

ALTRINCHAM LITTLE THEATRE



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2020



In theatre we have a tradition - whenever the theatre is empty we always leave one light on: typically on a stand in the centre of the stage. This light is known as the ghost light. There are many stories about its origin- but its meaning is unmistakable.

It means that though the theatre is empty, WE WILL RETURN. The one thing holding us up is the need for social distancing. Until that is removed we cannot realistically have you in the theatre again. You would have to queue up to enter the building as you do now to go shopping, the bar would have to be out of action and probably the toilets, we couldn't serve coffee in the interval. We would only be able to seat about 25—30 a

night instead of our maximum of 134 and you would have to wear masks all the time.

We have been trying to make plans but everything is so vague at the moment it is difficult to decide anything with much confidence, as, almost daily, advice and instructions change with little warning. However, we shall share with you what we WOULD LIKE TO DO, and hope we can confirm many of our decisions as soon as we can. However, this is unlikely to be before next January at the earliest, but we will let you know as soon as we can start planning with any confidence.

Firstly, there is unlikely to be any chance of opening again before January and many of the professional theatres are saying the same. We would like to start again with the two plays we had to cancel when lockdown was imposed—Dead Certain and Passing Strangers. This depends on the availability of the actors we had already cast and whether they are still available to perform. It also depends on whether the production as planned allows them to keep a safe distance away from each other on stage. We also need to check whether we will have time to build the set for Passing Strangers as we are also hoping to host productions by our friends from Sale and Altrincham Musical Theatre - firstly a show by their Youth Theatre and secondly by the adult group. Planned production dates may need to be altered to allow time for sets to be taken down from one show and built for the next one.

This leads me to another urgent matter we need to address in the near future—that of the shortage of helpers on the stage team to build and decorate the sets. Alan Reidsma and Don Hines have been doing sterling work since last summer, altering and modernising the toilets in the dressing rooms but this has been done alongside all their efforts building sets for the plays. They really cannot continue to work as hard as they have been doing. We desperately need volunteers to join the team to take some of the load off their shoulders. Experience is not essential but a willingness to turn up regularly and to learn some simple DIY skills is. If you could help in any way, or know someone else who could, please contact Ian Bowden (07850 825 256) or Steve Smith (07866 630 478) as soon as possible for further discussions about how you or those you know could help. We are becoming very concerned that there will soon come a time when we are unable to build sets for plays in future because of lack of a stage team.

We finally had a committee meeting the other week using Zoom, which meant the majority of us could discuss urgent matters from the comfort of our own homes. One topic we considered was next year's subscriptions and it was agreed unanimously that, as you had missed three plays recently and would probably only be able to see three plays next season, current members would not be charged a subscription fee for January to August 2021. Please do nothing until you hear from us in writing, but we thought you might like to hear the good news. There will be nothing to stop you donating the money this saves you as a gift to the theatre (we could do with the financial help) and we shall, of course carry on with our usual 300 Club draws which also help with the fund raising. Talking of which, the last two draws were made at the Zoom committee meeting and the winners are listed at the end of this newsletter.

Another matter we discussed at our Zoom meeting was the question of the forthcoming AGM. Normally this is held in the summer, usually in June. However, this seems to be far too early this year to be able to hold a meaningful meeting. Several alternatives were discussed but no conclusion was reached, other than whatever we do, it won't be until much later in the year. We talked about holding a Zoom AGM but only about half of you have a computer so that idea was rejected. We also considered holding a meeting in the auditorium as we usually do. This would be possible with the usual attendance we get (about 20-25) but if more than that wanted to come we would have serious problems with social distancing. A third alternative would be to send out a written report of what we managed to achieve before lockdown happened together with a pre-prepared set of Q and As on topics we expected would have been raised had we had our usual type of AGM. We intend to discuss the matter again at our next meeting so will let you know the format we then decide upon. The date has been decided—Wednesday October 7th. Details to follow later.

4th and 5th 300 Club Draws

	Fourth Play	Fifth Play
£100	J P Tickle	Mrs P Stuffins
£50	Mrs B Smith	Mrs M Ballantyne
£30	Mr & Mrs M Granger-Brown	Mr R M Smith
£30	John Grieve	Mrs I Emery
£15	Mrs J Copley	Anjan Trivedi
£15	Mr D R Copley	Mrs S Percy
£15	Steve Smith	Mr & Mrs Bannister
£15	Mrs M Ballantyne	Mr & Mrs M Granger-Brown
£15	Mr & Mrs M Granger-Brown	Jean Ormerod
£15	Christine Heath	Mrs J Ankers

Our policy is not to send cash in the post as it can get lost, however as the theatre will not be open for some time please get in touch with Ian on 07850 825256 if you would like us to send you a cheque or pay your winnings into your bank.

CONTACT DETAILS

Should you need to get in touch with us at any time, these are the relevant contact details;

By phone — 0161 928 1113

By email — alt.theatre@msn.com

Ticket sales — ct.tickets@gmail.com

Costume Hire Service — 0161 928 1113

Our website — www.alttheatre.org

Charity Registration Number: 517914

I am sorry you have had to wait so long for this newsletter but, believe it or not, I started writing it in the middle of June. Every time I thought I had finished it and it could go to Ian to be checked and circulated, the powers that be changed the rules and I had to alter parts of it. At the moment all we can say for certain is that:

- ♦ you will not be asked for any membership fee for the next season
- ♦ we are hoping to hold some form of AGM on Wednesday October 7th
- ♦ we are hoping to start producing plays again next spring.

Keep your fingers crossed that nothing else changes too drastically to alter those plans.

Take great care of yourselves. See you soon we hope.

It is with great sorrow that we have to report the loss of several much-valued members.

We knew that our President **Paula Tilbrook** had died last December and her funeral was held in early January but her family had asked us not to release the news at that time. In fact it only became public knowledge several weeks ago. Paula was a great supporter of our theatre and visited us regularly when her TV schedule or health allowed. We have made no plans to replace her with a new President at present.

Councillor Jane Baugh sadly passed away in February. She has been a supporter of our theatre for many years and was a much valued and respected Trafford Councillor as well as having been Mayor of the Borough.

Lindsey Andrews also sadly died in February. She had been an audience member for some time and fairly recently joined our front of house team.

At the end of March we heard of the death of **Robert Fysshe**, a member for many years, who also helped by distributing posters round the district for us advertising our shows.

We were saddened to hear of the sudden death of **Mary Eastwood** beloved wife of David known to so many of you for his appearances on stage and as a member of the front of house team. He is also a senior member of Altrincham Court Leet.

The death of **Victoria**, beloved wife of Gil Lane-Young and daughter of David and Vicky Lane in April was a shock to us all. We had known of her serious illness for some time, but thought she would have longer with her husband Gil than she did. Victoria has supported her parents work in reviving the theatre from the age of 4, attending rehearsals and helping behind the scenes.

The final death that we have heard of has come as the biggest shock of all to us. **Peter Nawn**, one of the funniest actors we have had the honour to grace our stage and an accomplished director. He was visiting family in Australia and New Zealand over Christmas as he and Marie his wife did every year, when he had a massive heart attack from which he didn't recover.

Our deepest condolences go to all the families and friends of these we have lost (and any others we may not have been told of). We understand that there will be services of remembrance to celebrate their lives when circumstances permit and we will let you have details when we know them.