



Colin with the battle plans

OFF CENTRE THEATRE  
*presents*

# THE GRAND OLD DUKE OF YORK

A pantomime by NORMAN ROBBINS



at Monmouth Leisure Centre

December 28th, 29th, at 7.30pm

30th at 3pm & 7.30pm

31st at 3pm.

Tickets: £2.00 £1.50 concessionary

Available from Brian Williams, Church St., Monmouth.

# THE GRAND OLD DUKE OF YORK

There is something very wonderful about pantomime: it works to quite well-defined rules, but invites them to be broken; it can be staged in any period because its characters belong in that timeless world of make believe. Most importantly, pantomime is fun and it is the responsibility of producer and actors to convey magic and excitement to audience of very different ages.

Pantomime is also challenging and creative: this is my third production. I enjoy working with quite large numbers of people, and watching the reactions they create in one another. As a professional designer, I have been trained to observe, and directing for the theatre is largely about observation — standing back to watch how people interpret a role and then weaving the whole thing into one believable performance. The first time I tried to produce a play, "The Management proudly Presents", I also had the temerity to write it. I remember getting quite frustrated about some people's interpretations of character, because I had gone into the production with pre-conceived ideas. Now, I try to let the play lead me for a while.

My first pantomime was "The Owl and the Pussycat", a charming musical adaptation by David Wood, and this allowed me to involve Monmouth School of Dance with the invaluable help and experience of Margaret Townrow. It also firmly established Anne MacFarlane as Musical Director and I'm delighted to still have the professional talents of these two ladies helping and advising. We last worked together on the production of "Babes in the Magic Wood" in 1986.

"The Grand Old Duke of York" is a fanciful tale, based loosely on the famous nursery rhyme, and follows a traditional line. It was written in 1980 by Norman Robbins and allows freedom of choice on music and presentation. Two of the characters are factual: Frederick, Duke of York was a popular and accomplished commander-in-chief (interesting that we have today a militaristic Duke of York in Prince Andrew), but in this story he and his ten thousand men detest fighting and follow more peaceful pursuits. His ward, Melody, falls in love with Colin, a gypsy boy paying a visit to York fair. The evil Baron Snatcher is plotting to overthrow Frederick and take control of York but his plans are, of course, opposed by Colin, Tommy Tucker and his love Martha Muffett, the dame. They are assisted by the city water-carriers Jack and Jill, just as the Baron is helped by two dim-witted rogues, Pye and Peas. There is a wicked fairy. Maleficent and a good witch in the form of Old Mother Shipton. Born in Knaresborough in 1488 (500 years ago!) her prophecies of iron ships, manned flights, radio, motorcars and two World Wars have made her name famous. I wonder if she prophesied her appearance in the Monmouth Pantomime!

Finally, there is a very nasty guardian of the Care in the Enchanted Hill, lots of pixies, gypsies, soldiers and citizens of York.

It would be wrong to pick out individuals, but I should like to pay tribute to John Smith who has been involved with every pantomime in Monmouth for 16 years, as actor, musician and set constructor, and also to Dave Williams who has been building imaginative and surprising sets for the same length of time. I also want to thank my wife for letting me disrupt Christmas yet again, and all the people who give many hours to make costumes, scenery, music and the magic of pantomime.

DAVID EVANS was born in Penallt in 1946 and educated at Monmouth School. He studied graphics at Newport College of Art and since 1969 has run his own design company. He was an active member of Centre Players and is Vice-Chairman of Off Centre Theatre. His other entertainment credits include being a founder member of the folk group "Trafalgar", and a current member of the music hall group "Moss Empire". He also finds time to be heavily involved in the organisation of Monmouth Festival. David is married and lives in Monmouth with his wife, Sue, and daughter, Holly, who are also involved in this Production.

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## THE MAIDS

For its first production of 1989 O.C.T. is pleased to present a production of the modern French play (in translation) "The Maids" by Jean Genet. Two of our members, Avil Farley and Ann Kent, were the maids in a performance of the play in the South Pacific and after a highly praised season in Port Moresby they now, with the addition of Margaret Lewis (last seen for O.C.T. in "Oh What a Lovely War") present the avant-garde play as an interesting example of experimental theatre for Monmouth audiences. The dates of the production are February 16th, 17th, 18th, 1989, and the venue is the Youth Centre, next to the Leisure Centre.

We look forward to welcoming you to another theatre evening with Off Centre Theatre.

## GRAND OLD DUKE OF YORK Additional Credits

Puppets: Charlotte Hancocks, Lorraine Holt.

Puppeteers: Emily Carey, Mary Sully

Pixies: Strawberry Heines, Ruth Taylor, Bethan Lovell, Carrie Greene, Nicola Lambert, Helena Maddox, Eleanor Crawford.

Soldiers: Victoria Brunt, Charlotte Perks, Emma Perks, Judith Holt, Louise Evans, Charlotte Hancocks.

Servants: Sarah Blow, Rhys Williams, Emma Croft, Judith Holt, Samantha Hughes

Ballroom: Carolynne Bright, Gemma Greene, Emily Carey, Mary Sully

Wedding: Lorraine Holt, Melissa Blow, Celia Blacklock, Victoria Jarvis, Elizabeth Evans, Samantha Hughes.

Gypsies: Holly Evans, Emily Carey, Gemma Greene, Samantha MacFarlane, Sarah Blow, Mary Sully.

Charmaine Summers, Victoria Saunders, Claire Morris, Charlotte Bagley, Stephanie Maddox, Louise Fitzpatrick, Simon Callicott, Elizabeth Callicott, Adam Blacklock.

Stage Management: Lucy O'Leary

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## CAST

Baron – Snatcher, of Seizitt Hall

Martha Muffet, a Dame

Jack } The City water carriers  
Jill }

Colin, a gypsy boy

Old Mother Shipton

Tommy Tucker, Martha's beau

Pye } The Baron's henchmen  
Peas }

Melody, the Duke's ward

Frederick, the grand Old Duke of York

Maleficent, a wicked fairy

Guardian of the Cave

Soldiers, servants, citizens of

York and gypsies:

Producer/Director

Assisted by

Musical director

Dance director

Lighting

Set design and direction

Technical crew

Costume

Front of house

Musicians

Publicity

– Andrew Morris

– John Smith

– Holly Evans

– Samantha MacFarlane

– June Edwards

– Jenny Abbott-Smith

– Dave Kent

– Sarah Weatherston

– Stuart MacFarlane

– Lydia Hall

– Mike Rogers

– Jill Rogers

– Grant Ramboux

– Cefn Lewis

– Sharon Gardiner, Liz Harper, Jenny Harper, Grant  
Ramboux, Cefn Lewis, Neil Keywood, Gordon  
Prest, Rhys Williams.

– David Evans

– Gordon Casson

– Anne MacFarlane

– Margaret Townrow

– Paul Macer-Wright

– Dave Williams

– Steve Brottie, Jim Novcomb, Keith Dando

– Sue Evans, Margaret Lewis, Pip Barter, Jill Evans,  
June Edwards & parents Marigold Customes  
Brynmawr.

– Sue Evans & members of the Off Centre

– Fiona Shackleton, Julie Edgar, Pete Smith, Nick Smith,  
Roger Grey

– Dave Kent, Jeanne Dauncey

Grateful thanks for help to:

Brian Phillips, Barry Cambden & Staff, Martin Avery Photography, Characters (Bristol), Chequer Press, Ron Ruck & Rowland Evans, Tom Meredith, Bond & Bond, Mrs Kear, Overmonnow Junior School, Wyesham Hall, Waterloo Garage, Adrian Jones and all others who assisted.

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## OFFCENTRE THEATRE

The company was formed in May 1986 as a result of an advertisement in the Monmouthshire Beacon which invited anyone interested in establishing a theatre group in Monmouth to attend a meeting to discuss such a project. The response was very encouraging and a unanimous decision was taken to launch a new theatre company in the town. The initial membership exceeded 50 and there were many whose interest lay in backstage work, an area often difficult to recruit. During the past two years the company has worked hard to offer regular theatre productions to the town and while being hampered by the lack of a permanent home it has done its best to overcome this by using a variety of venues in and around Monmouth. In addition to the main productions staged by OffCentre the company also contributes to the Monmouth Festival and sponsors visiting professional companies. In the Summer of 1987 members were involved in the production of 'Bordertown' a community play based on the life of the people of Monmouth during the reign of Henry V. During the past two years the following plays have been produced.

1986 – Maria Marten or Murder in the Red Barn

Mixed Doubles – 8 short plays by a variety of modern playwrights  
Babes in the Magic Wood

1987 – Sweeney Todd – a melodrama

The Land of the Christmas Stocking

1988 – Three one act plays – Agatha Christie, John Mortimer, J. B. Priestley

Outside Edge – Richard Harris

Oh What a Lovely War – Joan Littlewood

The sponsored plays were

The Fall of the Roman Empire – Hi Jinx Theatre

Whisper Who Dares – Hi Jinx Theatre

She Scored for Wales – Gwent Theatre

Our constant need is that of new members and we should be very pleased to receive enquiries about the Theatre company from those interested in joining. We meet on a regular basis on the first Wednesday of each month. Our subscriptions are: Family membership – £6; Individual membership – £4; Students etc. – £2.

Information from Chairman Brian Phillips on Monmouth 2565 or Secretary June Williams on Monmouth 3603.

A.G.M. February 1st-Wednesday – Conservative Club – 7.30 p.m.

## FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

Sponsored by OffCentre Theatre

January 19th at Treilech new school at 7.30, REMOULD THEATRE, from Hull present

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February 16, 17 & 18th at the Youth Centre Hall in the Leisure Centre, at 7.30

THE MAIDS by Jean Genet

An OffCentre production and the opportunity of seeing a rarely performed play

April – HAPPY FAMILIES by GILES COOPER