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04/18

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As I write this welcome to the spring edition, all I hear is a weather forecast for a big freeze and snow which is not very spring-like. However, I am sure you will all be preparing for your spring productions despite the vagaries of the weather, and I wish you every success with your shows.

It is with great regret I report that Mary Hobbs who was our President in 2002/03 died in February, and her funeral was held in early March. I hope we will be able to have a tribute to Mary in the next edition of NODA Today.

The courses selected for NODA Theatre Summer School this year have been increased and there is a wide variety; if you have not already booked, do look at the NODA website and see what is still available. There is one course – “Sound – From Empty Space To All Systems Go” – which is designed for those who work in venues that do not have their own sound equipment. The two short courses on costume and design will give students the confidence to look, in detail, at the ideas and skills needed to enhance and convey the overall design of a show.

The creation of the new Board Room at NODA Head Office will help to reduce the overall costs of running the Association and provide a modern meeting space. We are intent on making savings wherever and whenever we can for the benefit of members.

I trust you enjoy reading all the articles in this edition and it will be passed around your friends and neighbours, and societies will ensure all their members have the opportunity to read it.

John W. Barnes

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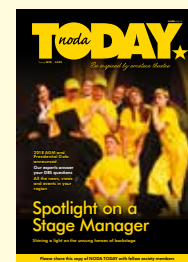
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NEWS

Make sure you're the first to find about all of NODA's news. Keep an eye out for our weekly news articles at noda.org.uk/news and also sign up to our monthly newsletter at nodaupdates.co.uk

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association CIO (NODA CIO), Charity No. 1171216, in accordance with Clause 11(1) of the Constitution, will be held on Saturday 22nd September at 2.30pm, at Hilton St Anne's Manor, London Road, Wokingham RG40 1ST.

A report and audited accounts of NODA CIO covering the period 1st May to 31st December 2017 will be circulated prior to the meeting together with other reports, detailed agenda and timings.

Particulars of a resolution that may properly be proposed, and is intended to be proposed, at the Annual General Meeting should be given 30 days before the date fixed for such meeting. Notice of such resolutions shall be sent to The Chairman of Trustees, at NODA, 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH or by email to john.barnes@noda.org.uk to arrive no later than 22nd August 2018.

Philip Hall and Tony Wade

In January we were saddened in NODA South East by the deaths of Phillip Hall and Tony Wade, both of whom had been Regional Representatives; Phillip succeeded Tony as the Regional Representative for District 1 (as it now is). Phillip and Tony were long serving members of LOS Musical Theatre (formerly Lewes Operatic Society) and Tony was their President until his death. Both their funeral services were attended by the Chairman of NODA, to say farewell to two people who had given sterling service both to the Association and their society.

John W Barnes

GDPR

Data protection guidelines are changing this year. We have created a new factsheet, called **GDPR – The Facts**, that will help you to understand what this means for you and how it might affect your society.

Find out more about the GDPR factsheet in the news section of our website – noda.org.uk/news
You can also download sample GDPR privacy policies from the factsheet area of our website.



Safeguarding

Working with young people and/or vulnerable adults can be hugely rewarding for everyone but concerned societies need to recognise that they are responsible for ensuring that no one is harmed in any way. Our new factsheet, **Safeguarding – what are your responsibilities?**, will help you to write your safeguarding policy.

Find out more about the safeguarding factsheet in the news section of our website – noda.org.uk/news



Your letters and comments

We want to know what you think of NODA Today. Send us your letters in the post to NODA, 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH, or email our editor at info@noda.org.uk.

Don't forget, you can also let us know your thoughts via Facebook and Twitter:
[facebook.com/NationalOperaticDramaticAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/NationalOperaticDramaticAssociation)
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NODA MEMBER BENEFITS

What do you receive for your NODA society membership?

- ★ Members' magazine NODA Today
- ★ Regional news and updates from HQ

Access to members' area of website

- ★ Factsheets, including:
 - ☆ Child protection policy
 - ☆ Performance regulations and copyright
 - ☆ Model constitution
 - ☆ Production team duties
 - ☆ Fundraising
- ★ Show listings online at noda.org.uk

Advice and services

- ★ Discounted rates on NODA insurance
- ★ Legal helpline
- ★ Health and safety helpline
- ★ DBS checks
- ★ Performance rights and scripts for pantomimes

Regional support

- ★ Dedicated regional representative
- ★ Regional youth advisor
- ★ Show reports
- ★ Regional social media advertising
- ★ Contact lists for MDs, directors, choreographers etc
- ★ Regional conference, awards and workshops

Training

- ★ NODA Theatre Summer School
- ★ Bursaries for Summer School training

Awards

- ★ National awards ceremony
- ★ Poster and programme competition

Discounts

- ★ Royalties discounts from major rightsholders
- ★ Special offers from partners

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Be inspired by amateur theatre



roundup

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Harlequin Eastwood – 41 Years Young

Harlequin Eastwood Theatre for Youth began as a church group, putting on our first production, *Snow White*, in May 1977. In our 40th year we were delighted to be awarded the Utopia Youth Award from NODA. The award recognised our contribution to our local community, both in terms of our performances, and our charitable endeavours in promoting and encouraging young people to follow careers in the arts.

Our members age from 9-21 years and we stage three productions per year which are all performed at Eastwood Park Theatre on the south side of Glasgow.

We seek to develop and nurture talent, whether as a performer or musician, back stage crew or production team, and many who started onstage remain actively involved.

The value of Harlequin to our local community comes from every positive experience that we offer each young person; the new friendships formed, the enhanced self-confidence and the lasting memories. ★

Ruth Baillie, Secretary



Join The Circus!

Rhianna Watson joined St Giles Panto Society in September 2003 and has performed in every production since then. However, the 19 year old is 'doing a Dick Whittington' and leaving Pontefract. Instead of searching for streets paved with gold she is going to study at London's National Centre for Circus Arts where she will spend two years getting to grips with acrobatic routines involving the flying trapeze, spinning wheels, suspended ribbons and juggling balls.

Rhianna joined a local sports acrobatics group and after attending local schools she went on to study dance at Leeds City College, attending extra classes on evenings and weekends at the Northern Contemporary Dance School.

To prepare for her audition she perfected routines in aerial skills – ribbons hanging from the ceiling. Her two day audition tested her agility, fitness, flexibility and strength.



Rhianna Watson

Rhianna is a holder of the NODA Youth Award and last year performed an acrobatic dance as part of the UV scene in the society's production of *Sleeping Beauty*. She will be sorely missed in Pontefract but will keep her links with the St Giles Panto Society as her Mum, Mel, is wardrobe mistress and her brother, Marley, is the society's accompanist. So hopefully before long she will be "Going to bed in Minneapolis, waking up in PA, but bless her soul we hope she comes home again!" ★

From Wyre To West End

It isn't every day you get a text from your director with the words: "We're going to be on the West End", but that's just what happened to our society, Blackout Theatre Company from Blackpool.

We had seen a post on social media looking for theatre companies to take part in 'West End Dreams', organised by West End stars at the Adelphi Theatre. After applying, we received word that we were to perform in London's West End, singing and dancing to 'When I Grow Up' from *Matilda*, a medley from *The Wiz* and 'Cell Block Tango' from *Chicago*, as part of a full revue featuring other performance schools and companies. It was the stuff dreams are made of!

After weeks of dancing until we dropped, singing until we were hoarse, costume hunting, fundraising, promotion and organising travel, the time came to head

to the capital. The day started early – young performers, their parents, and the team packed into the coach at 4am on a Sunday morning. A near uncontrollable excitement was buzzing in all of us and by the time we arrived in London we were all dying to hit that stage!

After a quick briefing, we all crammed into the two dressing rooms. It was surreal to be able to prepare in a real West End dressing room, but there was no time to be star struck as we headed backstage for our rehearsal. Rehearsing on stage was a real learning curve; some of our members had never had a radio mic attached to them.

Before we knew it, it was time to perform in front of a West End audience. Our pulses were racing, our hands were shaking, and our heads were ready to explode. But we'd come so far; we composed ourselves,

wished each other luck, and waited in the wings. We were ready. The performance went by in a flash. One moment you're in the wings, peeking out at the crowd and the next you're backstage having sung your heart out to hundreds of cheering people, wishing you could do it all over again.

The hours we'd put in truly paid off and, during that moment, we'd never been closer as a team.

At Blackout we pride ourselves in giving every member of the production a chance to shine and do their bit; by the end we were all covered in sweat, bones aching, bodies exhausted, but happy.

When we started Blackout, the West End was a far-off dream. Now, it's somewhere we believe we deserve to be. ★

Jordan Kennedy, Creative Assistant

Snakes on stage!

I had been thinking of directing for some time when events aligned to make me think – "it's now or never". *Whistle Down the Wind* appealed because it has an emotional storyline and some 'grit'. I had not quite realised what I had let myself in for: a 16 year old leading lady, at least a dozen children, snakes, kittens, and a fire – all this on top of a huge musical score!

From the first rehearsal, the children were fantastic. They learn so quickly – and retain it – and are so willing and eager to contribute. Their infectious enthusiasm does need a little bit of controlling occasionally but I'd rather have that than trying to persuade them to be more energetic! It is great to see them getting to know each

other and developing their characters.

Jude, who plays Poor Baby, says, "I love it because we have really good fun and we're always laughing but we still get stuff done."

Alice, who plays Louise, says, "LEOS has made me feel really welcome and I am enjoying it way more than I thought I would. I can't wait to perform on the big stage."



Holly, playing LaVonne says, "It has given me confidence and shown me that being small has lots of advantages as I can play a younger girl. I can't wait for the show."

I decided using live snakes on stage would add much more conviction to the 'Wrestle

with the Devil' number. Luckily, I found a local company, Bugs 'n' Bones, who were able to provide snakes. Their normal business is taking insects and reptiles into schools to introduce them to children, so the snakes are used to being handled.

At this point, I have yet to meet with the technical team to discuss how we can produce a 'fire' on stage, but they are all very experienced and I imagine a combination of lighting, sound, smoke and scene changes will produce something very dramatic! Fingers crossed! ★

Kathryn McAuley, Director

Long Eaton Operatic Society performs *Whistle Down the Wind*, just as this edition goes to print, from 10th - 14th April 2018 at Trent College, Long Eaton – break a leg everyone!

regionalroundup East

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L-R Rony Baldwin, Marjorie Lumb, Ged Jarrett, Gill Warren, Pauline Iredale

Friends clock up 292 years in theatre

Rob Bristow, Chairman of Peterborough Operatic and Dramatic Society (PODS) says, "Show business can be a fickle game, but for five members of PODS, theatre has played a major part in their lives for at least half a century". Friends Gill Warren, Pauline Iredale, Ged Jarrett, Marjorie Lumb and Rony Baldwin are all celebrating a minimum of 50 years' service with PODS which, added together makes almost 300 years of dedication to the society!

All five members have previously been Honorary Chairman of the society and continue to play an active part in PODS' life, attending socials, meetings and rehearsals. Gill celebrates the longest service, marking 66 years since she joined in 1952 for the show *The Dancing Years*. A performer, choreographer, and member of the committee, she keeps busy organising group bookings. Pauline Iredale, has been with the society for 52 years, having joined for *Oklahoma!* in 1966. As hospitality rep she is in charge of fuelling the cast with tea and biscuits after energetic dance rehearsals. Pauline says, "being part of PODS over 50 years, I've had some of the best moments in my life and the social side is great fun."

The five friends all helped the front of house team with PODS' production of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels the Musical* at The Key Theatre from 20th to 24th March. Director, Rob Bristow, says, "We're so lucky to have so many long-serving members who are so valued to us and still play such an active part in the society today." ★

Read about some more very special anniversaries in the North roundup on pages 16-17



Norfolk Music Man – David Kett

Norfolk theatrical circles were sad to learn of the sudden death of much loved and respected 'music man' David Kett. Whether in the Theatre Royal, or smaller venues, David was a welcome and

reassuring presence, as Musical Director for Norfolk & Norwich OS (NNOS), Dereham Theatre Company (previously OS), East Norfolk OS (ENOS), Great Yarmouth G&S, Sheringham Savoyards, Thorpe Players, and Limelight Theatre Company, plus the many Music Halls (including Maddermarket) and Charity Concerts.

One musician says that David was a talented, yet humble gentleman, and remembers declaring nerves before being accompanied by him for solo clarinet pieces; David's response was, "You're nervous? I'm terrified!"

ENOS members remember a younger, shy David blushing as the ladies' chorus tried to catch his attention at rehearsals, but in later years he learned to give out a witty comment. Other members say, "it was a joy to be in a production with David as MD" and "his sense of humour and stock phrases always caused amusement". But, he had a poor memory for names, referring to one soprano as 'Dewdrop' which stuck!

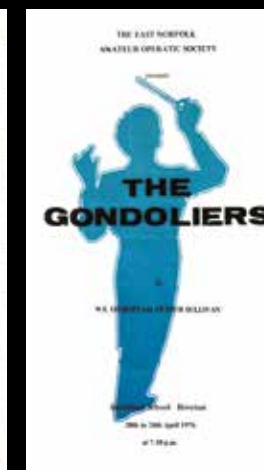
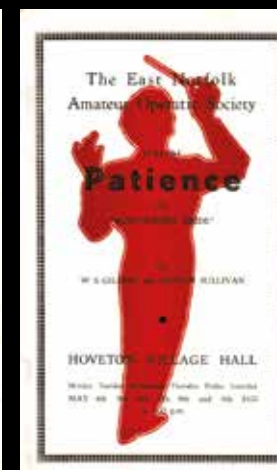
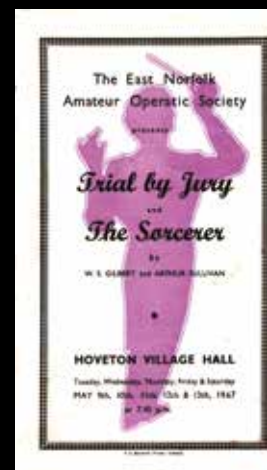
Others recall his comments when rehearsing the lower parts of a four-part harmony: "David would say, 'Right sopranos, spoil it' or he would say, 'Let's do that again with all seventeen parts' which invariably brought a smile to the lower voices."

David, a musical mentor to so many, was always the first to be asked and was ready to teach a song, give advice or record music for homework. If called to accompany at auditions or play for a concert, those involved breathed a great sigh. "David was always there, on side, and it was very reassuring to have him in the same team".

Even at very short notice a quick phone call to David, and he would appear and do whatever was required, sometimes without rehearsal; he would play the piano or take up the baton, always giving his time freely.

Chairman of NNOS said: "David Kett was in his 60th year with the society. As Musical Director until his retirement in the late 90s David continued to be a great supporter of the NNOS and we were very privileged when he offered to accompany some music rehearsals for our 2018 production *Top Hat*. It was heart warming to know how much he loved spending those evenings with us, especially enjoying the Irving Berlin melodies, which at 87 he could still play beautifully!"

David's life was celebrated in Thorpe St Andrews, the village where he was born, lived all his life and is now buried. This true gentleman, accompanist extraordinaire of talent and musical fingers, will always be remembered with affection. ★



Radio Plays Mark 1000 Editions Of Talking Newspaper



Photo by Terence Burchell.

Wymondham Town Mayor, Cllr Robert Savage, was special guest at an autumn production of radio plays, by local playwriting group, Four by Four.

The six short plays by the Four by Four team of Lou Betts, Richard Crawley, Alan Huckle and Tony Vale plus guest writers Jenny Devaux and Robin Franklin, had the theme of 1000, to coincide with the recording of the 1000th edition of Wymondham and Attleborough Talking Newspaper (WATN) on 3rd November 2017.

Founding member of Four by Four and current Chairman of WATN, Tony Vale said this was an ideal opportunity for the playwriting group, the audio news and the information service for visually impaired people to work together. A selection of the plays included as a special supplement to the milestone edition, is available via the Talking Newspaper's website.

For information about the play writing group and/or the Talking Newspaper, contact Tony Vale on 01953 605434 or email tony@valemail.eu ★

regionalroundup East Midlands

New Home for Bonkers Theatrical

Owner Mark Walker tells us about Bonkers Playhouse in Kettering

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Why Bonkers Playhouse?

Some years ago, a friend and I ended up in an 80's themed bar in Spain called Bonkers Showbar. We had a great night and returning to the UK we set up a mobile disco called Bonkers Disco, later morphing into Bonkers Theatrical and then into Bonkers Playhouse.

How did the idea of creating a theatre come about?

The idea of a playhouse theatre has been with me for many years. I felt it was something missing from our local community. I had been let down so many times by other larger theatres, it was time to do something about it and create an affordable working space to cater for many types of live performance.

It looks like the theatre is in an old factory building. Yes, it's part of an old factory which is around 130 years old.

What had to be done before you started creating the theatre?

It was obvious that we would need to strip out everything, taking the building back to a bare shell. Once this was done, it was fairly easy to design the layout and start the building work. Electrics, plumbing, plastering, metalwork - everything in the renovated building is new.

What facilities does the theatre offer?

The theatre has a comfortable 40 seat auditorium with tiered seating, a 20' x 12' playing area and a technical area including a full lighting grid and sound system. There is also a spacious foyer area, and the licensed Paul's Bar.

What has the theatre has cost?

Cost of the renovation has exceeded our initial budget but has still come in at a reasonable price of £50,000. We kept costs low by calling in favours and getting 'mates rates' where possible.

How did you finance the building of the theatre?

We have been very fortunate in gaining a couple of grants to assist with the costs. Tesco Bags For Help and Northamptonshire Community Foundation have both assisted. We also had a donation from a very dear friend.

Professional theatres are working hard to survive. How will you ensure that Bonkers Playhouse will prosper?

Our aim was to try and have some sort of event going on every month. Already, and without too much promoting, we have exceeded that with not only one event each month but two or three in some months. ★

The full programme of events can be found at bonkersplayhouse.co.uk



Read all about what it takes to be a stage manager in a theatre on page 33



Simon Brister tells us about High Tor Players, celebrating their 80th year

This year, members of The High Tor Players, based in Matlock, Derbyshire, celebrated 80 years of friendship and performance with a dinner at the Remarkable Hare in Matlock.

The group was formed in 1937 as a 'theatre appreciation group' and put on their first production *Potbound* in 1939.

Apart from a short gap during the war, the group have staged plays and reviews ever since – often as many as three or four a year.

Two current members, Joyce Renner and Dennis Todd, have been with the Players for many years; in fact, Joyce's first play was in 1956. They are both still active participants, directing and acting.

The High Tor Players are thriving, with two productions lined up for this, their 81st year; *Absent Friend* by Alan Ayckbourn, in April, being the first. Surely, a feat worth celebrating!

Please find out more on their website: hightorplayers.co.uk ★

★ NODA EAST MIDLANDS

★ LONG SERVICE AWARDS ★ PRESENTED JULY 2017 TO ★ DECEMBER 2017

★ **70 YEARS**
★ **Northampton**
★ **Musical Theatre**
★ **Company:**
★ Bryan Hall

★ **65 YEARS**
★ **Long Eaton**
★ **Operatic Society:**
★ George Cheshire

★ **55 YEARS**
★ **Carlton Operatic**
★ **Society:**
★ Julie Walton

★ **50 YEARS**
★ **Chesterfield**
★ **Operatic Society:**
★ Margaret Dring
★ **Long Eaton**
★ **Operatic Society:**
★ Angela Walters

★ **45 YEARS**
★ **Chesterfield**
★ **Gilbert & Sullivan**
★ **Society:**
★ Enid Moore

★ **40 YEARS**
★ **Erewash Musical**
★ **Society:**
★ Chrissie Oakden

Obituary – David Walker

It is with sadness that we announce the death of David Walker, a very well-known MD for numerous societies in the East Midlands. He passed away peacefully in the Royal Derby hospital on 3rd January 2018, surrounded by his family.

David had been an individual NODA member for over fifty years, first performing in his native Rochdale. Work took him to various areas of the country before he settled in Long Eaton, joining the local operatic society in 1962.

After appearing on stage with Long Eaton Operatic Society in both leading and supporting roles, and having played in orchestras for various shows, David decided to move from the stage to the pit and took on his first role as Musical Director in 1977 with Belper Operatic Society. From then he never looked back, taking up the baton with LEOS for the first time in 1979 for *Guys and Dolls*, followed by numerous shows with them, the ESNA Players in Loughborough, Carlton Operatic Society, Erewash Musical Society and The Cast, among others. He also conducted and accompanied concerts, concert rehearsals and nativities for various organisations, as well as playing piano or keyboards in the pit for other MDs.

David was also very supportive of the National Association of Drama for the Visually Handicapped, working as both Chairman of their Fundraising Committee and their Honorary Treasurer, as well as helping to run workshops and residential Summer Schools in the UK and Ireland. He thoroughly enjoyed these times, as did all those that took part.

A great lover of Stephen Sondheim's music, David was MD for LEOS's 2012 production of *Sweeney Todd*, which was his final show with LEOS. He retired from conducting in 2014 with Erewash Musical Society's production of *The Drowsy Chaperone*.

David was a very well-respected MD and was very highly regarded in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. His experience, talent and patience will be a great loss to many local musical societies. ★

Cyril Hunter

Cyril Hunter, a great champion of theatre in Wellingborough, passed away on 4th January 2018. An appreciation of his life will appear in the next issue of NODA Today.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY – EAST MIDLANDS AGM AND AWARDS DAY – LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN HALL THEATRE ON SUNDAY 10TH JUNE 2018!

The Presidential Year so far



Bristol Musical Youth Productions, 'Top Hat'

What an amazing hobby we enjoy! As my Presidential Year progresses I have been privileged to watch some inspiring productions and to meet with some wonderful people. I was honoured to be at Darlington for the re-opening of the refurbished Hippodrome. What a marvellous evening we enjoyed, including recognising Susan Robinson's 60 years of service. I have had great fun visiting some very small groups from Seaham in the North-East to Shaugh Prior on Dartmoor.

My first show visit was to the society where I am a member to see a moving production of *Rough Justice* directed and designed by a Summer School graduate, Wendy Bishop. Being mainly a drama man, this was the perfect start to my year. It was also good to see Summer School tuition being put to good use.

I had a thoroughly enjoyable weekend at the Scottish Conference, during which a bench in memory of my dear friend Gordon Blackburn was unveiled. If you ever get the chance to visit the Peebles Hydro you can take a moment to join Gordon's spirit and gaze at the fabulous scenery. Among the many wonderful elements of the weekend was a stunning cabaret from Carnegie Youth, and I am excitedly looking forward to seeing the full production in March.



Carnegie Youth Theatre



Susan Robinson with her 60 year award



STCOS, Sheffield

Of course, during the last two months I have been enjoying a wide variety of pantomimes: from the totally homemade to those enjoying professional sets and scripts. I was especially impressed by the members of BACCES who hardly managed to rehearse together as a handful of them are always in the air. One thing I have particularly enjoyed is seeing how many young people are involved in all the groups I have visited, and most importantly how well they are used. It is great to see production teams making every effort to include all ages in their shows, but especially the invention of opportunities for our young members. A particular highlight for me was my visit to Ebbw Vale where the Blaenau



Shaugh Players, Dartmoor



Mark Thorburn

Gwent Youth Stars, having been priced out of the local theatre, staged *Summer Holiday* in a community hall with all the trimmings.

With my diary quickly filling up I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the Regional AGMs. These events are usually pretty full-on but I trust that you will not be shy in coming forward to chat. As someone who only remembers his own name because people use it to call on him, it might be advisable to start off by reminding me who you are and why I know you. ★

Keep up the good work.
Nick



Exmouth Players



CENTRE STAGE

Our new Centre Stage feature gives you the chance to tell us about your favourite role. In this edition, our editor Becky chats to Stephen Cox, from The Sainsbury Singers.

Favourite role: Jesus in *Godspell*.
Performed: October 2017 at the Oakwood Centre in Reading, Berkshire.

Tell me a little bit about your acting background.

Mum and Dad met in the society about 45 years ago, so I was raised in The Sainsbury Singers! I always swore I would never perform, but I was backstage for *Evita* and they needed more men onstage. Suddenly, I was a torch-bearer and after that, I wasn't allowed backstage again! I've done about 25 shows in the last 15 years.



Let's talk about your favourite role; Jesus in *Godspell*.

I never imagined that Jesus would end up being my favourite role. I got to the audition and thought 'Well, you've got to give it a go, haven't you?'. The audition piece was the song 'Beautiful City', which we added into the show. I was listening to it in the car on the way over, and the opening lines go:

*Out of the ruins and rubble, out of the smoke,
Out of our night of struggle, can we see a ray of hope?*

It was around the same time as the Grenfell Tower tragedy and it just hit home, the whole show is about a community; a society being pulled together by this one special person.

What was the audition like?

We do open auditions in front of the whole society. It is the most terrifying thing you'll ever do, but I think if it's the one time you're going to get up there and play that role, enjoy it! The parts are decided on audition night, so we all wait together while the panel go and discuss.

How did you feel when the casting was announced?

I thought 'Blimey, I've done this, brilliant! Now, what's this part all about?'. I got home that evening and read through the libretto properly, and it dawned on me that Jesus doesn't leave the stage the whole way through. It's a series of parables, telling the Gospel of St Matthew, and the thing that links them is Jesus' narrative, so once he's on he stays on.

Tell me a bit about rehearsals.

We rehearsed for five months, two evenings a week. The performance venue has no wings, so the whole cast were onstage for the entire show, which meant we were all called to every rehearsal. That really helped bring the society together.

Rehearsals were hard work though. The first half of the show is all jovial and fun and then second half takes a darker tone and becomes very emotional. That took a long time to get my head around.

How did you deal with the work/life/rehearsal balance?

I have an amazing wife, who's also part of the society, and she keeps me organised; but also, I get through with sheer bloody-minded determination! I exercised too, I lost a lot of weight to play Jesus, primarily because he is baptised with his top off!

How did you learn the part?

I wasn't off-book until three weeks before the show and that was the most extreme it's ever been; it was very tough. I do a lot of driving, so I recorded my lines and played them back. I did find the libretto extremely difficult.



If you could play Jesus again, would you?

I've never performed with another society, but it's the one role that I might be tempted to reprise outside The Sainsbury Singers.

Is there anything you'd do differently?

I would have learnt my lines quicker!

Are there any other dream roles you'd like to have a go at?

Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables*. Definitely.

What have you got coming up next?

I'm playing Billy Crocker in *Anything Goes*. I'm excited, it's a million leagues apart from *Godspell*, but there are some parallels; Billy is a charismatic likeable character, like Jesus. Having come out of *Godspell* which was a huge success, I've gained a certain confidence which I'm carrying into this next show!

Anything Goes is on at The Hexagon in Reading from 16th – 19th May 2018 – find out more and book tickets at sainsburysingers.org.uk ★

If you'd like to chat to us about your favourite role, send an email to info@noda.org.uk and we'll be in touch!

regionalroundup London

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Councillor's Comments

2018 sees exciting events for the London Region.

In June we have the second of our London Festival Weekends. The first, in 2017, was a venture which, whilst not working quite as expected, still gave lots of our members great enjoyment with workshops over the two days (Saturday and Sunday) and the Awards Ceremony on Sunday afternoon.

This year we are working even harder to make sure that we cover as broad a spectrum of workshops as possible, giving opportunities over a whole range of theatre. These will include accents, Shakespeare, puppetry, pantomime, singing and make-up, so something for everyone.

And, of course, in September we are hosting the Presidential Gala and National AGM where the new President is installed and also the new Councillor for NODA London. Details of this event appear in this edition. Please do come and join us – we all intend to have a great time!

So, two dates to keep free:

- ★ The London Festival Weekend 23rd and 24th June at the Radlett Centre. Workshops, performance showcase and the presentation of Regional Awards, ensure an exciting weekend for everyone.
- ★ The Presidential Gala and AGM at the Hilton St Anne's Manor, Bracknell, Berkshire, on 22nd and 23rd September. ★

Jacquie Stedman
Councillor – NODA London, National Vice-President



Read more about the experience of a director in the West Midlands roundup on pages 42-43

WHAT WE DID FOR LOVE

Dom O'Hanlon On Directing *A Chorus Line*

With the London fringe theatre economy now relying on a profit-share model, in which contributors aren't paid a salary, the lines between voluntary amateur theatre and voluntary professional work are increasingly hazy. Adding to this confusion is the fact that the output of many 'amateur' companies is significantly higher and sometimes perhaps more 'professional' than many productions that operate with a professional licence.

I approach this subject having recently directed an amateur production of *A Chorus Line* that played for seven performances in London's Bridewell Theatre — a venue historically associated with high-profile UK premieres but now almost exclusively used for resident amateur theatre. *A Chorus Line* places demands on all the performers, yet, as a show, it's one of the most performed musicals in amateur, stock and community theatre across both the US and UK. What I found during auditions was that there were very few people who hadn't come across the musical in some form; most people's memories were of seeing an amateur, school or university production rather than the revival that ran for six months at the London Palladium in 2013. Auditioning just shy of 100 applicants with a 70/30 split of females to males (a figure familiar to anyone attempting to find a cast across London and beyond), I was primarily struck by the deep connections that people felt to

the legendary show, which opened on Broadway 42 years ago.

In preparing for the production, I had the pleasure and privilege of meeting the original Cassie, Donna McKechnie, who shared with me her own ghost of *A Chorus Line* like an albatross around her neck. Indeed, the show's legacy has been felt by all those who have produced, directed, choreographed or starred in it across the decades. From the repeated vamp that becomes the showstopper to the iconic gold top hat and tails, the musical takes on a life of its own in terms of audience and cast expectations. It prompts a significant challenge to those who come to the show hoping to leave their mark on it. If one could argue that *A Chorus Line* isn't a perfect musical, one could also argue that it achieves perfection in its own form and construction; any attempt to undermine or unravel this notion is foolish. Anyone who mounts a production is handed down the legacy of what the show means and what it represents to dancers, or gypsies, around the world — the idea of being given the chance to step out of the ensemble to share their story individually, away from the uniformed collective.

Our production remained faithful to Bennett's style and vision. It was designed not to be a reimagining or rediscovery, but instead a loving, respectful remounting that placed the onus on the performers to bring their own style to the roles. In working with

rather than against theatrical ghosts, the creative team let the performers and performances find lives of their own within a wider framework that both respected and celebrated the material.

In amateur theatre, these ghosts, in fact, represented another layer of excitement for the audience who recognised their friends, flatmates, work colleagues and even teachers bring their roles to life. The show's overall message, its celebration of the skill, commitment and dedication of the collective ensemble, is one that resonates with any amateur theatre company that relies on a community coming together to do what they love. In other words: a true ensemble musical. I cherished the fact that each of our 17 performers got their individual moments to shine before coming together to impress by dancing and performing in complete unison.

At the final performance of *A Chorus Line* on Broadway in 1990, producer Joseph Papp spoke aloud the words that Bennett, who died in 1987, had placed within the playbill for the show back in 1975:

"This show is dedicated to anyone who has ever danced in a chorus or marched in step anywhere."

This article was originally published on *The Clyde Fitch Report*, a website at the crossroads of arts and politics. Reprinted with permission. ★



regionalroundup North

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Councillor's Chat

Welcome to the first edition of NODA Today in 2018 – I hope you all have endured the winter season intact and your pantomimes and other shows have been well supported.

Once again, as I write, I have seen pantomimes numbering into the high teens and was even introduced to one cast as 'the man that doesn't like pantomimes' (not true Bruce). I enjoy all forms of theatre, but I'll be the first to admit I'm fairly undemonstrative and shy (haha!) when it comes to yelling back at cast members who implore you to let them know if there's a ghost behind them. I saw some excellent examples of pantomime, some non-traditional, some very traditional, and such was the feelgood factor, I even enjoyed the 85 mile trip back from Spittal, on the border, in a snow storm.

By the time you get this magazine we should have just finished our Scotch Corner weekend gala dinner and AGM attended by our National President, Nick Lawrence.

This is his second trip into the region after a whistlestop trip taking in three shows, as well as sightseeing in Durham Cathedral and at the Angel of the North.

I hope your societies go from strength to strength and I welcome your feedback about how NODA can help provide you a better service up here in the North. ★

Gordon Richardson
Regional Councillor



President Nick Lawrence
sightseeing in Dutham

Long service awards

Gordon Richardson, Councillor for the North, tells us about presenting long service awards.

Long service has always been warmly recognised by NODA and it is always a pleasure to present awards. One day you can be presenting a three year service award to a young child, and the next a 70 year service award. I was pleased to present a 70 year award at Middlesbrough AOS to Dennis Rainbow, who although a sprightly 90 year old, is still actively involved as chairman. The society surprised Dennis with the award and I was hidden in the wings of the theatre on their final night production of *Sister Act*.

It is extremely rare for someone to reach 70 years of service, and even more rare for two to fall within three months of each other. The second 70 year award went to Eunice Davidson of West End OS at their production of *Top Hat* in February. Eunice is a past treasurer and



active social committee member. That same evening two more awards were presented to Derek and Dorothy Coleman – mere youngsters at 45 and 55 years' service respectively. Between them this husband and wife duo have performed virtually every committee post within the group over the years.

Well done to all – I hope I'm still as sprightly as Dennis and Eunice if I ever reach 70 years' service! ★



West End Workshop Wows Audience

Mike Harbisher writes about a fantastic opportunity for young people in the Teesside Area.

In November Teesside Musical Theatre Youth Company and Middlesbrough Youth Theatre had the privilege of being given the opportunity to take part in a workshop. It was led by Matthew Dale, Sam O'Rourke and Charlie Stemp – three performers who had worked together in the hit musical *Half A Sixpence* in the West End. The three took time out of their busy schedule – indeed Charlie was leaving Teesside to fly out to America where he was appearing in *Hello Dolly* on Broadway – to teach the students a dance routine to 'Flash Bang Wallop' – one of the well-known songs from the show.



Read about another group's experience of the West End in our Youth news on pages 6-7

After an initial warm up the students were put through their paces learning intricate moves which were explained clearly to them. The students varied in age from five up to 18+ but there was something for everyone, with even the least confident dancer achieving great things as they were gently encouraged and helped by their teachers. Parents and friends were invited to watch – in fact some were itching to join in – and all the children who took part thoroughly enjoyed the experience of working with different choreographers and learning new things.

The children learned quickly and by the end of the session performed the whole routine to their audience.

Their choreographers were pleasantly surprised by how much the students had learned in such a short time and by the enthusiasm which they all showed. All of the audience were enthralled by what they saw.

The session finished with an opportunity for the students and audience to ask questions about life in the West End and the process that was used when rehearsing for a professional show. It was interesting to hear the replies and note that the process was almost the same, although obviously in the professional world there is more time spent each day

as more is available. In fact, after casting, the time spent rehearsing before opening night is approximately six weeks from beginning to end!

Wendy Lowe, artistic director of MYT said, "Middlesbrough Youth Theatre were put through their paces in a wonderful workshop, with Charlie Stemp, Sam O'Rourke and Matthew Dale. The company had a fantastic opportunity to work with these industry professionals, who took time out to share their knowledge and experience, inspiring the next generation of talent and performers." ★

Felton and Thirston Panto Society reaches 20 years

When the Felton village hall was refurbished 20 years ago Grace Aynsley suggested using it for a village panto. Now, some 20 years later, Grace is one of the original founding members of the pantomime society which is still going strong and is well-patronised by the majority of the village. This is due, in no small measure, to their 'signature' quirky scripts written by local writers and performers Dave Price and Neal Skelton. Their latest offering *Alice in Wonderland* (but not as you know it!) was a laugh from start to finish and was supported by many of the village's youth, both on the stage and off. The future looks bright in rural Northumberland for continuing success. Happy birthday FATPS! ★



WATCH OUT FOR EXCITING NEWS ABOUT THE REGENERATION OF THE GLOBE THEATRE, STOCKTON IN THE NEXT ISSUE

THEATRICAL TRADERS ASSOCIATION

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Many once popular musicals are losing their natural audiences and ex-West End mega-musicals are often expensive to produce. Here are some alternatives...



The Fred Karno Story

He was a theatre and music hall impresario, whose shows attracted large audiences, featuring stars of the time such as Laurel & Hardy, Charlie Chaplin, Will Hay and Sandy Powell. Featuring some of Karno's comedy sketches, the musical has new music written for the show together with some original music hall songs from Karno's time.



A musical comedy set in London's East End in 1981. Cathy thinks she has found her soul-mate in new boyfriend, Tony, but he hasn't told her about his gambling debts. Will he marry Cathy and get his hands on her money? Will best man Danny (who secretly loves her) speak out and risk all for love, or keep quiet and watch his true love marry the wrong man?



Exploring the price of our life's dreams and why you should never give up on them. In a British school of performing arts, two young student girls grapple with their fears, their abilities and their inner confidence, then face a battle between themselves. Which of them will go forward to represent the school at a crucial audition for a West End musical?

And for the dramatically-minded our plays are top notch...



Hoovering on The Edge by Hilary Spiers

(1m, 7f) Full Length. Discover the unlikely friendships that develop between seven very different women, tutored by one hapless male, on a summer writing holiday. Sun, sangria and story-telling, what could possibly go wrong! Meet Moira the tactless hypochondriac, Clare the dippy yoga teacher, and feisty Rita, to name but a few, as the women embark on a voyage of discovery about themselves, their hopes and their dreams... and uncover some surprising home truths.



Max Dix, Zero To Six by Vincent Eaton

(2m, 3f) One Act, 45 mins. Experience the birth and first six years of Max's life, and how he and his family deal with his arrival. Max tries to make sense of the world as it unfurls and unfolds, and then, as he gets older, how it unwinds and unravels in front of him. Max's first few years cause his mother (through her three personas shown on stage) to deal with the problems in her marriage, whilst his impish brother takes delight in needling Max as elder brothers often do.

Stage scripts

www.stagescripts.com sales@stagescripts.com 0345 686 0611

NODA PRESIDENTIAL GALA and AGM 2018

St Anne's Manor Wokingham RG40 1ST
Saturday 22 - Sunday 23 September

The London Region welcomes you to the Presidential Gala and AGM. It is 25 years since London hosted this event, so we are really delighted to have secured what we feel is a very special venue.

Set within 25 acres of beautiful woodland, Hilton St Anne's Manor is a country house hotel offering contemporary accommodation close to historic attractions including Windsor, Henley-On-Thames and Ascot. It boasts an indoor pool, whirlpool, gym and sauna plus a health and beauty room. The extensive grounds feature woodland, landscaped gardens, lawns and a terrace where drinks can be served.

The hotel has a spacious reception area and several comfy areas next to the St Anne's Suite, where the Dinner and Dance will be held, should you wish to take a break from dancing or have a quiet catch up with friends.

Travel to Wokingham is easy as it is a short distance from the M4 and M3. Should you wish to arrive by public transport, Heathrow Airport is 30 minutes by car, and Wokingham Train Station a few minutes away. The hotel can arrange a taxi pick up for you.

If you want to venture further afield, the hotel is conveniently located near to the historic towns of Windsor and Henley-on-Thames, whilst Hampton Court and the attractions of London are some 25 miles away.

LOCATION

- ★ Five minutes from Wokingham Train Station.
- ★ 30 minutes from Heathrow Airport.
- ★ 70 minutes from London Waterloo Station.
- ★ Close to Junction 10 of the M4 and Junction 3 of the M3.

FACILITIES

- ★ 14 metre indoor swimming pool.
- ★ Whirlpool.
- ★ Health and beauty room.
- ★ Gym and sauna.
- ★ Complimentary WiFi in all public areas of the hotel.

NEARBY PLACES OF INTEREST

- ★ Windsor Castle.
- ★ Henley-On-Thames.
- ★ Hampton Court.
- ★ London.

You can book your place by completing the form on page 22 and returning it to NODA, 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH.

Bookings and full payment must be received by 1st September 2018. Early booking is recommended to guarantee your place.



Our live band, the Polka Dots

Friday

You can arrive on the evening of Friday 21st for bed and breakfast, see packages C and D.

Saturday

The AGM will take place at 2:30pm on Saturday 22nd September, including the presentation of Programme and Poster Awards and the inauguration of Jacquie Stedman as National President.

The evening dinner will be followed by a cabaret entertainment by Stage One Youth, who are three-time winners of the London Region Youngstars Award. To round off our evening there will be dancing to a live band, the Polka Dots, bringing you a modern twist on 40s and 50s close harmony. Dinner will include half a bottle of wine per person.

Sunday

The Annual Meeting of Regional Committee Members will take place at 10:30am in the St Anne's Suite. Lunch will be provided for those who have stayed overnight.



PACKAGE A: £233 per person (Two people sharing)
Saturday morning to Sunday lunchtime

Saturday 22nd September:
12:30pm – 1:30pm..... Buffet lunch
2:30pm..... Annual General Meeting
6:30pm..... Reception
7:00pm..... Presidential Dinner/Dance Black Tie event
..... Cabaret
..... Dancing to live band

Sunday 23rd September:
7:00am – 10:00am Breakfast
10:30am..... Regional Committee Members' Meeting
12:30pm – 1:30pm..... Sunday lunch

PACKAGE C: £273 per person (Two people sharing)
Friday evening to Sunday lunchtime

Friday 21st September: Bed and breakfast

Saturday 22nd September:
7:00am – 10:00am Breakfast
12:30pm – 1:30pm..... Buffet lunch
2:30pm..... Annual General Meeting
6:30pm..... Reception
7:00pm..... Presidential Dinner/Dance Black Tie event
..... Cabaret
..... Dancing to live band

Sunday 23rd September:
7:00am – 10:00am Breakfast
10:30am..... Regional Committee Members' Meeting
12:30pm – 1:30pm..... Sunday lunch

PACKAGE E: £27 per person
Saturday daytime only

Saturday 22nd September:
12:30pm – 1:30pm..... Lunch
2:30pm..... Annual General Meeting

PACKAGE F: £63 per person
Saturday evening only

Saturday 22nd September:
6:30pm..... Reception
7:00pm..... Presidential Dinner/
Dance Black Tie event
..... Cabaret
..... Dancing to live band

There is no charge for attending just the AGM or the Regional Committee Members' Meeting.

PACKAGE B: £243 per person (Single occupancy)
Saturday morning to Sunday lunchtime

Saturday 22nd September:
12:30pm – 1:30pm..... Buffet lunch
2:30pm..... Annual General Meeting
6:30pm..... Reception
7:00pm..... Presidential Dinner/Dance Black Tie event
..... Cabaret
..... Dancing to live band

Sunday 23rd September:
7:00am – 10:00am Breakfast
10:30am..... Regional Committee Members' Meeting
12:30pm – 1:30pm..... Sunday lunch

PACKAGE D: £288 per person (Single occupancy)
Friday evening to Sunday lunchtime

Friday 21st September: Bed and breakfast

Saturday 22nd September:
7:00am – 10:00am Breakfast
12:30pm – 1:30pm..... Buffet lunch
2:30pm..... Annual General Meeting
6:30pm..... Reception
7:00pm..... Presidential Dinner/Dance Black Tie event
..... Cabaret
..... Dancing to live band

Sunday 23rd September:
7:00am – 10:00am Breakfast
10:30am..... Regional Committee Members' Meeting
12:30pm – 1:30pm..... Sunday lunch

PACKAGE G: £90 per person
Saturday daytime and evening

Saturday 22nd September:
12:30pm – 1:30pm..... Lunch
2:30pm..... Annual General Meeting
6:30pm..... Reception
7:00pm..... Presidential Dinner/
Dance Black Tie event
..... Cabaret
..... Dancing to live band

PACKAGE H: £27 per person
Sunday daytime only

Sunday 23rd September:
10:30am..... Regional Committee Members' Meeting
12:30pm – 1:30pm..... Lunch

NODA Presidential Gala and AGM 2018

Hilton St Anne's Manor, Wokingham RG40 1ST
Saturday 22nd September – Sunday 23rd September 2018

BOOKING FORM

Please print for accuracy:

Name(s):

Address:

Postcode:

Email: NODA Region:

Phone (emergency only):

N.B. Confirmation and other news about the celebrations will be sent via email. Your tickets and name tags will be available with complete information packs including timings on your arrival.

Package options:

- ☐ A: to include 1 night (Saturday), bed, breakfast and lunch £233 Two people sharing
- ☐ B: to include 1 night (Saturday), bed, breakfast and lunch £243 Single occupancy
- ☐ C: to include 2 nights (Friday and Saturday), bed, breakfast and lunch £273 Two people sharing
- ☐ D: to include 2 nights (Friday and Saturday), bed, breakfast and lunch £288 Single occupancy
- ☐ E: Saturday only to include lunch £27
- ☐ F: Saturday evening only to include Presidential Dinner/Dance £63
- ☐ G: Saturday lunch and Dinner/Dance £90
- ☐ H: Sunday only to include lunch £27

There is no charge for attending just the AGM or the Regional Committee Members' Meeting.

Type of Room required: ☐ Double ☐ Twin ☐ Single

Dietary Requirements: ☐ Vegetarian ☐ Vegan ☐ Gluten Free ☐ Dairy Intolerant ☐ Nut Allergy

Other:

Payment choices:

All payments must be accompanied with a booking form which can be posted to NODA, 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH or emailed to booking@noda.org.uk

Deposit

(non-returnable)
£50.00 per person

- ☐ Cheque made out to NODA
- ☐ Payment by BACS Bank Sort Code 60-83-01
Account Number 20379546
Quote AGM and your name
- ☐ Credit Card payments. Phone 01733 374790

Disability considerations (there are lifts to all floors):

You can download a printable version of this booking form from the website at noda.org.uk/news

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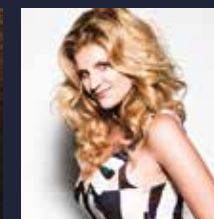
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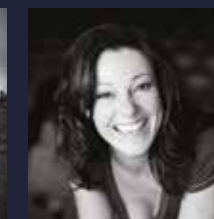
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regionalroundup North East



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Gala weekend dance workshop

Councillor's Comments

A very warm welcome to the NODA North East Region.

The last few months have seen many of our societies, and I suspect many societies in other regions, performing their annual pantomimes. Oh yes they have! I have had the honour and pleasure of visiting many pantomime productions as well as a good number of other productions such as musicals, revues, concerts and plays around the North East Region. I have to say I have been extremely pleased at the warm reception and hospitality I have always received at every one of the productions.

Once again, much time has been taken up by our Bridlington Committee preparing and arranging for our Annual Gala Weekend. This year we are very pleased to be celebrating 50 years at this popular East Coast resort and, although I can't admit to being there at the first one, it is true to say I have been to over 40 of the weekends in the town. We have always had an extremely warm welcome from the hoteliers, the staff at The Spa and the East Riding of Yorkshire Council as well as all the shops and various businesses in and around Bridlington. I hope these relationships continue and indeed grow in future years as we continue to use Bridlington for our weekend celebrations. ★

Leslie Smith
NODA North East Councillor

Memorable Celebration

To help celebrate her 50 years in amateur theatre Jeannine Ridha hired Louth Riverhead Theatre and brought together many people with whom she has worked during that time. She says, "I'd been counting the days off till my 17th birthday in February 1967 so that I could audition for Grimsby & District AOS (now Curtain Up Productions). My first show was *White Horse Inn* and I'm proud to say I've been performing with them and other groups ever since."

To mark her 50 years of performing in musical theatre she hired the Riverhead Theatre, which seats 209, for a special concert. "With help from an amazing team of family and friends we organised the event and I enjoyed one of the most

memorable times of my life." Having worked with lots of people Jeannine says that the most difficult part was leaving some off her guest list.

She chose the songs and included several audience sing-alongs. "It was fantastic to hear the audience singing along to songs from *South Pacific*, *Oklahoma!*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Oliver!*. Some of the cast from when I played *Calamity Jane* in 1979 joined me for 'The Black Hills of Dakota'. Many are now in their 70s and 80s and hadn't been onstage for years. To say it was emotional is an understatement."

Jeannine's daughter, Emma, and granddaughters Molly (15) and Tilly (11)

also performed and her son, Haitham, helped in the planning.

Jeannine continues "I felt very honoured that former NODA President, Eric Smart, and his wife Wilma were with us. I received a handwritten card from Jodie Prenger, who I've met twice. A special moment came at the end when Emma read out a surprise, very personal, letter from Sir Cameron Mackintosh. Wonderful!"

Jeannine had wanted the celebration to be a thank you to the wonderful friends that she has made in musical theatre over the past 50 years, "I feel very blessed to still be as passionate about performing half a century on and in January I played Maggie Jones in *42nd Street* for the 5th time" ★

Read about more special anniversaries in the Scotland roundup on pages 28-29

Award for an area stalwart

One of Hull's leading women in the world of musical theatre has been awarded a NODA Diamond Bar for 60 years of service.

Jean Ward Skerrow, 87, joined Hull Savoyards in 1957 and starred as Yum Yum in *The Mikado*. Since then she has performed lead roles in the majority of G&S operettas as well as numerous other musicals and has appeared on stage alongside her daughter Fiona. Jean has had an eclectic career as a performer and, whilst she has been part of many theatre groups, her long-standing dedication has been with the Hull Savoyards where she is now Honorary President and an Honorary Life Member. She is still participating by helping at rehearsals, selling programmes and raffle tickets and entertaining Mayors in attendance at the society's performances.

Jean says she has had a wonderful life thanks, in part, to the Hull Savoyards, "A lot of people pack it in but I was really keen to carry on and help the youngsters, so I entered into a coaching role. The young people still come and say, 'am I doing it right Jean?' and they really do trust me."

Since being convinced to audition for the group by well-known choir conductor Betty Middleton, and after bagging the lead role of Yum Yum, she has not looked back.

Jean is hoping for many more years of fun with the Hull Savoyards, "It's

something that I've always treasured and I've had the most wonderful life. It has taken me to all these places and I'm still enjoying it to this day. It's such an unbelievable achievement but I never did it for any awards or prizes - I do it because I love it." ★



regionalroundup North West

Councillor's Chat

Plans are well underway for our NW AGM and Awards Weekend in Manchester in May – we look forward to seeing you there.

This year, six of our regional representatives have arranged their own district awards dinner, each one only limited in numbers by the size of venue rather than lack of interest from their members. In total, almost 2,000 people have enjoyed these celebrations, which are largely run by individual Reps, although with a great supporting cast – especially our NW webmasters Lloyd Bamber and Luke Taberer and our treasurer Trevor Mills. So, I want to say a huge thank you to them, and to pass on thanks for all the people who have

attended a District dinner.

I was privileged to attend all six dinners, which celebrate the vast talent we have to shout about in the North West, but equally importantly the friendship and camaraderie which our wonderful hobby promotes.

It is wonderful to see the 'society families' coming together for an enjoyable evening in the company of like-minded people. Thank you everyone for being a part of our NODA NW family and for allowing me to be at its head. I am humbled and grateful! ★

Christine Hunter Hughes
Councillor



BIG DAY IN THE BIG APPLE

From Manchester, to New York, District One Representative Kevin Proctor sprung a recent surprise on his family, friends and NODA colleagues, with a secret wedding in New York.

Kevin and his long-term partner Andrew McNicholas were married in Central Park on 14th February, St Valentine's Day, before continuing their celebrations with a honeymoon in Florida.

We wish them a long and happy marriage. ★

Read about another NODA wedding in the Wales and Ireland roundup on pages 40-41

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The North West committee has recently lost a dedicated and staunch supporter of the region and NODA nationally, Edith Yates. Christine Hunter Hughes pays tribute here:

Edith was serving on the North West committee when I first joined as a District Representative, and I personally want to pay tribute to her for all the help and support offered to me, and the whole committee, for very many years.

Edith became the regional representative for District 11 in 1992 when she took over from her husband Harold, following his death. She served until 2009 when, unfortunately, the rules dictated she must resign. Edith was a member of Lancaster Dramatic and Operatic Society, the original founders of NODA. Perhaps it was this connection which made her such a staunch and dedicated supporter. I don't think Edith has ever missed a regional AGM. Many of you will have seen her there, ensconced in the hotel lounge, busily knitting for various charitable causes and happy to chat to anyone, glad to be within her NODA family.

My lasting memory of Edith though, apart from all her help and support, was her telling off some of the younger members of the committee who would wear their regalia as a 'badge' rather than on the red collarette. Edith was adamant the regalia should be worn with such pride, and the red collarette just made it immediately more visible.

Edith was born in 1928 so was almost 90 when she died, and had dedicated a lifetime of service to amateur theatre.

Thank you, Edith, rest in peace. ★

Look what happened to Mabel!

Who doesn't love to welcome a new member to their am dram family?

And that's been the case for members of Clitheroe Parish Church AODS, as Rose Hurley introduced her new daughter – who has a very special name. Rose played Mabel in the company's 2017 production of *Mack And Mabel*, and soon after became pregnant, giving birth to a baby girl in December.

Taking inspiration from the role, she chose the name Mabel for the newborn.

"I just loved the name," Rose said. "The fact that I had played the part of Mabel Normand made it even more special. It's



Rose as Mabel Normand

such an incredible role. She has some amazing numbers and being set over a long period of time meant trying to portray a range of ages and emotions.

"We are totally in love with our very own Mabel, and although playing Mabel was such fun, I am sure being a mother will be the best role yet."

At the NODA NW district 3 and 12 awards Rose received the award for best female in a musical and the BBC Radio Lancashire Award for best overall performance. ★



Rose and her very own Mabel

BRIGHT SPARK

For most of us, treading the boards is a welcome break from the pressures of work or studies.

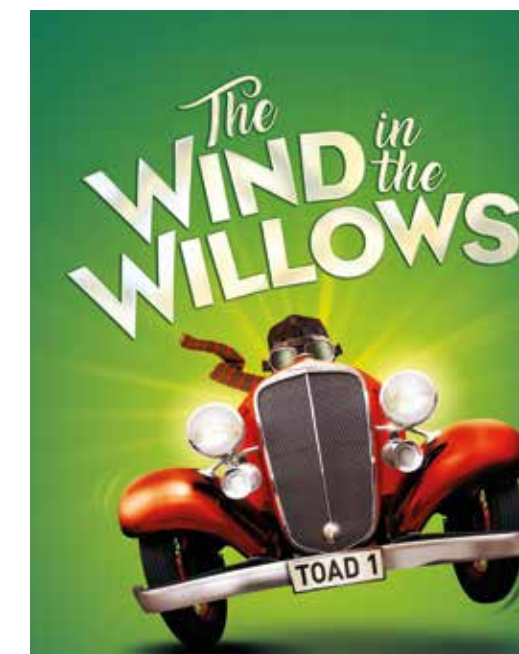
But Paul Taylor, of Mawdesley Amateur Drama (MAD) Group decided to take his hobby a bit more seriously and recently completed an MA in Making Performance: Theatre Lighting, Design and Contemporary Dance at Edge Hill University.

Paul has been a member of MAD for 15 years, developing a special interest in theatre lighting technology and has advised on updating the group's lighting equipment.

The concept of using dance as an illustration of the scope of theatre lighting came from Paul working with MAD choreographer Lorraine Ryan.

As part of his research, a public performance of contemporary dance was presented at Edge Hill's Studio Theatre, where Paul's lighting design was put into action.

Paul is now a member of the Association of Lighting Designers which enables him to be in touch with professional theatre lighting designers as well as being kept informed of developments in the industry. ★



MASTERCLASS

NODA North West Regional Conference
Sunday 6th May 2018
Mercure Manchester Piccadilly Hotel

Delivered by:
Jim Hoare
TRW Vice President, New York
Drew Barker
TRW Vice President, London

Conference attendee: Free
Non Conference Attendee Fee: £5

For more information or to book please contact:
christine.hunterhughes@noda.org.uk

TRW

regionalroundup Scotland

NODA Scotland Conference

The NODA Scotland Conference 2018 will be held from Friday 26th to Sunday 28th October at Peebles Hydro, Innerleithen Road, Peebles EH45 8LX. Full details will be posted in due course.

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Calum Campbell, NODA Scotland Youth Adviser – A Welcome



Calum has been involved in amateur dramatics for the past ten years. After studying music performance at college in Edinburgh, Calum took on the role of director for Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions Youth Theatre and works with them to the current day. He graduated from Summer Hall in Edinburgh with a diploma in physical theatre and has worked all over the UK as a full time professional actor, director and workshop

facilitator. Some of his work includes directing for Physical Theatre Scotland on their Commonwealth Games project for the National Theatre of Scotland, acting for a Theatre in Education schools tour in Yorkshire and directing for countless societies across the central belt. Calum is also the Head of Drama at Fife Academy of Performing Arts. He is very pleased to be appointed NODA Youth Adviser for Scotland. ★

Stuart McCue-Dick, Councillor



Russell Laurie: 50 years long service

Congratulations to Russell Laurie who is pictured receiving his 50 years long service award from Regional Representatives, Dorothy Johnstone and Douglas Clark. Russell is a member of Bohemians Lyric Opera Company, Edinburgh. ★

NODA Scotland Website and Facebook



We will be delighted to receive contributions to the NODA Scotland section of the website. Here you will find all sorts of useful information including news and show listings which can be submitted as far in advance as you have made plans. Don't forget we also have a very active Facebook page – please spread the word about this to your members.

Items for inclusion on either the website or Facebook page should be emailed to the Councillor, Stuart McCue-Dick, on stuart.dick@noda.org.uk ★



Ayrshire Santa Shock

On Christmas Eve Santa Claus got the surprise of his life!

On a recent trip to London, John McGill of District 4's Loudoun Musical Society (LMS) was convinced by friends to help out and take part in an apparent world record attempt for the most Santas down a chimney. But the 28-year old got the shock of his life when he landed, literally, on a West End stage in front of a roaring audience of 2,500 people.

The stitch-up was six months in the making and saw John's mum, and friend David – the current President of LMS – re-arrange his life to lure him away for a trip to London. The ruse of the world record attempt saw John, dressed in a Santa costume, sliding down a chute, and bursting on to the stage of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, ending up as the 'Unexpected Star' of Michael

McIntyre's *Big Show* which was broadcast to millions on BBC One on Christmas Eve.

John said, "I was like a rabbit in the headlights. I was hit by a wall of sound

and it took me ages to work out what was happening. It wasn't until Michael pointed out my family in the audience that I realised it was me who was being stitched up."

Aircraft mechanic John has been a member of LMS for ten years now and has been Secretary for the last five. He recently took the role of Jesus in the society's production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Palace Theatre, Kilmarnock. As much as he loves performing at the Palace, he felt "it was an absolute privilege to perform on that stage, in the West End, with that choir".

John would like to thank everyone for the kind comments and abundant messages of support for his performance on the show. You can catch up with John's rendition of *O Holy Night* on BBC iPlayer or YouTube. ★

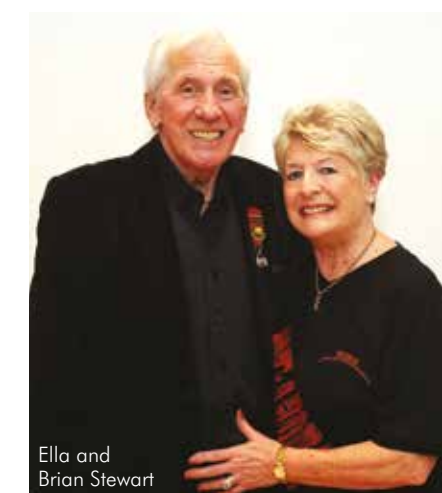


John McGill in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Loudoun Musical Society)

Kelty Musical Association: Long Service Achievement

Earlier this year Kelty Musical Association (KMA) congratulated one of our stalwart members, Ella Stewart, as she celebrated 65 years of membership with the company, a truly wonderful achievement. Ella was extremely proud to be honoured with the title of Hon. Life President, a position previously held by her beloved husband Brian, a well-respected KMA legend, who sadly passed away in 2014. Having appeared for more than 50 consecutive years on stage and performing many principal roles, her most memorable being those she shared as Brian's leading lady in *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, Ella retired from the stage. She then became actively involved from the other side of the footlights, a job she continues to do to this day very efficiently and successfully.

Ella has always been very proud to be a member of KMA and is so pleased



Ella and Brian Stewart

that her family of three generations of Stewarts are following in her footsteps, sharing her passion for this wonderful second family. Ella would like to specially thank the company for honouring both

herself and Brian by buying a memorial plaque to commemorate Brian's 65 years of dedicated service, and a thank you plaque for Ella's 65 years of dedicated service. These are featured on two seats in the stalls at Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline, which holds a special significance to them both. Ella was presented with her 65 year diamond pin from NODA to commemorate this fantastic achievement after the final curtain went down on a very successful run of *Spamalot*.

Ella is loving the rehearsals which are well underway for our production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in May, and as Treasurer she will be keeping her eye well focused on the purse strings, yet again. ★

Joyce Clark, Secretary, Kelty Musical Association

ASK AN EXPERT

Our experts answer your questions about DBS checks.

What is a DBS check?

A DBS check is performed by the Disclosure and Barring Service. Getting a DBS check means checking someone's criminal record.

Why might our society need this?

If there are child performers in your society, NODA considers it best practice to have at least one person in your company DBS checked. If you have chaperones in your society whose job it is to look after children, or vulnerable/disabled adults, during shows and rehearsals then they will require a DBS check.

What is NODA's role in the DBS check?

NODA is a DBS umbrella body. This means we can process and submit applications on your behalf. You cannot submit an application directly to DBS unless you are registered with them. Only large organisations who submit many checks a year can register directly with DBS.

Using NODA as your umbrella body makes the process much simpler. Once you have completed your forms, we will check that they are filled out correctly and then pass them onto DBS. This service costs £10 per application.



Explaining the basics:

1. Before you apply for a DBS check you must appoint a DBS contact in your society. This should be the person who will validate the forms. In order that we can process your application quickly, first let us know who your DBS contact is. Send us an email to richard@noda.org.uk, or a letter, showing your contact's name, address, email and telephone

number, signed by two of your society officials, plus a copy of your child protection policy. Once we have these details we can put you in contact with staff at DBS to start your application.

2. If the person you are checking is a volunteer, there is no charge from DBS. But if you are going to pay them for the role, it's £26 for a standard check and £44 for an enhanced.
3. Once you have received your form, download our basic step-by-step guide from the 'Our Services' section of our website. This will take you through each section of the form and explain what you need to do.

What sort of check do I need?

Standard

A standard check shows any spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings.

Most societies will only need to carry out a standard disclosure DBS check on a person. If there are children in your society and you have large group rehearsals, you shouldn't need more than a standard check.

Enhanced

An enhanced check shows the same as a standard check plus any information held by local police that's considered relevant to the role.

Sometimes you may want to carry out an enhanced check on a role like a director, if they spend more time with the children in your society.

An enhanced check with barred lists

An enhanced check with barred lists shows the same as an enhanced check plus whether the applicant is on the list of people barred from doing the role you are checking them for.

It is a criminal offence for an individual who appears on the barred list to engage in regulated activity.

Regulated activity is work which involves unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups, including children. If there is a person in your society who spends time with children on their own, ie with no other adults in the room, then this person must be checked against the barred lists. Usually this person would be a chaperone.

It's important to note that it is illegal to check someone against the barred lists if their role doesn't involve regulated activity.

What happens next?

Once you have completed your form, send it to us with a cheque for £10 made out to NODA. We will check your form and if it is all completed correctly



we'll send it onto DBS for processing. If there are any issues with the form we will get in touch with your DBS contact.

You can track your application online on the gov.uk website.

Once your application is complete you will be sent a disclosure certificate. ★

Dos and Don'ts

- ★ DO use black ink
- ★ DO complete the form neatly in block capitals
- ★ DO cross mistakes out with a single line and write the correction to the right
- ★ DO make sure your society DBS contact verifies all the documents
- ★ DON'T use correction fluid
- ★ DON'T write 'volunteer' under the role of the person you are checking— you need to be specific. Make sure you fill in the name of their role, i.e. Director, or chaperone, or MD and state whether it is a child or adult workforce.

Application form

a applicant's details

1 title

2 surname

3 forename(s)

4 have you ever been known by any other names?

5 surname

6 forename(s)

7 dates from and to

8 surname

9 forename(s)

mr ☐ mrs ☐ miss ☐

no ☐

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Celebrate your time in amateur theatre with our long service awards



10 years



15 years



20 years



25 years



25 years



30 years



35 years



40 years



45 years



50 years



50 years



55 years



60 years



65 years



70 years



Society Life Member

Download an application form today at noda.org.uk/awards

Spotlight on... a Stage Manager

NODA Today's editor, Becky, finds out what it takes to be a Stage Manager

This spring Peterborough Mask Theatre are performing *The Importance of Being Earnest*. When I was asked to stage manage, I decided I'd better get some tips from the experts.



Di Fox and Laura Smyth have stage managed for the society in large and small-scale theatre venues, outdoor spaces, and even at festivals.

What's the main job of a Stage Manager?

Di: To ensure the smooth running of everything that takes place on the stage for a production and to be the one who thinks about the technical requirements.

Laura: To make sure everyone and everything is where it should be, when it should be!

What do you do to prepare?

Laura: Read the play! I also spend time with the director to get to grips with their vision.

Di: I like to attend as many rehearsals as possible, to know the script as well as the actors.

What sort of documents do you need?

Di: The book is our bible – it's a script marked up with all the sound and lighting cues and anything else which needs action during a production. Also, the props list which we create during rehearsals. It documents where and when props are needed and, most importantly, where items have been sourced from, to make sure they can be returned after the show.

What do you do during rehearsals?

Laura: I make copious amounts of notes about prop requirements and draw diagrams of the set layout.

Di: One of the main jobs is to arrange the rehearsal room to resemble the performance space as closely as possible and keep the book up to date with cues and also blocking notes.

What happens just before a show starts?

Di: This is my favourite time – all the props have been set, the actors have all arrived and are ready. You have given the half call and the book is sitting on the prompt desk, open on page one. I like the quiet that comes over the auditorium just before the doors are opened to the audience. Then it all begins. You open the house, the 15, the 10, and then beginners. You are given clearance and call the lights down. We're off!

Stage managers have to 'call the show' - what does this mean?

Laura: Giving cues to sound and lighting operators during the show – I learnt this on the hoof at a festival in the Isle of Man!

Di: As well as cueing the sound and lighting you might also need to call entrances for actors that can't see or hear the action. Sometimes you also have to cue effects, like smoke for instance, or even flying scenery in.

Why do you enjoy it?

Laura: Stage managing appeals to my inner control freak; it's the SM's responsibility to get everything in place and run the show.

Di: I enjoy being part of a team of people who are working together to make a production work. I love calling the show and watching every night as it all comes together.

Tell us about a time that things didn't quite go to plan!

Laura: We took *The Pillowman* to the MADF festival on the Isle of Man and in our excitement to get on the road we completely failed to pack the performance license. It wasn't until halfway through the get in that we realised we didn't have it. Thankfully we managed to get a copy emailed over just in time!

Di: I worked on a youth production of *Blood Brothers* and our director wanted to use a stage gun for the final scene. The armourer came and trained the girl who was to use the gun, which had to be fired twice to kill both brothers. On the night the girl aimed and fired, and a loud bang went off; one of the brothers went down. She raised the gun again, but nothing happened, she fumbled with it but couldn't get it to go off – I was helpless! The second brother went down anyway – had he fainted or was he dead? The moral of this tale is always have a backup sound effect available! I still can't watch the video of that performance!

Thanks to Di and Laura, I think I'm ready to tackle the stage management challenge, wish me luck!

The Importance of Being Earnest is on at the Key Theatre, Peterborough from 11th - 14th April, just as this edition goes to print. To find out about Peterborough Mask Theatre's next show, *The Comedy of Errors* go to masktheatre.co.uk

If you'd like to chat to us about your backstage role, send an email to info@noda.org.uk and we'll be in touch!

regionalroundup

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Why youth need theatre and theatre needs youth

I was asked recently by a parent if what their child was doing in a theatre production would be 'valuable'. Here was my response:

Theatre is not just about the end product - theatre is about learning, building confidence, making friends, commitment and responsibility, hard work, and of course having fun. Parents of children in my theatre group tell me that it has been the best thing their child has ever done; some have made friends for life, some have grown in confidence, and all have learned new skills which can be applied in other areas of their life. So "yes" is my answer, what any child does and learns from theatre is indeed valuable.

In return young people are valuable to theatre. We need them and what they bring to the theatre now, but more importantly we need what they will bring in the future. I urge all societies to consider what you do to encourage young people into your groups and how you teach and nurture them. NODA Youth is here to help and support you in working with youngsters to make their experience of theatre a positive one. Remember, these young people are the theatre of the future and the theatre needs youth as much as youth needs the theatre. ★

Jackie Kenyon
 Youth Adviser

50 years of Waterside

Waterside Musical Society (WMS), based in Hythe and Holbury, are celebrating their 50th Anniversary this year.

The society was established near Fawley when keen operetta performers, many of whom worked for the oil refinery, became fed up of ferrying across to Southampton to take part in shows. The first performance was *Iolanthe* at the local school, and one member remembers attending as a child and seeing her teacher conducting wearing fairy wings.

Gilbert and Sullivan shows dominated for the first few years but during their history WMS have branched out with *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Chess*, *Brigadoon*, *Carousel* and even an original show called *Act Your Age* written by a member, Christopher Wortley.



A year of celebrations awaits as WMS perform a 1968 inspired concert in March and *Spamalot* in October. Members are also looking forward to a Golden celebration, including afternoon tea and reminiscing.

Find out more about WMS on Facebook at [WatersideMusicalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/WatersideMusicalSociety). ★

BODS present a UK premiere – *Silas Marner the Musical*

Rarely does a small village society get the opportunity to perform a UK premiere, but such was the exciting experience of Betchworth Operatic & Dramatic Society (BODS) when *Silas Marner The Musical* was chosen as its autumn 2016 production.

Set in the early 19th century, the Victorian novel *Silas Marner* by George Eliot tells the story of a weaver cast out from a poor religious community, who leads a solitary and embittered miser's life until chance brings him love and happiness. Although not, at first sight, an obvious subject for a musical, the book is brought to life with memorable songs and imaginative dramatic devices.

Director Alison Cooper stumbled upon this wonderful show and soon she and Musical Director, Ian Stone, were working alongside composers Phil Ryan and David Ford of Storm Productions to personalise the material for BODS. Ian added beautiful four-part arrangements to the chorus numbers and adapted the melodic solos to suit the BODS singers, while Alison designed a simple but imaginative set to enhance the flowing

style of her production.

NODA reviewer Jon Fox wrote, "Silas Marner was movingly and superbly played by Peter Thomas, who inhabited rather than acted this troubled and unfairly tormented man". The dramatic lighting and sound effects by David Ames greatly enhanced the depth and poignancy of the performances, as is evident from the production photos by Mick Mercer (these can be found at bodsweb.com).



Read about another new musical in the South West roundup overleaf



Silas Marner was a hugely successful show much loved by audiences, and attended by the composers themselves. BODS also received the NODA 'Accolade of Excellence'. ★

Photography courtesy of Mick Mercer

Batman and Robin by Catsfield Amateur Dramatic Society

We entered a full house, with loud music playing and a back projection of the recognisable Batman silhouette. Catsfield is freezing over and Mayor Chubby's daughter Rosie Cheeks is to be kidnapped by the wicked Penguin while his sidekicks Bish and Bash, together with Catwoman, and The Joker consult a Giant Joke Book. So, with a stirring opening by a masked ensemble, our caped crusaders Batman and Robin save the day. There's a few 'Pows', 'Bams', 'Kabooms', and of course the famous Batmobile, aided by a hot air balloon, with some very hairy moments along the way. What a journey!

This venture was undertaken by first time director George Brunger, with the usual enthusiasm and hard graft from the team of writers and performers. There was also one new addition to the group this year, Jessie Ballard.

The set construction was incredibly imaginative, with a Batcave, Penguin's Hideout, Bat Garage, Inspector Truncheon's office, the balloon basket, prison cage, and 'walk off with' Batmobile. An array of amazing props appeared from the cast – one wonders



what else they might have stashed away in their cupboards!

Cast doubled as stage crew with Ron Francis on the curtain and Lizzie Francis on the book. Music cues were synchronised and with the two Johns, Overall and Search in the technical corner, noises off and lighting were well under control. Front of House was

managed efficiently again by Rosemary Cooper and her friends, as was the raffle by Heather Verralls and her helpers.

Costume and character was first class and if space allowed I would mention everyone.

Batman and Robin, by Adrian Crompton, was performed at Catsfield Village Hall and directed by George Brunger. ★

regionalroundup South West

All Change on NODA South West Committee

It is always good to put a face to a name! At NODA's recent AGM in Bristol, our new Regional Councillor, Graham Liverton and several new Regional Representatives took up their new roles, at a presentation given by outgoing NODA President, Michael Hastlow. We were there to take their pictures and welcome them to their new jobs in NODA! ★

New Regional Councillor and Regional Representatives take up their roles!



Graham Liverton, Regional Councillor



Joyce Pomeroy, District 5



Delia Lee, District 10



Popular Regional Rep Retires

After many years and some recent 'soul searching', Janet Elworthy has decided to step down as the NODA South West Regional Representative for District 6, covering East Devon, Lyme Regis and the Channel Islands.

It was a decision not made lightly, but changes to personal circumstances have encouraged a reassessment of commitments. Janet says "visiting societies has allowed me to have the best time imaginable, meeting some of the nicest people and enjoying seeing some truly memorable shows. Thank you all for making this happen for me".

Janet has every intention of continuing to support District 6's productions and NODA whenever she can. We are pleased to announce that Patricia Barclay is proposed to take over from Janet and can be contacted via patricia.barclay@noda.org.uk ★



Janet Elworthy decides it's time to call it a day with District 6

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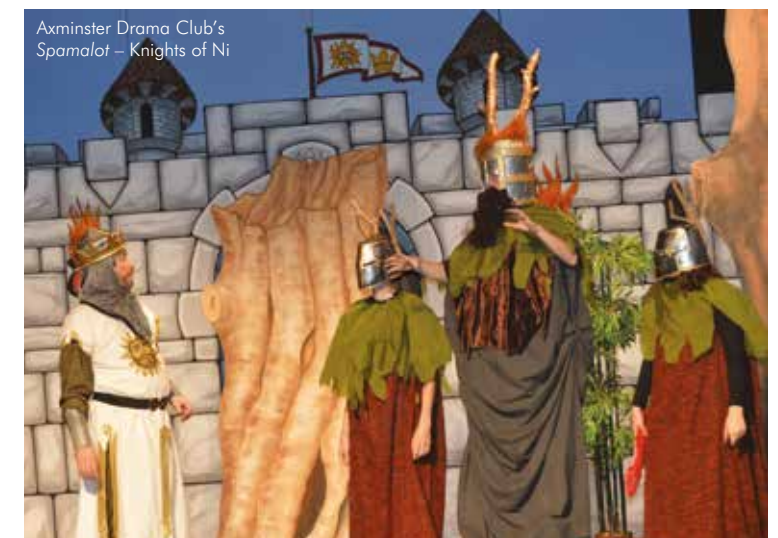
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Spam-a-lot of Celebrities!

We know it gets harder and harder nowadays for amateur groups to get those all-important 'bums on seats'. What you need is a good hook, to get the audience through the doors and one of our South West clubs recently had a very interesting marketing idea.

For Axminster Drama Club's recent production of Monty Python's *Spamalot*, Director Leigh Conley wanted to do something different. Leigh explained, "I thought it might be fun if we asked different local dignitaries to play the part of Sir Not Appearing in this Show, on each night". Sir Not Appearing is on stage for a split second, in fact just enough time to say sorry and then leave. Leigh approached several dignitaries, all of whom were happy to be involved, and they ended up with the Town Mayor; The Lord of the Manor; a local Councillor and the previous Mayor all making a guest appearance. None of their guests came to rehearsal, but all knew what to do and were all allowed to ad lib and enjoy their moment, which added to the fun!

Leigh wanted something extra special for the final performance and approached several celebrities who are connected to the local area. Luckily, the actress Pauline Quirke, famous for her roles in TV's *Birds of a Feather* and *Broadchurch*, has a holiday home around 10 miles from Axminster and was staying there on the final day. Leigh told us "She was so nice - it turned out she was



on holiday that weekend with her grandchildren. We offered her free tickets, but she said that they had to be back in London that evening and had to leave early. However, even though she was on an incredibly tight schedule she still wanted to help!". Apparently, Pauline drove out of her way to Axminster, with a stinking cold to boot, to be there at the appropriate time to make her guest appearance and got a massive reaction from the audience when she appeared.

"It was lovely of her to put herself out for us and she was genuinely surprised when she was given a card and flowers as she left, as she didn't feel like she had done anything! The show was a massive success and, those that came on Sunday, will remember their special guest for a long time to come", Leigh concluded.

For more details on this and Axminster Drama Club do see their excellent Facebook Page. ★



Read about more new writing in the East roundup on pages 8-9

Powder and Paint

South West Team looking to further promote their musical on the life of Helen Rubinstein

To launch a brand new, unknown musical is a brave step indeed – just ask any West End impresario! So, *Powder & Paint*, a two hour, largely sung-through production, with scenes propelling the action from Krakow to the Outback, Melbourne, London, New York and Paris faces a huge challenge.

The idea for a musical about the life of Helena Rubinstein, based upon her letters, came about when writers James Bulmer and Ant Stevens first met up to write a musical. It was in the world of beauty salons that Helena came to fame, in the early part of the last century. From modest Polish origins, she began by selling her homemade face creams from a sheep

station in the Australian Outback - and ended up a household name. Helena was a woman before her time. She battled against sexual inequalities and prejudice and, through sheer determination, created a global cosmetics empire. At times, however, she revealed surprising vulnerabilities. She longed to be loved but was afraid to drop her guard. This is a compelling story; a roller coaster ride of beauty, love and romance interlaced with ambition, abuse, rivalry and heartbreak.

Maybe what adds to its appeal is the lyrical quality of the songs - many of them a pastiche of the times - and the fact that there are seven strong parts supported by a dozen and more cameo

roles for the chorus.

Crediton Operatic and Dramatic Society took on the challenge of the premiere – bravery for any group but particularly one from a provincial town like Crediton with a school hall for a theatre. As with any new work, there were teething problems to be workshopped, but with a clever set design and an imaginative wardrobe it all came together and played for six nights to packed houses and enthusiastic audiences calling for more.

To find out more on the show and hear some of the music, visit: powderandpaint-themusical.com/music ★



NODA Theatre Summer School

In 2018 NODA Theatre Summer School takes place between 28th July and 4th August at Yarnfield Park in Staffordshire.



NODA Theatre Summer School is a residential School for anyone aged from 18 years. It provides tuition in all aspects of theatre, from expert practitioners. Whether it's performance or technical theatre which interests you, there's something for everyone. So come along and have the most amazing week of your life!

Everybody's NODA Theatre Summer School journey is different. Each year people attend for the first time or the fifteenth time, but by the end of the week all of them have so much to take away, for both themselves and their societies.



We asked three Summer School students about their experiences and each one had their own reasons for taking the plunge, and their own unique experiences once they arrived.



Carly Smith
Devising Drama course

I'm a drama teacher and I love what I do, but in November 2016,

I was missing being a drama student – workshoping, exploring, experimenting. I didn't have the time (still don't, really) to go back to uni or to commit myself to a whole production, but then on my Facebook newsfeed, up popped an advert for the "NODA Theatre Summer School" – whatever that was. I was curious; I clicked on the link. A week-long drama and theatre residential course that would give me the opportunity to workshop, explore, experiment with professional tutors and likeminded adults? And it was pretty much right on my doorstep? Sign me up!

I chose the Devising Drama course for two reasons – firstly because I saw it as an excellent CPD opportunity (it's a huge part of the new GCSE and A-Level Drama specifications and I was excited to take these new skills and share them with my students); and secondly, I was thrilled by the opportunity to create and play for a week.

"I didn't realise how big a deal it all was"

As expected, I was nervous when I first arrived – I didn't know anybody (although looking at the smiling faces, and the hugs and kisses being exchanged, a lot of people obviously did!) and I didn't have a clue what to expect. I didn't realise how big a deal it all was. But I quickly learnt how much everyone loved being here. Once I had allowed myself to go from teacher to student (a really hard thing to do!), I was in my element. There were some activities and tasks that I cover with my students that I was finally able to do and Sarah gave me new approaches to these that I hadn't thought of before. I'd had a difficult few months prior to this where I had questioned some of my abilities, but the rest of my group were so encouraging and free with their compliments that I started to feel really buoyed and inspired.



Stephenie Pagulayan
Actor's Toolbox course and Devising Drama course

I have been

privileged to attend NODA Theatre Summer School twice. I am looking forward to attending again this year and reconnecting with the wonderful friends I have made over the past two years. Coming from the rural Shetland Isles where access to theatre is limited, connecting with fellow creative practitioners at NODA has been invaluable.

My two Summer School experiences so far have been completely diverse and both have been incredible in their own way. The first course I attended was Actor's Toolbox 2 with Dylan Brown where I had the opportunity to explore a wide range of acting techniques and learned to connect with the "inner" of a character as well as myself. I learned to create truth in my performances in a way I had never discovered before. This course touched me on a personal level and I left with a newfound sense of confidence and self-awareness.

My second course was a journey of exploration into the world of devising drama. I discovered so many things on this course and it's incredible to think that in only a week we covered so much! We wrote monologues, explored physical theatre, practiced voice techniques and created so many magical pieces of theatre that I lost count! This course provided me with a full notebook of ideas and a full heart of wonderful lifelong friends. Every day brought a new sense of energy and positivity which has remained with me since coming home.

A good friend said to me once "I come to Summer School each year to reset and find myself again, and I leave feeling full of energy, like a recharged battery". That sums up exactly how I feel. I couldn't be more grateful for the generosity, support and creative inspiration the tutors, staff team and fellow students give at NODA Theatre Summer School and I can't wait to go on the next adventure in Summer 2018.



Paul Bilton
Acting courses

When I first went in 2002, the School was at Loughborough. I had little idea

what I had signed up for. I remember one woman was so excited about our acting course that she said she hadn't slept for a week. That first morning she was walking a thin line between tears of joy and tears of fear – and shed both. At the end of the day she had been stabilised!

"Every day brought a new sense of energy and positivity"

She discovered, as I did, that she was in a class of 17 other human beings of different ages, from different walks of life, with different outlooks and

opinions. But we all had one common goal; to discover what was within us and what we were capable of in a totally safe environment, helping, willing on, and always supporting one another.

It was a situation I never expected to encounter. "Perhaps I was just lucky with that class?", I thought. Returning three years later I found myself with a different tutor and different participants, but in that same supportive and safe atmosphere. Eventually I realised that I didn't have to wait another three years for this experience and I now attend every year. The friendly family extends beyond my own course, to every corner and everyone attending and running the School.

The big question is "What have I learned?". Theatre is not a maths exam, where answers are right or wrong and a final score is clear. What I can say is that, other than returning home each summer with a bag of new ideas and renewed enthusiasm (and more new friends), I find acting has become so much easier and, I hope, more effective. Appearing on stage has slowly changed from being a nerve-racking gamble to a rewarding and deeply satisfying and positive experience.

Thank you NODA Summer School!

Go online to noda.org.uk/summerschool to find out which courses are still available this year and book your place!



regionalroundup Wales & Ireland

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COUNCILLOR'S CHAT



Next month's Annual General Meeting will mark my first year as Councillor to Wales and Ireland. I would like to express my sincere thanks for your support over the past 12 months. This year has flown

by and I am sorry it has not been possible to visit you all. Thank you all for your kind invitations, I am looking forward to visiting more societies for the first time this coming year.

On Saturday 19th May 2018 our Regional Conference which includes our Masterclasses, Awards Ceremony and Gala Dinner will be in full swing. All information regarding the weekend and how to book will be sent to your society secretaries in March.

Thank you to those societies which responded to our survey asking for feedback regarding last year's conference. After recording and analysing the results we have decided to look at moving the location of our Regional Conference in May 2020. The main

reason for this is that in order to move venues, we must set ourselves a reasonable timescale. Nevertheless, whilst remaining at the Three Counties Hotel we will ensure that we continue to provide a pleasant experience.

Please remember in order for your society to be nominated for a Regional Award the Regional Councillor must be invited to your production. Please could invitations arrive at least eight weeks before the performance takes place. Thank you to those societies that already do this, I have already received bookings for 2019 and 2020! I welcome invitations to be sent to jordan.spencer@noda.org.uk.

I hope you enjoy this edition of NODA Today and don't forget to pop along to our NODA Youth page to catch up with what our younger members have been achieving in the last couple of months. ★

Your friend,

Jordan Spencer FRSA
Councillor

NODA Wales and Ireland Region Wedding of the Year

Friday December 28th at 11.30am 2017
at Norton House Mumbles.

Wishing Jordan and Luke every happiness and congratulations. ★



**NODA Regional Representative
Luke Spencer
and Regional Councillor
Jordan.**

COLSTARS

**Celebrating over 70 years at the
Coliseum Theatre Aberdare**

In the autumn of 1945 the Coliseum Amateur Operatic Society was born.

Their first venture was the Rudolf Friml operetta *The Vagabond King*. The Musical Director was Mr W.R. Thomas who remained with the society until 1975. The society went from strength to strength presenting new ventures such as *Silver Patrol*, *Balalaika*, *Rio Rita*, *Show Boat* (with a company of 78 on stage) and, in 1952, *Annie Get Your Gun*, which played to packed houses, for nine nights and two matinees.



The society continued its successful run throughout the 1960s and early 70s. Then, during a production of *Goodnight Vienna* in 1975, stalwart Musical Director Mr W.R. Thomas (more affectionately known as Billy) collapsed and died whilst conducting the orchestra. On stage at the time, singing the song,



When a Woman Wears A Ring, was present day Chairperson, Mrs Carol Bennett. The show went on, the leader of the orchestra taking the baton – that's showbusiness for you!

The latter part of the 1970s saw a huge decline in audience numbers. The Coliseum Theatre, which was owned by the Coal Board, was lacking funds and was in desperate need of refurbishment. In 1980 following the staging of a very lacklustre *Rose Marie* the company disbanded, and the theatre went dark.

However, in 1982 The Coliseum Operatic Society made a triumphant return, staging *Carousel* after a callout to the community. The theatre was still in a bad state of repair, so members rallied together and repaired, painted and cleaned until the theatre was fit for purpose once more. 1989 saw the sale of the Coliseum Theatre to Cynon Valley Council and there was a complete overhaul of the building. The company then changed its name to Colstars and its first production was *South Pacific* in 1990.

Colstars have flourished ever since; the annual pantomime sells out for eight performances and the "House Full" sign makes a regular appearance. They have won the Best Production award for *13*, and Best Performance awards for *The King and I*, *Annie* and *Hairspray*.

Colstars Youth Theatre, set up in 2007, has become a successful stepping stone for young people to enhance their theatrical skills and raise their personal confidence and social skills.

Colstars is now looking forward to the next 70 years. ★



**Read about
another very
special society
anniversary in
the East Midlands
roundup on
pages 10-11**

Llandudno Youth Music Theatre from 1978 to 2018

On Thursday 9th March 1978, 52 young people aged from eight to 14 attended the first meeting of the Llandudno Junior Players at the Scout Headquarters, Llandudno.

2018 will be Llandudno Youth Music Theatre's 40th year celebration – and what a forty years it's been. Formally the Llandudno Junior Players, the group was founded by Philip and Margaret Jones, Beryl Poynton (Jones) and Glyn Ross Jones, who were all members of Llandudno Musical Players.

Not many groups can claim to have a founding member as their current musical director forty years on, but Philip is still performing the role, just as Margaret is still involved.

LYMT has nurtured the talents of hundreds of local young people in over 70 performances and some have gone on to become industry professionals. The regular NODA award winning group boasts numerous Best Youth Production and Best Youth Actor awards, as well as Millennium Volunteer Awards, proving the group to be home to some incredibly talented and hard-working young people. LYMT is also responsible for discovering and honing other skills, and its members write,

create props, do make up and work on the technical crews for its shows.

While the group is open to members of secondary school age, younger children are welcome to join Stagenotes, where tutors help build confidence, team work and discipline skills all in a musical theatre setting. Stagenotes has also had the opportunity to perform with LYMT, a particularly memorable occasion being when both groups sang for the Queen and Prince Philip in Venue Cymru during their visit to Llandudno.

LYMT is determined to make 2018 an entire year of celebrations. Saturday 10th of March will be the night of a Gala Dinner at Venue Cymru, a black-tie event to formally commemorate the milestone. Former members of the group are also planning to reunite for a special original performance – *Past Members Present*. The group's show in 2018 will be the circus musical *Barnum* at Venue Cymru in July. Photographs show the original company in 1978 and the members in 2017.

Follow LYMT at lymt.co.uk Twitter @LYMT1 or Facebook: Llandudno Youth Music Theatre LYMT ★



Obituary: A.A.O.D.S. Mr Charles Barrie Jackson Honorary Life Member. 3rd February 2018, R.I.P.

regionalroundup West Midlands

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COUNCILLOR'S COMMENTS

As this spring edition lands on your doorstep, I am sure your plans for 2018 are well underway. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your invitations during 2017. It has been a great pleasure to enjoy so many productions along with your warm welcomes and kind hospitality extended to Karen and myself.



highly innovative posters and programmes were recognised at our Regional Conference Awards Ceremony earlier this month. Congratulations to all our nominees and award winners, along with those selected for our special awards for their contribution to amateur theatre advancement. It was a pleasure to welcome NODA National President, Nick Lawrence, to Stourbridge Town Hall to present the awards.

Welcome to our new societies and individual members who will be reading our magazine for the first time. We hope you take the opportunity to share its contents with all in your respective groups as you begin to enjoy the benefits of NODA membership.

The curtain came down on 2017's pantomime season that featured some truly outstanding productions. Many enhanced by the ever improving and affordable technology, enabling societies both large and small to deliver even more amazing productions.

The achievement and successes of societies and groups in musicals, drama, youth and pantomime, together with

Sadly, our former regional representative Kay Ikin passed away in November and regrettably was unable to complete the award nomination process in District 2. However, NODA West Midlands recognises the enormous contribution Kay made in supporting the wonderful achievements within her District, and a Special Commemorative Award Certificate was given to all NODA member societies across District 2.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as my diary will allow during 2018 and my good wishes to you all. ★

Ian G. Cox
Regional Councillor NODA West Midlands

What's On Readers' Awards

Local Finalists

Congratulations to all NODA WM societies who are finalists in this year's What's On Awards, Good Luck.

Assistant Regional representatives

Your region is seeking Assistant Regional Representatives, contact **ian.cox@noda.org.uk** for details.

From Performer to Director

By Sarah Gilhooly of Worcester Operatic and Dramatic Society (WODS)

I've been fortunate to perform with WODS and other companies for over 40 shows, including playing some wonderful, diverse roles. In my view, treading the boards in even the most demanding of roles is far less stressful than directing!



Sarah Gilhooly,
Norma Desmond in
Sunset Boulevard

I have directed twice now. In 2016, I directed my second show *South Pacific*. Rehearsals were enjoyable and a bit like having a second job! There are many comparisons between being a business manager and a director; you have to motivate everyone as well as being responsible for the overall outcomes. I am conscious that this is a hobby and people give up their time to be part of a production. It's important that everyone enjoys the rehearsal experience, I truly believe this contributes to a successful and happy production.

The production was a success, but I didn't enjoy the week of the show as much as I thought I would because I found it difficult to relax. I was incredibly

proud of *South Pacific* but I struggled, to 'let go' after the dress rehearsal. When performing, you are in control of what happens on the stage, but as director you have to be willing to put your trust in your cast and crew. On opening night, I spoke to fellow WODS director Andrew Rawle, I told him I felt surplus to requirement and missed being with everyone backstage. "Directing can be a very lonely role" he said, and I think he's got a point.

Will I direct again? I like to think so, but I'm not desperate to do it for a little while, I have too much fun in rehearsals and in the dressing room with all my mates! ★

Directorial Debut, Thanks To NODA Summer School



With a few courses left to be filled at this year's Summer School, perhaps it is apt that we hear from Tracy Crum of District 1, Hereford. Tracy has attended NODA Summer Schools since 2010 and put her new skills in to play when she embarked on her directing debut at the Tomkins Theatre with the Hereford Musical Theatre Company where she is a long-standing member.

Tracy said she could not have done this without the knowledge and experience gained from the 2015 'Directing Musical Theatre' course. She worked with fellow Summer School attendee Janet Rose and together they drew up the initial list of songs from which, working with Jenni Axtell (Musical Director) and Sarah Rowberry (Assistant Director) they created the Friends Concert *Look What Happened At NODA*.

Tracy told us she drew upon the skills she had learned to organise her thoughts and distribute the final list of songs to the company before rehearsals started. While this was happening Tracy looked at each number in turn and set it out on paper, so she knew which of her ideas worked ready for the first rehearsal and had a clear workable concept to convey to the cast from the outset.

Louise Hickey, NODA Representative for District 1, reviewed the production. Louise reminded us that Tracy also performed in the concert in a number from *Avenue Q* complete with puppet, drawing on skills from another Summer School class. Louise said "The cabaret style set was a nice touch, the concept was good and gave a relaxed approach to the lovely programme, all of the soloists and duettists did a splendid job. Well done Tracy on your directorial debut, you did a grand job." ★

Read more
about NODA
Theatre
Summer School
on pages
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Kay Ikin 4th April 1935 – 6th November 2017

On 6th November 2017 we lost our friend and colleague Kay Ikin, who passed away after a short illness. Kay was Regional Representative for District 2 for over 10 years and is remembered with much fondness, for her warm friendship, help and care for others.

Kay was a lovely, gentle lady, highly respected and well liked, and as a dedicated member of our regional committee always had the interests of NODA and its members at heart. Amateur theatre in Shropshire and beyond is the poorer for the loss of such a staunch advocate.

Kay was a key figure and Vice President of Whitchurch Operatic Society. She was an active member for over 30 years and took great pride in serving as a committee member and Honorary Treasurer for the majority of that time. Embracing the use of technology to help modernise the society Kay encouraged those new to the committee and helped shape foundations for the future.

At annual awards time Kay was diligent in considering nominations in District 2. She was a proud member of the subcommittee who shortlisted the wealth of posters and programmes to produce the winners. She loved attending the awards ceremonies to share the occasion and applaud all the societies and groups who were nominated, and won, and especially those from the District she was so proud to represent.

Our thoughts are with her family and friends at this time. ★

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