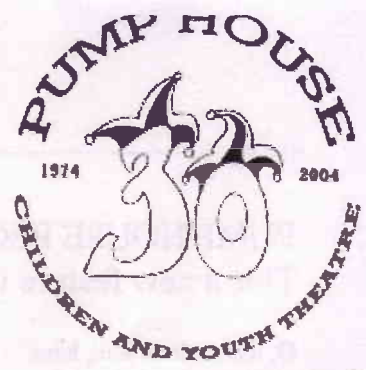


PUMP HOUSE NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2009



The AGM and ABBA night

We had a very successful AGM and ABBA Night on the 11th October. The event was very well attended and it was good to see so many new and familiar faces. It was a big team effort to organise such a large event so an *enormous* thank you to everyone involved in the night.

The Children and Youth entertained us splendidly and special thanks must go to Ben Rhodes and Niamh Brewer for being such wonderful MC's. Elisabeth Gunter and Moya Brewer were nominated as Life Members for their huge contribution to PHYCT so congratulations to both of you.

Elisabeth Lyster- Chair



The Shed

For many years we have been using the floor area in the Upper Rehearsal Room for costume storage which might have been better used for rehearsals; it was suggested that we could use the "jungle" area behind the dressing rooms and workshop, an area not often penetrated by even the most skilled and adventurous Pump House work teams. In the Autumn of 2006 I proceeded to organise clearance of the substantial willow trees that littered the site; subsequently Chris Swallow and his volunteer team cleared the old iron fencing, levelled the ground and laid hardcore to form the base for our shed. After many deliberations I recommended to the PHC&YT Committee early this year that we should proceed with the purchase of a wooden shed from a local supplier in order to provide the long-

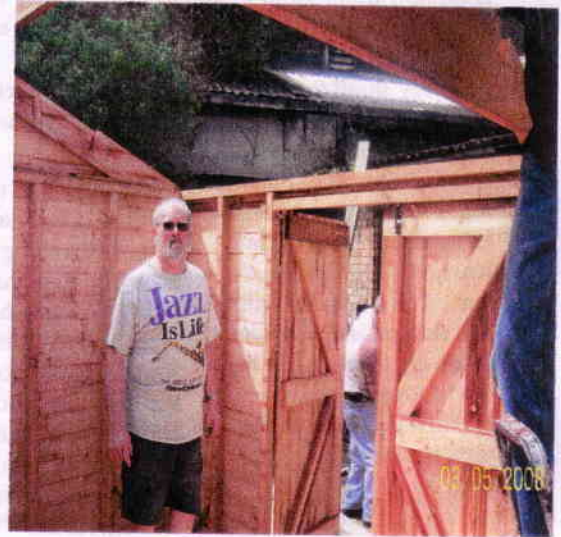
sought-after additional storage. Our shed was delivered as flat pre-fabbed panels in April 2008; we set to work, first of all laying concrete posts to create a stable base and then adding the floor, walls and roof. Layers of roofing felt completed the weatherproofing, and a Pump House padlock added security. The last job now will be adding the electrical fittings: a supply cable will be run across from the main PH building, and then lighting and low-level heating will be fitted by Jason in November. Overall this has been a significant project but within our capability to carry out given the tremendous help in planning and hard work from Chris, Jon, Simon, Jason etc credit must go to Ursula and her sewing team for her help in convincing the Committee of the need for storage

(rather than throwing a lot of costumes away) and her encouragement during the sometimes-protracted progress of the project.

We have also benefited from technical advice and contacts, especially from Brian Dorsett-Bailey, who helped me in dealing with possible use of a crane to lift in a Port-a-Cabin over the roof (!), and Brian's colleague Lee Kirby who donated sand for the shed base construction. Brian D-B also helped me with selection and sourcing of the slab insulation.

**David Fargus
PHYCT Committee**

Suppliers and Donations:



Steve Barber	Digger for ground levelling
IPS Fencing, King's Langley	Shed and concrete base posts
Lee Kirby Construction Ltd.	Building Materials
Sheffield Insulation	Slab Insulation
B&Q	Plywood and hardware
Screwfix	Electrical fittings

PUMP HOUSE PEOPLE.

This a new feature where we are invited to know a little bit more

Q: Karen, how long have you been involved with PHYCT and tell us how it started for you?

A: My daughter Jenny joined the children's theatre 11 years ago, followed by my youngest son, Ben, a few years later. They made great new friends and it added another dimension to their lives. My involvement was only small to start with but (and I know this sounds really cliched) being part of a production was so rewarding, I soon became hooked. It became a family affair when my husband Keith lent a hand with set painting and design, and years later made his debut in the band for 'Batman in Love'.

Q: How do you find the time to support the company?

A: I didn't have a great deal of time at first due to business commitments but I felt it was important to support the PHYCT in some way as it's run entirely by volunteers. Initially I just helped with photography during dress rehearsals but soon became involved in set painting or finding and making props. After a change in career, which allowed me more time at weekends, I ventured into helping out during the children's sessions on a Saturday morning and joined the committee.

I'm afraid that given the choice of meeting other parents and picking up new skills at Pump House or doing the ironing, became an easy choice. The bonus was my husband learnt new skills too and now irons all his own shirts Result! But before you dads start

squirming, the trick is to offer to come and help at PH before she does. Mums, just to let you know, we turn a blind eye to wrinkly shirts around production time, in fact we wear them with pride (and splashes of set paint).

Q: And now you have written an original play too! Can you tell us how that came about?

A: I've always enjoyed story writing but I was surprised

some years ago when one was published in a national magazine. My writing style was heavy on dialogue and so it didn't take much to turn another story, 'Café Buena Vista', into a short script for the PH Xmas showcase. The children and youth seemed to enjoy it and I was given the opportunity to write more, amongst them: 'Dominoes', 'Liberty Creek', 'You Are My Sunshine' and 'Pollyanna Jones and the Incy Wincy Code'. Spurred on by these I embarked on my dream of writing a full-length musical, something action packed with interesting characters and a touch of romance. And so 'Scrimshaw' evolved with inspiring music written by Lee Farman and George Wells.

Q: It is obviously a huge undertaking. What is the most exciting thing about it for you?

A: Watching our talented youth bring the characters to life.

Q: And the most worrying?

A: My first attempt at serious lyrics.

Q: We understand there are plans to take "Scrimshaw" to the Edinburgh Festival. This is really exciting but it must present some challenges. Can you tell us a little about that?

A: Edinburgh is an ambitious project and will firstly depend on us having enough cast

'on board' to take it there in August. Secondly, it will be a real test of both the musical and the youth's performance, as our audience will not consist of friends and family but 'the real world'; the critics can be especially judgemental at such a large festival.

The plays in Edinburgh are on average only 60-70 mins in length so we will have to condense 'Scrimshaw' and the set and lighting won't be as lavish as in January. On the plus side, just being part of the festival will be a great experience, the atmosphere up there is fantastic and it is a great opportunity to showcase anything new, not to mention several famous actors have been discovered there.

Q: How are the Youth enjoying rehearsing a totally original piece?

A: I think you need to ask the youth that question, but undoubtedly it requires more patience, as not being



Remember we always need volunteers . So if you want to help contact Elizabeth Lyster

a tried and tested piece we may have to make changes along the way to both script and music. The flip side to this is that they have an input on how it evolves. We already have two talented dancers in the cast, Nikki Carter and Jessica Sullivan, who are choreographing the Native scene.

Q: How will you, personally, measure its success?

A: By audience reaction: Will they laugh at the right moment? Will they have a lump in their throat when disaster strikes? Will they leave the theatre feeling entertained?

Will they feel as proud of the youth as I know I'm going to be?

Karen, thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to answer our questions. We are really looking forward to seeing "Scrimshaw" performed in January.

Scrimshaw
a pirate's legacy unfolds