



CODSWALLOP!

DECEMBER 2023

ANGRY
TWELVE

MADE IN
DAGENHAM

CODS
ARCHIVES

CHRISTMAS
PANTO

ADDAMS
FAMILY

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CODS WEBSITE

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CHAIR'S NOTES

Well the days are darker but the stage lights at the Queens Hall remain as bright as ever!

Firstly, as many of you will know, Maurice Wilkins has been a steadfast member of CODS for longer than a chunk of our members have been alive! During this time he has appeared on stage in many, many roles, backstage in just as many, stage managed a huge array of productions, was a priceless member of the famous Flishinghurst Gang for many years, committee member, keeper of the keys, building manager, famously the one voice to 'dull' an after show party with the famous "clearing up tomorrow morning" speech and more recently President of the Society. Now, after a CODS resume as long as all our arms put together, Maurice is resigning from his role as President.



All those that know Maurice and have shared a stage with him will join me in saying how thankful CODS are for Maurice's efforts in just about every area of our society, and how beyond grateful we all are for all the time and knowledge he has put into our shows over the decades. All of this without ever expecting a thankyou or anything else in return. I for one, along with everyone else, wish Maurice the very best in his CODS retirement.

Our most recent show **Made in Dagenham** was pulled off by the fantastic team of cast and crew providing a rousing trip through 60's London. Thank you to all involved, you made an incredible show. The NODA review from Dagenham highlights the work that was put in and is included in CODSWallop for your perusing.

I'm sure we are all looking forward to the festive season and we see the return of pantomime to our beloved QH. This year we're being visited by the Chaplins Theatre Company who will be bringing **The Adventures of Treasure Island** to Cranbrook for one day only! Buckle up you scallywags and trade your doubloons for a ticket, you won't want to miss the treasure in store! Tickets can be purchased through the CODS site as usual, and showings will be at 2:30pm and 5:30pm, on December 30th.

With this year coming to a close the committee are looking ahead to next. We are looking for panto directors or a direction team for next year's pantomime, so if you are interested, contact us to see what it entails and the support we can offer. The committee are here to support you throughout, and you don't need to have done it before! All you need is a creative spirit, and a fun wacky idea to bring to life!

Looking forward to the new year, our Spring play, **The Angry Twelve**, has just been cast and we are very excited to see our next production start to take shape. If you're interested in joining in for on off-stage role, be it set creation ahead of time, or front of house, please do email cods.secretary@gmail.com. We would love to have you. We are also looking for help for FOH with the pantomime so it's 'all hands on deck'.

Our next October musical, **The Addams Family**, is also well underway in terms of preparation, keep an ear out for more news to follow with audition dates.

CODS do truly appreciate its members and know we couldn't put on the amazing shows without your support, ideas and love for the society. We've been gifted a sizable legacy endowment from a previous supporter and are looking for suggestions and improvements that we could make, or investments in the society. If you have any such ideas, please email cods.secretary@gmail.com.

Wishing you all a restful time over the Christmas period,

Little James

CRANBROOK PANTO - TREASURE ISLAND

CODS are super excited to bring you a Mini Chaplins Panto this Christmas.

Chaplins Pantomimes are the UK's leading touring children's Pantomime company. This year they are coming to Cranbrook with their fun filled fantasy production of Treasure Island.

For 75 minutes, the children will be taken on a wonderful adventure from HAPPY TOWN HARBOUR all the way to TREASURE ISLAND itself.

Packed solid with comedy, songs, adventure and audience participation, they will love to cheer their hero Jenny Jiggles and boo the evil pirate Long John Silver! They will laugh at the comedy antics of Dame Auntie Nelly and of course meet the friendliest cat ever!

DATE - 30th December 2023

TIMES - 2.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m.

The BSL signer will be at the 5.30 p.m. performance.

VENUE - QUEEN'S HALL THEATRE, CRANBROOK

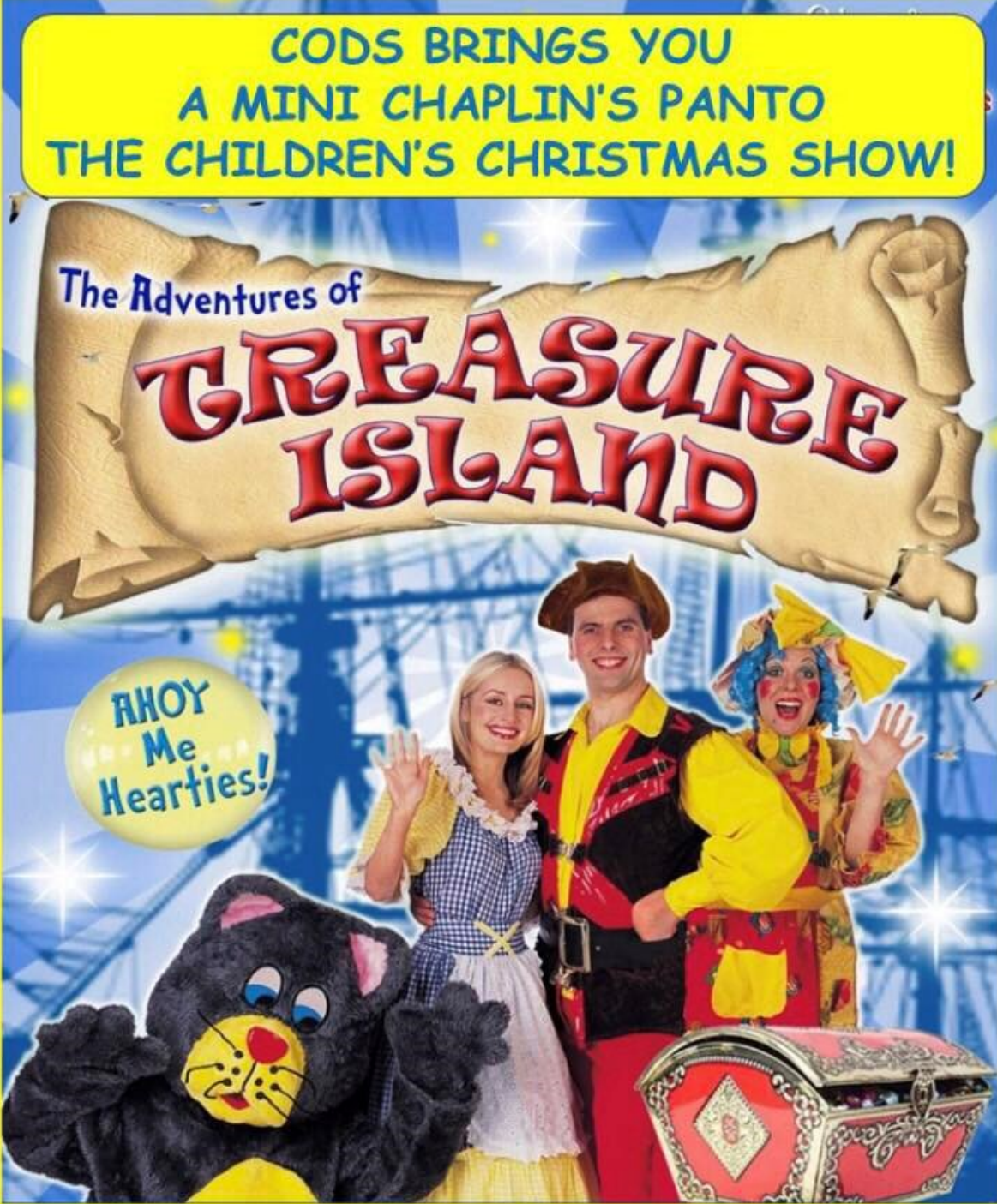
TICKETS - £7.50 (All ages)

Tickets - ticketsource.co.uk/cods/ or from our website

CRANBROOK PANTO - TREASURE ISLAND

CODS BRINGS YOU
A MINI CHAPLIN'S PANTO
THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SHOW!

The Adventures of
TREASURE ISLAND



AHoy Me Hearties!

SATURDAY 30TH DECEMBER 2023
Queen's Hall Theatre, Cranbrook
Two Performances @ 2.30pm and 5.30pm
Tickets all £7.50 - ticketsource.co.uk/cods

MADE IN DAGENHAM

The logo for 'noda' is written in a blue, lowercase, cursive script font.

Be inspired by amateur theatre

CODS

'Made in Dagenham' The Musical

Queens Hall Theatre, Cranbrook

26th October 2023

Directors: Wendy Thomas & Angela Wright

Musical Director: Ian Harby

Choreographer: Briony Chaplin-Mabbutt

This is a musical that surprised me for I wasn't a fan of the original film version based on the true story from 1968 when a group of hardworking female machinists at the Ford Motor Company based in Dagenham had the bottle to stand up for the right to equal pay when their jobs had been reclassified as unskilled. They were taking home far less than their men counterparts which with determination led to the passing of the Equal Pay Act of 1970.

Set design and construction was headed by Kas Page. A scaffold of two towers with steps to a gallery across was set at the rear of the stage with a central screen used for the 'Ford' logo prominent and using back projection to show many locations - a '60's kitchen, poignant hospital signage, Eastbourne Pier, Big Ben, the new Ford Cortina launch too, plus use of small pieces of furniture which were moved quietly and efficiently. Factory sewing tables complete with machines and stools worked exceptionally with the girls slickly placing them. The two stage extensions were well utilised for action in the home of Jeremy and Lisa Hopkins one side and Management Offices the other, all managed so efficiently by much experienced SM – first with CODS - Julie Hine and her assistants.

Musically Ian Hardy with his professionalism had prepared his singers well was both conductor of the balanced 7-piece band and played keyboard. Good sound and tucked away backstage.

The technical side was complex with many, many sound cues well-co-ordinated using the expertise of Sound Designer Jay Christie and operated by Penny Tobin with her usual efficiency and dedication – also responsible for the correct era make-up. John Sewell set the wonderful lighting design with some extra atmospheric effects skillfully operated by versatile Will Stoneham now working with Theatre Manager Kester at the Queens Hall.

Full of strong language but with much humour, tinged with struggle, perseverance, and belief Samantha Tomlinson gave an impressive debut performance for CODS in both her acting and vocals. As Rita O'Grady she transformed with real strength from housewife and loving mother of two, growing into a force to be reckoned with being inspired by the older Union Shop Steward Connie who was sympathetically played by Sharon Pickles. Union Shop Steward Monty, secretly in love with Connie sadly not reciprocated, tries to reason with the girls with John Wright creating a touching moment on Connie's death. Another debut performance came from Tony Chase as Rita's husband Eddie who is torn between love and his fellow workers and performs a moving number 'The Letter'. Their children were Amy Hine also Principal Dancer with Ben Clarke as Sharon and Graham. The individual characters of the girls opening with wicked quick exchanges of their overnight experiences were very funny indeed and the expletives, particularly from Beryl were delivered superbly by natural comedienne Siana Weston. They worked well as a team and choreography was sharp together with strong harmonic vocals. The men too had some great characters all most effectively portrayed – again slick and the volume and intonation good.

MADE IN DAGENHAM

The contrasts of the Hopkins – management, with wife label frocked highly qualified historian Lisa but supportive to Rita, was played most convincingly by Katie Kember acting rather than directing on this occasion paired with now hooked on drama Steve Lenham as a perfectly suited MD Mr Hopkins. Multi accented Richard Gray became American Ford Executive Tooley come loud cowboy in a fast moving ‘This is America’ scene and doubling as Mr Buckton. Cortina Man was just great as David Leaper gave his all! Another fine newcomer to CODS was Debbie Katis giving a strong and confident portrayal of Barbara Castle, never losing her accent singing a powerful ‘Ideal World’. The ‘Gannex’ coat and pipe, the signature of Harold Wilson a role played with much humour by Frank Shepherd another first into the world of am dram although not with his singing experience. Not all the cast is mentioned I know but there were delightful cameo parts as well as good choreography executed and created by Briony as well as her programme and poster design.

The Wardrobe Department created a colourful array of 60’s fashion with some fine examples of footwear to match and loved the American scene in particular Elvis and the Spaceman, colourful rah-rah girls, and glitter for the launching of the new Cortina.

A high energy finale ‘Stand Up’ concluded this funny, moving, and well-polished team effort production. To all those involved and unseen folk thank you for the experience, taking me back again in time remembering events and eating in a Berni Inn!

This report will be posted on the NODA website shortly.

Anne Lawson
NODA SE
Regional Representative
District 3

National Operatic and Dramatic Association

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Registered CIO charity number 1171216 Registered company number 241572 Registered in England and Wales at the above address.

Patrons: The Lord Lloyd Webber and Connie Fisher

THE ANGRY TWELVE

Director Louisa Nelson Chambers



I was shocked by the amazing amount of interest shown for this Easter production. So many people came to the Information Evening. It was so lovely to see so many existing, new and past members. The audition panel were shocked at the numbers who auditioned. I really couldn't believe it. We had 30 auditionees over 3 separate audition sessions and the talent was overwhelming. Annie and Penny both said it's a shame there were only twelve jurors to cast as we had enough people for 2.5 shows. I calculated that we saw about 1100 audition pieces over 3 days. (And that's conservative) It sounds crazy, But think about 12 roles x30 people factor in an average of each person doing 3 different roles. Annie and Pen thank you both for being on the panel and sharing the experience with me.

A huge thank you to everyone who attended. I am personally so sorry not to have been able to include some of the fantastic performers in this version. It was in no way a reflection of your talent. Exciting times lie ahead. We have also had so many people offering to help backstage. Julie Hines is our SM. Once we have settled on the set, she will be in a better position to know how many crew she requires.

Kirstie Scarlett-Bruff is our set designer, I loved all the work she did on the Blackadder set last year. So when the time comes to build her creation and help with the get-in it would be wonderful if we could call upon you all to lend a hand with this please. The production team is in place and we will have our first meeting before the festive celebrations.

Well I will sign off for now, until our next instalment. Louisa

CODS ARCHIVES

Hello lovely people.

As some of the more curious amongst you were wondering what I've been up to, hiding in the 'loft' at rehearsals recently, I thought I'd share a few snaps of what's lurking in the society's archive collection.

Hidden in the depths of one of the most cobweb-filled buildings I have ever seen (yes, it was a bit like a Halloween film set!) and riddled with droppings, spiders and mould (and the odd mouse skeleton!) the society's archives were clearly in need of a bit of 'love'. An afternoon in the sunshine, some help lifting the heavier boxes and a few evenings at the theatre later and they are looking a little happier. There is still work to be done. Whether it's beautiful set design paintings, detailed drawings, model sets, hilarious photographs, newspaper cuttings or neat handwritten ledgers, there's a lot hiding in those little boxes! Hopefully, these snippets will give you a little insight into CODS' past though.

The society has roots as far back as 1919!

HOW IT ALL STARTED — 50 YEARS AGO
by Daisy J. Allen

In the late summer of 1919, I was walking down the Hill when Eva Campbell, a newcomer to the district, and a keen amateur theatre enthusiast, called me into her house and asked me if I could sing. Yes, I said, and sang for her "The Moon and I". "Good," she said, "we will now do 'The Mikado'."

With tremendous excitement the two of us started a recruiting campaign in Cranbrook amongst my girl friends. My father, who was in the Church Choir, soon had a nucleus of men to enable us to call a meeting.

The Society was formed in the autumn of 1919. The first Committee along with the first president of the society Major Alexander, who lived at Great Swifts, were soon at work arranging rehearsals for "The Mikado" with Eva Campbell as producer.

How vividly I remember those early rehearsals with our local Vicar, the Rev. G. S. Provis, as 'The Mikado of Japan and Arthur Piper, who took the part of "Nanki Poo". How thrilled I was to be playing the part of "Yum Yum".

We had an early setback when we could not find anyone to play the part of "Ko Ko", the Lord High Executioner. Many weeks went by before eventually Mr. Young, a solicitor, came to live in the district and at once accepted the part.

I remember the dress rehearsal seemed to go on into the small hours of the morning. A man was sent to the gallery in the Vestry Hall with a hand bell and told to ring every time he was unable to hear. After several furious appeals he ceased and gave the cast a false sense of encouragement. In fact it was less tiring not to hear at all.

"The Mikado" was finally put on in the Vestry Hall on January 28th and 29th, 1920 and played to crowded houses. I remember reading a report in the newspaper saying: "It seems incredible that this excellent production could be entirely the work of amateurs".

How proud we all were.

Now in the Autumn of 1977 I look at the posters advertising the same society "Proudly presenting 'Merry Widow'" for the first time in Queens Hall. As I read my name on the Society's list of Vice-Presidents my mind goes back to that sunny afternoon in 1919 when I sang for—Eva Campbell.



*Scripts from times gone by.
This one will cost you 7/6!*

Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society
Presents
A 90s Christmas and a few recognisable faces, for some.

Seasons Greetings
by Alan Ayckbourn

Programme 50p

23rd - 25th April 1992 at 7.30pm
Queens Hall Theatre, Cranbrook School

CODS ARCHIVES

HOW IT ALL STARTED — 50 ODD YEARS AGO

by Daisy J. Allen

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Old newspaper clippings



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- | | |
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Back in the day. Esquires galore!

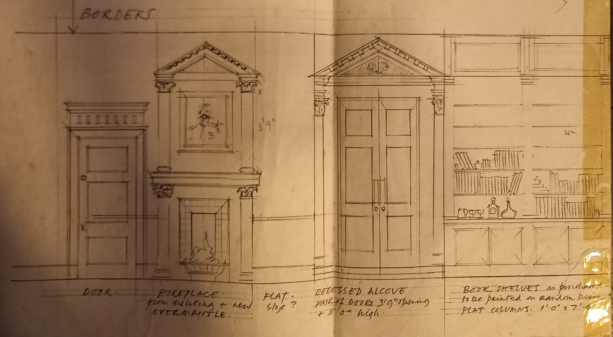
All by hand. Not a computer in sight!

RELATIVE VALUES 1900-1980 CODS 1986

Custom design for library, Maulewood House, East Kent.

Scale: 1/2" = 1 foot

ANTHONY WALTON 20 JAN. 1987



Telephone No. 3234 Vernon C. Simmonds, Proprietor

de olde Willesley Hotel

CRANBROOK
KENT

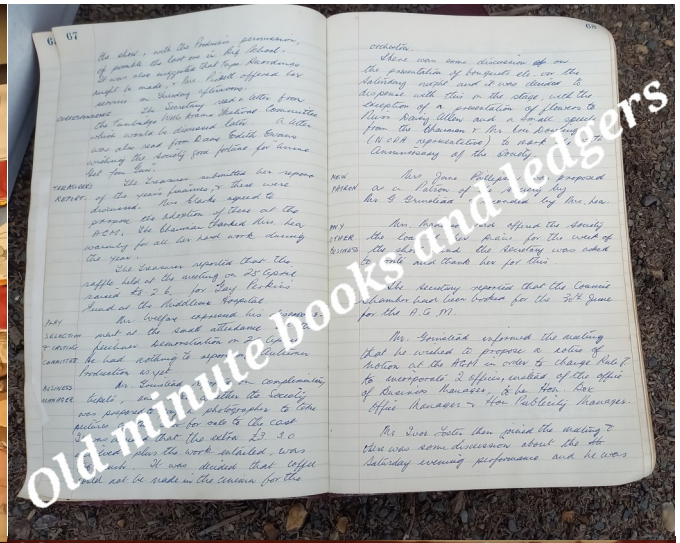
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Satisfaction Guaranteed

WILLESLEY SOCIAL CLUB

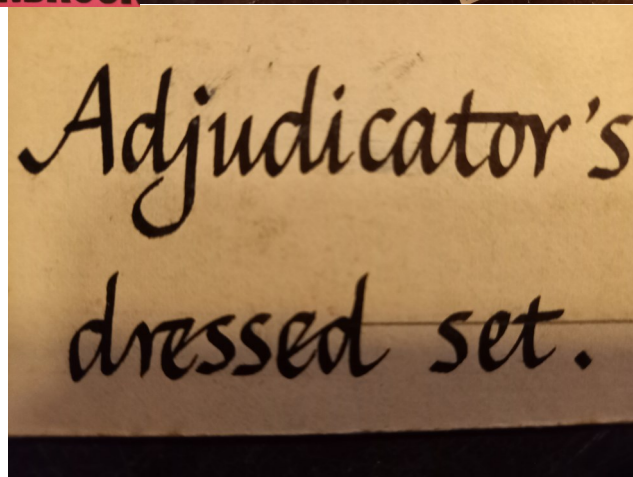
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CODS ARCHIVES



CODS ARCHIVES



I understand that Louise has kindly offered to help keep the archives up to date, moving forwards. Thank you, Louise.

Sarah x

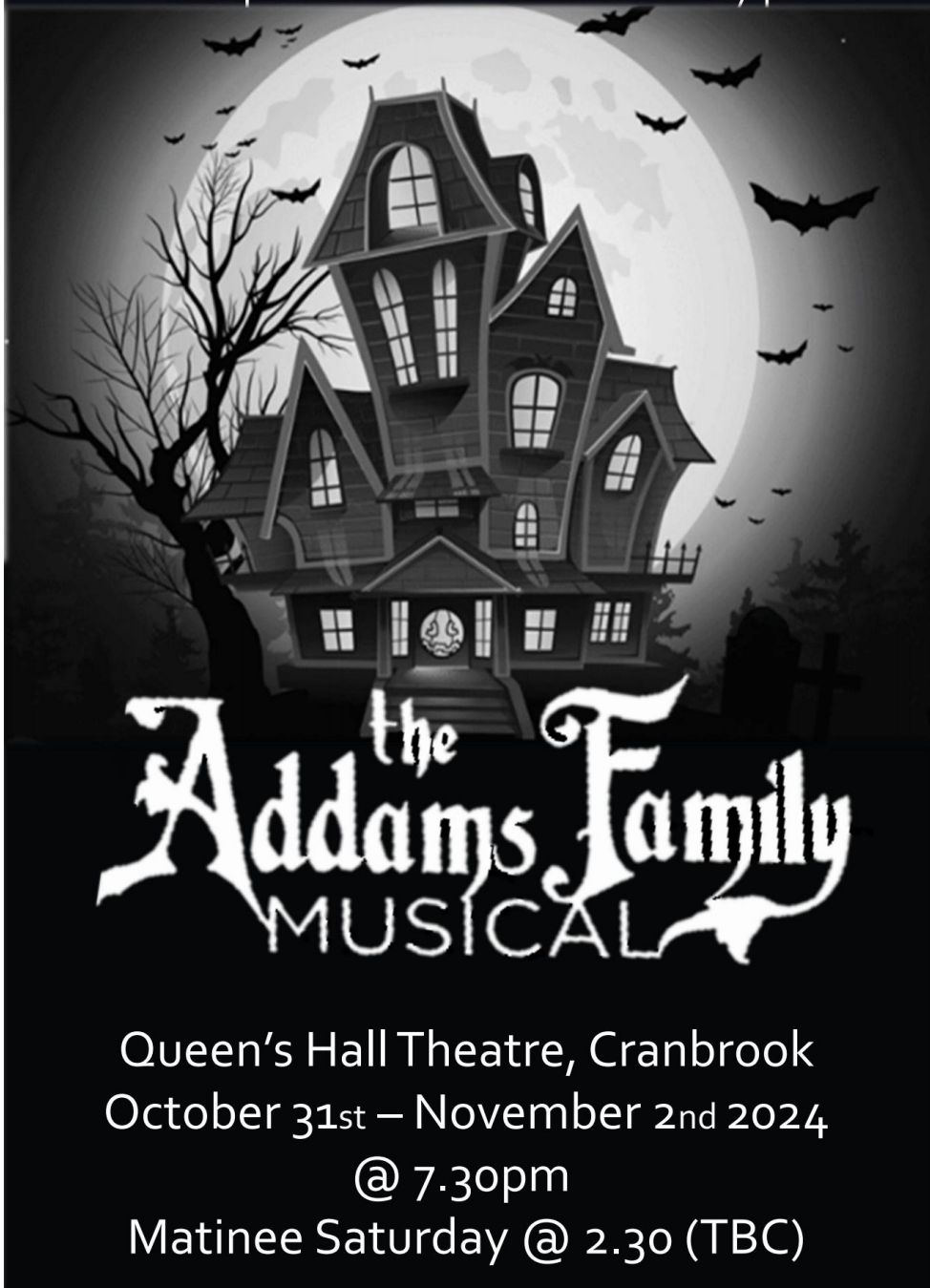
PS. That's not a misprint on the poster! Tickets really did cost 25p. £15 for a ticket today would have bought you 60 tickets back then!

ADDAMS FAMILY MUSICAL

Save the Dates for this modern, fun musical
with lots of roles for all ages.

Auditions Spring 2024

Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society presents:



Annie - annie.hatch33@gmail.com

MAURICE

I don't know how many of you have ever had the pleasure of working with Maurice Wilkins, either on or off the stage, but everyone that knows him seems to say the same thing... "He is a wonderful man and we don't know what we'd do without him."

Maurice has been a stalwart member of CODS for over 30 years. He and his wife Rita have been involved in plays, both serious and comedy, Pantomimes, Musicals, Quizzes, parties and concerts. One of his roles was Styx in Orpheus in the Underworld (2001) where he had a solo singing role, for the first and last time! He also acted in Fiddler on the Roof in 2002, and Rita recalls that he didn't shave or have a hair cut for weeks.

Rita and Maurice have been with us through sun, rain, hail, floods, snow, fog and of course the dark days of Covid, always there to help and always with a smile.

Maurice has been Stage Manager, set builder, actor, Box office manager, get in organiser, get out manager, and Committee member, and all of these roles he has performed without a grumble or a moan (well, not many anyway!)

In the year 2021, Maurice and Rita were made Presidents of Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society, a role to this day that they relish and enjoy.

Most of you know that in recent months Maurice has not been his usual active self, and he has had to give up his cycling, something that he has done throughout his life and indeed throughout the world. He has also had to make the difficult decision to give up his role of President at the end of this current year, due to his declining health. Rita will carry on being our President and will update Maurice on all of the goings on, and of our productions.

Maurice is currently living at Abbotsleigh in George Street, Staplehurst, should anyone like to visit him.



We at CODS, would like to take this opportunity of thanking Maurice for all he has done throughout his long and productive time with CODS and to let him know that the final nights of our shows will never be the same, without him saying, at the end of the party, "Thank you everybody, and don't forget, we have the 'Get out' at 9 o'clock in the morning."

Thank you Maurice.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

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Maurice Wilkins & Rita Wilkins

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Ruth Roberts

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RETURN TO FRONT PAGE

THE BACK PAGE

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

Lee Hatcher:

tel: 01580 388716

or email: cods.newsletter@gmail.com

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



CODS MEMBERSHIP

It's that time of the year! Yes, it's Christmas, but also time to renew your membership.

Membership to CODS is from 1st January to the end of December. It is only £10 per annum. Only CODS' members are allowed to take part in productions, whether it is a play, musical or a Pantomime.

In order to renew your membership (current members) please complete the new membership form that will be emailed to you very soon. Payment can be made via bank transfer. Please email the completed form to:

cods.secretary@gmail.com

If you are not a current member, but would like to join our flourishing society, then please email:

cods.secretary@gmail.com and request a membership form.

**DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR NEXT EDITION:
FRIDAY 26TH JANUARY 2024**