

TODAY



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Weekend and AGM
announced

NODA's plans for
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members

West End Girl

Mamma Mia! NODA Today interviews Gabriella Williams
about her roots in amateur theatre

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With apologies for the delay, welcome to the 1st edition of NODA Today for 2016 and a Happy New year to you all and success with your various productions...

As you will all now be aware Tony Gibbs C.E.O. left the Association in January having been in post for some 8yrs to pursue other activities. We were sorry to see him go and on behalf of the Association I would like to thank Tony for his work and commitment and would wish him well for the future.

Tony's departure has left us with a void that we are working to fill. Temporarily the office is being managed by the NODA Management team of Bronwen Stanway Executive PA, Sue Cuthbert Finance Manager and Dale Freeman Membership Manager. Council wishes to thank them for the work they are doing at this time. Council took the decision to instigate a root and branch review of everything the Association does and we are about to employ the services of a Business Analyst to assist us with this.

In the centre of this issue you will find all the details and booking forms for this year's NODA National Weekend and AGM which is to be held in the Metropole Hotel Birmingham. We hope that the programme we have drawn up will appeal to lots of you and that you will book for this and support the incoming President Michael Hastilow. I am sure it will be a first class weekend and the West Midlands Committee have put in some very hard work to ensure a successful time will be had by all.

I hope that you enjoy this issue and if you wish to comment or contribute to the next issue then please do contact us.

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did you noda?



NDA Representative

NODA has a new representative on the Council of the National Drama Festivals Association (Bronwen Stanway). Bronwen, a past Secretary of NDFA, will attend Council meetings and the AGM to represent NODA members and keep up to date with the world of Festivals.

NDFA is an Association of more than 37 independent Drama Festivals drawn from across the UK running full length, one act and youth Festivals. NDFA was formed to support amateur theatre in all its forms but in particular in the organisation of drama festivals and also sponsors a Playwriting Competition to encourage new writing.

Each year NDFA organises the British All Winners Drama Festival - a week long celebration of the best in dramatic theatre. In 2016 the Festival will take place in Hertford from the 25 to 31 July.

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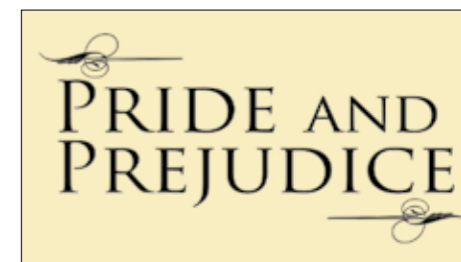
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Tony Gibbs Leaves NODA

After eight and a half years in the post Tony Gibbs has left his role as the National Operatic and Dramatic Association's Chief Executive Officer.

In a statement issued in January NODA's Chairman of Trustees, Fred Piggford said, "It has been agreed by mutual consent that Tony Gibbs is leaving his role as Chief Executive of NODA, as well as Company Secretary of our trading company, NODA Ltd., with immediate effect, as part of a restructure to which he had contributed various proposals and options, with the best long-term interests of NODA at heart."

Gibbs has worked for NODA since July 2007 and, over the years, has played a significant role in helping to modernise the organisation, as well as bringing a more strategic approach to business planning and the development of the association's membership services.

"He has personally shown consistent support for the trustees of the organisation," said Piggford, "and provided 'hands-on' operational management including input into marketing, publishing and the use of social media. He has also acted as a first class ambassador for NODA at all times."

Gibbs leaves NODA having been instrumental in creating various new initiatives during his term as CEO. These included introducing and delivering 'The Business of Amateur Theatre' workshop, recognising the importance for society

committees and boards to successfully balance the demands of running amateur theatre companies on a business-like basis, whilst still maintaining the ethos of their hobby.

Readers will remember our previous issue covered another new initiative inspired by Gibbs last Summer on the Isle of Man. Theatrefest was a new five-year plan in partnership with the IOMArt Council and focused on new writing. Sardines

is unaware, at this stage, whether Gibbs' departure will affect the future of Theatrefest but, rest assured, we will bring you news as soon as it becomes available, as well as NODA's future strategies which will no doubt include finding a possible replacement for Gibbs.

In conclusion Fred Piggford said: "We thank him for his many contributions and wish him every success in his future endeavours." ★



Article written by Paul Johnson, originally published in *Sardines*, issue no. 29



The show must go on...

Two popular writers may have thought their pantomime career was behind them – but oh no it wasn't!

After a break of six years, Toby Bradford and Tina Webster have now produced their 11th panto script, Rapunzel.

They had written their tenth panto, The Pantomime Adventures Of Sinbad, back in 2009. The show was first performed at Derby Guildhall Theatre by Kaleidoscope Players, as the previous nine had been, with Tina directing and Toby on stage.

Toby said: "After ten, we decided to take a break. I wanted to try my hand at other things. So far, I've written a couple of plays and I'm still working on a musical and a novel. I've also done a bit of writing for TV.

"When Tina suggested doing a new panto, I wasn't entirely convinced, I thought I'd moved on but, as soon as I sat down to think about it, the ideas started sparking and we were away.

"The great thing about pantomime is you can set your imagination free. There are no rules. OK, there are some rules – like the baddie never wins – but, outside of that, anything can happen."

Tina added: "We were ready for a break after Sinbad. Then I went to live in America for two years and, when I got back, I felt like doing something creative again. I needed something to get my teeth into after doing very little in the US. Also, it's something my late Mum was proud of, so I need to continue with it.

"It's not an easy process, but I think we work well together. Our individual skills work well as a partnership, Toby is a good story-teller, and I am good at visualising how it will work on stage. We trust each other's judgement enough to alter each other's work without feeling that we may offend or be offended."

Rapunzel was published in December by the National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA). The organisation has also published the ten other Bradford and Webster pantomimes and they are performed by amateur theatre companies across the UK – and further afield.

Toby said: "There are about 20-or-so productions a year of the various shows. The most popular seem to be Treasure Island and Aladdin. And there have been productions in France, Italy – and Canada!

"We decided to write Rapunzel – and we both seemed to have agreed that's

what we were going to write before we'd even discussed it – because we wanted another classic, well-known tale but something that was not the usual pantomime fare.

"I looked back at the Brothers Grimm version of the story and quickly realised there's a lot of it that's perhaps not suitable for panto, such as the prince being blinded violently and Rapunzel spending quite some time as a homeless teenage single mother of twins."

Tina said: "So we've taken the basic story of a girl with amazing hair who is locked in a tower without stairs or a door and woven a magical tale around that.

"Also, the film Tangled has been a very successful choice for Disney, so the story obviously works well for today's generation of children."

Rapunzel the Pantomime is available for licensing from NODA at www.noda.org.uk/pantos along with the ten other Bradford and Webster titles.

To find out more about the pair's shows visit www.facebook.com/bradfordandwebsterpantomimes. ★

SAFEGUARDING NODA'S YELLOW BRICK ROAD

NODA's plans for a 5 year Youth Strategy 2016 – 2021

Let's face it...we can keep box-stepping and jazz-handing our way into the future but, at some point our last sequin will glisten and our sparkling red shoes will go the way of the Wicked Witch of the East... but where are the Dorothys to take those slippers and skip on down the yellow brick roads? NODA must do more to support our future; our youth members.



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So now all that's clear it's time to break out the ice cream and gin and tonics! It's the interval (our mid-term aims). At this point we hope to establish a presence for youth at both regional and national levels by ensuring that all events of this scale are attended by the Councillor for Youth

or a Youth advisor to personally respond to all enquires. In addition to this we would hope that these representatives would also be given the platform to present updates on Youth Strategy.

It's also at this midpoint that we will step up a drive for youth membership. This is not just about recruiting new members but keeping the ones we have by identifying those groups within NODA that should be classified as youth theatre and providing them with tailor-made support through their local Youth Adviser. We will also aim to identify youth theatre organisations that are not part of NODA and speak to them about the benefits of NODA membership.

Finally Act 2 (our long term aims). We begin the build to the grand finale. Standby with glitter ball and sequins... we will centralise support for these youth groups in all aspects of theatre that are non-creative; offering poster and programme templates as well as templates for all aspects of media strategy (both print and viral).

We will specialise the training given to Youth Advisers to enable them to provide a more comprehensive coverage to their regions depending on local requirements.

Finally (and here's where we go all out – think pyrotechnics) we hope to be able to create a brand with NODA specifically for youth. Ensuring that these groups are cared for and responded to correctly within the overall umbrella of NODA's national portfolio.

Of course none of this will be possible without your continued support, help and guidance. So we will be seeking your feedback on this throughout its development. ★

As a result we have come up with a five year plan which aims to tackle our youth membership head on and keep hold of them for as long as possible. Thereby safeguarding firstly theatre making and secondly theatre venues throughout the UK at a time when budgets are tightening and the public purse shrinking.

This plan is broken down into three sections. For the sake of argument (and to keep you engaged) lets call these "Act 1", "The Interval" and "Act 2."

So Act 1 (our short term aims) here we go. Let's lay out the exposition and introduce you to some of the leading characters...

Firstly we need to establish a youth presence on the NODA website. Current thought in terms of layout and format is to use the template that we have for the regions but adopt a style that appeals to younger members establishing links with Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media to ensure regular updates.

This will be supplemented by regional weekend workshops and a Youth Theatre Academy using the Disney Workshops and the NODA Summer School as models.

For those mad fools out there who want to establish their own youth theatre we will provide comprehensive online guides showing you how to succeed in business without really trying! In addition to this we will offer support to all youth advisers in the hope that they will offer training sessions within their own regions.

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Presidential Meanderings

It is hard to believe that, as I write this article, it is very nearly six months since I was inaugurated as President of this wonderful Association.

Apart from some 20 visits to societies within my own historical and local patch, I have already been privileged to have made major trips as President in my first 5 months in office:

- ★ Isle of Man – Theatre Fest a festival of new work co-sponsored with the Isle of Man Arts Council where I saw three very different but exciting productions involving primarily amateur performers, including many young people. There were some stunning performances in these productions.
- ★ Mary and I also had a three day visit to societies in the Portsmouth area, including a visit to a dress rehearsal for *Safari Party*, a play from Romsey AODS, a first night performance of *Sunset Boulevard* from Portsmouth Players as well as a visit to an early days rehearsal for *Mikado* with Southampton OS. On that night the Gentlemen of Japan were enhanced by one NODA President complete with Presidential Bling (as I now fondly call the Presidential regalia!) I am trying wherever possible with the more long distant visits to see several societies over a number of days or even meeting a number of our members at such as a District meeting.
- ★ NODA South East - one of the first invitation I received was to visit Woking AOS for their production of *Sweeney Todd*, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street on Friday the 13th of November – the blood flowed that night! Mary and I survived that auspicious occasion without being turned into presidential pies and we very much look forward to meeting many members during our year of office as we fly the flag for NODA which exists to support all our members whether societies or individuals.
- ★ We have also had an early visit to AIMS our sister organisation in Ireland to join with our many friends in Ireland as they celebrated the 50th



- Anniversary of AIMS. We very much look forward to re-joining our many friends in AIMS in June next when we attend their Annual Awards Weekend
- ★ We have already had three trips to NODA South West with visits to two societies in Yeovil, The Merlin Theatre in Frome as well as a production directed by Councillor colleague, Nick Lawrence of *Guys and Dolls* at Axminster MT.
- ★ NODA London – A visit to the legendary British Airways Cabin Crews Entertainment Section (more usually abbreviated to BACCES) Annual Panto (*Sleeping Beauty*) at the Watford Palace – all the glitter and glam of a top flight (no pun intended) professional show. Indeed my Presidential Bling was overshadowed!
- ★ In January we were privileged to join our many friends from Bradford Catholic Players at their annual Mass, held this year in the Anglican Cathedral in Bradford – the first time a Catholic Mass had been celebrated there for over 500 years. It was a wonderful and inspiring occasion for me in the Cathedral in which I was confirmed some 55 years ago!
- ★ A memorable visit to Northern Ireland in February to see a great production of *Legally Blonde* with the Ballywillan Society and a District Meeting set up by our Regional Rep in the North, Shelagh Hobart. Mary and I stayed on for a few extra days and I can recommend Belfast as a great city to visit in this new era of peace in the city.

In addition to the above society visits Mary and I have been delighted to attend several Regional Events including the NODA Scotland AGM and Gala Weekend in October; the NODA South West Awards evening in early March and later that same month the NODA North AGM and Gala Dinner. We were made so welcome at each event and it was great to meet many new people as well as catching up with some old friends.

The productions we have seen have all been of a stunningly high standard and it is wonderful to see that most societies are now coming to terms with the electronic era. Of course traditional local press, posters and flyers are still of great value but those societies who are playing to near capacity audiences are those who have embraced the electronic age with social media in particular. I am well into the latter half of my 60th Decade (alright I am 68) and although I have difficulty at times keeping up with Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, Pinsent and the many other branches which are quite frankly beyond me, they are not beyond our younger members and they use these electronic tools to the absolute maximum to sell their shows (and they do take possession of them!). Successful societies are welcoming young people with open arms, they have tremendous talent, unbelievable drive and boundless enthusiasm - do not suppress it but embrace them and encourage them. Choose the right show and they will flock to your society and bring a whole new audience with them.

I am passionate about theatre, amateur or professional as indeed is virtually everyone who will read these brief *Meanderings*. Participation in Theatre is open to everyone, young or old, married or single, introvert or extrovert, actor or technician or tea maker. Theatre is something you can DO throughout your life and the skills you learn in the theatre you will use every day of your working lives (and retirement!) ★

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regionalroundup East

BAD GIRLS – THE BADDEST AND THE BEST!



Spotlight Musical Theatre Group (NODA district 6) had an exciting interruption to their scheduled rehearsals when Nicole Faraday, (star of *Bad Girls*, both the TV and West End productions of the prison drama, and TV soap *Emmerdale*), turned up to watch the company strut their stuff in HMP Larkhall prison (well the first six scenes of Act 1 anyway), and what a night it was for the cast. Nicole had travelled to

Beccles in Suffolk to host an acting workshop with show director Andy Osbourne and members of the Spotlight group ahead of their summer production of *BAD GIRLS the musical*, she said, "I loved seeing the group perform the show because it is the best job I have ever done and it is great to see them carrying on the 'Bad Girls' name". After watching the rehearsal Nicole gave a great talk and some very constructive feedback. Nicole, who is coming to the Norwich Playhouse in June to star in the *Charlie Chaplin Story* told the cast to have a ball being 'BAD' she said, "they haven't been rehearsing long but the stuff they have done is brilliant. I thought they were all really great. It was just lovely meeting everyone involved. Well done everyone". Andy was full of praise for the actress saying, "What an amazing night with Nicole Faraday at one of 'our' *Bad Girls* rehearsals, many thanks to her for coming all the way from London to 'lil ol' Beccles, you could see the delight on everyone's faces we'll do the show proud, thanks Nicole for your wonderful chat and your feedback".

BAD GIRLS the musical will be at the Beccles Public Hall from June 28th to July 2nd. Tickets are on sale now www.becclespublichall.org.uk Photographs by Caroline Lawrence www.spotlightbeccles.org.uk ★



Why do we do it?

Why do we do it I hear you cry... well for many reasons, for friendship, for charity, for personal ambition, for the love of entertaining whether a seasoned performer or treading the boards for the very first time, I can guarantee you that each and every one of those bright colourful faces that appear in front of you has a belly full of nerves before the curtain goes up.

Ten months ago a members of the Reydon & Southwold Pantomime Group sat down with a blank page in front of them, creative juices flowed (and I suspect probably alcoholic ones too) witty banter and local humour poured on to the pages and after many rewrites the scenes were set...now that would have been a fairy tale ending for the production team who have spent hours, days, weeks turning the script writers dreams into reality with elaborate scenery and some very imaginative props!

In the height of summer, we eagerly meet to read-through the script for the first time, laughter pours through the reading room at Reydon Church with the producers keenly seeking their perfect character match. Then the long awaited phone call from the producer... your role is... yay!!

September arrives and our first rehearsal which can only be described as a room full of excitable screaming banshees, we can be quite loud but mostly at inappropriate moments but not always when the producers call for it on stage!

Next appear tape measures, pins, brightly colour material and after weeks of trying-on, the costumes are almost complete!

In December we find ourselves at St Edmunds Hall, gulp... reality sets in! You can have two types of rehearsals, an absolutely amazing one when you go home buzzing to your loved ones about your excellent evening and then yes..... you've guessed it, the evening from hell when you forget all your lines, sing out of tune and your arms and legs refuse to work as a team for the final dance!

That brings us almost up to date, the patient musicians who have helped us with every bum note and encouraged us through some rocky moments, the sound and lighting crew who have illuminated the truly wonderful scenery and amazing costumes, all made by our hard working wardrobe team but it doesn't end there as lurking behind the scenes are a team of truly amazing people who call us, prompt us in our 'blank' moments, hand us props, change the scenery and chaperone the children, none of this could happen without them!

So, the audience arrive and are greeted by the wonderful front of house team. The curtain rises... and the hall is filled with fun, laughter, boo's and hisses and that all too wonderful applause. Yes, this is why we do it and we love every single minute... Roll on next year, we are going to do it all over again. ★

Submitted by Jo Self, Reydon & Southwold Pantomime Group (NODA district 6)

Reydon and Southwold Pantomime Group were just one of the many nominees attending the Eastern Region's Gala Awards Ceremony and AGM in St Ives, Cambridgeshire date this year.

Described by NODA rep and local press as creative and original, this group has a long tradition of donating its' profits to charity and the nomination for Best Panto in their 35th year for Robin Hood, was no different, except.... this year..... they are the proud winners.

Terry Rymer Noda District 6 Representative says: I think Jo says it all for this group of all female pantomime group. They have provided many years of original, quality christmas entertainment for the community, and all profits made are donated to local charities.

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regional roundup East Midlands



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Spotlight on David Fisher, NODA Representative for North Lincolnshire

69 years of age, David was born at Plymouth in Devon but lived most of his life in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and now Skegness in Lincolnshire. He was educated at Bungay Grammar School and latterly secured a degree through the Open University. He first appeared on stage at the age of 14 in a school production where he was given the part of a fox. The costume had a hole in between two fingers of the left hand. This annoyed young David intently and since then he has never gone on stage without thoroughly checking the costume!

Over the years he has appeared in plays, shows, pantomimes including many seasons as a Dame in Cambridgeshire. He has also directed plays, shows, etc and his claim to fame is when with his wife he presented in Cambridge a revue called Around the World in 120 Minutes. When he was asked at the beginning of 2015 to undertake the role within NODA as a District Rep he jumped at the opportunity, looking on this as reward for his 55 years involvement in this wonderful world of theatre. In his first year he has visited all bar two of the societies under his care and is thoroughly enjoying the position and has great honour in representing NODA at these functions. ★

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YOUR NODA NEEDS

After many years of sterling work Peter Beddall (Awards Secretary) and Mavis Beddall (Secretary) are retiring from the East Midlands NODA committee.

Please contact Nanette Lovell if you are interested in taking on one of these posts.



West End Girl

NODA Today interviews Gabriella Williams, who plays Sophie in Mamma Mia about her roots in amateur theatre

Gabriella started her showbiz career with the Retford Operatic Society and the Mini Operatic Bunch (MOB) at Retford, Nottinghamshire. After training at Tring Park School for Performing Arts (A levels in the morning, musical theatre in the afternoon!) she studied for a degree in Musical Theatre at The Arts Educational Schools in London. Towards the end of her course she was given the part of Chris in the award-winning 'Carrie' at Southwark Playhouse and only a week later Gabriella started her current job, playing Sophie in the West End production of Mamma Mia, which she has done since June 2015.



What was your first role in amateur theatre?

The first big role I played was Tallulah in 'Bugsy Malone' in 2006 with The MOB at the Retford Little Theatre.

When did you realise that you really enjoyed being on stage?

My family have always participated in musicals - my Mum loves to act and my Nan loves to dance and even my Dad got involved in the backstage work. I don't remember a time I haven't been rehearsing for a show, it was my hobby throughout my youth. At 16 I took the leap to train professionally and now at 22 it's my full time job! I'm very lucky to have always known what I wanted to do, to have had a passion.

As an amateur what was your favourite show...and role?

I met all of my closest friends through my time in amateur dramatics in Retford

and every show I did with them was an absolute ball. If I were to choose one it would have been 'Les Miserables' in 2008 at The Retford Majestic Theatre with the MOB. I played the role of Cosette and all of the other roles were played by my very closest friends. My final role with the MOB was Belle in 'Beauty and the Beast' - I don't think any girl could say they didn't long to be a Disney Princess.

When did you decide that you wanted to perform professionally?

Seeing 'Wicked' in the West End for the first time at the age of 11. I looked up and saw a beautiful, blonde woman floating down from the stage in a bubble, singing and smiling - I was captivated. That is her JOB. Her JOB! She's being paid to have all of that fun! I knew I had to at least try.

Memorable moment?

The MOB in Retford is a Sunday Theatre group for ages 8-18. They put on a musical production at the Majestic Theatre in Retford once a year. I was part of the MOB

from age 8-16 - I did countless Musicals, Pantomimes and Concerts with them. Last month 69 MOBsters got on a coach to see me in the West End playing Sophie in 'Mamma Mia'. When the curtain goes up to begin the show I sit alone ready to sing "I have a dream"...when the curtain went up this time there was a roar from the audience that I will never forget. Lovely support.

Any theatre superstitions?

I am the most horrendously superstitious person. When you're doing the exact same show 8 times a week you fall into a very precise routine backstage. I have to leave my dressing room to specific lyrics and have particular parts of the set I need to touch before going on stage - ridiculous!

What advice would you give a young person who would like a career in the performing arts?

- ★ Only do it if you cannot not do it.
- ★ If you cannot not do it, PLEASE between criticising yourself and working hard - let yourself enjoy it!
- ★ Don't try and be anything that you're not, you are the only you, and it might be you that they are looking for.



★ NODA EAST MIDLANDS LONG SERVICE AWARDS PRESENTED JULY TO DECEMBER 2015 ★

Members are reminded that there is a variety of ways by which NODA can reward your service to amateur theatre. For details of the badges, medals and pins available contact head office or your regional councillor. Oh - and always a reasonable amount of time (six weeks) for the award to be delivered.

★ **65 YEARS**
★ **Erewash Musical Society:**
★ Fay Kirk, and Jean
★ Simmons

★ **60 YEARS**
★ **Long Eaton Operatic Society:**
★ Jennifer Carty

★ **45 YEARS**
★ **Chesterfield Operatic Society:**
★ Diane Sanderson

★ **40 YEARS**
★ **Chesterfield Gilbert & Sullivan Society:**
★ David Stokes

★ **Long Eaton Operatic Society:**
★ Angela Walters

★ **Long Eaton Operatic Society:**
★ John Fox

regionalroundup London

Councillor's Comments



As we commemorate Shakespeare's death this year I have been following a blog written by a member of London's Tower Theatre – one of the amateur companies who are working with the RSC on 'A Play for the Nation' – A Midsummer Night's Dream. All the amateurs are playing the Mechanicals and along with selected companies across the country they have been attending rehearsals locally, and with the RSC via Skype and in person to produce an amazing piece of theatre. Each company has the opportunity to perform, with the professionals, in their own Region and then at the Royal Shakespeare Company's Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. They are also working with local schoolchildren who form Titania's fairy train, and for whom an experience like this will remain with them forever.

It has had very favourable reviews in the national press and once all the local performances have been done each group will perform in Stratford. I am sure it has also been a tremendous undertaking for the professional cast, as each cast of Mechanicals will provide a different set of dynamics to which they will have to adapt.

I can only imagine what an amazing feeling this must be for all those players who have auditioned and fought off the opposition to get to this point in their amateur 'careers'... let's face it, wouldn't we all just love an opportunity like that!

Very often we see productions where the standard is so very high that the only difference would seem to be that we, as amateurs, are doing it all for love. For some it is a springboard to a theatrical life, and for others a hobby where they have the chance to undertake challenging roles on a regular basis. But for whatever reason we participate let's do it well and with enthusiasm...who knows where it will take us!! ★

Jacquie Stedman
Councillor

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MEET THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE LONDON TEAM



NICK FORD, E-COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

The NODA London region is seeking to significantly boost its social media presence by recruiting a volunteer to solely look after social media and e-communications. Nick Ford has taken on the role and is starting by reinvigorating the NODA London Twitter account. Attention will then also turn to Facebook, where we already have good presence. The over-riding aim is to make the NODA London Twitter feed and Facebook page the place to go for all NODA London societies to find out what is on across the whole of London. But at the same time, Nick has been writing articles to help all NODA London societies improve their social media presence - which is becoming increasingly important in order to sell tickets and to attract new members. We have found that around 75% of NODA London societies are on Twitter and most of the remainder are on Facebook instead, but the aim is to make sure that each society takes advantage of this great (and free!) medium of publicity.



ROBIN KELLY, DISTRICT 4

An extremely young Robin Kelly made his stage debut in 1967 with his local operatic society in Manchester, going on to appear with various societies in the area until his move to London in 1975. Training at the Central School of Speech & Drama was followed by a teaching career which began in Drama before working in Special Educational Needs up to his retirement last year. In the meantime, he continued involvement with amateur theatre, directing, performing, writing, lighting, and even playing his guitar for a wide range of musicals and plays with a number of local societies and youth groups. He is looking forward to making use of that experience in visiting as many productions as possible on his patch, as well as contributing to the work of NODA in London.



MIKE MONK, DISTRICT 10

Mike has just retired after over fifty years of treading the boards, directing and choreographing musicals for companies in North London, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. He started with Margate Operatic back in the 70's, his first show being Hello Dolly and finished directing and choreographing the same show recently for Radlett Light Opera Society, who gave him an emotional send off.

To keep his hand in and keep in contact with the many friends he has made over the years, he decided to become a NODA Rep for area 10. He looks forward to meeting as many of you as possible over the forthcoming years. ★



regionalroundup North

Tynemouth Priory new approach

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Tynemouth Priory Theatre is a privately run traditional theatre with its own premises and an active programme of in-house theatrical productions and visiting shows. The theatre is in a healthy financial position, relying on a core of season ticket holders and sales of seats for productions (as well as hiring out the theatre, scenery cloths and properties).

As the theatre relies on its income for all its running and development needs, the society is keenly interested in the audiences it attracts for productions, and in putting on a programme of events that will sustain the theatre in a state of rude health.

The success of Tynemouth Priory Theatre has not been accidental. It is based on a deeper understanding of the customer base (both existing and potential). Qualitative and quantitative market research has been carried out on a regular basis in this recent development with income and profits rising significantly as well as occupancy numbers with the average age of audience members falling and a larger catchment area

The vision for the theatre was to strike the best balance between commercial and artistic

success with member/volunteer fulfilment. From that vision sprang a number of tactical developments which include a more customer/audience focus, developing and concentrating on the theatre's obvious niche, skilled production choice (a well-balanced programme of productions), an emphasis on high quality productions, a new and improved website and on-line booking facilities, partnership working with other symbiotic local business (for example a meal-deal with a local restaurant), enhanced facilities and services on site (refurbished audience areas and refreshments in the interval), value-for-money ticket prices, reasonable refreshment charges and superior marketing including mailing lists and regular feedback to the management committee.

The Theatre looks forward to a successful future based on its management approach, visionary thinking and the ability of its membership to adapt and act in its best interest (for example the current up-dating of the website). The flexible, audience-orientated strategy is strongly entrenched in the theatre's approach and it is prepared to adapt and adjust to meet future audience demands so it can be enjoyed and be an enjoyable show-business organisation. If Tynemouth Priory Theatre has anything to do with it, the show will go on. ★

Hawes Lights out

It was mentioned in the last magazine that the lights had failed briefly during an open air performance in the North and the audience lit the stage with mobile phone lights. Well Hawes OS went one better during their pantomime, *The Wind in the Willows*, in December when the whole of the venues electricity failed just before curtain up amidst gale force winds and lashing rain outside. No music from the electronic keyboard, no stage lighting, no lighting in the hall. In true Blitz spirit the society decided to battle on with their last night performance. The prompter, with torch, was pressed into becoming a 'moving spotlight' with Santa giving out presents to the children at the end in torchlight. The audience seemed to appreciate keeping going and the 'show must go on' attitude and all went home happy (if somewhat tossed and wet from the inclement weather). ★



Ian Bows Out

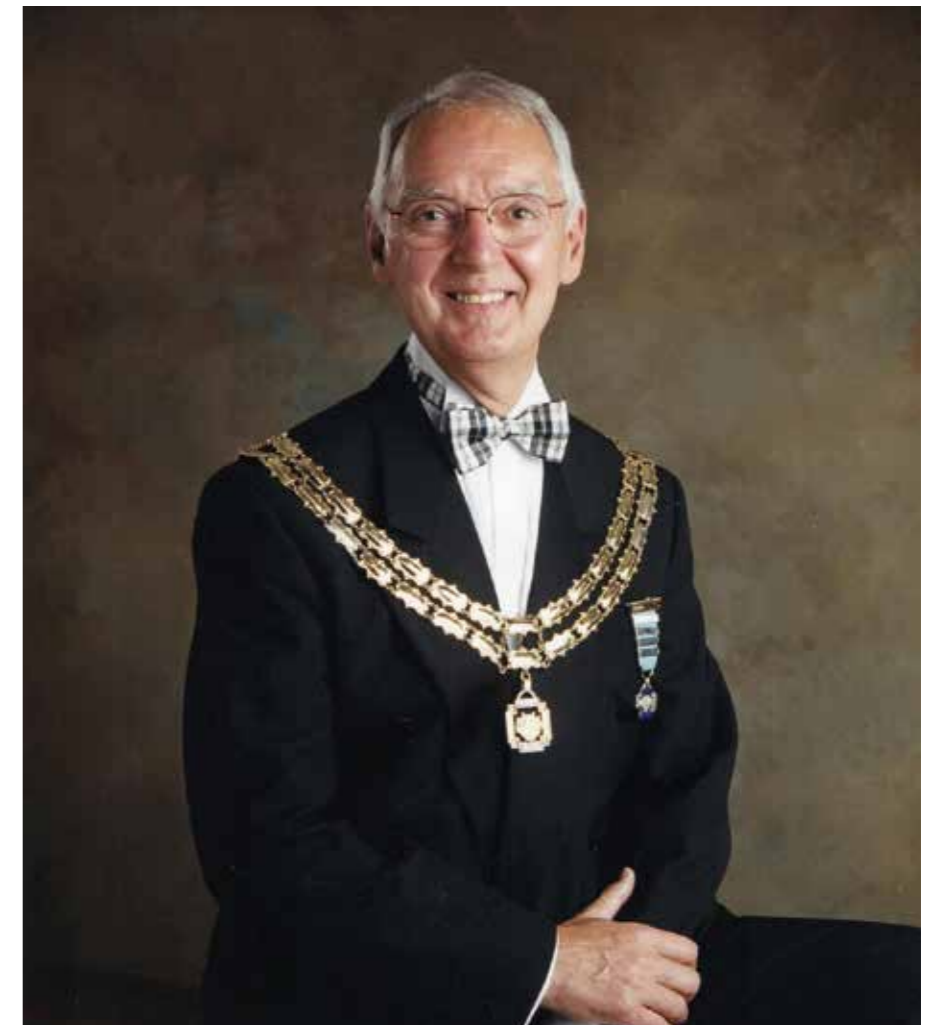
Ian Wells first trod the boards as a child in a pageant in Burntisland, Fife, the town where he grew up. Having moved to Tyneside in 1951, he appeared as a Herald in an open-air production of 'Merrie England' with the Hebburn Operatic Society in 1953 to mark the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

His first big role was that of 'The Stage Manager' in the play 'Our Town', by Thornton Wilder, mounted by Gateshead Grammar School in 1952, and then 'Mr Darcy' in 'Pride and Prejudice' the following year.

From then on he appeared with many groups in the area including University Rag Week shows and he remarks that he closed at least three theatres in Newcastle, The Palace Theatre, the Flora Robson Playhouse, and the Moss Empire, when 'Rag Revue' moved to successive houses as another closed. He appeared with Jarrow AO&DS and in 1962 joined Felling & District AO&DS for its production of 'Brigadoon' where he met his wife, Hazel. They became founder members of the Caprian AO&DS in 1965, and from then on Ian appeared with, and directed for, many societies including South Shields G&S, Durham AOS, Tynemouth AOS, Newcastle AO&DS, West End OS, as well as Felling, until 2013 when he retired from being active in amateur theatre, having been involved in nearly 200 shows. His favourite roles included Henry Higgins, Nathan Detroit, J Pierrepont Finch, and Henry Machin.

He put his name forward for election as a NODA Northern Area Regional Representative in 1989 when the incumbent, Rene Dearden, passed away, but was unsuccessful. In 1991, however, he was approached by Harry Low, the Northern Area Councillor, with a view to succeeding him. Ian agreed to let his name go forward and was duly elected Northern Area Councillor and installed as such at the NODA Annual Conference in Bournemouth in September 1991.

Two years later he was appointed Chairman of the Committee of the NODA Drama Summer School which



was held at Churchill Hall, University of Bristol, and served in that capacity until 1997. This was one of the three Summer Schools held under the auspices of NODA at the time, the other two being the Operatic School at Ripon, and the Technical at Winchester. Discussions had been taking place in Council about combining the three schools into one which seemed a logical step and would be more economical to fund. The decision was made to go ahead with this plan and Ian was appointed Chairman of the NODA Summer School. After much research by him and Treasurer Reg Vinnicombe, a recommendation that it be held at Warwick University was accepted by Council, and the inaugural combined Summer School was held from 8th – 15th August 1998, with Kate Neilson as Director. The courses on offer, some for the first time,

were Choreography, Drama Directors, Drama Performers, Make-up, Musical Performance, Musical Theatre Directors, Musical Directors, Opera Performance, Stage Lighting, Stage Management, and Wardrobe. Ian continued to serve as Chairman until 2010, when he retired from Council.

Ian was elected Vice-President of the Association in 1998, and succeeded to the Presidency in 1999. He was elected a Life Member of the Association in 2000, and continued to serve on Council until his retirement in 2010. After his year as President he continued to serve on the Area/Regional Committee as Editor and then Membership Secretary until his retirement in 2016, having served NODA in various capacities for twenty-five years. ★

Notice of the Annual General Meeting of National Operatic and Dramatic Association

**Saturday 24th September 2016 at 2pm
at The Hilton Birmingham Metropole, Birmingham**

Draft agenda

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation of notice of meeting 2. Apologies for absence 3. In memoriam 4. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting 5. Adoption of the Council's report for the period ended 31 December 2015 6. Adoption of the Accounts for the period ended 31 December 2015 7. To appoint the Association's Auditor 8. To declare the numbers of the membership in accordance with Rule 27(b) (vi) 9. Membership subscription rates 10. Alteration to the rules as recommended to the NODA membership by Council 11. NODA Ltd Board report 12. To elect the Appeal Tribunal in accordance with Rule 55 13. The Presidential Address | <table border="1"> <tr><td>NODA London
Jacquie Stedman</td></tr> <tr><td>NODA Scotland
Gordon Blackburn</td></tr> <tr><td>NODA South East
Kay Rowan</td></tr> <tr><td>NODA East Midlands
Nannette Lovell</td></tr> <tr><td>NODA West Midlands
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Christine Hunter Hughes</td></tr> <tr><td>NODA North East
David Streeter</td></tr> </table> | NODA London
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Nick Lawrence | NODA Wales & Ireland
Leah Collett | NODA East
Don McKay | NODA North
Gordon Richardson | NODA North West
Christine Hunter Hughes | NODA North East
David Streeter | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. To declare the Regional Councillors for the ensuing year in accordance with Rule 23 (c) and (d) 15. To elect in accordance with Rule 21, Life Members of the Association to serve on the Council 16. To elect the nominees of the Council for Honorary Membership of the Association 17. To declare the election of the President and Vice-President for the ensuing year in accordance with Rule 20: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – President: Mr Michael Hastilow (West Midlands) – Vice-President: Mr Nick Lawrence (South West) 18. To Elect in accordance with rule 35 the nominee of Council for Life Membership of the Association. 19. Any other business |
| NODA London
Jacquie Stedman | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NODA Scotland
Gordon Blackburn | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Christine Hunter Hughes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NODA North East
David Streeter | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Call for resolutions

In accordance with Rule 27 Business at Annual General Meeting, particulars of all resolutions required to be brought before the Annual General Meeting shall be given to the Chief Executive no less than 30 days before the date fixed for such meeting. If you would like to propose a resolution, please send it to Fred Piggford, Chairman of Trustees, National Operatic and Dramatic Association no later than Thursday 25th August 2016 by email to fred.piggford@noda.org.uk or by mail to 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH

2016 NODA Presidential Gala Weekend and AGM

Friday 23rd – Sunday 25th September



WELCOME

From the heart of the West Midlands we extend a warm welcome to our 2016 National Gala Weekend & AGM. It's an outstanding opportunity for members networking in a convivial atmosphere, with a chance to catch up in the very best environment with friends and make new acquaintances whilst having fun in the process.

We look forward to seeing you all.

Michael Hastilow
West Midlands Regional Councillor and Vice President

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE - MEET, EAT, PLAY & SLEEP!

- ★ Beneficial networking opportunities to reflect and share
- ★ Professionally led innovative workshop
- ★ Trade exhibition and advice Information on existing & new exciting products and services
- ★ Annual General Meeting with Poster & Programme Awards
- ★ Reception and Gala Dinner with guest speaker Connie Fisher
- ★ Cabaret entertainment from a local society and dancing to a Michael Bubl e Tribute Band
- ★ Top Class Overnight Accommodation with Leisure Facilities

OUR CHOSEN VENUE:

The Hilton Birmingham Metropole is a vibrant modern hotel with extensive facilities. Guests will be able to relax and feel comfortable in an environment comprising: spacious bar & lounge areas and excellent catering in outstanding function suites. Superb leisure facilities are also available. Accommodation is of the highest quality making the venue the very best backdrop to help ensure an exciting Gala weekend.

TRANSPORT

The venue is strategically positioned at the centre of the motorway network within easy reach of the M40, M42, M6 and M1. Birmingham International Station and Birmingham Airport are either a taxi or 10 minute walk away (clearly signposted). A regular courtesy vehicle service operates between the hotel and the station.

CULTURAL & HISTORICAL

Birmingham's distinctive heritage is energized by the youngest population in Europe. Birmingham's transformation into a dynamic, cosmopolitan, accessible and welcoming city has been truly remarkable. Delegates and guests have an opportunity to sample some of its delights throughout this Gala weekend.



PATRON AND GUEST SPEAKER

NODA feel privileged to enjoy the huge support and personal interest our Patron Connie Fisher gives to the organisation. In accepting the invitation to be guest of honour Connie has said "I am so happy to be part of NODA as a Patron and am looking forward to being with you at the Celebration Gala in September".



WELCOME TO THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL GALA WEEKEND & AGM

All delegates and guests can be assured of:

- ★ A high level of service provided by the management and staff
- ★ An extensive range of amenities and facilities
- ★ A fresh experience of NODA and what it has to offer
- ★ An opportunity to attend an exciting inspirational workshop
- ★ Information on existing and new products & services from traders
- ★ Magnificent Black Tie Gala Evening with Dinner & Entertainment
- ★ A simplified booking system

ITINERARY

- ★ 09.15 Welcome from the NODA Team
- ★ 10.30 Workshop
- ★ 10.30 Meeting of NODA Regional Representatives
- ★ AGM Rehearsal

- ★ 12.45 Fork Buffet Lunch
- ★ 14.15 AGM & Presidential Inauguration Ceremony
- ★ 18.45 Drinks Reception and Gala Evening

WORKSHOP – YOU SAY TOMAYTO I SAY TOMATO

Cathleen McCarron is a professional voice and dialect coach as well as an actress with 15 years' experience in theatre, film, television and radio. She is currently based in the Voice Department of the National Theatre in London and previously has worked at the Royal Shakespeare Company and several major drama schools. The workshop will cover:

- ★ Developing your ear for accents
- ★ Replicate accents with ease
- ★ Step by step process to analyse and learn with focus of a general American accent
- ★ Exploring the use of vowels and consonants, stress and intonation

AGM

- ★ NODA Annual General Meeting
- ★ Inauguration Ceremony and Presidential Address
- ★ Annual Report
- ★ Open Forum
- ★ Poster & Programme Awards

GALA EVENING

- ★ Drinks Reception
- ★ Welcome your National NODA President Michael Hasilow and honoured guests
- ★ Silver service three course dinner & coffee
- ★ Introduction of our patron & guest speaker Connie Fisher

ENTERTAINMENT

- ★ Cabaret from Members of West Bromwich Operatic Society
- ★ Dancing to Steve Maitland with his Michael Bubl  Tribute & Big Swing Band
- ★ Premium Raffle



NIGHT NIGHT

- ★ Stylish Rooms are designed for comfort and convenience with:
- ★ LCD Television
- ★ In-room movie channel
- ★ Air Conditioning
- ★ Safe
- ★ Tea and Coffee Making Facilities
- ★ Complimentary WiFi

RELAXATION

- ★ Unwind in the fully equipped Living Well Health Club
- ★ Swim in the heated indoor pool.
- ★ De-stress in the Ocean Rooms Spa pool or sauna
- ★ Tone up in the fitness centre. Indulge in a massage (chargeable)
- ★ Relax in spacious lounge areas to catch up over drinks/refreshments



SHOPPING

Retail therapy can be found at the recently opened Resorts World Complex which is a large shopping and entertainment centre

including cinema and casino all less than 10 minutes walk from the hotel.

Further retail therapy can be found in the heart of the city, just a short train journey away to the newly regenerated Grand Central. From here you can access a mix of shops, including John Lewis, Harvey Nichols, Selfridges, our world famous historic markets and Jewellery Quarter. Not to mention the great caf  bars and restaurants.



OUT AND ABOUT

The West Midlands has much to offer, whether you travel by road or rail your journey will pass through areas of outstanding natural beauty. The Region encompasses Staffordshire,

the Moorlands & Potteries, the Welsh Marches of Shropshire, which is the cradle of the industrial revolution at Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale. We stretch through Worcestershire, famed for its porcelain and wonderful Malvern Hills and on to Herefordshire with its distinctive cattle and apple orchards, and back across to Warwickshire, the birthplace of that playwright we lovingly call 'The Bard'.

A range of packages are available and are listed below. Payment options are either cheque or credit card and details of how to pay can be found at the foot of the booking page.

DESCRIPTION	Rate per person based on 2 people sharing	Room rate for one person
Package A+: 24 Hour Delegate Rate including Friday night ★ Full weekend Friday to Sunday ★ 2 nights' accommodation & breakfast ★ Saturday morning coffee ★ Workshop ★ Saturday lunch ★ Afternoon refreshments ★ Gala Evening with presidential drinks reception, dinner, entertainment & ball	£240.00 Per Person	£300.00 Per Person
Package A: 24 Hour Delegate Rate ★ Part weekend Saturday to Sunday ★ One night accommodation & breakfast ★ Saturday morning coffee ★ Workshop ★ Saturday lunch ★ Afternoon refreshments ★ Gala Evening with Presidential drinks reception, dinner, entertainment & ball	£145.00 Per Person	£175.00 Per Person
Package B: Gala Evening with accommodation and Breakfast ★ One night accommodation & breakfast ★ Gala Evening with Presidential drinks reception, dinner, entertainment & ball	£135.00 Per Person	£165.00 Per Person
Package C: Gala Evening only ★ Gala Evening with Presidential drinks reception, dinner, entertainment and ball	Not Applicable	£49.50 Person
Package D: Non-residential – Day Rate ★ Lunch ★ Workshop	Not Applicable	£60.00 Per Person

2016 NODA Presidential Gala Weekend and AGM

Friday 23rd – Sunday 25th September

Booking Form

Please photocopy and complete this form in block capitals. The closing date for bookings is Saturday 6th August 2016.

PLEASE ENCLOSE AN SAE WITH YOUR FORM

Organiser Name (1) _____ Region _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Email _____

Daytime Tel _____ Evening Tel _____ Mobile _____

Member status (individual/joint/society/regional rep/corporate/exhibitor etc) _____

Members of your party (full name and member status)

(2) _____ Status _____

(3) _____ Status _____

(4) _____ Status _____

Member name	Package	Room type (single, twin, double)	Extra nights

Please specify any dietary, mobility, or other requirements _____

If you would like to be seated near a specific delegate(s) at the presidential gala dinner please tell us in the space below. We will do our best to seat you with your chosen delegate(s), but cannot guarantee it.

PAYMENT TERMS & CONDITIONS

Payment can be made by cheque or credit card. Please note, for packages A+ A and B a non-refundable deposit of £50 per person is required when booking. All cheques (payable to 'National Operatic and Dramatic Association', post-dated cheques are not accepted) should be sent to **NODA 2016, c/o Paul Douglass 9 Dovestone, Wilnecote, Tamworth B77 4PB Telephone: 07876 190519**
Email: paul.douglass@sky.com

If paying by credit card please indicate in the adjacent box, complete the booking form and send it to Paul Douglass as above and you will receive instructions on how to make your payment.

Balance of payment is due by 31st August 2016.



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Theatre Summer School

Passionate about Theatre

Have you ever been to NODA Theatre Summer School? If not, you're missing out on a great way to learn new skills, refresh old ones, and have a fantastic time in the company of like-minded people for a week at the University of Warwick.

Details of the 2016 NODA Theatre Summer School are now available on the web site. You can also see what previous students think about the 'Summer School Bubble' on Facebook.

First timers are always made most welcome!



regionalroundup North East

Farewell after 24 years

At this year's AGM we said goodbye and thank you to Marguerite Jennings as she retired from her Regional Representative Drama position for District 16, having served on the North East Committee since 1992.

As a teenager she was briefly a member of Harrogate AOS. After marriage and two children she joined Thirsk Drama Group playing some leading roles. She was also very involved in Oratorio works, singing the soprano leads in *The Messiah*, *The Creation*, *Dido*, *Bach Masses* and *Cantatas* mainly at Ampleforth Abbey in North Yorkshire. On moving to Bradford in 1966 she played *Carmen* and *Delilah* for Bradford Opera Group.

Having trained as a Youth Leader she was appointed by the Bradford Council Youth Service to a Youth Club and directed an annual Pantomime and entries for local Drama Festivals with great success. In 1976 she started the Bradford Youth Players, with the help of the Principal Youth Officer, as a Club for young people who were interested in Acting, Dance and Music. This became a very popular group performing musicals, plays (including Shakespeare), revues and concerts in theatres in and around Bradford and the rehearsal rooms.

She became a Licentiate of the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 1974 and also gained a Teaching Diploma for Further Education and was employed by both Bradford and Halifax Colleges as a part time Lecturer in Speech and Drama. Meanwhile, directing musical shows for various Amateur Societies including Idle &

Thackley AODS, Ripon Amateurs, Bradford Players, Bradford Great Horton, Bradford Catholic Players, Leeds Amateurs, West Riding Opera, Leeds Cosmopolitans, Halifax Light Opera and Halifax All Saints.

Marguerite's wide experience has been of great value to her member societies and much appreciated by the North East Committee, particularly in setting up and running, together with her Drama Representative colleagues, a series of successful Youth Drama Workshops in the Region.

Enjoy your retirement Marguerite! ★



Marguerite Jennings is pictured with NE Councillor David Streeter

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First for President

Chris Ingram is pictured with the excited cast on the final night.



The cast and members of Woodhouse Musical Theatre Company were thrilled and honoured that NODA's National President, Chris Ingram, and his wife Mary, were able to join them for the final performance of their production of *Flashdance* at the Lawrence Batley Theatre in Huddersfield.

The company were also delighted that Chris took time out to address them

after the final curtain, and even more so when he told the cast how much he had enjoyed the show, this being the first time he had seen it.

It was a particular honour for the society, as it is believed this was the first time that a current NODA President has watched a production in Huddersfield. ★

Theatre closure forces venue changes

A delay on major refurbishment of Hull New Theatre has forced two local societies to seek alternative venues for their forthcoming productions. Closed since the beginning of 2016, it is unlikely that the theatre will re-open until the late summer of 2017, the year in which Hull is the UK's City of Culture.

Beverley Musical Theatre, who present their main annual show at the theatre, have said that the closure means that this year's production, the *Dolly Parton* musical, *9 to 5*, will be staged at Beverley Memorial Hall in June, a venue that the society uses for its Christmas pantos.

The society has already been given the rights for a production of *Legally Blonde* in 2017 and any further delay could result in the loss of these rights, having a knock on effect regarding alternative shows, venues and finances. Beverley's Chairman, Alison White, said "Everyone loves to perform

at Hull New Theatre and feels really disappointed that for two years they will have missed that opportunity".

The other society to be affected is Hessele Theatre Company whose spring show this year, *The Hired Man*, was staged at Hull Truck Theatre instead of Hull New Theatre. Neal Edlin, Marketing & Communications Officer for the Company, said "We're really looking forward to the changes that that will be made to the refurbished Hull New Theatre. Once complete, we understand the theatre will not only be able to attract touring productions with bigger sets and more complex scenery - it will also hopefully give local societies such as Hessele Theatre Company the opportunity to consider a wider range of shows which may previously have not been an option due to the building's current physical limitations. We're really excited about it and are looking to continuing our longstanding relationship with the theatre." ★

Leeds G&S Plans

Leeds Gilbert & Sullivan Society spread their wings in March with their innovative production of *Offenbach's Orpheus* in the Underworld. The production was set in a grey underwear factory, and subsequently at a similarly grey Head Office/Olympus, before transporting the audience down to a colourful Underworld, where anything goes and the Can Can is the dance du jour!

The Society is now focusing on its October 2016 studio

production of *She Loves Me* at the Carriageworks Theatre, Leeds. Based on the Hungarian play *Parfumerie*, and set in a perfume shop in 1930s Budapest, it is a charming story with some bite from the writer of *Cabaret* and music from the composer of *Fiddler on the Roof*, Jerry Bock. The play was the basis for the Tom Hanks movie *You've Got Mail*.

Also, following Mike Williamson's retirement, Jonathan Drummond has been appointed Musical Director for the Society. ★

Programme and Poster Competition	
The winners and runners up of the Region's Programme and Poster Competition were announced at the Region's recent Gala Weekend and are as follows:	
De Luxe Programme	
1st	STOS Theatre Company – <i>Legally Blonde</i>
2nd	Croft House Theatre Company – <i>Sister Act</i>
3rd	Steps Productions – <i>Cats</i>
Standard Programme	
1st	Dinnington Operatic Society – <i>Acorn Antiques – The Musical!</i>
2nd	Manor Operatic Society – <i>Ghost</i>
3rd	Woodhouse Musical Theatre Company – <i>Buddy</i>
Basic Programme	
1st	Wombwell & District Amateur Operatic Society – <i>When the Lights Go On Again</i>
2nd	Mytholmroyd St. Michael's Amateurs – <i>Big Dreams on a Small Stage</i>
Poster	
1st	York Light Opera Company – <i>South Pacific</i>
2nd	Harrogate Gilbert & Sullivan Society – <i>Princess Ida</i>

regionalroundup

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Fabulous Baby!

Blackburn Musical Theatre Company gave a warm welcome to its newest member - six-day-old Nora Cryer, at a rehearsal for Sister Act.

Nora's mum Anna is the society's publicity officer, and NODA's North West editor, and had joined in weekly singing rehearsals in the run up to the birth.

So it was only natural she paid a visit to meet the nuns just a few days later.

Accompanied by dad Andy, Anna and Nora made a perfectly-timed entrance, as the ensemble sang the opening Latin bars of Take Me To Heaven.

"It was a wonderful moment for all three of us," Anna said. "As people realised we were there, the nuns slowly but surely broke away from singing to come and see Nora, hug me and congratulate Andy."

"That particular section of the song is in such beautiful harmony that it sent shivers down my spine, while the warmth of welcome from my BMTC family - which took me in when I joined seven years ago on moving from the South West - brought tears to my eyes."

"We spent a very happy hour watching the rehearsal and Nora wasn't at all phased by the noise, hustle and bustle, I guess it's in her blood." ★



'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief...' this opening line of Dickens' novel, A Tale of Two Cities, couldn't be more apt for the rollercoaster ride Rochdale Musical Theatre Company experienced when staging the epic musical based on this classic tale. Rochdale Musical Theatre Company took the bold decision to stage the North West premiere of the Broadway musical, A Tale of Two Cities by Jill Santoriello in 2014 with the aim of performing it in February 2015. However, the Company struggled to find enough men to take on the many roles which required powerful singing voices to do justice to the challenging yet beautiful score. The Company deferred the performance to February 2016 when they were proud to present Peter Norris as the drunk cynic Sydney Carton and Phil Swift as the French Aristocrat Charles Darnay. The show demands both of these characters to have outstanding singing voices and to look alike because they swap places at the end of the show, one man sacrificing his life for the other, for his love of Lucie Manette.

The committee were drawn to this show by the stirring music and Dickens' story of love, vengeance and valour, all set during the French Revolution. Rochdale Musical Theatre Company has a large chorus and the committee felt that they would be able to do this blockbuster justice. The Company has received fantastic reviews which have praised their efforts in staging this epic production. Audience members have commented on the high standard of the singing (taught by Musical Director Richard Lord) and the effective acting and company movement (directed by Howard Raw). The stage crew (led by Stage Manager Paul Shiel) played a huge part in the success of the show as they ably manoeuvred the house frame structures to convey either London or Paris. The Company are hugely proud of everyone involved who helped to make this show a success. ★

Reps celebrate their districts' best

NODA reps across the North West have celebrated the best performances and productions in their districts in a series of local awards nights.

The region is the only one in NODA nationally to host awards nights at a district level, with five district reps organising their own events in addition to the NW-wide awards held each year during the May bank holiday weekend.

Around 1,400 NODA members attended the four district awards nights in January, for Districts 1, 2, 3 and 12, and 6, with winners from each night going on to represent their district at the North West awards in Manchester, on Saturday, April 30 and Sunday, May 1.

North West NODA councillor Christine Hunter Hughes joined her local reps for three of the nights.

She said: "I am so pleased that our reps in the North West recognise the importance of awards nights to celebrate the achievements of local performers."

"To have so many NODA members coming together at these nights is a real joy for all of us involved."

"Our North West awards sell out every year, so these nights in the districts are an extra way to mark our achievements and allow for so many more people to engage with NODA as an organisation."

"My heartfelt congratulations goes out to each of the reps who host local awards, and to all of their winners - many of whom will also make the trip to join us in Manchester for the North West events, where we enjoy both youth and adult awards on two separate nights."

Praise for the joint Districts 3 and 12 event included 'very well organised, delicious food and lots of happy talented people', 'thank you from Todmorden - it was a great night and just what we needed as our beloved theatre and society try to recover from the Boxing Day floods', 'it was great to see so many familiar faces from other societies', and 'the perfect way to celebrate how fantastic amateur theatre is in East Lancashire'.

District 12 rep Luke Taberer said: "It was fantastic to see so many people at our event."

"NODA NW is the only area in the country to hold district-level awards and dinners such as these. They are a superb way to celebrate the talent within our local area and allows societies to have a night off from the usual show rehearsals, don their glad rags and have a good time." ★

regionalroundup Scotland

NODA Scotland Conference

The NODA Scotland Conference 2016 will be held from Friday 28 to Saturday 30 October at Peebles Hydro, Innerleithen Road, Peebles EH45 8LX. Full details will be posted in due course.

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NODA Scotland has a number of awards that are presented annually at the Conference, e.g.

- ★ The Border Studio Trophy
- ★ The Glasgow Light Opera Club Courage Award
- ★ The Utopia Costumes Youth Award

The Border Studio Trophy is presented on an annual basis to a company that has shown technical excellence in its production. Regional Representatives can nominate production from their district. These nominations are then judged by two members of the NODA Scotland Committee and the NODA Scotland Councillor with the winner being announced at the Annual Conference. The judging year runs from 1 July to 30 June.

Some or all of the following criteria are taken into consideration when an entry is being judged:

- ★ Innovative stage sets
- ★ Creative lighting
- ★ Good and accurate costuming
- ★ Use of audio visual equipment
- ★ Clear use of sound equipment
- ★ Good use of performing space

The Glasgow Light Opera Club Courage Award is presented to the company performing the midnight cabaret at the Conference. As the name suggests, it is to recognise having the courage to perform

in front of an audience made up of fellow performers.

The Utopia Costumes Youth Award is presented annually to a youth company which has made a significant impact within its community. All nominations must be able to demonstrate or show evidence of the way in which the company has "made a difference", e.g.:

- ★ A company has demonstrated a commitment to its local community by contributing to the artistic or charitable life of the area.
- ★ A company over a number of years has inspired young people to participate in the performing arts.
- ★ A company has positively impacted upon the lives of individual young people and their families through the arts.
- ★ A company has striven to achieve excellence and provide exciting and challenging experiences for young people to achieve and enjoy success.

Nominations are welcome from Individual Members, companies and members of the NODA Scotland Committee. The closing date for nominations is Friday 21 September 2016 with the winners announced at the Conference. Nominations should be sent to the Youth Advisor, Craig Inglis. ★

Elinor receives her Diamond Bar

Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society member, Elinor McHatton, received a very special NODA award to mark her 60 years of treading the boards. Elinor joined the Society when she was 16 in 1956, and her first show was *The Gondoliers* in 1957. Since then she has never missed a show. Elinor said that she started singing aged seven, and has never stopped. The Society hopes that she will continue singing for many more years. ★



Elinor (right) receiving her award from Linda Ormiston OBE

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Am-Dram Antics! – The Untold Story

As with all amateur societies, fundraising is a major headache. In previous years we had performed a cabaret in September combining all types of music. This helped to fund our major show in April, but the committee felt that we should try something different – but what? At our monthly committee meeting the fundraiser was on the agenda along with the usual society business. In the midst of this a voice said "you know we should do a show about this". This struck a chord with everyone. Add to that a conversation I had had recently with Ronnie Honey with both of us saying we would love to write a show about amateur musical life – and from these humble beginnings *Am-Dram Antics!* was born.

Amy Sutherland, Ronnie and I volunteered to take on the writing of what we were calling the revue. Lorna Wallace became costume mistress and Hazel Brooks and Elizabeth Donald took on the publicity and advertising of the show. Lots of ideas were flying about that night and the "mood board" soon was filled with everyone's ideas of how it should run. At the end of the evening we had the bones of the plot – why stop at the committee meeting – let's show what really happens behind the smiling faces on the stage on opening night! As the weeks passed the three of us worked well together and our script got fruitier and funnier including a lothario with several 'ex's in the company, a diva, an illicit affair and the usual crushes on the leading man as well as various stropky committee members (is this ringing bells out there?) and of course a director, a musical director and a choreographer with the usual problems!. When we read the script back to ourselves each time we dissolved into laughter –

but how would the company feel?

The presentation night went well and as agreed we asked the company to come up with song suggestions which we then put into the script. The company liked the idea – phew!!! We knew we had to have a musical director to lead us in the singing and a choreographer to set the movement – we were so lucky to have Derek Calder come on board and to welcome Clare Martin to help us with the dancing. Derek is a hugely talented man and he loved our idea and threw himself into *Am-Dram* – even doing the auditions and casting because we as writers wanted to be on stage too!! As an excellent choreographer, our only plea to Clare was – "don't make the dancing hard!!" On audition night we sat in a circle and everyone read for the part they wanted to be considered for as well as singing a song for Derek unaccompanied – another first for Falkirk Operatic Society – all done and dusted and the casting finished in one night.

As well as writing the show Amy, Ronnie and I got parts – Amy and Ronnie playing two of the leads and myself playing the secretary (a wee change). We also divided up the scenes among us and each directed two. We had meetings with Derek to finalise the song list, Clare to go over how many high kicks we could fit into each number and with each other to update on how the rehearsals were going with regard



Cast of Am-Dram Antics! in rehearsal

to scenery, dialogue changes etc. The cast took everything in their stride and very quickly the show came together – we finally made it to Falkirk Town Hall for dress rehearsal night and I have to admit to feeling sick at the thought of what we were about to do.

Opening night – I can't describe the feeling before hand – excitement, terror, I could go on. During the opening committee scene all we could hear was laughter and it never stopped the whole way through the show (except for the sad scenes). Then came the final number and we stood on the stage as the audience applauded and cheered. I hope I speak for Amy and Ronnie when I say I have never had a feeling like it – we did it: wrote, produced, directed and performed our own show.

What started as a cost saving fundraiser turned into one of the biggest achievements of my life and definitely one ticked off the bucket list. My personal thanks go to my co-writers, Amy Sutherland and Ronnie Honey, our committee, but most of all the cast of *Am-Dram Antics!* – my Falkirk Opera Family. Falkirk Operatic Society (SCIO) has the copyright on the script. We would be delighted if anyone else would like to perform it. ★

Carol Sutherland, President, Falkirk Operatic Society www.falkirkoperatic.com

Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group – First & Last

Johnstone Operatic and Dramatic Society was founded in 1963 by Tom Carmichael. The first show the Society performed was *Oklahoma!* in the original town hall in 1964. Due to lack of funds and support the Society focused on fundraising in 1972 and with the efforts of a small group of determined members it rose again from the ashes the same year with the new name of Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group (JPTG) and went on to perform *The King and I*.

The original town hall building was demolished in 1974 but not before their sell out production of *Hello Dolly!* in 1973. The tradition continued by the Group performing the first shows as well as one of the acts in a concert for the official opening of the new

Johnstone Community Centre in May 1975, appearing alongside the Peggy O'Keefe Trio and Cliff Hanley. The group moved to the Tweedie Hall, Linwood, in 2013, this time choosing their very first choice of *Oklahoma!* to celebrate their 50th Anniversary. In 2014 they performed *Aladdin* and *Calamity Jane* before this building was demolished to make room for the new Tweedie Hall. Again, the first pantomime was performed there in December 2014, this time *Mother Goose*. The current town hall was revealed to the public in a grand opening in the summer of 2015. JPTG were involved in the opening activities and performed *Cinderella* in December 2015 – the first pantomime in this new venue. We hope the current town hall is standing for many years and JPTG are still going strong to carry on the tradition. ★

regional roundup

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A National Theatre youth performance of James Graham's 'Bassett' comes to the Barn Theatre, Seaford in April performed by young actors from award-winning group SMTJ.

"At Wootton Bassett School the supply teacher has done a runner and locked the pupils in their classroom. Dean needs the toilet, Aimee needs a coffee, Amara needs to pray, and Leo... well, Leo really, really wants to escape. Outside, only yards from their confinement, a repatriation of fallen British soldiers is happening along the high street, as it has over a hundred times before through this quiet Wiltshire town. But this one is more personal than most. As factions form and secrets are revealed, maybe Leo is not the only one who'll want to get away. An exhilarating startling snapshot of a generation who have inherited a world at war."

With strong language and very relevant challenges to attitudes on immigration, terrorism and what is considered to be 'British', Director Paula Woolven has praised the cast for their mature approach to discussing the issues in Bassett.

"Instant social media is showing a very different outlook on the world to the one that I saw in my teenage years. Young people today have never known peace - this very



hard-hitting, well written script shows how teenagers form their opinions through family, friends and the bombardment of information online and from 24 hour news reports. Although chilling, it is very thought provoking and opens up all sorts of conversations that we shouldn't shy away from if we want to resolve ignorance and bigotry in our societies."

Show times : Friday 29th April, 7.30pm, Saturday 30th April 7.30pm & Sunday 1st May, 2.30pm.

Visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/thebarntheatre or the Tourist Information Centre, Church Street, Seaford during office hours for more information.

Community arts group Seaford Musical Theatre Juniors (SMTJ) have been picked to take part in a UK wide youth film-making project - See It: Make It commissioned by the Into Film organisation.

Into Film gives children and young people aged 5 to 19 in the UK the chance to experience film creatively and critically as part of a well-rounded education, whilst also learning skills they can use to build a career in the film industry.

SMTJ members will be working with David Parker from Brighton based Fagment Arts to produce a short film that will be premiered in the summer through partnership with the Seaford Community Cinema, based at the Barn Theatre, Seaford.

The project runs from April to June 2016 and is funded by the National Lottery and BFI Film Forever scheme. ★

www.intofilm.org/see-it-make-it

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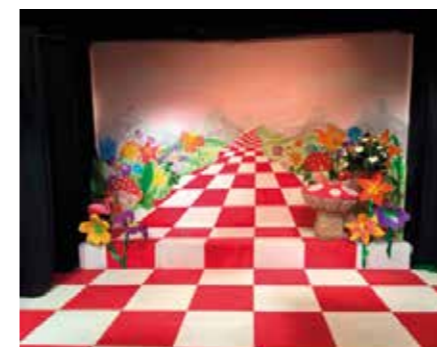
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Knightstar Productions are enjoying their rehearsals for 'Seussical Jr.' which they will be performing in June. This fun, colourful production features all the well known characters from the Dr Seuss stories - of which I'm sure many of you have very fond memories. The cast is made up of 7 to 14 year olds from Chichester and surrounding areas. They are also very honoured to be performing at the NODA South East Region Presentation of Awards, AGM & Entertainment on Sunday 10th July the Assembly Rooms, Alton - so some of you will get the chance to see them perform then. ★

Alice's Adventures in Rainham



The Ratlets Oast Theatre, Rainham, 13th November

It was Friday 13th when I went to see "Alice in wonderland" but it wasn't unlucky for me it was quite the reverse.

Ratlets (the youth section of RaTs) gave us an exceptional "Alice"!

The curtain opened and I heard the audience gulp a sudden intake of air, the set was like nothing I had ever seen before

at the Oast or any theatre come to that. It was STUPENDOUS just great, well done to those concerned.

The young cast guided us through the tales, with great acting from all of them, each playing many parts, I lost track who was playing who. Some were taking gender changing to its heights and doing it exceptionally well.

I couldn't really fault any of these young actors, all were intent on giving us their best and they did! Well done to you all.



Direction from Grant Flanagan was thoughtful and slick, he had cast the actors well in their relevant parts. His use of the small stage was ingenious, using every inch to its capacity. Costumes/makeup/lighting were colourful and all teamed in with that gorgeous set, making it come alive.

A very polished performance from a young cast who raised the standard of youth theatre in our region. Well done to all involved. ★



regionalroundup South West

NODA South West Annual Workshop Weekend 2016

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National Operatic & Dramatic Association
SOUTH WEST REGION *noda*

WORKSHOP WEEKEND
2nd - 4th September 2016

A weekend of workshops, networking and a celebration of amateur theatre at Palace Hotel, Torquay.



Workshops leaders include:
Dane Preece - singing for performance
Cathleen McGarron - voice and accents
Dave Tulloch - sound
Rachel Worsley & Ian Crew - showstoppers

The Tutors:

Dane Preece returns to Torquay, having been a tutor on many Musical Theatre workshops. He has had an extensive career as a Musical Director, working in the West End, the NT, RSC, UK Tours and music and drama colleges.

Cathleen McGarron returns after very successful workshops last year. She is a London-based voice, text and accent coach and is currently Assistant Voice Coach at the NT and an Associate Voice and Text Practitioner for the RSC.

Dave Tulloch specialises in theatre sound. Might he solve the widespread problems of mis-firing radio mics and missed cues?

Rachel Worsley is an award winning choreographer. Her wide experience always brings a touch of class to the stage with her simple yet effective routines.

Ian Crew has spent his life in music, playing multiple instruments and learning composition at the Royal Northern School of Music.

Other fun, social and training sessions are planned.

Interested?
Please contact Lynne Caygill on lynnecaygill@sky.com or your NODA Rep to request a brochure (issued in May).
Bring your actors, producers and committee!
Bring your backstage crew!

Exciting New Programme of Events Announced for September!



OBE Award for District Representative's Son

Last year, we sadly had to report the passing of long-serving and much-loved NODA District 11 Representative Peter Wheeldon.

However, it is with great pleasure I have to report that Peter and his wife Judy's son, Christopher has been awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List, 'for services promoting the interests and reputation of British classical and theatrical dance'. Judy must be extremely proud and we wish Christopher every continued success in his choreography. The picture included is of Peter and Christopher, who often worked together on dance projects. ★

Cotswold Savoyards Win National Programme Runner-Up!

District 15 Representative Frankie Telford was delighted to present the National Award to Gill Cogzell of the Cotswold Savoyards at their recent production of 'Follies'. All regional winners are put forward each year for this award, and so the competition would have been very strong. ★



Frankie Telford

St Alban's Players – Why they joined NODA!

St Alban's Players were founded in 1973 and are pleased to say that they have never looked back, only forward - having presented a varied programme of drama over the past 42 years - 68 full length plays, 46 one act plays, 7 musicals, 3 Music halls, 5 pantomimes, as well as enjoying more informal presentations and theatre workshops. Along the way, they have received numerous awards, including 6 "Rose Bowl" awards (a competition for the whole of the South West), together with winning the Bristol One Act Drama Festival on 3 occasions and gaining 2nd place on 8 times.

have decided that in the interest of development it would be beneficial for the company to obtain a different perspective and maybe new eyes on a production.

They are keen to strive to evolve the development of their drama technique, to give pleasure to those who support them in community drama and, whilst enjoying exploring the wonderful world of drama, we have raised over £32,210 for various charities, local, national and international - a record of which they are very proud!

They have joined NODA because, after having being members of The Rose Bowl for many years, they

We hope they enjoy being part of NODA!

Jill Gill and Tony Winstone.

Get to know your New District Representatives Dee Way (District 14)



Name: Deirdre Way – always called Dee
Age: Retired!

Time as District Representative: Six months

Lives in & with: Moved to Bradford on Avon, near Bath, in 2013 with my husband Jerome. Before that, we lived in Wickwar, near Wootton-under-Edge, for many years.

Favourite Play / Musical: I could not possibly choose just one!

Amateur Theatre Experience Summary: I have acted on stage for well over 50 years so far, starting in secondary school and moving to amateur groups everywhere I have lived. I have done several training courses and recently completed a PhD at Bristol University, investigating verbal memory performance in actors and their learning/recall techniques.

Best Amateur Theatre Experience: My experiences have been so varied that to choose just one would leave out so many. I have loved being in pantomime, musicals and plays in many different places. However, if I have to name a highlight, it was playing in Southampton in a professional theatre in Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' when I was at school.

Day Job: I have had several jobs, including being a shop assistant, a secretary, a PA to two professors, an editorial assistant for an academic journal, a research administrator and a lecturer in Psychology. I also set up and ran my own business for a while in desktop design and printing.

Other interests and hobbies: I love gardening and playing with my seven grandchildren. I also do jazz singing and ran a ladies singing group for 15 years, until last year. I am trying to write a family history book as I hold the archive for my family dating back to 1632. I volunteer at Wiltshire Music Centre, a purpose-built concert venue in Bradford on Avon, and hope to sing there this month.

'Top Tip' in Amateur Theatre: Always consider your audience – they do pay to see you. ★

NODA South West Awards Evening 2016

It was another glittering awards evening at the Bristol Marriott Hotel on Saturday 5th March, where 395 people enjoyed celebrating all that is great about Drama, Musicals and Opera in the South West. The list of all of the winners are detailed on the NODA South West web-page, though the main awards went to:

Wilfred Roe Trophy for Chorus Singing
Bath Opera "Peter Grimes"

NODA South West Award for Innovative Production
@2K "Titfield Thunderbolt"

Councillor's Cup for Best Youth Production
WOW Youth Musical Theatre "The Wow Show"

Wilfred Roe Trophy for Stage Décor
Sparkwell Amateur Theatre Company "Dick Whittington"

NODA South West Award for Best Comedy Production
Axminster Drama Club "Cash on Delivery"

Haslemere Award for Visual Excellence
BLOC Productions "Sunset Boulevard"

NODA South West Award for Imaginative Compilation Show
WOW Youth Musical Theatre "The WOW Show 2015"

Peter Wheeldon Memorial Trophy
Portishead Players

Stage Electrics Award for Technical Achievement
Athenaeum Limelight Players "Macbeth"

Allan Brooking Cup for Best Gilbert & Sullivan Production
Tavistock Musical Theatre Company "The Pirates of Penzance"

June Barker Memorial Cup for Best Pantomime
Starlite Productions "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves"

NODA South West Award for Best Drama Production
St. Albans Players "Some Canterbury Tales"

NODA South West Award for Outstanding Choreography
Zoe Harwood "Guys & Dolls" (Cheltenham Operatic and Dramatic Society)

Gerry Branton Award for Best Operatic Production
Bath Opera "Peter Grimes"

The John Cockram (Butlin) Award for Musical Production
Bridport Musical Theatre Company "West Side Story"

NODA South West Youth Achievement Award
Curtain Up "Les Miserables (Schools Edition)"

NODA South West Award for Best Musical Production
Atlantic Coast Theatre "The Addams Family"



regionalroundup Wales & Ireland

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WELCOME TO WALES & IRELAND NEW REGIONAL COUNCILLOR LEAH COLLETT

I am delighted to introduce you to your new Regional Councillor – Leah Collett – and the new Regional Representative for District 6 – Jourdan Hill.



Leah took up her duties at the Regional AGM on May 15th. Some of you will already have met her when she visited your shows and many of you from the Swansea area will have watched her many times playing a leading role.

Jourdan is young and very enthusiastic to make his mark with NODA. Like Leah he has a well founded background in theatre and will be a welcome addition to the team. Please invite them both to your shows.

I close by thanking you, as I finally bow out, for the support you have given me during my time firstly as a Regional Representative and then of course as your Councillor.

Continue to enjoy this wonderful hobby and have fun! ★
Derek Grattidge

WELCOME TO WALES & IRELAND NEW REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR DISTRICT 6 JOURDAN HILL

From an early age musical theatre and singing have been very much at the heart of my life both as a hobby and also at times in my working life.

As a professional singer I have worked since the age of 14 both in this country and abroad and this took me into a career as an Entertainments Manager with John Fowler Holidays.

I ran my own stage school to support young people with learning difficulties and introduce them to the world

of performance. They learned about dance, singing and acting and put these three elements into practice in revue shows raising money for many charities including Great Ormond Street Hospital and The Welsh Air Ambulance.

I also have a passion for Social Science and this coming September I will begin an Integrated Masters degree in Social Science at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

I look forward to meeting societies in District 6 ★

Jourdan Hill



A Night of the Stars! A4B Awards Round up

Every year the A4B committee of the Borough Theatre Abergavenny present awards to the amateur companies and societies who perform in the theatre. Throughout the year nominated judges attend the performances and give their nominations

The Awards are presented at a star studded Dinner in the ballroom at The Angel Hotel Abergavenny in January.

A selection of the Award Winners are pictured here. ★

Photography by kind permission of Charles Troft of Seren Images



Best Supporting Male under 25
Alex Williams (*Panto*),



Best Male under 25
Luke Williams
(*Cosmo - Singin' in the Rain*),



Best Supporting Female under 25
Maddie Robertson
(*Navigation Officer - Return to the Forbidden Planet*),

And to our other winners including:

Best Female under 25
Alys Le Moignan
(*Gloria - Return to the Forbidden Planet*),

Best Male
Andrew Fowler (BTP)

Best Supporting Female
Sarah Fowler (BTP),

plus special Judges' Awards to
Tomas Lang & Jaycob Harrington for their cameo roles in *Panto*.



Special Judges' Award to
Laura Harrington
(*Lina Lamont in Singin in the Rain*)

regional roundup West Midlands

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NODA Awards

NODA Awards are a great way to honour the services our members give to their societies not to mention sparking memories when we see former leads and society members celebrating similar honours to ourselves. In a recent roll of awards presented by Wyn Mason (Regional Awards Secretary) to the NODA West Midlands Committee, on seeing the name Dorothy Norris, Trevor Guest (District 10 Rep) recalled his time playing the male lead

opposite Dorothy (nee Burgess) in "Rose Marie" in 1959. Louise Hickey (District 1 Rep) shared news of Dennis Baker receiving his 55year NODA long service pin from Hereford Musical Theatre Companies Chairman Paul Morris at a recent AGM.

The committee enjoy hearing and reading each edition the honours list. Congratulations to all Award recipients. ★

NODA West Midlands Committee Members.



Paul Morris & Dennis Baker



Trevor Guest & Dorothy Norris



Theatrical Proposal

A quick congratulation to Will Hayward who surprised Natalie Goldup (both of TADLOP) with a truly theatrical proposal, when he "Popped the Question" on stage at London's West End production of Billy Elliot. ★



UK Premier

It is with great pleasure we highlight 'Starbuck Theatre Company' of Droitwich who were the proud performers of "The Guide To Being Single" a contemporary musical which until now has only been performed in Chicago and New York. The society welcomed one of the writers Kaitlin Gilgenbach who flew in to see it. Congratulations guys. ★



Bugsy Malone, Norbury Youth

Youth Societies

NODA has some truly amazing youth theatre groups filled to the brim with talent and enthusiasm. When the NODA West Midlands Committee held their meeting at The Norbury Theatre Droitwich, the resident Youth Theatre had finished performing Buggy Malone. Their Director Paul Wood could not sing their praises more highly when we met him and had our tour of the venue. Three of the cast got in touch to tell us about their experiences.

Charlotte joined 8 months ago, and said "There's no one I'd rather spend my first show with than the cast of this show! We managed to have a laugh at every rehearsal which took the pressure off a bit. And as for the show, well it was quite possibly the best 4 nights of my life. I especially loved being a 'Down and Out', and I'm sad that the show is over now, but can't wait for next years!"

Olivia "Rehearsing and performing 'Bugsy Malone' has been an incredible experience. Singing 'Ordinary Fool' alone in a spotlight to a packed audience

was a memory I will never forget... The standing ovations from the audience were the most rewarding moments of all, and I will cherish them forever."

Maanvi another newcomer played the role of 'Ventriloquist's Dummy', a 'Down and Out' and 'Babyface', told us "I thoroughly enjoyed it. The shows themselves were the best part as we all got splurged and we all laughed at everything that went wrong back stage. However, when the show came round it flew by quickly and it was soon over. Bugsy was a great experience and I can't wait till next year's production!" ★

Janine Graeme
NODA West Midlands Editor with members of "Youth Theatre" Droitwich

Centenary Celebrations

Kidderminster Operatic and Dramatic Society celebrated their centenary earlier this year. Starting back in 1916 they have been entertaining the Wyre Forest ever since. Their founders Mrs Ellis Talbot (pictured) and friends may not have contemplated more than a few performances to liven up the anxious days of World War I as part of a fund raising concert in aid of War Charities.



The Opera House, in Kidderminster, which was empty at the time, was acquired. Authentic costumes, originally used by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company were hired at a cost of 20 guineas. The scenery was built by members of

the society under the direction of Mr Bostock whose brother later became a President of the Society. An Orchestra was put together under the baton of Mr E.J.Pountney, a local cinema and music shop manager.

The society has since gone from strength to strength. During 1990 the then Chairman Mr Malcolm

Wright suggested introducing a youth element to encourage young talent. Consequently the youth section KODS was formed and the very long waiting list to join is testament to their success, not to mention being the spring board for one former member who is now on stage with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company.

To mark their centenary year KODS are gathering history and memories from past members. If you have a memory to add get in touch. www.kods.co.uk ★

Chris Paine
Chairman of KODS



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