



FRIENDS' NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF EAST SUFFOLK PERFORMING ARTS

Reg Charity No 1119037



27th issue

June 2007

WELCOME...

...to the 27th issue of the *Friends'* Newsletter ... and, as sharp-sighted readers will spot, the very first issue to boast the 'FESPA' (Friends of East Suffolk Performing Arts) strap-line. As our Chairman, Sidi Scott, explains in this issue, the *Friends* organisation is now, at long last, registered as a Charitable Trust and has acquired an even wider and more exciting *raison d'être* than to support our two summer theatres.

Your new editor certainly finds himself taking the reins not only at the busiest time of the Summer Theatre year but at a momentous turning point in the *Friends'* history. With my predecessor, Jack Clayton's support, encouragement and 26 issues' experience, to fall back on, I hope I will measure up to the task.

Barry Tolfree

CONTENTS	Page
Chairman's report	1
Jill Freud writes	2
Lunchtime theatre tradition returns	2
All you ever wanted to know about Dick Barton	2
Meet the 2007 company	3
2007 Summer Fete	4
Friends Forum	6
Dates for your diary	6
AGM 2007	6
Grand draw 2007	7
Profile of Jim Laws	7
'Worst Fears' : Horror upon Horror!	8

Why the fold?

Friends who have the newsletter delivered will have noticed that it now arrives folded. The new postal charging tariff means that we are able to save approximately £80 by using smaller envelopes.

AT LAST!

Our Chairman, Sidi Scott, welcomes the long-awaited birth of FESPA which sets the scene for a future in which the performing arts can increasingly flourish in East Suffolk.

Greetings fellow *Friends* or 'Fespians' as we could be known now that we have reached and successfully cleared the first hurdle and are a registered charity. Sometimes I wondered if we would ever get there but we did and now your trustees have more work to do in order to meet with the requirements of the Charity Commission.

Our policy for change will be "softly-softly" in the immediate future as we feel that, as *Friends*, we have built up a very happy organisation and, as the saying goes, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it". Meanwhile, we seek to do more to assist the Jill Freud company both in Southwold and Aldeburgh and to keep up the interest throughout the year.

It's a relief to be free at last from dealing with the formal legalese of the Trust document and, in the next few months, the Trustees will be busy preparing the Rules by which our organisation will work in the future - in language that we can all understand! This will be ready for the next AGM and we will be considering projects for the future in order to enhance the theatre life in our area and ensure its future.

In the meantime we would very much welcome any ideas *Friends* may have for progressively broadening the scope of FESPA over the next few years.

I know you all look forward to the new season with great excitement, we are so lucky to have the possibility of seeing good theatre so close to us and we welcome *Friends* who come from afar to join us. The atmosphere, especially on the first night is unique as the company is welcomed back into

our midst and long may it continue with your help and support. May I encourage you to try and join us at our events this year. So please study the details and put them in your diaries.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the *Friends* Evening, the Fete, and the end-of-season dinner. Good theatre-going to you all!

Sidi



Flash-back...

We are indebted to Maurice Rubens for finding this publicity shot of Jill in the January 1951 issue of 'Theatre World', and to Jill herself for loaning us an original print. The caption reads: "Jill Raymond, the 'Beauty' of *Beauty & the Beast*, Nicholas Stuart Gray's original children's play at the Westminster. She is here seen wearing the 1850 costume she wears in the play."

SPLENDID LUNCHTIME TRADITION REINSTATED

Jill writes...

Dear Friends

Once again, let us celebrate our return to Sutherland House. The new proprietor, the excellent Peter Banks, seems delighted to have his premises invaded by theatricals and musicians and, if the sun shines, there will be many happy hours spent in the garden and studio this summer. We are promised an affordable bar and easy-to-eat snacks - or, of course, the luxury of an alfresco lunch. Hurrah!

The Company is now in place, with many old friends looking forward to the first rehearsals in a few short weeks. In the meanwhile, Tony, Mark and I battle with the last-minute preparations...

Don't forget that the Poetry evening on 22nd July, with free wine and song, is once again in the theatre...

and then there's the Music Hall! I could go on...

Have a great season!

Jill Freud

Sutherland House owners so proud to host theatrical lunchtimes once more

Peter and Anna Banks couldn't be more excited about having the lunchtime theatre season back in their Southwold 'Secret Garden'. After two doldrum years during which this precious, listed, Elizabethan building was first closed up and deserted then pressed into service as a down-market, ill-fated carvery, Sutherland House has at last been rescued and given back its deserved dignity by classically trained, award-winning restaurateur and hotelier, Peter Banks.

Kitchens have been expanded and modernised, interiors meticulously conserved, dining areas stylishly redecorated and four new luxuriously fitted bedrooms recently opened. Even as we go to press we learn that, after just four months' trading, Sutherland House has been awarded two AA rosettes.

In spite of all the refurbishment, the tucked-away walled garden in Victoria Street, with its separate studio/function room, remain much as we remember them and Peter means to make the weekend lunchtime experience something to relish gastronomically as much as theatrically with a range of open sandwiches and light lunches served with a glass of wine beneath the spreading branches of the (allegedly) second oldest weeping ash tree in Suffolk.

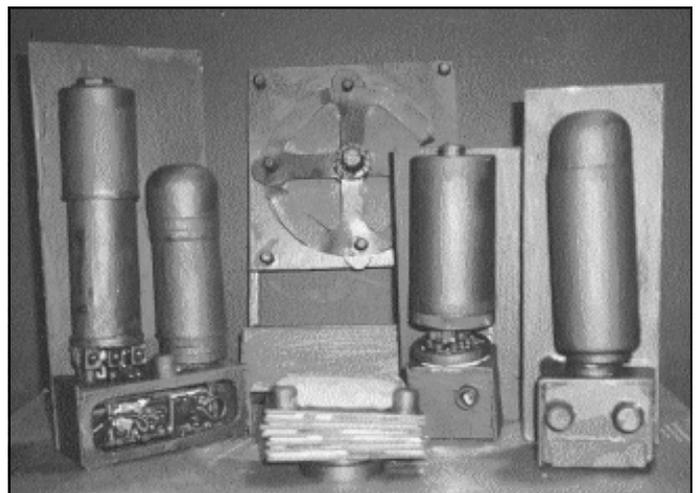
Sutherland House will also be serving pre- and post-theatre suppers throughout the summer with the emphasis on inventive cuisine and, above all, local produce.

Everything you ever wanted to know about...

DICK BARTON, SPECIAL AGENT

- Dick Barton, Special Agent ran for 711 episodes on the BBC **Light Programme** between 1946 and 1951.
- BBC rules limited violence to "**clean socks on the jaw**". (Never seen them worn that way before - or since!)
- Scriptwriters Ed Mason and Geoffrey Webb were instructed: "Sex plays no part in his adventures", although, briefly, Dick did have a **girlfriend**, Jean Hunter, played by Lorna Dermott.
- **Catchphrase** - "With one bound he was free."
- At the series' peak, **15,000,000 listeners** tuned in at 6.45pm each evening.
- **Noel Johnson** played Barton in the first series. In the second series, beginning in 1949, Duncan Carse took over, handing over to Gordon Davies in 1950.
- The theme tune is **Devil's Gallop** by Charles Williams, born Isaac Cozerbreit of Polish parents. He also wrote the music for the BBC TV Newsreel, *Friday Night is Music Night* and the 1937 film of *The 39 Steps* with Robert Donat.
- Dick Barton was finally pushed out of the 6.45pm slot (indeed, of the entire schedules) by **The Archers** during Easter 1951. (How short-sighted was that?)
- **Hammer Films** made three Dick Barton films starting in 1948, but canned the fourth when the star, Don Stannard, was killed in a car crash.
- **Phil Wilmott's** stage musical premiered at the Warehouse Theatre in December 1998. It was so successful that four sequels, by different writers, followed. The sixth, a prequel, *Young Dick Barton, The Making of a Legend*, enjoyed great success and closed at the Warehouse this February.

...not to mention a few things you didn't!



The wonders of wireless - Above: Maurice Rubens' table-top model of his set for DICK BARTON - SPECIAL AGENT. Left: External view of a 1950s Bush Radio ... with knobs on.

Company Artistic Director, Tony Falkingham, invites you to

MEET THE 2007 COMPANY

This Season you will see a lot of old favourites returning as well as some new faces who we hope will become favourites.

Jane Evers appears in ARSENIC & OLD LACE. We last saw Jane being turned into a pile of steaming entrails in the film, *A Tincture of Vervain*, which we made at the end of last season and which Friends will get a chance to see at a special Friends Premier at the Picture House in Southwold in July, (details on the back page). Jane will play Abby Brewster and her sister, Martha, will be played by that really wonderful actress **Marlene Siddaway** whom many of you will have seen in *Miss Marple* and *Midsomer Murders* and whom we have not managed to get here before apart from the odd lunchtime. Marlene will stay on to play Jerry Hinks' sister in ONE FOR THE POT.

Abby & Martha's nephew in ARSENIC & OLD LACE will be played by **Jonathan Jones** who has been in most seasons since playing a marvellous Earnest Worthing in 2004. You will also see Jonathan in ONE FOR THE POT and PRIVATE LIVES. His brother, Mortimer Brewster will be played by newcomer **Nigel Pilkington** who will also astound you all in ONE FOR THE POT. Their other brother, Jonathan Brewster, a part created by Boris Karloff, will be played by **Jonathan Ashley**, whom you last saw as the villain in *Ladies in Retirement* in 1994. Jonathan is also playing Jugg the canny butler in ONE FOR THE POT.

Also in ARSENIC & OLD LACE, providing the love interest, we have newcomer **Kate Middleton** (no, not that one!) and **Clive Flint**, who was the irascible Spettigue in *Charley's Aunt* last year. Incidentally, Emily Pennant-Rea, who was our Ella last year, has just finished a national tour playing Kitty in a production of *Charley's Aunt* starring Stephen Tompkinson;



Simon Snashall and Caroline Wildi in 'The Thirty Nine Steps' in 1999

their Spettigue is our very own **Richard Sims**.

Completing the cast of ARSENIC & OLD LACE will be **Richard Gibson** who played Brassett in *Charley's Aunt* last year (he will play Dr. Einstein) and **Armen Gregory** last seen in *Edge of Darkness* in 2003. They will be joined by **Beverley Denim** the dotty maid from *Dry Rot*. Beverley will also play Louise the French maid in PRIVATE LIVES.

Our second company, which is performing DICK BARTON – SPECIAL AGENT, will be led by **Paul Leonard** who was wonderful as Crocker Harris in *The Browning Version* last year. He will play Dick Barton. His onstage wife last year was **Penelope Rawlins** who will be Marta, the femme fatale. Baron 3

Scarheart will be played by newcomer **Carl McCrystal** and Daphne will be played by **Carley Massy-Birch**, a girl you will be seeing a lot of this year. Also in the cast are Southwold regulars, **Simon Snashall** and **Michael Shaw**. Simon was in our production of *Thirty-Nine Steps* and those of you who enjoyed that will want to book for this show.

Paul, Penny, Carl and Carley will then be seen in Andy



Joe Sowerbutts and Paul Leonard in 'The Browning Version' last year

Powrie's new play, CLIMBING THE WALL together with **Jill Freud & Doreen Mantle**, a treat for those of you who enjoyed Andy's *Growing Old Disgracefully* which was the biggest-selling show ever in both theatres. That cast will have in it our youngest actor, **Joe Sowerbutts** who made such a fine job of Taplow in *The Browning Version* last year and our oldest, **Stephen Hancock**, whom we have tempted out of retirement.

Finally we present PRIVATE LIVES by Noël Coward, with **Celia White** as Sybil and **Caroline Wildi** as Amanda. You will remember them both in *Blithe Spirit* playing Ruth and Elvira. Elyot will be played by **Richard Teverson** who played the lead in *Tons of Money* and has just finished playing Richard Hannay in the West End production of *Thirty Nine Steps*.

Now that lunchtimes, jazz and supper theatre has been restored to Sutherland House and with the three Sunday events at the theatre: Poetry & Wine, Hiss & Boo Music Hall and, hopefully, **Roy Hudd**, I think we are in for an exciting and entertaining Summer.



Celia White in 'Wait Until Dark' in 2005

“LET’S MAKE THIS YEAR’S SUMMER FETE THE BEST EVER!”

Says organiser Val Anderson

Sunday 1st July 2007, ‘Westons’, Walberswick

The *Friends’* annual fete in the grounds of the Freud family home, ‘Westons’, in Walberswick has become a real high-spot of the East Suffolk season. Last year the fete and associated lucky draw boosted the *Friends’* funds by nearly £4,000. This year the event will be officially opened by Jill Freud herself, and our organiser, Val Anderson, is determined that it will be an even better day with, if possible, an even bigger profit. But that depends on *your* support.

Val has made this plea: “We urgently need able-bodied people to put themselves forward to help set up the fete. I mean lugging tables, erecting gazebos, setting up the stalls, laying out the tea barn and general dog’s-bodying. The ultimate success of the day so much depends on everything being in the right place and ready to roll when the first visitors arrive. In recent years some of the stallholders have struggled to be ‘in business’ in time for the 1.30 gate opening.”

Of course, the other all-important way *Friends* can help is by contributing produce and saleable goods or by setting up and running a new attraction or stall of their own devising. Val is the person to ring if you have ideas or are able to volunteer your services. Her number is **01502 724609**. Val is also happy to provide temporary storage for any sale items in advance of the fete.

On this page we list most of the activities so far organised for the day, how you can help and who to contact:

GENERAL HELP REQUIRED

(Call Val Anderson 01502 724609)

Setting up - Val would like to hear from you if you are reasonably able-bodied and could help with both setting up from 10 am and/or taking down from about 4.30 pm.

Stewarding – In charge of manning the gate and supervising the car parking are **Les Reynolds, Ian Halliday** and **David Bunkell**. If you would be willing to help them, let Val know.

Loan of gazebos awnings and umbrellas – Last year, some of us found ourselves competing for shrinking patches of shade as the sun reached its zenith. If you can spare some sunshades or a gazebo please call **Val Anderson 01502 724609**.

THE ATTRACTIONS

Master of Ceremonies this year is **Terry Collins**.

Lucky dip – A huge favourite with the children. Can you help with contributions of small toys, puzzles, dolls, games or other ‘as-new’ gifts? Not essential but it would help if you could wrap them – blue for boys-only, pink for girls-only and any colour for gifts suitable for either. Call **Sue Langley 01502 722455**.

Bottle stall – **Marie Holmes** and **Sybil Cave** can use any number of bottles of alcoholic or non-alcoholic drink. A few ‘star buys’ would be particularly welcome as they are the ones that ‘pull the punters’. Marie and Sybil have made a special plea to avoid donating unhealthy childrens’ pop. Call **01728 668559**.

Cake shop – This stall desperately needs as many *Friends* as possible to come up with promises of food, biscuits, tarts, flans, buns, scones, pies, and cakes to deliver fresh on the day. Please call **Dione Sheriff 01502 723287**. (See also ‘Refreshments’ below.)

Refreshments – **Dorothy Steele** is in charge here. She needs willing helpers throughout the afternoon and, like Dione Sheriff in the Cake Shop, relies on as many people as possible baking as many cakes, scones and buns as possible. If you can help, call Dorothy now on **01502 713038**.

Children’s tombola – Prizes will include all kinds of confectionery, soft (healthy, please!) drinks, games, toys and any other junior paraphernalia you can dig out. Call **Jack Clayton 01986 872425**.

Tombola – Good quality ‘desirables’ of all kinds wanted here. **Paul Thompson 01473 735344**.

Toy shop - A new one, this - the idea of **Connie Barrett** and



Maggie Wilson. If you can persuade your children or grandchildren to part with some unbroken and complete toys, dolls, games, puzzles, kits and other kid's stuff, call **01502 575756.**

Picture gallery – We need original paintings, prints and art work of all kinds – framed and unframed. If you can't find anything on your walls or in your loft, perhaps you could paint us something! Also very welcome would be the loan of any portable easels to help us display the work. **Viv and Barry Tolfree 01502 722582.**

Bric-a-Brac – Never mind “no one will ever buy that!”; the key to a good bric-a-brac stall is that it should be heaving with stuff to rootle through in the hope of discovering that elusive just-what-I've-been-looking-for. Every house has loads of it. Look out yours and call **Wendy Gibbs on 01502 731051.**

The Book Browsery – Managed as ever by **Merwyn Cunliffe** who will also sell records, CDs, DVDs, videos. The more the merrier. If you have some to donate call Mervyn on **01394 382199.**

The Garden store – Not just plants and garden tools and but green-finger-licking goodies too – like home produce, jams, chutneys, honeys etc. Now's not a moment too soon to start potting up those spare seedlings and fledgling tomato plants. And what about doing an inventory audit of your potting shed? There's a ready market here for old garden tools and clean pots and tubs. Call **Val Anderson 01502 724609.**

'Jill's special stall' – This year, Jill has hinted that she will be selling off goods that fell off the back of a number of old Westons caravans. Sounds a bit dodgy to us!



Grand Draw – Turn to page 7 for details of this year's amazing prizes. The draw itself will be at about 4.20 pm on the day. Now we know it's a bit of a liberty but, as you will have seen, we have enclosed with this issue two books of tickets for you to sell, buy, return unsold or chuck away as you see fit. Of course, if you think you can use some more, all you have to do is ask **Joy or Michael Venn 01502 711707.**

Face painting – Our make-up artist this year is **Helen Collis.** If you can lend a hand please let Sidi Scott know on **01502 578711.**

Whisky Draw – Also organised by Sidi. If you'd like to offer a bottle of something really special, call her on **01502 578711.**

Games – **Ben Marriner and James Rand** are looking for helpers to man the various games and competitions. If you'd like to muck in, call Ben on **01502 722488.**

Pony rides – Supervised as always by Westons' stable staff.

Children's dog show – The categories (shouldn't that be 'dogegories'?) are: 'Best Trained', 'Waggiest Tail', 'Most Interesting Trick', 'Most Entertaining Dog Handling' and 'Best in Show'.

Entertainment in the Barn - The programme so far includes our much-loved clowns, Beato and Uncle Fred, a special preview of Wonderful Beast's children's show to be seen in this summer's theatre programme, plus our local children's brass band (conducted by Suffolk Music Advisor. John Flack) and, of course, Tracy's Toppers dance troupe.



The pictures reproduced here are a small selection of those taken last year by John Holmes who regularly helps out at the fete. His wife, Marie, will once more be helping to run the bottle stall.

GIGGLES' & 'LAUGH'* tell you all you need to know about **THE SUMMER THEATRE FETE**

It's at Westons, on the left as you drive into Walberswick. Just follow Laugh and me; you can't miss it!

On Sunday 1st July

Gate opens at 1pm for a 1.30 official opening.

Fete closes at 4.30.

On-site parking and entry charges

The car park at Westons will be open from 11am when the charge for the day will be £3 (the same as the village car park)

Cars arriving after 1pm will be charged £2

The parking fee in both cases includes entry to the fete for all the car's occupants (including one fete programme)



Entry for pedestrians 50p including programme

Stall holders and helpers...

Parking is free, naturally! Stall holders can start setting up their pitches at 11 am which should give them ample time for a break for lunch before being back at their stalls by 1pm ready for a prompt 1.30pm start.

**Our clown and his dog invented for us by Sue Langley, have become the Fete's highly recognisable mascots and publicity agents. Last year, not before time, they*

acquired names thanks to the originality of local girl, Oonagh Hughes, who was the winner of our Name-the-Clown competition. Giggles is the Clown, by the way, and Laugh his faithful companion.

HELP NEEDED!

Over the years we all gather possessions, and - somewhat reluctantly - the *Friends* have done the same. At present these bits and pieces are dispersed (stored by kind people) and unrecorded. So if memories failed or the keepers are absent or ill, we might be deprived of their use, and that wouldn't be in our best interests.

This appeal is for some adequate lock-up storage space in a central position. Once the items we own - such as the raffle drum - were listed and locked away safely in a place with spare capacity, we could add other items (gifts, purchases, etc.).

So if you know of a suitable store that wouldn't cost us too much to rent, please call Sidi Scott (01502 578711) or me (01986 872425).

Jack Clayton

FRIENDS ON LINE?

I have a suggestion for future Newsletters. It would be good to see contact details of at least the editor in there, perhaps? Maybe one day a SST website would help raise the profile - and funds.

Graham B

We wondered if you would be kind enough to pass on to the 'new editor' a suggestion for saving on postage when distributing the *Friends*' Newsletter.

We guess that many *Friends* like us have home email and would be quite happy to have the Newsletter and any other communications, pop into our inboxes rather than letterboxes, thus saving postage and volunteers' time. If email addresses were requested for all new *Friends* when they joined and then for existing ones at subscription time it should result in quite a saving... Plus the benefit of *Friends* being able to forward electronically Newsletters to their acquaintances thereby reaching a wider audience.

Michael & Alison Jones

Point taken about contact details! You'll now find them at the base of the back page. Suffolk Summer Theatres already has a website - www.southwoldtheatre.org which contains details of all the shows. The idea that FESPA could develop its own site is one that is certainly worth pursuing, as is the possibility of distributing copies of the newsletter by email to Friends who prefer this method. As a pilot exercise, I will send Michael and Alison a PDF file of this issue! If any one else would like to try an e-copy please let me know.

Barry Tolfree - barrytolfree@tiscali.co.uk

FOR YOUR DIARY

Fri 29 June (from 6.30) *Friends* meet the Company in Westons' garden. Bring a plate of eats.

Sun 1 July (from 1.30) Summer Fete at Westons.

Wed 4 July Special *Friends*' screening of 'Worst Fears' See back page for details and your invitation.

Thu 12 July Southwold Theatre 24rd season opens.

Tue 31 July Aldeburgh Theatre 13 season opens

Sat 1 Sept Last night at Aldeburgh.

Sat 15 Sept Last night at Southwold.

Fri 28 Sept *Friends*' Dinner with entertainment at St Edmund's Hall, Southwold. Register your interest with Sidi Scott now **01502 578711**. Further details to come.

AGM 2007

**IT'S BEEN OVER A YEAR,
BUT OUR CHARITABLE
STATUS IS NOW A REALITY**

It was this time last year that our Chairman, Sidi Scott, reported that, at the 2006 AGM, the *Friends* had overwhelmingly supported the Trustees' application for Registered Charitable status and the change of name to *Friends of East Suffolk Performing Arts* (FESPA). The application process has been a slow and tortuous one but, at this year's AGM, Sidi was able to report triumphantly that the application had just been formally passed for registration.

Under the chairmanship of President, Margaret Chadd, the meeting was as well-attended as usual. Treasurer, Peter Gibbs, presenting the audited accounts, confirmed that the *Friends* was entering this exiting new phase of its history in excellent financial fettle. On behalf of Jill Freud & Company, Jill herself accepted cheques from *Friends*' funds to provide a bursary for a foreign student, sponsorship for the Southwold and Aldeburgh Children's Theatres in 2007 and a special grant to the storytelling theatre company, *Wonderful Beast* directed by Alys Kihl which is mounting a 'magical Indian version of Red Riding Hood' at Aldeburgh this August. Jill explained that the children's programme could never hope to pay its way but was an enormously important aspect of the theatre season and depended absolutely on the generosity of such sponsorship.

Committee member, Jack Clayton, retiring as editor of this newsletter after 26 issues, spoke of rising costs and announced that the membership subscription which had been £5 for many years would almost certainly have to double to £10 per *Friend* at the next renewal in January 2008.

Jill Freud paid tribute to Jack's 19 years' valuable service to the *Friends* and presented him with a small memento as a thank-you.

Theatre A-Z

Guest speaker for the evening was Richard Frost who this year will be notching up his 12th summer season and directing his 19th production for Jill Freud & Company: an 'Evening of Poetry, Music and Wine' with Jill and 'The Girls' on Sunday 22 July. Richard presented a light-hearted 'A to Z' of the Theatre. 'R' stood for 'Repertory' and 'S', predictably, for 'Southwold', which Richard asserted "embodies all the best traditions of rep." The loudest of many laughs met Richard's 'D' for 'Digs'. Gone, he said, are the days of the fearsome theatrical landlady who would festoon their lodgings with dire warning notices to guests, such as: "Please do not replace the chamber-pot under the bed after use as the steam tends to rust the springs."

**Have you paid your
2007 Subscription?**

This is a plea to *Friends* who have inadvertently overlooked paying their subscriptions this year, to do so please without delay. There are still a few outstanding and, with the recent increases in postage charges, we are keen to minimise the number of reminders we send out. Cheques for £5 per *Friend* should be made payable to FSST and sent to the Treasurer, Peter Gibbs, 18 Jenkins Green, Lowestoft, NR32 4WX.

THE GRAND DRAW 2007

We send out about 900 copies of our newsletter and two books of draw tickets are included in each copy in this edition - a total of 10 tickets at £1 each. So if all are sold and the stubs returned, we will have covered our outgoings and made a surplus of about £8,000. Additionally we have spare books of tickets to send out to *Friends* who want extra supplies, and for sale at the fete.

However, as I have stressed in previous years, we only use this mailing as a convenient way of distributing draw tickets and do not intend to put any pressure on recipients. So, if you don't want to participate in our Summer Draw, please feel free to return the tickets, or even to destroy them. If you are strongly against raffles, please return the books to Michael and Joy Venn with a note to this effect. If you write your name and address clearly, we will do our best to avoid sending you tickets in future.

At the end of the Fete at Westons on 1 July the lucky ticket-

holders will be awarded attractive and substantial prizes.

The *First* prize is a **cheque for £400**; the *Second* prize, donated by *Friend* Val Anderson, is a **five-night self-catering holiday** (Mon-Fri) in Walberswick; the *Third* is a **voucher** (donated by Mr Fournel of Southwold's **Amber Shop**) value £250; the *Fourth* prize is Dinner, Bed and Breakfast for two at the **Brudenell Hotel**, Aldeburgh. Other attractive prizes include a three course meal for two with a bottle of house wine at **Sutherland House**, Southwold; ditto at **Reubens Bar and Grill**, Framlingham and dinner for two at **Spice Restaurant**, Woodbridge. Two local hostelries - the **Angel** and the **Bell** in Walberswick - have donated meals for two people; next is a cake baked to order by **Weavers** of Peasenhall, and, finally there are two of **bottles of spirits**. As usual, there will also be an award to the *Friend* who sells the most tickets.

Please remember, you need only participate if you want to. But we very much hope you do!

Jack Clayton

PROFILE

JAMES LAWS – 'ADDING TO DARKNESS'

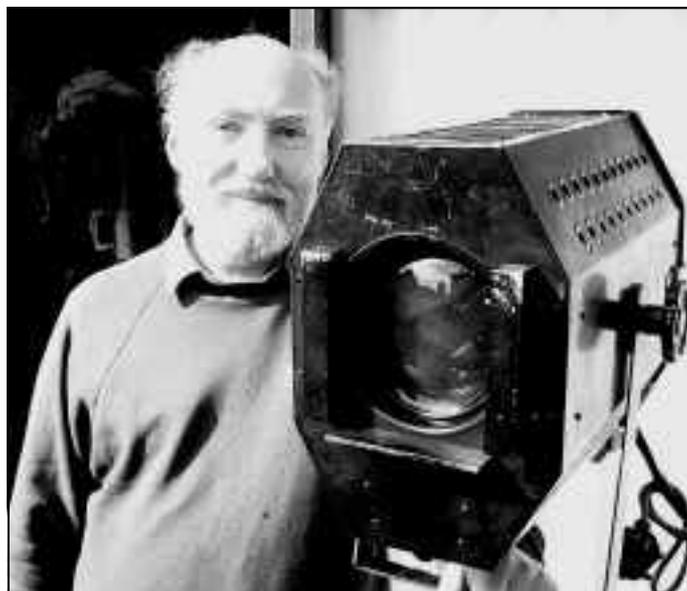
The way to judge a lighting designer is to assess what he 'adds to darkness,' explains James Laws, known to all as Jim. He sees darkness as his three-dimensional canvas and he has been working his magic on the sometimes imperfect darkness of St Edmund's Hall through 25 seasons, spanning 40 years of the Summer Theatre. In fact, even before Jill Freud's company took over in 1984, Jim was working on and off through the 60s and 70s with the earlier regimes of Richard Graham and John Ridley.

This summer, he'll be lighting two of the plays: the opener, *Arsenic and Old Lace* and Andy Powrie's *Climbing the Wall*. Ben Payne will be lighting the other three. Between times Jim will be down in Surrey pursuing his other passion of helping the New Farnham Repertory Actors' Company re-establish itself, following the closure of the Redgrave Theatre six years ago.

I discovered Jim and his wife, Pat, in a capacious barn in the yard of their 16C farmhouse home near Wrentham. The barn is the hub of Jim and Pat's day jobs; 'Jim Laws Lighting' is the country's leading consultant for period theatre lighting settings. You'll have seen masses of it in the 2005 film *Mrs Henderson Presents* with Judy Dench.

Jim started out with no formal theatre qualifications. He got the theatre bug in the stage club of the Regent Street Polytechnic where he should have been studying Quantity Surveying. When he left Poly in 1967, he cycled round every stage door in the West End in an attempt to find work. Soon he was a 'flyman' at the Black & White Minstrel Show at the Victoria Palace, then working with the props team at the Strand followed by 12 dizzying weeks' scene shifting for a season of 16 operas at Sadlers Wells. Then on to the Vaudeville and Haymarket where, as sound-effects man, he memorably 'slammed the door' behind Isabel Jean's exiting Lady Bracknell in 1968. The stage management for The New Southwold Repertory Company was recruited from the backstage crew at the Haymarket that year, so Jim went as DSM, in charge of sound, lights and carpentry, for which he was paid 7 guineas per week, gaining his Equity card.

After a year at LAMDA, learning the proper way to do things, and a second season at Southwold, Jim's first 'proper job' was touring with the Welsh Theatre Company.



Jim Laws with a 1936 spot from his collection

Nominally he was the 'sound technician' but he soon discovered he was also expected to light.

In 1970 at the Pitlochry Festival, Jim became smitten by Pat, the property mistress. By the end of the season they were engaged and, in November, they married... on a Friday because, by then Jim was at Ian Albery's Wyndhams Theatre where "Nobody gets Saturday night off in my theatre!"

A season at Chichester and 10 years in charge of repertory lighting at Windsor, Farnham & Basingstoke followed and then Jim and Pat decided to move to Suffolk to set up their own business. In 1986 Jill Freud was planning her third season in Southwold and hired one of their friends to design the costumes. Jim, pleased to have the chance to return to Southwold, went along to the first night of *The Lady or the Tiger*. After the show, he couldn't resist making a few suggestions for tweaking the lights.

Jill was impressed. Jim stayed... for the run... for the season... and, as it happened, for the next 20 years.

HORROR UPON HORROR!

Your worst fears are about to be realised

If you read Tony Falkingham's piece *On Location in Walberswick* in our November issue, you will know about the horror movie which was made in Southwold and Walberswick last September!

Tony was in it. So were Jill, Clement, Sidi Scott, Alva Semple, Jane Evers, a large number of the 2006 Company, the inimitable Fenella Fielding in starring role, various other celebrities and even our own ferry girl, Dani Church in a row-on part involving a coffin!



Fenella Fielding stars as Her Ladyship

The film, which is titled *Tincture of Vervain*, was produced by David McGillivray. It is one of seven ten-to-twenty-minute horrors made by David's production company, Pathétique Films and scripted by him with Keith Claxton who also directed. All seven films are bracketed under the title *Worst Fears*. The series received its world premier at BAFTA on 6th May. Its second outing will be an

exclusive special showing to *Friends* at the Southwold Picture Palace on 4th July. More

about this opposite! After that, it's off to Malta for the international premier in October followed by various film festivals, culminating, if all goes well, with David's ultimate aim of lucrative late-night spots on, as yet unsuspecting, TV channels.

Longer-serving *Friends* will remember David's series of 10 plays (in which he also performed) featuring the *Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society*, two of which, *Macbeth* and *Murder Mystery*, took Southwold audiences – not so much by storm as by complete surprise – in the late 80s.

David, whose day-job these days includes writing Julian Clary's TV scripts, made *Worst Fears* on what most

film producers would regard as a fragment of shoestring but which he describes as "far too expensive". It was about £25,000. "I relied entirely on the goodwill of friends; no one involved in any of the films was paid a penny but I have an understanding with them that, if I ever make any money, I'll be delighted to give them a cut."



Jane Evers is about to disintegrate

The films were made in various locations around the UK, Europe and Morocco. "The appeal of Southwold in September, says David, "was that there were lots of actors



Sir Clement is bewilderingly Her Ladyship's chauffeur!

hanging around with nothing to do." He adds: "Jill was terrific. She found all the actors and locations. I think she just phoned people and told them they were going to be in a film and that was that. It was Jill who decided that the film should premiere at the Picture Palace. Personally I don't know whether Southwold is really ready for this kind of thing."

Brightly, I enquired whether we should perhaps regard *Worst Fears* as a series of "spooof horror movies".

"Absolutely not," snapped David McGillivray. "I hate that sort of thing! These are real."

That certainly put me in my place... behind the sofa!

FRIENDS' EXCLUSIVE INVITATION

TO ATTEND THE GALA FIRST NIGHT OF 'WORST FEARS'

in the company of many of the stars and members of the production team.

at the Southwold Electric Picture Palace, Blackmill Road

On Wednesday 4th July 2007 at 7.30pm

Afterwards David McGillivray, will talk about the project and answer questions.

A strictly limited number of tickets is available in this tiny cinema at £15 each including wine and canapés.

The proceeds from this Gala performance will be donated to the *Friends*.

For tickets, please apply to Sidi Scott, 01502 578711

A public performance of *Worst Fears* will take place the following night, **Thursday 5th July**, for which tickets will be available from the Southwold Film Society 07815 769565.

Please note that these screenings were inadvertently omitted from the Picture Palace's published listings.