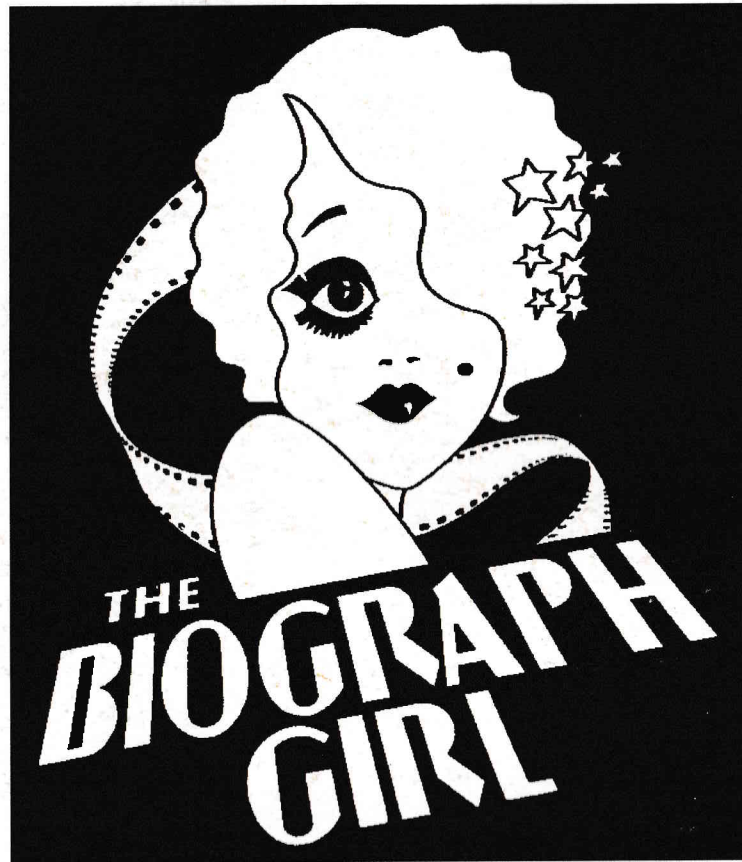


the mitre players

Present their Autumn Musical



By David Heneker and Warner Brown
Directed By Ian Brown Musical Director: Hannah Widger
At The Mitre Theatre, Trinity School, Shirley Park, Croydon.
Thursday 26th to Saturday 28th October
Tickets £5.00 & £6.00
Box Office: Julia Gibbs. 020 8686 2693

The Minack Theatre on the cliffs at Porthcurno

The Mitre Players

present

The Country Wife

A Bawdy Romp by William Wycherley

Directed by Martin Tyrrell



*Monday to Friday
31 July - 4 August 2000*



The Minack Theatre.

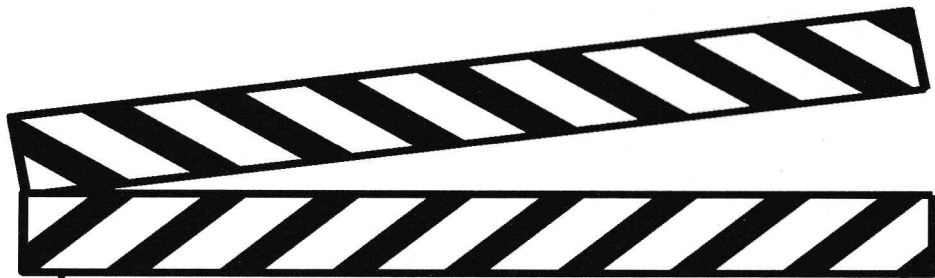
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In the interest of safety and comfort, members of the audience are requested:-

Not to walk on the stage at any time and to keep to the paths and steps when in the Theatre.

Not to smoke at any time in the areas where the audience is seated.

To place all litter and especially cigarette ends in the bins provided.



Next Week at the Minack
The Tavistock Repertory Company
presents
Mack and Mabel

A musical by Michael Stewart and Jerry Herman loosely based on the love story of Mack Sennett, creator of some of the greatest silent comedies, and his leading lady, Mabel Norman.

Evenings: August 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, at 8.00
Matinees: August 9, 11 at 2.00.



Chairman's Letter

The Mitre Players is the Dramatic section of the O.M.W.A, the Old Boys' Association of Trinity School of John Whitgift, Croydon, Surrey and was established in 1973. (Several of the founder members are touring with us this year). We perform 3 to 4 productions each year and have a strong dramatic tradition, having won the South East England Festival of Drama seven times.

Each summer, since 1987, we have presented a show in the South West of England and this is the fourth time we have had the opportunity to perform at the picturesque Minack Theatre. Our previous productions, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Man of La Mancha* and *Quasimodo* were each taxing in their own way but *The Country Wife* is possibly our most ambitious to date. Open-air shows hold particular memories for us as our last visit here saw gale-force winds and one power cut during our run!

We welcome back Martin Tyrrell as Director. His last production for us was *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which we presented at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, London in 1996. During recent

years The Mitre Players and in particular Martin Tyrrell had strong links with The Croydon Historionic Society, to whom we are indebted for their generous financial support, allowing us to stage this show more lavishly than we would otherwise have been able to.

Preparations have started for our next production, *The Biograph Girl*, a musical which traces the development of silent movies and we are also looking forward to our Christmas Pantomime, which, as is tradition with the Mitres, is written by one of our members.

I wish you all an enjoyable (and dry) evening or afternoon and thank you for your support.

Andy Thompson,

Chairman, The Mitre Players



William Wycherley

William Wycherley, the eldest son of a country gentleman, was born in 1640, near Shrewsbury. He was educated at home by his intelligent but rather stern and imposing father before being sent to France at the age of 15 to continue his studies. Whilst there, he became a Catholic and returned to England in 1660, the year in which Charles II became monarch. He took up a place at Queen's College, Oxford, but as his temperament was clearly unsuited to university life, he lasted less than a year before commencing legal studies at the Inner Temple in London.

In the capital, Wycherley found his cultural and spiritual home. As a young student, he began to experience and greatly enjoy the life of a fashionable and carefree 'man about town'. He was turning into just the sort of 'wit' he was later to present so successfully on stage. At about this time, too, he began his career writing poetry, and eventually his first play, *Love in a Wood*, produced in 1671. This was an immediate success, a fact which established him socially as well as artistically. He became a favourite



amongst the court circle and he enjoyed a well-publicised affair with a courtier, Barbara Palmer, later to become mother of three of the king's sons. Another former member of the court circle, Major Pack, noted in his memoirs in 1728:

As King Charles was extremely fond of him [Wycherley] upon account of his Wit, some of the royal mistresses set no less value upon Those Parts in him, of which they were more proper judges.

Wycherley's writing career was dazzling but brief. He wrote only three more plays, *The Gentleman Dancing Master* (1672), *The Country Wife* (1675) and *The Plain Dealer* (1676).

With his reputation at its height, Wycherley fell dangerously ill. He was visited in person by the king, who financed a recuperative holiday to France, where he stayed until 1679. By the time of his return, his creative gifts had forsaken him and he took employment as personal tutor to one of the king's illegitimate sons. The king's patronage was relatively short-lived, however, as he disapproved of the fact

that Wycherley had secretly married the widow of the Earl of Drogheda. Mrs. Inchbald, a former actress, writing in 1706, observes a particular irony in Wycherley's declining fortunes;

As the catastrophe of all comedies is marriage, marriage was likewise the catastrophe of all poor Wycherley's own schemes; for he married, and the rest of his life was a deep tragedy.

Although this may be an over-simplification of events, happiness and stability in Wycherley's life were elusive. Legal disputes over his dead wife's estate led him to imprisonment for debt, and even after his release he was in severe financial straits and his health also deteriorated.

In 1697, Wycherley inherited his father's estate and was able to return to London after an extensive period of enforced absence. For over fifteen years he became something of a literary legend, advising a new generation of writers such as the poet Alexander Pope. He died in 1715, and was buried in St Paul's Church, Covent Garden.

From the Cambridge University Press edition of *The Country Wife*, edited by Ken Bush

THE COUNTRY WIFE: A Brief Synopsis

1. Mr Horner, Restoration love-machine, lets it be spread abroad that he is now impotent.
2. By this tactic, he hopes to hoodwink jealous husbands into allowing him free access to their wives.
3. Sure enough, it isn't long before pompous Sir Jasper Fidget, stupid enough to believe the impotence story, invites Horner to become his wife's companion...
4. But Lady Fidget isn't enough for Horner. He is also keen to seduce rustic

Margery, the new 'country wife' of very jealous Mr Pinchwife. Margery isn't averse to the idea.

5. And nor are other fine ladies, including Dainty Fidget and Mrs Squeamish.
6. Meanwhile, Horner's young friend, Mr Harcourt, falls in love with Alithea, virtuous sister of Mr Pinchwife. The trouble is, she's engaged to be married to Sparkish, absurd fop and would-be wit.

Dramatis Personae

Mr Horner Alan Clarke
Quack Geoffrey Saw
Horner's Servant Paul Grace
Sir Jasper Fidget Ian Brown
My Lady Fidget Julia Gibbs
Mrs Dainty Fidget Lindsay Szekeres
Mr Harcourt Tom Szekeres
Mr Dorilant Alex Greenslade
Mr Sparkish Paul Smith
Mr Pinchwife Mick Scott
Mrs Margery Pinchwife Julia Ascott
Mrs Alithea Cathy Newitt
Mrs Squeamish Diana Dobson
Lucy Claire Szekeres
Old Lady Squeamish Margaret Stockwell
A Parson John Bartle

Servants, London Tradespersons, The Publick,
John Bartle, Alan Collins, Enid Ghent, Mary Holton,
Dave Richards, Jan Richards, Graham Read, Lucy Thompson.

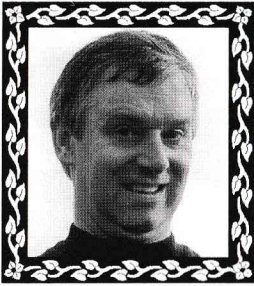
The action takes place in London in 1675, in the lodgings of Mr. Horner and Mr. Pinchwife, and in various public places.

There will be one interval of 20 minutes.

Production Team

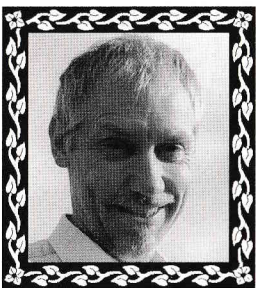
Director Martin Tyrrell
Designer Jill Wilson
Composers Tanera Dawkins and Mark Fleming
Stage Manager Gillian Bartle
Lighting Designer Alan Bishop
Sound James McLeod
Wardrobe Sheila Garnett
Props Jane Cruickshank, Jan Richards
Technical & Stage Crew Sue Carter, Alan Collins, Barry Ghent,
Julian Parsons, Dave Richards, Anna Warnock
Effects Andy Thompson
Choreographer Mick Scott
Poster Design Diana Dobson
Programme Alan Bishop, Anna and Colin Warnock
Box Office Julia Ascott and Peter Stockwell
Front of House Martin Garnett and Friends of the Mitre Players
Publicity Lesley Bates
Photography Marcus Ascott
Production Managers Martin Garnett and Anna Warnock

The Mitre Players wish to thank:
Philip Jackson, Roger Salter and all the staff at the Minack Theatre.
Michael Small and the Committee of the Croydon Histronic Society.
Ian and Claire Sutton of "The Vineries".
Curt Peirson and Roger Turner, Harrow School.



MARTIN TYRRELL (Director) helped to found The Mitre Players in 1973. He directed and acted in their first production, *Charley's Aunt*, and has continued to act, write and direct occasionally for them since then. Some of his previous productions for the Company have been *Abelard and Heloise*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Hotel Paradiso*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and at Shakespeare's Globe, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He has written book and lyrics for many of their home-made pantomimes and musicals. He has directed extensively for other companies in South-East England, concentrating on opera, Shakespeare and musicals. A teacher by profession, he is Head of Drama at Harrow School, and, since 1994, has been Director of the School's new Ryan Theatre.

JULIA ASCOTT (Mrs Margery Pinchwife) has been involved in approximately 70 Mitre Productions since joining in 1974. She has played a variety of different roles ranging from Marguerite Blakeney in *The Scarlet Pimpernel* to Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Globe. Minack regulars may remember her as the Wicked Witch of the West in *The Wizard of Oz* and Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*. She has also directed, choreographed and served on the committee for a number of years.



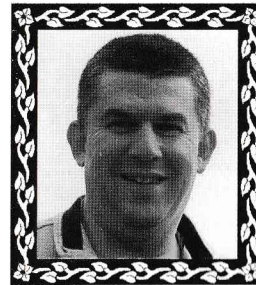
ALAN CLARKE (Mr Horner) has appeared with us only twice before – in 1984 as Martin in *Hotel Paradiso* and as Oberon in our 1996 Globe Theatre production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, both directed by Martin Tyrrell. He has, though, performed extensively with other Companies in the Croydon area. Alan is a self-employed consultant in the entertainment industry and is currently involved in a group teaching Shakespeare to children in schools.

JULIA GIBBS (My Lady Fidget) is a Business Analyst for a large insurance company. Although Julia joined the Mitre Players in 1978, her only previous Minack appearance has been for the Miller Centre Players as Regan in *King Lear*. Favourite roles include Brooke in *Noises Off*, Mrs Waters in *Tom Jones* and Maggie in *Outside Edge*. Her home was recently featured on BBC's *Home Stories*, the consequence of which was a lucrative move.



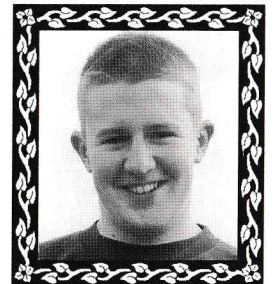
CATHY NEWITT (Mrs Alithea) joined the Mitre Players in 1990 for our Falmouth tour of *Godspell*, but is making her Minack debut. Favourite roles include Roxie Hart in *Chicago*, a cagelle in *La Cage Aux Folles* and Daisy in *Daisy Pulls it Off*. In the real world, she works as a P.A. Cathy enjoys cycling and is engaged to be married – let's hope it's not an uphill struggle!

MICK SCOTT (Mr Pinchwife) once taught Rolf Harris to Morris dance. Although *The Country Wife* marks Mick's debut for The Mitre Players he has previously directed and performed in several other productions at the Minack. His favourite roles include Bill Sykes in *Oliver* and The Ringmaster in *Barnum*. Mick is a Local Studies Librarian and enjoys clowning and juggling in his spare time!



PAUL SMITH (Mr Sparkish) has been a Mitre stalwart since 1984 though his only Minack appearance was a small part in *Man of La Mancha*. Past roles include Koko in *The Mikado*, Eric 'Rubber Legs' Divine in *A Slice of Saturday Night*, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the title role in *Nicholas Nickleby*. Among his other hobbies are cinema, cricket and laughing. Paul is a training manager for Marie Curie Cancer care.

TOM SZEKERES (Harcourt) is currently a student. Although this is his first appearance with The Mitre Players, Tom has already played parts such as Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Miss Prism (!) in *The Importance of Being Ernest*. Apart from drama, his major interests are music production and DJ-ing.



JOHN BARLLE (Parson) is famous for his characterisations of doctors, policemen and vicars (this appearance being no exception) and being able to raise his eyebrows and wiggle his ears at the same time. Since joining The Mitre Players in 1976 he has done little else...

IAN BROWN (Sir Jasper Fidget) was employed many years ago as a euphonium-playing cat in the Rupert the Bear show and has subsequently played Oswald in *King Lear* at the Minack. After 18 years with The Mitre Players Ian finally succumbed to women's clothing and appeared in the title role of *The Millennium Dame*, our most recent pantomime. Prospective parents please note: Ian is Principal of a notable children's Drama Academy.

DIANA DOBSON (Mrs Squeamish) played Kitty Verdun in our very first production (*Charley's Aunt*) in 1973 and among favourite roles since then have been Catherine in *The Winslow Boy*, Sister Godric in *Abelard & Heloise*, the Witch in *Jack & the Beanstalk*, and the title role in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Diana also enjoys gardening, D.I.Y. and cookery, and works as a Display Sales Executive for an Accountancy magazine.

PAUL GRACE (Homer's Servant) is proud (and relieved) to be a very recent Old Boy of Trinity School, Croydon though he has already performed in two of our productions as Paul/Terry in *A Slice of Saturday Night* and as a clown in *Turnabout!* Apart from drama, he also enjoys gymnastics and rock climbing, so he should feel at home at the Minack! Paul is starting a 'gap' year before starting university at Ripon & York St. John studying Theatre and TV studies.

ALEX GREENSLADE (Mr Dorilant) joined the Mitre Players in 1985, having attended Trinity School. He has been in all three of our previous Minack productions and enjoys any role which isn't German (he is often cast as a German as he speaks the language fluently!) He also likes travel (particularly to Germany), sport of all kinds and slimming! In Croydon, Alex is a Market Researcher and budding entrepreneur.

MARY HOLTON has appeared in most of our productions since 1981, including our three previous Minack shows. Notable parts include Mustardseed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Dregs of Paris in *Quasimodo* and a gorilla in *Cinderella*. Her other hobbies are cross-stitch, gardening and reading. She works back in Surrey as an admin clerk.

GRAHAM 'SNEAKY' READ has been involved in two previous Minack productions but hasn't before made it onto the stage. Back in Croydon, though, he has performed in many of our shows since 1987 including Gary in *A Slice of Saturday Night* and Dame in our pantomime *Ready Steady Goose*. Graham is a Primary School teacher and leaves us after this production to teach in Saudi Arabia. We wish him luck.

GEOFFREY SAW (Quack) agreed to join the Mitre Players one drunken moment back in 1973 and was an Ugly Sister in our first pantomime. He attributes his acting experience to appearances in rugby teams ("what, ME, ref?") and apart from acting and music, his main hobby is complaining – about canned music in pubs, baseball caps and women wearing jeans! Geoff is a retired engineer.

MARGARET STOCKWELL (Old Lady Squeamish) is delighted to be making her fourth appearance at the Minack. She joined in 1982 and is the only cast member to have performed in all 14 of our touring shows. Previous roles include Mrs. Kenwigs in *Nicholas Nickleby* and Lady Brockfurst in last year's *The Boy Friend*. Back home, she works as a secretary, along with husband, Pete.

CLAIRE SZEKERES (Lucy) still attends school and is making her Mitre Players debut in *The Country Wife*. Previously she has played Ursula in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Elsie in *My Boy Jack* at Hampstead Theatre, Verruca Salt in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and the title role in *Alice in Wonderland*. She enjoys reading, shopping and going to the theatre and cinema.

LINDSAY SZEKERES (Mrs Dainty Fidget) is making her first appearance for the Mitre Players, along with her son and daughter (see elsewhere) – indeed, this is her first play for 18 years. She says her main hobby is being a taxi service for Tom and Claire. Lindsay teaches English as a foreign language, though presumably 21st rather than 17th Century English....

TANERA DAWKINS and MARK FLEMING (Composers) are married - they met in 1984. Mark went to Trinity School and Tanera did not. Tanera went to Oxford University and Mark did not. They both were postgraduates at the Royal College of Music. Tanera has appeared on Blue Peter; Mark has appeared on Richard & Judy. Mark sings in the vocal group Cantabile; Tanera plays the cello lots, and has arranged & played on albums by Squeeze, Lamb and The Levellers. Tanera takes her composing seriously and concentrates on writing for film & TV; Mark has mainly written music for shows involving Martin Tyrrell. They share their lives with 2 cats, 3 'cellos, 2 pianos, a keyboard, a computer, an accordion, a violin, a guitar and an ud [called Robin].

JILL WILSON (Designer) has been involved with the Mitre Players for nearly twenty years and has worked on a huge range of shows from small scale plays to full-blown musicals. However, in recent years she has specialised in designing sets for any Minack society which will have her (any excuse for a Cornwall 'fix'!), and has already designed the sets for *Carmen* and the *London Cuckolds* this season. Previous massive erections for the Mitre Players have included a Spanish jail for *Man of La Mancha* and a re-creation of *Notre Dame* for *Quasimodo*.

