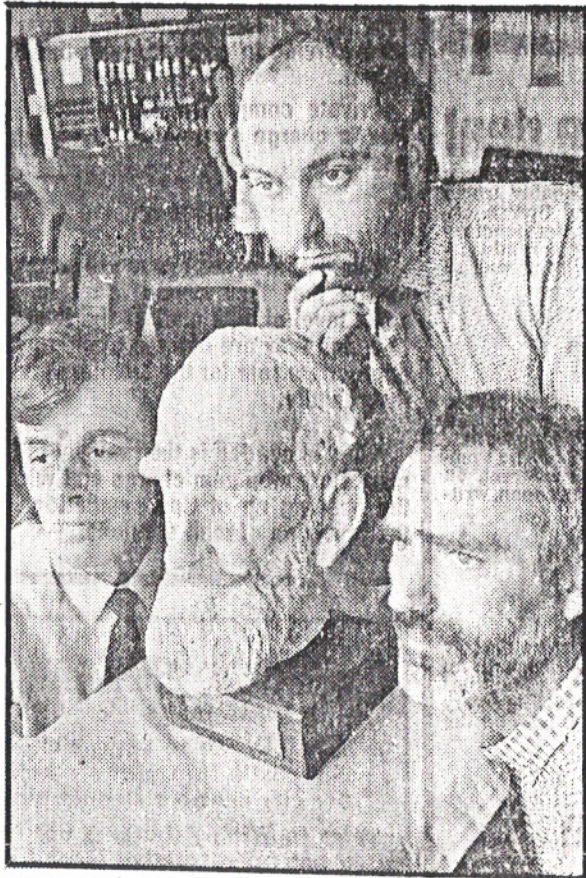


Special night at People's Theatre

Side by side

by . . . Shaw



Chris Goulding pictured behind the bust of Shaw, with Gordon Russell, left, and Gordon Mounsey

By PHIL PENFOLD
Entertainments Editor

THE three ages of Bernard Shaw — and the old boy himself!

Audiences at the People's Theatre this week will be forgiven for imagining that they're seeing the Irish playwright, essayist and critic in triplicate — they are!

A fund-raising entertainment based on the works of the great man is to be staged at the People's tomorrow, and features Gordon Russell, Chris Goulding and Gordon Mounsey as Shaw at various stages of his career and fame.

Chris and Gordon M have a chin's start on their colleague, who is still waiting for his false beard to be fitted — indeed, with various postal delays, for it to turn up at the theatre.

But why Shaw? Chris Goulding, who has devised and directed the one-off evening, explains: "The People's have a great tradition of performing Shaw's works, right from their formative years.

"We even have a claim to being the first in the country to fully stage Mrs Warren's Profession, which was for many years a banned play.

"Shaw kept up a long correspondence with the People's over his later years, and even gave his last public speech from our (then) stage in Rye Hill.

The proceeds from the show — which features many of the region's leading artists and performers — will go toward the People's renovation costs, which currently stand at £80,000.

In addition to re-vamping the outside of the theatre in Heaton, they're also re-designing the interior, including the gallery space.

Does any of the Shaw-People's correspondence still exist?

"Funnily enough, we have just about everything else in our files and archives but that," said a People's spokesman.

"I rather fancy that someone will have seen it as a collector's item, and will have taken it away into what one might euphemistically call 'safe keeping'."

Something that GBS might NOT have found so amusing.