

BARN THEATRE

NEWS

Volume 18 issue 3 August 2014



BARN 90, 'A FESTIVAL OF ENTERTAINMENT' CELEBRATING 90 YEARS AS A LIVE THEATRE

Those two very special weeks in early June when we celebrated 90 years as a live theatre serving the community, will be remembered for a very long time and were a good rehearsal for our 100th birthday in 2024! A fantastic mix of events created an enthusiasm not seen at the Barn since the last similar event, the Diamond Jubilee in 1984. This time, as then, (yes, I can remember) we were treated to a showcase of talent from many of our groups and schools in and around Oxted and overall, enjoyed a 69% box office sales average with which we are highly delighted, considering the eclectic mix that was available. An artistic and financial success, contributing just over **£12,000** to the DRIP fund, a wonderful boost and only possible through the generosity of our patrons, performers and a host of backstage and front of house unseen heroes who supported this **'Festival of Entertainment'**. Such is the enthusiasm that there are already plans for a repeat of the celebration luncheon each Summer and local Schools have demanded a repeat of Schoolfest, the very successful closing event of the two weeks.

Randy and the Rockets were the ideal band to launch this birthday celebration and what a great job they did for us. Stunning lighting by Andrew Bruce accompanied some really fine music and the theatre was alive with people dancing in the aisles. An evening not easily forgotten and surely to be repeated.

Celebration Luncheon: a splendid event of 3 courses accompanied by fine wines and champagne, created by Caro and her team, with all seats sold. Entertainment provided by Mr Magic Muscio which was very popular and a fine uplifting talk by our own Stella Thomas MBE.

The Wabbit King: a spectacular show devised by Chris Chambers and presented by Another Way Theatre Company enthralled our younger visitors. With a magnificent set by Wiggy and inventive lighting by Phil McKerracher.

Drama Night: an evening of two one act plays by The Oxted Players and Stag Theatre Company. Two excellent plays well received by the audience but not at all well supported and the disappointment of the celebrations, for this alone.

Cheek to Cheek: an evening with the New Foxtrot Serenaders is always popular at the Barn and this was no exception with a good house and very fine music by this band that have supported the theatre very generously over the last 16 years.

Let Us Entertain You Too was a real celebration of the arts as well as a celebration of all the talent at the Barn and in Oxted. We welcomed many of our friends and groups who have performed with us previously but also we were delighted to have some new faces on stage, including Reverend Andrew Rumsey, Rector of St Mary's Church who performed a song he had written about the theatre's 90 years.

Originally it was planned that this show would have been directed by Martin Patrick. Sadly, this was not to be but we are very grateful to Sarah Morrison who stepped in and gave her time and directorial skills and instead the evening was dedicated to Martin. May the legacy of knowledge, experience and kindness which he brought to us all, live on. Our thanks to everyone involved.

Open Day: always difficult to predict a turnout, this was a good Open Day with numerous visitors coming to find out a little more about their local theatre on what turned out to be a scorcher of a day and more suitable for visiting the beach perhaps? There was a good display of historic programmes with other information and much reminiscing of times gone by.



FOBs Quiz night: with a turnout of over 80 people, Lizzie Skinner and her team did a wonderful job of feeding them all whilst Richard Allen and his assistant Paul Longhurst ensured that this really was a Quiz Night with a Difference. Not only did competitors need a brain but all their senses had to work overtime too. A great night.

Songs from the Shows: what a fantastic night the Oxted Operatic Society gave us with this potted history of the society. An extremely slick presentation of all your favourite songs which will long be remembered for introducing us to new voices which have remained hidden in the chorus over too many long years. A show to be proud of in every aspect of the staging and music.

Nicholas Nickleby: Gerald Dickens, great-great-grandson of Charles Dickens had to be seen to be believed. The energy and pace were non stop as we were taken through this Dickens piece, character by character and each one so believable with instant changes from one to another without drawing breath, or so it seemed. Gerald tours the world with this and other one

man Dickens extravaganzas and this comes as no surprise to those who saw him that evening.

An interview with Gerald, whilst he was at the Barn, that evening can be heard via the internet. Please click on www.radioredhill.co.uk and then click on 'listen again' and the programme you need is "Out and About July 2014".

Schoolfest was indeed the highlight and closing ceremony for the Barn 90 Celebrations and a wonderful time was had by both the audience and those performing, who really did have a festival of their own up in the Little Barn and the marquees which were erected in the garden. We have received some wonderful feedback, one comment in particular was that "it was a fitting end for the festival to see so many young people on the Barn stage, bringing hope for the future life of the theatre". A massive thank you to everyone involved but particularly to all the school staff who gave up their time and their Saturday, to support their pupils, to the Nichols and Thurlow families without whose input this show would not have been possible and also to Chrissy Webb, who despite being retired nearly a year, demonstrated that she has not lost her head teacher skills and kept us all firmly under control!

Dates for your diary:-
Summer Luncheon 2015 Sunday 7th June
Schoolfest 2015 Saturday June 13th



Barn 90 'A Festival of Entertainment'

It was a great pleasure to contribute to the Barn's 90th celebrations by way of an evening of **Songs from the Shows, a potted history of Oxted Operatic** and huge thanks must be given to Fiona Steel whose brainchild the concert was and Tom Carradine for being a superb MD and really getting the very best out of all those on the stage. Everyone involved thoroughly enjoyed the evening and there was a great deal of positive feedback. One point that was made by several people in the audience was that it was a very pleasant change to see some of our regular chorus members making their way to the front of the stage to sing solo and maybe they should go for principal roles more often! Many thanks to everyone who supported the evening and especially those who joined us all in the green room afterwards to further boost the evenings profits for the DRIP fund!

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Our juniors have also been thoroughly enjoying themselves in the run up to Joseph, which included participation in the Oxted Carnival on Saturday 5th July before the run itself opening on the 23rd July. I hope to include a glowing report and review for the next Barn Theatre News but, due to the timings of copy deadline, I would need Joseph's gift of seeing into the future! If I did have such a gift I have no doubt I would be waxing lyrical



about the production, not least of all due to the hard work of all of the children, chaperones, parents and committee members involved but also the outstanding teamwork and vision of the production team of Carly Thompson, Catherine Blundell and Andrew Payne! Thank you all of you!

Thoroughly Modern Millie

We now have an excellent production team in place for our November production of "Millie", all newcomers to the Society but all with great CV's and a very exciting level of enthusiasm! As Director we have Yvonne Chadwell, our MD is Brian Steel and our Choreographer, Aimee-Marie Bow, who many will remember as choreographer for the Players' last Panto, Ali Baba. At time of writing, organization of the get together and auditions are well under way and we will hopefully be fully cast by the time you are reading this. Early talks with our team point the way to a very exciting production opening 18th to 22nd November 2014 and tickets are available, as usual, online at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk or by calling the OOS box office on 07530 528094

A Word Regarding One Of Our Juniors!

On Sunday, 8th June, Phillip Langham successfully completed the 5km RBC Race for Kids to raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospital. Phillip has a condition called Eosinophilic Gastro-Intestinal Disease and has been treated at GOSH since he was 3 years old. Last year he raised an amazing £1,370 for GOSH but this year he is currently exceeding that total. We all our proud of Phillip and if you would like to support him, please go to his



Just Giving page:

http://events.gosh.org/site/TR/RBCRacefortheKids/General?team_id=6530&pg=team&fr_id=1090

Please note Phillip's Just Giving Page is only open until 8th September so.....

"Please donate before it's too late!"

"Come and join us at the Bee!"

The **Barnstormers'** production of the hilarious comedy musical 'The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee' is shaping up well with the first-rate cast of nine talented performers being put through their paces by the production team of Barn regulars - Richard Allen, Colin Warnock



and Fran Newitt. The cast have already got their heads around many of the catchy musical numbers from the show, and everyone looks forward to getting their teeth into the hilarious comedy script, when floor rehearsals start in September.

We can always rely on The Barnstormers to introduce us to some of the less well-known theatrical gems out there and 'Spelling Bee' is certainly no exception. The Spelling

Bee competition is of course a modern day American phenomenon, which the Tony Award winning creative team of William Finn and Rachel Sheinkin have brought to the stage in this quirky musical comedy. 'Spelling Bee' is a hilarious tale of overachievers' angst that chronicles the experiences of six adolescent outsiders vying for the spelling championship of a lifetime. It is the unlikeliest of hit musicals about the unlikeliest of heroes: a quirky yet charming cast of outsiders for whom the spelling bee is the one place where they can stand out and fit in at the same time.

There are four performances from Wednesday 22nd to Saturday 25th October and we hope that you will not miss the opportunity to see the excellent Barnstormers as they make a welcome return to the Barn, this time actually inside the theatre! As many of you already know, the multi-award winning Barnstormers have been a dedicated and loyal fundraiser for the Barn over the last fifteen years, with around £50,000 donated by them to date, and so we sincerely hope you will continue to support them with both this and their future endeavours. The Barnstormers are known to always raise the bar with every production, so we can promise you a top-notch show, and a hysterically funny evening's entertainment, including a number of genuine audience volunteers being put through their paces alongside the cast! As with all Barnstormers productions, every penny of the profits will be donated to our DRIP charity project.

Tickets priced £15.00 each are available now from 01959 561811 or by credit/debit card from www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk, so why not dust off your dictionary, get booking your tickets, and join us at the Bee!

Oxted Carnival 2014

Annual 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 was dry, sunny and very, very hot and unfortunately, this meant that we didn't see the volume of people we have come to expect but this year however, despite waking up to rain and having very heavy showers during the morning the afternoon was reasonable and we had the queues of people we have come to expect. We cleared over £1000 and this money will be put towards the DRIP fund.

Thank you to all those who helped on the field or provided produce for sale on the day. I suspect we were one of the most successful stalls on the park, after all who can resist a cup of tea and a piece of cake!

Oxted Pram Race



Eric and Elsie Hallson, well known Barn stalwarts, started the pram race in 1977; originally Eric was part of the Oxted Carnival Committee which at the time primarily consisted of just the procession. His fellow members asked him to come up with an idea of how to expand this. On a visit to a friend in Clacton, Eric attended a pram race and recognised that with the pubs being in such close proximity, Oxted would be well suited to this type of event. Richard Knight is now the chairman of the Oxted Rotary Pram Race Charitable Trust, that continues to manage the event every year.

Things we discover about Barn families

Rod and Jo Starmer have been attending shows at the Barn since they first saw *Desert Song* by Oxted Operatic Society in 1966. For almost 50 years now they have supported the theatre productions and will often come twice to see a production if they like what they see first time.



Originally from Woldingham, they now live in Old Oxted and despite Jo being severely disabled they lead an active life that would put most of us to shame. With four children life has always been busy and little did they guess that their son Keir would forge a life that would bring the honour of a Knighthood and the privilege of being appointed a Knight Commander of the Realm.

Pictured above with the Duke of Kent at the opening of Barn 2000 and below at the investiture of their son Keir, at Buckingham Palace.

SIR KEIR STARMER KC, QC. The Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Knight Commander.

Keir went to Merle Common Primary School, he passed the eleven plus and went to Reigate Grammar School. He took a year off before going to Leeds to study Law. During the year he spent 6 months as a house parent in Church Town Childrens Home on Bodmin moor, looking after disabled 6 to 16 year old girls and boys. The next 6 months were spent in my factory operating a production machine...DEAD BORING.....Keir!!



At Leeds, Keir obtained a first in Law, LLB and a Scholarship to Oxford for a second degree, BCL. After a year at Law School in London, Keir joined Doughty Street Chambers. He rose up through the ranks to become Joint Head of Chambers along with Geoff Robertson QC. When Keir took "silk" we were very

proud parents at the morning session at the House of Lords and after lunch followed him to the Law Courts and watched him installed into all Divisions. When the job as Director of Public Prosecutions arose Keir applied for the post, was successful and was appointed by the Attorney General. After a 5 year term, Keir is now back in Doughty Street Chambers. His time as DPP is acknowledged as being a success and has made the CPS more radical. Keir lives in North London with his wife Vicky and two children, a boy and a girl.

At the Investiture at Buckingham Palace we were the proudest parents there; Keir was treated like a Lord and we were looked after like a Lords Mum and Dad!!

The Citation at the ceremony was:-

"Sir Keir Starmer, for services to Law and to Criminal Justice".

I can think of nothing better. Prince Charles did the Honours.

Rod Starmer

Edinburgh Fringe Former Young Oxted Player, Jamie Lewis is performing in 'Chatroom', a contemporary drama by Edna O'Brien, with 'No Prophet Theatre Company' during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival -1st-25th August. Jamie is studying Acting at Central School of Speech and Drama.

Jingle Bell Barn Saturday 13th December

Christmas is arriving at the Barn Theatre on Saturday 13th December at 7.30pm with "Jingle Bell Barn" when we welcome a heavenly host of performers to the stage including Oxted Glee Choir, pupils from St.Marys and Downs Way schools, Starmakerz and some of our very own talented friends from the theatre. Bring the family to celebrate this magical time of year and enjoy seasonal refreshments.

Tickets go on sale on Friday 19th September and will be available then by telephoning 01959 561811 or online at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk.

Kenley Holiday Workshop Nominated for NODA London "Youngstars Award"



The Directors and members of **Kenley Holiday Workshop** were delighted to hear recently that their production of *Grease* at the Barn last August was nominated for the prestigious NODA London "Youngstars Award" for the best youth production in

the London area. A group travelled to the annual conference in Potter's Bar where they were presented with their certificate by the president of NODA, Mr Bert Lumsden.

Flash, Bang, Wallop!

Set in Edwardian England with beautiful period costumes and fabulous music and dancing, the 50 strong **Kenley Holiday Workshop** cast return in August with *Half a Sixpence* – promising a "Flash, Bang, Wallop" of a show!



Presented after a 10 day intensive rehearsal period, this is a new version of the musical which boasts a faster paced and funnier script than the original with new songs to accompany the old favourites made famous by the Tommy Steele film. Arthur Kipps is an orphan apprenticed in a draper's shop. A square peg in a round hole, he unexpectedly inherits a fortune and climbs

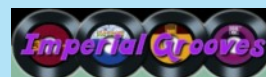
the social ladder, though learns that money does not always bring happiness when his inheritance is lost. Along the way he loses and regains his childhood sweetheart – twice!

Running from 13th – 16th August at 7.30,
tickets are available from
01883 331400 or www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk

Saturday 6th December Motown and Soul night

Imperial Grooves are one of the top Motown and Soul bands in the UK. The energetic show covers the classics including Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin, Sister Sledge, Stevie Wonder, The Four Tops, The Temptations, Jackie Wilson, Ben E King and many more.

Book your tickets now by telephoning 01959 561811 or online at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk





MY BOY JACK by David Haig 15th to 18th October

The Oxted Players are proud to commemorate the start of the First World War. *The Great War*, as it became known, saw the death of over 9 million soldiers during its four year span and when concluded was said to be "the war to end all wars". Unfortunately, as we now know, this was not to be the case. This was the war which touched the lives of millions of people in Britain, the Commonwealth and beyond. In the aftermath, the majority of British families were missing fathers, sons, grandsons, uncles, nephews and also female relatives who were supporting the war effort abroad. Those who did manage to return home were scarred physically and mentally.



Many novels, poems and plays have been written about this devastating period in our history and we have chosen **My Boy Jack**, a poignant and moving piece written by David Haig. It is based on true events and involves the family of one of our most famous authors, Rudyard Kipling. Rudyard lived with his wife Carrie and their two children, John and Elsie, at Batemans in East Sussex, a property which is now managed by the National Trust. He was a devoted father but also passionate about King and country and vociferously encouraged young men to fight for their nation.

The play charts Rudyard's support and encouragement for his son to enlist despite his myopia. John eventually obtained a commission in the Irish Guards and following a short period of training, he travelled with his men to the Western Front to fulfil his ambition, but with tragic consequences. There are poignant scenes in the trenches.

The play continues to explore the substantial impact that these events had on the family and their relationships.

My Boy Jack can be seen at the Barn Theatre from 15th to 18th October at 7.45 pm with a matinee at 2.30 pm on the Saturday. Directed by Elizabeth Callow, our cast includes Chris Bassett as Rudyard, Ghislaine Bowden as Carrie, Jacob Carter as John and Megan Saunders as his sister Elsie. Alex Barnet and George Cooper are Guardsmen Bowe and Doyle and there are cameo roles by David Morgan, Peter Shore and Vince Edwards. Set design is by Martin Beatty.

We would urge everyone to come to see this very moving drama which reflects so well the anxieties and trauma faced by one British family in particular during this cruel War. We feel that it will benefit those studying this period of our history as well as anyone who appreciates good theatre.

Tickets are £9.00 (£7.00 for students) and can be booked by phone on 01883 724852 or on line at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk (booking fee applies)

Please note that some strong language is used by the Guardsmen in their battle scenes.

Other News

Our spring play, the Victorian thriller *Gaslight* received glowing reviews. Lance Milton of NODA particularly commended the performances of the principals, Peter Damesick, Julie Silverman, Chris Butler, Stephanie Hornett Johnson and Angela Webb. He also praised the fine set design by David Sutton, the thoughtful lighting by Richard Grogan and the costuming by Pippa Bridges and Tricia Whyte which he said provided the finishing touch and took the play from tremendous to exceptional.



This year our **August workshop** with David Rowan has a Dickensian theme. The play will be performed by our Young Players on Saturday 23 August.

Babes in the Wood – 9th to 17th January 2015

The read through for our 2015 panto will take place on Sunday 7th September at St. Peters' Hall, Limpsfield and auditions follow on 14th September. Anyone is welcome to the read through but you need to be a member to audition. *Babes in the Wood* by Robin Bailes is a sequel to our 2010 panto, *Robin Hood*, and will be lots of fun. Chris Bassett directs and Jamie Cordell returns as MD with Aimee Marie Bow as choreographer.

If you would like more information please contact Pat on 01342 893217 or secretary@oxtedplayers.co.uk

FOBs

Since the last newsletter the BARN 90 celebration has been the principal event.

The opening evening saw the audience dancing in the auditorium to the music of **Randy and the Rockets**. This was a great way to start the celebrations.

It is not possible to mention all the events, but the **FOBs Quiz Night** organised by Lizzie Skinner was a new and very successful evening. Thanks to Lizzie and all her assistants for their hard work.

The two weeks did keep us all busy and it is thanks to all the volunteers that the events ran smoothly. Also, thanks to Pippa for organising all the support teams.

The bar was, quite naturally, very busy during this time and the introduction of Gin & Tonic has proved to be very popular and I am pleased to say that we can now serve 'ice' to go with the lemon slices.

Volunteers for duties such as bar serving, bar support and Front of House Manager are always in demand and I am pleased that several people are now being trained for these roles. We are always in need of volunteers and as each performance requires 10 people to cover all the various tasks there is something for everyone. To those readers who are new to Oxted, I can say from personal experience that it is a wonderful way of getting to know people and becoming involved in the community. The benefits far outweigh the time put in.

Alan Jackson

The Editor of the Barn Theatre News is Bruce Reed and contributions are always gratefully received.
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press deadline for next issue is Friday 17th October