

Chesil Street, Winchester SO23 0HU

NEWS RELEASE

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Take Ten Chesil Theatre New Writing Festival – the winning road taken

The theme set for entries in the 2021 Chesil Theatre New Writing Festival was *The Road* *Not Taken.* Over 400 writers from all over the country submitted 10-minute plays, most taking a metaphorical approach on how choices and events can alter a life. However, Ian Fraser, one of the ten winners, went even so far as to name the road – the M56. This motorway plays a key factor in the drama he submitted – *A Grande Day Out.*

Ian, who has lived in Winchester for 30 years, is a biology teacher. Studying science at university was one of the choices he made when deciding which path to follow in life. “I wanted to be an artist and novelist,” said Ian. “My father pointed out that employment in those worlds was hard to come by – and of course he was right. I chose biology because it gave opportunities to draw and I discovered a love of teaching the subject.”

In his free time, Ian paints, sketches, designs stage sets and writes. He describes himself as “a globe-trotting adventurer” travelling to remote parts of the world either alone or leading groups from the school’s Expedition Society.

Ian took a Creative Writing course run by the Adult and Higher Education Division (AHED) of Peter Symonds College. He focused on travel writing initially, with the aim of submitting magazine articles. He also attended a Winchester Writer’s Festival Weekend at the University of Winchester with Conference Director and local writer Barbara Large MBE. “We had to write the synopsis of a novel and the opening chapter, for assessment. I received such positive feedback, both at the weekend and meeting Barbara afterwards. It really encouraged me to keep writing.”

Ian’s entry for the 2018 Chesil Theatre new writing competition, based on the theme *Hidden Worlds*, was long-listed and he is delighted to have been declared a winner this time. *A Grande Day Out,* along with the nine other winners, will receive a full production at the theatre over the weekend of 2nd and 3rd October 2021.

“I found that the ten-minute rule imposed a discipline and structure to my writing,” explained Ian. “To establish a back story, characters, relationships and intrigue the audience within that limit was a stimulating challenge.”

Ian completed four full drafts – with minor changes between each one – before he was happy with his entry. The cast and director have now been chosen and he is looking forward to seeing how his play is interpreted.

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Editor’s Notes

The attached image is provided repro-free for editorial use.

About Chesil Theatre

Chesil Theatre (Winchester Dramatic Society) is based in the heart of Winchester, presenting six main productions a year, ranging from comedy to classics. Chesil Theatre also runs drama workshops and readings, plus two lively youth theatre groups as well as offering stagecraft and technical training. The Company has been performing for over 150 years.

Since 1966 Chesil Theatre has been the Society’s permanent home - a former 12th century church in Chesil Street, Winchester. This medieval building provides an intimate 75-seat studio-style theatre and versatile performance space.

About the judges for TakeTen

* Kate Spencer, stage and television actor, currently playing Grace Vickers in *Coronation Street*.
* George Richmond-Scott, West End director and voice coach, presently teaching at ALRA and RADA Business.
* Rosanne Collinson, Head of Drama, Peter Symonds College, Winchester
* Simon Plumridge, core member of Winchester’s professional touring company Platform 4
* Cecily O’Neill, author, Artistic Director of 2Time Theatre and a previous judge for Chesil Theatre writing festivals.