

Junior Drama Group Newspaper Report

Everyone a star in production

With 'The Parker Plan' Merriott Junior Drama Group diverted from their usual formula. Kings, Queens, Princes and fairies gave way to contemporary schoolchildren in casual holiday garb. But this in no way detracted from the first-rate entertainment value that the play provided. It was a brilliant consummation of months of rehearsal under the guidance of Mrs. I. Gwenllian Hopper, who has pioneered children's drama in Merriott for the past 11 years.

It was the story of a teenage schoolboy, played by Michael Best, who, though regarded as a 'write-off' by his parents, showed them and the whole village community of High Farthing that if he was bothered by Pythagoras in school it did not stop him converting a disused forge into a Village Hall, overcoming all sorts of opposition and physical obstacles in the process.

Lively interludes were provided by the village 'louts' who did all they could to impede the good work. They were played by David Taylor, Peter Daffern, Paul Daffern and Anthony Barrett. Their lively performance carried the show from one crisis to the next. Particularly memorable was their midnight wrecking of the forge, punctuated by the crashing of plates and saucers on the stage floor.

It is usually possible to pinpoint a dominant performer, but in this show the whole cast was the star. Each and everyone deserves unstinted praise. The chorus, ranging from teenagers to tiny tots, sang with gusto the many catchy tunes in the play to the accompaniment of Roy Daffern, whose inimitable style both on the piano and the electric organ, added the professional touch.

The show was an unparalleled success for the producer, who, though it be a Junior Group, does not stop at involving the whole village. Even the Vicar, Rev. L. Golledge, was caught in the net and willingly joined the cast in the official opening of the Village Hall at High Farthing. Over the years the Merriott Junior Drama Group has acted as a catalyst in sparking off a truly communal spirit. The children of Merriott are, indeed, very fortunate to have in Mrs. Hopper the driving force that makes their dramatic activities possible and from which they get so much enjoyment.

In every presentation one must not forget the hidden workers who toil behind the scenes. To them much credit must be given.

Cast

The cast—Elizabeth Robinson, Michael Best, David Hines, Joy England, Karen Butler, David Taylor, Peter Daffern, Paul Daffern, Anthony Barrett, Sally Scott-Robinson, Timothy Scott-Robinson, Marc Smith, William Scott-Robinson, Janet House, Debbie Harper, Terry O'Reilly, Simon Edge, Susan Cable, Donna Perry, Rev. L. Golledge, Julie Voss, Elspeth Harfield, Lynn Knowles, Wanda Voss, Catriona Harfield, Trudi Norton, Lisa Voss, Sharon Sweet, Lynn Bendell, Mandy Voss, Lynn Sweet, Richard Hooper, Kay Brown, Linda Witcombe, Jennifer James, Pauline Shoemark.

Stage director, Alan Robinson; assistant stage managers, David Robinson, Philip Rainford, Tony Barber; production manager, Ron Ashdown; lighting, Sylvia Crotty, John Nicholls; scenery construction, Douglas Cable, Ken Durrant; properties, Wendy Brown; back stage, Barbara Robinson, Ruth Pountney, Peggy Utton, Beryl Jackson, Sheila Daffern; make-up, Muriel Rumsey; wardrobe, Peg Gooding, Brenda Finch; treasurer, M. Henneage; publicity and front of house, Roy Daffern. F.J.W.