



Society : **Faringdon Dramatic Society.**
 Production : **Cold Comfort Farm.**
 Date : **26th June 2010.**
 Venue : **Faringdon Junior School.**
 Report by : **Gareth Jeremy, District 12.**

Report

Once again it was a pleasure to be visiting your Society for your latest production. -- in fact I was present at the 1994 production, --- and remembered Dave Headey, as Adam, Debbie Lock, (I think as Elfine), Joan Lee, Jo Webster and Carolyn Taylor as Judith. Unfortunately I can not find my programme, It was nice for the group to welcome back the two original cast from Holland. Did they come back specially for the Production.?

I was also fortunate to win a raffle prize, --- and brought home the very nice bouquet of flowers for my wife, which pleased her no end. Thank you.

I had read the book, but had not seen the play before, by Paul Doust, and I enjoyed the performance of your members. Your **Director, -- Jo Webster, and her Assistant, -- Carole Tappenden,** --- two very experienced members of your group, -- had extracted the very best out of the cast, and the comic characters, especially the **Quivering Brethren, --- Claire Hawkins, Joan Lee, Debbie Lock, Fiona Merrick, Sarah Varnom, Karen Whiffen., --- whose facial expressions, and some of their posture, were a joy to behold every time they appeared on stage.**

A few also . ' scrubbed up', well as they appeared as guests.!

This was a very large cast, and as stated in the programme it had brought together many actors from different parts of South Oxfordshire,-- and the principal ingredient was they had **worked as a Team,** -- and it had paid off.

Time and space does not allow me to mention everyone, - sorry.

The Principal characters were, ---

Verity Roberts, --- Flora.

This was an a huge role to perform, hardly being off the stage for the entire production, --- as narrator of the story she had the knack of bringing out both the humour, and pathos from the story.--- and that little bit extra of how she could change the lives of her eccentric Starkadder cousins. She gave a flawless performance, --- and I hope she can devote more time on stage in the future. Congratulations.

Carolyn Taylor, --- Aunt Ada.

This experienced performer gave her 'all', -- and I think enjoyed the character role.--- her diction, mannerisms, facial expressions, and contrast in character before she left for France were superb. Congratulations.

Marcus Pitcaithly, --- Seth.

Looked good on stage, especially in his white D.J.-- came over well as Judith's devoted son. Made full use of the stage, and his diction was clear and precise.

Jeff Barry, --- Reuben / Charles.

A man of many parts. I well remember his fall down the two flights of stairs in 2006.!. Quite different characters this time., his feelings for Flora came through quite strongly, and he played his role just right for me.

Lois Wells, --- Judith.



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She understood her character, and had much to contend with her strange husband! Good, clear diction, and was supportive of her children, in many ways. A good return to the amateur stage.

Vern Dunkley, ---- Amos.

I was impressed with his make up, and facial expressions, especially when he was preaching to his 'converts'. He put his heart and soul, into his characterisation. Well done.

Jenny Whiffen, ---- Elfine.

Looked fine in the role, and moved elegantly about the stage, --- very calm in all that she said, and did, and had a sweet smile. Looked serene in her wedding outfit, --- and it seemed like the happiest day in her life. Very realistic, -- well done.

Gary Field, ---- Urk, / Sneller.

Good characterisation throughout, and I liked his make up. Made the most of his role, and he seemed to have enjoyed it.

Harriet Warner, ---- Rennet.

Again looked good on stage, and fulfilled her character throughout.

Dave Headey, ----- Adam.

Another fine performance, with a very experienced actor. Did you feel about 80years of age, since the last time you performed the role'? Kept up his accent throughout the entire production, --- and you would have thought he had his three legged cow on stage with him, --- he made the character, --- so real. Congratulations.

Peter Webster, ----- Neck.

A valuable member of the group, seen more often behind the scenes, rather than on stage. Did a sound job, but I would have liked to see him as the extrovert member of the group. After all he was trying to set up these great deals, and in some ways I think one must be 'a little over the top', to succeed in business. Perhaps the Director wished it to be played the way it was. Just a personal opinion!

The supporting roles, --- played by

Janie Eyre-Brooks, as Mrs Hawk – Monitor.

Austen Roberts, --- as Richard Hawk-Monitor.

Hazel Wells, --- as Dandelion, / Waitress.

Seb Allum, -- as Luke.

Charlotte Allum, --- as Phoebe.

Lilly Dunkley, -- as Chorus / Starkadders.

And

Guests, ---- Richard Lock, Carole Tappenden, Alan and John Taylor.



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The show moved at a good pace, and everyone slotted in well as a good team does, and I felt that rehearsing the show had been fun I'm sure at times.

The set was well designed by **Director Jo Webster**, and painted as if one was in a traditional kitchen of a Sussex farm house. It was well constructed, as all sets by the company are by their hard working, regular crew, -- you are so fortunate as a company to have these willing people available, --- not many societies can say that these days.

The Sound by Scott Gildert was very appropriate, as was the **Lighting by Paul Mounfford-Lister**, and the **Wardrobe, by the experienced, - Jeni Summerfield**, and **Joan Lee** was of the high standard they have always set.

The Programme by Dave Headey, was informative, and I did like the 'Family Tree', in the centre pages.

All other Behind the Scenes people made sure the evening ran smoothly. One small point when the guests came on for the Dance, --- I know the stage is not huge, but the standard of so called ballroom dancing needs to be a lot better. Some on stage were not good at the waltz. I think it would be better just to have three couples who were good, at which ever dance you choose, rather than letting as many as possible, --- have a go !! Just a personal point, but if the play was in a competition, -- you could find points deducted for that presentation.

Once again the Society has given value for money to its audience, -- and it was far better to watch, -- than some of those football matches!!

Thank you for an entertaining evening, -- and I hope some of the audience did solve some of Aunt Ada's problems!!

Gareth Jeremy.

London, Region 12.