



BLOCNotes

April 2018

Editor: Dennis Elslander

The BLOCNotes Archive is also on-line, see
<http://www.bloc-brussels.com>

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BLOC DIARY			Updated: 25-04-2018
Dates	Time	Event	Location
31-05 & 01/03-06-2018	20:00 + 14:30	Urinetown	De Warandepoort
05-06-2018	20:00	Oklahoma: Introduction & Chorus Audition rehearsal	De Kam
10-06-2018 Sunday	13:30	Oklahoma: 13:30 Voice Test 14:00—15:00 Chorus Audition rehearsal 15:30 - 18:00 Chorus Audition	De Kam
11-06-2018 Monday	19:30	Oklahoma: Soloist Audition rehearsal	De Kam
12-06-2018 Tuesday	20:00	Oklahoma: Soloist Audition (Song & Text)	De Kam
18-06-2018	14:00	Oklahoma: Call Back	De Bosuil
19-06-2018	20:00	Oklahoma: Sing Through	De Kam
09-09-2018 Sunday	12:30	BLOC BBQ	De Kam
10-09-2018	20:00	Oklahoma: Soloists	De Kam
11-09-2018	20:00	Oklahoma: Chorus & Soloists	De Kam
22+23+24+25 November 2018	20:00 + 14:30	Oklahoma	CC Audergem

BLOC's Membership Fee 2018

As a performing member the fee for each person is 40 Euros for the calendar year 2018.

In your payment please mention your name and 2018.

If you are a non-performing member the fee is 20 Euros for the 2018 calendar year.

The account is BLOC and the account number to pay to is: BE54 3101 7807 3797.

The fee is for every member of 16 years and older.

DEADLINE NEXT BLOCNotes: 05th May 2018

MARCH/APRIL LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Blocnotes Reader!



We've just held our second AGM of the year. The first of the year was held on 22nd March but our lovely revised statutes say that at the yearly general meeting two thirds of the membership must be present. We had 90 paid up members on that date and so we should have had 60 present. There were 37 including the proxies. Not enough. The statutes go on to say (and this is Belgian law so there's no way round it) that a second AGM must be held no earlier than 15 days after the first but (and this is the better part) it doesn't have to be two thirds of the membership. So we decided to have the second one – really to vote on the new committee as the chairman's report and the treasurer's report had already been dealt with at the first one together with all the remarks from the floor – at a Sunday Urinetown rehearsal, on 22nd April. So that's what we did. And it went quickly. And there was a very good turn out.

To ensure maximum attendance in future years it was decided on 22nd April at the 2nd AGM that AGMs will in future be held on a Tuesday or Sunday in March before a rehearsal of the spring show. When the AGM was held in November, just after the winter show, and with a Christmas party to follow, numbers weren't a problem. Now our financial year runs from January to December and the membership is lower than later in the year.....well, you see the problem?

The new committee is as follows:

Chair:	Diana Morton-Hooper
Treasurer:	Alex Just
Hon.Sec.:	Dennis Elslander
Members:	Marie Rousseaux, Tony Lowe, Emanuelle Vergier, Barbara Bauer.

Tickets sold for Urinetown at time of writing? Just over 370 for all five performances (370 seat theatre.....so some hard selling is needed for the next few weeks to boost numbers, particularly the matinees). Ticket selling so often goes slowly to begin with and then there's a surge towards the end.....so cross fingers that the numbers start to rise. Our publicity team is working its socks off to sell the show. The cast are enthusiastic. It's a great show with some lively routines and some very catchy tunes so I can highly recommend it to you. I know.....terrible title....but it IS terrific fun with some show-stopping songs and dance routines so try not to miss it! Many of the cast will be flyer-ing in Tervuren this month and a flashmob is planned for very soon.....

Marie, our November director of Oklahoma! is already making final plans for intro evening, practice sessions and auditions, all happening immediately after Urinetown (Intro Evening on 5th June at 20h in De Kam). But for now, all focus is on Urinetown!

See you at De Kam?

DIANA x

The Chairman's report from the 2018 AGM can be found in this BLOCNotes
The Treasurer's report will be in next month's BLOCNotes

Music & Lyrics: **MARK HOLLMANN**
Book & Lyrics: **GREG KOTIS**

The Musical

URINETOWN



Box Office
is
OPEN!!!

Urinetown
was produced
on Broadway in
September, 2001
by Araca Group and
Dodger Theatricals
in association with
TheaterDreams, Inc.,
and Lauren Mitchell

A
drop of
HOPE can
change the
world

Stage Directors
Emanuelle Vergier

Music Directors
Steven De Mesmaeker

31st May – 3rd June 2018

De Warandepoort Cultural Centre



www.bloc-brussels.com

Markt 7B, 3080 Tervuren



Books in all languages and for all ages welcome as well as DVDs and CDs

Every 4th Wed of the month from 18.30 til 21.00
@ Le Chapelier Fou restaurant, Ch de la Hulpe 190, 1170 Brussels

Brussels Bookswappers Club
2018 dates

24 Jan, 28 Feb, 28 Mar, 25 Apr, 23 May,
27 Jun, 25 Jul, 22 Aug, 26 Sep, 24 Oct,
28 Nov, 19 Dec

Each month there will be a literary roundtable.
Please like our FB page or ask to be added to our mailing list for more details

BrusselsBookswappersClub BrusselsBookswappersClub@gmail.com



Urinetown:
some rehearsal pictures



G

"FOR. LOOK YOU. THERE IS HUMOUR IN ALL THINGS..."*(Jack Point, Yeomen of the Guard)*

S

Sing G&S in Brussels

invites you to its just-for-fun sing-along
afternoon of G&S humour
as it celebrates

Global Gilbert and Sullivan Day

Saturday, 5th May 2018 (14:30 to 18:00)

at the De Bosuil Cultural Centre, Jezus Eik,

1 Witherendreef, 3090 Overijse

(First floor. Doors open at 14:00)



Excerpts from "The Yeomen of the Guard" and "Patience"
and a complete sing-through of "Trial by Jury".
Tasty tea-time treats, too!

Music-scores provided on the day

Participation: 5 euros
For more information: singgasbru@gmail.com



ECC Panto 2019! Auditions in June

The journey to Sherwood Forest has begun. ECC are proud to present Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood which will be performed in Auderghem Cultural Centre from January 18-20, 2019 – directed by Andy Fisk. Auditions for the show will be held in the Warehouse on Sunday June 10th and Sunday June 17th from 10.30 am until 12.30 pm. There will be a number of principal roles and a chorus of around 20, plus a small chorus of mice as traditional.

We are also looking for people to help us in non-acting roles. For either acting or non-acting roles, please complete the online form at <https://goo.gl/forms/XTQpJVqfLJ5EvESu2>

Principal roles are:

Robin Hood: Female, solo singing role; **Marian:** Female, solo singing role; **Nursie Nanny Nellie:** Male (Dame), solo singing role; **Alan-a-Dale:** M/F (Comic), some singing; **Fairy Bluebell:** Female, no singing; **Sheriff of Nottingham:** Male (baddy), solo singing role; **Guy of Gisbourne:** Male (baddy), no singing; **Babe 1:** M/F, young role, no singing; **Babe 2:** M/F, young role, no singing; **Merry Men:** M/F, some singing.

There will also be a number of smaller parts for young and old. We also need back-stage help, so if you're interested in being part of the panto, but not acting, we'd love to hear from you! We need help to make costumes and props before the show, and then back stage help (stage crew, props, child-minding, front of house, make-up and hair) during the show.

Please note that rehearsals will be held on Monday and Wednesday evenings for Principals, and Sunday mornings for Chorus.

If you are interested in joining our merry crew in any capacity, please click on the link above and complete the form. Hurrah!

Andrew Fisk

1. I joined the Brussels Gilbert & Sullivan Society in 1976 and sang in the first Mikado the club staged – at the *Beursschouberg* in downtown Brussels. The club was made up of mostly Brits, a lot of gay men, some hetero couples and a lot of single women. Back in 1976 the only other groups to join were the English Comedy Club and the American Theatre Company. The club today is still thriving though quite different. Today Brussels boasts a vast range of amateur theatre groups to join but few can rival what BLOC has to offer.

2. The current BLOC brand – if you may call it that – is something that has evolved steadily over the past 6 to 8 years into something very special. We offer productions with extremely high standards of music, acting, costumes, props, set and we draw audiences of nearly 4000 people in any one year. We're looking forward to putting on a show in a great theatre at the end of May and we can look forward to yet another major production at the end of November at another even bigger theatre. These shows have budgets which most amateur drama groups couldn't even begin to dream about and it doesn't happen by accident.

3. It takes a lot of discussion, organisation and commitment from a lot of people to keep the club going year after year to achieve this. In a fast changing world the club has to adapt and develop. I can see there are a large number of knowledgeable, intelligent artistically ambitious people in front of me here who can make a contribution to this – not just the committee – we need all of you.

4. So, 2017. What happened? Since last year's AGM, we have published new statutes, found a storage facility which houses set, props and costumes under one roof, set up a new website, we've won prizes for our shows and we have a lovely range of ages and nationalities whose common love is musical theatre. There were plenty of Get Ins and Get Outs, some parties, and a wonderful feeling of togetherness as we faced and tackled each high and low that came our way. The committee sorted out crises, cajoled, enthused, lead when called upon and stepped back where appropriate. We never get everything right all the time – me least of all – but I think I can safely say that BLOC remains a friendly, welcoming, artistically sound club to belong to, full of very talented, hard-working people who volunteer their time, talent, ingenuity and goodwill for the greater enjoyment of all of us.

5. I began my Report last year with mention of weathering both Brexit and Trump. Both still dominate our

news, both exasperate many of us – so I feel as I did last year that BLOC has an important rôle to play in our lives. Music soothes the soul and brightens up a dreary day – and thus it was with our two vibrant productions of 2017: *HMS Pinafore* and *Crazy For You*.

6. The outgoing committee has got on well through the year - we don't always agree but we listen to each other, make compromises, talk things through and generally, it all works. We reflect BLOC in our age range and nationalities and we work by consensus. I'm sorry to lose Meera and Tonia who are stepping down but excited to see how the dynamics will work with the new set of 7 – more of that later. And there are those who don't sit on the committee but who work hard for the club and whom I shall mention anon. But initially, the committee:

- **Honorary Secretary** – Dutchman, **Dennis Elslander**, is our HonSec and in spite of a job that demands some tough unsociable working hours, he gives the club just about all the rest of his free time. He keeps committee records, sends flowers to BLOC members in times of joy or crisis, liaises with theatres for performances, rehearsals, parties, organises the annual BBQ and he edits, produces BLOCNOTES and even gets to be on stage. Thank you Dennis for all you do on behalf of BLOC – we ARE going to lighten your load this year. Promise!

- **Honorary Treasurer** – Austrian, Alex Just embodies the title "Jack-of-all-Trades". He's a hardworking treasurer, he found and set up our new ticketing system, he publicises and generates enthusiasm for our shows on Facebook, he performs, assistant produces and is a generally all round good sport.

- Sri-Lankan **Meera Laurijssen** takes charge of the box office at BLOC shows and is the club membership secretary. She has produced shows with Martin Blackwell and is currently joint producer for *Urinetown* with Alex Just. Thank you Meera. As I said, she is stepping down from her role as membership secretary and we thank her for all her hard work – particularly this past year helping to set up our new website.

- **Tonia Jolly**, a Brit, is BLOC Wardrobe Mistress and formed what we now know as The Jolly Sisterhood, who are a talented team of milliners, costume designers & makers who go from production to production creating some stunning looks for our actor-singers. Tonia is one of life's do-ers, never shirks from a task and she brings her own brand of Northern sense to many a situation. She will continue to head the Wardrobe team

but is stepping down from the committee. A huge thank you, Tonia.

- **Marie Rousseaux**, a Vietnamese Belgian is BLOC's Technical Liaison Chief – although she likes to build sets, she sings, turns pages and stage-directs. She directed HMS Pinafore in 2017 and in November 2018 she will be directing *Oklahoma!* for BLOC. She and Philip Deeks built the shelving and racks in our new storage home in Overijse and helped supervise the move from our old Shurgard storage in Machelen back in January.

- **Emanuelle Vergier** – is the youngest member of the committee and hails from the United States. She is one of our Social Media co-ordinators and keeps us in the loop about what's hot and what's not. She has taken lead roles in *Wizard of Oz* and *Crazy For You* as Dorothy and Polly respectively, and is our current stage director for *Urinetown*.

So my heartfelt thanks to all of you on the executive committee for your loyal support, enthusiasm and hard work. However, there are some others I would like to mention:

- **Peter DeSchepper** still fills the Resident DJ spot for BLOC and sets up his equipment at all BLOC parties. He wants to step down from his role as Social Secretary with Dennis – so we are looking for a volunteer. Thank you, Peter.

- Thank you to **Lawrence Kelly** for being the BLOC Props Master, overseeing our properties store which we have just moved to Overijse. Everything is itemised, catalogued, shipshape and easily located.

- Lawrence is aided by **Andrea Edwards** who sources props. If I mention a keeper and a sourcer, I should also mention some of our talented props makers – **Peter Mountain**, **Appo van der Wiel**, **Sari Sarenpaa** are just three of them, along with **Dr. Philippa Ferraz** who as well as making props, makes costumes, lends a hand with makeup and is our go-to Medical Officer during our shows. Thank you to all of you for the hours you devote to BLOC.

- If I mention anybody else who is a Jack of All Trades then it has to be the talented **Philip Deeks**, who builds our award-winning sets with **Marie Rousseaux**, and amongst others, **Liam O'Reilly**, **Steve Stabler**, **John Kenrick & John Hiley**..... sets which are magnificently painted by **Janet Gray**, **Anna Schallenberg & Mairead**

O'Reilly. Not only does Philip act and direct and build sets but he designed and built our all-purpose new storage facility at the new premises in Overijse which now house all set, props and costumes under one roof. The structure is firm and solid but whether it's all those years in Sweden, but he assures me it can all be dismantled like an Ikea flatpack and re-constituted just about anywhere, should we have to move again. Everything in one place at last. Tumultuous applause please.

- Thank you to **Barbara Bauer** who keeps charge of the BLOC Archives.

- Thank you to **Meera and Marie** who have looked after the new BLOC website, plus new recruit **Helen Krabb**.

- These days we are particularly lucky to have the talents of **Mrs. Alex Just** on hand. Otherwise known as **Eva Konrad**, she is the talent behind all our wonderful photographs, the show photo albums, show posters and she spends hours and hours putting together our stunning programmes along with our props lady

- **Isabelle Deneyer**, who has recently also been in charge of gathering advertising. These two ladies work behind the scenes as the show rehearses to gather information and design our (sometimes up to 40-page) programmes – which pay for themselves and are a welcome source of revenue – no bad thing when you consider how much it costs to put on a BLOC show.

- Marketing our shows is no mean task and I just want to mention our Show Promotion Team par excellence – **Anne Marie & Marc Tonnon** – who sell vast numbers of seats for each performance. Anne-Marie spends hours on the phone encouraging people to buy tickets – which she does very successfully. And she sees every performance. What dedication!

- Thank you to **Chris Harding** for all his lighting expertise, **Jez Thomas** for sound and our makeup & hair teams headed by **Laraine Alder and Francoise Salter**.

- Perhaps here I should speak about our great relationship with De Kam and all who run it: the ladies in the office **Anne and Daisy**, **Rudy** who is in charge of equipment, but with particular thanks to the friendly and accommodating **Koen & Koen's Mum** in the bar. We stay far too long merrymaking after rehearsals but he never turns us out without a smile and only rarely a discreet ring of his school bell..... It was a great honour to be asked to perform at the De Kam 25th Anniversary

evening on 23rd February – to sing to the Wezembeekers and to watch some film footage of us in rehearsal in the Grotezaal, very much part of the De Kam family.

So let's run through what has happened to BLOC since our last AGM.

7. Without a December AGM we had had a lovely Christmas Party and it helped us forget about the craziness that getting our revised statutes became. It took moving heaven and earth but by last March's AGM we were up to date, published in the *Moniteur belge* and raring to go thanks to some hard work by the committee, and particularly lawyer **Jacques Beukenhoudt**, to whom we are grateful for a lot of pro bono work for us.

8. We began 2017 on a euphoric note after the sell-out success of **A Christmas Carol** in November 2016. January auditions for HMS Pinafore were well attended: at last here was a Gilbert & Sullivan operetta to satisfy all those enthusiasts who believed that it had been a long time coming. The last G&S had been my Basingstoke or Bust! compilation in 2013 and before that.....well it was a long time. **Marie Rousseaux** took up the challenge of stage direction with Lionel Bams as musical director.

9. **HMS PINAFORE:** This was classic Gilbert & Sullivan with a cast of dyed in the wool enthusiasts and quite a few bemused new recruits whose enthusiasm for Sullivan's music was not a million miles from their exasperation at getting their tongues round Gilbert's words. Soaring soprano lead Josephine Corcoran was easy enough with **Bridget Pierson Davis** filling the role. The quest for a tenor Ralph Rackstraw? Not so much. It rivalled the quest for Scarlet O'Hara but with a couple of false starts as rehearsals began, a Ralph stepped from the chorus to fill the role and off we went. Tickets sold reasonably well but the pull of G&S to an international Brussels audience is far less these days than it is to the hundreds who flock to Harrogate each August to the G&S Festival – far less. Those who performed on stage and off together with those members of the audience who ventured out to De Bosuil on the cusp of May and June had a marvellous time. Artistically, Marie and Lionel reached their goals, we were able to give a lot of our G&S costumes a makeover and an airing. We proved yet again that the BLOC chorus makes a sound to be proud of, but financially we took a small loss as we feared we might.

10. With summer nearly upon us, **Steve Stabler** was obliged to have work done on his roof which meant a clear out of costumes from his house one fine June day.

We gratefully thanked Steve for housing the majority of our substantial ex Doyly Carte wardrobe and boxes of accessories for so long, hired a van and a team of about 15 shifted armfuls of heavy outfits from Sterrebeek to their new, albeit temporary as it turned out, home in Machelen, in a nearby lock up to our set and props store. There was still a garage full of even more costumes chez Jolly.....and The Ruthless Cull is still to happen. Anyhow, thank you to all of those good people who did the move that sunny day last summer.

11. I should say something about **storage** at this point. As most of you know, for the past couple of years or so we have stored items in a Shurgard lock up, built sets on a racquets court at the American School and housed other items at either Tonia's or Marie's, or indeed the Heenans before they left Brussels, and as mentioned, chez Steve Stabler. In December last year we had the opportunity of moving everything to one space at a much reduced rental. We decided to take up the challenge and in January with the help of BLOC volunteers, in yet another Get Out & Get In which was carried out in hardly the most conducive or clement of months for a move, we took everything from the Machelen Shurgard to Adrien & Fils in Overijse, just down the road from De Bosuil. The venue is more accessible and slightly cheaper to rent (for now....) Set designer-builders extraordinaires, Philip Deeks and Marie Rousseaux were thrilled to spend a couple of weeks in perishingly cold temperatures constructing something that would last more than 5 nights before destruction. Philip designed a solid racking and shelving set up which can be used in another space should we ever move again so all our costumes, props and set components are stored in a space which is optimised for the purpose. Huge thanks to them and to the volunteers who helped with The Majestic Move. We've now been able to throw out much that will never be used again and we have a more streamlined storage facility.

12. But back to 2017. September weekends were busy. Rehearsals for **Crazy for You** began, we held the September BLOC BBQ, won some Butties, and fund-raised for St. Anthony's RC church roof fund.

13. On 10th September we held the Annual BLOC BBQ organised by Dennis Elslander, with main course by our usual first class caterers. A dodgy rain-filled sky eventually turned sunny but we had set up everything in the De Kam Grotezaal as we did last year which worked. Tony Lowe serenaded us with some classics from his repertoire, tables groaned with a variety of delicious home-made desserts brought by everybody. With so many nationalities we can guarantee that our parties have a wonderful selection of particular dishes so

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it's just as well we do a lot of dancing and table hopping at our social events. Some question whether we should continue to make this event free for members or charge them but I think we should leave things as they are: we ask you all to do your bit for BLOC during the year so it's a lovely way to start the season after the summer break and say thank you. It gathers those about to perform and those not performing – in fact everybody is welcome. And that can't be a bad thing, can it?

14. On 17th September the Brussels Theatre Technicians' award ceremony was held in an Ixelles garden. BLOC won five awards for **A Christmas Carol** – Best Show, Best Actor (Tony Lowe for Scrooge and Sir Joseph Porter), Best Sound and Best Producers and yet again, Best Set. We were very proud.

15. On 24th September Jeremy Thomas' church was raising money to repair its roof so he gathered a group of BLOC performers to give a concert at St. Anthony's. We raised about 1000 euros and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Thank you to all those who took part and who came and supported the good cause.

16. On 30th September Philip and I represented BLOC in Alcester at Diane Gray's funeral. Di and Paul Gray lent their beautiful soprano and tenor voices to many BLOC productions from the mid-1970s onwards. They had retired to the UK about 6 years ago, with music still very much the focus of their lives so Di's short courageous battle with cancer stunned many who knew and loved her. Her funeral was a joyful celebration of a life well lived.

17. Picking the right show becomes increasingly difficult as we're a large club and we cannot shy away from large casts with enough for girls and boys from multiple generations. Modern musicals don't always cater to large casts so we often look to the musicals of yesteryear for our November show. It was in this vein that we chose **Gershwin's Crazy For You** for our November 2017 show with Rachel Bateman as stage director, Jean Emmett as choreographer and Vivienne McKay as music director. The story moves from New York to Deadrock Nevada in the 1930s and Team Deeks-Rousseaux built probably their most ambitious set to date which opened impressively from hotel frontage to inside bar saloon like a book, with a Peter Mountain car sturdy enough to dance on, some stunning sparkly costumes, a Rousseaux flashing 'Follies' sign with around 900 fairy lights and a cast of many non-dancers who had no idea that by November they would be fluent in Glaswegian and wowing audiences with tapping and swinging to the strains of a 20 piece orchestra. Ticket sales were again slow but perked up enough for the box office receipts to look respectable. From a wobbly last few rehearsals, a

little BLOC fairy dust blew over the first night and the cast pulled out all the stops to make it a show to remember. Thanks to all the **Crazy For You** team.

18. The **Crazy For You** cast party was a blast but not the last BLOC party of the year. Without a December AGM we decided to hold a Christmas Party at De Kam and it finished off the year nicely. There was mulled wine, a great spread of food reflecting our varying nationalities and some entertainment from a few brave souls who sang to us.

19. We began 2018 with auditions for **Urinetown**, our current production, and I should like to speak a little about the casting process. Before I do that, though, I want to share my thoughts about the choice of **Urinetown**. My advice to the committee was to perform **Oklahoma!** this spring which I felt was a better crowd puller for our new venue in Tervuren. I love **Urinetown** but I am not convinced it will achieve large audiences. However, the committee is run democratically, there was a vote and the majority went for **Urinetown**. That the production will be an artistic success I am sure, but we have to be prepared for a financial loss. To try to minimise this there is a first class promotions/publicity team already in place lead by Marc Tonnon so we're going to pull out all the stops to get those seats filled.

20. But back to casting and the audition process; always a subject of lively debate. BLOC auditions are not the same as the audition process in other amateur Brussels groups and to some they are probably more daunting. We expect auditionees to learn dialogue and a song or two. We usually lay out rows of chairs like an audience for either nervous or over-confident candidates, with a pianist and an auditioning panel that smacks of the Spanish Inquisition. There are a set of rules about procedure. However, auditions rarely go according to plan and a director sometimes has to think on his or her feet, to balance acting with singing ability, recognise long standing members who make significant contributions to the club, recognise a shy one who has potential and give him or her a chance. Sometimes there are several candidates who could do the role equally well. Sometimes a director has to sit through bad acting, candidates singing flat, candidates who are unprepared, candidates who are prepared and just go to pieces when faced with a semi- performance before they've even got the role. I know I speak for fellow stage directors when I emphasise that an audition should not be seen as a performance or as a competition with winners or losers. A director tries to cast a show according to a vision, to serve the story-telling in the best way possible. These days we hold open auditions for transparency. The committee has recently taken a decision not to use filmed

auditions by e mail. But we are not a production company, we're a club, and so the process has to be inclusive, not exclusive. What I'm trying to say is that you can't, maybe shouldn't, just cast on auditions alone – there are many other factors to take into consideration, to Do The Right Thing. Of course, when you decide to do a show you have to have an idea of who might be right in a role, but be ready to be surprised and sometimes play it by ear. I never said it was easy to be a director – it isn't!

21. We don't hire out much these days – certainly our pianos stay put and are only for BLOC use. Our costumes are in the process of being streamlined & catalogued so when this is completed we shall probably revise our costume hire arrangements. We tackle hiring out our possessions – be it set, prop or costume on a case by case basis.

22. The Programme and Planning sub-committee lead by Annina Alanen a few years ago drew up a list of potential shows – a yes, no and maybe list – which has served us well. Time for a new one and I have asked Jeanette Marino to lead a new Programme and Planning team to carry on the good work. She has a good knowledge of musical theatre and knows our criteria of enough for chorus, rights available, crowd-pulling, doable for present-day BLOC with its range of ages and nationalities.

23. As I seem to say each year, the club constantly evolves and we who run it try to make it a fun, challenging and rewarding experience for everybody who seeks us out to become a member. We always welcome new faces, love to add to the many different nationalities and ages in the current membership and, I hope, appreciate those who loyally continue to be associated with us. Why do we do it? Well they say that music soothes a troubled soul and helps the heart to beat firmly.

*For the performers who put themselves through the stress of learning lines & remembering them, learning moves, even dance steps and remembering them, for those who put themselves through the stress of helping those people to look and sound good before hundreds of people, **there IS no business like show business.***

It's a curiously frightening, stomach-churning, terrifying but ultimately amazing feeling. You always vow that you'll never put yourself through it again,

but you do – you can't help yourself. That's theatre passion. And long may it last.

So, thank you BLOC and in the immortal words of Tiny Tim in ***A Christmas Carol***:

God Bless Us, Everyone!

BLOC Chairman, DIANA MORTON-HOOPER

March 2018