

## **Rumour Has It**

Every village has its fair share of rumours and West Meon is no exception but from Thursday to Saturday last week they hit an all time high with three fantastic performances of West Meon Theatre's *Rumours*, a farce by Neil Simon. Described on the programme as "sparkling silliness". The plot was certainly hilariously silly and the tremendous cast of five couples sparkled in every way. The play *revolves* around the Government Minister host of a party having mysteriously shot himself, and the guests' attempts to cover up the scandal from each other as they arrive to find both their hosts absent and the other guests acting very strangely. This becomes more and more convoluted as each new couple arrives and the rumours and lies that follow are played to hilarious effect.

The subplots of each couple's relationship and in some cases the rumours that infected them were played out brilliantly by Mick Keegan (*Len*), Helena Gomm (*Claire*), Sally Williams (*Chris*), Rob Morrish (*Ken*), Rebecca James (*Cassie*), Darren Butler, (*Glenn*) Terri Cunningham (*Cookie*), Stuart Forsyth (*Ernest*), Carolyn Torkington (*WPC Casey*) and Suzanne Hall (*WPC Conklin*).

The humour came from all angles. The women named their dresses by the charity ball to which they had previously been worn "Lovely dress Chris. Leukemia?" said Claire, "no Muscular Dystrophy actually". Chris's efforts to give up smoking "I think I'll have to light up a cotton bud" and her drunken swoon being highlights. Other memorable moments were provided by the brilliantly played "lovey-dovey" couple Cookie and Ernest. Cookie was beset with the "inability to sit stand or walk". One minute crawling along the floor, the next letting out ear-splitting screams. Cassie and Glenn were utterly convincing as the couple most at odds with each other with Cassie's cutting remarks and Glenn's exasperation. Ken's growing desperation and sense of responsibility were played to good effect and his "deaf" scenes were hugely entertaining.

We were then treated to all the couples dancing which was hilariously reminiscent of something from 1970s Eurovision followed by the arrival of WPC Casey who was cool, calm and commanding with her sidekick WPC Conklin who had the audience in stitches with her stance and expressions. The mark of a true comedic actress – so much was said with barely two spoken lines!

The denouement was provided by a heroic performance by *Mick Keegan* who unwittingly explains the whole mystery surrounding the hosts, complete with Spanish dialogue. One can only imagine what one particular member of the audience made of this, being a Spanish national!

All in all a tremendous performance by the whole cast and a fantastic evening of laughter from beginning to end.

All credit must go to Hazel Town as director and the person who made it all happen, together with Suzanne Hall for her stage management. The stylish set, (designed and built by a fantastic team of Kevin Harris, Andy Nash and Stuart Forsyth, supported by Suzanne and Hazel) was admired by all and the flawless

sound and lighting effects were provided by the fantastic *Chris Town and Larry Golland*.

West Meon Theatre are currently rehearsing a 52 strong cast from their youth section for the forthcoming production of “Kipps” adapted from “Half a Sixpence” with performances on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Don’t miss it