Friends of the Barn, donate another £10,000 to DRIP

Another very busy and successful year at the Barn was the theme of Alan Jackson, Chairman of Friend’s of the Barn, at their AGM in March and Don Mear, the outgoing treasurer, was delighted to present Bruce, the Theatre Chairman with a cheque for £10,000 as a further contribution to the DRIP fund. Bruce duly thanked all the FOB’s for their continuing support of the Barn and encouraged the harnessing of more theatre supporters to increase the numbers available to assist with Front of House duties for the ever increasing number of shows.

To become a Friend of the Barn or to find out more about them, contact the membership secretary Jean Groves on 01883 712130, or collect an application form directly from the theatre where they are prominently displayed.

THE FRIENDLY FACES OF FOBS
A look at some of those unsung heroes of the Barn Front Of House team

THREE YEARS ON…………………

Karen and I moved to Oxted in 2009 to support Karen’s elderly parents. We had always enjoyed attending the theatre - both professional and amateur - and we quickly discovered the Barn. We joined FOBS and read in the newsletter that volunteers were needed for Front of House duties. On most occasions I found myself behind the bar but also carried out all the other duties at some time. After about 18 months I was trained for Front of House Manager.

I was voted onto the FOBs committee in 2012 and in 2013 became Deputy Chairman with a view to becoming Chairman in 2014 on Sheila Bennett’s retirement. I have been most impressed with the high standard which the various performances attain and also the standard of service provided by the many volunteers who give up their time. At various times there seem to be a lot of matters to attend to. However, as is often the case, one can get back so much more than one puts in and this is certainly true in my case. I have made some good friends and derive so much pleasure from working at the Barn as well as attending the performances and social events. It is always rewarding when everything runs smoothly and members of the audience comment accordingly.

SIX YEARS ON

I was very pleased to take on the role of Treasurer of FOBs, which enabled me to have some involvement with my first love, the theatre. I always wanted to have a career in the theatre but the lure of a real job as an accountant became more important to me. As compensation, Julie and I have managed to see many hundreds of West End shows, witness my collection of theatre programmes. I, as an accountant, had dealt with numbers, not cash, and the task of counting and then preparing floats, with the help of the extremely patient staff at NatWest was very challenging! I have made some real friendships with the FOBs committee, under the excellent Chairmanship of Sheila Bennett, and more recently Alan Jackson, and will miss the committee meetings (not the cash counting).

SIXTY YEARS ON!

Older BARN members may remember my parents Leonard and Betty Bridges. My mother was heavily involved with OOS from 1954 onwards and I would be dragged to the theatre, sat in the back row of the stalls and told "NOT TO MOVE!"

Had I moved far? Not really. I had just joined the Barn Family.

By 1968, I joined the Panto chorus and despite living in West London did a couple of years as principal boy, which included June Brown trying to turn me into a TILLER GIRL!

For the next 25 years I indulged my love of theatre in an amateur capacity by performing & directing at The Bob Hope Theatre in Eltham, The Kenneth More in Ilford and even doing some high kicks over water at The Pavilion, Worthing.

In 1990 I was recruited by the Director of the V&A to be the first General Manager of The Theatre Museum in Convent Garden where I ran their fringe studio theatre and had the added thrill of working with the professionals!

I returned to Oxted and the BARN in 1998 and served 12 years on the TOPS committee, subsequently joining the FOBS committee in 2004. Working happily with Sheila Bennett, the FOBS new Chairman, I tried to see what contribution I could make to the running of what had now evolved, under Bruce’s leadership, into a hugely successful enterprise. Sheila allowed me to take on the task of FOH Staffing. After 12 years I have now left the Committee and in addition to continuing the FOH staffing I am thrilled to take on the Front of House liaison with our outside hirers. You’ll still find me sitting in the back row of the stalls ….doing just what my mother told me to do sixty years ago.

I REALLY HAVEN’T MOVED AT ALL.
We are delighted that local schools have agreed to stage another special spectacular show, **Schoolfest**, to raise funds for dressing room improvements.

Participating schools include St Mary’s Junior School, Downs Way School, Holland Junior School, Oxted School, Lingfield Notre Dame School and St. Francis Catholic Primary School.

There will be two performances, at 2.30 and 7.30pm. Tickets priced at £12.00 each are available from 01959 561811 or online for credit and debit card bookings at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk.

All proceeds will once again going to our DRIP fund which we hope will benefit many of the young performers in the years to come.

Don't miss this very special showcase by talented young performers and do book early, as seats are limited.

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**Schoolfest**

**SATURDAY JUNE 13TH AT 2.30 & 7.30**

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**The Barn Theatre Premier of We Will Rock You!**

For the first time ever, the renowned rock musical **We Will Rock You** comes to the Barn stage, bringing together the combined uber-talents of Queen and Ben Elton. **Glow Theatre Group** are performing the musical in July, and rehearsals are already underway for this rocker of a show. Coming directly from their award winning performances in the **Southern Counties Drama Festival**, the show is providing the cast with a very different and very exciting challenge.....and is introducing the music of the famous rock band to a whole new generation! First created as a tribute to the amazing Freddie Mercury, the show takes you into the future, to a world where music has been banned and total globalisation has been achieved. It’s a safe, happy Ga-Ga place to live.....unless you’re a rebel. Unless you want to rock. Unless you are a Bohemian searching for your Rhapsody! The cast will be rocking the Barn from 1st to 4th July with songs such as Bohemian Rhapsody, We Are The Champions, Killer Queen, Under Pressure, Crazy Little Thing Called Love and Another One Bites The Dust.

Order your tickets now by telephoning 07813 916105 or go online for credit and debit card bookings at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk

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**Tea and Cake Time Comes Round Again Saturday 4th July**

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**Amick Productions bring some wonderful music and a very talented cast on their first visit to us in June. An evening not to be missed by lovers of good music.**

**The Sound of Musicals Saturday 6th June at 7.30pm**

Prepare to be dazzled by this musical-packed evening, where you will be taken on a journey from the West End to Broadway and back, spanning the classics to modern day musical theatre. Featuring some of the most popular and well-known songwriters, including Rodgers & Hammerstein, Elton John and Andrew Lloyd Webber and shows such as Les Misérables, Wicked and Guys & Dolls. The talented cast are Mike Christie (The X-Factor & vocal group G4), Sam Board (Mamma Mia, Palace Theatre, London’s West End) and Jemma Harris (The Ripper, New Players Theatre, Charing Cross). Don’t miss out on this fantastic show suitable for all ages. Tickets 01959 561811 or go online for credit card and debit card bookings at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk

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**The Barn welcomes this authentic tribute to Status Quo for the first time on Saturday 5th December and expect a sell out performance. All proceeds to the DRIP fund.**

**Quo-INCIDENCE Saturday December 5th**

Order your tickets now by telephoning 01959 561811 or go online for credit and debit card bookings at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk
In February we entered two plays into the Southern Counties Drama Festival. Our adults performed the comedy “Aunt Matilda Comes For Christmas Dinner” directed by Catherine Webber with Jackie Barrett, Sally Bosman and Steve Jones. Our Young Players entry was a very topical play “Safe” directed by June Brown and Libby Bliss with Rebecca Wilkes, Megan Saunders, Archan Mohile, Barnaby Stott, Teddy Stevenson and Natasha Rose. Both teams fared very well against stiff competition and received well deserved praise from the Adjudicator with special mentions for acting and stage presentation. One act festival plays often mean only one performance but are still as challenging as a full length play for all concerned so our thanks to our Directors, casts and production teams for their hard work and commitment.

Our spring production is “Boeing Boeing” by Marc Camoletti (13th to 16th May). This classic 1960’s farce was performed by the Student Players at the Barn in 1972 where the cast included “Barn Matriarchs” Jill Perry and Joyce Newitt as two of the air hostesses with June Brown on props. Set in the Paris flat of architect Bernard, his hitherto smooth management of the visits by his three air hostess fiancées is disrupted by the introduction of the new Boeing airliner which changes their flying schedules.

In 2016 we intend celebrating our 70th anniversary in style – any offers of supports, help or suggestions of what we might do? Please contact secretary@oxtedplayers.co.uk if you would like to know more.

In 2016 we are going to stage a musical that will get every audience member’s feet tapping along with the cast throughout the performance! Our November Production is 42nd Street, with performances from 17th to 21st November and rehearsals commencing at the beginning of September. We welcome our production team of Paul Robinson (Director), Andy Payne (MD) and Fran Newitt (Choreographer).

42nd Street tells the story of famed Director Julian Marsh’s attempts to stage a musical extravaganza at the height of the Great Depression. With well-known songs such as “I Only Have Eyes For You”, “We’re In The Money”, “Lullaby on Broadway” and of course, “42nd Street” among many others. This is a musical that will get every audience member’s feet tapping along with the cast throughout the performance!

The initial meet and greet will be on Tuesday 19th May, 7.30pm to 9.30pm and auditions will be 2nd June for Principals and 4th June for Ensemble from 7.30pm to 10pm, all to be held at Hurst Green Community Centre, 4 Oak Close, Hurst Green, Oxted RH8 0BA

Dazzle has been performed all over the world including Shanghai, South Africa, Canada and Australia but has yet to appear in the West End. Let’s hope that is the next destination!

Our July OJOS production is the exciting new musical “Dazzle”. Following a great turnout for the initial meet and greet, then workshop style auditions, we now have a very talented cast in place with principals as follows: Poppy: Anna Rastelli, Murgatroyd Megarich: Daniel Coldron, Flossie: Izzy Boorman, Sarkky: Maria Kelly, Skimpy: Ben Eldridge, Auntie Waltztein: Fern Simmons, Squeamish: Joel Wall, Clackett: Beth Mesher, Monkeychunks: Philip Langham, Mary-go-round: Sophie Moss, Spooky: Jonah Rumsey, Louis Spanton: Dan Brown, Beak Worthy: Ellie D’Elessandro, Fail safe: Grace Rumsey.

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Friends of the Barn Theatre

The recent AGM saw the retirement of our treasurer, Don Mear. Don had looked after the finances for the past six years and whilst I am sorry to lose his services, I think that he deserves a well-earned break. Alan Webber has taken over the duties of Treasurer and I look forward to working with him in this important role. The committee also lost the services of Pippa Bridges but she is continuing to find volunteers for the Front of House duties. We all thank her for the hard work which Pippa has put in over many years and particularly for her many constructive comments in our meetings. Dave Nichols has joined the committee and we look forward to his contribution.

If you are interested in assisting with any of the activities then please let us know. Our Sunday Club gathering (first Sunday in each month) is a great opportunity to socialise and to find out how you could help continue the excellent service which the theatre provides to hirers when they bring a show to Oxted.

Alan Jackson

Dressing Room Improvement Project

Fundraisings for DRIP continues apace and those little red buckets have already raised over £3,500 in loose change from retirement collections.

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Alan Jackson
Southern Counties Drama Festival 2015

An excellent week of festival drama unfolded at the Barn in late February with some close competition for the winning slots by the 15 teams performing. Jan Palmer Sayer, the adjudicator, was extremely complimentary as to the standard of the presentations and thoroughly enjoyed the whole “thriving” festival.

Winners of the Festival and Best Adult Production were Alternate Shadows with their play “War Room”, an original play written by Chris Brake, who played the part of Chancellor.

Winners of the Best Youth Production were Glow Theatre Group with their production of “DNA” by Dennis Kelly.

‘War Room’ by Alternate Shadows

‘DNA’ by Glow Theatre Group

Dennis Newitt

Dennis, patriarch of one of the largest and longstanding extended “Barn families” and himself a Barn stalwart both on stage and backstage, sadly died earlier this year. The funeral was attended by many of his Barn friends and Cathy Longhurst, one of his daughters has sent me the following extract from the eulogy which I am delighted to publish here:-

“We have been overwhelmed by the heartfelt messages we have received from everyone. The sentiments that have been repeated again and again were that he was a wonderful, gentle, happy, smiling man who liked to tell his stories and was always up for a chat. He is still remembered by our friends as being so very patient, sitting outside rehearsal halls and parties waiting for us to finally emerge! One old family friend said he was genuinely interested in what you were doing and when asked, offered sensible advice. There are some to this day who still remember his wisdom and guidance. Dad would be humbled by the quiet effect he made on people’s lives and I can just see him now smiling and waving at us all.”

ALL ENGLAND THEATRE FESTIVAL EASTERN AREA FINAL

Excitement is building for the Eastern Area Final here at the Barn as winners from earlier rounds gather for the event that takes the winners straight to the English Final of the AETF.

Jill Colby, well known to Barn Festival audiences, is the adjudicator and there are two sessions, afternoon and evening.

The afternoon session commences at 2.30pm with performances by winners from the Maidenhead and Waltham Forest Festivals and the evening performance at 7.30pm will see winners representing the Southern Counties and Elmbridge Festivals, followed by the final adjudication and presentation of the awards.

Tickets £8 per session or £14 for both.
Telephone 01959 561811 or online for credit and debit card bookings www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk

Barn Theatre Annual General Meeting

All are invited to the Barn AGM at 8pm on Wednesday 10th June in the theatre. Shareholders will receive their formal notice of invitation later this month and all other supporters are welcome as guests.