



Players Patter No 176 - Dec 2016

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TREASURER'S REPORT

I am very pleased to report that Singin in the Rain was an extremely well received production and we sold slightly more seats than for Sister Act. This certainly exceeded a lot of expectations as tickets sales were rather slow to get going. Despite the elaborate rain scene the scenery costs in general were very reasonable as were the wardrobe costs so the financial forecast for this show, once I have received all the income from the advertisers, looks to be very favourable indeed. This is very good news for the society as we do have some ongoing electrical work being undertaken in the studio which is very necessary for health and safety reasons. This will be reasonably costly but is very important to have done as we have members of the public visiting the studio for costume hire and obviously don't want any accidents involving electricity!

To cover our ever-increasing production cost overheads we have decided to increase the Show fees to £30 for adults. Juniors remain the same at £15. These are still very reasonable compared to a lot of local groups. To all those taking part in Wizard of Oz please remember to pay the Show fee promptly as on 16th January it will increase to £35 and this is not a cost you will want to have to stomach so soon after Christmas!! Prompt payment really is appreciated to either Pamela or myself and can be made online via BACS, Paypal, by cash or a good old fashioned cheque made payable to The Haslemere Players.

A very happy Christmas and New Year to everyone.

Arabella Burwood, Treasurer
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Chairman's Message

Life in the world of amateur theatre is busy and so many exciting things have happened since my last letter I hardly know where to start. There are, however, a few people to whom I would like to thank for what they have achieved over the past two months.

I will start with Hamish Donaldson, our President, who has both directed a very successful production of Singing in the Rain and for steering the Society through the process of becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee. Singing in the Rain was a near sell out with gallons of water pouring through an elaborate system, designed by Hamish, giving the spectacular appearance of a heavy rain shower for that famous scene. A very cohesive cast was led by some amazingly talented principals, including some newcomers, and we all enjoyed being a part of it. I must also mention Mary-Lou Knox and her team for all the fabulous costumes.

In the last Players Patter I wrote about the proposal to change the Society from a Charitable Trust into a Company Limited by Guarantee. With one exception, this proposal received unanimous support from the eligible membership who voted, easily achieving the minimum number of votes required. It is with thanks to all the research which Hamish and Sally Barr undertook that there was a smooth transition process. I also want to thank Sally for putting together our new Health & Safety policy and procedures, and Gary Moorshead, for preparing our new Fire Safety policy and procedures. These are two examples of the unseen hard work that goes on behind the scenes without which the Society could not operate.

Looking forward, we held some very exciting auditions for Wizard of Oz and rehearsals are now under way with another very talented cast of principals, chorus and children. Please put 21-25 March 2017 in your diaries and be ready to book tickets when they go on sale.

Please do get in touch if you would like to do more for the Society.

Best wishes

Chris Lloyd, Chairman, Haslemere Players

THROUGH THE AGES WITH THE HASLEMERE PLAYERS

50 YEARS AGO 1966 THE MIKADO

October 1966 saw a production of *The Mikado*. While acknowledging that there had been "a stampede to the box office" the acerbic critic of the Herald, Max Reese, questioned whether 'The Mikado' had been "as good as it ought to be". He suggested that the faithful had grown to be content with "indifferent works" and that the Players themselves had been "bemused into complacency by the unfailing loyalty of their docile audiences". Needless to say, members of the audience leapt in to defend the company with a number of irate letters in the next issue!

Early in the week of the show came the news of the Aberfan mining tragedy, made all the more poignant by the fact that it was the home village of Cledwyn Evans who was cast as the Mikado himself. After every performance the cast were in the foyer holding buckets, and £212* was collected from departing audiences for the Memorial Fund. [*Over £6,000 in today's money]

30 YEARS AGO 1986 HALF A SIXPENCE

The show was notable in having no fewer than nine of the leads under 25 years of age. As the Herald said: "Cor, what a show and what a cast who sang and danced their hearts out!" which helped make the Haslemere Players' production a smash hit". The reviewer continued: "If it had just opened in a London theatre, the Critics would have said 'It will run for months'."

20 YEARS AGO 1996 SHOW BOAT

Doreen Wylde was at the helm again for one of her favourite shows, with Angela Jones as MD. It was a sparkling production in every sense of the word,

The real-life pairing of Jonathan Foster and Christine Gudger as Ravenal and Magnolia brought some truly touching moments. In the finale their melodic 'You Are Love' was especially attractive when they were framed by glass globes wired up around the upper deck of the Cotton Blossom. Hamish had bought the lights on impulse at a Players' car boot sale and they created a spectacular effect to close the show.

The singing was exceptionally good and it says much for the depth of talent in the company that both Carolyn Beaumont and David Reading played the piano on stage as part of the action, and Christine Gudger sang to her own guitar accompaniment.

In November Linda Donaldson, our Social Secretary, organised a weekend trip to Bruges. 34 intrepid Players signed up to go by train on the new Eurostar. Unfortunately the day before they were due to go there was a fire in the tunnel, and Linda spent the day finding new transport. Finally she managed to book us on a ferry, but it was in the middle of the night! She has always had enormous gratitude that not one member

complained, and a really good time was had by all.

10 YEARS AGO THE KING AND I

Under Teresa Marsh's skilful direction, 'The King and I' in October was a delightful show from start to finish. An army of children had auditioned for the chance to be one of the twenty-four Siamese princes and princesses and they did everyone proud.

The cast was exceptionally strong. In the leading role, Paul Tapley, with his manly physique and shaven head, was every inch a King and gave an outstanding performance. His fiancée, Suzie Inskip, was delightful as Anna, the English governess. The secondary characters, the doomed lovers, Lun Tha and Tuptim, played by Jonathan Foster and newcomer, Vikki Thornhill, had the best duets to sing, with Christine Gudger in the role of Lady Thiang, made the best of the poignant "Something Wonderful".

It was a first in the company that seven members of one family (the Fosters) appeared on stage together (previously 5 Donaldsons were all in *Carousel*). Peter (12) and Eric (10) played the young Prince and Anna's son, Louis, respectively, Verity (7) was one of the princesses, and Fay, an Amazon guard.. Michael, was bullied into appearing on stage as a Buddhist priest just to create the record, and hated every minute of it!

Fay Foster

WARDROBE NEWS

There is now a Sale Rail in the end room and you are welcome to come in on Saturdays between 10.00 and 12.00 to have a look. Currently, the majority of the garments are ladies (quite small sizes) dresses but we'll be adding men's clothes and other items as we continue to cull and update our costumes.

Remember if you are hosting or attending a fancy dress or themed party, that our costumes are available to hire at the very reasonable rate of £10 (for members). Call Mary-Lou on 07903 312013 if you would like to arrange an appointment.

As a foot note I thought you might like to know that 95% of the costumes used for *Singin' in the Rain* came from our very own Wardrobe. It goes to show what a valuable resource we have.



Christmas Cracker

Don't forget that this year's Christmas Cracker Carol Concert will be held in the Haslemere Hall at 7.30 pm on Saturday 17th December. It is a fun evening for audience and massed choir. Tickets are £10.50 (£5.50 for children) from the Hall (01428 642161) and include mulled wine and mince pie.

As before the Players will be supplying a good part of the choir and sketches so there are plenty of people to support. But do book soon; it is always a sell-out and there wont be all that many tickets left.

SOCIAL REPORT

On Saturday, 11th February we shall be holding a Quiz at the Fernhurst Village Hall. You can either get up your own table of 6 or 8, or if you would prefer to simply join a table of others, just let Susanna Lloyd know on susanna@familylloyd.net. Tickets will be £10 a head to include a home-cooked supper. Bring your own drinks.



GRAPEVINE NEWS OF MEMBERS

It was lovely to see Trevor and Gill Ricketts when they came to see Singing in the Rain. They are both well and now living in Lee-on-Solent.

Many of you will have already heard the very sad news of the death of our long-term Patron, James Mackie. James was hit by a car when crossing the road in Haslemere, and although flown to St. George's Hospital in London, he never really regained consciousness. He is having a private family funeral followed sometime later, probably after Christmas, by a Thanksgiving Service.

AND....finally, Jessie McClusky. Jessie's story reads rather like a modern-day fairy story. 'Discovered' by professional director, Maria Friedman, when she came to see Sister Act, she asked Jessie to audition for Stepping Out which she was going to take on tour round the country ending up in the West End. Jessie got the part and 50 Players recently went to see her in the show in Chichester acting alongside Tamsin Outhwaite and Amanda Holden. In February they start in the West End.

It is lovely to know that things like this can still happen nowadays and to such a very worthy and talented actress. We shall all be watching her career and wishing her every luck in the future.



Dates for Your Diary

17 December	Christmas Cracker in Haslemere Hall
13 - 21 Jan	Peter Pan by Haslemere Thespians
24 - 28 Jan	The Beggars Opera by Farnham AOS
11 February	Players Quiz at Fernhurst Village Hall
17 & 18 Feb	Grayshott One-Act Plays
21 - 25 Mar	The Wizard of Oz



Excited doesn't even begin to cover it....what a brilliant turnout and what a fantastic cast we have for The Wizard of Oz. I couldn't be happier.

Dorothy	Abi Rogers
Scarecrow	Peter Coxon
Tinman	Howard Bicknell
Lion	Mike Byrne
Aunt Em/Glinda	Carolyn Lane
Uncle Henry/Guard	Peter Lucas
Miss Gulch/Wicked Witch	Chloe Johnson-Jones
Professor Marvel/Wizard	James Woodley

We also have an excellent Junior Ensemble and a slighter larger than expected (but equally wonderful) Adult Chorus. Pretty much everyone knows the story of The Wizard of Oz and it's our aim to rekindle childhood memories with a spectacular show filled with colour, adventure and laughter.

Tickets will be on sale shortly from the Haslemere Hall www.haslemerehall.co.uk

Vicki Gavin, *Director*

SHOW STOPPERS 2017

Orson Welles famously went round the world in 80 days. Well for Show Stoppers 2017, we are all set to go round the world in 80 musicals. Okay, well more like 20 musicals but that doesn't sound so catchy.

The vision is to start the show with 'Bon Voyage' (Anything Goes) and use the projector to "travel by map" (Muppets references for those in the know) around the world and sing some great numbers set across the globe. For example, we will travel east for some Miss Saigon, King and I and Mikado; down to Australia for Pricilla Queen of the Desert; over to Africa for Book of Mormon and Lion King; across the south Atlantic to South America for Evita; up into USA for Oklahoma, Chicago and Bombshell; and back to Europe for some Les Mis, Blood Brothers and Made in Dagenham.

The exact musicals are not set in stone yet but you get the idea. There will be a mixture of solos, duet, small group pieces and large chorus numbers. No numbers have been pre-cast so everyone will get a chance to volunteer for the numbers they fancy. Where certain numbers are in high demand, we will have a sing off to help us cast.

Creative team wise, I am to be join by the ever so talented Chris Snelling as Musical Director. Chris is a professional musician and has been MD for the Thespians' panto for the last four years. I hope lots of you will be keen to be involved. Come with Chris and me for the presentation evening on Tuesday 28th March. *Kim*