



NANDA Newsletter



NANDA NEWSLETTER
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Nanda Theatre Luncheon

A highly successful NANDA Theatre Luncheon was held at the Welbeck Hotel Nottingham on Tuesday 17th March when 29 people attended to hear Simon Shepherd, (star of Peak Practice) give his observations of life in the theatre. Roy Ainscough presided. Simon managed his contribution by way of a question and answer session thereby giving all present the opportunity to ask him for views on their particular interests. Emerging the discussion was a fascinating insight into the role of directors and the interpretation of text. Simon was at pains to suggest that a key role of the actor was to give at all times the deepest respect to the script to ensure that the author intentions were ably expressed. He was aware that tensions could arise between the actor and the director as to the nature and content of interpretation, but these should be sorted by constructive dialogue between parties. He was aware that some directors acted as dictators and sometimes tended to be overbearing. The best directors were those who had the ability to act as "enablers", guiding the audience into a true understanding of the text and also by tact and judgement motivating the acting performances.

Particularly interesting were his views on audiences and their variations in appreciation both by region and even night by night. Fridays tended to be difficult; such cool responses being known in the profession as "Bankers Fridays". Variations in audience reaction was also key in playing humour. An early indifference to the play's humour is a sure sign of trouble so you need to employ a range of tactics to win them over. To the perennial "cougher" in the audience Simon advocated that at key moments the actor should directly look at the offender often inducing a brief but welcome silence. Simon explained that he had participated in all forms of drama but it was the theatre that from his early days gave him the greatest satisfaction. He could therefore well understand the wealth of interest in theatre and why so many people in AMDRAM continued to be creatively involved. He was looking forward to several new projects including a possible return to Nottingham in the autumn. In the meantime he could also envisage that NANDA societies would also be hard at work and he wished them well in all their endeavours.

BBC Radio Nottingham

Have you or your drama group got a story to tell? BBC Radio Nottingham wants to hear from you. If you have a story to tell about your time in drama, how you got involved and why, and would be keen to share it on the radio, please get in touch. Or would you like to choose a couple of songs to play on BBC Radio Nottingham's

morning show, or review the morning newspapers on BBC Radio Nottingham's breakfast show then please get in touch. If you or someone from your group might be willing to take part, please contact Gemma Wilkinson, futures producer on 0115 9021899 or email gemma.wilkinson@bbc.co.uk for more information.

Editors Notes...

We are still on the up and my glass is still half full – forever the optimist me! We must be positive about what we can offer. The interest from BBC Radio Nottingham is an excellent way of getting the message across that local theatre is a thriving part of our communities for the members and our audiences and can be enjoyed by everyone, they will be looking at our website and the newsletter for dates of productions and festivals to keep the

citizens of Nottinghamshire informed. It was rather interesting that the radio thought local theatre would be a thriving in the recession, with an evening out being so cost effective in comparison to many other evening activities. So, that may be a new angle of promotion for people who have never been before! As they said in Monty Python...always look on the bright side of life....Ed x.

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Dates for the diary

NANDA Youth Festival FESTIVAL 2009

May 8th/9th

Chilwell Olympia

NANDA PLAY OF THE YEAR DINNER 2009

Friday 19 June 2009

Cotgrave Place Golf Club

OPEN FORUM

June/July TBC

Nottingham Arts Theatre



NANDA News from the County

Stop Press....

After the success of last year's open forum. We will be looking to run one again this year. It's an excellent place to send along members and share ideas and plans for the coming year.

Keep an eye on the website for the date which will be sometime in June/July at Nottingham Arts Theatre. An email will be distributed.

Play of the Year Entries

- Bonington Players**—Witness for the prosecution by Agatha Christie
Burton Joyce Players—Cold Comfort Farm by Paul Doust
Blaby Drama Group—Wind in the Willows adapted by John Morley
Nottingham Arts Theatre—A Midsummer Nights Dream by William Shakespeare
West Bridgford Drama Society—Night must fall by Emyln Williams
Keyworth Dramatic Society—Role Play by Alan Ayckbourn
Orchard Theatre Company—Nevills Island by Tim Firth
Prospect Players—Taking Sides by Ronald Harwood
West Bridgford Dramatic Society—Flat Spin by Alan Ayckbourn
Keyworth Dramatic Society—House Guest by Francis Durbridge
Lace Market Youth Group—Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare
Bonington Players—Popcorn by Ben Elton
Burton Joyce Players—Slaughter House by Norman Robbins
Elaps—Blinded by the Light by Gill Bowness
West Bridgford Dramatic Society—The Master Builder by Henrik Ibsen

Trouble at T'Mill—By Neil Mackintosh

Youth Festival Update

Friday May 8th

7:00pm start

Burton Joyce Youth Goup
Lace market Youth Goup

Saturday May 9th

7:00pm start

Elaps Juniors
Lace market Youth Group
9:30pm Awards

Chilwell Olympia Centre
Long Eaton

Back in 1979 The Buggles sang "VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR" (it begins "I heard you on the wireless back in '52" - the year in which I was born). However—evolving technology and social evaluation notwithstanding—this should not systematically be accepted as an overriding condition of moving on. Radio can have a great deal going for it—in the right circumstances. In the early 1990's I wrote a radio play called "Mr Wigmore's Last Stand". It was for an ultimately aborted Hospital Radio project involving Stapleford Players. At the risk of sounding obvious, the great thing about radio plays is that you can set the scene quite simply (and cheaply!) with a few choice sound effects. If you can hear seagulls, you are at the seaside; add some waves and you are on the beach. Train noises and some incoherent tannoy announcements puts you on a railway station; and so on. Of course, this is audio overkill required for a non-visual medium, but it doesn't mean that you can't be more adventurous with your stage productions (though having said that, if you applied every sound that would be there in the real-life situation, it would get in the

way of the acting! Like everything—it's a case of the correct selection. Mind you—it is the acting itself that can benefit. (A long-standing actor from "The Archers" once said that it was great acting on the radio; don't have to learn your lines; no props, costumes or makeup to mess with; only have to work six afternoons a month, and all for a salary equivalent to more than £1,000 a week!) It's great for someone who likes to do a bit of character-acting. It doesn't matter what you look like or how old you are, its purely a matter of voice application. I mean, at 5 feet 3 inches I could hardly expect to win the roles of such icons as James Bond or Sherlock Holmes in a visual medium—but on radio? (I could play Doctor Watson though—any takers?!). Still—going back to Mr Wigmore, that started out as a script for an amateur film that never got finished. I lengthened it for the radio version (adding a few exterior scenes in this "no holds barred" medium); and I now have the notion of rewriting it as a stage play (removing the exterior scenes again!). So, irrespective of all that I have just said, perhaps I do belong on the stage after all!



Whatever happened to communication?

We need your help to come up with better ways of communicating with all NANDA group's membership. At the moment we send out e-mails and newsletters to the chairmen and secretaries of each member group but sometimes that is as far as those communications get! We ask those officials to forward the communication to each and every one of their members, whether on e-mail or not, but from the feedback we get from individuals it just isn't happening in every group.

For example, around 30 of us recently attended the NANDA Lunch with Simon Shepherd and enjoyed an excellent meal and most interesting discussion (Simon stood in at short notice for Roy Marsden, who was ill). Those 30 attendees came from just 8 groups so we wonder if members of the other 18 group heard about the event at all. Did this communication ever reach these members or did it stop with the chairman and secretary?

So, what can we do to reach every member of every group that belongs to NANDA? First things first, may we remind every group chairman and secretary that these e-mails are not just for you but are supposed to be forwarded to all your group members. Secondly, group members can help themselves by looking at the NANDA website, www.nanda.org.uk where all newsletters and other communication is posted. Thirdly there is no doubt that communication is better in the groups that take part in the council meetings - all groups are invited to send representatives so if you want to find out more, contact the NANDA secretary or chairman and come along. Finally, if you have any better ideas for how we could improve communications without it costing a fortune please let us know (that is if you ever see this newsletter in the first place)!

Elaps celebrates 10 years...

East Leake Amateur Players resides in the Borough of Rushcliffe, Located in the county of Leicestershire, we're 1000 yards out of Nottinghamshire but we pay our due's and taxes to Nottingham. If you've never been—Elaps' is the most southern group in NANDA, (the weather is much warmer here and its nearly always sunny!), the good news is the currency is the same.

The group started as a concept in someone's lounge in December 1998, a few flyers and posters later the group auditioned and recruited members for its first show "Family Planning" in May 1999.

We started off with money on loan from its 12 members and a bit of credit for rehearsal time in the local village hall. Everything was on a tight budget, set, costumes and publicity. We hit the local Co-op in April 1999 to promote it. We all took 2 hourly shifts between us but couldn't work out why nobody seemed to be very interested, quickening their pace and uttering "no thank you's" before we'd even started our pitch. We then realised that the words "Family Planning" were the largest on our poster and we probably should have made "East Leake Amateur Players Presents" just as big. Oh the importance of good marketing and advertising.

We moved on to our second production in the round of "Christmas Carol", a rather adventurous project creating Scrooge's house in the centre of our village hall with makeshift fabric walls that disappeared to reveal each part of Scrooges' past, present and future life. We managed to spend all of the profit made on

"Family Planning" on "Christmas Carol". Thus starting our second year pretty much on nothing—£11.80 I think! So two very important lessons very early on in our existence, marketing and budgeting. Something that Sir Alan would have ripped us apart for, but lessons learnt in the early days have made us a much better and stronger group now.

Over the last 10 years we have grown our membership and created a very talented Youth Group. Re-invested back into our village hall with new curtains, blinds, stage extension, stage sets, lighting and sound rigs, a pretty impressive wardrobe department, smoke machines and just recently a laptop computer. We have fun and have some fantastic friends in the group. We've had some great support from local business's who continue to sponsor us each year and are grateful for funds from East Midlands Airport, Town lands Trust, our own Parish Council and Nottingham Arts Council and costume assistance from Keyworth Dramatic Society when we set up.

We don't have the biggest theatre, our stage is really quite small, our wings not really big enough to fly anything in or out of. But we have great fun doing it. We're still learning, - we may only have 10 years on groups that have been going for 40 but we have a group that's as warm and sunny as the Algarve and willing to please. Just remember to bring a cushion as we haven't yet raised the funds for padded seats, but it will happen!

Treasurers Note....

As the financial and membership year runs from 1st September to 31st August, this is the issue of the NEWSLETTER that contains your renewal invoice, thus giving you 4 months to remit your subscription (in time to receive your next newsletter in September). Please note that rates were increased this year at the AGM. For the record the new rates are: £25.00 for GROUP membership, £15.00 for INDIVIDUAL Membership; £7.50 for Newsletter subscription and for extra newsletters. As always contact Neil Mackintosh if you have any queries!

Don't forget we need your gurd award nominations

This can be for anyone in your group or within the amateur dramatics world who genuinely gives their time to amateur theatre without any mutual gain.

The rules and regulations for this award can be found on our website.

Nominations to Joan Wildgust by 5th June 2009



Summer Calendar

May 4-9	M Butterfly by David Henry Hwang	Lace Market Theatre, Halifax Place, Nottingham, 0115 9507201
May 11-16	Bare Foot In The Park by Neil Simon	Nottingham Arts Theatre, Nottingham City Centre, 0115 9476096
May 13-16	The Cemetery Club by Ivan Menchell	Prospect Players, Bonington Theatre, Arnold, 01159 208006
May 14-16	Blinded By The Light by Gill Bowness	East Leake Amateur Players, East Leake Village Hall, 01509 852364
May 14-16	Café Style One Act Plays	Kegworth Players, The Village Hall, Kegworth, 01509 821941
May 19-23	The Master Builder by Henrik Ibsen	West Bridgford D.S., The Studio, Stamford Rd, W.Bridgford 07960992196
May 20-23	In Camera (Huis Close) by Jean-Paul Satre	Lace Market Theatre, Halifax Place, Nottingham, 0115 9507201
May 21-24	Dance the Show by Summers in the Dance Ltd	Nottingham Arts Theatre, Nottingham City Centre, 0115 9476096
June 1-6	A Letter of Resignation by Hugh Whitmore	Radcliffe on Trent Drama Group, Grange Hall, R-O-T, 0115 9332906
June 8-13	The Happiest Days of Your Life by John Dighton	Lace Market Theatre, Halifax Place, Nottingham, 0115 9507201
June 8-13	Cranford by Elizabeth Gaskell	Nottingham Arts Theatre, Nottingham City Centre, 0115 9476096
June 17-19	Ladies Day by Amanda Whittington	Keyworth Dramatic Soc., Keyworth Village Hall, 0115 9372796
June 27th	Storytellers of Nottingham—Stories of Jack the Ripper	Burton Joyce Players, Village Hall, Burton Joyce, 0115 9312399
July 1-4	Helen by Euripedes (Translation by Bella Zewig)	Lace Market Theatre, Halifax Place, Nottingham, 0115 9507201
July 2-5	A Midsummer Nights Dream by William Shakespeare	All Hallows Dramatic Soc., Vicars Garden, 121 Holme Rd, 01159140689
July 6-11	Sweet Charity by Neil Simon	Nottingham Arts Theatre, Nottingham City Centre, 0115 9476096
July 9-11	Evening of One Act Plays	West Bridgford D.S., The Studio, Stamford Rd, W.Bridgford 07960992196
July 20-25	Quartet by Ronald Harwood	Lace Market Theatre, Halifax Place, Nottingham, 0115 9507201

Nanda Profile—Tony Vokes

Tony Vokes has been a member of the West Bridgford Dramatic Society for (here he lowers his voice!) forty years and has been their NANDA Representative for the past three years.

He was born and bred in West Bridgford and considers himself a true “Bridgfordian” although he hastens to add that the “bread and lard island” reputation always associated with West Bridgford is no longer valid.



As a young boy he was educated in the local Infant and Junior schools and for just over a year at the local Secondary school before passing his 13+ examination and completing his education at The Newark Magnus Boys’ Grammar School. His love of drama was instantly introduced to him when his sister took him to see the 1948 David Lean film of Charles Dickens’s “Oliver Twist”. It left a deep impression on him, and as a seven year old boy he constantly acted out in the confines of his bedroom the characters of ‘Oliver’, ‘Artful Dodger’ etc! It was this film too that started his flirtation with the works of Dickens although he confesses there are still quite a few novels unread.

His year at the Secondary School re-ignited his keenness for acting and he considers himself very fortunate to have had two excellent English Masters in Mr. Dawson (Christian name unknown) and Tony Armstrong who is so well known locally for his great contribution to amateur theatre in Nottingham – indeed, he was cast as ‘Ratty’ in Tony Armstrong’s school production of “Toad of Toad Hall” when he heard he would be going to The Magnus School and consequently had to give up the part. Eventually the lure of wanting to do more varied work attracted him to West Bridgford Dramatic Society and this is still his ‘home’. He was very soon cast as ‘Algernon’ in Oscar Wilde’s “The Importance of Being Ernest” and has since those early days appeared in many full length Productions. Currently he is in rehearsal For Ibsen’s “The Master Builder” and says he has a gem of a part because he is only on stage for the first eight minutes and then disappears into the ‘Green Room’ where he can spend the rest of the play sipping coffee or other suitable refreshments, only having to make himself available for the final ‘Curtain Call’!

He considers his most challenging and enjoyable role as that of ‘John Barrett’ in N. J. Crisp’s drama “Dangerous Obsession”. Only three characters in the play but each one so different and finely drawn. ‘Barrett’s’ transformation from ‘nurd’ to a psychotic, frightening man gives an actor a dream of a role to fulfil. Tony said the team spirit and great acting from the other two characters made it a memorable Production. His most embarrassing moment on stage was when he was playing ‘Garry Essendine’ in Noel Coward’s “Present Laughter”. In one of the many pontifical speeches that Garry made, Tony suddenly thought that something was crawling down his leg. To his horror he realised his pyjama trousers were falling down. Trying to retain his ‘Essendine’ character he excused himself from the actress on stage, strode into the wings (it was at Stanford Hall, Loughborough) and was very quickly “pinned” up by two delightful lady ASM’s. He walked back onto the stage (still in character), resumed his pose and promptly forgot his lines! Fortunately the audience were very understanding, if however very amused!

For many years now Tony has concentrated mostly on directing (total of plays directed currently standing at fourteen) and professes to have a great liking for directing Farce. Among these Productions are “See How They Run”, “Funny Money”, and “Run For Your Wife”. He also enjoys directing other forms of drama and of these he remembers fondly “A Taste of Honey”, “The Winslow Boy” and “Outside Edge”. Tony is now retired and his other leisure pursuits include being a harassed season ticket holder at Nottingham Forest and as a complete change, singing tenor in St; Giles’ Church Choir! The usual question of ‘what two people and three objects would you take with you to a desert island’ was thrown at him and after a long deliberation Tony came up with the answers of Dame Judie Dench for her great acting talent, warmth and sincerity and Derek Jacobi because of his wonderful performance, and the incredible stammer he perfected in “I Claudius”. The three objects were The Bible, complete works of Charles Dickens and a music centre and cd’s, the only proviso being that the batteries for the music centre must never expire! Tony concluded by saying that during the last three years he has come to realise what an important role NANDA can play in the lives of all our Societies. He urges every Society to send a representative to the Council Meetings and says that working together as a complete unit can only enhance amateur drama in the county and it can also bring many people together and forge lasting friendships.

For contributions contact Hayley at 17 Towson Field, East Leake, Leics, LE12 6RY or newsletter@nanda.org.uk