



New Mills & District
Amateur Operatic
&
Dramatic Society

News and
Views

January 2002

No. 46

Chairman's Remarks

Production of this issue of 'News & Views', so soon after the festive season, allows me the opportunity to say I hope all members had an enjoyable Christmas and to wish everyone a 'Happy New Year' whilst the memories are still fresh in our minds.

For those who attended, the Christmas celebrations got off to a good start in the Little Mill Inn on the 15th December when due to the wonderful efforts of Julia Cooper we all enjoyed a super party night – sincere thanks from us all Julia.

On the subject of celebrations, this year marks our Societies Eightieth Birthday. A special milestone, and I hope we can raise enough interest and enthusiasm from members present and past to enable us to celebrate with a memorable gathering later in the year.

This will, I think, be a very important year in deciding how the Society can best operate in order to survive. I raised the subject at the A.G.M. and in the next few weeks there will be serious discussion with the committee and interested members on how best we can progress. There are many issues to consider: membership, our audiences and income etc. but the most serious problem will almost certainly be how to deal with the unsuitable nature of the structure of the building in giving access to anyone with physical disadvantages. This is something we understand which will, in the not to distant future, become an essential part of the licence conditions for buildings used for public entertainment. To solve this problem will require some serious structural alterations at the foyer end of the Theatre and could ;prove very expensive.

We could arrive at a solution similar to the one faced in 1959 when a decision had to be made as to whether we go on, or decide to stop and call it a day. I think we should go on, but it will require a great deal of enthusiasm and practical participation from everyone, not least in raising the funds we shall need.

A challenge then! – helpful suggestions from any quarter will be most welcome and we will report further in our next issue.

Colin Brown.

HOW GREEN IS OUR BACKSTAGE?

This last summer saw the 'Interior Design' section of N.M.A.O.D.S. again being called into action.

Following the AGM when our attention was drawn to the sorry state of our general backstage area. A meeting of willing volunteers was well attended – something had to be done and lots of ideas were put forward. The biggest problems revolved round the vast areas of 'purpley/pinky' paintwork which could be difficult to cover, badly positioned hanging rails and large holes of one form or another which requires blocking up, filling in of otherwise disguising.

A large quantity of paint was mixed for us in a shade of green (officially christened 'Art Theatre Green') which we were advised would cover the existing décor of the stairs and upstairs dressing rooms whilst the downstairs dressing rooms and all woodwork and ceilings would be re-done in cream.

At the outset a lot of excellent work was carried out by our members with plumbing, plastering and joinery skills, and all the old eyesores of old disused windows, exposed pipe work and other obsolete features disappeared. Following this, the high ceilings and very awkward areas over the stairs were emulsioned by those of us with the necessary circus skills.

Then the aforementioned 'purpley/pinky' areas started to turn green.

The original plan was for there to be painted in a more commercial shade of green after 'Art Theatre Green' had done its toning-down work but after two applications it was starting to 'grow' on everyone plus the fact that issues of economy and time started to arise. Firstly we had enough of 'our' green paint to do it all again (if necessary) and holidays were affecting the availability of labour. Another problem – our depleting stock of appropriate wearing apparel as more turps was being used on the workers than on the work.

By this time we were well into rehearsals for 'Carousel' and cast members were frequently treated to the sight on hot summer nights of members up ladders or down on their knees in some not very glamorous 'overalls'.

The downstairs dressing rooms, toilet and passageway were painted cream and during this the well-known adage of 'if it doesn't move – paint it' applied: plus one of own – 'if it really doesn't move – paint round it'.

The whole job was completed with some very necessary floor painting (to disguise some careless work) and the addition of identification notices for the benefit of other organisations using the Theatre.

Jean and Judy.

ME AND MY GIRL

You may already be aware that our autumn production for 2002 will be **'Me And My Girl'** to be played at the **Art Theatre from Monday 25th November to Saturday 30th November 2002.**

The music is by Noel Gay with book and lyrics by L Arthur Rose and Douglas Furber.

'Me And My Girl' opened at the Victoria Palace, London in 1937. It starred Lupino Lane, George Graves and Teddy St. Denis and was the subject of one of the first outside broadcasts live from a theatre. It started the worldwide *'Lambeth Walk'* craze and went on to make theatrical history with a run of 1646 performances.

Because of the intervention of hostilities in 1939 and the absence of licensing rights for amateurs it was some years before the society was able to contemplate staging the show. So it was in 1963 that **'Me And My Girl'** graced the Art Theatre stage, to be followed in 1970 by a second staging. The show, with its very popular *'Lambeth Walk'*, *'Once You Lose Your Heart'*, and the title song *'Me and My Girl'* is a good company show with something for everyone, and was very well received.

Some of the pre-war shows have been rewritten and so it is with **'Me And My Girl'**. Stephen Fry revised the book and on November 22nd 1984 a new revamped **'Me And My Girl'** opened at the Leicester Haymarket Theatre. Several songs had been removed from the original score and some new ones were added, the two best known being some new ones were added, the two best known being *'The Sun has got his hat on'* and *'Leaning on a Lamp-post at the corner of the Street'*.

All the new songs are by Noel Gay with some revision contributions by Mike Ockrent so the continuity is still there.

It transferred to the Adelphi Theatre in London's West End in February 1985 where it had 'Sold Out' notices for several years. Eventually, it toured the country to the same acclaim.

It is the new, revised version which we will be performing **'Me And My Girl'** is funny, colourful, light-hearted and very easy on the ear. It is an ideal show for the Art Theatre with its compact stage, orchestra pit and auditorium.

The Get-together date will be announced presently but in the meantime please make a note of the playing dates in your new 2002 diary.

Wilfrid Gould.

ANNUAL DINNER

There was a change of venue this year for the Annual Dinner on October 12th 2001. Held at Disley Golf Club it was attended by around fifty people. It proved to be an excellent evening in a delightful setting. In a very relaxed atmosphere everyone enjoyed the food and company before listening to the Chairman's address.

Colin reminded us that next year is the societies 80th Birthday and a special effort will be required to make it a special event.

Colin presented NODA bars for long service to the Amateur Operatic Movement

The first one to Richard Hole was for thirty years service.

Starting with *The Student Prince* in 1971, he progressed to stage staff, bar manager, follow sport, and committee member.

Though conspicuous by his absence the bar will be given at a later date.

Next came Terry Barber with forty years service.

Starting with *The Desert Song* in 1961, with a rifle that was bigger than himself, he came back for more. As a Committee member, Current Stage Manager and Life member, we would be hard pressed without him.

Rather awkwardly Colin presented the next bar for forty years service to Himself!

He started with *Rose Marie* in 1956 and got involved with buying the Theatre when it closed as a Cinema. He has done most things along the way notably as a playing member in *Oklahoma* and *The King and I* to name but two.

Also as an electrician, long time committee member, Chairman and Life member he is still here to tell the tale!

Also for forty-five years, though unfortunately three years late, a bar will be presented to Beryl Ramwell at an appropriate moment. Beryl's first show was *'Annie Get Your Gun'* in 1953. Over the years she has had many leading roles, sometimes stepping in at a moments notice, i.e. often having to learn the lines of her opposite number (who found it impossible himself). In the last few years she has helped out front of house and has always been a loyal member.

From time to time society members are nominated for life membership for their services to the society. These are not given easily and at present we have only six life members. However two people stand out for a wide range of reasons, as deserving to be included in this exclusive list.

The first goes to Louise Hallam. Louie is our long serving genuinely active member. She, like Beryl started in *'Annie Get Your Gun'* in 1953 and progressed to her first part in *Wild Violets*, from there she had the role of leading lady over several years. When she was not taking a part she still enjoyed being a chorus member. She was prominent in the theatre take over, a long production and committee member, you name it, she's done it. She is presently editor of News & Views, a member of the alcoholic prop team.

The second life membership goes to Wilfred Gould who first came to the theatre to support his wife. He became a playing member and also a committee member. His various roles involved ticket sales, society secretary and show secretary with a talent

society work and during the last several years has made a financial success of producing our show programme.

Colin thanked Judy Foley and Joan Mays for their hard work in organizing the evening particularly in view of their involvement with back stage renovations, which have been taking place all summer.

Gill Crosland

NEWS FROM FRIENDS OF THE ART

By the time this newsletter reaches our members it will be almost time for the Annual Production. As I mentioned to you in the last Newsletter our production this year is *The Wizard of Oz*, which, as you know, is a musical rather than a pantomime.

Rehearsals started in October – the fact some of the cast were rehearsing both Carousel and the Wizard at the same time which clearly demonstrates their commitment to the Society. The dedication of these members and indeed all the cast will be obvious from the first performance. We have a strong production team again with Sheryl Haydock-Howorth as Director, Carolyn Hawkins as Musical Director and Beryl Gresty as Choreographer. Group bookings have been good and I strongly urge you to get your tickets as soon as public bookings opens on 14th January. Seats can be booked through Bookstop on Market Street, New Mills or by telephoning our ticket secretary Joan Mays on 01663 742364.

We again intend to run one of the ever-popular **Quiz Nights on the 23rd March at St. Mary's Hall, St. Mary's Road, New Mills.**

Maximum of six per team at £1-00 per team member

Start to get your team together and let Moira know your team name to reserve a table on the night.

Moira Whiteford,
Secretary,
Friends of the Art Theatre.
0161 427 5317

ANNIE

New Mills Youth Theatre presented the musical 'Annie' in the autumn, which again showed, to large audiences, what a wealth of talent there is in the group.

The role Annie was played by Corinne Ferris who carried it with surety, and aplomb. Capturing the hearts of all who saw her with her sweet singing and assured acting. A major achievement for one so young and we hope to see her develop into a mature actress. She was joined by the orphans in 'It's the Hard-Knock Life', which gave the show a tremendous start. Congratulations to them for their enthusiasm and discipline.

Moving on to the adults, Miss Hannigan was played superbly by Sally Rowe. Her portrayal of the nasty orphanage matron was first-class and she contrasted the subtlety of her solo 'With Girls' with the raunchiness of 'Easy Street' in which she was joined by Adam Musson (Rooster) and Natasha Graham (Lily) his partner in crime. Adam showed a wide range of skills from the scheming Rooster who also pretends to be Annie's father, to the popular radio show compere Bert Healy when he sings with some finesse 'Your never fully dressed without a smile'. The experience, which Adam has gained on the professional stage, was very obvious.

Oliver Warbucks, played by Leon Shufflebotham, was not brash but spoke with a quiet clarity. With a very good stage presence he was every inch the powerful but kind-hearted billionaire. His private secretary was played admirably by Lisa Dent. Her training as a dancer showed in her asserted poise and grooming. There was a well-observed authoritative performance of the President by Duncan Wallis.

The Orphans, Household Staff, Hoovervillites, New Yorkers and Senior Chorus gave first-class backing to the principals.

Producer/Choreographer Carolyn Dent, Director Laura Musson and Musical Director Christine Gartland combined their extensive talents to give a very enjoyable show and are to be warmly congratulated.

Alan Frater.

S.S.U.

So far we only have two events planned for this year:-

Miss Saigon at the Palace Theatre on Wednesday 20th March. Those travelling by coach will get details of time etc at a later date but I can tell you now that the price will be £6. I have booked 2 coaches – a 23seater and 35 seater which just accommodates the 58 of us travelling this way.

I have the names of 2 people who want to go if possible so if anyone has a spare ticket please let me know and I will re-sell if for you.

Annual Dinner This year will be our 80th anniversary so we will try to make the event special. No details available yet – we will keep you informed.

And don't forget that we are always open to suggestions

Joan P. Mays.

Forthcoming events for your diary

AUTUMN SHOW 2002

Our autumn production this year is *'Me and My Girl'* running from **Monday November 25th to Saturday November 30th.**

**First Get Together in the Art Theatre
WEDNESDAY MARCH 27TH at 8 pm.**

Auditions will be held towards the end of April, dates to be confirmed.

Anyone interested either in being in the show or helping in any other way do come along.

If you cannot attend on March 27th and would like further information please contact Lou Hallam on 01663 742818

FRIENDS OF THE ART THEATRE

**QUIZ NIGHT
SATURDAY MARCH 23RD @ 8 pm.
ST MARYS HALL. NEW MILLS.**

ADMISSION £1 per person. Maximum 6 persons per team.

Phone your team reservations to Moira Whiteford on 0161 427 5317.

S.S.U

This year will be the **80th Anniversary of N.M.A.O.D.S.** and we want to get the celebrations right. Judy & I will be putting together a list of ideas and we want members to tell us what they want.

Most, but not all, of the members likely to come to the **Birthday Party** will be going to see Miss Saigon in March so I intend to distribute voting papers to these people when I post details of the coach arrangements to them.

Will anyone interested in the party who is not coming to Miss Saigon contact me and I will make sure they are sent voting papers.

Joan P Mays:-Tel:01663-742364

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Some members will have received a letter with this broadsheet reminding them about their subscriptions, either overlooked, or with an amendment form for their Standing Order Authorisation

For those who are up to date with their subscription please allow me to remind everyone that at the Annual General Meeting in June 2001 a resolution was passed by the members attending to increase the rate of membership with effect from the 1st April 2002

The New Annual Rates are:-

Members	£10-00
Patrons	£12-50
Vice Presidents	£20-00
Junior Members (Under 16yrs)	£1-00

The Society Subscription year runs from 1st April to the 31st March.

Terry Barber:- Tel 01663-743826

The Kinder Choir in Concert
At the Art Theatre