

Oxfordshire Drama Network



Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2024

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

It's quite a busy Thespian Spring, so do try to go to as many of the other group's events as you can, and support each other. That's what ODN is about.

We still have a few pantomimes to judge for our Winter Festival. The results will be announced at our AGM in April (check our website for details).

Meanwhile it's time to start finding 1 Act plays to enter into our Drama Festival in June. I've put the info of the local drama festivals on page 10.

Mike Davies.



CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Although Christmas is but a distant memory, we are still in the middle of the winter festival season (which seems to get longer every year!). I have thoroughly enjoyed all the pantomimes and winter plays I have seen since November and have been extremely impressed with the ingenuity of your backstage teams to come up with some amazing work, and often have to cope with the challenges that some of the venues present – particularly the village/community halls, which understandably have to serve a multitude of purposes and not always well thought out for theatre productions. So I personally want to give a round of applause to everyone who has worked backstage on the winter productions – whether it's costumes, set, props, lighting or sound – you've been epic!

Looking ahead to spring, we come to my favourite time of year where there are plenty of festivals to enjoy. Even if you don't intend to enter a festival this year, please do support them – I know I bang on about them a lot, but they do offer a great educational experience and you can pick up so many tips and tricks, in a friendly and social environment. I'll be heading off to Chipping Sodbury at the beginning of March for the Avon Festival of Short plays and also Maidenhead Drama Festival later on that month. The dates of all the local festivals are on the ODN website. If you want to see where other national festivals are being held then do visit the NDFA website (www.ndfa.co.uk)

Please do add details of your forthcoming plays to the ODN website – I quite often dip in there to see if there is anything coming up that I would like to come along to or promote on our social media sites.

Karen Carey (Chair)



WHAT'S ON DIARY (details inside)

FEBRUARY

8-10	Hanney Drama Group	Robinson Crusoe
14-17	Banbury Operatic Society	Calamity Jane
14-17	Launton Village Players	Rapunzel
15-17	Witney Dramatic Society	Aladdin

MARCH

6-9	HAODS	'Allo 'Allo 2 "The Camembert Caper"
20-23	Henley Players	Pygmalion
21-23	Banbury Cross Players	Our Country's Good

APRIL

4-6	AmEgos Theatre	The Hunchback of Notre Dame
16-20	Oxford Theatre Guild.	The Importance of being Earnest
18-20	Buttercross Theatre Productions	Avenue Q
25-27	Compton Players	Wind in the Willows
25-27	Dorchester A.D.S.	Surprise! Surprise!
25-27	Wychwood Players	Arsenic & Old Lace

MAY

15-18	Bartholomew Players	A Pack of Lies
16-18	Jigsaw Stage Productions	
22-25		Disney's Beauty and the Beast

Email: info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org

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Instagram: www.instagram.com/oxfordshiredramanetwork

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Quick-Change Artistry

in 10 Easy Steps

By Christina Hamlett, Pioneer Drama Service

In 1974, I played the lead role in a children's musical called *Annabelle Broom, The Unhappy Witch*. The biggest fear I had during performances was that the beaky prosthetic nose I had spent an hour applying with liquid latex and powder would get knocked off during one of the lively dance numbers. But this was a misguided worry. What I should have stressed about more was that the zipper of my pink party dress for the final scene would get stuck at the worst possible moment! "A zipper in a costume?!" I thought. "What was the designer possibly thinking?"

During the years and innumerable productions that have followed, I learned some tips and tricks for flawless costume changes. I have also come to appreciate that what happens in the dressing rooms requires as much practice and discipline as what the audience sees on stage.

Zipper-free ensembles

If anything can go wrong, it usually will, and zippers are often the culprit. While they're easy enough to navigate in your offstage life, costume changes not only require speed but are also often performed backstage in dim lighting. Of course, that's when those pesky teeth snag on fabric, the slider separates, or the pull becomes detached. And the more frantic one becomes trying to find a remedy, the worse it gets. Quick zipper fixes include wax paper, soap, WD-40, Vaseline, or a lead pencil, but a better strategy is to avoid zippers altogether.

The wonders of Velcro

If a Swiss engineer hadn't gone walking in the woods one day in 1941 and noticed how burrs were sticking to his trousers, the amazing invention which could temporarily stick two pieces of material together may never have come to be. Today, it's not only used as a zipper-less alternative for quickly getting in and out of costumes, but it has widespread application as well in athletic shoes, camping equipment, blood pressure cuffs, and airline seats. In addition, it's inexpensive and can be affixed to fabrics without sewing. One downside, however, is that it doesn't work with delicate materials such as lace, silk, chiffon, and low-density knits. It's also somewhat loud, so make sure any costume change involving Velcro happens far offstage.

Snap to it

Snaps and magnets make for easy in-and-out costume changes, plus they can emulate the exterior look of fabric, wood, shell, and metal buttons. I remember seeing a period play in which the Victorian-era ladies wore tops with leg o' mutton sleeves sporting dozens of "pearl" buttons down

each side. It wasn't until I had a peek in the costume room and discovered that every single sleeve effortlessly broke apart from the shoulder to the wrist without any buttons, buttonholes, or cloth loops at all.

Double duty

Do actors who wear trousers really require multiple pairs for each and every scene? Interestingly, black trousers are noticed the least by the audience and thus always serve as good double-duty costuming. This saves both budget money and time, with costume changes focusing only on swapping out upper-body apparel. For period pieces (i.e., Shakespeare), knit tights can serve as the base costume.

The layered look

A popular strategy in snappy wardrobe changes involves under-dressing and over-dressing. Heavier fabrics can be placed over lighter ones, the simplest being a long coat or cloak.



This can also be orchestrated in reverse, i.e., having a character start out in a tee-shirt and shorts or a body suit and gradually add a dress, sweater, skirt, baggy trousers, and/or outerwear. Other tricks include wearing a long skirt, or trousers over shorter trousers, using reversible aprons, vests, bibs, and jackets, incorporating detachable collars and cuffs, and accessorizing with scarves.

The ease of elastic

Whether your actors are over-dressing or under-dressing, elastic waistbands and cuffs create a snug fit and bypass the need for belts and buttons. Excessive use, however, will gradually cause elastic bands and inserts to stretch. Keep an eye on these and replace them as necessary to avoid any embarrassing wardrobe malfunctions.

The floor pool

Make it easy for your actors to literally step into their next outfit by pooling it on the floor with the opening at the top. The only thing which is then needed is to pull it up to one's waist or neck and fasten it to fit. It



goes without saying, of course, that there should be a blanket or sheet laid down underneath to keep costumes from getting dirty.

Continued overleaf

Watch the head!

Wherever possible, try to avoid costumes which go on over an actor's head unless the neck opening is an appropriately wide one. It's not going to be a time-saver if interim repairs need to be done to hairstyles or makeup gets all over the collar as a top is pulled on. Consider as well whether your actors will be assisted or dressing themselves. Anything which has to be fastened in the back instead of the front can pose a problem for solo costume changes.

What comes next?

If an actor has multiple costume changes during a show, hang them on a rack in the order in which they'll be needed. This also goes for matching them up with correct footwear, wigs, hats, and accessories. If a costume is only worn once, move it to a different place or at the end of the rack so it isn't grabbed by mistake. As part of your tech rehearsals, incorporate a costumes-only run in which your actors are put through the paces of seeing how quickly they can exchange one outfit for the next.



Dressers

I was fortunate to work in community theatre productions where dressers were assigned to assist us between scenes. For schools which don't have this luxury, consider using actors who are already backstage at the same time. Another solution is to use parent volunteers. If they're offering to help, let them! And, of course, thank them with a credit in the program and or even a small gift to reflect your appreciation.

From www.pioneerdrama.com

REVIEW

THE WYCHWOOD PLAYERS

Flare Path By Terence Rattigan

The Wychwood Players' deft and professional production of Terence Rattigan's *Flare Path* in Shipton-under-Wychwood's New Beaconsfield Hall (24 November) confounded expectations of what one should expect from a local theatre company.

From the moment the curtains opened, one was enveloped in director Hazel Hughes's claustrophobic evocation of wartime Britain inhabited by Rattigan's cast of memorable and clearly-sketched characters, each of whom was note-perfect in their role.

The numerous moments of comedy in *Flare Path* were well-timed and skilfully delivered, yet done without detracting from the play's background of pathos, fear and uncertainty.

The play's central love-triangle comprised the lugubrious, fading Hollywood star Peter Kyle (convincingly played by a very charismatic Aram Gregory), actress Mrs Patricia Warren (Vanessa

Hartley, simultaneously vampish but naïve) and her husband, the blustering, self-doubting Flight Lieutenant 'Teddy' Graham (memorably played by Andy Belchambers in his first on-stage performance), with the romantic comings-and-goings contrasting with the daily life-and-death antics of the RAF crews.

The machinations and deceptions of the love-triangle's protagonists were thwarted and interrupted by the paper-thin façade of Countess Skriczevinsky (Joanna McKerlie, as movingly excellent as ever),



Fawlty-esque hotelier Mrs Oakes (outstanding first-timer Vikki Days) and lazy barman Percy (John McCormick, with loud-mouthed, rogue-ish charm).

The main *Flare Path* characters were ably supported by Sergeant 'Dusty' Miller (William Gofton, with a confidence that belies his youth), his sharp-tongued wife Maudie (Alice Spiers, with great comic timing), Squadron Leader 'Gloria' Swanson (a wonderfully buffer-ish Phillip Croxson), language-mangling Count Skriczevinsky (perfectly portrayed by Ralph Wears) and saloon-bar regular Corporal 'Wiggy' Jones (assistant director Simon Johnson).

The Wychwood Players' sound and lighting team (Anthony Gofton & Tony Mellerick), perfectly captured the cosy, devil-may-care atmosphere of the



local hotel in which the cast of *Flare Path* is billeted (familiar to the audience from numerous WWII films), yet with the tension and danger of the war always apparent, manifested in the take-offs and landings from the nearby RAF airfield - all achieved with very effective lighting and sound.

The production's 1940s wartime atmosphere extended to the excellent staging, costumes and props (Simon Johnson, Bob Days, Amanda Rowley, Ally Green & Ollie Ball).

Congratulations to the Wychwood Players' director, cast and crew on a sold-out production that conjured a complex mixture of comedy, wistfulness, bravery, loss and redemption, with the closing moments highlighting the intended ambiguity of Rattigan's original script.

Alastair Tweedie.

BARTHOLOMEW PLAYERS

Silver Lining by Sandy Toksvig

Care home residents prove they're still full of life

Most people after the age of 30, wrote George Orwell, "abandon individual ambition – in many cases, indeed, they almost abandon the sense of being individuals at all – and live chiefly for others, or are simply smothered under drudgery." This is the sad conclusion the elderly women in Sandy Toksvig's *Silver Lining* have reached, as they idle their time away in their retirement home. In retrospect, despite their talents and expertise, their lives as adult women had been either so relentlessly "busy, busy, busy" or so boring, they had been left with either no time or no energy to achieve anything truly meaningful.

They are not valued members of society. When the flood waters of Storm Vera rise, they are abandoned to their fate, not only by their few remaining relatives but also by all the care staff - save for one bizarrely mis-allocated and histrionic agency temp, a young black support worker from Croydon (played with energy and aplomb by newcomer to *Bartholomew Players*, Grace Olusola). Cut off by swirling waters, lack of electricity and erratic mobile signal, will they throw in the towel and succumb to their fate? Not a bit of it. In the face of adversity, they cease bickering and instead bring their long neglected talents to bear



on creating their own solution to their problems.

The title of Sandy Toksvig's play is characteristically clever and multi-faceted: as well as the unexpected benefit derived from this disastrous situation, it evokes the valuable hidden inner resources of the silver-haired generation. And this is the true drama – not the storm itself, so much as the gradual revelation of telling vignettes of their life stories. Particularly moving was that of May Trickett (Debi LisburneDiacon), born in the wrong generation for a "love that dare not speak its name".

This is a challenging play, in several respects. Firstly, it demands great stamina: from initial appearance, a cast member rarely if ever leaves the stage. An exceptionally notable performance in this regard was Liz Hutchinson's depiction of a form of dementia as "St Michael" (the label in her clothing is initially her only identity!) – she managed to maintain throughout all the drama an impervious serenity, her mind apparently transfixed on some alternate plane,

occasionally throwing out the odd enigmatic utterance. Secondly, there is an inherent tension in terms of timing, between the slowness for verisimilitude in portraying the aged characters versus the rapidity needed for the comic timing. Babs Denton was a superb stage presence in this respect, completely at ease in her character as Gloria, the former pub-landlady, and driving the pace of the production.

Being authored by Sandy Toksvig, the play was, like its title, clever and multi-



faceted – and, of course, very funny! While exploring serious themes, principally how society treats women and the elderly, its humour encompassed clever wordplay, delightfully acerbic wit, wry observation, and inter-generational and inter-cultural misunderstandings.

As usual, the show lived up to the very high standards we have come to expect from *Bartholomew Players*, not least in terms of the legendary production values. Denise Santilli (producer) deserves high credit for her expert, slick, professional organisation and attention to detail: no effort spared to secure the perfect props; the quality of the sturdily fabricated set; everything in its proper place at the proper time even at the dress rehearsal! One can imagine the immense amount of work which must have gone into creating the production, but *Bartholomew Players* make it look like second nature.

Heather Kaye (Daily Info)

OXFORD THEATRE GUILD

Macbeth By William Shakespeare

A Loyal and Atmospheric Adaptation

Macbeth, Shakespeare's shortest tragedy, is beaded throughout with some of his most quoted lines, from '....something wicked this way comes' to 'out, damned spot!' to 'tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow...' and many more. Hearing these brought to life once again by Oxford Theatre Guild's Production, which runs at St Margaret's Church this week was a thrill.

The play still has a sustaining grip, although its pacing remains a problem for me. It feels something like a story of the aftermath, a selfish impulse and its ruinous consequences; it's a steady drop into greed, paranoia and madness.

The church, with its soaring ceilings, ornate architecture and insistent chill, made the perfect backdrop for this dramatic and macabre tale. It blends effectively with Martha Zumack's rich yet unintrusive sound design. However, staging the show 'in the round' did not quite succeed - the blocking did not keep in mind that

viewers would be three of four sides, and the lines weren't always spoken loudly enough to fill the large performance space.

As Macbeth, Tom Wilson brought an enigmatic intensity and confidence, and his performance gathered nuance as the show went on. That said, I would have appreciated seeing more of a sense of conflictedness, panic and desperation intermingled with the character's cold ambition.

The acting was strong across the board, but a few performances truly stood out. As Lady Macbeth, Freyja Madsen delivered an arresting, hugely compelling performance. Lady Macbeth is a character who can become alien in her viciousness, but Madsen keeps the emotions raw and immediate, even as her delivery drips with venom.

Meanwhile, Keith Heddle's Macduff brought a convincingly weathered gravity to the performance, and in his delivery, a keen understanding of how to communicate Shakespeare to modern audiences. The meaning of the words played out on his features and in his movements, illuminating the flowery language.

Jo Godsal's Banquo and Beth Burns' Lady MacDuff were both perfectly pitched and did a lot with their relatively small roles, and Rachel Twyford shone as one of the Weird Sisters, the witches whose prophecy leads to Macbeth's downfall. Twyford delivered her lines with a genuinely eerie power, which was underpinned by the compelling decision to style the witches as Dis - Northern spirits that sway the fates of rulers.

The costuming was something of a mixed bag, with some brilliant items, such as Lady Macbeth's green velvet dress that screamed poison and power, and some underdeveloped ones. As hierarchy is such a key theme in the play, it would have been useful to see more variation in the uniforms of men in Macbeth's court.

Ultimately director Simon Billington and assistant director Jordan Bische have created a thoughtful, elegant take on the bloody, haunting, eminently quotable 'Scottish Play'.

Sophia Holme (Daily info)

AUDITIONS

OXFORD THEATRE GUILD

We are still looking for people that would like to direct Oxford Theatre Guild's annual summer production!

OTG has a long history of producing outdoor plays in the summer. These are usually in college gardens or the University Parks.

We are waiting for final confirmation of the venue this year and the dates of performances, but we are likely to be in the University Parks from 16 to 27 July.

If you are interested in directing a show for OTG this summer, please contact Tim Eyres

chair@OxfordTheatreGuild.com

for more information.

JIGSAW STAGE PRODUCTIONS

Beauty & the Beast (Disney version)

JSP now have a great cast of main characters but are looking for more Chorus members, *particularly male* for our next big musical in May.

We are also looking for backstage helpers.

For more information and an audition form please call Gill on 07919 176696 or email

down.pl@btinternet.com

Performance dates are:-

The Beacon Wantage

Thu-Sat May 16-18 7.30pm + 2.30pm Sat

AND

Cornerstone Didcot

Thu-Sat May 23-25 7.45pm + 2.30pm Sat

BLEWBURY PLAYERS

An outdoor production of

The Caucasian Chalk Circle

Auditions

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th February.

Please e-mail blewburyplayers@gmail.com or call 07795-675146 to book an audition or ask questions, even if you are not available on that weekend.

"A gem of a play full of action, humour, music, and emotion... a wonderful story performed by a gang of actors - in a new translation". You can find a video recording of Director Erica Harley discussing her love for this play and sharing her vision for our production next summer on our website www.blewburyplayers.co.uk.

Performance dates, 17-20 July, 2024.

at Orchard Dene Garden Theatre, Blewbury.

We would also like to encourage anybody interested in joining the production team in non-performing roles to get in touch in the same way

BUTTERCROSS THEATRE PRODUCTIONS (Witney)

Avenue Q

Could you be our "Christmas Eve"?

Buttercross Theatre Productions has a fab role available for the part of Christmas Eve to join their very talented cast for their production of Avenue Q in April 2024. We're hoping to find

someone urgently who can fit the description below:

Christmas Eve, female, a Japanese therapist playing age 25-45. It is a fairly large role with solo singing numbers, so the ability to sing is essential.

Christmas Eve is Japanese but the role has been played by actors with roots from across East Asia. As long as their appearance is believable, the actor doesn't need family origin in Japan.

Rehearsals are on Monday's & Thursday evenings as and when needed in Witney.
Show dates: 18th-20th April 2024.

Please apply to Buttercross Theatre Productions by contacting us at:
hello@buttercrosstheatreproductions.co.uk

ABINGDON DRAMA CLUB

Calendar Girls by Tim Fith Casting

Based on the Miramax motion picture by Juliette Towhidi and Tim Firth

The following are dates for casting our Summer 2024 show

Thursday 25th and Thursday 30th April

7:30pm at the ADC Clubhouse - 6 Marcham Road, Abingdon, OX14 1AA

Performance dates are:

Wednesday 10th to Saturday 13th July - 7:30pm
+ Matinee Saturday at 2:30pm

At the Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

HANNEY DRAMA GROUP

Robinson Crusoe:

Pirates and the Caribbean Queen a Panto By Cheryl Barrett

When: Thur 8th to Sat 10th February at 7.30pm
Plus Matinee Saturday 10th at 2.30pm

Where: Hanney War Memorial Hall

Tickets: from karongray99@yahoo.com
or Hanney Community Shop

BANBURY OPERATIC SOCIETY

Calamity Jane



A rootin'-tootin' musical comedy adventure that delves into the spirited life of Martha Jane Cannary, a frontier woman in the Wild West.

Set in the rough and tumble town of Deadwood, the show chronicles Calamity's unconventional relationships, her tumultuous adventures, and her challenges to societal norms. It's a rip roaring tale of love, friendship, and chaos in the rugged landscapes of the 19th-century West.

Dates: Wed 14 - Sat 17 February at 7.30pm

Plus 2.30pm Matinee Sat 17th Feb
(Relaxed Performance & BSL Interpreted)

Venue: Wykham Theatre, Wykham Park
Academy, Ruskin Road, OX16 9HY

Tickets: £16 (£14 concession) from
www.ticketsource.co.uk/BanburyOperaticSociety

Website: www.BanburyOperaticSociety.co.uk/

Email: BanburyOperaticSociety@gmail.com

LAUNTON VILLAGE PLAYERS

Rapunzel a Pantomime

by Julia West,
with music
by Steve Webber.

Will Rapunzel ever escape from the tower? Will the wicked Mother Gothel take over the Kingdom? Our heroes will need your help to make sure good



triumphs over evil!

This is a family show, suitable for all ages and includes all the traditional pantomime elements, with plenty of magic, comedy and audience participation.

Come and enjoy Bicester's biggest and most magical award-winning panto!

All profits will be donated to Bicester Autism, a community organisation in Bicester who provide much needed support, learning and opportunities for families and carers of autistic children, and those with, or awaiting a diagnosis of ADHD and Autism.

When: Wednesday 14th February at 7:30pm
Thursday 15th Feb at 10:30am & 2:30pm
(*10.30am is a Relaxed Performance*)
Fri 16th & Sat 17th Feb at 2:30pm & 7:30pm

Where: Cooper School Performance Hall,
Churchill Rd, Bicester, OX26 4RS.

Tickets: from £6, + family discounts.
from www.ticketsource.co.uk/lvp.

Website: www.launtonvillageplayers.org.uk

WITNEY DRAMATIC SOCIETY

Aladdin A Panto by Nigel Holmes

Join our hero Aladdin, accompanied by his loveable sidekick Wishee and the fabulous Widow Twankey as they embark upon a magical journey

through the streets and markets of old Peking. Will our lad find the magic lamp and win the love of the beautiful Princess Yasmine (bearing in mind no one is allowed to set eyes on her)? Will the villainous Abanazar succeed in his plot to be the Emperor of the Universe? Will the Spirit of the Ring ever manage to get her magic poetry to rhyme?

Come and see our genie-us combination of magic, mischief, toe-tapping songs, audience participation and Widow Twankey's washing!

Date: Thu 15th to Sat 17th February at 7.30pm
Plus Matinée Sat 17th February at 2.30pm

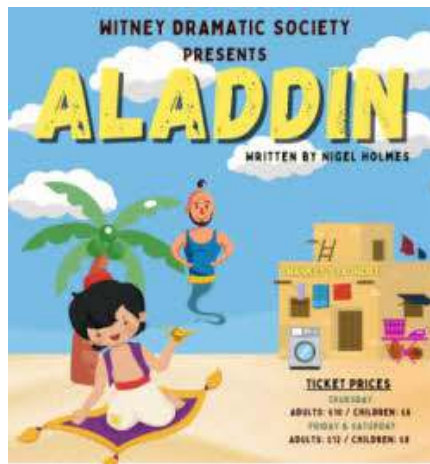
Where: Witney Methodist Church,
40 High St, Witney OX28 6HG

Tickets: Thursday: £10 adults / £6 children
Friday and Saturday: £12 adults / £8 children

Tickets from: Truck Music Store, Woolgate
Centre, Witney

www.ticketsource.co.uk/witney-dramatic-society
(small booking fee applies)

or On the door



HAODS

'Allo 'Allo 2 "The Camembert Caper"

They're back with a whole new adventure!

Yes, the irresistible Rene and his wife Edith are back! Together with their girls, Mimi Le Bonque and Yvette Carte-Blanche, they work hard to help Michelle of the Resistance and the hapless Crabtree with his appalling French to try and thwart the Germans once again, and smuggle two British airmen out of France

The painting of the Fallen Madonna with the Big Boobies is still in contention, but General Von Klinkerhoffen is demanding that Colonel Von Strohm and Her Gruber extract 50,000 Franks in payment from the Resistance as it was his retirement plan! Add in missing cash and an exploding camembert and you have a recipe for hilarity.

In the original 'All 'Allo, Authors Jeremy Lloyd and David Croft aimed for a laugh a minute...and they succeeded. Well, I have to tell you that they have done it again with The Camembert Capers. Packed with all the usual suspects, this dinner theatre is the perfect antidote to the winter blues!

When: Wed 6th to Sat 9th March + matinee on Saturday 9th March

Where: The Studio, New Street, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2BP

Tickets: from www.ticketsource.co.uk/haodshenley

This is a HAODS Studio Fringe production and is HAODS annual dinner theatre.

Tickets include a three course dinner, by courtesy of Steve Luscombe of Luscombe's restaurant. There are no 'show only' tickets for the evening productions.

Optional afternoon tea will be available at the matinee either pre-ordered or on the day.



HENLEY PLAYERS PYGMALION by George Bernard Shaw

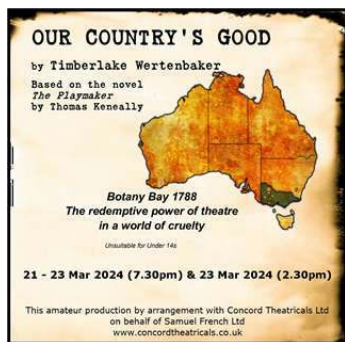
When: Wed 20th to Sat 23rd March at 7.30pm
+ Matinee Sat 2.30pm

Where: Kenton Theatre, 19 New St,
Henley-on-Thames RG9 2BP.

Tickets: from:

<https://kentontheatre.co.uk/event/pygmalion>

BANBURY CROSS PLAYERS



Our Country's Good

by Timberlake Wertenbaker

This is a powerful play based on fact. It is a multi-layered piece

about the novel "The Playmaker" by Thomas Keneally which, in turn, is the story of those who performed the play "The Recruiting Officer".

It focusses on the rehearsing of the play among the convicts and officers in a Botany Bay penal colony in 1788. There is a hierarchy. There are abusers and victims. Characters cross boundaries. It is sad and tender and painful. It is also a story of hope and redemption and demonstrates people can change. Barriers and stereotypes can fall away once people get to know each other.

Unsuitable for under 14s, Very strong language and themes of cruelty and exploitation

When: 21 March 2024 - 7:30pm - 23 March 2024 - 7:30pm

Where: The Mill Arts Centre, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury, OX16 5QE

Tickets: from:

themillartscentre.co.uk/shows/our-countrys-good

Email boxoffice@themillartscentre.co.uk

Tel 01295 279002

Website: <https://banburycrossplayers.org.uk>

This amateur production by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd on behalf of Samuel French Ltd

AMEGOS THEATRE

The Hunchback of Notre Dame

By Alan Menken & Stephen Schwarz

What makes a monster and what makes a man?

The Hunchback of Notre Dame tells the story of Quasimodo, who



has been kept within the bell tower of Notre Dame for his whole life, but longs to be 'Out There' as part of the outside world.

When he summons the courage to attend the Feast of Fools, he meets Esmeralda, a compassionate gypsy who protects him from an angry mob.

At the same time, Quasimodo's guardian, the archdeacon Dom Claude Frollo, and the new captain of the guard, Phoebus de Martin, fall in love with Esmeralda.

ODN website: www.OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org

Will Quasimodo be able to save Esmeralda from Frollo's lust and anger? And who is the true monster of Notre Dame?

A sweeping score and powerful story make The Hunchback of Notre Dame an instant classic. Using the magnificent surroundings of the medieval Wantage Parish Church as a backdrop to the story, audiences will be swept away by the magic of this truly unforgettable musical.

AmEgos Theatre is proud to be the first company in Oxfordshire to stage this magnificent musical.

With some adult themes, unlike the animated film, this is not a show for very young children

When: Thu 4th to Sat 6th April at 7:30pm

+ Saturday matinee at 2.30pm

Where: Wantage Parish Church, Church Street, Wantage OX12 8AQ

Bar opens at 6.45pm (and 1.45pm)

Tickets: www.AmEgosTheatre.com

Seating is unreserved, and on church pews, so please bring cushions or blankets if required for your comfort.

OXFORD THEATRE GUILD

The Importance of being Earnest

The classic comedy by Oscar Wilde



"The truth is rarely pure and never simple..."

Best friends and fashionable young men, Algernon Moncrieff and Jack Worthing, seem to have hit upon the perfect ruse to escape their social

responsibilities. They lead double lives – one in the city and one in the country. But when love is thrown into the mix and the formidable Lady Bracknell comes on to the scene, confusion reigns.

Updated to the roaring 1920s, this most enduringly popular of Oscar Wilde's plays features some of his best-loved characters, including Lady Bracknell, Miss Prism, Jack Worthing and Gwendolen Fairfax. This razor-sharp satire of snobbery and class distinctions makes for a hilarious evening of caustic wit and endless misunderstandings.

When: Tuesday 16th - Saturday 20th April
7.30pm (8pm Friday)

Plus Saturday matinee 2.30pm

Where: Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford OX1 2LW

Tickets: www.oxfordplayhouse.com

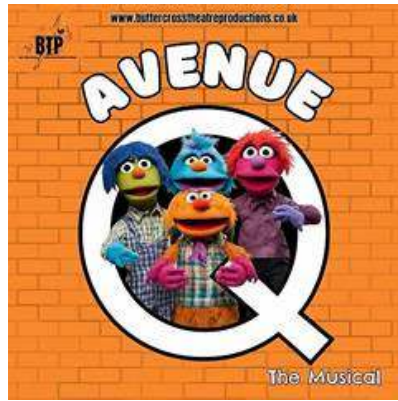
Tel: 01865 305305

Website: www.OxfordTheatreGuild.com

BUTTERCROSS THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

AVENUE Q

Join us this April as we find our Purpose on the eclectic Avenue Q, where puppetry meets Broadway magic in a dazzling performance that will leave you laughing, singing, and tapping your toes!



The laugh-out-loud musical tells the timeless story of a recent college grad named Princeton, who moves into a shabby New York apartment all the way out on Avenue Q. He soon discovers that, although the residents seem nice, it's clear that this is not your ordinary neighbourhood. Together, Princeton and his new-found friends struggle to find jobs, dates and their ever-elusive purpose in life.

Our talented cast of puppet and human characters will have you hooked from the first note to the final curtain call.

This show contains adult themes, so parental discretion is advised. Minimum age 16, 16-18 year olds to be accompanied by someone 18+.

When: 18th – 20th April 2024

Where: Corn Exchange, Witney, Oxfordshire.

Tickets: from <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/buttercross-theatre-productions>

COMPTON PLAYERS

Wind in the Willows

From the book by Kenneth Grahame

Meet the well-loved characters of Toad, Mole, Ratty and Badger in this adaptation by John Morley who has woven their exploits into an exciting adventure story for all the family.

When: 25th – 27th April 2024
(including a Saturday matinee)

Where: Compton Village Hall, Burrell Rd,
Compton, Nr Newbury, RG20 6NP

Tickets: from www.comptonplayers.co.uk

DORCHESTER A.D.S.

SURPRISE! SURPRISE!

by Philippa Smith

Jess's son has arranged a weekend getaway in a Derbyshire cottage for her 70th birthday, with



surprise guests in attendance. The problem is, neither her husband nor the son have bothered to turn up themselves, and the guests he's randomly picked from her contacts aren't the ones she'd have chosen to spend her special day with.

When: 25th to 27th April 2024

Where: Dorchester on Thames Village Hall

Tickets (£12) available from Ticketsource.co.uk/DADS

Or by phoning the Ticketsource box office number 0333 666 3366

Website: <http://www.dads.org.uk>

WYCHWOOD PLAYERS Arsenic & Old Lace

by Joseph Kesselring.

A clever combination of the farcical and the macabre, centres on two elderly sisters who are famous in their Brooklyn neighborhood for their numerous acts of charity. Unfortunately, however, their charity includes poisoning lonely old men who come to their home looking for lodging.

When: 25-27 April at 7:30pm.

Venue: New Beaconsfield Hall, Shipton-under-Wychwood.

Tickets £12, from our website www.wychwoodplayers.com

BARTHOLOMEW PLAYERS A Pack of Lies

by Hugh Whitmore,

A cold war thriller set in suburban London in 1960-61. This tense drama is based on the real-life story of the Kroger's who were KGB agents hidden in plain sight living a routine life in suburban London until their arrest and conviction for spying in 1961.

The impact of the deceit and lies surrounding their friendship with their innocent neighbours had devastating consequences.....

This play was not only recommended to us by one of our Patrons, Laurence Marks (of "Birds of a Feather" fame amongst other popular TV dramas) but we are honoured and delighted that Laurence will be Directing the production with Debi Lisburne-Diacon as his Co-Director.

When: Weds 15th – Sat 18th May 2024

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

Tickets: from: Denise Santilli 07721 744020

Email: bart.players@gmail.com

www.trybooking.co.uk

or Evenlode DIY in Eynsham

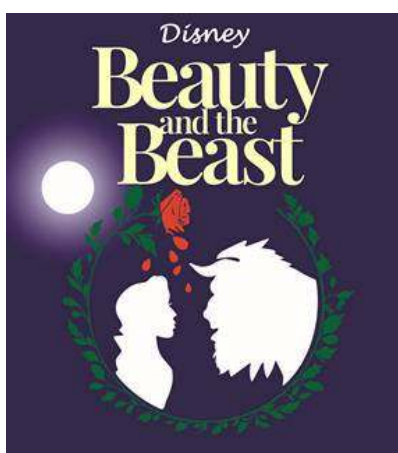
JIGSAW STAGE PRODUCTIONS

Disney's

Beauty and the Beast

Bonjour!

We proudly invite you to 'Be Our Guest' as the most enchanted musical of all time as Disney's Beauty and the Beast, comes to Oxfordshire this May.



This beloved 'tale as old as time' has been brought to life on stage with all the charm and elegance audiences expect from Belle and her Beast.

25 years after its Olivier Award-winning West End debut, Jigsaw Stage Productions present this new production featuring all of the spellbinding songs of Alan Menken, Howard Ashman and Tim Rice including Belle, Gaston, Be Our Guest and, of course, Beauty and the Beast.

Don't believe me? Ask the dishes!

Venues and Dates:-

The Beacon Wantage

Thu 16 to Sat 18 May at 7.30pm

+ Matinee Sat at 2.30pm

Tickets: £16 Adults or £14.50 under 14 year olds from <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DBGD> or the Beacon Wantage

Cornerstone Didcot

Wed 22 to Sat 25 May at 7.45pm

+ Matinee Sat at 2.30pm

Tickets £16 Adults or £14.50 Under 14s from Cornerstone Theatre, Didcot:

www.cornerstone-arts.org

or Tel 01235 515144

DRAMA FESTIVALS

MAIDENHEAD DRAMA FESTIVAL

A multi-day festival of one-act plays.

See plays from local youth and adult groups, with comments each evening from a professional adjudicator and a host of trophies to be won on the final night.

Adjudicator: Jan Palmer Sayer, GoDA

When: 20th – 23rd March 2024

Where: Norden Farm Centre for the Arts, Maidenhead, SL6 4PF

To book tickets call 01628 788997 and for queries email boxoffice@nordenfarm.org

THE HENLEY DRAMA FESTIVAL

at the lovely old Kenton Theatre in Henley on Thames the fourth oldest working theatre in the country.

When: Tuesday 7th to Saturday 11th of May

The shows start at 7.30pm, **Saturday at 7pm**

Details & booking on www.KentonTheatre.co.uk

Website: www.HenleyDramaFestival.co.uk

Email: HenleyDramaFestival@gmail.com

ODN DRAMA FESTIVAL Abingdon

We have 2 one act plays per evening Tue-Fri, 3 plays called back for Saturday Gala night.

A rare feature of the ODN drama festival is that after each adjudication there is also a short workshop with the cast.

Application will be online soon (see website).

When: Mon 3rd June - Sat 8th June 2024

Where: Unicorn Theatre, Checker Walk, Abingdon, OX14 3HZ.

WALLINGFORD ONE-ACT PLAY FESTIVAL

The adjudicator for 2024 will be Nancy Heath (GODA).

See website for application

When: Mon 10th June - Sat 15th June 2024

Where: Corn Exchange Wallingford.

Website: cornexchange.org.uk/drama-festival

Email: DramaFestival@CornExchange.org.uk

Oxfordshire Drama Network

Not just a network



HERE'S WHAT WE DO

- **Annual Drama Festival of 1 Act Plays** in June each year
- **Winter/Pantomime festival competition** – We nominate judges for your Pantos/plays
- **Auditions:** Newsletter & Facebook can notify all our members of auditions locally
- **Reviews:** We can do reviews of your play or musical or you send your own review (500 words max)
- **Letters:** We carry a letters section for Views & Comments when you send them in! (200 words Max)
- **Props:** Do you need a particular prop/scenery? Get in touch with us we may be able to help you.
- **Events** We inform readers of events, plus we are planning our own events soon
- **Website** Why not add your events to the ODN website and Facebook pages

News & Reviews should be sent to the editor at info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org

Are you a new Drama or Musical Group? For just £20 (Then £15/Year) you can join us :-
www.oxfordshiredramanetwork.org/files/GroupMembershipForm.pdf

Email: info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org

www.Facebook.com/groups/1324585987569767

Your ODN Committee

Officers

Chair	Karen Carey (Didcot Phoenix Drama Group)
Secretary	Becki Brewis (Wootton Players)
Newsletter/Website	Mike Davies (Drayton Players & Jigsaw Stage Productions)
Treasurer	Post unfilled
Membership Secretary	Jess Ebberson (Kennington Amateur Dramatic Society)

General members

Mike Lacey	(Kingston Bagpuize)
Sue Hadley	(Drayton Players & Buttercross Productions)
Mandyrae Jessey	(BODS of Wychwood)

Email: info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org

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