



JUNE 30, JULY 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

ROOKERY NOOK

by Ben Travers

CAST:

Gertrude Twine	ROBIN PIETTE
Mrs. Leverett	KAY RIMAN
Harold Twine	CLIVE CORNER
Clive Popkiss	JOHN FENNER
Gerald Popkiss	TOM ATKINSON
Rhoda Marley	MARLENE PENN
Putz	PETER LEGGETT
Poppy Dickey	SHERRY SANDERS
Clara Popkiss	CELIA ADAMS
Mrs. Pessett	HAZEL COCKRILL
Admiral Juddy	JOHN DILLAM

DIRECTOR: DOROTHY DILLAM

The action takes place in the lounge-hall of "Rookery Nook", Chumpton-on-Sea, Somerset.

Act I A summer night in the late Twenties

Act II The following morning

Act III Later the same day

There will be two intervals of fifteen minutes. Curtain down approximately 9.45 p.m.

Set design	Ronald Welch
Stage Manager	Jack Lawrence
Assistant Stage Managers	Anne Robertshaw, Margaret Bees, Mike Kerby, Clive Johnson.
Lighting Design	Mike Crisswell
Lighting Operator	Martin Sabin
Sound	Nick Welch, Jan Jones.
Wardrobe	Madeline Gorill
Construction Manager	Albert Whitehart
Photographs	Mike Lee

LOFT THEATRE FIFTY-FOURTH SEASON 1975-1976

FARCE FALLS FLAT

ROOKERY NOOK—Loft Theatre, Leamington, until July 10 (running time: about 2 1/2 hours).

WHEN a cake sinks slightly in the middle, it's natural to wonder what went wrong. Everything may be balanced and blended perfectly, but still give a result which is less than perfect. And that was the feeling when the curtain fell on the first night of the theatre's last production of the season.

Nobody could have acted Ben Travers's twenties comedy with more zest and slick timing than the company under Dorothy Dillam's direction. But it was soon apparent that the fault lay with the basic ingredient in their cake—the script.

True, there are the necessary intrigues and deceptions as two young chaps—who are also cousins—try to help a bright young thing who has been thrown out by her German step-father, an absolute boaster.

But an idea which is a potential bellylaugh from start to finish can raise only scattered sniggers.

Against that background, there are beautiful performances from most of the cast.

Tom Atkinson falls naturally into the part of hen-pecked Gerald Popkiss—a role he only took over about three weeks ago. Slightly pompous and remembering his bachelor days, he teams up with cousin Clive (John Fenner) to help the lovely Rhoda (Marlene Penn), who is usually found behind the scenes in overall charge of stage management, sleep in front of the footlights for her first major role of the season as sister-in-law Gertrude. And a veritable hen-hipped husband Harold one helluva time.

Clive Corner truly brings Harold to life, jibbering, stammering, contradicting himself and chewing his straw hat every time he is addressed.

With such talent, it is a pity that the company did not choose a play to do them justice. A.F.

Loft lacked that vital spark

Despite excellent characterisation by Loft actors, their production of the Ben Travers farce "Rookery Nook," which opened on Wednesday for ten days lacked the vital spark to make it shine.

It was an end-of-term romp that failed to engender anything but the slightest titters. In their favour, they worked hard on the decidedly untidy lines, and their individual performances were spotless. Being slightly susceptible to eccentrics, I found the two strongest performances were those of Clive Corner as the hen-pecked Harold Twine and John Dillam as Admiral Juddy.

They gave the play its more ribald lines and were overly funny. But to say their contribution was any greater than the other actors would be false. The cast worked as a team to make the play work.

EXCELLED

John Fenner and Tom Atkinson excelled in flat, dull roles of Clive and Gerald Popkiss. Peter Leggett provided an amusing Putz. Robin Piette optimised pseudo middle class arrogance in her role of Gertrude Twine, and Marlene Penn was a good Rhoda, the naughty girl from up the road who in the end was not naughty at all. Ronald Welch designed an adaptable and a well-laid out set, which gave the actors



Sherry Sanders provides a delightful spectacle for Tom Atkinson (left) and John Fenner in the latest Loft production "Rookery Nook." In the background are Celia Adams and Robin Piette.

plenty of room. If the production lacked pinpoint. While being a good anything it was energy and performance, the extra drive, not that of the actors something which makes a but of the pace of the show, notable one was missing.

