

Austen at the Gallop

We promised you a pared down canter through *Sense and Sensibility* - and this was Miss Austen trimmed down to the bare minimum with just 7 actors condensing the whole novel into an hour and 45 minutes of fast and furious intrigue, humour and tears. All the main points of the book were there, and for her first production with us Kaitlin Nixson certainly pushed at boundaries and tested both the acting company and the Tuesday night set building team. "So" she said, "in Act I we need to start in Norland in Sussex and then downsize to Barton Cottage in Devon without the curtains being drawn or the lights dimming and then all of Act II takes place in London". Cue much drawing in of breath by our set building team who came up with removable windows, paintings that became additional windows and a chaise lounge that (believe it or not) was too big to fit through the entrances used on stage. How we did it will remain a closely guarded secret but the choreography backstage was almost worth buying a ticket for! Lynda, as always, came up trumps with the costumes and managed, with a base costume for all of the characters, to ring the needed changes for country, town, party and poverty. And, for the first time (again, with much drawing in of breath) had to buy, yes BUY, an actual dress pattern - usually she just glances, slices, dices and 'voila' your costume! And as for you, our fabulous audience, you laughed, gasped and applauded on cue. And were fantastically complimentary on the way out. Thank you. And then, for two nights, we delved into the world of theatre with *All the World's a Stage* as we treated you to the delights of theatrical tradition, superstition, ghosts, music and a few sketches all assembled and devised by Alice and Sarah who even bunged in a short, rhyming (!), mini panto three months ahead of Christmas. And we humbly apologise for all the sleep lost due to Robin's antics as various cats, Ian as a West Country/Australian/Indian Ogre and for the sight of Steve and AJ in their pyjamas! And that's without mentioning Clarissa in her multiple roles in the saga of Lucy Lockett. Miss our one, or two, night stands at your peril.



An EDC Profile - Kaitlin Nixson

Barely a year into her time with Exeter Drama Company, Kaitlin has certainly made her presence known. Treading the boards in *Twelfth Night* and *Mystery at Blackwater* before directing *Sense and Sensibility* shortly after joining the EDC committee - we can't deny she dives in head first! You may have spotted Kaitlin's natural clumsiness shine through during one of the *Mystery at Blackwater* performances. Not one to make an exit "easy" she managed to break all the door knobs on stage during the first scene causing an emergency repair situation in the interval. Lynda is also just about speaking to her after she put her foot through her skirt hems only a couple of days before the Dress Rehearsal.

As a child, Kaitlin was known to recreate her favourite Disney movie scenes and sing repetitive song fragments at the top of her lungs...what a lucky family she has to know the first 2 lines of *Beauty and the Beast's "Belle"* in quite such detail. Kaitlin's first big break in theatre was playing one of the three wise men in her preschool nativity complete with crying and droopy crown (photos available on request...) Another Nativity saw her play the (literal) star; pointy hat and arms horizontal - and one *crucial* line was delivered with aplomb. After that, Kaitlin knew she liked to tell stories and perform so studied theatre all the way through to University level. A Devon lass born and bred, she didn't travel far and only moved from Marldon, near Paignton, to live here in Exeter for her student days. While at Uni, Kaitlin has

dabbled in all areas of theatre including producing experience that took three full scale productions into the Exeter Northcott. If you remember the Student productions of *Guys and Dolls*, *West Side Story* and *Kes* from approximately 7 years ago then it was Kaitlin who made sure all the important people got paid and no major dramas stopped the show from going on! Beyond University though, Kaitlin prefers the active Am Dram scene especially with us at EDC. A busy bee, she has taught herself to knit. Watch out if you're paired up for Secret Santa with her... you're highly likely to get a slightly wonky knitted hat and glove set! No theatre projects seem to be on the horizon for Kaitlin at the moment but we all know it's only a matter of time...



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Sorting Time. Again!



From time to time, due to very generous donations of 'costumes' from you, our friends and families or from bulk donations due to massive clear outs elsewhere the mighty and all seeing Witch in the Wardrobe deems it time to de-clutter. This occurs every couple of years - every nook and cranny where clothes, shoes and hats are stored is emptied, storage boxes gone through and drawers emptied out onto the floor. Three piles form in the middle of The Shed - 'keeping', 'going to charity' and 'burn it before it walks out on its own!' A team of helpers scurry from boxes to piles and back again before hefty chaps are directed to return even heftier boxes to their original resting place (up the step ladder and back onto the 'roof' of the ladies loo) ready for the next show. Cries can be heard of "I knew this had to be somewhere" and "what's *this* doing in *this* box? Who put this away last time"? echo around the hall as cringing minions cower, fearful of an icy withering look. We jest, of course, but it is a two or three day operation that involves a lot of laughs, relabelling of boxes, a lot of 'trying things on' and industrial amounts of tea, coffee and biscuits. Our two pictures show Lynda surveying her empire and Alice tied into the straight jacket. We'll let you decide whether you think she tried it on 'for fun' or was strapped into it for a misdemeanour!

Drama Company on the Road

Keep an eye on our website and the back of the December plays programmes for news of the shows we're taking out to Butterleigh in February and Thorverton in March. At both venues you'll have to book direct with the organisers as we've only been allocated a limited number of tickets for our own use, but we'll make sure that their details are very high profile. Both shows will be ones that have already been performed by us but, if you missed them the first time around, here's a golden opportunity.



Online Sales Rocket

You will, no doubt, have noticed the hastily typed up slip that we stapled to all the booking forms for *Sense and Sensibility* in your last mailing. This was due to unprecedented early online bookings from keen Austen lovers who wanted to snaffle their seats to ensure they didn't miss out. Early booking is great as far as we're concerned as a lot of the worry and stress of "will this show sell"? evaporates and the director and cast can get on with the job in hand. What it meant for all of you who wait for the booking form in the post was that choice was limited, indeed one night only had 6 seats left as the envelopes were hitting your door mats. *Twelfth Night* was the first play where online sales almost matched postal bookings but with *Sense and Sensibility* the interweb shot ahead leaving us all a little gobsmacked. Who knows what will happen with future shows but it might, just might, be an idea to keep an eye on our website and instruct a junior member of your extended families to book tickets on 'the wretched device' early for you rather than wait for the booking form in the mail. Online tickets go on sale the day after the one or two night show finishes and that's a whole two months before Postman Pat brings you our latest missive. Of course, we're very happy to keep receiving the booking forms back from you if that's what you prefer to do, we're just flagging up that there is another option for you to use, just in case.

Diva in Training

Ella recently celebrated her 16th birthday and, as well as a party, was whisked off to London to see a show. Tina, Ella's Mum, had contacted us asking for a list of all the plays Ella had been in as she was planning something for a birthday surprise. The result? A cake showing Ella playing her saxophone in *Twelfth Night* on top with icing post it notes all around the edges, each one naming a different show she's done with us. And they got the cake up to London on the train without a mishap!



A Blast from the Past

After an absence of twelve years it's good to welcome back to Exeter Drama Company Oliver Hale. Oly's last show with us was *The Happiest Days of your Life* during our 50th anniversary year in 2005 in which he played the Reverend Edward Peck, a harassed parent. Over the years he played a number of roles from Oddbod the gay, eighth dwarf in *Snow White*, a cowboy in *Deadwood Dick*, Athos in *The Three Musketeers*, a lawyer in *Trifles* and Dr Viktor Frankenstein in 1995 – a part he's now going to recreate in our 2017 version! What's he done in between? Got married, become a dad, run a number of successful businesses but somewhere, deep down, the acting bug just wouldn't go away. Welcome back Oly, let's see who you conjure up for us this time...!

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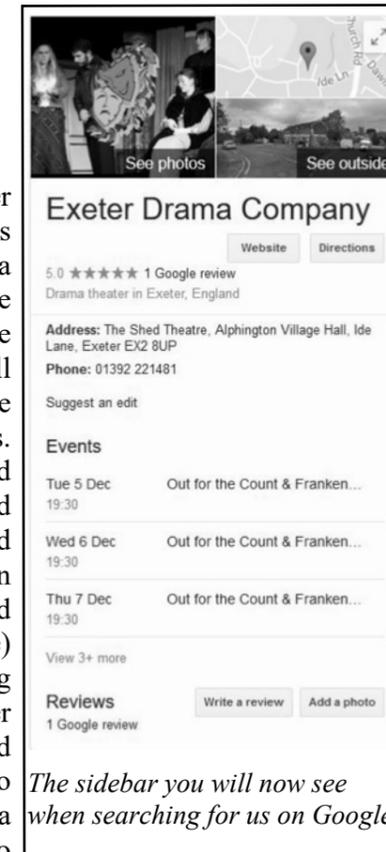
We always try and keep up with the modern world of social media and other services available via the World Wide Web but sometimes it doesn't always go to plan. Since launching online ticket sales via ticketsource.co.uk/exeterdrama we have seen a steady increase in the number of tickets for our shows that are bought online (you can even choose your own seats if you do this). But something strange was happening – all our shows were listed online, by Google, as being performed at The Bike Shed in Fore Street instead of at The Shed in Alphington! Outrageous. Understandably The Bike Shed were a bit put out when people started ringing them wanting to book for our shows and asked us to look into it. And pretty darn quickly please! So, after some sterling work by our Joe (who did all the emailing back and forth to Google) we now have an official listing on Google Search and Google Maps. This means that we will be able to see, and respond to, any reviews that we receive (which we encourage you to make)



Finding us on Google maps - now it's correct!

and also provides a more pleasing result if one was to search for Exeter Drama Company on Google. We would also like to take this opportunity to remind you all that we also have a public Facebook page which we also encourage you to like! Here you will see occasional posts announcing what's coming up and, more importantly, when tickets are starting to run out. Also, there is a collection of photos of our past productions from the last six or so years which include a few extra ones which do not feature on our own website.

The sidebar you will now see when searching for us on Google.



Panto Queen

Tickets are on sale for Exeter Little Theatre Company's annual pantomime, *Beauty and the Beast*, written and directed by our very own Clarissa Place. You may remember that Clarissa wrote and directed *Carry on till Christmas* for us last year so this makes two years in a row of Panto for her. This is a modern adaptation on the popular story and the production is full of fun and laughter for all ages. The show runs for 16 performances opening on December 21st with the final night being January 6th and, as this show is after our December offerings we're very happy for you to go along and see it - although anyone spotted in the Barnfield audience who wasn't at ours will have some serious explaining to do! To book tickets contact the Barnfield via their website or ring the box office on (01392) 271808.



Fresh Meat!

We're very pleased to welcome to our troupe of (travelling?) players Suzie Izzard and Julie Roach. No doubt they'll both be treading the boards very soon. Our fame continues to spread as Suzie and Julie comes from Teignmouth and Exmouth respectively.

Thank You for your Support

Because we had to make room in our last newsletter to pass on the sad news about the loss of one of our number we had to ditch a number of already prepared stories. One of which was, unfortunately, the big THANK YOU to everyone who came up trumps with a donation when asking to remain on our mailing list. We very much appreciate the trust you have in us. It's such a shame that a portion of your donations have to go to the taxman each year but we're hoping that may change very soon as we are, at the moment, dipping our toes into the water and may soon have news on our attempts to achieve charity status. We will, of course, keep you fully updated.



Follow the Leader

Dragging ourselves even further into the 21st Century we now have a twitter account @ExeterDramaCo where we will tweet reminders about ticket sales and any other news or information we think you ought to know about, so keep an eye out. Search for Exeter Drama Company on Twitter, or visit twitter.com/ExeterDramaCo or the easiest option is click on the link on the home page of our website, as that takes you straight through to the correct page on Twitter. If you choose to 'follow' us, you'll see our regular updates. So, not only are we luvvies we are now twits as well.