The Barn Theatre seems to be a breeding ground for young talent. It cannot have escaped your notice that we are blessed with so many youth groups performing at the theatre particularly during the summer months and this year is no exception.

What is really impressive is the sheer quality of talent that these youngsters have. Being heavily involved with one of the groups I never cease to be amazed at what they are able achieve. My group, Kenley Holiday Workshop, have now been performing at the Barn for twelve years; I can hardly believe it as I look so young! We have just had auditions for this year’s summer show, and I was bowled over by the very high standard of those auditioning. What a difference a year makes; it seemed like it was only yesterday that they joined as 8 year olds and now here they are, young teenagers, battling for leading roles, in what is a very complex musical. They are so mature, professional and dedicated: we could have cast the show several times over. I feel honoured to be part of them.

Then there are ‘The Young Oxted Players’ who have a very fine reputation for good drama and for whom 2008 is becoming a prolific year. We have just seen over 30 Young Oxted Players in a very enjoyable production of The Pied Piper directed by that champion of youth theatre, June Brown. But the highlight of their year so far must surely be the fantastic success they had in this year’s Southern Counties Drama Festival of One act plays in February, when they walked away with 6 awards, and went on to compete in the quarter finals of the All England Theatre Festival of One act plays. The group are back again in August with their annual weeklong workshop.

Then we have the new kids on the block, the ‘Oxted Operatic Juniors’ who take to the Stage in July with the musical Back to the 80’s (me I go back to the 60’s - Ah mini skirts and thigh high boots…!)

Not to be outdone, youngsters from 4 local Stagecoach schools will be performing here in July to raise money for charity.

‘The Maureen Brown Dance School’ were here in April; Maureen is another stalwart supporter of young dance talent.

All in all I think Mrs Worthington was given bad advice and we are reaping the rewards.

Of course it is not only on stage that you can witness the young talent. Back stage at the Barn has also seen a large number of youngsters taking up the challenge of supporting those on stage and have been involved in a range of skills such as stage management, set building, lighting, sound and music.

Bruce Reed and the Barn Trustees continue to foster and encourage youth groups to use the Theatre and are always willing to offer help and advice on all aspects of theatre life. You can do your part in supporting them by coming along to see and hear these children in their productions this year.