



Lord Arthur's failure is Group's success

NO matter how hard he tried, Lord Arthur Savile could not commit a murder, but his countless list of failures sent the crowds home from Waddington Drama Group's latest production with their sides still aching with laughter.

The comical tale of how the headstrong and glib Lord Arthur strove to murder three of his relatives gave the players the chance to step back into the lavish decorations and fashions of the Victorian era... and how well they took it!

Lord Arthur felt obliged to commit his murder after falling for the "infallible" predictions of palmist Mr Podgers.

Podgers was called in by Lady Julia Merton, the

mother of Savile's fiancée, Miss Sybil Merton, to check if the young peer was suitable match for her daughter.

Podgers delved into Savile's background and found a perfect record, much to the annoyance of Lady Julia.

But privately, Savile was told that he would soon commit a murder, so the noble fool decided to act, rather than ruin his impending marriage.

Both Sue Oliver as Sybil Merton and Bernice Barlow as her mother were perfectly cast. The naive and innocent Sybil put total faith in her fiancé.

But with Savile's murder plans holding up the wedding on more than one occasion, Lady Julia contin-

ally poured scorn on all Savile's intentions.

Two of the play's main characters appeared at Waddington for the first, but hopefully not the last, time. Noel Baron overcame a nervous start to dominate in the title role, and he was ably assisted by David Clews, who played the "old hand" Baines, the butler.

Above all, the Victorian era was all about elegance and colour and both were outstanding features of the ladies' costumes.

Supporting parts were capably filled by Brian Keating as the absent-minded Dean of Paddington, April Bell as Savile's neurotic, gambling great-aunt, and Audrey Cooke as Savile's aunt.

Graham Banks was also a stranger to the Waddington stage, playing the part of Podgers. He too made a good first impression, despite wearing what seemed a heavy make-up.

Another competent performance came from Glensy Wood, as Nellie the maid.

But unfortunately, Bob Fisher failed to master the German accent required for the part of Herr Winkelkopf.

Admittedly the part was a difficult one, but frankly he did not look anything like a ruthless German anarchist.

Overall, though, it was an amusing and colourful evening and the packed audience was just reward for the effort put in by producer Helen Wood and her staff.

The play was adapted from an Oscar Wilde short story by Constance Cox, and the group gave four performances at St Helen's Sunday School.

PETER STEVENSON