

November already!

Well hello again! I hope you've got your hearing back after all those fireworks last weekend, and that there weren't any accidents. And for those of you with pets, I hope you had enough valium: my parent's dog seemed to be approaching insanity as Monday night came along!

I'm glad to be back with you all: I'm getting used to be called Anna Jarvis, or (horror of horrors), Mrs Jarvis. Mike and I had a wonderful wedding and a superb honeymoon back in October, and our thanks to everyone who sent their good wishes. Still, we're both back to the grindstone now!

I understand that you had a fantastic first play of the season in *The Devil at Midnight*: all the reports that I'm hearing was that it was absolutely brilliant, and that those of you who were lucky enough to be there Saturday night heard a fascinating interview with the author himself, Brian Clemens. Read page 4 to find out what the two adjudicators thought of it.

But as you all know with the Club Theatre, as soon as one's finished, we're starting the next. Rehearsals are now well underway for *Toad of Toad Hall* in December. Read below for details, and don't forget to book

in plenty of time!

Well, that's all from me for now, but do read the rest of the newsletter, to find out what else is going on and how you can help.

Take care

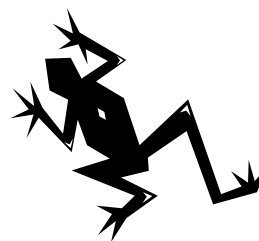
Anna Jarvis



The Club News

Toad of Toad Hall

Get ready for an invasion of rodents this December, as the residents of Toad Hall, their friends and their enemies arrive at The Club Theatre from 2nd to 8th December 2001. Val Harris is directing the cast in this musical



romp, with original songs composed by Val

and John Banks. Not only are the cast working hard, but the stage crew are creating an extremely innovative set, while Barry on lights is doing his usual conjuring tricks!

Promising to be a cracking show, so don't miss it!

Inside this issue:

November already!	1
Toad of Toad Hall	1
The Secret's Out!	2
Severe shortages!	2
Calling all wall-light brackets!	2
Junior Stage 80	3
The Pitlochry Festival	3
The Devil at Midnight	4
The New Front of House Scheme	4

The Secret's Out! (by John Banks, Publicity Officer)

In the past The Club Theatre has been advertised as 'Altrincham's best kept secret'. Unfortunately that secret has been kept too well and I am shocked to discover that so many people in Altrincham and its surrounding area have no idea of its existence.

There are exciting times ahead as we strive to bring The Club Theatre into the 21st century. Don't panic! That doesn't mean putting on plays you won't understand, changing our décor to Art Nouveau or altering our friendly style. What I hope to do is to increase people's awareness, heighten the theatre's profile.



Get talking about The Club Theatre!

Therefore if you have any ideas, suggestions or views as to how this could be done e.g. people I could approach, places where we could advertise, then please leave

me a message or write to me at the theatre. In this way we hope to gain more exposure, more support, more interest and more people, which in the long term will help us maintain and improve the theatre in every aspect for its members.

So don't just talk about us to your family but tell your friends, neighbours, acquaintances and visitors.

The Secret's Out!!

Spread the News!

Severe shortages!

I know everyone is going to want to see Toad of Toad Hall, from 2nd to 8th December. We're certainly anticipating being very busy!

But we have one little problem. Many of our regular front of house staff are actually on stage in this play, which leaves us with a severe shortage in the kitchen and

raffle department!

So we need your help. There are a number of ways you can help: by giving us a whole night, or even by volunteering just to sell raffle

*We need your help! Please call
us. We can't do everything on
our own.*

tickets, coffee tokens, programmes or sweets before the show on the night you're watching. But we are going to need quite a few of you. It doesn't matter if you've never done it before, you won't be on your own!

Please, call Val Harris on 0161 928 2277 and offer your help.

Calling all brass-effect wall-light brackets!

The Club Theatre prides itself on its attention to detail when arranging the props and stage dressings for plays. We are often commended for the quality and appropriateness of our props by our adjudicators.

Our props manager, Charles Thomas, is a genius at finding the exact items that we need, and he and his sister Gillean have worked miracles hand-making the more peculiar props. Likewise Barry

Swithenbank excels in finding just the right type of light fitting for each play.

But it would be easier if we already knew where to find them. So here's an advance plea: one of the plays this season requires some brass-effect wall-light brackets, and we don't have any. If you have some we could borrow, or know where we could get some, please contact the theatre.

And if you have any other bits and pieces that you would be happy to let us borrow if we needed them, we'd love to know about it. Hopefully, we can establish a directory of 'who has what' that we can borrow. We might not use them this season, but we'll probably find a use for them pretty soon! Leave a message at the theatre, and we'll get in touch. You know us, we're always grateful for anything that comes our way!

Junior Stage 80

We are proud to announce that Junior Stage 80 are coming to the Club Theatre to present their performance of "Guys and Dolls".

"Guys and Dolls" is a wonderful musical, set in New York in the 1940s. This part of Broadway is known as "Runyonland" after the man who invented all the characters.

Desperate to find money to pay for his floating crap game, Nathan Detroit bets Sky Masterson a thousand dollars that Sky will not be able to take the first girl he sees to Cuba. That girl is the local Salvation Army girl, Sarah Brown. While Sky eventually is able to convince Sarah to join him, Nathan battles with his fiancée of fourteen years, Adelaide. Adelaide is a dancer at the Hot Box club and suffers from a cold due to the fact that she is still unmarried.

When Sky returns to New York he

bets all the members of the floating crap game that if he wins the roll of the dice, they will all have to go to the mission. If he loses, he will give them each a thousand dollars. He wins and all the gamblers end up visiting the



Come and see a great musical, and support young theatre too!

mission and repenting their sins.

The cast of Junior Stage 80 are all between 11 and 16 years of age. This production is being directed by Byron McGuinness and

produced by Barry Price. The Club Theatre is delighted to welcome them to the Club Theatre and hope that you will all offer your support to them.

The performances are Wednesday 12th, Thursday 13th and Sunday 16th December, and tickets (£9.50) can be purchased from Sandra Stewart, phone 0161 980 7305. An added incentive (not that you should need one), is that there will be a donation from the proceeds to the Robert Whiteson Memorial Fund for Research into Hodgkin's Disease and Leukaemia. There aren't many tickets left so do phone as soon as you can, help a highly worthy cause and support these budding actors and actresses.

We are going to need front of house staff for the performance nights, just to do coffee and staff the bar, and be available in case of emergency to guide people out. If you are able to help, please call

The Pitlochry Festival Theatre (by Ian Haselgrove)

If you are going to Scotland next year, do try to include Pitlochry in your tour. One of this charming town's principal attractions is the Festival Theatre, set attractively overlooking the Tummel River. Five different plays run concurrently throughout the season, so during your stay it is therefore possible to enjoy several plays all in the same week!

From May to October, the Theatre is active every weekday evening, with matinees on Wednesday and Saturday, and occasional Sunday concerts. The theatre seats 550 in great comfort in a curved auditorium and includes a restaurant and café. Another interesting feature is the "backstage tour" which can be enjoyed during one of the mornings of your stay.

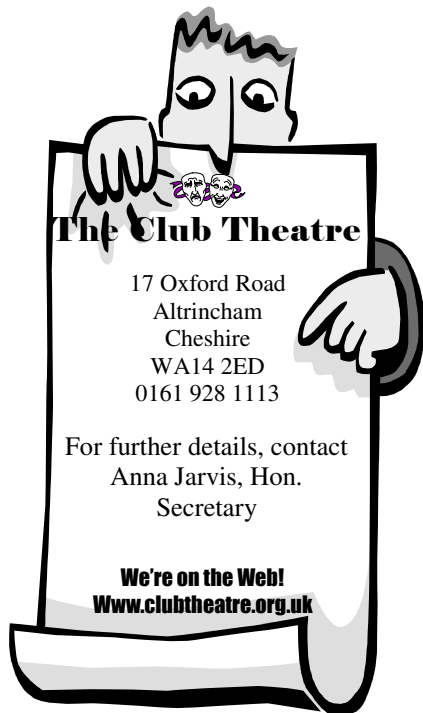
Next year's programme is as follows:

- 24th May on – "Amadeus", an award winning play by Peter Schaffer.
- 30th May on – "The Hollow", an Agatha Christie murder-mystery.
- 6th June on – "Absurd Person Singular", a comedy by Alan Ayckbourn.
- 13th June on – "Side by Side by Sondheim", a Sondheim musical.
- 25th July on – "The Queen of Spades" adapted from the novella by Pushkin and the opera by Modest and Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

If you are now wondering how in staging a different play each night, they manage to cope with all those scene changes, you will have to go on the backstage tour to discover their secrets!

To contact them, call the General Box Office on 01796 484 626, email them on boxoffice@pitlochry.org.uk, or access their website on www.pitlochry.org.uk.

If you know of any places to see some really good theatre while on holiday, or even just worth going to for the day, let me know and I'll let everyone else know. After all, it's drama as a whole we're interested in, not just the Club Theatre (though we're favourite, of course!)



The Devil at Midnight, by Brian Clemens

You know what you thought of it (from what we've heard, you thought it was brilliant!). But I thought you might like to hear what the two adjudicators thought of it. We are adjudicated this year by Joan Cooper from the Greater Manchester Drama Federation and Garth Jones from the Cheshire Theatre Guild. After each play they send in written comments about all aspects of the play, from sound, lighting and direction to each individual actor's performance. Here are some quotes from each report.

Garth Jones said

"This was one of the best full sets from the Club Theatre in recent times, and they have had their share of good ones"

"The Club Theatre met all the challenges of this play and the teamwork was impressive. Well done everyone."

"The dialogue was well served by good clear delivery and the acting and direction matched line for line the cut and thrust of the humorous yet tense dialogue. Music, sound and lighting played an enormous and effective role and the play had good audiences to help it along. I was caught in the excitement, excited by the acting and full of admiration for the director who had pulled it all together."

Joan Cooper's comments included:

"a beautifully decorated and furnished lounge/consulting area. Considerable thought, with an acute eye for detail, had gone into the design": "extremely well dressed set"

Re lighting, "an extremely busy evening and one on which you excelled, with superbly taken cues"

Re wardrobe, "Well chosen, with an eye for detail ... - an impressive array!"

"This production was directed with panache, to which players and technicians positively responded."

With comments like that, I think everyone, even those only slightly involved with the play, should be extremely proud of themselves. Congratulations!

The new front of house scheme

Those of you who came to see the last show will have noticed that we had a slightly new system for front of house. For those of you who didn't come, and for those who didn't quite understand it last time, it was suggested that I do a quick outline of how it's all going to work.

When you first arrive at the theatre, there will be a seat-ticket seller at the desk in the ground floor foyer – normally

this will be Stella and/or Jack Blackburn. If you already have tickets, you don't need to stop here, though do give Stella and Jack a friendly hello!

Up the stairs, there are two doors:



Our new coffee and raffle system – take note!

the first takes you into the upstairs foyer. Here there will be one steward, who will welcome you, and direct you to either the sweet stall, where you can buy sweets and coffee tokens, or into the auditorium and/or bar to buy your raffle tickets and programmes. If you go through the second door, up the two steps to your right, you will enter the bar straightaway.

There will be two people in the auditorium, one selling raffle tickets the other selling programmes, and an identical arrangement in the bar. To buy coffee tokens please go either to the sweet stall in the upstairs foyer or to the bar: if you don't want coffee at the interval you can order cold drinks at the bar as well.

As far as drawing the raffle is concerned, this will take place during the coffee interval: it will be drawn in the bar, and the numbers will be announced in both the bar and the auditorium, before the bar bells are rung. If you feel the need to go downstairs to the toilets, please leave your raffle tokens with a friend, so you don't miss out!

The reason for these changes are firstly to prevent traffic jams in the upstairs foyer, and secondly to speed the intervals up by cutting down the time spent on the raffle. If you have any comments on the system, please let us know for good or bad. We will be monitoring how it works.

Our main aim is to make things easier and quicker for everyone.