

nstc
new stagers theatre club

Our July production will be
THE DICE HOUSE
By Paul Lucas
Directed by Orna Joseph



20-23 July 2005

Imagine a world driven entirely by chance - where your every action is governed by the roll of a dice.

Welcome to The Dice House. Overseen by the eccentric psychiatrist Dr Ratner, the patients practice Dice Therapy - with interesting and often life-threatening results. Particularly for the unfortunate Mr Smith, who thinks everyone's out to get him...and who may just be right. The newest patient is Polly, the wife of Ratner's deadly rival, Dr Drabble, who sends his own inmate, Matthew, on a clandestine mission to find her, armed only with his wits and a deadly chocolate éclair.

This hilarious and anarchic black comedy was a major London hit in 2004, and New Stagers is proud to be one of the first non-professional companies to present it. Come to the Dice House, and your life may never be the same again...

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HARVEY

by Mary Chase

Programme
30p

HARVEY

The action takes place on a Spring day in the early 1950s.

Act 1

Scene 1 - A pleasant afternoon at the Dowd's
Scene 2 - A mistake is made at Chumley's Rest

Interval

There will be an interval of 15 minutes

Act 2

Scene 1 - Back at the Dowd's later that evening
Scene 2 - A mistake is rectified at Chumley's Rest

Act 3

Scene 1 - Harvey makes his presence felt

Cast (in order of appearance);

Johnson, a maid	Zoe Andrews
Myrtle Mae Simmons, Elwood's niece	Rachel Tozer
Veta Louise Simmons, Elwood's sister	Tracey Childs
Elwood P. Dowd, Harvey's best friend	Stuart Butler
Mrs Ethel Chauvenet, a society lady	Frances Holmes
Ruth Kelly RN, a nurse at Chumley's Rest	Vanessa Marchant
Marvin Wilson, an orderly at Chumley's Rest	Mark Freeman
Dr Lyman Sanderson, a doctor at Chumley's Rest	Jonathan Broadis
Dr William Chumley, an important psychiatrist	Mike Ainsworth
Mrs Betty Chumley, Dr Chumley's wife	Orna Joseph
Judge Omar Gaffney, the Dowd family solicitor	Jason Marchant
EJ Lofgren, a taxicab driver	John Laing

Crew

Director	Susan Jones
Producer	Frances Holmes
Lighting Design	Richard Frampton
	Mark Stannett
Lighting Operation	Mark Stannett
Sound Design and Operation	Ben Ellis
Set Design	Frances Holmes
	Paul Johnson
Props Co-ordinators	Susan Jones
	Frances Holmes
Costumes Co-ordinators	Vanessa Marchant
	Tracey Childs
	Frances Holmes
	Vanessa Marchant
Prompt	Gillian Guy
Stage Manager	Zoe Andrews
Assistant Stage Manager	John Laing
Front of House Manager	Sharron Stubbs
Catering Manager	Clare Pepperell

A word from the director

Welcome to the world of Harvey!

This show represents my directorial debut. I'd like to tell you how I chose Harvey but I actually have my suspicions that Harvey chose me. From finally seeing the classic movie I had heard so much about, to discovering that it was originally written as a stage play, to getting hold of a copy of the script and being enchanted by it and deciding to direct it myself – it all seems like a dream!

Watching the play become a reality in St Anne's Church Hall has been a magical experience, and I hope you enjoy watching the show as much as I have enjoyed directing it.

Susan

“What was that word you just said? Pooka? Is that something new?”

Pooka (n): from old Celtic mythology. A fairy spirit in animal form. Always very large. A wise but mischievous creature.

Our pooka Harvey has a long and distinguished history. The Irish mother of playwright Mary Chase must have included folktales in young Mary's bedtime stories, tales of the pooka commonly taking animal forms - a large goat, or huge stallion, or an eagle. The pooka would roam the countryside, turning milk sour and crops bad, and attacking hapless travellers who stumbled across its path.

But pookas aren't exclusive to Irish folklore. They make an appearance in Welsh tales ('pwca' means goblin) and even in Shakespeare (*A Midsummer Night's Dream's* mischievous spirit Puck).

Although our pooka Harvey isn't malignant and malicious like his ancestors, it's clear where he gets his mischievous sense of humour from!

Zoe Andrews (Stage Manager, Johnson)

Zoe joined NSTC in January 2004 and immediately made herself useful by gathering props for the April production *Our Country's Good*. Feeling empowered by the experience, she embarked on her first acting role with the group as a very French figment of imagination in *The Man Who Dreamed*. Unconsciously deciding that women's roles were not for her, she went on to play the warty, lazy Nobby in *Guards Guards*, and the glamorous but ineffectual Robin Hood in January's pantomime *Robin Hood and the Babes In The Wood*. Zoe has taken on a stage management role for Harvey but manages to pop across stage every once in a while to keep her hand in!



Mike Ainsworth (Dr William R. Chumley)



Mike has been with NSTC for seventeen years. Mike has directed over a dozen plays with the group including *A Midsummer Nights Dream* and the six hour epic *Nicholas Nickelby*. Recently he has concentrated his efforts on stage including Benedict in *Much Ado About Nothing* and roles in *Life's A Pantomime* and *Our Country's Good*. Whilst in Wormwood Scrubs Mike sang for David Bowie and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Jonathan Broadis (Dr Lyman Sanderson)

Jonathan joined NSTC this January and is returning to the stage after a break of 7 years in the world of work. He is a versatile addition to the company as he has experience as both an actor and as a producer! At school he acted in numerous productions, including as Dogsborough in *'The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui'* by Bertolt Brecht, as Ruckley in *'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest'* by Ken Kesey, and in *'Guys and Dolls'*. At university, Jonathan acted in *'Much Ado About Nothing'* and *'The Taming of the Shrew'* in student productions. He then moved into production design, producing and film including a commercially successful production of *'Dangerous Liaisons'*, and a short student film *'Reflex'*.



Jonathan is a keen sportsman and loves to travel – in particular around Asia. He is looking forward to treading the boards again with NSTC and thanks his family and friends for their continued support. Also he thanks Sue for being brave enough to cast him!

Stuart Butler (Elwood P. Dowd)

Stuart has enjoyed playing many manic characters with NSTC, in fact he thinks that he is type cast as a psycho. There was no way that he couldn't be cast in this play! In real life he works in "media" – most people find it hard to believe he lives in the real world and holds down a proper job! Stuart was in fact named after James Stewart, his father's favourite actor – perhaps the spelling mistake explains the identity crisis which has led to such consistent casting!



Mark Freeman (Marvin Wilson)

Mark Freeman previously performed for the Sheffield University Theatre Company, where his roles included Nathan Detroit in *Guys and Dolls* and Dysart in *Equus*, though he first hit the stage at the age of 10 as a more-than-able ventriloquist. This is Mark's first performance for NSTC.



Tracey Childs (Mrs Veta Louise Simmons)

Tracey joined NSTC way back in the early nineties. Her first production was *Plotters of Cabbage Patch Corner* in which she played a greenfly. Tracey has played a myriad of parts in her time with NSTC from Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to more recently Liz Morden in *Our Country's Good*. She has also turned her hand to the technical side of productions in which she has designed lighting for various plays, using candles in *Agnes of God* to as many lights as possible in *Nicholas Nickleby*. Tracey's directorial efforts have included *The Lion in Winter* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. Tracey met her husband at NSTC and says her most favourite and biggest production to date is their two young daughters.

Ben Ellis (Sound Design and Operation)

Ben's first acting lines were "tournez a gauche" in a French play at secondary school. After a ten year lull, he played both man-servants Lane and Merriman in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at university. Joining NSTC in 1995, Ben resurrected the French theme in his acting career by playing a chef in *Treasure Island*. However, his piece de resistance was to cunningly combine his talents and play a French man servant Azolan in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. A master/servant theme briefly emerged again when Ben played a Sultan in *Dick Whittington* but disappeared when he played Arthur Crabtree in *Billy Liar* and Antonio in *Twelfth Night*. Mistakenly believing twelve to be his new theme, Ben was delighted to master the role of the stockbroker in *Twelve Angry Men*. However, after playing a criminal, an aborigine and an English captain in the very same play (*Our Country's Good*), and an orang-utang in *Guards Guards*, he is thoroughly confused about acting and is giving sound a go instead.



Frances Holmes (Producer, Mrs Ethel Chauvenet)

Frances found her way back to NSTC two years ago after a six-year break. Her recent roles have incorporated the evil (playing pantomime baddies in *Cinderella* and the less traditional *Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood*), the meek (a worm-that-turned juror in *Twelve Angry Men*), the overbearing (hen-pecking wife Clara in *When We Are Married*) and the confused (Brother Plasterer in *Guards Guards*). She has directed and stage managed for the group in the past but for *Harvey* has turned her skills to producing. She has found being a producer for New Stagers can incorporate anything from creating swing doors to organising the director – (she thought it was just controlling the budget!) Frances also makes an appearance in today's show, as the important and influential society lady, Mrs Chauvenet.

Susan Jones (Director)

Susan has been a member of the group for 2 years, spending most of her time on the other side of the director's chair. She has appeared in four NSTC productions: *Much Ado About Nothing*; *Twelve Angry Men*; *When We Are Married*; and the slightly surreal *The Man Who Dreamed*. She turned her hand to stage managing for 2004's production *Our Country's Good*. Susan joined her first amdram group while still at school after becoming frustrated at not getting any parts in school plays due to being at least a foot taller than the boys. *Harvey* represents Susan's directorial debut, and she is eternally grateful to her lovely cast for letting her tell them what to do!



Orna Joseph (Mrs Betty Chumley)

Orna joined NSTC about seven years ago and hasn't been able to escape since. Orna has been an active member of the group both performing and taking on technical roles. As an actor with the group, she has been in *Peter Pan*, *The Visit*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *12 Angry Men*, *Our Country's Good* and *Guards Guards*. When not on the stage, Orna has also taken to the director's chair with *Memory of Water*, *When We Were Married* and the next production - *The Dice House*.

Orna is currently chairperson of NSTC.



Vanessa Marchant (Ruth Kelly, RN)

Harvey is Vanessa Marchant's second production for the NSTC. Her previous roles in *The Man Who Dreamed* consisted of an actress, a Nun and a doctor. Continuing the medical theme Vanessa plays the part of Nurse Ruth Kelly, ever suffering side-kick to the unfortunate Dr Lyman Sanderson. Outside of NSTC Vanessa spends her time as a graphic designer for a large magazine publishing house. She has always been involved in the world of acting however and started performing at the age of 11. More recently she has been working with a live action role-playing group who improvise characters for up to days at a time.



John Laing (Assistant Stage Manager, EJ Lofgren)

John joined NSTC in January 2005 and is making his acting debut in *Harvey*. Although this is his first time on stage as an actor, he can often be found behind a karaoke mike!



Mark Stannett (Lighting Design and Operation)

Mark has been a member of NSTC for ever such a long time and will be a familiar face to regular supporters of our shows, most recently starring in our January pantomime *Robin Hood and the Babes In The Wood* as the banana-obsessed Simple Simon. For *Harvey*, however, Mark will be tucked safely behind the tech desk at the back of the hall operating the lighting.

Jason Marchant (Judge Omar Gaffney)

Harvey is only Jason's second show with NSTC and he has to admit to being slightly perturbed at being cast as a Judge twice his actual age. But through liberal use of make-up, four hours sleep since January and 40 Benson and Hedges a day, he thinks he's shaken off his youthful good looks.

Although Jason works as a Copywriter for a computer games company, he actually studied acting (well, Theatre Arts) to degree level, but fell into the evil black hole that is a marketing career. Desperately trying to maintain some sort of integrity, Jason sees the NSTC as a way to keep his humanity from fading away entirely while giving him access to more ham than a giant's finger buffet.



Rachel Tozer (Myrtle Mae Simmons)

Rachel joined NSTC for last spring's production of *Our Country's Good*, playing 'Duckling' and 'Shitty Meg' (a part most men in the cast wanted, especially Mike). She enjoyed herself so much she came back for more this spring. Rachel's previous theatre credits include, 'Nancy' in *Oliver Twist*, 'Laura' in *The Glass Menagerie*, 'Yvette' in *Mother Courage and Her Children*, among others. More recently she had a part in a British Feature Film, *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, which was shown at the National Film Theatre and also starred Derek Jacobi. Rachel's main role is as a highly experienced temp, she has an excellent telephone manner, is great at filing, makes a lovely cuppa and at the moment is enjoying working in lingerie!



A Rabbit on Broadway

Most people know the story of Elwood and Harvey from the 1950 James Stewart film. But the movie followed the Broadway hit play written in the early 1940s by a journalist called Mary Chase. Chase had met a neighbour on the street one day, a woman whose husband had worked all her life to send her son to college only to lose him in WWII. Chase wondered whether she could write something that would make this woman smile again. A while afterwards, she dreamt one night about a psychiatrist who was being chased by a giant rabbit. An idea was born.

Harvey the stage play won Mary Chase the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1944, beating Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. The show reached Broadway and became a huge hit. Josephine Hull created Elwood's long-suffering sister Veta Louise on stage and went on to reprise her role in the 1950 movie, a role which earned her an Academy Award. James Stewart is often considered the archetypal Elwood, playing the part on stage before and after the movie was made. But Elwood P. Dowd was originally played by another actor, Frank Fay. The role was a revival of Fay's flagging career, but his abusive and anti-Semitic nature offstage led to complaints from the other performers, and he was dropped from the show and into obscurity.

References to Harvey the invisible rabbit abound in other movies, from *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* to *Donnie Darko*. Harvey has truly entered our collective imagination as shorthand for wonder and magic, and the belief that there is more to life than things we can merely explain.

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- Members of Cast and other NSTC members for tireless efforts with making, acquiring and lending costumes, props and artistic skills – you know who you are!
- **Gradav Hire and Sales Ltd** for the lighting
- **Harvey** is performed by kind permission of Josef Weinberger Ltd

About the group

This is New Stagers Theatre Club's 38th year of non-professional theatre in South West London. We present four productions a year, offering as wide a variety of plays as possible. Past productions have included classics such as *Twelfth Night* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, major stage hits such as *Outside Edge*, *Billy Liar* and *Table Manners*, thrillers such as *Deathtrap* and *Dead Guilty*, and recently the stage version of the films *Play It Again, Sam* and *Twelve Angry Men*. The club has also presented every major Pantomime, with scripts which are custom-written by club members.

Most shows include at least one newcomer, either onstage or backstage, and the club welcomes prospective members who would like to take part in any aspect of theatre. No previous experience is necessary.

You can call in at St. Anne's Hall on a Tuesday between 8 and 10 pm, or a Sunday between 4 and 8pm. It's a friendly and relaxed club, and no-one is required to audition in order to join.

If you're happy just to sit back and watch, simply join as an Associate Member, and we'll keep you informed of future productions.

You can also check out our website at: www.newstagers.co.uk

For your comfort and safety:

No smoking in the Hall.

Refreshments will be available before the show and during the interval.

Exit doors are open at all times at the back and side of the Hall.

Please do not move any seating or stand or sit in the aisles.

Please note that photography is not permitted during the performance.