

# BARN THEATRE

## NEWS

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### *THREE CHAIRS: HIP, HIP....*

We have just had further round of AGMs at the Barn Theatre following FOBs AGM in March. The first was that of the Barn Theatre itself or, to be more precise, the Oxted and Limpsfield Barn Theatre Company Limited. This is the company that looks after the fabric and finances of the Barn Theatre. It is a registered charity and is run by a Board of Directors who are also trustees of the Charity. The Chairman is Bruce Reed. New members are appointed by the Board as required, the latest being Anthony Goddard, who was voted onto the board in July. Tony has been associated with the Barn Theatre for almost 40 years and during that time has experienced almost every conceivable task that befalls those of a loyal nature here at the theatre. He has played some notable cameo parts with The Oxted Players and until recently was their long-standing Treasurer, overseeing and managing a very healthy account. He will be pleased to note that from the financial statement presented by Honorary Treasurer, Martin Fisher, he will be joining the board when the Barn Theatre's finances are also very strong as a result of increased bookings over the last few years as well as well into the future. These bookings, together with those of our resident societies, put the theatre on a secure foundation.



Bruce Reed

During the meeting people could view the plans for the new project, DRIP (*Dressing Room Improvement Project*). Following the AGM the plans were submitted to Tandridge District Council and were approved without a single objection or onerous condition imposed. Planning the works and fundraising will now be a priority in order that Phase One can commence in the summer of 2015.

The next AGM was that of The Oxted Players which took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. At the end of his first year as Chairman, Jonathan Tull reviewed the 2012/13 season and said how successful it had been with full houses for the pantomime. 'Calendar Girls' was an artistic success and a personal triumph for director Catherine Webber, while 'Life x 3' won an Accolade of Excellence award from NODA. Jon was re-elected as Chairman, with Alan (I'm a friend of Tony Goddard) Webber as Treasurer and Pat Brown as Secretary. Committee members include that well know Brand, Laura; Fran (can I take your Photo) Chalm-



Jonathan Tull

ers and Catherine (have you seen my calendar) Webber and new committee member Alison Langham.

Special thanks was expressed to Janet Magnay who stood down from the committee after a great many years of sterling service, but Janet has promised to continue to actively support the society [the ball and chain will see to that. Ed]. To mark the occasion Janet was awarded Honorary Life Membership and presented with a rose bush. Angela and Ray Dunster won the Committee Cup this year in recognition of their commitment and support particularly for their work with props, set building and front of house duties. The Chairman was also able to announce TOPS had a new website [www.oxtedplayers.co.uk](http://www.oxtedplayers.co.uk) which is now up and running but is still subject to some fine tuning and the addition of a Facebook page.



Dena Watts

Bruce Reed has been Barn Chairman for over 25 years and Jonathan Tull is just starting his second year as Chairman of TOPS, so please welcome new kid on the block Dena Watts who was elected to the Chair at the Oxted Operatic Society's AGM on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July. We wish Dena well as she continues on her meteoric rise with OOS. From backstage tea lady to her first show on stage as dance hall hostess in 'Sweet Charity' [I could see her talents then, both of them! Ed] to being a star herself, then Hon Secretary and now add OOS Chairman to her Biog. Others elected to the committee were Richard (Who is Tony Goddard?) Seagroatt, Treasurer; Fiona (Nerves of) Steel, Secretary and the Executive Committee comprises Sean Eldridge, Stephanie Johnson, Geoff Martin, Hannah Millsted and Teresa Reed. The new committee are all looking forward to continuing the good work already achieved in placing the Society in the positive position it now finds itself. The Society bid farewell to two of their Executive Committee members, Louise Fahey and Nicky Roberts. Louise's change of job to Head of Drama at Caterham School will be taking up all of her time in the new school year and Nicky has joined her husband in far off Qatar! A fond farewell was also given to Peter Reed (Chairman) and Janette White (Treasurer) who both had to step down mid-term. Also standing down was Samantha Grant (Secretary). On behalf of the Society Dena thanked them all for their hard work and commitment over the past year or more in some cases, particularly Teresa Reed who also acted as Caretaker Chairman for the last few months.

New President, Stella Thomas, whose extremely entertaining speech you can read this elsewhere in BTN, culminated in the awarding of the President's Award for Theatrical Achievement or PAFTA, brought the AGM to a most enjoyable conclusion! Stella presented her award to the entire cast, crew and Production Team of 'Chess', OOS's November 2012 production, and Paul Longhurst, Director, graciously accepted the cup.

# FOBS

We have just enjoyed a really enchanting performance of 'The Wizard of Oz' by regular Barn users, Glow Theatre. Congratulations to the whole Company. As I write a sparkling show from Starmakers is about to open. Then, in August, our summer favourites, Kenley Holiday Workshop are bringing us 'Grease'. What a plethora of youthful talent – enough to see the Barn Theatre thriving for many years to come. They will be the ones to benefit from the new backstage facilities if we all support 'DRIP'. The fundraising is underway so, Front of House volunteers, be ready to hold out - but not to *shake* - those red buckets again!

Summer has finally arrived and we do hope that it continues well into August for The Barnstormers visit to the Minack Theatre with 'Parade'. We wish the Company every success and enjoyment – perhaps some of those new to the Barn Theatre can be persuaded to join the Friends of the Barn as it is a good way to keep in touch. The word "persuade" reminds me that we have a 'guest writer' this month. Lizzie Skinner, who is playing the female lead in 'Parade' has managed to find time to say a few words to encourage younger members of the Barn family to join our Front of House volunteers. Lizzie herself has now been trained as a Front of House Manager and is full of enthusiasm for Front of House work – go for it Lizzie!

Thank you Sheila. My name is Elizabeth Skinner and I have been performing at the Barn for over twenty years, and will be performing for the last time here in 'Parade' with The Barnstormers on the tennis courts. I have been extremely fortunate in being able to turn my hobby and passion into my career.

During my time at the Barn, as a member of various societies as well as being on stage, I have worked backstage in the crew, with props, as an assistant costume mistress, learnt about lighting and sound and worked front of house. I am passionate about the Barn and the Barn family and friends I have made over the years. The casts of productions come and go but the true blood of the theatre lies behind the scenes with the people most of us 'performers' probably don't think twice about.

I have been working FOH for a while now and really enjoy it, but am surprised there are not more young performers willing to give up their time other than to be on the stage. I think that everyone does a tremendous job but I think it is important that the younger generation get involved and learn more about how the theatre works and the necessary skills to help out. So I took it upon myself and approached Pippa Bridges, who runs and organises all of the Front of House teams, a few weeks ago to see if I could learn about and train as a FOH Manager. I have been mentored by experienced members of staff and have had such fun learning another new skill. It is a wonderful feeling watching an audience leave at the end of an evening after a show and hearing all the comments that normally as a performer, I wouldn't hear! I am learning more and more and have always tried to not only focus on what happens on stage. I would love to encourage everyone to do a little bit in helping our beloved theatre run smoothly and continue to run for many many years to come.

We should all really jump at the chance to learn some of the skills I have learnt at the Barn; they have so helped me on my journey and I will be eternally grateful to those who have helped and guided me, and now it is my chance to give back into our community theatre. Contact the FOBs and offer your help - it can be doing an hour shift at the start of the evening working in the car park, selling programmes or the whole evening working behind the bar - a great opportunity to learn a new skill which would be tremendous work experience!

Those of you who know me know I love the Barn dearly, it has been a

huge part of my life and me doing what I do, and I will always find more and more time for it. Please get in touch and lend a helping hand it would be great to see some of the young faces on stage join in Front of House teams too!

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## Accolade for Life

The TOPS drama production of 'Life x 3' by Yasmina Reza was always going to be ambitious. The cast of Steve Bedford, David Fanthorpe, Rhian Lally and Julie Parry will not forget the experience - in more ways than one! Yet the production was seen by almost 600 and made a handsome profit. All credit to David Fanthorpe, the director.

The opening night was seen by NODA rep. Lance Milton who wrote impressively about how "*all four characters performed superbly in presenting the piece truthfully but with equal tenacity in their contrasting roles... I have no criticism to offer as the show was slick, well constructed and had excellent production values.*"

In June this year the team were surprised and delighted to hear that the production had been awarded an "Accolade of Excellence" for 2012 by NODA.

Since Pippa Bridges and I had assisted David in the production and direction of the play, we set off hand in hand to Hastings on a recent hot Saturday to collect the "gong" (well actually it was a scroll but gong sounds more impressive!). The venue was the NODA regional AGM - a good turn out of the committed and the committee'd.



*NODA President Derek Grattidge presents the Scroll to Pippa Bridges and Peter Shore*

Accounts were presented, officers were elected *nem com* and, to a collective sigh of relief, no-one had any questions from the floor. Clearly everyone was really there for the same reason we were – the awards!

We politely applauded the other winners until it was time for The Oxted Players' award. The "photo opportunity" was supposed to be with Lance but he was tied up elsewhere on theatrical business. The official photographer was therefore uncertain of the protocol. Undaunted, Pippa marched up to the unsuspecting national President of NODA, Derek Grattidge, and persuaded him that it was his duty to be in our photo. He obliged, as one might expect!

"The Accolade of Excellence" is another jewel in The Oxted Players' crown, and the scroll, when framed, will hang in the Green Room for all to see.

**Peter Shore**

## *Oliver!*

The recent round of auditions for Oxted Operatic's production of 'Oliver!' (19-23 November) have just finished following a "meet and greet" evening in June. There has been a definite air of excitement during the whole audition process; the production team have some excellent and innovative ideas. Daniel Coldrun and Thomas Muscio share the title role, Elliott Myers plays the artful Dodger, Julia Rodgers will play Nancy, Steve Bedford - Bill Sikes, and Bob Wilson - Fagin. Supporting them is a company of over sixty. Tickets are already selling well at this early stage so make a note to book yours soon for the best choice of seats!

We extend our warmest congratulations to Stephanie and Darren Johnson on their recent wedding and we wish them the very best for their future together!

Dena Watts

## *OOS President's address:*

Madame Chairman, members of the committee, members of Oxted Operatic Society, patrons, guests and friends. It is a great honour to be your new President and I thank you. It feels a lot like winning an Oscar or a BAFTA award. I should be thanking everyone in a tearful manner.

But I have got a little list . . . I have got a little list. First I must thank my parents who took me to a matinee of a film or stage show every Saturday. On the way home, I rewrote the show, adding a part for myself. I have played Scarlett O'Hara's youngest sister, a night club waitress in 'Casablanca', bombed out urchin in 'Mrs Miniver' and the 'Railway Children' had an extra child.

Next I must thank my first producer, Peter Butler, who took me out of the chorus line. He didn't believe in the traditional audition. Instead we had three workshops at our ancestral home, St Peters, where we did a lot of role playing. I was a very good tree. If you ever need a tree . . .

Peter is now Head of Australian Television (opera). (I don't think he is very busy.)

You can't be a good leading lady without a good leading man. It's a working partnership. Jimmy Rogers was my Professor Higgins and my Nathan Detroit. Stuart Stone was my Emile in 'South Pacific'. There wasn't a dry eye in the house when he went on that dangerous night mission. My two Mr Bumbles were first Leighton who was a professional actor and meticulous about every detail. We did about twenty rehearsals for the timing of a crooked little finger. David Clubb was my second Mr Bumble and he was a joy and a delight to work with.

The Operatic's two shows this year have been so very different. 'Chess' was outstanding, setting a new standard, the black and white ballet, the amazing television effects. I saw every performance and was so moved that I could hardly speak on my way home. It was a hard act to follow. But the singing in 'The Sound of Music' was glorious. Well done, nuns! It was good to see talented youngsters coming along.

When I was a nun in the first 'Sound' the musical director picked me up on mistakes after every show. The second time we did 'Sound', I played safe, and auditioned for the housekeeper.

A brief word to Bruce about the new loos. Please remember ladies with big dresses and those that carry all before them. In 'Kiss Me,

Kate', my wedding dress was so big I could not close the door and had to have a guard of honour. I took a baggage weighing gadget to the theatre. The dress weighed two stone. It was like wearing a carpet.

Also, please can we have the monster loo paper holders on the other side, so that ladies do not collide with them every time they go in?

Lastly, I have a little surprise for you. May I introduce the PAFTA.. This silver cup is the President's Award for Theatrical Achievement. I will award this each year for an outstanding achievement. It could be anything from a single performance to a whole show.

If we had just done 'Nicholas Nickleby' it would go to Peter Hogg for playing the crippled boy. If it was 'Copacabana', it would be for the terrific dance routines; if we had just done 'Honk', it would be for the amazing costumes.

This year's PAFTA goes to an entire company, cast and crew and the production team. It is my pleasure to present this PAFTA award to Paul Longhurst, the Director of 'Chess'.

Stella Thomas

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## *Elvis Has Finally Left*

Elvis left the building to rapturous applause and the evening raised over £2000 for the Dressing Room Improvement Programme. This one-off tribute evening to Elvis and Tom Jones, featuring the Starmakerz Dancers, was a virtual sell-out and well received by all who came along, but especially by the young people from the Orpheus Centre who were thrilled to be able to meet their hero after the show at the stage door, where he presented them with flowers and memorabilia from the show. Sincere thanks to all who were involved in putting this joint production together, particularly Paul Weaver, Vicky Butcher and Fran Newitt from Starmakerz, and the Barn Theatre team.



### *Starmakerz Dancers (photo Fran Chalmers)*

Starmakerz also recently performed their Summer Show 'Heroes and Villains' at the Barn Theatre which again was thoroughly enjoyed by all. One particular comment from a parent was that "The Barn does promote a special atmosphere which makes you feel happy and proud to be able to enjoy such a wonderful local venue." Starmakerz will next be performing at the Barn on 26<sup>th</sup> October to raise more funds for DRIP in a show called 'Let Us Entertain You'. Other participating groups include the Oxted Glee Choir who will perform a mixture of pop, gospel and musical theatre numbers; Bastet School of Dance, St. Mary's Junior School and the Charisma Singers. Tickets (£12) are available at [www.barntheatre.co.uk](http://www.barntheatre.co.uk) or on 01959 561811.

## TOPS

Calendar Girls entertained our packed audiences prompting both tears and laughter. Although it was very hard work for all concerned, it was great fun to produce and all those involved thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Particular praise and thanks go to Sharron, Chrissie, Amanda, Fiona, Deirdre and Catherine who were brave enough to bare all on stage each performance although careful choreography spared their blushes. We are also grateful to Catherine Webber for her passion and dedication in the careful planning and implementation of the production. Jane Maisey of the Godstone News said: *"It's one of the best things I have seen"*. John Maslem of Sardines Magazine said: *"Oxted Players gave a sure-footed, entertaining and well-executed interpretation of the play"*. Lance Milton of NODA said: *"Catherine Webber directed incredibly well with a very strong company across the board playing to the inherent comedy beautifully with the whole cast delivering skilful timing to rival any professional production."*

We still have for sale a number of 2014 Calendars depicting the cast (in the best possible taste) with photography by Traci Saville, at the very reasonable price of £5.00. The sale proceeds of these calendars are being donated to Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research and we will be glad to hear from anyone wishing to purchase early Christmas presents. We have already raised £700 for the Charity and would hope to reach a final total of £1,500 for this very worthwhile cause. Please contact us on [secretary@oxtedplayers.co.uk](mailto:secretary@oxtedplayers.co.uk) or 01342 893217 to place your orders... They will make marvellous stocking fillers!

### *Next Play will be a bit Edgy*

'Outside Edge' will be TOPS Autumn production directed by Peter Reed. Cast includes Guy Hudson, Jonathan Tull, Anthony Goddard, Ghislaine Bowden, Dena Watts, Amanda Stronge and Helen Byatt and we also welcome new member Glyn Rogers in the role of Roger. At the time of going to press, the part of "Kevin" is still uncast so anyone interested should contact the secretary at [secretary@oxtedplayers.co.uk](mailto:secretary@oxtedplayers.co.uk) or 01342 893217. Tickets available on line with card payments at [www.oxtedplayers.co.uk](http://www.oxtedplayers.co.uk) or [www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk](http://www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk) or by telephone 01883 724852

### *2014 Pantomime*

Our January 2014 panto is *Ali Baba* by Robin Bailes which will be the third pantomime directed for us by Chris Bassett. We also welcome the return of Jamie Cordell as Musical Director and Aimee Marie Bow as Choreographer.

A read through is being held at Hurst Green Community Centre on Sunday 8 September 2013 at 2.00 pm and auditions follow on Sunday 15 September from 11.00 am in the Barn Theatre. Those who are not currently members of the Society are welcome to attend the read through but you will need to be a member to audition.

We are introducing a new system for the sale of pantomime tickets aimed at being fairer and making a level playing field. This means that, with the exception of specific recognised group bookings, no tickets will go on sale until 1 October 2013 including online bookings so that everyone can access tickets on line at either [www.oxtedplayers.co.uk](http://www.oxtedplayers.co.uk) or [www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk](http://www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk) if paying by card or they can telephone Ann, our Ticket Secretary on 01883 724852 if they wish to pay by cheque or do not have access to the internet. The handbill booking form can also be used but no orders will be able to be processed until 1 October.

### *A Direct Question for You*

Are you interested in directing an entry in the adult section for the 2014 Southern Counties Drama Festival at the Barn Theatre? We

are inviting both experienced and aspiring first time directors to submit a proposal for a one act play or a self contained excerpt from a full length play. (The Festival rules stipulate that any entry must be between 20 and 55 minutes running time). We will be particularly interested in innovative ideas in terms of play choice or style of production.

We would like to be able to make a recommendation to the Oxted Players Committee by the end of September and would therefore like to receive proposals by the end of August. If you would like to know more about the Festival format, please contact Pippa Bridges on 01883-712459.

Pat Brown

## *Fringe Benefits*

Having successfully completed the preview run at the Barn under the banner of Table 9 Productions, we are busy preparing to move 'Bent' up to the Edinburgh Fringe for our run from 11-17 August. The company includes Barn regulars Muriel Lister, Peter Calver, Richard Grogan, Alison Redford, John Chinnock, Mark Mear and Steve Bedford.

The Edinburgh Festival presents a unique set of challenges. For example, the set and lighting is designed from drawings without being able to physically see the space; you have five minutes to get in and get out before and after your show, you have five minutes to seat the audience, you get fined for every minute you over run and you are competing for ticket sales with well over 2000 other productions.

The city itself is buzzing for the entire month of August. Every conceivable space is converted into a performance area; back rooms in pubs, churches and hotel conference rooms, and this year there are over 750 venues... no mean feat for a relatively tiny city! The atmosphere is nothing short of incredible!

We leave for Edinburgh on Saturday 10 August as our friends and colleagues will be returning from what I hope is an extremely successful tour to the Minack in Cornwall. I don't know if this is a first, but we will have representatives from the Barn at either end of the country on consecutive weeks!!

We are lucky enough to have support coming to join us in Edinburgh from as far afield as Amsterdam. If you are in the area between 11-17 August it would be great to see you there. We are performing at: C too, Main House, Venue 4, St. Columba's by the castle nightly at 10.10pm.

Chris Bassett, Director

## *Carnival Cakes*

Carnival day can throw up many challenges, but having run the Barn Tea Tent for a number of years we are generally able to overcome them without too many problems. There is, however, one challenge over which we don't have any control, the British weather! Last year it rained right up to the day and we thought it was going to be a washout, whereas this year it was the complete opposite, dry, sunny and very, very hot. Unfortunately, this did mean that we didn't see the volume of people we have come to expect but despite that we still cleared £1,000 profit. This money will be put towards the DRIP fund.

Carolyn Rowley

## *"Grease" Lightning*

Excitement is growing among the 50 strong cast of Kenley Holiday Workshop's production of 'Grease' which will run at The Barn over the "Summer Nights" of 14-17 August. Performed after an intensive ten day rehearsal period the show promises to transport you back to 1959 and into the world of diners, drive-in movies and American High Schools.

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