

PLENTY OF LAUGHS ON THE AGENDA

A political struggle looks like gripping a local village next week - with comedy at the top of the manifesto.

And if all goes well, for the 'politicians', orphans and other needy people could be in line for some 'overseas aid'.

For Stage Two Downham is hoping to raise cash for the Pendle for Romania charity with its production of Woodrow Wyatt's three-act comedy, 'High Profiles'.

Stage manager, David King, in particular, is hoping the production will be a complete sell-out, as he is planning to take part in a mercy trip with the Pendle charity in the summer.

Tickets are already selling well for the production, which starts on Wednesday and runs for four days, ending on Saturday. Wyatt, a former MP and well-known political commentator, sets the action during Margaret Thatcher's administration, but the characters are all fictitious.

However, it bears some resemblances to the more humorous aspects of cabinet reshuffles and the private lives of wayward politicians and their families.

There is a strong cast of seasoned players, with just one newcomer, 15-year old Emma Taylor, playing a teenager caught up in the political drama. The principal characters are played by Mel Scolah, Dorothy Cushing, Tim Milne-Redhead, Bob Cleaves, Lesley Knight, Gerry Hood and Pat Hargreaves.

Booking details can be made on 01200 427296 or 423168, or through Clitheroe Tourist Information Centre on 01200 425566

Our picture shows the cast at rehearsals

Knowing the ins and outs of a particular profession is an ideal qualification for anyone wanting to describe an aspect of that job.

Woodrow Wyatt, a former Labour MP and now a Lord turned playwright, obviously understands the consequences of keeping a high profile in order to obtain high office.

In the words of his main character, MP Philip Grantly, who is played admirably by Mel Scolah, Lord Wyatt, says 'high profiles mean high risks' The comedy he writes does not embark on any real risk-taking. In fact, it is a more than fair attempt at television's 'Yes Minister' spiced up with a healthy amount of sexual activity.

Consequently, that could be why Lord Wyatt does not have the highest of profiles in his latest job.

Yet the play is exceedingly good, easy entertainment. Set in June 1990, during a cabinet reshuffle, Mr. Grantly needs his family to keep a low profile so that any prospective scandal does not hit the fan and ruin his chances of promotion.

With a drug-taking teenage daughter (Emma Taylor) and a rather stupid, idealistic left-wing son (Tim Milne-Redhead) who gets jailed after a demonstration, he has to work hard to keep his name out of the Press.

But the plot thickens when his wife (Dorothy Cushing) discovers he is having an affair with his secretary (Lesley Knight)

In steps friend and colleague, MR Jack Collingwood, (Bob Cleeve) to dispense his one-liners and offer his own brand of self-centred caring. Gerry Hood and Pat Hargreaves offer great back up, adding to the high quality acting on offer.

Stage Two Downham is renowned for its excellent, productions and, once again, its choice of play was ideal. The eight members of the cast kept the production which was brim-full of one-liners, moving quickly and the audience well entertained.

Although the final night was Saturday, on this performance, I would recommend Stage Two's next production to anyone.

Max Gardner