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07/18

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It was good to see and meet many of you at the Workshops we organised for Treasurers, Editors, Webmasters and Youth Advisers at Radcliffe House in February, and I hope that you found them useful in your various roles.

By the time this edition lands on your doormat many of you will have been to NODA Theatre Summer School and I am sure you will have enjoyed the experience. If you attended on the Visitors Day I trust you found it worthwhile and you will be spreading the word about its benefits.

GDPR has been on every organisation's agenda this year and we have produced a number of Fact Sheets to assist societies - please do look at the NODA website if you need help.

The National Weekend in September is a great opportunity for meeting with your fellow members and also for Regional Representatives to get together at their annual meeting and it is being held at a superb location near to London. This is also when you get to meet the incoming President and can invite her to your society. Every society is at liberty to contact the President direct even if you are not able to get to the National Weekend.

I have seen some excellent productions this year, all very professional, and, despite the financial constraints many societies experience, it is encouraging that community theatre is alive and well. Keep up the good work. Best wishes and every success with your forthcoming productions.



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what's in the summer2018 issue?



4 letters and news
– Your new letters page, plus a roundup of news from Head Office.



6 Youth Page – Grabbing every opportunity to shine.



8 East – 80 days around the world, award-winning teen and other news from the East.



10 East Midlands – Hats off for charity, pantomime preparations and news from the East Midlands.



12 President's Roundup – President Nick Lawrence concludes his roundup of his year in office.



14 London – Cabaret, and some surprising outcomes, plus other news from London.



16 North – Youngest meets oldest, plus more news from the North.



19 NODA Presidential Gala and AGM
The London Region welcomes you to the 2018 Presidential Gala and AGM.



24 North East – The sun shines in Bridlington, plus more news from the North East.



26 North West – Technicolor premier for theatre company, plus more news from the North West.



28 Scotland – The ambitious and bold in Cumbernauld, plus more news from Scotland.



30 Ask An Expert
Our experts answer your questions about publicity.



33 Spotlight On
Sarah-Jane Butler and Derek Austin of The London Pantomimers give us the lowdown on what happens behind the scenes.



34 South East – It all started with NODA, plus more news from the South East.



36 South West – 42 take on the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, plus news from the South West.



38 Centre Stage
Sally Collings from The Tavonians, talks about her favourite role, Ruth Ellis in The Thrill of Love



40 Wales and Ireland – Donkey on loan, musical workshop at AGM, plus news from Wales and Ireland.



42 West Midlands – Benny makes his stage debut, plus other news from the West Midlands.

That moment of mystery when we made history



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

Mary Hobbs ARCM

Early in the year we were saddened to hear the news of the passing of Past President Mary Hobbs. Mary had first become a Regional Representative for Somerset in 1971 and for many years served the South West Region as a very efficient Awards Secretary. As Councillor she led a very successful team, maintaining the ever popular workshop weekends. Of course, alongside her, the South West Region gained the considerable talents of Tony as Treasurer. Having served NODA for over 30 years she became National President in 2002.

Born in Edinburgh, Mary moved to the West Country when she married Tony. She was an Associate of the Royal College of Music, having passed their examinations in singing, teaching of singing and conducting, and had sung professionally in Scotland including weekly broadcasts with BBC Glasgow. She sang soprano principal roles in Grand Opera, Gilbert & Sullivan, musicals and oratorio. Mary was one of only two singers from Scotland to be chosen to



sing with the Hamburg State Opera Company at the Edinburgh Festival. She also acted and directed in plays.

Once settled in Yeovil she also became respected as a Chorus Master and Musical Director. A number of societies benefited from her expertise. She enjoyed backstage work and being Front of House but apparently her favourite

support role was as prompt. After her Presidential Year Mary continued to support the local NODA team and societies and, naturally, her home society of Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society. There are many individuals in the South West who are eternally grateful for advice and encouragement given to them by Mary.

Apparently, while conducting "King's Rhapsody", Mary was surprised to arrive at the theatre about seven o'clock after a golf competition (handicap 7) to find a microphone being fitted to the podium. The stage manager informed her that the principal singer had lost her voice. Mary not only conducted the performance but sang the role while the voiceless actress mimed on stage. The audience was not informed and it was a huge success.

We are thankful to Mary for all she gave to the musical world and in particular to NODA nationally and in the South West. We send our condolences to Tony. Together they made a formidable team.



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 editor@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)
twitter.com/NODAtweets

NODA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of The National Operatic and Dramatic Association, Charity No 1171216, will take place on Saturday 22nd September 2018 at 2.30pm at Hilton St Anne's Manor, Wokingham, RG40 1ST.

The Meeting is called in accordance with Rule 11 of the Association's Constitution to receive the audited annual statement of accounts, the Trustees report, reports on the number of members, the proposed rates of subscription. To elect nominated Trustees, Honorary and Life Members. Appoint the appeals committee and elect the auditors for the ensuing year and receive any other business of which due notice has been given.

To ensure the smooth running of the meeting, any resolutions to be considered at the meeting should be sent to the Chairman of Trustees, John W. Barnes, at 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough, PE2 7UH or by e-mail to john.barnes@noda.org.uk to arrive no later than 24th August 2018.

Greetings from the Chairman for National Regional Representatives

It is that time of year when we come together to share the joys of our chosen roles within NODA. Information for our meeting was sent via email and as listed in NODA Today so, if you have not received your copy, email info@noda.org.uk and ask for a copy before the meeting on Sunday 23rd September 2018 at 10.30am.

We had a very good meeting last year so let us repeat the experience by putting our thinking caps on and letting me know your agenda ideas. If you cannot make it let me have your apologies too. Please do come not only to make full use of the beautiful hotel but also meet and greet old and new friends within NODA and share your experiences.

Seeing you there.

Judith Smith

AMATEUR THEATRE FEST

Presented by Nick Hern Books

Tickets are now on sale for this exciting new full-day event of workshops, talks and performances

- ENJOY** a celebration of the UK's incredible amateur theatre scene, and a chance to network with hundreds of fellow theatre-makers
- MEET** and hear from leading names such as **Simon Callow**, **Mike Bartlett**, **Amanda Whittington** and **Jez Butterworth**
- LEARN** skills for your own productions, with expert workshops on **design**, **auditions**, **directing**, **singing**, **stage combat**, **marketing** and more

Sat 8 September 2018, The Questors Theatre, Ealing, London
 See more and book now at www.amateurtheatrefest.co.uk



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"If you had one shot, one opportunity,
To seize everything you ever wanted,
One moment,
Would you capture it or just let it slip?"

Eminem

Youthful Collaborations

8218 Youth Theatre aims to create an environment where young people feel comfortable, have fun and grow in confidence whilst having the opportunity to perform. Thanks to companies such as West End Dreams Ltd and Voice in a Million, our 8 to 18 year olds not only perform in our productions, like November's *The Wizard of Oz, Young Performers Edition*, (pictured) which for us was the most complex show we have performed to date, where our cast of 32 clicked their heels and took it in their stride, just as they did when we joined Collabro on stage in Wimbledon during their UK Home Tour.

The collaborative opportunities mean our members have had some truly incredible experiences. It has to be the most rewarding

part of our job, seeing the faces of our members light up when once-in-a-lifetime opportunities present themselves. Needless to say plans for 2018's West End Dreams experience and Voice in a Million are well underway and we can't wait to see our company of stars take to our stage in a truly Technicolor masterpiece. ★



Young People Spend a Day at NODA North East Gala Weekend



Youth Day attendees with tutor Dee Bennie-Marshall.

The Youth Event at our Gala Weekend included dance, singing and prosthetic workshops, all led by experienced, professional tutors who have supported NODA at a regional and national level. The attendees were also able to experience some of what is available at the annual weekend as well as viewing the performance of *Made in Dagenham* by Yeadon AOS.

The prosthetics workshop (creating a severed finger!) was a huge success with the attendees who cited this as one of the highlights of the day. We were lucky that the NODA Summer School Director, Sarah Osborne, was delivering another workshop at the event and met with the attendees to give some details of the School's format.

At the end of the day the young people were all encouraged to feed back on what they had enjoyed the most during the day and participants were asked to outline what they would like to do at a future event so we can look to improve the event next time. All of the young people said they would attend again and would encourage others to join in the fun. ★

Jo Sykes
Youth Adviser NODA NE

Me-Wow! BCMCS Have Everyone Lending a Paw in Cats Youth Production!

Bolton Catholic Musical and Choral Society 30450

BCMCS' Youth 2018 Production of *Cats* is worth highlighting as a great example of not only how important those on stage are but also back-stage too. The cast of over 30 actors is a great feat in itself not only in attracting the commitment of the youth but also in the collective high energy created. However, for the transformation of all these youngsters into felines, there is extra help needed in costume, in set dressing, design and make-up.

Whilst the design was by Charlotte aged 17, Olivia, aged 15, one of the eight-strong, self-titled, 'Glam Squad' (all of similar age), explains "The make-up is essential in this production to create the illusion of a cat. But it can't mask the actors' expressions so it needs to contribute to their performance. We're very lucky to have such an artistic and talented team, capable of bringing the designs alive, without it the show would lack the pizzazz the audience have come to expect".

The primary focus in taking on a large production can often be pre-occupied with its casting. It is always important to remember the contribution made by the back stage heroes and heroines whose work is carried onto the stage by the actors. The more coverage this side of the production is given, the more people with extra, non-acting talents may be attracted to a society, often with long term loyalty benefits. ★

WHEN YOUR VOICE COUNTS

One of the greatest pleasures of being a District Representative is seeing the success of performers on your patch and it's even more exciting to see someone achieve success on national prime-time TV.

Riccardo Atherton, 14, has been interested in musical theatre from a young age, he has performed with various societies in the District and appeared on *The Voice Kids* on ITV in 2017, where he reached the final six. A year after his journey began, Sharon spoke to him about the experience and what happens next.

Riccardo first auditioned for *The Voice Kids* in September 2016, with the infamous televised blind auditions two months later. Riccardo sang 'Hallelujah', not expecting any of the celebrity judges to turn round, but Will I Am, McFly's Danny Jones and Pixie Lott did.

His performance went viral, with more than 2.8million hits on YouTube. He selected Pixie Lott as his mentor, thanks to their shared love of Mariah Carey, Riccardo went on to appear in the final going back to sing from his musical theatre roots with *Beauty and The Beast*.

Although he didn't win, Riccardo tells me he enjoyed the experience and learned a lot about TV production, interviews, being filmed and working



with hand-held microphones. At the after-show party he was introduced to Ben Margulies, who wrote many songs on Mariah Carey's first album, Ben was so impressed with the young singer that he asked to write some songs for him.

Since then, there's been a few shows with *The Voice Kids* team, but it was soon back to school to concentrate on exams. Riccardo's not stopped performing, supporting charity concerts both locally and nationally including appearing at Wembley Arena for *Voice in a Million*.

Thankfully, Riccardo assures me he still loves musical theatre and has recently returned to the North West stage, appearing in Z Arts production of *13 The Musical* last February. ★

By Sharon Drummond, NW District 7 Representative.

You can read the full story of Riccardo's journey on the North Wests NODA web page.

Don't forget to send us your youth stories – email your news to Jordan!



EAST



NORTH EAST



SOUTH WEST



NODA Today – July 2018

SOUTH EAST



WEST MIDLANDS



Read on for more youth news in the regions



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THEATRE COMPANY SUPPORTS NEW WRITING

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Emily Rutherford with her award

Waterbeach Theatre Company (WTC) are celebrating their 40th year by supporting new writing by members of the society.

In January, the year started with *Aladdin*, a pantomime written for them by Chris Shinn and Julie Petrucci. This was followed by two new plays, entered into a one-act drama festival, entitled *The Hiram J Haffenbacker Show*, written by member David Morris and *The Lost Archer* written by member Tim Boden. Both plays performed to great acclaim receiving several nominations and winning seven trophies.

WTC is very proud of the fact that one

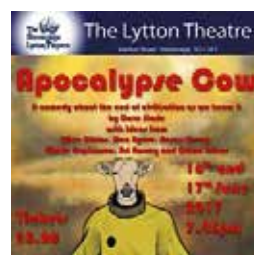
young actress, 15 year old Emily Rutherford, "achieved a double" by winning the Best Actress Under 18 award at festivals in Sawston and Cambridge playing 'Gemma' in *The Lost Archer*, a role specifically written for her by the playwright.

In November WTC is presenting a full length play *Snails for Starters* written by Kattreya Scheurer Smith, a member of the company from the age of six years and, now in her twenties, she has herself written winning one-act plays. *Snails for Starters* is Kattreya's first full length play and Waterbeach Theatre Company look forward to watching the transfer of her script from page to stage. ★

FRINGE BENEFITS FOR THE PLAYERS

David Slade is the Business Manager for The Stevenage Lytton Players and runs the Stevenage Lytton Youth Theatre. David says "Back in 2014 I took a group of young people to the Edinburgh fringe festival where they performed George Orwell's 1984. This August, he is embarking on a similar expedition with a group of 18 to 24 year olds to perform a new work developed with the cast entitled "Apocalypse Cow".

The company have worked hard to build funds for the trip by undertaking sponsored personal challenges to raise money. David



states he plans to lose two stone, others are doing mini marathons or walking 50 miles in one day and one young lady has chosen to 'bare all' by spending a month without make up

as well as putting on a live comedy and music evening and inviting support from Community Trusts and other financial contributors. As August draws closer the excitement builds... see a report on their experiences in the autumn edition. ★

Take the bus to page 37 with more NODA Youth on route to The Fringe



Phileas Fogg (Grant Filshill), Mrs Aouda (Roz Morgan), Fix (Barry Givens)

Local makeover for old favourite

To travel around the world in eighty days in 1872 when Jules Verne wrote his extraordinary novel would have been an epic undertaking. The challenge facing writer Eileen Ryan and director David Cumming at Harleston Players embarking on an adaptation for the stage, was not just how to fit everything in but how to give everybody, including our youth theatre, a role to play. Eileen explained "We had read and watched Laura Easton's adaptation for Stoke New Vic, which has been on national tour several times, but found it too reliant on a small professional company, trained in dance, stage-fighting and acrobatics.

like a bit of music to get things moving, so I wrote a travelling song to get Fogg and Passepartout off on the right foot and a couple more to set the mood or infuse new energy as the miles increased. One last consideration worth mentioning is that I found the character of Aouda, as portrayed by Verne, slightly insipid for modern taste. I wrote her as a rather more feisty personality than the original, which I felt created a rewarding role for the actress. If you might be interested in using the Harleston Players adaptation, or simply wish to know more, please contact Eileen Ryan on anyoldryan@gmail.com ★

For our production, we used four actors for the central characters of Fogg; Passepartout, his valet; Detective Fix and Madame Aouda. All other parts were played by the company, in our case five men, four women and a dozen youngsters. Phileas Fogg travels by train, hansom cab and elephant (but not balloon, this was a film addition) not to mention various boats across the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. That's a lot of bumping up and down, swaying around and holding on to your hat to put on one small stage. David duly issued every actor in the company with a suitcase (sometimes re-enforced) which became their seating for the journey. A portable length of ship's railing propped up by a lounging passenger told us we were at sea, and the elephant? David set a group of swaying actors under a large parasol, with two youngsters holding flapping grey ears and a trunk, and we could all see the beast that saves the day.

There aren't many children in the novel but we created new parts and, with the help of local dance teacher, Vicky Hirst used the youngsters to create that elephant, a London hansom cab, even items of furniture in Fogg's house. When you want to hurry the story along there is nothing



Sarah Curtis & Dawn Symonds



Harleston Players Youth

RSC HELP GEORGE PREPARE FOR A VILLAINOUS RICHARD III

Shakespeare at The George (SaTG), the NODA award-winning company from Huntingdon, has been putting its cast for *Richard III* through their paces – courtesy of two of The RSC's top practitioners.

Every year the company puts on a voice and text workshop for the cast and crew at the start of the rehearsal period for its open-air Shakespeare

production and this year the day-long workshop was led by Michael Corbridge, senior voice and text associate at The RSC. In addition, with *Richard III* ending with the climactic battle of Bosworth, SaTG also partnered with professional Fight Choreographer and RSC Associate practitioner Tom Jordan, spending a day being put through their paces to ensure that the battle scenes are as thrilling as possible and, working closely with director Lynne Livingstone, to choreograph the final fight between *Richard III* (Dean Laccohee) and the pretender to the throne, Richmond (Luke McQuillan).

Next year sees the company celebrate its 60th anniversary and is actively looking to hear from anyone who may have been involved with the company since its inception in 1959 as part of its archiving project. If you think you can help contact John Shippey on archive@satg.org.uk ★



A book that celebrates 50 years of a successful amateur dramatics society has been published. Written by historian Bob Dickson, 'The Lowestoft Players at 50' documents how the group starting with an initial fund of £65 became an award-winning and technically-adept band of performers. Email bobandd@btinternet.com for details. ★





East Midlands

Oh no you don't...
Oh yes you do!

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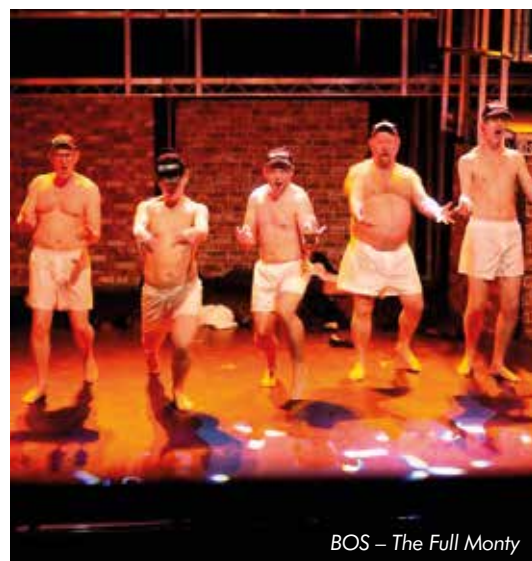
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With pantomime preparations due to begin soon, some modest proposals.

Don't make the show too long. Quality not quantity – even 2 hours and an interval is long enough if the show is good.

Do make appropriate choices for the songs both in terms of the cast's ability and what the audience would like. Songs from musicals and 'standards' which fit the story well may seem a bit staid but, unless they can be done very well, 'latest hits' taken out of context just don't seem right.

Don't confuse innuendo with blue humour (it happens!). The former will amuse adults and avoid embarrassment. The latter will embarrass.



BOS – The Full Monty

Courtesy of Limelight Scripts
Brackley Players – don't feed the plants



Do be very, very well organised – so many costumes, so much business and loads of props – you will regret it if you're not!

Don't assume writing a panto is kid's stuff, it's a craft that not everyone is cut out for. Try if you feel confident... but there are lots of good writers with proven products available. See

the NODA website.

Do respect the audience – for them it's not 'just a panto'.

Don't skimp on costumes or set.

Do look for advice – especially if you're a newcomer. One example; jacknorthcott.co.uk/category/help-and-advice ★

HATS OFF

The Boston Operatic Society for this fundraising effort, reported by The Full Monty's Director Rob Barclay

The Full Monty ran from the 20th to 28th April. It was a great triumph for the very brave guys that went 'The Full Monty'. The production team and cast were very keen to ensure that part of what they did raised both awareness and funds for Prostate Cancer UK. With many people in the production having loved ones affected, we set about looking at how we could best do this. We ran a sponsored waxing, ran a raffle, and held a collection after each performance. We were very pleased to have raised over £1,200 for Prostate Cancer UK. ★

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Boston Playgoers – 90th Anniversary

Peter Kay writes – with more news from Boston!

Boston Playgoers are based in Boston, Lincolnshire. Founded in 1928 the group has a tradition of producing plays to the highest possible standard, our policy of putting on just two productions a year enabling us plenty of time to audition, cast and rehearse the plays.



We have a wide repertoire, from TV comedies such as *Fawlty Towers*, *'Allo 'Allo* and *The Vicar of Dibley*, to classic amdram fare such as *Blood Brothers* and *The Ladykillers*. Alan Bennett's *Habeas Corpus* in October 2017 played to excellent reviews on social media.

Some members write as well as perform. In 2002, a local Playgoer, John Lingard, wrote *Bomber* which was presented at Blackfriars Theatre and Arts Centre in Boston, our regular venue for plays and rehearsals. Kei Bailey, a member and local writer, wrote a pantomime, *The Frog Prince*, performed at Blackfriars in February 2012.

We are affiliated to NODA and have enjoyed much success on a regional level, frequently nominated and winning awards for best play in our district two years running with *An Inspector Calls* and *Wuthering Heights*. We also participate in one act play competitions. In July 2017 the group took their one-act play, *Last Tango in Little Grimley* by David Tristram, to the Hunstanton Drama Festival in Norfolk and won the trophy for best production with one of the cast, Jo Warrick, winning the award for best supporting actress. All four cast members were nominated for acting awards.

2018 is a big year for the society as we celebrate our 90th anniversary by staging the Agatha Christie thriller *Love From a Stranger* in November 2018. For those intending to see the production there will also be archive material on display showing the history of the last 90 years of Boston Playgoers' productions. ★

★ **NODA EAST MIDLANDS**
★ **LONG SERVICE**
★ **AWARDS**
★ **PRESENTED**
★ **JANUARY TO**
★ **APRIL 2018**

Bonkers Theatrical:
45 Year Badge David Wicks
40 Year Badge Alan Galway
40 Year Badge Tracey Galway
40 Year Badge Mark Walker
25 Year Badge Leisa Cooke
25 Year Badge Jane Walker

Northampton Musical Theatre Company:
45 Year Silver Bar Nanette Lovell

Cyril Hunter 1921-2018



Remembering Wellingborough's 'Mr Theatre' who passed away earlier this year.



Wellingborough born and bred Cyril's involvement in amateur theatre started in the 1940s, appearing in pantos, plays and musicals

with the Rotary Club, Wellingborough Co-Op Players, the Pantomime Society and Wellingborough Amateur Operatic Society (WAODS).

His longest association was with Wellingborough Technical Players, which he joined in 1949, becoming secretary for 40 years after which he became Chairman, finally taking up his role as President in 2015. Cyril was President of WAODS in their centenary year when it gave him great pleasure to be host to the Duke of Gloucester, guest of honour at their production of *Kiss Me Kate*.

Another reason why Cyril was Wellingborough's 'Mr Theatre' was his devotion to the Castle Theatre, as Head Steward, committee member of the Friends of the Castle and a Trustee on the theatre's Board.

And, of course, Cyril Hunter was a member of NODA, wearing his 50 year medal with great pride on official occasions. A great ambassador for theatre, especially local societies, Cyril Hunter will be greatly missed.

A fuller appreciation of Cyril's life can be found on the NODA East Midlands website. ★

★ **Rose Hill Musical Society:**
20 Year Badge David Fletcher
10 Year Badge Craig Arme
10 Year Badge Richard Brierley

★ **Welford Amateur Dramatic Society:**
25 Year Award Michael Tanser
25 Year Award Hilary Whorton
25 Year Award Timothy Whorton

The Presidential Year so far



My Presidential Year progresses at pace and as I write I am preparing to represent you all at the Annual Conference of our sister organisation, the Association of Irish Musical Societies, which signals that I am three-quarters of the way through my year.

What a year it has been so far! From the rigours of trying to get home from Yorkshire through the snow to outstanding sunshine in Manchester and sea fret in Norfolk. Whitstable had to be at its coldest for my visit to the South East Conference but the welcome was warm and the smiles broad. This compared to a wonderfully sunny two days in Workington and the stunning scenery of the Lake District. The snow prevented me from getting to Brechin but, amazingly, the society was able to gather everyone once again in April to stage their show and I was able to make it. In fact the weather couldn't have been more different and I have a super video of the train journey up the coastline to Montrose.

If it wasn't snow it was floods and I had the most "interesting" trip to Cornwall. As the waters rose I wasn't sure whether it would be possible to get out of the remote village after the fabulous production, but the car



seemed to appreciate the free bath. Many of you will have seen the amazing array of pictures posted on Facebook by Councillor Gordon Richardson of my visits to the North Region. Despite the snow I was able to make it to Edinburgh and Dunfermline for *Hello, Dolly!* and *Starlight Express*. I have received some wonderful welcomes and in Solihull was stunned to receive

the honour of Best Peasant for sitting on the Holy Grail. Councillor Ian Cox was very amusing at my cry of "Oh, no! It's me!" when the clue was revealed. I was slightly better prepared for the stunning welcome I received at Spotlight Theatre, Bridlington, with the welcome message emblazoned across the back wall. Wherever I go I seem to be mistaken for someone important. It is



that chain's fault, but I was happy to join the "chain gang" at Abergavenny to do some serious bling comparison. I have got used to being assailed by random members of the public who think I can do something about their potholes. I was cheerfully greeted at one event with the question, "That's a nice necklace: Monsoon or River Island?"

My thanks to everyone who has invited me to meet them, and my apologies to the handful of societies I have had to turn down. Time is now limited but I do have some gaps in the diary, but you have next year to look forward to. I have a wonderful successor in Jackie Stedman and she is looking forward to your invitations. The President does not randomly pop-in to see you. It requires you to invite her, so get your invites off as soon as possible. No society is too small, remote or good to receive a visit from the President. ★

Keep up the good work.
Nick



London

Councillor's Comments

This is the last column I will write as NODA London Councillor, and now the time has come to put my thoughts into words I find so many things

buzzing round in my brain that I don't know where to start. So... I'll work on the KISS principle – Keep It Simple Stupid!

The last twelve years have been tremendously fulfilling, hard work, great fun (in parts), a bit frustrating (again, in parts) and have brought me into contact with some fantastic people performing superb shows.

I would like to thank those of you who have made David and myself so welcome on so many occasions and as we travelled to see shows, presented Long Service Medals and attended anniversary dinners you have been extremely generous with your time and your friendship.

The London Region has grown and developed and this would not have been possible without a team of people who are committed to the idea of bringing live theatre to communities in all its Districts and offering them support,



information and guidance when they need it. The London Regional Committee (the 'team') are just such a group of people. It has, inevitably, changed over the years with new people joining as others have stepped away, but each group has continued to work together to support the common

goal. I would like to express my sincere thanks to them all, past and present. Not only have they supported their groups tirelessly they have also supported each other as we have worked to grow the Region and recognise the high standards achieved.

In September I pass the role to Andrew Rogers (andrew.rogers@noda.org.uk) and I sincerely hope that he and his wife Karen receive the same warm welcome, when visiting groups, as we have done.

David and I will continue to travel around to meet groups, both in London and nationally, but with Presidential 'hats' on... and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all every success for the future. ★

Jacquie Stedman
Councillor – NODA London,
National Vice-President

GOOD LUCK, JACQUIE

NODA London Regional Committee would like to thank Jacquie for all the hard work, guidance and leadership she has given in chairing the Committee over the past twelve years. We are sure the whole Region joins us in recording our huge appreciation for the work, support and dedication Jacquie has shown in the role.

The annual regional meeting has grown into a Festival Weekend under her watchful eye and steered by a firm yet gentle hand, the Reps and Officers have all grown and developed together. Jacquie has made a great impact on the Region and she will be greatly missed. We wish her success as she steps up to take the role of President. Thank you, Jacquie. ★



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YOU NEVER KNOW WHO IS IN YOUR AUDIENCE!

London Society Centre Stage's Unique Cabaret, And Some Surprising Outcomes

Centre Stage London are proud of our LGBTQI+ members and the connection we have with this vibrant community and were excited to celebrate a message of hope, acceptance, activism and love in *Love Happens Here* – An LGBTQI Cabaret.

A labour of love of the cast and crew, *Love Happens Here* featured songs from legends like Lou Reed, modern jams by Lady Gaga, classics songs 'Somewhere Over The Rainbow', 'Dancing Queen' and songs from musicals like *Fun Home*, *Kinky Boots* and *Taboo*. *Love Happens Here* was a cabaret/concert mash-up of music celebrated and loved by the LGBTQ+ community and it's Centre Stage allies.

Stuart James, Director

Performing in *Love Happens Here*, an LGBTQI Cabaret by Centre Stage, has been such a highlight for me and one of my favourite productions that I have ever been involved in. From day one at rehearsal to curtain down it was more fun than you could ever imagine. I loved working with the creative team and how they made the show and its songs fit perfectly around the cast. I was very wary of having the classical/opera voice in the show as I feel it doesn't always have a place in a cabaret, but the production team made me see that I should own it as this show is about being who you are, being proud of who you are, and that my classical voice is a big part of who I am.

Luckily for me trusting this advice and doing this show has led to me finding

a place to train as a concert soloist at the UK's biggest Opera Company but, more importantly, the show shared an important message of love, strength and pride. I was very proud to stand side by side with my friends with all our different sounds and harmonies and portray this message as one voice in unison.

Kaylen Browne

I stopped acting three years ago after anxiety started to destroy my love for the industry. I was broken and I didn't want to be part of the industry whilst I was suffering the way I was. I stopped and went to work for a coffee company. Whilst there I started working on treating the anxiety and it slowly but surely got better. I was asked to be on stage a little later in a workshop musical and it was clear to me that the anxiety attached to performing hadn't died and it still wasn't in my life.

I came across Centre Stage last year and choreographed their Christmas cabaret, *Christmas Cake*, where I met Stuart, the Director of *Love Happens Here*. We started talking about the cabaret and something within me

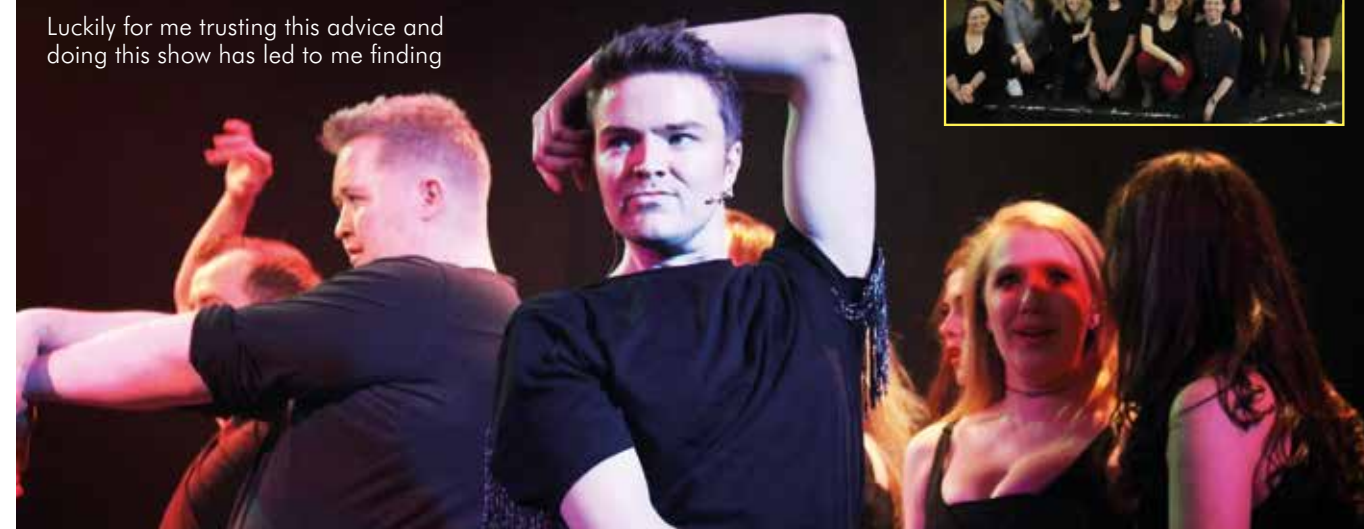


stirred. I felt like myself again going into rehearsals. It was a quick pace and it took me back to working in the industry and it slowly dawned on me that the anxiety I may have had in the past was nowhere to be found: it was as if I had found myself again hiding away in some closet.

After *Love Happens Here* finished I felt fantastic about achieving a goal I had set out when working towards overcoming anxiety and I was thrilled. Days later I received an email from an agent who was interested in meeting me after he had seen my professional CV. We met, and I've now signed up to his agency. It looks like I'm going back into the industry and I'm feeling very excited about doing so too.

It just goes to show that, when you think it's really bad and dark, it does get better and you never know who's watching in the crowd so give it your all. ★

James Lee-Campbell



North

Councillor's Chat

As this magazine reaches you we should be well into what we Northerners laughingly call 'summer'. We'll have had our fourth Presidential visit from Nick Lawrence taking in our AGM, Starlight, Vane Tempest TG, Darlington OS, Astravaganza, Sunderland TCo., and Newcastle MTC in a variety of diverse productions.

Hopefully, when the magazine arrives, people from all over our country (and abroad) will be making their way or just returning from Summer School at Yarnfield Park in Staffordshire, myself included. It really is an experience like no other. Advance reminder that bookings for 2019 will start at 9pm on 1st December on the NODA website with details of courses having been published 12 hours earlier. There is normally great demand hence the notice to add a note in your calendar.

Another event which will be well in the planning stages is the 6th Performance Awards – held this year again in Gosforth Park Hotel on 15th September 2018. Deciding the winners is always a difficult process and the standard has been exceptionally high this year. Sadly, only one can receive the 'cup' as I consider all aspects relating to performance, overcoming restrictions and handicaps and size of societies to fetch to the audience a production worthy of enthralling and mesmerising the public.

By the next magazine I'll be into 'panto' territory again, so until then watch out for me at a show near you and pop up and say Hi, especially if I haven't yet visited your group. I'd love to come along to your productions. ★

Gordon Richardson
Regional Councillor



Centenarian Lillian Thompson pictured with 5-day old Esmée Cathryn and TMTc chair Alison Dale.

Youngest meets oldest at 100th birthday celebration

Teesside Musical Theatre Company recently had the privilege of performing at our former President Lillian Thompson's 100th birthday party on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in May. Lillian, who had received a NODA medal in recognition of 40 years' service the previous week, had erected a large marquee for the event as well as having a bouncy castle for children young and slightly older! In addition to enjoying fish and chips and a free bar, the audience were treated to selections from TMTc's latest show *Anything Goes* and a variety of songs from Teesside Apollo Male Voice Choir. A good time was had by all, even our youngest new member Esmée Cathryn! ★

Mike Harbisher

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Members of Dryburn Theatrical Workshop enjoying their 40th Anniversary Celebrations.

Here's to the Next 40 – A brief history of "DTW" on their 40th Anniversary

Dryburn Theatrical Workshop was founded in 1978 by Edith Carvill, the then Supplies Manager for Durham Hospitals. Edith brought together a small but enthusiastic group of staff from various disciplines based in Dryburn Hospital in Durham City who all had a mutual interest in performing. She was an inspirational character who had a passion for all things theatre, having LAMDA qualifications in drama and elocution and becoming Sunderland University's oldest graduate in performing arts, graduating in her 80's. She directed for the group for 23 years until 2001 when her health prevented her from continuing.

The group's performances started off as small-scale revues and pantomimes and were rehearsed and performed in the hall of the staff social club. The hall had a small stage and no changing rooms, so the group members made use of a borrowed local scout marquee in which to dress for the productions, which was interesting especially in January for the panto! Any profit made was donated back to the hospital.

Due to the planning and development of the new University Hospital of North Durham the use of the hall was withdrawn and the group made the decision to move rehearsals to a local community centre and the productions to Park View Theatre in Chester-Le-Street. The group's first performance was

Cinderella in 1988 and they presented a pantomime alongside one act plays and concerts until 2007 when they produced their first full scale musical, *The Wizard of Oz*.

Although Dryburn Hospital was demolished, the group membership agreed to maintain it's roots and keep the original name as a mark of respect to Edith. There is also an annual "Edith Carvill Award" which is presented to a senior and junior member to recognise the recipient's contribution to the group.

Although none of the founder members still perform with the group today, there are long serving members who remember the "marquee days" and the humble beginnings of a now thriving group which has over fifty members.

Their anniversary year got off to a super start with a brand-new pantomime *Alice in Wonderland*, written by a talented past member Tom Whalley. There was a "Ruby Anniversary Ball" in April which brought together past and present members to celebrate and reminisce. There will be performances of *Grease* in June and *Blackadder* in September.

As a member who is fast approaching 40 years' service, I wish our group a very happy year. Here's to the next 40! ★

Written by Michelle Coulson

Obituary – Trevor Harder

NODA North was saddened to hear of the sudden death of Trevor Harder in December 2017 at the relatively young age of 71 years. Trevor was, as well as being heavily involved in local Amateur Operatic Societies, the Regional Representative for the then Region No 1 from 1992 to 2003, having taken over from Dorothy Lawson under the Councillorship of Ian Wells. He was both conscientious and well respected by all of his groups.

When I became Councillor in 1999 Trevor was a great supporter of all that I did, and we became firm friends. He then moved to Spain where he became heavily involved in Footlights Theatre Company, becoming their director for many productions. Even when he was in Spain he was still a strong supporter and promoter of NODA. However, in 2016, Trevor decided to move back to the UK to be closer to his family and very quickly became heavily involved in local groups. He was also in great demand to direct. Trevor will be greatly missed by family and friends alike and we send our deepest condolences to his family. ★

Written by Fred Piggford – Past President and Councillor of NODA North.

Regeneration of The Globe

Work is well underway on the renovation of The Globe Theatre in Stockton. The venue first opened as a cinema in 1917 and was converted into a bingo hall in 1978 until it finally closed in the 1990s. Due to grants by Heritage Lottery and Stockton Council it will soon be reopened for performances. Watch this space for more news! ★

noda

Theatre Summer School

Passionate about Theatre



The TTA means business 'SHOW BUSINESS'

What do we need to put on a show?

Besides the obvious - a theatre, a show, actors, dancers, musicians etc., you need to have Scenery, Costumes, Make-Up, Wigs, Props, Tickets, Publicity, Printing, Lighting, Special Effects, Sound Equipment and more.

In other words you need to source these items from Theatrical Suppliers.

How can the Theatrical Traders Association (TTA) help?

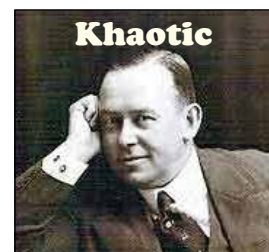
The TTA is a Trade Association with members supplying all aspects to amateur theatre. Almost all the companies in the theatre industry are staffed by people who themselves are involved in theatre. The wealth of knowledge they have is unbelievable.

Production problems? Simply contact the TTA Helpline Number on 0345 126 0631

or go online to www.theatricaltradersassociation.co.uk and log on to association members' websites for information on all their products and services.

The TTA is here to help you!

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



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.



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



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
..... Meeting

PACKAGE H: £27 per person
Sunday daytime only

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

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

PACKAGE J: £123 per person
(Two people sharing)

Saturday 22nd September
6.30 pm Reception
7.00 pm Presidential Dinner/
..... Dance Black Tie event
..... Cabaret
..... Dancing to live band
Sunday 23rd September
7.00-10.00 am Breakfast

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

PACKAGE K: £162 per person
(single occupancy)

Saturday 22nd September
6.30 pm Reception
7.00 pm Presidential Dinner/
..... Dance Black Tie event
..... Cabaret
..... Dancing to live band
Sunday 23rd September
7.00-10.00 am Breakfast

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
☐ J: Saturday to include the Presidential Dinner/Dance inc bed and breakfast £123 Two people sharing
☐ K: Saturday to include the Presidential Dinner/Dance inc bed and breakfast £162 Single occupancy

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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North East



Rachel and Janette in *Dick Whittington* 1987, and (inset) daughters Georgia and Katie

Like Mother Like Daughter

Scrolling through photographs of past productions I saw two familiar faces peering at me from this Children's Chorus snap for *Dick Whittington* in 1987. They closely resembled two girls who are now in the Junior Dancers.

I then realised that their Mums had also been members of St Giles with St Mary's Pantomime/Theatre Society. Janette Appleton (nee Collins) circled on the right and Rachel Young (nee Wilstrop) were members of the Society in the 1980/90s and both went on to get married and have children. Despite living in different counties and attending different schools both Mums encouraged their daughters, Katie and Georgia, to join the Society where they became friends. They were initially Sunbeams together, progressed to the Juniors and last year they attended the NODA North East Youth Workshop.

Janette and Rachel are also involved with the Society again, Janette as a member of the Ladies Chorus and Rachel as the 'call',

making sure everyone gets on stage at the correct time.

Rachel's grandparents have a long association with the Society as Grandma Jenny is a member of the Ladies Chorus and Granddad Mick is a member of the stage crew. Katie's older sister, Jade, is also a member and last year took the title role in *Sleeping Beauty*.

There are many benefits to being involved in amateur theatre and perhaps one of the greatest is that it's a hobby that transcends generations thus allowing families to share an interesting and active pastime together. St Giles has several families who feature the involvement of three generations and it's great to see people in their 70s working happily alongside primary school aged children. Hopefully, in years to come, Katie and Georgia will also share their enjoyment with future generations. ★

Jo Sykes
NODA NE Youth Adviser

Read about
the North East
Youth Day on
pages 6 and 7

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The Sun Shines in Bridlington!

Members enjoy a weekend by the sea.

Once again the sun shone brightly in Bridlington for the NODA North East Gala Weekend which kicked off on the Friday afternoon with various activities for members.

In the evening we had our Gala Dinner for 755 delegates and some short speeches which included the presentation of the Reg Vinnicombe Salver (September 2017 to April 2018) to Yeadon AODS for 9 to 5 *The Musical* and an award to Hesse Theatre Company for *The Baker's Wife* (April to September 2017). We watched a superb cabaret celebrating 50 glorious years of NODA in Bridlington and the evening ended with a sing-a-long accompanied by Geoff Allanach on the piano.

Saturday morning kicked off with some great workshops, all of which were well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

As usual on Saturday afternoon we held our AGM which, although being well attended, would have been better had there been a few more members present. Also attending the weekend were Nick Lawrence, NODA National President, and Dale Freeman, Chief Operating Officer at Head Office.

Saturday evening saw a potted version of *Made in Dagenham* performed in The Spa Theatre by Yeadon AOS which was thoroughly enjoyed and this was followed by dancing till late to Todd Miller and The Joe Loss Orchestra.

Delegates were up bright and early on Sunday morning to see the presentation of the Programme and Poster Competition awards and the announcement of Summer School Bursary winners.

To follow this we had arranged a guest speaker who unfortunately became ill the night before so a Q & A session was arranged with North East Councillor, Les Smith, and stalwart Frank Hammond which went down a bomb and received a standing ovation. The weekend was brought to a close with the traditional singing of Jerusalem. ★

Leslie Smith
NODA NE Councillor

NODA Today – July 2018

Programme and Poster Awards 2017

Basic Programme
Winner Whitkirk Arts Guild
– *It's My Life*
Second Halifax YMCA Pantomime Society – *Jack and the Beanstalk*

Standard Programme
Winner LIDOS – *Jekyll & Hyde*
Second Halifax Light Opera Society – *Guys and Dolls*
Third Wombwell and District AOS – *Sister Act*

Summer School Bursaries 2018

National Awards
Hannah Hughes, Beverley Musical Theatre, and Jennifer Newton Smith, Chapeltown Amateur Operatic Society, both for Musical Theatre in Rehearsal – *Revelling In the Classics*
Jeni North, Bradford Players, for Choreography for musical theatre

De Luxe Programme
Winner York Light Opera Company – *The King and I*
Second Croft House Theatre Company – *Priscilla Queen of the Desert – The Musical*
Third Maltby Musical Theatre Group – *Spamalot*

Poster
Winner Phoenix Players Rotherham – *Steptoe and Son*
Second York Light Opera Company Ltd – *The King and I*

Regional Awards
Carol North, Bradford Players, and Courtney Smith, Dinnington Operatic Society, both for With a song in my heart

Drama Rep Doyens Retire

55 years' service between them.

Julie Webb became a Drama Representative covering South Yorkshire and the south of West Yorkshire in 1981. For 61 years she has been a member of Phoenix Players, Rotherham, both acting in and producing plays, and also concentrating on the group's wardrobe and properties. Julie was Chairperson for 9 years and is an Honorary Member of the Group. With Marguerite Jennings, and later with Pam Booth, she helped to organise Youth Workshops for several years until a Youth Adviser was appointed. From 1998 to March 2011, when regional magazines were no longer published, she was the Editor of "Scratchings" and really enjoyed this particular job. In 2015 she retired from the position of Editor. Julie sat on the Region's Summer School Sub Committee, also the Programme and Poster Competition Sub Committee. She is a holder of the NODA Diamond Bar for 60 years service to amateur theatre and is an Honorary Member of the Association. Our sincere thanks for giving us your time and talents!!



Pam Booth became a Drama Representative covering groups in North Leeds in 2000. After joining a church group, she became a member of Yeadon AODS, with drama as a special interest, and has served all her 55 years with the group. She holds the Association's Gold Bar for 50 years service. She helped with the organisation of Youth Workshops with Marguerite Jennings and Julie Webb. Pam was Awards Secretary from 2011 to 2018 and has thoroughly enjoyed her time on the NODA North East Committee. Well done! ★

Also not standing for re-election at the AGM were District 2 Representative Helen Dent and District 13 Rep Geoff Haywood, the latter transferring to a revised District 2 for Drama societies. Musical groups in District 2 have been transferred to District 3 and District 15 Drama now includes District 16, handled by Bryan Craven. Keith Lowe was elected as Drama Rep for District 13, Ashley Booker was elected to succeed Leslie Smith (now NE Councillor) in District 5 and Sue Cox was elected as Drama Rep for District 14. Biographies of our new Representatives are available on the NE Region's page at noda.org.uk.

North West

Councillor's Chat

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I have just about recovered from the North West Weekend at which some 800 members from the NODA family, our NODA President Nick Lawrence and his consort Joyce Pomeroy, COO Dale Freeman and his wife Deanna, had a great time.



Congratulations to all the nominees and winners. The highlight of the weekend was the impromptu rendition of One Day More at the adult awards, led by our irrepressible compere, Michael Jones-McCaw. You had to be there!

My sincere thanks to the Mercure Hotel, Manchester, for their support. And a very special thank you to the North West Committee for their hard-work and dedication to our members and going the extra mile to make the event a great success.

For those who were not able to attend – you missed the announcement that in September 2019 I will, most regrettably, be stepping down as North West Regional Councillor. I have loved being your Councillor and feel so proud and privileged to head up NODA NW. However, it is onward and upward as I am stepping down to become NODA National

President. Thanks to all of you for making this possible. This will be the first time in 20-plus years that the National President has come from the North West, so I hope you will agree it is a real cause for celebration.

Later this year, or early next, you will be receiving nomination papers to elect a new NW Regional Councillor. Please do play an active part in this nomination process. You will be electing someone to not only head the NW Region, acting as the voice of the North West on the NODA Council, but also to become a trustee of a national charity.

And a little reminder: Any society can invite the National President to their productions. Thank you for inviting me to your productions and please keep doing so, as it gives me the opportunity to shout about all the talent we have in the region – what a great reminder to the National Council that NODA was initially formed in the North West. What a lot we have to congratulate our NODA family for!

Thank you – everyone! ★

Christine Hunter Hughes
Councillor

Obituary: David Parks

David Parks was a performer and a member of Mid Cheshire Musical Theatre Company for many years although his forte was G&S. He was also a huge fan of the Round Britain Cycle Milk Race – acting as a steward and a time-keeper in the North West. For many years David was the NODA North West District 8 Representative. By profession he was a jeweller and will hopefully be remembered, for many years to come, for sourcing the new President's Chain, with the first recipient being Bert Lumsden in 2008. David died in April after a long illness. ★

Get Wind Of Good Publicity

Blackburn Musical Theatre Company had a 'money can't buy' boost to their latest production – the East Lancashire premiere of *Whistle Down The Wind*.

The musical follows the same story as the acclaimed 1961 film of the same name except that, instead of the film's rural Lancashire setting, the show's action takes place in Louisiana.

The society was excited to bring the story back home and were delighted when Diane Poole (nee Holgate), who was plucked from her primary school playground to star as Hayley Mills' character's sister in the film, got in touch and offered to come and meet the cast.

A spokesman for BMTC said: "When promoting a show it's important to find something special to say about it, more than simply 'we're putting on a show, come and see it'. We made a good choice with *Whistle Down The Wind*, knowing it would be the East Lancashire premiere of the musical, as it's a story that people locally have really taken to their hearts thanks to the film.

"What we didn't expect was to have one of the film's original stars contacting us and, after meeting Diane and being impressed by her continuing enthusiasm for the story, we decided to capitalise on this and try to get some TV coverage of our production.

"Paul Crone from ITV's Granada Reports was really interested in the



Read more
publicity tips in
Ask The Expert
on pages
30-31

Isabella Crossley and
Diane Poole in Downham

connections, and keen to produce a report for the 6pm bulletin, and agreed to meet Diane and Isabella Crossley, who played the sister character Brat in our version, as well as BMTC chairman Gary Worthy, right in the heart of the beautiful village of Downham."

The commercial value of an equivalent piece of coverage on TV is reportedly more than £50,000.

"With that kind of financial value attached to TV coverage it really is a 'money can't buy' opportunity for amateur theatre companies and shows what a little thought and a cheeky ask can get you" the spokesman added. "The piece was a brilliant boost for our cast, and Blackburn Empire Theatre, where we perform, reported a boost in sales the day after it broadcast too." ★



Granada Reports' Paul Crone
speaks to Isabella Crossley



Isabella, Diane, Paul and
members of BMTC in Downham,
filming for Granada Reports

Any Show Will Do

A favourite for schools and an eternal touring production, *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* will soon be staged by an adult amateur theatre company for the very first time.



Alderley and Wilmslow Musical Theatre Company will proudly present the first adult amateur production of the Andrew Lloyd Webber show in celebration of its 50th anniversary.

Chairman Tina Spiers said: "We applied three times for the rights to perform *Evita* and did not get it.

But when they said no on the third occasion they asked me if we would be interested in *Joseph* as they were releasing it for amateur groups and that it had only ever been

released to youth groups or church groups.

"They also said it would only be available to a handful of societies, to mark the anniversary, and would we like to apply for the licence which we did and got it and we're incredibly proud to have this opportunity."

Donning the cloak of many colours will be Luke Clayton as Joseph with Vanessa Rachel as the Narrator, Stephen A Clayton as Pharaoh and John O'Brien as Jacob.

The show will run at The Evans Theatre, Wilmslow Leisure Centre, 1st to 10th November. Visit awmtc.co.uk or call 07506 988433 for tickets. ★



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Scotland

Showcase at the Palace

In January Edinburgh's Showcase Musical Productions was honored to be invited to a special evening at Buckingham Palace, hosted by the Prince of Wales, to acknowledge the work done by Macmillan supporters throughout the UK. In all, 150 selected people (from the 400 groups and individuals nominated by Macmillan) were personally introduced to His Royal Highness during a champagne and canape reception at the Palace.

Current President Alan Hunter (pictured right) and Vice President Ross MacTaggart nobly represented Showcase. Speaking after the presentation, Alan reported that it was a proud honor to represent the company at such a prestigious event and that it was a shame that everyone could not have been there, if only to add to the evening's entertainment! In a private discussion with Prince Charles, Ross is believed to have offered Showcase's services for a forthcoming family wedding and is standing by to get the call on the company's behalf!

In 27 years Showcase has now raised £270,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support and in 2018 is set for another Edinburgh season of concerts and the extravagant September shows, bringing together the best of musical theatre, contemporary classics and inspiring choreography under the direction of Andy Johnston, David McFarlane and Claire Smith. ★

Charles Leeson-Payne, Treasurer, Showcase Musical Productions



Alan Hunter and
Ross MacTaggart at
Buckingham Palace



A Gala Achievement

At the end of their March 2018 production of *Summer Holiday* in the Volunteer Hall, 11 members of Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society were presented with Long Service Awards by Borders Area Regional Representative, Debbie Lyons. The awards ranged from 10 to 65 years of service, a total of 470 years! A magnificent achievement! ★

Evelyn Watson, Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society (photo by courtesy of Sheila Scott)

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Musical Theatre returns to Cumbernauld

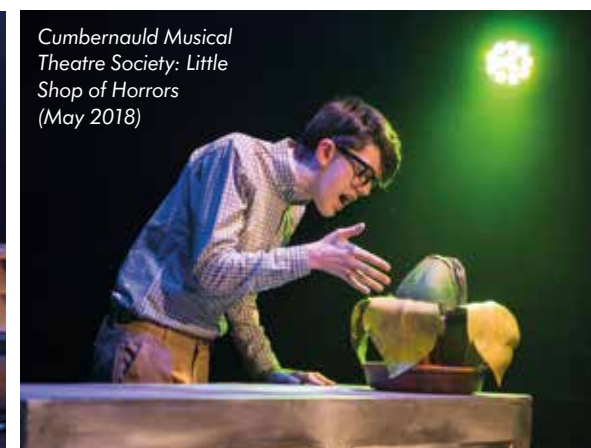
The latest addition to the NODA Scotland family is an "ambitious and bold" club which is creating quite a stir in the local area, and beyond.

Cumbernauld Musical Theatre Society was founded in May 2017 by Fraser Morrison, a local lad of only 21 years old, who thought it was about time that musical theatre made a return to the local community. It had been at least 30 years, if not more, since community musical theatre last took place in the town but we are glad to report that it has now made its triumphant return.

The club started by advertising auditions for a concert, not knowing who or how many would turn up. Luckily they were inundated with positive responses from talented local performers and put together a cast of 30 and two sellout crowds for their very first show. Following that tremendous success in October, CMTS took to the unusual thrust layout of Cumbernauld Theatre to perform a very intimate production of *Little Shop of Horrors*.

With only a cast of 12, and audiences on three sides, these performers must have felt extremely exposed with definitely nowhere to hide! Thankfully they didn't need to, as one of their reviews highlighted: "A small but mighty cast deliver vocals that rival that of any professional touring cast on the circuit today. Each one of the small band of actors excels in their own right."

What's next for this club? Well, they return to the Westerwood Hotel in October 2018 for their highly anticipated *West End at the Westerwood*



© Bob McDevitt

musical revue, and then bring the glitzy *Sister Act* to Cumbernauld Theatre in February 2019. *Sister Act* will be one of the final productions ever to take place in the old "cottage theatre" before it moves down the road to its new state of the art facility in Abrohill, which CMTS are extremely excited about!

CMTS are lucky to have a dedicated committee supporting the society who between them have covered several roles in other amateur groups across the

country and all of whom have usually had to travel far and wide for their musical theatre passion, but no longer.

If there is one quote to sum up this new club it would be this: "Cumbernauld Musical Theatre Society delivers a masterclass that so many would do well to recognise." (BroadwayWorld.com Review). To find out more, or get in touch, please visit their website www.cumbernauldmnts.co.uk or search for us on social media! ★

Celebrations at Innerleithen

After the final curtain fell on a hugely successful production of *The Wizard of Oz*, the entire cast and crew of Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society gathered on stage to hear from President Nicola Watt and special guest, NODA Scotland Councillor, Stuart McCue-Dick. Nicola thanked everyone for an excellent production and invited the Councillor to hand over performance certificates to each of the children and young people taking part. The President then announced the various Long Service Awards which the Councillor presented to the following members (years of service in brackets):

Zoe Spence (15), Leanne Young (20), Shirley Bean (25), Allan Graham (25), Gillian Rendle (25), Nicola Watt (25), Angela Pichlmayer (30), Greg Small (30), Adrianne Robb (40), Aileen Dumper (45), Evelyn Grahame (50), Rose Young (60).

Nicola Watt, President, Innerleithen & District Amateur Operatic Society



ASK AN EXPERT

Our experts answer your questions about publicity.

What are the different kinds of publicity I can use to promote my show?

Posters and leaflets

Posters will only sell your event if they can be seen by lots of people! You need to identify where you will put your posters and who will put them up. Sort all this out before you print the poster to make sure you spend your money well. Keep the writing to a minimum, because people won't read it if it is long. Be sure to include all the essential information on the poster, such as the date and place of the event and the telephone number for bookings. Use an eye-catching design. This will probably mean using a designer and if you do, tell them where your poster will be displayed and remind them it will be viewed at a distance.

Leaflets are wonderful opportunities for creating enthusiasm about the activities

and events you offer. They give you the chance to say more than you can in an advertisement or on a poster and you can combine your words with a striking design to attract the attention of your reader and reinforce your message.

The front page of your leaflet should tell people who you are, what the show is, where, when and how to buy tickets. On the back, you could have a booking form, press cuttings from your last productions or comments from satisfied customers eg. "The last production was amazing; I really loved the cat" by Emma Smith, aged 7.

Social Media

Facebook and Twitter are excellent, free advertising channels for your show. Set your cover photo to an image of your show poster and make your profile picture the society's logo. Keep your Facebook page and Twitter profile



fresh and up to date throughout your rehearsal period. Make sure you post lots of pictures of rehearsals and share your poster image regularly. There are lots of tricks you can use to keep your social media fun and interesting: you can use it to run competitions, post teaser trailers and videos, or even do a cast takeover. Make sure you keep posting links to book tickets and make an event for your show on Facebook so that the cast and crew can invite all their friends.



Advertisements

You can pay for advertising in local newspapers and magazines but you should also look around for local What's On event listing sites and add your show details to these. When you are placing an ad or adding an event to a website remember to include your society logo and the poster image for the show. Be creative but keep your content short and simple and to the point. Add a catchy headline but avoid clichés. In a printed advert you could run an offer, a code to quote for a buy one get one free ticket for instance. This will grab the reader's eye and also allow you to track the success of your advert.

How can I persuade my local paper to feature a story about my show?

You'll need to write a really good press release!

It can be really helpful to send press releases out to local newspapers and magazines or even online event sites. Press releases should be short, snappy and factual, and written in the third person to encourage editors to feature the story in their publication.

Most importantly you should remember to answer these six questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How?

Give your press release a short, clear, headline and then sum up the main point in one or two sentences. After this you can add some context to show the editor why your story is important. Make sure you include all the important details, and any quotes you have will add credibility. Finally end the press release with information about where people can find out more details.

How can I keep track of all this publicity?

Before your rehearsals begin you should create a marketing plan. Sit down with the production team and set out all the marketing streams you intend to pursue, plus your aims, budget and timescale. Identify a few people to help with different things: you could appoint a social media manager, a press contact and a poster

designer to help spread the workload. Most importantly, set yourself reasonable deadlines! ★

Dos and Don'ts

- ★ DO proofread everything twice and have someone else check it over before printing
- ★ DO create a sensible marketing plan and timescale
- ★ DO keep talking about your show on social media
- ★ DO Use high quality images
- ★ DON'T overload your copy – keep it short and sweet
- ★ DON'T give yourself too much to do – share the workload!



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 designer and set builder

Check out NODA Youth for the next generation of back stage stars

Many societies will be in rehearsals for their pantomimes by now. I thought I'd better get the lowdown on what happens behind the scenes in the lead up to panto season.



Sarah-Jane Butler is the Set Designer and Painter for The London Pantomimers and Derek Austin is the Stage Manager and Set Builder.

What's your main responsibility?

Sarah-Jane: I design and paint bespoke scenery pieces, procure backcloths and, during the run, I am the technical coordinator.

Derek: For the past three years my role has been Stage Manager but I also build the sets and props. I talk to the production team about which backdrops should be used and I put my ideas forward. It's my job to come up with alternatives if something doesn't work!

What do you do during rehearsals?

Derek: I make regular visits to rehearsals to get measurements for scenery, ideas on what is needed and to make sure the scenery works efficiently for the scene.

Sarah-Jane: When we hear what the next show is going to be I'll run off and watch the animated film version (again) and then Google it. I'll also look at what backcloths suppliers have. In spring I meet with the Director and go through the script listing scenery items, props and cloths that may be required. Later, we get together with the Lighting Designer and wardrobe to co-ordinate colour schemes and fight over ownership of rigging bars.

What was the last show you designed/made for? Tell me about the process, what you did and how it all came together.

Sarah-Jane: It was *Aladdin* in December 2017. The biggest design challenge was making the flying carpet a scene-stealer. I came up with the idea of keeping it simple (which is always best) and stationary, while using lighting and actors to imply movement. We built a black box as a base, which also housed a fog machine, and then glued a real carpet to a sheet of timber at an angle. The fog and the lighting gave the impression that the carpet was flying above the clouds.

Derek: I worked with the *Aladdin* stage crew to put together ideas and drawings of what we needed. We then arranged regular work days at our Scout hall, starting from September through to the end of November. Each project would be built with my team and then the stage crew would paint and decorate accordingly.

Why do you enjoy it?

Sarah-Jane: Well, my day job is a civil engineer so design is in my blood. But civil engineering isn't exactly artistic (don't tell any other engineers but I really wanted to be an architect). I just love creating things, and the wackier the better. My job is quite stressful and I find painting very therapeutic. I also get the opportunity to avoid my two teenagers for a while and spend time with friends I have known for many years (and make a few new ones). Oh, and it keeps me feeling young.

Derek: I have been involved with The London Pantomimers for over 34 years and it is a big part of my life. It would not be Christmas without pantomime. It's always a joy to see a piece of scenery that we have built from scratch come to life within the show. One of our famous crew jokes is: "we can build it panto straight". I enjoy the atmosphere and working with talented people, some of whom have been friends for many

years. It's a joy and a pleasure, full of laughter.

Tell us about the best show you worked on and why it was your favourite.

Sarah-Jane: I've found a new lease of life during the last couple of productions but I think our 50th anniversary production was my favourite. I had to design a revolving stage which depicted different pantos every time it rotated 180 degrees.

Derek: After doing so many shows it is hard to pick the best, but one that stands out for me was *Cinderella* in our 70th anniversary year. The transformation scene was one of the best I've been involved in, where Cinderella's pumpkin turned into a coach and Cinderella's dress changed into a ballgown.

Tell us about a time it all went wrong!

Derek: Luckily in my three years as stage manager nothing has gone majorly wrong!

Sarah-Jane: Honestly, hand on heart, it never has. Yes, scenery has fallen down, we've started the first show with wet paint or items missing, lowered the wrong cloth, been caught on stage many times, but it's never gone completely wrong. Besides... it's panto, even wrong is funny!

Thanks to Sarah-Jane and Derek, The London Pantomimers will be fully prepared again this year for their pantomime *Wizard of Oz - The Pantomime!*

Wizard of Oz - The Pantomime! will be performed from 6th - 15th December 2018 at The Intimate Theatre, Palmers Green, London N13 4DH. To find out more and book tickets email boxoffice@londonpantomimers.org.uk, call the Box Office on 07932 607901.
 London Pantomimers
 @LondonPantomime

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

South East

Youth Theatre's fourth production gains recognition

The Bexhill youth theatre group In The Wings won the South East Region's, Runners Up 'Youth Award of Excellence' for their fourth production, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* performed last August. The award was presented to them at their rehearsals for *Half a Sixpence* by District Representative Anne Lawson.

Maisie – When In The Wings was formed in 2013 I was one of the original members and, at age 11, one of the youngest. I am hoping to go into Performing Arts as a career and In The Wings has given me the opportunities which have helped me on my path.

Tyler – In The Wings is built on a great foundation, it's comfortable and relaxed



atmosphere bring the best out of every individual. The group becomes one big family, a family for life, it is fun, exciting and a great way to make friends.

Congratulations to all who took part, if you want to join them and are aged between 7 and 21 ring 01424 219659 for details. ★

Polegate Drama Group 1967-2017

In Spring 1967 our group put on its first public performance with two one-act plays. This was followed in November 1967 with our first full length play at the Church Hall in Victoria Road with two sell out performances. Since then we put on two plays every year and are now going past the 100 mark.

The group grew rapidly in the 1970s so we were able to extend the range of plays. Productions included *Jane Eyre* and *Pride and Prejudice*, plus several Whitehall farces, to name but a few.

In 1972 we put on our first pantomime, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and have put on more and more spectacular pantomimes ever since. We also entered floats in the Polegate and Eastbourne Carnivals being awarded 'Best Float' on several occasions.

I feel we have achieved our aim of providing a good, friendly group for those who are interested in drama either on stage or

helping. We have had several hundred people involved over the years. We have also provided plenty of shows of all kinds for all those who appreciate an evening of entertainment.

We thank everyone for their support and hope they will continue to support us. ★

Jim Dobell, President



Polegate Committee and cake

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It all started with NODA



Scott St Martin tells us of his journey from NODA to the West End and back and how his book "If You Want Me To Name Drop, The Diary of a West End Wendy" was born.

Aged eleven all I talked, dreamt and thought about was being on stage. One evening my father told me Watford Operatic Society were looking for boys for their production of *Oliver!*. Not only did I get in the show, I played Oliver and my dream had started.

Having played in many amateur productions I won a scholarship to The Arts Educational School in London and spent two fabulous years training. I performed all over the country and had the honour of being in the original West End productions of *42nd Street*, *La Cage aux Folles* and *Metropolis*.

Out of the blue I had a phone call asking if I would choreograph a local amateur group's production of *West Side Story*. For the next twenty five years I directed and staged over one hundred shows, NODA was back in my life and I ran workshops at conferences and became a tutor at Summer School.

After over forty years in the business I retired to France. In 2017, while in a small bar in Spain chatting with a friend about pantomimes, I was persuaded to write my book. It is strange how a few words can trigger a thought, a memory, a ghost from the past, I mentioned I had seen Cliff Richard, Terry Scott and Una Stubbs in Panto as a child. My friend Elaine smiled and said "I love it when people name drop".



I have always been asked questions about those years as so much of my life has been in a rehearsal room or sat at a dressing room mirror. I've worked with many West End Stars, Broadway legends, even household TV and movie names and it was time to put the real glitter and glamour on a page and tell you what it was like to perform on some of the most iconic stages. ★

The cast of *The Pied Piper*, who were supported by a 36 strong production team.



The Burley Players at 30

Back in November The Burley Players celebrated thirty years since they were formed as an amateur dramatic group. Their President, Mrs. Jeanne Wilde, started the group in 1987 and the first production, *Breath of Spring* was held on the 28th and 29th April 1988. There were little to no funds available so, after holding a fund-raising coffee morning we raised £227. They had, and there was, absolutely nothing when they started so a lot of work went into making this production happen, from stage facilities at their Village Hall to props and lighting, but they managed to borrow what was needed including basic equipment.

The production was a huge success and a great start to their many achievements experienced over the years. The Burley Players have gone from strength to strength and can proudly say they have their own lighting and sound systems. They have local artists who join them to paint the backdrops along with a strong production team and continuing support from far and wide.

On top of all the help they receive it is no secret that, after each production, The Burley Players make

donations to local causes and charities.

To celebrate their 30th year The Burley Players invited members, friends and supporters to a Barn Dance where, during the interval, the Chairman, Sandy Simpson, presented the NODA thirty-year silver bar award to Jeanne Wilde, Richard Pratt, Sue Trotter and Lindy Capon all of whom have been involved since the outset.



Their first pantomime, *Cinderella*, was performed in January 1989 and they have produced a pantomime every year since, their 30th celebration being marked with the pantomime *The Pied Piper* by Alan P. Frayn. ★

South West

The 'NODA South West Awards Evening' must go on!

Even the 'Beast from the East' could not stop this annual event successfully taking place – at the 2nd attempt!



Awards Attendees gathering before the event

What a night! The people of the South West were looking forward to their Awards evening on Saturday 3rd March at the Marriott Hotel, Bristol, with 338 like-minded people ready to join together for an evening of festivity and celebration. The South West Regional Awards Night had been carefully planned but then the weather intervened. Unfortunately, 'The Beast from the East' arrived and put our plans on hold. Heavy snow falls over the two days before the event made travelling dangerous so, for everyone's safety, the evening had to be postponed. The Hotel offered us an alternative date of Saturday 24th March but as you can imagine this was not without its problems as many people had already had previous engagements planned for this date, with many shows being performed that weekend and holiday arrangements.

The organising committee worked very hard to rejig the arrangements and our final numbers for the rescheduled date were 264, with a large percentage of the original people still available and others able to join us. Bookings needed checking and changing, refunds made, the table layout adapted and reprinted and the availability of tech support secured. Helium balloons decorated the tables and a display of the Awards and the competition posters and programmes were inspected.

Then we had a wonderful evening! It was the first with new Regional Councillor Graham Liverton at the helm and it was a great success. We were also honoured by the attendance of National President Nick Lawrence to present the Awards. Music played, people talked, dinner was served and drinks were shared. The Awards were made, including a surprise one for the President, and there was general fun, laughter and applause.

Some may have been unable to attend due to the change in date, but the smaller size of the event seemed to make it more intimate and enjoyable. Now plans are afoot for next year...! We all look forward to next year's event and hope the weather is kinder. See you there! ★

Frankie Telford and Dee Way



Best Drama Award – The Exmouth Players



Best Musical Award – CODS

Images © Leigh Conley

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Zenith Youth Theatre Company at the Edinburgh Fringe

42 Young People to experience this event, performing four shows daily on the Bath Theatre Bus!

The Bath-based Zenith Youth Theatre Company was founded in 1963 to encourage a younger generation to participate in amateur dramatics. They have been performing in and around Bath for over 50 years and are one of the longest running youth theatre companies in the country. One of the main aims of the group has always been to give their members a wide ranging and enriching experience in the arts and what better way than to take them to this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival!



for one week, presenting four shows a day, four different shows with four different casts performing them on the Bath Theatre Bus! (theatrebathbus.co.uk).

The Society wanted to give members, many of whom would not normally get the

opportunity, a chance to experience and perform in the world's largest art festival. They have involved them in the whole process, including choosing the shows, raising money to stage the shows, marketing and in the creative process, allowing them to learn how to stage a show from concept to performance. Ex-members with relevant experience have also been involved in the process from fundraising

The Society will be taking 42 young people between the ages of 13 and 21



Outstanding Years of Service to Bridgwater's Amateur Theatre

Bridgwater Operatic Society's (BOS) recent production of My Fair Lady played host to some very special presentations!

Following a performance by Bridgwater Operatic Society of the classic *My Fair Lady* (incidentally given a very successful modern twist), seven members of the society were presented with long service awards by NODA National President Nick Lawrence. These were:

- ★ Angie Rebbeck (30 years);
- ★ James Tucker (35 years);
- ★ Alan Calaminus (40 years);
- ★ Steve Culverwell, Norma Weaver and Tony Pomeroy (all 45 years) and
- ★ Sue Pomeroy, NODA Representative for South West District 9, was presented with her gold award celebrating 50 years upon the wicked stage!

It was a glittering occasion and a night to remember.

They were also able to get together a Quartet of Musical Directors, including Retired BOS MD Tony Pomeroy, NODA President Nick Lawrence, *My Fair Lady* MD Lyn Merrifield and BOS President and former MD Bill Young. ★



Are you 'Living Dangerously?'

John Barclay has been writing and performing for 60 years, most recently with NODA members The Rex Players in Wareham, Dorset. Using a recent script, John recommends the following for a good comedy sketch:

- ★ **Start with a good idea.** Sometimes a fairly good idea will do, if used imaginatively. When a friend of mine pulled out a packet of cigarettes, I noticed how the brand name and appealing design had been replaced with stark warnings on the dangers of smoking. It might be funny to refer to these warnings as if they were the brand names.
- ★ **Bear in mind where and when the sketch will be performed.** Whilst compering a variety show, I thought it might be effective if my mate marched up in the middle to try to buy cigarettes from me. **Surprise isn't necessarily funny, but it keeps everyone awake.**

to directing. This whole project will expand the horizons of group members allowing them to explore theatre, arts and events as well as build discipline and a professional work-ethic. Not all of the members go on to a career in performing arts but the confidence they will gain as part of this project will enable them to pursue their chosen career; whatever that is. Due to the nature of normal large-scale productions, most members only ever perform as part of the chorus. Doing four productions with small casts allows members to take on bigger roles and be more involved, which will further enhance the confidence of the young people involved.

This will be a memorable and potentially life changing experience for each and every one in the company, including the adult volunteers, and they all cannot wait! ★

Scott Rogers



Images © Scott Rogers

- ★ **A sketch is more interesting if the characters are contrasted in attitude and mood.**

A visual change holds the attention and makes the sketch more memorable, for example we decided to swap moods.

- ★ **Take care with props** or particular staging as they can slow a sketch.
- ★ **Originality usually goes down well** e.g. admitting you are stuck or making a sketch about sketches.
- ★ **Punchlines** can be abrupt, visual, final and, hopefully, funny.
- ★ Tweak and polish it, cut out anything unfunny, or not leading to something funny or moving the story on.
- ★ Finally, choose a snappy, intriguing title that closely fits the sketch such as **"LIVING DANGEROUSLY"**

"Living Dangerously" and other comedy material by John are available free on johnbarclayink.com ★



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CENTRE STAGE

Our Centre Stage feature gives you the chance to tell us about your favourite role. In this edition our editor talks to Sally Collings from The Tavonians.

Favourite role: Ruth Ellis in *The Thrill of Love*.

Performed: 23rd Feb – 10th March 2018, in eight different venues around Tavistock and Okehampton.

Tell me a little bit about your acting background.

My first part was in *The Hot Rock* at the age of 15 with the Theatre Royal's Young Company and I have been hooked ever since. I did a BTEC in Performing Arts and since then I've done everything from musical theatre to plays to concerts with many different companies. I've been lucky enough to play Nancy in Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* and Susan, or Rita as she likes to call herself, in *Educating Rita*.

Let's talk about your favourite role: Ruth Ellis in *The Thrill of Love*.

Truth be told I'd never heard of Ruth Ellis. When I found out that she was the last lady to be hanged in England, for shooting her lover, I felt that there must be far more to the story.

What was the audition like?

The Tavonians is a small company with some extremely talented actors. We are fortunate enough to be able to choose plays that suit the cast so I first got to 'meet' Ruth Ellis in a read through. Under the watchful eye of Di Ffitch, who was determined to direct this play, I read for Ruth and I cried from start to finish. I just knew I wanted to tell the story of this woman who was caught up in an unwanted situation, during a time when mental health was not talked about and domestic abuse was par for the course throughout many of the working classes.

How did you feel when the casting was announced?

I was excited, scared, and excited again. Then I felt the weight of the responsibility of playing a person who really existed and within a generation's reach, especially in a year where we celebrate #Woman100. She was so important. As a result of her case the laws on diminished responsibility were introduced and the case also

contributed to the abolishment of the death penalty in Britain.

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

Blimey, that's a question. I am manager of a busy estate agent in Tavistock and my first play was to ask them to sponsor the show, so when I needed to leave early on performance days it sweetened the pill slightly! I'm surrounded by lots of supportive people and my non-theatre buddies understand that they just don't see me for a little while, unless they buy tickets!

How did you learn the part?

I believe that just because it's 'am-dram' doesn't mean it shouldn't be a professional standard performance. I can't learn a script until it's blocked and then I learn all my lines scene by scene in a list, ignoring everyone else's (much to every Director's disgust!). I then spend rehearsals getting used to hearing my cues and reacting to them. I find this helps provoke a natural response. I

know that once I am no longer seeing the words on the page in my mind's eye I am comfortable enough to start to play with the role.

If you could play it again, would you?

It was exhausting. Both physically and emotionally. The whole team were a great bunch to work with but I think when something is done, it's done, and it's time to move onto the next challenge.

Is there anything you'd do differently?

I would change her voice. She was perceived as a 'brassy blonde' with a 'put on' middle class accent and a recent documentary which included recordings of her proved that! Although I was well spoken I was not nearly as 'middle class' as she was trying to sound.

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

I'd love to have a go at Sally Bowles in *Cabaret*. There was talk of Shirley Valentine, but can you imagine how exposed you feel on stage on your own, and I'd have to learn to cook egg and chips without the smoke detector going off!

What have you got coming up next?

I am in the Chorus of *Oliver!* at Sterts Outdoor Theatre Company this summer, enjoying all the numbers I didn't get to dance and sing in ten years ago. Fingers crossed for the weather! I'm also hoping to get involved in the production side of things for *Jeeves and Wooster* with The Tavonians next spring.

You can find out more about The Tavonians at tavonians.org.uk ★

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



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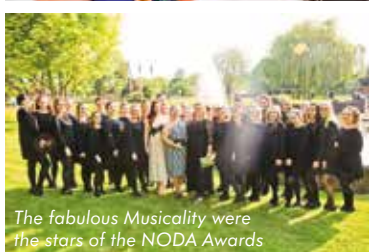
DISTRICT 7
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Sharon Davies and Lyn Emmerson were awarded Councillor's awards



Best Youth Performer Drew Morris for Annie, with Dee McIlroy

Regional Representative Lyn Emmerson District 1 receiving her 60 year diamond long service award



The fabulous Musicality were the stars of the NODA Awards



Sheelagh Hobart and Niamh Donnelly - Best Youth Performer

COUNCILLOR'S CHAT



At our Regional AGM in May this year I was reappointed to office as your Regional Councillor to Wales and Ireland for the 2018 – 2019 period.

Our Gala Dinner and Awards Evening was extremely successful with 113 trophies awarded to individuals and societies for their hard work and achievements in 2017. It was a pleasure to welcome our NODA National President Nick Lawrence and NODA's Chief Operating Officer Dale Freeman to our Regional weekend. The weekend saw 57 individuals part take in our Masterclasses which consisted of a Musical Theatre Workshop led by Luke Spencer and a Drama Workshop led by Mr Nick Lawrence. Musicality Academy (Youth Theatre Company) based in South Wales opened the evening with a number from the Addams Family and wowed our guests throughout the evening with various musical theatre numbers, ending the awards ceremony with 'The Impossible

Dream' and 'This Is Me' to name just a few. International Artiste Sara Jones took us past midnight with her fantastic Award Winning Tina Turner Experience.

I continue to look forward to attending as many productions as I am able to in 2018/2019 and I encourage societies to invite me to their productions if they do not already invite the Councillor, as this will allow me to travel around Wales and Ireland meeting our members and will also make societies eligible for the Regional Awards. All invitations are welcomed via email to: Jordan.spencer@noda.org.uk and I ask for at least eight weeks' notice due to the large geographical area of our region and personal commitments.

I hope you enjoy this edition of NODA Today and I look forward to meeting more of our members. ★

Your friend,

Jordan Spencer FRSA
Councillor

In Memoriam of Colin Porter

Banbridge Musical Society lost their beloved President of over 40 years' service last summer. Colin Porter, a stalwart of the Society, is very sadly missed and was given a wonderful fitting tribute, honouring his life with a memorial concert in the theatre he loved. ★

DO YOU WANT TO JOIN US?

District 6 (Llanelli to Haverfordwest) is currently vacant. If you would like to become a District Representative or know more please contact jordan.spencer@noda.org.uk



MAOS 75 Years of Memories

During World War II a group of friends met in a cafe in Maesteg, South Wales, to discuss how best to raise morale during those dark times. They decided, of course, to sing. And so, Maesteg Amateur Operatic Society was born. Its first production, *The Desert Song*, was performed at Maesteg Town Hall in 1943.

There are still a few who remember that first show when the romantic desert came to town with its 'star', a donkey on loan from nearby Porthcawl. (The donkey's minder is still a Patron of the Society).

'The Opera', as it will always be known, is a vital part of the social and cultural life of the town. Performances are alive in the memories of players and audiences alike: a stunning, unaccompanied encore of 'Ole Man River' indelible after over fifty years; the moving final scenes of *The King and I* (2003); the sheer force of *Jekyll and Hyde* (2013) and *Sweeney Todd* (2015); the overwhelming pity of *Oh, What a Lovely War* (2016)

We're a Society strengthened by families, six family members onstage together is our record and friendship:

we've even had an onstage proposal. (She said, 'Yes'). And, always, there are the reliable volunteers, backstage and front of house, who appear as if by magic as the show comes around.

We look forward to our 75th show, *Sister Act*, with a cast of mainly young performers a healthy sign for the future, so as we step onto the same stage as our founders, we will remember those who, in the face of the worst, determined to show what's best. ★

2019's Awards Dinner and AGM is scheduled for May at the Three Counties Hotel, Hereford. Watch our social media outlets for the finalised dates.

West Midlands

COUNCILLOR'S COMMENTS

It was an absolute pleasure to welcome so many of you to our regional AGM and Conference at Stourbridge Town Hall on Sunday 15th April. We were proud to enjoy the company of our National President Nick Lawrence who fully immersed himself in the whole day presenting an inspirational workshop entitled 'The Pace of Dialogue' and addressing a lively AGM where we formally welcomed Jordan McFarlane and Alan Bruce as District Representatives to the team.

The highlight of the day was an afternoon of entertainment and awards to salute and congratulate nominees and winners for their outstanding achievements during 2017.



An additional Special Award category enabled each District Representative to recognise any special contribution to a production or society. We were also pleased to ensure the achievements of societies in District 2 have been recognised by issuing a commemorative award.

This has been an exciting period in our calendar and my personal thanks must go to societies and groups for your much appreciated invitations and kind hospitality.

It is with sadness that I convey our respects to the family and friends of former District 9 Representative Marjorie Carmichael who passed away earlier this year. ★

Ian G. Cox
Regional Councillor NODA West Midlands

Benny Makes His Debut

Benny, the Guide Dog, made his stage debut last year alongside handler Helen Rourke. We caught up with Helen to find out how it all started.

"It was my ambition to be an opera singer so I joined The Arcadians in 1988 for their production of White Horse Inn. My sight deteriorated quickly and, in 1991, although I still had some sight, I was classed as blind and gave up any idea of being an opera singer.

As my sight continued to deteriorate I was still welcomed by the company and took part in productions missing only four over 30 years.

Benny is my third Guide Dog and the most laid back. He comes to rehearsals and stays in the dressing room when I am on stage. I never thought he would be on stage with me. It was Pam and James Garrington, the Directors of *Guys and Dolls* who came up with the idea. Benny was a natural and he loved all the attention he got from the cast and the audiences. Of course it is not possible to take Benny on stage for every production but I am looking forward to the next time."

Since we spoke, Benny and Helen were back on stage at the NODA WM AGM and Awards day where NODA President, Nick Lawrence presented Helen with District 9's first District Representative's Special Award. ★



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Your Regional Committee

Back Row - Andy Brown (District 5) Paul Douglass (District 9 & Membership Secretary) Brian Hirst (District 11) Janine Graeme (Regional Editor) Bruce Wyatt (District 10)

Middle Row - Dennis Price (District 8) Jean Beard (District 7) Ian G. Cox (Regional Councillor) Joyce Eyre (District 6) Wendy Winterburn (Regional Secretary & Treasure) Alan Bruce (District 3) Jordan McFarlane MBS (District 2 & Webmaster)

Front Row - Emma Barnett (Youth Adviser) Louise Hickey MBE (District 1) Alison Smith (District 4) Inserted - Wyn Mason (Awards Secretary)

Meet Your NODA WM Committee

Greetings to one and all. We are always delighted to receive your invitations to view and review your productions, from which they are considered for our annual awards in their categories. It has long been felt that our Youth and Pantomime societies should be acknowledged the same as Musical and Dramas and April this year saw the first of these awards presented by the NODA National President Nick Lawrence. We were also delighted to see the Special Award category which means, as District Representatives, we can finally acknowledge those who, in our eyes, deserve special recognition.

To all our award winners, nominees, short listed societies and everyone who performs, takes part and supports making magic happen within our communities and societies, we applaud you.

A full list of Nominees and Winners for all categories can be found on our Regional NODA website ★



Cllr Jane Mackenzie, Mayor of Shrewsbury and Cllr Tony Parsons, Mayor's Consort, enjoying *Oliver* with Heather Game, President, and Steve Thomas, Chair of Shrewsbury Amateur Operatic Society.



Congratulations to Spotlight Youth Productions on their inclusion in the Queen's Birthday Honours announced on Saturday 9th June 2018 for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Services (QAVS)



Congratulations to Judy Megarry, Founder and leader of Pershore Operatic and Dramatic Society, who was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM), for services to community music in Pershore, Worcestershire, presentation by Lt. Col. Patrick Holcroft.



The mayor of Dudley, Cllr Dave Tyler, held afternoon tea in the Mayor's Parlour as a thank you to all the Drama and Musical groups within District 8 for inviting him to their shows during his year of office. Dave and his wife Barbara are staunch advocates for amateur theatre and for their final official evening function enjoyed *Me and My Girl*, Barbara's favourite musical.

Secret Thank Yous

Secret Thank Yous give you the chance to acknowledge truly awesome people who make a huge difference through their everyday small acts.

A Thank You goes to Louise Farmer of Grange Players for everything she has done since taking on the role of Secretary in 2017, which includes creating the "Save the Grange Playhouse Campaign" to raise much needed funds to support the ongoing refurbishment of their venue. Thank You to the Norbury Players Theatre team for all their hard work.

If you have someone you wish to thank, get in touch
janine.graeme@noda.org.uk ★

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