

**STA**  
**Strode Theatre Archive**  
**1963-2013**

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY**

Strode Theatre opened in Street, Somerset, on 5 October 1963 on a site adjacent to Crispin School, Strode College and the parish church. The initial building was funded by the Clark Foundation and built on land purchased by Somerset County Council.

The theatre is closely connected with the BTEC Performing Arts course administered via neighbouring Strode College and the building was initially envisaged as a hall for the school. In 1989 the site was formally designated a community campus.

The first Theatre Manager was John Lowe (1965-1974), succeeded by Elwyn Johnson (1974-1977); Philip Venitt (1977-1984); Sue Kay (1984-1985); Wendy Greenhill (1985-1988); Simon Sherwin (1988- 1994); and Liz Leyshon (1994-current).

Strode Productions, Street Theatre, Strode College and Glastonbury and Street Musical and Comedy Society have all been active in the immediately locally, holding productions at the theatre. As many of the performers lived and worked in Street, the collection reflects the connections between C & J Clark Ltd and the performing arts.

**EXTENT**

34 boxes; 2 oversize boxes

**ARCHIVAL HISTORY**

The collection was transferred to The Alfred Gillett Trust in December 2013 via Liz Leyshon, Theatre Manager (employed at Strode since 1979).

The majority of this collection has been collated by theatre members of staff and Strode Theatre Committee members. A few small donations have been made by members of the public. The photographs have not yet been transferred.

**SYSTEM OF ARRANGEMENT**

The main body of this collection was organised according to function/chronological order prior to transfer. This original order has largely been retained.

**DESCRIPTION**

**1. Governance, 1963-2007:** Theatre Board of Management minutes, 1993-1998; Theatre Users' Sub Committee minutes, 1994-2003; theatre accounts, 1990-1991; STMC accounts, 1968-1969; marketing and audience development plan, 1992-2002; licenses, 1963-1972; papers relating to Performing Rights' Society, 1997-2004; work programmes, 2006-2007 [4 boxes]

**2. Commissions and collaborations (by production), undated:** The Farm, Nell Leyshon; A Play for Somerset; Glastonbury Fair; Prison Writing; Tor Dance Festival, 2006; Variety Show; A Somerset Suite; art commissions; also tour schedules, performance and actor contracts, promotional material [4 boxes]

**3. Art exhibitions, 1999-2009:** Papers relating to Somerset Art Month; contracts, promotional material and correspondence; exhibition lists and photographs [1 box]

- 4. Building projects, 1987-1999:** papers relating to Heritage Lottery Fund bid for theatre extension (correspondence, contracts, reports); plans, renovation and contractor agreements etc, 1998-1999 [6 boxes and oversize material]
- 5. Correspondence, 1968-2005:** South West Arts Promoters (SWAP); Somerset Arts Promoters (SAP); Friends of Street Theatre; Somerset Partnerships' Arts Education Agency (SPAEDA); Great Somerset Arts Adventure; Somerset Arts Conference; theatre customer enquiries [3 boxes]
- 6. Programmes and posters, 1964-2013:** calendar of events, 1968-2010; production programmes, 1968-1998 incl. for Street Players, Glastonbury and Street Musical Comedy Society, Strode Productions Company, Strode College, Mid Somerset Orchestra, Street Theatre, Theatre Management Committee productions, Strode Opera, Centre of Somerset Youth Jazz Orchestra (COSYJO), local societies, music recitals, touring productions; posters incl. Street Theatre, Strode Productions, Strode College, Strode Youth Theatre Productions, local societies, touring theatre, opera and ballet productions, art exhibitions, lectures, gigs, cinema, craft fairs, undated [4 boxes]
- 7. Brochures, 1968-2013** [1 box]
- 8. Press cuttings, 1988-2010** [5 boxes]
- 9. Photographs** [not yet transferred]
- 10. Tickets and audiences, 1976-2005:** papers relating to audience numbers and analysis of theatre use [1 box]
- 11. Papers of directors, 1956-2012:** Programmes, brochures, scripts, press cuttings, photographs etc, collected by James Forth (chairman of Theatre Management Committee); Liz Leyshon [4 boxes]
- 12. Miscellaneous, 1960s-2000s:** papers relating to history of theatre and 21<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations; Arts Council England reports and publications; papers relating to Ian Ritchie Foundation; training booklets [2 boxes]

#### **ACCRUALS**

Accruals expected in the future (eg section 9 - photographs).

#### **ACCESS CONDITIONS**

Access to the collection is by advance appointment. Access to some collections may be restricted due to Data Protection or other restrictions. Check with the Archivist.

#### **REPRODUCTION CONDITIONS**

Usual Alfred Gillett Trust regulations apply. Copyright permission from Strode Theatre, touring companies and the Trust is required before publication, particularly where in-house publications, programmes, posters and photographs are concerned.

#### **LANGUAGE**

English

#### **FINDING AIDS**

Sections 6-8 were fully listed by Julie Mather, Feb 2014. The remainder of the collection remains uncatalogued.

#### **RELATED UNITS OF DESCRIPTION**

None known.

#### **PUBLICATION NOTE**

Strode Theatre. 2003. *Not Afraid To Dream* [40<sup>th</sup> anniversary publication]