

TODAY★

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2016 Presidential Gala Weekend
and AGM



On the road again

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Welcome to this November Edition of NODA Today.

It is unusual for the President to be writing this introduction but with Fred Piggford standing down as Chairman and no CEO, the lot falls to me until Council meet to appoint a Chair of Trustees.

The magazine contains quite a lot about the Conference in Birmingham, if you were not present you missed a treat; a workshop on accents, Reps meetings, AGM and of course the Gala Dinner and a superb cabaret, pictures of which are elsewhere in the magazine.

In addition, Summer School have had to find a new venue and are overjoyed to find Yarnfield Conference Centre near Stone in Staffordshire, nearest main rail station is Stafford. There are details in the magazine, the programme of courses currently being planned should appeal to many – so if you are an old hand or have never been, check out the details when they are published on line on 1st December.

My round of visits is underway and in addition to the Scottish Regional Conference in Peebles I have already been to Portsmouth, Burgess Hill, Hitchin, Hereford and Chester-Le-Street with more in the pipe line – it is just as well I have a decent atlas! In all of my visits there is a common theme in the love of Theatre in all its forms and of the fun, fellowship and friendship coming out of the involvement.

On the administration side we are looking at ways of improving our services to members as well as moving forward on the converting NODA to a CIO, so much is going on.

With the advent of the Pantomime Season and Christmas it will not be out of place to wish all readers, both member and non-member, Christmas and Seasonal Greetings.

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owned by and be responsible to its members in a manner very similar to those currently existing.

NODA, the future as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

NODA is an unincorporated charity and as such the trustees take on personal liability for all its actions, it does not have a separate legal identity which means that it cannot as an organisation enter into contracts, own assets or take on liabilities, all these are currently taken on by the trustees on behalf of NODA.

Incorporation as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) will give NODA a legal existence in its own right, it will be able to enter into contracts, own assets and take on liabilities. The CIO will still be

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Look out for our fun facts, new for this issue, you'll find them dotted around the magazine!

The trustees have been considering making an application to the Charity Commission to incorporate NODA as a CIO and a presentation was made during the recent AGM where those present gave overwhelming support to form such an organisation.

As members of NODA, you will of course be able to vote on the resolution to convert NODA to a CIO and it is likely that this vote will be taken at an EGM, the date of which will be sent out to all members in good time.



Thanks Fred...

Fred Piggford's own concern about his health has led him to tender his resignation as chairman to the Association which, reluctantly, we have accepted.

Fred has been instrumental in bringing the Association through a very difficult year for which we thank him most sincerely. We wish him well.

Michael Hastilow

President
National Operatic & Dramatic Association



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NODA Presidential Gala & AGM

The NODA Presidential Gala and AGM was held this year at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole. NODA West Midlands would like to extend its thanks to all who attended and who took part, as you can see it celebrated all that NODA Stands for and represents.



Michael Hastilow was installed as President and Nick Lawrence (South West) as Vice President. Special mentions go to Connie Fisher, our patron, who joined us for the entire weekend along with Colm Moules president of the Association of Irish Musical Societies (AIMS).

The Presidents Cup was this year awarded to Leeds Children's Theatre Company and Judith Unwin jointly and was presented by the outgoing President Chris Ingram.

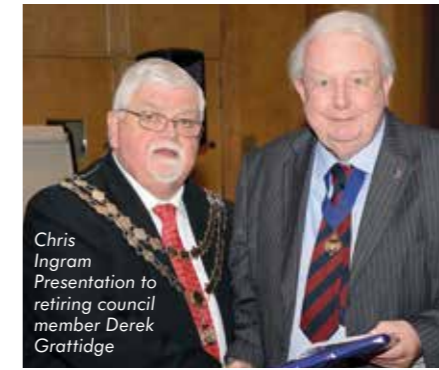
We thank David Lane for playing the many melodies from the shows whilst we ate, West Bromwich Operatic Society and WBOS Youth Theatre for an exciting cabaret and Steve Maitland and his bands for leading the dance until 1.00am. ★



Chris Ingram installing Nick Lawrence as Vice President



Chris Ingram presents Presidents Cup to Judith Unwin



Chris Ingram Presentation to retiring council member Derek Grattidge



Connie Fisher with Maurice Heinz of Loudoun Musical Society collecting the Owen Peacock Trophy awarded to the winners of the De Luxe Programme Competition with Anything Goes



Colm Moules (President AIMS), Janine Graeme, Presidents consort and Michael Hastilow, President NODA



Michael Hastilow New President of NODA with Patron Connie Fisher

All Gala & AGM Photos courtesy of Adam Chapman



WBOS Cabaret performers with Colm Moules (President AIMS) and Michael Hastilow (President NODA)

Cabaret image courtesy of Colm Moules



All Gala & AGM Photos courtesy of Adam Chapman

Memory Lane (The Gala Edition)

We asked delegates to recount their first memories of treading the boards or their funniest moments. Since Michael Hastilow told of his first experience in Ruddigore as a Bridesmaid, it seems fair that we share similar tales from NODA friends from other Regions.

Dee from NODA South West was in a school performance back in 1965 when, aged 17, she played an elderly Queen.

David from NODA East Midlands told of his time aged 14, when he was dressed as a fox. The costume was irritating and uncomfortable between his fingers. It left an impression as to this day he always checks the wrists and fingers of his costumes.

Bob of NODA London South East, recalls auditioning for Tom of Warwick in Camelot; he was told he was too tall and joined the ensemble. He has never forgotten the magical feeling of performing and the camaraderie that performing offers.

I could not agree more, nearly all the people I spoke to, spoke with wonderment and elements of euphoria glowing in their voices and eyes as the recounted the buzz they got from being on stage.

Linda from NODA North explains a couple of her funniest memories. Some of which we can all find moments of solace in. She told us that back in the day, you were able to nip to the pub between scenes. She recalls setting the stage during a black out in one play for a scene best described as "a room in storage". The member of crew helping forgot which scene he was setting and as fast as she was putting dust sheets on furniture, he was removing them, resulting in a tug of war. Needless to say the tabs rose on a room looking less like a room in storage and more like it had been burgled.

We conclude our memories with Christine from NODA North West, who while in a school production, playing Lady Macbeth, wore a nightdress that was far too long. She entered, tripped, and fell down the

steps landing on her posterior. The boy playing Macbeth was pushed on by the teacher but could not stop laughing as Christine tried to get up. The Curtain fell and they had to re-do the scene all over again this time without the fall.

These are brilliant memories and as funny and spontaneous as they all were, they remind us of the changes to how we work. We may think some of the modifications are for the worst but in reality they are for the better and an apt reminder of the importance of NODAsafe.

Accidents happen, things on wheels roll, we fall and items get knocked over. If we want to continue to look back and enjoy blooper moments as fond memories, spare a thought and take a look at your health and safety policies. We love what we do, let's make sure the show goes on safely for all.

Thank you for your memories.

Janine Graeme
NODA West Midlands Editor

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regionalroundup East



NODA East Councillor Don McKay pictured below at the National Gala and AGM and meeting Patron Connie Fisher (right)



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In memorium

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of both Keith Pendall, NODA East Regional Representative for District 2, and Sandra Samwell, NODA East Regional Representative for District 1.

Locally in Bedford, Keith was a well known respected actor and director for many years. He passed away in America in April of this year.

Sandra was D1 Rep for 18 months, but in that short time gained the trust and respect of her members. Sandra passed away shortly following a diagnosis of leukaemia.



Sue Dupont District 5 East was made an honorary member of NODA at the National AGM. Sue had been a NODA Rep for 25 years.



Keith Mindham

Careful the tale you tell...

On the outskirts of the city lies a fantastical forest where curses are reversed and wishes can come true. In the shadows of the trees something magical, fanciful and strange is happening, but wishes are dangerous beasts to manage.

Our story begins in a clearing not far from you... a Baker and his wife dream of a child, a flash of red captivates a tall, furry stranger and a girl with golden slippers is on the run. Each has a journey to make, a different path to take, but are they certain it's the right direction?

In this fairy-tale adventure it's too late to turn back... so why not explore what brings you Into The Woods this Christmas?

Sound Ideas Theatre Company Presents
Into The Woods
Norwich Playhouse
13 December 2016 – 17 December 2016
www.soundideastheatre.co.uk

Friends Reunited

didyou**noda**?
The rear end of a Panto cow is thought to be one of the biggest challenges an actor can face!

Past and present members of Bury St Edmunds AODS and other theatre friends got together at the beginning of August to reminisce and look over the Society Archives collated by Joan Abbs, archivist and long standing member. By kind permission of the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds, the social occasion was able to be held there. A group of over 60 came to see the collection which comprises records full of programmes, photographs, press reviews and personality profiles from the Society's founding in 1902 (the original Minute book is there!) to the present day. The occasion brought together many friends who had performed together over the years but may not have seen one another for some time. It was a revelation to look back and see their younger selves! It just shows that membership of this happy group forges friendships that time cannot erase. BSEAODS have been members of NODA since 1903. ★



SOUND IDEAS
THEATRE COMPANY

regional roundup East Midlands

Regional Day 2016 – Loughborough Town Hall

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Erewham Musical Youth Society Group (EMUS) – provided excellent entertainment

Photos thanks to Martin Holtom

Date for your diaries
East Midlands
NODA Regional Day
11th June 2017



Chris Ingram, NODA President



Retiring committee members Mavis Beddall (Secretary) and Sue Haydon (Treasurer)

Get Into NODA Today!

NODA Today needs your news! Please contact me if you think you have an item of news that would interest our readers.

alex.wood@noda.org.uk



The Castle, Wellingborough; Update

Readers will know that, The Castle, Wellingborough's theatre, was put into administration during the summer. Things moved so quickly that by the time my article appeared the theatre was on its way to reopening!



The Wellingborough council were true to their word and called a meeting of interested parties to see if the theatre had a future and this convinced them that indeed it did.

A specialist theatrical management consultant has been appointed and is now working with a skeleton staff to bring the theatre back to life. It is heartening that she is working with a representative of local people who is also organising a new 'Friends' group – something which was inexplicably abandoned by the old management of the theatre. A basic programme is being worked out which includes Wellingborough's 50th annual pantomime. And throughout its crisis the theatre doors were kept open by a local firm running the bar and catering.

Sadly, it is still unlikely that local societies will get the money owed them for pre-administration shows but the good news is that the council are taking steps to ensure that this will not happen in future. ★

Danny Hero – a new community-based musical in Corby



Knocked back by the closure of the town's steel works in the 1980s, the town of Corby looks as if it is at last turning a long corner.

The arts in the town have the support of Made In Corby, whose latest enterprise, in conjunction with Perfect Pitch was a musical based in the town called *Danny Hero*. Written by Timothy Knapman and Lawrence Mark Wythe, following a meeting with towns people it's the comic book story of Danny and the audience were invited to see if Danny has got what it takes to win the day, save the town and become the hero he's always wanted to be.

The show, performed at the end of October at the town's Corby Core theatre, involved many local performers, not least NODA's own Corby Amateur Theatrical Society. ★

Richard Laight, Boston Operatic Society

It is with great sadness and heavy hearts that we report the death of Richard Laight on 2nd September 2016.

Richard was on the board of Blackfriars Theatre, Boston, taking responsibility for Health and Safety in the theatre in the past few years. His knowledge of Blackfriars was extensive – he first performed in Blackfriars as a child, and had been an active member of BOS Musical Theatre Group for twenty years, taking both principal and chorus parts. He directed and produced several successful shows with them, including *Annie*, *Oliver* and *Miracle on 34th Street*. His production of "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way..." was nominated for a NODA Award. He also trod the boards with Playgoers, and was in the occasional "Blackfriars" production such as *Corpus Castle*. He made a very good Dame in Panto. In addition he was a skilled setbuilder, had extensive knowledge of sound and lighting, and was an efficient Stage Manager and backstage hand. In other words he had a passion for all aspects of theatre.

A Concert for Richard



In his last year he decided to raise funds for two charities close to his heart, the MacMillan Fund and Blackfriars Trust. In this, as in most things that he did, his enthusiasm and drive led to great success, and he raised several thousand pounds for each cause with his calendars, his golf, his concert and just simply rattling his can in people's faces – all of this while suffering a terminal illness. He was philosophical about dying, though not without regrets, and I am sure he would want me to say to every youngster who reads this – please don't smoke.

There was one thing he loved more than the theatre, and that was his family. His beloved Lindy, and his harem of daughters were his pride and his joy, and the satisfaction he had in seeing his girls settle down with good husbands and starting families of their own meant everything to him. Our love and sympathy go to them.

Richard was still a relatively young man who still had a lot to give, and BOS MTG and Blackfriars Theatre and Arts Centre has lost a great friend. ★

Stuart Bull,
Boston Operatic Society

regional roundup London



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Councillor's Comments

Now that the nights have drawn in, heralding the start of the pantomime season, a lot of you will be rehearsing for your next public offering and many of these will be 'home-grown'. This allows the writer/s almost free rein for their imagination allowing for slapstick humour for the children, innuendo (for mums and dads) and the community sing-song for everyone. All round the region our Reps see pantomime in all its guises. NODA already is a licence-holder for pantomimes but if you have written one (some) which follows the 'usual' pattern, and which has been well received by your audience – and does not contain any Disney songs! – then please let me know. You could share it with other groups in the region or send it to Dale Freeman at HQ (dale@noda.org.uk) to be looked at by our reader with a view to possibly being taken on. We have a lot of talent in the region, why not share it? ★



Jacquie Stedman
Councillor



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Actress Kate Beckinsale owns a pantomime horse costume

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Green Room Productions Launch Monthly Cabaret Evenings

Following their very successful launch in September, Green Room Productions are promoting their latest initiative - monthly Cabaret evenings, which will be held at Wylyotts Theatre, Potters Bar.

The Sunday evening cabarets will feature songs from the Great American and British Songbooks and the best of musical theatre. Come and sing your party piece, that tricky audition number that needs an audience, or just your favourite show tune. Or simply sit back and enjoy an evening of entertainment as performers from amateur and professional musical theatre entertain you.

Singers will be accompanied on the piano by the talented Mark Stamford (most recently the MD of EVITA by SEDOS), who will encourage some audience participation!

Included in the ticket price is a free welcome drink and nibbles. The bar will also be open for drinks, coffees,



sandwiches and light snacks from 7.30pm with the Cabaret starting at 8pm.

Register your interest by emailing offbroadwaypb@gmail.com with your first and second preferences for a song. There will be an opportunity from 6.30-7.30 to practice with the pianist if you so wish.

Please also follow us on twitter @broadway_off and find our facebook event too! <https://www.facebook.com/events/1728603060744832> ★

Jon Chartres

New NODA Reps

In a change from our usual practice, we are welcoming not one but two Reps to District 14 of the London region area, which covers East Berkshire. Where possible they will both try to see a production, but will decide in advance of the show who is going to write the report. We wish them well in their new roles.



SUSAN BOOBYER-PICKLES

A child of the 60s, Susan grew up in the Windsor area and started her performing life with a local dance school. As a child she performed in local pantomimes and eventually became a full time member of Riverside Players based in Old Windsor. Her main interest

has always been musical comedy and pantomime, though she has also performed in plays when suitable roles for 'women of a certain age' have presented themselves. For Riverside Players she has also directed musicals, plays and pantomimes and been active in all other back room jobs, Stage Manager, Box Office and FOH to name but a few, as well as Chair for five years.

Susan has performed in many musicals with local groups, though these days mainly supporting in off-stage activities.



TERRY HUNT

Also a child of the 60's, Terry's interest in the theatre could be said to go back as far as Sunday School, when he was asked to find an interesting way of telling the story of The Good Samaritan. The following week he turned up with a model box of a theatre, along with working house tabs, battery operated Lego lights, a script and several scene changes! He was about 8 years old! Since then, he's moved on to real theatres!

Starting out with various youth theatre and dance groups, on leaving school he continued to keep up his performing interests with amateur groups, but worked backstage in professional theatre for about seven years. He says "I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from some fabulous 'old school' professionals, covering lighting, sound, stage management, set design and scenic art, TIE (Theatre in Education) and even worked periodically in TV/film, but I have found my niche as a scenic artist."

Following a change in career, in 1997 he joined BACCES (British Airways Cabin Crew Entertainment Society) and returned to amateur theatre. Over the past 20 years he has been heavily involved with the staging of most BACCES productions, having written 10 scripts, designed and painted scenery, liaised with lighting sound designers and the musical director, and been Assistant Director. ★

regionalroundup North

Councillor's Chat

By the time this edition hits your doormats it'll probably be December and we all know what that means, "Oh no we don't!!!" – Yes Pantomime season...

Every year since I've been councillor I've seen an increasing number of pantos year on year – last season's tally was 17 pantos. As I always say I love all forms of theatre but I'll be the first to admit, even from a young child, I've never been particularly demonstrative when it comes to shouting out responses to such classics as "He's behind you..." Therefore, it came as a shock to many when I nominated as one of my winners in district 8 the Pantomime *Aladdin and the Pirates* by North Ormesby Minstrels in the Middlesbrough area. The pantomime was a wonderful example of the art of engaging the audience of all ages and the society added its own quirkiness to the production with many modern twists. Of course I was "picked" upon – ending up on stage to be mercilessly ridiculed in their community singing by a brilliant female dame, Jill Stephenson. I'm hiding this year Jill – you won't get me...

Talking of awards, NODA North had its 4th year of Youth and Performance awards at the Rainton Meadows Arena in front of 600 enthusiasts from many societies from Berwick on the borders to Northallerton in North Yorkshire. Presenting the awards this year was Phil Barnett, Youth Councillor from Cornwall who made the near 1000 miles round trip to be with us. We hope the trip was worth it for him because it certainly was with us as nominees and society members "lapped up" Phil's infectious enthusiasm for our hobby.

Awards were presented by each regional rep both in adult class and youth categories as well as myself presenting similar awards as part of my councillor visits. Once again the range of ages of winners was diverse with the youngest being about 7 and the oldest into their 70's – the one thing that was constant was the pride displayed upon receiving their accolade by the reps or myself.

My own awards were a very difficult choice such was the standard displayed over the year with Middlesbrough Youth Theatre's *Footloose* winning the youth production; a very worthy winner in Lucy Conroy as my individual youth performer in her portrayal of "Susan" in *Miracle on 34th Street*; Eileen Glenton as my adult individual for her wonderful portrayal of "Norma Desmond" in Durham MTC's *Sunset Boulevard*; and finally Jarrow MTC – worthy winners for their magnificent production of *Whistle Down the Wind*.

A new award was presented this year – the Joyce Lonsdale award, named after a lady who was a truly unsung hero of amateur theatre as a society accompanist for many societies up until shortly before her death at the age of 90. The recipient of the inaugural award was a committee nomination for David Brennan of Stagedoor Photography who has helped photograph many, many societies publicity shots over several years, helping promote them on social media – all for the love of the hobby.

There are many things to be learnt from the awards evening – as we do every year but the event will continue in the NODA North "calendar".

Good luck to all societies in the NODA North family – keep inviting your reps and/or myself to visit your productions and I hope that you've had a successful 2016 and are looking forward to a memorable 2017. ★



Lucy Conroy winner of Councillors best youth individual – with Phil Barnett and Gordon Richardson showing their 'I Believe in Santa' badges



All courtesy of Stagedoor Photography



Middlesbrough YT winner of Councillors best youth musical



Eileen Glenton winner of Councillors best individual performance



David Brennan, winner of the 'Joyce Lonsdale' aka 'unsung hero' trophy

New Regional Rep District 8

District 8 (Teesside area) have two new reps sharing the responsibilities.

Jean Scarlett-Carr who has been involved in Amateur theatre since 1987 as a performer, backstage crew, stage manager, committee member and secretary as well as youth leader. She has been involved not only in musical societies but also drama.

She is currently still involved with several of the groups in the district so to avoid a conflict of interest and not being able to complete those society's reports NODA have enlisted the help of a co-rep, Jean Dunn, to be able to serve those, and hope between them to be available for all the groups. Jean Scarlett-Carr, whilst not having much direct experience with NODA is fast learning and building up her knowledge as well as forming relationships with district 8 groups as is her co-rep Jean Dunn.

Both are looking forward to meeting with all of the groups in the near future and are hoping to reinstate NODA district meetings for them and others in our area to refuel the NODA links.

Jean Scarlett-Carr works full time as a metallurgy technologist in the newly formed British Steel company, and has a daughter Holly. Contact info jean.scarlett-carr@noda.org.uk, tel **07799 891407**

Jean Dunn is a keen patron of both professional and amateur shows, so can bring "a fresh pair of eyes" into this role. She also is looking forward to meeting the groups, and watching their productions under the new guise of the district 8 NODA Rep. Contact info jean.dunn@noda.org.uk ★

Seaham Youth Theatre Group 25th Anniversary

Seaham youth Theatre Group recently performed a 25th anniversary concert to celebrate their "birthday" by inviting back many older members to take part alongside the current crop of talented youngsters. The group was formed as an opportunity to give the youth of Seaham a chance to do productions more akin to their age group and one of its founder members Gillian Biffetti is now chairman as well as the groups director, with her own family having taken part over the years.

The group despite coming from a small village has had much success in producing talent that have gone on into the West End of London and TV both in leading roles as well as backstage via the technical side of things. People such as Frances McNamee, Laura Jane Matthewson (Evening Standard emerging talent award 2014) and Harry Hepple (BBC's *Boy Meets Girl*, *Misfits* and *Holby City*) have all come through their ranks.

Judging by their recent anniversary concert there are more waiting in the wings for their chance in the limelight. Whilst the current youth are enjoying their "moment" they did not forget their predecessors some of which are sadly departed with their very moving "tribute" song "Only the Good Die Young".

There is no doubt that the youth of Seaham will continue to "shine" for many years to come. ★

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Theatre Summer School

Passionate about Theatre

GREAT NEWS!

The home of the NODA Theatre Summer School moves in 2017. The "Bubble" will be located at Yarnfield Park in Stafford, a new and exciting venue where we will have a range of residential courses designed to suit everyone. With a varied mix of performance, drama and technical courses there really is something for everyone. For first timers and students under 30 years old there is the possibility of a bursary to assist with the cost of the fees.

Do come and join us at Yarnfield Park where we can guarantee a fun-packed week doing the thing you love best – THEATRE!

We launch on **December 1st at 9pm** but courses will be online from 9am at www.noda.org.uk/summerschool so plenty of time to decide what you want to do.

We look forward to seeing you!

29th July –
5th August

NODA Theatre Summer School

So Long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Goodnight...

August 2016 saw the last NODA Theatre Summer School at Warwick Conferences... we have had a marvellous six years there, but unfortunately the time has come to part and take on a fresh challenge in pastures new.

As you can see on the left, we launch on December 1st at 9pm, though courses will be online from 9am. This gives prospective students an opportunity to consider which ones they might be interested in before they have to make the final choice.

Included over the next three pages are some thoughts from students about their experiences which say, far more eloquently than I, what being in "The Bubble" means to them. I look forward to seeing you in 2017 when you can share the experience. ★

Jacquie Stedman
Chairman, NODA Theatre Summer School 2017



NODA Theatre Summer School experiences...

“ I am only now beginning to come down from being enveloped in the wonder and magic that is always the NODA Theatre Summer School. I can safely announce to the world that this is the only place and time in the year when I am truly and completely myself. The real reality. The rest is just counting the days till next year. Fortunately, there are over 200 of us at Summer School who feel exactly the same”

“ The best week of any year. The only one where you are free to be truly you, where warmth, affection and encouragement reign supreme, where all judgment is absent, where effort and courage are valued as highly as talent.”

“ NODA Summer School is a week of extremes - extreme quality, extreme dedication, extreme partying. It's a chance to fully indulge in what is, for most of us, a hobby... Amateur Theatre! Whether your interest is singing, acting or dancing on stage, or whether you prefer the non-performance elements of directing, make up, costumes, lighting or sound, there is something for everyone, and no one will leave having learned nothing, but adding to the repertoire of knowledge and skills that help raise the standards of the genre.

A dedicated team at The Office spend a year putting together a varied programme of courses from which to choose, hiring in professionals from the industry to tutor them who are generous in the sharing of their own personal wisdom and entertaining anecdotes. The quality of the tutoring is second to none, as those of us who return year after year will attest. It is the perfect environment

to try out something new. Perhaps you've always fancied being in a musical after years of straight plays with your society. Try a week of a singing course and surprise them when you get home! Or pick up some knowledge of how to light a show to the best advantage to add to your role as a director. You will not be disappointed.

And as if the genuine achievements in learning weren't enough, the social aspect of the week can't be ignored. An open bar each night offers the chance to share with friends on other courses, play games, or practise "homework" - you might even win some money with Phil's Heads and Tails! The week ends with an opportunity for the whole school to come together with a "show and tell" showcase concert. This may be the time when you see something from another course that makes you think, "I'd love to try that next year!" That is the moment you realise you're totally hooked! - Welcome to NODA Summer School - I'll see you there!"

“ Before I went to Summer School I was convinced that it was perfect for young and fun-loving free spirits.

It is!

But it's also for those older theatre lovers with open hearts and the wisdom to know that we never stop learning.

I have done a Shakespeare course two years running with the highest calibre tutors and loved every minute - but I could just as easily have loved every one of the other courses on offer!

The whole week was a joy - from the wonderful safe accommodation, the fantastic food, the devoted staff, the professionalism of the tutors - and the friendly open hearted students from 18-80. Love it!"

“ On Wednesday 3rd August I joined 20+ other NODA members from across the country at Visitors Day for the NODA Theatre Summer School. The day is arranged to give reps and regional committee members a chance to see and experience firsthand what it's all about. Tri Cumming (School Director) and Jacquie Stedman (Summer School Chairman) spoke passionately of the Summer School, after which we watched an extract from the Summer School video which was created by the students from last year's video course (see NODA website). This was an amazing experience and highlighted the exceptional standard of tuition.

So many people spoke of the "Bubble", being away from the world for one week, focusing solely and intensively on your course. We were there for one day and just as

the students had said we completely forgot the world outside. It took just 15 minutes for any awkwardness linked to not knowing the other 22 people as we, too, were immersed in the Summer School experience.

Before we broke for lunch we sang a medley of songs by Rogers and Hammerstein under the masterful tutorship of Andrew Nicol, and after a satisfying lunch, split into groups each visiting a difference selection of courses. There were plenty of chances to speak and mix with the students, many there for the second or third time... some for the 13th time. Those there for their first year were already making plans for the next year.

If you have the opportunity to attend Summer School it will be an experience that will stay with you for a very long time and give you a real opportunity to experience "The Bubble"."



A fond farewell to Warwick



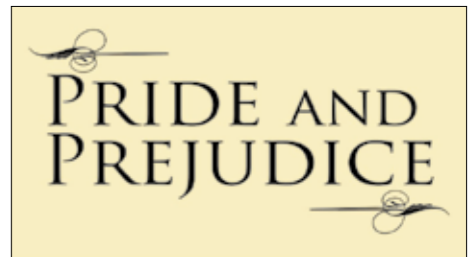
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New North East Representative

Helen Dent was recently selected to replace Rosalie Abel as our Representative in Noda North East District 2 which includes Scarborough, Whitby, Pickering and Malton.

Having worked for HSBC in Sheffield for 36 years Helen retired completely in 2012. Relocating to Scarborough, North Yorkshire, and having very recently taken up the role she is really looking forward to meeting her societies and attending their productions.

Helen has 48 years of experience of performing, both singing and acting, in approximately 130 shows, mainly with Greasborough Operatic Society, Rotherham and Scarborough Musicals.

She has played many of the soubrette roles in most of Gilbert and Sullivan's Operettas amongst them Tessa in *The Gondoliers*, Ruth in *Pirates of Penzance*, Phoebe in *Yeoman of the Guard* and Pitti Sing in *The Mikado*. Some of her other



roles include Eurydice in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Sally Adams (*Call Me Madam*), Bloody Mary (*South Pacific*), Nettie (*Carousel*) and Mother Abbess in *The Sound of Music*. Helen is hopeful of continuing to perform for as long as possible! ★

Word from "The Bubble"

Eight members of our Regional Committee attended the Visitors Day at the NODA Summer School in August and all came away totally enthused by what they witnessed. Along with representatives from other Regions, we were given the opportunity to experience short, practical, sessions from the drama and singing courses which were part of this year's school itinerary.

We were invited to visit a number of the classes which were in progress during the day including stage combat, costume design, directing drama and the two classes for

dance and singing beginners.

Perhaps one of the most enjoyable aspects of our visit was the chance to meet and chat with the students who came from all areas of amateur theatre. Their enthusiasm was infectious and the warmth of the welcome we received from them was lovely. It is not surprising that so many students like to make return visits to the Summer School and no wonder that first timers feel totally at home from the very beginning.

What a great day! ★

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Two Rotherham Lads reach for the Stars

Two lads from Rotherham are mixing with the stars this year after training in musical theatre. Both Luke Harley and Jonny Stewart are former members of Rotherham Teacher's Student Academy (RTSA), a youth group formed by Rotherham Teachers Operatic Society, now re-named Rotherham Musical Theatre Company.

Luke Harley first got into musical theatre at the age of 7 when he joined RTSA. From there Luke began to learn the process of putting a show together, rehearsals and what it actually entails to be in a show. As he grew older he began taking leading roles in a number of shows with some of the most memorable being Joe in *Our House*, Chris in *Miss Saigon* and Javert in *Les Miserables*. Luke also played Edna Turnblad in *Hairspray* when RTSA performed in the cabaret for the NODA North East Gala Weekend.

Luke decided to take things further and trained at the prestigious Cathedral Academy of Performing Arts (CAPA) in Wakefield where he gained valuable experience in his chosen career which also gave him a chance to realise how much hard work is needed to stay at the top of his game. It was whilst at CAPA that Luke auditioned for, and



Luke Harley

was accepted at, the Festival4Stars in Glasgow. There he won a place at a celebrity workshop in London.

Luke then auditioned for ArtsEd, GSA and Mountview drama schools in London and was lucky enough to be accepted by all three. He chose, with the massive support of his parents, to go to ArtsEd, and, in his words, "had an incredible three years". It was here that Luke trained intensively to become the best he possibly could.

After leaving ArtsEd, Luke signed with an agent and began auditioning for shows, one of which was *Thoroughly Modern Millie* at Kenilworth House Theatre. Luke was in the ensemble and the show, directed by Stephen Mear, ran for four weeks in August and September this year.

Jonny Stewart joined Rotherham Teacher's Student Academy (RTSA) in 2008 where he made friends for life. He immediately fell in love with musical theatre and especially with *Les Miserables* which was his first show for the Academy. Having to leave RTSA at the ripe old age of 20, after many happy years, he then joined the "adult" group, now named Rotherham Musical Theatre Company, and performed in many shows for the society, *Crazy for*



Jonny Stewart

You, Annie Get Your Gun and *Footloose* to name a few.

Jonny had completed a 2 year BTEC Diploma in Musical Theatre at Rotherham College of Art and Technology and it was at this time that he started auditioning for London Drama Schools. However, unfortunately, he was not accepted at any of his chosen colleges in his first round of auditions so decided to save money by working full time and trying again in 2013.

In his second round of auditions he successfully gained a place at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in North London, moving to London to start his three year BA (Hons) course in Musical Theatre. Jonny says that, because of his time at Mountview, he has gone from strength to strength and made more friends for life as well as having the time of his life. He says that all the hard work, early mornings and late nights have certainly paid off for him as he gained his degree in Performing Arts.

Once he had graduated Jonny started auditioning for shows, one of which was *Mamma Mia*. His audition was a quick turnaround as the role had already been filled. However the performer who had been selected for the part suffered a bad knee injury which needed surgery meaning that the job became available again. Jonny says his agent sent the scripts, sheet music and information to him, he auditioned three days later and was told the same afternoon that he had got the job.

He started rehearsals in May and opened in the ensemble plus first cover for Sky at The Novello Theatre in June. His current run will last through until June 2017.

Luke and Jonny are to be congratulated on the hard work and success in their chosen careers. ★

Opportunity for Skipton Youngsters

Following two successful shows featuring young people, Skipton Musical Theatre Company were looking for a way to continue the youth involvement in their work despite performing a show this year which was adult centric. They therefore decided to run a Youth Summer School during the first week in August.

The week was a great success with young people aged 8-13 attending every day to learn about stage craft in sessions which were fun and friendly. With dancing, drama and singing all day, every day, for a week this talented group were able to put together a showcase for family and friends on the Friday evening.

This was a great way to involve young people and raise awareness of Amateur Theatre. Well done to the hardworking adult members who gave up a week's holiday to give the young people this fabulous opportunity. ★

regionalroundup North West

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Unless you know differently and if you do I wish you would tell me, things in NODA in general and in the North West in particular, continue to go from strength to strength. At the national AGM in September, we

welcomed in our new President Michael Hastilow and I am sure you will join me in wishing him a most enjoyable year as President and we look forward to welcoming him to the North West for our weekend celebrations in April. Also at the AGM we had the opportunity to meet our new patron Connie Fisher – who will be known from her winning the TV show How Do You Solve A Problem Like Maria?

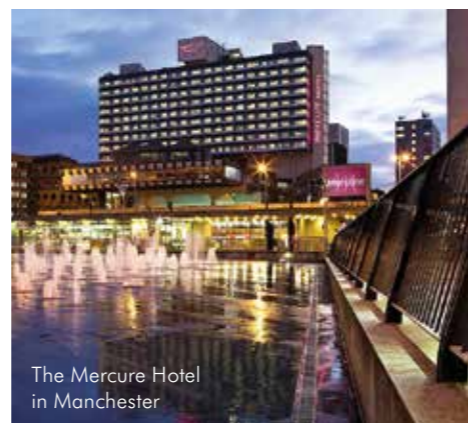
Unfortunately, just after the AGM our Chairman Fred Piggford decided the time had come for him to resign on health reasons. Fred has achieved so much during his tenure and we will miss him greatly. We are in the process of appointing a new Chairman and that will be announced early in December, after the Council Meeting.

The new venue for Summer School has been announced and from 2017 it will be held at Yarnfield Park, located in Stone in Staffordshire. The NODA Summer School has been described as the "Jewel in NODA's crown" and while some of our members from the North West have attended the numbers are very low, considering we are one of the largest regions.

We have 4 bursaries to award to either people under 30 or 'first time' attendees so do please have a look at the NODA website

and perhaps consider attending yourself or suggesting to a member of your society that it would be something they would enjoy.

The atmosphere is truly electric – imagine spending a whole week, with like-minded people, enjoying and improving on your own skills and working on your hobby. No wonder it is fondly known as the NODA Bubble! If you are interested and would like to find out more please speak to your Regional Representative, or to me, or look on the website for more details.



The Mercure Hotel in Manchester

Finally – a save the date request – the NW Regional weekend for 2017 will be held on Saturday, April 29 for the youth dinner and awards and Sunday, April 30 for the AGM and adult dinner and awards. We will, once more, be returning to the Mercure Hotel in Manchester.

If anyone has any thoughts about how the weekend should look or what you would like to see, or conversely not see, please do pass that on to us.

Hope to see you in Manchester in April! ★

Christine Hunter-Hughes
Councillor

DON'T FORGET!

NODA Theatre Summer School moves in 2017. Do come and join us at Yarnfield Park where we can guarantee a fun-packed week doing the thing you love best – THEATRE!

We launch on **December 1st at 9pm** but courses will be online from 9am at www.noda.org.uk/summerschool so plenty of time to decide what you want to do.



North West Councillor Christine Hunter Hughes with Regional Secretary Joan Carnaffin and her husband Bruce



NODA Patron Connie Fisher speaking at the 2016 AGM...

didyounoda?
The Pantomime villain enters from the 'dark side' stage left whilst his opposite (often the good fairy or fairy godmother) enters from stage right

...and taking part in a typically lively discussion!

regional roundup Scotland

NODA Scotland Conference

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

Introducing Gordon Smith: New Regional Representative (District 10)



My first involvement in amateur theatre was as a follow spot operator for Montrose Amateur Operatic Society, instigated by my NODA predecessor Ron Stewart and his wife Rita. From this humble beginning I

progressed to lighting technician in my home town with Brechin Amateur Operatic Society and various other theatre groups throughout Angus. In the mid 1980s Brechin found themselves short of men for their production of *Calamity Jane* and so I switched to the other side of the footlights as a cowboy. I then went on to undertake various small roles, my favourite being my last as the Rabbi in *Fiddler on the Roof*.

On being made redundant in 2003 I was employed as General Manager of the Lemon Tree in Aberdeen and so my hobby became my "day job". Following that I returned to Dundee as part-time technician and stage manager with Dundee College and the Gardyne Theatre. In recent years my passion has been for the musical side, wielding my baton as MD for Kirriemuir Amateur Operatic

Society and currently for Brechin AOS. In 1993 I met Liz (later to become my wife) at the Peebles Conference and together we form the Production Team for Opus Theatre Club. I am looking forward to my role as Regional Rep for District 10 and hope I can successfully follow in Ron's footsteps. ★



(L-R) Elaine Thomson (25 Year Medal), NODA Past President Bert Lumsden, Paul Thomson (30 year Bar), Roger Buist (60 Year Diamond Gold Bar), Ryan Milne (15 Year Badge), Graeme Smith (50 Year Gold Bar), Rachel Weir (10 Year Badge) and Gill Brown (30 year Bar).

Long Service at Downfield

NODA Long Service Awards and medals were presented by NODA Past President Bert Lumsden at the end of Downfield Musical Society's production of *Singin' In The Rain* in Dundee. ★

NODA Scotland Website and Facebook

The NODA Scotland Web Manager will be delighted to receive contributions to the NODA Scotland section of the website. Here you will find all sorts of useful information including news and show listings which can be submitted as far in advance as you have made plans.



Don't forget we also have a very active Facebook page – please spread the word about this to your members.

Items for inclusion on either the website or Facebook page should be emailed to stuart.dick@noda.org.uk ★



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Easter Egg – Seventy Years Young!

At the end of World War II Dalziel High School Motherwell purchased Cleland Estate, now Dalziel Park, as a living memorial to pupils and staff who had lost their lives during the war. A War Memorial Trust was set up to run the estate and oversee its development. The Easter Egg Club was set up in 1947 as part of Dalziel High School Former Pupils' Association, along with the rugby and hockey clubs, and became part of the War Memorial Trust.

From the early shows in Motherwell Town Hall to the current productions in Motherwell Theatre the productions have been variety shows of song, dance & comedy – with something to suit the whole family. Only twice in its history, in the early 1970s, has the Club performed musicals – *Orpheus in the Underworld* and *Oliver!* In 1976 the club took part in *Marasong* which at the time was a world record 96 hours of continuous entertainment. The event was staged in Motherwell Concert Hall and raising over £2,500 for the upkeep of the estate.

Every show is unique and takes 12 months of planning and hard work by the whole Club to arrive at the finished product. This includes selecting the music, teaching the arrangements, creating and teaching the movement, building scenery and selecting costumes.

As well as continuing to support the upkeep of Dalziel Park, as a living war memorial, the Club also raises money each year for a nominated local charity.

In 2017 the Club will celebrate 70 years since it was formed and it is already hard at work putting together its next production – *Celebrate Good Times*.

The show features a wonderful selection of music from a variety of well known artists including *The Jersey Boys*, *One Direction*, *Queen*, *Adele* and *Michael Jackson* as well as songs from well know musicals such as *Mamma Mia!* and *Les Misérables*. As always there will be a stunning set, fabulous costumes as well as a few laughs and a guest spot by pupils from Dalziel High School. The show is guaranteed, as always, to be a great night out for all the family.

As well as its ongoing contribution to the upkeep of Dalziel Park, the Club will be holding a bucket collection after each performance to provide support to Guide Dogs for the Blind. As well as the familiar guide dogs the charity also provides a guiding service which aims to support blind and partially sighted people to get out and about and do the things they want to do. In addition to this they also provide companion dogs and a variety of services aimed at children and young people. ★

Ronald Stewart Calls It A Day



I am sure there is never a right or a wrong time to retire but Ron has decided to give up the reins as NODA Regional Representative of District 10 after 15

years in the post, and, prior to that, ten years as Regional Editor. His district took in around 16 Societies in Angus and, whilst serving these with diligence and help when required, he was also to be seen playing in the pit or wielding his baton as Musical Director. These latter two engagements gave neighbouring Reps the opportunity to see his society shows but also required them to write the required reports! However Ron was always willing to deputise for them if needed. In his capacity as a member of the Regional Committee Ron could always be guaranteed to give his considered opinion on any matter under discussion and often with a wry sense of humour. At our Annual Conferences at Peebles Hydro, Ron was the resplendent Master of Ceremonies for the Saturday night Ball on one occasion bringing his band, *The Big Band Sound*, to provide music for the dancing.

Whilst all this was going on of course Ron's dear wife Rita played the starring supporting role in his travels and made sure everything was in order. Ron's many other interests will keep him busy but with this retiral he and Rita will hopefully have even more time to spend with his devoted grandchildren. ★

Bert Lumsden, Past President of NODA

Cats with the cream – more success for Minerva Youth!



Minerva Youth Theatre (MYT) was established in 1970 to give young people from the ages of 9 to 19 the opportunity to perform in full-scale musical theatre productions. Its first musical, *The Wizard of Oz*, took place in Partick Burgh Halls in Glasgow in 1971. The club has developed from performing what would be regarded as traditional school shows to productions that provide exciting and challenging experiences for all who take

part from the youngest to the oldest. MYT makes every attempt to cast the principal roles within the 9 to 19 age group. This means that the young people undertake challenging roles which would normally be played by adults. In the past ten years the club has grown so much that it now has around 60 to 70 boys and girls taking part in each show. Recent productions have included *Fame*, *Les Misérables (School Edition)*, *Joseph and the Amazing*

Technicolor Dreamcoat, *Back to the 80s* and *Honk!* It is the current holder of the NODA Scotland Utopia Costumes Youth Award, which they received following their highly acclaimed 2015 production of *Les Misérables (School Edition)*.

MYT is currently rehearsing for what it believes to be its most challenging show ever – Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* based on *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* by T S Eliot. Susan B Russell, Artistic Director, said, "The cast and the production team are so excited about this year's show and the enthusiasm of the talent on stage is a joy to see." *Cats* will be performed in Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock, Glasgow, from Tuesday 7 to Saturday 11 February 2017. ★

regionalroundup South East



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Harrogate or Bust

Mad Margaret's Minstrels from Bexhill were invited to take their production of "Harrogate or Bust" (previously Buxton or Bust) to the G & S Festival at Harrogate on Sunday 7 August, in the Savoy Theatre.

All costumes and props were transported by van from Bexhill to Harrogate, with the cast together with some supporters, travelling by coach.

Following the performance, comments on Facebook by members of "Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Facebook" read "This afternoon at the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival I saw a production called "Harrogate or Bust". This was a story about a G&S group trying to get ...to perform at Harrogate and their problems with their current show. It was extremely well thought out, well performed, a perfect sized orchestra and a high level of detail with sets, costumes, props etc. There was a very well deserved standing ovation at the curtain. Bravo Mad Margaret's Minstrels from Bexhill."

Stephen Turnbull, an Adjudicator commented: "Back from Harrogate or Bust in the Savoy

Theatre. I was expecting Mad Margaret's Minstrels to be a group of a dozen or so people, but they were a full company with their own (very good) 7-piece band. Their show called for a lot of props and stage furniture, and a good many costume changes, and it is full length – not down until 5pm. It was very much a show for the Inner Brotherhood – apart from making use of a vast number of G&S numbers, a lot of the characters' dialogue was recycled from the libretti, even though the piece is set in the present day. In their handout they talked of a "feel good factor" and that's true. There was a good house and they loved it. An ideal piece for a society to do as its second show in the half-year when it isn't working on the main show."

Margaret Amey, strongly supported by her husband Neal, wrote the whole show and were runners up in the SE Region Awards for the Best G & S Production and presented with their certificate at the Awards Day on 10th July.

More information for any society interested can be found on www.harrogateorbust.co.uk ★

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What's 70 years between actors?

Over 210 plays, musicals, revues, Music Halls and Pantos have been auditioned, rehearsed, staged and performed by Wadhurst Dramatic Club since the fateful meeting outside the butcher's shop in 1946 which kick-started the East Sussex Club just after the war. Many hundreds of enthusiastic thespians have trodden the Commemoration Hall boards and, equally important, been supported by Costumes, Make-up, Lights, Sound, Stage crews, Props and Prompts among others.

Most important of all, WDC have played to a total audience of probably 100,000 over the years, who've supplied laughter, appreciative applause and stalwart support for all their ventures – thanks to Wadhurst's community spirit!

WDC's 70th birthday celebration show,



the Platinum Revue, was no parade of the Club's past glories, however. It was a celebration of the Club's current talent, an outpouring of the ongoing enthusiasm, a snapshot of what WDC supporters want to perform now. Each of the performers was encouraged to contribute their own ideas, to collaborate with others when needed, to rehearse in their own time, to come up with their own costume and props ideas to make this truly a Wadhurst Dramatic Club birthday party, where everyone who wanted to did 'a turn' – and all enjoyed a sparkling 'Platinum' evening together. The acts ranged from George Formby to Grease, from Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis to *The Book of Mormon*, from Cole Porter to *Les Miserables*, all coordinated by Russ Kirton.

What was particularly wonderful was the age range of performers and crew that spanned over 70 years too – from the natural talent of 7 year old Duke Kirton

up to agile septuagenarians like Dot Smytherman BEM or John Bush (WDC President, unseen but an essential on the lighting platform!). And that is what is special about Wadhurst Dramatic Club – that age range works, with youngsters and seniors inspiring each other, working hard together and having a giggle together too.

Wadhurst Dramatic Club's Platinum Revue played to very enthusiastic audiences on 19th-21st May 2016. Another highlight of the 70th celebrations was July's Mad Hatter's Tea Party to which all supporters were invited. Special hat-shaped invitations were mailed to over 35 WDC old-timers, as well as the email invite to WDC's current database. Tables groaned under the weight of cakes and scones supplied by the



guests to accompany the WDC Prosecco (or tea!). Games of croquet, pick up sticks or giant Jenga kept all amused, when they weren't reminiscing. Pam Doherty was thrilled to win the competition for her 'maddest hat'. And all under a (mostly) sunny sky.

WDC is performing Shaw's *Arms and the Man* in October to round off the year – with plans for a 70th exhibition to accompany it. ★

regionalroundup South West



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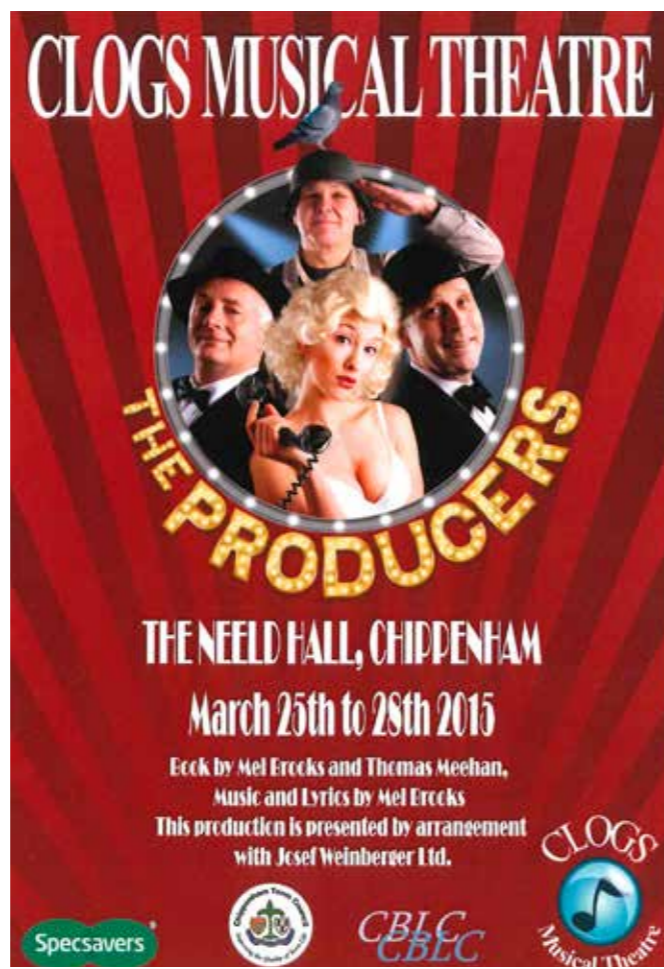
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CLOGS wins trophy at first attempt!

At the NODA AGM in Birmingham on 23rd September, CLOGS Musical Theatre (formerly Chippenham Light Opera Group) were awarded the Ralph Whittaker Trophy as National Runner-Up in the Deluxe Programme Competition for their 2015 production of *The Producers*. This was quite an achievement as it was the first time they've ever had a programme entered!

The award was collected by Programme designer Graham Davidson-Smith. We don't have a photograph of Graham collecting the trophy, but we do have a photo of the plate and certificate and also the cover of the programme – featuring Graham himself (with Pigeon) as the crazy German show writer – Franz Liebkind!

Cover of CLOGS Musical Theatre's 'The Producers' Deluxe Programme



© Graham Davidson-Smith

This year's AGM welcomes New Representatives

This year's NODA South West AGM on 4th September was at the Taunton Rugby Club, and though on a smaller scale than planned was well-attended. Thank you to NODA President, Chris Ingram (pictured with our new Reps) for travelling down to attend. Proceedings were kept in order by Councillor Nick Lawrence, for his last year in the role before becoming President.

One of the key activities was the introductions and presentations to the new Committee Members by Chris, which included:

- ★ Leigh Conley and Jack Price as Regional Youth Advisers
- ★ Oriel Bennett as Representative for District 1 (West Cornwall)
- ★ Stuart Dark as Representative for the new District, District 16 (Swindon and Surrounds), and
- ★ Dee Way as Representative for District 14 (Bath, North Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire)



Leigh Conley



Stuart Dark



Jack Price



Dee Way



Oriel Bennett

© Fred Coygill



Sally Robinson of The Young Generation Theatre Group in Falmouth is to be awarded British Empire Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours List

Founder of The Young Generation Theatre Group awarded British Empire Medal!

Sally Robinson, who set up the award-winning group more than 30 years ago, is to be awarded the British Empire Medal for services to community arts.

The Young Generation Theatre Group staged its first ever production

back in 1982, performing *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

Almost every year since then its young members – some of which have gone onto act professionally – have entertained audiences with their talent and enthusiasm.

Last year the group was nominated for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service and Sally is featured in the photo, receiving the certificate for this last year with other representatives from the Group.

Well done Sally on your award! ★

© Emma Ferguson



regional roundup Wales & Ireland

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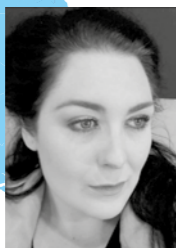
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COUNCILLOR'S COMMENTS



"Here's to us" and another edition of NODA today!

Where has the time gone? As usual we have been out and about visiting and enjoying the wonderful work across the country a very welcome break from the not so existent "summertime". I would like to

take this opportunity to welcome the new additions to our region and as always welcome back our membership. Here are a selection of items and goings on from the last couple of months. ★

"Break a leg wishes"
Leah Collett
Councillor

YOUTH ROUND UP

with Youth Advisor Zoe Richards

It has been a busy 3 months for Youth Advisers across the UK. After a great meeting in Warwick (pictured top right) the youth advisers looked at how we can make our 5 year plan a reality. Some of the things that I have been working on is diversity within groups and providing good information to ensure ALL young people can access societies, paying particular attention to young LGBT people.

One of the highlights of the Summer for me was receiving an invite to travel to North Wales to visit Llandudno Youth Music Theatre's production of *Children of Eden* (pictured bottom right). After seeing productions over the last 3 years it is such a delight to receive the young people's warm welcome and to be able to witness their progress over that time. ★



'Be our Guest' – Regional Councillor goes back to school

In July I had the pleasure of going back to Bishop Vaughan Catholic School for their magical production of Disney's 'Beauty and The Beast'. The school has a long standing tradition of welcoming and encouraging the arts, and even though it's hard to believe (and scary!) that 16 year ago I left school after many enjoyable years of choir practice, school shows, concerts, and competitions it is very clear that the schools passion for the arts has not changed. Talking to the students and

teachers after curtain down it was wonderful to hear their enthusiasm and love of performance, practically from the six form students who had juggled rehearsals with their A Levels showing true commitment. Congratulations to all involved a beautiful performance and as recent members to NODA I look forward to visiting again.

A true blast from the past! ★
L x

NODA in Ireland

Having been a Regional Representative for Ireland for nearly ten years now, I believe I have the best voluntary job in the world! I have been able to see such a wonderful variety of shows and made so many friends across the country – writing reviews and encouraging companies and individuals with nominations and awards for "jobs well done". Some of my NODA members have achieved National Honours in recognition of their contributions to Music and the Arts in Northern Ireland; namely Londonderry MS – Queens Award for Voluntary Service, Dennis McKeever – MBE, Edna Howard – BEM.

New Youth companies are being formed every year with some fantastic talent on view. Senior societies often reap the benefit when the young people outgrow these groups although, sadly they often go off to university across the water. Many of our young people are making a name for themselves on the professional stage. Amateur standards continue to rise although there always seems to be a shortage of men! Really keen young men can go from company to company and might do a different show every month!

Some years there has been a "run" of a particular show (particularly when it is newly released) but most years I am invited to a great variety – *Sunshine on Leith, Sunset Boulevard, The Addams Family, A Christmas Carol, Legally Blonde, Annie, Whistle Down the Wind, 9 to 5, Sister Act, Sweet Charity, Cats, Oliver, Fame, Pippin, In The Heights, The Beautiful*



Game, Oklahoma, Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat – in the last year! Venues vary from the Grand Opera House and other impressive theatres to church halls and small civic spaces. The introduction of cyc projections has made life easier for venues with small stages and little wing space and I never cease to be impressed by the innovation I see in staging and technical work.

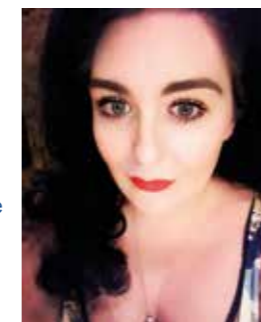
I travel many miles over the year (maximum 195 return/minimum 2 miles) and every mile is worthwhile. I also welcome each NODA President who manages to pay a visit to "The Emerald Isle" during their year in office. I hope all my fellow regional reps feel the same! ★

Sheelagh Hobart
District 2

Getting to Know You

This edition we get to learn a little more about Regional Councillor Leah Collett.

- ★ Inspired by her mother and Swansea singer Rose Collett to pursue the arts.
- ★ Trained as a dancer specializing in ballet and tap.
- ★ First amateur show – Played Brigitta in *The Sound of Music* with Swansea AOS in 1994.
- ★ First Class Degree in Contemporary Theatre and Theatre Studies.
- ★ Trained in Musical Theatre at The Royal Academy of Music, London.
- ★ Carries a three and a half octave vocal range.



- ★ Recipient of the Ian Fleming Musical Theatre Award, Arts Council of Wales Advanced Student in Music Award, John Thaw Award.
- ★ Has a love for all arts from Shakespeare to Sondheim – Fonteyn to Abramovic – Gilbert and Sullivan to D-Generation X.
- ★ Favorite musicals – *A Little Night Music* by Stephen Sondheim, *The King and I* by Rodgers and Hammerstein.
- ★ Her career highlights

include: Singing at the Prince Edward Theatre West End as invited special guest of Mr George Hall. Working with acclaimed director Matt Ryan. Working behind camera and on screen for the TV series *Da Vinci's Demons*. Appearing in Kurt Sutter's American TV series *The Basted Executioner*.
★ Leah looks to expand her work behind the scenes directing with her Swansea directorial debut in March 2017 and in the future (not too soon) hopes to continue her training at the MAI – Marina Abramovic Institute and start her PhD in Theatre Studies looking towards Julliard and the University of Maryland, USA. ★

regional roundup West Midlands

COUNCILLOR'S COMMENTS

At our Regional AGM in April I was proud to have been elected as Regional Councillor designate and following the National AGM on Saturday 24th September officially appointed. I am delighted to write my first column as your Councillor.



On behalf of NODA West Midlands I offer our congratulations to Michael Hastilow on his presidency and look forward in my capacity as Regional Councillor to build upon and develop that which has been achieved thus far.

Please join me in welcoming 3 new members to our Regional team. Andy Brown in District 12 taking over from me and Bruce Wyatt in District 10, following Trevor Guest stepping down. Trevor does so after 18 years loyal service offering advice, guidance and support for societies across Worcestershire. Welcome also to Louise Walker who joins us as Youth Advisor

We were privileged to organise the NODA National Presidential Gala Weekend and AGM held at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole; thank you to all who attended and took part in an event designed to celebrate all that NODA stands for and represents.

We were thrilled that Connie Fisher accepted the invitation to join us for the entire weekend, fully participating in the workshop and delivered a captivating after dinner speech. This was followed by WBOS & WBOS Youth who performed a magnificent cabaret that pulsed in sound and colour for every second of the performance. Our thanks also go to Cathleen McCarron for the "inspirational accents" workshop, to David Lane for his superb piano accompaniment during dinner and Steve Maitland along with his amazing bands that had guests dancing until 1am.

My colleagues are fully committed in their resolve to support NODA members and their respective societies. I feel privileged in having the opportunity to lead a team in their drive to inspire and motivate people of all ages in their passion for amateur theatre.

Whilst I cannot promise to reach everyone immediately, I very much look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the weeks and months ahead. ★

Ian G. Cox
West Midlands Regional Councillor



Ian and Karen Cox, Trevor and Maureen Guest, Robert and Sue Wilson, Andy and Mel Brown, Alison Smith, Elsa Slim

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NODA Gala Dinner

The National NODA AGM and Gala was held in September this year. It is by tradition hosted by the region of the President Elect.

We were joined by patron Connie Fisher along with NODA members and guests from across the British Isles including Eire for a weekend of activities. First time conference visitors included a couple from Shrewsbury Operatic Society who said "From the moment we arrived to the time we left we were made to feel very welcome, mentioning in particular elements at the AGM. The minute's silence. The President's Award a lovely tradition which was explained and the recipient was warmly applauded by everyone present. Even the passing of the President's 'bling' was done with great style, not to mention a dash of 'entertainment' thrown in for good measure. The presentation by the solicitor acting on NODA's behalf was so well done and with such humour that we wondered if perhaps he too has aspirations to tread the boards!"

I wonder with all the pages on the National AGM if you knew the stories behind a few of the table names? 'Ruddigore' was the first musical in which Michael Hastilow appeared, 'Carousel' was chosen for two of the guests seated at that table who sang the duet "If I Loved You", 'Desert Song' was for Gordon Richardson who performed it five times, 'The Music Man' was for his Daughter Jeni, 'AIDA' for WBOS as a thank you for their hard work entertaining us, 'The Most Happy Fella' was the first West Bromwich Operatic Society (WBOS) show he ever appeared in and aptly sums up his feelings for becoming President and representing NODA around the country.



Michael Hastilow and NODA Patron Connie Fisher

CONFERENCE QUIZ

For those of you who had a go at the Conference Quiz it is time to give you the winner and the answers. Congratulations to **Alexandra Berriman** from **NODA East**, you have done your region proud.

- Question 1**, The hardest of them all your name and region.
- Question 2**, NODA Summer School was at Warwick Conferences (University will also be accepted).
- Question 3**, The National Magazine is NODA TODAY.
- Question 4**, NODA Head office is in Peterborough.
- Question 5**, Which Regional Councillors belong to which Region, the answer was given at the AGM and is printed in the front of NODA TODAY.
- Question 6**, NODASafe is all about Health and Safety. If you have not done so, do watch the video on the NODA Website.
- Question 7**, The picture was the famous pack from *Dick Whittington*.
- Question 8**, Wishy Washy is the dame in *Aladdin*.
- Question 9**, Tradition states that Good appears on left so the fairy enters stage right, Evil is on the right so walks on stage from the stage left wing, you can read more on Pantomime traditions at www.its-behind-you.com
- Question 10**, Leo Bloom, had a comfort cloth or hanky.

- Question 11**, West Side Story is based on Romeo & Juliet.
- Question 12**, The Return to the Forbidden Planet is based on The Tempest.
- Question 13**, Bernard was engaged to three stewardesses.
- Question 14**, Hobson's profession was a Cobbler.
- Question 15**, In Season's Greetings Clive was the late arrival and love interest. He was shot but he did not die, he and Belinda found themselves mutually attracted.
- Question 16**, When the Stage Manager shouts "HEADS" something is being flown in as a final warning, they also shout "HEADS UP" followed by "Bar Coming in".
- Question 17**, Treads are steps or stairs.
- Question 18**, Seafaring terms, because sailors skills were what was needed, no one knew ropes & pulleys quite like a sailor.
- Question 19**, I sure hope you got this one right, if not you know why your director shouts.
- Question 20**, If you ask a stage hand where OP is they will point you Stage Right, Stage Left is the traditional location for Prompt Corner, where the Prompt Desk is located and where the DSM sits and runs the show.



Jack and Marjorie Webster

Happy Birthday Jack

Join NODA West Midlands as we raise a glass to SAOS Life Member Jack Webster who was 100 years old in May 2016. Jack joined the society in 1947. A trawl through their archives revealed Jack as being in *The Student Prince* 1947, *Show Boat* 1948, *The Student Prince* 1949, *Bitter Sweet* 1949. Then chorus for *Vagabond King* 1950, *HMS Pinafore* 1951, *Buttonhook* 1953.

He became Assistant Treasurer in 1951 before being Treasurer in 1954 until 1978 making 25 years in that role. Jack also took on the role of House Manager for many years. His final appearance on stage was in *Sweet Charity* 1978 as the policeman.

Happy Birthday Jack from all at NODA West Midlands. ★



Muriel Ellis and Freda Spickernell

New President for Bridgnorth Musical Theatre Company.

On 1st September 2016 Freda Spickernell, Bridgnorth Musical Theatre Company's fourth President, is standing aside after 18 years of service. Muriel Ellis will be taking over the responsibilities of this 'principal' role.

We would like to say congratulations to Muriel Ellis on taking on this role and who is also celebrating 55 years membership of the Bridgnorth Musical Theatre Company. ★

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