

Summer 2026

scene

Metamorphoses



the magazine of
Scottish Community Drama





**Join us for our
Centenary Gala
Weekend in
Pitlochry.**

See page 6



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Cover picture

Bon Accord Players' production of
'Metamorphoses', winners of the Scottish Final.
Photo by **Tony Flisch**



Chairman's chat

I hope everyone is enjoying the sunshine and perhaps taking a well-earned break, or maybe you have a Summer production in rehearsal? Such a lot seems to have happened since the Spring issue of Scene - yet there's more to look forward to this Centenary Year!

Planning is well underway for two special Centenary events – firstly, a celebration at the Library in Stirling on 26 September, with a focus on connecting playwrights, plays and performers. We will also showcase a short promotional film at this event, recorded during the Scottish Final at Pitlochry Festival Theatre. Later in the year, we have the Gala Dinner, running alongside our AGM weekend at Pitlochry's Atholl Palace Hotel in November.

Our One-Act Play festival reached its conclusion in late April, and it was great to meet or catch up with some of you at the District and Divisional rounds this year. The final, in sun-soaked Pitlochry, garnered good audiences and excellent performances. Our Scottish winners, Bon Accord, went on to the British Final in Wales in July, putting on a fantastic show but missing out on the top prize. However, it was my pleasure to present the Geoffrey Whitworth trophy to Keith Mackenzie, already a Scott Salver winner, for his play *A Thousand Invisible Choices* – the first Scottish winner this century!

Offering more opportunities for the creative and/or competitive minded, the annual Monologue Competition is now 'live'. Entries close at the end of August. We are also running the Play on Words (POW) competition once again, the first for five years. This is for original one-act plays that have never been performed – entry deadline is October 31.

As mentioned previously, our National Drama Advisor, Carole Williams, will be retiring in early 2027 and we will shortly be advertising to find a replacement – maybe you know somebody who might be interested?

Meanwhile, enjoy the summer,
whatever your plans!

Robin.

Welcome

to new Club members

Forfar Dramatic Society	Angus (Northern)
Brechin City Theatre Club	Angus (Northern)
Newtonmore Drama Club	Perthshire (Northern)
Stonehaven	Aberdeen (Northern)
Lamlash Drama Club	Arran (Western)
Whiting Bay Drama Club	Arran (Western)
Green Place Theatre	Glasgow (Western)
Motherwell Theatre Group	Glasgow (Western)
Gallus Outlaws Theatre Co.	Glasgow (Western)
Peebles Youth Theatre	Edinburgh (Eastern)
Wester Ross DG	S.W. Ross (Highland)
Sgiobha Drama Uibhist	S.W. Ross (Highland)

to new Individual members

Juju Dyspraxia	Inverclyde (Western)
Ian & Muriel Rae (joint)	Perthshire (Northern)
Adrian Ross	Edinburgh (Eastern)

to new Patron

Eleanor Love	Aberdeen (Northern)
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Thank you

for donations

the late Constance Anderson

Thanks also to our Patrons for their continued support.

Auld Avondale Actors

Auld Avondale Actors was formed from ex Young Farmers of Avondale Young Farmers Club back in 2014 after a successful Anniversary Concert of the Young Farmers Club. Avondale YFC have always enjoyed and excelled in Drama Competitions and a group of stalwarts decided we would start our own Drama Group so we could get on stage purely for the enjoyment and to raise money for local charities. We put on a production once a year in our local Community Theatre and our group is run on a very informal basis with everyone mucking in and helping out with all the tasks.

In Summer 2025 we decided on a relatively new Scottish play called Midge and we started rehearsing in earnest last Autumn. But bad news about two of our group needing medical treatment meant that at short notice we had to change our plans. 'Let's Be 'Aving You' by Geoff Buckingham was the new script we agreed on, then 10 weeks later we were on stage. We all had so much fun pulling this together. It is a farce centering on 3 policemen and 3 elderly knitting club ladies who by chance foil a burglary and the script provided many comedic moments and fabulous one liners.

Strathaven Town Mill was once again a fantastic venue which we are thankful we have

on our doorstep to use. As this play was just a one act play, we decided to pad the evening out with a Scottish Musical selection by our own accordion and violin players and a few other comedy sketches which were well received.

After performances over the 4 nights, we were delighted to be able to donate £1400 to 4 local charities.

We will all enjoy a rest over summer and will convene again in the Autumn to decide what production we will work on for next Spring.



A conversation with **Margaret Irvine BEM**

Margaret Irvine, the founder of Birsay Drama Group in Orkney, has been recognised for her decades of dedication to drama with the award the British Empire Medal.

Margaret's hard work and dedication has helped make her a driving force in Birsay often putting on multiplay plays for the drama festival as well as volunteering with the SCDA nationally.

Morna asked Margaret when had she first got interested in drama.

"Well, I was brought up in Deerness a very small community and we seemed to be involved in concerts and small sketches from an early age. When the young farmers started in Deerness we continued to do concerts with them. The young farmers then started their concert competition in 1967 which fortunately we won with *Music through the years* written by one of our members. We were then asked to fill in at the scda festival but because we weren't members we could not compete. However, we did get a public adjudication and it was very complementary.

A couple of years later we went to Shetland with our concert from that year which was *Musical Olympics* and we needed a play to go with it so we did the *Bonesetter*. Mr Shearer my old teacher from St Andrews help us with that and said they didn't have a club at the time so did we want some of their sets and would we be interested in doing it for the festival and we said yes why not. We were hooked and did mostly scottish plays but always comedy *Hogmanay* and *Halloween* had been great fun but always fairly large casts.

Then when I moved to Birsay I was asked to join some of the community centre concerts. We did a couple of plays and they had quite an enthusiastic group interested in drama and all they needed was just a nudge and the Birsay Drama Group was formed and it has grown from strength to strength. Some of our early plays were female casts *Ladies this is War* an *Costa del Packet* then we gathered some men and did *The road to Ruin*."

I asked Margaret if she had any favourite plays.

I think perhaps *The Steamie* and *Dirty dusting* and the most successful *Henry the Tudor Dude* and *El forna catconie* and *Cheshire Cats*.

Margaret thought that SCDA had improved in recent years. I think the competition is more friendly the teams are very supportive of each other and I have made a lot of very good friends through the SCDA.



Margaret Irvine BEM

What do I think could improve SCDA?

I think the SCDA should try to encourage more teams to join also maybe bigger teams and also encourage the youth more. The scottish final youth in Perth was a great example of including big teams. A great evening with three teams and over seventy people on stage. Well done to them all and to Beath High school with 38 people on stage - that surely is community with a capital 'C'.

Finally to future directors or producers have a go its a great challenge and very satisfying to see the end product involve the team along the way.

Just to finish by saying onwards and upwards to the SCDA a great institution and thanks its been a great journey so far.

Morna Barron

Centenary events

Plans are well underway for our centenary celebrations to continue as we host our Centenary Gala Weekend and National AGM on Friday 20 and Saturday 21 November in the magnificent surroundings of the Atholl Palace Hotel in Pitlochry. The weekend will be a genuine celebration of a century of community theatre whilst reflecting on the rich heritage of the association and looking forward to an enduring future.

The festivities will begin on the Friday evening with a special performance of the first ever winning play from the One Act Play Festival of 1926, *'Campbell of Kilmohr'* in the Bow Lounge. This will be followed by a social evening and quiz. An ideal opportunity, both to reconnect with friends old and new, and to share memories and stories from our past.

All members are welcome to attend the National AGM on the Saturday morning between 11.00 and 13.00 to discuss the business of the association and to hear the priorities for the future. Members will also be treated to performances of this year's winning Monologues prior to lunch.

One of the highlights of the weekend will be a fantastic opportunity to see the SCDA Centenary promotional film which was filmed at the Scottish Final during a

glorious weekend at the end of April at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre. This will be followed by an entertaining afternoon of excerpts from Scottish Final One Act champions, spanning the decades and highlighting the high quality of drama over the years at our festivals.

The weekend of centenary celebrations culminates with a fabulous three-course gala dinner on the Saturday evening with inspiring guest speakers who will reflect on both the past and present of SCDA as an organisation and our legacy for an equally enduring future. There will be ample opportunity to socialise afterwards and celebrate the passion and dedication of members who have promoted community drama for over 100 years.

Please come along to be part of the historical centenary celebrations for what promises to be a genuinely memorable weekend. Bed and Breakfast accommodation is now available to book directly at Atholl Palace Hotel at special rates using the special promotional code and there is other accommodation also available elsewhere in Pitlochry. The gala dinner is £55 for 3 courses with coffee and our entertaining guest speakers. Please email gala@drama.scot to register your interest and be part of this special weekend of celebration.

A Centenary Celebration @ the Library

As we celebrate 100 years of the SCDA, all members are cordially invited to join us for canapes and refreshments at our library in Stirling.

Saturday, 26th September 2026 at 2 pm.

1st floor, Argyll Court, Castle Business Park, Stirling FK9 4TY.

Programme:

- Welcome and introduction, short film.
- A short history of SCDA and our library
- Panel talk - Playwrights, Publishers and Performers, where does the library fit in?
- Discussion / Q&A.
- Time to browse

Featuring notable speakers involved in the creation, publishing and staging of plays, including the Scottish Society of Playwrights and Playwrights Studio Scotland, this event will be a great opportunity to strengthen links between playwrights and the world of Scottish amateur theatre.

It should be a great opportunity to meet the wider drama community and be introduced to our library's 14,000 unique titles.

We look forward to seeing you in Stirling

RSVP to event26@drama.scot



Introducing Neal Clark

Our drama advisor Carole Williams met up with Neal when he was tutoring at one of SCDA's workshops. Tell us a bit about yourself

I'm Neal, a professional sound engineer from the north of Scotland. I have been involved in theatre and SCDA since I was in my early 20s with the Thurso Players. After graduating from the Production Technology and Management degree from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, I have been involved in many exciting projects.

I have toured the USA and Europe with world class dance organisations, worked on the Edinburgh International Festival and I am currently the head of Sound for the Company ITISON, who produce world class events such as GlasGlow and Elfingrove.

In addition to my freelance work, I have taught across all ages at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

How did you find working with SCDA on their youth summer schools?

My main aim for the workshops was to introduce the young people to the world of backstage showing how it can make a difference to a project or production. If I was able to turn some heads and have some of the young people want to join the technical teams at their clubs it would be mission accomplished!

Did you learn anything new through delivering the workshops?

I found that working with the young people reminded me that not everyone wants to be a performer. The backstage door just needs to be opened for them so that we can all benefit from their enthusiasm and abilities. I also discovered that the young people learn technical skills very quickly.

How did you decide what to focus on with such a short period of time available?

I started by explaining design elements – what colour and intensity does when or how a sound effect can completely change a scene. Pairing this with hands on activity, they were able to produce comprehensive sound and lighting designs in one and half days!

Why do you think so few young people get involved in technical support at clubs? What about health and safety concerns?

Many clubs hesitate to involve young people in technical roles because of understandable safety concerns. Of course, health and safety matters, especially backstage, but that doesn't mean young people can't be involved. There are plenty of safe, practical ways for young people to get started. They can learn to rig lights at ground



level, add colour to lamps, and build an understanding of electrical safety without being exposed to unnecessary risk.

With the right supervision, they can also begin programming and operating lighting desks or running sound from a laptop. Given how confident many young people are with technology, these roles can be a natural and exciting fit.

Safeguarding and child protection are important, but there is no reason young people can't play an active role in lighting and sound. If amateur theatre is to have a strong future, we need to open that door now. And if clubs need support, I'm always happy to help. You can get in touch via the National Drama Advisor at nda@drama.scot.

What can clubs do to encourage young people to be more involved?

Use local networks to identify young people interested in technical theatre. Build relationships with local schools. Often young people only have limited access to kit and expertise in school to prepare for Highers and are eager to work on shows. Remember that young people can be involved in technical roles for any production, you do not need to have a youth section to involve them.

How can SCDA help clubs to involve more young people in the technical side of productions?

SCDA can continue to offer local workshops across all ages. These are particularly valuable because they use local kit resulting in immediately transferable skills. Mixing adult and youth participants also strengthens these sessions.

For grassroots theatre to thrive, the earlier that people get involved the better. Theatre is a team activity, each aspect of a production playing an important role. We should do everything possible to encourage and develop the next generation of backstage volunteers with the same enthusiasm as we do for performers.

Killin Komeedy Festival

Members of the brewery, you are summoned herewith to consider the actions of one Gordon Hibbert. A repeat offender. Charged once again with hosting a criminally funny Killin Komeedy Festival (and subsequently causing me to have to write this introduction like a trial transcript). A most serious offence, I'm sure you'll agree. Though he stands trial alone his co-conspirators should not, indeed cannot, be ignored. For while it has been said he could sell sand in the Sahara, and in fact both raffle and auction were a great success, he was not alone in this endeavour.



Okay, don't worry, I don't intend to actually do the entire article in that manner, no matter how tempted I might be, but let's just say there's a reason I'm not the comedian in the family.

For those that have never experienced Killin Komeedy Festival before it can be quite the intimidating thing walking into the hall for the first time. Lots of groups, all that seem to know each other, but as the random Americans who managed to be swept up into the crowd on the second night found out it's like a huge family gathering but with more dad jokes. The set-up with the two stages allows a speedy switch between the larger and smaller performances, and gives Gordon plenty of space to act as ringmaster for arguably the greatest show in town.

Up first, as was only right and proper, were Killin Drama (aided and abetted by Leslie Drama) who took it upon themselves to perform two mock trials, as published in 'Disorder in Court' by Stewart Auty, available for loan from the SCDA library (first Shameless Plug). The first of Goldilocks who was charged with Breaking and Entering, the second was the trial of the Big Bad Wolf for Stalking and Destruction of Property. While it was clear that some of the cast had been pulled in at the last minute, that really is what the festival is all about - coming together for the fun of it. And fun it was, even if the singalongs were a little slow in getting started, there was no holding back once they got going.

The crime theme continued throughout the night as action jumped from the main stage to the side stage and Andrew Murphy performed a self-penned confession of a bank robbery gone wrong, complete with mask of tights and a banana in place of a gun. Have to wonder if he ever did get his hands on a blue pen.

Action remained on the small stage as Leslie Drama stepped up for their first club performance, a wonderfully deadpan four hander of a couple having a conversation and the translation of what they really mean, hilariously breaking both character and audience as the couple walked off leaving the translators arguing.

Can't end day one without mentioning the supremely talented Lara West who spent the weekend on the food at the back of the hall doing incredible drawings of all the acts.



A fun weekend in the Perthshire countryside in aid of SCDA.

Day two dawned far too early as I headed back to Stirling for a shift in the excellent SCDA library (second Shameless Plug), getting back to Killin and going for a walk only to find it was clearly a drama club day out as we bumped into some very familiar faces going in the other direction.



Other than an epic bruise day two also brought us two performances by the wonderful playwright and poet Mike Tibbetts. The first a touching but very funny piece about soldiers in the trenches and a haggis that meant the world to them. The second a more modern piece that can, perhaps, be best summed up as happy wife, happy life. A change of hat gave a change of mood between the two pieces, each delivered beautifully, and to great applause.

To the main stage we went, and once again back in time as Perth Drama took over with a gloriously funny visual representation of William Topaz McGonagall's Battle of Bannockburn. I'm not sure if the low budget horse or the gay archers were my favourite bit, but quite how they managed to get through it with a straight face is beyond me.

The military theme continued on the small stage with Dave Sallnow from Leslie Drama, dressed as an English knight, complete with talking parrot that repeated some of his lines and rather stole the show.

With barely any time to recover Perth were up again, on the small stage this time, giving readings from an alternative dictionary that I would very

much like to get my hands on to the great delight of the crowd.

Finally they got some time off and it was Leslie Drama's turn again with Chris presenting a very different Scottish play that the bard maybe sort of (didn't) produce. With Gordon roped in to be the evil English landowner, members of Killin Drama playing the locals, the audience playing the midgies, and the lights choosing just that moment to decide to not work, it was somehow perfect.

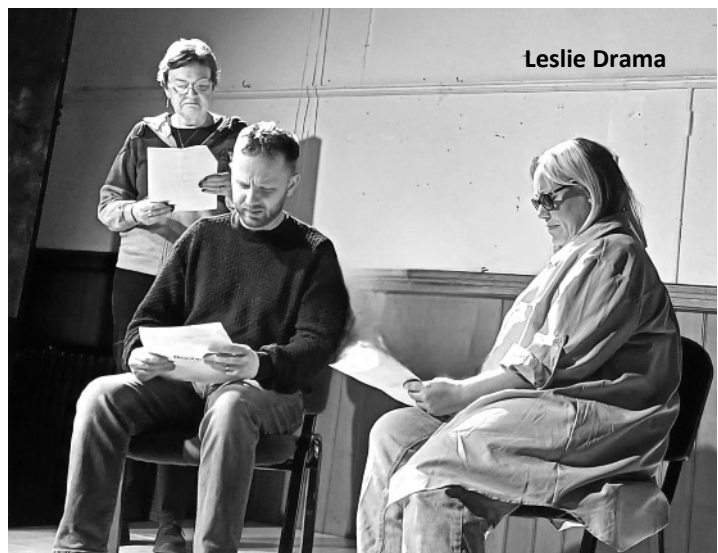
There was just enough time for one more song from Euan and a sand dance complete with disgruntled cleaner from Perth, before Chris from Leslie was back once more, this time ably assisted by his superhero wife (Clare from KDC) for a bit of a domestic. Now we really do know what happens when two superheroes marry, and just what secrets are under their masks.

To round it all off Adam Gibson from Leslie was back once more, this time as a disgruntled actor accepting an award that he Should Have Won. Petulant yet gracious, mostly.

And through it all Gordon did as Gordon does best, quite where he gets the energy from I'm not entirely sure, but the raffle prizes were given out, he auctioned everything from rhubarb to tickets for Pitlochry, coffee to massages. I think he might even have sold the shelves the auction items were on if he thought he'd get a bid for them. Knowing him he probably would have.

Gordon Hibbert, I find you guilty, and sentence you to doing it all again in no more than 12 months. If you need some ideas we have some excellent scripts in the SCDA library (final shameless plug).

Fiona Wilson



We need a conversation

Scottish Playwright Peter Arnott, formally Chair of the Scottish Society of Playwrights.

As you'll see elsewhere in this edition of the magazine, the SCDA are opening their library to the public and celebrating your centenary at the same time. I'm planning to be there, and I'm going to be telling lots of my fellow Scottish playwrights about it too. Why? Because, especially in such strange times as these, everyone who cares about making theatre should be talking to each other.

We should be talking, the SCDA and the SSP. This is not just because both are celebrating anniversaries at roughly the same time...the Scottish Society of Playwrights has recently turned fifty, and the Scottish Community Drama Association is rightly celebrating a WHOLE century...but because, well, my instinct is that we have interests in the future as well as past histories that intersect. We can help each other out.

First, you can't have one without the other. A hundred years ago small nations like ours were re-inventing themselves everywhere. Some of their enclosing Empires had come crashing down in WW1, and some were falling apart in slow motion, at least beginning to fray at the edges, and Scotland's drama reflects that in all its major genres. Even then, there was a conflict between what was rudely called a "Celtic twilight" kind of mythology based "Scottishness" coming into conflict with a more journalistic impulse towards saying how conditions really were for an inadequately housed and even-then underemployed and undervalued working class. Both genres are well represented in the SCDA library which has finally acquired a public facing outlet in Stirling.

Anyway, half way through that hundred years, theatre in Scotland, largely thanks to the work of writers and actors who had turned an amateur pursuit into a living, breathing and even...shockingly...commercially viable culture, acquired a body made up of people who had been paid to write plays volunteering to set up and run it for the benefit of the craft and business of writing plays in Scotland. Among our founders in 1973 – a period of enormous change once again for Scotland – was Ena Lamont Stewart, herself a veteran of writing for SCDA members.

Both bodies then, as perhaps embodied in their slightly dusty sounding names, came from the same tradition of collective, amateur volunteerism, but one set off in the direction of activity and competition between

performing groups while the other has spent half a century attempting to deal with the changing fashions and organisations of national government, quangos, and trade unions and such, attempting to sustain the conditions within which a theatre writing culture could thrive within our small country, and as one of its exports.



Peter Arnott

In other words, we both did politics – perhaps of a different kind. Ours has been based on contracts, endless negotiations with not-always-coherent negotiating partners, sometimes (as in the early days) with a publicly funded remit to promote and support playwrights (many of these functions now being ably fielded by the Playwrights Studio, Scotland...a youth set up in this century alongside the National Theatre of Scotland). We've been successful sometimes, and sometimes not, and I've personally seen and been partly responsible for many instances of both, I think.

But right now, despite the parlous state of the nation and the world, we're in quite a good place. We have a really good web-based information service. (do look us up,) we've sorted our legal position allowing us to function both as a trade union for theatre writers based in Scotland and as a funder of publishing and promotional activities.

about the library

Our SSP@50 programme was a great success and we're in the mood for a conversation, like I say.

But a conversation about what? Well, for one thing, in our membership we have a lot of access to a lot of scripts produced in the last fifty years, and we think that between the SCDA and ourselves we have the basis of some pretty rigorous and comprehensive cultural treasure, both for research and for exploration.

But it's more than just libraries. It's people. You have a membership who are dedicated to the craft and culture of theatre making by and for communities in Scotland. So do we. You have members All over this "wee country." So do we.

We should be talking about how your interests and ours might intersect, with one eye on the past...for us in the legacy and presence of writers like John Byrne, Liz Lochhead, Rona Munro...David Grieg, Zinnie Harris, Linda Maclean...Henry Adam, Morna Young, Johnny McKnight or Kieran Hurley...or even new kids on the block like Uma Nada Rajah, Hannah Lavery or Isla Cowan.

I've missed out a lot of people from this list...we have about 200 members...and those named and not named are all worth a web search...they all have a lot of texts that SCDA members might find useful for readings, workshops, and even full productions. I'm lucky enough myself to have had a few scripts revived by SCDA companies in the last few years, and I know how central that kind of activity can be to making plays live and breathe beyond the first and limited runs that Scottish Theatres can usually afford them.

But our plays are not dead and neither are we. We should all be talking, no matter how old we are...

And in representative bodies...each with living libraries...we have just the vehicle for those conversations to begin -or begin again.

Here's to the next hundred years. Even if none of us live that long, we both want to ensure that the culture of theatre making does.

Peter Arnott

Drama for all.

In case you missed it, 2026 is the 100 year anniversary of SCDA!

We wanted to offer something different for members at the Scottish One-Act play festival final in Pitlochry alongside the fantastic productions, and settled on a couple of slots for some relaxed drama activities. We called them 'Drama for All' - no experience required and no long commitment. People just had to turn up with an open heart, an open mind and a willingness to not take themselves too seriously!.

On Friday morning we looked at Creative Ways of Reading Plays which is one of my personal favourites. About a dozen people came along and everyone was surprised by how many different ways there are to read a scene. We could have gone on for twice as long without running out of ideas. There was much laughter and by the end of the session the group had learned a lot of the lines and really understood what the scene was all about.

On Saturday morning word had spread and with a slightly larger group we looked at improvisation as a rehearsal technique. It was a daunting start with people sharing their fears about improvisation. This made me even more certain that the gentle introduction I had planned would fit the bill. It would have been great to have had longer as everyone was just getting into their stride by the end of it and I had a lot more challenging exercises in my back pocket, but these events were all about fun and making connections. Anyone for an improvisation masterclass??

With such beautiful weather across the whole weekend, I am so grateful that people chose to come along and spend part of their day with me and other SCDA folk doing what we all love. Everyone got to know each other really quickly. New friendships were formed and new connections made. That is what community is all about.

If you would like to see something like this become more of a regular feature at events like the One-Act Play Festival please get in touch with your thoughts and ideas.

Carole Williams
National Drama Advisor

Morna reports on this year's

In our centenary year, it was not plain-sailing organising the final festival in the beautiful Pitlochry Festival Theatre but in the end we all enjoyed a wonderful three nights of excellent theatre. All eight clubs deserved to be there, and we were truly entertained to a selection of widely different plays.

The buzz in the foyer was exciting and the lovely displays from our archives gave the public a wonderful chance to find out all about our past 100 years. It was fascinating to see for example how the design and content of our house magazine Scene has changed over the years.

Gordon Hibbert had as usual his FOH teams selling the new centenary merchandise which added to the excitement.

First up on Thursday was **88 Theatre** with *'The Beginners Guide to Madness'* by Barry McKInley, a zany play following crazy Josephine's life. This is a fast-paced absurdist comedy about modern life and relationships where all is definitely not as it seems. Is our hero, Josephine, really losing her mind? Does her therapist



really have her best or breast interests at heart? Why does Josephine keep bumping into these weird people? Is there really a walrus called Toby in her apartment building? Can she live happily ever after?

As usual with this company there was carefully thought through scene changes along with good lighting and sound which helped with the comedy, in particular the National Express song. The two male actors portrayed six different characters between them and kept the pace going as poor Josephine wandered round with her laundry or was it her new 'cat' in her bag. Lots of laughter made this a fine start to the festival.

Adjudicator Walker Ewart said that, *"the inventive use of music and lip-syncing added much to the piece. The play was at its best when both music and scene changing were married together. The director had a clear and original view of the playing using a change in lighting effectively to move from the imagined to the real conversations. Could it have been sharper and more differentiated at times? This was a very good interpretation of a zany play which was entertaining"*.



Second was **Edinburgh Graduate Theatre Group** with *'Medea'* by Euripides (trans by Ian Johnston). This is the age old story of Jason and the Argonauts in search of

the Golden Fleece. This had a very effective setting with three separate acting areas. The chorus work was effective in leading us into the storyline. Their simple changes of costume helped with the mood changes. Quite a dramatic piece of theatre leaving the audience with food for thought.

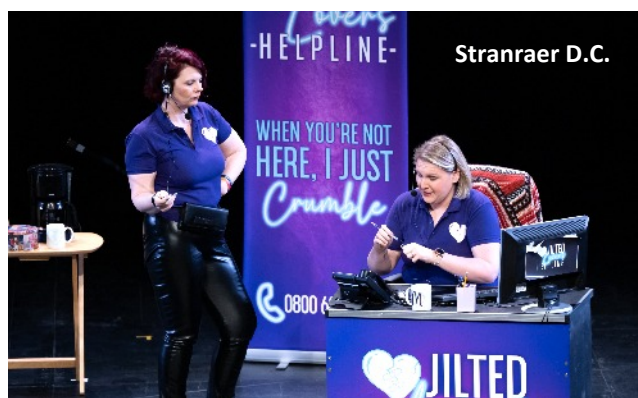
Walker's thoughts of Medea were *"that it is a tragedy and we need to recognise that; but controlled tragedy and pain can be unbearably quiet. Director and main actress should explore this side of the vocal work. In this way the more tragic outbursts would have gained more power. A well-disciplined chorus came in and out of the action effectively; examine more when they represent internal thoughts"*.

Last but by no means least came **Buccaneer Theatre Club** with *'Breaking and Entering'* by Mark Davenport. Two burglars get more than they bargained for when they recognise their victims. The opening was hilarious as the Mission Impossible music complete with a very flexible burglar erupted onto the stage. We knew we were in for a good laugh. A brilliant end to the first night.



Scottish Final at Pitlochry

Pictures by
Tony Flisch



Walkers take on Buccaneers production was that *"the use of the window and the choreographed set the tone for the play and entertained the audience thoroughly. More comedy and certainly more danger could have come from the use of the cricket bat which would have added to the laughs. The humorous lines were well pointed; the physical humour was good – although there is still more opportunity for more. An enjoyable watch"*.

The sun was still shining on Friday morning as around 14 of us Joined NDA Carole for a fun couple of hours looking at creative ways of reading plays. (See page 11)

Once again the foyer was buzzing as we all looked to see what the evenings performances would bring. First up was a new company from Edinburgh, **Broadsword Theatre** with *'I Dream Before I Take the Stand'*. The curtains opened on a quite spectacular scene, a woman sitting centre stage on a chair in the spotlight a male hovering in the darkness behind her. Already you felt a chill in the air. A defence lawyer cross-examines a woman during her testimony in a sexual assault case -- and in doing so, horribly distorts her perfectly innocent walk in the park. This two hander had everything and held your attention to the very end.

Walker's commented, *"The seeming simplicity of the set belied the inventive technical strength which supported the acting so effectively. The assured direction married with the high quality of the two performances drew the audience into the action. The pace was constant and varied; the questioning was intense and on occasions surprising; the body work of both actors was first-class. This was teamwork at its best"*.



Second was a welcome return by **Stranraer Drama Club** with *'Jilted Lovers Hotline'* by Johnny Grim. It focuses on two characters, Mary and Jasmine, operating a call centre designed to help "dumped lovers" rebuild their lives, frequently featuring witty dialogue and scenarios cantered on heartbreak and relationship. The two actors were well matched and worked well with the many phone calls being sympathetic when needed with some really excellent cueing. Great to see you back Stranraer.

Walker said, *"I loved the set the brand name on the pop-ups, on the front of the desks and on the sweat*



shirts provided a wonderful backdrop to the action. Both Mary and Jasmie worked well together either listening and/or responding to each other – they were empathetic to (most of!) the clients!The direction found most of the pace in a script which was challenging in places".

To round up the evening **The Wee Perthshire Dram-a Co.** gave us *'A Thousand Invisible Choices'* by Keith Mackenzie (*our Scott Salver winner, more on page 15*) A simple hotel room mix-up leads to an unexpected connection between two complete strangers. Cam

unwittingly finds himself in an hotel room that is already occupied with Eve. A compelling plot with an interesting dialogic structure. Once again we had two actors portraying various different characters with great success. A super end to a challenging evening,

Walkers' impression. *"The setting provided well-used opportunities to transform the pieces and move smoothly from one location to*

another. Could some of the locations have been more intimate? This original story drew the audience in; it was told with skill and directed with great assurance. A memorable performance".

... Scottish Final continued

Friday night as always is quiz night ably controlled with Robin and Amy. Again great fun and congrats to the backstage crew and Stranraer cast in winning the Tom Gibson trophy.

Another glorious day and Carole once again held a great event Improvisation as a Rehearsal Technique with 16 participants.

First performance in the evening was **Bon Accord Players with 'Metamorphoses'** by Sami Ibrahim, Laura Lomas & Sabrina Mahfouz. Ovid's timeless poem is a collection of myths and fables from ancient Greece ancient Rome and further afield. Reimagined for the 21st century is a collection of eight stories smoothly run together told by four actors. Right from the start the audience were engaged with the storytelling and inventive use of staging and lighting. A strong cast of four actors portrayed all the different characters with ease. A fine start to the evening.



Walker was impressed with Metamorphoses, *"A simple but effective setting which was used inventively and well as the performance moved from story to story The players used both their voices and their bodies to good effect. Along with the director they found humour, seriousness, youth, age – the vocal work was always strong. Several of the stories were outstanding/ This was an innovative director with and exceptionally strong cast – great teamwork"*.

Lastly but by no means least was **Lochcarron ADS with 'The Allotment'** by Gillian Plowman. Five women are serving community punishment orders and are growing the vegetables for soup kitchens on an allotment. It is the first morning for Daisy, the new probation officer, and the tables are cleverly turned when a traumatic event in her past puts her on a



par with the others. A good end to a great three nights of theatre.

Walker felt that, *"Lochcarron had found The appropriate and colourful setting provided plenty of opportunities to use the different spaces The play found much of the humour There were some good examples of strong direction: Did the transformation from make-believe to harsh reality – which all of them go through – needed to be stronger"*.

It was agreed that it had been a wonderful three nights of theatre. In summing up, Walker thanked the Committee for inviting him to do the Finals in such a lovely theatre on such an auspicious occasion. The honour was not lost on him and it was a definite highlight in his adjudicating career.

The standard at the top half of the programme was of a very high quality indeed.

Carole Williams our NDA presented the certificates to the teams and trophies to the winners.

1 st Wheatley Tassie	Bon Accord Players
2 nd Jim Porteous	Broadsword Theatre
3 rd David Baxter Salver	Wee Perthshire Dram-a Co.
Connie Fisher (highest direction)	Bon Accord
Donald Farmer (best moment)	Broadsword
Grampian TV (stage décor)	Broadsword
Scott Salver (original play)	Keith Mackenzie



Scott Salver Award

This season's annual Playwriting Competition for original scripts receiving their debut performance at District Festivals across Scotland attracted seven entries which were assessed by our experienced reading panel members.

Warmest congratulations to first time winner **Keith Mackenzie** from Perth whose script **"A THOUSAND INVISIBLE CHOICES"** achieved top placing from our judges. Premiered by **The Wee Perthshire Dram-a Co.** which was recently formed to take live theatre to small venues across Perthshire. The play set in 1987 Gairloch covers 24 hours in the lives of Eve and Cam, two strangers who meet by chance in a small hotel.

Supplied with detailed synopsis, the action blends humour and tense drama in a storyline about the choices which shape our lives. The staged production progressed from District Round in Blairgowrie, through Northern Divisional Final in Orkney to reach Scottish Final at Pitlochry Festival Theatre where actor/writer Keith was presented on stage with our Silver Salver.

Deservedly achieving runner up position was **Andy Macnamara** from Arran whose work **"REMEMBER WHEN?"** was staged by the **Whiting Bay Club**.

Harvey aged 64 wakes up in a house he doesn't remember, thinks he has met someone the night before but can't remember her name and as the action progresses he is revealed to be in his own home suffering from dementia where his loving wife Julia, although deeply saddened by his declining condition, remains upbeat managing to continue enjoying Harvey's company. Kitchen dining area setting.

Gaining third place came **V.L.**

Heathcote's "EMOJI" whose play was presented by **Fyne Acting Company** of Argyll Kintyre District. A seven strong cast offers plentiful scope for challenging characterisations and variety of movement prompted by phone messages. Perfect illustration of how our mobiles when used to extreme can not only totally disrupt our lives but eventually become threatening with increased panic culminating in tragedy.

No competition would be complete without a new script from prolific Perthshire writer **Bob Davidson** - this season performed by **Aberfeldy Drama Club**.

"McLEAN" a two hander set in a rural Scottish police office in 1986 is an imaginative largely conversational short piece concerning two contrasting bobbies and their detained prisoner. There is strong language throughout which is appropriate to the characters portrayed and their situation with the repetition of "He's dead-Who's dead-McLean?" routine developing further plot lines. Requires good pace throughout

Leitheatre's interpretation of **Robert Hunter Allan's** supernatural drama **"THE PSYCHIC"** gained a place in Eastern Division's Final. Large cast of mixed ages and types provides opportunities for extensive character development and their own special moment on the stage. Lively pace essential when a social club holds its psychic night with Mystic Meg and her spirit guide Silver Crow.

"THERE'S SOMETHING HERE" by QMU student **George Scott** was performed at Edinburgh District Festival. Setting a school classroom with an atmospheric storm building in ferocity outside. New conversational themes and emotions explored - past relationships, trans sexuality - with an undercurrent of threat both from the protagonists themselves and mysterious creatures lurking in the nearby woods.

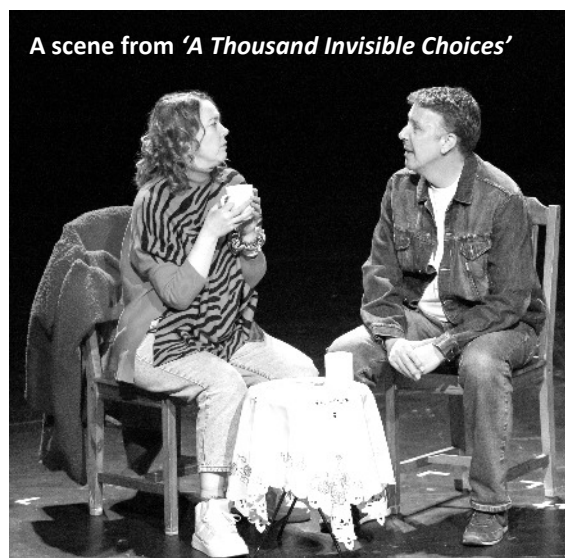
Fellow QMU student and last season's SS recipient **Jo McCartney** submitted **"GOT-TO GHOST"** The detailed character histories provided are essential for the successful interpretation of this piece.

Need a good old haunt then come on down to the Got-To-Ghost Organisation run by the overbearingly loud yet charming Mr Polter Geist. Penelope Lynn arranges a meeting at their office to solve an issue that has occurred and

in a comedic and chaotic whirlwind Mr Geist, nephew Herbie, the company receptionist Ruthie and Penelope pull together an elaborate plan to keep them all out of the laws eyes - but just how many ghosts does it take to frame a murder?

Several of our writers have submitted their scripts for the UK wide **Geoffrey Whitworth Competition** and we wish them well - remember every script is worthy of future production and reading copies will be available from our National Library in Stirling.

Stephen Lambert



Harry Glass 1926-2026

The long life of a well-loved playwright

Harry was born on 5th February, 1926, at 9 Leven Street, Dumbarton - a 'son of the rock' - and the youngest of three children.

From a young age, Harry was keen on football and saw his first game at Dumbarton F.C. in 1932. With nine aunts and uncles and over 70 cousins, he was never short of relatives to take him to a match.

Harry was a clever pupil but was made to leave school at 14 to bring in some money. After joining the queue at the local Labour Exchange, he was offered a position as Junior Salesman at the local branch of a firm of Gentlemen's Tailors.

Towards the end of the war, Harry joined the Royal Navy. He never spoke much about his wartime experiences but we know that he had a spell of duty in the far east and served as a telegraph operator on the destroyer HMS Vimmy.

After the war he returned to Dumbarton, resuming his job in the 'rag-trade' and married in 1947, becoming father to Roberta and Alan. Following a divorce, Harry and the children moved first to Glasgow and from there to Cumbernauld in 1964. This was the start of his involvement with the theatre, joining local drama groups, Cumbernauld Light Opera Society, and the Cottage Theatre. And it was through their mutual interest in the stage that Harry met Myra, whom he married in 1978.

In Light Opera, Harry appeared in *'HMS Pinafore'* as Sir Joseph Porter, in *'The Gondoliers'* he was the Duke of Plaza-Toro, in *'Iolanthe'* the Lord Chancellor and in the *'Pirates of Penzance'* he was the Pirate King.

At Cumbernauld Theatre he was George in *'Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf'*, Redfern in *'Look Back in Anger'*, and Pugh/Eli Jenkins in *'Under Milk Wood.'*

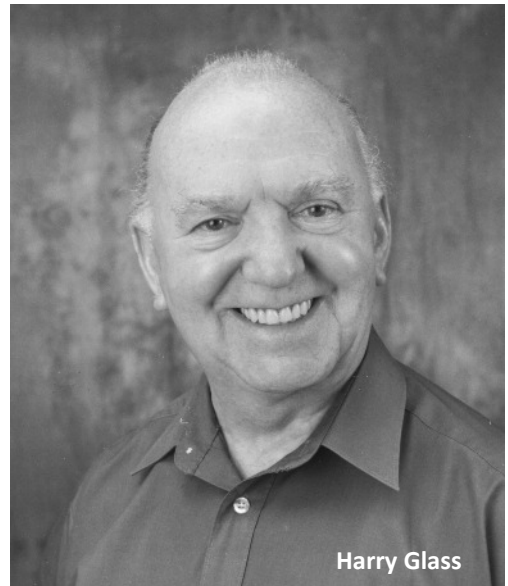
Harry was increasingly offered professional work and became a life member of Equity, appearing on *'Still Game,' 'Taggart,' 'Scotch and Wry'* and many other popular shows. He also acted in three feature films, several television commercials, and half a dozen corporate videos

Notable stage roles in the 80s and 90s included appearances in Edinburgh at the Netherbow, Traverse and Assembly Rooms, and at the Tron in Glasgow.

As a writer, he completed his first play *'Legge's Eleven'* in 1986 and went on to write 40 one act plays and three full length plays which have enjoyed over a thousand performances, winning many festival awards for clubs throughout the country. A considerable number have been Scottish finalists and one was a British finalist when *'A New Interest in Life'* was performed by Cardiff Telstars.

It was later translated into the Welsh language and published by the Drama Association of Wales under the title of *'Amser i Hau ac Amser i Fedi'*. It was then performed in the short play section of the Welsh National Eisteddfod.

On five occasions he received the Scott Salver award for the best new play in the annual SCDA one act play festival. The winning plays were *'Ships and Sealing Wax,' 'A Brief Period of Rejoicing,' 'Murphy's Law,' 'Agnes,'* and *'Uncle Jimmy'.*



Three more plays were runners-up in the SCDA 'Play on Words' competition. These were *'Swings and Roundabouts,' 'After Enola Gay,'* and the very popular youth play *'I Thought Cabbage was Green'.*

At holiday time, Harry and Myra liked nothing more than visiting drama festivals in Keswick or Pitlochry. He continued to support Dumbarton F.C. throughout his life and travelled to countless games home and away with his son and a few pals.

During the last few years of his life, he inevitably slowed down, stopped going to the football, wrote less, and after lockdown spent most of his time at home reading and watching TV.

He celebrated his 100th birthday in February ... reluctantly ... sometimes denying that he was a hundred. A few weeks later, he had a fall at home and was forced to take to his bed. He said he would need 'a couple of days' but died in his sleep on Sunday 19th April, aged 100 years, two months and two weeks

Geoffrey Whitworth results

The Geoffrey Whitworth Trophy is awarded annually to an original short play first performed in the UK one-act play festivals organised by the four nations.

Geoffrey Whitworth founded the British Drama League in 1919 and was a great supporter of new plays. His philosophy was to ensure that writers would benefit from seeing their plays performed and adjudicated.

In 2026 there were 19 plays entered for the competition, four from Scotland and the rest from England. The scripts were judged and marked by groups of experienced people from all four countries and the top nine were sent to final judge Colin Dolley to pick the winner and give his comments.

There were two scripts highly commended **'Estimated time of arrival'** by Tom Casling from Durham. Obsession, control, stalking and time passing are just some on the themes in this claustrophobic two-hander and **'Tigers'** by Brian Hutchison from Liverpool. Colin said, "there is a line near the end of Lord of the Flies where it speaks of the 'end of innocence' - and that is one of several themes in this dark and unsettling play."

Runner-up this year was **'We found love in a homeless place'** by Jamie McLeish from Sunderland. Colin thought this was aptly taking its title from the old Rihanna song the play has themes which include loss, despair, homelessness and eventually – hope.

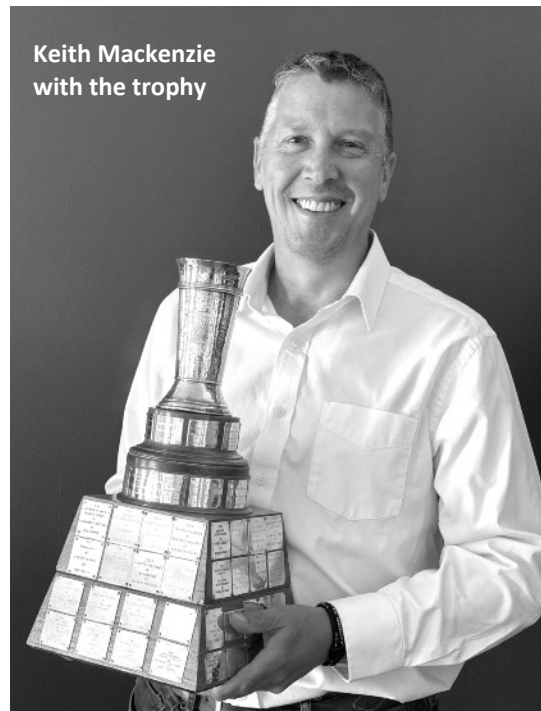
The central two characters are drawn with skill and have genuine depth, their growing relationship being explored with nuance and understanding. We are drawn to them as people and their situation. The son, however, does not have the same depth and remains somewhat superficial. The opening situation is set up well and the growing compassionate connection between the older woman and young homeless guy is plotted well and always with the ring of truth. They seem drawn together as two lost souls. The play is episodic being structured over ten scenes. Maybe there are spaces for a few cuts which would give a tighter shape to the text. Perhaps the concluding scene is just a shade too pat.

But undoubtedly – although dealing with tough subjects like loneliness, abandonment and grief – this play is also about the power of friendship and has abundant warm humanity

However we were delighted that the trophy was won by our own **Keith Mackenzie** from Perth with his brilliant play **'A Thousand Invisible choices'**.

Colin commented that there is nothing original about a plot where a woman meets man by serendipitous accident which is the starting point of this new play.

There is, however, much originality in the style and structure of the writing in this absorbing script. The dialogue moves easily from inner thoughts and scene-setting to real life interchanges between the two characters – each gradually revealing their own back story as the relationship develops. We gradually discover why they have come to this remote Gairloch hotel in 1987 – the woman having a personal emotional crisis while the man is facing a physically sinister crunch time.



Keith Mackenzie
with the trophy

This offers two great nuanced roles for the actors. The characters are well-rounded and create interest from the outset and that involvement is maintained and built as we see them taking steps to discover each other and explore their emotional situation. As they warm to each other we, too, warm to them as their gradual steps are plotted with great skill by the playwright.

The narrative moves through several scenes and would need a creative set designer and astute director to keep the production moving fluidly through the narrative without losing the dramatic energy the play demands. The very brief use of three other characters might be better used by different actors rather than being played by the central couple. The play is structured intelligently building to the final scene which is not wrapped in a glib happy-ever-after moment but leaves the couple and us with the possibility of an important more visible life-enhancing choice in the future.

At the Beauford Park hotel a rehearsed reading of the play by Keith and his wife Suzie took the main parts with Peter Crump reading the scene changes.

Bringing an Actor to Book

SCDA individual member **Adrian Ross** reflects on how his acting background helped him to write *Sons of Great Men*, a novel described by The Herald as ‘poignant and funny’, about a sometime actor and pantomime dame.

They say you should write about what you know, so when I was plotting my debut novel it made sense to tap into my backgrounds in acting and journalism. That’s why my protagonist Victor is an actor and his mum Jayne has been a political editor.

Sons of Great Men is actually my fifth novel but the first to see the light of day. It took three winters to write – one for the terrible first draft, one for the complete rewrite from scratch and one for the unplanned extra editing. It’s turned out well, though. Three book bloggers — have each praised the novel and awarded it four stars. It’s a relief to discover that friends and family weren’t just being kind!

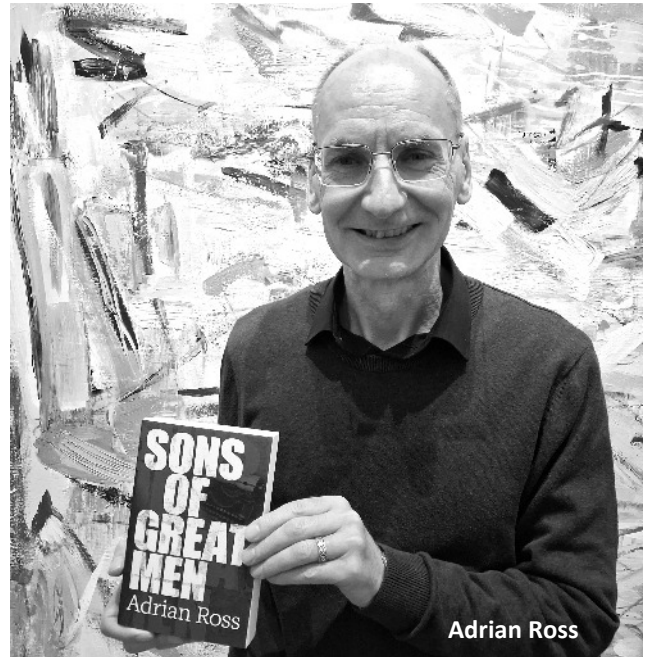
While I had plenty of fun writing a novel about an actor, I had to dig deep in places to convey Victor’s feelings about life onstage, backstage and front of house. To lend authenticity to his world, I built upon my own experiences of acting and working professionally in the arts. I also made a lot of stuff up.

I got into acting in my teens, starting with the school play and progressing to a junior course in drama at what is now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow.

Equally important was my first job while at school, ushering at the Macrobert Arts Centre in Stirling, a career catalyst I’ll always be grateful for. I went on to study drama and film at the University of East Anglia, where I was a founding member of Minotaur Theatre Company. As you may know, Minotaur has had some high-profile members over the years – including Matt Smith and Greg James – and the company brings a show to the Edinburgh Fringe each summer.

I loved my time acting in Minotaur and departmental productions; a large proportion of our drama course was practical. I took part in Steven Berkoff’s energetic version of *Agamemnon*. I enjoyed a comic turn as Irwin in *Little Malcolm and His Struggle Against the Eunuchs* by David Halliwell and played a concentration camp guard in *Bent* by Martin Sherman, wearing 22-inch flares because I didn’t have any other black trousers at the time.

I realised very quickly that I’d be unlikely to make a living from acting and started casting about for alternatives. I ended up with an improvised but sustained career doing absorbing things at arm’s length from pure creativity. I was a sub-editor and film critic for a daily newspaper; I



programmed theatre, music and dance as the arts development officer for Newport in South Wales, then had my longest stint as the manager of an arts centre in Cardiff. Now, after all these years, writing this book has allowed me to wonder: what if I’d followed that original acting dream after all?

This takes us back to our main man Victor, who’s worked as a jobbing actor for twenty years. Exhausted by the end of a long panto run, he signs up as a casual usher at the 1,000-seat King Edward theatre on the Isle of Wight, where he’s just been performing. One gig leads to another and he quips that he’s now “acting assistant house manager – with no acting required.”

We meet him while he’s kneeling on the carpet tiles in the downstairs bar, picking up pieces of broken glass during a Saturday matinée. That’s precisely the moment he gets a call via the box office informing him that his mum is seriously ill in a London hospital. With the help of his affable boss, Victor takes a large bag of clothing from the costume store, heads straight for the ferry – and so his adventure begins.

Does Victor get back into acting? To answer that would be a plot spoiler. I was always aiming for a funny-and-sad flavour for the book. Ultimately though, I thought it was important that the story should be warm and uplifting – especially the bit about the dog.

Want to read on? *Sons of Great Men* is a paperback available to order online or from your favourite bookstore. Signed copies can be ordered directly from Adrian via email: atwruk@ntlworld.com

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YOUTH FINAL

On the 13th June, over 78 young people descended on Perth for the SCDA Youth Final.

This was by far the largest group of our young people we have had since the youth festival began 25 years ago. It proved so popular that we had to move from the small Joan Knight Studio to the main auditorium of Perth Theatre for their performances in front of adjudicator Alasdair Hawthorn.

The teams were thrilled to be performing in such a prestigious theatre and there was a real buzz throughout the day as the teams met up with old friends and made new ones.

The evening opened with Stranraer juniors with *'The Wizard of Oz in 30 minutes'* by Jennifer Reif. A brilliantly colourful production telling the age-old tale of Dorothy and her three chums hunt for the Wizard.

On his adjudication, Alasdair thought it was a very well-played production by an ensemble cast who clearly enjoyed the experience and performed with energy and enthusiasm throughout. Each cast member was given an opportunity to share their talents and rose to the occasion. The physicality of the 3 friends and of the flying monkeys was utilised to great effect and brought a great deal of energy and enthusiasm to the production. An imaginative and fluid production from the two first-time directors.

Second on the bill was Beath High School with *'Ms Campbell's Class Fifth Period'* by Leyla Josephine. You thought the previous play had a large cast, well this one was double in size with 38 excited youngsters performing to their best. A group of students in the bottom set of maths class lock their teacher in a cupboard. They all have various motivations that are gradually revealed but then they are faced with the question – What do we do now?

Alasdair commented that this was again excellent ensemble playing with particular mention to 'Mack' and 'Clover' whose characters held the action together throughout. Each of the groups within the cast had clearly worked on their individual characterisations and sustained these throughout the action with the focus

upheld at all times. Initially, the dialogue was a little rushed and under energised, but once the cast adapted to the acoustic of the theatre, this was quickly rectified. An excellent ensemble piece which was both timely and relevant. The cast were clearly allowed to have input in the production, which gave them a sense of ownership clear to see and helped to create a feeling of fun and enjoyment,

Last but by no means least was Birsay Drama Group with *'Wannabes'* by Emilia O'Donoghue. Tells the story of a group of teenagers on their way out to a fancy dress party. Great set and costumes as the five girls dress up as the Spice girls.

Alasdair thought they gave five very confident and mature performances with each character clearly defined and with its own individual nuances and characteristics. The mood changes were particularly well handled, allowing the various emotions of the group to settle with the audience and for us to empathise with their individual situations. A very naturally produced and performed representation of a typical teenage night out.

In summing up Alasdair gave encouraging comments and great praise to all three teams. His choice was very difficult but Beath High came out with the Quidi Vidi winner's trophy with the Dolly Nicol Trophy for runner-up going to Birsay and Stranraer picking up the Colin Peter trophy for imagination & creativity. It was agreed it had been one of the best Youth Final's for a while.



AT PERTH

Here are comments from a couple of the teams.

Beath High School

The end of our 2026 SCDA journey hits with a kick, a buzz! Our Drama Club had lots of new members this year, plus our awesome assistant director and prompter, making 38 of us, so bus trips with the Beath kids are a rowdy experience. If you ever fancy a trip with us, headphones are recommended. After our trip to Leslie for the Fife District round, our director said she'd never heard so many verses of The Wheels on The Bus, and on the way home from Divisional Finals in Killin, we kept singing for the entire two hours. It was only fitting then that the sound of bagpipers played us off as we piled on to a coach at the school – obviously just for us, and nothing to do with the school car park being a warmup spot for Cowdenbeath Gala Day!

We arrived on stage for our tech rehearsal in Perth, and when the safety curtain went up and we could see the full auditorium, we were genuinely in shock. A lot of us have never performed somewhere so big and fancy before! We started wondering if we were at the right venue! Once we settled in we had lots of fun backstage too, making TikToks in the dressing rooms and avoiding the dreaded Perth Theatre corridor monsters. The Green Room was great – we loved the World Cup balloons – so a big thank you to the organisers for looking after us so well.

One of the best things about festivals is getting to see other plays and meet other drama kids. We were so impressed with the awesome costume and makeup from the Stranraer team, and loved the soundtrack and set from Birsay. It was awesome to meet so many of them in the theatre and at the pizza party afterwards (shout out to Dominos for the best pizza ever!), plus our spontaneous post-raffle singalong of the Backstreet Boys. Making new drama friends and feeling like we belonged there was one of the best things about the finals. It was really cool to meet so many young people just like us all working together to reach the same goal. The amount of people we see each year at the festival is just one big reminder of why we love theatre, so thank you SCDA for bringing us all together time after time.

Waiting for the results was nerve-wracking to say the least. When the winners were announced, we were all holding hands and took it in together. There was a slight pause before we realised we had won, and then everyone went crazy. Lots of family and friends had come to support us, and hearing family members tell us they were proud was a favourite memory for a lot of our cast. For some, this was their very first show and we are so proud of them. We really owe it to all of our supporters this year from our family and friends, our chaperones, and our N5 Creative Industries class for fundraising to get us here and many more people besides. Most of all, we feel like a big happy family, and we can't wait for next year's festival!

Emily Hart

Birsay Drama Group

Managing to make it into the finals was amazing enough, being there was even better. I will forever remember my amazing experience with my cast and crew, and all the people I met. I've always loved acting but haven't always felt that my love for it was respected, being there at the festival and meeting all the people who loved drama and acting as much as me made me feel so at home. Everyone was so welcoming and I have made many new friends.

Arriving at the theatre for the first time was beyond exciting and equally nerve racking. The theatre was way more intricate and fancier than any theatre I've ever been in, seeing it felt like being in a movie or shot back into the past. When we were setting up, the staff were all so kind and encouraging, making us feel far more ready for the finals than me and my group felt.

After a small slip up, but quick recovery with our lines, Birsay Drama group made it to second place which everyone was over the moon with. Although my highlight was not coming second, it was the fact that I left with more friends and memories made within hours than I've ever made anywhere else. Big thanks to anyone and everyone who helped me and my cast get this far, we couldn't have done it without you.

Alissa Omand

Youth final pictures on the back cover

The British Final at Mold

It does not seem a year since we headed of south to a British Final, but here we were again off this time to Theatre Clwyd in Mold.

The weather was glorious and the market town of Mold was a lovely little town to spend a weekend and the Beauford Park Hotel a delightful place to meet up with old friends and many new drama enthusiasts.

There was great excitement in the foyer of the newly refurbished Theatre Clwyd on Friday as we all took our seats for the start of the festival. Richard Jones welcomed us and introduced adjudicator Jennifer Scott-Reid, well known to many Scottish audiences.

First to perform was old friends TACT with their production of *"The Weight of Small Things"* by Tilly Lane, a modern folk tale about survival, sacrifice, and the people who choose to carry one another through the darkest times. As usual this was a beautifully staged performance with multi scenes which worked well. The use of puppets was an interesting addition to the piece.

Second on stage were Bangor Drama Club with well-known play *"The Donahue Sisters"* by Geraldine Aron. The attic of a family home is the setting for this sinister play. Three sisters reminisce on their unhappy lives long into the night. A great set helped provide a good atmosphere of an old attic. Much of the acting is conversation and needs clarity of pace, which these three actors had in abundance.

Two plays performed now was the time to hear what Jennifer thought about it all. She was impressed with TACT's set and the use of puppets was believable. She felt the director knew how to choreograph the whole

ensemble and the lighting had helped with the moods of the piece. This was a thoughtful and realistic production.

Jennifer looked at the challenges that faced Bangor with their piece. The importance of the set and the hatch was well done as was the costumes. The physical movement as well as dialogue was handled well between the three sisters who were a joy to watch. The director had a clear understanding of the family dynamic. A great start to the festival as we headed off for the usual Friday buffet.

Saturday morning was again a beautiful sunny day. We all got together in the large conference room of the hotel for the civic reception. Mayor of Mold, Councillor Jo Edwards was delighted to welcome us to Mold and hoped we would have a chance to look round the market town. Becky Gittens, MP for Clwyd West was also delighted to show off the new refurbished theatre and was proud of its history and hoped we would enjoy performing there as she had herself when a child.

Ian Thomas UKCFF Chair presented Mayor Jo with the federation shield and the representatives from the four teams exchanged the usual gifts. Then we all settled down to the rehearsed reading of Keith Mackenzie's winning Geoffrey Whitworth play *"A Thousand invisible choices"*.

The evening performance started with our own Bon Accord Players with *"Metamorphoses"* by Sami Ibrahim, Laura Lomas and Sabrina Mahfouz. Once again, they did Scotland proud with an even better production than we saw at Pitlochry.

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Morna Barron reports on the final act of this year's festivals



TACT

The strong ensemble playing and smooth changes of scenes made a brilliant start to the evening.

Last but by no means least was Penarth Operatic and Dramatic Society with *"All By Myself"* by Robert Scott. Larry has been stranded on his own on a small island for many years – or has he? This lively and sometimes hilarious comedy was a great end to the festival.



Bangor D.C.

What had Jennifer thought of the productions. Of Bon Accord, she was impressed with the strong ensemble playing and transformation of scenes. The stylised set went well with the costumes and the creative storytelling kept everything connected. There were some beautiful pictures in particular the forming of the tree. It had been a joy to watch.

On Penarth's performance she thought the minimalistic set, music and costumes all helped with the playful transitions. The storytelling was good and the director had a clear understanding of comedy and had

produced a very entertaining end to the festival.

The inevitable platform party assembled, the friendship quaich was passed onto to AUDF chair Clare Greer who invited us all to the Ardhoven Theatre in Enniskillen in July 2027. Jennifer then summed up the festival. All teams should be proud they were all winners and she felt it had been an excellent two nights of theatre with again a difficult decision, but the Howard de Walden trophy was to go to yet again to England.

A once again disappointing result for Scotland but Bon Accord really did us proud this year and the general



Penarth ODS

consensus was that there couldn't have been much in it. After all it is just one person's opinion. As we headed off to the end of festival party all agreed it had been a great weekend meeting up with old friends and making many new ones who we hoped we would meet again in Enniskillen.



Bon Accord Players

Youth Festival at Perth

Pictures by
Tony Flisch



Stranraer Drama Club

The Wizard of Oz in 30 minutes



Birsay Drama Group

Wannabes

Beath High School

*Ms Campbell's Class
Fifth Period*

