

## FUNDING THE PLAYGOERS

At this stage in the life of the Playgoers, when mention is made of Funding, thoughts turn at once to the magnificent response of Members, and Friends and Industry to the Club's 1977 Development Appeal for £35,000. This provided the Mezzanine Bar, converted and brought into use the Wilson Street properties, as well as generally upgrading our facilities. All credit to our Funding Consultant, Bill Thwaite, who made the Funding Committee believe it was possible to achieve this target. Those who worked with him learned a lot and marvelled at the close attention to fine detail in the preparations for our funding efforts. For example, those unable to be present at the Launch night Tuesday, 13th September, 1977 received their Funding Brochure first post on Wednesday, 14th September. This was because Bill had been up half the night sorting out non-attenders and addressing envelopes. He had deposited the letter at the sorting office at 5.00 a.m. on the 14th. His confidence was infectious and no one was allowed to think of failure. That our target was achieved within 6 months is almost history. Tony Singleton and I never did work out exactly how much was raised, due to variations in tax rates and contributions still coming in but, if we include all Covenants, and Industrial Donors, £43,250 so far is a good approximation. Many people who previously had been afraid of the covenanting system were encouraged, not to say bullied, into signing up. Some covenanted twice because we had to increase income in 1981 to help cope with inflation and dry rot.

One way and another, The Workington Playgoers' Club has always had to raise funds (and, I suspect, always will). Early in the Club's history this was done by fancy dress balls, dances, coffee evenings, whist and beetle drives, rummage sales and a host of similar activities popular in the pre-television era. More recently, as you know, by interest-free loans and covenanted gifts. As always those efforts were backed up, or should I say spearheaded, by the most important person of all the Ticket Seller. No patrons no long-term future for performances!

There are several funding landmarks in the Club's history which I have listed below, with present-day equivalent values to show that, what now seems a relatively small amount, was no mean feat at the time.

1949-52	£1,093 was raised by Improvements Committee —equivalent to £10,930 today.
1957	£800 for fire prevention demanded expenditure equivalent to £6,650 today.
1960-65	£5,000 plus for theatre purchase, foyer alterations, equivalent to £35,700 today.
1975	£1,750 purchase cost of Wilson Street premises equivalent to £4,300 today.
1977	£35,000 Development Appeal equivalent to £59,100 today.

P.S. In 1935 the annual subscription was 5/-

Our newest funding venture is now well established The Golden Jubilee Club. Prize money totalling £2,560 per year, featuring 4 large prizes and 48 "return of stake prizes" each year, and all for £1 per month! It is masterminded by Ian Mitchell whose sales patter boasts it is the only time Playgoers has given away money. In private he and Treasurer Tony Singleton are delighted at the net income and assistance with cash flow. Thus the Funding of our Club continues to keep ahead of our debts, just, and apace with our changing world. Let us hope that our Patrons will support and enjoy our efforts in the next 50 years as they have in our first half century.

Philip Heal