

Welcome to the summer 2021 edition of the WAOS Newsletter.

In this edition we look forward to *Made in Dagenham* in October.

In this Newsletter, we look at the latest news from Dagenham. We remember a past member of WAOS, who sadly passed away, over the summer. An all-important update from our President regarding The Flames of Injustice... Plus the usual reminders on dates and WAOS committee details... Happy reading and we hope to see many of you soon as we get going closer to October's show.

Hello everybody, I hope that you are all enjoying the summer period, despite the variable weather. I assumed the role of chairman in April, and one way and another it has been a fairly challenging time for the society. The unknowns of Covid-19 infection rates and restrictions questioned whether we would be able to proceed with Made in Dagenham (MiD). Thankfully, normality began to dawn just in time for us to hold auditions. Even so, the audition process was a challenging experience for both auditionees and the audition panel. At one stage, we thought that we were not going to be able to cast sufficient men due to a lack of auditionees. We found that some felt unprepared for auditions, because of the difficulties experienced with online pre audition rehearsals, where technology was not our ally, and the fact that many had not performed for more than a year. We cast our net wider and applied our persuasive powers to finally cast all roles. I am very happy to say that progress so far has proven that we have a very strong cast and production team, which will result in a show which I am confident will be of the award-winning standard that WAOS strives for. This has only been possible by the perseverance of everybody, and I thank you all for that. It would be remiss of me if I did not mention one person who has been pivotal in getting us to where we are with MiD. Ian Myers was originally asked to be part of the audition panel, and then to play in the pit during show week. He stepped in and played for auditions, and then took the reins as MD until the end of August. It is justifiable to say that the show may not have gone on without him. Our sincere thanks, Ian. I would also like to thank Susy Hawkes-Dighton, for being the architect of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, and being the go to representative for MiD.

All the best to everybody, Trevor



Made in Dagenham is fast approaching...

After starting rehearsals in the virtual world, which was a bit of a rocky road, Made in Dagenham, is now in full swing. We have Women Vs Men, Women Vs Men, a stunning Biba dress (Or maybe 2) and a cast ready to get back up on the Witham stage. With Just under two months of rehearsal time left, Nikki, James and the team are working hard to put the production together! The cast are determined, hardworking and the show is coming together nicely!

Tickets are on sale now and selling well.

Book your tickets here:-

<http://www.waos.org/box-office/>

If you would like to see a preview of their hard work please come and join us at our Preview evening at Witham Public Hall on Wednesday 29th September @ 7.45pm.

"Does anyone have any farts?"

A rather crude question but this line of dialogue is the cue for my first entrance, stage left, in Act 1 Scene 3 as Jeremy Hopkins, General Manager of Ford Motor Company in our next show Made in Dagenham.

If you are easily offended then this is not the show for you since it contains a lot of "earthy" language with many sexual references.

On the other hand it is true to life as I can attest from my own experience of factory work (1976-1979) during summer holidays.

The "F" word was simply a general purpose adjective used to add emphasis to anything slightly out of the ordinary and was so commonly used it ceased to be offensive after a short while. Men and women spoke this way and so language occasionally became even more extreme by genteel standards in order to make a point. This will become obvious as the show progresses as language differentiates the various characters.

Made in Dagenham was set in the 1960s, a lifetime away for many of us and yet the societal context that legitimised unequal pay and fewer rights and opportunities for women are sadly part of our history.

A lot of progress has been made, partly due to the willingness of the 200 women making car seats at Dagenham to stand up and make their voices heard. If hearing a few swear words is the price we must pay to learn more about our social history in an evening of entertainment then, in my opinion, it is worth the effort.

At its heart Made in Dagenham is a hugely entertaining show and it is certainly not an attempt to play politics. Whatever your own experience of the "long game" that is "management and unions" I think you will find yourself smiling, chuckling and even laughing uproariously as we poke fun at all institutions equally.

By Stewart Adkins



Publicity Events!



On Sunday 5th September, 11 cast/crew members for our upcoming production Made in Dagenham! went to perform at Crossing Temple Barns!

We were graciously invited by the Mayor of Witham to her Bubbly Tea!

This was raising money for her 2 chosen charities; this year the Mayor's two charities are WAOS and Macmillan Cancer Support. After singing 2 Musical Numbers, the Mayor lead us all in a round of London's Burning.

We were honoured to be a part of her day and we hope that we can do it all again soon.

On Saturday 11th September, 11 cast/crew members for our upcoming production Made in Dagenham! went to perform at St Nicholas Church Autumn Fayre!

The sun came out for the event and we performed inside this beautiful church. We sang three chorus numbers while Amy Pryce, who is our leading lady in Made in Dagenham, Sammy-Jo Evans, who plays Clare and William Hackett, who is one of the Prime Minister's aides in the show, all delivered amazing solos – it was a thoroughly enjoyable 30 mins of entertainment had by all.

WAOS will be looking to do more events in the future.
#WatchThisSpace



A Fond Farewell to Barrie Stead- A Perfect Gentleman



WAOS members will know Cynthia Stead well but perhaps will know less about her husband Barrie, her "rock" and greatest supporter. Barrie passed away on 27th June, 2021 at the age of 84 and with his passing went one of nature's true gentlemen; quiet and unassuming but with a strength of purpose and a wry sense of humour. In his early days Barrie was an engineer with the Merchant Navy and latterly an engineer working at power stations.

He took early retirement and indulged his passion for sailing at Blackwater Sailing Club but was also keen on bridge and snooker when he wasn't making props for a show in which Cynthia was involved. Not one to simply participate he was also happy to take responsibility for committee work in each of the areas of interest to him. Barrie was a family man, with three children and would drop everything to help them out when needed. This love and support was mostly evident to WAOS members when Barrie attended shows. He didn't like the limelight but positively basked in the reflected warmth and affection that Cynthia generated whenever she was on-stage.

Cynthia has been involved as director, choreographer and performer with WAOS (and WOW as director) for many years. She may not thank me for mentioning this but in 1975 she choreographed *Pink Champagne*; the programme notes are shown below. For the remainder of the 1970s Cynthia was the regular choreographer for the non-G&S shows but in 1983 she was both choreographer and Ado Annie in *Oklahoma*. From there she progressed to a co-director of *Free as Air* in 1984 and after further stints as choreographer stepped up to be the sole director of *Bless the Bride* in 1992. In 1995 Cynthia directed *Oliver!*, a show so successful, especially in attracting children, that WOW was created in the following year to capitalise on the interest of young people. The rest is history, as they say but Cynthia continued to work with WAOS and WOW as choreographer, director or performer until 2011 when she appeared as Mrs Harcourt in *Anything Goes* - a show that has timeless appeal as demonstrated by today's revival in London. Just like that show Cynthia has timeless appeal, all the while supported by her "rock", Barrie, watching and waiting and loving every minute.

CHOREOGRAPHER - CYNTHIA STEAD

Although new to Witham, Cynthia lives at nearby Totham and has achieved notable success as Choreographer for the Wickham Bishops pantomimes. A dancer since childhood, she has appeared in shows with many well-known stars including Harry Secombe, David Whitfield and the Beverley Sisters.



Stewart Adkins - August 2021

How we are preparing for COVID-19 during show week!

2020 will go down in history as the year of illness, of fear, of uncertainty and of resilience. I am sure we have all found our inner strength, as we stayed in our homes, were unable to see loved ones and all the while our key workers carried on tirelessly to keep us all safe. WAOS have a COVID policy to keep our cast, crew and audiences safe.

Working in conjunction with Witham Public Hall the following measures are put in place for show week.

We exceed the government's stage 4 Covid-19 requirements, we ask people to wear masks on arrival and when moving around the building. Please use the hand sanitisers provided; we police the toilets, limiting the number of people in the toilets at any one time. We limit access to the bar area and will be using a single order point at the first till and then have two people making up the drinks. This is slower than usual but keeps down the number of people in the rather small bar area.

As a new feature we have a pre-order system, where drinks can be ordered via an on-line app, using a mobile phone. WAOS will clean and sanitise handrails, toilets, bar before every show and our cast, crew and front of house teams will continue to do Lateral Flow Testing. We would love to see you show week for Made in Dagenham!

WAOS' own centenary musical - The Flames of Injustice

In 2022 WAOS will celebrate 100 years since the production of its first show. As part of this celebration WAOS has written and will perform its own musical, called The Flames of Injustice. This musical has local historical importance since it is based on the Witham Fires and the hanging of James Cooke in 1829.

Members of WAOS developed the concept, the name, the scene structure and characters for this musical, all under the guidance of drama facilitator, Sarah Osborne, who also wrote the script. Members also helped write the lyrics for each of the songs, again under the guidance of Sarah Osborne.

Franky Garland is composing the music and will arrange the orchestration so that we have a fully-worked script and score ready to start rehearsals in May 2022...

Members will appreciate that selling a new show will be difficult and that we will have to make a special effort to create awareness of, and demand for, The Flames of Injustice. An essential part of that special effort is the development of a logo, artwork and associated text that will have impact and appeal to all ages.

We hope to use this artwork on our posters, flyers, programmes, banners, roadside boards, Mailchimp headers, email signatures and any legitimate place for creating awareness on social, news and print media.

For this task we are seeking some professional help and hope to have this final pre-production task completed soon.

Stewart Adkins

WAOS Committee

President	Stewart Adkins
Chairman	Trevor Drury
Treasurer	Anita Gould
Secretary	Matt Waldie
Business Manager	Trevor Drury
Production Manager	Paul Goddard
Social Secretary	Emma Loring
Membership Secretary	Liz Chapman
Stage Manager	Ben Sawyer
Committee Member	Annette Maguire

General Enquires - secretary@WAOS.org
WAOS Web site - WWW.WAOS.ORG

Dates for your diary

Shows

Made in Dagenham	October 25 - 30 2021
Betty Blue Eyes	April 25 - 30 2022
The Flames of Injustice	October 24 -29 2022

Events

WAOS Made in Dagenham Preview Night - 29.09.21

For information about our shows, go to
<http://www.waos.org/news/forthcoming-shows/>

Stay safe and best wishes from the WAOS Committee.