



The Chorus Line

The Newsletter of The Company of Four
March 2024

Welcome from the Chair:

Hello everyone, Happy March!! Aren't we busy at the moment?

Firstly what a corker of a pantomime, a lovely week was spent with our friends making yet another fabulous piece of theatre. I had so much fun, and my special thanks goes to Oliver who did a great job of getting it off the ground and his great group of troops who assisted every step of the way.

We have a couple of social events coming up this month, I can't wait to see you all there. The social events that go alongside the shows are so important, as not only do they fundraise they are a fantastic opportunity to build our theatre community.

Lastly, next up we have The SpongeBob Musical - Youth Edition, more details below. I can't wait to see the youngsters shine again.

All the best

Lily x

Welcome from the Editor:

Thank you to all the contributors this month. Lots of things are happening in the Company of Four, as Lily says we have some exciting social events coming up, as well as auditions for our next production. If you wish to contribute to the NL in future editions, please do drop me a line, all the details are below...With that, here is a bumper six-page March offerings...

Oliver

Did you hear about the hungry clock. It went back four seconds.

Jack & The Beanstalk:

What can I say, other than What a Show! I know I would be biased in my opinion of the production, but listening to our audience who left, and some of them making a bee line for me, the comments were all positive and very congratulatory to all the cast and crew. Several audience members commented on the speciality parts, the fabulous beanstalk, the magnificent Giant, the funny Cow, along with lots of people, in person and on our socials commenting on the excellent singing and dance routines. We had a fabulous review from Noda, which is copied in beyond the back page for those who haven't yet seen it. I was also incredibly pleased with the Get Out on Saturday night, with lots of help from the cast, company members and a couple of audience members who stayed behind and said they'd like to help! With so much help, we were finished, packed away and home by mid-night...unheard of! This production is another feather in the cap of the Company of Four, to which I am very **Thankful** to everyone who helped in any small way shape or form!

Oliver

Bucket Collection and Cruise (oooo!):

As this Newsletter goes out to members, I am still awaiting the final official total from the Bucket Collection that was held in aid of St Elizabeth Hospice during our Panto run. I know it will be over £2000, and I thank our audience members sincerely for digging deep and supporting such a fantastic organisation. The last Saturday night of Jack and the Beanstalk also saw the draw of our fabulous prize of the Cruise (oooo!), that had been donated by Fred Olsen Cruise Lines in aid of St Elizabeth Hospice. The lucky winner was Emma Potter and she received (*what could have been mistaken for a disturbing!*) phone call from Dame Dolly Dumpling and Dangle to advise her of being the lucky winner. The video of this can be seen on our Facebook page. Congratulations to Emma and Thank you our wonderful audience for raising some much-needed funds.

Oliver

Two cannibals are eating a clown. One says to the other 'Does this taste funny to you?'

The SpongeBob Musical - Youth Edition:

Time doesn't stand still in the Company of Four and this Sunday we have auditions for The SpongeBob Musical. We have all been working hard on the initial plans and can't wait to see who comes along. Full details are as follows:

Sunday 3rd March 2024 12pm

Millenium Jubilee Centre, Kesgrave

Show dates are 1st & 2nd June.

Please do join the audition group for more details at:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/4TqJmDHBG7hSnXLW/?mibextid=K35XfP>

The Production team hope to see many of our junior members on the day. The production is open to anyone aged 8 to 18 (at the time of the show). All of the relevant audition material has now been shared on the Facebook page - it is great to see so many of you joining. We're also keen to see lots of new faces, so if you have any friends/family that may be interested please do pass them the details. There will be opportunities for all. The Company of Four are an inclusive group and therefore we are opening all parts to any individual. Please ask the team on the day if you require any further information. See you Sunday!

Lily, Charlotte, Sarah & Neil

Panto Party:

After the wonderful week and a bit of Panto, it's time once again to boogie on down and have an evening of frivolities at our Panto Party. So come along on **Saturday 2nd March** at Martlesham Community Hall (behind Tesco) from 7:30pm (*well spotted Jessie!*) and join us for a smashing disco and games throughout the evening. Tickets are £5 single or £10 a family from the same household and can be purchased on the door. It will be great to see everyone!

Catherine



Barn Dance:

'Grab your partners, round and round, it's time to Hoedown!' Yes, the Company are thrilled to be welcoming back local Céilidh band Stumpy Oak, to a social event that is bound to get you up on your feet and dancing the night away. **Saturday 16th March** at the Woodbridge Community Hall, Tickets cost £20 for adults and £10 for children, which includes food. Choices are: Fish & Chips, Jumbo Sausage & Chips, Veggie Burger & Chips and Sausage & Chips for the children. A Vegan & Gluten free option is also available, please mention this when booking. The evening is open to all friends and family, so please do spread the word. If you wish to purchase tickets, please email me at harty19@hotmail.com where I will need the number of tickets required and your food order. I will give you details of how to pay when you email me. We'd love to see as many of you there!

Vicky

Did you heard about the giant that threw up? It's all over town!

Friends of the Company of Four:

Congratulations to everyone involved with the latest pantomime production 'Jack and the Beanstalk' both on-stage and behind the scenes. A very big 'Thank you' to Members of Cof4, family and friends who were tremendously supportive of the Raffle held in the theatre foyer. So many prizes were donated, that together with donations by Friends of Cof4, we raised £763.00 profit (*A Massive Thank You to the Friends for their fabulous fundraising during the production and raising so much money - Ed*).

We also had 'Friends' Diane and Peter from Kesgrave write to us this week saying "*Just wanted to say the Panto last night was a real 'feel good evening'- so many youngsters on the stage and so much talent. As usual the Dame was on top form, we loved the Moo cow!! and Dingle and Dangle were such a good team/ great entertainment. Please pass on our congratulations to all the cast. We are looking forward to the next productions*".

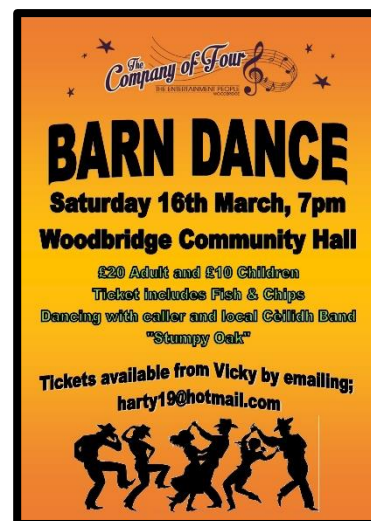
We now look forward to hearing about auditions and rehearsals for The SpongeBob Musical - Bring on the Youth of the Company!

Penny and Vernon

The Treasurer Writes:

Well, the Panto is physically over; scenery, costumes and props in store (or on the way); portacabins gone; children back at school. A breath taking 2 weeks all round, and it leaves me to finalise the paperwork and crunch the numbers to see how it all turned out financially. With bags of cash to count from programme and merchandise sales; invoices to pay, it takes a good few days! So, at this point, I will be reserved and can only say that I would expect to see a small surplus from the production. By next newsletter I will be able to be more certain and precise.

Neville



Fred Reynolds Centre:

The Fred Reynolds Centre has recently had several enquiries for bookings, which is great to see. So much so, we now have a new email address for enquiries: frcbookingsecretary@gmail.com, as well as our regular telephone number 07935 333457. Please do spread the word about the availability for hiring the centre, if you know anyone wishing to hold a birthday party or afternoon tea, it's a great place to hold them!

Oliver

I stayed up all night wondering where the sun went. Then it dawned on me...

A Message from Ian O'Brian Baker:

Jack & the Beanstalk marked the first absence of Life Member Ian Baker in nearly 50 years of Panto. Sadly, Ian has had to have a stay with the NHS and an operation, which has put him out of action for a while and his presence backstage on the ropes was missed this time round. He has asked me to forward on his Thanks for the get-well card from the Company, and he's now home and on the slow road to recovery. We wish you all the best Ian and Get Well Soon.

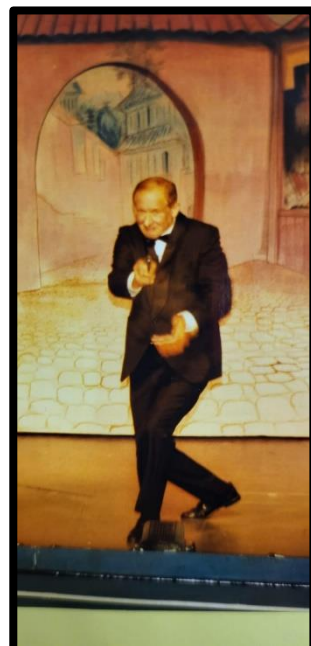
Oliver

England doesn't have a kidney bank. But it does have a Liverpool...

Mick Hadgraft:

Amidst our panto highs, we learned of the sad passing of our dear friend Mick Hadgraft. From stooge to pantomime kings, Mick trod the boards under many guises within The Company of Four. Although it has been some years since he last performed, many of his skits are remembered with fond giggles, including one James Bond style sketch where he made a death-defying drop from the ceiling only to reappear a second later from the trap door with a martini in hand. His comedic timing, coupled with his friendliness and warmth made him a firm favourite with the audiences and cast alike. Mick will be very much missed. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Lily



The Back Page

The Committee:

Chair: Lily Griffiths

Vice Chair: Oliver Fosker

Treasurer: Neville Woolnough

Secretary: Neil Thorpe

Committee Members:

Natalie Barker, Catherine Dale, Vicky Fosker, Adam Kearney, Kayleigh Richardson, Allan Rogers, Katy Spall, Adam Thorpe & Sarah Wheatley.

If any member has any questions, issues, concerns, or suggestions, please do speak to any of the committee members above, and if they can't help, we shall guide you to who can. We are here to support the Company and you as the membership, so please do get in touch with us.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:

New This Month in **RED...**

Saturday 2nd March - Panto Party

Sunday 3rd March - Auditions for The SpongeBob Musical - Youth Version

Saturday 16th March 2024 - Barn Dance

Saturday 1st & Sunday 2nd June 2024 - The SpongeBob Musical - Youth Version

October 2024 - The Railway Children

February 2025 - Dick Whittington



*There we are, another Newsletter completed. Please do feel free to send me anything you wish to include in a future Newsletter, this can be some good news you may want to share, a birthday shout out, a poem, a short story, or if you wish to be included in the Star Profile section, it really is as easy as emailing me on cof4secretary@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions for the April Newsletter is **March 25th**.*

Follow us on our socials:

www.cof4.co.uk
facebook.com/thecompanyoffour
instagram.com/thecompanyoffour
EMAIL: cof4secretary@gmail.com

Beyond The Back Page

Noda Review of Panto by Catherine Dixey:

Oliver wrote this Panto in 2019 and is now delighted to see it being performed as he takes a lead role, along with his wife Vicky, as the comedy duo of Dingle and Dangle. He tells me he relied heavily on and was very grateful for the assistance of Adam Thorpe, who was also his Stage Manager. It was a major challenge directing this enormous cast of 10 main leads and a total chorus of 48, the youngest being just 5 years old, not only onstage but in the wings and changing rooms. The chorus had been split into 5 groups from the Tots through to the senior chorus. You do see them all onstage together very briefly but with some clever directing and choreography the different groups are brought onto centre stage and dance off with the next group coming forward, so the stage never looks overcrowded.

This was a traditional, well written Panto full of (awful, but well delivered) jokes and one-liners, with all the familiar characters. Ysabel Bloomfield was very confident in her role of Mavis the Fairy and interacted well with her audience. The role of the wicked Cruella was played by Chloe Atkinson, her experience and talent are evident and gave a quality performance of the song 'Bad to the Bone'. Jack was played by Kayleigh Richardson and brought energy and vitality to the role. Jessica Jay played Rose, Jack's love interest, in a role she portrayed with warmth. This delightful couple bond well together with good songs and harmonies. The dame, Dolly Dumpling was played by Paul Leech. It was his 13th consecutive time of playing the dame, his experience shone through with good, perfectly timed ad-libs and divine covering when it all goes wrong. He sang an incredibly difficult, comedic, rhyming song listing virtually all the towns and villages in Suffolk. What an achievement!

Vicky and Oliver Fosker, as previously mentioned, played Dingle & Dangle, the comedy duo who worked well together, with good timing and communicated well with the audience. Troy Morden & Kit Widdup were Daisy the Cow. These two lads who portrayed Daisy did so with lovely comedy and a real personality keeping her mouth moving in time to the words right up to the final song. Well done boys. Allan Rogers, though appearing throughout, was also in the final scenes as the great looking, 10-foot-tall Giant, not an easy task to manoeuvre this huge costume around the stage and on and off it! The large chorus were kept busy with lots of well performed songs and energetic dancing. There were so many great numbers, but 'Cotton Eye Jo' was particularly effective and enthusiastically performed. The choreographers had played to the strength of their cast including some very accomplished acrobatic moves, and a variety of different genres from ballet to jive and modern dance sequences.

There was a good choice of songs accompanied by 5-piece band and praise should go to Olly, the MD, and the choreographers for the incredible amount of work they did with their cast. The costume list must have been immense with the chorus in numerous, matching, well-fitting costumes, incredibly colourful and with very smart plaited hairstyles. Mention must also go the team of chaperones for looking after and dressing all the young ones, what a task they must have had! Finally, the set and giant's beanstalk looked good, lighting and sound all very appropriate and the scene changes were quick and efficient, utilising effective use of front of tabs to ensure good pace.

Well done to Oliver, all his team and amazing cast for a very enjoyable evening.