

DAISY PULLS IT OFF  
1998

## ENTERTAINMENT



RICHMOND DRAMA AWARDS

### Lovely larky comedy

**W**HAT a jolly romp it is! I'm referring to the wonderful spoof about life at an English girls' boarding school, *Daisy Pulls It Off*. Written by Denise Deegan and here directed by Charles A Halford, the comedy is being presented by Teddington Theatre Club at the Vera Fletcher Hall in Thames Ditton.

The play is set in and around Grangewood School For Girls around 1927 and although I recall seeing the play in the West End many years ago, I had forgotten that the playwright uses the device of having the fourth formers in the school actually put on a play themselves - a glorious excuse for all sorts of mayhem as well as antideluvian speech patterns and jerky scene changes.

For the opening, a school procession hymn-

sings its way through the audience and up on to the stage for assembly. The impressive group is led by the much-loved but respected headmistress Miss Gibson (Sue Bell).

The story is basically about the acceptance or otherwise of Daisy Meredith (Rachel Pearson), a child from an elementary school plunging into the hot-bed of privilege. Form teacher Miss Granville (Jean Keay) has some doubts, music teacher Mr Scoblowski (Steve Boxall) is enchanted with Daisy's voice so is won over; head girl Clare Beaumont (Julia Allen) is very welcoming and Clare's games enthusiast best friend Alice Fitzpatrick (Alison Jay) is delighted that the amazing child is also a whizz at hockey.

Daisy makes a best friend almost immediately. Trixie Martin (Tracey

Frankson), self-styled 'madcap and poet' is a real good egg. The dirty tricks to discredit poor Daisy are perpetrated by Monica Smithers (Charlotte Bishop) and Sybil Burlington (Carolyn Williams) but of course by the end they get their come-uppance.

Where else would you hear lines like "detesting games is the sign of a rotter", "How topping!" and someone described as "being so beastly pi"?

I must mention the gym slips. The wardrobe for this production was by Alison Barker and a lovely job she has made of these Twenties school garments with their wide inverted pleats and low-slung sashes.

It's all great fun and the cast is good - Rachel Pearson's Daisy is a particular joy. See it if you can.

**Helen Taylor**

*See listings for details*