

TnodaDAY★

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Be inspired by amateur theatre

2015 AGM and
Presidential Gala

TheatreFest 15
new work initiative

Regional news

More offers for
NODA members

our new Patron
prepares for her
latest role

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National Operatic and Dramatic Association

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Connie Fisher

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07/15

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Welcome to the AGM edition of NODA Today. As you will see from the centre pages of the magazine, we are making some important changes to the format of the AGM and Presidential Gala and so please read that section carefully as we hope to see you in Leeds on Saturday 26th September 2015.

This edition of NODA Today also includes the draft AGM agenda and a call for resolutions, which is your opportunity as a member of NODA to formally bring proposals to the Annual General Meeting for consideration.

And don't worry if you cannot attend, as you can complete and return the enclosed Proxy Card to ensure that your views are represented at the AGM. If the Proxy Card is not enclosed with this edition of NODA Today, please call NODA Membership Services on 01733 374790 who will send another copy to you.

We are delighted to welcome Connie Fisher as a further Patron of the Association - see page 4 for more details.

There's also lots of news from the regions as well as details of TheatreFest15 which NODA is supporting to encourage new work for the theatre, a reminder of how NODA Councillor Phil Barnett took part in The People's Strictly, and updates on special offers around Britain for all NODA members.

As usual, if you have any feedback on any aspect of the magazine, please contact us on **01733 374 790** or email **info@noda.org.uk**. ★

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did you noda?



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 Tony Gibbs, Chief Executive, National Operatic and Dramatic Association no later than Thursday 27th August 2015 by email to tony@noda.org.uk or by mail to 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH

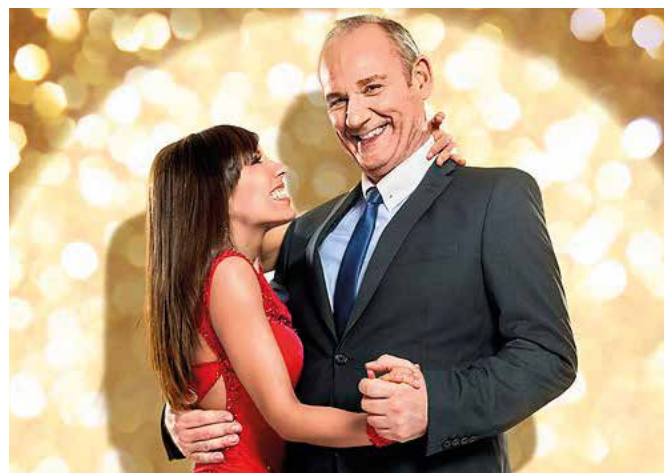
Phil's Strictly experience

As we reported in the last edition of NODA Today, Councillor for Youth, Phil Barnett, was one of only six inspirational individuals chosen to take part in the BBC's Red Nose Day celebration The People's Strictly.

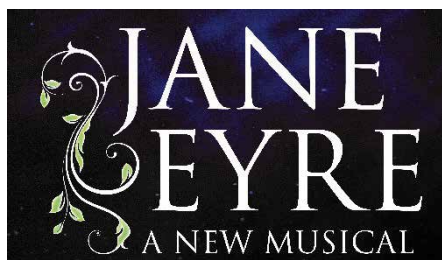
Phil and his partner Janette Manrara, dancing the foxtrot, did themselves proud but were beaten to the glitter ball by Cassidy Little and Natalie Lowe with their dramatic version of the paso doble.

Even so, it was an amazing achievement by Phil whose appearance on the show raised the profile of his NODA Society Kidz R Us in St Ives, as well as amateur theatre more generally.

Any guesses what Phil now uses as his ring tone?



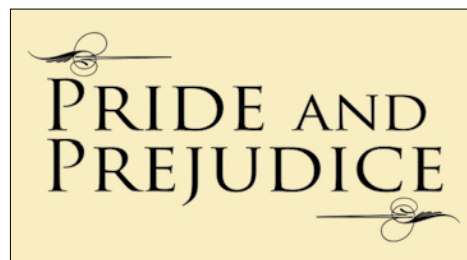
Discover Why These Six Musicals Sell Seats



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NODA welcomes another Patron

NODA is delighted to announce that Connie Fisher has accepted an invitation to become a Patron of the Association, alongside existing Patron, Andrew Lloyd Webber.

In taking up the role, Connie says, "Performance has been a huge part of my life since a very young age and so I recognise the importance of the arts in giving people a creative outlet, building confidence, making friends and having fun. These, I believe, are ingrained in the true spirit of NODA, bringing opportunities to perform to people of all ages and abilities so they can enjoy the benefits of opera and musical theatre. I'm proud to be a patron of NODA and wish you all the very best in your endeavours in the coming year."

NODA looks forward to working with Connie Fisher in the years ahead, and will update members on future plans in due course. ★



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

**Saturday 26th September 2015 at 2pm
at The Carriageworks, Leeds LS2 3AD**

Draft agenda

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Confirmation of notice of meeting | 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 |
| 2. Apologies for absence | | |
| 3. In memoriam | | |
| 4. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting | NODA London
Jacquie Stedman | 16. To elect the nominees of the Council for Honorary Membership of the Association |
| 5. Adoption of the Council's report for the period ended 31 December 2014 | NODA Scotland
Gordon Blackburn | 17. To declare the election of the President and Vice-President for the ensuing year in accordance with Rule 20: |
| 6. Adoption of the Accounts for the period ended 31 December 2014 | NODA South East
Kay Rowan | – President: Mr Chris Ingram (North East) |
| 7. To appoint the Association's Auditor | NODA East Midlands
Nannette Lovell | – Vice-President: Mr Michael Hastilow (West Midlands) |
| 8. To declare the numbers of the membership in accordance with Rule 27(b) (vi) | NODA West Midlands
Michael Hastilow | 18. To declare the election of the Chairman of Trustees for the ensuing three years in accordance with Rule 20A: |
| 9. Membership subscription rates for 2016 | NODA South West
Nick Lawrence | – Chairman: Mr Fred Piggford (North) |
| 10. Alteration to the rules as recommended to the NODA membership by Council | NODA Wales & Ireland
Sophie Herrmann | 19. Any other business |
| 11. NODA Ltd Board report | NODA East
Don McKay | |
| 12. To elect the Appeal Tribunal in accordance with Rule 55 | NODA North
Gordon Richardson | |
| 13. The Presidential Address | NODA North West
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 Tony Gibbs, Chief Executive, National Operatic and Dramatic Association no later than Thursday 27th August 2015 by email to tony@noda.org.uk or by mail to 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough PE2 7UH

TheatreFest 15

celebrates new work for the theatre

TheatreFest 15 is set to take centre stage internationally as it pioneers new work for the theatre and is a partnership between the Isle of Man Arts Council and the National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA) and will be held over the weekend of October 9th and 10th at the Gaiety Theatre on the Isle of Man.

TheatreFest 15 will be a five-year project encouraging and promoting new work for professional, amateur and community theatre in its very widest sense. Although the Isle of Man will be the hub and TheatreFest 15 will be supporting new local talent, participation will be invited from the UK and across the world and the project will provide exciting new opportunities for artists and audiences.

TheatreFest 15 is set to place the island and amateur theatre on an international stage.

Speaking at the launch, Isle of Man Arts Council vice-chairman Michael Lees said: 'TheatreFest15 is a brand new concept, a legacy outcome from Island of Culture 2014.

'From the outset we were determined that Island of Culture should have a life long beyond 2014; legacy was fundamental. The idea for TheatreFest was first mooted after the Island hosted last year's British All Winners' Festival of Plays finals and it was clear that the enthusiasm for TheatreFest far outweighed any concerns over the risk factor associated with putting on new work.

'TheatreFest 15 will be a five-year project encouraging and promoting new work for professional, amateur and community theatre in its very widest sense. What's so exciting is that although the Isle of Man will be the hub and we'll be supporting new local talent, we will be inviting participation from the UK and across the world.'

NODA chief executive Tony Gibbs said: 'NODA was pleased to become a partner in this venture because we're very aware that theatre – especially musical theatre – in the Isle of Man is of an extremely high standard and we've seen how the Island is taking a lead in advocating new work. Equally compelling was that while many NODA societies in England are

unable to secure the rights to perform top-flight shows such as *Les Misérables* or *Miss Saigon*, this is not the case for the Isle of Man. The island is treated as an exception because rights holders know any production staged here will be of a high standard, the audiences will be very supportive and the show will be performed in one of the British Isles' most magnificent theatres, The Gaiety.'

Mr Gibbs said that nowhere else in the UK was the TheatreFest concept being trialled. 'The Isle of Man provides a nurturing environment for getting new work off the ground. Its arts community has vision and an Arts Council that's far more forward-looking than any Arts Council elsewhere in the UK. All of which means that with TheatreFest the Isle of Man can take the lead in pioneering new productions.'

Mr Lees said TheatreFest would have a different theme each year. 'For 2015 slavery will be the theme. Slavery's not just something that went on 200 years ago. It's an issue that's still with us and on a global scale.

“TheatreFest 15 will be an evolving and involving project.”

Michael Lees, Isle of Man Arts Council vice-chairman

THEATREfest 15

MANNIN ISLE OF MAN

‘One of the elements of TheatreFest 15 is a new writing initiative that will take slavery as its theme and be open not only to writers in the Island but also worldwide. The selected work will then have its debut during TheatreFest 16.’

Other components in 2015 include puppetry workshops for schools delivered by an experienced puppeteer. As Tony Gibbs explained: ‘Puppetry’s enjoying a renaissance and is now very much part of mainstream theatre.’

There is also to be devised theatre work, also on the theme of slavery, produced by Stage Door Entertainment, the theatre company responsible for staging last year’s I Love Culture show. Ahead of the production in October the three-strong team of Lisa Kreisky, Kristene Sutcliffe and

Alex Toohey will be casting for local actors and holding workshops, led by director and theatre practitioner Bev Clark who said: ‘There are now more people in slavery than ever before. Slavery is alive and thriving.’ The new piece would, she said, start a process to give its victims ‘a face and a voice’. Lisa Kreisky explained that the devised work – a piece of community theatre embracing all ages and abilities – would not be scripted but ‘organic’ and had the potential to be ‘really exciting’.

A new original musical, *For Tonight*, is another strand to TheatreFest to be cast and produced by Stage Door Entertainment. Kristene Sutcliffe explained: ‘It’s a love story – a play with beautiful music that’s indie-rock/folk in style – which made its professional debut in the 2014 New York Musical Theatre Festival.’

Mr Lees said: ‘The legacy of Island of Culture 2014 has also led to TheatreFest featuring a world premiere; a professional production at the Gaiety Theatre of a new musical, *Jimmy Mac*, by Stuart Brayson who, with Tim Rice, composed *From Here to Eternity*. Stuart took part in last year’s celebrations so we’re delighted his experience of the Island’s arts scene has inspired him to bring his work to a Manx audience.

‘We are delighted to be partnering with such a respected body as NODA. To have the association’s support is tremendously valuable endorsement of the high quality of theatre in the Isle of Man as TheatreFest reaches out to the UK beyond to provide exciting new opportunities for artists and audiences and drive cultural tourism. Importantly, with a five-year life and a commitment to be as community-inclusive as possible, TheatreFest will be an evolving and involving project.’

TheatreFest 15 will be held over the weekend of October 9th and 10th at the Gaiety Theatre.

To register an interest in *For Tonight* and/or the devised theatre piece contact Stage Door Entertainment, stagedoorentsion@gmail.com



regionalroundup East

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Councillor's Comments

Another busy year in the East was marked by the annual AGM and Gala Awards Luncheon at the Burgess Hall, St Ives on Sunday 10th May. The AGM was well attended and we were able to welcome some new members to the NODA East Committee. This was followed by the Gala Awards Luncheon and both events were attended by the NODA President, John Barnes and his wife. MC Stephen Hayter gave us a remarkable Gala opening involving all the winners in the youth category's, who were either live or pre-recorded on film, which was a real celebration of the young upcoming talent that we are lucky to have in NODA. Congratulations to all of the well deserved nominees and winners in their categories, especially to Ipswich Operatic and Dramatic Society, who swept the board in District 12 as well as winning the Councillor's Cup for their



extraordinary "As close to the most perfect production that I have ever seen be it Amateur or Professional" production of "Jesus Christ Superstar". As well as all of this there were a large number of trade stands on display that were taken advantage of by our members, gathering useful information for their own future productions, and networking with fellow NODA members. My sincere thanks and appreciation go to the NODA East sub committee and all of the Reps and their partners who assisted with the smooth running of both events on the day.

I am already in the thick of it as we start the 2015 season and my wife and I have seen some excellent productions so far and look forward to seeing many more as the year continues. As standards improve it gets harder and harder for the Reps to make the final decisions on nominees and winners of awards in each current year, but needless to say whether you have a budget of £250 or £250,000 talent is priceless and all levels of production are judged on their individual merits.

Until next time, keep pushing the boundaries, aim high and most important of all have fun. ★

Don McKay
Councillor, NODA East



NODA East district 5

National NODA President visited Norfolk for a 'youth trail' during the Easter holidays and attended productions by Sheringham Little Theatre Youth Group 'Fiddler on the Roof', DOSYTCO (Dereham Youth Group) 'Hairspray', and Norfolk Youth Music Theatre 'The Secret Garden'. These youth productions demonstrate so clearly that young people are the future of amateur theatre. ★

Civic award for longstanding youth group

To celebrate 30 years of successful and award winning youth productions by Gorleston based youth group Dusmagrik, a Civic Award was presented to Mary Carter and Janice Harvey in recognition of their continued dedication to the group. The presentation was given by the Lady Mayoress at a 'tea party' in Great Yarmouth Town Hall.

The reception was entertained with a medley of chorus numbers from their most recent production Bless 'em All at the Gorleston Pavilion Theatre to celebrate the 70th anniversary of WW11 and attended by invited members, friends and guests. Founder, member Maureen Miller or 'Dusty' as she is so fondly known, puts the success of Dusmagrik, and, so many of the young people who have gone on to secure professional careers in the theatre, down to hard work but, 'necessary, good old fashioned discipline' a key ingredient she believes to ensuring young people learn and develop skills for life not just for the stage.

Dusty is also be looking forward to celebrating her 80th birthday party at the Gorleston Pavilion Theatre in May. ★

NODA East AGM & Awards Luncheon – 2014

The NODA East AGM was held at Burgess Hall, St Ives on 10th May – the third year at this venue, and as Don McKay our Regional Councillor said – we will continue to use this venue until we get it right!! As a Committee we listen to what our delegates say, and improve year on year to make this the sort of experience the members will relish and want to attend again.

Following the AGM, where we welcomed the President John Barnes and his wife Judith, delegates were free to explore the 14 Trade Stands – Sue Dupont having done a great job in getting so many traders interested – the hall was a hubbub of interest and colour, with many new visitors realising how much there is on offer to NODA members.

Lunch was a little late being served, but we made up the time so that we started the Awards Ceremony fairly on time. Stephen Hayter had arranged to go to every Youth Production nominee's rehearsal venue to film a few seconds of the young people involved – no mean feat when you look at the size of our region! – this was shown as a video overture, then the Youth Performance winners and representatives from Shoeburyness High School Southend, Bishops Stortford Musical Theatre Juniors and The Riverside Players St Neots flooded noisily into the Hall and performed a number specially written by Stephen, with humour, references to NODA practices etc – which was very well-received, and a good opening to what is, to us, the highlight of the Awards season! What are BAFTA's anyway?

Stephen was again MC for the ceremony, ably assisted by Emily Wainwright (Riverside Players St Neots).

We had a great time, and by making some changes in the format, all Districts received their awards in record time – 7 awards per District plus the Shields for best overall production – 91 presentations in total, the President rivalled the Queen for the number of hands he shook over a couple of hours!

The Committee would like to thank everyone who attended for their support, and any concerns that were voiced will be addressed for next year's event, which will take place at the same venue on 3rd April 2016 – hope to see you there! ★

Nova Horley
Rep for District 3 East



regionalroundup East Midlands

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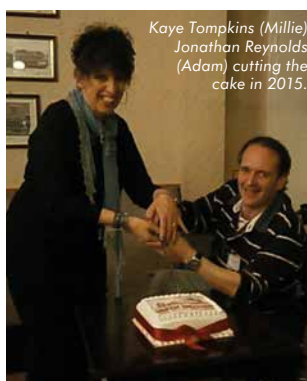
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Wellingborough Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society – 7 Brides Reunion

For want of something better to do on Boxing Day Jonathan Reynolds (a well known local performer in Northamptonshire) posted on Facebook a programme photo of WAODS 1985 production of Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, in which he played Adam, with the caption "This coming year marks the 30th Anniversary of the show – let's have a reunion".

So often these remarks are made and nobody acts upon it; but such was the response to his post it became obvious that there was a great deal of interest in having a get together. With this in mind Barry McIlroy (who had directed the production) and Rachael Hewitt (one of the brides) decided to organise a reunion. By now it was mid January and the ideal time for the event would be the first week in March as this would be exactly 30 years - so time was of the essence. A date was chosen, a venue and food booked and invitations were sent out. Some detective work had to be undertaken to trace some of the participants as in 30 years people had moved around – some even out of the area.



Barry, who continues to direct for societies throughout the UK, said that "Realistically if we can get 20 of the cast and helpers together – that would be an achievement". So he and Rachael were delighted that the final turn out was 50. These consisted of cast, helpers and friends – some travelled from areas as diverse as Suffolk and Bulgaria to be at the reunion in Wellingborough. A fantastic night was had by all as they rekindled friendships with people they had not seen for many years. The attendees saw images of the show, enjoyed an excellent buffet including a cake with the show logo emblazoned on it. A toast was made to absent friends and those who were no longer with us. This was a fitting way to celebrate what had been one of the society's most successful and popular shows.

Rachael said "Although this was a non profit making get-together the money left over after all bills were paid – together with the proceeds of a raffle – enabled us to present a cheque of £250 to the Wellingborough Talking Newspaper". ★

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The remaining Brides and Brothers in a publicity shot from 1985.

★ Q&A: ANNE KEY-HUCKERBY ★

★ Anne Key-Huckerby is a NODA
★ stalwart who has just retired after an
★ admirable stint as regional rep for
★ North Lincolnshire in NODA's East
★ Midlands region. Alex Wood asked
★ Anne some questions about her
★ time in amateur theatre and work as
★ regional rep.

★ When and how did your life in amateur theatre begin? ★

★ I sang in church, school and college
★ choirs in my early years. I first
★ appeared on the amateur stage in
★ 1963 when I took part in a play at
★ Retford Little Theatre. I was in at least
★ a couple more plays before I moved
★ to Lincoln and joined the Lincoln
★ AODS in 1964.

★ How long have you served on the regional committee? ★

★ I became a Regional Representative
★ when Pat Key, my first husband died. It
★ was his wish that I did so. At that time
★ this District was part of the Eastern Area.
★ But when the NODA boundaries were
★ changed my part of Lincolnshire and
★ a small bit of Nottinghamshire, moved
★ into the East Midlands Region. Later
★ (I think it was in 2010) when I had 45

societies in my care, the District was halved
and Peter Breach took over District 5 while I
retained District 4.

How long have you been a NODA member?

I can't remember whether or not I became
a NODA member when my first husband
was Regional Rep. Certainly I decided to
be an Individual Member when I took over
the job on 11th January 1989.

Your area (North Lincolnshire) is relatively sparsely populated and some readers will be surprised at how far you have to travel to see shows. What's your longest round trip?

The longest distance I had to travel was just
over 100 miles to Mablethorpe and back.

What do you think are the main challenges facing amateur theatre today?

The main problems certainly involve
expense. There's also the need for young
people to come forward to help run each
society and take on more responsibilities.
In addition there are so many other calls
upon people's time and amateur theatre
does need commitment.

Any memorably funny incidents?

There were at least two amusing
moments during pantomimes.
One was where a small girl sitting
immediately in front of me at a panto
at a seaside venue crawled under
her chair when King Rat appeared.
Another was when the Woodcutter was
taking the Babes in the Wood away to
do the dirty deed and a child cried out
loudly: 'Don't do it!'.

Of the shows you have reviewed what were the 3 plays ... and the 3 musicals ... that you most enjoyed?

The three musicals I have enjoyed the
most have been 'Fiddler on the Roof',
South Pacific' and 'Rose Marie'. [The
last one was the very first musical I
ever saw when I was a small child.]
The three plays I have found very
enjoyable are ; 'Blithe Spirit', 'The
Haunting of Hill House' and 'Good
Things'. I found having to be out and
about and meeting lots of people
were very helpful in my bereavement.
I have really enjoyed meeting so many
like-minded folk and have made many
very good friends over the years.

Thank you Anne – here's wishing you
a long and happy 'retirement'. ★

Looking Back in Stamford

Some memories from one of our oldest societies

Stamford Amateur Musical Society
(formerly Stamford Amateur Operatic
Society) celebrates its 110th anniversary
this year making it one of the oldest
amateur dramatic groups in the country.
Chairman Adrian Worgan recently chatted
to some older members about memorable
moments in the society's past.

One of its earliest members was taken to
see its first show, The Gondoliers, when
he was 10. It so impressed him that he
became a lifelong Gilbert and Sullivan
enthusiast, involved with the society selling
programmes and working backstage,
becoming musical director/conductor for
the society until 1929 when the man who
was to become acclaimed composer,
organist and conductor – most famously at
the Proms – Sir Malcolm Sargent took his
place on the national stage.

Adrian reminds us of the importance of
a society like his in a small town before
the age of 24-hour entertainment. The
Stamford Mercury printed double page
spreads about forthcoming performances
and between shows on Saturday the cast
paraded through the town on their way

to be treated to high tea at the Stamford
Hotel. On "Civic Night" all the Borough
Councillors attended in evening suits with
their ladies elegantly dressed in evening
gowns and fur coats.

Standards were high – auditions were
taken in front of the whole committee,
though that did not stop one leading man
being asked to decline the offer of a role in
The Rebel Maid as his leading lady
thought he was too young.

That said there was obviously a lot of
fun – possibly a little too much – as well.
The young man above had to go on stage
in Die Fledermaus sloshed having drunk
too much wine during a dress rehearsal –
presumably preceding a performance,
which sounds like hard work. Stage crews
don't change – they love a prank. One of
the senior members has never forgotten
being given a glass of 'wine' to drink in
a performance of The Merry Widow – he
manfully finished off the lemon juice which
he had, in fact, been given.

As some older readers will know, availability
of suitable venues and complications with

'getting in/getting out' are old problems.
Stamford's Picturedrome (the former Corn
Exchange) was used for many years. Sunday
was spent taking down the screen and
moving it and the cumbersome loud speakers
into store and building the set – collected
from the sidings at Stamford station – often
took into the early hours of Monday morning.

Scenery was heavy and, with many
scene changes in most shows the stage
manager's persuader of a barrel of beer
for the crew if they got changes done on
time usually worked a treat.

Helping to bring the Corn Exchange back to
its former glory, nominated for NODA awards
winning best musical award for The Full
Monty last year, and able to make donations
to local and national charities, SAMS has a
proud history and a bright, positive future.

This is an edited version of an article by
Adrian Worgan who spoke to Grahamme
Sorfleet, Trevor Kirk, Margaret Fox, Steve
Watson, John Fox, Duncan, and Jean
Hodson. An unedited version of the article
can be found via the EMids Facebook
page. ★



regionalroundup London

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Councillor's Comments

NODA Theatre Summer School

– Passionate about Theatre

University of Warwick 2-8 August 2018

Grants available...read on!!



At the 2015 NODA Theatre Summer School we are running the following courses which still have spaces available:

Choreography, Video Production, Lighting 1 (Nuts and Bolts) and Lighting 2 (Whistles and Bells). If you would like to attend any of these courses you will be pleased to know that we have made available 8 grants of £200 each for new bookings.

So don't delay – go to **www.noda.org.uk/SummerSchool** for an application form. I can guarantee you will have a brilliant time! ★

Jacquie Stedman Councillor, NODA London

Crazy or What?

It was in a moment of sheer madness that I decided to sign up and attend the NODA Theatre Summer School last year – who in their right mind goes back to school at my age!

It was probably one of the best decisions I have ever made – I had a ball and the week was a life changer!

As a School we had great fun during the week working on a variety of pieces, these were showcased at the end of our week. What an amazing afternoon that was – so much talent on display both performing and technical!!!

Whether your thing is singing, dancing, acting, directing, sound, lighting, or just plain love of all things theatrical, it's a unique opportunity to come together with likeminded individuals, spend a week totally devoid of worldly stress, and bond with people who share the same joy of performing and involvement in theatre.

I discovered it makes no difference how young or old you may be, Summer School has something for everyone. Will I be going back? You bet!! ★

Mike Smith

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BACCES is 'Onwards & Upwards' for Charity

The British Airways Cabin Crew Entertainment Society (BACCES) has been entertaining audiences with its annual pantomime in a variety of music halls and theatres, including The Royal Albert Hall, The Palladium, Chiswick Town Hall, The Planet, York House, and, more recently, The Beck Theatre for the past 44 years. The mantra of this British Airways affiliated society is 'To put on a show, raise money for charity, and have fun doing it.' The fun factor is key to everything they do, as is their desire to give as much to charity as they can, whether in monetary terms or by donating their time.

There have been many estimates about the total BACCES has raised and subsequently donated to charity since 1971. What has been calculated, however, is that in the past ten years alone the society has made in excess of £140,000 in monetary donations to a wide variety of local, national and international charities and projects. In addition, BACCES has been donating two full performances of each production, amounting to some 1,100 tickets, to local charitable and worthy causes since 1992. These include local youth groups, care homes, schools, charities, and those who would normally be unable to go to see a pantomime. This totals approximately £240,000 of tickets over the past ten years.

BACCES' last production, Jack and the Beanstalk, ran for six days at the Beck Theatre, which has been the society's home for the past 27 years, and the proceeds donated to charity. The society chose eight charities from the nominations they had received to benefit from the panto. These were: Christopher's Smile, which aims to raise



Photos courtesy of BACCES

money to fund development of new drugs to treat medulloblastoma and other childhood cancer without devastating side effects; Combat Stress, which provides desperately needed hope for ex- servicemen who have suffered trauma; Guide Dogs, Beacon House, which offers healthcare and wellbeing facilities to those who are homeless, in insecure accommodation or at high risk of homelessness; Colchester Deaf Club, Step by Step, which is a homeless charity helping young people facing homelessness and adversity; Colchester Society for the Blind,

and Mind, which is a mental health charity ensure no one has to face a mental health problem alone.

Charities are often nominated by society members, or friends and family of society members, for personal reasons. These can be wide ranging and varied. Some years, there might be just one charity put forward, while others might see a dozen or so suggestions. The Beck Youth Theatre, and others, have been beneficiaries on more than one occasion. Each of the chosen charities from Jack and the Beanstalk received between £500 and £2,500.

With ever increasing demand, higher overheads, and the desire to raise yet more money each year for charity, BACCES will be moving to its new home, The Watford Palace Theatre, for their next production, Sleeping Beauty, which they will stage from 13th to 17th January 2016. This follows a long and wide-ranging search for a suitable new venue. As many of you will already be aware, The Watford Palace is slightly larger than The Beck Theatre, with close to six hundred seats housed in a beautiful Edwardian building which offers modern facilities for both audience members and theatre groups alike. There is also a wide selection of amenities within walking distance of the theatre with excellent transportation links, and BACCES hopes this will draw even larger crowds to see their productions.

More details about the great work BACCES is doing and news on their next production can be found on their web site www.bacces.com. Alternatively, you can join them on their Facebook page. ★

Nick Young





regionalroundup North

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Councillor's Comments

At the time of going to press as the first signs of summer are appearing there seems a bit of a brief hiatus in productions although show visits are coming thick and fast in the coming weeks. We held a successful and enjoyable Regional weekend from March 6th to 8th at the Holiday Inn, Scotch Corner. Following the ingenious quiz on the Friday evening, the Saturday workshop involved a semi-staged work through of "Spamalot". Those who took part thoroughly enjoyed the excellent tutelage of Marje Bolam and came away from the session in raptures about their experience.

The evening dinner was as usual, a great success and was attended by the NODA president John Barnes and his wife Judith (pictured) who also helped present Programme and Poster awards after the AGM on the Sunday. We are returning to Scotch Corner (slightly later) on the 11th to 13th March next year.

Our next big event will be the Youth and Performance awards to be held at the Rainton Meadows Arena on September 12th. These awards are to celebrate excellence within amateur theatre in NODA North region. Each rep has been keeping an eye out during their show visits for societies or individuals that go the 'extra mile' in providing entertainment for the public. After a couple of successful award evenings we decided to expand the awards a little this year and there will be awards for best Musical, best individual and best play/panto/concert in the adult category and best production, best individual and 'rising star' in the youth category.

These awards have had their detractors saying that the audience's applause should be all any actor requires. Whilst I agree that the audience's applause is paramount, the awards we present are a small token of recognition of excellence

to encourage societies/individuals to 'stretch' themselves for future performances. The nominations have literally just been posted to their recipients in the last two days and Facebook has been full of 'chat' about how thrilled various A.N.Other's have been to be 'recognised' at last for their efforts. Audience's applause is great, but impersonal – our awards bring that 'personal' touch to say 'we appreciate your efforts'.

I have been visiting a couple of societies recently who have been celebrating special anniversaries – Caprians in Gateshead celebrated their 50th this year and Jarrow their 60th. My own home society, Murton Theatre Group, are celebrating our 90th anniversary year this year with my own families 80 years of continuous association with them (my parents joining in 1935). It is great to see longevity in societies but make no mistake it is achieved by tremendous background work by committees and moving with the times. However, it is generally 'ageing' committee's - younger members need to start taking administrative roles in societies if we are to survive. They may find they get to enjoy it being able to help plot the future of their own society...

Several members of NODA North will be heading down to the Midlands on August 1st – no it's not a football match but NODA Summer School 2015 at the University of Warwick. Currently we stand at eleven members attending which is the highest attendance for many a year including five Summer School 'virgins'. One thing I'll guarantee them is they'll all want to go back...

Well I hope your summer break is relaxing and your upcoming productions successful – see you around and about in the region. ★

Gordon Richardson
Councillor, NODA North



A Phoenix Rises

Blyth's Phoenix Theatre recently received £10,000 from the Sir James Knott Trust, kick-starting plans to refurbish its facilities. The theatre, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary year and relies on the support of dozens of volunteers, attracts about 15,000 guests each year.

The funding boost will help create an extra space for small-scale performances involving local writers, directors and performers – both amateur and professional.

David Garrett, executive director of the Phoenix, said: "We are really looking forward to some exciting times at the theatre during our 50th anniversary year. The celebrations will be made even more significant as we can make welcome improvements to the building and layout of the venue.

"These changes will help to strengthen the delivery of our education and creative programme, and put in place an infrastructure that will be invaluable for the development of the theatre's future." ★

New NODA North Rep for District 1

Dr Ray Lowry BDS, MB ChB, DRCOG, FFPH, a qualified doctor and dentist, completed formal training in public health and became an NHS consultant in 1990. Until he retired in 2010 he was a senior lecturer in dental public health at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and a Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health.

He has published over 50 articles in the learned press. He was the training programme director for public health in the Northern Region and an examiner for the Faculty of Public Health. He now devotes most of his working time to teaching, consultancy, humour, after-

dinner speaking and comedy performing (he took a one-man-show to the Edinburgh Fringe) and honorary roles in worthy organisations.

This may seem an odd mixture but he has penned comedy for radio, television and the press writing for Dave Allen, The Two Ronnies, Kenneth Williams and Don Maclean and for such series as Weekending, Don't Look Now and the Betty Witherspoon Show. He has had comic pieces published in the Probe, TV Times, the Two Ronnies Book and other national magazines and he has had a regular column in a newspaper. He has written three books: "Be an entertaining

North East Society's 110th anniversary Celebrations

One of the oldest amateur performing groups in the UK, Gateshead Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society, recently celebrated its 110th year. Music and singing filled the air when the group performed the classic "High Society" in April. Of special note is that Ros Norman, only 18 years of age, from Tyne & Wear, conducted the performance. He is the youngest conductor the society have ever appointed.

Created in 1905, the society's first production was The Mikado, which involved 25 females and 28 males in the chorus, as well as principals. In the 1920's and 30's, the society competed in tournaments in the North East to great success, winning the Belmont Trophy six years in succession. The group continued with operas and lighter musicals over the years and set up a junior society in 1991. Lots of the talented youngsters attending ended up performing in the West End in London...

Many congratulations and may the next 110 years be just as successful. ★



Sussex By The Sea

National Voluntary Arts Week

The Barn Theatre in Seaford, East Sussex, organised and promoted performing and creative arts events as part of National Voluntary Arts Week, 15-24 May 2015.

The aim of the week is to shine a national spotlight on the wide range of creative groups and dedicated volunteers that make up the UK & Republic of Ireland's vibrant voluntary arts sector – encouraging more people to connect with activity in their community and discover the joy of 'taking part'.

The week kicked off with a colourful and entertaining music hall variety show 'Sussex By The Sea' written and directed by London stage veteran, Graham Tubb at the Barn Theatre.

Neighbouring organisation, the Seaford Museum, based at the wartime Martello Tower, took part in the National 'Museums at Night' project with an illustrated talk on Sussex Graveyards by acclaimed author and historian, Kevin Gordon. The 'Last Minute Artists' Seaford art group presented a week long exhibition at the Crypt



Gallery entitled 'Six Artists and a Dog' including a design a postcard competition in several art mediums.

Brighton choreographer, Stuart Hall, held two dance workshops at the Barn Theatre rehearsing routines for the flash mobs that popped up around Seaford town centre and professional actress and self-defence instructor Wendy Reed held a confidence building workshop using both drama and self-defence techniques.

Rebecca Woolven from Becca's Face Painting taught the basics of face and body art with creative and expressive styles and writer Paula Woolven held a writing workshop for school years 3-6 and all entries were submitted to the Kallikids creative writing competition.

Seaford Community Cinema showed the film 'Interstellar' on the large screen at the Barn Theatre, featuring Matthew McConaughey and Anne Hathaway.

Theatre taster open days were held for potential new performing arts members for Seaford Musical Theatre

with read throughs for 'Anything Goes', a musical theatre quiz, tea and cake and basic song and dance rehearsals.

An open air teddy-bears picnic and a comedy performance by Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist, Sam Jones, finished off the weeks events which were enjoyed by over 500 people. The Barn Theatre hopes to repeat and build on the success of the weeks events in 2016. ★

SAM JONES 12A

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24th May 2015

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www.samjonesmagic.co.uk

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- Peter James

NODA AGM and Presidential Gala 2015

Your invitation to attend

On Saturday 26th September NODA is holding its Annual General Meeting and Presidential Gala in Leeds and you are cordially invited to attend either in your own right as a member of the Association or as a member of an affiliated society.

This year the incoming President is Chris Ingram, currently Chairman of Trustees and Vice President and he will be installed into his new role at the AGM as will Michael Hastilow, Vice President Elect and Councillor NODA West Midlands. On assuming the Presidency Chris will step down as Chairman of Trustees and Fred Piggford, Past President and Life Member, will be installed as the new Chairman of Trustees. There will also be a full report of the activities and finances of the Association in 2014. Finally the national Programme and Poster award winners will be announced and the various trophies presented.

Traditionally this event has been over two or three days and based in an expensive hotel but, as most of you are aware, Council have agreed a new format for this year with two main purposes in mind; to reduce the costs to the Association but equally importantly to reduce the cost of attending for you our members.

This year the event will essentially be one day only. Most delegates, with the exception of those from the more remote corners of the UK, will be able to travel on Saturday morning. Leeds has excellent road and rail

connections and the first event, namely the AGM, will not start until the afternoon. The AGM will be held in The Carriageworks, the theatre in which most Leeds based societies perform – it is very fitting that NODA, the principal representative body for amateur theatre in the UK should hold the principal business meeting of its year in a theatre! All members, society or individuals have a right to attend or be represented at the AGM free of any charge.

In the evening our Presidential Dinner and Gala Ball will be at The Queens Hotel, a top, four star, hotel in Leeds and which is accustomed to hosting prestigious events in its superb Ballroom, accommodating up to 500 guests. After a sumptuous meal we will dance the night away to Todd Miller and the Joe Loss Showband who have been an integral part of the NODA NE Gala Weekend for many years. Indeed Todd Miller is the very proud recipient of the NODA Commendation Award for his contribution to the NE Weekend over so many years.

The Queens Hotel is immediately adjacent to Leeds Railway Station and The Carriageworks is only a short (10 minute) walk or even shorter taxi ride away.

Hotel accommodation is not being booked through NODA but should be booked direct with your hotel of choice and Leeds has a comprehensive range of hotels, from budget to luxury to suit all budgets and all within a very short walk or taxi ride of the two main venues. Enclosed with this information are

details of a good cross section, but by no means exhaustive list, of these hotels. We do have a limited number of rooms being held on an allocation basis by The Queens, for both Friday and Saturday nights, at a special rate of £144 per room double occupancy (B&B) or £132 single occupancy (B&B), but these should be booked direct with The Queens – see the list of hotels for contact details.

Only the Presidential Gala Dinner and Ball is being booked through NODA and as the incoming President, I am very grateful to my colleagues on the NODA North East Regional Committee for administering tickets for this event – an application form accompanies this invitation.

Anyone can of course decide to make a mini-break of the weekend and Leeds has many attractions both within the City and in the surrounding areas which would make such a break an attractive and interesting holiday. As you would expect there is a plethora of information on the web but a good starting point for planning your visit is www.visitleeds.co.uk/



I look forward to welcoming you all to Leeds for what I know will be a great day for NODA. ★

Chris Ingram

Vice President and Chairman of Trustees
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07954 430058



SATURDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2015

Programme for the Day

Time	Event	Venue	Notes
10.30 – 12.00	AGM Rehearsal	Carriageworks Auditorium	
11.00 – 13.00	Meeting of NODA Regional Committee Members	Carriageworks Meeting Room TBC	
12.00 – 14.00	Refreshments (cash)	Carriageworks Level 1 Bar	The Carriageworks does not serve any food but there are many restaurants in the surrounding area.
14.00 – 15.30	AGM	Carriageworks Auditorium	NE Committee to meet/greet/steward
15.30 – 16.00	P&P Presentations	Carriageworks Auditorium	
18.45 – 19.30	Reception	The Queens – Ark Royal Bar	
19.30 – 21.00	Dinner	The Queens Ballroom	Tables of 10/12, Capacity – up to 450
21.00 – 01.00	Ball	The Queens Ballroom	Dancing to Todd Miller and the Joe Loss Show Band
01.00	Carriages		

Dinner Menu

Starters

Salmon Gravavlax, petit potato salad, rye bread crouste, citrus dressing

Carrot and coriander soup, lime crème fraîche, coriander cress (V)



Mains

Braised feather blade of beef, dauphinoise potato, roasted carrots and parsnips, curly kale

Roast vegetable and Puy lentil Pithivier, celeriac puree, Savoy cabbage (V)



Sweet

Vanilla bean cheesecake, blackberry paint, blackberry and marjoram compote



Tea, coffee and chocolates

V = Vegetarian option

Presidential Gala Banquet and Dance Booking Form (PLEASE PRINT)

Name		
Position		
Society Name		
Delegate Names	Position	Vegetarian
		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
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		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
Special dietary requirements		
Seating preferences e.g. 'With other members of Little Puddewick AOS' or 'NODA West Midlands' etc.		

Booking Forms to be sent to our Booking Administrator accompanied by a cheque payment covering all delegates (£45 per person).

Applications to be sent to our Booking Administrator: **Sally Holmes, NODA NE, 17 Sunnybank Court, Yeadon, Leeds, LS19 7UF**
(alternatively, email sally.holmes@noda.org.uk)

Charity Number: 254640, VAT Number: 232 5945 62

Leeds hotels

Leeds has many hotels within a short walk or taxi ride of The Queens Hotel and the following is list of many of these hotels and their booking details. It is of course equally possible to use hotel booking internet sites such as:

www.booking.com
www.trivago.co.uk
www.tripadvisor.co.uk
www.laterooms.com

Hotel	Address	Phone / Website	Distance from Queens
The Queens	City Square, Leeds, LS1 1PJ	0845 874 0060 www.qhotels.co.uk/our-locations/the-queens/	
Bewleys Hotel	City Walk Sweet Street Leeds LS11 9AT	0113 234 2340 www.bewleyshotels.com/leeds	600m – easy walk
Crowne Plaza	Wellington Street Leeds LS1 4DL	0871 942 9170 www.crowneplaza.com/Leeds	300m
The Hilton	Neville Street Leeds LS1 4BX	0113 244 2000 www.hilton.com/leeds	100m
The Double Tree by Hilton	Granery Wharfe 2 Wharfe Approach Leeds LS1 4BR	0113 241 1000 www.hilton.com/leeds	200m
Jurys	Brewery Place Brewery Wharfe Leeds LS10 1NE	0113 283 8800 www.jurysinns.com/leeds	800m – short taxi ride
Malmaison	1 Swinegate Leeds LS1 4AG	0113 398 1000 www.malmaison.com/leeds	300m
Marriott Hotel	4 Trevelyan Square Boar Lane Leeds, LS1 6ET	0113 236 6366 www.marriott.co.uk	250m
The Met Leeds Hotel AKA – The Metropole	King Street Leeds LS1 2AQ	0113 245 0841 www.galahotels.com/	150m
Novotel	4 Whitehall Quay, Leeds, LS1 4HR	0113 242 6446 www.novotel.com/leeds	200m

Hotel	Address	Phone / Website	Distance from Queens
Park Plaza	Royal Exchange House Boar Lane, Leeds, LS1 5NS	0113 380 4000 www.parkplaza.com/leeds	50m
Travelodge, Leeds Central	Blayds Court Blayds Yard Off Swinegate Leeds LS1 4AD	0871 984 6155 www.travelodge.co.uk	300m
Travelodge, Leeds Vicar Lane	97 Vicar Lane Leeds LS1 6PJ	0871 984 6337 www.travelodge.co.uk	800m – short taxi ride
Premier Inn	City Gate Wellington Street Leeds LS1 4AD	0871 527 8582 www.premierinn.com	1 km – short taxi ride
Premier Inn Leeds Arena	Hepworth Point Clay Pit Lane Leeds LS2 8BQ	0871 527 9356 www.premierinn.com	
Ibis Hotel	23 Marlborough Street Leeds LS1 4PB	0113 396 9000 www.ibis.com/1/leeds	800m – short taxi ride
Ibis Budget, Leeds Centre	2 The Gateway North Crown Point Road LEEDS LS9 8BZ	0113 245 0725 www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-6002-ibis-budget-leeds-centre	1 km – short taxi ride
Discovery Inn	15 Bishopgate Street, Leeds, LS1 5DY	0113 242 2555 www.discovery-inn-leeds.co.uk/	100m
Quebecs	9 Quebec Street, Leeds, LS1 2HA	0113 244 8989 www.quebecshotel.co.uk	200m



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Opening and Finale

The region has appointed two new Youth Advisors to replace Giles Atkinson who relinquished the post recently. David Lockwood has also been elected to serve as Representative for District 8 in succession to Jean Taylor. Full profiles will appear in the next edition of NODA TODAY.



Julie Webb has now retired as Editor of our Region's pages in NODA TODAY. Julie will continue with her role as Drama Representative in the Sheffield area and to oversee the publication of show reports on our website pages. Thank you Julie for all your work in the past. ★



★ Summer School Awards ★

A record number of thirteen grants have been awarded to the North East Region's attendees at the NODA Summer School in August. In all, at the time of writing this, 20 society and Individual members from our Region will be attending and all applicants for grants were auditioned and/or interviewed in February. The following were successful:

★ District 2

★ **Nicky Hollins** (IM, The Kings Troupe):
★ Shakespeare Page to Stage

★ District 3

★ **Mark Daniels** (Beverley Musical Theatre,
★ Hull Musical Society): Lighting 1 and 2

★ District 6

★ **Kathy Allen** (Grenoside Panto Section):
★ Pantomime
★ **Steve Atkinson** (Grenoside Panto Section):
★ Pantomime
★ **Lauren Atkinson** (Grenoside Panto
★ Section): Choreography

Gareth Carson (Handsworth & Hallam
Theatre Company): Actors' Toolbox 1
Jennifer Newton-Smith (Chapelton and
District AOS): Musical Theatre Workshop,
Stiles & Drew
Viv Siberry-Scott (STOS Theatre
Company): Singing for Musical Theatre
Carla Jane Wade (STOS Theatre
Company): Top Hat, Song and Dance for
Musical Theatre

★ District 7

★ **Harriet Winstanley** (Ossett Youth Theatre):
★ Top Hat, Song and Dance for Musical Theatre

★ District 11

★ **Christopher Cundell** (Keighley AODS and
★ Guiseley AOS): Pantomime
★ **Elizabeth Christine Ingham** (Haworth
★ West Lane Baptist AOS): Directing Musical
★ Theatre
★ **Jay Cundell Walker** (Keighley AODS,
★ Guiseley AOS and Skipton Musical Theatre
★ Company): Actors Toolbox 1

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Retirement after 31 years

Jean Taylor, Representative for District 8 (Huddersfield area) retired at our AGM at Bridlington and a commemorative award was presented to her by Chairman of Trustees, Chris Ingram.

Jean joined the Huddersfield Amateur Operatic Society when they re-commenced productions after WWII when she was still a teenager, and has been a constant member ever since.

Her first show was "Merrie England" performed at Huddersfield Theatre Royal (sadly demolished in the 1960's). She went on to perform with several Huddersfield societies both in principal roles and chorus. It was here where she met her future husband Stan, they were married in 1958. Together they performed with various amateur groups including concert parties performing in hospitals and old folk's homes.

Her last main production on stage was "The

Card" in 1977, which was when her daughter Julia made her debut on the backstage crew. After this Jean made one more stage appearance with her whole family, Jean, Stan and Julia in the rock musical "Time in Time Out". This was written by local school teachers and produced by the Huddersfield Amateur Operatic Society and later taken to Bridlington to be performed at the Region's Gala Weekend midnight Cabaret.

When Jean finished her performing career she concentrated on backstage activities forming, along with others, the Huddersfield Make-up Team which now travels the area providing this service for several societies, and also to train other people for their own societies.

Jean is a long serving member of the Huddersfield Amateur Operatic Society and is currently Active Vice President.

Jean became a NODA Representative 31 years ago and since then has served on various sub committees but mainly as Secretary for the Region's programme and poster competition. She holds the Diamond Bar & 65 year stud long service award and, after 25 years' service as a Representative she was awarded life membership at the NODA National Conference in 2009. ★

Jacqui Hartley

Courtesy of Ian Cornick Photography

Gala Weekend Fun

North East Region's annual Gala Weekend was held at the Spa, Bridlington from 24th to 26th April and was attended by nearly 700 members of NODA societies and their guests. These guests included the Association's President, John Barnes and his wife Judith along with Vice President and Chairman of Trustees, Chris Ingram.

The formal Gala Dinner in The Spa's Royal Hall on the Friday evening, also attended by representatives of East Riding of Yorkshire District Council, was followed by a Late Evening Cabaret provided by Wales Musical Theatre Company.

A wide range of well attended workshops took place on Saturday morning – Dance, Acting in an Ensemble, Developing an Audience, Creating Lighting, Singing and Promote Your Society.

Throughout the weekend we welcomed a number of trade exhibitors who displayed their wares at The Royal Hall. We are therefore grateful for the support received from Bev Jones Music Company, Border Studio, Josef Weinberger, Light the Way, Northern Stage Services, Proscenium,

Scenery Hire, Scenic Projects, Stagescripts, Triple C Costumiers and Ticket Mart.

The crowds came out again in the evening for two performances in The Spa Theatre by LIDOS (Leeds Insurance Dramatic and Operatic Society) of Supertown, a new musical which they staged at The Carriageworks Theatre, Leeds in 2014. Following this, in the Royal Hall, the weekend's attendees were once again wonderfully entertained by Todd Miller, the Joe Loss Orchestra and Singing Stars.

The final session of the weekend on the Sunday morning saw the presentation of awards to the winners and runners up of the Programme and Poster competition and prizes handed to the winners of the golf and ten pin bowling competitions. There was also a special guest appearance of the Tour de Yorkshire trophy and the large audience was entertained with comedy and songs by our guest performer Bernie Clifton.

The traditional singing of Jerusalem brought the weekend to a close with those gathered able to travel home in good voice and expectations for next year's event.

Programme and Poster Competition

The winners and runners up of the Region's Programme and Poster Competition were announced at the Bridlington Gala Weekend and are as follows:

De Luxe Programme

- 1st: Hot Mikado, York Light Opera Company
- 2nd: White Christmas, STOS
- 3rd: Carousel, Chapelton & District AOS

Standard Programme

- 1st: Kiss Me Kate, Maltby Musical Theatre
- 2nd: Footloose, Southey Musical Theatre
- 3rd: Billy, Halifax Light Opera Society

Basic Programme

- 1st: Cards on the Table, Phoenix Players
- 2nd: Cinderella, Dinnington OS

Poster

- 1st: Cards on the Table, Phoenix Players
- 2nd: Hot Mikado, York Light Opera Company



regionalroundup North West

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An emotional goodbye and a dramatic proposal were among the highlights of NODA North West's glittering awards and AGM weekend.

Held over three days at Manchester's Mercure Piccadilly Hotel, more than 800 NODA members enjoyed gala dinners celebrating the best of the region's stage talent of all ages.

Now in its third year, the youth dinner attracted 300 participants, with awards in 30 categories.

Then on Sunday night, the sparkling chandeliers shone down on 530 guests for the adult dinner.

Before the awards got under way, a special request had been made to the NW committee by James Coombs.

Attending the dinner with supporting actress nominated girlfriend Laura Evans, James wanted to propose on stage – and with a mass of nervous energy he won over the room, and Laura's hand in marriage as she said 'Yes' to rapturous applause.

And with the final few awards to be presented, an emotional tribute to Burnley Light Opera Society chairman Colin Sanderson was paid.

He had been selected for the NW region's special achievement award for 2015, but just a few days before the weekend, Colin sadly died.

He had been taken ill after the dress rehearsal for the society's spring show and passed away a week later.

Spontaneous applause welcomed a touching speech made in Colin's honour, as a true stalwart of the local theatre

James Coombs makes girlfriend Laura Evans's night extra special, taking to the stage to propose.



scene in Burnley – chairman of BLOS for 30 years, who never set foot on stage preferring to work in the background.

North West councillor Christine Hunter Hughes said: "The NW Awards and AGM weekend still goes from strength to strength.

"James's proposal and the emotion and respect for Colin were great examples of just how much amateur theatre means to people, how it becomes such an intrinsic part of their lives.

"A big thank you to all who attended, and those who did not – you missed a great weekend, celebrating the sparkling talent we have in our region.

"With youth and adult workshops, although the latter could have been better attended, the weekend was a true celebration of our wonderful hobby.

"I would also like to thank the NW committee for all their hard work in the run up to the weekend and for the actual weekend itself."

Christine also invited feedback on the weekend, especially the Monday adult workshop as it was poorly attended. ★



Colin Sanderson, winner of the NW Special Achievement Award.



ADULT AWARDS

Best supporting male actor in a musical: Andrew Tuton, George, Aspects Of Love, Preston Musical Comedy; Best supporting female actor in a musical: Louise Colohan, Mary Magdalene, Jesus Christ Superstar, Trinity Amateur Operatic; Best poster: The Drowsy Chaperone, Southport Spotlights; Best supporting male actor in a drama: Tom Lane, The Bishop Of Lax, Pools Paradise, St Ambrose Players; Best supporting female actor in a drama: Rebecca Hatch, Alice Tinker, The Vicar Of Dibley, Encore Productions; Best basic programme: Accrington Pals, Oswaldtwistle Players; Best male comedy performance: Ian Dean-Boardman, Tiger Lily, Peter Pan, SS Simon and Jude ADS; Best female comedy performance: Hayley Dent, Kate Monster/Lucy The Slut, Avenue Q, Cast Theatre Company; Best staging: The Haunting, Blackburn Arts Club; Best choreography: Louise Barron Jones, Grease, HAWK; Best standard programme: Crazy For You, Blackburn Musical Theatre Company; Best musical direction: Joanna Jeffreys, White Christmas, Lancaster Red Rose; Drama festival runner-up: Shakespeare In Hollywood, Guilden Sutton Players; Best leading male actor in a musical: Peter Norris, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Jekyll And Hyde, Clitheroe Parish Church Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society; Best leading female actor in a musical: Alexandra Howarth, Cassie, A Chorus Line, Hyde Musical Society; Best leading male actor in a drama: Malcolm Cooper, Jim Hacker, Yes, Prime Minister, Altrincham Garrick; Best leading female actor in a drama: Chris Wynne, Miss Parmenter, A Fete Worse Than Death, SS Simon and June ADS; Best deluxe programme: Little Shop of Horrors, Manx Operatic Society; Drama



Alexandra Ward with the trophy for best direction of a drama.

festival winner: Accrington Pals, Neston Players; Best artistic direction of a musical: Lee Brennan, Jesus Christ Superstar, Mossley AODS; Best artistic direction of a drama: Alexandra Ward, Tom, Dick and Harry, Carlisle Green Room Club; Best pantomime: Robin Hood, Shavington Village Festival Committee; Best concert or review: Broadway Nights, West End Lights, Burnley Light Opera Society; Best G&S production: HMS Pinafore and Trial By Jury, Hornby Occasionals; Best drama: Of Mice And Men, Centre Stage Theatre Company; Best musical: The Drowsy Chaperone, Southport Spotlights; Special achievement award: Colin Sanderson.

YOUTH AWARDS

Best supporting male actor in a musical: Andy Lee, Judas, Jesus Christ Superstar, The Phoenix Youth Theatre; Best supporting female actor in a musical: Amy Dewsnip, Fantine, Les Miserables, CODYS Productions; Best supporting male actor in a drama: Mason Forrest, Sebastian, The Tempest, Kirkham Grammar School; Best male comedy performance: Chris Wilson, Dracula Spectacular, Genghis, Stage One 2000; Best female comedy performance: Megan Carrick, The Wizard Of Oz, The Lion, That's Entertainment; Best male youth in an adult production: Sam Cain, Billy Bigelow, Carousel, Farnworth Performing Arts; Best female youth in an adult production: Amy McDonough, Rizzo, Grease, New Mills AODS; Best staging: The Wizard



Neston Players took the title in the NODA NW Drama Festival, organised and presented by Christine Hunter Hughes, regional councillor.

Of Oz, HEY Kids/Heywood AODS; Best choreography: Vicky Royle and Fiona Thompson, High School Musical, Pendle Hippodrome Youth Theatre; Best musical direction: Paul Blake, The Phantom Of The Opera, Walney Junior AOS; Best leading male actor in a musical: Jack McNeill, Don Lockwood, Singin' In The Rain; Best leading female actor in a musical: Emily Hopkins, Cat In The Hat, Seussical The Musical, Mid Cheshire Musical Theatre; Best leading female actor in a drama: Elyssia Cockshott, Prospero, The Tempest, Kirkham Grammar School; Best artistic direction of a musical: Stephen Hughes-Alty, SONG, Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat; Best youth production: The Phantom Of The Opera, Walney Junior AOS. ★



The cast of Grease, by HAWK, presented the adult awards' night cabaret.



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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 ★



Joan Bell receiving a 25 Year Long Service Medal from John Barnes, NODA President

Now let the loyal lieges gather round

On a cold Thursday evening in February, Dunfermline G&S Society were honoured by a visit from John Barnes, the NODA National President for 2014–15, who travelled from his home in East Sussex for one of their performances of *The Gondoliers*. Marco & Giuseppe's thrones were duly left out to provide a back-drop for those of the splendidly-attired cast to whom John had kindly agreed to present long-service awards. ★

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GAMA'S Programme Success

After being awarded the Wyld Trophy (NODA Scotland) for their *Fiddler On The Roof* programme from 2013, Glenrothes Amateur Musical Association were delighted to win the Owen Peacock Trophy at the NODA National Conference in the Deluxe Programme category.

Pictured here is Bruce Davies, programme designer, receiving the award from NODA National President, John Barnes, while Martin Butler, GAMA President, is seen with the Award Certificate.

Much work went into the programme and we were indebted to Ken Wilkie for his wonderful photography, Nancy Butler, Claire Mackinlay and Sandra Davies for their proof-reading and editorial contributions and to Bruce for putting it all together.

GAMA are currently preparing to present *South Pacific* at the end of September. ★



Bruce Davies, programme designer, receiving the award from NODA National President, John Barnes, while Martin Butler, GAMA President, is seen with the Award Certificate.



A quarter century and hopefully a quarter of a million pounds!

Edinburgh-based musical group Showcase is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year – and during that time we have already raised more than £223,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Showcase was founded in 1990 by Bobby Harvey and John Wright with the sole purpose of raising funds for what is now known as Macmillan Cancer Support; both had personal experiences of cancer in the family and had a great deal of help from Macmillan. Using their connections they gathered together a group of singers, dancers and musicians with the idea of putting on a production but based on highlights from various musicals. That very first production boasted its band call, technical and dress rehearsal, matinee and main performance – all in one day and everyone involved had a ball. The rest as they say is history!

The company has staged a production in the Church Hill Theatre, Edinburgh every

year since 1990, with all proceeds going to Macmillan. Our shows are like a revue of musical theatre numbers, popular songs and music from films, all put on by a group of very capable, enthusiastic amateurs. We are incredibly lucky to have an extremely talented musical director who writes all the choral arrangements and orchestrations which culminate in our unique Showcase sound. In the past our repertoire has included everything from opera to rock, *The Sound of Music* to Led Zeppelin, *Carmina Burana* to *Bohemian Rhapsody* and often in eight part harmony.

Over the years we have had in excess of 300 performers taking part, youngsters from university who might join for a few years, as well as people who have been in Showcase since the beginning and whose children now come along as well. Each and every one of our cast gives freely of their time and talents and makes a huge commitment to learn the music and movements associated

with a production which is usually in excess of 25 numbers. While everyone involved performs because of their love of the theatre, there is also a very serious side to our hobby, raising money for the work of Macmillan Cancer Support. It is a cause close to all our hearts and performing with Showcase allows us to do something we love, while supporting this very important cause, and we genuinely believe that every person who walks through the door of the theatre and buys a ticket to one of our shows is contributing – they're helping make a difference to someone's life; what can be more important than that? With this year being our 25th anniversary it would be the icing on the cake for us to celebrate a quarter of a century by reaching a quarter of a million pounds donated to Macmillan.

Showcase's next show will run at the Church Hill Theatre, Edinburgh, from 22 to 26 September. For details, including how to get tickets, head to www.show-case.co.uk. ★

Ups & Downs – Our Story

In 1995 two local teachers and an instructor from the field of Special Education by the names of George Barclay, Elaine Kirkwood and Theresa McKinnon all came together to set up a unique theatre group. What made this theatre group so special was that it was set up for young people with Down's Syndrome, who had a talent and a love of music, to do what they do best.

The club was set up under the umbrella of Down's Syndrome Scotland, and initially around 40 youngsters with Down's Syndrome and their brothers and sisters, signed up to be part of the club. Twenty years on the founders of the club could never have imagined just how successful our club has become. Our club has continued to increase throughout the years and has grown to a cast of over 70 members, all of whom are eager for

their chance to shine under the excellent tutelage of our dedicated production team. Recently we became an independent charity in our own right.

The club has achieved much, both on and off stage. In 2009 Ups and Downs were the first Scottish theatrical group to bring back to Scotland the NODA President's Cup and in 2011 we were once again awarded the Utopia Costumes Youth Award. We have also been extremely fortunate to attract the attention of many famous faces – Michelle McManus and some of the cast of *River City* have all paid us a visit during our rehearsals. Judy Murray, Gary Hollywood and Stuart Brayson all came to see *Take 19* and back in the day our cast even shared the stage with the Singing Kettle star Gary Coupland.

In 2011 Ups & Downs welcomed its first

well-known patron, *Britain's Got Talent* star Edward Reid. Edward has brought our club lots of recognition over the years and helped us to reach a much wider audience, even inviting us along to perform with him at some of his personal appearances.

Our whole cast was filmed singing out for Pudsey as part of *Children in Need* in 2011. A selection of our cast was also chosen to record a series of sketches for the BBC Alba documentary *Truasadh*. The Gaelic documentary was filmed to look at and dispel some of the misconceptions surrounding the Down's Syndrome.

The Ups & Downs Theatre Group provides young children and adults with Down's Syndrome with a whole range of positive experiences: following instructions, working together towards a common goal, overcoming fears and negative feelings, exploring new talents and perfecting new skills. ★



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In March this year Ifield Barn Theatre Society performed *Flowery Shirts & Strange Relations* to packed houses every night. Never heard of it? I'd be surprised if you had. This drama/comedy set in 1960s in a family-run guesthouse is the sequel to *Miniskirts & Revelations* which won a NODA SE Accolade of Excellence last year.



to follow up my character's mysterious disappearance. That was when the director suggested I write a play. So I did.

I'd written a few things for local charities, but never a 2-act play for a 'proper' stage. It was an exciting prospect. First I thought about what would particularly suit the Barn and its

Let me introduce myself – I am Margaret Graham, a recently retired yoga teacher and a published author on my subject. And no, I'm not sitting at my laptop in full lotus.

I joined Ifield Barn Arts Centre in 2010 'just for the coffee mornings'. I'd recently lost my husband and was looking for distraction. It certainly was that! The Barn is often referred to as a 'hidden gem' – a unique collection of buildings, some parts over 700 years old.

Soon I found myself making the coffee, then selling programmes, eventually acting on stage (including a Rapping Fairy Godmother), props, prompting, SM, and then AD for a wide variety of productions. A bit scary – but I loved it. Does this progression sound familiar to NODA members?

After playing Angela in *Disposing of the Body* I wrote a variety of weird and wonderful scenarios

members, what resources we have, (in common with many small theatres). Not too many male roles – men are often in short supply; strong female characters – we've plenty of those; age ranges that encompassed everybody – youthful, middle-aged and older members; a final scene that gave shy performers the chance to enjoy a walk-on part.

Now for the plot. I was lucky in that my unusual upbringing – growing up in a charitable 'Home for the Elderly' which my parents had founded – provided a wealth of characters, anecdotes and situations, to draw on. Not to mention all that teenage angst, romance and heartbreak. How glad I am that I kept a diary through those years. My tattered old exercise books have been a little goldmine – just don't ask to read the originals!

First I created the characters – feisty cook Grandma, secretly sexy Mum Chris, rebellious teenage daughter Penny, plus Biker brother Mick; Ivan

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(confidante and art- teacher guest); bossy Aunt Doris and a nosy Health Inspector. Then I worked out a beginning, middle and an end (including a traumatic finish to the first Act and a startling reveal for the final scene). I already had the set in my head – the kitchen/ living room of our Victorian mansion Home – right down to the Aga and the Marley floor tiles. This would become the Greenfield Guesthouse. And of course there would be the ever-popular 1960s fashions and music. A narrator, Present Day Penny could be to one side of the stage reading from her teenage diaries. On the other characters would sit on the kitchen doorstep among the potted herbs taking their elevenses and sharing confidences.

Having written the play – would it work on stage? And would the Production Committee be willing to take the risk of this unknown quantity? There were several stages to negotiate - first a read-through, which confirmed it could work and showed where minor changes were needed –extra time for costume changes for example. This was encouraging. Then a wait of months giving all PC members a chance to read the script. A few tweaks were suggested, some of which were very helpful such as combining some scenes, and working out a way to demonstrate a flashback to the 1930s. Eventually, much to my excitement, it was agreed the production could go ahead and a date set for October 2013.

I had worked with Janine Robins as AD and knew we made a good creative team (although we did nearly get chucked out of our local pub for laughing so much as we envisaged the play's ending). Once chosen, the cast seemed to click as a family straight away and although most of the characters are a mix of real and imaginary, to see my Grandma come to life in front of my eyes as she confronted the Health Inspector daring to touch her gravy – that was a strange, emotional feeling. And it wasn't just me. There were comments on the lines of 'Did you know my Granny? She was just like that!' 'My brother's a pain – same as Mick'. People seemed to identify with this family, and find them endearing. Others confided to me how they had lived through similar difficult experiences – the shame of divorce; the frustrations of early 60s conformity and suppressed sexuality. Our play wasn't heavy going though - the music and laughter

lightened the mood and we'd see the audience leave with a smile on their faces.

But I'm leaping ahead. Were there hitches? Of course there were. The original Ivan dropped out just a couple of weeks before the show. Fortunately Craig, from nearby Manor Theatre, stepped in and made a brilliant, sensitive Ivan. Our SM literally broke a leg (on a boat, not the stage) just before first night. Poor Deidre.

Setting up a dramatic 1930's cameo scene was tricky – the answer was a grainy b/w 'film' projected onto the back wall of the 'kitchen'. Ifield Park Home (still going strong) kindly allowed us to film in the original living room for ambience.

I found the teamwork of cast and crew, promotion, box office – everybody – so impressive. The enthusiasm and, well - fun – came across. The skill of volunteers is incredible. I've been asked how we managed to hoist an AGA onto the stage. 'With great difficulty' someone replied -well, you don't like to spoil the illusion. All credit to set builder Brian B and painter Brian E.

The sell-out success of the 4 shows exceeded all my expectations. We even had to put on a showing of the DVD for those who couldn't get in. The NODA SE Rep Phillip Hall attended first night and wrote an enthusiastic report. 'This play has everything' he repeated when presenting our production the Accolade of Excellence at NODA SE Awards ceremony at the 2014 AGM. That was such a proud and unexpected day. But that wasn't the end of it. People wanted to know more about the Greenfield family. 'What happens next?' they kept asking. So I started writing the sequel. This time I'd find Grandma or Teenage Penny waking me in the early hours, all excited, telling me what they wanted to get up to. I had to give in and write it down or I'd get no rest and 'wake up feeling awful' as Teenage Penny so often writes in her diary.

Flowery Shirts & Strange Relations went through the now familiar process of a read-through, scrutiny

by the Production Committee, tweaks, approval and open auditions. Set in the autumn of 1968 with some of the original cast and a few new faces, rehearsals got under way in January for the production in March.

Could we repeat our success? A hard act to follow we were told. But it seems we've succeeded – 100% sell-out of all 5 performances, and a DVD afternoon again. Although a sequel, I'd written *Flowery Shirts* so that it could stand on its own too – something that NODA Councillor Kay Rowan mentioned in her glowing report. I'm hoping that my experience will encourage others to write the script that is lurking in the back of their mind, and that our theatres will support such new productions.

So what now? *Flowery Shirts* is in the process of being published as a glossy play book, as before. The DVDs of both plays seem to be doing the rounds locally. There's a 7 minute publicity trailer of *Miniskirts* made and on Google, and one of *Flowery Shirts* in the offing. Both Phillip and Kay have said that in their opinion these plays are eminently suitable for lots of theatres, and I am hoping that the enquiries that are coming in will bear fruit in the future. A drawback is that I'm not experienced in managing the publicity side of things. For this reason I'm especially grateful for the praise, support and encouragement I have met with through NODA and its officers.

And yet again I'm being asked 'What happens next? Does Penny marry hippie Derek? Does Grandma carry on baking her rock buns? How else can Mum shock her family? And what on earth was their reaction to Aunty Doris and the Health Inspector's reveal?'

Oh dear, I hadn't planned to make it a trilogy – I've quite different things in mind. But you never know. Grandma may well wake me up at 3am any time soon – and give me all the answers! ★

Margaret Graham





regionalroundup South West

NODA South-West Awards Evening 2015

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2015's NODA South West Awards
Dinner on 28th February was
at the Marriott Hotel in the centre of
Bristol. It was another fantastic evening, celebrating
everything great about Amateur Theatre in the
South West.

Once again there was good company, good
food and a terrific venue. John Barnes returned
in his capacity as President of NODA this year
to present the awards, with excellent supporting
video and music effects, assisted at short-notice
by Soundbase UK, giving it a real professional

feel. To be nominated was an achievement in itself
and the winners on the night can be found on the
South West section of the NODA web-site, through
www.noda.org.uk/south_west_awards.

However, it really was Amateur Theatre itself that
was the real winner, showing the real depth and
range of talent in the region.

Thanks to Graeme Savage, Ian Goodenough and
the NODA South West Committee Organising
Team for putting together a wonderful event, as we
now look forward to the event again in 2016! ★



Over 400 people enjoyed an evening celebrating the
very best of Amateur Theatre in the South-West!



Courtesy of Stuart McPherson

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Everyone Welcome at the South West Annual Workshop Weekend!

Courtesy of The Palace Hotel



NODA South-West holds its Annual Workshop Weekend at the Palace Hotel in Torquay on Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th September 2015. It is a great weekend at a lovely venue, with the chance to enhance your range of theatre skills in a relaxed and friendly environment and to make new friends and meet old ones.

The weekend covers:

- ★ A choice of 3 Workshops across the two days
- ★ Saturday/ Sunday Bed and Breakfast and Lunch on both days, with teas and coffees provided throughout Saturday
- ★ Saturday's Presidential Dinner, followed by a Disco
- ★ As well as full use of the Hotel's many facilities!

This year we are delighted to welcome as tutors:

Cathleen McGorran from Summer School who will lead so amazing session on how to use your voice; Kathryn Stevens the highly acclaimed Musical Director who will work on some exciting company numbers and Becky Spiller hot foot from the West End who will share her insight into organising and running productions. We also have other courses for backstage personnel, committee members, youth workers, wardrobe and puppetry.

A special rate is available for staying over at the hotel from Friday evening, but you can always make your own arrangements if you wish. More details can be obtained from our conference co-ordinator: Mrs. Lynne Caygill at lynne.caygill@noda.org.uk or on 01395 272 577.

This weekend is open to all NODA members and not restricted to Noda South-West. Come and join in the fun and have a lovely weekend by the sea! ★

Tiverton's Tiller Girl Irene Holland interviewed on the Lorraine show



A Tiverton dancing legend was recently interviewed on ITV's Lorraine programme. Irene Holland, was featured on the show in an interview with Kate

Garraway promoting her new book "Tales of a Tiller Girl" - which reveals all about her life as a prestigious dancer. The 84-year-old joined the world famous dance troupe "The Tiller Girls" in the 1940s and travelled the globe, mixing with the likes of Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole. The book was also extensively reviewed by the Mid Devon Gazette and the Daily Mail.

In recent years Irene has become well-known locally for her dancing school, the Willow Tree Centre of Dance and Performing Arts, where she still teaches five days a week.

Irene, also a holder of a NODA Commendation Medal says she has no intention of retiring and is still known to do the odd high kick, especially after a tipples of her favourite red wine! ★

Somerset Group 'On-Tour' in Portugal

Ten members of Wellington Arts Association Operatic Society's "Touring Group" have just returned from a six day visit to Wellington's twin town in

Portugal, Torres Vedras. The Group is well known throughout the Taunton Deane area of Somerset for entertaining out in the community, in Residential Homes and for social and fundraising events of different organisations. They had performed earlier in the year, when representatives from Wellington's three twin towns visited to celebrate 50 years of Twinning and as a result the Portuguese delegates invited the singers to visit Torres Vedras to perform there.

Group leader Monica Spalding said "We have had an amazing time. The friendship and hospitality shown by our hosts was outstanding. We gave three concerts, firstly at St Joseph's home for the elderly where around fifty residents gave us an enthusiastic



The Group and two of their hosts at Peniche

reception. The second concert was at Henriques Nogueira secondary school, for pupils, parents and teachers, numbering around 150. We were delighted and amazed at the reaction of the audience who gave us a standing ovation at the end of the concert, noisily demanding an encore which was duly given. Some of the audience actually came on stage to join us in singing "Mamma Mia".

The final concert saw the group join with the town's Youth Choir, who entertained the audience with their repertoire of songs in both Portuguese and English. When the Operatic Society group sang they again received a standing ovation and again had

to give an encore. Finally the two groups of singers combined to sing in Portuguese and in English.

A busy programme of visits had also been arranged, with a day in Lisbon, where the group enjoyed sightseeing round this beautiful city, a second trip to the coastal town of Peniche and the beautiful Medieval town of Obidos and a third to the seaside resort of Santa Cruz, with its spectacular sandy beaches and rolling surf. The Group now hopes that its "Touring" will go on to include the other twin towns of Immenstadt in Germany and Lillebonne in France. ★

Jo Wilson-Hunt



The Group preparing to sing at the Residential home

Photography courtesy of Jo Wilson-Hunt



regionalroundup Wales & Ireland

Introducing Sophie Herrmann – new NODA Councillor for Wales and Ireland

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Sophie founded Ascendance Theatre Arts Ltd. in 2011 and has thoroughly enjoyed the varied roles and responsibilities her position of Company and Artistic Director has brought. Ascendance Theatre Arts is a children's musical theatre school, production company and agency based in the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff. Children attend weekly lessons which lead to end of term performances, LAMDA examinations (acting/musical theatre) and Arts Awards, capturing Sophie's passion for working creatively with children and within the arts. Passionate about teaching, Sophie has completed her MA in Drama, Estil voice training Level 1 and 2 and is recognised by the National Council for Dance Education and Training.



Sophie is also a director and choreographer. Of note are her productions of 'Alice in Wonderland Jr' (RWCMD, 2014), 'Oliver!' (RWCMD, 2013), 'Same' (National Theatre Connections; Salisbury Playhouse, 2014) and 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat' in the YMCA, Cardiff (2013). Sophie's next full scale production at the RWCMD will be 'The Wedding Singer' with auditions in Cardiff in September

(for a December production). In September Sophie will also be auditioning children aged 13+ for a National Theatre Connections project.

As a performer Sophie most recently performed as Lucy in 'Avenue Q' (2014) and Val in 'Chorus Line' at the New Theatre (2013). Previous experience includes Sarah Brown in 'Guys and Dolls' in the Everyman Summer Festival (2013) and Silly Girl 1 in 'Beauty and the Beast' at the New Theatre (2013).

Sophie was delighted to support Ruthie Henshall in 'A Night of Movies and Musicals' at St. David's Hall and the Wales Millennium Stadium (2013). Other experience includes dancing in the Rugby League Opening Ceremony in the Millennium Stadium (2013), The Paralympic Opening Ceremony (2012), Lisa in 'The Wonderful World of Dissocia' (YMCA Cardiff, 2011) and the Frantic Assembly/ Hijinx Unity performance at the Wales Millennium Centre (2013).

Sophie is currently directing Stravinsky's 'A Soldier's Tale' for the RWCMD REPCo week (RWCMD, 2015) and rehearsing for 'Sweet Charity' (Everyman Summer Festival, 2015). Sophie takes up her new role as Councillor at the AGM in Leeds. ★



Wales & Ireland Regional Award Winners 2014

Best Drama Production

Winner Briton Ferry Little Theatre – Funny Money

Best Youth Production

Winner Neath A.O.S. Youth Theatre – Phantom of the Opera

Best Supporting Performance

Winner Mark Jones – Llanelli Musical Players Malcolm in The Full Monty

Best Individual Performance

Winner Una Kulkin – Portrush Musical Society Mother Superior – Sister Act

Best Production

Winner Theatre Mask Productions, Rhondda – Jesus Christ Superstar





Wales & Ireland Achievement Award Winners 2014

District 1

For Outstanding Service To Amateur Theatre
Ian Wilson – Llandudno Youth Musical Theatre

District 2

For Outstanding Service To Amateur Theatre
Phyllis Michael – Portrush Musical Society

District 3

For Outstanding Service To Amateur Theatre
Patricia Evans – Blackwood Musical Society

District 6

For Outstanding Service To Amateur Theatre
Peter Sharp – The Academy

District 7

For Outstanding Service To Amateur Theatre
Gerald Carter – Christchurch Music Society

District 1A

For Outstanding Service To Amateur Theatre
Theresa Jones – Wardens Theatre Company Ltd

District 3

For Outstanding Service To Amateur Theatre
Deborah Fleming – Toppers Dance & Drama

District 4

For Outstanding Service To Amateur Theatre
Brian Gardner

District 6

For Outstanding Service To Amateur Theatre
Diane Williams – The Academy

Wales & Ireland District Winners 2014

Best Production District 1

Colwyn Abbey Players
Acorn Antiques

Best Drama Award District 1

Civic Hall Amateur Players (CHAPS)
The Last Bread Pudding

Best Technical District 1

Present Stage Theatre Company
Present Laughter

Best Youth Production District 1

Conwy & District
Kaleidoscope Theatre Co
Jack And The Beanstalk

Best Individual District 1 Lyons Engineering Award

Sue Buckley – Mrs Overall
Colwyn Abbey Players Acorn Antiques

Best Production District 1A

Newtown Musical Theatre Company
A Christmas Carol

Best Drama District 1A

Wardens Theatre Company Ltd – Noises Off

Best Technical District 1A

Wardens Theatre Company Ltd – Dick Whittington & The Pirates Of The Caribbean

Best Individual District 1A Lyons Engineering Award

Mike Clarke Newtown Musical Theatre Company
Scrooge – A Christmas Carol

Best Production District 2

Portrush Musical Society – Sister Act

Best Drama District 2

Searching For Dr Branovic – Helen's Bay Players

Best Technical District 2

Fusion Theatre – Phantom Of The Opera

Best Youth Production District 2

Fusion Theatre – Phantom Of The Opera

Best Individual District 2 Lyon's Engineering Award

Emma Nugent – Millie Thoroughly Modern Millie – Newcastle Gleees

Best Production District 3

Brynmawr Operatic Society- Guys And Dolls

Best Technical District 3

Abergavenny Pantomime Company
Rumpelstilzskin

Best Youth Production District 3

AAODS Juniors – Cats

Best Individual District 3 Lyons Engineering Award

Miles Harding – Jesus Vig Theatre Company – Jesus Christ Superstar

Best Youth Production District 4

St Peter's Players
Aladdin – Cardiff Gang Show

Best Production District 4

Concept Theatre
A Little Night Music

Best Technical District 4

Rhiwbina A Theatre Society – The 39 Steps

Best Individual District 4

Ellie Hoare Desiree Armfeldt – A Little Night Music Concept

Best Drama District 4

Rhiwbina A Theatre Society – The 39 Steps

Best Production District 5

Abbey Players – Singin' In The Rain

Best Drama District 5

Phoenix Theatre.com – One O'Clock From The House

Best Technical District 5

Melyncrythan A.O.S. – Sweeney Todd

Best Youth Production District 5

Neath A.O.S. Youth – Phantom Of The Opera

Best Individual District 5 Lyons Engineering Award

James Price Phil Davies – White Christmas

Best Production District 6

Oliver – Carmarten Amateur Operatic Society

Best Technical District 6

The Addams Family – Llanellimusical Players

Best Drama District 6

The Vicar Of Dibley – Just Good Friends

Best Youth Production District 6

Evita – Carmarthen Youth Opera

Best Individual District 6 Lyons Engineering Award

Geraint Thomas – Uncle Fester, The Addams Family – Llanelli Musical Players

Best Production District 7

New Venture Players Parade

Best Technical District 7

Young Venture Players – Starlight Express

Best Youth Production District 7

Abertillery Youth Drama Musical Society – Jekyll And Hyde

Best Individual District 7 Lyons Engineering Award

Andre Paul Spring – New Venture Players Parade
WAWWA – Rent





regionalroundup West Midlands

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Councillor's Comments

The Ninth West Midlands Regional Conference and AGM was held in the Town Hall Sutton Coldfield on Sunday 19th April 2015.

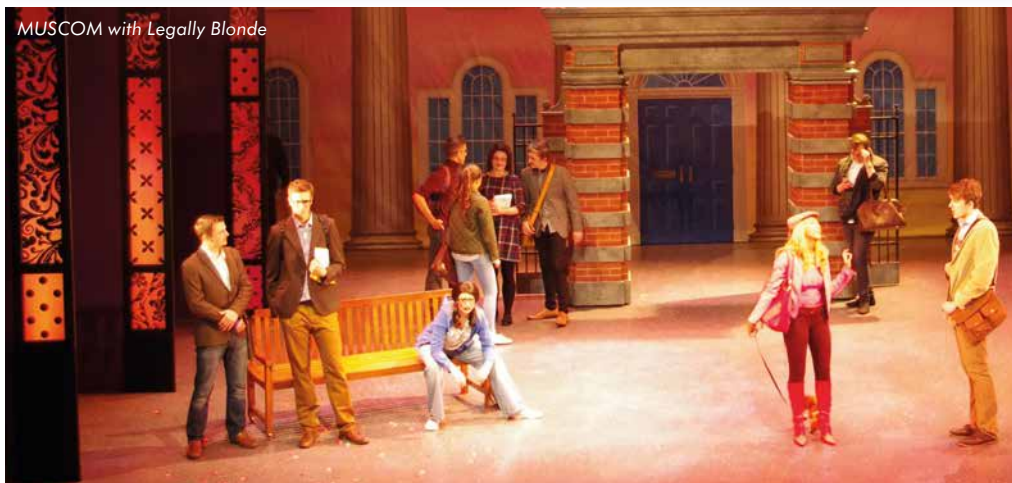
The event commenced with a workshop on "Copyright" presented by David Waters, of Stagescripts, compared followed by the AGM. After a light supper the Regional Awards, compared by Ian Cox, were presented by National President John Barnes. Awards being made for Best Musical, Best Drama, Best Pantomime and Best Youth production in each of the Districts in addition to awards for Best Programmes and Poster. During the evening Judith was presented with a bouquet of Flowers and John with a salver, similar to the awards he



had just presented, recording his visit. ★

Michael Hastilow
Councillor, NODA West Midlands

MUSCOM with Legally Blonde



First For The Region

A chance to celebrate a first, not just any first but a double, **Legally Blonde** had its British Amateur Premiere in our Region. The pressure of which was on but didn't show as Simon Stone reviewer for the Express and Star said of MUSCOM's **Legally Blonde** "amateur standards are fast approaching those of professional performance"

Alf Rai (District 7 Rep) proudly said "MUSCOM were given the honour of performing the British Amateur Premiere of Legally Blonde" and boy did they make a good job of it!"

Well done! To all who contributed. ★



Memories From Around The Region

At the 9th Regional Conference, we asked members to share their first performance memories. Our members noted many tales of school performances, child parts and memories that take us back a good 60 years. Yet the longevity of many societies out strips our members by generations, with the age of the internet it is easy to research our histories.

We thought we'd share a few gathered memories with you. For those societies in search of men, perhaps we should try some of these examples? Peter of **Worcester (WODS)** was persuaded to get involved by a school friend with the prospect of meeting girls who were taking part in the Boys School production of **HMS Pinafore!** Then there's, Stephen of **Talisman Theatre Company** who was recruited mid cricket match aged 13!

Members who recently received their 50 and 55 year pins have their memories too, a different era possibly a childhood spent amusing themselves "quietly", while their parents applied their passions. I'm sure many of us in our 40's and older probably share experiences the next generation will never know due to stricter health and safety rules, ours are awash with the smell of leichner, wooden ladders and the like, thick with aged hemp dust, mixed with theatre grime and air thick with stale smoke and beer.

Most of us, as our feedback proves, remember our childhood stage debuts, Sian **Brownhills Musical Society** when aged 5 was in **Annie Get Your Gun** and still remembers her line "General Gran" Margaret of **Bedworth Theatre** when aged 12 in **Hotel Paradise** her first production, one of her costumes was a swimsuit.

Worcester WODS, in its 125th year performed a sell out **West Side Story** clocking in at their 175th production, that's a lot of productions, hardly nothing to the years clocked up by **Birmingham BMOS** at 134 years or **Evesham EODS** with 136 years making these the oldest societies in our Region, this legacy is echoed by many societies across the country. It is about time we took stock and remembered what, where and why "we cross our fingers and hold our hearts".

It is near impossible explain the why to someone who's never stood on a stage and felt the warmth of an audiences applause, but once they have been touched.. We have members for life. ★

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Regional Editor, West Midlands

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