



A further condition we impose upon ourselves is that we appreciate that it would be good to counter balance the (pre-conceived) image of a dull and boring A.G.M. with a film which members would be highly unlikely to see elsewhere ( for example last year's selection of the Iranian film *The White Balloon*) or one which will (hopefully!) bring a smile to your faces - hence tonight's selection.

This particular film from the St Trinian's library of four was the last and also the first in colour. It starts with a train robbery, which at the time was of great topicality after "The Great Train Robbery" perpetrated by Ronnie Biggs and his gang.

In the film, the hapless crooks stash the loot in a deserted country mansion, however when they return to collect, they discover that St. Trinian's has taken over. They are then completely routed by the hockey sticks and rough stuff handed out by the little she-monsters. On parents day, however the gang returns and.....

Although the presence of Alastair Sims is greatly missed, the long and splendid cast of well- tried British character actors and comedians provide rewards along the line. Both the jokes and the plot are about equally divided between the criminals, the men from the Ministry and the unorthodox school staff.

Among the many performances which contribute to the fun are those of Frankie (Titter ye not) Howerd as a crook posing as a French male hairdresser; Raymond Huntley as a Cabinet Minister with amorous eyes on the headmistress, played by Dora Bryan, who is herself in good form. George Cole reprises his regular St Trinians role as Flash Harry. James Mason's daughter Portland appears ("to good eye-stunning effect" according to one reviewer) as a sixth-former.

It is perhaps interesting to note that Dora Bryan, George Cole and Stratford Johns continue to appear regularly in theatrical shows as well as on the television. Indeed Dame Dora has just stepped in for Maureen Lipman at Chichester Theatre. Perhaps a little less familiar face tonight will be that of Meredith Edwards who has the minor role of "Chairman" - even though now in his 80's, Meredith recently performed a recital of poetry at Theatr Clwyd in North Wales and can be regularly spotted strolling about the market town of Mold.

As with other long running film comedy series (*Carry on .....*,and *Doctor in .....*) the loss of the mainstay names (i.e. Alastair Sims, Joyce Grenfall from the St Trinian stable; Sid James, Hattie Jacques, Charles Hawtrey from the Carry On films), appears to have perhaps resulted in the later films in each series having an over reliance on a broadly vulgar and unsophisticated edge to the humour, with little new material or invention to compensate.. That said in tonight's film the hectic finale is quite amusing and maintained at a cracking pace. The final pay-off (which I will not reveal here) is a good gag which will no doubt bring a smile to faces.

One critic said of the film at the time of its release:- "a good bet for audiences out for a spree", which I think is a far assessment of the film.

Finally can I wish you a very pleasant summer. I look forward to meeting you all on 18 September, when we start our 18th Season with an excellent British comedy drama -*Brassed Off*.

Iain McGlashan