

The Club News

Behind the Scenes

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Have you ever wondered what happens behind the scenes? The answer is quite a lot. It all starts with the play selection committee who choose the programme for the year.

The individual director then works out how to present the play and consults, at an early stage, with the stage director and technical crew, wardrobe department and props about

the set design and any special effects required.

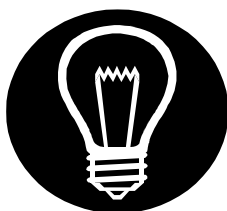
A play finishes on the Saturday and the following Monday the next production starts with the cast taking over the rehearsal room and the stage crew dismantling the previous set.

The cast work on learning their lines and their character while the stage crew build the

set and the props master obtains the props and the wardrobe try to fit everyone up with the correct costume.

Tickets go on sale and the ticket secretary gets inundated with calls. Then it's opening night, and off we go again with the house staff serving coffee, selling raffle tickets and programmes and clearing up after the show.

No Lies, No Lights!!



Well the first night of 'Pack of Lies' went with a bit of a bang leaving cast and audience in the dark. Earlier that afternoon the main feeder cable blew at the sub station in Altrincham and left the theatre without any power. When people arrived at the theatre they found Front of House staff welcoming them by torchlight. While we waited for news Val Harris and other staff provided hot drinks (can't beat good old gas cookers) in the bar. Unfortunately the fault was a major one and could not be fixed for many hours, therefore the first performance had to be cancelled. A very big thank you to the cast and crew however who made themselves available to play an extra night the following Sunday so people would not miss out. Also thank you to all the staff who helped during the 'blackout' and the audience for being so patient and understanding.

400 Club Winners

The 400 Club was drawn on 28th January 2004. The winners were

£50 Mr P E Peel

£30 Mrs L Pilkington

£10 Mrs M Cooper
Mrs J M Coldrick
Mr & Mrs J C Finlay
Mrs I Emery
Mrs V Lane Young
Mr S Smith

£5 Mrs J Copley
Miss E Holt
Mr C Coldrick
Mr & Mrs F R M Fysh
Mr J C Stretch
Mrs L Wright
Mrs V A Harris
Mrs O Blease
Mrs S I Gould
Mr P Dawson
Mrs M Batten
Mrs J B Gill

£50 Winner
Mr P E Peel

The Club Theatre and its Premieres



Our next play, "Without Trace", is another World Premiere for the Club Theatre, written specially for us by our Patron, Brian Clemens, who was much impressed by our production of his play "The Devil at Midnight." This is a great honour for us, because Brian is internationally famous for his TV and film work. Many of you will remember fondly his masterpieces such as "The Avengers", "Highlander II", and "The Professionals." So you will appreciate with what pride we are undertaking his latest play, which promises to keep you on the edges of your seats!

It made me cast my mind back to other premieres we have done. I didn't need to delve too deeply into the archives to bring to mind the first one I was personally involved in, in May 1979. The Club's policy was to put on at least one new play every season, but without compromising quality. But good, suitable plays aren't always easy to find, and that season, it looked as if we might not have one. Then at last Vicky Lane found "Fannikin", by Noah Elstein of Salford. It was based on the story of Fanny Burney, well known at Court in the eighteenth century. It was a new venture for us, because it included music, and yes, your unfortunate scribe was required to sing on stage in his role as Signor Pacchierotti! If anything was proved, it was a deep determination never to sing on stage again, especially in breeches that were uncomfortably tight. Please also take pity on poor Pat Lawrence who had to sing a duet with me. As one of the press write-ups said, I was "obviously the wrong man for Fanny to pin her heart on to!" We all suffer for our art, as the saying goes, but that was devotion over and above the call of duty!

The cast included names you must know even today. The sadly missed John Blackburn was Fanny's father, Dr Burney, and her mother was played by our dedicated Wardrobe Mistress Enid Holt. Leila Pilkington still treads our boards from time to time, but others, such as Mike Shaw and Pat Lawrence, have left to work for some opposition group. Yet others – Ray Deegan, Clive Holland, Kath Dunworth - have hung up their make-up.

Cyril Spencer of the Greater Manchester Drama Federation reviewed the play and generally seemed to have quite enjoyed his evening. The production showed a strong awareness of the period. The cast had been well trained in the correct acting style and the characterisation was 'generally clear cut and pleasing.' As for Mr Elstein, he was like a dog with two tails that he could at last see his play produced so long after he wrote it. He was an elderly gentleman, and when he was invited on to the stage, several of us were poised to catch him when he seemed to be in danger of falling off into the front row!

Going back to January 1977, we come to "Princess Ascending" by an old friend of the Club and Vicki and David Lane, Norman Holland. Written to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee, it was slightly unusual in that the cast was all female. Pat Lawrence was the then Princess Elizabeth, and was supported by people still familiar to you – Valerie Harris and Cherrill Wyche. They, with Pat Kirkman and Pauline Jackson, carried

major responsibility for the play, as they were also narrators, a challenge to which they rose triumphantly. And you, the audience were "The Commons of England." The GMDF reviewer, most impressed, summed up the production as "a high standard of presentation and achievement."

What about the author, Norman Holland? In the "Writers' Monthly" he outlined his thoughts on writing plays. "You enter into an unspoken contract to entertain audiences. Whether this is your first or thirty-first play, you embark on an enterprise which will be, by turns, enlightening, baffling, depressing, irritating, instructive, fulfilling and stimulating." And Norman loved the production. He wrote to Vicki and David accordingly. "You gave me a beautiful, a memorable, production of the play and made the presentation an occasion which gave all added grace. Light, colour, harmony and style characterised the presentation...You two, the twelve actresses, the backstage staff and the helpers have made me pleased and proud."

The Club Theatre has a proud tradition to live up to. Everyone associated with "Without Trace" has worked like Trojans to make the production one that we and you will remember for a long time. As always, we hope you will appreciate our efforts, and we look forward to seeing you on this rare occasion.

David Eastwood

The First Premieres

'Without Trace'



You don't get one for a while and then several come along, World Premiere's that is. In recent years we have had adaptations of 'Alice's Adventures In Wonderland' and also this year 'Mr Scrooge'. Here we are delighted to announce that our patron, Brian Clemens, has offered us his brand new play 'Without Trace'. This is another honour for the Club Theatre after having successfully produced his last new play 'The Devil at Midnight'. There is another link that has appeared. 'Devil at Midnight' was directed by John F. Banks, who after giving us 'Mr Scrooge', has been lucky to have been asked to act in this new play. Rehearsals are in full swing, the set is being built and Brian Clemens has confirmed that he will be coming to see his new play performed. We also hope to be hosts to the play publishers Frenchs and also members of a professional company who plan to put this play on in London. So it's all 'extra special'

go at the Club Theatre. The subject is completely different from Brian's last play in that it is a murder thriller set in a safari lodge in Africa. So get your bookings in early as we are sure that this play will generate a great deal of interest.

Mixty Maxty II (26-27th March)

On the 13th December 2002 'Club Drama' put on a production entitled 'Mixty Maxty'. This was a show, not a play, that displayed all the different types of drama that they had been taught over the year.

Because it was the young people doing this show many dismissed it. However the ones who did see it were surprised to be treated to a top class evening which was as good as, if not better than,

anything the senior section could have done.

To prove that this was not a one off thing 'Club Drama' went on to produce and perform a version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Not only did this remove any doubts some may have had, but it also showed that the Club Theatre has a very hard working, talented group of young people. This group then went on and won awards with this piece of theatre.

Now they are back with 'Mixty Maxty II'. Again this production showcases the work that 'Club Drama' does. Working closely with their tutors Val Harris, Ian Bowden, Barry Hesketh, Catherine Roberts and John Banks they have put together a highly recommended evening of entertainment. So if you missed them last time don't miss them this time.

Details from Val Harris on 0161 928 2277.



FOH

Our Front of House staff are a credit to the theatre and a very important part of it. We are particularly impressed when they rise to the occasion especially when things don't quite go according to plan.

Some new members indicated on their membership forms that they would be happy to

help on front of house.

Could we ask those people if they would please mark this on their booking form as it makes the Front of House manager's job so much easier than having to end up ringing round people. We would rather you offered than be asked! Please do not wait for

a phone call. Just because you don't get one does not mean we do not need you!

It's a well used phrase but 'many hands do make light work'. We need seven people, including the House Manager, at every performance! It's not a hard job when there are enough of us.

**Many Hands
Help!**

Dusters Utd Rule OK!!



What a difference!! After appealing again for help cleaning the theatre there were 7 of us battling the dust on the Saturday morning before the last play. Instead of the usual two or three of us labouring on until often well after 4.00 pm the theatre was spick and span by 2.00 pm. It really made a huge difference and **thank you** to those people, and you know who you are, who came. But let it not be the same faces every time. So please if you can help us keep on top of the dust and grime of a working theatre, your theatre. Come and give us a hand.

Free tea and coffee provided and excellent company guaranteed!!

The next date is **SAT 13th March at 12.30.**



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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	Mr 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
Secretary/Press Officer	John Banks	0161 486 1843
Ticket Secretary	Stella Blackburn	0161 980 8572
Club Drama	Val Harris	0161 928 2277
Club Theatre Office		0161 928 1113

Still in the Dark



Well there may have been power cuts but there are still a lot of people in Altrincham and the surrounding area who don't know about the Club Theatre. I have spoken to you about this a couple of years ago but we have had quite a few new members since then.

Basically I am always looking for new outlets and ways in which we can publicize the theatre and its productions. So if you know anywhere where posters or our flyers can be displayed please let me know. I am very grateful to John Ross and Robert Fysh who already take our posters and flyers to

some areas but I am sure there are other places or premises we could cover. Please feel free to drop me a line or call at the theatre if you know of anywhere or would like to help in any way even if it's just taking a poster to be displayed in your local shop. Every bit helps. Thank you.

John F. Banks Press Officer

The End Bit

We would all like to be blessed with divine wisdom. There are those who believe that wisdom comes with age. Others think that some people are born wise. The latter may be true as these words of wisdom that came to our attention recently. They were

all made by children who's average age is 9. Enjoy!!

"Never tell your Mum her diet's not working."

"When your Mum is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair."

"Puppies still have bad breath even after eating a tic-tac."

"You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk."

"If you want a kitten, start out by asking for a horse"

"Never try to baptize a cat."

"Don't wear polka dot underwear under white shorts."

"Felt -tip markers are not good to use as lipstick"

