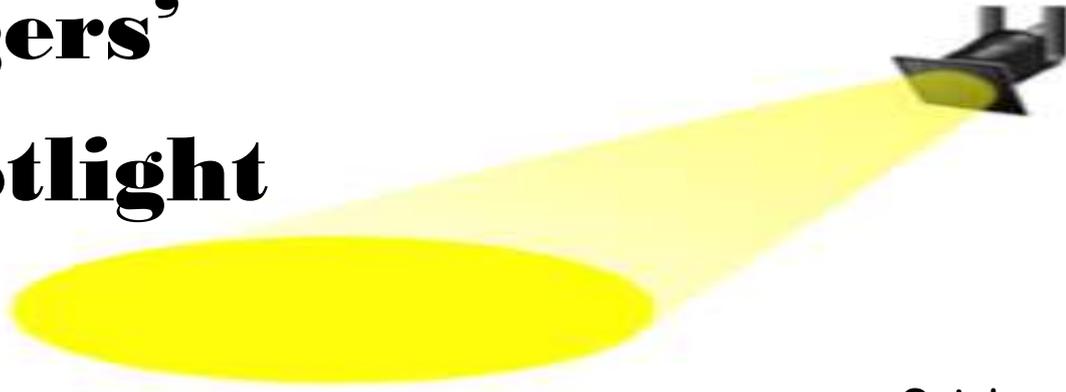


# Stagers' Spotlight



October 2021

## Chair's Message

The last month has been the busiest for Stagers in a very long time with rehearsals well underway for 'There's No Business Like Show Business' and, as we build up to Christmas, things will just keep getting busier as you will find out in this edition of Spotlight. However, we have to start with the rescheduled AGM.

As you may have seen, the AGM was due to take place on Wednesday 15th September but unfortunately we did not have enough people to reach quorum. So, in line with our constitution we are rescheduling for Monday 8th November in the Large Hall.

The AGM will start at 7pm to make sure that we are done and ready for the rehearsal to start.

I really hope that you will be able to join us, as Grayshott Stagers is only as strong as its membership. The AGM is an important part of keeping the society functioning.

As well as the AGM there are a lot of other dates to pay attention to in this issue. 'There's No Business Like Show Business' will be on stage 26th and 27th November including, a matinee on Saturday - I hope you have your tickets, as the rehearsals that I am in are very enjoyable and I think we will be back with a bang!

We will also have auditions for one of the three "One Act Plays" that will be put on in Feb 2022, on Wednesday 1st December. You can find a lot more information on our plans for this evening, later in Spotlight.

Finally, plans are gearing up to start work again on Honk! I hope that as many people as possible are able to come back and finally put this wonderful show on.

It really is wonderful to be writing to you as Chair with so many productions in the works after such a long time. Hopefully, this is the start of a series of very special shows for everyone involved in Stagers.



**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 7pm:** AGM Large Hall

**26<sup>th</sup> November 7.30 pm:**

**27<sup>th</sup> November 2.30pm and 7.30pm:**

There's no business like show business

**Wednesday 1st December:** Read through and Auditions for Lockdown in Little Grimley. NLJ Room

**18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022:** One Act Plays

**26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May 2022:** Honk



Visit our website for more Information

<http://www.grayshottstagers.co.uk>

Visit us on  Facebook Follow us on  twitter

## Publicity Profile

### Who are you?

I am Peter Budd, born in Ruislip, Middlesex, and lived in Ealing, until moving to Headley in 1976 and a few years later to Grayshott.

I am convener of the Publicity Sub-Committee and responsible for liaising with the Village Hall booking secretary in making and maintaining hall bookings for Stagers' rehearsals and performances. I am also the custodian of the Society's archive material, which dates back to the very first show (John Marlow's Profession) in 1951. I have a brief record of shows performed by Stagers' predecessor (The Grayshott Dramatic Society) from 1912 to 1934.

### What is your history with the theatre?

My first experience of treading the boards was whilst attending North Ealing Primary School. Each year an entertainment was put on for, and by, pupils, parents and staff. It usually included a short play and one year I was persuaded to take part in a play. I was all suitably attired as a page boy; made one entrance and spoke one line!! I was terrified and decided acting was not for me. Little did I know what the future held!



However, in the early '60s I started a job at a British Gas Research Station (Watson House) in Fulham. There I met a colleague (I'll call him Brian) who it transpired lived near me so we decided to car share. Quite by chance in 1966 he dropped me off at his house (where I used to park my car). Whilst chatting to him another guy (I'll call him Keith) came by. Brian asked Keith how his next production was going. It turned out that Keith was the publicity officer for a nearby drama group called The New Venturers. I must have shown some interest; I found myself agreeing to help deliver flyers and agreed to go and see the production. I had never seen an amateur play before and had always avoided them because I had the usual misconceived idea of their dubious reputation of acting and presentation standards. Well I went and was completely captivated and from then on, was hooked and joined the group and have

been involved in theatre ever *since*. The play was 'Time Murderer Please'. I loved the play and years later directed it for the Stagers. I became involved in every aspect of productions (except prompt). I was at times also Secretary and even Chairman – but *don't tell Joe that!!*

I went on to perform in 24 plays and direct 7, the first being 'Night Must Fall' by Emyln Williams. We also put on religious plays in St. Mary's Church, West Twyford – all their productions were rehearsed and performed in the adjacent Church Hall.

My first acting role with the New Venturers was in 'My Three Angels' as Sub-Lieutenant Espoir. I had to wait until nearly the end of the play and spent that time pacing up and down the dressing room getting more and more nervous. When the time came to make my entrance I actually had to be pushed onto the stage where I stood to utter my first words with my knees visibly shaking!

It was during this time that I had my first and, at that time, my one and only involvement in the chorus of a musical – 'White Horse Inn' with the Hanwell and Ealing Operatic Society directed by a professional.

In 1976 I moved to Headley and joined the Headley Theatre Club and directed a number of pantomimes. I performed in a few pantomimes with the Haslemere Thespians, occasional musicals and back stage work with the Haslemere Players. I also directed a couple of shows for the Players.

Finally, in 1976 Watson House celebrated its Golden Anniversary with exhibitions, and tours of the laboratories for the public. By then, my interest in amateur theatre had become well known; I was approached by one of the managers to write and direct a short sketch which would be performed in the company's club room to staff and managers. I duly obliged, I took a risk in writing a sketch which poked fun at the people who worked for British Gas from a disgruntled customer to the then Chairman, Sir Denis Rooke, including all the managers of Watson House. The climax was when a fitter eventually turned up at the complainant, only for the cooker to explode. I had great fun rigging that up! Fortunately, it was appreciated by everyone (including the managers I had poked fun at). There were times when I had my doubts and thought I'd gone too far and would be sacked. Fortunately, I wasn't!!

## What is your history with the Stagers specifically?

During my time living in Headley I became aware of another theatre group – The Grayshott Stagers. So I thought I'd go and see their next production – 'Ladies in Retirement'. I was impressed enough to decide that I might join. It was on a cold evening in 1976 - just 6 months after moving from London – I will always remember that night; I turned up at the Village Hall, not knowing anyone and not knowing what I was letting myself in for. I stood outside hesitating, nervous of going in.

Perhaps wind of my arrival must have been blowing, because the next thing I knew, a young lady appeared out of the darkness and said, 'Are you here for the Stagers?' Nervously I said, 'Yes' and before I could take my next breath, I was whisked upstairs to the Common Room and found myself in the chorus of 'The Card'. The director was Don Stacey; the lady who grabbed me was Mary Coyte (née Dew). There were two other newbies there that night – Tony Creasey and Audrey Siddle (known as Gearing).

From that moment I was hooked and never looked back. I have to thank Don Stacey, Mary, Tony and Audrey for making that first night so memorable, so welcoming and for setting me on a path that would hold so many great and glorious times ahead. It epitomized in one phrase all that the Stagers stand for – welcoming, friendly, hardworking and professional.

At the AGM the next year I was voted onto the Committee. In 1986 Barry Penny, who had been Chairman, stepped down and Audrey, who had been Secretary, took over and I was voted on as Secretary a post I held for 25 years at which point I resigned. However, after a few years in limbo I was persuaded back onto the Committee where I have been ever since.

During my time on the Committee I edited the Newsletter (2015 to 2019), took on the task of looking after the Stagers archives, convened the Publicity Sub-Committee and taken responsibility for hall bookings.

I have been involved, in one way or another, in more than 55 shows (not including One Act Plays and Young Stagers); directed 7 plays and 6 musicals. The first play I was in was 'Breath of Spring' (1977). 'Uncertain Joy' was the first play I directed and 'Oklahoma' the first musical. My last productions were 'Night Watch' (2006) and 'Somethings Afoot' (2012).

It's hard to pick my favorites but, musicals I directed, it's 'Oklahoma' and 'Guys and Dolls' that are up there at the top. The plays, it's hard to choose between 'Wanted One Body', 'Time Murderer Please' and 'The Cat and the Canary'.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who have helped and guided me, given me a shoulder to cry on when things got tough and even those who have put me on the right track when I strayed or did something wrong!!

## Apart from Stagers, what else do you do with your spare time?

Outside of Stagers I am the Minute Secretary of the Grayshott Village Hall Management Committee and I help out when and where I can, with the maintenance and upkeep of the Hall.

I love listening to music, mostly classical and am a 'Silver Friend' of Grayshott Concerts who regularly put on concerts by world class orchestras and soloists. There's nothing quite like hearing music played live.

I also enjoy watching TV especially mystery, Sci-Fi and horror.

Well as they say 'That's All Folks!'

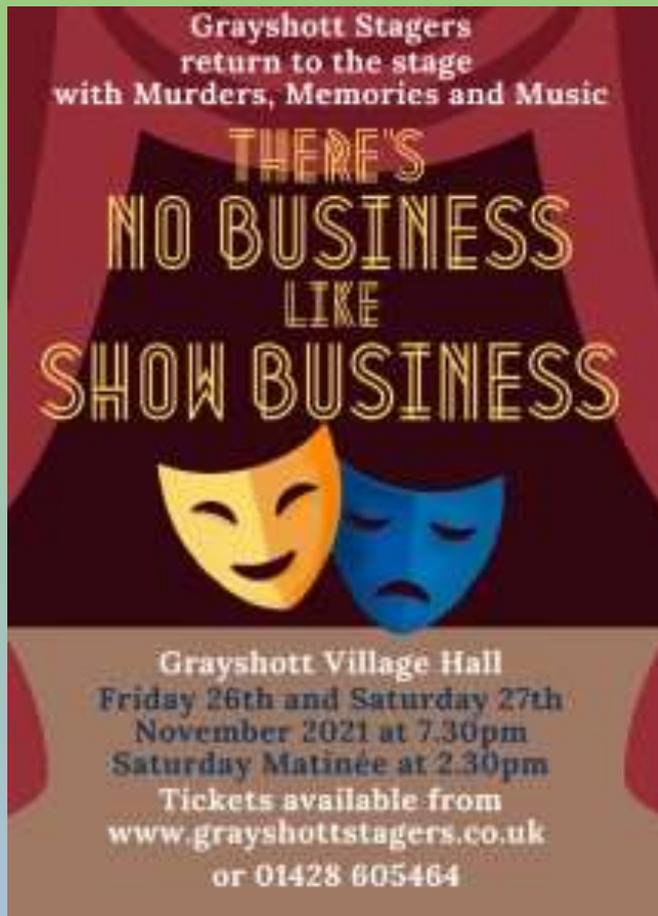
Peter



## Membership News

We wish Shirley Jelliss every happiness in her new home. We're particularly pleased that she has moved within Grayshott and is now even nearer to the Stagers' home, the Village Hall. *Jennifer*

### *There's No Business Like Show Business*



[CLICK HERE FOR TICKETS](#)

This time next month we'll be into the final stages of preparation for our back-to-the-stage show, comprising songs and drama from previous productions. At the moment there are lines, music and dance moves to learn, costumes to be fitted and props and set to be sourced or created. The Box Office is open, via our website.

The Publicity machine is now well and truly rolling, so do talk about it to your family and friends. Speaking of which, with the large cast treading the boards for this show, we need even more help Front of House than usual from our supporters, there's a job for you!

*26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> November 2021*



### Front of House

- ushering
- raffle
- bar
- refreshments

### Back Stage

- Hair
- Costumes
- Makeup

If you feel you can help in any way, please contact the Production Secretary

[jennifer.charters@grayshott.stagers.cu.uk](mailto:jennifer.charters@grayshott.stagers.cu.uk) .

Thank you!

*Jennifer*

# noda

Be inspired by amateur theatre

## Barry Levy

The September issue of Spotlight featured an article by John Hilder about NODA - the National Operatic and Dramatic Association - focusing on the Stagers' historical relationship with the Association.

After many years of sterling service as our NODA representative, John has now handed the reins over to me.

The Stagers is one of over 2000 amateur groups belonging to the Association, which was founded in 1899 to support the on- and off-stage interests of theatre groups like ourselves. Such support includes health and safety advice, legal advice and insurance services.

There is a national structure of area and local "councillors", and we invite both to all of our productions (except the one-act plays). You can find many of NODA's reviews of past productions on our website. I'm delighted that our local councillor's assistant will be attending the opening night of "There's No Business Like Show Business".

NODA considers the jewel in its crown to be its annual one-week summer school (operated as a virtual "e-school" for the last two years) offering courses covering performance, design and technical skills. Some intriguing examples - and questions - arise from the list of previous courses: in the 2015 "Accents for Actors" course, how many of the world's accents were taught? just how comprehensive could the 2014 course on "Directing Shakespeare" have been in a couple of half-day sessions?; and did the 2018 cohort really learn how to differentiate between "Fighting Like a Pirate, Cowboy, Jedi and Wizard"?

Please feel free to contact me if you'd like more information about NODA. You can also find out more from its website <http://noda.org.uk> from which you can also download the Association's periodic magazine "NODA today".

## One-Act Plays

18 and 19 February 2022

Members will recall that we had to cancel the one-act plays evenings in February 2021 because of Covid lockdown regulations. We now intend to revive two of those plays, the third having been performed in July 2021 at the joint evening with Tilbourne Players. The remaining two plays, as originally cast, are:

*Accommodation Haunted* by Alan Richardson (director to be confirmed) - a light and dark comedy, where we join Brian as he finds himself on an unexpected visit to a property letting agency... for ghosts.

**Brian:** Eric Collins

**Lucy:** Jennifer Charters

**Eleanor:** Melanie Tyrrell

**Sarah:** Ingrid Collins

*The Highwayman* by Martin Sims, who has both written and will be directing the play. In the bleak winter of 1750, two mysterious strangers meet in a desolate wood, but who are they and can anyone be trusted?

**Katherine:** Caroline Thompson

**Thomas:** Richard White

The new third play will be *Lockdown in Little Grimley* by David Tristram, the fifth in his series of *Little Grimley* plays, to be directed by Brezetta Thonger. This topical comedy examines the efforts of the Little Grimley drama club to come back after the lifting of the lockdown restrictions, but still having to cope with social distancing, the effects of isolation and the shortage of toilet rolls. They plan a spectacular show in aid of the NHS, but it does not go precisely to plan.



A reading and auditions of *Lockdown* will be on Wednesday 1 December 2021 in the NLJ room at Grayshott Village Hall (the former parish council office, upstairs) from 7.30 pm. Advance copies of the script can be obtained from Ellis Nicholls ([ellis.nicholls@grayshottstagers.co.uk](mailto:ellis.nicholls@grayshottstagers.co.uk)).