

A to Z

or everything you wanted to know about Faringdon Dramatic Society

ACTING	
Can anyone do it ?	<p>Currently approximately 60% of our current members are actors with varying amounts of experience.</p> <p>There are around 30 at any one time available and wanting to act with the group. There is no upper age limit - like most societies we would like to encourage younger members. There is a lower age limit only for the annual pantomime. Children must be 10 years of age when the panto is performed.</p> <p>Anyone who would like to act will be given the chance wherever possible. New actors may like to start with the panto - perhaps in the chorus to get a taste for the smell of the greasepaint and the roar of the crowd!!</p> <p>More experienced newcomers will be welcome to play readings and expected to audition in the usual way. There is no hierarchy - you don't have to serve an apprenticeship for years before being 'allowed' to set foot on the stage. It is our policy to get everyone involved as soon as possible.</p>
AGM	
When and where	<p>The AGM is held in May at the United Church in Faringdon where the Committee is elected for the next year, our financial report is produced and the past years issues and future plans are discussed with all members.</p> <p>According to our constitution only paid up members of the group are allowed to vote.</p> <p>It is the opportunity for every member of the group to have their say, air their views and influence the make up of the Committee.</p> <p>Annual Fees are usually collected at the AGM (preferably paid by cheque).</p>
AUDITIONS	
When and where and who makes the decisions	<p>Usually auditions are held for the next play immediately after the current one has ended. They are held after one or sometimes two play reading sessions. Auditions for the pantomime are broken up into children and adult sessions. The decision makers will be the Director with help from one or two selected colleagues.</p>
AUTHORS	
How are they chosen	<p>From recommendation, personal knowledge - no set parameters</p> <p>Several members have from time to time put pen to paper. The Society to date has performed eight pantos written by members</p>

BACK STAGE WORK	
Joining 'the crew'	Anyone who would like to help backstage can have the opportunity to join the backstage team. If you are inexperienced it is a very good way of getting to know how a production is put together. (A large number of current members cut their teeth on curtain pulling).
BUDGETS	
Who prepares them	The Director will be responsible for preparing a budget for their proposed production. The Committee must agree the budget and every attempt made to stay within budget.
BAR-B-QUE	
Cook out & chill out	We usually have a summer Bar-B-Que get together (we don't let the rain stop us) where partners, friends and children are welcome. We have taken over various members gardens in the past and good food and company can be guaranteed.
CASTING	
Who is involved	The Director with an assistant (usually the Producer) will be responsible for casting their play or panto.
COMMITTEE	
Who are they and what do they do	<p>The Committee has the responsibility to ensure the Society is properly run, they decide on the plays or pantomimes to be performed and plan the thinking about future productions. They take decisions regarding purchases and how best to use our resources both personally and financially.</p> <p>The Committee is made up of at least 8 members. Elected annually anyone can stand for election but we like to have key members stay for at least two years. It is made up of the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary with the other members taking on other duties at different times during the year e.g. social events. For each production the current Director will attend relevant Committee meetings. The Committee meets approximately 6 times a year and has the power to call extraordinary meetings if the need arises. All meetings are minuted and the Chairman and Treasurer give a report at the AGM.</p> <p>Being on the Committee is not as onerous as it sounds and it can even be FUN!</p>
CONSTITUTION	
The rules and regs	A copy of the constitution is available for any member to read. Any changes to the constitution have to be agreed by the Committee and put forward at the AGM.
COSTUMES	
	See 'Wardrobe'

CONTINUITY	
	See 'Prompt'
CHILDREN	
We all have to start somewhere	Children are occasionally involved in the plays but they play a very important role in the annual pantomime. The minimum age for children is 10 years old. Children between the ages 10 - 18 involved in a production must be registered with the Society. A subsidised fee of £5.00 is required to become temporary members and covered by our insurance., We can have up to 40 children involved in the panto. Our Panto is extremely popular and some of our children have gone on to become valuable members of the society as adults.
CHOREOGRAPHY	
Back, side, together.	We are fortunate to have some members with an appreciation and understanding of the discipline of the dance! (some of us need all the help we can get!). Dance routines have played their part in several plays but most memorably in the panto where, mostly the children, perform quite sophisticated routines. Members of the society choreograph these dances although we do co-opt professional help from time to time.
DANCERS	
Best foot forward	We have talented tap and ballet dancers in our group and their talents are generally put on show at panto (or Old Time Music Hall) time.
DIRECTING	
Lead the way	If a member of the society would like to direct a play or panto they must put their proposal to the committee. Whilst we are happy to encourage new directors, inexperienced members may be encouraged to be an assistant director before taking on all the responsibilities of full directorship. (For the panto there is always a co-director as the task is considerable for one person - with a cast of up to 60 to control!). The Director will audition, cast, put together the production team and set the rehearsal schedules as well as working with the actors to present the chosen play. With a producer at his/her side to keep an eye on timings and budget etc the director runs the show!
FRONT OF HOUSE	
Looking after the audience	Meeting and greeting our audience, selling the tickets and organising the raffle, selling the drinks and refreshments and providing lots of information about FDS are all part of the FOH function. FOH is a popular place for non actors to do their stuff.

FEES	
	See Subscriptions
GET IN / GET OUT	
Setting up and taking down	Getting in is erecting the previously built and painted set, ensuring it its safe and secure (no wobbles) and setting up the props and furniture in place ready for the dress rehearsal. This usually has to be managed in one day and is co-ordinated by the Stage Manager. The team of set builders is put together for each production. Getting out is striking the set once the play has finished, returning the usable stuff to our store and clearing and cleaning the stage.
HONORARY MEMBERS	
Special friends	Honorary members are appointed by the committee and are not required to pay membership fees.
JOINING - HOW TO	
Come and join us	Contact the Membership Secretary, Secretary, or any Committee Member. See the website for more details. www.faringdondramatic.org.co
KIDS	
	See 'Children'
LIGHTING	
Keeping in the spotlight	A highly technical part of all productions. It can vary from relatively simple to quite complex. We hire a professional lighting technician who visits the venue, discusses and advises the director, sets up, and strikes the lighting rig. He usually operates the lighting himself for complex productions, but will train one of the group to operate simpler ones. Extra pairs of hands to strike the rig at the end of a run are more than welcome.
LICENCES	
Keeping it legal	For all published plays we must obtain a licence. The Producer or Secretary usually deals with this and the licence must be held on site during performances. The cost is dependent on the number of seats in the theatre and the number of performances. This can range from £150.00 to £450.00, £50 per night is about average.
MEMBERSHIP	
The entire team	Membership goes from May to May (or from joining date to May). Members are expected to renew their membership at the A.G.M. (or very shortly after this) which is held in May. You cannot vote at the A.G.M. unless you are a fully paid up member.

	The membership currently stands at 60, made up of both actors and non actors.
MAKE UP	
Putting on the 'slap'	All make up is provided by the Society, and the make up situation is reviewed before each production to ensure we have the appropriate kit. Many actors do their own make up, others need and can get assistance. We do have some make up specialists but they appear to be a rare breed, so if you have an interest in this most important discipline speak up now!. We have books to guide us but a make up guru would be most welcome.
MUSIC	
	See 'Orchestra'
NEWS LETTERS	
Read all about it	To keep our members abreast of forthcoming productions, comments, awards, workshops, general FDS gossip and other news items the FDS Newsletter is emailed to all. Created by a member of the committee to ensure no one misses out on the latest news or changes that could affect our society.
NON - ACTORS	
The Crew	Although any member who wishes to act is encouraged to do so, there are plenty of opportunities to support productions in other ways, and such 'unseen' activities are of course, essential for the success of every production. On joining, new members are invited to indicate their interests - acting, producing, stage management, set design, set building, lighting/sound, choreography, make up, wardrobe, music, front of house, publicity. We have several members who have no desire to be on stage but thoroughly enjoy being part of the support teams. The Society relies very much on these highly competent and willing members.
ORCHESTRA	
Moments musicales	For the annual pantomime - and sometimes for other productions too - an orchestra is essential. Our Music Director recruits a scratch orchestra for each occasion, directing from the piano, and this affords opportunities for strings, brass, woodwind and percussion. Orchestral players are drawn either from the membership or outside.
PROPS	
Far removed from 'Blue Peter'	Over the years, we have built up a fascinating Aladdin's cave of props. These are held in store and are used, re-cycled or added to for each production. (We have been known to raid members' houses too). Several members are very skilled at turning some

	<p>MDF, several sheets of wrapping paper and tinsel and other bits and bobs into a very creditable magical Cinderella's coach !</p> <p>'Special' props involving some mechanical or engineering knowledge are sometimes required so once more we turn to our talented members to come up with workable solutions.</p>
PROMPT	
Heard but not seen	<p>Although actors are given adequate rehearsal time to become word perfect, and are 'off books' several weeks before curtain up, a prompter is designated for each production, for the final weeks of rehearsal and the actual performance.</p>
PANTO	
The 'big event of the year'	<p>Since the late 1980s a pantomime has featured as the January / February production. Some 20 pantos have been mounted over that period, several written by our members. Some of these have won awards in the Oxfordshire Drama Network Pantomime Festival. The cast for the pantos is augmented by up to 40 children drawn from local schools, a few taking lead roles, the majority in the chorus or dance ensembles. A large number of families are thus involved, and many children receive their first taste of the theatre in this way.</p> <p>The panto is hugely enjoyable for those taking part, and is very popular with the Faringdon community.</p>
PLAYS	
A versatile repertoire	<p>The Society's archives, which can be visited on our website which gives details of all the productions since 1949. In most years three productions are staged including, since the late 1980s, a pantomime. Generally the plays are put on in May and October with the panto traditionally running over the last week in January and first week in February. The plays include comedies, serious classics, courtroom dramas - all drawn from the West End twentieth Century repertoire. Plays are selected by the Committee from proposals put forward by members. Suggestions are always welcome and everything is considered (possibly not 'Hair' though).</p>
PUBLICITY	
Whats going on	<p>Posters (produced by members), 'Whats On in Faringdon', editorials in 'The Faringdon Folly' and the website are all used to promote each production. We are regularly reviewed in 'The Folly'.</p> <p>For larger productions a publicity team will be drawn together to handle this vital part of the organisation.</p>
PROGRAMMES	
Very good value	<p>A programme is created for every production which not only identifies all those involved but also details of the next one in</p>

	the pipeline, (how's your wordprocessing ?)
PRODUCTION TEAMS	
All hands on deck	The Society is fortunate to have a wide range of production skills at its disposal. As the Faringdon Folly commented in a recent review the Society boasts set designers, carpenters, painters, seamstresses, musicians, sound and light technicians with skills any one of which most drama groups would give their eye teeth for". However, new recruits to the backstage team are needed all the time - so if acting is not your scene how about a spot of painting or sewing.
PRODUCER	
The organiser	The 'Producer' role in our Society is to make sure that everything happens as it should. It's a co-ordinating function including such things as ensuring the play licence has been applied for on time, liaising with outside agencies (The Junior School, the United Church for eg.) checking that the production teams are on schedule etc. This enables the Director to concentrate on the actors and getting the best performances out of everyone. The Director and Producer work as a team.
PAINTERS	
Not necessarily all 'creatives'	Painters both artistic and domestic are always needed - don't hide your light under a bushel if you can wield a brush - let us know.
PLAYREADING	
Come and join us !	We play read sometimes just for enjoyment and to keep the social activity (the drink at the pub) going during the summer months when we have our longest period of 'resting'. You don't need to be a member to read with us - just turn up and join in. It does, however, have a more pertinent function which is to try out suggested ideas from members. When a play has been chosen it is then 'read' prior to audition so that anyone who is interested can familiarise themselves with plot and characters, and possibly try out several roles in an informal situation. Everyone is welcome whether or not they decide subsequently to audition.
REHEARSALS	
Learning those lines	We rehearse twice a week on Monday and Thursday evenings usually in the United Church. In the week of the production there will be a dress rehearsal and a technical rehearsal on stage.
STAGE MANAGEMENT	
Team work	Each production will have an appointed Stage Manager who has

	<p>the responsibility to put together the crew and ensure the set is built, erected, painted, moved and stored, the props are in place, there is a stage crew to change scenery, pull curtains and operate off stage effects. The back stage team report to the Stage Manager and they all help to put out and put away the chairs!</p>
SET DESIGN & BUILD	
What will it look like	<p>Each production will have a set designer to create how the production will look and decide which props will need to be made or sourced. The designer has overall responsibility for the visual effect of the production. The set designer may assist with building but generally leads or co-ordinates the set painting. The set builders work from scale drawings to create the set as designed. We are lucky to have several members adept at using power tools and plenty of ingenuity to create amazing things out of MDF. The Build Team erect the set</p>
SINGING	
Doh ray me	<p>We have performed musicals and of course the annual Pantomime which always involves lots of singing. We have musicians and talented singers to coach us so if you are unsure of your vocal prowess - don't worry, we generally have so much fun everyone can enjoy the experience of being in the chorus. Good voices are always a bonus so if you can do more than just hold a tune do join us.</p>
SOUND	
Lets hear it	<p>A sound engineer is required for all productions and some members are skilled in this particular discipline. Sound effects provide an added dimension to any production so if you are of a technical turn of mind maybe this is for you.</p>
SOCIALS	
cheers	<p>As a Society we are very friendly and sociable, we meet for play readings, drinks in the pub, the summer barbeque, theatre trips and the Christmas party. There ar NO prima donnas', just a mixed group of like minded people who enjoy putting on as professional and entertaining programme of plays as we can possibly manage.</p>
STORAGE	
Put it away please	<p>We have a small workshop sited at a local farm where we build and paint our sets and store our equipment. The Costumes are kept separately in their own Wardrobe Store on site at the Junior School</p>
SCRIPTS	
Get it down on paper	<p>Most scripts are purchased from the publishers except when members write their own. Members of the society are always</p>

	happy to read through prospective plays and offer advice if asked.
SUBSCRIPTIONS	
How much and what for	We have an annual membership subscription of £20 per person or £30 for couples or families. This is used to pay for the insurances we are required by law to have and fund part of the rehearsal costs.
TICKETS	
Sell sell sell	Ticket prices are set between the Director and the Committee. Concessions are available. A Committee member is responsible for ordering the tickets. By visiting our website www.faringdondramatic.org.uk , you will be directed to the Pre Pay Ticket Service. Once purchased your tickets will then be held on the door for your collection. They are also on sale from 'The Nut Tree' a local shop; and can usually be purchased at the door. However, for the panto it is generally a better idea to buy your tickets in advance. Cast members are encouraged to sell as many tickets as they can.
THEATRE TRIPS	
See how the professionals do it	We are pleased to support theatre trips organised by members of the Society. In the past these have taken us to Oxford, Swindon, Stratford and London.
UNDERSTUDIES	
Waiting in the wings	It is not usual for understudies to be chosen when casting. In the absence of a cast member on "the night", it is likely that the Director or Producer would stand in.
VENUES	
Where to see us	The Community Theatre closed in 1999. We usually perform at Faringdon Junior School, where we enjoy full support from the staff and most importantly the school caretaker. It is a long-term aim of the Society, to have its own theatre. (Keep buying those lottery tickets).
WEBSITE	
Get on line	Welcome to our website at www.faringdondramatic.org.uk . Run by a Society member, it is the quickest way to pick up news and views. Boasting some 400 pages it is a mine of useful and interesting information, archive materials, details of forthcoming productions, and the all important Pre Pay Ticket service. Visit it today!
WARDROBE	
Dressing up	The Society is lucky to have the skills and dedication of a number of designers and dressmakers. Their creativity is put to

	<p>the test regularly for the panto where nothing seems to phase them - whether it be Kings or Crocodiles. We have never been disappointed.</p> <p>We have an extensive wardrobe of our own and loan costumes to other groups. We sometimes need to hire specific costumes and accessories but generally we are self sufficient. Our costumes are the envy of many other societies and add immeasurably to the authenticity of our productions.</p>
WORKSHOPS	
Never too late to learn something new	<p>You are invited to take part in a variety of workshops organised by our members or by North Oxfordshire DA or Oxford Drama Network. From hints about directing and costume design to taking part in dance or mime, there is something for everyone. Details are in our Newsletter and also on the website.</p>
XMAS PARTY	
Letting our hair down	<p>Xmas Party: We have an annual get together to celebrate the festive season with friends. A chance to chat, drink, eat and dance - a good time is guaranteed.</p>
Y	
	<p>Why join? - Why not? -You'll be very welcome.</p>
Z	
	<p>ZZZZZZZZ They don't sleep whilst we are on stage!</p>