

Chairmans' Report

This last financial year has been short but very sweet.

Our in house productions began with a Glynis Smith spectacular (cast of thousands) entitled "Good Night Mr. Tom". The cast were all so happy to be back on stage, it had been a long wait. Originally designated for 2020 the children's parts had to be recast as they had all grown! Rehearsals were held online and in Glynis' garden as social distancing was still in force. With an imaginative set and a puppeteer playing the sheep dog it enchanted everyone. And the audiences came with an almost sell out. Congratulations to Glynis and her team.

Next we had the long awaited musical "9-5". This Dolly Parton favourite was in the hands of Nathan Wilde who once again gave us a superb musical treat. We welcomed quite a few new and returning members to the cast. The company also rehearsed online and in the carpark at the back the theatre before Covid restrictions were lifted. The band were on stage all the time for this musical setting a bit of a trend .Very popular with the audience Congratulations to Nathan and his team.

"Snow White and her Seven Dwarves " were hoping to take us to the diamond mines in January but sadly had to delay until February. It coincided with the half term holiday and audience numbers were almost back to normal. Andy had promised fantastic costumes and a big band, he didn't disappoint. All in all a brilliant performance. Congratulations again.

A Bunch of Amateurs was another show postponed due to lockdown but took to the stage in March. Only one character needs to be recast and we were fortunate to welcome Kate Powell to the Norbury. Another well played production but very badly supported. Not even our own members turned out to support this highly talented cast. Directed by John and Anne .However, the audiences were very appreciative and most complimentary so many congratulations.

Charley's Aunt came visiting in May. This hilarious period farce delivered on all fronts. Fast paced and extremely funny. Again it had been cast pre Covid and only required a few minor changes. With a mainly young cast it really makes one feel that the tradition of plays will long continue at The Norbury. We welcomed Keith..... for his directing debut at the Norb, having previously directed at the Swan Worcester. A great night out for those who attended the cast deserved better. Congratulations and well done.

Legally Blonde. Although strictly for next years AGM as it falls in next years financial year we can't possibly ignore our very last production. It was up beat and full of high energy many congratulations to the cast, Mel and her team. During the first week we were worried about audience numbers but the Droitwich Jungle Drums got into action and we filled the theatre during the second week.

Audience numbers had been extremely poor since Panto so we were delighted with the up turn in numbers for Legally Blonde. Many Theatres, even the West End are struggling with poor ticket sales. The economic climate, as we all know is worrying at the moment, let's just hope we all soon bounce back.

Children's theatre returned in the Autumn and it was a real treat to see the auditorium filled with excited little people with their Mums and Dads ,Grans and Grandad and assorted friends and relations. John Birchley premiered his play "How Much is that Dragon in the Window". Just watch out when you're next in The Lido Park! It was a triumph! As were all the plays this season. A huge "Thank You" to Carl Smythe for organising the last season and welcome and "Good Luck" to Glynis Smith who has volunteered to take on the reigns. Well done and Thank you to all who take part . If you've always fancied having a go please contact Glynis.

Not strictly for this season but I'm sure you'll be delighted to know that Beginners on stage has resumed. Paul Steele has taken on the mantle and the group are already rehearsing for their Autumn Musical which is Aladdin. Please support them we have approx 20 at the moment.

Unfortunately Norbury Youth Theatre is yet to reform. We have volunteers happy to help but as yet no one to take the Helm. Could this be job for you?

We will continue with cinema during the coming seasons but will "take a sabbatical " from screenings until audiences regain their confidence.

The Norbury is increasingly becoming the venue of choice for many of the local am dram companies. This does mean that we need to "man" the theatre more often and help back and front of house is needed.

We are so lucky to have such a talented back stage and technical team. Did you see the tributes to Ukraine and The Queen on the occasion of the Platinum jubilee? Stunning. The team are always looking to improve our facilities. Some hirers have quite demanding requirements but they always rise to the challenge. The team are always happy to train new volunteers in any of the disciplines. We are lucky to have them.

So skilled are our Team that they recently designed and rigged the lighting for Christopher Whitehead School in Worcester. They gave their time freely, Well done

Kirsty Purvis organises our FOH rotas and posts on Facebook every Monday without fail, it is now easy to see when FOH staff are required. To encourage FOH staff we are introducing a loyalty scheme. Each duty carried out is rewarded with a stamp on the award card, 10 stamps can then be exchanged for a free seat to a performance of your

choice, you can even gift your card to a friend. Duty Managers get 2 stamps per duty. Bar staff are also rewarded. This is an experiment until Christmas.

These days most of our tickets are purchased on line. With this in mind we have reduced the hours that the Box Office is open. The "Box" will be open now on Monday, Wednesday and Friday only between 11.00 and 12.00 and 7.00 and 8.00pm. Pre show will remain the same.

The theatre is usually represented at Wychavon and Droitwich Town functions.

Tuesday Tap continues to thrive and have been invited to dance with The Kirsty Purvis' Schools bi-annual concert later this month. All the dancers are members of the theatre, each contribute £10 each half term for the use of the theatre. The tutor is paid separately.

Scrabble club continues to meet on Tuesdays

The theatre still provides the costumed characters for The Town Walks ,at present there are only three volunteers if you would like to know more then please contact Anne

David Goode has been taking his character "John Corbett" into Westacre School. The school have made a donation for his appearances .

We continue to offer "theatre tours "for schools and local organisations. These are always popular and generate not just extra income but also an interest in our theatre and our productions. Talks on the theatre can also be given to interested parties.

Should you be looking to supplement your summer wardrobe then Norbury Theatre Polo shirts are available. Sample sizes are available to try on and shirts are available in a range of colours and sizes. Order and pay at the Box Office.

This year has been almost as difficult as last with the dreaded virus still a threat, meaning some productions have ben postponed or shows cancelled.

My thanks to each and every member of Theatre Council for their support, dedication and hard work over the last season.

Anne

STAGE COMMITTEE REPORT

The last yearbook was for our 2019 AGM. At the time, I stated "Each year I take the opportunity of this report to thank the stage committee for their contribution in ensuring we have our own programme in place as well as looking at all other productions and screenings." Little did we know I would not be able to report such a message in a yearbook again until now.

During lockdown, licences for shows needed to be continually reviewed. Rightsholders were generally supportive to theatre groups, but some shows went off licence for numerous reasons such as West End revivals or pro tours. Some changes have taken place such as mergers and acquisitions with rightsholders.

I was delighted with the responses we received upon return in September with our audience levels, but this has not been maintained as Anne will have reported for our last two plays and more recently Legally Blonde whereby it was noticeable members as well as general audience members were simply not there.

The recent audience levels have therefore required us to look at our future plans. We will continue to review audience levels over the next 12 months – maybe next year will be a different story in what we are able to report to the AGM. However, in 2023 we are doing one less play and we have cut the number of performances for all shows except pantomime.

We are also taking time out from screening productions from the Royal Opera House. These simply were not generating the income to cover costs. Maybe we will return in the future.

For cinema, please see the report from Ange but again box office is currently disappointing.

So, what are the plans here on.

We have just finished Legally Blonde – another show originally scheduled for 2020. Hopefully you will have seen the show yourself so no need to go into detail. Was however great to see this show on stage and involving many of our younger members who we look forward to seeing in future shows as well as the older ones! Of course special mention regarding Sid and Lola! We are now however either hiring or selling the set which will be great if we can partly cover the cost to us.

In rehearsal we have Spider's Web by Agatha Christie. These are always popular with our audience (two of our previous Christie plays have won Best Drama). Did you know her books have sold over 500,000,000 copies and translated into more languages than Shakespeare. This play premiered in the West End in 1954. I know whodunit but I'm not telling – so come along and work it out if you can when performed in September!

I hope by the time of the AGM to have the Diamond Jubilee (our jubilee not the other one) Concert, to be staged in October, cast. This promises to have songs from many West End / Broadway musicals. With Anne Lane and I, along with Laurence, Kirsty and Lois we hope it will include your favourites whether Les Misérables, Phantom or The Prince of Egypt.

In November we reach a milestone. Our final postponed production from Covid-19 days. Our Beginners on Stage will perform for one day only (two performances) – Disney's Aladdin Jr. This will be great, and our youngest members will be delighted to have your support, which I am sure they will.

Pantomime 2023 is once again the ever-popular Cinderella. Hopefully now fully cast but you never know the directors may still be on the lookout! Please see either John Birchley or Anne Lane if you are interested. The script is a NODA one (hurray) and many will have heard of the author as it is no less than John Birchley himself. You may even be able to get your script or programme signed! Panto will sell out – oh yes it will so better book early.

We hope to be able to enter at least one play into the one act festival in March. Please see anyone on council or stage committee if interested.

Our March play is not fully agreed but could well be The Darling Buds of May. The play opened at the Saville Theatre in London in September 1959 (the site is now the Odeon Cinema Covent Garden) so well before even the original television adaptation. However, the characters are the same including Pop and Ma Larkin, the children and so on.

The summer musical is to be Anything Goes. I will be directing this one with Laurence and Lois on board. This timeless musical has been brought up to date from the original. Last year it had a hugely popular run at the Barbican before embarking on a UK tour. This summer it returns to the Barbican. Look out for more details very soon but promises to be de-lightful.

The September play again not fully agreed but could very well be Absent Friends by Alan Ayckbourn. Ayckbourn plays are always popular with cast and audience so again look out for information once this is confirmed. This will be the first time we have performed this one which opened in Scarborough in 1974 and on the West End in 1975.

Moving on and in the autumn, we cross the pond to Oklahoma! This was the first musical from the ever-popular Rodgers and Hammerstein partnership. Jimmy Hill and Emma Waters along with Laurence take the rein for this one – more details to follow.

We have not yet got information to announce any future youth or beginners on stage productions. As always information will be on the web site as well as social media.

Children's Theatre will continue. Although a new coordinator with Glynis Smith overseeing the saying 'Don't fix what's not broken' covers this popular regular event. Speak with Glynis if interested in taking part in these.

We are looking for a director and production team for pantomime 2024. Interested? Speak with us.

Andy Brown

FoH report for Norbury Theatre 2022 AGM

The last year has been a challenging year FoH. Whilst we have generally managed to staff events often this has involved repeated pleas at a very late stage and sometimes adjusting the number of stewards relative to the size of the expected audience. A number of those who were volunteering pre Covid have not returned to the theatre and I understand why this may be but we are now more or less back to the pre-Covid procedures. Duties have been undertaken by a small number of members, often by 'doubling up' for example a tea and coffee steward also becoming auditorium steward or someone finishing a stint in the Box Office to then work the coffee bar during an interval. People are, I believe, more likely to volunteer for in-house productions rather than external hires.

Discussion has taken place at a number of Theatre Council meeting about what FoH volunteers are asked to wear as the 'black and white' rule may be seen as a deterrent to some members volunteering. It was decided that we would ask members to dress smartly for FoH duties in the hope that would encourage more to take up the role, especially younger members. We ask that auditorium stewards are over 18 as they may need to act as Mr Sand marshals and that sweets, teas and coffee stewards are over 16. Audience numbers have had an effect on the amount of drinks and sweets being sold. (I am writing this without having seen the accounts) I try to stock up before big productions such as musicals or pantomime but more items that I can remember have gone past 'Best before' dates so it has been difficult to organise purchase of stock. Whether this is because we have not opened the Sweet kiosk since Covid (which audience members have to pass as they enter the auditorium so may so may succumb to temptation) but with fewer volunteers coming forward I do not know when we will be able to do so. As with so much else at the moment sweet prices are beginning to rise.

We have decided to introduce a Loyalty scheme (like coffee shop ones) which members can opt into, this will be initially for Front of House, but if successful we may extend to other areas of the theatre.

We desperately need Duty Managers.

We have plans to rationalise Box Office opening hours as BO staff sometimes do not sell any tickets on their shift.

Thanks to all Box Office staff, Kirsty for rotas and all members who volunteer FoH.

As ever we need more FoH volunteers to ensure the comfort and safety of not only our audience members, but also cast members, musicians, crew and technicians. As some of the first people audiences meet they set the tone for our little theatre, if you feel you could volunteer please come and speak to any member of Theatre Council or contact us via the website.

John Birchley
Front of House

Norbury Bar 2021/22

It was great to reopen the bar in July 2021 and start serving our patrons again after the long period of lock down. In the period from July to the end of the financial year in March the bar made a profit of approx. £4,900

Some of the wholesale prices for items we buy are increasing and we are keeping an eye on all costs and increasing our prices at the bar to ensure we remain profitable.

The biggest problem is finding staff to help on the bar. I send out emails to 22 addresses I know many of these people have other roles in the theatre but at the moment the bar is being manned by 4 people only and I am sure that unless I get more volunteers there will be performances when the bar will not be able to open due to lack of staff.

If you would like to help on the bar please contact me, training will be given, no adding up required

Alan Lane lanedroitwich@btinternet.com

Marketing Report

New marketing budget - £3,000 for the year

This will be used solely to enhance the theatre's image and to push theatre awareness. Each show will contribute to the Marketing budget from the show budget. Up to £750 from a musical and £400 from a play. This will help market the show through multiple channels: social media, Newspapers, digital screens etc.

New Marketing team

Marketing Manager – Nathan Wilde (Theatre Council) Ben Thompson (Theatre Council)

Melanie Brown (Theatre Council)

Jimmy Hill (Theatre Member)

We are aware that other members would like to be involved. If this is you, please drop me an email: Nathan.wilde2021@gmail.com

New website

New website design really brings the brand to life and places us up there with other theatres on the national scene.

We have also made listings easier by redirecting traffic to Norbury's TicketSource page. This removes a step out of the booking process.

You'll notice that the Norbury Splodge on the homepage is currently sporting the colours of PRIDE during the month of June 2022 in support of diversity in it's many glorious forms. This will be changed to show our support of national, local and international awareness days, weeks or months going forward.

New social logo (Norbury Splodge)

The new Norbury Splodge brings the fun and modern element to the Norbury brand. Social media platforms, trailers and newspaper ads have been updated to reflect this.

New brand colour palette (featuring the original magenta)

Our mission was to create a palette that didn't deviate from the much loved, original colour scheme of the Norbury whilst adding more depth and a professional look to our image. All new public facing ads, press releases and promotions will now sport these new colours along with the faithful Magenta that is currently used in our logo.

New style designs for in-house signage

We have been working to get all in-house signage updated to reflect the new brand colours and assets and we are nearly done. We are currently awaiting a final quote for the signage for our theatre entrance. The design will in large remain the same but it will be a more permanent fixture.

Sundries now available via Ticket Source

We are not in a position where we can (if we wish) sell Norbury branded mugs and programmes at the same time as a ticket purchase via either TicketSource or Box Office.

There are a few more tests to make sure the process is manageable for patrons and the FoH team. More on this in the coming weeks/months.

NFC chips ready to be attached to posters

NFC technology has been in circulation for a long time now and has become massively more affordable over the past couple of years. We have therefore invested in NFC chips which will soon be used on the posters/poster boards outside the entrance to the theatre. This will enable those with a smartphone to tap and purchase tickets in seconds. Please note: This will not be replacing current methods of purchasing tickets. It will add another channel of sales to our armory.

I hope you agree that this is a huge step forward in embracing technologies that not only enhance people's visits but also attract new (tech savvy) members and patrons to our venue

Norbury Theatre TikTok account

Jimmy has setup the Norbury Theatre's first TikTok account. This provides us with the opportunity to peak interest in the theatre and it's productions via an increasingly popular social media platform, especially amongst the younger generations.

Marketing timeline agreed

We have needed to have a clear marketing timeline for our in-house productions. It will let directors and their creative teams know exactly when their show is due to be publicized.

We felt that this was needed to ensure all shows have a fair amount of publicity and marketing support on the build up to opening nights, auditions etc.

However, that said, our primary function is to market and publicize functions, events and performances that yield the most income for the advancement and survival of the theatre.
How we communicate

Whilst we appreciate that there are many members that do in fact like our updates via post, we are also aware that there are many others that would prefer digital copies. In an age where sustainability is a growing concern, it is the marketing team's opinion that we must try to do our little bit to help the environment and our planet. I propose that we ask people when we next do a mail out. A small piece of paper that allows people to opt-out of printed copies. The reason for choosing to opt-out, rather than opt in is to ensure that those without the use of PC's, Tablets etc are not left in the dark. If we receive no response, they will continue to receive by post. This will save money on paper and stamps whilst saving the planet at the same time. Small actions, big impact.

Introduction of trailers for in-house musicals and pantomimes

You may have noticed that we have trialed a trailer for Legally Blonde. We are currently seeing a huge amount of engagement off the back of this, therefore are planning to produce a trailer for all productions that meet all of the following criteria:

- The production must be produced by The Norbury Theatre
- The production must be categorized as either a musical or a pantomime
- The license must allow the marketing team to capture short visual recordings
- The production must have a run of no less than 7 performances
- All cast (or a parent/legal guardian) must agree for the performers to be

recorded for marketing and distribution purposes

Nathan Wilde

Technical Report

As a technical team we have continued to make improvements in a number of the technical aspects of the theatre throughout the last year.

The theatre website received a major overhaul and relaunch towards the end of last year. This coincided with the rebranding of a number of our signs and logos to give a more uniformed look to the theatre both online and in print. The website now allows us to

automatically take detailed hire enquiries and marketing/brochure submissions. My thanks for to Nathan and the marketing team for their combined work on this.

We have expanded the way in which we use TicketSource, our ticketing platform. We now feature more detail on there, including show posters and synopses, and there is even the option of buying sundries such as a show programme in advance at the same time as your ticket. This reduces the amount of cash we are handling and takes some of the pressure off of front of house volunteers during show nights. TicketSource now links in with the eNews, so anybody that allows their email address to be shared for marketing purposes automatically gets added to the eNews mailing list.

We now have a high-definition video and sound feed that goes into all dressing rooms, with thanks to new 'video-over-Ethernet' wiring technology, HD screens and broadcast-quality video cameras. Both cast and crew backstage can now see clearer images of what is happening on stage. We can also send any input to any output, so if for any reason we wanted to watch a live satellite feed in the dressing rooms instead of on the projector screen we could via the push of a button.

We have been granted 300 Microsoft Office licenses for free for theatre use due to our charity status. Over the course of the next year we will be rolling out Microsoft Teams for meetings and productivity, as well as a number of other Microsoft Office products. This has saved the theatre thousands of pounds. Training will start with members of theatre council and will then be rolled out to members of other committees and show directors.

The stage lighting system has received some subtle upgrades mainly as a result of us covering the orchestra pit more, meaning that a different type of front light is needed. As we have started to put pit orchestras at the rear of the stage, additional stage-facing TV screens have been fitted to the spotlight boxes so that cast members can see the MD via a video feed.

The theatre social media accounts have continued to be vital in reaching a large and varied audience. We have continued to build on Facebook and Twitter accounts as well as recently launching a Tik Tok account with help from a number of theatre members. A new Instagram account will follow later this year.

Throughout the year we have welcomed new faces into the technical team, with a number of members coming forward and expressing an interest in sound and lighting. We have also been able to accommodate a number of high school leavers for informal work experience, with the latest student operating the lighting for the final two nights of Legally Blonde.

The technical team have been actively involved in supporting events in the town, such as Friar Street Festival.

This year all information nights have been live-streamed via Facebook. Hopefully this is proven beneficial to people who haven't been able to attend in person. They are also recorded for future reference.

Moving forward into the next theatre year we aim to continue to build on the strong links that have been formed with the new marketing team and further increase the theatres reach in the public domain. With many people finding they have less money left over to spend on theatre trips at the moment it is important we extend our reach as far as we can and get the word out about our great little theatre. We also have a number of digital advertising screens to install that were donated free of charge. These will eventually replace the standard show posters outside the theatre and allow us to advertise more effectively indoors too. We will also be rolling out a public Wi-Fi service in the communal areas of the theatre. Since we are now more dependent of Wi-Fi for things like card machines the Wi-Fi at the theatre has been locked down for security reasons.

If anybody has any questions or suggestions regarding the technical side of the theatre, or would like to get involved, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Ben Thompson

Wardrobe

This last twelve months has been anything but easy. In fact it has been one of the most challenging years we have faced

This year I have joined fellow wardrobe mistress Jo Lush to offer assistance within wardrobe and work towards utilising our costume resources on a more regular and sustainable basis by generating additional income for the theatre.

I am very excited for the journey we are taking and how we are moving the wardrobe forward with a new lease of life.

In August 2021 we took part in a wardrobe clear out. We are grateful for everyone who came to assist at this time. We cleared out a lot of old items but there is still a lot of work to do.

Graeme is currently in liaison with Norbury House regarding the wardrobe roof due to the leaks that are coming through. We just need to understand who is the legal owner of the roof.

Jo and I would like to give a special thank you to Alison Chorley who has been assisting us with wardrobe.

We are embarking on an exciting time for the wardrobe;

Arranging plans for wardrobe layout and arrange an itinerary of all items so they will be more accessible for directors and outside hires. We will then be able understand what items are being used and what is not. We can also track items and where they are at given times.

I am currently looking at dates to arrange a clothes sale at the theatre for any costumes we are no longer using. If not sold they will then be donated to charity if possible. Any proceeds made will be invested in buying new costumes including a wider variety of sizes.

We are also looking to arrange a hire arrangement for members at a reduced rate to offer an advantage to our members.

If anyone would like to assist with wardrobe please get in touch with myself or Jo.

We would also like to ask if anyone has spare plastic boxes as they would be appreciated.

Grace and Jo

NODA (National Operatic and Dramatic Association)

In September 2016 I became regional representative for the new district five. I held this position until September 2021 when I became regional councillor for the West Midlands and therefore I sit on the council of trustees. Many will know Ian G Cox who was previously regional representative, then councillor who is now chairman of NODA.

As most members will know we continue to be active members of NODA, the display of certificates shows the successes we have had over recent years with awards in – youth, musicals, pantomime, drama and for programmes. The awards from 2019 announced online in May 2020 are now on display.

At the time of writing the West Midlands Regional Conference AGM and Awards are due to be held at the Norbury on 3rd July 2022 where we are due to be presented a special award. We look forward to welcoming the National President to the Norbury Theatre. NODA continues to publish a regular magazine NODA Today. This can be read online.

NODA long service medals continue to be very popular across many groups. Further information is available online.

Show reports for the whole societies across the whole of the UK are online.

Over the last year we have held meetings of the West Midlands regional committee at the Norbury and welcomed colleagues from the team as well as the Chair of NODA and colleagues from the committee to our in house productions.

Should you have any questions regarding NODA please contact me at any time.

Andy Brown