

FOBS

A belated New Year greeting to all those who missed Caro's splendid 'jacket potato lunch' on the 2nd January. Those of us who were able to be there had a most congenial Sunday Club and we very much hope that Caro will be willing to make it a New Year Barn Tradition! Thank you, Caro.

One month of 2011 has passed already and the Barn Calendar is booking up fast so expect to be called for Front of House duties all our valued volunteers. It was good to see more new faces during the pantomime and we hope that they will join the team – as explained in the last issue, the list of volunteers is shared by The Oxted Players, The Oxted Operatic Society and the Friends of the Barn. It is hoped that we'll be able to organise a 'volunteers' session at the Theatre this year to familiarise everyone with the various Front of House tasks. It is important that we make the experience of a visit to The Barn Theatre both enjoyable and safe for our Patrons so we realise that volunteers need to be aware of the routine and necessary regulations. Pippa has the challenging task of staffing six nights for the Southern Counties Drama Festival – it is always particularly difficult to find enough willing folk to help with the car parking so do give her a call if you would be ready to 'brave the elements' for us.

We have our Annual General Meeting booked to take place in the Theatre – by kind permission of Oxted Operatic Society which will have taken up residence in the Theatre in order to start building the set for *Gigi* – on:

Monday 21st March at 7.30pm.

Official notices will be sent out at the end of February but do put the date in your diaries now please. All members of your present committee are willing to stand for re-election but we encourage you to nominate others who you feel would have something to contribute – or, have yourself nominated if you would like to become a more active member. Each committee member has a role:

Pippa Bridges organises our Front of House staffing
Bridgett Carey is our secretary
Sharon and Simon Dawes manage the bar and Simon is Deputy Chairman
Jean Groves is our membership secretary
Janet Magnay manages the sweet shop
Don Mear is our treasurer
Terry Rolph is our actively involved president
Phil Littleford is our permanent representative for the Theatre Directors

A new committee member could 'shadow' any of the tasks which interested them – including, of course, that of your Chairman.

In conclusion I remind all readers of The Barn Theatre News, whether members of The Friends or not, that the Sunday Clubs held from midday to 2pm on the 1st Sunday of each month are a very pleasant way to meet fellow supporters and to find out more about your Theatre - so do come!

Sheila Bennett

Eric Hallson

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Eric Hallson in December. Eric and his wife Elsie, who died about 4 years ago, could be described as the resident props team at The Barn for many years, making and supplying props for shows by The Oxted Players and Oxted Operatic. They were a very devoted couple. Their family has asked for those wishing to make a donation in their memory to support The Woodhouse Centre in Hoskins Road, Oxted, where Eric spent much of his time after Elsie's death.

Resurrected



Following his brave and courageous performance, as Jesus, suspended on a cross above the Atlantic ocean in all weathers at the Minack Theatre in Cornwall last year, we are delighted to welcome back Stuart Matthew Price to the Barn. Stuart will perform an outstanding selection of songs from his debut solo album *All Things in Time* and many more West End hits including those from *Les Miserables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Love Never Dies*, *Sweeney*

Todd and, of course, *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Apart from his role as Jesus that we all know, Stuart has recently been seen in 'The Cradle Will Rock' at the Arcola theatre and is perhaps best known for creating the role of The Young Soldier in the Donmar's acclaimed production of 'Parade' by Jason Robert Brown and Alfred Uhry. Robert Brown says of Stuart, "*People just don't sing like Stuart does, and even great singers don't manage to convey the emotional depth that Stuart effortlessly summons. I spend a lot of my time in the theatre hoping for that kind of experience, that all too rare moment when the actor and the part and the song all merge into one perfect expression.*"

Stuart is no stranger to solo performances and you can look forward to an intimate and informal evening, here at the Barn, celebrating his acclaimed best selling debut album 'All Things in Time'.

Order your tickets now on www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk or by telephoning the box office on 01959 561811

Calendar Girls days are Numbered

Calendar Girls, the story of a Women's Institute group that raised money for charity by posing nude for a calendar, has taken more than £21 million at the box office. The production was first seen at the Chichester Festival Theatre in 2003 and was made into a film in 2008. A new UK-wide tour began in January 2011 and will be the last before the rights to amateur productions are made available in 2012 for one year only. Amateur groups are being invited by Samuel French to apply now for permission to perform the play. So it will be a TOP show to do and I know the very person who could play the month of June...

Oxted District Community Responders

The Oxted District Community Responders was set up in September 2006. Volunteer Community Responders (CRs) are trained to respond to emergency calls through the 999 system, providing vital assistance to people who are ill or injured prior to the arrival of the Emergency Ambulance. They are based in the area where they live or work and can make a real difference in their communities. They can be men or women over 18 years of age with use of a car and while 'on call', be able to immediately attend emergency calls by stopping whatever they are doing at home or in their workplace. CRs must be caring, extremely reliable, physically fit, able to cope well under pressure and remain calm in emergency situations. To ensure safety and clinical standards prospective CRs undergo checks carried out by the South East Coast Ambulance Service and need to pass an interview after which they undergo intensive training/assessment with the Ambulance Service. The Local Responder Group needs at least 3 more volunteers. Would you be prepared to help save lives? For more information contact the website: www.secamb.nhs.uk/jobs-in-secamb/community-first-responders or call local Community Responder Team Leader, John Kempton, on 01883 716616 or e-mail oxted999responders@tiscali.co.uk

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

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