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February 2014

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cover image © Kidz R Us, Ian McLean 2013

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02/14



**Here at NODA we hope that all of our members had a good Christmas and New Year, and for those of you who were putting on shows, that these were all great successes.**

For the new year we have a new edition of NODA TODAY, which will be followed by a further two editions in 2014, following the wonderful feedback we received from members after the publication of the first edition of NODA TODAY back in September 2013.

You'll remember that with the last magazine we sent out postcards to be filled in, in addition to an online form, for members to tell us how they'd like to receive future NODA publications; digitally, online or in print. Thank you to everybody who sent back postcards and filled in the form on the website. The outcome of this was that the majority of members who responded (70%) wish to receive future publications from NODA in print.

However, for the 27% of members who told us that they would like to receive communications online, every edition of NODA TODAY will be available on the NODA website for you to view, download, save and print, and most importantly, share with fellow members of your society. We also received a small amount of interest in an iPad version of the magazine (3%), so we're looking into possibilities surrounding this option for the future.

If you have any further feedback on the magazine or how you'd like to receive information in the future, please contact us on **01733 374 790** or email [info@noda.org.uk](mailto:info@noda.org.uk). ★

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# did you noda?



## You could qualify for a bursary for NODA Theatre Summer School 2014

NODA Theatre Summer School 2014 will run from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> August 2014 at Warwick Conferences, the University of Warwick. There is a wide range of courses on offer to students again, but are you aware that you could qualify for a national bursary of £300 to assist with the cost of these courses?

Anyone can apply for a bursary, but preference is usually given to first time students or those on a relatively low income, although we do not means test for this. No student can have more than two bursaries in his or her lifetime and these must be for different courses.

The courses on offer can be found on the Summer School pages of the NODA website, along with the bursary application form. All applications must be received by Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2014.



NODA President  
Bert Lumsden with  
his wife Anne

The 2013 National AGM and Presidential Gala saw Bert Lumsden become NODA President for the second time, replacing Derek Grattidge in the role.

The AGM, which was held in Peebles, Scotland, was a great success, and delegates were able to come together not only to discuss NODA, but the wider trends, issues and opportunities affecting amateur theatre throughout the UK. Some

images from the occasion can be viewed at [www.noda.org.uk/news/noda\\_agm\\_2013](http://www.noda.org.uk/news/noda_agm_2013) and the full list of 2013 programme and poster competition winners and runners up is available at [www.noda.org.uk/news/programme\\_and\\_poster\\_winners\\_and\\_runners\\_up\\_2013](http://www.noda.org.uk/news/programme_and_poster_winners_and_runners_up_2013).

## NODA wants you to design our new logo!

### When you think of NODA what comes to mind?

We've decided our brand needs a facelift, so if you think you can improve on both the crest and the NODA logo, then why not enter our design a logo competition, which is exclusive to NODA members? The deadline to enter is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, so there's plenty of time to come up with an idea. The winning entry will be launched at the 2014 AGM and will become the official NODA logo; the winner will also receive £100 worth of theatre tickets.

Before entering the competition, please read our terms and conditions at [www.noda.org.uk/termsandconditions](http://www.noda.org.uk/termsandconditions). Once you've done this and created your design, please send it either by post to **NODA, 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough, PE2 7UH** or by email to [admin@noda.org.uk](mailto:admin@noda.org.uk).



# GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

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Kidz R Us perform  
'Les Misérables'

# NODA Youth Strategy Makes Strides

**Phil Barnett, Director of Kidz R Us in St Ives, Cornwall, has been appointed to the NODA Council as a representative for youth. The youth strategy Phil has been developing saw him co-opted to Council in September 2013 and he's being supported in his work by a network of regional youth advisors.**

Phil is a former NODA South West representative who plays an important role in organising NODA Summer School. He was awarded a British Empire Medal in 2012 for his work in spearheading the award-winning youth theatre group Kidz R Us over the last 20 years.

The aim of the proposed youth strategy is to create a thriving nationwide youth membership of amateur theatre groups, with NODA providing high quality, exciting and innovative supported opportunities in theatre for all young people. The strategy's objectives are:

- ★ To support all youth groups, all adult groups with their own youth section and all societies that have youth involved, whenever support is needed for a particular show, to become financially and artistically successful
- ★ To increase NODA membership within the youth theatre market and to encourage growth within this sector
- ★ To remove barriers to the formation of new youth groups either outside or within current societies
- ★ To make NODA indispensable to these groups as the leading provider of youth theatre support and training

Phil's approach sets out proposed strategies, an action plan and suggestions of what NODA can do. These include developing a how-to guide and providing training, as well as creating a database of highly-skilled professional contacts and a database of local and national suppliers that offer the best value for money on hires/sales.

At the last Council meeting, it was agreed that Phil's next steps would be to:

- ★ Develop a strategy to support NODA societies that would like to increase youth participation
- ★ Agree definitions and terms, as well as success criteria
- ★ Consider the role of NODA youth advisors and the structure required to support and manage them
- ★ Consider relationships with third parties
- ★ Identify funding sources
- ★ Propose and contact potential new patrons who would appeal to young people

The first Youth Advisors' meeting was held from 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2014 at Scarman House, Warwick Conferences. ★

## The Border Studio

The Border Studio is pleased to announce that we will soon be unveiling our brand new website.

Find out details and our official launch date by 'liking' us on facebook or following us on twitter.

We'd love to hear about your next show!

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# regionalroundup East

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## Councillor's Comments

The NODA East committee has been working hard and we are now considering the NODA awards for this year's NODA East AGM, so remember to book your tickets as soon as possible.

We have taken into account the comments that were made on feedback forms returned from the last AGM, and with this in mind we have made some improvements, such as menu choices and seating requirements. This has resulted in a maximum of 350 tickets being available, so as soon as you receive notification in January 2014 please do not delay in ordering yours.

**Don't miss the NODA East AGM, to be held at Burgess Hall, St. Ives, on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2014. Look out for details on the NODA website and the NODA East Facebook page.**

**Don McKay** Councillor, NODA East

## HMS Pinafore at the Maddermarket Theatre

The East Norfolk Operatic Society present the comic opera *HMS Pinafore* and *Trial by Jury* at the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich, from Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May to Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

*HMS Pinafore* is a hilarious operetta from Gilbert and Sullivan that takes place aboard the eponymous British ship, upon which Josephine, a navy captain's daughter, falls in love with a lower-class sailor instead of her father's choice, the First Lord of the Admiralty Sir Joseph Porter.

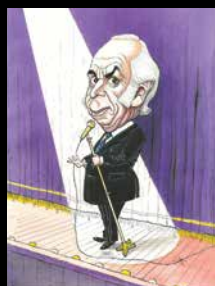


(L-R) Janet Barley, Susan Dupont and Sheila Tuffield

*HMS Pinafore* is a charming story filled with memorable music and a surprise twist. Act Two includes the short comic opera *Trial by Jury*, concerning a 'breach of promise' lawsuit in which the judge and legal system are the objects of lighthearted satire.

Performances are at 7.30pm each evening with a matinee show on 10<sup>th</sup> May at 2.30pm. All tickets are priced

£12 (there are no concessions). To reserve a seat, contact the theatre Box Office on 01603 620 917 or visit the website at [www.maddermarket.co.uk](http://www.maddermarket.co.uk). ★



## John E. Seaman MBE, 1920-2013

Many tributes have been paid following the death of former Councillor John Seaman MBE, who died at his Wilburton home on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2013 aged 92, surrounded by his family.

He has been associated with community theatre in East Anglia for many years, and having worked professionally in the theatre and served on the Board of Eastern Arts, he eventually became a NODA regional representative.

He will be remembered with great love and affection by everybody that knew him, and our thoughts and sympathy are extended to his family at this sad time.

His funeral took place on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2013 at Ely Methodist Church at 12 noon, followed by a private family burial. A thanksgiving service in his memory will take place at Ely Cathedral in 2014 at a time and date to be agreed.

**Michael G. Williamson,**  
JP DL

# 110 Years Old and Still Going Strong



One of the oldest amateur performing groups in the UK, Bury St Edmunds Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society (BSEAODS), has been celebrating its 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary throughout 2013. Created in September 1902, the society's first production was *HMS Pinafore* in April 1903, the year in which it also became a member of NODA.

From the outset, the Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmunds has been the home of the society's productions. Although other venues had to be found from 1925 to 1963 while the Theatre Royal was closed, the society was active in a fundraising campaign that saw the triumphant re-opening of this magnificent Georgian playhouse in 1964. BSEAODS was also a major supporter of the renovation scheme that saw the Theatre Royal returned to its former glory in 2005-2006, and the society feels privileged to perform in one of theatre-land's 'jewels in the crown'.

For over forty years light opera was the society's staple fare, with plays added to

the repertoire from 1923, but 1949 saw its first big musical *Show Boat*. Since 1975 only musicals and operettas have been performed, but the society has retained the 'Dramatic' in its name. Twice a year, enthusiastic audiences have attended the shows of a group that has acquired an enviable reputation, with local NODA awards for *Me and My Girl* and *Crazy for You*, and more recently for *Half a Sixpence* and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

Given such a long history, some of the favourites of the musical stage have been produced time and again. Leading the field among operettas are *Iolanthe*, which has been produced eight times, including two concert versions, and *The Mikado*, produced six times, while the musicals *Carousel* and *Oklahoma!* have both been produced three times.

As well as enjoying the continuing support of local theatre-goers in these difficult times, the society also takes pride in its extracurricular activities. In 2011 a concert raised £1,600 for

Help for Heroes, and an annual cash award is presented to a student about to embark on a performing arts course. In addition, a BSEAODS team won the BBC Radio 2 quiz series *Mad About Musicals* in 1996, beating off teams from throughout the UK. This was a long time ago now, but some of us still like to talk about it!

For the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, the enhanced programme included a summer production of *Calendar Girls*, which was the society's first play for nearly forty years. The November musical was the world premiere of *Sex and the Village* by Rebecca Applin and Susannah Pearce, a privilege granted to BSEAODS by the licensors Perfect Pitch following a national competition. To round off the year, from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> December 2013, new concert venue The Apex in Bury St Edmunds saw society members presenting hit songs from some of the musicals that have long been part of the society's history. ★

**Mel Barnes**  
President, BSEAODS

## West End leading man Daniel Koek helps celebrate 40 years of musical theatre in Cambridge

Attended by more than a hundred past and present members, and others interested in musical theatre, Festival Players of Cambridge celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

The evening began with a welcome speech by Chairman and founder member Brian Thomas, and was followed by the inaugural presentation of the Tom Farrell Award to Joe Griffiths by President Linda Thomas. Brian Thomas then took up his baton to lead a group of current Festival Players in singing pieces from four decades of the society's history.

However, the highlight of the evening came after dinner, with a speech and short performance from Daniel Koek, who is currently playing Jean Valjean in the West End production of *Les Misérables*. After a charming speech about his journey from Australia to London's West End, Koek sang 'Bring Him Home', leaving his audience in raptures.

With productions of *Avenue Q* and *Godspell* lined up for 2014, the Festival Players have good reason to look forward to their next forty years. ★



Ian Newton and Ian Cook with the President's Cup and certificate

## Eight Go Mad at Peebles

Imagine the delight of local society Waveney Light Opera Group (WLOG), who perform at Beccles Public Hall in Suffolk, when they heard that they had been nominated for the NODA President's Cup award for their performance of *The Reunion*, written and produced locally by their Chairman Ian Cook and

Musical Director Ian Newton, and performed in April 2012.

Eight intrepid members of the society travelled mostly by plane but some by train to the legendary Peebles Hydro Hotel, where, at the annual NODA AGM, the President's Cup award was announced...and it went to WLOG! Cue general joy and much celebration, assisted by typical traditional Scottish hospitality.

Terry Rymer, Regional Representative for NODA East District 6, says this is a major achievement for a small society in the face of strong opposition from the whole of the UK. A real feather in the cap, this is an award for entertainment and not just technical quality, which, as Terry states, his district has in abundance. WLOG will certainly remember their trip north of the border for some time to come. ★



# regionalroundup

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### Amateur Beginnings Can Lead to Illustrious Careers

*Brenda Blethyn, Michael Gambon and Richard Wilson all have something in common: their illustrious careers began in amateur theatre. Here, Phil Williams shares some memories of the Nottingham Arts Theatre (now performing as The People's Theatre) and Joyce Handbury tells us about some of the recent graduates of the Young Inspirations Theatre Company from Mansfield.*

As well as presenting seasons of plays, musicals, pantomimes and opera, the Nottingham Arts Theatre rapidly became the breeding ground for a number of actors, actresses and directors who would later find fame in the profession. Many household names started their careers there. Su Pollard (who still visits) later recalled:

*"I learned my craft at the Arts Theatre and had a blooming marvellous time there. It was in effect my drama school, because I attended three times a week from the age of 11 to 24. The Arts Theatre taught me not only the importance of acting, but all the backstage skills necessary to put on a production."*

Peter Bowles performed in a production of *The Merchant of Venice* at the theatre and among the cast were John Bird, John Turner and Philip Voss. The future film makers Ken Loach and Stephen Frears were also associated with the theatre and Alex Hanson, who played Von Trapp in the recent West End production of *The Sound of Music* and is now the leading man in Andrew Lloyd Webber's new musical *Stephen Ward*, was a cast member of the theatre's 1980s production of the show.

The impact of the theatre on young actors is summed up by comments from Sherri Hewson, who has had a long career in the soaps *Coronation Street*, *Crossroads* and *Emmerdale*, and as a member of the *Loose Women*:

*"I remember as a young actress how much attending the Arts Theatre meant to me. The encouragement I was given there enabled me to develop skills which I have taken into my professional life. If it had not been for that early experience of acting at the Arts Theatre, I honestly believe I would not have had the career in theatre and television that I have enjoyed."*

As well as the Nottingham Arts Theatre, a number of graduates from the Young Inspirations Theatre Company have gone on to enjoy successful careers. These include Drew Mason (*The Full Monty* USA tour, *Mamma Mia* in the West End and the *Joseph* UK tour), Tom Hargreaves (*We Will Rock You* German tour, and *The Wizard of Oz* and *9 to 5 The Musical* UK tours) and Ashley Orwin (performed with Ballet Rambert and in Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*). In addition to these names, several other young people have gone on to professional careers or have won places to train for the theatre. ★

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## We're on Facebook!



NODA East Midlands now has a Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/NODAEastMidlands](https://www.facebook.com/NODAEastMidlands). Check it out and 'like' our page.



Anne Key-Huckerby and Andy Morris proudly display her 50 year award



## Amateur Theatre Stalwart Receives 50 Year Award

Anne Key-Huckerby recently received her 50 year award from Andy Morris, the chair of her society Lincoln Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, who recalls the event below.

It was with great pleasure that I presented Anne Key-Huckerby with her 50 year NODA award in front of so many enthusiastic and committed amateur performers from Lincolnshire.

Anne is a stalwart of the amateur theatre scene in Lincolnshire and she tirelessly supports the work of so many groups across her region by driving miles every week to see every show that she can. Since I was a young boy (more years ago than I care to tell) Anne's face has been a constant beacon in the audience. She is reassuringly warm and supportive, and she always reports with a kind yet constructively critical eye.

Her tireless commitment and enthusiasm for local theatre is both heart-warming and essential to the survival of the hobby and culture that we all love. As chair of Lincoln Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, I know that the support Anne offers to us and all the groups in her region cannot be underestimated. Her award is well deserved and it was a pleasure to recognise the longevity of her commitment. My thanks to Anne, a great personal friend and a friend of amateurs everywhere. ★

## Just in time for Radio Times!

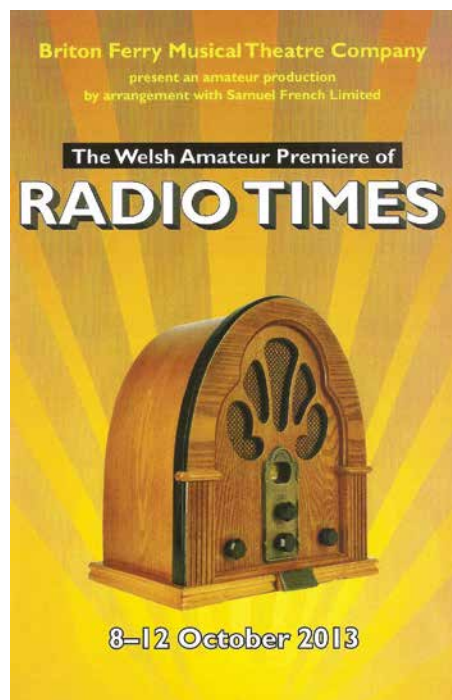
If there was less than a week to go until your show and your leading man left the production, what would you do? Here's how a company in the East Midlands helped one Welsh group struggling with this problem.

In amateur theatre last minute cast replacements for a production can be very difficult to find for a number of reasons, but help could be at hand from companies around the country that have performed the same show. In the midst of the panic over losing a cast member, it's always worth bearing in mind that other societies could help.

When a principal actor in the Welsh premiere of lovely musical *Radio Times*, due to be performed by Briton Ferry Musical Theatre Company, withdrew a week before the show was due to be performed, director Barry McIlroy had a dilemma to solve if the show was to go on.

Fortunately, Barry had seen a production of the show in his native Northamptonshire and contacted principal actor David Wicks to ask him to reprise his performance as the harassed Heathcote Bultitude. Luckily in this case, David was only too pleased to oblige and Briton Ferry made sure that he got to Wales in time and that digs were sorted out for him.

In this instance, a crisis was averted and the show did go on. This serves as a good example of why it's always worthwhile to ask other societies that have put on the same show if they'd be willing to help. ★



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

### Our Venues

Recent years have seen a number of venues used by our groups closing, increasing their prices, or trying to sideline societies by prioritising professional shows and laying down increasingly onerous conditions for amateur use; for example, asking for show plans unrealistically far in advance.

One solution is for a group (or groups) to run their own theatres, like the Concordia in Hinckley, Leicestershire, and The Acorn Theatre in Worksop. Another would be for groups to collaborate together in order to work more effectively with venue managers.

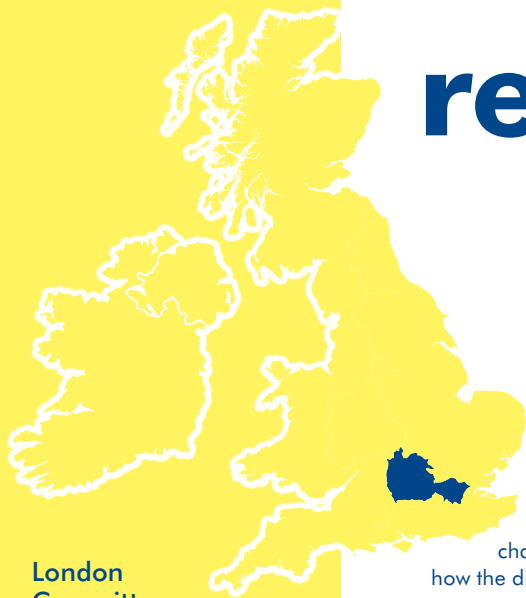
It would be interesting to hear from groups who have taken steps to tackle this venue problem.

### Choosing a Director

There's a number of interesting questions that arise from the process of hiring a director.

How does your society choose a director? Do you prefer a director who is known and liked by members of the society, or a director that no-one has met but who has a reputation for bringing the best out of a cast, even if it means upsetting people? How important is the size of the director's fee? Have you ever appointed a director then regretted it? (No names please!)

We'd love to hear your thoughts on what's important when hiring a director, and on the venue problem, so let us know by contacting the East Midlands Regional Editor Alex Wood at alex.wood@noda.org.uk. ★



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## Beaufort Players Turn to DIY for Latest Set

Beaufort Players rehearse and perform in a church hall in Ealing which has a small stage. As such, purpose built sets have to be created and they cannot be put up far in advance of a show. The society has solved this problem by building their own sets, and their last production, *Memory of Water* by Shelagh Stephenson, threw up a specific set of challenges because it is set in a house which is in the process of subsiding down a cliff. Here's how the director dealt with this challenge. *Elaine O'Sullivan*

"In *Memory of Water* the lives of the central family have been irrevocably altered by a decision that occurred 25 years ago. This decision led to the relationship between three sisters and their mother slowly decaying, leading to the mother passing away with only one sister by her side. The play starts just after the mother has passed on and the sisters have all returned to the family home, which is located on the edge of a cliff and is in the process of slowly subsiding into the sea; the script describes a large crack that is visible on the wall of the house.



© Beaufort Players

I am a fan of realistic sets but I was very aware that this set should portray the underlying emotions and secrets held within a family that is barely holding itself together. I decided that I wanted to take the idea of the subsidence crack a good deal further and portray a room that had not been maintained and had slowly rotted over the previous 25 years, to match the crumbling relationship of the sisters. This would also then fit into the atmosphere surrounding the funeral of the sisters' mother: the family is breaking up, literally, and with it so is their home.

To achieve a suitable look I required furniture and props that portrayed a room caught in another era, walls that looked like they were barely standing up and generations of grime and dirt covering it all.

Ultimately we had a set that helped to portray a family and a home clearly in a state of disintegration."

**Craig McCrindle**

Director

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**Tiger Theatrical Productions was formed last year with the primary objective of creating a small non-professional theatre company which would focus on entering one-act festivals. They had no home theatre as such, and so began with minimal resources but lots of enthusiasm.**

Although initially keen to perform *Zoo Story* by Albee, due to a rights refusal the company had to find a new play and fast. Following a long search of several online libraries they came across a new Australian play,

# The Fun of Festivals

*Just a Straight Man*, which had never been performed outside the country. After getting the rights, along with permission from the authors to re-write some of the play to make it more suitable for a UK audience, Tiger Productions went ahead with their inaugural performance at the Maidenhead Festival.

At Maidenhead *Just a Straight Man* won Best New Play and was placed second overall. The company then moved on to Leatherhead, probably the largest festival in the UK, and here the show also came second overall, with three nominations for Best Actor, Special Production Mention and Outstanding Contribution.

After a break of a couple of weeks the production was back on the road to Haverhill, and here it swept the board, winning Best Play, Best Stage Presentation, Best New Play and Best Actor. The next stop was at Welwyn

Garden City, where the production won Best Play, Best Director, Best Actor and Best Staging. The final performance in this series of productions involved a long trip to the Skegness Festival, where the production won Best Play, Best Actor and Most Innovative Production.

The point of all this is to plea to all non-professional companies to attend festivals, both as an audience member and as a participant. If your group isn't keen, you can start your own group just to perform at festivals.

Also, it really isn't that expensive: the company's costs were less than £1,500 in all, and festivals allow companies to get out of their comfort zone, perform in new venues, and meet and have fun with likeminded people from across the country.

**Bob Thomson ★**

Courtesy of Tiger Theatrical Productions

## Pride of Reading Awards 2013: Starmaker founder awarded for commitment to the community

A man who helped *Titanic* star Kate Winslet make her acting debut has scooped an 'Oscar' for himself by winning the Pride of Reading award for Commitment to the Community. Since founding Starmaker Theatre Company 25 years ago, David Savage has helped hundreds of budding actors and actresses take their first steps onto the stage. The anonymous nomination described Mr Savage as "a truly inspiring part of Reading's art community, his enthusiasm and dedication to Reading's young talent is remarkable and he deserves a huge pat on the back for his years of hard work".

More than 350 people attended Starmaker's glittering 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary party at Reading Town Hall in May 2013, including several West End performers. On receiving the award from Chris Tarrant and Jun Okumura, he said: "It's amazing, it's very humbling to have this award and it's very, very nice to receive the applause. Starmaker has been going for 25 years and I'll keep on going until I get too old".

To celebrate Starmaker's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Dave Savage is directing three recently released musicals: *Les Misérables*, *Cats* and *Miss Saigon* (schools editions). *Les Misérables* and *Cats* were both presented in 2013 and *Miss Saigon* will be presented in March 2014. All of the productions are presented at the Wilde Theatre in Bracknell, and the first two were both sell-outs.

### About Starmaker

Starmaker is a youth theatre company formed in February 1988. It serves the young people of Berkshire by enabling them to gain experience in the performing arts.

Starmaker's objectives are to:

- ★ Provide training for young people in all aspects of theatre and the performing arts by professional directors, musicians, choreographers and technicians, and to provide confidence and experience in the field.
- ★ Give guidance and assistance in all social and career matters, especially those related to the entertainment industry.
- ★ Provide top quality entertainment for the community by happy, enthusiastic young people.
- ★ Provide a healthy environment for young people to meet, work together and socialise.
- ★ Build the company for future generations.

The company enjoys a thriving acting membership of over 90 young performers, ranging from ten to eighteen years of age, as well as a further fifty non-acting members working behind the scenes together.



Kate Winslet, Starmaker's patron, says: "Starmaker Theatre Company is an exceptional organisation. Not only does it produce some wonderful productions, but it provides young people with a wonderful opportunity to be part of something unique, exciting and inspiring. It gives them an opportunity to explore their own particular talent or skill and also teaches them some new ones. As a company, they treat everyone equally, regardless of age, sex, or race, and everyone gets a chance to go on stage and have some life enhancing experiences."

**Henry Hawes ★**



# Getting the Look



**Ewan Campbell from Utopia Costumes, NODA's recommended supplier for *The Slipper and the Rose*, discusses some tips to make sure your costumes really steal the show.**

We all know that the costume call is close to show week. Whether you have a busy costume team who make bespoke costumes, or if you hire them from somebody else, the excitement is just the same. Costumes add so much to productions that it's really important to get them right.

In general we refer to a costume as the clothes we put on to portray a character in a show. Whether playing a leading character or someone in the ensemble, we should all take the time and effort to look right.

In all aspects a costume is what you make of it. As long as you go to your costume call and apply a few simple rules, the experience can be a pleasant one.

Remember:

1. The costume doesn't take into account personal preferences. Just as we buy clothes that suit ourselves, in the same way costumes cater for the preferences, style and design of the character a performer is playing, so embrace this and go ahead with an open mind.

2. The costume is not meant to fit you exactly, it is meant to fit your character, who may not be exactly your size.
3. The costume has been designed to be seen at a distance and as part of a bigger picture.
4. The costume is only fabric and doesn't have magical slimming properties.
5. The costume will not turn a performance into BAFTA standard, the performer has to do this themselves.
6. The costume has only one real function: to turn a performer into someone else. So try to look like the character and not yourself when onstage.
7. Most importantly, what is in the imagination very rarely exists in costume reality, and knowing this avoids disappointment.

Once your costume is sorted, you have to make the best of it. In the wonderful world of amateur theatre, performers should acquire a few basic costume skills.

*Ironing and darning:* You'll need to know how to press your costume, and learning to put a few tacking stitches in the right places is not that difficult and can make you look and feel like a million dollars.

*Accessorising:* Do you need shoes, gloves, shirts, bowties, hand bags, scarves, jewellery and other accessory additions? Get items that complement your costume but that aren't supplied with it. This makes it your costume for the run of the show and adds individuality and interest.

*Hair and makeup:* This is as important as your costume, because hairstyles differ just as much as clothes do. A modern hairstyle doesn't go with a period costume, but you would be surprised at how

many modern choppy bobs appear in productions of *Oliver!* Likewise, stage makeup is for the stage and day makeup is for going to Tesco. It is unlikely that we'd wear heavy stage makeup in Tesco, so don't wear light daytime makeup on stage.

*Get the idea:* Try the whole thing on at home before you go to the theatre so that you know you will look good, as this bolsters your own confidence and inspires confidence from the audience. Don't say you can't or don't have time, this is just an excuse. Think of it as a bit of 'me' time and have a go. If you're not sure what to do there is always someone who looks fantastic on stage that you can ask for help from, and whose costume you can look at to see what they did with theirs.

In the current climate we all are trying to get bums on seats. The audience members are the ones who pay for shows and it is you, the people on stage, that your audience come to watch. At Utopia Costumes we are providing a product. We help to 'make' shows and create lasting pictures in the minds of audience members as they leave theatres, hopefully encouraging them to come back. So give them something good to look at...you! ★







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## Councillor's Comments

By the time you read this I shall be well on my way to having completed a full year in office. It's been hectic, it's been stressful, but above all it's been enjoyable, visiting many of the region's member societies, seeing their productions and talking on a one-to-one basis at district meetings.

Hopefully NODA North will continue to evolve and adapt to try and meet the needs of our

members. In early March we'll be having the first regional AGM and conference of 2014, held in Scotch Corner near Darlington. Please do come along to the AGM and the open forum afterwards. We always need your input.

**Gordon Richardson**  
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Caitlin Bannister with  
Derek Grattidge. Copyright  
of Stage Door Photography

## Youth and Performance Awards Evening

After much planning, NODA North finally held its inaugural Youth and Performance Awards evening last September 14<sup>th</sup>, held in the Rainton Meadows Arena. Over the course of the year each district representative had been on the lookout for youth societies, as well as individuals and societies with those over the age of 18, that had gone that little bit further to reward the efforts of their younger members in some way.

Eventually, approximately 370 youth, individuals and society members attended, as well as NODA National President at the time Mr Derek Grattidge and his wife Connie, from Cardiff. Despite the odd teething problems a good night was had by all and the event will be firmly stamped in the NODA North calendar for 2014. Pictured with Derek Grattidge is the youngest winner of an award, Caitlin Bannister, for her role as Iago in Disney's *Aladdin Jr*, performed by Rainbow Youth. ★

## NODA North Conference, March 2014

Members of NODA North will be attending our regional weekend and AGM at the Holiday Inn, Scotch Corner near Darlington, over the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

The Friday evening is traditionally a quiz night and this year the theme is musicals. Saturday starts with a workshop run by Marjorie Bolam on Samuel French's *The Musical of Musicals*, before a formal dinner dance in the evening and the presentation of trophies to the winners and runners up in the programme and poster competition.

Before departing on Sunday the regional AGM takes place, followed by an open forum question and answer session. NODA North will welcome National President Bert Lumsden and his wife Anne back to the region to attend our conference. ★



Some of those who attended the Spennymoor centenary celebration

## Spennymoor Stage & Song's Centenary Year

During the course of 2013 Spennymoor celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a series of productions, culminating in a performance of *The Sound of Music* at the prestigious Gala Theatre in Durham, which was a collaboration between professionals and amateurs.

Accompanied by a 36 strong orchestra of students from the Royal College of Music in Manchester, who were conducted by society Chairman Martyn Jones, the production was a lavish event. Even the band call was a special event; held in the Pennine village of

Penistone, it was attended by the Regional Councillor, the NODA Past President and the full cast, including 21 children, and was followed by a champagne reception. All in all, it was a spectacular end to Spennymoor's centenary year. ★

## Giving Back

The Castle Players, a Teesdale-based community theatre group, who like many societies raise money to fund their own productions, decided to do something different in 2013. They decided to donate the proceeds of money raised by raffles during their open air production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in the grounds of Bowes Museum near Barnard Castle, to The Witham, a community hall within the town which has long been associated with providing rehearsal and venue space for many local organisations.

The raffle raised £750 towards The Witham's £700k refurbishment fund. Andrew Harrison of Castle Players said: "We have always had a close connection to The Witham and we are very pleased to be able to support them in this way." ★

## Queen's Honour for Durham Director

Fred Wharton has devoted his enormous talent for directing and his energies over 45 years to make Durham Musical Theatre Company into the success it is today. His efforts were rewarded in the Queen's Birthday



Honours when he was awarded the British Empire Medal for 'services to drama in the North East', a richly deserved recognition! This was presented to him in Durham Town Hall on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2013 by the Lord Lieutenant of County Durham on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen. ★

## South Moor Sweep Up Long Service Awards

NODA has been issuing long service awards for most of its 114 years of existence. Yet rarely has NODA had a situation when so many were presented in one evening to members of the same society.

South Moor Musical Theatre Group celebrated their 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Stanley Civic Hall, County Durham, on the evening of 21<sup>st</sup> September

2012, with both current and past members. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of long service awards. To present the awards, society Chairman Bill Readman drafted in the services of NODA Regional Representative Michelle Coulson, Regional Councillor Gordon Richardson and Past President Fred Piggford. Included in the vast list of presentations were five fifty year awards and three sixty year awards.



Jean Hughes, Joan Hind and Lily Middleton made the most of the costumes and props

The recipients of the three sixty year awards, Jean Hughes, Joan Hind and Lily Middleton, were given the honour of cutting the cake specially made for the occasion. In a night of fun and celebration, they soon went on to prove the old adage of being able to take the girls out of the theatre but not being able to take the theatre out of the girls.

In a corner of the room were set aside several props and costumes, and the first to join in with this managed mayhem was the octogenarian trio, who donned 'rock chick' outfits and appropriate props. Not wanting to be left out, Gordon Richardson and Fred Piggford dressed up alongside the trio, all in the name of fun.

Not content with one mammoth awards celebration, a fortnight or so later Ferryhill Stage Society, who were celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, also presented awards to their members totalling 515 years of service to amateur theatre after their production of *The King and I*. ★



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'Calendar Girls' charity presentation.  
Photograph courtesy of Paul Atkinson of  
the Bridlington Free Press.



### Calendar Girls Raises Money for Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research

On 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013 a cheque for £2,250 was presented to Judy King, Regional Coordinator of Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research, by Pauline Pope, Director of *Calendar Girls*. The production was held at Spotlight Theatre, proudly owned by NODA members Bridlington Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society.

Mike Sheldon, Chairman, said: "It has been a privilege to be part of a wonderful inspirational play. Everyone involved in the play, a great team, gained a huge amount from doing it and made many new friends. This includes those whose lives have been touched by leukaemia or lymphoma, which gave an added spur to the actors' efforts."

Some of those involved in the production made great efforts to raise money for the charity. For example, Kenneth Davison, who played John Clarke, shaved his hair off and raised £506, while

Liz Edwards, who played Annie Clarke, painted six sunflower paintings that were auctioned off and raised £400. In addition, The Late Night Pharmacy, who sponsored the programme, also raised £150, Rags Restaurant raised £50 with their *Calendar Girls* pre-theatre meal and McCain's Foods of Scarborough donated £250. Lots of raffle prizes were also given by local businesses and patrons of Spotlight Theatre, and Bridlington AODS is thankful to them all. After these fundraising efforts, Bridlington AODS and a charitable society contributed the remaining sum to make the grand total of £2,250.

Mike added: "On behalf of Spotlight Theatre I thank everyone who came to see the play. We had full houses all week, with many audience members leaving with a tear in their eye and a smile. A moment in time not to forget, it was amateur theatre at its best." ★



# Summer School Experiences from the North East

**Once again members of NODA North East societies had an excellent week at Summer School 2013, held at Warwick Conferences. In addition, nine members from the North East region were awarded bursaries to assist with the cost of Summer School: six received regional bursaries and three received national bursaries.**

You can read about their experiences here, but for more information go to the NODA North East website to read their full reports.

## **Singing for Musical Theatre**

"People from my musical society had told me I would have a great time at NODA Summer School, and now I know why. All of the sessions in the Singing for Musical Theatre course were enjoyable and taught us so much. For example, how to use muscles

to support the voice and how important pronunciation is, along with using emotion to add colour to songs."

*Helen Green, Whitby Area Musical Theatre Company*

"The classes every day were so interesting. Pam was an amazing and inspiring teacher, and very funny too. She taught us such a lot in a short space of time. We had three master classes, which involved singing a solo song to the rest of the group. This was very challenging as I've never really done solo singing before, but I did it and Pam and the rest of the group were very encouraging."

*Carol Green, Bradford Players*

## **Musical Theatre in Concert**

"The Musical Theatre in Concert course was a new addition to the programme to run alongside the Musical Directors course. The structure of the

course certainly made for a thrilling experience and the added bonus of being able to perform with a live band was wonderful."

*Sam Chipman, Guiseley Amateurs*

## **Comedy**

"I was blown away as the week went on by everyone's support and how much they help to develop your skills. At the end of the week I found myself on stage in front of the school doing stand-up comedy, which I really enjoyed. This is something that I wouldn't have felt comfortable with at the start of the week so I could tell for myself that I had really developed."

*Gareth Carson, Handsworth & Hallam Theatre Company*

For further information on Summer School 2014, go to [www.noda.org.uk/summerschool](http://www.noda.org.uk/summerschool) or call 01733 374 790. ★

# 100 Years of RTOS

**Rotherham Teachers Operatic Society (RTOS) this year celebrates 100 years in amateur theatre.**

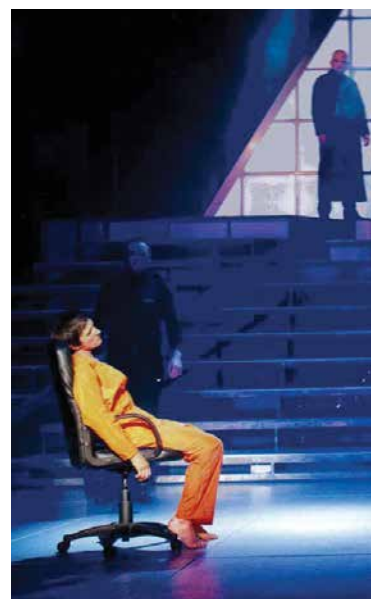
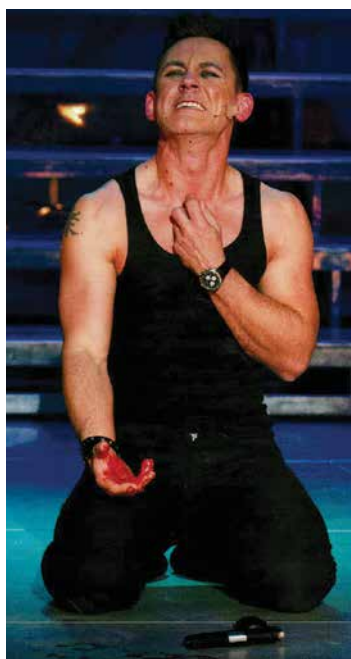
The society was formed in 1913 by a group of teachers who all enjoyed the operas of Gilbert & Sullivan. The first production in 1914 was *The Gondoliers*, performed at the Empire in Rotherham. It was a great success both financially and artistically.

In 1922, the Hippodrome became the venue for productions, before RTOS moved on to the Theatre Royal in 1930 and to the Empire in 1934. Both wars interrupted the society's activities, but RTOS returned as soon as possible to the production of shows. Some years the society performed two shows in the same year, one being Gilbert & Sullivan and the other a more modern production. In 1960, the Rotherham Civic Theatre opened and RTOS enjoyed success with *The Merry Widow*.

There have been numerous producers and officials throughout the years and all have tirelessly given their time and expertise to help bring first class amateur theatre to Rotherham. Indeed, our most recent production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* was a first for the society.

In 2002 we were very proud to introduce Rotherham Teachers Student Academy, which is a youth group for performers aged eight to nineteen. This group has been a great asset to the society, and over the eleven years they have been in existence they have produced shows such as *Seussical*, *West Side Story*, *High School Musical*, *Miss Saigon* and *Les Misérables*.

As RTOS celebrate 100 years, we would like to thank our past members and officials, such as Past President Derek Stacey, who dedicated 60 years of his life to the society. It is people like Derek who have helped to make RTOS what it is today. ★

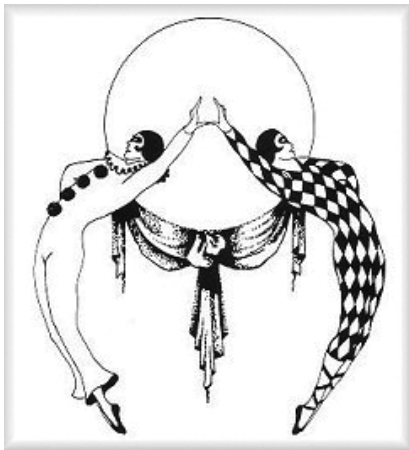


Scenes from the recent production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*

## West End Success

Troy Tipple, recently seen in the York LOC production of *Oliver!*, was chosen to open at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, as Charlie in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* at the end of November 2013. Sharing the part with three other boys until May 2014, we send him our congratulations and best wishes for a very successful run. ★





# So you want to be a stage manager?

**In the first instalment of a regular column in NODA TODAY, Graham Coulson, General Manager of scenery supplier The Border Studio, provides advice for budding stage managers. The Border Studio is NODA's recommended scenery supplier for *The Slipper and the Rose*.**

Whilst putting pen to paper about being a stage manager for an amateur theatre company, I wondered where to begin and where to end. Let's start at the beginning and have some fun exploring the role of the company stage manager.

For me, the key to the above question is that you fully understand what the role is all about and the importance of it within the production structure. You will of course have been fully briefed about the time commitment. Most good companies will be upfront about what they expect from you as their company stage manager and I dare say even remunerate you for agreeing to take on the role.

My experience over the years has been varied to say the least, from those individuals who are up for doing the job well and have all the key skills, to those who take on the role for the purely social aspect of being part of a successful production. With most of the stage managers I have worked with, I am still not convinced that they all realise that once the dress rehearsal is over they become responsible for the running of a production: a very big and powerful responsibility which comes with many accolades when all goes well and equally constructive criticism when there are technical glitches along the way.

I do wonder at this point in the narrative whether you can empathise with my ramblings. It is my intention to start at the beginning and explore the whole gambit of the stage manager role. If you are considering becoming a company stage manager, I hope to share with you some good practice gained over the years from the many stage managers we have engaged with here at The Border Studio, and eventually to provide you with some simple dos and don'ts.



*From rehearsal...*



*...to live performance. Stage management is a powerful responsibility.*

In terms of the key skills and attributes needed to fulfil the role, it goes without saying that of course you must be good looking, polite, understanding and above all have a smile for all occasions; after all, this is the theatre!

That's all for this issue but I do hope that this

has whet your appetite for the next instalment of our journey into the role of the company stage manager. ★

With best wishes and kind regards,

Aye,  
**Graham**



# **2014 The 41st British All Winners Drama Festival**

**Sunday 20th July to Saturday 26th July**

**Gaiety Theatre  
Douglas  
Isle of Man**

**Adjudicator - Jan Palmer-Sayer GODA**

**Coordinator - Michael J. Lees**

[michaellees@manx.net](mailto:michaellees@manx.net)



**2014 Island of Culture**





# regionalroundup

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## Councillor's Comments

The NODA North West committee are now working hard on plans for the 2014 North West Conference, to be held at The Mercure Hotel, Piccadilly, Manchester. This promises to be another great event for the region. The weekend takes place from Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> to Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2014 and booking forms will be sent to society secretaries on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014, with priority bookings only accepted until Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February. Please do book early as we anticipate that the event will fill up very quickly, so take advantage of the priority dates.

In other news, Summer School bursaries are once again available to four lucky NODA North West members. Each one is worth £300, around half the cost of Summer School. Do take a look at the courses and consider attending. Applications for bursaries must be received by Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February, so there's not much time left.

The 2013 NODA North West Drama Festival was also a great success, and eleven societies competed. I would like to thank all the societies that entered the festival for the excellent standards which I was privileged to witness. The standard and variation was superb and the winners will be notified very soon.

Next, just a brief word on the programme and poster competition. The 2013 national award for the Best Souvenir Class Programme was won by North West society Walney Musical Theatre Company for their *Peter Pan* programme, so congratulations to them! Also, a reminder about the competition: to be eligible for entry the programme must contain the NODA crest and the full wording 'Affiliated to the National Operatic and Dramatic Association'. Please ensure your regional representative has five copies of the programme to submit first to the North West competition, and if successful, then to the national competition.

As ever, I would like to finish by thanking those societies who have invited David and myself to their productions and have made us so very welcome. We are most fortunate in the North West to have such a considerable amount of talent and very many thanks to you all, both on stage and off, for all the hard work that goes into making such tremendous shows. This is my standing ovation to you!

**Christine Hunter Hughes**  
Councillor, NODA North West

## Blackburn Group Learn From *Phantom Star*

Members of Blackburn Musical Theatre Company (BMTC) have been lucky enough to learn from star of the stage, professional opera singer and former *Phantom of the Opera* star Roy Weissensteiner, at Liverpool's beautiful St George's Hall.

Roy has played both the Phantom and Raoul in *Phantom of the Opera* on tour in Australia and Germany, and now runs Absolute Opera with his wife, dancer Emma Marie, from their Merseyside home.

Tenor Roy initially called on the services of BMTC to help create his new show *Absolute Musicals* at the company's base, the Thwaites Empire Theatre in Blackburn. And such was the success of the collaboration that members were then invited by Lormac Productions to join Roy and baritone Guy Mott as they launched their new CD, recorded at Parr Street Studios in Liverpool.

A BMTC spokesman said: "A chorus of our members was asked to take part in *Absolute*

*Musicals* and were thrilled to be asked to work again with Roy. Every rehearsal was like a workshop and hearing someone with such a fantastic voice, in such an intimate and relaxed setting as a rehearsal room, was a privilege.

"Then to see the dazzling concert hall at St George's in Liverpool was a treat for us – we were so proud to sing there alongside Roy and Guy. Roy had a great understanding of 'community theatre', as it is called in Australia where he grew up, as he took part in productions there." ★

Members of BMTC with Roy Weissensteiner at St. George's Hall





# RSC Open Stages: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Performances

**The NODA North West award-winning group Guilden Sutton Players are proud to have been accepted onto the RSC Open Stages scheme.**

This huge developmental opportunity will culminate in a production of Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in November 2014 in Guilden Sutton Village Hall. The production will be attended by a professional theatre practitioner who will give feedback to the director, the group, their partner theatre and the RSC.

During 2014 and into 2015, the Players will

benefit from regular forums, theatre skills workshops and training opportunities for directors, actors and crew, hosted by the RSC and their Northern partner theatre, the Contact Theatre in Manchester. Between May and June 2015 the Contact Theatre will showcase extracts from their attached companies, and then the RSC will invite some Open Stages companies to perform in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Guilden Sutton Players' director Gail Young has chosen *The Merry Wives of Windsor* because it is a fast, furious and very funny farce, which she feels will be a lot of fun for

the group and perfect for their audiences.

A spokesman said: "The group has often mulled over the possibility of performing Shakespeare, but a fear of not doing justice to the Bard and also some concern about bums on seats has previously stopped them rising to the challenge. The joy of being an RSC Open Stages company is that a superb support network is in place for participating groups who want to try something completely new."

Throughout 2014, Gail will be updating readers of NODA TODAY on Guilden Sutton Players' Open Stages experience. ★

## Something's Coming: Something Good

**A musical theatre classic, retelling one of Shakespeare's most well-known and loved stories, will close Altrincham Garrick's centenary season. The Garrick is proud to be taking part in the Royal Shakespeare Company's (RSC) Open Stages project by presenting *West Side Story*.**

Theatre manager Nev Roby said: "2013 - 2014 is our 100th season as an amateur theatre group and we're ending it with our biggest and most challenging production yet. We've had an appetite to do *West Side Story* for a number of years, but have talked ourselves out of it many times due to the pure scale of it. Rounding off the 100th season seemed like a timely opportunity to finally bite the bullet, and coupled with being able to tie this in with mentoring from RSC Open Stages, this presented a compelling combination."

In an unprecedented move, The Garrick approached performers from other societies to audition for the production in a bid to embed a real spirit of collaboration at the venue, which plays host to several other societies.

*West Side Story* director Adam Whittle said: "We wanted to learn about working in a more collaborative and creative way with the community around us. We're extremely excited about being mentored by experienced professional practitioners from the RSC and the opportunities this opens up to every theatre maker involved in the project."

The cast of *West Side Story* will receive training, director mentoring, feedback and support from the RSC and partner theatre the Contact Theatre, in Manchester.

Musical director Mark Goggins has already attended RSC workshops in Stratford-upon-Avon, which focused on movement and devised theatre, among other things.

"It certainly helped focus on the themes of *Romeo and Juliet*, upon which *West Side Story* is based," he said. "The challenge has been bringing out the themes and rhythms of *Romeo and Juliet*, so the audience don't see this as just another pedestrian performance of a period musical."

Adam added: "For us, it's crucially important for the characters to be rooted to the story's central themes of love versus hate, tragedy and revenge, and not just a showcase of great singers and dancers, although there's no getting away from the fact that all of the cast do need to be able to act, sing and dance. It's quite an undertaking, but we're confident the end result will be breath-taking."

*West Side Story*, 19<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> May 2014, 7.30pm plus Saturday 2.15pm. Call 0161 928 1677 or visit [www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk](http://www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk) to book. ★



The interior of The Garrick Theatre in the 1930s compared to the interior today



# regionalroundup Scotland

## And Now For Something Completely Different

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**Coconuts were at the ready when Downfield Musical Society took on the task of presenting the Scottish amateur premiere of Monty Python's *Spamalot*. Fresh from their successful spring production of *Whistle Down the Wind*, the society continued to look on the bright side of life and brought this hilarious show to audiences at the Whitehall Theatre, Dundee, in September 2013.**

The first task was to assemble the all-important, all singing, all dancing Knights of the Round Table. From King Arthur and his faithful servant Patsy, to Sir Lancelot the Brave and Sir Robin the Not-Quite-So-Brave, the talented boys immediately bonded in their quest for the Holy Grail. Bringing a Las Vegas touch of glamour to the show was the fabulous diva, the Lady of the Lake, and her bevy of cheerleading beauties, the Laker Girls. The company provided essential support in various forms, including a cartload of singing and dancing corpses, the towering Knights of Ni, a bawdy court of Camelot and a castle full of cheeky French taunters. Rehearsals frequently descended into hysterics

as the cast and director struggled to deliver deadpan lines whilst desperately trying to hold back gales of laughter!

As the show was newly released to the amateur stage no professional scenery was available for hire, so the decision was made to build a full scale set complete with castles, a ten foot high rabbit, random shrubberies and exploding hillsides. Technical trickery saw the Black Knight's legs chopped off, the killer bunny blown to pieces and a *Phantom*-esque gondola delivering the Lady of the Lake and Sir Galahad on a sea of mist. Beautiful costumes were provided by Utopia Costumes and state of the art projections were produced by the lighting director to transport the audience into the

surreal world of Monty Python. In a nod to the original Python team, the voice of God was provided by writer Eric Idle.

*Spamalot* was a hugely enjoyable experience for the whole company and judging by the howls of laughter coming from the audience, they loved it as much as the cast. The hilarity hasn't ended for the company as they have immediately launched into rehearsals for their annual family pantomime *Dick Whittington*. Downfield will always have wonderful, happy memories of this show, but remember: "What happens in Camelot, stays in Camelot!"

**Craig Shearer**  
Stage Manager, Downfield Musical Society ★



King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

© Gordon Hogg

### Moving On

After 29 years of visits and reports, I finally stepped down as Regional Representative for District 7 at the NODA Scotland AGM at Peebles in October 2013. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working with all the talented individuals and strong companies in Fife. I am grateful to you all for your support and really appreciate all the friendships I have made over the years. District 7 is second to none in Scotland! I am sure my successor, Mike Pendlowski, will be fortunate enough to enjoy the same support that I have had. I wish everyone in the district all the best in the coming years and look forward to keeping in touch. It has been a privilege working with you all.

**John Urquhart**  
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# Utopia Costumes Youth Award Goes to LAMP Children's Theatre

President Jennifer Miller was delighted to receive a phone call from NODA Scotland telling her that the youth section of Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions (LAMP) had won the Utopia Youth Award for 2013. She was invited to receive the award, along with some of her young company, at the NODA Scotland Conference at Peebles Hydro on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

The award is given to groups that have achieved excellence, contributed to the artistic and/or charitable life of their area, inspired young people to participate in the performing arts, and have provided exciting and challenging experiences for young people.

Despite the fact that LAMP's own production of *Thoroughly Modern Millie* was showing that week, nine representatives of the company came to the conference: seven youngsters, President Jennifer Miller and Director Calum Campbell. The award was presented by

LAMP Children's Theatre receiving the Utopia Costumes Youth Award.



© Ron Stewart

NODA Youth Advisor Kenny Christie, who invited them all forward. The youngsters thought this was a wonderful moment and were pleased and surprised to be the centre of attention. Calum Campbell thanked everyone and commented on how hard the youngsters had

worked, especially in their recent productions of *Honk!* and *The Pirates of Penzance*. ★

**Elizabeth Donald**  
Regional Representative, NODA Scotland District 3

© Elizabeth Donald



Falkirk OS with National President Bert Lumsden and his wife Anne at Peebles Hydro.

## A Once in a Lifetime Experience

When Falkirk Operatic Society was asked if it could provide the Midnight Cabaret at the October 2013 NODA Scotland Conference, the whole society was excited. We were preparing for our autumn cabaret show in Falkirk Town Hall in September, and could easily see how some of our material would transfer well to the conference cabaret.

Once 13 members had been chosen to perform, we all knew we had to put on a polished performance because expectations would be high. So we fitted in extra rehearsals and brought in choreographer Clare Martin to sort out our dance moves.

As soon as we arrived at Peebles Hydro we were made to feel at home and were given the Regency Room to call our own, which soon became our green room. When the time came to perform, our opening number had us standing with our backs to the audience. Although at first my mind froze, once we were introduced and the first strands of music hit us we were all ready. We had such a welcoming reception that we all relaxed, and buoyed up by goodwill, we gave it our best shot. A wave of applause greeted each number. Words can't describe how it felt; we just couldn't stop smiling and to be presented with the Courage Trophy was the icing on the cake.

**Carol Sutherland** President, Falkirk Operatic Society

## Recollections of Peebles Hydro

In October 2013, NODA Scotland held its 60<sup>th</sup> successive Annual Conference in the magnificent surroundings of Peebles Hydro. I first heard of the Scottish Conference at the NODA Operatic Summer School in Durham in 1967 and have attended ever since. By the next year a small, generally younger, group from the Lyric attended. This group grew and quite a large contingent came from the society for many years thereafter.

I also remember my first National AGM at the Hydro, when John Simonson became President. On the Friday evening I think the other members of the Scottish contingent were wondering who this Celia Walker was whose name was on the list. I recall they were all very kind to me and included me in whatever was happening.

Over the years things have changed, including the AGM being moved to the Saturday morning and training activities included on the Saturday afternoon. The Saturday night cabaret is now rehearsed and presented by a society and there have been some very memorable performances.

The Scottish Conference has become the longest running regular booking at the Peebles Hydro. Although the Hydro has changed quite a bit over the years, the welcome NODA Scotland has been given has remained constant. I hope this will continue for a long time.

**Celia Walker** NODA President, 2003 – 2004



© T. Davies Brock

Dining room at the Peebles Hydro set out for the banquet.

## Youth Advisor

After a number of years of distinguished and valued service as Youth Advisor to NODA Scotland, Kenny Christie demitted office

at the NODA Scotland AGM on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013. Expressions of interest in the important post of Youth Advisor should be conveyed to the NODA Scotland Councillor Gordon T. Blackburn by emailing [gordon.blackburn@noda.org.uk](mailto:gordon.blackburn@noda.org.uk).



# regionalroundup

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### Councillor's Comments

Welcome to the second edition of NODA TODAY and your region's pages.

It was an honour to be elected as Vice-President at the NODA National Conference in Peebles in September 2013, and I look forward to becoming President this September when the National Conference will be held at The Felbridge Hotel & Spa, East Grinstead. Please make a note of the date in your new diaries: 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

I have been delighted to be invited to see various productions across the region and sincerely thank those who have done so, but at busy times of the year it is not always possible to fit them all in.

#### New musical pays tribute to local seamen

I had the pleasure of seeing a new musical, *Mary's Boys*, performed in Eastbourne by The Haven Players in October 2013. It was based on the worst lifeboat disaster for many years, which occurred on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1928 at Rye, East Sussex. The whole of the 17 man crew of the *Mary Stanford* Lifeboat were drowned, which was practically the whole male fishing population of Rye Harbour. The lifeboat was launched in a south-west gale with heavy rain squalls and heavy seas to rescue the crew of the 'Alice' of Riga vessel. News was received that the crew of the 'Alice' had been rescued by another vessel and the recall signal was fired three times, but the lifeboat crew did not see it. As the lifeboat was coming into harbour she capsized and the whole crew perished. All the dependants were pensioned by the RNLI. The musical is a tribute to the families of Rye Harbour, and what a moving musical it is, particularly for those from coastal communities.

#### 150 years and still going strong

Winchester Dramatic Society (WDS), more familiarly known as The Chesil Theatre, celebrated their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2013 with a supper presentation of *Elsie & Norm's Macbeth*. Congratulations to WDS on this momentous occasion and hopefully a report will appear in the next edition of NODA TODAY.

#### Invitations to regional representatives

If your society wishes to have their production reviewed by their regional representative, I would ask that you write and invite the representative as soon as the date of the production is known, rather than leaving it until a few weeks beforehand to find they are not available.

#### NODA awards

Just a reminder that NODA awards are available for both members of societies and individual members, provided that the application is supported with confirmation of the years involved with amateur theatre. An individual can pay for the award, but I hope that societies will purchase the award in recognition of the contribution someone has made to the society and amateur theatre. It is always a pleasure to be invited to present such an award when I attend a show.

#### Items for the magazine

Remember this is your magazine; your articles of interest together with high resolution photographs in jpeg format are always welcome for publication.

**John W Barnes**

Councillor, NODA South East

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# Mary's Boys pays tribute to lifeboat disaster of 1928

**Mary's Boys is a new musical play by three talented young writers: Darren Vallier, Michelle Pollard and Gaynor Newnham. Back in 1994, teacher and songwriter Darren Vallier took a group of children to the Smugglers Museum in Hastings. There he bought a book entitled *The Mary Stanford Disaster* by Geoff Hutchinson, about a local lifeboat disaster in November 1928. The story of this disaster in Rye Bay, East Sussex, of a lost lifeboat crewed by local fishermen, was so moving that he thought straightaway that it should be dramatised as a musical.**

In November 2011, Darren heard that the church in Rye Harbour was holding its annual memorial service for the seventeen man crew. Although many years after he had originally encountered the story, this memorial service reminded him of the idea that had lain dormant for seventeen years while he worked on other musicals for both school and adult groups. Now head teacher of a primary school in Eastbourne, he invited historical writer and researcher Michelle Pollard, and amateur poet and wordsmith Gaynor Newnham, both of them on the school staff, to collaborate on the piece.

Then followed a great deal of research: talking to relatives and members of the Rye Harbour community, examining census records, old documents and magazines, as well as visiting the Harbour and the boathouse itself to understand the mammoth feat undertaken by the men, running from the village to the boat before launching it in the most difficult of circumstances.

The writers felt great responsibility to the real people they had written about and wanted to

emphasise the individual characters in order to do them all justice. Although an extremely sad story, all three wanted to convey the courage and camaraderie between the characters, as well as the unity and the fun.

I was able to pass on to the director of the premier of this musical a poem written by my grandfather, Charles Crisford, at the time of the disaster. He was a resident of Hastings and a founder member of the famous Winkle Club (of which Winston Churchill was an honorary member), made up mainly of local fishermen. At the end of the performance, pictures of the lost men were displayed on a screen and the voices of some of their relatives were heard talking about the disaster. I was extremely moved to see my grandfather's poem shown and recited as follows:

## Heroes All

15<sup>th</sup> November 1928

An Old fashioned Town,  
With Old Fashioned Hearts,  
Willing to do or die;  
Such are the men who gave their lives  
From the Old Time Town of Rye.

It was not among the Battle's din,  
Nor goaded on to slay;  
But to save the lives of strangers,  
They met their deaths this day.

All Glory to the Fathers bold,  
And Sons of low degree,  
May England long your praises sing,  
True Sons of Sussex, by the Sea.

The terrible irony of the situation was that after the lifeboat had been launched those on the troubled ship were saved by another vessel. Although the lifeboat from Rye was



Scenes from  
Mary's Boys



recalled because of the terrible storm, the crew were unable to see the signals that had been sent. These brave men are still remembered after 85 years and I do hope that this musical which honours them will be performed to a wider audience.

Further information can be obtained from [www.valliermusic.com](http://www.valliermusic.com) ★

**Brenda Gower,**  
NODA South East Regional Representative



Participants of the  
Hook Players' theatre workshop

## Hook Players' Theatre Workshop a Great Success

Hook Players' recent theatre workshop was held by Sue Sampson (drama teacher, director, actor and choreographer), who led a brilliant day enjoyed immensely by all. The programme was fun packed, informative and extremely well put together and delivered. The exercises and role plays were numerous and opened our eyes to many different aspects of theatre.

Throughout the day, Sue praised the good stage craft shown by individuals and gently encouraged and guided us. Not even the most experienced thespian amongst

us would have left without a number of tips, insights and ideas to take away and use to improve future productions.

It was also an excellent opportunity to meet and interact with members of other amateur dramatic groups who all brought different ideas to the day. It was a wonderful experience which I would heartily recommend to anyone interested in live theatre. ★

**Lesley Morrison**  
Chairman, Hook Players



# regionalroundup

## South West

### Sherborne's Shakespearean Success

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**The Amateur Players of Sherborne are one of 90 groups selected to take part in the RSC's Open Stages project. Jim Reville tells us all about it.**

The Amateur Players of Sherborne have been selected to perform Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as part of the Royal Shakespeare Company's (RSC) Open Stages project. The play will be performed at Digby Hall, Sherborne, in April 2014. Taking part will be members of the company together with a group of young people from the town.

The Players are very excited to have been chosen as one of 90 groups from across the UK to participate in this venture, which aims to develop the skills of amateur theatre companies presenting the works of Shakespeare.

John Crabtree, the play's director, chose the comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor* because it is Shakespeare's only play set in middle-class England. Setting the production in modern times, Crabtree aims to make it more relevant to the inhabitants and way of life of a small market town like Sherborne. Many of Shakespeare's characters will be recognisable in the Sherborne community and it is hoped that the contemporary setting will help to underline the similarities.

One of the key aims of the production is to be a community-based project, working with local charity RendezVous, which supports young people in the town. Also involved will be sixth formers from Sherborne's Gryphon School. Together with the Players, both groups will provide

actors, musicians, technical support and stage management, as well as arts and craft work.

Sylvie Lord, who is coordinating youth involvement, emphasises that the objective is to work alongside young people, and to introduce them and encourage them in all aspects of theatre making. All members of the groups will have access to training, mentoring, feedback and support provided by The Nuffield Theatre, Southampton, which is the professional partner for Open Stages in the South West.

For further information, please contact John Crabtree on 01935 814 720 or email jcrabbers@aol.com. You can also contact Sylvie Lord on 07875 127 032 or by emailing sylvielord27@googlemail.com. ★

#### NODA South West Youth Musical Theatre Day, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2014

After the success of the *Wicked* workshop in July 2013, the next NODA South West Youth Musical Theatre Day will be on **23<sup>rd</sup> February 2014** at the **Octagon Theatre, Yeovil**, and this time the show will be *Matilda*.

Some great achievements were made in the last workshop and the atmosphere was really fun. To find out more or to sign up, please contact Trudy Dyke via email at [trudy.dyke@noda.org.uk](mailto:trudy.dyke@noda.org.uk).

#### NODA South West Show Reports

NODA South West compiles their posted society show reports into two electronic publications per year. These are sent out throughout the region by your regional representatives and your society secretaries.

If you haven't received a copy recently, then please contact your society or regional representative, or get in touch with the South West Regional Editor Matthew Heaton at [matthew.heaton@noda.org.uk](mailto:matthew.heaton@noda.org.uk).

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# National Conference at Peebles

Graham Liverton



**Graham Liverton, the South West's representative at this year's National Conference, gives us his report.**

Peebles Hydro Hotel is to be congratulated on looking after the delegates at this year's National AGM so well. The food was wonderful and the accommodation splendid, in lovely grounds and surrounded by fantastic views. Oh and of course, the conference was a great success too.

On the Friday I attended a meeting for regional representatives which covered a range of issues, including the website, business cards and advertising. On Saturday morning there was a trip to the Cocoa Black chocolate factory and Saturday

afternoon's AGM started promptly at 2pm. New President Mr Bert Lumsden (Scotland) was elected, along with Mr John W. Barnes (South East) as Vice President.

The evening brought the sumptuous banquet in the dining room, with the top table piped in by the bagpipes in true Scottish fashion, which was a really lovely touch. This was all followed by The Grand March in the Ballroom and a wonderful cabaret by Johnstone Phoenix Theatre Group.

It was a great weekend; my only complaint was that we did not have long enough in wonderful Scotland. ★



Willow Tree's company for 'The Slipper and the Rose'. Courtesy of Jo Wilson-Hunt

## The Willow Tree Theatre Company Hits the News Twice!

**Jo Wilson-Hunt tells us how the society's profile has been raised through their recent production of NODA's *The Slipper and the Rose*.**

The Willow Tree Theatre Company in Tiverton was founded by Irene Holland, its current President, who was also principal of the local Willow Tree Centre of Dance and Performing Arts. The aim in establishing the company was to accommodate the growing need for locals to gain good quality performing experience and also to benefit the dance centre, which had for many years provided opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to dance, sing and act.

Willow Tree recently gained some local publicity through its search to cast the role of the dog for its December 2013 production of *The Slipper and the Rose*, a musical twist on the classic Cinderella story. Twelve dogs of all shapes and sizes came to audition, ranging from Collies to Jack Russells, but a West Highland white terrier known as Buddy was selected following the auditions, in which the pooches had to perform a range of tasks including sitting and climbing into a basket.

The society also hit the spotlight through its desire to support the Families for Children charity. During the production run, on the Wednesday night £1 of every ticket bought went to the charity. Star of television and stage Caroline Quentin, whose son is a member of Willow Tree, is one of the charity's patrons and kindly agreed to give her time to support the company's fundraising venture this year.

May Willow Tree continue to hit the news throughout 2014! ★

## Don't Miss the 2014 NODA South West Awards Gala

**Ian Goodenough tells us all about it.**

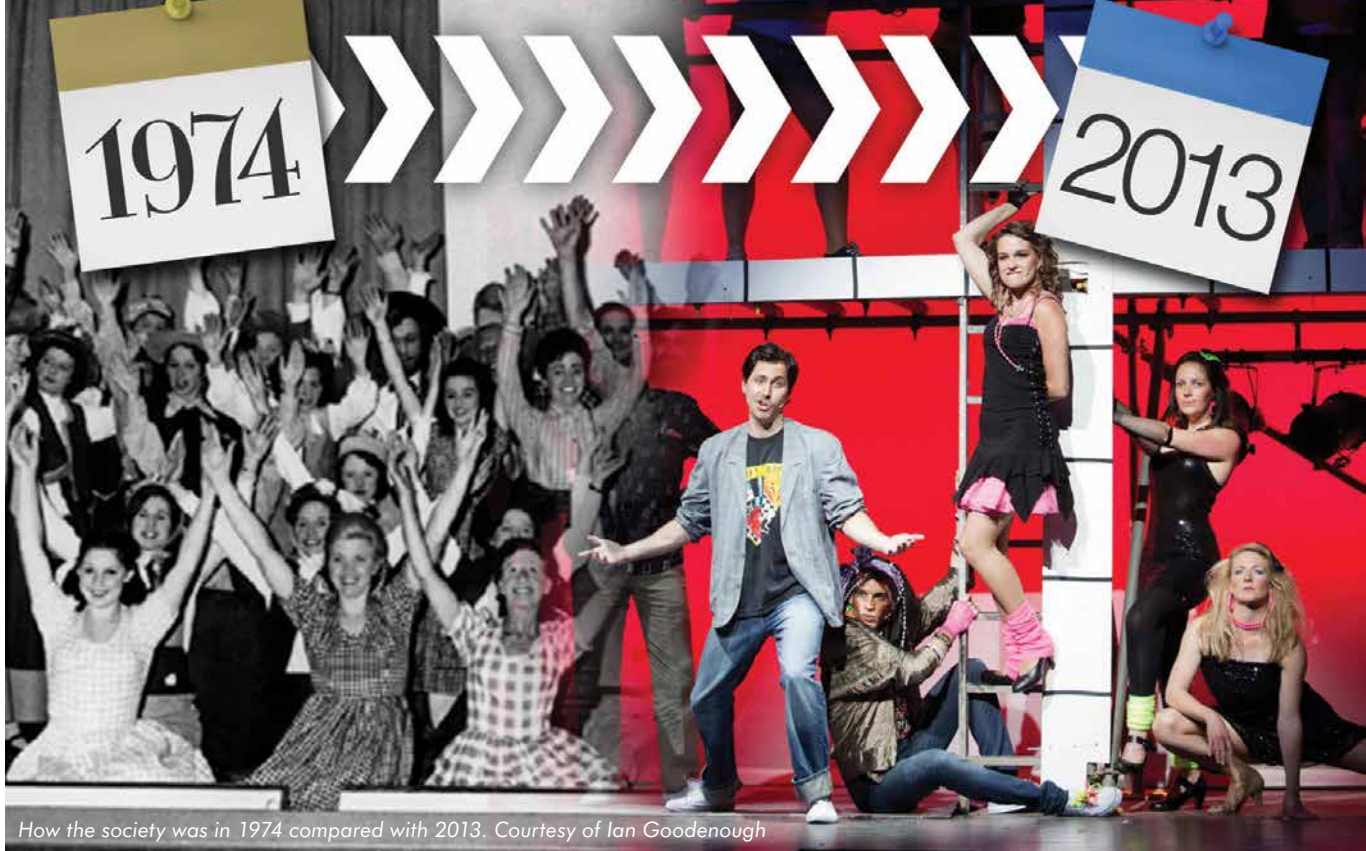
After the huge success of the 2013 NODA South West Awards Gala at the Thistle in Cheltenham, we were spurred on to make 2014's ceremony an even grander affair. So to that end we're hosting the next gala on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014 at the St. Mellion International Resort, and it's shaping up to be a fantastic night to celebrate everything that is great about amateur theatre in the South West.

As the St. Mellion resort is so beautiful, many of you are already fancying the idea of staying a little longer and making a long weekend of it. So for those of you who are wondering why, here's a little run-down on the resort.

St. Mellion is not just a wonderfully designed hotel nestled in 450 acres of stunning Cornish countryside, it's also a top-rated golf course with a fully equipped health and fitness club. Then there's the cuisine; our gala evening meal will be created by first-class chefs, but if you're staying longer there's also two main restaurants with separate bars and lounges that provide simple snacks and fine dining.

If you'd like more information, take a look at their website: [www.st-mellion.co.uk](http://www.st-mellion.co.uk)

**Dinner tickets will be £40, including a drink on arrival and technical wizardry, and rooms are £90. Bookings can be made through South West Councillor Nick Lawrence on 01404 758 463 or by emailing [nick.lawrence@noda.org.uk](mailto:nick.lawrence@noda.org.uk). ★**



How the society was in 1974 compared with 2013. Courtesy of Ian Goodenough

# Do You Dare to Change?

**Changing a society's name can be a controversial topic. Atlantic Coast Theatre (ACT) talks us through the decision to change their name four years ago and the effect it's had.**

On the subject of changing a society's name there are often two distinct camps: one staunchly clinging to the heritage of the society and the other looking at the potential that changes could bring in the future. It was therefore with some trepidation that Branton Productions decided to square up to that very issue in 2009 in an attempt to inject some new life into the society, with a change of name and a change of attitude.

## Why the need for change?

In 2009, Branton Productions had a reputation for small-scale musical and play productions, having migrated from the smaller town of Branton to the larger town of Barnstaple many years before. Although initially successful, by moving into an area populated by far larger societies with longer pedigrees, Branton began to find that casting was tricky and that its voice was becoming lost amongst the others, particularly when staging shows of the same genre.

In addition, the committee was made up of people who were all key parts of the production. As such, each committee meeting was focused solely on the development of the production in hand and did not address topics such as society welfare, social events, fundraising, marketing and communication. A dwindling bank balance was also a constant worry, indicating an uphill struggle ahead.

## The plan

Drawing heavily on NODA's online resources, the committee put together a proposal. At the next AGM the membership was presented with a plan to completely restructure and rework the way the society operated, along with a vote to change the name from a shortlist recommended by the company.

The constitution was rewritten from scratch. The committee was also restructured to include specific roles and responsibilities for all the new members, backed up by a job description. The production team also got a shakeup by separating them from the committee, so that there would be equal focus on the shows and the development of the society.

But it didn't stop there. In order to differentiate themselves from other local societies, Branton committed to tackle new shows and leave behind the 'old faithful' productions that were being put on by others.

The structural changes swept in and Atlantic Coast Theatre was chosen as the society's new name, based on their location and the acronym ACT. The first show would be new musical *Footloose*, in keeping with the new brand they were trying to be, but ACT was concerned whether tickets for a new show would sell in such a traditional area. All of this was a big risk for the society, but it was agreed that they could either take the risk or slowly begin to lose their way.

## So, did it work?

The answer is a resounding yes. Since 2009, ACT has shown itself to be a daring and

exciting society, committed to its new brand. Since *Footloose*, the society has staged *The Producers*, *Acorn Antiques* and *The Wedding Singer*, as well as touring versions of *BlackAdder* and *The Vicar of Dibley*. They have also found that they are encouraging new and often younger members to join because of the fresh outlook, as well as a younger (and very excitable) audience, including hen parties!

With the new committee structure freeing up more time to focus on general society business, internal communication with members became more consistent and communication with the general public became stronger, with a better website, newsletters and social networking. Focus also turned to fundraising, with more events being organised. There was a hugely successful auction of promises, with big scale donations and a massive sponsored event, as nine ACT members and supporters climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, splitting donations in half between ACT and other causes.

Financially, the society has never been healthier and the buzz it has been creating continues to excite new and old members alike. Some of the shows were never going to be money-makers, but ACT doesn't just want to do shows they know will sell, but things their members will love too.

Changing the society name and structure was a dramatic and risky decision that ultimately has not only saved the society, but thrust it into a stronger position. To find out more, contact Atlantic Coast Theatre online at [www.atlanticcoasttheatre.co.uk](http://www.atlanticcoasttheatre.co.uk). ★



# Put on the perfect pantomime with NODA\*



'Pinocchio' by Larbert Amateur Operatic Society

**If your society is thinking about performing a pantomime this year, look no further than NODA. We offer over 150 pantomime scripts by well known authors such as Stephen Duckham, Bradford & Webster, Peter Denyer, John Morley, David Swan, Marsden & Rundle and Leonard Caddy, amongst many others.**

In addition to the huge range of pantomime scripts available, NODA also offers unrivalled experience in the pantomime sector and can guide you through the licence application process, as well as supplying your scripts in good time for rehearsals. We also provide a personal, friendly and efficient service, and the many repeat customers we have year on year is testament to this.

To make your choice from NODA's great pantomime selection, which is regularly updated with popular authors both past and present, go to [www.noda.org.uk/pantos](http://www.noda.org.uk/pantos). Here you will find all the information on NODA pantomimes that you need, including royalty rates, and our online application form, which you can use to order your society's pantomime scripts.

If your society is undecided about which pantomime they want to put on, try NODA's perusal scripts, which can also be found on the 'panto' page of the NODA website. NODA offers a wide selection of perusal scripts that can be downloaded and printed off at your leisure, making it easier for your

society to choose their perfect pantomime.

The perusal scripts contain reduced content, but provide enough of the script to give you a flavour for the pantomime and to decide whether it's right for your society. Alternatively, for a very small charge, you can hire a number of scripts postage free for one month, allowing you to evaluate at leisure what your society's next production might be.

Ordering pantomime scripts from NODA couldn't be simpler: you can pick up the phone and call 01733 374 790 for our friendly and efficient service, or visit our website at [www.noda.org.uk/pantos](http://www.noda.org.uk/pantos) and



'Dick Whittington' by HEOS Musical Theatre

Downfield Musical Society, Dundee



enjoy peace of mind by ordering through our secure online application form. Whichever method you choose, we aim to provide top quality customer service at all times.

So, for the perfect panto production, look no further than NODA and make your show the talk of the town! ★



Ponteland Repertory Society, courtesy of POSS Productions

\*Oh yes you will!



# regionalroundup

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### Councillor's Comments

Christmas is now well and truly over, with some pantos having been and some still to come.

Now is the time for regional representatives to assess all the shows they have seen throughout 2013 and decide who to nominate for NODA awards. They will be allowed up to five nominations per award.

The year 2014 will see some changes in the NODA awards structure, as both regional and district levels will now include an award for Best Drama. Also, in each district there will be an Achievement Award, for which societies can submit nominations to their district representatives. This award is not necessarily for a performer but is for anyone who has made a significant contribution to the life of their society.

The 2013 awards will be presented at a ceremony to be held on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2014

at the Three Counties Hotel, Hereford, which will be attended by NODA President Robert Lumsden. A change next year to our conference is that the Annual General Meeting will be held at 2.30pm on the Saturday.

I do hope that you will all try to attend this exciting event and meet people from all over Wales and Ireland who share the same common interest.

Please remember that I and all the regional representatives are here to help you with any problems you may encounter throughout the forthcoming year.

Good luck with all your shows.

Pob Hwyl,

**Brian Sullivan**  
Councillor, NODA Wales and Ireland

## Come and Join a Musical Theatre Workshop in Districts 1 and 1a

This is an invitation for societies to spend the day with like-minded people aged 17 and over who wish to extend their experience of musical theatre. The workshop will be open to a maximum of 45 applicants on a first come, first served basis. There will be a nominal charge of £5 per person.

The workshop will be held on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2014, 10am - 4pm, at Rhyl and District MTC Operatic Centre, 114 Vale Road, Rhyl, LL18 2PD. The tutor will be Luke Spencer.

This is an opportunity not to be missed and application forms with further details will be sent out to societies early in the New Year.

**Lyn Emmerson**  
Regional Representative, NODA Wales and Ireland District 1

## Welcome to NODA

Wales and Ireland welcome the following members to the region.

District 1  
**Michael and Barbara Ward** – Anglesey  
**All For Someone Else (ALFS)** – Rhyl

District 3  
**VIG Theatre Company** – Abergavenny

District 4  
**Suzanne Scale Performing Arts School** – Cardiff

District 5  
**Bishop Vaughan RC School** – Swansea  
**Stars Musical Theatre Group** – Swansea



# Seventy Years Young: Maesteg Opera's Platinum Anniversary

To celebrate Maesteg Amateur Operatic Society's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the society has produced a booklet which tells the story of its history through the words of those involved over the years. A number of tales concern President D. Cynwyd Thomas, who has been with the society since the beginning, including his actions in the blackout of 1943, his appearance in countless shows and his staunch support of the present players.

The society owes its success to the fun, love of music and above all friendship that has remained constant since 1943. The Opera, as it is known, is at the heart of the community, and society members and audiences are both proud of its history and excited to look forward to many more years of fine entertainment.

Our present production of *Jekyll and Hyde* relies on the considerable talent of three young members: Neil Parker (Jekyll), Kelly Ann Allen (Lucy) and Rhian Hughes (Emma). The show is a special challenge; however, as a society that aimed to raise morale in wartime, they are used to challenges.



*A scene from rehearsals for Maesteg's present production of 'Jekyll and Hyde'*

## Get your anniversary booklet today!

The Maesteg Opera 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary booklet is available from the website at [www.maestegopera.co.uk](http://www.maestegopera.co.uk). Go to the 'Contact Us' page and leave a message in the space provided to request one. Each booklet costs £2 and contains a collection of comments from players and audience members about many aspects of the society's life. The booklet conveys the spirit of the society rather than a list of historical facts. ★

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# Swansea Workshop Proves It's Never Too Late to Learn

**Following a very successful youth workshop in Criccieth, North Wales, the Wales and Ireland region held a workshop for adults on Sunday 8th September 2013, which proved to be extremely successful.**

The workshop, which was held in Swansea, was led by Luke Spencer, NODA Regional Representative for District 5, and covered breathing, voice production, using the voice healthily, harmonising and movement. Luke, who studied Voice and Opera at the Northern College of Music, was a great hit with those who attended, drawing excellent responses.

The success of the whole event is evident in the praise it received by those who attended. Julia Hallinan, Chair of Radyr Parish Music Group, thought that it was "absolutely terrific" and that "the tutor was superb." Echoing these thoughts, Debbie Scott of Blackwood AOS said: "It was different and great fun! It was good to learn new things and everyone was sociable." Leanne A'Gea of Llandaff Musical Society summarised the workshop well, adding: "It was a fantastic workshop. It was lovely to spend time with like-minded people, learning new skills and refreshing rusty ones. There were lots of exercises and hints to take back to our society."



*Workshop participants being put through their paces*

The Wales and Ireland committee thank Swansea Amateur Operatic Society for providing the venue free of charge.

Much thought is being given to providing similar workshops in other districts. Watch this space! ★

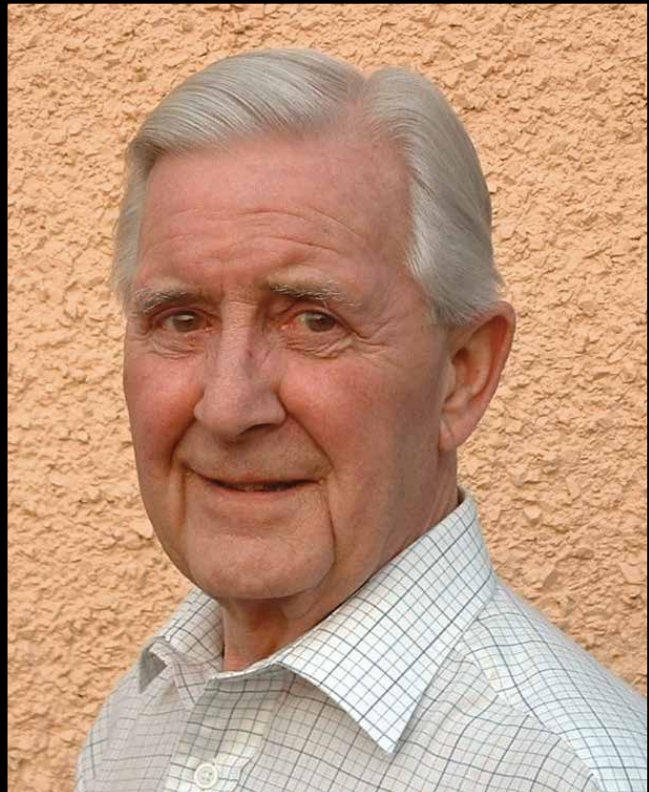
# Loss of a Legend

**The Wales and Ireland region has lost one of its much loved members, Frank Wooles, who was a regional representative for 55 years; a remarkable achievement!**

Frank, who retired as a NODA rep one year ago, was 81 years of age and had been in hospital for a month. Frank was a true gentleman, full of charm and impish humour, and was much loved by the societies in his care.

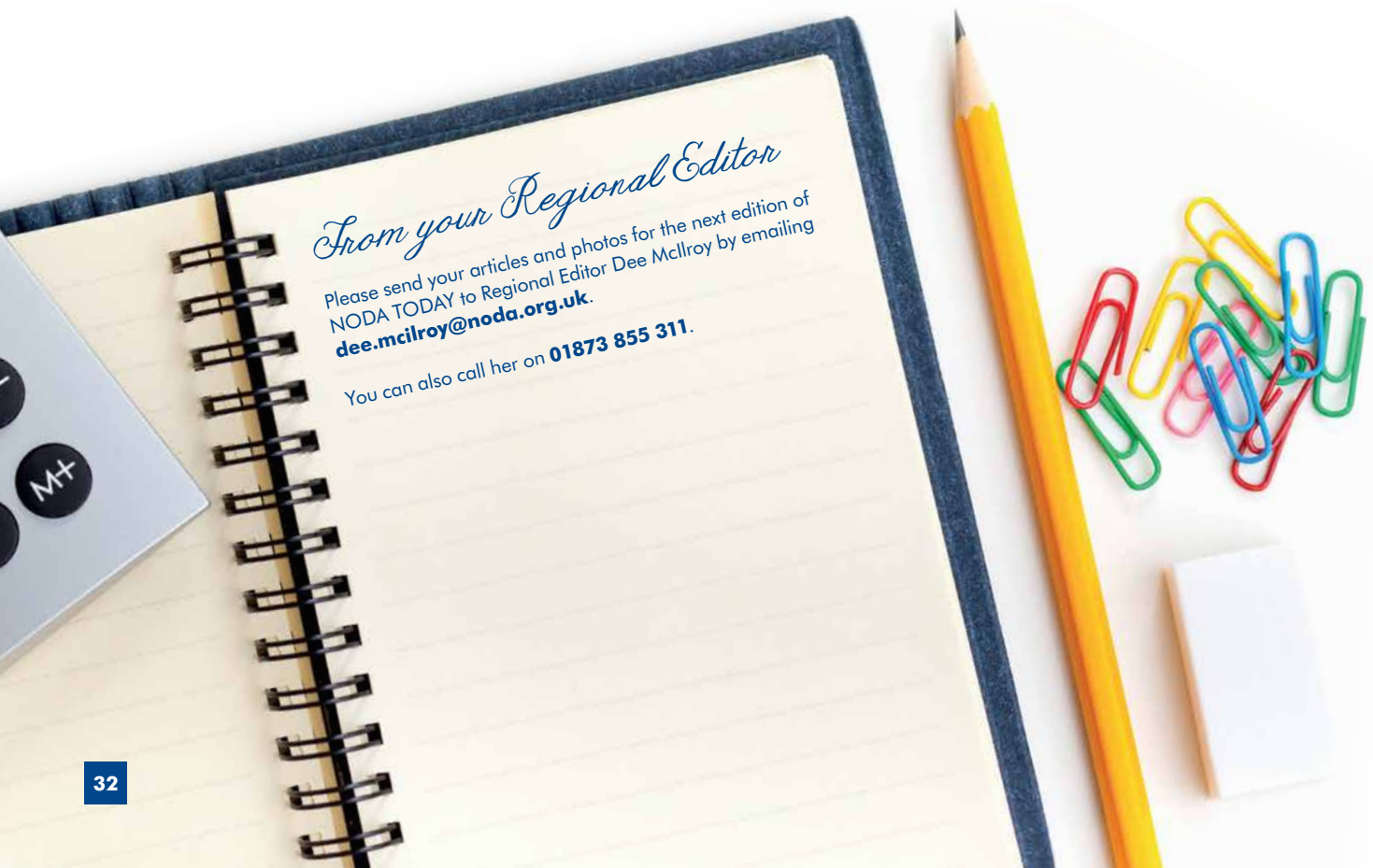
Originally from Swansea, he first took to the stage as a young boy appearing in *HMS Pinafore* with the Pantygydr Church Youth Club, stealing the reviews. He then moved to Cardiff, where he appeared with a range of societies, and after National Service he returned to the stage to create a range of memorable roles.

He later became director of Penarth AOS, and when the Orbit Theatre Company was formed he became its director, bringing many magical musicals to the capital city. Who can ever forget his memorable productions of *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Hello Dolly*, *Camelot* and *The King and I*? The latter production played an important part in Frank's life because it was where he met his beloved Netta, who choreographed his productions. Bearing this in mind, it was appropriate that at his funeral service his body was carried into the chapel to the strains of 'The March



of the Siamese Children'. The service was a fitting tribute to this delightful man, with Sally Kingsbury singing an aria from *Tosca*, and concluded with 'There's No Business Like Show Business', a fitting tribute to Frank's passion in life.

Frank leaves behind his widow Netta and sons Hugh and Guy, with Guy continuing the NODA connection by becoming Web Manager for the Wales and Ireland region. ★



*From your Regional Editor*  
Please send your articles and photos for the next edition of  
NODA TODAY to Regional Editor Dee McIlroy by emailing  
[dee.mcilroy@noda.org.uk](mailto:dee.mcilroy@noda.org.uk).  
You can also call her on 01873 855 311.



# New Year, New Committee?

## Steps to reviewing your insurance

The New Year is traditionally a time for change. For some societies, this means a new committee. This might be an entirely new line up, one or two new faces or, at the least, a renewed commitment by existing committee members.

One job for the new committee will be to ensure that their insurance protection is sufficient. When reviewing your insurance, bearing the following tips in mind will help you through the process.

### 1) Make sure insurers have the right point of contact

When committees change, many things will be passed from the exiting committee to the new committee. It's important that your insurers are aware of the correct point of contact so no important documents are missed.

### 2) Review your calendar of productions / performances

It's important to take note of when your performances are throughout the year. These are the times you are most likely to need to increase elements of your policy for short periods. Don't let insurance be an afterthought.

### 3) Check your members are covered

When it comes to covering all your members it's important that you give insurers an accurate number. This means everyone will be covered for personal accident. This figure should be the maximum you will have at any one time, so it's important to include those who help out during productions too.

### 4) Check you have sufficient cover for property and money

Should the unthinkable happen in the lead up to a show and your property is lost, damaged or stolen, the last thing you would want to find out is that you are underinsured. Make sure your property cover is sufficient for all that your society owns. During the period of your performances, you may need to increase elements of your policy to incorporate property that you have hired.

Ensuring that you have sufficient cover for your society's money is also important. Take time to check that arrangements for the safe and secure storage of takings at venues, in transit and at committee members' homes comply with your policy.

### 5) Check your abandonment cover

This is an important element of cover to have. In essence it will pay out should you be unable to go ahead with an arranged performance. The policy wording will explain what situations are covered but it's important to insure the full costs of your events. Cover for loss of anticipated ticket sales is excluded, along with postponement of any open air performance due to bad weather.

### 6) Review your liabilities

Good policies will come with employers' and public liability as standard. In the context of amateur theatre, employers' liability will cover your society should a volunteer be injured and the society is found to be negligent. Public liability cover is regularly requested by third parties, for example when you are hiring props. It covers you against claims from members of the public and third parties. Our policy offers cover of £10,000,000 and £5,000,000, respectively.

### 7) Do you need buildings insurance?

If your society owns its own theatre or rehearsal space, you may need to insure the buildings. This can usually be incorporated into most society insurance policies.

### 8) Indemnify your committee

Your committee works hard to ensure everything is in order within your society. With the best will in the world, mistakes do happen. Sadly not everyone accepts apologies. Arranging indemnity insurance for your committee means that should someone be personally pursued for an honest mistake they've made, a legal defence will be provided to help them argue their case. This will almost always need to be arranged separately from your society insurance. With the NODA Insurance Trustees' & Officers' Indemnity policy, past, present and future committee members are also covered.

It's important not to choose insurance based just on price. Just because one insurance policy is labelled the same as another, doesn't mean they offer the same cover. With the amount of time and effort your members put into the society, it would be a shame if things weren't properly insured.

This year we would encourage you to review your insurance requirements and ensure your society and committee are properly protected. Should your society have any queries regarding your policy with NODA Insurance or if you would like to discuss setting up a policy, simply contact us on 0845 130 1368 or visit [www.nodainsurance.co.uk](http://www.nodainsurance.co.uk).

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*noda*  
**INSURANCE**  
Protecting Amateur Theatre

# regionalroundup

## West Midlands



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## Councillor's Comments

I was wondering where the inspiration for my notes would come from when I received a series of press releases. The first was from

Shrewsbury Amateur Operatic Society,

which has the distinction of presenting their shows in the fabulous Theatre Severn in Shrewsbury. To begin with, the society has successfully recruited as President Mary Ann Ritchley, the wife of a former Mayor, which is a great help in engaging with the wider community. They then recruited 40 children from across the county of Shropshire to take part in *Fiddler on the Roof*, which will be performed in April 2014 and will be led by Lynn Hunt-Carib. Not to be left out is Musical Director Alaister Carib, who will put the company through their musical paces whilst he recovers from an ankle replacement: a new twist on 'break a leg'!

Meanwhile, Great Witley Operatic Society, renowned locally for its G&S performances, went off to *Oklahoma!* and brought in new blood for the performance (pictured right). They seem to have successfully gained new members by enhancing the opportunities available and providing the chance to experience new genres. They have also successfully raised funds through their summer concerts, after-dinner charity cabarets and by joining in with Worcester's Victorian Market, all in readiness for *Yeoman of the Guard* in April at the Swan Theatre, which is on the banks of the River Severn.

On the River Avon stands Pershore, where Pershore Operatic and Dramatic Society perform. This year they are celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a celebration made sweeter by the fact that society founders Judy and Stuart Megarry were invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace in recognition of their contribution to the arts in Pershore. ★

**Michael Hastilow**

Councillor, NODA West Midlands



Judy and Stuart  
Megarry outside  
Buckingham Palace

## A Century of Service to Amateur Theatre

Four members of an operatic society with more than a century of service to the amateur stage have been presented with their NODA medals.

They are Lynn Hunt-Carib, Helen Bryant, Jane Ellis and Gillian Keates (pictured right), all members of Shrewsbury Amateur Operatic Society, who had either badges or bars presented to them by Kay Ikin, NODA Regional Representative for the area.

Lynn has a total of 43 years of service (three bars), Helen has 40 years (three bars), Jane has 20 years

(one badge) and Gillian has 15 years (one badge).

Kay Ikin, who attended a society rehearsal, said: "Congratulations to everyone with their bars and badges. Wherever you are with your NODA badge, people will recognise it and speak to you."

The society's next show is *Fiddler on the Roof*, which will be performed at Theatre Severn from 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2014. Tickets are available from the Box Office on 01743 281 281 or by emailing [mail@theatresevern.co.uk](mailto:mail@theatresevern.co.uk).



# Still Going Strong Fifty Years On

The year 2013 saw the fiftieth anniversary of Walsall Gilbert and Sullivan Society, and they decided to celebrate the occasion by repeating their original productions of *Trial by Jury* and *Pirates of Penzance* in February.

The second part of the celebration came in September, with a concert of items from each show the society had performed since its formation. Both parts of the celebration were staged at the society's home, the Forest Arts Centre in Walsall.

During the celebratory concert, the sell-out audience sat at round tables while scenes from the operettas were projected onto a large screen behind the performers, who wore a variety of Gilbertian costumes and sang items from their own operettas and those of others.

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of a small cut-glass bowl to founder member Dyls Bradshaw, who has been involved in every Walsall G&S production, either as principal, chorus member or producer.

Dyls was somewhat unsure about G&S when she first went with her father to see *Trial and Pirates*, but she soon began to enjoy it. Her first principal role was in *Sorcerer*, when she had difficulty both singing and acting at the same time, a problem she has now overcome. Dyls prefers to play the part of 'mature' ladies in both G&S and amateur dramatics, as she considers them to have better roles.

At the ceremony Dyls was also presented with her NODA fifty year gold bar and certificate by Chairman Ken Rhodes, and other awards were given to society members Pam Robinson and Jill Rhodes. ★



GWOS perform 'Oklahoma!'.  
Photo courtesy of Peter Willis



Helen Bryant,  
Gillian Keates, Kay  
Ikin, Jane Ellis and  
Lynn Hunt-Carib

## Obituary

**Martin Jones**

1<sup>st</sup> September 1954 to  
12<sup>th</sup> September 2012

It is with great sadness that I report the death of Martin Jones at the early age of 58 years old. Martin was a member of both Great Witley Operatic Society (GWOS) and Vocal Score, and the two groups combined to perform a showcase tribute in his honour on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster.



Martin was a man of astonishing versatility. He sang choral tenor, took principal tenor roles and more recently comic light baritone roles. He was a consummate performer of roles amongst the most wordy in the Gilbert & Sullivan canon and was always polished, with impeccable timing.

For many years he directed GWOS's summer charity concerts, choosing, arranging, rehearsing and conducting interesting and demanding programmes that benefited both the society and the charities for which they performed. Martin was also a long standing member of close harmony Worcester group Vocal Score, formed in 1988 to entertain at fundraising events.

The full concert programme contained four pieces melodiously arranged by Martin and ended with a combined society fifteen minute stunning medley from *Les Misérables*, which received a standing ovation. He is very much missed. ★

**Trevor Guest**

Regional Representative, NODA West Midlands District 10

# A Crisis Averted - Scene Two

## Setting:

In this scene the defendant is being cross examined for violating the Health and Safety Act 1974.

## Characters:

Defendant: You

Your Solicitor: NODA Insurance

Prosecutor: Representative from the Health and Safety Executive

## Act 1:

Prosecutor: And did you complete the full risk assessment taking into account all eventualities?

Defendant: I believe I did, I completed the form to the best of my ability and I am sorry that someone has been injured. I thought I had everything covered.

Prosecutor: *Turn to face the Judge*

Your Honour. It's clear there has been a breach of Health and Safety in this case. Although the defendant appears an honest person, this should not stand in the way of seeing justice for our client.

Your Solicitor: *Turn to face the Judge*

Your Honour. Our client made every effort to ensure the safety of the actors. This event is purely an accident and not the fault of the defendants. Everything was in order.

A situation like this is stressful enough, without having to worry about the cost of proving your innocence.

Fortunately, NODA Insurance Trustees and Officers' Insurance is there to hold the hand of your committee members. This makes doing the job you've volunteered to do that bit easier.

Call NODA Insurance today for your quote on 0845 130 1366, or get your quote online.



[www.nodainsurance.co.uk](http://www.nodainsurance.co.uk)

Society Insurance - Trustees & Officers Indemnity - Home Insurance

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