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Artists and supporters gather to launch the 2014 Hostry Festival with Stash Kirkbride, right (wearing cap). **Picture by Bill Smith**

# Curtain goes up on annual arts extravaganza

By Emma Knights

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It's festival time once again as the curtain goes up on Norfolk's annual autumn arts extravaganza.

Hansells Hostry, based at Norwich Cathedral's Hostry, opened on Wednesday with the open air art project Paint Out Norwich.

Throughout the next week and a half the festival will be entertaining audiences with a programme packed full of theatre, music, dance, visual arts and radio.

Stash Kirkbride, the event's artistic director, paid tribute to all the committed volunteers that are helping to make this year's Hansells Hostry Festival possible and he encouraged everyone to join in and come to see some of the shows and events.

"There's a great cross-section of the arts and projects of a really high standard – everything from outrageous Restoration comedy through to inclusive theatre through to new visual arts,

and there's a real opportunity for people to get involved," he said.

"It's a chance to see some unique projects that have all been specially commissioned, and I think that is what sets us apart.

"I am very proud of how we are nurturing new projects all from Norfolk."

When asked to pick three festival highlights, Mr Kirkbride said: "Disappearing Friends is a new play about dementia that is portraying what it is like to have dementia in the family. I think it is a fascinating project.

"Paint Out Norwich is a new member of the Hostry Festival line-up and I think that open air art project will become an annual event.

"The Country Wife is our main house play – if you have never seen Restoration comedy this is a very interesting show to see.

"It's outrageous and it will be a lot of fun."

**Hansells Hostry Festival runs until November 2.**

**For details of all the festival events visit [www.hostryfestival.org](http://www.hostryfestival.org)**

**Have you got a Norwich arts story? Email [emma.knights@archant.co.uk](mailto:emma.knights@archant.co.uk)**



Jo Reil as Mrs Margery Pinchwife in The Country Wife – the main house play at the Hostry Festival **Picture by Robin Watson**



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