

# "WHITE HORSE INN" IS FULLY BOOKED

## Burton Operatic Society score again

To attempt to judge the success of a musical comedy staged this week by the Burton and District Operatic Society by the first night last night at Horninglow Secondary School would seem pointless in view of the advance bookings already received for the show.

For it appears that the public has pre-judged the show already. Seats for all performances each night this week including the last night on Saturday and the Saturday matinee, have been fully booked. Such is the confidence in the local Society, and deservedly too.

The bookings, in fact, mean that, including last night, more than 2,000 people will see the presentation. And certainly none will be disappointed.

Why this tremendous support? Many would suppose that a good reason is that this week's production, "White Horse Inn" is the answer in itself. For it is the first time that the Society has presented this particular show.

But I feel they would be wrong. For instance, last year's production, "Yeoman of the Guard" was by no means a flop. Indeed, over the years the Society has been well supported, generally.

It is very likely more a case of the Society catering for a real need for this type of entertainment locally. And a good job they make of it too.

### EXPLANATORY WORD

Perhaps an explanatory word concerning the story of the show would not be out of place, as it is the first time it has been performed in Burton by the society.

The set is in Austria, on the shores of Lake Wolfgang and appropriately enough, the time is the good old days when Austria was still an empire.

The proprietress of the inn, Josepha, finds that her job of keeping the servants in line is not being made any easier by the amorous attentions of her head waiter, Leopold. Josepha favours the affections of a certain Valentine Sutton, a London lawyer who is a regular visitor to the inn. He is expected at any moment.

In a fit of jealousy against Sutton, Josepha lets his balcony suite to a North Country manufacturer of underwear, no other than Ebenezer Grinkle and his daughter Ottoline. But Sutton falls for Ottoline.

Josepha and Leopold quarrel bitterly and Leopold eventually decides that the only course left for him is to leave and join the Foreign Legion.

There are other interesting arrivals at the inn as the plot thickens, and eventually we reach the climax where news arrives of the impending visit of the Emperor to the inn. This gives Leopold the chance to force Josepha to reinstate him, as she is without another head waiter.

### COLOURFUL STORY

It takes the Emperor himself to sort things out in the end, and his advice to Josepha concerning where her true affections lie make it all clear to her at last. And there is a wonderful happy ending with champagne flowing at the famous White Horse Inn.

Indeed it is a colourful story, and boasts all the ingredients to test the scope of an amateur society.

The production — particularly in view of the fact that it was originally more of a full scale "panto"—caused problems of its own, not the least of which was its length and mammoth proportions.

This was but one of the headaches which faced producer Michael Thorne when plans were first laid last July. But he certainly made a good job of trimming the edges and cutting the production down to a more practical size, of two-and-a-half hours.

Some idea of the size of the original can be guessed from the four full pages of foolscap paper on which all the props were listed.

As can be imagined from an original production of this type, the sets are, to put it mildly, ambitious. Here was another problem, was the society's stage crew capable of turning out a real job, with a professional touch?

### CONFIDENCE JUSTIFIED

Mr. Thorne's confidence in his back-stage workers was not misplaced by any means. He was justly quick to pay tribute to them—stage manager Ray Welby, Jimmie Harvey, Peter

Binnersley, Len Harvey, Jack East, Derek Rudin and Clive Baker.

As usual Arthur Ormerod was in first class form as musical director, assisted by Coral Gould and the accompanist was Evelyn Woodhouse.

Valerie Keeling as Gretal and Keith Gould as a waiter were making their first appearances in principal roles for the society. Alan Thompson as Leopold, Gena Jackson as Josepha and Sheila Boyce as Ottoline are established members of the society and lived up to their reputations.

Edgar Williams turned out well as the kindly emperor and Bernard Bourne fitted the bill admirably as the Yorkshireman.

Other leading parts were played by Ann Hamp-Gopsill, Ken Lowe, John Halsall, Trevor Bakewell and the chorus included Glenna Acis, June Acton, Joy Appleby, Barbara Binnersley, Glenise Blant Betty Booth, Peggy Borlace, Lily Brunning, Joy Gostelow, Betty Halsall, Stella Hambleton, Valerie Hodgkinson, Ann Holmes, Mollie Kidger, Brenda Neal, Doris Postle, Lynette Postle, Ann and Effie Shorthose, Pamela Tuffs, Jane Ward, Monica Welton, Mabel Whiteland, Trevor Bakewell Terry Bassett, Tony Borlace, Joe Buckley, Jack Copeland, Jim Gould, Garth Hamp-Gopsill, Joe Hickman, Stephen Hickman, Clifford Howse, Stanley Hunt, Michael Johnson, Harry Scattergood and Jim Thornley.

Francis Bates and Michael Thompson looked after the lighting and Mary Thornley, with help from Agnes Cottrell, C. Dicken and G. Kirkland, was the wardrobe mistress. Lorna Staley was in charge of the properties and Delia Johnson was on hand as prompter.

The dances were arranged by Ann Shorthose, Betty Halsall, Linda Bowler and Michael Thorne.

All in all, the society should be all set next year for one of the most popular productions of all "The Mikado." Bookings for seats are not being accepted—just yet!

—C.O.K.