

STICKERS / THE FAT LADY SINGS IN LITTLE GRIMLEY

by David Tristram

9th & 10th October 2008

There was much to laugh at in the two “comedy-dramas” staged by the Beaufort Players in the Ascension Hall in Beaufort Road on 9th/10th October 2008.

The first, “Stickers”, was set in a school’s all-female staff-room where four teachers awaited the appointment of a new head. One was tortured by the obnoxious contents of a pupil’s pencil box, one obsessed by recipes, one just plain bolshie and the fourth tediously determined to involve the others in a complex new colour-coded storage system for the PE shed - and there was the school’s secretary too, a zany nightmare. Each was well portrayed, but the star of the play was undoubtedly Lindsey Carter as the departing head, a magisterial figure from whose lips a torrent of management jargon poured unremittingly. But the play ended just as it could have got really interesting, when the new head walked in. A handsome young man!

It was an enjoyable performance though sometimes lines did not get the laughs they deserved as the cast’s timing and delivery were not always as confident as they might have been. However as two had taken on their parts only a week earlier, after the original actors had to pull out, they all did very creditably.

The second play, “The Fat Lady Sings In Little Grimley”, was a well-constructed story about a village dramatic society whose four members faced major problems - a lawsuit, insolvency and the start of a rival group formed by the director’s ex-wife. Worse still, he had called one of the others a “talentless moron”. Their desperate plotting to sabotage the other group’s first performance became more and more farcical, winning plenty of laughter especially when they attempted to reduce a whole show to under four minutes and lines like “If we hired a couple of heavies, would they charge us VAT?” Inevitably chaos ensued and by the end they were all extensively bandaged and plastered.

Martin Roe’s antics with a trombone and banana were always entertaining, but the real strength of the production were the performances of Alan Robinson and June Burgess. Totally credible and always fully audible, their acting was top-class by any standards.

All credit too to everyone who toiled behind the scenes or front-of-house to support those on stage (though it was a shame that there were not enough programmes for all the audience on the second night).

Above all, praise should go to Roger and Diana Dishley (she directed the first play, he the second) for casting and staging them so well. As the driving-force behind the Beaufort Players for many years, they should be proud not only of putting on such an enjoyable evening but also that there will be another production, “Lady Windermere’s Fan”, on November 20th, 21st & 22nd - after a gap of only six weeks.

John Harrison