



**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**

### **The Leatherhead Drama Festival...Putting it Together!**

The Leatherhead Drama Festival has gone from strength to strength since its formation in 2004 and is now considered the largest in the UK! Offering a packed programme of plays, both devised and established work, that will excite, entertain and enthral audiences. It is the highlight of The Leatherhead Theatre calendar! But, have you ever wondered what goes into putting on such a big festival? How does it all come together? Who's involved? Well let me fill you in.....

The Leatherhead Drama Festival was the brainchild and vision of Richard Houghton and to be of major benefit for the local community. However, Richard sadly died in 2004, soon after the first festival and it fell upon David Brett, current Chairman, to form a working committee, to ensure the continuation and progress of the event. And when you meet David and his wife Meg, you cannot help but to be totally caught up in their enthusiasm, commitment and passion for the whole project.

The job of the Chairman and festival committee is not only to pull together scripts and cast information for the Adjudicator (this year Helen E Sharman – Member of the Guild of Drama Adjudicators) but also source funding and sponsorship from local business', organise press and media coverage, catering, backstage and technical requirements for each play, ticket sales, musicians for entertainment in the foyer and of course special guests (including Patron of the festival Sir Michael Caine) for the Gala Awards on the last night. Although the festival is an annual event, the committee meet regularly throughout the year – as there is always so much to do!

It takes a huge amount of hard work and dedication from various individuals to put the festival together each year and the majority of this is on a voluntary basis. It is also supported by local business' Dick Jones Creative Services and Andy Newbold Photography, who contribute their time and expertise every year and by Mole Valley and Surrey County Council.

This year, the festival has grown, not just in profile but in people, as there are now 30 groups participating, as opposed to the previous years of just 20. This is partly due to so many groups wanting to participate and therefore the organisers were completely oversubscribed. This just highlights how much the festival has grown. Apart from the Sir Michael Caine Drama Awards and the Richard Houghton Awards, also this year is the 'New Writing Award', created to encourage new playwrights and the committee have increased the prize money, to make it winning even more worthwhile – so competition between the groups should be really fierce!

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

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**Theatre Address: 7 Church Street, LEATHERHEAD, Surrey KT22 8DN**



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One of the groups taking part is the Freewheelers Theatre Company, presenting their new piece 'Earthrise.' Bringing together disabled and non-disabled actors and supporters, productions teams and the local community, Freewheelers use theatre and dance, wheelchair and voicebox technology, multimedia, animation, puppets and shadows to create innovative work throughout the year. And in doing so, challenge perceptions, break down barriers, rules and conventions and therefore create equality and inclusion.

The company for 'Earthrise' includes a Director, Choreographer and a cast of 15 actors. With an original idea created by member Sam Ruffles, the whole cast have contributed to the ever-changing and developing piece and have felt totally engaged since its conception and throughout rehearsals. Using sign language, visual technology and music (Pink Floyd no less!) the inspiration for the play came from a very famous photo of Earth taken from the Moon and tells the story through the eyes of three astronauts, as they make their long journey through life. It promises to be a very inspiring and thought-provoking performance, for both cast and audience.

And just to prove how important the event has become, the festival committee have been asked if they would like to host the All Winners Festival, which truly underlines the recognition and real achievement in the industry of the festival and a real testament to how popular and important the whole competition has become. So, why not pop along to The Leatherhead Theatre in May and see some of the most talented actors in the county, performing some of the most unusual and exciting plays, providing you with first rate entertainment!

You can 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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*The Leatherhead Theatre—Offering you the very best in arts and entertainment,  
latest film releases, workshops, exhibitions and events  
...the theatre with a heart, in the heart of Surrey!*

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