

A THOROUGHLY ENJOYABLE PLAY

There was no coyness in Downham Stage Two's production of 'When did you last see your trousers?' admirably directed Barbara Taylor.

We were treated to scantily-clothed women with heaving bosoms, wiggling bottoms and legs galore. It was a shapely leg-show indeed, with even the men strutting around in their under-garments.

This farce, based on a story by the well-known script-writers, Ray Galton and Alan Simpson, was a witty and riotous affair. A burglar, played with a sure comic touch by Bill Hemingway, climbed through the window of a fifth-floor flat where a girl was sleeping with her lover, a bookie.

The burglar proceeded to take the ring off her finger and a watch from her lover, before decamping with the man's suit of clothes and his shoes. The couple slept on. The scene is set. Later, several suits appeared and disappeared, like a game of 'pass the parcel'.

Bob Cleeve, as the main loser of trousers, was by turns mystified, exasperated, panic-stricken, cajoling and even reduced to dressing as a woman. It was a masterful performance, rendered even more impressive by the fact that he rarely left the stage.

His dialogues with the policeman, Mel Scolah, were among the highlights of the play. Their timing and deft movements were so good that, at any moment, you expected them to give a rendering of Gilbert and Sullivan's 'A policeman's lot is not a happy one'.

Lesley Knight played the attractive girlfriend with grace and charm. Time Milne-Redhead, as a punk rocker, was a good foil for Andrena Backhouse's Tove, a voluptuous 'Great Dane'. She filled the centre-stage effortlessly - a lovely performance.

There were no passengers in this production. In the smaller roles, Gerry Purchase as the politician, Kathryn King his mistress, David King as the bookie's client, Bill Hemingway as a police inspector and Tin Milne-Redhead as a kissogram ape did justice to their parts, so that the last scene with chases, door-slammings and window-hoppings was hilarious. Brain Rix would have applauded.

The set, given the small stage, was excellently planned. The lighting was good and the incidental music kept the atmosphere light and frothy. Obviously this play, written before political sleaze, drugs, police corruption, adultery and bomb scares became open major problems, was not meant to be taken seriously - or was it?

John Cleese has proved that lessons can be learnt through comedy. Notwithstanding, the audience suspended judgement and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Pam Moulds

CURTAIN UP ON VILLAGE FARCE

Farcical behaviour by members of Downham's Stage Two amateur dramatic group is set to become the talk of the village.

From next Wednesday to Saturday, the group is performing the farce 'When did you last see your trousers?' in the village hall at 7.30pm with a cast (pictured) headed by leading lady Mrs Lesley Knight and Mr. David King, who also designed the set.

The production, which has been in rehearsal since September, is directed by Mrs. Barbara Taylor.

Tickets, which cost £3 and include refreshments, are available from Downham Post Office, the Tourist information centre, Clitheroe and from Mrs. Knight on 01200 426428

The group's next production will be staged in March and anyone interested in joining to either act or work behind the scenes should also contact Mrs. Knight.