



**ECCO**  
**JANUARY 2009**  
English Comedy Club, Brussels

Dear All,

First, best wishes to everyone for a happy and healthy 2009! We saw out 2008 with *A Christmas Carol*, and, with barely a pause for overeating, the Doctor Who Christmas Day special, and fireworks on New Year's Eve, it is on to the next show. *Absurd Person Singular* is already well underway, with a cast and crew fired up to create 3 kitchens and 3 Christmas Eves. See below for more details on APS, including an interview with cast member Hilary Barry, a new and already much-loved addition to the ECC scene. Online booking has already opened, so make a note in your diary for 3-7 and 10-14 March!

Of course, there is plenty to keep us busy between now and then. For those of us not already on board and working hard on the preparations for **FEATS (Festival of European Anglophone Theatrical Societies)**, the Steering Committee is making its first call for volunteers, so please sign up, however little time you can offer. FEATS is a huge affair and an opportunity for lots of people to get involved – we will need many, many pairs of hands both in the run-up to the event and over the long weekend of 29 May to 1 June! If you are interested, Janet Middleton is collecting names; please get in touch with her on 02/347.11.13 or [feats2009@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com](mailto:feats2009@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com).

The ECC is of course one of the co-owners of the Warehouse – and most people are aware that the old place could use a bit of work... (!) The sterling **Adopt-a-Brick** fundraising work continues with another quiz – plus watch this space for details of an upcoming coffee morning in early March and a race night. Between those occasions, and upcoming shows *Compleat Works of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)* from the ATC and *Othello* from BSS, the social calendar is filling up very nicely over the rest of winter. Hope to see you at one or more of our events, for all of which you can find more information below.

Two last points: firstly, if you have not yet renewed your **ECC membership**, please do so using the form below; and from now on, please send any notices for the ECCO directly to [harrietmb@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:harrietmb@yahoo.co.uk).

All the best,  
Abi Greef  
ECC Chair

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**EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS**

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**CALENDAR ROUND-UP (see below for full details):**

Sunday 1 February 2009: FEATS launch party

Wednesday 4 February: Monthly Playreading (*Black Comedy* by Peter Schaffer)

Saturday 7 February 2009: Adopt-A-Brick Quiz

Monday 23 February: ECC Planning Meeting (2009-2010 season)

3–14 March 2009: Absurd Person Singular by Alan Ayckbourn (Studio)

Saturday 7 March: Brick Fund Coffee Morning and Silent Auction

Saturday 18 April 2009: Centenary Year Launch reception at Brussels Town Hall

29 May–1 June 2009: FEATS weekend

20 June 2009: Delyria – Shakespeare Club Night (“Museum” Nightclub)



**Feats**  
BRUSSELS 2009

**SUNDAY 1 FEBRUARY  
FEATS LAUNCH PARTY**

Details available from Janet Middleton on 02/347.11.13  
or [feats2009@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com](mailto:feats2009@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com)

FEATS is returning to Brussels in 2009, a fitting culmination to the ECC's centenary season. As any FEATS regular will know (and anyone unfamiliar with FEATS could easily imagine!) a four-night international theatre festival doesn't just organise itself; it needs lots, and lots, of volunteers. The FEATS 2009 Committee has been in place and working hard for several months already. With about four months to go, it is time to get more volunteers on board. There will be a launch party on Sunday 1 February, starting at 7pm, where you can meet the FEATS 2009 Committee members, talk about the preparations for the festival so far, and sign up for one of the many roles that we need people to fill. Some roles need people who can give time in the run-up to the festival, while others will be about helping over the weekend itself. Are you interested? Please contact Janet (details above) to sign up for the party (or to receive information by another means if you cannot make it on 1<sup>st</sup> February). We look forward to seeing you.

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**EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS**

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**WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY  
MONTHLY PLAYREADING: *BLACK COMEDY***

Avenue Bel Air 32, 1180 Bruxelles

The next playreading will take place at **Mary Pritchard's house on Wednesday 4 February (7.45 pm for 8 pm)**. The play will be *Black Comedy* by Peter Schaffer. Please confirm attendance on 02 345 8583 beforehand so that we know how many chairs to put out. Ideas for the coming months are welcomed!

**SATURDAY 7 FEBRUARY  
ADOPT-A-BRICK QUIZ**

Warehouse Studio Theatre, 69a rue Waelhem, 1030 Schaerbeek

Given the resounding success of the Quiz held at the end of last year, we are pleased to be able to announce the **Adopt-A-Brick Quiz – Round 2, at 7.30pm on Saturday, 7 February 2009** at the Warehouse Studio Theatre. If you would like to bring a team of four people along to join in the fun for just 10 euros each, simply fill in the online form ([www.theatreinbrussels.com](http://www.theatreinbrussels.com)). There is a limit of 20 teams so book soon!

**MONDAY 23 FEBRUARY  
ECC 2009-2010 PLANNING MEETING**

It might seem a little crazy with so much going on in the next four months, but we are already thinking ahead to next season! As is the ECC tradition, we are holding a planning meeting to which all potential directors are cordially invited to put forward their proposals. The meeting will take place on **Monday 23 February, 7.30pm chez Abi Greef**. If you would like to come along, please call Abi on 0495 594956 to let her know.

**SATURDAY 7 MARCH  
WAREHOUSE BRICK FUND COFFEE MORNING AND  
SILENT AUCTION**

Come and join us for coffee & home-made cake between **10am and 2pm on Saturday 7 March**, and while there take the time to bid for one of the fantastic gifts and services donated by Friends of the Brick Fund. A silent auction allows you to look around at what is on offer, choose the item you want and simply add your name to the list before each item to place your bid. Multiple bids welcome. Think eBay in the real world!

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**EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS**

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**ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR BY ALAN AYCKBOURN****3-7 and 10-14 March 2009, 8pm**

Directed by Diana Morton-Hooper

Warehouse Studio Theatre, 69a rue Waelhem, 1030 Schaerbeek

€ 15 (€13 for ECC members and students)

Box office now open at <http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com/>

or 0477 408704 (between 1pm and 6pm)

Three couples. Three kitchens. Three hilarious Christmas parties – firstly chez social climber Sidney Hopcroft and loyal wife Jane, with a knack for housework but little else, secondly chez philandering unsuccessful architect Geoffrey Jackson and suicidal wide Eva, and lastly chez over the hill banker Ronald Brewster-Wright and his dipsomaniac second spouse Marion. Ranked as one of Ayckbourn's funniest and most popular plays, *Absurd Person Singular* has running through it a darker thread. Through the wild comedy of Christmas party disasters is the story of the advance of the Hopcrofts to material prosperity and the decline of the others. Written in the 1970s, it still has resonance today: the underdog overcoming adversity, the rise and fall of the class system, character weaknesses, misplaced egos.... But as with all Ayckbourn, he will make you laugh heartily until that moment when you wonder if one of those people could be you...

**CAST AND CREW:**Sidney Hopcroft: John Baldwin (*Dancing at Lughnasa*)Jane Hopcroft: Sara Murray (*Honour*),Geoffrey Jackson: Philip Deeks (*Honour*)Eva Jackson: Alma Forsyth (*Humble Boy*)

Ronald Brewster-Wright: Richard Foxon (FEATS Best Actor 2002)

Marion Brewster-Wright: Hilary Barry (*Diana of Dobson's*) – see below for a Q&A with Hilary!

plus surprise Lottie &amp; Dick Potters nightly

Director: Diana Morton-Hooper

Assistant Director: Roisin Dore

Stage Manager: Alice Perry

Properties: Eileen Sutton and Sue Botterell

Box Office: Carolyn Cusack

Poster design: John Baldwin

Programme: Conrad Toft

Publicity: Harriet Mancey-Barratt

Set: Philip Deeks, Conrad Toft, Roger Axford, Peter Mountain &amp; Rory Spellman

Lighting: Carsten Koestner

Sound: Malcolm Hiseman

Makeup: Pauline van Groeningen

Wardrobe: Iona Hamilton

Live Sound Effects: Rory Spellman

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**EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS – EVENTS**

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**SATURDAY 18 APRIL  
ECC CENTENARY PARTY**

Plans are underway for another club event to celebrate our centenary season. We had originally hoped to have drinks at the New Year but our venue – the Brussels Town Hall – had a double booking, so we re-scheduled to 18 April. We are still working out the details of the evening, but here is what we can tell you so far:

- Time: 1800-2100 (TBC)
- Theme: ENGLAND! As it will almost be St. George's Day and Shakespeare's birthday, we decided to celebrate with an England theme. "English" costume will be voluntary, but of course encouraged and warmly welcomed!

More details will follow as we finalise arrangements with the Town Hall. For now, block your diaries and prepare to raise another birthday toast to the ECC!

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**INTERVIEW – INTERVIEW – INTERVIEW – INTERVIEW**

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**Q & A: HILARY BARRY**

Marion Brewster-Wright in *Absurd Person Singular*

**So, Hilary, how long have you been in Brussels?**

I've been here for 3 years – before that I was living and working in Senegal. I work in Public Health projects in developing countries, hence my 10 years of being in Africa before moving to Brussels.

**Do you have a theatrical background, or is this all new to you?**

I started Drama classes at the age of five and continued until my early twenties, when I completed my drama teacher exams. Though working abroad in Africa, I remained involved in theatre by joining the "International Players" during my stay in Ghana and I taught drama as a hobby in Senegal.

**How did you get into the less exotic Brussels scene?**

The first English speaking play I saw in Brussels was the ECC's *Honour* at the end of 2007. Sitting in the audience, I had quite a rush of nostalgia for my own acting days and was absolutely mesmerised by the actors' performance. I couldn't believe that this was Am Dram as the standard was so high. Little did I know that a year later I would be acting alongside Sara Murray and Philip Deeks in the upcoming *Absurd Person Singular*. This of course began the 'acting itch' and I was soon scouting around the websites to see if there were any upcoming auditions with any of the theatre groups. The ITG was auditioning for Vincent Eatons' play 'Max Dix, Zero to Six' and I plucked up the courage to go along.

After the auditions, I was on an absolute high and I floated out of the studio ...I kept asking myself 'Where has this Hilary been for the last 10 years?', and where have these marvelous people been hiding since my arrival in Brussels? I was cast for three parts in Max Dix, an optimistic mother, a mad grandmother and a weird religious freaky cousin.

After a week's run in Brussels and bringing Max Dix to Feats in Stockholm, I was asked to audition for the ECC centenary play 'Diana of Dobsons'. Of course like all the other actors in the Brussels theatre groups, I had promised myself 'a long relaxing break from rehearsals' but no, this would not be possible... that acting itch was still niggling away and I found myself cast as 'Diana Massingberd'.

### How did you find working with the ECC?

Our first read through was the 2nd of June. I had read snippets of the play but not the whole way through. I had never seen a character with so many lines!!! Reality set in while waiting for the tram... I had to learn all of these... panic panic panic! However, once I got into it, I really started to like this feisty 'Diana' character and I empathized with all of her frustrations, hopes and dreams. Richard Foxon (also in *Absurd Person Singular*) and Henri Colens were my suitors in this play. Poor Richard – I had to refuse to marry him every night! Alma Forsyth, Bridget Peirson Davis and Marion Tomkins were wonderfully encouraging when my confidence was sometimes failing, as were all the other 'Dobsonites'. Conrad Toft, my Director, put me through my paces, pushed me beyond what I thought were my limitations and stuck by me every step of the way. I have rarely witnessed such dedication.

After Di of Dob's, I once again decided to take 'a long deserved break' which lasted all of about two days since I offered to give a hand backstage by doing props for the ITG production of 'Dancing at Lughnasa'. I would like to advise all of the actors to do this at least once in the upcoming seasons. I got intense training from the one and only, Eileen Sutton, and thanks to her I learned so much during those few weeks and was very honored to be involved in the show. Forget thinking that the backstage crew has it easy!!! I can safely say it is a myth...these are our 'Guardian Angels' who get the actors on and off stage and hold us and our shows together. As actors our adrenalin keeps us going but for the crew it's just pure selfless devotion!

### How are the preparations for Absurd Person Singular going?

I play 'Marion', an eccentric upper-class banker's wife who is a little fond of the gin. We have a fantastic group of actors (Philip Deeks, Sara Murray, John Baldwin, Alma Forsyth and Richard Foxon) and so far we are thoroughly enjoying ourselves. Ayckbourn's writing is simply hilarious and there is just so much material to work with. This play will be a test for our Director as the choreography in each scene is more than impressive. The backstage crew also has their work cut out with three very different scenes to put in place as well as quiet a lot of activity off stage. For the cast and crew our second residence has officially become the 'Warehouse' Studio from now until middle of March 2009. However, the Warehouse is already a second home for most of us, isn't it? There's always a friendly face, the kettle on the boil, a community of people we belong to and theatre at its best!



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## **REMINDER: MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS**

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If you haven't yet renewed your membership, please do so as soon as possible! We very much hope that you will wish to continue supporting the ECC, as well as obtaining benefits such as reductions on ticket prices. Membership remains at the rate of €10 per year, and only €5 for students, stagiaires and under-18s, with the membership year running from 1 October to 30 September.

We would be very grateful if all new and continuing members could fill in a copy of the attached membership form, in order to ensure that our contact details remain current. If you have any queries regarding membership, please do not hesitate to contact our membership secretary, Rachel Cuff, on [rachel.cuff@bplaw.com](mailto:rachel.cuff@bplaw.com) or 0486 102632.

You can pay membership dues by bank transfer to our account: **310-0627727-29**. Don't forget to put your name in the communication. Then please take a moment to **update the form on the next page** and send it by:

- Post, to **English Comedy Club, rue Waelhemstraat 73, 1030 Brussels** or
- Or E-mail to [Rachel.cuff@bplaw.com](mailto:Rachel.cuff@bplaw.com)

For the sum of €10 a year (€5 for students, stagiaires and under 18s), you will be entitled to:

- Our regular newsletter, ECCO, with information on forthcoming auditions, shows and other club events
- Reductions on tickets for ECC productions
- Membership of CAST, giving access to the rehearsal rooms and workshop in the Warehouse complex for ECC, ATC and ITG events
- Participation in monthly play readings and other club events.



ECCO  
JANUARY  
2009

## English Comedy Club, Brussels

### Membership address and telephone number update

I am a new member	I am renewing my membership
Date:	

Name			
Address	(street & no.)		
	(commune)		
mobile phone			
Tel (daytime/office)		Tel (evenings)	
e-mail			

I am interested in (PLEASE TICK):

ACTING		DIRECTING		PRODUCING	
RUNNING PLAYREADINGS		RUNNING BOX OFFICE		TAKING BOOKINGS	
ATTENDING PLAYREADINGS		COSTUMES		PROPERTIES	
STAGE MANAGEMENT		SET BUILDING		PAINTING	
LIGHTING		SOUND		PUBLICITY	
MAKEUP		HAIR		FRONT OF HOUSE	
OTHER					