

2018 has been a very good year for the Area. We again had three, six-play quarter finals and a six-play semi final, the winner of which went on to represent the Area at the Grand Final which we were honoured to host at the Mitchell Arts Centre in Stoke-on-Trent. The format proved to be both an artistic and a financial success for the AETF.

Birmingham - This compact festival retained its popularity and played to almost full houses. In her summing up of the festival Jennifer Scott-Reid paid tribute to all of the teams taking part and the festival organisers.

Warwickshire - Unfortunately Jean and I were unable to attend this year due to clashing dates. However, the ever helpful grapevine reports that the festival went well and Nick Wilkes, the adjudicator, was popular with both the audience and the teams.

Herefordshire - The move from the Courtyard in Hereford to the Market Theatre in Ledbury seems to have been a good one. In his summary from the stage, Chris Jaeger remarked that the increased participation (thirteen groups took part) and full-houses bode well for the future of the event.

Worcestershire – Snow forced a postponement of this festival. Fortunately, the theatre was able to offer alternative dates and a reduced festival went ahead a few weeks later. Congratulating all involved, Nick Wilkes remarked that, although the postponement had posed problems for all, the event had been a happy and successful one.

South Staffordshire - It was our privilege to attend the Hastilow Festival in Tamworth on the opening night. Having taken over from the original adjudicator at short notice, Sue Doherty was very well received by the audience and the three teams taking part that evening.



North Staffordshire - We attended the Friday evening and had a very good time. Richard Woodward complimented the three teams (junior, youth and adult) for providing impressive entertainment.

Shropshire - We attended the second night and witnessed youth theatre productions. The audience were in full agreement with Beverley Clark who complimented all the teams for taking on stiff challenges of interpretation and presentation.



Western Division Quarter-Final - This six-play event took place in Ledbury. Mike Kaiser, the adjudicator, sent two original plays through to the next round (one with a cast of thirty-one and the other with a cast of seven).

Central Division Quarter Final - The Brewhouse, Burton was the venue for this event. All six productions played to very good houses. Nick Wilkes, whose first quarter final this was as an adjudicator, found it a stimulating experience.

Eastern Division Quarter Final - Unfortunately Jean and I were unable to be at the Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton this year, but reports suggests that Chris Jaeger and the audience were provided with a great day of competition from all six groups.

Area Semi-Final - This year we were at the Swan Theatre, Worcester. Six deserving teams played to good houses over two sessions. In his summing up Paul Fowler said that it had been a varied and memorable event which had showcased nearly every dramatic genre.

I could not possibly complete this brief survey of Central Area's season without congratulating Sue Fortune, my Vice-Chairman, for organising this year's Grand Final at the Mitchell Memorial Theatre. This was a splendid event which went off well. The fact that her group, TACT, were crowned AETF Champions with *The Thrill of Love* by Amanda Whittington and went on to perform it at the British Final in Stirling proved a delightful bonus.



I invite you to attend our Central Area AGM which will take place on 23rd September at the Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton from 2pm.