



L.A.D.S

NEWSLETTER for April/May 2023

Spring is in the air, the daffodils are daring their appearance and the snow drops have risen in unique quiet confidence. I am sure no one can deny that the local birds are singing louder and prouder more recently and the brighter evenings are finally with us. With this time comes new beginnings, new performances, new projects, it is hard to deny the invigorating spirit of growth and renewal. LADS is welcoming new members and invites everyone to the open event on the 14th May. Our mission is to enliven the Tractor Shed with existing and new talent, be it behind the scenes, cautiously venturing into the unfamiliar or stepping out with exuding confidence, we aim to create a hive of community and celebration.

With change it is important to remember those that already play a crucial role in many different ways at LADS. When we are enjoying the spring blooms and watching the new lambs of the year we often forget the hard work that happens all year round. The tractor shed being located on a working farm is mindfully made safe and welcoming by those who tend the farm before any show or event can even be planned. The environment provides a unique location for drama enthusiasts to practice their skills. With this comes policies, procedures, protocols and laws, all that must be carefully enacted and sometimes painstakingly carried out. Before any show can be performed royalties and licences to perform must be agreed and these are not always easily approved. Health and safety measures must be in place to even create membership to LADS. Some members must hold First Aid certificates in order to welcome guests to shed, the treasury must constantly budget, the box office and those who are always designing, planning and ensuring good public relations. Even those members who have simply taken the time to proof read this newsletter.

All play a crucial role before any show can bloom. If you are new member reading this newsletter I hope you will appreciate these roles and also look at this as an opportunity for yourselves, to be a part of LADS all year round; not only when the curtains go up and the light rushes in. We are ultimately an amateur dramatic group and we are often lucky enough to be able to donate to many deserving charities. We are a group, an amateur dramatic group, we all have a common goal and we enjoy every minute of it. So no matter if we are the ones tending to the foundations that enable LADS to exist or the bright talent that we applaud on those summer filled days we all thrive on being apart of something colourful and most of all meaningful to many.





✨ A message from our social secretary, ✨

Thank you so much to everyone who came and supported our Quiz!

We are so thankful to all 16 of our wonderful teams and are very pleased to announce that you all helped us raise **£507** for the DEC Turkey - Syria Earthquake Appeal (Disasters Emergency Committee).

This money will go towards helping those that are still in desperate need following the disaster with things like clothing, medicine and housing.

It wouldn't have been possible without your support, and thank you for making it such an enjoyable evening too!



*Coming
Soon*

Little Women

19th to 22nd April

SHOWHITS 2023

30th August to 2nd September

A Bunch of Amateurs

15th to 18th November

We are very pleased to announce an open invitation to our upcoming read through for our November 2023 production; A Bunch of Amateurs. This modern comedy offers a variety of roles for both men and women of various ages.

If you have ever fancied giving acting a go, we at L.A.D.S always welcome new members and there is always plenty to get involved with on and off stage, why not come to one of our read throughs and find out what we're all about?



Genre: Comedy

Cast Size : 4 Women, 3 Men

- ♦ Lead Male; Jefferson Steele, Ageing Hollywood Star (Could suit age 30-50) American Accent.
- ♦ Lead Female; Dorothy Nettle, Middle Class, Late 30s (Could suit age 30-50) Becomes Jefferson's love interest.
- ♦ Jessica Steel; (Jefferson's Daughter) Teenager (Could suit 14-18) American Accent.
- ♦ Nigel; Solicitor, Pompous and Stuck Up (Would suit 40-60)
- ♦ Mary; B&B Owner, Jefferson Fan (Could suit 30-60)
- ♦ Dennis; Handyman, Village Fix It (Could suit 30-60) Energetic! and Positive.
- ♦ Lauren; Marketing Exec. and Physio Therapist (Could suit 20-40) Involves Sexual Innuendo.

L·A·D·S

LATCHINGDON ARTS
& DRAMA SOCIETY

PRESENTS



Louisa May
Alcott's

LITTLE WOMEN

19th - 22nd April

Curtains open 7:30pm

Enquire at www.ladsdrama.com

All are very welcome to our SHOWHITS open event. This event gives you the opportunity, with no commitments, to come along and have a few hours of fun and get an insight to what goes on behind the scenes of our yearly Showhits production.

Then, if you had an amazing time ! Which I'm sure you will, join us and be a part of our 2023 production. All information regarding rehearsals and production information will be discussed at the workshop

We can't wait to meet you all! And smash out another amazing
SHOWHITS 🎭





Members Meeting

25th April

8pm

Everyone welcome



Read through

2nd April 6pm

5th April 7pm

SHOWHITS OPEN EVENT

Sunday 14th May

2pm—5pm



Welcoming another to our hall of fame!

Penny Lamport



Joining LADS was one of those sliding door moments. I happened to turn up one evening in the village hall at Latchingdon with my friend Liz, who had directed me in a number of plays with The Blackwater Players. LADS were having a read through with the cast of their next play



Come Back to the 5 & Dime Jimmy Dean. Liz and I joined in, and at the end of the read through, Peter Jones asked me if I would like to play the part of the loud and brash Stella Mae. Unfortunately, due to poor vocal technique, I lost my voice during performance week and Stella Mae, clad in a gold jumpsuit and a full brunette wig, was reduced to uttering her lines in a deep growl.

LADS gave me such a rich variety of roles. It was a huge privilege to be cast and directed by Peter Jones. For me, he is nothing short of a creative genius and was my most inspiring and influential director. Where else would I get to play the Duchess of Malfi, Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*, Dame Chat in *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, Beggar Woman in *Sweeney Todd*, or fly across the stage on a rope as Jenny Lind in *Barnum*? It was Peter's belief in me which led to the biggest challenge of my acting career. Playing *Shirley Valentine* was the most terrifying but also the most wonderful and fulfilling experience. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Peter and to every single member of the LADS family I have worked with on and off the stage.

In 2007, I relocated to Whitley Bay in the North East and became a member of The People's Theatre in Newcastle. It took me a long time to be cast in anything. My first main role was as Deborah in *A Kind of Alaska* by Harold Pinter. I went on to play many more roles including Alice in *The Killing of Sister George*, Miss Cooper in *Separate Tables*, Mrs Conway in *Time and the Conways*, Judith Bliss in *Hay Fever*, Susan in *Woman in Mind* and Miriam in *Snake in the Grass*.

In 2009 I embarked on a professional acting course called InterACT under the direction of Gillian Hambleton at Northumberland Theatre Company. The course consisted of a wide range of master classes with top professionals. The highlight for me was my work placement with Eastern Angles where I was cast as *Betsy the maid* in their Christmas Show, *Mansfield Park and Ride*. We were an ensemble of six and I had an absolute ball performing over 60 shows during the festive season. I look on this production as the pinnacle of my acting career. I even got a mention in The Stage review and our show was in the Guardian top picks for Christmas.

The promising start to 2010 didn't last long. George, my youngest son, had been suffering from paranoid schizophrenia but seemed to have turned a corner and was looking vibrant and healthy. Tragically, the approach of the general election triggered a severe bout of paranoia which led to George taking his life at the beginning of April. In my numbness, I threw myself into my acting career as a coping strategy. I did much of my grieving driving thousands of miles up and down the country. I became a member of Equity and performed in a range of theatre productions across the UK including two touring shows.

People imagine an actor's life to be very glamorous but travelling to different venues, staying in basic digs, putting up the set, night in night out, is hard work! It was very exciting to play at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2012, although doing 6 shows a week for the whole of August and giving out leaflets to drum up an audience on the Royal Mile every day was exhausting. The average audience for an Edinburgh Fringe show is six! I returned to Edinburgh in 2016 for a short run of the one woman show, *Celia*, written by Rachel Cochrane. *I'd sell it to punters on the Royal Mile as Butterflies meets The Vagina Monologues. This marketing strategy seemed to work and we had sell out audiences by the end of the run.*

During my touring years, I was lucky enough to be signed by an agent who sent me for some exciting auditions. Most of them were unsuccessful but I always enjoyed the process. The most exhilarating job was playing Activia Granny in a yoghurt advert with Mel Goodrich doing the voice over. That Christmas, my face, plastered with an inane grin, appeared repeatedly on TV screens in an advert for Safestyle Windows. Not a particularly illustrious TV career, but fun, nevertheless!

While in the North East, I was involved in a number of student films with Sunderland and Newcastle Universities, and more recently with UWE. I love the energy of student productions. They can be quite chaotic in terms of organisation but their enthusiasm is infectious. They also provide a great opportunity to gain experience in screen acting which is so very different from performing on the stage. "Less is more" was one of Peter Jones' mantras and that definitely applies to film acting. Joining the Actors Centre in London gave me access to some training for the screen which was invaluable. My last professional film role was playing a Welsh gossip in the independent film, *Confession Day*. *Filming in a tiny churchyard near Usk with a live male voice choir ringing out across the valley gave me goosebumps.*



My chief love in acting is performing Shakespeare, especially in an open air production. Peter Jones gave me my first role - as Mistress Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. *I have loved playing Shakespeare ever since. I was a member of MacTheatre in Essex which was set up to perform Shakespeare in the park in Maldon, and played in their first five productions. In 2003, I enrolled in a Skills through Shakespeare summer school with RADA. It was such a buzz to perform Lady Macbeth's letter soliloquy on The Old Vic stage. Since moving to Stroud in 2018, most of my roles have been in Shakespeare productions, including The Comedy of Errors, Julius Caesar, The Tempest, Macbeth and The Winter's Tale. In 2020, I joined the Cotswold Arcadians and fulfilled a long cherished ambition to play Caliban. I relished the earthy physicality of this role and the wonderful poetry in Caliban's speeches. Performing in the open air in the beautiful and expansive grounds of Hatherop Castle gave me enormous freedom and scope physically and vocally. There was definitely some growling. But I learned my lesson with Stella Mae and always do a voice warm up before each performance. Last year, I was cast as Autolycus in A Winter's Tale and was in my element playing this larger-than-life lovable rogue.*



Recently, I was asked to record a couple of extracts from Shirley Valentine for Kaleidoscope, a Cotswold Vale talking newspaper for the blind and partially sighted. *It's such a joy to immerse myself once again in Shirley's words. I'm transported back in time to that Friday performance - my late parents watching and shedding a tear - a special memory that I will always thank LADS and the Tractor Shed for.*



If there are any types of events you would like us to consider holding, please contact our Social and Fundraising Secretary, Heather.

Email contacts:

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