

THE OXTED PLAYERS

Panto was a Ball

Our January pantomime escaped the snow this year and *Cinderella* played to packed houses, receiving excellent accolades. Despite the doom and gloom of a cold wet winter and the economic climate, we



believe we managed to lift everyone's spirits. In his review for Words & Music Tony Flook said "This excellent production lived up to Oxted Players' reputation for staging top class pantomimes" while Sigrid Sherrell for The Chronicle commented "There's no better way to end the festive season than with a pantomime and the Oxted Players provided exactly the right combination of humour, romance and hilarious costumes in their production of that well-loved favourite *Cinderella* to blow away those January blues. The Players have their pick of the finest actors, singers and dancers in Oxted as well as amazing set builders, which came together in perfect harmony to give the audience a fantastic evening's entertainment." To add to this the Surrey Mirror review described the show as "first class". Our sincere thanks go to Director Chris Bassett, Choreographer Fran Newitt, Musical Director Jamie Cordell, all the cast, production team and everyone who helped in any way with this very happy and profitable production.

At the end of each performance, we held red bucket collections and also a last night raffle in aid of the Children's Heart Federation, a Charity which supports children with heart problems in the UK. Our aim was to raise sufficient funds to purchase at least one more INR blood monitoring machine costing £670 which families of affected children can use in their own homes so as to reduce substantially the number of hospital visits which can cause distress and disruption to family life. We were told by the Charity that the waiting list for these machines is very long. With the proceeds of our Charity Barn Dance in November we were able to fund one such machine and we are thrilled to be able to report that we raised over £1,100 to which the Society has added the balance required for two more machines to be purchased. We are grateful to everyone who donated to this very worthy cause.

Double Drama

We continue this very busy time of our theatre season with our participation in the Southern Counties Drama Festival. We are again supporting the Festival this year by entering two plays. Our adult play is *Mantrap* by Paul Reakes, directed by Tricia Whyte. Petty larceny, manslaughter, policemen and a devilishly elaborate form of blackmail are all ingredients in this taut thriller. The strong cast features Ghislaine Bowden, David Fanthorpe, Rhian Lally, James Kletch and Chris Muscio. *Mantrap* will be performed on Saturday 5 March which is the last night of the Festival and at the end of the evening the Adjudicator will announce the awards. Ten of our Young Players

will be performing *The Press Gang* on Thursday 3 March. The play is directed by our Chairman June Brown assisted by Nick Fanthorpe. Set in a secondary school in the 1990s during a discordant editorial meeting for the school's newspaper, the young editor's plans are disrupted by other pupils who are either disinterested or have their own agendas. For the past four years our Young Players have won the Best Youth Play Award at the Festival and for the past three years they have been Festival Runners-Up. There are therefore great expectations for the youngsters to do well again. We wish both our teams every success.

Important Spring Production

Our spring production (18-21 May) is *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde directed by Chris Hepher. There are few works of literature, either novels, poems or plays, which most people could identify from simply two words contained within them. However, if you say "A hand-bag?" almost everyone will immediately know that you are referring to possibly the greatest comedy written in the English language in the last two centuries. Despite the auditions being disrupted by the snow in December, Chris has chosen his cast which includes Peter Calver (*Jack*), Cat Longhurst (*Gwendolen*), Laura Brand (Cecily), Daniel Horton (*Algernon*) and Jo Silcox (*Lady Bracknell*). With the added bonus of an authentic set designed by Sarah Cox and period costumes organised by Catherine Webber to transport audiences back to late Victorian England, you are assured of an excellent evening's entertainment. Tickets are available now from our Ticket Secretary on 01883 724852 or on line at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk* (*booking fee applies).

Expect the Unexpected

Although some months ahead, we would like to mention our Autumn production (19-22 October) which will be Agatha Christie's classic murder mystery *The Unexpected Guest* to be directed by June Brown. A read-through and auditions for the cast of 7 men and 3 ladies will be held in May and details will be circulated to our membership. Anyone who is not already a member and who would like more information should contact June on: j.brown306@btinternet.com. Only paid up members will be eligible to audition.

Your Legacy

By making provision for the Barn Theatre in your will, you would be making a lasting gift for future generations. The theatre, now protected as a charity, has endured for over 80 years (almost 90) and every sum, no matter how small, is welcomed and spent entirely on vital conservation and improvement works that will ensure that the Barn continues to be accessible for everyone to enjoy. Thank you for your interest and support – we would not be the success that we are without it.

Note to Editor

The article about Ghosts and Ghoulies in the last issue refers to dear old Bunny frequently passing through the dancing girls dressing room with a spare bulb. Tut, tut - bulbs grow in the ground - Bunny only ever carried spare lamps – he didn't have time for gardening!

Thank you for pointing this out Bruce. We should have realised it should have been 'new lamps for old'

Ed