

AGM Chair report July 2023

Thank you for coming. Recap since July 2022.

2023 is the centenary year, 100 years being 19 Dec 2022. More later.

Update post AGM – Reminded that a Sep evening of short acts took place.

Nov 2022. Our show was, a court room drama, The Accused by Jeffrey Archer. Directed by Jo Roskilly with James Barnard in the 'Jeffrey Archer' Role, and guilty/not guilty cards to decide the ending. Jo obtained some excellent sponsorship and this was put to use in a targeted publicity campaign including a joint leaflet with the Settlement. It also enabled us to have free centenary programmes. With an audience of 317, it was well received and financially very successful.

There was an intent for a Christmas Party in January but this did not materialise. We can add it to the list of events we need to catch up with.

In March 2023, Sam Powell directed The Importance of being Earnest, a sublime comedy, by Oscar Wilde, along with a matinee performance. Our publicity budget, was still healthy, with more sponsorship, so we again did more targeted publicity, joint leaflet, free programme. The first week ticket sales exceeded the first two weeks sales of The accused, even adjusting for an extra performance, so there was a big appetite for the show. The rehearsal process also found a whole new level for Dr Chausble and Ms Prism, resulting in the Prasuble 'lets get in on' Victorian love story video which can still be found on the internet.

Audience number was 359.

Two shows over 300, highs we haven't seen in more than 10 years.

Update after AGM. Two surveys provided data on audience locations and increased newsletter list to around 280 from about 140.

June 2023, Jim Anderson directing Wait until Dark, a physiological thriller, and a departure from recent shows, with Jo Roskilly spending 90 minutes on stage as the lead character who is blind. Again we did more targeted publicity, joint leaflet, free programme, and a lot of late ticket sales gave us an audience of 213, which is pre 2020 levels.

The three shows have used lots of people both, on stage, back stage and FoH. I thank them but ask you, if you have time and energy to get involved, and help

the players be successful and find other people who want to support our local theatre.

Beyond quality shows we have to work hard to get and retain an audience, we are spending more on publicity, and plan to continue to do so and work jointly with the settlement. Sponsorship does also appear to be a viable option, where Jo led the way last Nov.

Regarding the Centenary. Lots of little acts have been occurring to mark 100 years of the Players. New logos, free programmes, all produced by Jo Roskilly. Other items are still on the list, small centenary event in January 2024, I see no reason to not carry our centenary into first half 2024.

Merch. Sam Powell has been looking at Tshirts and Jo has produced some Merch designs that could go on shirts, tea towels/tote bags etc, if people are interested.

A picture history book and a small exhibition of Players archive are also still on the list.

Finally on the Centenary, Claire Hogan was commissioned to write a one act to take to the camb drama festival and to celebrate our 100 years. With a remit of The Players, the Settlement and covid/settlement closure it was a tough job. We now have the script, submitted to CDF and rehearsals have started. Excitingly it then transpired that Stuart Cocks had also written a short play and so both will be on our double header one act evenings in Sep.

Goes to show that even as a small group we have a lot of talent within the Players.

Lots of new actors this year, Hannah, Eleanor, Matt, Jackie, Katie, Charlotte, Una. Backstage, Phil joined us for Wait Until Dark.

The summer jobs have also started being led by Rob Evans. The more the merrier.

Finally a reminder, the Settlement Players are a group of individuals who share a common interest in non-professional theatre, and ultimately need and depend on an active membership. The more active the membership, and the more individuals who have the time, the interest and the skills to be actively involved, the more successful the Players will be.

If you have the time and enthusiasm to commit beyond acting, then please get in touch and come have a chat. Stephen Charles