

Forthcoming Shows

Habeas Corpus

Written by Alan Bennett Directed by Clare Brittain

A riotous comedy of lust, lies, and lechery, Habeas Corpus is a fast-paced farce set in 1960s Brighton. When a doctor's dull life is upended by a cast of eccentrics character, chaos ensues. Expect mistaken identities, dropped trousers, and sharp wit in this amusing satire of middle-class morals and human desire. A hilarious theatrical romp not to be missed!

Tue 17th - Sat 21st February, 7.30pm

Christchurch Hall, 3 Christchurch Road, Abington, NNI 5LL

The House of the Forgotten

by Liz Vokes Devised & Directed by Meryl Couper

A new devised piece for Masque Theatre from We & Us Productions, who brought us 'A Grimm Tale'!

A young doctor's search for truth unravels into a chilling journey through madness, memory, and the macabre. Inspired by the haunting tales of Edgar Allan Poe, this atmospheric new play invites you to question what is real - and what should have stayed buried behind locked doors. Do you dare to join us?

Tue 28th April - Sat 2nd May 7.30pm

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, 1 Church Lane, Northampton NNI 3NL



WWW.MASQUETHEATRE.CO.UK



MASQUE
THEATRE



THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

BY CHARLES DICKENS

ADAPTED & DIRECTED BY MAGGIE HOLLAND



TUE 9TH - SAT 13TH DECEMBER

DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

Over the years Masque Theatre have performed several of the stories of Charles Dickens. I have appeared on stage in some of them. The Old Curiosity Shop however has been missing from that list; indeed, it is rarely performed anywhere. I first fell in love with it via a television adaptation, but then, years later, reading the full novel I discovered there was so much more to the story and so decided to write my own adaptation.

The preface to the novel compares Nell's journey to the "Pilgrim's Progress" and in the book Nell reminisces on her reading of that classic work. This play would have been three hours long if I had included all the characters that they meet on their travels. I hope I have balanced time constraints with a suitable cross section of those characters. This is a story that resonates across the centuries. Themes of greed, addiction and exploitation remain hauntingly relevant, while the resilience of Nell and her companions reflect the endurance of the human spirit.

One of the big choices I faced was the ending. When the original story was published, readers were quick to let their sorrow be known at the death of Nell. Should I perhaps soften the ending of the story for a modern audience? The issue of Grandfather's weaknesses raises another question. If he had not gambled himself into a spiral of debt, would they have all lived happily ever after? Maybe, but then Dick would not have rescued the Small Servant, the Garlands would never have controlled their pony, and Quilp would have found other victims to terrorise. Sometimes in life you just must accept "It is what it is."

To quote the original author in his preface, "I had always in my fancy to surround the lonely figure of the child with grotesque and wild, but not impossible companions" Join us now in the strange and grim world that Charles Dickens reflected for us.

Maggie Holland - Director



Maggie joined Masque in 2005 and has been involved in many productions both on and off stage. Previous directing credits for Masque are: 'Closer' (2009), 'Entertaining Angels' (2013), 'Woman in Mind' (2018), 'Treasure Island' (2019) and 'The Middle of Nowhere' (2022).

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Ever wondered what it's like to be part of a theatre production — but without the spotlight? At Masque Theatre, not all stars are on stage!

Since 1931, our productions have thrived thanks to an incredible team of volunteers working passionately behind the scenes. Now, we need you!

Whether you're a whizz with a paintbrush, handy with a hammer, or love the buzz of organising things, there's a place for you in our backstage family.

We're looking for **lighting and sound operators, stage managers, wardrobe assistants, prop makers, set painters, set constructors, and even helping hands for show-night catering.**

No experience? No problem.

Enthusiasm and a willingness to learn go a long way—and our friendly, experienced team will support you every step of the way.

Volunteering with Masque isn't just about putting on a great show (though we do that brilliantly). It's about being part of a creative community that's been entertaining Northampton for over 90 years. You'll make new friends, learn new skills, and bring live theatre to life.

So if you love theatre but don't fancy the spotlight, join us backstage — where the real magic happens.

Get involved today - we can't wait to meet you!

Contact productions@masquetheatre.co.uk for more information.

Masque values our audience's feedback.



Use the QR code to fill in a short survey form!

Rehearsal Photos



Charles Dickens 1812 - 1870

Born in humble beginnings in 1812, Charles John Huffam Dickens became a towering figure of Victorian literature whose stories still resonate in theatres today. His childhood was marked by financial instability—when he was just twelve, his father was imprisoned for debt and young Dickens was forced to work in a factory. These early experiences of hardship infused his psyche with empathy for society’s underdogs, a recurring heartbeat throughout his writing.

Though he left school at 15, Dickens began his career as a legal reporter and then a journalist. He burst into public view with Sketches by “Boz”, a collection of witty vignettes, but it was *The Pickwick Papers* (serialized in 1836–37) that really launched him. Part farce, part social satire, it relied on episodic structure—perfectly suited to the serial format—and established Dickens as a national star.

The serial installments of his novels made them natural fodder for theatrical adaptation, and his vivid characters—comic, grotesque, or tragic—soon populated London stages in droves.

Yet Dickens was far more than a showman. Beneath his humour lay a fierce moral imagination. In ‘*Oliver Twist*’, he condemned the brutality of the workhouse and the criminal underbelly of Victorian London. As his career progressed, his novels grew darker and more symbolic: the fog-choked streets of ‘*Bleak House*’, the suffocating prisons of ‘*Little Dorrit*’, the dreams and disappointments of ‘*Great Expectations*’.

His remarkable skill lay in blending realism with invention—he combined a rich knowledge of London, ear for dialect, and an uncanny ability to create characters who felt larger than life yet heartbreakingly real. These traits, together with his sharp social commentary, turned him into what G. K. Chesterton describes as a “spokesman of the conscience of his age.” Dickens passed away in 1870 at his home in Kent, leaving behind an unfinished mystery, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and an indelible legacy.

Information sourced from Encyclopedia Britannica

Cast



Chris Stobart - Narrator

Chris Stobart's other Masque credits include "Henry V", "The Duchess of Malfi", "Little Women", "Shadowlands" and most recently "Edward II". This is his seventh turn in Holy Sepulchre.



Jem Clack - Grandfather

Jem first appeared on the amateur stage in the late 1980's as Verges in Masque's 'Much Ado About Nothing'. Since then he has been in many shows in many groups. His most recent roles being Lord Melchett in 'Blackadder', Jerry in 'Road' and Earl Warwick / Sir John of Hainault in 'Edward II'.



Emma Taylor - Nell Trent

Emma hasn't done a lot of drama before and is loving working with the incredible people at Masque Theatre. She is very excited to play Nell, a young girl full of curiosity and wonder whilst also having a lot more grit and determination than the world gives her credit for.



Kirsty Macpherson - Kit Nubbles

Kirsty's first appearance with Masque was as the smaller little Emily in "David Copperfield". Most recently she was in Bishop Stopford's school production of "Guys and Dolls" at the Lighthouse Theatre



Brady Jolly - Fred Trent/Schoolmaster

Brady is an actor based in Northampton, he made his Masque debut in "Edward II" playing the Earl of Kent, he has enjoyed rehearsing this play due to the two vastly different characters he portrays.

Cast



Bea Thomas - Mrs Jarley

Bea is delighted to be joining the cast of 'The Old Curiosity Shop' after making her Masque debut in 'Twelfth Night'. Watch out for the enigmatic Mrs Jarley and her waxworks!



Sally Whitestone - Villager/Mother/Ensemble

Sally has performed in many local musical theatre productions most recently "Jesus Christ Superstar" and is looking forward to returning to Masque in 'Curiosity'



Bridget Adlington - Mrs George/Mother/Ens.

'Longtime fan of the theatre but new to the stage herself, Bridget is looking forward to her first show.



Mia Souter - Barmaid/Ensemble

Mia has been acting and performing since she was young. She loves the process of embodying and portraying a range of characters. She would love to work in the film and TV industry. Mia is focused on stage and screen acting to amplify her talent and to get into the industry.



Josh McCallum - Young Mr Garland/George/Docker/Ensemble

Josh as previously enjoyed studying level 3 to HND acting at Northampton College from 2018 to 2022 and is very excited to try out different ambient roles in this large production.

Cast



Toni Clarke - Sally Brass

Having appeared for Masque in 'Who Needs Stephen King?', 'Our Country's Good', 'The Christmas Spirit', and 'Grimm Tales' amongst others, Toni expects the audience to "boo" the cruel and heartless Sally Brass!



Scarlett Teckman - Small Servant/Codlin

This is 18 year old Scarlett's second production with Masque, which she has been rehearsing along side scare acting at Dr Frights Halloween Nights. She has been a part of a few projects throughout the years, but is especially excited to take on the role of a Victorian servant.



Stephen Power - Single Gentleman

Stephen is excited to be taking part his first production with Masque, having performed in two local plays this year, "Escape!" and "Rumours". Previous credits include "Oh What a Lovely War!", "Smike" and "Dracula Spectacular".



Owen Warr

Owen has sadly had to drop out of the play due to health issues. We all wish him well. The director would like to thank Josh for taking over the role of Mr Garland at short notice.



Sue Howes - Mrs Garland

Usually to be found behind the box office, Sue is also treading the boards tonight. She has been a member and performed with many groups over the years including HAMS Co-Op players, Cogenhoe players, Splinters and The Playhouse. Sue is happy to be playing the small part of Mrs Garland.

Cast



Michael Chakanetsa - Dick Swiveller

Michael is an aspiring actor with a strong passion for storytelling and performance. From a young age, he has been captivated by the power of storytelling. Fascinated in how characters interact with one another and embark on thrilling journeys has inspired him to become an actor.



Antony Newby - Daniel Quilp

Antony has been lurking in the background of Masque productions since Treasure Island, 2019. This will be his first major speaking role for them, although the past year or has seen him in assorted roles for Moulton and Nerve Theatre. Looking forwards to some Dickensian villainy as Daniel Quilp.



Richenda Jameson - Betsy Quilp/Short

Richenda returns to her theatre roots in The Old Curiosity Shop after years focused on music, bringing sharp instincts and a bold, expressive presence back to the stage.



Patricia Coleman - Mrs Jiniwin/Miss Monflathers

A member of Masque Theatre for many years Patricia is delighted to be working with friends old and new on Masque's Christmas production of 'The Old Curiosity Shop'.



Craig Macpherson - Sampson Brass

Craig joined Masque in 2010 and has been in 20 shows, most recently February's "Shadowlands". This is his fourth Dickens play, and his second time acting alongside Kirsty.

The Old Curiosity Shop

CAST

Chris Stobart ----- Narrator
Jem Clack -----Grandfather
Emma Taylor ----- Nell Trent
Kirsty MacPherson ----- Kit Nubbles
Brady Jolly -----Fred Trent/Schoolmaster
Michael Chakanetsa ----- Dick Swiveller
Antony Newby -----Daniel Quilp
Richenda Jameson ----- Betsy Quilp/Short
Patricia Coleman ----- Mrs Jiniwin/Miss Monflathers
Craig Macpherson ----- Sampson Brass
Toni Clarke ----- Sally Brass
Scarlett Teckman ----- Small Servant/Codlin
Stephen Power ----- Single Gentleman
Sue Howes ----- Mrs Garland
Bea Thomas ----- Mrs Jarley
Sally Whitestone ----- Villager/Mother/Ensemble
Bridget Adlington ----- Mrs George/Mother/Ensemble
Mia Souter ----- Barmaid/Ensemble
Josh McCallum ----- Young Mr Garland/George/Docker/Ensemble

THERE IS ONE INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES.

REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH NORTH AISLE

CREATIVES & PRODUCTION

DIRECTOR----- Maggie Holland
STAGE MANAGER----- Clare Brittain
LIGHTING & SOUND ----- Philip Welsh & Dave Jones
SET----- Mark Mortimer
PROPERTIES & SET----- Rob Kendall
COSTUMES----- Pam Mann & Clare Brittain

POSTER DESIGN----- Meryl Couper
PROGRAMME----- Meryl Couper
TRANSPORT----- Robert Vaughan, Masque Members
AUDITORIUM----- Rob Kendall, Mark Mortimer, Richard Walker
BOOKING MANAGER----- Robert Vaughan & Ian Allan
BOX OFFICE----- Liz Allan
HOSPITALITY MANAGER----- Sue Howes
HOLY SEPULCHRE LIASON-----Maggie Holland
SAFETY OFFICER----- Rob Kendall
CHAPERONE----- Catherine Macpherson
REFRESHMENTS----- Masque Members

THANK YOU...

Masque Theatre would like to thank the Holy Sepulchre Church for their continued support and help with this production.

Grateful thanks also goes to anyone assisting with provision of props, especially The Playhouse Theatre Group.