

**Minutes of the NODA SE AGM held The Assembly Rooms, Alton on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 at 2.30pm**

**Present:** as per registered list and a warm welcome was given to all.

**Apologies:** had been received from Priscilla & Robert Blanchard, Roy Brown, Phillip Hall, Chris Horton, Brenda & Greg Gower, Lance Milton, Frant Pantomime & DS, Loddon Players, Ringwood Music & DS, Cranbrook ODS, and Margate.

**In Memoriam:** The following long standing members of societies in the SE Region have died this year:

**Sylvia Blogg** – one-time Regional Rep and President of Margate Operatic Society

**Stella Blond** of EODS

**Robin Freeman** of Chesil Theatre

**Trevor Nash** of several societies including TWODS, Tunbridge Wells Operatic, The Oast Theatre (Tonbridge) and was part of Kentainers the Revue Society.

A founder member of Romsey Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society **Vincent Richards**.

**Danny Spurrier** a founder member of Loddon Players.

**Alan Young** of Molesey Musical Theatre

**Brenda Wade** wife of Tony Wade President of LOS Musical Theatre Lewes.

All these people gave so much to their societies in particular and amateur theatre in general. I think it would be appropriate to remember them with a standing ovation.

Good afternoon everyone. It is wonderful to welcome so many of you here this afternoon. Welcome and thank you for giving up your time – missing rehearsals, escaping get-ins and outs and the various sporting events of today - the Grand Prix, the Tennis and the football. I hope you have an enjoyable afternoon celebrating the successes in NODA South East. Most of you will be aware of the room full of theatrical traders as you came in. They will be there until the end of the tea break which reminds me in order to shorten any queues for tea and cake refreshments will be available both from the hatch in here and in the traders' room. On a more serious note may I point out the two fire exits at the front of the hall and the one through the door by which you entered the hall. No fire alarms are anticipated.

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May I present those here in front of you today. Firstly, the President of the National Operatic & Dramatic Association Mr Chris Ingram. Mrs Anne Lawson, the Regional Representative

for District 3, who is standing in for our Regional Secretary Mrs Priscilla Blanchard who could not be with us today. Mr Keith Smithers the Regional Treasurer. Behind us are the Regional Representatives.

<del>District 1</del>	<del>Lance Milton</del>	District 11	Barbara Fairclough
<del>District 2</del>	<del>Mrs Brenda Gower</del>	District 12	Gloria Smith
District 3	Anne Lawson	District 13	Marie Coltman
District 5	Gordon Harris	<del>District 14</del>	<del>Mrs Chris Horton</del>
<del>District 6</del>	<del>Rob Gore</del>	District 16	Rita Boffin
District 7	Doreen Grierson	District 17	-
District 9	Jose Harrison	District 18	Betty Haslam
District 10	Mark Donalds	District 19	Jon Fox

In addition we have Margaret Coltman who is our Hon Awards Secretary and John Barnes the Honorary Membership Secretary. Bob Heather and Mark Allen are the nominated representatives for districts 17 North and 17 South respectively. These are the faces of your regional committee.

1. The Report of the Annual General Meeting held at Wessex Arts Centre held on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2015 have been circulated and posted on the NODA website. These were not read out.
2. Matters Arising: there were none and the Minutes were duly signed.
3. Councillor's Report: The last year seems to have flown by with visits to the four corners of the region. I have seen 50 shows from Basingstoke to Margate, from Brighton to Romsey. I have attended rehearsals technical & dress as well as performances. It was a great honour to be invited to give a short talk at a dinner and presentation of awards evening. It was a good opportunity to spread the word about the contribution NODA can and does make to the life of amateur theatre. I have attended numerous Council meetings in Warwick and contributed to three sub committees including the Poster & Programme selection committee.

The standard of productions seems to get higher and higher with societies setting themselves greater and greater challenges. There have been many new shows often written by members both with and without music. The range of productions is as wide as ever with many trusted and tried favourites in the amateur theatre being performed alongside the more modern shows. Many societies are avidly waiting for the release of new shows in order to be the first. I have received a warm welcome wherever I have gone and I feel very proud that societies see both myself and NODA to be part of their wider theatrical family. Thank you to all those who have invited me over the past 12 months.

There have been a few changes on the South -East committee this year and a couple to come today. Firstly I have to welcome the arrival of a new Honorary Secretary. Pauline Catterall from here in Alton has kindly agreed to take on the role enabling Priscilla Titford to step down after 18 years firstly taking over the Treasurer role and then becoming Secretary in 2006. She has worked with four Regional Councillors and was absolutely invaluable when I first became Councillor.

Secondly back in March the Committee said goodbye to Stuart Ardern who after more years than he cares to remember returned to his hometown of Marple near Stockport. Stuart has been our Webmaster for many years and ensured that all the reports get on line for everyone

to see. He was also responsible for the wonderful photographs taken at our AGMs. Alongside all that he was the Regional Rep for District 17 providing reviews and help to the societies in his own inimitable style. I am very excited to say that we have been fortunate to find two people willing to take on the role and as a consequence I have divided the district into two; District 17 North and District 17 South. With a small number of societies each the new reps will be able to represent their district and bring their particular skills to the region at committee level. Mark Allen is proposed to take over 17 South whilst Bob Heather will support 17 North. Bob has also very kindly agreed to take the photographs of the presentations today. Mark Donalds the Regional Rep for District 10 has taken on the role of Webmaster.

Betty Haslam of District 18 has supported the work of the regional committee for many years firstly as the wife of one time Regional Rep John Haslam and for the past eight years taking on that role herself. She has shown exemplary support to her societies and her visits to shows will be sorely missed.

Your committee continue to work very hard on your behalf and I would like to thank them for all of their work including their unstinting support for me.

The courses for this year's summer school have been well supported and in several cases oversubscribed with waiting lists. Unlike last year we only had one application for a bursary this year hopefully this is not an indication of lack of support in the South East. The Summer School is such a wonderful opportunity for students to benefit from the first class tuition that is on offer and all in a comfortable environment.

Our Youth Advisor is now actively involved with groups but I would like to see more direct links between her and our young people.

The entries for the poster and programme competition were again of a very high standard and I am hoping that we will be equally thrilled when we hear the results of the National competition. The rules will be changing for 2017 – 20 so please do get your programme coordinator to check the rules first particularly that relating to logos and crests. A display of the winners and runners up are on the board at the back. Also at the back are a couple of notices about the Long Service awards – do please take time to have a look. Particularly youth groups there are certificates and awards which can help to enhance the records of achievement, job and university applications that the youngsters have to complete.

Last year I mentioned the NODA website was being reviewed and redesigned. Unfortunately it is still in the development stage. Should there be anyone here with any constructive comments to make please let me or our webmaster Mark Donalds know as soon as possible. This brings me to a request. Is there anyone here or do you know of anyone who could give us some time to develop an active NODA South East Facebook page? The committee feels that we need to make ourselves known to the widest possible audience and at present the links between societies and activities are limited.

We have had some fine articles submitted for NODA Today so do look at the next edition. Many more articles and photos are needed so do have a think about what your society can contribute to the South East page that is vibrant, interesting and shows that there is a real theatrical buzz in the south-east. Whilst I am sure you all thank your other halves for their support in this your voluntary activity I too would like to thank publicly my husband Roger

for his continued support and encouragement. His patience with answering all the phone calls is invaluable.

This is my report and I offer it for adoption.

4. **Membership Secretary's Report** – John Barnes announced that 14 new members had joined this year but we had lost some. Total now stands at 244 Societies, with 67 Ind/joint/life members making 311 in all. We still need more! If anyone knows of a group interested there was a 50% off offer. Spread the message and take a look at the NODA Magazine that you all receive. We are very grateful that he has taken on this important role and is meticulous in maintaining the records. Thank you John. (I am sure he would be very grateful if he were to be informed of any changes in personnel so that we can keep everything up to date so that in turn you get information promptly delivered to the right person.)
5. **Treasurer's Report** – Keith presented his Report which was handed out – a copy is attached. Thank you Keith for all your hard work this year in maintaining our finances and administering the expenses so efficiently.
6. **President's Address:** Would you please give a warm welcome to the President of NODA Chris Ingram who will share his thoughts with us. Copy below.
7. Election of SE Councillor Kay Rowan – proposed by Chris Ingram – under Rule 23 no other nominations having been received Kay Rowan should be duly elected to serve as Councillor for the South East Region.

Election of Representatives for 2016-2017 – proposed en bloc by Kay Rowan seconded by

District 1	Mr Lance Milton	District 11	Mrs Barbara Fairclough
District 2	Mrs Brenda Gower	District 12	Mrs E Gloria Smith
District 3	Mrs Anne Lawson	District 13	Mr Marie Coltman
District 5	Mr Gordon Harris	District 14	Mrs Chris Horton
District 6	Mr Rob Gore	District 16	Mrs Rita Boffin
District 7	Mrs Doreen Grierson	District 17 North	Mr Bob Heather
District 9	Mrs Jose Harrison	District 17 South	Mr Mark Allen
District 10	Mr Mark Donalds	District 18	Vacant at present
		District 19	Mr Jon Fox

8. **Appointment of officers 2016-2017** – the South-East Committee wish to appoint the following members:

Hon Treasurer	Mr Keith Smithers
Hon Secretary	Mrs Pauline Catterall
Hon Membership Secretary	Mr John Barnes

9. **Appointment of Co-opted Members 2016-2017** –the South-East Committee wish to co-opt the following members

Hon Editor	Mr Gregory Gower
Hon Awards Secretary	Mrs Margaret Coltman

Hon Web Manager  
Youth Advisor  
Drama Advisor

Mr Mark Donalds  
Mrs Jackie Kenyon  
Mrs Margaret Fields

**10. Regional Conference 2017 Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July** – venue to be notified.

**Any Other Business:** I have to repeat my plea from last year – book your Regional Rep early to avoid disappointment. There seem to be weeks when there are so many shows on that we cannot fit them all in which is why sometimes you get a different rep to do your review or unfortunately none at all particularly if I am not available either.

My last words of thanks must go to you all - the members and societies of NODA South East. Thank you for your enthusiasm for what you do, thank you for sharing that enthusiasm with your audiences. Enthusiasm is infectious which is why there are so many people here today.

Thank you all for attending.

I declare the Annual General Meeting closed – at 3.15pm.

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**Presentation of Poster & Programme Awards:** I would like to ask our President to present the awards for the poster & programme competition. Would recipients please come up immediately the results for the category have been read.

**Presentation of Accolades of Excellence:** Last year we reviewed the number of societies in a district and apportioned an appropriate number of accolades accordingly. This seemed to work very well and has been repeated this year. This will explain why some Regional Reps present more awards than others.

**Accolades of Excellence:** We will read out all the results for a district and then if recipients would come up in order that would be of great assistance.

**The Regional Awards** have all been reviewed by a small committee – one for each award. This has made for some interesting discussions. We would be grateful if recipients of trophies and shields could replace them on the table so that we can obtain a signature afterwards before they disappear without trace.

The last emotional presentation went to our retiring Regional Representative of District 18 Betty Haslam with the Committee's love and thanks.

**Entertainment** – sit back and enjoy Knightstar's presentation.

A very big thank you to Knightstar for entertaining us this afternoon. A particular thank you to their parents for bringing them all this way and to Jackie Kenyon for her organisation.

It only remains for me to say thank you to everyone for attending today.

Thank you to Chris Ingram and his wife Mary for undertaking their long journey to join us.

Thank you to your committee for all their hard work and dedication to NODA.

Finally a big thank you for coming and supporting us here today. We hope you have enjoyed yourselves and met new friends. Safe journey home and we look forward to meeting each other at future productions and at the presentations next year on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July next year.

### **Presidential Address**

*“In early 1976 the then NODA Representative for my area announced her retirement, I had attended what was then known, and still is known, as t’Brid Weekend and was becoming quite interested in NODA. I was already on t’ Committee of my own society so I sought their support in nominating me for the vacant position. My interest in putting my name forward was generally welcomed by my committee colleagues with one exception who commented “I’ve nowt ag’in you personally lad but I don’t think tha’s right man for t’job”. Fortunately other views prevailed otherwise I would not be standing here today wi’ this big chain round mi neck!*

*As President I would very much like to pay tribute to Immediate Past President John Barnes and his wife Judith, who have been excellent ambassadors for NODA in the past year, I will be a happy President indeed if Mary and I command the same respect as they. I know that during this year we will see many long established and meet many new friends during our visits. I also wish my good friend and Past President, Fred Piggford, well as he embarks up on his period of office as Chairman of Trustees.*

*Major themes for the coming year for NODA are:*

***Financial Sustainability*** – *amateur theatre is a business and we must make the best possible use of facilities and information available via the internet. A few years ago a Committee sat and discussed and information needed was sought for and brought back to the next meeting – now every committee has at least one but more probably several members who immediately access the internet via laptop, tablet or smart phone and they get the answer there and then – brilliant*

*Apart from visits to societies within my own historical and local patch, I have already been privileged to made major trips as President in my first 8 months in office:*

*Isle of Man – Theatre Fest a festival of new work co-sponsored with the Isle of Man Arts Council when I saw three very different but exciting productions involving primarily amateur performers, including many young people. There were some stunning performances in these productions.*

*Mary and I also had a three day visit to societies in the Portsmouth area, including a visit to a dress rehearsal from a Romsey Drama Society, a first night performance of Sunset Boulevard from Portsmouth Players as well as visit to an early days rehearsal for Mikado with Southampton AOS. I am trying wherever possible with the more long distant visits to see several societies over a number of days or even meeting a number of our members at such as a District meeting.*

*Our furthest trip in terms of a show visit was to the North of Ireland where we managed to combine a show visit with a District Meeting*

*NODA South East - one of the first invitation I received was to visit Woking AOS for their production of Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of November – the blood flowed that night! Mary and I survived that auspicious occasion without being turned into presidential pies and we very much look forward to meeting many members during our year of office as we fly the flag for NODA which exists to support all our members whether societies or individuals.*

*We have also had two visits to AIMS our sister organization in Ireland to join with our many friends in Ireland as they celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AIMS in October last. We returned to Ireland in Mid June on holiday and incorporated a visit to the AIMS Annual Award Weekend in Killarney – 1200 delegates.*

*Mary and I have also attended 8 of our 11 Regional Conferences (including being here today). Regrettably we missed NODA Wales and Ireland and NODA London due to illness and have still to attend NODA South West.*

*Incidentally – many thanks for the many expressions of good will I received during my recent period on illness – they were very much appreciated. Happily I can report that I am well on the way to a full recovery.*

*I am passionate about theatre, amateur or professional as indeed is virtually everyone in this room. Participation in Theatre is open to everyone, young or old, married or single, introvert or extrovert, actor or technician or tea maker. Theatre is something you can DO throughout your life.*

***Audience development** – the internet and social media of all types are an essential and valuable tool for all societies. Our younger audiences do not book by post or phone or even in person, they do not book through a society's playing members but they do book via the internet and decide what they are going to see via social media. Our members ignore this facility at their peril.*

***Involvement of youth** – welcome them with open arms, push them to improve their stage skills and give them responsibilities. They will respond to all these but they will quickly leave if told to sit there, watch and learn but do not challenge anything, we know best!*

*I wish NODA South East, your excellent and hard working Councillor, Kay, your Regional Committee of volunteers and all our societies - their members and our members, every success for the future.*

*I am honoured to be your President and will do my best to promote the name of NODA and the passion for theatre whenever and wherever I can. ”*