



Whitefield Garrick Newsletter Spring 2024



Be My Baby by Amanda Whittington

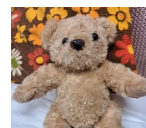
Following his award winning portrayal of John Read in *After the Dance* in January 2023, Alfie Howard made his directorial debut with the Garrick in January this year and brought a sensitivity and warmth to this very emotional and poignant drama set in the 1960's. The story is a stark reminder of the stigma surrounding unmarried mothers during that time. With a superb cast and supportive technical team everything was set to go like clockwork.



What is it they say about 'the best laid plans of mice and men'? Unfortunately, on opening night, Catherine Cropper who was to play Queenie had to withdraw due to illness. Emergency plans ensued and at very short notice and a full day of rehearsals on opening night, hero Chelsea Nelson arrived and saved the day. Chelsea is a member of Marco Players in Bolton and was due to play part of Queenie in February a few weeks later. She very kindly stepped in and threw herself into the role until Catherine, to everyone's delight, was able to return later in the week. Our very grateful thanks to Marco Players for allowing us to 'borrow' the brilliant Chelsea Nelson at such short notice.



**Catherine Cropper, Alfie Howard and
Chelsea Nelson**

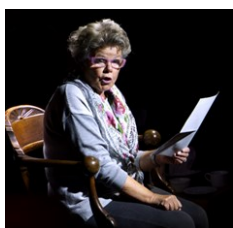
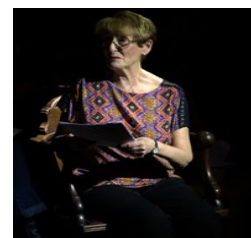
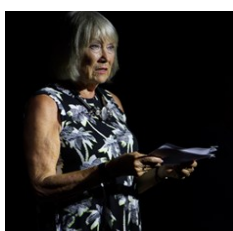


Story Telling Evening in aid of Bury Hospice

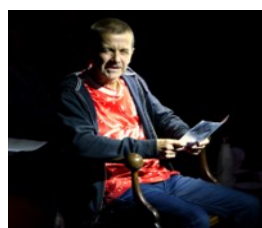


John and Julie Cunningham organised the *Storytelling Evening* as part of their “Strictly Best Foot Forward” campaign on behalf of Bury Hospice. Members of the Garrick and author Duncan Battman read eight of his entertaining short stories. £800 was raised on the night for this worthy cause. In total, John and Julie raised a magnificent £3700 for the charity and this included their participation in the 2023 Strictly Best Foot Forward dance competition. (Photographs, courtesy of Steph Walters)

The Story Tellers



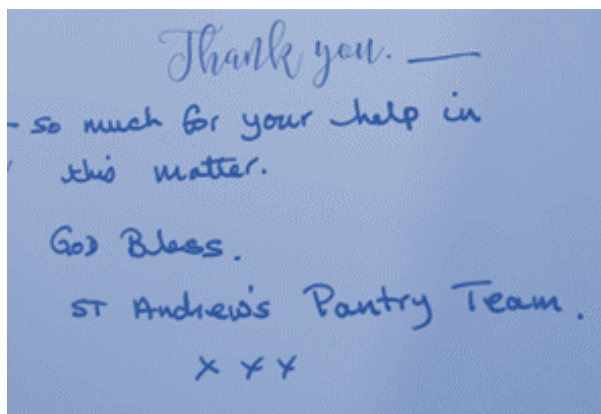
Author
Duncan Battman



Donation to Food bank



St Andrew's Food Pantry on Ribble Drive, Hillock Estate, provides a very important and necessary service for needy causes. With the Season of Goodwill in mind, Whitefield Garrick made a donation to them, which will help towards providing food, fuel and clothing for those in need and for which we received a delightful letter of thanks :



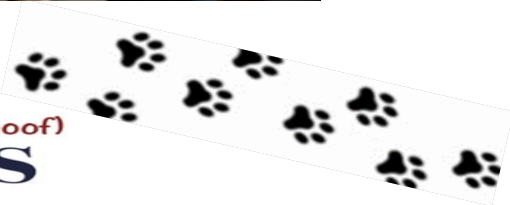
Jane Murphy presenting our donation to St Andrew's Food Pantry

Murder by Misadventure

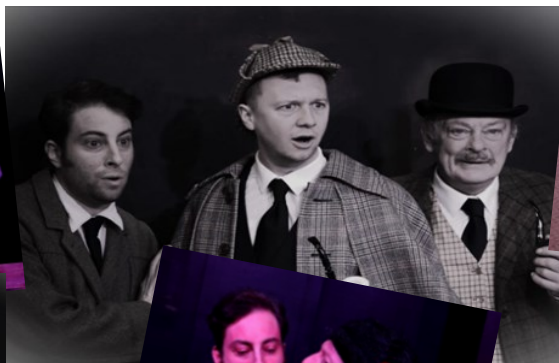
Our November 2023 play *Murder by Misadventure* was in the very capable hands of Director Dave Eyre, Daniel Clynes, Joy Plowes, Matt Rigby and John O'Connell. The audience were kept on the edge of their seats throughout this murder mystery, but there was a surprising twist at the end and the unexpected body falling out of a cupboard made everyone sit up!



The Hound of the Baskervilles (Spoof)



John O'Connell as Watson, Stephen Davies as Holmes and Guy Samuels as Sir C Baskerville were a trio made in heaven. Holmes was originally to be played by Mark Leigh but as rehearsals started, Mark unexpectedly, had to withdraw from the cast and was replaced by the inimitable Stephen Davies. The trio chopped and changed roles, costumes and props, whilst hardly leaving the stage. The wide and varied selection of props was provided by Jane Unsworth and Janet Leather, and kept the play in a continued state of blissful chaos !!!!!



Mat Owen-Veale, GP by day and Actor by Night



Mat Owen-Veale has been a regular actor at The Garrick since joining in 2016 appearing in several plays. Mat's talent, amiable and pleasant personality, has endeared him to everyone and he is a much sought after actor within the acting community. Last year he was invited to be interviewed for a feature in the British Medical Journal relating to General Practitioners in the Arts. The result was a full-page article appearing in the British Medical Journal in December 2023. The interview was conducted by Journalist Kathy Oxtoby, and in these short extracts, Mat is quoted about his 'Amateur Theatre journey' and how much both Whitefield Garrick and being involved in acting mean to him.

He joined the Whitefield Garrick Society—"my home theatre group." He was promptly cast as Tom—a biographer for a rich family with a lot of secrets—in Brian Friel's Chekhovian play *The Aristocrats*.



Journey's End

Since then, he has performed as a chaotic Welsh director, a bar tender caring for his ailing father, and an American musician pretending to be an English butler. "I like playing comedy roles best," he says. "I particularly like those unintended comedy moments when things don't go to plan."

"What I love about amateur dramatics is the escapism," he says. "Being a GP can become your identity. You spend so much time at work and thinking about work. So, when you're not at the surgery, amateur dramatics gives you the ability to play a range of roles and to be someone completely different."



Damsel In Distress

Permission to reproduce these extracts and photo of Mat from the Journal was obtained from the BMJ by Carole Taylor 28.2.24.

Kathy Oxtoby, London
BMJ 2023; 383: P2785

'Big Break' Acting Classes at The Garrick



BB Tuition Presents
'Big Break'
Theatre Workshops

Advanced Acting/Drama workshops
Opportunity for students to gain UCAS
points

LAMDA Qualifications available

Audition Advice/Acting Skills
Improvisation
Monologue Masterclasses
Stagecraft



Contact BBTuition fb
123bevb@gmail.com



Saturday Mornings 10.30 am -12.30pm
Fantastic Venue at Garrick
Theatre, Whitefield



Advanced Acting/Theatre Workshops at Whitefield, Garrick Theatre

BBTuition's 'Big Break' Theatre workshop run by Beverly Bacon will open their books for April to students keen to develop acting skills, seek audition advice, create improvisations, work collaboratively on ensemble pieces, bring scripts to life, work on monologues and learn about stagecraft. Beverly is a fully qualified and experienced teacher and tutor. Following 30 years as a very successful teacher of Drama, Theatre and English in secondary schools as well as working professionally in television and theatre, Beverly took the initiative to continue to develop her passion for the arts by moving from the classroom to work freelance.

The workshops will run in four week blocks on a Saturday Morning
between 10.30am and 12.30pm.

The next four week block commences on Saturday April 6th at
Whitefield Garrick Theatre.

The classes are £7.50 an hour, with the first hour free to new students.

Further information can be found on Facebook at BBTuition
or email 123bevb@gmail.com

Bank Street News !



Exciting news!

As part of the ongoing 'vision' for The Theatre, plans and building work are going ahead to create some extra acting space in the bar/foyer area. New wiring and lighting, has been fitted and a small stage is being built. It is hoped that by developing this space we can accommodate small productions, play readings and other events which will encourage visiting companies, new members and people wishing to hire a small space.

Update on the Roadworks

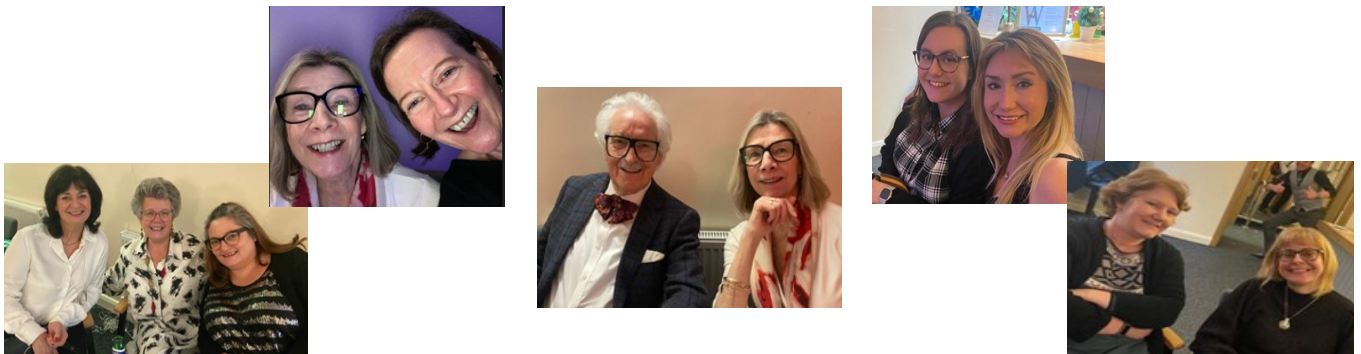


Our Chairman Geoff Shindler has been keeping a keen eye on the progression of the work at the corner of Church Lane and in December 2023, along with other residents and 'Occupiers', we received a notification from Transport for Greater Manchester advising us of the forthcoming plans to complete the work. It was to be finished by 22nd December at the latest. Thankfully we had access to The Theatre in time for the first play of 2024 *Be My Baby* by Amanda Whittington, however it seems that the current work is far from over and may continue to cause disruption for some time.

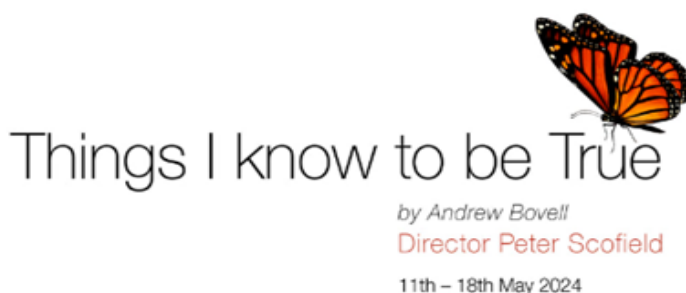
Christmas Party

The Christmas/New Year Party was held at the theatre on Saturday 6th January and it was good to see so many old and new faces enjoying the music and food. Danny Murphy very kindly provided the entertainment and the delicious food was provided by Pat Hill, Jane Murphy and Social Secretary Emma Ferguson.

A few familiar faces enjoying the evening !!



Our final Play of 2023/2024



Things I Know to be True

by Andrew Bovell

Directed by Peter Scofield

Evenings: 11th & 13th to 18th May 2024

7:30pm

Matinees: 12th & 18th May 2024 2:30pm



What an exciting evening we had! So nice to see all our friends from the acting community in our theatre. The annual *Directors Evening* provides all our members with details of the forthcoming season of plays and offers everyone an opportunity to hear at first hand each Director's vision of their play. For the next season, together with Andrew Close, Peter Scofield and John Cunningham, we are very excited to welcome two new Directors to the Garrick, Jon Walker and Natalie Crompton, both of whom are also experienced award-winning actors and we look forward to seeing their productions listed below.

Here are the plays selected for 2024/2025 for your diaries :-

	<p>21st to 28th September 2024</p> <p>Dear Lupin</p> <p>by Roger Mortimer and Charlie Mortimer</p> <p>Adapted by Michael Simkins</p> <p>Director Jon Walker</p>	
	<p>16th to 23rd November 2024</p> <p>Juno and the Paycock</p> <p>by Sean O'Casey</p> <p>Director John Cunningham</p>	
	<p>18th to 25th January 2025</p> <p>It's A Wonderful Life</p> <p>adapted by Mary Elliott Nelson</p> <p>Director Andrew Close</p>	
	<p>15th to 22nd March 2025</p> <p>The Thrill of Love</p> <p>by Amanda Whittington</p> <p>Director Peter Scofield</p>	
	<p>10th to 17th May 2025</p> <p>Pygmalion</p> <p>by George Bernard Shaw</p> <p>Director Natalie Crompton</p>	