

Victorian classic captivates with thrills and chills

GASLIGHT came to Waddington in more ways than one. The piping of gas to the village tempted Waddington Drama Group to have its own joke by presenting the Victorian thriller "Gaslight" by Patrick Hamilton in St Helen's Sunday School last week.

It was no joke, as the audiences were thrilled and chilled by the performances of this talented group.

"Gaslight" is almost a classic, despite its age continuing to make good theatrical entertainment, but if not well presented it could become a farcical melodrama. The audiences, however, were very soon captivated and the proverbial pin drop could have been heard.

The play is one of moods and mixed emotions difficult to portray, but aided by expert performances from all the actors, carefully-selected curtain music and precise lighting effects round which the plot revolves, these were successfully achieved.

In the chief roles were Glenys Wood as Bella Manningham and Bob Cleeve as her wicked husband. Both delivered excellent performances ranging from light-hearted banter one moment to heavy dramatic tension the next.

As the "hero", Graham Mitchell gave perhaps his best performance ever. The part of Inspector Rough is a difficult one, but here we had a disciplined presentation with a positively-defined characterisation.

The two entirely different maidservants were most ably portrayed, Pat Hargreaves as the steady, devoted loyal retainer and Carmel Donald as the pert, cheeky mischief-maker with a distinct fancy for the master.

The set was superb and obviously delighted the audiences, totally creating the heavy, dark Victorian atmosphere. Barrie Wood, a very talented stage manager, and his staff had given a great deal of attention to detail.

The cast was completed by two visiting actors who

obviously relished their tiny walk-on parts as police constables.

Much hard work and effort had gone into this play, directed by Barbara Scattergood, and Waddington Drama Group scored with another successful production.

W.C.C.