



**Event: The 5<sup>th</sup> Leatherhead Drama Festival**  
**Date: Monday 5 – Saturday 17 May 2008**  
**Tickets: Junior Week: £8.00 each**  
**Senior Week £10.00, Awards Night £12.00**

## PRESS RELEASE

### Leatherhead gears up for THE dramatic event of the year!

The Leatherhead Drama Festival, now in its 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year and considered the biggest and best in the UK, is coming back to The Leatherhead Theatre in May and promises a two week packed programme of new and established pieces that will excite, entertain and enthral audiences once again. But, have you ever wondered what goes into putting on such a big festival? What work goes on behind the scenes? How long does it take to put a play together? What about all the backstage gossip?!? Well let me fill you in.....

Two of the junior groups delighted to be entered into the festival are Akemi Theatre Company and the Howard of Effingham School. Simon Fielder (Artistic Director) and Louise Fowkes (Marketing Manager) both of The Leatherhead Theatre went along to meet them last week to see how they were getting on with last minute rehearsals.

Akemi Theatre Company are presenting a new piece entitled *The Third Expedition* written by Emily Stewart who's just 16 years old! With a cast of 8, attending local schools St Andrews and Therfield and all currently studying A-levels, the young actors are really enjoying working together as part of a team and learning from their accomplished Director for Akemi, Sally McCormack. The story, laced with hilarious comedy (and real fight scenes!) is inspired by all the familiar pirate stories of old; *Treasure Island*, *Captain Blood*, *The Black Pirate* and the characters names created (and jumbled around a little!) from some of history's most notorious individuals! Although, when asked what the script most likened itself to, playwright Emily felt it was 'more like Muppet *Treasure Island!*'

The story goes like this: They have been two failed attempts at finding treasure located on Tropical Bay Island, so main character Mary Bonney (Ship Captain of The Happy Revenge) decides to get a crew together to find the legendary loot. However, Charles Hudson wants to join the trip and therefore - in a reversal of the normal historical scenario - he dresses up as a woman and succeeds in getting on board the vessel. However, it turns out to be a voyage of discovery for both characters! Will they succeed in their endeavours or will it turn out to be just another fateful expedition? And with only one month to go, are the cast going to be ready?!? With the 'Good Ship Akemi' being under the watchful eyes of Sally, the cast and crew are steering a steady course!

<b>Cast List:</b>	<b>Playwright</b>	<b>Emily Stewart</b>
	<b>Assistant Director</b>	<b>Jemma Dowding</b>
	<b>'Mary Bonney'</b>	<b>Abi Jones</b>
	<b>'Nigh'</b>	<b>Hannah Dowding</b>
	<b>'Mrs Piecrust'</b>	<b>Rosie Lloyd</b>
	<b>'Jack Scallington'</b>	<b>Tom Loveless</b>
	<b>'Charles Hudson'</b>	<b>Alec Mills</b>
	<b>'Henry Teach'</b>	<b>Cameron Stewart</b>

**For more information on this or any of the events taking place at The Leatherhead Theatre, please contact:**

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The second junior drama group right in the thick of rehearsals is the Howard of Effingham School with their presentation of Willy Russell's comedy ***One For The Road***.

The play centres on Dennis and his forthcoming 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. Together with his wife Pauline and close friends Roger and Jane, they are having a dinner party to celebrate his onrushing midlife crisis! After a promising start to the night, with each of them expressing enthusiasm for their own personal achievements in life, it soon becomes apparent, after much arguing (and copious amounts of booze!) that 'keeping up with the Jones' is proving too much like hard work! It finally transpires, after some surprising revelations and hilarious unexpected outbursts, that life is not really what you expect, is not particularly interesting and really rather dull!

Willy Russell, celebrated for works such as Shirley Valentine and Blood Brothers, is one of our most well-known playwrights of the modern age and this four-hander is one of his best! Studying this piece (and performing it as part of their GCSE Drama Practical Exam), the cast feel proud and rather excited by the prospect of performing the play on the professional stage with a real audience. This is Howard of Effingham's first time performing as part of the Leatherhead Drama Festival and they have been working together since Christmas to make sure that they make a great job of it! Also part-directing the play themselves, they are being guided and assisted by their Drama Teacher Hannah Maskell and are thoroughly enjoying the whole experience!

Cast List:	'Pauline'	Holly Godwin
	'Roger'	Daniel Holt
	'Jane'	Alex Roberts
	'Dennis'	Stuart Tomkins

Over the next few weeks, Simon and Louise will be scouring the county, meeting the actors, crew and production team for the Leatherhead Drama Festival, bringing you all the very latest news and gossip! You can also keep up to date with all the events and activities by logging onto the festival website at [www.leatherheaddramafestival.org](http://www.leatherheaddramafestival.org)

Tickets for the festival are available at The Leatherhead Theatre Box Office priced as follows:

£8.00 for the Junior Week (*Season Ticket for 5 nights £20.00*)  
£10.00 for the Senior Week (*Season Ticket for 5 nights £25.00*)  
£12.00 for the Awards Night

by calling **01372 365141** or booking online at the secure theatre website (subject to a £1.00 transaction fee) at [www.the-theatre.org](http://www.the-theatre.org).

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