

## Past and Present

In this new feature we profile a villager from the Wychwoods and, in turn, the person they nominate who has contributed to the life of the local villages in the past.

Next time you are at the New Beaconsfield Hall, enthralled with the action on stage, take a look over your shoulder at the couple behind the desk at the rear of the hall. Les and Pauline Knightson sit quietly getting on with the business of twiddling switches, but without their hard work and expertise, none of the high quality productions that we have come to expect from the Wychwood Players would ever get on to the stage.

Les and Pauline have been involved in amateur dramatics for many years, starting in their youth in Essex. They tell me that in those days amateur dramatics was enjoyed by many, and that if you wanted to appear on the stage you had to help with all the back-stage jobs, like putting up scenery and lights and taking them down again afterwards! In those days Les had to help make not only the stage sets, but the lights and switchboard as well, as they were unable to buy their own. Apparently landing lights from airplanes were adapted to do the job.

Les and Pauline were actually in different groups but met up at a combined Christmas party in 1956 and the rest, as they say, is history.

They lived for 12 years in France, where Les worked for a TV and



### Les and Pauline Knightson

Communications company, putting satellites into space. They have two daughters, one working for NATO in Brussels and the other is an Executive Head Chef in London - one of the very few women to hold such a job in what is still a man's world.

#### Retired

They 'retired' here in 1992 and were soon involved in village life. Les first helped with lighting for the pantomime in the old village hall and soon became involved with helping to erect scenery. When the Wychwood Players was formed, Les took over the lighting for productions, with Pauline acting as his 'dog's body' (her words not mine). She did have to work the lights on her own one year when Les fell off the ladder and injured himself. He has gradually become more and more involved and now builds much of the scenery and sets. At the moment he is busy building 'flats' for 'Oh What a Lovely War'.

Les and Pauline enjoy their involvement with the Players but would love a few younger folk to volunteer to help, particularly when it comes to scaling ladders. Anyone interested, with or without skills in basic electrics or carpentry, would be welcomed in to The Players. It does not matter if you only have a little time to spare - it all helps.

**Christine Halliday**