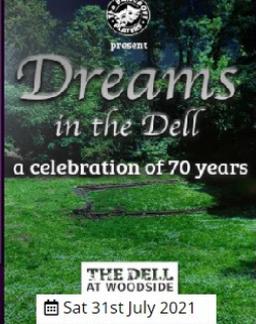


## DIARY DATES

 <b>Bull</b> by Mike Bartlett	 <b>The Wind in the Willows</b> Modern adaptation of Kenneth Grahame Novel	 <b>The Retreat</b> by Sam Bain	 <b>Dreams in the Dell</b> a celebration of 70 years  THE DELL AT WOODSIDE Sat 31st July 2021
<b>29 JUNE - 3 JULY 2021</b>	<b>8 - 11 July 2021</b>	<b>10 - 14 August 2021</b>	

**SATURDAY 25 SEPTEMBER**

**QMT WELCOME BACK PARTY**

## ART DIRECTORS BLOG

Well done to Claudia and the Juniors for her own production of Out of the Chaos which was so well done and really enjoyed by the full houses that came to see it! We expect great things too of Maisie Brooker's directorial debut for the BP's with Mike Bartlett's powerful play, Bull. To enable the play to be presented in the round, we are borrowing the Thespian's home, Woodside, for the event. You see - we're always innovating! Hot on its heels we have our (long) delayed Xmas production of The Wind in the Willows directed by Sam Powell - so that will be fun too. At the end of the summer we are proud to present The Retreat with Russ Hurn in the director's chair - it's a very funny play so please don't forget to put that in your Calendar.

It's great to see the theatre busy again and, to be fair, we have been selling lots of tickets albeit for covid-friendly reduced numbers. We can seat about 60 or so in the main house at the moment and a similar number over at Woodside. For the present we are not using the Studio. Thanks to Chris, Christine, Keith and all those that see to the seating as well as Elliott who oversees Oscar, our ticketing system and to Julian for his fantastic artwork.

So I guess you've got some sort of staycation planned? I know a few hardy souls who are going abroad so good luck guys! Please, please, please, enjoy your summer and get ready to come back in the autumn to either be in plays or help in some way behind the scenes. Small venues like the QMT live or die by the enthusiasm of their membership and after such a long hibernation, we want to get back into the fun business in a big way and Charlotte and Louis are organising a Welcome back party for the new season.

Finally many thanks to Christine for editing this learned journal over the last two years or so. She's done a smashing job and we'll miss her determination to get every issue out bang on time!

*Rory Reynolds*

Arts Director

## COMING UP AT THE QMT:



### BULL

Written by Mike Bartlett

Directed by Maisy Brooker

**STRONG  
LANGUAGE**



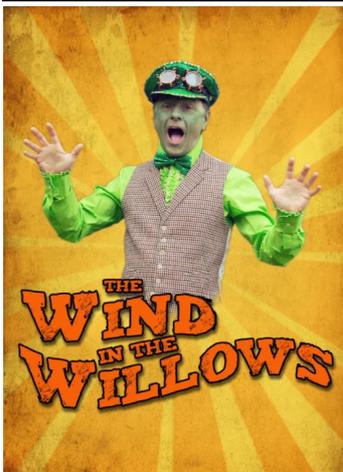
**June 29 - July 3** —QMT STUDIO PRODUCTION AT WOODSIDE THEATRE

Three youngish business people meet near a water cooler, waiting to hear which of them will lose her or his job. A razor sharp dark comedy about office politics and power games. This award-winning play drills into the head and heart like a screwdriver. Too good to miss so [book now](#).

*(No bar so BYO - No glass or glass bottles please!)*

**CLOSING THIS WEEKEND -**

**TOO GOOD TO MISS SO BOOK NOW**



### THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Adapted Rosemary Bianchi

Directed by Sam Powell

**July 8-11** —MAIN THEATRE

**FUNNY  
LANGUAGE**



A wild tale about the thrill-seeking Mr Toad and his furry friends comes to life in a fantastical and fun play based on the famous book by Kenneth Grahame. Approx. 1 hour, no interval. [Book here](#) for a great spectacle, **Poop Poop**.



### THE RETREAT

Written by Sam Bain

Directed by Russel Hurn

**August 11-14** —MAIN THEATRE

Comedy drama about Luke who left his high flying city life to find serenity (and love?) in retreat in the Scottish Highlands. But he can't escape his past as Tony, his younger brother turns up. Is Tony all that's wrong with Luke's old life, or is he only the only one who can really see into his soul?

Bookings opening soon.

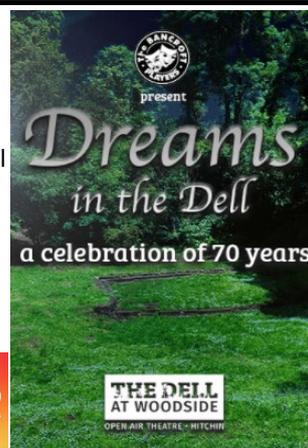
**STRONG  
LANGUAGE**



### DREAMS IN THE DELL

Bancroft Special for the Hitchin Festival for the Dell

This specially created theatrical experience will transport you to a magical place to celebrate the show that started it all at the Dell ... "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Excerpts, performance, music and memories create a fitting finale to the Dell Events of Hitchin Festival. Click on [Hitchin Box office](#) below to book your place for this special event.



**HITCHIN  
FESTIVAL**

**Box Office**



The Bancroft Players has been a society of theatre-loving members for over 75 years and the last 12 months has been one of the strangest in our long and varied history. Now as our communities start to open once more and we welcome audiences through our doors again, we need to ensure we have an active and dedicated membership to take us through the next 75 years.

We have been working hard to update what being a member of The Bancroft Players *actually* means and how we can rebuild our own community within The QMT – this may involve some changes to how we do things, how we communicate, more socialising, the real benefits of being a member beyond just receiving a monthly newsletter and be able to take part in productions. People’s time is precious, many of us have re-evaluated what’s important to us over the last year and we want to make sure that The Bancroft Players can also reflect and adapt to meet the needs of our members and patrons.

As our current “season” comes to an end and our new one begins we’d like to ask all of you to still consider The Bancroft Players an important and vital part of your life. In the weeks to come we’ll start sharing some of our plans for membership; including an exciting party to kick things off!

Please remember to renew your membership from **1<sup>st</sup> August 2021** by going online [www.qmt.org.uk/membership](http://www.qmt.org.uk/membership) so you don’t miss out on all the new things happening - you don’t need to do this if you pay by bank transfer, but we would ask you to check and update your bank instructions so the correct amount is being paid to us.

Thank you,

**Elliott Bunker – Membership Secretary**

[membership@qmt.org.uk](mailto:membership@qmt.org.uk)

**SATURDAY 25 SEPTEMBER**

**QMT WELCOME BACK PARTY**

With a few shows under our belt at the end of this season and just a few more to come before we take a short break, we can all look forward to the summer and to the a new season of shows at the QMT. What better way than to start it all off with party.

Charlotte and Louis are organising a Welcome back party with bar, food and music. The party is for members, ex-members, patrons, volunteers, well everyone associated with the theatre plus one other. This will be a great chance to celebrate out theatre throughout the years and find out a new season of exciting shows.

**More details to follow and an invitation but for now SAVE THE DATE in your diary to avoid disappointment.**

an Amateur production by arrangement with Nick Hern Books



postcard photography & design by luciddreampictures.com

CLOSING THIS WEEKEND -

TOO GOOD TO MISS SO BOOK NOW

**29th June - 3rd July 2021**

Book online at [qmt.org.uk](http://qmt.org.uk)

  
Woodside Hall

 @TheQMT  
 @TheQMT  
 @QMTweeters

**STRONG  
LANGUAGE**



**A sharp and witty play from writer Mike Bartlett; a prize winning hit in Broadway and the West End alike.**

Bull is a cutting, sharply written play about office politics. In this case: two jobs for three candidates, Thomas, Isobel and Tony. One of them must be fired in a company reshuffle and the odds seem stacked right from the start. A dark comedy that pokes fun at the way offices often function like school playgrounds and where the bullies are in charge and pick on the meek. A brutal but comical play shows the dark sides of the modern corporate world. Mike Bartlett's funny yet cruel play will have you on the edge of your seats hoping for the best but expecting the worst.

The Queen Mother Theatre  
NETHER, HERTS



BY KENNETH GRAHAME  
ADAPTED BY ROSEMARY DIANCHI

8TH - 11TH JULY 2021

MATINEES ON SAT & SUN

BOOK ONLINE QMT.ORG.UK



QMT.ORG.UK/COVID-SECURE

COME TAKE A TRIP DOWN TO THE RIVER BANK  
WITH MOLE AND HER FRIENDS

MOLE IS IN FOR QUITE AN ADVENTURE! SHE FINDS NEW FRIENDS IN RATTY, BADGER AND MR TOAD AS WELL AS MEETING RABBITS, DUCKS AND A HUNGRY OTTER. HOWEVER, WHILE MOLE DISCOVERS THE JOYS OF LIFE ON THE RIVER AND ENCOUNTERS THE DANGERS OF THE WILD WOOD, MR TOAD GETS UP TO ALL SORTS OF MISCHIEF AND SOON NEEDS HIS FRIENDS TO HELP HIM OUT.

COME AND FIND OUT WHAT THE FOUR FRIENDS GET UP TO AND HOW THE STORY ENDS IN THIS ADAPTATION OF THE CLASSIC STORY BY KENNETH GRAHAME .

THIS MODERN, CHEEKY PRODUCTION WILL MAKE THE WHOLE FAMILY SMILE.

# The Wind in the Willows

## RIVERBANK GAZETTE

EXCLUSIVE WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR!

Sam Powell – Director



This play has been quite an experience! The Wind in The Willows is a well-known, much loved book but I had never read it! So, when I was asked to direct it last October there was a mad scramble to read it, listen to it, talk to people about it and then try and find my own way into it. Adapted by Rosemary Bianchi into a short play, it was originally intended as the Christmas play but here we are getting ready to perform it nine months after we first started!

With lockdowns and restrictions and general unprecedentedness we began with Zoom read throughs and discussions, moved onto outdoor rehearsals in my garden and then finally stepped into an actual theatre in the middle of May. The cast have been fabulous: absolutely bursting with ideas and energy and we have laughed a lot. We all needed that I think, after the year we have had.

Of course, despite rehearsals being a non-starter, this did not stop the design team from beavering away behind the scenes in garages and dining rooms. The plan was to keep costs down and recycle where-ever possible. This was not only to be environmentally responsible but also to keep expenses in check. In a year when we have been unable to get income, and with restricted audiences in the near future, keeping costs down seemed a sensible option.

The play is not your traditional Windy Willows (as we lovingly call it). We have experimented with lots of different things and the aim was always to have fun as a cast and to give the audience a fun trip to their local theatre, whilst bringing to life our interpretation of these much-loved characters. Everyone has worked very hard: designers, set and prop builders, crew, tech, marketing, box-office and last but not least my wonderful, crazy, trusting cast! We hope you enjoy it as much as we have.



## Amy Walker - Mole

Mole's favourite hobby is exploring by tunnelling underground. Her favourite meal is worm spaghetti - that's worms instead of spaghetti and mud instead of Bolognese! Her favourite film is "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them" because she wants to be a niffler.

I think everyone can identify with Mole over the past year - she very rarely leaves her house and nearly never meets up with other people! So, she's a bit bored and ready to do something adventurous and different.

I've prepared for playing Mole by doing some research and watching videos of moles, which is tricky as they like to stay out of sight. Zoom rehearsals were fun for read throughs and getting to know each other, but I was very excited when we finally got together and back on stage!



Does Moley finally see the light?



Has Badger been shamefully typecast?

## Graeme Bussey - Badger (and a few other roles too)

Badger has a character that is much influenced by his advanced age and resulting life experience and is very much set in his ways. Because of this, he sees himself as the voice of reason for the Impetuous Toad!

There's always a fully stocked pantry at Chez Badger, which contributes to his substantial size and Inability to fit through doors and run at speed... a challenge when Toad is up to mischief that requires a chase scene!

Badger is a greyish and white coloured furry animal, which is good because that covers my general appearance characteristics. Preparation for this role was relatively easy during lockdown. Badgers are largely reclusive, nocturnal creatures, not venturing too far from their set. All of this now perfectly describes my personal habits. So much so, I am now considering moving the Family out of our house and into a burrow in a dark wood.





## Russell Hurn - Toad

I am the proud and ungrateful Toad. I love this character. He may have many foibles but he has a good heart and seems like a great friend to have around, even if he can be rather distracted.

I have been working on my green complexion and found that my skin seems to take on a toady hue after spinning in circles for about a minute: I'm still working on the nausea that goes with it.

### Road Safety Alert as Toad takes to the Open Road

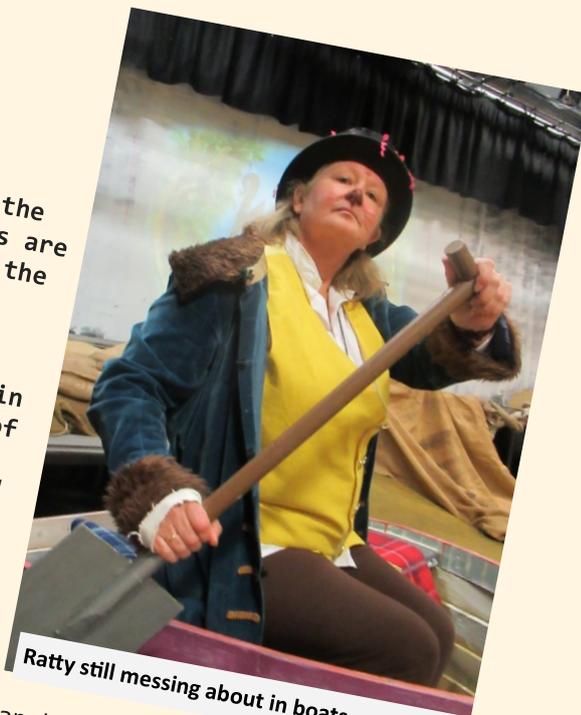
Like Toad I love to swim and recently took a dip in the River Ouse to connect with my character. Luckily, I managed to avoid pneumonia and I should be warmed up in time for the show. Unlike toad I am not fond of insects, at least not for dinner although I recently bought some edible ones to add to my morning smoothy. It's not a recipe I will be recommending.

This show has been a whole new experience with zoom rehearsals and back garden stages but the cast are amazing and were very keen to get back in the theatre. We are all looking forward to the show and to seeing real people in the audience.

## Alison Hudson - Ratty

Ratty lives in a burrow along the river bank. Although water rats are quite shy creatures by nature, the character is very friendly and loyal. Ratty loves everything about living by the river. She especially loves 'messaging about in boats, or with boats, in or out of boats, it really doesn't matter. That's the beauty of it!'

Playing Ratty is fun, I love the gentleness of the character, mixed with old school charm and a bit of bravado.



### Ratty still messing about in boats

Portraying an animal on stage can be a challenge. I have tried to use some of the characteristics of a water rat without imitating one completely. Ratty's movements are quick and precise with clear clipped speech. Meeting up for rehearsals over zoom was quite tricky and a bit frustrating, because the play is quite physical and has lots of movement and interaction. However, it helped me to become familiar with the script and we had some fun exploring accents. Ratty's love for the river is the essence of the character, she says. 'What is hasn't got is not worth having and what it doesn't have is not worth knowing.'



Terri horses around

## Terri Hyde

Various characters (Rabbit, Horse, Girl, Clerk, Narrator & Woodland creatures)

I love this play because it has given me a chance to try a bit of multi-rolling and think about characteristics and voice of characters- like telling a children's story book.

- ✧ Narrating the story is great because it is my authentic self just a little more enthused, if that is possible.
- ✧ Rabbit is a bit scatty, a massive gossip and often angry at mole's stupidity.

- ✧ The Horse does not speak but is bold and proud and yet frightens easily.
- ✧ The Girl is a cunning girl with a feisty attitude, often sarcastic.
- ✧ The Clerk is book-smart and proper and quite dull, very wordy.

It was a funny time on zoom, but it allowed me to really think about the voice rather than the physicality. I particularly enjoy the little snip-pets of the characters over zoom. The idea of all of them in a lockdown talking over zoom in their hibernating holes is amusing. I couldn't wait to get 'up, up we go!' and get out first into the spring and summer air with rehearsals, then onto a real stage in an auditorium.

## Peter Matthews

Various characters (Otter, Train driver, Washer woman, Magistrate & various riverbank and woodland creatures)

As a dedicated and deeply serious method actor I fully absorb myself in each and every role I play. The process demands that I surrender myself to the thoughts, feelings and impulses of each character, as well as undergoing a complete physical transformation. I eat, sleep and breathe them. I even take them shopping with me!



Serious actor scares local supermarket staff

Therefore, since being cast in *The Wind in the Willows* I have undertaken an intensive and punishing regime to simultaneously become an inebriated otter, an omniscient narrator, a voluptuous washer woman, a cantankerous magistrate, a train driver who thinks he is Michael Caine and an entire gang of rampaging weasels. It's been quite an experience.

"I would like to thank my family for their patience - accepting that I may have been a little difficult to live with lately. I pay tribute to the River Ouse Wildlife Trust for their advice, the river bank access and Ranger Ian's invaluable lifesaving skills. Finally, I offer my sincere apologies to my local Co-Op for the distress and damage resulting from the now infamous 'weasel improvisation'".

## The Retreat

Written by Sam Bain

Directed by Russel Hurn

**August 10-14** —STUDIO PRODUCTION PERFORMED IN THE QMT MAIN THEATRE

**The Retreat is a fast moving comedy by award winning co-writer and creator of The Peep Show. The play sees two brothers at odds with each other when one decides to give up his home and family in search of enlightenment.**

The main action focusses on the turbulent relationship between Luke and his brother Tony. Luke has decided to give up his lucrative job and expensive London flat in search of peace, happiness (and love?) as a Buddhist monk. Tony who has been enjoying the life his brother has provided for him thinks it's a dumb idea. He has tracked his brother down to a retreat in the Scottish highlands to persuade him to change his mind. There is one problem Tara. A beautiful, enigmatic and idealistic young woman who would rather see Luke's money helping the community to build a temple.

### Cast

Luke: Harry Harding

Tara: Emily Walls

Toni: Will Hextall

Sam Bain's is the BAFTA Award-winning co-writer and co-creator of Peep ~Show, Fresh Meat and Four Lions. The Retreat is his first play. The Retreat premiered at Park Theatre, London, in 2017, in a production directed by Kathy Burke.

Warning: this play contains strong language.

## **BANCROFT PLAYERS' 200 CLUB**

### **Bancroft Players' 200 Club raises £300 for the QMT**

Something of a bumper bundle this month – as June is always an important month in the 200 Club year. Firstly it is the month we donate our contribution to the running of the theatre and secondly it is one of two mega draws that we hold each year.

So a cheque was dutifully handed to our Treasurer, Mark, earlier this month. The sum this year was £300, sadly down on previous years as we have lost several members over the past 12 months, which I am very keen to replace. Details at the end of this piece. But nevertheless, Mark was very grateful.

Secondly Pauline Sadler is the lucky recipient of the £50 draw. Congratulations to Pauline and all the other June winners.

So if you would really like to bolster the QMT coffers by joining the 200 Club, please do drop me a line. It will cost £12 a year and who knows how much you will win! [paula.downes@ntlworld.com](mailto:paula.downes@ntlworld.com) or 07778 014428. Hope to hear from you soon!

Paula Downes

#### **Congratulations to our June winners:**

Pauline Sadler	£ 50
John Butler	£ 25
Ann O'Dell	£ 20
Maureen Nobes	£ 15
Helen Huson	£ 10

# QMT COVID –SECURITY SAFETY MEASURES

Volunteers at the QMT have worked hard to create a COVID-SECURE environment. The theatre has been certified under the See it Safely scheme by SOLT. Here are just some of the measures in place:

## Theatre safety measures

On-line bookings



Wear your mask



Follow directions  
& one way systems



Maintain  
social distancing



Temperature checks



Please bring minimal  
baggage & coats



Wash hand frequently  
for 20 seconds



Hand Sanitiser  
Stations



Enhanced cleaning  
is taking place



**See it  
safely**  
#BackOnStage



Partnership with Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre



If you test positive for Covid and needs to self isolate, just email our [box office](#) and we will refund your ticket.

[More information is available on our website.](#)