

# PROMPTINGS



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I am delighted to report that the season is continuing with more success – *An English Tragedy* was extremely well-received by everyone that came to see it – a massive 324 tickets sold, plus season tickets members, giving a total audience over the three nights of 379. It had been considered by the play selection committee that

this play would be the most difficult to sell because of its subject matter, but with the tremendous efforts of Richard and Sandra D encouraging new people to come along and see their LADS' debut, it actually outsold *Anne Boleyn*. We are certain that those new audience members were impressed enough to want to continue to support LADS' productions in the future. Margaret Godfrey gave us a very entertaining and informative crit on the Monday after the play and the NODA crit is included in this issue of Promptings.

So, onwards and upwards ... *Jamaica Inn*, the 4th and final play of the 2015/16 season, is now in rehearsal. Tickets are on sale, so please start your "member marketing" – forward the handbill which has been sent to you by email – share the post on Facebook – retweet the twitter feed on Twitter – collect handbills from the hall on a rehearsal night and put them on your local notice-boards – help out on 5th June at the Farmers Market – and

generally let people know about *Jamaica Inn*. It is a very exciting production with especially composed music just for LADs, and interesting staging. I have been to a few rehearsals and have been very impressed by what they have already achieved. We are very pleased to welcome new members Lee Kenneth and Katie Clarke who are playing Joss Merlyn and Mary Yellan, and guest James Kenneth playing Jem Merlyn.

Onto more social events ... see inside for more information. After-show party at Andrew and Karens – 25th June ... Read-through for *Wife After Death*, the first play of 2016/17 season on 30th June – running order yet to be decided ... The End of Season Car Rally on 3rd July - do sign up and come along for the day, it will be a great day out for all the family ... AGM on Monday 11th July 8pm – it's your society, come along and have your say, and then over the pub for a beverage ... Theatre trip to Tolethorpe Hall on 23rd July – matinee of *The Tempest* at historic Tolethorpe Hall open-air theatre, tickets still available.

Finally, please look out for the nomination forms for the AGM, which will be sent out in May. There are spaces on the general committee and play-reading committee for 2016/17, so if you are interested in running the society and would like more information, do not hesitate to talk to me.

*Jean.*

## LADS DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sun. 5th June	Farmers market - please help to give out flyers for <i>Jamaica Inn</i>
Sun. 19th June	Set up for <i>Jamaica Inn</i> – help out, have lunch, catch up with friends
Thu. 23rd – Sat. 25th June	<i>Jamaica Inn</i> production nights – make sure you book your ticket
Sat. 25th June	After show party - venue Andrew & Karen's – all welcome
Sun. 26th June	Set down – three line whip for all those not going to NODA awards ceremony
Sun. 26th June	NODA London Awards - nominations out soon
Mon. 27th June	7:30pm Small hall – Crit. followed by curry
Thurs. 30th June	Read through of 1st play of the 2016/17 season
Sun. 3rd July	End of season social – Car rally ... more details inside
Mon. 11th July	AGM – Small hall – 8pm – NB: changed from 4th July
Sat. 23rd July	Theatre Trip to Tolethorpe Hall to see <i>The Tempest</i>

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## MEMBERS' NEWS

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We are pleased to welcome Katie Clarke who will be playing Mary Yellan in *Jamaica Inn* and James Kenneth, who is guesting for us in *Jamaica Inn*, taking the part of Jem Merlyn.

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## THEATRE TRIP

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Roger has purchased 10 tickets for the **1.30pm matinee performance of "The Tempest"** being performed as part of the Stamford Shakespeare season at the wonderful Rutland Open Air Theatre in the historic grounds of Tolethorpe Hall ([www.stamfordshakespeare.co.uk](http://www.stamfordshakespeare.co.uk)) on **Saturday 23rd July** - for the annual LADS summer theatre outing.

For those people who have never come to this before, it is a lovely day out. We car-share, so that not everyone has to drive - and we stop off at The Sibson Inn Hotel on the A1 for a late breakfast, and then drive onto Tolethorpe Hall for the 1.30pm matinee. After the show, we tend to go to The George in nearby Stamford for dinner.

The stage is situated in a wonderful open-air glade, but the audience is covered - so you don't have to worry about wet weather.

The price of the ticket is £13, but obviously the cost of the meals are on top.

If you wish to come along to this, please either let me ([lads.chairman@gmail.com](mailto:lads.chairman@gmail.com)) or Roger ([rogerbarker23@gmail.com](mailto:rogerbarker23@gmail.com)) know as soon as possible. Eight members are already signed up for the trip, so there are two tickets available, but we may be able to get more tickets if necessary.

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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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## NODA CRIT. FOR 'AN ENGLISH TRAGEDY' RICHARD FITT

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I have seen this group over several years now and have always admired their sense of adventure and readiness to take on difficult subjects and scripts. Not for them the populist plays that guarantee an audience. No, they take on the historical, the challenging and the obscure and yet at the same time have a faithful following that would be the envy of many a group sticking to the crowd pleasers. An English Tragedy was no exception.



**Christian Mortimer**

Written by Sir Ronald Harwood more famously known for his plays *The Dresser* and *The Pianist*, this tells the story of the trial in 1945 of John Amery, son of MP and government minister Leo Amery, a man who ironically had hidden his Jewish ancestry, and brother to Julian, also later an MP and government minister in his own right. After a turbulent, rebellious and somewhat spoilt, early privileged start in life John became a fervent anti-communist, pro-Nazi who lived in France, befriended the French fascist leader and ended up recruiting and broadcasting for the Nazis during World War II. After the war Amery was arrested by Italian Partisans and tried for high treason at the Old Bailey, which is where our play begins.



**Richard Cohen**

Performed in The Lopping Hall, Loughton the stage design by Andrew Rogers was a simple rostra affair on several levels to very effectively depict the various scenes, consisting of The Amery's house, Terni in Northern Italy, an office, a prison cell and a court room. To complete the set each individual acting area was very effectively lit by Terry Tew with a precision that allowed a minimum of breaks between scenes.



**Jean Cooper**

Sound was by Mary Lowe and Sarah Biggs completed what is always an impeccable backstage crew at The Lopping, expertly managed on this occasion by Cathy Naylor.

Costumes and properties were authentically supplied by Liz Adams and Valerie Jones respectively to deliver us back in time to 1945.

Leopold Amery, John's father was played by Richard Cohen and from what I learnt afterwards I can only express a deep admiration for his courage. This a huge part and it turns out not only is it his first major role but it is also his first time on stage, ever! He was obviously born to it and why he has not graced the boards before must be an English tragedy in its own right. I also take my hat off to director Mary Lowe for entrusting such a large part to a total newcomer. Not only did he grasp the part with both hands, overcoming all nerves, but on more than one occasion rescued other actors who were floundering with their lines. After a couple more

parts this actor will have mastered stage craft tricks that have taken others decades to learn. Some first performance sir!



**Adam Rabinowitz**

His wife and John's mother, Bryddie Amery was expertly played by the vastly experienced Jean Cooper, showing a large range of emotions from enforced self-control to a very touching moment in the prison cell with her son before his execution where you could almost feel the atmosphere between them.



**Foster Barnett**

Adam Rabinowitz, after recovering from an early stumble with the dialogue was an excellent foil to Christian Mortimer's John Amery as the solicitor struggling with his client's flippant attitude to saving his own skin, expressing his incredulity with a mixed air of frustration and professional poise that was severely tested in this most public of environments.



**Martin Howarth**

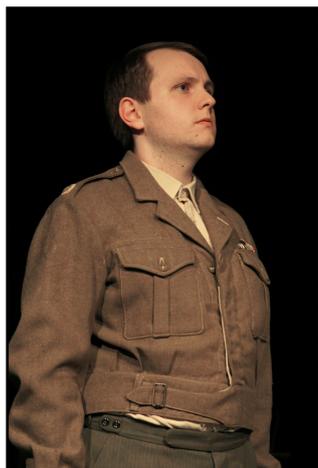
The man of the moment however has to be Christian Mortimer as John Amery himself. This is an 'A' list amateur actor if ever I saw one. I've not seen this play done before, so how much is down to the playwright and how much is down to the director I don't know, but Mortimer's upbeat, joking manner of playing Amery was the delight of the evening. It takes some skill to take a very serious part and add a light touch to it in the way he did, he really got under the skin of the character with terrific confidence and a lot of humour giving Amery great depth and, with due respect to all the other actors, the scenes with him were simply a class above.

The dialogue in this play has huge monologues and lots of places where if not delivered with understanding, variety, pace and passion can become somewhat turgid. In the main the actors were aware and mostly avoided that bear trap, but I did on one or two occasions, especially in some of the longer monologues find myself losing concentration when delivery stayed on the monotone level, with the consequence that the pace inevitably dropped off ever so slightly. But in the main I'd say they mostly succeeded with what is an incredibly difficult play both in dialogue and subject matter.

All credit to Mary Lowe who clearly understands what Harwood is trying to say, and he is not an easiest of playwrights to perform. Nice job!

Thank you LADS for what was yet another enjoyable and thought provoking evening.

**Richard Fitt**

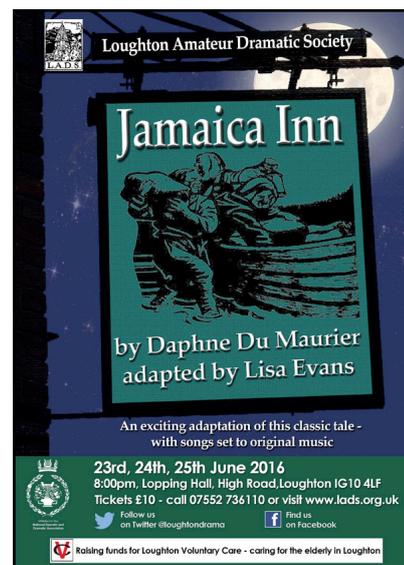


**Josh Sowerbutts**



**Sandra Davidson**

There were some excellent and formidable minor characters who also deserve a mention. I particularly liked Foster Barnett as the Major who questions Amery after his initial arrest and is somewhat bemused by his answers and Martin Howarth as the warder who was a wonderful foil to Mortimer's Amery in the prison scenes. Not of course to forget a very competent Sandra Davidson as Dr Rosemary Pimlott who, as a leading expert barrister in this type of law struggles to find a legal escape route for Amery and can only advise he pleads insanity. Well done also to Josh Sowerbutts as the sergeant and Phil Postings as the judge, who looks far too realistic in the part for my liking! Scary!



Murder, mystery, romance, wreckers...sheep! LADS' June show contains all the above, and more. Adapted from Daphne Du Maurier's book of the same name, Jamaica Inn is not a typical choice of play for our society as there are a number of songs in it. It's important to state: this is not a musical, more a play with songs – a style of drama with which LADS have had success in the past.

I first came across the adaptation in 2006 and the play reading committee read it and were enthusiastic. Unfortunately there was a planned



**Phil Postings**

film and the (poorly received) TV drama in production and the Du Maurier estate would not sanction the play being put on. Time passed and I contacted the estate again in 2014 to be told that adaptations were now available. The play reading committee again read the show and realised its dramatic potential and I was delighted to be given the task of directing it.

The story is well known. Mary Yellan comes to live with her Aunt on Bodmin Moor at Jamaica Inn, a place “where no coach stops”. It transpires her Uncle is involved in evil deeds and Mary gets dragged into a mysterious world where she cannot be certain of anyone’s true intentions. The adaptation takes us through scenes comic, romantic and tragic, using the dramatic device of Mary’s internal monologue personified as The Woman and involving smugglers, the strange Vicar of Altarnum, Mary’s Uncle’s enigmatic brother and, yes, sheep!

With wonderfully atmospheric music written specially for our production, a host of sound and light effects, an interesting set and, of course, an enthusiastic and hard-working cast, we hope Jamaica Inn will be a fitting conclusion to the current season.

**Andrew Rogers**

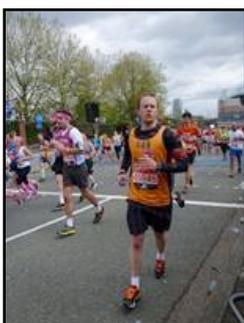
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## DAN’S MARATHON

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Thank you to all the support I got from LADS’ members for my running the London Marathon for the RNLI. It was a run of two halves. My target time was 4 hours, 10 minutes, but a twisted knee at 18 miles put paid to that, and I ended up with a time of 4 hours, 50 minutes. I was gutted I didn’t finish the way I wanted to, but I did really push through some difficult parts. I am determined to run again, so I can beat the time!! The best news of all is that together with all your help, we managed to raise over £3,120 for the RNLI.

Thank you again. **Dan.**



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## BILL CALDOW

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It is with great sadness that we have to report the passing of Bill Caldow in April. From the early 1970’s through to the early 2000’s, Bill was a stalwart for the LADS, performing in and directing numerous plays. He was also instrumental in introducing his son Iain to our ranks, where he too starred in and directed many of our productions. Bill’s wife Bobbie served as our Ticket Secretary for many years.

Longer serving members and subscribers will easily recall Bill’s portrayals in such memorable plays as *Amadeus*, *The Entertainer*, *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, *On Golden Pond*, *Dame of Sark*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Pack of Lies* - to name just a few. He also directed some eight plays for the Society including: *Deathtrap*, *The Killing of Sister George*, *A Doll’s House*, *Nude With Violin* and *Bonaventure*.

Bill will be fondly remembered by all those privileged to have known him. He was a steady and reliable co-performer and cared deeply for the high standard the LADS always seek to attain. His achievements ‘on the boards’ for the Society speak volumes for his ability and dedication.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Bobbie and family at this sad time, with the earnest hope that they will find comfort in the many memories they have shared over the years.

**Babs**

# Bill Caldow

