

The Club News

Director - Peter Nawn

I seem to be repeating myself here. As with the last play "Arsenic and Old Lace" our next play is directed by a newcomer to directing at The Club Theatre but by no means a stranger.

You will no doubt remember Peter Nawn as Sergeant Plod in our first play "Inspector Drakes Perfekt Crime"

amongst his many appearances at the theatre.

Over the years he has shown he is equally at ease in a strong drama, "The Devil at Midnight", as he is in comedy. His sense of comic timing will put him in good stead for our next production, "Absent Friends" by Alan Ayckbourne.



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Paula to the Rescue!!

THANK YOU to our President Paula Tilbrook who having read our plea for new brushes send us a box of brand new ones. It has not been easy trying to paint our set 'skirtings' with a 5 inch brush! We now proudly have a range of brushes to cope with all those detailed and narrow bits that have been causing us headaches of late.

400 Club Winners

The 400 club was drawn on 29th January 2003. The winners were

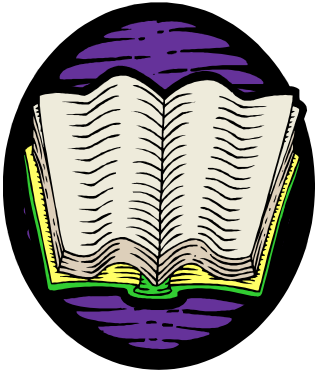
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|-----|-----------------------|----|---------------------|
| £5 | Mrs M Jennings | £5 | Mr R A Lucas |
| | | | Mr & Mrs P Wyche |
| | | | Mr & Mrs R Gresty |
| | | | Mrs V Harris |
| | | | Miss J Worrall |
| | | | Mr A D Johnson |
| | | | Mrs J Robinson |
| | | | Mr & Mrs F R M Fysh |
| | | | Mr R Bowett |
| | | | Mr & Mrs P Wyche |
| | | | Mrs A J Wright |
| | | | Mr & Mrs J B Ward |
| £10 | Mrs C Edmondson | | |
| | Mrs M Baker | | |
| | Mrs M Mitchell | | |
| | Mr & Mrs A Ward | | |
| | Mr & Mrs I Haselgrove | | |
| | Mr R Tucker | | |

£50 Winner

Mrs M Jennings

We still have some unclaimed 400 club prizes from previous draws. Due to problems with the post (money going astray) we don't like to send money in the post and the cost of bank charges for a £5 cheque makes it uneconomic to send cheques. A list of unclaimed prizes will be on the notice board next to the 400 club numbers.

Plucked from the Past



Many of you will have seen this January in the Sale and Altrincham Messenger, a letter from Mr J. W. (Bill) Machin. In his letter he said how he was a founder member of the Altrincham Players (W.A. Copley and Sons) which was formed in the 1940's and later joined with St Margaret's Institute to create the Club Theatre.

Upon seeing this letter our Chairman Ian Bowden contacted Bill. Ian with David Eastwood, our archivist, met Bill at the theatre on 26th January and what

a treasure trove Bill produced! Programmes going back nearly 60 years, to 1944. Newspaper cuttings giving reviews of plays we put on in 1950! Even copies of Plays and Players of the early 1930's!

With extraordinary generosity Bill gave us all this priceless history. It includes plays that, even the late George Maguire, who wrote our centenary history in 1996 hadn't unearthed. So David Eastwood is now happily and carefully putting

everything in his bulging archive files!

We are very grateful indeed to Bill for his kindness and thoughtfulness in letting us save his precious recollections. As actor and stage manager, he helped to start what the Club Theatre is today. Nearly all the material was previously unknown to us and is therefore particularly valuable.

Many thanks, Bill we hope to see you often at the theatre in the future.

Lauriston Trust Supports 'Club Drama'

The Club Theatre is delighted to announce that it has received a generous donation of £5,000 from the Lauriston Trust. The presentation was made on Monday afternoon, the 17th February, at the theatre to the Chairman Ian Bowden and the Vice Chairman Val Harris. This money is going towards maintaining and improving the facilities required by 'Club Drama', the theatre's youth section.

The Trust has been active for many years but its roots may not be familiar with some people. The story starts in the 1920's when Flo Turner who also ran a Dancing School founded Lauriston High School for girls. Although most subjects were taught, the emphasis at the school was on English and the performing arts. Miss Turner's schools produced a pantomime each year, in which everyone

took part. Elocution, dance and drama lessons were encouraged and most children benefited from them. Indeed our wardrobe mistress Enid Holt is an old girl of the school.

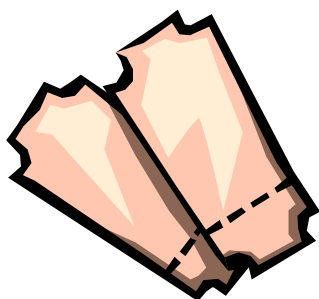
Charitable status was achieved requiring Trustees to be appointed. Private education became less popular and along with the introduction of the National Curriculum, which would have required the buildings to be extended led the trustees to agree to become an infant and junior school, still focusing on music and drama. This functioned well for many years.

After Miss Turner's death a careful look at all the options resulted in the school being sold and being renamed Forest Park School. The

Charity Commissioners agreed to allow the Trustees to administer the money, as the Lauriston School Trust. They still have three of the original Trustees adding others with sympathetic views. The Trusts resources are devoted to furthering artistic education in all its forms, and particularly to help those unable to afford the cost of such courses.

The Trustees are delighted to be able to support the Club Theatre in their work with young people who are the future for Drama. The Theatre Committee, are in turn, very grateful for the support that the Trust is giving, ensuring that the talented group that is 'Club Drama' will continue to prosper.

The future of Drama



'Absent Friends'— Tickets

It is highly recommended to book early for all the plays. Many people were disappointed to have missed out on 'Arsenic and Old Lace', which was sold out! Can we remind people that tickets that are to be picked up on the door **must be collected by 7.15 pm**. Any outstanding tickets will be resold. If you cannot attend on the night please ring Stella before 6.30 pm.

John Blackburn Remembered.

I am sorry to report the sudden death, on 15th January, of John Blackburn. John (or Jack as most of his friends knew him) was one of the early pioneers of amateur drama in the North West.

Together with his great friend Ron Arscott, he founded the Tudor Players. Over the following years they won many trophies in drama festivals. When the Tudor Players was reformed recently after several years without a home, he was delighted to be their president. He attended all their productions, and took great delight in attending the Isle of Man Festival where the Tudor Players had many successes over the years.

Jack was one of the founder members of the Greater Manchester Drama Federation, he served on the board of management helping guide the Federation to being one of the principal organizations representing amateur drama in the country. He rose to be Vice President and was the official liaison officer for The Club Theatre, Altrincham Garrick, Sale Nomads and Tudor Players on the Federation Board. He collated all the production dates on his computer so that a comprehensive diary listing could be produced every month. He also kept a database of cast lists so that when a society was in trouble with a missing cast member, he could tell them which society had done the play so that they could ask for help.

Jack was a long-standing member of The Club Theatre. He acted, directed and served on the committee always ready to assist in every way he could, whether it was with advice or assistance. Recently, together with his wife Stella, he has been responsible for issuing tickets for every production, taking phone calls at all times of the day and night, a thankless task, which they both carried out in a most diligent manner.

I will certainly miss him, especially at the start of each performance, when he sat downstairs with Stella running the ticket box. Our thoughts are with Stella at this time.

Ian Bowden - Chairman.

A Drama Pioneer and a Gentleman.

Stella Thanks

Stella would like to thank the Committee and all members of The Club Theatre for the many letters, cards and flowers together with the generous donations to the Echo Development Fund, Wythenshawe Hospital she has received during this sad and difficult time. She is most grateful to you all.

A special thank you to all who attended the Thanksgiving service for Jack on the 1st February at St Peter's Church, Hale.

Stella Blackburn

'Club Drama' goes Shakespeare

'To be or how good to be..a Club Drama member'. After their very successful Christmas show 'Mixty Maxty' the theatre drama school will be tackling the Bard. Rehearsals for 'A Midsummer's Night Dream' are already under way under the eye of Shakespeare expert Barry Hesketh. With tutors Val Harris, Ian Bowden and John Banks also on hand the youngsters are starting to get to grips with the task of learning and understanding the language of an England of old.

As you will have already read in this newsletter the production has received a huge boost from the Lauriston Trust. This will enable the theatre to purchase equipment and that will be used for this production. This promises to be an exciting production and one that must not be missed. Those of you who did come to 'Mixty Maxty' will be well aware of the high standard that was achieved and the amount of talent that was present. Watch this space for more news.





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Website: www.clubtheatre.org.uk

Useful Numbers

There is always someone who will be able to help or put you in touch with the right person if you have any questions or queries about any aspect of the theatre. Feel free to call.

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Chairman | Ian Bowden | 0161 980 2551 |
| Acting , Front of House | Val Harris | 0161 928 2277 |
| Sponsorship | Val Harris | 0161 928 2277 |
| Treasurer | Roy Burman | 0161 928 1477 |
| Stage Director | Steve Smith | 0161 941 2116 |
| Costumes | Enid Holt | 0161 928 1113 |
| 'Thursday Club' | Barry Swithenbank | 0161 980 7743 |
| Publicity Officer | John Banks | 0161 486 1843 |
| Ticket Secretary | Stella Blackburn | 0161 980 8572 |
| Drama School | Val Harris | 0161 928 2277 |
| Club Theatre Office | | 0161 928 1113 |

Parking for new faces? Read On.

It is always nice to see new faces at the theatre and never more so than on Front of House. Thank you to those who have come and helped to do this very important job. It an overused phrase we know, and no apologies for using it, but it is so true that 'many hands make light work'.

There are still more plays to come and so the help will still be needed but a warm welcome is guaranteed to our helpers and the thank you for the excellent and often commented job that you do. We hope we will see you again. Which leads us to our other point.

Parking is always a problem on Oxford Road during play week. Therefore may we remind you



Stealing Thunder

The theatre is a fascinating place and its history is littered with stories true and false that are stranger than fiction. Here is one that is true!!

The playwright John Dennis (1657-1734) devised a new means of creating the sound of stage thunder.

In the early 18th century it was produced by rolling iron balls around inside large

bowls.

Dennis generated a more realistic sound by rolling the balls down long wooden troughs, or 'thunder runs' when his play 'Appius and Virginia' was produced at London's Drury Lane theatre. Sadly the thunder effects were the only success; the play itself was taken off after only a few nights.

Not long afterwards, Dennis

paid a visit to Drury Lane to see a production of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'.

From his seat at the front of the pit he suddenly realised that his thunder runs were being employed. He jumped up, turned to the audience and shouted: 'The villains! That's MY thunder they're using. They won't play my play, but they will steal my thunder!'

