



~ **An 80th Anniversary tribute to the end of World War II** ~

Margaret Corry's tribute to the Marlborough Dramatic Club of the era

Background

The Marlborough Dramatic Club was established in 1904 and turned 121 years old in 2025. It has performed plays in Brentwood annually, except the World War and pandemic years. The most regular theatrical home has been Brentwood School Memorial Hall for the last 101 years. In the World War II era and beyond, the Marlborough was *the* society activity in Brentwood. Shows (of which there were three or four performed annually) were held three evenings a week, with Thursday's performance being reserved for servants / staff to attend, Friday and Saturday evening for the upper classes! Anyone in 'trade' was not allowed to be a member and membership of the Marlborough was not a certainty; you had to be vetted and approved in those days.

Margaret Corry joined the Marlborough in the early 1970s and experienced the Club during the last throes of this 'exclusive' period and her experiences of the people she met have informed her scripts.

Just as today, the early Marlborough had a barn where set / costumes / props were stored. On Sawyers Hall Lane, the location was called *Woodstock* Barn. (Today, our barn is in Padham's Green near Ingatestone). Margaret has created a proxy drama club called 'The Woodstock Players' to represent the Marlborough.

Scenario

Margaret has written two short playlets:

1. 'Judgement'

To open our 80th anniversary tribute evening, the 'Woodstock Players' are shown performing the very final scene of what will be the last play they will perform before the onset of WW2. Sometime in summer 1939, 'The Judgement at Ellery Hall' ('Judgement') is acted by some Woodstock regulars. At the end of 'Judgment' the Woodstock actors stay to talk to the audience a little about what is next for the Players as war looms.

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2. 'Pilot'

After the interval of our 80th anniversary tribute evening, we again meet the players, who have returned to the Hall after VE Day 1945, having not put on any plays during the intervening years. They are assessing the damage and beginning to tidy up and plan a return to some kind of post-war normality. A lone pilot walks through the 2025 audience to the stage and the action begins.

Characters / Cast

Actor	Woodstock Player	'Judgment' character
James Biddles	Chairman	Lord Edward (Owner of Ellery Hall)
Juliette Bird	Joan	Lady Julia (Wife of Edward)
Karol Patten	Miranda	Lady Primrose (Sister of Edward)
Richard Spong	Leonard Barrington – Len (Pilot)	Lord William (son of Edward, brother to Susan)
Lucy May Fuller	Dorothy	Lady Susan (daughter of Edward, sister to William)
Laura Kelly	Hilda-Ellen	'Partridge' the maid

Introduction to 'Judgment at Ellery Hall'

Compere Bill Wells

Welcome to the Marlborough Dramatic Club's

We begin our WW2 tribute evening with a playlet specially written by one of our longest standing Club members, Margaret Corry, who first joined the Marlborough in the 1970s, at a time when the Club was still one of *THE* society activities in the Brentwood area, with a very exclusive membership policy and some strong characters!

Through this playlet, the first of two specially written for this evening, Margaret pays tribute to the Club, with the 'Woodstock Players' as a fictional representation of the Marlborough of the WW2 period. Here we meet the Players as they conclude their last play 'The Judgment at Ellery Hall' as war looms in summer 1939...

After: The second playlet about the Woodstock Players will begin the second act...



The Judgement at Ellery Hall

Curtain opens

The ensemble are on stage, midst heated discussion. Edward / Julia seated on a double-seat centre back. Edward has his foot on a stool. Primrose seated stage left, Susan seated stage right, William wandering with a newspaper stage right. The maid is wandering around with a feather duster and clears up an empty bottle of port with disdain.

Lord Edward: How much longer do we have to wait for this wretched telegram from London?!!

Lady Julia: We'll know soon enough how the High Court views our case..... *(to the maid)* Thank you, Partridge

Maid exits

Lady Primrose: It's all your fault for drinking so much port!

Lord Edward: What!!

Lady Julia: Teddy darling, the port brought on your gout and stopped you from travelling anywhere, let alone London.

Lady Primrose: That ghastly self-made millionaire trespassed on our land, planted trees and built a couple of barns!

Lady Susan: Land we've owned for centuries!

Lady Julia: We must win the case and reassure the tenant farmers before the war with Germany starts.

Lord Edward: We have to look after all our staff and their families. Our land is precious!

Lord William: I've heard that if one has any land, it has to be dug over for food production and planted with Brussel sprouts.



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All: Brussel Sprouts!!!!

Lord William: Or was it turnips? It could have been.....

Lady Julia: One feeds turnips to cattle.

Lady Primrose: Perhaps we'd grow horns.

Lady Susan: Like Herr Hitler.

Lady Julia: He hasn't shown his. Yet.

Lord Edward: That Post Office chappie is reliable is he?

Lady Julia: Of course! The telegram will come through and that boy of his will get on his bike, pedal like mad up here – as always!

Doorbell chimes – breathless hush. Maid appears and hands telegram to Lord Edward who hands it to Lady Julia, who spies the maid hanging around earwiggling:

Lady Julia: Thank you, Partridge! *She opens the telegram.* We've won, we've won!!

General excitement. Lady Primrose gives a dance! Everyone has a drink.

Lady Primrose: Bring on the port!!

Curtain closes

Curtain opens – cast bows – Chairman at the centre

Chairman steps forward

Chairman: Ladies and gentlemen, I have had the joy and privilege of chairing the Woodstock Players for the last five years. But now, with war approaching, this must come to a close. Thank you for being such a wonderfully appreciative audience. Until we meet again: Goodnight and -

Miranda: *Interrupting* Mr Chairman – I should like to thank my audience for their love and response to my work. As you know, I am



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professionally trained and indeed have appeared in films of the
1930s –

All: *Cast cuts in -What on earth?*

Curtain.

Miranda: *Popping her head through the curtains*

I love you all!



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After the War – ‘Pilot’

Beethoven's Piano concerto No.5 plays

Then the sound of a Spitfire

Lone Airman (Len) walks through the 2025 audience onto stage right. Gazes around the stage then out to front.

Dorothy enters upstage left.

Dorothy

(As Juliet, from ‘Romeo & Juliet’)

“I shall forget, to have thee stand there, remembering how I love thy company”

Len

(As Romeo)

“And I’ll stay, to have thee still forgot, forgetting any other home but this.”

Len turns to face Dorothy

Dorothy

Moves downstage

The Woodstock Players venture into serious drama with ‘Romeo and Juliet’ – 1937 or was it ‘36? They are meeting here today to discuss future productions now that the war is over!

Len

Yes I did hear

Dorothy

Well, look at you – Ace Pilot!

Len

It meant that a pilot shot down at least five enemy aircraft. Not an official title! I was more thrilled when I was awarded my wings when training was completed.

Dorothy claps him



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We were presented with them and told to sew them ourselves –
sewing was never my forte, and when I held up my tunic, I saw
they were upside down!

They laugh

Shall we - ?

Points to sofa and they sit, but must not touch

Dorothy I suppose you flew upside down at times?

Len In dog fights, yes frequently...

Dorothy With Messerschmitts?

Len Yes. We were thrown straight into combat. I was frightened.

Dorothy It must have been terrifying

Len Too much to watch out for, to feel normal terror. The noise, the
gravitational pull of the other aircraft – watch out – every five
seconds – watch! Watch out! Watch out!

For the one that shot you down was the one you never saw ...

Dorothy Did you get any breaks to enjoy yourselves?

Len Yes – in London at the RAF Club and other clubs and bars,
dancing, flirting.... assignations! Then the dreary District Line
back to Hornchurch, where we hoped to cadge a lift back to the
squadron! Only to discover that several aircraft had been



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scrambled after reports of enemy assaults over the southern coast.

And one wondered how many empty chairs there'd be at breakfast...

How about you Dorothy – did you join the Wrens? I remember your boyfriend was in the Navy.

Dorothy

I thought about it. I had a friend who was a Wren. We'd meet at Waterloo Station platform 7 for the Portsmouth train! But Bill and I split up and Louise got pregnant with twins

Len

Oh... Ah well...

Dorothy

No cracks about sailors please

She laughs

After that I joined the ATS and was sent to Scotland. I'd pick up torpedoed sailors and take them to various hospitals. I was an AWFUL driver – and there were moans and curses all the way and nobody said thanks. I didn't blame them! I was sent back to London as a mechanic; I serviced the motors with Her Royal Highness, Princess Elizabeth...

Len

Did you become friends?

Dorothy

N – no... but she waved at me!

Noises off

Len

Do you know – I think I'll give this meeting a miss

Dorothy

Oh how disappointing. What does the future hold for you?



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Len I think that I might try to get into drama school, RADA possibly...
that would give Miranda a run for her money!!

Dorothy I am so disappointed, but I wish you luck!

Len I'll be in touch from time to time.
He exits

The Woodstock Players enter. They exclaim at the messy stage

All *To Dorothy*
Hello!

Chairman Here's Dorothy! How lovely to see young blood for our future
productions. Tell all your friends my dear, especially young men
– ha ha!

Dorothy Yes of course! I was hoping that Len might join us.

The Woodstock Players all freeze

Chairman I'm so sorry to tell you that Squadron Leader Leonard
Barrington, British Distinguished Flying Medal, was shot down
over Nazi Germany...
He didn't survive...

Dorothy *In shock, she holds the back of a seat stage left*

"For the one that shot you down was the one you never saw..."

*She moves to sit stage left and Joan sits beside Dorothy and the
other Players group behind.*



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I saw him...

Joan

Hugs Dorothy

I'm sure you did

Dorothy

He said he'd be in touch...

Joan

In his own way – he will. Strange things we can't begin to understand often follow wars and suffering – and loss. Now you – and all of us – must move to build a future for the generations to come.

All

And so say all of us.

Chairman

God save the King!

...Curtain closes

Curtain opens

James

Over 57,000 RAF Bomber Command servicemen and women lost their lives in WW2.

Biddles

(as himself)

Richard Spong playing the pilot Len, represents just one of them.

Richard bows

Curtain closes

Roll the projector screen down behind the closed curtains