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News & Review

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# ALL-ENGLAND THEATRE FESTIVAL

Reaching out to drama groups throughout England



## England

Having been in post for a year now, I would like to thank everyone for their support and for making my year so enjoyable. However, sadly Martin Patrick, who was an excellent National Secretary and performed his duties diligently, passed away on 14th December following complications from a fall. Despite recently relinquishing the position as National Secretary due to failing health, Martin had offered to continue producing the festival brochure, which gives details of all the AETF festivals throughout England. We will all miss him within AETF and send our condolences and best wishes to his partner Julia.

Well fellow organisers, actors, backstage crew, teams and audience it's that time of year again. Hard work for all involved, but how can we resist. I am sure you are all looking forward to Festival Season 2014 as much as I am. Organisers, of first rounds in particular, have a huge responsibility, to make the teams welcome and feel part of a learning, sharing, enjoyable experience, so that they want to return each year to take part. I hope that this year numbers of competing teams will grow and that the amount of new writing, the excellent work that is being produced and the encouragement of youth, to become involved in our festivals, will bring energy and enthusiasm which will continue as the young people, hopefully move into our adult groups and help amateur theatre, at a high standard to survive. Boding well for the future of AETF.

Some of the structures within areas changed in 2013. Northern Area amalgamated two of their Quarter Finals which seems to have been very successful. Central Area has reshaped into 3 divisions each consisting of three Preliminary Festivals and hopefully this will encourage even more teams to take part in 2014.

AETF's biggest achievement of 2013 has to be England's success in winning the British Final in Northern Ireland. Troupers from Western Area were worthy winners with "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg" and gave a performance full of sincerity and truth. I had

an excellent weekend meeting "like minded people" and enjoying the wonderful city of Derry.

Stage Writes which was funded by the Heritage Lottery Funding in order to establish a record of amateur theatre memories has had a very good response and memories and stories have been gathered and can now be found on [www.stagewrites.org.uk](http://www.stagewrites.org.uk) (please continue to send articles and photographs to Ann Aplin)

We continue to produce our twice yearly newsletter (thanks to Jean Cunnington) and our brochure continues to inform members on what is happening around the country.

Our Membership Scheme is open to individuals, families and groups who wish to support AETF and we hope that as many of you as possible will decide to take up this membership in 2014. The English Final will take place in Evesham in June 2014; the Adjudicator will be Chris Jaeger GoDA. ( Hope to see you all there.)

I look forward to meeting old friends and new during the 2014 festival season.

Sue Fortune  
(AETF Chairman)



*The only nation-wide  
eliminating contest  
for one-act plays  
in performance*

Chairman  
The Elms, Lichfield Road,  
Hopwas, Tamworth  
B78 3AF

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[www.aetf.org.uk](http://www.aetf.org.uk)



Troupers - A Day in the Death of Joe Egg

# All-England Theatre Festival

The Elms, Lichfield Road, Hopwas, Tamworth, B78 3AF



## Northern Area

From the Frozen North.

Well, panto season is almost upon us and the temperature is dropping. My panto cast are fighting off colds and flu bugs to make sure they are fighting fit for opening night in January.

Even with all of the panto activity I've started the preparation for the Saltburn Drama Festival which opens on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014. We have decided to reduce to a 4 day event in a bid to reduce outgoings. Our Adjudicator this year for the preliminary round is Jennifer Scott-Reid GoDA. This will be Jennifer's first visit to our festival and we are looking forward to a new perspective, critique and input to what we hope is yet another exciting week.

We've had a very exciting few weeks here in Saltburn-by-the-Sea as a bid was made for the funding from The Peoples Millions. It was a real roller coaster ride and on the 28th November on the local ITV news we learnt that our bid had been successful. An enormous £50,000.00 has been awarded to Saltburn Community Arts so that Saltburn Community Theatre can have some much needed refurbishment to the seating, lights and sound and also enable the organisation present some events aimed at young people. Some of the award will also go towards funding essential staff. Nothing could have prepared me for the result and how wonderful it felt to know that this little theatre in a small seaside town in North Yorkshire will be able to continue to serve the community for years to come.

My delight is compounded as we are hosting the combined Quarter/Semi Final of The All England Theatre Festival (Northern Division) on 24th and 25th May 2014. Our Adjudicator for this event is Helen E Sharman GoDA and again, I've managed to get an Adjudicator who hasn't officiated at Saltburn before. I am so looking forward to welcoming the participants at both the preliminary and follow on round to the place where an interest in amateur drama first began for me.

The 2013 season has been very enjoyable with opportunities to watch so much original work, travel to new places, meet up with old friends and make new friends too. What I have learnt from our recent experience here in Saltburn is that when things look bleak, particularly in the current economic climate, there can be a bit of magic and miracle making. If it can happen here it can happen anywhere.

Sheenah Taylor  
Northern Area Chairman



Saltburn  
Community Theatre



Richmond ADS Cox and Box

For the second year running AETF North has been forced to reconfigure its programme of events. Because of the lateness of our biggest first round festival, the Leverhulme, we are unable to fit in quarter finals this year (though we hope to revert to the status quo in 2015). Instead, the winners of all our preliminary round festivals will be eligible to proceed to a two-day semi-final to be held at that delightful resort on the Cleveland coast, Saltburn-By-The-Sea. It will take place over the weekend of May 24 and 25 and AETF North Chairman Sheenah Taylor and her Saltburn '53 colleagues, expert festival organisers all, will be hosting what should prove to be a superbly entertaining show at their splendid Saltburn Community Theatre.

Though it seems no time at all since AETF North last hosted the English Final (in 2011) our turn comes inexorably round again in 2015. We make no apologies for having booked, for the second time, the 500-seat Harrogate Theatre to host the event. Opened in the last year of Queen Victoria's reign as 'The Grand Opera House' this lavishly decorated venue designed by Frank Tugwell, architect of the Savoy Theatre, will prove a fitting venue for our flagship event before we move on to Bracknell for the British Finals. In 2011 we secured generous sponsorship of the English Final from the Zolsha restaurant in Knaresborough. We hope we can secure comparable financial support in 2015 from the Harrogate business community.

If you spent November 2013 on Planet Tharg you may have missed the news that Hull has been selected as UK City of Culture in 2017. Our colleagues in Hull and East Riding have put forward the interesting and cogent suggestion that we dovetail the English Final that year with the Hull celebrations. Although it is not AETF North's turn to host the English Final in 2017, the AETF trustees have been very sympathetic and have given Barbara Prince and her Hull colleagues free rein to explore this proposal further. With its maritime history and infrastructure, Ferens Art Gallery and the magnificent Hull Truck Theatre opened in 2009 the city is bursting with interest and potential. Watch this space.

I wish all festival organisers and participants across the North of England the very best for the new AETF season and I look forward to seeing many of you in May at what promises to be a cracking Area semi beside the seaside.

Ian Clarke – AETF Vice-Chairman,  
Northern Area Secretary.

# All-England Theatre Festival

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## Central Area

It is, as I am sure everyone realises that time of year, the start of a new festival year has arrived. The merry old pantomime must be put to bed and the bringing together of those slightly different problems associated with the festival play, not forgetting the productions which are already scheduled and in the pipeline for rest of the season. (Whilst on the tack of future productions - have you considered advertising your next home production in the Quarter-Final programme? it should be good way of contacting a new section of the local community.)

Our 10<sup>th</sup> Central Area AGM took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September in Solihull, and there were few changes, no contentious votes as to who would be the officers and members were in no way confrontational. The new Area layout has completed its first year and appears to have been a success. The first Eastern Division Quarter-Final of Central Area took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> April, at the Abbey Theatre in Nuneaton and the Central Area Semi-Final on the 18<sup>th</sup> May at the Mitchell Memorial Theatre in Hanley. Both the new festival and the new format festival were a success and thanks must be given to all those involved with their organisation. The brochure with the location of this year's festivals and their dates is now available and I hope that you will do your best to support as many of them as possible.

Your Area committee would like to reiterate the fact that the Area needs your support, primarily bums-on-seats. This particularly helps the teams but also the Festival's finances. Equally I hope that you have not forgotten our previous requests for sponsorship - this is particularly important in light of the fact that we are the hosts of the English Final later this year. Sponsorship can be in a variety of forms, direct to the Area, specifically for an event, i.e. the English Final, or more generally by becoming a member of the AETF. Please grab, 'not literally' any member of the organising committees to find out how to give your support and what it would mean for you and us.

It has finally hit me there is a difference between Sports and the Arts - and that is 'support'. Both are competitive, at least in the festival scene, but do we as practitioners in the Arts, support the away fixtures in the Arts world as they appear to do in Sport? As an organiser of Quarter and Semi-Finals the answer is NO. How this can be resolved is undoubtedly more in the hands of the teams than the festival organisers. We all accept that your supporting audience has in all probability already seen your production, but, as most finals have five or six plays, that means that there are four or five productions they have not seen; therefore value for money cannot be the deciding factor. To give yourself the edge and enhance your own performance, please support the AETF and in particular the Central Area by doing your utmost to bring a party to every Quarter and Semi-Final you attend. There are four finals due to take place over the next few months in our Area alone.

Jean and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible during the festival season, at your own Preliminary Round Festivals as well as the Finals.

Roger Cunnington.  
Central Area Chairman.



Martin Patrick

A STALWART of the All-England Theatre Festival and Oxted's Barn Theatre, who was an inspiration to many, has died aged 67.

Martin Patrick, who died on December 14, was involved in local amateur dramatics for five decades, including producing and performing in many plays.

He is particularly fondly remembered at the Barn Theatre in Bluehouse Lane, where he was not only a trustee and director, but had also regularly played the part of the pantomime dame.

Mr Patrick was a leading light in the theatre's annual week-long drama festival as both a main organiser and the compere.

Barn Theatre chairman Bruce Read said: "Martin was a mentor and inspiration. Apart from pantomimes he also directed many plays, musicals and variety shows at the Barn.

"He played dames in many pantomimes around the South East over about 50 years.

"Martin will be sorely missed here at the Barn and by all who knew him during his busy and full life."

He said Mr Patrick had been a trustee of the theatre for two decades, bringing wise counsel, good humour and much experience to the role.

"He did a huge amount of work with the theatre."

Carolyn Rowley, the theatre's press officer, said: "Martin had not had an easy time over the last couple of years but faced each day with fortitude, humour and courage.

She said: "Martin would always offer advice and encouragement, and was an utter gentleman.

"He leaves a family and many good friends, and a vacuum in our lives that will be difficult to fill.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Julia and his family."

The funeral which was attended by over 400 took place on Thursday 9th January.

Article courtesy of the Surrey Mirror



Martin as pantomime dame at the Barn Theatre

# All-England Theatre Festival

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## Western Area

“Last year was a very busy year for Western Area, what with one round and another” mused the Chairman with wry humour. The “another” referred to our hosting of the English Final at Christchurch, that quadrennial task that had to be done properly, not only to provide competing groups with a stress-free environment but, as importantly, to maintain our reputation for efficiency. The trouble is that four years is long enough to lose sight of the lessons learnt ‘last time’, particularly if key personnel have changed. The answer of course is proper planning in good time and not losing the record of those lessons. ‘Stress-free groups’ quite rightly expect a smooth, swan-like progress through the event, most of them blissfully unaware of the frantic underwater paddling that got us there! For EF13, we replicated the detail of our annual planning of our (Area) Final, setting out a stated distribution of tasks and a separate budget. The **tasks** included: **Chair:** appoint adjudicator’s steward; stage décor; host event, welcome visitors; platform party briefing; votes of thanks; executive committee on the Sunday. **Sec:** book theatre; adjudicator contact; stage plans etc. to teams; programme outline; return of trophies; certificates. **PRO:** media releases; theatre brochure; direct invitation to all arts groups in the County; contact winning teams for programme detail; photographs for pre- and post-publicity; design and print flyers, posters. **Treasurer:** budget, financial report; theatre payments; floats. The **budget** headings were Theatre hire; theatre technician; adjudicator’s fee, travel, accommodation and meal(s); printing; flowers; certificates; grant to winning team; Sec’s incidental expenses; PRO budget. **Divisional Rep:** Visit theatre, establish link; book adjudicator; appoint Festival stage staff; competitors’ local hosts; programme sellers. Each item in both lists had a date by which they were to be done, timings which were validated or amended by constant review – including after the event. Christchurch’s English Final went well, as was reported here in July.

### Proper Planning Prevents Problems.

“This year looks somewhat quieter, on the face of it”, mused Dennis. The Area’s Preliminary and second rounds are all in hand and the contact details will be found in the AETF programme sheet to be published this month. The winning groups from the (Divisional) Quarter Finals will gather at The Carlton Theatre, Teignmouth on 24 May 2014. (Fingers crossed! The date is fixed but The Carlton awaits a Council decision as to *when* an extensive rejuvenation programme is to commence. Alternative venue has been arranged.) The Carlton is a delightful, bijou, seaside town theatre of the kind that we all relish. Teignmouth is a well-known and well-favoured holiday venue and drama folk from within Western Area, or elsewhere but within reach of a railway(!), could do worse than to visit over that weekend. (Teignmouth Tourist Information Centre 01626 215666 \* [www.visitsouthdevon.co.uk](http://www.visitsouthdevon.co.uk).)

Two problems that affect our Festivals (and other Areas, we’re sure) are a diminishing pool of competing groups at Preliminary level and diminishing audience figures. We gave this some thought and urged our Preliminary and second rounds to apply the following.



### Diminishing pool of groups at Preliminary round level

- The committee to compile a list of the advantages to competing in Festivals,
- Offers to visit committee or group meetings to urge participation,
- Personal contact with all existing arts groups within the district/County,
- Personal contact with Head Teachers/Head of Drama of all secondary schools or colleges,
- Marketing, ie keeping ‘amdram’ in the public eye: media reports reflecting Festival rehearsals or achievements, current rehearsals, any community contributions. The key is **enjoyment**: ‘as much fun as you can get for twelve pounds a year!’

### Bums on seats, ie publicising a show

- local radio and newspaper releases with pictures, a mix of marketing and immediate publicity,
- offer of local radio interviews with mini-extracts of plays,
- all group members with a computer given a ‘j.peg’ of flyer or poster of the next production and asked to print off a limited number and the product distributed at the next local market day by group members in costume or group tee-shirts.

This concerns us all throughout the AETF. We suggest a correspondence in these columns as a national search in pursuit of examples of best practice. Surely that would be worth-while.

Ron Roberts, PRO, in conjunction with  
Dennis Dunford Western Area Chairman.



### Change of email

**Jeannie Russell GoDA**  
Email is now:  
**[Jeannievanrompaey@gmail.com](mailto:Jeannievanrompaey@gmail.com)**

# All-England Theatre Festival

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## Eastern Area

The twelve pipers seem but a distant memory as thoughts turn once again to the first buds of spring – namely the first round AETF festival season! The Eastern Area may be somewhat smaller than hitherto, with five festivals compared to the seven twelve months ago, but what it lacks in quantity it will doubtless make up for in quality.

Bedford, Elmbridge, Maidenhead, Southern Counties and Waltham Forest are all long-standing drama festivals and have enjoyed considerable success over the years, with representation in the English and even British Finals. We look forward to more success this year.

With the reduction in the number of festivals the Eastern Area Quarter Final stages have been dropped and the first round festival winners will now proceed directly to the Eastern Area Final (national Semi-Final), to be hosted by the Bedford Festival over the early May bank holiday weekend.

Hopefully, the recent trend for youth entries, original works and new groups will continue together with the support/challenge provided by the many 'stalwart' groups who have entered the first round festivals for many years, or in some cases, decades! It is refreshing to see the number and generally high quality of new works coming through to challenge well-directed and staged 'classics' such as the 2013 English Final winning play, "A Day In The Death of Joe Egg".

On a more sombre note the Area was saddened to hear that Martin Patrick passed away before Christmas. Martin ran the Southern Counties Drama festival for many years and served on the Eastern Area Committee and AETF National Executive, most recently as the long-standing Secretary of the latter. Although Martin had suffered ill health for some time, his untimely loss was unexpected and he will be sorely missed for his considerable knowledge of drama, inspirational demeanour and good humour.

I wish the very best of luck to all involved in the 2014 AETF competition and look forward to seeing the usual feast of drama at the English Final in Evesham.

Ian Thomas  
Eastern Area Chairman



## The Treasurer's Ramblings

It is the start of a new festival season, and in common with most groups the season is probably already well planned out and underway. You do not need the national treasurer to tell you that finances are tight and there are little signs of prosperity showing. Sponsorship and advertising revenue are harder and harder to find, however we continue to keep looking. Equally we are determined and still enthusiastic enough to keep soldiering on. I know that I am not alone in my concern as two of our family of Preliminary Round Festivals will not be taking part in 2014. I am led to believe that one just feels that we are not doing enough for them and have decided to pull out of the organisation, and the other has had to fold because there was no body left on committee following their AGM to run it.

This is beginning to sound like doom and gloom, but the decision has been taken not to run four of our eleven quarter-finals this year. Hopefully this is an experiment that will not be successful. After all, these are events that should provide the learning curve for our competitors and provide an income to the AETF to enable us to continue.

On a much more positive note our membership is growing; please remember that we still need your support to persuade your friends and acquaintances of the benefits of becoming a member of the AETF.



Twelve months ago I said that the trustees were carrying out their five yearly review of trophy holdings, this has been done and not surprisingly we appear to have lost a few, winners moving and taking our trophies with them! It is interesting to note that the engraving on some of the trophies, particularly those that go back to the thirties, give a fascinating insight as to how and why the AETF is, as an organisation, as it is. This has raised a couple of questions: -

1-If a festival has a number of trophies that are no longer required should they be presented to those PRFs which do not have a specific trophy for the winner representing them at the next round?

Or 2-Should we attempt to try and raise some income from their disposal?

Again continuing an idea started last year, the National Programme Covers are available for the cost of postage to any PRF who would like to use them. We do not make any money on these, only from Gift Aid that we claim back from HMG on membership fees, and donations from individuals and festivals, which is much appreciated. The trustees and I thank all who have donated and helped in this way.

AETF National Treasurer.  
Roger Cunnington.

# All-England Theatre Festival

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## Why Don't We Enter A Festival?

Perhaps in your society a lone voice asks rather tentatively: "Why don't we enter a Drama Festival next year?" Is this query greeted with enthusiasm or talked down with such response as: "Festivals are all pay out and nothing in return" or "We're happy as we are." "Our audiences love our productions." "We don't need anybody to tell us how good we are!" "What would we get out of it anyway?" "All that work for one night!" How often have such responses silenced that lone voice? Clearly some arguments are required to melt the icy responses from the committee:-

Festivals provide an exciting learning experience. There should be helpful, constructive comments from a well-qualified, independent adjudicator – unlike family and friends on home territory. In addition to the adjudicator's constructive assessment, much will be learnt by watching other festival entries – facets of production, staging, lighting, effects, plays, acting technique, introductory music etc. All this provides funded experience and can be called upon for any future productions.

By entering the festival, each society becomes part of the festival that means measuring up with other enthusiasts who share the love of theatre. That insularity which, regrettably, is a feature of many local societies is broken down. Within a short while, teams often become friends and not rivals – and from such friendships practical help may well emerge.

Many societies have a regular programme of home productions that must, of necessity, be audience pullers. This is understandable, but to grow artistically your actors need to keep fresh by trying new, unusual or less accessible plays. This is where the festival can come into its own. Get out of the boulevard comedy rut and try Beckett, Orton, Pinter or Tennessee Williams, try the unknown play, the original play, the compilation of poetry, words and music. There are so many possibilities.



Maybe there are those who wish to direct for the first time or there is an influx of new untried members. Why not allow them to flex their creative muscles at the drama festival? They will learn so much and that can only benefit the whole society in succeeding years. The production may only make one appearance, although if there is another festival in the area it could be entered there as well – but some actors, for personal reasons, may prefer the one night stand rather than a week-long run in the home production.

I have not in these arguments for entering a festival, listed: to win the festival trophy! In my experience teams who are desperate to win rarely succeed; a sense of frenzied angst is apparent and the production is nervous, tense and uneasy. However, should the production do well, then the success can be used in publicity material through local press, radio and in future programmes – all adding to the kudos of the group.

Having used these arguments for entering a festival, your lone voice may still have to quell the strident voice of the Treasurer! Yes, it does cost money, but surely it is money well spent, an investment into the future development of the group. The profits from the money-spinning home production could go to finance the festival play.

If the committee is forward-looking it might well say "We'll give it a try next year." That decision could well be a pivotal point in the history of your society.

Perhaps we will meet some day.....

Colin Dolley  
GoDA Chairman



## Chris Jaeger Awarded MBE

The AETF send their warmest congratulations to Chris Jaeger, Chief Executive of Worcester Live, after it was announced that he had been awarded an MBE for services to the arts in Worcester.

Before Worcester Live stepped in, both of the main city venues, the Swan Theatre and Huntingdon Hall were in real danger of closing down.

Chris, also a senior member of the Guild of Drama Adjudicators, will be adjudicating the English Final on 14th June 2014 at Evesham Arts Centre

# All-England Theatre Festival

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## 2013 AETF Statistics

The provision of stats, whilst often somewhat boring in content does help to give an indication as to how the festival movement and the AETF in particular is continuing to support our local communities. The figures are supplied by the Preliminary or First Round Festivals, which make up the AETF family, and the conclusions derived are based solely on that information. We find that: -

### 1. THE PERFORMANCE STATS 2013

- This year has been particularly good, only one festival failed to make a return giving us an 82% success rate.
- Within the family there are 34 independently organised festivals, together with 16 AETF Preliminary Round Festivals &/or Finals. Of these 50 festivals, 2 were not actually scheduled or were cancelled in 2013.
- There were some 151 performance evenings, &/or matinees, which took place in 48 venues throughout the country. Overall 371 groups took part, cast and crew numbering over 3,902, watched by an audience of some 10,327, providing an income in excess of £66k.
- In regard to programmes and the promotion of the AETF, all AETF festivals used the programme covers provided. There were however, a number of independent festivals who failed to include the AETF logo & advert within their programmes.

### 2. THE PLAY STATS 2013

The most popular authors this year were: -

- 'Anon' with 7 titles being performed at 14 First Rounds.
- David Campton with 7 titles being performed at 8 First Rounds.
- Richard James with 5 titles being performed at 8 First Rounds.
- David Tristram with 4 titles being performed at 7 First Rounds.
- Richard MacSween 2 titles being performed at 7 First Rounds.

The most popular play this year is an impossible question to answer: -

- Last year two plays were performed by three different groups in three different festivals. This year two groups performed their play in three festivals and one group performed their play in four festivals. Many groups performed their plays in two festivals.
- The fact that some 23% of plays performed this year were original may also have contributed to the difficulty of finding a single popular production.
- Not forgetting that five festivals did not provide me with a copy of their programme, this was however a slight improvement on last year.

Analysis of the data received reveals that: -

- Taking part at our 34 Preliminary Rounds Festivals there were 260 (201) different play titles, (The figures in brackets are from last year.), of which 73 (36) were original plays; there were some 206 (170) different authors.
- Interestingly out of the 291 performances we have information on, 43 (31) were monologues or duologues and 31 (32) were three handers; of the

remaining, 115 had between four and seven characters whilst 102 (94) had over 8 characters.

- From the returns 236 (232) wanted to be considered as part of the ongoing AETF festival whilst 43 (44) adult and 40 (44) youth entries did not.

### 3. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

Overall compared to previous years it appears to have been a good year, roughly the same as those recorded in 2008. We have been both better and worse than that during the intervening years. The AETF organises the only on-going, one-act play competition in performance, and provides England's representative at the "British Final of One-Act Plays" each year. In 2013, 236 groups vied for that honour.

For ever looking to the POSITIVE, we are now ready to embark on the new festival season, and I believe that we should be anticipating another good year. We look forward to the continued support of all Preliminary Round Festivals who feed into the competition and, as custodian of the stats; I hope that this year's returns will provide an increase of participation when the 'Festival Returns' come in.

It is the provision of the Stats Return Form and a copy of the programme from your PRF which enables the above report to be produced, and I would like to thank all festival organisers for their help in keeping me informed by providing them.

I close with the hope that the above information has been of some interest and reiterate that it is from this information that the AETF is able to prove that it, and it's Family, is providing a worthwhile level of assistance to the community throughout England, and thus ensuring the continuance of the national competitive festival scene.

AETF National Treasurer.  
Roger Cunningham.



ENGLAND



SCOTLAND

### British Final

The British Final of one-act plays now has it's own website  
[www.britishfinal.org.uk](http://www.britishfinal.org.uk)

The team representing England will performing on  
Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June  
If you don't have access to the web  
Contact:  
Peter Rickard  
01786 850209



WALES



NORTHERN IRELAND

# All-England Theatre Festival

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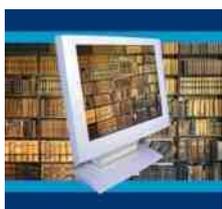


As you know, the Drama Association of Wales possesses a large and important collection of English and Welsh language play texts and theatre literature. Following reductions in DAW's public funding, it has become increasingly difficult for the organisation to care for and promote this important resource.

Over the past few months, the organisation has undertaken a strategic review, supported by the Arts Council of Wales, to identify options to enable the library to continue to be accessible to both our members and the public.

At its meeting in November, the Board of DAW concluded that the Library's future potential could best be realised within a Higher Education or similar institution which already has the necessary core funding, infrastructure, people and systems to run a professional library. The Board unanimously agreed to transfer the books and texts to established institutions, which it believes can provide a better guarantee for the future sustainability of the Library.

We are delighted that the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama will provide a new home for the extensive collection of plays, with a view to maintaining the lending service (including the Postal service) to members and, ultimately, to making the collection available additionally to students and members of the wider public. Some of the research materials will be transferred to appropriate research institutions, under the guidance of a qualified advisory team. Some surplus materials will be retained by DAW and will be made available for browsing and/or purchase by our members at a very low cost. Those scripts that are in very poor condition and beyond repair will be recycled.



We are currently working closely with colleagues at the Royal Welsh College to put in place the arrangements to make this happen.

The Principal of the College, Hilary Boulding, has sent the following message:

"The Royal Welsh College has worked closely with members of the Board and Executive of the Drama Association of Wales to try to find a way of sustaining this important collection. We are excited (and not a little daunted) at the prospect of managing this extensive collection of plays. We share with DAW a passion for theatre – our role at the College is to train and develop the rising generation of theatre practitioners. Your important Library will continue to be made available to your members, and in addition, will also be available to our teachers and students to help them in their work. In due

course, it is our intention to make it more widely accessible to the general public.

We are committed to reopening the library by the end of March 2014. Please bear with us as we undertake the transfer and cataloguing work required. We will provide information and further details about accessing the Library in due course, via DAW. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to play our role in the next chapter of the Library's history."

During this transitional period the Library will be closed from Friday 20th December to the end of March, at which point it will be reopened, operating from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

We are optimistic about the future.

We are pleased to have identified a future home for the library and will undertake the transfer with care and due diligence.

The DAW Executive is already planning new services and benefits for its members as well as bringing back old favourites, such as the DAWN magazine.

We are extremely grateful to our members for the support and financial donations we have received – this support is invaluable as we plan for a sustainable future and refocused activities. Your DAW Membership secures your access to the Library and we will confirm details in due course.

We will of course keep you posted on developments, but if you have comments you wish to share with us, please contact the office by email on [orders@dramawales.org.uk](mailto:orders@dramawales.org.uk) or by telephone on 02920 452200, or direct to our Chair, Ms Teri McCarthy at [chair@dramawales.org.uk](mailto:chair@dramawales.org.uk)

## The English Final

14<sup>th</sup> June  
at  
Evesham Arts Centre  
WR11 4QH

Online Box Office: [www.eveshamartscentre.co.uk](http://www.eveshamartscentre.co.uk)  
2.30pm & 7pm

£10.00 per session or £15 for the 2 sessions

Tickets online from theatre

or via:

J.Cunnington, 11 Howard Road, Yardley, B25 8AL  
Tel: 0121 707 6684 email:[cunnington@talk21.com](mailto:cunnington@talk21.com)



Between session buffet (including hot drink) £10  
(must be pre-booked via J Cunningham)