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LADS Tea -
17th October



'Dear Diary'
Readers
Wanted

Message from Cathy



It has been a year since our last edition of Promptings, and what a year it's been.

LADS has been very active during the long periods of lockdown and has managed to produce 5 online productions which have all been a great success amassing over 2,000 views and some wonderful feedback so a huge thank you to all involved. We can all feel extremely proud that the society has continued to flourish and discover new ways to perform and entertain, as well continuing to provide our members with a vehicle to create wonderful performances.

With restrictions finally lifted, our October production is well into rehearsal and it's wonderful to be back at Lopping Hall doing what we do best. It would be fantastic to start the season with a bang so please do all you can to spread the word and sell as many tickets as possible. The flyer is attached to the email for you to forward to anyone who may be interested. Vee will soon be asking for volunteers for FOH so please offer your help if you can. We may need extra bodies to keep people moving and avoid unnecessary crowding

in certain areas so your help would be much appreciated.

You will have received all the season dates in the start of season mailing so please put the dates in your diary. As the season will continue to develop, please keep your eye out for emails from Karen with details of the March and June productions, read through details and casting. Can I also remind you to let Karen know your availability. Unless you advise to the contrary, the committee will assume you are available in any capacity.

Membership fees were due by 1st September. Thank you to everyone who has paid and for those who haven't, take this as your reminder!

And finallyI'm extremely proud to take on the role of Chairman of such a vibrant and buoyant society and I'm really looking forward to another successful season.

I hope to see you at set up if not before.

Cathy



Dates for your diary

Sun 17th October	Afternoon Tea at Lopping Hall - 12:30pm - 3:30pm
Sun 24th October	Set Up for 'A Fine Bright day Today' from 9:30am - Lopping Hall
Thur 28th - Sat 30th October	'A Fine Bright Day Today'
Sat 30th October	After show party in Buckleys Bar - all welcome
Sun 31st October	Set Down - 10:00am start
Mon 1st November	Crit. At 7:30pm in Small Hall followed by curry - all welcome
Thur 4th November	Read through for the March production
Fri 10th December	LADS Christmas Social - 8:00pm in Buckleys Bar

Members' News

We are very excited to announce the following new arrivals. Massive congratulations to all!



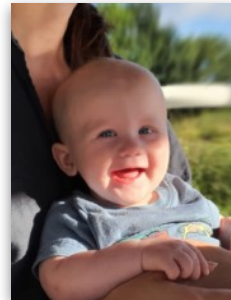
Tom and Chloe have welcomed Hetty to their family.



Fiona and James have welcomed Hugo, a beautiful baby brother for Kiki.



Dan and Rosie Cooper welcome Ruby (pictured here with big sister, Lyra).



And yet another addition to the Cooper clan, Andy and Kate welcome Axel.



And finally, Cathy welcomes Bear to the Naylor family.

NODA Crit. - The Memory of Snow



I believe LADS may have chosen to perform “The Memory of Snow “ by Sian Rowland before Covid 19 reared its ugly head and threw the world into disarray. As things panned out this play was more relevant to our situation over the last six months or so than can have been anticipated by your artistic director. Hopefully the final outcome of our lockdown will not be so grisly.

“The Memory of Snow” chronicles the experiences of the four ‘Romanov’ Princesses when they were under house arrest in war-torn Russia in 1918. Written as a stage play by Sian Rowland it was presumably adapted slightly by your team to work as a radio play and it really did transpose very well thanks to the full commitment and superb delivery of your four actresses and the visual and sound effects on YouTube created by your Technical team.

Cathy Naylor directed this radio presentation, which required a somewhat different approach to its theatre performance. The actors do not have the advantage of showing emotion in the face or body but fortunately the human voice is wonderfully expressive and with this and the atmospheric sound effects Cathy was able to ensure a ‘picture’ was created and justice was done to this moving play. Production assistant for the proceedings was **Valerie Jones**. The different scenes were depicted on screen by photographs of venues first in Tobolsk, Siberia, and later in Ekaterinburg. A further scene in which there was an exchange of letters between the sisters, was very effectively depicted by overlapping dialogue and a sepia picture of hand written letters on the screen. Further atmosphere was created throughout by sound effects like ticking clocks, guards’ footsteps, doors opening and closing etc and all this added to the success of this production. **Howard Platt**

helped Cathy with Design and **Andrew Rogers** sourced the sound effects. The ‘sound and vision’ for this YouTube presentation was edited meticulously by **James Harrington**.

The ‘stage’ was suitably set by the opening music – The Russian Imperial Anthem – God Save the Tsar – moving seamlessly into The Russian Federation Anthem intermingled with the sounds of mayhem. The royal family photograph worked well but as we were going to be listening to ‘OTMA’ (as they called themselves) over the next 40 minutes or so it might have been nice to have had named pictures of the four Princesses as well. The opening scene found the girls trying to keep their spirits up whilst being confined at home by the Russian guards at Tobolsk , Siberia in March 1918.

We learn much about these four sisters in this opening scene. The eldest, Olga, carried the burden of being the responsible one rather reluctantly but the love she has for her siblings and parents never falters and she tries to set a good example of behaviour and decorum whilst remaining positive. Cracks begin to appear in her mood during the next couple of scenes in view of the restrictions enforced on her life – which, before the war she recollects had just begun to soar. This role was played beautifully by **Sarah Hudson**. Sarah demonstrated all Olga’s documented characteristics so well. Her melancholy and frustration increases through the piece until she loses her temper with her beloved sister, Maria, who she cannot forgive in view of her romantic indiscretion with a Russian soldier. This is particularly offensive to Olga as she had, herself, been the victim of rape by one of the Russian soldiers. This horrifying incident and her awareness of her family’s likely fate lead to her deepening depression and suicidal ideation and self harming all of which Sarah pitched exactly right – very emotional and distressing but controlled and credible. Her speech proudly describing the royal blood pounding through all their veins was no doubt a reference to the family’s downfall – the inherited condition, haemophilia, from which the only son and heir, their brother Alexey, suffered.

Tatiana, the second of the “big pair”, as their mother called them, is the ‘sensible’ one, the organiser or ‘the governess’ as her sisters called her. **Karen Rogers** played this peacemaker, perfectly. With her soothing, reassuring voice she attempts to calm her sisters’ quick temper, high spirits or feisty antics. Her anxiety and genuine love and concern was perfectly evident in the duologue with Olga as her sister is breaking down – we could almost see the girls embracing. Tatiana never loses her regal control even in the final scene. It is mainly thanks to Tatiana’s love, empathy and pride that the girls regain their composure in this final scene, well judged and credibly performed by Karen.

In the first couple of scenes Maria’s naivety, warmth and openness - as well as her submissiveness, was well portrayed by **Lisa Kirby**. Maria was obviously dominated by her younger sister Anastasia but there was no ill feeling and the friendship and love between these young girls was very evident, particularly in the opening scene. Maria however acquired a confidence and maturity when she was chosen to accompany her parents to Ekaterinburg to take care of her mother. The readings of the letters to and from her sisters was delightfully done. Maria’s growth as a young lady unfolds during these letter exchanges so much so that we are prepared for her sad disagreement with Olga in the final scene regarding her flirtation with a Russian soldier. Lisa’s performance in this scene when she pleads with her sister to kill her too was impressive - a very moving sequence from both, great team work.

Anastasia – the younger of the “little pair” as their mother called them remains the wild, irrepressible child throughout. Sarah Vickers brilliantly captured her cheerful enthusiasm of youth and was determined to keep everyone cheerful however disagreeable their situation. Sarah’s overall control of the “Ivanhoe” sequence was much appreciated – her vocal versatility was perfectly used as she took on several characters within this playlet. Her energy and exuberance contributed greatly to the joyous atmosphere of this first scene. She also managed to inspire our sympathy when she behaved rather petulantly, frustrated by the

restrictions forced on them by the Russian forces and upset by their unkindness.

I am grateful that I was given the opportunity to listen to this production of “The Memory of Snow” and I can appreciate your frustration at being unable to perform this play on stage to the large audience it deserves. I do hope that many watched your excellent YouTube presentation.

Carole Baynes

Do you remember?

5 years’ ago: Oct 2016

Wife After Death by Eric Chappell. Directed by Sophie Gilbert.

Cast: Iain Howland, Wendy Butler, Adam Rabinowitz, Charlotte Pope, Val Jones, Kimberley Packman



10 years’ ago: Oct 2011

The Charlatan by William Norfolk. Directed by Andrew Rogers.

Cast: David Stelfox, Sophie Gilbert (nee Robertson), Roger Barker, Foster Barnett, Frances Dennis, Howard Platt, Cathy Naylor, Karen Rogers



25 years' ago: Oct 1996

Dancing at Lughnasa by Brian Friel. Directed by Val Parker

Cast: Chris Harris, Liz Adams (nee Holt), Irene Elkins, Marguerite Wheatley, Gina Thurgood, Christine Eckley, Iain Caldow, Foster Barnett



LADS Afternoon Tea



In celebration of Babs and Roger clocking up an impressive 135 years collectively with LADS we will be hosting an afternoon tea party at Lopping Hall from 12.30pm to 3.30pm on Saturday 17th October. It would be wonderful to have as many LADS members, past and present to join us in celebrating this impressive achievement, so please let Cathy know if you are able to come along. As well as celebrating with Babs and Roger it'll be a lovely afternoon to catch up with friends.

Dear Diary



On one of our 'LADS Talking' evenings we enjoyed some rehearsed readings of diarists (both well known and not so well known). As many diaries are now out of copyright, we thought this would be a good opportunity to take to the airwaves once again for another audio presentation on Youtube.

Howard has agreed to produce 'Dear Diary' which will start rehearsal sometime in the Spring, to be available on Youtube in between our Spring and Summer productions. The contents will be tailored to the readers who wish to take part.

Like 'A Walk on the Wild Side', Howard will hold one-to-one rehearsals via Zoom and then, when ready, people can either record via their phone and send to Howard or it can be recorded during a Zoom session

Once we have an idea of who wishes to read, Howard can start compiling suitable source material. We will also need a Production Assistant to help co-ordinate rehearsals and 'proof listen' recordings.

If you would like to take part, can you please call, text or email Howard:
how_platt@yahoo.co.uk 07985 923257

A Fine Bright Day Today



We started rehearsing A Fine Bright Day Today at the end of August and despite the disappointment that Tim has had to pull out due to ill-health, everything is going well with Howard picking up the part of Milton. I am really enjoying only having 3 actors to direct, when I am so used to having a 'cast of thousands'. The more we rehearse, the more I love this gently funny, hopeful play with its complex, colourful characters (those you see and those you don't).

We need some help with a couple of props/costume:

The set is a kitchen - can you save empty packets/jars for the food cupboards please
 Howard needs some walking boots - size 11 and half. Anyone got a working toaster they don't use? We need two fisherman's style gilets with lots of pockets.

This will be a great play for people coming back to the theatre - funny, moving, uplifting, so make sure you let all your friends know about it and sell lots of tickets.

Jean