

## A Bunch of Amateurs? No way!

The recent production of "A Bunch of Amateurs" was a great success, and I am grateful to John Munson for the following review:

**Detling Players.**

**'A Bunch of Amateurs'.**

Directed by Edward Price, this play by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman was not an easy task for any Director. I was told that it was its very first performance by amateurs in a village hall. So Edward can claim a record! Very episodic, with lots of breaks between scenes, it would have been much easier to produce as a television play. However, I saw it on the last night and it made me laugh and the audience loved it. The idea of the play is clever. A fairly



well known American Hollywood Star mistakenly has agreed to appear in Shakespeare at Stratford. Mistakenly, because it is not that Stratford but another one. He feels insulted. Not used to learning lines, the film actor is playing King Lear. He starts off being pretty unbearable to everyone, just like the Bard's Lear. Gradually he improves and eventually repairs his relationship with his young daughter. Just as in King Lear. This is a comedy that becomes serious but has a happy ending as the King Lear seen by early Victorian audiences had. How did the Players fare?

Steve Page as Jefferson Steel played a blinder. His change from Mr totally unbearable to the rest of the cast to loved by all of them was completely believable, a tour de force. It was written as a powerful part and Steve really did get his teeth into it. The rest of the cast had to be 'a bunch of amateurs' and acted the parts very convincingly. Sue Sutton as Dorothy, who had 'Stage experience', was suitably disorganised as the Director in the play. Dicky Dawson was a wonderful Nigel. Dicky was really playing himself. The absolute rock of the Dramatic Society with enormous experience, respected by everyone. I think everyone loved his performance and his timing. Sandra Stanley as the 'B & B' lady swooning over her famous guest was her usual lively self and changed to mistaken prudery with appropriate severity. June Pocket as the enthusiastic patron of the group, Lauren, demonstrated well her acting skill by entering each time, lifting the action with her bubbling enthusiasm and, 'Everything going well, is it?' She also handled the massage scene with aplomb. (Geddit? Handled?) Kathryn Shirley also showed her ability in effect playing Cordelia for the second time this year. Her scenes with Steve's Lear at the end were finely and sensitively played. Fran Butler handled the part of Gloucester, particularly the loss of his eyes with good timing. There were some prompts. Lines were not always heard at the back of the hall. Was this intentional? After all this was supposed to be a production by a 'Bunch of Amateurs'. Would professional actors have given us this play with the very plausible rare 'amateur' touches?

The lighting and sound effects, as always at Detling, were very high quality. I loved the thunder and lightning. The set was excellent, especially the area where Mary dispensed her dreadful breakfasts. Thank you Derek. Well over twenty other 'amateur drama group' helpers did everything from costumes, (I loved the Elizabethan), to painting the set and running the bar. Thanks to all of them and the cast for giving us such an enjoyable Saturday evening and Edward for keeping them all under some sort of control.

John Munson

The Players announce their next production:

# Dancing at Lughnasa

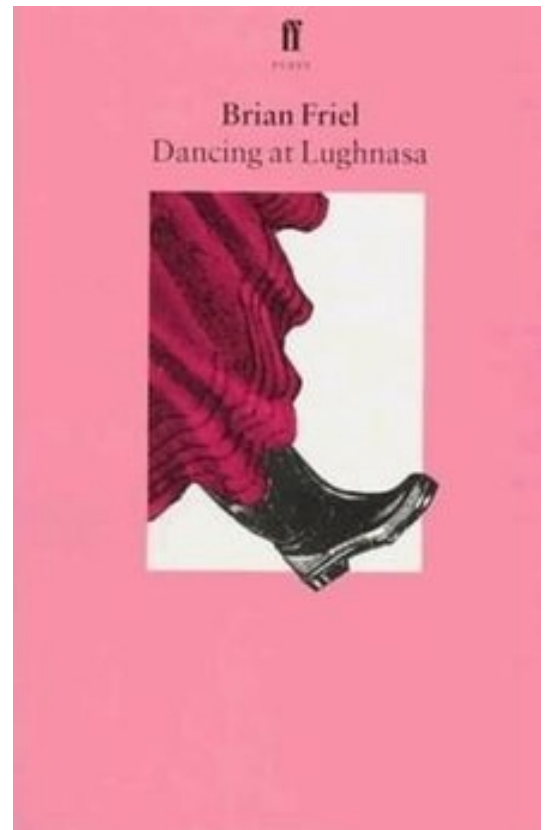
Dear Members

The Detling Players have chosen the play '**Dancing at Lughnasa**' by Brian Friel for their April production. It has eight wonderful parts in a wonderful play, five women and three men. The dates of the performances are Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> April, with a matinee on the Saturday.

All those who are interested are invited to a read-through of the play on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 at 7.30 at 10 Princes Way Detling, ME14 3LB. If you are unable to make that date and are interested in auditioning, please ring me on 01622 630231 or e-mail [johnmunson@fastmail.fm](mailto:johnmunson@fastmail.fm)

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

John Munson



Some more pictures from the dress rehearsal. Unfortunately I didn't have many but if anyone has more good photos, please let me have a copy for the archive - John Watson

