



# Newsletter

July 2015

## Chairman's Message

First and foremost thanks to all for a really successful last season with great productions and once again making a small surplus to invest in the fabric and future of the theatre.

We took Merchant to Stratford under Jen's guidance and our relationship with the RSC continues now through Dream 16 with 6 actors playing the "Mechanicals" in A Midsummer Night's Dream in February. I am sure you will join me in congratulating the Nonentities Company on such amazing accomplishments.

We are also hosting the Guild of Little Theatres regional conference in October. This will be part of celebrating our new branding of the Rose.

It will be obvious when you come back for the season that we have been very busy this summer with a programme of refurbishment in the public spaces together with a complete overhaul of our marketing, signage and stationery. We have relocated the props store, extended the wardrobe and resurfaced the stage in addition to the usual "clear out" and now are just about to refurbish the Studio ourselves with willing hands. Many thanks to all who have committed time and effort to these improvements

The new season has an exciting array of plays to cater for the many and varied tastes our patrons enjoy, together with productions from our long standing partners KODS and Carpet Trades as well as many visiting drama, music and comedy shows. We are particularly pleased to welcome back John Challis, our new Patron.

## Artistic and Production Advisory Group

The Production Advisory Group has done sterling work stepping up to the mark while Richard Taylor has been working in London. Thanks to Hugh Meredith, Tori Wakeman, Chris Clarke and Sue Downing for supporting the Chair in finding an array plays and willing Directors who have assisted with the unenviable task of casting. The choice of plays has had to balance gender, age, availability and the need to secure good backstage crew, using to our very best, new and experienced actors. We have reduced the number of large cast plays as this was causing a problem for crewing and FOH and Bar, and also to accommodate Dream 16 until after February 16.

The new season is already on line and the new brochure will be published and sent out at the beginning of September.

Those cast will be contacted direct and an all Rose email has been sent with each cast list

We are as ever delighted to have a range of plays and musicals in the programme from KODS, Carpet Trades and TOR who are part of our financial and artistic success as a theatre in the Community.

We have been unable to secure mutually agreeable dates for the pantomime this season, which has been a real matter of concern.

My thanks to Amanda Salt who relinquishes Front of House Manager and so we are keen to find a new volunteer Manager

And finally the Committee thanks Louise Fulwell for her two years as Youth Theatre Leader. She has taken the YT forward with successful productions and we now have the satisfaction of having had 3 older YT members in Merchant and 4 now going through to be in Wizard which is testament to Louise's encouragement of the group. We will be taking a decision about the way forward with the Youth Theatre during the next month and will keep all informed.

## **Clear Out Weekend and Beyond**

Thanks to all who have sorted, tipped and cleaned this summer and the work goes on. Anyone who wants to help with the refurbishment just phone the office to see what is needed. Keith and Mike will be there most days and will always find work to do, specifically getting the Studio up to date.

## **RSC Merchant of Venice**

Wow!! What a Society are we? as we said last time.....and so...

We successfully played cuts from the play at Stratford to RSC acclaim and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and maintained our reputation with the RSC

My thanks to all involved

Jen Eglinton

And thanks from all involved to Jen for her leadership in getting us there



## **And it Doesn't End There....**

### **Dream 16 Project – news from Sue Downing our Director**

Back in January I was given a week, and the enviable task of auditioning a group of actors towards the most exciting challenge of our lives; The RSC were looking for a group of amateur Mechanicals to play alongside professionals in their 2016 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

You'd be mad not to give it a go I thought.....Along the way we lost two Bottoms, employed a Lakeland terrier, ruined two decorating sheets, tore the sleeve out of a shirt, burned our arms, dislocated a thumb, cracked a windscreen and lost all self respect - but we made it!

As amateur actors we can only fantasise about performing on such an iconic stage and feel that it's an honour to

represent The Nonentities and the Rose Theatre, and to reveal the acting talents of the West Midlands.

Jumping up and down in dark corners, and smiling inanely to no-one has become commonplace, we are now bruised all over from pinching ourselves, and each other. This is a dream we do not wish to wake up from - no matter how many fairies kiss us.

Erica Whyman, RSC Deputy Artistic Director, and director of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* wrote:

"The Nonentities are a tight-knit group who impressed us with their warm generosity of spirit. Hailing from Kidderminster, they bring an infectious joy to speaking Shakespeare's language. The whole group have terrific instincts - definitely not nonentities!"

Thanks to you all for your support, encouragement and congratulations.

Sue and the team - Patrick, Chris, Simon, Andy and Alex



## New Technical Director

We welcome Joe Harper to the Committee as our new Technical Director. He will be co-ordinating technical support for all productions. Anyone wanting to branch out or re-learn old skills please feel free to get in touch with Joe through the office.

## Members Matter

Hi everyone from Hilary. I reported last time that we had upwards of 20 new applications during the previous 12 months, all wanting to do a range of production and support work. About 8 have stuck and are successfully involved in the theatre. Some of the younger applicants have sadly for us and good for them found permanent work and so could not continue.

I am stressing to all members new and old that membership includes a commitment to helping with bar and FOH when the call comes!

The tricky bit is getting new people involved quickly and so all Managers need to think about training days and weeks when new members can be invited along.

Our new members need us oldies to help them along and gain confidence

**Vacancy** – as previously I am always looking for help with the role. I love the job and it's great to support such good members of an essentially volunteer society who "run" a theatre.

I have had offers of support for the social side of the role and so we hope to see more quizzes, social nights etc and also hopefully more trips and events going but support and ideas are always welcome. Essentially if you have an idea, consider running it for us and let me know.

## Member News and Views

Please send in articles and news

### Message from Alix Abram

Being part of the Nonentities for the last four years has been great fun and an amazing experience. When I joined The Rose aged 14, I was interested in theatre and costume, but it was participating in the production weeks and the rehearsals leading up to them, which made me realise that this is the career I want and not just a hobby I enjoy.

As I join Bristol Old Vic Theatre School to study theatrical costume, I just want to say thank you to the Nonentities for all your support over these years - especially Carol, Jenny and Lynn, and for the experiences which got me my place at Bristol.

Alix

**More Congratulations to the Taylors – Derek and Kerena are now pregnant – what more can one say?! A new little Taylor to join the fold.**

### Dinner Dance 2016

A great Dinner Dance this year and thanks for supporting Hilary in her first year of taking it on.

She feels we should ring the changes this year – a new venue after several years.

**Dinner Dance 2016 will be Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at a venue to be announced. Get it in your diary now.**

## Subscriptions

We have got underway with the new system for payment from 1<sup>st</sup> July each year. This has meant pro rata payment for those due for renewing before 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and still means a pro rata system for those due to renew after 1<sup>st</sup> July.

See message from previous Newsletter below

### Membership Subscriptions

To confirm that at the AGM membership subscription rates were increased in line with inflation to Full - £45, Associate - £10, Couple - £75, Concessions - £25 full

The Theatre Manager has indicated that the current system of members paying subs at any repeat time during the year, usually on the anniversary of joining, is causing problems of admin, reminders, emails lost etc. So the Committee have agreed that a new system will be instigated whereby all membership falls due on 1<sup>st</sup> July of each year. There will be an interim year 2015 when members will pay a manual pro-rata calculation. The full system will be complete then by 2016.

**Example** – if your current membership falls due on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015 – you will be asked to pay on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 instead but will have 4 months deducted to reflect what you paid this year or at least whenever you are asked to pay it will be pro rata to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016..

Bear with us! – Mena in the Box Office is doing a great job and come June 2016 everyone will be on an annual renewal from 1<sup>st</sup> July. Any queries about membership payment can be resolved by Mena at the Box Office together with

myself, we hope and thanks for your forebearance

Hilary xx

## **Box Office Training**

Box Office on the night is a critical role but it requires training on the computer system and shadowing of current experienced members

Please let us know if you are interested – much needed!!

## **Open Day – Sat 19<sup>th</sup> Sept**

Calling all members to assist with guided tours, auditions, teas and coffees. Names in to office please

## **Your Front of House Needs You – more than ever**

Many thanks to Amanda who has been our FOH Manager. She has now retired from the role and so we are looking for a new Manager. Not such a tricky role as might have been portrayed. Essentially:

- Ordering supplies
- Ensuring production weeks are set up
- Getting a rota of volunteers for Duty Manager and FOH lead
- Ensuring all have adequate support and training

The office have offered to do as much as they can.

FOH and Bar are critical to the financial viability of the theatre and our volunteers are so much appreciated.

Free drinks and ice creams have been reinstated

It has also been suggested that one FOH volunteer sits in the show for at least half of the evening to cover first aid emergencies – saves feeling one is waiting around and free pre-view of the play!

## **BAR**

Bar – with paid staff the call for volunteers has been less but please we still need you. Experienced bar volunteers particularly needed on the predictable busy nights and if Hayley is of sick or needs a booked night off.

We have agreed that we will keep a list of experienced bar volunteers who can step into the breach if there is an emergency gap.

**Hayley has put out a call for dates – please, please respond with specific date offers**

## **Front of House and Bar – urgent request**

**We have the Kidderminster Male Voice Choir on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> Sept and KODS play Pardon Me Minister 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> September, followed by the Medium Night on 15<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

**These productions provide good income for the theatre and we urgently need FOH and Bar staff, prior to the start of our season.**

## **Rehearsal Teas**

I am delighted to report that Lyn Ravenhill has offered to co-ordinate rehearsal teas. Please support her as much as you can. She will be in touch. This involves providing a tea between

double dress rehearsals on Sundays before productions.

Cast and Crew work hard on the Sunday before production weeks and need a tea between double rehearsal. We charge a fee of about £3.50 per head and those providing teas can manage it as they wish. We are a bit thin on the ground for catering volunteers - it's a great way to support a production.

**Phone Lyn on Hilary on 01562 851143 if you think you can help**

## **And Finally**

**Members Pre Season Social Night – Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August**

**It's our Society – our club**

**All welcome .**

**This will give an opportunity to talk through the season ahead, sign up for FOH and Bar (see above) and see what else needs support.**

**It will be an opportunity to see the new décor.**

**The bar will be open so just come along to meet old and new friends before the season starts with a vengeance.**