



*Stoke-on-Trent
Repertory Theatre*

£1



Fur Coat and No Knickers

23rd - 28th January 2012 at 7.30pm

Matinee: Sat. 28th at 2.30pm

(An amateur production by arrangement with
Samuel French)

The Cast

Edith Ollerenshawe:	Jane Proctor
Kevin Ollerenshawe:	Richard Vernon
Deidre Ollerenshawe:	Samantha Rushton
Harry Ollerenshawe:	James Lawton
Nip (George Albert):	Mike Johnson
Peter Ollerenshawe:	Matt O'Connor
Mark Greenhaigh (the groom):	Rory Poole
Father Finbar Molloy:	Brian Rawlins
Barmaid (The Oddfellows):	Christine Birks
Hamish (the best man):	James Freeman
Barmaid (The Friendship):	Karen Hare
Jimmy (Peter's friend):	Steve Salt
Barmaid (The Steam Shovel):	Christine Birks
Man in Catholic Club:	Keith Williams
Bouncer:	Howard Goodall
Waitress:	Holly Sanders
Evette (Stripper):	Samantha Rushton
Policeman:	Keith Williams
Policewoman:	Karen Hare
Wendy (Bridesmaid):	Holly Sanders
Ronald Greenhaigh:	Howard Goodall
Murial Greenhaigh:	June Hodson

*There will be a twenty minute interval between
Act One and Act Two*

**Special thanks to North Staffs Operatic Society
for the loan of costumes and props.**

Act One

Scene 1:	Friday evening.	The Ollerenshawes' living room
Scene 2:	Later that evening.	<i>The Oddfellows</i> Tap Room
Scene 3:	Later that evening.	<i>The Friendship</i>
Scene 4:	Later that evening.	<i>The Steam Shovel</i>
Scene 5:	Later that evening.	<i>The Catholic Club</i>
Scene 6:	Later that evening.	<i>The Can Can Club</i>

Act Two

Scene 1:	Saturday morning.	The Ollerenshawes' living room
Scene 2:	Saturday afternoon.	The Church
Scene 3:	Later that afternoon.	The Masonic Hall

Time: the late 1970s

The Crew

Director:	Alan Clarke
Assistant Director:	Norma Davies
Stage Director:	Richard Masters
Stage Crew:	Andrew Baddeley, John Stone
Set Designer:	Brian Hadley
Scenic Artists:	Brian Hadley & Peter Burrows
Stage Manager:	Terry Wright
Set construction:	Mike Adams, John Beeston Adam Davis, Bill Hancock Peter Logan, Richard Masters Luke Shaw, Liam Smith
Lighting Design & Operation:	Malcolm Rushton
Sound Operator:	Mike Adams
Choreographer:	Alex Green
Props:	Joy Rawins, Diana Bevan
Costumes:	Sylvia Wright
Programme:	Janet Smith
Company Photographer:	Peter Croft
Costumes:	North Staffs Operatic Society Lichfield Costume Hire John Cumberlidge
Wigs:	

*Many thanks to Norman & Birch Motor Cycles for the
loan of motor cycle helmet.*

Mike Harding

Mike Harding was born in Crumpsall, Manchester, in 1944 into a working-class Irish-Catholic family. His father was killed returning from a bombing mission just four weeks before Mike was born and this loss had a profound effect on his childhood and early life and was to later provide the inspiration for his haunting song **Bombers' Moon**.

As a child, he attended St Bede's School where his English teacher, Father 'Foxy' Reynolds, recognised Mike's nascent talent and encouraged his creativity. Throughout his adolescence he developed a love of music and, in the early 60's, began performing in Skiffle and Rock bands around the Manchester area, sharing the bill with other emerging bands such as The Beatles, Gerry and the Pacemakers and The Hollies. Even today, he still joins in sessions in Manchester's Irish pubs, if given half a chance.

On leaving school he had a very varied and chequered career encompassing a whole range of jobs, from dustman to bus conductor and road digger to carpet fitter, before embarking on a degree in Education, paying his way through the course by working at night in folk clubs.

Finally, the lure of the bright lights became too much and he became a full-time entertainer instead of a teacher. His success as a performer began in 1967 when, during a gig at Leeds University with The Edison Bell Band, he began to tell jokes to fill in the awkward pauses while the band tuned up. The patter became part of the act and when he had exhausted his repertoire of gags, he trawled his wealth of real-life stories and experiences of growing up in post-war Manchester and developed them into the humorous anecdotes which subsequently became the backbone of his solo act.

He came to national prominence in 1975 with the comic song **The Rochdale Cowboy** which reached number 22 in the UK Singles Charts and catapulted him from the Manchester clubs into the national mainstream of live entertainment, becoming a prolific recording artist, performer, writer and broadcaster with a weekly programme of Folk Music on BBC Radio 2.

But his love of writing and words extends far beyond just music and he is a prolific writer of poetry, short stories and books, including several travel and outdoors books which recount and share his love of walking and the countryside.

A life-long dream was realised in 1971 when he was able to buy a cottage in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales. With this as his base, he walked, cycled

and photographed the everyday life of the Dales, building up a wealth of experience to the point that he is now in constant demand to speak on ecological and environmental issues and has had the honour of being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

When not writing, singing or walking, Mike has also managed to squeeze in some acting and admits that he still has ambitions to become a film star and would dearly like to appear in **Coronation Street** as the son of Albert Tatlock - the outcome of a night of passion between the bewhiskered lollipop man and a lady air raid warden during the Salford Blitz.

Pursuing his theatrical ambitions in a slightly different way he has also written a number of plays; the first, **Fur Coat and No Knickers** was produced in 1980 at the Coliseum Theatre, Oldham, where it broke all previous box office records at the venue.

Written 30 years ago, the play is a modern era northern comedy depicting a social history of working class society and its aspirations. Political Correctness was unheard of in these far off days - and it shows in the writing with the outspoken views of many of the characters. It is doubtful whether it would be written in this form today. However, as a piece of social theatre of its day, it is important to use this language to express the views of the families.

The social commentary aside, **Fur Coat and No Knickers** is Mike Harding's best known play, still performed many times each year throughout the country because it is so very, very funny (and all the more so because we find that we are laughing at things we really should not). So sit back, enjoy the performance and banish those January Blues.

(ps. Stag Nights were traditionally held on the night prior to the wedding and close to home. After watching the play, it may explain why they now tend to take place weeks before the big day in some other town or city - or even in another country!)

Alan Clarke

(including information from Mike Harding: The Life)

Thank You

**We are indebted to the St John Ambulance Brigade,
whose members voluntarily attend all our performances.**