

COMING UP AT THE BARN



A BUNCH OF AMATEURS

15TH – 23RD OCTOBER AT 8PM

THEY WISHED FOR A STAR...THEN WISHED THEY HADN'T.

A fading Hollywood star arrives in Stratford to play the lead in *King Lear* – but this Stratford is a sleepy Suffolk village whose am-dram club are fighting to survive. As two acting worlds hilariously collide, and two cultures clash, ego and vanity give way to acceptance and surprising resolutions...



26TH – 31ST OCTOBER AT 8PM IN THE STUDIO

PETER SHAFFER'S GRIPPING PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER.

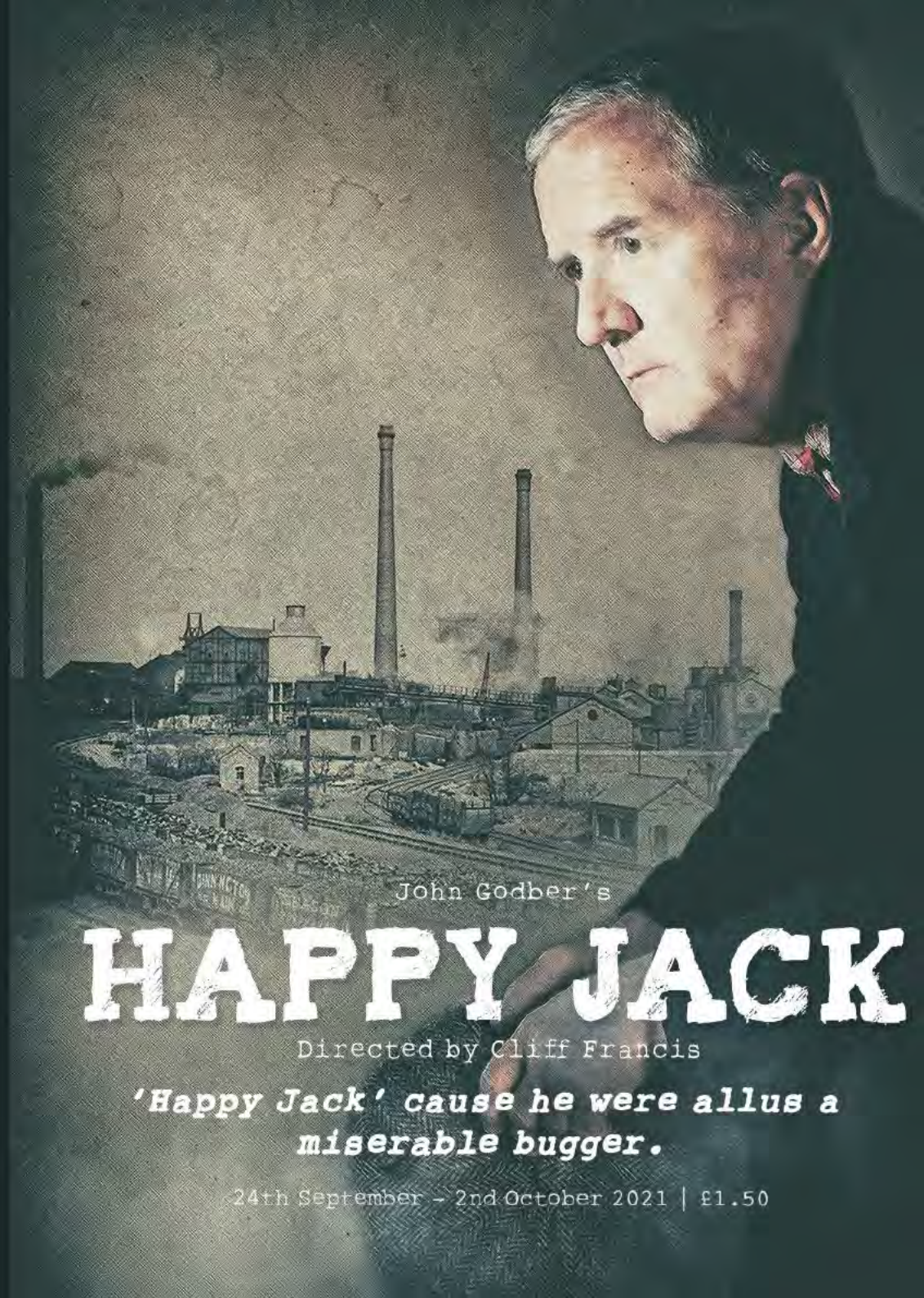
Dr. Martin Dysart, a disaffected psychiatrist, is faced with a unique case when a young man, Alan Strang, is brought to him for treatment. Alan, a passionate and obsessive horse lover, has blinded six horses, to the horror and surprise of his family. In his efforts to coax Alan out of his shell and treat him, Dr. Dysart begins to unravel the complex psychological puzzle of Alan's obsessions.



12TH – 20TH NOVEMBER AT 8PM

CHURCHILL - "ONE BY ONE YOUR PRIME MINISTERS WILL FALL UNDER YOUR SPELL.

For sixty years Elizabeth II has met each of her prime ministers in a weekly audience at Buckingham Palace, a meeting like no other in British public life. It is private. Both parties have an unspoken agreement never to repeat what is said.



John Godber's

HAPPY JACK

Directed by Cliff Francis

'Happy Jack' cause he were allus a miserable bugger.

24th September – 2nd October 2021 | £1.50

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the start of a brand-new season and to this performance of *Happy Jack*. It's always exciting to be writing programme notes but this year feels even more special. After all the problems and difficulties we've faced, it's simply delightful to be back to doing what we at the Barn Theatre love doing best.

This production is an unusual one, with the actors in turn narrating the story and slipping into numerous roles to tell the touching tale of the couple's marriage. The play depicts the author's own grandparents and is built around small, lovingly detailed extracts from the couple's experiences as we weave a path through the story of their lives together. While a deeply personal exploration of a working-class marriage, I'm sure many of the feelings the characters express will resonate with you as you watch their relationship develop over time.

So – welcome back: welcome back to theatre, welcome back to the Barn, and please get ready to welcome 'Happy Jack' and his wife Liz as they share with you their secret of a long and 'happy' life together.

The *Financial Times* described the play as 'Neat, touching and joyously celebratory'.

I hope you'll agree.

Simon

Simon Parr
Chairman, Barn Theatre Club



FROM THE DIRECTOR

It's so good to be back doing what we all love. It's now 23 months since my last show, 23 very long months. I've never had such a long break in my theatrical career. Not just back, but with lovely big audiences and the bar refurbished and open again! We've had a great time these last few weeks rehearsing, such a joy to have the Barn back in full operation, with three shows rehearsing simultaneously and auditions taking place. Life and the theatre are getting back to normal.



And we have a gem of a show, a little performed John Godber piece, written with much love about his grandparents. *Happy Jack* has had the longest genesis of any show I've been involved with. We originally started rehearsing a companion piece called *September in the Rain*, with a group of six, to be performed online and with a limited socially distanced audience. We had to pause rehearsals when lockdown 2 started. When we were ready to resume, the cast, Simon and Mary, had diligently learnt all the lines, only to be told, sorry but we're now doing *Happy Jack* due to a licensing problem. Now Simon and Mary know both of John Godber's plays about his grandparents...

Happy Jack tells the story of his grandparents, Jack and Liz's lives in reverse order, working from their deaths to their first date. Jack was a hard-working miner devoted to his wife and family; Liz an overworked, tired and depressed housewife. The play is in parts gritty, sad, sentimental and funny, a rollercoaster ride through the emotions. A story though that will resonate with many, with the routine of daily life only broken by a week's holiday in the British rain.

Myself and the cast and crew are so pleased you've come to support us and the theatre, and to see some drama, how it should be, performed live. Enjoy the show.

Cliff

Cliff Francis - Director

CAST

Jack.....Simon Parr

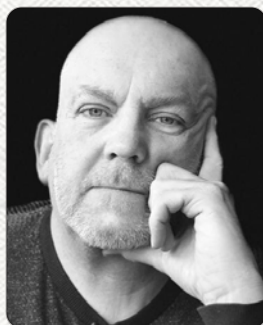
Liz.....Mary Powell

The play is set over 2 acts in Saxon Terrace, Upton, a small mining village between Sheffield and York.

There will be one 20 minute interval.

JOHN GODBER

John was born the son of a miner in Upton, West Yorkshire. He trained as a teacher of drama at Bretton Hall College. Whilst he was Head of Drama at Minsthorpe High School, the school he attended as a student, he won every major award at the National Student Drama Festival between 1981 and 1983.



John's plays are numerous and include: *Bouncers*, *Up 'n' Under*, *April in Paris*, *Teachers*, *Blood, Sweat and Tears*, *Cramp*, *September in the Rain* and of course, *Happy Jack*, and are performed across the world. He has the distinction of being one of the most performed writers in the English language. He has won numerous awards for his plays, including a Laurence Olivier Award and seven Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards.

John was Artistic Director of Hull Truck for 26 years, taking it from bankruptcy in 1984 to its new home in a £15 million theatre in 2010.

In 2011, he set up *The John Godber Company* with his playwright wife, Jane, and formed a partnership with Theatre Royal Wakefield to produce two tours of his work each year.

Since then his plays have continued to tour the UK and have been seen by over 200,000 people.

CREATIVE TEAM

Director Cliff Francis

Production Manager Sharon Francis

Stage Manager Sharon Francis

Lighting Design Nick Mogg

Lighting Operator Clifton Hoyle

Sound..... James Rowles

Set Design Cliff Francis

Set Dressing..... Kris Moore, Peter Moore

Properties Kris Moore, Peter Moore

Wardrobe Anne-Marie Austin

Choreography Vikki Myddelton

Rehearsal Prompt..... Anne Woolmington

Set Construction Ian Bage, Bob Cameron

Keith Collingwood, Dave Fairhurst

Robert Gill, Keith Lambert, Norman Merry

Martin Moore, Pete Moore, Kris Moore

Nigel Rive, John Sear, Colin Timney

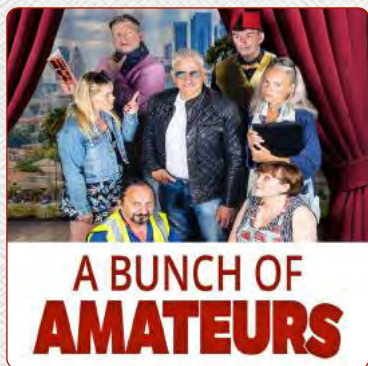
Edward Washington

Poster Design Simon Wallace

Poster & Programme John Cook, Clive Weatherley



COMING UP...



A Bunch of Amateurs

15TH – 23RD OCTOBER AT 8pm

The play is about a small local amateur theatre Company that perform their productions in a Barn, no it's not a documentary, it's a comedy and probably one of the most popular productions for amateur theatre companies in recent years. The play is about as struggling

amateur theatre group that find a Hollywood star to play the title role in their production of *King Lear* in Stratford. He thinks its Stratford as in the Royal Shakespeare Company, and thus general misunderstanding and hilarity ensues.

The cast are now deep into rehearsals. Director Bob Thomson commented

"I've been very fortunate to put together an exceptional and I do mean exceptional cast...and a terrific crew, I don't think even I can mess this production up"

The Production team are really going to town we are promised some great special effects, and a whole lot of laughs. The play is really a homage to amateur theatre and the perfect October night out.

We wish to extend our huge thanks and appreciation to our local business supporter.

The Howard Centre
Welwyn Garden City Shopping



EQUUS by Peter Shaffer

26th – 31st October, Barn Studio

(Strictly limited availability).

The Director Steve Thompson writes...

"Thirty years ago I was a member of the Barn's play selection committee. Every year we spent weeks meticulously putting together they Barn's season of plays. On one occasion we got into a heated discussion about a particular play...was it too racy? Was there too much sex and violence for our delicate-natured audiences to handle?"

I recall Eric Farlie (then Chair of the Barn) making an impassioned plea...Drama, he said, should not always take the safe path. Sometimes it has to be challenging, even dangerous. And then he said something which has stayed with me ever since... he said 'I can't believe the Barn has never done Equus'. Thirty years later, Eric, the company has finally got around to it..."

'Equus' is the story of a young adolescent who commits an act of unspeakable violence; it's the story of the psychiatrist who tries to unravel the complex puzzle of the boy's obsessions. It still has the power to shock, but also the power to dazzle and entertain. 'Haunting, engrossing theatre... takes the breath away' (Whatsonstage).



Have you ever wondered what the Queen and her Prime Ministers talk about at their weekly private audiences?

Do you know who the Prime Minister was when the Queen had chickenpox, or who was her favourite P.M.?

What about the Head of Government who spoke to her about fish or the Prime Minister whose idea of a restful weekend was writing a book about the financial crisis?

If you would like to know the answers to these questions, find out more about the relationships between the Head of State and the Head of Government, or just enjoy an entertaining night out, then join us in the audience at the Barn Theatre in November for *The Audience* by Peter Morgan.