

TOM JONES IN LITTLE WOOD

Joan Macalpine's adaptation of "Tom Jones", from the novel by Henry Fielding, is hardly suitable for children but it's great fun for their elders. Having apparently decided to deny the young their yearly treat in Little Wood, the Hampstead Garden Suburb Dramatic Society, treated us to one of the best productions in the open air theatre for a long time. The actors seemed liberated by the play and joyously filled the grassy stage with Fielding's wonderfully defined characters.

The hero, Tom Jones, is a rake, fond of drink and play, but he is also brave, generous and courteous in his vices, and Philip Grant, playing with much humour, struck a nice balance between the two. A most attractive portrayal. His foster-father,

defying such a tyrannical father. Diana Bumpus was charmingly demure and obstinate though why Tom should look further than the seductive Molly, except to marry for land and money, one cannot imagine. Jo Hann, not only looked lovely but was



Diana Bumpus

Forney as the tutor, Thwackum, and Tim Solomons, as that horrible hypocrite Blifil, also stood out from a group of really good supporting players.

The shape of the "stage" in Little Wood imposes dreadful problems on actors, producers and set designers. These were not solved by having an elevated platform dead centre, as it left seemingly vast empty areas each side and forced the actors to run on. The director, Peter John White, certainly got lively, clear spoken performances out of his company and the hilarious goings-on at the inn were very cleverly handled.

Certainly a very pleasant way to spend a warm June evening.

L.S.



Jo Hann prepares to play the seductive Molly.



Scene 1: a dressing room in Little Wood.

Allworthy, that compound of coldness and excellence was well played by David Kidd. Jonathan Stewart was amusingly boisterous and brutal as Squire Western; one felt really sorry for poor, dutiful Sophia Western and admired her courage in

also so seductive that surely no man could resist her. Tom's other female conquests, Mrs Waters, who holds the secret of Tom's true origins, and the sensual Mrs Fitzpatrick, were well played by Patrice Sheldon and Caroline Wright. Andrew

Encouraging wildlife in the garden

The increasing human population, coupled with its activities, is rapidly threatening many wildlife habitats. Our individual gardens are minute oasis in the concrete jungle, but added together they form a substantial nature reserve. While modern technology and horticultural fashions remain detrimental to wildlife, it behoves us to actively encourage the wildlife into our gardens.

A wildlife garden is not a neglected garden which has run wild. It is a garden that has thoughtfully and lovingly been planned to encourage and support wildlife, which, with very few exceptions, can be done without detriment to either the beauty or productivity of the garden.

Walls, sheds, paths, lawns, etc. also provide homes for different animals and insects. The greater the number of interesting features in the garden, and the greater the number of plants grown, including weeds, the larger the resulting wildlife population will be.

Maintaining the garden by natural means wherever possible is very important. Indiscriminate use of poisons, insecticides, weedkillers and aerosol sprays can have a devastating effect on pollinating insects. Promoting an increase in ladybirds and a tolerance of ants, both of which eat aphids, would be so much more beneficial.

Normal garden practice demands the constant improvement of the soil nutrients and texture. It is so easy to apply chemicals, but how much better to build an efficient compost heap, where worms and insects can flourish on organic matter, thus allowing earthworms and the like to replenish the soil. Using a hoe rather than a weed-killer provides decaying matter useful to insects and the soil. Where edible produce is grown and removed it is most important that decayed organic matter should be returned to the soil, both for the survival of the creepy crawlies and to maintain a good soil texture.

To increase the number of

bird visitors a garden must provide trees and shrubs for perching and cover. A dense clump of greenery will attract robins, chaffinches and dunnocks, while few vegetarian birds can resist berry and seed bearing bushes — holly, cotoneaster, berberis or pyracanthus. An old rotting piece of wood, growing fungi and bacteria, will soon be covered with insects, much to the delight of insectivorous birds, who thrive on worms, slugs and caterpillars, and teasels will draw goldfinch like magnets. A good bird book will soon advise you on nesting boxes and bird tables.

Areas of long grass attract nocturnal, seldom seen, field and wood mice, while hips left on rose bushes and haws left on the hawthorns will prove irresistible. The hedgehog is a universal pest controller delighting in slugs, larvae and insects. It thrives in herbaceous borders which are allowed to have clumps of dead leaves around, and as its name suggests, it frequents hedges.

The greatest requirement of moths and butterflies is nectar, which, unfortunately, does not predominate in modern hybrid bred flowers. Our winged friends need old fashioned cottage garden flowers — wallflowers, sedum, budleia, honesty, etc for the nectar, and strong healthy nettle leaves for the hungry caterpillars to eat. The introduction of a pond brings a whole new dimension to wildlife gardening. Careful plant stocking will bring invertebrates and amphibians, whose habitat is disappearing at an alarming rate. Birds will paddle in shallow waters and fish will breed in deeper pools.

Wildlife gardening is all about choosing the right plants, growing them in the most natural and advantageous way, not being fanatical about neatness and tidyness, and allowing the wildlife to flourish and increase. A well established balance of wildlife tends to control itself, and interestingly, far less time will be spent by the gardener on pest control — one

bluetit family well consume 7,000 caterpillars! With an increasingly ecology conscious society developing it is almost our duty to see our gardens as nature reserves.

CLAYFINGERS

Demand for good quality homes to rent in the Suburb continues to grow.

Excellent prices can be obtained through us with first class overseas company, diplomatic and academic tenants always available for

Pretty cottages, magnificent mansions and anything in-between.

Every aspect of rentals can be handled by us, legal and taxation advice, rent collection, management — or, if you prefer, we can just introduce a tenant.

No question is too trivial — if you are only *thinking* of letting and want preliminary advice, please phone.

Don't delay, phone today and **DEPEND** on us, like hundreds of Landlords throughout London!

BIRCH & CO

ESTATE AGENTS
VALUERS & SURVEYORS

18-21 JERMYN STREET
LONDON SW1Y 6HP

Telephone: 01-734 7432

01-437 5921 (7 lines) 01-734 0620 (3 lines)
(24 hour answerphone)

Telex: 268312 Wescom G Attn. Birchco
Fax No. London (01) 734 0670

2msl92

Whichever way you look
at it we are the

**HAMPSTEAD GARDEN
SUBURB SPECIALISTS**

Selling a flat or a maisonette

Ring us now! 458 8814

OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK
20 Market Place, NW11

CENTRAL HOTEL

TEL: 458 5636

PRIVATE BATHROOMS
AND PARKING

35 HOOP LANE, GOLDERS GREEN,
LONDON NW11

PROPS: MR & MRS E. TANNER