

The Club News

It's That Time Again

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Yes Christmas is nearly upon us, and easter eggs will soon be in the shops.

Take a break from the commercialism and go back to a simpler time with us, see the miracle of Christmas as told by Charles Dickens.

Our next play Mr Scrooge keeps as far as is possible to the original story. It has

something for everyone young and old alike.

You have received this booking letter early because some members are already ringing up for tickets. We make it a rule that tickets are not sold until after the booking letter has been posted. But with the demand we have recently been having for tickets please book as

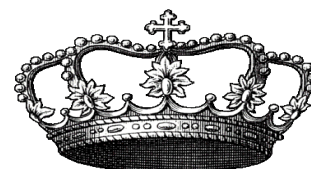
soon as you can. In previous years members have booked extra tickets for the Christmas show.

I apologise to members who like seats A1, A2 and A3 also A11 and A12 these are not available for this show, however there is an extra performance on Saturday afternoon.

'Go Queen'?

As requested at the AGM we had a referendum and asked members to vote as to whether the theatre continues to play the National Anthem at performances. The votes came in, were checked twice, and the result was 60% for and 40% against keeping the Anthem. We hope members will accept this democratic decision with good grace and will also inform any guests they may bring to the plays. It is most disconcerting and upsetting if audience members do not respect the wishes of the majority.

Our lighting man Barry will be pleased to know that he can continue to say 'Go Queen' at the start of every night.



400 Club Winners

The winners of the 400 Club drawn on 15th October 2003 are.

£50 Mrs M.Ledger

£30 Mrs B. Coombs

£10 Mr & Mrs G. Evans
Mrs M. Mullin
Mrs M. Smith
Mr F.R. Eades
Mr P.E.Peel
Mrs P.E. Staffins

£5 Mrs E. Leighton
Mrs C. Lucas
Mr & Mrs J.L. Harris
Mr & Mrs J.C. Finlay
Mr & Mrs R.J. Ashley
Mr J.C. Stretch
Mr & Mrs G. Evans
Mrs M. Burton
Mrs H. Moss
Mr & Mrs M. Smith
Mrs J. Copley
Mr & Mrs R.J. Ashley

£50 Winner

Mrs M Ledger

The numbers are posted on the notice board at the top of the stairs. Anyone requiring a copy of the numbers please ask in the bar.

Plucked from the Past



Not so many years ago, writers had to submit their new playscripts to the Lord Chamberlain's red pencil and he wielded it quite fiercely! Even a mild "Damn it" could be reduced to "Darn it", or if he was very liverish that morning, perhaps even "Dash it"! No nudity of course, perish the thought, and sex (sshh) only occurred at the end of Middle, Es and Sus.

I don't think he had too much trouble with the play the St Margaret's Institute Amateur Dramatic Society produced almost exactly one hundred years ago. 'Time and the Hour', by Simon and Dale was performed on 19th December 1903. The theatre critic of the Altrincham Guardian quite enjoyed it in his pompous, ponderous way, but didn't say what the play was about. He thought it was cleverly constructed, with "a good deal of smart dialogue, but several scenes for whose portrayal the utmost care is essential". Luckily, the Society's progress had "armed the Committee with confidence, and it must be said that their judgement was not open to serious criticism," although "some of the situations were weakened by a lack of freedom and naturalness...even from the work of the more experienced players."

Some of the characters however were "a trifle exaggerated and their eccentricities might have been toned down without sacrificing their humour."

Everyone got a mention. Miss L. Wilkinson was "sprightly" as Mrs Montgomery Brown, but Mr W.H.Stead, as Mr Montgomery brown was probably the reason why she was sharp-tempered and impatient on occasions! However Mr Steel was "a capital foil" and made his character noteworthy. Miss F. Taylor "was full of resource" and Miss Hough deserved "unqualified praise for a quite competent study." Mr F. Clough played Sir Philip Deverall "with a coolness befitting that calculating and clever forger", and Mr J.P. Benson was dignified. Mr F. Stubbs suggested a well-known detective, so he probably did a take-off of Sherlock Holmes! Mr G. Nixon "played a small part with success, Mr A.L. Hall was "not without merit", and only Mr W. Clough "as George Aylmer, was not entirely well suited."

A somewhat uncritical write-up, I think. Reading between the lines, you can almost hear the prompts and see the amateurish creaks of the performance. I'm glad I wasn't around then to see it, even at 1/- (5p for those of us with slightly longer memories) for the best seats. Quite expensive for those days.

Now lets skip a few decades to December 1953, when Vicki Lane was a mere slip of a young lady and produced 'A Horse, a Horse', by L. du Garde Peach. The title comes straight from Shakespeare's King Richard III, of course, but that unhappy monarch would have sold his soul, let

alone his kingdom, for this horse. It could talk! The play was a farce, if you haven't guessed. "Simple humour, naïve fantasy, and heavily padded out moments of hiatus", said the reviewer. The Duke of Wistburgh is hard up, and so stupid he can't see the money-making possibilities when his horse, Persimmon, starts to talk at great length about left wing politics and equine rights. I would have loved to see the horse. It's operator "added to the fun by his clever manipulations of the creature's grins, twitchings and whisperings." It can't have been the standard pantomime horse, then. How did they do it? Does anyone remember?

Again everyone gets a mention. The Duke "was lovingly played by Ronald Allen, who obviously revelled in the part. " Irene Alexander was his duchess and made "a really believable person of her." Their daughter was "definitely not the best acting part in the play", but Iris Byers, charming, made the best of it. Donald Chapman as Morgan "helped the comedy along in fine style," and Denis Murphy's Cockney accent was good, (when you could hear him!)

Again, an uncritical review of what sounds like a truly awful play. Well, they don't write plays like that any more. Thank God for that, do I hear you say? I shall have another trawl through the archives for your next newsletter, to see what more gems from the past I can find.

David Eastwood

An uncritical review

What A Super 'Suite'

Congratulations to Director Jean Drinkwater on her directing debut with the delightful 'Plaza Suite'. Also well done to her cast and all the crew who helped make it happen. Neil Simon is a popular playwright and it is a long time since we produced one of his plays. Well, it seems it was a good choice, turning out to be a very good start to the season and it was wonderful to receive a call on Tuesday night to announce that the 'Sold Out' signs could be displayed. The stage crew had built a lovely split hotel suite set with its New York skyline and with the strains of Frank Sinatra, we were transported to Suite 719, Plaza Hotel, New York.

So onward and upward as they say. The standard has been set and we wish Director John Banks, his cast and crew equal success with 'Mr Scrooge'.



Film Society

Mr John Grieve, Secretary of the Manchester & Salford Film Society sent us a very nice letter recently. He would like to thank all those members who turned up for the Film Society's first film of their new season. The evening was a great success and he looks forward to seeing everyone again at the next screening.

This will be on November the 8th and is called 'La Commune'. The film is French, 6 hours long (yes that's right—value for money) and is in French with English subtitles. However, he stresses that you should not be put off by foreign language films. The subtitles are easy to follow and you will soon get caught up in

the action.

This film starts at 3pm and will have a 1 hour break in the middle.

Their next film is An Autumn Tale on 22nd November 2003. 110 mins certificate U This film will start at 7.30pm

Don't Lose Out!

The last two years have seen a big increase in our audiences and demand for tickets for our shows. This season looks set to be another busy one for everyone at the theatre and certainly this has been very evident at the box office. The first play was sold out by the middle of the week.

It pays to book early or you will lose out. Some did, as I received their booking forms during the week of the play!!

If you could bear in mind the following points it would be of a great help to me.

- **Please could you indicate, as requested, a second choice night on your booking form.**
- **If you cannot come please ring me and let me know. You can contact me up to 6 pm on the evening of the performance. I can usually resell these tickets to people who are waiting but not if you leave it until you see me at the theatre.**
- **Could I also remind patrons to have their tickets ready for checking when they enter the theatre door.**

We will do our best to get booking forms out early but it helps if you get them back to me as soon as possible so I can sort out your seats as I also get a lot of outside bookings these days.

Thank you very much. I hope you enjoyed the last play and look forward to seeing you at the theatre's next production.

Stella Blackburn
Ticket Secretary

**'SOLD OUT'
Again**



THE CLUB THEATRE

17 Oxford Road
Altrincham
Cheshire
WA14 2ED

Phone: 0161 928 1113
E-mail: secretary@clubtheatre.org.uk
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

Spick and Span

The theatre has often been described as a 'Tardis' as there is just so much more to it than many people realise. It never fails to baffle and amuse visitors, as we take them round, how many little nooks and crannies there are. However, all these areas have to be kept clean and none so much as the areas that you, the public, sees and uses; namely the foyers, bar, auditorium and toilets. We do not employ any cleaners but a small group do it on a regular basis. However, and this is a big **HOWEVER**, we would like a little help.

Now we are not asking every day or every week but just a couple of hours on one particular day. That day is the Saturday before the first performance of every show . After 'Club Drama' the theatre has to be dusted , hoovered and the bar stocked up in readiness for the first night. This last time it ended up being done by just three people! Two of them being the Chairman and the Vice Chairman. If anyone is willing to come and help, just for a couple of hours on this day, it would be great. Like Front of House duties, we have a bit of a laugh, a coffee and a chat and the work gets done with enough hands, in half the time.

The next cleaning session of this type will be on the **29th November at 12.30 am**. Before the first night of 'Mr Scrooge'. If you can come, we will be delighted to see you.



The Actor's Joke



This landed on the Newsletter desk. We hope you like!

A Musical Director, a Lighting Technician and an Actor are all persuaded to take part in a workshop. Each is locked in a small cell like room with no furniture and only a small window high up

in the wall.

Each is given two large glass marbles to amuse themselves with.

After a while the invigilator looks in on each in turn.

The MD is happily playing marbles.

The Techie is holding the marbles to the light diffusing and refracting the rays of sunlight.

The Actor has lost one and broken the other.