

Published in 1575 "Gammer Gurton's Needle" was probably written more than a decade before this. The title page of the first edition tells us that it was written by "Mr. S., Mr. of Art" and the veiled indication of authorship creates an enigma which has not yet been solved. The present producer accepts the argument of F. S. Boas that John Bridges, a member of Pembroke College and afterwards Dean of Salisbury and Bishop of Oxford, was the author.

The play is set in a village of Tudor times and conveys a vivid picture of rural life in which a cock and a cat have almost as much personality as humans and the loss of Gammer Gurton's needle is a catastrophe of such dimensions that the village is turned upside down. The situation is aggravated by the mischievous machinations of Diccon the Bedlem who sets one person against another with comic and involved consequences.

This is not an arch rural idyll of the kind which became popular later but a portrayal of country people which must have resulted from close observation and real affection.

Much of the action of the play is rumbustious and the words spoken by "the vulgar" are true to their originators but we must be dangerously sophisticated not to enjoy the first and prissily delicate to be offended by the second.

We may think ourselves improved and refined since those days but these are our forefathers we are seeing and their "earthiness" gives the same kind of satisfaction that comes when digging over a long-fallow piece of earth on a spring day.

PROSCENIUM

Founded by George Woollands and Margaret Rendle

(Affiliated to the British Drama League and Harrow Arts Council)

The following productions (at 7.45 p.m. in this hall) will complete the 1963/64 Season—

March 19, 20, 21, 1964

Dinner with the Family by Jean Anouilh

Produced by Jean Abrahams

May 28, 29, 30, 1964

The Taming of the Shrew by Wm. Shakespeare

Produced by Roderick Jones

Box Office: Joyce Gobey, 33 Hindes Road, Harrow. HAR 6814

Secretary: Jean Willett, 236a West End Lane, N.W.6. HAM 2395

Publicity: Barbara Siddall, Hill Cottage, Harrow-on-the-Hill
BYR 4765.

A Ryght

Pithy, Pleafaunt and me

tie Comedie: In-

tytuled *Gammer gur-*

tons Nedle. Played on

Stage, not longe

ago in Chri-

stes

colledge in Cambridge.

Made by Mr. S. Mr. of Art.

PROSCENIUM: January, 23, 24 & 25 1964

¶THE NAMES OF THE SPEAKERS IN THIS COMEDIE



<i>Diccon the Bedlem</i>	Dennis Bridgeman
<i>Hodge, Gammer Gurton's servante</i>	Barry Brown
<i>Tyb, Gammer Gurton's mayde</i>	Monica Burnett
<i>Gammer Gurton</i>	Jean Abrahams
<i>Cocke, Gammer Gurton's boye</i>	Brian Langridge
<i>Dame Chatte</i>	Jose Pogson
<i>Doctor Rat, the Curate</i>	John Gobey
<i>Mayster Baylye</i>	Roderick Jones
<i>Doll, Dame Chatte's mayde</i>	Jeanne Hawkes
<i>Scapethryft, mayst Beylies servante</i>	Lawrence Smith
<i>Mutes</i>	Norman Gee, James Young, Alan Seale



GOD SAVE THE QUEENE

There are three scenes in the first act and two in the second. The action is continuous.

The play produced by Dennis Bridgeman

"This is held to be the first comedy in our language: that is, the first play which was neither Mystery nor Morality, and which handled a comic story with some disposition of plot, and some discrimination of character."
—Thomas Warton: *The History of English Poetry.*

Set: Designed by John Siddall
Constructed by Michael Pearn, Colin Tufnell and Anthony Reese
Painted by John Siddall and Ann Coventry
Music for the play composed and arranged by .. Norman Gee
Wigs by Bert
Costumes by Proscenium Wardrobe
Additional Lighting .. Strand Electric & Engineering Co. Ltd.

Stage Manager Michael Pearn
Assistants:
David Green, Patrick O'Donoghue, Ashley Young.

Lighting:
Colin Tufnell.

Costumes:
Patricia Smith, Wilhelmena Smith, Margaret Rhodes, Heather Carr.