

MIDLANDS**Birmingham Variety**

Contact: Alec Powell, 07831 115448, birmingham-variety-branch@equity.org.uk
Birmingham & West Midlands General

Contact: birmingham-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Coventry & Leicester Variety

Contact: coventry-leicester-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

East Midlands Variety

Contact: Clive Bumstead, 07815 951798, east-midlands-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

NORTH WEST**Blackpool Variety**

Contact: Denis Askham, denisaskham@yahoo.com

Gtr Manchester & Region

Contact: manchester-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Isle of Man General

Contact: isle-of-man-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Liverpool & District General

Contact: liverpool-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Manchester & District Variety

Contact: Yvonne Joseph, 0161 792 2035, manchester-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

Merseyside Variety

Contact: Bob Romanoff, 07707 322166, merseyside-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

North Lancs & Cumbria General

Contact: north-lancs-cumbria-general-branch@equity.org.uk

NORTH EAST**Humberside Variety**

Contact: Christie Clifford, 01482 848031, humberside-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

Leeds & Region General

Contact: Pete Keal, 01422 885 211, leeds-general-branch@equity.org.uk

NE of England General

Contact: north-east-england-general-branch@equity.org.uk & 'Equity NE Branch' on FB & Twitter

North East Variety

Contact: Steve McGuire, 0120 723 8258, north-east-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

N&W Yorkshire Variety

Contact: Valerie Jean Mann, 07778 450759, north-west-yorks-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

Sheffield General

Contact: sheffieldequitybranch@gmail.com

South Yorkshire Variety

Contact: Anthony Blakesley, anthonyblakesley1964@gmail.com

NORTHERN IRELAND**Northern Ireland General**

Contact: northern-ireland-general-branch@equity.org.uk

WALES**Cardiff & S. Wales General**

Contact: cardiff-general-branch@equity.org.uk

North Wales General

Contact: north-wales-general-branch@equity.org.uk

South Wales Variety

Next meeting: 1st Tues of the month, 7.30pm, Tyn Y Twr Tavern, Port Talbot, SA12 8AU
Contact: south-wales-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

SOUTH WEST**Bristol & West General**

Contact: bristol-west-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Devon & Cornwall General

Contact: devon-cornwall-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Dorset General

Contact: dorset-general-branch@equity.org.uk

West of England Variety

Contact: Mary Lane, 07900 848003, west-england-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

SOUTH EAST**Brighton & Sussex General**

Contact: brighton-general-branch@equity.org.uk

East Anglia Variety

Contact: east-anglia-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

Essex General

Contact: essex-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Home Counties West General

Contact: home-counties-west-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Kent General

Contact: Marie Kelly, kentgeneralbranch01@gmail.com, 07703 207878

Oxfordshire General

Contact: oxfordshire-general-branch@equity.org.uk

SCOTLAND**East of Scotland General**

Contact: Torya Winters, east-scotland-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Glasgow General

Contact: glasgow-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Scotland Variety

Contact: Linda Rifkind, 0141 639 6969, scotland-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

LONDON**North & East London General**

Contact: north-east-london-general-branch@equity.org.uk

North West London General

Contact: north-west-london-general-branch@equity.org.uk

South & SE London General

Contact: equitysselondon@gmail.com

Thames Variety

Contact: Nick Putz, 020 8808 3802, thames-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

West & SW London General

Contact: west-south-west-london-general-branch@equity.org.uk

ONLINE**Online Branch**

Contact: Caron Lyon, moderator@equityonlinebranch.co.uk; www.equityonlinebranch.co.uk

Looking back, going on

Maureen Beattie remembers her father, and looks to the union's future

I'VE BEEN THINKING A LOT about continuity in recent times. Some of you will know that my father, Johnny Beattie, who was a variety artiste and actor and career-long member of Equity, passed away in July this year. The silver lining in my family's particular Covid cloud was that the virus meant I was able to be with Dad and care for him throughout his final days.

One of the last things he did in his life was to vote for me to continue as President of our union. Alas, he didn't live to see me voted in for a second term, but I know he would have been immensely proud, as my activism meant a great deal to him.

There's a story I have told many times about the beginning of Dad's career in show business which I think bears repeating here. As a young husband and father of a newborn baby (me!), who was just starting out in show business having begun his working life as an apprentice electrician building ships on the Clyde, he was offered a one night gig at the Gaiety Theatre in Leith. He got his act together – literally! – and his costumes and his props and he took himself over to Edinburgh from Glasgow, and when he got to the theatre there was a notice pinned to the stage door "Insufficient bookings. Go home." There was no compensation and no expenses because his contract had a "No play, no pay" clause.

Having come from the passionate unionism of the shipyards, Dad saw clearly that the way forward for himself and his fellow workers in the entertainment industry was in the power of the collective, and he went about recruiting members for The Variety Artistes' Federation and what was then The British Actors' Equity Association.

The stark reality is that without Equity we're heading for "No play, no pay" once more.

When I wrote in an earlier column

that we live in parlous times, I had no idea just how parlous they were about to become. The pandemic has shone a glaring spotlight on the fragility of the workers in our industry. It has brought into sharp focus all the inequalities which are endemic in every form of live performance and recorded media.

While we at Equity have accepted this wake up call and are passionately determined to right the wrongs of the past, the powers that be – the holders of the purse strings – are using the Covid emergency to divide and therefore rule us. The gap between rich and poor is widening all the time. Why don't we have a universal basic income? Because not having one keeps us on our toes, keeps us uncertain, hungry and fearful, just like my father was back in 1953.

I have served on Council now for six years and in that time it has been my great privilege to serve alongside the magnificent Christine Payne, who has worked tirelessly for Equity for 41 years and led us as General Secretary for the past decade and a half. She is a very impressive person. She leaves us with a union which is strong, resilient and, most importantly, open to new ways forward: not least in handing the baton to her successor, Paul Fleming.

We are at our best when the inventiveness and creativity of our members dovetails with the practical business of protecting and enhancing our terms and conditions, the remit of our wonderful staff. If we are to go forward into a bright new future – which I believe passionately we can – we will do so if we remain constant to the principles that brought Christine Payne to work for Equity all those decades ago.

In his recent Radical Statement of Intent Paul Fleming said, "Our union believes in

three things: All working people have the right to be artists. All artists have the right to a dignified life at work. The cause of labour is the hope of the world."

The cause of labour is the hope of the world.

That will do me fine and I expect it would do my Dad fine, too. 🙏



Maureen Beattie
Equity President

> **EQUITY BRANCHES** are your local meeting place to discuss the industry, share insights and influence the direction of the union. Find your local branch at www.equity.org.uk/branches