



FUN THÉÂTRE BULLETIN



25th March 2022 | Edition 02 | Newsletter

Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the *Fun Théâtre Bulletin* - the newsletter of Fun Théâtre Communautaire (FTC).

Our soirée portes ouvertes / open evening was wonderful with many new and existing members of Fun Théâtre gathering to catch-up with each other, and to hear Graham and his team set out their aspirations for this year's programme, including plans for a play in French and our next pantomime in the spring of 2023.

Over the next few pages, I'll summarize the main announcements shared during the evening. If you have any questions or would like to register your interest in any of the activities (if you didn't put your name on the relevant sign-up sheet) don't hesitate to contact hello@funtheatre.fr. Thanks to everyone who helped with this event, and to Briony and Kitty for their entertainments during the evening.

Finally, at the end of the *Bulletin* you will find what we hope will become a regular feature, where members of FTC introduce themselves. In this edition we focus on the officers of the association who are working hard behind the scenes to ensure that FTC is a lively and interesting association.

And remember if you have any suggestions or an article for possible inclusion in a future edition of the *Bulletin*, please send an email to: hello@funtheatre.fr

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 29th March at 8pm

Session to introduce *Les Bonnes Manières* our next play (in French)

More dates for activities & workshops to follow

Club du Samedi (date to be confirmed)

Fun sessions for juniors

29th May 2022 midday

Fun Théâtre Picnic at 14 Logerie, 61220 Saires La Verrerie (near Flers)

October or November 2022

Les Bonnes Manières by Alan Ayckbourn translated into French by Dominique Hollier

December 2022

Participation in the Téléthon at Passais

From January 2023 Pantomime

Cendrillon et ses demi-sœurs de Passais
Rehearsals commence

We hope to add some social events to this calendar to help us all stay in touch with each other. If you have an idea or are able to host an event please contact: hello@funtheatre.fr

Soirée Portes Ouvertes

To begin the evening Graham welcomed everyone, and acknowledged that the past two years have been very difficult for Fun Théâtre. After a highly successful start in 2018, our first show in 2019, and a tremendous amount of work by everybody to prepare a show for 2020, Covid stopped virtually everything.

Nevertheless, we have kept many members, we have had AGMs each year, and in December last year finally managed to perform The Sunshine Boys.

We are now looking to the future and have five main areas to focus on:

- ✦ Various workshops for members during the year plus ideas for a Saturday morning theatre club for juniors
- ✦ Participation in the Passais Villages Téléthron event in December 2022
- ✦ A play in French for autumn 2022
- ✦ Plans for a grand spectacle - a pantomime - in 2023
- ✦ And finally, a picnic for members and their families

Workshops & Saturday Club

In order to be able to prepare for all future projects we need to ensure we have plenty opportunities to work together again, and to socialise as a team.

We intend to arrange at least one evening event, in the salles des associations, each month. Each event will be different, but there will be some important objectives:

- ✦ For everyone to get to know each other well.
- ✦ To discuss and develop the projects for the year
- ✦ To prepare people for the projects.
- ✦ These evening events will primarily be for the adult members of FTC, although not necessarily exclusively.
- ✦ The programme of events will be developed as we go through the year.

The provisional date for the first event is **Tuesday 29th March at 8pm**. The subject of this meeting will be the French-language play “Les Bonnes Manières” by Alan Ayckbourn to be performed in the autumn 2022 (dates to be confirmed) open to all interested members.

Téléthron

We would like to offer a small piece of entertainment to be included in this year’s Téléthron event in Passais. This will of course need to be discussed and agreed with the organisers of the event. But we think it should take the form of a short comedy sketch, perhaps 15 minutes or so, and may be performed twice during the day.

The guidelines for the sketch will be similar to that employed for our major shows. That is:

- The script will be written especially for the members taking part. It will be inclusive.
- The script will use integrated French and English dialogue.

At this time, we do not need members to commit to their participation. However, it would be very useful if you could indicate your interest in taking part now. If you did not put your name on the sign-up sheet at the open evening, please email your details to hello@funtheatre.fr

Further details will be in future newsletters, but for now:

- We will ask for commitment by August or September
- We do not know the date of the Téléthron in Passais yet, but we assume it will be early December

We are very keen to involve more junior members this year. We would like to have many children taking part in the pantomime in 2023.

With this ambition in mind, we would like to explore the possibility of running separate workshops or events for the junior members on a Saturday morning.

Perhaps once each month, or maybe twice each month. The frequency would be dependent on getting volunteers from our members to oversee these sessions.

We would need at least one responsible person to oversee each session, and perhaps other people to help organise the events.

To proceed with this, we would like to ask anyone who may be interested in helping with this initiative to let us know. You are welcome to send us an email at hello@funtheatre.fr

We intend to arrange a short meeting one Saturday morning in the small salle at Passais to plan this in more detail.

A Play in French

A play in French this year is important for our commitment to balance and inclusivity for members and audiences, but for many reasons it has been difficult to find the right play. We had explored several things over the last year or so, but had found nothing suitable for our association.

For expediency, Graham made several attempts to find plays that he knew by English writers that have been translated to French. Alan Ayckbourn is one of the world's most prolific playwrights, and his plays are extremely popular with amateur groups and their audiences.

Just before Christmas Graham had a breakthrough in his research when he discovered that Ayckbourn's trilogy of plays, the "Norman Conquests" had been translated into French, and that all three plays had been performed in France recently. Graham's favoured play of the three, Table Manners, had been translated into French by Dominique Hollier, becoming Les Bonnes Manières. Eventually Graham was sent the translated scripts for all three plays - including this one.

OUR PROJECT

Performing Les Bonnes Manières is a unique and exciting opportunity for FTC's members and our audiences. We can produce it in a 'radio' format, similar to that used for The Sunshine Boys, but with enhancements - although it is relatively easily produced in a traditional stage format if members prefer to do it that way. We can decide on the format later, after some work with our actors.

The imperative is to produce this in its French version. This is our principal objective. However, there is also the opportunity to run the English version on alternate nights. If we choose a 'radio' format, we may be able to add sub-titles on a screen which may encourage many people to see both versions.

THE TEAM

- ✦ Each version needs 3 male actors and 3 female actors
- ✦ So, if we do both versions that provides acting opportunities for 6 French speaking members and 6 English speaking actors.
- ✦ Plus, a full production team of course.
- ✦ The degree of flexibility in casting the actors (in regards to ages for example) will be greater for the 'radio' format.
- ✦ It is possible that we will use workshops to help the decision-making process.

NEXT STEPS

- ✦ Performance dates cannot be confirmed yet, but are likely to be in October or November 2022
- ✦ Rehearsals will probably begin in August or September
- ✦ There may be some workshops earlier than that
- ✦ The actors need to be selected early, which will give them the opportunity to work with the script in advance.

There will be a meeting at 8pm on Tuesday 29th March.

Panto 2023

Cinderella has been chosen as the story outline for our 2023 show because it is as a great pantomime.

Our core values are about working in two languages, and inclusivity. For the pantomime, dual language is a given, and we will once again use an integrated French/English script.

Collaboration was also an important element of the success of the 2019 pantomime, and will be equally important for our 2023 show. This time we hope to be working with Danse Moderne in Domfront and Vivace Choir.

We were lucky to have some great youngsters in the 2019 pantomime and young performers are so important to pantomime. We would like even more this time, hence the drive for more activities for junior members.

From the outset of FTC inclusivity was identified as a fundamental value, and not only in respect of language. Namely: everyone who wanted to take part would be provided for. Graham has once again committed to writing a pantomime script for all prospective actors. Whatever their language, whatever their ability, whatever their ambition. If we had ten people who wanted to act, then the script would have ten characters. If there were 15 or 20 people who wanted to act, then the script would have 15 or 20 characters. In 2019 over 80 people were involved in the production. The same principals will be applied for the 2023 pantomime. Everyone who wants to be a part of it will be provided for.

However, this does mean we need commitment. And we need it early... maybe by May this year, as Graham will need to start writing the pantomime script. Because of our commitment to inclusivity, we will need to know who our participants are in good time.

Some particular things to note:

- We may use some workshops later in 2022 to help the team get to understand and learn the script
- To allow for any potential winter health issues we will try and get dates for the show around the end of March 2023 - giving us a longer rehearsal period.

If you are interested in participating in the pantomime, and did not sign up at the Open Evening, please email hello@funtheatre.fr with your details.

The President of FTC: Graham Follett



At the end of 2016 I moved to France with my wife Rosa. Previously living in Northampton, we had both been very active participants in local theatre; in particular, helping to run a popular community theatre venue where the members produced a season of six plays every year.

With our move to France coming just a couple of years after retirement, it heralded a substantial change in lifestyle, something that we both embraced, and we were keen to become involved in our local community.

The creation of FTC has meant that we have not only become involved with acting and directing again, but writing too.

For many years I have also been a keen theatre photographer, so I have been fortunate in finding opportunities to photograph local events here in Normandie, and for the last three years have been the only English-speaking member of a photographic club in Domfront.

Finding new skills in my woodworking workshop and in our garden since arriving in France, along with a good social life, I have no problem filling my days! I also work as a *bénévole* at the médiathèque in Passais-la-Conception for one afternoon a week. I feel that Fun Théâtre is “A piece of magic that has introduced us to so many more brilliant people.”

Vice President of FTC: Martyn Crowe



Retiring to France in August 2016 and enjoying singing with Chorale Vivace as an activity, I was approached to think about joining FTC and appearing in a pantomime. The last time I was involved with panto. was in the 1970s but that's another story. About

to move house I was a bit reluctant but who could refuse Kitty Stephens' arm twisting. How we pulled it off, I shall never know but what a great and very enjoyable achievement it was. I dedicated my performance to my wonderful daughter who is a drama teacher in the UK.

When our President asked me to join him in a production of *The Sunshine Boys*, I could not wait to start rehearsing. It was great to get going again as the COVID pandemic restrictions lessened. The event was postponed but we eventually made it happen. The radio play style was new to me but quickly made a lot of sense. Bravo Graham Follett and Rosa for her fantastic direction.

I have several other interests. My wife and I really appreciate how we lucky we are to live where we do. We can walk our dogs across the fields from outside our house and admire the wonderful countryside. I work on my various projects, when not maintaining our garden, mostly involving my old cars. I love following rugby, tennis and motorsport. Oh...and my favourite actor is Anthony Hopkins.

Secretary: Véronique Reinaudo-Sorin



My name is Véronique, I am 43 years old. I have lived in Passais for 15 years. I work with farmers doing administrative paperwork. My husband is a farmer and we have a daughter of 6 and a half.

For me, my involvement in the life of the community is natural. I joined FTC from the very beginning. I am also a town councillor. I've been on stage or behind the scenes since I was 13. The atmosphere of a theatre company gives me a fantastic joy and energy. Being involved in the creation of the pantomime and the murder mystery was a great experience! There were moments of doubt but together we made it.

As my English is not very good, the language difference sometimes makes it complex to communicate with everyone. But the cosmopolitan mix of our group is also a source of inspiration that allows for great moments of exchange and good jokes.

Our small association participates in the life of our local community, which is very important in our small region.

I am really looking forward to preparing the next shows. I hope to be able to share these moments with my daughter who often accompanies me to our different meetings.

Treasurer: Richard Biddlecombe



I have lived just north of Le Teilleul with my wife Sandra, since March 2014.

We are originally from Hampshire, near The New Forest. My career was mostly in agriculture and estate management, but lastly making artisan cheese in Wiltshire. I still make a bit of cheese here with cow's milk from my neighbour.

We have been associated with FTC since the beginning.

I was in the panto as a singer in the chorus. I had never done any acting before, but I enjoyed the experience and being part of the society.

However, I prefer to be behind the scenes and took on the role of front of house manager for the Murder Mystery.

I also took on the role of Treasurer in what has turned out to be a challenging time for the finances for FTC. During this time, I have introduced the online ticketing system to make it easier for our audiences to reserve their tickets for our performances.

Membership secretary: Joan Peagam



Hi, I'm Joan, the non-executive membership secretary.

Before coming to live in beautiful Normandy I taught biology and chemistry in the U.K. for 30 years in big schools and colleges which was great fun.

I went into a management role in Higher and Further Education for a while and then my husband Tim and I

bought our lovely house just outside Passais in 2012.

We went to run a retreat centre for aid workers in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand for nearly 5 years before coming to live here permanently in 2016.

I became involved in Fun Theatre just before the pantomime, and loved playing the small part of Agnes, and was going to play the part of the English inspector in the murder mystery play.

We are very happy living here and now work for Chiang Mai and Bangkok Hospitals and Medical Schools editing research papers and coaching the doctors in scientific English.

We have 3 adult children and 2 grandchildren, who live in and around London, who thoroughly enjoy coming to visit! I love gardening and really enjoy spending time as a volunteer at Les Jardins des Renaudies each week with the really kind, entertaining Mayenne Council staff.

Fun Théâtre Picnic

The opportunity to meet together socially is so important to the life of Fun Théâtre and over 20 people have already signed up for our family picnic – if you have not done so already, please invite your family, pack a delicious lunch, and come and enjoy a sociable afternoon in the Normandie countryside with other members of FTC on Sunday, 29th May from midday.



Publicity officer: Cathy Daniels



I arrived in Normandie with my husband Peter in the Spring of 2019. I had been devastated by having to give up the job I loved, as a Head Teacher in London, due to ill-health. But we decided to take our enforced early retirement as an opportunity for one more adventure, and moved our

lives to Northern France – an area we loved from many happy holidays. We were just beginning to settle into the rhythm of life here, learning French and exploring the area, when COVID struck. We were also so disappointed that the Murder Mystery Evening, which we had tickets for in Passais, had to be cancelled due to pandemic restrictions.

We love amateur theatre, and Peter has years of experience managing the technical side in the UK, so finding a theatre company putting on shows here, in French and English, had been such a wonderful surprise. A little more research and we discovered that they had also put on a fabulous pantomime the year before.

Now, panto is a big favourite of Peter's. So, when I realised that one of the nice ladies I met at the Book Club in Pages Book Shop was involved, it was too good an opportunity to miss! We asked her if they could use any extra help, she gave us Graham's email address, and the rest is history!

Peter thoroughly enjoyed doing lighting and sound for The Sunshine Boys, and I had my very first role in front of the curtain in that production. And we can't wait for the panto!

Your Officers are:

President: Graham Follett

Treasurer: Richard Biddlecombe

Secretary: Véronique Reinaldo-Sorin

Vice-president: Martyn Crowe

Membership secretary: Joan Peagam

Publicity officer: Cathy Daniels

For staying in touch:

Facebook: join our page [Fun Theatre Communautaire](#)

Website: www.funtheatre.fr lots of information on projects past and present to be found here

This newsletter was compiled by Cathy. If there is something you would like to know more about, if you have an article you would like to submit for possible inclusion in the *Bulletin* or you have ideas that you would like to be passed on to the executive officers please email: hello@funtheatre.fr (in English or in French)