

# TODAY

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# noda headoffice

## National Operatic and Dramatic Association

15 The Metro Centre  
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Tel: +44 (0) 1733 374 790  
Email: [info@noda.org.uk](mailto:info@noda.org.uk)  
Web: [www.noda.org.uk](http://www.noda.org.uk)

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(NODA Membership Services)  
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## Design and Production

warwickprint  
[enquiries@warwickprint.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@warwickprint.co.uk)

## Editor

Janine Graeme  
[janine.graeme@noda.org.uk](mailto:janine.graeme@noda.org.uk)  
Assisted by Tony Harris

## Head Office Staff

### Dale Freeman

Chief Operating Officer  
[dale@noda.org.uk](mailto:dale@noda.org.uk)

### Craig Allison

Finance Manager  
[craig@noda.org.uk](mailto:craig@noda.org.uk)

### Beverly Clarke

Administrative Support  
[beverly@noda.org.uk](mailto:beverly@noda.org.uk)

### Rebecca Owen-Fisher

Marketing & Publishing  
Executive  
[becky@noda.org.uk](mailto:becky@noda.org.uk)

### Richard Hutchinson

Membership Services  
[richard@noda.org.uk](mailto:richard@noda.org.uk)

### General Membership Enquiries

[info@noda.org.uk](mailto:info@noda.org.uk)  
01733 374790

08/17

# headoffice



By the time you are reading this edition, our NODA Theatre Summer School at Yarnfield Park Conference Centre will

have taken place. I trust all those who attended enjoyed the whole experience and in particular the course studied. NODA Today is always pleased to receive reports on the experience of attending Summer School, especially from those who have attended for the first time. So, do let us know of your experience, be it good or bad. Hopefully nothing bad, but if we are made aware of any shortcomings we can take steps to try and ensure they don't happen next year.

At NODA HQ, we welcome two new members of staff; Rebecca Owen-Fisher as Marketing & Publicity Manager and Craig Allison as Finance Manager. Beverly Clarke is providing Admin Support to the Trustees and continues with her role dealing with Summer School.

Someone mentioned to me recently that they had been to see a member society production at which it had been "signed" for deaf patrons. This got me thinking about what societies do to ensure deaf or visually impaired persons can enjoy a production equally as other members of the audience.

For the deaf patron they can normally be catered for by having someone who is a qualified BSL interpreter, trained and competent for performance interpreting, even if it is only for one performance.

## Council

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[john.barnes@noda.org.uk](mailto:john.barnes@noda.org.uk)

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[michael.hastilow@noda.org.uk](mailto:michael.hastilow@noda.org.uk)

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**Chris Ingram**

[chris.ingram@noda.org.uk](mailto:chris.ingram@noda.org.uk)

NODA East

**Don McKay**

[don.mckay@noda.org.uk](mailto:don.mckay@noda.org.uk)

NODA East Midlands

**Nanette Lovell**

[nanette.lovell@noda.org.uk](mailto:nanette.lovell@noda.org.uk)

How about visually impaired? Audio Description is the usual way and there are companies and individuals out there who provide this service, with equipment that can run audio description as well as act as hearing support; a trained audio describer is always worthwhile as they can provide touch tours and the various introductions, characters and the audio description.

If your society is one which provides audio described, captioned or signed access, do let us know how this works for your audiences, so it can be shared with our members and encourage them if they don't provide one or more of those services.

All organisations are asked to ensure that persons who are disabled in any way are given the opportunity to participate fully, and I see this as us giving them the facility to enjoy all aspects of the amateur theatre.

**Due to the closure of The Palace Hotel, the AGM and Presidential Gala is now being held on 23 September at City Centre Marriott Hotel, Bristol, BS1 3AD (home to NODA South West Awards Night) when the annual meeting of Regional Representatives is also being held. Please make that extra effort to be there.**

My best wishes for the forthcoming season of pantomimes, plays and musicals.

### John W. Barnes

Interim Chairman  
National Operatic and Dramatic Association

NODA London

**Jacquie Stedman**

[jacquie.stedman@noda.org.uk](mailto:jacquie.stedman@noda.org.uk)

NODA North

**Gordon Richardson**

[gordon.richardson@noda.org.uk](mailto:gordon.richardson@noda.org.uk)

NODA North East

**David Streeter**

[david.streeter@noda.org.uk](mailto:david.streeter@noda.org.uk)

NODA North West

**Christine Hunter Hughes**

[christine.hunter@noda.org.uk](mailto:christine.hunter@noda.org.uk)

NODA Scotland

(Acting Councillor)

**T. Davies Brock**

[davies.brock@noda.org.uk](mailto:davies.brock@noda.org.uk)

NODA South East

**Kay Rowan**

[kay.rowan@noda.org.uk](mailto:kay.rowan@noda.org.uk)

NODA South West

**Nick Lawrence**

[nick.lawrence@noda.org.uk](mailto:nick.lawrence@noda.org.uk)

NODA Wales and Ireland

**Jordan Hill**

[jordan.hill@noda.org.uk](mailto:jordan.hill@noda.org.uk)

NODA West Midlands

**Ian G. Cox**

[ian.cox@noda.org.uk](mailto:ian.cox@noda.org.uk)

Life Members

**John W. Barnes**

[john.barnes@noda.org.uk](mailto:john.barnes@noda.org.uk)

**Robert Lumsden**

[bert.lumsden@noda.org.uk](mailto:bert.lumsden@noda.org.uk)

## NODA Limited

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# Meet the Peterborough team

2016 and 2017 have seen some significant changes within NODA's Peterborough Head Office. Having spoken to many of you at your AGM's, I'd like to introduce you to The Peterborough Head Office Team.



## Dale Freeman – Chief Operating Officer

I am extremely pleased to say that at the beginning of 2017 I was offered the role of Chief Operating Officer, a position I was very proud and pleased to accept. I am now in my tenth year with NODA. Working as Membership Services Manager gave me an invaluable insight into the mechanics of this wonderful organisation and, equally importantly, the needs of you, our members. It has been a real privilege for me to attend some of the regional conferences this year and meet so many of you wonderful people. I look forward to meeting many more of you in the coming years. Please do feel free to call for a chat or drop me an email: [dale@noda.org.uk](mailto:dale@noda.org.uk)

## Beverly Clarke – Administrative Support

Another long standing member of the NODA head office team is Beverly Clarke who has also been with us for over 10 years as Finance Assistant. Beverly has recently taken over the role of Summer School Administrator and those of you attending Summer School this year may well have had some communications with Beverly already. Following a staff restructure, Beverly's new post within NODA is to provide admin support to the Chief Operations Officer, Chairman of NODA, Chairman of NODA Limited, Council and Summer School. Beverly's email address is [beverly@noda.org.uk](mailto:beverly@noda.org.uk)



## Richard Hutchinson – Membership Services

has taken over Antonia's role (minus the Summer School Admin). Richard was employed by NODA between 2006 and 2007. We welcome Richard back to the fold in Membership Services. His responsibilities include processing NODA Long Service Awards, Licensing, Pantomimes, New Membership Applications and General Membership Correspondence.. Richard's email address is [richard@noda.org.uk](mailto:richard@noda.org.uk)

## Craig Allison – Finance Manager

will be at the helm of all finance related matters and replaces Sue Cuthbert as Finance Manager. AAT qualified Craig brings with him a wealth of experience in customer related operations including training, customer services and team-working. Craig's email address is [craig@noda.org.uk](mailto:craig@noda.org.uk)



## Rebecca Owen-Fisher – Marketing and Publishing Executive

comes to us with a wealth of experience in theatre, working in local community arts as a performer, writer, contributor and participant in events, shows and artistic laboratories. Rebecca works closely with Lamphouse Theatre as a writer, playwright and performer. Rebecca's email address is [becky@noda.org.uk](mailto:becky@noda.org.uk)

This brings our complement of Head Office staff to five. This year at the Peterborough Head Office we are looking to reconfigure our offices to accommodate a boardroom for our Trustees and other official meetings. This will save outsourcing space, for which the costs are becoming increasingly expensive, and bring it in-house once again.

The streamlining of procedures and systems plus the embracing of available technology has enabled us to function far more cost effectively for the Association yet still maintaining that all important 'human element'. More and more of our time is now spent answering emails as this appears to be the preferred method of communication these days. Email communication has increased 100 fold in the past ten years for us. I'm not complaining, but suffice to say we are always happy to converse using the time honoured tradition of the telephone if that is your preferred choice!

We are always keen to hear from our esteemed members so, if you have any concerns or simply just want to run anything past me or anyone of the team, please do not hesitate to make contact. There are many ways now in which you can do so! Telephone: 01733 374790 Email: [dale@noda.org.uk](mailto:dale@noda.org.uk). For general enquiries it is the same number and the email address is [info@noda.org.uk](mailto:info@noda.org.uk). If you have any suggestions or ideas then it is [suggestions@noda.org.uk](mailto:suggestions@noda.org.uk)

Dale Freeman  
COO

## NODA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

With the unexpected closure of the Palace Hotel in Torquay the Annual General Meetings of the Association will now take place on Saturday 23rd September 2017 at The Bristol City Centre Marriott Hotel, Lower Castle Street, Bristol BS1 2AD. The date is unchanged.

**The Final General Meeting of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association, (The Association) Charity No 24640 will be held at 2.30pm.**

The First Annual General Meeting of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association Charitable Incorporated Organisation (NODA CIO) Charity No 1171216 will be held immediately on the conclusion of the first meeting.

The report and the audited accounts of the Association covering the period from 1 January 2016 to 30 April 2017 will be circulated prior to the meeting together with other reports, detailed agendas in accordance with Rule 11(1) of the Constitution.

To meet the requirements of Rule 27d of "The Association" and those of NODA CIO, the particulars of any resolutions required to be laid before the meetings shall be sent to John Barnes, Chairman of Trustees of NODA, 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough, PE2 7UH or by e-mail to [john.barnes@noda.org.uk](mailto:john.barnes@noda.org.uk) to arrive no later than 23rd August 2017.

## Greetings from the Chairman for National Meetings of the Regional Committee Members

A big Thank You is due to the organisers of this year's National Conference as, with very short notice, getting us into The Marriott in Bristol AND also keeping the time in a reduced schedule for the Regional Reps to have a meeting.

This will be for 2 hours at 11.00 am on Saturday morning. Information for our meeting was sent via email, if you have not received your copy, email [info@noda.org.uk](mailto:info@noda.org.uk) and ask them to send you one before the meeting. Please do come and make the efforts to support us worthwhile.

See you there.

**Judith Smith, Chairman for National Meetings of the Regional Representative Committee Members**

## Tragedy in Manchester



Two members associated with NODA Societies died in the terrorist attack on the Manchester Arena on the 22nd May this year.

On behalf of the wider NODA Family our condolences go to both the Families and Societies associated with Kathleen Kiss of Pendle Hippodrome Theatre Company and Chloe Rutherford who had been associated with Newcastle Musical Theatre Company Youth.

May they long be remembered in the applause we hear after each and every performance.



# Presidential Grand Tour 2016-2017

**Time flies and it only seems like yesterday that I was installed as President, an event I shall long remember and treasure. For the first time ever one of our patrons was in attendance. It was a joy to welcome Connie Fisher, there was a Cabaret performed by my own Society WBOS. Along with excellent food provided by the Birmingham Metropole Hilton Hotel, to top this we had in abundance the most important element for any successful event, the good company of friends and fellow NODA members from all corners of the UK.**

I was advised that I was in for a treat with eleven Regional conferences to attend, and shows throughout these isles.

However, it has not worked out quite that simple. To date I have attended 9 conferences, one unfortunately missed due to that age old problem, the diary clash. I still have one to go and Janine and I are very much looking forward to them. The main reason it changed started with the resignation of Fred Piggford on health grounds. It takes some metal to resign and since last September he has reverted to a healthy and far more relaxed person and this move reminded Council that even as volunteers we need to look out for the health and wellbeing of those we place in office. ManCom looked at this and felt many of the responsibilities of the Chairman could be shared among members of the Council, especially taking advantage of the specialities of the individuals represented.

John Barnes stepped up, taking on the Chairman's role, and together we have steered the Association through a re-staffing programme exacerbated when the finance manager and her assistant resigned prior to Christmas. We also steered the Association through the final stages of conversion to a CIO



NODA North Weekend with Janine celebrating St Patricks Day

(Charitable Incorporated Organisation) complete with Constitution and Bye Laws. All these things are "back room" and do not seem relevant to the main activities of the association but are essential for its smooth running as accounting processes seamlessly moved over to the new CIO. None of which could have happened without the other members of Council and our associate company who contributed in this process.

In October I attended the Scotland Conference in Peebles. It was a superbly organised event and gave Janine (my daughter and consort for this year) the first taste of the diversity and enthusiasm of our members outside our own Region, we saw their cabaret and spoke with those involved, we took part in "The Grand March" and then partied into the early hours. Our host Gordon Blackburn was accompanied by his sister Moira. Gordon's influence was everywhere and it was a great personal sadness that we learned of his stroke and subsequent death. He will be hard to replace and we will miss his vast knowledge of Theatre.

The following week was the start of what can be described as an interesting challenge in logistics. In one week, leaving Scotland, I travelled to the South East to visit SOCIETIES in Portsmouth and Burgess Hill before returning to the Midlands for a production in Hereford, then heading back to The North for a matinee on the following day. Whilst there I saw two further shows and, before returning home, I saw three versions of *Oliver*.

I especially look forward to seeing youth in production and can only marvel at some of the routines the youth so spectacularly pull off. Providing we can continue to retain them into adult societies, the outlook for the quality of future productions is assured.

Increasingly I am finding more societies who cater to the wider and more diverse community. One such



NODA South West, Exmouth Players Titfield Thunderbolt



Long Service Awards Side by Side Stourbridge

Society I recently visited was celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday where their Director was also celebrating 20 years of creating their productions, some of which the Society have taken to the Edinburgh Fringe and festivals in Sweden and the Czech Republic. Hearing their pride and that of their audience is testimony to what can be achieved, as with all societies it is the pride we have in our performance that gives a meaning and magic to life and underlines that theatre really is for all. I also attended a signed production, where, in chatting to the audience through an interpreter, I was able to understand their enthusiasm in being able to share the joy of watching and understanding the performance and the company also enjoyed having the extra performer standing at the edge of the acting area. I have yet to experience an audio described theatre performance and perhaps someone will tell me where I can see such a performance.

Subsequently I have been accompanied



On Londonderry's Walls with Sheelagh Hobart, Northern Ireland Rep

by Janine to Conferences in the North at Scotch Corner, the North East in Bridlington, North West in Manchester, East and West Midlands, London, Wales & Ireland in Hereford, the South East at Barnham near Bognor Regis and an awards evening in Bristol for the South West Region. Each conference is different but the underlying enthusiasm for Theatre is very much present and all are keen to advance their art.



NODA West Midlands with Councillor Ian G. Cox



In Conference Mode – North West Conference



Mary Cox receives her 60 Year Diamond Bar, Chester Le Street AOS

I have seen a variety of productions across the UK from a *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* in Londonderry, three *Olivers* mentioned earlier, two *Betty Blue Eyes*, a pair of *A Tales of Two Cities* and a variety of plays, musical and

pantomime offerings in between.

Wherever possible I meet the cast, which is always very motivating for them and myself as it has usually also given me the opportunity to speak to the production's unseen heroes and the back stage crews.

In June, the Association of Irish Musical Societies held their Annual Awards at the Irish NEC in Killarney, to which the NODA President is invited. Such a great weekend with equally enthusiastic members all delighting in the awards they received.



NODA NORTH WEST, Youth Awards



Greetings from Yarnfield



Welcoming new Councillor Jordan Hill to NODA Wales and Ireland

I am looking forward to greeting our students and visitors to our NODA Summer School, held in Yarnfield, Staffordshire in July, and with some students joining us from Switzerland it too becomes quite an international affair where we will be surrounded by enthusiastic thespians and technicians.

I can fairly sum up on my year to date as being one long celebration, filled with people you really want to be with all of whom love their theatre, their craft and their societies. ★



Association of Irish Musical Societies (AIMS) At their awards weekend.

The Best Man



For Senior Youth Groups  
or Young Adult Groups.  
(think 'Fame' set in the UK)



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**Treasurers...** are you losing money on shows that are 'guaranteed' box office hits?

If the titles above convey something to you, then it's quite likely that your audience members will also understand what they're about... so put your audience e-mail list and social media posts to good use and offer them something fresh.

'Oklahoma' and 'Grease' have had their day, choose to delight and challenge your audience with something new.

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SAMUEL FRENCH



Be Inspired by amateur theatre

# roundup



## NODA Youth Advisers

- NODA East  
**Zelda Rolfe**  
zelda.rolfe@noda.org.uk
- NODA East (North)  
**Tina Doyle**  
tina.doyle@noda.org.uk
- NODA East (South)  
**Alexandra Berriman**  
alex.berriman@noda.org.uk
- NODA East Midlands  
**Amanda Hall**  
amanda.hall@noda.org.uk
- NODA London  
**Ann Hertler-Smith**  
ann.hertler-smith@noda.org.uk
- NODA North  
**Michelle Coulson**  
michelle.coulson@noda.org.uk
- NODA North East  
**Joanne Sykes**  
jo.sykes@noda.org.uk
- NODA North West  
**Jenny King**  
jenny.king@noda.org.uk
- NODA Scotland  
**Craig Inglis**  
craig.inglis@noda.org.uk
- NODA South East  
**Jackie Kenyon**  
jackie.kenyon@noda.org.uk
- NODA South West  
**Jack Price**  
jack.price@noda.org.uk
- NODA Wales and Ireland  
**Matt Hampton**  
matt.hampton.noda.org.uk
- NODA West Midlands  
**Vacant**  
Contact: ian.cox@noda.org.uk



Some wonderful work continues to be done by our Young People. All over the country groups are putting together exciting productions. Take a look at our regional pages as youth members and societies feature highly from celebrations for Youth Achievement to being part of the longevity of their societies and on to performances on stage at their regional AGMs.

While we are very proud of their efforts, we must not forget the hard work that the organisers put in to these groups. Having done my stint with our local youngsters,

many years ago now, I know how much time and energy it requires to inspire our young people to achieve the high standards that they do. Thanks to all of you who spend time working with our youngsters.

Don't forget to contact your Regional Youth Advisers and Regional Representatives, they are there to support you. Many regions have a thriving youth scene and established workshop opportunities. Do get in touch with your Adviser to find out more.

**Nick Lawrence** Vice President

## Stage Management

From a young age I have been interested in theatre, becoming lost in the plot and characters. There was always something so intriguing about the mysteries of backstage, who were the people in black swiftly moving the sets? Soon the time came, as it does in every teenager's life, to decide the path which I wished to pursue as a career.

After researching for somewhere to get experience in theatre (with a little persuasion from my mom) I arrived at The Grange Playhouse in July 2016 and I have not looked back. I started as Assistant Stage Manager for a couple of productions before being trusted to become Stage Manager for Rachel Water's 'Bracken Moor.' The Grange gave me the experiences needed to discover that stage management is extremely stressful, very tiring, horrifically nerve racking and the most rewarding thing I have ever done.

The members are so supportive and understanding and I have grown in confidence and made wonderful friends among the frenzy of backstage. My advice to others aspiring to work backstage is to get as much experience as possible. Then if it is too much for you, you can follow other paths and discover what works for you, or, like me, you can realise that it's where you want to be plus it looks great on your CV as an interest and as general work experience.

**West Midlands. Katie, Aged 16**

## Axminster Drama Club Youth

Axminster Drama Club Youth presented a most evocative presentation of Will Russell's "Blood Brothers". Directors Sara Leat and Jack Price had adapted the production to give all the members a chance to contribute. Particularly impressive was to see how the company had learnt from comments made by the GODA adjudicator of the Exmouth One Act Play Festival. The club had entered part of the production as a warm-up to the presentation and had made the most of the recommendations given. The enthusiastic audience at Axminster Guildhall was effusive in its praise for the maturity shown by all the cast in presenting this moving story. The cast are seen on the set of the production during rehearsals in ADC's impressive workshop.

**South West, Jack Price, Youth Adviser and Director.**

The cast on the fire-escape from their workshop/rehearsal space.



## Barnstaple Young Generation

As Vice President I was delighted to visit Barnstaple to present the John Cockram Award for Musical Presentation to Barnstaple Young Generation for their production of "Into the Woods".

The production also received nominations for the Councillor's Cup for Best Youth Production, the Haslemere Award for Visual Excellence and the Best Musical Production Award. The number and variety of nominations paid tribute to the all-round team work that the production enjoyed.

The picture shows some of the cast gathered on the night, along with Director, Jordan Buckingham, holding the award.



Members of BYG with their Director and the John Cockram Award

I was also delighted to hear news of the re-opening of the Queen's Theatre in Barnstaple and the cheers that greeted the curtain rising on the recent production of "Hairspray": the first production in the theatre for some time.

**South West, Nick Lawrence, Vice President.**

## Youth Event Success

For the first time, the North East Region held a Youth Event at its annual Gala Weekend at Bridlington Spa in April. Here, one of the students gives her impressions of the day:

"I'm Helena, I'm 17, and can be described as your typical musical theatre buff. I've been a part of Whitby Area Musical Theatre Company for 10 years now and I, along with other youth members of the company, jumped at the chance to go to the NODA North East Youth Event in Bridlington.

This day included three workshops; dance, drama and singing, all of which were thoroughly enjoyable. Not being a dancer myself, I wasn't sure what to expect from the dance class and although Daniel pushed us to the limit in the advanced class, I loved every second of it (but not the aching the day after!).

I can speak on behalf of my four friends from WAMTC by saying that it was a great laugh and we all loved it. The drama class was also a lot of fun, including improvisation warmup games leading

into a short performance of an improvisation piece. This gave us a chance to meet and get involved with other youth members from theatre societies not too far away.

The singing workshop was brilliant. Being a singer myself I found it very useful as Neil gave us lots of tips, exercises and techniques for breathing. We put this into practice at the end of the class by all singing in a large group.

There is no need to fret if you're not comfortable or confident in either dance, drama or singing, we all have our strong and weak points. Every class is enjoyable and easy to participate in even if you're not the best dancer, a thespian or a singer, that's what the classes are for, to help you improve.

To end the day we were invited to watch a show performed by members of Rotherham's Steps Productions in the Bridlington Spa Theatre. The performance, "From Broadway To Bridlington", was amazing and great to sing and dance along to, packed with songs from the shows.

It was such a pleasure to be able to experience this opportunity and I would like to say a massive thank you to Jo Sykes for making it all happen and looking after us for the day."

**North East, Helena, Aged 17**



Look out for us later in NODA Today!

# regionalroundup East

## OUR NODA EAST CONFERENCE IN PICTURES ... 2017

### East Committee

**Councillor  
Don McKay**  
don.mckay@noda.org.uk

**Membership Secretary  
Julie Petrucci**  
01223 880023  
julie.petrucci@noda.org.uk

**Treasurer  
Tessa Davies**  
01702 525112  
07803167786  
tessa.davies@noda.org.uk

**Web Manager  
June Forway**  
01480 300409  
june.forway@noda.org.uk

**Awards Secretary  
Contact  
don.mckay@noda.org.uk  
for details.**

**Magazine Editor  
Julia Rymer**  
07786 620623  
julia.rymer@noda.org.uk

**Youth Adviser  
Zelda Rolfe**  
01603 408017  
zelda.rolfe@noda.org.uk

**Youth Adviser North  
Tina Doyle**  
01733 2435014  
tina.doyle@noda.org.uk

**Youth Adviser South  
Alexandra Berriman**  
07800 893435  
alex.berriman@noda.org.uk

**Minutes Secretary  
Catherine Dixey**  
01449 676878  
catherine.dixey@noda.org.uk

### East Districts & Representatives

**DISTRICT 1  
Julie Armstrong**  
07801 953643  
julie.armstrong@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 1 ASSISTANT  
Rob Bristow**  
07968 594013  
rob.bristow@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 2  
Richard Fitt**  
01567 652115  
richard.fitt@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 3  
Nova Horley**  
01582 604344  
nova.horley@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 4 N  
Stephen P E Hayter**  
01553 810291  
stephen.hayter@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 4 S  
Julie Petrucci**  
01223 880023  
julie.petrucci@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 4 S ASSISTANT  
DeeDee Dake**  
deed.dake@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 5  
Susan Dupont**  
01603 416638  
susan.dupont@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 6  
Terry Rymer**  
07786 620622  
terry.rymer@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 7  
Decia Ranger**  
01371 874073  
decia.ranger@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 7 ASSISTANT  
Susan Hartwell**  
01371 872657  
susan.hartwell@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 8  
Alexandra Berriman**  
07800 893435  
alex.berriman@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 9  
Vicki Avery**  
01992 441441  
vicki.avery@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 10  
Tessa Davies**  
01702 525112  
tessa.davies@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 11  
Ann Platten**  
01787 374069  
ann.platten@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 12  
Pamela White**  
01449 721467  
pamela.white@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 12  
ASSISTANT  
Linda Grey**  
01449 760567  
linda.grey@noda.org.uk



# Quadrophenia – A First for East Anglia



Caroline Lawrence Photography

After directing the NODA award nominated stage musical *Tommy* by The 1960's group *The Who* Andy Osbourne (pictured) embarked upon a year long negotiation with Pete Townshend's production company to gain his agreement to stage the unique musical *Quadrophenia*, written by Stockport based group NK Theatre Arts.

The result was a first for the Spotlight Musical Theatre Group, in Beccles, Suffolk, as they are indeed only the fifth group in the world to have been given permission to present this stage adaptation from the incredible 1973 soundtrack of *The Who's* rock opera. Many readers will remember the 1979 film featuring Phil Daniels, Leslie Ash, Phil Davis and Mark Wingett, Sting, Ray Winstone and many more well known actor/musicians whose story captured the spirit of the Mods versus Rockers battles on the Brighton seafront.

Director Andy says "This was not one of the usual 'off the shelf' musicals, there were no published music or singing scores for the cast and the agreement to perform was that the production was faithful to Pete Townshend's music – no cutting corners". This meant a lot of hard work for musical directors Brian Parker and Simon Howe who, with only a Piano and Guitar score, were required to write the music for the six piece band. Not one to shy away from publicity Andy, who is also Publicity Officer for the Spotlight Group, succeeded in obtaining sponsorship from AR Motorcycles Ltd in Lowestoft whose manager, Jamie Hewitt, said "it was a pleasure to sponsor the production and we were happy to loan a scooter for the duration of the show and pre-publicity photo's and to promote *Quadrophenia* through our connections with Scooter Clubs in East Anglia". ★

## Quadrophenia ... A personal anecdote of Mods and Rockers (circa 1963)

I was there... Well not actually in Brighton... but Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, yes we had our battles, and as I recall, that particular weekend we were out on our scooters (mine was a Lambretta 175 and quite rare) travelling from Norwich to the old Royal Hotel on Lowestoft Prom to see a pop group called *The Moody Blues* or 'the moodies' as we named them.

After the gig, we camped for the night at North Denes (Sparrows Nest) campsite in Lowestoft; parking our scooters neatly in a row alongside our 'ex' Boys Brigade tents and settled down for the night. Dozing off, we were awakened by the deep throated sound of motor bikes followed by some movement outside our tents and a sudden almighty crash. Before we could sit up we found, to our amazement, we were staring up at the clear, black and star studded sky as our tents (no sewn in groundsheets in those days!) ripped from the ground, were being waved triumphantly like battle flags by the gang of leather jacketed Rockers encircling our encampment baying for blood. Our scooters, tumbled domino effect, were laid on their sides in a sad, dejected and disorderly heap!

Being somewhat startled we leapt from our sleeping bags, still wearing our parkas,

and prepared for the fight or flight (we sensibly chose the latter!) deciding instead to make for a safe vantage point; an old WW2 pill box further up the beach. One of our brave foursome (Quad.. you see!) produced from his Parka pocket an old 'Acme Thunderer' police whistle, ..he had fortunately claimed ownership of this after a recent Duke of Edinburgh Award expedition to the Peak District...which he blew with considerable force and, to our glee, it worked and we watched our would be assailants climb onto their BSA Bantams and disappear into the night with bravado well and truly dented... Relieved...we Mods picked up our prided scooters, straightened out the mirrors and de-camped immediately down the coast to Southwold where we slept under the pier until dawn! A couple of early bird local fishermen shared their sandwiches and bemoaned the state of the nation and reputation of the mad youth of the day... presumably having heard about the disorder on the south coast and unaware of our very minor but nonetheless traumatic experience.



So, with an air of anticipation and nostalgia, I donned the old Parka and went along to Beccles Public Hall to see Spotlight Theatre Group perform *Quadrophenia* .. and what a night: The Who's music and Mod madness a plenty.. This was not a piece to lighten the heart but there were several 'older' kindred spirits who had no doubt 'been

there' too! And I couldn't help but wonder if any of them were our old adversaries of that fateful night in Lowestoft 1963. The production was a brilliant projection of the events as depicted in the film and album of the same name; Director Andy Osbourne and Musical Directors Brian Parker and Simon Howe certainly brought together a superb cast and musicians to recreate this iconic piece. The show ran for a week to almost full houses and I bet there were one or two thoughts of 'those were the days' going through the minds of my contemporaries as we left feeling that familiar twinge of nostalgic euphoria and just a small element of pride that we had relived a piece of British social history. ★

A true experience related by: Terry Rymer (NODA Rep East for District 6)

# regionalroundup East Midlands



## East Midlands Committee

Councillor  
**Nanette Lovell**  
01604 712651  
nanette.lovell@noda.org.uk

Secretary  
**Alison Roberts**  
01604 644945  
alison.roberts@noda.org.uk

Membership Secretary  
**Phil Williams**  
0115 9198545  
phil.williams@noda.org.uk

Treasurer  
**Caroline Jervis**  
01536 518734  
caroline.jervis@noda.org.uk

Web Manager  
**Alex Wood**  
01604 862634  
alex.wood@noda.org.uk

Awards Secretary  
**Peter Beddall**  
0115 913 9490  
peter.beddall@noda.org.uk

Magazine/News Editor  
**Alex Wood**  
01604 862634  
alex.wood@noda.org.uk

Youth Adviser  
**Amanda Hall**  
0773 9573079  
amanda.hall@noda.org.uk

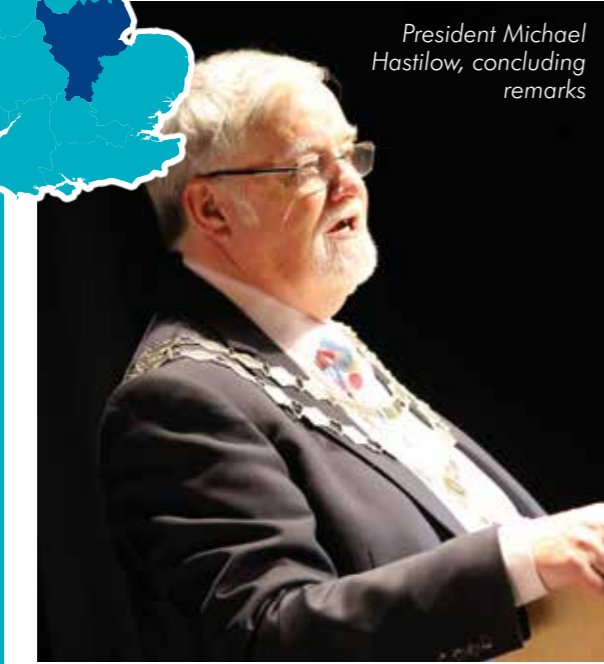
## East Midlands Districts & Representatives

**DISTRICT 1**  
**Keith Scott-Savage**  
01332 670239  
keith.scott-savage@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 2**  
**Joyce Handbury**  
01773 745082  
joyce.handbury@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 3**  
**Martin Holtom**  
07854 171014  
martin.holtom@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 4**  
**Liz Williams**  
07769 218717  
liz.williams@noda.org.uk



President Michael Hastilow, concluding remarks

## Audition Advice

The other day a director asked me: 'What should you always do before you go to an audition?' I thought for a bit and ventured, 'Read the script, make sure you're relaxed, do some voice exercises?' His answer: 'Look in the mirror and decide whether you look right for the part.' What would be your advice? ★



Regional Awards, Good Times!



The President, Wyn Hinks, nominees for the Hinks-Cole and Tailby trophies

Photos © Martin Holtom

## Of course you could... contribute to NODA Today!

Photos, articles, shorts... of interest to the readers of our national magazine. I am always happy to offer advice and help to anyone who would like to make a contribution. Just contact Alex Wood, Regional Editor. [alex.wood@noda.org.uk](mailto:alex.wood@noda.org.uk)



# Our Regional Day

By Regional Editor, Alex Wood

It always seems to be a sunny day when we hold our regional day in Loughborough. And the 11<sup>th</sup> Regional Day in June this year was no exception.

The Annual General Meeting was addressed by NODA President Michael Hastilow who spoke about the eventful year our organisation has experienced, reassuring those present that various changes are now taking good effect.

In a change to previous years the cabaret was replaced with a guest speaker, Andrew Wright, who was interviewed on stage by Regional Councillor Nanette Lovell.

Nanette told us that she first met Andrew when she provided 'digs' for performers at the Royal and Dergate theatres in Northampton. Having watched the first night of A Chorus Line, Nanette waited for her guest, Brady, who had Andrew with him. They all went for a gin and tonic and the rest, as they say is history – many other shows and many G & Ts have followed.

Andrew is one of the UK's most successful choreographers. He is responsible for the wonderful dance routines in the highly regarded, award-winning new version

of Half a Sixpence, currently showing in the West End.

But everyone has to start somewhere and for Andrew it was the National Youth Music Theatre. Their show at the Edinburgh Festival in 1989 saw Jude Law take the lead – but Andrew was very proud to tell us that he was the back end of the camel.

Three years training at Arts Educational followed after which Andrew was, in his own words, 'very, very lucky' to get a part in the show Pickwick, choreographed by Gillian Lynne. Parts in Mary Poppins, Anything Goes, Beauty and the Beast and other shows followed but, after three years in Cats, Andrew decided it was time to hang up his dancing shoes (some of you will be disappointed to hear that he said that, at 32, it was time to stop dancing!) and become a choreographer.



After what might be called a run of good luck it was interesting to hear that when he started to offer his services as a choreographer Andrew took on all sorts of work for small sums of money in pubs and small theatres – a sobering but



useful lesson to anyone seeking to make a start in any sort of career in professional theatre.

But after that start Andrew has gone on to huge success with a dazzling array of shows to his credit. They include Singin' In The Rain, Guys and Dolls, Barnum, 42nd Street, Betty Blue Eyes, Mrs Henderson Presents, concerts and pantomimes. Even if you only go to see professional theatre occasionally there is a very good chance you will have seen Andrew Wright's work, either in the West End or on tour.

He was choreographer of the first (and several subsequent) Night of a Thousand Voices which featured 100 singers from each of NODA's regions – so I guess some readers of this article will remember that.

Andrew also told us about two of his next projects. A new production in the round of Five Guys Named Moe which will open in September in a tent at Marble Arch and, rather more conventionally, a new musical based on the film Nativity which he is working on at Birmingham Rep, from where it will tour a number of UK venues. ★

[www.a-wright.com](http://www.a-wright.com)  
[www.nymt.org.uk](http://www.nymt.org.uk)  
[www.fiveguysmusical.com](http://www.fiveguysmusical.com)

Date for your diaries: Regional Day 2018 – Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018

## ★ NODA EAST MIDLANDS ★ LONG SERVICE AWARDS PRESENTED ★ JULY 2016 TO JUNE 2017

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

★ **70 YEARS:**  
★ **Northampton Musical Theatre Company:**  
★ Cliff Billing

★ **60 YEARS:**  
★ **Newark Amateur Operatic Society:**  
★ Mavis Ackroyd, Christopher Grant, Patricia Holland and Jean Robinson

★ **55 YEARS:**  
★ **Long Eaton Operatic Society:**  
★ Anthony Newton  
★ **Newark Amateur Operatic Society:**  
★ Rita Crowe and Robert Crowe

★ **50 YEARS:**  
★ **Long Eaton Operatic Society:**  
★ Stuart Danvers

★ **Newark Amateur Operatic Society:**  
★ Barbara Seymour  
★ **Nottingham Operatic Society:**  
★ Frank Nicholson and Jeff Smith  
★ **Rose Hill Musical Society:**  
★ Helen Turton

★ **45 YEARS:**  
★ **Chesterfield Gilbert &**

★ **Sullivan Society:**  
★ Peter Flint, Carole Pilkington & May Wing  
★ **Newark Amateur Operatic Society:**  
★ Rachel Hold and David Hold  
★ **The Watson Players:**  
★ Robert Rodgers

★ **40 YEARS:**  
★ **Newark Amateur Operatic Society:**  
★ David Hold



# regional roundup London

## HMS TEENS

HMS Teens are based in Hillingdon and perform in Iver Village Hall in Bucks, with a current group of 30 children aged from 11-21. They rehearse during the school summer holidays and produce their show at the end of August.

The group was started by Kenny Frier in 2015 to perform Les Miserables which had always been his dream to stage. The show was such a success that it was decided to make the group a permanent youth branch of Hillingdon Musical Society and continue in 2016 with the show Sunshine on Leith. Unfortunately, mid way through the rehearsal period in June, Kenny was diagnosed with a brain tumour and sadly lost his fight at the end of July. At this stage people dropped out - Les Miserables has a huge cast and this production ended up with just 16 (14 on Saturday night because two of the boys couldn't make it) but Kate Patterson, Producer, Anthony Wilson, MD, and the remaining youngsters made the decision to carry on the production in Kenny's honour, finishing

off the sections where Kenny had indicated his ideas but not yet set the scenes. These included doing Make My Heart Fly in British Sign Language, which was lovely. Against all odds they put together an amazing show with his daughter very bravely taking to the stage as one of the principal characters.

Their NODA Rep, Zena Wigram, commented "The way the youngsters (including Kenny's daughter) continued with their show in his memory was remarkable and the final show was extremely good - plenty of adult groups would have been proud to produce something of this standard."

The youngsters won not only the Constance Power Trophy of Encouragement but also took home the Youngstars Award for 2017.

This year they have renamed the group The Kenny Frier Youth Theatre in his memory. ★



### London Committee

Councillor  
**Jacquie Stedman**  
020 8529 3318  
jacquie.stedman@noda.org.uk

Regional Secretary  
**Cortina Henderson**  
020 7407 4245  
cortina.henderson@noda.org.uk

Treasurer  
**Dave Evans**  
07966 173956  
david.evans@noda.org.uk

Membership Secretary  
**Frances Chalkwright**  
020 8926 7413  
frances.chalkwright@noda.org.uk

Youth Adviser  
**Ann Hertler-Smith**  
01923 267604  
ann.hertler-smith@noda.org.uk

Magazine Editor  
**Rosemary Roberts**  
01628 636984  
rosemary.roberts@noda.org.uk

Long Service Awards Secretary  
**Harvey Kesselman**  
020 8621 3192  
harvey.kesselman@noda.org.uk

Social Media & Webmaster  
**Nick Ford**  
07748 966 011  
nick.ford@noda.org.uk

### London Districts & Representatives

**DISTRICT 1**  
**Tony Sweeney**  
020 8654 0682  
anthony.sweeney@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 2**  
**Zena Wigram**  
01895 636028  
zena.wigram@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 3**  
**Des Wilby**  
07788 117635  
des.wilby@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 4**  
**Robin Kelly**  
020 8859 1354  
robin.kelly@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 5**  
**Phil Wilcox**  
020 8949 5879  
07964 808522  
phil.wilcox@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 6**  
**Andrew Rogers**  
020 8508 9635  
andrew.rogers@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 7**  
**Paul M Holgate**  
020 8804 9553  
paul.holgate@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 8**  
**Tony Austin**  
01895 634288  
tony.austin@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 9**  
**Bill Baynes**  
020 8428 0533  
bill.baynes@noda.org.uk  
**Carole Baynes**  
07958 427707  
carole.baynes@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 10**  
**Mike Monk**  
07792 784455  
mike.monk@noda.org.uk  
**Gilli Monk**  
07930 100771  
gilli.morris-monk@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 11 & 11a**  
**Judith Watsham**  
01494 774557  
judith.watsham@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 12**  
**Rob Bertwistle**  
07731 642907  
rob.bertwistle@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 13**  
**Jeanette Maskell**  
01635 41791  
jeanette.maskell@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 14**  
**Susan Boobyer-Pickles**  
07900 136073  
susan.boobyer@noda.org.uk

**Terry Hunt**  
07758 888943  
terry.hunt@noda.org.uk

# London Festival Weekend

At the time of writing this the London District has just celebrated its annual Award Festival. In previous years this has taken the form of a one day event but, with a growing reputation and increasing demand for tickets, this year we decided to try something different in the form of a two day event. The proceedings were moved to The Radlett Centre in order to offer plenty of space for workshops, to incorporate traders, and with more dressing rooms so that our performers could be appropriately costumed to give an even more polished performance.

The atmosphere in the theatre on the Saturday was buzzy and the Sunday was a complete sell-out – with a waiting list! I am pleased to say that the workshops were a great success with lots learnt and great fun had. There have been lots of positive comments about how much people enjoyed the day and are looking forward to next year. With late bookers unable to get tickets we are looking at a system for 2018 which, we hope, will ensure that District Winners, at least, will have the ability to purchase tickets early before they go on sale to the rest of the members. I don't think we realised what a difference it would make moving the awards presentations to the afternoon!



Stage Conflict Workshop



Song and Dance Workshop

Workshops included Stage Conflict and Singing Masterclass whilst, on the Sunday, there were opportunities to sing and dance to All That Jazz from Chicago plus Make-up, Accents and Acting workshops. All were really well received and the Song and Dance group put on a presentation at the end of the morning.

We were very lucky to have most of the members of Stage One Youth, winners of the Youngstars Award 2016, on stage to do their presentation at the start of the afternoon, which kicked the whole event off with a bang. Next year we will welcome HMS Teens, who won the Youngstars Award this year, to show us what they are made of. It is wonderful to see what a wealth of talent we have in our young people and it is especially lovely when they come for the whole day and take part in the workshops – and really being true NODA members!

This year we re-worded the certificates to reflect the fact that the people receiving them are, indeed, winners in their District. I hope this has, at last, confirmed what I have always said that, as your Rep sees everything in his/her District, to be awarded the District Winner certificate is the real accolade, whether or not you take home the Regional trophy.

We are already planning next year's Festival Weekend (23/24 June 2018 – **keep the date free**) building on our experiences and feed back from this year.

David and I look forward to meeting many of you as we travel round the region, accepting invitations to your shows and meeting your members. Thank you so much – it makes this 'job' really worthwhile and it is always good to put faces to names. We look forward to meeting many more of you this coming year. ★

**Jacquie Stedman**  
Councillor



Stage One Youth, Les Miserables



# regionalroundup North

## Councillor's Chat

As I write these notes we are saddened by the loss of life and life-changing injuries of so many young people in the Manchester Arena attack. We in this region lost six people including a young lady who had, five years earlier, taken part as one of the orphans in Newcastle MTC's "Annie". Chloe Rutherford (17) and her boyfriend Liam Curry (19) went to the Ariana Grande concert on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and never came home. All in the North pay tribute to them and express our deep sympathies to their families and all the victims of those killed or hurt in Manchester and in London less than a fortnight later.

By the time this magazine hits your doormat there will be over half our societies preparing to assemble for our annual awards presentation evening on September 16<sup>th</sup> – this year for the first time at the prestigious Gosforth Park Hotel. The awards night seeks to recognise societies and individual performers who have delivered that extra little bit more over the past year and, since the inception of the awards 5 years ago, my own

personal observations would indicate that standards in amateur theatre within the North are improving year on year. This is a good thing both that it gives your audiences a better experience and secondly, because of this, they are more likely to come back next year.

Amateur theatre is a great hobby – I, myself, have made numerous lifelong friends over the 45 years I've been in it – it instills confidence in the shyest of people and it gives youth (and not so youthful) the social skills required for life. That said it must not simply be a vanity project. The management of your societies must be treated seriously and run as a small business if you are to survive in an ever challenging 21<sup>st</sup> century so don't be afraid to put yourselves forward when, at your next AGM, the Chairman asks for nominations for committee.

Above all though you must have 'fun'. Hopefully I'll see many of you at Gosforth on September 16<sup>th</sup> – I'll be the one looking uncomfortable in a DJ... ★

**Gordon Richardson**  
Regional Councillor

## How to write a panto, well... sort of?

This year's Felton and Thirston Pantomime Society's interpretation was around a re-titled 'Peter Pan – Well.....Sort of?' which "took off" and headed straight to 'Never-Never Land' via a series of unexpected 'twists and turns' that saw the Darling children 'whisked off' by Peter Pan and the most unlikely Tinkerbell that anyone could have expected. That was when the 'rot set in' with a "boy meets girl", "boy loses girl" and "boy gets girl" theme.

'Captain Hook' and his diminutive 'side-kick' 'Aye' plotted to ruin everything – but in true panto tradition they failed and order was restored with a traditional 'Happy Ever After' pantomime ending. There was stunning acting from the whole cast however the undoubted star of the show had to be eight-year old Bailey Fowler (Aye-Aye) as 'Captain Hook's' 'Mini-Me'!!! He acted his role with confidence having the audience in stitches!!!



The cast thoroughly enjoyed playing to 'sell-out' audiences who enthusiastically joined in the 'Behind You!!' banter and the songs.

The pantomime was given full credence through wonderful sets, designs, props and costumes, all of which added to the on-stage fun for the audience and cast alike. This is the distinctive aspect of our panto - fun for all the family!! Plans for next year? Oh, yes there are!!

Where does our inspiration come from? It's not about the craziness of the writing - it's about the craziness of the writing partnership! We have got 'inside each other's mind' so, once we have the story, the script then flows

between us with ease. Taking a known pantomime, putting in our 'off the wall' slant and linking in village activities and characters is the fun part. Our approach has proved to be a winning formula and the storyline always seems to slot together no matter how "off the radar" we go! ★



## Fifty (plus) Years of Fun

In January 2014 Whitley Bay Pantomime Society celebrated its Golden Anniversary with "Aladdin" having been founded in 1964 by a group of local enthusiasts who noticed a lack of a Pantomime in the Whitley Bay area. Over the years the Society has steadily built up a high reputation with audiences, bringing the fun and pleasure of Pantomime to many and continues to do so and the Society's Vice President, Valerie Hopper, thought 50 years of unbroken service by volunteers presenting annual Pantomime in the town was something to be proud of.

Many people had been involved in reaching this goal and she felt it important that their stories and memories be recorded before time moved on and they were lost forever. So, archives were raided, members past and present contacted for personal contributions and after four years of research and a grant from Sir James Knott Trust to cover the cost of printing, "Fifty Years of Fun", a history of Whitley Bay Pantomime Society was finally published in January 2017. Valerie arranged for the official launch of the book on 30<sup>th</sup> May at Whitley Bay Library where she gave a talk on how it all came about. The book is now available through the Society for £5, all proceeds to Society funds although Valerie stresses this was not the reason she was inspired to write the book. She simply wanted to ensure that the dedication and love of pantomime of those people she knew and worked with, some sadly no longer around, was not forgotten and would act as an inspiration to those now following in their footsteps. ★

(Councillor's footnote: I have seen and read the book and it is a great look back into the history of the society.)



## PONTELAND REPERTORY SOCIETY IS 90 YEARS OLD IN 2017!

Ponteland celebrated their 90th birthday this year with a concert 'Around the World in 90 Years' including music from many of the productions their audiences have enjoyed over those years. Musical Director, Deborah Barry included pieces from some of the following shows; Annie, The Sound of Music, The Wizard of Oz, Mikado, My Fair Lady, Me and My Girl, Fiddler on the Roof, Showboat, South Pacific, Oklahoma and others.

Their Youth Theatre, "Preppies", joined in the entertainment, including songs from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and The Sound of Music in a sell-out success!! Whilst it is difficult to single out individual contributions the society thanks Kyle Richardson and his musicians for wonderful music and, indeed, Kyle himself for his show stopping and stunning solo of 'Some Enchanted Evening'.



Their President also celebrated her 90th birthday in May. Betty Nesbit has been a member of the Society for 50 of her 90 years taking a full part in the Repertory Society throughout these years and is still a lively, committed, member as their President.

However, Betty does not only look back to the history of the Society but also looks forward. Commenting on this she says "Our Society has always been forward thinking, looking to do new things. Today I am exceedingly proud of our Youth Theatre, THE PREPPIES"

The society 'travelled' around the world to New York, Japan, Land of Oz, Israel, London, Russia and the USA in several locations and were thrilled to share their celebrations with their wonderful audiences and looking forward to welcoming them to their Autumn production of 'The King and I'. ★

## Rivalries set aside for Production

Anyone living in the North knows of the fierce rivalry of the many 'faiths' of football supporters within the region – none more so than the rivalry of Sunderland and Newcastle. However, in Walkerville's recent production of Guys and Dolls these rivalries were set aside for the good of the production as Big Jule, Nicely-Nicely Johnson and Benny Southstreet (David Parrack, Nick Thompson and Ken Richardson) sported their Newcastle, Sunderland and Gateshead colours together. ★

### North Committee

Councillor  
**Gordon Richardson**  
0191 586 6350  
gordon.richardson@noda.org.uk

Treasurer  
**Derek Coleman**  
derek.coleman@noda.org.uk

Regional Secretary  
**Pauline Swann**  
pauline.swann@noda.org.uk

Awards Secretary  
**Fred Piggford**  
fred.piggford@noda.org.uk

Membership Secretary  
**Pauline Swann**  
pauline.swann@noda.org.uk

Webmaster  
**Gordon Richardson**  
gordon.richardson@noda.org.uk

Youth Adviser  
**Michelle Coulson**  
michelle.coulson@noda.org.uk

Regional Editor  
**Vacant**

### North Districts & Representatives

**DISTRICT 1**  
**Ray Lowry**  
ray.lowry@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 2**  
**Foster Johnson**  
foster.johnson@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 3**  
**Michelle Coulson**  
michelle.coulson@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 4**  
**Peter Oliver**  
peter.oliver@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 5**  
**Michael L. Avery**  
michael.avery@noda.org.uk

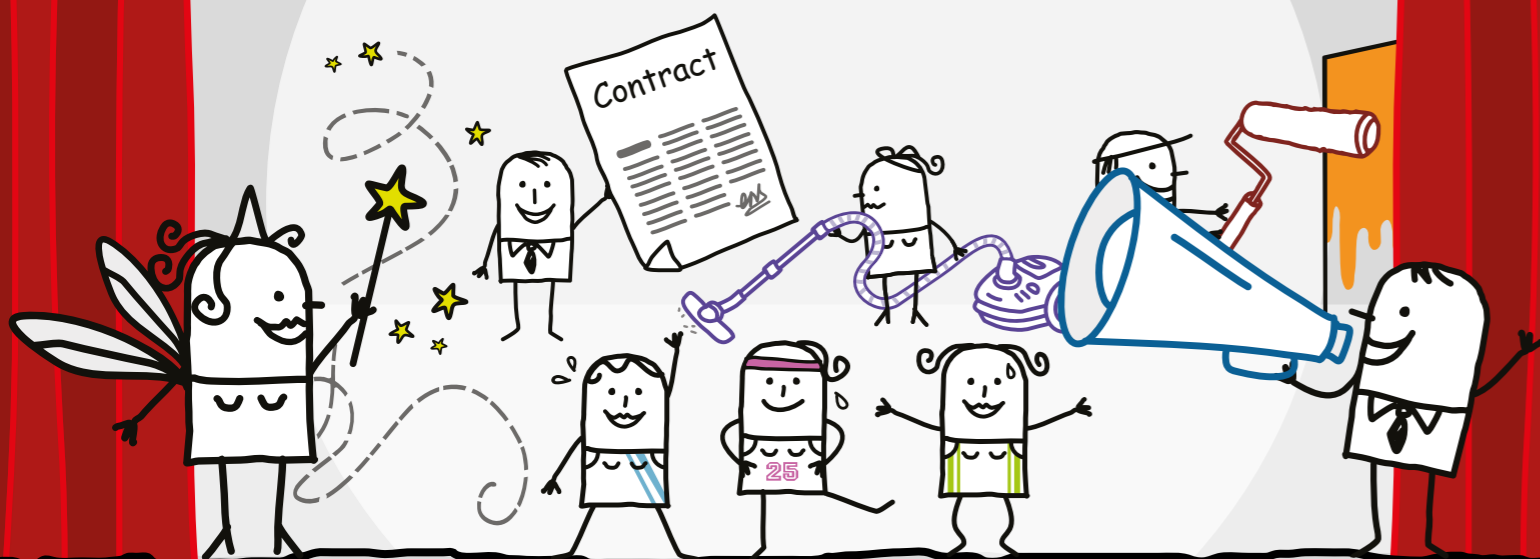
**DISTRICT 6**  
**Peter Parlour**  
peter.parlour@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 8**  
**Jean Scarlett-Carr**  
jean.scarlett-carr@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 9**  
**Kathryn Curry**  
kathryn.curry@noda.org.uk

# noda

Be inspired by amateur theatre



## WE'RE THE SUPPORT BEHIND EVERY GREAT SHOW

**NODA** represents 2,500 amateur societies nationally and we aim to continually support our members in all areas of making amateur theatre. We encourage and act on feedback from members and always try to improve our services.

### FACILITIES

- 👍 NODA website including Members' Area
- 👍 NODA Advice & Support
- 👍 NODA Factsheets & Tips
- 👍 NODA Insurance – preferential rates – Society & Personal

### ACTIVITIES

- 👍 NODA Legal Helpline
- 👍 NODA Safe – Health & Safety Helpline
- 👍 DBS Checks (Separate arrangements for Scotland)
- 👍 NODA Rightsholder – Pantomimes & Plays
- 👍 NODA National AGM & Awards
- 👍 NODA Poster & Programme Competition
- 👍 NODA Theatre Summer School
- 👍 NODA Today – magazine

### REGIONS

- 👍 NODA Regional Youth Adviser – dedicated contact
- 👍 NODA Show Reviews – individual and on website
- 👍 NODA Regional assistance with Auditions, AGMs, MDs, Principals etc.
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We've a huge range of member services that you might not be aware of. To find out more call NODA Head Office on **01733 374 790** or email us at [info@noda.org.uk](mailto:info@noda.org.uk)

# NODA Presidential Gala and AGM 2017

City Centre Marriott Hotel, Castle Street, Bristol, BS1 3AD  
Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th September

**Welcome to the South West and join us for the inauguration of Nick Lawrence as President of NODA and the National AGM. City Centre Marriott Hotel, Lower Castle Street, Bristol has been booked and we have the weekend to catch up and celebrate at a new venue, which has welcomed NODA South West for a number of years for their Awards Weekend.**

The change of venue is due to The Palace Hotel in Torquay changing hands in early July and cancelling all bookings after 31st July, which included the NODA Presidential Gala and AGM weekend.

We have been fortunate in that the Marriott in Lower Castle Street Bristol can accommodate us on the original dates as listed above. The programme will be curtailed from that originally planned but we are pleased to announce that the Reps meeting, AGM, and celebration ball can go ahead as planned, although the Reps meeting will now be held on the Saturday morning.

The Marriott Bristol is in Lower Castle Street immediately opposite Castle Park. A short walk across it will take you to the shopping areas including John Lewis. The River Avon is home to both the SS Great Britain and "The Matthew" a replica of the ship John Cabot sailed when he discovered Canada and Newfoundland. Bristol is home to the Clifton Suspension Bridge. There are two Cathedrals to choose from, The Anglican Cathedral in the City and the Roman Catholic Clifton Cathedral built in 1973.

**A WEEKEND OF CELEBRATION**  
Travel to Bristol is easy by Road using M4 and M5 networks and there is a Multi-storey Car Park adjacent to the

hotel. Bristol Temple Meads Rail Station is ¾ mile away and Bristol Airport is approximately 20 minutes taxi ride away.

**FRIDAY:** The Annual General Meeting of the South West Region will take place in the Concorde Suite of the City Centre Marriott, Lower Castle Street, Old Market, Bristol BS1 3AD, on Friday 22nd September commencing at 6:30 p.m.

Rooms will be available on Friday for Bed & Breakfast for those who need to come "early" (See Package A)

**SATURDAY:** The Annual Meeting of Regional Committee Members will take place in the Bristol Suite, at the City Centre Marriott, Lower Castle Street, on Saturday 23rd September at 11:00 a.m.

The Last Annual General Meetings of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association and the First Annual General Meeting of National Operatic and Dramatic Association CIO 2017 will take place on Saturday 23rd September in the Bristol Suite at the City Centre Marriott, Lower Castle Street, at 2:30 p.m.

A Buffet Lunch is included in Bookings A B & C.

Traders' Exhibition will be set up in the Sun Lounge all day, please visit them.

Presidential Gala Dinner and Dance in the Bristol Suite of the City Centre Marriott, Lower Castle Street. Reception is at 6:30 p.m, followed at 7pm by a formal dinner, with entertainment and dancing to a live band. This is a Black Tie event. There will be a quiet area where NODA members may relax and chat.

**SUNDAY:** Breakfast followed by departure home.

Please note that to fit into reduced accommodation it is not planned to offer any workshops.

Packages may be booked through NODA. Package A includes overnight stays on Friday and Saturday. Package B for Saturday including, lunch, Presidential Gala and overnight stay Saturday. The charge is based on two persons sharing. Please indicate whether you require double or twin beds, or single occupancy. This is reflected in our charges to you. Alternative accommodation is available nearby.

Evening meal on Friday is not included, however the recently refurbished bar renamed "The Brew Bar" and restaurant "The Cast Iron Grill" now offer a new range of local ales, cocktails and for coffee lovers the Coffee house is open; the restaurant has a new menu available to download from the hotel's website. Alternatively there are a variety of restaurants in the vicinity.

The Hotel has its own leisure facilities available to guests during their stay, a variety of gym equipment, swimming and Sauna.

Please note that all members who booked before July 2017 should complete a new application form. If you would like to join us this September there is still time to book using the application form on page 24.

We look forward welcoming you to Bristol.

You can book your place by completing the form on page 24 and sending it to Nick Lawrence at 63, Mill Street, Ottery St. Mary, Devon EX11 1AB or [nick.lawrence@noda.org.uk](mailto:nick.lawrence@noda.org.uk)



**PACKAGE A: £230.00 per person  
(Two people sharing)**

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September** Bed & Breakfast

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September** 11:00 Regional Committee Members' Meeting  
1:15 Buffet Lunch  
2:30 Annual General Meetings  
6:30 Reception  
7:00 Presidential Dinner/Dance Black Tie Event  
Bed & Breakfast

**PACKAGE B: £175.00 per person  
(Two people sharing)**

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September** 11:00 Regional Committee Members' Meeting  
1:15 Buffet Lunch  
2:30 Annual General Meetings  
6:30 Reception  
7:00 Presidential Dinner/Dance Black Tie Event  
Bed & Breakfast

**PACKAGE B: £185.00 per person  
(Single occupancy)**

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September** 11:00 Regional Committee Members' Meeting  
1:15 Buffet Lunch  
2:30 Annual General Meetings  
6:30 Reception  
7:00 Presidential Dinner/Dance Black Tie Event  
Bed & Breakfast

**PACKAGE A: £250.00 per person  
(Single occupancy)**

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September** Bed & Breakfast

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September** 11:00 Regional Committee Members' Meeting  
1:15 Buffet Lunch  
2:30 Annual General Meetings  
6:30 Reception  
7:00 Presidential Dinner/Dance Black Tie Event  
Bed & Breakfast

**PACKAGE C: £25.00 per person  
(Non-resident daytime)**

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September** Includes morning and afternoon refreshments and Buffet Lunch

**PACKAGE D: £45.00 per person  
(Non-resident evening)**

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September** 6:30 Reception  
7:00 Presidential Dinner/Dance Black Tie Event

**What's On**

- ★ South West Region Annual Meeting: Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept at 6.30pm
- ★ Traders Exhibition: Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September in the Sun Lounge
- ★ Regional Committee Members' Annual Meeting: Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 11am.
- ★ (National AGM) Final Meeting of NODA (The Association): Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 2.30pm
- ★ Followed by: First Annual General Meeting of NODA CIO.★



# NODA Presidential Gala and AGM 2017

City Centre Marriott, Lower Castle Street, Old Market, Bristol BS1 3AD,  
22nd – 24th September 2017

## BOOKING FORM

Please print for accuracy:

Name(s): .....

Full Name of Spouse/Partner/Guest: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: .....

Email: ..... NODA Region: .....

Phone (emergency only): .....

N.B. Confirmation and other news about the celebrations will be sent via email. Your tickets and name tags will be available with complete information packs including timings on your arrival. please inform Nick Lawrence with your full guest list if you are making a party booking

### Please tick which is your chosen package:

- |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>A:</b> to include 2 nights (Friday & Saturday) bed & breakfast<br><b>£230.00</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>A:</b> to include 2 nights (Friday & Saturday) bed & breakfast<br><b>£250.00</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>B:</b> to include 1 night (Saturday) bed & breakfast<br><b>£175.00</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>B:</b> to include 1 night (Saturday) bed & breakfast<br><b>£185.00</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>C:</b> Saturday including Buffet Lunch non-resident<br><b>£25.00</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>D:</b> Gala dinner dance only<br><b>£45.00</b> |
| Two persons sharing  | Single Occupancy   | Two persons sharing  | Single Occupancy   |  |  |

There is no charge for attending the AGM

**Type of Room required:**  Double  Twin  Single

**Dietary Requirements:**  Vegetarian  Vegan  Gluten Free  Dairy Intolerant  Nut Allergy  Fungi Allergy

Other: .....

### Payment choices:

- Cheque made to NODA  Payment by BACS Bank Sort Code 60-83-01 Account Number 20379546 Quote AG and your name  Credit Card payments. Contact Nick Lawrence for details

**Cheques made out to NODA are to be sent to Nick Lawrence at 63, Mill Street, Ottery St. Mary, Devon EX11 1AB. Credit Card payments, contact Nick Lawrence – nick.lawrence@noda.org.uk**

Disability considerations (there are lifts and ramps to all levels and floors):

### Please note:

South West Region Annual General Meeting: Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 6:30pm in the Concorde Suite  
Traders' Exhibition: Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September in the Sun Lounge  
**Regional Committee Members' Annual Meeting:** Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 11am in the Bristol Suite  
**Annual General Meeting of the Association:** Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2:30pm in the Bristol Suite  
Presidential Dinner – Dance – Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 7:00 p.m. in the Bristol Suite

# How Magna Makes the Drama and Magic Happen

**'The play's the thing', or so Master Shakespeare would have us believe and that is certainly the case for Magna, a Performing Arts Group based in the rural village of Credenhill in Herefordshire.** We have a wide membership of extremely talented actors in both 'Young Magna' eight to sixteen year olds and 'Magna' all performing uniquely created in house plays based on whatever criteria or theme is suggested.

The inspirations for our plays are many and varied. Our starting point can be an emotion, a situation, character or a topical subject. 'Magna' are well known for dealing with difficult subjects which challenge and stretch our cast, writer/director and audience. Our method works incredibly well for children who give us fantastic and unusual ideas. Our members can explore a range of scenarios in a safe space and, if someone feels unable to contribute, this is respected and we often find them re-engaging later on.

So what do we do to create our plays? We take a subject "fear" as an example, this was the emotion we explored for our production 'Echoes' a murder mystery, costume drama based at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. First the group talked about what their idea of fear was. The next step is to select one or two of these ideas we think we can take further and we start to discuss the what, when and how. Over a couple of weeks a rough plot based on our discussions is created, we start to improvise around the theme and delve deeper into the story to develop a genre, where and when it is set?



As soon as the characters begin to interact with each other, it is my job as the Writer and Director to flesh out the notes to create the framework. More often than not the scripts are based on the dialogue generated during our improvised sessions. In 'Echoes' our collective fear of being shut in a space we could not escape, became the dominant subtext. We refined the themes around this by 'hot seating' the cast and their characters before, during and after the play is written, we use this to see if the group discover anything new to add to the characters for the play and give them a 'life' before the play.

The organic nature of the process enhances Magna's ethos to create a friendly, creative environment not to mention achieving our main goals to have fun and produce our unique productions. We produce several plays a year across both groups.

Magna have been quite successful over the years, winning awards for our productions at the local Drama Festival in the categories of: One Act Plays, Best Original Play, Best Director, Best Actor and Audience Choice. We have even won NODA West Midlands awards for Best Drama in 2011 (Echoes), 2013 (Sandscenes) and 2015 (Isolation, pictured) we are pleased to be sharing our process with NODA TODAY and hope it provides you with a little inspiration.

Our cast are encouraged to think about costumes and mannerisms to give the

characters believability, this is not just left to me. The advantage of working in this way is that it gives me the flexibility to fit characters to actors rather than the other way round, even for the shyest members. I can then write taking into consideration the restriction of space, set and the members, anybody who wishes to perform has parts written for them and like most societies we have members who do not wish to act, and they become part of our equally essential off stage team and take on work backstage. All our members enjoy the challenge and take pride in creating and working with original scripts, this includes their involvement with our sets, props and lighting.

We are a fully inclusive group and welcome new members. At 'Magna' we look at the person and their abilities, but most important is their passion for the acting. It is their enthusiasm to perform that encompasses and pushes the possibilities to create our award winning performances.

After each production there is great buzz from the cast and stage crew to see what the challenge will be next time.

I would be happy to share what I have learnt over the years or what is involved in taking on the role of resident playwright and director if you contact me on [magnadrama@btinternet.com](mailto:magnadrama@btinternet.com)

**Betty Morris**  
Playwright and Director of Magna.

If you have your own methods of creating your own Drama's or productions, or you'd like to share your performance hints and tips with NODA Members, please get in touch with us at [info@noda.org.uk](mailto:info@noda.org.uk) don't forget to say for NODA Today

# regionalroundup North East

## Sutton Green Hut Theatre Company

North East District 11 Representative Sally Holmes had the pleasure of attending a rehearsal for Sutton's Green Hut Theatre Company's recent Spring Concert, which was also doubled with Sally being invited to present a 60 year Diamond Bar Long Service Award to Doreen Smith (pictured). The photo shows Doreen receiving her award from Sally Holmes, together with members of her family – her daughter, her son, her son in law and her granddaughter – who between them all have over 200 years loyal service to Amateur Theatre... and they all belong to the same Society – Sutton's Green Hut Theatre Company. ★



## Morley AOS Celebrates 90 Glorious Years



The Society was formed in 1927 as the Morley Technical Institute Amateur Operatic Society, 'Technical Institute' referring to the fact that the rehearsals were held as evening classes in Morley Grammar School. Their first production was 'The Mikado', performed at Morley Town Hall in December 1927, and ticket prices were 1, 2 and 3 shillings (5p, 10p and 15p in today's money!)

G&S operettas were a popular choice for some years, but gradually more mainstream musicals were included, continuing to be presented at the Town Hall. There were blips and changes over the years, as there are with most Societies. In 1992, a production of 'South Pacific' had to be cancelled due to falling masonry in the auditorium. MAOS moved temporarily to the old Civic Theatre in Leeds, which closed and a new theatre, the Carriageworks, took its place. Back at the Town Hall, the Society has gone from strength to strength and this year they are celebrating their 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a Grand Ball at Howley Golf Club in Morley. Coincidentally, their Publicity Manager, Steven Holt, is also celebrating his 90<sup>th</sup> production with the Society, appearing in every main show and pantomime since 1972. ★

### North East Committee

Councillor  
**David Streeter**  
0114 235 2490  
david.streeter@noda.org.uk

Regional Secretary  
**Judy McMurray**  
0114 236 2430  
judy.mcmurray@noda.org.uk

Regional Treasurer  
**Geoff Haywood**  
01226 724925  
geoff.haywood@noda.org.uk

Membership Secretary  
**John Parsons**  
01724 334931  
john.parsons@noda.org.uk

Web Manager  
**Bryan Craven**  
0113 252 2514  
bryan.craven@noda.org.uk

Long Service Awards Secretary  
**Pamela Booth**  
01943 430318  
pamela.booth@noda.org.uk

Regional Editor  
**Tony Harris**  
01377 272063  
tony.harris@noda.org.uk

Youth Adviser  
**Jo Sykes**  
07967 504554  
jo.sykes@noda.org.uk

### North East Districts & Representatives

**DISTRICT 1**  
**Terry Harrison**  
01423 870656  
terry.harrison@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 2**  
**Helen Dent**  
01723 317688  
helen.dent@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 3**  
**Tony Harris**  
01377 272063  
tony.harris@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 4**  
**John Parsons**  
01724 334931  
john.parsons@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 5**  
**Leslie Smith**  
01226 756654  
leslie.smith@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 6**  
**Mary Titterton**  
0114 236 8619  
mary.titterton@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 7**  
**Noel Rigg**  
01924 466659  
noel.rigg@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 8**  
**David Lockwood**  
01484 322868  
david.lockwood@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 9**  
**Christine Castle**  
0113 2664672  
christine.castle@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 10**  
**Jacqui Hartley**  
01422 706050  
jacqui.hartley@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 11**  
**Sally Holmes**  
0113 2192095  
sally.holmes@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 12**  
**Judith Smith**  
01274 568305  
judith.smith@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 13**  
**Geoff Haywood**  
01226 724925  
geoff.haywood@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 14**  
**Julie Webb**  
0114 2551869  
julie.webb@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 15**  
**Pamela Booth**  
01943 430318  
pamela.booth@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 16**  
**Bryan Craven**  
0113 252 2514  
bryan.craven@noda.org.uk

## Bridlington Gala Weekend

The Region held its annual Gala Weekend at Bridlington Spa in April and it was another well attended event. During the Region's AGM Les Smith, currently Representative for North East District 5, was announced as our new Councillor to take over from David Streeter in September. A full report will appear in the next issue.

With a screening of Mamma Mia, a Gala Dinner and Blues Brothers Cabaret provided by Crigglesstone Community Theatre Company, a variety of workshops including Dance, Direction and First Aid, musical performances by Steps Productions followed by a Ball with Todd Miller and the Joe Loss Orchestra and Singing Stars and a Sunday morning presentation by Rod Taylor the weekend was also supplemented by a Youth Day for the first time. A report provided by one of the attendees at the Youth event from Whitby Area Musical Theatre Company is included in this magazine's Youth pages.

At the Gala Dinner the Councillor's special award of the Reg Vinnicombe Salver was presented to Ellesmere Musical Theatre Company for their production of Betty Blue Eyes. This award, presented to the Society whose performance the Councillor was

## HAPPY FUNDRAISING

Everton Village Players are a small amateur dramatic society based near Doncaster. Performing in a village hall in Everton, they draw actors and directors from across the region, and have become known for the quality of their innovative performances over the years.

The society recently presented the comedy Cheshire Cats by Gail Young which is based on the Moon Walk half marathon through London in aid of breast cancer research. It is a play to be considered by groups working in a small space, or who are looking for plays with mainly female casts or wishing to contribute to this deserving charity which is very supportive of the production.

The storyline tells of 6 women who agree to raise money in memory of their leader's mother who had recently died of cancer. Being of mixed ages, sizes and walking ability there are amusing scenes

David Streeter, North East Regional Councillor, Mabel Delamore, Ellesmere MTC President, Philip Smith, Ellesmere MTC Chairman, Jane Blythe, Vice Chairman and David Jefferson, Members' Representative



invited to and attended, is not judged on the Councillor's choice of 'best show' but rather on the overall production that has 'impressed' the Councillor the most - a production that made the Councillor think 'wow - that was good theatre'. It is the production that is not quickly forgotten.

The Society's Chairman, Philip Smith, said "As Chairman of Ellesmere MTC I was so proud to have our company presented with the 2016/2017 North East Regional Councillor award, The Reg Vinnicombe Salver, by David Streeter in his final year of office. This award was made even more special by the fact that our Society also celebrated their 70th year in Musical Theatre. A proud moment indeed. Thank you."

as they train and agree on their 'cats uniform' based on black bras, to the consternation of some of the group.

Everton Village Hall is capable of various staging options and for the society's production in February 2017 a traverse style was chosen, with the audience on either side of a central space. Being physically close to their audience, the actors were able to include them more easily into the performances.

The audience joined in the countdown for the start of the walk encouraged by the walkers. They sang songs along with the marshals and took bottles of water from them as they were invited to keep hydrated. Incredibly, they stood up in their seats as the Aerobics Instructor gave them exercises to do in the warm up as if they were really taking part in the walk, before calmly sitting down again and becoming part of the audience to watch the next scene.

The key element to the success of the play is the camaraderie between the women, and their adlibbing and friendly chatter together

## ★ Programme and Poster Competition

Winners of the Region's Programme and Poster competition were also announced as follows:

### ★ De Luxe Programme

- ★ **1<sup>st</sup>** Seven Brides for Seven Brothers – York Light Opera Company
- ★ **2<sup>nd</sup>** Made in Dagenham – The Musical - STOS Theatre Company, Sheffield
- ★ **3<sup>rd</sup>** The Likes of Us – Settle Amateur Operatic Society

### ★ Standard Programme

- ★ **1<sup>st</sup>** Annie Get your Gun – Dinnington Operatic Society
- ★ **2<sup>nd</sup>** Barnum – Manor Operatic Society, Sheffield
- ★ **3<sup>rd</sup>** The Wiz – Calder Valley Youth Theatre

### ★ Basic Programme

- ★ **1<sup>st</sup>** The Lady Killers – Phoenix Players, Rotherham
- ★ **2<sup>nd</sup>** Murder on the Nile – Phoenix Players, Rotherham

### ★ Poster

- ★ **1<sup>st</sup>** Seven Brides for Seven Brothers – York Light Opera Company
- ★ **2<sup>nd</sup>** Singin' in the Rain – Chapelton & District Amateur Operatic Society

throughout. By contrast the audience will be in complete silence as each character performs a soliloquy giving their back stories – which are in turn serious, sad, angry and extremely emotional.

Walk the Walk supported the Everton's production by supplying T shirts and props. Gail Young, the writer, encourages drama groups to do a collection for the charity, raising money for breast cancer research and Everton Village Players raised £400. ★

# regionalroundup North West

## Councillor's Chat



May I open by saying thank you to the 800-plus members who attended our glittering awards and conference weekend at the Mercure Hotel in Manchester's Piccadilly.

We had a few organisational issues but we hope these didn't dampen anyone's spirits. As it took place at the end of April and did not finish until Monday, May 1, the weekend marked an historic occasion: The last regional conference of NODA 'The Association' and the first regional conference for NODA as a 'Charitable Incorporated Organisation' – or the rather snappier CIO. As members of NODA you should see absolutely no difference to the service you receive.

However, for those societies among you which have charitable status I would urge you to look at the possibility of becoming a CIO yourselves. Details are on the

NODA website or do please contact either myself or your Rep if you need any further information.

We have made some changes to the regional committee since the annual meeting. Following the departure of Katharine Carradus from district 11, we welcome Martin Craig to that patch, as well as Louise Colohan to district 8. We also thank Sharon Drummond, our district 7 rep, as she also becomes Regional Secretary. Our district 12 reps Luke and Lloyd have stepped down, but remain on the committee in the new co-opted role of events and marketing to retain their very special skills in this area. District 3's David Slater will be picking up the additional societies in East Lancashire. Thank you all SO much!

This year we were able to purchase new trophies for the Youth Awards alongside the new ones for the adults. I hope you will agree they are really something special. We look forward to re-presenting them at the 2018 Regional Conference on May 5 and 6 – save the date! ★

**Christine Hunter-Hughes**  
Councillor



It is with great regret that we inform NODA North West members of the death of Jackie Kay, until recently the Regional Representative for District 5. I am sure that she will be greatly missed by her own society and all the societies in her area of Bolton. She will certainly be missed on the North West Committee which she thoroughly enjoyed serving on for the last few years, and our thoughts are with her family at this sad time.

### North West Committee

Councillor  
**Christine Hunter Hughes**  
01772 728817  
christine.hunterhughes@noda.org.uk

Regional Secretary  
**Sharon Drummond**  
01706 854208/07976 076962  
sharon.drummond@noda.org.uk

Regional Treasurer  
**Trevor Mills**  
01477 534843  
trevor.mills@noda.org.uk

Web Manager  
**Ian Johnston**  
01900 66209  
ian.johnston@noda.org.uk

Awards Secretary  
**Christine Sanderson**  
01772 827812 / 07961 561647  
christine.sanderson@noda.org.uk

Magazine/News Editor  
**Anna Mansell**  
07971 193616  
anna.mansell@noda.org.uk

Youth Adviser  
**Jenny King**  
0151 639 4189  
jenny.king@noda.org.uk

Events & Marketing  
**Lloyd Bamber & Luke Taberer**  
Luke: 07906 358645  
Lloyd: 07971 544242  
lloyd.luke@noda.org.uk

### North West Districts & Representatives

**DISTRICT 1**  
**Kevin Proctor**  
07771 961865  
kevin.proctor@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 2**  
**Eddie Regan**  
01772 453885  
eddie.regan@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 3**  
**David Slater**  
078770415902  
david.slater@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 4**  
**Budge Grounell**  
0151 639 8328  
budge.grounell@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 5**  
**Position Vacant**  
**DISTRICT 6**  
**Pat Connor**  
01257 277615  
pat.connor@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 7**  
**Sharon Drummond**  
01706 854208  
sharon.drummond@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 8**  
**Louise Colohan**  
07999 049807  
louise.colohan@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 10**  
**Ed McGee**  
01900 603050  
ed.mcgee@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 11**  
**Martin Craig**  
01229 431516 /  
07870 835997  
martin.craig@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 12**  
**David Slater**  
078770415902  
david.slater@noda.org.uk

# Charity Capers for a Crucial Cause

From donning tutus to bedding down in a haunted theatre two East Lancashire performers have taken on 12 months of challenges for a local charity.

Josh Hindle and David Smith, from Pendle Hippodrome Theatre Company, asked local residents to come up with 12 tasks for them to take on each month of 2017 in aid of Pendleside Hospice. So far they have spent a cold January night in the reportedly-haunted Hippodrome in Colne, taken part in a ballet class and found their way home without a penny to their names after being dropped off in a mystery location – which turned out to be Saltaire, near Bradford - walked four

David, left, and Josh line up with Encore Dance students for their ballet lesson



Josh and David set off on a four-mile walk in flippers from Pendleside Hospice

miles in flippers and took on a bake-off challenge, judged by their NODA rep David Slater and Pendle MP Andrew Stephenson.

Singer Josh, 25, and nurse David, 30, are both regulars on the Hippodrome stage, and Josh is currently directing their September production of Rent.

The grand total, just six months into the challenge, is already topping £4,500 –

almost half way towards their £10,000 target.

They also staged a Big Night Boogie concert at Burnley Mechanics' Theatre, and have completed the Total Warrior assault course for the cause.

Future challenges include a trek along Hadrian's Wall, running a half marathon and holding rats and spiders to conquer their fears.

Speaking about the ballet class with PHTC choreographer Helen Cheung, Josh said: "We were taught movements and routines from some of the ballet students and had to perform in front of the class. It was daunting but we really enjoyed it – although we maybe got too comfortable in our tutus."

If anyone wants to support Josh and David's fundraising challenge, please donate online at

[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/joshanddavidchallenge](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/joshanddavidchallenge) or by texting JHDS60 £5 or £10 to 70070.

Follow their ongoing adventures on Facebook by searching for Josh & David's Hospice Challenge 2017. ★

A long-standing member of St Helens Unnamed Players has been awarded the British Empire Medal for her services to performing arts in the North West.

Enid Pennington is not only a stalwart of the amateur group but is also a key member of the Friends Of The Theatre Royal – currently Chairwoman – fundraising for the town venue. She was awarded the medal during a special ceremony at Liverpool's Athenaeum Club, after being named in the Queen's New Year's Honours List.

The presentation was made by Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside Dame Lorna Muirhead, with friends and family of the 92-year-old recipient present. Enid, who has been a member of the Unnamed Players since the 1950s, said the medal was a 'delightful honour'. "I am so thrilled to be given a BEM, not for myself but for the projects I am involved in," she told local paper St Helens Reporter. "I see it as advertising what I do and keeping the arts alive, not praising me."

In almost 70 years Enid has appeared in, produced and directed musicals and

plays at the Theatre Royal and has also been a member of St Helens Amateur Operatic Society playing her first principal role with them in 1948.

Enid was presented with a bouquet of flowers at this year's North West District 6 awards night in recognition of the honour.

Vicki Doherty from the Unnamed Players said: "Enid is an amazing inspiration and makes a great difference through her voluntary work in support of the arts in the town of St Helens and she is held in great regard by her colleagues and the community. Her unstinting commitment and enthusiasm has brought people of all ages and walks of life together, giving them confidence, enjoyment and a feeling of wellbeing. For many years she has been

heavily and voluntarily involved with the Friends Of The Theatre group for the upkeep and maintenance of the Theatre Royal in St Helens, and the fact that it is still operational today is, in no small way, a tribute to the involvement of Enid Pennington and her fund-raising work. She has been involved in amateur dramatics and theatre in St Helens for over 70 years as a successful writer, director, producer and actor and is a much deserved recipient of the BEM which was recently awarded for voluntary service to the arts in the North West." ★



Enid celebrates with friends at the NODA NW district six awards night

# regional roundup Scotland

## NODA Scotland Conference

The NODA Scotland Conference 2017 will be held from Friday 27 to Sunday 29 October at Peebles Hydro, Innerleithen Road, Peebles EH45 8LX. Full details will be posted in due course.

## Co-operatic!

Cupar Amateur Musical Society (CAMS) has recently received a very generous donation through the Co-operative Community Fund. Through the scheme, members of the Cupar Co-op store raised a substantial amount of money to be shared between local charitable groups and CAMS were presented with a cheque at the local store on Wednesday 19 April 2017. CAMS will be using the money raised to help upgrade the lighting at the Corn Exchange in Cupar to a more energy efficient, programmable, system. This will enhance not only CAMS productions but also those of Cupar Youth Musical Theatre, local dance school shows, fashion shows and other similar events, as well as ceilidhs and celebrations which take place in the main hall of the Corn Exchange. They also intend to use some of the money to continue to offer transport to their productions for members of the local community who may have difficulties travelling to the Corn Exchange. The company's next show is *Anything Goes*, which will run in Cupar Corn Exchange from 6 to 10 February 2018 and the company will be able to assist with transport for local groups whose members might not be able to get to the venue. Tickets for the shows are on sale at the Caring For Cupar shop, Crossgate, Cupar, online at [cuparams.org.uk](http://cuparams.org.uk) and by calling 07746 046987. ★



CAMS members receive donation from the Co-operative Community Fund

## Happy Birthday Mary



A small group from Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society had the great pleasure of singing at Marchmont Residential Home in celebration of the 100th birthday of one of the Society's founder members, Mrs Mary Sellars.

The group sang a selection of well known songs from G&S Operas, along with music from *Show Boat* and a medley from old time music

hall. It was wonderful to see so many of the residents joining in, and a very happy afternoon was enjoyed by all.

Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society was founded in 1939 and Mary has been a loyal and supportive member over all these years.

We wish her many more! ★

## NODA Scotland Website and Facebook

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



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

Items for inclusion on either the website or Facebook page should be emailed to [stuart.dick@noda.org.uk](mailto:stuart.dick@noda.org.uk) ★

## Diamond Jubilee of Musical Theatre in East Kilbride

Sixty years ago on the 6 March 1957 a few enthusiasts called an open meeting to gauge the possible support for a light opera club in East Kilbride. Encouraged by a turnout of 6 ladies and 11 gentlemen they drafted a constitution, which was put to another meeting on the 3 April. Office bearers and a committee were elected and so was formed the East Kilbride Light Opera Club.

Their first venture was a revue – *September Song* – performed in a local primary school. They played for two nights to capacity audiences. That was it, they were in business. After much discussion they agreed that their first full-scale production would be the well known favourite *The Desert Song*. They also decided to take the financial gamble of engaging a professional orchestra and ordering their costumes from an established costumier, a decision they

have never regretted. This production and the nineteen that followed were performed in the local secondary school. Two memories which stand out from their days in the school were the hard seats and the fact that it invariably snowed during the week of the show.

Their 21st anniversary coincided with the opening of the Village Theatre in East Kilbride and to celebrate this they produced two shows in 1978, *Paint Your Wagon* in March and *The Sound of Music* in April. The Village Theatre with its first class facilities, both on stage and for our audiences, was greatly appreciated.

Over the years they have built up a loyal and enthusiastic band of followers, some of whom can claim they have seen every production from the first *The Desert Song*. To these people, and to all their audiences, which total more than 130,000 over the

past 60 years, they are indeed grateful. More than 550 talented performers have taken part in their productions and over the years they have been served by many hard working office bearers and committee members. They have benefitted from the talents and expertise of their production teams and backstage volunteers.

In 2015 they decided to rebrand the club and changed the name to East Kilbride Amateur Musicals Society. Their overriding aim has always been to entertain and they look forward with confidence to the next 60 years. In particular they enjoyed special success with their most recent production, *Annie* in the Village Theatre in March 2017. For a detailed history of the club please visit [www.ekloc.co.uk](http://www.ekloc.co.uk). ★

Bruce Arthur, President, East Kilbride Amateur Musicals Society

## Showcase wins major charity award

Having a hobby which makes a difference to people's lives.

Beginning in 1990, Showcase Musical Productions has been delivering something different in the amateur musical theatre world. For more than a quarter of a century they have raised money for Macmillan Cancer Support through a series of musical extravaganzas, concerts and shows. To date this has totalled an impressive £260,000.

Late in 2016 the company was honoured to be nominated to receive that charity's founder's award and were thrilled to be announced as the Scotland and Northern Ireland regional winners of the Douglas Macmillan Award for promoting Macmillan and leaving a lasting legacy.

A progressive collection of talented singers, dancers and musicians bring together collections of songs from every genre to appreciative and sometimes wildly enthusiastic audiences in Edinburgh. Even their most recent spring concert – *Showcase At The Movies* – coupled *O Fortuna* from *Carmina Burana* and a medley from *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, while this year's



Showcase 2015

September show will see a fusion of *La La Land*, *George Michael*, *Billy Joel* and *Jersey Boys*; and that's only the beginning.

"Why..." asks Showcase director for over 15 years Andy "AJ" Johnston "...do we do this?" His own answer of "...because we can" is testament to the versatile talent of the performers.

Equally at home in formal evening wear proudly wearing the Macmillan brooches delivering massive hits with a message like *Bridge Over Troubled Water* or *Love And Mercy*, playing the fool with hits from *Matilda* in costume or dancing to *Uptown Funk* like Mark Ronson and Bruno Mars won't need a backing group again, the Showcase cast never cease to entertain, constantly challenging the *Status Quo*. (Hang on, that sounds like another good idea!)

MD David McFarlane (now in his 20<sup>th</sup> year with Showcase) continues to perform

astonishing feats of musical arrangement and orchestration, even bringing apparently uninspiring material to choral life, ("Here's the music to *Dr Who*. What can you do with that?") while Claire Smith achieves the impossible in choreography down to some form of co-ordinated "music and movement" for the more challenged. All this is now hallmarked by AJ's inexhaustible imagination-fuelled realisations of the finished musical product on stage.

As Alan Hunter, the current President, reflects "This is a very proud accolade for Showcase. It is not just about the money raised, although that is why we are here. Everyone from every performance from every year should take the credit for the award."

Showcase 2017 will be performed at the Church Hill Theatre Edinburgh from 26 to 30 September. ★

Charles Leeson-Payne, Treasurer, Showcase Musical Productions



Showcase receive the Douglas Macmillan Award in May 2017



# regionalroundup South East

## Councillor's Comments

The last couple of months have been very busy with visits to societies as far apart as Margate in the East and Milford in the West. Societies perform in a wide range of venues from mini theatres in old barns to The Kings Theatre in Portsmouth not forgetting the Nuffield in Southampton. Wherever I go I receive a warm welcome and experience some truly remarkable theatre. In the last edition I advertised for Assistant Reps and to date I have received 5 expressions of interest. Together with the Council I am working on the detail of their future role within NODA particularly here in the south-east. I am still looking for volunteers

in several districts notably the coastal and western regions.

I am pleased to report we have too much copy for this edition of the magazine and a couple of items have been held over to the next edition but I think it will be worth it. **Keep the articles coming.** You must have fun in your groups – share it with us all.

I hope you will enjoy the summer break and return invigorated for the next action packed season. ★

**Kay Rowan**  
South East Regional Councillor



## 90th Anniversary Year of The Portsmouth Players



Recently the Portsmouth Players celebrated their 90th anniversary of the first fundraising concert staged by them with a party at their headquarters, The Barn. Over 80 members, past and present together with friends of the society shared memories, music and images of the society. Entertainment was provided by two former members Julia Worsley and Rachel Barrell, who now perform in the West End. The cake was cut by John Lindsey (former Chairman of Players) and Daphne Staniforth, who both joined the society in the late 1940's. Continuing their special year in March this year they performed *9 to 5 the Musical* at the Kings Theatre, Southsea, a tribute to the first show staged by them *The Gondoliers* at the South Parade Pier. ★

## South East Committee

**Councillor**  
**Kay Rowan**  
01420 83076  
kay.rowan@noda.org.uk

**Regional Secretary**  
**Pauline Catterall**  
01730 827200  
pauline.catterall@noda.org.uk

**Regional Treasurer**  
**Keith Smithers**  
01903 419913  
keith.smithers@noda.org.uk

**Membership Secretary**  
**John Barnes**  
01580 830830  
john.barnes@noda.org.uk

**Web Manager**  
**Mark Donalds**  
023924 69197  
mark.donalds@noda.org.uk

**Awards Secretary**  
**Margaret Coltman**  
01202 658380  
margaret.coltman@noda.org.uk

**Magazine/News Editor**  
**Gregory Gower**  
01323 737813  
gregory.gower@noda.org.uk

**Youth Adviser**  
**Jackie Kenyon**  
07533 884599  
jackie.kenyon@noda.org.uk

**Assistant Regional Rep (East)**  
**Phillip Hall**  
01273 473500  
phillip.hall@noda.org.uk

**Drama Adviser**  
**Margaret Fields**  
01962 775 438  
margaret.fields@noda.org.uk

**Media Guru**  
**Vanessa Denson**  
SEmedia@noda.org.uk

## South East Districts & Representatives

**DISTRICT 1**  
**Position Vacant**  
Contact:  
kay.rowan@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 2**  
**Brenda Gower**  
01323 737813  
brenda.gower@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 3**  
**Anne Lawson**  
01424 428693  
anne.lawson@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 5**  
**Gordon Harris**  
01634 402323  
gordon.harris@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 6**  
**Cheryl Mumford**  
cheryl.mumford@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 7**  
**Doreen Grierson**  
01474 813611  
doreen.grierson@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 9**  
**Jose Harrison**  
01903 892248  
jose.harrison@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 10**  
**Mark Donalds**  
023924 69197  
mark.donalds@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 12**  
**Gloria Smith**  
01932 866323  
gloria.smith@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 13**  
**Marie Coltman**  
01202 581385  
marie.coltman@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 14**  
**Chris Horton**  
01256 882 426  
chris.horton@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 16**  
**Rita Boffin**  
01983 731491  
rita.boffin@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 17**  
**Mark Allen**  
07889 677182  
mark.allen@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 18**  
**Pauline Surrey**  
07976 587642  
pauline.surrey@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 19**  
**Jon Fox**  
020 8668 6768  
jon.fox@noda.org.uk



## 60 Magical Years of Musical Theatre in Crawley

From its early beginnings in a secondary school, to present day performances in the Hawth Theatre COS Musical Theatre has produced a very wide variety of musical productions. The first was *Trial By Jury* from which the society has moved on through many shows to the present day sparkling productions of *Spamalot*, *Hairspray* and *The Wizard of Oz*. They have spent a great deal of energy encouraging new members both young and not so young to swell their numbers. Returning to the presentation of traditional pantomimes has led to a surge in numbers both of cast and audience. Despite great competition from touring companies COS Musical Theatre continues to thrive and entertain with sparkling performances. ★

## 50 Years from Passion to Passion In Church Crookham



Church Crookham Players rose out of a passion play staged in the local church at Easter 50 years ago.

The group has produced a wide variety of plays and other entertainment both on stage, outside and in the church. They were delighted to be able to recreate the original passion play again this year. The society also assists with other presentations in the church. The "golden" celebrations included a magnificent cake, which was cut by two of the original members. The photograph shows a scene from their last production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. ★

## NODA SOUTH EAST AWARDS WINNERS

District	Society	Name	Award
6	Margate Operatic Society	Nicola Smith	25 Year Long Service Medal Award
		Alson Monrow	25 Year Long Service Medal Award
		Dot Jenkins	30 Year Silver Bar
		Sherry Underwood	30 Year Silver Bar
		Sherry Underwood	35 Year Silver Bar
		Jeff Harwood	40 Year Silver Bar
		Jackie Hart	60 Year Diamond Bar & Certificate
		Heather Grant	60 Year Diamond Bar & Certificate
7	TWODS	Paul Denman	35 Year Silver Bar
		Sadie Williams	70 Year Pin
9	Durrington Theatrical Society	Andre Dore	30 Year Silver Bar
		Pam Stringer	35 Year Silver Bar
10	Fareham Musical Society	Graeme Clements	20 Year Badge
		Caroline Mary Balcom	30 Year Silver Bar
		Elaine Rogers	30 Year Silver Bar
12	Walton & Weybridge A.O.S.	James Palmer	15 Year Badge
		Stephen Farr	25 Year Long Service Medal Award
		Richard Lee	30 Year Silver Bar
18	BAOS (Basingstoke Amateur Operatic Society)	Danni Stembridge	10 Year Badge
		Sarah Williams	10 Year Badge
		Alexandra Stores	15 Year Badge
		Kathryn May-Miller	20 Year Badge
		Robert Wilson	20 Year Badge

## From Kismet To Acorn Antiques In 20 Years



Tony Hill was always a in high demand as a tenor and for 20 years Worthing Musical Theatre Company enjoyed the company of Tony Hill who died suddenly earlier this year. He will be sorely missed for his work both on and off stage. Having started as Omar in *Kismet* one of his later roles was as a tattooed & multi-pierced punk in *Acorn Antiques*. Well known locally for all his voluntary work he became the recipient of the "Paul Harris Fellowship" after 40 years as an active Rotarian. ★



More detailed articles about these societies will be circulated through a regional newsletter.

# regionalroundup South West

Another successful NODA South West Annual Awards Night!

## South West Committee

Councillor & Membership Secretary  
**Nick Lawrence**  
01404 758463  
nick.lawrence@noda.org.uk

Regional Secretary & Pantomime Liaison  
**Iain Douglas**  
07880 543 719  
iain.douglas@noda.org.uk

Regional Treasurer  
**Tony Pomeroy**  
01278 662181  
tony.pomeroy@noda.org.uk

Regional Webmasters  
**Stuart Lyddon**  
07827 317 532  
stuart.lyddon@noda.org.uk

**Sarah Hall**  
sarah.hall@noda.org.uk

Regional Awards Secretary  
**Frankie Telford**  
01453 842 695  
frankie.telford@noda.org.uk

Regional Editor  
**Matthew Heaton**  
01249 713 743  
matthew.heaton@noda.org.uk

Regional Youth Adviser  
**Jack Price**  
07921 290 654  
jack.price@noda.org.uk

## South West Districts & Representatives

**DISTRICT 1**  
**Oriel Bennett**  
01726 883 523  
oriel.bennett@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 2**  
**Kathy West**  
01208 816 214  
kathy.west@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 3**  
**Michael Simpson**  
01752 330 159  
michael.simpson@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 4**  
**Iain Douglas**  
07880 543 719  
iain.douglas@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 5**  
**Graham Liverton**  
01395 579972  
graham.liverton@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 6**  
**Janet Elworthy**  
01823 680 117  
janet.elworthy@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 7**  
**Di Ffitch**  
07799 557 871  
di.fffitch@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 8**  
**Leigh Conley**  
07496 612258  
leigh.conley@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 8A**  
**Jo Wilson-Hunt**  
01823 663 257  
jo.wilson-hunt@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 9**  
**Sue Pomeroy**  
01278 662 181  
sue.pomeroy@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 10**  
**Petra Schofield**  
07966 552 853

petra.schofield@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 11**  
**Sylvia Coates**  
07904 929 989  
sylvia.coates@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 12**  
**Brian Oliver**  
brian.oliver@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 13**  
**Tony Winstone**  
07974 289 817  
tony.winstone@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 14**  
**Dee Way**  
01225 867 099  
dee.way@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 15**  
**Frankie Telford**  
01453 842 695  
frankie.telford@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 16**  
**Stuart Dark**  
07894 660 060  
01793 630 655  
stuart.dark@noda.org.uk



## Another glamorous and busy night for Amateur Theatre in our Region

It was another packed awards evening at the Bristol Marriott Hotel on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March, where nearly 400 people enjoyed celebrating all that is great about Drama, Musicals and Opera in the South West. The list of all of the winners are detailed on the NODA South West web-page, so here are some photos of the event!

Your production will automatically be considered for 2017's Awards Night if attended and reported on by your NODA District Representatives – so do get them along. To enter the Poster and Programme competition you will need to give the Representatives 5 copies for the judging. ★



© Stewart McPherson

# Graham to be the South West's New Regional Councillor!

We introduce **Graham Liverton**, who will take over from **Nick Lawrence** as the South West's Regional Councillor on 22nd September.



Those of you in East Devon will know Graham well as District 5's Representative, but let's introduce him to everyone else in the South West Region:

Born in Sidmouth, Devonshire, and proud of it, Graham became interested in drama and performance while at school from singing in choirs to acting. "Let's make an Opera" by Benjamin Britten was his first show, taking the part of The Little Sweep aged 11!

Graham began his working life as a trainee chef and worked in London for a while but changed to the largely 9 to 5 life in the retail business. This gave him time to pursue his hobby of treading the boards – acting and singing in many musicals, plays and pantomimes (usually the Dame role as shown) and directing on the odd occasion (including producing a potted panto at his church with a completely untried cast!)

Graham got involved with local Government and has held various elected positions on Sidmouth Town Council for over 30 years, including Chairman of both. Thus his years of chairing meetings, reading reports and dealing with people of all sorts, should stand him in good stead for his work with NODA – although hopefully it will be more fun!

Graham is due to retire from paid employment in April 2018 and so will be able to give his full attention to his new position, trying his best to follow in the very able footsteps of his friend and mentor Nick Lawrence. He will be fully supported in this, as in all things since his marriage nearly 25 years ago, by his wife Ann who loves the theatre and performance as much as he does.

Graham feels very privileged and humble to represent all the South West's dedicated District Representatives, who work tirelessly for their areas, travelling all over at all times of year and in all weathers. Their reward is seeing so much talent and enthusiasm with the determination to put on a first class show, whether it

be in a village hall or in a purpose built professional theatre, not only from the actors but from back stage crews, front of house and those that make the rehearsal and interval coffee. All working towards helping their societies achieve their "raison d'être" of camaraderie between fellow "thesps" and providing brilliant entertainment for their loyal public.

Graham looks forward to meeting as many of you as he possibly can during his time as Councillor. ★



Graham Liverton (right) and Barry Lister (left) in Cinderella, Sidmouth Amateur Dramatic Society Panto 2016/17

## May this 'Float yer Boat'?

### New Musical Comedies launched by South West Playwright!



We're always keen to promote local writers and so were only too pleased to mention two new titles for Amateur Dramatic Groups, from **Peter Whittle** of Chadleigh in Devon.



**Float yer Boat** is a clever and amusing musical comedy about 5 characters looking for excitement during their mid-life crises. It was well-received at its premier at the Ice Factory, Teignmouth.

**The Cankerbury Tales** enters the world of local politics, with an overbearing Mayor trying to push through the cancellation of the Town's Christmas lights on financial grounds, ignoring the objections of his councillors, who rebel against him!

Details of each can be found at [www.FloatYerBoat.moonfruit.com](http://www.FloatYerBoat.moonfruit.com) and [www.cankerburytales.moonfruit.com](http://www.cankerburytales.moonfruit.com), and via Peter himself on 01626 854768 or email [peterjwhittle7@gmail.com](mailto:peterjwhittle7@gmail.com). ★



## Meet your New Youth Adviser for the South West!

**Jack Price** joins us as our new Youth Adviser to help advise and enthuse all NODA groups in the Region on how to inspire and develop young people in Amateur Theatre and also to steer groups through the guidelines and best practices in place to ensure everyone's safety and well-being.

A few facts about Jack are:

**Time as District Representative / In Role:** 9 Months

**Lives in:** Axminster

**Favourite Musical:** Wicked

**Favourite Play:** The Play That Goes Wrong / The Vicar of Dibley

**Amateur Theatre Experience Summary:** He has been involved in the theatre for 10 years and has done almost every role - Performer, Director, Producer,

Props, Stage Manager, Deputy SM, Front of House. He is heavily involved in Groups in East Devon, West Dorset and Somerset.

**Best Amateur Theatre Experience:** The Best Amateur Theatre experience is having directed a production and sitting back seeing the audience enjoying it and laughing.

**Day Job:** Retail Sales Adviser for Axminster Tools and Machinery

**'Top Tip' in Amateur Theatre:** Try every role in the theatre; don't just stick to what you know; try something new.

Do contact Jack via his NODA email: [jack.price@noda.org.uk](mailto:jack.price@noda.org.uk)



# regional roundup Wales & Ireland

## Wales & Ireland Committee

Councillor  
**Jordan Hill FRSA**  
01792 931196 / 07478686251  
jordan.hill@noda.org.uk

Regional Secretary  
**Jackie Titley** 01686 650955  
jackie.titley@noda.org.uk

Regional Treasurer & Membership Secretary  
**Ian Hogg** 01686 650955  
ian.hogg@noda.org.uk

Magazine Editor  
**Dee McIlroy** 01873 855311  
07531 260935  
dee.mcilroy@noda.org.uk

Youth Adviser  
**Matt Hampson**  
matt.hampson@noda.org.uk

Web Manager  
**Guy Wooles** 02920 710818  
guy.wooles@noda.org.uk

Awards Secretary  
**Lyn Emmerson**  
01492 870205  
lyn.emmerson@noda.org.uk

## Wales & Ireland Districts & Representatives

**DISTRICT 1**  
**Lyn Emmerson** 01492 870205  
lyn.emmerson@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 1A**  
**Jackie Titley** 01686 650955  
jackie.titley@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 2**  
**Sheelagh Hobart**  
02891 852760  
sheelagh.hobart@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 3**  
**Dee McIlroy** 01873 855311  
dee.mcilroy@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 4**  
**Allan Mears** 07815 710654  
allan.mears@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 5**  
**Luke Spencer** 01792 931196  
luke.spencer@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 6**  
**Position Vacant**  
Contact: jordan.hill@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 7**  
**Sharon Davies** 01633 764939  
sharon.davies@noda.org.uk

## COUNCILLOR'S CHAT



At our Regional AGM in May I was proud to have been elected as your Councillor for Wales and Ireland. Having been Regional Representative for District 6 I feel my appointment to office a great honour and privilege.

Our Regional Conference 2017 was extremely successful with over 51 trophies awarded to individuals and societies for their hard work and achievements in 2016. It was a pleasure to welcome our NODA President Michael Hastilow and President's Consort Janine Graeme to our Annual Awards Dinner. At our Regional AGM Past Regional Councillor Leah Collet stepped down handing over the helm to me. All Regional Representatives apart from District 6 were re-elected to office and I look forward to working with them as Councillor to improve our region here in Wales and Ireland.

We will be holding our next Awards Dinner and AGM on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th May 2018 at the Three Counties Hotel, Hereford. Having attended the Three Counties Hotel, Hereford, for some time there has been a steering committee formed from your Regional Committee to focus on finding a new venue for our Annual Conference in 2019.

Since taking over as Regional Councillor on the 29th May 2017 I have had an incredibly hard start as my beloved Grandmother suddenly but peacefully passed away in June. I have tried my very best to answer all correspondence that I have received and I

would like to personally thank NODA Council, Wales and Ireland Regional Committee and society members for their kind messages and support that I have received.

By the time you are reading this I will have been in post for 7 weeks and you may be pleased to know that I have travelled over one thousand miles on NODA business, visiting individuals and societies to either watch their productions or present awards.

I am looking forward to attending as many productions as I am able to in 2017/2018 and I encourage societies to invite me to their productions if they do not already invite the Councillor, as this will allow me to travel around Wales and Ireland meeting our members and will also make societies eligible for the Regional Councillor Awards. All invitations are welcomed via email to: [jordan.hill@noda.org.uk](mailto:jordan.hill@noda.org.uk) and I ask for at least one month's notice due to the large geographical area of our region and personal commitments.

I hope you enjoy this edition of NODA Today and I look forward to meeting our members. ★

Your Friend,

**Jordan Hill**  
Wales and Ireland Regional Councillor

We have the very sad news of the sudden passing of Mr Ray Emmerson husband of Mrs Lyn Emmerson District 1 Representative. Lyn and her family are very much in our thoughts and prayers at this time.



★ ★ Congratulations Saundersfoot Footlights on your 40th Anniversary from NODA! ★ ★

District 2 were delighted to welcome NODA President Michael Hastilow to the district with a tour of the sights between visits to watch *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and *Are You Being Served*. ★



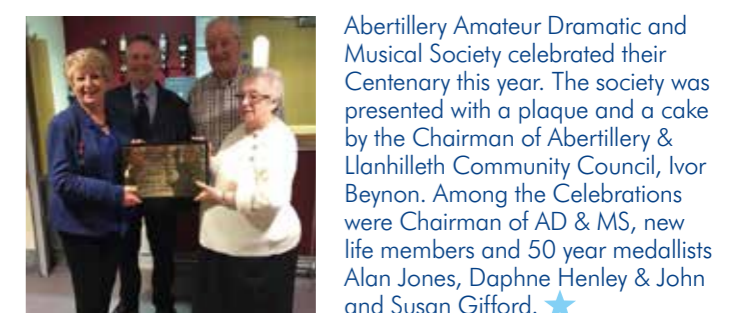
1. Irish contingent at the photo booth – Hereford 2017.
2. Sheelagh with Kyle Emerson, her Youth Individual Award Winner.
3. Michael and Sheelagh on Derry's walls.
4. Michael and Sheelagh at the Giant's causeway.



CMTS (Caldicot Musical Theatre Society) have been treading the boards and entertaining their community for over 80 years. Based in South Wales (District 7, Wales and Ireland) the group has grown in numbers significantly over the last few years and can now boast very strong male and female membership of all ages and as of April 2017 achieved Charitable Status for their work in the community.

In Spring 2016 the group successfully auditioned to perform at Disneyland Paris as part of their Performing Arts Programme and on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2017, 31 performing members ranging from 7 to 60 years of age (plus 30 family members), travelled to France to make their dreams come true! ★

## Regional Awards STAR STUDDED AWARD WINNERS!



Abertillery Amateur Dramatic and Musical Society celebrated their Centenary this year. The society was presented with a plaque and a cake by the Chairman of Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council, Ivor Beynon. Among the Celebrations were Chairman of AD & MS, new life members and 50 year medallists Alan Jones, Daphne Henley & John and Susan Gifford. ★

# regional roundup West Midlands

## West Midlands Committee

Councillor  
**Ian G. Cox** 01527 543808  
ian.cox@noda.org.uk

Regional Secretary and  
Regional Treasurer  
**Wendy Winterburn**  
01432 273907  
wendy.winterburn@noda.org.uk

Membership Secretary  
**Paul Douglass**  
07876 190519  
paul.douglass@noda.org.uk

Webmaster  
**Jordan McFarlane MBCS**  
07450 250059  
jordan.mcfarlane@noda.org.uk

Awards Secretary  
**Wyn Mason** 01782 616486  
wyn.mason@noda.org.uk

Regional Editor  
**Janine Graeme**  
janine.graeme@noda.org.uk

Youth Adviser  
**Vacant**  
Contact: ian.cox@noda.org.uk

## West Midlands Districts & Representatives

**DISTRICT 1**  
**Louise Hickey MBE**  
01531 635133  
louise.hickey@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 2**  
**Kay Ikin** 01948 880200  
kay.ikin@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 3**  
**Alan Bruce** 07971 953534  
alan.bruce@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 4**  
**Alison Smith** 07961 069505  
alison.smith@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 5**  
**Andy Brown** 01905 795996  
andy.brown@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 6**  
**Joyce Eyre** 07711 625353  
joyce.eyre@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 7**  
**Jean Beard** 01902 882362  
jean.beard@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 8**  
**Dennis Price** 01384 571737  
dennis.price@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 9**  
**Paul Douglass** 07876 190519  
paul.douglass@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 10**  
**Bruce Wyatt** 01905 840684  
bruce.wyatt@noda.org.uk

**DISTRICT 11**  
**Brian Hirst** 01543 677144  
brian.hirst@noda.org.uk

## COUNCILLOR'S COMMENTS



In this publication we are proud to include content that reflects the diversity and talent that is applauded daily by audiences across the region. I am sure you will also wish to join me in offering congratulations to societies and individuals celebrating highly notable milestones in their history and the many nominated and award-winning productions which were acknowledged at our Regional AGM and Awards Ceremony in April.

We were delighted to have the company of so many society members at our conference this year in a new venue with its daytime format, which those who attended appreciated and have indicated they

will be returning next year. More people attended the workshop than ever before and were treated to a hugely entertaining and informative presentation on international puppetry. Our AGM also had a strong attendance and it was a pleasure to formally welcome two new regional representatives Andy Brown and Bruce Wyatt and our webmaster Jordan McFarlane.

We were privileged to have National President Michael Hastilow presenting Best Production Awards and thoroughly enjoyed an exciting piece of entertainment from Worcester Operatic Society Youth Section during our 'Oscar Style' awards ceremony.



Thank you for the continuing support. ★

**Ian G. Cox**  
West Midlands Regional Councillor

## NODA President supports local access to theatre

On 7<sup>th</sup> June NODA President Michael Hastilow and Consort Janine Graeme visited Bournville Musical Theatre Company's second Sign Language Interpreted performance of The Pajama Game, which proved popular with local members of the Deaf Community. Michael and Janine joined the cast on stage after the performance and passed on feedback and congratulations from the audience on a superb production. BMT are not the only company in our Region to provide access to their performances through British Sign Language. ★



## A Stage Manager's Tale

Referring to the joys and tribulations of working backstage, The Grange Players young and talented Stage Manager has already made a significant contribution towards the world of theatre.

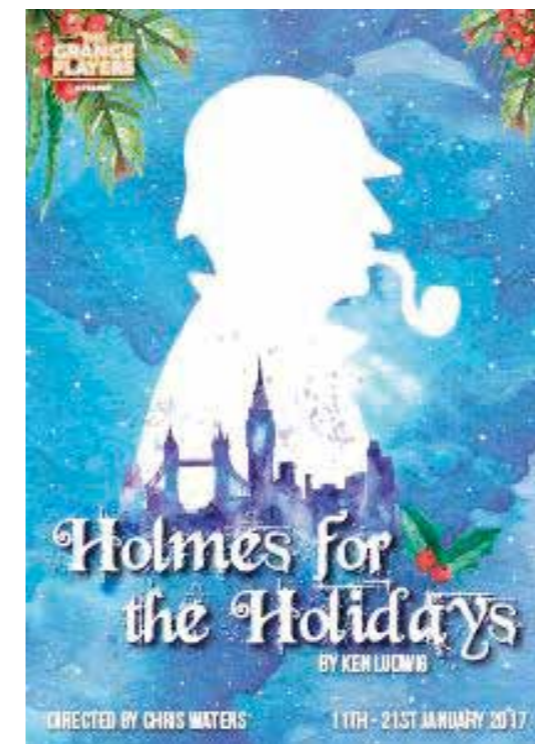
Here is what Katie had to say:

"Holmes for the Holidays' was my second experience of being a Stage Manager. The production presented many essential technical elements which were my responsibility. In the first ten minutes a lighting cue, firing a gun from the back of the auditorium, executing a set change and pushing the revolving wall on cue were immediate challenges.

Inevitably everything comes at once with prolonged times of nothing, making this one of the stressful aspect of the job. However, through rehearsals and planning, I attained coping mechanisms and developed a running order, just like actors learning their scripts. I learned the order of my responsibilities and when and where I can call on the cast and rest of the crew to help. The production had a revolving wall which had to be moved manually sometimes with an actor on it. Designed by Sam Evans and Rod Bissett it formed a segment of wall with a table on one side and a bar on the other all moved by three wheels and on cue. Luckily I had help for the majority of cues rather than moving it by myself. For the audience and keeping the 'magic' alive our invisibility was important and achieved by dressing in full blacks, complete with gloves and black tights over our faces.

Props play a big role, including food, drink and other items, all needing to be prepared before curtain up. During the show, cast are responsible for their personal props. However, knives, teacups and guns need special care and managing both on and off stage. Smooth running is the key and props manager Rachel Holmes sets a prop table in the wings with segments for each character and their props. Everything back stage relies on team work and high levels of organisation giving peace of mind both to me and the actors who now knew where to place their props. Moreover, Rachel and prompt Victoria Whitehouse were on hand to help when I could not be in two places at once. For example, after catching the thrown teacup (stage right), and attaching a knife to Liz Webster's back (stage left), one of them was waiting with a torch and the knife hilt, which we attached using the Velcro around both the hilt and some under the dress all while Liz delivered her lines.

Stage management, I must acknowledge, is not easy and I still have a lot to learn. Unpredictable things happen during the show and quick decisions are required by the Stage Manager. For this reason, my advice to others is to get as much experience as possible. For me I gain a sense of pride in myself when things go right, I feel proud of everyone and proud of myself for carrying the jobs out right. 'Holmes for the Holiday' has been a big confidence boost as I feel more comfortable in my ability and also in talking to people I have never met before. I have made so many talented friends and I look forward to sharing more experiences with them and people like them". ★



Stage Manager – Katie,  
The Grange Players,  
NODA West Midlands



## WODYS

There were celebrations and congratulations all round as Worcester Operatic and Dramatic Youth Society (WODYS) won the award for the Best Youth Production in District 10 for its sell-out 2016 Les Misérables (School Edition) at the NODA ceremony at Stourbridge Town Hall. Before the awards WODYS cabaret group and four of the principals from last year's Les Misérables performed a selection of songs and received a standing ovation from the audience ★



## Adding up the years of service

Birmingham Youth Theatre celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an after show awards ceremony with several cast members receiving 3, 4 and 5 year certificates. I had the pleasure of presenting NODA Long Service Awards to Chairman Karl Smith for his 50 years of service and Paul Douglass 25 years of service. ★

## AN INVITATION

We would be delighted to hear from you if you enjoy the wider aspects of Amateur Theatre. This is an exciting opportunity to be part of our dynamic regional team including assisting with society visits and production reviews. Training will be provided.

Apply by email to Ian G. Cox  
NODA West Midlands Regional Councillor ★

ian.cox@noda.org.uk

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