

The Oxted Players

Well, what a challenging start we had to 2010! Having had our pantomime rehearsals severely disrupted by the snow and ice before Christmas, we then faced more problems with the heavy snowfall which came just before the opening of our run of *Dick Whittington*. The resultant road conditions played havoc with our final rehearsals but with true determination and dedication the cast and crew overcame these problems and continued with the 10 performance run with almost all seats sold in advance. Unfortunately, because of the icy conditions, some people from farther afield were unable to take up their seats on the first weekend but throughout the run our audiences expressed their appreciation and enjoyment of the show. Tony Flook, of the Surrey Mirror, ended his glowing review by saying that the show "epitomised the best of pantomimes" - a fitting tribute to Janette, Sarah, Ieuan, Malcolm and everyone involved.

Having put panto to bed for another year, we are now busily preparing for our entries into the Southern Counties Drama Festival at the Barn Theatre. Our adult entry is *Alternative Accommodation* by Pam Valentine, directed by Tricia Whyte. This fast moving one act comedy is set in modern times when three adult children meet to decide what to do with their ageing mother. The play reflects upon a relevant social dilemma which affects most of us at one time or another. June Brown takes the part of the Mother, and Nigel Brown, Ghislaine Bowden and Mandie Arbuckle play her children. The play is being performed on Tuesday, 23 February 2010.

Our Youth Entry '*I in 56*' is the story of *Joshua Thompson*, who finds himself a prisoner of his own imagination when he falls into a coma. We follow him as he tumbles through his own memories and relives the moments that formed him as an individual. A moving and funny coming of age story with a twist in the tail, the play tackles many of the challenging themes concerning the fascinating process of growing up and discovering who you are. The cast comprises Faith Anderson, Marissa Beatty, Becca Filewood, Lotti Davies, Charlie Massey, Jamie Lewis and George Ewin and will be performed on Thursday 25 February 2010.

Please come along and support these entertaining plays - tickets can be purchased from the Society's allocation held by June Brown on 01883 714460.

We then move onto the exciting world premiere of *The Adventures of the Faraway Tree* which has been specially adapted for us by Ruth Summerfield from the very popular Enid Blyton classic tale, *The Folk of the Faraway Tree* which many people remember from their childhood. Directed by June Brown, we have a cast of 27 talented youngsters with Georgie Muscio, Archan Mohile, Natasha Rose and Lottie Morris as the children and Martin Barlow (*Moonface*), Jack Chilcott (*Saucepan Man*) leading the supporting cast. Performances are 12 March at 7.00pm and 13 March at 2.30pm and 7.00pm. Tickets are available at the moment from the Ticket Secretary on 01883 714852 and also on line at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk.

Following an excellent turnout as the auditions for Habeas Corpus, director, Peter Shore, has lined up a very strong cast of Peter Damesick (*Arthur Wicksteed*); Janette White (*Muriel Wicksteed*); Wendy O'Mahony (*Mrs Swabb*); David Fanthorpe (*Canon Throbbing*); Henry Tredinnick (*Dennis Wicksteed*); Rhian Lally (*Constance Wicksteed*); Helen Glancy (*Felicity Rumpers*); Ghislaine Bowden (*Lady Rumpers*); Mike Rourke (*Mr Shanks*); Peter Hogg (*Sir Percy Shorter*); Chris Hopher (*Mr Purdue*). This wickedly funny play by Alan Bennett detailing the exploits of the seemingly respectable Dr Arthur Wicksteed and his family and associated characters will run from 12 - 15 May 2010. Tickets are now available on 01883 724852.

Dorothy (Roberts) Rogers 1919-2009

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death in November of Dorothy. She was such a light in the early days and as a part of the founder members of both the Student Players (The Oxted Players) and Oxted Operatic Society. Her amazing talents covered many things including dancing, acting, upholstery, interior design to name just a few. Her most amazing skill of all was her creative mind on costumes, she made hundreds, some of which are still being used some 50 years on.

Unfortunately Dorothy left the area some years ago so we lost this great talent.

I remember her personally with great affection, as a friend/neighbour, plus a seamstress who made my marvellous wedding dress. The fun and laughter we enjoyed during the years will remain with me forever.

Our love was extended to her remaining family.

June Brown

FOBS

Let's start with an important date for your diaries! The Friends of the Barn Theatre will be holding their **Annual General Meeting** in the Theatre on the evening of **Monday 29th March** - by kind agreement of the Oxted Operatic Society which will have taken over the Theatre in preparation for "Mack and Mabel".

This newsletter offers a good opportunity for me, as Chairman, to say a huge thank you to all our members for their support and particularly to those who volunteer to help run the Front of House provision for visiting companies. Bruce has received many complimentary letters of thanks during the past year mentioning the Front of House staff and their professional but friendly approach.

Your committee need special thanks too as they are a great team working happily together - Bridgett keeping us all up to speed so efficiently with her agendas and minutes provided in good time; Don, not only keeping the paperwork of the accounts up to date but also preparing the floats and counting all the cash; Jean now highly skilled on her computer and keeping the membership records in good order; Simon and Sharon finding time during their busy working lives to look after the bar; Janet cheerfully counting the sweets and watching out for all those 'best before' dates; our President, Terry, always there to advise and encourage. You will have noticed that I've left Pippa for a very special mention as we all know what a responsibility it can be to make sure that the Theatre is well staffed and she does an excellent job throughout the year, for which we are all so grateful. However, please don't think that your committee is a 'closed shop'! There is always room for more committed members so do come forward at the AGM if you have something to offer and would like to join us.

At last year's AGM Don made an appeal, on my behalf, for help with taking in the bar and sweet deliveries from Bookers and packing the items away. I'd like to record my thanks now to Rebecca Littleford, Jeff Magnay and Tony Goddard who have been a great support.

By the time you read this we will have put the 2010 pantomime 'to bed' and be busily preparing for another Southern Counties Drama Festival. It would be good to have larger audiences this year so do come along and support. 2010 looks as if it is going to be a very busy year so keep those diaries handy - and *make a note of the AGM right now*, please.

Sheila Bennett