

## Six reasons to stop reading this now:

- You enjoy sleeping
- You don't enjoy having a brilliant time with like minded people
- You're attached to the same old two week holiday every year
- You're of a delicate constitution
- You have no sense of humour
- You've always considered yourself relatively sane

Still reading.....? Well don't blame me!

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## The Riverside Players

The Riverside Players is a unique company of people who put aside two weeks every summer to put their energies into one exceptional production. The Company was founded by 10 students of the Central School of Speech and Drama in 1951. The membership now numbers over 100 and is worldwide, including members from Denmark, Australia and the USA, not bad for a company without a permanent base.



We began as a barnstorming group who played in the villages of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Changing circumstances and larger productions led to the present system of living and working in a single venue and over the years we have played at Culham, Stamford, Bognor Regis, Bloxham and Pangbourne. We have also taken productions to Copenhagen.

Each summer a group of people from many walks of life and of ages from six months to over eighty come from all over Britain (and beyond) to spend two weeks living and working together with the single, shared aim of staging a large-scale piece of theatre. Our repertoire ranges from Tartuffe to Twelfth Night via Toad of Toad of Hall and all points in between! We start with a green field site when we arrive on our first Sunday afternoon and two weeks later we depart leaving only memories and a few marks in the grass.



We believe that theatre is one of the greatest team efforts of all and our way of working means we have to be a very efficient team indeed. We work hard but we also play hard. The whole experience is exhilarating, stimulating, satisfying, exhausting but thoroughly rewarding and enjoyable.

The Riverside Players has grown because members have brought their families along and have introduced people whom they feel would enjoy and contribute to the company. Many of us come back year after year and lifelong

friendships have been formed. Inevitably the company is changing all the time, now the third generation is treading the boards and heading up technical and backstage crews... but a theatre group is always in need of new blood and this is where you come in!

## A year in the life of a virtual theatre company

Not everything can happen in the space of two weeks and lots of planning takes place in between productions. The company is run by an elected committee who steer and guide it. Socially the group meets three times a year.

An AGM is held in October and it is here, traditionally, the following year's play is announced. We meet again in February to hold auditions, discuss the technical aspects of the play and enjoy a good lunch and chinwag. In June in glorious sunshine (we hope) we have a garden party, this is usually held at the home of a company member. The garden party is a further opportunity to firm up the artistic and technical aspects of the show and to enjoy each others company.



It is important to remember that the Riverside Players is an ensemble theatre group and not just an acting company. There are no 'stars' and you could find yourself playing the lead one year and third spear carrier from the left the next. Even if you are cast in the play it is expected that you will also be part of a technical department of your choice, this could be an area in which you feel you have something to offer or you may fancy trying your hand at a new skill.

Some of our members have no interest in appearing on the stage whatsoever. We are fortunate in having a variety of complimentary skills amongst our membership. We have talented scenic artists, dressmakers, engineers and signwriters who ensure that the technical side of our productions is second to none.

### The 'Tour'

In remembrance of the company's barnstorming beginnings the two weeks of the play is affectionately called the tour. It begins on a Sunday afternoon with a short meeting of the whole company and then the work begins...and the fun too! The days are long and hard with work starting at 9:00am and ending at about 9:00 pm if you're lucky. The focus of the activities is then centred on the bar which closes when the last person leaves!



Once the show is up there is an opportunity to attend workshops, enjoy leisurely lunches, get to know the local area or maybe even just catch up on some sleep.

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## Now you've read this ask yourself these three questions:

- Have I now lost the will to live?
- Would I rather poke my eyes out with a sharp stick than join this mad lot?
- Would I like to know more about this company? If this is the case then log on to [www.riversideplayers.org.uk](http://www.riversideplayers.org.uk)