

## Circular November 2021

### Welcome...

...to the November issue of the Circular, the newsletter exclusively for members of the Stephen Joseph Theatre's membership scheme.

This month, we'd like you to meet the star of our Jack and the Beanstalk trailer, bring you an update on our £60 for 60 fund-raiser, and recount the travels of Monty the Gnome.

### Jack trailer



We had huge fun at the end of October when our Fundraising and Development Officer, Stephanie Dattani, and her daughter Gwen joined our marketing team to film a trailer for *Jack and the Beanstalk*. It was a long day and a real reminder of just how much energy five-year-olds have to burn – Gwen was still raring to go when the rest of us were ready to drop!

We love the results, and hope you will too – watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRdqZxS5cic>

**It's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas...**



*The cast of Jack and the Beanstalk in rehearsals © Tony Bartholomew*

We don't need to tell you that it's nearly December. This year, Christmas is looking so much more like its normal self – we can't wait to welcome full houses of families to see our Christmas shows, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *The Giant Who Had It All (And Then Lost It...)*

*Jack* is in our Round, and is aimed at six-year-olds and upwards (and trust us, there'll be plenty of fun in there for adults, too!), while *The Giant Who Had It All* is in the McCarthy, and is perfect for under-fives.

There's more, too – as well as a season of festive films and streamings, we've got:

**The Papatango Prize Winners 2021** (7 to 11 December): those of you who saw Shook a couple of years back will know that the Papatango Prize usually throws up something a bit special. This year, rather than physically touring the shows, they're sending out audio versions to selected theatres. You can hear the three plays – *Some Of Us Exist In The Future* by Nkenna Akunna, *The Silence and The Noise* by Tom Powell and *Ghost Stories From An Old Country* by Tajinder Singh Hayer – by either popping into the theatre and paying a refundable £5 deposit for a table and headphones, then grabbing a seat in our foyer or perhaps heading up to Eat Me Café to listen. Alternatively, scan the QR code on one of the posters that will be up around the building and listen on your own device at home.

**Holly at Christmas** (14 December): They're back! Buddy Holly's hits, other contemporary classics and some Christmas crackers all wrapped up in a fast, furious and funny feast of entertainment for all the family.

**Oh Whistle...** (16 December): two ghost stories by the great MR James, read by Lloyd Parry. This show is sold out – please contact the box office on (01723) 370541 if you'd like to be added to the waiting list.

And onwards into 2022...

**Hammonds Saltaire Band** (8 and 9 January): one of the country's finest brass bands pays its traditional new year visit to our Round.

**The Greatest Magician** (29 January): A dazzling new magic show presented by the magician most famous for jamming the BBC switchboards when he correctly predicted the lottery, focusing on mind-bending feats of illusion, from making people forget their own names to transporting iPhones from the auditorium into blocks of ice.

### **£60 for 60 years**

A huge thanks to all of our who contributed to our '£60 for 60 years' fund-raiser celebrating six decades of Alan Ayckbourn as a director. Alan is so well known as a writer that it's easy to forget that he sees himself as a director who writes, rather than a writer who directs.

Your generosity meant we raised over £8,000, money which will be put to good use nurturing directors and writers of the future – we're always on the lookout for the next Alan!

### **12 Days of Christmas giving**

Once again the brilliant financial services company Ecclesiastical is running 12 days of giving as part of its Movement for Good scheme. If you'd like to nominate us to be one of the charities they give £1,000 to at Christmas, please click here (and scroll to the bottom – our details are pre-filled). The more nominations we get, the better our chances of winning!

<https://movementforgood.com/12days/index.php?cn=253606&ct=community>

### **The Offing**



*James Gladdon and Cate Hamer drown their sorrows after not getting to eat that lobster! © Tony Bartholomew*

Those of you who saw *The Offing* here in October (or at Live Theatre in Newcastle this month) will know that it had a beautiful period atmosphere, both from its 'now' scenes in post-war Robin Hood's Bay and its flashback pre-war mid-30s scenes. A lot of that was down to our dedicated stage management team, who go to every length to get things as accurate as they possibly can. We loved these notes from Deputy Stage Manager Sara-Lee Bull.

"The lobsters onstage at the top of the show are real lobster shells from someone's leftover dinner at The Lanterna!

"The copy of *Women in Love* and the John Clare poetry book are real 1930s editions."

"There are two telegrams used in the production: one is printed, the other is handwritten. The first telegram is seen in a London hotel - their local Post Office more than likely had the money to afford a printing machine. The second telegram is seen in the cottage. The local Robin Hood Bay Post Office probably couldn't afford the machinery, so it's hand-written."

That's what we call attention to detail!



## Dates for your diary

Our popular Circle Cafés bring you, our members, the exclusive opportunity to meet our casts, crews and SJT staff for an insight into what happens behind the scenes. We're already working on some dates for 2022, but for now, we hope you can join us for the last Circle Café of 2021...

Thursday 9 December – meet members of the *Jack and the Beanstalk* team (please note that this is at 1.30pm as there's a morning show that day).

## Into The Archive

*This is a new feature in which Alan Ayckbourn's Archivist, Simon Murgatroyd, delves into The Bob Watson Archive at the Stephen Joseph Theatre to unveil some of its most significant or unusual holdings.*

## Monty the Gnome



2011 *Neighbourhood Watch*  
© Karl Andre Photography

If you visited Eat Me Café at the SJT during the summer, you couldn't fail to have noticed the cafe's most regular patron.

Monty was the 6ft-high, bronze gnome which looked on as you ate your lunch and was taking a holiday from The Bob Watson Archive, where he does not receive half as much attention nor nibbles.

He's the single largest object held in the archive and if space hadn't been found, he would have been destroyed due to size and lack of storage space in the SJT. Fortunately, Monty found sanctuary in the archive.

Monty celebrates his tenth birthday this year as he was created for the surprise finale of Alan Ayckbourn's acclaimed play *Neighbourhood Watch*, which premiered in 2011 at the SJT before transferring to the 59E59 Theatres, New York, and the Tricycle Theatre in London.

In the play, the protagonist, Martin, is (spoiler alert) shot by the police and he is commemorated by a 6ft bronze gnome in the image of his own beloved garden gnome, Mr Montmorency, who is destroyed earlier in the play. This initial act of wanton violence leads to the creation of a Neighbourhood Watch project, which does not go quite as planned and ultimately leads to Martin's untimely death.

Monty was designed by Pip Leckenby, who has worked many times with Alan. She made the original clay version of the garden gnome from which all other Montys (small and large) were cast and moulded by Design Supervisor Michael Roberts.

The large Monty was carved by Michael from polystyrene, which then received several coats of a thick paint that creates a hard surface which can be sanded smooth. Finally, he was painted to look bronze.

And then the process was repeated...

Did you know that Monty has a twin? As if one giant gnome wasn't enough to contend with, there are two of them. One of whom became a globetrotter.

*Neighbourhood Watch* opened at the SJT during September 2011 before transferring to the 59E59 Theatres, New York, as part of the *Brits Off Broadway* festival, in November.

The gap between closing in Scarborough and opening in New York was too short to ship the original Monty prop to New York, so a duplicate Monty was created and dispatched whilst the original production was still playing in Scarborough.

This also led to the unlikely creation of a Monty blog, created by actor Phil Cheadle, charting Monty 2's adventures. As the story went, Monty 1 couldn't perform in the States due to union rules, so was replaced by an American Monty, who was more buff but a less talented thespian. A familiar story for many actors, I'm sure.

Following *Brits Off Broadway*, Monty 2 was shipped back to Scarborough but, unfortunately, managed to lose part of his nose and emergency rhinoplasty had to be performed upon his return by Michael.

Meanwhile, the original Monty, possibly jealous of his twin's trans-Atlantic success, found himself in the UK tour of *Neighbourhood Watch* and its subsequent transfer into the Tricycle Theatre, London, during early 2012.

Eventually, the two Montys were reunited at the SJT. Which brought its own challenges.

What do you do with two giant gnomes and where do you store them?

At this point, the SJT still owned the former Tonks' building for storage, so there was a place for them and they were occasionally hired out for other productions of *Neighbourhood Watch*.

Sadly, there isn't much other call for enormous, bronze gnomes. It's a bit of a niche prop.



Monty hiding away in the Bob Watson Archive  
© Simon Murgatroyd



Monty 2(?) in his new home in Huddersfield © Richard McArtney

Which led to the decision to auction off a Monty to raise money for the SJT during 2015. Monty 2 (or perhaps Monty 1 as, by this stage, no-one seemed to know which one was which) was caught up in a bidding war before moving to Linthwaite, near Huddersfield.

He was bought by John Cotgrave and Richard McArtney: they run Dick & Lottie, a professional theatre company dedicated to the works of Alan Ayckbourn.

And, obviously, Monty found himself once more on stage, stealing the show in Dick & Lottie's 2016 production of *Neighbourhood Watch*.

This Monty is now firmly ensconced in Richard and John's dining room which means – rather bizarrely – both Montys have retired to a life of culinary delights.

Monty has recently had to leave Eat Me – possibly due to an expanding waistline – and is now ensconced back in the Archive. But who knows, Stephen and Martyn of Eat Me are keen for him to return, so you may still see Monty eyeing up your food in the future.