

FRIENDS OF THE COMPANY OF FOUR

Newsletter April 2022

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Company of Four website - www.thecompanyoffour.co.uk/

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Dear Friends -

2022 and spring-time is upon us and we are in the midst of learning to live with the dreaded covid infections that have been with us for two years already. So many cancellations and set-backs to contend with during this time including Company of Four who haven't staged a major stage show during this time but who now look forward to events starting with their 50th year Anniversary.

'Friends' Membership -

To those of you whose membership year is May 1st to April 30th, we are taking the opportunity to enclose a renewal form and hope to hear from you in due course.

- Reminder that stage costumes are available for hire for £5.00 per costume plus £5 deposit, returnable when the costume is returned in good condition. If interested, please contact Kathy Hilton tel. 01728 746492

Cof4 Accommodation -

The single storey 'Fred Reynolds Centre' in Woodbridge is available for hire; please call 07935 333457 to check dates and/or to make a booking.

Gavin Lee - as many members will know, Gavin was a member of Cof4 as a child performer in 70's and 80's and at that time attended schools in Woodbridge finishing at Farlingaye High School. When he left school, he took his first steps to stardom by attending Bird College and continued his dream and successfully achieved his ambition to appear on many professional stages in the West End. He has been so successful that his career took him to Broadway in USA to name but one city in the country. Gavin married and lives in America with wife and children. Now, Gavin is back in UK for a while where he is starring in many theatres with the production cast and team of 'Beauty and the Beast. He heard that Farlingaye school were to stage their version of 'Beauty and Beast' and took time out to send a video from himself, Sam Bailey and all of the West End cast and wished them "Good Luck". What a brilliant thing to do!

PREVIOUS C/4 PRODUCTIONS

'BE MY BABY' - Martlesham Community Hall - 15th to 17th October 2021

After 18 months, The Company bounced back to the stage/theatre environment; this time with a small scale production at Martlesham Community Hall, with an intimate and immersive performance of 'Be My Baby' which was a poignant drama about attitudes to teenage pregnancy in 1960s Britain. There were four performances; each with a small and very enthusiastic cast with equally enthusiastic technical support. There was an interval with refreshments included and Penny held a raffle on behalf of the 'Friends' and as usual, did very well.

PROPOSED PANTOMIME February 2022 - 'SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS'

Sadly, this major production had to be cancelled because of Covid health problems resulting in major absenteeism of cast and/or production members at rehearsals which also hindered preparations and practicing in between rehearsals.

FUTURE C/4 PRODUCTIONS & EVENTS

Queen's Jubilee celebration in Woodbridge - Friday 3rd June.

Kingston Playing Field, Woodbridge

The Company of Four have been asked to take part in the public event of the Queens Jubilee Celebrations which they have agreed to and are looking to perform a small selection from their next production which is their Summer Show '**Thank You Very Much**'.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH - 22nd to 25th June 2022

Riverside Theatre, Woodbridge

Originally referred to in the previous newsletter as 'A Summer Song and Dance Spectacular - 1972-2022' to celebrate The Company of Four's 50th year Anniversary, with a nostalgic and exciting variety show, auditions have been held and rehearsals are under way for the Show; now titled "**Thank You Very Much**" which refers to the thanks to the Friends and General Public for all support given and which of course, refers to the finale song at the majority of the shows over the past 50 years.

Oliver Fosker is Producer & Vice Chair and writes to you as follows -

Hello everyone. It has been an absolute pleasure for me to be able to write and produce a song and dance variety show to celebrate The Company of Four's 50th year anniversary in entertaining the people of Woodbridge and beyond. I started my stage involvement back in 1989, in a Friends concert no less, I well remember our 21st and our 25th Birthday celebrations in 1993 and 1997 respectively, so, when the opportunity arose for me to write this tribute show for the 50th, I jumped at the chance.

The basis of the show itself is loosely on the origins of The Company of Four, starting out with a Youth Club performance (who remembers those?) at the local church hall. The FOUR members of the Youth Club who ran the productions at that time, are asked by the Youth Group Leader to take a step back (stating they are too old to be considered Youths) and to allow the younger members a chance to gain the experience of putting on productions. The 'FOUR' branch out on their own and it's not long before **The Company of Four** is born. The Woodbridge Cinema Owner is made aware of future plans for local stage entertainment and allows the building of a stage over the seats and erection of sound and lighting towers in the auditorium. They go from strength to strength, starting with an Old Time Music Hall, continuing with pantomimes and variety shows right up to performing some of the West End & Broadway hits; all in Woodbridge as well as other local theatres and also appearing at The Royal Albert Hall in 1999.

The show is to be filled with lots of music that will appeal to a wide range of our audience and many of the Friends may have heard and seen them a few times over the years. I encourage you all to join in, clap your hands and sing whenever you feel like it. It will be great to celebrate the Company of Four's 50th birthday with our loyal supporters of **Friends of The Company of Four**. I won't divulge the ending to '**Thank You Very Much**' save to say that a Big Celebration occurs!

The production will be performed at our home of The Riverside Theatre as follows -

Wednesday 22nd June - 7.30pm

Thursday 23rd June - 7.30pm

Friday 24th June - 7.30pm

Saturday 25th June - 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Seat prices – Adults £15.50, Seniors (over 65s) £13.50, Children £10.00, Family (2+2) £45.00.

-Tickets are on sale now from The Riverside Theatre Box Office tel. 01394 382174, by booking online or by visiting the theatre in person.

As is the norm for the Friends during stage shows, Penny will be organising a fund-raising raffle at each performance. 'Thank you' very much in anticipation of receiving raffle prizes, for the friendship of you all and 'thank you' to supporters selling tickets in the foyer.

50th Year Anniversary BBQ - Bredfield Village Hall - 10th July from 1pm - 9pm.

Planning is now in full swing for the Company's BBQ Birthday Bash on the Sunday, which will be open to all current and previous members of the society, as well as the Friends of the Company, who wish to come and reminisce and have a burger or two! Fun & games will be taking place throughout the afternoon, and some entertainment is being organised. We would love to see as many people as possible to celebrate the 50th year of the Company. Food will be provided, bring your own drinks; also chairs if weather appropriate.

'GOODNIGHT MR TOM' - Seckford Theatre, Woodbridge

20th to 22nd October 2022 (dates to be confirmed)

The Company is still planning to perform the play 'Goodnight Mr Tom', which was made into a moving film in 1999 and is a World War II tale, in which a bad-tempered widower living in a small village takes in a nine-year-old evacuee from London. The widower soon realises that his young charge has been damaged both mentally and physically at the hands of his strict mother. He sets about undoing the damage, teaching the youngster to read, write and draw, but as his tenth birthday looms, the child is summoned back to the city.

Auditions for the Show are likely during July; please contact Cof4 if you know of any children that would like to be involved.

PREVIOUS OUTINGS

CLACTON WEST CLIFF THEATRE - 'Brassed Off' - Saturday 27th November 2021

45 members booked for this outing by coach. Firstly, we stopped for shopping (including M&S of course) and lunch at Clacton Shopping Village, then in the afternoon, went to Clacton West Cliff Theatre to see the stage version of 'Brassed Off'. After this, we enjoyed a meal at Brantham Bull PH. Luckily, we avoided bad weather until heavy rain started in the afternoon, by which time we were under cover and virtually unaffected until leaving the coach to complete our journey home. Everyone seems to have enjoyed what was the first outing for 21 months caused by lockdowns and concern regarding Covid-19.

'WARNER HOLIDAY - THORESBY HALL, NOTTINGHAM

Friday 8th to Monday 11th April 2022

As this venue was the last Warner holiday that was organised for March 2020 but unfortunately had to be cancelled because of Covid, we planned again for April this year. Same venue and easy to organise we thought, but covid and two-year lapse brought differing Group arrangements by Warner and sadly, illness for some members who had to miss the event. Thankfully the holiday went extremely well and we were blessed with bright sunny weather throughout. En-route to Nottingham we stopped at Coton Orchard Garden Centre and arrived Thoresby Hall at 3.30pm. Returning home, we stopped at Springfields Shopping Outlet in Spalding ("thank you" Tony & Marian for the idea) and also had a short stop at Bury St Edmunds; arriving home late afternoon. We very much enjoyed the lovely cards, messages of appreciation

and gifts from members. Friends' trips usually have a fair amount of laughter and banter and this one was no exception. There were extremely generous (£1 each) gifts distributed including a green hat to Tony for protection of his head, sticky 'cut-outs' in book to form pictures given to Pat & Kath and Diane & (another) Kath who had to share, with instructions not to squabble.

Felixstowe Travel were hired for the holiday and we have thanked them for the lovely coach provided and for Marcus; their most competent and obliging driver.

FUTURE OUTINGS & EVENTS

THREE IN ONE - Thursday 9 June 2022

1 - Cherry Lane Southview, Garden Centre, Fritton, Gt Yarmouth

Time for exploring many items on sale as well as looking around the garden centre and taking of refreshments.

2 - NEIL SANDS - HAPPY & GLORIOUS at Marina Theatre, Lowestoft

Arrangements have been made for this show with their publicity as follows - - *'Come and enjoy a regal and patriotic afternoon as we celebrate in style Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Join Neil Sands and his wonderful West End cast as they travel back over 70 Glorious years of her record breaking reign, bringing back golden memories with songs made famous by many of her favourite singers and starts with her Royal Command Performances. From show tunes to the swinging sixties and a Cockney knees-up to a rousing section from Last Night of The Proms. Finishing with our signature flag waving Finale in a tribute to the veterans of her armed forces; this really is the perfect nostalgic way to celebrate this historic occasion.'*

3 - BUFFET MEAL - The Lion Inn, Little Glemham

Arrangements have been for a stop here for a Buffet prepared just for us and where we can purchase liquid refreshments from the Bar, have a chat, etc.

The coach will pick up at Woodbridge swimming pool at 9.00am (to be confirmed) and travel to the first stop along the A12 northwards via Beccles. As most people will know, there is adequate parking in the car park adjacent to Woodbridge swimming pool.

The total cost for the coach, theatre, meal and driver's gratuity is £46.00 per member (£49.00 per non-member).

BURE VALLEY RAILWAY AND BROADS BOAT TRIP - Thursday 7 July 2022

Tickets have been booked for coach travel to Aylsham, a trip on the Bure Valley Railway to Wroxham followed by time in Wroxham for lunch, then by coach to Horning and a Broads trip on the Mississippi Paddle Boat from and return to Horning, then coach travel home. We will arrive back in Woodbridge approximately 7.30pm.

The coach will pick up at Woodbridge swimming pool at 8.00am (to be confirmed) and travel to Aylsham on the A12 northwards via Beccles. As previously mentioned, there is adequate parking in the car park adjacent to Woodbridge swimming pool. There is access provided embarking and disembarking the boat for disabled passengers.

The total cost for the coach, train, boat and driver's gratuity is £42.00 per member (£45.00 per non-member).

GENERAL NOTES REGARDING OUTINGS, ETC. -

- When booking outings with us, please remember to include a stamped addressed envelope if you would like a receipt for the payment; otherwise we will let you have the paperwork when we next meet.
- If anyone is unsuccessful when applying for an outing/event, we invite you to let us know if you would like to be considered for late cancellations.
- Guests - Regarding non-members wanting to join us for any outing, we try to make places available whenever possible but members must be given priority.
- Seat numbers - We prepare numbered seating plans for every outing but, sometimes these will conflict with the actual coach seating and/or theatre seating provided. Please bear with us for any changes forced on us and be assured that there are always sufficient places available.

ADDITIONAL EVENT

BIG BAND & THE SPALLETTES - The Riverside Theatre, Woodbridge

Sunday 1st May - Performances 14:00 & 18:00

Stardust Big Band members are a mixture of ages and musical backgrounds, but they all share a passion for jazz and a love of playing together, with music ranging from early swing to easy listening and modern big band spanning the 1920s to the present day.

Performing with the band are The Spallettes - Helen, Amy and Katy Spall; three daughters of Lyn and the late Don Spall. As you may well know, the girls work in stage management; Helen and Amy are on tour in London and Katy is Head of Wardrobe with a stage production; also on tour.

They love singing together and join with Stardust Big Band whenever they can all be in the same venue at the same time! They are all very excited to be back in the town that they grew up in and the theatre that they regularly performed in and refer to as their second home. Tickets for this wonderful event can be purchased on-line, by phoning box office 01394 382174 or by visiting the Riverside Theatre.

... **and finally:** Best Wishes to you all as we approach Summer and we look forward to seeing you at forthcoming Company of Four shows, events and outings. PLEASE make yourself known to us at front-of-house of the theatre(s) so that we can say "Hello".

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Reserveplace(s) @ £46.00 per member,place(s) @ £49.00 per non-member

Total £

I/We enclose £ full payment (cheque payable to Mrs P Burrows).

I/We agree to comply with Covid protection measures as current at time of travel, to not travel with any symptoms of Covid-19 and be prepared to wear masks/visors in enclosed spaces.

Name(s) Member No(s)

Address

Tel. No Mobile phone No

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