

Issue 005 Spring/Summer 2023

# Spotlight

NEWS, COMPETITIONS, FOOD, DRINK & MUCH MORE!

**WIN!**  
Enter our  
competition

MUSIC | THEATRE | COMEDY | LIVE ENTERTAINMENT | CINEMA | EVENTS

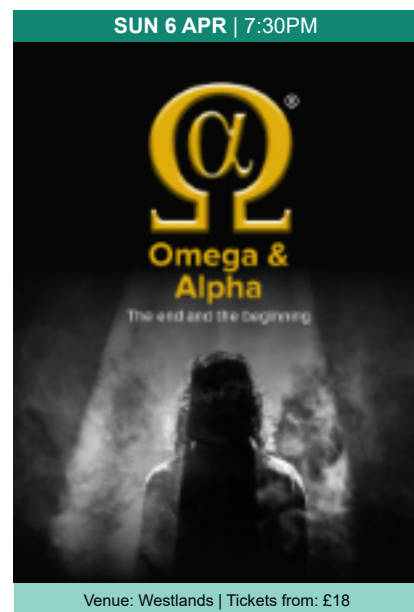


**OCTAGON**  
THEATRE  
YEovil

**WESTLANDS**  
YEovil

[octagon-theatre.co.uk](http://octagon-theatre.co.uk) | [westlandsyeovil.co.uk](http://westlandsyeovil.co.uk)





Venue: Westlands | Tickets from: £18



Venue: Octagon Theatre | Tickets from: £26.50



Venue: Westlands | Tickets from: £24.50



Venue: Westlands | Tickets from: £16



Venue: Westlands | Tickets from: £18.50



Venue: Westlands | Tickets from: £51.50



Venue: Westlands | Tickets in advance from: £25



Venue: Westlands | Tickets from: £27.50



Venue: Westlands | Tickets from: £26

# Welcome to Spotlight...

Welcome to our Spring / Summer edition of our venues magazine that gives you a backstage look at some of the exciting performances happening at Westlands Entertainment Venue over the coming months and the final month at The Octagon Theatre in its current design.

We are delighted to welcome some exceptional talent in the near future which you can read about here in Spotlight. Our magazine is packed with a wide range of live entertainment for everyone, so please sit down, relax and take a read of the things coming to Yeovil.

## The Spotlight Team.

## Contents

- 4-5 Ben Fogle
- 6 Tim Vine
- 7 Cheesy Bingo Party
- 8-9 Wodehouse in Wonderland
- 10-11 Julia Donaldson on ZOG
- 12-13 Emma Kenny
- 14 Darts
- 15 Summer Schools, Hire
- 16 A Cultural Venue for Somerset
- 17 Arts Council England NPO Status
- 18 Castaway Theatre Group
- 19 Bad Dad
- 20 National Theatre Live
- 21 Five minutes with Mark Labbett
- 22 Lounge Bar, Join the Team / Competition
- 23 UPW / Cinderella

This magazine is interactive!

Throughout this edition of Spotlight, you can click on the images to take you to the relevant booking pages on our website

Box Office:

01935 422884

[OCTAGON-THEATRE.CO.UK](https://www.octagon-theatre.co.uk)  
[WESTLANDSYEOVIL.CO.UK](https://www.westlandsyevovil.co.uk)

-  /TheOctagonTheatre /WestlandsYeovil
-  @OctagonYeovil @WestlandsYeovil
-  @OctagonYeovil @WestlandsEntertainment
-  @OctagonYeovil

This publication is available in large print.  
To request, please contact our Box Office.



The Octagon Theatre, Henford, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 1UX  
Westlands Entertainment Venue, Westbourne Close, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2DD  
The Octagon Theatre is owned, managed and funded by Somerset Council. Westlands Entertainment is managed and funded by Somerset Council



# BEN FOGLE

Broadcaster and adventurer Ben Fogle is about to tackle his latest walk on the wild side with a new tour full of hair-raising and uplifting stories from a life of amazing encounters. Best known from hit shows including *Animal Park*, *Lost Worlds* and *New Lives In The Wild*, the presenter is preparing to bring his new live tour **BEN FOGLE – WILD** to 22 towns and cities in May and June. **BEN FOGLE – WILD** will see Ben sharing stories of hope, possibility and positivity, all learned from a career which has taken him to some of the most extreme locations in the world, whether filming for documentaries or tackling some of mankind's greatest physical challenges.

But it all began back in 2000 when Ben was one of 36 people to embark on the ground-breaking BBC *Castaway* series, which saw the adventurous souls ditch the rat race for a 12-month social experiment living on the remote Scottish island of Taransay. "I think it's all luck, but you make a bit of that yourself," he says, reflecting on the past 23 years. "I have always loved travel, nature, the outdoors – that's why I did *Castaway*. But it was a much more intense experience than anything I could have had under normal circumstances. I get asked about *Castaway* a lot and will be talking about it on the tour, as it's a big part of me and relative to so much of what I do and have done."

"'Y2K' was a definitive time. It was pre-mobile phones, social media didn't exist, so many things were very, very different."

"Now things have changed so profoundly it would be difficult to go back to that innocence and simplicity. A channel might try it again one day but no one has replicated it so far. Partly due to the fact nothing like it existed at that time, and people went for very pure and innocent reasons. The landscape has changed, people go on TV now for fame and fortune and that naturally changes the dynamic. Heading off to spend a year on an island with a load of strangers, gave me a real grounding, and a foundation of what it takes to make a simple, off-grid life."



That foundation allowed Ben to build his career and stood him in perfect stead for his many varied TV projects. Perhaps none more so than *New Lives In The Wild*, for which he has spent the past 12 years travelling the world to meet people living extreme off-grid lives – in a world now dominated by ease of communication and all-too-often dictated by being on-grid.

"*Castaway* definitely gave me the qualifications to be able to do a series like *New Lives* – to spend time with people living their whole life the way I did for 12 months" he said.

"I have a better understanding of the trials and tribulations, the highs and lows, the benefits and sacrifices they make. The more people I have spent time with over 12 years of making that show, the more I understand what goes into making a sustainable, off-grid life like that. A lot of these people are quite reserved, not anti-social necessarily, but they perhaps don't enjoy being round other people. But as I have experienced it, they can open up with me – there's almost a mutual respect between us."

Ben's experience of meeting those who live in some of the world's most diverse environments will form the basis of his new tour. In **WILD**, Ben will take audiences on a journey to relive some of the inspiring and uplifting tales he has encountered on his travels to places such as the wilderness of northern Sweden, the jungles of Honduras, the hostility of Chernobyl and the mountains of Nepal. Having previously filmed in Chernobyl, when he met those who returned to live there as it continues to recover from the 1986 nuclear disaster, Ben took the opportunity to go back on a private visit in September, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Ben has previously spoken of the emotion he felt at seeing the families he'd previously met there – and more than a year after the invasion he doesn't see it coming to an end soon. "I fear this is in for the long run, decades and decades of unrest in that part of the world. I can't see a quick resolution unfortunately".

"It's another thing the tour will look at – the effects that war and disaster can have on places, not just the landscape but the people too.

It seems harsh to say, but war is part of what happens in a world where seven billion people live. It's another way that man destroys the environment around us – but can also provide examples of how a place can bounce back."

Ben's love of the great outdoors reaches back to his own childhood, where his time was divided between rural Dorset and central London – with extended school holiday trips to the Canadian wilderness to visit his paternal grandparents.

So, for someone who has experienced the wilder side of life – whether directly on his expeditions, or through his encounters with those who make a lifelong commitment to it – could Ben ever step fully out of modern life, and would he take his family along for the adventure? "I'm incredibly lucky that I get to straddle two worlds, being in the urban world with all it offers then going off to the wilderness – and that gives me perspective, which is so important in life," he explains.

"There's definitely something about that kind of life that appeals to me – but not right now. My children, Ludo and Iona, are 14 and 12 this year, and are very much involved in urban living. They are very well travelled. They have spent time in the jungle, in remote islands, wood cabins, the Norwegian wilderness. But then they go to school and are very much engaged with 'normal' society, and love researching on computers, having pizza or going to the cinema. We live outside London now, and that helps – we ride horses, go wild swimming, long dog walks."

"But it's balance; I want them to be street savvy as well as being able in bush craft skills. I want my children to be able to wire a plug and start a fire, to make a bed and to put up a tent. They're all skills for life and don't need to be exclusive".

"People ask why I'm not living in a cabin in the woods, but there are sacrifices to make for that life – and I love those great cultural events, arts, cinema, books, so what I have realised is that the search for a perfect balance is what is more important."

"My life is not something everyone could have, not everyone could do it. But I hope that after joining me on the **WILD** tour, people will consider what kind of things they can do in their own life, the small changes to make to find that balance."

Join Ben Fogle on his  
**WILD** tour at Westlands  
on Thursday 4 May



# TIM VINE

Catch Tim Vine at  
Westlands on Friday 21  
and Saturday 22 July

Tim Vine is a jester with a joke for every occasion. After his last show, Plastic Elvis, in which he paid tribute to the king of rock and roll, hold onto your headgear, the king of the sidesplitting one-liner is touring with Breeep! Expect quips and quickfire punchlines to rain down from the stage as he fills the room with funnies.

Vine has won Dave's Joke of the Fringe twice. In 2010 with 'I've just been on a once-in-a-lifetime holiday. I'll tell you what, never again.' And in 2014 with 'I've decided to sell my Hoover... well, it was just collecting dust.' It is no surprise that The Times asked: 'Is there a more ludicrous comedian in Britain than Tim Vine?'

**Tell us about your new show Breeep!**

"Can I say it's nonsense? Hopefully funny nonsense. I do silly one liners and silly songs with silly props. I have a table with a black bag full of bits and pieces. And I have another table with some other stuff on it. I end with a song called 'These Are Some Of My Things'. I'm surrounded by all this detritus at the end of the show. It does sort of sum up my life a bit."

**Can you give me a flavour of any of the jokes in Breeep!?**

"This one was in Dave's Joke of the Fringe top ten this year. I used to live hand to mouth. I'll tell you what changed my life. Cutlery."

**People seem to want to laugh right now so Breeep! sounds perfect.**

"I'm just trying to make people laugh as stupidly as possible. I'm not breaking into satire at this point in my career. I think there is an appetite for comedy without any message. There's quite a few of us doing that. I like being in that little gang. I really am not making any point whatsoever."

**Did you start off with this style from your very first gig?**

"I attempted different things. I remember doing a chatty thing about how I sort of inadvertently affected world events, a bit like in Forrest Gump. I had this thing where JFK was going to Dallas and wanted to borrow one of my cars and the choice was of the convertible or the bulletproof Bentley, and I said 'it's going to be lovely weather in Dallas, take the convertible...'"

**Can you teach someone to write a funny joke?**

"If I knew how to write a funny joke I'd only ever write funny jokes. Everything I wrote would go straight into the show. But part of the joy of the whole thing is that I know how to structure a joke. There are rules and things that will help it feel like a joke by the time you finish writing."

So I know about that, but the whole thing about what makes it funny, you dig around and throw everything at the wall and see what sticks. It's a gradual purifying process. Whittling. That's the fun of it. It's always an audience that decides."

**What are you like off duty? Are you more serious?**

"I'm a lighthearted person. I think I get that from my dad. One time as he walked to work across this football field and it had been snowing he thought 'if I close my eyes and try and walk in a straight line for 200 paces, I'll be able to look back and see how successful I was by how straight the footprints are.' He came home with a massive bump on his head. He'd hit the goalpost at the far end. I love the fact that he decided to do that and wasn't worrying about work."

**Laughter is important.**



# CHEESY BINGO PARTY

Join the cheese at  
Westlands on  
Saturday 1 July

EMBRACE  
THE  
CHEESE!



Do you secretly love bingo? New to Westlands Entertainment Venue is the ultimate cheesy party experience - **Cheesy Bingo Party!**

A mix of bingo and a whole load of the cheesiest party music you ever heard! Book a table with your friends and family or come along with work colleagues for a fun filled wild night of our favourite game – bingo! Win prizes, dance, sing and party like your life depends on it!

It's bingo with a whole tube of cheese sauce poured all over it.

You can expect to hear: Britney, Aqua, Madness, Wham, S Club, Steps, Village People, Cyndy Lauper, Gina G, Bros, and loads more - all whilst trying to win some equally cheesy prizes.

Age Restrictions: 18+



# WODEHOUSE IN WONDERLAND

At The Octagon  
Theatre from Tuesday  
25 - Thursday 27 April



**Cahoots Theatre Company present William Humble's play starring Robert Daws and directed by Robin Herford, that is currently enjoying a UK Tour and coming to The Octagon Theatre.**

**Based on the life and writings of P.G. Wodehouse, 'Wodehouse in Wonderland' takes place in P.G. Wodehouse's New York State home in the 1950s.**

The play sees him answering questions from a visiting biographer, as well as singing songs from his illustrious early career as a Broadway lyricist, when he worked with the likes of Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Cole Porter and Ivor Novello. "I always think it's quite strange that this man we now associate with such quintessentially English characters was in those days better known for his work on Broadway," says Daws.

He adds that he's enjoying the opportunity to sing again, having appeared in a number of musicals when he first started out in the profession. He even won a musical award at RADA, where his interest in Wodehouse was first piqued when Tom Wilkinson, who was directing at the Academy, gave him a copy of *Right Ho, Jeeves*.

Since then Daws has gone on to become a staple of many beloved TV dramas, including the murder mystery series *Sister Boniface Mysteries*, medical soaps *Casualty* and *The Royal*, as well as the likes of *Poldark*, *Outside Edge* and of course *Jeeves and Wooster*.

"I LIKE TO THINK OF MYSELF AS BEING THAT RATHER OLD-FASHIONED TERM A CHARACTER ACTOR,"

And alongside acting he has also developed a successful career as a crime novelist, including making the podcast series *Partners in Crime* with Adam Croft.



"HIS COMIC  
TIMING  
TAKES SOME  
BEATING."



ENTERTAINMENT VIEW



Daws says these two sides of his work are wholly complementary. "Writing uses a lot of the same creative muscles that you use as an actor. And certainly all the work I've done over the years creating characters has been really helpful. I suppose in a way my writing has become my own little wonderland."

And now he gets to combine both by playing one of his favourite authors. How has he found researching Wodehouse as a character? "There isn't actually much footage of him, and people always said that in reality he was a very reticent and shy figure," says Daws.

"SO THIS IS VERY MUCH MY TAKE ON WODEHOUSE, RATHER THAN AN IMPERSONATION OF HIM."

Despite displaying much of the humour and geniality that his writing is known for, the play also delves into some of the darker aspects of the author's life. The title, *Wodehouse in Wonderland*, is taken from a now lost diary Wodehouse kept when he was sent to a Nazi internment camp during the Second World War. "The Germans manipulated him into making what became known as the 'Berlin broadcast'," explains Daws. "This was then used for propaganda purposes and caused huge upset back in England. He later referred to it as his great shaming."

Bringing his story to the stage is especially meaningful considering Wodehouse's own contribution to the theatre. He contributed lyrics for 25 musicals, including *Anything Goes*, and in 1917 had five shows running simultaneously on Broadway. He was also an accomplished playwright, who in 1928 alone had three plays on in the West End.



"HUMOROUS AND  
SAD... YOU CERTAINLY  
DON'T NEED TO  
KNOW ABOUT  
WODEHOUSE'S WORK  
TO ENJOY THIS SHOW"



THE VIEW FROM THE STALLS



# JULIA DONALDSON

## talks Zog, and seeing her books adapted for the stage...



Best known for her popular rhyming stories for children, especially those illustrated by Axel Scheffler, Julia Donaldson is the multi award-winning author of some of the world's best loved children's books, most notably the modern classic *The Gruffalo* which has sold over 13 million copies worldwide.

**You've written almost 200 books – where do you get your ideas?**

"It varies, but I always develop the storyline fully in my head before I start writing. I think you read some books and you can tell that people have just made it up as they go along – but I always think, you wouldn't start telling a joke if you didn't know what the punchline was."

**Where did the idea for Zog the dragon come from?**

"Well that one was quite unusual, in that the initial idea didn't come from me. My editor said to me 'it would be lovely to have a story about a dragon', so I started thinking about it and the name 'Madam Dragon' came into my head, which I thought had a nice sound. And then I thought what could Madame Dragon do, who could she be? I came up with various ideas and a schoolteacher was one of them, so I took it from there. Originally it was going to be about a knight and a dragon, but it ended up being about a Princess and a dragon – the story came to me bit by bit. My husband Malcolm, who is a doctor, also had some input here."

Because when I was planning the story, I knew that Zog would keep meeting the Princess, and originally I was going to have them play together and toast marshmallows. Malcolm said 'that's a bit soppy, couldn't it be something with a bit more oomph?' And then I came up with the doctor angle. The Knight, Sir Gadabout is one of my favourite comic characters because he's such an upper-class twit. I love the line he says: 'I've come to rescue Princess Pearl, I hope I'm not too late' – when it's actually been a whole year since she was captured."



**Animals feature very strongly in many of your books – why is that?**

"It's often used as a convention – like in *Aesop's Fables*, where the animals aren't really animals, they represent a quality or a characteristic. I also think it would be far more boring for the reader or listener, if Mouse in *The Gruffalo* was just a small but clever person, or *The Gruffalo* itself was a big, scary but rather stupid person. Or in *The Snail and the Whale*, if the Whale was just a big person and the snail a little person – I think you need animals to represent the qualities."



Join Zog, Princess Pearl and Sir Gadabout on Tuesday 18 & Wednesday 19 April



**Your books always have a happy ending, which is very comforting, do you think it's important to give that to your readers?**

"I often think about the role of storytelling for young people. In life, not everything does have a happy ending – but I think storytelling is probably very important because to grow up with stories helps you have aspirations, even if life doesn't turn out like that. Even as grown-ups, we know that there is a lot of sadness in life, but I think if we didn't have those stories, aspirations and a sense of what's ideal, life would be much harder to live."

**A lot of your stories are written in verse, what do you feel that adds?**

"Well obviously if it's done well, it makes a story very memorable – and people have loved rhyme since time immemorial. I love writing in verse because I wrote songs for so long."

**You've had a long and very successful working relationship with illustrator Axel Scheffler – how does the partnership work?**

"It's always through the editor – I never exchange a word with Axel about the pictures when we're putting a book together. Axel probably wouldn't even know that I was writing something until my editor shows it to him – and then I have a nail-biting moment wondering if he likes it and wants to do it."

"Then he'll do some character sketches which I'll look at. Sometimes, after he's created sketches for every picture, I'll think 'oh hang on, I'm going to change that little bit of text, because I like what he's done with that,'. And then Axel will get to work seriously and I'll see it at a later stage, when there will still be a few little tweaks."

**As you're writing, you must visualise characters in your head. What's it like when an illustrator then comes up with something different?**

"I always say it's like going on holiday – you've got an idea in your head of how it's going to be, and then it's always totally different. But once you're there and enjoying it, you just forget what was in your head before. Also, I usually know when I'm writing something whether I want Axel to work on it – in which case I've got his style in my head as I'm working. It doesn't influence the storyline, but it will influence how I picture the characters – so I'm usually not surprised when I see Axel's interpretation."



**What's it like for you when people turn your books into stage performances and films?**

"For me, it's like an extension of working with an illustrator. Handing it over to a theatre company or film company you know it's going to change a bit; the end product will be a blend of my words and their artistic vision. And they do usually consult me and tell me what they've got in mind."

**What do you feel a visit to the theatre gives young children?**

"Well I remember going to see *The Nutcracker* when I was a child and I found the whole thing completely magical. I can still remember how I felt when the curtain went up."

"I suppose in a way it's the same thing that a book gives you, in that while you're reading or watching, you believe in a different reality. And if it's a good show, parents love to see that their children – even very young ones – can just be transfixed by it."

BIGGER, BRIGHTER AND MORE ROAR-SOME THAN EVER!





# Emma Kenny

Emma Kenny is one of the UK's most notable Psychological Therapists and Crime commentators. Aged just 14, she knew "therapy" was the career she wanted to pursue and has now done so for more than two decades. "I started my first job two days after finishing my degree and prior to this had spent my time outside of university volunteering," said Emma. "I had the privilege of working with young offenders and also victims of crime, meaning that I have been granted an insight into both of these areas. As my main focus has always been victimology, and many offenders are also victims in their childhoods, the area of criminality became a personal focus, as I believe that we need to be doing a great deal more early intervention in the childhoods of children who are in less than satisfactory circumstances."

'The Serial Killer Next Door' comes to Westlands this June and Emma described the show as "a journey of discovery into the ingredients that could be responsible for creating a serial killer." She went on to explain that:

**"The show aims to be entertaining and insightful and will explore the many theories that exist where serial killers are concerned. We will look at profiling and explore the childhoods of these killers to decipher if there were any red flags that were observed in these killers early experiences. The audience will also have an opportunity to see if they think like a psychopath and we will also importantly consider what we can do to protect ourselves from these predators."**

If you search 'Emma Kenny' on the internet, you will come across a vast array of different things that she has done. Emma's website lists her as a psychologist, TV presenter, writer and expert media commentator; best known for her role as resident psychologist on ITV's This Morning. Emma also features on Radio 1's as their life hacks expert and present a classical show for Scala radio. Emma started her presenting career with the BBC and then moved on to GMTV and Daybreak where she was an expert commentator often discussing victims and mental health which then led onto being invited to present Britain's Darkest Taboos' on CI, a show she fronted for six seasons. Emma has taken part in over 120 crime documentaries and in 2021 began her YouTube channel which has opened her up to a whole new wonderful audience. But what does she enjoy doing most?

"I absolutely love doing my YouTube and theatre tours as this has made me feel very personally connected to my audience in a very new way. I loved doing the This Morning phone in but as I spend so much time on the road this isn't possible on a regular basis anymore. I feel grateful and unbelievably privileged that I have the wonderful audience and supporters that I have gained through my career and when I stand on stage it is always a pinch me is this real moment."

Emma told us that therapy remains a huge passion of hers and being offered the opportunity to offer her psychological insight with a wider audience is something she is very much looking forward to. So what makes someone want to analyse and understands killers? Do you have to have a certain element of intrigue and excitement? "I wouldn't say that any killers excite me, they disturb me and at times confuse me. I remain stunned consistently that these human predators have such little care for human life and the infinite meaning each of their victims had to their families and this world. I find individuals like Dennis Nilsen intriguing as it is very disconcerting to note that he had a relatively good sense of humour, had served as a police officer and worked for the job centre. His chameleon like qualities reflect the danger these killers pose as they are so masterfully hidden behind their well-crafted masks," said Emma.

We probed Emma more into what she thinks create a serial killer – a little glimpse into the show. "The vast majority of serial-killers have problematic childhood experiences which we analyse in depth, this in addition to issues with brain development, genetics and social factors all contribute to creating these killers." And what advice does she give to any aspiring psychologists or anyone coming in June?

**"My main advice to anyone coming is to have an open mind and to be willing to explore the possibilities that I pose on the night. I hope that the night will be as equally entertaining, as it is hopefully interesting. For those on the academic journey themselves I would hope that I further their understanding and add to their knowledge."**

Speaking with Emma gave us a wonderful insight into how her mind works; how she appears to be concerned about killers and their predatory instincts, yet intrigued. Join Emma Kenny for an evening that promises to be like no other at Westlands Entertainment Venue.

**Come and see Emma Kenny at Westlands on Wednesday 21 June**

*Age Guidance: 14+*



The World Seniors Darts Masters has a new home at Westlands, Yeovil.

**WSDT**  
WORLD SENIORS DARTS TOUR

2023

# SENIOR MASTERS

16 PLAYERS... ONLY ONE MASTER!

The legendary set play format returns to the World Seniors Darts Tour Calendar in 2023 on 24 and 25 of June. Sixteen players will take to the Westlands stage in the event that was won by Canadian David Cameron in its inaugural hosting. Reigning World Seniors Darts World Champion Robert Thornton will be looking to add to his trophy collection. The Scotsman also lifted the World Seniors Matchplay title in 2022 but missed out in the World Seniors Masters.

Martin 'Wolfie' Adams, Trina Gulliver, Bob Anderson, John Part, Kevin Painter, Mark Dudbridge and Chris Mason have all accepted invitations to play.

## We caught up with Robert Thornton:

### How did you get into darts?

"Darts was massive as I was growing up. Watching people like Jockey Wilson on TV made me want to be just like him so I played all the time until I had children. Then I had to take a bit of a break, but I finally took darts seriously in 2002 when I joined the BDO. I've been a professional player ever since really."

### How often do you practice?

"I try to do a couple of hours a day, but it tends to vary now I'm a bit older. I know some of the younger guys still on the PDC tour that will do five or more hours a day, every day. For me now it's just about keeping myself at my current level and ensuring I go into competitions in the best shape possible. It's just as easy to over-do and as it is to under prepare, so I have to be aware of that."

### How much travelling do they do for the sport?

"When I was playing in the PDC the answer would have been an awful lot. The calendar is so busy these days, you can be away for 45 weekends of the year easily. That's one of the things I'm loving about the World Seniors Tour. It's not as full on. It's perfect for us older guys who now have to rest a little more and can spend time with our families now that we've done the hard slog of our careers."

### What's your best leg?

"I hit a 9-darter at the World Grand Prix against James Wade in 2014. It's special to do it in that event as you have to hit a double to start the leg and finish. James had already hit one against me in the match so to get one back against him felt really good."

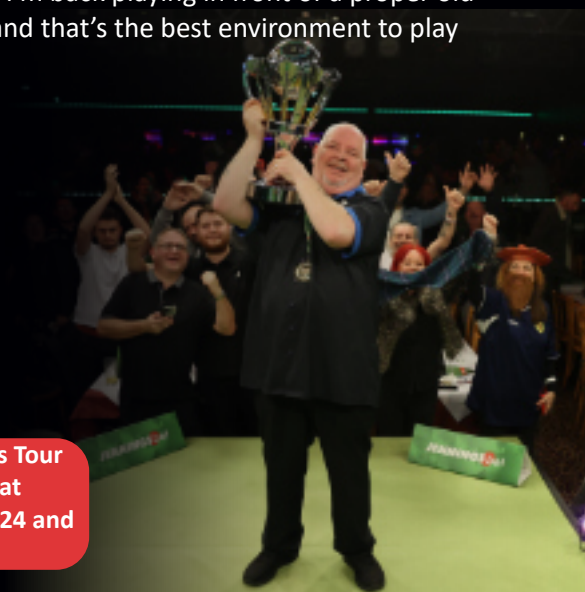
### Most Memorable Match?

"I've got a couple for this one. The match where I hit the 9-darter I mentioned will always stand out as memorable. Winning the Final of the UK Open or the World Grand Prix are huge too. But defending the World Seniors World Championship a few months ago was brilliant for me. My family drove down over night to surprise ahead of the final, and being able to have my grandchildren on stage at the end will be something that stays with me for a long time."

### How do you sum up the World Seniors Darts Tour so far?

"Obviously, it's been brilliant. I'm fortunate enough to have won three TV titles already, including back to back World Championships. The balance of the tour is great, and all the players have really embraced the concept since it's start in 2021. You can't beat the feeling of winning, whether it's a game down the local with friends or a TV tournament, I still get a massive buzz from it, and the World Seniors Darts Tour has allowed me to keep that going. The fans have all been amazing too. It feels like I'm back playing in front of a proper old school crowd, and that's the best environment to play darts in."

The World Senior Darts Tour  
2023 is happening at  
Westlands on Saturday 24 and  
Sunday 25 June



OCTAGON  
ACADEMY

# SUMMER SCHOOLS

Summer will soon be here and if you are on the lookout for some activities to keep your little ones entertained during the holidays then look no further... This summer as part of the Octagon Academy we have a series of summer schools on offer for children and young people. Our Octagon Academy Summer Schools give local young people the opportunity to develop confidence and practice performance techniques, whilst encouraging their understanding of the arts in a friendly and professional environment. Click on the images below to take you directly to the booking page.



### Castaway's Summer School: Snow White & Friends, The Next Chapter

MON 7 - FRI 11 AUG | 10AM - 3PM | Age: 7-16 years

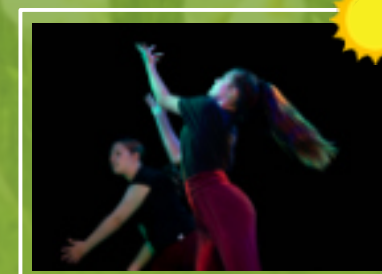
This is a story about Snow White when she was woken up by a kiss from her Prince. Did they get married? Did they live happily ever after? What happened next? Learn a script, songs and dances to bring our story to life in five days to then perform it on stage on Friday night for all our parents and friends.



### Stuff & Nonsense Theatre Summer School

MON 14 - FRI 18 AUG | 10AM - 4PM | Age: 12-18 years

A fantastic opportunity to take part in a week of workshops, using your ideas to create puppets, songs and poems, working towards an entertaining evening of informal 'cabaret style' performance, where you can invite friends and family to watch.



### Somerset Youth Dance Summer School: The Greatest Show

MON 21 - FRI 25 AUG | 10AM - 4PM | Age: 7-16 years

Roll up roll up... if you are always dancing away, practicing your favourite tricks and imagining you are part of 'The Greatest Show' then this summer school and performance opportunity is for you!



### 'Tiny' Somerset Youth Dance Summer School

WED 23 - FRI 25 AUG | 9AM - 10AM | Age: 3-6 years

Our 'Tiny' Summer School is a chance for the younger dance enthusiasts to come and have some dancing fun. Dancers will learn a fun, upbeat dance or two to pieces of music inspired by the fun of the circus.

## Westlands Venue Hire

### Meetings and Conferences

We offer a wide variety of options in some of the most spacious and versatile facilities. From an intimate meeting room to a large scale conference, we can cater for up to 821 people with breakout spaces and reception areas.



### Private Parties

We can cater for intimate events, as well as parties for up to 1,000 guests. There are a range of catering options available tailored to your event - from simple refreshments, to a buffet or multi course menu. We will ensure that a dedicated member of staff sees your event through from the initial consultation to the special day.



### Funerals

At Westlands we pride ourselves on our friendly and efficient service, our attention to detail and thoughtful guidance at such a difficult time. With close proximity to local churches and Yeovil Crematorium, Westlands offers the perfect location for family and friends to meet after the funeral service. We offer funeral reception lunches as well as buffets and afternoon teas, all handled with sensitivity and discretion. Want to find out more? Visit [westlandseyovil.co.uk](http://westlandseyovil.co.uk) or call our Box Office on 01935 422884.



# A Cultural Venue for Somerset



We are delighted to update you on our plans to create a flagship centre for the creative arts that will provide amazing opportunities for all Somerset residents and bring world class artists to the county. Planning approval has been granted recently and we await the final performances at The Octagon Theatre before the doors close at the end of April and building works commence in the coming months. Plans will see the venue transformed into a centre of excellence that will spark economic regeneration for the area and be a source of joy, entertainment and inspiration for generations to come.

## The redeveloped Octagon Theatre will include:

- An increased seating capacity in the main auditorium from 622 to 900.
- Two new smaller cinema/studio spaces predominately for film screenings.
- A dance studio which will become the new home for our popular Octagon Academy.
- A community studio offering an alternative space for additional classes.
- A greatly improved café bar area open throughout the day.
- Improved front of house and customer facilities.
- Improved backstage accessibility.
- The construction of a fly tower, enabling larger visiting companies to use the venue which would bring a new range of shows.
- A Changing Places Toilet for those with additional needs.



The development of The Octagon will mean less trips out of the county to access brilliant shows, activities and entertainment with superb events right on your doorstep and unleashing creativity across Somerset and beyond.

We are continuing to raise funds for the redevelopment through fundraising in different ways. Castaway Theatre Group have joined some of our staff twice for a sponsored 24-hour sleepover at the theatre, we have welcomed comedian/ventriloquist Paul Zerdin for a performance with all ticket proceeds being donated to the redevelopment and we have recently completed a 24-hour dance-a-thon with Project Dance's James Bamford. Our staff have also played a role in fundraising by doing their own sponsored events outside of work.

You can get involved with fundraising through joining in with our events where applicable or being part of something special by supporting our **Name A Seat** campaign. From as little as £150, you can have a personalised plaque on a seat within the new auditorium. Contributing now means that you will be placed on our priority list and contacted to choose a seat once the seating plan has been designed.

You can find out more information and download an application form online at [www.octagon-theatre.co.uk](http://www.octagon-theatre.co.uk) or call the Box Office on 01935 422884.

## The Octagon Theatre is now an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO)

We are delighted to announce that The Octagon Theatre has been awarded NPO status from Arts Council England, which sees an investment of £760,000 to support arts and cultural activities in the area over the next three years.

### What does this mean for our residents, communities and patrons?

By becoming an NPO we will be able to provide more opportunities for our communities to watch, take part and benefit from arts and cultural activities. The NPO investment will support our Arts Engagement & Outreach team to grow, develop and deliver programmes and activities that benefit health and wellbeing, enrich learning and education in and outside school, inspire and celebrate talent. Creating work that will support local artists and tell "local stories". Our work will seek to improve inclusion and remove barriers, whatever they may be, so that everyone is able to enjoy and benefit from the creative arts. Our beautiful county is a great place to live but we recognise the issues our communities face and key issues surrounding rural isolation, areas of disadvantage, to challenges around mental health and an ageing population. Our activities will seek to positively contribute to and alleviate these issues, with more opportunities for residents to interact with the creative arts from within our venues and in community locations throughout the district.

### Here's a glimpse of some of the initiatives we have planned:

**Arts for Health & Wellbeing:** Working with NHS trusts and voluntary services, we will develop creative activities that deliver emotional and physical support to people with mental and long-term health conditions.

We aim to establish regular specialist support-led sessions in community settings across South Somerset that will support treatment, recovery and long-term wellbeing.

**Creative Learning & Education:** Between 2023-2026 our target is to work with a minimum 32 primary and secondary schools, reaching students from rural and deprived areas to ensure children have the opportunity to be inspired by the arts.

**Participation:** There are three elements to our participatory programme with delivery of regular activity in community locations and our venues, targeted workshops, and high-quality enrichment opportunities with amazing artists and companies.

**Programme Development & Commissioning:** To reach audiences outside our venues we will look to produce a community production, project commissions to celebrate Somerset's cultural heritage, and free to watch performances out across the district.

**Talent & Workforce Development:** We have planned projects to support young people, emerging and established artists fulfil their potential and sustain creative careers here in Somerset.

**Access & Inclusion Schemes:** With a focus on improving access in the midst of the cost-of-living crisis our priority will be to launch an Accessible Pricing Scheme and Access Fund, enabling people from low-income households the opportunity to attend shows and workshops at no or heavily discounted cost.





**Castaway Theatre Group**, also known as Castaways, is a Community Theatre Group taking children from the age of 5-17 and has a real sense of family. Meeting on Saturdays at Westlands Entertainment Venue, the group frequently puts on a variety of shows for the public to enjoy, including musicals, plays and showcases.

Castaways began in Barwick village hall over 20 years ago, when they embarked on a fundraiser to raise some money for St Margaret's Hospice following the amazing care they gave Lynn's cousin Philip when he battled his terminal diagnosis of a brain tumour. The group started with a cast of about 15 people, including only 2 children and 1 chaperone, Linda, who has since retired after 18 years. The Castaways journey continued from this whilst raising over £25,000 for the hospice.

Lynn and Tammie grew the company and joined forces with vocal coach Helen Geen. Castaways moved to a bigger stage for another fundraiser at the Octagon Theatre and began to run the group in the Johnson Studio. Kirsty began her journey as part of the company but then moved to the role of choreographer and Andrea joined to support the group as secretary when her son joined.



At Westlands from  
Wednesday 31 May -  
Saturday 3 June

Following the success of their debut operetta *Whistle Down the Wind*, Castaways now regularly perform showcases, pantomimes and musicals, giving the children the opportunity to work with industry professionals such as director Jeremy Tustin and musical director Matt Holman-Holmes.

They continue to raise money for their own future shows, various charities including Yeovil Hospital and The Octagon Foyer Club, The Ukraine Appeal, Diabetes UK and supporting our members in the next part of their performing journey whether that be locally or further afield. Castaways are a not for profit group who are all volunteers providing a service to local children and offer many skills to help build confidence, friendships and a sense of belonging as well as the opportunity to perform locally, in London and Disneyland Paris.

Castaways is now split into two groups of 6 to 11 year olds and 11 to 17 year olds, enabling the volunteers to teach age appropriate skills. As well as being part of their one night show cases, the younger members perform in their own annual musical giving them the experience as they grow to confidently perform on The Octagon stage in the seniors annual musical. This year however, the entire company will be performing together at Westlands in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat.

*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* is a reimagining of the Biblical story of Joseph, his father Jacob, eleven brothers and the coat of many colours.

The musical is full of catchy songs in a variety of styles, from a parody of French ballads (*Those Canaan Days*), to country-western (*One More Angel in Heaven*) and calypso (*Benjamin Calypso*), along with classics *Any Dream Will Do* and *Close Every Door*.

The Octagon Academy is the place to sing, dance and act with the emphasis on fun and enjoyment. With a range of classes to choose from for all ages and abilities, our academy is a programme for everyone to embrace the joy and art of performance. Our annual talent showcase, SHiNE, which will close The Octagon Theatre before its redevelopment into a cultural hub for Somerset, gives all classes the opportunity to show what they have been practising week in, week out.

# BAD DAD

on the  
road!

Recommended age: 7+  
Running time: 2 Hours inc  
interval

Illustration © Tony Ross 2017. Lettering of author's name © Quentin Blake 2008.  
Licensed by HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

Gather round and give three cheers for Reverend Judith. She is receiving the Citizen of the Year Award for her amazing work with the food bank. Come congratulate her and hear how it all started with Frank and his dad, Gilbert. Gilbert is a bit of a local celebrity. He was no other than the legendary 'King of the Track', Gilbert the Great. That was until a tragic accident put a stop to his track-racing days. Driven to desperate measures in order to provide for his son, he agrees to become a get-away driver for the local baddies.

Join Heartbreak Productions for this warm-hearted tale that follows the highs and lows of a father-son relationship. An open-air adaptation of David Walliams *Bad Dad* is the perfect summer family entertainment. So, pack your picnics, grab your wet weather gear or sun-cream (or both), something to sit on, and join Frank and Gilbert as they navigate their way through car chases and convicts in the struggle to escape the clutches of the local crime lord and clear Gilbert's name.

**FRIDAY 4 AUGUST | 6PM | Burrow Hill, TA12 6BU**

A unique outdoor theatre experience... [www.heartbreakproductions.co.uk](http://www.heartbreakproductions.co.uk)



HeartbreakProductions



@OutdoorPlaysUK



HeartbreakProductions



HeartbreakProductions



# National Theatre Live

National Theatre Live brings the best of British theatre to the cinema screen. Their plays are filmed in front of a live audience whilst optimising everything for the big screen so it's the next best thing to being there.

The National Theatre based in London make world-class theatre that is entertaining, challenging and inspiring. It is made for everyone and by screening it at your local venue it becomes even more accessible. With star casts including; Benedict Cumberbatch, Kit Harrington, Emilia Clarke, Ralph Fiennes, David Tennant and Sir Ian McKellen, these rollicking comedies, Shakespearian adaptations, childrens storytelling and political plays provide a little bit of something for everyone.

At Westlands we screen the NT Live programme as part of our Screenings in the Ballroom programme. A different cinema experience where you can book a comfy sofa for your film of choice.

Coming up we have the **Life of Pi** by Yan Martel, adapted by Lolita Chakrabarti and Directed by Max Webster. Showing on Friday 31 March 2023 *Life of Pi* is an Olivier Award-winning stage adaptation of the best selling novel, it's a unique combination of puppetry, magic and story telling. After a cargo ship sinks in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean, a 16-year-old boy named Pi is stranded on a lifeboat with four other survivors – a hyena, a zebra, an orangutan and a Royal Bengal tiger. Time is against them, nature is harsh, who will survive? Filmed live in London's West End and featuring state-of-the-art visuals, the epic journey of endurance and hope is brought to life in a breath-taking new way for cinema screens.



On Friday 21 April and Sunday 30 April we will be screening C.P Taylor's **Good**, directed by Dominic Cooke. With his much anticipated return to the West End *Good* stars **David Tennant** in a blistering reimagining of one of Britain's most powerful, political plays. As the world faces its Second World War, John Halder, a good, intelligent German professor, finds himself pulled into a movement with unthinkable consequences.

**Best of Enemies** By James Graham and Directed by Jeremy Herrin was Inspired by the documentary by Morgan Neville and Robert Gordon is being screened on Monday 22 May 2023. **David Harewood** (*Homeland*) and **Zachary Quinto** (*Star Trek*) play feuding political rivals in James Graham's (*Sherwood*) multiple award-winning new drama. In 1968 America, as two men fight to become the next president, all eyes are on the battle between two others: the cunningly conservative William F. Buckley Jr., and the unruly liberal Gore Vidal. During a new nightly television format, they debate the moral landscape of a shattered nation. As beliefs are challenged and slurs slung, a new frontier in American politics is opening and television news is about to be transformed forever.



## Five minutes with MARK LABBETT



ITV's very own Chaser 'The Beast' Mark Labbett is coming to Westlands Entertainment Venue, presenting you with a unique and never before seen evening of fun and challenging interaction with the most iconic quizzing personality on the planet.

We managed to take five minutes out of Mark's busy schedule to ask him some of his most challenging questions...

**Where did the nickname "The Beast" come from?**

"My surname is Labbett – French for 'The Beast La Bete'."

**If you weren't on a TV show, what would you have liked to have done?**

"I was a maths teacher for 15 years, so I would have to say a teacher."

**When did you realise you had a talent for quizzing?**

"I would probably say when I was at Oxford and taking people on three or four at a time at Trivial Pursuits."

**Who do you think would win in a head-to-head quiz battle of The Chasers?**

"Definitely me! If I didn't think that, then I probably shouldn't be doing the job! But if I had to pick someone else, then Paul."



Get to know the man behind the myth, with never seen pictures, videos and stories, you will learn of how the legend of television quizzing, both in the UK and in America, was made! The second half of the evening will then be the time to test your knowledge against 'The Beast of Knowledge', with an interactive quiz, throughout the audience, which will eventually see one person joining Mark on stage for the final Head to Head! But are you smart enough to 'Beat the Beast!'?

Catch Mark Labbett  
at Westlands on  
Friday 5 May



# Welcome to Westlands LOUNGE BAR

A bright and open space that is perfect for informal meetings, working lunches or simply meeting friends over tea and cake.



Served Monday to Saturday between 10am - 2pm

With an extensive licensed bar and range of hot drinks and a new breakfast & lunchtime menu, it is the perfect place for any gathering or even just for sitting back and unwinding.



[www.westlandsyevil.co.uk/food-drink](http://www.westlandsyevil.co.uk/food-drink)

## COMPETITION TIME

### Win two vouchers for our Screenings in the Ballroom

In this edition of Spotlight, three sets of Screenings in the Ballroom vouchers are up for grabs. To be in with a chance of winning a pair of vouchers for any of our Screenings in the Ballroom, tell us how many Cinderella pumpkins (not including this 🎃 one!) are hidden in this magazine and what page numbers they are on.

Please send your answer and full contact details to: [octagontheatre@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:octagontheatre@southsomerset.gov.uk) or mail to:  
Win a prize, Octagon Theatre, Henford, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 1UX

Competition closes on Friday 30 June 2023. Prize items cannot be exchanged to monetary value. Entrants must be over 18



## Join Our Team

Here at The Octagon Theatre and Westlands Entertainment Venue, we are always on the look out for casual employees to join our team. From Front of House Cafe Bar Assistants to behind

the scenes Technical staff. To find out what vacancies are currently available by visiting our website at

[https://  
www.westlandsyevil.co.uk/  
discover-more/working-with-us/](https://www.westlandsyevil.co.uk/discover-more/working-with-us/)



# SOMERSET SLAM

SUNDAY, JUNE 4



Ultimate Pro Wrestling returns to Westlands Entertainment Venue for an evening of family friendly live wrestling entertainment. With a host of your UPW favourites plus special guests, this is an evening not to be missed! Directly afterwards there is also an opportunity for fans to meet and greet the wrestlers. Check our website for full details.



FRI 8 DEC 23 - SUN 31 DEC 23  
[WESTLANDSYEOVIL.CO.UK](http://WESTLANDSYEOVIL.CO.UK)

# Cinderella







**SCREENINGS**  
IN THE **BALLROOM**  
AT WESTLANDS



# Enjoy films & encore theatre screenings in the Ballroom at Westlands

**Free WIFI | Hot Drink | Snacks | Fully Licensed Bar**

*Why not book a comfy sofa for your film?*

**BOX OFFICE 01935 422884**  
**WESTLANDSYEOVIL.CO.UK**