

AUGUST 2026



Remember to renew your membership



Gentleman Jack is in performance as this month's Oast Notes goes to print. If you haven't bought tickets yet, buy them now. Why not? Come along and see our final play of the 25/26 season.

A bold heiress shatters society's rules - stealing hearts, secrets, and power - in a seductive tale of desire and defiance.

Please be aware there will be intimate scenes of a sexual nature throughout.

Running until 25th July. Performances at 8pm.
Tickets: members £10. Non-members £14.

We Need Chaperones!

We're looking for volunteers to join our chaperone team for the Oast Youth Theatre and Hoppers. Without them, the shows are legally not able to go ahead.

As a chaperone, you'll play a vital role in keeping young performers safe and supported during rehearsals and performances. Your responsibilities will include:

- ensuring the child has enough breaks and meals
- taking action if the child is ill, upset or tired
- considering health and safety issues
- safeguarding issues
- adhering to legislation relating to child performance
- assisting costume changes and dressing
- escorting children at all times, including to the toilet

While this may look like a lot, they are quite common sense in practice, and it is a fun way to work with our wonderful young performers.

To become a chaperone, you'll need to complete a short training course, obtain an Enhanced DBS check (which the council will arrange for you), and be available for rehearsals and performances.

If you're interested, please contact Jason at jason.lower@oasttheatre.com

Tonbridge Lions Fete

The theatre will have a gazebo stand at the Tonbridge Lions Club Fete again this year, so do come along and join us, the more the merrier! It's a great way to help publicise the theatre, and maybe we might muster a few recruits! We'll have our banners on display, lots of props for people to look at, some lighting and sound equipment, A6 flyers advertising the next four shows, the new season programme, hopefully some show photos. We're planning on taking along Aslan's headpiece, Alice in Wonderland figures to promote the Christmas show, a few costumes, various food props such as *The Good Life* gateau, eggs and bacon, and Miss Havisham's cake from *Brilliance in the Room*, along with anything else we might be able to carry!

The theme for the day is 'sport for all' to celebrate how sport, like theatre, brings people of all ages together, strengthens communities, encourages teamwork. If you fancy dressing up, perhaps as your favourite sporting hero, there will be a best-dressed competition.

The programme for the day includes a Samba band, Tonbridge Soul Choir, the AMC Dance School and Colette Redgrave with Songs from the Shows.



SAFETY TRAINING DAY

Wednesday 29th July.

As some of you may know, we have recently asked Arts Safety to come and do an audit. As a result, we have to conduct training for all members who carry out activities at the Oast Theatre, so we have arranged a training day.

The day will be a refresher for those who attended the previous training or are attending safety training for the first time. The day will be tailored to the activities that people undertake at the Oast

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COME TO THE CABARET!

Saturday 26th September

7.30 pm for 8.00 pm

You are invited to the Oast for an evening celebrating the joys of Musical Theatre, featuring LUCY GARRIOCH - West End singer, actress, vocal coach, choir leader and much else besides. Look her up online - you will be impressed! Lucy has toured far and wide with her one-woman cabaret show and she will entertain us for the first half of the evening; after the interval the programme will also feature YOURSELVES - a chance to sing some of the best songs ever written for the theatre, to the original backing tracks. How could you miss it?



This is a members' event and the cost for the evening is £12, to include light refreshments; it will all happen in the Bar Lounge (the bar will be open, of course) and so numbers will have to be limited. To book, preferably please email valerie.armstrong@oasttheatre.com (or call Valerie at 01892 723459/07792 079451). All bookings will be acknowledged, with details of how to pay - online direct to the club, or by cheque or cash if you prefer. The Box Office will not be booking this event. We really look forward to welcoming you to an exciting and fun evening!

The Curtain Falls on Another Season.

The 25/26 season has been very busy. So many productions in one season. A season in which we saw so many plays performed in the Janet Young Studio as well as on the main stage. It is an achievement of which we should be proud. As you can see in the centre pages, so much has gone on. The pictures may have actors and performers in the various shows, both adult and youth theatre, but actors alone do not make a production. All the other people involved in putting on each play and each performance should also be remembered. The director, the backstage team, the technical crew, the Playgroup, the sewing ladies, as well as those who serve behind the bar and the coffee counter. Not forgetting those who volunteer to take on the very important role of front of house. The Art Group, the Sociable Committee and the Management Committee. The audiences as well. Each of us plays our part. The list goes on. Without all these people, the shows would not go on, and the theatre would fall by the wayside. So I'm sure you'll join me in saying a warm thank you to all.

As we are about to embark on another season, please remember to pay the due membership fee. At only £30, it is a bargain.

Ed.

Artist of the Month

MARGARET WOOD

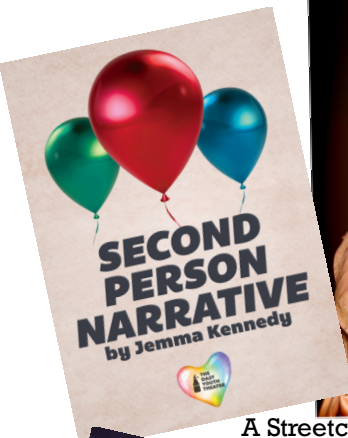
Margaret works with the Oast Wardrobe group, who meet mainly on Wednesday mornings. For years her pastimes have included sculpture, pottery and especially painting, experimenting with all types of media, including pastel work and pen and ink sketches. She is also keen on knitting, crochet and needlework, which led her to the Oast to assist with the making and mending of costumes.

She belongs to several local art groups, enjoying both the company and the variety of knowledge gained. She says she would not be so presumptuous as to call herself an artist, but considers she is a reasonable “copyist”. She enjoys hours of quiet pleasure producing pictures in a variety of subjects—animals, portraits, country and sea views. Margaret’s next exhibition is in the Oast Bar Lounge during July.



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Farewell to season 25/26



A Streetcar Named Desire



Quartet



The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

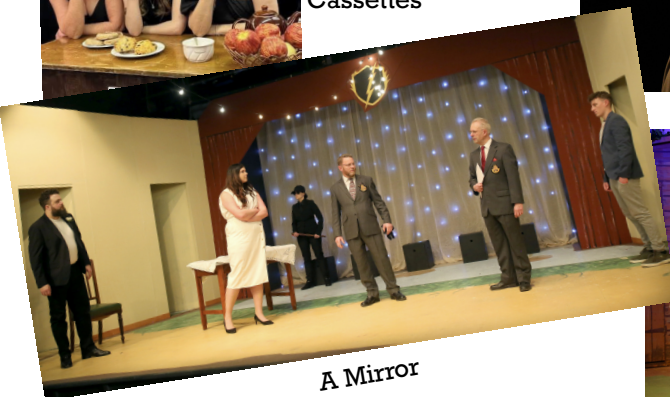


Lord of the Flies

Cassettes



Still Life



A Mirror



Humble Boy



Overruled



Just Let Me Go



The Wardrobe



The Good Life



The Master Builder



Hymn to Canada



Abi's Apartment



The Brilliance in the Room



Gentleman Jack

The Brilliance in the Room Review

An entertaining gallop through Dickens' novels is how Phil Porter, the writer and director of *The Brilliance in the Room*, describes his production. It certainly was a gallop, depicting a mix of around fourteen different scenes, and it was also entertaining, giving the audience a taste of both the comedy and tragedy of nineteenth-century London.



Samantha Comfort & Tony Pegg

Phil Porter brought together a strong and talented ensemble cast who showcased not only some of the more well-known characters such as Pickwick, Pip, Miss Havisham, Magwitch, but also some of the lesser-known such as Miss Flite, Mrs Gamp, Joe and Betty Higden. Dickens was an advocate of the small, unnoticed people who lived on the margins of society, in *Brilliance* we were treated to a snapshot of their lives. A crazed bird woman, a gin-imbibing nurse, a raucous convict, inmates of prisons and the workhouses were just some of the characters we met. The control, indifference and cruelty displayed by the authority towards these starving beings was shocking to observe. These poor dying people would likely hang if they asked for 'more'.

The skill of the cast, Deborah Berger-North, Wendy Challis, Samantha Comfort, Lizzie Goodall, Nadia Higson, Tony Pegg, and Carol Smith to perform as and continually transition into such different and varied personas was extremely impressive.

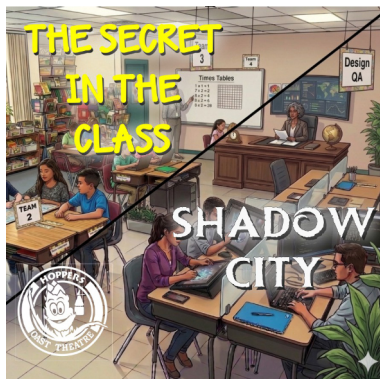
The many special effects and numerous on-stage props and costumes made for a dramatic and atmospheric production. Impressive sound (the storm and gunshots in particular) and changing screen imagery by Alaric Smith, evocative lighting by Will Dunn, such as the striking silhouettes during the duel, befitting period costumes sourced and sewn by Alison Miall and the Oast Costumiers, all worked together with the props to enhance the mood and setting of each scene. Sue Biggs and Lee Kirk's creativity and attention to detail on the props added much variety and entertainment. I particularly liked the guns which turned into oars when rowing across the marshes, the yellow umbrellas used as wheels on the Commodore coach, the lit candles and lanterns, the glowing fireplace, the white death masks, and the pile of red ribboned documents. The three-tiered wedding cake, covered in cobwebs with a spider to boot, was a perfect metaphor for Miss Havisham's decay.

The powerful and memorable lines quoted at the end of the performance served as a reminder of the brilliance of Dickens' writing, but there was also a lot of brilliance in the room from everyone involved. Congratulations.

Mandy Hulston

Hoppers review

I always look forward to both our Hoppers productions and our Youth Theatre. It is good to see the budding talent and to watch the enjoyment of the cast.



A lot of hard work had gone into making The Hoppers Summer Show such a success. Two very different plays, each quite challenging for the cast. A clever use of the projection onto the backdrop clearly set the scene. In *Shadow City*, the setting was a modern, fully computerised office. The cast was confident in their moves. There was also some delightful characterisation. The costumes were well chosen, the more relaxed attire for some members of staff

contrasting with the Dex sporting his collar and tie. Well done to the team for being confident with their moves, maintaining their character, speaking so I could hear in the back row and working well together as a cast. It is never easy being first on stage, so congratulations to a confident receptionist. Great fun, well acted and congratulations to a hard-working cast.

As if by magic, we moved to a classroom, again thanks to our lighting designer! You could easily believe you were back in the classroom! There were some lovely cameo parts in the play. Mr Brindle the caretaker, was kept very busy. Miss Ashcroft was confident in her character. Then the dreaded WET PLAY the nightmare for any teacher but again I loved the characters, the paper planes, and the paper being thrown. With the arrival of the new girl, you could feel the chemistry of the class change. Well done for the dance routine, and the fight scene was realistically staged; that is not easy. The cast really entered into their characters and maintained their roles. Do, however, remember to speak up so the back row can hear you. Many thanks to the backstage crew and the lights and sound, which were impressive. Lovely to have a full house and a very appreciative audience. Thanks as well to the chaperones, but many thanks to Phil and Dotty for directing two most enjoyable plays of a high standard. I am looking forward to seeing these Hoppers in youth productions. A most entertaining evening.

Lee Kirk

Ticket Analysis

Hoppers

Tickets sold 191

% of seats sold 85.27

Brilliance in the Room

Total tickets sold 471

Members 228

Non members 243

% of seats sold 52.57



Are you at a loose end on a Wednesday morning? Would you like to fill your time for a good cause? The Oast Playgroup could be the place for you. It is brimming with many activities, such as building sets, creating props and painting. There is a friendly, welcoming atmosphere and plenty to keep you occupied. You can help create props for forthcoming productions.

Help is always welcome when it comes to building sets: so many jobs to do, and so much pleasure to be gained. You can take pride in seeing your work brought to life in all its glory on the Oast stage.

Interested? Contact Ken Smith - Phone: 01732 882221

Drama Committee

The Drama Committee would welcome two more members. The Committee meets once a month on a Saturday morning. Nearer the time that the annual programme needs to be put together we meet every two weeks.



In order to arrange an interesting and varied programme for each season, we ask prospective directors to put forward three plays to the Committee. Every member of the Committee reads each play, so there is a lot of reading! A knowledge of plays and of professional productions is very helpful but a passion for theatre is vital. Interested? Contact Sandra Barfield - sandrapbarfield@gmail.com

100 CLUB WINNERS

£25 Mr and Mrs T Pascall

£10 Mrs H Ward

£10 Mr and Mrs P Cooper

£10 Mrs M Phillips

£10 Mrs J Blessley

You can join the 100 Club for just £13 per year. Call Valerie Shields on

01732 355919 or email 100club@oasttheatre.com

QUIZ

1. Novel by Bram Stoker
2. Lead actor in the film, Alfie
3. Playwright of *Shakers*
4. Four actors who have portrayed Oscar Wilde on film
5. George Bernard Shaw play recently performed in the West End
6. Novel about Arthur Conan Doyle by Julian Barnes
7. Alice in Wonderland film was directed by.....?
8. David Mamet play now performing at the Old Vic
9. Julie Walters starred in which 2003 film?
10. Who acted in the one-woman play, The Picture of Dorian Gray?

Answers next month

Answers for last month's quiz

1. Aphra Behn
2. Wuthering Heights
3. Timberlake Wertenbaker
4. Medea
5. Stevie Smith
6. Sarah Kane
7. Virginia Woolf
8. George Elliot
9. Suranne Jones
10. Caryl Churchill

THE OAST THEATRE



Committee Members

Chairman:	Phil Porter - chair@oasttheatre.com 01732 835460
Vice-Chair:	Kate Robbins - kate.robbins@oasttheatre.com
Secretary:	Sara Lacey - secretary@oasttheatre.com:
Treasurer:	Nick Blessley - treasurer@oasttheatre.com
Head of Drama:	Sandra Barfield - sandra.barfield@oasttheatre.com 07973 657311
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Room & Rehearsal Bookings:	Kate Robbins - hire@oasttheatre.com
Box Office:	Ian Burns - ian.burns@oasttheatre.com
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Trustee:	Nic Hoskins - nicola.hoskins@oasttheatre.com

Deadline

Please send in any copy you wish included in the Oast notes by the 6th of the month.

Copy to be sent to:

Andy Taylor - editor@oasttheatre.com