

Theatre Managers' report 2026

We have had another very busy year, and the need to move the first studio show from the beginning to the end of the season caused some very tight deadlines to pull this off. All credit and enormous thanks has to go to the set team and the technical team in making this happen, literally pulling one show out the same day as moving the next set in. Some set pieces were literally moved from stage to stage and re-purposed immediately. And as we sit here, some things have moved back *again* for Blue Stockings.

A complete review of the year has been carried out, over a few meetings, while constructing the diary for next year. We are trying to streamline the next year and keep it spaced out, Lewis been able to come in early on this exercise and spread youth shows out alongside the Juniors requirements too, over the year. This is always very complex as it has to fit in with school term times to make sure of availability of cast at the right times.

I reckon this could be 75 performances or more over the year from all groups. That is also a lot of backstage and front of house staff to man each evening on top of the set and technical teams. Plus the daytime staff to turn the theatre around for seating, cleaning and restocking. That is just the physical side. On top of that the seating plans, ticketing and marketing and financing and budgeting can be added in the background.

This statement could have been written in other reports from the Chairman or Artistic Director, the relevance here is that the human resource is as important as money to the Bancroft Players. We have always looked forward to ways we can improve and streamline what we do and at the moment there are a few projects in the planning in the short term.

The pressure on personal has meant we cannot meet or devote enough time to project planning while we are trying to run the theatre day-to-day.

This is why it is so important that everyone in the membership steps up and performs duties to help run the theatre besides the commitment they make to stage a show.

The projects at the moment are to improve the space and functionality of the studio foyer, turning the John Coxall room into multi-purpose use for dressing room and costume cutting area utilising worktops for both purposes, and preparing the Youth Wing for occasional performances. This will necessitate the re-structuring of dressing room three to separate it into two rooms with a dividing corridor down the middle to give access to a new backstage area in the youth wing. Something I have had in planning for a few years but not moved forward. It has the advantage of giving seven spaces at mirrors, more than we have at present, plus clothes rails, and the flexibility of two assignable rooms to gender as required. It as means that a corridor can be incorporated

from stage left wing to the Green Room without disturbing dressing room three at present.

Preparing the Youth Wing for performance is not a simple thing as we have to think about audience access, not a direct route at present, but not unsolvable.

The noticeable items we have managed this year is the fitting of new workshop exterior doors, something I would like to extend to the auditorium exit side exterior doors now as well. In the last month we have had the boiler changed which failed this year after about 15 years' service. We have also replaced the ageing foyer heaters and I have managed to restore a heater in the centre where there used to be a wall heater, lost during the recent re-furb, but now a heater under the bench seating. Hopefully this should just add enough to maintain a decent temperature during those cold months, with greater efficiency restored to the other heater positions. Replacement of lighting to LED fittings continues on an attrition basis.

I would like to thank again those that have kept this high level of activity going in the background, Oksana on cleaning, and what seems like Amanda on everything else, re-stocking the bar, ordering materials and stock, opening up for sessions, preparing spaces, and then repairing and redecorating the theatre after all those things. We extend an enormous thanks for all that Amanda does. Also thanks to the members of the set team for the tasks they have helped with when asked, outside their artistic endeavours.

Can I again this year appeal that members spend just that little bit more time when leaving (and commuting) around the theatre to turn lights off. Our electricity bill is huge and a lot of this can be reduced by turning off the lights and heating (aircon). Many lights are left on during sessions, when there is no reason, and also a belief when you leave that other people in will turn the lights of after you. Most times this isn't so, they just turn off the areas they went to. So many times, I, and others, have come down to find odd rooms, corridors, and aircon left on. Can I ask if you are going to backstage rooms, and not using the auditorium directly, that you don't use it as a pathway, it is the single most expensive area to light and once you have gone through it doesn't get used again for long periods, use the side corridor. Don't turn it on automatically when you enter the theatre.

Finally, thanks to all those I have not mentioned in keeping the theatre running - the EC and the other members of teams that have made this such a great year.

Chris Lane

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