



Exeter Drama Company Newsletter

www.exeterdramacompany.co.uk

email: exeterdrama@hotmail.com

Newsletter 59

September 2019

A company limited by guarantee. Registered office: 19 Farmhouse Avenue, Exeter, Devon EX1 3XU Registered in England No 7002854. Registered Charity No: 1181995

Our Youngest Recruit!

A huge EDC welcome to Dorothy Elizabeth Holly Nash who was born at 10:19 on April 11th (16 days late!) she was 9lbs 3oz and 91st percentile for weight, length and head circumference! Her mum, Jenny, is taking a year off from acting and directing but that's no reason not to meet her and read all about Jenny's journey. Jenny has always wanted to be a Mum but after a number of Mr Wrong's and Mr So So's it was obvious that Mr Right might just miss his window of opportunity so Jenny researched her options and discovered that lots of women are now taking the plunge and going solo with IVF so that's what she did! During rehearsals of *Good Wives* last year Jenny did wonder what her cast thought about all the snacking she was doing as they were all completely unaware of her condition as she'd not had her first scan yet. The night she had a scan picture to show her cast, not much more rehearsing was done as everyone wanted to see the picture and hear all about Jenny's journey. Information about the donor Dad obviously has to be kept secret and secure but Jenny can tell us that he's a tall and athletic Dane who's very good at maths which is probably what clinched it for Jenny as she happily admits to being fairly useless at maths herself. This incredibly kind man has helped Jenny achieve her dream. Everyone in her friends and family circle has been so incredibly supportive and Jenny was delighted when Charlotte and Phoebe helped to organise the



most wonderful baby shower and that they, along with another EDC member, Sarah are all going to be Godmothers at Dottie's christening in September. Dottie is now nearly 4 months old and doing amazingly well. She's started rolling and is almost sitting by herself

and recently Jenny took her to a superhero's themed baby sensory class. Dottie's Granny, Helen, made her first costume but we're all convinced that she'll be in many, many more when on stage with EDC! As Jenny was writing this piece for us she apologised for it being a bit of a rush job as Dottie was not sleeping well due to teething but she was, as Jenny typed, sat with Great Granddad Les watching the cricket!



Open Evening

During rehearsals of *The Dame of Sark* we thought it would be a good idea to throw open our doors and invite you in to explore and see the new venue. We had a brilliant turnout and a very big thank you to everyone who came along and had a look. There was cake, coffee and poetry upstairs whilst a rehearsal was taking place downstairs. What we hadn't expected was for those who came to be so captivated by watching a rehearsal unfold! The cast were still being given direction, blocking was still being sorted and they were wandering around with scripts in their hands but we almost had to crowbar some of the 'audience' away so that the poetry could start upstairs. The cast said afterwards that they felt quite intimidated being watched so early on in rehearsals when they were all still working out where to stand and when to sit, but we are delighted you found it so interesting. And you weren't backward in coming forward when it came to the seven different homemade cakes on offer upstairs and, yes, we did spot the people coming back for seconds, or thirds, of a different flavour. It proved such a successful evening that we think we might make it an annual event - maybe with more emphasis on watching a rough and ready rehearsal than risking any expanding waistlines.



New Home, New Faces...

It's surprising what a bit of advertising does, isn't it? We recently ran a recruitment campaign, both online and by leaflet drop, to coincide with us starting to perform at Cornerstone. A veritable deluge of new and exciting talent resulted and we're delighted to welcome Carrie Neilson, Shyron Maidstone, Jake Hendy, Kathy and Steve Morris, Adam Carpenter, Ana Olmedo-Gonzales, Ruben Garcia, Richard Hogben, Jasmine Kelley, Kirsten Lees, Michelle Parrington, Lori Hilson, Miles Clayton-Foster and Krish Madray to our ranks. All of them are throwing themselves into the company and if you haven't seen them on or backstage yet, you very soon will as most of them are involved in the upcoming September shows.

...and some Goodbye's

As usual at this time of year we, the full members of the drama company, pay our subscriptions for another year of eating cake, being shouted at by directors when we don't know our lines, laughing more than we thought possible, wearing itchy costumes and generally having the best time ever. But, inevitably, some of our happy little band decide that the time has come, for various reasons, to hang up their acting shoes and opt for a quieter life with evenings in or move away for university, a new job or a new relationship. It's always very sad to see them go (although you'd be amazed at how many 'ex' members still hang around on the fringes and turn up at socials!) but most move from the membership list to the audience list as they still like to receive the newsletter to keep up with all that's going on. This year 14 have not renewed but with 16 new faces joining our ranks, we're still a very healthy company. Our current total of full members is now at 62 and, as always, there are a couple of enquiries in our inbox from people wanting to join up and get involved. Change is good but you'll still see lots of the familiar old faces, fear not!

Exeter Drama Company



We have exciting projects coming up,
and we'd like new members
to join us both on stage
and behind the scenes.

Contact us now if you are 18 or over.

www.exeterdramacompany.co.uk

exeterdramaco.publicity@gmail.com

**Cornerstone, 10, Kimberley Road,
Exeter, EX2 4JG**

Standing Tall

One of the disadvantages of performing at Cornerstone is that there is no stage. We did ask if we could build one, expecting to be told no, so were not too disappointed when that was the answer we got but then we had the problem of what do we perform on?! Both Ide and Alphington Primary schools had staging we could use as did the village hall and when we performed at St Michaels Church we were 'in the round' so no staging was required. After lots of discussion, lots of head scratching and lots of trawling the internet we decided to bite the bullet and buy our own staging. Once the decision had been made (and Phoebe had got us a discount) the order was placed, the cheque was sent and it duly arrived and was delivered to Britannia Lanes on Marsh Barton where it was put straight into the back of a van we hired to transport the scenery to Cornerstone. If you saw *The Dame of Sark* you probably weren't even aware of what the cast were performing on but it's adaptable, we can create different shapes and heights with it, it's lightweight and we can buy additional sections if we need to. The only downside was the cost, even with the discount, but at least it's ours and, who knows, if we have to move on from Cornerstone, at least we'll have a stage to perform on! Maybe you could all dig a little deeper into your pockets next time you have one of our wonderful coffees to help offset the cost. You'll have to drink a lot of coffee over the years but it'll be worth it to see us standing tall.



Dig for Victory

Yes we do know that our draw prizes can sometimes stretch the limits of the word 'prize' but we always have great fun 'selling' them when we're down at the front pulling out the tickets. Okay, yes, we have had the odd draw prize handed back in as the 'lucky' winner departs but we put it back in the draw the following night and someone always takes it. Probably because we say we'll lock the doors until all the draw prizes have gone. But for *The Dame of Sark* we came up with an inspired prize by providing a box of 'home grown' veg (grown by Mr Lidl and Mr Aldi) as one of the nightly offerings. In the box was a selection of spuds, carrots, onions, lettuce, beans and whatever else was freshly dug that morning from the front lawn turned into a veg patch for the duration of hostilities. And a very popular draw prize it turned out to be as well. Together with the tin of corned beef that was meant to be the joke draw prize but actually got picked first one night. Ahead of the wine! There's no accounting for taste is there. If we were to theme the draw prizes we'd have to provide a wooden chest overflowing with pieces of eight for the next play, *Treasure Island*, so don't hold your breath.



Our New Committee

Unlike Boris Johnson appointing his new cabinet there was no 'night of the long knives' at the recent AGM of the drama company when the new committee was formed. Remaining in post are Phoebe Guy (Chair), Malcolme Littler (Vice Chair), Robin Thwaytes (Treasurer), Ian Guy (Publicity), Lynda Anning (Wardrobe), Robin Hoad (Production Manager) and Katherine New (Marketing). Joining the committee are Kaitlin Nixson who takes over as Hon Secretary (freeing Ian of one of his two posts!) and Elliott Logan who steps into a new role of assistant Treasurer to help Robin with any additional admin and accounting being created now that we're a charity. All these volunteers will serve until July 2020. Will the new cabinet last that long....?!

Occupying the Cast

Knowing the Channel Islands very well Fran felt at home directing *The Dame of Sark* for us as our first production at Cornerstone. Each of the six scenes of the play took part during a different year of the Second World War on the tiny channel Island of Sark which was occupied by a small force of Germans for the duration of the war. The indomitable Dame, part of a feudal system in place for centuries, proved to be more than a challenge for the occupying forces and the cast found the story fascinating. Three of them, Ric, Graham and Elliott, had to learn German for the play and as none



of them spoke a word of the language, Fran and Ian travelled up to Somerset to visit an old friend and native German who very kindly recorded all their lines for them, together with an English translation (to help them get the emphasis right). Learning lines is bad enough at the best of times but when they're in another language it's asking a lot of amateurs but they all rose to the challenge brilliantly. So much so that some members of the audience who had a smattering of German themselves were delighted that they'd actually been able to follow what was being said. A big thank you to Gabrielle for doing the recording. Another problem Fran had was finding uniforms for the men and a lot of time was spent online looking at pictures of men in uniform! Research apparently. Or that's what she told Ian anyway... In the end many of the costumes were sourced and 'adapted' to look older or from the correct country! The hall was decorated with bunting, 1940's newspapers and maps and info on the Channel Islands and the Front Of House staff dressed up in 1940's style. The stage and set went up in double quick time as we only had a day to get everything in and it was brilliant that so many company members made the effort to come and help out. The play was a huge success and, like the cast, you were all fascinated by the story too. Pam, who had the mammoth part of the Dame, so enjoyed the play that she and husband Robin are going over to visit Sark later in the year. Maybe we should warn the current Seigneur (the 23rd one) that he may find a squatter when he comes down to breakfast one morning!



An EDC Profile - Katherine New

Katherine only discovered live theatre at the age of 18, - but has been in the non-arts stream at school. What a revelation she says, especially for an academic who soon realised that theatre can be educational as well as entertaining! As a healthcare scientist for over 20 years, working in the NHS, Katherine appreciates the bigger picture and passionately believes in the wider benefits of amateur dramatics. A full believer that community theatre contributes both to personal wellbeing and to the wider community, giving everyone a chance to celebrate creativity and teamwork, Katherine joined us in 2018 not, as she says, to act or to build scenery, but to get involved in some of the back room

jobs such as marketing and forward planning - things that you, the audience, are probably unaware of - but is vital if EDC is to continue this important work. Part of that work has included establishing our audience surveys which gives us the opportunity to reflect on what our audience experiences. And whilst Katherine is very modest about not mentioning her role with us becoming a charity at the beginning of the year we feel it only right to say that it was she who cajoled the committee into finding the right paperwork, ticking the right boxes and dealing with the management company who completed the application form for us. Katherine noticed during rehearsals how EDC brought aspiring actors together to hone their craft creating a sense of accomplishment as cast and crew work towards a common goal. The performers and production crew

become a second family, a support system, with a strong sense of pride in their contribution to the arts. "When I saw this first hand it reminds me why I work behind the scenes to support such a great group of people," says Katherine. She also found a cross over from her other hobby, floral design, when she was asked to provide the fresh flowers for *Bonaventure*. With her school governor hat on (Bowhill Primary) Katherine was delighted to discover that the brilliant teenagers in EDC had been with us since they were 10 years old. This, she says, is another example of how community theatre works and brings together people of all ages and walks of life. Reiterating once again that we'll never get her on stage she did say that if there's ever a stage version of *Out of Africa* she might, just might, wear a big hat and be in the background somewhere!