

Your editors would like to thank all those who have contributed during this year. Seasons greetings and keep those articles coming. Positive feedback has been inspiring and we will have another edition in mid January to be before our next show.

*Moya Brewer and Olivia Gunter*

## Recent Performances

### Darling Buds of May

*Saoirse Brewer*

In the middle of November I was involved in a play with the Adult Theatre Company called the Darling Buds of May.

It was a really different and new experience for me as I had never been involved in an adult play before. I was really fortunate and lucky though to have had that opportunity as I learned a lot from it.

Obviously I played one of the children called Victoria. I only had a few lines but nevertheless I was vital to the play as they needed children. I doubled up the part with another girl from the Children's theatre – she did one night, I did the other etc... Out of all the children only two weren't from the Children's theatre.

A lot of detail went into the play. Even the smallest thing had to be perfect and precise. The crisp packets were crisp packets covered so that it was an old fashioned Smiths crisp packet with some double sided tape inside for easy access. This detail was all a lot different from what I was used to with the Children's theatre.

Not only that but, I found the experience really helpful towards my acting skills but my sister Niamh, who also had a role in it learnt a bit more about stage fighting as she had another actress had to fight with strawberries!! She had learned all the techniques before but this gave her the chance to do it on stage, develop her skills and learn new ones.

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to work with the Adult Theatre and thanks to Pat, the director and all involved as those of us from the Children's Theatre learned so much!

### LES MISERABLES IN REHEARSAL

*By Roger Martin*

Les Misérables must be one of the most dramatically powerful and musically demanding pieces of work to hit the stage. It has outstripped all records for musicals on the West End and Broadway but when you study the story you know exactly why it has the nickname of "The Glums"

It is perhaps the most depressing story I have ever read! I am pleased to say the Youth have not let the storyline influence their enthusiasm for this show but in some ways I wish they would channel the expressive vocal talent they have more towards the piece of work in progress and less on the latest goss about their friends or TV celebrities.

Working with such an enthusiastic bunch is proving to be a bit more of a challenge to me than I first thought but I hope I will eventually rise to this as the Youth have demonstrated, in rehearsal, they can rise to the challenge of this show!

*However if what we saw at the Pump House Art Week is anything to go by this show will continue the Youth Theatre's excellent reputation. Ed*

If you have not already booked your tickets what are you waiting for?

Don't forget the cheapest way to buy your tickets is by using the online credit card form at <http://www.pumphouse.info>

### Carousel @ Christmas

*Lee Farman*

This term the Children's theatre has focused on techniques to create characters. The Carousel @ Christmas showcase was designed to give the opportunity for all to try out these skills on stage.

Also we wanted to give the "chouth" (the name for our band of Children section helpers from the Youth theatre) a chance to learn production skills.

So the challenge was set :- put on a production with a cast of 64 parts (20 of whom it was their first show with the CYT), including a trainee production team, with only 5 weeks rehearsals and minimum extra rehearsals at a busy time of year for everyone.

We chose some potted pantos as a vehicle for characters, a stunning new play by Karen which included many accents and sing songs to keep their singing voices going. In our efforts to make sure every one of the 64 people got a part, the show ended up being longer than we expected but it was well worth it.

Lighting, sound back stage management, and props was run by the chouth (under the experienced guidance of Jason and Chris Swallow).

Of course we must not forget all the other (slightly older) helpers covering the direction, costumes, rota, set build, make up, etc, many of whom quietly and efficiently make it all happen in the back-ground.

So the verdict:

- Excellent entertainment for the audiences
- Great experience for the cast (including the audience interaction)
- Impressive capability from the trainees in the production team
- A lot of emerging talent
- A great new play premièred
- A fun production all round

A big thanks to all involved



# What's happening in the PHCYT

## PHCYT Annual General Meeting - October 2005

The PHCYT AGM on 8 October was great fun, though the fun for me only started once the meeting was out of the way - what with me being a novice at holding forth and being "master of ceremonies". Mind you, how could I fail with the full support of a stirring committee which turned out in fine style to support the meeting.

The reports from that meeting are published in this newsletter for those of you who couldn't make it. Thank you to those of you who were there. It would be good however, to see more people, you know you are always very welcome. It's not just the children and youth members who have an involvement with the CYT and the AGM is your chance to find out more about the full range of the work that goes on for the groups, about the finances, to put your questions and meet everyone at an event that doesn't involve a chaperone rota!

Before I tell you about the committee for 2005/6 I will tell you about the wonderful quiz we had after the business of the meeting was over. Glen Ridgeway, a new parent to the CYT, organised a really enjoyable series of questions we cheated and challenged our way through. Great cheese and fruit was provided by Ann Bolitho-Jones and the bar was open! The winning team had a disproportionate number of scientists in it. The youth turned up in droves which was much appreciated though in part to do with the fact that the cast for *Les Misérables* was to be announced during the evening.

The Committee - Christine Clifford and Mike Lovett stood down this year. The committee thanks them both for their commitment, support and hard work. Both of them have offered continuing support with productions which is very welcome.

We are fortunate to have two new people on the committee, Bridget Curran and Elaine Lardner. Bridget's son Sean is a member of the youth theatre, he recently played the part of Marky in *Mugged*. Elaine's daughter Sophie also played a main character in *Mugged*, that of Mel.

We thought you might like to know who your committee is and what their connection with the Children and Youth Theatre is. So, let me tell you about the other members.

Ann Bolitho-Jones is the secretary, this is the second year she has agreed to do the job. Her daughter Jenny recently left youth to go to university. Her son Jon is still a member of youth and also a great help on Saturday mornings with the children's theatre. Moya Brewer has daughters in both camps. Saoirse in the children's and Niamh in the youth. Moya is a tutor and director and will be co-directing the *Shell Connections* play this year with

the youth. Maria Enevoldsen is a youth rep and therefore a youth member. Maria has been on the committee as youth rep for a couple of years and always gives a valuable contribution speaking for her peers. David Fargas has been involved with the Pump House for many years. His child connections have grown up and moved on but he still provides a valuable contribution as a committee member and with set building and scenery changes for productions. Catherine Farman has done pretty much everything for the CYT. Her daughter Hazel is a children's theatre member. Catherine does the banking, box office, drafts the Saturday food rota and myriad other jobs. Lee Farman shares the same daughter as Catherine, as they are married and all live together this doesn't pose too much of a problem. Lee as you all know, is artistic director of the CYT and is pretty indispensable really. There isn't much he doesn't do and do it rather well if I may say. Olivia Gunter is the second youth rep and youth theatre member and my daughter. If this smacks of nepotism I hastily add that she was proposed by the youth committee members with no undue influence on my part. Pat Hibberd has three members to drop off and pick up, two in the children's theatre, Rachel and Steven and Jenny in the youth. Pat has recently taken on the role of production assistant for *Les Misérables*. Ursula Hodgkinson you must all know is our costume mistress. There is not much she can't make out of a piece of fabric and bit of trimming. She is a very talented lady and we are lucky to have her. Nizar Kanji is the treasurer, in charge of the finances and a fine job he does. His son Tom recently left the youth theatre having gone through the ranks from the children's theatre and is now at RADA. Tom choreographed the thrilling sword fight in *Romeo and Juliet* in the summer. Nizar is a long standing committee member whom we are lucky to have. Karen Rhodes has a son Ben, in the youth theatre. Karen is multi talented. She paints scenery, directs, writes and takes the excellent photos you see for sale during productions. Ken Spearpoint has two daughters in the CYT. Georgie in the children's and Rosie in the youth. Ken also acts when time allows and is a great supporter of all things CYT. Jean Staveley-Taylor has a daughter in the youth, Millie. Her other two daughters were also prominent members of the CYT both having moved on now. Jean is a tutor and co-directed the very successful *Shell Connections* play *Mugged* earlier this year.

So that's us - you could join us - why don't you? All you need to do is express an interest before the next AGM in October 2006. Please don't hesitate to ask any of the committee about the role, we are always about in one capacity or another. If you don't want to join then do try to come to the next AGM anyway, you will be warmly welcomed.

Elisabeth Gunter - Chairman

## AGM October 2005 - Artistic report

- Artistic director role created this year following Jeanette moving away and the challenge of finding projects and people to take them on
  - 7 people involved in direction this year
  - Busy year involving over 100 members on stage at 5 venues (including twice at the Palace and drama festivals), 41 performances including musicals, plays, improvisation and mimes and over 4000 people watching
  - New venture with NT Shell connections (*Mugged*) worked well and we would like to continue, as well as a successful production at the Edinburgh Fringe festival
  - Festival of new drama writing not only great vehicle to give all members a good opportunity on stage, but brought out writing talents within the Pump House
  - Tried new methods for running productions close together. This involved investing money to allow easier technical setup and working with technical volunteers to make improvements and encouraged more to be involved.
  - The CYT is a real community with increasing numbers working behind the scenes but there key people making this happen:
    - O Jason seamlessly turning ideas into technical reality and training new people
    - O Chris (with David, Charles, Rhode's, Whitty's, etc) creating practical artistic sets effectively
    - O Ursula, Sue, Susan and a large team creating costumes for next to nothing
    - O People like Sue C, Sara Watts, Sara Corre and others covering key roles
    - O Moya, Robin, Karen, Sue, Jean, Edna, Jeanette, Roger taking on productions
    - O The "Chouth" helping the Children's theatre run at all
    - O Catherine handling all the money that comes in during a production
    - O Elisabeth organising the rota's as well as doing an excellent job this year of keeping the CYT moving forward
    - O The Youth committee started this year and will increasingly become an important input into the artistic planning for the CYT
    - O Increased links with other groups with members taking part with Cassio Operatic and the Adult Theatre Company
- Future challenge of continuing quality, opportunities and fun. More people put in the more we can do.

## LOST PROPERTY

Ursula has loads of lost property to return. SO if anyone in either the Youth or Children's theatre is missing any clothing please come & have a look. If the articles are not claimed within 4 weeks they will be taken to a charity shop! 07973 897812



# What's happening in the PHCYT

## Do you hear the people sing...?

*Emily Bannister*

Last September I was given the opportunity to join the Pump House Youth Theatre (PHYT). It felt as though I had been on the waiting list for forever and I couldn't believe my luck!

What made it even more fantastic was when I found out that the first production would be "Les Misérables". I had just seen the West-End show and loved every minute. I was a bit nervous when it came to auditioning – what should I go for? – I love singing and decided to try "On my own".

The parts were announced at the Pump House AGM and afterwards we took part in the Quiz Night where my team came joint first – but we lost the tie break (never mind!).

I was very pleased with my part. Rehearsals started almost immediately. They are hard work but great fun and I have met lots of new friends. I can't wait for the real performance in January (Although I might still be a little nervous on the first night!)

*From a Stage Manager... Charles Gunter*

For a 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row, I was lucky enough to be the Stage Manager for the PHCYT Summer performances, once again a double bill of sorts and once again two completely different productions. For one thing, Oliver was bigger and heavier than Honk, the previous musical I was SM for. Having been at university, I was indebted to Chris Swallow for attending the meetings and all the many members of the Youth Theatre who put the props together under the coordination of Sara Watts and Moya Brewer – it is always a great relief for me to know that props are someone else's responsibility.

On the Tuesday before the show, the heavy rain resulted in some flooding backstage – and for a couple of hours I was terrified that there had been some damage to the props and set. Thanks to the adult Theatre and Chris Wheeler, no harm was done but backstage smelt a bit!

Challenges on the way included: - forgetting to call Fagin's gang, losing the owl from the birdcage and the difficulties in making the bunting stay up (hang on – they were all for the same scene change!)

So, Oliver was over, the final curtain fell (not literally thankfully) – and then came changeover Sunday, where 19<sup>th</sup> Century London became 16<sup>th</sup> Century Verona and the crew of one show became the cast of another. Having a larger crew for Oliver, Romeo and Juliet was a big change. The main job of the crew was to carry Juliet off – not as easy as it sounds though, as we never really had enough hands to open the door to get out and for a brief moment we considered using Emily's head as a battering ram!

Thanks to Chris Swallow, Sara Watts, Rhys Windsor, Moya Brewer, Emma Williams, Steven Bland, Henry Williams, Olivia Gunter, David Fish, Lauren Murdoch, Sean Lovell, Toni Lovell and Jenny Hibberd – the crew of Oliver! and Romeo & Juliet.

## SHELL CONNECTIONS IN BATH: CONSIDERING DIRECTION

Karen and I were really fortunate that Lee and Jean had paved the way with their successful entrée into this local and national festival with Andrew Payne's Mugged. This was shown at March's Festival of New Writing at the Pump House as well as sharing to the wider public in both the Bushey Festival and at the Palace theatre's show case of new writing. It then went to Edinburgh and was a success. What an act we have to follow!

We read through the plays which we had pared down to 4 and members of the Youth came for a read through of these 4. This really clarified things for us as they, like us, were drawn to Ursula Rani Sarma's play: The Spider Men and so we agreed to submit this as our play entry for Shell Connections this year.

The weekend is an opportunity for you to work with a facilitating director, in our case Edward Kemp, to explore the issues and ideas in the play as well as different approaches to its production. We also had the writer there and it was insightful to hear her reasons behind the title, the characters and the "beats" which punctuate the play. It also made us realise the detail the writer puts into their writing and that no full stops speak more loudly than fullstops in the rhythm of the language and the pace it needs to be spoken and acted.

Edward Kemp provided us with techniques to bring out the pace or the direction or the emotion or the staging for a piece and we loved getting up and re-enacting parts of the play and playing around with different interpretations for the same piece. Mind you working in groups of directors means everyone wants to be in charge – a nightmare!!

The young people who worked with us from the National Youth Theatre did so convincingly and really joined in well, and you could see them taking direction, trying out ideas and contributing their feelings to parts they adopted. It is something I feel we could mirror with our Youth and it reminded me just how important workshoping with such new material really is.

The Sunday involved an insight into the backstage working of any theatre, and again I felt that at the Pump House we should plan to have such Open Days and show others the skills and talents of our technical crews which all too often go unnoticed and are not celebrated enough; so Chris and Jason and Ursula and David let's go for this in 2006!!

For Karen I believe one of the highlights of the weekend, alongside being inside the head as it were of a fellow writer, was the shopping in Bath's very individual shops amid the lights and the country atmosphere. For me it was having fun working

with other facilitators and the Master-class with Sir Richard Eyre. He was so self effacing and so mesmerising without being all wordy and "up himself", which others in the group we'd been with on Saturday had been, particularly the man in the large green t-shirt! My can Drama types be pretentious and how refreshingly practical and thinking on his feet was Richard Eyre! He worked with members of the NYT on the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 scenes from Hamlet. I learnt more about that play and about direction in that 11/2 hours than any other course I have ever attended. He moved on the stage and around it, he changed his mind, he didn't know all the answers and he asked the actors for their ideas and moves. He said the director does not know it all and needs the cast to interpret the play too. He does away with models and close blocking before going into rehearsal and does more whilst rehearsing. He also warned not to plan too much ahead until you start rehearsing – I think that's what I do too much already!

Karen and I are both looking forward to working with members of the Youth on the 2006 entry and to learn from Lee and Jean's vast directing and producing experience. We also know we'll need a team to work with us if we wish to do justice to the play and to the reputation of the Pump House, so please say "yes" when we ask!!

Play read through will take place in early December with auditions before Christmas, because we know locally others in the region are starting work already on their entries!!

It will be performed at the end of March as part of the Festival of New Writing so not very long really. Any one who has any Spiderman comics or books please get in touch with us – we do need them.

More of an update about the play itself in the next newsletter.

Final thanks to the committee who have paid for the entry and for our accommodation and travel there. Despite my cold and sore throat we had a brilliant time and are looking forward to realising many of the ideas we have for this play.

*Moya ( and by proxy: Karen)*

**Warwick Way Productions** have been talking with the Pump House Centre and a brand new project is in the pipeline. WWP could be on the radio as early as next year! I am not able to tell any more than this at the moment, but when I know more, I will be writing to everyone who wants to be involved – so get in touch. There will be two recording sessions in April 2006, so if you want to be involved note those dates now, and get in touch.



# Back to the Future

## Diary dates

### DECEMBER

Sun 18<sup>th</sup> 2-5pm - Workshop audition for Shell Connections Play The Spider Men

### JANUARY

Sat 7<sup>th</sup> - Start of spring term  
Thur 18 - Sat 20 & Tue 25 - Sat 28  
Les Misérables Schools Edition (Youth theatre)

### FEBRUARY

Mon 13<sup>th</sup> - Sat 18<sup>th</sup> - Kindertransport (Pump House Theatre Company)

### MARCH

9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> - New writing festival  
11<sup>th</sup> - Impro tonight  
23<sup>rd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> - Bushey Drama festival  
25<sup>th</sup> - Last Saturday of term  
29<sup>th</sup> - The Spider Men

### APRIL

Wed 19<sup>th</sup> - Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> - Dinner (Pump House Theatre Company)  
22<sup>nd</sup> - Start of summer term

### MAY

Mon 1<sup>st</sup> - Sat 6<sup>th</sup> - South West Herts Drama Festival

### JUNE

Mon 12<sup>th</sup> - Sat 17<sup>th</sup> - Humble Boy (Pump House Theatre Company)

### JULY

TBC - Guys and Dolls  
TBC - Youth production

## Future Shows

Looking beyond the imminent Les Misérables we have an exciting year of theatre ahead of us.

### Festival of New Drama Writing

Another chance to explore new drama from local as well as more famous writers. It will take the form of rehearsed play readings from the Children and Youth sections as well as potentially some people from other groups.

### Impro Tonight

A fun evening of improvisation and mime from the Children and Youth sections

### National Theatre Shell Connections

Following last years success with Mugged we continue with this festival, where the National Theatre commission 10 new plays.

This year we are doing "The Spider Men" which will be performed on 29th March.

### Guys and Dolls

Subject to confirmation the Children's theatre will be doing the Broadway Juniors version of Guys and Dolls at the beginning of July 2006.

### Youth summer project

The Youth section summer term project is yet to be confirmed. But is likely to be 2 one act plays.

## CYT Volunteers

Thanks for the offers of help for Carousel at Christmas. By the time the newsletter reaches you I should have a complete rota.

Thanks also to everyone who returned their slips or called with offers of help for the forthcoming production of Les Misérables. I have passed on costumes volunteers to Ursula and painting, set and scenery to Chris Swallow and Karen Rhodes. You should be hearing from them shortly if not already. I will be contacting people about the Front of House rota at the beginning of January or after Christmas. Your responses were great.

The Saturday food rota continues to be a huge success and everyone plays their part so willingly, thank you for your contributions and for organising swaps when you need to.

We are holding a short session before Carousel at Christmas about being a Front of House manager to increase the pool of those we can call on. We will also be holding a session in January before Les Mis so watch out for the date and time. It's a necessary role, please do consider giving it a go.

If you would like to help in another way such as backstage, props, box office, as production assistant or if you have any knowledge of publicising events then any help will be very gratefully received. Please give me a call on 01923 240762 or email [elisabeth.gunter@btinternet.com](mailto:elisabeth.gunter@btinternet.com)

## Footnotes



- The Adult Pump House Theatre Company have offered discounted tickets for members of the CYT. When booking mention you are a member.
- Look out for CYT members taking part in Kindertransport in February with the Adult Pump House Theatre Company

Your editors would welcome contributions for the next newsletter which will go out late November.

So please send anything to Moya and Olivia c/o [elisabeth.gunter@btinternet.com](mailto:elisabeth.gunter@btinternet.com)

This newsletter is also available online at [www.pumphouse.info/cyt](http://www.pumphouse.info/cyt)

## ONLINE

**Have you seen the new website?**

[www.pumphouse.info](http://www.pumphouse.info)

### Tickets

We are changing our prices so that the cheapest method for you to purchase tickets is by using your credit/debit card online. All other methods such as via the phone, reservation form or on the door will incur a surcharge of 50p a ticket.

### Letters

Copies of letters sent out, newsletters and **rehearsal schedules** are available on the website

### E-mail

If you are responding to a letter or giving notice that you can not attend a rehearsal then please do this by e-mail to [cyt@pumphouse.info](mailto:cyt@pumphouse.info)

## WANTED for Les Misérables

- Help with set painting and backstage
- Help with props
- Oboe, Trumpet and Horn players to play in band

Contact Pat on 01923 663896

## BOX OFFICE

This is a big job, please help us by telling everyone:

- Use online credit card booking (which is the cheapest method for the customer) where possible
- All tickets will be available on the door and will not be sent out
- Quote the name that you booked your tickets with (e.g. name on credit card) when picking up tickets on the door
- Please check the details on the PayPal receipt that you receive to make sure you booked the tickets you thought you did
- Please be patient with the box office