

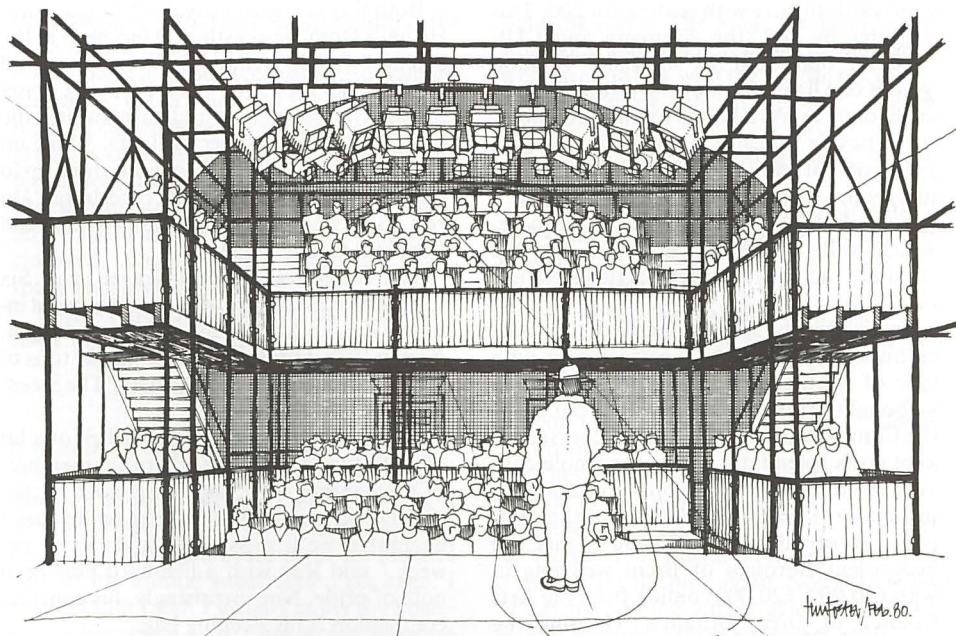
rose inexorably to £250,000) was as so often frustrated. Instead S.A.C.A., to the relief presumably of the Church Commissioners who had had feelers from the Moonies, has put some £70,000 of its money into buying Church House which sits solidly and solemnly on Horsefair, near the Cross and just across the road from elegant St. Mary's Church. St. Mary's, incidentally, is often used as a venue for concerts, its pantheonic acoustics making custom-built halls sound dry as dust in comparison.

Now, in and about Church House, local architect David Ronson is at work on a 250-seat theatre, plus its greenroom, clubrooms etc, which will open this coming Autumn and will provide pleasantly central, professionally equipped quarters for amateur groups from a pretty wide catchment-area, and proper facilities for touring companies and visiting firemen from Kansas City (as delegates to conferences and conventions used to be described). Come back and come home from all those draughty village-halls, partially-converted Nissen huts and school gymnasias all ye of the Banbury Cross Players, the Banbury Amateur Operatic Society, and the Banbury and District Music Society.

If we seem to be doing a lot of name-dropping in this interim report it is only to emphasise that, in the next decade, in what may well turn out to be the real decentralisation of support for the arts that successive Ministers of Culture have been fantasising about for years, local needs and interests should be catered for *first*. And that applies, too, to fund-raising. In fact, though they did pretty well themselves in the early stages, and the Cherwell District Council has been a lot more generous than some local authorities we could name (Edinburgh, for instance?), S.A.C.A. has now appointed, to help get together the £150,000 still needed to get 'The Jimmy Black Memorial Theatre' to the Church House on time, a professional fundraiser with the resounding and door-opening name of Lt.-Col. Ferdinand De Weld Silmon. It helps, he thinks, that several industries with national names — like Alcan, the aluminium people, and General Foods, the practically everything else people — actually live in Banbury. 'Getting pledges just of money is wonderful, of course,' Ferdy Silmon says, 'but contributions in kind are, I suppose, an even better way of showing involvement. Nothing is nicer than if a demolition firm offers to lend us a bulldozer for an afternoon, or if a firm that makes neon signs decides to let us have one free. Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the opening night.'

### Try cycling to Kilburn

We *still* don't quite understand how the Wakefield Tricycle Theatre Company came by its name. Alright, it started out back in 1972 doing lunch-time plays at a pub in King's Cross called 'The Pindar of Wakefield'. But, wait a minute, which Pindar would that be then? The Greek Pindar, we all know of, whom Ruskin described as 'ranking only with Homer, Virgil, Dante and Scott (Scott ?)' Or the Peter Pindar, everybody seems to have forgotten about, who was successively a doctor, a clergyman



and 'a fearless lampoonist' in the latter years of the eighteenth century, but was really called John Wolcot and had absolutely nothing to do with Wakefield at all? So far so confusing. Then 'Tricycle'? Maggie Easton, who handles the company's publicity, explains that this 'has something to do with Wakefield (like York and Lincoln) having a cycle of Miracle Plays, and because there were originally three founder-members of the theatre. . . .' You see what we mean? All this aside, the simpler, more succinct Tricycle Theatre Company is now preparing a permanent home for itself in Kilburn (which has hitherto not been too flush with dramatic entertainments), from which they will continue with their rare and welcome policy of putting on mainly new plays by mainly new — or at any rate not overdone — writers. The incumbent artistic directors most involved are Shirley Barrie and Kenneth Chubb; most recently, you probably remember them, on

tour or at the King's Head, doing Adrian Mitchell's comprehensively eclectic romp 'Hoagy, Bix and Wolfgang Beethoven Bunkhaus'. (This complicated titling disease seems to be catching).

From the Kilburn High Road the facade behind which the company is working — skeletally, because the actors are on tour at Cardiff — doesn't look any too promising. Despite the stone-carved antiquity of its name, Forester's Hall dates, in a mausoleonic sort of way, only from the 'twenties, and retains of its historic associations ('This entrance hall', a notice warns 'is the freehold property of the Ancient Order of Foresters') only an outpost office of the Foresters Friendly Society. But, behind this, is a complex of pretty impressive saloons and chambers in the largest of which the architect, Tim Foster, with Theatre Projects as its de rigueur coordinating, is creating a neat, flexible and even portable 'galleried

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