

Oxfordshire Drama Network

Newsletter



FEBRUARY 2018

EDITOR'S BULLETIN

It is with great sadness that I have to inform our members that Deidre Jones, our Chairman, passed away last week after a short illness.

Deidre has been on the ODN committee for over 10 years and our Chairman since 2011.



In her youth Deidre was a professional dancer, appearing on the west-end stage and around the country. When she moved to Oxfordshire, she started to use her dancing skills again by choreographing shows for local schools, and then for Drayton players, and directed plays and musicals for them. She also choreographed several musicals for Abingdon Operatic society, and for Dorchester Amateur Dramatic society.

in 2007 she created her own drama group, BreakaLeg Productions directing 2 plays a year and many drama festival entries, winning several awards for them.

She will be sorely missed in the local amateur dramatic community.

Mike Davies

Email: info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org
Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/1324585987569767

N.B. ODN membership fees were due on 1st Jan

The deadline for the April issue is 22nd March 2018
Contributions to info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org

WHAT'S ON DIARY (details inside)

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- 2-3 Faringdon Dramatic Society
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- 2-3 *Woodcote Amateur Dramatic Society*
The Emperor's New Clothes
- 31Jan Wootton Players
1-4 Feb **Sleeping Beauty**
- 7-10 *Banbury Cross Players*
My Boy Jack
- 8-10 Hanney Drama Group
Cinderella and the Velvet Slipper
- 19-20 *Didcot Phoenix Drama Group*
Red Riding Hood Goes Out West

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- 15-17 The Chiltern Players
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Wootton Players Youth Group



The Wootton Players are an amateur drama company based in Wootton who have been in existence for just over 30 years. We put on a panto each year in the local community centre which is always very popular in the village and is watched by some 900 people each year across 5 performances. We also put on a Murder Mystery every September and occasionally other plays. Historically some 6-8 children aged between 11 and 16 appeared in the junior chorus in the pantomime. Talking to the children and their parents some 4 years ago, it was evident that they really enjoyed being part of the group and involved in the pantomimes and got a great deal out of it. However, they were asking whether they could continue to meet even when we were not rehearsing for the panto (which is typically between October and early February) and whether their younger friends and siblings could also be involved.

We therefore decided to set up a Wootton Players youth drama group for children aged between 8 and 16 which would meet every Monday evening during term time in the community centre from March through to the end of September. The objectives of the group were:

1. *To improve the children's general acting, singing and dancing skills and improve their stage presence to help them when they appear in pantomimes*
2. *To raise awareness of all the activities involved in putting on a drama production, e.g. set design and painting, sound, lighting, costumes, choreography.*
3. *To help instil a love of drama and the theatre: and*
4. *(Most importantly) To have fun!*

We do not turn anyone away although we do have a Behavioural Policy and Code of Conduct which they must sign up to. We do not charge for children attending but recognising our commitment to support the young children in the village we set aside some monies from the profits generated from the pantomimes to fund the rental and certain other costs to run the youth group. We are also fortunate to have some 8 people on the Wootton Players committee who are school teachers, teaching assistants or who are involved in the local church (and who therefore have the appropriate DBS checks and awareness of the importance of

safeguarding procedures) who willingly give up their time to run the drama group.

In the first 2 years some 12-15 children regularly attended each week. In 2016 the children put on a performance of a short play "Stoppit" which was watched by some 60 members of the village. The numbers have continued to increase with some 25 children now regularly attending and in June 2017 the group put on 2 performances of an abridged version of Bugsy Malone on Sunday 25th June which was watched by some 150 people. 2 of the older members of the group choreographed the dances, all the children are actively involved in designing and building the set and identifying costumes, with other children operating the sound desk and lighting.



The group continues to go from strength to strength. It is clear that they really enjoy being involved, it gives them a sense of purpose and provides them the opportunity to learn new skills and keeps them off the streets. We can see the difference the group makes when it comes to panto time. Last year, we had some 15 people in the junior chorus (and could have had more if we had relaxed the age limit), 2 of the older members of the group choreographed all the dances whilst another designed the set, whilst 2 other children operated the sound desk and follow spot, and others were involved in helping back stage.

For us what makes it all worth-while, are the many comments received from parents thanking us for giving their children such confidence to perform and grow as individuals.

We continue to be dependent on the goodwill of many people. We are delighted to have recently received a donation from the Wantage Junior Showstoppers who unfortunately have disbanded. We are incredibly grateful for the donation and will ensure that the money is put to good use to ensure that our youth group remains alive and kicking in Wootton!

Mike Varnom Chairman Wootton Players

N.B. The Wootton Players Pantomime is on this week – 31st Jan until 3rd Feb - see page 4. ED

CASTING

KENNINGTON ADS

Following a successful run of 'Beauty and the Beast' Kennington ADS will be preparing for their Spring show 'Raising the Roof' later this month. If you are interested in being part of this spectacular musical showcase, please come down to Kennington Village Centre at 7.30pm on Tuesday 20th February. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided! For more information, contact Sarah Ellner at sarah.ellner@yahoo.co.uk.

REVIEWS

BARTHOLOMEW PLAYERS

The Constant Wife

by W. Somerset Maugham

29th November-2nd December 2017



The excellent 1920s set appropriately dressed set the tone for this production. This play is as relevant today as it was then and showed no signs of being 'dated'.

The stalwart long-suffering butler, **Bentley** (*Steve Ashcroft*), in his 40th year with Bartholomew Players, was well cast, maintaining dignity and discretion

Mrs Culver (*Deborah Lisburne Diacon*) was stately and splendidly haughty in her attempts to protect her daughter, Constance, from the philandering of her husband. Her other daughter, the mischievous **Martha Culver** (*Kate Astley O'Connor*) was very strongly played and was a good foil to Constance. Her associate, **Barbara Fawcett** (*Sarah Miller*) was well cast and the clipped accents of both added to the twenties feel.

Constance Middleton (*Gillian Somerscales*) triumphed in the part. She was commanding throughout, taking every situation in her stride and gave a brilliant all-round performance.

Marie-Louise Durham (*Sandra van der Linde*) was cunning in her naivety, being very demonstrative and flirtatious.

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John Middleton (*Joe O'Connor*) whilst having an affair with Marie Louise, was assured and increased in intensity and agitation as the plot unfolded, with some interesting awkward hand gestures, when his temper surfaced.

Bernard Kersal (*Ed Miller*) was very credible and relaxed as Constance's would-be lover, totally unflustered by the frenzy that surrounded him.

Mortimer Durham (*Ianto Wain*) was a good blustering foil to the beleaguered John and the relaxed Bernard.



The whole play maintained the humour of the twenties with good costume changes (of which there were many) Given that Denise Santilli is relative new at directing, she certainly is a force to be reckoned with. Her direction was excellent with effective use of the stage and very nice touches throughout.

This production maintained the high standard of the Bartholomew Players we have now come to expect. Well done to everyone involved.

Nigel James

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FARINGDON DRAMATIC SOCIETY

Dick Whittington

A pantomime by Peter Webster

Dick and his cat Calico have arrived in London Town seeking to make their fortunes, only to find that they are not at all welcome as the locals are very suspicious of strangers. However, Alderman Fitzwarren's adopted daughter Alice persuades her father to give Dick a chance by giving him a job, much to

Fitzwarren's wife Phobia's displeasure. Calico is



also taken on to help Tapioca Dripping, Fitzwarren's cook, keep marauding rats out of her pantry...

This will be the début production of a brand new pantomime written by our own Peter Webster.

When: 27 & 28 Jan, 2 & 3 Feb 2018

Matinées 2:30pm Evenings 7:30pm. Doors 2 & 7pm.

Where: Faringdon Junior School, Oxfordshire

Tickets: Adult £8. Child (under 16) £6

Tickets online soon:

www.faringdondramatic.org.uk

or from Tuesday 2nd January from The Gifted Magpie, 6 London Street, Faringdon.

WOODCOTE AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY

The Emperor's New Clothes

Based on the story by Hans Christian Andersen

The Emperor is so exceedingly fond of new clothes that he spends all his money on being well dressed. He cares nothing about reviewing his soldiers, going to the theatre, or going for a ride in his carriage, except to show off his new clothes. He has an outfit for every hour of the day, and instead of saying, as one might, about any other ruler, "The Emperor is in council," here they always say. "The Emperor is in his dressing room."

However, the Emperor is running out of cash and demands his son marry into money to keep him in the lifestyle to which he has become accustomed. Alas the options are not all they seem.....

Come along and see what happens when the Emperor engages two new costume designers who promise him the most magnificent suit of clothes ever!

When:
Saturday 27th January 2.15 pm & 7.30 pm
Sunday 28th January 2.15 pm
Friday 2nd February 7.30 pm
Saturday 3rd February 2.15 pm & 7.30 pm

Where: Woodcote Village Hall

Tickets: phone the Box Office 01491 680573

Email: wadsboxoffice@gmail.com or

Website: www.woodcotedrama.co.uk



When: Saturday 27th January 2.15 pm & 7.30 pm

Sunday 28th January 2.15 pm

Friday 2nd February 7.30 pm

Saturday 3rd February 2.15 pm & 7.30 pm

Where: Woodcote Village Hall

Tickets: phone the Box Office 01491 680573

Email: wadsboxoffice@gmail.com or

Website: www.woodcotedrama.co.uk

WOOTTON PLAYERS

Sleeping Beauty

by Alan P Frayn

An up-to-date version of the traditional Pantomime, suitable for all the family.

The Wootton Players have a very good record of producing Pantomimes so please buy tickets early to avoid disappointment.



When: Wed 31st Jan to Friday 2nd Feb. at 7.30pm
Sat 3rd Feb at 2.00pm and 6.30pm.

Where: Wootton & Dry Sandford Community Centre

Tickets: Adults £8 (conc £6).

Wed & Thur ALL tickets £6

From: Ticketline: 01865 390555 or Wootton Co-op.

All proceeds from Wednesday to 5 local charities.

BANBURY CROSS PLAYERS

My Boy Jack

by David Haig

Telling the story of Rudyard Kipling sending his 17 year old son, Jack, to war in 1915. The drama covers three periods.

1913: The conflict between 15yr old Jack - with defective vision but desperate to get away from home - and his father's determination to send him to war.

1915: When Jack, despite his defective vision and aided by his father's influence, does go to war.

1924: Kipling and his wife interview soldiers from Jack's regiment in search of news.

This emotional and highly charged drama is an account of the anguish at the heart of a man whose storytelling continues to delight millions the world over.

When: 7 - 10 February at 7:30pm

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

Tickets: £12.50 (£11.50 Concession Weds & Thurs only)

from www.TheMillArtsCentre.co.uk

Website: www.BanburyCrossPlayers.org.uk



HANNEY DRAMA GROUP

Cinderella and the Velvet Slipper

by Peter Nuttall

Cinderella as you have never seen it before! Yes we have the Ugly Sisters, Prince Charming, a Magic Godmother, etc. BUT.....(if you want to know what the *but* is, you will have to come and see it!)



When: Thu 8 – Sat 10 Feb. At 7.30pm, + Sat 2.30

Where: Hanney War Memorial Hall

Tickets: £8, (Saturday 2.30pm all tickets £6)

Available from Jan 6th, from 01235 868780, or email: karongray99@yahoo.com

DIDCOT PHOENIX DRAMA GROUP

Red Riding Hood Goes Out West

by Jackie Staite

Red Riding Hood Goes Out West is a new telling of the Red Riding Hood tale set in the American West. Red Riding Hood, an independent-minded English girl, arrives in the town of Not Very Big Boulder to save Grandma from the outlaw, Bad Bart, and his incompetent sidekick, brains. Bad Bart wants to buy Grandma's home for a pittance as there is 'gold in them thar hills'.

Red manages to foil his plan. In desperation, Bad Bart hires Big Bad Wolf, an Indian brave with a villainous reputation, to kill Grandma, leaving Bart able to claim the island as his own. But help it at hand in the form of the Lone Ranger Tonto – or it would be if the Lone Ranger were more competent and less vain! Red Riding Hood, the children and Tonto save the day.

When: Fri 19 & Sat 20 Feb - 7:30pm + Sat 2.30pm

Where: Didcot Civic Hall

Tickets: £9 (£5 Concs) Family ticket £23

Discounts on group bookings of 10+

From Didcot Civic Hall, or online at

Website: www.DidcotPhoenixDrama.co.uk or

Email: DidcotPhoenixDrama@hotmail.co.uk



BANBURY OPERATIC SOCIETY

An Evening in Vienna

Audiences can expect an evening of well-known and much-loved musical numbers from the operettas of Strauss, Lehar, Offenbach and their friends.



With songs such as The Merry Widow Waltz, You Are My Heart's Delight, The Radetzky March, The Laughing Song, Girls Were Made to Love and Kiss, and many more, you can't fail to be transported to the Viennese world of days gone by. The music abounds in melodic waltzes, invigorating marches, stirring gypsy music and even the Can-Can, so the dancers of BOS will be 'tripping the light fantastic'!

It will be a semi-staged, costumed production. There will be a bar available at all performances plus on Saturday afternoon - in true Viennese style - coffee, tea and cake will be available during the interval.

This show will be guaranteed to have you singing (if not dancing) as you leave.

When: Friday 2nd & Saturday 3rd March at 7.30pm
+ Saturday matinee at 2.30pm.

Where: Wykham Theatre, Banbury Academy, Ruskin Road, Banbury, OX16 9HY,

Tickets: £10 and are on sale online at www.banburyoperaticsociety.co.uk/tickets or from Edd Frost & Daughters Family Funeral Directors, 20 Horton View, Banbury, OX16 9HR or from Anker & Partners Estate Agents, 31 High Street, Banbury, OX16 5ER.

Website: www.banburyoperaticsociety.co.uk

ACTS (ASTON AND COTE THESPIAN SOCIETY)

The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate

Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society

production of MURDER MYSTERY

A Murder Mystery

Every drama group has experienced the horrors of what can go wrong on opening night, and the ladies of the F.A.H.E.T.G. Dramatic Society are no different, with the possible exception that almost everything that could happen does!

The scenery collapses, cues are missed, lines forgotten, and the sound effects take on a strange note at times, as the ladies present their ambitious evening's entertainment with the cunning whodunit, "Murder at Checkmate Manor". And just in case the audience should get bored, there's a Film and Fashion Show and Murder Mystery Quiz, complete with a Prize!

When: 8 - 10 March 2018 - 7:30pm

Where: Aston Village Hall, ASTON, Nr Bampton, OX18 2DU.

THE CHILTERN PLAYERS

'Rumours'

a farce by Neil Simon.

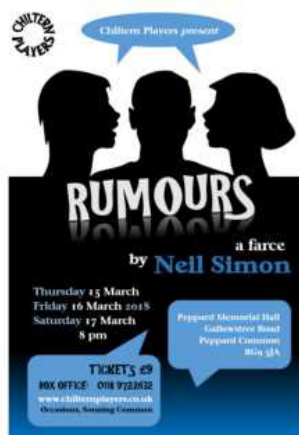
Three couples, each with problems, arrive at the Home Counties home of their friend Charley, a prominent Government official, for a twentieth wedding anniversary; to find that their host has just shot himself through his ear lobe; and his wife is nowhere in sight. The evening descends into classic farce as confusions and miscommunications mount.

When: Thursday 15th to Saturday 17th March 2018

Doors are open 7.30pm for a 8.00pm start.

Where: Peppard Memorial Hall, Gallowstree Road, Peppard Common, RG9 5JA.

Tickets: £9.00 each from 0118 972 2632, or 'Occasions' in Sonning Common, or chiltern.players@yahoo.co.uk



YOUTH OF BANBURY OPERATIC SOCIETY

Rock of Ages - Taster Day

Renowned for our ability to put on a whole musical in just one week in the summer, YOBOS is an award winning drama group for anyone aged 11 to 19. At the taster day, you will meet the production team, learn about the show, pick up audition pieces and meet others with a passion for performing!



Ages 11-19

When: Sunday 19th March - 2.00pm – 6.00pm

Where: Christopher Rawlins Primary School, Banbury
Only £5

OXFORD THEATRE GUILD

The Life of Galileo

By Bertolt Brecht
Translated by David Hare



Galileo advocates the heretical view that the earth revolves around the sun, rather than standing motionless at the centre of all creation. He faces imprisonment and torture at the hands of the Inquisition as a consequence. He is forced to weigh self-preservation against his mission to establish a new age of science.

Brecht's masterpiece provides powerful drama laced with wry humour. It deals in an accessible way with grand themes, setting them in the context of the emotional relationships of the protagonists caught up in the conflict between dogma and science. It has seldom been more timely as we find ourselves in a 'post-truth' era in which ideology is increasingly favoured over facts.

OTG returns to the Playhouse with a striking production of this classic, translated by one of our greatest contemporary playwrights.

When: 27 - 31 March at 7:30pm

Where: Oxford Playhouse

Tickets: www.OxfordPlayhouse.com/whats-on/all-shows/the-life-of-galileo/7230

JIGSAW STAGE PRODUCTIONS

Oliver!

Join young orphaned Oliver Twist as he escapes from the hungry world of the orphanage only to be caught up in the London underworld of theft and violence in Fagin's 'family' of child pickpockets!



With spirited timeless songs like, 'As Long as He Needs Me', 'Food, Glorious Food' and 'You Gotta Pick a Pocket or Two', 'Oliver!' is a musical classic and a family favourite.

Performance dates are :-

At The Beacon Wantage:

4th – 7th April 7.30pm + 2.30pm Sat

Tickets available from:

The Beacon, Wantage or Bretts Chemist, Grove.

At Cornerstone, Didcot:

26th – 28th April 7.45pm + 2.30pm Sat

Tickets from The Cornerstone, Didcot

Further information from 01235 767509

Website: www.JigsawstageProductions.co.uk

ABINGDON DRAMA CLUB

A More Perfect world

a new play by Tony Green



This new play from Tony Green ('Another Man's Eden' and 'Thou Shalt Not Suffer') is being staged in tribute to those who served in World War 1 which ended 100 years ago this year.

The play skips between the war years and interviews taking place many years later with veterans. It looks at the real life experiences of those who took part across the theatre of war, their recollections and feelings and how perhaps the "myths" of what we now perceive from a distance are at odds with the reality for those who were there, and are overtaking what actually happened.

When: Wed 11th - Sat 14th April @ 7:30pm

Where: Unicorn Theatre, Abbey Buildings, Abingdon

Tickets: available from March -

£10, £8 concessions (60+, under 12s, Students, ADC members) Group Bookings: Groups of 10 and over - All tickets £8 (£8.55 online)

Book online: www.Abingdon-Drama-Club.com

Email: tickets@unicornboxoffice.org.uk

Phone: 0845 4636638

The Bookstore, The Abingdon Precinct (15 Bury St), Abingdon

N.B. The Unicorn Theatre does not have numbered seats. All tickets are sold as unreserved seating.

ST PETER'S PLAYERS,

3 one-act plays

The Merry Regiment of Women

by Rae Shirley

Shakespeare's Kate and Petruchio, Romeo and Juliet, daring Henry V, plus Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra, combine to produce a mad and merry, totally irreverent play.

Poor Yorick by Phil Mansell

Yorick the jester is not dead – he's on the road dying a death as he pioneers a new kind of comedy called stand-up. When this fails, he is persuaded by his tavern wench girlfriend Bess to return to Elsinore and

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get his old job back. But when he arrives he finds there have been many changes, and he becomes embroiled in Hamlet's plans for revenge.

Melons at the Parsonage

by Nick Warburton.

Two amateur drama groups become joint winners of a play festival. A tie-break involves the groups performing an extract from their own entry and then an excerpt from the opposing team's play, but the pieces are very different. They compete again with hilarious results but the outcome is still a tie.

This time a rugby scrum will decide the winner!

3 directors, 3 plays, 1 theme : **performance.**

When: Wed 11th April to Sat 14th April at 7.30pm

Where: Wolvercote Village Hall.

Website: www.StPetersPlayers.co.uk

AMEGOS

A Bunch of Amateurs

by Nick Newman & Ian Hislop

Keen to boost his flagging career, fading Hollywood action hero Jefferson Steele arrives in England to play King Lear in Stratford – only to find that this is not the birthplace of the Bard, but a sleepy Suffolk village

When: 12th - 14th April at 7.30pm

Where: King Alfred's Academy Theatre, Wantage

WYCHWOOD PLAYERS

Deathtrap

by Ira Levin

Thriller playwright Sydney Bruhl hasn't had a success to his credit for years. So when a script arrives from an unknown dramatist he fumes with jealousy much to the consternation of his wife, Myra.



How far would he go to achieve another hit?

In a plot that twists and turns with more surprises than an audience may bargain for, we invite you to come and decide who or what is true or false

When: Thur 26th to Sat 28th April

Where: New Beaconsfield Hall, Shipton under Wychwood near Burford.

Tickets: Available later - check online :-

Website: www.WychwoodPlayers.com