



THE CORN EXCHANGE TIMES

Newsletter of the Sinodun Players



March 2022

Musings from the Chair – March 2022

Showtime 2, the collaboration between Crescendo and the Sinodun Players has just completed its run at the Corn Exchange and what a fantastic show it was and I hope many of you found the time to come and see it. I was lucky enough to be involved together with many other SP members and other talented local performers and although most of the cast were hit with Omicron three weeks before curtain up, we managed to pull it off! Huge congratulations to Marilyn



Johnstone and Rob Alderton for a truly wonderful experience. The cast and crew took the opportunity to raise money for Ukraine and on our last performance the lighting team created a very moving backdrop using the Ukrainian colours and flag. Thank you to those who contributed to our fund-raising efforts which raised in excess of £120.00 for the Red Cross.

Moving on from Showtime, two members of the Showtime team, Hannah Smithson and Amanda Woodbridge and I are now jumping straight back into rehearsals for the SP early Spring Production of W. Somerset Maugham's, *The Constant Wife*. This very funny play is set in the 1920's and portrays a modern, quick-witted and alternative view on marriage and infidelity and how to deal with an extramarital affair! Opening night is Tuesday 29th March so please do come and support us.

Calling out for more techies!! As you are aware technical support is essential to every live show but we are finding ourselves relying repeatedly on the same few people to run our own SP productions and incoming shows. To encourage more people to get involved in this area of theatre and indeed to support our existing technical volunteers, we are setting up a new 'Tech Club' which will be designed to offer instruction and hands on equipment training in lighting and sound operation. Anyone is welcome to come along so even if you have no experience in this area but would like to learn more about it we would love to hear from you. For more information contact Mike Baker technicalmanager@cornexchange.org.uk.

Don't forget we are still open to receiving play submissions for our 2023 programme. The invitation is open to all and even if you have submitted previously and your play wasn't chosen at that time please do try again.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to say how very sad I was not to be able to attend John Jones' memorial. I was told it was a poignant, touching and emotional afternoon full of wonderful anecdotes and stories demonstrating how much John was valued and how much he will be missed by so many. Thank you to Erica Harley and all who were involved in organising this beautiful and fitting tribute to a wonderful man.

Caroline Malnick

Chair, Sinodun Players

Calling all Directors

Reminder from the artistic team

We've had some promising early enquiries but we are still looking for proposals for next year's program. Directors – get your proposals together and get them in to us now! Remember, we have five productions a year: we are looking for a pantomime in January and plays in early and late spring, July and the autumn. There is no limit to how many scripts you submit for consideration and we will be looking for a variety of genres, styles and cast sizes. If you are new to directing and would like to give it a try, why not submit a one-act play for our festival play.

Finally, we would like to thank all those who submitted plays for 2021. They might not have been suitable at the time, but we would be happy to reconsider them.

We look forward to hearing from you,

The Artistic Team

Sue, Dorothy and James

Please contact :

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james@sinodun.org.uk

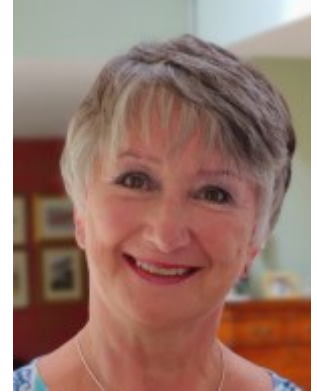
dorothy@sinodun.org.uk





Board Banter

It's wonderful to see the Corn Exchange coming back to life after the difficult 2 years that we've all had to cope with. Whilst we acknowledge that we're not out of the woods completely, it is somewhat comforting to hear that there is now less risk from covid than from flu. Those of you who have visited the Corn Exchange recently will have noticed that we are gradually returning to a more normal way of organising ourselves, although one or two covid protection elements will stay in place for a little while longer.



It has certainly been gratifying to see the number of people who came to see Showtime 2. Whilst not the sell out that we have experienced with previous Crescendo/ Sinodun Players productions, ticket sales were nevertheless encouraging, and it certainly seems that people are enthusiastic to come to the theatre to see a live show. It is taking a little longer for cinema audiences to return to pre-pandemic levels and the Board is monitoring this to ascertain whether we need to change our approach in the future. However, we continue to get people coming to the Corn Exchange for the first time and telling us how much they appreciate the atmosphere and the warm welcome they experience. Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who help to create this.

While bookings are down, your Board are keeping a close eye on finance, and we are restricting expenditure to those items that are necessary for the safety and comfort of our audiences, members and volunteers. We are, however, very aware that we need to ensure our standards are such that people want to keep coming back and – perhaps more importantly – that they recommend us to others. With so much new housing in the area, we have a wonderful opportunity to reach out to people who don't yet know us. If you can do anything to help with this, please spread the word.

NOTE: although we will be open to show "Coppelia, children's ballet" over the Easter weekend, we will not be opening for coffee and cake on the mornings of 15th or 16th April.

Finally, our next Board Meeting will be on Monday 4th April and this will be preceded by an Open Forum. This is an opportunity for anyone to attend in order to ask questions, offer ideas or just find out who we are and how we operate. The Open Forum will commence at 7 pm and the meeting will be held in the Curtis Room.

Gloria Wright

Chair, Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd.

March 2022

The Great Big Shoe Sort



Jan Castle, our esteemed Wardrobe Mistress, mustered the troops on a recent Saturday morning for a little shoe-sorting challenge. Amazingly, after only two hours of the pairing game, almost every shoe and boot found its partner. As part of a re-ordering exercise, a proportion of the collection has now been earmarked as surplus to requirements and awaits a new home. Thanks to Barbara, Janet, Sue, Maddie, Clare, Anna and Jean - a great job done! Next stop: hats, caps, helmets and bonnets!



Nick's Natter

Pantomime may be becoming a distant memory yet in the world of sound design and operation it marked a bit of a watershed. This started with the sound course run by Rob Alderton in December, where about a dozen of us learned the theory behind theatre sound and had the opportunity to work out what all the sliders and knobs on a sound desk are for. Rob had already agreed to do sound design for *Sleeping Beauty* and helped the team of 5 operators make the most of an enhanced rig, including some front fills and an additional pair of speakers in the auditorium. Adding speakers reduces the sound levels required for the audience as it brings everyone closer to one, meaning you don't need to push the sound for all to hear! We also used the radio mics and floats to reinforce levels during speech, as well as for songs, to help the overall effect.

A very similar sound set up was also used on *Showtime 2*, our joint SP and Crescendo production. My only involvement was as an audience member, and I must say how great it was to listen to our talented singers belting out, at a very acceptable level, hits from 7 different shows so professionally. Next up is *The Constant Wife* which I hope, like me, you've got your tickets for.

I'll finish this time with further reflection on John Jones, as a few weeks ago we held a wonderful memorial to celebrate his life. I volunteered to operate the tech, which had been set up well by Mike Baker. Through the service I learned so much more about John, both in and away from the Corn Exchange. His passing has left a significant hole and his theatre duties have been taken on by several others. I was asked whether I'd be willing to be co-opted into his Trustee role, and obviously I'm honoured to do so.

We really miss you, John.

Nick Morley

March 2022



Anyone who has tried to use the Corn Exchange internet connection over the past 2-3 months will know that we have been experiencing severe issues with connection speeds and also frequent disconnections. This caused issues with the bar tills not working correctly as well as very slow downloads of any cinema trailers and other publicity material. There appear to have been multiple problems: our broadband router had a fault, the telephone line itself had a fault and we were getting very slow download speeds from our provider. After several phone calls and testing we eventually got an OpenReach engineer to come and check the line. This resolved one issue. We also replaced the broadband router resolving another issue – but we were still left with very low download speeds (around 1 – 2 Mbps for anyone interested, when we should have been getting 16-18Mbps!).

Then one day I found we'd been sent a new broadband router by our internet service provider with a letter saying we were going to be upgraded to superfast fibre connection at no extra cost to us. This upgrade happened at the beginning of March and we now benefit from download speeds of about 80Mbps and upload speeds of around 20Mbps!

Whilst this is still not that fast by today's standards it is a huge improvement on what we had and anyone using the network/WiFi at the Corn Exchange should see much better performance for connections to and from the internet. It also makes it more feasible for cinema films to be downloaded via the internet instead of receiving them on hard-disks which are couriered to us. And our bar tills are working properly again!

Good result I think!
Oliver



AED with life support training.



As you can see from the picture Gloria is dreaming of her new man Prestan who is rather ripped and very portable. He has lungs that actually inflate and she pounded his heart for several minutes during CPR training. A good time was had by all who attended and we now feel confident that we could cope, and use the AED which is situated in the foyer, should a situation arise.



Your newly trained First Aiders with certificates valid for 3 years are:

Amanda Potter, Carol Pedrick, Barbara Wood, Deborah Whelan, Graham Gilgrass

Trisha Gilgrass, Jan Baptiste-Grant, Wioleta Jedrzejowska, Clare Owen,

Gloria Wright, Julie Grimshaw

The following still have certificates which expire in Jan 2023

Eric Leadbetter, Lynn Burridge, Ellen Phelips, Caroline Malnik, Rita Rainsden

Thomas Herrington-Truman.

How many of you knew that 112 is the number to ring from a mobile instead of 999?

Using this number means the emergency services can accurately locate you within a building or out in the countryside.

Julie Grimshaw



**HEALTH & SAFETY
MATTERS**



Saturday 30th April.

Ian Knight is organising Fire Extinguisher Training in the Studio.

2 sessions 10.30am and 11.45 and can accommodate 10 people at each session.

So House Managers, Stage Managers, Technical and Workshop people and anyone else who would like to be trained please let me know.

HRDirector@cornexchange.org.uk

Reminders – if you are doing anything in the building, and haven't done already, please complete the quiz in the back of the green H&S Booklet and make sure that someone has gone through an Induction Form with you. This needs to be signed by you both and returned to the Green folder in the H&S pigeon hole in the foyer cupboard.

If you are bringing electrical items into the building they need to be PAT Tested. We are purchasing an online course and have the equipment so we can train more people to do this.

If you are coming into the Corn Exchange, outside of normal opening hours please sign in and out on the clipboard in the white cupboard by the foyer door. This worked well during lockdown but has lapsed since. It stops people being locked in and setting off the intruder alarm, and others being called out as the alarm has gone off.

Julie G

The Late John Jones

Francesca and Philippa would like to thank everyone so much who contributed towards the successful running of this Memorial Service to John. It was so smoothly run that it helped to reduce the stress we naturally felt at such an event, and we are very grateful to all the front of house and back of house volunteers who made this possible.

Particular thanks go to Erica Harley and Julie Grimshaw, of course, without whose help the whole Service would not have happened, and thanks to the Corn Exchange for allowing us to run the Service on a Sunday afternoon. We would also like to give our heartfelt thanks to the speakers (Gloria, Dorothy and Chris all connected to the Corn Exchange, and Chris Bryan as his former Headmaster) - and to all the members of the Sinodun Players who came to the Memorial.

He would have been so proud (and rather embarrassed!) at the tributes paid to him, and to those who came to say a final farewell. As the Newsletter has said : RIP John Jones.

Francesca and Pippa Jones



March 2022

The Sinodun Players presents at
The Corn Exchange Theatre Wallingford

THE CONSTANT WIFE

BY W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

DIRECTED BY CHRIS HARRIS

DESIGNED BY NICOLA WEBB

*A fizzing comedy exploring
sexual independence*

TUESDAY 29TH MARCH

to

SATURDAY 2ND APRIL

PERFORMANCE TIMES 7.45PM

Saturday Matinee 2.30pm

TICKETS £12.00

**OPENING NIGHT
SPECIAL OFFER
TICKETS £9.00**



Online at cornexchange.co.uk



This amateur production of "The Constant Wife" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd.
on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

*The play is full of good laughs. And as to the perennial debates about women,
home and society: well, just wait till you see this!*

Director, **Chris Harris**

March 2022

THE CONSTANT WIFE

BY W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

DIRECTED BY CHRIS HARRIS

DESIGNED BY NICOLA WEBB

Set in the late 1920's at the height of Art Deco culture and the flourishing progress of feminism, Maugham's frank and fizzing comedy sparkles with Coward-like wit and crackles with arguments about marriage and infidelity; are the sexes programmed at birth – or not? Is sauce for the goose really sauce for the gander?

Constance is the calm, intelligent and self-possessed wife of John Middleton, a successful London surgeon. Friends and family are desperate to tell her of her husband's infidelity - with her own best friend, Marie-Louise. They expect the typical response of the 'wronged wife'.... But Constance is anything but typical. She is complex, clever and increasingly liberated; a character whose creator was a master both of language and

the play of ideas. Her journey will lead her to discover the very core of

love, infidelity and equality.

One of Maugham's most captivating creations, the play is as fresh and

relevant today as it was in 1926. It holds up a mirror to the audience:

how much have our social attitudes really changed, nearly 100 years on,

from those of the late 1920's?

Booking is open for this rarely performed funny and thought-provoking play, online at cornexchange.org.uk



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Copy date for the April issue...

All entries for inclusion in the next edition of the Corn Exchange Times to newsletter@sinodunplayers.org.uk by **Sunday 10th April 2022** (or preferably, earlier please).