

Exeter Drama Company Newsletter



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It's a funny old world

When we moved into Cornerstone in April last year we were under the impression that, whilst the long term plans of Isca Church was to sell the building, we'd have at least 3 or 4 years before we needed to raise funds for a bid on the building or start looking around for yet another new home. Sadly that proved not to be the case and very early on in our tenure we were informed that the building would be put up for sale later that year.

At our post production meeting on January 6th Phoebe, our Chair, informed the membership that we'd had notice to quit the building by 25th/26th January! Sharp intake of breath and then thinking hats on to work out the logistics of removing our stuff from the building, where to put it and where Robin could continue with his rehearsals for *The Camel's Back* as well as find a venue to perform his play in! Clearing Cornerstone proved to be far simpler than moving out of The Shed as most of our stuff was already in storage. Someone took all the lighting and sound equipment in their car in one hit, a couple more people shifted the stuff from our one storage cupboard and the one man marvel that is Doug Thomson moved 90% of our red chairs in about 5 trips in his car and they now reside in his garage. After our last rehearsal at Cornerstone on Thursday



St Thomas Scout Hut

January 22nd we dropped our keys back through the letterbox after we'd locked up for the final time. We've no idea who's bought Cornerstone but have been told that the new owners are 'very keen' for community use to continue. We've asked that the new owners contact us as a matter of some urgency and have been told that our details have been passed on. At the time of writing we're still waiting for a phone call. Our next problem was new rehearsal and performance space. We'd seen that a local St Thomas Scout hut had a 'hire space' notice in the window, so we made contact and secured Monday nights so at least, for a while, Robin has one night a week to keep his cast on task. An approach was made to Alphington Primary School, where we've rehearsed and performed before, to see if they had space on Thursdays, which they did, *and* they could also help us with performance space as well so we booked ourselves in. We're delighted that another past venue of ours, St Michael's Church in Alphington, has also been booked for our September show - more of which in due course. It'll take a lot more than the sale of a temporary residence to stop us pulling on those tights, stressing over line learning and waiting in the wings, about to go on, thinking "what the heck am I doing this for? I could be at home in front of Eastenders" before basking in your rapturous applause.

Alphington Primary School



And the Winner is...

Oscars, BAFTA's, Globes and the other awards that hit us in the first few months of the year all pale into insignificance when it comes to the EDDIE's - our very own, in house, awards. The paid up full members of the company tackle stage 1 which is picking the top 5 (usually) actors and actresses from a list of all performances by everyone who's been on stage in the last year. Once we've made our choices those 10 names come out to all of you, along with the 5 plays during the season and we wait with bated breath whilst you post, email or hand deliver your votes back to us. There's also an online poll (very strictly policed to weed out dodgy voting) and then, when voting closes, various people count the votes and a final list is drawn up. Winners shields are secretly engraved and then the big reveal happens at our annual dinner.



Fran

This year it was at The Mercure Southgate and after a fabulous meal Phoebe, our Chair, organised the



Sarah

awarding of said shields. This year's winners were Sarah Thorn for her portrayal of Anne of Cleves in *The King's Mare*, Oliver Hale for Colonel von Schmettau in the *The Dame of Sark* and the best production went to Frances Guy for her direction of *The Dame of Sark*. Taking second and third places in the acting categories were Pamela Hoad (*The Dame of Sark*) Charlotte Guy (*The Regina Monologues*) Graham Setter (*The Dame of Sark*) and Ric Hutton (*The Dame of Sark*) and with the productions in 2nd place was *The King's Mare* directed by Ian Guy and in 3rd *Treasure Island* which had been directed by Denise Gough. Well done all.



Oliver

Coffee Anyone?

Saturday 22nd February saw us running a fundraising coffee morning in Pinhoe Hall Church which was brilliantly attended. Robin, Katherine, Lori, Helen, Pam and Ian all arrived by 9am to set up and by the official opening time of 10am were all prepared. Two big tables of wares were set up and on display were: 4 different types of homemade cake, 3 different types of homemade biscuits, plants, books, greetings cards (both theatrical and birthday) and a range of object d'art. Despite the inclement weather the good burghers of Pinhoe turned out to support and there was barely a spare seat to be had. The tea and coffee flowed, dispensed by the super efficient Helen and Lori, Robin was doing a roaring trade in draw tickets, Pam was on brewing duty and Ian and Katherine manned the cake and plant stall. It was very apparent towards the end of the morning that the draw is one of the main reasons for coming out on a damp Saturday and Helen (our very own trolley dolly!) was kept on her toes wheeling a groaning tea trolley laden with prizes up and down the central aisle. At the eleventh hour Paul arrived on his white charger to help with the washing up and we were all done and dusted by 11.45am with a £150 plus profit for our efforts. It was all good clean fun and we're booked back in for another one in October. Watch this space for more details...

Refreshed and Renewed



We're having a bit of a makeover, well, our website is. Way, way back in 2004, Kate, who's been in charge of our online presence ever since, created our website. It's been a labour of love for her over the years and she, and we, are most proud of our fantastic back catalogue of plays. Thanks to our longest standing member, Wendy Montgomery, who had the foresight to keep scrapbooks of photographs going back right back to the first show the company ever did, Kate was able to include a page on every production the Drama Company have ever performed, coming right up to date with the most current. The site has been a major if not *the* major point of entry for all new members. But for the past few years Kate's been saying that the website is starting to look a bit staid, out of date and, quite frankly, a bit old. Kate herself admitted that she didn't have the skills or the energy anymore, due to continued ill health, to give the website the much needed make over so Joe, being a bit of a boffin, volunteered to take on the task and for the past few months has been working on moving us into the 21st Century and building on the brilliance that Kate gave us all those years ago. We went live with the new look in mid February and whilst it, obviously, looks

different now all the information is still there - including our fabulous back history. When you have a moment do, please, have a good old rummage through the pages and flag up anything that still needs tweaking. It's been a massive task and many pairs of eyes have scrutinised the work in progress but it's still possible that something 'bleeding obvious' has been missed by everyone! Not that it affects anyone but the contact email address on the website has changed to our new gmail one and the eagle eyed amongst you may also spot a design change to our posters as well. All part of refreshing and renewing and dragging ourselves, kicking and screaming, into the 2020's whilst also relieving Kate of some of the burden of keeping us in the public eye. But don't think she's hanging up her admin role, far from it, she's still going to be designing our programmes, our tickets, keeping a firm grip on putting together the newsletter and has also become joint administrator on both our private (members only) Facebook group and our public Facebook page. And, no doubt, she'll still come up with weird and wonderful schemes or ideas in the future to keep us, and you, on your toes. Thank you Kate for all your hard work over the last twenty years but *please* don't curl up in a rocking chair in warm cardy and slippers as we'll still be calling on you for your brilliant ideas for our annual do and for whenever we need a quiz devising!

Signing Yet More Up

Time, once again, to name check our newest recruits to the wonderful world of Exeter Drama Company and it's with great pleasure that we welcome Mum and daughter Emmy and Sunny Lloyd, Kyle Carter, Gill Cree, Chris Meacock and Ella Edmonds. Stars in the making and new faces for you to watch out for!



Theatrical Recap

"Events, dear boy, events," as Macmillan allegedly said, overtook us at the end of last year and there was no time to get a newsletter out so here's a brief recap on the last few shows. September saw us set sail for *Treasure Island* under the captaincy of Denise Gough with a large cast of old lags and bright eyed newcomers filling the roles. Everything you'd expect was there from the wooden leg and parrot through to the top deck of the ship. Denise



also decided to litter the play with sea shanties which caused some consternation when a 'singing rehearsal' was announced! You all took to it like ducks to water and no one was made to walk the plank which was a huge relief. Following *Treasure Island* was our one night, *Theatrical Showcase*, when we did, quite literally showcase yet more of the new talent in the company (alongside experienced old timers) as Ian Guy and Elliott Logan offered up snippets of underdone plays by Am Dram Groups - which has resulted in *Richard III* and *School for Scandal* being added to our to do list after feedback from some of you. December brought *A Christmas Assortment* directed by Ian Guy and Pam Hoad as last minute replacements with a comic cast of fairy tale characters performing in rhyme, in the dock, disagreeing with the storyteller and a less than cheerful dwarf running a dating agency for Prince's. Something for all the family! Closing the year, Denise Gough returned with a one night quiz show where two teams of unsuspecting company members battled it out in various quiz show routines until, sadly for the chaps, the girls team emerged triumphant. Wine and cake kept you fuelled and we sent you all off full of festive cheer. Thanks to all of you for continuing to support us for which we are eternally grateful.

An EDC Profile



Tim and his family moved from Birmingham to Devon in 1987, and then to Exeter 8 years ago. Tim has

dabbled in drama since starring as a shepherd in a nativity play age 5. Bits of stage management, set building and acting continued through the next 55 years. Christmas shows at work were the main interest with Tim writing some of the sketches. These were very varied. such as the *Jerry Springer Palliative Care Special*, *Sleeping Beauty* set in a hospital, *The Time Warp* with extremely dodgy lyrics and several versions of *The Twelve day of Christmas*. The one unifying theme was appalling

taste. It was this dedication to stagecraft that led Tim to getting a wholly undeserved reputation for cross dressing. The truth is that a professional drag queen left him some of his high heels in his will and it seemed wrong not to use them...

Varied work rotas and being on call meant that joining Exeter Drama Company had to wait for his retirement 3 years ago. "Everyone seemed so friendly and welcoming," Tim remembers from his first evening with us. A spot of assisting with set building was a great way to get a feel for the place. Tim was delighted to be offered a part in *Really Old, Like 45* as the dissipated Robby, an older man who keeps young by trying to date younger women. "Don't worry

Tim," the Director told him, "it's just a test of your acting ability". Right.

Tim sums up his abilities: Singing - dodgy, dancing - dodgier, musical instruments - impossible. And as for learning lines ... just winging it seems best. Tim is also involved with painting (pictures not sets), a bit of writing, Exeter's Talking Newspaper for the blind and has travelled quite a bit since being liberated from work. Both he and his wife Caroline cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats last year. This was on a two wheeled bike but Tim is also a passable unicyclist! Since that first play Tim has been a vampire, pastor, colonel, detective and most recently Long John Silver. Favourite role? Hard to say, but overall baddies are much more fun than goodies and tend to get the best lines!