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YOUR NEWS:

Please keep us informed – do tell us about your Society's productions, so that they can be included on the KDA website.

Add admin@kentdrama.org.uk to your publicity e-mail, and join KDA's Facebook group to publicise your society's activities.

2019 FULL LENGTH PLAY FESTIVAL

There are again 18 entries in this year's Full Length Play Festival.

We welcome back Charles Evans as adjudicator. He has adjudicated our Festival several times in the past, and is widely well regarded for his inciteful and helpful adjudications.

Copies of a list of societies' forthcoming productions, including the Festival adjudication dates, are enclosed with this newsletter. Please disseminate this amongst your members, and encourage them to see as many of the productions as possible. Seeing another society's production, and hearing the adjudication, is an enjoyable evening and a good way to learn how to improve your own productions.

Woodchurch Players have kindly agreed to host the **Awards Evening**, which will be held on Saturday 22 June 2019 at Woodchurch Village Hall – societies will remember their excellent presentation two years ago. Tickets will be £15 per person, to include food, and a bar will be available. Full details, including the ticketing arrangements, will be sent to participating societies nearer the date.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The KDA would like to present the **Lifetime Achievement Award** again this year, and we would welcome nominations from societies.

If you know of someone in your group who would qualify for this award, would you please send the name with brief reasons to **Michael Patrick** at angelampatrick@btinternet.com by **20 May**.

Previous entries can be resubmitted.

We would like to hear from more societies, including those whose members have not previously received this award.



THE FESTIVAL'S ADJUDICATOR

Charles Evans, BA, DipEd, ADB, GODA



Born in Warlingham and educated at Keele and Oxford, Charles served in colonial North Borneo before entering the Royal Navy. He was a Royal Navy sponsored graduate of the British Theatre Association's ADB and is the author of several prize winning military-historical plays.

Charles taught at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, specialising in Communism and Russian life and culture. He also held an appointment in Communication Studies at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

In 1989 Charles was a Churchill Fellow and travelled widely in the (then) Soviet Union examining the impact of glasnost on Soviet theatre. In 1992-4 he held Travelling Fellowships from the Leverhulme Trust and the British Academy, and spent extended periods in Moscow and Saint Petersburg studying Russian and English drama.

In 2005 Charles was awarded a Hawthornden Fellowship to complete a 15 year diary of travels in Russia. He contributed a chapter to The Cambridge Companion to Harold Pinter. He continues to write and lecture on theatre and politics in the New Russia.

Charles has adjudicated festivals overseas, in Scotland and in the Home Counties, and is a published playwright and poet.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The **Annual General Meeting** will be held on Saturday 5th October. Details will be circulated in the summer. Last year, only a few societies turned up, and if the same happens this year then our Constitution requires us to propose winding-up the Association.

Please arrange for someone from your society to attend the meeting. These meetings establish better contacts between societies, and we need to share views as to how KDA can assist drama societies in Kent and to consider how we can continue the Festival over the longer term.

APPEAL FOR ADJUDICATORS

It has become increasingly difficult to find adjudicators for our Festival, especially in view of its duration and the distances involved between societies' locations.

Do you know of anyone who would be willing and able to adjudicate the Festival? Membership of GoDA is not necessary but an extensive experience of amateur drama, and presentational skills, are.

A possible solution might be to have a small panel of adjudicators made up of members from societies – so that no-one adjudicated their own society's entry. Please let the Committee know what you think of this, or any other ideas.

This newsletter and the list of Festival productions can be downloaded from KDA's website www.kentdrama.org.uk, which also gives details of all member societies, and of their forthcoming productions.

KDA also has a Facebook page: [KentDramaAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/KentDramaAssociation)

A Tribute to ARTHUR ROCHESTER, by Charles Evans

In May 2018, following a short illness, GODA lost one of its most popular and well-loved members, a long-time and prominent adjudicator in London and the Southern Counties, including KDA's Festival.

Arthur won his spurs as adjudicator and GODA member through long and varied experience, both on and off the stage. Born and educated in the London area, as a young man Arthur saw commissioned service in the Honourable Artillery Company, including one posting to Germany (and making an early stage appearance in the field gun salute at the Royal Tournament). Beginning a career in sales and marketing, he had the good fortune to meet and marry his life partner, Jean, at the company where they both worked. Subsequently, his career took him to India, Scotland and Liverpool, during which time he held management consultancy roles with Rank Xerox and Barclays Bank, as well as forming two companies himself. His work entailed frequent and often long visits to other parts of the world, including the United States, India and Africa. In Madras, then Glasgow, the couple were blessed with their two sons, Philip and Andrew, a family which in due course would expand to include grandchildren Sarah, Kathryn and Alex.

Arthur's interests were as varied as his travels and career. Always a rugby fan (particularly if his boys were on the field), he also played hockey for his regiment, and, perhaps a harbinger of his GODA years, then took up refereeing. Like so many with links to drama, he was also a keen cricketer. His nifty footwork extended to ballroom dancing, and in those early days Arthur and Jean, both expert dancers, consolidated their happy and popular partnership on the dance floor. But Arthur's main joy and pleasure was increasingly the field of drama, in which he showed himself multi-talented. As an actor, participating with more than one society in the Bromley and Kent Drama Festivals he shone in both heavyweight and lighter roles, perhaps finding his true home in comedy, and in the Bromley Festival he more than once took the Best Actor's Award. He had a lifelong passion for Shakespeare, and, among his many appearances on the Bromley classical stage, his Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* was particularly memorable. Also fondly recalled from earlier years was his account of Bottom ("born to play the role" said many friends of that time). But, as noted by those who had the pleasure of working with him, the bumptious exuberance which he brought to this latter role belied his sincere and more modest nature.

As with increasing seniority his acting roles diminished, with customary versatility Arthur turned to directing. Many of those in the Bromley Festival community who had performed under his guidance would comment on, typically, a firm hand coupled with unfailing civility. His theatrical judgement was sound, and he was a sometime Artistic Director at the Bromley Little Theatre. Subsequently, he put his administrative experience to good use, organising the Bromley Theatre Guild play festival, and serving as Vice-President of the Guild. Throughout this time, Arthur was fortunate to have at his side the loyal support of Jean, not only as sometime actress (once unforgettably partnering Arthur in *Gaslight*), but also as festival award-winning stage manager.

The couple formed an equally valuable partnership in their commitment to the United Reformed Church, first in Bromley, then at Christ Church in Petts Wood. Arthur was a serving Elder of the church, while Jean for a time edited the church magazine, and was secretary of the church's (then) associated Whitfield Players, until its demise Arthur's 'home' society.

In 2004, realising a growing desire to use his thespian talents more widely, Arthur was accepted for GODA membership. He quickly established a reputation as a sympathetic and dependable adjudicator. With his benign and avuncular demeanour, coupled with an unfailing ease of manner, Arthur was a reassuring presence on the adjudicator's platform. His appraisals, delivered with twinkling eye and ready humour, were firm in judgement but always tempered with kindness. "Scrupulously fair," was the comment heard from more than one festival organiser. Whatever the venue, village hall or large theatre, Arthur, carefully attentive to diction, never forgot the back row. As an actor himself, he well knew the sensitive post-performance vulnerability, and could always find the adjudicator's subtle alchemy of encouragement and criticism. His tact extended to post-performance discussions, when, always the gentleman, he had the happy knack of relating easily to cast and crew; and, in those occasional moments when disagreement arose, could smilingly disarm the most persistent of challengers. With Jean invariably at his side, he was equally supportive of his colleagues, ready with generous comments after attending a colleague's engagement. "Lovely adjudication," he would whisper to a colleague whose address he had just heard, as ready to learn as to praise. He adjudicated widely, regularly the Bromley and Kent festivals, but also the Glasgow District Festival (for Arthur a voyage de mémoire), the Southern Counties Festival, and the Gibraltar Drama Festival. Sadly, Arthur lost his beloved Jean in 2014, and began to reduce his commitments. But as late as 2016 and 2017 he was still adjudicating for the Southern Counties and Duncan Rand festivals. Fittingly, the Bromley Theatre Guild's Adjudicator's cup is to be restyled the Arthur Rochester Adjudicator's Cup.

Arthur's life, career and interests were all marked with his distinctive enthusiasm and notable achievement. Family, friends and colleagues in many walks of life will be saddened by his passing. And we in GODA can, gratefully and with thanks, salute one of our own.