



FULWOOD METHODIST CHURCH COMMUNITY THEATRE VISIT GROUP LATE 2017 NEWSLETTER

It seems very strange to be writing a newsletter which is headed 'late 2017'.

We hope that you have enjoyed the visits we made together in 2017 and that those of you coming to 'The Armed Man' will have a good afternoon. That will be our last event until the New Year.

Thank you all for your support and encouragement and especially for the feedback you give to us about your experiences on the trips. We have used your comments to help guide us as we make a few changes for 2018.

Our main intention in this newsletter is to provide information about our progress in planning the programme for 2018. This programme will be rather different from the approach we have taken in the past and we would like first of all to explain why that is so. There are several reasons:

1. As we have commented before, not all the theatres announce their programmes at the same time. So sometimes we choose to visit a show and then at a later date realise that it coincides with another opportunity which has presented itself. So you will see that a few of our events are at this stage 'either/ors'.
2. We recognise that theatre tickets are becoming more expensive. You encourage us to obtain good quality accessible seats, which are usually more expensive, and when we have asked you have told us that you think our

prices are reasonable. However, we want as many folk as possible to feel able to come along with us. We think that a longer-term and more varied programme will mean there is something for everyone. It will help you to pick and mix!

3. You have also made it clear that not all visits we make need to be based upon a theatre performance. One of our happiest days this year was the visit to Chatsworth House, for example. Sometimes, too, you tell us you like the option of coming on the coach to a place of interest whether or not you join in with any theatre visits. So we are now working with a list of day visit suggestions, many of which you provided to us. We are always happy to try to accommodate people on a coach-only basis.
4. You have also told us you continued to value residential visits. These enabled to spend time with existing friends and to make new ones. But it is clear there are two distinct groups – those who want a good break and those who want serious theatre. That is the main reason why we are looking to two residential visits later in 2018.
5. We also find it helpful to have a long-term programme. It helps us with publicity and with administration.

So you will see that our plans are longer-term than usual and stretch over the whole of 2018. However, this does mean that there will be some details which can only be filled in at a later date and we will provide this information through emails and posted newsletters as soon as we can.

If you already have your new diaries or calendars you might want to make a note of some of the trips we are preparing.

At the end of this newsletter you will see our programme for 2018. To assist you further, even though we may not be able to supply full details, we provide an indication of the likely cost by labelling each event as follows:

- Category A – lower cost (usually the main element will be the transport and administration costs. We will make it clear whether any entrance costs will be part of the charge or if they need to be paid on the day.)
- Category B – medium cost (transport and administration plus a theatre ticket for a theatre e.g. Bolton Octagon, Oldham Coliseum, Keswick, Blackpool Grand.)
- Category C – higher cost (transport and administration plus a ticket for a performance in a larger theatre, such as a ballet, opera or musicals. The Royal Exchange now comes into this category.)

When we buy theatre tickets, we will usually obtain good stalls seats and do our best to ensure accessibility. When this isn't possible we will say so clearly.

As you read the programme you will see that visits are more evenly spread out, after the three trips in the early part of the year. These three have been in the programme for some time.

Although it may seem a little early, please accept our good wishes for your health and happiness this Christmas and into the New Year.

Sharon Beck

Ken Wales

FULWOOD METHODIST CHURCH
COMMUNITY THEATRE VISIT GROUP



Programme of visits and events being planned for 2018.

Saturday 13th January 2018 - matinee performance of '**A Christmas Carol**' at The Octagon Theatre Bolton. For this event we will be joined by children from Ribbleton Avenue Methodist Junior School. This performance will be great for children and adults alike. The cost for this visit is £43 (£40 for children) and your payment can be insured for an extra £4.

Saturday 20th January 2018 - matinee performance of '**Guys and Dolls**' at The Royal Exchange Manchester. We can guarantee that you will see top-class theatre at The Royal Exchange's Christmas production and come out of the theatre truly invigorated. The cost for this visit is £50 and £45 (all stalls seats but some a little further back) and you can insure your payment for £5.

Saturday 3rd February 2018 – Shakespeare's '**Hamlet**' performed live by the Royal Shakespeare Company on tour at The Lowry Theatre, Salford. The production was highly acclaimed when it was performed earlier this year at Stratford and was broadcast at cinemas nationally. The cast is very largely the same. Very highly recommended. The cost for this visit is £53 and you can insure your payment for £5.

Monday 19th March 2018 - a day visit to **Liverpool**. Time will be available for shopping, sightseeing and culture as you choose. This will involve a group visit to see 'The First Emperor and Terracotta Army Exhibition' at the World Museum. (Cost Band A/B) Please note this event is being negotiated with the Museum. Final information will be available as soon as possible.

Saturday 7th April 2018 – a matinee performance of '**East is East**' at The Lowry Theatre, Salford. This is the BAFTA winning film comedy now adapted for the stage. The cost for this trip will be £43 and the payment can be insured for £4.

Monday 21st May 2018 – a day visit to **The Lake District** to include time in Ambleside and a cruise on Lake Windermere. (Cost - Band B to include steamer sail)

Saturday 9th June 2018 – a matinee performance of '**A Summer Holiday**' at the Bolton Octagon Theatre. This is the famous musical of our youth – produced in a new stage version. There will be some surprises for you to tell your friends about. Cost will be £43 and insurance will be £4.

Thursday 21st June 2018 – a day visit to **Ilkley** (shopping, walking on the moors or by the river, sitting and relaxing, great restaurants (Betty's! and several others) and for those who wish, time at the pre-Wimbledon tournament at Ilkley Tennis Club. Unreserved seating ticket at the tennis is only £7.50 payable on the day and you will see promising young players and maybe

some players whose names you recognise, trying to qualify for Wimbledon wild cards. (Cost - Band A)

Wednesday 11th July 2018 – this will be a full-day visit **either** to **Keswick** (with the option of seeing a play – their summer programme is yet to be announced) **OR** a visit to **Ulverston** in the morning and then to Grange over Sands for afternoon tea. (Cost - Band B)

Friday 7th and Saturday 8th September 2018 – another visit to **Stratford-upon-Avon** staying overnight at the ideally centrally-located Crown Plaza Hotel. This time we will take in only one play – **‘Romeo and Juliet’** – on the Friday evening (this will be optional – come along and use Friday evening in another way if you wish) and after time in Stratford on Saturday morning we will return via the **National Memorial Arboretum at Stoke-on-Trent**. Financial information will be available shortly.

Monday 1st October to Friday 5th October 2018 – a four night residential visit to **The Buxton Palace and Spa Hotel in the Peak District of Derbyshire**. This will include a wide range of daily visits and excursions for those who wish to join them. Buxton also has an excellent theatre and nearer the time we will see if a visit is possible – their programme is yet to be announced. Full financial information will be available shortly.

Wednesday 24th October or 31st October 2018 – a day visit to **Keswick** to include a matinee performance at The Theatre by The Lake **OR** a planned visit to two locations in the **Lake District**. (Cost - Band B)

Wednesday 21st November 2018 – matinee performance of **‘Matilda’** at The Lowry Theatre, Salford. (Cost - Band C). Projected costs are as follows, the cost for ticket, travel and gratuities will be £80. Insurance will be £6.

A note about payment:

For most of these events, the normal financial arrangements will apply. That is, you can reserve a place at anytime with a £10 non-returnable deposit and the balance is then due four weeks before the date. That will cover all costs, including gratuities, unless otherwise stated. An extra ‘insurance’ payment will cover you in the event of emergencies. Payment must be made in this timescale or the place will be offered to others if there is a waiting list.

However, there are two types of events where we may require earlier payment:

- Those where we have to pay substantial sums in advance for tickets e.g. Matilda
- Residential visits, since hotels require early deposits

As we have commented in previous newsletters, the new payment system seems to be working well, but we will keep it under review. One problem is that it does require Sharon and yourself to be in contact with each other at least twice for each event – for the deposit and the final payment. So the system

may be further refined as we go along. We would love to introduce an on-line option in due course – does anybody know anyone who might be able to help us set one up?

You may interested to know that we learnt recently of one similar group to ours where the payment is due in full before a name goes on the list. (Your name goes on our list when the deposit is received). In that other group, in the event of illness or any other reason, it is for that person then to make arrangements to sell the ticket on. We want to avoid that sort of arrangement if we can. The central idea of our group is to provide a service to our local community and not to add to your burdens!