

Tnoda TODAY ★

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Be inspired by amateur theatre

The final leg of the
Presidential tour

Big things in small
packages

Definitive guide to Long
Service Awards

Welcome to the bubble

The joy of
younger
members in
our society

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WELCOME



The nights are drawing in and the clocks have gone back, there is a chill in the air, autumn has arrived and soon it will be pantomime season for many.

This edition of the magazine is a further step forward to producing a more inclusive and interesting magazine with hints galore on how to enhance your production and extol the virtue of the amateur scene across the nation. Rob, the National Editor would like to hear your comments on the appeal of the format.

The National Gala contained the AGM, which, as has been observed is not the most exciting of events to attend but are necessity. Some in the past have been highly charged.

This year we asked for approval to amend an even drier subject, our Constitution, Council have spent a considerable amount of time on this and approval by the members at a General Meeting was sought and given. The next step was acceptance by the Charity Commission, this was given and since 13th October the new Constitution is in place. You will find the text on our website.

There is a short article on Relaxed Pantomime reminding us that theatre is for all, this is one of three ways in which we can make our productions available to the whole community, relaxed is possibly the least expensive to achieve but it still needs detailed planning, a Signed Performance needs the services of a good signer, and an audio described production needs much planning and extra equipment to support headphones for those listening to the description. Societies who have taken this path find the reward in the satisfaction it brings to those who could not ordinarily have attended a production. For all, a touch tour of the set can be a bonus. Let us keep on hearing about how we can bring theatre to all.

There is a lot about youth involvement and this is where we start, I recollect that I as a 12 year old was once a bridesmaid in the schools production of Ruddigore!

Michael Hastilow
Chairman of Trustees



North



South East



NODA Youth

GETTING IN TOUCH

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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?

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

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Go to www.noda.org.uk/regions
Click on your region and then the tab saying **Committee**

or

NODA email addresses follow the format of
firstname.lastname@noda.org.uk

To find out more about NODA Pantomimes?

Go to www.noda.org.uk/pantomimes
Here you can read extracts of all of the pantomimes available from NODA

or

You can apply for your performance licence online

We need legal advice - what do we do?

Email info@noda.org.uk clearly detailing your issue or request.

We will then contact our Legal Team who will get in touch with you directly.

This is a society benefit only.



Who's who at NODA

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Councillor's Chat

A quick note from your Regional Councillor



Tessa Davies
East Regional Councillor

It's been an interesting few months since my appointment in May. I have enjoyed visiting many society's productions across the region. Please continue to invite me to your productions, I will be happy to attend if my diary permits.

At the National AGM I was privileged to accept the award for Best Deluxe programme, on behalf of Shakespeare at the George (Huntingdon). It was also lovely to see the presentation of the Presidents cup to CTC (Needham Market) for *Jesus Christ Superstar* and their work in promoting Youth theatre. My congratulations to them both for these awards.



Nanette Lovell
East Midlands Regional Councillor

Hello everyone in NODA East Midlands. It is great to be able to speak to everyone and to thank you for inviting me to all of your fantastic productions over the summer months.

I should imagine that by now most of you will be getting into panto mode? I really look forward to your festive productions but if you would like to invite me - and your NODA rep - please do so as early as possible as our diaries do get very booked up at this time of the year! In the meantime keep enjoying the best hobby in the world - Amateur Theatre.



Andy McNicholas
North West Regional Councillor

It's an honour to have been elected as the North West Regional Councillor. At this stage I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the North West Committee and other Regional Councillors for welcoming me into the NODA Family and to Christine Hunter Hughes for her inciteful support and encouragement during the handover.

On behalf of the NW Region I'd like to wish Christine a happy Presidency and thank her for her leadership of the NW Committee over the past 8 years.



Stuart McCue-Dick
Scotland Regional Councillor

Training is an important part of the support provided by NODA Scotland to its members. Over the coming months there will be further Business of Amateur Theatre workshops along with a range of skills workshops for our youth members. Full details will be posted on the website and Facebook page.

The members of the Regional Committee are on hand to provide help and support to members - please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any issues needing resolved.



Kay Rowan
South East Regional Councillor

The summer months were a particularly busy period especially May and June. So many societies performed at the same time it was difficult to get round to everyone. Frequently I have had to attend a rehearsal which I must say is exciting and refreshing - an opportunity to meet the cast and crew, talk to committee members and find out just how societies are faring. What a happy bunch you seem to be!

Look out for information about a series of workshops being organised in 2020 for SE members. Read the newsletters via your society or follow us on Facebook.



Andrew Rogers

London Regional Councillor

Hello from the London Region. I trust you are all enjoying the exciting new format of NODA Today and that the magazine will be of interest. Karen and I are looking forward to seeing your Autumn and Winter shows. Please continue to invite us.

Plans for our Regional weekend – June 13th /14th 2020 -continue to develop and look out for updates in our Regional newsletter, Curtain Up!



Gordon Richardson

North Regional Councillor

Some dates for your diary from the North:

Regional Gala dinner and AGM (including P&P awards)
Holiday Inn Hotel, Scotch Corner
13th - 15th March 2020

National Presidential Gala and National AGM
Durham Radisson Blu Hotel, 18th to 20th September 2020

Youth and Performance Awards
Grand Hotel, Gosforth (tbc)
31st October 2020



Leslie Smith

North East Regional Councillor

I suspect rehearsals are now underway for your forthcoming productions and I look forward to seeing you at your respective shows during the next months.

Early next year you should be receiving letters through your door with details of our 2020 Gala Weekend in Bridlington, once again this will be a great experience and one which I am sure you will all enjoy.

I hope you received the new regional newsletter, North East Natters, if you have anything which you would like to be included please do let either me or your Regional Rep know.



Graham Liverton

South West Regional Councillor

We've just had our AGM in the Southwest and it was nice to see many new societies attending.

In this next year, we hope to bring more workshops to the Southwest that will be useful to members and also be a great chance to meet up with others in your District.

If you would like a workshop, then please get in touch with your District Representative and tell them what kind of workshop you want.

We will make every effort to accommodate!



Jordan Spencer

Wales & Ireland Regional Councillor

Due to the limited time I have to travel around such a vast region, the committee proposed and agreed that they would put forward those societies they think should be considered for a regional award and the reasons why they think they should be eligible. This will give opportunity to those societies which I have not been able to visit to be considered alongside the shows I have already seen for Regional Awards.

Please keep inviting me to your shows and where possible Luke and I would be delighted to attend.



Ian G. Cox

West Midlands Regional Councillor

Your kind invitations to shows and events are always appreciated and every success for a promising programme ahead including the traditional pantomimes.

An important date for your diary is Sunday 10th May. Our 2020 Regional AGM and Awards Day will be held in a stylish new venue with a fresh look and different format with an opportunity to meet our NODA president Christine Hunter Hughes along with corporate and exhibitor partners.

Big things in small packages

NODA members come in all shapes and sizes - from performing in the countries biggest theatres to the smallest corners of a pub during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival - NODA members do it all.

I am lucky enough to be involved in a society that owns its own performance space. It's a small stage with no wings, no flies, limited backstage space and limited height for a set, in a building that dates back to the 1700s. And wow, does make it complicated at times! But does that limit what we can achieve... of course not.

With only 100 seats our production budgets are limited: Although we own the theatre, so do not incur hire fees, we are responsible for keeping the doors open, hence a minimum profit on each show is a requirement. By the end of 2019 we will have produced 9 amateur shows with our in-house company and another 4 from other NODA groups using the space in one year. That will make it 70 amateur performances in total, including 2 musicals, a TV sitcom, 3 plays, numerous music events and an 18 performance run of pantomime. So, all in all, being a small space definitely doesn't limit the number of shows you can do. However, as all those NODA groups using small spaces know, it certainly doesn't mean it is easy.

We like many NODA societies rely on volunteers to not only build our sets, make our costumes, and run our sound and lighting, we also require our volunteers to think of all the designs too. This is exactly the point in any of our productions where all our fantastic ideas are challenged by our uniquely formed and frustratingly awkward small space.

To the right are photos of some of our sets. From *The Last Five Years* with a 'multi use' apartment with creative projection, to the *Les Misérables* barricades and trenches in *Blackadder Goes Forth*, to our most recent logistical triumph *The Railway Children's* moving train, we pride ourselves on the creative fixes that allow us to never say 'We can't do that show, we'll never be able to make it work!'.

But how do we manage it with a stage of 8m wide by 6m deep with only a single door as a dock entrance and barely any backstage space?

To understand we need to start at the very beginning (sorry... *Sound of Music* pun). Here is your task, some will say it is a luxury and some will say it is impossible:

You have a budget of £1800 to put on a large scale play. You do not have to pay for the hire of the theatre but you need to make at least £1000 profit. That was the exact brief I was given for the recent production of *The Railway Children*.

Having seen the professional production of *The Railway Children* at Kings Cross Station and obviously wanting to incorporate a moving train into the show I knew it was going to require an innovative set and a cast willing to work hard to make the show a success. When working in a small space it is tempting to try to split the space into different areas to compensate for not having different cloths or large movable set pieces in the wings. However, a lot of the time this will only compound your problem by making your playing spaces smaller and not really allowing you to ever make use of the entire stage. Audiences can be very forgiving when a story is told well, this isn't necessarily because they appreciate your problem or are nice people, its because theatre is different to TV; audiences find themselves so engrossed by the action

on stage that the fact that the cottage kitchen in Yorkshire is actually in the middle of Oakworth station isn't occurring to them. They really will be much more interested in why Mother is telling Phyllis that she can only have 'Jam or butter, not both darling'. Now a great performance and large playing spaces will work wonders in allowing your audience to forgive your small space, but these aren't the only tips and tricks that will help you transport your audience to a world in which they believe your small space was simply built to put on your latest production.

My main background has always been technical theatre, mainly specialising in sound design. I am a firm believer in less is more with a show. The subtle sound effect or lighting cue will work far better than huge clumsy set piece that takes time to come onstage for it's short scene and off again. *The Railway Children* has multiple locations spread from the London home, two train stations, the farmhouse, the train track and inside and outside the tunnel.

Music played a heavy part in creating the



Godspell | Credit - Rob Williams



Les Misérables | Credit - Bob Ledger



Sweeney Todd | Credit - Bob Ledger



The Last Five Years | Credit - Rob Williams



Blackadder Goes Forth | Credit - Hannah Holt



Chicago | Credit - Curtis McMullan



drama and suspense. I decided I would avoid 'known' songs but found many websites offering free instrumental music that could be used for live performances. From cheerful scene setting music (everyone thought that track was the Bake Off theme!) to eerie spooky music for creeping down the train tracks. The music added a new dimension to the action on stage and also set a pace for the whole dialogue.

Each scene in *The Railway Children* presented a technical challenge to support the performers but for those that don't know the storyline (spoiler alert!), the last scene of act 1 involves a tunnel collapse which the three children witness. They are too far from the station to alert the driver in any other way than shouting and waving their red bloomers to try to stop the train before it crashes.

Set

The set was made up of a raised stage either side of a floor level with a staircase either side and a balcony over the top. Between the raised sides two 8 by 4 foot decks rolled in and out to form trains and to create a large open playing space on one level. Small spaces also don't usually have the space (and in our case budget) to have automated set, hence we found four actors to play train crew pushing the decks in and out. Rather than constantly have the crew cross in front of the audience to leave and return to the decks, the train crew would secure their decks before sitting on the tracks to watch the story unfold. Reducing the movement of 'set crew' our small space to have a moving train without annoying the audience and interrupting their view. Due to the lack of backstage space the two decks would be pushed as far back as



possible into backstage and a set of tabs below the balcony's front edge would be drawn to cover them and allow actors to depart the decks and set pieces to be changed.

Props

The set definitely didn't include a tunnel so the question came: How are we going to do the tunnel collapse? Well, to put simply we took a load of boxes and pushed them over. We just did it a bit more artistically than that. Boxes of different sizes were all wrapped in brown paper before being stacked on one of the moving decks in a way that resembled the dark hollow of the inside of a tunnel. The tunnel was revealed to the audience before being knocked down in time with an appropriate sound effect.

Lighting

Not all small spaces have the luxury of extensive lighting rigs with the latest LED this and moving lights, but this is much less of a barrier to creating the best small space production than one might think. In fact, lighting in a small space sometimes only requires one easy effect to make the audience come out at the interval complementing the 'special effects'.

So after the tunnel collapses and the children realise their only hope of avoiding a nasty accident is to warn the train driver, Bobbie jumps down onto the tracks and a par-can placed on the edge of stage, slowly starts to increase in intensity. The par-can has been left 'open-white', no coloured gel had been added, and had been positioned at an angle that will catch





Bobbie's face perfectly as it reaches full intensity, creating a total focus on her and making her look rather pale in the process.

Sound effects & music

Before Bobbie jumps onto the tracks underscore is introduced. The sound of a train is started in speakers set behind the audience, giving a basic surround sound. As Bobbie jumps onto the tracks the underscore changes to something much more dramatic and the volume is increased, drawing the audience into the moment. At the same time the train sound moves into speakers set up either side of the audience and the level of bass is increased, this movement of sound and increase in bass makes it feel like the train is passing straight through the middle of the audience, racing towards poor Bobbie who is desperately trying to catch the drivers attention.

Costumes

We are very lucky to have very talented volunteers who manage to create brilliantly practical costumes which allow you to look like the perfect lady before having to manoeuvre a bit of set offstage in total blackout without tripping over the bottom of your dress. Simple things like having you cast double up as set movers can really shorten the length of blackouts if you have to have them. Anyway, moments before jumping onto the tracks Phyllis gives Bobbie the idea to use their red bloomers as flags to catch the drivers attention. The colour red is

given in the script but the accidental use of silky material that caught the light coming from the par-can made the effect so much better than the dull red t-shirt used in rehearsals. It was always nice to hear when Phyllis and Peter 'rip' a pair of bloomers in half to make the three flags a gasp as the Velcro rips giving the perfect sound effect and reaction.

Creativity

So when the sound effect of the trains brakes screeched out of speakers facing the audience, Bobbie collapses onto the wrapped boxes representing the collapsed tunnel, the open-white light dims away, and the silky red bloomers fall to the floor the audience are totally absorbed in the moment. There wasn't actually a train, nor a tunnel, in fact they were still

backdropped by Oakworth station when they were meant to be on a steep cutting far up the line from the station, but all those small different elements meant that all that was needed to overcome the small space problem was creativity.

So, what is the conclusion? When I set out to write this article, I wanted to show that with a bit of creativity, a bit of alternative thinking, that anything in theatre is possible, where ever you perform it. Whether you use huge set pieces or just a sound effect to transport an audience it doesn't matter. As long as that audience member believes in the scene if front of them, then you have succeeded.

Rob Williams
National Editor



Credit: The Railway Children photographs by Curtis McMullan



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Good things come in small packages

NODA Wales & Ireland



Seventy-year-old Newcastle Glees Musical Society in Northern Ireland is fortunate to own their own theatrical space. They have been using the beautiful 'listed' Annesley Hall since 1957, buying it from the owners and refurbishing it in 1999.

The seating capacity is 180/200 with a small stage measuring only 6 metres wide by 5.5 metres deep, limited wing space and storage areas. Originally there was a small orchestra pit which was 'filled in' nearly 20 years ago thus extending the stage area by 1.5 metres in front of

the red curtain. A balcony was built at the back of the stage for some of the orchestra, putting the remainder in a props room that opens onto the stage. Both these areas are at a higher level.

Designing a set can be challenging at the best of times. For a small stage, it requires ingenious planning to ensure that everything is as seamless as possible. The Gleesingers are fortunate to have a talented set builder who is sympathetic to our space limitations. Not only does the set need to be imaginative and creative, but it needs to work - be clever and easily

moveable! Yes, there are constraints with designing and building for a small stage area, but it has never beaten us yet!

Gone are the days of heavy, cumbersome sets, with long scene changes. This suits the Glees as no one wants to be climbing over large pieces of scenery to get to the stage. Over the years we have had large numbers in our cast but, with good direction and common sense, this has never presented any problems for, as they say, "the more, the merrier".

With our small audience capacity, this impacts on our box office receipts. However, although we have no rent to pay, we do have the running costs of the building and so need to be careful and realistic when budgeting for our productions. We cherish and are proud of our theatrical space; our Annesley Hall; home to Newcastle Glees M.S. With small spaces concentrating and disciplining the mind, this encourages positive energy and after all...Good things come in small packages!

Edna Howard
Former Chair Newcastle Glees M.S

The Crown Wharf Theatre

NODA West Midlands



Set up in January 2019 to design, build and run a facility in the heart of Stone in Staffordshire, for live theatre, music, dance, comedy, cinema, corporate events and community meetings, with audience capacities ranging from 130 up to 220. The venue's flexibility and functionality to support a multitude of events that attracts professional acts whilst nurturing and developing local artistic talent.

A facility that also supports economic development in the town, through employment, its supply chain, increased tourism, and footfall that boosts both the



day and night time economies.

The vision is to become the cultural and social centre point of the community, our mission is to raise funds to make this vision a reality. This will fill a long standing gap in Stone's landscape.

As part of the Joule's Crown Wharf development project, the building of a new tap-house and heritage centre for Stone, they have agreed to build the outer-shell of the theatre and restore the existing buildings on site for the backstage facilities.

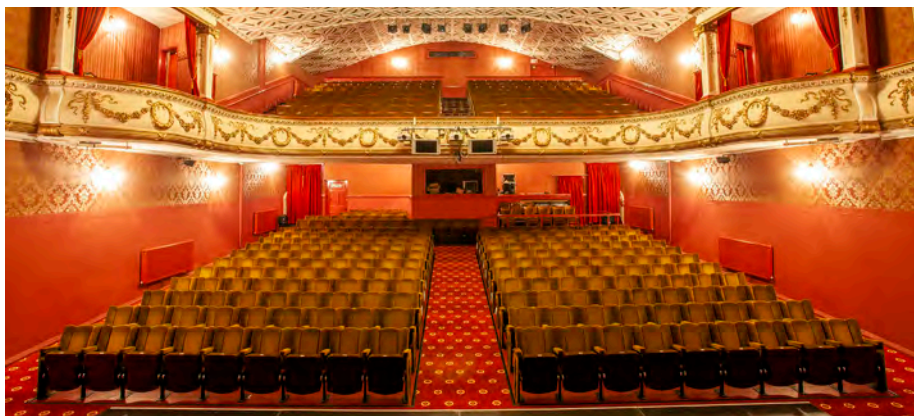
Joule's Brewery started work on site in early 2019 and will be handing over a watertight and wind-proof theatre shell to the charity at the end of the year. It will then be down to The Crown Wharf Theatre charity to design and fit out the auditorium and backstage areas. We will need everything from plant, cables, insulation, plaster, seating and technical equipment.

As part of our fundraising efforts we are looking to build strong relationships with businesses in the area who share our vision for the town's future and can see the potential of this fantastic facility in the heart of the community, very much a legacy opportunity offering the chance to be part of one of the most exciting development projects in our community.

These Founding Partners who want to be there from the start will be permanently featured on our Founders board displayed within the theatre; for thousands of user groups, audience members, pub goers and canal visitors to see.

West End donation to replace century old seating

NODA North West



LW Theatres donates auditorium seats to regional theatres as part of landmark Theatre Royal Drury Lane renovation project

From ghosts to regicide plots, WWII bombs to the birth of musical theatre, the hallowed halls of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Theatre Royal Drury Lane have almost seen it all. Now over 1000 of the theatre's iconic auditorium seats will find new homes in three regional volunteer-run venues as part of its £45 million revival.

Out with the old and in with the new, Theatre Royal Drury Lane's auditorium

will be entirely re-modelled to improve sightlines and comfort, which includes brand new auditorium seating. Rather than letting the comfy golden seats still in good condition go to waste, LW Theatres chose to gift them to venues around the country in need of refurbished auditoriums.

The three chosen venues include New Mills Art Theatre, Derbyshire; The Olympus Theatre, Gloucester; and The Royal Court Theatre, Bacup.

CEO of LW Theatres Rebecca Kane Burton said: "LW Theatres is thrilled to

recycle a much-loved piece of our history in a way that adds real value to regional theatres. We look forward to following the journey from Theatre Royal Drury Lane to their new life enjoyed by new audiences across the UK."

Director of New Mills Art Theatre Beverley Eaves was thrilled at the news of the donation. "To say the 500 century-old seats that currently occupy our Derbyshire theatre are tired and uncomfortable is an understatement! Throughout our long history circa 1911, the Art Theatre has benefited from a wonderful outpouring of volunteer community support, and in return, we look forward to give back to our patrons and provide their 'rears' a sense of West End comfort," she said.

The Bacup Royal Court Theatre director Nick Daye said: "Our old theatre has been a hub for the local area for 130 years and is solely run by volunteers without local funding which has made it hard to do any major refurbishments. The 300 seats we can now replace are over 100 years old, some of them are beyond repair, which will add a much-needed facelift to the auditorium."

The Fairfield Halls is like my second home

NODA London



The Croydon Operatic and Dramatic Association (CODA) put on the first production at the Ashcroft Playhouse when Croydon's Fairfield Halls reopened this September, 57 years after performing the Ashcroft's very first musical. CODA, which was founded in 1943, performed Mel Brooks' award-winning musical *The Producers* at the Ashcroft Playhouse.

It was 3rd December 1962 when over 70 CODA cast members performed Sigmund Romberg's operetta *The New Moon* at the newly opened Ashcroft Theatre. 57 years later, CODA returned



with a 27-strong cast with Mel Brooks' *The Producers*. Following 1962, CODA went on to perform repeatedly at the Ashcroft, last performing *West Side Story* there in 2012 before the Fairfield Halls closed for refurbishment in 2016.

The production was co-directed by CODA Chairman Peter Bramwell and David Sanders, choreographed by Aimee-Marie Bow, and musically directed by Joshua Hickin. Says Peter, "CODA performed over 90 shows at the old Ashcroft Theatre, and we were thrilled to be invited back to our spiritual home

to be the first to perform in the Ashcroft Playhouse."

While Peter has performed in over 40 different shows at the Ashcroft, which he says is probably far from any CODA record, *The Producers* cast members Ann Byers and Tonia Porter say they have both "lost count" of the number of shows they've done at the Ashcroft. Ann says, "I started Cards when I was 19 and did two shows a year until I had my kids. I then carried on doing shows when I could right up until six years ago. The Fairfield Halls is like my second home."

Choreographer Aimee-Marie Bow has both choreographed and performed at the Ashcroft twice, while cast member Hazel Istead started doing shows there in 2003. Fellow cast member Keith Preddie says, "I've performed at the Ashcroft many times before. From memory, the first time was in 1987, and it was amazing to be performing again and to be the first production to perform after the big refurb."

The 10 reasons why

With renewal time fast approaching, you may be wondering what you actually receive as a NODA Member

1

Digital Resources

With our new look website, it is now even easier to find the information when you need it, including our helpful factsheets, NODA Safe, Long Service Award applications and Pantomime applications.

You can advertise your own productions, view your show reviews or just find out how to get in touch with your Regional Representative or Head office

2

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Protecting Amateur Theatre

Did you know that with NODA Membership you get discount on insurance through NODA Insurance?

Whether you are looking for society insurance or committee insurance, contact NODA Insurance today for a quote

T 01823 250 730 W www.nodainsurance.co.uk

3

noda
S A F E

NODASafe is run by people who understand theatre and have personal activity in the community theatre environment, so we know what pressures and challenges face NODA societies on a show-to-show basis.

Support includes - telephone and email support with production safety queries, general advice on all health and safety queries, dealing with serious accidents, generic risk assessments and coming soon will be online training

4

Legal Advice and DBS Checks

NODA provides extensive advice on a wide range of contractual issues and guidance on subjects that would benefit from the advice of a qualified solicitor who understands the specific requirements of amateur theatre. Email info@noda.org.uk with a clear description of the advice required.

DBS Checks - this helps societies make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with children. Contact Head Office for more information and DBS forms.

5

Regional Support

Each member society is allocated a 'Regional Representative', this person is your first point of contact for all things NODA. Alongside your Regional Representative is your Regional Councillor, they sit on the National Board of Trustees and 'head up' your region.

Each region has an AGM and awards. The awards vary from Best Production in the Region to Best Youth Performer. When your show is reviewed, it will automatically be entered into the competition for a Regional Award

6



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7

Long Service Awards

Celebrate your service to amateur theatre

NODA offers a superb and totally exclusive range of medals, bars, badges and certificates for your society to present to members, to show appreciation and to commemorate their years of service to amateur theatre. Visit our website for more information

8

NODA Theatre Summer School

NODA Theatre Summer School provides residential training to NODA members aged 18 and over using professional theatre practitioners. With competitive course fees and purpose built residential facilities you are guaranteed a fun packed week of top quality training, optional evening activities and plenty of time for socialising.

noda.org.uk/summerschool

9

National and Regional Awards

NODA's annual Programme and Poster Competition is a very popular competition for societies. Its purpose is to encourage high standards in programme and poster design.

Each region holds its own competition, using set criteria, with the winning entries then put forward to the national competition. Trophies for the winners and runners up of the national competition are currently awarded at the NODA AGM. For more information visit our website

10

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Corporate Partner

NODA works closely with some of the biggest companies in the theatre world to provide our members with that little bit of extra support when it is needed.

Partners include rightsholders, stage combat experts, ticketing systems, props and costumes

For a full list of all member benefits visit our website

noda.org.uk

Celebrating youth

In the summer edition of NODA Today, Rob Williams, the National Editor wrote an article asking what more can be done to encourage youths into theatre and once involved how best to support them. Several groups and individuals have since got in touch to tell us about how they as a society support, encourage or take part in youth theatre.

Gilbert and Sullivan in a week!

NODA East Midlands

PB Theatricals (PBT) was founded to give children and young people the opportunity to explore their creativity and confidence in theatre. We cast, rehearse and perform high quality Gilbert & Sullivan shows within a week. Common knowledge is that our director, Pamela Bilik, created the company in 2009. However, Pamela would be the first to admit that this isn't truly the case. PBT was really founded by a collective of parents and adults determined to achieve PBT's core aims. It is through their dedication and support that the group continues to thrive, allowing young people to get together each year for our production season.

A familial atmosphere is vital to the group's survival. Lifelong friendships have been formed at PBT rehearsals, meaning that each year is not only an opportunity to perform G&S but also to spend time together with old friends.

Currently, PBT performs around four shows a year with concentrated preparation for the new year beginning after our AGM in January. Our main season is dedicated to casting, rehearsing and performing within a week. From auditions on Saturday, we rehearse every day from 10-4 until the cast are ready to perform the following Friday.

Our shows this year were *HMS Pinafore*, (10-18) *The Gondoliers* (16-30) and *Rarest*

of all Rarities (Fringe show). *HMS Pinafore* is a great show for introducing younger children to G&S - full of fantastic chorus moments. This year we met a variety of younger kids, some of whom have never sung or performed at all. It was inspiring to see their transformation from shy children to performers with under a week of Pamela's direction.

Pamela takes care to listen to her cast and ensure they are being respected as equals. This is crucial for the chorus: a G&S show is only as strong as its chorus and Pamela takes the time to recognise this.

The longest standing members of the group have been performing and working with Pamela for ten years and we hope for many more to come:

"I've had a brilliant time with PBT in the last 7 years. It has fuelled my passion for singing and given me opportunities to sing both challenging and enjoyable roles as well as singing in the chorus. I've learnt so much about performing in general through doing these shows, and I've learnt valuable acting skills through Pamela's advice and help [...] I've made such good friends - it feels like a family! That atmosphere and family feeling is the reason we all come back every year (as well as our love for performing Gilbert and Sullivan)" -

Emily Callow (18)



The joy of younger members in our society

NODA East Midlands

Ruth Palmer, Director of the Stamford Gilbert and Sullivan tells us how her group has got youngsters involved in G&S.

Stamford Gilbert and Sullivan Players are a friendly, talented group but, as with many G&S societies, getting young people involved in productions is often easier said than done!

Most groups are usually made up of rather more mature members who probably discovered their love for G&S whilst in a school production and so have been performing it for many years. Nowadays G&S is less known by school aged children and therefore is to them as yet 'undiscovered'.

We tried valiantly over the years to reach out and encourage young people but this was to no avail (even for 'Pirates' which we thought would appeal to boys and girls alike!) - we had no replies whatsoever! But one day a young man joined whose wife ran a local dance school and so started the introduction of a few new young members. Initially involved as dancers, as show week approached we could see them becoming more and more involved and singing along with the chorus numbers - a wonderful thing to behold! We then realised that, once they have experienced one show, they too fall in love with G&S, are keen to stay on for more and pass their enthusiasm onto their friends.

We now have a regular group of younger members - girls and boys. We have appointed a youth representative who can voice any ideas, thoughts or concerns at committee meetings. She is also unofficially in charge of 'looking after' any new young members.

"I went and watched the Stamford G&S Players every year from the age of 6, and loved every single moment of it. So, when I had just finished my GCSE's it only seemed right to join. I came into a group of adults as one of the first children they had ever had, and was accepted instantly - everyone took me under their wing. The Players have helped me to grow into the person I am today. Without the society, I would not have the social skills I now have or the ability to talk to different age groups maturely. During rehearsals I get treated as an equal to all the other members. Show week is the most exhilarating week of the year. We all join together to make the show the best it can be! I love G&S because it is classic and good for all ages. It has opened up so many doors for me and will forever be a massive part of my life as it has already been for 13 years. I look forward to performing in *Iolanthe* this October, and hopefully in our next year's show

too. G&S has sculpted my life and shall continue to do so!"

Elizabeth (18), our youth representative who is playing Celia this year.

We are very fortunate to say that for our next show *Iolanthe*, all our Principals are the correct age for their parts.

I feel, as a past lead soprano and now Director, that it is up to **us** as the more experienced performers, to allow these youngsters to have their chance. These talented and enthusiastic youngsters are the light of the future and without exception are as keen and passionate about being on stage as our stalwart members. They bring a breath of fresh air and vitality to the wealth of experience already on stage in our productions, proving that Gilbert and Sullivan **is** great fun for all ages - even in these modern times!



Helping young people

NODA Scotland

At Larbert Amateur Operatic Society (LAOS) we know the value and benefits of encouraging young people in the study, performance and appreciation of music and drama. Due to the generosity of one of our members, we have been able to set up a fund that young people in LAOS can use to attend courses and training in drama. This fund is called The Jim Nicol Fund for Young People.

Jim Nicol was a loyal and trusted member of LAOS for over 50 years. We are still very sad at his passing in February 2019. Jim was an active member of our company and a rock solid supporter as he always wanted the best for LAOS. Jim was someone who would take time to welcome new members of the society and made sure that they felt at ease. People bring many qualities to a company and amongst Jim's there was honesty, integrity, loyalty and generosity. His generosity was demonstrated when he donated the fund to LAOS as part of his 70th birthday celebrations. We feel honoured that Jim chose to donate to LAOS and help our young people.



The first recipient from the fund was Jennifer Brisbane to help her attend NODA Summer School. Jennifer also received a National Bursary from NODA.

"I am so grateful to have been given the opportunity to attend NODA Summer School, thanks to the Jim Nicol Fund. Jim was an amazing member of Larbert Opera and I'm so happy that he provided the company with a young members' fund, which allows young adults, like myself, to learn from new experiences. NODA Summer School was one of the best experiences I've had, learning new



acting and singing techniques, meeting wonderful and insightful tutors whilst feeling like a part of a family, the amazing NODA family! I can honestly say, that trying out Summer School was one of the best choices I could have made. I hope to make this part of my summer each year!"

We're so delighted that Jennifer had such a great time at NODA Summer School and that she can bring all her experience back to LAOS. We hope that many more of our young people take up this opportunity in the years to come.

Youth development

NODA Scotland

As part of their future development Livingston Players have been bolstering their numbers by taking a foray into youth productions. This is the third year of the project and so far they have produced *Les Misérables* in 2017, followed by *Grease* in September 2018 and *West Side Story* this year. They have a core number of youth members who have appeared in all three productions with a steady stream of new members adding to the group dynamic. The youth members have also appeared along with the adult members in the main musical productions and plays as well as the Players' *Showstoppers Concert Party* and a fundraising event for Guide Dogs Scotland.

Year on year production costs are increasing and the youth members have thrown themselves into fundraising. They have bag packed and walked and performed in a gala day parade to name but a few. They are already planning more events to raise funds for the next production – even though it's not been decided yet – a flash mob in the local Morrisons being one of their ideas. It is important that the Players continue to support and nurture the youth members



to sustain the viability of the company and three of the youth members have volunteered to be the "voice of the youth" at their committee meetings. They have learned a great deal so far and now have a realisation of the actual cost of a production. Maybe there's a future President or Treasurer there in

the making! They are keen to fill the theatre for their next show and have been canvassing their audience during the run of *West Side Story* to gain a feel for what their audiences want. Hopefully they will choose a great show and continue to wow the audiences of West Lothian.

A Letter from a NODA Today Reader

Greetings, NODA and NODA Today Magazine readers.

I do not pretend to be a very active or major 'player' in the world of NODA or amateur theatre. I have directed big musicals and pantomimes for NODA member societies in the West Midlands, and even been nominated for my productions, once Best Musical, once Best Play and once (winner!) Best Pantomime. But it is no secret amongst friends and family that my greatest passion is helping youngsters to love the theatre and participate in performance. My own children had drama and dance classes when they were young - not forced by us, but choosing to do so amongst the other sporting and social activities we offered them all those years ago. They both went successfully into professional show-business, one into television and theatre, from which she has since 'retired' gaining a degree and becoming a teacher, the other staying put, now Musical Director of several touring shows, including a big panto once a year and also touring the world with a Led Zeppelin tribute band! Not your average NODA-type shows. They are both now in their 40s.

Almost by default I formed The Festival Players in Evesham a few years ago, after I had been asked to tutor some teenagers for LAMDA Solo Acting qualifications. I carried on tutoring them, and then a few more each year, until I had some doing Bronze (Grade 6) as well as Silver and Gold (Grades 7 and 8). These exams not only allowed me to help youngsters love the spoken word, Shakespeare and modern stuff, but gave them additional UCAS points (helpful when applying for college or university) when they passed the exams, which they did with some pretty good results. (This year I entered eight at those three levels; all passed way above the basic pass mark, and six gained Distinctions). At the same time I had wanted to perform a play rather than a big musical (which as a small - teenage - group we could not afford) and so about eleven years ago set about performing *The Canterbury Tales* (NODA nominated), *Treasure Island*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and, fulfilling a life-long ambition to direct, *A Man for All Seasons*. So, The Festival Players was born with the emphasis on using young people, although at that time not exclusively so.

Having started tutoring for LAMDA exams, so along came the idea to perform

the LAMDA pieces for parents or others under the banner of The Festival Players. I created an evening of some thirty monologues in 2014. This was based on the centenary of the start of World War One, with plenty of *Henry V*, as well as letters from servicemen and soldiers dating back to the Napoleonic wars. We topped the evening off with an half-hour episode of the much-loved sitcom, *Porridge*, just to make it publicly appealing if nothing else, and with the blessing of the writers Dick Francis and Ian La Frenais. It was huge success with the youngsters and their families. It was also (the very reason for writing this) so easy to produce and present. No scenery, virtually no costume, no royalties; just a semi-circle of teenagers hugely proud of their ability to deliver Shakespeare, other monologues and comic lines, and performed on a mini-tour of four or five local towns.

Alongside that exercise I persuaded these young people to go and see the best in acting and theatre; we are only 40 minutes from The Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford upon Avon, and I have to say that they, as a group, simply can't get enough of it, especially when I can arrange tickets for less than £10 (front row stalls!). I also 'fixed' it for some to meet the actors on occasions. In 2017 the group (always changing as some get older and leave and some join in - although never more than a dozen or so, which is why I am not a major 'player' in the world of NODA) asked if we could do a complete Shakespeare play, so we chose Shakespeare's shortest and funniest, *The Comedy of Errors*. Now we did need some scenery and costumes but it is amazing how two identical wigs and two identical costumes - times 2! - can create two sets of twins. It went down a storm, again in four different venues locally, one night each. This year they asked for an Agatha Christie mystery, and so *And Then There Were None* was rehearsed, alongside GCSE's and A Levels, and alongside LAMDA exam preparation. That production has just finished its local four-town tour to considerable acclaim.

This time, an entire set (self-made, not hired), props, furniture and costumes had to be loaded into a transit van, constructed and de-constructed every night for four separate performances. What these kids did not learn about rehearsing, acting, theatre-craft, touring, different audience reactions, and stage management was ... well, who knows?

They loved it, they were exhausted, and it went down a storm, actually making more money for the group than we had ever had before. And, something I am most proud of; they ran the show. They built it at 2.00pm in each venue (including for the Dress); they learned exits and entrances, backstage labyrinths in each venue, I did the pep-talk and voice warm-up about 6.00pm and then I took my place in the audience at 7.30. After the curtain came down they struck it, loaded it all in the van, (within 35-40 minutes) and were taken home, because only one out of the dozen or so involved is old enough to drive! I was so pleased, and their parents were glowing with pride.

So, that's my contribution to helping young people to love the theatre. A small group with never more than a four-figure sum in the bank (and seldom that much); as many visits to see the very best that theatre has to offer as we can afford; some concentrated tuition to get useful qualifications and a wonderful bunch of youngsters who gain in confidence and self-esteem, knowledge and stage-craft which will stand them in good stead for any future role (show-biz or not) or job interview they go for. Already at least one young man who went for a college interview recently astonished the tutors by knowing the plot of several abstruse plays which the tutor thought they might never have heard of, and even knew a speech from one of them! I love the theatre; I enjoy encouraging young people to love the theatre and above all enjoy helping them to achieve minor successes in performance and acting qualifications.

And just for fun, as a bonus, apart from trying to introduce them to professional actors occasionally, I persuaded Mr George Asprey, an actor of some renown, who is starring in the West End of London at the moment, playing Scar in Disney's *The Lion King*, to provide the mysterious voice in the Agatha Christie play we have just done, which pleased the youngsters no end - especially as he sent them a video Instagram message on the day of their first performance, recorded backstage at The Lyceum theatre in London, in his Scar costume!

Sincerely,
Eric Jones

Where do you hire your costumes from?



Costumes: one of the most important departments that causes some of the biggest headaches when putting on a show! Here at Petersfield Youth Theatre, our hiring wardrobe is open for schools, youth theatres and anyone putting on a show to share our 30 year collection. We are renowned for our large ensembles of the same costume in matching or contrasting colours which enables you to design your show around the great choice of costume sets available. As youngsters come in all shapes and sizes, our age range is from 5 years to adult – we often hire to adult companies so have the complete range.

Over the years we have costumed most of the popular musical theatre shows, and some have a completely individual take on the traditional. Our *Cats* costumes are of particular interest to youth groups, designed around a boiler suit, they are very effective and flattering for all involved. We also enjoy the challenge of putting a wardrobe together for original or not so well known shows. We pride ourselves on making our costumes as authentic as possible – from the *Les Misérables* and *Oliver* set that take on the weight and dirt of Victorian England, to the *Wizard of Oz* set that has the bright innocent look for the yellow brick road.

We are always happy to discuss your requirements but best of all we encourage you to come and have a look at the breadth of choice available. Our costume hire charges are very competitive as we want to share our collection with as many groups as possible.

Petersfield Youth Theatre,
2a Heath Road, Petersfield, Hants GU31 4DU
01730 266730
thewardrobe@pyt.org.uk

ADVERTISING FEATURE



Wide range of London theatres receive small grants from Theatres Trust

Eleven theatres receive funding from the Theatres Trust London Small Theatres Grants Scheme for projects that improve operation, access and environment for staff, artist and audience.

Hampstead's pub theatre, Pentameters, will undertake urgent electrical works which will protect this well-loved local theatre – this grant is the first the venue has ever received.

The Coronet Theatre will be able to provide induction loop facilities for the hearing impaired as it upgrades its sound system; and the King's Head Theatre, will be able to ensure its new venue is as accessible as possible.

While Matchstick Piehouse, a new 60-seat railway arch theatre, will improve the flexibility of its auditorium with extra sound proofing and rigging positions – this work will also reduce the risk of noise complaints from neighbours; 2Northdown, a testing ground for comedians expanding from stand-up, will install a permanent stage allowing artists the facilities to present this art form more theatrically. Bernie Grant Arts Centre London

The Bernie Grant Arts Centre, in Tottenham, will ensure the safety of its visitors by installing improved security systems, and those attending the Pleasance Islington and Studio 3 Arts will benefit from upgraded heating and cooling systems.

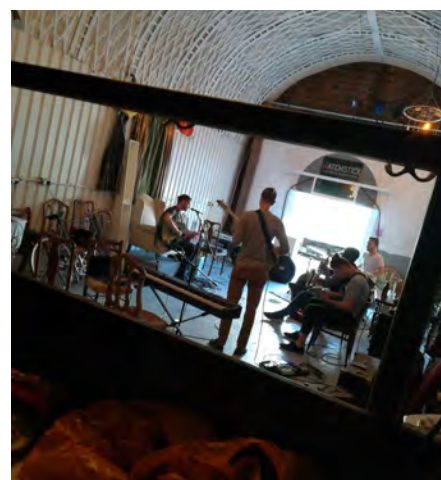
Greenwich Theatre will enhance its new studio space for small-scale productions by installing a new removable rostra platform and creating a new dressing room, so it can better support artists, staff and audiences at rehearsals and during performances; and The Playground Theatre, a converted bus depot which opened last year as a producing theatre, will enhance the functioning of the site with better external signage, working lights and theatre curtains.

Finally the Geoffrey Whitworth Theatre, a 150-seat amateur theatre will refurbish and upgrade its accessible toilets, after water damage from a leaky roof.

The Mackintosh Foundation and Fawn James at Soho Estates support our London Small Theatres Grants Scheme.



Geoffrey Whitworth Theatre



Matchstick Pie House

Does your theatre qualify?

The Theatres Trusts currently run three grant schemes that address improvements and urgent repairs to theatre buildings and welcome applications and enquiries from all eligible theatres. Visit theatrestrust.org.uk for more information

London Small Theatre Grants

The London Small Theatres Grants Scheme is a capital fund that awards up to £5,000 to small theatres in London which are undertaking building projects.

The scheme was set up following the London Assembly investigation led by Tom Copley AM into the challenges facing the capital's small theatres and its July 2013 report *Centre Stage: Supporting small theatres in the capital*.

Priorities include projects that address urgent building repairs, improve operational viability, introduce environmental improvements and enhance physical accessibility. The scheme can also be used to help lever in other sources of investment, particularly philanthropic support. Please note that applications for technical equipment and refurbishment of soft furnishings are a low priority for the scheme.

Theatre Improvement Scheme

Theatres Trust's Theatre Improvement Scheme, in association with the Wolfson Foundation, offers capital funding for theatres.

This is a three-year scheme, with funding each year being given to projects on a specific theme. The theme for the 2019 fund is Improving Environmental Sustainability.

Theatre operators anywhere in the UK can apply for grants of up to £20,000 towards their building or equipment as part of the scheme.

UK Theatres Grant Scheme

The UK Theatres Small Grants Scheme is a capital fund that awards up to £5,000 to theatres across the UK run by charities and not-for-profit groups that can clearly demonstrate the value capital improvements to their theatres would make to their work in local communities.

Priorities include projects that address urgent building repairs, improve operational viability, introduce environmental improvements, and enhance physical accessibility. Please note that applications for technical equipment and refurbishment of soft furnishings are a low priority for the scheme.



Final leg of the Presidential tour

On 28th September 2019 in Southport I passed the Presidential regalia to the 70th President of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association, Christine Hunter Hughes, after what can only be described by David and I, as a truly momentous year, and one we will never forget...not the miles we have travelled, the people we have met, nor the productions we have seen! We have been shown kindness, been greeted with such enthusiasm, and enjoyed the hospitality of individuals and NODA Societies throughout the UK and abroad. All of which has been mentioned in my previous articles, but which makes such an impression when it is constant.

One of the biggest joys of being the National President is hearing the background to youth groups and being able to speak to the youngsters personally after the performance. The range of shows we have seen them perform, and the talent within their ranks is mind-blowing. However, I have to say that the support they receive from the adult volunteers is so generous and unselfish, that many of them continue even after their own children have left the group. Even then, those young people who have moved on still come back to provide backstage or technical support – still wanting to be included in that wonderful feeling that being part of a show generates.

The lessons young people learn within their groups are not just about theatre (although they probably think so) but are life skills which help to equip them for their future, and which they will retain and put into practice on many occasions – perhaps not even realising it! It was to one of these youth societies – The Children's Theatre Company (CTC) from Needham Market, Suffolk, in NODA East – that I presented the President's Cup for their very original production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. I was delighted that Bridie Horne, the Principal was in Southport to receive it.

So, the 2018/2019 Presidential year is over, we have a couple of outstanding invitations to fulfil, but after that life will become a bit calmer, and we can pick up our personal life where we left and get to grips with a much-neglected garden. But now, apart from my heartfelt thanks, all I can say is...'come in number 69, your time's up!'

Jacquie Stedman
NODA National President 2018/19



Jacquie and Kevin



Boukers Theatrical - Blood Brothers



WEM Centenary Dinner



*CTC - JCS
Winners of the President's Cup*



*Zurich Comedy Club - Our friends
from Summer School*



Lowerstoft Players - Evita



Kidz R Us - Cats



Musical Youth Company of Oxford



Lowerstoft Players - Chitty Chitty Bang Bang



Watlington Young Performers - Aladdin Jar



Poole & Parkstone - Cheshire Cats



Axminster AGM



Whitty - It Runs in the Family



Kidz R Us - Wizard of Oz



Chelmsford AODS - Evita



Torquay OADS - Addams Family



Fusion - Chitty Chitty Bang Bang



Fusion - Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Good Call: Free Telephone Box Office Service



Don't leave your audience hanging on the line – dial-up TicketSource's exclusive telephone box office service and let their dedicated team handle your customers' calls.

From booking tickets to answering queries, TicketSource's service comes at no cost to their event organisers. A good call for individuals or organisations who don't have the time or facilities to manage a phone-line. Southwell Music Festival, an annual classical music festival in Nottinghamshire, switched their ticketing service provider to TicketSource in 2019. "We identified that telephone booking was a service our customers valued," explained Flynn Le Brocq, General Manager. "The additional telephone box office solution provided by TicketSource is a very important part of

our ticketing operations."

The service meets the needs of audience members who prefer to book over the phone. "Some of our customers don't like using the internet for purchases, and appreciate the opportunity to speak to a human," said Le Brocq. "We've had lots of positive feedback about TicketSource."

The customer service staff are friendly and helpful, and the call waiting times are short."

By transferring telephone bookings to TicketSource, the festival has eased the

pressure on its team. "We receive fewer queries to our help email address," noted Le Brocq. "We provided detailed notes to TicketSource about our venues and ticketing, which enables them to assist our customers efficiently."

"TicketSource offers a fantastic service for customers and event organisers," said Le Brocq. "We highly recommend them."

The telephone box office service is totally free for the event organisers. Customers choosing to book tickets through the telephone box office service pay a small additional fee of £1.75, which includes postage costs for printed tickets.

The service is available via a local rate telephone number and operates on Mondays to Fridays from 9.00am to 7.00pm (excluding bank holidays) and on Saturdays from 9.00am to 5.00pm. Calls received outside of these hours are managed on an answerphone and call back basis.

It's simple to request the free telephone booking service through the dashboard of your TicketSource event organiser account. Under the Account tab, select Telephone Box Office Settings and input your information.

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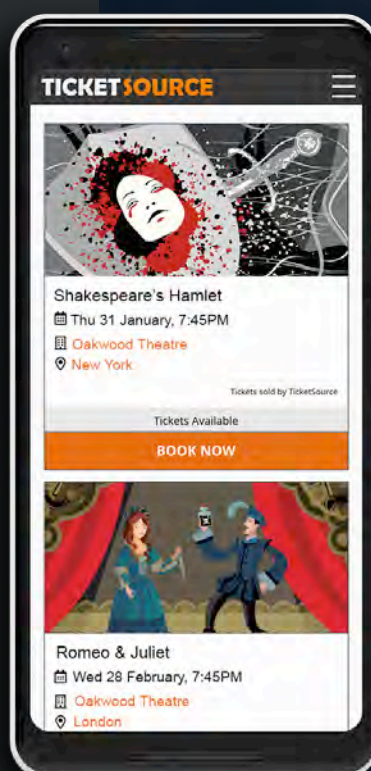
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Equality makes us shine

NODA West Midlands



Lollipop Youth Theatre is a not for profit Musical Theatre Company in Worcester providing opportunities for youngsters aged between 5 and 19 to shine. Holly Fields started Lollipop back in 2016 with 10 members performing to their parents. By 2017 Lollipop staged their first big musical *Back to the 80's* which was a mere hop, skip and jump to their hugely successful July 2018 performance of *Oliver!* at the Norbury Theatre Droitwich. What started as an aspiration to provide support for youngsters to fulfil their goals and dreams to perform, Lollipop now has 70 members, of which 60 were on stage in their 2019 production *The Wizard of Oz*.

This equal opportunities society enables youngsters to build their confidence, self-esteem and, that all-important, self-belief. Everyone is encouraged to give it a go, with two productions a year Lollipop share the magic of performance across one licenced musical and a concert. 2018's Winter Concert was a little different: the children wanted the audience to know that no matter what ability, background or appearance everyone is equal. A message we can all learn from and in today's society of equality.

Lollipop won National Lottery Funding to continue its work, and I for one, cannot wait to see what the members of Lollipop do next. To find out about this amazing theatre company go to lollipopyouththeatre.co.uk

Janine Graeme
West Midlands Regional Editor



South West welcomes new Youth Advisor

NODA South West



We all know how important Youth and their development is to the future of our art and we'd like to welcome Jo Wilson-Hunt as the new Youth Advisor for NODA South West.

Jo studied at Croydon College of Arts and the Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance (BA Hons Theatre Studies). She has worked as a Costumer, Production Manager, Director, Performer, as well as Choreographer for both professional and amateur theatre. After a time in Manchester working for SB Watts Costumers and a spell in wardrobes of the West End (The Really Useful Group, Croydon Dance Theatre) she returned to the South West. While running Taunton Area Young Peoples Theatre, she worked on a number of youth theatre projects with the National Theatre and RSC. She is now is Director of the McMillan Youth Theatre Club, Group and Theatre Company at the McMillan Theatre in Bridgwater and is about to begin another production with the National Theatre Connections Project for 2020. Jo is also a Tap Dance teacher for the lower school at Willow Tree Dance and Theatre Arts in Tiverton, Devon.

Jo is enjoying visiting societies and Youth Theatre Companies across the counties that encompass the South West region. Please do invite her to your youth societies and youth section performances, so she can appreciate the talent across the region.

The definitive guide to NODA Long Service Awards

NODA offers a superb and totally exclusive range of medals, bars, badges and certificates for your society to present to members, to show appreciation and to commemorate their years of service to amateur theatre.

Who can apply

The Awards are intended for those who, week after week, attend rehearsals or spend many hours on backstage or administrative work, and whose services are essential/indispensable to putting on shows. 'Occasional' service, e.g. just for a show week itself, does not qualify and generalised descriptions of duties such as backstage, f.o.h., programmes, tickets, committee, officer or helper are insufficient. The grant of Life Membership of a Society is NOT a qualification for a NODA Award, nor is any status which can be achieved by merely paying a subscription - such as 'Patron', 'Associate' or 'Hon. Member'. Receipt of any remuneration - but not refund of actual accountable expenses - disqualifies, and for this purpose remuneration includes gifts above a nominal value. Payment for services to the amateur theatre other than to the sponsoring societies, however, does not preclude the person from being given an Award. Any activity before the age of eleven does NOT qualify for consideration for NODA Long Service Awards.

We appreciate that some societies cannot afford or are allowed to due to their constitution to purchase awards for members. Whilst the applications will need to be made by the society, the individual is able to pay for the award themselves (or indeed someone else in the society).

How do I apply

Currently to apply, your society will need to fill in an application form, which is available on our website. You will need to provide details of the service given whether to you current society or to previous societies. Once signed off by your society, the form will need to be sent to your Regional Awards Secretary, who will confirm the details and sign off for delivery. NODA Head Office does not hold details of ongoing applications, for any queries please contact your Regional Awards Secretary.

By the beginning of 2020, the whole application process will be made digital, meaning applications and payments can be made via our website.

What if I don't qualify

Those who do not qualify for one of the Long Service Awards may be entitled to wear the **NODA COMMENDATION AWARD**, especially if they are in receipt of remuneration or do not serve amateur theatre on a weekly basis. Please note - 10 years' minimum service to amateur theatre is required before a nominee can be considered for this award.

Youth Awards

A Youth Award may be awarded from the age of 11 after a minimum of three years' service to a maximum age of 20 ie. the Award may first be presented at the age of 14.

A Youth Certificate may be awarded from the age of 5 for every three years of service to a maximum age of 20 ie. the Certificate may first be presented at the age of 8.



Long Service Medals

The most highly prized award in the world of amateur theatre is undoubtedly the NODA Long Service Medal, signifying 25 years of active and unpaid service, on stage or off.

Every subsequent five years of service can then be marked by adding a Silver Bar, culminating after 50 years of service with the Gold Bar, and after 60 years with the highly prestigious Diamond Bar.

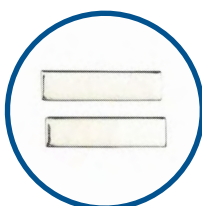
55, 60, 65 and 70 year pins are, as with all NODA medals and badges, hand crafted and manufactured to an extremely high standard, and these pins are fine examples of just that. They make a beautiful, quality gift for those with more than 50 years' service to amateur theatre and can be attached to existing 50 and 60 year medal ribbons.



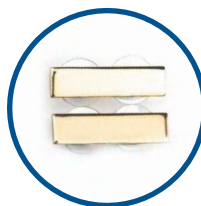
25 Year Long Service Medal



50 Year Long Service Medal with Gold Bar



Silver Bar



Gold Bar



Diamond Bar



55 Year Pin



60 Year Pin



65 Year Pin



70 Year Pin

Badges

Badges offer a more cost effective way to express gratitude to your long serving members.

Badges start from 10 years service all the way to 60 years. The application process is the same as a Long Service medal but at a much lower cost.



On both sides of the curtain



Georgea Daskalaki with Matthew Croke

When Georgea Daskalaki, a student at the London College of Music, entered The Prince Edward Theatre earlier this year she gave the magic lamp in the entrance a quick rub for good luck. However, during her interview, the PET team weren't interested in her stage experience, studies or attendance at NODA NE Youth Workshops. They wanted to know whether she could sell a programme or not!

Georgea had applied for a role in the front of house team to support her studies and because, as well as performing, she had supported her local NODA Society by helping front of house she had lots to talk about in her interview. The team were impressed that she had worked as a steward and helped to sell refreshments and programmes. Members of St Giles Panto Society were able to give glowing references of Georgea's strong work ethic and she got the job. A great way for someone studying the theatre to earn some (much needed) extra cash.

Whilst working at PET she also got to

spend time with the stars of the show, including Matthew Croke, whose own journey to the West End stage started in NODA North East. Matt performed at Sheffield City Hall with Manor Operatic Society and sent a good luck message for their panto programme last year (which, very fittingly, was Aladdin)! When the Aladdin run ended Georgea and all the team had a party and here she is snapped with Matt celebrating a great run.

Matt returned to the North East in September and performed his first solo show *This is Home* at Rotherham Civic Theatre and young people from Rotherham Theatrical Students Academy were included in the performance.

So whether you're selling programmes, performing with West End stars or you are the professional star of the show, you never know when your NODA Youth experience will come in handy!

Jo Sykes
Youth Adviser, NODA NE



Visit our website for up to date factsheets on

Children in Entertainment (England and Wales)
Child Protection Guidelines (Scotland)
Model Child Protection Policies
GDPR Privacy Policy for Children

We could have been anything that we wanted to be



The Ormskirk Civic Hall hosted the annual NODA North West Youth Workshop where children of all ages were invited to come along and learn skills from the stage. The children were split into three age groups and took it in turns to dance, sing and express themselves with their own written work on stage performing in front of the rest of the groups with the theme this year being based on *Bugsy Malone*. They were guided and supported by the wonderful talents of Gemma Briscoe, Liz Wainwright and David James Wall and organised by the North West Youth Advisor, Jenny King with assistance from District 6 rep, Jim Briscoe and our very own Regional Councillor (new NODA President by the time you read this!) Christine Hunter Hughes.



Mr Francis and the village of secrets

NODA Scotland



Rhona Mitchell, Director, MSD Productions, tells the story of a newly commissioned work performed by her company at The Lemon Tree Theatre in Aberdeen and Peterhead Community Theatre.

Mr Francis and the Village of Secrets is the first piece to be performed in this, the sixteenth, Garioch Theatre Festival. This brand-new play with music from award-winning playwright Alan Bissett with music and lyrics by Ashley Forbes was a brand new commission for North East Scotland in conjunction with Garidge Theatre and Aberdeenshire Council. The play tells the true story of Francis Lathom, a Gothic novelist mysteriously banished from England in 1810, who reappeared in Aberdeenshire fifteen years later under the guise of 'James Francis'. This hilarious, sometimes tragic play speculates about Lathom's past while turning a satirical eye to the religious hypocrisies of nineteenth-century Scotland.

Alan Bissett is a playwright, novelist and performer from Falkirk who lives in Renfrewshire. In 2012 he was named Glenfiddich Spirit of Scotland Writer of the Year and in 2013 was shortlisted for the Creative Scotland / Daily Record Literature Award. The plays which he has written and produced with director Sacha Kyle are *The Moira Monologues* (2009) and *More Moira Monologues* (2017), which was shortlisted for Best New Play at the Critics Awards for Theatre in Scotland (as was their play, *Turbo Folk*, in 2010), *Ban This Filth!* (2013), shortlisted for an Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award, and their play about ex-Pink Floyd frontman Syd Barrett, *One Thinks of it all as a Dream* (2016). The

short film which he wrote and narrated, *The Shutdown* (2009), won numerous awards at international and domestic film festivals. Alan's prose work includes four novels, including *Death of a Ladies' Man* (2009) and *Pack Men* (2011), both shortlisted for the Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust Fiction of the Year Prizes. He was short- or long-listed for the Macallan / Scotland on Sunday Short-Story Competition four years running between 1999 and 2002 and has also edited five anthologies of fiction. In November 2016 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Stirling for his contribution to Scottish culture.

Alan Bissett writes, "When Rhona first approached me about writing a play set in Inverurie I was initially stumped. I'd been there a number of times doing shows or school talks, but never long enough to find myself steeped in the place. What to write about?"

"My mind went back to my days as a student at Stirling University, way back in 1999. Professor David Punter of the

Department of English Studies had hired me as his research assistant to find out what I could about one Francis Lathom, a Gothic novelist from the late 18th century, who is only now remembered because one of the characters in the Jane Austen novel *Northanger Abbey* refers to him. Professor Punter, a Gothic scholar, had to know more about who this writer was. So off I went on his trail ...

"It turns out that Lathom was born in 1774 into an upper-class Norwich family, and found early fame as a novelist and playwright, before in 1810 being mysteriously banished from his home town and written out of his family's will. His children later reverted to their mother's maiden name.

"He seems to have travelled extensively around Europe and the United States thereafter, before finally settling in Inverurie, of all places, late in his life, where it is known that he dressed as a dandy, enjoyed a drink, told incredible stories, frequently burst into song, started a theatre company, and was abducted by a local magistrate in some dispute over



Backstage with Pyramid Theatre Management

NODA Wales & Ireland

rent which resulted in Lathom fleeing by horse to the Rennie family farm in Fyvie, where he resided for the rest of his life. After his death in 1832, he was buried in the Rennies' plot in Fyvie churchyard, under the name 'James Francis'.

"What a story! What a mystery! And barely anyone in Inverurie knows the first thing about this fascinating man who once lived in their own place. We had our play. We had our lead character. All we needed to do after that was speculate wildly. This play is the result of that speculation!"

I first saw Alan perform last summer in one of his own plays, and went on to read some of his novels. Having greatly enjoyed his writing, I thought he would make a very good fit as a writer for Inverurie and our cast. So I was thrilled when he agreed to the commission, and we were fortunate to be granted funding from Aberdeenshire Council towards the creation of a new piece for the North East of Scotland. With lyrics and music by Ashley Forbes, established as a superb contributor in the past, this project was going to be special.

To work directly with a writer of Alan Bissett's calibre and be part of the process as well as the final outcome is a very special experience. Through workshopping and improvisation sessions the cast has had input, gaining a real insight into how a professional writer works, as he pulls many strands together successfully, from their own ideas to the story of Francis Lathom and making this a piece in which they are all fully engaged. I'm very proud that we've been able to provide this opportunity and it should be seen as a real coup for the area, especially as it is so specific to our own place. It is strange that a piece set in 1820 has turned out to be one of the most contemporary pieces we've delivered.

We are all hopeful too that this will raise interest in a part of our local history which has been almost forgotten. To quote the Press and Journal from 1888: "Francis is buried in the Churchyard of Fyvie, in the grave next to his friends, the Rennies. That no monument is erected over the grave of such a personage is rather curious."

Rhona Mitchell, Director, MSD Productions



In these uncertain financial times, the need to budget shows appropriately is more important than ever. For many groups, after the orchestra/band, the scenery for their shows is the most expensive item on their budget sheet. This was no different last year for Abergavenny Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, with their *Oliver!* set coming in at a whopping £4500. It was very impressive mind you!

This cost got creative director, Matt Bryant (an accountant by day) and stage manager, Jon Vaughan, thinking about how they could save money for this year's production of *The Addams Family* without compromising on quality.

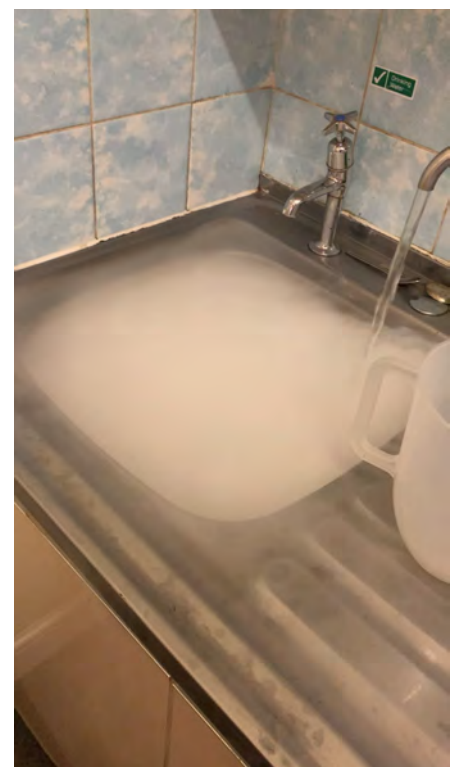
It is true that you can get a set for a fraction of the cost but the pair were convinced that 'you get what you pay for'. This summer, they set up 'Pyramid Theatre Management' and set about designing the set for AAODS's production.

With the help of Mike Robinson from Stage Lighting Services in South Wales and local carpenter, John Williams, they have designed a set which they feel is fit for the West End, never mind little old Abergavenny! It will be assembled in October, a week before the production, in situ at the theatre. Matt and Jon are no strangers to technical theatre, with Matt having worked on professional crews and winning NODA awards for his local technical work and Jon has stage managed many productions in Wales and Ireland's district 3 - himself picking up awards from NODA. Awards they are both very proud of.



The financial benefit to AAODS will be quite remarkable, with the final bill likely to be around £1800, a staggering saving on last year!

Together, the trio of Matt, Jon and Mike have also found a very special effect for this spooky musical production. Matt had a vision of wanting the drink at the end of Act One to smoke - looking amazing on stage whilst also keeping his young performers safe in the process. Mike sourced a product from a company called Chilli-stick (very helpful!) and Matt and Jon tested it, including in the theatre kitchen sink!



National Gala

After a very wet and long journey we arrived at the equally wet location of Southport, our venue for the National Gala and AGM Weekend. Lets face it AGMs are not exactly the most exciting of events to attend, but a necessity for charities such as NODA.

The weekend kicked off with the formal AGM, with Jacquie Stedman our outgoing National President presiding, joined by NODA Chairman of Trustees Michael Hastilow to complete the official business.

As is traditions the President of our sister organisation in Ireland (AIMS) Seamus Power provided some light hearted entertainment.

In Jacquie's final emotion address, she thanked all of the societies, Regional Representatives and Regional Councillors for making David and her so welcome at all of the shows and events through the year. It is a huge commitment to be NODA National President, thousands of miles travelled, the range of different shows watched, but Jacquie has shown this year as with all Presidents before her Amateur Theatre is definitely still alive in the UK.

This year the Presidents Cup was awarded to CTC in Needham Market for their youth production of Jesus Christ Superstar.

All that was left for the official handing over of the Presidential Regalia, starting with the appointment of the 2019-20 Vice President, Gordon Richardson . As is tradition, the Presidential Consort David Stedman, for the last time, removed the Presidential chain from Jacquie and 'installed' the chain onto our new National President, Christine Hunter Hughes.

After a few hours break it was time to celebrate, with a drinks reception to welcome our new President.

The setting for the Gala was somewhat of a grand nature, the Art Deco Floral Hall providing the beautiful backdrop to a wonderful evening.

In 1899 NODA was started by A.P. Bulfield, the musical director of Lancaster Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society, so it was only fitting that they provide the cabaret entertainment, performing numbers from previous shows, followed by The Tonkerers, fronted by NODA Scotland's Youth Advisor (who played still wearing his badge!)

The weekend certainly showed that the weekend is much more than a formal AGM, but a celebration of all things NODA, an organisation that relies on it's volunteers and members to enjoy their hobby but also to continue supporting each other for another 120 years.

Rob Williams
National Editor





Welcome to the bubble

Everything you need to know about the
NODA Theatre Summer School 2020

What is the NODA Theatre Summer School

Affectionately known as the “Bubble”, NODA Theatre Summer School provides residential training to NODA members aged 18 and over using professional theatre practitioners.

With competitive course fees and purpose built residential facilities you are guaranteed a fun packed week of top quality training, optional evening activities and plenty of time for socialising.

Who can attend?

Whether you are 18 or 70, NODA Theatre Summer School is open to all. As long as you are 18 years old or over and either a member of a NODA Society or an individual member of NODA you can attend. It does not matter how experienced you are all we ask is that you are willing to learn!

Where is it?

This year we will be holding the NODA Theatre Summer School at The Performance Hub @ Walsall Campus of the University of Wolverhampton.

What goes on?

The courses start on the Saturday evening with an introductory session to set you up ready for the coming week. Each day after breakfast is a student led warm up followed by a full day of classes. To round off your day you can relax and spend time socialising with other students. Two nights of the week, there will be taster evenings where there are a wide range of additional sessions offered by tutors. It's an opportunity to indulge in something you love or try something a little different. Regular evening social activities include quizzes and sing-a-longs. Finally Friday night it's time to party with your new friends at a themed evening with optional dressing up.

How do I go?

All you need to do is pre register on the NODA website so you have your online account set up and ready. The courses will all go on sale at Noon on 1st December 2019. You will need to pay a £100 deposit at the time of booking, this deposit is non refundable. One of the stipulations of attending Summer School is that you are either a member of a NODA affiliated society or you become a NODA Individual member. Whichever membership you have, you will need to be a member at the time of Summer School.

How much does it cost?

The cost of the 2020 NODA Theatre Summer School will be £660. This includes all food and accommodation for the week. It does not include drinks.

I would love to go but can't afford it

NODA offers students the opportunity to apply for a NODA Theatre Summer School Bursary. At the time of booking, click on the **Apply For A Bursary** button and fill in the application form. Applicants for a Bursary must still apply for a place at NODA Theatre Summer School and pay their deposit. Should you be unsuccessful in getting a Bursary and therefore cannot attend, your deposit will be refunded. This is the only situation under which deposits may be refunded. National Bursaries are worth £330 towards your course cost.

“It reignited
my love of
acting”



“I am immersed in a world
of like-minded people who
care about the important
things in life: theatre,
friendship and learning.”

Don't just take our word for it...



For all those of you considering if NODA Summer School is for you, I thought a few words from a NODA Summer School virgin might help you decide.

1) What is NODA Summer School? Well simply it's a one week school environment for adults who want to learn and improve their acting, singing, drama or technical skills with regard to amateur dramatics.

2) What will I learn? Well that very much depends on the course you chose. In 2019 there were 13 different courses to choose from. They included back to basics in singing or dance, through to set and prop making and design, to Shakespeare, to West End Musicals. If you wanted something slightly different there was the chance to learn how to be a Swashbuckler or creating, acting in and then editing a short Agatha Christie style murder mystery video.

3) What level of pre course skill or experience do I need? In most cases, no experience at all. Some courses do require some pre course preparation, but most simply need you to come prepared to work hard with a group of up to 26 people in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. The NODA web site lists both the courses and background info on the tutors so you have a good insight as to what will happen before you arrive.

4) What if I can't keep up with the other class members? First of all, don't panic. The organisers and tutors are very sympathetic. Courses are refined as the week progresses to ensure everyone learns something. Your fellow classmates will also work with you to

help you catch up. It all very friendly and not intimidating at all.

5) What if I choose a course and then find out, once I start, that it's not for me? Again, speak with the course organisers and your course lecturers. I was able to change my course after 2 days to one which would allow me to achieve what I wanted from the Summer School. The NODA committee want everyone to leave having learned something new, made new friends and helped you achieve your personal goals.

6) Is it all work and no play? Not at all. The social side is as important as the school sessions themselves. The courses are designed to be educational but also fun. Then after school, there are social events arranged on 4 nights with additional alternative taster sessions on the 2 other nights. However, you will find there are many student arranged 'not timetabled' after school events. These can often be the most fun of all but be prepared for these to happen late at night.

7) What do I need to do if I want to be a part of the 2020 School? Log onto the NODA web site and register at noda.org.uk

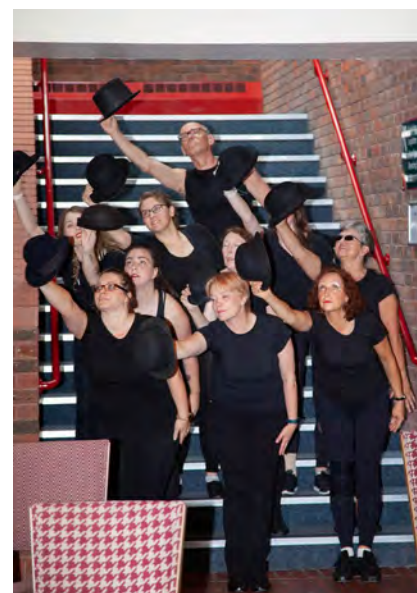
Do this before the registration starts which, for 2020, will be on or around 1 December 2019. The courses are usually announced during November. Having registered, you will be notified when the courses are announced. The 2020 school runs from 1st to the 8th August.

8) Is there financial help available? Yes there is. NODA offer a number of bursaries. You will need to apply

separately once your booking has been accepted. The bursary application has to be submitted no later than mid January. The bursaries are not means tested.

9) Is this something I will want to do year after year? I expect so. There were many members who had been multiple times. Some go every year, others when a course suits them or when they have the time available.

10) So should you consider going in 2020 or 2021? I would say 'give it a try'. The courses are varied so look carefully at what you want to do and consider courses where you will not only learn something useful to use in your future productions but also that you will find enjoyable. The school days are full on so be prepared to work hard. In return you will leave having learnt new skills and more importantly made great new like-minded friends. ★





Sixty years of Age and Still Learning, thoughts of a Summer School First-timer

I had wanted to go to Summer School for quite a few years, but something always got in the way. However, in 2018, I put the 2019 Summer School dates on the calendar nice and early. When the booking opened, I was in New Zealand and getting an internet signal and being awake at the right time was a struggle ... however, a few text messages and emails later and help from the wonderful people at NODA HQ and I found myself booked on the course “Shakespeare - Pure and Simple” to be run by Michael Corbridge from the RSC ... the journey had begun!

I have read several reports of NODA summer school over the years and every article informed me what a welcoming, exciting, inclusive, fun place it was to attend. This led me to think that it might be a bit like the New York School of Performing Arts from Fame, with dance students dancing on the cars in the car park, and people bursting into song in the cafeteria or, probably, it may be more academic, with drama students walking around with piles of plays and papers, singing students going through endless voice exercises and dancers complaining of aching bones.

It has all been said before, but everyone was so welcoming – from the lady in the car park standing in the pouring rain with her umbrella, showing new arrivals where to go, to the reception desk, to the staff and volunteers just being friendly and pleased to see everyone arriving.

Following informative chats from Jacquie (Summer School Chairman) and Sarah (Summer School Director – and past tutor for 10 years), dinner showed me what a varied, scrummy feast I would be tucking into over the week; and the

course Introductory Session introduced me to my fellow students and to Michael Corbridge, who is probably the most learned, funny, non-academic, generous teacher I have ever met. His passion for helping people improve is paramount, and I can't wait to use the “toolbox” he gave me, full of ideas, tips and exercises. A drink in the bar at 9pm with some fellow students to chat over the day and get to know each other and then off to bed....

The next 6 days at Summer School were packed full: classes, extra optional courses on 2 nights, a Quiz Night, a Ceilidh and a Film Night, plus partying on The Orient Express on the final night. Everyone will experience it differently, but the important thing is that you are allowed to do it in your own way with no judgement. My 6 days were full of a delightful absorption of knowledge, with time to think about what you were learning, with someone on tap to question. I may not have partied until the early hours, but I made friends from all over the country that I hope to keep in contact with and certainly see again at Summer School.

So, there wasn't any dancing on cars, or impromptu singing in the cafeteria (although I think there was probably some in the bar late at night, certainly during the Singalong-a-Phil evening), but the Friday afternoon Showcase, where some of the performing groups gave everyone a taste of the other courses, gave a little taste of Fame. You could tell that everyone had enjoyed their time in The Bubble, experiencing it in their own way and taking away memories that will last a lifetime.

My only regret? That it took until I was 60 before I went to Summer School. ★

This year marks my third NODA theatre summer school and I can honestly say that the experience has been life changing. It's hard to describe the brilliance of summer school (‘the bubble’) to anyone who hasn't had the pleasure of experiencing it but imagine it like this - a place where you can be completely yourself, supported by the most passionate and inspiring tutors, and surround by friends that feel like family.

Six years ago my Mum attended her first summer school course ‘Directing Youth Theatre’ in preparation for a show that she directed for the youth theatre that I was in at the time. After coming back with such wonderful stories of her week I was desperate to go to the bubble but was encouraged by Mum to wait for a course that I really wanted to do. Three years later and NODA advertised their ‘Musical Theatre in Performance: Wicked’ course, and I knew it was the one! After that I've never looked back. Each week at summer school brings tears and times where I wonder why I put myself through the experience, but also laughs, pride in the achievements of each person in my group, increased confidence in my own abilities and a restored faith in the fact that incredible, supportive and accepting people are out there.

‘There's a place where you don't have to feel unknown, and every time that you call out you're a little less alone’ - Dear Evan Hansen

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

This year was my 10th summer school, I was on the directing musical theatre course for the 2nd time, I learnt a lot more this time than I did the first time round. I learnt how to research a musical and how to unit some text. I would like to direct a musical for my society one day.

NODA summer school is an amazing experience and I always get asked why I keep going back? I say I can't explain it you just have to experience it!

I always say NODA summer school is like a drug you keep wanting more. ★



You will never regret it!

In the summer I took part for the first time in NODA Summer School to learn how to direct musical theatre. It was with trepidation that I drove down the M6 in torrential rain. I was on my own and knew no one who would be there. On top of this, I was aware I was only a back stager and dressed always in black. Would I be able to fit in with experienced theatrical performers, choreographers and those who had already tried directing?

Our first class was on the Saturday evening after arrival and my heart sank. My class were all experienced theatrical performers, choreographers and those who had already tried directing and I just crumpled into my seat. Even as a gregarious extrovert, I believed there was no way I would fit in with this group, or more exactly, into their world. I felt I knew nothing; had never really acted and was beginning to doubt I could direct when on that first evening we looked at what a massive responsibility directing was and what a mammoth job, when broken down into all its parts.

My week at NODA Summer School changed all that.

We bonded as a class really quickly. Breakfast on the Sunday morning was the only meal I had alone (not easy for an extrovert!). After that, a group of us from the class would sit together at every meal and laugh ourselves through the day. This really helped us to feel comfortable with each other.

In addition, the work in class really helped us to connect. Every class started with warm up exercises, which really do serve to break down barriers! As well as this we worked with two scripts: Marvin Hamlisch's *Sweet Smell of Success* and *A Little Night Music* by Sondheim. We started by dealing with

the script; researching the context; developing themes to be used in staging; activities to help actors deliver lines and to help the ensemble to create characters. All this work led to us directing an excerpt from one of the two studied musicals, chosen by the class tutor, and then being critiqued by the class and the tutor.

This meant, of course, that I had no choice but to act and perform, for the others to be critiqued in my directing. It has always been a huge dream of mine to act and the older I have got, the more I have been afraid to try, because I did not want to find out I could not do it. My best friend kept telling me to just let go – you've got to let go. My first part was from Sondheim and I had no choice whatsoever but to let go and it was glorious. My classmates were so encouraging when I did eventually perform and I loved it. In terms of the directing, I learned many lessons, from being directed myself and through actually directing.

The week completely transformed me. I feel confident now to audition and I am very excited to be trusted enough one day to direct a show. I cannot wait to get an opportunity to do both.

The week ended up with a themed night. There are many social evening events throughout the week. We were all sitting outside partaking in a beverage. My new friends were very reluctant when I suggested we should act out the whole of *Les Mis*. So I totally disregarded them and cast the parts. That ended up with them singing a few of the well-known numbers, and lots of others joining in, and we ended with a performance of "One Day More." It was such a success, they renamed it *Les Liz* and we will be adding to the performance at next year's summer school. If you want to be part of it, sign up to next year's Summer School. You will never regret it!

This year, I took the plunge and went to my first NODA Summer School; and I'm so glad I did!

What a wonderful experience it was!

Although, like many others, I arrived in torrential rain, my enthusiasm was not dampened even if my clothes were! I was greeted with a warm welcome, assistance with registration and very helpfully shown around to get my bearings. Needless to say, I felt at home in no time.

The icing on the cake was the final afternoon when we demonstrated what we had learned during the week, and all made special by the way we had all cried, laughed and supported each other on our enlightened journey.

To be amongst so many talented and inspired people was in itself a pleasure but the standard of teaching made it an outstanding experience. It will be no surprise to learn that is almost certainly my first of many NODA Summer School attendances. Thank you to the organisers and to my amazing 'classmates'. I hope to see you all again,"

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This is my second year at NODA summer school, this year doing set building and prop making. Matt (the tutor) was brilliant, both with the course content, and with the different levels of experience – from those who haven't used much more than a screwdriver, and those who's day job is carpentry. We made a properly built example flat with (hand-cut) mortice and tenon joints; we carved props from expanded polystyrene (the room looked like Narnia at the end). We used power tools such as routers, jigsaws and track saws to make a French brace. In small teams we made a rostra.

The environment at summer school means that A) the out-going become more so, and B) the more reserved of us become less so.

However, many of us become one big family, affectionately known as the bubble, where hugs (for those who are comfortable) are commonplace and friendships are made.

It is a great opportunity for amateur dramatic societies to network, and to get suggestions and advice from other students and tutors.

courses

Musical Theatre

Life is a Circus *for Dancers and Singers*

Forgotten Musicals *for Actors and Singers*

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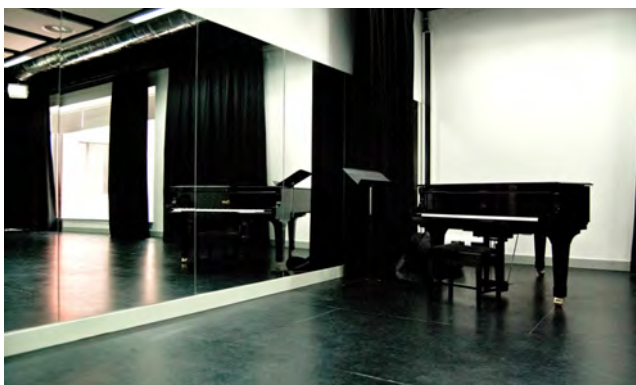
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The show must go on

NODA North



When 13-year-old Freya Graham went to Norway on a school trip in early March, she was looking forward to having a break prior to returning to rehearsals for Spennymoor Youth Theatre Group's concert in July. Sadly, whilst there, she began to show flu-like symptoms which soon developed into fits, hallucinations and a loss of control of the right side of her body. Freya was quickly rushed to the nearest hospital in Bergen, where she later lost all mobility. She was left unable to talk or swallow, leaving her in a 'locked-in' syndrome and sadly, a poor prognosis. A little improvement saw her medically flown back to a specialist hospital in

Newcastle, where she began a new treatment for Encephalitis. Freya slowly improved under the new treatment and, despite still being unable to talk or walk, was determined to re-join her friends in SYTG.

Upon being released from hospital, Freya immediately returned to rehearsals and worked privately each Sunday with friend Megs Defty. Eventually, Freya defied all the odds and made a glorious comeback in SYTG's July concert, even dancing and singing a couple of solo songs, proving the classic adage, "the show must go on". Freya continues in her recovery.

NODA helps bring new writing to the stage

NODA South East

Henry, a Tudor Musical began when Tess Townsend and her composer husband, Alan, heard a version of "Stars Still Shine" by their friend Tony Carson. Tess was mesmerised by the ballad, and a journey began. "It was like a jigsaw," says Tess "we looked at the 6 Tudor marriages, 3 births, beheading and politics and found our favourite bits".

They felt that there must be more to Henry VIII than a womanising despot and wanted to explore his feelings and conscience. "The guys wrote song after song, I wrote dialogue and some lyrics. Bit by bit, like ink flowing from a quill, the work began to take form."

Henry's Fool, the narrator, provides access to the Tudor streets, the Court and even into the King's private thoughts. The role is arguably the best in the show.

Using a flexible and inclusive cast of 17-70 the show works for clubs, schools and drama societies of all sizes. Handmaids double as Queens and Henchmen double as Politicians so everyone can find a role!

Bob Harvey-Jenner directed the première at The Barn Theatre. News spread quickly, and the run sold out, with David Packer, advisor on the RSC's Wolf Hall/Bring up the Bodies, commenting "I saw the show in the company of five colleagues, all heritage professionals with decades of experience of telling the story of Henry VIII. The first thought was that the show deserved to be put before a wider audience. I, for one, hope that this will be the case."



Four years later Molesey Musical Theatre were brave enough to back work by unknown local writers, and the run was dedicated to Alan, who died in 2016. Given the quality of the member's voices and the skill of MD, Liz Cooper, Tess and Tony wrote two new songs including a new opening ensemble number "Shout Hooray!" The show got scored for 11 instruments, and MMT won NODA's Best New Show 2018.

Professional reviewer "Everything Theatre," wrote "Whilst amateur in name, there is enough to elevate this above that title. Lyrically it hits the right notes with its good humour, 'Where's Henry' being a superb full cast outing. The duet between Henry and Anne of Cleves is as funny as anything you might see elsewhere. Its a perfect example of why regional amateur theatre is alive and well and deserving of attention."

The NODA accolade was more than the writers could have dreamed of, yet the show continues to evolve. A Darlington company are currently in rehearsal for a tour of 8 shows in Spring 2020 and shortly the show pitches for a place at BEAM 2020, a showcase designed for professionals seeking new British musicals to develop and stage.

"It is great that two NODA groups have taken a chance on an unknown piece. We are so grateful to everyone who's been involved in the journey so far. Next step - Hampton Court Palace, perhaps?"



Author's Surprise for Cast

NODA North East



Derek Webb (front right) with Director Craven and members of LIDOS

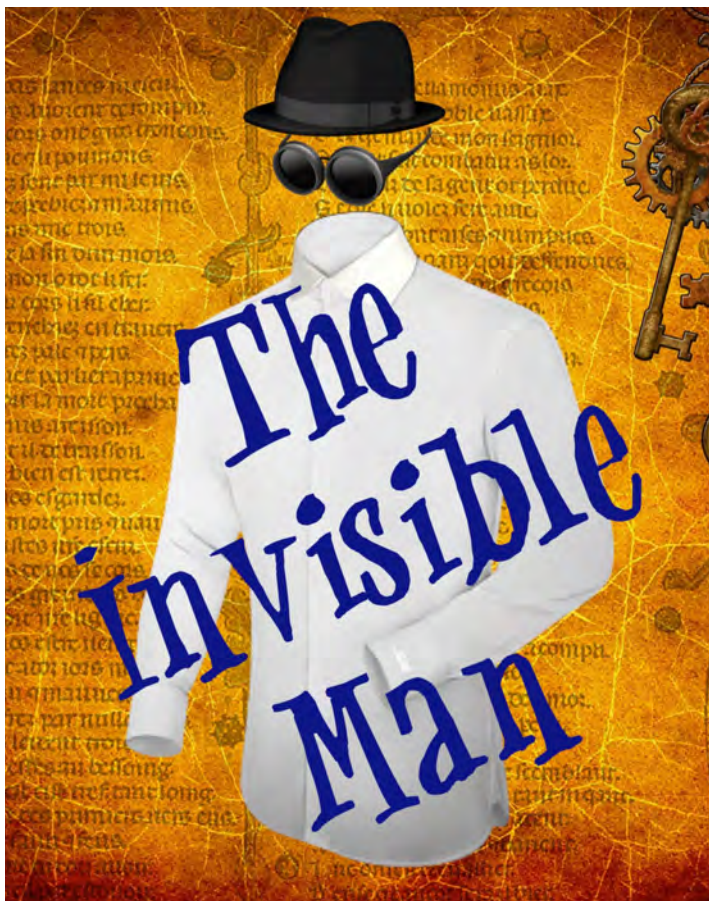
The cast of the recent sell out LIDOS production of *Call Me Dusty* had the surprise of their lives when the writer of the play, Derek Webb, and his family

travelled from South Wales to Leeds to see the production.

Call Me Dusty tells the story of Dusty

Springfield, the best female vocalist the UK has ever produced. Director Bryan Craven, who arranged the visit, said "I thought it was best not to tell the cast the author was in the audience. It would have only caused them even greater stress." They only found out at the end of the play, when Derek was introduced along with NODA Regional Rep, Christine Castle, and Councillor, Les Smith. Jane Collins, who played Dusty said "Amazed and completely surprised when we were introduced to Derek Webb. Loved that he enjoyed it and thought I got Dusty's sensitivity and fire".

Derek Webb, as well as writing this play, is also the author of the very popular series of Agatha Crusty plays. Derek said on Twitter, "Caught *Call Me Dusty* by LIDOS in the Carriageworks Theatre in Leeds last night and what a terrific production it was too – a wonderfully true performance by Jane Collins as Dusty with an excellent supporting cast, great crew and direction by Bryan Craven. Well done one and all"



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derekwebb.co.uk

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The biggest risk is not taking any risk

NODA North West



In 2017 Manchester Musical Youth took a real gamble on performing a show that had previously flopped on Broadway and was a much lesser-known show of the musical masters Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schonberg. They had performed *Les Misérables* the previous year and won the district Best Youth Production, so felt inspired to do another of their shows, *The Pirate Queen*.

Musical Director Kimberly Holden continues the story: “We had the principal cast round to our house to work on their characterisations on Good Friday, and I remember getting absolute goosebumps as they had all totally researched their characters and had incredible insights and ideas as to how they would like to portray them. This prompted me to contact MTI (who we had our rights with) to ask them if they could invite Boublil and Schonberg to watch our version of this show that we had all fallen in love with. It was a long shot, but worth a try.”

“Rehearsals started, and before we got into any of the scripts, we held workshops in sword fighting, rhythm work with large oars and Irish dancing. These added to the members’ experiences incredibly, and they gained so much from this. Our stage fighting teacher was Kenan Ali, a highly regarded fight choreographer from the

North West and our Irish dance teacher was an ex Spirit of the Dance member who had been on tour with Michael Flatley, Lindsey Alexander.”

“The major stumbling block was there were no sets available of this show. We had a clear vision of what we wanted and so my husband Dave, together with our stage manager Ellie Whitfield and director Dan Jarvis designed a set, which Dave and Ellie built along with some guidance with a lady called Meriel from the Royal Exchange. A daunting, but totally rewarding task and the set looked amazing!”

Then, on Thursday, May 22nd, 2017, tragedy struck as a bomb was detonated at the Manchester Arena just as people were leaving an Ariana Grande concert.

“The bombing at the arena directly affected many of our members who were there or had family/friends there. We felt compelled to do something, and so we requested permission to change the lyrics of ‘Sail to the Stars’ (granted by Boublil and Schonberg) and a recording studio in Manchester allowed us to use their studio for the day. Musicians gave their time freely, and we recorded this song with members from our youngest group, MMY Apprentices, main group MMY

and older group MMY Graduates. It went on sale and proceeds were given to the Manchester charity.”

“We heard back from MTI. Boublil lives in America and so couldn’t come and watch. Schonberg was on tour with *Miss Saigon* at the time of the show and couldn’t come either. BUT..... HE WAS WILLING TO COME AND DO A THREE-HOUR WORKSHOP WITH OUR CAST!!!

Once I’d crawled down from the ceiling (my husband heard my screams from the other side of the house!), we quickly found a date and booked in the legend that is Claude-Michel Schonberg to work with our cast.

On an afternoon in June, he arrived at the station (I collected him), and he came to Z-arts and worked with the children for three hours. He was incredibly inspiring, and the children loved him. He showed such insight into his work, and as a Musical Director, I learned so much about how he wanted the music played, the tempo changes and even tweaks of notes whilst he was with us. He signed everything for the children (and an oar for us!), and as he left, he kissed me on both cheeks and said, ‘thank you for bringing my music back to life’.”

Can't Stop The Beat!

NODA London



Since 1975, Ilford Operatic and Dramatic Society (IODS) has been fortunate enough to perform at the Kenneth More Theatre in Ilford, with all its professional facilities and support. When it suddenly became known in March 2019 that the KMT was under threat of closure following the loss of all subsidy, a title for our Centenary Concert on July 7th 2019, which had been in preparation for well over a year, suddenly became obvious.

In 1919, IODS was formed at the end of WW1 by former members of the Ilford Social Club, which had started life as a club for men, with ladies merely "tolerated"! How things have changed in 100 years! Since 1991 we also have a Youth Group, and like many other Societies, we are now always on the lookout for more men! In the early days, big, lavish musicals and plays were produced on the stage of the Ilford Town Hall. Membership of performers and supporters was large and any losses on shows, though infrequent, used to be

underwritten by wealthy members of the Society!

Two of our members, IODS President Pam Reeve and Treasurer Michael Brackley, have been performing and supporting shows in various committee and production roles for over sixty years and received a surprise presentation during the concert following the presentation by London Councillor Andrew Rogers of the NODA Centenary Certificate.

The concert featured as many of the best songs from IODS shows as could be crammed in! The opening men's chorus from IODS' first-ever musical, *The Mikado*, swiftly morphed into a dance routine from *The Hot Mikado*, followed by the dramatic entrance to that glorious Sondheim melody of nearly 40 "Beautiful Girls" through the auditorium and onto the stage, each wearing a sash sporting the year she joined the company. Throughout the concert, we enjoyed a backdrop of

projected images reflecting the songs performed using archive material. And so the concert progressed, current members joined on stage by many former members, some of whom have gone on to professional careers, including the MD, arranger and conductor Steven Day, a founder member of IODS Youth.

What a pleasure it was to rehearse and perform together one last time. So many lasting and deep friendships formed, some performers with nearly 80 years age difference between them! Availability of everyone to rehearse was a challenge we managed to overcome, thanks to the backbone of stalwart attendees at most rehearsals and commitment from many to distance learning of video-ed rehearsals!

The excitement of celebrating our Centenary has been tinged with more than just a small dose of sadness, as the future for the Society is rather uncertain. We have replaced a November show with social activities and plan to perform in new venues. However, excitement for the future is always to be encouraged - and we thank NODA for doing just that.

Diana Fairburn Smith



New representative for district 4

NODA East Midlands



Hello. I'm Andrew Key, now 53 years old, with an almost lifelong love of theatre. This started at Primary School as I recall playing the King in *The Royal Stomach Ache*. At Carre's Grammar School in Sleaford I took part in several school productions and since leaving have been a member of several groups. Heckington Players has been my main society for more than 30 years, with many there as the Dame in panto and other roles from Runnicles in *No Sex We're British* (twice - ten years part) to Toad in *Wind in the Willows*. I've performed with Sleaford Little Theatre, Boston Playgoers and Boston Operatic, where my favourite part was Cliff in *Cabaret*. Whilst working away at one time, I even appeared with Heanor Operatic Society in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Over the years I've also produced and directed lots of shows and served on committees.

I remember the visits of the NODA Rep to shows and anxiously awaiting their reviews. My aim as a NODA Rep myself now is to help nurture and encourage local amateur theatre to flourish, with the emphasis on 'encourage'. My sincere hope is that everyone can enjoy our wonderful hobby and find their lives enriched by it, as much as mine has been.

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• Treasure Island

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Curtain calls and cues keep on coming

NODA West Midlands - Special Feature

Famous faces, a cast of hundreds and a century of entertainment. Neil Thomas of Shropshire Magazine, reports on a very special milestone of WEM

What does this trio of household names past and present have in common?

Stand-up comedian and actor Greg Davies, a familiar face in the nation's homes for television sitcoms like *The Inbetweeners*, *Cuckoo* and *Man Down*.

The late Peter Vaughan, an accomplished character actor on stage and screen, remembered for his roles in *Porridge* and *Game of Thrones*,

And the late Peter Jones, a sitcom star of the 1960s and '70s in *The Rag Trade* (with Miriam Karlin, Reg Varney and Barbara Windsor) and *Mr Big* (with Prunella Scales and Ian Lavender),

Yes, they have all starred in television sitcoms. More than that, though, they all started their performing careers as members of Wem Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society.

That is quite some alumni for an amateur group in a small Shropshire town! But the reflection is timely, for the society celebrates its 100th anniversary in June of this year.

There will be a celebration party at Wem Town Hall on June 29, when members past and present will gather to share their memories. Large amongst them - he is nearly 6ft 7ins after all - will be Greg Davies who is scheduled to be guest speaker for the evening. Given how much he has achieved, it is sure to be an occasion loaded with poignancy for the affable comedian.

Someone who is better placed than most to chat with authority about the society's history is Margaret Simmons, who has been a member for two thirds of it and is now Life President.

Margaret joined the company in 1954 and recalls that recruitment was very different from today.

"It was all very formal. You had to apply in writing with recommendations from two members and go before the committee for an interview. I think it helped if they considered you to be from a respectable, middle class background. I was only 21

but luckily I'd married the deputy town surveyor so of course I was accepted," she recalls with a broad smile. "Nowadays, we'll take anyone," she adds, her eyes twinkling with mischief

A towering figure in those days was Miss Irene Ohm, a driving force at the inaugural meeting of the society in June 1919 at Grove House.

Miss Ohm, as she was known to members, was the daughter of Wem Grammar School headmaster Joseph Ohm and a descendant of German physicist George Ohm who developed the electrical theory known as Ohm's Law.

An actress and producer, Irene was heavily involved in many productions in the first half century of the society's history. She was also aunt of Wem-born Peter Ohm, who went on to television, film and stage fame as Peter Vaughan.

Other members of that very first committee were local florist Ernest Jones, Cecilia Strong who ran a newsagent's shop; Alice Keeble, wife of a local bank manager; farmers Geoff Ashton and Ted Ikin and The Rector, Prebendary Archibald Park.

It would be almost a year until the first production at Wem Town Hall, an elaborate three-night run in April 1920 of a popular musical of the day, *The Geisha*, by Sydney Thomas. Its producer was Alec D. B. Scott, once of the Cambridge University Opera Society.

So successful did it prove, that it was reprised in October that year to give more people the chance to see it. Reviewed at the time as 'the finest thing ever produced in the town' it was even taken to the Royal County Theatre in Shrewsbury, still in 1920, to raise funds for the Royal Salop Infirmary. Such demand, though, came at a price. The show ended with a deficit of £92. A garden fete was held at The Lawns, later to be Wem Recreation Ground, and made £93.

"In all the years since, we've only ever made one small loss," says Margaret, who,



as the society's archivist, has a precious hoard of photographs, programmes and posters, perfectly catalogued in decade order.

In the early days, rehearsals were in members' homes but eventually the group purchased the old Salvation Army hut, next to the town's fire station, and rehearsals, set building, costume making and after-show parties were held there for many years.

Large and small productions took place in Wem Town Hall and, as with *The Geisha*'s performance in Shrewsbury, the second show, *A Country Girl*, also went 'on tour', this time to Whitchurch.

"When you think about the logistics of this, it shows what enthusiasm abounded," Margaret says.

With one eye on the importance of normality in keeping up morale, Wem was one of the few societies to put on the occasional show during the Second World War.

"These were mainly pantomimes when, of course, women could play the part of men, some of whom were away on active service."

Wem made history in 1969 - the year of its 50th anniversary - when it became the first amateur society in the country to stage *My Fair Lady*, the hit musical by Lerner and Loewe based on George



Top Left - Julie Blake, Margaret Simmons, Graham Colclough and Jenny Colclough look through the vast archive of the society's memorabilia dating back 100 years.

Top Right - Goldilocks and the Three Bears (1963)

Left - Bruce Risdon, Julie Blake and Margaret Simmons rehearsing for See How They Run (1998)

Above - Stage Door Theatre, Wem

Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion.

Since the successful Hollywood film version with Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison in 1964, there had been a clamour amongst amateur groups throughout the country to stage the show and jealously-guarded rights to do so were keenly sought after.

"We felt very privileged to be the first amateurs to be given the chance to do it," Margaret says, As well as musicals and pantomimes, the society has produced a host of three-act plays, including many of the top comedies and dramas in the theatrical canon.

The society has entered many drama festivals down the decades, winning quite a few along the way.

It also made it all the way to the semi-finals of the All British Drama Festival. Wem Town Hall was the society's spiritual home for many years. In fact, it took over running of the main hall and function

room from the local council in 1984 at a time when the authority was strapped for cash.

"We ran it successfully for the next 10 years, putting on not only our own productions and festivals but hosting weddings, parties, rotary dinners and so on," Margaret explains. "We painted, rewired and carpeted it and refurbished the bar area."

There have been setbacks along the way too, of course. An organisation that endures for 100 years would be very fortunate indeed to evade some form of ill luck. In the society's case, it was a fire on November 19 1995 which badly damaged the Town Hall.

"This obviously caused us a lot of heartache as well as requiring a financial balancing act," Margaret recalls.

"Thankfully our then treasurer had made sure we had fully insured all our equipment which helped us to find the

deposit for our next venture."

That was an ambitious £100,000 plan to buy and convert the former Apostolic Church in Aston Street. Purchase price was £22,000, with four leading members, Margaret, her husband Colin, Julie Blake and Clive Jones each loaning £5,000 of their own money (since repaid) to set the ball rolling.

Clive, in fact, has been a member of the society even longer than Margaret, having joined as a 12 year-old in 1952.

"I operated the spotlight for the panto," he recalls. His mother Violet - know to the society as 'Auntie Vi' - was a producer with the group and had a fearsome reputation amongst the actors, he recalls.

"One of her phrases was 'woe betide you if you don't do such and such'," he recalls with a smile.

The first phase of the Aston Street project involved an £18,000 extension, the second phase was a further £25,000

renovation scheme and the third was a £35,000 Green Room. Work is ongoing to this day, with plans for a new floor in hand.

The result is the impressive Stage Door Theatre, a 60-seat capacity venue which is now home to the impressive productions for which Wem Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society has become a byword. In May it staged its latest production, the satire *Strictly Sex Factor on Ice*.

Society chairman Jenny Colclough believes one of the reasons for its longevity is its policy of encouraging children and young people to get involved.

"We have a history of generations of the same family joining. A steady stream of new young members has helped to ensure continuity through the years," she adds.

Stage Door Youth 2000 is a thriving set-up for younger members, with two groups and a waiting list of 75 children.

"The workshops on Saturdays are very popular and once children come most of them seem to want to stay. Several have gone onto drama schools and universities to study the performing arts," adds committee member Lynn Pulford.



From left to right - Jordan McFarlane Regional Representative District 2, Greg Davies Patron of WEM, Margaret Simmons President, Jacque Stedman NODA Immediate Past President, Jenny Colclough Chairman of WEM, Ian G. Cox NODA West Midlands Regional Councillor,

Indeed, over the decades several from the society aside from Messrs Jones, Vaughan and Davies have gone on to careers in theatre, film and television, including Jenny's husband Graham and their daughter Nikki.

In 2012 the society received the ultimate royal accolade for an organisation, the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, generally perceived as a group MBE.

It is richly deserved indeed, for it is hard to imagine an amateur body in the entire country that has done more for its community over a longer period - in terms of entertainment, cultural enrichment and the nurturing of talent - than Wem Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society.

Here's to the next 100 years...

Three of our most popular musicals ...



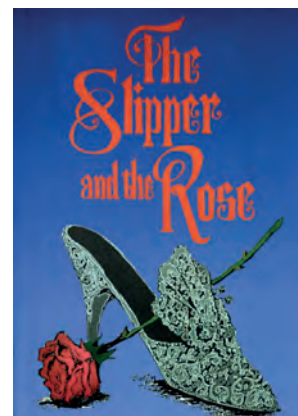
Specially written for amateur musical groups with largely female memberships. A therapy clinic for celebrities, down on its luck, is forced to take in a bunch of old folk as their Home is uninhabitable. A mystery celebrity phones to check in, and it's all hands to the pump to try and convince her that 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.

Next Production: Your Town, Next Year?



This excellent 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.

Next Production: Your Town, Next Year?



This glorious musical tale of Cinderella and her Prince has recently been updated 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's a truly family friendly piece of musical theatre.

Next Prod'n: Riverside MTC, Woodbridge, Nov 2019

And for the dramatically-minded...



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.



Liberty Hall by Robin Jennifer Miller

(4m, 4f) *Full Length Comedy/Farce*. Attempting to impress his American girlfriend, Zoe, Tom has told her he's an English lord whose parents own a stately home. Ashworth Hall is a delightful country house hotel and Tom's sure, that with the help of his friend Colin, he can pass it off as his parents' home. What could possibly go wrong? Well, his ex might turn up. And Zoe's strict father might turn up, too. And the managers of the hotel are expecting a visit from their son's irate teacher...

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Saving the largest surviving medieval guildhall

NODA East

The Guildhall of St George in King's Lynn has been a theatre for nearly six centuries and the only surviving working theatre where Shakespeare performed. This proud legacy is now in grave danger of being lost. It may soon be closed as a theatre or converted to other uses.

Built in 1410 the Guildhall has been a theatre since 1422 making it the oldest working theatre in the country and one of the oldest in Europe. Since 1951, it has been owned by the National Trust and has been leased and used as an Arts Centre ever since. The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk is the current tenant with a lease until 2050, which it is finding increasingly difficult to sustain.

The largest surviving medieval guildhall in Britain, it was restored by public subscription and is the cultural inheritance of the people of King's Lynn and all of Britain. Your Guildhall and the new Shakespeare's Guildhall Trust need your help to secure its future. Don't let our generation be the one that breaks 600 years of artistic tradition.

This Medieval Guildhall has now become the main venue in King's Lynn for

Amateur Productions as the near by Corn Exchange which was converted into a Theatre in the 1990's has now become too expensive to perform in so this old theatre is providing an affordable performance space.

King's Lynn Players as well as Kings Lynn Operatic and Dramatic Society and West Norfolk G & S Society all use this venue.

Kings Lynn Players have been actively supporting the fund-raising efforts of the newly formed Shakespeare Guildhall Trust, their young players rehearsed and performed, within 6 weeks, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on Midsummer's Eve as a fund raising performance, they also



performed short extracts on the hour on the recent Heritage Open Day.

The Watlington Players will also be performing *Twelfth Night* in late October also as a fundraiser.



Opening night sees 'the man' become the father

NODA North

A Chester-le-Street based amateur dramatics group really did make it a family event during their recent show week this summer! Chester-le-Street Theatre Group places a huge emphasis on their family ethos and are very proud of their 'Theatre Family'. However, during their recent production of *Whistle Down the Wind*, which ran from 2nd – 6th July 2019, it became apparent just how family-orientated they are.

CLSTG Director Julie Dryden-Smith told us, "Rehearsals started in January and I was delighted to have such a diverse cast age range, the youngest being 7 (Senna Robson) and the oldest 76 (John Elliott), which was necessary to portray this moving musical story. In addition to this, we had three actual families acting together on stage (Geoff Graham and his daughter Caisley, Jo Siou and her daughter Anya and Christine Cassy and her daughter Alicia)".

However, what was to happen during show week surprised everyone! Jonathan



Credit - Signature Times Photography

Robson, who played the part of 'The Man', attended opening night on Tuesday 2nd July 2019, giving an amazing performance whilst his partner Steff Quinn watched proudly. Later that night, Steff went into labour and gave birth to their daughter Isabelle Charlotte Robson, born weighing 6lb 5oz at 7.23 am on Wednesday 3rd July 2019 - three weeks early! After having no sleep, Jonathan still managed to get back on stage that night to give another stunning performance.

Jonathan told us, "It was a week I will never forget; I survived on adrenaline and



would not have got through it without the comradeship of the cast and crew! They all kept me going." The group got to meet their little 'show baby' at their recent after-show social event where she was officially welcomed and was never short of cuddles!

The show closed on Saturday 6th July 2019, where the group proudly awarded their 'Honorary Life President' Bill Stephenson with a NODA 60 Year Diamond Pin presented by NODA Past President Fred Piggford.

NODA website relaunch

Launching in December

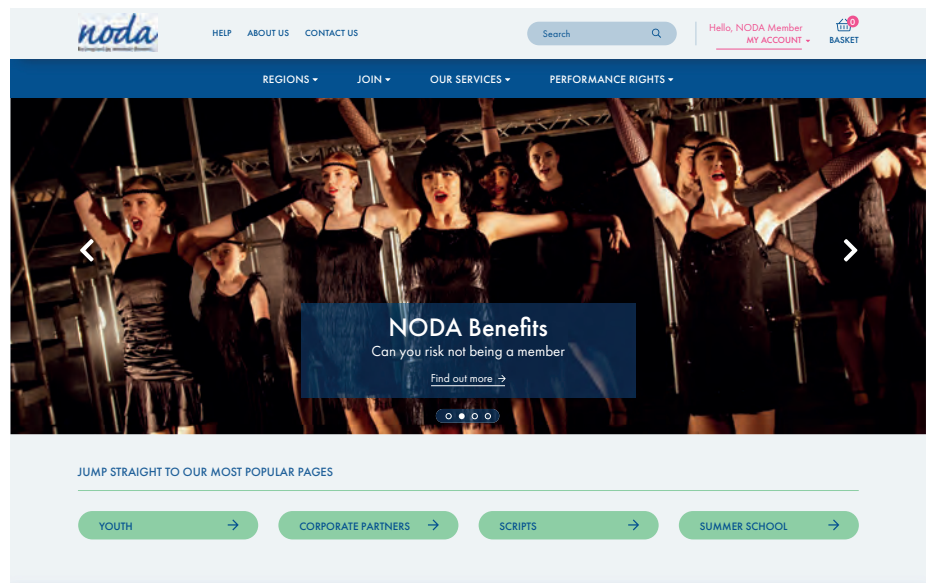
It has now been nearly three years since the launch of the NODA website and decided it was time for a refresh.

The new website whilst looks very different has the same functionality as the current site but information is much easier to find including our factsheets and pantomime scripts.

New features will include online Long Service Award applications, NODA Safe online training, Regional contacts pages where members can add their services for other societies in their area, props and costumes forum.

When uploading events, it will be easier to add photos and also give clear details about your performance venue.

To access all of the features of the new site, please make sure you have updated us with your current society details and committee members.



Giving Amateur Theatre a Voice

NODA provides support and education to amateur theatre groups across the UK. Add another sentence explaining how you support and educate.

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Cinderella The Pantomime

SOCIETY


NODA Productions

DATE

21st December 2019 - 24th December 2019

MATINEE

24th D 2019



NODA Productions bring you the classic pantomime Cinderella to the stage

Cinderella is as kind as she is beautiful. Sadly, her loving Mother died when she was young and for the sake of Cinderella, her Father the Baron re-married a woman with two daughters of her own.

Bitterly jealous of Cinderella's youthful grace and beauty, the two Stepsisters forced her to do all the terrible chores at Hardup Hall and tore her beautiful dresses to rags.

But as vile as they were, they were nothing compared to her new Stepmother...

Featuring all your favourite pantomime characters and songs, laughter, joy and magic, make it a Christmas to remember

VENUE

NODA Head Office
15 The Metro Centre
Peterborough
PE2 7UH

BOOK TICKETS

You can call the box office for this show on:
[01773 374 790](tel:01773374790)

For more information about this show and how you can book tickets, please [click here](#).

Please note, clicking the link will open an external website. NODA is not responsible for the content of external websites.

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SHOWCASE

LOWER GROUND FLOOR
14-15 MONTPELLIER ARCADE
MONTPELLIER STREET, CHELTENHAM GL50 1SU
INFO@SHOWCASEONLINE.CO.UK

Showcase proprietors due to retire

Established in 1992 by John and Heather Pannett Showcase is a family business run by enthusiastic people who have combined their love of Dance, Costume and Theatre to create a Dancewear and Fancy Dress department.

Professional advice and assistance is always at hand, supported by a wealth of knowledge gained in over 40 years of theatre and dance.

Over the years Showcase has encouraged and advised people with the love of theatre and dance and have been able to assist a number of them in their progress, with some now performing in the West End.

John and Heather would love to see Showcase with new proprietors who would love to develop the business for the 2020's. Any enquires please contact info@showcaseonline.co.uk



The TTA means business
'SHOW BUSINESS'



What do we need to put on a show?

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

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

How can the Theatrical Traders Association (TTA) help?

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

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

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

The TTA is here to help you!



*Nobody loves a fairy when she's [forty] fifty
Nobody loves a fairy when she's old
She may still have a magic power but that is not enough
They like their bit of magic from a younger bit of stuff
When once your silver star has lost its glitter
And your tinsel looks like rust instead of gold
Fairy days are ending when your wand has started bending
No-one loves a fairy when she's old...*

...EXCEPT US!

We don't believe that older actors should hang up their wands and resign themselves to playing butlers and grandmothers. We are the only publisher that creates new (and in some cases, award-winning) comedy and drama scripts where ALL the best parts are for older actors. Our plays have been performed in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, USA, Portugal, France, South Africa, Canada and Australia to date.



Read about our plays on www.playsforadults.com. The scripts are also available to read on Kindle for a very modest sum or in designated drama libraries in the UK and Ireland.

www.playsforadults.com

Local theatre company raises £3,500 for charity with Terry Pratchett play

NODA Wales & Ireland



Cardiff-based amateur theatre company, Peculiar Productions, have raised £3,500 for Nerve Tumours UK with their recent stage production of a novel by bestselling UK author Sir Terry Pratchett, which ran for five performances at The Gate Arts Centre.

Men at Arms was adapted for the stage by Stephen Briggs from Pratchett's 1993 novel. It follows the City Watch – whose members include a werewolf, a dwarf and a troll – as they attempt to solve a series of increasingly baffling murders in the fictional city of Ankh-Morpork. Widely considered a comedy-fantasy masterpiece, Pratchett's novel deals with themes of racism, sexism, and the effects of power.

The production was dedicated to the memory of David Blake, a close friend of a company member, who passed away in 2018 at the age of 30 following a battle with cancer caused by neurofibromatosis. David's parents offered the production a financial contribution as part of 30 things they did to celebrate David's 30 years of life.

'We are very grateful to the amazing efforts by Peculiar Productions setting up this amazing play in support of our cause,' says Markus Bell of Nerve Tumours UK. 'We are reliant on raised funds; any donation will help us to support and raise awareness for the 26,500 people affected by Nerve Tumours in the UK. We will be able to meet our goals of providing first-class support to those who need our services through our helpline, as well as specialist neurofibromatosis nurses in various regions throughout the country.'

The production has received widespread praise from audience members and positive reviews, with the National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA) noting the 'very talented' cast's 'polished performance', and Cardiff Times calling the production 'brilliant' and saying 'characterisation was outstanding'. 'The last 18 months have been the most exciting, rewarding and enjoyable ones I can recall. It's been absolutely fantastic to see people work so hard with so much love' says director Matthew Hitchman. 'This was an ambitious production, but with £3,500 raised for Nerve Tumours UK, I'm so proud that we've turned our energy into positive results for those that need help.'

LADS fundraising effort for limbless veterans charity

NODA London



Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society (LADS), will be launching their 2019/2020 season with a gripping new play, *Pressure* by David Haig. Funny, tense and deeply affecting, the play explores a very significant back story to the D-Day landings.

It is June 1944, and the Allies stand ready to launch for the Normandy beaches. The Allied Expeditionary Force Commander, Dwight Eisenhower, is under pressure to give the right command. His decision hangs upon the weather. British meteorologist James Stagg is under pressure to produce the correct forecast. The wrong conditions could jeopardise 350,000 lives and put the effort to defeat the Nazis in danger. All are under pressure.

LADS is excited to be producing this play in the year of the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings but especially because the play ties in perfectly with the charity that LADS will be supporting in 2019/20.

Throughout the season LADS will be raising funds for the Limbless Veterans charity, BLESMA, based in Chadwell Heath. BLESMA is dedicated to assisting serving and ex-Service men and women who have suffered limb and/or sight loss in service of the country. There will be charity box collections at performances, and the proceeds of the programme sales for *Pressure* will go to support BLESMA members, like Roy Hayward. Roy, now 94, lost both his legs when his tank was shelled just after D-Day. Roy says that BLESMA gives him a "feeling of camaraderie and that there is someone behind me, protecting my interests". A BLESMA grant also means he can keep his garden in a suitable state and live independently.

Chair of LADS, Jean Cooper, said "We hope our claim to produce plays of 'true dramatic worth' will be borne out with this gripping drama of WWII history. LADS have supported a different charity every season for over 15 years, but we are especially proud to support BLESMA – a charity that since WWI has helped so many of our servicemen to regain their lives after suffering life-changing injuries."

Panto Company's 75th Anniversary Celebration – that so nearly wasn't...

NODA South West



St Stephen's Pantomime Company comes through, with a cautionary tale for us all. Credit - Steve Polmounter

Based in St Stephen (hence the name) near St Austell, January 2020's production of the 'Sleeping Beauty' will celebrate 75 years of village panto, making St Stephen one of the longest-running such groups in Cornwall. However, this so nearly didn't happen, as back in March this year the Society discovered that a Company member had taken a substantial amount of funds from their bank account over a 5-year period. False account balances and auditor reports had covered this up. Rather than £31,000 in the bank, they had less than £1000.

They were all devastated and heartbroken by the theft... not just because of the financial loss but from the breach of trust too. There was no other option for the Committee but to involve the police, who identified the source and the perpetrator admitted the theft. However, whilst this and Court proceedings followed, funds were needed immediately to put the show on.

Once the news of the theft became public, the Company launched a 'just giving' page, hoping that they might be able to raise £1,000 – and were stunned to find they'd raised three times that in less than a week! At the same time, letters were dropped into every household in the village to explain the sad story and dire financial situation, resulting in some amazingly kind

donations from villagers, that coincidentally matched the 'just giving' donations. Everyone's generosity was terrific. Even more overwhelming was the fantastic support and financial assistance received from their friends at other local panto groups in the area, as well as local operatic groups too, including performing with them in a fundraising 'cabaret evening'. And, only as a result of all of this, their 2020, 75th-anniversary panto will definitely be going ahead!!! There is still more fundraising to do, but the recovery plan is on track.

The Company are hoping that in true panto style, goodness will overcome and that there will be a happy ending at St Stephen. Some valuable 'trust' lessons have been learnt too – processes are already in place so that they can't be hurt by something like this again and they hope this story will alert all groups to this as it can and does take place across the country. Their panto family are strong, perhaps even stronger now, and determined to succeed – but as mentioned, this is only due to hard work – and to the support received from their amateur theatrical and panto friends, fellow villagers and businesses in their area. Thank you, everyone!

Steve Polmounter
St Stephen Pantomime Company

'A Showcase of Talents' raises funds for young member

NODA North



A few months ago, one of Park Production's young members, Hannah Bowerbank, found out that she had been chosen to go to the Guide Jamboree in Poland next year. With this, Hannah was required to raise the money for her trip. She approached the committee to ask to sell fudge at one of Park Production's shows to begin her fundraising. The committee were more than happy to oblige. However, they weren't going to stop there!

The decision was made to put on "A Showcase of Talent" in order to raise money for Hannah's trip. Members and friends pulled together to produce a wonderful concert at Burn Park Methodist Church in August. The evening displayed some great talent, including singing, dancing, playing an instrument and performing a poem, all linked together with great comedy from the hosts of the evening 'Dan' and 'Cliff', a.k.a. Nick and Corey. The concert was a huge success, and Park Productions were proud to present Hannah with a cheque for £300 to go towards her trip.

A trip to the archive - The birth of the Association

2019 marks the 120 year anniversary of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association. In this issue we look back to our roots and how it was down to one man's efforts of forming a Mutual Aid Society to benefit Amateur Societies across the country. It is very interesting to see that the reasons for starting 'NODA' are still at the forefront of our membership services 120 years later.

The Legend

There is a legend that the Association started because of the last-minute illness of a principal in an operatic production somewhere in the North of England, towards the end of the last century.

When such a thing happened in those days, it was indeed a serious matter for the Society concerned. In the unlikely event of anybody knowing a substitute, amateur or professional, the difficulties of communication were such that, by the time he could be located and transported to the theatre it might be too late. It must be remembered that in 1899 the telephone and the motor car were in their infancy.

The desirability of providing understudies is beside the point. The fact is that for various reasons, which may include the injury of the principal and his understudy in some accident, Societies do occasionally need a performer for a leading part at very short notice.

Support was probably lent to the legend, for, from the earliest days, the provision of substitutes was found to be one of the most valuable services that the Association could render. In the stress of an event such as a principal going sick at the last minute, the *deus ex machina* which could find a deputy at a moment's notice was more than likely to be subject of legend.

Nowadays, the provision of a substitute is so ordinary an occurrence that it creates little interest except to the Society concerned. In fact, the Association often does not know when it takes place, as the Secretaries of Societies communicate with one another direct, in accordance with the instructions, and, except in cases of special difficulty, the Officials of the Association hear nothing of the matter. Unless, of course, the Society has received assistance troubles to write to Head Office.

In the early days, when General Meetings were reported in full, several records of thanks by Societies for such

services occur in the Minutes, and, at the tenth Annual General Meeting of the Association, which was held on 12th of June, 1909, Mr Hadley, the Honorary Secretary, in summarising "the advantages which the Association claims have resulted to Members from its formation," said, under the heading of "Assistance given by Principals": "... on many occasions help has been obtained... whilst on other occasions your Hon. Secretary has been enabled at very short notice to fix up principals for Societies requiring assistance, who would otherwise not been able to produce their Opera satisfactorily. In connection with this the following letter may be quoted :-

'Dear Mr Hadley,
Now that our production is a thing of the past, I feel that I should personally like to write and express my very sincere thanks to you, for your great help afforded to me and our Society when we were so hopelessly "in the cart". I cannot find words to truthfully express my appreciation of your very prompt action and unbounded kindness.'

The writer then refers to various details of the episode and continues :-

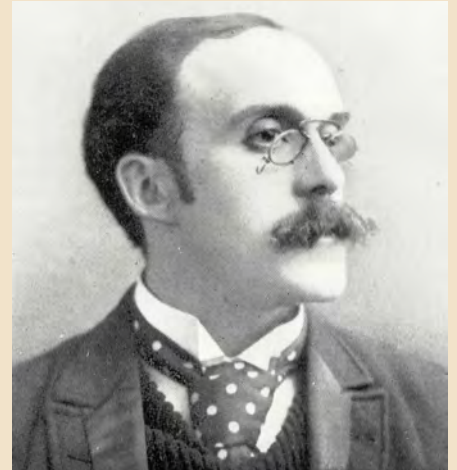
'We feel we owe a great debt to the National Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Association, and if you have any waverers or others requiring information re same please refer them to me.

Once more thanking you an the Council.'

The Need for the Association

The legend goes on that the difficulty finding a substitute in the circumstances which occurred, suggested to Societies the need for a Mutual Aid organisation in case such a thing should happen again. Had the legend been true it would have provided a suitably theatrical opening to the life of the Association. The facts of the matter are less exciting.

When a Society were considering any particular work for production at the time - that is to say, about the end of



A. P. Bulfield
The Father of the Association
Hon. Secretary 1899 - 1901

the nineteenth century - they often had the greatest difficulty in finding out who owned the performing rights, what rehearsal material was available, where scenery and costumes could be obtained, what they would cost, and so on. This is frequently mentioned by speakers at Meetings of the Association held in later years when referring to this period.

At the Annual General Meeting mentioned previously, the Chairman, Mr. Nicholas Kilvert, who was also President of the Association in proposing the adoption of the Council report said :-

"... He began his little experience in Amateur Operatic work in 1893, and he thought that none of those who had begun in a similar way during the last few years could realise the difficulties that a small Society... had in 1893, in obtaining information which they required in regard to selecting Operas and finding the means to produce them effectively. Nowadays everything was changed, for since the Association had been started it had been a mere matter of letter writing to obtain any information required on points such as the cost of production and costumes, fees to be paid, or whether certain Operas could be obtained at all..."

The seconder, Mr Monckton, the Vice-President, said that :-

"... He ... had started a little earlier even than the Chairman did, He knew that their initial troubles would have been considerably less than they were if they had had an Association that they could have jumped into get the information which could now be obtained through the medium of their present Association. In those days - in the year 1885 - there was no means of ascertaining anything at all."

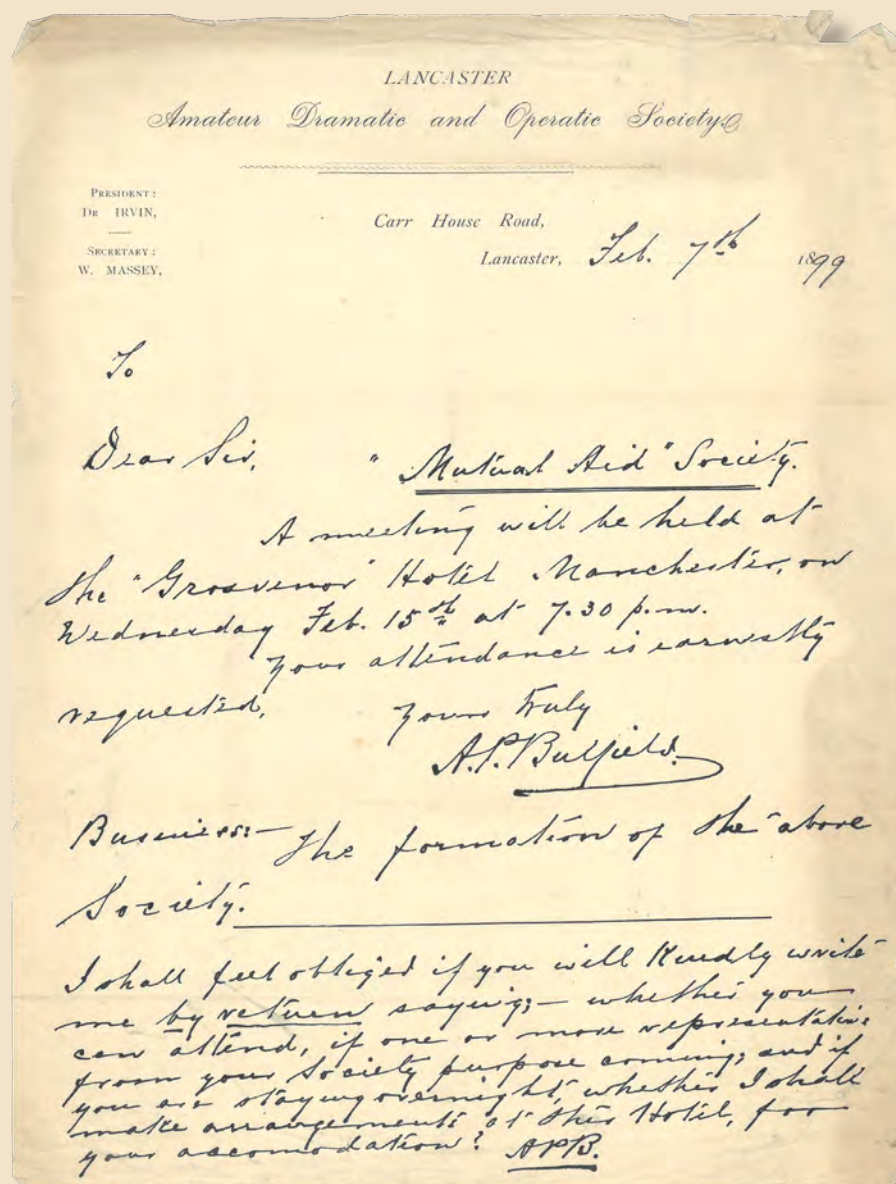
The True Story

In 1897, or thereabouts, the Lancaster Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society were considering a production of "The Mountebanks". and they met the difficulties mention by Mr. Kilvert. Evidently they were, or they came into, contact with the Barrow Society, who supplied them with information. The episode mentions by Mr. Bulfield, the Musical Director of the Lancaster Society, in the circular letter which he subsequently sent out when he refers to the "... kindly way in which the Barrow Society came forward and helped us with 'The Mountebanks' not only by sending us their prompt copy, and giving us the benefit of their experience, but also sending two of their principal ladies to help us with the details ..."

It was evidently this occurrence which put the idea of the formation of a "Mutual Aid Society" in Mr. Bulfield's head. He referred the matter to his Society, who approved and passed a resolution at a meeting held on the 3rd of December, 1898, which is quoted here by the courtesy of their Committee :-

"In the question of the amalgamation of Dramatic and Operatic Societies, that Mr. Bulfield be requested to communicate with the various Societies, suggesting a meeting of their representatives, at a central point, to discuss a furtherance of the scheme."

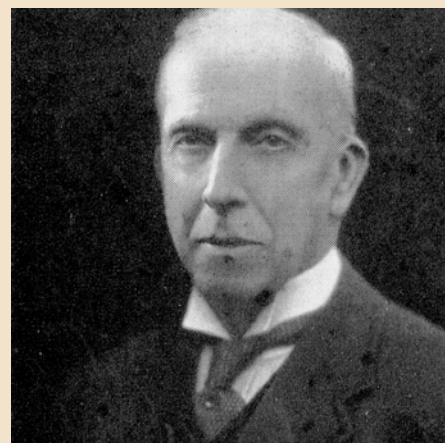
Mr. Bulfield sent out a letter in January, 1899, and the replies were sufficiently encouraging to enable him to call a meeting for the 15th of February. A reproduction of the notice convening the first meeting held of what was later to be the National Operatic and Dramatic Association appears opposite, and a copy of the Report of the Proceedings overleaf.



The original notice convening the first meeting, dated 7th February 1899. The document is held amongst others in the NODA Archive.



Nicholas Kilvert, J.P.
President 1899 - 1911



H. H. Monckton
President 1911 - 1914

THE NATIONAL AMATEUR OPERATIC & DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION.

Report of Proceedings.

A Meeting of this Society was held at the Grosvenor Hotel, Manchester on Wednesday, February 15th, at 7:30pm., Major Stack (Sunderland Operatic Society) presiding.

There were present: -

Mr. N.H. Ballard - *Altrincham and Bowden Amateur Dramatic Society.*

Mr. Roger Bamber - *Bolton Amateur Operatic Society.*

Mr. N. Kilvert - *Brooklands Amateur Thespian Society.*

Mr. A. B. Sherwood - *Carlise Philharmonic Society.*

Mr. G. H. Anderson and Mr. T. Donaldson - *Eccles Amateur Dramatic Society.*

Mr. C. E. Barrow, Mr. W. Massey, and Mr. A. P. Bulfield - *Lancaster Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society.*

Mr. O. G. Whitney, Mr. Grant, Mr. Mc.Robie, and Mr. Blackwell - *Leicester Amateur Music and Dramatic Society.*

Mr. G. H. Skevington and Mr. E. Howe - *Northampton Amateur Operatic Society.*

Mr. A. Gough and Mr. ----- - *Osmond Amateur Dramatic Society.*

Major Stack, and Mr. E. S. Potts - *Sunderland Amateur Operatic Society.*

Mr. A. Browne, Mr. C. H. Woods, Mr. T. G. Hulse, and Mr. Stanley Wright - *Warrington Amateur Dramatic Society - and others.*

Letters and telegrams were read from Mr. Hodgson, Hon. Sec., Lancaster Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society ; Mr. Sedwick, Hon. Sec. Derby Amateur Operatic Society ; Mr. Walter Todd, Hon. Sec. Grantham Amateur Operatic Society ; and Mr. Frank Provis, Hon. Sec. West Didsbury Dramatic Society, expressing their regret at being unable to attend the meeting, but promising hearty support and co-operation, and best wishes of the Society which they purpose joining.

Mr. A. P. Bulfield, Lancaster Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society, at the request of the Chairman, explained the scheme ; showing the benefits that would accrue from an amalgamation of Societies throughout the country, and particularly dealt with :- Mutual assistance and protection, the charges for playing rights, the value and loan of prompt copies, loans of scenery, costumes, band parts, scores, librettos, etc ; and the saving that could be effected to one another by affiliated Societies ; understudies, exchange of principals, "strikes" of sections of choruses, the professional amateur, the suggested annual convention, and other matters.

After discussing various heads, it was proposed by Mr. Kilvert (Brooklands Amateur Thespian Society) and seconded by Mr. Browne (Warrington Amateur Dramatic Society) that a Society, based on the lines suggested, be formed. Carried unanimously.

It was decided, later in the evening, that the name of the Society be "THE NATIONAL AMATEUR OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION"

Proposed by Mr. Browne (Warrington) and seconded by Mr. Potts (Sunderland) and carried unanimously, that a Committee be formed to deal with the objects and rules of the Society.

Proposed by Mr. Potts (Sunderland) seconded by Mr. Mc.Robie (Leicester) and supported by Mr. Bamber (Bolton) that Mr. A. P. Bulfield (Lancaster) be Hon. Secretary. Carried unanimously.

Moved from the Chair, that the present meeting form a Committee to deal with the details of formation.

Proposed by Mr. Kilvert (Brooklands) seconded by Mr. Massey (Lancaster) that the Committee be formed of representatives from Bolton, Brooklands, Warrington, and Lancaster, each Society to nominate its own representative. Carried unanimously.

Proposed by Mr. Sherwood (Carlisle) and seconded by Mr. Browne (Warrington) that a hearty vote of thanks be accorded to Mr. Bulfield (Lancaster) for the trouble he has taken in formulating the scheme of amalgamated Societies. Carried unanimously.

During the evening, some excellent suggestions were tended by Messrs. Kilvert, Browne, Barrow, Donaldson, and others, for the guidance of the Committee, and the proceedings closed with a hearty vote of thanks to Major Stack for so ably presiding over the meeting.

The Secretary has, so far, restricted his correspondence to a limited number of Societies, but feeling assured that the general wish is that the Association be National, he will feel obliged to members of affiliated Societies by their sending him the names and addresses of Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Societies who might be induced to join this movement.

DEAR SIR,

I shall be glad to receive a list of the works produced by your society since its initiation, and any other particulars that you consider useful to me.

Yours sincerely,
A. P. Bulfield Hon. Secretary.

The Father of the Association

The Committee which had been set up met at Preston a fortnight later and drafted the Rules, for presentation to a General Meeting held in Manchester on the 6th of April following. These, after discussion and amendment, were adopted and the provisions then duly carried out by the Meeting. It was resolved to invite Sir Henry Irving to become Patron, which he subsequently did. Mr. Nicholas Kilvert was elected President, Mr. Monckton, Vice President, and a Council of six appointed. An Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Auditors were also appointed.

Mr Bulfield had, of course, been elected Honorary Secretary at the inaugural Meeting held on the 15th February, but he was not able to continue long in office, and at the Council Meeting held immediately before the next Annual General Meeting (27th March, 1901) he "signified his desire to retire". He was elected a Member of the Council, but was rarely able to attend meetings, and when, at the Annual General Meeting in 1905, it was his turn to resign he was not re-elected, and was never seen again. He died in 1909. Short though his tenure of office was, to him must go the credit, not only for conceiving the idea of the Association, but also for having the energy to bring it to life.

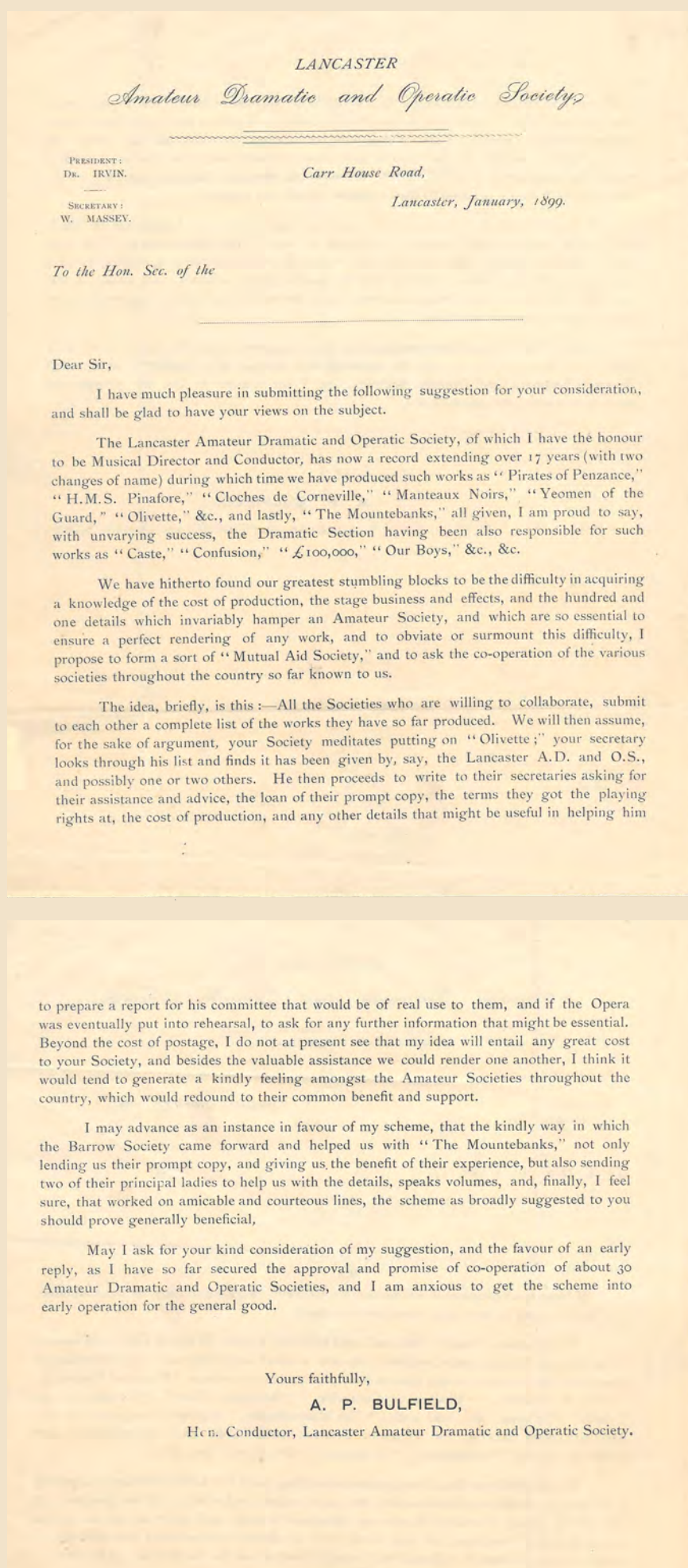
At the Annual General Meeting held on 8th of May, 1908, the Chairman said :

"... At this particular time - ten years from its formation - he did not think it would be the right thing to refer to the success of the Association without mentioning the efforts of the gentleman who had first occupied the post of Honorary Secretary. He referred to Mr. A. P. Bulfield, of the Lancaster Society, who was extremely enthusiastic at the time of the formation of that Society, and it was largely, he thought, in the first place due to his efforts, and in the second places to the efforts of one or two of those now present, that this Association was formed, and he thought that there were few Members who knew to what extent the success of the Association was due to the initial efforts of Mr. Bulfield."

In the report of the next Annual General Meeting - that is, after ten years, an Epitome of the proceedings was published. This includes the following :-

"To Mr. Bulfield... is due the credit of its formation, and he may be most aptly described as the father of the Association."

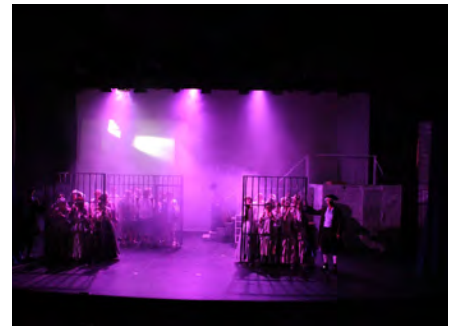
Fifty Years of Amateur Theatre
By Dumayne Warne
1949



The original letter, introducing the idea of a Mutual Aid Society.

Moll Flanders - with a warning from Woking

NODA South East



Do not attempt to perform the Musical *Moll Flanders*...

....unless you have children or young adults who can convincingly play Moll as a child and young person, i.e. 8, 12 and 16 year olds

....unless you have a multi-talented, not to say energetic and indefatigable adult Moll: great singer, comedic actress, sexy, quick changer etc. etc.

....unless you have a troop of young ladies to command the key parts of Corinder and Lucie, and then be sexy enough to be convincing whores and great dancers...

**....unless you have enough handsome young men to be Moll's various suitors
....then older men to be her later amours, and play the 'heavier' roles of the Mayor, Priests, Judge etc.**

....likewise mature ladies to play Lady Constable, Moll's Mother, Mother Midnight, Daisy - all again requiring great presence, lovely singing and comedic talent

....a really large cast, so these roles can be shared out without exhausting everybody - except Moll, who will be exhausted whatever....

So, do not even think of putting on *Moll Flanders* unless you have these resources

....plus a Director who can bring out all the staging and performing nuances, at pace, training a cast to act with 18th century mannerisms; a Musical Director who can get tricky harmonies across to all (well, at least most!); great Choreography bringing out the intricacies of the minuet; costumes too numerous to mention; great sound and atmospheric lighting plus set designs to convey the many stages and aspects of Moll's complicated life...

If you have all of these, go ahead and give it a go, but a task not to be undertaken lightly; however, the joy and pride of seeing such a production triumph will be worth every effort.

Woking Amateur Operatic Society (WAOS) was in the very fortunate position of having all the ingredients when they staged the show to great acclaim this May led by Martine Young, Director and Ian Peters, Musical Director.

Musically, there was so much harmony to be learnt, and some numbers were a capella. The decision was made to have two outstanding keyboard players to emulate 18th century sound, rather than an orchestra. (The music is rooted in traditional English songs from the 16th century on). It was brilliantly executed and the sound produced was a perfect complement to the dialogue.

Being able to field a cast of 43, aged from

8 to almost 80, (with each 10 year cohort in between), is a very fortunate situation to be in. The sheer number of main characters, secondary and cameo roles, meant most of the cast had a named role.

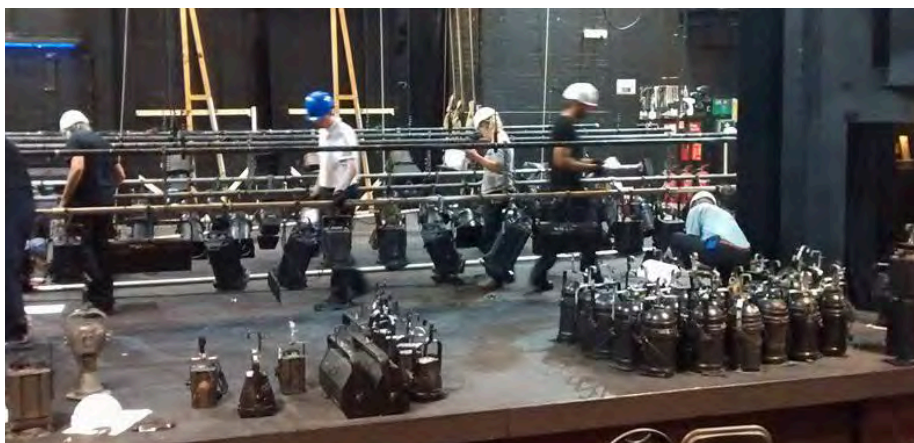
Some societies may suffer from ageing membership, and WAOS was until recently, however, we have enjoyed an influx of enthusiastic youth: children of members plus young people moving into the area for work. This younger generation discovered what a period piece is about, and loved it! They also loved wearing 18th century costumes, and mastering the intricacies of dancing in them, quite different from moving and dancing in modern costumes; to say nothing of the period wigs, especially atop the men, and lessons in 18th century make-up artistry! *Moll Flanders* requires great story telling from the cast, acting out the complex relationships in Moll's incredible life. Consistent talent in the cast is crucial to maintain the flow of the story and keep both the drama and the comedy alive.

Experience is great and youthful exuberance is hard to fake, and both combined as the performances got better evening-to-evening, culminating in a rapturous standing ovation on the last night.

So, it was all worth it. Even we may find it tough to put on such a big show again soon. But, we will! It was too much fun!

Light up your theatrical life

NODA East



Lighting is crucial in theatre. Not only does it ensure the cast are seen, it helps the audience focus on the right spot, gives a sense of place and time, and can even affect the mood of a scene. So lighting designers are theatrical VIPs – and directors with a knowledge of lighting are often behind the most atmospheric of productions.

That's why Pied Pipers' first Theatrical

Workshop, supported by amdram.co.uk, was a lighting workshop with professional lighting guru Paul Curtis.

On 5th October, participants received a short briefing from Paul on the important considerations for theatrical lighting, before inspecting a rig, experimenting with a lighting desk, and – most importantly, exploring how to read a script from the perspective of lighting.

All 20 participants handled the equipment first-hand and agreed it was an essential day for all aspiring amateur lighting designers.

In addition to benefiting from Paul's extensive expertise, participants also met representatives from many of Cambridge's community theatre groups. Each society talked about their next show(s) giving participants the chance to be choose a show in which to potentially debut their lighting skills.

Also present were representatives of the NODA award-winning Penguin Club – Cambridge's specialist society of amateur theatrical technicians, which supports virtually all of the city's amdram productions. The Penguins offer all the ongoing tech support needed – including a fantastic community spirit.

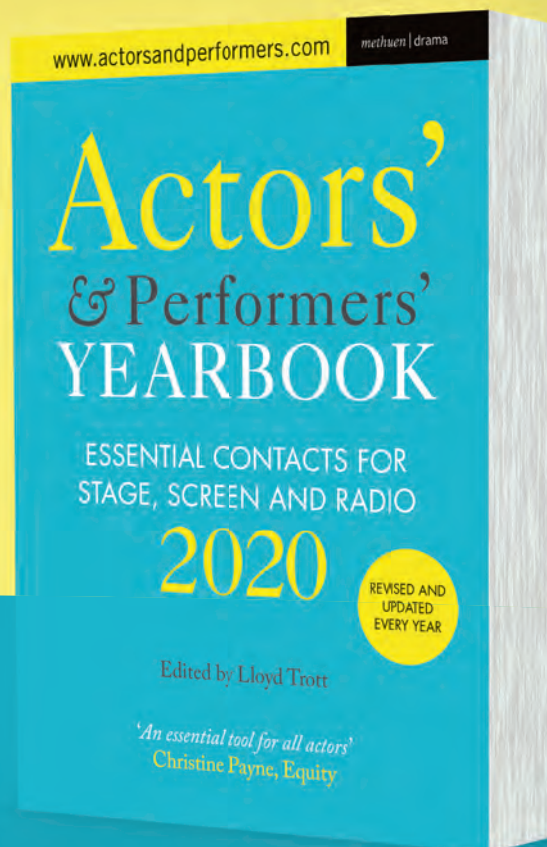
More Theatrical Workshops are also being planned, to include sound design, choreography, and more – all to be led by industry professionals.

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for stage, screen and radio

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STAGE, SCREEN AND RADIO

2020

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Edited by Lloyd Trott

'An essential tool for all actors'
Christine Payne, Equity

Meet the Queen of South Yorkshire stage makeup!

NODA North East

If you're a regular visitor to community theatre in South Yorkshire you'll be very familiar with the work of Pat Bunting...even if you don't know her name or face.

Pat is the undisputed Queen of stage makeup in theatres across the region, working with most of the biggest non-professional companies on some of the country's best-loved musicals.

From *West Side Story* to *White Christmas*, *The King and I* to *Anything Goes* and *Hello Dolly*, Pat's special touch has brought a whole world of musical theatre to fresh life. And, even though she is now quite happy to admit she is 81 years old, her 30-year reign shows no sign of coming to an end any time soon.

Earlier this year she used her special skills to create the acclaimed facial characteristics of the much loved feline characters in Croft House Theatre Company's regional premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* at Sheffield's Lyceum Theatre.

She was back at the Lyceum in November for what might have been her greatest challenge to date, working on the cosmetic special effects to bring STOS Theatre Company's amateur premiere of *Shrek the Musical* to life.

"This is a very different show from anything I've ever done before, but that's what makes this job so interesting and such a challenge," Pat admitted.

Pat didn't begin her theatre life in the makeup room but on stage as a dancer. Like many other children, she attended dancing school as a youngster but didn't make her theatre debut as an adult performer until she joined the line-up for the Phoenix Operatic Society production of *The Desert Song* at Sheffield's Granville College in 1965.

Over the years that followed she appeared in many popular shows but it was in 1989 that she was asked to assist on makeup for a production of *Showboat* for Phoenix - and her theatre life set off in an entirely new direction.

When, in 1990, she was asked to take on the makeup job for the Teachers' Operatic Society production of *Oliver!* at Sheffield City Hall, her place as South Yorkshire's premier stage makeup expert was assured.

"I really learnt on the job," she says. "I've done some courses over the years and workshops with NODA, but really I've developed as I've gone along and I'm still learning, which is where the pleasure of it is really because there are always new techniques you can bring to a show, especially as the productions become increasingly elaborate."

Today Pat works with Sheffield and South Yorkshire's finest - STOS Theatre Company, Manor Operatic Society, Croft House Theatre Company, Handsworth and Hallam Theatre Company, Woodseats Musical Theatre Company, Endellion Theatre Company, Wales Community Theatre Players, Splinters Theatre Company, Southey Musical Theatre Company, Rotherham Teachers Student Academy, Rotherham Musical Theatre Company and Wickersley Musical Theatre Company.



In recognition of her work on *Cats*, Pat was this year awarded Croft's prestigious Brian Revitt Award, presented annually to the group member who has achieved something over and above expectations. It followed the award she received from Sheffield College for her outstanding work in encouraging and supporting stage makeup work experience opportunities, enabling students to realise their career aims.

"I did once try to count all the productions I have been involved in but I lost count after the first hundred," Pat laughs. "It's been so many of the classics and all of them so different but I have a great team working with me on the bigger shows to make sure we reach the sort of professional level that audiences today demand."

"I'm not sure I have a favourite but I did love *Man of La Mancha*, which I worked on for Endellion Theatre Company at Leeds City Varieties last year - but every show is special to me and I enjoy them all."

"There's a real feeling of camaraderie back stage in a theatre that I have always really enjoyed and continue to enjoy after all these years."

Although productions like *Cats* and Disney classic *Beauty and the Beast*, which she has overseen in major revivals at both the Lyceum and City Hall, present many great challenges, she does feel that *Shrek the Musical* could be in a league of its own when it comes to using theatre magic to create a show stopping effect.

"People have seen the films and know what they want to see and it's down to me and the team to make sure they are not disappointed. How do we make our leading man and leading lady green? That would be telling!"

Released on behalf of STOS Theatre Company by John Highfield PR.

Community Award for 50 years of Service

NODA South West



Sue Pomeroy is a Regional Representative and Membership Secretary for NODA South West. Recently Sue was nominated for and awarded the 'Somerset County Council Chair's Award for Service to the Community'. This award was based on over 50 years of voluntary service to

her home society Bridgwater Operatic Society.

As a member of BOS since 1968, Sue has performed in numerous musicals, starting in the back row of the chorus and eventually rising to a soprano principal performer in many productions. Since 1971 she's enjoyed being a member of the BOS management committee having been chairman twice, for 6 years and for 10 years. Additionally, Sue held roles of secretary, fundraising and social events. Currently Sue is Vice Chairman with responsibility for membership and box office. After numerous shows as an assistant director, Sue became show director in 2008, and worked with her MD husband Tony on review shows at the Bridgwater Arts Centre and at the Town Hall directed *Oklahoma*, *Sweet Charity*, *Company*, and *King and I*. In 2016 she was delighted to take BOS into the new McMillan Theatre directing *Annie*. Sue made another 'come back' playing 'Mrs Higgins' in *My Fair Lady* in spring 2018 and this year was thrilled to play 'Sister Mary Lazarus' in the BOS May production of *Sister Act* at the McMillan Theatre.

In 2007 the society published her book *But We Don't Do Opera* to celebrate the society's centenary and this was enjoyed by many.

When asked the question 'why did you give so much time in a voluntary capacity'? She answered 'I just love amateur musical theatre, and I am very proud of my home society. I want to see it continue to flourish with more and more performers enjoying BOS and its productions, and then audiences can enjoy the results of all the hard work by so many people on and off stage.'

As 'age' takes its toll Sue, having 'made more comebacks than Frank Sinatra', has reluctantly retired from the stage although she still enjoys being part of a choir 'when you can sing using a book and don't have to remember all the words'. But she also comments 'It was very nice to be acknowledged for all the hours of blood sweat and tears, not forgetting the love, the laughter and the applause, but I never expected it. Many people spend hours and never get recognition and my admiration and thanks go to all unsung heroes of amateur theatre'

Relaxed pantomime!

NODA Scotland

One of the main aims of Larbert Amateur Operatic Society (LAOS) is to entertain the local community and our annual pantomime is a great way to do that! We want everyone to have the opportunity to come along, so we introduced a relaxed performance for children and young people with additional support needs along with their families and friends.

It all started five years ago when a local group Tayavalla (part of Action for Children) approached LAOS about doing a relaxed performance for their group. We were thrilled to do this and worked with Tayavalla, ensuring we met all their needs. We set about making some adjustments, such as not using pyrotechnics, keeping some lights on in the hall, allowing people to move around freely and having quiet areas people could go to during the performance. The company also all signed (and sang!) our finale song of "Santa Claus is Coming to Town". Tayavalla were an amazing audience and our company absolutely loved performing for them.

The principal cast were honoured and



delighted to meet all the young people after the show.

As everyone had such a fabulous time, the following year we did another relaxed performance for Tayavalla and when word got round we were approached by other groups to see if they could join in the fun too. Of course, we were more than happy to extend our relaxed performance and we now have around 200 people

attending from groups including Tayavalla, Enable, Falkirk Carers and Play and Learning Support (PALS).

We would encourage other societies to put on relaxed performances as it's been such a positive experience for everyone involved. Ask anyone in LAOS and they'll tell you that the relaxed panto performance is their favourite as the audience are just one of the best!

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First and last...with The Lowestoft Players

NODA East



The final show of NODA President Jacquie Stedman ended with a BANG, well two actually, as her term of office as National President brought her once again to the 'far east' for her final show, to see the Players perform the immortal classic *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*...A fitting end to an exciting year of travel and real synchronicity as her reign began almost immediately with a visit to Lowestoft Players NODA award-winning *Made in Dagenham*.

She was quoted as saying that her first show would be hard to beat, and as a fitting tribute, it ended with yet another superb performance that would grace any professional stage. She was also able to observe a stunning *Evita* at the Players own theatre, previously The Bethel (now 'The Players Theatre'), during another visit to East Anglia. The most easterly theatre in the country!

The technical for 'Chitty...' alone were

enough to turn a directors hair grey with the need to reinforce the stage and access points for the non-human star of this extravaganza; and what a spectacle it was, with wings, headlights, and a very convincing 'flight' among the clouds! The audience was in awe of the effects which accompanied this first-class production and one which probably puts the Lowestoft Players in a premier league of societies capable of staging such a spectacular piece of amateur theatre, they surely qualify as one of the best in the country...If in doubt, next time you fancy a trip to the seaside, book a date when The Players are performing and see for yourself...Altogether now...' Oh, I do like to be beside the seaside...' well it's nearly panto time, and there is no rest for the wicked...

We are grateful to Jacquie for her warmth and praise, and her love for this Easterly extreme of the NODA map. We wish Jacquie, and her ever attentive husband David, a well-deserved rest and her successor now installed, all the very best... it will be a hard act to follow!

Terry Rymer (NODA Rep East Dist 6)

Onstage proposal surprises cast and audience of *The Addams Family*

NODA North

Both the cast and audience of a final performance of *The Addams Family* were in for more than they expected by the evening's entertainment in Chester-le-Street this summer! Dryburn Theatrical Workshop performed their annual musical from 19th – 22nd June 2019, which proved to be a truly unforgettable production for this family-orientated group.

After the cast took their bows during the last performance, the Lucas Beineke of the stage, played by Joseph Coulson, got down on one knee and proposed to his girlfriend Emma Scott, who played Morticia Addams. The pair have been members of the theatre group since each were 11 years old, having grown up amongst the group with both of their mothers being members of DTW for over 30 years. Since become more than just friends during the group's 2014 summer production of *Avenue Q*, Joe seemingly felt it appropriate (and romantic!) to



Credit - Signature Times Photography

propose to his girlfriend of five years on the stage that they "met, grew up and fell in love".

The proposal came as a huge shock to the cast as well as the audience, although the special moment was chosen by Joe due to the people who were present at the time. Emma's mother and sister were also part of the cast, her father was the Stage Manager, and Joe's mother is the group's Director. Friends and family joined them in the audience, whilst the stage was filled with what Joe described at the time as "this big family right here". Emma said, "It was the most perfect moment in the



Credit - Signature Times Photography

most perfect place – the people we are closest to were all in that room, and that stage is where it all started for the two of us. Without this group, me and Joe would never have even met. We couldn't be happier!"

Signature Times Photography were on hand, albeit under false pretences, to record the surprise engagement. You can even check the video out for yourself, on their Facebook page, which has managed to rack up almost 5,000 views. The couple are still on cloud nine and are now looking forward to their wedding in April 2022.

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