

Noël Coward was born in Teddington, Middlesex, on 16 December 1899. He was acting professionally aged eleven, and his work was first staged before he was 21. He created a sensation with *The Vortex* in 1924, and followed through with *Hay Fever*, *Easy Virtue* (both 1925) and *Bitter Sweet* (1929), for which he wrote book, music and lyrics. *Private Lives* (1930) launched the stage partnership with Gertrude Lawrence, renewed in *To-night at 8.30* (1936).

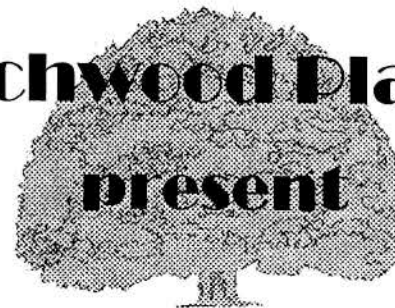
In-between came *Cavalcade* (1931) and *Design for Living* (1933). His autobiography, *Present Indicative*, was published in 1937, *Blithe Spirit*, *Present Laughter* and *This Happy Breed* followed each other on to the stage in 1941-2, and the forties also saw the films *In Which We Serve*, *Blithe Spirit* and *Brief Encounter*.

In the fifties Coward began a new career as a cabaret entertainer, wrote *Relative Values*, *Quadrille* and *Nude With Violin*, and published a second volume of autobiography, *Future Indefinite*. A collection of short stories, a book of verse and a novel appeared in the sixties; *Waiting in the Wings* and *Sail Away* were produced; and he acted his last role onstage in *Suite in Three Keys* (1966). He was Knighted in 1970 and died in Jamaica on 26 March 1973.

The idea for *Hay Fever* arose out of evenings spent in the company of American actress Lurette Taylor and her husband Hartley Manners in their New York home... "On Sunday evenings up on Riverside Drive we had cold supper and played games, often rather acrimonious games" These events took place in 1921 and three years later Coward began work on *Hay Fever* – a task that was to take him three days. In his autobiography, Coward wrote "It was inevitable that someone should eventually utilise portions of their eccentricity in a play, I am only grateful to fate that no guest of the Hartley Manners thought of writing *Hay Fever* before I did".

2004

Wychwood Players



Hay Fever

by
Noël Coward

**The New Beaconsfield Hall,
Shipton-under-Wychwood
20th May - 22nd May 2004
at 7-30pm.**

The Bliss family are ultra bohemian and have "weekends". This time they have each invited a guest without telling one another. Result: mayhem!

Cast in order of appearance:

Sorel Bliss.....Emily Lewis
Simon Bliss.....Tom White
Clara.....Siân O'Neill
Judith BlissAmanda Henriques
David BlissPhillip Croxson
Sandy Tyrell.....David Staines
Myra Arundel.....Rose Hartley
Richard Greatham.....John Trevers
Jackie Coryton.....Zoë Humphrey

Directed by Philip Brown

The action of the play takes place in the Bliss family home,
at Cookham, during a weekend in June 1925

Act I Saturday afternoon

Act II Saturday evening

Act III Sunday morning

There will be an Interval of 15 minutes between
Act I and Act II

The bar will be open before performances and during
the interval

PRODUCTION

Stage Manager.....Richard Hartley
Stage Crew.....Dave Robson

Costumes Designed and made by

Pat Bannister
Barbara Wilson

Set Construction.....Pat Bannister
Les Knightson
Shelia Lambert
Jeremy Huntingford

Lighting..... Les & Pauline Knightson

Properties.....Daphne Waugh

Sound.....Frank O'Neill

Box Office & Front of House.....Gill Drew
John Drew

Bar.....Members of the Players

The Director would like to thank all members
of the Wychwood Players who have assisted
with this production and also to the following
who have kindly loaned items for this performance

Talbot Court Galleries, Stow-on-the-Wold

Wyndhams Antiques, Stow-on the-Wold

La Chaise Antique, Stow-on-the-Wold

Ruskin Decorative Arts, Stow-on-the-Wold