

The spring Production from Stage Two his hear is the sparkling Alan Ayckbourn comedy 'Table Manners'.

In spring last year this talented group reformed 'Round and round the Garden', another play in the Norman Conquests Trilogy by the same author.

In 'Table Manners', which represents another battle in the trilogy, we see Norman, the well know seducer, laying siege to his sister-in-law with hilarious consequences.

The character of Norman will be played by Bob Cleeve, very ably supported by a very strong cast of Pat Bowker, Lesley Haworth, Steve Cooke and Gen Purchase. The producer is Eddie Bootle.

The play will be performed at Downham Village Hall on Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> until Saturday April 24<sup>th</sup>, starting at 7.30pm.

Tickets are now available either from Clitheroe Tourist Information Centre of from Fran Osborne on 01200 423301

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## 'TABLE MANNERS' DID GROUP CREDIT

Downham's drama group Stage Two did not disappoint their audience when they presented 'Table Manners' by Alan Ayckbourn, the second in his trilogy of plays 'The Norman Conquests'.

Eddie Bootle once again directed following their success last April when the group performed 'Round and round the Garden. One year on this dysfunctional family moved in from the garden to the dining room to continue their thinly-veiled shenanigans.

The story revolves around the lives of three couples - two sisters and a brother, two spouses and for the unattached Annie, an ineffectual suitor. Norman plans to take his sister-in-law, Annie, away for the weekend. Brother and sister-in-law Reg and Sarah come over to look after mother believing Annie to be going with her dreary veterinary friend, Tom. Sarah soon puts a stop to their tryst and everything turns on its head when Norman's less-than-popular wife, Ruth, arrives.

A shift in dominance of characters put Sarah, the relentless nagging wife, in a major role, played competently and elegantly by Pat Bowker. She never 'let up' interfering and complaining, finding nothing in her life that could possibly make her happy until the feckless Norman volunteered to take her away for a weekend. This was as good as a tranquiliser for Sarah.

Bob Cleeve, comfortable in his 'Norman' role, played the part to the letter - the boyish carefree style belying his selfish philandering behaviour. Bob sustained his character for long pieces of dialogue when the family were ignoring him at breakfast. Norman really appears to believe that everyone should like him.

Lesley Haworth returned to the role of Annie, portraying with ease the slightly scatty woman who has given her life to looking after her elderly mother. Lesley transformed the cardigan-clad dowdy Annie to a more vampish character in an attempt to show the family she was no longer 'round and round the garden'.

The 'vacant vet', Tom, was played convincingly by Steve Cooke, providing many comic moments throughout the play. His slow-burning courtship with Annie hit a highnote when he threw a punch at Norman at the dinner table.

Sarah's husband, the gregarious Reg, was once again well portrayed by BRIAN Haworth. Chatty and amusing when free from the nagging Sarah, who he finds impossible to please, and, at other times, rather wistful when recalling his boyhood pastime of making model planes.

For the second in this set of Ayckbourn plays, Glen Purchase took the part of Norman's wife, Ruth. She brought in another contrasting character to this unwieldy family, confidently taking the role of the rather superior Ruth, who deals with her husband's amours and with a somewhat scornful and dismissive approach. Her short-sightedness, cleverly acted, added a human touch to the part.

A well directed and convincing play, amusing from start to finish. The set was built to use the stage well as the whole play took place in the dining room, every detail contributing to the requirements of the story - thanks to Dan Bradbury and Gerry Purchase. Effective lighting and sound was provided by David King. A strong cast ably supported by good direction and efficient teams behind the scenes and front of house.

Well done Stage Two once again!

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