

Murder for the Asking

A play by Derek Benfield
Performed in May 1989

Sure-fire murder mystery

WITH her usual sure-fire touch, producer and director Nancy Reeves had chosen a Derek Benfield murder mystery with a twist ending for Faringdon Community Dramatic Society's latest production.

One felt instinctively Mr Benfield had got his hands on a user-friendly word-processor when scripting the dialogue because of the many times chief suspect Henry Scrubb (Alistair Warner) repeated himself by protesting his innocence.

But who did it? Murder victim James Franklyn (Peter Webster) had placed an advertisement in the local paper, giving only a box number. Scrubb was just one of those who replied and Det Sgt Thatcher (Ieuan Thomas) soon tracked him down to a small poorly furnished flat where most of the action took place. While dim-witted Scrubb vehemently denied, every possibility put forward by, the smooth policeman, one's mind focused in turn on everyone else involved.

There was Mrs Scrubb (Deirdre Hamley), who claimed to have been out at the pictures, and the scatty upstairs neighbour Janet Gregory (Helen: Barter) who could have been anywhere. Before long, I was even beginning to suspect the smoothly sinister policeman.

Another suspect arrived when poor Scrubb had accompanied Sgt Thatcher back to the station for finger-printing. This was Fred Pender, a brief cameo role for Tim Reeves. And finally, the widowed Rita Franklyn (Jo Webster).

Of course the murderer was finally caught. How? Who was it? Sorry, I just can't tell you because the audience was asked not to reveal the plot to anyone who has not yet seen the play. You'll just have to keep an eye out for another amateur dramatic society's version.

Ivy Curzon

Newspaper article from 'The Gazette & Herald'