

## Summer School History page – 2000

Back in July, GoDA Adjudicator Scott Marshall arrived in Wales from his native Northern Ireland to tutor his course "Small is Beautiful" for the Drama Association of Wales Summer School 2000. A support group for those of a diminutive stature who have issues with their self-esteem it was not. In fact it was a week-long course designed to introduce actors and directors to as many lesser known one act plays in a week as possible allowing a detailed analysis and discussion of each of the plays. Here are accounts from two of the course attendees telling of their experience of DAW Summer School 2000.

My personal reflections are of the amazing amount of work we got through in such a short time and the friendly supportive attitude of everyone there. It didn't take long to become a closely knit group, I really learned a lot and hope to prove so with the next one act play I direct.

On arrival there was a friendly welcome from DAW staff. It was a bit like that "first day at school" feeling but unease quickly dispelled by the attitude of all concerned during the day. After a couple of ice breaking sessions I found myself watching body language to decide on peoples veracity. You never knew whether Scott had primed someone to spin you a yarn or not. Evidently, being able to lie convincingly is mandatory in drama.

We were then given our first four plays to do. We were split into groups and worked on the presentation i.e. interpretation, moves, props, costume, not expected to learn lines - thank goodness and all the parts were allocated. We all contributed to the production with a designated director having the final say (in theory). This was the continuing format for the week. Except that instead of a day and a half to prepare we finished up receiving the play in the morning and performing in the afternoon, which concentrated the mind admirably. The standard of drama was amazing, enhanced by being able to perform in the actual theatre. I just wish we had videotaped everything. I now can't believe we did so much and were all able to contribute effectively and enjoy the finished results. Scott said at the beginning of the week that he wanted to introduce us to a variety of plays and he certainly did that. There were gales of laughter at times and tears at others. He had an unerring instinct when choosing the plays and casting them.

The extra curricular activities were good too. We had quizzes, poetry, charades and pub evenings, and a day trip to Fishguard to the 'Labyrinth', another mind stretching experience.

Sixteen people, sixteen one act plays, a memorable week. I can't wait to enroll for the next one! **Liana Gannon**

I walked into the dining room at Trinity College, Carmarthen half an hour after arriving and I was presented with a Sea of Grey Heads (well, not everyone was grey, that would be unfair, but grey was definitely the dominant colour). I immediately felt I stuck out like a sore thumb and that I was well out of my league as I am only in my twenties and relatively inexperienced in drama. I looked around the dining table and saw what appeared to be experienced actors who all seemed to know an awful lot about Theatre and this further fuelled my trepidation. However, chatting over lunch I soon discovered that these were people of all levels of experience, which eased my apprehension no end.

Daily, we split into our small working groups. Each group was given a one-act play in the morning that was to be cast, discussed, directed and then performed in the afternoon before the rest of the group. Everybody was given a chance to shine. In addition to the daily play, we were given various exercises throughout the week that taught the Art of Acting. We were kept that busy that I never really had time to feel nervous. Plus, we were performing in front of people who were about to perform in front of us.

I was involved in several completely different one-act plays that demanded very distinct and often polar aspects from the different characters I was playing. After each play was performed, it was dissected by cast, director, audience and tutor.

It was hard work, but thoroughly enjoyable, and months later I am still reflecting on what I learnt that particular week. ***Leon Bearman***