

THE OXTED PLAYERS



Simon Lofts and Justin Thomas-Verweij

Our Young Players did us proud with their production of *Huckleberry Finn* in March directed by June Brown. There was well earned praise from the audiences and the reviewers. Derek Graham of The Guide marvelled at how very fortunate the Oxted Players were to have a pool of young talent growing up with a love of theatre. He praised the polish and confidence of our Young Players, many at 13 or younger, and wondered if in a few years time they would want to turn professional. There were also fitting tributes to June for her patience and skill in controlling and bringing 30 children up to that standard with excellent use of the stage and some very realistic fights. There was more praise for the brilliant set designed by Bruce Reed and built by members of the company in record time including a Town pump which brought up water and a picket fence that all the boys painted. Justin Thomas-Verweij as *Huck* and Simon Lofts as *Tom Sawyer* complemented each other perfectly in the lead roles and there were also strong performances by Jo Cox (*Aunt Polly*), Ben Atterbury (*Ned*), Laura Brand (*Mary*), Sam Davies (*Muff Porter*), Nick Fanthorpe (*Injun Joe*), Elliot Roberts (*Judge Thatcher*), Matthew Driman (*Dr. Roberts*) and Faith Anderson (*Public Prosecutor*). Derek Graham made special mention of Paul Atterbury who at the age of 9 played *Tom's* younger half brother *Sid* "with the sort of voice projection that directors dream of – but rarely get.". Along with the use of other young members on the technical side, overseen by young Paul Stoneman, it was, all in all, a fantastic achievement by all concerned. The youngsters can't wait until the next Young Players production.

Family Planning, the hilarious comedy by Welsh author, Frank Vickery, is our Spring Production directed by Mike Rourke (*Abanazar* in our last Panto) running from 17 to 20 May 2006. It tells the story of a dysfunctional Welsh household where a cantankerous *Gran* (Wendy O'Mahoney) lives upstairs in bed but still manages to know everything that is going on in the household. When granddaughter *Tracy* discovers she is pregnant, she doesn't know how to tell either her parents, *Elsie* (Mandy Arbuckle) and *Idris* (Frank Atterbury) – or her moronic boyfriend, *Bobby*, (Ben Atterbury) but *Gran* gets the truth from her and paves the way for the announcement. However, hypochondriac *Idris* overhears a snippet of *Elsie* and *Tracy's* conversation about the pregnancy and jumps to the wrong conclusion, believing he has but a short time to live! Add to this the amorous advances which next door neighbour *Maisie* (Alison Redford) makes towards *Idris* you have a recipe for misunderstandings and mishaps which lead to a riotous conclusion. Don't miss this opportunity for an evening of laughter. Tickets are £8.00 from Ibbett Mosely on 01883 712241.

Our Autumn Play is Peter Shaffer's *Lettice & Lovage*, another excellent comedy, about *Lettice Douffet*, an eccentric ex Shakespearean actress, who resorts to employment as a tour guide in a shabby stately home but is sacked for being too over imaginative. However, she forms an unlikely friendship with *Lotte Shoen*, the starchy Preservation Trust official who sacked her. Maggie Smith and Margaret Tysack played the lead roles when the play premiered at The Globe in 1987. There is a read through on 4th June 2006 in the Little Barn and auditions on 12th June 2006. Anyone wanting more information, please contact Guy Hudson on 01732 862763. Anyone wanting to audition will have to be paid up members of the Society.

The Oxted Players are celebrating their **60 Anniversary** this year and hope that all their supporters will be joining them at a special AGM at The Barn on 19th July and will also be celebrating with a buffet lunch in September.

THEATRE HIT BY RATES INCREASE

With other local theatres around us struggling for survival due to council cut backs we are grateful to our teams of dedicated volunteers who ensure the good times we are currently enjoying. However, we are not immune and have just received a notification from TDC that our rateable value is to be increased **from £5000 to £9800** as a result of the new extension being completed.

We do already enjoy a discount on rates by virtue of being a charity but even so an increase such as this simply gets translated into higher charges by us and higher ticket prices for our patrons. We have applied to TDC for a further discretionary discount and must now wait to hear their verdict. Considering the benefit we provide to the community at nil cost to the rate payer we are hoping our request will be approved.

FOUR CLOSE FRIENDS

Four ex-Kenley Holiday Workshop performers will be putting their talents together to present Maltby and Shire's musical 'Closer than Ever' in September. Sisters Sarah and Alice Gimblett, no strangers to the Barn stage, will be teaming up with Mark Stanford and Peter McCartney in this intimate, insightful tale about love, security, happiness and holding onto them in a world that pulls you in a hundred directions at once. With a liberal dose of wit, intelligence and creativity, Maltby and Shire turn an unblinking and frank spotlight on our lives and loves, relationships and fantasies in a steady stream of remarkable showstoppers.

INAUGURAL PERFORMANCE ING TO THE BARN

Incrementum Theatre Group, a brand new theatre company, is performing *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at the Barn in September this year. This is perhaps Williams' greatest play: a beautiful tale of unrequited love, merciless rejection, painful grief and contemplative death. The Group is comprised of those in further and higher education all over the country and aims to promote the production and enjoyment of theatre throughout the community. Furthermore, after the Thursday production (14th) the Group will run a 'platform', a question and answer session in which cast-members and directors will discuss any aspect of the production or Williams' play itself. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* runs from 13 – 16 September 2006 with reduced-price tickets for students. Admission to the platform is free but should be booked in advance. Contact the box office on 07896743331.

The Group is still expanding – if you are interested in any aspect of theatre production or want to join the company's free mailing list please contact the Director, Thomas Probert at:
incrementum_theatre_group@hotmail.co.uk

FROM MY KITCHEN WINDOW

One day, a few years ago, I was by my window, waiting for the kettle to boil, when I saw a Japanese man approach the Theatre. I know he was Japanese because, true to stereotype, he was wearing cameras like Mr T wears gold medallions round his neck.

He stopped on the forecourt and prepared to take photographs. He proceeded to take pictures of the front facade of the Theatre using several of his cameras, never moving along the side or round the back and out of my sight. This took no more than a few minutes.

He then walked off back towards the town (- and station?), wearing a beaming smile from ear to ear.

What was that about? I myself have no idea, and I have thought about it often ever since.

Were the pictures for a brochure, a newspaper article, a magazine spread, a postcard? I'm sure there must be a logical explanation and the fact that the photographer was Japanese may just be fate's happy coincidence for my entertainment along. Any suggestions?

Mette Breminer at No 74