

FOBS

A big thank you to the 60+ members who came to the AGM and the 30+ who sent apologies. It is really encouraging to have that level of support. A most enjoyable social gathering took place after the meeting. If you missed it for any reason you still have the possibility of spending a pleasant evening with friends at our Theatre on Wednesday 8th June when the AGM of the Barn Theatre will be held at 8pm. You do not have to be a shareholder in order to attend and the meeting itself is interesting with drinks and nibbles afterwards – so do try to come along.

The summer season sees us welcoming a number of youth shows to the Theatre. 'Starmakers' and 'Glow' will be back and it is good to see that Maureen Brown is also making a welcome return with her Dance School. It is the turn of Oxted Operatic Juniors to take over the Theatre in July and Kenley Holiday Workshop can be relied upon to give us a rip-roaring *Oklahoma* in August. A group named 'Courtyard Theatre' are making their first visit to present *Ruddigore*. I do urge you to check your programme information and come along to as many shows as you can. There is an amazing pool of talented youth locally and we are privileged to support them by buying tickets and/or working for them Front of House.

Those of us who were involved in the Barnstormers' award winning *Jesus Christ Superstar* last year are very excited that our 'Jesus' – Stuart Matthew Price – is coming to the Barn on Tuesday 21st June. This is an evening not to be missed.

Your committee was re-elected en-bloc and has held its first meeting of the current year. We'll be thinking about ways to improve our service to our patrons – and also about how to keep our prices as low as possible during this difficult economic time whilst still generating funds for the Theatre through our efforts.

We have been very pleased to welcome some excellent new Front of House Managers into the team over the last year – do look out for new faces and give them a cheery greeting when you come to shows! By the way, you do not have to be a FOB (Friend of the Barn Theatre) in order to work as a Front of House volunteer – although we are always delighted to have you join us. You may be a member of the Oxted Players; the Oxted Operatic Society or simply a general supporter of the Theatre with no particular allegiance to a resident group. Many FOBs are also members of the other resident groups and we all regard ourselves as part of the 'Barn Theatre family'.

Sheila Bennett

The Oxted Players

Busy Start to the Year

Having seen the worst of the winter out on a high with our record breaking sell out pantomime, *Cinderella*, we moved seamlessly onto Southern Counties Drama Festival with our adult and youth entries which both did very well. Our adult entry, *Mantrap*, by Paul Reaves and directed by Tricia Whyte won the Stage Presentation Award. Against strong competition, our youngsters performed admirably and four of our Young Players, namely Cameron Arbuckle, Libby Bliss, Hollie Pitt and Chris Zabilowicz, were mentioned in the category of Best Young Actor/Actress for their performances in our youth entry, *Press Gang*, by Ellen Dryden directed by June Brown. The play was also mentioned by the Adjudicator in her shortlist for the category of Best Youth Play – very welcome recognition of the talents of all our Young Players and their production team.

Important Handbag

We are now putting the final touches to our Spring play *The Importance of Being Earnest* which begins its run on Wednesday 18 May

at 7.45pm. Enhanced by the cleverly designed set and costumes of the period, this promises to be an excellent production. The play is a much loved classic by Oscar Wilde. 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.

This play is a witty outlook on the Victorian upper class, exposing a world of shallow indifference to true love. The young



Julie Parry & Mike Hill

Jack Worthing and his good friend Algernon find themselves in a ridiculous situation after their fiancées learn they are coincidentally engaged to the same man. A glorious rendition of mistaken identity, Wilde's play is sure to get people of all ages, if not realising themselves, the importance of being earnest! This classic play will appeal to old and young alike and this production should not be missed. We have an excellent cast with Barn regulars, Peter Calver (Jack), Cat Longhurst (Gwendolen), Laura Brand (Cecily), Janette White (Lady Bracknell), Guy Hudson (Lane), Mike Hill (Canon Chasuble), Duncan Browne (Merriman) and Julie Parry (Miss Prism) and we welcome newcomer Danniell Horton (Algy). Tickets are available from the Ticket Secretary on 01883 724852 and also if you prefer to use the internet at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk where a small booking fee will apply.

Guessing Game

Our October production (19–22 October) is *The Unexpected Guest* by Agatha Christie to be directed by our Chairman, June Brown. This murder/mystery promises to keep our audience guessing to the very end in classic Christie fashion. By the time this Newsletter is published there will have been a read through and auditions will have been held on 8 May.

Jacks Back

We are also pleased to announce that our January 2012 pantomime has now been chosen and will be the family favourite, *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The very successful team of Chris Bassett (Director), Fran Newitt (Choreographer) and Jamie Cordell (Musical Director) are joining forces again to bring us this colourful festive offering. There will be a read through at Hurst Green Community Centre on Sunday 5 September 2011 at 2.00pm followed by auditions on Sunday 12 September from 10.00 am but you will need to be a paid up member of the Society to audition. If you are interested in joining the Society, please contact our Membership Secretary on 01883 716566 or download the application form by using the Oxted Players' link on the Theatre website at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk.

Barn Theatre AGM

Will take place at the theatre on Wednesday 8th June from 8pm. All are welcome; you do not need to be a shareholder just a supporter who enjoys the Barn.

Time for Stuart

Originally from Kidderminster Stuart grew up in Portsmouth and started singing from a very early age. At the age of 16 Stuart moved to Croydon to attend the BRIT School on their Musical Theatre course. After BRIT, Stuart couldn't decide whether to pursue a career in composition or acting and took a few years out of education. After a holiday to New York his spark for performing was reignited and in 2004 he began training at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in North London where he graduated with BA Hons First Class Degree in Musical Theatre.

Since graduating he has travelled the world performing, singing and writing including a few shows in London such as *The Cradle Will Rock* at the Arcola Theatre, *Merrily We Roll Along* at the Donmar, and *Beyond the Gate* at the Gate Theatre, Notting Hill. He has also toured around Germany as the youngest person to play Riff Raff in *The Rocky Horror Show*. One of Stuart's highlights was playing Jesus in Barnstormers' production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. "JCS will always be a very special time for me; I had the chance to work and meet with incredibly genuine and supportive people who have a real love for every second on stage. With such a lovely and warm bunch of friends, it was nicely topped with the gorgeous and stunning back-drop of the Minack Theatre. Being crucified 200ft in the air isn't something you get to do often!"

Since performing in JCS Stuart has gone on to record his first debut album, *All Things In Time*, which supports and promotes new musical writing by British and American composers. Stuart is only just setting out on his journey into musical theatre, but is loving every second of it. As a result he is returning to the Barn Theatre where he hopes to share his journey and these new songs with the Barn audience. You can also find him on stage at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane for this year's new production, *Shrek The Musical* (based on the hit Dreamworks animation film) which also features Nigel Harman, an ex-Barn Theatre child prodigy. Stuart is delighted to have the opportunity to return to the Barn Theatre and is looking forward to seeing his Oxted friends at this intimate night of song.

Tickets are available from www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk or by telephoning the office on 01959561811

Surrey Opera

Britten's *Albert Herring* at the Barn

Surrey Opera will be bringing an exciting new professional production of Benjamin Britten's comic opera *Albert Herring* to the Barn in September, with performances on Tues 20th, Wed 21st, Fri 23rd and Sat 24th at 7.30p.m.

Albert Herring is a stunning piece, very witty and musically ingenious. The Barn Theatre is an ideal setting for this opera with its hilarious plot, which tells the story of rural life in a Suffolk town, where no girl is pure enough to be May Queen, so it is agreed that they only have one option – to crown someone May King – guess who? Albert of course, the shy young greengrocer! But all is not necessarily straight-forward!

Nationally respected conductor and musician, Jonathan Butcher, returns to his home town to conduct the opera, with a talented young production team – Director, Joe Austen and Designer, Simon Kenny – promising to bring the comic masterpiece to life. The cast is made up of young professional opera singers accompanied by professional chamber orchestra, so this really will be a quality production not to be missed!

Tickets can be booked through the Surrey Opera Box Office on 0208 657 7909 or online at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk

Kenley Holiday Workshop

Oklahoma!

The talented youngsters of KHW will be returning to the Barn Theatre once again this summer with their latest production, *Oklahoma!*, the ground-breaking first musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein. Against a background of conflict between farmers and cattlemen, *Oklahoma!* tells the tale of farm girl Laurey and the two rivals for her affections; happy-go-lucky cowboy Curly and the sinister farm-hand, Jud. This wonderful hit show includes such classic numbers as "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'", "Surrey With a Fringe on Top", "People Will Say We're in Love", "I Cain't Say No" and "Oklahoma!"

The show runs from Wednesday 10th to Saturday 13th August and if you want to see if the corn is really as high as an Elephant's eye you can book your tickets now on 01883 331400 or online at www.kenleyholidayworkshop.co.uk

Government cuts to the arts budgets

You will all be delighted to learn that the resolute independence of the Barn Theatre keeps it safe from the recently announced government inflicted cuts to the arts industry. Many other splendid organisations will founder without the financial support they have grown accustomed to over the years.

Tea and cakes time comes round again

Saturday 2nd July is the annual Oxted Carnival and as usual the Barn stalwarts will be out on the field early erecting the tea tents ready for the afternoon crush of visitors. Always a fun day, getting some fresh air and working in daylight rather than a dark theatre it is the opportunity for the theatre to support the community as we hope they will support us.

Dinner with an AfterGlow

Fresh on the heels of their entry into the Southern Counties Drama Festival, the AfterGlow performers at Glow Theatre Group are embarking on a brand new venture in June... Interactive Dinner Theatre. Concentrating on the skills of improvisation, the group will present *Murder at the Lodge* to their audience, who during dinner will then have chance to interrogate the actors, before making their allegations as to who may have "dunnit"! Taking this show out of the theatre and into a venue in which actors can move amongst the audience will be a challenging and interesting experience....Glow loves to be different!

Meanwhile, the main Glow Theatre Group has taken on the giant that is Disney... David and Goliath springs to mind! With a production of *High School Musical* set to take to the stage in June and July, in December the group will present Disney's *The Jungle Book*. Glow was recently asked to sum up what the group is all about. It's hard to encapsulate your raison d'etre into one phrase, but after looking at the growing faith in themselves from the children and their ready smiles, enjoyment and love of performing, in the end it was easy.... Glow Theatre Group - For A More Confident Future!