

Autumn 2017

scene

The Wall wins



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OFFICE OPENING HOURS

Our staff work flexible hours but the national administrator's normal office hours are Tues-Thurs 8am-3.30pm, so please leave a message and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

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Chairman's Chat

Dear all,

Hopefully by now you'll have been able to see some of Walter Hampson's lovely photos of the British Final in Belfast. We very kindly loaned Walter out to the British Final Organising Committee as their official Photographer



All of those who were able to make it to Belfast to support Aberfeldy Drama Club were treated to 4 excellent plays, all very different in their themes and none that didn't deserve a place at the British Final.

Belfast made SCDA very welcome, and we were so proud of Aberfeldy and all the support that came with them. Their performance had the audience in equal measure of laughter and tears and, judging by reactions, were definitely the audience favourite, however when the adjudicator states "head must rule heart" we knew that we had lost out to the beautifully choreographed and presented performance from England.

And so back to old clothes and porridge and thoughts of the next few months for SCDA running up to our AGM, we've got some exciting plans as you'll read further on, and we have many teams performing at the Edinburgh Fringe – please try and support them if you can. I hope some of you managed to get to Carole's event discussing 'Amateurs at the Fringe' at Fringe Central at Appleton Tower on the 9th August. There will be some interesting discussion I am sure and look forward to reading about it in a future issue of Scene

Yours aye

Jackie

Poster Competition - Reminder

An exciting opportunity for your club to be recognised at the SCDA Scottish Finals

We are well aware of the range of talent needed for every production and to recognise one of the skills involved we are still running our poster competition the Dunmore trophy for the winning entry to be presented at the Scottish Final at the Churchill Theatre.

What to do? SCDA member clubs are invited to send to Scene at scene@scda.org.uk a copy of any poster they have designed and used to promote a production between 1st January and 31st December 2018. The production need not be linked to any festival entry and the competition will hopefully attract entries from clubs throughout the country. The main criteria are that each poster must have on it the SCDA logo and/or say they are members of the Scottish Community Drama Association in their design. Come on clubs you should be proud of your membership of SCDA. If you have had a busy year and have had several shows then please feel free to send as many posters as you wish. Electronic PDF files are preferred, but printed posters will also be accepted. **Closing date:** 1st January 2018 and they will be given to a suitably qualified judge.

The top three posters will be displayed at the Scottish Final and printed in the spring issue of Scene.

NB: As always, the judge's decision is final.

Performance Skills Workshop

There was a very good turnout of Kilmardinny members for a performance skills workshop in Milngavie's Lower Lesser Hall at the end of April. **Carole Williams** SCDA National Drama Advisor, delivered a workshop on body language and physicality. Everyone enjoyed the workshop and learned some important techniques to apply as performers and directors.



Following some body and voice warm ups, Carole led the group through a series of exercises. Beginning with the use of gesture and spontaneous response, members then worked in pairs to develop sequences made out of ten separate touches. The main body of the workshop was concerned with 'inner

monologues' – how to show character, thoughts, feelings and intentions without the use of words. Individuals were asked to sequence their responses to a number of imagined stimuli (sights, sounds, smells, sudden thoughts/recollections and so on). We were then split into two



groups to develop

(silent) sketches based round the idea of waiting on a beach for the sun to rise and spending time in a hospital waiting room. At each stage, there was feedback and discussion of the work. Carole finally offered a checklist for actors to use in exploring character when preparing a performance.



The evening was a great success and worth making a regular feature of the club programme.

CLASS ADS

(The small ads page)

Playwright?; small business?; buying or selling?; All kinds of small ads accepted. Have your ad read throughout SCDA land. Contact scene@scda.org.uk
Send your details to Scene Magazine's classified page.
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Welcome....

to the following new individual members: -Netta Brown, Joyce Baillie, Mrs E Herdman, all Orkney, welcome back Ian Carmichael and Ola Tait., also Orkney; Chester Parker, Edinburgh and to TOT Theater, Edinburgh and Byre Writers, Fife

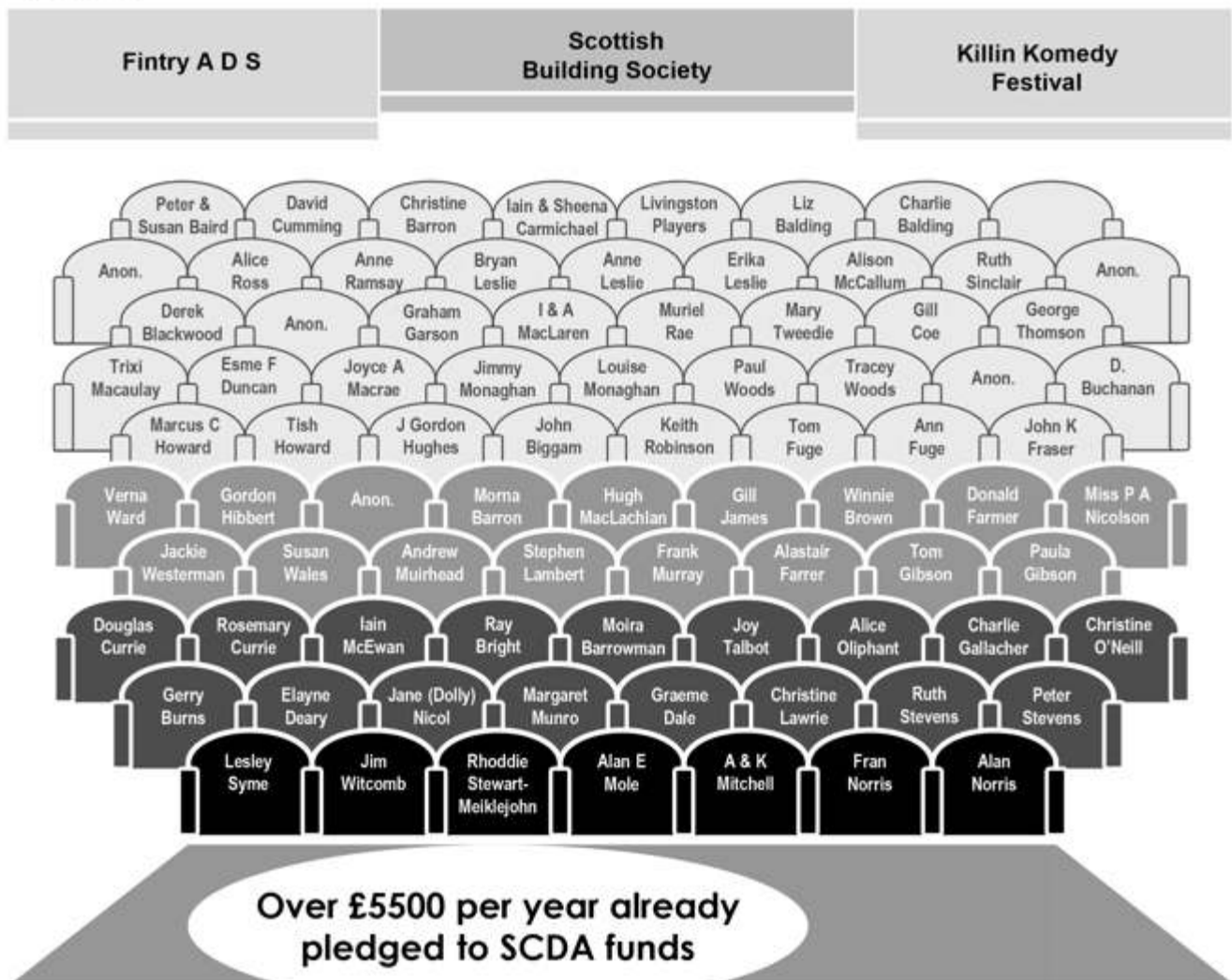
Thank you....

to Rhoddie Stewart-Meiklejohn; Tony and Lorna Flisch; Stornoway Thespians; Braemar Performing Artists; Susan Wales and Mr B McKenzie for their kind donations and, as usual, to National Committee and Exec members for donating their expenses.

Tony Flisch
National Vice Chairman
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Can you spare between £5 and £10 a month to help SCDA survive the biggest challenge of its 90 year history?

Please join our band of supporters. SCDA faces a huge ongoing challenge to meet its goals without the benefit of funding from Creative Scotland. Your donation of £5 (or more!) per month will help us achieve those goals. You'll find an application form on our website and they are also available from SCDA HQ.



Our grateful thanks go to our Patrons and Corporate Donors for supporting our virtual theatre. These donations are vital to the success of our Association.

Captive Passion

Little did I ever imagine back when I started attending a youth theatre, that I would be one day directing a Passion Play in the middle of maximum security prisons! That's what I love about theatre - the way it reaches out to anyone and everyone, so welcoming and all inclusive. There are no barriers physical or otherwise in theatre.

And so in 2010, that's exactly where I did find myself - in Angola Penitentiary, Louisiana after agreeing to come and teach "The Life of Jesus" play to inmates and have subsequently directed the same play in a Brazilian prison and last year in Opera prison, Milan with a smaller version also being produced in Greenock prison - bit closer to home!



Brazil

I've been directing Passion plays for many years in various different formats and had been directing an open air large scale promenade production at Dundas Castle when Assistant Warden Cathy Fontenet visited there. When she heard about the play, she thought it would be perfect for the inmates in the prison.

Angola is the largest prison in the USA with over 6000 male inmates all of whom are serving over fifty years to life and used to be known as a hell-hole with violence and murder within the prison being common. Fifteen years ago, Warden Burl Cain arrived bringing his Christian values to the prison

which transformed it radically. His radical outlook also allowed us to work with women inmates from another prison - that is the biggest risk factor in the whole project as male and female prisoners are not allowed to be close to each other, let alone touch each other! I've managed to do that in every prison apart from Brazil. And yet, it was one of the most touching moments at the end of year one when the women said to the men "Thank you for treating us like women again - like sisters and mothers". So moving.

In 2010, my only experience of American prisons was what I'd see on TV - and they all looked very violent and dangerous places.

Meeting the drama group in the prison was quite daunting initially - but soon we found that we had common ground in a love of theatre, God and ready to create a production that would indeed be ground-breaking. There were so many issues in the first year as no-one had ever staged such a large production with a cast of 100 prisoners before especially not within a prison situation! That is another article in itself!

Working with a cast and crew who are all murderers, rapists, armed robbers and paedophiles does challenge you on

a daily basis - not because they are violent and evil, but more because they are the exact



Louisiana

opposite! The majority of the inmates have indeed turned their lives around and in their words wanted to do the play "to show the world they weren't the monsters the public perceive us to be". It was so humbling working with them and sad to hear their stories. The Director who I was mentoring was sentenced to death at aged 16, spent two years on death row and is now in prison for life. He is 55 years old now and a very humble, wise and perceptive Director who rules his cast with a gentle rod of iron! Amazingly, the law changed two years ago and he is now free which is wonderful!

They work so hard on the play, desperate to get it right and we could learn a lot from them. Every cast member knew off by heart at least two roles each and could step into a role at the blink of an eye. The girl that plays Mary Magdalene literally had lived the same life - brought up in an abusive home, abused by men all her life and finally snapped, killing her abusive partner - she is now serving life. So when she kneels at the feet of Jesus and he forgives her, she says she feels his forgiveness. That's what's so amazing about this play - the power of theatre and the spiritual nature of the story come together and transform lives. One of the most powerful scenes in the play is when the cast take the bread from Feeding of the 5000 into the audience and give them bread - the audience are overwhelmed and often give them a standing ovation at that scene alone! Murderers serving the public and wishing them peace - very humbling.

So the play has been performed many times now, with increasing success. The inmates make all the set, costumes and props from nothing and I put together a backstage team, training them too. It's very rewarding to see someone uncover a talent who has been written off by society. There are so many life stories in the cast and crew - I'm constantly amazed by where they've come from and who they are now.



Milan

Each prison has its own challenges but I am constantly amazed, inspired and challenged by their determination to succeed and to produce the best play they can. Italian prisons are very committed to Theatre, virtually every prison has at least 1 or 2 Theatre projects and many also have a purpose built theatre space within the prison - they understand the power of theatre to transform lives. I hope that they continue to do ground-breaking projects and change people's lives from within their prison - I know they changed mine!

Suzanne Loftus/ Photos Clara Vannucci



SCDA Merchandise

A range of merchandise is available with all profits from this venture being donated to SCDA. The range of garments are navy blue colour with gold and light blue embroidery of the SCDA logo. Also available in Fushia Pink.

Polo Shirts size XS to XXL £15

Sweatshirts size S to XXL £15

Full Zip or Pullover Hoodies S to XL £20

Garments can be personalised with club name or Individual name. Other sizes quoted for on request. To order please contact: lilacstitches@aol.com or enquire at Head Office for further details.

Our Ebay shop **scda12** sells pens, bags, mouse mats and other items.





LIBRARY ARCHIVE APPEAL

Please would all Divisions and Districts provide a copy of their festival programme to the National Script Library for our drama archives. Post a hard copy to National Script Library, Room 3:6 Taconic Building, Summerhall Art Centre, 1 Summerhall Place, Edinburgh EH9 1PL or an e-version to library@scda.org.uk.

Thank you.
Alison McCallum

The TARDIS that is the National Script Library has continued to be challenged these past few months, with large donations from publishers, authors, clubs and individuals. Amongst the donations has been a massive one as a result of Samuel French's London bookshop closing down, which included quite a lot of sets. Many publishers are now only printing to order, and are reluctant to print singles, so our stock has become more valuable for perusing various titles. (Clouds & silver linings, and all that)

At the time of writing there have been 15 A4 boxes delivered as a donation from an individual in Greenock. Many titles may prove to be already held but, as with most other donations we get, invariably there will also be new titles.

Our magician-like shelver, Alison, has a big challenge finding room for so many more volumes, but house them all she does.

As usual they will be available for members to borrow. See the catalogue listed on our websites and don't hesitate to email library@scda.org.uk if you need any help searching/filtering for your requirements. We are always willing to help.

BTW: **You may notice a change in our closing time to "6.30pm last orders"**. This is to enable us to get away sharpish for buses, rather than allow customers to arrive right up to 7pm. The service is unchanged.



The National Library Team



Let Carole build your theatre skills

Carole Williams is SCDA's National Drama Advisor. She offers a wide range of challenging and fun workshops to develop your performance and directing skills.

Workshops are supported by SCDA and can be tailored to your individual needs.



Find out more by contacting Carole on
nda@scda.org.uk



Geoffrey Whitworth Results

– BY STEPHEN LAMBERT

This year there were 23 entries to the Geoffrey Whitworth competition. Judges Ron and Norma Nicol once again studied the plays and gave constructive criticism of them all.

The winning script was **Moles and the Habits of Birds** by Susan Pierce of Saltburn by the Sea, Yorkshire. The writer provides a clear and informative synopsis. The intriguing title almost leads the reader to expect a comedy, but this is based on the 1996 collapse of a colliery spoil tip, which slid downhill in the form of slurry and buried a section of the village of Aberfan and its school within minutes. The survivors' accounts of the disaster are used as a starting point for the play, which is written with sensitivity and conveys the real feeling and horror of the circumstances. The cast requires twenty-five male and female actors and provides many roles for children, and such a large cast would make this suitable as a community play. This is a top class, very well planned play, with good story-telling and plenty of action.



Highly Commended by the judges was **The Honourable Member** by Jeremy Hylton Davies of Cwmfelinfach, Caerphilly. There's an excellent and informative synopsis, full details of the box set are given, the directions are clear and easy to follow, and there are meaty roles for a woman and three men. Philandering unethical Welsh politician Aneurin Cadwallader, his loyal secretary Hughes Hughes and protester Mr Williams are well rounded

characters, while Cadwallader's PA Ellen is a marvellous part that most actresses would die for. The play is essentially Welsh in location, occasional dialect and character. The lively introduction immediately draws us into a well-plotted, enjoyable and very funny political sendup which expresses a great sense of humour with flowing sparkling dialogue. The well observed, rounded characters have spirited interchanges and the wit explodes everywhere. A well thought out, very well planned and extremely funny piece which audiences should find thoroughly satisfying.

There were three Commended, **Aftermath** by Alex May of new Brighton Wallasey, Merseyside. There can be ten speaking parts which with doubling can become five – four men and one woman – plus optional non-speaking police, miners and strikers – which could be optional but who are needed to add body to the re-enactments. The playwright's knowledge and understanding of the Dublin Lockout, the Miner's Strike and the Social Worker's Strike is sound and gripping, and the play is a history lesson about the injustices to the working man and the Trades Union movement from 1913 to the present day. It's possible that in performance the re-enactment of the speeches of each strike might seem a little repetitive. The play is full of variations of character, pace and emotion, and the conversational dialogue is loaded with a sense of humour. The three protagonists have real depth. This is a well-planned, well-written, very theatrical presentation which includes songs to great effect. Most enjoyable and interesting, this piece should entertain and inform an audience of any political persuasion.

Just Desserts by Cath King from Muir of Ord, Ross-shire. The author describes this as a 'bittersweet stage play about a woman who, after searching for the father of her child, realises that she is better off without him.' There's a cast of 2 men and 3 women, and the writer has given helpful character descriptions. The dialogue is lively and flows naturally throughout, although it's occasionally perhaps a little over-precise. The piece is set on a split stage suggesting a hotel bedroom and the hotel restaurant. This is a pleasant story, well worked out and developed, with a pleasing conclusion. A surefooted, firmly written and most enjoyable play.

Untucked by Teresa Hennessey of Cambridge. This writer describes this as a 'bitter-sweet comedy of trust and jealousy; frocks and frills', and the play is exactly that. Great demands are placed on the players, who must adjust to confidently portraying a presumably unfamiliar behaviour and life-style. The piece provides a great deal of information about the world of the drag queen through flowing dialogue and sparkling interchanges between the players. In performance the piece might benefit from having a few opportunities for more action, but it's beautifully written and keeps the interest from start to finish.

THE AULD KIRK PLAYERS 1957 - 2017

This year Kirkcaldy's oldest group celebrates its 60 years of existence. Founded in 1957 and still sparkling brightly in our Diamond year, the Auld Kirk Players are rightly proud of our heritage, ethos and place in Kirkcaldy's cultural history. This year we are doing *Tiptoe Through The Tombstones*, a Comedy Thriller by Norman Robbins. It is our proud boast that we have managed to put on a Three Act Play in the autumn of virtually every year of our existence. Unavoidable things like illness have only rarely stopped us from performing. We also are regular performers in the One Act Festival.



We can also boast that every one of our Three Act plays has been performed at the same venue - the Hunter Hall, an unprepossessing building in Kirk Wynd, Kirkcaldy. It is small, but when full, the atmosphere is quite something! And we pride ourselves on our rapport with the audience, who in turn have supported us loyally over the past 60 years. Tea, for example, is always served at the interval, free of charge. Oddly enough, we make more money that way, for we get donations! The big difference between 1957 and 2017 as far as the Auld Kirk Players is concerned is the fact that there is now no Old Kirk, at least as far as the Church of Scotland is concerned. The Kirk still exists as a venue for

concerts, ghost walks etc (we help produce them), but the only bit of the Old Kirk left is the Auld Kirk Players. Our ethos is now one of working together to produce a show for everyone, players and audience to enjoy. Just occasionally in the past, there has been as much drama going on behind the scenes as on it, but we now pride ourselves on being welcoming and supportive to everyone. There is no place in drama for anyone who is too good to share a stage with other members of the cast! The first play in 1957 was *Bachelors are Bold*, and since then we have concentrated on comedies (Scots and others genres) murders, farces and anything that can entertain the audience. We take the view that audiences go to the theatre to be entertained and made happy. They do not like "stark realism" "damning indictments on modern society" "psychological insights" or leaving the hall on a dark November evening wondering what on earth that was all about! But we believe that the deeper elements of the Theatre can be brought to the fore in the 1 ACT SCDA festival. Our first 1 Act festival performance was "The Gentle Rain" back in 1976 when Bjorn Borg was winning Wimbledon. Our latest consisted of two original plays written by members of the group, one of which called "Confesions" won the Best Moment of Theatre at the Eastern Divisional final in Stirling. If you missed it, it involved lowering a chair. Now that takes talent!

We now have a new logo, and a motto which says "histriones in scaenam" , "actors onto the stage". The "in plus the accusative" rather than "the ablative" (for you Latin scholars!) is significant because the stress must be in persuading people to become actors, and giving them the opportunity to do so. Not everyone can make it to the professional stage (although we have two youngsters with



exactly that ambition at the moment) but we believe there is a place in drama for everyone, be it acting, costumes, prompt or whatever.



Ten years ago, we produced a booklet called *Fifty Years of Entertaining Kirkcaldy* detailing our history. This year we are producing an archive of what we have done. It has been an astonishing amount, but it has also been an astonishing amount of pleasure that we have derived from it! We look forward to seeing you in early November to help us celebrate the past 60 years and to raise a toast, with a free Tea, to the next 60!

David Potter

Darling You Were Words Fail Me!

As actors, we crave compliments. Indeed, some of us have been known to dine out on them for decades. But beware – the praises of our peers may in fact be coded insults. Here are some of the most lethal. Read, reflect and, if you've ever been on the receiving end of any of them,

What they say

You must have had fun doing that.
I could never get up on a stage and do that.
You could have heard a pin drop.
Farce is very hard to pull off.
Where did the director find that play?
That's the best thing I've seen you in.

I love a quality play.
You're going places!

I could see you in Stratford.
That was so professional.
You must be exhausted.
There's nothing like a good thriller.
They don't write plays like that anymore.
That actor has a great future ahead of him.

Busy wee play.
What a trouper you are!

You wrung every ounce of humour from the script.
So many lines to learn!

Do you think you'll ever retire?
That was my first visit to your theatre
and I'll certainly be back!

What they mean

The audience didn't have fun watching it.
I'd have more self-respect.
Most people had left at the interval.
You failed.
Why does he always pick turkeys?
You're usually dire; tonight you were mediocre.
Sadly, this wasn't.
Just not RADA, the Conservatoire or the West End.
Only if we arrange to meet there.
There were twenty prompts.
I was, after sitting through your play.
That was nothing like a good thriller.
Thank God.
Just not on the stage.

I hate farce, but I've got to say something.
You'd play a curtain if it meant you could get onstage.
You overacted.

Even on the last night of the run, so many lines to learn!
Please retire – soon.
I want to see if the acting can get any worse

AGM Notices

Eastern Division - 7th October 2017 at 11am in The Scott's, Wood Street, Grangemouth, FK3 8PP. Coffee will be served from 10.30am

Highland Division - 28th October 2017 at 1pm (13.00 hrs) in The Florians Theatre, Inverness

Northern Division - 7th October 2017 at 2pm (14.00 hrs) in the Arts Centre Aberdeen, tea/coffee will be available from 1.30pm

Western Division - 21st October 2017 at 2.15pm in the Broomhill Hotel Kilmarnock. Tea/coffee will be available from 2pm (14.00hrs)

National AGM weekend

This year the Annual General Meeting of the Association and our annual social gathering will be held in Pitlochry at Scotland's Hotel on the weekend of 3rd/4th November 2017. There will be a dinner with entertainment on the Friday 3rd November.

The Saturday morning there will be coffee served at 10am for a 10.30 AGM followed by a Forum then Lunch. A must for those who want to brush up on their backstage skills Drew Scott will take a "Behind the Scene" workshop at Pitlochry Festival Theatre at 2pm

There is a production of The Monarch of the Glen at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre on the Saturday evening at 7:30pm. Booking form for the whole weekend in this issue.

Accommodation in the hotel £41.00 Dinner Bed & Breakfast per person per night, £10 single supplement. Dinner on the Friday for non residents £25.00

Youth Final Delights At Birnam

Glorious sunshine met the four teams for the 18th Youth Final Festival on 17th June at the Birnam Arts Theatre, nr Dunkeld. Excited youngsters from Thurso, Kirkintilloch, Edinburgh and our local team from Perth looked forward to meeting each other and competing for the Quidi Vidi Trophy for the best SCDA youth team of 2017.



After all the tech rehearsal were done it was time for Kaitlyn and Albany to welcome everyone to the Festival and get the audience settled down for the first play of the evening "The Wall" from Kirkintilloch Players. A brilliant start with four talented young people. In his report adjudicator Russell Boyce commended the young actors for their natural dialogue and their use of the pause.

He also commented on the clever use of

spatial awareness. The clever director moved the cast and changed stage pictures without us noticing.

Next up was Thurso Juniors performance of "Box". Quite a large cast of various ages delivered a delightful production with their different boxes. Russell congratulated the cast on their well-rehearsed and disciplined performance. He enjoyed the good groupings

and the great invention shown in the boxes. A large cast with a wide range of ages it was at times difficult to hear the dialogue but never the less he was impressed with the quality on stage.



Third for our delight was Indelible Arts Theatre from the Lothians with "Sparkleshark" another exciting production with an interesting set of a roof top. Russell said it had been a delight to watch a cast so committed to their work. He was impressed

with the characterisations the cast had developed, all roles believable. Occasionally they allowed their accents to dominate which meant some dialogue was missed.

Last but by no means least was the local group Unmasked with "Remembrance" yet another large cast of various ages beautifully costumed

took us back to the days of World War 1. Here Russell said there was much to credit in their vocal work. There was no rush in delivery and excellent level of projection.



He thought the prologue and end sequence was particularly poignant. Some stage movement could have been more natural but he was impressed with the amount of work that had gone into this production.

At the end of a super evening Aimee Findlay introduced the platform party and after Anna Patons vote of thanks asked Russell to sum up and announce the winner. It had been an excellent evening of entertainment by a total of 46 young people. SCDA's future couldn't be in better hands.



Anna Price presented the Quidi Vidi Trophy to the winners Kirkintilloch Players "The Wall"

Youth Final at Birnam

A few weeks ago I went to Dunkeld to perform in the Youth Scottish Finals for S.C.D.A. We had been rehearsing on our play Box for months and our first competition was against Wick. Our hard work paid off and we won! Now we had the hard job of waiting to see if our score was high enough to get through to the finals. After what seemed like AGES we got told that we were through to the finals and we were all so excited! We took the adjudicators feedback from our previous performance and started rehearsing again. Then after lots and lots of hard work we went down to Dunkeld and performed.

The house we stayed in was lovely and I really enjoyed playing in the huge garden. The theatre was amazing and it was nice to perform somewhere new. I was a bit nervous as all the other teams were so good but it was actually really good fun! We didn't win but we all tried our very best and everyone should be so proud of themselves. I really enjoyed the whole experience and can't wait till next year!

Edythe Cottam (12yrs)

Our play box was about school kids who have boxes that show how they feel and what their lives are like. The cast had 15 people in it and throughout the competition we all got very close which made sharing a house a lot easier when we actually got to Dunkeld!

Before we came to the finals we rehearsed every Sunday and sometimes on Thursday as well to get ready. None of us had ever performed or used the stage before so all anybody had to go on was some rough measurements so it was really exciting to get to see the theatre for the first time right before tech and to get to have a look around the town before we had to get changed for the performance. I had lots of time to get some pizza and walk round the Beatrix Potter garden with my friends, this was probably one of my favourite parts of the weekend because the theatre in Dunkeld is really nice and it was sunny outside. We all really enjoyed ourselves during the performance, all the other teams were incredibly supportive and the worst part is that we won't ever do the play again.

Poppy Cottam (13yrs)

THE "BRITISH" IN BELFAST

This was going to be a new adventure. Aberfeldy making their first appearance in a British Final. A long trip? Yes, but after many, many trips to Orkney we were used to travel over seas so business as usual. With generous financial support from Aberfeldy Rotary and the Black Watch Inn the budget was set. No sweat. Until the Wednesday night when we started to load the van! It was a bit smaller than previous rounds but "we would manage". After a lot of pushing and shoving and swearing everything was inexcept for the old iron bedframe which would provide a key sound effect. After a deal of head scratching we came up with a couple of improvisations; an old squeaky lighting stand or a knife scraping a metal bucket. Neither took up much room so we were off.

For most of us and there were many of us, Aberfeldy must have been deserted over the weekend, it was a first visit to Belfast. We took every opportunity to explore it on the obligatory open top buses and on foot. Belfast suffered badly from bombing during the Second World War; the harbour, Harland & Wolf's shipyard and the Shorts aircraft factory were all very close to the city centre so casualties from near misses were high and many buildings were destroyed. You can see this in the patchwork of building styles as you walk around. The Titanic experience made a great impression on everyone and with brilliant sunshine on the Saturday we were able to see the city at its best. The people of Belfast are working hard to put



The Troubles behind them. There is a lot of new development especially along the river side but you are very conscious of the murals of masked gunmen extolling the IRA or the UDF depending on which part of the city you are in. The sardonic Irish sense of humour is certainly still there and summed up in the story that when a Belfast ice hockey team was formed they thought of calling it The Belfast Bombers!



The Festival was based in the MAC (Metropolitan Arts Centre) Theatre which was built in 2012 and includes an art gallery as well as a compact 300+ theatre. As we all know putting on a play in a venue you have never been in before, within the limitations of festival rules, is a nerve wracking experience. Our nerves were farther shredded at the start of our tech. when we discovered that there were no front tabs, and since we were second on we would be erecting the set in front of an audience and without the cast members. However we roped in two of our supporters to help with the heavy lifting. Life was greatly helped by the local stage manager and technical staff who were extremely helpful. With Walker Ewart, well known in SCDA circles, as adjudicator all was looking well.

Although it was purely by chance, the two evenings produced totally different types of play. The two Friday plays were essentially realistic, dealing with recognisable real life family stresses while on Saturday we had fantasy; one based in the distant and mythical past and the other in the distant future. Bangor D.C. opened with *The Galway Girl* by Geraldine Aron set in a small area centre stage with two contrasting characters, tracing the breakdown of their marriage through his alcoholism and their mutual inability to communicate. Walker commented that while they were strong vocally there was a lack of pace in the production and that they could have made





more use of body language to trace the ageing process. Aberfeldy D.C.'s production of Ring Road by Anita Vettese was set in a run-down hotel. Lisa whose marriage to Paul was breaking down over their inability to have children had arranged to meet Mark, her brother in law with a view to getting her pregnant. Walker felt that they should have restricted the acting area more to emphasise the nature of the seedy hotel. However he congratulated both actors on the way they brought out the contrasting characters. He particularly liked the way they balanced the comedy with the underlying pathos. The telephone conversation with Paul which revealed the tragedy within the marriage was extremely well

handled.

The reception on Saturday morning followed the usual format with a welcome from the famous Mary Peters, President of AUDF and the High Sheriff of Belfast; Gilbert couldn't understand why he wasn't wearing a Stetson and a six-shooter. The other teams were each presented with a bottle of Aberfeldy malt kindly donated by Dewars and each Chairperson and team rep said the usual kind things.



First off on Saturday Total Arts Community Theatre presented Lear's Daughters by Elaine Feinstein & the Women's Theatre Workshop, a prequel to Shakespeare's play.

When the audience entered the auditorium the three daughters were already on stage like a medieval triptych in window frames; a position which they held, motionless, for at least 15 minutes until the play began. They were then manipulated by the Fool with the Nanny/ Nurse narrating real or imagined stories. Walker had wondered how the performance would link to the original and how the various themes would come together. They gave an excellent portrayal of the stages



of Lear's life and the place of the sisters in it. This was really good ensemble playing with excellent androgenous costuming. We then rocketed into the far distant future with Future Shock by Richard Stockwell. Laura has been



in hyper sleep for 800 years but has been wakened; because of austerity cuts her state can no longer be maintained. She is confronted by two contrasting characters who have very different attitudes toward her. Walker liked the use they had made of lighting but felt that the costumes of the "future" characters were not sufficiently futuristic. They managed to bring out the limited amount of humour within the play but could have made more use of body language to portray emotion.

In his summing up Walker said that sometimes an adjudicator had to choose between his heart and his head. We knew what he meant. Aberfeldy had lost out to Lear's Daughters but by the narrowest of margins.



After the usual closing ceremony Jackie welcomed everyone to come to Stirling next year on the 6th and 7th of July where she assured them of a warm Scottish welcome...

Iain and Nancy McEwan

JOHN MORLEY'S PANTOMIMES

"THE DOYEN OF GOOD PANTOMIME WRITERS" (*The Times* 1994)

CINDERELLA

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS

PETER PAN

BABES IN THE WOOD

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

PUSS IN BOOTS

RED RIDING HOOD

HUMPTY DUMPTY

WIZARD OF OZ

MOTHER GOOSE

"NO ONE KNOWS MORE ABOUT PANTO THAN JOHN MORLEY"

(*Sunday Times*)

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ALADDIN

ROBINSON CRUSOE

GOLDILOCKS & THE THREE BEARS

PINOCCHIO

JACK & THE BEANSTALK

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

SINBAD THE SAILOR

DICK WHITTINGTON

"WRITTEN BY JOHN MORLEY, THIS IS PANTO AT ITS BEST"

(*The Guardian*)

FROM SAMUEL FRENCH LTD.

RAY BRIGHT



It was with great sadness and shock that Highland Division and beyond heard of the sudden passing of Ray Bright in March of this year. A staunch member of SCDA for many years.

Ray and Pam came to Lochcarron in 1973 from Essex following a holiday with friends who had already moved to the Lochcarron area from Essex. They decided that the highlands was the place for them and the decision was made. Ray, never at a loss to find ways of making an honest penny soon picked up his paintbrushes and along with one or two others set to painting the new accommodation units for the oil rig construction company at Kishorn. It wasn't long before he was also helping with the local milk round and mobile shop, the odd bit of grave digging and fixing TV aerials. He finally took over the milk round and when the shop came up for sale he and Pam took it over. After running the shop very successfully for a number of years Ray moved on to The Attadale Estate where he made his mark in the gardens as well as renovating and helping to run the self catering cottages. His final move work-wise was to take up the paint brushes once again and he continued with this until his retirement. Retirement gave him the time to indulge in his love of sport, watching not playing, and his and Pam's love of animals.

During almost all of this time Ray and Pam were involved in drama. In 1975 they restarted the drama club which had been defunct for a number of years. The two of them ran the club as secretary, treasurer, stage manager director and anything else you can think of. Some well kent names in the drama world moved to Lochcarron and success was the reward for all the hard work. Morris Manson and then Connie Fisher joined them and they reached the dizzy heights of reaching Scottish Final on no less than 15 occasions. They also appeared at the Fringe one year with Once Upon a Seashore by Donald East. Ray himself acted as Stage Manager at every level including British when it was at Eden Court theatre in Inverness. He was Highland Division treasurer for many years, until his passing. It was said that Ray never performed on stage but on one occasion he went on stage in his overalls to remove a sign.

We will miss him, his steady demeanour keeping us all right even when things didn't quite go according to plan.

Joy Talbot

SCDA and Citizens Theatre Director Development Programme **... an opportunity of a lifetime ...**

SCDA in partnership with the world renowned Citizens Theatre has developed a unique experience for amateur theatre directors, comprising formal training and individual mentoring. The format we are proposing is 2 intensive weekends followed by mentoring through a production.

Who is it for? It will benefit new or emerging amateur directors but would also be suitable for experienced directors wishing further to develop their skills. Places are limited to ensure that all participants can get maximum benefit from the practical workshops, so a selection process will be run jointly by SCDA and the Citizens Theatre. Selection will not be dependent on having already directed a production.

What is the timeframe? Our current draft plan is for the training weekends to take place in the Spring of 2018, taking into account One-Act Play festival commitments.

How much will it cost? We are hoping to access sufficient funding to keep costs to a bare minimum so that it is not a barrier to participation. Fuller details will be available on completion of a successful funding application.

What commitment is required? - you will need to attend both of the intensive weekends in Glasgow based in the Citizens Theatre - you will need to direct a local production within 1 year of completing the training weekends - you will be asked to share your experiences with the wider membership We are now at the stage where we need to ensure that this appeals to enough members for us to submit a viable funding application. If this is something you would like to do, then please register your interest by contacting SCDA at directors@SCDA.org.uk by Monday 11 September.

Topsy-turvy

In recent years female empowerment has continued apace in many fields: art, literature, tv cop dramas, and not least, political leadership. So, too, in my own field, the strange and wonderful world of pantomime. When I started writing pantos in the late 70s, it was a male dominated world; this despite the fact that in most clubs then as now women outnumbered men by two to one. John Morley was the undisputed king, and I can recall only one female panto writer, Trudy West, who produced a number of successful scripts in the fifties.

Most plots centred on the adventures of a young male hero, often in an exotic setting, like Aladdin, Ali Baba, Dick Whittington, Jack (and his beanstalk), Robin Hood and Sinbad. In the topsy-turvy world of panto, this male hero, designated Principal Boy, was nearly always played by a woman. The female lead, often a princess, had a rather passive role and some often mushy lines to deliver. In Dick Whittington scripts, the female lead Alice Fitzwarren is rarely allowed to go on the voyage to Morocco. There were two, perhaps three, exceptions to this order of things: *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White*, but in the latter the heroine is surrounded by seven male characters.



Comedy was almost entirely in the hands of the Dame character, a man in drag (two in *Cinderella*), and a comedy duo, again two male characters. Villains were mainly male: sorcerers (*Aladdin* and *Sinbad*), robber chiefs (*Ali Baba*), a giant rat (*Dick Whittington*) and the Sheriff of Nottingham (*Robin Hood*). Female baddies were always witches (*Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White*). The only other roles open to women were shrews like Baroness Hardup and fairies, often doomed to recite doggerel verse in interludes.

Things began to change in the nineties and noughties. In my own company Gill Morell wrote a radically different *Cinderella* set in the 1920s with more substantial female roles including two broker's women called Germaine and Greer. In Robin Bailes's *Robin Hood & His Merry Men* there 's a Principal Girl called Jim who desperately wants to be an outlaw, an actual outlaw called Ellen-a-Dale, and a very camp Will Scarlett. Both scripts were written in 2003. Ron Nicol meanwhile was promoting his pantomimes with cast lists of two or three women to one man. His *Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood* (2008) has 3 male, 11 female and 8 male or female characters. In my own script *Sinbad & The Golden Chalice* (2004) the baddy Al Chimaera is male, but his allies are the fanatical female warriors of Zafira, evil queen of Zamorra.

Or take *Treasure Island*, Stevenson's classic Boys' Own adventure story, which features no females at all in the voyage to the island. In the Spotlight version (2006) by Richard Hales, Mike Hogan and Claire Wright, Squire Trelawney's daughter is forbidden to go on the voyage but disguises herself as a crew member, Bob, a situation which produces the following hilarious exchange on board the *Hispaniola*:

Polly wanders downcast to the front of the stage

Polly (Bob) This is terrible. We've been at sea four weeks, and I still haven't had a moment to tell Jim and the others of the pirates' plot. It's been Bob do this, Bob do that... swab the deck, pump the bilges... Night and day. I keep trying to sneak off, but that Hans von thimgummy won't let me out of his sight... And to make it worse, they expect me to behave like one of the lads - if you know what I mean... I had a narrow escape in a game of strip poker last night...

Aaron Alright Bob me lad! How's it hangin'?

Polly raises her eyebrows

Barnacle Bess How's you finding life on the ocean wave? The smell of the salt sea, the wind past your cheeks...

A pirate breaks wind loudly

...the fellowship of your mates in the bunk-room. Aye, we're all one happy family on this voyage. We eats together, we drinks together, and we scrubs us down together in the showers once a month. Ain't that right, me hearties?

All pirates Ah har!

Hans von S. Zat reminds me - it's shower night tonight my blonde friend (*drop this if she's not blonde*). Will you be vashing viz us, zen Bob? (*Polly draws back, looking worried*)

Walker What's the matter with you - got something to hide?

Polly (Bob) (*looking embarrassed*) Um well, er... (*thinking on her feet*) ...I've got a verruca and I don't want to give it to my friends..

Mad Maria Verruca - shmerruca! That don't want to be worrying you me lad! I've got verrucas the size of pincushions and bunions as big as boiled sweets, and they don't worry anybody!

Barnacle Bess That's right. There's no need to be shy in front of us!

Polly (Bob) Er... I've forgotten my towel.

Walker Towel? We don't use towels here! We stands on the poop-deck and lets the wind blow us dry.

Polly (Bob) Um... shower gel! That's right I haven't got any shower gel!

Nobby Knees Shower gel! What's that then? We rubs us down with a wire brush and are glad of it! A pox on your shower gel!

Hans von S. Ve have vays of making you vash, you know...

Barnacle Bess Hey look lively - here comes the captain!

Captain Smollett appear from the cabin, L, followed by Sam & Ella

Polly (Bob) (*Aside*) Phew - that was a close one! I'm off before they rumble me!

In the last five years a number of female writers have produced scripts with strong female characters who not only drive the action but share the comedy lines: scripts such as *The Wizard of Oz Pantomime*, *the Snow Queen* and *Peter Pan the Pantomime* (Emma Houldershaw & Samantha Cartwright), *Alice in Wonderland*, *Hansel & Gretel* and *the Snow Queen* (Susan Mosley) and *Cinderella*, *Jack & The Beanstalk* and *Snow White* (Nancy McPherson).



Dave Buchanan, Spotlight Publications



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On The Road Again: The Tale Of A Touring Company

When Anne McIntyre and Madeline Reid set up 88 Theatre in 2013, with encouragement from their friends in the SCDA, they had to find actors, somewhere to rehearse and the money to put on productions. To add to these challenges, the one-act festival was looming and time was of the essence. There was, of course, no sudden mass influx of budding or experienced players. However, I offered my services, as did our friend Jill and Madeline's aunt Anna. The Birchvale Theatre in Dalbeattie let us have rehearsal space at a much cheaper rate than other local venues and Anne quickly found a play. "Solstice", a dark expose of an abusive relationship, won us a place at the Divisional final. We were on our way, but where?

The answer was: on tour. We knew we had to make enough money to be able to enter festivals; trying to fill a single rural venue for three nights was not a realistic option and a car boot sale was not going to swell our coffers substantially. So we decided to choose a full-length comedy ("Happy Jack" by John Godber) and perform it at various local venues.



The following year we added The Harbour Arts Centre in Irvine and made guest appearances with "Kissing Sid James" at the National SCDA AGM in Stirling. We even went to Plockton. This year we performed for the first time at Scotland's oldest working theatre, The Theatre Royal in Dumfries, with our production of "April In Paris".

Touring is not always plain sailing. At the Electric Theatre in Dumfries last year my sister and her friend made up 1/8 of our audience. The Isle of Arran was a costly disappointment. Despite our intensive PR

and assurances that, with the great drama following on the island, we could fill Lamlash Theatre, we played to an audience of 29 (in a 250 seat venue). We are unlikely to repeat that experiment. But touring is trial and error. You can promote your show to the hilt, but you can't force people to attend.



Our first three years of touring have nonetheless been an extremely positive experience. As well as adding new venues each year, we have slowly built up a loyal, returning audience. What began as a necessity has turned out to be both enjoyable



and rewarding, enabling us to travel, to make new friends and to party in different places. Forced to tour? Yes, but we're not complaining!

Scott Fingland
88 Theatre

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Duncanrig school visit to The EK Rep. June 2017

In June 2016, it was decided by the EK Rep Board that they should try to work closer with the young people who are studying Drama at school.

There is some pressure on the Scottish (and English) schools to ensure that those pupils are given access to seeing 'live' theatre. Watching it on TV, Films or even the special screened performances from, say the National Theatre, was not the same as a live performance. However the professional theatre ticket prices, even for schools, can prove a pound too far. What to do?

Recognising this dilemma, Ken Lawton, on behalf of the EK Rep Theatre Board, got in touch with the Head of Drama at Duncanrig School in East Kilbride and offered a possible solution. This sounded that it could work so Mr. Lawton was put in touch with Drama teacher, Lauren Daley and began to work closely with her. The EK Rep Theatre is essentially an amateur unit but is not only one of the busiest Theatre companies in Scotland but they have their own rehearsal premises and full use of the local professional theatre, run by the South Lanarkshire Council's Leisure and Culture Trust - The EK Village Theatre.

As a result of being established over 50 years ago the EK Rep Theatre has built up a reputation of high standard productions which aspire to be professional. They produce five plays, host a One Act Rep Fest in May and mount a two week pantomime each season which runs from September to June each year. This busy programme attracted the School with its range of comedy drama etc. and most of all, because The EK Rep is well established with premises which not only contains a rehearsal area but a wardrobe department which will dress you from medieval, to Georgian, to Victorian to modern day dress. Next door is a small props department, and nearby, in separate premises, a large prop/Furniture department. There is also a scene dock area and a green room. This was due to the hard working predecessors that they were able to own their own production area.

This was especially what attracted the School as their course in year four was less accent on acting and more in depth study of the backstage and how a production is put together, with scene design, sound scenes and effects, lighting, stage management and the other supporting skills that would be required. A programme of visits was devised which culminated in a very busy day for the students. To set this up Ken Lawton, and

with Dave Bennet who was the Director of the last play on the season- Alan Ayckbourn's "Time of my Life", took a workshop to the school where Mr. Bennet (retired lecturer in Drama at Stow college, Glasgow) outlined some of the plot (no real spoilers) and devices that Ayckbourn used in this play in shifting time about.. It was surprising just how many of the two classes involved had not seen a live performance of drama.

They arrived at the Theatre at lunch time and were shown around the sound and lighting box, the set for the play was up and in place, then backstage to see the lighting rig, the fly tower, the props table, the desk from where the Depute Stage Manager conducts the whole show, the scene dock and dressing rooms.

This part was, by kind permission of the Leisure and

Culture Trust and in particular their technical staff, who helped the Rep people answer the students' questions.

Next they went across the car park to where the EK Rep H.Q. is sited and saw over the likes of the small props department and the wardrobe department, scene dock and rehearsal area with the help of some of the Rep members. There were



many intelligent questions asked. The visit then terminated but only for the party to return at night, complimentary of the EK Rep, to see the production and hopefully where everything fell into place.

Miss Daley said, "We had a fantastic day at the tour and a great evening at the performance." She continued, "Thank you for arranging this on our behalf the pupils who really appreciated the free tickets to the performance, and I have no doubts that they will make the most of this over the next year. We have certainly enjoyed working with the Rep this year, and appreciate everything you have arranged throughout the year, it has offered some fantastic opportunities for our pupils." She concluded by saying, "A few of our current S4 cohort have asked about joining the Rep when they turn 16, so I'm sure you will hear from them when the day comes."

The EK Rep Board were very satisfied with how the day had gone and now look forward to repeating the experience and working closely with Duncanrig School for the EK Rep Season of 2017/2018.

The current EK Rep Board are considering extending this facility to the other secondary schools in East Kilbride in the future

Killin Komedy 2017

Having thoroughly enjoyed this event last year I once again made the long drive from the Mearns to Killin for a weekend of fun and laughter and the odd G&T. The drive was glorious and sunny and I hoped the weather would stay the same throughout. Thanks Gordon and Lesley you managed the weather again!

Staying at the Coach House this year didn't meet up with many SCDA friends till evening meal at Killin Hotel then it was heading across the road to the McLaren Hall for Friday night's fun.

First up was a brilliant start to the weekend with FADS production of 'Bonking James Bond'. A crazy comedy with a superb sexy performance from Jackie Smith as she fantasied 'bonking James Bond', and to be a fair Josh Frazer was made for the part! This tale of a middle aged women worried her husband is having an affair and wondering how to cope before realising she can do very well without him was full of laughs and a great start to the night.



Then we had various sketches from Perth Drama Club, have to mention the hilarious 'escape goat' saga and the problems with 'hell'. Riverside Drama's comedy Mary Mary, was great fun, as 'Mum' tried to get her poor widowed son a new women in his life. Unfortunately everyone seemed to be called 'Mary' which caused no end of hilarity it was reminiscent



of an old Brian Rix farce.

There was the usual auction and raffle to fill the coffers of SCDA and nice little titbits to soak up the alcohol before we made our way back to our hotels and B & B's. All agreeing once again a good night.

The Saturday dawned blue skies and really hot sun, quite a few sun burnt faces appeared at night. A nice stroll through the village with the annual stop at the old fashioned 'Sweetie Shoppe' for bags of soor plumes and liquorice comfits, then a lovely sit by the river with cool pints of cider to while away the hours till evening.

Saturday night started with a few choice poems from Sharon, then we had more crazy funny insight to life with poems from Russell Adams from Stonehaven Ury Players followed by a very funny sketch 'Speechless' where a couple tried to rehearse a play with half the words missing and a helpful hand given by various mimes and objects from a stage hand at the side of the stage.



To change the mood a little John Biggam gave a good rendition of Burns "To a Louse". Then we moved into outer space with Dollar Drama Clubs 'Mission to Planet Bob' 3 astronauts having problems getting their space craft back to earth, and National Committee member Stephen Lambert as you have never seen him before!!

There were a couple of sketches from the Mercators, with our Librarian Douglas Currie and his wife Rosemary showing how as one gets a little older the problems that arise when trying to get away on holiday. You have still got it Douglas!!





Finally there was a brilliant comedy from Fraser Anderson and Calette Duke from Auld Kirk Players, Kirkcaldy with 'Confession'. A playwright trying to write his play before a midnight deadline struggles, his wife thinks writing plays should be easy and attempts to help, with hilarious results. This was an absolutely brilliant double act from two excellent actors, especially when they tried to out- do each other in the ad-libbing stakes (Calette had the last word of course).

The final act both nights was the usual surprise act. This year it was the 'tiny dancers' and really you had to see it to believe it, if you have facebook it will be



there!

Thanks once again Gordon, Lesley, Martin, Andrew and all the local Killin folks for once again giving us a weekend to be talked about for days. As I said last year if you haven't been before you are really missing a treat, put first weekend in May 2018 in your diary now!

Morna Barron

★★★★★
The Herald

★★★★★
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