

CODSWALLOP!

APRIL 2021

OUTGOING
CHAIR - AGM
REPORT

INCOMING
CHAIR - AGM
REPORT

ROM &
JULIE

ARABIAN
NIGHTS

PRISCILLA,
QUEEN OF THE
DESERT

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AGM - OUTGOING CHAIR'S NOTES

Chairman's Report

Hello, All you lovely CODS members.

Last year, I began the mailed AGM chairman's notes by saying:
Covid-19 has reared an ugly little viral head which means that you will receive this information by email or post.



None of us could have imagined that we would still be in a similar situation 12 months later, and though we are all now on zoom, we have still seen nothing of each other or our beloved theatre for almost a year and a half.

There has been much news from amongst our membership. Several members, possibly more than I know about, have been afflicted with covid. Marian Cumberland has recovered, but I am sad to say that we lost Peter Gray, after whom the Gray room is named. Maurice is recovering well from his dreadful accident at the end of last year, but Ollie Levett, who was our young sound and lighting engineer before moving away to train, has also now had an awful accident and if anyone would like to contact Jo to send their best wishes, then she is happy for them to do so.

On a happier note, we have had several tiny CODS born in the last year. Laura Larkin's twin girls were born early last year and Hannah Carter – our choreographer for Guys and Dolls has had a baby boy, Luca and last but not least, Simon and Sam Tomlinson now have a little boy called Jude.

After the last AGM we organised a survey to assess members' opinions and requirements for the future. The three issues brought us were as follows:

More modern and interesting shows – we addressed this in our choices of Arabian Nights and Priscilla Queen of the Desert as our next shows.

Committee meetings are too long – I addressed this by cutting the time down so that meetings are much shorter and less arduous.

There should be a change of leadership – this will happen this evening, should you all vote for Louisa and Sharon to take over as Chair and Vice Chair.

Hatch and I along with members of your committee and others organised a wonderful year of centenary celebrations for 2020, but all this faded to nothing as covid first necessitated the cancellation of Alison's 'Sing 100' concert and then all our shows and events for the year.

We have all missed our theatre and our performances this year as well as our social interaction with one another and I am rather sad that I will leave my role as chairman having planned so much and achieved so little this year. Most of us haven't seen one another since our centenary meal at the London Beach early last year, which brought together many members of the society, old and

AGM - OUTGOING CHAIR'S NOTES

new. It was lovely to see so many CODS' faces there, and all seemed to enjoy finding themselves in pictures on our photographic display of a century of CODS shows.

We still wait to get back into the Queen's Hall Theatre, but 'The Adventures of Rom and Julie' – our entry into the Kent Drama Association radio play festival has been keeping some of us busy online, under the direction of Andy Clarke, which I hope we will all be able to view soon.

I also met with Kester this week, and had confirmation from Cranbrook School that if we decide to stage a panto at Christmas, which is our plan, we would be most welcome to rehearse, certainly from September onwards. We have obviously made such plans for a year now and had to then cancel or postpone them, but hopefully we may soon be emerging from the darkness of covid and we will be able to begin our second century with a colourful and energetic family show in late December – keep your fingers crossed.

Our further tentative plans involve the 'Arabian Nights' show which was in early rehearsal last year followed by 'Priscilla Queen of the Desert' as our productions for 2022 and I hope that you will all back us and get involved in those – there are roles for everyone in all these shows and they should be huge fun and bring the society bursting back into life.

We have a change of leadership for the forthcoming few years, and, if you all vote in favour, Louisa and Sharon will take over as Chair and Vice, with a slightly changed team behind them but with a number of people staying on to ensure continuity as we move forward.

As they retire from the CODS committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jane and Bryan for their contribution for the past couple of years, especially Jane's work as social and minute secretary. Also, to my wonderful, supportive husband who took on the roles of Hon Sec, Props master, Programme and Newsletter editor as well as website designer and administrator. All these jobs are so important and people will only notice if they don't happen, so thank you to all of you for helping to run the society.

CODS is very lucky in that we have not lost thousands of pounds in cancelled performances over the past year or so. We have the chance to come back with all guns blazing.

I will sign off now in the hope that we can all join together soon in our shared love of the theatre.

Annie x

AGM - INCOMING CHAIR'S NOTES

I'd like to thank the committee for all of their work, and in particular, ANNIE and LEE for their work & commitment over the past 2 years. The efforts of the committee over the last few years, during both, Annie's and Guy's stewardship, has been commendable. Over the recent years the committee have managed to drag us financially back from the brink and kept us viable, after the financially precarious years previously experienced.



As we are all aware the fundamental make-up of Drama Societies has changed significantly! Where once membership was drawn from local residents and societies tended to hold onto their members for years. This has changed. Membership and audiences alike talk with their feet. There are so many other things going on socially for people to choose from. We're effectively in competition with other societies, drama groups, television and professional theatre. We have to acknowledge and embrace this fact and actively grow our membership and entice our audiences to watch our shows. This isn't something that is restricted to CODS, but affects all drama societies and other interest groups. We are vying for the same audiences and the same performers and crews.

We have our reputation, but nowadays, this is only as good as your last production! We have to continue to develop CODS' reputation. We have to produce appealing shows and do them to our best abilities. We have to take note of what's going on around us and always take into consideration, what could be popular and intriguing. It doesn't mean we can't try new genres, or be indulgent or experimental.

It means, we need to be smart about producing seasonal shows. We're so lucky to do 3 show's per year and use Cranbrook's facilities. We know our Christmas shows are usually the money makers, our musicals usually consolidate our income. But we have to generate interest in people wanting to be in the shows. Shows are sold by word of mouth by performers and their families. To engage Foot-fall we have to publicise our productions far and wide. People will travel to see productions they are interested in. We have to have curb appeal. We can't make decisions on productions based PURELY on core membership appeal. Because our membership is dwindling, and our acting pool too!

We have to continue to ensure that every production we do is executed with the highest values. This doesn't mean we can't have fun, but we have to be flexible and offer everyone an opportunity to take part in the fun of putting on a show they want to be a part of. If we can't find people who want to be in a show, we are in trouble, this affects our audiences, membership and the society's viability.

Over the next two years, my focus for the committee is to increase CODS' visibility and get our name out there on the various social platforms. Broaden local interest in CODS. Investigate if there are smarter practises which may reduce costs without negatively impacting on our productions. Also, to review the committee and constitution to see if it works for today's CODS. It isn't change for the sake of it. But to see if we can refine and improve the society.

To continue to be financially viable we have to present varied targeted excellent productions which appeal to audiences and members alike. We have to review and check ourselves as a committee, to ensure we are in-line with our membership and audiences. We know people are desperate to get back to drama and socialise, but we must remember all the other social, and hobby groups are also out there with the same aim. When Drama's doors open again, we have to grab a place for CODS.

I'm so looking forward to us working together as a team to increase our membership and audiences for each of our productions. I hope at next year's AGM we can begin to see an upward swing in the next chapter of CODS.

Louisa

KDA RADIO PLAY FESTIVAL 2021

The Adventures of Rom & Julie

After a rigorous audition process, the cast of Romeo & Juliet (CODS entry into the KDA Radio Play Festival) have been slaving away at their Zoom screens to refine their characters and produce a first class production that even Bill Shakespeare would be proud of.



Whilst not your standard Romeo & Juliet, this abridged version of the classic contains many of the period features associated with the original. But, with a host of new characters, some new musical numbers and an alternative ending this production is sure to be a hit.

KDA RADIO PLAY FESTIVAL 2021

We have high quality acting skills from a dedicated cast of nine including:

Andy Clarke as MC & Brave and extremely handsome Mercutio

Angela Cowling as Night-night Nursie & Naughty Narrator no 2

James Harper as Tough Tybalt

Katie Kember as Not quite so innocent Juliet

Kaz Kember as Naughty Narrator no 1

Matt Sims as Romantic Romeo

Maurice Wilkins as the Mysterious Monk

Penny Tobin as Mollycoddle Mumsie

Robin Harrison as Pompous Paris and Naughty Narrator no 3

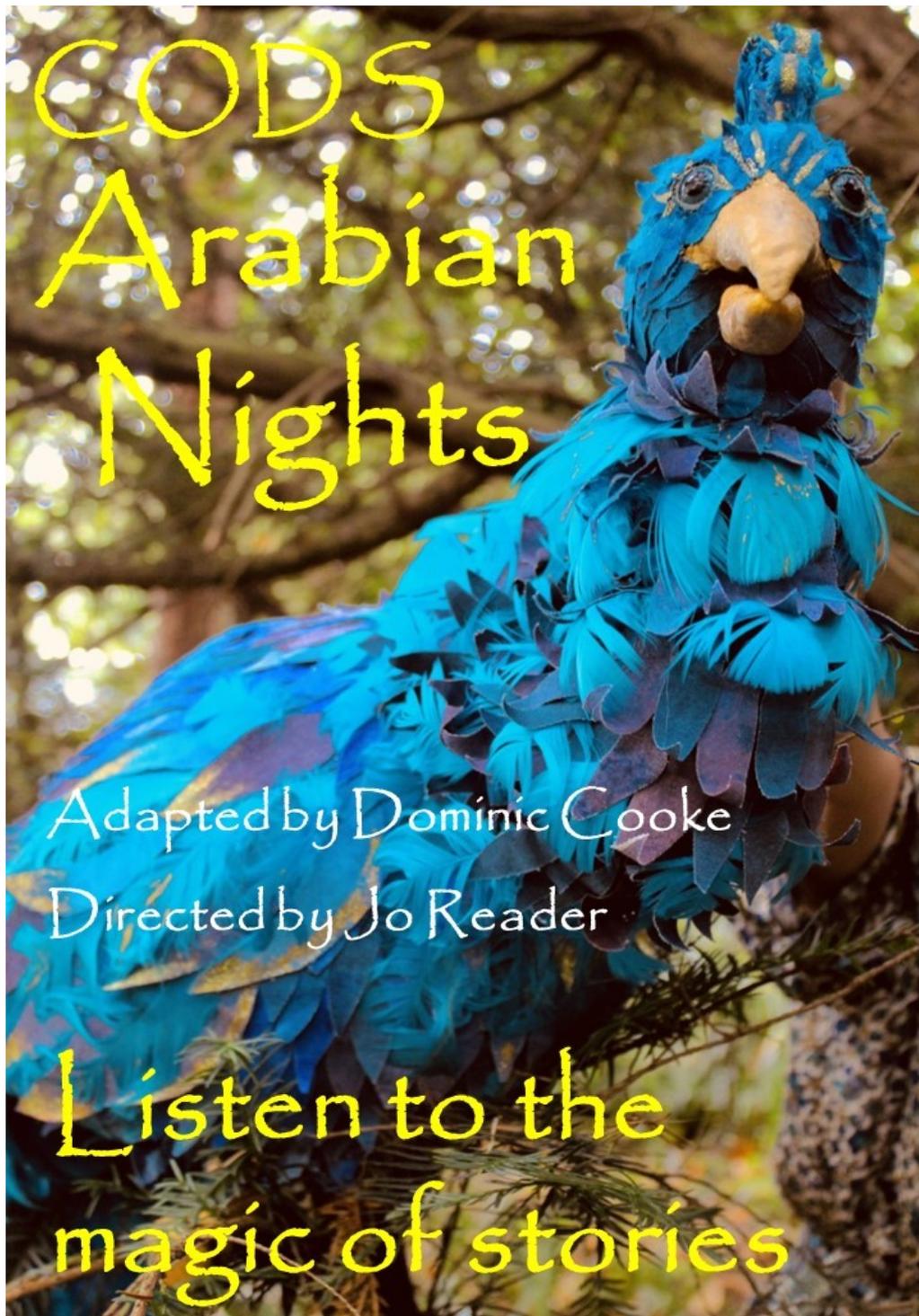
The Play is complete and with the KDA for adjudication. If members would like to listen to the play it is available online for a short time at the following link;

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tXYexvlQgarEqUqOOSqF043afDH1lIgN/view?usp=sharing>

Andy Clarke - andyclarke1964@gmail.com

ARABIAN NIGHTS

Our Spring 2022 play is due to be Arabian Nights, postponed from 2020. We will be working over the coming months to plan how to bring this spectacular show to the Queens Hall Theatre stage in 2022. Watch this space for news on dates, any recasting etc. In the mean time we have one of our puppets from the show below and details of the stories and characters of Arabian Nights!



ARABIAN NIGHTS

There are 70+ characters of various ages which can be played by a company of about 18 actors or more (the script says a minimum of 9). Ages are flexible and every actor has to double up. Below is an outline of the scenes and characters.

Frame story – Shahrazad, Dinarzad (her sister), Vizier (her father), King Shahrayar, headsman, Queen, jester, slave, bride, company.

The Story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves – The thieves are played as a chorus, becoming the horses, the cave, the treasure inside. (reversible cloaks) Kasim is cut in to four pieces.

Characters - Shahrazad, Shahrayar, Dinarzad, Ali Baba, 6 thieves, Captain, Kasim (Ali's brother), Ali's wife, Kasim's wife, Marjanah the clever slave-girl (performs exotic dance), druggist, Baba Mustapha (poor cobbler), Ali's son.

The Story of the Little Beggar – comedy with slapstick death routine, singing and a tambourine, choking on a fish bone and comedy hanging scene.

Characters -Shahrazad, Beggar (must be able to fall over/tumble/perform slapstick/be agile), Tailor, Tailor's wife, passers-by, Shahrayar, Dinarzad, maid, doctor, doctor's wife, steward, merchant (drunk, urinates, fights), watchman, chief of police, King, hangman.

The Story of Es-Sindibad the Sailor – Es-Sindibad the Sailor tells the story using a puppet of his younger self. Company create images and characters using masks, models, objects, and puppets.

Characters -Shahrayar, Dinarzad, Shahrazad, Es-Sindibad the porter (sings), page, 3 wealthy merchants, 2 male servants, 2 slave-girls, Es-Sindibad the Sailor (uses puppet), company.

How Abu Hassan Broke Wind – the tale that finally makes King Shahrayar laugh.

Characters - Shahrayar, Dinarzad, Shahrazad, Abu Hassan (must be able to mime a huge and deafening fart), marriage broker, bride, uncle, aunt, preacher, fakir, friend, foe, King, girl, mother.

ARABIAN NIGHTS

The Story of the Wife Who Wouldn't Eat – A gruesome tale of a flesh-eating wife and sorcery. Sidi 1 tells the story and Sidi 2 acts it out in flashback – they are identifiable as the same person by distinctive items of the same clothing. Some audience participation.

Characters - Shahrayar/ghoul, Shahrazad, Dinarzad, Sidi 1, Sidi 2, Amina/horse, Haroun, company as dogs, baker, customer 1, customer 2, sorceress.

The Story of the Envious Sisters – a moral tale closely mirroring the King's own story. Uses puppets, cloaks, branches, props, dolls.

Characters - Shahrazad/talking bird/youngest sister, Eldest sister, second sister, Dinarzad/Princess Parizade, King/Shahrayar, Vizier, Prince Bahman, steward, steward's wife, Prince Perviz, passers-by, woman, dervish, head cook, company as stones, tree, birds.

The Story without an Ending – frame story – Shahrazad, Dinarzad, Vizier, King Shahrayar. Characters from previous stories – beggar, Vizier, dogs, thieves, snakes, bird, Marjanah, Es-Sindibad, eagle, Ali Baba. Full company dance a celebration of rebirth.

Epilogue – frame story – Shahrayar, Shahrazad, Dinarzad and full company.

PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT - THE MUSICAL

**Queen's Hall Theatre, Cranbrook
(dates tbc)**

**Here's all you need to know about our next musical -
Watch this space for news about Auditions**



PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT - THE MUSICAL

SYNOPSIS

Based on the smash-hit movie, PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT is the heart-warming, uplifting adventure of three friends, Tick, Bernadette and Adam, a glamorous Sydney-based performing trio who agree to take their show to the middle of the Australian outback. They hop aboard a battered old bus (nicknamed Priscilla) searching for love and friendship and end up finding more than they ever imagined. With a dazzling array of outrageous costumes and a hit parade of dance floor favourites including "It's Raining Men", "I Will Survive", "Hot Stuff", "Boogie Wonderland", "Go West", "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun", and "I Love The Nightlife", this wildly fresh, colourful and funny musical is a journey to the heart of FABULOUS!

CAST

7 female, 9 male, and 1 boy featured roles

Opportunities for featured casting in the ensemble.

Adam (Felicia)	Lead – young man - drag artiste
Bob	Lead - Older male
Bernadette	Lead – Older male – transgender
Tick (Mitzi)	Lead – approx. 40s – drag artiste
Jimmy	Local (originally Aboriginal character) any age
3 Divas	Female singers, good voices, able to hold a line
Miss Understanding	Comper in nightclub – drag artiste, any age
Cynthia	Bob's Thai wife – sings and does a 'turn' with ping-pong balls!
Frank	Prejudiced thug, any age
Marion	Tick's wife 35/40 ish
Farrah	Drag artiste – any age
Young Bernadette	Dream sequence - sings
Shirley	Bar owner – any age - sings
Benji	Young boy – son of Tick – under 12 years
Ensemble	Male and female - these appear in many of the songs, lots to do!

Many of the drag queen vocals can be lip synced, some can be sung, depending on casting.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Most numbers are group songs - if the drag queens are singing, they are usually accompanied by the 3 divas who are major players.

There is lots more work for the ensemble in the stage show than in the film and this is the main draw for the cast.

You'll see from the list below that it's all rather stylised and the company turn up in most musical numbers.

PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT - THE MUSICAL

Here is a list of who sings what:

It's Raining Men	Company
What's Love Got to Do With It	Miss Understanding and Divas
Don't Leave Me This Way	Company
Venus	Company Felicia (Adam)
Go West	Company
I Say a Little Prayer	Tick and Divas
I Love the Nightlife	Company
True Colours	3 Queens
Sempre Libera	Adam (Felicia)
Color My World	Company
I Will Survive	Company
Thank God I'm a Country Boy	Company
A Fine Romance	Young Bernadette
Shake Your Groove Thing	3 Queens and Divas
Pop Muzik	Company
Girls Just Want to Have Fun	Felicia (Adam) /Divas
Hot Stuff	Queens and Divas, then Company
MacArthur Park	Queens and Divas
Boogie Wonderland	Company
Always On My Mind	Tick and Benji then Company
We Belong	Company
Finale	Company

Dancing requirements and difficulty - this will be adjusted according to the abilities of those cast. Dancing can be as simple or as complicated as necessary.

Possible Crew – Would you like to be involved?

I will need a stage manager, a production secretary, a MD, a choreographer as well as crew for set building, sound, lighting, wardrobe, wigs, make up and props – though I've already had lots of enthusiastic volunteers for some of these roles. Please get in touch if you'd like to help -

annie.hatch33@gmail.com

Sooooooooo exciting!

Annie x

NOTICES

HALL MANAGER

In charge of locking up the theatre after performances, which is much more involved than that may sound! Maurice has retired after many years on the committee and in his various roles (what will we do without him?) We wish him all the very, very best and thank him for his many unstinting years of devoted service to CODS. If anyone is interested in this role please contact via CODS Secretary. CODS.secretary@gmail.com

CODS STILL NEEDS AN ARCHIVIST

We would love someone to take over the organisation of CODS' archives. We have 100 years of information, most of which has already been filed in plastic boxes. Posters and photographs of shows from the past few years however are waiting to be added, and we need someone who can continue to keep our records up to date. If you are interested in helping with this please get in touch. It would be lovely to have a society member getting involved.

Contact: cods.secretary@gmail.com

FLUSHINGHURST HELP

CODS relies on 2 or 3 long standing members to build the scenery for all of our shows, at all times of year, in all kinds of weather. They work really hard and are all well past retirement age. They need much more help and we need other people to learn how to build sets for us. They currently work on Fridays but with enough help they could also work on other days. Can you help?

Without these chaps our scenery wouldn't exist, or it would be very expensive!

Let us know if you can help and when you can help. CODS.secretary@gmail.com

AGM 31ST MARCH 2021

Minutes from the AGM that was held on 31st March via Zoom are available upon request from; CODS.secretary@gmail.com

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President

Bernard Beardsmore

Vice Presidents

Pam Baker, Jeremy Cartwright, Dinah Chamberlin,
Alan Hodge, George Hudson, Peggy Latter,
Alan Pickett, Dennis Russell,
John Tapper, Maurice Wilkins, Ian Wookey
Marian Cumberland, Rita Wilkins

Executive Committee

Chair

Louisa Nelson-Chambers

Vice-Chair

Sharon Pickles

Business Manager

Guy Fillmore

Treasurer

Glyn Roberts

Committee Members

Annie Hatcher, Penny Tobin,
Alison Withey-Harrison, Andy Clarke,
Kaz Kember, Katie Kember

Contact details for the committee are
available via :

Website - cranbrookods.org.uk/committee

Email - CODS.secretary@gmail.com

Officials of the Society

Orchestral Secretary

Ruth Roberts

Wardrobe Mistress

Sharon Pickles

Properties Master

Lee Hatcher

Front of House Manager

John Tapper

Newsletter Editor

Lee Hatcher

Independent Examiners

Messrs McCabe, Ford and Williams

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Marian Cumberland, James Hanaway,
Glyn Roberts, Jackie Barker, John Tapper

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Any questions about what you have read?
Please contact your CODSWALLOP Editor

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or email: cods.newsletter@gmail.com

If you have any news, views, or ideas as to what YOU
want to see in CODSWALLOP, let me know!



GO TO OUR WEBSITE FOR VIDEOS FROM LAST YEAR & MUCH MORE

CRAMBROOKODS.ORG.UK/CODS-2020-LOCKDOWN



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2021 PANTO NEWS
COMING SOON



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FRIDAY 21ST MAY 2021**