

RAVING MAD NO 21

All roads lead to a barmy, windswept, rainy, hot and Mad Summer!

I think it is about that time again when you, the MAD family needs a bit of sustenance by way of a Newsletter. To say a lot has happened since the last one is an understatement and to report that we are still hanging in there, not financially secure by any means but with the recent help of many well wishers, some sassy fund raising events and a couple of grants we are just keeping our head above water. It is such a pity and so frustrating that full houses or even near ones, for our productions still elude us so here's hoping we make it into 2012.

So talking of productions, I think the majority of you enjoyed 'The Lying Kind' – it certainly provoked controversy and where it was liked the comments were excellent and so very encouraging. Where it wasn't liked the playwright seemed to get 'the stick', not me, so I came out relatively unscathed although I did get a few "What on earth made you choose that play?". Reply, "I chose it because it was the funniest play to come along for some time".

That brings me nicely on to our next production, as mentioned to me after the 'Lying Kind' our last two productions have not been exactly 'safe theatre' so prepare yourself for our very first MAD Music Hall so the group have got it right, we went to Wikipedia, and came up with "Music Hall is a type of British theatrical entertainment which was popular between 1850 and 1960 and refers to a form of variety entertainment involving a mixture of popular song, comedy and speciality acts".

So for those of you who want to come to Meeching Hall, Fort Road Newhaven in September, that is just what you are going to get, complete with all the trimmings. By that I mean we will be following the basic format having a grandiloquent 'Chairman', acting as a master of ceremonies, introducing the old songs and some not so old which

you can join in with, together with unpretentious comedy in the form of monologues, acts and sketches some old, some new, but all guaranteed to have you rolling in the aisles with laughter. In fact the evening will be solid entertainment, with of course access to a bar, which was always part of the music hall's appeal.

To add to the atmosphere, it so happens Meeching Hall was built in 1895 when the music hall was at its peak, so maybe it will awaken some ghosts because we know little of who would have been on the stage at that time, but it is certainly going to be a grand evening for those wanting to dip their toes into the past and enjoy one of MAD's unique performances.

The MAD MUSIC HALL will run for three evenings at 7.45pm, from 22 to 24 September. Tickets £8, available from Meeching Estate Agents, High Street, Newhaven from 29 August (Tel: 01273 515566).

Tony Gibbs (Chairman)



Newhaven Cormorant – 16 July

Well what an event! I've seen this sort of street theatre in Brighton before but how good it was to see it in Newhaven. Although I am sure some didn't know what to make of it, nevertheless it was different and attracted the crowds which is always an indication of its success. I am also pleased MAD had the opportunity (albeit small one) to get involved. So on a unseasonably cold evening and maybe influenced by the anarchic sway of the Blue Fiends with their oil drums and haunting music, we simply had fun on the beach, of course reference to any current issues was purely coincidental. Among the deck chairs, knotted handkerchiefs, buckets and spades we bought down our own sand and made castles that looked wonderful in the moonlight, until someone who will remain nameless put water into the moat.



The Future

The future, must always look bright otherwise why are we here? We still have difficulty attracting directors, so I am going to give it another go, it will be awesome and fantastic fun doing, and if MAD has to fold it is going out on a big high. Yes, the rumours are correct we are doing 'Are you Being Served ' as our big seasonal production 19 to 28 January 2012, yes our stage is going to be graced (excuse the pun) with the cast of Grace brothers, the likes of Mr Humphries, Mrs Slocombe and her pussy, Miss Brahms, Mr Grainger, Captain Peacock I can go on and on. Also we need to brush up on our Bavarian dancing and try to enlist the help of a Newhaven/ Denton/South Heighton based German Oompah band, why you may ask? Because the same writers of 'Allo 'Allo – Jeremy Lloyd and David Croft have come up with another very funny play script involving the cast going on holiday and the lead up to it.

The Maddies

It is with a tinge of sadness that the Committee have decided to close our youth group, the main reasons being that one year on, of the four adult members who originally started the group, all have left or decided working with youth was not for them, leaving it to a handful of those remaining to continue. We realise it has been a sharp learning curve for us, the administration of seeking grants, training and check-

ing out staff together with devoting a minimum of two evenings a week on top of trying to keep the main group going was just proving to much in the end as we really needed to focus all our energies, in keeping MAD itself going. On a lighter note, four ex-maddies are in our music hall and we are delighted that they are staying involved.



MAD AGM – Friday 2 September 7.45pm Meeching Hall

A plea from your Chairman, firstly please renew your membership and secondly try to attend because as must of you know the last year has not been an easy one for the group both financially and support wise.

So please come along have your say and at least support the group's wish to continue with and encourage people to become involved in, live theatre in Newhaven. Also put yourself forward to come on the Committee we need new 'blood'. A reminder that August is also the month when your member-

ship is due for renewal, at present it stands at only £15. I hear a whisper that a proposal may be made at the AGM to increase this because it is so cheap and certainly way behind what some other local groups have to pay, so get in quick as we do need members, old and new, so contact our Membership Secretary/Treasurer.

Treasurer, Garry Fowler Tel:01272 611882

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Secretary, Josie Hobbs Tel: 01323 893735

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Some MAD trivia from the past and other bits.

A couple of plays that never quite made it onto the stage for various reasons, 'No time for Fig Leaves', 'I thought I heard a Rustling' - Four playwrights have had the distinction of having their work produced by MAD on more than one occasion (Name those plays??) Richard Lloyd (2001 & 2003) Derek Benfield (2004 & 2008) Ray Cooney (2002 & 2009) Phil Willmott (2009 & 2010) - A second favourite so many times for our Christmas production, however, never quite making it but nevertheless it would have made a magical third time for Richard Lloyd, the play was 'Smut's Saga' - Richard Gray was the pianist busking in Newhaven Square who came to us for 'Arabian Knights the Panto' what a musician! he could play anything, often without music, sadly he drifted back up north, wonder where he is now? – Did you know Puppets have appeared in no less than 6 MAD productions.

Blocking

The art of moving actors on the stage in such a manner as not to collide with the walls, the furniture, the orchestra pit or each other. Similar to playing chess, except that the pawns want to argue with you.

Date for your diaries

Thursday 22nd - Saturday 24th September 7.45pm Meeching Hall – 'MAD Music Hall'

Tickets £8 from Meeching Estate Agents from Friday 26th August

Friday 2 September – AGM - 7.45pm – Meeching Hall

Saturday 3 September – Stall at 'Fete de Newhaven' help required, call Tony.

Tuesday 26 September – 7.45pm – Read through of 'Are you being Served'.

Thursday 29 September – 7.45pm – Auditions for 'Are you being Served'.

Tuesday 29 November – Another MAD fund-raising evening – TBC

Thursday 19 - Saturday 28 January 2012 – 'Are you being Served'.