



Project Case Study

Woolstore Country Theatre, Codford, Wiltshire

| The Challenge...

to find a cost-effective means to better serve hearing-impaired theatre-goers

| The Solution...

an induction loop system integrated with the building's existing sound system

| The Benefits...

broader access to performances at the venue

Community-focused facilities often find that they need to improve access for people with disabilities, either as a response to legislation or as a means of widening participation. Sometimes reliant on charitable support, such venues can face these demands with a limited budget. For a theatre, where hearing the performance is integral to the experience, an induction loop system can provide significant benefits at a very reasonable cost.

The Woolstore Country Theatre serves the village of Codford and surrounding communities. As a registered charity promoting theatrical activities the venue offers seating and facilities for over one hundred people, including a bar and coffee room. The team at the Woolstore stage regular productions and organise activities including concerts and trips to see shows at other theatres. The theatre has an interesting history, dating back to 1758 when it was used to store fleeces from local farms prior to being taken for weaving. The building played an important role during both world wars, providing entertainment for troops stationed in the area. It has been run as an amateur theatre since 1948 and is one of the few self-supporting village theatres in the country.

Improved Access

Having a significant number of regular visitors with hearing impairments, the team at the Woolstore decided it was important to provide adequate facilities to meet their needs. As part of a wider strategy to improve access for people with disabilities, including making provision for wheelchair access and disabled toilets, the team decided on an induction loop system installed by Gordon Morris Ltd.

As Mike Bremridge at the Woolstore explains, given the number of visitors who stood to benefit from a hearing system *"it seemed wise to cater for those with hearing difficulties."* To achieve this, engineers from Gordon Morris Ltd designed and installed *"a loop system under the seating which is connected into our sound system and a high powered microphone aimed at the stage to augment our own microphone system."*

Based around the superb Univox PLS-100 Amplifier, connected into the existing sound system, the loop has delivered clearer sound for hearing aid users throughout the performance area.

Convenience and Clarity

The benefits for local theatre-goers have been clear. The system is extremely convenient, providing clear sound from the stage and the sound system already installed at the theatre. *"Those who have a T facility on their hearing aid are able to listen to productions and hear every word"*. Simply by moving the switch on their hearing aid to the T position, the device is then able to pick up the electromagnetic signals created by the induction loop system, allowing the user to hear sound direct from microphones without distracting background noise. The theatre also hosts occasional meetings and the loop system has proved effective in these situations too: *"equally for meetings etc, those who have a hearing aid with the T facility can participate fully."*

Professional Service

After choosing Gordon Morris Ltd on recommendation, the team at the Woolstore were not disappointed. *"The loop system helps those who have a hearing difficulty and having that facility not only helps those who attend our productions but may also encourage people to come to the live theatre because they can now hear."* For an organisation that relies on the generosity of its patrons for its continuing success, attracting and retaining audiences is important. With hearing impairment affecting around one in seven people, an induction loop system can be an effective way of helping to achieve this objective.

The feedback the theatre has received has been good too: *"Those who use the facility think it is a great improvement and it is a pleasure to be able to hear what is being said."* But what really differentiates Gordon Morris Ltd is the quality of the service they deliver. Staff at the company were able to deliver a quality solution, whilst *"bearing in mind the financial constraint"* involved with serving a charity working to a limited budget. From *"initial contact with the firm through to a firm appraisal of what was needed."* Mr. Bremridge was pleased with the service he received, right up to the final fitting of the system. *"We are pleased we have fitted a loop"* he says *"and are grateful to Gordon Morris and the staff for the help they have given us."*

Gordon Morris Ltd would like to thank Mr. Bremridge for his kind cooperation with this article and wishes all the members and patrons of the Woolstore Theatre the very best for the future.

For more information about the theatre visit their website at <http://www.woolstoretheatre.co.uk/>