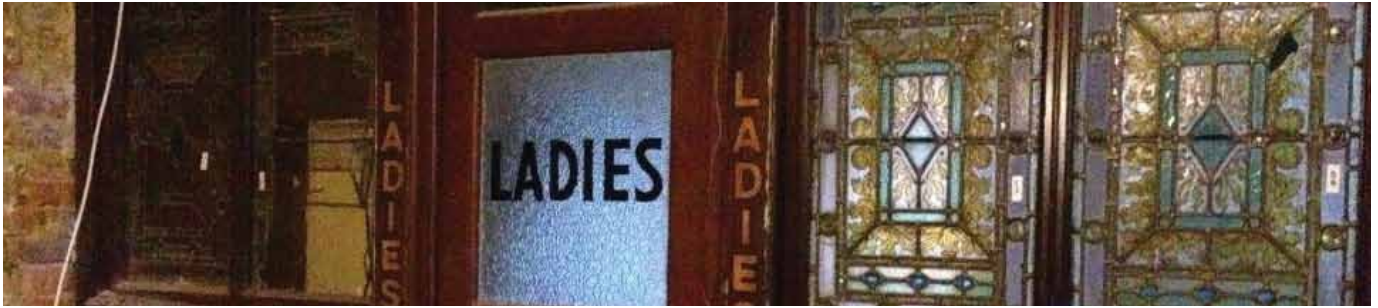


Spend a penny



For many female patrons, as the lights on stage go down and house lights in the auditorium come up for the interval, they are already on their feet ready to make the dash to the loo, hoping to be one of the first in the queue to avoid the foot hopping wait to make it into a cubicle before the bell rings for the start of the second half. Theatres Trust with the generous donation of £125,000 from *Simon and Sue Ruddick* is trying to raise the profile of this problem by enabling 10 theatres across the UK to upgrade their facilities.

Sue and Simon Ruddick are avid theatregoers living in the heart of London's West End. On occasion, when visiting local theatres, it has occurred to them that during the interval it may be faster for Sue to go home and use the toilet than joining the queue at the theatre. And this is a nationwide problem. As our Interim Director, Rebecca Morland says: "It is a practical fact that ladies take rather longer to get through loos than gentlemen and cubicles take up a lot of space." Due to the restrictions of the building footprint, many older buildings have great problems increasing their toilet facilities to accommodate these demands and instead try to fit as many smaller cubicles as possible in.

"Some of the toilets are so tiny in some of the old theatres that I don't know how pregnant women actually get into them. And sometimes it will be up a little step and then you have to manoeuvre yourself around to get in."

Sue Ruddick

The limited number and longer use time of cubicles often leads to snaking queues of women, jealously watching as male patrons wander into the loo and out again with plenty of time still to get to the bar for a drink. Many women have strategies in place such as arriving early or being the quickest out of their seat to alleviate the anxiety of possibly not being able to use the loo before the performance starts again. An entertaining and enjoyable evening often disrupted because the facilities do not reflect the make-up of the audience which is there to use them. The fund is not exclusively for ladies' loos, Theatres Trust encourages applications to the fund from theatres aiming to redress the provision of toilet facilities for all under-represented sections of their audiences.

As Simon Ruddick says: "Initial feedback on the idea of the fund has been terrific, both in terms of media coverage and the response from individual theatres who are intending to apply. We have even had support from Dame Judi Dench, offering her name to the campaign. There are a lot of people across the UK who really want to make a difference to improving the theatregoing experience in their venues, ensuring it the very best that it can be for their patrons. We are proud to be able to help them in this essential way."

Sue finished: "We really look forward to hearing how this initiative has provided direct relief to like-minded theatregoers across the land."

The 10 theatres to receive £15,000 each will be selected based on an application, assessments of their current facilities and the need to update. Priority will be given to projects which, on completion, meet the relevant British Standard BS6465, but we would encourage applicants to meet the recommendations of ABTT Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment.

Simon Ruddick is Chairman of Albourne Partners. He and his wife, Susan, were recently involved in raising over £155,000 for the Duchenne Research Fund by way of a one-night show at London's Dominion Theatre entitled *The Importance of Being Lewis*, having previously raised money for Teenage Cancer Trust with a show called *At Home with Mayor Lewis* and also by way of an event called *Hedgestock* in 2006, which featured a performance by The Who. Simon Ruddick won the International Leadership Award from the American Red Cross in 2012. He became a Trustee of Theatres Trust on 1 April, 2014. Sue Ruddick recently completed the first year of her Professional Acting Diploma at City Lit. Needless to add, he and his wife love the arts and theatre in particular: they just aspire to enjoying the intermission equally.

The closing date for applications to the Spend a Penny scheme is 26 October 2016 at noon and the outcome of those applications will be decided in December 2016.

Further details on how to apply for the Spend a Penny Scheme can be found at:

theatrust.org.uk/grants/spend-a-penny

"If you love theatre, I urge you to support the Theatres Trust Spend a Penny scheme - they are looking after our national treasure of unique and wonderful theatres for generations to come."

Dame Judi Dench

Theatres Protection Fund Spend a Penny

In January 2017 we announced the eight theatres that were selected to receive £15,000 each from the Spend a Penny campaign, financed by the Chairman of Albourne Partners (and Theatres Trust trustee) Simon Ruddick. Deeply empathetic of his wife's complaints about the ladies' loos in many theatres, this theatre-going entrepreneur decided last summer to do something, and offered funding to Theatres Trust to make a start on the improvement of facilities for women primarily, but also gender neutral and unisex toilets.

The scheme proved massively popular, and we received 21 applications from an extraordinary variety of theatres throughout the UK, ranging from large London theatres to small community theatres. We chose to fund a variety of projects. Some of them involve major re-workings, whilst others involve a more creative use of existing space.

We very much hope that the projects will inspire others to review their toilet provision, and we will feature some of the completed schemes as case studies in future issues of TM. With such a proven need for funding in this area, we also look forward to other donors coming forward to follow on from Simon Ruddick's initiative.



The theatres that received funding are:

Shelley Theatre, Bournemouth

The Shelley Theatre and its supporting rooms are in the mid stages of a full restoration programme. This historic Grade II listed private theatre has been in use since 1870, when it was built by Sir Percy Florence Shelley, the son of the poet and authoress Mary Shelley of *Frankenstein* fame. It was acquired in 2005 in a derelict condition helped and supported by volunteers it puts on a varied programme including touring theatre, film and music of various genres. The theatre currently only has ground floor unisex toilets and with the help of the Trust's funding can add six ladies' loos.

Darlington Hippodrome (former Darlington Civic Theatre)

Opened in 1907 as the New Hippodrome and Palace of Varieties, this Edwardian Grade II listed building has been entirely owned and managed by Darlington Borough Council since 1964. It is the most complete surviving example of the unique style of architects Owen & Ward. It serves as the main venue for arts and entertainment within the borough and is a sought after venue for touring companies. The theatre is currently closed for a major capital project which will now include four new unisex toilets in the Upper Circle thanks to this timely funding.

Darlington Hippodrome
Credit:
Ian Grundy

**Shelley Theatre,
Bournemouth**
Credit: Theatres
Trust





Liverpool's Royal Court

A Grade II listed art deco theatre in Liverpool, the Royal Court has been brought back to life over the past ten years. It operates entirely without subsidy and has combined a popular artistic programme with phased capital works which have transformed the theatre. The Trust's funding will specifically upgrade toilet provision in the balcony area, where it is currently very poor. It will not only transform the existing toilets but improve access to them from the seating area. This will be part of their Act 3 Project, which has just received confirmation of Arts Council capital funding.



Little Angel Theatre, Islington

One of only three building based puppet theatres in England, the Little Angel Theatre opened in 1961 and remains dedicated to the celebration and development of puppetry and live animation in all its diverse forms. It produces its own work for children and family audiences and tours nationally and internationally as well as hosting puppet companies from the UK and abroad. It has a very active creative learning programme and provides training opportunities for puppeteers and puppet makers. There are currently only three toilets available - female, male and disabled. The funding received from the Trust will help create three new unisex loos as well as a larger accessible, baby-changing toilet. The new lavatories will make basins, soap and towels much more accessible to children who find it difficult to use the ones currently in situ.



Marine Theatre, Lyme Regis

The Marine Theatre is a much loved cultural and historic centre in Lyme Regis, holding a significant place in the life of this small town. It has 220 seats and provides a mixed programme of up to 200 performances a year. It also hosts four local festivals, three amateur dramatic societies and the Lyme Youth Theatre. Toilet facilities are currently old, badly sited and of inadequate number. After extensive work including repair work to the aged drainage system and total gutting and rebuilding of the toilets, there will be four new ladies' loos thanks to Spend a Penny.



Tyne Theatre and Opera House, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

The Tyne Theatre and Opera House is a Grade I listed building of national importance and one of only 20 such listed theatres in Britain. The restored wooden stage machinery, original hemp flying system and wooden gantries provide a unique living picture of the workings of a Victorian theatre. The auditorium is one of the finest of its date in Britain and is structurally the same as when it was built. The theatre survives as an entertainment venue in spite of numerous setbacks and against a backdrop of closing theatres locally and throughout the country, with 2017 the 150th anniversary of its opening. The theatre has been owned by the Tyne Theatre & Opera House Preservation Trust since 2008 with an international company managing the theatre through an existing lease. Two years ago the Preservation Trust took over the operation of the theatre itself, providing a varied programme including ballet, opera, comedy, amateur musicals and live music, and currently runs at about 130 performances a year. The toilets are dilapidated and out-of-date and the project will substantially upgrade the Stalls, Grand Circle and Upper Circle ladies' toilets.



Stephen Joseph Theatre
Credit: Ian Grundy

Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough

Named after Stephen Joseph, one of the pioneers of theatre-in-the-round, this theatre became famous under the artistic directorship of Alan Ayckbourn and was the place where his plays premiered. The converted Odeon Cinema became the company's base 20 years ago and they are now looking forward to a bright future under new Artistic Director, Paul Robinson. Because of Scarborough's location and tourist economy, this theatre has its busiest season in the summer months supplemented by toured-in work at other times of year. The female toilets are very dated with slow flush mechanisms; the Spend a Penny funding will allow them to be entirely re-plumbed so that they work off the mains connection water supply. The improved toilets will not only flush faster but will be complemented by new hand basins, anti-slip flooring and redecoration.

Theatre Royal Wakefield

The Grade II* listed Theatre Royal Wakefield was designed by renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham and opened in 1894. It is partly a presenting theatre and has a varied programme including drama, family friendly work, music and comedy. It also produces the work of creative director, John Godber, along with an annual in-house pantomime. Its poor toilet provision will be enhanced with the opening of its new Centre for Creativity which includes a 100-seat studio theatre and will have direct access to the main auditorium with fully accessible new toilet facilities. Three ladies' loos will be created and financed by Spend a Penny.



Theatre
Royal Wakefield
Credit: Anders Hanson