

## OTTERSHAW PLAYERS

### 'A CHRISTMAS CAROL' – DECEMBER 2004

I am pleased to welcome you to Region Nine of the Southern Area and I hope that that you will find your membership of N.O.D.A. beneficial. I was delighted to come along to review your production of 'A Christmas Carol' last week, which proved to be most enjoyable.

Alan Wakefield and Peter Pratt did a magnificent job on the set design. It was cleverly adapted from living room to bedroom with the turn of the fireplace and enabled the audience to feel as much of a 'fly on the wall' as Scrooge did during his travels in time. It provided the perfect setting for all the action on stage. The lighting was excellent and the sound effects good.

Congratulations to Danny Sparkes on her superb direction which was faultless. The whole stage was used imaginatively and the finale with the players grouped, foregoing the usual walk-down, was perfect.

In the lead role of the irascible miser Scrooge, Matthew Horton was impressive and his humanity gradually emerged as the play progressed. The only negative comment I have was that the hair attachment was obvious.

The humble, resigned Bob Cratchit was well acted by Graham Botterill and his close and loving relationship with his family was touchingly apparent, especially between he and his understanding wife played securely by Kay Doyle.

There were confident performances from the family Fezziwig with Bob Day, Julie Jonklass, Lianne Demsey and Nicci Brighton presenting a strong characterisation of a Victorian family. Peter Moore made a likeable, happy Fred who thankfully was not a chip off the old block and Sahra Kirk was charming as his wife, if a little too quietly spoken.

The ghost of Marley slowly walking on stage created a chilling moment, aided by the realistic sound of howling wind, as Brian Inns became the first of the spirits to visit and warn Scrooge.

The party was a delightful scene which conjured up the gentility of the era, and there were many poignant moments as Scrooge watched his past life with quite evident emotion. Unfortunately during the breaking of the engagement the music was too loud for the dialogue to be heard.

Alison Byers moved gracefully and had first rate diction as the Spirit of Christmas Past whilst her facial expressions were marvellous as the Charity Lady.

The children on stage acted with confidence and of course Kathryn Ditton stole everyone's heart as Tiny Tim.

The production required 35 players and the whole cast is to be complimented for differentiating so well between their individual characters. Those with the remaining supporting roles added much to this praiseworthy entertainment which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Costumes, hairstyles and properties were suitable but some of the ladies makeup was a little too pale.

Your programme contains all the necessary information and is attractively presented.

Thank you for inviting me to review 'A Christmas Carol' and good luck for casting and rehearsals for 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses' which I shall look forward to seeing in June. Thank you also for your hospitality on the day.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

E. Gloria Smith  
N.O.D.A Regional Representative