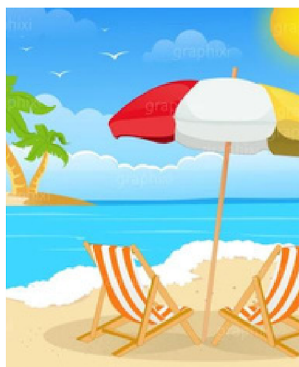




Audio Description Association



It's Holibob Season

Whether you're lounging by the beach or exploring new destinations, we've got engaging content to keep you informed and entertained over the summer months. Dive in and enjoy!

We're delighted to feature an exclusive interview with Roz Chalmers, a returning ADA exec member, plus our team has been hard at work sourcing fantastic events, from workshops to webinars for you to enjoy.

We appreciate your active participation in our community and would encourage ADA members to get involved and check out our current vacancies.

Warm regards,
The ADA Comms Team :)

ADA Spotlight -

🥁 Drumroll, please! 🥁 We're thrilled to kick off our ADA Spotlight with Roz Chalmers. With Roz's rich and varied experience it felt nearly criminal to edit the printed version, but you can listen to the full interview on the [A View On Access Podcast](#).

Tim: Can you introduce yourself, explain why you came back to the committee in 2023 and what your current role in ADA is?

Roz: My name is Roz Chalmers, and I'm on the executive of ADA and my responsibility is updating the training courses. I decided to return as I saw enthusiasm and a desire to take things forward from the exec. I felt people had got tired and needed to pass it on to somebody else, not walk away from it completely but ADA needs to think about screen description alongside theatre description so we can start branching out. And Veronika (Hyks) is very persuasive. We're updating the existing theatre AD course (written 20 years ago) because things have moved on, such as legislation, the use of multimedia, dance, etc., and these things need to be considered.

Tim: How did you get involved in AD?

Roz: How far back do you wanna go? I've worked with deaf and hard-of-hearing people for 40 years, and I still work as a theatre captioner. I got into lip speaking, a form of interpretation for deaf people. With lip speaking, you listen to what somebody else is saying, and it's sort of being channelled through you. I was spending a lot of time not using my voice, and I wanted to do something different, but still within access. I went to the RNIB, and I said, "How do you get into AD?" And they said "You're not an actor. You can't possibly get into it." So I thought, well, I'll speak to the National Theatre. I hadn't heard of any AD then, but the National said they have a training course, would you like to apply for it? The first describers I heard were Andrew Holland and Louise Fryer, so I started at the pinnacle with *The Merchant Of Venice* (1998), and I thought, oh my god, this is amazing!! So I did the course, and started working at The National.

Andrew Holland was starting up Vocal Eyes, and he asked me to join the team. I helped develop the museum and gallery curricula and built on Louise and Andrew's existing work. I ventured into film and TV AD as well through Red Bee. I like doing film, but you get very little feedback. During a touch tour, you meet the people you work with. They will tell you what they did and didn't enjoy and what information they could only have gotten through your AD so you know what's working and what isn't. That's how I started, and frankly, I intend to continue until I drop!

Tim: What occupies your time in 2024, and what's important to you professionally?

Roz: I'm still enjoying it hugely at the National Theatre. It's where my roots are, but The Old Vic Theatre is also close to my heart. Over lockdown, I had to think about mastering describing over Zoom, so that's been a learning curve. I also train people who have their own production companies and want to incorporate AD into their own work.

I've been looking at technology and thinking about how AD is delivered because the main feedback is, "I want to get those headphones out of my ears". So, I'm brainstorming how we could build descriptions creatively, e.g., with a soundscape, so people can become absorbed without headphones.

My other interest is providing an authentic voice for AD. Sometimes, my voice is the wrong one; nobody wants their granny talking to them. We trained Eleanor Stollery, a 12-year-old blind girl, to voice the description for a school's production of *The Witches*, at The National. Andrew Holland and I wrote it, and she voiced it brilliantly.

Recently, I did *The Father and the Assassin*, which is about the partition of India, and basically, I was the colonising voice. The adage, "Say what you see", isn't always enough, and I think sometimes you need to have that specific cultural and political knowledge to craft a particular kind of AD.

Tim: So, how important is it for you to mentor upcoming describers?

Roz: It's a lot of what I do because I can access theatres and assist. They often say, "I've got this issue, can you offer any advice?" and we'll find a solution.



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ADA Spotlight -

Over the summer, I'm planning to provide a weekly "surgery" for describers so we can find solutions or connect them to people who can help. We must support each other and find good, enthusiastic people who can go forward and explore different areas. Younger blind and partially sighted people have said that they don't listen to AD because it's an old person's aid, and we must disabuse them of that. Obviously what they're hearing doesn't fit their needs; perhaps they want something less intrusive. I don't know, but we need to have that conversation.

Tim: Are there still things you want to achieve before you retire?

Roz: I can't imagine what I would do, I would have to clean the house! I want somebody like Sennheiser or whoever to think about the needs of blind and partially sighted people when developing equipment. Everything that we're looking at was originally developed for something else. For example, software such as Stellar, Reaper and even Starfish, were originally developed for sound or captioners/subtitlers. Having something that's developed by describers for blind people so that the technology is the best it can be, and that's affordable for small touring theatre companies. Approximately 40% of the population only attend amateur theatre work, so why can't these groups be made accessible as well? Everywhere that there is an art form, there needs to be at least an opportunity for AD. I would love to see AD break free and become available to anybody who wants to use it, e.g., people who have young children and who want to explain the sighted world to them and teachers and students who need to have things described to them.

Tim: Lack of funds is often why amateur theatre isn't made accessible. What's the solution to start having those conversations and make this happen?



Roz: More people need to know about AD, and producers are at the root of this. They need to understand how AD impacts their production. The Society of London Theatre has a training course for producers, and we should be talking to them about making their productions more accessible so they can build it into their budget from the outset. We worked at LAMDA, The Musical Theatre Academy and Rose Bruford because those young people going into the industry need to know that this is something that they will come up against. Some of my past students who are jobbing actors remember that training. They're no longer concerned about touch tours because they know what they are for and infuse the company around them. We must also train blind and partially sighted people to do this work. We also need to get funders, but there's no point in saying just to give me the money. What for, what is it you want? Do you want training for the people in your theatre company to provide AD? Do you want equipment? If I got you a piece of equipment to transmit AD, who could you share it with, and who would benefit? So, we need to think about what we want and what they need the budget for, not just say that they haven't got a budget.

Tim: And what are your hopes for the future?

Roz: I would like to see younger people coming into the business and staying, falling in love with describing, and pushing it forward as much as possible. I would like to see describers doing regional theatre get all the tools they need: access to the video/script files and do a stage walk-through. When you're trying to provide a good description of a show for a 5-day run, you need an iron-clad technique for working, and I'd like to see ADA supporting them as well. I also want to see the people who started ADA and worked to get this going being recognised; people like Anne Hornsby are very plucky. It's been a labour of love, so I'd like to see them be recognised by ADA having a bigger presence and influence. Not vying with Vocal Eyes or the RNIB but fulfilling its own path. We need to recognise what quality is and work towards it; that's where ADA could influence, and I would like to see more blind people help us do that.

Tim: Regarding recognition, you were awarded the MBE. Can you describe how that felt?

Roz: I was gobsmacked. I got this stiff envelope with the crown on it. Jokingly, I said, "Oh, look, it's my MBE", and it was!!! I'm still flabbergasted!! Matthew Cock and Melanie Sharp put me forward for it, so I'm very grateful to them, but I pondered whether I should accept because I believe some people have contributed more. Still, it recognises the profession and works within the arts for people with sensory impairments, so that's great. I still have yet to learn the superpower you get with an MBE and how to wield it like a lightsaber to get more influence.

Tim: Well, congratulations and thank you very much for this interview.



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What's On Theatre:

JULY:

Bluets - Royal Court (Sloane Sq)

Audio Described: Sat 29th June
Touch Tour: 12:00
Curtain Up: 13:30

Six The Musical - Vaudeville Theatre

Audio Described: Sun 7th July
Touch Tour: 13.30
Curtain Up: 15:00

Sister Act - Dominion Theatre

Audio Described: Mon 8th July
Touch Tour: 18:30
Curtain Up: 19:30

People Places & Things - Trafalgar Theatre

Audio Description: Sat 13th Jul at
14:30 and Thu 25th Jul at 19:30
Touch Tour: TBC

Romeo & Juliet (Tom Holland) - Duke of York Theatre

Audio Described: Mon 15th July
Touch Tour: TBC
Curtain Up: 19:30



Kiss Me Kate Barbican Theatre

Audio Described: Weds 17th July
Touch Tour: 17:30
Curtain Up: 19:30

Boys from the Blackstuff - Garrick Theatre

Audio Described: Thurs 18th July
Touch Tour: TBC
Curtain Up: 19:30

Come From Away - Lyceum (Sheffield)

Audio Described: Thurs 18th July
Curtain Up: 19:45

Chariots of Fire - Crucible Theatre

Audio Described: Wed 24th July
Curtain Up: 14:00

The Secret Garden - Regents Park Theatre

Audio Described: Sat 20th Jul
Touch Tour: Time TBC
Curtain Up: 14:15

Kathy and Stella Solve A Murder - Ambassador's Theatre

Audio Described: Tues 23rd Jul
Touch Tour: Time TBC
Curtain Up: 19:30



Audio Description Association

Jenni Elbourne Steps Down as ADA Secretary:

It is with a mix of joy and sadness that we announce the departure of Jenni Elbourne from her role as Secretary of ADA. Jenni is stepping down to welcome an exciting chapter in her life: becoming a mum. While we will deeply miss her dedication and expertise, we are thrilled for her as she embarks on this wonderful journey.

Jenni's contributions to ADA have been nothing short of extraordinary. Our Chairman, Edward Copisarow, expressed his heartfelt appreciation for Jenni's outstanding service with the following words:

"It's impossible to overstate Jenni's fabulousness! Certainly in my time as a trustee she has been the person who has kept the show on the road. Since we welcomed new trustees on board at the AGM last year, she has energised, enabled, and empowered colleagues old and new to take massive strides forward so that we now have the largest membership we can ever remember, a website that does what it says on the tin and a calendar of meetings where everybody is primed, ready for taking the decisions that we need for each further step to improve information sharing, training, and much more besides.

I'm going to miss her hugely, not just as the perfect colleague, but also for her common sense, hard work, and good humour."



Jenni's leadership and vision have been pivotal in achieving some of ADA's most significant milestones. Under her guidance, our membership has grown to unprecedented levels, and our communication platforms have been refined to better serve our community. Her ability to bring people together and foster a collaborative spirit has been a key factor in our progress.

As we bid farewell to Jenni in her professional capacity, we extend our deepest gratitude for her service and wish her all the best in her new role as a mother. Thank you, Jenni, for everything you have done for ADA. You will always be a cherished member and we can't wait to meet the newest member of your family soon.



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What's On

Theatre: July - Sept

101 Dalmations - The Curve Leicester

Audio Described: Sat 27th Jul
Touch Tour: 12:30
Curtain Up: 14:00

The Constituent - The Old Vic (James Cordon)

Audio Described: Wed 31st July
Touch Tour: 17:30
Curtain Up: 19:30

AUGUST:

& Juliet (West End Tour) Theatre Royal Norwich

Audio Described: Thurs 1st Aug
Touch Tour: 18:30
Curtain Up: 19:30

The Hot Wing King - Dorfman Theatre The National

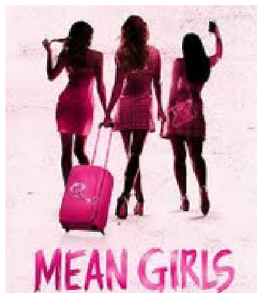
Audio Described: Sat 3rd Aug
Touch Tour: 12:45
Curtain Up: 14:15

Grapes Of Wrath - Lyttelton Theatre The National

Audio Described: Thurs 15th Aug
Touch Tour: 17:30
Curtain Up: 19:00

Stranger Things (Prequel to the TV Series) Phoenix Theatre

Audio Described: Sun 18th Aug
Curtain Up: 15:00



SEPTEMBER:

Mean Girls (Musical) - Savoy Theatre

Audio Described: Sat 7th Sept
Touch Tour: TBC
Curtain Up: 14:30

Next To Normal - Wymondham Theatre

(Musical - Nominated for 4 Olivier Awards)
Audio Described: Sat 14th Sept
Touch Tour: TBC
Curtain Up: 14:30

Comedy of Errors - The Globe Theatre

Audio Described: Sat 21st Sept
Touch Tour: TBC
Curtain Up: 14:00



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Focus Group - Imperial War Museum Exhibitions. Volunteers with a Visual Impairment Wanted.



Researchers Ann-Marie Foster and Joanna Baines, are currently working with Imperial War Museums to make their digital collections more accessible to disabled, chronically ill, and neurodivergent researchers. More info can be found here: [Accessible Pasts, Equitable Futures Research Project | Imperial War Museums \(iwm.org.uk\)](https://www.imperialwar Museums.org.uk/accessible-pasts)

They're running a participation drive to establish a focus group of disabled, chronically ill, and/or neurodivergent people who have, or would like to, use IWM's collections, and offer confidential feedback to help shape future Research Room Plans. The criteria for joining are not gatekept; you can be self-diagnosed and will not be asked for any medical information. The call for participants is here:

[APEF Disability Focus Group Recruitment Sheet.docx \(live.com\)](https://www.imperialwar Museums.org.uk/apef-disability-focus-group-recruitment-sheet.docx)

There will be a survey going live later this summer and shared through IWM's social media.

Please share this with colleagues and your networks, as well as with students, and send further questions to email apef@iwm.org.uk



AD tour of Michelangelo: The Last Decades Exhibition.

Join art historian and guide Lisa Squirrel for an AD tour of Michelangelo: the last decades exhibition:

5 July 2024
18.00–19.00

This exhibition looks at the last 30 years of Michelangelo's remarkable life – a dramatic new chapter which would fundamentally shape his experiences as an artist and as a man.

- Book now to secure your place: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/event/s/audio-described-tour-michelangelo-last-decades>
- Carers and Disabled people's companions do not need to purchase a ticket.
- Assistance dogs are welcome
- Please meet at the Information Desk in the Great Court.
- If you have any access requirements or need assistance booking this event, please email access@britishmuseum.org or phone +44 (0)20 7323 8971.



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What's On At The Cinemas:



Despicable Me 4 - release date July 12th

Directors: Chris Renaud, Patrick Delage.
Starring: Steve Carell, Kristen Wiig.

Fly Me to the Moon - release date July 12th

Director: Greg Berlanti.
Starring: Channing Tatum, Scarlett Johansson.

Deadpool; Wolverine - release date July 25th

Director: Shawn Levy.
Starring: Ryan Reynolds, Hugh Jackman.

Borderlands - release date Aug 9th

Director: Eli Roth.
Starring: Cate Blanchett, Jamie Lee Curtis.

Alien: Romulus - release date Aug 16th

Director: Fede Alvarez.
Starring: Cailee Spaeny, Isabela Merced.

Beetlejuice 2 - release date Sept 6th

Director: Tim Burton.
Starring: Michael Keaton, Jenna Ortega.

For listings and further info visit
accessiblescreeningsuk.co.uk



Audio Description Association

Gala Pro and Hear The Picture Collaboration.

Hear The Picture were given the opportunity to describe *Standing At The Sky's Edge*; on transfer to London's The Gillian Lynne theatre. We started work on this show in 2022 at The Crucible, as well as showcasing our AD at The National Theatre when it transferred. We were thrilled to work with a new cast and space, and to tick off our West End debut.

The transfer also brought up an opportunity to work with GalaPro. Now the leading provider for in-show theatre services, GalaPro provides captioning and AD services to 90% of Broadway Theatres, and they are currently expanding across Europe and the West End. The Gillian Lynne is one of five UK theatres to have GalaPro's technology installed, so this was an exciting opportunity!

GalaPro's technology takes away the need for human operation, using recorded AD and midi cues already built into the lighting design, giving access to AD on every performance. When we were initially approached about recording AD for GalaPro, I was sceptical. As a describer and an advocate for live description, I know the flexibility you need when delivering description live; I was unsure about trusting technology to cue our description. However, through GalaPro, every show has AD available, and for us, even if the timings are occasionally out of sync, having every show described outweighed my timing concerns, so we went ahead and recorded our description for them.

All they needed was a script with cue points, and our audio description lines, individually recorded. This wasn't too much extra work and recording the AD gave us the chance to perfect the vocal delivery.

The moment of truth came as I headed to The Gillian Lynne to experience my own AD! It was a bizarre feeling listening to my own work live; I was equally excited and nervous! It was a fantastic experience, the app was easy to use, and the staff explained how it worked. Our intro notes played on a loop before curtain up so we could listen and relax with our pre-show refreshments. I was amazed at how well it worked; I was tense before the show started but as soon as the first cue played, perfectly timed, I just relaxed into the performance, smiling the whole way through.

Working with GalaPro has been inspirational for me and Hear The Picture. I believe recorded AD is the future, and companies like GalaPro are leading the way. They were easy and lovely to work with, and deliver a brilliant service that is bringing more accessibility to more shows and more performances. What's not to like?

Dan Parr – Hear the Picture

**Pre recorded AD available for every
performance of *Standing At The
Sky's Edge* until Aug 3rd. Download
the GalaPro App on your smart
phone and let us know your
feedback!!**



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What's On TV:



Emily In Paris (New Series) - Netflix
Part 1 - 15th August
Part 2 - 12th September

Girlboss - Netflix

Buying London (Reality TV) - Netflix

Atlas (Dystopian) - Netflix

Survival Of The Thickest - (Comedy) - Netflix

The Responder (New Series) - BBC iPlayer

Tokyo Vice (New Series) - BBC iPlayer

The Victim (Drama) - ITV

Douglas is Cancelled - Comedy/Drama by Stephen Moffat) - ITV



Audio Description Association

ADA Needs You!!! Trustee Vacancies

We are still on the hunt for a Secretary and an Assistant Treasurer!

Secretary

Our brilliant Secretary Jenni is stepping down, and we're looking for somebody organised and energetic to maintain and develop this role.

Key tasks:

Plan and minute four annual executive meetings (mixture of online and in-person) and one open AGM.

Ensure all official Charity Commission records are kept up to date, including new and retiring trustees. Support the Treasurer with submission of the Annual Return.

Act as 'second signatory' on the ADA bank account, using online banking to approve expenditure.

Distribute information to exec members e.g. constitutional documents, induction materials and shared working documents. Maintain the shared Google Drive and lead on the development of this for the improvement of workflows within the executive committee.

Support the Membership Secretary and Communications Working Group to develop and maintain our Customer Records Management and member subscription functions.

Support other ADA working groups according to individual skills, interests and availability.

Time commitment: 10-15 hours per month, plus away days (1 or 2 per year)
Start date: As soon as possible.



Assistant Treasurer

Our Hon. Treasurer, Andrew Piper is set to work with the 'Describing for Screen' working party on standards and training, but he needs to free up some of the time he is currently devoting to get stuck into this important area.

You don't need a background in accounts, but you do need to be comfortable with numbers and internet banking and be fairly methodical. "Unlike me!" says Andrew, "My ADHD brain could do with someone reasonably level-headed and organised around to ensure that the I's are dotted and T's are crossed. I have infinite patience for showing someone how the technology works and the memory of a goldfish for what important things need to happen and when!"

Time commitment: 3-4 hrs a month.
Start date: Flexible

Both roles are mostly remote, with 1 or 2 face-to-face meetings annually. These mainly take place in London, and travel within the UK can be paid for by ADA.

For more information or to express an interest in these roles please email info@audiodescription.co.uk



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Did you know.....

The Edinburgh
International
Festival & The
Edinburgh Fringe
have Audio
Described shows?!?



2nd - 26th of Aug



Check out the following
websites for more information

Edinburgh International Festival

*[Sign up to our Access Pass](#) to
book a ticket for a touch tour
online, or phone the box office
on our access line: +44 (0) 131
473 2056 (textphone prefix
18001).*

Edinburgh Fringe:

<https://tickets.edfringe.com/accessibility/accessable-shows#audio-described>

ADA's SKILL SET and AD SOUP sessions Summer Break:

The ADA Skill Sets with Tim Calvert
and
AD Soup Sessions with Roz Chalmers
will be taking a summer hiatus and
enjoying some holiday time. See you
in September!



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