



TEDDINGTON THEATRE CLUB PRESENTS AN AMATEUR PRODUCTION
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH SAMUEL FRENCH LTD

A Visit from Miss Prothero & An Englishman Abroad

By Alan Bennett
Directed by Jenny Hobson

Sun 9 Jun – Sat 15 Jun 2019

£1.50



Hampton Hill Theatre

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- 🎪 For reasons of safety, glassware must NOT be taken into any part of the auditorium.
- 🎪 Latecomers will be admitted at the first convenient moment provided that no interruption or distraction to the performers might be caused.
- 🎪 All gangways, passageways and stairways must be kept free from obstruction. Persons are not permitted to sit or stand in any gangway.
- 🎪 The taking of photographs and the making of sound and/or visual recordings in the auditorium are not permitted.
- 🎪 An infra-red hearing assistance system is available in the auditorium but not in the Coward Room. Personal systems with a T-switch will require an additional unit available in the foyer. 'In ear' headsets are also available.
- 🎪 Wheelchair positions are available in both stalls and the balcony. The Box Office Manager will be happy to discuss your requirements.
- 🎪 TTC Ltd, as managers of the theatre, reserves the right to refuse admission and to make alterations to the programme and cast without notice.

Directors Notes

Alan Bennett

Born in Armley Leeds in May 1934, Alan Bennett has over the years earned himself the title of national treasure, although he is quick to argue that “people should not think of me as cosy”. Nevertheless, since the heady days at Oxford where he studied history, the stream of journals, books and plays has put him at the forefront of British dramatists, and crowned him one of our best loved writers.



His first foray into the world of theatre came with *Beyond the Fringe* (August 1960) to which he contributed sketches, and acted alongside Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, and Jonathan Miller. It is interesting to note that the quiet bespectacled young man, who at that time was perhaps the least outgoing of the quartet, has reached the pinnacle of fame, and continues to this day wooing audiences with his unique observational skills and his ability to take a small incident and turn it into a captivating drama.

He approaches all of his work in an intelligent, educated and engaging way, often reflecting his own personality which can be both cantankerous and irresistibly funny in equal measure.

The two one act plays chosen for performance in our uniquely intimate studio space offer an insight into the world of both the metropolitan and provincial. In *A Visit from Miss Prothero* we are invited into the comfortable suburban home of Arthur Dodsworth, which probably mirrors Bennett's own humble beginnings in Leeds, whereas *An Englishman Abroad* deals with the complicated lifestyle of Guy Burgess, who came from a wealthy Hampshire background, but who landed up branded a traitor living a lonely existence in Moscow. The two dramas demonstrate the consummate skill with which Bennett draws the audience into the world of both fact and fiction alike.

A Visit from Miss Prothero

Widower Arthur Dodsworth lives quietly and contentedly in his small suburban home, safe in the knowledge that he has worked hard all his life, and achieved some measure of success during the 30 years he has worked for Warburtons. How is it then that this quiet safe existence is turned upside down by a visit from his ex-secretary, the poisonous Miss Prothero?



An Englishman Abroad



Based on a true story told to Alan Bennett by actress Coral Browne, we are drawn into the sleazy world of defector Guy Burgess in Moscow 1958. During a visit by the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Company who were performing *Hamlet*, Browne was asked to assist

Michael Redgrave with a very drunken Burgess who was being sick in his dressing room. In recompense, Burgess invited her to his flat, but not before he had put in a strange request.

Coral Browne 1913 - 1991

Coral Browne was an Australian-American stage and screen actress. Married to Philip Pearman who died in 1964, she subsequently married Vincent Price in 1974.

In 1984 she was awarded a BAFTA for her appearance in the TV version of *An Englishman Abroad*.



In 1987 she became a naturalised United States citizen as a gift to Vincent Price and he became a Catholic for Coral who had converted many years before.

The actress was renowned for her most colourful language, and the many affairs in which she indulged during her life. She was attracted to both men and women, and for five years she maintained a strong relationship with a woman who has never been officially named.

When told that there was no suitable role for her husband Philip Pearman in *King Lear*, she asked for a script and, having found the page she was looking for, announced wryly “there you are, the perfect part, a small camp in Dover”.

Coral died of breast cancer in Los Angeles at the age of 77 leaving behind a legacy over 60 stage productions and numerous successful films - an achievement for someone who at the age of 21 emigrated from Australia to England with just £50 in her pocket and who found fame and fortune on the world stage.

Guy Frances de Moncy Burgess 1911 - 1963

Many writers and dramatists continue their endeavours to encapsulate the life of this complex character. Born into a wealthy family, educated at Eton and Dartmouth Naval College, Burgess was brought up mainly by his mother and various female aunts following the death of his father at an early age. A voracious homosexual who from a young age indulged in numerous liaisons with men from all walks of life. He entered Trinity College Cambridge at the age of 20, and it was here that he formed his strong political beliefs and made alliances with others who became known as the Cambridge Five. He was recruited by Soviet intelligence in 1935, and worked for the BBC as a producer, a job that was interrupted for a while when he became a full time MI6 intelligence officer. He joined the Foreign Office in 1944 as confidential secretary to Ernest Bevin’s deputy. Despite his aversion to all things American, in 1950 he accepted the post of second secretary to the British Embassy in Washington, thus opening up opportunities to access the secret files of both Great Britain and her allies.

There is no doubt that Burgess had a brilliant mind. However, this was all too often masked by the fact that he was frequently grubbily dressed and in a state of total inebriation. Nevertheless, when sober he maintained an appealing charm.

Defecting to Moscow with Maclean in 1951, life was not as he had imagined it. Despite maintaining a certain style, always wearing his old Etonian tie, he lived a lonely spartan existence, permanently under the eye of his minders.

It is interesting to note that Alan Bennett is sceptical as to whether Burgess was as dangerous as is made out. However, it has been discovered that he passed at least 4,500 documents to Moscow during the time he was operating as an agent.

Picture a damp Hampshire graveyard on a chilly October evening at dusk. It was here that according to his mother's wishes, and due to the generosity of the Foreign Office, that the ashes of Burgess were allowed home to be buried in West Meon next to his father. Just five lonely figures watched as a rather nervous vicar placed the casket unceremoniously in the space, in order to spare the wrath of the local residents who had no wish to hold the remains of a traitor in the churchyard.



An Englishman Abroad offers a tiny but tempting insight into an extraordinary life. Maybe audiences will be inspired to look further into how a man with such a potentially bright future came to be returned home undercover in an earthenware pot decorated with Russian script, to be placed stealthily in what is now a neglected grave in a quintessentially English Hampshire village. We hope so!

Jenny Hobson

Scenes and Music

A Visit from Miss Prothero

The action of the play takes place in the living room of Mr Dodsworth's semi-detached house

Music

The Radetzky March - Brighouse and Rastrick Band

Autumn Leaves - Brighouse and Rastrick Band

An Englishman Abroad

The action of the play takes place in Burgess's flat in Moscow – 1958

Music

Who Stole My Heart Away - Pianola by Ampico Lexington

Who Stole My Heart Away - Jack Buchanan

For He Is an Englishman - HMS Pinafore, Gilbert & Sullivan

Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes - The Gondoliers, Gilbert & Sullivan

Cast

A Visit from Miss Prothero

Arthur Dodsworth	Jeremy Gill
Miss Prothero	Liz Williams
Millie the Budgie	Florrie

An Englishman Abroad

Coral Browne	Roberta Cole
Guy Burgess	Patrick Harrison
Tolya	Graham Titcombe
Tailor	Jeremy Gill
Assistant	John Wilkinson

Production Team

Director	Jenny Hobson
Production Manager	Juliette Sexton
Stage Manager & Set Construction	Vicky Horder
Lighting Designer	Patrick Troughton
Sound Designer	Charles J Halford
Set Construction	Alan Corbett
Props & Set Construction	Mart Stonelake
Costumes	Maggie Revis
Rehearsal Prompt	Liz Salaman
Photography	Jojo Leppink
Artistic Link	Heather Mathew
BAT Link	Dave Rumens

Please Note:

There will be an interval of 20 minutes

Please note [An Englishman Abroad](#) contains some strong language.

Biographies



Liz Williams
Miss Prothero

Liz has very much enjoyed working on her first Alan Bennett play with Jenny and Jeremy - exploring this deeply unpleasant character in all her 'glory'. Devoid of humility, any sense of happiness or meaning in her own life having eluded her, she is more than ready to gorge herself on her prey - the unsuspecting Mr. Dodsworth. In recent years, Liz has performed with TTC in *Too Long an Autumn*, *The Matchgirls* and *The Winter's Tale*, with OHADS in *The River*, at RSS in *Tom and Viv* and Park Players in *Absent Friends*, *The Problem*, *A Bunch of Amateurs* and *About Time*. Prior to this, Liz enjoyed various roles at a non-professional, suburban theatre in Chicago and was involved with The Rose Plus Players about seven years ago at The Rose Theatre in Kingston.

Jeremy Gill has been acting since 2006. Previous roles for TTC include Sir Charles in *The Ruling Class*, a weird collection of mostly drunk characters in *Under Milk Wood* (with our director Jenny Hobson narrating), Knox in *Breaking the Code* and Sgt Wilson in *Dad's Army*.

Jeremy has wanted to act in a play, any play by Alan Bennett, since before the dawn of time. Now at last he has his chance to perform in these two well-written plays. Set around Jeremy's home city of Leeds, Miss Prothero in particular has been very interesting and thoroughly enjoyable to rehearse. Bennett must have grown up around these people, he knows them so well!



Jeremy Gill
Mr. Dodsworth



Roberta Cole
Coral Browne

Roberta has been a member of TTC for many years and is thrilled to be returning to the Hampton Hill stage after a seven year break. Her acting credits include several TTC and BROS productions plus a Swan Award winning performance as Vita Sackville-West in *Vita and Virginia* at RSS. Roberta's thoroughly enjoyed exploring the magnificent character of Coral Browne. Along with Jenny and Patrick, she's loved diving into Alan Bennett's wonderful text, discovering the complexity of both Burgess and Browne, revealed through their very brief but memorable meeting.

Patrick is delighted to be making his TTC debut in the enigmatic and contradictory role of Guy Burgess. As a modern history graduate who visited Russia in 1990, and whose early film influences included *Another Country* (in which Rupert Everett played Burgess), Patrick has long been fascinated by the Cambridge spy ring and has thoroughly enjoyed researching this role and exploring the various aspects of Guy's character. Previous appearances have included Dr. Chasuble in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and numerous musical theatre performances including Cliff (*Cabaret*), Doolittle (*My Fair Lady*), Max (*Sunset Boulevard*) and Harry (*Company*). Patrick has produced and directed many productions and is a founding member of Cygnet Players and a past Chairman of Putney Light Operatic Society.



Patrick Harrison
Guy Burgess



Graham Titcombe

Tolya

Graham has been a member of Teddington Theatre Club for many years. Most recently at TTC, he has played Plumard and Justin in *French Twist* and The Man in *Stevie*. Graham is enjoying exercising his Russian in the role of Tolya. *Dosvidanye tovarishchi* (Goodbye Comrades).

This is John's 13th appearance on stage with TTC. During this time he has played a variety of roles from Ugly Sister and Dame in panto to Herr Flick in *'Allo 'Allo*. In total contrast to the high camp of the above he played the sadistic bully Sgt Major Reg Drummond in *Privates on Parade* and has somewhat cornered the market in dour policeman for TTC, OHADS and RSS; a career highlight was putting Alan Turing behind bars in *Breaking the Code*. Despite theatrical evidence to the contrary John is a very nice man who would love to buy you a pint in the bar after the show!



John Wilkinson

Assistant



Jenny Hobson

Director

Jenny has many interests in life, but top of the list is her involvement in theatre. From winning a prize for poetry speaking at the tender age of five, there was a natural progression to drama school, followed by radio work and teaching. Since those heady days, Jenny has been part of several excellent non-professional companies and has played numerous roles from Electra to the flamboyant Madam Arcati. Since joining TTC in 2014 she has taken part in *Equus* and *Under Milk Wood*, as well as *Family Circles* for OHADS. Directing has taken over in the past few years, and her production of *Stevie* for TTC won a Swan award and a nomination. Alan Bennett's scripts have created both hard work and fun for our two talented casts, and that mix, says Jenny, is what it's all about!

Teddington Theatre Club Ltd

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Teddington Theatre Club acknowledges with grateful thanks the practical and financial support given by local residents, businesses and community groups.



Teddington Theatre Club is affiliated to the Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain and to Arts Richmond.

This production is entered for the Arts Richmond Swan Awards for Drama and Musicals.

Coming soon

at Hampton Hill Theatre

Wolf Hall & Bring up the Bodies

By Hilary Mantel, adapted for the stage by Mike Poulton

Treachery, politics and intrigue at the court of King Henry VIII

Sat 22 Jun – Sat 29 Jun 2019

Auditorium

Marvin's Room

By Scott McPherson

Who will care for the carer? A dark comedy tale of two very different sisters

Sun 15 Sep – Sat 21 Sep 2019

Coward Studio



For up-to-date information on TTC and the Theatre, and to book tickets online, please check our website: **www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk**

Postal bookings are accepted on publication of the booking form.

Telephone enquires open two weeks before each production.

Call: 0845 838 7529 (Open Monday to Saturday 1.00pm to 8.00pm)

To enjoy good theatre locally, join TTC today. It is easy to join as an audience member, or as a full performing and technical member.

Teddington Theatre Club is a Club Theatre open to members and their guests. Each month, details of forthcoming productions are mailed to each member together with Theatre, our club magazine and newsletter.

All are encouraged to help with Front of House, Bar and Marketing activities of the Club and Theatre. To find out more please visit our website

www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk or call our Membership Secretary on 020 8287 2663 or complete one of the forms you can find in the Foyer.