

# Search for star quality

**SALFORD's** newest drama group are convinced that they can find enough 'home-grown' talent to stage first class productions in the city.

Barely a month old, the Unit One Theatre Company is already busy preparing its first offering – the Keith Waterhouse comedy *Billy Liar* – which they hope to give a public airing in January.

Unit One is the brain-child of 19-year-old Barry Hall who, with a number of other former members of the Mark Slann Players, decided to form their own amateur society.

Barry is no stranger to showbiz. As a 14-year-old pupil of Ordsall High School

he took part in several auditions for television and ultimately appeared in an advertisement.

## DOMINATED

Since then he has trod the boards firstly with the Salford Players and more recently with the Mark Slann group.

He told me: "We want to get the amateur drama scene off the ground in Salford. At the moment it is dominated by Salford Players but most of their actors live outside the area.

"I am sure there are enough people in the city who are more than capable of acting competently. The main problem seems to be persuading them that drama can be fun and very rewarding.

"Young people in particular shy away when you mention it to them but sport produces a completely opposite reaction. Maybe it has something to do with class distinction but I am sure that as soon as someone develops self-confidence they will be surprised at what they can do.

"I accept that it is easier said than done to stand up before an audience and speak lines. To turn up for rehearsals on a cold winter's night after doing a day's work requires a lot of dedication, especially when no financial gain is involved.

We are looking for people of all ages to join us whether as actors or for backstage duties such as lighting and sound. All that is needed is enthusiasm and a sense of humour," says Barry of Denbigh Place, Pendleton.

Unit One which currently has about 15 members rehearses twice a week – at the Broadwalk Library on Mondays from 7.30 p.m. and at St Paul's Church Hall on Wednesdays.

Helping Barry, who works for an industrial electrical wholesalers in Cheetham Hill, to promote the new group is Neil Duncan (17), an unemployed butcher, of Lords Avenue, Weaste.

## NOT HAPPY

He says: "About six of us broke away from Mark Slann after the last production – *Hobson's Choice*. We were not too happy about the way things were being done and decided to try and go it alone.

Neil, who attended Clarendon Park High School, would be pleased to provide more details about the group to anyone who telephones him at 737-2481.

•Theatre Foundry, a community theatre company, will perform Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage" at the Sheena Simon College in Whitworth Street, Manchester, on October 26.



MARJORIE Salt, Andrew Pearce (seated) and Salvo Marigliano rehearse a scene from *Billy Liar*, the Unit One Theatre Company's first production