

# Oxfordshire Drama Network

## Newsletter

APRIL 2019

### EDITOR / CHAIRMAN'S BULLETIN

The Pantomime season is now over, all the entries in our pantomime competition have been marked and the reviews appear in this issue. The results will be announced at our AGM on 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

If anyone would like join the ODN committee, especially as treasurer, please let us know

We always welcome feedback from our members, so we have arranged an on-line Survey to gauge your views (see page 2).

I can't believe there are 7 different shows on next week! No-one can possibly see them all !

*Mike Davies*

ODN Chairman



#### DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The **ODN AGM** will be on 3<sup>rd</sup> May at Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton, Nr Abingdon, OX14 4LG at 7.30 for drinks, 8pm start.

The deadline for the June issue is 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019  
Contributions to [info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org](mailto:info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org)

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### WHAT'S ON DIARY (details inside)

#### APRIL

- 4-6 Jigsaw Stage Productions  
"The King and I"
- 9-13 *Abingdon Operatic Society*  
*My Fair Lady*
- 9-13 MYCO(Music Youth Company of Oxford)  
The Wedding Singer
- 10-13 *AmEgos*  
*The 39 Steps*
- 10-13 Compton Players  
\*The Ladykillers\*
- 10-13 *Sinodun Players*  
*Dead Funny*
- 10-13 St Peter's Players  
"Merely Uniforms"
- 11-13 *Jigsaw Stage Productions*  
*"The King and I"*

#### MAY

- 1-4 Banbury Cross Players  
Death Knell
- 1-4 *Henley A.O.D.S.*  
*Half a Sixpence*
- 2-4 The Wychwood Players  
Two One act plays:
- 7-11 *Thame Players*  
*Witness for the Prosecution*
- 10,11 WSMC  
17,18 Musical Road Trip
- 15-18 *Bartholomew Players*  
*"And Then There Were None"*
- 18 Kingston Bagpuize Drama Group  
A Murder Mystery Evening
- 30- *Bicester Choral & Operatic Society*  
1 Jun *Evita*
- 31- Oxford Operatic Society  
1 Jun The Trials of Love!

#### JUNE

- 3-8 *ODN Drama Festival of 1 Act Plays*
- 10-14 Wallingford Drama Festival
- 19-22 *Dorchester A.D.S.*  
*Sex Please We're Sixty*

#### JULY

- 17-20 Blewbury Players  
The Crucible

# ODN DRAMA FESTIVAL

## ENTRIES STILL BEING ACCEPTED

Now is the time to choose your play to enter into the ODN Drama Festival of 1 Act Plays at the Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon.

**Entries before 1st May please.**

**Festival dates are  
Mon 3<sup>rd</sup> - Sat 8<sup>th</sup> June**

**Unicorn Theatre Abingdon**

N.B. Tech day is Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

Plays should be between 25mins and 55mins long, but 1 Hour max is allowed, including set & strike. Entries cost £20 per play (max 2 plays per group). 3 plays will be picked to replay on Sat 8<sup>th</sup> so please endeavour to ensure all cast can do that evening.

The adjudicator this year will be Nick Wilkes

**Awards presented are :-**

Colin Dexter Rose-bowl for a special moment  
Punters Prize chosen by our season ticket holders

**N.B.** Groups must be paid up ODN members (joining details are on our 'Downloads' page).

See ODN website to download Festival Entry form & rules

The ODN Drama Festival is a member of the  
**National Drama Festival Association**

After the ODN festival, the adjudicator's marking for each play will be sent to that group only, but all the marks will be passed on to the NDFA so they can consider the plays to compete in the NDFA's "British All Winners final" this year to be held in Woking on 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> July.



# National Drama Festival Association

The 2019 NDFA British All Winners Festival will be held in Woking from 14th to 21st July, at Rhoda McGraw Theatre, Woking.

The All Winners Festival was inaugurated in 1974 in Stoke on Trent. The festival is an opportunity to celebrate the 'Best of the Best' by inviting the winners of NDFA festivals around the country to come together competitively for one last time at the end of the festival season. It now includes a youth section for groups who have won youth festivals or youth sections.

## The NDFA Derek Jacobi Award for New Playwriting

The winner of the Award will be presented with a new stylised trophy; will be featured in all publicity and will receive a publishing contract for their work with STAGESCRIPTS together with a cheque for £250.

Full details about THE DEREK JACOBI AWARD FOR NEW PLAY-WRITING telling you how to enter, eligibility and STAGESCRIPTS can be found in the relevant page on the NDFA Website - [www.NDFA.co.uk](http://www.NDFA.co.uk)

## ODN MEMBER'S SURVEY

To gauge the relationship between the ODN Committee and its members, the Committee have decided to survey the Member Groups/Societies via a short 10 question Survey created through "Survey Monkey".

The reason this Survey has been devised, is to find out whether member group/societies are content with how the ODN represent the members, or whether the members believe that improvements could be made.

Any individual member of a group is free to complete a survey, as the Committee would like to have as full a response as possible to enable the ODN to move forward.

The survey covers the main aspects of the ODN, including Pantomime Competition, ODN Festival and general questions.

The Committee would be grateful therefore if the Surveys could be completed online as soon as possible, so that all the results can be compiled and be presented at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting on Friday 3rd May.

**Here's the link to our Survey:-**

[www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/F9MZBX5](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/F9MZBX5)

## Wallingford Corn Exchange One Act Drama Festival



Monday 10th to  
Friday 14th  
June

The adjudicator will be David Henson.

There are awards for the following categories:-

Best Overall Production.

The Commended Award.

Best Junior Production.

The Harris & Jones Salver for best actor.

The Punters' Prize.

The Susan North Memorial Trophy for special moment.

The deadline for entries is May 1st. The entry fee is £20 for adult groups and free for youth groups.

More information can be found at [www.cornexchange.org.uk/drama-festival/](http://www.cornexchange.org.uk/drama-festival/) or email [dramafestival@cornexchange.org.uk](mailto:dramafestival@cornexchange.org.uk)

## Wantage Summer Arts Festival from June 15 to July 14

Why not submit your events into the Wantage Summer Arts Festival. Currently we just have the Rain or Shine company doing their annual pilgrimage to Dicky Squire's Garden in Wantage.

It would be great to have more drama.

Any ideas or suggestions welcomed.

Contact Jim Mitchell 01235 767975

## MODULAR STAGE FOR SALE



We have recently upgraded to a new school stage and are looking to sell our existing modular stage.

It includes 21 pieces of 1.2m x 1.2m stage modules which slot together, 2 x single steps, 2 x double steps, side and front panels and 3 storage containers. It is in great condition for its age (~16 years old). Cost approximately £4000 new, we are selling for £500 or nearest offer.



I wondered if any of your members were interested in this? I can arrange viewings (at Chilton Primary School) if there is any interest.

Christine Reardon  
School Business Manager  
Chilton Primary School, Downside, Chilton,  
Didcot, Oxon, OX11 0PQ  
SBM.2555@chilton.oxon.sch.uk

## CASTING

### AMEGOS THEATRE

are thrilled to announce their autumn show

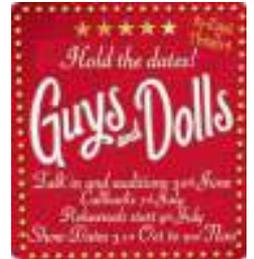
### GUYS AND DOLLS

Please come and join us on stage... get in touch to register your interest

Talk-in and Auditions Sunday 30th June.

Callbacks Sunday 7th July.

Rehearsals start 9th July.



There will be four performances from 31st Oct to 2nd November at King Alfred's Academy Theatre in Wantage

We love all you 'dolls', but 'guys' are particularly welcome!

Contact us on: [amegos.theatre@gmail.com](mailto:amegos.theatre@gmail.com)

## ABINGDON DRAMA CLUB

### 'Allo 'Allo

by Jeremy Lloyd & David Croft



### Casting

Wednesday 27th March &

Monday 1st April - both at 7.30pm in the ADC clubhouse on Marcham Road

Performances: 'Allo 'Allo by Jeremy Lloyd & David Croft

Wednesday 26th to Saturday 29th June @7.30pm in the Unicorn Theatre in Abingdon

Based on the original BBC comedy from the 1980's it follows the trials and tribulations of Rene Artois a café owner in the town of Nouvion, France, and his attempts to negotiate safely the war and German occupation.

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**ADC Play Readings:-** Play readings are open to anyone and everyone to come along.

Weds 3rd April - couple of one acts, possibly one for the ODN Festival

Tues 14th May - possible show for the autumn slot

Tues 11th June - possible panto for January 2020

Tues 9th July - a play being considered for 2020.

# REVIEWS

## BANBURY CROSS PLAYERS

### Game Plan

By Alan Ayckbourn

The Mill, Banbury 13th-16th February 2019.

Game Plan, the second play of the BCP season, is written by Alan Ayckbourn, and it shows. This is a funny play, although as many Ayckbourn productions do, it descends into darker issues in the second act.

The plot however is simple. Sixteen-year-old Sorrel enters the murky world of prostitution in order to alleviate the cash problems she and her mother are experiencing since her father deserted them after his business collapsed.

Sorrel enlists her best friend Kelly to help as her maid and advertises on the Net.

So the play opens with Lynette Saxon (Tara Lacey) explaining to daughter Sorrel she cannot spend money like they used to. Ms Lacey as expected came up trumps as the once wealthy wife now working as an office cleaner. Not many laughs so far. What I didn't expect is the part of young Sorrel to be played with such confidence and conviction by Clare Primrose, an accomplished performance from such a young lady who I believe is only a few years older than the part she portrays.

Almira Brion again came over well as Kelly, Sorrel's best mate. Her volume needed adjustment at the outset but this was the first night and as the piece progressed Kelly blossomed and gave an impressive characterisation in supporting the demanding Sorrel.

The Set designed by Nik Lester was first-class, simple and well thought out. John Hicks' lighting plot is also worth a mention, as I just loved the light from the fourth wall windows beamed onto the set. This attention to detail was also carried through by the Sound guru, Zac Lacey-Rousou, when the apartment window is opened and we hear the sounds of the outside world.

Directed by BCP Chairman Liz Riley, Game plan is a comedy from Ayckbourn at his best and the laughs come thick and fast as Sorrel's first client, the garrulous Leo Tyler played by Roger Riley, arrives for his appointment. Mr Riley puts in a terrific performance as the widower who seemed in no hurry to sample Sorrel's delights despite her writhing and vamping around the room dressed in her new basque. A superb lengthy and faultless monologue by Leo should ensure Roger a place in the BCP Hall of Fame under the heading 'How do they remember all those lines?'

The scene was hysterical and appreciated by the well-manned auditorium.

Afterwards (how delicate is that?) Leo enters the living room thanks Sorrel for her endeavours and promptly drops dead in a move of which James Cagney would be proud.

The rest of the play revolves around Sorrel and Kelly getting rid of the body and the police eventually turning up to see what's what as they do.

ODN website: [www.OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org](http://www.OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org)

Lynette (remember her) is taken to be the loose lady of the premises as Sgt Dan Endicott (Dave Candy) assumes Sorrel to be too young to be doing these things. Dave Candy graduated with honours as the detective sergeant pacing the stage and asking all the right questions backed by his colleague PC Grace Page played by Hilary Beaton who stole the stage with her Biblical quotations. Suffice to say they all got away it seems with the body dumping crime (don't know how but it's best not to go there).

Eventually a gossip column magazine's reporter calls. James Murray plays Troy Stephens and he did lack a little depth but he was up against some stiff opposition on that stage.

He offers Lynette a healthy sum for her story, she adds a nought to figure suggested, and we all wait to hear the result. Mr Ayckbourn draws a veil over his story at this point and we have to make our own minds up as to the outcome.

My mind is made up; Game Plan is a cracker, another professional and commendable performance from Banbury Cross players.

Lance Bassett

## PANTOMIME REVIEWS

of our Pantomime Competition entries

### KINGSTON BAGUIZE

#### DRAMA GROUP

### SLEEPING BEAUTY

Southmoor Village Hall 22 – 24 Nov 2018

The pre -show atmosphere was well created and helped by the excellent pianist (Alan Smith) playing a selection of well-known songs to get the audience in the mood.



The scenery was simple, but effective, with scene changes slick and effective, given the constraints of the stage. This well-costumed production left the younger members of the audience spell-bound and thoroughly lost in the magic of the story. Outstanding and enthusiastic performances were given by the Queen (Kate Belcher), who managed to whip the audience into a frenzy with her outgoing personality and infectious enthusiasm, whilst keeping in character throughout. Sally Lacey as Carabosse, the wicked fairy, was superb with her guttural east-end accent, strutting around in a manner that would put

the Kray twins to shame; striking fear and hatred into the audience. She was ably supported by her evil black cat Spindleshanks (Lucy Dixon) – a cat with attitude, who delighted the children with her animated rendition of the Floss! The other feline part, Kitty (Ruby Belcher) was very effective and cleverly doubled up as drummer for the show. Billy, the Royal Butler (Sarah Curran) was a little stiff and forced at the start, but eased herself into the part as the show progressed. The King (Rob Bateman) gave a solid performance throughout. Princess Aurora (Fiona Eaton) was, as expected, sweet and innocent and a good match for Prince Orlando (Abby Hallion), who looked excellent in the part. Unfortunately, some of her dialogue was lost as she spoke a little too quickly. Her duets with Aurora were good.

The supporting cast of fairies and courtiers, Emily Eastham, Jack Marsh, Mike Lacey and Abi Bellis were played effectively. They all seemed to be engaged with the action and stayed in character even when in the background. The slapstick element of cake-making was handled well, as was the falling asleep of the courtiers. Then we had a brilliant 'nightmare' scene with ghosts and zombies dancing around the sleepwalking royal family. Their awakening mesmerised the children, the conversion of Carabosse from bad to good was a moment to remember. The costumes were good, appropriate, and outlandish - especially the Queen dressed as a cake, and the fairy's dress made out of petals. The lighting and effects were all contributed well to the overall atmosphere. The music and songs were just right and added to the overall delight of the show.

Kate Belcher is to be congratulated on her direction of this pantomime, in which she also played a leading role. The whole show came together to create a well-rounded and excellent production.

Nigel James

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## WEST OXFORD PANTOMIME ASSOCIATION Jack & the Beanstalk

West Oxford Community Centre January 2019

West Oxford Pantomime Association's 2019 eighth annual pantomime was Jack & the Beanstalk written and directed by club members Heidi & Dominic Utton.

The WOPA mission statement is to produce an annual Panto that potentially involves all members of the community. Well the streets of west Oxford must have been empty as most of the local population seemed to be on the stage in the leisure centre for this epic yarn.

Firstly we were treated to a brief video leading us into the opening scene at Mutley Farm and a story involving Venetian ice-cream makers blended in with the traditional Jack & Beanstalk tale.

The action moved slickly between the farm and Venice. The flats were well painted by Lois Muddiman but there were perhaps a few too many scene changes with the scenery being turned or removed sometimes with annoying regularity.



The live action opens with Jack Trott (Fallou Faye), his mother and various others on stage including Colin the Cockerel played by Carol Brady who stole the first half of the show with her impressive rendering of the bird. Carol must have spent hours studying chicken manoeuvres to pull off a performance like this. Perhaps her television is broken.

Accompanying Colin frequently was the slightly arthritic looking cow Daisy, an impressive bovine performance by Angela Bloss. To complete the menagerie writer/director Heidi Utton played Gertie the Goose happily rearing her goslings and laying golden eggs of varying sizes.

Anant Borole portrayed Jack's mother, obviously relishing his role as the pantomime Dame and tenant of the evil Squire Brown (Jon Rail) who wants to double the rent on the Trott's farm in an effort to evict them and open a giant egg farm

Jennifer Crouch was Leonardo the Venetian ice-cream seller and having had his children turned into ice-cream the only way to reverse the spell is to find the cow with a daisy marking and drink her milk. He easily finds Daisy by her markings and then returns with her to Italy to administer the milk to his children.

All this is intertwined with the tradition Panto storyline of Jack trading Daisy for a handful of beans. Jack's mum casts the beans aside and overnight they grow into the giant beanstalk. Next day Jack scales the plant and arrives in the land of the Ogre called Umpff. This land is a parody of the US under Donald Trump. For some reason Trump (Umpff) is played by a young lady Fleur Roland. Fleur delivered an admirable confident performance but being cast in this role just didn't work for me.

Jack and his friend Rosamund make their exit via the beanstalk and then chop it down. Rosie Brown played Rosamund, giving an excellent assertive performance and of course she ends up with Jack happily ever after when Gertie donates one of her golden eggs to buy the farm from the Squire.

All good solid local entertainment from WOPA.

Lance Bassett

## SINODUN PLAYERS

### Ali Baba and the 40 thieves

Corn Exchange, Wallingford February 2019

The Sinodun Players have been staging Pantomimes since 1949 so they should be well versed in putting on this seasonal form of entertainment. However nothing prepared me for the sheer professionalism of their rendering of Ali Baba and the 40 thieves, as good a pantomime performance as I have seen in many a year and I am including The Oxford Playhouse here.

The vibrant colours of the impressive slickly changed set and costumes, both delivered by Marilyn Johnstone, could have come straight from the West End. The acting was practically faultless and the stage and auditorium used to the limit. Full marks go to Director Caroline Wilkes, people have got OBE's for less than this.

It's impossible to mention all the cast but suffice to say Fiona Huntingdon-Ledger as Mustafa Screwloose had the audience in the palm of her hands. She kept the entertainment coming, on her own at times, giving a master class in Panto lapped up by the good folk in the auditorium baying for more.

It was also good to see a reversal to non-PC days with the Principal Boy (Ali Baba) played by a young lady, in this case the capable thigh slapping Zoe Nielsen, and with Richard Doughty as the Dame Fatima, just a perfect performance.

Adam Brimley portrayed the evil Asbad head of the thieves, he clearly enjoyed brandishing his sword and threatening all concerned. Colin the Camel provided great hilarity as did Bashim and Grabbit (Peter Smithson and David Simmons) the new recruits to Asbad's band of scallywags.

The Sultan (Mark Wilton) played his role with suitable aloofness but certainly had the best job sat on his throne at the side of the stage throughout holding hands with his new squeeze Scheherazade enthusiastically played by Kirsty Van Den Belk.

The plot is simple Ali Baba stuck for funds tracks down Asbad's stash of treasure so he can marry the Princess Jasmine. Now Jasmine (Sian McLaughlin) has fallen for Ali and fallen out with the idea of marrying Prince Haroun (Emily Streets) which is just as well as Prince Haroun is now in love with the ex-slave Marjana (Amy Jo Hudson). Now I thought Emily Streets had more than a passing resemblance to Megan Markle and almost expected to see Prince Harry sat behind me (which has happened before I might add), but not this time. Back to the plot.

Ali does discover the booty much to the chagrin of Asbad and his cronies and all ends happily ever after.

Ali Baba is a terrific show and was obviously well appreciated by the audience who had their brief chance of stardom being involved throughout

including being invited on to the stage many of whom took up the offer.

The Lighting and Effects were again faultless full marks to the crew, but the highlight for me was the Magic Carpet actually lifting off the stage, Wow, the Sinodun Players are high fliers indeed.

Lance Bassett

January 2019

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## FARINGDON DRAMATIC SOCIETY WISHING ON A STAR

by Verity Roberts & Helen Thrower-  
Faringdon Junior School January 2019

As this was a new pantomime, there were no pre-conceived ideas of the storyline. Even though there were three separate quests to find the 'Star', these were intermingled, but didn't get confused.

The prologue with the witches was beautifully(!?) portrayed by Scooby Carter, Millie Green and Janie Eyre-Brook set the scene and explained their search for the Star to regain their youthful charms. This happened only once in a hundred years and it showed.

The opening with the chorus singing and dancing was well handled and from it emerged Kristian (Abby Benson) who wished to win over the heart of local maid, Louisa (Millie Long). She was less than enthusiastic about Kristian and that he could only have her hand in marriage, if he brought her the Star, which had just fallen to earth. Despite Kristian's excellent singing voice, to which we were treated several times throughout the show, even conquering some difficult contemporary songs, he did not win her hand. This was regardless of severe warnings from his mother, Dame Ariel Bucket, played by the brilliant Sara Varnom, who decides to accompany Kristian on his quest to find the Star. Her comedic timing was a joy to behold. From the midst of the chorus the Galaxy Minstrels, led by Jayne Hoyland kept thrusting their unwelcome presence into all sorts of situations.



The witches kept popping up in a variety of guises, ably supported by the long-suffering Malarkey (Byron Pound) and the Imps. The Star (Andrea Bond) falls to earth, but not in the right place, which is the cue for all parties to start the hunt.

The third party to the Star quest is the court of the ailing King Goddard (and his three warring sons). There, is turmoil because of the impending loss of the kingdom unless they can get the Star to marry the eldest son,

Fitzroy, who was played with nauseous petulance by Jacob Bayliss, in all his dealings with his siblings and, later, the hapless Kristian. Having passed the fearsome Dragon's Cave, all encounter the friendly Welsh Dragon and her dancing Draglets, who performed an accomplished dance routine. By this time Kristian has fallen madly in love with the Star who accompanies them on their journey to the castle.

All three search parties come together in the Starving Crow Inn, a scene which was very effective and superbly directed, with a large number of cast members to marshal. The obvious song 'Master of the House' was skilfully delivered by Duncan Sinclair (a man of many parts) and Helen Thrower. At this point, Prince Fitzroy and Kristian lose the Star, who is captured by the witches, after performing a brilliant routine for the assembled company and luring them into a trance.

All meet up again in the castle and the Star is released and agrees to marry Kristian, much to the chagrin of Prince Fitzroy. The main problem is that he is not of noble birth, but Dame Ariel reveals that she is not, in fact, his mother, but found him in a basket by the river, with a royal ring in the blankets. (shades of Moses here) The King recognises the ring and reveals that Kristian is his long-lost son and, therefore, is the eldest prince and entitled to marry the Star, save the kingdom and all live happily ever after.

The choice of some of very modern tricky songs didn't quite work, as they are not easy to grasp. Others worked well. The choice of 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' as the audience song fell a bit flat and there could have been more audience participation. The live band were particularly good and did not drown out the singers. Sound was a bit variable in places meaning that we could not always hear the songs. The lighting was very effective and the scenes were well portrayed.

All round, this was a brilliant show, reflecting the hard work of all involved. Congratulations.

Nigel James

So here we are, Prince John played with relish by Ros Merriman is hard up and increasing taxes in every direction, a bit like a meeting of the Treasury I should imagine. The Sheriff is told to go and get the money from the peasants and if he plays his cards right the Prince will let him marry Maid Marian. Off he trots and takes anything he can from the villagers, as they have no money.

Mike Varnom threw himself into the role of the Sheriff, snarling and threatening the crowd including the audience if they resisted him.

Enter Gymkhana (Jim) nicely played by Jasmine Miller who has a rather fine cow called Daisy, and parents who have been slung into jail as they upset the Prince for some reason.

When Robin and his men finally materialised, we find the thigh slapping Ruth Blackwell in the part leading her followers from the front in an excellent display of management technique. Friar Tuck (Becki Brewis) looked the part in her natty monk's costume as did Will Scarlet (Janet Scott) well, dressed in scarlet.

Little John for some reason had an arrow through his head in the early part of the Show and sounded as though he hailed from Barnsley way. He was a tad over the top sometimes but I guess that's pantomime, but why the arrow?

The mandatory Dame in the production was Jemina Gusset played with vigour and style by Simon Newton. He strutted and stormed his way through in a dazzling array of dresses.

The cast was big and the stage sometimes over crowded but the costumes were from the top drawer. Costume supremo Kate Schomberg is to be congratulated on her designs.

Back in the village our hero Jim cons her way into Robin's band by pretending to be a man to get into the castle to rescue her parents and Robin wants entry to rescue Maid Marian from the clutches of the Sheriff.

Various characters keep popping in and out including the rhyming Ellen A-Dale, cheerfully portrayed by Imaan Nawaz-Campbell.

The action continued apace with a certain amount of audience participation though there were too many pop songs in the production for my liking.

Lance Bassett

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## **THE WOOTTON PLAYERS**

### **Robin Hood & his Merry Men**

**By Robin Bailes & Jonathan Hales**

**Wootton Village Hall - 30th Jan – 2nd Feb 2019**

Directed by Teresa Miller, the Wootton Players Panto this year was Robin Hood and his Merry Men. No surprise they were merry living the good life deep in the heart of Sherwood Forest with no mobile phones, council tax, TV reality shows or talk of Brexit.

The good folk of Wootton obviously relish their Pantos judging by the audience reaction in the packed village hall. The two main baddies in this production Prince John and the Sheriff of Nottingham had the auditorium hissing and booing when they appeared on stage and held their corner with threats of what they would do to the audience if they persisted. Good stuff.

The action starts in a village in Sherwood Forest, the scenery, or lack of it, left something to be desired. Most of the scenes lacked a full set with the exception of Robin's hideout, which was excellent.

ODN website: [www.OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org](http://www.OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org)

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## **STANTON HARCOURT**

### **DRAMA GROUP**

### **FRANKENSTAIN**

**by Steve Tuck & Eleanor Tuck**

**Stanton Harcourt Vill Hall 28 Feb – 2 Mar 2019**

My first thoughts were that Frankenstein as a pantomime just wouldn't work. How wrong could I be? The concept was brilliantly thought out and superbly executed. Professor Frankenstein (Gil Hilleard) was the typical absent-minded professor who was busy building a robot with his assistants and

his assistants Ygor (Nic Robinson) & iGor (Debbie Robinson). These two started off the interaction with the audience and continued to play the intellectually challenged pair with great success. Ygor's friends, the vegetables played an important part throughout the production.



The professor's robot, Frankie, expertly played by Sean Moran, should be indistinguishable from a human being and a force for good, thanks to artificial intelligence and is immediately enamoured by the Professor's daughter, Freda (Caroline Wheatley) However, the wicked Donna Donaldso aka 'The Godmother' wickedly played by Jane Eagle had other plans to re-programme Frankie in the laboratory and turn him 'bad'. She was supported in her nefarious plans by her henchmen Jimmy (Simon Bustany) and Mugsy, played by the incredible Lucy Heath, whose over-acting mesmerised us all. The apprentices to the gang who were scary in themselves, not to mention the mighty Mickey Mcquire (Daniel Axford), who terrorised the whole village. Stanton Von Harcourt was awash with nationalities and accents, from the Bavarian baker Angela Apfelstrudel (Michele Poynter) who enthralled us with her Belgian buns, to the incredibly camp French dog-trimmers Clement Coiffure (Dom Stoppani) and Pierre Bouffant (Reg Berry). The dyed pink beard set the part off to a tee. Throughout all this, the Professor's housekeeper Frannie, (Elizabeth Griffiths) in her exaggerated Scottish costume was setting her sights at the Professor who was too absorbed in his experiments to notice her, meanwhile her 'twin' sister Fannie (Paul Harrison) was after any male she could lay her hands on!

The chorus of children were remarkably talented and well-rehearsed and provided delightful continuity between scenes. Just when the Godmother thought that she had Frankie in her control, to continue her protection racket, he sees a butterfly and realised that he is not 'bad' at all but developing human characteristics of goodness and kindness. When sanity is restored to the village, the annual Vegetable Show is organised, much to the delight of Ygor. Guest judges were introduced in the guise of Fannie and Frannie in 'Carmen Miranda' headdresses, who plucked three random unsuspecting audience members to exhibit their wares, with some trepidation, but contributed to the pantomime tradition.

The final reveal was that Donna, the Godmother was mother of Freda and with the help of Frankie restored peace and harmony to the village and a commitment from the mobsters to reform. The words were a little sticky in places, but regaining them added to the fun, as did the corpsing if the Professor regarding where to insert the USB stick to re-programme Frankie.



The whole show was a very well received was original and a brilliant new concept to the pantomime genre. The original songs by Eleanor and Steve Tuck with additional lyrics by Elizabeth Griffiths were catchy and well performed by the entire cast. The

costumes and makeup were excellent, as was the versatile scenery. A great achievement by the group, ably directed Eleanor and Steve Tuck reflecting an enormous amount of work which went into this show. Congratulations to all.

Nigel James

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### JIGSAW STAGE PRODUCTIONS

## "The King and I"



#### A musical by Rodgers & Hammerstein

Set against a foreign backdrop, "The King and I" is the moving story of Anna, an English governess, who arrives with her son Louis in Bangkok, capital of the kingdom of Siam to teach the King's children. It is set in the early 1860's and shows how the governess tries to help an Eastern king come to terms with the modern world, but he is unable to resist the forces of ancient customs. The actual conflict between Eastern and Western cultures inspired this well-loved musical, which is always a firm favourite with the public especially the King's many children.

The score includes "I Whistle A Happy Tune", "Hello Young Lovers", "Getting To Know You", "Something Wonderful" and "Shall We Dance?".

Music by Richard Rodgers, book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. Based on "Anna and the King of Siam" by Margaret Landon

**When:** Thurs 4th to Sat 6th April 7.30pm  
+ Matinee Saturday at 2.30pm

**Where:** The Beacon Wantage

**Tickets** from The Beacon, Bretts Chemist Grove, or Tel 01235 200266

# ABINGDON OPERATIC SOCIETY

## My Fair Lady

book and lyrics  
by Alan Jay  
Lerner  
and music  
by Frederick  
Loewe



My Fair Lady made its debut on Broadway in 1956, with Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews in the lead roles.

Hailed by critics and audiences for its heart and its wit, My Fair Lady is a beautiful musical about transformation, patronage, gender politics and class, based on George Bernard Shaw's play, Pygmalion.

Packed with hit songs, including 'Wouldn't It Be Lovely', 'I Could Have Danced All Night' and 'Get Me To The Church On Time', this Lerner and Loewe classic will give delight to both members and audience alike.

Acclaimed Professor (and confirmed bachelor) Henry Higgins makes a wager with his linguistic colleague Colonel Pickering that in six months he can pass off "gutter snipe" Eliza Doolittle as a duchess at an embassy ball.

Through arduous training, day and night, Eliza learns how to speak English "properly," and transforms into a lady, respected and adored by all classes.

Along the way she bewitches young Freddy Emsford-Hill into falling in love with her and convinces a supposed linguistics expert, Zoltan Karpathy, that she is royalty.

**When:** 9 – 13 April

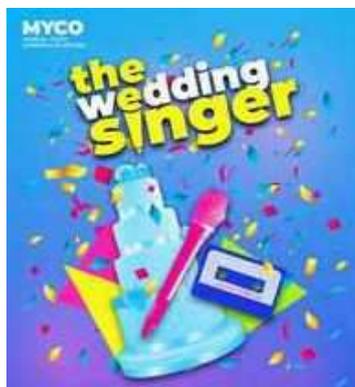
**Where:** The Amey Theatre in Abingdon School.

**Tickets:** See [www.abingdonoperatic.co.uk](http://www.abingdonoperatic.co.uk)

## MYCO (Music Youth Company of Oxford)

### The Wedding Singer

music by  
Matthew Sklar,  
lyrics by  
Chad Beguelin,  
book by Beguelin and  
Tim Herlihy



Set in 1985, Adam Sandler plays a nice guy with a broken heart who's stuck in one of the most romantic jobs in the world, a wedding singer.

He loses all hope when he is abandoned at the altar by his fiancé. He meets a young woman named Julia (Drew Barrymore), who enlists his help to plan her wedding. He falls in love with her and must win her over before she gets married.

ODN website: [www.OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org](http://www.OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org)

**When:** Tue 9th to Sat 13th April 7.30pm  
+ Sat matinee 2.30pm

**Where:** Headington Theatre, Oxford, OX3 7TD

**Tickets:** see [www.myco.org.uk](http://www.myco.org.uk) or Tel 01865 686481

## AMEGOS The 39 Steps

Mix a Hitchcock masterpiece with a juicy spy novel, add a dash of Monty Python and you have The 39 Steps, a fast-paced whodunit for anyone who loves the magic of theatre! This award-winning treat is packed with nonstop laughs, over 30 zany characters (played by a ridiculously talented small cast), an onstage plane crash, handcuffs, missing fingers, and some good old-fashioned romance!



In The 39 Steps, a man with a boring life meets a woman with a thick accent who says she's a spy. When he takes her home, she is murdered.

Soon, a mysterious organisation called "The 39 Steps" is hot on the man's trail in a nationwide manhunt that climaxes in a (nearly) death-defying finale!

The 39 Steps amounts to an unforgettable evening of pure pleasure!

**When:** 10th - 13th April 7.30pm

**Where:** King Alfred's Academy Theatre, Portway, Wantage

**Tickets:** from [www.AmEgosTheatre.com](http://www.AmEgosTheatre.com)

## COMPTON PLAYERS

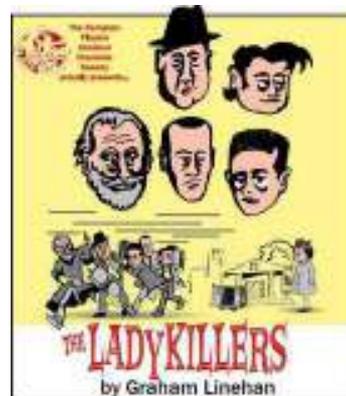
### \*The Ladykillers\*

By Graham Linehan.

\*The Ladykillers\* is a classic black comedy;

A sweet little old lady, alone in her house, is pitted against a gang of criminal misfits who will stop at nothing. Posing as amateur musicians, Professor Marcus and his gang rent rooms in the lopsided house of sweet but strict Mrs Wilberforce. The villains plot to involve her, unwittingly, in Marcus's brilliantly conceived heist job.

The police are left stumped but Mrs Wilberforce becomes wise to their ruse and Marcus concludes that there is only one way to keep the old lady quiet.



With only her parrot, General Gordon, to help her, Mrs Wilberforce is alone with five desperate men. But who will be forced to face the music?

**When:** 10th to 13th April, 7:30pm

**Where:** The Village Hall, Compton  
(10 miles north of Newbury).

**Tickets:** Online via [www.ComptonPlayers.co.uk](http://www.ComptonPlayers.co.uk) (no booking fee)

## SINODUN PLAYERS

### Dead Funny

a comic play by Terry Johnson

When the members of the Dead Funny Society learn that Benny Hill has died, they decide to honour him with a memorial get together. Set in 1990s London, an hilarious and poignant comedy about morality and marriage. Expect some nudity, marital disharmony and custard pies.



**Warning:** Adults only - scenes of a sexual nature and some strong language.

**When:** 10th–13th April 7.45

**Where:** Corn Exchange, Wallingford

**Tickets:** Corn Exchange Box Office, 01491 825000

[www.cornexchange.org.uk](http://www.cornexchange.org.uk)

## ST PETER'S PLAYERS

### "Merely Uniforms"

by Will Hazell

The play is a satirical look at the second world war - the tensions between individuals and the grand sweep of history.

We think of the country being united in fighting the Nazis, but here the characters are distracted by petty local concerns whilst the actual war itself seems to fall by the wayside, and the only character who thinks much about it feels completely out of place and lost.

**When:** 10th to 13th April 7.30pm

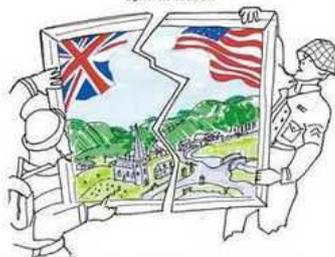
**Where:** Wolvercote Village Hall

Further details on the St Peter's Players

**Website:** [www.StPetersPlayers.co.uk](http://www.StPetersPlayers.co.uk)

ST. PETERS PLAYERS present  
**MERELY UNIFORMS**

by Will Hazell



## JIGSAW STAGE PRODUCTIONS

### "The King and I"

A musical by  
**Rodgers &  
Hammerstein**



See earlier for full details.

**When:** Thurs 11th to Sat 13th April 7.45pm  
+ Matinee Saturday at 2.30pm

**Where:** Cornerstone Didcot

**Tickets** from Cornerstone Box Office:  
[www.cornerstone-arts.org](http://www.cornerstone-arts.org) or Tel 01235-515144

## BANBURY CROSS PLAYERS

### Death Knell

by James Cawood

Set in an isolated lodge in the Scottish Highlands, James Cawood's, Death Knell follows Henry Roth, a famous (but one-hit-wonder) playwright and his slightly unstable, recovering alcoholic wife Evelyn, as they await the arrival of his new 'muse' – a charming, charismatic but unknown young actor called Jack Willoughby - determined to secure a role in the playwright's latest production.



The scene is set in the first act with vile Henry, neurotic Evelyn, dashing Jack and a serial killer on the loose. In the second act Inspector Lazan arrives - in pursuit of said serial killer. But not everyone's motives are quite what they first seem. It's action-packed, full of suspense, excitement, surprise, anticipation and anxiety ... and, of course, murder.

As the playwright himself says "the characters you've got to know in the first half will not be the same by the end of the second half".

Edge-of-your-seat thrilling story-telling. It will take your breath away!

**When:** 1-4 May 2019, 7.30pm

**Where:** The Mill Arts Centre, Spiceball Pk Rd,  
Banbury, OX16 5QE.

**Tickets:** £13 and £12 (conc) -  
(no concessions Friday/Saturday)

**Box office:** 01295 279002 or online at  
[www.themillartscentre.co.uk/book-online/218263](http://www.themillartscentre.co.uk/book-online/218263)

**Website:** [www.banburycrossplayers.org.uk](http://www.banburycrossplayers.org.uk)

# HENLEY A.O.D.S.

## Half a Sixpence

This adaptation of HG Wells' novel "KIPPS" is a classic musical crammed with memorable songs and perfectly weighted comedy. Don't miss this chance to follow Arthur Kipps' trials and tribulations!



**When:** Wed 1st – Sat 4th May 7.45 + 2.30 Sat  
**Where:** The Kenton Theatre, New Street, Henley, RG9 2JP

**Tickets:** Adult £18, Concessions £17, Child £12  
Kenton Theatre box office see:

**Website:** [www.haods.org](http://www.haods.org)

**When:** Wed 1st to Sat 4th May 7.45 + 2.30 Sat  
**Where:** The Kenton Theatre, New Street, Henley, RG9 2JP

**Tickets:** Kenton Theatre box office

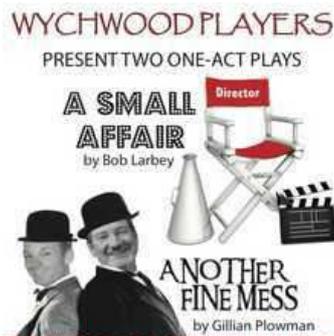
# THE WYCHWOOD PLAYERS

## Two One act plays:

### 1 'A Small Affair'

a comedy by Bob Larbey (The Good Life) which is set in TV's Broadcasting House.

Director Guy's TV rehearsal is shunted into a small room and he is beset with problems. The cast come to loggerheads but after a 'calming' break return to find their space double-booked by would-be contestants in an idiotic game show. Regular interruptions from members of staff and his cast of eccentric actors add to the comic mayhem of the rehearsal.



### 2 'Another Fine Mess'

by Gillian Plowman.

Double act Stephen and Phil are having a last minute rehearsal as Laurel and Hardy in the back room of an old pub.

Meg, Stephen's girlfriend, is there supporting them. The close friendships between the three are strained to the limits by a revelation from Phil which tests their relationships to breaking point.

The problems link with favourite Laurel and Hardy scenes enacted by the characters and these throw light on the charming innocence of Laurel and Hardy and the hard reality of the real lives of Stephen, Phil and Meg.

**When:** Thurs 2nd May to Sat 4th May at 7.30 pm  
**Where:** The New Beaconsfield Hall, Shipton under Wychwood, near Burford OX7 6BQ

**Tickets:** £10 - for more details please visit: [www.wychwoodplayers.com](http://www.wychwoodplayers.com)

# THAME PLAYERS

## Witness for the Prosecution

by Agatha Christie

Leonard Vole stands accused of murdering a rich widow. The stakes are high with shocking witness testimony, impassioned outbursts from the dock and a young man's fight to escape the hangman's noose.



Generally regarded as one of Christie's most accomplished plays, this suspenseful thriller keeps audiences guessing until the very end.

There is an opportunity for an audience member each night to take part in the performance as the Foreman of the Jury who delivers the verdict at the end of the play. If you wish to do this please contact the director urgently on [pat.shepherd@thameplayers.co.uk](mailto:pat.shepherd@thameplayers.co.uk) and she will discuss with you how it will be organised.

**When:** 7th to 11th May at 7.45pm

**Where:** The Players Theatre, Nelson St, Thame, OX9 2DP

**Tickets:** all £8 Tuesday 7th & Wednesday 8th May.  
£10 (£9 conc) Thur 9<sup>th</sup>, Fri 10th & Sat 11th May.

Tickets from [www.thameplayers.co.uk](http://www.thameplayers.co.uk) or Spear Travels, Greyhound Walk, Thame 01844 217228.

Enquiries to Pat Shepherd - [p.k.shepherd@btinternet.com](mailto:p.k.shepherd@btinternet.com)

**Website:** [www.thameplayers.co.uk](http://www.thameplayers.co.uk)

# WSMC

## Musical Road Trip

Everyone loves a musical road trip. A chance to let your hair down and sing along to some great songs. And if there's a live band to support the singers along with a bar, then that sounds like the recipe for a great night out. So WSMC's next concert takes you on a musical journey around the globe featuring songs by artist as diverse as The Beatles, Cher, Alisha Keys, Peter Gabriel, The Beach Boys and George Ezra all given the WSMC twist.



The concerts are taking place at:-

Fri 10th May – Old Mill Hall, Grove

Sat 11th May – Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington

Fri 17th May – Steventon Village Hall

Sat 18th May – Old Mill Hall, Grove

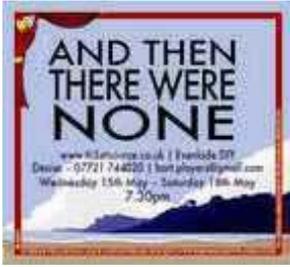
Doors open 7pm starts 7.30pm

**Tickets:** are available NOW from:-

[www.WSMC-music.co.uk](http://www.WSMC-music.co.uk) with an online offer.

# BARTHOLOMEW PLAYERS

## “And Then There Were None”



by Agatha Christie

Ten strangers, each hiding a dark secret, are summoned to an unknown house on the uninhabited, totally isolated, “Soldier Island” by an unknown U.N.Owen. During their first evening, a recorded

message accuses each of them of a heinous crime. One by one, they begin to die, rather alarmingly, according to the fate described in a well known rhyme posted on the wall of their bedrooms. One amongst the ten must be the killer. But who is it?

As usual, we are partnering with a local group for our Charity Supper Show who will assist us in organising the evening in return for a share of the profits. We look forward to seeing you!

**When:** Wed 15th, to Sat 18th May (times below)

**Where:** Eynsham Village Hall, Back Lane, Eynsham, OX29 4QW

**Tickets:** for **Wed, Thurs and Saturday** nights  
Doors open: 7.00pm, Performance: 7.30pm  
Price: £10.00 (concessions £9.00)

Available: from Denise Santilli, 07721 744020,  
[bart.players@gmail.com](mailto:bart.players@gmail.com), ONLINE:-  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/bartholomewplayers](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/bartholomewplayers)

from Evenlode DIY in Eynsham or on the door

**Tickets:** for **FRIDAY** 17th May – **MUST be purchased in advance** by 13th May  
Doors open: 6.10pm, 2-course supper served:  
6.30pm – 7.30pm, Performance: 7.30pm  
Advance Tickets only: £20.00

Available: in advance from Denise Santilli, 07721 744020, [bart.players@gmail.com](mailto:bart.players@gmail.com)  
(not available online)

**Website:** [www.bartholomewplayers.co.uk](http://www.bartholomewplayers.co.uk)

## KINGSTON BAGPUIZE DRAMA GROUP

### A Murder Mystery Evening

#### With a Hog Roast,

A very special Murder Mystery Evening to celebrate our 70th anniversary.

The group has commissioned an amusing, tongue in cheek but also most murderous script *Deadly Encounter*, because our very first production in 1949 was Noel Coward's *Still Life*, better known to many as the film *Brief Encounter*.

It's 1949 and Bunty Parlington-Dormer has caused consternation by starting a 'theatre venture' in the small village of Kingston Bagpuize and Southmoor. There are many who feel the village has already

suffered enough over the past few years! Then, before the set has been finished or rehearsals have even begun, someone is bumped off....

All amateur sleuths welcome to try and work out who 'dunnit' and how by quizzing the suspects. Teams of up to 6 people. We are encouraging the audience to join in by dressing up in 1940s costume and there will be a prize for the best.

**Ticket** price (£15 per person) includes the hog roast (vegetarian options) and dessert plus tea or coffee.

**When:** Saturday 18 May Doors open 6:30pm, curtain up at 7:30pm

**Where:** Southmoor Village Hall, Draycott Road, Southmoor.

See our **website**, for a booking form.

[www.kbdgshow.com](http://www.kbdgshow.com),

## BICESTER CHORAL & OPERATIC SOCIETY

### Evita

You know the music but do you know the story!?

The tale of the most adored and hated woman in Argentina!

**When:** 30th May - 1st June  
7.30pm nightly

**Where:** The Cooper School - Bicester, Oxfordshire

**Tickets:** from Coles Books, Bicester or

**online:** [www.ticketsource.co.uk/bcos](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/bcos)



## OXFORD OPERATIC SOCIETY The Trials of Love!

Meet Angela & Nick, two angels embroiled in an exciting board game. As the two play, the game comes to life and reveals the story of four couples.

Including musical numbers from *The Phantom of the Opera*, *La Traviata*, *West Side Story* and *The Merry Widow*; *The Trials of Love* will take audiences on a turbulent journey featuring wonderful company numbers along the way!

Music from popular musicals and operettas with original dialogue by Nia Williams.

**When:** Fri 31st May & Sat 1st June at 7:30pm and 2:30pm Sat mat.

**Where:** SJE Arts, St John the Evangelist church, Iffley Road, Oxford, OX4 1EH.

**Tickets:** £10 - £18 See [www.oxfordoperatic.org.uk](http://www.oxfordoperatic.org.uk)



# ODN DRAMA FESTIVAL

## ODN Drama Festival of 1 Act Plays

Drama societies from all over Oxfordshire and nearby are sending their very different plays to make an exciting, fun week of top class theatre.



There will be two plays every night and a prestigious Gala evening with 3 plays called back on the Saturday.

Guild of Drama Adjudicator, Nick Wilkes, will run a short workshop at the end of each play which is a unique feature of the ODN Festival.

**When:** Mon 3rd - Sat 8th June 7.30pm

**Where:** Unicorn Theatre Abingdon

**Tickets:** The Bookstore Abingdon, or 01235 821351

## Wallingford Corn Exchange One Act Drama Festival

The adjudicator will be David Henson.



**When:** Monday 10th to Friday 14th June 2019,

**Where:** The Corn Exchange, Wallingford

More information can be found at:-  
[www.CornExchange.org.uk/drama-festival](http://www.CornExchange.org.uk/drama-festival)  
 or email [DramaFestival@CornExchange.org.uk](mailto:DramaFestival@CornExchange.org.uk)

## DORCHESTER A.D.S. Sex Please We're Sixty

by Michael and Susan Parker

A typical Parker farce with lots of sexual innuendo and menopausal jokes.

"Bud the Stud" is a member of the senior set who has sex drive of a teenager. Mrs. Stancliffe, the owner of the B&B is tolerant and believes in absolute punctuality.



Bring in a persistent suitor who has developed a female version of Viagra, a friend who is willing to try the product, a frustrated menopausal romantic novelist and a southern belle with an overactive libido.

Dialogue is fun, people go in and out of doors at a typical Parker pace

**When:** 19th to 22nd June

**Where:** Dorchester Village Hall, 7 Queen Street, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire, OX10 7HR

**Tickets:** See [www.dads.org.uk](http://www.dads.org.uk)

## BLEWBURY PLAYERS

### The Crucible

By Arthur Miller

**An outdoor production**

Based on the Salem witch trials of 1693, and an allegory of the House Un-American Activities hunt for reds under the



bed, the Crucible is one of the most powerful plays of the Twentieth Century. It is Arthur Miller's version of the mediaeval witch test. If she drowns she is innocent, if she floats she is guilty and is condemned to death. In Miller's theocratic community, you betray or are betrayed by your neighbour, whose testimony is enough to convict you and your plea of innocence is itself evidence of guilt. Be vigilant. The Players first performed the Crucible in 1979 but it is not the sort of play with which they have been associated more recently. It is raw drama, serious stuff with strong characters raising questions about the sort of society we want to live in and the sort of people we want to be.

An unforgettable play for our times.

**When:** 17th-20th July 2019.

**Where:** Orchard Dene Garden Theatre, Blewbury

**Tickets:** On-line from 2 pm Saturday 8th June

**Website:** [www.blewburyplayers.co.uk](http://www.blewburyplayers.co.uk). or  
 Savages Box Office from Monday 10th June  
 (cash or cheque only) or

Cornerstone Box Office from 10 am Tuesday 11th June 01235 515144

See website for details of the usual offers.

## OXFORDSHIRE DRAMA NETWORK COMMITTEE 2018-2019

Chairman	Mike Davies	01235 821351	<a href="mailto:info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org">info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org</a>
Secretary			
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Asstnt Treasurer	Pam Aird	01235 230657	<a href="mailto:PamAird@Hotmail.co.uk">PamAird@Hotmail.co.uk</a>
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