



*Present*

*Under Milk Wood*  
*By Dylan Thomas*

*Directed by Ann Hoole*



**Halse Village Hall**

**5, 6, 7 June 2008 at 7.30pm**



## Halse Players

It is less than two years since 'Cinderella and the Forty Thieves in the Woods' gave birth to the Halse Players. We are now presenting our third play since then, all directed and cast from within the villages of Halse and Ash Priors.

Our aims are straightforward:

- To offer a wide variety of good quality drama and pantomime
- To make sure our plays are accessible to our audience
- To provide a challenge to directors, actors and backstage members
- To cast by open audition, always using people from our villages where we can.

We are very pleased with our productions to date which have attracted full audiences and a little bit of local critical acclaim! We have a full programme ahead of us which, together with our current production, will hopefully continue to grow the reputation of the Halse Players. We very much appreciate the efforts of those who work so hard behind the scenes to give the actors the opportunity to have fun on the stage and particularly of you, our audience, without whom there would be no point.

## *Dylan Thomas and Under Milk Wood*

Dylan Thomas was born in Swansea in October 1914 where his father was the Senior English Master at Swansea Grammar School. Having completed his education there, he embarked on a short career as a journalist before making his life in London where he became a renowned lyric poet and writer of short stories.

Major works include *Collected Poems 1934-52*, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* (1940) and, of course *Under Milk Wood* (1953)

In 1949 he made his home at Laugharne, Carmarthenshire (clearly the inspiration for 'Llareggub') and between 1950 and 1953 completed three lecture tours of the U.S.A. during which *Under Milk Wood* was completed.



Throughout his adult life he was known to be an enthusiastic drinker and this was to bring about his tragic death in November 1953. Not by the traditional slow decline but violently as the result of severe alcoholic poisoning following a competitive drinking session in New York.

*Under Milk Wood* was, of course, written for Radio which now is probably regarded as a minority medium for major plays. Whilst film was firmly established in the early 1950s, television was in its infancy and not yet seen as a major opportunity to bring drama directly into peoples' homes. Indeed throughout the 1950s major BBC performers such as Tony Hancock clung to Radio as the medium for proper work with television still seen as experimental. It is in this context that 'Under Milk Wood' was first performed in 1954 shortly after Thomas' untimely death and thus takes its place as one of the great literary works of the 20th century.

## The Cast

<b>Narrators</b>	Chris Davies and Alan Byrne
<b>Actors</b>	Chris Davies, Leff Cook, David Porter, Alan Byrne, Paul Batchelor, Ann Hoole, Matt Ogden, Charles Grimwade, Caroline Cook, Katy Davies, Claire Daly, Doreen Williams, Sylvia Haselock
<b>Technician</b>	Simon Burch

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<b>Set Construction</b>	Tony Burch and Chris Baldwin
<b>Furniture and Properties</b>	Tim and Kate Payne
<b>Costumes, Hairstyles, Makeup</b>	Shirley Byrne, Jodie Reading and Sophie Baverstock
<b>Posters and Programme</b>	Matt Ogden, Andy Hill and John Bull
<b>Ticketing and Publicity</b>	Jill Hillenbrand and Tony Burch
<b>Stage Management</b>	Jenny Hill
<b>Front of House Team</b>	Andy Hill, Stephen Hoole and Clayton Vellacott
<b>Lighting</b>	Matt Reading and Marcus Westcott
<b>Sound</b>	Simon Burch and Matt Ogden
<b>Producer</b>	Jenny Hill
<b>Director</b>	Ann Hoole

## Under Milk Wood

A play for voices

by Dylan Thomas

*The play is set in a sound studio of the BBC Home Service during the early 1950s*

*There will be a 20 minutes interval between the two acts.*

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## Halse Players

### Previous Productions

Cinderella and the Forty Thieves in the Wood (January 2007). Alan Byrne, David Porter, Richard Elston, Liz Topping, Jay Brooksbank, Alison Bellamy, Leff Cook, Rob Wonnacott, Matt Ogden, Derek Hillenbrand, Sam Kirkham, Norman Tricks, Barbara Bartlett, Chris & Katy Davies, Doreen Williams, Ann Hoole, Vicky Remnant, Katy MacKeith, Anna Kennedy, Naomi Porter. Produced and Directed by Maggie Cooksley and Liz Richmond

Time and the Conways (J.B. Priestley) July 2007. Ann Hoole, Richard Elston, Maggie Cooksley, Simon Burch, Jay Brooksbank, Jenny Hill, Claire Daly, Sylvia-Mary Haselock, Matt Ogden and Alan Byrne. Produced and Directed by Andy Hill

Absurd Person Singular (Alan Ayckbourn) February 2008. Jenny Hill, Andy Hill, David Porter, Caroline Cook, Claire Daly, Derek Hillenbrand. Produced by Andy Hill, Directed by Matt Ogden

### Next Production

Jeffrey Bernard is Unwell (Keith Waterhouse) 20,21,22 November 2008. To be Produced and Directed by Matt Ogden and Andy Hill. There will be an open meeting to introduce the play on Monday 16th June at the Village Hall at 7.00 pm with reading/audition at a later date to be advised. Everyone welcome.

# THE PLAYERS

## *Charles Grimwade*



We regard Charles as the father of modern Halse drama, not least because of his production of 'A Man Born to be King' (Dorothy L. Sayers) in the church which inspired many of us to become involved in drama (or reawakened old leanings). As a schoolmaster he produced several school plays including 'A Man For All Seasons', 'Hassan' and 'Volpone'. He has also produced operas including 'Nabucco' and 'Turandot'. Musically, of course, he is best known locally for his work with 'Bacchanale'

## *Doreen Williams*

Doreen has acted all her life. As a young lady she completed a three year Drama course at Toynby Hall in London, then joining the City Literary Institute off Drury Lane where she worked with aspiring professionals including Richard Briers and Richard Wilson. She is a veteran of more than 70 productions including works by Checkhov, Brecht, Coward and Sheridan but looks most fondly on her appearance as Fairy Twinkletoes here in Halse a couple of years ago. We are indeed lucky to have Doreen as part of our team.



## *Chris Davies*



Chris was brought up in the heart of Dylan Thomas land in South West Wales and thus brings vital authenticity to our production. His Opera experience is extensive and includes lead tenor roles in the finest of operatic works too numerous to mention here. All this began at school where he appeared as a little maid in the famous G & S trio alongside the current Archbishop of Canterbury. In pure drama his school debut was in 'Our Town' (Thornton Wilder).

## *Katy Davies*

Like her husband, Katy is also from the correct part of Wales and is looking forward to reading 'Under Milk Wood' although may not have chosen to do so with a bunch of English amateurs! We all know Katy as a very talented musician and again she is a veteran of numerous operatic performances including a number with the Somerset Opera Group. Interestingly 'A Midsummer Nights Dream' appears twice in her repertoire (one dramatic, one operatic) where she has performed as two different fairies!



## *Leff Cook*

Apart from school (Mole in 'Wind in the Willows') and a Prisonwarder in 'The Quarefellow' (Behan), Leff has also performed as an adult with the 'Hayes Players' which one would imagine to be a step up from Halse. His two roles were as a gendarme and a burglar. It would be nice to provide more detail but sadly Leff cannot remember the name of either play. More recently his Halse debut included three parts in 'Cinderella etc in the Woods.



## *Paul Batchelor*

Paul claims no dramatic credentials whatever but volunteered to join us for 'Under Milk Wood' because of his longstanding love for the work and, of course, some Welsh heritage. Reasons enough and we hope Paul enjoys the experience.

## *Maggie Cooksley*



Maggie has appeared on stage in numerous productions, originally for South Petherton Combined Arts Society, then Bishops Lydeard Dramatic Society and Halse pantomimes. She directed the most recent Halse panto and took an unexpected last minute part in 'Time and the Conways'. Luckily she has managed to get away again with not having to learn any lines.

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## *Ann Hoole (Director)*



We are proud to welcome Ann as our fourth different Director for Halse Players all of which live in our small village. Her dramatic credentials are already well established following her outstanding performance in the lead role in Time and the Conways last year.

'Under Milk Wood is important to me as the coastal village in West Wales bears more than a passing resemblance to the small industrial town in South Wales where I spent a large part of my childhood. The play is a delightful, comic, lyrical yet grave picture of a small Welsh community and gives a vibrant reminder of how the Welsh love to talk. And why did I volunteer to direct this piece? Quite simply I didn't think the Halse Players would ever put on this wonderful 'play for voices' unless I did!'



Dylan Thomas' home in Laugharne in West Wales. The village is the setting for the fictitious 'Llareggub'.



The Interior of the boathouse where Thomas did much of his writing.