



Theatre Groups: -

The Burley Players

The New Forest Players

Venues: -

Forest Art Centre, New Milton, BH25 6DS

Burley Village Hall, Burley, Pound Lane, BH24 4EB

Ballard School, Fernhill Lane, New Milton, BH25 5SU

Theatre Shows

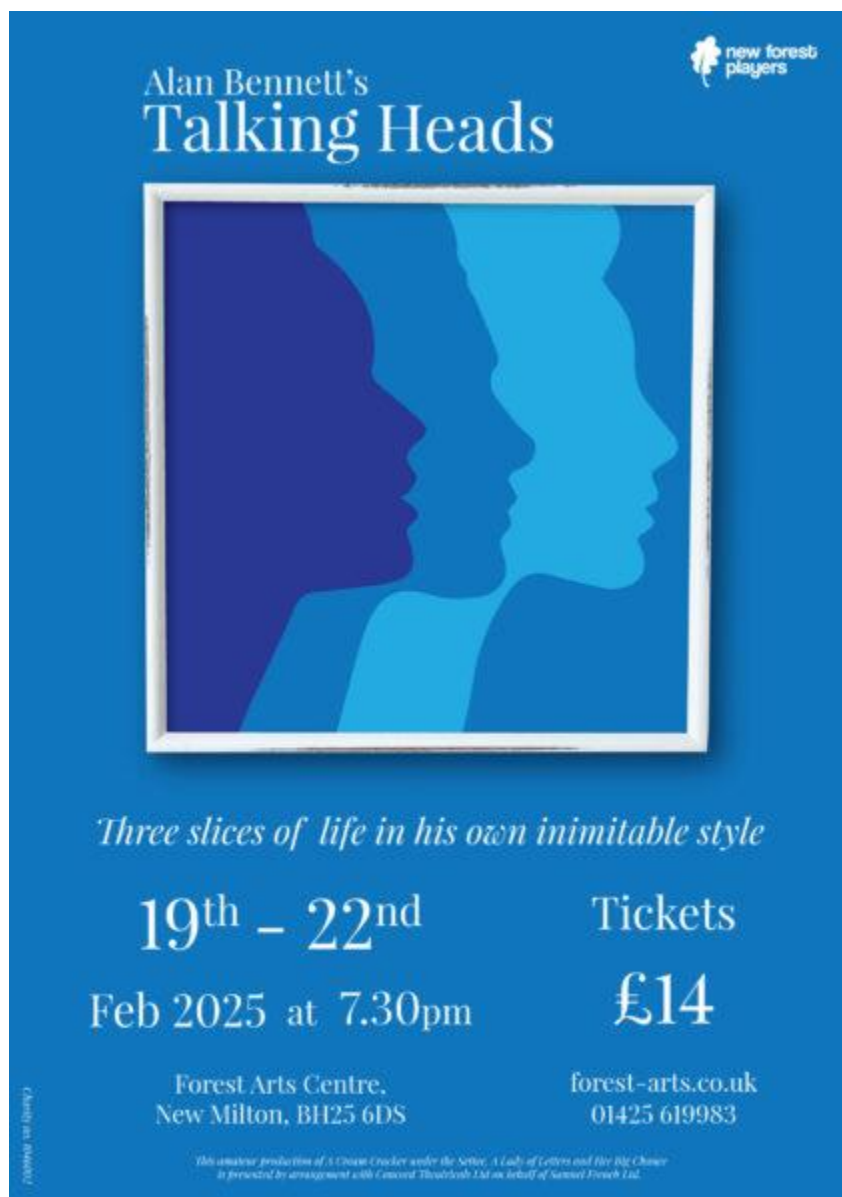
Talking Heads- Alan Bennett

Pack of Lies – Hugh Whitemore

Bedroom Farce – Alan Ayckbourn

Inspector Drake and the Perfekt Crime – David Tristran

Waiting for God – Michael Aitkens



What's it about?

Following the success of our production of “ART” at the Forest Arts Centre last February we have decided to return again. This time it is the turn of our actresses to impress with three performances from the famous Talking Heads series – A Lady of Letters, (originally played by Patricia Routledge), A Cream Cracker Under the Stairs, (originally played by Thora Hird) and Her Big Chance (originally played by Julie Walters). Collectively they cover slices of life we all recognise, there’s plenty of humour and a little pathos. Bennett really gets under the skin of his characters and audiences know and love his work.

Cast

Irene – Lotte Fletcher_Jonk

Doris – Wendy Beaumont

Lesley – Rachel Mackay

Crew

Production Design – David Ward

Stage Manager – David Luker

Set Build – David Ward, Richard Ward

Lighting & Sound Design – Simon Hanney

Technical Operations – Alice Evans

Show Photographer – Sarah Haberfield

Box Office – Forest Arts Centre

There is a gallery further down the page with 12 photos of the show. To see the complete set of photos please click here:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/AbfdRVGxbor8Abxp6>

Many thanks to Paul and Sue Berkeley AFIAP, ARPS, CPAGB for all the wonderful photos

The Cast & Crew

Cast

Miss Ruddock (Lady of Letter) – Lotte Fletcher-Jonk

Doris (A Cream Cracker Under the Settee) – Wendy Beaumont

Lesley (Her Big Chance) – Rachel Mackay

Crew

Set Design – David Ward

Stage Manager – David Luker

Lighting design – Simon Hanney

Review of the Show

Talking Heads by Alan Bennett is a highly acclaimed collection of monologues that was first aired on BBC television in 1988 and later followed by a second series in 1998. It has since been adapted for stage and print, cementing its reputation as a modern classic in British drama. There are three monologues performed here. 'A Lady of Letters' – A lonely spinster's obsessive letter-writing lands her in unexpected trouble. 'A Cream Cracker Under the Settee' – A elderly widow finds solace from her unfulfilling marriage

and finally 'Her Big Chance' – An actress reflects on her career, unaware of the exploitation she has endured.

We begin with 'A Lady of Letters' and Lotte Fletcher-Jonk is superb as Irene Ruddock's one-woman Neighbourhood Watch scheme, that somehow gets out of hand. It's not the observations of her neighbours that get her into trouble; it's the bombardment of letters that she sends to the authorities that get ridiculously unruly.

The monologue concludes with a wonderfully farcical ending where the audience was almost relieved for her! Lotte really took the audience on a love/hate relationship throughout. How best to describe Irene. These pieces were written in the eighties, but if it was written today, Irene would probably be an internet troll. Fabulously portrayed.

Wendy Beaumont was faultless in the script for 'A Cream Cracker Under the Settee', and really embodied the role of 'Doris' who suffers a fall after trying to clear up after her not-so-thorough home help, Zulema. Alone and injured, she wonders whether the only place left for her in society is a care home which she distrusts. It is a poignant tale, which makes you really feel for Doris.

What I loved was that her movement is greatly restricted which makes Wendy's performance even more impressive and completely convincing. There is a small amount of time to reflect on Bennett's writing, which only dates because of the lack of digital references, the story of mental health and loneliness is still as fresh today as it was when it was written back in the late 1980s.

After the interval, the audience was treated to 'Her Big Chance' a piece made famous by Julie Walters in the original television adaptation and more recently by Jodie Comer. In this production, Rachel Mackay brought her own engaging interpretation of Lesley, the aspiring actress. After a series of unpromising extra roles on TV programmes such as Crossroads, she finds what she believes to be her big break as the adventurous 'Travis' in a new film for the West German market.

It is not clear to what extent Lesley understands quite what sort of film she is appearing in...the clues are in what is unsaid. Rachel delivers her character's story in a completely compelling way, convincingly portraying Travis's blindness to the sinister undertones of the narrative, as well as the self-delusions and gullibility.

It's the opposite of confessional "reality" TV and this was especially so in this performance. Rachel clarified the scene, but the audience joined up the dots as to what was going on – costume changes added to the characterisation of what again, was a terrific performance.

At this point, acknowledgement must be paid to the director and her team. Janet Courtice let this production breathe. This play could have ended up as some northern parody but instead this was well disciplined and has allowed the actors to make each role their own. With impeccable timing and a keen understanding of Bennett's signature wit and melancholy, they ensured every word resonated. A masterclass in storytelling, this production was a triumph for both cast and audiences.

Jade Morrell – Scene 1+

20th February 2025 – Alan Bennetts Talking Heads 7.30pm





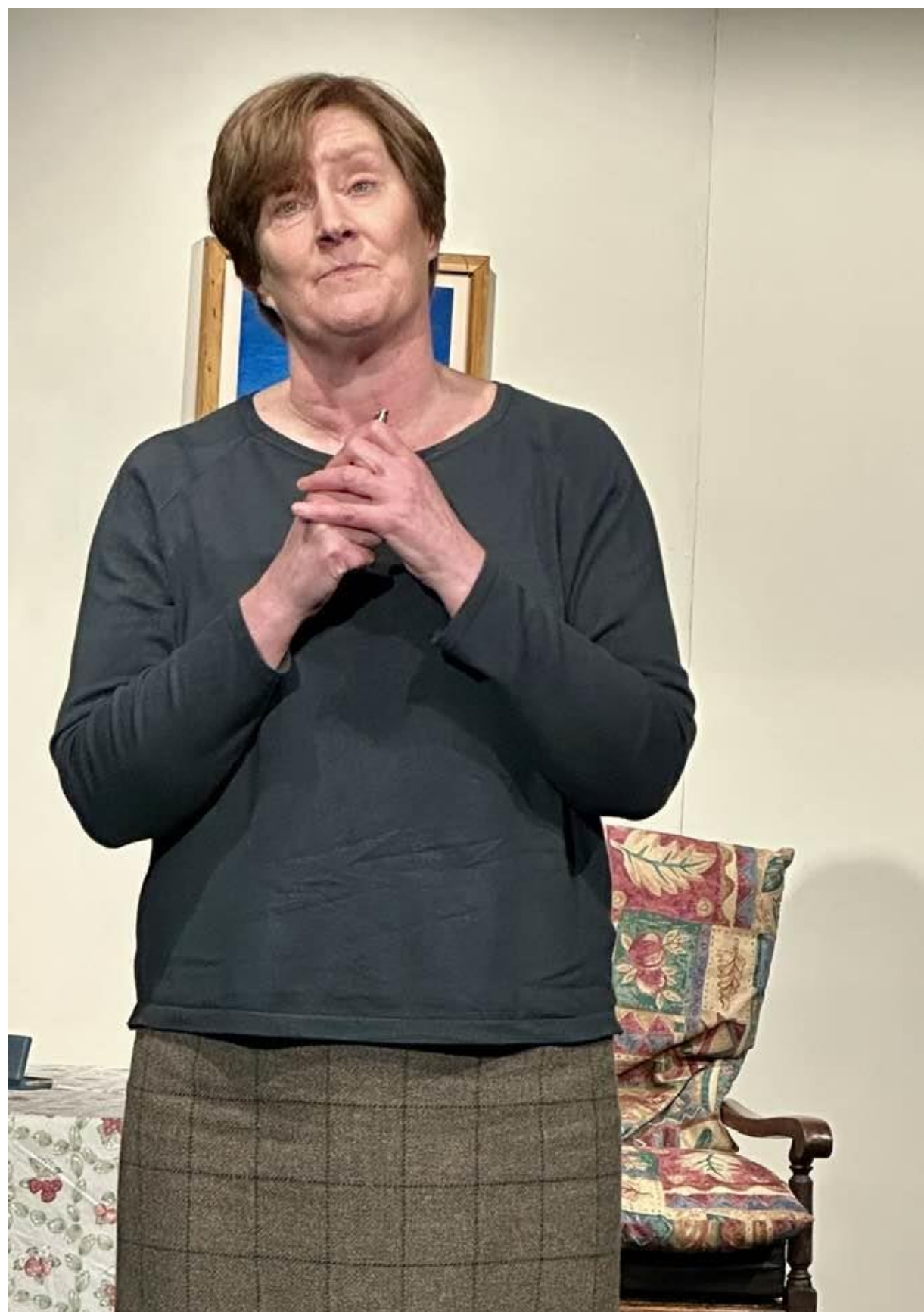
















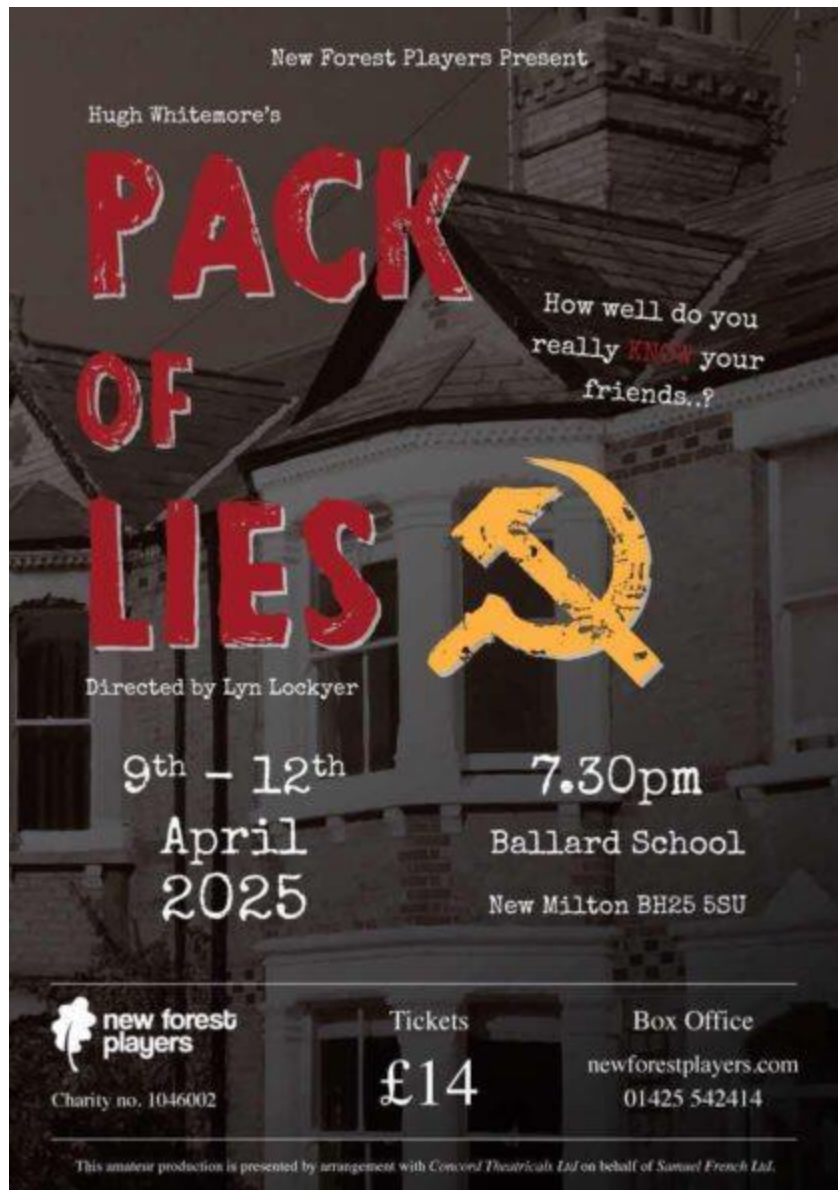


Unfortunately Graham Newton had a health issue and wasn't able to attend along with Angela.

Please find a review attached published in The New Milton Advertiser, supplied by Robin.



Attendance of 6 people.



What's it about?

The Jacksons are a nice middle aged English couple. Their best friends are their Canadian neighbours, the Krogers.

All is blissful in their world until a detective from Scotland Yard asks to use their house as an observation station to try and foil a Soviet spy ring operating in the area.

The Jacksons become more and more put out as Scotland Yard's demands on them increase.

They are really put to the test when the detective reveals that the spies are the Krogers and he asks them to help set a trap. Should they betray their friends?

The Cast & Crew

Cast

Bob – Paul Berry

Barbara – Judy Anders

Julie – Maddie Beard

Helen – Dawn Cresswell

Peter – David Luker

Stewart – Julie Lax

Thelma – Tina Fagan

Crew

Stage Manager – Katie Kelly

Design and all things technical – Ben Sandford

Prompt – Bee Neil

Review of the Show

Pack of Lies is an intriguing drama of deception and high stakes espionage; and asks the question: “How well do you really know your friends?” It has all the trademarks of a George Smiley or James Bond spy thriller, but it is in fact a rendering of actual events that took place in England between 1953 and 1961 – referred to as ‘The Portland Spy ring’. This was one of the most significant foreign undercover operations in Cold War Britain and involved a number of individuals who obtained secret research documents from the Admiralty Underwater Weapons Establishment in Portland, Dorset, and passed them on to the Soviet Union.

The Play, written by Hugh Whitmore, started out life in 1971 under the title of Act of Betrayal, an episode of the BBC Play of the Month series. In 1983 it became a very successful West End stage play as Pack of Lies, starring Judi Dench and her husband Michael Williams. Its London success was repeated on Broadway, and it was subsequently adapted for American TV.

The script is slow moving, but it is gripping from the opening lines right through to the emotional ending. Clearly, it’s a play with some pedigree; and fortunately for us, it is now the latest production of the New Forest Players!

Set in the mundane middle-class suburbs of London, unremarkable Bob and Barbara Jackson are living happily with their teenage daughter Julie, blissfully unaware that their ‘Canadian’ neighbours and best friends Peter and Helen Kroger are active Soviet spies. The family’s world is turned upside down when they are approached by Joan Stewart, a haughty senior Civil Servant, who pressurises them into allowing their house to be used as an observation post to monitor a Soviet spy cell operating in the area. As events unfold, it is revealed the prime persons of interest include Peter and Helen, which

naturally Bob and Barbara cannot believe. Barbara is badly affected by this revelation and finds it hard to come to terms with Peter and Helen's duplicity and her own treachery in their downfall.

Judy Anders, as Barbara Jackson and Dawn Cresswell, as Helen Kroger, appear natural and completely at ease playing their parts. Judy Anders is just perfect and utterly convincing in her part as her character changes from a contented housewife in the beginning to someone on the verge of a nervous breakdown by the end of the play. Dawn Cresswell is vivacious and gregarious as Auntie Helen, and her interpretation of this role provides an excellent counterpart to that of mousey Barbara. Her North American accent for the part is pretty good too.

Paul Berry plays the part of understated Bob Jackson, an amenable bloke just getting on with no fuss or bother in his life – until Joan Stewart unexpectedly turns up. Paul Berry turns in another fine performance to add to his previous successes with NFP. So too does David Luker, playing political idealist Peter Kroger. Julie Lax makes her NFP debut playing Joan Stewart, and she acquits herself well in what is a very demanding role. Maddie Beard also does well in the role of adolescent Julie Jackson. Support is ably provided by Tina Fagan, as Thelma, and Debbie Jettan, as Sally, who are Joan Stewart's on site operatives.

The NFP production team and Director Lyn Locker have added some nice touches to the presentation of this production. The stage is arranged with a kitchen to one side and a living room on the other side, and both areas are complete with appropriate period furnishings. What is not expected though is the large video screens placed on either side of the stage which are used to show pre-recorded monologues by the main characters to provide back-ground information to whet the appetite for each scene that follows. This is a commendable technical achievement. As to be expected of NFP, the lighting and sound effects are perfectly synchronised with the action on the stage. The appreciative audience burst into spontaneous sing-a-longs with the pop music from the era that was played between scenes, and the authentic costumes and hair-dos didn't go unnoticed either.

This is yet another quality drama from the NFP and there's still a chance to catch it before the current run ends on 12 April.

Philip & Julie McStraw – Scene1+

























To see the complete set of photos please click here:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jxjambxg1c3drouGA>

Wednesday 9th April 2025 7.30pm

Hello James,

Theatre Interest Group (TIG)

27 Probus members attended. 29 tickets sold.

Mike and Margerat Humphey were unable to attend.

Gaye Gibson was unable to attend but Keith Rutherford used her ticket.

The evening was a great success. I have had a lot of positive feedback all looking forward to the next theatre outing.

So I think TIG is going forward and will become a permanent feature on the Probus calendar.

Hi Maurice & Sue

Just to say thank you for organizing the trip to see 'Pack of Lies' We thought it was great and thoroughly enjoyed the company and the play.

Looking forward to seeing you both on Friday

Richard & Elizabeth

Thank you Maurice, for your, as usual, expert arrangements for the theatre, I thoroughly enjoyed the play and thought it one of the best performances I had seen the company do. It was a very nice evening, spent with nice people! Love Kate.

Hi Maurice,

Many thanks for organising the play which we enjoyed

Great venue ...a real eye opener.

Our next door neighbour has two boys that go there.

Cannot image the horrendous cost of that . I guess you get what you pay for.

Best regards ,

Simon

Hi Maurice

I thought the show was very good and enjoyed it hugely. It was great too to be doing something "normal". Thank you for initiating our Theatre Interest Group.

I think the venue is good as well.

All in all, I give it a score of 10

Best wishes, thanks again and I look forward to the next outing.

Graham

Great, thanks very much

Chris and Beryl

Thank you Maurice, thoroughly enjoyed it and look forward to the next event. Regards David.

Sent from my iPad

David Marshall

Good Evening Maurice,

Did not get chance to get to chat to you this evening but many thanks for organising the tickets etc for this production . Both myself and Jean enjoyed it and put us down for the next one in July if you are planning for this one.

Best Regards

John and Jean Davies

Total of 29 were booked to go.

27 total attended.

Mike and Margaret Humphrey were unable to attend (No refund available)

Mike had a sore back and wouldn't be able to sit for 2 hours without discomfort.

Please find a review attached published in The New Milton Advertiser, supplied by Robin.

Please note the review has the incorrect dates it should be 9th April to 12th April 2025.

Attendance of 29



BURLEY
PLAYERS
theatre company

Bedroom FARCE

BY ALAN AYCKBOURN

3RD 4TH 5TH JULY 2025



BURLEY VILLAGE HALL | 7:00PM

Directed by: Annie McTaggart
Produced by: Deborah Nightingale

Thursday 3rd - Saturday 5th July 2025

Doors Open and Licensed Bar from 6.45pm
Meals served at 7.00pm
Play starts at 7.45pm

SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

In this gleeful comedy set in three bedrooms, four couples struggle hilariously with the ups and downs of their rocky relationships.

Ernest and Delia are a middle-aged couple trying to celebrate their wedding anniversary in peace. Meanwhile, newly-weds Malcolm and Kate are hosting a housewarming party, inviting Jan and Nick who are themselves navigating the pitfalls of commitment and a very bad back. Throw in troubled pair Trevor and Susannah who create havoc wherever they go, and you dive into a hilarious world of misunderstandings, mishaps and marital mayhem with Alan Ayckbourn's uproarious play.

With its charm, chaos, physical comedy and Ayckbourn's trademark razor-sharp dialogue, Bedroom Farce is a laugh-out-loud masterpiece that will leave you smiling long after the curtain falls.

THE CAST

Ernest	Bruce Clitherow
Delia	Sue Trotter
Nick	Steve McTaggart
Jan	Jules Sawdon
Malcolm	Paul Berry
Kate	Jackie Reynolds
Trevor	Steve Reynolds
Susannah	Sharon Street

ACTS

Act One	Saturday evening, 7.00pm
Act Two	A few moments later

THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Annie McTaggart
Producer	Deborah Nightingale
Scribe to Director	Sandy Simpson
Sound Desk and Lighting	Greg Baggott and Simon Hanney
Stage Manager	Clare Collins
Continuity	Jacqui Baker
Small Props	Alayne Pullen and Michael Johnson
Large Props	Bruce Clitherow, Mike Manley, Simon News and Peter Rogers
Make Up Artists	Kate Hodges and Carly Lynch
Wardrobe	Sue Trotter
Posters and Design	Georgie Street-Cash
Programme	Claire Doolan
Ticket Sales	Simon News
Front of House	Anne, Deborah, Esme, June, Karen, Pam, Rowena, Wanda and Zoe
Kitchen	Chris, Claire, Debbie and Wanda
Bar	Simon and Sue News

SPECIAL THANKS

Provision of beds	Annie Ratford
Ticket provider	The Little Box Office
Sustenance	Berties Fish and Chips, New Milton New Forest Ice Cream
Large props storage	Peter Egerton
Website	Georgie Street-Cash
Parking facilities	Dawson Engineering, Wathen Bartlett, Barry & Su Topp and The Cider Pantry
Permitting use of the Village Hall	The Chairman (Robin Simpson) and Trustees of Burley Village Hall

FUTURE EVENTS COMING UP

2nd August:	Human Fruit Machine, Burley Village Show
27th September:	Quiz and Supper Evening at the Village Hall, Burley
24th - 31st January 2026:	Pantomime 2026 – 'Peter PANTo' at the Village Hall, Burley
2nd – 4th July 2026:	Summer Play 2026 at the Village Hall, Burley

Join us for our upcoming production in January 2026 'Peter PANTo'. If you are on the lookout for new adventures, attend the read-through and auditions, and you might even snag the lead role. If acting isn't your thing, consider singing and dancing with the chorus - it's a blast! Tickets go on sale Sunday 14th December at 2pm.

THE BURLEY PLAYERS

The Committee extends its sincere thanks to everyone who has generously shared their time and talents to bring our Summer Play to life. Beyond those named in the programme, countless individuals contribute in many different ways. It's thanks to this collective effort that we're able to continue presenting the events our community loves.

We're a welcoming and enthusiastic theatre group, always eager to invite new members to join the Burley Players - whether you're an actor, singer, dancer, technician, prop maker, part of the backstage or Front of House team, or simply keen to volunteer, there's a place for you here.

And to our wonderful audience, thank you for your continued support. We truly couldn't do it without you!

Wishing you a joyful summer, and we hope to see you at the Burley Village Show - come and test your luck against our famous Human Fruit Machine!

Deborah Nightingale
Chair, Burley Players

Want to know more?



Call our Hon. Secretary: Sharon Street on 07976 143204



Email: burley.players@outlook.com to be added to our mailing list



Find us on Burley Players Facebook page



Our website is: www.burleyplayers.com

We promise not to bombard you with emails, and you can unsubscribe at any time.



[Bedroom Farce](#)

- Thu, 3 Jul 2025 19:00 Saturday, 5 Jul 2025 19:00

Burley Players presents their adaptation of Bedroom Farce by Alan Ayckbourn.

This hilarious play set in in three bedrooms sees four couples juggle the ups and downs of their rocky relationships.

The play explores themes of marriage, infidelity, and the struggles of communication within relationships.

The core of the story revolves around 4 couples who are all connected in some way, and their individual dramas unfold within the confined space of the bedroom.

Tickets include a supper dinner & dessert:

- £20 (fish and chips + dessert)
- £17 (sausage and chips or veggie pie + dessert)

Performances:

- 3rd July 2025 7pm
- 4th July 2025 7pm
- 5th July 2025 7pm

Dear Maurice & Sue

Just wanted to say a Big thank you for organising the trip to see Bedroom Farce with Burley Players. We thoroughly enjoyed the evening, the company, the play and the supper. It's a great idea to combine supper with a Play and thought the play was excellent with a terrific cast.

Richard unfortunately left his water bottle behind, but they found it and we went and retrieved it yesterday, so all was well.

Sadly we can't make the next play, but we look forward to seeing more in the future. As and when I find out more re. the Ringwood players and Easter musical I will let you know.

Hope to see you both at the Wine Tasting.

Kind regards

Eizabeth & Richard

Unfortunately, David Marshall was unable to attend due to a vertigo issue

Please find a review published in The New Milton Advertiser, supplied by Robin.

BEDROOM FARCE, BURLEY PLAYERS, BURLEY VILLAGE HALL

THEATRE lovers can enjoy a fish and chip supper alongside Burley Players' summer production Bedroom Farce.

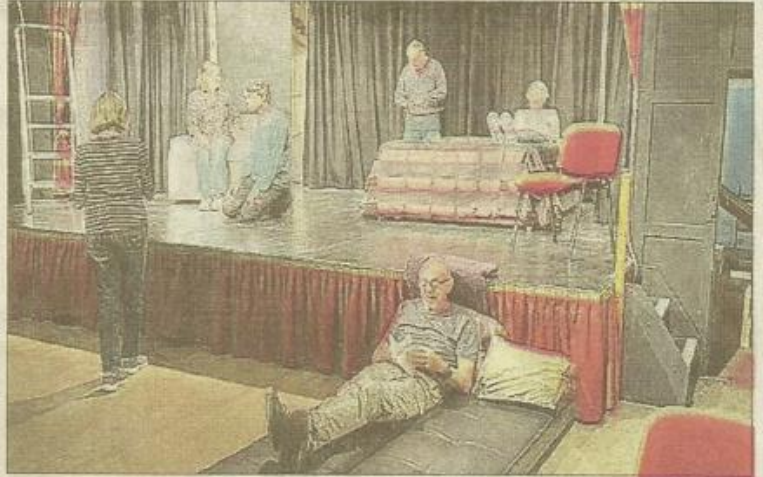
On stage at the village hall in Pound Lane, the satirical comedy by Alan Ayckbourn centres around four couples and their relationships, all set within the confines of three bedrooms.

Well known for their seasonal pantos, Burley Players also perform an annual summer show which includes a hot supper of fish and chips, sausage and chips or vegetable pie and chips.

The amateur group can trace its origins back to 1946 when it was founded by Dorothy Hornsby. After disbanding in 1962, Jeanne Wilde moved to Burley in 1984 and was keen to find an amateur dramatics company to join, so the Burley Players were reignited and have been thriving ever since.

Burley Players spokesperson Bruce Clitherow said: "Burley Players are in now final rehearsals for their performances of Alan Ayckbourn's Bedroom Farce.

"The play explores the tensions, insecurities, and anxieties



that can arise within marriages and romantic relationships, ultimately highlighting the disruptive and self-centred nature of some individuals in their ability to impact others."

The story unfolds at three different houses, the evening thrown into chaos by the fallout from a destructive argument at a housewarming party leading to a night of awkwardness, misunderstandings and tensions.

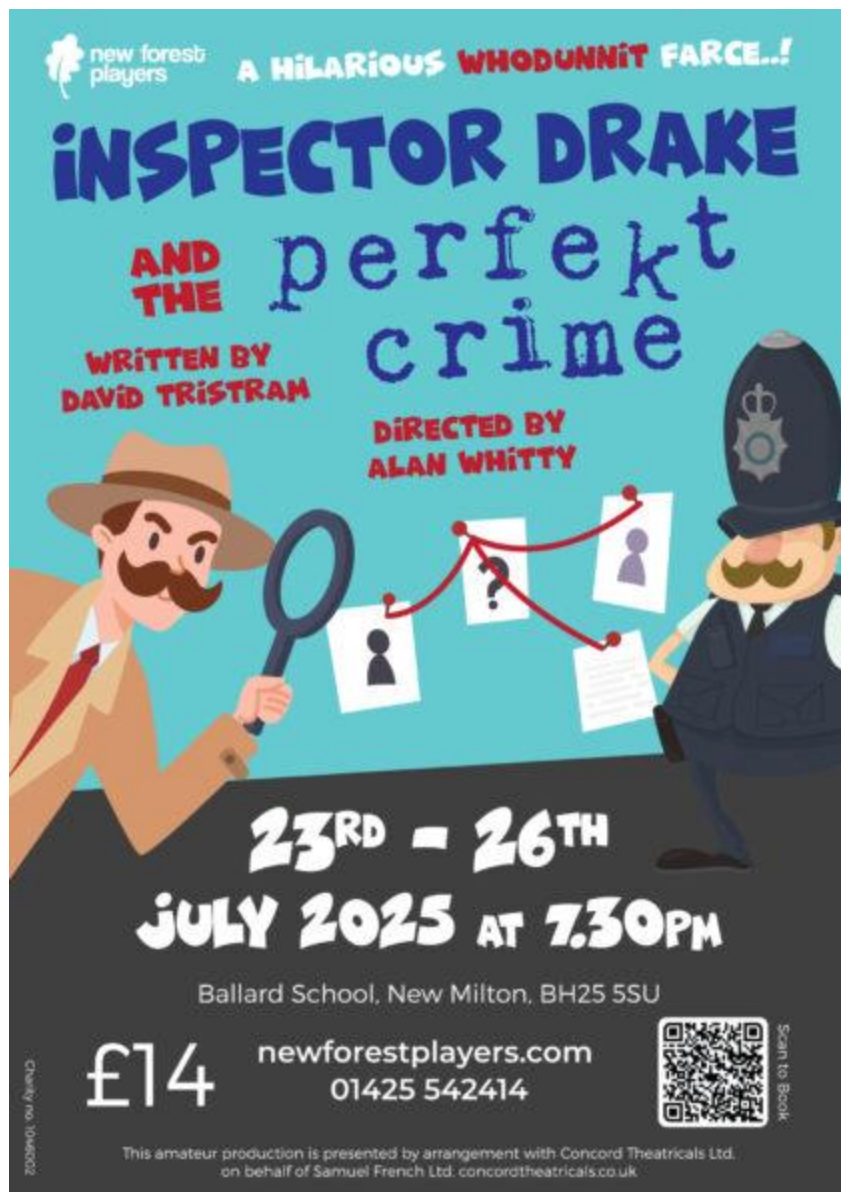
Bruce added: "The darkly

comedic moments amidst the turmoil make this fast moving play an entertaining and thought provoking evening."

The play is directed by Annie McTaggart and produced by Deborah Nightingale.

Bedroom Farce will be on stage at Burley Village Hall from Thursday 3rd to Saturday 5th July. Tickets cost £20. For more information and to book visit thelittleboxoffice.com/burley players call 07990 535910.

Attendance of 16



What's it about?

When a genius commits a murder, the plan is perfect. But is it foolproof?

Inspector Drake prepares to face his greatest-ever challenge. Who is the mysterious Doctor Short, and did he really marry a warthog? Has he murdered his fourth wife – or did she murder him first? Has he really got two daughters called Sabrina, or is one of them telling porkies? Where is Frank, the Taxi Driver? What was the Pope doing in the woods? And, perhaps most importantly of all, why is there a lamp-post in the living room?

These are just some of the questions facing the indomitable Drake and his faithful sidekick Sergeant Plod in this hilarious farce.

Armed with a magnifying glass, a banana, and the blind optimism of a man who once tried to arrest his own reflection, Drake is determined to crack the case. Clues are chased, suspects are interrogated, and no one is safe from Drake's unique brand of logic.

Penned by comedy mastermind David Tristram, Inspector Drake and the Perfekt Crime is a whodunnit which is more Clouseau than Poirot. A whirlwind of farce, plot twists, and glorious nonsense. If you like your detectives clueless, your suspects suspicious, and your laughter frequent, then this is the show for you.

Cast.

Doctor Short — Adam Ogilvie
Sergeant Plod – Peter Cutler
Inspector Drake – Ian Prescott
Sabrina – Stephanie McMahon
Miss Short – Victoria Sandford

Crew.

Stage Manager – Katie Kelly
Props & Costumes – Sarah Haberfield, Sue Darcy
Prompt – Lyn Lockyer
Set Design – David Ward
Sound Light – Simon Hanney
Decor – David Luker
Set build team – NFP Construction Team led by Richard White & David Ward
Photography – PDS Theatre Photography
Box Office Sue Baker and Robin Ede
Animation – James Moody-Jones

Thursday 24th July 2025 7.30pm

The evening was a great success.

Bill and Heather Dempsey were able to join us at the last minute.

Hi Maurice,

I sent your message to Alan as requested and also added my and Maggie's response.

Alan has replied this afternoon so sending you his message.

See you Sunday👍.

Keith

On Thu, 24 Jul 2025 at 13:54, Alan Whitty <alanwhitty01@gmail.com> wrote:

Thank you both glad you enjoyed it.

Alan

On Thu, 24 Jul 2025, 12:58 Keith Puttick, <kputtick1988@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Alan,

Maurice sent the following message to me this morning.

Maggie and I fully support Maurice's message as we thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

Well done👍

Keith & Maggie

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Maurice Dowling** <mdowling@gmx.com>

Date: Thu, 24 Jul 2025 at 10:04

Subject: Inspector Drake

To: Keith Puttick <kputtick1988@gmail.com>

Good Morning Keith,

I don't have Alan Whitty's email.

Please pass on congratulations from all the Probus members. It was brilliant.

Kind Regards,

Maurice Dowling

Hi Maurice,

Just a quick note to say thank you for your kind words and a massive thank you and your friends for being such big supporters of local theatre. I'm glad you all enjoyed it.

Best wishes

Alan

Hello Maurice,

Enjoyable show last night. The inspector was very good and very audible and the sergeant gets the runner up award. Thanks for arranging it all.

All best, James

Attendance of 28

































INSPECTOR DRAKE

ACTION FIGURE



SERGEANT PLOD

ACTION FIGURE



DOCTOR SHORT

ACTION FIGURE



SOPHIE SAUSAGEDOG

ACTION FIGURE



MISS SHORT

ACTION FIGURE



To see the complete set of photos please click here:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/3p67fYyi2HkKYU1k6>

INSPECTOR DRAKE... BALLARD SCHOOL

NEW Forest Players return to the stage later this month with the hilarious farce Inspector Drake and the Perfekt Crime.

Penned by comedy mastermind David Tristram, Inspector Drake is a whodunnit which is more Clouseau than Poirot and will take the audience on a whirlwind of farce, plot twists and glorious nonsense.

On stage at Ballard School's Performing Arts Centre, the summer show is directed by Alan Whitty.

New Forest Players spokesperson Sarah Haberfield said: "If you like your detectives clueless, your suspects suspicious and your laughter frequent, then this is the show for you."

"When a genius commits a murder, the plan is perfect. But is it foolproof?"

In the madcap farce Inspector Drake prepares to face his greatest challenge with the help

of his faithful sidekick Sergeant Plod.

Together the pair will endeavour to find out: who is the mysterious Doctor Short, and did he really marry a warthog? Has he murdered his fourth wife – or did she murder him first? Has he really got two daughters called Sabrina, or is one of them telling porkies? Where is Frank, the taxi driver? What was the Pope doing in the woods? And, perhaps most importantly of all, why is there a lamppost in the living room?

Sarah continued: "Armed with a magnifying glass, a banana, and the blind optimism of a man who once tried to arrest his own reflection, Drake is determined to crack the case. Clues are chased, suspects are interrogated, and no one is safe from Drake's unique brand of logic."

Inspector Drake and the Perfekt Crime is at Ballard Performing Arts Centre from 23rd to 26th



July. Tickets are £14. For more information and bookings visit www.newforestplayers.com or contact the box office on 01425 542414.

NEW MUSEUM ADVERTISED

11/07/2025

INSPECTOR DRAKE..., NEW FOREST PLAYERS

ANOTHER New Forest Players' tour de force at Ballard School with David Tristram's hilarious whodunnit send-up, Inspector Drake and the Perfekt Crime.

A magnificently hilarious stop-go animation, (two pipe-cleaner characters on either side of a roaring hearth fire) created by 13-year-old James Moody-Jones, gave the audience the back-story so that they were ahead of the police right from the start.

Adam Ogilvie was terrific as the arrogant, self-assured Doctor Rupert Short who reports his fourth wife Victoria missing and is exasperated by the police's incompetence. Is he really as innocent as he claims?

Peter Cutler, in his first role with the Players, stole the show as long-suffering, deadpan Sergeant Plod, trying to make sense of the chaos around him. I especially liked the 'Dixon of Dock Green' scenes when, standing under a police light at the side of the stage, he brings the audience up to date with developments.

Ian Prescott was great fun as the self-important, clueless Inspector Indiana (Indie) Drake, clutching at straws (and young ladies) in this, his greatest-ever challenge. Will he solve the perfekt crime?

Stephanie McMahon, another newcomer to the company, was excellent as Sabrina, the doctor's daughter unexpectedly returned from Canada - or was Miss Short, splendidly played by Victoria Sandford, the REAL daughter?

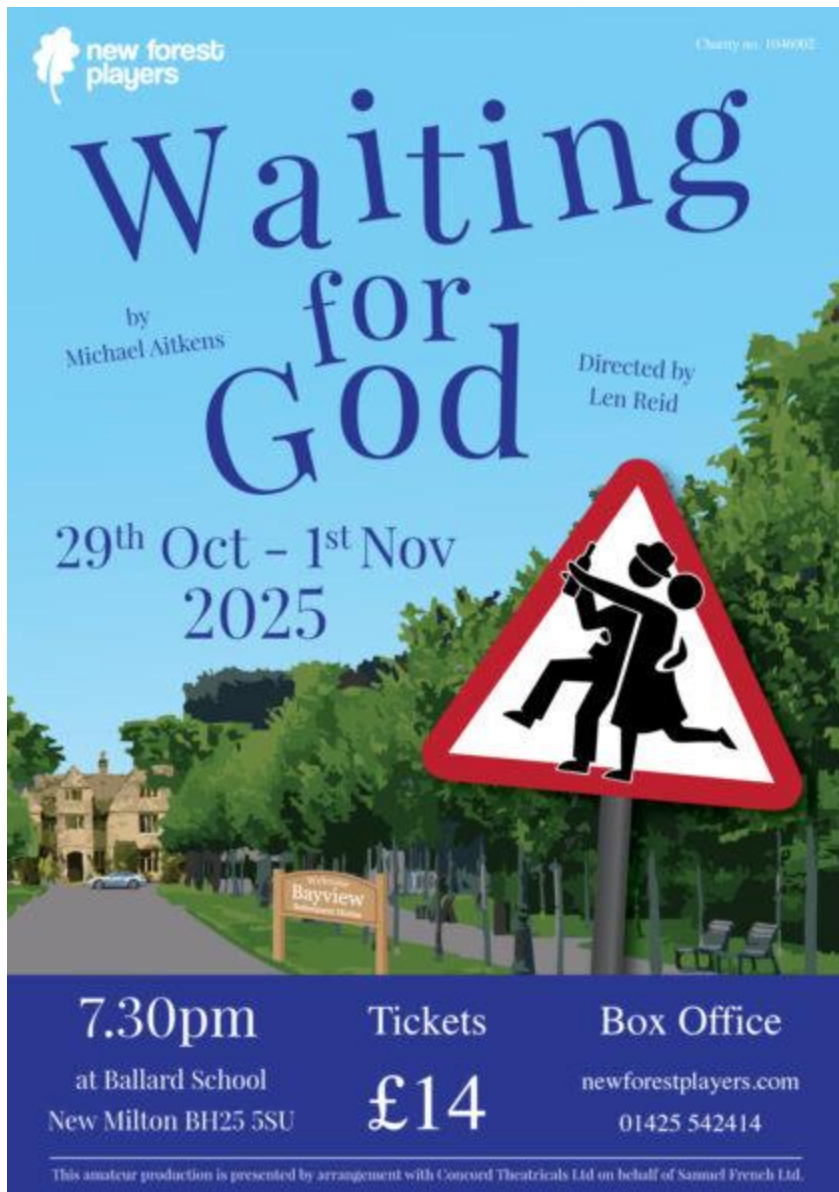
And who killed Dr Short? Was evil Uncle Ebenezer really drowned in the lake???

This brilliant spoof was expertly directed by debut director Alan Whitty with terrific technical effects by Simon Hanney (dramatic music, lighting and scene-freezes building up tension) and it was good to see new young talent coming to the fore backstage. The superb set designed by David Ward was just right for the 1950s, including the flying ducks and huge warthog head on the wall.



The talented cast's comic timing and rapid delivery of some excruciating punch-lines kept up the momentum throughout, including the speeded-up 're-run' scene at the beginning of Act 2. A splendid evening keeping the audience in stitches! I'm looking forward to the next production.

Alison Smith



Waiting for God

29th October - 1st November 2025

Ballard School

story by: Michael Aitkens

directed by: Len Reid

WHAT'S IT ABOUT ?

All the favourite characters from the British sitcom aired on BBC1 from 1990 to 1994 are reimagined for this play.

Facing the challenges that come with growing old gracefully, two spirited residents of Bayview Retirement Village, a stuffy senior's home where stepping out of line is strictly frowned upon.

Retired photojournalist Diana Trent is often angry, more so now because she's stuck at Bayview. She has little use for anyone except the new resident Tom Ballard, who gleefully cheers Diana on as she goes about her undermining ways, to give the conniving manager Harvey Baines and his assistant Jane Edwards their comeuppance.

Add Diana's niece Sarah Chase a successful and charming business woman and Mary Ballard the daughter of Tom who is very dull and has a difficult marriage to a sex mad husband. Plus a dithering vicar, a female doctor, a mad organist and a undertaker and this all leads to a hilarious conspiracy with unexpected heartwarming results.

The Cast & Crew

CAST

Diana Trent – Wendy Howard-Allen

Tom Ballard – Richard Fereday

Jane Edwards – Courtney Fereday

Harvey Baines – Mathew Walker

Sarah Chase – Laura Soles

Mary Ballard – Debbie Lucas

Dennis Sparrow + Basil – Hugh Howard -Allen

Doctor + Milly + Organist – Katie Kelly

Undertaker – Neil Hopkins

CREW

Director – Len Reid

Stage Manager – Neil Hopkins

Prompt – Sue Nicholson

Lighting and Sound – Colin Bailey with Simon Hanney, Megan Raine and Clare Collins

Props – Mary Stallwood, Emma Lucas, Liv Stopes, Ruth and James Moody-Jones

Set Designer – David Ward

Set Construction Crew Led by David Ward and Richard White.

Front of House – Wendy Beaumont, David Luker.

Box Office – Sue Baker and Robin Ede

Photography – PDS Theatre Photography

Attendance of 32