

newsletter

MANE CHANCE SANCTUARY



MCS Spring Newsletter - May 2021

Welcome!

Welcome to our Spring newsletter!

We do hope that you are all well and have been keeping safe in these continuing challenging times. The latest lockdown seemed so much harder than the first – we were well-versed in the changed routine with just staff on site following our experience of last summer, but with added mud, rain and cold, together with that feeling of déjà vu, it definitely was a tougher few months. The country seemed to have a bit of a blitz spirit during the first lockdown (helped by the longer days and the warm weather of course), but this one was more tricky. We all trust that you have all managed through these difficult months and can join us in looking forward to a better second half of 2021.

We are immensely grateful for all the support that we received over the pandemic situation. Having built up some emergency reserves over the past few years, we managed to steer our way through financially with the online appeals helping to cushion some of the blow of cancelling our planned events. Many front-line charities have had access to Covid emergency funding, exactly as they should in order to preserve their invaluable services to those who need them, but sadly for others like us, there hasn't been any assistance and we have had to pull on all our reserves. This means that this year is much more worrying – having dipped into our 'rainy day' fund last year (who



could have imagined it would turn out to be a 'rainy year'?), our future is a little uncertain – but if enthusiasm and determination is anything to judge us by, we will make it through! It just means that the pressure is on to try to ensure we are safe for this year having survived the past fourteen months before we can even think about long-term plans again. The trials and tribulations of running an animal charity...

We have been able to return to some normality since the initial lifting of restrictions in March – our merry band of volunteers have been a very welcome sight each morning (my goodness, how much we missed them all) and we have been able to resume some of our community work, albeit with reduced numbers to comply with restrictions. Never more than now have we understood how important our work is – many of those who come

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to the Sanctuary have found the lockdown very hard and we know that the numbers of those with mental health concerns are rising ...

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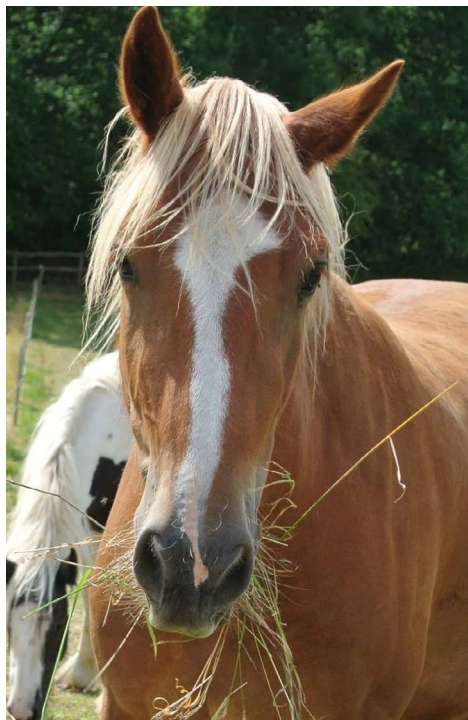
uncontrollably as are the statistics of those self-harming and with eating disorders – the pandemic is going to have long-lasting effects on so many. Despite the forced gap in our provision of sessions, we have never lost sight of how we can offer respite and support and immediately our Sanctuary was able to spring into action with those who have returned. Our horses, thrilled to see both familiar and new faces in their tracks and fields seem to have gained even more ability to empathise, offer

friendship and support. It's almost as if they know that we have all had a tough time and are doing their bit to help us through it too – when you see the interaction and horse-human connections taking place across our site, you can't help but be spurred into ensuring that we do everything possible to make sure that this continues long into the future and that Mane Chance is here for many a while yet...

Where would we be without our animals – those constant companions who remain loyal throughout everything and who sometimes just know how to put

their head in your lap, run to greet you or whinnie across a field at exactly the time you need that little pick-me-up. We are lucky to have so many animals at Mane Chance and we never take them for granted – it's just so lovely to be able to share them again with others. We do hope that, fingers crossed, the path out of lockdown continues and that we may also see all of you back on site soon so that you can share them too – our newsletter contains details of the events that we are daring to plan... Get your diaries ready!

Our Urgent Hay Appeal



Unfortunately, we have a crisis on our hands. The poor hay-growing conditions of the past few years coupled with the ongoing unsettled weather has resulted in a national hay shortage. The price of hay is soaring, supplies in quantity are hard to find and we have hit the perfect storm – we neither have good grass growth on site to feed the animals ourselves nor can source reasonably priced hay to compensate for it.

The extreme wet weather conditions at Christmas, followed by snow and subsequent thaw, and a very cold and dry start to the year has hugely affected the industry. For many farmers, they would have already made their first cut of hay by now, but the weather conditions since Christmas have meant their hay simply hasn't grown and it is not there to cut.

We need your help now, more than ever. The shortage means the price of hay has increased by as much as 40% from some suppliers. The extra spend is putting further pressure on our already tightened budgets which have been significantly impacted by the pandemic of last year. With 38 horses to feed our hay bill is going to be extortionate, but with your support we can raise the funds to buy the hay we need to see us through the summer. Until now we have been paying on approximately £3 per bale of hay, but we are expecting they could rise to as much as £7 per bale – or even higher!

We would be so grateful if you could spare a few pounds to help us keep our horses fed by donating what you can to our **Urgent Hay Appeal** [Donate here](#)

Thank you for anything that you are able to give.

Open Sundays



We are delighted to announce that we are resuming our open Sunday events this year. Due to the ongoing restrictions, we will be limiting the numbers on each day to ensure we remain within the regulations, but the format of the day will remain the same – a tour of the site, video presentation and time to talk to our team – plus a free cuppa and cake of course!

There is one difference however this time. We will be placing an entrance fee of £3 per adult for the Open Sunday event – equivalent to the usual price of one bale of hay! Children over the age of 5 have discounted tickets of £2 each. We are sorry to introduce a cost to the event, but it helps us to cover costs and ensure the future of Mane Chance.

Open day events start at 2pm with the tour of the horses and usually last a couple of hours.

Dates so far are confirmed as Sunday 30th May, Sunday 20th June and Sunday 25th July.

Visit our website for more information and to book your place [here](#)

Please note that booking is essential, so please book early to avoid disappointment!

Our animals

It's been quite a frustrating few months for our horses too – without the weather playing ball, they are having more time on the hay diet which is not as enjoyable as the succulent shoots of growing grass of course!

So, they are as keen as we are for the weather to change and the grass to finally start to create a platter of nibbles, as well as looking forward to having the warm sun on their backs. They are all over the place with shedding their coats- some have lost everything and are summer sleek and others still have their thick itchy winter coats!!!!

Other than that, they have come through winter well – as with any Sanctuary offering forever homes for their animals, it means that we have an ageing herd and each year, a few more creaks and aches appear for our oldies. Every winter, a few more rugs are needed to keep the bodies warm and a little more supplementary feeding to aid weight retention. But it's not a problem – with age comes maturity and we have very settled herds enjoying a level of retirement that befits their years! Berry, for example, whilst one of our oldest horses nearing 30 years of age is looking better than ever – his coat is gleaming and his demeanour is that of a 15 year old. It is such a pleasure to give these horses the retirement that they deserve – and they seem to be thriving on it!

Our four mares are also doing well – we are maintaining their weight well (or lack of it as they are prone to being quite tubby) and their mobility is better for being a little lighter on their feet. Coupled with that, they are loving human interaction which considering when they arrived with us a few years ago, they had never been handled, is lovely to see and they are now very important members of our community herd, enthusiastically working with the children and visitors that we have returning to site.



Our cobs are maturing too – the over-excitable and boisterous characters of Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Blueboy, Bobbie, Ziggy and Phyllis have blossomed into characterful yet kind and generous horses – whilst they do still have the odd moment of madness, their herds are generally calmer and more respectful than ever and we are so proud to see how they have grown up.

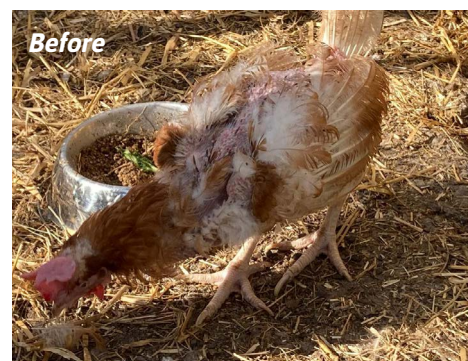
And that's just to name a few of course.....

It's strange how when the world stops and enforces a return to a simpler existence as it has with the pandemic, that you notice the smaller things around you. The site was quieter in general, the staff were busy but with general hustle and bustle of everything reduced around us, it allowed some of the world to shine again. We noticed the bird song more, the water vapour trails of planes were replaced by the majestic soaring of the red kites in the skies above us and the bluebells seem more blue than ever.

Our horses too have shined brighter – reinforcing and reminding all of us on site of our ethos that things don't need to be so rushed and pressured and that the calmer approach always wins through. Let's just hope that we, as a society, can take some of those lessons forward and not return to the chaotic and challenging existences that we had been caught up with before. We always knew that our horses could be great teachers, but they seem to have graduated into professors over

lockdown! Already, they are working wonderfully with our returning community visitors, offering kindness and calmness to all that spend time with them, and we look forward to sharing them more as we progress through the roadmap of lifting restrictions.

As you know, Mane Chance also have some others in their care too – Angel the dog of course, but also ex-battery and ex-caged chickens. Rescued in collaboration with the British Hen Welfare Trust, our flock of girls (supervised by Dave the Cockerel of course) not only thrive in our large hen coop and run, providing eggs each day for us, but they also provide great entertainment and life-lessons too. For birds that arrive featherless and withdrawn, crouched into submission, they soon stand tall, grow their contour and down feathers and start to investigate all corners of their new home. An instant way to tell the health of a chicken is through the comb on the top of their head – red and upright means they are healthy, white and



floppy means that they are lacking. Our chickens arrive, not surprisingly with white, floppy combs and it's a pleasure to see them pink up and start to stand up brightly. The girls also often arrive without any understanding of grass, rain or even natural sunlight (!) as they are usually kept inside on grilled surfaces, and they take a while to get used to the feeling of the soft ground beneath them! But more extraordinary is the fact that they have never encountered a cockerel before – the male of their own species is not something that is needed in an egg-producing farm of course! Dave the cockerel likes to make a great deal of

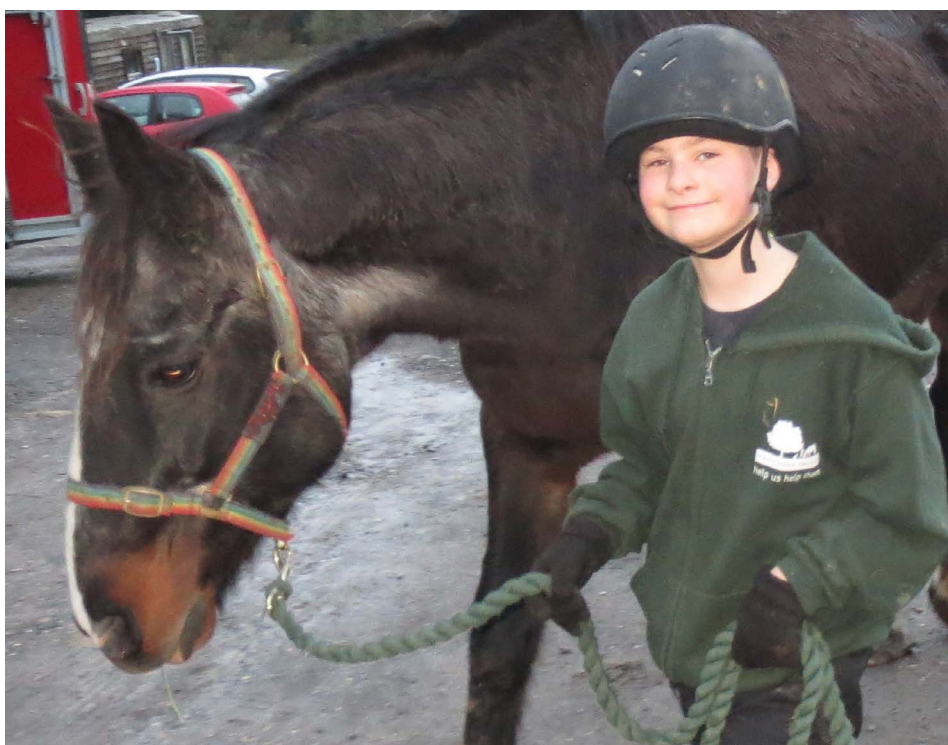
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noise (and not just at dawn) as any of you who have visited the Sanctuary will know – his crowing is a regular sound in the orchard! And well, he is a huge show-off! When new girls arrive, he fluffs up his bantam feathers (even though he is smaller than all the chickens) and he struts around loudly, crowing for all his worth. The first time the newly rescued hens hear him, he makes them physically jump – never before have they heard such a thing! But they soon get used to him and his 'male' presence!



It takes time to integrate the new hens as they are seen as a weak threat in the flock and the meaning of the phrase 'pecking order' is really demonstrated as the older hens can be pretty brutal, sensing the vulnerability of the new girls. So it's a gradual process to get them all together, starting with improving the physical health of the new girls so that they are not seen as such a weak link before we put them in with the established flock. We don't push the integration with the chickens (as we don't with the horses) and we give it the time it needs - our run with two coops allows us the space to do it. Soon they will be together as one – our latest three new girls joining our merry band of hens, putting their previous life behind them and looking forward to a more comfortable retirement too – with red combs standing strong of course!

Our Community



We obviously have had to delay a lot of our community work during the lockdowns and have only really resumed our sessions in the past few weeks during the Easter holidays and then with schools when they returned after that.

Sessions are still limited in numbers of participants, which restricts us a bit, but we have worked hard to reschedule all the Share a Shettie sessions that we had to postpone, plus honour all the vouchers for sessions that had been bought over Christmas. In addition, we had a number of Duke of Edinburgh and work experience students who had been working hard for their studies and who had been horribly interrupted during the year – they are now scheduled into the diary. Finally, we were at last able to resume our 1-2-1 sessions and Chance2Be courses, welcoming more children to work with us at the beginning of the summer term. First-hand, we have seen how the time away from most social interaction, school environments and even our site has impacted young people and we are delighted to be able to offer direct support to them once more, rather than from a distance.

Sadly, we remain very over-subscribed for such sessions and as our waiting list grows, we are looking to see how we can improve our community offer and be able to help more people throughout the week. We must make sure that we don't affect the grooms' work with the horses or overwhelm the herds with the result that they could become jaded and not be so keen to interact by over-committing our provision, but we are looking at all ways we can increase our ability to help more people. There are so many who will benefit from time spent at the Sanctuary matched only by our desire to help them...

AQA Awards

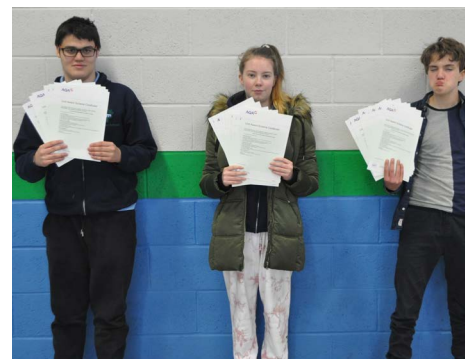
Our AQA awards, launched in the Autumn term of 2020, may have had an interrupted start when we had to close again in December, but in the short time we were delivering them, they had an amazing impact on our services.

As you may know, during the first lockdown, we took the opportunity to write over 80 bespoke unit award modules relating to the work we do on site – horse care, site maintenance, chicken care etc. Aimed at all ages and abilities, they offer us the ability to structure our community time so that the young people are working towards certificates of achievement during their sessions. All of the units are underpinned with our ethos and approach – calmness, respect and kindness towards the animals and other members of the team – but also to self. By learning the practical skills in a safe environment, we find that we are able to encourage our young people to grow in confidence, lessen self-criticism and anxiety and to increase self-esteem. This is all done in the peaceful surroundings of the Sanctuary, a place outside of the normal school environment where they often feel so uncomfortable and defensive. During the Autumn term, we enrolled 19 students onto the scheme and in the twelve weeks we were open,



they achieved 125 certificates between them. For many of these children who struggle to achieve at school, these were some of the first certificates they had received. Where possible, we arranged for the school to present the certificates in front of peers, even at assemblies where appropriate and to really celebrate what the students had attained. We have had amazing feedback from schools, parents and the children themselves about how proud they are to have succeeded in the awards and we look forward to working with more young people on the scheme. It's a lovely way to consolidate all the learning we provide at Mane Chance and to give our students something tangible to take away. For them, life is challenging and difficult, either because of chaotic home lives or mental or physical health issues – we are proud

to offer them something reachable that they can work towards and share with others, in celebration of what they can do, rather than highlighting what they can't. And we hope that going forward, these achievements will unlock further potential for our young people to progress further in study or even employment. We congratulate all our certificate holders and wish them well...



Meet the Team



Sophie joined our grooming team in February last year and was just starting to settle in when the lockdown struck!

Since that time, she has not only demonstrated a very good understanding of our ethos and approach to horse care, but she also brings with her experience in rehabilitating rescued animals and has introduced some lovely new techniques to our work with particular focus on the emotional enrichment of the horses as well as the physical. We were delighted to be able to offer Sophie a promotion at the beginning of this year to equine supervisor and she has already brought much to the role. We look forward to her leading the team in the future and sharing her knowledge with all of us plus we have some exciting plans of how we can share it with you too – watch this space! Congratulations Sophie on your promotion and thank you for all your hard work!

Chitty's Challenge – Sunday 3rd October 2021

This is the Mane Chance virtual London Marathon entry!



Join us with this unique event - either in person by running a mile as part of our team or from afar!

Rev. Lynne Chitty has been supporting Mane Chance Sanctuary for many years. She lives in Devon but keeps in touch with all the happenings at the Sanctuary and is a great ambassador for the work that we do with both the horses and the humans!

Having secured a place in the ballot, in October Lynne will take on the Virtual London Marathon to raise vital funds and awareness for Mane Chance. She will tackle the gruelling 26.2 miles, running between the sanctuary in Compton and Godalming Town Centre, on a looped route which will see her cover the distance between the two locations THREE times!

Will you help us support Lynne by either donating to her fundraising campaign or even accompanying her on one of her 26 miles?

We are looking for a team of 26 runners who will each accompany Lynne for 1 mile, providing much-needed encouragement, support and motivation. Our relay team of runners will run with Lynne at her pace, handing over to each other as she hits each mile marker! Lynne's average mile pace is approximately 11-minute miles, so you don't need to be a sprinter!

Lynne will finish her epic challenge accompanied by founder of Mane Chance, Jenny Seagroave who will join Lynne for the last mile and welcome her back to Mane Chance Sanctuary - and there might be a couple of extra surprises then too!

If you wish to run, there is a registration fee of £20 to reserve your mile and we ask that you canvass the support of your friends and family by asking them to sponsor you through our Chitty's Challenge Just Giving Page. In a very challenging couple of years for the charity, we are hoping to make this a very special occasion and raise some much-needed funds!

Each of our mile runners will receive:

- Bespoke T-Shirt with your mile number on it
- Souvenir pen
- Mane Chance souvenir medal
- Invitation to the final celebration at MCS when Lynne finishes
- Refreshments at the Sanctuary and en route

To be one of our treasured relay team, please [register here](#)



If you are not able to join us in person, but would still like to support our challenge, there are a number of ways you can get involved:

- if you're not a runner, the easiest way to show your support and encouragement to her on this huge commitment is to make a donation to our [Chitty's Challenge Appeal](#)
- if you are a keen runner and are feeling brave, perhaps you run your own marathon for Mane Chance at home, or in your local community linking in with our [Justgiving page](#)
- team up with friends, family or work colleagues and complete a marathon, splitting the 26.2 miles between the team, linking in with our [Justgiving page](#)

Lynne and the team's progress will be covered on our social media channels on the day - don't forget to keep in touch with how it is going!

To take part and buy your mile, please [register here!](#)



Mane Chance Events

We are looking on the positive side wherever we can, so are putting in the early plans for some of our regular events plus a couple of new ones. We hope that we will be able to see you all,

even if there is a limit on numbers and we have to time-ticket our events, we will endeavour to keep to our plans as much as possible! Please keep an eye on our social media and website for

more information as we get nearer the time, but in the meantime, please grab your diaries and save some dates!!

Big Summer Open Day – Sunday 22nd August

Mane Chance Firewalk – Thursday 14th October



We invite you all to come and meet the team, the horses and the hens! Find out more about what we do and how we do it – plus there will be craft stalls, live music, games, tombolas and of course, refreshments galore including our Pimms tent and BBQ! It will be the first major event we have had for over 18 months, so we really hope to see you, give you a warm welcome and get you up to date with what's been going on! The day runs from 12 noon until 5pm and tickets will be on sale soon, so please keep an eye out for more updates over the coming weeks.

Christmas Carols – Sunday 5th December

We are daring to look even further ahead and have also booked the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Godalming for our carol evening. Please do make a note in your diary for **Sunday 5th December** when we hope to hold our regular event, attended by our Shetland ponies of course – plus some celebrity friends performing as well! This is a really lovely start to the festive season and we missed this event last year so can't wait to see you all there!

Face your fears... feet first!

Join Mane Chance for an event like no other, a challenge that will thrill, excite and exhilarate! Put your courage to the test walking across embers of temperatures up to 1200F – it's a case of mind over matter!

Open to ages 18+, the Fire Walk is also the perfect team-building event for local groups and work teams step across the hot surface with your team cheering you all the way.

So why not raise your temperature, your heart rate and vital funds for Mane Chance Sanctuary and make our Fire Walk your moment to remember!

[Visit our website for more information!](#)



Not forgetting our Sanctuary Gift Vouchers



As you know, all of our horses are available for sponsorship. Last year, we introduced gift vouchers for our basic and enhanced sponsorship packages, Share a Shettie experience and Sanctuary private tours. These are a lovely way to treat a family member or friend, allowing them to choose their own horse to sponsor or date to attend the site to spend some special time with our horses. For any animal lover, this are super gifts which will really immerse them in Mane Chance, learning about our horses, why they came to be with us and how we rehabilitate them and work alongside them in the community.

When you purchase a voucher, you will receive a gift card to give to your recipient, which will tell them more about how to activate their membership or book their visit and now that we are opening up – we can put dates in the diary! Why not give a gift of sponsorship or a Mane Chance experience?

[Please visit the voucher section of our shop to find out more](#)



Other Ways to Donate to us

Sometimes it feels like all we are doing is asking for money. It's true that it is at the forefront of our minds right now and we need it desperately, but it is not always only monetary donations that can help us! There are a number of other ways that you can support us by turning your second-hand or unwanted items into cash, nominating Mane Chance to benefit from your generosity!

These include:

- Donating unwanted rug and tack items direct to us at the Sanctuary
- Taking your excess apples and pears from your fruit trees to the Surrey Garden Cider Company (who will turn it into cider for us to sell!)
- Collecting used stamps from your post
- Selling unwanted items through Ebay for Charity or Ziffit
- Donating your old car (!) to Give a Car

If you would prefer to buy an item for us rather than send money, we do completely understand. Our Amazon Wish list is set up to do just that – we have placed on it a number of items that we need at the Sanctuary which you can choose from to purchase and they will be sent directly to the Sanctuary.

Lastly, if you are an online shopper, by signing up with the Giving Machine, Easy Fundraising or Give as you Live and nominating Mane Chance to benefit, you can turn your shopping sprees into donations for us – the online retailers pay a percentage of your purchases to us, rather than online companies! It doesn't cost you a penny!

For more information on all of these ways to support Mane Chance, [please visit our website](#)

Thank you!

Psst...

Jenny has exciting news to tail this newsletter!

Despite the well-publicised difficulties that the entertainment industry is facing, against all odds, she has news! Jenny is appearing at the Theatre Royal Windsor in an exciting season of plays starting at the end of June. Sir Ian McKellen stars as Hamlet, 50 years after first taking on the role. Jenny stars with him in this re-imagined age, colour and gender-blind production of Shakespeare's unrelenting tale of madness, revenge and death.

Staged in a new format never seen before at Theatre Royal Windsor, including a limited number of on-stage seats to be made available closer to performances dates, this is an exclusive opportunity to experience world-class theatre up-close.

**IAN MCKELLEN PLAYS HAMLET IN SEAN MATHIAS' INAUGURAL SEASON
OPENING THEATRE ROYAL WINDSOR 21 JUNE 2021**

BILL KENWRIGHT PRESENTS
SHAKESPEARE'S

HAMLET

THE COMPANY BEN ALLEN FRANCESCA ANNIS STEVEN BERKOFF
EMMANUELLA COLE LLINOS DANIEL ALIS WYN DAVIES
ASHLEY D GAYLE NICK HOWARD-BROWN
JONATHAN HYDE ASIF KHAN LEE KNIGHT MISSY MALEK
IAN MCKELLEN JENNY SEAGROVE

DIRECTOR SEAN MATHIAS
SET DESIGNER LEE NEWBY COSTUME DESIGNER LOREN ELSTEIN
LIGHTING DESIGNER ZOE SPURR
COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER ADAM CORK

MONDAY 21 JUNE
- SATURDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

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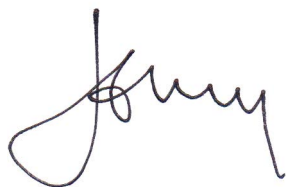
THEATRE ROYAL Windsor

Understandably, tickets are selling fast! So don't delay – visit the [Theatre Online Box office](#) for more information and to secure your seats!

And finally...

It's been a tough year, there's no denying it! For some more than others. But out with my dogs on one of my morning walks, it occurred to me that sometimes life can be like negotiating a puddle in a narrow lane. Some puddles are too big to jump and you know that you are going to have to get your feet wet, (or maybe if you are the Vicar of Dibley, you go in up to your waist...) but some have the odd stone or stick in the right place where you can carefully

find your way across and reach the other side. I hope that in the months to come, you all manage to find stepping stones to cross your puddles!!! Take care and keep safe as we hopefully negotiate our way into what may well be a new normal for us all.



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