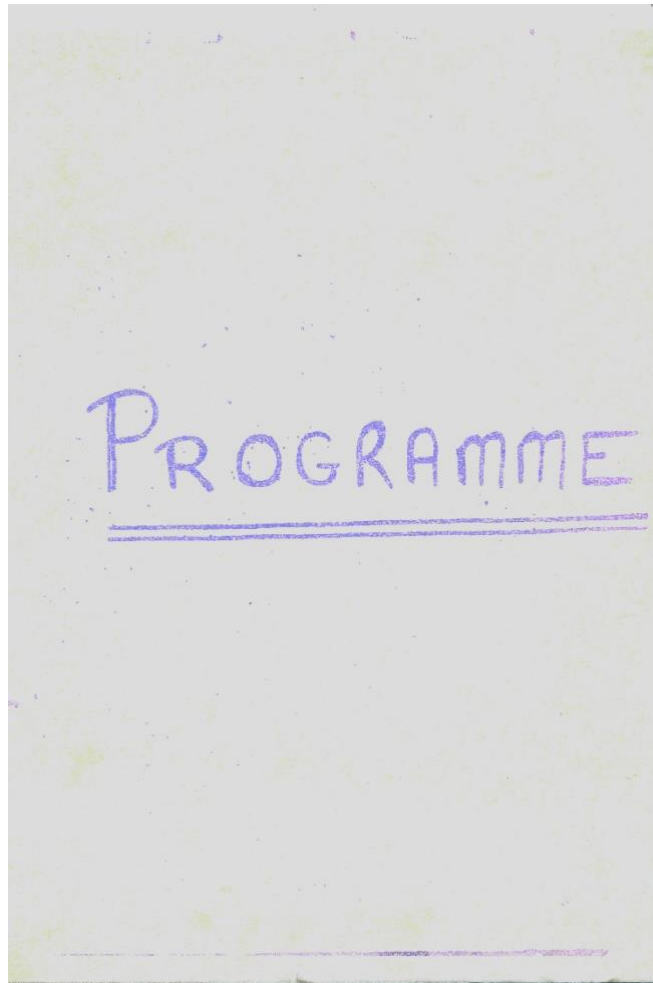


## VILLAGE CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENT FROM THE 1980s and 1990s



This was the rather less than arresting cover of the entertainment given around Christmas time in the village hall in 1982 or thereabouts (no one now seems sure of the exact year). Some of you reading this may recall using a Banda machine to produce multiple copies of a document (and getting ink on your hands). Usually the ink was this sort of purple colour. The Programme perhaps shows this was a first tentative attempt at a 'revue' put on by village residents.

Below is the running order of the show. It was centred round 'Red Riding Hood', which had been turned into a play – somehow incorporating characters from Alice in Wonderland – by Muriel Capell. She was a stalwart of village life, especially of the W.I. There were three breaks between scenes in the play, when other items were interspersed.

Act 1. SCENE 1 - RED RIDING HOODS HOME

RECOLDER BY VICKY GRANT.

SCENE 2 - SCHOOLROOM

CAPTAIN BEAKY BY R. GARDINER + T. BUTTERISS

SCENE 3 - KITCHEN

SCENE 4 - IN THE WOOD.

..... INTERVAL .....

Act 2. SCENE 1 - DREAM IN WONDERLAND

SCENE 2 - GRANDMOTHER'S BEDROOM

THE MAD CHEF BY - MR A. LANGLEY.

SCENE 3 - RED RIDING HOODS HOME

STAGE MANAGER - MRS J. LANGLEY

COSTUMES BY MRS S. BUTTERISS

SCENERY BY MR M. EASON

PRODUCED BY MRS M. CAPELL

MRS J. WEEKS

There are some familiar names here, of people still living in the village 40 years later in 2023: Jan and Alan Langley and Judy Weeks. Younger people who have left the village are Vicky Grant (daughter of Sue), Rosemary Gardiner (daughter of Sally and the late Ken) and Tracy Butteriss (elder daughter of Trevor and the late Sheila). Sheila did wonders with the costumes, especially with Humpty Dumpty – big enough to contain a child. Mike Eason is

Sheila's brother but didn't and doesn't live in the village. Muriel Capell's inventive mind was the stimulus for the whole show.

Below is the cast of 'Red Riding Hood':

EAST FARNDON VILLAGE HALL	
<u>COMMITTEE</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>
"Red Riding Hood" ADAPTED BY MRS M. CAPELL	
<u>CHARACTERS</u>	
Fairy Godmother	Mr R. BOUCHER
Red Riding Hood	ROSEMARY GARDNER
Mother	MRS O. BOUCHER
Grandmother	MRS M. HOULSTON
Teacher	MR A. LANGLEY
Children	{ ROBERT LANGLEY JAMES BOUCHER GARETH GRANT VICKY CAPELL RACHEL WEEKS GLYN HOULSTON ELIZABETH LANGLEY
WOLF	JAMES BOUCHER
Jenny	VICKY GRANT
Red Queen	MR V. HALL
White Queen	MRS S. GARDNER
Alice in Wonderland	TRACY BUTTERISS
Humpty Dumpty	ELIZABETH LANGLEY
White Rabbit	EMMA WEEKS
Bad Tempered Cook	VICKY CAPELL
Woodcutters	{ ROBERT LANGLEY GARETH GRANT GLYN HOULSTON
	MR A. LANGLEY
	MR V. HALL

Some of the cast have already been mentioned on the previous page. Those who haven't include the following who are still living in the village 40 years later: Bob and Ollie Boucher, Sally Gardiner and Glyn Houlston. Other adults (named as Mr. or Mrs.) are Marjorie Houlston (who died in 2021) and Vic Hall, who lived at Kenwood (now Butterfield) and was a barrister, later a judge.

Children who have moved on from East Farndon are Rosemary Gardiner, James Boucher, Vicky and Gareth Grant, Rachel and Emma Weeks, Robert and Elizabeth (Libby) Langley and Tracy Butteriss – all these have parents or a parent who still live in the village. Vicky Capell is the granddaughter of Muriel.

Some of the participants are in the photograph below – though not all of them:



Standing at the back (left to right) are Alan Langley, Bob Boucher and Mike Eason.

The children standing in front of them are (left to right) Rachel Weeks, Vicky Capell, Robert Langley, Gareth Grant and Glyn Houlston.

The three sitting on the right are Vicky Grant, Marjorie Houlston and Ollie Boucher.

Kneeling on the left is James Boucher, inside the egg (only knees and arms visible) is Libby Langley and next to the egg is Emma Weeks.

There were performances most years at Christmas during the 1980s, but there is no record left of some (unless in someone's attic). Three programmes have come to light, from 1986, 1987 and 1989, all entitled 'Grand Christmas Revue'.

Here is the programme from 1986 – now typed and looking rather more professional.



ACT 1

WENCESLAS MARK II - Glee Club

The Weatherman - Alan

The Cavewomen - Greta, Olive  
Isobel, Judy

Animal Farm - Bob, Gerry,  
Jim

Rain OR Shine - Emma and Kate

The Farndon Ladies' Choir - Mary and Company

United We Stand - Muriel, Olive  
Sheila, Marjorie

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INTERVAL during which refreshments  
will be served

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ACT 2

A Funny Thing Happened on  
the way to the Savoy - Tim, Vic, Bob  
Jim, Gerry

Hot Lunch Jam - Rachel and  
Rebecca

The Lion and Albert - Diane

The Farndon Ladies' Choir - Mary and  
Company

The Roaring Twenties - Caroline and  
Libby

The Christmas Fairy - Gretta

Christmas is Coming - Finale

the whole Company and Assembled Multitude

Master of Ceremonies - Derek

Orchestra - Cameron and  
Evelyn

Refreshments - Diane, Greta  
and helpers

Bar - David and  
Barry

Production Team - Vic, Glyn  
and James

Note the coffee stain! Also that only first names are used, which sometimes leads to ambiguity or even means that the identity of a person is no longer known. Some of the names are of the same people as in the previous programme. In Act 1, there are Alan Langley, Greta Hill, Isobel Jeffery, Judy Weeks, Bob Boucher, Gerry Prior, Emma Weeks, Kate Shepherd, Mary Furnish, Muriel Capell, Olive (Ollie) Boucher, Sheila Butteriss, Marjorie Houlston. Gerry lived at Hillside at that time before moving to Market Harborough and he died recently (2023). Mary Furnish and her husband Alfred lived in The Lealand and were very talented musically.

Those in Act 2 not previously mentioned are Rev. Tim Roper (the Rector at the time), Vic Hall, Jim Grant, Rachel Weeks, Diane Ashby, Caroline Ashby, Libby Langley, 'Gretta' (actually Greta but pronounced Gretta) Grove. At present Rebecca cannot be further identified. The Rector, Tim Roper, had a fine resonant baritone voice and delighted the village hall audience on several occasions with his songs. Greta Grove and her husband David lived at Redbrick Cottage.

Those mentioned on the back of the programme and not previously mentioned are Derek Moulard, Cameron Fraser, David Grove, Barry March, Glyn Houlston and James Boucher. Derek was a stalwart of village life at the time, a man with great charisma who made an excellent M.C. He and his wife Kay lived at Horseshoe Cottage.



This photo is of the sketch 'United We Stand' (at the end of Act 1 above). The sketch was written by Muriel Capell (centre, with red headscarf). Also seated are Marjorie Houlston (knitting) and Sheila Butteriss. Ollie Boucher is standing behind Marjorie.

The programme for 1987's Grand Christmas Revue displays a similar mixture of comical sketches, music and dance, as can be seen below.

ACT 1

THE NEXT TWELVE DAYS OF  
CHRISTMAS BOB & GERRY

JUST FOR KICKS DIANE & CAROLINE

CHRISTMAS DINNER MURIEL, MARJORIE  
MAVIS & SHEILA

THE GAS MAN COMETH TIM

GOODNESS GRACIOUS ME BOB & GERRY

PICKPOCKETS DEREK & FRIENDS

-----  
INTERVAL

DURING WHICH REFRESHMENTS WILL BE  
SERVED

ACT 2

I WANT TO DANCE RACHEL

A STRANGE AND TERRIBLE TALE ALAN AND ROBERT

THE JUDGE'S SONG VIC

MARIA MARTEN KAY, DEREK AND GERRY

STRIPPING G R LEE

JOSEPH EMMA, CLARE, SAMANTHA  
JODIE, NICOLA, KATE  
CAROLINE, LIBBY, ALEX  
AND THE WHOLE COMPANY.

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CHAIRMAN - VIC HALL

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NO SMOKING PLEASE DURING THE PERFORMANCE

ORCHESTRA

CHRISTINE HODGSON

REFRESHMENTS

GRETA & GIRLS

BAR

OLLIE, KEITH & OTHERS

PRODUCTION TEAM

VIC, KEVIN & MICK

Most of the names here are the same as those previously mentioned, except Caroline Ashby (Diane and Eric's daughter), Mavis Bird, who lived at The Bell and was the last publican before it closed. Among the cast of 'Joseph' are Clare and Samantha Dunkley (daughters of

Sharon and Alan, who lived on Back Lane), Jodie (daughter of Pam and Michael Joyce) and Alex (daughter of Sheila and Trevor Butteriss). 'G.R. Lee', meaning Gypsy Rose Lee, was actually Judy Weeks behind a screen, throwing over it the items of clothing...which she had just ironed.

The names mentioned on the other page (and not mentioned above) are the late Keith Hill (Greta's husband) and Mick (also known as Mike) who was responsible for the scenery in the first production above. Christine Hodgson did not live in the village.

Next, below is the programme for the 1989 Grand Christmas Revue. (Was there one in 1988?).

<u>ACT 1</u>		<u>ACT 2</u>	
THE CHRISTMAS REVUE 1990	BOB AND GERRY	THREE LITTLE COOKS	SHEILA, MARJORIE AND OLIVE
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT	ALEX, DAVID, VICTORIA, FRANCESCA AND JODIE	USEFUL AND ACCEPTABLE GIFTS	GRETIA
THE TALES OF SAM AND EMILY	DEREK	JINGLE BELLS	MICK, LYNN AND IAN
WE'RE A COUPLE OF SWELLS	MICK AND LYNN	THE DRUNKARDS DILEMMA	OLIVE, BOB, GERRY AND DEREK
THE HAT TRICK	KAY AND JUDY	FINALE	THE WHOLE COMPANY
.....		.....	
INTERVAL FOR REFRESHMENT		YOUR CHAIRMAN - DAVID GROVE	



ORCHESTRA	-	CHRISTINE HODGSON
STAGE MANAGER	-	KEVIN JOYCE
LIGHTING	-	BY COURTESY OF THE E.M.E.B. AND NORMAN WARD

There are few new names here; it's largely the same people making fools of themselves yet again. Francesca Graziano is one of the children in 'That's Entertainment', David may be David Matthew (of Farndon) and Victoria may be Victoria Williams (of Oxendon). Mick (or Mike) Eason is listed with his partner Lynn Rogers. 'Ian' is so far not known.

At the foot of the back page we can see that the lighting supremo was Norman Ward. He was born and brought up in the village and set up an electrical business in Harborough. Later he moved back into the village when he had 'Twin Elms' built for his retirement. The E.M.E.B., not surprisingly, was the East Midlands Electricity Board, which was our supplier in those days.

The entertainments in the village hall continued into the 1990s. A photo, below, shows a scene from 'Grease', an ambitious show put on by Sheila Butteriss in 1992. All those in the photo have been identified, thanks to Sheila's daughter Alex. Alex herself is reclining on the stage in the centre.

The others are, from back left: Rory Rattray, David Matthew, Gino Graziano, Tammy Taylor (of Clipston), Polly and Bethany Hamer (Oxendon), Francesca Graziano, Amy Dowling (Sibbertoft). The two girls sitting on the stage are Eleanor Hamer (Harborough) and Victoria Williams (Oxendon). All are from Farndon unless otherwise shown.

There are some other photos of this production on the 'Scrapbook 1992-3' page of this website.



The 'Scrapbook' mentioned above also has some photos of a production in 1993, called 'Ali Bongo and the Pizza Thief'. There were other shows in other years, but seemingly no trace remains to show exactly what they were and memories are vague.

Anyone who has any other souvenirs or information of the village entertainments from the 80s and 90s which might be of interest should contact this website.

Alan Langley  
November 2023