

*“Does she not wish to celebrate the fact that she’s now sixty years of age? I thought that might be a cause of celebratory mirth.”*

**Alan Ayckbourn**, *Constant Companions*

## Welcome...

...to the August issue of the Circular, the newsletter just for members of the SJT Circle.

We’re absolutely thrilled to welcome a cast of familiar and much-loved faces for our next show, Alan Ayckbourn’s 89th play, **Constant Companions** (7 September to 7 October).

Georgia Burnell, Andy Cryer, Tanya-Loretta Dee, Alexandra Mathie, Naomi Petersen, Richard Stacey and Leigh Symonds are currently in rehearsal with Alan for a show in which he weaves together the stories of highflying lawyer Lorraine, lonely bachelor Don and technician Winston with characteristic humour and compassion.

Lorraine is a fabulously successful lawyer of a certain age. Jan Sixty is the janitor of her building, an android of indeterminate age. In a not-too-distant future where humans have turned to artificial friends for companionship without compromise, can Lorraine and Jan find true love?

Alan says: “Reading so much about the inevitable arrival of AI into our society – some would say it’s already here! – I felt a cautious look forward might be in order.

“Are we really prepared for an encounter with another race? Not from outer space, but one of our own creation which will inevitably eventually turn out to be a lot smarter than we are?

“Honestly, the human race! As if we didn’t have enough problems already...”

If you can’t make it to Scarborough to see *Constant Companions*, you can always catch it at The Old Laundry Theatre, Bowness-on-Windermere (17 to 21 October) and the New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme (24 October to 4 November)



# Truth Will Out



September brings a rare opportunity to see something very special: Alan taking to the stage! He'll be performing in a rehearsed reading of his 2020 play *Truth Will Out*, which sadly never saw the light of day because of – well, we don't need to say, do we?

Everyone has secrets. Certainly former shop steward George, his right-wing MP daughter Janet, investigative journalist Peggy, and senior civil servant Sefton, do.

And all it's going to take is one tech-savvy teenager with a mind of his own and time on his hands to bring their worlds tumbling down – and maybe everyone else's along with them. A storm is brewing...

An up-to-the-minute satire on family, relationships, politics, and the state of the nation, this rehearsed reading by professional actors will be the first time anyone's ever heard it read aloud. Alan will be playing Jim alongside John Branwell, Christopher Godwin, Frances Marshall and the cast of *Constant Companions* and although he's directed him many times, it'll be the first time Alan's performed opposite Christopher since 1963!

Tickets are £25, and you can buy them [here](#).



# September visiting shows

We're steadily gearing up for our autumn season of visiting shows, with no less than 18 to choose from between the beginning of September and Christmas. We don't want to flood you with too much information here, so you can find out more about the later shows on our website ([www.sjt.uk.com](http://www.sjt.uk.com)) and in future issues of the Circular.

But we just wanted to introduce you to September's very diverse offerings:



## **Live: Scarborough** (11 September):

Presented by award-winning theatre company Barrel Organ, this is your chance to see exciting new productions from Yorkshire coast-based artists in their early stages. The programme for the pay-what-you-decide evening will feature local talents Lel Meleyal, JJ Cruickshank, Michelle Clark, lowercase theatre, Gabe Mason and Maddy Whitby.



## **ADHD The Musical: Can I Have Your Attention Please?** (20 September):

Dora Colquhoun's new, exciting and heartfelt work exploring the highs and lows of having the most common neuro developmental disorder worldwide. The show attempts to unpack feelings of shame and blame that occur when being neurodivergent in a world designed for the neurotypical brain.



## **Playreading: Our Ben** (25 September):

The latest in our series of script-in-hand readings of plays by up-and-coming writers, Claire O'Connor's *Our Ben* is the story of 15-year-old Katelyn who sees falling pregnant as a bit of a laugh – she won't need to do exams and she'll get her own flat. But when Ben is born something's not right. Katelyn's first challenge is to convince the doctors she's not making it up; her second, to convince everyone she can look after him; her third, to convince herself that she is the best mum for Ben.

# And Then Come The Nightjars



A new movie directed by our very own Artistic Director, Paul Robinson, can be seen in our cinema next month.

**And Then Come The Nightjars** will be on our silver screen on Friday 22 September at 7.45pm, and Saturday 23 September at 2.45pm and 7.45pm, following its world premiere at the Chichester International Film Festival on 25 August. The Saturday evening screening will be followed by a Q&A with Paul Robinson, led by George Cromack. Tickets for the screenings are usually £7, but as a Circle member, you can use the discount **Nightjars5** to get a ticket for just £5 for the Saturday evening.

The film was adapted from the original play by its writer, Bea Roberts. The stage version was the last play to be directed by Paul Robinson at Theatre503, where he was Artistic Director until he joined us in 2016. It toured to the SJT in the autumn of that year.

Set against a backdrop of the 2001 Foot and Mouth outbreak, it tells the story of an unlikely friendship between a Devon farmer and the vet

who is assigned to cull his precious herd. In this new film version from Finite Films and TV, Nigel Hastings and David Fielder reprise their successful on-stage roles as Jeff and Michael, with Paul Robinson making his feature film directorial debut.

Paul says: "It was a dream come true when Finite Films approached me to direct this beautiful story. We shot it on location in Devon, on a farm which was impacted by Foot and Mouth, so that made it even more important to get right. It was a terrifying experience but also one which I relished every moment of. I had the most fantastic team – cinematographer John Craine, editor Claire Pringle and composer Simon Slater – who supported me all the way, and I really think we've got something quite special. I'm certainly delighted to have captured those incredible performances on screen.

"It was an audience favourite on stage and I'm really hoping for the same response to the film."

## Backstage secrets



*In the latest of our series of backstage secrets, our Company Stage Manager, Fleur Beeley, writes:*

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Nope, it's a well-known breakfast cereal!

You will all have seen many things falling from the ceiling in the Round at the SJT, from dust to snow, petals to slime. And whatever drops from the ceiling has to be non-slip, safe and non-toxic.

Petals are usually made of material; this gives them a wonderful flutter as they fall to the stage. Different sizes and colours make a multitude of different petals.

Snow and ash are recycled from polythene bags or paper, ripped into tiny pieces. White for snow, black and grey for ash, they all come in different sizes to give different effects and with some cunning mixing together can make all sorts of effects.

Slime is a tricky beast: getting the consistency right so it doesn't (a) fall like a bowling ball or (b) splatter the front row from head to toe can involve a lot of trial and error.

In Treasure Island, we ended up putting an actor underneath it on a very large flag to break its fall and make clean up easier. Although getting it out of his costume was no mean feat every show – twice on Thursdays and Saturdays!

In The 39 Steps a character shoots a pistol in the air inside a theatre. To give this some reality, the director and designer asked for a dust drop as if it had punctured the roof. That in itself is quite easy: a tippable box and a piece of string, or a box with a magnetized lid that can be released through the lighting board. But what to put in it, that isn't a hazard to walk on, or dangerous to breathe in? All things we have to think about around actors doing the show eight times a week – one slip or choke and we can have a cancellation on our hands.

The answer? The humble Weetabix, crushed to a suitable powder, or left in larger lumps, makes a great plaster and dust drop.

So, next time you see something coming from the sky at the SJT, have a wonder what it's made of and how it's released on cue!

## Carers Plus

As many of you will know, we work with various local charities and other organisations to provide tickets at just £1 each for people who might otherwise be unable to access an evening at the theatre. One of those organisations is Carers Plus Yorkshire, which has a long track record of listening to, supporting, and working in partnership with unpaid family carers.

Carers Plus Yorkshire are always very appreciative, and love to share their clients' feedback with us. We thought you might like to hear what a recent group – a mix of people with caring responsibilities and those who require full- or part-time care – said after their visit to see *The 39 Steps*:

*"I absolutely loved it!!"*

*"We haven't laughed that much in ages and ages!"*

*"The main actor was brilliant and his stunts with the ladder were totally amazing...I'm still in shock!"*

*"Just what I needed to forget some of the rubbish from my day."*

*"Going out with a group of friends is something I thought I would never do again."*

*"I was a bit nervous about coming tonight but I needn't have been!"*

Our £1 tickets scheme is supported by our corporate partners – Castle Employment Group; Clock's Home and Garden Centre & Bibelot Bee; the Crown Spa Hotel; Eat Me at the SJT; Eaglei; Evelyn Partners; Fortus; Handelsbanken; Pinkney Grunwells LLP; Lloyd Dowson, and Saint Cecilia's Care Group – and, of course, by our wonderful Gold members!

## Talking of...

...our valued corporate partners, we're happy to welcome the Crown Spa Hotel to the fold. A warm Yorkshire welcome awaits you at this four-star hotel on Scarborough's Esplanade with views over the South Bay and harbour. Bedroom accommodation is spread over four floors and fully accessible. The Crown Spa Health & Leisure Club has full cardio and free weights gym, pool, 20ft jacuzzi, sauna, steam and ice rooms. Relax with spa treatments or dine at the Taste Restaurant & Bar, including à la carte menu, BBQ Sundays, bottomless brunches and afternoon tea. Four event rooms are available for six to 200 guests, for meetings, conferences, private dinners and weddings.

## Proudfoot

We just wanted to take this opportunity to say a huge 'thank you' to our friends at Proudfoot Supermarkets, who have recently given us money from their Making A Difference Locally – Nisa's registered charity which enables independent retailers to donate money to their local communities.

Valerie Aston, from the Proudfoot Group, says: "Our ethos is to help as many charities and good causes within our area as possible. To date we have supported around 100 local causes with over £125,000 donated through Making a Difference Locally.

"It has opened our eyes to the work of the many groups and organisations within our area of the country who are doing invaluable work to help so many, and we are delighted to be able to support them."

Our fundraising and development manager, Stephanie Dattani, says: "We're really grateful to Proudfoot and to all the other local businesses that support us – it's support like this that enables us to continue our valuable work in the community."



# Dates for your diary

At our last Circle Café, members had the opportunity to meet members of the cast of *The Blonde Bombshells of 1943*. Rory Gradon, who plays Patrick, Gleanne Purcell-Brown (Lily), Alice McKenna (Grace) and Lauren Chinery (Elizabeth and Liz), all multi-talented actor-musicians, spoke about auditioning for the show and revealed that the first time they all played their instruments together was the second week of rehearsals!

Our Circle Cafés are usually held on Thursdays, which is also matinee day for both live shows and in our cinema, so why not make a day of it? Your Circle membership entitles you to a generous 10% discount in *Eat Me @ The SJT*, and you could catch a show or a film afterwards.

This year, we're also introducing a few Circle Socials – evening events, similar in format to Circle Cafés, but aimed at those of you who can't make mornings (although if you are a Café regular, you're still very welcome to a Social, of course!).

Circle Cafes and Socials are getting increasingly popular, so please make sure you book a free place via the box office in advance so that we can predict numbers and make sure we have enough seats!

Circle Socials will be in the Boden Room, with a 5.45pm arrival for a 6pm start, and will last approximately half an hour, giving you time to grab a drink or a bite to eat if you're seeing that evening's show.

**Circle Cafés (starting at 10.15am, so please aim to arrive between 10am and 10.15am) include:**

**Thursday 14 September:** meet the *Constant Companions* company

**Thursday 26 October:** meet the *These Majestic Creatures* company

**Thursday 23 November:** meet our new(ish!) Head of Production, Simon Bedwell

**Thursday 14 December:** meet the *Beauty and the Beast* company. Please note that, as the cast will actually be on stage performing at the usual 10.15am start time, this December Circle Café will be in the Boden Room, with a later start at 1pm – please try to arrive between 12.45pm and 1pm).

**Circle Socials (starting at 6pm, so please aim to arrive between 5.45pm and 6pm) include:**

**Tuesday 26 September:** meet Alan Ayckbourn's Archivist, Simon Murgatroyd, who will talk about Alan's 89th play, *Constant Companions*