

# Trio of slick comedies proves another winner

THE WEALTH of talent with which the Rotherfield Players is endowed is really quite amazing and a source of envy for amateur dramatic societies whose choice of plays is severely limited by scarcity of numbers.

A richness indeed when producers can afford to leave actors and actresses of the calibre of Michael Block, Frances Smith, Alison Organ, Pauline Waters, Jean Jenkins and Andrew Fermor in the wings and still maintain high standards.

And whoever is on stage can always rely on a smooth backstage operation, efficient in all departments, and a setting which is in itself an object for admiration.

To add to the more than satisfying situation most of the Players' 40 or so membership live in the parish of Rotherfield, population about 3,200.

"A lot of them are quite talented and quite experienced," said Mike Organ, founder member and present chairman of the Players. Modesty forbade him adding that some were very good producers as well.

That was his role in last week's production at the village hall of Neil Simon's comedy, Plaza Suite — a trio of short plays set in the same suite of a swish New York hotel.

Just a third of them on its own would have been worth the visit. I can think of no higher tribute than to say I found it much funnier than the screen version, featuring Walter Matthau.

## On stage

James Gallifant's version of the irate father, alternating between noisy blustering and soft talk wheedling in an attempt to persuade his bride-to-be daughter to come out from the locked bedroom and get married, was masterful and his best performance to date for the Players.

Appearing in her first major role in Rotherfield, Geraldine Davies impressed as the distraught wife.

There was a perceptible increase in the volume of the already warm applause when it came to this couple's turn to take a bow.

Earlier, Jennifer Ward had endeared herself to the audience with a delightful portrayal of the mixed emotions of nervousness and possible pleasure to come of a married woman meeting her old flame from

high school days after 15 or so years time. Her delivery and timing were impeccable and achieved with seemingly effortless ease.

Rekindling the flame, Nigel Burnett contributed to the play's success as the Hollywood producer intent on a bedroom scene.

By then the evening had been launched on the path to another success by excellent performances in the opening play from Lyn Warholm and Allan Curless, she trying to re-light a spark of romance in a dying marriage and he more interested in making money and having an affair with his secretary.

Supporting roles were well handled by 14-year-old Barrie-Jan Waters and Michael Podmore, sharing a bellhop's duties, Richard Wood and James Ward, doubling as a waiter, Heather Block, David Vayro and Alison Wood.

RAY DEDMAN