

THE OXTED PLAYERS



Since the last BTN we have held our hugely popular Children's Summer Workshop week in August with David Rowan who never fails to amaze us with his entertaining plays and his directorial skills. Forty children took part this year, the most we have had to date, and un-

fortunately we had to turn some away. An adaptation by David of *Wind in the Willows* was performed to a packed house of parents and friends on the Saturday night. Because of the numbers taking part there were more than one *Toad*, *Ratty* and *Mole* but everyone played their parts well and enjoyed the experience of rehearsing and performing in costume in the Theatre. The technical team also included youngsters who assisted with lighting, sound and stage managing. All in all it was a very enjoyable week for everyone.

Having had real problems with the choice of our Autumn production, firstly through casting difficulties and then licensing problems, at the eleventh hour a replacement play, *Party Piece* by Richard Harris, was chosen. Directed by Guy Hudson it proved to be a very suitable choice for the talents of the cast who had great fun at rehearsals. The end result was a very funny production telling the tale of incompatible next door neighbours, the Smethursts and Mrs. Hinson. Michael Smethurst, played by Paul Bowles is like a young version of *Victor Meldrew* who aims to have a perfect barbecue for invited guests who had been told to come as 'famous couples in reverse' but only two guests actually arrive. Paul looked stunning in his *Ginger Rogers* costume! Michael's wife *Roma*, played by Mandie Arbuckle, tries so hard throughout to please her husband and to avoid confrontations with the neighbours. *Michael's* plans are also thwarted by frozen meat, damp charcoal, complaints about smoke, people tampering with his stereo and car parking disputes (haven't we all been there at some time!). In addition his cantankerous neighbour, Mrs. Hinson, played by Jackie Barrett, manages to upset him as well as her visiting son, *David*, and daughter in law, *Jennifer*, (Anthony Goddard and Janette White) and invites herself into the party intent on making her presence felt. They are joined by the bubbly *Sandy* (Nicky Gill), who has come along minus her

boyfriend and *Toby* (Chris Bassett) who is "on the pull" and whose drunken escapade cavorting around wearing a gas mask and falling into the pond (yes, real water) was for some the highlight of the play. The excellent set designed by Mike Sutton showed the differences between the lifestyles of the neighbours and special praise also goes to Patrick Tricker for his crazy paving. The technical team of John Chinnock (Sound), Richard Grogan (Lighting) and Paul Stoneman (Stage Manager) and the backstage crew joined with the cast in making this production a success.

Our next production is, of course, our January Pantomime which is *Sleeping Beauty*, directed by Martin Patrick, choreography by Andrea Allen and Phil Cornwell is our Musical Director. The Panto is fully cast and rehearsals have begun. As is tradition, this is a story about good versus evil. Because she was not invited to the christening, a curse is placed by the evil Fairy, Belladonna, (Janette White) on *Princess Melinda* (Abigail Thomas-Verweij), the newborn daughter of *King Trug* and *Queen Jardinere* (Clive McTavish and Mandie Arbuckle) that when the child reaches 16 she will prick her finger and fall asleep forever. The curse is softened somewhat by the good Fairy, *Lilac* (Kay Davies), so that a kiss from a *Prince* (Vicki Stanbury) will awaken her. Our *Dame* this year will be the director himself, Martin Patrick, who has appeared regularly as *Dame* in Panto at Chequer Mead since 1999. The above are supported by an enthusiastic cast of Fairies, Dancers, Juniors and Adult Ensemble, all working together to present a thoroughly enjoyable traditional family pantomime. Our Panto runs from 12 to 20 January 2007 (except 15 and 16 January) with early and late matinees on Saturday and Sunday, 13 and 14 January (1.30pm and 5.30pm) and a further matinee on Saturday 20 January at 2.30pm. All other performances will be at 7.30pm. Tickets are £6.00 children and £9.00 adults obtainable on 01883 724852. Do not delay in buying your tickets as they are selling fast.

Our May 2007 play is to be Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing* (16 to 19 May) directed by Peter Reed. Auditions are planned for December and anyone interested in auditioning should please contact June Brown on 01883 714460. Please remember you need to be a member to audition - new members always welcome!

Full Week of One Act Festival Returns to the Barn

Expectations are running high with the probable return of a full week of Festival at the Barn next February. At the time of going to print SCDF entries have started to arrive but it is a little too early to know precisely how many nights will run. However, present indications are for a total of 16 entries and that is very good news for drama, festival and the theatre.

What we do know is that our own Oxted Players are entering both a youth and an adult team so order your tickets now direct from June Brown. The Players have an allocation for both performances so they need to sell those to members to recoup their expenses.

Del Harman

After a long illness Del passed peacefully away on 31st August. at his home in Edenbridge surrounded by his loving family. Del had directed a number of shows for the Oxted Operatic Society at the Barn over the years. These included *Annie*, *The Sound of Music* and most recently, *Oklahoma!* He was a popular and prolific director for a number of societies in the South East. who regarded him as their friend. Del's legacy is that everybody who came into contact with him felt special while in his company. He will be sadly missed by so many people who were proud to have known him.

Arthur Herbert

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Arthur Herbert on 16 October. He had been very ill for some time though in keeping with his life his commitment to the community remained as strong as ever.

He will be remembered with great fondness for his contribution to local theatrical activities; in particular stage lighting at Woldingham, where he lived for many years before moving to Devon recently, and at the Barn where his support for Kenley Holiday Workshop over many years helped to make it the success it has become.