



Players Patter No 189 - July 2019

Treasurer's Report

Hi folks, I'm back! Firstly, a huge thank you to Arry for making sure that everything was so up to date before handing over.

As many of you know, the AGM took place at Chris & Susanna Lloyd's on Saturday 6 July, coupled with the annual BBQ. The treasurer's report was presented and showed a surplus for the year of £117. Last year's Show Stoppers produced a surplus of £383, Chess a loss of £887 and The Gondoliers a surplus of £415. The society's net assets remain at around £73,000 including the studio (76 years remaining on our 99 year lease) and cash of £38,500, up £2,500 on the previous year.

The committee have recommended that membership rates remain the same and these can be found on the website.

Moving on to Show Stoppers, receipts and costs for the show both came in at a little over £200 over budget so I'm pleased to report a surplus of £650. A good start this financial year and well done to all involved.

Arry has agreed to continue to help with the treasurer role and will still be looking after all the banking and Jane McMichael and Pamela Depledge will also be continuing to look after membership and show fees respectively. Meanwhile, I shall have a glass of rosé in the garden! Don't worry, there's still plenty to be done. With each show costing up to £18,000 and ticket sales becoming increasingly challenging....and unpredictable, we need to make sure we keep costs under control in all areas.

Vicki Gavin

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Chairman's Message

Summer is now upon us and, for many of us, there is the lure of holidays. Before we head off on our various breaks, I want to take a moment to reflect on the past twelve months.

Starting with last summer's Show Stoppers, "Keep The Home Fires Burning!". It was an entertaining but poignant production, and there was a real buzz amongst all involved; the get-out was completed in near record time and I have never seen so many people go for a drink afterwards. We also raised £416 for the Royal British Legion.

In October Hamish directed Chess. It was pleasing to see both regular and new members amongst the principal cast. It was timely that we put on Chess when we did. The protagonists and the topics of debate may be different, but maybe not much has changed in the intervening forty years!

Our March production was The Gondoliers. The production received good reviews from all who saw it, even from those for whom Gilbert and Sullivan is not their cup of tea. It was lovely to see some new members take to the stage with us and I hope that they enjoyed being a part of it and will come and do further shows with us.

This year we made the decision to combine our AGM with the summer BBQ. The new format resulted in a substantial increase in numbers attending the AGM: in recent years we have barely been quorate. I arranged for Lizzie Hales to provide us with musical entertainment and, as much as I would like to take the credit for it, the weather was generous and we had a lovely sunny day. I have received a number of unsolicited emails from members commenting on how much they enjoyed this format.

Whilst on the subject of the BBQ, I want to say a big thank you to all of those who did so much to make the day successful with a special mention to Mary-Lou Knox and Peter Foster for doing all the cooking.

We announced some changes to the committee at the AGM:

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Chairman's message continued

- Arry Burwood is handing over the role of Treasurer to Vicki Gavin who is rejoining the committee after a break of 3 years.
- Sally Barr is handing over marketing to Andy Johnson, who was co-opted onto the committee during the year.
- Both Arry and Sally are remaining on the committee and will be organising our social events. As much as being an amateur theatre society, we are a club or community for people with similar interests to get together, make new friends and to have fun together off stage.
- Lastly, we say goodbye to Lucinda (Lucy) Loveland and her lovely family. They are returning to the USA. In a short period they became very much part of the society and life in Haslemere. Lucy even made her directing debut with the 2019 Show Stoppers, "An Evening of Love". We wish them all well and hope to see them soon on their visits to the UK.

We have set up a sub-committee to help the main committee select a range of shows that will appeal to our members, audiences and directors. Alex Boughton is leading this supported by Adrian Stent, Verity Foster, Stephanie Goodfellow and Tony Creasey. Please speak to Alex should you do have any ideas for shows.

Rehearsals are well under way for Evita, our October show, with Adrian Stent making his directorial debut. If you are not involved in the show in any way, please make sure that you book early to ensure you get seats for this very popular show.

I hope you all have an enjoyable and relaxing summer.

With all best wishes

Chris

Saludos from the world of Evita!

Rehearsals are now in full swing (or should that be full tango?!) for the October show, and our wonderful chorus has been making a great sound from the very first rehearsal under Lizzie's expert guidance (our principals are wonderful too of course!). Mandy is busy setting, rehearsing and re-rehearsing the big Act 1 dance numbers including Buenos Aires and Peron's Latest Flame, and we are all getting into the latin groove.

Meanwhile behind the scenes the great Players off-stage machine has sprung into action. To name a few of our off-stage stars (many of whom are also in the show): Caro, our very own graphic designer, has completed the design for the logo, flyers and posters; Mary-Lou and Jonathan Foster are ransacking the local charity shops, costume suppliers and the internet to supplement our own extensive wardrobe to meet the demanding costume requirements of the show; Steph is starting to gather together the many props we need; Debbie is busy writing copy and working the media; Andy Johnston is working on generating advertising leads; and Hamish and Graham Perrett are planning set construction, which will start in early August.

If you would like to get involved - or if you are already involved but would like to do more - please do contact Sally Barr or anyone in the team. We are particularly on the lookout for people to help with set building/painting (no prior experience needed), advertising and front-of-house, but however you would like to help we will be delighted to hear from you!

Adiós por ahora!

Adrian, Lizzie, Mandy and Sally



GRAPEVINE News of Members

It is lovely to be able to report some good news this time. Firstly Rachel Perkins is now home after being in the Royal Surrey since Christmas, and although she will need time to make a full recovery, it is wonderful news. Secondly Elizabeth Chester is now home and back singing again after her spell in Frimley Park. It is lovely to have you back Elizabeth.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

30, 31 Aug	Kiss Me Kate by Imagine That Productions
22- 26 Oct	Evita in Haslemere Hall
29 October	Read through Legally Blonde

Social Report (BBQ)

Very many thanks to Susanna and Chris Lloyd for hosting our first combined AGM and annual BBQ at the beginning of July. We had around 50 members join us and the new format worked very well - the AGM formalities were followed by delicious food, chat with friends and plenty of sunshine. We would like to particularly thank Lizzie Hales for the musical entertainment, Mary-Lou and Peter Foster for their expertise (and hot work) on the BBQs and the committee for providing the salads and desserts.

Following our very successful Ceilidh a few months ago and the recent BBQ, we are working on our next social event and will be back in touch with details in due course.

In the meantime if you have any ideas for social events then please let us know.

Arry and Sally



THROUGH THE AGES WITH THE HASLEMERE PLAYERS

30 years ago

On October 20th 1989, one of the busiest weekends of the year with both dress rehearsal and band call, high winds were responsible for great hole in the roof of the Weaving House in the main car park used as our wardrobe store before we acquired the back part of the school. Luckily the costumes for the forthcoming *Pirates of Penzance* were all safely stowed in the Haslemere Hall but a drying-out exercise had to be mounted. The husband of a cast member nobly mended the hole temporarily until the Council came to fix the problem.

Earlier, before the auditions for *Pirates*, it appears that passengers travelling first class on a flight from Hong Kong found themselves on the receiving end of an unsolicited preview of the show. With little time to rehearse for the set pieces, Hamish had borrowed Sally's Walkman to listen and learn from a recording while returning from a business trip. He said he must have been singing along to the strains of 'I Am a Pirate King' rather too enthusiastically, for a stewardess tapped him on the shoulder and said fellow passengers were complaining! In fact Haslemere audiences did not see Hamish as the Pirate King as the audition committee decided that his basso-profundo tones would be more usefully employed as the Sergeant of Police. This choice was more than justified with Hamish making a brilliant characterisation of the part.

The Pirate King went to Dave Sillett but it was touch and go whether he would make all the performances. His wife was expecting their first child during show week, so Peter Barber from Farnham stood by as understudy. In fact, with perfect timing, baby Laura arrived on the night of the technical rehearsal, the only day when the cast weren't called, enabling Dave to be there at her birth.

Teamed with Malcolm Pike as MD, Doreen Wylde was producing once again and, although she introduced a lot of innovative touches in 'Pirates', they were such that even the most ardent traditionalists were happy. The Hall was filled to capacity for every single performance with praise heaped on the cast and on the magnificent pirate ship constructed by Alan English. Christine Gudger and Jonathan Foster, destined to become man and wife in real life, were the young leads, Mabel and Frederic, with the part of the Major-General played by Andy Boughton.

20 years ago

Fiddler on the Roof had its second showing in October 1999 and, as producer first time round in 1976, Doreen Wylde was asked once again to direct this, her favourite musical. Since the company had a complete set of costumes in its own wardrobe and was able to borrow an excellent house set from Alton OS, financially speaking it was a most propitious choice.

With the unhappy events in Kosovo and Chechnya filling the TV screens daily, it was a particularly poignant and thought-provoking show. In fact, many among the audience admitted that, so moved were they by the action, they felt strangely reluctant to clap. In some ways this was sad because the standard achieved was amazing. Tony Ostime, a regular at Farnham OS was an excellent Tevye, very ably supported by Anne Manning as Golde who had also appeared in *Players'* 1976 production. Their elder daughters were charmingly played by Laura Musco (who stepped into the part in mid-rehearsal), Christine Gudger and Clare Hosmer, partnered by Jonathan Foster, Gunnar Cauthery and Phillip Elliott, the last two having first appeared in *Players'* productions as schoolboys. Further excellent cameo performances came from Jane Clayton as the ghostly apparition and Judith Forde as a sprightly fiddler. Under the direction of Robert Cantan, both chorus and orchestra were exceptionally good.

10 years ago

With Doreen again at the helm, *Scrooge* was the production chosen for autumn 2009. This captured the spirit of Victorian London, while Robert's skilful control of both orchestra and singers added much to the enjoyment of the evening. The chorus had rarely been better, with excellent singing and lively dancing to Mandy Sutcliffe (now Boughton)'s innovative choreography.

Newcomer Ben Lawson was a compelling *Scrooge*, masking his tender years, and completely believable as the crabby old miser whose life changed so dramatically after his spectral encounters. His handling of these scenes was superbly done with Chris Bridge, Carolyn Beaumont (Lane), Andy Boughton and

James Thonger giving excellent support as the ghosts of his partner, Jacob Marley, and of Christmases Past, Present and Yet To Come.

As *Scrooge's* nephew Harry and wife Isabel, Kevin Sampson and Rebecca Lucas were in fine voice and acted well, particularly in the scene where they became the alter egos of a young *Scrooge* and his first sweetheart. Scenes with the Fezziwig family, led by Mary Coyte and Peter Gardner, showed the jollity and good living of wealthy citizens, the Cratchit family clearly demonstrated how the other half lived. Jonathan Foster and Teresa Marsh and their delightful family (including the appealing Tiny Tim of Harry Simmonds) provided the real pathos of the evening and there wasn't a dry eye in the house as Jonathan wept over the grave of his dead son during the vision of Christmas Yet To Come.

Hamish's sets (including the magical appearance of Marley's Ghost) and Jenny Budden's costumes were shown to perfection in the final scene when 'snow' fell and created a typical Christmas card scene from Victorian days.

Fay Foster

