

# Jolly time in Bucks

The better one likes and knows a play, the more preconceived ideas one is likely to nurture. While I enjoyed John Roth's production of **Relatively Speaking** at Hampton Court Theatre this week, I found it unsatisfying in some respects.

First things first, however. Jeff Beauchamp's set is a technical and artistic triumph. Part of it is on a revolve, to facilitate the awkward first scene, in which we meet the young couple, Ginny and Greg.

In the second scene we move to The Willows, Lower Pendon, Bucks, idyllic country seat of Philip and Sheila, and the play stays there for the duration.

## TEETERING

To explain the plot would take up too much space and leave us all boss-eyed, so suffice it to say that it relies upon mistaken identity and misunderstanding to the extent that the play is constantly teetering on the brink of absurd incredibility. In between laughs, the mind boggles at Alan Ayckbourn's ingenuity.

Of course it requires the deftest touch from both director and players to make it work well. John Roth obviously had a clear idea of how he wanted each character to be played in order to produce the most lucrative interplay.

Greg, as played by John Lawrey, is an obstinately likeable young man, forgiving and well-intentioned, while Philip the middle-aged owner of The Willows, is a monumental bore, devoid of charm or social grace, as played by John Hancock.

RELATIVELY  
SPEAKING  
1975

## DIM-WITTED

Jenny West's Ginny is a rather timid little thing, and Sheila, played by Dorothy Jones, is simply a pleasant, slightly dim-witted housewife, who doesn't really know what's going on and can't be bothered to find out.

Both acting and production is well up to Teddington Theatre Club's usual high standard, but I felt they could have got more out of the characters and the situation. Other productions I've seen, not all professional, have been a lot funnier.

I should add that the audience the night I was there enjoyed it immensely and it is certainly a jolly evening's entertainment.

There is an evening of Gilbert and Sullivan at Hampton Court Theatre on October 26th. Admission is free, so if you're not a member of TTC it would be a good opportunity to have a look round.