



# PLS Newsletter ♦ Fall Season 2008

## *Shakespeare and the Queen's Men: the project continues to flourish.*

We are pleased to announce more projects, either already existing or at the press.

Queen's Men Editions, which will be located on the University of Victoria's [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#) web space, has *The Chronical History of King Leir* ready to go online as old-spelling and modern-spelling texts. Notes and introduction will follow by spring of 2009. Shortly thereafter, we hope to post *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*

Several editors are working on the other Queen's Men texts to be published online over the next several years. Also being launched this fall at McMaster University and available to early drama classes world-wide is [Performing the Queen's Men](#), an interactive research web site with many performance clips from our productions of *King Leir*, *Famous Victories*, and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. The web site was largely created by Peter Cockett with multi-media creation and editing by Stacey Wheel.



Our paper publication, *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603*, edited by Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin, is at Ashgate Publishing Company, available for purchase in spring 2009.

*- Helen Ostovich*

## *Shakespeare and the Queen's Men: Production report.*

The project continues its exploration of Elizabethan theatre practices with two more Queen's Men's plays, both co-productions with the [Graduate Centre for Study of Drama](#). In *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*, produced last fall, the focus was on the role of Master Actors directing the play from within. They were guided by Jennifer Roberts-Smith and a team of dedicated student researchers.

Next February/March we will be presenting *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*, an early Elizabethan romance that tells the tale of two wandering knights on quests for honour and the hands of fair ladies.

Guided by Peter Cockett, the project will begin with a

one-week "[Renaissance Boot Camp](#)" after which the actors will work on their parts individually before coming together for the first performance. After a short rehearsal period, the play will then be presented publicly and the process will be filmed for use on the the SQM web site.

## *Voices from the Basement: One year later.*



*Showing our muscle: the move in progress.*

When we learned that the Centre for Medieval Studies would be moving to a new home – in the basement of the Lillian Massey Building – we were sad to leave our long-

time home but excited at the prospect of a bigger, better office. After the Moving Sale in May 2007 came the seemingly endless work of packing in the heat of Toronto's summer. Even after three postponements of the move date there was a last-minute scramble to be ready, and I was fortunate to have two excellent Work-Study assistants to help.

The day itself went smoothly as the moving crew handled hundreds of boxes of costumes, props, and papers with amazing speed. But that was only the prologue: I arrived at our basement space to find the renovations far from finished, and the promised new furniture consisted of two tables – no chairs!

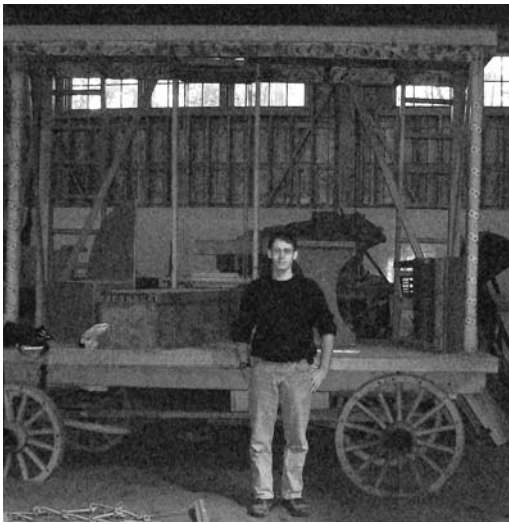
Within the next few weeks we acquired chairs, shelves, a file cabinet and bulletin board, and the office began to come together. It took a bit longer to get racks for the costumes, but we now have a flexible space where costumes, fabrics, masks, etc. can live together, with the archives stored close by.

In December I was joined by our new office manager, John Cowling. Some of you will remember John's father, Doug, who was Artistic Director of PLS in the late 80s. John has made the office much more organized and is working on updating our web site, beginning with setting up a new, simpler web address: [www.plspl.ca](http://www.plspl.ca).

*- Linda Phillips*

## A visit to the wagons.

You probably remember the pageant wagons: those beloved, lumbering old wooden vehicles on which we have mounted a number of presentations. They've been living a relatively quiet life of late, in their barn home north of Toronto.



Recently, Erik Buchanan and I decided it was time to pay them a visit.

As Erik clambered around with a measuring tape and I snapped photos, we were reminded that we at PLS are the guardians of a unique and priceless treasure. Our wagons are a tangible connection with a theatrical tradition dating back hundreds of years. Even disassembled and dusty their hand-carved trims and bright colours are a lasting tribute to Reed Needles and Steve Putzel, the original "wainwrights" who created them from old farm wagons for York 1977, and to the many PLS "old hands" who have maintained them since.

As we look ahead to the *Chester Cycle* in 2010, we anticipate the excitement of a new generation who will be able to participate in making theatrical history come alive.



Meantime, one of these wagons sneaked quietly out of the barn to lend its sturdy support to yet another such production. The story is below.

### *A Judgment in Waterloo*

The PLS Judgment wagon made its most recent appearance at Jennifer Roberts-Smith's first year theatre class at the University of Waterloo.

With help from PLS veteran Erik Buchanan, students helped tow the wagon from its storage space at Joker's Hill, set it on its wheels, and used it to perform an excerpt from the York *Last Judgment* play. Among the highlights was a flame-throwing devil... and (seen in rehearsal) an ascent into Heaven, helped by the wagon's trap door.

The whole experience was recorded by a team of student videographers, footage that will increase PLS' ever-expanding educational video records.

*- Jennifer Roberts-Smith*

## The value of togetherness ...

Once again, PLS is grateful that we don't have to "go it alone". Our co-operative ventures greatly enrich our lives and our season.

The 2007-2008 PLS season featured three successful co-productions with people who share our enthusiasm for Early Drama: the Graduate Centre for Study of Drama (*The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*), Sine Nomine (*The Parliament in Heaven*), and Toronto Masque Theatre (*A Royal Wedding Masque*). Our only "stand-alone" show, *Ram Alley*, was produced at the Robert Gill Theatre belonging to the Drama Centre. We are happy to continue our long association with the Drama Centre in this season's co-production of *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*.

As in all our previous productions of the great Mystery Cycles, *Chester 2010* will depend on the co-operation of many different groups who come together in Toronto to perform the twenty-four episodes that make up the three-day cycle. In May of 2010, using a text edited by Alexandra Johnston, this international gathering will attempt to rediscover the version performed by the guilds of Chester under the direction of their Town Council in 1572.

## Our Play Season for 2008 - 2009.



Once again we offer a two-play season. The first programme "**The Trial of Mary and Joseph**" and "**The Woman Taken in Adultery**" is a double bill, both plays dealing with the tribulations of women in Biblical times. The enclosed flyer tells all, and should (we hope) get you racing to see this presentation: two treats for the price of one.



Our second offering, February 25 to March 8, 2009, is a co-production with the Graduate Centre for Study of Drama. **Clyomon and Clamydes**, is a 16C "quest" play involving two knights and two ladies and a story about love and honour. A not-to-be-missed comedy production, it represents another selection from the repertoire of the celebrated Elizabethan theatre troupe, *The Queen's Men* company.

*As always, we count on your support for PLS in its many activities. Your donation – a cheque or money order to "Poculi Ludique Societas" (USA donors, "Associates of the University of Toronto") will be most gratefully received.*

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