Alan Bennett.

On.

Years

Forty
DIRECTOR'S NOTE

'The plays of Alan Bennett', wrote The Times, 'have always been marked by an irrepressible gift for parody, underscored by elegiac melancholy.'

The emphasis tonight is undoubtedly on the comic, with a veritable parade of pertinent parodies from Wilde to Sapper and from Beerbohm to Bloomsbury. But this is not to say that there is not a more serious note underlying this affectionate review of Britain in the first half of the twentieth century. 'You could say,' argues Franklin as he explains the purpose of the school play, 'that we are trying to shed the burden of the past'. 'Why must we shed it?' asks the Headmaster. 'Memories are not shackles, Franklin, they are garlands.'

In search of background for the play, I recently revisited the school where, forty years back, I sat with Alan Bennett to sing the song which gives tonight's play its title. Founded by Samuel Smiles, proponent of Self-Help and other manly virtues, as the Head was always reminding us in his prayers, the place looked friendlier now, even if the paint was flaking and the grass overgrown. 'The School Song?' echoed the Secretary incredulously as I asked after a copy. 'We don't have school songs now'. She remembered Alan Bennett vividly. 'But a lot's happened since then, you know. We've gone non-selective, comprehensive and mixed. And we've had a fire.'

I like to think that Alan Bennett would have appreciated that remark as a more widely applicable encapsulation of recent history. Whether you side with Franklin or the Head is up to you. But whatever the message, there's a massive coating of sugar. So all you've got to do now is sit back and, in the words of Mr Bennett's latest play — 'Enjoy!'

JEFFREY SMITH
FORTY YEARS ON
by ALAN BENNETT

CAST

HEADMASTER          Michael Howard
FRANKLIN, a Housemaster  Michael Green
TEMPEST, a Junior Master  Robin Duval
MATRON               Ruth Lister
MISS NISBITT, the Bursar’s Secretary  Betty Ogden
LECTERN READER       Chris Wallock
ORGANIST             Michael Carver
or
COTTLE               Gerry Blake
TUPPER (treble)      Samuel Barbary
MOSS                 Alexander Barber
SALTER               Colin Brown
LEDGETTER (treble)   Jon Campbell
MACILWAINE           Richard Cullen
BOTTOMLEY            Timothy Ellis
SKINNER              Richard Grimshaw
WIMPENNY             Andrew Groves
GILLINGS             Stephen Heatheron
DISHFORTH            Jason Hobart
CLARK                Richard Howlett
RUMBOLD              Roger Kelly
LORD (boy in bed)    Nigel Lane
SPOONER              Piers Langridge
PRINGLE              Nick Leibermann
FOSTER               David Lohfink
CRABTREE             Rupert Mathew
JARVIS               Dominic McCann
GRUBB                Paul McConnachie
BAXTER               Vicente McNeil
CHARTRERIS (prompt)  Judd O’Connor
CARTWRIGHT           Phillip Rutt
TREDGOLD (Rugby Captain)  Mark Salem
COTTELL              Simon Skinner
WIGGLESWORTH         Oliver Wain-Ferns
SIMPSON              Jan Williams

Directed by JEFFREY SMITH
Set designed by JOHN STACEY
Costumes by LINDSAY UDELL
Lighting designed by PETE WALTERS
Sound by MURRAY COOKE

The scene is the Assembly Hall of Albion House, a public school on the South Downs.

There will be one interval of fifteen minutes.

Stage Manager                      Tim Hayward
Deputy Stage Manager                Chris Sydenham
Assistant Stage Managers

Construction by
assisted by
Prompt
Wardrobe Assistants

Lighting Operator
Sound Operator
Properties
assisted by
Printing by

Thanks to: Don Kincaid, John Davey, Vincent McQueen, Graham Cannings, Roger de Toney, Eric Kirby, Flora Ellis
and to: Ealing Green School, Brentside High School, Montpelier Middle School, The Plymouth Theatre Company and Stoll Moss Theatre Ltd.
After each main Questors production, a public

DISCUSSION

is held, attended by the director and the cast, open to all members of the audience, and led by some figure of standing in the theatre. An increasing number of members are finding this an interesting extension to their theatre going.

The Discussion on Forty Years On will be held on TUESDAY, 20th OCTOBER, at 7.45 p.m. in the Bernard Shaw Room and will be led by

PETER DEWS

one of the leading theatre directors of the day. Peter Dews started in the theatre at the amateur Bradford Civic Playhouse, but after University rapidly made his name as a director in the professional theatre. As Director for six years of the prestigious Birmingham Repertory Theatre, he was himself responsible for many productions, not least the outstanding Hadrian VII which came to London and with which he won the New York Antoinette Perry best director award in 1969. His wide experience also includes many productions at Chichester Festival Theatre, of which he is currently Director, as well as in such places as Durban, Stratford, Ontario, and Tel Aviv.

So why not come along, to join in or to listen?

Note the date

TUESDAY, 20th OCTOBER at 7.45 p.m.
in the Bernard Shaw Room

All are welcome Admission is free

During the run of Forty Years On – the ever-popular
ANNUAL GIFT STALL!!

The Gift Stall will be in the Main Foyer, and the Book Stall in the West Foyer from 7 p.m. each evening and daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Sunday 12 – 2 p.m.).
Gifts for the stall are still needed.

CAN YOU AFFORD TO MISS IT?
CONTINUING THE NEW SEASON...

IN THE MAIN THEATRE...

THE WINTER'S TALE
by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21 NOVEMBER
One of Shakespeare's last plays which represent the summit of achievement of the world's greatest dramatist. A very moving play in which the elements of love, jealousy, friendship, loss and redemption mingle.

DIMETOS
by ATHOL FUGARD
5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12 DECEMBER
A chance to see this impressive play by the distinguished modern South African playwright. Should Dimetos withdraw from the mainstream of life? What are his reasons? Is he responsible to others? And what are his feelings for his young niece?

AND IN THE STUDIO THEATRE...

HANS KOHLHAAS
by JAMES SAUNDERS
28 OCTOBER – 1 NOVEMBER
James Saunders is well known as the author of many plays presented at The Questors, including Next Time I'll Sing To You, A Scent Of Flowers and The Borage Pigeon Affair. One of his most recent plays, Bodies, enjoyed a long and successful run in the West End. Hans Kohlhaas was first seen in a very exciting Studio production at The Questors in 1972, and is now to have a long-awaited revival. The original production was the result of extended co-operation between the author and the cast, and James Saunders is working with the new cast on a revision of the text. Not to be missed!

MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL
by T.S. ELIOT
19 – 28 NOVEMBER
This classic of the modern theatre, based on the murder of Thomas a Becket in the Cathedral at Canterbury is being given an extended run in the Studio Theatre.