

What's On?

We've been asking that for
fifty years and more.

I was there at its birth,

I've seen it change.

It started down the road,
A cushion on the floor
Sitting in a ring.
But that building's gone
The library stands there now.

Cheeseman and Joseph
Who are they?
Oh they've gone now
But their idea is here.

Theatre in the round.
What's that all about?
1962, that old cinema
In Hartshill, Victoria Street.
Plays and things like that.

But the documentary
was its forte;

1964
The Jolly Potters,
The Dirty Hill,
The Knotty,
The Burning Mountain,
The Fight for Shelton Bar.

Not about the famous,
Except for one or two.

But lives of toil and grime
Men and women
From around these parts.
In their own words too,
It had to be as they spoke
That was what it was all
about.

For twenty five years
They entertained at Hartshill
And all the time the dream was
taking shape, somewhere to
work and see the ideas through
was needed now.

At last a site that met the
need, the idea had been proved
and the builders moved in.
But nature had to be
considered when making space
for cars, and Stephen's wall
is standing now.

New stories needed to be told,
Nice Girls in the headstocks,
Mr Matthews, Sir Stan to you.
And Eric, the musical marathon
man.

Christmas Shows amongst the
Ayckbourns and classic plays,
Music of course, and Berry
Another local man,
The New Vic proved its worth.

Thirty six years at the helm
And Peter stepped aside.
Gwenda and then Theresa took
up the challenge to develop
and carry the work out there.

The Vols have always played
their part and local folk and
schools have been involved.
But a place was needed to
expand and bring in youth and
the disadvantaged.

That new building you see,
New Vic Borderlines, Youth
Theatre and space for props
and things. And new ideas are
given birth, the words of
local people, 'Up Hanley duck'
Their hopes and aspirations in
documentary style.

'What's on?' come and see,
The New Vic is here.

COLIN RAMSELL