

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE



### **Welcome to the Carver Theatre.**

The Carver is Marple's one and only theatre and has been entertaining the community since 1906. During this period the society has staged over 300 productions and, with your help, intends to produce many more. All our activities depend solely on voluntary effort, and we hope the information contained in this booklet will both enable and encourage you to become actively involved. Our enthusiastic members form one of the best-established drama groups in the North-West.

We present seven productions each season, running from September to July. Four plays are organised by Production, two shows by the Junior & Youth sections, in June/July, and Panto Department, in January. Plays run up to six performances from Tuesday until Saturday and each has around six weeks of rehearsals. The pantomime generally has a run of ten performances with matinees and earlier evening performances at weekends to enable those with young children to attend.

In addition, we occasionally let the theatre to external parties for their own productions and events. The summer period, generally July to August, is spent renovating and modernising the various areas of the theatre as required and funds permit.

Owning our own theatre building means that we are free to rehearse, build sets, store scenic materials, wardrobe, and properties, as well as hold meetings and social gatherings on the premises. However, it also means that we bear all the expenses of producing plays and maintaining the building to a good order. To do this we rely on regular patronage by our audiences, and a good deal of enthusiastic effort by our members. In recent years we have, largely by our own endeavour, improved the theatre and created a degree of comfort and well-being for our patrons and members.

**To enable you to get actively involved we list below the various stages involved in producing a play together with the time commitment required. Please be assured that someone will always be available to assist you until you become familiar with each role.**

***We encourage you to volunteer for a minimum of one role during one play each season.***

**PRODUCTION:** is headed by the Production Co-ordinator. The members of this section read as wide a selection of plays as possible during the year and select a programme of plays and play dates for the forthcoming season. Suggestions of plays are always welcome.

**Directors:** The Director of each play is appointed by Production. He or she is responsible for delivering the play onto the stage which not only includes the obvious role of directing the actors, but being closely involved with the staging, lighting, and sound effects; and bringing all participants together. Each Director is expected to work within an allocated budget as set by the Executive Committee.

You can apply to Production to direct a play or to be appointed as Assistant Director. However, this role is for experienced actors or those with experience behind the scenes.

**New Season Launch:** Once the plays and the pantomime have been chosen, a New Season Launch evening is held, usually in March or early April. This social evening also enables all interested members to discover the nature of forthcoming plays and the parts involved. All interested members are encouraged to complete a form indicating their interest in being cast for particular roles or volunteering for any of the backstage or Front of House roles. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend the New Season Launch, the Production Co-ordinator can usually be contacted on Club Nights at the theatre or by telephone (see Website) or email to express interest in a play.

**Casting:** Plays are then cast by means of Play Readings which are normally held from June/July (for the September production) to January (for the May production). All members are eligible to attend. Our policy is to include as many acting members as possible during the season whilst always striving for the highest standard of production.

**Rehearsals:** These usually start six weeks before curtain up and actors are expected to rehearse without their scripts after three weeks. We normally rehearse three nights a week (normally Mon, Wed, & Fri) from 7.45 pm – 10.00 pm, as well as Sunday afternoons close to the opening night. The technical rehearsal is normally the Sunday before the run starts and full dress rehearsals take place on the Monday and Wednesday evening prior to curtain up.

**Prompt:** One Prompt is required per play and is usually involved for the last four weeks of rehearsals plus every night the play is staged.

**Contact:** [production@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:production@carvertheatre.co.uk)

**STAGE:** A vital and too often unsung section of the theatre led by the Stage Co-ordinator. The Stage Department is responsible for appointing a Stage Manager, Sound and Lighting technicians and designers, Properties, Wardrobe, Make-up, and Stage staff personnel for each play. The New Season Launch is the best place to indicate your willingness to be involved in any of these roles although they are happy to accept volunteers at any time of the year.

**Set Design:** Whilst the Set Designer is often the Director, in some cases a Designer is appointed by the Stage Department as are the Lighting and Sound Designers for each play. The Junior and Pantomime Department chooses the Set Designer for the pantomime and junior show. These roles are only available to those with experience of the discipline and who are able to interpret the mood of the play from the script. If you have experience in the theatre, why not gain experience in the role as Assistant Designer.

**Stage Crew:** The Stage Crew builds the sets and paints the back drops, constructs the sets on stage and deconstructs at the end of the stage run. They are also available every night of the performance to change scenery. Even if

you do not wish to help with the performances your help with the building phase will always be most welcome. They are at the very heart of the theatre so, if you can wield a paintbrush or a hammer or simply mix paste, there is a place for you. Indeed, this is a good opportunity for “resting” actors to see how it works from the other side, so to speak. Becoming involved with the Stage Crew is a great way to get to know people, put your skills to the test, have a good laugh and slake your thirst in the bar after the performance!

They meet several times a week (but normally on Tuesday and Thursday evenings when rehearsals are on but this can vary). They try to blitz the build in the first week of a new production to get as much of the heavy construction out of the way as quickly as possible. Contact the Stage Co-ordinator to arrange to help as and when you can.

**Stage Manager:** This is an appointed role by the Stage Department. The Stage Manager is ultimately responsible for all the non-acting elements of a production, for calling a meeting of the whole creative team with the Director to discuss the show in detail before any work is started on the set, and for ongoing liaison with the Director. The Stage Manager is responsible for the production staying within the allocated budget. He/she is also in charge of running the whole show from the technical rehearsal onwards, including each public performance. Once again, experience can be gained in the role of Assistant Stage Manager who often calls the cues during the performance.

**Sound:** The sound for each performance is operated from the Control Room at the back of the theatre. For newcomers to this role, training will be given prior to the technical rehearsal.

Time commitment would be the training day (if required), the technical rehearsal on the Sunday prior to curtain up, the dress rehearsals on the Monday and Wednesday nights, and either the six to eight nights of a play or the ten performances (including matinees) of a

pantomime; both starting on the Friday. One sound operator is required per production.

**Lighting:** The lighting is designed by an experienced member. Anyone with appropriate skills is welcome to get involved. Help is always appreciated at the rigging stage which usually takes place on the Saturday prior to the technical rehearsal. One lighting operator is required for each production and your time commitment would be the same as for the sound operator (see above).

**Properties (Props):** This involves obtaining the various items which finish off the on-stage set, together with dressing the stage, and making any adjustments between scenes during the show run. Some of the items may be sourced from our props room whilst others may need to be sourced from outside (some from theatrical warehouses) or borrowed from friends, members or purchased from charity shops. Between one and three people are required for each production.

Time commitment: many Directors prefer involvement early in the rehearsals schedule so that the actors have their hand-held props as early as possible. Apart from the technical and dress rehearsals and the nights of the production, the time commitment would be ‘as long as it takes’ to source the required items, usually starting six weeks before curtain up.

**Wardrobe:** We have our own wardrobe room and sometimes hire when the production requires something specific. This role involves choosing appropriate costumes (particularly for period plays which may require some research) and assisting cast. One to three wardrobe staff are required for each play.

**Make-up:** Actors tend to do their own make-up if the production is a ‘normal’ play. However, for the pantomime or if special effects are required, we do need make-up artists. In addition to applying the make-up for

the technical and dress rehearsals and every night of the performance, one or two people are required to be responsible for checking the tins of make-up and ordering replacements.

**Contact:** [stage@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:stage@carvertheatre.co.uk)

**HOUSE:** is co-ordinated by the House Services Co-ordinator. This area covers Front of House, sale of teas, coffees and ice creams and also the sale of programmes and raffle tickets, together with social events and running the bar.

**Front of House:** Two front-of-house people are required for each performance night. They are also trained fire officers and are required to turn on the emergency lighting and check all emergency exits are clear. A smart casual dress code is required for this role. Short training is given to anyone new to the role and you would be responsible for the evacuation of the building in case of fire.

Time commitment is from 6.45 pm until the audience has cleared the theatre. Rotas are arranged for each production and new volunteers are always welcome. Currently, the Front of House stewards take it in turn to sit inside the auditorium in case any patron needs assistance whilst the other is available to assist anyone who arrives late or wants to leave early and often they sit and chat in the bar area during the performance, so this is quite a sociable role. The Stage Manager has a walkie-talkie connection to you in case of an emergency.

**Teas/Coffees/Ice Cream:** Teas are served from the library by two volunteers each night of the performance. Dress code is smart casual. Ice-creams are served direct from the freezer in the foyer. Volunteers are asked to arrive about 20 minutes before the interval and leave after the interval once everything is cashed up and set out for the following performance. A rota is organised, and an experienced member would always be available to help new volunteers. Total time commitment 1-1½ hours. Of course, you can always stay later and

socialise with Front of House and Bar staff during the second half of the performance.

**Programmes/ Raffle sales:** These are usually sold by the Junior members of the theatre. Time commitment is 6.50 – 8.00pm

**Social:** Social events are organised by the House Services Department. Anyone with enthusiasm, ideas and a sense of fun should contact House on the email below.

If you would like to get involved in any of these areas, please contact us at:

**Contact:** [house@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:house@carvertheatre.co.uk)

**BAR:** A great deal of work is involved in stocking and running the bar efficiently. It remains one of our main sources of revenue. We open the bar for the various productions, social events, outside lets and Club Nights. Duties involve serving drinks, operating the glass washer, topping up the bar stock and clearing the bar area. Two people (who must be over 18 years of age) are required behind the bar. At least one experienced member is in attendance and new volunteers are most welcome.

Time commitment is 6.45 pm – 11.30 pm approximately on production nights and 8.00 pm onwards on Club Nights (see below). This is a very sociable place to be and gives you a good opportunity to meet lots of people.

**Contact:** [bar@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:bar@carvertheatre.co.uk)

**PUBLICITY:** is co-ordinated by the Publicity Co-ordinator who is responsible, with the help of volunteers, for public relations, newspaper and radio coverage, the printing and distribution of tickets (including season tickets), posters, and leaflets to show the forthcoming season's programme, compilation of programmes for each play and any schemes to publicise the Carver Theatre.

Other roles include research for an article in the programme; checking the final cast details for the programme; organising the annual renewal of business advertisements; preparing an article for each edition of the Marple Review; photographing the dress rehearsal and updating the website. If you have any of the required skills in IT, design, printing, photography or writing, please get in touch with [publicity@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:publicity@carvertheatre.co.uk)

All ticketing is now done on-line but there is still work to be done behind the scenes. Prior to the end of each season (generally around April) the next season has to be 'built' into the TicketSource system and season tickets have to be allocated, printed and distributed. During performances we provide a manned Box Office at the theatre before each performance to sell spare and returned seats; usually one person will cover this from 7– 7.45 pm. Contact: [boxoffice@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@carvertheatre.co.uk) if you wish to help.

We also produce a regular Newsletter that is distributed to members, preferably by email. If you are interested in helping compile the newsletter or have anything related to the theatre that you'd like published in it, please contact: [newsletter@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@carvertheatre.co.uk)

**FINANCE:** The Treasurer supervises the finances of the theatre and advises the Executive Committee on all financial matters.

Contact: [treasurer@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@carvertheatre.co.uk)

**FACILITIES:** This Department has responsibility for all aspects of maintaining the structural integrity of the buildings. It is also responsible for considering improvement schemes for the theatre and providing full details and costings as required. To this end it is empowered to co-opt members with the appropriate technical skills as necessary to

carry out work required for the general preservation of the fabric of the building.

We would love to hear from you if you have skills in accountancy, auditing, electrics, plumbing, building or decorating.

**Contact:** [facilities@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:facilities@carvertheatre.co.uk)

## **JUNIORS, YOUTH AND PANTO:**

Children aged 11 and under are eligible for Junior membership, 12 to 17 for Youth. Junior and Youth workshops are arranged regularly whereby interested Juniors and Youths receive tuition in theatre studies, take part in drama-based activities and sometimes theatre visits.

They put on Summer Shows each year where the children can showcase their talents. The normal run is three performances (Friday night and two on a Saturday). We are always looking for adults who can spare some time to assist.

Weekly workshops are held on Tuesday evenings during term time: 8–11-year-olds (primary) 6.30 pm - 7.30 pm and 11–17-year-olds (secondary) 7.30 pm - 8.30 pm.

**Pantomime:** The Junior, Youth and Pantomime Department guides Production on the pantomime choice, dates, auditions, casting and production of the pantomime. They work in conjunction with the Production Department. This is one of the most rewarding areas to be involved in. Working with such a large cast requires far more people behind the scenes. All the roles required for the production of a play are naturally required for the pantomime (see above). The roles are selected by the Department. Auditions for the pantomime are normally in September. Rehearsals for the Juniors usually start in October and rehearsals for any adults on stage in November. Why not get involved!

**Contact:** [juniors@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:juniors@carvertheatre.co.uk)

**ADMINISTRATION:** The Carver Theatre is run by an Executive Committee headed by the officers of the theatre. In addition to an honorary President the officers comprise the Chairman, General Secretary, Treasurer and Registrar. Other members of the committee include all the Department Co-ordinators (e.g. Production, Stage, House, Publicity, Finance, Facilities, Junior and Pantomime). Please feel free to air your ideas to any committee member. All Department Co-ordinators may make recommendations to the Executive Committee but cannot implement procedure without its approval.

The Annual General Meeting of the Carver Theatre is held in the auditorium typically in September or October. Members receive notification in advance.

The Membership runs from July to June each year. The Registrar manages membership subscriptions throughout the season.

A list of Officers and Members, together with the rules of membership and health and safety guidelines, can be found on the notice board in the corridor by the stage door. These are also published in the members' area on the website.

**Main Admin Contacts:**

[chair@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:chair@carvertheatre.co.uk)  
[treasurer@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@carvertheatre.co.uk)  
[secretary@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:secretary@carvertheatre.co.uk)  
[registrar@carvertheatre.co.uk](mailto:registrar@carvertheatre.co.uk)

**CLUB NIGHT:** We have a Club Night on Wednesday evenings (except during a production run) where members can meet in the friendly atmosphere of the Bar. It presents an ideal opportunity to get to know people, make new friends and become involved in this lively theatre. As a member, you are entitled to sign in a visitor on Club Nights but on no

more than three occasions in one season. This is stipulated by the terms of our club licence, details of which are displayed on the Notice Board. The bar opens at 8.30 pm and the entrance is via the Stage Door on Chadwick Street. If you are not yet privy to the door code, the button below the keypad operates a bell which will be answered if rung.

**CARVER WEBSITE:** The Carver has a dedicated website for access by the general public at [www.carvertheatre.co.uk](http://www.carvertheatre.co.uk)

This provides a wealth of information about the theatre, its history, access to online booking, our child protection policies and current and future productions.

Members can log into the members' area. This is a secure area available only to members where we hold information about the workings of the theatre including recent minutes of meetings, props lists, newsletter, and this booklet.

**THE CARVER ETHOS:** is that we are here to work together, enjoy our theatre and protect its future. We therefore look forward to meeting you, getting to know you and working with you.