

TAKELEY DRAMA GROUP



Draft version 1.0

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Version Control

Draft V1.0 Jan 2017 All known names are against the photos. The Newspaper reports can be typed out in a future release and also need to see if other newspaper reports can be found.

TAKELEY DRAMA GROUP

Introduction

We have not yet uncovered the full extent of the shows put on by the Takeley Drama Group but a newspaper report in 1949 for School for Spinsters mentions that the group was then two years old suggesting that it started in 1947. We also have evidence (newspaper report from March 1961) that there were still plays taking place in 1961. It is fair to assume the people involved over this time frame would have changed and for all we know at present the group may have continued long after 1961. We also know of a subsequent group who regularly performs in the Silver Jubilee Hall in the 1980s. There was also a Takeley Players group which Les Frost played a large part in its running from 1939 to at least 1957. This group almost exclusively performed pantomimes and we have a separate booklet for that group.

Whilst most of the actors and production crew appear to be a different set of people to the Takeley Players we do note that Mair Evans who usually played a witch in the pantomimes also had parts in the Drama Group productions.

Joseph Gunyon was the producer of these plays and Ron May would appear to have been the leading male actor. We have found some newspaper reports which suggest that at least two plays may have been put on a year. We have around 70 photographs which we believe are of the Drama Group productions but I am sure there is a wealth of photographs and programmes yet to be discovered.

Some of the Drama Group actors we have identified to date from photos are:

Ron May, Billy May, Joan Gunyon, Mair Evans, Marjorie Jones, Marjorie Watson, Nora Lambert, Sid Hopkins. Michael Crow, Derek Turner, Ron Bolton, Ron Gunyon, Maureen Reeve, Margaret Butler (nee Bolton), Madge McFarlane, Millicent Felgate, Joyce Cox, Mrs Nelson..

On the next few pages are the titles and dates of plays we have discovered together with any newspaper reports we have found. The aim is to expand each of these with reports and photographs.

After that there is a large section of photographs that we believe come from Takeley Drama Group plays but have not been able to identify.

There are some clues in the newspaper reports, names of cast etc which should gradually allow us to sort them out. We can also try and group where the costumes match from one photo to another and this is how the photos have been grouped together.

Obviously, this booklet is a work in progress. Meanwhile we offer this draft copy via our website for anyone to print and attempt to identify the actors or attribute the photographs to play titles. If you have any knowledge of the plays or maybe recognise a family member please contact: secretary@tlhs.org.uk

Steve Hazon, Chairman, Takeley Local History Society

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May 1949 Charity Begins

Report in the Herts & Essex Observer -- Friday 13th May 1949.

Takeley Players' Success

Takeley Drama Club played to a crowded house on Saturday, when they presented "Charity Begins," a comedy in three acts by Ireland Wood, in the Jubilee Hall. The play held the audience from the moment the curtain rose, and producer Joseph Gunyon had not only made a capable job of the direction, but had cast his players to the maximum advantage.

Timothe Denning, the youngest of the Deveral family, was charming and sincere, while the elder sister, played by Norah Lambert, was a tough and narrow-minded leader of the family, with her brother (played by William D. Evans), a perfect foil. Marjorie Jones, as the absent-minded Emily, was well received, while Irene May played Catherine with understanding and charm. As the aged mother, Mair Evans was outstanding, and Minnia Evans, as a lively village worker, brought roars of laughter from the audience. Susan Higgs, Ronald May and Sydney Hopkins completed the cast.

The scenery was made by Hubert Lambert, and Richard Budworth was stage manager.

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December 1949 School for Spinsters

Report in the Herts & Essex Observer -- Friday 9th December 1949.

Takeley Amateurs in "School for Spinsters"

Takeley Drama Club gave two very fine performances of Ronald Pertwee's "School for Spinsters" at Takeley Silver Jubilee Hall on Friday and Saturday. Mr. Joseph Gunyon produced the play.

Miss Timothie Denning gave a polished performance in the part of Rose, and 15-year-old Rita Farrington, in the rôle of Daisy, made an outstanding first appearance on the stage. Mrs. "Gussie" Evans received particular applause from the audience for handling the difficult part of Freda so well. Of the men in the cast, Ronald May, as Oswald, and William Watts as Tom, headed the list.

The Takeley club produce two full-length plays every season and, when possible, a few one-act plays to help local societies. The décor and properties are made and prepared by the members themselves.

Mr. Gunyon is so pleased by the results achieved since the club was formed two years ago, that he is considering the possibility of forming a district repertory company.

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April 1950 A Quiet Weekend

Report in the Herts & Essex Observer -- Friday 7th April 1950.

THE HERTS AND ESSEX OBSERVER, FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 1950

TAKELEY AMATEURS IN "QUIET WEEK-END"



A scene from "Quiet Week-end." On the stage are: (standing)

A scene from "Quiet Week-end." On the stage William Watts and Timothie Dennings, (seated) and William Evans.

Twenty-one-year-old Timothie Dennings, as Miranda Bute, enjoyed a personal triumph in Takeley Drama Club's presentation of "Quiet Week-end," by Esther McCracken, at the Silver Jubilee Hall on Friday and Saturday. Nevertheless, the entire production was very enjoyable, and laughs came frequently.

The play, a popular one for presentation by amateur dramatic clubs, was staged recently by the Potter Street Players. While it was obvious that although the Takeley Club had not "pirated" the Players' production, they seemed to have learnt from their mistakes. This production was, to my mind, the more polished and sophisticated, but it seemed to lack the enthusiasm of the Players' presentation.

The story of the play revolves about a week-end which is being spent by a town family at their country cottage. The week-end turns out to be anything but quiet, and, among other things, involves Adrian Barasford, the local J.P., in a salmon poaching expedition.

"Gussie" Evans gave a very good performance in the difficult part of Mildred Royd. Her husband was played convincingly by Ronald May. William Watts, as Denys Royd, spoiled an otherwise good performance by failing to give the impression that his lines were the spontaneous expressions of his thoughts. William Evans, as the embarrassed Adrian Barasford, J.P., and Mair Evans as the garrulous maid, were quite excellent.

The four newcomers to the club, Anne Rushen, Joanne Gunyon, John Fannon and Brenda Nelson all played their parts well, although Joanne Gunyon as Marcia Brent was inclined to under—rather than over—act the part. The other members of the cast were Norah Lambert, "Bill" May and Cuthbert Lambert. The play was produced by Joseph Gunyon.

Two complaints: a table set down-stage masked the players sitting on the sofa—and Adrian would surely have been much more wet after his fall into the river.

D. J. R. E.

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Standing: William Watts and Timothie Dennings .
Seated: Ron May with pipe, William Evans
A Quiet Weekend 1949

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December 1950 Summer in December

Report in the Herts & Essex Observer -- Friday 9th December 1950.

Takeley amateurs shine

PACKED "houses" acclaimed Joseph W. Gunyon's production of "Summer in December" (James Liggat), presented by the Takeley Drama Club at the Silver Jubilee Hall, Takeley. The three-night run ended on Saturday.

The comedy and pathos of this story of life in a seaside hotel were portrayed skilfully. Joanne Gunyon, as Elspeth French, the attractive widowed proprietress of the hotel, played a difficult rôle with sympathy and understanding, gently repulsing the advances of Nigel Wainwright, a boisterous, lovable author, joyfully acted by William Watts.

John Fannon, as Edward Kingsley, made a splendid father to Angela (Anne Rushen), who was interestingly sensitive to her parents' separation. William Butcher took the part of David Payne, a shy, gauche school-boy, and his uncle, Colonel Waters, retired and peppery, was played by William Evans.

Nita Page, as Rowena Smith, was a devastating vamp, Terry Holmes (Ronald May) and Judy (Brenda Nelson) a delightful young married couple, and M. Anatole (Cuthbert Lambert), a French visitor whose reply "oui" to everything had some very funny results. Gussie Evans, as Muriel Kingsley, the repentant wife, was very sincere, while the cheerful chatter and obliging manner of the maid Effie (Norah Lambert), was a golden thread running through the whole play. When she appeared in her "naughty nineties" bathing dress the house rocked with laughter.

The many dresses were always appropriate and fresh. It was quite obvious that much attention had been paid to detail. Enunciation throughout was clear and precise, and placing was near faultless, with no masking at any time.

After the final performance the ladies of the cast were presented with bouquets by Mr. G. Rushen.

G.C.

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April 1952 Ladies in Retirement



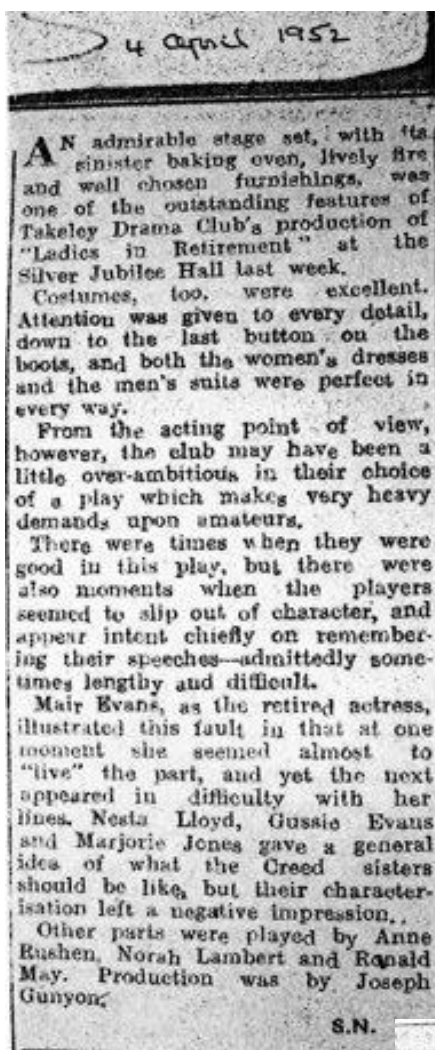
?, ?, Marjorie Jones, ?, ?, Ron May. ?.
Ladies in Retirement April 1952



Mrs Cox, Marjorie Jones, ?, ?, ?.
Ladies in Retirement April 1952

TAKELEY DRAMA GROUP

Report in the Herts & Essex Observer -- Friday 4th April 1952.



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March 1953 See How They Run

March 1958 Wild Goose Chase

March 1961 Breath of Spring

Report in the Herts & Essex Observer -- Friday 17th March 1961.

TAKELEY DRAMA CLUB IN "BREATH OF SPRING".

So convincing was the performance by the Takeley Drama Club on Thursday, Friday and Saturday when they presented "Breath of Spring" at the "Silver Jubilee Hall" that if the plot had taken place anywhere else but on the stage, local police would have been very interested.

Jacqueline Robinson was excellently cast as a maid, who on being discharged from prison, is employed by Dame Beatrice Appleby, convincingly portrayed by Ruth Rigby, who is forced by circumstances to take in paying guests.

Complications arise when the maid steals a neighbour's fur coat, and every-one works hard to return it.

WELL BALANCED.

Outstanding performances were given by Anne Holmes and David Gwynn as two of the guests, and with well balanced portrayals from Nora Lambert, Peter J annaway and Dennis Hall as the other guests, and Madge McFarlane was a friend of Dame Beatrice, the team was complete.

Excitement grew, when as a result of the successful completion of the scheme, they decide to form a fur stealing gang.

Ronald May was the producer, and other production duties were carried out by Pat Moylette, stage manager - Charles Bardwell, lighting, -- Jessamine Higgins, Décor. -- Irene May, prompter. -- Joan Bromley and Noni Shuttlewood, properties. -- Dick Boywer, stage carpenter. --- Isabel Barltrop, Box Office

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Photographs to be sorted

There follows about 70 photographs which have been grouped by production by comparing scenery and costumes.



Takeley Players Carnival Float in the late 1950s

Note the names of previous performances: Wild Goose Chase 1958, See how they run 1953, Down Came A Blackbird 1958. Although this appears to be a Carnival Float there does not seem to be any outside scenery behind it so this could have been photographed on stage.

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This production seems to feature nurses, nuns and policemen in uniform



?,?,?,?, Marjorie Jones



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Two photos with the same costumes and scenery



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Four photos of this production with same horse brasses on the horizontal beam.



Marjorie Jones, Ron May.

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-Watson, Ron May, Joan Gunyon, ?, Marjorie Jones, Sid Hopkins, Mair Evans

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Three photos with matching scenery



Seated: Gussie Evans, Mair Evans, Nora Lambert, Mrs Nelson, Joan Gunyon, Millicent Felgate



?, Nora Lambert, Ron May, Joan Gunyon

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Four photos of a production with rather bland scenery



?, ?, Ron May, Syd Hopkins.



?, Joan Gunyon, Marjorie Jones, Ron May, ?.

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Joan Gunyon, Ron May, Billie May, Nora Lambert, ?, ?.
Seated in front: Marjorie Jones, ?, ?, ?.



Standing: ?, Syd Hopkins.
Seated Ron May, Joan Gunyon, Millicent Felgate, Betty Thurgood, ?.

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Three photos with painted outside backdrop through curtained windows with arched top



?, Ron May.

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Marjorie Jones, - Watson, ?, Ron May, ?, ?.



Standing: Ron May, ?, ?, ?, - Watson, ?, ?, ?.
Sitting: Marjorie Jones, Ron Bolton, ?, ?

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Three photos actress has same paisley print dress



Ron May, Joan Gunyon.



Nora Lambert, Ron May, ?, Derek Turner

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?, ?, ?, Ron May, ?, ?, _Watson, ?.

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Four photos with the same wall lights and in 3 cases the same door and surround



Ron May, ?, Joan Gunyon.



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Joan Gunyon, ?, Ron May, ?, ?.



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Three photos with a paneled effect backdrop



Ron Bolton kneeling



Ron Bolton, ?, ?, Ron May.

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Three photos with brick fireplace to the left



?, ?, Ron May.



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The tasseled spears over the window are the unique feature of these two photos



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The spears over the window feature again in these two photos but different scenery with wallpaper



?, Madge McFarlane, ?, ?, ?.

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Three photos with distinctive background and vicars



Watson, Joan Gunyon, Ron May.



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Joseph Gunyon, ?, ? , -Watson, Joan Gunyon, Ron May.

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Four photos where the male lead wears a uniform with jackboots.



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Ron May, ?

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The bookshelves and curtains are the distinguishing factor in these two photos



?, Ron May.



?, Marjorie Joans, ?, ?, -,Watson, ?, ?.

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The theme in these three photos appears to be a wedding



?, ?, Ron May, ?, ?, ?, ?.



?, Ron May, ?, ?, ?, ?.

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?, Ron May

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These three photos have the same bay window and actress in each one.



?, Ron May, ?.



?, Ron May. ?.

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The distinguishing feature in these three are the walllamps and the actors moustache



Michael Crow, Ron May, ?.



-Watson, Michael Crow, ?, ?, Derek Turner, ?, ?, Ron Bolton. Ron May
Front: Joan Gunyon, Gussie Evans, ?, ?.

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?, Ron May.

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The curtains, arched doorway and spear leaning on the left are the clues that link these two



?, Ron May, ?, ?.



Standing: ?, ?, ?, Ron May, Irene May, ?, -Newman, ?.

Sitting: ?, ?, ?, ?, ?

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The matadora outfit links two of the photos nad then the naval uniform links on the third



Ron May, Joan Gunyon.



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Joan Gunyon, Ron May, - Watson

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This pair of colour phoros are of the same scenery



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?, ?, Marjorie Jones, Ron May, ?, ?, ?, ?.



Ron May, Joan Gunyon, -Watson.

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This looks like a make-up/rehearsal session in the body of the Silver Jubilee Hall



Standing: ?, ?, ?, ?, Maureen Reeve, Noni Shuttlewood, ?, ?, Sonia Gurney, Haddon Spurgeon, ?, ?, ?.

Sitting: ?, Madge McFarlain, ?, ?, ?, ?.

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Standing: ?, Syd Hopkins, Mrs Watson, Mrs Cox, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, Ron May, ?.
Seated: Marjorie Jones, Joan Gunyon, Irene May, Mair Evans, Joseph Gunyon,
Nora Lambert



?, Ron May, - Watson, ?, ?,
Joan Gunyon, ?, ?, ?.
?, ?.

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Standing: Marjorie Jones, Ron May, ?.
Sitting: Joan Gunyon, ?.



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?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, Ron May
 ?, Mair Evans, ?, ?, Joan Gunyon?, ?.
 Billie May, ?, Mrs Joyce Cox

