

FOOTLIGHTS

The Newsletter for Barton Theatre Company

Issue 2: May 2011

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1. EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second issue of Footlights.

Firstly, I'd like to thank everyone who emailed me about the first issue. I received several messages all of which were very complimentary about the newsletter. One person even said they were going to print it out and pass it on to their friend. The support made doing it worthwhile and made me want to carry on.

This issue will be shorter than the first. I did consider waiting until 'Ladies Down Under' was finished but I am a terrible procrastinator. If I put this off for a week,

then next week, I'll find a reason to put it off until a week after that.

So, regardless of the lovely weather outside on this late Bank Holiday Monday afternoon I've sat myself down at the computer and will not move until I've finished this issue!

Oh, is dinner ready? Well maybe for some food... and a cup of tea.

Andrew Nevill (Editor)
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2. LADIES DOWN UNDER

Rehearsals are almost over for our latest production, Ladies Down Under. Because it's on next week.

This has the potential to be a wonderful production. Amanda Whittington is a great

writer and we had so much fun when we did Ladies Day. Ladies Down Under is supposedly that rare article, a sequel that's better than the original. There is also an extremely strong cast with the three of the original Ladies making a return to Oz.

If you've not got a ticket yet, why not? Please do come along and show your support. You're promised a bonza night out.

The show is on at our usual home of Salford Arts Theatre from Thurs 12th to Saturday 14th May 2011 at 7:30pm. There's also a matinee on Sunday 15th May 2011 at 2pm

The theatre is on Kemsing Walk, Off Liverpool Street Salford, M5 4BS. Tickets are £7.00 (waged) and £5.50 concessions and can be ordered by telephoning 0161-799 4685 or 0161 925 0111 (Theatre)

Janet Johnston is probably still on the lookout for people to help out Front of House (we always are). So if you're interested please contact Janet.

We always need people to help us put up the set. If you're available on Sunday 8th May we would be very grateful for your help. We usually set build from about 10am onwards but as we're usually there all day, please feel free to drop in whenever you can. Of course, once the run is finished, we have to take it all down again so if you could drop in after the matinee on Sunday 15th May, you would be very welcome and appreciated. Or...

Here's the idea
Come and see the show on Sunday
Stay after the show and help us take the set down
This is not just theatre
It's Barton Theatre

3. BRIDGEWATER CANAL 250

Last issue we reported on the exciting news of Barton's involvement in the ongoing celebrations of the Bridgewater Canal's 250th Birthday.

Here's a reminder of the events that we'll be performing at:
Monton Festival – 2 July 2011 – Monton Green
Right Royal Regatta – 16 July 2011 – On or by the canal
Eccles Festival – 17 September 2011 – Eccles Recreation Ground.

The latest news is that Elly Hayton and Elaine McCann (who's writing the script) had a meeting with Walk the Plank who are organising the Regatta to discuss our involvement. From what Elly has told me,

it seems we may be staying on shore, doing our bit from the canalside, either at the Waterside in Monton or at Worsley's Rhubarb Field.

As I said Elaine is busy coming up with a script. These events will form our next 'production' beginning straight after Ladies Day. Casting will happen the week beginning 23 May.

Anyone who wants to be involved in any or all of the events is more than welcome to join in. The first event we did was tremendous fun and the others promise to be just as good

Please do come along to one of the script readings that will no doubt be held and read for a part.

4. QUIZ

Last time we had first lines of Shakespeare plays. Apparently this was fiendishly hard as not even Dave Milne got all five. So, this time, I've given you last lines of

Shakespeare plays. Your challenge is identify the play. (Yes, I am evil. Thanks for noticing. Ed) Answers at the end of the newsletter

1. And Robin shall restore amends
2. Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone
3. Let us not leave till all our own be won
4. 'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tam'd so
5. This heavy act with heavy heart relate

5. REVIEW: SMITHS BITE SIZE THEATRE

The latest production in Smiths ongoing Bite Size Theatre was Two New Plays by Mike Stewart.

The first was The Road to Denshaw's Farm. In it we meet Eddie, who walks up the same hill everyday. But he's nearing retirement and change is in the air. Today his walk will be a little bit different and things won't be the same again.

The play was directed and performed by two of Barton's own, Elaine McCann and Les Kinsey respectively. As Eddie, Les addressed the small audience directly in an understated naturalistic performance that drew you in, making the already intimate venue seem even more so.

In a script peppered with small anecdotes about this ordinary working man's life, you gradually came to know about Eddie and, like him too. Les, relating these, made you feel like you were in the pub, or I suppose, walking up that hill, chatting with him.

However, the script keeps coming back to what is happening as Eddie's walking up the hill and the feeling pervades that all is not as it should be.

The skill lies in how subtly this is revealed. Eddie doesn't know what is going on and the audience sees everything through Eddie. The audience are given clues as Eddie tells us what's happening, (a road accident, the hooded figure standing at the bottom of the hill). Slowly, they're allowed to work it out for themselves with Eddie's fate only revealed in the very last line.

If there's one fault, it may be that perhaps it's too subtle as at the end of the play, I wasn't sure if Eddie was dead or alive. But then maybe Mike Stewart meant to leave things slightly uncertain.

The second play Carole at Christmas was directed by Alan Titley and introduced us to Carole, played by Liz Titley. The school nativity play has just finished and Carole, a teacher, tells the baby Jesus, (well, the doll that's been used in the play for the last

ten or more years) about her life over a glass (or two or three) of Jameson's

In another well written script, by turns, funny, poignant and sad, Liz Titley perfectly portrayed the angst and frustration that we all feel, particularly when you think life's dealt you a bad hand and everyone else is holding the aces. Her performance was always convincing, winning the audience's sympathy. Watching Carole becoming less sober, spiralling ever downward in front of us, in reflection of her own life, was like a bad reality TV show. You knew it was all going to go wrong but, due to Liz's performance, you couldn't help but watch.

Which is why I loved the reverse twist ending. Reverse twist? Yeah. The stereotypical twist is usually the negative one. In horror movies, for example Freddie Kruger isn't dead. But in this, the twist is that all of sudden things go marvellously and wonderfully right for Carole. You know at the end she's going have the best Christmas ever.

Another thing that works well is the conceit of Carole addressing the doll of baby Jesus. Unlike the first play, this isn't a character quietly reflecting and musing

and so addressing the audience directly probably wouldn't work. So Carole needs to talk to someone, needs someone or something to react to, to question.

Both plays had similarities but also contrasts. Both were short one act plays. Both featured a single character speaking in monologue. But *The Road to Denshaw's Farm* was a quiet piece, full of subtlety; its protagonist, Eddie thoughtful and reflective. *Carole at Christmas's* eponymous heroine railed at the world with an anger-fuelled energy that fuelled the play. The counterpoint this provided meant the two plays whilst different complemented and balanced each other so that they provided a superb piece of theatre.

The last word must go to the two actors Les Kinsey and Liz Titley. It cannot be easy when it's just you and thirty people watching your every movement, listening to your every word. Usually, you'd have at least one other person on stage with you who can help you out if you drop a line. Not here. However, Les and Liz rose to the occasion with aplomb and if some things did go wrong, I didn't spot them. (It would be unfair to mention it even if I had)

6. BIRTHDAYS

Celebrating her birthday last month was Elly Hayton. Elly, as you all know is our treasurer and is currently playing Pearl in *Ladies Down Under*. I've not been told the exact date or Elly's exact age, other than it was a 'significant birthday'. So please join me in wishing Elly a Happy 18th Birthday.

Congratulations also to Mags Riding who celebrated her 21st Birthday on 16th April. Mags has been with Barton since she was really young. (I think she was a member

even before I joined. Ed) and has been in countless productions. She's currently playing Linda in *Ladies Down Under*.

In order to celebrate, Mags and Elly hosted a meal at a local restaurant for some of their friends in Barton. The food was lovely and the wine flowed freely (except for Elly, who forgot her ID and had to stay on Diet Coke.)

Also turning 21, on the same day (What a coincidence. Ed) was Mags' twin brother

Tom. Tom frequently helped out in the sound and lighting box until he discovered the joys of university. Our very best

wishes to Tom. Shame you couldn't join us at the meal but I'm sure you had fun anyway

7. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

BTC Dates:

Ladies Down Under:

Set build – 15 May 2011 – From 10pm

Performances - 12th -14th May 2011 - 7:30pm, 15th May 2011 - 2pm

Set destruct – 15th May 2011 – after matinee (approx 4pm)

Salford Arts, Theatre Kemsing Walk, Off Liverpool Street, Salford, M5 4BS

Annual General Meeting – To be announced but will be after Ladies Down Under

Bridgewater Canal 250:

Script read and casting – Week beginning 23 May 2011 – St Mikes.

Monton Festival – 2 July 2011 – Monton Green

Right Royal Regatta – 16 July 2011 – On or by the canal

Eccles Festival – 17 September 2011 – Eccles Recreation Ground.

Other Dates:

Edgefold Players – Out of Sight, Out of Murder – 11-14 May 2011 – 7.30pm - Methodist Memorial Road, Walkden.

Bookings: 0161 7028 8708.

<http://www.edgefoldplayers.co.uk/>

Salford Art s Theatre – Love Shy Neighbour – 19-20 May 2011 – 2pm, 7.30pm - - Salford Arts, Theatre Kemsing Walk, Off Liverpool Street, Salford, M5 4BS. Bookings 0161 925 0111

www.salfordartstheatre.co.uk

8. THE FINAL CURTAIN

Thank you for reading this newsletter. Sorry this one was a little short. Hopefully they'll be a little more news next time.

I'd like to thank Elly Hayton for proofreading and fact checking and for supplying the information on the Bridgewater Canal 250. Also thank to Elly for being a good sport and not objecting to the jokes about her birthday.

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Barton Theatre Company Committee
Chair: Brian Cogswill, Treasurer: Elaine Hayton, Secretary: Janet Johnston,

Officers: Joan Breen, Beverley Greenhalgh, David Milne, Andrew Nevill

Quiz Answers:

1. A Midsummer Night's Dream
2. Macbeth
3. King Henry IV, Part 1
4. The Taming of the Shrew
5. Othello, The Moor of Venice

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