



September 2017

Newsletter

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Hello dear members,

Welcome to another members' newsletter.



The Summer Comedy Party, with two one-act plays and a quiz, went with quite a swing but sadly this event did not attract the audiences that we had hoped for and we made an overall loss. Everyone involved – cast and audiences – had a jolly time, and many thanks to those members who did turn out; your support was most welcome.

We had tried to do something different for our summer event in our special 50th anniversary year, but this did not prove as popular as our usual Murder Mysteries. We would still like to ring the changes and are always open to fresh ideas, so any suggestions from our members will be warmly welcomed.

Key Dates

Cheshire Cats

25th - 28th October

Rehearsals start 5th Sept

Box Office 18th September

Beauty & the Beast

13th-21st January 2018

Rehearsals start early
November

Box Office 14th November

Coffee Morning

Saturday 9th September

OUR NEXT PRODUCTION

As the 'Comedy Golds' theme continues throughout our anniversary year, this autumn heralds a charming new production for Polegate.

From October 25th to 28th we are back on stage with **Cheshire Cats**, a lively comedy that has been described as a cross between Stepping Out and Calendar Girls (with clothes on!)



Directed by Cris Haniver, the cast is as follows:

Vicky	Sue Talmadge	Madge	Alison Attwood
Maggie	Helen Griffin	Ethel	Ann Taylor
Hilary	Charisse Goddard	Handsome Drunk	Warren Goddard
Siobhan	Mandy Brown	Policeman	Bill Haniver
Yvonne	Jane Parratt	Radio Voice/ Station Announcer	Jim Dobell
Andrew	Steve Edwards		
Aerobics Instructor	Helen Baird		

Played at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2006, this modern play tackles a very real subject, Breast Cancer, in a funny and endearing way. Follow the Cheshire Cats team as they speedwalk their way to fundraising success in the London Moonwalk. Hilary, Siobhan, Yvonne, Vicky and Maggie are attempting to walk 13 miles across the capital in record time in their decorated bras and posh new trainers, but the sixth member of the team doesn't seem to meet the physical criteria! This is both a girl's night out and a real mission to support a cause close to many hearts, with plenty of laughs and a few tears along the way.

"A genuinely funny and even touching ensemble piece" - Edinburgh Fringe Review, *The Scotsman*

"Moving, emotional, poignant, and best of all it makes you laugh..." - *Chester Chronicle*

Rehearsals start on Tuesday 5th September. Priority tickets for this production will be available to members from 18th September. The ticket price is £10, children £6.50, and £1 for each ticket sold will be donated to Breast Cancer UK.

THE PANTOMIME



Our 2018 pantomime is **Beauty and the Beast**.

The panto is being directed and choreographed by that lovely double act: Sue Wood and Cris Haniver, supported by musical director Michelle Radley and a very funny script by Alan Frayn.

The cast is as follows:

Belle	Heather Tingley	Prince Danton	Warren Goddard
Ermengarde	Ronnie Boyce-Stevens	The Beast	Richard Baker
Esmerelda	Mandy Brown	Marcel	Ian Parratt
Madame Fifi	Chris Thompson	Monique	Jane Parratt
Jacqui	Laura Buck	Monsieur Le Fou	Bill Haniver
Gustave	Hope-Marie Henderson	Flora	Luisa Livesey
Belladonna	Cris Haniver		

Rehearsals and scenery for the panto will start in early November and the full schedule will be advised shortly. Cast members and crew will this year receive a 'Panto Pack' with comprehensive details of rehearsal, scenery and production dates, script and musical numbers.

The panto will be on stage 13th-20th January and tickets go on sale on Tuesday 14th November. Please note our revised play times this year:

Saturday 13 th	2pm and 7pm
Sunday 14 th	2pm and 6pm
Wednesday 17 th	7.30pm
Thursday 18 th	7.30pm
Friday 19 th	7.30pm
Saturday 20 th	2pm and 7pm
Sunday 21 st	2pm

IMPORTANT REQUEST: As well as fantastic acting, our pantos are famed for their brilliant sets, but they don't build themselves. This year's panto requires a lot of scenery and we will need plenty of people to help, mostly on Sundays and over the Christmas/New Year period. We want to hear from anyone who is handy with a hammer, drill or saw, or can hold a paintbrush. Don't worry: you don't need to be Picasso as there will be a range of tasks from scenic backcloths to simply slapping on emulsion. This year we aim to have a schedule of tasks for each set-building session so you won't be left hanging around. You will be joining a very friendly team and will be rewarded with loads of tea, coffee and great conversation (bring your own sandwiches!). If you are able to help, even for an odd morning or afternoon, or know someone who can, please contact us at admin@polegatedramagroup.com. Thank you.



COMMUNITY CENTRE & DRAMA GROUP IMPROVEMENTS

There have been a number of recent improvements to the community centre and the drama group's own assets:

Firstly, the area under the stage has been dried out and relined and our costumes and props are back in place. The under-stage area is now well organised and tidy ... long may it continue! A big thank you to everyone who worked so hard over the bank holiday weekend for this to happen.

Secondly, we have a new lighting desk and a happy chairman! The old desk had been giving us some grief for a long while and finally let us down for the Summer Comedy Party, requiring the urgent hire of a replacement unit. Hopefully the new lighting desk will be much better and reliable. The technical area at the back of the hall is also being partitioned to provide more secure storage for our valuable electronic equipment.

Thirdly, Maria has been giving our website a great new facelift with more useful information about our forthcoming productions and other key dates. Check it out now!



COFFEE MORNING

Many thanks to Sylvia who organised the last coffee morning. Our next one is on Saturday 9th September, also organised by Sylvia, and we appreciate all offers of help and cakes.

SPOTLIGHT

This is a new feature in the newsletter: a spotlight on a member of the drama group with, hopefully, a bit more information than you already knew. In this edition, the spotlight falls on our deputy chairman, Cris Haniver:

Cris first joined the group in 2006, in the chorus of Aladdin and has been in every panto since then bar one. But when Cris came to Polegate, she was no newcomer to the stage – far from it.



"I started performing when I was three," Cris says, "and, a year or so later, I had my first show at the Winter Gardens. I was in The Wizard of Oz and I played a bluebird and a bubble!"

Cris (that's actually her Equity name) turned semi-professional when she was thirteen, and appeared in her first professional cabaret season at sixteen. She went on to do many years as a professional dancer, in London cabarets and summer season floorshows, and appeared on TV too, the first time playing a can-can dancer at the Moulin Rouge.



Retiring from the professional circuit after the birth of her son, Cris kept her hand in (or rather her feet!) as a semi-professional in modern ballet, tap and modern jazz. Returning to her birth town of Eastbourne, Cris joined the Sussex School of Dancing and Gilbert & Sullivan Group where she performed, choreographed and teamed up again with Sue Wood (the pair had danced together as children).

But why Polegate? Cris says: "I'd never been in panto before and it was something I'd always fancied ... and of course Polegate is famous for its pantos!"

Away from the stage, Cris turned to the law and is now a partner with Eastbourne solicitors Cornfield Law where she specialises in Wills, probate and powers of attorney. What drew her towards becoming a solicitor? "Because I'm still on stage. Your clients are your audience and you have to be very professional, know your job and your lines. I deal mostly with private clients, ordinary, elderly people living in care who don't have anyone else. I look after their affairs and do their shopping. I love my job!"

At home in Eastbourne, Cris is married to Bill and between them they have three children, three grandchildren, four dogs, two canaries and two goldfish. It's a happy house!

Let's turn back to the theatre: Cris is now both an actor and a director, but which does she prefer? "I always thought I only wanted to act as I come alive on stage, but now I also love directing. It's like a chess set and I am moving the pieces around. I wouldn't want not to do both."

With so many years in theatre, what is Cris's most memorable moment? "I was in a variety show with a group of girls and we were all dressed in beautiful yellow crinolines. During the interval we were sitting on the stage behind the curtains, legs splayed out and dresses tipped up round our necks when the (new and inexperienced) stage manager suddenly pulled back the curtains ..."

And what is Cris's all-time favourite production and role? "My favourite production has to be Hot Mikado with the Gilbert & Sullivan Group, and my favourite role is the Baroness in Cinderella, but I've enjoyed all my parts. I've never played a fairy and never will be. I'm not fairy material!!"

Finally, as Cris is now vice-chair of the drama group, what are her hopes for the future? "I think Polegate has members who are really enthusiastic and, because of that, we will continue to succeed. But I hope to get new blood in too to ensure our succession and, with Beauty and the Beast, I was pleased to be able to bring in some new people. Polegate is a really friendly group, everyone watches out for each other, people care, and we have fun!"

I hope you enjoyed finding out more about Cris. Watch out for another Spotlight special in the next newsletter.

AND FINALLY ...

We were delighted to receive a letter from the Town Clerk of Polegate Town Council:

*"It is with great pleasure that I write to you to advise you that Polegate Drama Group has been selected as the winner of the **MAYOR'S CUP AWARD** for 2017."*



That's all from me. I hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter and look forward to the next one, which will be issued in December. This is your newsletter and I welcome your contributions, so please feel free to send me any anecdotes or funny stories that may be of interest to other members. Just email c/o admin@polegatedramagroup.com

I hope to see you all at our autumn production, if not before!

Very best wishes,
Alison