

# The Oxted Players

We began our 2008/9 season with the tenth anniversary of our very popular Young Players Summer Workshop with David Rowan. After a week of preparation and rehearsals, 40 youngsters gave an excellent performance of David's adaptation of *The Lion The Witch and the Wardrobe* on the Saturday night to an audience of family and friends, assisted on the technical side by more Young Players. Because of the success of these workshops, we have persuaded David come back again during the February half term week.

We have also just completed our run of *Benefactors* by Michael Frayn which, although not well attended, was very well received by its audiences. This play replaced the originally planned *Anniversary* which we had to abandon due to casting problems. The cast of Nicky Gill, Chris Morgan, Alan Webber and David Fanthorpe under the direction of Peter Shore gave very creditable performances coping with the very wordy script. With no guidance from the author as to staging the play, which spanned a period of some 15 years, Peter and his helpers produced a simple set design which was very effectively enhanced by the lighting by Richard Grogan. We compliment Peter, his cast and crew for their commitment to the production and on the end result.

Our January Pantomime rehearsals are now well underway, benefiting from the experienced direction of Neil Reynolds and excellent choreography by Fran Reynolds. This family pantomime is a refreshing new take on the old legend of *Robin Hood* and his followers, *The Merry Men*, and the evil *Prince John* (John Harris) and the even eviller *Sheriff of Nottingham* (Chris Bassett). Add an outrageous *Dame* by the name of *Jemima Gusset* (Clive MacTavish), lively dances and well known songs you have a hilarious mix of fun, music and adventure. There is a variation on the usual formula as our principal boy is exactly that! *Robin Hood* is played by new member Peter Calver and Laura Brand returns as principal girl as *Maid Marian*. With the support of *Will Scarlett* (Nigel Brown), *Little John* (Jonathan Tull) and *Friar Tuck* (David Rose) and joined by *Gymkhana Thatch* (Sophie MacTavish) *Robin* has a cunning plan to rescue *Maid Marian* who has been kidnapped by the Sheriff and in true panto style there is a happy outcome.

*Robin Hood and His Merry Men* runs from 9 to 17 January 2009 (excluding 12 and 13 January) with ten performances in all including 5 matinees/late afternoon slots. The first performance on 9

January 2009 which will be for mainly cub scouts and beavers. Tickets at £7.00 for children and £9.00 for adults are selling fast so don't delay and contact the Ticket Secretary now on 01883 724852.

We are again supporting the Southern Counties Festival in February 2009 by entering two one-act plays, our Adult Entry being directed by Peter Reed and the Youth Entry by June Brown. Further information on these will be available in early November and circulated to the membership. Our 2008 Festival Play by our Young Players scooped a total of 6 awards at The Barn and at Walton whilst our Adult Entry won the Adjudicator's Award at The Barn so we will aiming to do well again next year.

There is also real excitement and interest in our May production which will be a traditional version of Shakespeare's comedy, *Much Ado About Nothing*. We are pleased to welcome Paul Longhurst who will be well known to many theatre goers both at The Barn and in the South East where he has appeared in and directed many musicals and plays. He directed the Barnstormers' much acclaimed production of *The Crucible* and also the two musicals *Into the Woods* and, more recently, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, both of which went down to the Minack Theatre in Cornwall. The play is set in *Messina* where it has been a busy week! A jilted bride - innocent of her supposed crimes, a "love trap" set to end a long standing battle of words, the incompetent night-watchmen make an arrest while a bastard brother makes plans for a prince's downfall. What went wrong? Well, take care that you don't believe everything you overhear! This is classic Shakespeare comedy.

There will be a read through of the play on Tuesday 25 November 2008 in the Little Barn behind the Barn Theatre at 8.00 p.m. and auditions on Sunday 30 November 2008 at Hurst Green Community Centre (behind the shops), Pollards Oak Road, Hurst Green at 5.00pm. Anyone wishing to audition will need to be a member. Paul aims to begin rehearsals in mid February. If you require any further information or are interested but unable to come along to the read through and/or auditions, please contact Paul on [paul@paullonghurst.com](mailto:paul@paullonghurst.com)

## Christmas Cracker 2008

Saturday 13th December 13th  
7.30pm

Always the highlight of the year, plans are well advanced for a splendid evening of Yuletide entertainment again this year. With the return of the children from St Mary's School after a break of a few years, a visiting choir from Heathfield, a guest appearance of the Harestone Valley Boys and many of the regular features including carols and Christmas readings you can look forward to a most enjoyable evening accompanied by mulled wine and mince pies. We are delighted to welcome Martin Fisher as MC for the evening and you are advised to book those tickets, not just soon but immediately! 01959561811.

If you wish to be involved in the evening do speak to Bruce on the box office number or 07802 302025.

## Christmas Natter and Noggin

Sunday 7th December  
12pm - 2pm

Christmas starts at the Barn with our traditional Noggin and Natter to which you are all warmly welcomed. It is your chance to see friends and family in the convivial surroundings of the Barn and to enjoy the hospitality of the FOBs and Trustees. Carolyn is already planning those delicious plates of nibbles and you need to arrive early if you wish to partake. No need to book, just turn up and enjoy.