



If you have any suggestions or comments for ECCO, then please send them to Janet at ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com.

The next ECCO will come out in May 2013



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Letter from the Chair



Every now and again I get a 'gentle reminder' e-mail from Janet, drawing my attention to the fact that the date for the next ECCO is looming. Janet does a fantastic job of informing us all of what is going on in the ECC. ECCO is a wonderful way to keep us all up to date, so I would like to thank her for putting ECCO together, and chasing up the contributors.

As if that wasn't enough, Janet is directing the forthcoming ECC production ***Calendar Girls***. Rehearsals are well underway, a lot of fun is being had and much hard work being put in. This show is perhaps most known for its nudity, there is however a much more serious side to the play. Many of you will know the story behind the reason for the calendar, the loss of a loved one to cancer. This production is aiming to bring out both the fun and heartbreak in the story. Not to be missed.

We are already looking to the future. Lyn's audition notice, which you will find later in this ECCO, flags up ***Copenhagen***. Lyn will be directing this, and it will be a Warehouse Studio production.

I look forward to seeing you at ***Calendar Girls***.

Sue Botterell

chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com



Calendar Girls by Tim Firth

based on the Miramax motion picture by Juliette Towhidi and Tim Firth

March 2013

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			€2 per ticket goes to		1	2
			6	7	8	9
		11	12	13	14	15
			8pm	8pm	8pm	8pm + 8pm
17	18	19	20	21	22	23

Tickets available from <http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com>



English Comedy Club - Performance by amateurs under licence from Samuel French

CALENDAR GIRLS

By Tim Firth

Based on the Miramax motion picture by Juliette Towhidi and Tim Firth

Directed by Janet Middleton

The Studio Theatre
Palais des Beaux-Arts

12-16 March 2013 - 8pm & 3pm Matinee 16 March

Click on calendar & book now!

For each ticket sold €2 will be donated to Fondation contre le Cancer



CALENDAR GIRLS

Its Director, Janet Middleton, writes:

We suddenly seem to be getting very close to opening night! And we're ready for it! That's not to say we'd like to discover there's been a time-slip and suddenly we've lost 2 weeks, but we're certainly on schedule for when the curtain opens on us for the first time on 12 March.

Last ECCO I focused on the fabulous characters in this piece ([if you missed it you can find it here](#)). In the past few weeks it has become ever more apparent though that the actors are competing for stardom with ... the props!! I cannot thank Colma enough. She is ably assisted by the very tolerant Liam ("Liam, could you just make me a customised cake stand?" "Colma, you do know that we need the golden waves of Montego Bay?"). In my own defence I must say that (1) Colma volunteered and (2) I did warn her that there would be a lot of props required! We started off with the official list of props at the back of the script – but this has at least doubled and took no account of – well, the need for a customised cake stand! There are some amazing creations made by Colma and Liam – the wreath, the girdles, the boy band ... but what will pass unnoticed, because they fit so seamlessly into the piece, are the everyday items which sometimes take quite a bit of seeking out! And the tiny fun touches that the audience will never notice: the Naked Chef cookbook, the 'Fursty Ferret', 'Dark Lord' and 'Wainwright' beers ... So a huge thank you to Colma and Liam for their tireless work, enthusiasm and support in the face of a director who will suddenly appear with a huge smile and a full-size Christmas tree that (literally) falls apart every time you touch it.

But it's not just props that there is a huge quantity of. No! We have costumes. Oh my! The costumes have an important role in setting the scene – during the play a whole year passes and the changing seasons need to be reflected in what is being worn, plus, let's face it, it would be pretty unconvincing if the characters wore the same clothes every day for a year! And then there are the more challenging costumes – well, you'll have to come to the show to see Iona's fabulous creation for Chris! So thank you Iona for bearing with me ("Could you make a skirt to match this bra", "Oh, and they're each going to need a cardigan in that scene") and always smiling and saying "That's really not a problem"!

There are of course many other back stage people I must mention – Conrad for his help with directing, set, programme and sound (where would I be without you Conrad?), Victor (Sound), Heather for her fabulous piano playing, Carsten and Barbara who seem to be able to conjure up any lighting effect I ask for ... and not least Sue and Eileen, my amazing Stage Manager and Producer. The show's not up yet, but this may be the last chance I have to thank you all publicly in ECCO all for the wonderful work you are doing.

In keeping with the ethos of these wonderful ladies, the ECC has agreed to give €2 from each ticket sale to a local cancer charity in Belgium: **Fondation Contre le Cancer** (www.cancer.be).

**At time of writing (3 weeks before opening night)
50% of tickets have been sold – so do book soon to avoid disappointment!**

We are sorry to report that some people have been having problems buying tickets on line. If you, or someone you know, is having a problem with the Bozar website, please write to us at calendar-girls@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com and we will put you in touch with the right person in their offices.



The Calendar Girls and Boys in Rehearsal

Coming Soon!

The ECC is delighted that Lyn Wainwright has agreed to direct Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen* for us in October.

Lyn writes:

Michael Frayn is perhaps best known as the author of the farce *Noises Off* which is all the funnier because it views the production of a play both from in front and from behind the scene. Frayn has achieved equal success with both drama and fiction: his novels like *Spies* and *Headlong* are full of well researched detail but the humour is always there as well.



His work often raises philosophical questions and this play is no exception. It is based on a meeting between two physicists, Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg. The meeting really did take place in 1941 but what occurred between them is a matter of speculation. Frayn draws parallels between the uncertainty of the behaviour of physical objects as established by Heisenberg's scientific work and the difficulty of knowing what motivates people and why they do what they do.

Auditions will be held at the Warehouse as follows:

**Sunday 24th Feb at 2pm
Monday 25th February at 8pm
Monday 4th March at 8pm**

Roles for 2 men and 1 woman. Further details can be obtained from the Director, Lyn Wainwright:
Copenhagen@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

Other Forthcoming Events...

For more information and auditions see www.theatreinbrussels.com

American Theatre Company

Café Theatre: 16-20 April

Irish Theatre Group

***The Importance of Being Earnest
By Oscar Wilde: 21-25 May***

BLOC

Basingstoke or Bust!: 23-26 May

Click on the name of the theatre group above to go directly to their website



The next screenings will be:

21 March: *People* – a new play by Alan Bennett

16 May: *This House* – a new play by James Graham

<http://kinopolis.be/fr/theatre-au-cinema>

If you hear of any productions coming up in English in Brussels or Belgium, why not share with your ECC friends? Send details to Janet for inclusion in the next ECCO:

ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

Best FEATS Forward

The ECC's FEATS Liaison, Andy Ing, writes:

It's that time of year again. The afternoons stay light that bit longer, the sun has been sighted ... and English-speaking theatre groups around Europe frantically begin rehearsing one-act plays. Yes, it can only mean one thing - FEATS must be upon us once again.

For the uninitiated, the Festival of European Anglophone Theatrical Societies – FEATS for short – is an annual competition between English-speaking amateur theatrical groups from across mainland Europe. It's also an opportunity to see four evenings of first-class entertainment, boasting three one-act plays per night.

This year, FEATS is hosted by AATG (Anglo American Theatre Group) in The Hague, from 17 to 20 May, and takes place once again at the impressive Koninklijke Schouwburg.



The countdown to the festival has already well and truly started, with the infamous technical data package and other vital documentation sent out to the participating groups, and information on tickets and hotels soon to be made available.

The twelve groups invited to perform at FEATS 2013 are ATC Brussels, ACTS Stuttgart, Copenhagen Theatre Circle, ESOC Darmstadt, Hamburg Players, Het Homerostheater The Hague, InPlayers Amsterdam, NEAT Stuttgart, Stockholm Players, Tagora Strasbourg, TIE Brussels, and Village Players Lausanne.

Each will perform a one-act play, previously published or an original script, of between twenty and fifty-five minutes, under the critical eye of a professional adjudicator. Awards are presented at the end of the weekend.

And all this without even mentioning the FEATS Fringe, and the many other activities, taking place over the weekend.

Although the ECC will not be performing this year, we hope many of you can go to The Hague as enthusiastic audience members to support our FEATS friends and to enjoy a great weekend of theatrical entertainment.

For more information on FEATS 2013:

<http://www.feats.eu/>

<http://www.feats.nl/>

Behind The Scenes

The Props Person

Experienced Props Manager, Andrea Theinert, writes: I remember my first ever production very well. I'd always been interested in theatre but never dared getting involved because I didn't want to act. When I saw an audition notice for the BSS production of *Macbeth* in 1995 which also mentioned backstage crew I thought: 'Oh well, why not...?' I went to the auditions, and said that I would like to help with props because I'd often wondered where all these fascinating things on stage came from and who had found them.

Expecting an experienced props person to be in charge, and myself just helping to source and maybe run props, I suddenly found myself in charge of swords, daggers and fake blood. The most valuable lesson I learned during that show was: make lists, lots of lists, all kinds of lists, and check and double check! It certainly helps being a control freak...

What do you do? When you start on a new production, talk to the director and find out which era the play is going to be set in. Is it going to be period or modern, minimalist or not? Talk to the stage manager, and discuss where you and your props table will be located during the run of the show. Then read the script very carefully, and take note of every prop that is mentioned in the stage directions or the text. Try to go to as many rehearsals as possible, especially after the initial blocking is done. It helps immensely to know where on stage a prop will be needed by which actor, where it comes on and where it comes off in order to avoid logistical problems! Start bringing in rehearsal props as early as possible which will over time be replaced by the real props. During rehearsals you may realise that an item which you thought was perfect is difficult or awkward to handle. Some things look nice but simply don't work on stage.



Props are a fascinating area of backstage work because as props person you are involved in the whole production process. It also is very time consuming because you probably won't find your perfect prop on your first trip to the flea market or the Petits Riens, and I have spent many a lunch break on fruitless shopping trips. A big help these days is, of course, the internet because you can do a lot of research online looking for inspiration for the design of Irish banknotes, the Magna Carta, or 1950s newspapers. And of course you can make your life easier by ordering props online or buying them on eBay. Personally, I don't do that very often, however, because you can't touch the prop, and that sometimes makes all the difference.

Not every prop can be bought, though, and that's when you have to start getting creative. Making shields, swords, newspapers, writing what feels like hundreds of letters, and tea staining them, making masks, or a papier-mâché leg of mutton: it's all part of a props person's job. It's a job in which you'll go from looking after 15 swords for a medieval battle scene, to supplying the more embarrassing part of your 80s record collection; you're stocking a bar with bottles, glasses and ice cubes, and then running a hotel restaurant from the Studio Green Room.

So, a props person's job does not start when the show finally goes up, but it doesn't end then either. You will probably be stuck in a dark corner backstage for the run, and it's most likely that you will never see the show as a member of the audience. You are a part, however, of the whole backstage experience, you're part of a team, and share the (muffled) laughter, giggles, panics and adrenaline rushes with actors and crew, and you meet a lot of very talented wonderful people along the way.

ECC MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to Ellis Alexander Coy

His surprised, but happy, mother, Rachel Cuff writes:

So. In mid-December I went to New York for a pre-baby holiday. My waters broke horribly early, so I spent a month in hospital trying not to have a baby. On 14 January, Ellis Alexander Coy arrived – 5 weeks early, but healthy and beautiful. After a few days in the neonatal ICU, both he and I finally escaped from hospital. After a few more weeks of sorting out passports etc., we finally flew back to Brussels. A six-day vacation became a seven-week ordeal, but we did get to take home a pretty cute souvenir. Who might one day be President. How's that for Real Life?

Huge thanks to lots of people for all the support.



ECC Committee 2012-13

Sue Botterell	Chair
Conrad Toft	Treasurer & ACTS Liaison
Iona Hamilton	Secretary, CAST Liaison & Costumes
Andy Ing	FEATS Liaison
Janet Middleton	ECCO
Laura Smith	Website
Lyn Wainwright	CAST Liaison & Membership
Martin Blackwell	
Sara Hammerton	Publicity

Contact us via: ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com



Monthly Play Readings

Wednesday 6 March - Chez Barbara – 7.45 for an 8pm start!

Simone Ellul will be organising us to read

PLUNDER By Ben Travers

Please ring Mary for further information and to let her know if you are going to come along or email ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com. (If ringing you are most likely to catch Mary between 8-10, am or pm).

Contributions to interval drinks and nibbles always welcome!

In April we will meet at Mary's on the 3rd ... but please keep an eye out for changes to dates or venue which happen from time to time

