

# Faringdon Folly

## Our Town - a moving play of life and death

*"Life and death are things we just do when we're born"* John Cale

OUR TOWN was a bold, but ultimately successful, choice by director Peter Webster for Faringdon Dramatic Society's autumn production. This is a challenging play that broke new ground when first performed in the 1930's for American playwright Thornton Wilder used the device of employing a character, the Stage Manager, played with finesse by Debbie Lock, to speak directly to the audience. She introduces the characters and layout of the small town of Grover's Corners, for there are no props apart from a few tables, chairs and ladders. The actors cope very well with this and it is to their credit that the audience is drawn into the lives of what is essentially a fairly humdrum existence. This was a poignant, and at times humorous, play that is centred on two families, the Gibbs and the Webbs, whose children George and Emily, (Tom Woolman and Harriet Warner) become engaged, get married with Emily ultimately dying giving birth. Universal truths abound, the final scene is set in a graveyard several years later when the dead characters discuss amongst themselves how life's opportunities pass people by and one character says "when it's gone, it's gone". The finale is full of pathos and seemed to leave the audience sad and reflective. There's a comedy cameo from Sarah Varnum as Mrs Soames, with a confident young Seb Allum playing two parts and strong performances from Daniel Lander, Karen Whiffen, Adrian Wells and Allan Dover as Howie Newsome the milkman. All the characters spoke in American accents and performed admirably, with the usual convincing performances from FDS veterans John Taylor and Dave Head?y. There were good houses at all three performances. Full credit to FDS for contributing so much to the cultural life of Faringdon, onwards to the panto Aladdin in the new year.