



# Dramatic News Dramatic News

Jan-Feb 2007

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[www.huntingdondramaclub.org.uk](http://www.huntingdondramaclub.org.uk)

In Our 63rd Year

## From the Editor

It's been a very busy start to the year! We've had a Burns Night, a lighting workshop an AGM and preparations for the up-and-coming Alan Ayckbourn "Joking Apart" production.

From the beginning of January the club launched into a two rehearsal a week programme for "Joking Apart". That's at least 3 hours per evening followed by private rehearsals at home/wherever (let's add another six hours, at least) making each week approximately 12 hours per cast member – phew.

There has also been the set design to consider. This is one of the trickier ones, with some of the considerations proving a great challenge. Such considerations include:

- How to set up chicken-wire and several poles to hold a make-shift tennis court;
- How to get hold of this type of gear (anyone know where any of this is going free?)
- How to get a tennis court and garden setting onto such a small stage as that provided in the Commemoration Hall?
- How to set the sound and lighting so that it has the right effects for fireworks, a bonfire and other madcap noises;
- Teaching Michael Black how to play tennis (again)!

And on top of this is the difficulty of directing. This play does not set itself out with only **two** acts/scenes set in the same time and location. There are four scenes in all, each set in a different time period and in different seasons. Directing this has certainly been a challenge.

And finally (for this newsletter) there comes the costumes. How to get a cast of 11 characters attired for the four different scenes! As you might imagine, this is not an easy ask.

As you can see there is a lot going into this production in a short space of time! So what can you do to help (please)...

- Got any chicken wire and poles for a tennis court?
- Any small panels of wood to represent what is left from a fence that is pulled down (the panels need to be broken over several nights of performances and dress rehearsals)?
- SELL TICKETS. Please tell your friends and neighbours, school groups, scout/guides groups, NCT groups, NHW groups.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS ! SUBSCRIPTIONS ! SUBSCRIPTIONS !



Please be reminded that 2007 subscriptions of £10 fell due at the AGM and are now overdue from those that have yet to pay - many thanks to those who made the effort to pay on time.

Could those that have not paid please do so either at the next rehearsal or by forwarding a cheque made payable to:

Huntingdon Drama Club  
f.a.o. R.J.Stevenson,

This is a contribution to club expenses such as the newsletter, workshops, public liability insurance, and other ongoing expenses.

Folks – we need subscriptions to cover these important costs and to aid the future of the club. With Huntingdon's focus on the Arts it would be a shame to lose one of the town's great contributors.

## POTENTIAL DIRECTORS!

Please let Michael or any other committee member know if you're interested in directing either the June or the November production.

**The deadline is Wednesday, 28 February.**

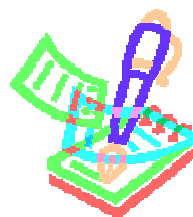
The committee will choose both plays at its meeting on 6 March.



Around a dozen people are interested in acting in the June play.

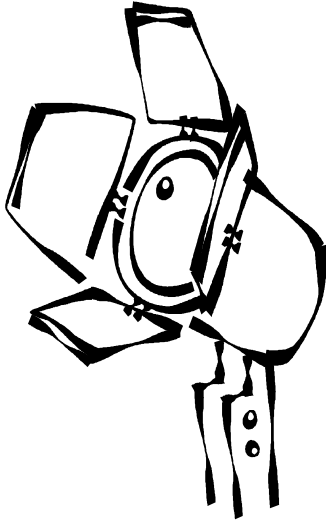
## CONTACT DETAILS

<mailto:theeditor@huntingdondramaclub.org.uk>  
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## Lighting Workshop



On 31<sup>st</sup> January a great crowd of us turned up at the Commemoration Hall for our long-awaited Lighting Workshop. Now I'm fairly new to the whole acting lark so the goings on of the lighting crew have always been shrouded in mystery for me and I was looking forward to learning all about it.

There were two parts to the evening. First, Adam – from Stage Electrics, the source of most of the lighting equipment that we hire – demonstrated some lights that could be programmed to rotate, change colour, flash and do everything except get up and dance. This was particularly interesting for the old lighting pros among us.

Then John Morgan, who's been doing sound and lighting for the Club for twenty years, introduced the lighting virgins to the basics. Where the lighting bars were and what the different kinds of lights were used for. Luckily for me he put it all into plain English so I didn't make an idiot of myself by asking daft questions (well, no more daft than usual!).

But then suddenly to our great delight he allowed us all on stage to actually touch the lights, attach them to a lighting bar and play with focusing and directing them. Carol even volunteered to winch a lighting bar down from the lofty heights of the stage ceiling (which she did with great aplomb). Suddenly it all started to make sense as we could see the lights in action. I had thought that spotlights followed actors around the stage (what a fool!) and I certainly hadn't realised the limitations that the lighting crew work with (it's basically on, off or fade for each set of lights).

Now, of course I'm an impossible show-off with my new-found knowledge of Fresnels, Barn Doors, Gobos and Profile Lanterns. I'd even like to have a go sometime (if they can prise me away from being in a spotlight to pointing it at someone else!). And I know John had offers of assistance from others on the night, which bodes well for all of us who are keen to see John liberated from the lighting desk and back on stage sometime soon.

It was a terrific evening and I know everyone I spoke to found it fascinating. Let's have more of the same – I think most people in the drama club (not to mention all the non-members who turned up) would like to know more about the backstage elements of putting on a production. Oh, and if you missed it, John's excellent booklet is available on the website and contains everything you could ever want to know.

After that taster, John's now thinking of running a half-day course that would give people enough knowledge and experience to light a production, so if you're interested, do contact him ([john.morgan@vodafone.net](mailto:john.morgan@vodafone.net)).

John, you have enlightened us, illuminated the subject and, dare I say, tripped the light fantastic!

Caroline Harbord

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## Report on the club's AGM

Cunningly contrived to take place on Shrove Tuesday, the Club had a good excuse to start AGM proceedings with a veritable cornucopia of pancakes (laced with lemon and sugar), washed down with coffee and tea. We then settled down to the AGM itself.

The Chair's report on the last twelve months showed that we had plenty of cause for self-congratulation, with fine productions of 'Silhouette', 'Move over Mrs Markham' and 'The Greatest Gift', workshops on make-up and lighting, socials and parties, DVD evenings and trips to the theatre. Most important of all, several new people have got involved in the Club - including four of the cast of 'Joking Apart'.

Plans for the coming year were discussed, including the June and November productions, workshops and play readings. Several good ideas were put forward, including suggestions regarding the hire of lighting.

There was also great praise, from both the Chair and the floor, for the quality of the newsletters and website, thanks to Mark Lamberth and John Morgan, respectively.

The Treasurer, Ronald Stevenson, was able to report that while in 2005 we had a net deficit of nearly £900, last year we made a surplus of almost £1,500. This included a profit of close to £900 on 'Silhouette' and £550 on 'Mrs Markham' - both record amounts for the Club.

The Chair thanked the committee for all its good ideas and hard work during the year - without their efforts the Club couldn't exist. The new committee was elected, as follows:

- Chair: Michael Black
- Vice-Chair: Carol Wadey
- Secretary: Caroline Harbord
- Treasurer: Ronald Stevenson
- Ordinary members: Mark Lamberth, Richard Meredith, Ann Monk, John Morgan, Kat Sexton and Pete Welsh
- Huntingdon Youth Theatre representative (appointed by HYT): Ray Livermore.

Ray's report on Huntingdon Youth Theatre was read out.

It was agreed that the annual subscription should remain at £10. This is a paltry sum to pay for the activities that are on offer, but the income helps to cover non-production costs. **Please give or send your subscription to Ronald Stevenson now.** This covers membership until the AGM in February 2008.

### Other social events

## ALAN AYCKBOURN'S 70TH PLAY "IF I WERE YOU"

Mr Ayckbourn's latest play will soon be showing at Cambridge Arts Theatre and it is proposed that the club, and particularly those involved in Joking Apart should endeavour to attend this event on **Friday 9th March**.

In true Ayckbourn style this bears many of the hallmarks of his earlier work, a depressed downtrodden wife and the behavioural defects of an endearingly dysfunctional family. For a fuller review please click here:-

<http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/reviews/feature/1629/If+I+Were+You/>

Stalls tickets are £25, please contact Ronald Stevenson who is arranging the booking.

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