

On the Fringe



An occasional newsletter from the Spring Grove Fringe – March 2020

Registered Charity Number 1150982

Dates for your Diary ??

We know that your previously busy diary is now emptied of all those bookings to the National Theatre, Royal Opera House, Guggenheim Museum, and cruises to ultima Thule.



We do not yet know when Spring Grove Fringe will be able to satisfy your lust for culture!

Sadly, *Outside Edge*, the comedy set in a cricket pavilion, by Richard Harris, has been postponed until May 2021. This is not a desperate effort by Janice and Jenny to give everyone more time to learn their lines, but merely sensibly complying with Government recommendations.

If the situation improves over the Summer, we are still hoping to be able to welcome you in the Autumn. Stay well.

October 2nd/3rd

A Theatrical Quiz Night with performances and vignettes around which the questions will be based, masterminded by Sandy and Amanda.

November 27th/28th

Falstaff, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, directed by Nigel Duffin.

Donations

SGF continues its tradition of supporting charities with donations from the profits of our shows.

We know that everyone will be delighted that as a result of the very successful panto, the SGF has made a donation of £500 to Alzheimer's Research UK.



Donations of £500 were also made to 'Moving on together', a local peer-led community support group for those recovering from addiction, and 'Scope', a charity working towards equality for disabled people.

Storage

The Surbiton garage that we previously hired for storage of props and costumes had proved to be rather damper than anticipated. Probably not too much problem for a car, but definitely unsuitable for our vast stock of 'designer' costumes.

Following research by Jenny and Helen, the move has now taken place to a brighter, airier, and seemingly drier, garage in Teddington. When we have some cash flow, we will fit it out with racking for props storage.

Who's got Talent ??

From our Arts Correspondent

There's a rumour going around in the arts world that there is talent lurking in some very strange places. Simon Cowell was otherwise occupied so your intrepid theatre critic went in search, braving the wild outposts of luvviedom, to track down a lost tribe of thespians, not knowing what strange behaviour or danger might be encountered. And extraordinarily there it was! (breathless pause) In the hinterland and swamps of the Thames and deep in the further dark recesses of an historic building this rarely spotted troupe of chattering thespians was discovered.

Unfortunately I was not the first, nor alone, with my film crew. Their antics were also being watched by a throng of local explorers and the location was exceedingly crowded. But what a sight to behold!

There was dancing, prancing, hollering and declaiming from diverse species of local thespians herded together by the leader of the pack, Daisy Jones.



And talent there was in abundance. The gathered onlookers were treated to some outstanding displays of animal behaviour. There was initially much clever chattering from tribal specimens Jenny Robson, Jan Smith and Bethany Birley



and delightful squawking from Matt Sexton, Daisy Jones, Keith Glenny and Gavin Chaplin. The leader of the pack, David Hamilton, expertly guided the onlookers through the rituals with rather risqué commentary and brilliant assistance from dummies.

All this clearly exhausted the thespians' stamina and feeding time was declared to which we were, surprisingly, invited, not just to watch but to participate.



This troupe enjoys a varied diet which was remarkably palatable and a significant improvement on television food.



After some interesting displays of collective grooming they were back cavorting and entertaining us with highly amusing songs from Adrian Treloar, Scott Milligan, Jan Smith, Jo Need, and Nigel Duffin,



hilarious prancing around from Suzanne Nail and Mark Stafford,



and comic pieces from Veronica and Bethany Birley, Roger Chown and Laurie South.

A hugely entertaining spectacle and only performing dogs were missing!



So ... the rumours are true and there is an enormous amount of talent to be found in the wilderness if one is brave enough to search for it. This critic was hard pressed to choose which talent to invite through to the next round in the studio jungle so all were put forward and are awaiting the call from Mr. Cowell. Please report any further sightings immediately!

Hello boys and girls!



Hello boys and girls! My name is Hyacinth Bean, and I wanted to write a little thank you to the SGF for putting on their little play about the most extraordinary 24 hours of my life, where my lazy grandson Jack stole my car, and traded it with an old woman for some magic mushrooms, leaving me to get evicted from my cottage.

Of course, a lot of dramatic licence was taken to make this sorry tale into a panto. Daisy Jones really portrayed Jack's laziness and stupidity like a pro; she expertly handled a collapsing beanstalk on opening night, almost like she was drawing on personal experience to coax a reluctant stalk back to life.



Nigel Bellwood played my love interest Jasper, and I took quite a shine to him, I can tell you. However to be clear I have no idea where he is now, and he's definitely not in my cellar so please don't look there.

Our director Lynn was amazing and clearly drew on her experience as a senior teacher to herd the assorted cats of the company, even stepping in herself to play several parts when actors were either ill, or too far gone to hear their cues; kudos too for Jacqui for her multiple roles, though all from the sidelines as the prompt.



Suzanne was an old woman, a young princess and a choreographer of fabulous fairies, but what's new?



And Jonathan Nail was and is a giant of the small stage.

Our baddy, Veronica, enjoyed some big booing, as well as the usual big boozing.

Last but not least, my beloved cow Daisy was played by Cameron and his long-suffering back-end, Gary.



Well, excuse me now, I'm off on holiday myself soon, so I've got to go and trim my little front garden, folks.

Bye bye, boys and girls!

Matchbox Theatre

From an amused – yet bemused – audience member

What better way could there be to launch an evening of fun with SGF than to exhume two bodies from the 15th century. But Sir Geoffrye and Lady Hillarye were there in the form of Adrian and Karina. In the audience, I was wondering how they had paid their subscriptions. Was it in firkins of wine?



Tony was on hand to get the whole rowdy audience organised for a take, including obstreperous child. Was the yob in baseball cap transformed by wearing a boater? Only those there will know.



The evening was given a huge cultural uplift by the attendance of Mr & Mrs Andrews, looking in the gloom of the arti gallery like Linda and Nigel.

As if 'high art' were not enough, we were treated to the bickering of high heaven, where Scott was on the sapphire throne, being nagged by consort Jenny.



Sandie and her outside broadcast crew, Linda, brought us breaking news from outside the National, which seemed even more chaotic than Grove Lane with the after-show drinkers from the Parish Hall.



In trying to get some social media discipline in the audience, we thought that lesser-known politician Laurie revealed rather more of his private life than he intended.

Still, his vacuousness was outshone by the awards ceremony which preceded supper, at which Scott, Jenny, Janice and David tried to outdo one another in empty luvviness.



At this halfway point, the audience was wondering what exactly was going on. Were they part of this show? Were these people on stage really them? Were the characters in a play or in a book? Were they you, or me, or all of us?

This existential question was taken up by Jacqui and Amanda, who seemed to be part of the audience and yet were on stage. Very confusing! More so, when that predatory chugger, Bethany, wanted sponsoring.



Now the set was being changed in the gloom. How very avant-garde not to close the curtains ... but, hang on ... I know that Sir David Attenborough is local, but had he really crossed the river to give a commentary on the mating behaviour of the

lesser-spotted stage crew? That wine, so persuasively sold me by Gavin at the bar, must have been stronger than I thought. Was it that David? or 'our' David?

I definitely needed to sit down, as did Jo, trying to get the local council to take away her old sofa.



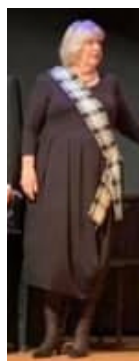
Well, we all have an old sofa in our lives that we are trying to get rid of, including Val and David, whose comic timing in finishing one another's sentences is a height of marital bliss to which all might aspire. Why is it, we were prompted to wonder, that the dividing line is so narrow between such heights of bliss and murder?



I thought that maybe Lynn had come on stage to resolve this paradox, but no, she seemed to be plotting the next SGF production, which was to be ... as written! No! dear Fringers, this is not what your audience expects!



I was still trying to work out whether I was in the audience or in the play, with those on stage



observing me, when, suddenly, we seemed to be in the midst of a Shakespearian drama. Not one that I was familiar with, but the sponsors of the show seemed very enthusiastic and, as is expected, most of the actors ended up dead, so that Lady Tethering was able to declare the whole evening a success and, in the words of Shalamar, 'make this a night to remember'!