

Autumn 2019

scene



Kirkintilloch win Youth Final

The magazine of Scottish Community Drama





Congratulations

On a wonderful sunny day in June lots of family and friends attended the wedding of two special SCDA people:

Susan Wales and Walter Hampson

Susan is the strength behind Edinburgh District and Eastern Division, not to mention the Library and Scene itself. Walter of course is our main photographer for Festivals and Scene.

It was a privilege and pleasure to be part of such a joyous occasion and it is fitting they get our congratulations and best wishes from all at SCDA.

Morna Barron



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**Scottish Community
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Scene magazine

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The editorial committee reserve the right to edit or not print items submitted to Scene.

We always welcome news or opinions, please email letters or articles to the Scene Editor at scene@scda.org.uk

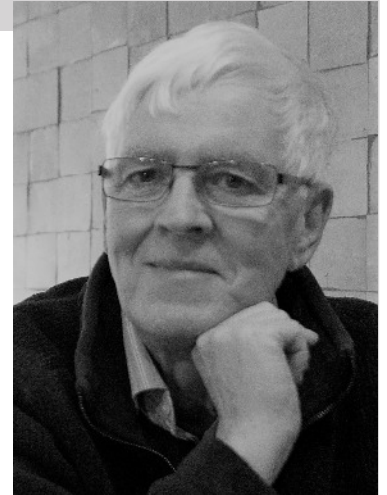
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Cover

The cast of Kirkintilloch Players' 'Scarfed for Life'.
Winners of this year's National Youth Final in Stranraer.

Photo by **Kyle Anderson**

Chairman's musings



Hello

I'm just back from the British Final in Harrogate where our Scottish winners from Stromness performed 'Shakers' to an enthusiastic audience. Sadly, they were narrowly beaten by an incredibly enthusiastic bunch of youngsters from Woking sixth form college performing 'Education Education Education'.

A few weeks earlier, the youth final wowed audiences with the sheer professionalism and quality of their performances. Kirkintilloch players with 'Scarfed for Life' were worthy winners. We all took to Ben Humphry who created a strong rapport with the audience and, more importantly, the actors. His adjudication was warm, entertaining and informative. GoDA Chair Jan Palmer-Sayer was there too to evaluate Ben's adjudication on behalf of GoDA. Here's what she said afterwards in an email; -

"Thank you so much for making me so very welcome at the SCDA National Youth Final last Saturday. It was a splendid occasion and the standard of the entries was extremely (and gratifyingly!) high. I was bowled over by the exuberance, the confidence and the competence of the young folk on show - both as participants and as commère / compère for the evening. The future of Scottish theatre appears to be in very safe hands!"

I agree totally with Jan's sentiments but must admit I had to look up commère - I had no idea compère was masculine only. Aha! I get it now - mère and père - we're always learning.

Tony Flisch
chair@scda.org.uk

Welcome . . .

To new Individual Members

Christopher Connon	Aberdeen (Northern)
Gillian Hardisty	Stirling (Eastern)
Ian Barrowman	Glasgow (Western)
Andrew Hothersall	SW Ross (Highland)

To new Life Members

Morag Blance	Orkney (Northern)
Mary Harcus	Orkney (Northern)
Gordon Hibbert	Stirling (Eastern)
Brian Neil	Edinburgh (Eastern)
Alice Oliphant	Fife (Eastern)
Keith Robinson	Glasgow (Western)
Alison Scott	Orkney (Northern)

To new Clubs

Union Theatre	Aberdeen (Northern)
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Thank you . . .

For donations from

Jenny Calcott
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Thanks once again to the Executive and National Committee Members for donating their expenses

AGM dates for your diary

Northern Division AGM

Saturday 12th October
Inn at the Park Hotel, Aberdeen
Lunch - 12.30 AGM - 14.00 hrs
To book lunch, email jjstewart57@hotmail.com
by 9th Oct.

Highland Division AGM

Saturday 26th October
Nairn Little Theatre
AGM at 14.00 hrs

Western Division AGM

Saturday 26th October
Park Hotel, Kilmarnock
Coffee - 13.30 AGM - 14.00 hrs

Eastern Division AGM

Saturday 19th October
Woodside Hotel, Aberdour, KY3 0SW
AGM 10.30 for 11.00 hrs

National AGM weekend – Queens Hotel, Perth

Friday 1st Nov. 19.00 hrs, fun social evening and dinner. (to book, contact secretary@scda.org.uk by 28th Oct.)
Saturday 2nd Nov. AGM - 13.00, (coffee from 12.30 hrs) 14.00 hrs NDA Carole's trip to Canada

Is this your magazine ?

If you've just picked up Scene at a drama rehearsal, or from a friend's coffee table, we hope you enjoy it. If you'd like to get your own copy four times a year, it's one of the benefits of becoming an Individual Member of SCDA. Go to our website: scda.org.uk for more information.

RESERVE ADJUDICATOR TRAINING

In April 2018, Western Division hosted a training session for reserve adjudicators. Dave Bennet (Chair of SASDA and a well-respected adjudicator) and I delivered a half-day session for 11 people. We all learned how challenging it is to adjudicate one scene let alone a whole play. Following feedback, from the attendees, a second session was devised, where we would adjudicate a 'live' production.

We planned this second session around the EK Rep Festival in May 2019. We selected the play that we would all 'adjudicate' to be followed by a facilitated discussion. We advised all the participants from Session 1 and advertised across the whole membership. Not everyone could make the selected date, and, in the end, a small group of 4 people signed up.

We assembled before the play began to talk about our preparation. We were under strict instructions from Dave not to discuss the play directly after the performance but that didn't stop us discussing the other plays that we saw!

The next day, Saturday morning, we all arrived clutching our notes. The discussion was hugely enjoyable, and we got so caught up with it we could have spent all day together. As one participant said...

'We all think we're adjudicators at festivals, so being given the chance to adjudicate a play and mark it, using the proper criteria was really

interesting. Being able then to discuss these in detail was very helpful and reassuring. So far producing a written adjudication has been the most difficult part but it has all been a great experience.'

And another...

'Learning about adjudication is one thing. Practice and consolidation is a totally different thing. The opportunity through EK Rep Fest to observe and feed back thoughts and opinions on a play was excellent. It provided a real insight into how adjudicators think and the complexities of their role.'

The organisers too greatly enjoyed the whole process, Dave commented...

'We were highly impressed with the analytic detail the reserve adjudicators fed back through discussion, and their reports were detailed with informed comments highlighting what worked well and ideas for improvement'.

- Adjudicating is difficult but a lot of fun.
- You need to make sure you are prepared in advance and make lots of legible notes
- This training works well in small groups



Next steps

We will regroup to adjudicate again followed by an opportunity to deliver a 'public' adjudication (just for ourselves) to critique each other. Hopefully everyone will feel confident enough to volunteer to reserve adjudicate for SCDA in the future.

We hope to roll this out across the country. With what we have learned, we think that we could run everything over a couple of days. Contact your Division if you think your area should be prioritised.

Carole Williams
National Drama Advisor

Killin Komedie Festival

Hard to believe that this was the 9th consecutive year of this event. The date was later in May than most of the earlier years but that was to try and make it easier for all those wishing to stay over to find accommodation at a reasonable rate. Judging by the turnout, moving away from the early May Bank Holiday paid off.



For those unaware of the format of this event, it takes place in a large village hall, the largest in Perthshire, with the traditional main stage, a side stage (with lighting and a cyc!), a bar and the seating set out café style, so that it all feels very intimate and cosy.

It's always lovely when the doors first open and the audience, many of whom are also performers, start to dribble in and then all a sudden, it's "have we got enough seats out?", "maybe we need more red wine?"

So everyone is in, and the first group up are ready in the impromptu dressing room. Killin were delighted to welcome again to KKF Birnam Institute Players with "*La Tour Eiffel*" by Bob Davidson.

An interesting element of KKF is that every year the running order tends to go a little awry. No-one seems to

care but it helps that no-one in the audience actually has a clue what is coming next.

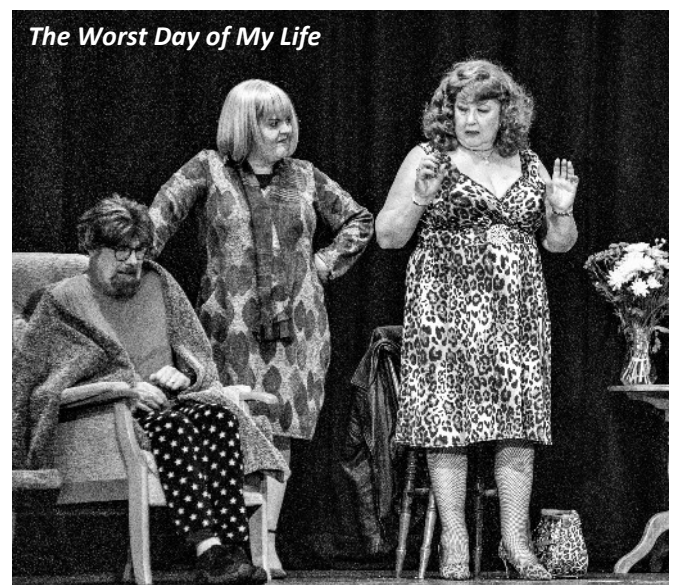
The plays on the programme are interspersed with great offering of sketches from clubs and individuals. So we were delighted to present short pieces by members of Perth Drama Club (PDC) and Leslie Amateur Dramatic Society (LADS) while Killin Drama Club warmed themselves up prior to performing "*Our James*" by Ros Moruzzi.

Time again for a short breather, a refill of glasses and over to the side stage again for some more well-received short sketches from PDC, LADS and also KDC.

The Mercators from Edinburgh, regulars in Killin from year 1, brought some beautiful costumes to the main stage with "*Indicatively Dickens*" by Alan Richardson.

There was a bit more light entertainment until the supper which has become part of the tradition of the event. Everyone happy, some go home, some stay and enjoy the bar for a little longer.

Then it's the next day and it starts all over again. First up on Saturday, and a new group to visit Killin, but with some



well kent faces, were Plamf Players with "*The Vampire Clinic*" by Peter McDougall. Intervening entertainment was provided by PDC and LADS once again, with the next main stage item being Riverside Drama Club who offered a great opportunity to laugh with "*The Worst Day of my Life*" by Alan Richardson. The rehearsed part of the evening was followed by an impromptu piece read by Lesley Syme and Andrew Murphy but with sound effects being provided "off the cuff" and to considerable laughter by members of the audience. Then the supper and lots of conversation about how the event had gone.



Let's not forget that events such as this don't just happen! Killin Drama Club put an enormous effort into the organisation of this event. The tech desks and stage side of things are ably assisted by Andrew Murphy and Martin Butler who have been travelling to Killin almost every year since the event started. They lift and shift without a moan (well almost!)

Also though we must not forget the purposes of KKF! Equally important – to encourage friendship in drama and to fundraise while doing what we enjoy. Over £10,000 has gone to SCDA from this event over 9 years. Between ticket sales, bar profit, auction items and raffle KDC aim to relieve you of your cash! This year there was also a substantial display of SCDA merchandise which sold incredibly well. Let's make the 10th

special. If you haven't been to KKF yet. Why not?

Dates for 2020 are still to be confirmed.

Lesley Syme



Our patrons pledge almost £6000 per year to SCDA funds

Thanks to your support, over £35,000 has been raised from our Patrons Scheme in the past few years – a truly outstanding result! Special thanks to those of you who have chosen to 'top-up' their donations to allow for inflation. Your generous support is helping SCDA to survive through difficult times. Application forms are available from HQ or from our website.

Roald Dahl Double

This is a tale of witches, potions, children disobeying the rules and, most importantly, magic. It is also a tale of dedication, hard work, and a determination not to fail.

In the Aberdeen District of the SCDA, we've been facing a conundrum in recent years. We have a loyal following of SCDA member groups and individuals. We host a three-night festival each year, and the quality of performances is always high. In the past 3 years we've also had school groups re-join our festival. However, for all that our festival might look a success, we've struggled with pitifully low audience numbers, and as a result a shrinking bank balance.

It's a tale that I think other districts will relate to. No matter what we have tried, we've failed to get more people coming along to enjoy our festival. The people who turn up are either loyal followers who'll follow us wherever we go, or are those who are supporting the teams and committee that put on the festival. Vary rarely is a face seen in the auditorium that isn't connected to a team or committee member.

Another thing that makes this all the more alarming is the lack of affordable venues in Aberdeen and the surrounding area that can meet all our technical requirements. Those that offer what we need are often prohibitively expensive, or we can only use outside of term time.

So, as a committee we sat and scratched our heads. How to get more people to come to our festival? We tried reaching out directly to theatre groups, asking them to come along to the festival, see what it was all about and learn more about us and SCDA. We make social media videos about the festivals, and

shared them far and wide. We put articles in the local papers, and online publicity on local Facebook pages. Still the seats remained empty.

However, a little magic (and some brain storming!) can take you a long way. After hearing in several meetings questions being raised about what else we can offer people, both SCDA members and our audience, I thought about what other theatre groups do. You don't put on one show a year, and expect that to



build an audience. You need to be proactive. So proactive is what we have become.

With the blessing of the Aberdeen District committee, I set up the SCDA's Union Theatre. A small subset of the committee with the intention of staging something new, vibrant and exciting. Something that would lure an audience to the theatre, and something that would coax local actors into our community. That is how The Roald Dahl Double was born.

The Roald Dahl Double, is a double bill performance of "George's Marvellous Medicine" and "The Witches" and will be staged at the Aberdeen Arts Centre from the 26th

to 28th September 2019, running for four performances. Each night our audience will be wowed with two magical tales for the price of one!

We have two very talents directors, Peter Esson and Bruce Taylor, both of whom had their first directing experience through SCDA Aberdeen, and we're delighted that after turning their hands to many projects, they've both decided to be involved in The Roald Dahl Double. It's fostering this kind of talent that we're so very proud of in Aberdeen and want to continue doing.

We thought very carefully about how we were going to cast the production, how to reach out to new people, and how we would make sure that this is going to be a truly magical production. And some of those things happened without us even trying.

When we announced our planned production, we had a lot of interest right from the start. It's worth pointing out that to begin with we created a Facebook page, and were sharing our posts on our SCDA Aberdeen

Facebook page, and on our own personal accounts. We had interest from people wanting to act, those looking to help with set and lighting, hair and makeup. It was overwhelming the response we got – I did wonder to myself "where were these people when we advertised our festival?"

One of the people to get in touch with us was Eion Smith, a local magician and Roald Dahl fanatic! Eion contacted us asking if we had given any thought to how we were going to portray the on-stage magic (we hadn't) and if we'd be interested in his help. Needless to say, we jumped at the chance to work with him and he is now an integral part of our production crew.

When it came to casting, we had drawn up a poster and had a dedicated email set up, along with a standard response to send out to any one who enquired about the production. We put out one Facebook post about the auditions, and we decided very quickly that we weren't going to spend any money on sponsoring the post. Here's why - at the time of writing, that one Facebook post has been seen by 17,152 people. Its been shared 94 times. It has 97 reactions and over 100 comments. We were blown away by the reaction it got, and we still can't explain it. I think it's partly the subject matter (who doesn't love Roald Dahl?) but it was also the fact that we shared that one post on several local group - selling groups, what's on, city specific pages. From there it gained traction and other people started sharing it onto their own pages.

When we closed our submission for auditions (open to everyone over 14, no matter what experience) we had over 50 people interested in auditioning, the majority of whom had no prior link to the SCDA or any of our member clubs.

The auditions have now taken place, both plays are cast and rehearsals are underway. Thanks to our outreach effort a minimum of 19 people will be becoming members of the SCDA because of this production.

We still have a lot of work to do. We are currently fundraising to meet the cost of hiring the Arts Centre for the duration of our production, and we all know that the real hard work is in the rehearsal room. Our amazing casts are hard at work now learning lines, moves, and also stage magic to boot!

We are determined that this will be a success story for Aberdeen District; that we will create an audience for what the SCDA does in Aberdeen and that we will continue to grow our membership. Most of all, we will make sure that year after year SCDA Aberdeen continues to be able to offer a place for directors, actors and all

those behind the scenes to enjoy their passion for theatre.

Please support us, either by coming to see the show (we'd love to see some new, as well as familiar, faces!), by sharing our Facebook publicity or even dropping a wee line to let us know you're thinking of us! You can find us on Facebook by searching for Union Theatre Aberdeen. Thank you.

Emily Esson

Social Media for SCDA Aberdeen,
Chair of Union Theatre



SCDA Membership for Life!

For many years Life Membership of the Association was available to our members and proved to be very popular. It was sometimes used as a gift for a significant birthday or whatever, but the scheme was suspended when the fees lost touch with the reality of current Membership Fees.

The National Executive have agreed that the time is right to re-introduce the scheme and is taking care to present our more mature members with a sliding scale of fees. Financial plans are in place to avoid skewing our annual balance sheet!

The costs:-	Age 55+ £550	Age 60+ £440	Age 65+ £330
	Age 70+ £200	Age 75+ £100	

Interested ?—contact HQ for methods of payment!

If you are one of our valued members who have already paid their subs and you would like to transfer to Life Membership—please send an email to: headquarters@scda.org.uk and we'll sort the finances for you.

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National Youth Final

Three groups of excited and nervous young people arrived at the Ryan Theatre, Stranraer on Saturday 15th June for the SCDA National Youth Final. Technical rehearsals done the auditorium started to fill up and the adjudicator Ben Humphrey took his seat.

Young Ashlyn Kinahan expertly welcomed everyone to this prestigious event in SCDA's calendar and the festival was now underway.

All three clubs were of a particularly high standard and could have given any of the adult teams at Kirkcaldy a run for their money. The adjudicator was particularly impressed with the quality of the acting throughout.

Of Stromness's production of '*A Handbag*' by Antony Horowitz he felt the costumes and set were too good for the message of the production, but there were strong moments of comedy and this was well balanced with dramatic tension. He felt they could have found more variation in the pacing and interpretation of speech; which would help with clarity.

A very strong piece of teamwork and a good balance of comedy and dramatic tension.

Of Mill Youth Theatre's '*Zero for Young Dudes*' by Alistair McDowall he thought the directors made bold choices with the staging of the play and used the audience as the 'enemy'. He thought they could have made more of this and not be afraid to make the audience uncomfortable. The entire cast was focused and driven with wonderful moments of ensemble playing. A well-handled piece of ensemble theatre that was compelling to watch.

Lastly Kirkintilloch Players '*Scarfed for Life*' by Martin Travers. Ben thought the cast were on top form during this production, relationships suitably crafted and interactions rooted in clear thoughts and intentions. The comedy was in safe hands as was the dramatic moments. This was a disciplined, well-rehearsed and focused team who gave the audience a play that educated and entertained.

Ben summed up by saying he loved youth festivals as there was so much

drive and passion. He was impressed by the standard of all three productions and he gave the Colin Peter Award to Mill Youth Theatre, but the winning Quidi Vidi trophy went to Kirkintilloch Players.

However let's see what the young people thought themselves.

Morna Barron

Stranraer

On the 15th of June 2019 the Scottish Youth Finals took place in the Ryan Centre Theatre Stranraer, the three finalists travelled from all over Scotland to have the chance of winning the Quidi Vidi trophy.

Several juniors from the Stranraer Drama club hosted each team. The teams were a great bunch of people. It got to the plays and everyone was getting excited. By reading the programme you could tell all three plays were each going to be quite different.

The first play was '*A Handbag*' by Stromness Drama Club (Northern division) This play intriguing the audience from the start as it featured a play inside of a play. The play was entertaining. The characters were from a young offenders institution. Overall it was an enjoyable play and the adjudicator, Ben Humphrey gave both a positive and constructive feedback.

The next play to perform was '*Zero for young Dudes*' by Mill Youth Theatre (Eastern Division). This play was extremely thought provoking. It was set in a young person's concentration camp in the future which the audience clearly found interesting.

The last play last play to perform was '*Scarfed for Life*' by Kirkintilloch Players (Western Division). This play showed the consequences of sectarianism amongst football fans in a comedic and thought-provoking way.

Susan Wales presents the trophy to Kirkintilloch, with adjudicator Ben Humphrey



National Youth Final

The play gained many laughs from the audience but also sad negative emotions when the play became more serious. All plays performed to a high standard and the adjudicator was impressed with the young actors performances. It then came to the results, with the Colin Peter Theatre Award (This award recognises the club displaying the most imagination and creativity in their production) went to Mill Youth Theatre and in first place, the Quidi Vida award going to Kirkintilloch Players.

On behalf of Stranraer Drama Club we would like to congratulate all teams who participated and a big thanks to the adjudicator Ben Humphrey for the comprehensive adjudications.

We would also like to thank the organisers for giving our junior club the opportunity to assist in the running of the festival.

Mason Avci
assisted by Stranraer club juniors.

Stromness

The SCDA's Scottish Youth Final this year was a fantastic and memorable, if mammoth, trip for both cast and crew from Stromness Drama Club, where many memories were made.

The event ran beautifully, and we were made to feel very welcome, thanks to the hosting prowess of the Stranraer Drama Club and the volunteers who helped put the finals together. The stage and facilities were very nice and there was a very warm atmosphere from the minute we arrived.

We travelled down with family and friends who came to support us, and we all got along very well, which made the 7-hour bus journey more enjoyable. The luxury of the minibus didn't hurt much, either!

Our play, "*A Handbag*" by Anthony Horowitz displays the experiences of 6 younger people trying to put together a play ("*The Importance of Being Earnest*" by Oscar Wilde, the only decent play they had in their library), but as

the play goes on it starts to reveal a darker side to the story and it becomes clear that these characters are in a secure unit for kids as they had committed serious offences in their past life.

The cast grew into their parts very well, thanks to our director's eye for casting and as the rehearsals went on, we all got to know our characters better. With every performance it just felt more and more real. We eventually had learned our lines to the point that we would be quoting them in the middle of random conversations, an odd thing to do with murderers' lines.

On the way to the finals we had to win both the Orkney District Festival and the Northern Divisional Finals, both of which had other fantastic plays and groups which had clearly also put in a lot of effort and put on a great competition in every stage. Unfortunately, we didn't quite manage to pull it out of the bag in our final performance, but our congratulations go to the Kirkintilloch Players who performed amazingly and were deserving winners.

Since our team this year consisted of four 18-year olds, a 16-year old and a 14-year old, only two of us will still be eligible to participate in years to come, but have no doubts, Stromness Drama Club Youth will be back!

Hamish Burgon
(Specs) Stromness Drama Club



For Jan Palmer-Sayer's view of the National Youth Final, see the Chairman's Musings on page 3.

Photos by **Walter Hampson**

Mill Youth Theatre's
'Zero for the Young Dudes'



ing us think we had gone over time! Thankfully, it was just a technical difficulty, and we were able to continue the performance!

We loved listening to the adjudicator, Ben Humphrey. He told us that a good play educates and entertains and we would say that the same goes for an adjudicator! He certainly did both and we learned much from his adjudications. As the presentation and results drew near, the nerves were definitely kicking in! Fortunately, it turns out we won the Scottish Final! We won the Quidi Vidi trophy, and the club is very proud of our achievements. We loved meeting other teams and sharing our best dance moves at the disco! Being a part of the festival as a whole from district to divisional to Scottish has been just amazing.

Kirkintilloch

My experience in Stranraer may have been short-lived, but it was an experience I will never forget. The weekend was filled with fun, whether it came from our time in the Ryan Centre, or the beautiful meal we had in the Custom House. We had a great, though short, time, and we hope to be there again. The most unnerving part of the weekend, obviously, was the competition itself!

We had tough competition, and we had seen plays from the other competing teams at last year's final in Plockton, but we were determined to succeed. The play we performed, *'Scarfed for Life'* by Martin Travers, was very Glaswegian. We feared the audience either wouldn't understand the play's themes of sectarianism, specifically when it comes to the fabled Old Firm rivalry between Celtic and Rangers, or the audience wouldn't understand our thick accents! I, specifically, was fearful of the amount of different characters I had to play, as I played about 7 different characters, all with different ac-

cents, personalities and motivations. Thankfully though, we all performed our characters well, and were told by the adjudicator we handled any mistakes or hiccups very professionally, as at one point the lights went out, mak-

Winning the Scottish Final and being crowned Scottish Youth Champions was an experience none of us will ever forget and we hope to be back next year!

Fionn Cameron
Kirkintilloch Players

Kirkintilloch Players'
'Scarfed for Life'



TAKING ON THE FRINGE

Taking a show to the Edinburgh Fringe is the dream of many theatre companies, both amateur and professional, but with spiralling costs and audiences faced with over 3000 shows to choose from, how can you make sure your dream doesn't turn into a nightmare?

Quids In Theatre Company, an independent, artist led theatre company based in Aberdeen, have performed at least one show, often two at the Fringe annually since 2012, braving the know it all critics, the variable audiences, the noise and bluster of daily life on the Mile In August and still coming back for more. So what are the things to remember to ensure that you have the best experience possible?

Firstly, be very clear why you want to take your show to the Fringe. What are you looking to get out of the experience? Is it to share your show with a wider audience? To take it further, ie go on tour? For the cast to experience performing in the biggest arts event in the world? Something else? When you have decided this, then you can begin to plan your trip.

Getting a good venue and time slot is crucial to the whole project. Choose a company that will help you promote and advertise your show and support you through the time you are at the Fringe. We have always gone with The Space UK as we have found them to be reliable and reasonable but there are other 'hosts' who



are just as good, so do check around. Depending which slot in the day you choose will determine the cost. Earlier slots are usually cheaper while prime slots in early evening are more expensive. Be realistic in estimating the size of your space. It is better to sell out a small forty seater and have people clambering for tickets than have an audience of fifteen in a huge hundred seater that has cost you an arm and a leg.

After you have confirmed your venue, you can register with the Fringe to appear in their brochure. This will cost around £400 per show and is the way most of your audience will determine which shows they are going to, so think carefully about the image and copy you are going to use to sell your show. This is the first contact with potential audience and very important for ticket sales.

Next is deciding your marketing strategy. Designing posters and flyers is challenging when you want to stand out among the thousands on display. If you plan to visit the Fringe prior to taking a show, it is well worth spending some time researching what stands out for you from the posters and flyers and why. Then design your ones to stand out. It is possible to hire someone to do your PR for you but is very expensive and beyond the budget of most small companies. Many promoters have their own press department which helps you get the word out there. Flyering on the Mile or down at Fringe central is useful, but be prepared to talk endlessly about your show. A quick sentence that sums up why someone should go see it is always useful.

Accommodation will probably be your next biggest outlay. Prices of flats and rooms sky rocket during August.



A flat can cost three times the price it normally does, in August so do bear this in mind when choosing your show. Cast numbers do affect how much you will have to spend on accommodation and food. As a rough guide a three bedroom Ed flat will cost anything upwards of £150 per night. It is much cheaper if you choose to stay outside Edinburgh and commute but you miss the atmosphere a bit.

Getting a good review is the aim of many companies. Stars sell or so most people think. If you have a four or five star review then people will flock to see your show. While it does help, the increasing number of shows being awarded four stars or above has devalued the star system a bit. After all it is just the opinion of one reviewer at one performance. I have seen really good shows be awarded four, three and even two stars by different reviewers. Having said that if you do want reviews to come and see you, you need to get your press release to them early. Many reviewers admit that they fill their slots from what they fancy from the Fringe brochure and only leave a few slots to go to things that later catch their eye. Many promoters have their own press team who can help with reaching the ones who get away.

One of the huge benefits of going with a firm like Space UK is that you get a pass to see others shows, if they are not sold out for free. That can be several hundred shows across many venues which allows you to see so many shows on a tight budget. The Free Fringe is also excellent for comedy and unusual shows which all add to your experience.

The Fringe experience is something not to be missed. It can be exhilarating, exhausting, exasperating and every other ex you can think of. The atmosphere in the Royal Mile is electric from mid-morning into the small hours. Having said that, you do need to pace yourself. The Fringe is always crowded, always noisy. Pubs and restaurants are

busy and getting a seat for five minutes can seem impossible.

But there is something about knowing you are part of the largest arts festival in the world something about looking out at audiences who have chosen your show out of the hundreds on at the same time that makes you want to come back for more. Year after year.

Annie Begg
Production Manager
Quids In Theatre Company



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are proud to support Scottish Community Drama.

All the world's a stage and all men and women merely players, but sometimes it takes the right company to get you there.



The drive to deliver ..

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New plays from Samuel French Ltd.

'Cuckoo' by Lisa Carroll

Two Act Drama for Teenagers

Cast: 2 Male 2 Female 1 Non-Binary
ISBN 9780573116261

Everyone except Pingu hates Iona and fitting in can be hard work when one of you can't be quiet and your silent best friend wears a tuxedo to school every day. Eventually becoming sick of the ceaseless bullying and despair Iona and Pingu decide to escape their lives in Dublin.

It turns out that emigrating is a great way to gain the attention of the cool kids and Iona becomes drunk on her new found popularity until discovering she's messed with the wrong crowd.

In a world where reputation must be defended at all costs disaster looms for all involved.

Shortlisted for the Papatango New Writing Prize, Lisa's sharp and sparkling debut script dissects the true cost of belonging and reflects on the difficulties of breaking away from home ground.

The dialogue crackles away at pace highlighting all the teenage insecurities that can make friendship treacherous in this new digital age.

Directors should seek a creative solution for the frequent shifts in location and time.

The calm, confident Pingu is a challenging non-speaking role and the actor must learn to communicate with the audience subtly using periods of silence, eye contact and a piercing stare.

Contains strong language.

'Something to Say'

by Richard Everett

One Act Drama

Cast: 2 Male 2 Female
ISBN 9780573115929

Maddie has something vitally important to confess to her husband David but he's not in the mood for listening and her desperate attempts to gain his attention initially fail. However, when she finally makes her confession, David's response is both unexpected and extreme becoming increasingly more bizarre to produce an evening neither party had expected.

This darkly comedic piece is a beautifully observed study of infidelity probing a marriage in crisis with touching insight and wit.

The setting throughout can be as elaborate or abstract as production resources will allow and there are helpful lighting and effect cues.

The script was originally written for BBC Radio 4 Afternoon Drama. Complete with interesting author's note on the writing of the play.

'Reared' by John Fitzpatrick

Drama in Ten Scenes

Cast: 2 Male, 3 Female
ISBN 9780573115448

Eileen has a full time job, a fifteen year old daughter with lots of secrets, a mother in law who is showing the early signs of dementia, a new baby on the way – and a husband who doesn't want to deal with any of it.

As she tries to clear the way for the new arrival, the family start pushing each other's buttons in the way only families know how.

There simply isn't enough room for everybody but in this house nobody is leaving without a struggle.

A dark comedy about overcoming family history and fighting for a seat at the table containing well observed character roles.

Very detailed description of kitchen setting.

'High Ridin' by James Hogan

Drama in Four Scenes

Cast: 2 Male, 1 Female
ISBN 9780573115936

Teenager Ronnie travelling to the North of England seeking to find a job in Blackpool and start a new life is offered a lift by ex-bouncer Stan who is just out of prison.

Taking charge he speeds off the motorway to a rundown guest house on the Lancashire Moors where Ronnie doesn't find exactly what he was searching for when he discovers that Stan has more morals than Mary Poppins.

This unlikely comic love story about two men who don't live likely lives was premiered at King's Head Theatre, London, a champion of new stage writing for nearly 50 years.

James Hogan is the founder publisher of Oberon Books.

Standard props listing and helpful author's note on key moments in the plot and character backgrounds.

Scripts can be obtained through the discount scheme for SCDA Members - please contact Brenda Williams at our national office for details. Geoffrey Whitworth and Scott Salver scripts can be borrowed from our SCDA National Library at Summerhall Arts Centre.

Betty Gibson

A remembrance



Betty Gibson was a mainstay of amateur drama in Angus for the last 50 years. Along with her husband Richard and others she was a founder member of Carnoustie Theatre Club in 1969 and, once established, over the following decades played a central role in growing the Club from very humble beginnings to it having its permanent home at the Dibble Tree Theatre in Carnoustie High Street.

Betty was born in Dundee in 1939, and married husband, Richard (Dick) in 1959.

It was Betty and Dick's interest in creating a drama club for Carnoustie that, along with bringing up their three children was to shape their lives. Although the Club for many years would have no permanent home Betty threw herself into creating and putting on productions. No part of theatre was undiscovered by Betty. She was an accomplished actress and producer but also played a major role in costume design.

As the Club grew it became affiliated to the Scottish Community Drama Association and started to enter plays regularly to the annual SCDA one act festival. Plays produced by Betty herself or with her cast in key roles regularly went on to reach the Scottish Final each year. The Club has been placed third in Scotland on two occasions. Once in 1988 with Betty as both co-producer and also in the cast of *Audition For A Writer* by Doris M Day and again in 1998 when Betty produced *Brenton Versus Brenton* by David Tristram, a spoof play she produced "for a bit of fun" and ended up creating something that resulted in audiences getting out of their seats and cheering as the curtain came down. A committee member for many years for both the Angus District and the Northern Division of the SCDA, Betty thrived on community drama.

But it is for her work and huge contribution to youth development that Betty will be most remembered. As the mainstay behind the creation of the annual Carnoustie Pantomime, children were central to her huge cast numbers. The first annual pantomime was staged in December, 1978 and her pantos from then on regularly had casts numbering up to and in excess of 100. Children and young people were encouraged to join her casts from as young as four initially, and through her encouragement and nurturing she created and developed an environment which allowed youngsters to be provided with opportunities for social interaction and self-discovery. This happened both on and off stage. She made these kids proud of who they were and gave them the confidence to be the very best they could be.

Her encouragement allowed young performers to develop skills that are valuable in all walks of life and to simply flourish in ways they never thought they would. She had a nature that allowed people to relax and give it a try. It didn't matter how good or bad you were, she provided you with the opportunity to give it a go mainly because she was always behind you being cheery and supportive. Her enthusiasm was infectious. The result was that hundreds of local children found their feet in amateur drama thanks to Betty Gibson. Many went on to study theatre and drama, becoming household names as actors, or working in other aspects of theatre. Along with members of Northern Division she was the instigator of the now flourishing SCDA Youth Drama Festival.

Betty and Dick's commitment and dedication to community amateur drama was recognised in 1996 when they were awarded Carnoustie Citizens of the Year.

Betty will be sorely missed.

Grant Wilson



Calendar competition

SCDA is planning to publish a calendar in 2021, which will be launched at the Scottish Final in Orkney, April 2020.

We are looking for 12 photographs which depict one (or more) of the three words: **SCOTTISH, COMMUNITY, DRAMA.**



Rules of Entry

- Entries will be accepted only from SCDA Individual and Life Members, SCDA Patrons or via an SCDA Member Club.
- Entries from Clubs will be limited to 5 photos.
- Photos must be suitable for printing as A5 landscape, colour or monochrome, min. 300 dpi.
- SCDA will have the right to use the 12 selected pictures indefinitely, free of charge, for future publicity. Copyright will be retained by the photographer.
- The name of the photographer will be shown on the calendar, unless anonymity is requested.
- All four Divisions of SCDA will be represented in the final selection, assuming sufficient suitable entries.
- The judging will be by a person external to SCDA and their decision will be final.
- There is no prize other than publication of the photograph.
- There is no entry fee.
- Photographs should be emailed to headquarters@scda.org.uk.

Closing date
1st December 2019



The curtain has come down on East Kilbride RepFest- the friendly festival of one act plays started by the East Kilbride Rep Theatre Club (EK Rep) in 1984.

The adjudicator this year was Alasdair Hawthorn who has a wide experience as an actor on stage, TV and film. He has directed a great variety of productions and is a regular adjudicator throughout the country.

This year the festival attracted clubs from Campbeltown, Dunlop, Fintry, Greenock, Killin, Rutherglen and Whiting Bay. For the first time in 11 years, the Rep entered the competition.

Audiences were entertained by 10 plays over the four nights and, on the final night, Alasdair Hawthorn congratulated everyone for their performances before announcing the winners.

1st Place - The John McNicol Trophy
EK Rep - *'Bouncers'*

2nd Place - Arts Council Trophy
FADS – *'Mrs G'*

3rd Place - Whitemoss Trophy
Whiting Bay Club of Drama and Music -
'Nunquam Non Paratus'

Best Actress - The Club Trophy
Sarah Walker – for *'Mrs G'* FADS

Best Actor - Alf Davidson Trophy
The ensemble cast of *'Bouncers'* EK Rep

Best Staging - Betty McAuley Trophy
Accent Players - *'Grave Prospects'*

EK Rep would like to thank all the clubs for taking part and the audiences for supporting the festival. The members are naturally delighted with the result as this is the first time the club has won the top prize in its own festival.

CLASS ADS

Playwright?; small business?; buying or selling?; All kinds of small ads accepted. Have your ad read throughout SCDA land. Contact scene@scda.org.uk

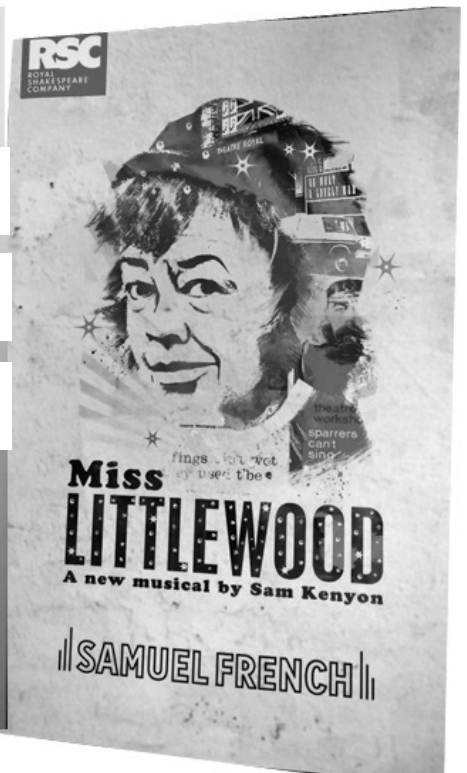
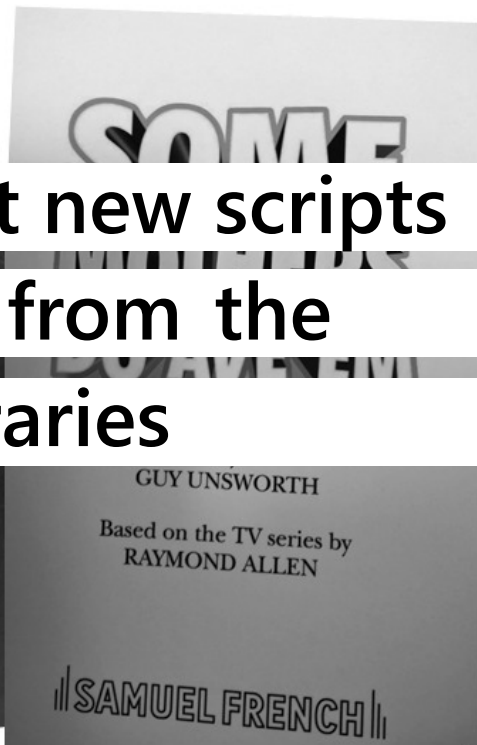
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Check out new scripts available from the SCDA libraries



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Room 3/6, Summerhall Arts Centre,
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Hours : Tuesday 2.15 - 6.30pm

Contact details : Library@scda.org.uk

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Library contact : Olga Kimmons

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.

Contact Carole through the National Office or directly at nda@scda.org.uk



GEOFFREY WHITWORTH PLAYWRITING RESULTS

There is always a limit to the number of original plays receiving their world premieres in our annual One Act Play Festivals and it was pleasing that we welcomed twenty five entries this season.

The competition continues to be administered by SCDA on behalf of the UK Community Drama Festivals Federation. New scripts were submitted by authors from a wide geographical area stretching from the West Country, Midlands and Yorkshire to the majority of our talented home based Scott Salver finalists.

Crime provided the major plot-line in many entries with fifteen ghosts or revenants, two shootings, two homicides and several attempted murders depicted.

Our judges look for scripts which have appropriate settings, well rounded characters, suitable dialogue, opportunities for interaction and a developing storyline with fitting conclusion. Not everyone managed to combine all of these elements satisfactorily. Remember that Playwriting Judges have to base their decisions solely on reading the script rather than seeing the staged production and the comparable level of achievement among the leading authors made the task of selecting a winner particularly difficult this year.

The winning script was **'A Penny for Them'** by **Keith Burton** of Pateley Bridge, near Harrogate, a regular entrant to the competition who achieved runner-up position in 2018.



Keith Burton receives the trophy from Simon Smith

A soundtrack provides an intriguing opening sequence to the initial outdoor setting of undergrowth with tree stump changing to a living room demanding some thought from the set designer.

The six characters are well defined and relationships and interactions quickly established with naturally flowing dialogue. The various twists and turns are excellently handled as the developing conflict between the

protagonists leads into various unexpected revelations and betrayals. A well planned and most enjoyable play.

Four scripts were Commended by the Judges:

'Forgive Our Foolish Ways' by **Shari Gledhill** from Scarborough.

The script provides details of the church interior setting and information about the three characters whose relationships are established and well developed. The language flows smoothly and the inherent tension throughout rarely fades. An excellent story with a gripping and theatrical theme.

'Mrs G' by our Scott Salver winner **Mike Tibbetts** from Milngavie provides detailed descriptions of the characters, furnishing, dressing and properties.

From the impressive opening sequence The Man and Mrs G are believably portrayed with fast moving exchanges and well handled changes of emotion and movement. A skilfully written piece with the unexpected ending delivering impact.

'Our Boy' by **Helen Hammond** from Edinburgh requiring split stage setting with synopsis providing background details and stage directions for performers.

The writer has a real understanding of the difficulties encountered when trying to raise an autistic child – the strong emotion of guilt which parents constantly experience is well handled and Joe proves a loving sensitive, intelligent boy and a challenging role for a young actor.

And finally, **'Welcome To The Pearly Gates plc'** by **David Gorton** from Tividale, West Midlands.

A light comedy with office waiting room setting taking a modern look at life after death. The entertaining storyline swiftly develops with smoothly flowing dialogue and the quirky explanation that the Almighty had organised three linked deaths simply to test his new entrance system.

Winning playwright Keith Burton was presented with the Geoffrey Whitworth Trophy by Simon Smith of Cresselles Publishing during the awards ceremony at British Final in Harrogate Theatre on Saturday 6 July.

The script also received a public reading by Pateley Bridge Dramatic Society at the Frazer Theatre, Knaresborough, earlier that afternoon with copies available for sale.

The UKCFFF wish to extend best wishes to Ron and Norma Nicol who retire this season after eleven years service as our Professional Judges – I know Competition entrants have greatly appreciated their helpful advice and comments.

Thanks to all our writers who submitted their work for assessment – scripts are now available to borrow from SCDA National Library at Summerhall in Edinburgh.

Stephen Lambert

British Final in Harrogate

From the four corners of the UK teams and their supporters travelled to Harrogate in beautiful sunny weather for the British Final Festival of One Act Plays on 5th & 6th July.

Friday

Ian Clarke, Chair of AETF welcomed all to Harrogate, the capital of 'tea, smiles and poshness' in the splendid Harrogate Theatre and we were treated initially to a rousing song from the local Gilbert & Sullivan Society.

First to perform were the Woking College Theatre Company with *'Education, Education, Education'* by the Wardrobe Ensemble. The team of sixth form drama students gave us a thought provoking play full of satire, nostalgia and fond memories of school days in the 1990's. Full of high energy and some brilliant and innovative choreography it gave us a superb start to the festival.

Next up was The Unknown Theatre Company from Wales with *'Constellations'* by Nick Payne. A difficult two hander. This is a conventional love story but it uses the same words and same cues six or seven times. Each time leading to a different response. He is a beekeeper and she works in the field of quantum cosmology. Each scene – that barbecue, this date, a break-up, the illness and a proposal – happens several times. Suddenly the lights shift and the situation recurs, with different results, some happy, some discouraging. An interesting play that kept you intrigued to the end.

After the regular raffle came the public adjudications. This year it was Robert Meadows (some may remember him from East Kilbride). He proceeded to give us his thoughts firstly on Woking's performance. He felt there were many strong features in the simplicity of the setting and there was a clever design concept which worked very well, particularly

when it was whizzed around with ease by the cast as they moved from scene to scene. The imaginative directorial team had impressed by the faultless energy and slickness of movement of the whole piece. He felt although there was superb energy from the cast he did feel at times they needed more clarity and sharpness of delivery, but a great start to the festival.

On Wales production he said it all rested on the quality of the two players to subtly change the scene and the mood of the play. Here we had two skilled performances competent in their own characters. Strong communication with each other and he loved the clever signing when Marianne was ill and had difficulty speaking. He felt the production was a little too even and we needed drawn in more to hold some of their moments. A complex play but the humour was found and they did not overplay the shifting patterns. We shared their story and it was a successful production.

**... an excellent final
with ... impressive
and inventive
ensemble work**

We then all retired to the Cairn Hotel for a nice buffet supper and were entertained by 'Betty Lupton's Ladle Laikers' folk dance troupe, with lots of twirling hankies, pompoms and jiggling bells which rounded off a great start to the weekend and we all looked forward excitedly to the following day.

There was the usual civic reception for the teams where they were once again welcomed to Harrogate by the Mayor, Stuart Martin MBE and Councillor Jim Clark and an exchange of gifts between teams. The sun was shining so a relaxing afternoon was spent by some while others headed off to Knaresborough's Frazer Theatre for the scripted reading of the 2019 Geoffrey Whitworth winning play 'A Penny for Them' by Keith Burton.

Saturday

A packed theatre in the evening saw Northern Ireland's Theatre 3, Newtownabbey production of *'A Bench at the Edge'* by Luigi Jannuzzi. A play seen several times in recent years. The curtains opened to the sound of a chill wind blowing which set the atmosphere. A simple set and their abyss was portrayed by straight bright yellow tape across the stage, which I personally felt was distracting. The two actors worked well together and it was interesting to see yet another different take on this play although again I felt the echos didn't quite work for me.

Scotland closed the festival with Stromness DC's production of *'Shakers'* by Jane Thornton and John Godber (adapted by Graham Garson). This had some added pieces of business and was a much sharper piece of theatre than we saw at Kirkcaldy. The cast had worked well and had the audience in the palm of their hands from the get go. A fitting finish for the festival.

Robert's views on Theatre 3 were that he felt the simple effective set helped us focus but the sound effects should have been more chilling. The two men worked well together but he felt we needed to get more surprise on the arrival of the 'bullets' as they ran across the stage and threw themselves off into the abyss. He felt once this production got into gear he was engrossed but it had needed more dramatic tension. However it was a first class contribution from Northern Ireland.

Finally we waited to hear what he had to say about 'Shakers'. He was taken in by the cleverness of the various acts and the humour. What was done by the director had so much imagination, the timing of the moves, the business, the sense of detail and the challenges of the transformation were done expertly.

Stromness Drama Club's 'Shakers'



In the momentum of it all we never lost clarity although maybe the satire could have been a bit more unpleasant. This was a very strong piece of direction. He praised the 'girls' miming and communication with each other. He thought Mel (Lorraine Giles) had captured exactly what Godber had in mind. He felt it could have been a little bit sharper at times but overall it had a design concept of real imagination that worked well.

The platform party was introduced by Ian Clarke and he asked Councillor Jim Clark if he would like to say a FEW words. Councillor Clark started by telling us he was from Arbroath, had actually been treasurer of EPT in

Edinburgh at one time, then he went on

After some time, Shauna Kyle AUDF chair got up and listed the top scripts in the Geoffrey Whitworth competition and asked Simon Smith of Cressrelles Publishing to present the trophy to winner Keith Burton. Shirley Betts, Chair of DAW then invited us all to the British Final in Rhyl, 26 & 27 June 2020.

The teams were all given a memento of the occasion and Robert was asked to sum up the festival and announce the winner. He said that it had been an excellent final with a good range of impressive and inventive ensemble work, all understanding the author's intentions. There had been four good plays, of a very high standard, although none were perfect it was a very close

decision with basically a mark between them. It had been an honour, privilege and delight to adjudicate and the winner was England! The whole cast of youngsters invaded the stage in delight and we are still waiting to actually see the trophy being presented.!!

We all adjourned yet again to the Cairn Hotel, for congratulations and commiserations and a wonderful small concert from the Harrogate Gilbert and Sullivan Society.

No Howard de Waldon for Scotland this year but Stromness did us proud so let's see what we can do next year in Rhyl.

Morna Barron

The cast and Directors of Woking College Theatre Co. receiving the Howard de Walden Trophy





ENGLAND

Woking College Theatre Co.

'Education, Education, Education'

British Final Harrogate



WALES

The Unknown Theatre Co.

'Constellations'

NORTHERN IRELAND

Theatre 3, Newtonabbey

'A Bench at the Edge'



Photos by
Walter Hampson