



Exeter Drama Company Newsletter

www.exeterdramacompany.co.uk

email: exeterdrama@hotmail.com

Newsletter 53

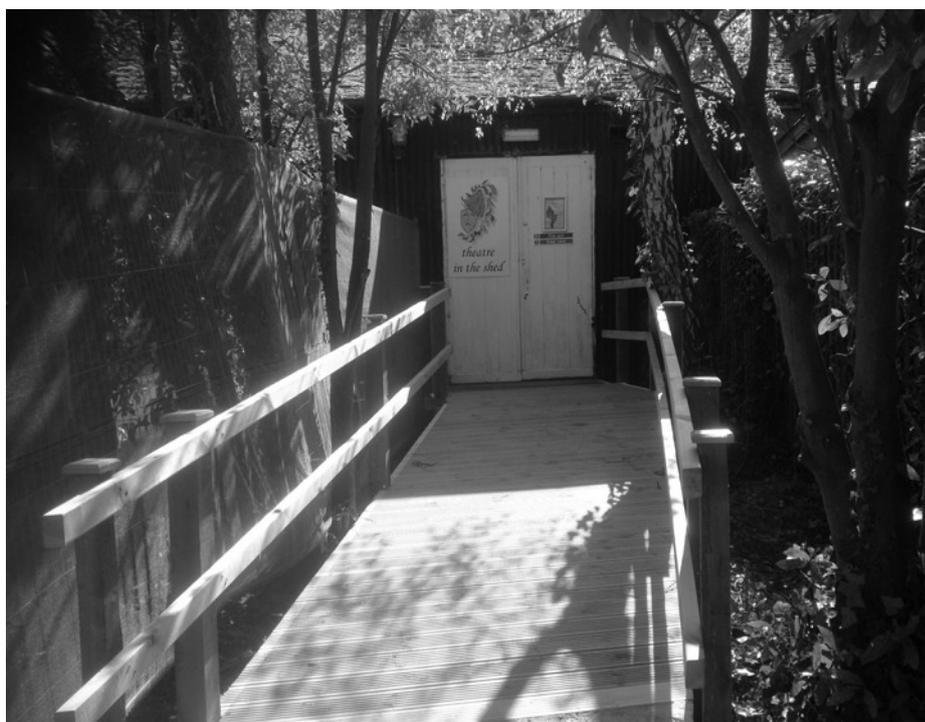
May 2017

A company limited by guarantee. Registered office: 19 Farmhouse Avenue, Exeter, Devon EX1 3XU Registered in England No 7002854

Work In Progress

Whilst all the building work is happening to the Village Hall we have to make a few adjustments to how we operate and hope that you'll bear with us until such time as we can 'go back to normal'. Or what passes for normal in the barmy world of Exeter Drama Company! The main change, so far, has been the loss of our old front door and the creation of the wooden ramp that now leads up from the surgery car park to what used to be our fire escape. Thankfully you all found the way in for *Mystery at Blackwater* and *Wine, Women & Song* so our directions worked and you all managed the ramp. We're making a change to the end of it so that it will finish as a step rather than a concrete slope at the end of the wood and this will already have been done by the time you're reading this. The one other change that you'll notice when you next come is that we've had to redesign our seating plan and cut the number of seats. This is only temporary. Advice from the fire officer is that while we're restricted to only one useable entrance, we need to keep the number of people in the building at any one time to 60 or below. So, the larger the cast, the smaller the audience. We thought we'd try a smaller number in the audience, 45 of you rather than 55, whilst adding extra nights if the directors and their casts were happy to do more performances. The next play, *Really Old, Like Forty Five* will play for six performances rather than five, with 45 seats per night while the June 'one' night stand will run for two nights with 40 in the audience. We think it'll work fine but all of you will need to get yourselves organised early with booking seats as, for the time being, we CAN'T bung in an extra couple of chairs if the night you want is full. Your mantra from now on until further notice must be

"book early". We know that not everyone is computer literate but now that we sell online through Ticketsource, seats are usually available about a week after our last play finishes and that's about six weeks before you're getting this in the post. If you have a young person in your extended family then get them to book for you – or ring Ian direct to book and put your cheque in the post. Early. Once we're reconnected to the finished new build we'll have two entrances back again so all will revert to normal – in fact we may be able to add extra seats permanently as we'll be a bit bigger due to losing our current kitchen and being able to use the one in the new building. But more of that in the future! We'll continue to keep you updated about any changes, however small, as and when they occur but you can rest assured that while little things may change the standard of the productions certainly won't. We still intend to make you laugh, cry, gasp and keep up a running commentary with the person sat next to you with everything we have planned for our stage over the coming year.



Don't Mess with the Witch!

One of the first jobs that has to be done after a play finishes is to put all the costumes back into storage. As the curtain comes down on the last night there's a routine – all shirts and blouses are left in a pile in the middle of the stage where they're scooped up and taken home by Lynda for washing and the rest of the costumes are hung on hooks for packing away later. On the designated pack away night after *Mystery at Blackwater* another mystery revealed itself as during the putting away process it was noticed that one item of clothing, a long black hooded velvet cloak was missing. We had the cover that it went into but not the cloak itself. Lynda was starting to seethe as an emergency text went out to all the ladies involved in the play – "Who's got it?!!" Ping went the phone as a message came back with "It's not me. Ask X she wore it". X denied all knowledge of it, having hung it on a hook in the wings. Ping again went the phone as the person, who we'll call The Culprit, confessed. She had apparently asked another member of the company if she could borrow it and they'd agreed (the person concerned has no

recollection of any such conversation but it had been at the after show party and one or two glasses of wine may have been drunk...) It was going to be worn to a party but in the end wasn't used as The Culprit thought she'd be too hot in it. Lynda is always very happy to lend bits and pieces to company members as long as they ask her so that it can be logged as out on loan and she knows where it's going. If you notice someone missing from our stage you'll know that the fate meted out to The Culprit was swift and bloody and it stands as an example to others to not mess with the Wardrobe Witch!



Key to the Door

With so many under 30's in the company now we seem to have birthdays every couple of weeks (those of us over 30 tend to ignore that one day in the year!) but recently we've had a set of quadruple 21st's. Holly kicked things off in January, to be swiftly followed by Phoebe, Natalie and Jonny keeping the local key cutters in business churning out 'the key of the door'. Although in Phoebe's case she was, quite literally, handed the key of the door to The Shed as being the incumbent director (at the time) she needed to be the first to arrive for each rehearsal to let her cast in. And a special mention should go to Bronwen (who herself turned 14, along with Jake, in March) for making the fabulous birthday cake for Phoebe (pictured). Why a bra? Because Phoebe is the manager of Triumph, the lingerie shop in the High Street. Birthday congratulations to all of them and the sore heads were completely your own faults!



A Sad Loss

Our Tuesday night set building team recently suffered the traumatic loss of one of the stalwarts of the design and decoration of so, so many of our plays. You, like us, will be devastated to learn that Purple Brown is no more! For more years than we care to remember Purple Brown has been the 'go to' colour for the set of any play taking place in a country house, a Victorian parlour, a cottage in the woods or chairs, tables and other assorted 'antique' furniture. A cry of "what colour for the doors?" would always be answered by a multitude of voices shouting, as one, "purple brown". The cries of anguish at the first



painting night of *Mystery at Blackwater* must have reverberated around the village. There was a wailing, a beating of breasts and a gnashing of teeth fit to raise the dead followed by much discussion on how B&Q could be so utterly, uncaringly stupid as to have changed their paint supplier between our last tin running out and us needing to pop out and buy some more. What on earth could they have been thinking? News of the loss is still reverberating around the company and any shell shocked luvvies you see aimlessly roaming the streets should be treated very gently. And, to make matters worse, there's no matching colour in the new paint range, the closest we've got is by taking one of our few remaining unpainted over bits of skirting board into B&Q and getting them to zap it with their magic gun and making up a sort of replacement – which is what we used for the last play. Hopefully you didn't notice any difference. But we did. And to make matters worse, the new paint doesn't even have a name, we now have to go in and ask for a 5 litre tin of DB445z53a! What is the world coming to?!

Spreading the Love

Two of our band of players have recently been appearing in shows by other companies (with our permission of course!) We do like to showcase our talent after all. Rachel Barker (last seen with us as Mum in *Ernie's Incredible Illucinations*) was at the Barnfield Theatre just after Easter in Exeter Little Theatre Company's production of *Dancing at Lughnasa* and Jonny Robinson (last seen with us as Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*) is blowing a tenor horn in *Brassed Off* for SADS (Sidmouth Amateur Dramatic Society) at the Manor Pavilion in Sidmouth from 8th-13th May. Depending when you get this newsletter there might still be time to see Jonny at least!

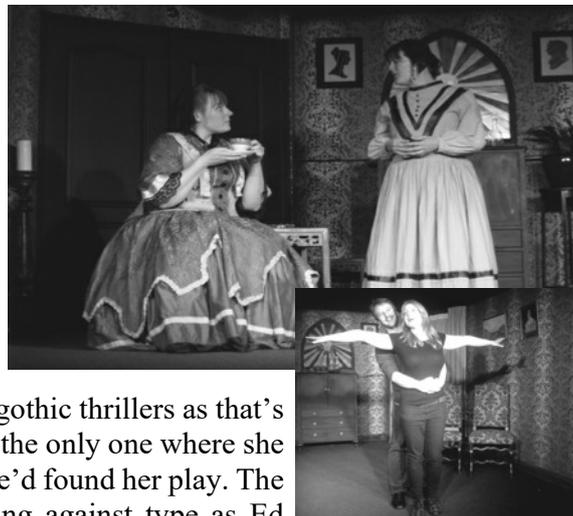


New Members

We're delighted to welcome to The Shed our newest recruits: Elizabeth Jones, Liam Dunn, Charlie Hewett, AJ Nouman, Daniel Bartlett and sisters Harriet and Matilda Venn who join our under 16s.

The Mystery Revealed

Our most recent production, *Mystery at Blackwater*, will go down in EDC memory as the play that provoked the most audience reaction every night as the final scene drew to a close. Watching audience faces as the penny dropped as one by one you 'got it' were a joy to behold for those of us sat at the back. We even had, one night, a loud exclamation of "Dang! I wasn't expecting that!" from one young man in the third row. Phoebe, for her first foray into directing a full play, read countless numbers of mysteries and gothic thrillers as that's the genre she likes and she picked *Mystery at Blackwater* as it was the only one where she couldn't work out what was going to happen, and then she knew she'd found her play. The cast threw themselves into the different parts and enjoyed playing against type as Ed became mean, vicious and shouty and Lynda became meek and downtrodden. Once again the set builders took the director's ideas and gave exactly what she wanted, right down to the stained glass window with its grinning skull. Although for the next play they'll have to ensure that the door handles are more securely attached as on one night Kaitlin managed to pull two of them off! Phoebe's Dad Ian found himself driving her to virtually every wallpaper shop in the city to collect torn off samples before the final choice was made. And, once again, the costumes provoked comment with their eye to detail and, again, they all came from our own collection and were just assembled in a different way by Lynda to make you think you'd never seen them before, even though most of them have appeared in many period plays over the years. Phoebe said she felt very supported and encouraged by everyone during her tenure as incumbent director and we all hope it won't be too long before she starts reading plays again to find her next one. What followed *Mystery at Blackwater* a week later was a politically incorrect night of laughs, music, loud cheers from you along with cries of "more, more", wine of varying colours and Charlotte and Eliot in a hot air balloon as we hit you with *Wine, Women and Song*. If you've never come to a one night stand you'll never know what you're missing..!



An EDC Profile - Jacquie Draycott

Jacqui says that *Mystery*. Another part she remembers fondly is *Blithe Spirit* where she had her first leading role and also had to start as we all do in school. In sitting on a low sofa. The panic every night that she'd step on her dress when standing up led to a lot of ankle flashing as the dress was hitched causing one member of the audience to admit he'd been transfixed by her shapely ankles. Work once again intervened and Jacquie left us to move to Bermuda where she immediately joined Bermuda's Musical & Dramatic Society, principally because they had a real bar! It was whilst in Bermuda that Jacquie directed her one and only play (to date) and because she'd had so much fun with *Blithe Spirit* in Exeter she replicated it exactly for a different audience in Bermuda. Whilst there she played a vast array of characters including the Nurse in Hancock's *Blood Donor*, a squirrel shooting highwaywoman and the part of Jackie Coryton in *Hayfever*. Then she moved to Chicago, where she did some 'extras' work when Hollywood came to town. Jacquie says you can spot her wearing her own bright fuchsia pink scarf (so she stood out) in *The Company* sat just behind Malcolm McDowell in one of the final scenes of the film. Her US visa expired in 2008 and she found her way back to Exeter re-joining us again in 2012. And, she says, we'd not changed a bit. We were still mad wine glugging cake eaters. Not taking long to get the feel of our stage under her feet again she's been in a number of productions but her favourite to date has been playing Truvy in *Steel Magnolias*. It was a brilliant, funny and heart-warming play says Jacquie and she didn't have to stuff her bra to look like Dolly Parton! To all EDC directors reading this Jacquie would like to point out that whilst she loves being cast in comedies she can actually shout and cry with the best of them and would love to tackle a juicy drama and can they please 'take note'.