

*The Railway Children*  
Dir. Leigh White

MAY 2023

# SCENE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEICESTER DRAMA SOCIETY

The  
Little  
Theatre

Visit our website for more information: [thelittletheatre.co.uk](http://thelittletheatre.co.uk)



# Editor's Letter

*The Railway Children* was a huge success for the theatre. The production brought in many new faces and was incredibly well-reviewed. A big thank you to everyone who helped to make it a success.

A similarly wonderful production of *Anything Goes* followed, via our extended family at LOPs. We've included a review if you want to read more about it.

Our Youth Theatre productions

have increased in popularity over the years as evidenced by the impressive number of audience members that turned out for *James and the Giant Peach*. Well done to our Youth Theatre team.

The 200 Club resets this month for the rest of the year. Call the box office to sign up – you could win up to £250!

We have great news in that two new trustees have been co-opted to the board: Diani

Gatenby Davies for Trustee without Specific Responsibility and Amanda Sadler for Trustee for Outreach. Watch this space for what the Board of Trustees brings us next.

We're looking forward to this month's productions of the charming 1950s-set *Home, I'm Darling* and WAOS' stage adaptation of the hit film, *Ghost: The Musical*.

Kerry

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# The Team

Theatre Manager ▶ **Graham Muir**

Deputy Theatre Manager ▶ **Carolyn Young**

Head of Wardrobe ▶ **John Bale**

Premises Supervisor ▶ **Rob Mullins**

Scenic Workshop ▶ **Dave Towers**

Youth Theatre Leader ▶ **Andy Longley-Brown**

Deputy Youth Theatre Leader ▶ **Kate MacIntyre**

## **Leicester Drama Society Ltd Board of Trustees**

Chair ▶ **To be appointed at next board meeting**

Minutes Secretary ▶ **To be appointed at next board meeting**

Company Secretary ▶ **David Moore**

Honorary Secretary Elect ▶ **Simon Dickens**

Technical Trustee ▶ **To be co-opted**

Treasurer ▶ **Jenny Harding**

Trustee for Facilities ▶ **Martin Scott**

Trustee for Front of House ▶ **Frances Harris**

Trustee for Marketing ▶ **Tom Young**

Trustee for Membership ▶ **Jackie Caunt**

Trustee for Outreach ▶ **Amanda Sadler**

Trustee for Productions ▶ **Joe Middleton**

Trustee for the Studio ▶ **Jane Towers**

Trustee without specific responsibility ▶ **Diani Gatenby Davies**

## **Scene**

Editor of Scene ▶ **Kerry Smith**

Design of Scene ▶ **Cross Productions**

Contributions to Scene are invited. Our deadline is a week before the end of each month. If you have a story, let us know before then to guarantee that we reserve space for you. Contact us via email on [hello@thelittletheatre.co.uk](mailto:hello@thelittletheatre.co.uk).

# 200 Club Winners

## **The winners of March 2023's draw:**

1st 016 (£250)

2nd 056 (£100)

3rd 015 (£50)

This was the final draw of the current year. If you wish to enter the 200 Club for the coming year, please contact the office to sign up. It costs £60 to join for the year (12 draws total, one per month), and gives you an excellent chance of winning a prize of £250, £100 or £50 each month.

Your payment will provide valuable support to The Little Theatre for the ongoing development of its buildings.

Call The Little Theatre Box Office on 0116 255 1302 to join and make your payment.

# Revamped Acting Workshops

Acting Workshops in the studio Thursday nights, led by Michael King.

**Beginners: 6-7.30pm**

**Advanced: 8-9.30pm**

Register interest with the office for further info and to book in. This should also be live on the website soon.

Non-members: £8 per session

LDS members: £4 per session (50% discount)

Multi-buy discounts are available (five sessions for the price of four).

Limited bursary places are also available.

# Member Profile

## Lydia Clemence

Stage Manager for The Railway children

Lydia lives in Leicester with her sister, five ferrets and three dogs (more about this later). She's 26 years old and attended Longslade Community College in Birstall (now Cedars Academy). From there, Lydia went to Worcester University to study human biology. Whilst at university, she belonged to am-dram society Loco Show Co. and developed an interest in backstage work. She now works as a healthcare assistant in a GP surgery and really enjoys her job.

Her love of theatre stems from her mum's love of theatre and being taken to see shows at an early age. Lydia joined The Little in 2019 and has worked backstage for a few plays and panto. Eventually, she was approached by Doug Simpson and asked if she'd be interested in stage managing. With help and training from Doug and Simon Dickens, she's now got a few plays in her repertoire. Lydia has stage-managed for *Bracken Moor*, *Rabbit Hole*, and *Alphabetical*

*Order* amongst others. She was also joint stage manager for *The Railway Children* with Fraser Tew – if you managed to spot two folks pushing the connecting platform in costume then you got a brief glimpse of Lydia and Fraser. During the run of this show, Lydia fell down the stairs at home and sprained her ankle and managed to uphold the adage 'the show must go on!'

Embroidery is another one of Lydia's hobbies, as well as looking after the ferrets and dogs. I've never met anyone who kept ferrets before and was fascinated by this. Their names are Bertie, Harris, Hamish, Hubert and Percy. I would love to know the thinking behind those names. The dog's names are Purdey because she is very pretty, Neville because he's a grumpy old man, and Peto means 'fart' in Italian – enough said!

There was a good camaraderie amongst the backstage crew as I



was talking to Lydia but managing backstage is a very important, responsible job and I admire all those volunteers who take it on.

Thank you Lydia for giving me your time.

NB: I'm sure most men named Neville aren't grumpy.

Words by Jackie Caunt,  
Trustee for Membership



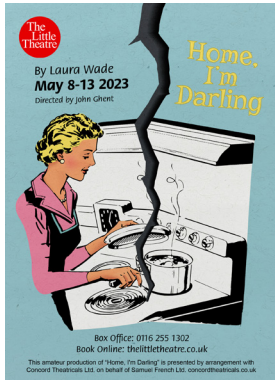
## Workshop Wonders

I was stopped in my tracks just as I was nipping through the workshop. Suddenly, there before me were the makings of a giant peach (albeit I called it an apple). I am so in awe of folk who can produce works like this that I decided to take a picture and then I thought I would share it with the creator of this work, Dave Towers. He was a bit camera shy so you only get to look at the work in progress. *James and The Giant Peach* will be over when you see this and I hope you all managed to see the finished article on stage when you came to see the show.

Jackie Caunt



# What's On This Month



**Home, I'm Darling** By Laura Wade  
**March 8-13** An LDS Production  
Directed by John Ghent

Every marriage needs a little fantasy to keep it sparkling, but behind the gingham curtains, being a domestic goddess isn't as easy as it looks. Judy seeks to be the perfect 1950s housewife; she and her husband Johnny are living the dream. They have a beautiful home, Johnny has a promotion on the cards, and Judy is revelling in the joys of domesticity making cakes, cocktails and homemade marmalade. But wait! Could cracks be starting to appear in this wonderful life?



**Ghost: A Musical**  
By Julian Woolford and Richard John, based on the novel by Edith Nesbit  
**May 16 to 20** Wigston Amateur Operatic Society  
Directed by Sarah Varnam

Our extended family at Wigston Amateur Operatic Society present this adaptation of the 1990 film. Lovers Sam and Molly are attacked while returning to their apartment. When Sam dies, he becomes caught between the real world and the next. Molly is in danger and Sam cannot leave her. A medium, Oda Mae Brown, helps Sam to get in touch with Molly to warn her.



Don't forget that LDS members are entitled to one ticket (per member per show) at the discounted rate of £10 for the five LDS plays in our spring/summer season. These are available to purchase within a month of the production.

## THE PLAYS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS DISCOUNT ARE:

**Bouncers (Remix)** (June 12-17)

**Shakespeare in Love** (July 3-8)

## ALSO AVAILABLE ON THIS RATE IS:

**Gypsy** (KW Productions, June 20-24)

## VISITING PRODUCTIONS

### Billy Fury Meets Elvis Presley (May 21)

A tribute to two kings of Rock and Roll.

### Basil Newby's Funny Girls on Tour (May 23)

Glamour, feathers and top hats from Betty Legs Diamond.

### A Brief History of Music (May 24)

GreenMatthews present 600 years of musical history in 90 minutes.

### Ceri Dupree: Back to the Rhinestone (May 25-27)

Undoubtedly the UK's finest female impersonator.

### Top Secret: The Magic of Science (May 30)

The theatre is transformed into a real-life science laboratory.

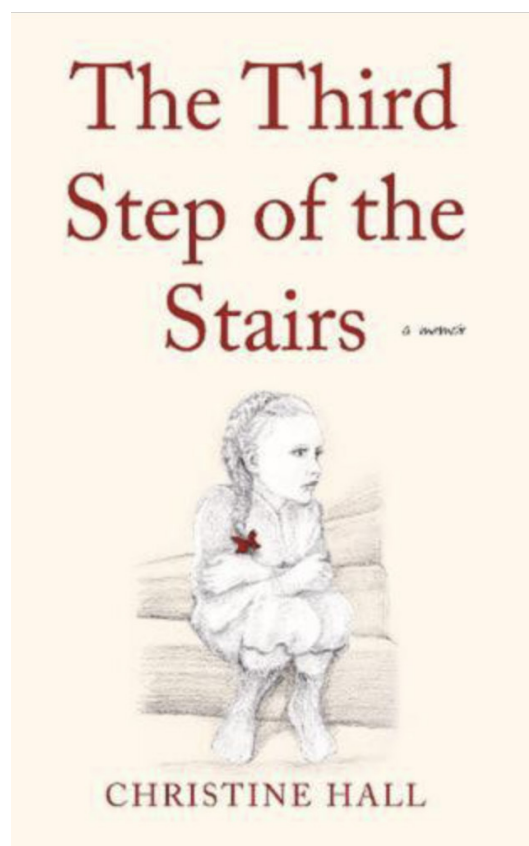
### A Nick Cope Family Concert (May 31)

Beautiful and totally unique songs for children and their families.

# The Third Step

Chris Hall, a cherished member of The Little, has proven herself not only to be a stage creative but a writer too! She's written a novel about her life experiences. *The Third Step of the Stairs* contains snapshots of Chris's life from birth in 1941 through to when she lost her husband in 2012. It takes a journey of a dysfunctional family, five girls and one boy and what it was like growing up together and the things we got up to. It covers village life, teenage years to adolescence and boyfriends, her choice of career in nursing, meeting her future husband and courtship, and eventually marrying and moving to Leicestershire, as well as the arrival of her children and the trials of repeated ill health in her husband, which at times stopped the family in their tracks. Life interspersed with him having to have two major heart operations. Chris's nursing continued, essential to find work to help pay the mortgage. *The Third Step of the Stairs* also goes into detail about pursuing hobbies, joining a drama group then moving on to amateur operatic societies, the excitement of auditions and the challenges of the production especially costume fitting. Chris says that life has been a roller coaster ride, sometimes sad but mostly joyful and that writing this book has been a cathartic exercise.

Buy *The Third Step of the Stairs* online on Amazon, Book Depository, or at WHSmith and Waterstones.



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## Connections Report

The latest Connections event, held on March 28, will be the last one until returning on June 6. Two were held in March and both were very well attended.

We did the usual introductions and a brief talk by Richard Payton (Coordinator for Connections). The tour began with a visit to 52 Up for a brief look at a rehearsal for *Home, I'm Darling* directed by John Ghent. We saw some action from Caitlin Mottram – who plays Judy – and Gary Hunt – who plays Johnny. They play a married couple. Judy is going to be made redundant and is trying to persuade Johnny that it would be good for them both if she stayed at home as a housewife. She seemingly promises Johnny 'Life of Riley', but at one point during this persuasion, Johnny did mention she can't cook – Judy manages to gloss over this with 'I can learn'. I will definitely be buying tickets for this one as I can't wait to see how this pans out!

John showed the group a 3D mock-up of how the set will look and explained the workings of the set, which looks impressive. The set designer Al Davis was the

owner of Bones the Theatre Dog who sadly passed away last year. Deviating from Connections with some news, Al came into the theatre with Hazel, a seven-month-old Collie mix rescue puppy who is absolutely delightful and so affectionate. We all had a cuddle and she's certainly got a human fan club in the theatre. However, back to business. Thank you, John, for giving the group a bit of your time in your busy rehearsal schedule.

The group then looked around the props store, studio, and workshop, before making our way into the first on-stage dress rehearsal of *The Railway Children* in the auditorium. We caught a bit of the rehearsal which was looking good; Gem Greaves' set was amazing. We hope you all managed to see it.

Several of the prospective new members took application forms so hopefully, they enjoyed the experience, and we'll see them around the theatre soon.

The next two Connections evenings are on June 6 and 27, 2023.

Jackie Caunt

# Review: Anything Goes

I saw *Anything Goes* by Leicester Operatic players (LOPS) with three friends. What an amazing show. I always try to be a glass half full in life and when I come to see a show at The Little, I'm often not disappointed – albeit the reason being these amateur actors, dancers and singers are, in my opinion, just as good as professionals, if not better. This show was so well put together from the set, musicians and cast.

I met Steve Elliott on Monday the day before the grand opening and I mistook him for the set designer, not realising he was the director, but that's amateurs for you! They have to be able to turn their hands to everything. Looking at the programme, I realised I have seen most of the productions that Steve has directed and enjoyed them all.

My friend and I attend Sound Bites at the Attenborough Arts Centre on Tuesday lunchtimes and

Natasha Carr sometimes does a turn. As I had already seen her in *42nd Street*, I knew she was talented. My friends were impressed and wanted to see her on stage playing Hope Harcourt in *Anything Goes*. They were not disappointed and when we discussed the show afterwards, they couldn't believe the energy that was present on stage. How they all keep it up night after night I will never know because they also have day jobs.

I don't want to single anyone out because they were all brilliant but one of my friends went on and on about the 'Gypsy in Me' performed by Lizzie Bywater-Florence as Reno Sweeney and Russell Webster as Lord Evelyn Oakleigh. The number was a cross between a Flamenco and tango of sorts. Whatever it was, it was certainly different! I really enjoyed this production so much, in fact, I went to see it again.

Jackie Caunt

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# Review: *The Railway Children: A musical*

We came to see *The Railway Children* on the first Sunday performance and although I had been privy to bits of the rehearsal, I wasn't quite sure what to expect with it being put to music.

Some years previously I had taken my grandson, Joshua, to see a play of *The Railway Children* at Curve, and while I didn't really enjoy it, Josh loved it - though he was more interested in the technical aspect of the staging.

I'm not biased, but I've got to confess, I loved The Little's production of it. I enjoyed Mr Perks the stationmaster (Tom Young), narrating/singing us through the sequence of events. I thought the chemistry between the Mother (Amanda Sadler) and Bobbie (Scarlett Hubbard) was lovely and moved me to tears at times. I loved the children – didn't they do well? At times, owning the stage.

The set by Gem Greaves was amazing. I'll let you into a little secret – I saw the engine being made in the workshop by Dave Towers, and it's incredible what you can achieve with wood. Dave is so talented. The

costumes were so in keeping with the times – obviously sorted by our equally talented John Bale costume designer/dame extraordinaire.

There was so much talent in this production, not least the director and musical director, Leigh White, and assistant director, Joe Middleton.

I do have one little tiny, almost miniscule criticism: why did we have to throw cases onto the stage when there was a landslide?

As I'm writing this, Beulah, who co-ordinated props on this production, has arrived to do her stint in the box office. She tells me they had to make jam sandwiches for the children to eat in the production. Usually, they'd throw them away after the performance, but some of the kids cottoned on to this and asked her to keep hold of them. Jam sandwiches – always popular, and never go out of fashion.

*We received many other wonderful reviews for this production, which can be found via our social media or elsewhere online.*

Review by Jackie Caunt



# **LITTLE THEATRE** **OPEN** **AUDITIONS**

## **WHEN**

**Sun 21st May, 2023**  
**10am**

## **WHERE**

**The Little Theatre**

**Dover Street, Leicester, LE1 6PW**

**All auditionees will have the opportunity of taking part in a morning workshop session which will be led by David Cross. This will culminate in a short presentation in front of a group of Directors.**

**After a break for lunch, there will be individual auditions and a chance to show what you can do!**

**To book a place or find out more, please contact Adam Jones by e-mail on [adamjones506@btinternet.com](mailto:adamjones506@btinternet.com)**

**Please note the closing date for applications is Friday 12th May**

**[WWW.THELITTLETHEATRE.CO.UK](http://WWW.THELITTLETHEATRE.CO.UK)**

**ARE YOU 16 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER?**

**DO YOU HAVE A PASSION FOR PERFORMING?**

**ARE YOUR ABILITIES AS AN ACTOR BEING RECOGNISED?**

**DO YOU FEEL TYPECAST?**

**HAVE YOU AUDITIONED FOR PLAYS, BUT NOT YET BEEN CAST?**

**WOULD YOU LIKE THE CHANCE OF BEING SEEN BY A RANGE OF DIRECTORS?**

# Audition notice

## A Murder is Announced

*A Miss Marple mystery, adapted by Leslie Darbon*

**Audition Date/Time:** Wednesday 10 and Friday 12 May, 2023  
7:00pm – 10:00pm

**Production Dates:** September 11-16, 2023

**Director:** John Bale

**Location:** Little Theatre (studio), Dover Street, Leicester

**Contact Info:** johnrbale@hotmail.com

**Description:** The villagers of Chipping Cleghorn, including Jane Marple, are agog with curiosity over an advertisement in the local gazette which reads: 'A murder is announced and will take place on Friday, October 29, at Little Paddocks at 6:30pm.' A childish practical joke? Or a hoax intended to scare poor Letitia Blacklock? Unable to resist the mysterious invitation, a crowd begins to gather at Little Paddocks at the appointed time when, without warning, the lights go out...

Characters:	M/F	Age
Julia Simmons	Female	20-30
Letitia Blacklock	Female	45-55
Dora Bunner	Female	45-55
Patrick Simmons	Male	20-30
Mitzi (the cook)	Female	20-50
Miss Marple	Female	50-60
Phillipa Haymes	Female	20-30
Mrs Swettenham	Female	50s
Edmund Swettenham	Male	20-35
Rudi Scherz	Male	18-25
Inspector Craddock	Male	45-55
Sergeant Mellors	Male	20-50

Remember, playing age isn't your real age—it's what you can get away with!

If interested, please get in touch—audition sections will then be advised.

Rehearsals will begin week commencing July 24. Holidays can be accommodated within reason. Scripts available from The Little Theatre box office.

# Recent Productions

## *The Railway Children: A Musical*

In April, we staged our Easter production of *The Railway Children: A Musical*, directed by Leigh White.

The timeless story proved a real hit with audiences, bringing new people into our theatre, and wowing them with beautiful storytelling and stunning vocals. Fantastic performances from both the adults and children in the cast.



**"Wow! Just been to see it today and honestly, it's brilliant. I shed a few real tears at the end!"**

**"What a super opening night! Great cast and some amazing performances too. Fab to see Rachel Draper & David Lovell on stage and in the bar afterwards! Well done to all, have a great run"**



**"It's such an incredible show! All the cast are standout and it's superbly directed by the very talented Leigh White. Just loved it!"**



**"Amazing production, it's a MUST see. Well done everyone"**





**"Just returned from seeing it. Brilliant production super story telling"**



**"Just watched it and really enjoyed it. Some very talented performers"**



**"What a wonderful show to come and see at The Little Theatre in Leicester, my first ever visit to this lovely venue"**



**"Brilliant production. I'd urge everyone to go and see it"**



**"Absolutely amazing. Fantastic cast with amazing singing from all. Faultless"**



**"Wow, what amazing talent. We loved every minute of it. Well done to all involved you should be very proud!"**



# Recent Productions

## Anything goes

Last month, we were delighted to welcome our extended family at Leicester Operatic Players (LOPs) back to the theatre for their production of *Anything Goes*, directed by Steve Elliott.

The Cole Porter classic brought a touch of glamour to our stage, with some incredible tap-dancing choreographed by Ellie Newbrooks. Audiences loved the vocals and comic timing of this wonderful cast.



**"An absolute delight!!! Too many stars to mention. So many hilarious moments, fabulous singing, great choreography, well done to everyone involved."**



**"It was spectacular! Such a wealth of talent on that stage. Congratulations to you all!"**



**"What a fabulous show. So professional. Costumes were beautiful. Congratulations to you all"**

**"No one should miss this AMAZING show. Really uplifting"**



**"Oh my god, it was bloody fantastic. I didn't know what to expect as we have never been to the theatre, but the show did not disappoint. The humour and comedy were entertaining from start to finish! Everyone put on an amazing show. A big shout out to our Hannah McCourt who was absolutely fab!"**





# James and the Giant Peach

It was fabulous to see our youth theatre back on stage for this year's production: an adaptation of Roald Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach*, directed by youth theatre leader, Andy Longley-Brown. It's always wonderful to see our next generation of acting talent perform, and we look forward to seeing more of them in the future.





# In The Spotlight



**Name:** Caitlin Mottram

**Age:** ???

**Profession:** Speech & Drama Teacher

**Upcoming production:** *Home, I'm Darling*

**Noteworthy:** Previously appeared in *Absurd Person Singular* (2018), *Death of A Salesman* (2019) *Private Lives* (2021)

## What was the first theatre show you saw?

Rather bizarrely, the first show I clearly remember going to see was Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* at the RSC in Stratford with my friend and her family, aged 11! Given the rather violent material, I managed to emerge from the experience unscathed by the gore, murder and violence and instead came away totally awestruck by an amazing performance by Brian Cox and the whole company, and with a lifelong love for Shakespeare.

## What was the first play/musical you were in?

The first production I appeared in was *RATS The Musical* at primary school when I was in year six. I played Alderman Greedy, the corrupt, double-crossing town mayor. I had to wear a padded fat suit and, for some reason, chose to attempt a strong Brummie accent. My dear dad always used to say that this show remained one of his favourite shows that I performed in.

## What's your favourite role you've played to date (and why)?

I was lucky enough to play the role of Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for over a year and because she seemed so identifiable to me, I never grew tired of her. I found the

combination of her wit, sadness and silliness constantly engaging. Ruth in *Blithe Spirit* a few years later was another favourite. I found her emotional journey from calm, composed, elegant hostess passing through a raging, baffled scold to a mischievous ghost so enjoyable to play.

## What's your dream role that you're yet to play (and why)?

I'm always quite interested in flawed characters whether dramatic or comedic. So, generally, someone mad, bad or sad is always an interesting challenge for me. Gosh, so many to choose from, but off the top of my head, I'd say Marquise de Merteuil in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, Mrs Raffi in *The Sea* or Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Or maybe some Scottish Shakespeare...!

## What's the best theatre show you've ever seen?

That's a tough one so I'm just going with something that I've seen fairly recently: *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. I took my son to see it last year and was so by impressed how they create the magic in the play through such clever and brilliant use of stagecraft (and not just special effects). I loved how this worked so well and how

it created space for some really top-notch performances in the show, especially from the younger actors. Truthful, funny and so well observed.

## What's your favourite thing about The Little Theatre?

The Little Theatre is such a welcoming and friendly organisation to be part of. Everyone is kind and encouraging, which creates a positive environment for people to come together and work on a show. There is a great deal of dedication, passion and hard work driven by a very professional approach, which is demonstrated in the wonderful quality of the productions that they put on.

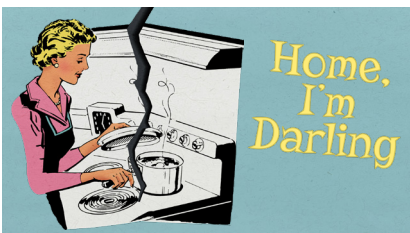
## Tell us about your upcoming production!

*Home, I'm Darling* is a sparkling comedy about a couple who transform their passion for fifties nostalgia into a lifestyle experiment. The play explores how this affects their relationship and the relationships with the people around them. It is beautifully written and – as well providing lots of fun – I think that it also offers an interesting perspective and a timely analysis of the gender divide. An amusing evening of 'soft gingham and hard truths', not to mention the awesome set and those fabulous outfits.

# At a glance

## What's on this season

### MAY



#### Home, I'm Darling

May 8-13

#### Ghost

May 16-20



### JUNE

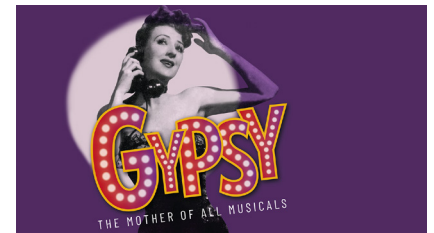


#### Bouncers (Remix)

June 12-17

#### Gypsy

June 20-24



### JULY



#### Shakespeare in Love

July 3-8

#### Celebratory Centenary Old Time Music Hall

July 21-22



## Coming this September

# A Murder is Announced

A Miss Marple mystery, adapted by Leslie Darbon





Visit our website for more information: [thelittletheatre.co.uk](http://thelittletheatre.co.uk)