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WHAT'S ON / COMING SOON

Latin Mass Society Oxford Pilgrimage Saturday 3rd June

To honour Blessed George Napper, martyred for his priesthood 1610.

Traditional Solemn High Mass

11.15am at the Oxford Oratory, followed by Procession and Benediction

www.oxfordlmsrep.blogspot.com SARA WHEELER - The highly respected travel writer OPEN MORNING: LECKFORD PLACE SCHOOL will be discussing the life of Karen Blixen's lover Independent co-educational day school. Entry at and companion, Denys Finch Hatton at Blackwell's 11+ and 13+. Join us on Saturday 10 June from 10am on Tuesday 6th June at 7pm. Sara's new book "Too to 1pm. An informal event which gives students Close to the Sun" will be available to buy. Tickets £2 and parents an opportunity to look around the school and meet our teaching staff. Tel: (01865) available from Blackwell or call (01865) 333623.

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MEETINGS AND LECTURES Thu 1st

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THE LATE SHIFT / A group for adults age 16+ suffering mental health problems / Mind / 5:30-8:30pm / Cowley Community Centre, Barns Road

Fri 2nd

THE CHORAL PILGRIMAGE 2006 / Tomás Luis de Victoria & Marian Antiphons / Pre-Concert Talk / 7pm, concert 8pm / Sheldonian Theatre. Broad Street; Tel: 305305 BIG BROTHER EVICTIONS / Oxford's official Big Brother Venue lets you see evictees, live! / 9-2.30am Dress for Press oxford@oceancollins.com / www.oceancollins.com / Ocean and Collins. 43 Park End St; Tel: 01865 241144

CINEMA **Until Fri 2nd June**

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(-MEN: THE LAST STAND [12A] 🗷 Thu: 1.15, 4.00, 6.45, 9.30pm Fri: 12.15, 3.00, 5.45, 8.30pm (wheelchair access to all Battle lines are drawn amongst the X-Men.

THE DAVINCI CODE [12A] 🧷 Thu, Fri: 12.00, 1.00, 2.00, 3.30, 4.30, 5.30, 7.00, 8.00, 9.00pm

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE III [12A] 🚿 an't be impossible, or he wouldn't be able to do it. Would he THE WILD [U] Thu: 11.30am, 1.30, 3.45, 6.00pn

Thu: 12.45, 3.45, 6.30, 9.15pn Fri: 12.30, 3.30, 6.15, 9.00pn POSEIDON [12A]

inking disaster escape drama thingie. Prolonged peril, and all that CURIOUS GEORGE [U] Fri: 11.45an

UNITED 93 [15] Fri: 12.45, 3.45, 6.30, 9.15pm

Vue Cinema (08712 240 240) PRIME [12A] Thu: 8.30pm, Fri: 8.45pm

Inbeat take on Mrs Robinson tale with Uma Thurman in New York. CURIOUS GEORGE [U] Thu: 11.00am, 1.15, 3.45, 6.15pm MISSION IMPOSSIBLE III [12A]
Thu: 8.45pm, Fri: 5.45, 8.20, 11.10pn

THE DAVINCI CODE [12A] 🔏 Thu: 11.15am, 1.00, 1.45, 2.30, 4.15, 5.00, 5.45, 6.30, 7.30, 8.15, 9.00, 9.30pm Fri: 10.45am, 1.00, 2.00, 3.00, 4.20, 5.15, 6.15, 7.30, 8.30, 9.30, 10.45pm

X-MEN: THE LAST STAND [12A] 🗷 Thu: 11.00am, 12.15, 1.30, 2.45, 4.05, 5.30, 6.40, 8.00, 9.15pm Fri: 11.00am, 12.15, 1.30, 2.45, 4.00, 5.30, 6.50, 8.00, 9.15, 10.30, 11.40pm ICE AGE 2 [U] 🗷 Thu: 11.45, 2.00, 4.30pm, Fri: 12.45pm

THE WILD [U] agascaresque animation: zoo animals at large. Fri: 12.30, 2.30, 4.30, 6.30pn Thu: 12.30, 3.15, 6.00, 8.25pn Fri: 11.45am, 2.15, 4.45, 7.15, 9.40, 11.55pm

nking disaster escape drama thingie. Prolonged peril, and all that UNITED 93 [15] Fri: 11.15am, 1.45, 4.10, 6.40, 9.00, 11.30pn

Phoenix Picture House (0870 758 3218) THE DAVINCI CODE [15] 🗷 Thu, Fri: 2.00, 5.15, 8.30pm he film of the best-selling boo

BRICK [15] 🗷 CHALLENGING CONVENTIONS: MEMENTO [15] Thu: 7.00pm

UNITED 93 [15] Fri: 1.30, 4.00, 6.30, 9.00pm

Odeon Magdalen St (0871 2244 007) PRIME [12A] Age gap rom com with Uma Thurman

X-MEN: THE LAST STAND [12A] 🗷 Thu: 12.15, 3.00, 5.45, 8.30pm Battle lines are drawn amongst the X-Men Fri: 1.00, 4.00, 6.45, 9.30 (Wheelchair access to all. CURIOUS GEORGE [U]

Thu: 11.45am, 2.00, 4.15, 6.30pn MISSION IMPOSSIBLE III [12A] Fri: 5.45, 8.30pn an't be impossible, or he wouldn't be able to do it. Would he THE WILD [U] Fri: 1.30, 3.45pm adagascaresque animation with zoo animals at large

Ultimate Picture Palace (245288) CASANOVA [12A] THE NEW WORLD [12A] Thu: 9.15pm

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GIGS

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New Theatre, Oxford (0870 6063500)

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THEATRE REVIEWS

Ghosts

Old Fire Station Theatre, 30th May - 3rd June 2006

The subject matter of Ghosts is grisly and morbidly fascinating; taking the dregs of society in 1870s Europe and looking at the realities behind the outward appearances of respectability. Broken marriages, adultery, incest, drunkards and syphilis are everywhere, as if inescapable. Over it all the pompous and self righteous Pastor judges and delves into the Alving family secrets, conscious of nothing but his own reputation.

This is the setting for the play, but the student production directed by Ben Bransfield has set the play in 1970s Britain at the height of a sexual and cultural revolution and at odds with the moral climate of the 1870s. This serves to heighten the claustrophobia in the play, set in one room and surrounding a family which has not been able to move on with the times due to the ideals and standards they relentlessly uphold.

Desperate and bleak, as are most of Ibsen's plays, the heavy atmosphere is relieved at times by the comic characters of Osvald (the son returning from an artist's life in Paris), and Jakob (the drunken father who wants to open a hostel for sailors). This is needed in such a closed and serious setting to make the play more watchable. Even though the play is supposed to be stagnant and claustrophobic, sitting through two hours of it took a dedicated and patient audience.

The bleak setting is thankfully broken up just often enough by humour and scary moments to keep our interest Haunting lines such as "You are worm eaten from birth" and the presence of those from the past who still haunt the house and Mrs Alving, like ghosts, make the play effectively scary at times, especially when the lights go out at importune moments and the music runs to a screaming pitch and makes you want to look away as you know what is coming. As the last hopes of salvation are lost, the play becomes predictable and spirals towards its ending.

Reputation, respectability and ideals are upheld by people to this day, protected at all costs; and the underworld of drugs, prostitution and "lost souls" who do not belong to a traditional family unit are still as unmoved by the attempts of the Pastor to guide them back to a "respectable life" as they were over 100 years ago. It makes one wonder how far we have really progressed.

Decadence, By Steven Berkoff

Burton Taylor Theatre, 30th May - 3rd June 2006

'I wouldn't have it any other way', says Helen, one half of the upper class pair in Steven Berkoff's verse play Decadence, which is being staged by the Philadelphia Players at the Burton Taylor Studio. She does so after riding her married lover in imitation of her hunting mount, graphically describing the social whirl and gory chase of riding to hounds. Starting off side-saddle, resoundingly slapping his rear, she ends up astride, bouncing, graphically describing the kill, the climactic blooding of the younger members of the hunt immediately preceding her battle cry.

In this study of sex and class, Molly Davies and David Cochrane take two roles apiece: that of Helen and her lover Steve, and of Steve's nouveau riche wife, Sybil, and the gangster she has hired to discover his infidelities. In alternating scenes in the typical Berkoff style of traded confessions and drawn-out anecdotes, they act out key moments of their respective affairs; the toffs in a 'sumptuous pad' in the West End, the working class in a suburban house (the kind that can be found, according to Helen, in 'rancid East Cheam'). The ambit* of the upper crust in the play is wide, taking in concerts, the theatre and supper at the Savoy, whereas the flat-vowelled Sybil and Les act out their highly carnal affair behind closed doors. What unites both couples is the frankness and depth of their sexual talk, revealing to the audience the bones of their difference, and the values that Berkoff sees the English attaching to sex.

More than twenty-five years on from its first performance, the stripping down of the English class system in Decadence defiantly survives as a familiar dramatic and fictional trope. It is tempting to see its invective of class war as a dusty relic of Thatcher's England, and viewed as a contemporary piece this play doesn't quite push the boundaries it did in the 1980s now that sex and sexuality in their many variant forms are the constant themes of film,

Molly Davies' performance is spot-on, easing into the contrasting accents and physicalities required from her for the two roles. The seams show more in Cochrane's breathless and halting portrayal of Steve and Les, but his energy is palpable and helps especially to realize the sensuality of the caddish Steve. The stark set, composed of nothing more a central settee, does much to keep the audience's mind on the fact that we are being invited to see these two couples as a mirror not only of one another, but also of ourselves.

*Ambit – 1. A circuit, compass, or circumference 1597; 2. The limits of a district 1845; fig. The compass of actions,

Buddy: The Buddy Holly Musical

New Theatre, Oxford, 29th - 3rd June 2006

Essentially, this is a glorified tribute show. Not that there's anything wrong with that. After all, the atmosphere at 9.45pm when the curtain descended after protracted bows was undoubtedly electric.

For two hours we follow the rise to fame of the 1950s rock and roll legend, Buddy Holly, from his first recording contract to his final performance. If you're looking for a serious biographical study, you'll be disappointed as the writers and director take a firmly populist stance. In between scenes of ambition, love and laughter well over twenty of the bespectacled performer's greatest hits are performed live including 'Peggy Sue' and 'That'll be the Day'.

The plot is thin, the jokes weak, the characterisation two-dimensional, the set far too small for the New Theatre's vast stage and the acting is hammy but who cares? It's the toe-tapping brilliance of the music and the boundless enthusiasm of the 16-strong cast which bring the greying audience swaying to their feet. Edward Handoll as Buddy has a strong singing voice and leads with confidence. Ricky Glowacki as Richie Valens should also be mentioned for his shamelessly camp, seemingly endless rounds of pelvic thrusts and excellent rendition of La Bamba. But it falls upon Debbralee and Ann Marie Roberts as the Apollo Performers to inject some humour into an otherwise

Being far too young to have witnessed such antics first time around, I couldn't exactly wallow in the nostalgia of Nixon jokes. I did however find incalculable satisfaction in watching the slightly childish, wide-eyed excitement, enthusiasm and wonder of the well-to-do sixty-something sitting next to me who couldn't bear not to rise to her feet and sing along. It's not often you see an audience jiving in the aisles. This is feelgood theatre at its somewhat

flawed best. Joe Pike, 31/05/06

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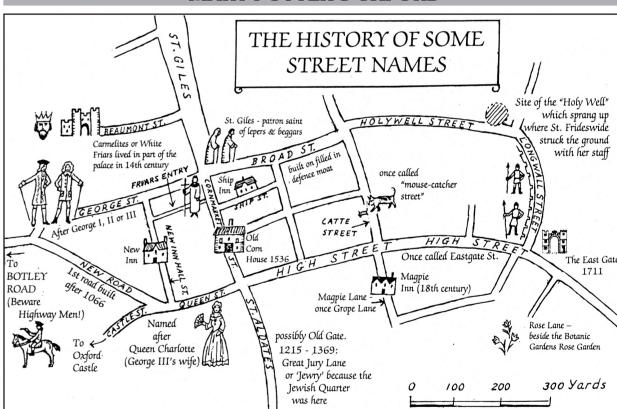
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MARY POTTER'S OXFORD



1) Corn Market: The Old Corn House, built in 1536, was demolished in 1644, so that the lead roof could be melted down for bullets, for use in the civil war.

2) Holywell Street. St. Frideswide, the patron saint of Oxford, was a nun so holy that when she prayed for relief from a persistent admirer, the latter was struck blind. She presumably felt this was an unduly harsh punishment, since his sight was restored by the water from her holy well. She is depicted in a window by Burne-Jones in the Latin Chapel of the Cathedral.

3) Great Jury Lane: There was a thriving Jewish community in Oxford in the 12th & 13th centuries, but Edward 1 expelled all Jews from this country in 1290. They were not officially re-admitted until 1656. 4) St. Aldates: Research has failed to track down a saint called Aldate, though there is a church of this name in Gloucester. It may be a corruption of Eldred or Olave or some other audio-confusable name, but current

opinion favours the "Old Gate" theory. Newcomers to the city will not realise how easy it was to move from north to south by car 20 or so years ago. Legend has it that on the day when the one-way system was introduced some enterprising undergraduates rearranged the signs so that everyone ended up in Carfax

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