

IN THIS MONTH'S SPOTLIGHT, WE HAVE **4 PAGES** OF ARTICLES WRITTEN BY RATS MEMBERS, PAST AND PRESENT!

THE EDITORIAL TEAM HOPE THAT YOU ENJOY THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS. WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR MORE CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE.

SPOTLIGHT

10

RATS 'EVENTS' (from Jackie)

ACTING WORKSHOP - *Weds May 23rd - 7.30pm* Victoria Hall

All welcome just bring your usual £1 contribution

SOCIAL EVENING and QUIZ - *Weds 30th May 7.30pm* Victoria Hall

Members and partners invited / teams to be drawn out of the 'hat'!

Bring your own 'bottle'- nibbles to be provided, usual £1 contribution

A REVIEW of 'FOOTLOOSE'

by Steve Green

I saw the R.M.T. production on Sat night and a most enjoyable evening it was. The story was based on a true story. It was centered on an American town, where several townspeople some years before had lost their teenage children in a tragic accident. They were returning from a dance and the car had fallen from a bridge into the river. The local preacher issued an edict that there would be no more loud music or dancing, since such activities, could induce another tragedy. The preacher had himself lost a son in the accident. This new puritanical culture was upset forever by a new resident called Ren. He felt it was his duty to let the kids know that no singing and no dancing made for a dull life, it didn't take long for them to agree. The rest of the story is fairly predictable, but provides a good vehicle for everyone to sing and dance their hearts out, much to the audience's delight.

The show marked a departure for R.M.T. from all its previous productions in more ways than one. A small rock combo was used rather than a full orchestra. It was guitars rather than strings, that ruled the evening. The music and the dancing was firmly set in the rock genre rather than the style of R.M.T.'s traditional musical. Also the main characters were teenagers. A small revolution for R.M.T.!

The pace was vigorous and the plot was told through the music, the dance and the fast moving libretto. The scene changes were fairly brisk, so, all in all there was no time to become bored.

The two RATS members in the cast, James and Mick, gave two of the best performances of the evening. James was totally believable as the preacher as was Mick as the coach. James delivered his main song with total conviction and passion. So, well done lads! Our own Jill Powell gave strong support in her role as wife to the character played by Mick. The young persons' parts were outstandingly taken by all

those concerned, but a special plaudit should be given to the young actor who took the part of Ren and another to the young lady taking his girlfriend, Ariel, the daughter of the preacher.

For me there were a couple of reservations.

First, the choice to push the dialogue through amplification distorted the voices and I had great difficulty in making out what was being said, thus I was not able to properly follow the plot. If you choose amplification, then you have to make sure that the diction of the actors is crystal clear and that the sound technician is top class at their job. I had great difficulty in making out the words of many of the songs. Secondly in my opinion, the musical material was not particularly strong. There are no particularly memorable songs, which was a shame, because the combo was first class and so was the singing, by and large. All that said, the show was lively, entertaining and engaging and made for a very enjoyable night's entertainment.

From Joy Gregg — Its that time again — **'Oh Yes it is! Oh No it isn't!' —**

The Pantomime for next year will be 'Red Riding Hood' written by Sheila Plant.

So far Trish has volunteered to direct. It will be at the Victoria Hall in Feb 2013. Auditions will take place after the October Show. There are lots of parts and we're looking for youngsters as well.

'A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED' -
Weds 16th May to Sat 19th May
TICKETS FOR THE PLAY ARE AVAILABLE
FROM 'MUSIC & MORE'
£8 IN ADVANCE AND £10 AT THE DOOR

Joan Jenkin (of 'Normanton Hall' fame) who moved to Cheshire, is going through a difficult time at present. She is improving but still having treatment prior to her operation. She has no phone and no email at present but her new address is 5, Priory Green, Highgate Close, Norton, Runcorn. WA7 6GH. A card or a letter would be most appreciated.

'ART FOR RATS SAKE' by Julie France

What sort of idiot would stand in someone's open-sided conservatory, freezing and covered in paint, during a snowstorm? Answer: an amateur theatre company scenery painter. My first big painting job with RATS was on the panto 'Robinson Crusoe'. The year before I had painted our very small set to represent the waiting room for 'The Ghost Train', with the help of Graham Carey, now sadly no longer with RATS. That was on Jackie Sellwood's drive in blazing sunshine and I distressed (i.e. dirtied) the paintwork with real mud from her garden! I was then asked to help with the panto set.

We had four colours of paint. green, brown, blue and red emulsion. Graham (whose house, garage and conservatory were full of stage junk) patched up the scenery and I bought some woolly fingerless gloves and we all got painting. The snow kept falling. We painted everything in sight with sky, palm trees and red jungle flowers (using my hands for the last items.) Well, it worked, and the panto went well. And nothing fell down - when people weren't walking into it.

That year, RATS did some successful fundraising and with a grant that Wendy and Graham secured, we bought a lot of the scenery. I leapt around with joy, although new canvas doesn't 'alf wear your paint brushes out!

Another summer, and I was up at Wendy's house with Sheila, to paint a Music Hall set. Weeks later, we had a set of extraordinary proportions and were more or less exhausted. I then moved back to Graham's for the second half of the set, the backdrop for which was a railway station. I started this by slapping a big handful of Cadmium Yellow acrylic paint on the surface, spreading it out by hand and painting everything around this light source. Once I had got myself unstuck from the flat I found to my surprise that it had worked!

Since then I have learnt a heck of a lot, and provided sets for both panto and serious plays. My favourite, I think, has been the 'Hi de Hi' set, which was huge representations of naughty seaside postcards. All in all, scenery painting is messy, can be cold, can be frustrating, can go horribly wrong and there are a huge amount of brushes and rollers to wash out afterwards. And it's not just artwork. Now we have a more permanent home at the St. Georges Barracks, anyone can come along and paint flats. Or help with construction. Or maybe (please, please) just come and make the tea!

I have had more fun with this job than I had for years before I started it, and I'm a better painter for the work, because it pushed me into areas I never tried before. So come and have a go—if you think you're daft enough!

"RATS TALES" by Ivor Codpiece.

**Have you heard the latest? What's happening in Uppingham?
Rumour has it that there will be NO Pantomime next year from the
Uppingham Theatre Group? Well who'd have thought it?**

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY IN MAY

Little Theatre

'The Forsyte Saga'

14-19th

'Sweet Charity'

22-25th May

Melton Theatre

'Danceicality' 4-5th May

'We will Rock you'

29th-30th May

Harborough Theatre

'The Memory of Water'

15-19th May

De Montfort Hall

'Chicago' 21- 26th May

Curve

'King and I' 8-12th May

Theatre Royal

Nottingham

'The Diary of Anne Frank' 8th - 12th May

Nottingham

Playhouse

'Saturday Night and Sunday Morning'

8th-12th May

'Roots'

23rd May-2nd June

RATS ARCHIVE

A poem by Lynn MacLean for the
RATS SILVER JUBILEE 1999

Twenty five years ago from now, the
first RATS Panto was planned,
starring Maggie as 'Cinderella', and
directed by Wendy Brand.

Maureen Dodds staged managed at
Braunston, on a budget of £25!
Joan Underwood played the piano,
no need for electronic sounds.

"The Good Old Days" featured
often, so ably directed by Ron.
Sometimes assisted by Robby or
Val, 'Till Mike, Phil or Maureen took
it on.

Joan Walton produced 'Humpty
Dumpty', 'Sinbad the Sailor' was
Wendy's Panto.

'Aladdin' by Joan with Sheila Plant,
'Mother Goose' for Maureen's next
show.

Joan's dancing fairies featured
often, She liked to get everyone in.
Passion plays were often a feature,
a favorite with Charles and Lynn.

Jill Ferguson's musical talents , in
many productions seen.
Piano and singing the true loves of
her life, 'Til she married our own
Peris Steen.

RATS had seen more than one
happy romance, Ron and Sandra
two others who wed.

She had the foresight with 'When
we are married'. Once Firmager,
now its Dudley instead!

Mike Charlton another past
member, who acted, produced and
was rude,
When showing his slides in Music
Hall, he slipped in the odd one of a
nude!

Val and Maurice were long standing
members, Chris and Derek another
keen pair,
Jill and Peter a formidable
twosome, now there's Barbara and
Cliff in the chair!

In '88 RATS moved from Braunston,
to Oakham's venue the QET,
They performed Mike Leigh's
'Abigail's Party', produced by the
talented Melanie.

A new era of RATS was beginning,
Joy Everitt a new leading light.
Rob Owen's great comedy acting,
Steve Green for each part always
right.

Then along came MacLean with his
Pantos, 'Robin Hood' and 'Aladdin'
he wrote.
'Cinderella' made the news in the
'Mail on Sunday', Louise Doughty
our Macca did quote.

Jackie Sellwood another fine
member, has acted, produced and
the rest,

If doing all jobs is a prerequisite,
Jackie certainly passes the test.
Backstage people often forgotten,
their efforts are needed so much.
Olly, Carol, Peter, Chris and Mike,
Barbara's props which have just the
right touch.

Young RATS have always been
welcome, 'Our Day Out' a fine
sample of this,
and 'The Secret Diary of Adrian
Mole' where Nick Hall got his first
stage kiss.

We've had Ivan in drag in Panto,
Steve lying paralysed in bed.
Rob dressed as a bird and even a
plant, and 'Bouncers' when the
audience fled.

Sue Stephens brought RATS many
talents. choreography was her true
bent.
But she's acted, produced and has
written the Millennium Panto is her
next intent.

Nanette was a founder member,
who's returned after some time
away.
To produce 'The Diary of Anne
Frank', now she's back we hope
she will stay.

There are many productions not
mentioned, many members who've
played their part.
In making RATS a group to be
proud of, where all will be given a
start.

PANTOMIME ALLIANCE AWARDS 2012 by Jill Powell

We were nominated in several categories. For the best music, best comedy duo and for the best supporting actress, which Sheila as Mother Goose won! - Well done!



'The Burlesque Follies'

by Duncan Tomblin.

Jackie and I are devising a show that follows the usual type of format that we have done previously in October but with the more comic twist of Burlesque. This style of variety performance was popular in the USA at the turn of the twentieth century and is associated with a little 'risque' style of comedy, usually referring to parody songs, comic sketches and 'risque' dancers. It was the precursor to Vaudeville in America. The musical 'Gypsy' is an example of that style.

Our production will have a Ringmaster as an MC and start with a circus chorus item. Act 1 will end with a chorus item entitled 'At the Races'. During both acts you will see the 'Burlesque Dancers' lead by Amanda and Act 2 will end with a chorus item called a 'Journey round Britain'. There are the usual variety of solo items and sketches.

The audience will be in 'Cabaret' style (chairs round tables) and the drinks will be served by waiters and waitresses.

There will be NO auditions except for solo items

October Production

'The Burlesque Follies'

Weds 17th Oct to Sat

20th Oct 2012

*Duncan and Jackie
are Directing.*

A HUGE BIG 'THANK YOU' IS DUE TO CLIFF ASHTON FOR 'RENEWING' THE BOARDS THAT ARE PLACED ON THE MAIN ROADS LEADING INTO OAKHAM PRIOR TO A SHOW. THANKS CLIFF from Jackie.

Directing by Trish Buxton

Are we directors or just critics? Being both a director and an actor, the best directors for me are those who know their script inside out before directing a cast of actors. The real challenge of being a director is that you have to do so much but yet you need to do so little. It's your vision that is being shaped. It's your passion that is guiding and inspiring the artists. You are the storyteller and you have elected to tell the story through your actors/artists, you must collaborate. You must rely on the skills and artistry of others in order to achieve your goal. A voice is a director's powerful tool. You talk your play/production into existence. You inspire each artist/actor to do their best work on your play, with your vision as their guide.

If you know what you want, and know the results you want, you will be fine as a director, just as long as you can articulate your desires to the

individual actors/artists and always remember to direct your characters and not the actors/artists. Happy Directing. By Trish Buxton

Directing by Andrew Chapman

It's a bit of a lonely job, it is like standing outside a sweet shop looking in and watching others have fun. However, on another aspect, it's like being a parent, or even a gardener. You watch your baby slowly grow - being encouraged with kindness and love, well watered with guidance. The baby starts to get onto its feet with faltering steps, helping when it stumbles and falls. Suddenly your child walks and trots along, blossoming into this beautiful creation. You find yourself smiling with pride, laughing even. The lonely aspect then seems to be forgotten or a distant memory. On a serious note, know your subject be it play or panto, etc. and just live the dream.

MESSAGES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

The following Plays have been submitted for consideration by the committee for May 2013. Some submissions were not possible to be performed in the Victoria Hall. If you have any more suggestions please contact a member of the committee as soon as possible. The next Spotlight you will include a breakdown of the ones the committee recommend we consider.

**Spring and Port Wine / Blythe Spirit / Ladies who Lunch
Improbable Fiction / Ladies in Retirement / Seasons Greetings**