

Riverside Player's AGM

Committee Report

Thursday 7th March 2019

Welcome all to this year's AGM where I am pleased to give you our annual review on behalf of the Riverside committee. This has been my first year as chairman of this society in what has been an interesting year in several aspects and one that I personally have learnt a great deal from.

It was extremely pleasing that this year we returned to our full program of 3 shows having seen our 2017 unfortunately reduced to just the singular, though undoubtedly enjoyable and well received pantomime of Rapunzel. The year began with Trish Weller's directorial debut for Riverside with "A Bunch of Amateurs" a very fun and amusing script from Nick Newman and Ian Hislop. The feedback on the show was very positive and those that attended any of the 3 nights seemed to very much enjoy it. As is often the case with our spring and summer shows it was a tad regrettable that tickets sales were perhaps not a little stronger and this is something that we continue to look into improving.

Moving to the summer, amidst the backdrop of the World Cup and the generally glorious sunshine, Susan Pickles brought us the very amusing murder mystery of "A Fete Worse than Death" by Richard James. With parts wonderfully played out by a strong stable of Riverside regulars as well as some new faces. A special mention has to be made of an excellent performance from Trish Weller as 'Miss Parmenter' acting every bit of the Miss Marple type. Well reviewed once again this was another show to be very proud of.

The final of our 3 productions was of course our annual pantomime. This year we brought 'Peter Pan' to life thanks to the direction of Jill Dady and production by the Riverside Committee who truly deserve a great deal of thanks for their dedication and hard work into making this another wonderful show. The pantomime was a challenging production for several reasons. Not least due to the large number of children featuring in prominent roles. For so many youngsters to gain potentially their first exposure to amateur dramatics and to first hand witness their growth in confidence and quality of performance was truly very pleasing to see. Sadly we also saw our casted lead Sian have to pull out due to illness leading to the last minute stepping- in of Vicki Arnold and Kay Smith, both of whom deserve tremendous credit for excellent performances in the circumstances and maintaining the old adage of "The show must go on". The production as a whole was a testament to what I feel makes this society so great, several new and not so new faces pulling together be that working as part of the front of house, bar or even on stage itself. For the growth of us as a society I think this was wonderful to see and I hope to see as many of these returning for future productions where possible. The show also saw a change to the timings of the first Saturday shows to allow an earlier evening performance. This reflected well in sales for the show and is something we will look into the viability of for this year's pantomime.

In other news from the year the wonderful Vicki Arnold was awarded the Best Pantomime Character award in District 14 at last year's London Festival Weekend for her performance as the villainous Gothel in Rapunzel. For this year's awards (with announcements and dates to come in due course) Our productions of A Fete Worse Than Death, Peter Pan and this month's upcoming 'The Box' will all be eligible so we will keenly await any potential news regarding these.

We once again participated in this years Old Windsor Carnival walking party, the theme for 2018 was "A Grand Day Out", and in true Riverside fashion we did the usual slightly quirky thing and went as "A Gran Day Out"! It was a lovely day and we won a trophy for the best walking party. A great time was had by all. We also gladly took on hosting and judging duties for 'Old Windsor's Got Talent' on the Sunday afternoon of Carnival weekend. Our very own Simon Arnold got to fulfil his hosting dreams once again and the panel got to enjoy some excellent performances from the talented youngsters. I always find the carnival is an excellent opportunity to be part of the Old Windsor community and it has often been a great entry point for some new members to our own society.

I am also delighted to say that we finally tackled the task of clearing and organising our, now ever so slightly less considerable, wardrobe store. Pulling in several members of the society who gave up their time to aid us in organising this. Though not the most exciting task in the world it will go a long way to making the costume aspect of productions easier so I thank all involved for their time with that.

I and the committee eagerly look forward to your comments and feedback this year and I would like to take this moment to thank you for attending this AGM. Whilst on the subject of thanks the society would also like to acknowledge and extend our gratitude to all of those non acting members and friends without whom we would not be able to make our productions happen.