



cymdeithas ddrama cymru  
drama association of wales

Sept/Oct 2015

Dear All,

Welcome to our September Newsletter. So much has happened since the last time we sent one out it's incredible.

We've had The British Final Festival of One-Act plays in Bracknell - you can read all about the experience of Cardiff Players who were the Welsh contingency on pages 2-4

Summer School we resurrected this year thanks to Sue Jones and a great success it was as well. We actually sent out a Summer School Newsletter but I have also asked Sue to write us a little something for this edition as well on page 5

At last the Angela Tidswell Award was presented see page 6

On a truly sad note we lost a stalwart and dear friend of both DAW and GDL, Barbara Lake, and our condolences go out to Geoff Lake and his Family. Peter Stickler had written a very fitting tribute to Barb, as she was affectionately known, on behalf of Cardiff Players on page 4

All that is left for me to say is, enjoy your reading, please keep Leon informed of your productions so that we can advertise them on the web, [Facebook](#) and [twitter](#) and don't forget...

The British Final of One-Act plays takes place this year in Wales at The Sherman Theatre Cardiff, 1+2 July 2016. Preparations are well underway but we need your support.

If you know anyone who knows anyone, who knows anyone who is anyone then please ask them to have their photograph taken with the

Banner below and either send it by email to [brisishfinal16@gmail.com](mailto:brisishfinal16@gmail.com) or tweet it on [@britishfinal16](https://twitter.com/britishfinal16) so that we can spread the word. We have a Social Media Team who are working round the clock to spread this news and flood the internet with it. Let's make it a British Final to remember.



If you have any news items you would like us to highlight on the website or in the next newsletter then please send articles & photos to [newsletter@dramawales.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@dramawales.org.uk)

The deadline for submissions will be  
**27<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Happy reading

*Jeri*



**CARDIFF PLAYERS AT THE BRITISH  
FINAL FESTIVAL 2015**



I know I have said it many times over in the last few months, but I'll say it again. When I suggested to my group, The Cardiff Players, that we enter local author, Phil Nash's rambunctious comedy **The Obituary** into the Glamorgan One Act Festival it would be "...as a bit of fun ... not likely to win anything". And it didn't! Instead, Unknown Outcasts won the festival with an excellent performance of a dystopian drama, **The Cut**. However, we had a glowing adjudication and along with our other entry **Bette & Joan**, ended up in the top 6 highest scoring plays and qualified for the Welsh Final held this year in Ystradgynlais.

To me and my cast's total surprise, we won and became the Welsh Champions for 2015! Considering this was only the group's 3<sup>rd</sup> entry into The One Act Competition, it was an amazing achievement.

So we were off to Bracknell, north of London for the British Final. Lordy, lordy! I didn't realise the forms and organisation it required to take part. Just arranging the accommodation, tickets and social events was a full-time job!

Thanks to the help and patience of Jackie Huke and Ian Thomas of the AETF (All England Theatre Festival) it was all successfully completed and we set off on a bright June Friday morning with great excitement.

By lunchtime, we found ourselves in The South Hill Park Arts Centre, set in wonderful parklands with a large stately home at its centre and to one side the lovely Wilde Theatre, an intimate auditorium with two tiers of wrap-around balconies in Restoration theatre style. We spent the afternoon enjoying the facilities and gardens of the centre and then the hectic activity of the technical run-through. Eventually, all this being complete, we retired to the Festival Hotel, which was very conveniently within walking distance, the Bracknell Hilton. Meeting together with the other Am Dram people from all over the British Isles is the really nice part of the week-end.

So once settled in, we headed back to the theatre. The excitement building as the cast got dressed and make-up applied. Only two of my cast had experienced festivals before The Glamorgan round; two of them, including the second lead, Ben, had not been on the stage since junior school. It was a huge leap for them to now compete in the British Final!

The first play of the week-end was **The Tale of Tilly Miller** performed by TACT. The audience was wowed by their precision and teamwork in this tale of Dickensian corruption. Then our play **The Obituary**, was received with lots of laughter and enjoyment by the capacity audience. The team did The Players and Wales proud with their fast and funny production.





Cardiff Players

On the Saturday morning, we attended a civic reception back in the Arts Centre. As we entered we could see these packages with the other teams. The first thing Teri McCarthy, chair of the DAW said to me as we entered was, "You did bring your gifts didn't you?" "I thought the DAW was doing that" I said. "I brought the gift from the Lord Mayor of Cardiff" I said desperately. It had been a struggle to get that. The Mayor's secretary had greeted my request with "With the cut-backs, we don't do gifts anymore". However, I persuaded her that the other teams from the home countries would be doing the same and eventually she came up with a copy of a nice book about Cardiff. As Scotland and England introduced themselves and presented their gifts I had to stand there and apologise that I had misread the instructions!

How glad I was when Carole Stewart, Director of the Northern Ireland group, The Hollywood Players stood up and did the same thing! She was a hoot, with lots of funny stories about past productions. With all the groups we had lovely conversations, comparing the triumphs and difficulties of doing Am Dram in our various regions.

The director of TACT from Tamworth in England told how they existed without a home base, doing their productions wherever they could find a sympathetic venue, but had nevertheless, won many festivals. Some groups are able to concentrate their resources on festivals whilst others, like ourselves have to focus on the programme for the year with the festival being an added bonus. On the way back Carole Stewart, looked at us and stated enigmatically, "You look like you've got a good sense of humour".



The South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell

Saturday night and the final two plays. First, Hollywood Players presented ***The Future of Life in Death*** about a group of people being interviewed for a job selling 'death insurance'. The remark about our sense of humour finally made sense, as the last words were about there being plenty of scope for selling if they concentrated sales in the depressed area of Cardiff! Blinking cheek, but we did laugh. The last play of the festival was definitely something special. A two-hander, by Kirkintilloch Players, ***Her Slightest Touch***. The play explored the relationship between a young prostitute and her middle-aged client. The play was funny, tragic and heart-warming.



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drama association of wales

Sept/Oct 2015

I, with a lot of the audience, had a tear in our eyes at the end and we knew we had watched the winner.

The week-end was finished off beautifully by a buffet in the hotel with entertainment provided by an Andrews Sisters tribute group called "The Polka Dots" who were excellent.

The whole week-end was very well organised and the venues and welcome were great. It was such an enjoyable time for all of us and we were so privileged to be part of it.



**2015 British Final Winners - Kirkintilloch Players**

As a post script. Personally and for my daughter Juliet, we were so happy that for my dear wife Barbara it was such a happy occasion that had happened a few weeks before she passed away. For which we will always be grateful.

**Geoff Lake – Cardiff Players, Director**

### OBITUARY



**Geoff and Barbara Lake**

As many of you know, sadly, in July, Barbara Lake passed away. She was an amazing woman who, despite suffering from arthritis most of her adult life, always had a warm smile and friendly welcome for everyone she met. She leaves behind her devoted husband, Geoff; daughter, Juliet; son, Simon, daughter-in-law, Charmaine, and grandchildren, Sean and James, as well as close family and friends. Barbara was an inspiration to whoever had the joy of meeting her. She touched a lot of people in her life, both through teaching and her love of community theatre, where she met her husband Geoff.

Together Geoff and Barbara founded Llantrisant Drama and over many years became leading lights in Welsh community theatre, both playing major parts in the Glamorgan Drama League. Barbara will be greatly missed by us at The Cardiff Players; she was an outstanding talent whether on stage or directing. She was not only committed to any role or job she was given in a play but also selfless, giving advice and helping others to reach their potential, always doing so with a smile and a warmth that made her loved by all. In later years, due to ill health, Barbara took more of a back seat in The Players but,





cymdeithas ddrama cymru  
drama association of wales

Sept/Oct 2015

whenever a show was performed, you could find her on the door, greeting the audience with that wonderful smile.

You could say she was the face of the group, to such an extent that when she was absent, people immediately asked where she was. Barbara will be missed by us all. She leaves a hole in our hearts that will never be filled; we still look for her arrival in the theatre, or even the pub, on her motor scooter and it will take a long time for her family and friends to come to terms with her passing.

Our love and support go out to Geoff and the family. She was part of a bigger family though – she was like a mother to us all.

**Peter Stickler – Cardiff Players**

### SUMMER SCHOOL 2015

I'm sure most of you know by now that we had a very successful Summer School "Sharing Shakespeare" at Broneirion and Willow Globe. Our tutors Sue, Phil and Shaz were inspirational, as was Victoria from the RSC. Broneirion provided lovely food in a country houseparty atmosphere, as we had the whole house to ourselves. Willow Globe Theatre was a wonderful setting for our final presentations. If you haven't read the special Summer School newsletter it's still available on the DAW website. Next year's title and tutors are not yet confirmed, but it will be at Broneirion from Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2016.



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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

DUE TO UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES THE  
AGM WILL NOW BE HELD ON:

**SATURDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2015**

**14:00**

**BRYNAFON COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL,  
SOUTH STREET, RHAYADER. LD6 5BL**

GUEST SPEAKERS:

**FRANK VICKERY & GARETH GIBBS**



### **THE ANGELA TIDSWELL AWARD**

At the final night of the 2015 Wales Final Festival in Ystradgynlais in June, it was announced that the year's winner was from Gwent. No name was divulged as illness had kept this person away from the Festival. It was not until September the 19th that the presentation could take place. As the winner was from Gwent it was decided to hold the presentation at the Congress Theatre in Cwmbran, a venue very familiar to this year's winner.



**This years' recipient Claire Jones**

In telephone conversations with this person, Gareth Gibbs, as Vice Chair of DAW had asked if the winner could present herself to the theatre at 4.15pm to present the Award to Richard Williams of the Congress (she being completely unaware that she herself was to be the recipient!) And so we gathered, Teri McCarthy Chair of DAW, Richard Williams and a host of friends of the actual winner.

And so it was, that at the appointed hour CLAIRE JONES WINNER OF THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD entered the room and was told that it

was not Richard who was to get the prize, but she herself! There was much applause and peals of delight, Claire herself was shocked, but very pleasantly so. Our lady, looking wonderful and very pretty which belied her 92 years exclaimed that she had never been so surprised and shocked.

A gorgeous cake beautifully decorated by Richard's daughter was brought on and the 'Lifetime Achievement' certificate and trophy was handed over to this remarkable, lovely lady who had, over the years given so much of herself to theatre in the area. Mention was made of one particular performance of hers which to this day stays in the memory, that of Deborah the sleeping sickness victim in "A Kind of Alaska" by Harold Pinter, who awakes after being asleep for thirty years. It was a truly memorable performance.

It was a delightful event, made more so by the fact that it had taken so long to organise. Grateful thanks were extended to Claire's friends, who drove to London – where Claire now lives - and brought her down for this very special occasion and were to take her back the next day. The Drama Association of Wales extends grateful thanks to Richard Williams and friends of the Congress Theatre and all who helped make it such a special event for a rather special lady, CLAIRE JONES.

### **PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS;**

2014 Teri McCarthy, Cardiff

2013 Richard Brazier, Montgomeryshire

2012 Gareth Gibbs, Gelligaer





### THE 39 STEPS AT CAXTON THEATRE



Having just produced *The 39 Steps* at the Caxton Theatre Grimsby I thought I would write and share my experience. *The 39 Steps* is a fast paced piece of physical theatre which is based on Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 classic film. It has had an eight year successful run in London and an equally successful nation-wide tour.

The play is a challenge for any experienced director as he has to create a frantic train journey with characters both inside and outside a moving train, actors hanging off the Forth Bridge, a bi-plane chase across the Scottish moors and a full Scottish marching pipe band. With more characters than you shake a stick at it has to be done with only four actors.



Pace is what it was all about with doors, chairs, windows, luggage boxes and a bedroom flying on and off from the wings the backstage choreography is equally as tight as that on stage.

It is at times silly but the silliness makes the play hilarious.

The whole event was received extremely well by a nearly sell out audience so if you directors fancy a challenge have a go at *The 39 Steps*.

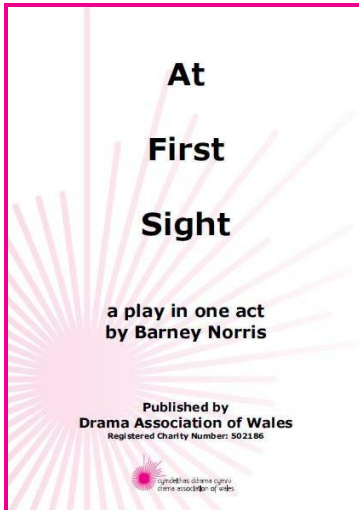
Our local Grimsby Newspaper commented "The Caxton Players have waited some time to be able to produce *The 39 Steps* and it has definitely been worth the wait. West End quality is here in Grimsby."

**Robert Till – Caxton Theatre, Director**

Performance rights are held by Samuel French Ltd, more information is available at [www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk](http://www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk)



**DAW PUBLICATIONS**

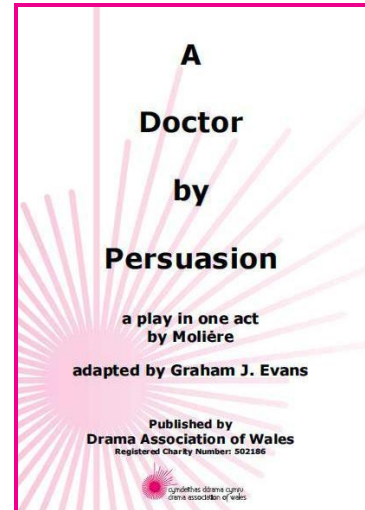


***At First Sight*** is a play about youth, love, memory and loss, and follows Jack and Holly, two young people who meet and spend a New Year together in Salzburg. Holly is there on holiday with her parents; Jack plays piano in the hotel bar. As they circle their shared history, returning again and again to the moment when they first met, their story is told through a collage of exchange and recollection.

**Cast: M1 F1 £4.50 Performance Fee: £38.00**

Barney Norris was born in Chichester in 1987 and grew up in Sussex, London and Salisbury. A graduate of the universities of Oxford and Royal Holloway, his plays are ***At First Sight*** (presented on tour and at Latitude Festival, 2011) and ***Missing*** (Tristan Bates Theatre 2012), and his poetry, stories and other writings have been published in various little magazines. He is the co-artistic director of the theatre company Up In Arms [www.upinarms.org.uk](http://www.upinarms.org.uk)

**DAW PUBLICATIONS**



Géronte is worried as the marriage he has arranged for his daughter Lucinde to his OLD friend has been postponed because she has lost her voice. Local doctors are baffled, so Géronte sends out his two faithful servants to search for a brilliant doctor. They meet Sganarelle who has to be 'persuaded' to use his medical skills...

**Cast: M4 F5 £4.50 Performance Fee: £38.00**

Graham J. Evans, a former soldier, coal miner and window cleaner to the gentry, was born in Aberystwyth but raised 'Down South' in the Rhymney Valley. His first play, *A Strong Smell of Burning* (also published by DAW) won the coveted Crawshay Cup in the 2003 One Act Festival season in Wales and was runner-up in the Geoffrey Whitworth UK-wide competition.

Both plays are available to purchase from DAW  
Email: [office@dramawales.org.uk](mailto:office@dramawales.org.uk)  
Tel: 029 2045 2200





### **PINT-SIZED PLAYS' EIGHTH SEASON OF SHORT PLAYS BEGINS**



Pint-sized Plays, based in Pembrokeshire are now casting their plays for the 2015 season. Now in its eighth year, Pint-sized Plays has established itself as one of the foremost competitions for short plays in the world.

This year, the competition attracted over 300 entries from the USA, Australia, New Zealand as well as the UK. The rules are simple: each play should be able to be performed by two or three actors and be capable of being staged in the actual bar area of a pub, using only the furniture that is available and any props that the cast can carry.

The six winning plays and four runners up are performed in pubs in Tenby, during the Arts Festival Week, and then at a Script Slam at Theatr Gwaun in Fishguard, where the audience vote for their favourite script. A number of the actors performing are drawn from the local amateur circuit, but many are also performed professionally, now that Pint-sized Plays have begun publishing the scripts in book form.

Three volumes have now been published with around 20 plays in each. They are available from French's Bookshop as well as direct from the website [www.pint-sizedplays.org.uk](http://www.pint-sizedplays.org.uk)

Plays have been performed as far afield as Finland and New Zealand as well as many productions in the UK, by amateur and professional companies alike. While there is a fee for performances which have a ticket price, for those performances which are free for the public to attend, performing licences are available free of charge. Several amateur companies in fact have used the plays as a recruiting method for their groups, by performing them in pubs and other venues.



***MultiTasking, Brighton May 2015***

This year, as last, Pint-sized Plays have taken a number of plays to the Brighton Fringe Festival, performing six plays over two nights in seven pubs. There will also be presence at this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival too, when one of the plays from last year's winners will be performed.



**DAW MEMBER'S NEW PLAY SET TO TOUR**  
**SOUTH WALES**

DAW member Derek Webb has a new play touring South and West Wales in October. Called ***The Railway Children Lady*** it is based on the life of the children's author, E. Nesbit.



**Eloise Williams as Edith Nesbit in Derek Webb's new play *The Railway Children Lady***

Prolific novelist and poet, and co-founder of the Fabian Society with her husband Hubert Bland, Edith Nesbit was to the world at large a figure of conventional if progressive tastes.

The people in Edith's life read like a who's who of Victorian and Edwardian society. Eleanor Marx, Annie Besant, Emmeline Pankhurst, H. G. Wells, Sydney and Beatrice Webb, H. G. Wells, Annie Besant, and Noel Coward were just a few of the notable personalities she numbered among her friends.

This mesmerising contrast between the public figure – author of lyrical poetry and children's stories – and the private, often outlandish individual makes the story of Edith Nesbit fascinating drama.

***The Railway Children Lady*** is being produced by Ignition and opens on September 26 in Tenby before touring to ten venues throughout October, including the Grand Theatre Swansea, Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl and Ffrwnes, Llanelli.

Two years ago, Derek Webb's play about Dusty Springfield ***Call Me Dusty*** played to packed houses across South Wales and received excellent critical reviews.

In ***The Railway Children Lady***, Edith is brought to the stage by Pembrokeshire-based actress Eloise Williams who has dozens of TV and stage appearances to her credit, including playing Dylan Thomas' wife Caitlin, Natasha in *Three Sisters* and Gertrude in *Hamlet*.

***The Railway Children Lady*** tour;

26<sup>th</sup> Sept: TENBY Church House  
30<sup>th</sup> Sept: PORTHCAWI Grand Pavilion  
9<sup>th</sup> Oct: CWMAMAN Cwmaman Theatre  
10<sup>th</sup> Oct: CHEPSTOW The Drill Hall  
15<sup>th</sup> Oct: AMMANFORD Miners' Theatre  
16<sup>th</sup> Oct: LLANELLI Stwdio Stepni  
17<sup>th</sup> Oct: FISHGUARD Theatr Gwaun  
22<sup>nd</sup> Oct: SWANSEA Grand Theatre, Arts Wing  
30<sup>th</sup> Oct: MACHYNLLETH Y Tabernacle  
31<sup>st</sup> Oct: RHOSYGILWEN Penfro Book Festival

Further details available at  
[www.ignitiontheatre.org.uk](http://www.ignitiontheatre.org.uk)





**THE STARLIGHT PLAYERS TO PRODUCE BEAUTY  
AND THE BEAST**



After their successful run of *The Vicar of Dibley*, The Starlight Players are very excited to announce that their next production will be Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

Melissa Minnice is the producer and director and she has already established her production team and rehearsals started last week. Casting for parts has not yet taken place as Melissa wants the troupe to thoroughly familiarise themselves with the script before auditions take place in the middle of October. So there is still time for any aspiring artist or singer to join with this ambitious company for what will be a lively and colourful show.

Wardrobe Mistress Sue Cooper is responsible for design and tailoring of the costumes and stage sets are being designed and built under the management of Peter Weston.

If people are interested in performing or even supporting behind the scenes contact Melissa on **07790 137278** as soon as possible. We're looking at a wide range of people for the cast, both male and female, young and old.

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

26 Sept -31 Oct The Railway Children Lady by Derek Webb, Ignition Theatre. Venues are on page 10, further details are available from [www.ignitiontheatre.org.uk](http://www.ignitiontheatre.org.uk)

1-3 Oct The Government Inspector by Gogol, Cardiff Players. Mike Barlow YMCA Theatre 7.30pm Tickets: £8 from 01656 865989 or email [cardiffplayers@mail.com](mailto:cardiffplayers@mail.com) [www.cardiffplayers.org](http://www.cardiffplayers.org)

19-21 Nov Blithe Spirit by Noel Coward, Telstars Theatre Company. St Germans Church Hall, Cardiff 7.30pm Tickets: £8 from [Ticket Source](http://TicketSource)

20-21 & 26-28 Nov *Rumours – The British Version* by Neil Simon, Guilsfield ADS. Guilsfield Community Centre 7.30pm Tickets: £7.50 adults, £5.00 under 14, £6.00 pensioners from [www.guilsfieldads.net](http://www.guilsfieldads.net)

13-14 Nov *The Normal Heart* by Larry Kramer, The Unknown OUTcasts. 7.30pm

15 Nov 2.30pm – Lefel 1, St David's Hall, Cardiff Tickets £10/£8 concessions

Available from [St David's hall website](http://St David's hall website) or on 029 2087 8444 [www.unknowntheatre.co.uk](http://www.unknowntheatre.co.uk)

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