

Southern Counties Drama Festival

Where can you see ten one-act plays in a week? Answer: the Barn Theatre, from 26th February till Saturday 1st March. For the past 20 years the Barn has been home to the Southern Counties Drama Festival formerly know as the Betchworth Festival. We can promise you a full week of festive fun and drama with a professional adjudication each evening from this year's Adjudicator, Colin Dolly, GODA. Come early to support your local societies, and meet old and new friends in the bar while listening to a programme of pre-show foyer musical entertainment.



We have just completed our panto run of *Treasure Island* which was a resounding success with full houses for all ten performances. It was directed and choreographed by Neil and Fran Reynolds who coached and motivated the very large cast of adults and children achieving excellent results with this not so well known pantomime, and the show has been widely praised. The maverick of the cast proved to be the parrot, who seemed to have his own agenda but even he managed to be word perfect by the end of the run! We are most grateful to Neil and Fran for their hard work and also the cast, production and back stage teams and front of house staff for their commitment and enthusiasm.

Our Society's next appearance on The Barn stage will be in the Southern Counties Drama Festival when once again we have entered both an adult team and a junior team. Our Young Players, and Jo Cox, will be defending their titles won in last year's Festival for Best Youth Play and Best Young Female Actress respectively. Our Youth Entry is *The Edge* by Ron Nicol and is directed by Paul Bowles. Adam Farrell and Jo Cox play two teenagers in a cleverly controlled situation with grimly comic moments which comes together to deliver a deeply serious, ultimately tragic tale of teenage angst versus genuine anguish. The Youth Play will be presented on Friday 29 February 2008 at 7.00 pm. On a much lighter note, our adult entry is *Last Tango in Titsey Hill* by David Tristram directed by Catherine Webber. *Titsey Hill Amateur Dramatic Society* is in dire financial trouble. The membership has dwindled to four and the audiences are not much bigger, and if they don't come up with some rent money soon, they are going to be thrown out of their hall. At an urgently convened meeting, the Committee realise that drastic steps are required and their Chairman, Gordon, played by Peter Damesick, comes up with a good idea to save the society. Thus begins a chaotic and hilarious build-up to an evening of extraordinary home-grown drama – an evening locals of Titsey Hill will never forget. Nicky Gill plays *Margaret* the haughty secretary, Alan Webber is the sarcastic *Bernard* and Mandie Arbuckle is the empty headed and confused *Joyce*. Our play will be the last play performed on Saturday evening, 1 March 2008 immediately before the final adjudications. We do hope that you will come along and support our entries.

Our Young Players have a further opportunity to display their talents in *The Pied Piper* by Adrian Mitchell based on the well known tale of the mysterious stranger who arrives in the village of Hamelin and offers to rid them of their rat problem. Directed by June Brown, the show is on Friday 1 May (7.30pm) and Saturday 2 May 2008 (2.30 and 7.30pm). This musical play was first performed in 1986 at the Olivier Theatre and ex *Doctor Who* Sylvester McCoy played the *Pied Piper*. Heading our large young cast is Jacob MacIntosh as the *Pied Piper* and Lottie Davies as *Toffee Jenkins*, the lame girl. We are pleased also to be able to utilise the talents of Jeremy Lloyd as Musical Director and Marissa Beatty as Choreographer and we are grateful to Bruce Reed who will be designing the set. As in previous years, our youngsters will also have the opportunity of helping on the technical side.

Following on from the Youth Production we have our Spring Play (21 – 24 May 2008 at 7.45pm) which is the poignant comedy *The Cemetery Club* by Ivan Menchell and directed by Mike Rourke whose last directorial outing for us was the hilarious *Family Planning* two years ago. In *The Cemetery Club* (not to be confused with the film of the same name) three New York Jewish widows meet once a month for tea before going to visit their husband's graves. *Ida* is ready to begin a new life, *Lucille* just wants to have fun and *Doris* is priggish and judgemental, particularly when widower *Sam* enters the scene. We have an excellent cast including Wendy O'Mahoney as *Ida*, newcomer to the Society Trish Richings as *Lucille* and Nicky Gill as *Doris*. Information about tickets for all our productions can be obtained on 01883 724852.

New Barn Director appointed

I am delighted to announce that Chris Bassett, Chairman of the Oxted Operatic Society, has accepted an invitation from the Oxted and Limpsfield Barn Theatre Co Ltd to join the board as a director and subsequently as a Trustee of the Charity too.

Chris has worked tirelessly as chairman of the OOS and his new appointment will serve to strengthen the already strong ties between the society and the Barn. It is the first time for many years that a serving chairman of the society has been on the board and the directors are looking forward to working with Chris as one of the team.

