

UPstage

THE ORGAN OF THE ULLENHALL PLAYERS

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January 2008

Issue 30

Baring UP?

SPRING PLAY GETS UNDER WAY

After much discussion, reading and viewing of videos, The Ullenhall Players Spring production for the Palace Theatre has finally been chosen.

The selected play is *Who Goes Bare?* This extremely funny farce, written by Richard Harris and Leslie Darbon, was originally produced by The Players in 1986, and this latest production will feature a number of the original cast although not necessarily in the same roles.

Steve Brookes will reprise the lead role of Eddie Manchip with Martin providing the supporting foil as his brother Brian. The action is set in a health resort which Eddie owns; for now at least. However, not only is

the resort struggling to pay its way, Eddie has also signed an IOU to some unscrupulous gangsters after a bad night at the gambling tables. Indeed, Mr Butcher, to be played on this occasion by Pablo Raybould, has escorted Eddie home to ensure the collection of the deeds. Meanwhile Brian is bringing a potential investor, Nancy McSmith, to stay for the week-end. She has erroneously formed the opinion that the resort is a nudist camp. She is a keen naturist and so Eddie and Brian are not about to disillusion her; to the extent that Brian is persuaded to join her *au naturel* in order to further convince her. Add to this an enthusiastic but inept maid, an over zealous Oxfam collector who continuously removes any discarded clothing, a quick change impersonator with a personality disorder, Brian's wife Joan, Nancy's husband Angus and the local police sergeant and the scene is set for the usual mayhem.

Casting is complete and rehearsals have begun. The production will be directed by

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WYTHALL JOURNEY TO OLTON

Wythall Theatre Company have announced that their next production will be the First World War classic *Journey's End*, by R.C. Sherriff .

Set in 1918, in the trenches around Saint Quentin, France, the action portrays the two days preceding an attack by the German forces, the conflicts and the bonds formed between young men in these dire and horrifying circumstances and the effect of sudden and violent deaths amongst the comrades.

The play, Directed by Joy Rodgers, will run from Wednesday 11th June to Saturday 14th June 2008 at The Dovehouse Theatre in Olton, Solihull.

UPfront

For those who haven't heard yet, Rachel Gill gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Ruby Grace, on 18th November 2007. Ruby weighed in at 9lb 6oz. According to the text message Lynda sent me, "Ruby has lots of snippets dark hair. Will speak soon." How very advanced kids are these days. Congratulation to Rachel and Tom.

Baring UP?

From Page 1

Pablo Raybould and we've secured the services of John Best again as stage manager. And we're delighted to have Jenny Roberts lined up as prompt. Dave Humphries will be in charge of set construction and Louise Smith's fiancée Dan (remember last year's stairs?) has been volunteered to assist.

This will be a demanding, high energy, fast paced production but the results should be well worth the effort. There's lots of business and endless laughs to be extracted from this inventive script. Performances of Who goes Bare will run from Wednesday May 7th to Saturday May 10th.

- Ruby Grace -



Wanna Feel Good ?



The Priory Theatre Kenilworth presents the political comedy Feelgood, by Alistair Beaton next month.

Described as an "outrageously funny satire on modern politics, New Labour and the fine art of spin", this production is



directed by Richard Collett and features amongst its sparkling cast, Joanne Gill.

It runs from 4th to 12th February. The ticket sales have been extraordinary, having sold out for five nights already. They being the 4th to the 7th inclusive and Monday the 11th. So if you'd like to go along and see it we suggest you contact the Box Office on **01926 863334** as soon as possible.

However, be warned, the theatre advises that the production is not suitable for children or for those who are easily offended.

This delightful little bundle of smiles is Rachel Gill's new daughter, Ruby Grace, born 18th November 2007. Hello Rubv and Welcome.

Playing UP?

Last November's cabaret evening performances, under the banner of Playing UP Again, proved to be another success for The Players.

The programme included three sketches by Louise Smith and Charlotte Williams and one by Peter Woodman, songs from Rebecca Gardner (Boo) and Dan Blizzard (Dan 1), Joanne Gill and Dan Gough (Dan 2) and a blasting guitar piece from young James MacPherson.

Additionally there were two short plays. Code of the West, a dramatic presentation of a humorous ode, and Cinderella, a pantomime to forget, lovingly destroyed by an enthusiastic cast.

Throw in two monologues from Steve Brookes plus one from Lynda Gill and a couple of songs from (the annoyingly talented) Hannah Massey, bind them all together with MCing at its best by Graham Robson and no wonder we raised £500 for this year's chosen charity, The Acorns Children's Hospice.

Allo Allo

IN THE INTEREST OF FAIRNESS

Readers may recall the, what I consider, well deserved slating that was metered out to semi-professional group All & Sundry last year after their appalling production of Noises Off. To redress the balance we publish this much kinder review of their production of 'Allo 'Allo.

The start of the familiar theme tune from the television series helped to set the mood. The lights went up and on stage came Rene, played by Nigel Buckley a newcomer to the company. From the outset his excellent interpretation of the French/English accent transported the audience to a café in France. Rene set the scene by updating the audience with the story of the painting if the 'Madonna with the big boobies' and how it had come into his possession. You immediately had a sense of sympathy for the character even though he had two young waitresses hanging on his every word.

Rene's wife Edith was also well cast with Pat Hobday playing the role. She encapsulated the characters strength and her impatience with her husband's unwillingness to fight against the occupation but also managed to show her enduring love for the man she married. Her 'cabaret' act was wonderful, lots of wrong notes in a big voice, exaggerated choreography and an ability to send herself up make them a joy to watch.

The partnership of Aleksandra Everitt and Mick Randle, Private Helga Geerhart and Herr Flick, was a joy to watch. There was perfect comic timing that provided some real laugh out loud moments. Inaki Deza Cruz as the Spanish Capitano Alberta Bertorelli also brought the character to life with an over the top portrayal of a man who thinks he's god's gift to women, confident in his looks and his effect on the women in the café.

James Ralley, a tall well built man, playing Gruber managed to pull off the role by being a gentle giant in his pursuit of Rene. One moment of genius was when he 'accidentally' threw a boot out of a window, how he managed it without hitting the scenery remains a mystery.

There were one or two weak characters, the 'crowd' of two women were more of a distraction than anything else, and a couple of the German officers were acting at a pace slower than the rest of the company. The only thing missing from the night was a larger audience to appreciate all the hard work of the players and the back stage helpers. In all a good play, well presented.

'Allo 'Allo was presented by All and Sundry
Artrix, Bromsgrove 27th September 2007
Reviewed by Susan Armstrong

All & Sundry
Present
ALLO 'ALLO
Artrix, Bromsgrove
25th to 29th Sept 2007
Programme
£1.50
All & Sundry

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Rowney Green Do It With Their Eyes Shut

The Rowney Green Players are to produce “Shut Your Eyes and Think of England” at the Peace Hall in April.

Written by John Chapman and Anthony Marriott, this is a farce performed previously by The Ullenhall Players in 2000 when, as those older members may recall, we first took a production on to the Norbury Theatre in Droitwich.

Rowney Green’s website currently provides few other details, with the cast and production staff merely being shown as to be confirmed. They give the planned dates as 16th to 19th April 2008 however, so one imagines that they must by now be well into rehearsals if they’re to meet that sort of target date.

UPdates

Priory Theatre, Kenilworth, presents Feelgood, 4th to 12th February 2008.

Rowney Green Players present Shut Your Eyes and Think of England 16th to 19th April 2008.

Wythall Theatre Company present Journey’s End at the Dovehouse Theatre, Olton, Solihull 11th to 14th June 2008

Similarly neither ticket prices nor Box Office details are confirmed but keep an eye on the website for further news.

www.rowneygreenplayers.co.uk/

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UPenders

