

FARINGDON DRAMATIC SOCIETY present **BEST OF BRITISH**

May 2012

The evening started with a delicious fish and chip supper accompanied on the piano by Debra Warner.

Then the cabaret began with the compere, Michael Tipper, warming us up with lovely groany jokes and some laid-back juggling. Then the company walked onto the stage through the audience, gradually building up a full stage singing 'Side by Side' - words on our song sheet. This was billed as Old Time Music Hall songs and although they were sung with gusto I would have liked to have seen big Victorian hats and shawls. Not complete costumes, of course, but I'm confident Faringdon have these items in their wardrobe and it adds so much to the enjoyment. Jo Webster, Carole Tappenden and Joan Lee treated us to readings with actions, of three of 'Dicken's Women' - again I felt they would have been enhanced with a nod to costuming. Duncan Sinclair gave a superb rendition of 'The Gasman Cometh' and a Victoria Wood comedy song, accompanying himself on the piano. A great 'mastermind' sketch from Michael Tipper and Seb Allum giving the answers to the previous questions- difficult to learn. Tania Isham and Ian Brown gave us 'Beatles on Brass' and then a great Spice Girls tribute from Abby Benson, Suzanna Carter, Alex Oliver, Anna Dyet and Tessa Disney with good choreography and well rehearsed movements. The girls obviously enjoyed themselves and therefore so did the audience.

Adrian Wells and Jeff Barry gave a fun 'Hancock' sketch and Suzanna Carter became Amy Winehouse, complete with the Hair and outfit. 'Cool Britannia' trio of Richard Lock, Nick Coard and Martin Waymark - two guitars and Nick singing - lovely polished performance of 'Wonderful Tonight' and 'Moondance'

Six of the company gave us 'On Quoting Shakespeare' with quick fire quotes we use every day. Actually I would have liked a little more time taken over these as they were fascinating but I'm sure I, along with the rest of the audience, missed some of them. The research that went into this item must have been considerable.

The audience joined the Company in the final singsong but, again, we were asked in the publicity to 'wear something red, white and blue'. Some of us in the audience had found blue or white shirts, red skirts or even red or blue scarves or necklaces. I thought the cast should have done the same, a couple of artists had made the effort and looked splendid in John Bull waistcoats but most were in ordinary, every day outfits.

Seb Allum became 'Puck' and then we all finished with a rousing chorus of 'There'll Always be an England' waving flags from the tables. (I'm afraid it did look as though some of the younger girls did not know the words)

The front of House team, always smiling and welcoming, run by Denise Monk and Sandra Keen would have added to the evening's entertainment with Union Jack hats - these are available everywhere and would not break the bank.

Small quibbles from a very entertaining evening ably produced by Debbie Lock.

Deidre Jones