

*"These men act quickly. You don't know how **clever** their **chief** is. He has a dozen names, and he can look like a hundred people, but one thing he cannot disguise: part of his little finger is missing, so if ever you should **meet** a man with no top joint there, be very careful, my friend."*

**John Buchan, *The 39 Steps***

## Welcome...

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

Those of you who saw our 2018 production of **The 39 Steps** and are looking forward to seeing it again will be pleased to know that it's broadly the same, but also rather different – our Artistic Director Paul Robinson, who's directing it again this time, tells us that has at least 39 more jokes in it!

You might recognise two of our company from previous SJT productions – Niall Ransome was in the 2018 *39 Steps* and returns to play the same part (or rather, many parts – he plays one of the Clowns, who have quick changes down to a very fine art), and was also in our 2019 Christmas show, *Treasure Island*. And if you saw last year's hit Christmas show, *Cinderella*, you'll definitely remember our second Clown, Lucy Keirl – she was the brilliant trainee Fairy Godmother, Mandy, as well as playing many other roles; more quick changes!

The actor playing Annabella Schmidt, Margaret and Pamela, Olivia Onyehara, is new to the SJT, but you might know her from our old friend Barrie Rutter's *Jack Lear* at Hull Truck a couple of years back – she played one of his three daughters in an updated version of *King Lear*. And actually, she's not entirely new to us – she was brought up in Grimsby, and remembers coming on a school trip when she was a teenager, including walking on the famous mesh above our stage.

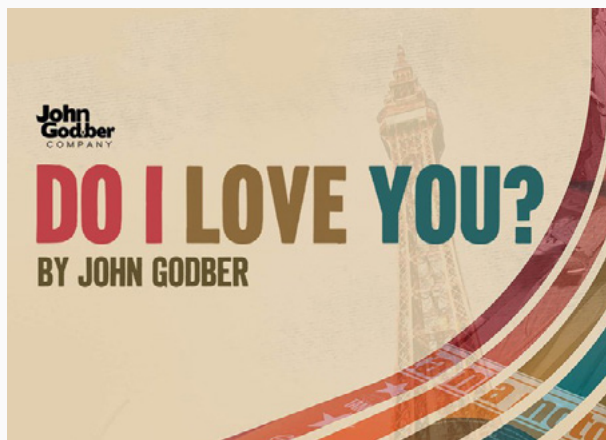


Our final cast member – and the only one who has the luxury of playing just one part! – is Dave Hearn. As a founder member of the madcap Mischief Theatre, Dave will be a very familiar face to fans of the *Goes Wrong* shows, which are popular both on stage and TV – he plays Max. We've given him a very different role in *The 39 Steps*: our dashing hero, Richard Hannay.

The four of them together are proving to be a bit of a tour de force in rehearsals – we can't wait to get this one on stage!

## New shows!

We've just added two new shows to our programme, and as a Circle member, you have priority booking from today.



***Do I Love You?* (7 to 10 February)** is the latest show from the legendary John Godber, with a cast featuring his daughter, Martha Godber, alongside Emilio Encinosa-Gil and Chloe McDonald.

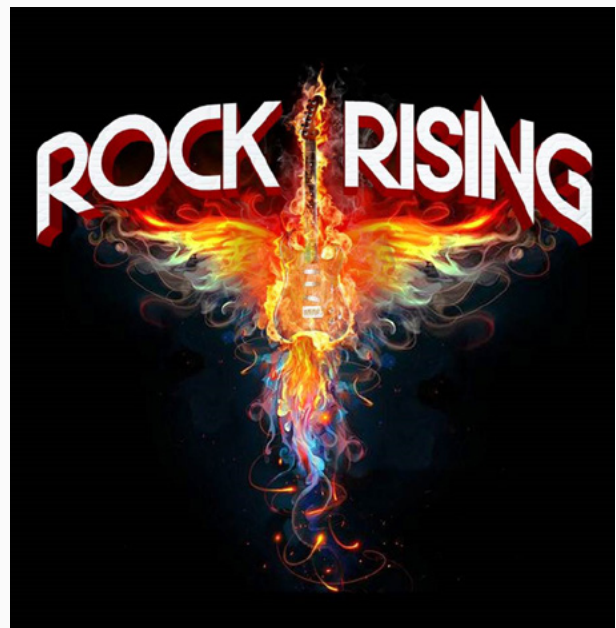
Join twenty-somethings Sally, Nat and Kyle in this hilarious comedy as they develop a love for Northern Soul and the people involved. What started as a college project has grown into a passion, but the dance steps are exhausting; far beyond their home city of Hull, our trio find excitement, purpose and the tribe they've been looking for. Now they can't get enough! From Brid Spa to Stoke, Scarborough to the Tower Ballroom, our young soulies are *determined* to keep the faith!

This is Northern Soul for a new generation, but with rising costs, unemployment, and small town blues, has anything really changed? Is this England 1973 or 2023? The pubs are closing, hospitality has gone, and strikes are everywhere; but when you're out on the floor...

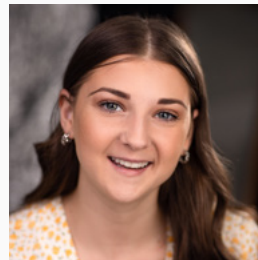
So spread the talc, grab your loafers and join our trio for a weekend!

Our second new show is ***Rock Rising* (24 February)** – a high octane, classic rock show designed to take the audience on an edge-of-their-seats journey through the evolution of classic rock. Showcasing an excellent seven-piece band, it features rock anthems from legendary acts such as Pink Floyd, AC/DC, Journey, Foreigner, Toto, Thin Lizzy and many more multi-platinum selling artists from the last four decades.

Booking opens for the general public on Friday 7 July, so don't hang around – visit our website at [www.sjt.uk.com](http://www.sjt.uk.com) or call box office on 01723 370541 to take advantage of your priority booking!



# Happily Ever After?



A rehearsed reading of a new musical set in the world of fairytale characters after their stories have ended comes to our McCarthy stage on **Thursday 6 July**.

***Happily Ever After?***, with book, music, lyrics and concept by Scarborough Theatre Company's Alex Weatherhill, finds characters including Hansel, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Goldilocks, Peter Piper, Red Ridinghood and Rapunzel in group therapy, from first meet-up to performing at a local music festival. There are twists and turns and, of course, the person running things has ulterior motives.

Directed by Alex, with musical direction by Andrew Davison, the reading will be performed by Katie Buttner, Connor Canvess, Amy Hunter, Natalie Jackson, Martin Richardson, Georgie Samuels, Julie Anne Smith and Nicole Wade.

Alex says: "*Happily Ever After? was born in one of those freak moments where many things converged. I was working with a director in Barcelona at The Institute of Arts putting together a student production of Stepping Out: The Musical; we'd previously worked on Into the Woods; I had just watched a show in a studio space and talked to the producer about how few shows were written as chamber pieces; another friend who runs a singing business was discussing sound healing and the crazy quantum stuff that she was researching to do with singing and, in particular, group singing...and then a Facebook post sharing the real version of Sleeping Beauty appeared on my feed.*

*"The idea for a bunch of fairytale characters meeting in a village hall for some sort of group singing PTSD choir popped into my head and lo, the beast was born!"*

*"There are moments of tender connection and moments of outrageous campery. It concentrates on how we live beyond the story of our trauma and, despite being centred on fairytale characters, it's not for kids: it's for adults who aren't completely grown up. The kind of adults who are watching Wednesday, who loved Once, and might dig out Labyrinth from time to time."*



# Seal of approval

Our script-in-hand play readings have always been popular with those of you who just love new work – it's the chance to be in at a very early stage in a play's development, and to feed back to the writer, potentially shaping its future.

Our play reading is on **Tuesday 25 July**: *Approved* is by writer and actor Misha Duncan-Barry (some of you may have seen her in Red Ladder's *My Voice Was Heard But It Was Ignored*, which came to the SJT last autumn).

*Approved* follows the journey of three female students who must pass college courses to graduate and live in an 'outer world'. Set in a dystopian future, the stakes are high with class, social status, and ambition being the antagonising forces working against them and a Headmistress who's driving them to work against one another. With secrets and lies at the core of the system, can any of them truly become approved?

Directed by our Carne Associate Director, Kash Arshad, the play is performed by professional actors after just a day's rehearsal.

Most people who come to our play readings tell us they've had a really interesting and enjoyable time – and at just £5 for a ticket, why not give it a try? You can book [here](#) – and if you like it, pop the next one in your diary – it's on **Monday 25 September**.



# Happy birthday, Stephen Joseph!



It was our founder, Stephen Joseph's, birthday on 13 June – he would have been 102 years old. Sadly, Stephen died at the way-too-young age of 46; who knows what he might have done had he lived longer?

We make no apologies for marking the occasion by bringing you one of our favourite quotes from the great man, celebrating theatre generally, and theatre-in-the-round particularly (those four front rows!):

*"Have you ever asked yourself what the theatre can do that the cinema and the TV cannot? Work it out. In the end you'll remember that the theatre has live actors who are responsive to a live audience and vice versa. You can eat fish and chips through a TV show. You can switch off. They go on acting just the same. You can cuddle your girl friend at the flicks. They go on acting. In the theatre, actors feel*

*the response of the audience. Every performance is a unique work of creation, a work of art made by that audience and those actors at this moment of time. So to hell with the scenery that the films can do so much better! To hell with the frame that protects the cathode ray tube! Let's have the actors in the same room as the audience, let's have four front rows, let's get really excited about this acting business!"*

# Everyone Loves Ernie

It's the name of a local band fronted by our lovely Creative Engagement Co-ordinator, Ernie Acquah, and it's true – we do!

But Ernie's popular outside the SJT, too, keeping busy doing loads of community work. Here's just a sample of recent outings, in his own words:

*"We've been doing **GP workshops** with local doctors for a couple of years now, usually monthly. I'm currently working with locally based actress Shannon Rewcroft. One of the purposes of the sessions is to bring the GPs together – they're all usually separate within their practices, so it's a great way for them to meet each other. They'll give us a theme, such as thinking on your feet, or improvisation: they come from all over the world, as well as within the UK, so it's a form of training using theatre to help them to come out of themselves, look at communications, status work, and so on.*

*"**Mencap** provides learning disability support services. I see them usually every couple of weeks. Sometimes I go to them on Valley Road: most of the time they come here to the theatre – it's a great opportunity for them to be in a different space to the one they're used to. I do a number of different workshops with them, including drama, circus skills, samba percussion and puppetry.*

*"The people who come are all ages from about 20 upwards, and have varying abilities. It's a chance for them to do some different activities – we have, for instance, quite a few different puppets: humans, animals, aliens. I use bits of material to create new ones, and we work on using your hands to create puppets, how to match what you're saying with what your puppet is doing. We do music, lip synching and dancing.*

*"Via **Create**, I did a recent event at the Market Hall – they're doing a pop-up outdoor market every other Friday till September. There are various stalls outside, craft activities, a bar, a band. I went to do some five-minute samba workshops with kids, a lot of whom came from Friarage School, just around the corner." And it goes without saying, of course, that this important work that Ernie and the other members of our brilliant Creative Engagement team are doing in the local community wouldn't be possible without the support of you, our wonderful Circle members!*



## Alex meets The Woman in Black

It's always inspiring to meet a true enthusiast, and we had the great joy of meeting one when Northern BroadSides visited us earlier this month.

Actor Alex Moran (he played Ensign Blades in *Quality Street*) is, it's probably fair to say, a superfan of *The Woman in Black*, which, of course, started its life at this theatre back in the Westwood days. That was in 1987, the year Alex was born (thanks for making us feel so OLD, Alex!) – but 13 years later, he saw it at the Fortune in London, and it's what made him want to become an actor. It also inspired him to write his upcoming show *Shock Horror*, which will be touring next year.

Alex was thrilled when he heard that the BroadSides tour was coming to Scarborough, and contacted us to ask if we had any original material he might be able to look at.

Of course, thanks to the efforts of the late Bob Watson, and subsequently Simon Murgatroyd, we have an incredibly comprehensive archive of material relating to shows at our three homes – the Library Theatre (1955 to 1976), the Stephen Joseph Theatre in the Round at Westwood (1976 to 1996), and our current home in the former Odeon cinema.

We were able to show Alex programmes, production photos and other material relating to all three Scarborough productions – the original in 1987, performed by Dominic Letts and Jon Strickland; the 1997 version starring Martin Freeman (yes, *that* Martin Freeman!) and Peter Laird; and the 2015 one with the unique father-and-son casting of Christopher and Tom Godwin.

But there were also some little treasures that are rarely seen, including technical drawings, an original script, and a set of slightly blurry but remarkable colour snaps of the first show done, we think, during a dress rehearsal, and just for the record.

Alex was beside himself with excitement, and it reinforced to us just how important our archive is. If there's a show you'd love to delve deeper into, drop us a line and we'll see what we can find.

And if you've any material you think would fit well into our archive (we're always particularly keen on things from the Library, and early Westwood days – the further back in time we go, the less we have!), and would like to donate it, we can definitely find it a home.

## Blonde Bombshells of 1943

We haven't even opened *The 39 Steps* yet, but we're already thinking ahead to our next big show of the summer – ***Blonde Bombshells of 1943***. It's a co-production with the Octagon in Bolton and Theatre by the Lake in Keswick, and has already opened at Bolton – we urge you to watch their lovely trailer [here](#).

It's in Keswick throughout June, and heads our way on **2 August**, so we'll tell you more about it in next month's Circular.





# Backstage secrets – a farewell to Oldham



Our Company Stage Manager, Fleur Beeley, writes:

As some of you may know, due to funding cuts Oldham Coliseum is having to shut down. Their Company Manager and all the staff were challenged to find new homes for everything in the theatre. This meant wardrobe, down to the coat hangers; technical, down to the rolls of electrical tape; props, down to the shilling pieces; furniture, down to the church kneelers.

Theatres by definition are staffed with hoarders. You never know when things will come in handy: cardboard tubes, bubble wrap, bits of perspex.

So, when Jane phoned me to see if I could house some of their prop store, inadvertently, she had landed on her feet. I am the world's greatest hoarder. I have boxes and drawers full of things that are hard to find: vintage whistles, Christmas decorations, darning mushrooms, cigarette packets, boxed handkerchiefs, cocktail forks. And that's just my top drawer!!

I have made two trips over to Oldham in our van, and Jane has been over in their van once to

deliver some more props, but mainly to put her feet in the sea and have an ice cream.

Deciding what to save from an enormous store that has been built up over 85 years was tricky to say the least (the Coliseum opened way before that in 1885, but was turned into a repertory theatre in 1938). I would have taken it all, especially as Jane kept saying that if they couldn't find new homes for things, they would end up in the skip. That, I could not bear.

So, as the theatre comes to its final weeks, I have 'saved' as much as I could and my stores are overflowing, literally. Vintage compacts, milk bottles, wallets, two cellos and seven(!) violins, a WW2 parachute, enough crockery to seat twenty at a vintage dinner party, glassware to match, handbags, rucksacks, gramophones, books, umbrellas, walking sticks, eiderdowns, radios and tape machines.

I wish all the staff at Oldham the very best and congratulate them on finding new homes within the theatre community for much of their stock."

# Stephen Wood

We were deeply saddened to hear of the death earlier this month of our former Executive Director, Stephen Wood.

Stephen first joined the theatre, then known as the Library Theatre, as press officer. That was back in 1976, just months before our move to Westwood, where we became known as the Stephen Joseph Theatre in the Round.

He left in 1982 to join the National Theatre as Head of Press, moving back to Scarborough in 1996 to become Chief Executive of the theatre in our current home. He retired in 2015.

Helen Boaden, chair of Scarborough Theatre Trust, says: *"Stephen was an irrepressible force of nature who loved cricket, newspapers and the SJT. He championed our theatre through thick and thin and we send our sincere condolences to his family."*

Our Director Emeritus, Alan Ayckbourn, says: *"Stephen had long been associated with the company throughout its various incarnations ever since its Library Theatre days. Throughout his association with it, initially as press officer and finally as executive director, he played a huge part in its growth and development. He is someone I always considered a guardian of the company's founding principles, innovation, originality and excitement, pursued through the highest achievable artistic standards."*

Our thoughts are with Stephen's widow Amanda – who also worked at the SJT for many years – and their family.



# Janet Dale

Only a few days later, we heard that Janet Dale had died. Janet had a long history with Alan, appearing in the world premieres of *The Norman Conquests* (1973), *Absent Friends* and *Confusions* (both 1974); *Bedroom Farce* (1975); *Just Between Ourselves* (1976), and *Ten Times Table* (1977). She also appeared in his family show *Invisible Friends* at the National Theatre in 1991.

Janet also directed a couple of Christmas family shows for us, in 1974 and 1975: *The Christmas That Nearly Wasn't*, and *Charlie's Christmas Countdown*.



# Dates for your diary – and why not make a day of it?

More and more people are enjoying our monthly members-only Circle Cafés – so much so that we're having to move to a bigger venue!

From now on, Circle Cafés will be held in Eat Me Café on our first floor with a **new, earlier start time of 10.15am** and a prompt finish time of 11am to allow the Eat Me team to reset in time for lunch.

As our building doesn't open until 10am, please aim to **arrive between 10am and 10.15am** (December is an exception to this rule due to the Christmas show being on in the morning – please see the schedule below). These events are free, but **please** do book a ticket at box office as, even with our increased capacity, numbers are limited.

It's a great way to make friends and to get to know your theatre – you'll meet the people who run the SJT and company members from our own productions and from visiting shows. Plus, of course, there's always free tea/coffee and sweet treats.

Our last Circle Café saw members meet the cast of Northern Broadsides' *Quality Street*, and what a delightful bunch they were! Amongst other things, they talked about those fabulous costumes, inspired by the wrapper of the chocolates (which were named after the play), and how much they enjoyed meeting the Mackintosh's factory workers whose reminiscences bookended JM Barrie's original script.

Our next event, on 13 July, will introduce you to our *The 39 Steps* cast – and having seen them at the read-through and in rehearsal, we can guarantee it'll be highly entertaining!

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

This year, we're also introducing a limited number of 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! 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 perhaps a bite to eat if you're seeing that evening's show.

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

**Thursday 13 July:** meet *The 39 Steps* company

**Thursday 10 August:** meet the *Blonde Bombshells of 1943* company

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

**Thursday 16 October:** meet the *These Majestic Creatures* company

**Thursday 23 November:** meet our new(ish!) Production Manager, 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 1pm start – please try to arrive between **12.45pm and 1pm**).

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

**Tuesday 25 July:** meet the SJT's press officer Jeannie Swales and Executive Assistant Jaye Lewis – friends who go back many years, with each other and with the theatre!

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