

# The Club News

## A New Season

To quote Victor Meldew "I don't believe it". Another season is starting, it only seems a couple of weeks ago we were planning the refurbishments to the auditorium.

As you will have read in the last newsletter, and I make no apologies for repeating it, the auditorium has been spruced up. The seating was removed and sent away to Essex to be reupholstered. While the seats were out we took the opportunity to

repaint the ceiling and proscenium. The carpets were cleaned and the seat bases were checked and cleaned. We hope you will appreciate the new look. Those who sponsored Anna Jarvis's cycle ride will be pleased to know that her efforts raised £1000 which went towards paying for the seat refurbishment.

Behind the scenes we have also installed a new sound system. We welcome any members of the audience to the Perch to view our new

state of the art equipment.

We have lined up an exciting season for you which opens with a comedy/thriller/farce and will be followed by our Christmas production of 'Alice in Wonderland'.

You should have already received a copy of our new seasons brochure with details of each play. If you want any more they are available in the bar and the downstairs foyer.

## The Last Hurrah for the GCSE Drama Course

This year's GCSE Drama group were the final class to take the examination and they did the theatre proud! Twenty four students completed the course and all performed with great credit.

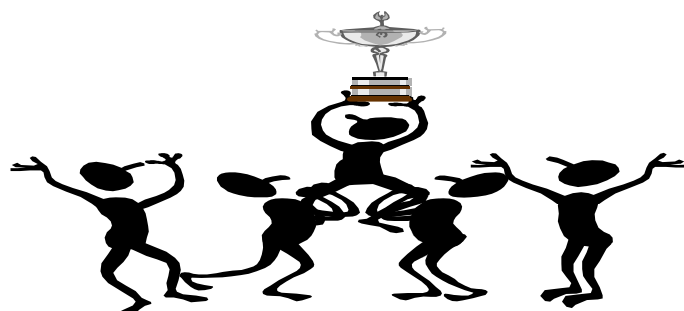
Four gained B grades, twelve gained A grades and eight were awarded A\* grades which are usually awarded to only the top 3% of the country. So you can see that we are justifiably proud of their achievements.

The only reason that we can no longer offer young people the opportunity to take the GCSE in Drama and Theatre Arts in the future is because the examining boards in their

wisdom have changed the format of the exam. Students now have to sit a written paper and the whole course is far more academic--- not what Drama is all about really! Anyway, at least we have gone out with our best results ever.

I must say thank you to John Banks, Mike Donahue and Dee Frazer, for having been

most supportive and encouraging to both myself and to the students over the past few years. I shall miss many aspects of this course but not the MARKING!! It has been hard work for all concerned but there have been some wonderful moments and I can look back on some very happy memories.



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**'They did the theatre proud'**

## ALTRINCHAM FESTIVAL AWARDS CLUB

On Thursday evening, the 12<sup>th</sup> September Chairman Ian Bowden and Vice Chairman Val Harris attended a presentation at the Cresta Court Hotel held by the Altrincham Festival Committee.

They were there joining a group of representatives from other local charities who were to be presented with cheques. This was for their work in helping to promote the Altrincham Festival, this in turn supports various organisations like The Club Theatre.

Chairman Tony Fishwick,

informed everyone that the Festival has now been running for 25 years and that this year had been a particularly successful one with over £3000 pounds having been raised.

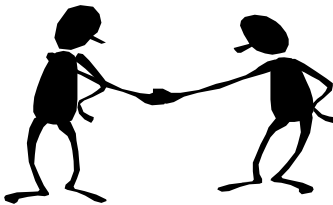
Upon receiving their award Val Harris thanked the Festival Committee on behalf of all at The Club Theatre and added that the money would go towards the recent refurbishing of the auditorium seating.

Tea, coffee, and sandwiches were available afterwards and this gave everyone the

chance to talk with the other organisations that were present.

Once again we would like to thank the Altrincham Festival Committee for their gift and hope to take part in the parade next year.

News of this will be given out to Club members nearer the time as we will need help on the day



## “FUN AUCTION”.

Something a little different will be happening at Green Lane High School in Timperley on Wednesday evening the 25<sup>th</sup> September.

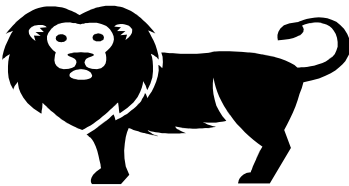
The school with the support of Altrincham and District Lions are holding a ‘Fun Auction’. This is taking place to support the schools’ bid to becoming a Specialist

School in the Visual Arts. Viewing starts at 7.00 pm and the auction itself at 7.30 pm.

There will be a Bar selling alcoholic and soft drinks while tea and coffee will also be available. Admission is Free and this promises to be an excellent evening.

This is a very good cause and as you know The Club Theatre is always supportive of young people.

We in turn would also like to thank the Altrincham Lions for their support in our recent publicity drive.



## PLEASE HELP STELLA.

With her husband, Jack, our Ticket Secretary Stella Blackburn does a great job dealing with all your booking inquiries and ticket distribution.

We have not forgotten how she immediately offered to step into the breach and take on this daunting and demanding task when Vicki Lane died.

What we are going to be doing from now on, is that the front of house staff will check and be removing the tear-off slip on your ticket when you arrive at the theatre.

There are several reasons for introducing this but the main two reasons are that it helps us keep a check on how many people are in the theatre and also helps Stella

with her Ticket sales check and accounting.

Like many new changes that have been introduced at The Club Theatre, it is something that will take a little getting used to by house staff and patrons alike but please be patient with each other.

So please remember to show your ticket, get it torn and this in turn will help reduce Stella’s blood pressure.

## STILL BOOMING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

In 1937 The Daily Mail published an article in its YearBook entitled 'Amateur Theatre "Boom" in Britain'. It makes interesting reading as there have been very few changes over the years therefore much of it is still relevant today.

In sharp contrast to the decline in vitality of the theatre in the provinces - indeed link the two as cause and effect - is the amazing growth of the amateur dramatic movement in all parts of Britain.

So rapid has been the growth during the past two or three years that the use of the word "boom" is probably justified. It is a "boom" which is likely to reverberate for an indefinite period.

Owing to the absence of a rigid and reliable form of central registration, it is not possible to give the exact number of amateur dramatic societies operating today. It can be stated however, that the number is not far short of 40,000.

The larger number of these societies have a membership of over 100 - some of them four or five times that number - and it is therefore safe to assume that there cannot be less than a million amateur players in Britain today.

There is no one organisation, which embraces all these societies, but there are several, which cater for their needs. The British Drama League, one of the best-known, has about 4,000 societies affiliated to it

During the past two winters

new societies have been formed in impressive numbers and the central organisations report that this winter the total will be a record. Scotland particularly is breeding great numbers of amateur players. There the movement is well nurtured by the Scottish Community Drama Association, which is making great strides.

Several facts may be advanced to explain this generally increasing interest in amateur acting. On the one hand the economic circumstances operating within the professional theatre itself have deprived great numbers of comparatively large communities of any opportunity of seeing professional productions.

The provincial touring system, for instance, is practically dead, and many provincial theatres have been turned into cinemas.

A great stimulation of interest too, has been provided by the strong competitive element, which has now been introduced into the movement. Drama festivals take place every year in all parts of Britain and there is keen competition to win the premier awards. There is a good deal of area rivalry, and "teams" can now work their way through to the regional "finals", much as star football teams win their way to the Wembley Stadium.

Quite recently, this interest in acting has spread to the villages, where it is now almost as strongly entrenched as in the towns. Organisations like Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds have done a lot to create the new

interest in community drama and now organise their own competitions, for which there are large and competent entries.

Of recent years it has been noticeable that the churches have withdrawn tacitly their opposition to "amateur theatricals." There are now almost as many church as secular societies.

Allied with this great growth in numerical strength are a deeper sense of realism in the amateur theatre, a stronger desire to forge new links between the drama and life, and a more sincere attempt to make contact with something which can teach lessons instead of serving merely as a medium for exhibitionists.

As an outcome, too, there is a demand for plays - especially one-act plays - which the "amateurs" can take to their bosoms. They have, indeed, kept the one-act play alive and given it surprising vitality. So much so that many of our most competent and most famous dramatists are now finding it worth-while to write these little plays.

*David Eastwood.*

**Amazing growth  
of amateur  
dramatic  
movement.**

**Keen competition  
to win the premier  
awards**

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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.

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

## THE POWER OF THE PEN.



Ever fancied yourself as a writer? Got a good story that you would like to share? Both the newsletter and programme are always looking for articles to be published.

The newsletter is your theatre news and we would love to hear from you and what you think about your theatre. If you feel strongly about something then write

in, we will take your comments on board and, space permitting, publish your letter.

Have you brought a programme recently? One member has been buying one at every show for over 30 years and has certainly seen some changes.

Have you noticed the new format? Read the interesting articles? No! Then you are

missing out. Think you could do better? Then write to us at the theatre and you could soon see your name in print. So be it stories, jokes, comments, reviews or ideas The Club Theatre team welcomes them all.

So don't just think about it pick up a pen and get scribbling now.

## WHAT DID YOU SAY?

.We may be amateurs in our chosen field but we always try to act in a professional manner, come what may. However nerves are one of our worst enemies and can play havoc with the best of people. The history of theatre is littered with stories of how they have affected both novices and professionals alike. It's nice to know one is never alone but in good

company. Here is just one little story for you to enjoy.

Appearing with Robert Atkins at the Open Air Theatre, Regents Park, a young actor was supposed to come on as a page at the start of the play with the line: 'My lord, the King is here.' Nervous on the first night, he entered and delivered the line: 'My

Lord, the King is dead.' Robert Atkins took him by the throat and shook him like a rat. 'The words by the greatest poet the word has ever known,' he bellowed. 'The scenery, by God! The director a genius, though I say so myself. And YOU come on and bugger the whole play up.' Sometimes on stage we die in more ways than one!!