

FUTURE PROGRAMME

MAJOR BARBARA

by George Bernard Shaw

5, 6 and 7 July 1990

MOOT HALL - THE STOW - HARLOW

Major Barbara, the eponymous heroine of the play, is a Major in the Salvation Army. She is also the daughter of munitions millionaire and estranged parent, Andrew Undershaft. When they meet, she is forced to choose which is the better road to salvation for the poor - the charity bestowed by the Army shelter, or the housing and full employment offered by the Undershaft munitions works.

When Ken Collins last produced the play thirty years ago lines like Undershaft's: *The government of your country!!! I am the government of your country. Do you suppose that you and half a dozen amateurs like you, sitting in a row in that foolish gabble shop, can govern Undershaft & Lazarus? No, my friend: you will do what pays us. You will make war when it suits us, and keep peace when it doesn't...* sounded all too topical then. Are they still as appropriate in today's fast-moving world of politics? Come along and decide for yourself - and enjoy an evening of Shavian wit at the same time.

A strong cast, led by Jennifer Southwell, Charles Hill, Yvonne Mitchley, Nigel Porteous and Ian Beckett - all of whom are on show this evening - look forward to entertaining you during the first week in July.

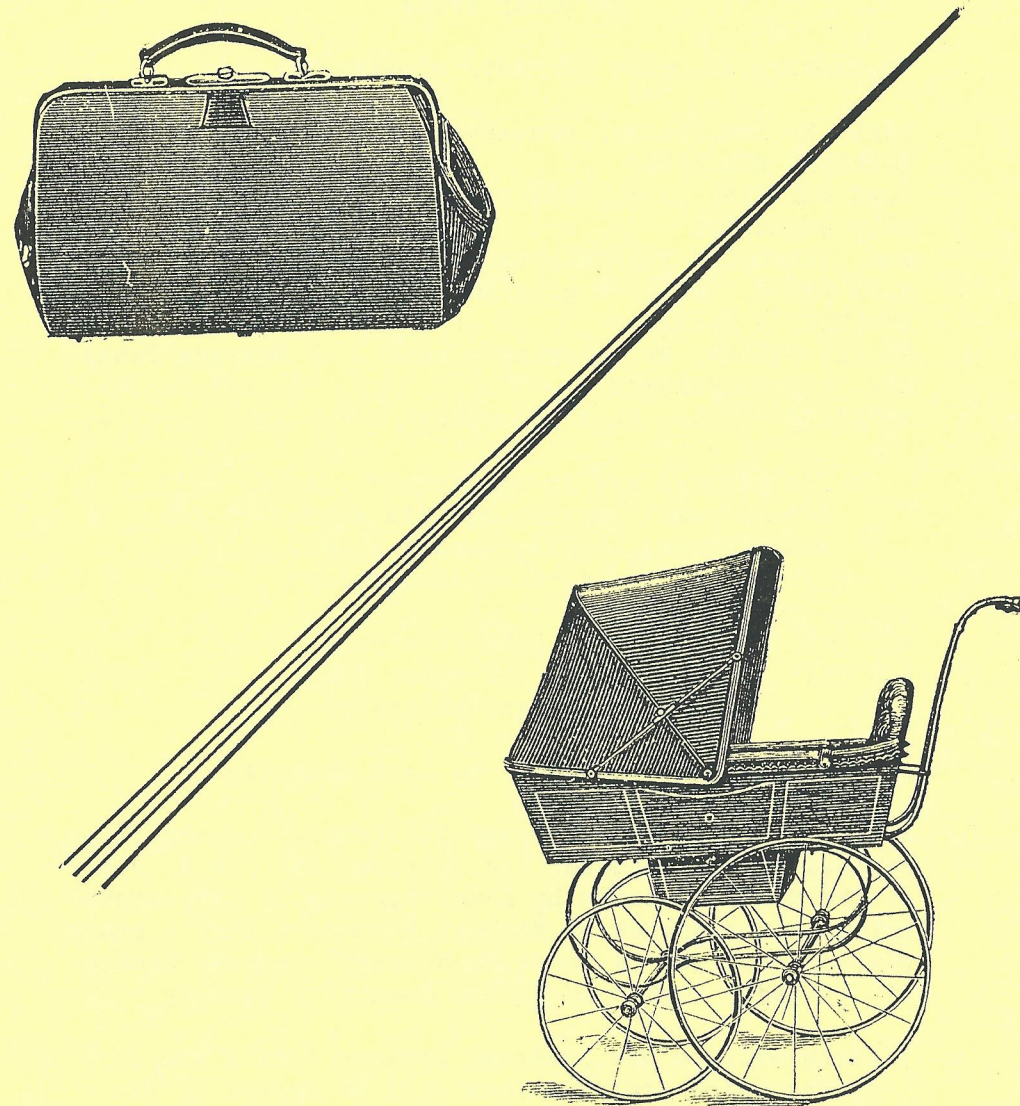
J. AND R. HILLS
THE STOW - HARLOW

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MOOT HOUSE PLAYERS

present

THE IMPORTANCE
OF BEING EARNEST



1990

MOOT HOUSE PLAYERS

present

**THE IMPORTANCE
OF BEING EARNEST**

A Trivial Comedy for Serious People
by Oscar Wilde

Characters in order of their appearance:

LANE, Mr Moncrieff's manservant	...	Charles Hill
ALGERNON MONCRIEFF	...	Ian Beckett
JOHN WORTHING, J.P., his friend	...	Nigel Porteous
LADY BRACKNELL	...	Yvonne Mitchley
Hon. GWENDOLEN FAIRFAX, her daughter		Karen Neal
MISS PRISM, Cecily's governess		Jennifer Southwell
MOULTON, a gardener	...	Michael Branwell
CECILY CARDEW, Mr Worthing's ward		Nerissa Penna
REV. CANON CHASUBLE	...	Ken Collins
MERRIMAN, butler to Mr Worthing	...	Jack Mitchley

The play is set in Algernon's flat in Half Moon Street, London; and the garden of the Manor House, Woolton during a week in July at the turn of the century.

ACT I: Algy's flat, late afternoon
ACT II: The garden of the Manor House,
Woolton, the next afternoon

The play produced by Jack Mitchley

Auditorium arranged by Roger Williamson; decorations devised by the producer and supplied by J & R HILLS of The Stow; costumes by Laws; lighting by Christopher Driver and operated by Michael Branwell; Algy's piano playing recorded by Norah Handscomb; hanging baskets kindly loaned by Harlow Council's Nursery.

There will be one interval between Acts I and II, during which refreshments will be served in the foyer and the setting will be changed.

THE AUTHOR AND HIS PLAY

Oscar Wilde (1856 - 1900) had a tragically short working life in the theatre, with only seven complete plays surviving; but these cover a large range, through romanticism and decadence, to the witty and fantastic - epitomised in his best known "*Trivial Comedy*", THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST, which was playing in London during his famous trial and imprisonment for homosexual offences in 1895.

THE IMPORTANCE, probably the most elegant farcical comedy written in English since the 17th century, was first produced by Sir George Alexander at the St. James Theatre on Thursday, 14 February 1895. The play was originally in four acts, but Alexander asked Wilde to cut it to three, and this is the version which is normally played today. The four-act text was published for the first time in 1957 in a version edited by Wilde's son, Vyvyan Holland from the manuscript and checked against a pirated version published in German translation in 1903 under the title ERNST SEIN! There is some doubt even now as to the exact date when the play was written. An early French's Acting Edition gives the copyright date of 1893, but Holland says that his father was working on it in late 1894. All we can be certain about is the date of the first performance, since when it has appeared regularly in the repertoire of the European theatre and even in some oriental venues - notably India and Japan.

Wilde is quite severe with the upper classes in this classic play. A well known critic once wrote, "Here is the social question treated not with the dull seriousness of purpose but with irreverent gaiety."

Jack Mitchley first produced the play in 1937 but has not looked at the text until now since his last production for the Clavering Players in 1967. It has come as a great joy to introduce it to yet another generation of young players.