

Faringdon Venture June 2nd 1973

Audiences of well over a hundred filled Buckland Memorial Hall on the evenings of May 14th & 15th for Faringdon Dramatic Society's performances of 'The Brides of March' – a farce by John Chapman. The producer, Mrs E. Stoodley – who also acted as compere sketching characters and scenes as programmes were not available – introduced the play as 'a little slice of history which never got into the history books'. Action centres on the home of Mr & Mrs Tony Scudamore in Pinetops Avenue, Finchley where life follows a well-ordered, even boring daily routine until the unexpected arrival of a letter from Libya. The letter announces an inheritance for Tony; one-tenth of the estate of the Sheik of Kassar – which is eventually revealed as four Eastern maidens in the charge of Haroun el Bahn. The effect of their presence on the household, which also contains Tony's bachelor brother Ken, a suspicious 'daily' and frequent visits from Sally's friend Jack Krasner and Tony's parents can well be imagined. By far the most demanding role was that of Tony, played by John Vogt, who was on stage for almost the entire evening and held the performance together, particularly when the less experienced actors were on stage. Tony's American wife Sally was played by Brenda Hedgecock, who obviously found an American accent difficult, especially in times of stress. Perhaps it would have been better to abandon the attempt since it marred an otherwise attractive performance. Michael Durham, on the other hand, as Sally's friend from New York, mastered a good American drawl and looked every inch a pilot. Sam and Eileen Heath gave polished performances in their respective roles as Ken Scudamore, Tony's brother, and Mrs Scudamore, senior. The Eastern maidens were well played by Virginia Jealous, Dabnet van Tinteren, Susan Wearing and Sheila Watt. In contrast with these, their guardian Haroun el Bahn, in the person of George Young, took full advantage of a very amusing role and the inevitable confusions resulting from language difficulties. Other parts were played as follows:- Mrs Spencer – Kathleen Hill; Van driver – Derek Belcher; Arthur Scudamore – Norman Pickles; Policeman – Timothy Reeves.

Derek Belcher proved a very efficient Stage Manager and lighting was, as usual, in the capable hands of Bob Tanner. Despite difficulties, a large cast, limited space on stage and even less in dressing rooms,

transporting props etc, and having to do the making-up in Faringdon, the production was very successful. We would echo Mrs Stoodley's opening remarks – thanks to Buckland for their hospitality and the hope that the Dramatic Society will soon have a suitable home of its own.

