



**LEWES THEATRE CLUB**

Newsletter No.24 March 2010

# She Stoops to Conquer

By Oliver Goldsmith  
Directed by Mike Turner



**Saturday 27 March to Saturday 3 April 2010**  
**at 7.45 pm daily except Sunday**  
**Matinee Saturday 3 April at 2.45 pm**

[www.lewestheatre.org](http://www.lewestheatre.org)

## Editor's notes

It has been a sad shock to lose one of our most active members, Dick Passmore, this month. Dick was always helpful and cheerful, manning the bar and organising events. He will be much missed

After a hard Winter, Spring is showing signs of appearing – snow drops and daffodils are bursting forth – so a comedy which ends with a pair of marriages is an appropriate celebration of renewal and fertility. Our next production, *She Stoops to Conquer*, fits the bill and we hope that we will play to full houses as the weather improves.

The Reader's Letter this edition is from Colin Fuller, a member for many years who is now living in France. Let's hear from you old and new. We like to hear from old friends as well as from current members.

We need a new Front of House Manager. Sue Tait, who has done a splendid job for the last three years, is retiring from the post and we are looking for someone to organise and manage this important aspect of the theatre (See page 9 for details.) See page 8 for details of our Summer Season – lots of new and exciting events for you all.

**Mike Turner**  
[michealturner@btinternet.com](mailto:michealturner@btinternet.com)

All photographs by Adrian Bowd  
[adrian.bowd@homecall.co.uk](mailto:adrian.bowd@homecall.co.uk)

## IN THIS ISSUE...

- 3 PREVIEW** *She Stoops to Conquer*
- 4 REVIEW** *Two Thousand Years*
- 6 REVIEW** **Cafe Theatre**  
*Happy Jack*
- 7 REVIEW** **Cafe Theatre**  
*Be My Valentine*
- 8 OBITUARY** Dick Passmore
- 11 DIRECTOR'S NOTES**
- 12 CAFE THEATRE**  
New Sussex Singers
- 13 READERS' LETTERS**
- 14 ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 15 INFORMATION**
- 16 BOOKING FORM**

## DIARY DATES

### PERFORMANCES

**SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER**  
27 March - 3 April

**IVANOV**  
15 - 22 May

**CAFE THEATRE**  
**NEW SUSSEX SINGERS**  
24 & 25 April

**FLANDERS & SWANN**  
25 July

# She Stoops to Conquer

by Oliver Goldsmith - directed by Mike Turner

**PREVIEW**

Evening performances at 7.45pm. Matinee at 2.45pm on Saturday 3 April.

**THE BOX OFFICE** 01273 474826 will be open daily from Monday 22 March to Saturday 3 April except Sundays from 10.30 am until noon and from 7pm to 7.30pm. Postal bookings received before the Box Office opening period will be given priority. Please remember only members can buy tickets otherwise we could lose our licence to perform. Tickets not paid for 15 minutes before the performance is timed to start may be resold.

**In any case seats booked in advance but not taken up must be paid for if not resold.**

*She Stoops to Conquer* is a classic low comedy intended by Goldsmith as a riposte to the sophisticated comedies of manners set in high society which had dominated London theatres since the Restoration. It is nearly a farce and has some superb comic scenes of misunderstandings and double dealing. Goldsmith was, like many comic playwrights, born an Irishman and after studying as a medical student at Edinburgh University and undertaking a European tour, he settled in London and gradually became recognised as a writer. His best known poem is *The Deserted Village*. He only turned to theatre as a quick way of making money in order to get out of debt. We should be grateful because *She Stoops to Conquer*, which he had to struggle to find a producer for, has, since its first performance in 1773, become one of the classics of English Comedy – loved by audiences worldwide.

It will be presented in 18th Century costume produced by Anne Turner and the wardrobe team. The attractive period scenery has been designed by Bob Smart.

We have assembled a company of established Lewes actors led by Nigel Sharpe and Anna Crabtree ably supported by Mike and Kay Fitzgerald and Laura Mason and a group of actors new to our stage including Robert Woodbridge as Tony Lumpkin, Simon Hellyer as Marlow and John Ford as Sir Charles.

Be prepared to have your prejudices challenged and confirmed on the subjects of courtship and marriage and observe the way the best of plans can go astray. We can promise a lively evening's entertainment in which laughter and confusion combine as the *Mistakes of a Night* unfold.

Order your tickets early as this popular play will sell out.

**Mike Turner**

**REVIEW****Two Thousand Years**

Whether being a Gentile, like me, is a handicap or advantage in writing about this play I don't know...

Sterling production values were obvious from the word go. Gerry Cortese's unfussy, very attractive set invited us in and gave us an idea of these people's world even before we'd met them. It accomplished well what sets should always do: served the play, not the ego of the designer, and made full use of our wonderful stage. The decision to

lighting went about its business unobtrusively, doing everything the play and the audience required.

It opens in stillness and silence. Three members of the family sit immersed intently in their reading. Dentist husband Danny (the totally believable Stephen Gray) and wife Rachel (Gini Comyns – outstanding!) break the silence. What, she asks, does he think of that newspaper article? He doesn't know. It's confusing. She agrees. And so



position most of the furniture – and thus the action – as far forward as possible, was spot on. It put us, the audience, right in that room. Raising the rear of the living-room guaranteed excellent sight-lines. Traditional and more contemporary Jewish music for the lead-in was well chosen, not merely complementing the set but gesturing toward the vast canvas promised by the play's extremely ambitious title. Sue Piller's workmanlike

the principal building blocks of *2,000 Years* are quickly established: family, political opinion, discussion, confusion. Josh, their highly-educated jobless son (Samuel Nunn, in the most difficult part) is the third of the reading trio. But he has very little to say – another building block. Their neighbour, Jonathan (convincingly played by Adrian Bowd) arrives bearing allotment vegetables and his political opinions, and the conversation skips

# Two Thousand Years

through Arafat, the peace process, Israel, Iraq, Sharon etc etc. We are now thoroughly embedded in the Jewish community of north London. Until the arrival of Auntie Mash at the end, these building-blocks don't vary much. With one striking exception: in a few very short scenes – too short, really – Leigh establishes that the son, Josh, has secretly become religious.

Casting was fantastic, largely free of the shortcomings which bedevil amateur theatre: all the characters were pretty much the right age and right physically, too. (Was this great good luck, or incredible industry by the Director?)

Lyn Fernee turned in a sparkling, girlish performance as the globe-trotting Spanish-interpreting Guantanamo-Bay-conferencing pro-Hugo-Chavez “activist” (and daughter). Speaking of casting, Alan Lade as Tzachi, her Israeli boyfriend, was perfect, and though I'm no expert on Israeli English his accent was, for me, believable and above all always consistent. You just didn't doubt this man had passed his stint in the Lebanon war smoking ‘cigarettes’. Samuel Nunn as the perplexed, newly-religious son, found himself in a part Mike Leigh made as difficult as possible, one-tenth outrage and nine-tenths silence. He deserves a medal for his efforts, as does the Director. Gini Comyns created a very distinct character in the mother – bringing an authenticity and quiet self-possession to her, as she kept the lid on a family always threatening to boil over. And Alan G. Baker was simply tremendous as Dave, the irascible grand-dad and patriarch, a sort of Jewish Alf Garnett.

Frances Wood was perfectly cast as Auntie Mash, whom she played (rightly) not so much as a human as a monstrous neurosis. (Her unexpected arrival impacts the end of this play like the collapse of the Twin Towers impacted



the beginning of this century.) But how seriously Mike Leigh wants us to take his play, I am really not sure. Is it a comedy? A serious, probing discussion play? Does it know? Wouldn't it have been interesting if Josh had said to his horrified family: “But listen to yourselves. You have no idea what you believe in anymore. Your own religions – Israel, the kibbutz, socialism – are dying, didn't even last your lifetime. So what on earth is so wrong with me trying out the Faith which got us through 2,000 hard years, and is still going strong?” Be that as it may, both audiences on the nights I attended enjoyed it. And I admire the endeavour of Derek Watts and the theatre in staging it.

**Randolph Morse**

**REVIEW****CAFÉ THEATRE**

---

**Happy Jack**

The first Café Theatre performance of 2010 took place in the main theatre on January 17th. *Happy Jack* is a one-act play by prolific Northern playwright, John Godber, best known for his gritty, down-to-earth dramas with titles such as *Bouncers*, *Teechers* etc, and chronicles the life and love of Jack and Liz, a gritty, down-to-earth Yorkshire couple, unashamedly inspired by Godber's own grandparents.

The parts of the two characters, introduced by themselves, then portrayed by themselves, were taken by Bob Leeds and Catherine Dampney. Although this was a rehearsed reading with just two tubular-steel chairs in front of the curtain, the effort the two actors had put in to adopt credible accents and make the most of the stage, deserved longer than an enthralling hour on a Sunday lunchtime.

Jack, nicknamed 'Happy' because he always looked miserable, but sometimes 'Jacko' by his wife as a term of endearment, is a coal miner who has worked down the local pit for forty-two years. Liz, like many long-suffering women of her era, has spent her entire

life "a prisoner" in their house, "washing and cleaning" to the extent "I might as well be bloody dead!". But this is not simply a tale of unremitting working-class toil, it is more as if the audience has been permitted to flick through a cherished family photograph album or look over the shoulders of the couple as they randomly share the delights of a dog-eared scrapbook.

This endearing and revealing glimpse of the lives of two ordinary people, although not in chronological order, encompasses holidays in a Blackpool boarding house, the time they first met - Jack coming home from the pit, Liz coming out of the Co-op - and a moving scene where Liz is in the agonies of childbirth while Jack is engrossed composing one of his simple but perceptive poems, "Have you ever stopped to wonder..."

Humour and heartache, as related by Jack and Liz, provides lessons for us all. Godber's companion two-hander, *September in the Rain*, featuring the same characters, seems a must for a future Sunday.

**Roger Paine**

**REVIEW****CAFE THEATRE***Be My Valentine*

Sunday 14 February, if not all chocolates and champagne, was a happy and thought-provoking hour of appropriate poetry, prose and songs. But as Victoria Thompson reminded a rather sparse foyer audience, 'Love comes in many forms'. And so it proved.

In a programme, imaginatively put together by Joyce Fisher, the tone was set by Jack Wilkinson's opening song from *The Pyjama Game*, 'Hey There You With The Stars In Your Eyes'. This was followed by more lyrical ballads which captured the mood without over-egging the schmaltz, such as 'No Other Love Have I' and a memorable 'If I Loved You', recalling Gordon MacRae in *Carousel*. With gentle accompaniment from Susan Bain on the piano, Jack's singing had a quality which made everyone listen intently, and then want more.

Joyce's reading of the poem, 'If thou must love me' by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and the classic Shakespeare sonnet, 'Let me not to the marriage of true minds', together with Phil Dunn reading 'Come live with me', written by Christopher Marlowe over four hundred years ago illustrated, if this was

necessary on Valentine's Day, that the words of love, and loving, have echoed down the centuries.

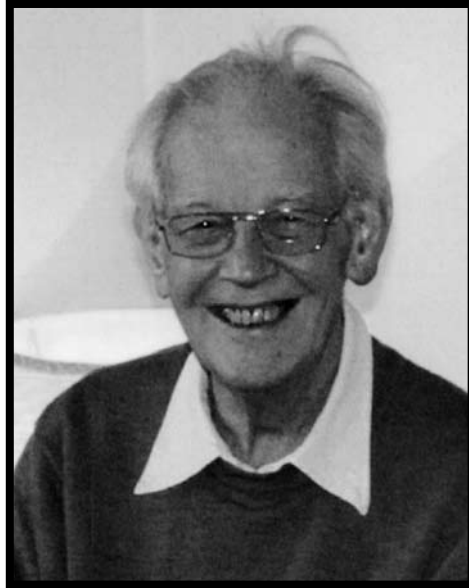
More contemporary was a short extract from Harold Pinter's bleak drama on modern love and marriage, *Betrayal*, enacted by Victoria, Phil and Paul Myles. Paul's reading of Pinter's Irish poem 'I walked one morning with my only wife, Out of sandhills to the summer fair'. This made an interesting contrast to Stella Stone's rendering of the Bard's immortal sonnet, 'Shall I compare thee to a Summers day?', and an even greater one to Sue Followell's 'Basil and Ethel', also by Stella, which recalled Benny Hill's amusing 'Ernie, the fastest milkman in the west'.

Joyce's reading of 'Without You', the moving tribute to his love by Adrian Henri, one of Liverpool's much-respected Mersey Sound poets, made for an apt conclusion before the finale, an upbeat 'On The Street Where You Live' from *My Fair Lady*, sung in delightful harmony by Jack, Paul and Phil.

**Roger Paine**

# OBITUARY

---



## DICK PASSMORE 1927 - 2010

A large gap has occurred in LewesTheatre Club with the death of one of its favourite members, Dick Passmore.

He was always so irrepressibly there, acting, singing, running the Studio and Cafe Theatre events, serving behind the bar or just generously giving of himself to the theatre - and all with that wonderful laugh.

Dick had a great fund of humorous anecdotes for all occasions, with which he regaled his appreciative listeners. Now many people must be recalling their own special memories of Dick. Many years ago he played

the Troll King in *Peer Gynt* and one night during the run we learnt that his train from London was running late and he might not be in time for his entrance. A diminutive actor had volunteered to take his place. I was dreading him coming on, drowned in Dick's capacious costume. Unknown to me someone had rushed to the station, hurtled Dick to the theatre where he dressed in the wings in ten seconds flat and sailed triumphantly on to the stage. Nothing fazed Dick. Having worked with Dick many times we would fix a date for the next rehearsal with which Dick would readily agree. Then Beryl, his lovely

# OBITUARY



wife, would say, "Just a minute, darling, aren't we...?". The diary would come out for Dick to discover that that date was already double, if not treble, booked. Everyone needed him and he never wanted to let anyone down.

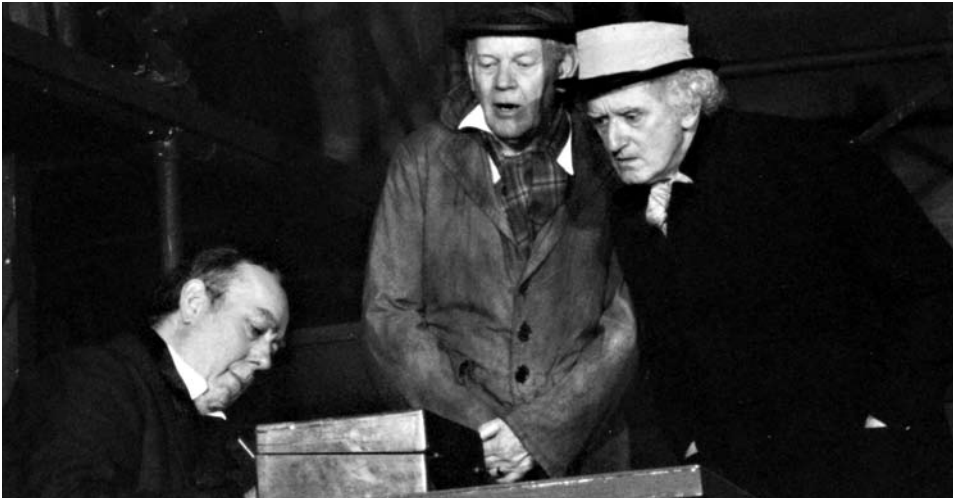
Music was very much part of Dick's life and he had a wonderful singing voice – memorably his duet with Beryl, "Ah! Yes, I remember it

well." He was equally at home with comedy songs, ballads and rousing anthems. The last time many would have heard him sing was only weeks ago in a Carol service with the New Sussex Singers. His many friends will miss Dick enormously but at least we can appreciate how much richer our lives have been for knowing him.

**Stella Stone**

# OBITUARY

---



## From the Chairman of the Falstaff Club

“Another year! - another deadly blow!” John and Paddy Cull, Lionel Green, Jack Partlett, Cliff Skeet – and now Dick Passmore, long-time, dedicated members, who epitomised the true ethos of the club. Dick was more than, “an enthusiastic member of Lewes Little Theatre,” as mentioned in the *Sussex Express*, he was involved in so many areas of the of the club’s activities – as Falstaff Club committee member, working party activist and, for many years, LTC Events Co-ordinator. He also contributed cameo performances to several main house productions and memorable G&S and Flanders and Swann offerings such as *The London Omnibus*. However the Tuesday night working party was the nub of Dick’s theatre

involvement, ensuring that the bar was stocked with Harvey’s bitter for post work consumption and, of course, as one of the Falstaff Club ‘trusties’, having the keys to open up at 9.30 p.m.

Writing the moving obituary, in the newsletter, of his dear friend Cliff Skeet, Dick opined, “There is no doubt that should our Theatre ever run to the luxury of having a working heart it would be firmly planted in the Working Party, faithfully beating away every Tuesday through the year.”

Like Cliff, Roger, Geoff and several others, Dick was right up in the front ranks of this happy band, either side of the bar. With glasses charged, we say a last, “Cheers, Dick,” to a wonderful, unique, friendly Clubman.

**Timothy Frost**

# Club Director's notes

Discussion with the company responsible for *In Lambeth* last year and the enthusiastic reception given to working with professionals from audience and actors, led to the idea that we would like to increase our utilisation of the Theatre during a normally 'dark period' for recruitment of new members as, well as an additional programme for Lewes Theatre members. Jack Shepherd indicated that for professional actors the idea of being part of a repertory season would be immensely helpful and we may be one of the few venues in the country offering this possibility...as opposed to the odd appearance in a soap or commercial.

Now after much discussion and debate, here is the proposed programme which will include two light-hearted musical events as well as three very fine modern dramas.

July 2 - 3 *Swinging Sixties* devised and presented by Derek Watts and James Firth-Haydon.

July 8 - July 17 *A Taste of Honey* by Sheila Delaney, directed by Neil Sheppeck

July 23 – 31 *The Lady from Dubuque* by Edward Albee, directed by Victoria Thompson

July 25 *Flanders and Swann II* starring Jack Wilkinson, Edmund Jenner and Susan Bain  
3.00 p.m. followed by tea

August 5-14 *Oleanna* by David Mamet directed by Neil Sheppeck.

This is a really exciting venture and Committee hopes that your response will be as overwhelmingly positive in supporting these plays as it was for for the Ayckbourn trilogy. Our last play of the season, *A Taste of Honey* by Sheila Delaney, which season ticket holders will be entitled to attend, will also be the first of the summer season. (NB we have, unavoidably, had to change the dates of this production).

Members will be able to book tickets in the usual way for all the events of the summer season. But please be aware that Box office availability will be limited after 17 July (they need a holiday too!). It is hoped that members will book for all three productions as soon as we have confirmation of performance rights.

Anyone wishing to audition for any of the three plays, *A Taste of Honey*, *The Lady from Dubuque* or *Oleanna* should note that auditions will be held on 21 April between 3.00 - 5.00 p.m and 6.00 - 8.00 p.m. at the theatre. The same will apply to 28 April. IT IS ESSENTIAL to let Victoria know in advance that you are intending to attend and at which session. We are still awaiting final confirmation of availability for *Lady from Dubuque* and *Oleanna* but *A Taste of Honey* is confirmed. Anyone interested in taking part in the *Swinging Sixties* event should contact Derek Watts.

(derek@watts457.freemove.co.uk)

The two musical events are confirmed and can be booked during *She Stoops to Conquer*.

Victoria

# CAFE THEATRE

---

## NEW SUSSEX SINGERS

New Sussex Singers, under their inspirational young music director, Lee Reynolds, is one of the area's foremost chamber choirs.

In the past 12 months they have presented concerts ranging from *Bach's St John Passion* to a programme of music composed through the lifetime of Henry Allingham who died in July last year aged a remarkable 113 years.

New Sussex Singers perform in venues throughout Sussex and beyond, and have toured in the USA, France and Germany.

They will perform a lively and varied programme at Lewes Theatre Club in April, the last event arranged by one of their esteemed founder members, Dick Passmore, well known to LTC over his many years in Lewes.

The 24 - 25 April dates almost coincide with both St George's Day and Shakespeare's birthday and you can be sure the programme will reflect them both with music for all tastes.

Do join us on either Saturday night or Sunday lunchtime for an enjoyable concert in aid of a very good cause.

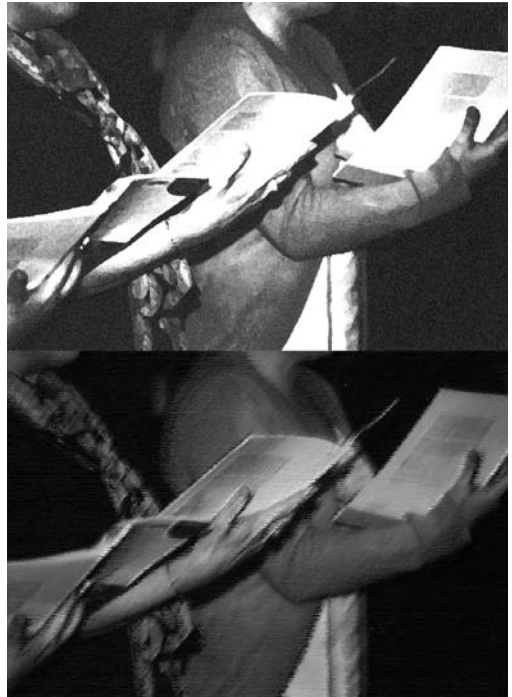
**Saturday 24 April at 7.45 pm. Tickets £10.00**

**Sunday 25 April for Lunch at 12.00 noon  
to be followed by the Concert at 2.30 pm**

**Tickets Seat only £10.00**

**Seat plus Lunch £17.00**

**Book tickets on the form on page 16 via the Box Office**



## READERS' LETTERS



Dear Sir or Madam,  
 Having spent much of last year in hospital in Paris I am late in finding the time to write with reference to some correspondence from my 99 year old mother. Amongst the vast collection of cuttings from local rags I spied a (picture of a) group of people surrounding a ladder most of whom I believe have passed on to better things. But I'm probably one of the few people still able to name them all and count them as long lost friends. If I remember it was a time when there was a resurgence of local news media including the Lewes Echo, which carried a centre spread of the then gathered company. They were all hard workers who, over the 27 years I was a member, spent their time decorating the theatre, rebuilding it brick by brick and helping at the start of the foyer, the original being just fifteen feet by ten. The good looking face at the apex of the ladder was me.

When I saw the picture memories flooded back to me. On the rare

occasion I return to England I meet a few old members around the town – which is not the town I remember (I'm a Lewes boy, Bonfire and all!)

There was a photo of Love's Labour Lost on the wall of the old staircase to the old wardrobe and one of the very pretty boys on it was me! For those that remember me I used to have a voice, so I was told, that would charm angels and lovely legs and bottom – according to Grace Towner, the then wardrobe mistress.

I still sing over here (in France) in our local chorale, in French of course, and gain great pleasure from it and, of course, friendship. I am retired now but my memory is good if the body is weak. Our new life here has opened up a new world if only illness would allow us to do more – but things are getting better daily. We're both old codgers but still try to be kids.

Yours truly

**Colin Fuller**



## INFORMATION

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION £10 Double £16  
Over 60s, Student & Juniors £6 Double £10  
ADMISSION PRICES Evenings £10.  
Matinées £7

### THE FALSTAFF CLUB

Anthony Jenner Bar, all L.T.C. members are automatically members. The Bar is open before, during and after all evening performances and on special Club social occasions. Interval drinks may be ordered in advance.

### THE NEWSLETTER

Published before each production.  
Contributions in the form of articles or correspondence are welcomed and should be addressed to The Editor, Lewes Little Theatre, Lancaster Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2PX.

### MEMBERSHIP

Applications should be sent to the Membership Secretary. Acting Membership involves no extra subscription. Members wishing to act are invited to attend auditions announced in the Newsletters.

### CAR PARKING

Limited space at the theatre is available to those with disabilities. Municipal Car Parks, close by in Brook Street and the Needlemakers Centre, are open free of charge after 6pm.

### THE WORKING PARTY

This hard-working group undertakes set building, costume, repairs and maintenance, both inside and out, meeting every Tuesday evening.

### THE WARDROBE

Hiring of costumes – phone the Wardrobe Team Alison 479471 or Gerry 479432 ten days before to make an appointment. Deposit required.

### DISABLED PEOPLE

Members who have difficulty negotiating stairs and steps may enter the Theatre by the former entrance on the east side of the building. Seating close to this entrance is in Rows G9-11, H10-12 and J5-7. We can accommodate one wheelchair at certain performances. For details, ask at the Box Office. A disabled persons' toilet is located between the two main doors to the Auditorium. A fully operational induction loop has been installed. Aids should be adjusted according to the manufacturer's instructions.

### OFFICERS

President Miles Jenner  
Director Victoria Thompson  
Treasurer Bob Leeds  
Gen Secretary Ann Thomas  
Membership Secretary Anna Crabtree

## FOYER EXHIBITION Lewes 8 Photographs

Lewes Little Theatre presents an exhibition of Photographs about the life and people of Lewes  
From 20 February open 6-10pm.  
The show is open every Tuesday evening and it will be possible to see the exhibition then and during *She Stoops to Conquer*. Closing date for the show is 5 April.



# She Stoops to Conquer

## OPENING

Saturday 27 March 7.45 pm

*Note. See page 3 for box office opening times for these performances*

---

## BOOK NOW

NAME .....

MEMBER NO .....

ADDRESS .....

TEL DAY ..... TEL EVE .....

Please complete the form legibly and send it with remittance and S.A.E. to Box Office, Lewes Little Theatre, Lancaster St. Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2PX. Cheques should always be made payable to LEWES THEATRE CLUB. TELEPHONE BOOKINGS: 01273 474826. See page 3 for Box Office hours.

PLAYS & CAFE THEATRE	Preferred date	Alternative date	Matinee or Evening	No. of seats	Preferred location
She Stoops to Conquer			Matinee £7.00		
She Stoops to Conquer			Evening £10.00		
New Sussex Singers	24 April	X	Ticket £10.00		
New Sussex Singers	25 April	X	Ticket £10.00		
New Sussex Singers	25 April	X	plus lunch £17.00		
Ivanov			Matinee £7.00		
Ivanov			Evening £10.00		

Please note: If the Box Office is able to fulfil only part of a request, a refund may be collected from the Box Office during opening hours. Alternatively, members may prefer to enclose either separate cheques or an open cheque crossed with a maximum amount.