



"Curtain Call"

Our bi-monthly publication with news from the RHTC

JUNE 2015 --Welcome to the 4th edition of our bi-monthly newsletter all about the RHTC. This month we are honouring The Queen's birthday and the month of her coronation. If there is any additional topic you would like more information about please contact us.

Notes from the Board

Corporate News

The Board meets monthly to review all the company's activities. In the last two meetings we have:

- Selected the directors for our 2015-16 programme using a more formalised procedure whereby directors submit written proposals about their vision and approach— audition dates are being announced;
- Agreed to three Village Ventures productions at the theatre in December, February and March;
- Identified a potential leader for the RHT Youth Group;
- Appointed an architect (Clive Brooks) to help us plan future building developments;
- Reviewed the lessons learned from the production of Sense and Sensibility particularly the need for a complete production schedule rather than just for rehearsals;
- Agreed to support and participate in the Averham, Staythorpe and Kelham Wings and Wheels Show on 5 September;
- As well as monitoring our finances and the preparations for Hi de Hi.

Building developments:

Our new architect Clive Brooks has reviewed the state of all parts of the building and has recommended what our priorities should be, mainly in the extension building. Some of these were works we have underway such as the permanent wiring of the dressing rooms area and the installation of doors between the wardrobe and the stage door corridor. Some are new items that he will help us to plan in detail such as the encasing of the structural steelwork. He will be able to provide estimates so that we can work out what we can afford to do and what we need to raise funds for helping us to sequence items into a programme. His next step is to produce a full set of plans of the whole building as it is now as a basis for forward planning.

In the meantime we think we have finally cured the roof leaks over the stage that have been there on and off for years. The car park weeds have sprung up and have been sprayed off and David and June Horton have done some amazing work in the courtyard garden on the left hand side of the auditorium. We are planning some working parties across the summer to do some of the routine maintenance and minor works from the development programme.

And finally

We have been very pleased to have been invited to give talks to local groups about the theatre. It's an interesting story of where we've come from and where we're going and of course is an opportunity to promote our programme. If you have a local group interested in having a talk contact the secretary (Jean Baloi-Key) and she will pass your request on to one of our speakers.



RHTC 200 Monthly Prize Draw

SUPPORT THE THEATRE AND WIN CASH PRIZES!

If your membership number is drawn, you win a cash prize.

Subscription of £12.00 per annum, open to all supporters of the RHTC.

Proceeds of the draw will be used to purchase equipment for the theatre.

Pick up a form at your next visit or from our programme. If you want more information contact Sue Smith at ssconsulting15@yahoo.co.uk.

Running the Theatre

It takes a huge team of people to keep the theatre going – and thank you to all our volunteers. As well as our team of ten Directors, there are those people who help maintain our buildings and the team that puts on productions – of course sometimes this is the same people!

Once we have created a list of possible plays for the new season we will check availability and obtain scripts. We then select the plays that we want to produce (not an easy process), trying to offer a broad selection for our audiences. We will then set dates, appoint a Director and then hold a Production Meeting with various key members of the team such as Technical, Artistic and Set. This is followed by role nominations – a Stage Manager, for larger plays we will require one or two Assistant Stage Managers, we will also have a Technical Director, Lighting, Sound and Set Designers – each one working right up to the finished play. Invites are sent out for auditions and we name the cast and set rehearsal dates. Literature for the production is designed/printed and posters/flyers distributed, adverts written and media contacted.

While rehearsals are taking place, which take approximately 6-10 weeks, tickets are being sold, we source costumes and props, build the set, nominate prompt, sound and lighting technicians. The programme then needs to be compiled and printed. We are then recruiting staff to run the show front of house, from the Duty Manager, who is one of our Directors responsible for the buildings and people on site during the show, box office manager, coffee servers and bar staff. We also require 2-3 ushers who also sell programmes, raffle tickets, ice cream and collect tickets and act as fire marshals. There are also car parking attendant's who are essential to keep our neighbours happy. Rehearsals culminate in final technical, a full dress, and then we are ready for a 5 night production run. Following this (and after show party), costumes are cleaned and returned to stock or back to the hirer, the set is struck and the theatre made ready for the next hire or production. So you can understand why putting on one production is such an involved process – and we do this 5 times per year! If you would like to be involved we are always looking for help, so please get in touch.

URGENTLY NEEDED – PROPS ASSISTANT

We are looking for someone who is willing to help out with productions and take over the responsibility of sourcing props. This is for 5 productions per year – although we do appreciate that you may not be available for all these due to holidays etc. It will mean liaising with the Design Director sourcing props for each play, and depending on the play this could be a long or short list. Some items may need making, printing, sourcing from charity shops, borrowing, or just finding in our props cupboard. We have had to source some unusual items recently – a parrot in a cage, cello case, sausage with a painting inside, suitcase full of money, prime minister's red box, ink pot and quill, old record player, and a xylophone, but rest assured that some of the items we have to source are pretty basic, like a sandwich, a water jug and large bra – never had to find a skull!



Fancy a challenge and would like to get involved with one of the more interesting roles in the theatre then please contact Jackie Rogers at jrogers13@hotmail.co.uk or on 07500 762591. All the items for Hi de Hi are now sorted, and we will then enjoy a summer break. Our next production is in September 2015 which is Abigail's Party. We will be looking to start sourcing items for this in early August, so get in touch now!

Tickets for all productions are available on our box office number 07733 179986



SPOT LIGHT on Margaret Marshall

As you can see below, Margaret has been involved with the theatre many years, commencing in costume, but recently managing the theatre membership. Without people like Margaret the theatre would struggle and we would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her support and enthusiasm over the years.

I studied Drama at university, specialising in costume design and production, then worked with an ex-West End Wardrobe Mistress, which involved me in freelance work for Opera North and I.T.V. My memory of the first production that I saw was of the high standard of acting and set design - but the costumes were not good. At the end of the show,

I approached David Nightingale, the then Theatre Manager who introduced me to the Theatre Director. And so I met Jose, who told me that they had just lost the wardrobe mistress . I left the theatre that night, with the wardrobe keys in my pocket, as wardrobe mistress, costume designer and costume maker. My very first production was "On Golden Pond", with Brian Bonner, who needed two clean shirts a night as he finished each performance with two shirts soaked in sweat, and Barbara Fisher, whose blouse kept popping open at the bosom. And what fun it was! There are so many memories - Mike Dobbs at the top of a "Jack in the Beanstalk" ladder, adjusting the lamps, Nigel in the lighting box, Sandra in the props cupboard - and the after-show parties! Something I will always remember is standing in the dimly-lit wings, with, as always, a needle and cotton pinned to my sweater, watching a Shakespeare production, where all the men wore cod pieces. I noticed that one of the cod pieces was hanging by a thread, and knew that the actor would shortly be off stage for a maximum of one minute. As he entered the wings I grabbed him and swiftly stitched it back on, only to realise that I had no scissors. There was only one way to sever the thread; I leave it to your imagination. There was much merriment backstage.

For the last six years, as a volunteer at the Workhouse, I have been responsible for developing the costume stock for re-enactments. I value the friendships that I made at the theatre, and am fortunate to be allowed to watch some dress rehearsals, and re-capture that feeling of being part of a very creative team. In "hippy-speak", man, do I miss it !



2015/2016 MEMBERSHIP

Some news about Membership – which is coming up for renewal at the end of June. Margaret Marshall is no longer Membership secretary, as she wishes to spend more time on other artistic pursuits. Our Secretary, Jean Baliol-Key has now taken on that role. The good news is that we have not increased the cost of membership which stays at:

Full - £20 Joint- £35 Student - £10

We are always looking at ways of making your lives easier (and also getting your cash more quickly!) So for those who want to save time and effort, you can pay through online banking 3 easy steps.

- Get form (on website, at the Theatre or from Jean Baliol-Key)
- Fill in, save and email, post or give to Jean Baliol-Key
- Follow instructions on form about method of online payment

Those who wish to pay by cheque may continue to do so. Mrs J. Baliol-Key, 61 Harewood Avenue, Newark, NG24 4AN

For those who would like to pay in person, just bring along your chequebook when you come to see a show.

Thank you so much for all your support over the last season.

Do you have.....a

chest freezer you no longer need, by any chance?

As you may know we have started selling a delicious range of ice creams which are proving to be very popular. Consequently we need to have a chest freezer to store the large stock of ice-cream we now have to keep. It goes without saying that we would be very grateful if you have one to pass on.

For further information visit our web site – robinhoodtheatre.co.uk



Abigail's Party

By Mike Leigh

Watch out for our next production, *Abigail's Party* – it's not till September, but we will be closed soon for the summer, so it's a good time to reserve your tickets. You can travel back with us to the 1970's when the hallmark of a sophisticated evening with friends was cheese and pineapple on sticks laid out on the glass coffee table, a Watneys Party 7 in the kitchen and Demis Roussos warbling on the stereo.

Suburbanites Laurence and Beverly are entertaining their new neighbours, Angela and Tony as well as Susan, whose teenage daughter, Abigail is having a party to which Susan has been dis-invited. Over the drinks and nibbles, clichés and fatuous small talk abound. The tension escalates as the marital strain between Beverly and Laurence surfaces for all to see. Susan's anxiety over Abigail's party accelerates as loud music and God-knows-what-else are heard from down the street. As more and more drinks encourage Beverly and Angela to offer some supremely tactless remarks, the evening degenerates until a shock event brings everyone back to earth with a bang. This hugely entertaining piece was an instant hit when it was broadcast as part of the BBC *Play for Today* series in 1977, making Beverly one of the iconic characters of British theatre. As ever with Mike Leigh, you can expect biting observations, moments of high comedy and a great evening in Robin Hood Theatre's next show.

Full House

Recently I went to the Palace Theatre to see 'The Mousetrap', Agatha Christie's long running play. Interestingly it premiered at Nottingham Theatre Royal in 1952 and after touring, went to the Ambassadors Theatre in London where it remained for twenty- two years. In 1974 it moved next door to the St. Martins where it has played for another forty years. It has become a tourist attraction because of its longevity.

When this touring version of the play was advertised I thought the Palace Theatre Management had gone mad. The theatre has avoided putting on plays for a long time because they don't sell and 'The Mousetrap' was booked in for a whole week, six evening performances and two matinees. Newark people flock to see ballet or opera but not straight plays, or so we all believed. Tickets for this production have virtually sold out.

The play is touring until December so the production company must be pretty sure of always having good houses. So what can we learn from its success? It really isn't a brilliant play and it is very dated. Leaving aside the fact that it is famous which is bound to be attractive, the standards of performance and production are professional in every respect. The set is beautiful, the lighting and sound are perfect and the acting is excellent. The actors make the stereotypical characters believable and play them with an energy that never flags.

We do aspire to those levels of excellence and sometimes, I hope you will agree, we do achieve it. We have also had full houses for some of our plays this season. Perhaps choosing familiar titles is the reason and we have some of those coming up, notably 'Abigail's Party', 'Gaslight' and 'Brief Encounter'. Whichever play we choose we can only do our best and hope that our audience will leave the theatre feeling that they have been well entertained. – *Carolyn Drury*

