

Animal House (15)

Eight members watched the anarchic comedy "National Lampoon's Animal House (15)" on Wednesday 10th December.

Starring John Belushi, Tom Hulce, Tim Matheson, Stephen Furst, Karen Allen, Donald Sutherland, Peter Riegert and Kevin Bacon, with an excellent pivotal role from John Vernon as the Faber College Dean, this raunchy, screwball comedy, directed by John Landis and made in 1978, satirises 1960s Ivy League college life by following the antics of the Delta fraternity as they battle against the stiff necked sobriety of the college authorities and other fraternities.

The film was very much of its time, with the attitude towards women and girls ranging from respectful to objectification, and the gross out humour was generally accepted but not always to everyone's taste (and very near, or over, the line in terms of today's values). Some of the humour was improvised - for example, John Belushi's "guess what I am" before the food fight was totally unscripted. The final set piece, the mayhem at the Homecoming parade, was very well executed.

The soundtrack was very good, and largely audible, including the excellent "Otis Day and the Knights" with their showstopping rendition of "Shout". It is very easy to see why this film is one of the most popular comedies of all time, and several later "gross-out" comedies can clearly trace their lineage to this.

It is interesting to note that the film was release as a 17/R in the USA and X/18 in the UK, but has now been downgraded to 15. The film has some nudity, comedy violence and sexual references, but these are now regarded less severely than when the film was first released: make of this what you will!