

Huntingdon Drama Club presents

move over



Mrs Markham



Commemoration Hall,
Huntingdon

Thursday to Saturday

9th - 11th
November
2006

show starts at 7.30

Programme £1

www.huntingdondramaclub.org.uk





Move Over Mrs Markham

by Ray Cooney and John Chapman

Directed by Michael Black, assisted by Kevin Webb
Produced by Ann Monk

Produced by special arrangement with Josef Weinberger Plays

The action of the play takes place in the drawing room and bedroom of Philip and Joanna Markham's top floor London flat. The date is 1967.

Act I

About 7 pm on a warm summer evening

Act II

The same. The action is continuous.

There will be one interval of twenty minutes.
The performance will end about 10 pm

Welcome to Huntingdon Drama Club's production of

Move Over Mrs Markham

How it brings back the memories! The sense that there's a lot going on out there, but you're not brave enough to throw yourself into it wholeheartedly, so you just dip a toe in and feel you're being very bold. Philip and Joanna Markham represent the more traditional life and morals of the '50s, threatened and unwillingly transformed by the new permissive society of the '60s.

A good farce isn't pure escapism. It works best when it provides a comic treatment of subjects that could just as easily form the basis of a much more serious play. Sex, both in marriage and outside it, how long you have to know someone before it's all right to have sex with them, how to react to someone who seems to be gay, how far your sense of identity depends on acting like the majority, whether retreating into Norfolk and preferring dogs to people makes sense or is eccentric – these are some of the themes that *Mrs Markham* touches on.

Once again, I've had the good fortune to work with a splendid team both on stage and behind the scenes. So many people have contributed a great deal of time, effort and good ideas, and I'm very grateful to all of them – particularly Ann Monk, who has again done sterling work as producer.

Michael Block

I think everyone involved has enjoyed themselves creating this production. I certainly have, and I very much hope that you, the audience, will enjoy watching it.

Director of *Move Over Mrs Markham*

The cast, in order of appearance

Joanna Markham Caroline Harbord
Alistair Spenlow James Godwin
Sylvie Hauser Kat Sexton
Linda Lodge Carol Wadey
Philip Markham Chris Topham
Henry Lodge Mark Lamberth
Walter Pangbourne Ronald Stevenson
Olive Harriet Smythe Jeanette Brown
Miss Wilkinson Kelly Mason

The Production Team

Producer Ann Monk
Set design and artworks Ann Monk
Stage Manager Bob Pugh
Stage Crew Alison Gray, Anwen Pugh, Chris Doyle
Chris Hunnam, Richard Lee, Pete Welsh
Sound and lighting John Morgan
Properties Richard Meredith and Ann Monk
Costumes Carol Wadey and Ann Monk
Make Up Jan Sheppeard and Carol Wadey
Front of House Christine Hunnam and team
Poster and programme cover cheekdesign ltd
Programme Caroline Harbord and Michael Black
Publicity Kat Sexton
Photography Kevin Webb
Prompt Kevin Webb

assisted by Linda Hutchings and other Club members

Our special thanks go to

Brampton Church, Brampton Park Theatre Company, Hartford Village Hall, Huntingdon Library, Huntingdon Town Council, Huntingdon Youth Theatre, Lydia, Malcolm and Chris of the Commemoration Hall, Shakespeare at the George, SIMADS, The Card Gallery, The Flower Patch

Caroline Harbord (Joanna Markham)

Caroline had never acted before she took on the role of Celia Wallis in Huntingdon Drama Club's production of *Silhouette* in March. In May she appeared as Caroline in Brampton Park Theatre Company's production of *Four Play*. She has now been well and truly bitten by the acting bug and says that packs of wild dogs couldn't keep her from the theatre. But then she always was a bit of a drama queen. When not acting, Caroline works in marketing and as a writer.

Chris Topham (Philip Markham)

This is Chris's first performance with Huntingdon Drama Club but he is a seasoned actor, having performed many roles with Brampton Park Theatre Company, including Dick Barton and Inspector Drake. Chris's last role was as David in *Four Play*, proving that he has a unique talent for playing put-upon husbands. When not on stage, Chris does something very clever in the RAF involving aeroplanes and we are all in awe of him.

Carol Wadey (Linda Lodge)

Carol is an accomplished actor and singer, with an impressive track record in drama clubs in Sussex. Three years ago, luckily for us, she moved to this area and immediately threw herself into local drama. Earlier this year she took the title role in *Patience*, with SIMADS (if you didn't catch her, she made a very fetching milkmaid!) and she played Julia Sterroll in the Huntingdon Drama Club production of *Fallen Angels* last year. In real life, Carol is an assistant at Brampton Playgroup.

Mark Lamberth (Henry Lodge)

Mark is our token antipodean and joined the Club last year. He feels that the romantic lothario role of Henry Lodge suits him much better than his part as the disturbed stalker Neville Smallwood in *Silhouette* earlier this year. Well, that's what he tells us anyway. He also played Carol's husband Fred Sterroll, in the Huntingdon Drama Club production of *Fallen Angels*. When not on stage Mark is a Chartered Accountant, which sounds terribly grown up to the rest of us.

James Godwin (Alistair Spenlow)

This is James's first performance with Huntingdon Drama Club, but you may have caught him as Paul in Brampton Park Theatre Company's production of *The Waiting Room* in May or as Conrade in *Much Ado About Nothing* for Shakespeare at the George in 2005. He would like all the ladies to know that he is nothing like the character of Alistair, and that his convincingly camp manner is simply the result of first-class acting. Off the stage, James works as a marketing manager for an engineering company in the Midlands.

Kat Sexton (Sylvie Hauser)

Kat appeared earlier this year as WPC Leach in *Silhouette* and is absolutely delighted that the role of Sylvie involves no singing or dancing at all (but she hasn't complained once about all the goosing!). She has been involved in the theatre since the age of nine, and studied drama at university. She has also run publicity for this production, so if you're reading this, it's probably down to her!

Jeanette Brown (Olive Harriet Smythe)

Jeanette is an accomplished actor and has appeared in several Huntingdon Drama Club productions including *Fallen Angels*, where she took the part of Jane Banbury. She also acts regularly with Broughton Village Players. She is of course nothing like the batty Miss Smythe and doesn't even have one dog, let alone nineteen of them, but she has thoroughly enjoyed being eccentric for this production!

Kelly Mason (Felicity Jane Wilkinson)

Kelly joined the drama club last year and appeared as Saunders in *Fallen Angels* as well as in several roles in *From Mafeking to the Millennium*. 2006 has been an eventful year for Kelly as she achieved the double whammy of getting married and having her first child. Kelly is fearless and didn't bat an eyelid when offered the role of Miss Wilkinson, even when she realised she'd be spending much of the performance in a sheet!

Ronald Stevenson (Walter Pangbourne)

Ronald appeared earlier this year as DS Fisher in *Silhouette* and this summer made his Shakespearian debut, playing Antonio in *Twelfth Night* for Shakespeare at the George. He also appeared as Richard in *You're Only Young Twice* at Brampton Park Theatre last week. In between all this play-acting, Ronald somehow manages to hold down a semi-respectable office job and once, like Walter, really was a Management Accountant.

Michael Black (Director)

Michael is the Chair of Huntingdon Drama Club and regularly appears on stage as well as turning his hand to directing. You may have seen him as the murder victim Martin Powell in *Silhouette* in the Spring. He also appeared in *Patience* for SIMADS earlier this year. He is understandably proud that he has never had a tantrum while directing, a feat which is all the more remarkable given the recalcitrant rabble of a cast he's had to work with this time!

Kevin Webb (Assistant Director and Prompt)

This has been Kevin's first experience at directing, as he is more often to be found on stage, where he has a penchant for playing villains and pantomime dames. Earlier this year he appeared as DI Bruton in *Silhouette* and as a priest in *Twelfth Night* for Shakespeare at the George. He says that he has enjoyed working with such an esteemed bunch of thespians for his first directorial experience.

Ann Monk (Producer)

Ann was last on stage in *From Mafeking to the Millennium*, which she co-wrote with Michael, and produced. The role of producer cannot be over-estimated - without Ann, we simply wouldn't have a play. She tells us that producing this play has made her feel like one of those people who have to keep lots of plates spinning at the same time. But Ann ... you make it look so easy!

Swinging London in 1967

Move Over Mrs Markham was written and first performed in 1967.

Philip Larkin wrote: *Sexual intercourse began / In nineteen sixty-three (which was rather late for me) – / Between the end of the Chatterley ban / And the Beatles' first LP.*

So by 1967, you would imagine London to have been a hotbed of adultery and naughtiness. And for some daring souls no doubt it was. For others it was something to read about in the Daily Mail and titter about in plays such as this. Joanna wants to be “with it”, but in reality is still firmly living in the innocent world of the 1950s. Philip doesn't even aspire to be fashionable. Henry, Alistair, Walter and Miss Wilkinson however, have thoroughly embraced modern attitudes, providing us with some highly comic clashes of culture.

1967 was a wonderful year. England was still basking in the afterglow of that World Cup final. Radio 1 was launched. And if you tuned in you would have heard Simon & Garfunkel, Georgie Fame, the Beatles or Elvis. If you were lucky enough to have a television, you would have been watching *The Prisoner*, *The Forsyte Saga* or even *Camberwick Green*. If not, you probably popped along to the pictures to see *Bonnie & Clyde*, *The Graduate* or *The Dirty Dozen*.

Joanna and Philip are at the height of cultural sophistication in 1967. This is made obvious by their impressive lifestyle. Who else had an au pair girl, an interior designer, holidays in Spain, a floral bidet, a bamboo trolley, an oval bed and had champagne in their bar? For most Britons, the height of sophistication was a honeymoon in Skegness and a bottle of Blue Nun.

We could have updated the play and transposed it to a modern setting. We couldn't bear to. 1967 gave us so much to play with. We hope you've enjoyed the nostalgia trip. It's been groovy, man.

Caroline Harbord

About Huntingdon Drama Club

Since 1944 Huntingdon Drama Club has produced at least two plays a year. We operate on the principle that we're all in it to have fun and we're mercifully free of egos, tantrums and politics. We work very closely with other theatre groups, as you'll see from the cast biographies, and we're always delighted to welcome new members.

There are many roles within the club, all of equal importance. We need people to work on lighting, costumes, set-building, front-of-house, properties, special effects and publicity, just as much as we need actors. If you're interested please come along and meet us. We're very friendly and we'd love to have you on board. You can find out more at our website www.huntingdondramaclub.org.uk or by calling our Chair, Michael Black on 01480-454486.

We're taking part in *Dreaming of a White Christmas* at the Commemoration Hall on 16 December, and our next full-length production will be staged on 29-31 March.



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