

A to Z

Everything you wanted to know about The Mendip Players

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| ACTING | |
| | <p>Currently approximately 75% of our current members are actors with varying amounts of experience. There are around 30 at any one time available and wanting to act with the group. There is no upper age limit and we encourage younger members. Those between 10 and 18 are encouraged to join the Mendip Players Youth group. There is a lower age limit for the annual pantomime - children must be school year 3 when the pantomime is performed. Anyone who would like to act will be given the chance wherever possible.</p> <p>Lots of our new actors start with the panto where the chorus is a great place to decide whether you like treading the boards.</p> |
| AGM | |
| | <p>The AGM is held in April in the Memorial Hall, Draycott, where the Committee is elected for the next year, our financial report is produced and the past years issues and future plans are discussed with all members. According to our constitution only paid up members of the group are allowed to vote. It is the opportunity for every member of the group to have their say, air their views and influence the make up of the Committee.</p> |
| AUDITIONS | |
| | <p>Usually auditions are held for the next play very soon after the current one has ended. An introduction evening is held where members can meet the Director and Production Team, hear about the play and pick up a copy to read through before the auditions. Auditions for the pantomime are broken up into children and adult sessions. The decision makers will be the Director with help from one or two selected colleagues (usually including the Producer).</p> |
| BACKSTAGE | |
| | <p>Anyone who would like to help backstage can have the opportunity to join the backstage team. If you are inexperienced it is a very good way of getting to know how a production is put together.</p> |
| BUDGET | |
| | <p>Currently, the Management Committee is responsible for preparing a budget for the next production. Every attempt is made to stay within budget - by every department!</p> |
| CASTING | |
| | <p>The Director with an assistant (usually the Producer) will be responsible for casting their play or panto.</p> |

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| CHILDREN | |
| | Children are rarely involved in the plays but they play a very important role in the annual pantomime. Minimum age for children is School Year 3. Children between the ages 10 – 18 are invited to join the Mendip Players Youth group. Any child involved in a production or in the youth group must be registered with the Society (see Subscriptions). We can have up to 40 children involved in the panto. Our Panto is extremely popular and some of our children have gone on to become valuable members of the society as adults. |
| CHOREOGRAPHY | |
| | Dance routines play their part most memorably in the panto where some quite sophisticated routines are performed, usually by the junior and adult chorus. Members of the society choreograph these dances although we have co-opted professional help in the past. |
| COMMITTEE | |
| | The Management Committee has the responsibility to ensure the Society is properly run, they decide on the plays or pantomimes to be performed and plan the thinking about future productions. They take decisions regarding purchases and how best to use our resources both personally and financially. The Committee is made up of 8 members. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Minute Secretary are elected every three years. The Committee meets approximately 10 times a year and has the power to call extraordinary meetings if the need arises. All meetings are minuted and the Chairperson and Treasurer give a report at the AGM. |
| CONSTITUTION | |
| | A copy of the constitution is available for any member to read. Any changes to the constitution have to be agreed by the Committee and put forward at the AGM or an Extraordinary General Meeting. |
| CONTINUITY | |
| | See 'Prompt' |
| COSTUME | |
| | See 'Wardrobe' |
| DIRECTING | |
| | If a member of the society would like to direct a play or panto they must put their proposal to the committee. Whilst we are happy to encourage new directors, inexperienced members may be encouraged to be an assistant director before taking on all the responsibilities of full directorship. The Director will audition, cast, put together the production team and set the rehearsal schedules as well as working with the actors to present the chosen play. With a Producer at her/his side to keep an eye on timings and budget etc the director runs the show! |

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| FEEES | |
| | See Subscriptions |
| FRONT OF HOUSE | |
| | Meeting and greeting our audience, selling the tickets and organising the raffle, selling the drinks and refreshments and providing lots of information about The Mendip Players are all part of the FOH function. FOH is a popular place for non actors to do their stuff. |
| JOINING – HOW TO | |
| | Come and join us! Contact the Secretary on mendipplayerssecretary5@gmail.com or see the website for more details www.themendipplayers.co.uk |
| LICENCES | |
| | For all published plays we must obtain a licence. The Producer or Secretary usually deals with this and the licence must be held on site during performances. The cost is dependent on the number of seats in the theatre and the number of performances. This can range from £150.00 to £450.00, £50 per night is about average. |
| LIGHTING | |
| | A highly technical part of all productions. It can vary from relatively simple to quite complex. We have our own static lighting rig. Our Lighting Manager discusses with and advises the director, sets up, and strikes the lighting rig. A programme is set for complex productions for members of the lighting team to operate simpler ones. |
| MAKE UP | |
| | All make up is provided by the Society, and the make up situation is reviewed before each production to ensure we have the appropriate kit. Many actors do their own make up, others need and can get assistance. We do have some make up specialists but they appear to be a rare breed, so if you have an interest in this area, we would be very happy to hear from you! |
| MEMBERSHIP | |
| | Membership goes from September 1 st to August 31 st (or from joining date to August 31 st). Members are expected to renew their membership in September either by Standing Order or directly to our Treasurer. You cannot vote at the A.G.M. unless you are a fully paid up member. There are lots of benefits to being a paid up member - news of forthcoming productions, workshops, social evenings, film nights, play reading group, theatre trips and more. |
| MUSIC | |
| | Although we try to use live music as much as possible, most of our musical accompaniment is from backing tracks. |

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| NEWSLETTERS | |
| | To keep our members abreast of forthcoming productions, comments, awards, workshops and other news items the MP Newsletter is emailed to all. Created by a member of the committee to ensure no one misses out on the latest news or changes that could affect our society. |
| NON-ACTORS | |
| | Although any member who wishes to act is encouraged to do so, there are plenty of opportunities to support productions in other ways, and such 'unseen' activities are of course, essential for the success of every production. On joining, new members are invited to indicate their interests – acting, producing, stage management, set design, set building, lighting/sound, choreography, make up, wardrobe, music, front of house, publicity. We have several members who have no desire to be on stage but thoroughly enjoy being part of the support teams. The Society relies very much on these highly competent and willing members. |
| PAINTERS | |
| | Painters both artistic and domestic, are always needed – don't hide your light under a bushel if you can wield a brush – let us know! |
| PANTO | |
| | The annual Pantomime runs for at least 3 performances, usually in the first week of February. It is our most popular show of the year and has had casts of up to 80, ages range from 7 - 80! We have a healthy adult chorus and a younger contingent which includes many local children, a few taking lead roles, the majority in the chorus or dance ensembles. A large number of families are involved, and many children receive their first taste of the theatre in this way. Playing the Dame sees many of our male members eager to don the obligatory frock and wig! |
| PLAYREADING | |
| | We are starting a new play reading group where we hope that our members can socialise and read plays together. Hopefully this group will eventually have a more pertinent function which is to suggest future productions! Watch this space! |
| PLAYS | |
| | In most years three productions are staged including a pantomime. Generally the plays are put on in July and September with the panto traditionally running in the first week in February. The productions include comedies, serious classics, murder mysteries, even a radio play or two! At the current time, plays are chosen by prospective Directors and brought to the committee for approval. Suggestions from the membership are always welcome and everything is considered (possibly not 'Les Misérables' though!). |

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| PRODUCER | |
| | The 'Producer' role in our Society is to make sure that everything happens as it should. It's a co-ordinating function including such things as ensuring the play licence has been applied for on time, liaising with outside agencies (the Hall for example), checking that the production teams are on schedule etc. This enables the Director to concentrate on the actors and getting the best performances out of everyone. The Director and Producer work as a team. |
| PRODUCTION TEAMS | |
| | We are fortunate to have a wide range of production skills at our disposal. The Mendip Players boasts set designers, carpenters, painters, seamstresses, sound and light technicians with some amazing skills! However, new recruits to the backstage team are needed all the time – so if acting is not your scene how about a spot of painting or sewing? |
| PROGRAMMES | |
| | A programme is created for every production which not only identifies all those involved but also details of the next one. |
| PROMPT | |
| | Although actors are given adequate rehearsal time to become word perfect, and are 'off books' several weeks before curtain up, a prompter is designated for each production, for the final weeks of rehearsal and the actual performance. |
| PROPS | |
| | We have amassed an eclectic selection of props throughout the years however we can always find what we need! For personal props, our Props Mistress can sort everything out. For larger, stage props, we are lucky to have many hands-on members who are creative and capable of making anything we need - from an electric chair to Cinderella's pumpkin coach! |
| PUBLICITY | |
| | We have regular updates in the local newsletter. Pre-production fliers and posters (designed by members) are distributed around the neighbourhood. We have a healthy social media presence on Facebook (@themendipplayers) and Instagram (@mendipplayersdrama). We are reviewed regularly in local newspapers. |
| REHEARSALS | |
| | We rehearse every Wednesday in the Memorial Hall Draycott. Nearer to showtime, some actors like to get together at other times to go over scenes etc. In the week of the production there will be a dress rehearsal and a technical rehearsal on stage. |

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| SET BUILD/STRIKE | |
| | Setting up and taking down the set, ensuring it is safe and secure (no wobbles). This usually has to be managed over a weekend and is co-ordinated by the Stage Manager. The team of set builders is put together for each production. Striking the set is getting it all down once the play has finished, returning the usable stuff to our store and clearing and cleaning the stage. |
| SET DESIGN & BUILD | |
| | Each production will have a Set Designer to create how the production will look and decide which stage props will need to be made or sourced. The designer will have read the play and discussed it with the Director. We are lucky to have several members adept at using power tools and plenty of ingenuity to create amazing things out of MDF. It is all hands on deck to build the set - usually a couple of weeks before the show. |
| SINGING | |
| | We don't do musicals although the annual Pantomime always involves lots of singing. Good voices are always a bonus so if you can do more than just hold a tune do join us. |
| SOCIALS | |
| | As a Society we are very friendly and sociable, we meet for drinks in the pub, film evenings, get together at members' houses, theatre trips and the Christmas party. |
| SOUND | |
| | A sound engineer is required for all productions and some members are skilled in this particular discipline. Sound effects provide an added dimension to any production so if you are of a technical turn of mind maybe this is for you. |
| STAGE MANAGEMENT | |
| | Each production will have an appointed Stage Manager who has the responsibility to put together the crew and ensure the set is built, erected, painted, moved and stored, the props are in place, there is a stage crew to change scenery, pull curtains and operate off stage effects. The back stage team report to the Stage Manager but everyone helps to put out and put away the chairs! |
| STORAGE | |
| | We have a container which holds the larger set pieces, canvases, large props and other bits and bobs. Upstairs at the Hall, we have secure locked built in cupboards which hold our wardrobe, personal props and electrical paraphernalia. |

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| SUBSCRIPTIONS | |
| | We have an annual membership subscription of £20 per adult, £10 for U18 or those still in full time education. There are a number of options for families. This is used to pay for the insurances we are required by law to have and fund part of the rehearsal costs. |
| SCRIPTS | |
| | Most scripts are purchased from the publishers except when members write their own. Members of the society are always happy to read through prospective plays and offer advice if asked. |
| THEATRE TRIPS | |
| | We are pleased to support theatre trips organised by members. In the past these have taken us to Wells, Bristol, Bath and London. |
| TICKETS | |
| | Ticket prices are set between the Director and the Committee. Concessions are available. Tickets are available from the Website and also at Draycott Community Shop. The Pantomime tends to sell out quickly so we encourage people to buy their tickets as early as possible! |
| UNDERSTUDIES | |
| | It is not usual for understudies to be chosen when casting. In the absence of a cast member on “the night”, it is likely that the Director or Producer would stand in. |
| VENUE | |
| | We rehearse and perform in the Memorial Hall, Draycott where we can seat audiences of up to 150. |
| WARDROBE | |
| | Our Wardrobe team is second to none! Whatever the era and however many costumes are needed, we can rely on Wardrobe to kit us out appropriately whether it be 30 mice costumes or Victorian London ladies! On the rare occasion that we don't have or can't make a costume, we will hire in. |
| WEBSITE | |
| | Our website is managed by a society member. It holds information about the society, galleries of past productions, details of how to join and our box office. www.themendisplayers.co.uk |
| WORKSHOPS | |
| | Workshops are held throughout the year to focus on a variety of skills from characterisation to understanding a text to physicality in drama. Our Tech team have lead workshops on lighting and sound. We welcome suggestions from our members. |

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| XMAS PARTY | |
| | We have an annual get together to celebrate the festive season with friends. A chance to chat, drink, eat and dance – a good time is guaranteed. |
| YOUTH GROUP | |
| | The Mendip Players Youth group is open to children aged 10 - 17. We meet weekly on a Tuesday at the Memorial Hall, Draycott. Sessions include drama games, theatre skills and play rehearsals. We aim for two Youth productions a year. In addition to the annual membership fee of £10 per child, there is a weekly sub of £3.50 which goes towards theatre trips, workshops and parties! Our young people are encourage to get involved with all aspects of stagecraft from lighting and sound, to directing, scriptwriting, costume design and so on. |
| ZZZZ | |
| | There's definitely a buzz about us! (No, they're not sleeping!) |