

# PROMPTINGS



ISSUE 88 - FEBRUARY 2016

[WWW.LADS.ORG.UK](http://WWW.LADS.ORG.UK)



Dear LADS

As LADS nears its 92nd birthday, I am pleased to announce that we are going from strength to strength. *Whipping It Up* continued and surpassed the magnificent ticket sales we had for "Anne Boleyn", with 418 bums on seats. Thank you to everyone

who sold tickets, and to everyone who came out on the cold January nights to watch the play. It was lovely to have Dave Stelfox back on LADS stage, and to welcome Lydia Dronsfield into the society in her first part with LADS. Many congratulations to Cathy on her first directing debut – we hope it will be the first of many! It was the perfect play for the post-Christmas blues and was well received by all. The NODA crit for *Whipping It Up* is included with this issue of Promptings.

Rehearsals have started for *An English Tragedy*, the 3rd play of the 2015/16 season, and tickets are on sale, so please start "member marketing". People are more likely to come and see a play if it is recommended by their friends. I have already sent an email with an electronic handbill to members with email, so please use that to forward to all your email-able contacts. If you would like some handbills to give out to people, they are available at the hall – either in the foyer, or from the kitchen on rehearsal nights.

May 1945: Victory in Europe and a Labour landslide in the UK. English traitor John Amery is arrested in Italy and brought back to London for trial. If convicted, he faces the death penalty. But his father is a senior politician. Surely the Establishment will look after its own. Based on an extraordinary true story, *An English Tragedy* is a disturbing tale of wartime treason and conflicting loyalties".

We are currently arranging the annual end of season celebration, and we have decided to have a car rally on Sunday 3rd July. You will find more details inside Promptings, but make sure you put the date in your diary, along with Saturday 8th October, when we will be having the start of season party for 2016/17.

There will be spaces on the general committee and play-reading committee for 2016/17, elections for which will be at the AGM on Monday 11th July (NB: this is a date change), with nomination forms being sent out in May/June time. If you are interested in being part of the general or play-reading committee and would like some more information, do not hesitate to talk to me.

*Jean.*

## LADS DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sat. 19th March	Leafletting in Loughton - <b>help required, (<a href="mailto:lads.chairman@gmail.com">lads.chairman@gmail.com</a>)</b>
Sun. 3rd April	Set up for <i>An English Tragedy</i> – <b>everyone welcome and needed!!!</b>
Thu. 7th – Sat. 9th April	<i>An English Tragedy</i> production nights – <b>make sure you book your ticket</b>
Sat. 9th April	After show party - venue Adam & Michael's (Loughton) – <b>all welcome</b>
Sun. 10th April	Set down – <b>we've had good turnouts recently ... let's keep it up!</b>
Mon. 11th April	7:30pm Small hall – Crit. followed by Chinese meal
Thurs. 14th April	Rehearsals start for Jamaica Inn – and the show goes on....
Sun. 5th June	Stall at Farmers Market, Loughton - <b>help required (<a href="mailto:lads.chairman@gmail.com">lads.chairman@gmail.com</a>)</b>
Thurs. 30th June	Read through of 1st play of the 2016/17 season
Sun. 3rd July	End of season social – Car rally ... <b>more details inside</b>
Mon. 11th July	AGM – Small hall – 8pm – <b>NB: changed from 4th July</b>

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## MEMBERS NEWS

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We are pleased to welcome Lee Kenneth to LADS, who some of you may know from his many appearances with LOS. Lee is playing Joss Merlyn in Jamaica Inn.

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## POSTERS AND FLYERS

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Do come along to a rehearsal and pick up some flyers and posters to give out to friends and family and to anywhere you think may interest people. Rehearsals are every Monday night, Rehearsal nights are: Feb 25th, 29th; Mar 4th, 7th, 9th, 14th, 17th, 21st, 23rd, 24th, 30th

If you can help on the Loughton leafletting on the morning of Saturday 19th March, please let Jean know ([lads.chairman@gmail.com](mailto:lads.chairman@gmail.com); 07896910214)

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## THANKS FROM JON & SOPHIE

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Jon and Sophie Gilbert (who as you may know were married in July last year) have sent a message to thank LADS for the gift vouchers - a totally unexpected but very welcome gift which they are going to put towards the decoration of their house. Also, they would like to thank Foster and Marion who hosted a really marvelous after show party after Anne Boleyn.

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## NODA CRIT. FOR 'WHIPPING IT UP' JACQUIE STEDMAN

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I was very pleased to be cover for your Regional Rep, Andrew Rogers and be invited to come along to your recent production to provide a report for your Society. I always feel a trip to LADS is very stimulating – you always give your audience a lot to think about as well as providing a very good evening's entertainment.

This play is in much the same vein as 'Yes Minister' which enjoyed such popularity during Mrs Thatcher's Conservative Government and leaves one aghast at the antics and machinations of politicians and the political system itself. It was very cleverly written with clearly drawn characters which the LADS cast created well. It also appeared to show the power of the Whips over backbenchers and the lengths to which they

would go to secure the right results....for their own party!

Like most of the LADS programmes I found the information at the front of the programme of great interest and help. It carefully explained all about the Whips and their purpose within the mechanism of Parliament, but also said explained about the many acts of kindness to colleagues which is part of their stock-in-trade. It also gave some background to the terminology used within the play with which members of the audience may not be familiar and thus made the enjoyment of the production that much greater.



**Richard De Berry**

I thought this was a very authentic set, interesting with all the paraphernalia associated with a busy office. Congratulations to Wayne Gilbert, Sue Bonner and Stephen Radley for all the hard work they must have done to bring this set to life. All the furniture was well positioned and comfortable with a large notice board at the back adorned with small photographs of all the party members of Parliament – the reason for which became clear as the play progressed. A very simple lighting and sound plot served the action well.

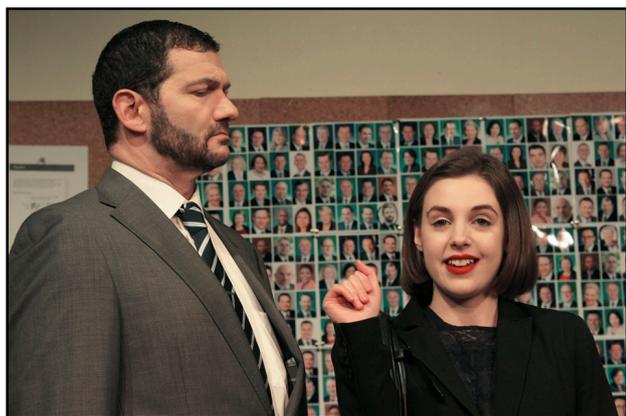


**Howard Platt and Karen Rogers**

The characters were well drawn, as previously mentioned, and developed well throughout, sometimes with mercurial changes in their situations and attitudes, particularly when trying

to decide who had been 'got at' regarding the impending vote.

**Alastair (Deputy Chief Whip)** – Howard Platt was quietly commanding in his role. He appeared to virtually run the office, but bowed to the superiority of the Chief Whip when the situation demanded. Their relationship was one of mutual respect. A lovely clear voice delivered some very pithy dialogue in a most commanding manner, although there was a touch of the iron hand in the velvet glove at times. I felt he could have been a little less static in places though. I know there was not an excess of space on the set, but very few people stand completely still when speaking. When talking to Guy at the beginning it is not necessary for them both to look at each other all the time, it's good to see you full face rather than in profile...and the voices carry better to the back of the hall.



**Howard Platt and Lydia Dronsfield**

**Guy (Backbench MP)** – Tom Donoghue, was suitably nervous at having just delivered his maiden speech, but even more so at being summoned to the Whip's office. He continued to be nervous, as I suspect a new MP would be in the face of the rulers of the House, except when, later, he spoke about how hard he had worked to become an MP and how he didn't think that being exposed as gay would help his cause. Here he spoke with determination and passion which, hitherto, he had not shown, so that was very surprising. There was a good analogy throughout regarding cricket when Guy spoke about having a good innings but not scoring a boundary. It was included in the conversation with Tim in a most natural manner of speaking.

**Tim (Junior Whip)**- David Stelfox, seemed a complicated character to unravel. He was obviously in politics because 'Daddy' had money and was also obviously not in the same social sphere as the people with whom he shared the office. However he did show very obvious signs of being manipulative and devious to a great degree when

the situation called for this, and, of course, at the end of the play really proved he had what it took to be a wearer of the highly valued striped tie. He could have done with a bit more light and shade in his dialogue because it was very easy to lose the meaning of what was being said. However, his delivery was punchy and energetic, emphasising, I think, his determination and force.

**The Chief Whip** – Richard de Berry was laid back and rather lugubrious, having been there and done it on his way to the top. His interaction with Alastair was even handed but with Tim his dislike and suspicion about his upbringing made him doubtful as to whether he had what it took to succeed in the Whip's office. However in Act II there was really good interaction with Tim, full of sincerity about his own life and Tim's future. He was also a very cunning man, as his 'heart attack' showed, thus managing to manipulate Tim into doing the right thing. His exit from office was not maudlin, just matter of fact that someone had to be sacrificed, and he accepted that his time in office had run its course and it was time for a change – well handled. There was a good partnership between the Chief Whip and the Deputy during the action with the 'prisoner' next door in the Chief Whip's office in an attempt to break guy's nerve...lots of yelling and moaning made for a very convincing episode.



**David Stelfox and Tom Donoghue**

**Maggie (Researcher)** – Lydia Dronsfield managed to fool everybody (including the audience I think), except that Alastair, with his vast knowledge of human beings, saw through her scheme. She was very convincing as the 'researcher', and then just as convincing in her real life situation as an under-cover reporter trying to expose how the Whip's office worked and the power they had to control the members by the belief that they held secret information about them. I initially thought that maybe Lydia looked rather young for the role, but her excellent delivery and many varied expressions, both facial and bodily overrode that thought and I found her most believable.

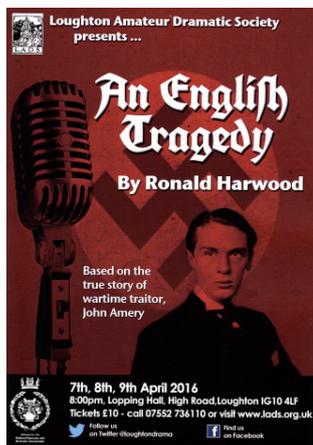
**Delia (Deputy Chief Whip for the Opposition)** – Karen Rogers was as devious as her counterparts and showed great delight when her trick worked regarding members of her party who should have been dining too late for the vote. Good solid dialogue and way of standing and moving emphasised the superiority of characterisation, she was a woman making her mark in a man's world, obviously successfully. Again a bit more variance in the delivery of the dialogue would have helped. Would she have been so acerbic all the time or is that attitude par for the course in politics?

**Jacque Stedman**  
**Regional Councillor NODA London**

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## AN ENGLISH TRAGEDY

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An English Tragedy is into the 4th week of rehearsals and everything is going very well. The actors have been very early in learning their lines which is excellent and aids the rehearsal period greatly. Tickets are on sale ([www.lads.org.uk](http://www.lads.org.uk) or box office: 07552 736110), so please spread the word. If you require posters or handbills, they are available on rehearsal nights (see item above: "Posters and Flyers").

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## DAN'S MARATHON

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Dan Cooper is running the London Marathon to raise money for the RNLI.

The reason why I am supporting the RNLI is because through their lifeboats, lifeguards and safety advice they are committed to ending preventable loss of life at sea. The RNLI get no funding from the government and rely on

charitable donations to operate 237 lifeboat centres, 340 lifeboats and lifeguard patrols on over 200 beaches. Included in these centres are four along the river Thames; Chiswick, Gravesend, Teddington and Town and four inland lifeboat centres at Lough Derg, Lough Ree, Enniskillen and Loch Ness.

I met with the RNLI Chiswick lifeboat crew to find out more information about the charity and they said that one of their safety initiatives is life jacket integrity in the rowing community. From our chat I picked up the slogan "Treat it Like a Parachute" which was used to highlight the importance of wearing a functioning lifejacket when coaching or coxing rowers. It would be unthinkable to put on a parachute which hadn't been checked and they feel the same should apply to putting on a lifejacket. The tragic fatality of a rowing coach on the tideway in early 2015 and worrying statistics from lifejacket checks have highlighted the need for lifejacket clinics for the rowing community. RNLI safety officers have been running such clinics for leisure boaters on the coast for many years and can bring this expertise to the rowing community on tidal rivers and inland waters so that they can enjoy the water more safely.

Having been coaching rowing since 2005 I am keen to help promote this initiative and in between training sessions I have been liaising closely with the RNLI safety team, British Rowing and Lifeboat crews on the Thames to work out ways to spread this essential safety message.

If you would like to support my marathon run or the RNLI please donate using my just giving site. <https://www.justgiving.com/dan-cooperlondonmarathon/>

Thank you for reading this and your support.



**Dan Cooper**

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## CAR RALLY

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The end of season car rally social will take place on Sunday 3rd July. We will meet at Lopping Hall at 11am to receive instructions and maps. Everyone is welcome to join in – members, friends, children and family. There will be a set of questions that will lead you on a tour of local places and on the way you will have to answer questions at each point and collect things. The last place will be somewhere that we can all have a picnic and a relaxing afternoon.

Don't worry if you don't drive or own a car, you can be a passenger in someone else's car and be part of their team! There will be a charge of £3 per person, so we can buy a prize for the winning team – but apart from that, all you need to do is turn up, bring a picnic, something to sit on and your enthusiasm for a good day out!!

To make sure we will have enough people to make it work, please let me know if you can come along by either sending me a text to 07896910214, an email to [jean.famcooper@btinternet.com](mailto:jean.famcooper@btinternet.com), or by putting your name on the list that I will put up at set-up.

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## PAT BUCKLEY - HAPPY 90TH!

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Belated congratulations to Pat Buckley on her 90th birthday on February 3rd.

Pat and her husband Roy joined LADS way back in the 1960s and for two decades performed and directed for us regularly.

In the late 1970s, following Roy's retirement from a teaching post at West Hatch and Pat's from Loughton Library, they moved to Torquay where again they were shining lights in the local amateur theatre - joining a near-professional company which mounted some ten shows annually in the local purpose-built theatre!

Pat returned to Loughton in the mid 1990s and immediately rejoined the LADS, much to our great delight! Sadly we were only occasionally successful in persuading her to perform or pick up her directorial baton, but she gave stalwart service as our Ticket Secretary between 1997 and 2011 and is one of our treasured Honorary Members.

Warmest congratulations Pat from us all - whatever you're doing to achieve your longevity - keep it up!!

Pat sends the following message:

“Dear Jean,

I was thrilled to receive a lovely bouquet of flowers from the LADS on my birthday. Please thank them on my behalf, and also the members who kindly sent me cards.  
All the best for the season.

Love Pat.”

**On the next page is a small selection of photos featuring Pat in LADS productions...**

(Do you recognise a few other LADS faces?)

