

# The Boys Backstage

Behind the scenes at the Mayflower Theatre, Southampton.

The major refurbishment of the Mayflower Theatre at Southampton, featured in both this and our May issues, involved an interesting and complex mix of work for Hall Stage of Borehamwood, no strangers to sorting out the mechanical bits and pieces backstage in theatres all around the world.

The £60,000 project involved the total refurbishment of the safety curtain and drencher system and releases, and also the lantern light and releases. The counterweight flying system operating rail was dismantled, as were the rope locks from the stage floor, actors left. All old equipment was removed from the original operating area, and Hall Stage then had to rebuild the first level bridge to provide increased floor

area and access from the first floor corridor behind the stage.

A total rebuild of all equipment removed from stage level was undertaken, and the counterweighting operating rail and rope locks were refitted to the new position on the first level bridge, actors left. This involved fabrication of all new steel work and also the installation of full height, full length guards to the counterweight system at stage level.

Chris Hitchens, general manager of Hall Stage, told L+SI that the galleries - "real solid" - were originally built in a Southampton shipyard, and were rivetted in on a one-piece basis - not the easiest of structures to adapt to a new layout.

New scenery pack rails were fitted along the actors left stage area, and there was a total rebuild and overhaul of the safety curtain hoist. All rope locks were overhauled as was the complete counterweight system. Six totally new counterweights designed by Hall Stage were provided as part of the general enlargement and up-dating of the system, as was a flying beam track with an integral motor unit.

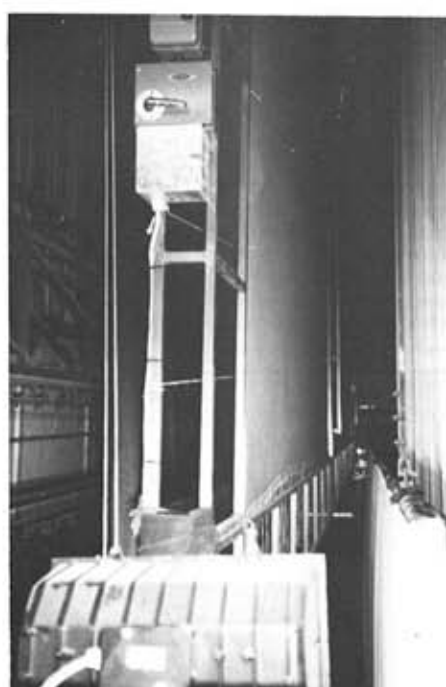
To retain the theatricality of the venue, two star traps and a coffin trap (circa 1926) were taken out for refurbishment and then refitted into a revised position. A nice idea, providing no very ancient pantomime performer thinks they are still in the same place!



The new counterweight sets.



The original coffin trap has been preserved.



The re-positioned and re-surfaced screen.



The new operator gallery with re-positioned rope locks - originally at stage level.



STAGE PRODUCTS  
LIMITED

are pleased to have carried out the  
refurbishment of stage equipment,  
safety curtain and counterweight system  
at the Mayflower Theatre, Southampton

also new counterweight sets  
re-design of operator gallery  
and re-build of original 1920's  
star traps and coffin trap

The Gate Studios, Station Road, Borehamwood, Herts WD6 1DQ  
Tel: 01-953 9371 Telex: 8955602 PERLUX G



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