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## Press Notice

### LeDFAS 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lunch

Not content with merely having birthday cake and wine, as at last month's lecture, LeDFAS decided to celebrate its 20th anniversary in style this month. We had a special lecture followed by lunch in the superb surroundings of St John's School.

Bertie Pearce is a Professor of Punch and Judy, and he entertained us with an account of how this much-loved English tradition had developed from the medieval Italian Commedia Del'Arte. Although it is now associated with children, it was originally entertainment for adults and it had a subversive streak not far removed from the Spitting Image satires of the 1980s and 1990s.

He showed us some of the Punch and Judy props, such as the crocodile and the swazzle: a little diaphragm that performers hold in their mouths to produce the strange voices that are associated with the characters. He gave us first-hand stories of some of the problems experienced by the performers – such as children trying to touch the puppets (which he effectively deterred by using the crocodile to snap their fingers).

After a short interlude, chatting in the sunshine in the school's splendid courtyard, we went into lunch in the hall. Lunch was of a quality standard that was more like a top restaurant than the school meals that we remembered from our childhoods. And wine wasn't a feature of school meals either – but of course it was necessary on this occasion, so that we could drink the appropriate toasts.

It was worth celebrating the efforts of the volunteers over the last 20 years who have helped to make the society such a social success.



*LeDFAS members chatting in the courtyard of St John's School*