

Brighton Beach comes to Ashtead

Monday 1 April, 2024

Ashtead Players are delighted to announce that after many months of negotiation between themselves, Brighton and Hove City Council and the National Trust that an agreement has been reached to loan the local drama society fifty tonnes of pebbles from Brighton seafront beach.

The pebbles and shingle will be used to cover the floor at the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall in order to create 'the feel of Brighton' for audiences of their forthcoming performances of 'One Man Two Guvnors'.

The show is set in Brighton in the year 1963 and the society wanted a way to try and create an immersive feeling for the show. They hit upon the idea of, rather than seating the audience in a conventional manner, having real pebbles and sands from Brighton on which sit the audience.

Prof Sally Idao, the head of Arenology at Brighton University helped work out the quantities needed to cover the auditorium floor. She also liaised with the council and other institutions to obtain permission for the loan.

As an expert in the composition of beaches in the UK, she explains that "Normally it would be against the law to remove pebbles and shells from the beach, but we were able to coordinate the idea alongside the annual 'sweep'." Explains Prof Idao. "Every winter storms and winds change the profile of the beach, often leaving a steep slope down to the sea, so in spring each year we move tonnes of pebbles where needed to restore the beach ready for the summer". This year fifty tonnes will have a slight detour, spending a week at Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall.

The comedy farce, One Man Two Guvnors, was a hit on Broadway and in the West End and Ashtead Players hope that their authentic beach effect will help make their production even more memorable when it opens later this month.

Performances are at 7.45pm from Wednesday 24 to Saturday 27 April 2024 with a Saturday matinee at 2.30pm. Tickets are available on the door for £15 or in advance for £12 via <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/ashteadplayers> or box office 07598 121477.

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