

FREE CHAMPAGNE COMPETITION!

**A DECADE OF PLAYS
At Mottisfont Abbey**

By The Maskers Theatre Company

The first play that we staged at the Abbey in the summer of 1982 was Robert Bolt's "A Man For All Seasons". Prior to tonight's performance we have re-created a character from each of the ten plays since that year - including tonight's - who will be walking around the grounds. Each bears a number. All you have to do is to write that number against the play you think they come from. Hand in your free entry to an usher before the start of the performance; there will be a draw in the interval.

Character Number

A Man For All Seasons

Tom Jones

She Stoops To Conquer

Ring Around The Moon

Cyrano de Bergerac

The Beaux Stratagem

The Rover

Much Ado About Nothing

A Penny for a Song

The Recruiting Officer

Your Name : _____

THE RECRUITING OFFICER



**THE MASKERS THEATRE COMPANY
IN THE OPEN AIR AT
MOTTISFONT ABBEY**

MOTTISFONT ABBEY - Some Notes On What You Can See From Where You Are Sitting.

THE SOUTH FRONT : It is difficult to imagine as you look at this imposing early 18th century mansion, but you are in fact sitting within the confines of the original 12th and 13th century cloister, the remains of which you can see over to your right as fragments of carved stone under the roses; and to your left under the ballustrade where the doorway leads to the 13th century cellarium where refreshments are served for the show. The heart of this magnificent building is the Priory founded in 1201 and consecrated in 1224; the main knave stretched from left to right across the full width of the building you now see and indeed beyond. The Priory continued to prosper until the middle of the 14th century. Then suddenly came the Black Death, which carried away two of the Priors and so seriously impoverished the Priory that it never really recovered. The monastic revenues continued to reduce until finally the reformation intervened and in 1536 the Priory was suppressed. Henry VIII subsequently struck a bargain with the Lord Chamberlain, William Lord Sandys, by which he exchanged Mottisfont for no less than the two villages of Chelsea and Paddington. Sandys then undertook the conversion of the Priory into a fine Tudor mansion - dividing the nave into two floors, chopping off the tower at roof level and demolishing the north transept and the eastern end of the church. The title subsequently passed through the female line to Sir John Mill, whose second son Sir Richard began in 1743 the further transformation of Mottisfont into the building you see today. It was he who romantically but incorrectly first called it Mottisfont Abbey. **THE EAST FACADE** - Here you are faced with some of the original 12th and 13th century stonework; the archway - known as the Chapel Porch, was built by Lord Sandys to shore up the truncated tower of the original priory after he pulled down the east end of the Church. Within it are two piers with vaulting shafts, which are the remains of the chapter house excavated in 1901 by the last private owners of the house Mr and Mrs Gilbert Russell. They were under a grass ramp which rose from the south lawn up to the first floor balcony at the end of the building to your left.

George Farquhar spent much of his short life in close proximity to war. He was born in Ireland in 1677, and his birthplace, Derry, became the stronghold of the Northern Protestants in their revolt against James II. His father was a clergyman whose Rectory was burnt down by James' Army in 1689. He was educated at Trinity College Dublin, and briefly acted at The Smock Alley Theatre, where he met the great comedian Robert Wilks, for whom later on he wrote many leading parts. By the age of 22 he had made a considerable reputation but bad days followed. His debts mounted, his plays failed, and he married a penniless woman in the belief she was an heiress. In 1704 the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland commissioned him as a Lieutenant of Grenadiers, which must have helped to keep his family and please his mistresses. He was sent on recruiting duty to Lichfield and Shrewsbury; Acts of Parliament in 1703-5 empowered Justices of the Peace "to raise and levy such able-bodied men as have not any lawful calling or employment, or visible means for their maintenance and livelihood, to serve as soldiers". The openings for corruption were many. As a recruiting officer you could get a man drunk, slip some of the Queen's money into his pocket, and claim that he was thereby "listed". From this experience Farquhar produced an autobiographical play - the only Restoration comedy of note whose whole action is set in the country away from the nobility and coffee-houses of London. It was staged at Drury Lane in April 1706, with clamorous success. He subsequently wrote one more play; "The Beaux Strategem" presented in 1707. In April of the same year, aged 29 he died of TB in a garret overlooking St Martins Lane.

Transvestite Notes

Female characters who posed as men and actresses who played male parts were popular throughout the Restoration period, when they were known as "breeches parts". The fashion continued through the 18th and 19th centuries including Sarah Siddons playing Hamlet and in 1899, Sarah Bernhardt doing likewise. But in Farquhar's day, transvestism was more than a theatrical joke; there were real Silvias in the armed forces. Indeed a direct parallel is the story of Christian Davies (1667-1739), who enlisted in the English Army in Flanders, fighting in the Battle of Landen and subsequently injured the Battle of Donauworth. She had gone into breeches in search of her husband, who had been pressed into service after only four years of marriage. She was ordered to guard some prisoners, and while doing so, suddenly spotted her husband, from whom she had been separated for thirteen years. So deep was her passion for military life that she made him promise to pass her off as his brother, but in a later battle her skull was fractured by a shell and the surgeons discovered her true sex. She was dismissed from the service, but continued to follow her husband until he was killed at Malplaquet in 1709. After another military marriage she was presented to Queen Anne in 1712 who granted her a life pension.

The action of the play takes place during a recruiting drive for Malborough's Army. There will be two Acts.

During the interval and before the show, The Cellarium will be open for your Buffet and Bar requirements.

Cast In Order of Appearance

Sergeant Kite
Captain Plume, the Recruiting Officer
Mr Worthy, a Country Gentleman
Melinda, a Lady of Fortune
Silvia, Daughter of Balance,
in love with Plume
Lucy, Melinda's Maid
Mr Balance, a Country Justice
Mistress Goody, his Housekeeper
Costar Pearmain
Thomas Appletree
Rose, a Country Wench
Bullock, her Brother
Captain Brazen
Bridewell, a Constable
Justice Scale
Justice Scruple

The Local Populace (and others!)

Ken Spencer
Andrew Easton
Robbie Carnegie
Catherine Nolan

Belinda Drew
Hazel Burrows
David Bartlett
Brenda Atkinson
Kevin Mitchell
Ian Morley
Debbie Moorhouse
Martin Caveney
Brian Stansbridge
David Pike
Michael Patterson
Tony Bull

Bruce Atkinson
Kate Atkinson
Christine Baker
Mark Bence
Richard Cole
Anya Cook
Gail Greensmith
Michael Hough
Graham Hill
Jenny Martin
Pam Simpson

For The Maskers Theatre

Director
Technical Director
Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Lighting Design
Lighting Operator
Sound

Property Mistress

Master Carpenter
Crew

Wardrobe Mistress
with

Costume Hire

Wigs
Business Manager

The Maskers would like to thank - John and Barbara Cavanagh,
Silvia and David Pankhurst, all the un-named people who have
contributed to the success of this, our 10th production at Mottisfont
Abbey.

Ken Spencer
Ron Tillyer
Angela Barks
Julie Campone
Ron Tillyer
Alison Mountford
Lawrie Gee
Adrian Plaw
Philippa Taylor
Jan Ward
Stephanie Taylor
Chris Finbow
Andrew Baldery
Mark Harvey
Clive Weeks
Kevin Hughes
Larry Bartel
Mike Turner
Fran Morley
Jane Royle

Torbay Costume Hire
Hampshire Wardrobe
Showbiz of Southampton
Michael Patterson

oOo FUTURE MASKERS PRODUCTIONS oOo

The Maskers return to the Plaza Theatre, Romsey this autumn with a production of Terence Rattigan's classic one act plays "The Browning Version" and "Harlequinade". Put these dates in your Diary NOW - Tuesday 5th - Saturday 9th November ... Booking opens in October through Romsey Travel Services - 0794 523232.

DO NOT MISS A RARE OPPORTUNITY to see inside Mottisfont Abbey. The Maskers Theatre Company will be performing an evening of entertainment for Christmas in the house from Tuesday 10th - Saturday 14th December ... A chance to see the wonder of the Whistler Room and the splendour of the South Gallery and Music Room ... Tickets will be strictly limited to 100 per night - SO WATCH LOCAL PRESS FOR DETAILS OF BOOKING! This will be a delightful and unique way to start the festive season!