

PROMPTINGS



ISSUE 84 - FEBRUARY 2015

WWW.LADS.ORG.UK



Dear LADS,

I am writing this on the 14th of February and therefore would like to wish you all a belated happy Valentine's day. Have a look in this newsletter for a Valentine's day themed warm up game that those at rehearsals could play if they get time to.

Well done to all of those who got involved with selling tickets for *The Curious Savage*. This was the first play that has made a profit since the society has had to pay the increased hall hire costs. This shows that with the hard work of the society we can continue to make this work. For our March and June productions we are experimenting with releasing tickets earlier and also giving a group booking discount to those that book ten or more tickets. We are hopeful that this will help drive up ticket sales.

It is good to hear that the working parties have started to communicate. I am excited hearing about the ideas these groups of people are coming up with and looking forward to seeing the fruits of their labour. Already we have brought in more advertising for the new full colour program, a food deal with Loughton BBQ, and are making plans for cataloguing the vast amount of costumes and props that we have. If you have any ideas, big or small, about how the society can improve please do chat to one of the General Committee members.

To keep LADS thriving we need to continue to strengthen our relationships with other organisations and build new ones. Our close relationship with LOS and the other user groups is

a great way that we can influence the improvements that are happening at Lopping Hall. The new curtains are up at the back of the hall and I hope that we have a strong number of LADS members at the Friends of Lopping Hall working party days on the 28th of February and the 1st of March.

This season's social schedule has had the addition of three extra events being held at Lopping Hall. The Xmas party was a great success and it was fantastic to see the LADS Christmas cheer in full swing. On Friday the 27th of February there is a wine tasting evening being held by Majestic wines which currently is proving popular. The third will be held in April or May so look out for more information closer to the date.

I have made the hard decision that I am stepping down from the Chairman position at the end of this season. I made my LADS stage debut sixteen years ago as Biondello in *The Taming of the Shrew* and since then I have had the privilege to see LADS continue to grow and produce fantastic pieces of drama. This is all because of the hard work of its members. I am very proud to have been a part of LADS and I have confidence that the society will continue to be a strong amateur dramatic society through its centenary and beyond.

Dan

LADS DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

| | |
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| Friday 27 February | Social Event - Wine Tasting, Lopping Hall Bar, 7:30pm |
| Sunday 1 March | Farmers Market Loughton, a.m. - Handbill Distribution |
| Sunday 22 March | Set up for Beyond Reasonable Doubt from 9.30am |
| Mon. 23 March - Weds. 25 March | Rehearsals, Tech and Dress Beyond Reasonable Doubt |
| Thurs. 26 March - Sat. 28 March | Performances, Beyond Reasonable Doubt |
| Saturday 28 March | After show party, location tbc |
| Sunday 29 March | Set down from 10.00am - followed by set down lunch at Papillon (see Social Events below) |
| Monday 30 March | Crit. night and curry from 7.30pm |

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome Adam Rabinowitz, who will be playing Pastor Manders in *Ghosts*.

READ THROUGHS AND CASTING

As some people may not be clear about the purpose of LADS read-throughs and how they relate to our casting process, here is a reminder. Unlike most drama societies, LADS does not hold auditions either to join the society, or for casting purposes. Auditions can be stressful for all concerned (including audition panels!) and some people who are perfectly confident in front of an audience don't present themselves at their best under the pressure of an audition.

So, are our read-throughs a substitute for auditions? Well, no, they are much more than that.

Firstly, the read-through is a good way to introduce the play to members. You will see a brief description of each play and breakdown of characters on the next season summary sheet, when this is sent out with Promptings, but by coming to the read-throughs you will get a much better feel for the play and the characters.

Everyone is welcome to take part, though some people come just to listen. Other members come to read, even though they don't act with the society. Parts are rotated to give everyone a chance to read two or sometimes more characters, depending on the numbers.

As well as the Director of the production concerned, most or all of the play selection/casting committee members come to the read-through. This is not a covert audition – and no-one is looking for a 'performance' standard. It does however give us a chance to hear a combination of people reading parts and it's particularly helpful if there are new members or would-be members who we have never heard before.

When plays are selected no parts are 'pre cast'. Of course we have to consider the general makeup of the acting membership of the society when choosing plays, but as we usually have a healthy influx of new members this is liable to change. Hopefully we can stretch to larger cast plays from time to time.

If you come to a read-through, it's really important that if you have a preference for a particular part (or backstage role), you indicate this on the availability form. The play selection/casting committee do take this into consideration, as well as looking at how recently/frequently someone has been cast in previous productions. Remember – if you don't come to the read through, it will be assumed you are still available unless you have indicated otherwise. You may be cast or given a backstage role!

Casting is based on the 'fit' with the character (age, and gender are critical of course – though we often have to use 'theatrical license'). Also, we always try to cast new members as soon as possible, so they don't have to wait too long to get on the boards. Where this isn't possible, we will look to find a backstage role so they can gain experience of being involved in a production.

Casting meetings are usually held on the Sunday following the read-through. Sometimes, it is just not possible for us to complete a full casting decision on the Sunday – for example if there is literally no-one suitable and available for a particular part. In this case we may issue an incomplete cast list. We will only look to cast from outside the society as a last resort, when there are no alternatives.

If we have to cast from outside the society or we have someone who has contacted us about possibly joining, but hasn't been to a read-through, we try to arrange a separate individual reading with them, before committing to the casting.

So please remember:

Everyone is encouraged to attend read-throughs.

Please put the dates in your diary and try to come along.

Let Cathy know if you are definitely unavailable for a particular production.

ADVERTISING IN OUR PROGRAMMES

We are now offering advertising space in our full-colour programmes. Please inform any local businesses/clubs/societies that you know. It is a relatively cheap way of getting to a few hundred people who are from Loughton and the surrounding area, who are supportive of the creative arts. A full page (A5 portrait) is £50 and half-page (A6 landscape) is £30. We can produce the artwork or work with anything ready prepared. Email: info@lads.org.uk.

FARMERS MARKET 1ST MARCH - HANDBILL DISTRIBUTION

We are handing out handbills at the Farmers Market on the morning of 1st March.

Please contact Gemma (07875031354 or gemma.garside@hotmail.com) if you can help.

SOCIAL EVENTS: WINE TASTING AND SET-DOWN MEAL AT PAPILLON

Wine-tasting and social evening on Friday 27th February - 7.30pm in Lopping Hall bar.

The wine-tasting is for approximately an hour and will be run by Steve, the Manager of Majestic Wine. There will be a selection of wines of contrasting styles (3 red and 3 white) Steve will give a talk about basics of wine-tasting and there will be a discussion about the wines, with questions/chat at the end.

£5 per person to cover cost of wine

Please book your place, so we know who is coming—bring a friend or two—everyone is welcome! If wine-tasting isn't your thing—we hope you will still come along—we will run our LADS' bar from 8.30pm, and will continue the evening as a normal LADS' social (at no charge—apart from your drinks from the bar, of course)

Sunday lunch after set-down for Beyond Reasonable Doubt (Sunday 29th March).

Roger is arranging a Sunday lunch at Papillon in Chigwell after set-down for Beyond Reasonable Doubt. If you wish to attend, you can put your name on the list at set-up, or please contact Roger on 020-8508 5253.

CRIT. FOR 'THE CURIOUS SAVAGE' - MARGARET GODFREY

When I was asked to crit. this play, and was given the background - I did wonder whether it had stood the test of time, being written in 1950 and I was pleasantly surprised.

It was sharp and witty, but also gentle and thoughtful and with a little tweaking could have been updated, as people don't change that much over the passage of time, though I am glad that you decided to keep it in the time that it was written.

I got hold of a copy of it from the library and I wanted to read it first, and have it by my side when writing about it. Just a thought. For your future productions, do you get an extra copy to give to whoever is going to crit it, as I found it very useful to know the play before I watched it and I am sure others will too.



Dave Hinkley, Pam Macdonald and Sylvia Zilesnick

So - let me start by saying a few words about Front of House. Everyone was greeted and helped if necessary, programmes readily available and the bar and coffee area manned (and womaned) for a busy night. I also like your previous production photos and info on the screen in front of the green room - all adds to the ambience of the evening.

Programme and poster design

Lovely posh programme! Great front cover too, it said a lot. I think having the photos of what the actors really look like was important, as some of the characters didn't do you justice, particularly Mrs Paddy and Fairy May - it was good to see what attractive women you actually are!

Super directors notes (and I absolutely agreed with Jean about having English accents - more of this later though.)and information about the author, and I hope you got money for your advertising! Thumbs up to you Howard and to Garry for the production photos.

Curtain up promptly at 8.00pm with attending music.



Sylvia Zilesnick, Nick Martin & Rebecca Phillips

The Set and Props

Good set with period features, wall paper and furnishings, making a pleasant dayroom for the patients - apart from the bars on the window of course, though sweetly explained away as keeping people out rather than them in.

I liked the use of putting a window seat in, as the sofa was necessarily small, to get all 11 actors on stage with the furniture plus a piano, but it never felt over crowded. Having the coffee table as a moveable object and the two down stage chairs in front of the curtain giving you more room. Although a carpet is featured in a couple of scenes, they can be a right nuisance, so doing without and using ones imagination was fine. So congrats to Stephen as the set designer and construction man.

The set was a well dressed, which made it feel like a comfortable home with all the many attending bibs and bobs for use during the play and I think it's only when you have done props that you appreciate how many there are to think about, particularly that need setting before curtain up, plus of course having to also deal with coffee being drunk as well. It looked as if went very smoothly Sue.

Lighting and sound

This was fairly uniform apart from the business of lights on lights off re Mrs Paddy and her exploits, though I had to refer to my programme a couple

of times re time of day or night.

Act 1 Sc 1 is set at night....and it was a bright as day outside, so assumed it must be a summers evening when it gets dark after the inmates go to bed (though don't sleep of course!) but then Fairy says about wishing to have been a cat so that she could see in the dark when it wasn't so I was a bit confused, could there have been short curtains could have been drawn across the window without cutting off the window seat? Telephones rang when they should, buzzers buzzed and lights on and off were well executed, so thanks to Cathy and of course not forgetting the rest of those 'unseen' worthies - Wayne, Karen and Neil - though on Saturday night Neil was not required once!



Charlotte Pope & Jon Gilbert

Costumes

Excellent as all the cast looked exactly as their characters should have, with change of costumes as well where appropriate. Just a couple of examples - Mrs Savage looked elegant and expensively dressed, Fairy May, very frumpy, and Lily Belle - what heavenly red and green chiffon outfits and terrific high heeled shoes. The chaps, well suited and booted, with the exception on Hannibal, he had the pleasure of wearing his delightful tank tops!

Attention to detail was closely observed so very well done Liz, Hanna and Christine.

Direction

An interesting choice of play, with a lovely variety of contrasting characters that your actors could get their teeth into. Gentle folk inside and quite awful ones without! The Family were truly a gruesome bunch !

You brought out the contrasts with your good choice of actors. Of course these days it is most unlikely any of them would be confined to a home for the mentally unstable, they would be out in the community - apart maybe for Mrs Paddy, who

could be a danger to herself and anyone around after dark!....and sweet fragile Fairy May, who finds solace in her fantasy world.

Having just the one set, with quite a lot of furniture and a cast of 11, there was not a lot of room for manoeuvre, but enough not to be over crowded and for a wordy and fairly static play, you got as much movement as was possibly could from your cast, so very good stage direction. Of course there are the odd anomalies when actors had to sit in the down stage chairs and address characters upstage, occasionally lines were less distinct, and when conversations were held toward the back of the stage, I am sure you urged everyone to use more projection.



Martin Howarth

There are too many good moments to mention them all, but one which stood out was in Act 2 Sc 1 was when Mrs Savages delightful step children, were verbally and almost physically circling her as she sat on the sofa, like wolves after their prey, it was quite menacing, though Mrs S was undaunted!

You put in enough comedy business without distracting from the more serious elements of the play, as John Patrick said 'easy laughs will rob the play of meaning' - as in the contrast between the charm and humour of the inmates and the abhorrent insane world outside 'The Cloisters' and this was totally achieved with good ensemble playing.

Actors

Let me deal with the staff first

Dr. Emmett - Jon Gilbert

You looked the part and you portrayed your character as serious but kindly and warmhearted who works hard to help his patients.

I did notice in some earlier scenes though that you occasionally addressed the floor rather than the character you were talking to, so do bear in

mind keeping eye contact, it also helps us to hear you better.

You had a particularly good scene between you and Mrs Savage in Act 2 Sc 2 when discussing why she sent her step children on a wild goose chase and I think his understanding of her deepened after that and was most telling on his exit line when the 3 miscreants come in - I'll be just outside - if you want me. A well delivered and telling line.

Overall - a good solid performance.

Miss Willie - Charlotte Pope

The admin assistant and nurse, married to Jeff, but he can't remember you - quite heartbreakingly really. You are a very kind and understanding person, but particularly so to Jeff - Bingo as call him. This came over to the audience. I could have done with a bit more volume from you though, as I didn't want to miss anything that was that being said. You looked good in your suit, efficient, yet warm and friendly, and so tender. It was a touching performance.



**Howard Platt, Dave Hinkley, Nick Martin,
Jon Gilbert & Wendy Butler**

The Family

Titus - Howard Platt

A humourless, sober and direct person and the least popular senator in congress - thoroughly unpleasant and a marvellous character to despise! You put him over with great aplomb, stamping your overbearing authority on all about you. You looked good, I heard every word, excellent diction, a most enjoyable performance.

Lily Belle - Kimberley Packman

Serial wife - 6 husbands so far - a celebrity heiress, arrogant, tres chic, self assured and self centred. You managed to portray all these unattractive qualities, while looking gorgeous. I

very much enjoyed your characterisation - and you reminded me a little of a young Joanna Lumley - a touch of the Patsys about you - all to your credit, and good projection too. Thank you, you were a delight to watch.

Samuel - Martin Howarth

He has the distinction of being a judge with the most overturned decisions in the US. You walk in the shadows of your overbearing siblings offering only short comments every once in a while only to be shot down by your family. Not a big part but your presents was noted at all times and you got a great laugh on your line in Act 3 "we are Savages" - so apt!



Howard Platt & Kimberley Packman

Ethel Savage - Sylvia Zilesnick

The events of the play are centred around you and your decision to hide the money which you inherited from your late husband in an attempt to make her step children look on others more kindly - you obviously disliked them, but learns to love the residents of The Cloisters.

I thought you were terrific. From your first entrance - well the Teddy Bear was just ahead of you, you commanded attention. You looked great - the 'blue' wig actually suited you and you carried yourself with grace and elegance on stage, thoroughly knowing your character. I heard every word and your interaction with your fellow 'guests' was acted with great warmth and your disdain for your awful step children was palpable. A truly excellent performance.

The Residents or Guests of the Cloisters

Florence Williams - Pam Macdonald

Your foible is that you believe you have a five year old son named John Thomas (a name that

has different connotations in the UK) He is a doll but your fellow guests never let on. You have a good nature and is caring of everyone. This came across in your portrayal - you looked good, and assured on stage and gave a confident performance as a caring mother figure to the residents. Well done.

Fairy May - Rebecca Phillips

A sweet natured, childlike compulsive liar who wants everyone to love you, and although very frumpy you think you are a great beauty - and why not, no one disabuses you - apart from that utter bitch Lily Belle. I really liked the way you handled this part - with a lot of sensitivity and at the same time quite fay but happy in your fantasy world - you moved your character well and had a lot of enthusiasm in your acting.

Mrs Paddy - Wendy Butler

A gift of a part to have fun with - I loved what you did with her. An artist in your own eyes, you paint seascapes - well just a blue line across a canvass - rather odd as Hannibal says - she's never seen the ocean. You stopped talking when your husband told you to 'shut up' and now you only speak to list all the things you hate - and it's quite a number of things! I think you only have four speeches in the whole play but no one can deny your presence. Your expression was great - how did you keep your mouth in a scowling horizontal position! You were very funny, but not played for cheap laughs! ...and I loved the line about what you hate ending with politicians! A very good performance.



Sylvia Zilesnick, Pam Macdonald, Nick Martin, Rebecca Phillips & Dave Hinkley

Jeffrey - David Hinkley

Probably one of the saddest figures at The Cloisters, you think you are scarred when you survived a plane crash in the war that killed your

men, but the scarring goes a lot deeper - you are in fact still a handsome young man - I think we call this condition survivor guilt - and you that your wife is Miss Willie, and you play the piano, but are too shy to do this when other people are around. You conveyed your more serious nature well in this performance. You had very sad eyes! and always telling the wife you don't recognise off for - well for lack of a better word - coming on to you - ever so gently though - very nice interaction between the two of you. Again, I could have done with more volume, but when I heard you, you had good diction and delivered a convincing performance.

Hannibal - Nick Martin

Once a statistician, fired and replaced by an electronic calculator, must have tipped you over the edge. You took up the violin and think you play beautifully - as beautifully as Mrs Paddy thinks she can paint! It is of course horrid when you scrap the bow over the strings, but the kind hearted residents, smile and tell you, you are great. Your lively personality contrasted well with Jeffs and I loved the scene with the playing cards and the ring - a natural talent for comedy I think. Thank you.

So.....I do hope I haven't missed anyone out! I was delighted by the final outcome for 'The Cloisters' residents - that little bit of magic at the end when they all become how they would like to be....Mrs Savages triumph and the humiliation of her horrid brood.

Going over my notes again, I kept seeing so many positives that I had written down - words like Excellent black out - well handled, great bit of business there, 11 characters well placed on stage - Lily Belle - what a bitch! scribbled down whilst still trying to keep track of what was going on, on stage.

Thank you for asking me - I really enjoyed the play and there were some outstanding performances - very best of luck for Beyond Reasonable Doubt in March.

LADS TICKET SECRETARY

We are still looking for a Ticket Secretary to take over from Lisa and Lucy, who are stepping down at the end of this season.

The new person would need to start at the beginning of the new season, i.e October 2015 would be the first play. A handover and

shadowing process with Lisa & Lucy could be offered towards the end of this season.

The ticket secretary:

- Is an officer on the general committee
- Receives all advance ticket bookings
- Manages all phone and email bookings through the TicketSource website
- Staffs the Box office for each play, selling tickets on the door

The best things about the job are:

- You get to speak to our audience very regularly, and build relationships with all our regulars
- You get to be involved and part of the team for every show, but in a predictable way!

If you're interested, contact Lisa who can tell you lots more about the role.

Call 07811 471948 or email lads.boxoffice@gmail.com

SHAKESPEARE QUIZ

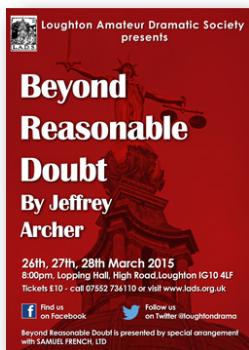
Which Shakespeare character is dying?

Shakespeare saved some fine lines for those characters drawing their last breath. Can you identify who speaks these words in their exit speeches?

1. "O, treachery!"
Banquo, Thomas Horner or Desdemona?
2. "And then all this thou seest is but a clod and module of confounded royalty."
King John, King Lear or King Richard III?
3. "Et tu, Brute!"
Cassius, Brutus or Caesar?
4. "God forgive my sins, and pardon thee!"
Mercutio, Henry VI or Cardinal Wolsey?
5. "O, I am slain!"
Polonius, Lady Macbeth, or Mistress Quickly?

6. "How now! What means death in this rude assault?"
King Richard II, Claudius or King John?
7. "If thou be merciful, Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet."
Romeo, Paris or Friar Laurence?
8. "I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this; Killing myself, to die upon a kiss."
Timon of Athens, Goneril or Othello?
9. "O Antony! O Antony!"
Cleopatra, Mark Antony or Domitius Enobarus?
10. "Now die, die, die, die, die."
Hamlet, Bottom or Hotspur

BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT



Don't forget to book your tickets for Beyond Reasonable Doubt, which go on sale shortly.

Also, please tell your friends about the special meal deal which LADS have with Loughton BBQ - book a table for 4 on any night of the play and you'll get a meal including tea/coffee or soft drinks and dessert for less than £8 a head!

See attached flyer for more details.

VALENTINES DAY DRAMA WARM-UP

A Valentine's Day variant of [Pass the Invisible Object](#) - a (mostly) mimed warm-up game.

Standing in a circle, the tutor or nominated person should **present the person next to them with an invisible present** for Valentine's Day – for example, a bunch of flowers. They should **clearly mime what it is** so the receiver knows how to react to it.

The giver should say “for you” when handing over the object, the receiver should reply “for me? thank you!” then **respond appropriately to the gift** (for example, sniffing the flowers or putting them in a vase). Once that exchange is complete, the receiver becomes the next giver – they can give whatever they want to the next person around the room.

The most common gifts will be used up quickly – allow for duplication but encourage originality in both the giving and receiving aspects.

Length: 5-10 mins, depending on the size of the group/length of the acceptance scenes

Group size: any size

SHAKESPEARE QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Banquo
2. King John
3. Caesar
4. Henry VI
5. Polonius
6. King Richard II
7. Paris
8. Othello
9. Domitius Enobarus
10. Bottom