

# The All-England Theatre Festival



The All-England Theatre Festival has a history dating back to 1919 when the British Drama League was formed. By June 1923 there were 360 affiliated societies which included amateur and professional bodies. In 1938 the final of the National Festival was held outside London for the first time, following the invitation of the Scottish Community Drama Association. Entries totalled 602.

The war brought a significant reduction in the League's membership but activities continued as best they could throughout. The emphasis changed somewhat to encourage Youth Clubs and military units for educational purposes. The All-England Theatre Festival organises an eliminating series of festivals which leads ultimately to the English Final.

England is divided into four Areas for the purposes of this Festival: Northern, Central, Eastern and Western. Each Area is also divided into a number of Divisions according to the size and/or history of the areas.

The winner of the English Final goes on to compete against the winners of similar festivals in Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

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Regulated and authorised by the FCA

## Festival Information

*Venue*

Barn Theatre

Bluehouse Lane, Oxted, Surrey, RH8 0AA

*Festival Dates*

19<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024

*Festival Adjudicator*

Bob Tomson G.o.D.A )

The largest preliminary round festival  
in the UK

Winning team prize of  
£500 to be won

Southern Counties Drama Festival  
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The Barn Theatre, Oxted

# Southern Counties Drama Festival 2024

19<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> February



*"Can't wait to come back next year it was so much fun"*



*"Such high standards, a super week of live theatre"*



*"A great week of theatre, thanks so much"*



Southern Counties  
Drama Festival

*Premier festival of the Eastern Region*

A competitive festival of one act plays  
varying from 20 minutes to 55 minutes  
in length

The Barn Theatre  
Bluehouse Lane, Oxted,  
Surrey, RH8 0AA



# Southern Counties Drama Festival

"The premier festival of the AETF Eastern Area"

The Southern Counties Drama Festival has been an important part of local amateur dramatics in Surrey and Kent for over 70 years. Traditionally the venue of the Festival had moved around with different groups hosting the event each year. As time moved on, the standards of technical facilities were found lacking in some of these venues, which were in the main church halls, hurriedly converted for theatre use on the morning of the technical rehearsals. In 1989 the Festival moved to the Barn Theatre, was a great success and since that time the Barn has become the resident home to the Southern Counties Drama Festival.

Sixteen years ago there was a change in the Festival Management team who have since rejuvenated this popular Festival to become a premier event in the annual UK arts diary.

## The 2023 Festival

The Southern Counties Drama Festival enjoyed another successful season in 2023 with 19 entries. The standard of the entries was particularly high and it was not easy to forecast any of the winners until the final play had been performed on the Saturday evening.

SCDF are pleased to support the winning team as they progress to the successive rounds of the All-England Theatre Festival. The adjudicator, Julie McLoughlin, praised all the teams for their contribution towards some memorable performances. She also congratulated all of them for rising to the challenge of entering a competitive festival of such a high standard and wished the winning groups, Sevenoaks Shakespeare Society and Glow Theatre Group all the best in future rounds. During the week Julie had chatted with the groups after their performances which was greatly appreciated by all.

The ongoing sponsorship provided by Verlingue is warmly welcomed and will enable SCDF to continue their support for the winning teams in future years.

# SCDF 2024 Adjudicator

BOB TOMSON G.O.D.A.



Bob, who lives in West Sussex, has been an actor, stage and screen writer, a college and university lecture in drama, and now divides his time as a professional director in both theatre and TV. His early years as an amateur actor with Liverpool Masque players and the National Youth Theatre gave him his first love

of the stage, since when he has founded no fewer than 18 youth theatre groups, has become a sought-after guest tutor at leading London Drama Schools and on amateur theatre training courses.

Many of his productions have toured the UK or run in the West End and you might have seen one of them. His production of Willy Russell's Blood Brothers has won every major British theatre award, recently completed a record 25-year run in London, and was nominated for three Olivier Awards. His other long-running musical success, Leslie's Bricusse's Scrooge, has enjoyed over 20 years of regular seasons, including three London runs at the Palladium and Dominion theatres. His current production of Andrew Lloyd Webber/Tim Rice's Evita has been running in the UK for 11 years, including seasons in London's Dominion and Phoenix theatres.

His international productions include: Evita (Europe), and Blood Brothers in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and, most significantly, in the US, where the show ran for three years and was nominated on Broadway for no fewer than six Tony Awards, including Best Director. Notable actors associated with this production and its subsequent US tour include David Cassidy, Petula Clark, Carole King, David Soul and Helen Reddy. Bob directed Richard Chamberlain in the title role of Scrooge for the US tour, while its Australian and Japanese premiere productions won Bob Best Director awards. His Tokyo production of Patrick Stewart's one-man version of A Christmas Carol won the prize for Best Production. His current production of Ghost - the Musical has recently finished runs in Moscow, Paris, Dubai and Istanbul.

Recent national touring productions include: Jesus Christ Superstar, Oliver!, new musical treatments of Half a Sixpence and Doctor Dolittle, the jukebox musical Carnaby Street, and the world-premiere musical adaptation of the film Picnic at Hanging Rock (Chichester Festival Theatre). Current UK productions are Evita; Blood Brothers; Ghost - the Musical; Catch Me If You Can and Cilla - the Musical (prior to the West End).

Bob has attended a previous SCDF event at the Barn and is very much looking forward to joining us for the week in February.

# Our Festival Vice Patron



Diana Drysdale 'got the bug' for performing' when her childhood dancing school put her on stage at the Scala Theatre in London in 1947, playing Pan. After leaving school she had two years with East Surrey Operatic Society as a

dancer but acting being her preferred activity, she joined Merstham ADS in 1958. MADS were founder members of the Betchworth Drama Festival (as SCDF was originally called) and she appeared in many of their entries. She acted in and directed many MADS entries over the years and they achieved Best Set, a couple of Best Supporting Actors and a Best Actress. She was flattered to be asked to be Vice Patron of SCDF and is looking forward to being part of this very friendly contest.

## The 2024 Southern Counties Drama Festival

If you belong to a drama society or youth group who would be interested in competing in the 2024 Southern Counties Drama Festival, you are warmly invited to contact the Secretary who will be delighted to send you an entry pack. This information is also on our website [www.barntheatreoxtd.co.uk/scdf.html](http://www.barntheatreoxtd.co.uk/scdf.html) or you can e-mail us. Full contact details are on the back of this leaflet.

## 2023 Verlingue Festival Youth Winner

"The Edelweiss Pirates" by Ayub Khan Din performed by Glow Theatre Group.

Also winning

Best Young Actress – Rosie Chambers (Petra Gleissner)

Best Young Actor – Linus Davison (Narrator)

Martin Patrick Award for Best Director – Jackie Driscoll  
Best Youth Production

## 2023 Verlingue Festival Winners Award

"The Final Kiss" by Maurice Level performed by Sevenoaks Shakespeare Society.

Also winning Best Adult Actor - Pierse Stevens (Henri) and Best Adult Production

**In 2024 the winning team will take away a  
£500 cash prize**