

# MUSICAL NOTES

Number 16  
November 2004

## The Newsletter of Newtown Musical Theatre Company

### Au Revoir Penry

It is with great sadness that we received Penry's news that he was standing down as a performing member. Penry has been a member of the Company for 17 years and, in my early years here, was a most respected Chairman.



His commitment and attitude on stage have been an example to us all: he has always been determined to "get it right", both in terms of stage movement, characterisation and in singing the correct bass harmony!



Penry was one of the "magnificent seven" in 1999 (all from Newtown) who represented the Western Area at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the NODA Centenary Choir. He also took part in the Les Misérables Masterclass in London. How many other gentlemen in their 70s have done that, I wonder?

We would like to think that he will change his mind. Failing that, Penry is a

Patron anyway but perhaps we can persuade him to be involved backstage or front of house. Let us hope so.



Penry has left us with another of his amusing anecdotes, culled from the media. This is from a Radio 4 programme about stage and film actors and actresses during which it was said

that sometimes they might have to sing if their part demanded it. Some were good singers, some made valiant efforts with moderate success and others were not successful. One contributor to the discussion spoke of one actress whose singing was so bad that deaf people refused to watch her lips moving!

Thank you, Penry.

*Photographs: just three of Penry's many performances with Newtown Musical Theatre Company -*

- (a) a gentleman in Hello, Dolly! 1998,*
- (b) a soldier in Gipsy Baron 1999,*
- (c) a footman in Annie Get Your Gun 2001.*

---

## Oklahoma!

A reminder of the dates: Wednesday to Saturday 16-19 March 2005. We will probably do a matinée again on the Saturday afternoon.

The Cast List as it stands at present is:

Curly	Gareth McMurdo	Jud Fry	Tony Crozier
Laurey	Karen McMurdo	Andrew Carnes	Mark Ward
Will Parker	Andrew Bond	Gertie Cummings	Sarah Gardner
Ado Annie	Ruth Thorp	Ellen	Gwiryon Bond
Aunt Eller	Chris Clarke	Faye	Emma Flynn
Ali Hakim	Mike Clarke	A Girl	Joanna Western

Who is responsible for what? The Production Team is as follows:-

Director	Marjorie Meredith
Musical Director	Kat Bond
Production Manager	Lorraine Thomas
Wardrobe Mistress	Irene Harbron
i/c Make-up	Peggy Bound

*Rehearsals:* Marjorie has planned to draw up the rehearsal schedule over half-term, so we should all know now when we are needed. Can I remind all members that if you are unable to make a rehearsal that you are called for, you should let either Marjorie or Kat know.

## Honorary Life Members

At the AGM, the motion was passed to elect our first Honorary Life Members: Irene Harbron, John Harbron and Jackie Titley, in recognition of the fact that they have been continual members of the Company since its inception 21 years ago. This represents a significant measure in the continuing development of NMTC. We extend our warmest congratulations to them, with grateful thanks for all they have done over the past 21 years.

## Future Shows

The Committee has appointed the following people to be members of the Show Selection Sub-committee: Tony (chairman), Jackie, Kat, Marlene, Mike. If you have any suggestions for shows for October 2005 and Spring 2006, please hand them to any of the above. Proposed dates are: Friday & Saturday 7 & 8 October 2005; Wednesday 29 March to Saturday 1 April (!) 2006.

## Karen

Congratulations to Karen on coming fourth in a national Civil Service singing competition at Cheethams, Manchester. Karen was representing Wales, one of the 12 regions taking part, having won the Welsh heats earlier in the year. She sang "Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again" from *Phantom of the Opera*, "I Could Have Danced All Night" from *My Fair Lady* and "I Can't Say No" from *Oklahoma!*. A fine achievement!

## Fundraising

Along with this Newsletter, you will receive a sheet from Peggy outlining her plans for a Promise Auction. You will have seen from our accounts that our

payment for the hire of the theatre alone for *Magic Of The Musicals* amounted to the equivalent of 48% of seats sold. It is an expensive business. So, please put your thinking caps on and come up with suggestions and offers of practical help for fundraising activities.

## Theatre Courses

At the recent courses run by Montgomeryshire Drama Association, Peggy, Chris C., Dorothy and Kat attended the Make-up course while Andrew and Tony did the course on Stage Fighting.

## Party Pieces Xmas "Do"

Following the success of last year's event, the Committee proposes to hold a similar event this year on Saturday 18 December 2004 at the "Little Theatre". You will be pleased to know that the costs will be the same as last year.

The Xmas "do" will be £5 per person.

For newer members, "Party Pieces" is where you come along and perform anything you want to, but you have to pay for the privilege! It is a fun evening and helps to swell the Company's coffers.

Fees: solo £3 (two solos by the same person £5); duet £5; trio £6; quartet £8; groups of 5 or more £10. There will be a form to fill in beforehand, to be returned as indicated.

## Hymns and Arias

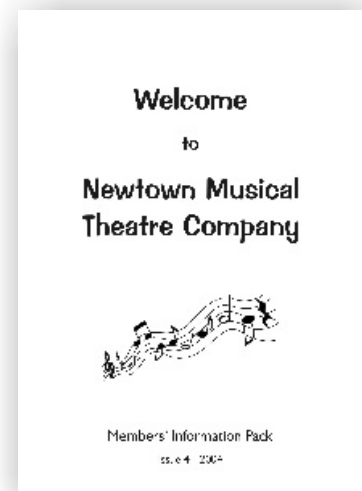
This exciting event is fast approaching. The Company is being represented by 22 members, many of whom are making a weekend of it and staying over in Cardiff. The concert is on Saturday 27

November. There is a rehearsal in the afternoon with the concert starting at 7.30p.m. Fireworks will round off the evening.

I must admit I found it strange when we went through the Welsh hymns after rehearsal, I realised that I was the only Welsh person in the room (apart from Ceinwen on the piano)! What I think I can promise all you good English people is that, for a day, you will experience what it feels like to be Welsh!

## Members' Booklets

Ruth is in the process of refining and updating what was the booklet issued to new members. It is the Committee's wish that all members shall receive a copy. It contains full information about the Company and a copy of the Constitution.



## Company Costumes

As you will know, costumes belonging to the Company are stored in the basement at the church. Irene and Rosemary are in charge of these; they will organise and catalogue them.

When any of these costumes are used on stage or borrowed, this must only be done via either Irene or Rosemary, who will register costumes out and back in.

---

*This is YOUR newsletter!*

*Please give any contributions of ideas, articles and photos to Mike Clarke.*

## Company Website

Our website is at present: [www.newtownmts.org.uk](http://www.newtownmts.org.uk). There is an error here, of course, because the "s" should be a "c".



William, who is in charge of this, will change it to: [www.newtownmtc.org.uk](http://www.newtownmtc.org.uk). Please visit the site, use it, add to it and encourage friends and family far and wide to visit it in order to keep abreast of what we are doing

## Ruddigore

Congratulations to Buttington AOS for their recent performance of the Savoy Opera *Ruddigore*. It was directed by Hugh Stephens and included both Marlene Smart and John Jones from NMTC in the chorus (as well as Hugh himself, but then aren't we all a bit short of chorus men?!)

## Aladdin

Karen and Gareth will both be performing in Llani Drama Group's Christmas panto - *Aladdin* (Karen in the title role). Gwiryon is playing the piano in the band.

The panto will be showing from 25th to 27th November 2004 starting at 7.30pm (6.30pm on the Saturday) in the Community Centre at Llanidloes. Tickets will be available on the door.

## Oklahoma! - iconoclast

That's just a posh word to mean that it broke the mould, it was new and full of innovation.

*Oklahoma!* was the first of the brand new type of American musical. It was not light and frothy; it started with a solo, not a chorus number; it has a killing in it.

Just as the stage show had revolutionised Broadway, so did the film 12 years later. It was the first film to be shot in Todd-AO using 70mm film, twice the normal size, enabling it to be shown on giant screens, bringing the audience right into the action.

*Oklahoma!* was the first musical to move away from the usual nondescript action based on stock situations presented in a fluffy style. It had a dramatic plot, much headier than anything seen on stage before. Today, we may well consider that "the corn is as high as an elephant's

eye" to be, OK, corny but at the time it was totally unexpected iconoclastic. Added to that, there were the freshest, most gorgeous songs heard for a long while on the American stage.

Also, when it was announced that Richard Rodgers was to collaborate with Oscar Hammerstein in the writing of the show, the critics and pundits all declared it would be a disaster. (They said the same thing about *Les Misérables*!).

How wrong they all were! It ran for several years on Broadway and then took London by storm, with the great Howard Keel wowing audiences with his portrayal of Curly. Following the film premiere, Variety magazine said: "The wide screen used for the Todd-AO process adds production scope and visual grandeur capturing a vista of blue sky and green prairie that can be breathtaking. ...

All things weighed in the scale, *Oklahoma!* rates with the industry's best." It sure does!

Enjoy!

## NMTC Committee

At the recent AGM, the new Committee was elected as follows:-

Chair	Jackie Titley
Vice Chair	Tony Crozier
Secretary	Mike Clarke
Treasurer	Jeremy Thorp
Business Manager	Peggy Bound
Publicity Manager	Karen McMurdo

*Committee Members:-*

John Harbron  
Mark Ward  
William Worth

*Non-Committee Posts:-*

Membership Secretary	Ruth Thorp
Librarian	Gwiryon Bond

## Subscriptions

Subs are now due. As Jeremy is not able to attend most *Oklahoma!* rehearsals, he asks that you hand your subs to Ruth.

## Diary 2004/5

2004	
27 Nov	<i>Hymns &amp; Arias</i> , Cardiff
18 Dec	Party Pieces

2005

16 - 19 Mar *Oklahoma!*

