

JULY 2021

# newsletter

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**sewellbarn**  
THEATRE

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*We are tremendously excited to write again with news of the theatre as it gradually comes back to life. Read on for photographs and reviews of our production in June, our forthcoming show in July, other exciting local shows in preparation, and a 'teaser' about our planned 2021-22 season...*

## Our next production: Private Lives

by Noel Coward

directed by Cassie Tillett

**Monday 19 to Saturday 24 July at 7:30pm, matinee Saturday 24 July at 2:30pm**

*Please note that performances will not follow the Barn's usual two-week, eight performance pattern, but will play for seven consecutive performances (dates above).*

We were thrilled with the quantity and quality of auditionees for this show – over two dozen accomplished actors applied for just four roles (plus one tiny cameo), giving director Cassie Tillett the best kind of problem! In the end, we are delighted to welcome Barn stalwarts Harriet Waterhouse (Amanda), Nick Meir (Elyot) and Verity Thomson (Sibyl), together with welcome newcomers Lee Johnson (Victor) and Cristina Fernandes (Louise). With only four weeks to create the show, it's been all systems go right from two days after 'Shorts' (see below) came down; the cast and crew have been working incredibly hard, and rehearsals have been full of hilarity and discovery.

We anticipate that current Covid restrictions will be lifted on 19 July (which happens to be the first night). However, to continue to ensure the safety of our audience, we are limiting ticket sales for the first four performances (Mon-Thu) to a maximum of 50 seats, allowing a two-seat separation between groups, and for the final three (Fri-Sat) to 70 – with a one seat separation, at 70% capacity. If these arrangements should change due to any further extension of restrictions, those booking earliest will have priority; therefore early booking is highly recommended. Tickets at £10 (£9 concessions) are available online via TicketSource at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/sewellbarn](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/sewellbarn), and there is also an option for telephone booking on 0333 666 3366 (booking fees apply in both cases). Whilst some tickets may be available on the door, that is far from certain, so please book in advance to secure your place.

We hope very much that you will be able to join us for this fabulous and iconic comedy as we work hard to bring our next offering of quality entertainment back to Norwich after some very dark days.



*Harriet and Nick take it easy during their first rehearsals!*

## Our previous production: Put Your Shorts On!



Photography: Sean Owen

The atmosphere was electric as we welcomed our first audiences back to the theatre on 9 June – the last performance having been the final night of *The Female of the Species* on 22 February 2020, more than fifteen months before. The theatre was cleaned to within an inch of its life, carefully marked seating for distanced social groups were prepared for every performance, drinks were served to the audience in their seats, the two halves of the cast (four for each half) occupied different parts of the building. The eight talented actors created a wonderful spectrum of characters and situations as imagined by local authors, many of whom had never seen their work on stage before, and our audiences were clearly thrilled to be back. Here are a few comments:

"Congratulations to the Sewell Barn and their determination to bring live theatre back to Norwich. At their current performance of Put Your Shorts On, great attention was paid to Covid regulations and carried out with care and attention to detail, but the welcome was so friendly and warm. Congratulations also to the actors and backstage support, for giving us an entertainment, very much based on our local literary talent and so professionally delivered. A thoroughly satisfying evening for all who attended. May it be a signal for the return of amateur drama to Norwich." *June G*

"A big 'Thank You' to everyone for the brilliant performances last night. It is so good to see you all again, and to be part of a 'real' audience." *Roy & Eva T*

We were especially moved by this message from one of our authors:

"I just want to thank everyone concerned with Put Your Shorts On yesterday for such a wonderful theatrical experience. We received an incredibly warm welcome from everyone on our arrival, you're such a friendly group of people! The show itself was absolutely stunning, the acting was incredible. Each piece was so powerful and by the end of the afternoon I had used all my

emotions, I was drained. As the writer of Don't Forget The Freddos Dad, I'd like to thank Cassie and Kevin for bringing my words to life. It could not have been performed any better. I have to say that it was one of the proudest moments of my life!" *Tim Strugnell*

You can read more comments on our blog at <https://sewellbarntheatre.blogspot.com/>.

## Help needed!

With the imminent re-opening of the theatre, we are in urgent need of help.

### Wardrobe Co-ordinator

The latter post has been filled for many years by our good friend June Gentle, and she's decided it's time to pass on the baton. June writes:

"I am stepping down after many happy years of working for the wardrobe team. As Wardrobe Co-ordinator for the Barn, I liaise with the Artistic Directors when they launch the season's productions. I speak to the Directors to find out what costumes are needed for their plays. We have a small team of helpers and we get together to decide who will see which play through production. We all help each other to cover the needs of the play, so that no-one takes on the single responsibility.

The Wardrobe department is an interesting place from which to see the full scope of theatrical experience... if you are interested but not sure of the commitment you could always join our team to try us out!"

For more details, please contact June on [wardrobe@sewellbarn.org](mailto:wardrobe@sewellbarn.org).

### Technical Operators

For Private Lives, and for our forthcoming 2021-22 season, we would like to recruit more operators to the 'box'. Our technical co-ordinator, Chris Jones, does a wonderful job of programming and designing, using our QLab software and our new LED lights; but as we move (hopefully) back to several shows each year, and eight performances plus tech and dress for each show, we need to spread the load. Please contact Chris on [technical@sewellbarn.org](mailto:technical@sewellbarn.org) if you'd like to make use of your existing skills or learn some new ones, and help us to continue to offer professional-standard entertainment to the local community.

## New season: 2021-22

After so many months of difficulty and uncertainty, and in the absence of a crystal ball to know what the future will bring, it is impossible to be certain about our next shows. However, we've come to the conclusion that there is no reason why we should not plan a season in the normal way; and if our plans are at any stage thwarted again, we will simply shelve them until life and legislation permits.

That being the case, Clare and Cassie are working hard on a near-normal season to commence in October 2021. We are aiming to offer seven shows rather than eight, to allow more spacing of working time spent in the theatre; we also are keeping all but the final show to single-figure cast

sizes. However, in every other sense our plans are as they have always been at the Barn: to include a wide variety of quality entertainment, familiar and less so, contemporary and classic, comic and dramatic, and with roles for all ages. We are including plays from the half-season that was cut short, plays from the season that was planned for 2020-21 that were never announced or performed, and some new ideas. Performance dates will return to the two-week, Thursday-Saturday and Wednesday-Saturday pattern. We have already obtained confirmation from all seven directors, and approval for the rights for almost all plays; we hope to be ready to announce this new season on the opening night of Private Lives (19 July), with a leaflet in the programmes for that show, and via newsletter, social media and our website.

The first show of the season, when confirmed, will of course need to audition very soon, as it will open on 14 October and rehearsals will begin in late August. A separate newsletter will be sent out with those details, and published as above, as soon as we're able.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Sewell Barn, and as we have said so often in recent times... watch this space!!

## What's on in Norwich

Our friends at the **Maddermarket** and the **Great Hall Theatre** are also making tentative moves towards re-opening. Do support our local theatre community as we take steps out of such challenging times.

### **The Merry Wives of ~~Windsor~~ Norwich**

by William Shakespeare

adapted and directed by Tony Fullwood

Friday 27 to Monday 30 August: three performances at 14:00, four at 18:00

<https://maddermarket.co.uk/event/the-merry-wives-of-norwich/>

### **A Lady Mislaid**

by Kenneth Horne

Wednesday 3 – Saturday 6 November 2021: 5 performances (inc matinee)

at the Assembly House

<https://www.facebook.com/events/295306431969318>