



A message from the Chair, Joan Travis



Above, celebrating 100 years of the theatre

Our last communication by Newsletter was in April 2014, so some of the news here may seem old, but has not been recorded, except verbally at the previous AGM. You may be able to recognise yourselves in the centenary birthday photo; and you will recall press articles and TV and radio programmes that have appeared over the last year concerning Hippodrome matters and ideas that many varied groups and people have expressed about the development of Derby city centre. These are often not accurate in fact or conveyance of meaning, so it's worth asking questions about anything puzzling at the AGM.

This is the first newsletter since his death, that we remember the wonderful dedication of Chris Harris, one of our founder members who was compiling an archive of people's memories of the Hippodrome, including on film, and who gave up so much time to our Facebook site and to checking the internet

and the media. If anyone would like to take over his work, or knows someone who would, please don't hesitate to contact us.

The article on page 2 & 3 should give you the accurate picture of our progress to date. Be reassured that the application to the HLF does represent a step forward, and will test the support of the new owners. If they feel that the process of grant acquisition is too long for them, they can either try to get planning permission for an alternative use for the building, which would have to be approved by the same authorities who turned down the first application (and after two studies had concluded that the best option was for a full-blown theatre), or sell and cut their losses. After talks with city council members the idea of compulsory purchase seems a little less alien, and some members are beginning to see the economic argument for a theatre. At last.

The future of the Lyceum Theatre in Sheffield was in a similar situation to ours in that their city council suggested it would be better turned into a carpark(!) The determined supporters of the Lyceum have just celebrated the 25th year of a successful theatre. There's another example to spur us on; we remain optimistic! We thank you for your continued support.

Joan

The past year

In the 2014 Newsletter we reported on the submission of our planning application to redevelop the Green Lane front of house of the theatre as a coffee shop and usable spaces for offices and meetings as well as roofing over the auditorium and stage house. We got approval but as we did not own the building or have any agreement with the then owner, Christopher Anthony, to develop the site we were stymied.

Change of ownership

Then in February this year we met with Blake Finance who were in the process of acquiring the Hippodrome. Discussion continued through the summer until finally, in September, Blake Finance completed the transfer of ownership.

Change of direction

In the meantime the Trust had been reconsidering our rather narrow proposal regarding the redevelopment of the front of house in light of other events in the City. Derby City Council had announced that the Assembly Rooms (1600 seats) and the Darwin Suite (300 seats) would not be renovated and re-opened following the plant room fire in April 2014 and that the Arena, the velodrome designed essentially for cycling, would stage major events such as the annual pantomime.

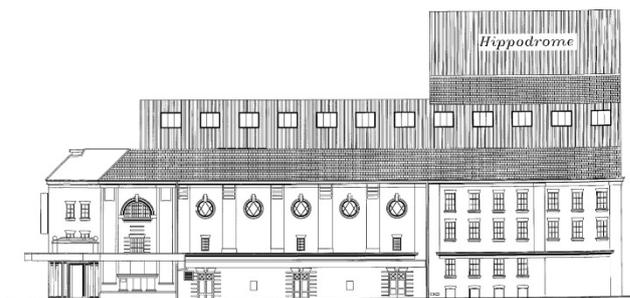
This left the Derby Theatre, the former Playhouse, with 550 seats and the Guildhall (just under 200 seats) as the only other theatrical venues. Coupled with the thriving development of the City the way was seen to be open for a restored Hippodrome with 1000+ seats and an appropriately sized stage and fly tower to receive touring productions covering musicals, opera and ballet.

The decision

So the Trust decided to go ahead with the redevelopment of the derelict Hippodrome to its full 1914's splendour. The capacity when it first opened was 2,300 but that was before Health & Safety and people in general getting larger! It is commonly accepted that a theatre with at least 1,000 seats and a million population within 40 minutes travel time should be economically viable. The capacity of the rebuilt theatre will be about 1,200 and there are 1.8 million people within the 40 minute travel time. So we were confident that with the right impetus the revitalised Hippodrome will succeed.

Funding

We then moved to the next stage which is to seek funding to the tune of £25 million for the rebuild and fit out of the theatre and to negotiate with Blake Finance for a lease of the site. Bear in mind a similar sized theatre on a new site will start at somewhere between £50 and £75 million and take at least seven years to complete. Whereas the Hippodrome can be completed in under three.



Above, design concept of how the future theatre could look, from Macklin St

The principle funding will hopefully come from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This requires a two stage application, the first of which we have to fund ourselves. If we are successful and move on to the second

stage then the majority of the funding will be provided by the H.L.F. We have however, just made application to the H.L.F. for a Start Up Grant of £10,000 to help with stage 1.

We actually went in the Hippodrome!

So in October we were able to get inside the Hippodrome, the first time anyone had been 'officially' inside since the fateful day in 2008. It may look terrible but with the debris cleared out we are left with in effect a half built theatre. Think of all those brick built castles and manor houses that have stood open to the elements for 400 years or more! The intention is to enlarge the stage, increase the height of the fly tower and to put an additional floor over the auditorium that can be used as dressing rooms, scenery storage and office space served by stairs and lift to stage level.

Below, the proscenium arch, exposed to the elements, autumn 2015



Support for the Hippodrome

Over the last twelve months it has been recognised both within the City and outside that Derby desperately needs the 1,000+ seat theatre that the Hippodrome can provide. We have had support in the local press from the Derby Civic Society and others with Lord Bragg of Wigton decrying the cultural scene in Derby and wholeheartedly supporting our

endeavours. We have received powerful support too from surprising sources who at this time prefer to remain anonymous.

As they say business is looking up! But we need more people to carry out the tasks ahead of us. So, please spread the word get your friends and colleagues to join.

Peter Steer, director of DHRT

Hippo celebrates 100 years

In summer 2014 the Derby Hippodrome marked a very important birthday. On Sunday July 20th, the theatre was 100 years old, representing a significant period in the life of this historic building. A crowd of DHRT supporters came to mark the anniversary and gathered outside the building alongside supporter and President of the Derby Hippodrome Restoration Trust, actress Gwen Taylor. Each supporter was asked to hold a red balloon to celebrate the theatre's centenary. Gwen Taylor, who spoke that day with great passion for the building, said: "the Derby Hippo has been entertaining people over the last 100 years. I remember well coming to the theatre with my father and being entranced by this lovely old building. I hope that now the Derby Hippodrome has managed to reach its centenary, the city will choose to save and restore it for another 100 years to come."

Turn to the back page for details on how to donate or renew your membership to DHRT. We really value your support!



Subscription renewal / application form 2015-16

- I apply for membership of the DHRT and agree to support the objects of the Trust
- I am renewing my membership for the year
- I enclose a cheque for £10.00 for my annual membership (payable to Derby Hippodrome Restoration Trust)
- I do not wish to join but enclose a cheque / cash for £.....as a donation
- I am interested in helping out / volunteering

(Please delete as appropriate)

Name.....Address.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....Email.....
date.....

Please send completed form and cheque to: DHRT, The White House, 2, New Road, Darley Abbey Derby DE22 1DR. Please fill in the Gift Aid below.

Gift Aid Declaration

Details of donor

TitleForename(s)
 Surname
 Address

 Post Code

I want the Derby Hippodrome Restoration Trust to treat all donations, including annual subscriptions, **and** all donations and future subscriptions that I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

SignedDated

NOTE: you must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the Trust reclaims on your donations in the appropriate tax year (currently 25p for each £1 you give).

Notes: You can cancel this Declaration at any time by notifying the Derby Hippodrome Restoration Trust.If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the Trust reclaims, you can cancel your declaration.

If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return. If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask the Trust or refer to help sheet IR65 from HM Revenue and Customs. (This is available on their web site www.hmrc.gov.uk).