

COMING TO THE RESCUE TO HELP FUNNY AND CHALLENGING PLAY

A Clitheroe sixth-former and local nursery have come to the rescue of an amateur drama group trying to get its production off the ground.

Stage Two Downham has David Leadbeater (17) and Barkers Primrose Nurseries to thank for its forthcoming production of the Alan Ayckbourn comedy 'Woman in Mind'.

David, who attends Clitheroe Royal Grammar School, saved the day when Clitheroe's David Watson (21) abandoned his part as 'Rick the Imaginary Son' to become a colonial marine at the new 'Alien War' attraction in London's Trocadero.

Barkers, on the other hand has supplied a cornucopia of potted plants and shrubs for the set of the production, which is supposed to take place in the garden of the main character, Susan Gannet.

Played by Dorothy Cushing, Susan is going through a mid-life crisis where her imagination becomes more exciting than reality. Not only does she conjure up an imaginary family, but also had both a real and imaginary garden.

The results are a disturbing funny play which presents a challenge to both actors and stage manager David King.

Produced by Mel Scolah, the play is being presented in Downham Village Hall at 7.30pm next Wednesday to Saturday. Admission is £2.50.

Tickets are available from the Tourist Information Centre, Hammond's Bakery in St. Mary's St, Dowham Post Office or Mrs. Janet Hulme (Clitheroe 24157)

WELL DONE TEAM FOR TACKLING SUCH A DIFFICULT PLAY!

Stage Two Downham's most recent presentation 'Women in mind' is one of Alan Ayckborne's newest plays, written during his 'blacker period'. It is a play of imaginations, emotion, poignancy and pathos and, unlike his earlier works, more devoid of humour.

Without the explanation in the programme, it might have been difficult to realise that the action, on the one hand, is in the real life of the main character and, on the other, is in her imagination, although the changes had been suggested by the use of varied lighting.

Ayckbourn is not always the simplest of playwrights to interpret and this piece is probably one of his most difficult. He is a student of human behaviour and this is probably one of his most disturbing observations. The action centres round the gradual mental decline of one woman, starved of affection and companionship by her real family, who conjures up in her mind an ideal husband and family who appear to her from time to time in her beautiful imaginary garden.

It is an ambitious play to tackle and especially on a village hall stage, but certainly on the night I was there, a very interesting evening and one which held the audience's attention throughout.

The set was most attractive. The small stage was used to good effect, with a variety of levels and sufficient scenery and décor spread over the proscenium to suggest the maximum width.

The production was carefully handled by director Mel Scora and the staging and action were well balanced.

There are eight characters in the play, each absolutely defined. In this presentation, the director and actors had obviously explored the characters and the result was extremely pleasing and successful. Mel himself took the role of the real-life husband and was smug, stuffy and boring, to say the least. No one would have wanted to share his roof! Brain Haworth was everything an ideal, loving husband should be (almost too good to be true!)