Fowle, who is accused of murdering his excessively jovial wife, is a lugubrious and uneducated man. However he turns out to be also both kind and, at least in terms of his understanding of the needs of his fellow man – Morgenhall – intelligent.

The play is set in Fowle's holding cell below the courtroom in which his case is to be tried.

Jim Knight



Following a hugely successful production of *Oh What a Lovely War* in April 2004, a public meeting was held at which it was agreed to form a drama group in Balcombe. The group was named The Victory Players after The Victory Hall in which it performs. The objective of the group is to perform drama in Balcombe, and to offer its members a range of drama related activities, including theatre visits, play readings and workshops.

The Victory Players is always very happy to receive new members and friends. As well as thespians the group is dependant upon people with a wide range of talents in order to thrive, including directors, backstage crew, graphic designers, producers, prompts, set-painters, make-up artists etc. Annual subscription is £10 for Members and £7.50 for Friends. Membership is open to all Balcombe residents, and to non-residents when sponsored by a Balcombe resident member. Victory Players membership forms are available both from our website and Threads. Please contact Robin Williamson on 01444 811519 for further information.

More information about The Victory Players, including photos, news and reviews, is available on our website: www.victoryplayers.co.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 6 May: A play reading of *Pardon Me Prime Minister*, to be led by Douglas Wragg, in the Social Club at 7:30 pm. All are welcome.

Tuesday 17 June: AGM in the Social Club at 7:30 pm.

WAITING ROOM

by Michael Pertwee

Written in 1958 this play is set in the ladies waiting room of a British Rail station. The characters (all women) are, I believe, all recognisable versions of those of us who were a part of British society at that time. From Vera (Nancy Towers), an original 'bag lady' who is as sharp as she is scruffy, to Miss Wells (Val Horton), a British rail official, Mrs Flack (Shirley Michell), the cleaner, Mrs McTavish (Isabel Gordon), the tea lady and Miss Gossage (Helen Sweetman), a 'doggy' lady who seems only to use the waiting room to consume her breakfast whilst remaining oblivious to everything going on around her.

For most of the action the narrative, such as it is, centres on Jane (Natalie Wheaton) who it appears is waiting to meet a man she has met recently who is much older than her – and married. Supported by the confident and well-meant advice of Mrs Ogilvy (Nicola Preston-Bell) Jane resists the demands of her mother (Jacqueline Wigginton) to give up her infatuation and return home – to the consternation of Miss March (Jane Horrell), a spinster lady who is appalled by the advice offered by Mrs Ogilvy. However there is just a little more to it than that...

Jim Knight

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

Mrs Flack SHIRLEY MICHELL
The cleaner

Vera NANCY TOWERS
The 'bag-lady'

Miss March JANE HORRELL
A kind if waspish spinster

Miss Wells VAL HORTON
A British Rail official

Jane Smith NATALIE WHEATON
A pretty young woman

Mrs Ogilvy NICOLA PRESTON-BELL
A smart and confident woman

Mrs McTavish ISABEL GORDON
The tea lady

Miss Gossage HELEN SWEETMAN
A tweedy, 'doggy' lady

Mrs Smith JACQUELINE WIGGINTON
Jane's mother

This amateur production is presented by arrangement
with Josef Weinberger Ltd.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director Jim Knight
Stage Manager Martin Allitt
Lighting Keith Major, Brian Couchy
Set Richard Harris, John Randall,
Ted Randall
Props Sue Etheridge, Isabel Gordon
Wardrobe Manuela Warburton, Jane Horrell
Make-up Penny Jennings
Prompt Pat Rayner
Front of House Manager Robin Williamson
Deputy FOH Manager Norman Howard
Front of House Team Sue Etheridge, Mike Rayner,
Barbara Saunders,
Priscilla Williamson
Programme Robert Saunders
Publicity & Poster Design Greg Field
Box Office Isabel Gordon
Producer Rodney Saunders

SCENARIO

Scene 1

Preparing for Fowle's trial for murder.

Scene 2

The day after the trial.

There will be a few minutes break between the two scenes.

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

Fowle (The prisoner) CHRIS WALKER

Morgenhall (The barrister) DOUGLAS WRAGG

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Samuel French Ltd.

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERVAL OF THIRTY MINUTES.

Please take your interval drinks form to the Club bar ten minutes before curtain-up. At the start of the interval one person from each table is asked to collect all the drinks for the table.