

Group: Woodfield Entertainers
Show: Amdram is Murder
Date: 16th May 2025
Venue: Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall
Director: Tanya McArthur

The hall was filled with an appreciative audience...lots of 'oohs and aahs'. The table decorations were attractive and sometimes edible. The supporting instructions were immensely complicated and no doubt made sense to some people. The bespoke programme was very much appreciated...it really helped.

Lighting was well presented with efficient, discrete patches for the witnesses. The *problems* with the dodgy lights, during rehearsal, were very amusing.

There were lots of creepy atmospheric music and announcements. Good sound effects.

Costumes were very simplistic...largely t-shirts. It's nice and easy, but did miss an opportunity to give visual appeal and to enhance characters by showing their choice of clothing. And what happened to Derek's scarf collection ?

The set was a village hall; and the furniture was basic and appropriate to the scene. Props were right for the action and were used naturally.

It's always interesting to watch a play within a play. This was no exception: the actors worked hard to flesh out their characters and to display the tensions and rivalries within the small drama group.

Jo Knox made Cathy relaxed and natural but something of a control freak. Louise Chaplin was enthusiastic but cynical as Jenny. Her anti-romantic stance was so strong, one wondered if it was masking something ?

Val Anscombe was a delight as both fey, animated Shelagh and Shelagh's wonky performance as the great-aunt. Derek Sharp, played by Dan Edwards, rose to the occasion as the group's resident lothario. He appeared to have enjoyed the favours of all the rest of the cast.

Fiona Barnes (played by Elaine Denny) seemed too nice to be true. Some of her statements were believably unbelievable (or vice-versa). Her death came as something of a surprise and the telling of it was rather rushed. But then we had the marvellous murder scene at the end which beautifully illustrated the dastardly deed.

The eyewitnesses were clear and animated. Their nosy neighbour testimonies helped confuse us even more !

Tanya McArthur gave the house a very complex and intriguing mystery, all the more impressive as a different character was bumped off each night.

And, above all, it was fun. Woodfield Entertainers are always FUN ! Even the raffle became a vehicle for a Kenny stand-up routine.

Thank you for an enjoyable evening.

Graham Botterill

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