

BOURNEMOUTH

LITTLE

THEATRE

NEWSLETTER

2025-2026 Season

November/December 2025

Issue 1718

Member: Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain
www.bournemouthlittletheatre.co.uk

11 Jameson Road, Bournemouth BH9 2QD



**BOURNEMOUTH
LITTLE THEATRE**
presents

9 - 13 December 2025 7:45pm

Matinee on Saturday 13 December 2:30pm

Bournemouth Little Theatre
11 Jameson Road BH9 2QD

Tickets: bournemouthlittletheatre.co.uk

This amateur production of Blithe Spirit is presented by arrangement with Concord
Theatricals Ltd on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk



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Dear Members and Patrons,

Steven Moffat's 'THE UNFRIEND', in October, directed by Caroline Burr, went down a storm! It was another sell-out and caused very loud laughter at each performance, with audiences leaving the theatre after having a great night out and with a smile on their faces!

Thankyou to the director, cast and all the crew who helped stage this great modern play.

We went straight from set strike of 'THE UNFRIEND' into the preparations for BLTC's Christmas play 'BLITHE SPIRIT' by Noel Coward, which is directed by Tim Fearon with rehearsals, and set build/painting and sourcing props throughout November. 94% of the tickets have been sold already (including the matinee) grab yours if you haven't already or you may miss out (again!)

As is the way at BLTC, we start on the next production before the current one has been staged! The 14th and 16th November saw the read-through and auditions for our February 2026 play, with 15 attendees at the read-through and similar numbers auditioning (for four roles). With those numbers there is bound to be disappointment! See details of the cast and more about the play on Page 5. We urge unsuccessful auditionees to look out for the read-through and audition dates in January 2026 for our April 2026 production of the hilarious 'NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH', by Alan Ayckbourn.

For the Blithe Spirit run, we now have to organise the mince pies and mulled wine, which will complement the usual ice creams teas/coffee and bar...oh! and the raffle prizes and tickets...well, it IS Christmas!

See you at BLTC soon! BLTC Committee.

ADVANCE TICKET BOOKINGS

Our mailing address for all ticket bookings is:

BLT Box Office, 54 Wentworth Avenue, Bournemouth, BH5 2EG

Tickets £14.00 Members £12.00

- ◆ **BOOK ONLINE** at www.bournemouthlittletheatre.co.uk (booking fees apply) OR **SCAN THE QR CODE**->
- ◆ **WRITE** enclosing cheque (payable to BLTC) and SAE to BLTC Box Office (address above)



Tickets will be issued on receipt of a completed booking form, cheque and SAE. Where an SAE is not enclosed, tickets will be retained to be collected at the theatre on the night of the performance.

It is really easy to book online and, of course, so convenient. Whenever you decide you want to book tickets for a show—whatever the day and whatever the time—you can go ahead.

But—and there's always a but, isn't there? - it is also, sadly, easy to make mistakes.

By making your booking too quickly, it is easy to book on the wrong day—or even to book for the wrong show! So.....a word to the wise...

CHECK, CHECK AND CHECK AGAIN at every stage of your booking that it exactly fits your requirements, as our booking agent does not make changes and refunds are only given if booking protection is taken out with TicketSource, and the reason for cancellation is covered by their insurance.

Please be aware that member discount on tickets is only available to fully paid up members, for their own ticket or that of another fully paid up member.

Of course, if you are not entirely happy with the on-line process you can always use the postal option detailed above in the second bullet point.

A FINAL PLEA: If you have booked tickets and know that you, or one of your party, will not be able to attend, please let the Box Office know as soon as possible. Thank you

NEXT PRODUCTION: BLITHE SPIRIT

by Noel Coward

Directed by Tim Fearon

Tim trained at RADA and spent nine years touring the UK's major repertory theatres.

He returned to acting in 2019, playing Richard, Duke of Gloucester in Shakespeare's '*Richard III*' for Brownsea Open Air Theatre and in 2022 played Lear in '*King Lear*' here and on a tour of local venues.

At BLT he has appeared in '*Heisenberg: The Uncertainty Principle*', which he co-directed; as Balthazar in '*The Lying Kind*' and as Roy Hubley in '*Plaza Suite*'.

At BLT, he has also directed '*BULL*', '*Season's Greetings*' and last year's Christmas production of '*Charley's Aunt*'.

In 2027 he will be directing '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*' for Brownsea Open Air Theatre.



Blithe Spirit – About the play

This much loved comedy, described by Noel Coward as 'an improbable farce in three acts' and a smash hit on the London and Broadway stages, was first seen in the West End in 1941 when it ran for 1997 performances.

Socialite and novelist Charles Condomine is preparing to write his next bestseller, '*The Unseen*'. To assist him with the creation of a 'professional charlatan' character he has invited local medium, Madam Arcati, to dinner and to conduct a séance.

However, things do not go as planned – the evening results in the materialisation of Charles' late first wife, the mischievous Elvira, who soon sets to work in showing how she intends to love Charles always – much to the chagrin of his eminently sensible second wife Ruth!

This is Coward at his very best – witty, fast, charming, full of a spirit of fun and a great way to kick off your Christmas celebrations!

BLITHE SPIRIT

CAST

Edith (a maid) – Mairi Holmes

Ruth Condomine – Belinda Harward

Charles Condomine – Topher Lynn

Dr Bradman – David Maxwell

Mrs Bradman – Carole Allen

Professor Arcati – Tim Fearon

Elvira – Lauren Killham



MAIRI HOLMES



BELINDA HARWARD



TOPHER LYNN



DAVID MAXWELL



CAROLE ALLEN



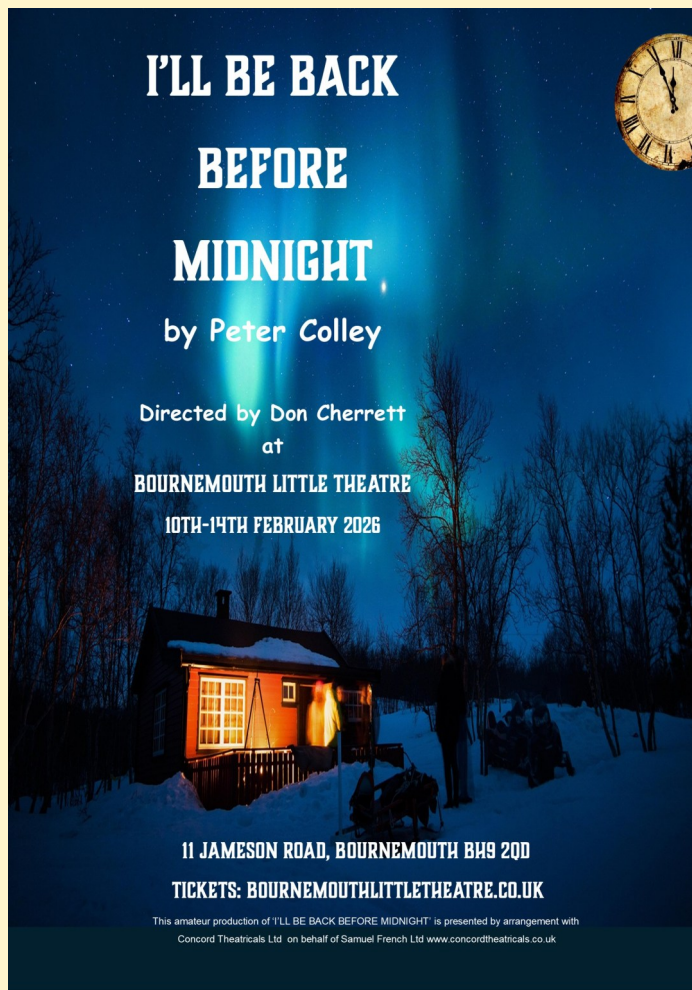
TIM FEARON



LAUREN KILLHAM

2025/2026 SEASON'S PLAYS - 'DYING WITH LAUGHTER'

A season of mystery, murder, ghosts, comedy and sometimes a mix of all four.



We had another great turn-out at the play-reading and auditions for our February 2026 production *"I'll be Back Before Midnight"*. Don had a difficult choice in casting, with so many good auditionees. The successful ones are

GREG.....Barry Gray
JAN.....Marianne Chabin
GEORGEPeter Court
LAURA.....Pip Hendry

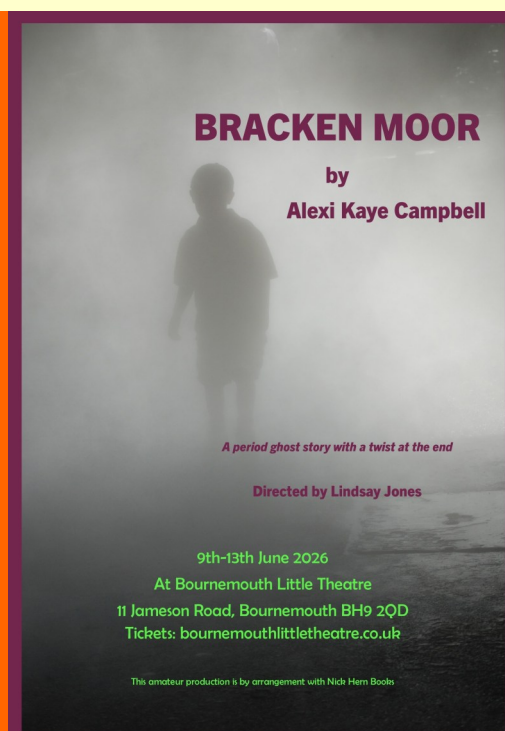
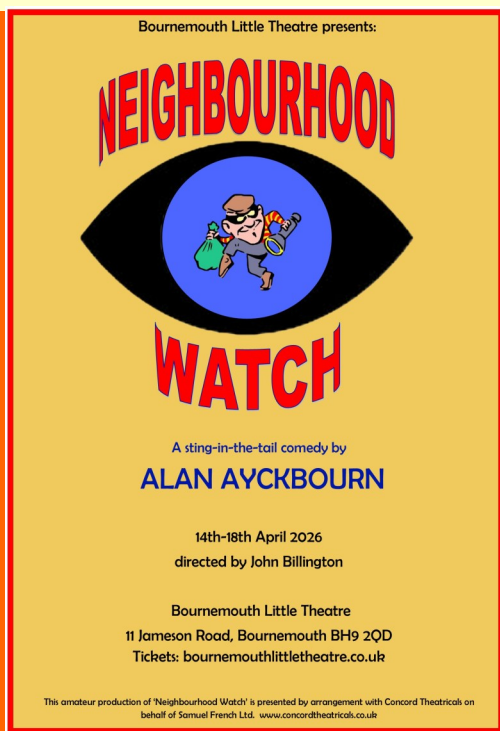
This play has an exceptional number of technical effects and there will be a **Production meeting on Wednesday, November 26th in the Green Room at BLT from 7:30pm for anyone wishing to be involved.**

ABOUT THE PLAY:
After suffering a recent nervous breakdown, Jan retreats with her husband Greg, an archaeologist, to a secluded farmhouse in the countryside, conveniently located near his latest dig site.

Hoping for peace and quiet, Jan instead finds herself swept up in eerie tales from George, the quirky and comical farmer who owns the house. He warns of a gruesome murder that once occurred there... and a ghost that still haunts the grounds.
Just as Jan's nerves begin to fray, Greg's alluring and conniving sister Laura shows up unannounced, further disrupting Jan's fragile sense of calm. Strange noises echo through the night, chilling visions plague her, and Jan begins to question what's real and what's not. Is she relapsing—or is someone trying to drive her mad?

As the tension escalates, Jan's fight for sanity takes a shocking turn in a gripping night of suspense, mystery, and psychological thrills melded together with often hilarious dialogue.

2025/2026 SEASON'S PLAYS – ‘DYING WITH LAUGHTER’...COMING SOON:



SAVE THE DATE...READ THROUGH AND AUDITIONS FOR OUR APRIL 2026

PRODUCTION OF 'NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH' WILL BE 9TH AND 11TH JANUARY 2026 RESPECTIVELY.

DETAILS WILL BE CIRCULATED IN DUE COURSE IN A SEPARATE MAILSHOT AND ON OUR WEBSITE.

‘Why doesn’t B.L.T. do more modern plays?’

This seems to have been a recurring question over the last few years, particularly from our younger members, so a detailed response seems to be in order.

It depends, of course, what is meant by a modern play, given that the history of theatre stretches back to the ancient Greeks. However, if we take the last thirty years as embracing modernity, then during our last three seasons of six “main” plays, modern plays have included ‘Neville’s Island’ (1992), ‘Humble Boy’ (2000), ‘The Lying Kind’ (2002), ‘Bracken Moor’ (2012), ‘The Unfriend’ (2023) and others.

However, one of the major challenges we face is maintaining a balance between modern, and often quite challenging plays, and those, often older ones, with a more populist appeal. Added to this, is the fact that we do not own Bournemouth Little Theatre, it is leased. To this considerable monthly outlay must be added the cost of heating, various inspections, insurance and general maintenance. The latter includes lighting, sound and seating. So, a very important consideration when selecting plays has to be ‘bums on seats’! Added to this is the problem of getting performing rights for contemporary plays. If one is currently being performed (or there are plans for it to be performed) professionally anywhere in the U.K., performing rights are often frozen. So strict is this that some time ago I was refused performing rights for a play that was running in the West End, even though I was staging it in Singapore!

Bearing all the above in mind, we strive to produce a range of productions that will both stimulate and entertain. As the last few years have seen an almost unbroken run of sell-out shows, we hope you will agree that your poor overworked Play Selection Committee isn’t doing too bad a job!

Thankyou for your continued support.

Lindsay Jones.

REVIEW— THE UNFRIEND

Review by John Foster

A clever and amusing conceit lies at the heart of Steven Moffat's new farce, *The Unfriend*: that the family harbouring an imagined serial killer (a spirited performance by Thea Wiles) as a house guest is transformed into a harmonious and good-humoured entity by her benign presence. This is a very funny idea played with aplomb by the ensemble of talented actors last night at its premiere at the Bournemouth Little Theatre.

Moffat is an experienced television scriptwriter (*Doctor Who*, *Sherlock*) and he brought the pace and deftness of the small screen to the stage. The belly laughs were plentiful and last night's packed audience relished every moment of this very funny play. The director, Caroline Burr, kept the pace up throughout the performance, yet was able to pause at significant moments, to lend depth and pathos to the action. Particularly effective was some of the absurdist dialogue involved in dealing with the alleged serial killer: Martyn French as the father of the household was especially adept in his role as the bridge between sanity and the wilder shores of idiocy. Much of the skill of the script and its delivery was the play on words and the innuendos which flourished in the cause of double-meaning. This was often hilarious and not a little chilling.

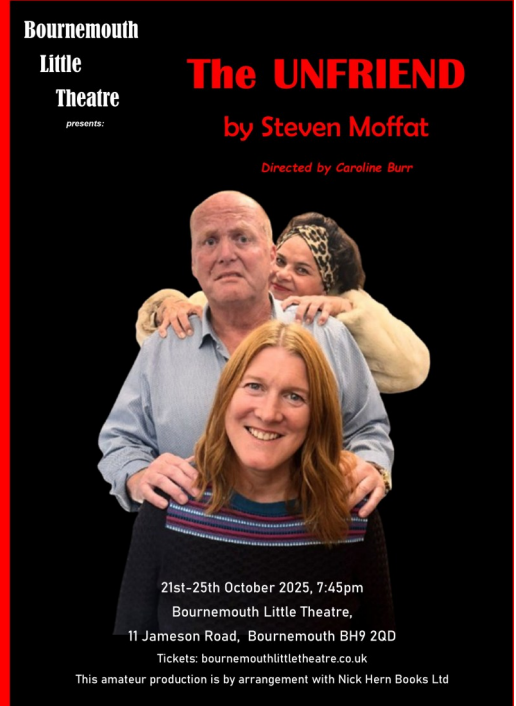
The family ensemble were particularly convincing and individualistic. A performative sleight-of-hand helped turn stereotypes into real characters, with genuine inner lives. Kim Fletcher as the mother was excellent, able to switch personalities from domestic suburbanite to crazed avenger in a second and with complete conviction. The teenage children, played by Emmeline Spirling as Rosie and Jo Campbell-Clarke as Alex, were strong and inventive support to the proceedings, bringing their own brand of generational humour to the proceedings. Michael Mackey as the highly irritating yet forgettable neighbour was essential as a member of the extended family and hilarious in his doddering preoccupations. Chaz Davenport as the cop gave a strong, sturdy performance, with enough implied threat to foreclose the diabolical goings-on.

With seven cast members, director Caroline Burr had her work cut out in orchestrating the action and keeping the piece dramatically on the boil. She managed to keep the play tight, taut, yet allowed the action to breathe and seem perfectly natural. Some of the lavatory humour in the second act was less welcome and was uncomfortably crude, although the audience seemed to enjoy it. This was part of the play as written, perhaps its weakest element, and it was executed with professionalism and in good faith by the ensemble.

The set design was fairly standard, allowing the action to filter effectively between situations. The set effectively evoked a standard suburban home, but might have been a little more imaginative and supportive of the play's themes and content. As it was the set served the play adequately. Short film clips were deftly introduced into the action without disrupting the naturalistic flow of the piece, and provided essential backstory.

The title of the play, in itself quite amusing, points to the age of social media. Trump also gets a mention or two in the piece, the serial killer being a fan and indeed had voted for Trump. These references sat happily in the text, even if the play itself felt as if it belonged to the age of Alan Ayckbourn and a lost timeless reality. The skill of the writing meant that these somewhat alien references could be incorporated without undermining the creative credibility of the piece.

A robust and engaging piece, bristling with laugh-out-loud humour, it was well worth a visit.



Get Involved Get Involved Get Involved



Each season, Bournemouth Little Theatre brings six main productions and up to two Studio productions to the stage. Each production requires a Director and cast. In addition to this are the unsung heroes, who toil away (lark about) behind the scenes to make these productions possible. We are all unpaid volunteers at Bournemouth Little Theatre and if you have any occasional spare time and would like to get involved with a production, you would be very welcome- come along to the advertised production meetings to see how you could be involved or to Set Build/ Set Painting days, back-stage or support.



CONTACT DETAILS:

Your Committee Members:

Gwen Jones (*Treasurer /Memberships/Newsletter/
Venue Hire*) 07825 064731

Lindsay Jones (*Play Selection Committees/Photographer*) 01202 083504

Mo Hamill (*Properties and Costumes Co-ordinator*) 07585 504500

Adam Stoddart (*Studio Play Selection Committee,
Rota organiser*)..... 0774 9409634

Tim Fearon (*Play Selection Committees/
Website co-ordinator*) 07973 198811

Caroline Burr (*Main Play Selection Committee*)..... 07905 650952

Adele Smyth (*(Properties and Costumes)*)..... 07883 095884

Not on the Committee:

Alastair Griffith (*Lighting Design*)..... 07400 014135

Andrew Whyatt (*Main Play Selection Committee*)

Chris Huggill (*Bar Stocks Manager*) 07443 626484

Sue Hyder (*Box Office*)

Hilary Guess-England (*Costumes*)..... 07718 188203

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