

Laughs aplenty in Chideock Players' latest show

MY OLD Granny used to say "Oh what a tangled web we weave when first we set out to deceive" and those words came back to me as I left the Chideock Village Hall, having viewed the Michael Cooney comedy *Cash on Delivery*, staged by the Chideock Players, and the most hilarious play I have seen for ages.

Feel sympathy for Linda Swan, well played by Debra Bates for she, the typical suburban working wife, left home on a typical work day all unsuspecting of the mess of fraud, embezzlement, and obtaining goods by deception that she would find on her return.

True, she did have a certain suspicion but it was far divorced from reality and she acted the part of the shocked and enraged wife with conviction.

Her husband and our hero/villain was played by Nick Baker. He too really convinced as the man who was in control of his destiny initially but relinquished this control as his lies and deceit all came back to haunt him.

His was a massive part and needed clarity of diction that he gave it. His timing was good too and much of the play's humour evolved from this.

Poor old Keith Readings! He took the role of Norman Bassett the slobbish and completely innocent lodger and fall guy and played it with aplomb. How he must have wished he had gone to work that day, cold or no cold. Had he done so he would not have become embroiled in the subsequent nefarious activities that could well have lost him his light o' love, virtually on their wedding eve.

Fortunately his dear Brenda (Sali

by
Keith Jenkin

Douglas-Watson) proved rather a more game bird that most had initially suspected she would be.

I did enjoy the performance of Dewi Lambert. He played the man from social services, Mr Jenkins (no relation).

He initially seemingly had all the answers and came over well as the clerk from the benefits office. After proceeding with confidence for a space he then disintegrated under the complexity of the web that was being woven around him and ended with all the looks and attitudes of a piece of chewed string.

His colleague Sally Chessington (Natalie Williams), although less involved than he in the main plot, certainly added something to the show's success with her involvement in one of the sub plots that emerged in the course of the play, while Doctor Chapman (Richard Chubb), seemingly trained by Barbara Woodhouse, did likewise in another.

The part of Uncle George was given to Chris Lambert and I suspect that the main requisites looked for by the casting committee were a certain suppleness of the frame and a thick skull.

He certainly brought both these and much more to the role of the guy who would get involved in any subterfuge that would turn a dishonest shilling. (I thought the sequence involving him and the door was a highlight of the whole performance).

I did feel that Val Cowell who played Ms Cowper found difficulty in

living up to her advance billing as battleaxe. She was a dab hand with a plunger however and saw through all the smokescreens put before her before solving all problems in the final scene.

Another who made a valid contribution in what was a comparatively minor role was Di Dowle. She played Mrs Forbrite the undertaker in a part full of well timed entrances and a fair bit of stretcher wrestling.

This play, with its very considerable script, had more than a little of a Whitehall farce about it and must have been both hard work and great fun to rehearse, and it showed.

Its success depended to a great extent on the cast's timing and their entrances and exits and they were rarely found wanting in either discipline.

The set was well constructed with its rather innovative mulioned exit to the stairs and its dado rail and, if there was the odd instance of amnesia throughout, it did little to detract from the audience enjoyment.

I did think though, that the prompter was not ideally situated, although don't ask me to find an alternative site.

Cash on Delivery is a very funny play and was well acted and staged. I for one, found the evening most enjoyable on my first visit to the Chideock Village Hall. Director Leigh Conley would certainly have been pleased with the team's efforts.

● Production team: producer - Moira Lucas; stage managers - Di Dowle and Kris Tozer; stage crew/sound - Pat Anderson, Mary Ann Rimer; lighting - Moira Lucas; set - Kat Dowty, Malcolm Dowty,

Maurice Blogg; properties - Di Dowle; costumes - Jane Tamone,

Hilary baker; pre-production - Chris Lucas, Catherine Batten; refresh-

ments - Myrtle Cheeseman and friends.



▲ A SCENE from the hilarious *Cash on Delivery* (from left) Nick Baker (Eric Swan), Debra Bates (Linda Swan), Keith Readings (Norman Bassett), Richard Chubb (Doctor Chapman), Chris Lambert (the prostrate Uncle George on sofa) and Dewi Lambert (Mr Jenkins)

City of Bristol choir come to Lyme for organ appeal

A LEADING choir from the South West is due to visit Lyme Regis to give a concert in aid of the Lyme Regis Organ Appeal.

funds for the organ appeal.

David works extensively with the Royal School of Church Music and with the BBC in religious broadcast-