

Estuary Players

JANUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

Hello everyone- and all good wishes for the New Year, which has started with great interest and support for “Brassed Off” – our choice for the Spring production. Here are some words from Howard, our Director, also published in the January Topsham Magazine:

Estuary Players

March 2012

Brassed Off

Estuary Players are delighted to be in partnership with Lymptone Band for this production of *Brassed Off*. The stage play is an adaptation by Paul Allen of Mark Herman’s film and was first seen in Sheffield in 1998, later that year playing at the Olivier at the Royal National Theatre, London.

The play, set in 1994 at a time of great change in the coal industry, tells the very moving story of impending mass redundancies in Grimley, a Yorkshire mining town, when its profitable colliery is threatened with closure. It is worked out through the lives of miners who are members of the colliery band that also faces closure. The band is led by their passionate conductor Danny, who is determined to take the group to the finals of the National Championships at the Albert Hall. The play moves through many levels of light and shade, joy and sorrow following the lives of these miners and their families, all resolutely helped along by some stirring brass band music.

I have been fortunate to gather together a strong cast of 12 actors, young and old, with some new and some familiar faces. Coupled with the forces of Lymptone Band this will be an exciting project for Estuary Players.

Book your tickets early for what promises to be an evening of first class entertainment. The show runs from Tuesday 27th to 30th March in Matthews Hall.

“...celebratory and defiant....sheer emotional power...” *The Guardian*

Howard Eilbeck

Rehearsals are now underway, and here is the cast list:

Danny, conductor of Grimley Band	Bob Drury
Phil, his son	Jeremy Davy
Sandra, Phil's wife	Kim Brady
Jim, miner and euphonium player	Alan Caig
Vera, Jim's wife	Chris Eilbeck
Harry, Jim's mate and tuba player	Ian Potts
Rita, Harry's wife	Anny Kilbourne
Andy, a younger miner	Ben Beeson
Gloria, recently returned to Grimley	Marie Taylor
Shane, son of Phil and Sandra	Sam Dowell
Craig and Melody, Shane's brother & sister	Rhodri and Hannah Williams
Nurse Vera	Tilly Webster
Nurse Rita	Kate Wannell
Bailiff	Rob Hole
Director	Howard Eilbeck
Stage Manager	Freddie Jacobs
On the Book and Prompt	Janine Warre
Production Manager	Maggie Butt

As Howard says, a great cast and we look forward to hearing how rehearsals are progressing over the next few weeks.

New Policy

Several issues have been raised which required the committee to consider how we manage health and safety issues when performing plays in Matthews Hall. This we have done, with much time and thought and the agreed policy below is the result of this.

Audience Management for Front of House

1. The most important task of the front of house team is the safety of the audience, cast and other occupants of the building. Therefore all members of any front of house team should remain vigilant at all times, and should ensure that there is always at least two team members, one in the foyer and one in the auditorium by the main doors. All team members should be acquainted with the procedures for evacuating the premises, and should be available to assist with evacuation – essentially this means that front of house team members cannot sit in the audience during performances. These elements of the job are part of the licence held by the hall, the conditions of which demand that the hiring organisation conforms to the legal requirements. There should be one person designated as being in charge.

2. The licence also requires that all entrances and exits to the hall be kept clear at all times. There is scope for a managed solution to this in some cases – for example if there is masking across an exit, a named member of front of house or backstage staff should be responsible for moving it in the event of an emergency. However chairs should not be placed in gangways under any circumstances.
3. The second most important task of the front of house team is the comfort of the audience. It is difficult to prescribe standards for this, but important elements should include:

Welcoming members of the audience as they arrive.

Taking care with returned tickets so that they are re-sold on a first come first served basis, including prior “return reservations”.

Being aware of empty seats in the last few minutes before curtain up, so that those arriving in the nick of time can be directed to them.

Where possible, consolidating empty seats into pairs, by asking audiences not to leave odd ones.

Spotting rogue texters and asking them to desist.

Having sufficient presence in the foyer and auditorium at all times to answer questions or even deal with sudden illness or other unforeseen situations.

Making sure only ticket holders are admitted, so that there is no confusion at the last minute, or that bona fide ticket holders are not relegated to worse seats than they might otherwise have had.

Having all the relevant information to hand – interval time, curtain down time, programmes, and the policy for admitting latecomers, which will need to be set separately for each play

Having a presence in the foyer throughout the performance to welcome and direct latecomers, to manage random wanderers in, and in particular to ensure that users of the upstairs room don't disturb performances when arriving or leaving.

Note

If all of the above is implemented there are some implications for the way we have been managing performances. In particular, members not involved in a production, should not expect to sit in the audience without prior arrangement,

and the practice of placing spare chairs in the gangway needs to cease. Those undertaking front of house duties should not necessarily expect to see much of the play, and therefore should buy tickets for another performance, or come to see the dress rehearsal, to which all members are cordially invited in any case.

Also note that refunds are not available, but the company will endeavour to re-sell where possible.

Estuary Players - 13.01.12

Looking ahead

Very good news!

Director for Nov 2012 - Rob Hole
Director for Spring 2013 - Alan Caig

All looks very promising indeed!

best wishes
Avril