



Newsletter of the Sinodun Players - October 2015

THE CORN EXCHANGE TIMES

A marvellous night for a moondance...

Under the cover of October skies, you may get this newsletter just in time to acquire tickets for the Players' production of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, translated by Tom Stoppard, directed by Ric Harley. Last night is Saturday 17th.

Panto rehearsals get under way and this year (as if you didn't know) the Sinodun Players' offering is *Rapunzel* by Michael Buchanan-Smart, directed by Marilyn Johnstone and Caroline Wilkes.

Before that Rebecca Cleverley is working on a Christmas party for the society - more details inside... !

Also in this edition, the Artistic Team publish the scheduled programme of productions for 2016. They're still waiting for offers for a drama festival entry so do step up! Once the festival season is over might we not consider taking the portable show to a local school or two?

Here's a nice photograph...



**David Treadwell and Gloria Wright
in *The Cherry Orchard* all this week.
Tickets still available!**

EVENTS

WED 14 OCT to SAT 17 OCT @7.45pm **PLAY**

The Cherry Orchard by Anton Chekhov
(dir. Erica Harley).

22, 23, 25 OCT @ 7.00pm **NT LIVE**
Hamlet - Benedict Cumberbatch takes on the title role of Shakespeare's great tragedy in this production broadcast as live from the Barbican.

MON 26 OCT @8.00pm **FILM**
PREMIER of the new Bond movie, *SPECTRE*! All premier night tickets £10 (includes a regular cinema ticket and a free drink at the bar). Dress to Kill! DJs & Great Gowns win Prizes.

SAT 7 NOV **MUSIC**
Acoustic Ballroom celebrates a decade of open mic magic with a special celebration evening featuring Megan Henwood, Jackie Oates, Jodie O'Callaghan, Rosie Shaw, Band Of Hope and other excellent acts!

School Term WED @4.30pm **ENCORE**
Sinodun Players' Youth Group headed by Ginny Avery meet every Wednesday in term time.

1st TUE of MONTH **DC MEETING**
Drama Committee meets in Curtis Room at the Corn Exchange.

THE TRUSTEES

THE TRUSTEE CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

It was good to see 50 full members attend the AGM, as this is the meeting at which you can express your democratic right to vote for your Committee members, and also to raise any matters that are of concern to you about the Society. Once again there were no elections for posts and, in fact, there were not enough nominations to fill all Trustee positions. Debi Lisburne and Liz Van der Vord were both elected and, since the AGM, John Jeskins has been co-opted into the remaining post. He had indicated an interest to me in the summer but was away when nominations closed. I hope that the new Trustees may have an easier ride than most of us have had over the last year.

This has principally been down to the work the Trustees have been undertaking, aided by a Charity solicitor, to ensure we can successfully amend our Constitution to include the preservation of the Corn Exchange in our objects. This has been what most members have wanted for a long time and will enable us to grant money to the Company for upcoming work, such as the Roof Project, without saddling them with more debt. The EGM endorsed us submitting the new Constitution to the Charity Commission for their approval. If approval is granted another EGM will need to be held for full members to adopt both the new Constitution and the Society Rules document. This meeting will not be held before February 2016. Any member who has opinions on what should be included in the Society Rules document is encouraged to let John Wright or me know.

The other main effort is going to be in renewing the loan from the Society to the Company, so that it includes interest payments and a plan to pay off the capital. John Wright and I, aided by professional advice from a Charity specialist accountant, have had an initial meeting with Keith Yapp and Oliver Hemming, representing the Board, and following discussion at the next Trustees meeting will have another meeting with them to try and agree the best way forward. As there is now nobody who is both a Trustee and a Director we have no conflict of interest to address.

Any member who has any concerns about the Society is encouraged to talk to either Julie Utley or me so that we can raise them, if necessary, at our meetings. We are generally in the Corn Exchange on a Saturday morning and available on email or by phone.

Nick Morley

DRAMA COMMITTEE

THEATRE TRIP

SPs Graham Watt, Sue Brown and Mark Wilkin are currently rehearsing hard for *Anything Goes* which is being presented by HAODS at the Kenton Theatre in Henley from 18 - 21 November. This promises to be 'an evening of fun and spectacle'. With the music of Cole Porter and a troupe of tap-dancing sailors what's not to love?

As a social event I will be organising a block booking for Wednesday 18 November. Tickets are £14 adults, £13 concessions, £9 children, but I believe we may be able to get some discount for block-booking. Let me know by Saturday 24 October if you would like to come. We can arrange car sharing nearer the time. Please note that this will be a firm commitment, If you subsequently become unable to attend I will still need payment from you and you will need to arrange for someone else to take your place.

Rebecca Cleverley

CHRISTMAS PARTY

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...

...or we're starting to think about it at any rate. The Drama Committee will be organising a Christmas party on Tuesday 22 December. The plans so far include eating, drinking and general merriment with a festive hat competition (so start designing now), a quiz and stage disco (please Oliver and Martin?).

We'll be collecting for Crisis again to support the work Nick Morley will be doing for them over the festive season. There will be a small charge for tickets so we can provide some food.

So book the date in your diaries now (and take the next day off work!).

Christmas cards will be collected in our postboxes as usual. We will open these on 15 December in case people are going away and won't be around to pick them up on the 22nd.

Rebecca Cleverley

DRAMA COMMITTEE

2016 PROGRAMME

The Artistic Team is pleased to announce the list of productions for 2016.

Pantomime:

Rapunzel by Michael Buchanan-Smart

Director: Marilyn Johnstone & Caroline Wilkes

Spring Production:

Two by Jim Cartwright

Director: Graham Fyffe

Late Spring Production:

Bazaar and Rummage by Sue Townsend

Director: Julie Utley

Summer Production:

The Chalk Garden by Enid Bagnold

Director: Chris Harris

Autumn Production:

The Tempest by William Shakespeare

Director: Paul Cleverley

(*A Spark in Judea* has been withdrawn from the line-up because of John Van der Vord's ill health.)

In addition, we would like to enter a play in the local festivals (we usually enter Maidenhead, Henley, Abingdon and Wallingford festivals, the first of which is in March, and the last one in June), and would welcome submissions. If you have any questions about the festival play requirements, please contact Sue Forward, Caroline Wilkes or Sarah Enticknap.

Artistic Team

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SERVICE



John Warburton receives his British Empire Medal, awarded in the Queen's 2015 New Year Honours list from Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

At a ceremony in Banbury on 11 June the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, highlighted John's contribution to the Corn Exchange and in particular the fundraising efforts over four decades from the initial conversion to the installation of digital cinema.

He also mentioned John's involvement with Midsomer Murders that has brought many visitors and significant income to Wallingford.

OPEN SOCIETY?

When we applied for a National Lottery grant in approx 2005 we were told that we were not eligible not being an 'Open Society' - our heinous offence was to require new member applicants to be approved by the drama committee after being nominated and seconded. We amended our Constitution to remove these limits on joining.

The power to be vested in trustees to vet applications and potentially reject them and to be able to sack members would seem to me to be rather more serious.

Shall we perhaps not need grants from public bodies for the roof?

Philip Burton

200 CLUB WINNERS

This month's winners are:

£25	84	Mrs D Hawkins
£15	140	Mrs O Gold
£12	33	Mr and Mrs T Cotton
£10	287	Mr N W H Allsop

Sarah Enticknap

MEMBERSHIP

THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTION

Fellow members will know that I have raised issues about the management of the Charity's finances over several years and I recently gave the Chairman of Trustees evidence of the beginning of my concerns as expressed more than 10 years ago when I was the General Manager of Sinodun Players Limited. The Trustees have made the following statements when presenting the proposed new Constitution and Rules and have had them published in the CX Times:

"The Constitution will govern the way the Trustees operate on behalf of the Charity Commission" and "The Trustees' first responsibility is to protect the assets of the Society on behalf of the CC".

In point of fact this is not so - there is nothing that says this in the Guidance to Trustees issued by the Charity Commission.

Ours is an Unincorporated Association of Members. We agree a Governing Document, our Constitution, which sets out rules our Trustees must follow to manage our association as a Charity. It is a 'Contract' between the members and our servants the Trustees. We, the members, have the right, by two thirds majority voting, to amend that Constitution (needing to refer to the CC only to get agreement on amending certain clauses. And we can, under Clause 5 c 4, by simple majority at a general meeting remove any trustee. That ability is inexplicably missing from the proposed Constitution.

The new Constitution gives the Trustees (Clause 8) the right (and duty) to vet applicants for membership and reject individuals and gives them the power to sack members (Clause 9) – my view is that if we (the members) wish to have such powers they should at least be exercised in a quorate general meeting. These clauses will preclude grant aid from the National Lottery and possibly others as they insist that any Charity they support must have open membership.

Clause 16 refers to outside organisations being members and appointing proxies – why do we want such a facility?

Clause 18 5 b is not understood. Clause 21 prevents non director trustees being quorate without 100% attendance and will delay decisions affecting SPL

Clause 19 talks about taking security for loans – if, of course, a charge is made on the CX to secure the loan to SPL then the company will be unable to give appropriate security on any new mortgage.

Moving on to the existing loan to SPL. Several years ago, contrary to HMRC guidance for charities, the Charity improperly loaned SPL some £300,000 without the obligatory repayment schedule and without any interest being charged - let alone at a commercial rate. SPL was thus able to make necessary capital purchases and claim tax credits for that expenditure without receiving any income through the P&L account. At the very least – significant tax avoidance. And only 2 years ago the Trustees lent SPL a further £25000 to help purchase the digital projector – again tax credits were claimed for the purchase cost and tax avoided. Monies donated by members and others for the purchase of the projector was largely retained in the Charity's accounts

The whole of the loan was due for repayment in full in 2014. The trustees are apparently 'minded' now to re-issue the £320,000 or so loan with an interest charge of 2 per cent and with a repayment schedule with a term yet to be agreed. In order to make these payments SPL will need to charge the Charity a substantial increase in the rent paid to the Company by the Charity for the use made of the building for drama (possibly from the present £20k pa to £50k pa). BUT in order to make its payments to the Charity, SPL will have to declare sufficient taxable profits. The unpaid tax avoided over the past 15 years will crystallise. Roughly speaking some £80,000 tax will need to be paid by the Company on £400,000 to be paid to it by the Charity for it to be able to repay the £320,000.

I therefore remain significantly concerned that in attempting to avoid the tax charge we could be accused of tax evasion. All trustees (and members) must note that tax evasion is a criminal offence and proper advice must be taken and due diligence applied individually by all trustees. Any further improper action will put them at risk of personal liability. Having been warned of the dangers, such action would represent culpable misconduct and in such circumstances the trustee insurance is unlikely to cover them at all. You have been warned.

Philip Burton

WAKE UP AT THE BACK

"Everybody thought that Somebody would do it,
Nobody realized that Nobody would do it
Everybody blamed Somebody... "
Anon.

Q.E.D? The point is, as every actor knows, that unless 'everybody' is there to light them, to mic them, to costume them, to protect them on stage, to produce SFX, to make scenery, to sell tickets, to keep the audience safe, imbibed and happily seated, not to mention safe, sustainable maintenance of the building; they are 'Nobody'. Cannot be seen nor heard. As a group, whether labelled by job title or just ordinary member, the onus is on every one of us to step up and help run the place.

Why? I can't believe you even ask...

Front of House duties are surprisingly simple – one of the few places where no degree is required, or previous proven experience, or a passport, or a birth certificate. Just plain old common sense. So for ****'s sake sign up! I guarantee there is good on-the-ground support and nobody is left floundering.

It is disappointing in the extreme that John Wright has to send begging notes each month for House Managers. There are capable members out there whose names only ever appear in cast programmes and never volunteer. Please don't think this is not you (unless you are already one of the few).

Wake up at the back! You are needed out front! If everybody did one offstage duty a month we'd be able to work up some mighty lean machine. Bring it on!

Jill Parrick

VOLUNTEER BREAKFAST

Ohhhhhhh.....

Wonderful breakfast in Wallingford's fair city.
To have missed such a feast would indeed have been a pity.
For a mighty breakfast was served for each brave volunteer
Who consumed both eggs and sausages with many a heartfelt cheer.

And who filled the upper room with the most acceptable smell
Of bacon and strawberry jam and cups of tea as well.
Oh who could forget the rapturous scenes
As children lifted saucepan lids to discover baked beans.

And with sparkling eyes approached with raised spoons
Steaming bowls laden with corn flakes and prunes.
So three cheers for Julie Grimshaw the bold breakfasteer
Who cooked enough bacon to last for many a year.

And whose efforts with mushrooms were indeed very fine
Which I'm sure will be remembered for a very long time.

W. McGonagall
(discovered lurking in an attic by Mr Orton)

MEMBERSHIP

SPRING 2016 PRODUCTION

The introductory reading of the play on 27th September went very well. There appeared to be much enthusiasm for the play despite it containing only two parts. Scripts, together with a list of audition pieces, were handed out to those actors who were prepared to undertake the challenge of being on stage all evening!

The auditions are being held in the Club Room on Tuesday evening 20th October commencing at 7.30 pm. There will be four performances from 13th to 16th April.

It is not too late to borrow a book and come to the auditions should any member wish to do so. If you would like to have a look at a script, please let Anne Stammers know (annies1@btopenworld.com). You will find the scripts in the SP treasurer's pigeon hole in the foyer cupboard on the far right.

Please let me know if you are interested in reading for a part and I shall send you the audition list (gfyffe@waitrose.com).

Graham Fyffe

AUTUMN 2016 PRODUCTION

October 2016 will see the SP production of *The Tempest*. On Sunday 3 April 2016 there will be a play reading in the Club Room and the first auditions will be on Sunday 24 April.

The casting of the play will be open to all and there will be no rigid adherence to the formal gender of the dramatis personae. This applies to all roles so please, if you think you have a contribution to make as an actor don't be put off by the fact the character you might like to read for is written as a man or a woman ... or Ariel...

Given the nature of the language I consider it wise to aim for a longer run up than might otherwise be appropriate, so we're planning for a twelve week rehearsal period. Rehearsals, then, will begin in early-ish July although no formal dates have been set as yet and The Chalk Garden will clearly take precedence.

And given the nature of the language, the intention is to be off the book as soon as possible; by casting in early May the actors will have the opportunity during the following months to concentrate on learning as much as possible in advance of the first rehearsal.

We have a remarkable and creative production team lined up but volunteers will be needed and are always welcome!

It's an exciting project and one we hope the Players can take to their hearts, especially given the overarching themes of the play itself.

Paul Cleverley

BACKSTAGE

SOME SCENES IN THE CHERRY ORCHARD



BACKSTAGE

RUBLE UP MILL...

Adult pastimes are not what they used to be I fear. Nevertheless, on the advice of my better half and regarding recent Russian renderings, here's your opportunity to indulge the new/old craze for colouring in ... send in your completed colourings and a mystery prize will be yours!

Entries to newsletter@sinodunplayers.org.uk - (scan or photograph them as you'd not want me to lose the original!)



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BACK PAGE

DON'T MISS

an evening of world jazz with

nana simopoulos & filomena campus



www.nana.net www.filomenacampus.com

The Great Hall, Cholsey Meadows Fri 30 Oct 8pm

Tickets £10 online at www.wegotickets.com/event/330749
or from CCDT Office at the Great Hall (01491 652339)

In the absence of any other shameless plugs I continue this one!

I first met Nana in 1974 at school in Athens. She played guitar in a school band "Feet" and went on to greater things, not least amongst them studying with the great Pat Metheny.

For the price of a couple of pints you get to visit the Great Hall in Cholsey Meadows and listen to the harmonies and melodies and improvisation of world jazz at its best with Steve Lodder on keyboards and Dudley Phillips on double bass. I have tickets for sale if you want some!

Paul Cleverley
grumblyfrown@gmail.com



SOCIAL MEDIA



Did you know that the Sinodun Players have their own Facebook group? It's a public group which you can join and share with your friends, family and colleagues.

Each production will have a new image which you can use on your own Facebook page to help promote the show (the latest is *The Cherry Orchard*).

Go to Facebook, search for "The Sinodun Players" and ask to join! It all helps get bums on seats and you can help promote the Society!

AN OBSERVATION FROM AN OLD FRIEND



COPY DEADLINES

The deadline for copy for the next issue is noon on Sunday 8th November. Submissions after this time will not be included. Please submit copy by email to newsletter@sinodunplayers.org.uk or by post to The Editor, CX Times, Corn Exchange, Market Place, OX10 0EG. All material in this publication is copyright and may not be published in whole or in part without prior written permission from the Editor.

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- All correspondents must supply the Editor with their name and contact details. However, names may be withheld upon request.
 - The Editor reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and reserves the right to edit as needed for space, libellous statements or personal attacks.
 - No articles will be published that in any way demean or insult any member or group of members.
 - The Editor may need to limit the length of letters (300 words approximately).
-