

Tnoda TODAY★

Spring 2019 | £3.90

Be inspired by amateur theatre

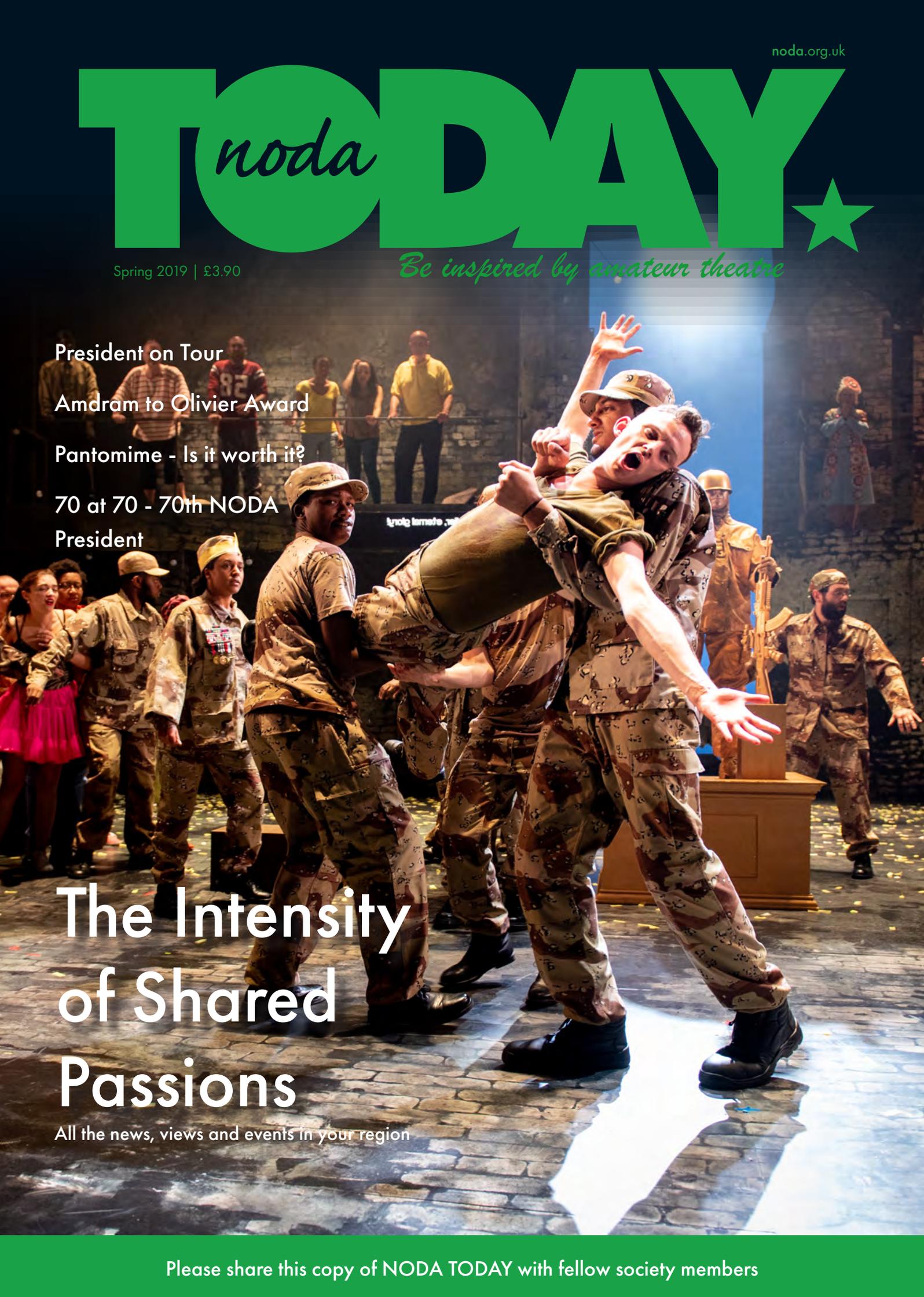
President on Tour

Amdram to Olivier Award

Pantomime - Is it worth it?

70 at 70 - 70th NODA

President



The Intensity of Shared Passions

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Jack and the Beanstalk, All Souls Dramatic Club. NODA North West



Chairman's Welcome

Two years on from NODA becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, we are now looking at our rules and policies to update and amend, there will be some changes but in general this is a tidying up exercise.

The Governance process within the Association is ongoing and to ensure that we all sing from the same hymn sheet Trustees have an annual update on best practice, it was with this in mind that we held the Valuing Volunteers Conference in March, which was attended by close on half of our Regional Representatives. Throughout the conference Regional Committee members had opportunity to express their views. As an Association we aim to support our members to enjoy their hobby, and the Council and HO rely on Regional Representatives to feed back the needs and aspirations of you our members. Some things we can influence although we cannot always guarantee results. Requests are often asked of NODA to look into the burden of performance fees (royalties), although a couple of Rights Holders now offer a discount to our members there is still a long way to go. The legislation and regulations affecting amateur theatre are continually changing and through our newsletters we will keep you informed.

The National Weekend in September is to be held in Southport, full details are on pages 31-34, the weekend presents a superb opportunity for meeting with your fellow members and also for Regional Representatives to get together at their annual meeting. There is time to meet the incoming President and every society is at liberty to contact the President direct. The weekend coincides with the British Musical Fireworks Festival also in Southport which will add a new dimension to our gathering.

Finally NODA's Summer School is holding its Visitors Day on 31st July contact your Councillor for details.

Michael Hastilow
Chairman of Trustees



Who's Who at NODA?

Back Row Left to Right - Stuart McCue-Dick, Andrew Rogers, Gordon Richardson, Ian G. Cox, Graham Liverton, Don McKay, Leslie Smith
 Front Row Left to Right - John W. Barnes, Christine Hunter Hughes, Jacquie Stedman, Nanette Lovell, Michael Hastilow

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Your letters and comments



Does your society have famous alumni?

Has your society pulled off a spectacular show?

Was your last show something out of the ordinary?

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If you have an interesting story to tell, then get in touch with your Regional Editor

NODA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of The National Operatic and Dramatic Association, Charity No 1171216 will take place on Saturday 28th September 2019 at 2.30pm at Conference Centre Southport (The Floral Hall) PR9 0DZ.

The Meeting is called in accordance with Rule 11 of the Associations Constitution to receive the audited annual statement of accounts, the trustees report, receive reports on the number of members, the proposed rates of subscription, 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 Michael Hastilow at 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough, PE2 7UH or by e-mail to michael.hastilow@noda.org.uk to arrive no later than 24th August 2019.

For all Regional Contacts, please turn to page 64 for full list.



Councillor's Chat

Welcome to your NODA Youth roundup page 2019. I hope you enjoy this edition of NODA Today.

Over the last year I have witnessed fantastic work produced and performed by our youth societies, the only real shame, it often doesn't make its way to your NODA Youth roundup page. Please if you are celebrating success, I encourage you to submit an article on your society or one of your individual members so that we can share your success with our NODA family.

Please ensure your child protection policies are up to date. You can find our various model documents and more information regarding Child Protection on our website: noda.org.uk/factsheets

Please get in touch with your Youth Adviser if you would like to feature in our next edition of NODA Today.

We are always keen to hear from societies celebrating success.

Keep reaching for the stars.

Jordan Spencer FRSA
Councillor to NODA Youth



This Is Where You Wanna Be!

On the back of the success of *The Greatest Showman* movie musical, NODA NE felt it would be great to run a workshop for 10-16 year-olds on the theme. So the day dawned bright in October 2018, and young members from across the region travelled to Pontefract in West Yorkshire – with fabulous help being received from group leaders who transported a lot of the young people along with their parents. Everyone was issued with a NODA Youth T-Shirt stating 'This is where we wanna be!'

The day involved the opportunity to attend both a dance and acting through song workshop. Both workshops were led by professional tutors who have experience in working with this age range. Throughout the day young people were challenged to try new things and also to take the opportunity to make new friends. All of the youngsters got on incredibly well, and many felt that the chance to meet new people was a highlight of the day. The workshops were physically active and encouraged the young people to develop new skills which they could take back to their groups.

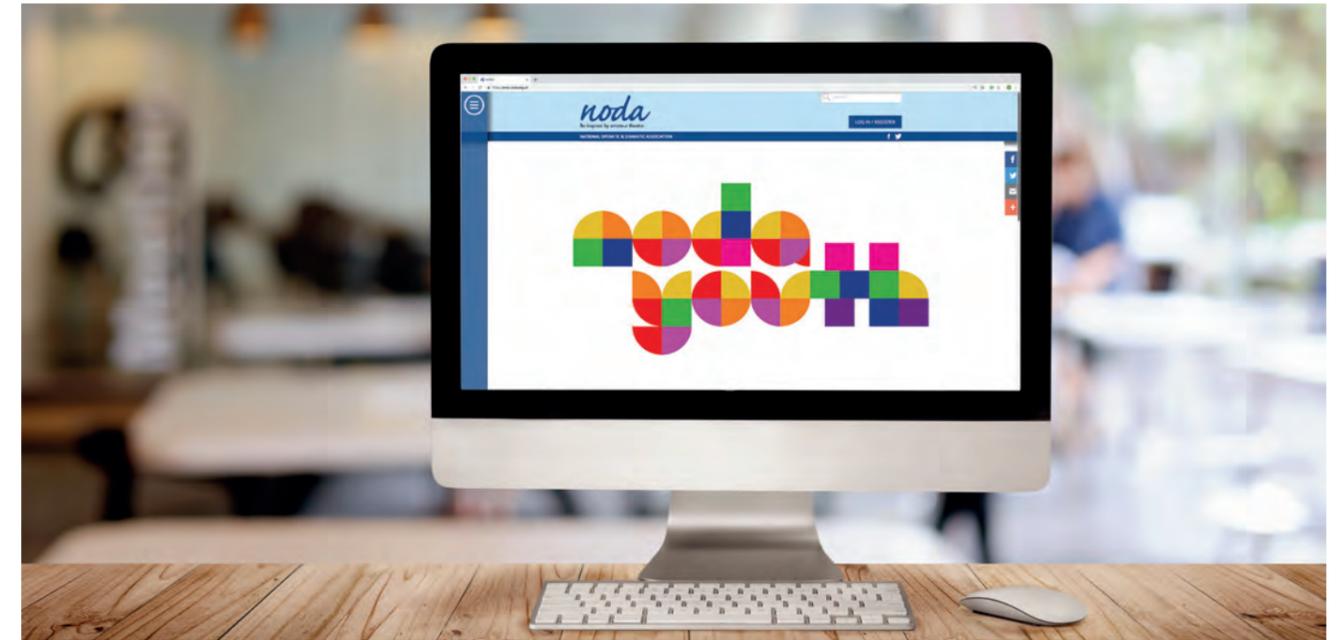


The event ended with a dance and singing performance by all the young people. The performances were inspiring as the young people had had less than half a day to learn the songs/routines. The parents who came to watch felt that their young people had succeeded beyond their expectations in a short time.

The young people were encouraged to feedback on what they have enjoyed the most during the day and responses included: "All of it - it was brilliant", "Everything", "I have enjoyed challenging myself in the singing", "I enjoyed building my confidence in dance", "Learning new dance moves", "I enjoyed meeting different people from other parts of Yorkshire", "I enjoyed being able to contribute to the big production", "I enjoyed singing the songs from *The Greatest Showman*", "The dancing was hard work, but great fun".

Jo Sykes
NODA Youth Adviser - North East

NODA Youth Zone to go live soon!



Our NODA Youth Advisers are always asked the question - where do we find out information specific to youth groups? Where do we get more details about Child Performance Licencing and Safeguarding?

Well we have listened to you all and very soon will launch the NODA Youth Zone on our website. In this area you will find

useful things like up to date information for all your questions, factsheets around all the ins and outs of youth theatre. But you will also find out locations for youth workshops running in your area, interviews with youth practitioners that might give you inspiration for your own group and lots more.

We hope to have the area up and running

as soon as possible but in the meantime visit noda.org.uk/youthsignup to keep upto date with the launch.

If you would like to suggest content for these pages particularly items that would be useful to your society then please email youth@noda.org.uk

Panto Society see the youth inside themselves

Whenever you go to see a production in the rural Northumberland twin villages of Felton and Thirston you expect to see a whole community's spirit and a rip-roaring and undoubtedly quirky production.

The quirkiness was there for all to see from the very start as the Narrator guided us through the production of *Alice in Wonderland* – but not as we know it. Not only did it have two dames who pursued Alice down a magic time portal only to arrive in the previous years panto with crossover characters, but the time travellers also met up with Sherlock Holmes' Mrs Hudson about to cook the White Rabbit. Much mayhem ensued before the adult versions of Alice, the two dames, Mrs Hudson, the White Rabbit and the Narrator of the story were all accidentally affected by Alice's decision to drink the 'shrink me' potion.

All six adult characters were transformed

into their younger self's ranging from about 8 to 11 where, for a major part of the remainder of the panto, they played the roles – Did the youth fail at the hurdle – No they did not as they embraced the opportunity and gave as equally polished performances as their adult contemporaries. A wonderful quirky twist on the classic tale and congratulations to the youngsters of F&T and for the society for allowing such magic to occur.





Beauty and the Beast, Angles Theatre, Wisbech. Photography by Adam Fairbrother Photography

Pantomime - why is it worth the pain?

Having just finished a 17 performance run of pantomime, I sat back and wondered partly why I had just subjected myself to such a long run of shows, but also why people flock every year to see it.

Pantomime is a staple in the amateur theatre calendar. Every December up and down the country, men dig out their best bras and heels and take to the stage, people argue who will be the back end of the horse, and the director wonders what annoying catchy song will be this years community song! (Baby Shark...!) In most other hobbies, people will think all of this is a bizarre idea, but alas for me and thousands of others it is 'just Christmas.'

So what actually makes a pantomime and why is it such an important event in the calendar?

Trusty Wikipedia says
"Pantomime (informally panto) is a type of musical comedy stage production designed for family entertainment."

"It was developed in England and is performed throughout the United Kingdom, Ireland and (to a lesser extent) in other English-speaking countries, especially during the Christmas and New Year season. Modern pantomime includes songs, gags, slapstick comedy and dancing. It employs gender-crossing actors and combines topical humour with a story more or less based on a well-known fairy tale, fable or folktale. It is a participatory form of theatre, in which the audience is expected to sing along with certain parts of the music and shout out phrases to the performers."

Pantomime is traditionally a very family orientated show. I know of many generations of families who come to watch my own society's show each year. They tell me that they can remember coming to watch pantomime as a child with their grandparents and it has been a family tradition ever since. Those people actually now bring their own grandchildren. Others say it just isn't Christmas in their house until they have been to watch a pantomime.

Obviously, although we all want to put on a great show at Christmas time, societies need to make money for their group. Pantomime is traditionally a high

ticket sale and low(ish) expense show to put on. This means societies can try more adventurous shows that may not have the same return as more popular choices at other times of the year, safe in the knowledge that their pantomime can recoup any additional expense or lower ticket sales. For some societies lucky enough to own their own venue, pantomime allows them to keep the doors open in January, a traditionally barren time for theatre.

Why do we put ourselves through it? Is it the joy of having 100 10-year-olds screaming and shouting at us night after night, buckets of water poured over our heads, or spending Christmas as the back end of Daisy the cow? Any show is a big commitment, but pantomime is something else. So why do we do it? For a society committee member is it the bank balance at the end of the run, as a performer is it spending Christmas or New Year with your 'theatre family'.

For me, it is something entirely different. During one performance this year, I remember a severely disabled boy on the front row who would not settle before the show began and his carers were planning on taking him out. As soon as the show started he settled in an instance, and although his communication skills were not very advanced, he was booing and cheering the whole show and loved every minute. For me that's what panto is about - Pantomime is accessible to everyone, and everyone is truly able to experience Christmas magic through it.

Every night, walking out and having a full house cheering at the top of their voices, having to stop your script as the audience is booing so loudly, and knowing that the community song might be twice as long as necessary because the audience don't want the magic to end. It is a unique experience that no other type of show will give you. For me, that's what makes pantomime worth it. ★

Rob Williams, National Editor



A few things to consider

So starting at the beginning of the process - choosing the right script. Do you go for a traditional title like *Mother Goose*, a 'Disneyfied' title like *Beauty and the Beast* or *Cinderella* or something entirely different like *Frankenstein the Pantomime*? Getting this right makes or breaks any show, but particularly pantomime.

In honesty, my society has been a member of NODA for 15 years and has been performing a yearly panto for the last 12, but we have not performed a NODA pantomime since 2008. I had always thought the titles were old fashioned and hadn't been updated for years. It was not until I started working here that I realised this was not the case! NODA hold over 150 different scripts - from the classics to new scripts submitted each year. I was delighted to be proved wrong in my assumptions, and my society is now looking through the titles on the website for our 2019 script. At the time of writing this article, we have at least 20 scripts to ready for approval before being added to the catalogue.

So you have a script, what next. Well, you need songs. For me, these need to be a mix of current chart songs, a few classics for the older audience members and a few musical theatre songs for the big dramatic punch. We always cut the songs down to a maximum of two and a half minutes, it keeps the show moving at a good pace.

Don't forget the finishing touches - panto merchandise. Yep those annoying flashing wands that are the bane of every performer's life, but kids (and a lot of adults) love them. They are relatively cheap to buy in and can be sold for a significant markup. At the end of each performance, I see our treasurer cashing up and always envisage him as Fagin counting his money by the fireside.

The list seems never ending and I am sure for a lot of people reading this that what I have said is nothing new to them. But the biggest thing is like any show, society or hobby is to enjoy it! Make the most of this unique type of theatre where you can work with the audience and shape a performance around their reactions!

NODA
PANTOMIMES

MODERN

Classic



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR
YOUR NEXT PANTOMIME?
IF YOU ARE - YOU'VE COME
TO THE RIGHT PLACE!

Here at NODA we offer a huge selection of pantomime scripts ranging from Classics like Sleeping Beauty and Pinocchio to Modern titles like The Prince's Quest and Scrooge the Pantomime
Whatever your cast, whatever your venue, we have a script for you!

Titles Include: A Christmas Carol • Aladdin
• Beauty & The Beast • Cinderella • Dick
Whittington • Goldilocks • Jack & The Beanstalk
• Little Red Riding Hood • Mother Goose • Oh
Scrooge • Peter Pan • Pinocchio • The Prince's
Quest • Puss In Boots • Rapunzel the Pantomime
• Red Riding Hood and the Three Little Pigs • Robin
Hood • Scrooge The Pantomime • Sleeping
Beauty • Snow Queen • Snow White & The Seven
Dwarfs • Treasure Island

Visit our website for reading copies of all our pantomime titles and to
licence your next pantomime!

noda.org.uk/pantomime



Councillor's Chat

I hope all of your 2019 productions are going well so far, if the shows that my wife Maxine and I have seen up to now are anything to go by, the standard just keeps getting better and better. I am pleased to see that many of you are pricing your tickets to reflect the quality of your productions and provide a sustainable future for your societies.

I am delighted to announce that we have almost a full complement of Regional District Representatives and Assistants, which means that at minimal cost to the Association, we in the East, are able to provide maximum cover for our members, and smooth transitions due to retirement or standing down of current District Representatives. Please invite your Representatives to your shows, committee meetings or rehearsals and get to know them.

As well as all of the exciting new initiatives being launched in the East this year, we are also very keen to build upon the NODA Youth Strategy that was started several years ago. Unfortunately due to lack of response from you in previous years, very little has been done to encourage and promote youth involvement with NODA in the East. Therefore, I appeal to you to please let us know what our Youth Representatives can do for the youth in your district/society. No suggestions are too big or too small, and all will be considered.

I look forward to seeing you all at our new AGM and Gala Awards Luncheon venue at Wicksteed Park, on Sunday 12th May 2019. ★

Don McKay
East Regional Councillor

East



The End of the Pier Show and Other Strange Places

Whenever you talk to an "am-dram" person there is always a tale to be told, usually funny, sometimes painful and hopefully not one that the audience witnessed. Cast members share "in-jokes" and remember "that" show with stories being handed down long after the final night curtain; but how many of us think about the (cramped/strange/quirky) places in which we change into (many) costumes or of our valiant backstage crew lifting and carrying (in silence) whilst crammed into the wings with props and other bodies!

Cromer and Sheringham Operatic and Dramatic Society (CSODS) proudly produce many of their great shows literally at the end of the pier...The Society began life in 1914, and has seen many changes in 1923 becoming Cromer Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, then joining forces with Sheringham Players in 1932 before reconstituting in 1949 under the name it is known by today. Through the generosity of three pre-war members acting as guarantors to the tune of £50.00 each, they performed in Cromer Town Hall having previously performed at both Sheringham and Cromer, the former losing it's theatre.

After successful years at the Town Hall, it was decided to gamble on a move to the 720 seat Pier Pavilion. After only one year,

the Pier was so severely damaged in the 1953 floods that the Society was forced to return to the Town Hall until re-establishing itself at the Pier Pavilion in 1956 and continuing to run at this venue with a major production being performed annually.

In 2004, the seating capacity of the Pier Pavilion Theatre was increased to 514 with the addition of an upper circle, the society was pleased and proud to be the first users of the newly refurbished theatre. Their successful association with the nationally recognised Pier Pavilion Theatre has seen record-breaking productions, which has raised thousands of pounds for charity marked by the unveiling of a plaque to celebrate, not only their 2014 centenary but their proud and long association with Cromer Pier Pavilion Theatre.

Robin Taylor, chairman of CSODS, says that "Whilst the theatre itself is fairly traditional, the situation over the sea has presented challenges for us, especially when transporting scenery and props down the pier on a windy get-in day, although drainage during *Singin' In The Rain* was very easy! For really big shows, such as *Oliver!* extra dressing room space had to be found in the adjacent lifeboat station with cast members having to be ready to 'stand back' in case the lifeboat was called to an emergency!" ★

Shakespeare at The George



Shakespeare at The George has commissioned a brand new Shakespeare Play (yes, you read that right!) to celebrate its 60th anniversary this year.

As you fine folk know, William Shakespeare wrote 37 plays between 1590 and 1614, that cemented his reputation as the finest playwright the world has ever known but... Now you can make that 38! Because the first new Shakespeare play in over 400 years had its world premiere at Commemoration Hall in Huntingdon as part of The Bridge Arts Festival.

Written by writer and director Lynne Livingstone entitled *Shakespearean* has been formed entirely from lines found in each of Shakespeare's 37 plays to create a whole new story that is at once fresh and yet strangely familiar (and one that is technically co-written by William Shakespeare himself)

All the features of a Shakespeare play: scheming royalty, passionate lovers, intrigue, romance, cross-dressing, and mistaken identity are woven through including a happy ending!

FRANCIS DURBRIDGE THE COMPLETE GUIDE



With an annotated listing of his novels and his works for radio, television, the stage and the cinema

MELVYN BARNES

BSEAODS author in print

Melvyn Barnes a veteran and past President of Bury St Edmunds Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society and individual member of NODA of many years has completed his latest book *Francis Durbridge: The Complete Guide*.

In 2015 *Francis Durbridge: a Centenary Appreciation* was self-published with a limited print run, but such was the international interest that he was encouraged to pursue further research and solve the many puzzles surrounding Durbridge's career.

Francis Durbridge (1912-98) is remembered as the creator of the detectives Paul Temple and Tim Frazer, but his name will be known to the many amateur dramatic societies that frequently perform his stage thrillers such as *Suddenly at Home*, *Murder with Love* and *House Guest*.

Melvyn's 235-page book is the result of several years' research, vastly expanding Durbridge's career and giving full details of all his novels and his works for radio, television, the theatre and the cinema. Published by Williams & Whiting, in paperback and also as an e-book, via websites such as Amazon ★

Grant to help techies in Cambridge



A report received from the Pied Pipers Musical Theatre Club of Cambridge, states "we are thrilled to announce that we have been awarded a small grant which will enable us to run workshops for wannabe amdram techies and creatives!"

Chip Colquhoun of the Pied Pipers said: "The grant will enable us to achieve a long-held ambition of the committee to hold affordable workshops involving professional theatre technicians to develop the skills of amateurs which will sustain and enable groups like ours to produce in-house experience".

Cambridge's renowned Penguin Club, which regularly supplies many of the technicians for the city's community theatre groups, will be working with the Pied Pipers to help promote, organise, and facilitate the workshops. These will be open to all, and Cambridge community theatre groups will be invited to pitch to participants at the end of each workshop, in the hope of recruiting them into a production to put into practice their newfound talents.

Workshop subjects have yet to be confirmed – but suggestions, solely aimed at developing backstage crafts are invited - be it technical or creative.

Barton Shop Of Horrors



Barton Players are a dramatic group that has been performing in Great Barton village hall near Bury St Edmunds for over 40 years. We put on a pantomime during the Christmas season and in recent years have recently branched out into musicals and plays. Made up of a multi-talented group of people from Great Barton and the surrounding area, we work hard to put on high-quality shows; but make sure we have A LOT of fun along the way!

This year we've upped the ante by staging *Little Shop of Horrors*, complete with man-eating plant and shop front on our little stage! It's going to be a real challenge, but it is a fantastic show with great music so come along to Great Barton Village Hall on 16th to 18th May for a great night out.

With *South Pacific*, *Hi De Hi* and *Cinderella* we had a packed and groundbreaking 2018. It was great to see some of our youngsters step up into principal roles adding youth and energy (and lots of talent) to the performances. We start 2019 with this musical, plan a comedy in October and a pantomime in late November. So, plenty to keep us busy, bring it on! ★



East Midlands

Where There's Luck There's Brass



Councillor's Chat

Hello everybody and a very Happy Spring to everyone in NODA East Midlands. Now that pantos are well and truly over, plans will be going ahead for auditions and rehearsals for 2019 productions, and I look forward to seeing as many of these as possible.

A date for your Diary is **Sunday 23rd June 2019** for the NODA East Midlands Area Day for the AGM and AWARDS. This year we are delighted to be returning to the **Concordia Theatre at Hinckley**. You may recall we were at Concordia several years ago and it is a fantastic venue. Full details will be sent out at the beginning of April, but please put this date in your diaries!

Now - have you ever fancied (or know anyone else who has) becoming a NODA Rep? If so we are looking for a NODA Rep for East Midlands District 8 - Wellingborough, Northampton, South Northants and Milton Keynes and it could be you! If you think this might be just the hobby you are looking for, then please contact me directly for a chat and further details. It's a brilliant hobby - go on - have a go - you'll never regret it!

Finally, once again I must take this opportunity to thank the very hard working East Midlands Committee. Their support and loyalty to me is just invaluable.

My very best wishes to you all. ★

Nanette Lovell
East Midlands Regional Councillor

Martin Tyrrell recalls a more than memorable production of *Brassed Off* which shows that like the Grimley Colliery Band it pays to persevere.

St Nicolas Players in Spalding put on *Brassed Off* in November – in memory of Philip Bosworth, a much-loved member of our society, who directed the show in 2006.

The first challenge was to find a brass band. No local band could commit to our dates and even if they could cost would be prohibitive. It seemed all was lost when Tony Fell, a close neighbour, revealed that he played tenor horn with a nearby band and suggested that a band for the show could be built from scratch. As musicians joined, casting continued. Joe Dickinson was chosen to play the romantic lead, Andy Barrow. It was explained that he would have to pretend to play the tenor horn. He didn't need to – he owned and played one!

But what about uniforms? Local enquiries drew a blank, and with renting out of our range, we met with another obstacle. But



a web forum for brass players came up with a solution. We found that after 134 years Murton Colliery band in County Durham were about to fold – so we asked if we buy their uniforms? With astonishing generosity, they donated 20 uniforms to us.

The National Coal Mining Museum lent us miners' helmets and lamps.

At last, it looked as if we would be able to get the production on stage. But then our leading man – playing Danny, the terminally ill bandmaster (Peter Postlethwaite in the film) – was contacted by the BBC to act as the stand-in for Richard Gere (on long shots). Shooting coincided with our show week. With three weeks to opening night and no time to find anyone else, I had to step in to take over the role.

The show was a resounding success, and we were sad to see the run come to an end.

The band? They decided to stay together, as St Nicolas Brass - they already have concert commitments through this year! ★



Celebrating 20 Years Of Musical Excellence

Joshua Mason tells the story of Inspirations Theatre Company.

Inspirations Theatre Company is an award-winning group based in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, celebrating their 20th Anniversary with a specially licensed production of *Chicago* in April, their first Rodgers & Hammerstein musical *The Sound Of Music* in June, and a special concert reuniting past members at the conclusion of the year.

Inspirations was established by Dorothy Clarke to offer opportunities for young people to perform West-End style shows at professional venues across Derbyshire.

In its formative years; *Big Al*, *Fame* and *West Side Story* (to name but a few) were produced. The group were then asked to perform at Her Majesty's Theatre in London and then for The Queen herself in Derby's Pride Park. As Inspirations grew and achieved sell-out successes' with *Les Misérables* and *We Will Rock You* with LAMDA and Trinity College courses offered encouraging members to pursue professional performing careers. Inspirations are very proud of their members who are now working in the West-End, on international cruise ships or touring as solo performers.

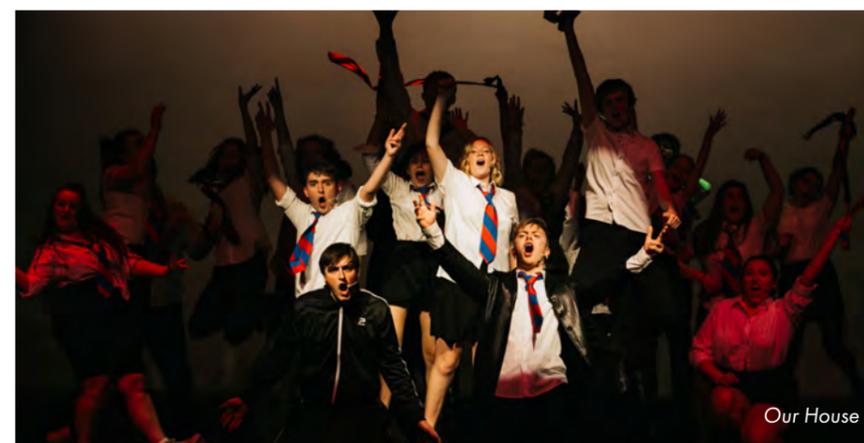
Joshua Mason became Company director three years ago. He already ran 'StageCrafts' who get booked to perform at weddings and parties, however, at the age of 24, Joshua took on a greater challenge with Inspirations. "Taking over the company has been an amazing experience. I've gained new skills and helped encourage young people to achieve." Having consolidated his position with a sell-out production of *Chess*: *The Musical* in 2017 to achieving rave audience reviews in 2018 with *Godspell*, this year promises to continue to build on the long-standing ethos of the group; that of inclusivity and opportunity. ★



Godspell



Gypsy



Our House

Obituary - Chris Clarke

It is with a heavy heart that we must announce the passing of Chris Clarke. As a performer, Chris took the lead role in many shows with AOS starting with only the second ever show they performed (*Camelot*), before moving on to producing and directing for The Guild and finally, *The Tinklers*. Chris also undertook the role of treasurer for the society, starting from lowly beginnings and turning the society into the one it is today. Forever encouraging, Chris nurtured the nervous and inexperienced through the audition process and onto the stage, delighting in seeing their confidence growing.

He is survived by his wife, Christine (who along with Damon Walsh has taken up the mantle of co-directing/producing for the society), a son, Jason, who currently lives and works overseas and a daughter, Zoe, who, from an early age, followed in her dad's footsteps both on and off stage. And three beautiful grandchildren – Hermoine, Riley and Sebastian - who were the apples of his eye and kept him on his toes right to the very end. He will be sorely missed by all.

The Point of No Return

Mistakes Directors Make

Michaela Clement-Hayes with a message from the rehearsal room...and she doesn't hold back!



Directing is hard. Mostly because you have to deal with actors – defensive, strong-willed, stubborn... (plus many other less polite descriptors)

As actors, we aim to embody the character we are portraying. As a director you see the big picture and bring it to life, helping our characters interact with each other to tell the story.

But to get to that coveted five-star performance, remember that you need your actors and crew as much as they need you. Even the most seasoned director makes mistakes. But what are the worst things you can do to really upset everyone?

Blocking Creativity

We get it. You've got an idea, and it's incredible. You can see the whole stage, the actors, the lighting everything – all in your mind, or on your scale set model. But once rehearsals start, you have to be adaptable. Turning up to the first rehearsal and dictating every character's move, inflection and emotion is not only unrealistic but is a recipe for disaster. We are excited to understand your vision, but let us experiment with what feels natural to our character and how we've interpreted them.

Confusing Ideas

There's nothing more frustrating than coming to a rehearsal and being told "you're doing/saying it wrong", despite having clear stage directions written in your script, because the director changed

their mind or didn't write their own direction down. No less irritating is a confusing direction, such as "you need to be calm, but angry" or "walk more like a sailor". What does that mean? Personally, I hate being told how my character is feeling during a scene because I don't always know until I'm on the stage delivering the lines.

Audience Neglect

Directors continue to conceptualise shows, trying 'something new' to show off their creativity and ability to 'think outside of the box'. These new adaptations can be hugely successful, but when it comes to am-dram, try to rein it in. Your audience probably doesn't want anything highbrow, complicated or too surreal. Pick something that local theatregoers want – this might be Molière, murder or musical – because if your audience finds your show too confusing, bizarre or modern, they won't recommend it to their friends, and may even boycott future productions. Many local theatres are struggling, so you need bums on seats! And nothing is more disappointing than putting in weeks of hard work for a half-empty theatre.

Power Struggles

Everyone has different ways of directing. So if you visit a rehearsal your fellow am-dram member is directing, then let them be. Advice (never criticism) should be given privately, rather than in front of the actors. And if you're directing, remember that everyone deserves your time and respect. So don't treat your actors and crew differently – they're equally as important

and necessary for a successful production. Listen to their ideas, appreciate their time and, once the show is over (especially if you get good reviews), be gracious thanking everyone for their contribution, no matter what their role.

Ignoring Life

Staging a production is a huge commitment for everyone involved. When actors or crew are late, it affects everyone else. We get it, we hate letting people down too, but life gets in the way. None of us is getting paid for this, so if there's a crisis in the office, our child is sick, or our car breaks down, that has to take priority. Don't shout at us for being late, or criticise everything we do at the next rehearsal – it's not a productive use of time. Accept our apology and move on, or we won't audition again. We might even throw a dramatic strop and exit stage left.

Final Curtain

However, you direct, upsetting your cast and crew will never get you anywhere. Our time is precious, so if we're bullied, patronised or stifled creatively, we'll find another group. And if we stick it out because we don't want to let everyone down, morale and performances may suffer.

However, it's not all doom and gloom. Take heart – you deserve that applause! Most of us are terrified to direct because we know what actors are like, so trust me when I say, please don't give up – we need you! ★

NODA MEMBER BENEFITS

What do you receive for your NODA society membership?

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

Access to members' area of website

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

Advice and services

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

Regional support

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

Training

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

Awards

- ★ National awards ceremony
- ★ Poster and programme competition

Discounts

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

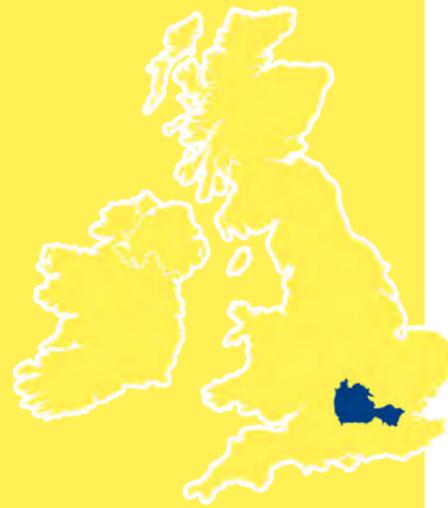
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noda

Be inspired by amateur theatre



London

New Studio for Henley Society

Councillor's Chat

As the weather warms up and preparations for your Spring shows are reaching the critical stage, we on the London Committee are planning ahead for our Regional AGM and Awards Day. Initial details are in this issue but look out for further announcements direct to you, on Facebook or via your Regional Rep. Don't forget, three awards are for those nominated by their Societies, and the self-nomination forms are on the London website.

For the Awards Day, we are returning to the Radlett Centre in Hertfordshire on 9th June. This location, off the M25, with decent rail links and a large car park very close, has proved the most suited to our needs. I appreciate it is a long way to come for some in our large Region. The Regional Committee has been researching other venues with a view to staging the event in different locations but as yet we haven't identified somewhere large enough, with just as good transport links, large car park, onsite catering and a fully equipped stage, all for a reasonable price in order for us to keep ticket prices low.

With Easter falling as it does, lots of you have shows planned over the same two weeks in April, and the Regional Reps will have a busy time preparing their reviews.

Karen and I have enjoyed seeing your productions and meeting so many of you over the autumn and winter. Please continue to invite us, and we will try to make as many as possible. ★

Andrew Rogers
London Regional Councillor



In 1987 HAODS - Henley Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society - acquired a piece of land adjacent to the Kenton Theatre in Henley with a view to adding a Studio and the society embarked on a mammoth fundraising campaign to cover the costs. In the late 90s an extension was added, once again paid for by fundraising, to house our extensive wardrobe of some 3,000 pieces of costume.

Even with a lot of the build being done by the members, the Society was still £30,000 short to complete the project. However, thanks to the generosity of one of the members, the Society was loaned the shortfall, interest-free, provided

the donor remained anonymous. The repayment was to be made at £1000 per annum. HAODS have dutifully paid £1000 each January for the last 30 years... and now the Studio is wholly owned by us.

Tucked away to the side of the Kenton Theatre in Henley, where HAODS stages the main musical productions, The Studio has become a major asset and is so versatile, being used for rehearsals, functions, drama classes, Junior Theatre Schools and now small scale productions. Dinner Theatre Fringe productions have also been added to the society's repertoire, including 'Allo 'Allo and Blackadder - complete with Blackadder's Banquet which included Baldrick's Turnip Surprise.

Late last year, the anonymous donor agreed to be 'outed' when the final payment had been made. A celebratory afternoon tea was organised to mark the occasion and members old and new from all over the country to say a big thank you to..... Sandra Moon. A plaque will be erected shortly in her honour. ★

Julie Huntington
HAODS

NODA London AGM and Awards Day – 9th June

Regretfully we are unable to go ahead with the planned Showcase Competition on 8th June. Despite a super event last year, we received too few entrants this year for the Competition to be viable.

We had extended the Regional Day to a weekend two years ago in response to feedback from members that they wanted more than just an Awards Day. Presuming the Region would still like us to offer more than just one day, we will go back to the drawing board and work on some more alternatives for 2020 and beyond.

So, for 2019, we will revert to a one-day event on 9th June. Full details will follow direct to London societies and members and will be posted on the website, as well as on Facebook. However, the outline plan for the day is as follows:

Morning: Masterclasses in Acting, Accents, Singing and Makeup.
Afternoon: Presentation by Musical Youth Company of Oxford, AGM and Awards presentation.

We plan for the booking period to open on 6th May and expect demand to be high for tickets, so please look out for the announcement and get your ticket orders in. ★



Marilyn Johnstone as Miss Marple with Gloria Wright and Letty Blackstock in the background

How to make a first night special

So there I was dear reader, minding my own business at a Drama Committee meeting as the Trustee rep when a discussion came up about 2018 being a double anniversary year. It is 70 years since the group was founded by our first President - one Francis Curtis (more on her later) and 40 years since we bought and totally renovated the Victorian Corn Exchange building in our town's Market Square. I piped up and said that since Agatha Christie was our second President from 1950 – 1975 and lived in our town for over 30 years, should we not put on a Christie play? "Ooooh yes", they all said – and without missing a beat "and will you direct it??" The slot was for October 2018, choice of play to be mine subject to the license being available. BUT what I knew about Agatha Christie could be written on the back of a postage stamp, and I

knew that many aficionados who knew everything about her books and plays would attend. Scary huh?

And so I started my research by ordering about 6 books on Christie from our local library, began to narrow down the choice of plays and settled on "A Murder is Announced". Cut to the summer when husband Graham and I decided to conduct research by visiting Christie's (now National Trust) home Greenways in Devon. I ask to see a senior NT Curator, and a lovely woman appears wearing a name badge that reads Jane Francis Curtis. I had mentioned I was from the Sinodun Players in Wallingford. Well, it turns out that this woman is the grand-daughter of our Founder, Francis Curtis and even bears her name..... But I'm in Devon I think, a fair way from Oxfordshire, I have not yet had

any G&Ts today, how can this be? But it was indeed her, and I invited her to come as a VIP to our first night Gala Evening – and she agreed! She even agreed to get a message for us from Christie's grandson whom she knows quite well. In addition, I invited Judy Dewey, the brilliant Curator of Wallingford Museum and a Christie expert to give a pre-show talk on that night, and then to set it all off, NODA President Jacquie Stedman and her husband agreed to come along too as VIPs. We used this night to thank all our recent major donors to our recent fund-raising initiative and invited them to come along as our guests and to attend a Canape Reception between the talk and the show. It was an excellent and special evening all round. And the play went well too! ★

Debi Lisburne Diacon



Judy Dewey, curator Wallingford Museum



Left to right: Keith Yapp, Sinodun finance director and workshop team Leader, Jacquie Stedman NODA President, David Stedman, Debi Lisburne, Sinodun Trustee



North

Joseph is Relaxed

Councillor's Chat

Well what happened to 2018 – we blinked once, and it was over. Nevertheless, the North Region managed to squeeze in three Presidential visits, a regional weekend, an Awards evening supported by 500 likeminded individuals and myself personally a trip to Yarnfield in Staffordshire to attend a Stage Manager course at Summer School as well as several trips to HO in Peterborough.

I also managed to fit 82 productions into 2018, and I thank you for your continued invites to myself and my regional representatives and Youth Adviser.

So where do we start with 2019 – well by the time you read this we'll have had our first Presidential visit with Jacque Stedman and her husband David attending Seaham Youth's *Oklahoma* and Fatfield MSS's 70th-anniversary production of *Thoroughly Modern Millie* with a 70-year pin presentation to founding member Audrey Lawton. Jacque will also be at our regional weekend early March after a few from our region attend a volunteer training conference the week before in Coventry. All in all a pretty busy start to 2019.

Sadly not all managed to 'make it' with a couple of societies disbanding due to declining numbers and audiences. I can't stress enough to take every opportunity to promote your societies and your productions – use social media and also utilise the free listings available to you via the NODA Website.

I hope to see you throughout the course of 2019 – good luck in all your ventures.

Gordon Richardson
North Regional Councillor



In their 95th anniversary year, Felling performed *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* in its golden anniversary year and were allowed to perform a "Relaxed Performance", exclusively for anyone with special educational needs, disabilities or disadvantages, by the rights holders without paying royalties. Any donations on the night were given to charity.

The idea came to director Bea Atkinson after being asked a few years ago to do one, and 'Joseph' it was felt would be the perfect vehicle! In addition, the group had several children in their cast who had Autistic and Down's syndrome qualities. They had the most wonderful experience.

Michael Lavery, one of the group's members, was cast as a brother but unfortunately due to his business commitments had to drop out. He very kindly sponsored the performance and paid for the venue on that evening with all having an amazing night. ★



Morpeth Pantomime Society say Thank You for 40 years

Founded in 1979 by Christine Barron the ever-popular pantomime society performs in King Edward VI School in Morpeth. Formed as a family society, this is still at the heart of its core values.

Hard work and enthusiasm produced the first pantomime, *Red Riding Hood*. There was a lot of acting talent in the dancing school. Parents were persuaded (cajoled probably!) to perform the adult roles. Among parents were found dressmakers, makeup artists, prop designers, electricians, sound engineers as well as joiners capable of building stage sets.

Morpeth now had its very own pantomime. Currently, the society has 70 members, ranging from 9 to 90 years old, 40 performing, while others create scenery, costumes, props, lighting, sound, or play in the band.

Gordon Carr, scriptwriter and director, says, "I have been a member of this society almost from the start. Every year brings new challenges and rewards.

It can be hard work but always good fun. There's a great camaraderie amongst the members, no matter what their age.

Experienced and new members work as one and, though some years we worry the show will never come together it always does. When I meet ex-members, they all fondly have a tale to tell of their Panto experience."

At the 40th anniversary, previous members joined in the celebrations.

Memorabilia was on display in a wonderful exhibition. Ex-members were given a commemorative badge to keep and enjoyed prosecco and snacks while reminiscing. During the pantomime itself, the current cast paused to thank and applaud previous members, who were in the audience, for their involvement.

This year's Panto was a reworking of the first ever offering, *Red Riding Hood*. A bit of a departure from the original tale, it included lots of local humour as well as a narrator called Will-I-Aint, complete with swivel chair, and Alexa to help create the magic.

40 years... The villains defeated! The heroes save the day! The heroines fall in love! There's laughter! There's dancing! There's singing! There's acting! Their audiences continue to grow, enjoying good wholesome fun from this quintessentially British Institution.

Congratulations Morpeth Pantomime Society! ★



Cast Behind Bars

North Ormesby Minstrels turned to their local town hall to promote their production of the musical, *Chicago*.

The newly refurbished Middlesbrough Town Hall Court Room and Police Cells, originally built in the late 19th century, provided the perfect backdrop for a photo-shoot to advertise a local production of the musical *Chicago*.

Set in the 1920s, and with most of the action happening in Cook County Jail and the Chicago Courtroom, this fabulous venue conjured up just the right sinister, period atmosphere. Add to it a cast of merry murderesses who are no better than they should be, and the group was able to conjure up the perfect backdrop to the publicity for their production of *Chicago* in late 2018.



Not surprisingly the show itself was a complete sell-out and received great reviews from audiences. Fortunately, all members of the cast were released without charge, and it was not long before they were able to get cracking on their next production, *Dick Whittington!* ★

President On Tour

In the last issue of NODA Today, there was a lovely article (written by NODA North Councillor Gordon Richardson) about the Presidential Gala Weekend in Wokingham. The weekend saw me take over the mantle from Nick Lawrence as NODA National President, a role which is more ambassadorial than administrative – no reports to write or agenda to prepare, just lots of lovely people to talk to about our fantastic hobby – amateur theatre. My thanks to all of you who helped to make that weekend so memorable for David and me...and now it hardly seems possible that we are halfway through our year!

From the Gala Weekend in September until the first week in December David and I had been invited to some 34 productions from as far afield as Scotland and Wales, and various parts of England, so we really did hit the ground running! Seeing plays and musicals up and down the country, we have been impressed by the breadth of talent, expertise, energy and imagination that groups have within their ranks. The joy of seeing young people perform is magic... their enthusiasm and discipline matched by their friendliness. Presenting Long Service Awards highlights the dedication and commitment of Society members and the affection in which they are held. We have been made so welcome wherever we have gone, spoken to the cast after various shows and had the inevitable photo opportunity. What a fantastic way to spend the time! It has also been very rewarding to meet students from NODA Theatre Summer School, who within their groups have put into practice their teachings from 'The Bubble'.



Scottish Conference with Scotland Regional Council



Addams Family - Axminster Youth



Scottish Conference with my husband David



Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat - Newton Operatic Society



Yew Tree Showcase



My Fair Lady - Chelmsford OADS

This is a 'job' about which you have no experience until you actually take it on and then the whole experience just blows you away. At the end of January, we began our travels again... I do hope we get to meet some of you on our way!!

In the meantime may I wish you all every success with your 2019 productions. ★

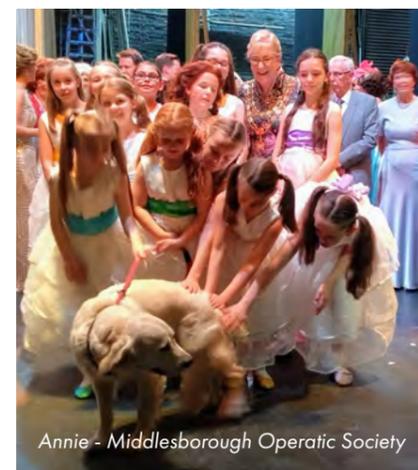
Jacquie Stedman
NODA National President



Christmas Carol - NOMADS



Scottish Conference with Stuart McCue-Dick



Annie - Middlesborough Operatic Society



Priscilla - Banbury Operatic Society



Cats - WOW Youth Musical Theatre



North East

Councillor's Chat

As the new year began, here in NODA North East arrangements were under way for another Gala Weekend in Bridlington in April which last year attracted over 700 attendees for a fun packed weekend.

Panto season has now ended and invites have started to pour in for various shows, revues and plays from societies around the North East Region and it is always a pleasure to attend these events. If you haven't yet invited me to your productions please do email me as I am only too happy to accept plus you will get chance to win the Reg Vinnicombe Trophy for the Councillor's Award.

It never ceases to amaze me how much talent we have in our Region, and I am sure this is true of the other Regions within NODA. We have some excellent actors, singers and dancers who work tirelessly to ensure the shows they produce are of the highest standards and this is also true of our many Youth Groups who also present some excellent productions.

As you will be aware, over the last few years we have held a Youth Day as part of our Gala Weekend and this year is no exception with youngsters aged 16, 17 and 18 attending the event totally free of charge. Some superb workshops were arranged for them and they will also be able to see the first performance of our Saturday evening Cabaret.

I look forward to seeing you all in Bridlington for this year's Gala Weekend. ★

Les Smith
North East Regional Councillor

No Grumbles at Grumbleweed Comedy Workshop!

Gathered together at Wombwell Operatic Society, members of NODA North East were treated to a fabulous comedy workshop with the amazing Grumbleweeds, Robin Colville and James Brandon. The February workshop provided the opportunity to learn about the art of comedy and the need to understand where laughs come from. Organised by NE District 5 the day covered a range of techniques and developed the understanding of attendees. Using their extensive experience on the professional stage Robin and James shared their knowledge with NODA members to allow them to use these tools with their own groups and societies.



and advice given was invaluable to the performers and directors gathered together, but what made it an even better experience was the way Robin and James peppered their delivery with jokes and humour.

Covering topics such as tension, physical communication, use of silence, expression, tonality, pace, timing, pantomime tradition, planning, lighting and confidence, the event was greatly enjoyed by everyone who attended. The tips, guidance

A fabulous coming together of professionals and amateurs to share their love of all things comedy and to encourage those of us for whom the amateur stage is our hobby and passion to recognise that we don't have to be paid to give a professional performance. ★



L-R Brad Pollard, Karen Pollard, Debbie Forsyth, Tim Wilkinson. Photo by Chris Iredale

From New York to New Orleans

Pateley Bridge Dramatic Society (PBDS) member Keith Burton has done it again. Three years on from having his play *The Journey* performed Off Broadway in the Samuel French Short Play Festival, his play *On False Premises* has been announced as a finalist in the 2019 Tennessee Williams Literary Festival.

The Festival is an annual event in New Orleans attracting over 12000 attendees every year and is dedicated to the Pulitzer prize-winning playwright Tennessee Williams. A major feature is its theatrical productions of full-length and one-act plays by the playwright himself, as well as others. In 1992, the Festival began hosting a one-act play contest. The winning plays are premiered and have become one of the Festival's most anticipated events.

Keith can add this second American success to being runner-up in the British award for the best new play written by an

amateur (The Geoffrey Whitworth prize) in 2014 (*The Journey*), 2015 (*Predictive Text*) and 2018 (*On False Premises*) and a finalist in the 2017 Full Circle Theatre Playwriting Festival.

Keith said: "Clearly, my work appeals to the American reader although, after watching *The Journey*, one of the New York judges challenged me to try writing something in American dialect. *The Journey* is set in Leeds and she had found some of the accent challenging! So, I decided to have a go and *On False Premises* was the result. It would seem that New York American goes down well in New Orleans even if it is written by a Brit!".

Keith's other proud boast is that all his plays have premiered at The Playhouse, Pateley Bridge - the home of PBDS. You can find out more about Keith's writing at keith-burton.uk ★



70 years of Panto in Pontefract

This year St Giles with St Mary's Pantomime Theatre Society performed *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* at Pontefract Town Hall as their 70th consecutive production in this historic venue which is the location of the first secret ballot in a parliamentary by-election in 1872.

Pantomime was introduced to the parish of St Giles by the Reverend Jack Peel who produced their first pantomime, *Dick Whittington* in January 1950.

What the audiences saw on stage in January was the culmination of nearly a

year's work in the planning, preparation and rehearsal of the production. The Society boasts cast members aged from 5 to 75 and feels there is something for everyone to enjoy whether they are on stage or in the audience. 70 people were featured including some veteran members who returned to perform the opening number which celebrated Panto in Pontefract and showcased vintage costumes from the Society's extensive wardrobe. Over 400 costumes, which had been made locally, featured in the production and it was a great spectacle.



Eric Arundell

The production was also a farewell to Pontefract's very own Panto Dame after over 30 years. Eric Arundell has been a wonderful ambassador for the Society, always supportive and at every publicity event, usually in a dress! Eric was thanked for his wonderful entertainment with a commemorative plaque and poem written by the Society's MD, David Hookham. Eric also received a huge amount of positive feedback from members of the audience who acknowledged his fabulous contribution to Panto in Pontefract. ★



L to R Freda Hargreaves, Chris Ingram, Mavis Garnett



L to R Freda Hargreaves, Richard Phillip, Eric Parker, Trudie Wilson (Chairperson), Mavis Garnett.

Big Celebrations at Settle

There were big celebrations for Settle Amateur Operatic Society following their very successful production of *Oh What a Lovely War*. Not only had they been remembering all the local people who had given their lives in WWI but also they had many personal celebrations of their own.

The Society, one of the oldest in the country and one of the first to join NODA, is now entering its 140th year of existence. The comedy *Paul Pry* was presented in January 1880. Shortly after this the Society progressed to comic opera when Gilbert & Sullivan became the order of the day.

In 1900 there was a repeat performance of *The Geisha* conducted by Dr Charles

William Buck who was a personal friend of the composer Elgar and presumably, because of this, hundreds were turned away from the Victoria Hall on the last evening.

A bequest from an old member helped the Society buy The Old Courthouse in the town which came complete with the dock and the magistrates seating! This gave the Society somewhere to store costumes, make and paint scenery and eventually to hold rehearsals and social events there. Photographs of every show they have produced are displayed on the walls.

The current President of Settle AOS has been a member for half of its life with

Freda Hargreaves joining in 1949 as a chorus member. Following her rise through principal roles she became chorus mistress and eventually MD, retiring to the position of President in 2012. She has served, and is still serving, on both the Management and Social Committees and Freda received her 70 years NODA Long Service Award from Past President Chris Ingram.

Another award was presented to Mavis Garnett for 60 years service. She joined as a dancer when her parents and grandparents were members of the Society - her grandchildren have followed in the family's footsteps - and later on Mavis volunteered to do props and is still there, also serving on the Management and Social Committee.

There were other presentations of 25 year medals to Richard Phillip and Eric Parker. Therefore a total of 180 years service to Settle, NODA and Amateur Theatre in 140 years of existence. Many congratulations.

Sutton's Green Hut Theatre Company were also recently celebrating with their 90th anniversary and Sally Holmes, District 11 Representative, had the great pleasure of presenting a total of 325 years of Long Service Awards to members. ★



North West

Councillor's Chat

Goodness, where does all the time go – it seems barely any time has passed since I was announcing to you all that I was to be the NODA President for 2019 – 2020. A quick romp through the Panto season (oh yes it was!) many excellent productions, plays and musicals along the way and now suddenly I find myself planning the Presidential Gala (28th September in Southport).

We have had some changes in the NW Committee and, as such are delighted to welcome several new Committee Members to the fold. Unfortunately Sharon Drummond had to step down due to her continued ill health – we will all miss Sharon enormously and hope that her health improves.

A new Councillor has almost certainly been identified, and we look forward to introducing this lucky person to you at the Regional Conference – this year 4th (Youth) and 5th (Adult) of May once more at the Mercure Manchester Piccadilly.

This year no less than 7 District Representatives organised and ran a District Dinner, and I would like to formally thank them on your behalf for all the extra work which goes into organising such splendid occasions. All of which were a huge success and enjoyed enormously by all those who attended.

This seems like a good time to remind you, our members, that everyone who works on the Regional Committee is a volunteer and therefore receive no payment for the considerable time and effort they put in – they do it for exactly the same reason you do it for your society, because they, like you, are "passionate about amateur theatre".

Christine Hunter Hughes
North West Regional Councillor



Big Girls (Dames) Do Cry

On Saturday 19th January 2019 eleven members from societies across 'NW District 6' took part in a 'Sponsored Walk' entitled 'BIG GIRLS (Dames) DO CRY'. 'Yes,' you've guessed it...all the walkers were dressed as Pantomime Dames!

The walk, around nine miles, started from The Civic, Southport Road, Ormskirk at 11 am and concluded at 3.45pm at The Atkinson Theatre, Lord Street, Southport.

The walk was organised in memory of Stephen Connor, the son of NW District 6 Representative Pat Connor. In December 2013, Stephen, aged 30, married for just 10 weeks, left home one Saturday afternoon to play a game of football from which he never returned the result of a cardiac-related event.

All money raised will go to 'The Stephen Connor Memorial Fund', a fund set up to help support research into this type of event by the organisation CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young).

Walk organiser, Jim Briscoe, from Pleasure Folk AMS's said, 'The walk could not have gone any better, and we had the best day ever! The support from passing motorist, members from other societies who just turned up was tremendous! Thanks to everyone who helped or supported the walk in any way; without YOU this wouldn't have been the success that it was. Finally, I'd like to thank All Souls Dramatic Club, for allowing us to 'crash' their panto and end up on stage in front of a full house; it was just the icing on the cake! ★



To donate to this amazing cause visit noda.org.uk/regions/north-west

Coming Full Circle

Many societies have youth sections to nurture the next generation of performers, and Bolton Catholic Musical and Choral Society (BCMCS) Youth Theatre is proving to be a real training ground for the future of the Society. We are used to our young performers going on to join the adult section of our society, and in some cases to become professional performers. This year, however, we have seen a new development.

Our forthcoming production of *Treasure Island* is being led by the youngest team we have ever had. At the helm of the production is our director Sam Hill. Sam is just 18 and a student at Arden School of Theatre studying for a BA in Musical Theatre. A highly talented performer in his own right, he has been nominated in NW District 5 for Youth: Best Male Lead in a

Musical for his portrayal as Munkustrap in *CATS*. For Sam, directing *Treasure Island* is a real blast from the past – this was the first show he ever did for BCMCS Youth Theatre when he first joined us as a shy 11-year-old. And an adorable pirate he made, too.

Stepping into the role of the choreographer is Nathaniel Elechi. Nathaniel joined us two years ago, playing Chad in *High School Musical* and then wowing audiences with his outstanding dancing as Mister Mistoffelees. Amazingly, Nathaniel is only 16, but you wouldn't know that from his assured dance routines. His talent has been recognised by SLP college in Leeds where he will be starting in September.

Louise Gaffney has also been nominated in NW District 5 Youth: Best Supporting Female for her portrayal as Grizabella in *CATS*. She too is just 18 and studying for her HNC in Musical Theatre at Pendleton College. This year she joins our production team as Stage Manager, and she has already recruited two follow-spot operators who are – you guessed it – previous members of our Youth Theatre.

Sam and Louise have been greatly assisted in their work by Charlotte James, also 18 and studying for her A-levels. Charlotte designed the costumes and make-up for *CATS*, and it is partly down to her



Starting 'em Young

All Souls Dramatic Club part of District 6 in the North West region celebrated their 60th annual pantomime at The Atkinson Theatre in Southport with a run of 11 shows at the start of the year.

They presented an adaptation of *Jack and the Beanstalk* written and directed by Cliff Gillies. This year saw the company use a 7 piece live band on stage, aerial hoop work and projected scenery – what a way to celebrate! The show featured a strong theme of family with Jack and his family 'The Trotts' coming together to defeat the

Giant in the sky, it turned out, he was just really hungry!

Family has always been a key element of the membership with the club also having many family members performing side by side. In fact two years ago 1-year-old Olivia Hughes played the young version of Princess Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty* (played by her mum Chloe) who was brought on by her Grandmother, not to mention Olivia's Dad, Matt who was the technical manager on the entire production! The finale song of this year's



fabulous design talents that the show was nominated for Best Musical. Charlotte herself was nominated for Best Supporting Female for her role as Bombalurina. Charlotte has a real flair for anything to do with the styling of a production and has used her talents this year to design the set for *Treasure Island*.

It has been a real pleasure to watch all these young people bringing their energy and enthusiasm to their production team debut. We are also blessed to have more experienced adults who are willing to give their time and expertise to mentor and nurture the burgeoning talent of the next generation. ★

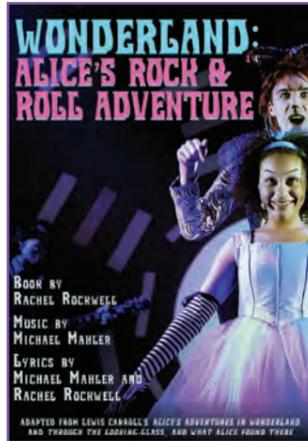


show, *We are Family* was extremely apt with mothers and daughters and husbands and wives all performing together.

2018 was a very special year for Writer/director Cliff Gillies and his wife Helen who met through All Souls Dramatic Club way back in 2006 doing various pantomimes together. They welcomed their daughter Thea Helen Gillies at 10:20am on opening night! Congratulations All Souls Dramatic Club on 60 years of pantomimes and welcome baby Thea! ★

A few suggestions from the Rightsholders...

We have all been there. Searching through websites and catalogues to try and find the next show. Do you go for a well-known title, a black box show with low costs, big cast, small cast, or even something a bit obscure? The questions are endless! So we ask each of our Corporate Partners to select a title from their collection that they would recommend and why.



Wonderland: Alice's Rock & Roll Adventure

How can you march to the beat of your own drummer when you're still writing the song? Everyone's search for one's authentic self is at the heart of *Wonderland: Alice's Rock & Roll Adventure*. Carroll's beloved, poetic tale of self-actualization is brought to life by a cast of actors/musicians who create an eclectic, live rock soundtrack as Alice searches for her own inner musical voice.

Along the way, Alice faces challenges and fears, but she meets the ultimate test in the form of the Jabberwocky, an insidious monster made up of the dark thoughts and self-doubt that lurks inside us all. In learning to believe in the impossible, Alice learns to believe in herself. Throughout her journey, the actors surround Alice in a live musical tapestry ranging from classic rock to punk to ska and even a little bit of Bollywood. Rock concert meets live theatre as Alice reflects the vulnerabilities of all kids and then confidently finds her own inner voice.

Micky Reed
Dramatic Publishing

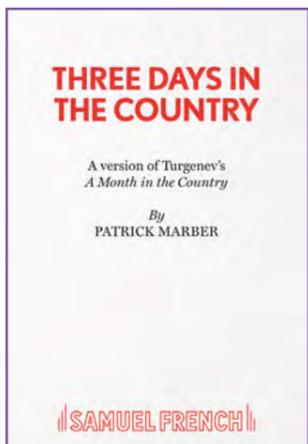
The Home Front

September 2019 is the 80th anniversary of the start of World War 2. Many drama groups will be looking for a play that covers this event and Playstage Senior has it covered with our very popular *The Home Front* revue with sketches and songs, written by Lynn Brittney.

This is a compilation of WW2 official Government announcements, plus songs, and sketches that follow the fortunes of one particular family's experiences of the home front. A light-hearted but informative stroll through the war years, lashings of nostalgia and the perfect entertainment to, perhaps, accompany a sausage and chip supper!

As with all our plays, the majority of the parts are for actors over the age of 40 (sometimes well over!) Running time of 1 hour and 30 minutes without interval.

Lynn Brittney
Playwright - Playstage Senior



Three Days in the Country

Described by *The Guardian* as "an evening where the wit of the dialogue captivates", Patrick Marber's version of *Turgenev's Three Days in the Country* originally premiered at the National Theatre in 2015. Set on a Russian country estate in the nineteenth century, this passionate and moving comedy explores love in all its forms, from the forbidden and the platonic to the ridiculous. You'll find wry humour and memorable dialogue, surprising subplots, and characters that are a joy to perform.

The play features a large cast of 9 women and 10 men, and the period setting offers lots of creative opportunities for costumes and stage design. It's an elegant and highly entertaining take on a classic, just as you'd expect from the award-winning writer of *Closer* and *Dealer's Choice*, and it would make a statement in any amateur theatre season.

Cathy Thomas
Samuel French

Tails of Hamelin - The Pied Piper Musical - International Theatre & Music

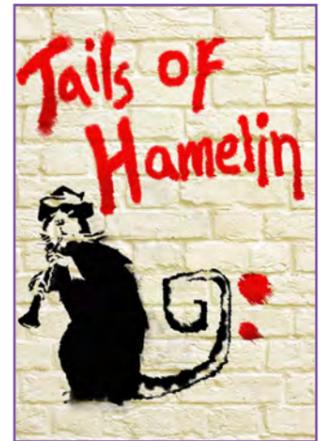
When the happy tourist trap of Hamelin has its revenues curbed by an invasion of pesky rats, a mysterious musician arrives to strike up a deal with the wily mayor and turn the town on its head. *Tails of Hamelin* takes in a cornucopia of musical styles from rock to Latin American, from Motown to Broadway and proves that honesty is the best policy as the Mayor and his greedy town pay the ultimate price.

Suitable for youth groups and amateur theatres. Choose from full-length scripted musical or shorter sung-through version. Script and scores are delivered digitally, as PDFs, which is super-fast plus you only print what you need. Arranged for solo keyboard or 7-piece. Professional quality backing track and cast album available.

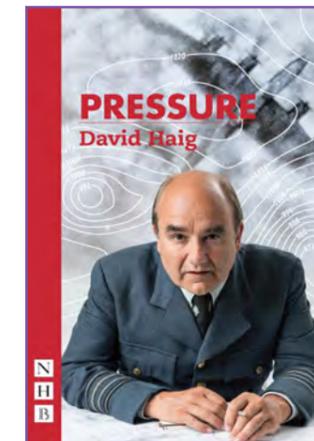
From the team that brought you *Peter Pan the British Musical*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Through the Looking Glass*, *The Adventures of Mr Toad* and *Around the World in 80 Days*, this modern, witty, re-telling of the Pied Piper legend shows just what happens when promises are broken.

Written by Chris Blackwood & Piers Chater Robinson

Piers Chater-Robinson
International Theatre & Musical



Nick Hern Books



An extraordinary, little-known true story, David Haig's play *Pressure* – newly available to perform – thrillingly explores the responsibilities of leadership, the challenges of prophecy and the personal toll of taking a stand.

June 1944. Everything is in place for the biggest invasion ever in Europe – D-Day. One last crucial question remains: will the weather be right on the day? Problematically there are two opposing forecasts. American celebrity weatherman Colonel Krick predicts sunshine, while Scot Dr James Stagg, Chief Meteorological Officer for the Allied Forces, forecasts a storm. As the world watches and waits, General Eisenhower, Allied Supreme Commander, must decide which of these bitter antagonists to trust. The decision will not only seal the fates of thousands of men, but could win or lose the entire war...

Pressure premiered in 2014, and has been a hit around the UK and in London's West End. With a cast of thirteen, this fascinating historical drama would be perfect for the 75th anniversary of D-Day in 2019.

Jon Barton
Nick Hern Books

Get in touch

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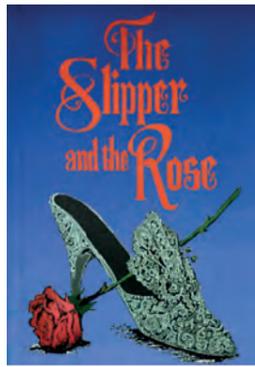
Three musicals that are perennially popular...



Specially written for amateur musical groups with largely female memberships. A therapy clinic for celebrities, down on its luck, is forced to take in a bunch of old folk as their Home is un-inhabitable. A mystery celebrity phones to check in, and it's all hands to the pump to try and convince her that the place is well run and managed; when in fact it's the old folk who are gearing up to administer their own bizarre range of alternative therapies.



This marvellous new musical is based on the true story of what happened (with a bit of artistic licence) when a ship containing 50,000 cases of whisky runs aground on a remote Scottish island in 1943. Adapted from Compton Mackenzie's novel, this musical has had two very successful productions at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre in 2009 and 2011 and numerous amateur societies in Scotland have produced it. However, it awaits its premier production outside of Scotland.



The libretto for this glorious musical tale of Cinderella and her Prince has recently been updated and revised to make it more easily staged. Taken from the smash hit film of 1976 with music and lyrics by the **Sherman Brothers** ('Mary Poppins' and 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang') it is a truly family friendly piece of musical theatre.

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



Hoovering on The Edge by Hilary Spiers

(1m, 7f) Full Length Drama. 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.



Curl Up And Die by Anna Longaretti

(3m, 7f) Full Length Comedy. Ruth's antiquated hairdressing salon's only chance of survival is a complete make-over, funded by winning the cash-prize hairdressing competition run by 'Fab Hair' magazine. Things are looking hopeful until Ruth's old faithful blue rinse ladies arrive during the judging and inveigle their shampoo and sets from her. The petulant model throws a strop, the Spanish photographer fuses the lights, and a pompous H&S Officer arrives for an 'in depth' inspection. During the mayhem one of the 'old biddy' customers seemingly dies under the drier. Could things get any worse?

Stagescripts

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"There aren't many good parts for older actors."

(lament of any actor over the age of 50)



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Interested? Then read on...

www.playsforadults.com

NODA PRESIDENTIAL GALA AND AGM 2019

The Floral Hall Southport Theatre & Convention Centre Southport PR9 0DZ

Saturday 28th - Sunday 29th September

The North West is proud to welcome you to the Presidential Gala and AGM. Back in 1899 NODA was actually founded in this region, and it is quite fitting that the 70th NODA President is from the same region.

The Southport Convention Centre, having recently undergone a £40 million restoration is the setting for this years AGM with the Gala being held in the beautiful Floral Hall under the Art Deco dome.

Over the same weekend, Southport will host the British Musical Fireworks Championship. During the competition over two tonnes of explosives are used to create the very best and most entertaining fireworks event in the UK.

Southport is easy to get to whether you are travelling by road, rail, air or sea. By car the M6 is just 20 miles away, Southport train station is a short walk from the hotel and three airports are less than an hour away. If you are travelling from Dublin, Belfast or the Isle of Man there are daily ferry crossings.

If you would like to venture further afield, Liverpool, Preston or Blackpool are all under 1 hour away.

Bookings and full payment must be received by 1st September 2019. Early booking is recommended to guarantee your place.

LOCATION

Picturesque, elegant and rich in heritage, Southport has always been a bustling hub of culture bringing the likes of Marlene Dietrich, Pink Floyd and The Beatles to the stage of The Floral Hall, as well as welcoming generations of families to its beaches and parks for holidays they cherish forever. A little slice of paradise, nestled in a 22 mile stretch of stunning coastline close to Liverpool and Manchester.

NEARBY PLACES OF INTEREST

Wesley Street - full of boutique shops. From cakes to jewellers and butchers to photographers.

Southport Market - fantastic food-retailers, fresh flowers and potted plants are among the few amazing businesses in the market



ENTERTAINMENT OVER THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY

If you are joining us on the Friday evening, why not take a trip to the British Musical Fireworks Championship event nearby. With your AGM booking you will also receive discounted admission tickets for the fireworks event.

SATURDAY GALA EVENING

We are excited to announce that Lancaster Amateur Dramatic & Operatic Society will be providing entertainment after the Gala meal. Back in 1899, NODA was founded by A. P. Bullfield - the musical director of LADOS, so it is only fitting that as the NODA Presidency returns to the North West they are with us to join in the celebrations.

FRIDAY

You may arrive on the evening of Friday 27th for bed and breakfast, see packages below

SATURDAY

The AGM will take place at 2:30pm in The Lakeside Suite on Saturday 28th September, including the presentation of the Programme and Poster Awards and the inauguration of Christine Hunter Hughes as National President.

The evening Gala will be followed by entertainment from Lancaster Amateur Dramatic & Operatic Society. To round our evening off there will be a live band to dance the night away to.

SUNDAY

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

PACKAGE A

Based on 2 people sharing

2 Nights - Friday & Saturday
Bed & Breakfast
Lunch Saturday & Sunday
Gala Dinner Saturday evening

£260 Per Person

PACKAGE B

Based on 2 people sharing

1 Night - Saturday
Bed & Breakfast
Lunch Saturday & Sunday
Gala Dinner Saturday evening

£175 Per Person

PACKAGE C

Lunch Saturday
Gala Dinner Saturday evening

£75 Per Person

PACKAGE D

Gala Dinner Saturday evening

£45 Per Person

PACKAGE E

Single Occupancy

2 Nights - Friday & Saturday
Bed & Breakfast
Lunch Saturday & Sunday
Gala Dinner Saturday evening

£350 Per Person

PACKAGE F

Single Occupancy

1 Night - Saturday
Bed & Breakfast
Lunch Saturday & Sunday
Gala Dinner Saturday evening

£215 Per Person

There are limited numbers of twin rooms available. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

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

NODA PRESIDENTIAL GALA AND AGM 2019

The Floral Hall Southport Theatre & Convention Centre Southport PR9 0DZ
Saturday 28th - Sunday 29th September

BOOKING FORM

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 2 nights (Friday & Saturday) Bed & Breakfast, Lunch and Gala Dinner Saturday £260 Two people sharing
- B: to include 1 night (Saturday) Bed and Breakfast, Lunch and Gala Dinner Saturday £175 Two people sharing
- C: to include Lunch & Gala Dinner Saturday £75.00
- D: to include Saturday evening Gala Dinner ONLY £45.00
- E: to include 2 nights (Friday & Saturday) Bed & Breakfast, Lunch and Gala Dinner Saturday £350 Single Occupancy
- F: to include 1 night (Saturday) Bed and Breakfast, Lunch and Gala Dinner Saturday £215 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 payable to NODA
- Payment by BACS
Sort Code 60 - 83 - 01
Account 20379546
Quote AGM and your name
- Credit Card Payment
Please call 01733 374790

Names of additional members of your party

Disability considerations

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

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View your show reports online

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Access to Regional Conferences and Workshops

Need Information?

You will find lots of factsheets on our website to help with running your society.

These include

- Model Child Protection Policy
- Corporation Tax & VAT
- Fundraising
- Equal Opportunities
- GDPR
- Gift Aid
- Stage Weapons
- Any many more!



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As part of your membership, societies can get assistance from our Legal Helpline

To use this service please email a full explanation of your request to

info@noda.org.uk

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The font of information for amateur theatre

NODA Corporate Partners

Did you know that NODA works in partnership with a number of companies throughout the UK offering services to the Amateur Theatre world? These partners offer performance rights, props, technical hire, ticketing systems and much more.



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Stage Lighting Services - Technical Services

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Councillor's Chat

It may only be March but plans are already at an advanced stage for this year's NODA Scotland Conference. Once again, we will be at Peebles Hydro – 25th-27th October. Please put the date in your diary and try to encourage as many of your members as possible to attend. The weekend is a great way to network with members from all over Scotland as well as take part in workshops covering singing, movement and drama as well as back stage skills and updates for those serving on committees. Full details about the weekend will be released in early April although I can confirm there will be no price increase this year. To help make the weekend more affordable a savings account has been set up and details can be obtained from myself.

Training is vital for amateur theatre to continue to improve. A number of Business of Amateur Theatre workshops are now planned over the coming months with more dates to follow. Full details are available from your Regional Representative.

Robbie and I have been very impressed with the quality and variety of performances we have seen over the past few months. I fully appreciate many groups are struggling to ensure productions continue to cover their costs but remember NODA is here to provide help and support to ensure amateur theatre continues to thrive.

Best wishes to all members with shows over the coming months. We look forward to meeting many of you as Robbie and I travel round the country.

Stuart McCue-Dick
Scotland Regional Councillor

Scotland

Guy Vaesen and the Founding of the Florians

2019 sees the 75th anniversary of The Florians. The Inverness company has planned several commemorative events, including an open day in July encompassing memorabilia, speeches and short films of reminiscences by senior club members. The Provost of Inverness will unveil a commemorative plaque in the Florians Theatre.

Another very special guest that day will be Paul Vaesen, who has been tracked down by Hon Vice-President Trevor Nicol. Paul is the son of Guy Vaesen who was the driving force behind the establishment of the company in 1944. Guy was a fascinating character who became a close friend and associate of Harold Pinter. He joined the Royal Tank Corps during the war, but being unfit for overseas service was sent by the military to inspect NAAFls in the North of Scotland. Guy put his time in Inverness to good use by forming the club and writing and directing its first production.



When the Florians had their 50th anniversary in 1994, Trevor found an article in The Inverness Courier from August 1944 which described the founding of a new drama club in Inverness to entertain the troops. The club's first production was *The Road That Beckons* by Guy Vaesen, and for most members by 1994, this was a completely unknown name. Trevor tried to obtain a copy of the play, but unfortunately, the search proved fruitless.

Fast forward 25 years, and with the 75th anniversary approaching, Trevor discovered a clipping in The Highland News from 1994 mentioning the play and its author. An internet search threw up an obituary of Guy from 2002 in The Independent. The obituary spoke at length about Guy's career in the theatre and his friendship with Harold Pinter and wife Vivien Merchant. It went on to say that Guy had subsequently become an artist and settled in Greece, which was where he died in August 2002.

However, the most amazing part of the obituary stated that when in the Highlands

during the war he had: "...formed a group of amateur players, the Florians..." This statement seemed to indicate that the formation of the club had been important to him. The obituary had many interesting facts about Guy's career which had taken him from post-war stagehand in the Theatre Royal Stratford, to Birmingham Rep, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Scarborough. From 1957 to 1963 he had been the resident director at the Connaught Theatre in Worthing, and his close friendship with the Pinters had led to them moving there in 1962. Pinter wrote *The Homecoming at the house in Ambrose Place*, a play Peter Hall regarded as his finest work. Guy worked for the BBC for some time and became Head of Drama at Radio 3.

Guy's early years at the Corporation had proved rather soul-destroying. The job of BBC script editor could be a mind-numbing existence, having to shatter aspiring authors' dreams by returning rejected scripts to them. Eventually seeking

solace by joining the BBC Art Society proved to be a life-changing decision and led to Guy's final career as an artist. His work was to hang in some very illustrious homes such as those of Lady Antonia Fraser, Paul Eddington, Judi Dench, Vincent Price and of course, Harold Pinter.

Interestingly, the obituary mentioned that Guy had a son named Paul, and it was at this point that Trevor decided to locate him for the 75th anniversary. The prospect of Guy having left early photos of the Florians and perhaps the odd programme or even a dog-eared copy of *The Road that Beckons* was an intriguing one. Luckily Trevor tracked Paul down to a small village outside Eastbourne. He was delighted by the approach and readily agreed to be guest of honour at the open day. This is to be held on Saturday 13th July at the Florians Theatre when the general public will be welcome to enjoy the displays.

Unfortunately, Guy left little in the way of memorabilia, but he did keep diaries, and Paul hopes to find some new and interesting facts about the origins of the Florians. ★



Windmill Productions: A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum
Bob McDevitt

Evita Comes To Rutherglen

Windmill Productions is delighted to have been awarded one of the few amateur licences in 2019 to perform the Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, *Evita*, which will be performed in Rutherglen Town Hall, Glasgow, from 11th to 15th June 2019.

Evita charts the young and ambitious Eva Perón's meteoric rise to sainthood. Set in Argentina between 1934 and 1952, the Tony-winning musical follows Eva Duarte on her journey from poor illegitimate child to ambitious actress, as the wife of military leader-turned-president Juan Perón, the most powerful woman in Latin America, before her death from cancer at age 33.

The events in Eva's life are presented in song and commented on by the show's

narrator, Chè. Well-known numbers from Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical masterpiece include 'Don't Cry for Me Argentina,' 'Oh What a Circus,' 'Buenos Aires' and 'Another Suitcase in Another Hall.' *Evita* has strong leading and featured roles, plenty of scope for singing and dancing ensembles and one of Lloyd Webber's most-loved scores, combining Latin, jazz, pop and more traditional influences.

Windmill is a relatively new production company established in 2014, but with a wealth of experience behind it, covering directing, stage design and construction, and stage management, as well as performance covering music and drama. If you've attended an amateur show in the west or east coast of Scotland over the past few years, you'll no doubt have seen

something that we've been involved with, either onstage - or more likely backstage.

Productions to date (*Whisky Galore – A Musical*, *Nonsense – The Mega-Musical Version*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*) have been artistically successful, but small scale. To present a bigger scale show to a larger audience, the decision was taken to move to Rutherglen Town Hall, originally constructed in 1862 and, following a £12.5m refurbishment, is a five-star arts venue under the VisitScotland grading scheme. It offers great facilities for audiences – café, mezzanine bar, parking and excellent public transport links. The Grand Hall itself is a stunning venue and is unlike any other small theatre with comparable audience capacity. ★



Windmill Productions: Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown
Bob McDevitt



Windmill Productions: Nonsense: The Mega-Musical Version
Bob McDevitt



Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society: Titanic

The Titanic Sails Into Broughty Ferry

Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society's *Titanic* was visited by National President Jacquie Stedman, Past President Bert Lumsden, NODA Scotland Councillor Stuart McCue-Dick and Regional Representative Douglas Clark.

Hiding amongst the cast is local Regional Representative Roger Buist who was making a welcome return to the stage – can you spot him? The invited guests were delighted to have the opportunity to meet the cast and crew on stage after opening night and to wish them well for the rest of the run. ★

Am Dram to Olivier Award

North East Editor Tony Harris together with Rep Christine Castle and Neal Edlin compiled some questions to put to Michael Jibson who began his career in Amateur Theatre and most recently appeared as The King in *Hamilton*, his performance winning him an Olivier Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical.

When did you first perform?

My first ever performance (apart from School Christmas shows) was with Hessle Theatre Company in their 1994 production of *Oliver!* at Hull New Theatre. I was thirteen. My Mum had been involved with the company and asked me and my brother Paul if we'd like to be in it, so we auditioned. My brother played Oliver and I played The Artful Dodger. I loved it and I suppose it changed my life. Before that all I was interested in was football and sport.

What was the biggest hurdle you had to overcome as an aspiring actor and how did you manage it?

Dealing with my friends who thought that what I was doing was silly. Acting, singing and dancing wasn't cool. I remember once I'd been on *Blue Peter* with the National Youth Music Theatre (I'm now a Patron of the company) and my English teacher surprised me and showed it to the class on the school TV. I was very embarrassed as some of my class mates laughed at me. It was hard but I stuck to it and tried not to let it bother me.

Who influenced you as a performer when you grew up?

There were a few people who helped me and taught me along the way. My Mum paid for me to have private lessons with Geoff Annis, who was a trained actor who lived in Hull and taught Drama. He was also involved with Hessle Theatre Company. He taught me the basics of Shakespeare and how to work on text. He gave me confidence and encouragement. Then the people I worked with at The National Youth Music Theatre inspired me to want to be a professional actor. One memory sticks out though: when I was fourteen my brother and I got the opportunity to be in the 1995 revival of *Oliver!* at The London Palladium with Jonathan Price. Working with him and watching him on stage was a masterclass. The detail and truth that he brought to Fagin still inspires me today.

Who do you look up to (as an actor/director/etc.)?

I look up to actors and directors, writers and producers who are brilliant at what

they do and are also lovely people. The industry can sometimes be a very strange place and I admire people who can switch between the madness and normality. I've worked with a few now, so it's great to see how different people work and take some wisdom to every job I do.

Could you tell us a little about your time with Hessle Theatre Company?

I joined Hessle in 1994 and stayed with them on and off until I was eighteen. I was in their productions of *Oliver!*, *Joseph*, *Hello Dolly*, *South Pacific*, a short play called *Runaways* (that my Mum's friend Linda Burgess actually wrote!) and many concerts. I have very fond memories of singing with the concert party. I was the youngest one involved but I got to sing all the songs from the shows we all loved at the time: *Les Mis*, *Phantom*, *Martin Guerre*, *Blood Brothers* and many more. That's where I gained the confidence in my singing voice. I would often sing the song 'If I Can't Love Her' from *Beauty and The Beast* as a solo, which I then went on to sing for my Drama School audition, which then got me into GSA. The cool thing is





that, singing *Les Miserables* and *Beauty And The Beast* with Hesse, at the time I only ever dreamed about being in those shows and I actually got to be in the movies of both of them instead! I was offered *Les Miserable* in London when I first left Drama School at twenty one but had to turn it down to play Joe Casey in *Our House*.

How do you cope with auditions? Do you get nervous?

Yes I always get nervous. I always prepare and do my homework. Sometimes it can be very last minute but usually I find a way to drop everything and be on top of the material. The thing about being an actor is you're only ever as good as your last audition or job, so I always try and be the best I can be for whoever I'm meeting as you never know where it may lead. I've missed out on jobs in the past because I'm not right for the role, but then got to work with the director at a later date because of an audition I did for something else.

What's the best method for you in learning lines?

These days I use an App on my phone

called LINE LEARNER and I couldn't do without it. It's like a voice recorder but it means you can run the lines with yourself. Or I grab someone and work with them. I also break the big speeches down into thoughts as that always helps. Then I run them all the time! I'm usually running lines when I'm not doing something important. My plan tonight is to work on my lines for a project that's coming up. Any chance I get, I learn and get them under my belt, especially these days with TV castings being so last minute. I'd rather not go to a meeting if I don't know the scene inside out.

What's the last thing you do before you step out on stage / the curtain goes up?

I usually take a deep breath!

What do you do when you're not doing theatre?

In terms of the work I've done, I actually mainly work on TV or in film, so I'm often filming. I also write. I co-wrote and starred in the film *The Lighthouse*, which was nominated for five Welsh Baftas and won one! I've also been the co-director of the



new musical *Eugenius!*, which I've been developing with the writers for the past four years. My commitment to *Hamilton* meant that I had to take a back seat when it opened in London at the Other Palace, meaning I became the Creative Consultant. Also, my wife is the Welsh Actress Caroline Sheen, so I'm often on Daddy duties with our daughter Flora when she's working.

If you had a magic wand, what show would you do next?

Hamilton will be hard to top, but I'd love to do another Sondheim musical.

What advice would you give for youngsters thinking about a career in theatre?

Indulge in every aspect of it. Go to the theatre whenever you can. See the best and the worst theatre. Help out backstage. Be an assistant director. Help with the lights. Paint the set. Read about its history. Find out about the older shows that have influenced the new ones...and be a nice person. ★



Ticking All The Boxes For Ticket Sales

Claire Boot for TicketSource

From tiny tech start-up to a well established online business, TicketSource now handles more than £40 million in ticket sales for almost 90, 000 events each year, ensuring productions keep the drama on the stage - not at the box office.

Back in 2004, as the digital revolution began taking hold, a software developer with a passion for amateur theatre had "a lightbulb moment." Simon Wilsher credits a "very proactive music teacher" with getting him involved in amateur theatre, which he continued as a hobby while pursuing a career in computer science. As Wilsher performed in and directed shows with different societies, he realised that each group struggled with the same ticketing issues.

"Selling tickets was a job that nobody wanted to take on. You'd have a very reluctant ticket secretary, who you could buy tickets from at rehearsals or try and catch on their home phone number. It was very hit and miss."

Wilsher brought his two interests together and developed an online ticketing system for amateur theatre groups, launched as TicketSource in 2004. Recently celebrating their 15th birthday, TicketSource has since grown from tiny tech start-up to a well established online business handling more than £40 million in ticket sales for almost 90, 000 events each year.

Rhiwbina Amateur Theatrical Society (RATS) in Cardiff was one of the first groups to sign up. "We've known Simon for many years, and TicketSource has been looking after our audiences ever since it was founded," said Carol Coleman, chairman. "We've always been delighted with the service."

TicketSource transformed ticket-selling opportunities for RATS and word spread fast. As well as allowing audience members to book at any time from any location, the system streamlined the box office process at no extra cost to the show's producers.

For Whitchurch Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society (WAODS) in Shropshire, value for money was a major factor.



"As a registered charity and community organisation, we needed a system that would be cost effective," said David Pearce, chairman. "TicketSource fitted the bill for us. I would definitely suggest it where you've got a small budget - if any - and need a reliable and up-to-date electronic system, as you can absorb the cost or put the booking fee on to the tickets."

Drawing on his own experience, Wilsher encouraged the recruitment of staff with personal involvement in community arts groups. "Our employees can empathise with the person on the end of the phone, and understand what they're going through if they encounter any difficulties." As a result of TicketSource's continued commitment to friendly and professional support by email, live chat and telephone, a recent survey revealed an average customer satisfaction rating of 4.5 out of 5.

In 2008, TicketSource set up a telephone box office service, which is free for event organisers. "Due to our sporadic opening hours, our biggest worry was how to offer regular purchasing opportunities

to customers," said Phil Harding, entertainment manager at Brio Leisure, a community interest company managing council-owned venues in Cheshire. "The telephone box office service is the ideal solution and works really well."

For Wilsher, participation in amateur theatre has given him lifelong friendships that extend far beyond the rehearsals. "It's a great social scene, with a very diverse range of people who you might not meet day to day." By providing a cost-effective and easy-to-use online ticketing platform, TicketSource helps groups and venues to deliver events that bring communities together. "It's where we started," said Wilsher. "And, fifteen years later, it's still the core of what we do now."

Ready to start selling your event tickets online? Feel free to sign up and try TicketSource under no obligation at ticketsource.co.uk. Alternatively, if you need advice about pricing services tailored to you please email support@ticketsource.co.uk or call 0333 666 4466.

TICKET SOURCE
Free online ticketing system



Councillor's Chat

In the four-month period since the beginning of November your 15 Regional Reps, 4 Assistant Reps and myself have attended 113 shows of which 41 were pantomimes.

Amateur theatre in all its forms is alive and well in the south-east. Our youth groups continue to excel themselves in so many different styles of show. From compilation to pantomime, from comedy to serious plays, from upbeat musicals to the more sombre - they continue to amaze me with their dedication & focus.

In writing this I am mindful that by the time it is published our Regional Celebration of 2018 and AGM will be over and we shall have shown our appreciation for all the hard work done in the region by distributing accolades to societies and by a public vote of thanks to your Regional Committee.

My thanks to all those societies who have invited me to see their shows and I look forward to meeting many more in the coming year. ★

Kay Rowan
South East Regional Councillor

South East

A Sign of the Times



Cranbrook Operatic & Dramatic Society (CODS) has become the first local amateur theatre group to provide a British Sign Language (BSL) live interpreter for one performance of each of its shows. What's it all about? We asked Jo Levett, CODS Executive Committee member, to explain.

Why do we need a signing interpreter? Do we have many deaf people coming to see CODS shows?

Firstly, under the Equality Act 2010 service providers have a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that people with disabilities are able to access services, so it's actually something that should be happening everywhere. People with hearing impairments are not usually able to access shows, as they can't hear what's being said by the actors. We want to welcome BSL users to our shows so that they can enjoy them just as much as a hearing audience. We're hoping this is just the start of opening up local amateur theatre to people with a significant hearing loss.

Isn't it distracting for hearing people in the audience to have a signer up on stage?

In our experience, absolutely not! Our first signed show was *The Real Inspector Hound* in April this year. Anyone who came along to the Thursday performance was treated to a signed performance by Laura Goulden, a very experienced performance interpreter. Laura stood at the edge of the stage, and her

performance was amazing. As well as using fast, precise BSL signing, Laura's animated facial expressions, rather than being distracting, actually enhanced the performance for hearing as well as deaf audience members. In fact, several hearing audience members contacted me to say how impressed they were with Laura's performance and how much it added to their enjoyment of the evening. If hearing people are anxious about being distracted there is a message on Ticketsource so that they can book tickets on the other side of the auditorium or choose to attend a performance which does not include BSL signing.

How do the signing interpreters keep up? Surely they can't sign everything? What about the songs?

We only use interpreters who are well-qualified and have experience of precisely this kind of work. Many of them carry out this kind of work for professional West End performances. Although they are skilled in simultaneous interpreting (very useful for pantos!) they have the script well in advance and carry out lots of background work so that they get to know the lines. They also come to rehearsals beforehand so that they get an idea of the tone of voice used and get familiar with how the cast is portraying the characters. They really do their homework. They have all the song lyrics beforehand and practise signing along to the music, so deaf audience members get a sense of the rhythm and feel of the songs. If you're interested, why not come along to our next signed performance, to see for yourself?

When is your next BSL signed performance?

We're currently rehearsing hard for our autumn musical, *Anna Karenina*, which is on 11th-13th April 2019. ★



New Youth Adviser Joins the South East

My name is Mike Mullen and I have been actively involved in Youth Theatre for the past 26 years. The last 4 of these have been as Chairman of a large organisation in the Southampton area that have been long standing members of NODA and I am extremely excited to be joining the committee and representing the incredible work that is carried out throughout our region by bespoke youth theatres along with companies with a Youth Section. I look forward to meeting many of you soon. ★

Who Needs Recorded Sound Effects When You Have a Foley Team



Winton Players are a friendly and busy theatre society in Petersfield, Hampshire, with almost 120 members, and performing three major productions each year. This Spring, they will be performing *The 39 Steps* adapted by Patrick Barlow, from 11-13 April at The Festival Hall, Petersfield.

This award winning stage adaptation, based on John Buchan's gripping whodunnit - memorably filmed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1935 - played for four years at the Criterion Theatre in the West End. Richard Hannay is an all-action hero with a stiff upper lip and a miraculous knack of getting himself out of sticky situations.

Originally written for four actors playing multiple roles, it's an hilarious and theatrical tour de force, and an affectionate comedy spoof of the Hitchcock film. The director, Laura Sheppard, has enlarged the cast three fold, although most actors are still playing more than one role.

Unusually, the production will be accompanied by live sound effects, in full view of the audience. Laura is calling this area her Foley Corner. In the film industry, a Foley corner, named after sound effects artist, Jack Foley, is where reproduction of



everyday sound effects are added to films in post production.

The 39 Steps actors will be dashing from the stage to a lower rostrum to provide the sound effects that are required to accompany the show - and back again to change hats to become another character.

A whole plethora of percussion instruments is in use in the show: snare drum, wood block, xylophone, vibraslap, flexatone, swanee whistle to name but a few. Both a metal and wooden cabasa will be used for an old LNER steam train chugging along, a closely miked sewing machine for the sound of a motor car, rubber gloves dragged along a smooth surface for a braking car, rubber gloves dragged down a 'cello bow for a braking train, bubble wrap for a crackling fire, a slap stick for gun shots, an alarm clock for a police car siren - plus all sorts of bird and animal noises from different instruments.

The list of sound effects is rather large, and as well as working in the Foley corner, the cast will be creating various scenes by holding up doors and windows, and whizzing furniture around - they will be very busy. It will be enormous fun, and I fully expect the audience to be delighted.





70 at 70

NODA was founded in 1899 in what is now the North West region by A. P Bullfield, the Musical Director of Lancaster Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society. Fast forward to 2019 which marks the inauguration of NODA's 70th President Christine Hunter Hughes. Coincidentally it is also the year Christine herself turns 70. Our National Editor Rob Williams interviewed the President elect in a rather apt location - the local rehearsal rooms.

My very first memory of theatre was actually a part I didn't get. It was the Oldham Pageant in 1951. My father had been a professional actor and was a leading light by then in the amateur scene, and they wanted somebody small to come on and hold the bowl for Pilate to wash his hands in. They wanted me to do this, but my father said "No she isn't doing it, she will come on and say here you are dad, here is the bowl!" So that is my very first memory of theatre - the part I didn't get.

When I was actually allowed to be in the shows I started with pantomimes and eventually graduated to plays, father was very much an actor, and I was fortunate to be directed by my dad on at least two occasions. He told me I was too wooden, I would like to say I have improved well, I hope I have! He said I needed to be more expressive, so I took that on board. My dad was the Oldham Rep with the likes of Dora Bryan and that ilk but left when I was born as he wanted a steady job.

I have done plays, straight plays, I used to go and watch Gilbert and Sullivan as a youngster and absolutely loved it but never had any thought of actually doing any. That was until my daughter who was in secondary school at the time was asked by her music teacher who was the MD for the group, would she go singing in *Iolanthe*. I said to her "please can I come with you" and instantly she replied, "No, I'm not taking you with me, of course, you can't." A strange way round the parent begging the child to let them go somewhere with them. Eventually, she let me, I did have to promise not to talk to her or embarrass her. I went and joined the chorus. The lady who was playing the Fairy Queen was suffering from illness the director asked me to understudy as I had been singing in the part during rehearsals. Two weeks before the performance, I was told that I would be playing the role - which was quite daunting! So I played the Fairy Queen and loved it, absolutely loved it and have never looked back since. I have now been in every G&S and played all the Alto leads (which in itself is strange as I am a soprano - I like to do things differently. My singing teacher always described me as a Soprano with a good bottom.)

I was asked the other day what my favourite show is, it is a close call between *Ruddigore* when I played Mad Margaret with no acting ability required and *Yeoman of the Guard* as it is such a good sing. I love *Yeoman of the Guard* and played Phoebe. But if I have to make a choice it will have to be *Ruddigore*, it was such fun and the music is excellent.

I do have a bucket list of shows to be part of. I desperately want to play Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Madam Arcarty in *Blythe Spirit*. Two very different parts, so if anyone is looking for those roles give me a call, maybe after my Presidential Year when I have a bit more time! Whether I will remember all the lines is anyone's guess.



My best stage memory was playing the The Duchess of Plaze-Toro (*The Gondoliers*) in a very cheap and nasty nylon Court wig with big chandelier dangly earring in. The gentleman playing the Duke had to place his head on my shoulder, when he pulled away my earring came away dangling down the front of his very cheap nylon court wig. I looked at I, you can hear on the video me going arhhh in a high-pitched voice as it was pulled out of my ear. We ended up going through two pages of dialogue and a song as we couldn't get the blasted thing out of the wig and one of the lines the Duchess sings is "Would jib their wearing apparel" so I sidestepped along the stage and flicked the earring. The audience howled with

laughter, but as there were only two of us onstage, the chorus had absolutely no idea what was going on. They didn't know what we were doing, see the earring, all they could hear was the audience in hysterics. The two of us onstage were trying the whole time not to make eye contact so that we didn't join them in hysterics. We did get to the end of the scene and carried on.

The other and perhaps worse time was when I was playing Lady Macbeth at school and fell down the stairs. All the perfumes of Arabia in hand and our English teacher had said wear this hugely long nightie. Let's face it, I have always been little, but this was excessive in length. I kept telling him I couldn't walk in it but kept being told it looks ethereal and perfect. So, there I was walking down the steps on the third performance wringing my hands and saying my lines as I manage to fall from the second step from the top all the way down, hitting every step on the way! I ended up sitting at the bottom of these steps wringing my hands, as Macbeth enters, instead of saying his line to save the scene, he just burst into laughter. They had to bring the curtains in, and we started the scene again. Thankfully I made it down the stairs that time without any mishaps!

I didn't come across NODA until quite late on, while I was doing Mad Margaret in *Ruddigore*, our Regional rep at the time was due to retire. I had gone to say that I can't go to the Regional



Event this year because we are on holiday, he turned to me and said: "you'd make a great Regional Representative, you have experience in drama and musicals and some opera." Next thing I had was a phone call saying "someone tells me you are putting up for the Regional Representative" so lo and behold I became the Rep for NW District 2 as people seemed to think it was a good idea. I served for 5 years as Regional Rep, and then our Councillor left and again someone thought it would be a great idea if I stood for Councillor. I didn't think I could manage the role and tried to put it off. But I could, and I have loved every second of being the North West Councillor and with NODA.

I really wanted to be President because NODA started in the North West. The founding father of NODA was Mr A P Bullfield who was the musical director of Lancaster Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society (LADOS), they are still members of NODA, and I am happy to say they are providing the cabaret for the Presidential Gala in Southport this year. They were the obvious choice for entertainment and my chance to trumpet the fact NODA started here in the North West. But even though NODA started here it has been over 20 years since the North West had a National President, which I think is a crime which is why I was keen to stand for President, and that is why I did it - for the region. I think it is the best region; obviously, I would say that, but I still believe we have some fantastic talent in the North West, super shows, inspirational youth groups. We have a great

committee of people who are keen, passionate and eager about amateur theatre. I want the chance to be able to showcase this talent and dedication by 'bringing the Presidency home.'

This year will be even more special as I will be turning 70 this year and will be the 70th NODA National President. What more of a reason is there to take on this role?

The thing I am most looking forward to seeing is all the different regional events and awards and how they work. In the North West, we have a fantastic weekend of festivities, and it is amazing to see the support from our members at the event. I want to see that amazing support around the country.

You do your time as a Regional Representative, move on to Councillor and you see a whole new side of the workings of amateur theatre, you then become President - wow - what a honour! You go around the UK and Ireland and see all these fantastic shows and ideas but then what next? I hope to pass on all the great things that I am sure I will see during the presidential year - assuming of course that societies invite me? (Please do). It is perhaps the greatest honour I can imagine to be the President of our great NODA Family and have the opportunity of encouraging even more people to take part in what can only be described as the best hobby in the world! ★



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.

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NODA Theatre Summer School 2019

If you were to ask some of the regular Summer School students how long it is until we all meet up again, they would be able to give you the time – almost to the hour!! However, suffice it for me to say we are over half way to this year's School when we will, once again, welcome new and returning students to a week of immersion in 'the Bubble'. To those of you returning, we look forward to having your company for the week and catching up with what

has happened in your life since last August and to those of you attending for the first time... a heartfelt welcome! I can promise you an unforgettable week that you will never regret. If you are still undecided check out the website noda.org.uk for course availability.

You will see in the article written by our school director, Sarah Osborne, that we are actively putting in place measures to

support our most vulnerable students to make NODA Theatre Summer School truly inclusive. If this is your area of expertise and you can contribute in any way please get in touch with either Sarah or me...we want to ensure that we cover everything... this is **YOUR** School after all.

Jacquie Stedman, Chairman of NODA Theatre Summer School



Course Focus - Swashbucklers of the World Unite

Have you ever held a secret desire to walk in the footsteps of the heroes and villains of the silver screen? Have you always fancied the idea of learning stage combat but not yet found the confidence? Do you have you a secret swashbuckler inside you looking for the opportunity to strut their stuff?

If the answer is yes, this is the course for you...

The week is aimed at those with no stage combat experience – we just ask that you have a willingness to work as physically as you can within your own limits and the openness to have a go.

Open For All

There are many reasons why I am a champion of NODA Theatre Summer School, but one of the top ones is that anyone and everyone (as long as they are over the age of 18) is welcome.

This mission to be inclusive has always been at the centre of so many of the decisions the committee makes about Summer School, but I think it is essential to think about what this inclusivity looks like in real terms...

The first piece of evidence I can use is, that contrary to what it might look like from the outside, every Summer School is made up of: repeat 'offenders', Summer School infants who may have only attended a couple of times before and entirely new students who may, for a moment after they arrive, wonder what has hit them. Last year we had over 50 new students – all of whom began the week with varying degrees of trepidation and all of whom finished with a sense of absolute belonging. Equally valued are the students

who have been to Summer School in years gone by and make a glorious re-entry. As I said, anyone and everyone is welcome.

Of course an important aspect of making sure that everyone feels part of Summer School is the tutors – in addition to being top of their particular performance or production craft, they care. They care about the needs of their students, and they care about helping them smash down whatever barriers are getting in their way. A NODA Theatre Summer School classroom is a place of discovery, learning, letting go, enlightenment and safety, and the tutors strive to make sure that everyone gets the most out of the experience.

The students are also a big part of our inclusivity too – yes friendships have formed over the years, and Summer School is a precious opportunity to reconnect with familiar faces. However, importantly, these same students are eager to discover new friendships, and new students are quickly swept up in

the warmth and companionship that is a driving force of Summer School. I love looking across the dining hall and bar in the rare downtime during the week and literally watching friendships form in front of me. Connections are made, discoveries are enjoyed, and kinship is established that starts with a mutual love of theatre and then becomes much more than that as the week goes on.

I am aware I am painting a rosy picture – but that is genuinely because I feel this way about Summer School. I am also aware there is room for improvement. This year, for example, the committee is working on an initiative to ensure our most vulnerable students are supported in the best way possible. As director of Summer School, I will continuously strive to improve the inclusivity of the week and will welcome any suggestions anyone can give to help me achieve this. ★

Sarah Osborne - Summer School Director

Yorkshire's Own Mini-Bubble Creative Collective

Because the NODA Summer School is such an amazing experience three years ago a small group of devotees decided to continue the fun in the winter months and the Yorkshire Mini-Bubble was born. By January 2019 this Mini-Bubble has grown into a great weekend of 'creative loveliness' for anyone connected to NODA Summer School. Hosted by Sarah Osborne in Wakefield it provides a chance for people to come together to share and develop ideas, to increase their understanding and awareness and to try new ideas in a safe environment. This year 24 attendees got together in venues around Wakefield, including the award winning Hepworth Gallery, for a range of workshops and youth theatre observations – as well as the obligatory evenings out.

People journeyed from around the UK – with a total of 10,334 miles being travelled to share in this experience. The range of people who attended, their experiences and understanding enables the Collective to respond to needs and share best practice as well as encouraging each other in their performing and artistic development.



Sarah uses Social Media to spread the magic of the experience and a post about one workshop generated a comment from Jeremy Stockwell who said "We need to go out of our minds to come to our senses" – which the Mini-Bubble allows people to do. As well as all the learning – the

weekend is wonderful fun – with friends new and old – with a touch of that Summer School buzz.

Anyone interested can contact Sarah (via the NODA Summer School FB page) for future events and a chance to get involved. ★



NODA MUSICAL THEATRE SUMMER SCHOOL

27th July - 3rd August 2019
Yarnfield Park, Stone, Staffordshire

For more information please visit noda.org.uk



Streets Apart



Most of us know that homelessness is on the increase. Stratford-upon-Avon playwright Jackie Lines, has written a play that aims to raise awareness of the homeless and the many and varied reasons why people end up on the streets.

Following months of research, she has created *Streets Apart*, a fictional piece of theatre based on the real stories and experiences of the vulnerable and homeless. It promises to be a powerful and contemporary performance that explores the fragility of life and aims to bring a community closer together. Many of the cast members are with local amateur groups, in particular, Second Thoughts, and many bring a wealth of experience of homelessness or addiction through work or previous activities. The company includes one of Stratford's Street Pastors, a retired paramedic, and the manager of an addiction agency.

Jackie is an experienced playwright: her one act play *Whisking Eggs* - an original and outrageous comedy – is being presented for the second year by Second Thoughts in July, Vancouver in March and was nominated for the George Taylor Award. Meanwhile: "I was thinking about the next play and what direction I would go in. I had no plans to write anything serious but as I got to know people on the streets I thought the best thing I could as a playwright was to give them a voice. So many are isolated, unfairly judged and misunderstood. I knew through the power of theatre I could address that.

She continued, "The stories I heard were heart-breaking but each time someone

shared their life stories, issues with mental and emotional health and trauma, I knew that these good people deserved more." The play tells the hard-hitting but moving story of two young street sleepers eventually helped by a local drop-in centre. Through support and compassion, their lives take a positive new direction. Dark street scenes depict the threatening underworld of drug-dealers, violence, negation and addiction. But *Streets Apart* is lifted throughout with humour, warmth, joy and hope.

Streets Apart will be interspersed with poetry written by the people Jackie has met and two original songs will form part of the play, reflecting life on the streets written by actor/songwriters Chris Musson and Karen Welsh. She added: "I wanted to address the resounding questions asked by the public: 'are they genuine'? 'Should I give them money'? People feel powerless and want to know the best way that they can help."

Streets Apart premieres at Stratford Playhouse on 6th and 7th April as part of an event which will include music played by local musicians at the Drop-in Centre, a photographic and art exhibition and information from the agencies and charities who support homelessness and addictions.

Finally, Jackie said, "I want to be able to offer the script to any school, college or amateur company to be able to spread the word and help address this topical and growing problem." Visit stratfordplay.co.uk to book tickets and visitstreetsapart.impressionpr.net for more information. ★





Councillor's Chat

We've seen a lot of changes in the last 6 months to the South West Team. Jo Wilson-Hunt has taken the position of Youth Adviser after Jack Price moved on due to other heavy commitments. I'd like to record our thanks for his help and advice to our youth. This is important to the future of not only our societies but to NODA as a whole. Jo comes with another great deal of expertise where youth are concerned and has relinquished her role as Rep for District 8a to Jane Burt, whom we welcome too. Janet Elworthy also stepped down as Rep for District 6 with Patricia Barclay taking over. I am indebted to Janet as she remains on the committee as Social Secretary keeping her expertise with us. Kathy West too has moved on from District 2 for personal reasons, and I thank her for all the work she has done for NODA in Cornwall. We welcome Adam Ward to NODA for this area now.

Finally, Mike Canning has taken up the long-vacant post of District 7 Rep, and Debi Weaver has taken-up District 16. A big thank you to them and the rest of the Committee for all their support and help shown to me over the last year.

Can I thank those societies that have invited both my wife, Ann and I to see their shows and welcomed us so generously – it has been a real pleasure to attend. Please keep on inviting us as the more I see, the better it is! Not only for me but for NODA to be represented. ★

Graham Liverton
South West Regional Councillor

South West



Teignmouth's 3TC perform the UK Premier of Richard Everett's 'Demons.'

The 'Demons' in the detail!

Entertaining Angels is fabulous play by Richard Everett which you may have read or seen. 3TC (a catchier title for the Teignmouth Touring Theatre Company CIC) was set up as a theatre company in 2015 to perform it! After successfully applying for the rights, Richard Everett sent the group a 'Good Luck' email, and after letting him know he was the reason for the company starting, he agreed to be the Society's President. This has been the start of a great friendship and partnership even though Richard lives 170 miles away!

Richard has a long and varied background in the theatre world (see richardeverett.co.uk) with Broadway, West End, Film and seven published plays to his credit. To follow, the group asked if he had a one-act play to perform for a festival. He dug out a radio script that he had written 30 odd years ago and rewrote it as a stage play. *Something to Say* was performed in early 2018 as a global premiere and has since been published by Samuel French with 3TC credited for its first performance.

Demons is a play that is very close to Richard's heart and, whilst it has had professional tours in Germany and Lithuania, it has never been seen by him, published or performed in the UK. It was a massive honour for 3TC to have Richard suggest they give it its U.K. premiere in

January 2019. Richard worked closely with the group while still allowing me, as the director to shape the play my way. The audience reaction was astonishing! We have never met such a powerful, positive and profound response to a play. The audience Q&A with Richard after each performance was awash with compliments and praise for both playwright and cast and the reviews were spectacular!



This superb play about mental demons, not satanic one and is a powerful study of the journey through grief, anger, bitterness and betrayal to ultimate redemption and peace. It takes us inside the mind of Hannah, a mother who's seven-year-old son has been killed

on a zebra crossing by a drunk driver a year before the curtain rises. Played to 'blacks' in 33 continuous and overlapping scenes Hannah never leaves the stage but interacts, one at a time, with four other characters – her husband, her friend, her psychotherapist and the drunk driver. The result is riveting.

What's next for 3TC? The group has been invited by other South Devon theatres to bring *Demons* to them later this year and, of course, there's the rest of Richard's portfolio! ★

Philip K. Wesley-Harkcom



Redruth Amateur Operatic Society Trust (ROAST) wins 2018 Trophy for outstanding production.

Cornish NODA Group wins Minack Trophy!

Redruth Amateur Operatic Society Trust (ROAST) has won the '2018 Minack Trophy' for their production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. This much sought-after trophy is awarded to the production that the Minack Theatre Trustees deem to be the best production of that season. Many of you may have attended or seen pictures of this iconic outdoor venue overlooking the stunning Cornish coast. As the Minack welcomes a range of amateur, semi-professional and professional productions, the award is hotly contested and rightly revered.

The Minack Theatre said: "it was a really hard choice this year! Our shortlist had 13 shows on it, but it came down to a battle of the musicals with the highly professional slick version of *Chicago* from the British Theatre Academy being pitted against the early forerunner. After much debate we have awarded the 2018 trophy to the fabulous, visually stunning, beautifully staged production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* from our local Cornish superstars, Redruth

Amateur Operatic Society Trust."

If this wasn't enough, the Group soon realised that we were only the 2nd amateur Cornish company to win the award in The Minack's long, illustrious history. As a proud Cornish group, this was truly the icing on the cake!

Helen Hartshorne, the show's director, said "I am so proud and thankful to every single person who has contributed towards the show. What an achievement for a society of amateurs! Performing at the Minack is a wonderful experience, but to win the award is just overwhelming. ROAST is a family, and I am very proud to part of this amazing group of people. When you truly believe in something and have the drive and the passion... it will happen!" This sense of family and unity was also seen in the society's will to support a chosen charity. In March 2018, while in the full swing of rehearsals, many members took on the gruelling challenge of walking from their rehearsal base in Redruth to The



Minack Theatre itself, a mighty 28 miles! A fantastic £2782.50 was raised for the very deserving 'Children's Hospice South West'.

The Group has since reprised the production in December at our 'home theatre' - the Regal in Redruth. Though re-staging, a new set and new cast members, it all resulted in another unforgettable production. Look out for their November 2019 production of *West Side Story!* ★

Gareth Harris – Assistant Secretary for ROAST

NODA President Awards the Exmouth Players

The Exmouth Players had the great pleasure of meeting the NODA National President, Jacquie Stedman, during their very recent production of *Alice!* (directed by the past President, Nick Lawrence) at The Blackmore Theatre on 9th December. Jacquie and her husband came to see the performance. They also presented the Kay Darbyshire Trophy for finishing Runners-Up in the Standard Class National Programme Award 2017. This was for their programme for *The Witches*. ★



From left to right - Trevor Brice (Programme co-ordinator supported by Wendy Bishop & Fin O'Leary), Alix Kelman of Kelman Media, Exmouth (Programme Designer), Jacquie and then Bernard Hughes (President of The Exmouth Players). Credit: Jules Allen of JAllen Photography, Exmouth.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

In 2018, 1295 people were awarded Long Service Awards, ranging from 10 Years up to an amazing 70 Years!

NODA wants to recognise everyone who is awarded one of these prestigious awards, to show our gratitude to all those people who have given years of their life unpaid to amateur theatre.

In this edition we showcase the 50 Year Winners upwards from 2018. In our Summer edition we will showcase those winners with 10 Year awards upwards



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

50 Years

East

Pam Corrie
John Horley
Nova Horley
Jeanette Yates

Springers Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society
Griffin Players
NODA Regional Representative
Peterborough Operatic & Dramatic Society

East Midlands

Joyce Handbury
Elizabeth Jepson
Enid Moore
Sheila Rothman

Ripley & Alfreton Musical Theatre Company
Chesterfield Gilbert & Sullivan Society
Chesterfield Gilbert & Sullivan Society
Chesterfield Gilbert & Sullivan Society

London

Veronica Thompson
Steve Taylor

Hemel Hemstead Theatre Group
Chesham Musical Theatre Company

North

Audrey Richardson

Fatfield Musical Stage Society

North East

Ann Garnett
Bernadette Conley
Mary Ingram

BrassNeck Theatre
Normanton Musical Theatre Society
Guiseley AOS

North West

Sandra Blyth
David John Cooper
Elaine Cooper
Geoffrey Hubbard
Lesley Jackson
Ian Johnston
Lynn McCullough
Sue Ness
Pamela Watson

Farnworth Performing Arts Company
Ellesmere Port Musical Theatre Company
Ellesmere Port Musical Theatre Company
Workington Amateur Operatic Society
Burnley Light Opera Society
Workington Amateur Operatic Society
Workington Amateur Operatic Society
Salford Musical Theatre Company
Ellesmere Port Musical Theatre Company

Scotland

Pat Adam
Rosalind Beattie
Linda Blackie
Kathleen Crowe
Evelyn Grahame
Margaret Herriot
Frances Irons
Harry Kerr
Linda MacDonald
Valarie Jane Steel Brown
John Urquhart
Elizabeth Wylie

Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company
Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society
Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society
Leven Amateur Musical Association
Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society
Leven Amateur Musical Association
Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society
Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society
Falkirk Bohemians AODS
Kirkcaldy Amateur Operatic Society
Broughty Ferry Amateur Operatic Society

South East

Philippa Anne Mills
Mary Coyte
Helen Mills
Jilly Nuthall
Kay Rowan
Pat Smith
Peter Smith
Janet Turner

Alton Operatic & Dramatic Society
Grayshott Stagers & Haslemere Players
Walton & Weybridge A.O.S.
Milton Musical Society
Alton Operatic & Dramatic Society
The Sevenoaks Players
The Sevenoaks Players
Walton & Weybridge A.O.S.

South West

Linda Evans
Lyn Kidd
Sue Pomeroy

Parish Players
Northavon Youth Theatre Company
Bridgwater Operatic Society

Wales & Ireland

Christine Dyer
Elissa Jones
Pauline Mills
Stella Morris
Richard Norton
Venna Parminter
Kenneth Rees
Valerie Rees
Brian Smith
Glynis Thurlow

Port Talbot & District Amateur Operatic Society
Rhyl & District Musical Theatre Company
Port Talbot & District Amateur Operatic Society
Llandudno Musical Productions
Maesteg Amateur Operatic Society
Port Talbot & District Amateur Operatic Society
Briton Ferry Musical Theatre Company
Briton Ferry Musical Theatre Company
Rhos On Sea Savoyards
Briton Ferry Musical Theatre Company

50 Years cont.

West Midlands

Patricia Appleton John Arnold John Barker Mike Davies June Edwards Michael Greenfield Lesley Kay Hart Colin Lapworth	Studley Operatic Society Willenhall Musical Theatre Company North Staffs Operatic Society Stourbridge Amateur Operatic Society Shrewsbury Amateur Operatic Society Kidderminster Operatic and Dramatic Society Worcester Operatic and Dramatic Society Erdington Operatic Society
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55 Years

East

Diana Davies	Letchworth Arcadians
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East Midlands

Brenda Moore	Erewash Musical Society
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North

Russell Ainsley David Carter Marian Chandler Dorothy Coleman Margaret Gargett James Laidlow Rita E Stafford	Hexham Amateur Stage Society Stockton Stage Society Stockton Stage Society West End Operatic Society Ferryhill Stage Society Hexham Amateur Stage Society Stockton Stage Society
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North East

Robert Graham Longward Vernon Blades Harold Kebir Berry Chris Ingram	Brighthouse Theatre Productions Normanton Musical Theatre Society St Giles & St Mary's Pantomime TS Guiseley AOS
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North West

Elizabeth Allwright	Southport Spotlights Musical Theatre Society
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Scotland

Irene M E Cook Hazel Devlin Audrey MacDonald Jean Macmillan Norman Macmillan Robert Seaton Eileen Taylor	Rosyth & District Musical Society Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society Paisley Musical & Operatic Society Paisley Musical & Operatic Society Carnoustie Musical Society Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society
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South West

George King Patricia B Perry Keith Robinson Ernest Sidney Thomas Marion Stainer	Keynsham Light Opera Group Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society The Bridgwater Pantomime Society Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society
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Wales & Ireland

Jane Given Anthony Mullins Joan Parr Kevin Sivyer	Londonderry Musical Society Maesteg Amateur Operatic Society Rhyl & District Musical Theatre Company Carmarthen Amateur Operatic Society
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West Midlands

John Barker Judy Davies Raymond Harbourne Michael Jones Fred Shaw Tony Taylor Arthur Turner Michael Turner	North Staffs Operatic Society Stourbridge Amateur Operatic Society Ombersley Dramatic Society North Staffs Operatic Society Stourbridge Amateur Operatic Society Hereford Amateur Pantomime Society Ombersley Dramatic Society Ombersley Dramatic Society
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60 Years

East

Marjorie Lumb	Peterborough Operatic & Dramatic Society
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North East

Mavis Garnett Julie Webb Christine Roberts	Settle AOS Phoenix Players Rotherham Guiseley AOS
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Scotland

James Anderson Cynthia Dickson Margaret Logan Christine Lyon Margaret Paul Morag Wallace Rose Young	Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company Leven Amateur Musical Association Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company Hawick AOS Musical Theatre Company Lochgelly & District Amateur Musical Association Falkirk Bohemians Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society Innerleithen Amateur Operatic Society
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South East

Margaret Coltman	Milton Musical Society
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South West

Gill Barnes Roger Ivan Howell Derrick Palmer	Frome Musical Theatre Company Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society The Bridgwater Pantomime Society
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Wales & Ireland

Shirley Curtis Lyn Emmerson David Windsor Davies Peter Hourahine	Melyncrythan Amateur Operatic Society Llandudno Musical Productions Melyncrythan Amateur Operatic Society STC Musical Society
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West Midlands

John Biddulph	Wolverhampton Musical Comedy Company
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65 Years

Scotland

William Anderson Margaret Russell	Hamilton Operatic & Dramatic Club Galashiels Amateur Operatic Society
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70 Years

North East

Freda Hargreaves	Settle AOS
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South East

Don Buckland Robert Charles Drywood	Bidborough Pantomime Society Ramsgate Operatic Society
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South West

Roy Evett Russell G R Chatwin	The Bridgwater Pantomime Society Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society
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North

Eunice Davidson June Hall Arthur Dennis Rainbow	West End Operatic Society Murton Theatre Group Middlesborough Operatic Society
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North West

Phyllis Mitchell	Farnworth Performing Arts Company
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Wales & Ireland

Joy Maguire	Rhyl & District Musical Theatre Company
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More information on Long Service Awards please visit our website
noda.org.uk/awards

Wales & Ireland



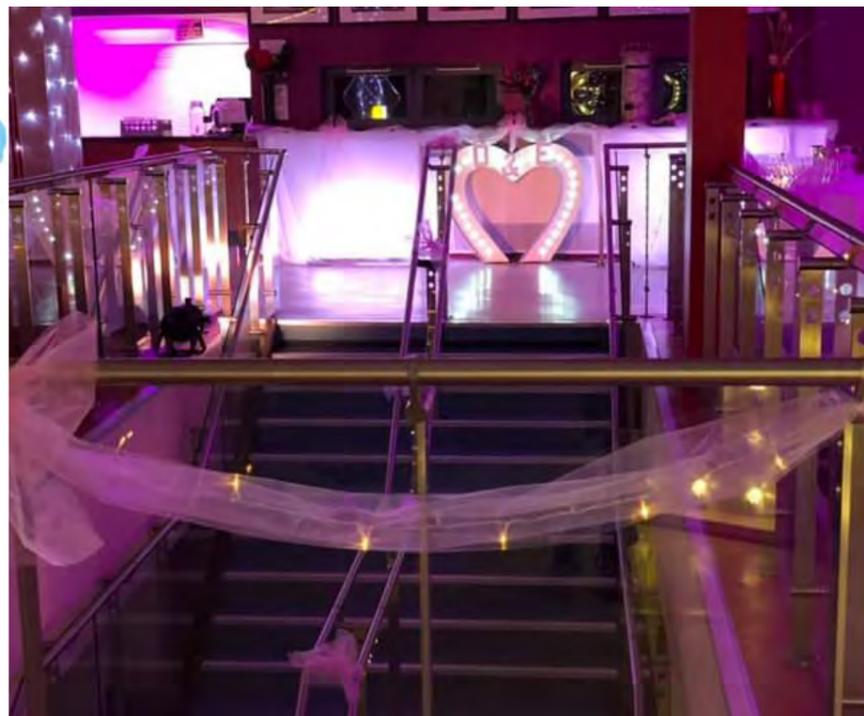
Councillor's Chat

This year's Conference weekend will mark my second year as your Regional Councillor and what a two years it has been. This year has flown by and I am sorry it has not been possible to visit you all, thank you all for your kind invitations. On Saturday 15th June 2019 our Regional Conference will have arrived again with a fun packed weekend including our Workshops, Awards Ceremony and Gala Dinner. All information regarding the weekend and how to book will be sent to your society secretaries in April.

Please remember for your society to be nominated for a Regional Award the Regional Councillor must be invited to your production. Please could invitations arrive at least eight weeks before the performance takes place. Thank you to those societies that already do this, I have already received bookings for 2020 and 2021!

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

Jordan Spencer FRSA
Wales & Ireland Regional Councillor



A new use for a theatre foyer

Newport Playgoers and The Dolman Theatre are both well known in the Newport area. This private theatre is extremely busy with numerous societies performing plays, musicals, dance shows and revues. It has a main stage, studio theatre and foyer/cabaret stage, but one weekend in February it took on a new look when the Theatre Caretaker and his fiancée the Lighting manager got married.

The bar/foyer area have been used for



parties and private functions in the past but this time the foyer area was transformed into a fairy-tale reception for the couple who work and live at the theatre.

The theatre are now looking to follow this through by offering a competitive venue for both parties and other functions during its closed season in the summer months, and if this wedding reception is anything to go by I think it could be a new use for the area, and hopefully another source of income. ★



One of the Oldest Theatres in Wales Reopens It's Doors



The Savoy Theatre occupies the oldest known theatre site in Wales. It was extensively refurbished in 1927 but, as it retained the basic structure of the previous Victorian building, it can claim to be one of, if not, the oldest working theatres in Wales.

On the 70th anniversary of the refurbished cinema, in March 1998, the Monmouth Operatic Society presented a tribute

to Gilbert & Sullivan. This celebration was notable as it marked the use, once again, of the original raked stage, tabs and back-stage facilities. The new Trust has now taken this to the next level and reinvigorated the Savoy by turning this wonderful part of theatre and cinema heritage into a place of pleasure and enjoyment for the whole community ★

A Brief History of The Savoy Theatre Monmouth



Local Dame Lighting Up Pantomime Performance



Musical director of Crickhowell Players - Barney Bowdon and NODA Regional Representative Dee McIlroy with fabulous Dame Rob Jones in Crickhowell Players pantomime *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* in his amazing light-up costume.



Regional Conference 2019

Don't forget the date of this year's Gala Weekend and Annual General Meeting. It will take place at the Three Counties Hotel, Hereford on Saturday 15th June 2019.

Please be aware there are only 300 spaces for the event, so book early!



West Midlands

The Intensity of Shared Passions



Tom Pickles as Woyzeck and cast. Watch Nicholas in full swing on YouTube youtu.be/HtWFLu__QJk



Tom Pickles as Woyzeck with Nick Sullivan as Captain

NODA Member, Nicholas Sullivan talks to us about taking part in Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*, last June at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in association with Birmingham International Dance Festival 2018. Leo Bulter's new version of this classic drama was directed by The Rep's artistic director Roxana Sibert and choreographer and associate director Rosie Kay. 100 amateur performers and two professional actors from Birmingham and the West Midlands participated in this amazing life-enhancing piece of community theatre fully celebrating the talent, diversity and inclusiveness of the city and the region.

It was the most amazing experience starting with the auditions in December 2017, followed by months of weekend rehearsals that culminated in the magnificent performances that were overflowing with explosive energy, elation and emotion!

I was privileged to have this challenging and richly rewarding experience as a cast member, not only as a member of the ensemble but also playing the pivotal role of the sadistic and bombastic Captain. Whilst preparing for the role of the Captain I was supported by an outstanding team, the intensive input was something I rarely had the privilege of experiencing before as an amateur. I

relished every demanding, gruelling and rewarding moment! I had never realised there could be so much required with the "simple" act of breathing!

I have since pondered on this question, what is it that makes the difference between the professional and the amateur experience? We both share a passion and joy of performance as well as an aspiration to produce the very best experience for our audiences. Joy, comradeship and theatrical excellence are all essential characteristics of our shared experiences and mutual passion for drama. After much reflection, I think the essential difference is that for the Professional, their current show is their core focus. For the member of an Amateur Company, it is the Company itself that is the beating heart! Each production is just punctuation in our shared amateur story.

My heartfelt thanks go to the many dedicated and talented people on the Rep Team, and to my amazing fellow players for whom I have such respect and admiration. I made new friends as well as learning so much about my craft, about myself as an actor and as a person. What brilliant gifts to receive! And I will take those wonderful gifts back to enhance and enrich all my future amateur ventures. ★

Nicholas Sullivan, NODA West Midlands

Gren Redfern

It is with great sadness we announce the death of Gren Redfern, Former Regional Representative who will be fondly remembered for his staunch support afforded to NODA individuals and societies in North Warwickshire.

Councillor's Chat

Pantomime season is behind us and attentions turn to preparations for a host of lively productions. With this in mind anyone wanting a milky white cow, pantomime sized cots and pushchairs? Join our Facebook page for the latest prop offers, you will also find news of up and coming auditions (many societies are looking for men!).

Standards for all performances across our region rise exponentially, providing excellent artistic output and first-class entertainment. Most encouraging too is the innovation and enthusiasm from our many youth groups.

Solid foundations in amateur theatre have been established by societies and individuals whose passion and inspiration keep us going and will never be forgotten. We have in recent weeks sadly seen the passing of high profile theatre advocates whose dedication and drive has enriched the lives of many, without which, great success would have not been achieved.

Our thoughts are with family and friends who since the turn of the year have seen the passing of four special people who helped shape amateur theatre in the region.
Victor (Vic) Charles Herbert, 14th January, aged 78.
Anthony (Tony) Weatherhill, 18th January, aged 79.
Robert (Bob) Wilson MBE, 2nd February, aged 82.
Alan Hackett, 7th February, aged 75.

We will be honouring all who are sadly no longer with us at our annual AGM and awards ceremony on Sunday 14th April, when nominees and winners from 2018's productions will be announced. ★

Ian G. Cox
West Midlands Regional Councillor

Six Degrees of Separation and a bit of regional history



Michael Hastilow



John Richards



Nevil Cook



Herbert H Monckton (far left) with NAODA officials, circa 1904.

As former NODA National President Michael Hastilow settles into wearing another Presidential chain of office, this time as President of the West Bromwich Operatic Society (WBOS). A quick glance into the society's records show that after joining WBOS in 1962, Michael follows in the footsteps of two former WBOS Past Presidents who also held the office of NODA National President. Our history trail does not end there.

During 1999, John Richards was NODA National President when NODA celebrated its Centenary Year at the Royal Albert Hall with A Night of 1000 Voices. John was WBOS President the year before for their 50th year. John supported Michael when he found himself

appointed as Regional Councillor for the West Midlands. Unfortunately, John was not around to witness Michael becoming NODA National President.

In 1991, Nevil Cook was NODA's 41st President. Following his time as WBOS Society President in 1982 Nevil was the first from the society to have his name engraved on the NODA President's regalia. Now if you're wondering who is responsible for Michael being so involved in NODA then look no further than Nevil, who in 1982 co-opted Michael as Treasurer of the Midland Area and the rest, as they say, is history.

These formidable gentlemen, were not the only Midland or West Midlands Regional

Councillors to represent NODA as National President. Herbert H Monckton in 1911-1914 was the first, followed by F. Jameson Lilley (1963-1964), Bernard Clarke (1973-1974), Ken Barnes (1982-1983) and Mike Hinks (2006-2007). Before you say Mike is from the East Midlands, in 2006 the Midland Area split to become the East and West Midland Regions. Mike Hinks was the last Midland Area Councillor and the first East Midland Regional Councillor.

Who will be the next to follow in their footsteps? ★

Janine Graeme,
West Midlands Regional Editor.



Ombersley Operatic Society Awards night

Anniversaries

A heartfelt Happy Anniversary to all society members who are embarking on their celebratory plans this year. Normally we showcase societies who are marking a century or more, in this issue along with the 50 year Service Awards we thought we'd talk about some of our younger societies.

It is often following invitations to your District Representative and our Regional Councillor that we hear more about you. Last year Bruce Wyatt attended Ombersley's 60th Year celebration where he presented to the society no less than six long service and other awards. It is times like these your District Representatives around the committee table agree it is a

real honour to be invited and a pleasure to present the awards.

Alison Smith brought Rugby Theatre to our attention, a society who during their 70th year in 2018 took the opportunity to commemorate the ending of WWI with *Blackadder Goes Forth*.

Your District Representatives love to hear from you and receiving invitations to productions and events. You could find yourself as an award nominee at the West Midlands AGM and Awards Day in April or receive a mention in the NODA magazine ★

Jean Clarke

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of Jean Clarke, Presidents Consort 1973-74 who alongside her husband Bernard, were NODA National President and Consort during NODA's 75th year, marked by a Reception at St James' Palace, in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother.



Photograph from the book *A Centenary of Service*, by John N Young. Featuring Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother with Bernard and Jean Clarke NODA President and Consort at the 75th Year Celebrations.

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