

## FOBS

Our Spring Term began with a very busy February (not forgetting the 31<sup>st</sup> January when the Barn Sinfonietta entertained with Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons'). So what's new? It started with Phoenix Theatre's Once Upon a Mattress, then A2's HMS Pinafore, followed by the Betchworth Festival bringing the annual visit of other Societies. We marched into March helping The Young Oxted Players as they presented The Famous Five – some bright young performers there – and fronted again when the New Foxtrot Serenaders returned on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

Then to our Annual General Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March and attended by 40 of our members for a pleasant evening of less than one hour of business followed by free drinks and nibbles – hard to beat. The main points were as follows:

After careful consideration it has been decided that the FOBS will not seek charitable status as the complications and possible implications outweigh any benefits. In addition the Barn Theatre is a registered charity and can therefore reclaim VAT on major purchases.

We continually review our prices and profits and both your Committee and the Barn Directors feel that at present an increase in bar prices is not justified.

Heather Lloyd, our Chair, reported that the FOBS have provided Front of House services for 40 shows in the past year, in addition to stocking and staffing for several receptions. Now do you see why we keep calling upon you? She thanked all helpers, that's you, gentle reader, as did Bruce Reed, Barn Theatre MD.

Our Treasurer, Brian White, claimed to have enjoyed his first year, confirmed that we are solvent and still passing money to the theatre from time to time. Recent purchases have been a 'state of the art' coffee making machine with new cups and saucers to keep it happy, plus a hostess trolley, all costing over £360. There is now talk of a new cooker to help us when we heat up the stage paint. You mean they use it for food as well? Only joking, Mr Food Inspector.

We were all delighted to learn that Jean Groves had volunteered to be our new Membership Secretary. Jean, with her late husband Desmond, has been a stalwart of the Barn Societies since founding days, so it was an added pleasure for us to welcome her. She reports that our membership is around 254 but a number of subscriptions are overdue. Could this be you or are you able to tell us of people who may have moved away or sadly passed away, and we are perhaps unaware. If so, kindly call Jean on 01883 712130.

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## Aquarian Opera

### La Boheme by Puccini

Aquarian Opera will be presenting Puccini's masterpiece, La Boheme from 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September. With lavish costumes, a talented cast and sublime music this promises to be a magical production. Tickets can be booked until 1<sup>st</sup> September from 01883 713465 and after 1<sup>st</sup> September from Ibbett Mosely 01883 712241.

## Magic in the Woods

The Barnstormers promised us in our previous issue of BTN that their production of Stephen Sondheim's hit musical 'Into the Woods' in aid of Barn 2000 would be a 'feast for the eyes and ears' and those who came to see their production at the Barn two weeks ago were not to be disappointed.



Not only was the acting and singing of the highest standard, but the audience were treated to magnificent woodland settings, dramatic lighting plots, an impeccable orchestra of 15 and a whole parade of sumptuous costumes and wigs, all of which wouldn't have looked out of place in any professional West End production. The set was designed by Jill 'Wiggy' Wilson and constructed by Bruce Reed and his dedicated team of helpers. The wonderful set was complimented by an atmospheric lighting plot designed by Carolyn Rowley and sound was in the capable hands of James McLeod who managed the large number of radio mics (17 in total) and numerous sound effects admirably.

Other technical feats of note were a revolving Rapunzel's tower, the interior of Grandmother's House rising out of a grassy knoll in the woods, a levitating witch's chair and the Witch in question magically disappearing down through the stage in a cloud of smoke.

It would be inappropriate to pick out any individual performance from amongst this talented cast, save to say that the casting was perfect and the performances excellent. The cast of twenty guided us through Sondheim's complex and at times very witty plot which brings together many familiar Grimm's fairy-tale characters all searching for that "happy ever after". The production team of Richard Allen (Producer), Paul Longhurst (Director) and Jonathan Butcher (Musical Director) are to be congratulated on making such a challenging and technically demanding show such a success.

We wish all the cast, crew and company all the very best with their trip to the Minack Theatre in Cornwall at the end of May. For those of you that feel the urge to go down and support them, the Minack performances run from Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May to Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June and tickets are available now from the Minack Box Office on 01736 810181 or online at [www.minack.com](http://www.minack.com)