



Promptings

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**NODA REVIEW OF
BREAKING THE CODE**



**BOOK YOUR TICKETS
FOR THE ELEPHANT
MAN**



**RAMBLING
LADS**



**MY FIRST STAGE
APPEARANCE**

Message from Jean

What a fabulous start to our 2017/18 season! *Breaking the Code* was a tremendous success in so many ways. We sold out on Friday night, selling 384 seats over the three nights (still chasing that 400 target), the play was so well received I have had people singing its praises everywhere I go - Cathy directed with such tender care that Dean's portrayal of Alan Turing truly touched people's hearts. The NODA crit is inside Promptings and rightly recognises Dean's stupendous performance and the hard work of everyone involved. Another Naylor triumph! Oh, and we *almost* had the new chairs – well, we had new chairs, but not OUR new chairs. (Stop press.... the new chairs have arrived now and I sat – very comfortably – in one for LOS' production of *Bugsy Malone*).

Onwards and upwards, the casting has been completed for *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* (aka *Come back...*) and cast lists emailed out by Karen. It was great to see some of our new members at the read-through and be able to cast some of them in this interesting, funny and poignant play alongside our established members. I suspect we are going to have a lot of fun with this one.

Rehearsals have begun for *The Elephant Man* - at the time of writing, we have only had 3 rehearsals, but we have blocked the play and it is already beginning to take shape. It is a difficult rehearsal period with Christmas and New Year in the middle, but all the cast are working hard to ensure the production is ready early so all we have to do after Christmas is to add the shine. See inside for what is needed for props etc..., and how you can help.

Don't forget the Christmas LADS social in the Lopping Hall bar on Friday 15th December from 7.30pm. Come along, have a drink or two, bring a few nibbles for everyone to share, and catch up with your LADS' mates to wish them a Merry Christmas. See below for the calendar of upcoming events. The full calendar can be found on the website (www.lads.org.uk) on the membership page (password is willingale).

There are still a few spaces left on the Accents Masterclass, to be run by Gemma Wright on Wednesday 17th January. We have asked Gemma to cover Texan and General American, so if you are cast in *Come back ...* Andrew would ask that you attend the workshop. More information inside. Finally, for those I won't see before, I would like to wish you (albeit, a little prematurely) a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and remind you to please to market *The Elephant Man* as the production dates of 11th, 12th and 13th January will be on us so quickly after New Year. Just an idea ... how about getting some handbills from the hall and putting them in your Christmas cards?



Jean



Dates for your diary

Fri 15th Dec	LADS Xmas Social. Lopping Hall bar, from 7.30pm
Sun 7th Jan	Set up for <i>The Elephant Man</i> . Starts at 9.30am
11-13 Jan	<i>The Elephant Man</i> production dates
Sat 13 Jan	After show party at Andrew and Karen's. 28 Station Road, Loughton.
Sun 14 Jan	Set down for <i>The Elephant Man</i> . 10am start.
Mon 15 Jan	Crit - Small hall at 7.30pm, followed by curry at Bengal Spice
Weds 17 Jan	Accents Masterclass with Gemma Wright. Info inside Promptings.
Thurs 18 Jan	Read-through for <i>California Suite</i> . 8pm in Small Hall.
Fri 19 Jan	Rehearsals start for <i>Come Back to the Five and Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean</i>

My First Stage Appearance - Cathy Naylor

If we skim past my appearance as a duck in my dance school show when I was 4 and several appearances in my primary school theatrical offerings, my first real stage appearance was playing Vivi in *The Rose Tattoo* by Tennessee Williams when I was 9 years old.



Amateur dramatics is a hobby that I had been brought up with because my Mum was an active member of our local drama group and was always involved in a production in one capacity or another. In our house, it was perfectly normal for my Mum to be reciting her lines whilst preparing dinner, rearranging the furniture in the sitting room so she could practise her moves or be making costumes or props. As a child, my favourite thing of all was when my Mum was in a play and I

was allowed to go to rehearsal with her to sit at the front to watch it all happen. I absolutely loved being at the theatre so the excitement of being asked to do a part is indescribable.

My Mum was playing the lead role and I vividly remember collecting our scripts and sitting together at the kitchen table to mark them up so that we could start to learn our lines. I was determined to be word perfect so I practiced my lines over and over and over again until they were perfect. All three of them.

When rehearsals started, I was so excited because instead of sitting at the front to watch, I was sitting round the edge of the room with the other actors and I felt so grown up. Although I only had three lines, I was on and off stage quite a lot so there was a lot for me to remember. Looking back through my script, I was reminded of one entrance, which if I were asked to do now, would fill me with horror and dread. I had to enter from stage right, skip to centre stage while bouncing a ball, pause and throw the ball to another member of the cast who then had to throw it back to me for me to catch. Once caught, I had to continue bouncing the ball while I skipped off stage left. As a 9 year old, I had no concept of the potential disasters that could occur so did it without question, never dropping the ball or failing to catch it.

After weeks of rehearsal, it was time for the performances and I couldn't wait. I was used to being at the theatre during production week but instead of sitting quietly in a corner of the dressing room, I had my own seat in front of the big mirror with the bright lights and I was beyond excited. I was on stage when the curtain went up and I can remember being in position listening to the babble of the audience and willing the minutes to tick by so that we could start. I didn't suffer from nerves or stage fright, I just wanted to get going. My Grandpa came to see me on the first night and I remember seeing him sitting in the front row with the biggest and most proud grin I've ever seen. Thinking about it now, his grin and pride could've been directed at my Mum who had an enormous amount of lines and never left the stage but at the time, thinking that I'd made my Grandpa so proud was an amazing feeling.



After six performances, the run finished and I experienced my first taste of post show blues. I'd had such an incredible time and it had been so much fun that there was no doubt in my mind that this was something I was going to continue to do as a grown up. There's still no doubt in my mind that thanks to this magical first appearance, whenever I do eventually become a grown up, I will always want to be involved in amateur dramatics.

Accents Masterclass



We have invited Gemma Wright, who is a leading voice and accents coach, to run an Accents Masterclass for us at Lopping Hall on Wednesday 17th January. She will be covering Texan and General American, to help those involved in *Come Back...* and *California Suite*. As Gemma is an outside practitioner, LADS will be paying for this course, so to help a little to the cost we are asking for a £5 donation from all those that attend. Andrew asks that all those cast in *Come Back ...* attend the masterclass, and bring their scripts as Gemma will be working directly with the text. We currently have 13 people enrolled, so we still have a few spaces available. Contact Jean on lads.chairman@gmail.com, or phone on 07896910214.

The Elephant Man



We've only had 3 rehearsals at time of writing, but I am delighted with my hard-working cast and crew. I was hoping to collaborate with some acrobats for the production, but I was let-down. However, we still hope to entertain you with a fairground-style beginning to the play. We have managed to find a Victorian bath, which we thought would be the difficult thing to do – but as always, there are always others things to find – if you can help with the following, please let me know: an old-fashioned hospital screen and a Victorian-style screen about 4' high.

**And don't forget to book your tickets -
on sale now!**



Christmas Get-together

We will be getting together for our "LADS Christmas in the Bar" on Friday 15th December. Come along from 7.30pm, have a drink or two, bring along a few nibbles to share, and wish your LADS' friends a very Merry Christmas. EVERYONE is welcome, so bring along friends and relations.



NODA Crit for 'Breaking the Code' - Jacqui Stedman

The selection committee of LADS must take great pleasure in choosing plays which are a challenge to both players and audience and this was no exception. To tackle a story which, recently, has been so well documented, about a man who made such a huge contribution to enable this country to win WW2 is no mean feat. It was very obvious to me that a lot of research had gone into both the story and the character of Alan Turing, a man who was so badly served by the establishment, so to say that Cathy Naylor struck the right note is somewhat of an understatement!

Telling the story in a series of flashbacks (and forwards) at first took a bit of concentrating, especially as it is difficult to follow the programme in the darkness of the theatre, but it became easier as the play progressed and we became accustomed to the parts that other characters played at various periods in his life. Unlike other pieces that I have seen, Hugh Whitmore's play centred on the character of Turing and his life, set outside the confines of Bletchley Park – although his work there was pivotal to the story. We learned who he was and why what happened to him, happened. And, because the outcome of the story is so well documented, there are no surprises in the ending –until you experience that final scene – when you reach a full understanding of the horror that he suffered.

The arrangement of the set, designed and constructed by Garry Cooper, encompassed everything that was needed throughout the play, dispensing with scene changes and positioning. The ability to move easily from one scene to another, picking up props (ably overseen by Peter Fox) when required, removing a jacket, moving a chair, laying a table, all ensured that the audience's attention was engaged continuously.....and

strangely enough, the onstage furniture didn't look out of place when it was not being used.

The lighting design by Terry Tew, operated by Sarah Biggs, appeared simple, but allowed for various parts of the stage to be lit according to the place of the action. The sound design by Andrew Rogers, in this case the music throughout the production, was very much in keeping with the tone of the piece and, again, was ably operated by Sarah Biggs.

Costumes were cleverly ambiguous throughout the action, again ensuring that the action was continuous, and was under the control of Liz Adams.

Congratulations to Dolleen Howlett who, as Production Assistant, pulled all the various departments together and to the Stage Manager, Lynn Marsh, and Backstage Assistant, Karen Rogers, in ensuring that there were no technical glitches. Thanks to Howard Platt for the Production photos and the Programme and Poster Design and to Cathy Naylor for supplying such interesting information about Alan Turing himself and the background information to the story. There is always so much of interest to read in a LADS programme.

There is absolutely no doubt that this whole play hinged on the character and portrayal of Alan Turing. Other people came in and out of his life, but they seemed to be there to highlight various aspects of Turing's personality and thinking. His reaction to them reinforced the fact that he was a highly intelligent individual, a radical thinker, somewhat of an eccentric and an unashamed and unapologetic homosexual. This was all combined in a superb, well observed and totally believable

performance by Dean Bartholomew. From his first appearance it was very obvious that here was no ordinary man – he may have looked conventional in his (rather crumpled) suit, but his mannerisms of nail biting and fiddling with the cuticles on his nails, his inability to look directly at people the ‘tick-like’ movements of his head and his inability to connect properly with his mother, seemed to indicate some form of autism or asperger’s syndrome. His speech to Sherborne School at the start of Act II was beautifully delivered, well modulated and showed an understanding of the young boys at the school. And not once, during his whole performance, did this falter – he had become, albeit temporarily, Alan Turing. Even when he came down for his curtain call his movements were clipped.

Mick Ross (Graham Milne) was the police inspector whose questioning following a robbery at Turing’s house eventually led to the uncovering of Turing’s homosexual activities and it is during these interviews and Ross’s questioning that we understand the naivety within Turing’s personality. The varying reactions to the robbery, as the facts slowly unfolded, were clearly indicated and Ross’s eventual disbelief when he realises the truth of both that and Turing’s indecent behaviour were well done – nothing over the top – even to the point of being apologetic that this has to be reported.

Christopher Morcombe (Tommy Ray) was, it appeared, Turing’s first love, possibly at a time when he was discovering the different layers in his personality. He was kind, charming to Sara Turing and an obvious good friend to her son. He seemed to sense the undercurrent between the two Turings and sought to diffuse any possible difficult situation in a very gentle way.

Sara Turing (Sylvia Zilesnick) showed her exasperation when Alan visited her both as a schoolboy and an adult – there seemed to be little understanding of his character in her attitude towards him, which manifested itself in her being short tempered, a bit brusque and rather detached, perhaps due to her living in India when he was at school in England. The one time she relented was when she visited him after he had been arrested when she showed a much softer side. Turing’s speech about the green foliage folding over him was, again, beautifully delivered and showed that he had no idea how his mother

felt about him. A very believable character coping with a difficult situation.

Ron Miller (John Gilbert) seemed to be a ‘guy on the make’, using Alan (albeit willingly) in a quite unwholesome way. He was a bit brash and really open about his past ‘relationships’, being very obviously money-motivated. There was a coarseness about him which contrasted well with Turing’s fastidiousness – thus emphasising the great differences between them. There seemed to be almost a streak of ruthlessness about him when he said he was going to leave, causing Alan to beg him to stay, a scene which I found quite upsetting.

John Smith (Martin Howarth) was the other police officer who, together with Mick Ross, interviewed Turing once the accusation of gross indecency had been established. He was seen supporting Ross and conferring about Turing and what would happen to him, thus establishing the line that the law would take.

Dillwyn Knox (Michael Lewkowicz) as the professor showed himself to be sympathetic to Turing and one wonders whether there was an element of understanding of his sexuality. He spoke with assurance during some quite complicated bits of dialogue and presented himself as a ‘typical’ academic.

Pat Smith (Charlotte Pope) was portrayed as a woman in a knowingly hopeless situation. She was in love with Alan Turing but realises his homosexuality, is sympathetic with his relationship with his mother and with his future. She was kind and understanding, obviously intelligent, but aware of the helplessness of the situation.

Finally in this excellent cast, we have Nikos (Ian Russell) a Greek who knows no English, whom Turing couldn’t understand (or be understood by) but who appeared to be the last liaison that he had. His Greek (?) speech sounded very authentic and was well delivered. ‘How can I love someone I can’t understand?’ says it all really – love has no boundaries.

Congratulations to Cathy Naylor – not just for your choice of cast, but for getting from them true performances. There was nothing unreal or invented about their characters – they could almost have been people you would see on a train or meet in the street. This was human, historical drama at its best and should be applauded.

The portrayal of Alan Turing helped us, the audience, to see how his life affected his ending – and in such a terribly poignant way. I truly never expected to see that final scene – a man chemically castrated and driven to the end of his endurance by the law of the country he did so much to save from defeat. It was beautifully done.

Congratulations to you all,

Jacque Stedman
Councillor
NODA London



Rambling LADS - Val



Those of you who buy LADS' programmes may have noticed that adverts for the West Essex Ramblers feature regularly. You might have wondered how a local voluntary group manages

to do this. The answer is quite simple. West Essex Ramblers is the nearest Ramblers group to Lopping Hall and many members live locally. The previous publicity officers for West Essex Ramblers became regular attendees at LADS' shows and they approached LADS to propose a mutually supportive advertising arrangement. In return for placing a half page advert for the West Essex Ramblers in LADS' programmes, the handbills/posters for LADS' productions are incorporated into the West Essex newsletter and featured on their Facebook page. The arrangement is achieved at zero additional cost to both organisations and has been in place for the last couple of seasons.

Whilst the two groups have fundamentally different activities, there are many similarities in how they operate. Both aim to provide an activity or experience that the members enjoy and they want to encourage others to enjoy those activities too. Like LADS, West Essex Ramblers is wholly dependent on the voluntary efforts of its members to organise and run its activities, all at a very minimal annual cost (currently £35 p.a.). As a member you can be involved with the organisation of the group as much or as little as you like. If you do get involved beyond turning up for walks it can be by creating and leading walks, supporting the

committee work, writing the newsletter or putting on social activities.

The two groups have had members in common over the years. I am the most recent recruit to both LADS and West Essex Ramblers but I had a very distinguished predecessor in the late Bill Caldw. Several Ramblers have told me about their conversations with Bill, when he would tell them about his latest exploits on the stage as they were tramping the footpaths with him. I do my bit by distributing flyers for our productions when I am on a walk and gently encouraging attendance. I know this led to several additional people coming to see *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Breaking the Code*. The feedback since has been very positive, so I hope it means we will get some repeat attendances this season.

I would love to find a play or drama that reflects my two hobbies, but it's not easy. The atmospheric woodland that you walk through or the fantastic views that you get from the top of a hill that you've just ascended are very difficult to reproduce on a stage set. But there is dramatic potential in stories about walking, often comedic. I have not found anything designed for the stage but on TV there has been *The Great Outdoors* – a 2010 sitcom about a misfit rambling group – and, on film, the 2014 indie movie *Downhill*. Shot in a 'fly on the wall', documentary style *Downhill* is about 4 middle aged male friends who reunite to tackle the epic Coast to Coast walk which spans the 192 miles across northern England from St Bees on the Irish Sea to Robin Hoods Bay on the North Sea. It's the sort of story that often makes a

good comedy - mid-life crises, mischief, squabbles, deep emotional revelations and philosophical debate ensue. The piece has been described as a darkly funny, charming and painful walking road movie.

The Ramblers is a national organisation and a member can just turn up and participate in any walk, anywhere in the country. But on joining new members are signposted to their nearest local group, if they have not already found it, and most people tend to walk regularly with the one or two groups near to where they live. West Essex is a big and busy group. They currently organise 4 walks each week – Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Walks are usually circular and can take place anywhere in the west Essex and east Hertfordshire area. They alternate between short walks taking half a day (5-6 miles) and longer walks taking the whole day (10-12 miles). Some walks take place in London and include historical commentary. The group also organises walking holidays in the UK and abroad. You don't have to join The Ramblers to take part in a walk. Anyone interested in joining up is very welcome to come on a few walks and 'try it out' first. If you decide you are going to walk regularly then you are expected to officially join the organisation. All West Essex walks are listed on the Ramblers website. (<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/west-essex>). If any LADS' members are interested in joining The Ramblers I'd be happy to talk to them and assist. And I promise that West Essex is nothing like the group in The Great Outdoors. It's friendly and easy going - so if you do fancy a bit of rambling, do give it a try.

New Members



LADS extends a very warm welcome to the following new members:

Ines Mendes – doing costume with Liz
 Portia Sorinyane – doing Props for EM
 Eleanor Ireland – cast in *Come back*
 Kelly Mordue
 Anna Galbraith – backstage in *Come back*
 Margaret Kellett
 D Sohi
 Fliss Prothero
 Shea Donovan – cast in *Come Back*
 Sarah Jane Vickers – cast in *Come Back*
 Lisa Kirby
 Lizzie Tucker

Play selection -

Karen, Artistic Director

The play reading committee has started its task of selecting plays for the 2018-2019 season. We're hard at work reading at every opportunity, between rehearsals and line learning of course.

Currently we have a list of about 40 plays, representing a wide variety of playwrights, genres and periods but need to whittle that down to just four. I predict some lively discussions ahead as we debate the merits, or otherwise, of these works.

Suggestions for LADS' productions aren't limited to the members of this committee; any member can put forward a play for consideration, however I must ask that any suggestion is accompanied by a script. Suggestions can be passed to: Karen, Cathy, Dolly, Sarah, Dean, Adam or Michael.

A message from Christine Eckley

Dear Jean and members of LADS,

Thank you so very much for making me an Honorary member of the society. LADS has always given me a great variety of opportunities and challenges. I hope that over the years I have been able to contribute to the strength and quality that make us so enduringly successful.

Kindest regards,

Christine x

And a message from the Mayor

Dear Ms Cooper,

Breaking the Code



On behalf of the Town Mayor, Cllr Philip Abraham, I would like to thank you for inviting him to the above production on 3 November 2017 at the Lopping Hall.

Cllr Abraham said it was a pleasure to watch a local group presenting their sheer talent time after time. Kudos to the Loughton Amateur Dramatic society and all associated with the production. It was an outstanding performance by Dean Bartholomew who played Alan Turing, the brilliant mathematician who broke the Enigma code during the Second World War.

Cllr Abraham also said that it was a full house and the Director Cathy Naylor can really take pride in her cast.

Thank you once again for the invitation.

Yours sincerely,

Pippa Bryce

Administrative Assistant.

NODA Showcase



LADS are going to take part in the NODA showcase in June next year during the NODA London Festival Weekend (23rd and 24th June). The Play Selection committee have decided on a newly written play by Sian Rowlands – originally written for a Doughnut Production's New Writers evening of 3 plays all entitled "Trapped". It is a 20-minute play about the Romanov Sisters, during the time of their incarceration in 1918. The title of the play will be "The Memory of Snow" and will be co-directed and produced by Cathy and Jean. We also hope to produce the play as part of the Loughton Festival in May – but we are waiting to hear from the Festival Committee regarding this. The casting of four female actors will take place after "California Suite" has been cast in January – watch your emails for more information. Rehearsals (which can be flexible and be worked around the actors) will be in April/May for the Festival, with rehearsals in June before the NODA showcase.



The Town Mayor was delighted that his minder allowed him to hold the baseball bat at the Jessel Green fun day