

THE WYCHWOOD PLAYERS

“It Could Be Any One of Us”



The Players – left to right.

Rebecca Marshall, Dudley Thompson, Rob Gorton, Jonathon Willson,
Gail Huntingford, Christine Halliday.

The combination of an evening's drama with a light supper is a deservedly popular format which the Wychwood Players have made their own. With decent bottles of wine available at a reasonable price, it makes for a relaxed and convivial night out. The one complaint is that, with only two performances, not even the New Beaconsfield Hall is large enough to cater for all the demand, and a good production is seen by too few people.

This format, originating years ago with cabaret in the more intimate atmosphere of a barn, has been used by the Players for a pair of one-act plays. “It Could Be Any One of Us” was a full-length comedy by Alan Ayckbourn with sufficient meat to command the full attention of the audience. It is partly a who-dunnit but also a study of an amateurish and failed family who devoted themselves to the arts in a large but seedy house, with murderous results.

With a cast of only six, there were no bravura parts allowing a single star to shine. Instead, all the parts mattered and needed to be integrated with coherent direction. It is one of the Players' strengths that their members include several competent producers. This play was produced by John Drew, more familiar as an actor and a panto-author.

He is to be congratulated for a taut production, achieving pace and balance. These are some of the most difficult tests for amateur companies, and this production was a welcome sign of maturity on the part of the Players.

The cast comprised: Jonathon Willson, Gail Huntingford, Dudley Thompson, Rebecca Marshall, Rob Gorton and Christine Halliday. Each performed well and delineated the character clearly. To say that none of them was outstanding is no slur, but merely recognises a balanced team production.

The programme was dedicated to the memory of Peter Jessey, who sadly died in July. For many years Peter, an ingenious carpenter, made the scenery and created some stunning effects, first for the WI Pantomimes and latterly for the Players. He will be sorely missed.

Gardening

As I write this piece the rain is coming down, flooding is the main item on the news and, of course, most of our gardens are waterlogged. So digging, dividing herbaceous plants and most work in the garden must be postponed until conditions are suitable.

In recent issues we have discussed the pruning of fruit trees and soft fruit bushes and this work can be finished off even with wet conditions. And if you had planned to use a tar oil spray this will also be possible.

Christmas will soon be with us. It is very satisfying to enjoy decorations made by oneself, so if you are that way inclined, collect ivy, holly – there are lots of berries this year – and other suitable growth such as conifer cuttings. For the front door buy a wreath ring from the garden shop and build your own masterpiece from all the bits you have collected. If you have difficulty in obtaining berried holly use artificial berries that are on sale in some places.

I hope you have a most enjoyable Christmas with family and friends and that the first year of the new millennium will bring you good health, happiness and peace of mind.

A V Mitchell

Oh Dear – I cannot tell a lie, It was me wot rote it!

It was with some surprise that I was 'brought to book' by the Editor because of a complaint about the 'articles' supporting wife-beating, being possibly racist and written by an anonymous author. I wish to assure everyone that the snippets were not "articles" supporting such a barbaric practice, but small extracts from a national newspaper, and if I inadvertently offended anyone, please be assured that I did not mean to do so, and would never dream of supporting such a practise, (nor, I might add, husband-beating). I really never expected anyone to take them seriously.

Many apologies, 'Don' Salter, (the 'putter together' of this magazine).