

# York Shakespeare Project

## Newsletter 2009-10, issue 3

And so this  
is  
Christmas...

Well, I  
promised four  
columns, and now I  
have to fulfil that  
promise... Despite  
the fact that the first  
line of this  
paragraph only  
contains two words.  
Oh, look, and the  
eighth. Amazing.

Anyway, another  
YSP year is coming  
to an end, 2009 has  
been a pretty great  
one, I think, and  
2010 is starting to  
look pretty exciting,  
too.

What we have done  
this year is put on  
two more  
productions – Julius  
Caesar and Richard  
II – and enjoyed an  
excellent fundraising  
event in town. For  
anyone that doubts  
the usefulness of  
those fundraising  
events, the  
(somewhat

ridiculous) amount  
of money they  
make, is really  
valuable in helping  
to pay for our other  
events throughout  
the year. See later  
on for how to get  
involved in the next  
fundraiser.

The next year holds  
some exciting  
possibilities, starting  
with...

The History  
of Henry the  
fourth; With  
the battle at  
Shrewsbury,  
between the  
King and  
Lord Henry  
Percy,  
surnamed  
Henry  
Hotspur of  
the North,  
with the

humorous  
conceits of  
Sir John  
Falstaff...  
and the  
second part,  
too.

That's right, and  
here are the  
excuses: I didn't  
know any better, I  
did say it was only a  
rumour, I wasn't the  
only one (it was in  
the programme!), it  
was all part of the  
hilarious ninja jokes,  
and most of all I  
**BLAME MY TOOLS**  
(sources).

Our next production  
doesn't have the  
initials M.A.A.N and  
didn't once have a  
modern adaptation  
starring that ginger  
bloke out of Band of  
Brothers, who –  
incidentally - my  
girlfriend Charlotte  
once saw riding his  
bike along Charlotte  
Street. (Oh, and for

the member who  
emailed in thinking  
they had 'figured  
that one out' as I  
asked – riding his  
bike along Charlotte  
Street is *not* a  
euphemism.)

So, to take the full  
title displayed on  
some early printed  
editions, our next  
production has the  
initials THOHTFWT  
BAS,BTKALHP,SH  
HOTN,WTHCOSJF  
...ATSP,T. Unless  
you take out 'and's  
and 'of's and things  
like that – I'm never  
sure when you're  
supposed to do that,  
in which case it's  
more like:  
HOHFWBSBKLHPS  
HHTNWHCSJF...  
SPT. No, I think it  
was better first time.

Anyway, York  
Shakespeare  
Project is proud to  
announce that its  
next productions  
will be Henry IV  
Parts 1 and 2 in  
Rep (one cast for  
both plays) in  
Summer 2010.  
Aren't you getting

excited? If, not you should be – it's great. It's not just a great bit of history, it's also funny! Amazing. Anyway, get excited. Not only that, but...

**Friends,  
romans,  
countrymen,  
lend me your  
directors...**

**H**ere (below) is the text for the advert to recruit a director for Henry IV. It's a paid post, so have a think about whether you need some extra cash and can come up with a mind-blowing proposal to blow the panel's heads off (not literally, I like my head). And if you can't think of anything, pass it on to your friends, family, famous director uncles, that sort of thing. Henry IV is a really ambitious project (damn my limited vocabulary) for the Project and would be exciting for almost any director!

**Call for  
directors!**

**B**ork  
Shakespeare

**Project** is looking for a director to direct

**Henry IV parts 1 and 2**  
in **summer 2010**.

Based in York, YSP is a thriving amateur theatre company dedicated to performing all of Shakespeare's plays by 2020. Fifteen plays have been performed so far, the most recent being Richard II.

The plays are to be performed in repertory with a York venue and performance dates still to be decided.

The director's fee is negotiable, and will depend on experience.

Applications should include a C.V. and proposed outline of the director's concept and interpretation. This may (but does not have to) include reference to a suggested venue (indoors or outdoors). Promising applicants will be invited to interview in York shortly after the application deadline.

Applications should be submitted by **January 4<sup>th</sup> 2010** to

[recruitment@yorkshakespeareproject.org](mailto:recruitment@yorkshakespeareproject.org)

Any queries may also be directed to this address.

**SO GET THE  
WORD OUT!**

**Before we  
forget, our  
last  
production  
was...**

**R**ichard II. And without further ado I give you a little post-show article from the production's director, Hugh Allison...

*It is not even a month since the last performance of Richard II but it feels like years ago. So much has happened in my life, and presumably that of the cast/crew, that I am not sure I can even remember the plot of the play, let alone any particulars.*

*However, I know that in many ways (especially as the cast were largely amateur) I was very pleased of the finished product. I wouldn't necessarily say it was the best piece I have ever directed, but definitely the one I*

*was most proud of. I feel that the cast and crew should be equally proud of their achievements, and (on the whole) should be proud of the efforts they put into it.*

*If I was to do the piece again, there are a few things I would change (including which bits/characters I would cut) and several bits I should have put more effort into. But, the best way to consider the piece is from a positive perspective and the bits I remember fondly, such as the soundtrack and the amount I learned about English history from my research and from the text itself.*

Thanks for all you're your hard work Hugh, and see you soon!

**And now, the  
moment  
you've all  
been waiting  
for...**

**T**he bit about fundraising I promised you earlier!

We've got King's Square booked for a

fundraiser to celebrate our favourite bard's birthday (well, our second favourite; Cacophonix is clearly the best one).

Plans are afoot, and anyone interested in getting involved should become a member of the newly forming fundraising squad by emailing [fundraising@yorkshakespeareproject.org](mailto:fundraising@yorkshakespeareproject.org).

If you've got any ideas – any parts of plays you'd like to direct or act in, any sonnets you'd like to perform, or Shakespeare themed songs you'd like to sing/write, then get in touch. To get your creative juices flowing, we spent the Away Day (well, the time in the pub afterwards) coming up with some of these:

- *Where's Your Head At (Yorick)* – Hamlet /Basement Jaxx;
- *Common Hamlet* – Hamlet/Pulp;
- *Mr Hamlet* – Hamlet/The Killers;
- *Hamlet and TV* – Hamlet/Blur;
- *Don't Look Back At Hamlet* – Hamlet/Oasis.

If that doesn't get you excited, I don't know what will!

## Despite the fact that the next show has changed..

I think it's only right that we publish the article below. Partly because she re-wrote it for us, partly because I haven't bothered to plan anything Henry IV related.

Anyway, take it away Sally...

*Having said recently that I didn't get involved in acting at university, I have since realised that I should withdraw that statement. 'Much Fuss, No Need' is a little known work by the great Sha-shi-pi-a (try saying it out loud...) that saw a thankfully brief run of one performance during my degree in Mandarin Chinese.*

*At school, we had studied Much Ado About Nothing for our English A level and it was a particular favourite of mine, so I was more than happy to agree when one of our language teachers proposed improving our skills by performing it in Chinese. She translated it herself, and many language tutorials were spent*

*going through a dauntingly long script which she had written out in beautiful Chinese characters.*

*Despite it being a long-held ambition to play Beatrice, I was assigned the part of Don Jon, and spent most of that term being referred to as 'the bastard' by the rest of my class. I seem to recall that I also got to play a number of bit parts including the Sexton.*

*People sometimes ask how I manage to learn lines, and I often say that it used to be quite easy, particularly with Shakespeare, as the metre and poetry stick in the head well. This does NOT apply when trying to learn Shakespeare translated into Mandarin (which is, believe me, a tough language to get right). So how did we manage in this play? Truth be told, not very well...*

*It is quite common for audiences at a Shakespeare play to make comments like 'Well I enjoyed it, but didn't quite understand it some of the time' (or if it's a history play '...a lot of the time'). In this case, I can quite easily predict that*

*none of the audience had a clue what was going on. Half of them were our English friends who didn't speak a word of Mandarin, and the rest were our teachers and overseas students from China or Taiwan who would have had a chance of understanding if we hadn't mangled the lines beyond any hope of recognition.... You could say that in the interests of international relations we united them in a common sense of bewilderment.*

*Happily we had a very comprehensive plot summary in the programme, and the acting was of a style much beloved by some in YSP (never knowingly under-acted...). Swords were wielded with gusto, beautiful ladies swooned in distress and most of my entrances were met by a storm of boos and hisses in true pantomime style. And it all ended with the obligatory trip to the pub. Miss Hua was left behind wondering whether she had actually managed to teach us any Chinese at all.*

*So, I have to admit – not my finest*

acting hour by any means, but one that I look back on with a fair amount of fondness....

- Sally Mitcham.

## Away Day shenanigans

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Just a quick note about the Away Day.

First of all, thank you very much to everyone who came along. We had almost the perfect number of people there, some fantastic ideas and – best of all – a really open, friendly and thoughtful atmosphere. It made it a really enjoyable day, and I think we got some great stuff out of it.

It's now up to the Executive Committee to use the ideas and principles that the Away Day came up with in everything we do, and it's up to the rest of you to make sure Exec are doing that. If we're not, then let us know, and vote us out.

We have written up everything from the Away Day, and if anyone would like to see it all, please

contact me at [info@yorkshakespeareproject.org](mailto:info@yorkshakespeareproject.org).

Otherwise, I'll summarise some bits and pieces here, and in Newsletters as it all starts to move, but, for now...

### All action stations are go...

Following a great morning of ideas and discussing, we chose four key areas for York Shakespeare Project to focus on over the next few months/years. These were followed by action plans, which we will begin putting into place from the start of next year. These areas are:

- *Completing the sequence.*
- *Planning ahead.*
- *Retaining experience and expertise.*
- *Creating more of a sense of 'a company'.*

More on those later.

### All the plays. In York. In twenty years.

## More than once..?

In a fantastic discussion at the end of the day, the Away Day recommended to Exec that we need to discuss further – and in depth – the possibility of changing the YSP constitution to allow plays to be repeated. The arguments for and against this are many and varied, and I won't go into them here, but this is something which the members clearly think is worth discussing further.

So watch this space for more developments in the new year, and maybe you will finally get that chance to play Tybalt, or Titania, or Proteus (from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, you uneducated swine... or at least so Spark Notes tells me).

### Here's that bit where I try to fill in some space in order to get into the last column, and

## then get the newsletter to finish at the bottom...

### Oops...

### Nearly there... Done it.

So, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and because no one has sent me any festive Shakespeare, here's one made my good self. (And when I say 'made', I mean 'googled', and when I say 'my good self', I mean 'someone else'. If anyone here own's the copyright to this picture, please forgive me.)

Hang this on your Christmas tree, and see you in 2010!

