

Oxted Players

The year 2006 has started brilliantly for us with excellent audiences for our Pantomime, *Aladdin*, directed and choreographed by Neil and Fran Reynolds with music from Lawrie Houghton. Our extra Sunday early evening performance was sold out as were most of the performances. The quick turnaround between performances on the first weekend was tight but we managed and the auditorium was ready to receive the second audience in record time thanks to the Theatre's "housekeeper" June and the Front of House Team. With their professional backgrounds, Neil and Fran ensured that *Aladdin* was a lively and colourful show. Everyone worked as a team and rehearsals were constructive and rewarding. In our experience, there is usually that glitch in the lead up to shows (usually around 1-2 weeks before the run) when producers and directors wonder why they ever got involved and after stern words and pleas everyone bounces back, moves up a gear and everything tends to fall into place by the first night. *Aladdin* was no exception. The end result was a great show which was enjoyed by all.

The success of the pantomime was a fitting tribute to Colin Townend to whom the show was dedicated. For many years Colin had been one of our keenest panto participants and had been cast as Mee Strung Wun but shortly after rehearsals began he was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour and sadly he died on 8 January 2006 before the show began its run. We were, however, very pleased to see his family and friends in the audience on our last night and the raffle held raised in excess of £250 for Colin's chosen charities.



**Lucy Coward, Vicky Stanbury and Barrie Ward
in The Oxted Players production of Aladdin**

Having put Panto to bed for another year we have moved straight into our Young Players production of *Huckleberry Finn*, adapted from the stories of Mark Twain and directed by June Brown. There are three performances, one at 7.30 pm on 17 March and then two performances on 18 March at 2.30 pm and 7.30 pm. The story is set in 1847 on the banks of the Missouri River in the village of St. Petersburg in America's Deep South, and depicts the lives of Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer and their friends in this close knit community. We have a cast of 31 children with more helping on the technical side and back-stage. This is a great opportunity for many more of our youngsters to be involved and the end result will be very rewarding.

We anticipate that tickets will sell quickly and would advise you to contact the Ticket Secretary on 01883 724852 without delay to ensure you are not disappointed.

Our May play (17 to 20 May 2006) is *Family Planning*, a hilarious play written by the Welsh author, Frank Vickery. Set in a Welsh household, Tracy, the daughter of the family, discovers she is pregnant and doesn't know how to tell her parents, solid dependable Elsie and hypochondriac Idris, or her boyfriend. She turns to her Gran, who is the central character of the play, being permanently bed bound and indeed permanently on stage from well before curtain up until the very end (strong bladder required!). A misheard conversation leads Idris to believe that he has but a short time to live! Add to this an amorous next door neighbour who has designs on Idris, misunderstandings and mishaps - particularly with Gran - and you have a recipe for a riotous conclusion. See the flyer for further details but tickets are now available from 01883 724852.

FOBS

We have survived Christmas and New Year and are now in the grip of Jack Frost as I write. We staffed a successful Christmas Cracker and those who bought raffle tickets will be pleased to know that a cheque for £100 was donated to Marie Curie.

During the show Michael Burbidge was made an Honorary FOB in recognition of having been Musical Director of every Christmas Cracker show without charging a fee. Our President, Terry Rolph, had the pleasure of presenting him with a badge and a bottle.

Some of us assisted TOPS with a very busy 'Aladdin' leaving the sweet shop looking ravaged. Since we are a listening Society we took action on the plea of a lady volunteer who found the odd 5p's for sweets a hindrance and have rounded sweet prices up and down.

Simon and Sharon Dawes have volunteered for the bar at the first Sunday Club on 5th February; volunteers are welcome for other Sundays and this monthly event will be a relaxed way for 'make-learn' bar helpers to begin.

Before you read this we shall have fronted for the BREEZ, a concert hosted by the Kings Church. In March we await the return of the Janie Harris School of Dance presenting two ballets; kindly volunteer your services please for this and other events shown on your handbills.

It was mentioned in the November issue that we had been throwing money about to improve the Barn's CCTV cover to reach the parts others cannot reach to the tune of £5000, and no doubt we shall soon think of something else on which to spend money. All well spent. Other news – membership is up to 254 including the Duke of Kent and Michael Burbidge. Get your friends to join them.

There are still five seats for sale in the gallery available from Terry Rolph on 01883 712725.

Now, it is with a heavy heart that I inform you that we are to lose our fearless leader, Heather Lloyd, who after six very hardworking years is stepping down from the Chair at our forthcoming Annual General Meeting on 6th March. We shall be very sorry to lose her. We are also losing our Hon. Examiner of our accounts, Colin Thomas, who has given us no less than 15 years of sterling service. We have been very fortunate in acquiring another volunteer.

The notice of the AGM will shortly be sent out and this is your chance to be a committee member, so step forward please!

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