

huntingdondramaclub

# HABEAS CORPUS

*a comedy*

BY ALAN BENNETT

20 21 22 March

Commemoration Hall  
Huntingdon



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*Programme £1:00*



**70 years old this year!**

Bringing drama to Huntingdon since 1944

# ***Habeas Corpus***

by **Alan Bennett**

directed by Steph Hamer  
produced by John Morgan

**Thursday to Saturday, 20 – 22 March 2014, at 7.30 pm**  
Commemoration Hall, Huntingdon

*Previously performed by the Club in 1979*

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



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<https://twitter.com/HuntingdnDrama>

# The Cast

<b>Dr Arthur Wicksteed</b> .....	Tony Burrin
<b>Muriel Wicksteed</b> , his wife .....	Christine Marriott
<b>Dennis Wicksteed</b> , their son .....	Edward Welsh
<b>Connie Wicksteed</b> , Dr Wicksteed's sister .....	Caroline Molony
<b>Mrs Amelia Swabb</b> , their cleaner .....	Jeanette Brown
<b>Canon Throbbing</b> .....	Guy Makey
<b>Lady Delia Rumpers</b> .....	Lindsay Kennedy
<b>Felicity Rumpers</b> , her daughter .....	Louise West
<b>Mr Denzil Shanks</b> .....	Nathanael Spalding
<b>Sir Percy Shorter</b> .....	Bob Pugh
<b>Mr Purdue</b> .....	Graham Crouch

# The Production Team

Director .....	Steph Hamer
Musical Director .....	Roy Bellass
Producer .....	John Morgan
Stage manager .....	Peter Welsh and team
Sound and lighting .....	Mel Pugsley
Properties and costumes.....	Ann Monk
Prompter .....	Jane Crittenden
Front of House .....	Marion Stribling and team
Poster and programme cover .....	Jane Green
Programme .....	Michael Black
Photographs.....	Dr Pat Doody

*Many thanks to everyone who has helped us put on this production, and to Prima restaurant for offering a special pre-performance supper on Thursday.*

# From the Director

I came to see Huntingdon Drama Club's surreal comedy *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* and thoroughly enjoyed this somewhat bizarre play. While I was sipping a glass of wine in the interval, John Morgan (HDC Chair) asked me if I'd like to consider directing the Spring Production. Having just seen this vibrant and talented team of actors thoroughly enjoying entertaining their audience, I wanted to choose a play that would involve as many of them as possible. *Habeas Corpus* fitted the bill. Having performed in this very quirky play myself many years ago, I knew it would be fun. Alan Bennett's somewhat smutty (and in its time possibly somewhat risqué) play set in Brighton's "plush silk stocking district" of Hove in the 1960s takes a look at the "permissive society" that often lies behind respectable doors. The eccentric characters range from a rampant doctor and a randy vicar to a frustrated flat-chested spinster and a busybody cleaning lady, as well as many others.

The play is also a rather sobering reflection on life and "the body". *Habeas Corpus* is the legal term for a court order that requires a person under arrest to be brought before a judge. It literally means "you have the body". Bennett cleverly weaves a complicated plot of desire and revenge as the characters move in and out through a maze of mistaken identities and sexual encounters. As Dr Wicksteed says at the end of the play, "He whose lust lasts, lasts longest".

Our production is lucky enough to have original music written especially for us by Roy Bellass, and I am extremely grateful to Roy for making my ideas come true.

Enough of my ramblings – if you enjoy watching the play as much as we have enjoyed rehearsing it, then you are in for a good evening's entertainment. Enjoy!

Steph Hamer

Director

## **Bob Pugh (Sir Percy Shorter)**

Bob's first Club production was 'behind stage' in *Relatively Speaking* in Spring 1983 and he's been with us on and off ever since. Roles have varied from the sublime (Rochester in *Jane Eyre*), through the naïve (Henry in *Travels with my Aunt*), to the obnoxious (Norman in *Table Manners*). Not having been invited to last year's Dr Who celebrations - despite being the eighth Doctor (*Empress of Othernow*) – he enjoyed being a bar fly (Gaston in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*). This time not only a Knight of the Realm but a fine upstanding doctor too – or is he?

## **Caroline Molony (Connie Wicksteed)**

This is Caroline's first role with Huntingdon Drama Club, and she is thoroughly enjoying it. Appearing on stage is quite a contrast with her day job, as a professional oil painter – to see her work, visit [www.carolineponsonby.com](http://www.carolineponsonby.com). She and her husband have lived in Godmanchester for 26 years, and they have two grown-up daughters.

## **Christine Marriott (Muriel Wicksteed)**

Christine joined the Club in 2008, supporting backstage for *Hay Fever*. Her debut acting role was in *Ghost Writer*, followed by hotel owner Pat Cooper in *Separate Tables*. There followed two appearances for Brampton Park Theatre Company; then back to Huntingdon for *The Happiest Days of Your Life*, *Occupational Hazards* and most recently Sarah, controlling matriarch in *Table Manners*. When not acting, Christine is one of that rare breed of thespian who actually enjoys taking the important role of prompt.

## **Edward Welsh (Dennis Wicksteed)**

Edward Thomas Welsh has been with Huntingdon Drama Club for some time, off and on stage. His last stage appearance, or rather explosion, was as Schmendiman in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. He also has the dubious distinction of being the first to die, in Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*. Edward enjoys all aspects of theatre, including technical and backstage roles.

## **Graham Crouch (Mr Purdue)**

This is Graham's first play with Huntingdon Drama Club. The last time he performed on stage was over 20 years ago at the Hastings Scout Gang Show. He joined the Club in January this year with the thought of helping out back stage and was immediately volunteered for the massive walk-on part of Mr Purdue. What can possibly go wrong?

### **Guy Makey (Canon Throbbing)**

I've been a member of the Club for four years, in which time I've played roles as diverse as the rascally schoolboy Hopcroft minor, a chatty porter, a loyal hound and an incompetent police constable. My most recent – and most challenging – role was that of mad scientist and father of the century Albert Einstein, in his formative years.

### **Jeanette Brown (Mrs Amelia Swabb)**

Since joining the Club in 2003, Jeanette has enjoyed playing a wide variety of roles, including several dizzy/dotty ladies. However, following the protest leader in *Occupational Hazards* and Ruth in *Table Manners*, Mrs S. is her third sensible character in a row. (Then again, she was Mrs Cropley in Broughton Village Players' production of *The Vicar of Dibley* last month, and they don't come much dottier than that ... )

### **Lindsay Kennedy (Lady Delia Rumpers)**

Lindsay has been a keen member of a variety of drama groups, depending on where she was living at the time. Over the years she has appeared in numerous plays, including *The servant of two masters*, *Outside edge*, *The tale of Lizzie Borden*, *The Joyce Grenville monologues*, *Blithe Spirit*, *The Importance of Being Ernest*, Chekhov's *Five Farces*, *Present Laughter* and *Abigail's Party*. She has also tried her hand at directing (which she loved) for Brampton Park Theatre Company's production of *Dancing at Lughnasa*.

### **Louise West (Felicity Rumpers)**

Louise joined Huntingdon Drama Club last autumn, and played Suzanne in Steve Martin's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. Before that, she had been part of Thrapston Amateur Dramatic Society until she left Northamptonshire. Having recently settled in Huntingdon, she was quick to take up acting again.

### **Nathanael Spalding (Mr Denzil Shanks)**

Although this is only Nathanael's second performance with Huntingdon Drama Club, he has been involved with drama on and off stage for many years. Last year he was typecast as the vain womanising artist Picasso, but earlier roles include the Scarecrow in *The Wizard Of Oz*, the Mad Hatter, and third soldier from the left in a school production of that Scottish play!

### **Tony Burrin (Dr Arthur Wicksteed)**

This is now the fifth Club play that Tony has acted in and the bug has really been caught! Following the delightful *Table Manners*, when he followed in the footsteps of the wonderful Richard Briers, Tony now finds himself – most humbly – cast in the role played by the legendary Alec Guinness in the original 1973 stage performance of *Habeas Corpus*. Crikey! Tony is particularly delighted to be performing with some of the new, younger acting blood that has recently joined the Club.

### **SOME OF THE PRODUCTION TEAM ...**

#### **Marion Stribling (Front of House Manager)**

Being Front of House Manager can be hard work but also good fun and I've made some great friends. Also, I feel that I'm making an important contribution to the success of the Drama Club.

#### **John Morgan (Producer)**

Starting at the age of 15, John was usually found behind the sound and lighting desk. But more recently he has appeared on stage several times, for instance in *Hay Fever*, *Separate Tables* and *And then there were none*. He's also been front of house manager, and produced a number of plays.

#### **Roy Bellass (Musical Director)**

I have been a musician for many years now. Being involved with the Drama Club and Shakespeare at the George since 2007 have both been hugely enjoyable experiences, which have given me the opportunity to play different styles of guitar music – a far cry from my rock n roll roots! I wrote, composed and directed *City at Night*, which was staged in the Commemoration Hall two years ago. I've really enjoyed composing the music for *Habeas Corpus* Next stop this year's Shakespeare at the George production, *The Merchant of Venice*.

#### **Steph Hamer (Director)**

Steph's passion for amateur dramatics spans over 40 years. In 2005 she trained professionally in London. She has performed with the Club as the indomitable Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and the meek Lady Matheson in *Separate Tables*. Her directing credits include RAFTA Award winning play *Our Country's Good* with Brampton Park Theatre Company in 2009 and *Love's Labour's Lost* with Shakespeare at the George in 2012. Next year she will be directing *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at the George. She is very pleased to be working with Roy Bellass again, who has composed original music especially for *Habeas Corpus*.

# Our forthcoming productions

July: to be confirmed

November: ***The Accrington Pals***, Peter Whelan's play set during the First World War, directed by Dean Laccohee

All performances in the Commemoration Hall.

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

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

## Words Apart Theatre Company

presents a double bill of one-act plays

### **Bill & Ben and The Dreaming**

with Richard James & Dean Laccohee

Friday May 9th at 8pm at Huntingdon Commemoration Hall

Tickets £10 from the Commemoration Hall box office, at Niche Comics or on the door

Why not join Huntingdon Drama Club? It's for adults of all ages, and for only £12 a year, you can get involved in a wide range of activities.

We put on three plays a year, and sometimes smaller-scale performances as well, for instance for schools, Huntingdon Town Council and other local organisations.

As well as the plays, we arrange informal play readings, usually in a pub, and two or three dinners each year.

Visit our website [www.huntingdondramaclub.org.uk](http://www.huntingdondramaclub.org.uk) to find out more.

John Morgan  
Chair, Huntingdon Drama Club



# Past productions: the last 25 years

1989	Under Milk Wood Pygmalion	2003	The Real Inspector Hound Wedding of the Year
1990	A Day in the Death of Joe Egg Caught on the Hop	2004	May-Hem Bobby Dazzler
1991	The School for Scandal Pass the Butler	2005	Fallen Angels From Mafeking to the Millennium
1992	Lady Windermere's Fan Ghost Train	2006	Silhouette Move over Mrs Markham
1993	A Chorus of Disapproval Loot	2007	Joking apart A murder is announced Jane Eyre
1994	Tom Jones The Empress of Othernow	2008	Cold Comfort Farm Hay Fever Ghost Writer
1995	No Sex Please, We're British Out of Sight... Out of Murder	2009	Separate Tables Absent Friends And then there were none
1996	The Importance of Being Earnest Dracula	2010	The Importance of Being Earnest Port Out, Starboard Home! The Happiest Days of your Life
1997	The Hollow Absurd Person Singular	2011	A Doll's House Abigail's Party Pack of Lies
1998	An Ideal Husband On the Razzle	2012	A Fête Worse than Death Travels with my Aunt Hound of the Baskervilles
1999	Rope Working with Amateurs	2013	Occupational Hazards Table Manners Picasso at the Lapin Agile
2000	Bazaar and Rummage One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest		
2001	Picasso at the Lapin Agile Journey's End		
2002	Worlds Apart Mixed Doubles		



Photos by Dr Pat Doody