



Promptings

In this issue...



**NODA REVIEW OF THE
ELEPHANT MAN**



**OUR NEXT
PRODUCTION**



**THE MEMORY
OF SNOW**



**MY FIRST STAGE
APPEARANCE**

Message from Jean

Two down, two to go!! Our 2017/18 season continued with not one, but two FULL HOUSES. *The Elephant Man* production had reduced seating which means the seats sold (343) where not as many as *Breaking the Code*, but it was great for audiences to sit in a packed auditorium in the **new chairs** (and may make more people book in advance in future). The production was very well received with many congratulatory emails received. You can find the NODA report inside Promptings. The production was a true team effort with support from everyone which created a very special production. Christian's performance as Joseph Merrick touched many people's hearts; and it was evident that Tom's perseverance, working so hard to portray Frederick Treves, was worthwhile, as it resulted in one of the best performances he has given.

Casting has now been completed for *California Suite* and Karen has emailed the casting lists to those on email (those not on email will receive it with this copy of Promptings in the post). This is Christian's first foray into directing for LADS, so we wish him all the best and assurance that support will be given every step of the way.

Rehearsals have begun for *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* – see inside for Andrew's article on how it is going. From my point of view, as Juanita, it is a lot of fun! We will need all members to help with the marketing of the production as usual. Handbills and posters are available at the hall – we are there rehearsing every Monday evening and most Thursdays. Most important is to speak to people you know about LADS and what we do – show them the website (www.lads.org.uk), invite them to join the Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/2399580967), and follow us on Twitter (@loughtondrama) – WE KNOW THAT WORD OF MOUTH IS THE BEST MARKETING!

Look at the calendar below and put things in your diary/phone to ensure you don't miss anything. Look inside for more on the NODA Festival weekend and our entry, *The Memory of Snow* into the Showcase in June and in the Loughton Festival in May, and come along and support your LADS' friends.

See you all soon.



Jean



Dates for your diary

Sun 18th March	Set up for <i>Come Back to the Five and Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean</i> Starts at 9.30am
22nd - 24th March	<i>Come Back to the Five and Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean</i>
Sat 24th March	After show party at Adam and Michael's.
Sun 25th March	Set down 10am start.
Mon 26th March	Crit - Small hall at 7.30pm, followed by curry at Bengal Spice
Mon 9th April	Rehearsals start for <i>California Suite</i>
Sun 13th May	Farmers Market
Fri 18th May	<i>The Memory of Snow</i> at Lopping Hall
Sat 23rd June	NODA showcase and workshops - Radlett Theatre
Sun 24th June	NODA London Festival and awards - Radlett Theatre

My First Stage Appearance - Dolly Howlett



A few years ago, I was at a rehearsal at my friend Bernard's house (some of you may have met him). He asked us all: Why do you do theatre? It was a fascinating discussion. I learnt a lot from my fellow cast mates and I

think we all came away with a higher degree of respect for one another. My answer? "I've just always been on stage."

It's true. My mom put me into dance a month before my fourth birthday. She tells me she was proud because I knew how to skip before most of the other dancers. "You were naturally co-ordinated." I'm not sure what's happened since. Falling down seems to be a regular part of life these days. My first performance was "How Much is that Doggy in the Window". I was a blue poodle. I'm not entirely sure what inspired the colour choice. Obviously, I was amazing and carried on dancing (apart from one disastrous foray into BROWNIES, of all things!) for the next sixteen years. I performed with the Royal Alberta Ballet and in nationally televised ceremonies.

Then I went to university.

Purely by accident, I ended up majoring in Drama and I'm only a few credits away from my Bachelor of Fine Arts. As a third-year student, I got my first role on the main stage of Greystone Theatre. I was part of the chorus in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. If you're not familiar, it's a very saucy play. The director, Henry Woolf, was a man I admired very much. He'd led an amazing life – best friends with Harold Pinter, featured in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, but, most importantly, he was the only person in the department who was shorter than me. I was desperate to impress him; and I did. I can still hear Henry shouting "MORE SEX FROM THE GIRLS, PLEASE! Dolly... you were wonderful." Every week I was given an extra task: bend over and pick up that prop, stroke that soldier's weapon... I was thrilled, until I realised that I'd basically become the village tart of *Lysistrata*.

Things got worse. My costume was a beautiful dress. It was sheer, light blue that darkened to purple. I was in love! Tech rehearsals, I flitted about in my fancy dress and felt like a princess. Opening night, all our costumes had been freshly laundered. Somehow, mine shrunk. It was a saucy play, but the cut of the dress was borderline illegal. I literally had to sew myself into the dress.

On top of that, I'd been going through a phase of dying my hair bright red. It looked great, but the colour always faded very quickly. By opening night, it was pink. With roots. Village tart, indeed! My mother seems to have blocked this from her memory: when I mentioned *Lysistrata* to her, she said "I remember that one! You looked gorgeous." To be fair, she's seen some things from me over the past forty years on stage. I guess a low-cut toga and pink hair wasn't too bad.

Despite these small disasters, I loved every minute. There was such a team spirit. We shared mirrors, sang songs, did each other's hair... it didn't matter if you were the lead or a member of the chorus. I think that's what I love about theatre – the camaraderie. I love every aspect of the process of performance; from rehearsal to getting ready backstage. Performing on stage is just the icing on the cake.

Some of those cast mates are good friends of mine to this day – twenty-one years later. In fact, when I was home over Christmas, I met up with another member of the chorus and she'd bought me Henry's memoirs as a gift. Funny how things come full circle.

Dolly

Accents Master Class



At some point, we all find ourselves in a role which involves an accent. Although some of us might be natural mimics and can slip into accents with ease, others find it more of a challenge. I think I can manage a reasonable Irish accent and have been faced with roles requiring German, north of England (not sure which side of the Pennines) and an all-purpose "country" accent. However, I still feel more comfortable with my own Received Pronunciation (RP) like accent and even the idea of Scottish, Welsh or Geordie fills me with dread.

It was, therefore, with great interest that I attended, with Jean and Cathy, a workshop run by vocal coach, Gemma Wright, at last year's NODA London weekend. Gemma's enthusiasm was infectious and we agreed that it would be great to get her to do some work with LADS. Two plays

requiring American accents in the season, seemed to present the ideal opportunity. *California Suite* requires more generalised accents while *Jimmy Dean* is firmly set in Texas with all characters coming from the same small town, so Gemma's masterclass started with General American - Gen Am (a bit like the US equivalent of RP) before moving onto the more specialised Texan accent.

To begin with Gemma got us to think about ways into learning an accent and which might be of greatest importance. We also got to listen to examples taken from film, during which we were encouraged to think about key sounds. Then the fun really began. We were asked to focus on the physicality of an accent, that is almost acting out the accent and putting it into practice by moving about repeating words and phrases which encapsulated this.

By physicalising the accent we relaxed into it and also gained an understanding of the shape of our jaw, and what our muscles might do when speaking in that accent. When physicalising Gen Am we focused on the ideas of space and chew. Gemma then took us through the differences in vowel and consonant sounds between RP and Gen Am. We were fortunate in that we had a native speaker in Shea, so that we could listen and copy both her and Dolly.

Having mastered (or at least gained confidence in) Gen Am, we moved onto Texan. Physically we were encouraged to sway and sashay in order to get the feel of this accent. Again, we looked at key vowel and consonant sounds and how these vary from Gen Am, for example the "pen/pin" shift. This is when in Texas the "e" sound becomes almost "i" when preceding an "n" (Think of the vowel sounds in pen and pin). Even that one little tip can make a difference to how you say a line.

The cast of *Jimmy Dean* are now putting what we learnt from this fascinating evening into practice. Vocally we are still travelling a little around the USA, but I think our wanderings are limited to the southern States!

Karen

Visit to Tolethorpe



Roger is arranging the annual trip to Tolethorpe Open Air Theatre. The date is 4th August and we will be seeing the afternoon performance of "The Merchant of Venice". Roger has currently booked 6 tickets for those who have expressed an interest, but more tickets can be easily booked. Please let Roger know if you wish to come along and join the party (020 8508 5253). It is quite a trip, so we always car-share – stopping off at Sibson Inn on the A1 for breakfast. The matinee starts at 1.30pm, and after the play, we treat ourselves to an early dinner at The George Hotel in Stamford. It has been said that the trip is more about eating than play-watching!!

First Aiders



We are setting up a LADS directory of people who have had first aid training as part of our Health and Safety Policy. Please let me know if you have ever been trained in first aid and whether your certificate is up to date. Basically we would like a list of people who have first aid knowledge. Email me on lags.chairman@gmail.com.

Farmers Market



We have a stall at the Loughton Farmers Market on Sunday 13th May. We will be marketing "California Suite" and "The Memory of Snow", as well as raising money for our 2018 charity – Loughton Citizens' Advice Bureau. Please let Cathy know if you can come along and help. Set up will be about 8.30/9am and we will need people to man the stall and give out leaflets from then until about 1pm. This is a really good avenue for marketing, as we can get to speak to local people about the society and what we do at Lopping Hall. Let Cathy know your availability and she will set up a rota (cathy@fastbox.co.uk).

Help Needed For Garage Cleaning



We will be doing another garage clear-out on Saturday 7th and/or Sunday 8th April. Depending on the help we get, we may only do one day, so let me know when you would be free. Please let me know asap if you can help (07896910214; lags.chairman@gmail.com). It won't be too much heavy work, as we are checking the curtains and the costumes – so it will be interesting to see what we have got hidden away at the back of the garages – and it is always so rewarding to see everything sorted and packed away in boxes. I look forward to hearing from you.

Jean

Front of House



Hello, lovely people. If you can help with front of house for *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*, please contact Steph (stephielou19@hotmail.co.uk) or Charlotte (charlottepope25@gmail.com). For each night (22nd-24th March) they will need:

Front of house manager – 7pm to end of show

Bar staff (2) – 7pm to 11pm

Programme sellers (2) – 7.15pm to start of show (can watch on the same night)

Tea and coffee staff (2) – 7pm to start of show and in the interval (can watch on the same night)

Thank you.

End of Season Event



Our end of season social event will be either on Saturday 30th June or Sunday 1st July. We are considering doing a Hidden City treasure hunt for those that want to and then meeting up with other members that aren't up to the walking side for food and chat! Watch your emails/post box for more information!

Crit Nights

I was told recently that members that haven't been involved in a play tend not to come along to the Crit./Q&A and curry night on the Monday after the show, because they feel it is for the cast and crew only.

I felt this was a shame, as I have always looked upon it as a social event, a way of supporting the cast/crew and finding out more about the production and how it was realised. Admittedly, some of the crits are better than others, but I think it is fair to say we can always learn from what others have to say.

With regard to the Q&A sessions we have held for the last 3 January plays, people have said they have really found them very illuminating. I do hope more people will attend the "Monday night event" after the plays in the future and join in the discussion.

Jean

The Memory of Snow



As mentioned in the last edition, on **Saturday 23rd June** LADS are performing in the NODA Showcase competition taking place as part of the NODA London Festival weekend (23-24 June). Cathy and I are co-producing and directing "The Memory of Snow" and the play casting committee have cast the play, using two established LADS' members and two new members.

We will be producing a 40-minute version for the Loughton Festival on **Friday 18th May** at Lopping Hall – where the evening will also include a talk by the playwright – Sian Rowland – and live music from Daria, a Russian singer. For the NODA showcase, we will present a 20 minute version of the play. Doing something outside of our 4 plays is something LADS does quite rarely, so we are very excited about the prospect of doing a production with a small cast, no additional crew and basic set and props.

The play is about the incarceration of the 4 Romanov sisters before the execution of the Russian royal family in 1918. It is a beautifully written piece, full of dramatic irony and pathos, but it also shows how strength comes out of love and understanding. Please put both dates in your diary and come along ... it would mean the world to us!

Members News

Welcome to the following new members

Nila Patel - cast in California Suite

Michael Gamble.

A warm welcome back to:

Lizzie Lynch - backstage in Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean

Caris Grey - backstage in Elephant Man

Lee and Sarah – a bouncing boy

Congratulations to Lee and Sarah on the birth of their baby boy Archie on January 28th. Mother and baby doing fine.



NODA Crit for 'The Elephant Man'- Jacquie Stedman



Once again, I was delighted to be asked to write the report on your latest production, a story which the majority of people in the audience possibly knew to varying degrees, but which, when written as a play by Bernard Pomerance and performed by such an experienced cast, took on a whole new depth of meaning.

I must congratulate your selection committee for striving to bring to your audiences plays of such varied subject matter and challenging dramatic interpretation, as well as providing excellent 'entertainment'.

I have mentioned before that I always find the background piece and the Director's notes in your programme so informative and, indeed, this was no exception. In this case, though, it was enlightening to read that there have been so many conflicting reports of Joseph Merrick's life that to try and get a true perspective was a challenge in itself. A challenge to which Jean Cooper, the Director, rose magnificently! When a play is based on facts there is, I believe, a duty on behalf of the entire cast to be as truthful as possible, and I think this must have been the hardest challenge for the Director. Thanks to Howard Platt for his continued work with the programme and poster design - most evocative on both counts.

As always, I will start with the technical side of the production, which in this case, particularly, added so much thus enabling the audience to understand the social history of the time in which the play is set. The simple staging and the use of lighting to denote various scenes enabled the play to move smoothly without the need for a lot of scene shifting. Well done to Stephen Radley for his design and construction, both of which worked well. I was rather surprised, though, that there were a few times when the change from one scene to another took longer than one would have expected. Victorian London, as depicted on the projected photographs, takes quite a bit of understanding. The projections – London itself, the workhouse and the actual photographs of Joseph Merrick all helped us to appreciate the atmosphere and attitudes of the time. I don't know who was responsible for ensuring the projections were on cue and well lit – but congratulations...most effective. Both in London and Belgium, at this time, there was little done to understand those members of society who were incarcerated in an asylum or had the physical afflictions, like Merrick. The 'soundtrack' of the fairground as the audience entered, with the music and the hubbub of voices, lent a very jolly atmosphere to the start of the play which actually belied the humiliation which those less able persons suffered at the hands of the showmen. Well done to Terry Tew for Lighting Design and Andrew Rogers for the Sound Design. I always think that the music used throughout your productions is eminently suitable and this was no exception. The Sound and Lighting Operation worked so smoothly too – I'm not sure whether this was Cathy Naylor or actually Sarah Biggs – I would imagine a lot of concentration is needed for both these roles.

Costumes, in the capable hands of Liz Adams, were well thought through, and most suitable for each of the characters concerned, in some cases emphasising their social status. I can actually remember the long-skirted uniforms that the nurses in the London Hospital used to wear! What a difference it made to Merrick's appearance when we saw him in a shirt and brocade waistcoat, and how well the longer right hand sleeve worked in giving us the impression of a deformed, hidden hand. The Pinheads had their condition exaggerated by the white conical shapes on their heads, although it is doubtful whether their heads would actually have been quite that shape, but given their possible condition of microcephaly, they would have been smaller and more pointed than normal, and the cones would have been a useful freak show 'prop'.

Properties for this Victorian era were well sourced by Val Jones and Portia Sorinyana. Merrick's model in its various stages of construction was one which fascinated me – and how different you made his hospital room look once it was established as his home.

Congratulations to the entire production team for enabling this production to have such a profound effect on the audience.

And so to the cast!! Once again some really first class portrayals with a mixture of both new and established performers. The doubling of some of the characters worked extremely well with each of the characters being clearly defined – in the case of the pinheads they were unrecognisable when they became members of the aristocracy. So...if I may...I will take the cast in the order in which they appear in the programme.

As John Merrick, the Elephant Man himself, Christian Mortimer used his physicality to marvellous effect. As he stood on the stage whilst his image was projected and his condition was related to the audience, he changed before our eyes until he became the person with the malformed physique. This enabled each of us to have our own perception of what Merrick looked like, and the fact that Christian maintained those abnormalities throughout his performance meant that we also maintained that perception throughout the production. We were also able to see and understand, how he changed under Treeves' protection, although there was always the glimpse of the man inside. He grew in confidence and assurance before our eyes and delighted in the attentions of those notable persons who were his frequent visitors. Those insights into his intelligence, sensitivity and sense of humour were so wonderfully low-key and surprising.

Frederick Treeves (Tom Donoghue) was a young doctor willing to fight for those less fortunate and his dedication and concern for Merrick seemed to define his life. His performance was sensitive, and his relationship with Merrick protective, although as the play progressed we see a change in his attitude to healing the sick poor and the aristocracy – a theme which I understand many medics experience throughout their career. Tom's dialogue was clear, precise and secure and his relationship with the other characters very believable. I understand this is possibly the biggest role you have taken with LADS, but if you could physically relax on the stage I think your performance would benefit greatly.

The character of Carr Gomm was in the very capable hands of Howard Platt. A man at the top of his profession and possibly on the governing board of the London Hospital, he shared Treeves' compassion for Merrick and his high principles, but was worldly enough to see through Lord John and advise accordingly. Howard's portrayal had authority and kindness and an understanding of the high ideals which filled Treeves' early career. He completely looked the part throughout and showed us a sympathetic understanding of Merrick's limited life expectancy.

Mrs Kendall (Amanda Smith) was a delightful companion for Merrick. She showed no disdain for his condition and was so kind and generous with her time. As an actress she would have been adept at concealing any negative feelings she may have felt for Merrick's condition, but there was never a time when I didn't believe she could see beyond his physicality. She also understood the man inside and knew how to deal with it. Her performance was pitched just right – she was the same with duchesses and countesses as she was with Merrick – and showed a great affection for this unfortunate man, without a hint of pity.

Peter Fox showed us two very different characters in Ross and Lord John – the change in costume leaving us in no doubt as to which was which. I think Ross was the personification of the freak show men of the time, with his eye on the main chance, but with a streak of self-preservation as when he approached Merrick for his 'cut' when he found himself short of cash. A well played 'wide boy' of the Victorian era. As Lord John he played a similar wide boy but from the aristocracy.

Bishop How (Richard Cohen) was the voice of reason both in his dealings with Treeves and Carr Gomm and was played with strong humanitarian conviction and a believable pastoral air.

I put Snork (Marcel Kay) and the Porter (Joshua Sowerbutts) together because they were probably two of the lowest ranked workers in the hospital and their attitude to their jobs was similar. These two characters allowed us to see the differences in attitude and behaviour within the ranks of the non-professional staff in the hospital.

The Pinheads (Jo Keen, Wendy Butler and Val Jones) portrayed these poor creatures whose greatest fear was a return to the asylum. They were verging on hysteria and visibly terrified of their manager (Marcel Kay) – a rather unsettling glimpse of their life in a freak show.

Elisa Thomas played the part of Miss Sandwich with conviction and belief in her own ability to deal with the upsetting sight of Merrick – until it was actually put to the test. She was also suitably regal, but this time very kind, when she met Merrick as Princess Alexandra, together with Duchess (Jo Keen) and Countess (Wendy Butler). Charlotte Pope was a very convincing Nurse - with her authentic uniform and air of quiet efficiency. And the Belgian and English Policemen were played by Richard Cohen and Martin Howarth respectively.

Initially this would appear to be a play with primarily three main parts, but all the other characters added so much to the overall feel that it is difficult to imagine the story/play without them. They all impacted on Merrick's life in one way or another and in varying degrees. Treeves' dream was an example of the way Merrick, and his own attitude to the poor man, had affected his thinking and to see Merrick playing the part that Treeves had played when they first met felt quite surreal.

Although it was very obvious that John Merrick was not going to have a long life, even in the caring atmosphere of the hospital, his death, when it came, was very sensitively handled. From what I understand his one wish was to sleep lying down as other men, so one could almost say that he chose his own way to go if Pomerance's play is to be believed.

In your depiction of this story there was pathos, humanity and sensitivity, but above all there was humour which prevented it being a maudlin evening, but one where hope and humanity reigned supreme.

Congratulations to you all - I hope that you had the audiences a play of this calibre deserves.

Jacque Stedman
Councillor
NODA London



E-Mails from audience members



Dear Jean,

Would you please thank the cast for a fabulous performance last night of the Elephant Man. I learnt a lot about the real John Merrick thanks to your notes and we were both moved to tears by the part about "home" by Christian. He didn't need an ugly false head or lumps (John Hurt!) to portray his character.

My association with the LADS goes back about 70 years when my father (Hollingworth) was a member (Babs Oakley knew him) and I played a small lamb in Noah and a demented child in The Crucible!! Many thanks for a great evening. We hope to come to many more.

Best wishes,

Celia Jackson

Dear Jean,

Thanks for your email. In the end we took a chance on Saturday evening and, as luck would have it, there were two seats available on the back row. So we enjoyed this very interesting play. Years ago I did some reading up on the Elephant Man, really in relation to the local history of Whitechapel, so had a particular interest in the subject.

I was curious to see how the Elephant Man could be portrayed on the stage and was very impressed with the way this was covered. I thought the actor who played this key role must have had a very hard time, having to hold his body and face in the contorted position for so long.

As a social worker I once had to find an Asian adoptive parent for a baby whose mother was thought to have the indications of the possible development of the Elephant Man's condition. There was the uncertainty as to whether the baby might inherit this. I suggested the child to a couple who had already adopted one boy and were looking for a baby girl. They said "No" but,

as is often the case in extended Asian families, another member of the family was present. This man, who had watched whilst his two younger brothers and their wives had gone successfully through the process of adoption but had never expressed interest himself, suddenly said "Pat, what about me" (meaning his wife as well, of course).

I had already got to know him over the years and was thrilled but asked as to whether he was not concerned about the unknown factor as to whether the child would develop this serious condition. "If God has meant her for us, that is good enough" was his response. Most unprofessionally I was tempted to grab hold of him and kiss him - of course I controlled myself! Once the adoption goes through the legal process the social worker has no further reason to keep in touch with the family so I lost touch, but I felt that whatever transpired, that child would be safe and loved.

Thanks for all the work you and your colleagues at LADS do,

Pat Juchau

And a message from the Mayor



Dear Jean,

On behalf of the Town Mayor, Cllr Philip Abraham, I would like to thank you for inviting him to the production of The Elephant man at Lopping Hall.

Cllr Abraham said that once again it was a full house and a superb performance from all the cast especially by Christian Mortimer who played the Elephant Man.

Philip said he thoroughly enjoyed meeting and chatting to all involved and thanks you once again for the invitation.

Yours sincerely,

Pippa Brice
Administrative Assistant

Do you Remember?

5 YEARS AGO: March 2013:



Blithe Spirit by Noel Coward. Directed by Dan Cooper. Cast: Liz Adams, Ellie Atanasova, Wendy Butler, Jean Cooper, Gemma Garside, Martin Howarth, Howard Platt.

10 YEARS AGO: March 2008:



Feelgood by Alistair Beaton. Directed by Jean Cooper. Cast: Liz Adams, Foster Barnett, Mark Langham, Karen Rogers, Marc Sardinha, David Stelfox

25 YEARS AGO: March 1993:



The Seagull by Anton Chekhov. Directed by Iain Caldow. Cast: Roger Barker, Foster Barnett, Lee Bernstein, Bill Caldow, Jean Cooper, Julian Gregory, Christopher Jarvis, Dorothy McCall, Andrew Rogers, Gina Thurgood, Marguerite Wheatley.

Come Back to the Five and Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean



Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean may be almost the longest title of a play LADS has ever produced. It is, for certain, one of the most interesting plays and gives great acting opportunities to our lady members. The ladies - and Josh - are working hard to not only master the Texas accent, but deal with a time shift of twenty years within the play, some powerful characters, lively dialogue and some big revelations.

Set in both 1955 and 1975, a group of fans of the actor James Dean meet up on the twentieth anniversary of his death as a reunion of their fan club, when the arrival of a mysterious stranger sets off a chain of disclosures that challenges everyone to rethink what they believe in and what they really know about each other.

The play is funny, poignant and very entertaining and I hope we have sellout audiences; they won't be disappointed.

We are looking for some help with props and hope LADS members can assist. Set in the equivalent of a Woolworth's store we need things to fill shelves. Especially empty shampoo/conditioner bottles, makeup pots and similar on which we can stick old (new) labels, pairs of sunglasses which be appropriate for 1975 - thankfully big sunglasses are back in fashion and they would be ideal - a wooden step ladder (only 2 or 3 steps) and seasonal decorations, for example a Santa Claus, bells, a skeleton and a plastic turkey (!). Please either let me or Sarah Hudson know

rogersa05@gmail.com

or sarah_hudson@outlook.com.

Andrew