

**HENLEY-on-THAMES AMATEUR OPERATIC and DRAMATIC SOCIETY**  
**MINUTES of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Monday 22nd September 2008 in the Green Room at 8.00 pm for the Accounting Year ended  
31st May 2008**

**Welcome** Committee Chairman Terry Rymer welcomed the Members, President Simon Williams and Henry Hawes, Area Representative for NODA. Simon Williams then took the Chair.

Simon reminded those present of the Members who had died in the past year; Malcolm White, Vernon Mellett and Pam Redwood. A minute's silence was observed followed by the traditional round of applause. Simon also spoke of Margot Thomas at present in a nursing home.

**Present** President – Simon Williams; Chairman - Terry Rymer; Hon Treasurer - Bryan Villars; Hon Secretary – Martin Jarvis; Committee Members – Ann Jenkin; Linda Selway; Wendy Huntley; Members – Neil Allen; Wendy Bowsher; Ann Burley; Val Cattlin; Paul Cockfield; Leah Corlett; Peter Dayton; Nansi Diamond; Mary Dickinson; Alan Elston; Basil Evans; Penny Gilbert; Derek Gilbert; Roddy Gray; Grainne Harling; Tim Harling; Ioan Havard; Barbara Head; Claire Hewitt; Mike Huntington; Wendy Huntley; Andy James; Christine Jarvis; Sandra Moon; Angela Pengilley; Bill Port; Rosalie Raymond; Mike Rowbottom; Gareth Saunders; Pauline Silver; Pauline Smith; Mark Staunton; Rob Talbot; Alan Taylor; Cherry Tyer; Peggie Wilcock; Jeni Wood; Guest – Henry Hawes – Area Representative of NODA.

**Apologies for Absence** Charles Cattlin; Helen Eastwood; Andrew Finlay; Julie Huntington; John and Ann Luker; Roger Redwood; John Reeves; Julia Rymer; Jane Taylor; Margot Thomas; Hazel West-Manning; Bill and Marjorie Willis; John and Judy Yeates.

**Previous Minutes** With the agreement of the meeting, Martin read out only the more important parts of the previous AGM Minutes. The Members approved the Minutes and Simon signed them.

**Treasurer's Report** Prior to the meeting, Bryan had distributed copies of his full 'Trustees Report and Financial Statement for the Year Ended 31st May 2008' around the Green Room for Members to read. At the meeting he spoke of highlights of that report and included information subsequent to 31st May. In summary, it had been a good financial year, with a surplus of £12651, being 30% better than the previous year. Of particular note were profits of over £3000 each made by Stepping Out and West Side Story; the Green Room had turned last year's loss into a profit of £923. Fund-raising events had also done well – Fun Run £1353; the Musithon £1226; May Fayre £342. On the negative side the calendars had proved unsaleable and the previous stock value of £1000 had been written off. He reported that this summer's open-air production of Taming of the Shrew had made a loss due to inclement weather and insufficient publicity, adding '...our improved financial situation permits us to take the occasional gamble with such events'.

As Treasurer of the Kenton Theatre, Bryan thanked HAODS for the cheque presented by Julie Huntington for £321.80 raised by Saturday morning coffee in the Kenton Foyer.

Bryan reported that the Committee had recommended donations of £250 each to the three charities of Headway, Peach and Friends of Townlands Hospital. The Members proposed Acorn as the fourth to receive £250 and approved all four proposed donations.

The Members approved the formal Report for the Financial year.

**Secretary's Report** A very successful year since the last AGM despite one controversial event with

which I will deal straight away.

*Productions* At the last AGM Members urged that we put on an outdoor production. In response it was planned to put on Henry V but the unusual proposals for it failed to enthuse HAODS actors and almost no-one turned up for the auditions, the last on the Friday evening before the Spring Bank Holiday at the end of May. Over the weekend, Director Mike Huntington said he was prepared to do the alternative of Taming of the Shrew. With only seven weeks to go before the performances it was obvious that there was not time to give notice for, and to hold auditions – there just would not have been enough time left for rehearsals. The choice was either to allow Mike to try to find a cast by direct approach, or abandon any outside production this year. In the next couple of days Mike found a cast; he was given the go-ahead and the result was a show that gained HAODS one of the most glowing crits ever in the Henley Standard for an outdoor production.

Uncontroversially, Stepping Out and West Side Story were great successes all round, both making over £3000 profit and getting great critical praise. West Side Story even won the NODA Kathleen Oyler Trophy for choral work.

Our Festival Play, The Rose and Crown, by J B Priestley, achieved some success at all three Festivals we entered; Leah Corlett as Best Supporting Actress at the Kenton; nominated for Most Dramatic Moment at Abingdon; and award of Second at Wallingford.

Titanic the Musical had replaced the choice of Brigadoon for this November.

*Constitution* Further work, with Pauline Smith and Val Cattlin, had been put into the proposed new Constitution and the intention is to put it to Members to consider at an EGM. Prior to the EGM it would be published on the website together with the existing constitution (called Rules) for comparison.

*New Website* Under a new name, this is up and running under the leading editorship of Ioan Havard with the support of other editors in the Committee. It has had to be given a different name from the old site because this was not in our ownership and, although promised, control has not yet been fully handed to us. Our new site still needs some things added, or amended, and the odd glitch attended to – but in any case it will change frequently, to reflect latest news and information, for members and the public.

*Social* By Ann Jenkin and her Committee: The usual, and very successful, Carols Evening in December. The monthly lunches in the Green Room continued and, although we would like to see more members there, are always very enjoyable. Two very successful parties have been held in Rosalie Raymond's house, which had also been featured by extensive photographs in the Henley Standard.

*Play Readings* An attempt is being made to hold these as frequent events. A number had already been held – the next is An Absurd Person Singular by Alan Ayckbourn, to be hosted by Judy Yeates on Friday 24th October.

*Wardrobe* Managed by Julie Huntington. A lot of work had been done to reorganise and dispose of unwanted items, but much remains to be done.

*Fund-raising* The usual May-Day Fun Run had been held. A May Fayre had been held in the Green Room raising over £300, but it was thought that this was not a particularly good return for the effort involved. A Musithon, organised by Angela Pengilley and Jane Taylor, specifically to raise funds for the new chairs, had raised well over half the £2000 cost. It is hoped to hold a similar event next year to raise the balance.

*Green Room* Last year's loss had been replaced by a profit of over £900. Manager Jane Taylor had continued the improvements: the chairs, mentioned before; brighter main lighting; and curtain over the mirrors (by Julie Huntington). Special mention must be made of the work by Angela Pengilley and Pauline Smith in sorting and cataloguing our library of music and librettos. It is planned to put the catalogue onto our website.

*Membership* All recorded by our hard-working and very effective Membership Secretary Linda Selway. This has gone up from 220 to 241, mainly because of West Side Story. At this moment, though, some 50 are behind with subscriptions which means that the new Committee must do some chasing and, no doubt, cause some names to be removed from the Register of Members.

**Chairman's Review** Terry introduced Henry Hawes, Area Representative of NODA, as he had expressed a wish to make comments directly to HAODS Members about West Side Story. He said that of all the productions of the 24 Operatic Societies in his area West Side Story was one of the finest productions he had ever seen. He had particular praise for the chorus; and he thought that the choreography was worthy of a west-end stage. Terry also displayed the silver cup, the Kathleen Oyler award for Choral Work, that had been presented to us by NOD.

Terry then proceeded to give praise and thanks to some of those who had given special service to the Society:

*Jane Taylor*, who was retiring after many years on the Committee and Green Room Manager

Jemma, unknown and unseen by almost all Members, but was the dedicated lady who did the essential cleaning of the Green Room, sometimes at 5.00 in the morning so that she has time for her family responsibilities. (Wendy Huntley received a token present on her behalf)

Ann Jenkin for organising social events and Green Room Lunches.

Ann Jenkin and Val Cattlin for organising Front of House staff at HAODS performances

Sandra Moon for taking advance bookings for all our shows.

Neil Allen for always saying 'yes', sometimes at very short notice, to transporting and sometimes storing, staging and equipment

Leah Corlett, probably the oldest member still regularly appearing on stage, and present this evening after breaking an arm in a recent fall - presented with flowers.

The members of the Committee who had given a year of dedicated service.

Terry said it was his hope that some long-service NODA awards could be presented on our Carols Evening, and invited nominations.

**Election of Officers** *President* Simon Williams was unanimously re-elected unopposed

*Vice Presidents* These were re-elected en bloc. But, when a member suggested that at least one had died, Simon suggested that before the next AGM all should be written to to obtain their confirmation of willingness to serve.

*Treasurer* Bryan Villars was re-elected unopposed.

*Secretary* Martin Jarvis was elected unopposed. He said that he had accepted the task after no-one had been elected at the last AGM. He gave notice that he would not continue in the post after the next AGM - and would happily relinquish it if someone came forward before then.

*Committee* Wendy Huntley, Roddy Gray (subsequent to the meeting it was realised that he was not yet a member, and therefore his election was invalid), Terry Rymer, Ann Jenkin, Julie Huntington and Paula Silver were elected. Sue Brosnan and Laureen Williamson had also been nominated but, as there was no evidence that they had accepted nomination, and they were not present to confirm, their election was not proceeded with.

**100 Club September Draw** The number of Joyce Walden was drawn by Simon. Someone suggested that, as she was not present, it should be redrawn. This was done and Angela Pengilly was the £50 winner. (Subsequent to the meeting it has been realised that a redraw is incorrect procedure and it was decided that both draws should stand and cover September and October; a £50 cheque has been sent to Joyce with a letter of explanation.)

**Open Forum** Simon invited comments and suggestions from Members.

*Alan Elston* invited contributions for the Carols Evening. Martin Jarvis said he could do a Christmas story.

*Mike Huntington* said that the flyers for Titanic should have been out already; and that the ticket order form on the back was a waste. *Sandra Moon* said that some 40 similar forms had been received for West Side Story. *Mike* also said that we ought to be able to offer booking online.

*Mike Huntington* said that the Chairman ought to be elected by the Members at AGM and not by the Committee. *Terry Rymer* supported this view. *Martin Jarvis* responded that last year's Committee had, but not unanimously, recommended that the draft new constitution should allow for no change in how the Chairman is elected. He gave as a reason that the Committee needed to be able to choose a Chairman that they were comfortable working with - and needed to have the power to replace him for any reason they saw fit. *Nansi Diamond* spoke strongly in support of this view. *Martin* added that Members would have the chance to express their views when the draft new constitution was published on the website and at the subsequent EGM.

*Jeni Wood* strongly criticised how the cast of Taming of the Shrew had been chosen. She accepted that there was insufficient time to seek auditions in the normal way, but made it clear that more should have been done to contact members to let them know what was happening to allow them to express a desire to be considered.; why, for instance, was email not used? *Martin Jarvis* sought a show of hands as to whether the production should have gone ahead or been abandoned. By a narrow margin the vote was in favour of it having been done - but about half of the Members abstained.

*Wendy Bowsher* asked why a publicity opportunity, of the award of the cup for West Side Story, had been missed. A short discussion on such publicity took place with *Mike Rowbottom* making the point that the Henley Standard often did not co-operate the way we would like them to.

**Vote of Thanks** Nansi Diamond proposed a Vote of Thanks to Simon Williams for chairing the meeting in such an effective way and with such humour and enthusiasm - and for encouraging bursts of applause at all appropriate moments, helping to lighten what can sometimes seem like over-serious proceedings.

The meeting closed at 10.02 pm.

