

## NEWSLETTER

MAY 2015

### Diary of Events for May

- Fri 15th & Sat 16th           **“The Theory of Everything”** (Screen at the Phoenix) 7.00pm
- Sat 23rd - Sat 30th           **“Day of Reckoning”** by Pam Valentine (Phoenix Theatre Co) 7.30pm
- Sun 31st                       **“The Lunchbox”** (Screen at the Phoenix) 7.00pm

### Diary of Events for June

- Tues 2nd                      READING for **“A Night on the Tiles”** by Frank Vickery 7.30pm
- Fri 5th                         AUDITIONS for **“A Night on the Tiles”** 7.30pm
- Weds 17th                    **Annual General Meeting** 7.30pm (see next page for details)
- Thurs 25th - Sat 27th       **“Back to the Movies”** (Phoenix Theatre Singers) 7.30pm

(please see our website for possible future cinema screenings)

### Website

The new theatre website is now up and running. The committee is very pleased with the new design and we hope you are too. A particular feature is the password-protected **Members Area**. Online members, once registered, are able to access the Member's calendar, Newsletters, Committee minutes and other archived documents. The intention is to add to this area so as to provide a source of information as to how the theatre is run and maintained. The header to this month's Newsletter reflects the design of the new website. In addition the Members Area includes a **Members Directory**. This will enable members to look up the contact details (telephone number and e-mail address) of other members. In accordance with the Data Protection Act, we have to obtain your permission for your name to be included in the directory. If you have not already done so, would you please let me know whether or not you wish to be included.

**Graham Russell** (editor)

e-mail: manchester.house@btinternet.com

tel: 01981 540749

## AGM

The Phoenix Theatre Company Annual General Meeting will be held on **Weds 17 June at 7.30pm**. Under Rule 7, as amended at last year's AGM, **nominations from members** wishing to stand for election to the committee must be notified to the secretary at least 3 weeks before the AGM i.e. by **27th May**. All the current committee members intend to stand again. Any new nominations should be accompanied by a brief statement outlining why the nominee should be chosen for the position. Similarly **matters for discussion** at the AGM must be notified to the secretary by **27th May**. Any other business (AOB) will not be permitted at the AGM. **Please send nominations and matters for discussion to our secretary Trevor Jones:** tjones@trevorjones3.wanadoo.co.uk or telephone 01989 763628.

The committee posts and current holders are as follows:

Chairman	Sue Edwards
Secretary	Trevor Jones
Treasurer	Amanda Smith
Production Co-ordinator	Suzanne Hill
Membership Secretary	Catriona Pearson
Publicity Officer	Alison Clarke
Building Manager	Graham Russell
Members without portfolio:	Mary Brigg and Sarah O'Neill

**Sue Edwards**

### **Production co-ordinator's column**

**"The Beggar's Opera"** by John Gay was a great success. The singing, acting and visual impact were wonderful. The set and costumes were a triumph. Congratulations to Brian Jackson, Mary Brigg and their cast and crew for a memorable production. Our seat occupancy figures showed that we achieved 82% of possible ticket sales. A financial success too!

**The Phoenix Youth Theatre** entered the **Hereford County Drama Festival** in March. They performed **"The Six Wives of Calais"** by L. du Garde Peach. We won the Bishop Hodson Plate for Best Stage Setting, and Katie Potheary won the trophy for Best Individual Youth Performance in her role as Marguerite, seated at the tapestry. Congratulations to Brian Jackson, Sarah O'Neill and their cast and crew for an amazing performance.

**"Day of Reckoning"** by Pam Valentine, directed by Renee Field, will be on stage from **Sat 23rd May to Saturday 30th May**. In the village hall, the fete committee includes nosey Ethel, middle aged country woman; Pauline, the long suffering wife of the vicar; horsey Marjorie; elderly Mavis, deaf when it suits her; middle aged exhausted Gloria, who cares for her mother; brisk army wife Sally, always looking immaculate, and the shy new teacher, Angela. Also, there is the vicar, Geoffrey, who likes a drink, a forbidding man, but capable of great charm. Six months later the hall becomes the command centre for the fete. Much has changed revealing a world of gossip, innuendo, secrets and a hidden agenda. If you have ever seen a committee in action you cannot fail to enjoy Pam Valentine's comedy of life in a village.

The cast comprises Suzanne Hill, Jane Bovell, Amanda Smith, Lucy Davies, Penny Field, Anna Ricks, Alison Clarke, and Tim Betts.



**Book your tickets now to avoid disappointment!**

**Acting workshops** – These took place on three Mondays in April and were well received with 15 members taking part. Richard Curnow, a professional actor, who ran the workshops, entitled the evenings, “Shaking up Shakespeare”, “Objective and Activity – contemporary drama”, and “Actioning – going with the flow”. Members attending felt the workshops refreshed their acting skills and inspired everyone to new heights.

**The Phoenix Theatre Singers** summer show, entitled “**Back to the Movies**” will take place from **Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> to Sat 27<sup>th</sup> June**. Do get your tickets well in advance as they are likely to sell out!

Our September production is to have a **World War 1** theme. The dates are **Tues 15<sup>th</sup> to Sat 19<sup>th</sup> September**. The production will consist of a one-act play entitled, “**The Way to Mandalay**” by **Christopher Kell**, followed by songs and poems from the era, ending with a rousing finale. **Gordon Brigg** will direct the play. The cast comprise 4 male and 2 female actors, playing multiple parts. Horace, a wounded soldier and entertainer; Sophie (Nurse), also plays Vesta Tilley and mother; Doctor, also plays Recruiting Sergeant and Guard; Harry, also plays Commanding Officer and Guard; Will, wounded soldier, also plays Stan Jefferson; and Alice, Horace's wife. The play is set in a field hospital, somewhere on the Western Front in WW1. A soldier struggles to regain his memory after being found shell-shocked and with no identification tag. The soldier, Horace, had been an actor and entertainer and his identity is confused with many characters, real and imaginary - Harry Lauder, Vesta Tilley and Stan Jefferson (later to become Stan Laurel). The action moves between harsh reality and surreal scenes in Horace's imagination, where he performs popular songs and monologues. He struggles to remember the words of “Mandalay”. Slowly he remembers fragments of his true identity and his disillusionment with his restrictive marriage thwarting his theatrical ambitions. When he faces the choice of being prematurely sent back to the Front or facing a Court Martial, Horace comes to a dramatic decision about his future - but is it real or imaginary? The reading and auditions were well attended and the play has been cast.

Our November production is to be “**A Night on the Tiles**” by **Frank Vickery**. It will be directed by **David Pollard**. The dates will be **21st - 28th November**. There will be a **reading on Tues 2nd June and auditions on Friday 5th June, both at 7.30pm**. A perceptive, entertaining and highly comical play. Gareth and Shirley's wedding day does not get off to an auspicious start. Gareth egged on by his cocky, good looking brother, Kenneth, has a post stag night hangover so bad that he can barely speak. The bride is 3 months pregnant and Grandad, confused after getting stuck in the outside loo, is unsure whether Shirley is marrying Gareth or Kenneth. Things do not improve when Gareth overhears his bride getting rather intimate with Kenneth, apparently not for the first time. Over the next few months relations are somewhat strained between Gareth, Shirley and Kenneth until, on the night the baby is born, Kenneth overhears something which will shatter his life! The cast comprise Gareth, Shirley and Kenneth, Mum, Dad and Grandad and Mrs Morris, the nosey next door neighbour. **DO COME ALONG FOR A FUN READING!**

**Suzanne Hill**  
tel: 01989 770428

## The Beggar's Opera thrills at the Phoenix Theatre



If you want an evening of fun, colourful costumes, lively singing and dancing take the advice of Kate Justice on BBC Hereford and Worcester last week and go to the Phoenix Theatre, Ross-on-Wye, to see their production of *The Beggar's Opera*. You may have heard Kate's visit to a dress rehearsal last week – she was so impressed that she has booked tickets to see what happens in the end.

John Gay's ballad opera is a light-hearted romp with a twist at the end and a lovely final line. You will find some of the songs very familiar and all are well sung. Gareth Wigg as the highwayman, Macheath, led the action and his fine voice was a delight to the ear. The two leading ladies, Michelle Cooper, playing Polly and

Tanya Jacobs, playing Lucy, charmed the audience with their fine acting and beautiful voices which complimented each other beautifully.

As always, the Phoenix gives us an enjoyable, well-produced show with excellent actors and delightful



music. The well designed and constructed set reflected 18th century London and the lighting for the gaol scene was perfect in evoking the mood required. The costumes were colourful and in period and are to be congratulated. Richard Watson, the accompanist, gave a faultless performance, playing almost continuously for over 2 hours.

This is an ambitious production with 22 in the cast and Brian Jackson, the director, and Mary Brigg, the musical director, are to be complimented on a fine show.

**Jan Sheldon**

## The Colourful Cast & Behind the Scenes!



## Phoenix Youth Theatre does it again!

### “The Six Wives of Calais”

Phoenix Youth Theatre at the Courtyard Theatre, Hereford.

Last Thursday, for the second year running, Phoenix Youth Theatre successfully performed at the Courtyard Theatre in Hereford with “The 6 Wives of Calais”, their entry in this year’s Hereford County Drama Festival (part of the All-England Theatre Festival of one-act plays). With an all-female cast the play, set in the 14<sup>th</sup> C during the wars with France, recounts an incident during the siege of Calais and the wives’ reactions to the changing fortunes of their hostage husbands. Combining drama with a satire on marital relationships the cast had no reservations about competing for acting honours against more experienced adult companies. All members of the cast won accolades from the adjudicator (Jan Palmer-Sayer; BEd, MA, GODA) and Katie

Pothecary lifted the trophy for Best Individual Youth Performance against strong competition. The company also went on to win the Bishop Hodson Plate for Best Stage Setting which, combined with the costumes, was described by Ms. Palmer-Sayer as “A feast for the eyes”. This is only Phoenix Youth Theatre’s second entry in the competition. Last year at their first attempt they came away with the award for Best Individual Youth Performance and also the Oswin Cup for best ‘Novice’ performance.



**Brian Jackson**

#### Adjudication extracts...

– The Six Wives of Calais – ‘...a brave choice for a young group, but a wonderful one too.’

STAGE PRESENTATION – ‘a most pleasing opening picture.’

COSTUME – ‘the cast were marvelously dressed... a feast for the eyes.’

SOUND/LIGHTING – ‘...well chosen lute music... fanfares and offstage sounds were apt and well cued...’ ‘Lighting absolutely right.’

PRODUCTION – ‘Visually, this was super...’

POSITIONING – ‘...movement seemed natural... good use of the upper level beneath the window.’

DYNAMICS – ‘...delightful moments of gentle comedy...delivered sure-footedly with expert timing.’ ‘The confrontation between Anne and Marguerite was handled extraordinarily well...to create a pin-drop silence in the audience...’

KATIE – ‘...a super performance.’

ZOE – ‘...delightfully expressive.’

LORNA – ‘A lovely central performance... move about the stage well...’

MORGAN – ‘... a super characterisation... a wonderful voice... rich and mellow.’

LOWRI – ‘...a gift of a role... captured extremely well.... A wonderful and youthful hysteria in the performance...’

ROSIE – ‘...looked terrific...wonderfully well done... completely understood how to deliver a comic one-liner to maximum effect.’

ANNA – ‘...strong characterisation... convincing and a wonderful contrast...equalling the strength of any of them...a very good performance’

DRAMATIC ACHIEVEMENT – ‘...striking visual feast... light, shade and texture. What a delightful filling to this evening’s sandwich of three plays.’



*The crew*



*The director*

### **Ashfield Park School Visit**



This is our third event of this kind and once again it was a huge success. 47 pupils from year three from Ashfield Park School visited us for the morning of Monday 2nd April and learnt lots about the theatre. They were guided around by our team of volunteers, Julie Church, Chantal Poole, Sam Solandt and Sam Cullen, Mary and Gordon Brigg and Trevor Jones, and were given demonstrations of how things work at the theatre and the different things we do. It was a wonderful morning for all of us and something we really value doing here at the theatre for our younger members of the community.

**Sarah O’Neill**

## Youth Group

Rehearsals are now in progress for the forth coming production for PYT in October this year. This will be a play written by Simon Reade and adapted from Micheal Morpurgo's well known novel " Private Peaceful". Performance dates are;

Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th October - matinees at 2pm

Monday 19th, Tuesday 20th, and Wednesday 21st October 7 pm

Tickets available from September onwards to members.

Summer School for the youth....

If you/ family member are interested in attending a youth theatre Summer school (youth ages 5 - 18+) then The Drama Company will be running its usual holiday sessions at the end of July (29th - 31st). To find out more, please email: sarahoneill362@btinternet.com or visit their website: www.drama company.co.uk.

Contact number: 07814 624417.

**Sarah O'Neill**

e-mail: sarahoneill362@btinternet.com or tel: 01989 720627

## Folk Concert - Callaghan



On Saturday 11th April, the theatre hosted a folk concert from Ross Roots featuring Callaghan. She played to a full and appreciative house, some of whom had travelled a considerable distance for the occasion. Callaghan is an English singer songwriter who now lives in Nashville to pursue her singing career. She accompanies herself on guitar or piano and sings with more than a hint of “country” style. Callaghan was accompanied on the keyboard by Adam Wakeman.

It was, by all accounts, a successful evening, particularly at the bar! Ian Godsave was on hand in the technical gallery to run the lights. Here are a selection of Ian’s photographs of the event. If you missed the show, you can tune into her music at her website:

<http://www.callaghansongs.com>

