

## Chairmans report – Settlement Players AGM 2015

We began our year in September at our Open Evening where I made my directorial debut with *Tis Folly to be Wise*. This one act play was great fun to produce and the actors involved all gave terrific performances. We were able to be a little more creative than usual with this play as we made quite a few changes to the original script. We even came up with three different endings before choosing the one we liked the best. The evening itself went very well and everyone enjoyed themselves.

Then in November we proved that we could do Shakespeare. Cliff Francis directed *The Taming of the Shrew*. This very colourful and funny production boasted a large cast, all of whom performed admirably. Sam Powell who took the lead in this one was brilliant. Our audiences enjoyed this production and, I think, because we did it so well the play only served to enhance our reputation.

In February, Pat Baskerville directed *My Own Show*. Because of casting difficulties, Pat wasn't able to put on the play that she had originally wanted to. Pat showed great determination and skill despite this disappointment though and managed to come up with a very creditable alternative. The all-woman cast was superb and reminded us again how lucky we are to have the actresses that we have in our group.

Our Festival entry this year was the very dark *After Midnight, Before Dawn*. Directed by Cliff Francis this gloomy little play was very well received at the festivals it was entered into. This year unfortunately, we were up against stiff competition and, despite several nominations, we didn't win any prizes. Once again though, amazing performances from everyone involved and a great set that proved you could do a lot with very little.

In April, we showcased our festival entry at the Settlement. It's always a good night when we play our festival entry in front of our home audience and this was no exception. On the evening, Helen Faulkner made her directorial debut with two short plays *Doggies* and *Cupboard Love*. These short but very funny little plays were in sharp relief to the darker *After Midnight, Before Dawn*. As always, the audience enjoyed their evening.

In June we closed the year with my proper directorial debut, *The Ladykillers*. John Baskerville and the backstage crew pulled out all the stops for this one and gave us an amazing set which was great fun to play on. As always, everyone worked really hard and we managed to put on a very ambitious production with great success. Everyone in the play performed brilliantly, making the most of the comedy in this piece and the audience enjoyed it.

This year we have continued to put on drama that we can be very proud of. We have had good audiences at everything that we have done. Our technical people continue to give us whatever we ask for. There seems to be no limit to their skill and ingenuity. This year, as always, we have introduced several new faces to our stage and the existing core of talented actors that we already have continued giving the amazing performances that we have come to expect of them.

Throughout the year we have tried to make everyone feel that they are part of things even if they are not directly involved in a production. We had a Christmas party which was well attended and enjoyed by everyone. We have organised theatre trips. We are currently organising a free voice coaching session and we hope to have a picnic later in the summer. We have also expanded the newsletter and made it a regular event. I have tried to put news which is of interest and useful information in the newsletter so that everyone knows what is going on. With the promise of a bigger committee in the coming year then I hope that we shall be able to do more.

We have also done extensive work on the Settlement Players website. I would like to thank the team of people who have worked with me on this. Stephen Charles, Jenn Groves and, whenever we break it and we need his help, Stuart Cocks. Thank you all. If you have looked at the website recently you will have noticed that the past plays archive goes back, with a few exceptions, to 1973 and that we have started to add one act plays on the site as well. We are currently filling in as much extra information as we can get hold of. Many of us now have our own pages on the site detailing all the plays at the Settlement that you've worked on. All of these plays and people are linked. There is now a next show page which details our next production. There are maps and other aids to finding us and information about joining us. The news blog is kept up to date with news of what we are doing. There is even now video on the website. If you look at the *Ladykillers* and *Breaking the Code* pages you will find video tabs on which there are links to the videos that we've made. We are planning to make more use of this site in the future. For example we want to set up an on-line ticketing facility so that people will be able buy tickets for our productions directly from us easily and quickly. We are also looking at a facility which would enable you to pay your subscriptions on the website. In the coming year we are going to concentrate more on the members' area, adding more tools to make our lives easier and making it available to all our members.

So, all in all, I think that it's been another very good year for the Settlement Players. We have continued putting on great plays and enjoying ourselves while we did it. As to next year, we haven't got a complete programme that I can give you now but I hope to be able to do that soon. What I can tell you though is that in September we have yet another directorial debut. Jo Roskilly will be directing three parts of *Duets* by Peter Quilter at our open evening. Then in November, David Smith will be directing *Ladies of Spirit* by Georgina Reid. Both directors have held their auditions now and announced their casts and I am sure that these plays will be a great opening to yet another good year for the Settlement Players.

Thank you