

## News and Events

Welcome to the first edition of The HopBarn's newsletter, which provides information and insights into The HopBarn, as well as offering further notification of up coming events and performances.

Over the course of 2016, The HopBarn initiated a more coherent programming schedule and as such, demonstrated a clear development in moving towards the outlined vision the centre had when first conceived. There is still a lot more to do, although recognition must be attributed to the overwhelming number of audience members who have attended an event at The HopBarn. Such attendance and feedback provided, offers us a positive reflection on the work that is being undertaken, as well as demonstrating the contribution the centre has made within the local surrounding area.

2017 looks already to be a fulfilling year and through this offer of a monthly news and events publication, it is hoped that useful and informative insights into the development of The HopBarn, can be witnessed by all who wish to sign up and join our mailing list.

We hope that such information proves to be useful to our readers, but if you would like to offer feedback and suggestions as to what to include or what to focus on, please feel free to e-mail or write in with your suggestions and we will try to accommodate them where best we can.



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## A little bit of history:

### The HopBarn a one time personal dream!

As Stuart Poole took a moment amongst an array of feed bins, pallets, tractors, trailers and the mill that was slowly grinding grain into feed; he stood back against the wall and visualized a different use for the barn, one that was far removed from its current and historical use in farming and agriculture.

The buildings, originally built to house and dry hops for the brewing industry (hence the name The HopBarn) are reputed to date back to the late 18th Century. Years of agricultural abuse had left them in a very precarious state as they were modified and diversified to suit the ever-changing needs of the farm over the past 200 years. The main barn and now The Hopbarn Studio was once used as a feed store, dairy, workers mess and main farm office.

The buildings that now house the accommodation block being used as a piggery, workshop and grain store. This ever-changing use of the buildings, coupled together with the occasional argument with a tractor and other farm machinery, meant that the buildings would have fallen into complete disrepair if no action was taken to restore them sooner.

Prior to embarking on a life-long career in farming, Stuart had been a chorister whilst at The Minster Grammer School and his love for music continues despite the decision to follow a different career track. The skills learnt as a farmer along with this life long passion for music, offered the perfect catalyst for turning a dream into reality.

So, whilst standing for that moment waiting for the feed mill to finish, Stuart conceived an idea that would dramatically alter the course and direction of the barn and revive the heritage of the buildings to ensure a future legacy in music and performance.

In 2010 action was taken to begin the slow process of restoration. Along with support from a local builder and with help from his wife Mary Poole, priority was given to strengthening and securing the walls, stripping the roof in order to renew the rafters and insulate the roof area before relaying all the tile pans and ensuring that this time they were all aligned correctly. As the external work progressed, work began on renovating the inside space. Slowly the buildings according to Stuart, began to resonate and be brought back to life.



Stuart Poole

The HopBarn officially became operational in early 2015 and since being established the venue has programmed a regular live music offer ranging from roots and folk, to classical and popular. What's important to highlight here is that many of the artists and groups that have performed at The HopBarn, write, compose and perform their own work. With the likes of Martyn Joseph, Luke Jackson and The East Pointers amongst other well-known artists and groups currently touring the music circuit, a steady audience has begun to recognize the venue and support the programming that has been established. With additional support and guidance from local promoters True Blue Music and The Gateway to Southwell, The HopBarn has since January 2016 programmed over 20 events mostly in music but also offering live theatre, and talks. In this time we are delighted that over 1,200 audience members have seen or experienced an event at The HopBarn.

The recent production of *Small Worlds* by Mimika Theatre, a fantastic adventure for children and adults alike, recounts the tale of 5 characters through puppetry, digital animation and live theatre. This work builds on The HopBarn's commitment to bringing quality performance events to the local area. The production was extremely well received and it is hoped that Mimika's next production, *Landscape's* will be brought to The HopBarn in 2018.

In contrast, the acclaimed theatre production *JOAN* by Milk Presents brought a challenging and highly controversial piece of original theatre to the local area. Having received a 3 star review from *The Guardian* whilst in production at Camden's People's Theatre, this clever piece of writing was commissioned in association with Derby Theatre. The production is a modern re-telling of Joan of Arc portrayed by Drag King Champion Lucy Jane Parkinson (aka LoUis CYfer) and offers a unique perspective of the struggles endured by a women trying to establish a leading role amongst a backdrop of male dominance. Ironically, it could be argued that the work continues to resonate today due to the world's political and economic uncertainty.

Last summer, The HopBarn hosted a Late Summer Recital, profiling 3 young and highly acclaimed musicians. Matt Glendening (Clarinet) Stephanie Childress (Violin) and Kumi Matsuo (Piano) presented an evening of classical and contemporary repertoire. The evening again was extremely well received by audience members attending, and we are eager to host the trio again in the near future to build on the offer of classical and contemporary music.

But our vision does not end here and in-between advertised music and theatre events, The HopBarn provides a unique and isolated venue for artistic research and development. Here, artists, groups and companies have complete liberty to explore and experiment with new and original concepts and aesthetic ideas, without the pressure of producing a finished work. This artistic freedom is seen as a crucial factor in ensuring the work retains a true sense of originality. For the artists groups and companies that have embarked on research and development at The HopBarn over the course of the last year.

The HopBarn's offer is still in the very early stages of development, although distinct priorities have materialized that fulfill the outlined vision for the centre and provide a clear direction for the future. There is still much to do, but as Stuart and Mary pause and take a few moments reflection, the personal dream once conceived amongst the array of farming machinery must now seem a distant memory.



Stuart and Mary Poole



Mimika Theatre - Small Worlds Tent



Brink Dance Company rehearsals

## Whats on: Music and Performance

### Claude Bourbon - Medieval & Spanish Blues: guitar and songs

11 Feb 2017

Ready for a unique and talented take on a wide range of musical traditions? Claude Bourbon is known throughout Europe and America for amazing guitar performances that take blues, Spanish, Middle Eastern, and Russian stylings into uncharted territories.

Each year Claude plays more than 100 shows around the world. Claude has played countless venues, including Glastonbury Festival, Isle of Wight Festival, Colne Great British & Blues Festival, Rock O'Z Arene, Avenches, Switzerland, among others. He has shared the stage in Europe and the USA with countless musicians, Calvin Russel, Charlie Morgan (Elton John, Gary Moore), Jan Akkerman (Focus), Steve Grossman (Miles Davis), Herbie Armstrong (Van Morrison), Jose barrense Dias and many more.

Now based in the UK, some of this guitarist's influences allow us a fascinating insight into this remarkable musician; Paco De Lucia: Deep Purple's Richie Blackmore; Joaquin Rodrigo; JJ Cale, Monty Python; JS Bach and Fleetwood Mac's Stevie Nicks....

One reviewer even noted that although "Claude's roots were in blues, that is like saying Leonardo da Vinci was a painter". Intrigued ?

Experience an evening of exploration in the unique ambiance of the Thumb !

"... not a same ole same ole gig..."



**Tickets £10 via Eventbrite or contact 01636 822742**

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