

THE PRODUCTION

Moot House Players first produced this delightful play 20 years ago, almost to the day, and it still retains its feeling of charm and fantasy. Sadly, there is not one member of the original cast involved in tonight's production, although Steve Collins (who was in the original show) did start rehearsals. Unfortunately, he had to give up the role of Professor Bosh owing to pressure of work and Mary Hidalgo, who has not worked with the company before, bravely stepped in and took over the part. We welcome another new face in Clive Weatherley. He has appeared with the company on its tour to the Czech Republic last summer with Vaclav Klicpera's *Homeland*, but is now acting for the first time in the company's own homeland of Moot Hall.

We welcome back two of our young actors, Alex Castle and Ben Lloyd, who were with us last year for *Toad of Toad Hall*, and they have now been joined by Tom Chitseko in what we hope will be just the first of many appearances with the company. Together they are creating some lively idiotic Jumblies. Finally, at the last minute, we were fortunate that Kate Edwards and Jade Mondroit agreed to be "living" Bong Trees - an idea which makes Lear's magic island even more exotic.

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FUTURE PROGRAMME

March 18-19-20 at 8.00 pm

ABSENT FRIENDS

by Alan Ayckbourn

Our first Ayckbourn since 1990 - and very welcome at that. A very funny play which has all the Ayckbourn ingredients of turning a conventional situation on its head and making us aware of how we appear to others.

Directed by Jon McNamara

May 13-14-15 at 8.00 pm

THE PRICE

by Arthur Miller

Directed by Tony Edwards

July 8-9-10 at 8.00 pm

IVANOV

by Anton Chekov

Directed by Jack Mitchley

MOOT HOUSE PLAYERS ACKNOWLEDGE WITH GRATITUDE
THE SUPPORT WHICH THEY RECEIVE FROM THEIR
PARENT-BODY, THE MARK HALL AND NETTESWELL C A.

THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT



WENT TO SEE . . .

1999

MOOT HOUSE PLAYERS
present

THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT WENT TO SEE . . .

A Musical Play by David Wood and Sheila Ruskin
adapted from the writings of Edward Lear

Characters in order of appearance:

EDWARD LEAR	...	David Albinson
THE OWL	...	Michael Caswell
THE PUSSYCAT	...	Jennifer Southwell
THE DONG	...	Doug Sheppard
THE QUANGLE WANGLE		Clive Weatherley
THE PLUM PUDDING FLEA		Ian Beckett
THE RUNCIBLE SPOON		Becky Sheppard
PROFESSOR BOSH	...	Mary Hidalgo
THE PIG	...	Alex Castle
THE JUMBLY GIRL	...	Monica de Gernier
THE TURKEY	...	David Schacht
HEAD JUMBLY	...	Tom Chitseko
JUMBLY TWO	...	Alex Castle
JUMBLY THREE	...	Ben Lloyd
BONG TREES		Kate Edwards, Jade Mondroit
CANARIES	...	{ Alex Castle Ben Lloyd Tom Chitseko

The play directed by Bett Hewlett

Musical Direction - David Albinson Choreography - Jocelyn Johnson

*The action of the play takes place in and around
The Land Where the Bong Tree Grows*

*There will be one interval, during which refreshments will be available
in the foyer and bar. The bar has a club licence, and members of the
audience with a ticket for tonight's performance are entitled to use
its facilities.*

Setting devised and decorated by the director and built by Tony Edwards
and members of the company
Lighting and sound designed by Christopher Driver;
operated by Simon Brewer
Costumes by members of the company and from the Laws wardrobe
Properties constructed by members of the company
Stage Manager - Philip Lloyd
Production Manager, Prompt and Taxi Service - Rosemary Caswell

HE AUTHORS AND THE PLAY

Edward Lear (1812-1888) was one of a trio of eminent Victorians whose lighter works have been more highly valued than their more serious *oeuvres* by the frivolous British. Charles Dodgson's *Euclid and his Modern Rivals* was almost certainly remaindered in the 1880s, but the same writer's *Alice in Wonderland*, appearing under the name Lewis Carroll, is still doing splendid business. Similarly, there is not much call for a revival of Sir Arthur Sullivan's grand opera *Ivanhoe*, whereas one can hardly move for productions of *The Mikado* and his other Savoy light operas.

Edward Lear was the twentieth child to be born to his parents. He was ugly, short-sighted and prone to asthma and epilepsy. His stockbroker father served a short time in prison for debt when Edward was four and the family was split up. Edward was handed over to his eldest sister Ann, who brought him up. She had a lively sense of humour and certainly helped to form his character. He was given to wild flights of fancy from an early age. Amongst other things, he claimed that his grandfather was Danish, bearing the name Lørr, "but he picked off the two dots and pulled out the diagonal line". The Danish alphabet, however, has no such letter and the story is as much an invention as the Dong with the Luminous Nose, the Jumblies and the Quangle Wangle, all of whom appear in tonight's play.

By the age of fifteen Lear was earning money with his serious drawings of the natural world and was offered a job at the Regents Park Zoo to make a series of drawings of parrots. The collection of drawings came to the notice of the 13th Earl of Derby who promptly invited him to Knowsley Hall to illustrate his unique collection of animals, and it was here that Lear entertained the Earl's grandchildren with his jokes and funny drawings which were later published as *The Book of Nonsense*. Lear was a serious landscape painter and spent most of his life travelling in the Mediterranean countries but, happily for us, he still found time also to add to his bizarre collection of limericks and other nonsenses.

David Wood was a young actor working with the repertory company at the Swan Theatre, Worcester, when he was invited by the company director to write a Christmas show. He came up with *The Owl and the Pussycat Went to See . . .* co-writing it with his first wife, Sheila Ruskin.