

Riverside Player's AGM

Committee Report

Thursday 5th March 2020

Welcome everyone to this year's AGM where I have the pleasure of presenting you our annual review on behalf of myself and the Riverside Players Committee. With another year in the books it is again one that we can take a lot of positives from as well as things to learn from going into the future.

As with last year we ran our full program of 3 shows, consisting of plays in the spring and summer and of course our traditional Christmas pantomime. Kicking off the year was our Spring Production of *The Box* by Alan Tibbles directed by Trish Weller. A comedy set within a family's kitchen with the mystery encapsulated around the titular box. This show saw a few of our regular cast members stepping into more leading roles certainly for the first time in my tenure. As such tremendous credit goes to Alex Taggart and Roger Blackman for stepping up the challenge of this as well as Serena Kelly taking on a larger role for the first time. All deservedly receiving praise within an overall positive review from Noda.

On to the summer and audiences were taken on a cruise courtesy of Simon Arnold and Lorna Cottrill's production of *Port Out Starboard Home* by Richard James featuring a variety of colourful characters. The show centred around guests on a cruise ship in Greece. With a variety of characters such as the flamboyant entertainments officer (played as emphatically as you would expect by co-director Simon Arnold pulling double duty) and Alan Payn and Kay Smiths wonderful pairing as the controlling unpleasant husband and Hypochondriac wife respectively particular highlights personally amongst a stellar cast. Once again, a well-received show and as an added extra one that we saw nominated by Noda for excellence in set design. Something we can all be extremely proud as set builds are always a team effort within Riverside productions involving a great deal of time and attention to produce the best possible effect. On a personal level I am always amazed by the end result of these builds with an incredibly amount of vision and ingenuity going into these.

Coming to the end of the year was of course our annual pantomime. This year Susan Pickles brought us *Dick Whittington* by Chris Bennion and Moldiwarts Scripts. The pantomime is always our biggest and, in many aspects, most challenging production and this year was no different. As such Susan deserves a tremendous amount of credit for once again delivering a fantastic production. As these shows tend to be on a bigger scale it offers greater opportunities for cast members to be involved on stage. This was reflected again with a lot of returning younger cast members from last year's production of *Peter Pan*. It's wonderful from the societies point of view to have an environment in which they want to continue to explore opportunities on stage. The growth in confidence and performance from the cast is a testament to both the hard work everyone involved in these shows puts in, as well as the quality we are incredibly fortunate to have from the more seasoned members of the society offering guidance and dependability.

Looking to 2020 I am delighted to say that we are seeing a change in our normal program to bring a musical back to Old Windsor. Under the fantastic direction Kay Smith and Mark Hastings this summer we will be bringing you The Sound of Music. This being the first musical production we have done in a few years is a cause for tremendous excitement. With the show now cast everyone is already hard at work to bring this production to life. We cannot wait to bring you more updates around this in the coming weeks and months in anticipation for the show dates at the end of June. Following that of course will be our traditional Christmas pantomime, which I am thrilled to announce will be a production of "The Little Mermaid" to be Directed by Trish Weller. In all I anticipate 2020 to be an extremely exciting and one in which I hope we are going to bring 2 top class productions that I know we are more than capable of delivering.

In other news as with every year we were once again honoured to take part in the Old Windsor Carnival, firstly as part of the annual walking party for which this years theme was "Games People Play" our participants therefore took that as an excuse to play Doctors and Nurses and strut around as part of the procession dressed as such. Thank you to everyone who took the time to represent Riverside Players as part of this. We also took on hosting and judging duties for the Sunday's Old Windsor's Got Talent show. With the villages local young talent once again wowing the judges with excellent performances in a variety of acts. The carnival is always something that gives us a wonderful chance to interact with residents of the local village in a capacity outside of our shows. As such it is wonderful that we maintain a presence at the weekend's activities.

Whilst on other news as well I would like to take a moment just on behalf of all of us at Riverside Players to offer our congratulations to the society's good friends Jock and Hazel, who celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary last August. Wishing you both all the very best.

Some of you may remember that last year we began the mammoth task of trying to tame our wardrobe store, though we took excellent strides in reducing volume of clothes in there we are planning a phase two of clearing this out in the coming weeks. On Sunday 15th March from 10am we will be attempting to tackle this again. Just whilst in the presence of our membership I would like to ask on behalf of the committee for anybody able to offer assistance in this where possible.

With that I will bring to a close my report of the year that has been, I eagerly await your comments and feedback on this year and am incredibly enthused by the year ahead of us as I hope you all are. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the other members of the committee from this year for their hard work and dedication, without which nothing that we do would be possible. As well as thanking you our wonderful membership and friends who offer their time and commitment both in on and off-stage capacities to make these productions possible.