

hightide

AUGUST 2009

SCARBOROUGH'S ESSENTIAL GUIDE

**All fired up:
glassblowing
in Ryedale**

**Whatever
floats
your boat**

For Paris read Glaisdale

**AND: music arts theatre comedy
film exhibitions poetry food & drink**

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It's August so naturally we expect wet weather. That means we get the chance to visit indoor shows, and this month there's some great exhibitions underway.

The traditional art of glassblowing is back in Ryedale after 400 years - but Gillies Jones' bowls are like none you've ever seen. We talk to Kate Jones about taking the quick way slowly.

Esk Valley Theatre is one of those small but perfectly formed ideas that has taken off big time. As director Sheila Carter prepares for another summer run, we feature the mighty mouse of theatre.

And if you want to do as well as see, there's sculpture you can really get into at the Art Gallery. Enjoy!

Front page pic: Tony Bartholomew

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ART

Pic: Tony Bartholomew



All fired up

Janis Bright talks to artist Kate Jones

Getting there by the quickest way slowly is how Kate Jones describes her art. It neatly sums up what's needed – patience, certainly, and also a determination to stick at it, and an appetite to learn the craft.

There are no short cuts in this business, because Kate and her partner Stephen Gillies are involved in pushing the traditional art of glassblowing to new levels. Their latest show, at the Ryedale Folk Museum, will present some of their latest work in a gallery setting, with photographs illustrating the process by Tony Bartholomew.

Kate says the show will be a welcome chance for the Gillies Jones enterprise to take a step back and examine how their work has evolved. The quickest way slowly for them has involved a 15-year journey in business, always pushing the limits of the craft. And to do that, you must first serve your time in the old ways.

Kate and Stephen served old fashioned apprenticeships, which included travelling to Switzerland, Denmark and the US to learn more. Then they set up shop, and their choice of Rosedale for a base again echoed the past: the Rosedale area was a centre for glassmaking as long ago as the 17th century.

At first Gillies Jones turned out a range of different blown glass items. But over time they have refined their work to focus on the one thing that continues to fascinate them and draw them to experiment: bowls. Their latest designs involve sending experimental vessels to Stourbridge to be have openings cut in them before returning to Rosedale for further design work. Kate explains: 'It's about vessels, a container for ideas, literal and metaphorical. Glass is a material of contradictions – it's fragile, yet strong. Spun glass has a tensile strength greater than steel. It's transparent, yet opaque.'

She wants to draw attention to this material that we all use every day and 'see but don't see'. Not

All fired up



Pic: Tony Bartholomew

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only is it widely used in household goods, but glass has come into its own as a 21st century communications medium, via the fibre optics that carry broadband.

Sadly though, as practical uses for glass increase, it is losing its place in the art world. Glass blowers are a rarity today, and Kate fears the skill is dying out. Partly, she thinks, that is because of the total commitment needed to do it. 'It is a 10-year learning curve to get good at it and you have to put in that investment to get results,' she says. Once the furnace starts blasting out its heat, the glassblower must work with it. 'It's all or nothing, you can't compromise.' Happily, in this rural niche the ideas and the vessels are in good shape.

Bounded Space: Blown Glass Vessels is part of Ryedale Folk Museum's Fired Arts series. It runs from 8 August to 11 October with a special event on 19 September.
Home page pic: Tony Bartholomew



Some people spend their whole year dreaming about their next summer holiday. For Sheila Carter and Mark Stratton it's more a case of spending a year planning for the extraordinary three weeks of hard work in August that is Esk Valley Theatre's offering to the world.

There are sponsors to be won over, rights to be secured, production and design meetings. It's best to be physically in shape as well, for

'The outside gazebo was about to fly off across the valley'

when the scaffolding arrives for the surprisingly comfortable bank of tiered seating for the audience. And then there's the weather. Sheila recalls: 'Each summer we've had some days when the weather has been so wet and windy that the stage manager has called me from his mobile whilst holding onto

THEATRE

For Paris read Glaisdale



Get ready for another rip-roaring show in the unlikely setting of a moorland village hall, says Janis Bright

the outside gazebo which was about to fly off across the valley.'

As she adds, it's not exactly Mary Poppins. But they never thought it was going to be easy, either. As far as can be discovered, Esk Valley Theatre is the first company in the country to even attempt to run a professional season in a village hall. The hall in question is the Robinson Institute, Glaisdale's modest but pleasantly detailed meeting place, built just in time to celebrate the coronation of George V in 1911. Among the attractions is being able to stand on the grass outside sipping a summery glass of wine and listening to the sheep bleating.

It's been a roaring success since the start in 2005, with John Godber's September in the Rain. Last year's play, Vacuum, was a hugely engaging, superbly acted tour de force complete with an original music score. Which is doubtless why the Arts Council decided not to fund the theatre for this year.

Sheila admits this year has been 'a challenge' with extra fundraising events needed to plug the gap. 'A huge amount of time is spent on funding applications, which are not always successful, and raising sponsorship,' she says.

But now it's all coming together once more, thanks to local businesses and other

sponsors, and an enthusiastic group of front of house volunteers. This year the company is returning to John Godber with April in Paris, starring Fiona Wass and Eamonn Fleming. It's a romance of rekindled love, which is definitely what you will feel for theatre-going if you take the trip to Glaisdale this summer.

April in Paris runs from 7 to 29 August, tickets £9/£8. Box office 01947 897587, www.eskvalleytheatre.co.uk

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**Roger Osborne
visited the Art
Gallery's new
hands-on show**



Whatever floats your boat

If you like a good dose of wit with your art, or with life in general, then Rock My Boat will certainly paddle your canoe. Who knew that the Owl and the Pussycat's pea-green boat was actually made of peas? Or that a Salty Dog can be a canine boat skipper? The first room has big sculptures of these two – the rotating owl's head and cat's tail are a sign of things to come – plus a life size iron palm tree.

The next space is taken up with a dazzling mobile sculpture, impossible to describe, essential to see. The artists' description says what it represents, but I found it better to experience it as both soothing and disturbing.

The final room has the boat you can pedal, complete with passengers with flapping flippers and rotating white stilettos. Then comes the scary eight foot metal minotaur and the mad cow (the best bit for Michael, our ten year old reviewer), with some rotating crying babies for those quiet moments.

While all this is great for kids, there is some seriously interesting art too, as well as a use of materials that goes beyond novelty for novelty's sake. Art doesn't have to wear a serious face in order to say something worthwhile.

Rock My Boat
by **Johnny White and Amanda Wray**
Scarborough Art Gallery until 20 September