

PROMPTINGS



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Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow!"

On the 3rd of November the wind in Loughton was so strong that it dislodged some of the lead on Lopping Hall Clock tower! However no adverse weather will stop LADS members rehearsing and on the

4th of November the first rehearsal for *Why Me?* took place in the Small Hall.

LADS has continued to support the local community with our 'Evening with LADS' being part of Epping Forest's Lopping Hall Festival. Over thirty people had a great evening and we have had fantastic reviews from both the public and the Council. Well done to all those involved in this.

The ticket sales for our first production were a little low compared to past years. It is important that the society pulls together around each play to make sure that it is publicised in as many places as possible. Unfortunately flyers and posters for *Playboy of the Western World* were thrown away as they never made it out of Lopping Hall. Lets make sure that the whole society advertises our January production and collects handbills and posters and gets them out in the public eye. To help with this Jean Cooper is looking into how LADS can better market itself in the local area and to the local community. She is looking for help with this and more information can be found in this issue.

As many of you will know the Lopping Hall Trustees instructed us that the scenery store must be cleared out by the end of the year. LOS is assisting with this and all the items that are down there are being moved to a barn in Epping. When a date is announced it is important that LADS members help with this move. Not having these items to hand will mean that we will all need to be more organised so that set ups and set downs can run smoothly.

That brings be neatly onto my next note which is to make sure that we look out for each other at set up and set down. I have taken on the role as Health and Safety Advisor, so if any member has cause for concern or a comment on that topic then please contact me . However, it is really important that everyone feels empowered to be able to voice observations to fellow members if they feel that someone is being unsafe.

Don't forget to put the 8th of February in your calendar. LADS 90th Anniversary celebration will take place at Theydon Bois Golf Club. Tickets will be £30 per head and will be available to be purchased shortly (and via Ticket Source website).

Here's wishing you a great festive holiday and I look forward to seeing you all in 2014 or before.

Dan Cooper

LADS DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 12 January	Set up for <i>Why Me?</i> from 9.30am
Mon. 13-Weds.15 January	Rehearsals, Tech and Dress <i>Why Me?</i>
Thurs.16- Sat.18 January	Performances, <i>Why Me?</i>
Saturday 18 January	After show party, venue to be confirmed
Sunday 19 January	Set down from 10.00am
Monday 20 January	Crit night and curry from 7.30pm
Thursday 23 January	Read through, <i>The Imaginary Invalid</i> , 8pm Small Hall
Monday 27 January	Rehearsals start for <i>A Lie of the Mind</i>
Saturday 8 February	LADS 90th - Dinner and Dance, Theydon Bois Golf Club

AN EVENING WITH LADS



Thanks to all those who performed, read and supported our "Evening With the LADS" at the Lopping Hall on 8th November as part of 'Our Lopping' Festival. We are delighted to report a successful occasion enjoyed by all those able to be with us. Eleven members presented a pot-pourri of extracts from our 337 productions over our 89 years - not the easiest of selection processes and made a little more trying by having to select playwrights who had died more than 70 years ago! Happily, due to Cathy's persuasive negotiating skills and the generosity of Nick Hern, we were able to include extracts from some of our more modern work, which certainly helped with the variety. As a past Chairman and very experienced Director, Jean was able to enlighten our audience with the process of selection, casting and production procedures and the Hall was transformed into a candle-lit 'club' to good, atmospheric effect. Cathy 'artistically-directed' the whole evening, which we feel can go down in the Society's annals as a well-worthy tribute.

Babs

PLAY SELECTION AND READ THROUGHS



Hello LADS

All 'artistic' areas of LADS have been extremely busy during the past few months. *An Evening with LADS* was a great success and I would like to say a huge thank you to both Babs and Jean for all of their hard work in arranging the evening and of course, thank you to all of the members who took part or came along to support us.

Members of the play reading committee are currently reading their way through 41 scripts in order to choose 4 plays for next season and as many as you will know, this is no easy task. Our aim is to have the season shortlist completed by March so there is plenty of reading to be done in a short space of time.

The casting committee has now cast our third play, *A Lie of the Mind* but we do have a vacancy for assistant props. If you think that you can help, please let me know. The read through for our final play, *The Imaginary Invalid* is on 23rd January 2014 with casting taking place on 26th January 2014.

This leads me neatly on to clarifying the purpose of our read through evenings. The read through is not an audition, it is simply a way of members becoming familiar with the play and meeting up with other members. I am very aware that there are a number of people who are not comfortable if asked to sight read and therefore do not come along. If you would like to join us at a read through but do not want to read, you would be very welcome to come and listen.

LADS are extremely fortunate to have a pool of very dedicated and experienced directors who consistently produce the high quality of productions that we are known for but we are always looking to expand that pool. If you have a secret desire to add directing to your talents, let me know. It would be great to have another directorial debut next season.

And finally, I would like to wish you all a very happy festive season if I don't see you before. We will be arranging a social get together before Christmas but as yet, have not agreed a date. Please keep an eye on your email !

Cathy

LADS 90TH - DINNER AND DANCE



In case you didn't already know, 2013 is a special year for LADS as we'll be celebrating our 90th anniversary! To mark this

occasion the committee has arranged a dinner dance at Theydon Bois Golf Club on the evening of the 8th of February.

Tickets are priced at £30 each which includes your three course meal. You can expect an evening of good food, great entertainment and most importantly, fantastic company. So, please buy your ticket now as numbers are limited and will be sold on a first come, first served basis.

There are two ways to purchase your ticket:

1. Send a cheque (made payable to LADS) to Martin Howarth, LADS Treasurer, 16 Marjorams Avenue, Loughton, Essex IG10 1PT. Please don't forget to enclose a note to state the name of each person for whom you are purchasing a ticket.
2. You can purchase your ticket online from Ticket Source: www.ticketsource.co.uk/event/46878
(Please note that Ticket Source adds a £2.70 admin. charge to the cost of each ticket)

Menu options will be e-mailed or posted to you once we have received your booking.

We look forward to seeing you all then, and celebrating this special occasion together.

CRIT. FOR 'PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD' BRICE PITT



**Jodie Seymour, Cathy Naylor, Lindsay Swinson,
Sophie Robertson and Dean Bartholomew**

The LADS' four productions a year feature classics, new plays along with the occasional 'old favourite'. Frankly I thought they might be pushing their luck with Synge's whimsical, paradoxical masterpiece which I've seen two or three times but never wholly enjoyed. My hearing not being all that good, these days, I bought the play from Amazon a week or so ago, took a couple of nights to read it through - and loved it: the language is so seductive that I had to stop myself from speaking with a lilt (Isn't it yerself Mr Cashier, and haven't I got a few small cheques to pay in this day?) while the - let's face it, rather daft story - I found funny, even romantic!



Roger Barker and Martin Howarth

So we arrived at the Lopping Hall on Thursday evening, admired the out front photos, visited the loo (and was surprised to find Jean Cooper furnishing the toiletries,

very Joan Littlewood, methought). The lift was a Godsend to the arthritic, we collected our tickets (row G, with an excellent view) and enjoyed the Irish jig, even to the third time of looping) which got the other veterans near the front swaying and tapping their feet.

incongruously cute stone wall, but the stormy clouds impressed. Still more impressive was the whole cast's mastery of the West of Ireland accents: they had engaged with Synge's writing to fine effect. I had supposed that this would be the production's major problem, but I was totally wrong.



Dean Bartholomew, Howard Platt, Frances Dodd



Cathy Naylor and Paul Caira

The programme, with an excellent introduction, was packed with information (I was so sorry to learn that the author's premature Death was from Hodgkin's Disease) with a page of photos of the cast - value for money these days. I thought that the House was fairly good for the first night of what might be considered an 'arty' play, but the FOH manager felt that there should have been more: still, we did have an audience.

This does not mean, alas, that I could hear every word, because I couldn't. It doesn't help, of course, to have a deaf critic(!) but others might have been perplexed by not being able to predict what might be said next. When louder actors came on stage they might be audible but unsubtle:



Dean Bartholomew and Tom Donoghue

Howard Platt's robust, swaggering, lapel clutching turn as Michael Flaherty belonged to a bar-room brawl in a John Ford film! Still, eventually I hope I got my ear in. The acting by a large company was a credit to the company. Frances Dodd as the stalwart Pegeen Mike was exemplary. She inhabited her role and the setting to the life, and brought gravitas to what might have seemed mere whimsy.

Curtain up bang on time - always reassuring - and first sight of Garry Cooper's very likely set for the interior of Michael Flaherty's pub on 'a wild coast of County Mayo, with its bar (only pot sheen was served, but generously) and a fire in the down left wall. When the door was opened we saw a rather



Frances Dodd and Dean Bartholomew

Cathy Naylor was a naughty Widow Quin, who came dangerously close to overacting but was a lot of fun. Dean Bartholomew coped resourcefully with the title role, Christy Mahon, acclaimed as a hero for killing his dreadful old father with a Loy; we saw this implement and it looked truly lethal! (Bravo Andy Cooper!) he looked too intelligent to me; I wanted an engaging simpleton. Nor when at last he and Pegeen expressed their love could I sense quite enough chemistry though when he needed to let rip, Dean certainly did.

Tom Donoghue, the hapless Shawn, Pegeen's would-be spouse, made the most of his rather pathetic role. His best moment was when he plied Christy with his all to get him to go away - he excelled in his abasement. There was great character acting by Paul Caira as Christy's not all that dead father and Roger Barker and Martin Howarth as Flaherty's mates, and the gaggle of giggling girls (Lindsay Swinson, Jodie Seymour and Sophie Robertson) revealed younger talents.

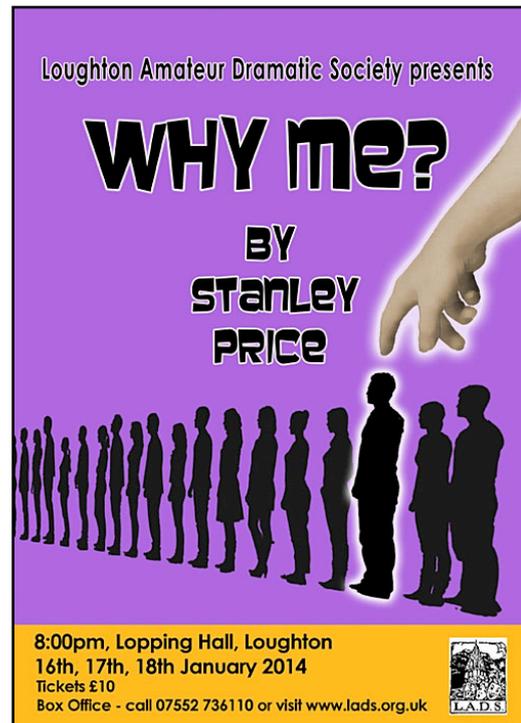
Costumes seemed appropriate except that Christy, on his first entrance, seemed far too spruce after running through the country side waiting for the police to capture and maybe hang him!

Jean Cooper (serving tea in the interval, also responsible for the excellent Irish soundtrack) must be acclaimed for a fine production. I loved the quartet who turned on us from the back of the bar to comment on Christy's racing triumph. Hers is a 4-star production, the best, I believe, that I have seen, and I will be lucky if I live long enough to see better.

BUT Pegeen's last line 'oh my grief, I've lost him surely. I've lost the only playboy of the western world' should, I think, have been allowed to resonate so that we could realise its true poignancy. Then before the whole cast (including Wendy Butler and Foster Barnett as villagers) came tumbling onto the stage reeling and jiggling,

Thank you for having me.

WHY ME?



Rehearsals are now well under-way for our second offering this season - *Why Me?* by Stanley Price - yet another new playwright for the Group. It travels through the trials and tribulations of a redundant civil engineer, is feelingly and humorously observed and, although set in the mid-1980s, still has plenty of relevance for today's audiences. A mix of six well-drawn characters will provide plenty of challenge for the actors, and - needless to say - there will be more than enough for the rest of the 'team' to tackle within a domestic setting covering a long summer and with no less than eight scenes! Fran Cartwright will be making her stage debut for us, and we are delighted to have Peter Galloway back after being a stalwart soldier in *My Boy Jack*. Many hands will be needed for set-up on Sunday 12th Jan: to do justice to Stephen's solid set, so do please make a note of the date in your new 2014 diaries and come along to lend a hand - lunch provided, as usual.

SUPPORTING LOUGHTON FOODBANK



This season, LADS are pleased to be helping to raise funds for Loughton Foodbank, a local charity which supports people in crisis in the Loughton area. The Foodbank was set up in June 2013 and is part of the Trussell Trust.

The Trussell Trust works to empower local communities to combat poverty and exclusion in the UK and Bulgaria. We work with the people that society forgets, providing practical help through sustainable projects and enabling each person to realise that they are valued. Our vision is to build communities where people of all backgrounds are included and have the opportunity to live in dignity with hope for the future.

Collection buckets will be in the foyer at each performance of *Why Me?* and this will be added to LADS donation of all programme sales. For more information on the Foodbank visit:

<http://loughton.foodbank.org.uk/>

SPREADING THE WORD



In order to better promote not only the season of plays, but also the society itself, we are beginning to put together a marketing policy for LADS. Improved

marketing will bring us new audience and perhaps more importantly, new members to help share the hard work that goes into producing plays of the high standard we pride ourselves on. Play profiles are being produced for each of the productions for the season and, when ready, they will be sent to everyone in the society, so that LADS' members feel confident when promoting the play to friends, relations, hairdressers and any other random stranger they talk to about LADS.

It is early days, and more information regarding this will come out over the season. Initially we need a small team of people who are interested in helping out. This team may alter slightly for each play, as it is important that people heavily involved in a production are not expected to do too much "off-stage". Jobs within the team will include such things as media, flyers and posters, sponsorship, cast liaison, etc., with one person overseeing the process.

Please contact Jean jean.famcooper@btinternet.com; 020 8505 6988; 07896 910 214) if you are interested in being part of the PR team, or if you have any marketing ideas.