

Ferring Amateur Dramatic Society

## Seasons Greetings

**Reviewed by:** Jose Harrison on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2014

**Venue:** Ferring Village Hall

**Type of Production:** Play

**Director:** Simon Vyvyan

## SHOW REPORT

On entering the hall we were faced with an excellent set, designed by Simon and constructed by him, Alan Fryer and their team. Not only did it look realistic, it really worked, as the ground floor of a family home with each room carefully laid out to enable the cast to inhabit three rooms and a landing and yet obviously be out of sight and earshot of the other occupants who continued with life in a natural and realistic way. It was enchantingly laid out with a Christmas tree and presents in the hall, an armchair, bench seat and television in the lounge and a table and chairs etc all laid up ready for supper in the dining room. Great attention had been given to every smallest detail to complete the picture. The lighting and sound must have kept Derek Bell very busy, the whole being a masterpiece of good timing. There are nine characters whose multi-layered relationships are explored at various times during the two Acts and it is full of home truths, with a good deal of pathos. Every member of the nine-strong cast showed total understanding of their role and of their relationship with the rest of the team. Bob Wakelin was excellent as Harvey, the grumpy uncle with many years in the security business. David Morgan was equally convincing as Bernard, a dodgy, inept doctor with his penchant for putting on abysmal puppet shows. His walk, stance and way of talking were very memorable. Carol Clark went right over-the-top in her portrayal of drink laden, lethal cook, Phyllis, causing huge amounts of laughter from the audience. The scene with them playing Snakes and Ladders was a gem. Good performances were also given by Grace Consterdine as the believably pregnant Pattie, Jared Bilton as Eddie and Claire Mitchelson as Rachel. I liked the well directed drunken scene, with Colin Mitchell as Neville who proved that a good performance could also be given when being seen but not heard. Only Clive, the outsider, played by Simon Vyvyan, seemed totally well balanced but even he lost his cool when he and Belinda, the hostess, enthusiastically played by Karen Franklin, became passionate, with hilarious results when they accidentally set off one of the mechanical toys under the Christmas tree, bringing the rest of the household from their beds. Ayckbourn's writing is complex, with much interaction of speech, which can often make a good pace difficult, but the cast were well drilled and generally quick on cue. Having seen a production as well staged as this, it seems a shame that 'Season's Greetings' is so rarely seen and then only at Christmas.

### **National Operatic and Dramatic Association**

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