

Faringdon Venture April 8th 1972

The goings-on during a week's holiday at the seaside was the background to 'A Basinful of Briny' – the final production at the Little Theatre on 23rd, 24th and 25th March. This play, a comedy in three acts, by Leslie Sands, was well enjoyed by a large audience, but their laughter was probably diminished by the knowledge that this was the last performance that this distinguished group could present at Butts Close. Although not the most amusing comedy ever written, the superb production by Evelyn Stoodley and imaginative stage staff managed by George Young enabled the cast to present a lively two and a half hours. Outstanding among the cast were Kath Hill – a domineering mother, mother-in-law and wife – all in one, who carried off her part with her usual aplomb, and Norman Pickles – a henpecked husband of a year's successful experience – who, versatile as usual, projected himself into a difficult part in a most professional manner. Jeanne Leahy gave good account of herself in this her first part – a challenging difficult role which she played admirably well. Elizabeth Galpin also gave good account of herself in a small but demandingly important role. As the owner and proprietress of the Seaview Hotel Eileen Heath delicately maintained a necessary continuity and established a lively relationship with her maid – played by Peggy Stocks, who gave a fine performance as the flirtatious skivvy. Sam Heath too, played with his usual suave vigour, entertaining us with an unique rendition of 'Come Into the Garden, Maud', whilst Penny Durringer – a local attraction – was innocently persuasive using 'low animal cunning' with her associate played by Ken Durringer. After three curtain calls Mrs Stoodley was presented with a large bouquet by her appreciative cast and on this special, but sad occasion she gave her final speech from 'this stage which will soon be just a shell with a pile of rather worthless rubbish'. In a very touching speech Mrs Stoodley referred to the way that so many people remained loyal for so long to the 'Drama Lark'. It was inspiring to hear her speak with such confidence that the live theatre will go on indefinitely in Faringdon. Mrs Stoodley paid tribute to the large team of workers who were essential in a production of this nature – 'what we see here is just the tip of the iceberg' and asked for new members to join the Little Theatre group, thus displaying her enormous faith that we will not allow live drama to disappear from Faringdon. The closing comment was 'not goodbye but au revoir'. We look forward to the new venue and the next production.