



Show Report

Altrincham Little Theatre

Lettice and Lovage

06 October 2026

Altrincham Little Theatre Lettice and Lovage

SHOW REPORT

– 2026–27 Season –



Northern Stage Awards

REPORT COPYRIGHT & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY NOTICE

©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved.

Northern Stage Awards is committed to openness and transparency. Our adjudication reports are therefore made publicly available so that societies, performers, production teams and the wider theatre community can access, read and share them freely.

Our decision to make our reports publicly accessible should not be interpreted as permission for other organisations to copy or reproduce our work.

The reports produced by Northern Stage Awards represent original work developed for and on behalf of the organisation. This includes, where applicable, the written content, commentary, observations, recommendations, wording, structure, presentation and other original elements contained within our reports.

Our reports may be freely viewed, downloaded and shared in their original form, and **societies may use their own reports for their own promotional, educational and archival purposes, provided that Northern Stage Awards is appropriately credited.**

However, **no permission is granted for another adjudication, awards, assessment or theatre organisation to copy, reproduce, adapt or repurpose our reports, or distinctive elements of our reporting approach, for use in its own services or publications.**

This includes using Northern Stage Awards reports as templates, source material or models for producing reports on behalf of another organisation, particularly where doing so reproduces our original wording, distinctive structure, presentation or other original content.

Northern Stage Awards recognises that general ideas, principles and methods may not be protected by copyright.

This notice is therefore specifically intended to protect the original written and creative expression developed by Northern Stage Awards and its contributors, rather than prevent others from developing their own independent approaches to adjudication.

We are proud to publish our work openly. We ask that others respect the distinction between being inspired by good practice and reproducing someone else's work.

Unauthorised reproduction or use of Northern Stage Awards material may constitute an infringement of intellectual property rights, and Northern Stage Awards reserves the right to take appropriate action where necessary.

All photography contained within this report has been supplied by the relevant society or production company and remains the property of its respective copyright holder. The images are reproduced with permission and no ownership rights are transferred to Northern Stage Awards.

For permission to reproduce material beyond the uses expressly permitted above, please contact Northern Stage Awards.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

PRODUCTION	Lettice and Lovage
SOCIETY	Altrincham Little Theatre
VENUE	Altrincham Little Theatre
GENRE	Drama
CAST SIZE	8
STAGE DIRECTOR	John Newman
STAGE MANAGER	Martin Carrick
PROPERTIES	Martin Carrick & Altrincham Little Theatre
CONTINUITY	Barbara Steel
COSTUMES	Altrincham Little Theatre & Cast Members
HAIR	Janet Reidsma
SOUND DESIGN	Jan Taylor
LIGHTING DESIGN	Jan Taylor
LIGHTING/SOUND OPERATOR	Amy Auterska
SET DESIGN	John Newman & Mike Russell
SET BUILT	Under supervision of Stage Director, John Newman by: Paul Blackwell, Martin Carrick, Don Hines, John Howe, Andy Peate & Alan Reidsma
ASSISTED BY	Lisa Barker, Pauline Glover & Stephen Glover

CAST LIST

Lettice Douffet	Celia Bonner
Lottie Schoen	Lisa Barker
Mr Bardolph & Vistor	Chris Burton
Surly Man & Visitor	Adam Burton
Miss Framer & Visitor	Christine Perry
Visitor	Martin Carrick
Visitor	Christine Heath
Visitor	Derek Welsh

DATE OF PERFORMANCE	Tuesday 6th October 2026
DATE REPORT PUBLISHED	Thursday 8th October 2026
ADJUDICATOR ID	NSA0003

NSA LOGO ON POSTER	Yes
NSA IN PROGRAMME	Logo Only, No Banner
PROGRAMME CLASS	Best Essential Information

THE REVIEW

REVIEW WORD COUNT	1493
STRONGEST ELEMENTS	

A Perfect Yin and Yang

- **Celia Bonner** and **Lisa Barker** created a wonderfully contrasting partnership as Lettice and Lottie, with Lettice's flamboyance and imagination bouncing brilliantly against Lottie's prim, precise nature. Their reactions, timing and chemistry created some of the production's most enjoyable moments.

A Theatre That Feels Like Home

- There is something wonderfully special about the community atmosphere at Altrincham Little Theatre. From the warm welcome at Front of House to the applause celebrating their NSA successes, there is a genuine sense of connection between the society, its theatre and its audience.

Bringing Fustian House to Life

- The set by **John Newman** and **Mike Russell** transported us straight into a stately home, with the protruding staircase bringing the action closer to the audience. I particularly loved the clever use of the rear window in Lettice's flat, where simply seeing people's feet passing by instantly established that we had moved below ground.

There is no rest for the wicked when it comes to the Northern Stage Awards! We've just finished an incredible weekend at our inaugural awards ceremony celebrating the previous season, and now we are diving straight back into the 2026-27 season.

For me, it was a particular pleasure to return to Altrincham Little Theatre for *Lettice and Lovage*. There's something special about revisiting a familiar venue and seeing what each new production brings. My guest and I were warmly welcomed by the Front of House team, all volunteers, who were busy running the box office, raffle and bar. On a drizzly October Tuesday,

the theatre felt cosy, nostalgic and wonderfully friendly. That welcome is part of what makes a visit to Altrincham feel so special.

It was also lovely to catch up with **Steve Smith**, Chairman of the society, who filled us in on all the refurbishments and events that have been taking place over the summer in preparation for the new season. It was fantastic, too, to see all their Northern Stage Awards proudly on display for everyone to see. What I really love when I visit Altrincham is the genuine sense of community they have with their audience. This was cemented by the announcements at the beginning of the performance, inviting us to their quiz night and celebrating their Northern Stage Awards results to rapturous applause. There is something wonderfully familiar about Altrincham Little Theatre; perhaps it is that little feeling of hiraeth, where the theatre, its people and its traditions create a sense of belonging that keeps you wanting to return.

Lettice and Lovage is a satirical farce centred around the eccentric Lettice Duffey, a tour guide at London's least stately home who becomes bored of delivering the same mundane facts and instead begins adding pizzazz and panache to her tours, much to the dismay of Lottie Schoen, the uptight and highly strung inspector of the preservation society. As with many plays of this nature, the cast is small and therefore the script is often very dialogue-heavy for those involved, and this production was no different.

Director **Mike Russell** did a great job of creating three distinct spaces, moving between them and guiding the cast around the stage to make the most of the space available. It was clear that everyone involved loved the script and were keen to do it justice, and that affection for the production came across in the performance.

Costumes for this production, sourced by the society and cast, were also great at adding further depth to each role. I particularly liked the contrast between Lettice's floaty outfits in bright colours and bold patterns and Lottie's neat office attire in much more muted colours. I also loved the variety of costumes worn by the visitors to Fustian House, which helped to give each of them their own identity.

As the curtains opened, we were transported to Fustian House, and the set, designed by **John Newman** and **Mike Russell**, looked exactly like the stately homes I have visited. Weapons and armouries were displayed on the emerald-green walls, coats of arms were proudly on show and the furniture had been pushed back to create space for visitors to mill around. I particularly liked the story's infamous staircase protruding from the stage. When it was used, it brought the action closer to the audience and made us feel as though we were part of Lettice's tour ourselves.

The outer set remained largely unchanged from scene to scene, but I loved the effect of the window at the back of the stage. When we moved into Lettice's basement flat, people would walk past the window and we would only see their feet, immediately giving us the impression that we were now below ground.

Lighting, designed by **Jan Taylor** and operated by **Amy Auterska**, was simple yet effective, with warm lighting across the stage and spotlights highlighting key areas such as the staircase and Lottie's office. The lighting in Fustian House was dimmed slightly, as you would expect in a stately home, while Lettice's flat was brighter and livelier, reflecting her personality. There were quite a few blackouts during the performance, which I will openly admit are not my favourite as they can affect the pace of a production. However, it was clear that the stage crew were moving and resetting the set with care and attention, while keeping noise to a minimum, and their work was carried out efficiently.

Sound, again designed by **Jan Taylor** and operated by **Amy Auterska**, was well suited to the play. It wasn't overdone, and the musical choices used to represent each scene worked well. There were also some well-timed sound cues, such as the buzzer in Lottie's office.

Lettice Duffey was portrayed by **Celia Bonner**, who displayed great characterisation as the flamboyant tour guide. She handled this dialogue-heavy script well, with only a few moments where she needed a prompt, which is understandable given the sheer amount of dialogue. What I particularly liked about Celia's delivery of Lettice was her storytelling ability. She wasn't simply recalling her lines; she was creating the world that Lettice herself had created. She demonstrated excellent comedic timing, and I particularly enjoyed the accents she used during her stories, as well as the eccentric way she rolled her Rs. She worked well with the characters around her, as well as in those moments when she was dominating the scene.

Lisa Barker played the stoic Lottie Schoen, who was also not short of dialogue, which she handled extremely well. Lisa really embraced the prim and proper attitude that Lottie needed, channeling her need for neatness and order. Again, she performed particularly well with Celia, and I enjoyed the yin-and-yang feel between the two of them. I enjoyed Lisa's reactions to the quaff and the cat, which gave us glimpses of a more relaxed Lottie, and she also created some lovely reactive moments when listening to Lettice's stories.

Christine Perry gave a lovely performance as Mrs Framer, Lottie's receptionist, and I particularly liked the character shift between her interactions with Lottie, where she was timid and apologetic, and Lettice, where she became giggly and confident. This added another layer to both character profiles.

Mr Bardolph, the polite, long-suffering and loyal solicitor, was played by **Chris Burton**. He delivered his dialogue clearly and used some good mannerisms, albeit a little eagerly on the night I attended. This wasn't an issue, but perhaps something to consider for future performances. Chris had some good facial reactions, especially when listening to the long, drawn-out tale Lettice was reciting, but I would have loved to see even more frustration and irritation in his voice and demeanour at Lettice's distractions. Again, this didn't take away from the performance, but could be an opportunity to explore the character further.

During the opening scene, we are drawn into the story as part of the tour group, witnessing Lettice's guided tour and her increasingly elaborate stories. The ensemble, made up of **Adam Burton, Martin Carrick, Christine Heath** and **Derek Welsh**, displayed a range of different characters that you might see amongst these groups. As we witnessed changes in day, week and season, it was great to see how they changed their characters and costumes. These visiting characters certainly made an impression, bringing a strong and engaging presence to the production. It was clear from the audience's immediate response that they connected with these characters and enjoyed their interactions within the scenes. Their contribution added an extra dimension to the production, creating some enjoyable and memorable moments and helping to maintain the connection between the performers and the audience.

Adam Buxton also deserves a mention as the Surly Historical Scholar. His directness made it clear that Lettice's tales were invented, and suggested the frustration they might cause a genuine enthusiast of the period. He was a welcome counterbalance to Lettice's flamboyance, helping bring the play's tension between historical fact and imaginative embellishment into focus.

Overall, *Lettice and Lovage* was a delightful way to begin my 2026-27 reviewing season, full of humour, eccentricity and, naturally, panache. Most of all, it had a strong sense of community, on stage and off.

From the welcome at the door to the cast and crew's care in bringing this story to life, it was clear that Altrincham Little Theatre takes pride in its work and in the people it creates it for. After the excitement of our inaugural awards ceremony, it felt fitting to start the new season among the society's previous successes, while seeing them already look ahead. That's what the Northern Stage Awards celebrate: the people, passion and commitment at the heart of amateur theatre.

Thank you to Steve and everyone at Altrincham for making my guest and I so welcome. It was a pleasure to return, and we wish everyone involved the very best for the remaining performances and the rest of the 2026-27 season.

I look forward to seeing what comes next!

PROGRAMME



ALTRINCHAM LITTLE THEATRE

Altrincham Little Theatre
Oxford Road
Altrincham
WA14 2ED
www.alttheatre.org

A comedy by Peter Shaffer

Lettice & Lovage

A flamboyant Tour Guide puts pizzaz into the past & doesn't let historical facts get in the way of an entertaining story!

4 - 10 October 2026

  Association of Community Theatres 

BOOK NOW
TICKET SOURCE

Curtain up 7.40pm
ct.tickets@gmail.com
Tel: 0161 928 1113
www.ticketsource.com/alt

Charity Registration No: 517914 Amateur production by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd.