

Normansfield – Protecting a Theatrical Past

Normansfield Theatre, Langdon Down Centre,
Saturday, 20 May 2017
10am to 4.30pm

- 10am **Registration and Coffee**
- 10.15am **Welcome**
Carol Boys, Chief Executive, Down's Syndrome Association
- 10.20am **Overview of Normansfield, a home for people with learning disabilities established by Dr John Langdon Down in 1868**
Ian Jones Healey, Archivist, Down's Syndrome Association
- 10.45am **The Conservation of the Normansfield Scenery Collection**
Karen Thompson, Lecturer in Textile Conservation, University of Glasgow
- 11.15am **Coffee**
- 11.30am **Normansfield – Protecting a Theatrical Past**
David Wilmore, a Theatre Consultant, has been involved with the Normansfield Scenery since the 1990s and managed the photography and cataloguing of all the scenery at Normansfield
- 12.15pm **Lunch – a light buffet lunch will be served**
- 1.15pm **Victorian Set Painting**
Dr Hilary Vernon Smith, former Head Scenic Artist at the National Theatre
- 1.45pm **Victorian Costume Making**
Jane Pritchard, Curator at V&A and Dr Veronica Isaac, Assistant Curator at the V&A
- 2.15pm **The D'Oyly Carte – the company's interaction with scenic artists from 1875**
Raymond Walker, Chairman/Founding Director – Victorian Opera Northwest
- 2.45pm **Coffee**
- 3.15pm **Visit Theatres – the historic theatre route through Europe**
Alison Rae, Chair of the Board of Visit Theatres
- 3.40pm **Questions for the Panel of Speakers**



This programme might be subject to slight variation

Speakers

Ian Jones-Healey

Ian Jones-Healey is archivist at the Langdon Down Museum and editor of the Down's Syndrome Association journal and website.

His talk will focus on the life and work of Dr John Langdon Down and his institution at Normansfield. Here those with learning disabilities could benefit from a revolutionary and enlightened approach to education, training and care. It became an NHS Hospital in 1951 and closed in 1997. Part of the original building is now home to the Langdon Down Centre which includes the Down's Syndrome Association, the Langdon Down Museum and Normansfield Theatre.

Karen Thompson

Karen Thompson, BA(Hons), PGCE, PGDip, FHEA, ACR is a lecturer and textile conservator at the Centre for Textile Conservation and Technical Art History, University of Glasgow. Painted textiles is one of her areas of specialism and research. Karen was project manager for the conservation of a set of painted theatre scenery and storage of over 100 pieces of scenery for Normansfield Hospital Theatre, Teddington. The work project was shortlisted for the prestigious Conservation Awards in 2005. Other work with painted textiles has involved: Lead conservator on The National Banner Survey held by the People's History Museum, Manchester; Conservation of painted banners; and research and publications in the making, deterioration and conservation of painted textiles.

Her talk today will address the development of the conservation of the scenery collection, describe some of the conservation challenges addressed during the project and review the conservation 10 years on.

David Wilmore

Dr Hilary Vernon-Smith

Jane Pritchard

Jane Pritchard is curator of dance for the Victoria and Albert Museum where she co-curated *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes, 1909–1929* and edited the accompanying book. Previously she was archivist for Rambert Dance Company and English National Ballet, and created the Contemporary Dance Trust Archive. Other exhibitions include *Les Ballets 1933, Rambert Dance Company at 75, A Flash of Light: The Dance Photography of Chris Nash* and *Hand in Glove*, a performed exhibition. She has curated seasons of dance films, presented on radio and contributed to numerous publications. She was awarded an MBE for services to the arts in the 2014 New Year's Honours.

Jane's presentation, 'Making costumes', will look at London costumiers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century

Dr Veronica Isaac

Dr Isaac has a long-standing interest in dress history and graduated with an MA in Museum and Galleries (specialising in the history of Textiles and Dress) in 2008. She first became interested in theatre costume when writing her MA dissertation, which investigated the collections held within the UK. This research brought the costumes held by Department of Theatre and Performance at the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A) to her attention. Her subsequent work with collection, has inspired her to develop this research further to look specifically at developments within dress and theatre costume over the course of the nineteenth, and early twentieth century.

This presentation draws upon her recent completed doctoral research into the personal dress and theatre costumes of the actress Dame Ellen Terry (1847 – 1928). Her research was carried out at the University of Brighton, and in collaboration with the Department of Theatre and Performance, and the National Trust property, Smalhythe Place (Terry's former home).

Raymond Walker

With a teenage interest in theatre, retired Physics teacher Raymond Walker was first responsible for lighting in amateur dramatics before becoming a lighting designer for local operatic societies. This led to an interest in Gilbert and Sullivan and a fascination with early Victorian Theatre.

After chairman of Wilmslow Opera, he founded Victorian Opera Northwest to provide recordings of neglected British opera. With Richard Bonyng as President and conductor they recorded some 5 operas by Balfe, Malace and Sullivan. Raymond has been researching and is writing a book on the Scenic Design of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company over 100 years – "Backdrop to a Legend" This specialises in the scenic art from the 1870s and uncovers techniques and happenings that had been thought to have gone to the grave.

Alison Rae

Alison will be giving an introduction to Visit Theatre, a user-friendly guide to theatres' tours in Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands and Belgium, and its role in managing the Channel Route of the European Route of Historic Theatre. This talk will look at Visit Theatres' work in promoting the tours offered by the 27 historic theatres featured on the Visit Theatres website www.visittheatres.org and its relationship to the 120 theatres featured on the 12 Routes of the European Route of Historic Theatres.