

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## Rock 'n' roll for PTH

Surrey and Hampshire based band The Dolomites will be hosting their very own variety-styled charity Christmas party, on Saturday, December 22 at St Marks' Hall in North Camp, with all proceeds going to Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice.

Combining four great vocal talents with a backing of lead and rhythm guitars, bass and drums, this female-fronted band has an authentic rock 'n' roll sound which epitomises a bygone era.

The Christmas party will see the band play a full set including a guest performance from Adam Russell of the Nashville Teens - with many other fantastic acts adding to the evening with acoustic and electric sets across two stages. Come along and see

All That Swing, Surrey Ukeaholics, Lauren & Hardy and Peter Crutchfield. Comedians Andy Stedman and Ben Owens will each host one of the stages, and delicious Nepalese food will be on sale too, provided by The Gurkha Durbar Restaurant, Grayshott.

Professional dancers, a dressing-up box, a raffle and a host of other surprises make this a party not to be missed! The party will start at 7.30pm and finish at 11pm. Please bring your own drinks.

Tickets will be on sale on the door, priced £5, and all proceeds will go to Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care, which provides supportive and end of life care for local patients and families who are living with an advanced or terminal illness, such as cancer.

## Pop-up art shop in time for Christmas

If you are looking for new and unique gifts this Christmas, a pop-up shop in South Street, Farnham, might have just what you need.

Around twenty designers, makers and craft artists, associated with the University for the Creative Arts, have joined together to show and sell their work until Christmas Eve. The shop opened on Thursday (December 6) and offers high quality products, from textiles and basket-weave to ceramics, jewellery, sketches and lots more.

With every pocket in mind, prices range from stocking fillers to significant anniversary presents and investments for the future. Designers can also work with clients on custom-made pieces.

Each piece has a concept behind it and for silversmith and jeweller, Abigail Marsh, this is 'connection'.

Recently talent spotted by The Goldsmiths' Centre, Abigail's range of jewellery shows connecting hands.

There is also work from a glass artist whose quirky figures evoke lost childhood, a jeweller whose 'spinning thoughts' necklaces represent social anxiety, a textile artist whose work deals with hope, and a ceramicist whose grand-daughter lit and stoked the wood fire that gives his pieces their subtle colours and sheen.

Annette Mills is an artist in residence and co-ordinated the exhibition. After a "really positive start", several pieces had already been sold by Friday.



Annette Mills co-ordinated the exhibition (FD51-139-18)

# Panto as panto should be – the youngsters will love it

### Sleeping Beauty

Camberley Theatre

Corny jokes, energetic dance routines, quick-fire one-liners, men dressed as women, a few double entendres. A theatre full of laughing and screaming children.

It can mean only one thing – it's panto season.

And the Camberley Theatre team do the traditional festive fare proud. It's a modern take on an old tale – this sleeping beauty, Princess Aurora from Snoozeville, is a feisty young woman who has no intention of becoming a meek bride for her handsome prince.

She grabs a sword and wants to tackle the haddie, Carabosse, by herself.

Of course, good triumphs over evil in the end – this is Pantoland, after all, and some things can never change.

If the adults had heard most of the jokes before, or saw the punchlines coming way, before they were delivered, no-one told the youngsters. They howled at the gags, and enjoyed dancing in their seats.

Two performers really stood out. Melanie Stevens as – booooo – haddie Carabosse was exceptional. Fantastic expression, fantastic vocals, she milked the role for all it was worth.

And she looked as if she really enjoyed it.



The cast of Sleeping Beauty belt out their finale number

Madcap Ewan Goddard was Middles, the man who drew everything together on stage.

He's a Duracell bunny of a performer, never standing still. His pet dragon Drippy squirted water over those in the front row and while that's old hat for the parents, the kids loved it.

The producers know their audience well – and appreciate what will give the youngest people in the auditorium a fit of the giggles.

Mentions, too, for Nick Wyner as Nanny Nee Naw, the panto dame, who did his best with some lines which had

also been dormant for 100 years – as a Shakespeare actor, he turns his hand to slapstick as if he were born to it – and Louise Young as Princess Aurora, with her fine singing voice.

Princess Aurora's father, King Cedric (Mark Hyde) has a dominant stage presence. And the younger members of the cast, the juvenile chorus, perform with gusto.

No-one performed badly. Okay, some of the gags could have been more refined. But panto is primarily for the children – and they loved the gentle fun being poked at the towns surrounding

Camberley ("I needed a new bra – my old one was like Woking's football club, no support and no cups").

As the audience filed away at the end, the children were all smiles. For more than two hours, they were transported to a mystical castle and enjoyed the trip.

And as any parent will tell you, if the youngsters are happy, the whole family is, too.

■ *Sleeping Beauty* is at Camberley Theatre until December 31. More details on [www.camberleytheatre.co.uk](http://www.camberleytheatre.co.uk) COLIN CHANNON

## Comic pulls a blinder



Chris McCausland (Photo: Steve Ullathorne)

Star of Live at the Apollo and Comedy Central at The Comedy Store, multi-award-winning comedian Chris McCausland will bring his smash hit Edinburgh Fringe show, *Speaky Blinder*, to Bordon and Aldershot in 2019 as part of his debut national tour.

He's blind. He's a dad. He's a husband. That's just the half of it.

From hilarious tales of the marathon birth from hell that Chris and his wife thought would never end, and their experience of having to pay actual money to a mail lactation consultant (yes that's a real job), to the numerous and inevitable conflicts that arise when a pasty white Scouser is married to a hot-blooded Brazilian woman, *Speaky Blinder* delivers more razor-sharp observations from one of the circuit's best-loved and most prolific stand-ups.

Chris will be performing at the Phoenix Arts Centre, Bordon on Thursday, May 30 at 8pm (tickets priced at £12, concessions/members £10, available from phoenixarts.co.uk or 01420 472664) and West End Centre, Aldershot on Saturday, June 15 at 8pm (tickets £12, concessions/members £10 available online at [hampshireculturaltrust.ticketsolve.com](http://hampshireculturaltrust.ticketsolve.com) or call 01252 330040).

## Kitchen fitter cooks up novel

A KITCHEN fitter from the Meon Valley has served up a treat to readers with his debut novel about the trials and tribulations of three south-coast students.

Much of *Needless to say... Music, Mayhem, Fun and Friendship* is based on Jason Toman's formative years around Portsmouth and his musical tastes at the time.

The coming of age story, which has received "very positive feedback" since its release, follows the aforementioned trio through life's ups and downs and the music they enjoy.

The father-of-two from Droxford has always wanted to write a novel but the self-published book, which took seven months to complete, Search for *Needless to say... Music, Mayhem, Fun and Friendship* at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

## Dame is belle of the ball in Winchester

### Beauty and the Beast

Theatre Royal, Winchester

We are the people of this town," chant the villagers at the start of *Beauty and the Beast*; this year's Christmas panto at Theatre Royal, Winchester.

The scenery and costumes make a fantastic first impression. Early on we learn it is set in France – the land of current protest and unease – but then there is mention of Brexit, too.

The two-hour performance is littered with plenty of fun, jolly japes, double entendres and lots of "Oh no it isn't".

In the shopping scene where Wally (Ed Thorpe) arrives on stage with a trolley, mum Doty (Julian Eardley) – in a flamboyant dress that befits only a pantomime dame – asks whether he got what she wanted. "Did you get Oxo?" she questions. "No, they ran out of stock."

And so the gags continue to roll right on until "Bras" – "No they went bust!"

Writer and director James Barry has clearly enjoyed himself here and even



The cooking scene delivers another volley of laughs; Panto dame Doty (Julian Eardley, left) and son Wally (Ed Thorpe) dish up plenty of fun and jolly japes

my daughter Harriett, seven, gets the jokes and is in stitches.

The cooking scene delivers another volley of laughs. Poor old Wally can't seem to ask for flour without it being blown into his face in only the slapstick

to dream and they will inevitably re-enact parts of this performance back at home.

While for me, Doty is the strongest and most enjoyable to watch, all the cast needs congratulating.

"I shall dream about the witch [Malvolent] (Sarah Annakin)," says Henry, two, who is enthralled for the whole performance; a massive achievement.

Not a traditional pantomime, this love story with its lessons about beauty, substance and character could well go on to stand the test of time. It is sure to make many happy families this festive season.

"I laughed at the same jokes as you did," Caroline tells me later. We always have done but the challenges of parenthood, especially of late, can leave you feeling you have lost your sense of humour.

On our way back through the city centre we stop and watch the Eastleigh Scout Band playing Christmas carols and it is a perfect end to our little trip to Winchester.

TIM SAUNDERS

# Entertainments

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LIVE FROM NEW YORK  
19th  
8.00pm  
NATIVITY ROCKS! 19th  
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