

A wonderfully brave working of tragic tale

A GREAT deal of thought to all the pros and cons of staging this year's spring production of "The Diary of Anne Frank" was undertaken by the Stage Two Downham Drama Group.

Dramatised by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett from the book "Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl" the director, Fran Osborne, opted to stage this interesting and different play, despite knowing the difficulties that this production demanded, both in directing a cast of 10 and devising a set which depicted an attic, on Downham Village Hall's little stage.

Fran's choice resulted in the wonderfully brave and breathtaking performance of "Anne Frank's Diary," which was played to capacity audiences on Friday and Saturday. Everyone was enthralled by her thoughtful and sensitive direction.

The intentions of the playwrights were certainly realised as we watched actors and technicians

recreate the stressful times that the Jewish family Frank, and their friends, the Van Daans and Mr Kraler (played by Eddie Booth), lived through from 1942 to 1945 when Holland was under Nazi occupation.

The entire cast of this play were so well rehearsed and word perfect that they appeared to "live" their roles rather than merely acting them. This gave an added dimension of belief to this production.

Particular comeos were electrifying, such as the energy generated by Mrs Frank's outburst (played by Glen Purchase) when she caught Mr Van Daan (David King) stealing the family's bread; the frustration of having to share a bedroom with a teenage girl, by the loner Mr Dussel the dentist (Gerry Purchase); Mrs Van Daan (Elizabeth Wrigley) clinging on to the memories of the comfortable life by nursing her fur coat - and the sweet placating nature of Anne's older sister, Margot (Lucy Scott). Mr Frank, who managed

to be a patient father and strong support to them all, was played with compassion by Kim Croydon.

Rachel Humphreys who played Anne shocked the audience by her enactment of Anne's nightmare - and engaged our sweeter memories when feeling longings of love for Peter (Karl Barnsley).

Act one ended with the "sweet celebration" of Hanukah (Jewish thanksgiving). Even under such historical bittersweet conditions Anne had managed to make gifts for everyone.

Rachel achieved her acting debut with a natural skill and depth of understanding. She caught the nuances of an adolescent girl's high and low spirits, confusions and relationships.

Anne longed for freedom and love while living in that cramped existence - no noise or movement between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.


What a challenging role for Rachel to play at the very onset of her life in the theatre.

She revelled in her performance.

Eight members of the cast played in close proximity on stage throughout the performance, which bonded them in true team effort. Mr Dussel, provided the attic in which the fugitives lived and he and his daughter, Miep Gies (Kate Taylor), played their parts with quiet bravery and warm concern.

Stage manager Aled Brewerton and Don Bradbury stage construction together with the backstage technicians and designers are all to be congratulated for a first class job. Rachel Scott dressed the set assisted by property mistress Stephanie Brewerton.

Lighting and sound was by David Scott and Pat Hargreaves, whose variety of sound effects included low gear noises from below to the crunch of jackboots marching along the street, the climax being the harsh words of "Raus Schnell" by the Nazi soldier who came to arrest the party from the attic. **MSS**

STAGE TWO DOWNHAM PRESENTS 

The Diary of Anne Frank

Dramatized by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett from the book:
Anne Frank: Diary of a young girl in
Downham Village Hall
at 7.30pm

Wednesday 29th, Thursday 30th
Friday 31st & Saturday April 1st
Admission £4.50 (inc. Tea & Biscuits)

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM TOURIST
INFORMATION CENTRE
Tel: 01200 425566

ssified) www.clitheroetoday.co.uk

Weekendplus

Anne's war diary to hit village stage

AN ambitious project is about to come to fruition for members of Stage Two Downham whose latest production of "The Diary of Anne Frank" begins its four-night run on Wednesday in Downham Village Hall.

Directed by Fran Osborne the 10-strong cast will unfold the well-known story of Annaliese Marie Frank who was born in Germany on June 12th, 1929.

When the Nazis came to power, her father Otto Frank decided to move his Jewish family to Amsterdam, which he thought was a safe haven for religious minorities. However, by 1942 the round-up of Jews and their deportation to concentration camps was becoming routine.

The family moved into a hiding place above Otto's warehouse and for two years eight people occupied these cramped rooms. Unfortunately, the story does not have a happy ending as only the father Otto Frank survived the war, however Anne's diary also came to light



and proved to be an accurate account of that time.

The production starts at 7-30 p.m. with tickets, priced at £4-50 and including tea and biscuits, available from Clitheroe Tourist Information Centre on 01200 425566.

Our picture shows Rachel Humphreys, who plays Anne Frank. (s)

Spotlight On a local theatre group and its latest production

Stage set for more great drama

A POPULAR and well-established Ribble Valley theatrical group is currently in rehearsals for its next production.

Stage Two Downham has been entertaining audiences for more than 40 years.

The group, which is based at the village hall, currently has a membership of 25 and performs two shows a year.

It is hoping that its next production will again attract the crowds.

Performing an adaptation of the famous play, "The Diary of Anne Frank", by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, the cast of 10 will portray the story of the Jewish teenager who lived in Amsterdam during World War II.

It will be produced by Fran Osborne and star Clitheroe Royal

by Tracy Johnson



was formed by Waddington WI in the 1960s. It was originally based at Waddington Methodist Church, changing locations in the 1970s to St Helen's school room, where it became known as Waddington Drama Group. That remained its home for 19 years, until 1989 when, due to unforeseen circumstances, it was forced to look for new premises.

Thanks to the kind suggestion of the late Geoff Braithwaite, the group re-located to Downham and got its new name, Stage Two Downham.

Its first play under the new name was "Round And Round The Garden".



The cast of "The Railway Children", one of many successful productions previously staged by the group (s)



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