



L.A.D.S

NEWSLETTER for February /March 2023

As a new year has rolled in beautifully we have not forgotten the pride of years gone by and

the very special people that have been apart of it. We all know the potential that LADS can offer our local communities and I know you are all with me when I say that this year will be our best yet! We have received some wonderful stories and anecdotes emailed in by our members and friends; and have enjoyed them immensely. Please do continue to email in with stories, ideas and thoughtful suggestions that you have for our society. We look forward to hearing from anyone that wants to voice their fabulous thoughts on how we can achieve that best year ever.

You will all be aware that we run regular fundraisers and rely crucially on numbers with all of our events. This means we need to be all about visibility. The actions of our members and patrons will create a reaction. Re-post on social media, tell your friends, invite your families, put up those posters and shout it (safely) from those roof tops! We at LADS want everyone to know that they are welcome to be apart of our society. There will be people in our community now who being apart of LADS could be the very thing they are looking for, they just do not know it yet. The terrible quiet years of late are now over and people are looking to reconnect with groups and societies, this is our chance to show them what we can offer.

The benefits that come with being a part of such a dynamic group are tenfold. The action, the community, the opportunity to shine and the chance to learn may now be highly coveted in our local towns and villages. Parents are wanting their children away from computers and urging them to search through other ambitions. Stage craft could be a life changer for many people. Our older members in the community may also be looking for those shows and events that are an opportunity for fantastic night out that they haven't tried yet. The purpose here is that we at LADS are inclusive and everyone is welcome. We want to see new people in the audience, we welcome new talent and adore fresh ideas.

The potential new skills and development that can be grown and honed are endless. This is the time to spread the message that great opportunities exist here and we are more than willing to fill anyone with passion for the stage, music or rhetoric, spare time. Like the rather large tractors wheels that we are all very familiar with, they must keep turning, new seeds, new growth and then of course new rewards. Let everyone know we are about giving to the community and that teamwork is the only way our wheels will keep turning. LADS regular meetings discuss and plan ways to continue providing the much needed live entertainment. This is how we fulfil our commitments to the local towns and villages and we want more people to be apart of it.

In conclusion, and most of all, we want everyone who joins us or visits the tractor shed to have fun, to feel safe, to have their proudest moments and to make their best memories. We need to fill the canvas with colour and sparkles. We see it in you now, our members, we hope to find even more in friends and family. LADS is entering a new era and its time to make sure everyone knows it!



*Coming
Soon*

Little Women

19th to 22nd April

SHOWHITS 2023

30th August to 2nd September

A Bunch of Amateurs

15th to 18th November (to be confirmed)



Members Meeting

Monday 6th March

8pm

Everyone welcome



Quiz Night

Date To be confirmed

MARCH 2023

Rehearsals

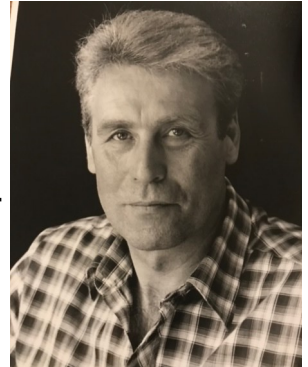
Start February





Welcoming with our first addition to our hall of fame.... KEN LODGE!

I am delighted to be asked to contribute to L.A.D.S.'s newsletter, in telling my story it will become clear how important this group were to my personal theatre journey and why I will never forget those days or cease to be grateful for them.



To begin at the beginning or nearly, I have to admit to being a painfully shy child, a bit of a loner, who I am ashamed to say would hide behind his mother when visitors came. I believe I was a dreamer who had a strong imagination, but these elements of 'creativity' were very much an internal spark, not in any way meant to be shared or communicated to others. Looking back to those days I remember listening to the radio a lot and now strongly believe that my imagination along with many others was stimulated by listening only – someone once said 'I prefer radio – the pictures are better' however the thought of going anywhere near a stage or expressing my precious thoughts and dreams would have, at that time, sent me running and diving into the nearest rabbit hole to hide quietly with Alice. 'I know, I'm in my own little world, but that's ok they know me here' comes to mind! Anyway, you get the picture. I am sharing this and my later experiences in the hope that it may encourage others to believe in themselves and their possibilities. Henry Ford is supposed to have said 'if you believe you can, or believe you can't, then you are probably right!' self limiting beliefs do need to be challenged, though often in a gentle way.

Moving forward a few years, my Uncle Bob Townsend took part in amateur dramatics in Goldhanger and was very good, somehow I was drafted in to be a member of the crowd in Pygmalion where he played Professor Higgins – foot in the water? I am not sure but my next venture onto a stage came courtesy of Mr Edmunds at Maldon Secondary School who for some reason, best known to him, cast me in 'The King and the Farmer' and 'The Snow Queen'. My early appearances were a mixture of apprehension with limb twitching anxiety to be moderated by a blossoming of something akin to excitement and eventually a sense of achievement! to the degree that I was to join The Goldhanger Players and begin a one way venture onto the stage.



Acting became an obsession and following a production of Jean Anouilh's "Beckett" in St Andrews Church, Heybridge where I met other actors from

a variety of local groups including Dorothy Jeppe who was to invite me to perform in a production at The Mundon Little Theatre where I began to hear exciting stories of this group at Latchingdon. I quickly went to see some of their productions including Great Expectations and Antigone and was frankly so impressed! Here was amateur theatre taken to a new level of creativity and imagination!. I managed to meet this modest man, Peter Jones and was lucky to be accepted by L.A.D.S. with a part in 'The Remarkable Mr Pennypacker' – in all I was to go on and perform in, I believe, eight plays at Latchingdon and two short pieces for "Critics Choices" at The Mercury Theatre with Robin Warnes and Judy Embling, two very talented actors (then 30 years later to return to revive the part of Prospero in The Tempest and even later a snippet from 'Knots' with Judy and Robin in honour of Peter). I was in my early L.A.D.S.'s days, working in Colchester and gained a number of contacts when helping to raise money to build The Mercury Theatre, which later was to lead me to being offered a role as an extra in a production of Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard at this theatre, which I believe was partly due to the L.A.D.S.'s appearances at The Mercury. Alongside this, Robin Warnes and myself joined and were appearing in open air Shakespeare productions for The Priory Players in Colchester, the momentum seemed irresistible and eventually I was to audition for Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in London and begin the professional phase of my personal journey, albeit with the words of Peter Jones echoing in the depths of my consciousness 'I don't recommend you doing this, it is a terrible profession' or words to that effect, I did later understand why he was attempting to dissuade me!



My two year drama course gave me, not only, a range of invaluable techniques, but time and space to experiment and prepare physically and emotionally for the profession. It was also to give me a guiding principle for acting, particularly on TV or small theatres 'don't just find yourself in the part – find the part in yourself' though it took some years to appreciate this gem.

This is not the forum to list my professional achievements over a 20 year span, however much more important is how I made this terrific leap from a shy boy from Goldhanger to a working professional actor and importantly the catalyst that Peter Jones and L.A.D.S. were to prove to be in this journey.

Looking back, L.A.D.S. have always been special, in my early days of amateur dramatics, many groups were putting on plays from quite a narrow band of comedies and dramas, set within a standard box set, with the audience being the fourth wall as it were (proscenium arch). There was also the tendency of one or two actors, playing the lead roles

by tradition or right (but I always play the lead darling!) not so with the L.A.D.S. From my very first impressions of L.A.D.S 'the play's the thing' appears to be a guiding principle, they seem to recognise the importance of team work where set design and construction, lighting and special effects, costume, music and acting were all equally important in creating a story and therefore giving life to an author's written words and on so many occasions creating a magical and memorable experience for the audience.

The productions undertaken were so refreshing, a mixture of classical theatre, musicals, modern drama and comedy – just looking back at their playlist performed over more than a 60 year time frame is breathtaking in its scope – L.A.D.S have never, I believe, held back on experimental sets and theatre that breaks out from the proscenium model and therefore allows its audience to feel part of the production or involved with the story and finally, though most importantly, L.A.D.S has given so many opportunities to the local community and particularly to youngsters to find their own path to creativity and self expression – I for one would have loved to have been exposed to this opportunity when I was that shy young boy. Long may LADS continue and an enormous thank you to Peter Jones and his team!.

Ken



Footnote

Ken combined his career in acting with helping individuals with their personal impact and organisations manage people more effectively and have better and more productive conversations through a combination of role play, feedback and psychological profiles plus coaching

He utilises the skills of communication that he was lucky enough to explore through acting and keeps these alive by offering a range of talks including 'an actors life for me' and works self employed as a celebrant.



If there are any types of events you would like us to consider holding, please contact our Social and Fundraising Secretary, Heather.

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L.A.D.S Latchingdon Arts and Drama Society