



# Dramatic News Dramatic News

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

Oct 2006

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In Our 62nd Year

## “MOVE OVER MRS MARKHAM” – 2 weeks to go

**Don't forget to get your tickets**

Performances are on 9<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> November in the Commemoration Hall.

Tickets are only £7.50 (concessions £6.00).

Tickets can be booked online at [Huntingdon Drama Club Booking Office](#), at the Card Gallery and the Commemoration Hall in Huntingdon



## Christmas Extravaganza

You will recall that we were recently asked by Lydia Eldridge, Artistic Director of the Commemoration Hall, to contribute a 15 minute production to the Christmas Extravaganza on 16<sup>th</sup> December.

Well, under the successful direction of Ronald Stevenson we have:

### The Greatest Gift

The cast and crew for the Christmas show is as follows :-

**George**, little boy lost - Mark Lamberth  
**Narrator** / Jackanoryist - Michael Black  
**Mystical Tramp** - "don't do it!" - Chris Topham  
**George's Mum** - Jacqueline Spencer  
**George's Dad** - Richard Meredith  
**Mary** (George's real life Wife?) - Carol Wadey  
**Mary's son** - Tom Ashton  
**Art Jenkins** - James "I'm from the Midlands " Godwin  
**Jim Silva** - Kevin Webb

## Christmas Extravaganza (continued)

**Director** - Ronald Stevenson

**Props** - Richard Meredith

**Sound FX / Lights** - John "don't worry I'm an electrical engineer" Morgan

**Choir Mistress and Chief Caroller** - who else but Carol Wadey

### **Commentary**

A big thank you from the Director to all of you who have enthusiastically responded and I look forward to working with each and every one of you to ensure that this small but poignant production is a success for all involved. I will require some help with the wardrobe side of things and we also require a dog, although sound FX may have to do, they say never work with children or animals..... but if anyone knows of a dog that barks to command I'd relish the challenge. A barking cat ? - now there's a thought?

Points of note:-

- \* Carol is back after a temporary absence as a forlorn milkmaid, in her preferred role as Mark's wife, by all accounts for the third time.
- \* James will be making his straight acting debut after many years of playing the ponce, well they say it's never too late.
- \* In terms of unfair situations often encountered on the casting couch, the fact that somebody i.e. Michael is going to be comfortably seated throughout the whole play is a new one to me - it's just not fair!!
- \* It remains to be seen whether the most famous sofa in England will make another stage outing, this time it may even have its owner in situ, who knows?

### **NEWSFLASH NEWSFLASH NEWSFLASH**

Tom Ashton has broken his arm (in a playground incident – or so we are told) and has the arm up in plaster.

Tom – wishing you a speedy recovery and don't go breaking anything else before the Christmas Extravaganza.



### **CONTACT DETAILS**

<mailto:theeditor@huntingdondramaclub.org.uk>  
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## SO WHAT'S IT LIKE TO DIRECT AN AMATEUR PRODUCTION?

Michael Black is chair of the drama club. He is also directing our Autumn production *Move Over Mrs Markham*. He also co-wrote and directed *From Mafeking to the Millennium* last year. But he was acting in *Silhouette* in the spring. So does Michael's heart belong to acting or directing? *Caroline Harbord* decided to uncover the man with many roles.



I've only been a member of the drama club for a year so I've known Michael more as a director than as an actor. On talking to him however, it's evident that he thinks of himself more as an actor who has taken on directing out of necessity. I asked him how it all came about.

"I started directing when I was 22," he told me. "It was the year after I graduated and they were putting on a production of *Orpheus in the Underworld* at my old college. The director fell ill halfway through rehearsals so I took over. Despite lots of things going wrong, it was a huge success. Since then, I've directed about nine shows, five of them for the drama club." Because you can't resist the challenge of directing? I ask. He laughs, "No, it's more a case of 'Who's going to direct the next show?' and nobody else volunteering, so I did. I'm generally not afraid to turn my hand to something I don't know much about – life's much more exciting if you take chances."

So what are the best things about directing? "I really enjoy being part of a team creating something together and contributing suggestions that spark off other ideas. The director's there to encourage the cast to experiment and to ensure consistency in the outcome. And I'm particularly interested in trying to make personality and relationships clear, through speech and body language." He continues, "It's also helped me when I'm acting. I'm more aware of how things look from the front, and of how characters interact. It's definitely had an impact on how I approach a role." So would you recommend it to other actors? "Definitely," he says, adamantly. "Directing is fun, and it's thrilling to see a good performance and think 'I helped to make that happen'."

But come on, I say, spill the beans - there must be a downside to it. We actors must drive you mad for a start! He laughs. "No, the worst is being both director and producer. I've been in plays where the director has had virtually no time to direct, because they've been so busy with props, costumes, publicity, and so forth. We're extremely lucky in the Club that we have enough people – and enough people with specialist skills – to put on good productions."

There's one question I've always wanted to ask you – when you're acting do you find yourself wanting to direct people? "Yes," he smiles wryly, "but I think it's good if everyone – other cast members, anyone else watching a rehearsal – makes constructive suggestions. As I said, it should be a co-operative effort, and the director certainly isn't the only person with something to contribute. When I'm directing, I'm very happy for other people to put forward their ideas, and when I'm acting I'm happy to get suggestions from anyone." And when you're directing do you ever wish you were acting? "Yes, but then I remind myself I'd have to learn all those lines and I'm glad I'm directing!"

Lastly, what would you recommend if someone in the Club fancies trying their hand at directing but is hesitating because it seems like a big step and a big responsibility? "Go for it. It's probably easiest to start as an assistant or co-director. And we're a strong club, so we can normally provide a producer. Novice directors needn't feel they're left to do it all themselves."

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**Social And Other Events , past and still to come**

**1. Notes from the Garden ... (a report on the Last of the Summer Wine party, by Carol Wadey)**

The sun shone and the food was beautiful and plentiful at Ronald's Summer Garden Party.

Ronald produced a 'bang-up' spread with the aid of his glorious assistant, Caroline, and his "vegetarian is my specialty" chef, Michael.

Many lovely puds were also produced by Drama Club stalwarts and there was wine and merriment galore – not all the merriment due to the wine! It was a lovely afternoon.

Here's to the next one – cheers Ronald!

**2. Shakespeare DVD evening**



Shakespeare at his feelgoodest – **Love's Labour's Lost**

Study for three years and never see a woman? That's what four handsome young men – one of them a king – decide to do.

But the Princess of France is about to pay a state visit, with her three beautiful ladies in waiting. Studying or women ... what a dilemma.

But how can the men disguise their feelings? And who are the mysterious Russians?

**2. Shakespeare DVD evening (cont)**

Kenneth Branagh turns Shakespeare's wittiest comedy into a 1930s musical, adding songs by George Gershwin, Cole Porter and Irving Berlin. Busby Berkeley – eat your heart out.

Branagh, Richard Briers, Timothy Spall, Adrian Lester and Geraldine McEwan are among the excellent cast, and the show will have you on your feet, dancing cheek to cheek.

**Thursday, 23 November at Michael's (email [michael.black@btinternet.com](mailto:michael.black@btinternet.com) or ring 01480-454486 for his address). Doors open at 7.30, main feature at 8. Popcorn and other delights await you.**

**3. Pre-Christmas party**

Caroline Harbord is throwing open her doors to the Drama Club at a party she is hosting on 2nd December. This will now take the place of the Drama Club Christmas Event mentioned in the last newsletter.

The invitation reads as follows:

*Get in the **Pink** this December with the hottest, **pinkest** invitation of the season.*

*To all Drama Club members*

*Please come to Caroline's Pink Rose party  
It's in aid of the Cambridge Breast Unit at  
Addenbrooke's*

*Wear something pink, bring something pink  
and most importantly, bring a donation for  
the charity.*

*Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December from 8pm  
At Caroline's House (directions on request)*

RSVP

Find out more at [www.pinkrosedinner.org.uk](http://www.pinkrosedinner.org.uk)

Please let Caroline know if you are attending (partners are welcome) so she has an idea of numbers.

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