

British Final Festival History page – 2009

Dates	Venue	Adjudicator
3-4 July 2009	Adrhowen Theatre, Enniskillen	Walker Ewart ADA

Finalists	Play	Playwright	Company	Director
Northern Ireland	A Little Something for the Ducks	Jean Lennox Toddie	The Clarence Players	Alan Marshall
Scotland Two Jim Cartwright Kirkton Players	Two	Jim Cartwright	Kirkton Players	Alex Welch
England	Moll Flanders	Peter Machen	Total Arts Community Theatre	Rebekah Fortune
Wales	But Yesterday	Jimmie Chinn	New 'Tabs' Players	Sue Williams

Awards	Play	Recipient
Howard de Walden Trophy	Two	Kirkton Players
Geoffrey Whitworth Playwriting Competition	The Funeral of Macie Loverett	Gytha Lodge

Notes on the festival	
Date added	13/05/2016
By whom	Leon Searle

Notes**BRITISH FINAL 2009, first appeared in DAWN Summer 2009**

Notes Regular British Final-goers will be aware of the reputation the Association of Ulster Drama Festivals has for hosting a great British Final. This was my first visit to a Northern Irish Final and I wasn't disappointed. The welcome began as soon we arrived late in the evening the night before the festival kicked off and were greeted like old friends by our adjudicator for the festival Walker Ewart ADA, representatives of the AUDF and a one or two other early arrivals in the bar of the Festival Hotel.

The weather for the weekend wavered between fine, sunny weather and dark, gloomy skies punctuated by heavy downpours but the gods smiled upon us for our arrival at the Festival venue, the beautifully appointed Ardhoven Theatre and we spent a pleasant half hour or so before curtain up with a glass of wine chatting with other festival-goers on the terrace overlooking the bobbing boats at the jetties below.

Representing Northern Ireland, The Clarence Players opened the festival with *A Little Something for the Ducks* by Jean Lennox Toddie. This short two-hander brought us Dorothy Wiley and Paddy Ormonde playing an elderly couple (Irma and Samuel) who meet at a duck pond where he has come to feed the ducks since the death of his wife. Strong acting from both cast members brought through the warmth of this charming tale. A particularly strong performance from Paddy Ormonde who stepped in to the role following the death of original cast member Ray Hastie.

Another two-hander came next from Kirkton Players representing Scotland with Jim Cartwright's *Two*. The experience of this production's actors Gerry Burns and Elayne Deary was clearly evident as they introduced us to the landlady and landlord of a pub and a whole host of their regulars. Kirkton have become well established at the British Final since joining the Scottish Community Drama Association in 1991, winning the festival no less than three times in previous years.

Another previous British Final winning group Total Arts Community Theatre opened the Saturday night with a production of *Moll Flanders* by Peter Machen. Excellent choreographed movement and tableaux struck really impressive images while the choral speaking moved the story alongside the acting and dialogue. Director Rebekah Fortune must have really been cracking the whip to get the cast so disciplined for this visually impressive and colourful production.

The New 'Tabs' Players representing Wales closed the festival and having spoken to some of the group earlier in the day and hearing of their awful tech run that afternoon I was worried for them. However, they delivered the goods once again. Despite the technical difficulties, the lighting was, if anything, even better than it had been at the Welsh Final but because of the tech run problems there had not been enough time for checking sound levels and their birdsong sound effect did somewhat detract from the production.

Before Walker summed up the festival and announced the winning entry Keith Robinson of the SCDA announced Gytha Lodge from Cambridge as the winner of the Geoffrey Whitworth Competition for the best play receiving its premiere in the first rounds of the National Festival of Community Theatre and presented her with the Geoffrey Whitworth Trophy.

And so another one act festival, which began for DAW at Colwyn Bay way back in March, drew to a close as Walker Ewart announced that the Howard de Walden Award for the winner of the 2009 British Final Festivals of One Act Plays would be presented to... Kirkton Players for their production of *Two* by Jim Cartwright.

Congratulations to Kirkton for making that a record fourth win at the British Finals and commiserations to the other groups taking part. Thanks to New 'Tabs' Players for representing Wales so well – you did us proud and thanks too to the AUDF for making the Final such a pleasant experience.