

# *The Linford Luvvie*

**Newsletter of the Bradgate Drama Society  
Summer 2009**

## *Editorial*

Welcome to our Summer edition of the Luvvie. The editorial team was recently thrilled to learn that the Luvvie had been voted the third most welcome thing to drop through the letterbox, just behind birthday cards and Reader's Digest offers but well ahead of gas bills, letters from the Inland Revenue and the firework that the local yobs put through around Bonfire Night. Buoyed by this huge vote of confidence, here we go again with a bumper issue containing our Theatrical Correspondent's review of the Spring production, advance notice of the Christmas production and lots of news about recent social events.

Finally, thanks to Bob Rankin who mentioned at the AGM how much he'd enjoyed the previous editions of the Luvvie. Come to think of it though, there isn't a lot else happens in Woodhouse Eaves

## *In this Issue*

- The Spring Production – six people talk around a table
- Christmas production – Peking behind the curtain
- Social events – out and about with our roving reporter
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## *Spring Production*

The Chairman's directorial debut, Alan Ayckbourn's *Table Manners*, hit the stage in mid-May to considerable acclaim. It was a difficult piece for a first attempt at direction as all the action takes place in the same room, centred around a table at which a series of argumentative meals takes place. The play relies for its impact on pace and timing and actors who are able to learn a large number of lines and reproduce them in the right order. With the help of an excellent cast and despite a number of sleepless nights, Andy succeeded in staging a production which rattled merrily along from beginning to end

For those of you who didn't get to see it the action, set in the 1970s, is a prolonged family squabble taking place over a summer weekend. From this unpromising scenario Ayckbourn manages to create one of his typical larger-than-life comedies centred around the hero/villain Norman Dewars. Though accompanied by his wife, Norman has little compunction in arranging a dirty weekend with his sister in law Annie whilst at the same time flirting with Sarah, his other sister-in-law. Although, at least according to

him, this bore little relationship to his own lifestyle, Peter Warlow did a creditable impression of an aging roué, injecting his usual gusto and enthusiasm into the part.

Four of the supporting roles were played by Andy Hastie as a bumbling, inarticulate bachelor, Toby Manning as the pedantic hen-pecked husband, Leslie Baker as his nagging, highly strung wife and Tracey Hastie who played Norman's long suffering wife, dealing with his aberrations with a mixture of resignation and annoyance. On legal advice I'm making no comparison between any of the above roles and the actors' real-life personas.

The revelation of the production, however, was Sally Cook who played Annie, Norman's intended conquest. Although Sally has featured in the Society's last few productions, including a memorable Essex girl interpretation of Snow White in the last Christmas show, this was her first major part. Notwithstanding this, she rose to the occasion magnificently, not only mastering the knack of walking and talking at the same time, which many of us still find so difficult, but dealing confidently with a part which was not only long but central to the action of the play.

Recognition should also be given to the stout hearted men and women of the backstage crew, particularly John Nixon, who not only designed the set to his usual impeccable standard, but did far more than his fair share of scenery painting (surely he's not the only Society member who owns a paintbrush?) and Hannah Johnson who provided a series of table settings and meals for the cast through the course of the production which would have not disgraced a medium sized residential home. And finally, how about a word of recognition for Brian Hooper and John Boyd, the Society's answer to Wallace and Grommit, whose work on stage management and lighting respectively is often uncelebrated but never unappreciated.

## *Christmas Production - Aladdin*

For this year's Christmas production we will be returning to a traditional pantomime, so here, to start things off, is a pantomime joke –

Teacher – “3B you're turning this lesson into a complete pantomime”  
Voice from the back – “Oh no we're not”

This joke and hundreds like it will probably be featuring in the BDS production of Aladdin – serious drama aficionados please look away now. The show will be staged on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>, Friday 4<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December but the immediate date for your diary is **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>. September** when auditions will be held in the Village Hall, starting at 7.30p.m. In accordance with recent practice, everyone wishing to take part in the show will be guaranteed a part, even if we have to write in a few more roles. We are also happy to accommodate those who just want a cameo part, either to dip their toe in the water of dramatic art for the first time or to convince themselves that the old magic is still there. We also look forward to seeing anyone wanting to contribute backstage to do all those vital things which make the show happen. Rehearsals will probably be on Tuesday and Thursday nights, subject to agreement with the cast.

The whole enterprise will be directed by Peter Upton who, in making his directorial debut, will try to cover his lack of experience with a love of corny jokes, double

entendres, cross dressing, slapstick, audience participation and more double entendres – in fact everything that makes a great pantomime!

And just one more pantomime joke to round things off –  
“Haven’t I seen your face somewhere else”  
“No it’s always been here on the front of my head”

## *Social Events*

Lots has been happening over the last couple of months. Firstly around twenty of us went to the Curve in July to see five of our members take part in the Curve’s community production of the stage adaptation of Philip Pullman’s ‘His Dark Materials’. Peter Warlow, John Rolinson and Dave Bown took leading parts with Holly Warlow featuring in the chorus and Fern Warlow working on the sound desk – I’m sure any remaining Warlows must have been involved in some way, if only making the sandwiches. The production made no concessions to its amateur cast and crew, making full use of all the Curve’s technical gear to present a spectacular fantasy tale. The BDS contingent upheld our reputation magnificently – just hope some of the magic rubs off on the rest of us. Certainly if the Curve puts on another community production I would encourage anyone with a serious interest in theatre to become involved, if only to appreciate the wide but not unbridgeable gap between our own efforts and those of a professional theatre company.

Secondly we had the barbeque which, inevitably, was held on a day of brooding black cloud and showers interspersed with the odd spell of watery sunshine. We plunged on regardless, however, confident in our ability to incinerate a sausage whatever the weather. The day was saved when Des Bates rang to offer the loan of his gazebo for the event. Not quite sure what use a small antelope would be, we were reassured when it turned out to be an impressive canvas structure which could comfortably shelter a dozen or so people and uncomfortably shelter a lot more. This was fortunate as there was a good turnout for the event with a couple of dozen members and partners attending. Everyone eventually realised that the weather looked a lot less threatening through the bottom of a wine glass and the evening roistered merrily along with the standard of cooking varying in inverse proportion to the alcohol intake. An anxious Sunday morning brought no reports of e-coli or salmonella so the event was judged a success with a reprise probably being pencilled in for next year.

Finally and sadly we had to cancel the boules competition for the second year running due to a combination of impending bad weather and non-availability. Those boules aficionados amongst you (not sure whether the correct term is bouleur, bouliste, boulant or even boulanger) can rest assured that the Committee will leave no stone unturned in its efforts to resurrect it in 2010. Thanks again to Gill and Des Bates for their sterling, if ultimately unsuccessful, attempts to get the show on the road.

Social events for the remainder of 2009 and the early part of 2010 will be planned at the next Committee meeting in early September and details circulated in the usual way. If you’ve got ideas for events you’d like to see on the programme (as far as I’m concerned anything apart from sky diving and bungee jumping) just let us know and we’ll try to put it on.

## *The Annual General Meeting*

This year's AGM took place on Wednesday 20 May. In front of a small but distinguished attendance the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary presented their reports on the year's activities. Elections were then held for the Officers of the Society and the Committee members. Eunice Gibbins had notified us of her retirement from the Committee – see our appreciation below – and was replaced by Hannah Johnson who, as many of you know, has rejoined the Society having returned from living in France (apparently you can't find a decent pantomime anywhere in Normandy). Apart from this change, the Officers and Committee members remain unchanged, which for the record is –

Chairman	Andi Hastie
Treasurer	Toby Manning
Secretary	Peter Upton
Committee Members	Gill Bates, Anita Gillingham, Tracey Hastie, Brian Hooper, Hannah Johnson, Helen Tansley and Peter Warlow

The meeting also agreed to accept a number of small changes to the constitution of the Society, last reviewed in the 1980's, to bring it into line with current practice and plug a few loopholes. Copies of the AGM Minutes and the revised constitution are available from the Secretary by request.

## *Eunice Gibbins – an appreciation*

If asked who had worked for the society for well over thirty years yet never appeared on stage some people might be left scratching their heads. Eunice, who retired from the Committee at the AGM, does in fact fit this description (unless, of course, she knows any different!). Gill Bates, who has been in the village for 32 years – obviously she can have been little more than a toddler when she arrived – says that Eunice was working for the Society when she came and had probably been doing so for some considerable time before that. As most of you know, Eunice's long-standing contribution has been as booking secretary for all the Society's productions. She is credited with creating the ticket allocation system we now use – presumably before then it was the biggest and strongest who got to sit at the front - and tells of those far off days, probably before television and public transport, when people used to queue outside her door the day tickets were released to ensure they got a seat for the latest production. Although we will miss her contributions at Committee meetings we still hope to see her at productions and social events for many years to come.

## *The Next Newsletter*

The Winter edition of the newsletter will contain a progress report on the Christmas production, details of social events for the new year and any other old rubbish I can find to fill four pages! As usual, if you've got any comments on the newsletter or anything else about the Society you can always contact me at -

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