

Markhouse Drama Club & The Cyril Malyon Memorial Fund



NEWSLETTER EXTRACTS Autumn 2025

Welcome to this Newsletter and its range of Markhouse Drama Club and Mark House School items - including the latest thoughts on the final phase of the CMMF Performing Arts Projects, plans for the future of the website, a few 'miscellaneous' items, some recently unearthed photographs including one 'new find' for our production memorabilia and, sadly, some news from within our membership

CMMF News

Website Plans

Changing Times

Foot (Lights) Notes

**Memory & Eyesight Test..
Another Letter – No 3!**

**And now in the main
Website Pages:**

***Tributes to**

**Peter Kett - Dave King -
Penny Howe (Malling) &**

***Website Additions**

CMMF Performing Arts Projects

Whilst our last Newsletter reported on the hope that a further CMMF Performing Arts Project would be initiated through the MDC membership, our latest circulation about this did not, unfortunately, produce the desired result - so the earlier 'Whose Myth is it Anyway' at Kelmscott School in Walthamstow did, as envisaged at that time, look to be the last in the series!

However, the 'fall back' position was to consider building on the positive relationship that had been developed back in our 'homeland' with Kelmscott School and to explore the possibility of continuing to give support to their future drama activities.

This idea saw a good deal of progress and, in fact, resulted in giving them the opportunity to apply for some small grants spread over the subsequent year or so; but, quite disappointingly, this similarly did not work out as we had hoped. So, as the end of the period in which any grant applications would have been considered, thoughts have, perhaps inevitably, now turned back towards completing the work of the CMMF through a further project - particularly as the potential for one has recently arisen!

In this respect there is now a possibility for one that will establish a new and ongoing youth drama group and thereby be quite different to those that have previously been developed. These had mainly been 'one offs' and short term projects, although a number of them did see some subsequent work undertaken with the young people involved. Indeed, two of these, the 'Macbeth' project at Thornage Hall in Norfolk and a 'View from The Streets' in Croydon, both developed into longer term pieces of youth work.

The link for such a further project is with a community association who have not only expressed some interest in establishing a youth drama group, but are also prepared to sponsor its initial development with free access to their premises - which, helpfully, includes a stage!

However, as with anything as ambitious as this, there is still a good deal of work ahead in making all the necessary links and, in particular, finding the 'right' person to establish and lead a new group! So we are, of course, keeping our fingers, arms and legs crossed that the forthcoming 'negotiations' and 'search' result in a positive outcome!

CMMF Projects



Full details about all the CMMF Projects and how they are managed can be found on the Website

THE MDC Website

Some thoughts for its future!

Whilst the future of the website has been under discussion for a while, more recent 'events' have progressed these thoughts a deal further - with the first of these emanating from the above position of the CMMF!

In this respect, the absence of recent CMMF activity and that the above project is going to take a while before any actual work is undertaken, has meant that we have not needed to maintain the insurance that we had in place - as clearly we have no current responsibilities with young people that we need to cover. A decision was therefore taken to temporarily close the insurance cover; with the resulting savings, in effect, putting the website's finances in quite a comfortable position. In this respect the annual income given through Standing Orders, from MDC members, now just exceeds the annual expenditure.

However, the ongoing discussion about the website has acknowledged that at some point in the future a decision will need to be made about how long it should be continued and then, as a result, removed from the internet. This is mainly because after some eight years of its existence, the recent level of 'usage' within the membership and the amount of new content that has been added has reduced significantly - as evidenced by the decreasing frequency of our Newsletters and, in particular, the number of items each has listed in the 'Website Additions' pages.

It would seem that this latter position is unlikely to change and whilst still being amazed about the amount of material that has been found and archived from the 22 years of MDC productions, the increasing absence of finding any 'missing' memorabilia - particular in the final few years - has continued. This is despite some continued research which has only seemed to have revealed that earlier interest of the local newspapers in reporting 'youth drama' had steadily declined.

However - there is always the hope that someone within the membership will suddenly find a pile of old programmes, photos and press cuttings after a clear up of an attic, shed or the like!

So, whilst no date is in mind about when to close the website, it has already been decided that when that time comes the aim will be to give all our members, and the families of those sadly lost in recent years, a digital copy. The hope is that this will be an appropriate way for both current and future 'younger generations' to be able to see something of what their respective ancestors 'got up to' in their teenage years!

More recently this discussion has move significantly forward and is now looking at packaging the digital recording in some form of booklet/magazine style publication; one that might provide, for example, something of the Drama Club's history, an extensive range of photographic material from our productions, re-unions and the CMMF Performing Arts Projects, plus, of course, our membership gallery! This is a much more ambitious plan than just providing a digital recording; particularly in terms of the amount of work that will be involved and deciding what to 'put in' and what to 'leave out' from the extensive amount of material in the website. Plus, of course, it will have a different cost factor!

Although initial enquiries have shown that the latter is not be as high as might be imagined and is achievable, this broader plan has received a substantial boost through the receipt of a further, and generous, donation from Jennifer Chacksfield (Malyon) in response to the earlier funding appeal. Jennifer's continued support could not, of course, have been anymore timely and will doubtless help towards achieving this aim of the digitised copy of the website within a more visible form of souvenir!

There will be more news of this plan in due course, but it is hoped that some former members might wish to be involved in determining the eventual content of our 'publication' - which could be 'fun' as well as helpful!

And for anyone particularly keen on being involved, there is also a need to check and update the accuracy, grammar and layout of the current website; also to edit down some of the lengthier parts of the text! So, a few further tasks that perhaps might not be quite 'fun' - but will still clearly be helpful!

So watch this space and, in particular, if you have some publication/layout skills - definitely get in touch!



and Ongar Railway Society - on this occasion helping his grand-daughter 'alight'.

Foot Lights Notes

2025 MEMORY & EYESIGHT TEST!!!!

Having bemoaned the diminishing finds of 'new' items of memorabilia over the last year or two, the last few weeks have seen a modest, but probably short term, change in fortune - and perhaps one that might provide an amusing test of the grey matter? Hence the following images and the respective questions about them.

So - as a starter - can you identify the 4 former Drama Club Members hidden in this group in their nightwear?

For the answer see the Website's 'MARKHOUSE PAGES' Drama Club & Markhouse Members Photo Gallery



And it would be really good to confirm whether the name of the cheerful 'chap' sitting next to Dave King in this photograph, taken at his Farewell Party, was named Jim, Eddie or Stan?

He was the really helpful and friendly Caretaker who gave so much support in the years after the school closed and the Drama Club enjoyed the use of the upper parts of the premises?

The excuse re: his name - well it was some 48 years ago!



And, finally, can you name the former MDC member who was part of 'The Tinted Aspect' Pop Group pictured in this Walthamstow Guardian photograph.

It was apparently taken during a break in rehearsals at the Common Gate Pub, Markhouse Road, where they were the 'Resident Group'.

The accompanying report noted that they had just signed a recording contract with MECCA!

And a clue - he is the one actually wearing a hat!



For the answer see the Website's 'MARKHOUSE PAGES' Drama Club & Markhouse Members Photo Gallery

Letter No 3 - But not 'From America' this time!



Whilst it is unfortunately true to say that the Website Contact Page has never been a hive of activity, from to time something, or more accurately someone, does pop up!

This is usually a former Drama Club member or Mark House pupil who has decided to google our name and duly found us! However, just to ring the changes the latest one is from someone with no connection to the MDC, or the school, whatsoever! However, it seems that he managed to come across the website whilst googling the title of a play that was clearly of interest to him - and one which we had produced - namely 'Murder in Motley'

This provided a reminder that this play had 2 cast lists - which, some 63 years after its 1962 production, may well have slipped the memory - or was too confusing anyway - perhaps even for those who were actually involved? So herewith a memory test and/or refresher - c/o a Simon Coward who clearly took great interest in 'explaining' our cast list - or lists!

'Hello - despite having no connection with this (or any other) production I think I may be able clear up a little of the confusion in relation to the two cast lists for the play 'Murder in Motley'.

It was pretty much an immediate thought when reading the two casts and some further digging in relation to other productions of this play, seems to confirm it.

*When it starts, the audience believes they are watching **John Cade** playing the part of Sir William Ainslie and **Penelope Malling** playing his wife, Lady Mary Ainslie, in a play set in a country house, stately home (or similar). Then, at some point in Act 1, something happens which pulls the rug out from under the audience's feet and it's revealed that what they're actually watching are John Cade and Penelope Malling playing actors in a production that's set in a theatre.*

And those actors are appearing in a (fictional) theatrical production, set in a country house, stately home (or similar), as characters called Sir William and Lady Mary Ainslie. So the business with the programme and the two casts is just to disguise the 'play within a play' aspect.

A few other productions appear to have attempted to disguise the nature of their production of this play in different ways, either by only printing a limited cast in the programme or by just listing the members of the company without apportioning parts at all. Others seem not have bothered with the illusion at all, for example at the Stockton-on-Tees Hippodrome the cast in the programme has Hugh Tate playing Godfrey Dennis - "Sir William Ainslie".

*Some other productions actually seem to have had a character who is the 'Assistant Stage Manager' (of the fictional play) so whether in this production **Iris Moorshack** was actually the SM but also appeared as the fictional ASM, I couldn't say; but I wonder if it's a possibility if you were surprised by her appearance in some of the photos'*



'Hope this helps. Best regards, Simon'

Editors Note: *Having only been a mere manual labourer (scene shifter) for this production I did, subsequently, think that Iris's presence in the above photo and Mr Malyon in the one on the right, indicated that these were taken at a dress rehearsal - hence a 'hope' noted in the website that one of our cast might remember why the programme included the instruction of -*

PLEASE DO NOT BREAK THE SEAL UNTIL THE FIRST INTERVAL

- which presumably revealed the second cast list? Whilst till a bit confused, I'm sure that in the light of this 'external' explanation, all those in the cast (inc scene crew et al) will now clearly remember every single detail of the plot - wont they?



*A later MDC production of '**On Monday Next**' in 1967 was also a sort of a 'play within a play' - but much easier to understand as the plot was wholly about the Producer's antagonism towards, and subsequent attack on, the Author. As a result of the latter, the Author was stretched off by two ambulance men who, as seen in this production photo, couldn't stop laughing - so very MDC - albeit not without due 'management retribution' as the latter two anonymous members (otherwise identified as AS & BJ) were never given any further serious roles to play!!!!*

Close examination of the enlarged photo in the website gives the suggestion that there was also a 'smile' on the authors face at the time of this exit?

I wait with baited breadth to see if any comments are forthcoming but, in the meantime, thanks Simon for taking the trouble to write and providing an excuse to pull a couple of photographs out of the archives! DM