

Oxted Players

You may recall in the last BTN news we reported the success of our team of players with our Festival Entry, *Four Play*, directed by Chris Hepher. Having performed the play again in front of an appreciative audience at Woldingham, the team nervously faced the next round of the Southern Counties Festival at Walton in the knowledge that any delay in the proceedings would cause disruption to the last night of *Twelfth Night* where one of our actors, Peter Damesick, was due on stage at The Barn as *Malvolio* at 7.45 p.m. However, all went to plan, the M25 was clear and Peter made it back to The Barn with time to spare. In the event, our team was not chosen to go through to the next round of the competition but they did receive a very good adjudication and also took home the "Runners Up" Cup to add to the three cups already awarded to them in the first round.

Moving to *Twelfth Night*, directed by Martin Patrick - well what an excellent production this was receiving great reviews and our thanks go to Martin and his team of actors and technicians for their commitment. It was great to see some "old" faces and to welcome new ones. In his review for our AGM, Martin gave an amusing account of the trials and



**David Fanthorpe, Ray Howell and Peter Hogg as:
Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Feste and Sir Toby Belch**

tribulations experienced by the director. He explained that early blocking rehearsals were a little confusing for the cast at first because he had moved a number of the earlier scenes around. His Act 1 Sc1 was in fact Mr Shakespeare's Act 1 Sc2, and his Act 1 Sc2 was his Act 1 Sc1 & 4 rolled together. His Act 1 Sc 3 was his Act 1 Sc3 & 5 rolled together, so at times there was frantic page turning. Martin was also aware that with these early rehearsals there can be a lot of hanging around, so he endeavoured to call actors at set times during the blocking period, which seemed to work. However, sometimes even the best laid plans need adjusting. He thinks at times it's too easy to forget that this acting lark is a hobby of ours and that we all have day jobs and other commitments away from the flickering footlights of fame.

So apart from the notified absences before rehearsals began, Martin did manage to have his fair share of enforced absentees: finding yourself on a train steaming towards Folkestone instead of Oxted doesn't help, and he never knew that a paramedic cannot just leave a patient in A&E at the end of his shift and disappear into the evening sunset; no, he has to wait for a doctor to become available to do a handover. Family problems, abscesses, sitting exams, celebrating the passing of said exams, house hunting up north, having forty winks before coming to rehearsals that end up as a sleep-over didn't help either, but never at any time did he feel the need to panic, well, almost never. A phone call on dress rehearsal day informing him the aforementioned abscess had exploded and emergency treatment was needed at the dentist that night, meant one less at the dress rehearsal. The evening was saved however by one of the best performances that night - from the prompt corner. Stella Thomas's distant yet clear voice got younger and sexier as we moved through the play and she is to be congratulated on a fine performance!

Martin also said that he had no idea of the timing as there was never really had an uninterrupted run, but it did seem long and he had fears

that the interval coffee would turn into night time Horlicks. A book was opened by the cast to see how long after 11:00 the final curtain would come down. Martin went on to admit that he did enjoy the rehearsals immensely and returned home elated after one particularly good rehearsal (yes, there was one!). To see the characters grow, the relationships develop, the comedy business take shape, to see people turning up on time, (to see people turning up!) to see scripts being put down at last was a joy. In closing he expressed his indebtedness to all the cast and to the technical team with special praise for Sandi Saville, who was responsible for costumes saying that it was always with eager anticipation that he waited for her to turn up at the beginning of rehearsals where she would approach him clutching some new piece of fabric to her bosom for him to admire (the fabric that is). Once he had approved the fabric Sandi would scurry off to her sweat shop in Bletchingley where she proceeded to transform the chosen material into a magnificent costume. Martin has expressed a willingness to direct some more Shakespeare for us in the future so watch this space.

Our Young Players Summer Workshop is taking place between 21st and 27th August 2005 at the Theatre. This is an opportunity for our youngsters to work with David Rowan and to produce by the end of the week a very creditable performance. This year David has specially adapted *Animal Farm* and we are awaiting the result with excitement. The family and friends of the Players take priority for places in the audience for the free performance on Saturday 27th August 2005 at 7.00pm but there may well be some seats still available and if you would like to see the play, please telephone Muriel Lister on 01883 717754 to register your interest and she will get back to you during the workshop week to confirm seat availability.

Our autumn production is *Pack of Lies* by Hugh Whitmore directed by David Fanthorpe. This powerful drama is based on true events in 1960 when an ordinary suburban family, the *Jacksons*, are drawn into a web of espionage and the resultant deception and betrayal. Dame Judi Dench and her late husband, Michael Williams, appeared in the play when it was first performed on the London stage in the 1980s. We had a great deal of interest at the auditions and David was able to assemble a strong cast: Chris Morgan and Peter Damesick take the roles of *Barbara and Bob Jackson* with Laura Brand playing their daughter *Julie*. Alison Redford and Guy Hudson play *Helen and Peter Kroger* with Chris Hepher as *Stuart* of MI5 and Vicki Stanbury and Adele Deakin as the surveillance officers, *Thelma and Susan*. Bruce Reed has again been persuaded to design the set and he will be looking for assistance in early October when the build begins.

This is a much acclaimed and very moving play, so please spread the word and don't miss the experience yourselves! Tickets are on sale now @ £8.00 from 01883 724852 until 26th September and then from Ibbett Mosely on 01883 712241.

We then move on from high drama to fun and frolics with our January 2006 Pantomime. Neil and Fran Reynolds, who have a wealth of experience in the professional theatre, are directing and choreographing *Aladdin*. They aim to present an exciting and entertaining production of this popular pantomime and their expertise is bound to have excellent results.

The characters are Aladdin, Widow Twankey, Abanazar, Princess, Nursie, Emperor, Empress, P.C. Ping and Pong (comic policemen), Genie of the Ring, Genie of the Lamp, Mee Strung Wun and Yoo Week Wun (comic duo) and Puff, a small dragon. Fran and Neil are looking for a cast who can give lively and effective performances and commitment to the show. For anyone interested in auditioning, we are planning a read through on 4th September with auditions on 11th September 2005. For further information please contact June Brown on 01883 714460. You will need to be a member of the Society to audition.

Aladdin will be running from 13 - 15 and 18 - 21 January 2006 (10 performances). We have decided to try out a new timing schedule for the Panto so as to give an opportunity for more young children to see the show so that their bedtime is not disrupted. Please see the reverse of the handbill for full details and book early to avoid disappointment.

Quiz Night

Question: What's on Saturday 29th October? Correct. Another infamous Barn quiz night, another chance to outwit your friends in an evening of banter and brains. The usual mix of question and answers to see who the top team is. Your starter for ten will be at 7.45pm. Further details from Mike Sutton.