



**EVERYMAN**  
THEATRE ASSOCIATION

FRIENDS OF THE EVERYMAN THEATRE

WELCOME TO

# THE EVERYMAN THEATRE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2019 NO: 275

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I hope you have enjoyed the 2019 ETA events and the Everyman theatre programme so far. The theatre continues to do well, and Mark Goucher and his team are to be congratulated on its success. Several recent shows have sold out, and advance tickets sales are the highest ever. After the success of the last pantomime, next year's *Cinderella* already has advanced sales of well over £200,000.

Since our last Newsletter there have been three successful ETA Meet the Cast parties. In January members enjoyed a relaxed party with the cast of *The Girl on the Train*, and Samantha Womack was happy to sign autographs for several of our members. Clive Thomas, Chairman of the Everyman Theatre Board, accepted on behalf of the theatre the ETA's cheque for £5,000. In February there was an opportunity for members to meet the cast of the theatre's own production of *Waiting for Godot*. Just after rehearsals began we also had the chance to attend an open rehearsal at the invitation of Paul Milton, the Director. We always



*Art Meet the Cast Party*

appreciate and enjoy these occasions and are grateful to Paul for allowing us to be there while he rehearses the cast. This was a successful production and showed Tweedy's versatility. In March we met the cast of *Art* after the first performance. An ETA cheque for £5,000 was presented by Nigel Havers and Stephen Tompkinson, and accepted on the theatre's behalf by Zareen Ahmed, a member of the Everyman Theatre Board.

We hope to present another cheque at our next Meet the Cast party in May after the first performance of *Fly Eddie Fly*. We look forward to this new musical, presented by the Everyman Theatre Company and Youth Theatre, written by Miranda Walker, a member of the ETA committee and the Writers' Lab, and starring Eddie Edwards. On May 7th Paul Milton, the Director, and Miranda will give a talk to ETA members about this production.

*Continued overleaf.*

Tickets were exclusively available in February, to ETA members and friends, for Andy Secombe's show *You're Not As Funny As Your Father* in the Irving Studio.

This summer we shall again be giving £1,000 from the ETA's funds towards bursaries which will enable young people to take part in the Everyman Summer School – a worthwhile use of our funds, we feel. We are also pleased when the BTEC Performing Arts students come to entertain us, and they always welcome the opportunity to perform. The production of their musical *The Battle of Boat* will take place on June 15th in Parabola Arts Centre. We wish them



*Waiting for Godot Meet the Cast Party*

every success. By the time this letter reaches you our AGM will have taken place, followed by lunch on stage and a short entertainment by the BTEC students.

Please do consult our website for full details of all our events. There are

sometimes events which we have not been able to include in our Newsletter but we will always try to email you about these. The latest event about which we now have details is the Christmas Studio Event on December 12th, which is always very popular.

We hope that you are enjoying your ETA membership and that you will encourage your friends to join us. I look forward to seeing you at some of our forthcoming events.

Best wishes,

**Janet Limb**  
*Chairman*

## WAITING FOR GODOT

The Everyman Theatre chose the Samuel Beckett classic *Waiting for Godot*, featuring Tweedy, star of our pantomime, as its in-house production this February. It is widely regarded as one of the most important plays of the twentieth century and it was a real coup for the Everyman to have secured the rights, as the Beckett Estate is very particular as to where the play can be performed.

It was quite a bold choice as the play is a famously Absurdist work, dealing with existentialism, the concept of time being non-linear and depression.

Tweedy was keen to play Estragon which I knew would bring out the comedy and I wanted to take a light, physical approach to the play, using comedy as a contrast to the great sombre moments. The risk certainly paid off. Ticket sales were much better than we had initially thought (we always knew it would be a hard sell!), audience feedback was great and the reviews were unanimously good.

Many thanks to all those ETA members who attended the open rehearsal for *Waiting for Godot*. I appreciated it, and so did the actors

– it gave us a taste of audience engagement with the play. As you could tell, rehearsals were a great deal of fun (how could they not be with Tweedy in the room?!) and we delved into an amount of research about Existentialism and the Theatre of the Absurd, which informed the performances. I, as Director, certainly learnt a lot about philosophers Kant, Berkeley and Camus. I never realised what a rich and textured play it is. I had studied it at A-Level and found it pretty incomprehensible, but – after our 3 ½ weeks' rehearsal process – I understood a lot more about the underlying themes and philosophical debate. I hope our audiences got a taste of it too!

I'd like to thank all of the Everyman technical and Stage Management teams for their support on *Waiting for Godot*, the very talented actors who brought the text to life and, of course, all of our audience members who supported this show.

**Paul Milton**  
*Director*



## FLY EDDIE FLY – BY MIRANDA WALKER

Miranda is a member of our very own Writers' Lab and also an ETA Committee member and is a scriptwriter and librettist for stage, TV and radio. Her work has been staged at venues around the country and she was Cheltenham Literature Festival's writer in residence in 2017. Also a children's author, Miranda wrote the much-loved picture book *Wishing Fish Clock* about the real bubble-blowing clock in the Regent Arcade in Cheltenham and when not writing, she lectures in Dramatic Writing at the University of Gloucestershire.

We caught up with Miranda to tell us about her new play *Fly Eddie Fly*:

Eddie the Eagle made his legendary Olympic ski jumps in 1988. I loved his character and spirit. I was in my last year of school and remember rooting for him with my Dad.

About seven years ago, three years after I moved to Cheltenham, my husband heard a radio interview with Eddie and asked if I knew he was from Cheltenham. I didn't, but immediately thought that the uplifting underdog story of an ordinary bloke doing something that extraordinary would make a brilliant comedy play. Luckily, the Cheltenham Everyman Theatre agreed, and I was delighted when Eddie himself came on board as consultant. We had some long chats that informed the writing and gave the piece wonderful authenticity. The 70 minute show (no interval) went on in the Everyman Studio Theatre a year later. It sold out, had lovely reviews and went down very well with audiences.



*Eddie Edwards with Nik Howden as Eddie*

In 2016, Eddie invited me to the London premiere of the excellent Eddie the Eagle film. It was exciting and also a bit surreal to watch Eddie on the 'red carpet' (which was actually bright blue to match his Olympic ski suit!), cavorting with the film's huge stars, Hugh Jackman and Taron Edgerton, as fake snow drifted across Leicester Square! I noted then that Eddie had achieved something so elusive all over again almost 30 years later – this ordinary bloke from Cheltenham had now become Hollywood film fodder!

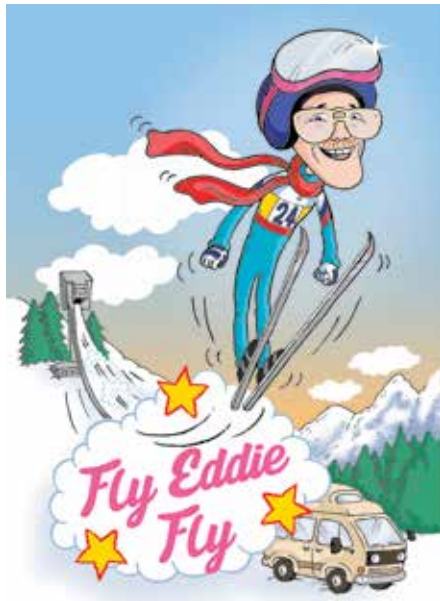
I realised that this episode of his life story could give *Fly Eddie Fly* a second act just as uplifting as the first, creating a whole story to take us from Eddie's first school skiing trip right up to the present day. Having seen Eddie be wonderful at personal appearances, I thought it would be fantastic to have him actually appear as narrator. I told him my idea over coffee in Stroud and he loved it straight away.

Next, I pitched it to Mark Goucher, CEO of the Everyman, who also embraced it. As I began the development with the Everyman's Creative Director, Paul Milton, the show grew into a musical, and we decided to stage it in the main house, with a mix of professional and community performers, including 50 children per show! Composer Michael Childs came on board, who I had worked with on a previous musical, *Atmosphere*. I've written the *Fly Eddie Fly* lyrics, as well as the book (script).

The songs heighten the warmth, heart and inspirational moments of the show brilliantly and really do take it to a whole new level. We have an actor playing younger Eddie, but yes, our narrator does have his own number too! And who doesn't want to see Eddie the Eagle on stage, telling his own story? When he flies through the Calgary skies, he'll take the audience right there with him. It's very celebratory and has the feel good factor in spades.

**Miranda Walker**

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



**Tuesday 7th May, 3pm – Matcham's Miranda Walker, writer of our new in-house production *Fly Eddie Fly*, will talk about the play, along with Director Paul Milton.**

Miranda premiered this play about Eddie Edwards in the Studio a few years ago and has rewritten and expanded it for this new main house production with music by Michael Childs. The talk will last about an hour and is FREE but please rsvp to francesca.goddard@everymantheatre.org.uk so we know how many chairs to set out.

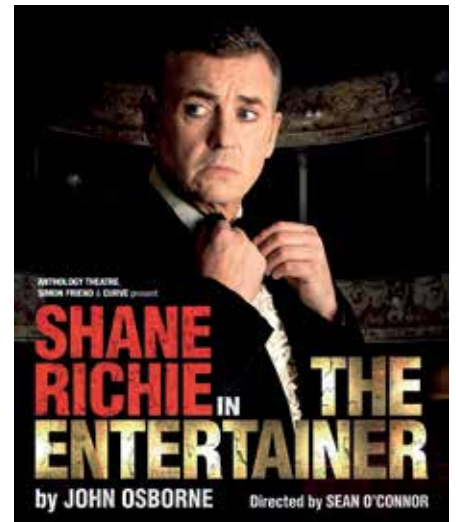
**Thursday 23rd May**  
**Post-show Meet the Cast of our brand new community musical play *Fly Eddie Fly*, written by our very own Writers' Lab and ETA Committee member Miranda Walker and starring Eddie Edwards as himself!**

**Tuesday 11th June**

**Post-show Meet the Cast of the new Peter James spine chilling thriller *The House On Cold Hill*, starring Joe McFadden and Rita Simons.**



**All Meet The Cast Parties take place in Matcham's on the second floor of the theatre.**



**Monday 11th November**

**Post-show Meet the Cast of the John Osborne classic *The Entertainer*, starring Shane Richie.**

**Thursday 12th December**  
**ETA Christmas Studio Event**

An exclusive ETA performance of *Under The Greenwood Tree* performed by Hammerpuzzle Theatre, who produced *A Gloucestershire Midwinter* and last year's *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Tickets to the show, followed by festive refreshments with the cast and Director, just £20. Maximum 2 tickets per member. Book now as this event is always popular.

## SPECIAL OFFER AT VINNIE'S EATERY

Show your ETA Membership card at Vinnie's in Cheltenham to get a free glass of wine with every dinner (valid until 5th October 2019). They are now open in the evenings on Fridays and Saturdays (9.30am – 9.30pm) – ideal for a pre-theatre bite. For more info and to book <https://vinnieseatery.uk/>



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