

AND WE DO THIS FOR FUN???

When I asked our esteemed editor whether he wanted me to write the usual article for BTN about the Barn tea and cake tent at the Oxted Carnival on 1st July, little did I know quite what I was letting myself in for. It seemed that something different was wanted this year, not just the usual report about who had helped and how much money we had made, but because I was going to be Duty Manager at the Theatre on the evening of the Carnival as well, could I do a "Day in the life of a Barn Trustee" article instead?

So here we go – having spent some of the previous evening baking my rather unadventurous contribution to the cakes for sale, I set off early in the morning to deliver the cake to the Little Barn and then help with erecting the tents and pergolas in Master Park. As usual there was a good turnout of helpers, but within an hour or so it was becoming apparent that this was going to be a difficult day. Even by mid-morning the temperature was climbing off the scale on the thermometer and even the most energetic members of the team of helpers were needing to take a break every so often to gulp down water and mop a perspiring brow.

We had the usual fortifying bacon rolls/hot dogs at around 11.00 and by 1 o'clock were ready with the cakes laid out, the kettles boiling and the cash floats stashed away in those cute little bags which we all wear strapped around our stomachs. As the afternoon wore on, it was clear that the heat was having an effect. A lot of customers seemed disinclined to buy cakes coated with chocolate and although the cream teas were as always popular, what we did sell out of quite quickly were bottles of cold drinks.

From around 3.30, business really did start to slump, due of course to people wanting to head home and turn on their televisions. There was, it seemed, a competing attraction, somewhere in Germany. By 4.30 I was on the way home to soak in a cool bath and change before heading back to Oxted again to be Duty Manager for the final performance by the Kim Difford dance school.

A small number of hirers can have difficulty appreciating that we insist on very high standards at the Barn, but I have to say that the Kim Difford School are a delight to work with and quite a breath of fresh air. Unfortunately for them, though, the weather was taking its toll this year. We all know how hot the auditorium can become in the summer and 1st July, as one of the hottest days of the year, was a night when being in the audience was like taking a two and a half hour sauna. There was a regular stream of audience members leaving their seats and coming out to stand under the air conditioning vents in the bar, especially one heavily pregnant lady who looked as if she was going to give birth there and then! Listening to audience comments as they leave is always instructive, and the most interesting that night was "It's a lovely theatre, but I just can't stand the temperature". *[good news, see front page, ed]*

So, to the get out. With a "regular" hirer (Oxted Operatic, Oxted Players, Barnstormers etc) the Duty Manager is allowed to leave once the public are off the premises, but with one off hirers, like Difford or Tandridge Leisure, the DM has to stay to lock up the Theatre after everyone is out. Difford always excel when it comes to cleaning after the show. They have a brilliant team, mainly consisting of mums, dads and boyfriends, and they are one of the few hirers who bring their aerosols of Pledge to ensure that all the dressing room work surfaces are polished and squeaky clean.

By midnight, everything was done, although as always the Difford team were still on a high and wanting to party. By the time I left there was a picnic still in full swing on the stone steps leading from the stage door up towards the Little Barn – proof positive that the hirers had had a great time.

There we are then, a sixteen hour Barn day. And we do this for fun!

Chris Hepher

ABBA COMES TO THE BARN

Saturday 2nd December

THE British Tribute to Sweden's most successful pop sensations 'ABBA' featuring all those famous and memorable songs including – Dancing Queen, Waterloo, Super Trooper, Winner Takes All, Mamma Mia and many, many more are booked to come to the Barn.

ABBA UK will be recreating all the best of **ABBA**, lots of action and music, all in all a brilliant extravaganza not to be missed. **Order your tickets now from the box office 01959 561811.**

WHEN A FRIEND IS IN NEED, TAKE ACTION

'Friends are made in wine and proved in tears' goes the proverb; words which have rung true for me in recent times.

A close friend was diagnosed with breast cancer a few years ago, but excellent treatment resulted in an encouraging 'all clear'. However, shortly after Christmas cancer was traced in her spine. Having fought the initial problems so bravely, her spirit dipped - I felt helpless, totally unsure what to do or say to give the fullest of support. At a similar time another friend sent news of her 6 year old daughter who is suffering from leukaemia.

These circumstances, and similar sad stories from others, prompted me to endeavour to raise funds for enhanced research by organising a Charity Fair. Monies raised from the event will be split equally between Cancer Research UK and CLIC (Cancer and Leukaemia in Children) Sargent.

Stalls will be available offering a wide range of items from books to cosmetics, Polish pottery to Italian handbags, cards to cakes, shoes to silk flowers, candles to chocolates and face painting to jewellery.

Please put the date in your diary and come and support this worthwhile cause. Thank you.

Ann Lovell

CHARITY FAIR

SATURDAY 7TH OCTOBER 2006

2.00PM – 4.30PM

**ST PETER'S CHURCH HALL,
LIMPSFIELD HIGH STREET**