

Huntingdon Drama Club  
presents  
a comedy by Alan Ayckbourn

# Absent Friends

Commemoration Hall Huntingdon

16-18 July, 7:30 pm

Programme £1



All the rehearsal photos on this page are by Marie Huggins

## PAST PRODUCTIONS – THE LAST 25 YEARS

1985	Filumena Suddenly at Home	1998	Absurd Person Singular An Ideal Husband On the Razzle
1986	Arms and the Man Absent Friends Night Must Fall	1999	Rope Working with Amateurs
1987	Lord Arthur Savile's Crime Laburnum Grove	2000	Bazaar and Rummage One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest
1988	Any Number can Die Easy Virtue	2001	Picasso at the Lapin Agile Journey's End
1989	Under Milk Wood Pygmalion	2002	Worlds Apart Mixed Doubles
1990	A Day in the Death of Joe Egg Caught on the Hop	2003	The Real Inspector Hound Wedding of the Year
1991	The School for Scandal Pass the Butler	2004	May-Hem Bobby Dazzler
1992	Lady Windermere's Fan Ghost Train	2005	Fallen Angels From Mafeking to the Millennium
1993	A Chorus of Disapproval Loot	2006	Silhouette Move over Mrs Markham
1994	Tom Jones The Empress of Othernow	2007	Joking apart A murder is announced Jane Eyre
1995	No Sex Please, We're British Out of Sight... Out of Murder	2008	Cold Comfort Farm Hay Fever Ghost Writer
1996	The Importance of Being Earnest Dracula	2009	Separate Tables
1997	The Hollow		

**The National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA)** was founded in 1899 and has a membership of approximately 2,500 amateur theatre groups and 3000 individual enthusiasts throughout the UK.

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## HUNTINGDON DRAMA CLUB'S

### FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

(more details on our website, [www.huntingdondramaclub.org.uk](http://www.huntingdondramaclub.org.uk))

#### **St George and the Turkish Knight**

a traditional mummers' play  
being performed during

The Black Bull (Brampton) Beer Festival 2009  
on Sunday, 2 August at 2, 3 & 4 pm.

**And then there were none** by Agatha Christie  
directed by Carol Wadey, 12 – 14 November, in the  
Commemoration Hall  
Read-through and casting: 29 July

**The Importance of being Earnest** by Oscar Wilde  
directed by Sarah Ward, 25 – 27 March, in the Commemoration Hall

Please contact us if you'd like to take part, on-stage or off.

For further information visit [www.huntingdondramaclub.org.uk](http://www.huntingdondramaclub.org.uk),  
phone Michael Black and John Morgan on 01480-454486, or contact  
any other Club member.



*Bringing drama to Huntingdon since 1944*

Affiliated to the National Operatic and Dramatic Association

# Absent Friends

by **Alan Ayckbourn**

directed by Dean Laccohee

produced by John Morgan

*This play is performed under licence and with the express  
permission of Samuel French Ltd.*

There will be a 20-minute interval,  
when refreshments will be on sale in the foyer

**Thursday, 16 March to Saturday, 18 March 2009 at 7.30 pm**

## A Note from the Director

My first performance in amateur drama was in Huntingdon Drama Club's production of Noël Coward's "Easy Virtue" in 1988 and I'm honoured to find myself, 21 years later, making my directorial debut for the club with this superb play by Alan Ayckbourn.

And how timely too, as Ayckbourn has been thrust into the limelight again this summer after collecting a prestigious Tony Award on Broadway for the Old Vic's revival of "The Norman Conquests". The Old Vic's artistic director Kevin Spacey described Ayckbourn's work as "part of the same canon as Beckett or Chekhov or Mamet" and the revival production's director Matthew Warchus likened his savage subject matter to that of Harold Pinter and Edward Albee, referring to him as the "Chekhov of our time."

As a cast and director we were determined to balance the comedy in this play with the underlying bleakness and despair felt by the characters as their relationships unravel during the course of one afternoon. The actors have worked incredibly hard to bring as much depth and truth as possible to this production and I salute them. I must also thank the crew and committee who have worked behind the scenes over the last three months to bring this show to the stage – thank you!

To you the audience - enjoy the show and thank you for continuing to support your local drama club.

**Dean Laccohee**

**Dean Laccohee (director)**

Dean was in the Club's productions of *Easy Virtue* and *Pygmalion* in the late '80s, then left to take a three-year professional acting course at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA). He recently returned to live in Huntingdon, and played one of the leads, John Malcolm, in *Separate Tables*. He says it's been a pleasure to work with the cast and production team of *Absent Friends* – and what's more they say the same about him, which isn't always the case!



### **John Morgan (producer)**



During his 23 years with the Club, John has usually been found behind the sound and lighting desk. But a part in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* gave him a taste for acting, and he's since appeared several times – most recently in *Jane Eyre*, *Hay Fever* and as the retired classics master Mr Fowler in *Separate Tables*. He's also produced several plays, and this time is doubling up as producer and front-of-house manager – which gives him the pleasure of making you feel welcome!



### Mark Lamberth (Paul)

Mark has appeared in several Club productions, starting with *Fallen Angels* in 2005. His roles include the obsessive Neville Smallwood in *Silhouette*, the happily married Richard in *Joking Apart*, film fanatic (and sex-on-legs) Seth Starkadder in *Cold Comfort Farm*, and the thoroughly decent Charles Tanner in *Separate Tables*. Paul's lack of warmth and humanity in *Absent Friends* is a far cry from the real Mark. This is his last role with the Club before returning to his native Australia in September.



### Scott Hutchison (Colin)



This production marks Scott's return to the stage after a nearly 20-year absence. *Absent Friends* is also Scott's first performance with the Club since joining at the start of the year. He served as prompter in the Club's last play, *Separate Tables*.

### Warren Laccohee (John)

Aside from a spit and a cough in brother Dean's production of *Macbeth* in 1994, this is Warren's first proper acting role. No stranger to the stage though, Warren is also a talented musician, having played in the bands *Fantastic Sam* and *Genus Fickle*. He also makes up half of the popular local duo *The Decanters*, playing regularly at the *Samuel Pepys*, successfully combining his two favourite pastimes.



## The Cast

*In order of appearance*

Evelyn ..... Kelly Mason  
 Diana ..... Carol Wadey  
 Marge ..... Jeanette Brown  
 Paul, Diana's husband ..... Mark Lamberth  
 John, Evelyn's husband ..... Warren Laccohee  
 Colin ..... Scott Hutchison

The play was first produced at the Library Theatre, Scarborough, in 1974. It opened at the Garrick Theatre, London, in 1975, with the following cast:

Evelyn ..... Cheryl Kennedy  
 Diana ..... Pat Heywood  
 Marge ..... Phyllida Law  
 Paul ..... Peter Bowles  
 John ..... Ray Brooks  
 Colin ..... Richard Briers

The action takes place in Paul and Diana's modern executive-style house.

Act 1 Saturday, 3 pm

Act 2 Immediately following

# The Production Team

Director ..... Dean Laccohee  
Producer.....John Morgan  
Stage Manager..... Peter Welsh  
Stage crew .....Steve Missen, Adam Marriott  
Sound..... Dean Laccohee  
Lighting design ..... Mel Pugsley  
Lighting..... Callum Pitt  
Make up ..... Sarah Ward  
Properties..... Richard Meredith  
Prompter ..... Michael Black  
Front of House.....John Morgan and team  
Poster and programme cover..... Dean Laccohee  
Programme ..... Michael Black  
Publicity..... Caroline Harbord and Kat Sexton  
Photography..... Marie Huggins and Dean Laccohee

assisted by other Club members

## Many thanks to everyone who has helped us put on this production, especially

Brampton Playgroup, Jenni and Lydia at Huntingdon Town Council, Gavin, Malcolm and Roy at the Commemoration Hall, Bob Pugh, The Card Gallery, Spotlight Productions, Huntingdon Youth Theatre

Our apologies to anyone we've missed.

## Carol Wadey (Diana)



Carol's first performance with the Club was in *Fallen Angels* in 2005, and her roles have included the scatty Linda Lodge in *Move over Mrs Markham*, Miss Marple in *A Murder is Announced*, the vamp Myra Arundel in *Hay Fever*, and downtrodden Sybil Railton-Bell in *Separate Tables*. She's enjoying bringing to life Di's range of emotions in *Absent Friends*. Carol is looking forward to directing the Club's autumn production, Agatha Christie's *And then there were none*.

## Jeanette Brown (Marge)

Jeanette first appeared with the Club in *Marriage of the Year* in 2003 and followed this with *Fallen Angels* in 2005. Other roles have included a dotty writer of children's books in *Move over Mrs Markham*, a ruthless killer in *A Murder is Announced* and two very different Judiths – gloomy, downtrodden Judith Starkadder in *Cold Comfort Farm* and over-the-top actress Judith Bliss in *Hay Fever*. She thinks that Marge's shopaholic habits are quite a mild reaction to life with Gordon!



## Kelly Mason (Evelyn)



Kelly made her Club debut in *Fallen Angels*, and she's since played several memorable roles. She stripped in *Move over Mrs Markham*, sank into depression in *Joking Apart*, threw herself down the well as Daft Rennet Starkadder in *Cold Comfort Farm*, and served breakfast with aplomb in *Separate Tables*. In addition, Kelly directed *A Murder is Announced*. Evelyn's lack of personality is a real challenge for her to convey! But she knows she only got the part because she had her own pram.