



What's 70 years between actors?

Over 210 plays, musicals, revues, Music Halls and Pantos have been auditioned, rehearsed, staged and performed by Wadhurst Dramatic Club since the fateful meeting outside the butcher's shop in 1946 which kick-started the East Sussex Club just after the war. Many hundreds of enthusiastic thespians have trodden the Commemoration Hall boards and, equally important, been supported by Costumes, Make-up, Lights, Sound, Stage crews, Props and Prompts among others.

Most important of all, WDC have played to a total audience of probably 100,000 over the years, who've supplied laughter, appreciative applause and stalwart support for all their ventures – thanks to Wadhurst's community spirit!

WDC's 70th birthday celebration show,



the Platinum Revue, was no parade of the Club's past glories, however. It was a celebration of the Club's current talent, an outpouring of the ongoing enthusiasm, a snapshot of what WDC supporters want to perform now. Each of the performers was encouraged to contribute their own ideas, to collaborate with others when needed, to rehearse in their own time, to come up with their own costume and props ideas to make this truly a Wadhurst Dramatic Club birthday party, where everyone who wanted to did 'a turn' – and all enjoyed a sparkling 'Platinum' evening together. The acts ranged from George Formby to *Grease*, from Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis to *The Book of Mormon*, from Cole Porter to *Les Miserables*, all coordinated by Russ Kirton.

What was particularly wonderful was the age range of performers and crew that spanned over 70 years too – from the natural talent of 7 year old Duke Kirton

up to agile septuagenarians like Dot Smytherman BEM or John Bush (WDC President, unseen but an essential on the lighting platform!). And that is what is special about Wadhurst Dramatic Club – that age range works, with youngsters and seniors inspiring each other, working hard together and having a giggle together too.

Wadhurst Dramatic Club's Platinum Revue played to very enthusiastic audiences on 19th-21st May 2016. Another highlight of the 70th celebrations was July's Mad Hatter's Tea Party to which all supporters were invited. Special hat-shaped invitations were mailed to over 35 WDC old-timers, as well as the email invite to WDC's current database. Tables groaned under the weight of cakes and scones supplied by the



guests to accompany the WDC Prosecco (or tea!). Games of croquet, pick up sticks or giant Jenga kept all amused, when they weren't reminiscing. Pam Doherty was thrilled to win the competition for her 'maddest hat'. And all under a (mostly) sunny sky.

WDC is performing Shaw's *Arms and the Man* in October to round off the year – with plans for a 70th exhibition to accompany it. ★