

Winter 2018

scene

*Kirkton
at 60*



The magazine of Scottish Community Drama

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by Ron Nicol
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plus club anniversaries - pages 7, 12, 19 & 22



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**Scottish Community
Drama Association**

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Cover

Kirkton Players' production of 'Alan & Jean's Incredible Journey' at the 2018 Scottish Final.

Photo by Walter Hampson

Chairman's Chat



Hello

It's strange how events have a habit of steering you in an unanticipated direction. When I took on the role of Vice Chair in 2015, I did so on the proviso that I would not become SCDA Chair, as I felt the organisation needed someone younger, but here I am now Acting Chair following the resignation of Jackie Westerman. Jackie was a popular Chairman with good 'people skills' and she will be missed, but we have to move on. It's odd too that I'm writing this at the beginning of October when, by the time you read this, much will have happened as a result of Divisional and National AGMs.

Right now however, we have just had the first of two weekends for aspiring directors as a joint venture with the Citizen's. Our own Carole Williams has been working with Guy Hollands of the Citizens on developing the course. The course members will, over the next year, direct a production in their own club and will be mentored by Carole. We had around 60 initial expressions of interest and then 22 applications for the 9 places. Applicants were chosen by Guy and Carole from the anonymised application forms.

I'm really proud of this initiative which resulted out of a meeting I had with Guy in 2016. While SCDA funds wont stretch to making this an annual event, as we are bearing the entire cost of delivering the course, we do need to look at how we might learn from it and deliver something more local.

I would like too, to have a conversation with SCDA members about what they would like from their association. Feel free to write to me with suggestions.

TONY

Tony Flisch
Acting SCDA Chairman
(Chair@SCDA.org.uk)

Welcome . . .

To new Individual Members

| | | |
|-----------------|-------|-------------------|
| Melanie Gillson | . . . | Falkirk District |
| Edith Lennon | . . . | Falkirk District |
| Jean Stuart | . . . | Ayrshire District |
| Jonathan White | . . . | Ayrshire District |
| Val Davies | . . . | Glasgow District |

To new Clubs

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Westray Drama Club | Orkney District |
| Bucaneer Theatre | Moray District |
| Darnick Village Play-reading Group | Borders |

Thank you . . .

For donations from -

Alan Henry
Rik Kay

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

Happy 10th Birthday SCDA Patrons!

Along with other celebrations at the year end, we also celebrate the 10th anniversary of the launch of the SCDA Patrons Scheme and thanks to our Patrons for your loyal and much valued support!

From the financial dark days in 2008 the scheme was launched to help ensure our survival and WOW, our generous patrons have contributed over £40,000 when taking gift aid into account. This is a magnificent achievement and is the envy of our sister organisations around the UK.

Looking to the future, we are asking those who have helped us for so long to consider an increase to their donation to cover inflation, but we continue to welcome all support with an entry level of £5/month.

If you wish to join the scheme, we have enclosed a Patron Leaflet in this issue and ask you to complete it and return it to SCDA HQ. Remember that Gift Aid increases the value of your donation by 25p for every £1 donated too!

SCDA Districts... One of our SCDA Districts held their AGM recently and decided to pledge £250 to the Patrons Scheme, on the basis that they will review their support annually! This is great news and maybe shows the way for other Districts or Clubs to follow their lead? Well done Perthshire District!

To all Patrons, past and present—we thank you



Pot Luck Quiz

(answers on page 14)

1. Also title of famous literary work, who were Mrs Pagg & Mrs Ford?
2. USA bought Alaska from which country?
3. Which British actor directed the film Sunshine on Leith?
4. Name the African City at the confluence of the Blue & White Niles?
5. What is the Nationality of the artist Edvard Munch?
6. Which Christian name is shared by TV detectives, Bergerac, Rockford and Taggart?

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Theatre - an hereditary gene?

Travelling back from my latest SCDA committee meeting, I got to thinking about all the drama stalwarts around the table whose commitment, dedication and love of theatre help to power the wonder that is Scottish Community Drama. How did they get there?

Many might assume we were beamed down from some distant planet or evolved from a dusty backstage cocoon, to be nurtured and fed and emerge years later, unfurling our theatrical wings, only to sit in a sweaty conference room drinking tea and munching hobnobs, making monumental decisions about next year's potential adjudicator, or more usually, what's for lunch. The latter is oddly true; every committee member has done their apprenticeship, joined a drama club, been press-ganged by a committee, then groomed (?!) and trained, moved through district ranks to divisional ranks and if lucky, been promoted to the National Committee, the Generals of the drama world. To reach any of these positions takes years of dedication, but how did they get there? Did they fall? Were they pushed? Or is it in their blood?

I personally grew up at the side of the stage watching my father direct a rag-tag collection of local drama enthusiasts in Kilmaurs Centre Players. I would sit with wide-eyed fascination watching how it all came together (or not, in some of their early productions), marvelling at his attempts at special effects and fumbling with record players and tapes (yes, that long ago) while watching countless Aggie Adams and Joe Corrie plays. One play in particular called for a ghost smoking in a chair, so he presented the prompt with a 6ft hose and got her to chain-smoke and blow it through to the empty ghost filled chair, which nearly kippered half the cast but looked quite impressive. This all probably explains why as a director, I



am now a bit OCD about sound, lighting and special effects. I honestly believe I was born into drama and it's in my genes. My first foray on stage was at the grand old age of six, as Mrs Brown in "Paddington Bear"; as a chubby child I was type-cast as mothers, psychotic nurses and roly-poly chefs, a trend which has sadly continued into adult life.

I was very lucky to have had a mad drama teacher who wielded a rod of iron over twenty-odd kids in Kilmaurs Junior Drama Club. The terrifying "Miss Burns", who had trained at RADA with Gordon Jackson, drilled us to within an inch of our lives, while spouting outrageous theatrical anecdotes and sayings like "You NEVER walk backwards on stage unless you're being attacked or in the presence of Royalty" and her favourite "The Theatre is not a public bar, it is a holy temple!" She believed that the only thing that stops you going on stage is death itself, which was ironic since we frequently felt like flinging ourselves like lemmings into the orchestra pit when she was in "one of her moods". I often ended up in tears, but what I learned from her has stayed, deeply embedded in my psyche.

I took over directing from my father when I was about 19, which was a very steep learning curve of the downward variety. Many years later, just before he died, he handed me three dusty tomes on drama from the 1930s. "These were your grandfather's, I want you to have them and love them". My grandpa had died of shell-shock when my dad was just 16; he had been a successful theatre director before fighting in WW2. I had no idea.

So, is the love of theatre hereditary? Perhaps, but I believe we wouldn't have this magazine and the SCDA if it weren't for the countless committees full of people with the "Hereditary Theatrical Gene".

Anne McIntyre
Stewartry District

Letters to The Editor

Why PVG rules are a MUST!

Killin is a very friendly village and attracts lots of folks as a great retirement location. The welcoming nature of the various clubs and associations makes it easy for newcomers to integrate into village life and when Ann and Bob arrived in Killin a few years ago they quickly fitted in. They would never be treated as locals, but they were the next best thing!

Bob was a retired army officer with lots of engineering skills. In recent years he had been involved in charitable work helping with building schools and children's homes in remote parts of the world. He liked helping people and before long became a member of several local groups. Bob was tall in stature, and sported a very full beard, which made him a natural to perform the role of Santa at the primary school Xmas party etc. His army skills were helpful to the scouts, and he was invited to speak about his charity work for various groups including the Women's Rural. When our Drama Club called for help building scenery, Bob got involved and was a welcome addition to our team. Ann was a little more reserved, but quickly got to know lots of people and life for the couple seemed settled.

So what's this all about? you may ask. I am writing this letter in a state of anger because around 2 weeks ago Bob was convicted of a serious sexual crime. He has been sentenced to 3 years in prison, and will remain on the sex offenders list for the rest of his life. His victim was a 15 year old girl. The offence took place in his home while his wife was away. His defence was that the girl had given consent for what took place, and she was consequently subjected to cross-examination in court. I hope I never meet him again.

When Killin Drama Club host their annual "Visit Santa's Grotto" this year, we will have to work extremely hard to assure the public locally that our own Santa is a good one! The man concerned had helped our club in the past, although he had not been in the company of children - but villagers will make assumptions. At our Panto casting recently we made no apology for emphasising that we have a very strict regime for anyone coming into contact with children - it has to be done!

Please take our 'near miss' at Killin as a warning to everyone that we can easily be taken in by strangers, and that strict adherence to PVG rules is a MUST!

Bob & Ann are not the real names.....but the facts are sadly true.

Gordon Hibbert Killin Drama Club

Modern Highland Comedy
by David Hutchison

THE CLEAR MOUNTAIN AIR

Two Acts cast of 6/8 (3/4 Female 3/4 Male)

A contemporary comedy set in the north-west highlands. Locals and incomers clash over a proposed fish meal plant - prosperity or environmental destruction?

Further details and script contact :-
dbhutchison@btinternet.com

David Hutchison was a prizewinner in the Play on Words competition in 2009 and 2011.

Since then he has had professional productions of 'The Blood is Strong' at London's Finborough Theatre, and 'Too Long the Heart' in Edinburgh by the Siege Perilous company.

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.

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Mouse Mats, Jute Bags and SCDA logo pens are available from Head Office



FADS reaches forty

On 16th June, FADS friends and members past and present gathered in Fintry to celebrate the club's 40th birthday with a truly entertaining dinner dance. (One year late, but we wanted to get the party just right!) It was brilliantly organised by Ellen Ross, Jackie Smith and Rowena Laing and hosted by the formidable double act, David Smith and Ian Turner, who put together a fantastic presentation looking back at the club's best moments.

Sheila Fraser, who's been a member since 'Fintry Theatre Club' was founded in 1977, took us back to the first productions of 'Gibbie Proposes' and 'The Buchan Trap',



kicking off a visual catalogue of highlights, triumphs, tight corners, flamboyant costumes, awards, bare bottoms and our very own 'The Faftas'!

The full cast of British Championship-winning 'Victor's Dung' (2014) was in the room – Jack Doyle, Iain Howie and



*Sheila Fraser
with her award*

Andy Barr, as well as director Martin Turner – and Jack got a special mention as two-time winner and current holder of the East Kilbride RepFest 'Best Actor' award. Memories of other notable successes included Martin's stint at the RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon, the 'Bonking James Bond' and 'Pushcart Peddlers' 2017 tour to Orkney and, most recently, 'Eight O'Clock's triumph at EK RepFest, where it took three of the four top awards.

The 'Name the Voice' competition caused much hilarity - with several 'artists' failing to recognise themselves! – and we danced the night away to the sounds of the super 7-piece band, The Dodgy Characters, who played a perfect mix of blues, rock'n'roll and modern numbers.

But one of the real highlights of the evening was Sheila being presented with a 'Lifetime Commitment' award, in recognition of everything she's done for FADS, as an actress, committee Chair and all-round touchstone for everyone. Thanking the club for the award, Sheila said, "FADS has been 40-plus years of enjoyment for me, at times with problems and frustrations to be overcome but, above all, with laughter, fun, friendship and support. The club brings together folk from all the airts and parts, of all ages and talents. Long may it continue to grow and flourish and be a hub of fun and friendship for all its members and friends."

I think that says it all.

Sarah Walker
FADS Committee

Being a Playwright

"I could write a play". Many say it. A few do it. Most don't. If you want to be a playwright you have to write. Nothing will stop you. I've been involved for nearly sixty years in amateur and professional theatre as an actor, stage manager, director, adjudicator, playwriting judge - and playwright. Production, publication or competitive success can never be guaranteed, but what follows works for me. Perhaps it might encourage you to write.

Forward planning is essential. You have to clarify your thoughts and shape them into a manageable form. Devise a coherent plot with a beginning, a middle and an end. Invent well-rounded characters. Place them in an appropriate setting. Give them opportunities to interact. Create suitable dialogue. Shape and advance the narrative. Introduce changes of pace, mood, tone and intensity, light and shade. Provide opportunities for movement and action.

Develop your plot. If it's a one act play for a festival, length is important. If you spend ages writing half the story, then try to cram too much into the final stages or run out of ideas, the conclusion could tail away. You might want a surprise ending, but you must make sure that situations are resolved and loose ends aren't left trailing. Might two acts be better?

Where and how people grow up affects their personality. How they speak and behave. Are they winners or losers, bullies or cowards. Caring or threatening? How are they connected? Have they something in common or are they different? How do they approach each other? Influence each other? Interact? Will there be conflict? Relationships

must be established and ideally should develop as the story progresses.

Accent and dialect affects choice of words and sentence construction. Over-precise grammar can sound artificial unless your character belongs to a particular background or era, so be conversational. "Don't go or I'll kill you!" rather than "Do not go or I will kill you!" Incorrect spelling or misplaced punctuation can impair understanding and make it difficult for actors to speak your words. 'Let's eat there, Gran' and 'Let's eat their Gran!' are very different.

Keep re-reading your script. Re-write or take out sections which don't work, even if they're your favourite bits. As the play develops, it might lead into byways you hadn't considered beforehand. Don't stick to the plan no matter what - adapt or abandon it. Don't throw the outline away - it might be the plot for another play.

Read your script aloud while moving around the room, sitting or rising where appropriate, and speak the lines as each character would. Persuade a friend or two to help out. Correct tongue-twisting phrases or awkward lapses in sense, perhaps by adding a comma to indicate a pause or change of thought. Establish the running time. Ask someone you trust to give you feedback. My most valued critic and adviser is my wife Norma, a former professional actress. Her comments are invaluable.

Try to include ideas about how the play might be staged. If your dramatic plane crash dissolves into a full-scale hospital setting, provide some hints about how to achieve this transformation. Some playwrights think it's the

The cast of *Beware the Jabberwock*



(Act 1) by Ron Nicol



director's job to work everything out, but not everybody has the experience or imagination to translate an ambitious script into cohesive action. They might choose a different way to do it - perhaps a better one - but if you just can't be bothered to make any suggestions at all, don't expect other people to work it out for you. If you haven't a clue how your stupendous tour de force can be staged, don't write it!

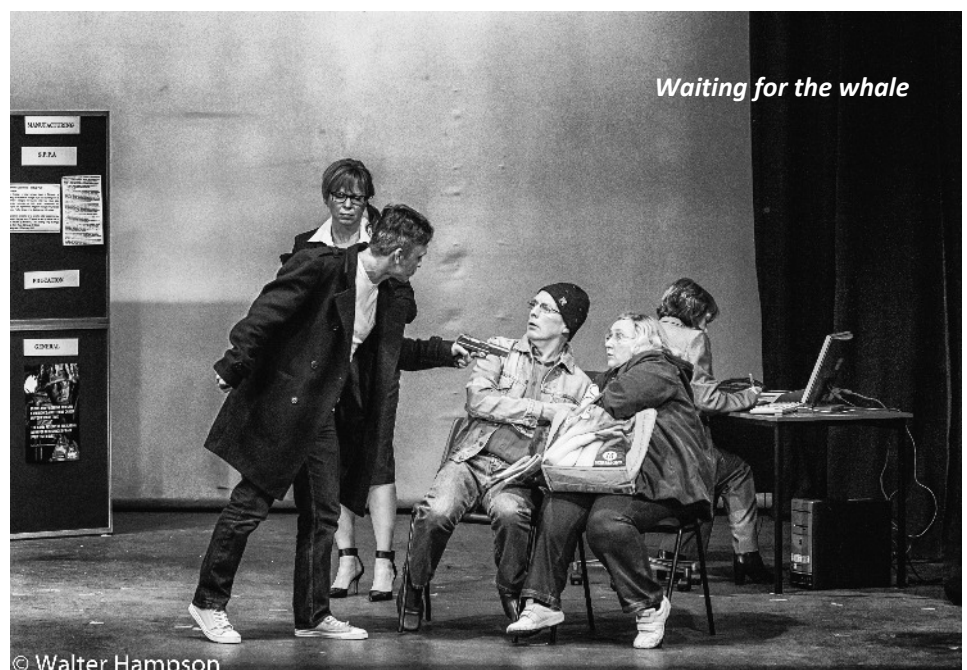
Your play is finished. What next? Approach your local dramatic society to ask whether they'd be interested in producing it. If they can't - or won't - consider it, try sending it to other groups nearby. I'm lucky because Norma runs Glenrothes Theatre Company, which means I'm certain to get a reading and performances are practically guaranteed - subject to Norma's approval. While I'm directing, I can identify and solve script problems. Company members aren't averse to offering criticism - though not every suggestion will be followed. Incidentally, be aware that laughter during rehearsal might not be generated by your comic dialogue!

Opening night! Will your complicated plot be understood? Will your sparkling comedy repartee be met with silence? You silently speak every line, follow every move, listen to every audience reaction, unable to

relax. A production by another company can be equally nerve-wracking. Have they interpreted it as expected? Will they put it across successfully? Will you have to sink into your seat and slink out before the end? If you meet them afterwards what will you say? There's not much you can do in either situation - but your play's been performed!

What next?

Continued in the next edition of Scene.



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JOHN MORLEY'S PANTOMIMES

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SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS

PETER PAN

BABES IN THE WOOD

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'Bold Girls' - a directorial first

This play first caught my attention in Standard Grade English in 1994. I'd love to say it was the writing, the symbolism or the fascinating but despairing struggle of working-class women affected by war that shook me awake from my rebellious teenage years, but honestly? It was the profanities. The profanities won me over. Being 14 and allowed to utter words like 'bastarding' and 'hoor' during class was quite the highlight of my week. It was then that I made a quiet promise to myself to direct this play one day.

The opportunity presented itself during Pathhead Players AGM in 2017. The committee was kind and willing enough to allow some scientist with no prior directing experience to give it a go.

Reading the play again after so many years was like reading a brand new play. The once-novel profanities paled into significance as I re-acquainted myself with Deirdre, Marie, Nora and Cassie. What struck my 37 year old self was the sheer strength of women. Women who suffered loss, trauma and violence but still managed to do their washing, cooking and enjoy a cheap night out down



the local club. It prompted me to think about how there are women like this all over the world, being affected by men and war today. World news rarely focuses on the hum-drum of daily living that women have to endure in war and I felt it an honour to be able to present a reminder of this to our audience.

As a group we faced multiple challenges in the journey from our first table read to the dress rehearsal. I even



found myself taking on the part of Cassie- not entirely wise for my directorial debut. The Troubles in Northern Ireland are a complex issue so I wanted to ensure we presented the play in a sensitive manner. I read up on the history of The Troubles, ensuring I checked different sources, spoke with people from Northern Ireland and arranged a cast trip to Belfast. We took a taxi tour and bombarded our friendly tour guide with questions, which really helped to set the scene and to accurately portray these fascinating women. The West Belfast accent was also a key challenge for our broad Scottish cast however we had some vocal coaching from fellow thespian Lindsay Corr which really helped. The blocking of the play on paper was done purely as a distraction one morning after I found my flock of hens slaughtered by a fox; if you look carefully there are still tear stains on my dog-eared script. The play was exceptionally well written by Rona Munro which made it straightforward to block. The actors each brought their own experience of the stage and of life to their parts, meaning that a huge amount of direction was not required. Taking on a part in the play as well as directing was one of the most challenging aspects as it meant that most of the time I was too busy trying to remember my next line than concerning myself with where people were placing themselves on the stage.

Bruce Ward, a Pathhead Players stalwart with much directing experience was invaluable to me. He helped to smooth the edges of our spiky play and gave professional guidance of what we were presenting. The back stage team provided emotional support and the full biscuit barrel each Wednesday night helped too. The week our run was on coincided perfectly with the 20 year anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement too which although unplanned was very fitting.



Jacqui Doran
Pathhead Players

Stage Hands Who Double as Actors

If you want to understand a group look to the past....

On March 19th 1958, 'A Meeting of the Drama Group was held' to appoint the first committee. Our records do not tell us the location of the meeting, but they do tell us that the first plays chosen were *'The Spent Match'* and *'Nine Green Peas'*.

Interestingly there was no Large Hall at Kirkton Church with anything as wonderful as a stage. The hall would be built later. When Kirkton Church Drama Group first performed it was in the small hall with a raised platform. Exit stage right and you were in the corridor outside of the Sanctuary. Exit stage left was via a window into the Manse Drive. Humble beginnings for a small group, but all great fun.

By 1961 the group had begun fund raising to build what is now the Large Hall and stage area. When work was completed in 1965 the new performance space came complete with curtains and under stage storage – as much as our old bones curse the narrow entrance now, this must have felt like seventh heaven!

From here on there was no stopping the group – they performed to their local church audience as well as Guilds,

and other social groups from across South Lanarkshire. A real spirit of community began to emerge. This was widened when the Group began performing in local festivals, such as East Kilbride and Uddingston. All helping create a solid base for future generations of Players.

Fast forward to 1991 when the newly renamed Kirkton Players joined SCDA, taking the Oak tree that stands in Kirkton Church as our logo – showing not only our roots and heritage, but alluding to the great things that were to come.

In 1995 *'September in the Rain'* by John Godber reached the Scottish Finals in Kilmarnock. And that was just the start. When you are around festivals as long as we have been you aspire to be better and to put on the best performance that you can and you learn from your peers. In 1999 Kirkton Players lifted the Howard De Walden trophy for the first time with Pinter's *'The Dumb Waiter'*. In 2002 *'Bouncers'* took home the top prize, followed the next year by *'The Steamie'* (Side Note – only the 2nd club to win in two consecutive years, to date). In 2009 Kirkton did it again with *'Two'*, followed in 2012 with *'In the Blinking of an Eye'*. In fact, no other club has won the British Finals as often as Kirkton Players.



Kirkton's 60th birthday

Kirkton at 60

Not bad, for a group of Stage hands, who double as actors.

This phrase derived from the fact that our numbers have always been few, with some of our infamous box sets having in the region of fifteen or more flats, not to mention beds, internal walls, cast iron radiators and 4 Belfast sinks it's a wonder we ever managed the build in the allocated ten minutes prior to performing - using not only our small stage crew, but our Actors also. It is a very rare occurrence to go on stage without having helped build a set. Not that we complain. After all we do this because we have a shared passion for entertaining.



local food bank we try to give back to our most loyal supporters.

This year marks 60 years of Kirkton Players. And to celebrate we are putting on a 'Gala Performance' of two of our British Final winners on Friday 30th Nov and Saturday 1st Dec- 'In the Blinking of an Eye' by Jeremy Hylton Davies and 'The Steamie' by Tony Roper. We will be very proud to step, once more, onto the stage that those who came before us helped to build and we hope to show our appreciation to those who helped to create this small band, whether it be former members or our loyal audience members. We have a great many tales to tell about our highs, and indeed our lows. No doubt these will be shared across the three performances. So as we raise a glass to 60 years of Kirkton Players I can hear the toast 'Here's tae us! Wha's like us? Gie few, an there aw deid!'

George Thomson



Above all else, regardless of our successes we pride ourselves on the Big 'C' – Community. We have several members who are key to running the various festivals and as a group sponsored the Ann Brown Memorial Trophy for the entry with the highest marks in acting at Glasgow District. We did more than our share to organise a Scottish Youth Finals, even though our youngest member was 25! We have even helped out by building and striking the sets for other competing teams. Locally we continue to support charity and fundraising events. Whether it be a bingo night through local charity 'Kind Hearts', money to repair the church organ, or audience donations to the



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Pot Luck Quiz Answers

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Merry Wives of Windsor | 4. Khartoum |
| 2. Russia | 5. Norwegian |
| 3. Dexter Fletcher | 6. Jim |

True North

I guess I was always destined to be an amdram fan. Some of my first memories were of going to village halls in Halkirk and Reay, where my folks ran drama groups, to watch rehearsals and then plays in SCDA festivals. Of baking for bring and buy sales in Thurso to fundraise for the Mill Theatre and of my entire family being part of the community that was and is Thurso Players. Buses – yes plural - being packed with casts, sets and camp followers touring Scotland to the next festival and the next, staying in hotels and B&Bs and meeting the same amazing people year in year out. Being sooo proud of my lovely dad and big brothers when *'The Happy Journey'* came third in the Scottish final in 1956 (I was 4) and having the privilege of being in a play at the age of 10 which also reached the same giddy heights in 1962, (see picture below).



I tip my hat to my lovely parents, the wonderful Jess and Jimmy Watt who gave me the best introduction to theatre. The friendships, the fun, the people, all made for a really happy childhood and that sense of common purpose and community and the huge importance of culture and communication in our lives made for a solid core to build my life on.

So this summer, myself, my long-suffering husband Tom (now a convert and chair of Aberdeen District, ex chair of Northern Division and quiz master extraordinaire), and my 8 year old hyper active performer grandson Craig, went on a trip down (or up) memory lane to Caithness and Orkney and caught up with pals old and new.

In Thurso my new found friend and fellow National Committee member Alan Gerrard gave us a guided tour round the Mill Theatre and even managed to find one of the Thurso Players who still remembered us Watts; the lovely Betty Bradstreet who came

and showed us round the costume department and let Craig try on hats and do a bit of posing in the dressing rooms. I had contributed to a book about the players some decades ago when Edna Walford and I were on General Council at the same time and sadly lost my copy. BUT the resourceful Alan presented me with another. Thank you Alan! I will treasure it!

Onwards to Wick (sorry Thurso) where we met up with our pal Grant Mackenzie. When any young Wick Players came down to Aberdeen to uni Donald Farmer would send them to my door. As one of the founder members of the sadly no longer Ferryhill Players, our home was an obvious springboard into the drama scene in the city and Grant was one who came and stayed with the players for his 4 years at uni, and what an asset he was, starring in many Ferryhill productions and going on to direct his muckers Kevin Farmer and Andrew Craigie in great drama in Wick. Donald himself of course directed the same pair in two plays which ultimately won British Finals! Grant is now deputy head at Wick High School.

Next leg, Orkney, where we had a phenomenal night with a bunch of Orcadian thespians and followers. Bob Ross, Vera Copeland and the redoubtable Margaret Irvine (on a rare night off from rehearsing Birsay prior to their foray to Fintry!!), accompanied by Mary Harkess and Ola Gorie. As ever, Orkney hospitality is second to none and not only were we having a ball with our mates but we were staying in Mike and Inga Drever's home free gratis (they were in York). Thank you, guys! And yet another wonderful night was had at Bob and Linda Ross's.

What can I say, we had a magical 10 days and the sun shone. Thank you Caithness and Orkney buddies. See you at the next festival.

Paula Gibson
Individual member



new plays review

by Stephen Lambert

Samuel French Ltd

'Everybody's Talking About Jamie'

Book and Lyrics by Tom Macrae with music by Dan Gillespie Sells

Drama in Two Acts

Cast: 11 Male, 8 Female with doubling

ISBN 9780573706899

Jamie New is sixteen years old living on a council estate in Sheffield where he doesn't quite fit in, is terrified about the future but nevertheless is destined to be a sensation. Supported by his brilliant loving mum and surrounded by close friends, Jamie is determined to overcome prejudice, beat the bullies and step out of the darkness into the spotlight.

Sixteen is at the edge of possibility – time to make our dreams come true.

Inspired by the BBC3 documentary Jamie: Drag Queen at 16.

The Kids are raucous, real and rough around the edges, never appearing polished or highly trained and every child has their own name, personality and backstory that should be reflected throughout.

The Adults are working class Northerners rarely appearing sentimental or romantic with any show of emotion having to be earned.

The characters vocal choice of music should reflect their personality from Dusty Springfield to contemporary pop.

Everyone remembers being sixteen – it's terrible, wonderful, frightening yet exciting so recapture your emotion and put that on stage.

Contains unique glossary of popular terms and expressions.

Stagescripts.com

New plays from Derek Webb. This Wales based writer's latest ventures include a play celebrating the centenary of the first UK- Ireland flight, another marking the 50th Anniversary of Dusty Springfield's solo career and finally *'The Railway Children Lady'* dramatising the life of Edith Nesbit, plus a growing list of One Acts and Youth plays to his credit.

Contact : derekwebb@me.com

'Agatha Crusty and the Health Spa Murders' by Derek Webb

Comedy in Two Acts

Cast: 3 Male, 7 Female

Crime novelist and amateur detective Agatha Crusty decides that a few days at a health spa is the ideal method of recharging her batteries giving inspiration for her latest book.

She arrives at Seventh Heaven owned by Andy Eden where she encounters other participants including the sales team from Zara Fernandez Fashion House and staff members Abigail, the super Sloane therapist and Russian Dmitri Popov who specialises in Venik massage.

The women experience a selection of spa treatments including birch twigs until one of the group is found drowned in the Moor Mud Bath.

Enter Inspector Simon Aster complete with classic speech impediment and a penchant for complicating the simplest of detection methods and with murders escalating Agatha investigates the significance of the apple tree in the Garden of Eden.

Featuring a healthy dose of humour throughout and an ingenious plot to tax the little grey cells of any audience.

The action passes in the Health Spa's Tranquillity Suite.

Complete with properties, effects listings and costuming advice.

'Agatha Crusty and The Murder Mystery Dinner' by Derek Webb

Comedy in Two Acts

Cast: 5 Male, 6 Female

ISBN 9781910457207

Geoffrey and Caroline Robertson are hosting a dinner party to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Mighty Midget Vacuum Cleaners, the company Geoff jointly owns with Tim McArthur and to add spice to the proceedings they decide to give the evening a murder mystery theme. A variety of employees with their partners have been invited plus one surprise guest – the well known crime novelist Agatha Crusty who happens to be promoting her latest book in the area.

In classic thriller style a storm rages outside and the remote Victorian mansion becomes cut off by rising flood waters. During a sudden power cut one of the guests is murdered perplexingly when everyone else was together in one place.

However with Agatha Crusty on the case there are sure to be plenty of laughs as the body count increases.

Sitting room setting throughout. Supplied with comprehensive furniture and properties listing and sound/lighting plots.

Scripts can be obtained through the SCDA discount scheme - 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.

The hour we knew nothing of each other.



'The Hour We Knew Nothing of Each Other' is a play without words, narrated by music and animated by unspoken interaction. This production gives the simple pleasure of people-watching a vibrant dramatic life as the audience weave a narrative out of the everyday scenes of a city.

This 450-character production welcomed a large scale cast of Edinburgh residents onto the stage to create it. www.lyceum.org.uk

The play that I took part in was an adaptation of Peter Handke's comedy, by Meredith Oakes, and it showed at the Royal Lyceum Theatre here in Edinburgh from 31st May to 2nd June 2018.

We rehearsed regularly for several weeks to put the flesh on the bones, as it were, and I met and made several new friends. We all got on famously, mainly because this play had almost no spoken words at all.

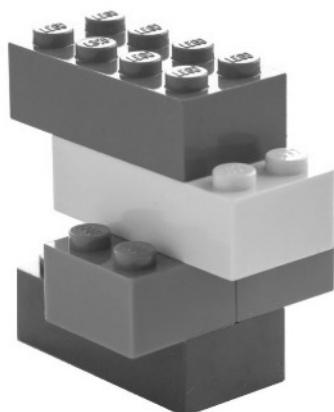
The directors were Wils Wilson, Janice Parker and Drew Taylor. The staff and others were all very kind to us, with plenty of tea breaks, and there were about sixty of us in the cast all told.

There was one scene where nearly all the cast have a hoe-down and wait for a sharp thumping sound which is similar to an electric shock so to speak. Metaphorically speaking, this must have been the case because, just after this, we all had to position ourselves in a scrum-like hoard in order 'to find the incentive' – whatever that is or was or will be!

It's been such an honour and privilege to take part in this amazing play and I must confess I greatly enjoyed it. I am also greatly enjoying being an active member of both St Serfs Players and The Scottish Community Drama Association as well as the Edinburgh Acting School.

Roddie Stewart-Meiklejohn

Photo by Aly Wight



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



We've escaped! but we need a new home.



As clubs commence their winter season programme, we hope that you'll remember to help SCDA funds by donating raffle proceeds at some stage. If you're looking for raffle prizes or gifts over the coming weeks, our newly acquired Teddy Bears and cuddly Dogs are available to

order from Ebay. They stand almost 11" tall and they're proud to wear their SCDA tee shirt! Compare the prices—ours are very competitively priced at £8-50. The November Newsletter contains the links!

Patron Scheme . . .

**Our patrons pledge
almost £6000 per
year to SCDA funds**

Can you spare between £5 and £10 a month to help SCDA?

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.

70 years of Saughtonhall Drama Group

In 1948, after the war, a group of young people and friends in the church started up a drama group to meet on Friday evenings in the church hall and perform plays. It was called Saughtonhall Church Dramatic Society and the members put on two or three productions a year, very successfully. They grew in numbers and various members of the group would direct. One of our original members, Gladys Bell, is still an active member within the group.

In the early 1970s the group wasn't very active due to lack of members. However, a small number did try to keep an interest going and in 1978 there were enough people to start in earnest again. A new constitution was drawn up renaming the group Saughtonhall Dramatic Society, a new committee formed and they were off! They performed two productions a year, one in spring and the other in late autumn. The group performed successfully for many years and entered the One-Act Festival at the Churchill Theatre a number of times and also the Churches Festival at the Netherbow Theatre.

Unfortunately, in January 1992 a fire destroyed the Church and the drama group lost everything. All the stage materials and pieces of furniture were stored under the stage and nothing remained of them. It was a sad time for the whole church. A Portacabin was erected in the church garden and the drama group met there on a Friday evening to assess the damage and work out where they went from there.

A decision was made to carry on so enquiries were made around town to find a venue to perform in and also to rehearse. It was decided we could go to St. Bride's Centre in Dalry and rehearse in the local scout hall. Of course all this cost money. Two new members joined us to carry out

the technical requirements for St. Bride's. Three productions took place there and though the plays were successful not all our local support followed us, but the experience did the group good.

1995 saw the group back in the new church. If the group was to continue it would have to use the sanctuary area to perform on. The area was much smaller and lower than before but a One-Act play was performed and it worked



well by using the back curtains instead of flats. They continued doing One-Act plays and mirth, monologue & song for a number of years and in 2000 the stage extension was built, which meant Three Act plays could be performed again and panto was introduced by Gladys Bell. The drama group was up and running again.

In 2002 the group applied to elders for permission to add a new lighting bar to the ceiling. Permission was granted and we then entered the Fringe for the first time in August 2003 with *'Surprise Package'*. This was a great success.

In 2010 the group won the Best Play award at the Edinburgh Evening News Drama Awards with *'A Pack of Lies'* directed by Morag Simpson. We are still entering the Fringe and thanks to the dedication from our members the group have gone from strength to strength.

We are delighted to celebrate our 70th anniversary with two One Act plays, *'Bus Stop'* and *'The Church Meeting'*. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us over the years.

Here's to another 70 years!

Cheers!

Elizabeth Meston



Some light relief

by Robert McLaren

Sittin' here without a care
Ready fur the show
The actors poised, lines weel kent
Desperate fur tae go.

But gremlins they were lurkin' there
Waitin' tae appear
Tae hiv some fun wi' the lightin' desk
It was just a load o' auld gear.

The desk wis past retirement age
It's starrin' days wir past
The gremlins knew the bits tae touch
The bits that widnae last.

Those gremlins they did start tae work
The lights they were nae stable
On and off, dim and bright
Is there somethin' wrang wi' a cable?

Big Rab, he hid lost the plot
Wee Rab tried his best
The gremlins they were havin' a ball
Fur pitys sake gie it a rest.

Enougs enough Big Andra' called
The desk it's time tae ditch,
They pesky gremlins hiv had their fun
The show goes oan without a hitch.

The Tolbooth "Light Cavalry" they were called
Tae come up wi' a plan,
A desk arrived no sae new
In the back o' a wee white van.

The Tolbooth Crew. Rab and James
They really hid a task

Four oors tae go tae the show
They'd need tae work real fast.

Like Boab the Builder high on speed
Pliers and screwdrivers flashed.
They did the joab just like oor Boab,
The gremlins plot wis dashed.

The scene lit up, the lights were set
Noo it's time tae go
The audience came in wi' not a clue
Noo lets get oan wi' the show.



POSTERS

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Share your Club's posters in SCDA's 2018 poster competition

Send a pdf or jpg file to scene@scda.org.uk

Closing date 31st December

Remember posters must include the SCDA logo or a reference to SCDA membership

JBT Distribution

are proud to support the Scottish Community Drama Association.

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



We will drive 500 miles!

Yes, that is what Birsay Drama Club did, in July, nineteen members of the club got up at five a.m to catch the six thirty ferry and then drove from Orkney to Fintry and back, to perform in the Menzies Hall, Fintry. This had been a long awaited trip, as Fintry had previous travelled to Birsay on two occasions to perform, "*Victor's Dung*", "*The Pushcart Peddlers*" and "*Bonking James Bond*".

SCDA members who have been to divisional or a Scottish final in Orkney will appreciate the challenges with ferries and portable sets. One of the sets had been specifically designed to flat pack into the back of a car but was greatly enhanced by the Fintry Clubs' freshly cut greenery.

This time Birsay brought an original Play, "*The Passing Place*", and an interclub performance of "*Henry the Tudor Dude*". The interclub performance included five actors from Fintry and seven from Birsay. The cast had individually rehearsed but then spent Saturday rehearsing together, this was a challenge, but a fun piece with the Birsay team benefitting from the experience of the Fintry cast, and the Fintry cast benefitting from the visitors familiarity with the moves! Both clubs would highly recommend this as a great way for clubs to perform together. The ability of Fintry to dress a stage set and produce some wonderful period costumes certainly helped to enhance the combined production.

'*The Passing Place*', a play about five women coming to the end of a five day sponsored walk in the Highlands, received a great reaction from the Fintry audience, in particular the beautiful set, the relationships between the



five women, the lovely moments of humour combined with the compelling loss, meant there was hardly a dry eye in the hall.

The Fintry club were exceptional hosts, providing amazing hospitality, glorious food and great evenings of fun and entertainment. Birsay benefited from working with another club, learning about their approaches to stage management and lightning. We would urge clubs form across the districts and divisions to seriously consider this way of sharing and supporting amateur drama across Scotland.

We will all be keen to undertake another 500 miles to ensure our inter-club development continues.

Margaret Irvine



St. Serf Players at 70

It is always exciting to reach another milestone and St Serf's Players have reached 70! Like many other drama clubs, they were formed in the post war period to encourage community spirit and many are still here and active today.

St Serf's Players was formed in late 1948 by members within St Serf's Parish Church and has thrived on the same site at Clark Road, initially performing in a tin roofed hall which was replaced in 1959 by the main hall much as it is today. Much, probably all, of the technical equipment was supplied by the drama club and over the years we have gone through 3 different lighting boards; the first built for the tin hall, followed by two further upgrades for the existing stage, each built by members of the club and now operated by computer via DMX.

The first public performance actually took place in February 1949 with three one act plays; *'The Ugly Duckling'*, *'In Waltz Time'* and *'John Grumlie'* - a copy of a signed program from this production can be seen on our internet pages. The club has continued to perform every year since then, winning many trophies and awards along the way.

From our records, St Serf's Players first took part in the SCDA in 1952 with *'Elizabeth Refuses'* performed at The Little Theatre. St Serf's Players have worked with many others over the years, organising one act evenings with other local amateur drama clubs and supporting the KDF (Kirk Drama Federation) which used to hold their One Act festival in The Gateway.

We have continued to produce a wide variety of plays over the years both traditional in style and contemporary and the group has been a place of great support for members when life got tough. It was also a great place to meet new people, resulting in several engagements and subsequent weddings. Children of group members then became involved too, helping out with lighting, sound and back stage as well as on the acting front.

In 1982, the club decided to tackle something different which would enable younger people to take part in drama and our first pantomime *'The Wizard of Oz'* was staged – a huge success which set the way forward for our December show every year since. The pantomimes have given the club the opportunity to welcome younger talent from outside groups into the club enabling them to be part of the shows – initially The Manor School of Ballet, Ward School of Irish Dance and Dynam-nic joined us and latterly The Trinity Theatre Group, who all contributed towards making our shows fun, vibrant productions.

We continue to produce a spring play in May each year and our Pantomime each December (this year's being *'Aladdin'*) and hope to support the SCDA one-act festival again in the future. We are always keen to welcome new members whether to act, support back-stage or to help Front of House and hope that St Serf's Players will continue to grow as a club, challenging ourselves and presenting our audiences with a worthy range of drama for many more years.

Trevor Garlick



**Erica and Me
(2016)**

Old Folk
(2015)



Pictures of past St. Serf productions

The Steamie
(2013)



Please contribute to Scene

This is your magazine and it can only be as good and interesting as the articles and pictures you submit. If you have a story and photos that you think would be interesting, get in touch with the Editor. scene@scda.org.uk

Clubs please note, you can get 4 copies of Scene for £10 plus postage. Just send your request to HQ



It's nearly panto season.

Pictures from last year's shows in Pathhead, Killin and Linlithgow.

Photos by Walter Hampson



Setting the lights at Saughtonhall

The first published picture of stagecrew at work