

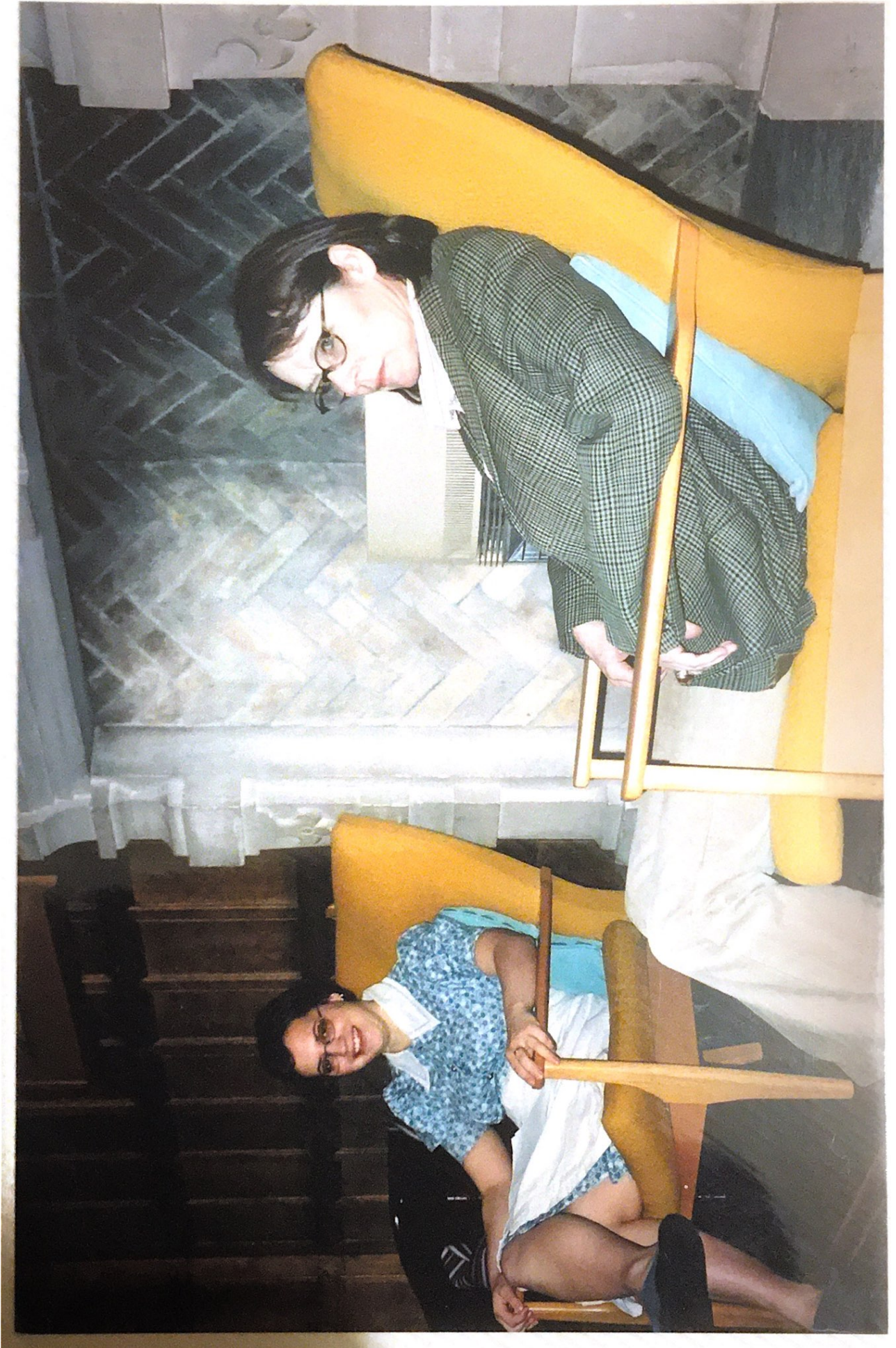
Run At It

Shouting



Frances MacGechan
Catherine Keeble
Tina Cronin
Sian Mansfield
Charlie MacGechan
Kevin Skilton
Nick Keeble











1. The John Cobbold Trophy - Overall Winner.
2. The Ray Jacobs Memorial Trophy.
Presented to the team awarded the highest acting marks.
3. Audience Award trophy - runners up.

Drama triumph for director who never lived to see it



Run At It Shouting with their silverware from Felixstowe.
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GIVEN six months to live, a courageous and talented drama teacher fought her illness to direct her last play, but didn't live to see it scoop the top award at a prestigious drama festival last week.

Run At It Shouting, four times winners of the Haverhill Drama Festival, took a full-length play to the Felixstowe Drama Festival, and came away with the winners trophy.

They could now progress to the national finals in Wales next month.

But the woman who directed the play, Frances MacGechan, died of cancer in February at the age of 56.

A founder member of the Haverhill group, Frances had directed three winning one-act plays at the Haverhill Festival, the last being an abridged version of Find Me by Olwen Wymark, in 2005.

The group was invited at that time to take the play to the All-England Winners finals for one-act plays, but was unable to do so because of other commitments.

Last year Frances was diagnosed with stomach cancer and when, in September, she was only given six months to live, she agreed to direct the full-length version of the play as her final project, as

to raise money for cancer research and care.

With a remarkable mixture of courage and creativity she battled the onset of her illness to bring the project to a triumphant conclusion before a packed audience at Haverhill Arts Centre in December, raising nearly £1,000.

A few weeks before she died she insisted on the group entering the play for the Felixstowe festival.

One of the cast of Find Me, Tina Cronin, said: "It was at our final committee meeting and she made us fill in the form there and then - and then promptly fell asleep!"

"We found out we had been accepted a few days before she died, so we were able to tell her and she made us promise to go ahead with it.

"We feel as a whole group this is a fitting tribute to her and that her work continues to be recognised as being of the highest creative standard even after her death.

"We are really thrilled to have won and know she would have been so proud."

The play won the 57th National Felixstowe Drama Competition, against entries from as far away as Cardiff.

Haverhill Town Council leisure and arts manager Nick Keeble, said it was terrific for a Haverhill group to have this kind of success.

"When they did the play in December all the staff at the arts centre gave their time free for it, which was a tribute to what they felt about Frances as well as to the cause it was fund raising for," he said.

Nick was stage manager for the play and his wife Catherine one of the cast, which also won the award for best team acting, and the audience runners-up award, as well as being nominated in four other categories, including Frances for best director.

"Her way of working seemed a little chaotic but in the end it was fantastic," said Nick.

"She was always willing to talk, listen and incorporate other people's ideas.

"The rehearsal process was unusual compared to other things I have done because she worked things through in a different way.

"An example of her skill I re-



The cast of Find Me, Catherine Keeble, Rebecca Neal, Charlie MacGechan, Tina Cronin, Kevin Skilton, Sian Mansfield and Camilla Snell.

Run At It Shouting

Presents

A full-length play, based on the festival winning play

Find Me

By Olwen Wymark

Sunday 10th December 2006

7.30pm

at

haverhillartscentre

All proceeds to Cancer Research

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