

# Celebrating the life and memory of Ray Bartlett - a man much-missed by so many

THE life of a man who loved to be on stage was celebrated by friends and members of the Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society.

Ray Bartlett was born in Montacute and lived there all his life apart from two years spent on National Service.

He was a well-known figure in Montacute and was involved with both village churches and all the local community events.

Mr Bartlett worked for many years in the local glove factory and then many people will remember him as a porter at Yeovil District Hospital.

He had a passion for live musical theatre and he joined the Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society in 1967 and was a member of its production of Gypsy Love performed at the Assembly Rooms in Princes Street.

Mr Bartlett was a dancer in the society's first-ever production of My Fair Lady at the new Johnson Hall - which was later renamed the Octagon Theatre - in 1975.

He appeared in many shows with YAOS over the years with his final performance coming in 2012 and the group's production of South Pacific where he took the role of Henry.

Mr Bartlett also trod the boards with other local societies including Crewkerne United Dramatic & Operatic Society, Shogun Productions and the Montacute Pantomime Society.

His love of the theatre was so strong

that he even transformed his house in Montacute into a theatre - which was featured on local TV news and each room was named after a star of entertainment.

Mr Bartlett died early last year at home at the age of 89 and he is greatly missed by all that knew him.

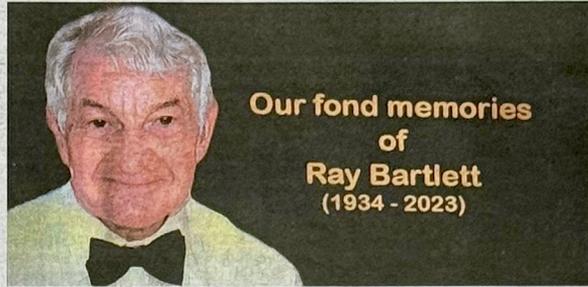
A social evening in honour of Mr Bartlett - entitled Ray's Soiree - was held at Edwards House on the Pen Mill Trading Estate in Yeovil, the headquarters of YAOS, on August 3 where his memory and generosity were celebrated.

Mr Bartlett left a bequest in his will for YAOS and donations were presented on the night to Montacute Baptist Church and Julia's House, while a cheque was also presented to Yeovil District Hospital's Breast Cancer Unit Appeal which had been the operatic society's charity of the year.

During Ray's Soiree old video footage was shown of Mr Bartlett in action for YAOS courtesy of Bud Budzinski, while people also paid their own personal tributes to him.

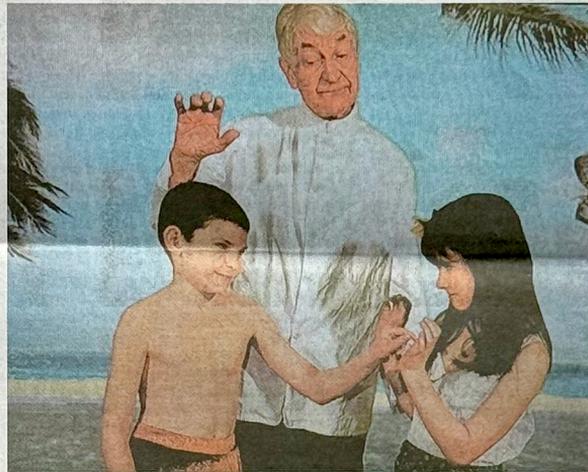
Members of YAOS will be in action next month with Some Enchanted Evening - a performance of musical showstoppers to be staged at the Westlands Yeovil entertainment venue on October 12 at 7.30pm and on October 13 at 2.30pm. Go to Page 14 for more details.

PHOTOS: Yeovil Press. Photos on Page 70 were taken during Ray's Soiree at Edwards House on August 3.



Our fond memories of Ray Bartlett (1934 - 2023)

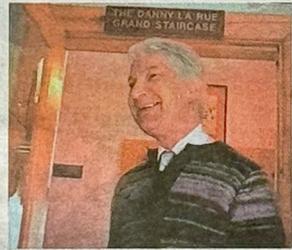
Remembering Ray Bartlett.



The late Ray Bartlett (centre) in action as Henry during Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society's 2012 production of South Pacific with Ashley MacLaughlan as Jerome and Milly Lawson as Ngana. Photo courtesy of YAOS.



Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society president Charles Clive-Ponsonby-Fane is pictured presenting a £1,500 cheque Yeovil Hospital Charity volunteer Karina Parsons (left) and the charity's community and events fundraiser Amy Phelps.



A local TV news report from some time ago featured the late Ray Bartlett and his house in Montacute which had been given the appearance of a theatre and different rooms and areas of the home had been named after celebrities from the 1960s.



Members of Montacute Baptist Church receive a £5,000 cheque from Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society president Charles Clive-Ponsonby-Fane on behalf of the late Ray Bartlett.



Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society vice-chairman Geoff Thrush (left) and committee member Nick Mounjany with a £1,000 cheque for Julia's House on behalf of the late Ray Bartlett.



The 2012 production of South Pacific performed at the Octagon Theatre was 40 years after YAOS had performed the musical in 1972 at the former Assembly Rooms in Princes Street. Members of the 1972 cast got together for a photo in 2012 and Ray Bartlett is pictured (front row - far right). Also pictured are (standing from left) Wreford Stainer, Ken Nicholls, Bryan Evans, Geoff Thrush, Tim Hillard and Marian Stainer and (front from left) are Guy Burgess, Sue Burgess, Sylvia Thrush and Paula Budzinski. Photo courtesy of YAOS.