



THE CORN EXCHANGE TIMES

Newsletter of the Sinodun Players

September 2022



The Sinodun Players, recipients of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, pay tribute to a remarkable life of service to the nation and beyond over an extraordinary reign of 70 years.

Thank You Ma'am.

Elizabeth R

1926 - 2022

Sinodun Players Amateur Dramatic Society Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 14th September at 7.45pm.

This is a reminder of the above meeting to be held in the Auditorium of the Corn Exchange.

Could we make a plea for as many of you to attend as possible please? We need at least 30 members in attendance for a quorum, but there is a drama rehearsal on the same evening this year, which means that a number of people are unable to attend the AGM. Thank you!

The Agenda, Reports from the Trustees, Board, and the SPC are included in this Newsletter. The Draft Accounts of the Sinodun Players for 2021-22, and the Minutes of last year's AGM are available on the members website under Documentation/AGMs.

Sinodun Players present

Sinodun Players AGM & Social Event

Corn Exchange
Wallingford

Wednesday 14th September at 7.45pm

All Full & Associate members are encouraged to attend, but only Full members will be able to vote.

❖ Complimentary welcome drink and nibbles provided.

Please could we ask that you complete the Google Form RSVP <https://forms.gle/mgmoW2Qnk27yYBrAA> or email alice.walker@sinodunplayers.org.uk

AGM SEPTEMBER 2022 – CHAIR'S REPORT

Before I start with my own reflections over the past year, I would like to take a moment to remember the members and friends that have so sadly passed away. Firstly John Jones, a long-standing active member and one of our finest actors, Jean Calvin-Thomas a long-standing member and supporter of the SP's, Dennis Wood our beloved Honorary President and friend to many without whom we



would not have the wonderful theatre we own today and finally Pete Utley, our friend and colleague, a fine actor and a valued member who was always on hand to help whenever he could.

Following *The Wind in the Willows* in the summer of 2021, our first production coming out of lockdown, it was a relief to finally start catching up with our 2020 SP programme. In October 2021 we kicked off with *A Daughter's a Daughter* which was originally scheduled as the 2020 early Spring Production. Despite social distancing limiting audience numbers it was very well supported and the cast produced a polished and first-class piece of theatre.

Gloria Wright did a fantastic job negotiating and accommodating the large cast of adults and children for our pantomime *Sleeping Beauty*. It was a very difficult task with Covid still very much dominating. Miraculously we only had two covid casualties, Joe one of our young Encore principals and Mark Wilkin who was playing Father Time. Fortunately Ed Simpson was able to step into the Tardis for the last week to carry us through to the end. Sadly, we were unable to invite the audience children onto the stage for the kid's song but our comedy duo Fiona and Tom kept the whole audience engaged and literally up on their feet.

The Constant Wife, our early spring production, struggled initially with casting and we had to actively search and approach people to come and audition. Early rehearsals were interrupted with three of the cast being involved in another show and myself and another cast member then coming down with Covid. Reflecting back, there were very few rehearsals with the whole cast present and after a penultimate 'train crash' dress rehearsal it was all looking pretty miserable. Another of the cast members Dorothy Hirsch came down with covid just before curtain up but Sue Brown saved the day by seamlessly stepping into the role. Despite the pressure we were all under this was one of my favourite times of 2021. I loved being part of this clever, funny and insightful play but most especially

I was humbled by the extraordinary support and affection the cast had for each other. Thankfully it was also very well attended and positively received by the audience.

Nell Gwynn had already been cast in 2020 but prior to starting we already knew that our dear John Jones had himself decided to step down. Two other original cast members were also sadly unable to commit but thankfully Kevin Goodfellow, Tom Mackriell and Jack Prince stepped in and we were good to go. During rehearsals covid struck again and left us looking for another King Charles but luckily we found the wonderful Drew Morris. Pete Utley then had to step in to fill another gap but I'm so pleased we got to see Pete on stage one last time. I know from a conversation I had with him afterwards he had a lot of fun and thoroughly enjoyed being back on stage and part of the team. Bless you Pete. This was another joyous production to be involved with and I know the cast didn't want it to end. They were having too much fun obviously! This was also Jan Castle's last production before stepping down as Wardrobe Mistress and photographic evidence showed she was also having a lot of fun!

Bedroom Farce was the only production that wasn't part of the 2020 programme. Thankfully there was only one recasting early on in the proceedings – nothing to do with Covid either! This production was slick and beautifully choreographed together with a fantastic set and lighting design. Alice Cornelius, Stage Manager, kept the show running seamlessly whilst also being responsible for calling all the lighting and sound cues. There were around 75 lighting cues alone so a brilliant job done Alice.

Our wonderful Encore youth group successfully created and staged their showcase Shakespeare Shake Up. This was an extremely intelligent and funny interpretation of five Shakespeare plays - The Tempest, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Taming of the Shrew, Macbeth and Twelfth Night. Greg Ryder complimented the showcase with his colourful and beautifully painted set and Bruce William's fun lighting design completed a very competent piece of theatre. Well done to Diana Christie, her team and all who supported them.

As most of you know Jan Castle has stepped down as Wardrobe Mistress, a role that she has held for over 40 years. I will be paying tribute to Jan at the AGM so will report back on this in October's Newsletter.

I would like to thank the new team who have taken on the mammoth task of managing the wardrobe and who have already made great strides. Changes and new ideas are inevitable but I know that each and every member of the team, who are Jan's friends and colleagues

and at some time have all worked along-side her, have the greatest admiration and respect for her and for the legacy that she leaves.

The SPC has recently been given the contractual and financial responsibility for all live incoming shows. We will endeavour to ensure that this process is carried out smoothly and efficiently. Other members involved with the process are Mike Baker Technical Support, John Evans Marketing, Vince Humphrey Stage Management and Julie Grimshaw who organises the meet and greet.

Gerry Bolton has recently taken up the task of sorting and organising our archives. A mammoth task to say the least! She has made fantastic progress already so a huge thank you to my dear old friend! If anyone fancies getting involved then do get in touch with me.

This year has also seen a change in the SP's Marketing and PR procedures. Bruce Williams who is leading this process has already successfully promoted most of our 2022 productions. He has introduced the marketing trailers that are shown with cinema and shared on social media and has developed excellent relationships with local newspaper groups and radio networks. His production and marketing schedules are proving to be invaluable for the planning and smooth running of a production. I would like to thank Bruce, Alice Cornelius, Hannah Smithson and Emma Trotman who are assisting him, for all their hard work and diligence thus far.

We have also started to promote Tuesday rather than Wednesday as our SP Production opening night together with a 'reduced first night' ticket offer. This was trialed for *The Constant Wife* and was very successful. The reduced ticket price definitely encouraged a larger first night audience and the Saturday Matinee was welcomed by those who for whatever reason didn't want to or found it difficult to come to an evening performance.

The Artistic Team will be encouraging all future directors to adopt this policy.

Not much has happened socially this year for obvious reasons. An SP outing was recently organised to watch Ed Simpson and Illyria performing *Pirates of Penzance* at Bassett Manor near Checkendon. It was a very pleasant evening and we are hoping to organise more social events in the coming year.

We had great pleasure congratulating Johnny and Alice who got married earlier this year and many of us joined them with their celebrations. We are delighted to congratulate Hannah Smithson and James Winters on their forthcoming marriage in October. On behalf of the SP's I wish you gorgeous couple joy and happiness for your special day and your

future together.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the front of house teams, ushers, technical team, backstage crew and our beloved workshop for all the hard work, time and support given to the SP's and the Corn Exchange. We should also not forget Jean Simmons editor of the CX Times! Everybody's effort is valued and sincerely appreciated. We have had a number of new members signing up this year but we need more. The SPC are looking at ways to encourage new blood into the building.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my fellow SPC members Rebecca Cleverley, Anne Stammers, Bruce Williams, Dorothy Hirsch, Alice Cornelius and Marilyn Leadbetter who are all continuing and Sue Brown, James Winters and Hannah Smithson who are sadly stepping down. Thank you all for your valued support and guidance during my first year as Chair.

Caroline Malnick

Chair, Sinodun Players

SP AGM - 14th September 2022

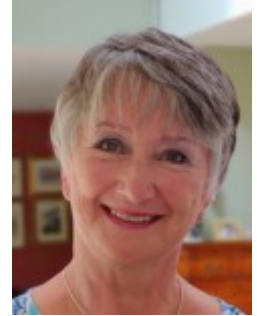
AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of AGM of the Sinodun Players held on 15th September 2021
3. Any matters arising from these minutes
4. Report from the Chair of the Trustees for the year ending 31st May 2022
5. Report from the Corn Exchange Wallingford for the year ending 31st May 2022
6. Trustees Report on Annual meeting with the Limited Company 5th September 2022
7. Presentation and report from Encore
8. To approve the accounts of the Sinodun Players for the financial year ended 31st May 22
9. Reports from Sinodun Players Committee
 - Chair's Report
 - Treasurer's Report
 - Artistic Team Report
10. To conduct the annual elections for such posts as are vacant within the Society.
11. Formal Closure of AGM
12. Members Open Forum



ANNUAL REPORT FOR CORN EXCHANGE WALLINGFORD LIMITED FOR THE YEAR TO JUNE 2022

It is with a huge sigh of relief that we can say things have now returned to normal at the Corn Exchange. The various Covid barriers have all come down and we no longer have to concern ourselves with social distancing and wearing masks around the building. The last 2 years have been both worrying and difficult for us all and I would like to thank our volunteers who have continued to offer their time so that we could maintain our service to the public. We have up-graded the destratification fans in the auditorium so that they now contain ultra-violet and catalytic components that kill germs and viruses, including covid, as the air passes through. Backstage, we also installed 2 hospital-grade, portable units backstage which are similarly effective in killing bugs and viruses. Hopefully these measures will continue to reduce the amount of colds, flu and other viral infections in the future.



You will have noticed the banner outside the Corn Exchange asking for more volunteers. I am pleased to say that this has borne fruit in some areas, but we are still struggling to find anyone who is prepared to step up and offer their services as a member of the Board. At the beginning of this year I stated in the CX Times that the situation was critical. We are very grateful to Graham Gilgrass who has volunteered to take on the role of FoH Director but we still need a Finance Director and a H&S Director. And Greg Ryder has also stated that he wishes to stand down in order to focus on some other projects outside of the theatre. We are therefore currently trying to run the Corn Exchange with just 5 Directors. This situation cannot continue and we desperately need some more people to step forward in order to learn the ropes and take over in due course.

I want to offer huge thanks to Mike Baker who is stepping into Oliver's shoes as Technical Manager. Mike has put in many hours in order to understand how the sound and lighting works at the Corn Exchange and he organised workshops for those interested in learning more, including a very popular course on operating the sound desk. This has proved really useful and we have had one or two new faces operating the desks over the last year. Further thanks are due to John Pinniger who now has responsibility for the cinema tech and training up new projectionists. Hopefully, before Oliver leaves to start his new life in Italy, he will be able to report that he has successfully handed over all aspects of the work he has carried out for us for so many years.

One big difference to the organisation of the Corn Exchange is that all responsibility for live

shows has passed to the Sinodun Players Committee. Please see the Financial Report that follows for more information on this.

As I'm sure you are all aware, cinemas around the world have suffered enormously post-pandemic. There has been a lack of "blockbuster" films over the last year or so and a lot of the more popular films went straight to streaming so that people could watch at home. Added to this, over the last 12 months many people have still been nervous about attending anything in a full auditorium. Live shows have flourished whilst cinema has languished. The revenues for Corn Exchange Wallingford Limited have therefore reduced dramatically and we have had to impose a strict cap on expenditure. We are now working even more closely with the Trustees to ensure that the Limited company can fulfil its objective of ensuring that the Corn Exchange is a safe and comfortable working environment for everyone that uses it.

The last year has seen a huge amount of work by the Health & Safety Team and I would particularly like to thank Ric Harley for the years that she has chaired the team meetings and worked with Julie Grimshaw in order to ensure that we have trained everyone so that they understand the H&S procedures. Ric has now stepped down from the H&S team but she leaves in place very comprehensive guidelines and procedures (and these have been complimented by professional H&S consultants).

Of course, the big question moving forward is whether or not we can acquire the Lloyds Bank premises once the bank move out in June 2023. Whilst we have been in discussion with A C Lester Ltd who actually own the building, they have not yet given us any firm information about the price of the building. As you know, we recently carried out a survey amongst our members and volunteers to find out how people felt about acquiring the property, and the overall result was extremely positive. As soon as we have more news this will be shared with everyone.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Directors: Ken McCrae who is stepping down as Finance Director, but who has helped us chart our way through the last 2 uncertain years. Greg Ryder who is stepping down as Back of House Director: Greg has been a tireless fixer of all things that need fixing as well as running our much admired workshop and helping to design and build not just our sets but also artifacts for Wallingford Museum and the 1155 organisation. Julie Grimshaw for all her work in inducting new volunteers and ensuring that on-going training is happening as necessary, not to mention the 101 other things that she does on behalf of the H&S and Front of House teams, from regularly testing the alarms to ensuring equipment is fit for use. And my thanks to John Evans for his continuous work to communicate with our patrons and to ensure that the Corn Exchange remains front and centre in all local publications. With so many

new people moving into the area it is more important than ever to keep getting the message out to the public about what we do. Caroline Malnick, whose primary role is Chair of the Sinodun Players, has nonetheless been an invaluable voice on the Board and in the last year she has taken on a huge amount of work to formalise our contractual arrangements with visiting artists. And Elaine Hornsby who has joined us in the past year and is on a very sharp learning curve to understand how the Corn Exchange works! I have no doubt her knowledge of all things connected with Wallingford will prove an invaluable asset to us in the future.

One person who has worked quietly and efficiently in the background, and without whom we literally could not operate, is Sue Lovegrove. Thank you for all that you do for us, Sue, and for agreeing to stay on as our bookkeeper.

And, of course, the person who keeps everything (and every one of us) on the straight and narrow: Katie Price. I don't think any Chair can do their job effectively without a good Secretary. Katie's knowledge about everything that has happened over the past decade or more is positively encyclopaedic. Your support over the last year has been invaluable, Katie.

Thank you all for your energy, your commitment to the Corn Exchange and your help over the last year.

Gloria Wright,
Chair Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd.

Presentation of the accounts for the 2021/22 year by the Finance Director

The audited accounts for 2021/2022 shows a turnover of £227,052 and cost of sales of £54,927, giving a gross profit of £172,125. The underlying figures show that Cinema sales totalled £94,922, Bar and Refreshments £28,075, Other Income £87,055 and Grants & Subsidies £17,000. The total Operating Expenses were £113,027 therefore giving a net income of £65,299.

Sinodun Players Trustees Report 2021 – 2022

Trustees: Minaz Bedell (co-opted), Christine Blackburn (Financial Trustee), John Jeskins (Safeguarding), Will Lidbetter, Nick Morley (co-opted), Martin Parr (Chair), Enid Stevens (Secretary), John Jones (passed away), John Warburton (resigned).

Achievement and Performance

Object 1

To promote the advancement and improvement of general education in relation to all aspects of the art of drama and the development of the public appreciation of such art.

As we chart our recovery from the effects of COVID we have had a buoyant year for artistic output. A strong run of productions including the Pantomime Sleeping Beauty, and A Daughter's a Daughter, The Constant Wife, Nell Gwynn, and Bedroom Farce sold strongly, getting people back into our theatre. Youth theatre was well-represented with the Encore group's Shakespeare production providing an excellent showcase for the large number of local young people that swell our junior ranks. Bought-in live shows now sit under the remit of the Sinodun Players Committee and they have done much work to ensure that we will find, contract in and support those productions which have potential to be an increasingly valuable source of income for us.

Object 2

To preserve, restore, maintain and enhance the building known as the Corn Exchange in Wallingford as a venue for the public performance of the arts.

The Charity has and will continue to work closely with the Board of our subsidiary company, Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd, to keep the building safe, up to date and fit for purpose.

The theatre has been fitted with and benefits from HEPA filters backstage and UV scrubbers on auditorium fans. We cannot be fully protected against COVID, but with these measures we seek to protect our members and patrons alike as best we can. With revenues still down from the cinema, and the CX Board facing the prospect of tough theatre running costs, costs incurred in the process of making drama happen at the theatre (new lights, ropes, stage training, etc) will increasingly come to the Sinodun Players Committee to recommend to the Trustees. With potentially a challenging and uncertain

winter ahead for utility costs we need to be alive to making savings and new revenue streams where we can. For example, we note recent efforts to rationalise and reorder the Wardrobe, control costs and make additional revenue in the process. As there are ongoing uncertainties as they relate to both both costs and revenues, the trustees have taken on a more proactive role in logging and managing risks for the society against a key risk register.

A significant recent development involved Trustees starting to discuss with the Board of the Corn Exchange Limited Company the feasibility of acquiring the Lloyds Bank premises (4 Market Place) as they intend to vacate it and give up their lease by June 2023. We have had limited discussions with AC Lester Ltd who own the building, but as yet we are not certain how much it would go on the market for. A recent survey of members and volunteers showed that most were positive about us exploring the option to buy and develop next door as a way to enhance and expand our existing venue. With that in mind the trustees and the Limited Company are in the process of setting up groups to scope the potential project, to understand fundraising opportunities, and to build partnerships in the community to deliver an arts-centric venue that meets local need.

Martin Parr
Chair of Trustees

Artistic Team report for AGM September 2022

Sinodun Players Productions from Autumn 2021 to Summer 2022

Lockdown delayed our planned program for 2020 but come the autumn of 2021 we were ready to go and it was carried forward starting with A Daughter's a Daughter by Agatha Christie (writing as Mary Westmacott) and directed by Lucy Pitman Wallace. Set in the 1950s, it explored a complex relationship between a mother and daughter. It had been all set to go on stage in May 2020 and the delay caused many problems but despite a seemingly constant change of actors and some technical issues it was an accomplished and polished production with a strong cast that won plenty of praise, and not just from the audiences - "A fascinating and engaging evening" commented the NODA rep. Wardrobe was a problem with the changing cast but it still looked wonderful and was complemented by a great set designed by Nicola Webb.

September 2022

Then came the pantomime in January 2022 – *Sleeping Beauty*. Written by our own Pete Orton and Barbara Woods, directed by Gloria Wright with Sue Huntingford-Ledger and Gaby Clements as musical directors and Amanda Woodbridge as choreographer, it was a marvellous production. With a great script, an innovative set by Greg Ryder (the NODA reviewer said “The conception of the staging is quite brilliant”), wonderful costumes and an energetic and committed cast, it was extremely popular and had packed houses. We were happy to welcome new members Chris Black, Tom Mackriell, and Bob Webb to the Sinodun Players, and enjoyed having Alistair Leiper on stage with us, rather than up above us or taking photos. Rehearsing under Covid restrictions was a challenge for the singing and dancing large cast but we got through it. Covid took its revenge, however and sadly a couple of the cast became victims. Ed Simpson did a great job of taking over the role of Father Time from Mark Wilkin when Mark fell ill. The feedback on the panto was excellent, both from our audiences and our NODA reviewer who said we should be very proud of what we had achieved. We were!

The Constant Wife (by W Somerset Maugham, directed by Chris Harris) followed on as our delightful early spring production. A sophisticated light comedy set in the late 1920s, it was witty but full of polished malice. The *Henley Standard* said that: “This irresistible show offers the audience plenty of laughter alongside an examination of traditional social values from a different angle”. Despite Covid disrupting rehearsals and performances (there was another cast replacement as sadly Dorothy Hirsch found she had covid two days before the opening night - fortunately the prompt, Sue Brown, was able to take over), it was a great success with good and very appreciative audiences. Joining another strong cast, Matt Phillips was a welcome addition to the SPs as was Amanda Woodbridge, who has appeared at the Corn Exchange in *Crescendo’s* productions but now joined the SPs as an actor. The impressive set design by Nicola Webb won many plaudits and the elegant costumes by Jan Castle and Anna Gordon reinforced the period feel.

The play also introduced a Saturday matinee performance, and opened on Tuesday, rather than Wednesday as had been the norm for plays recently, with a cut-price offer for the opening night. This meant that we did six performances and potential audience members who were not able or willing to go out at night were able to attend the matinee – the matinee demographic was interesting, ranging from senior citizens to teenagers. It was certainly appreciated by many people and this arrangement is something the SP committee would like all future production to follow.

Nell Gwynn (by Jessica Swale, directed by Julie Utley and Caroline Malnick with musical director Sue Huntingford-Ledger) was our riotously gorgeous late spring production. The directors had to cope with some late cast changes including enlisting Pete Utley with a week’s notice (tragically his last performance), and a former member returning to save the day - Drew Morris was able to

take over as King Charles in the nick of time. It was truly an ensemble piece with the wonderful cast acting, singing and dancing their socks off - there were many brilliant performances. It was a pleasure to welcome Jack Prince and Louis Bispham, who had both been seen on stage as SP youth members. A sense of the period was evoked by the glorious costumes (sadly the last production costumed by Jan Castle) and the clever set by Jean White. The Henley Standard certainly liked it: "This is a fine production of a fine play, at times raucous and saucy but perfectly pitched and paced throughout. It's a right royal triumph".

June brought Encore's production of Shake-up Shakespeare to our stage. This was Shakespeare as we have never experienced it before! It was a tremendous success and was an impressive and exciting piece of theatre. What a talented group of youngsters we have in our youth group. As our NODA rep said: "The opportunities provided by membership of "Encore", and the guidance and leadership provided by the director and her creative team, surely means that the future of Shakespeare's plays on the English stage is in safe hands".

Alan Ayckbourn's Bedroom Farce, directed by Erica Harley was our wonderfully funny summer production. Set in the mid-1970s, with a strong cast and a comical script, it showed the different and altering relationships of four couples at a time of the feminist movement for change and progress. The set was a challenge – three separate bedrooms on the stage – but it was brilliantly realised by the set designer Jean White, complemented by the clever lighting design by Bruce Williams. Our NODA rep praised the practical lights, from the staid bedside lamps in Delia's room, via the paper lantern over Jan's bed to the bare bulb in Kate's room, which were all cunningly incorporated into the lighting plot. "Even the fluorescent bulb in Delia's en-suite flickered on – that's authenticity!". Huw Saunders-Trevor was our latest SP recruit, playing Trevor to great effect. The Oxford Mail thought the casting and direction were excellent and the reviewer commented: "the men were brilliant, but the women really STOLE this production for me", while our NODA reviewer, who praised all the cast, was particularly impressed by Joel Webster, who as Nick, "delivered a masterclass in pain management".

The Artistic Team feel we have had a great year with a varied, balanced and fascinating program that brought the theatre alive again after the long lockdown. We feel privileged to have such a talented group of actors and directors to call upon, and would like to thank them all, and everyone involved, who worked so hard with such wonderful results.

The Artistic Team

Sue Brown, Dorothy Hirsch, James Winters

Treasurer's Report 2021-22 - Anne Stammers, SP's Treasurer

Income – as you know we were able to start holding performances again last summer and we re-opened in July with *Wind in the Willows* having been closed for about 15 months. Only 75 seats per performance were able to be sold because of Covid restrictions and 96.5% of these were sold making a profit for the show, which was good news and the performances had been much enjoyed by those who saw it, giving encouragement to all involved.

This was followed by *A Daughter's A Daughter* and again there were restrictions on the number of seats allowed to be sold. Even so the production was profitable. The costs were spread over three years as it should have been performed in March 2020 as were the costs for *Constant Wife* and *Nell Gwynn* both should have been on stage in the spring / summer of 2020. The actual total expenditure for all three shows is shown in the 2021-22 profit and loss figures some of you will have picked up this evening. All made a profit, and helped bring our audiences back to the theatre

Pantomime and the plays that followed were all back to normal capacity and sold well, Panto making a profit of £ 22,000+.and as always much enjoyed.

I would like to thank Jan for all the fund-raising she did for the department, over her years as Wardrobe Mistress, including for the three 'pop-up' shops in the town and for the time she took to sort out clothes people wanted to borrow for a small donation, be they individuals or other drama groups, it all helped. Thank you Jan.

Thank you too to Barbara Wood for her help in running the membership account so efficiently and maintaining the records. With producers help it is being ensured that people who are in a production are fully paid up members. Membership figures have remained constant.

Expenses As previously mentioned some productions have been spread over three years but are included in the financial year 2021-22 in the production profit and loss figures.

The Society continues to belong to Oxford Drama Network, The Little Theatre Guild and the National Operatic and Dramatic Association a charity for amateur theatre groups with over 2500 groups belonging to it. All can give us advice on legal, health and safety matters, and training. NODA, when asked, will send us a person to give a critique of a production which is then published in the *Corn Ex Times*.

Training Budget – was partly used when two of our members went on a rigging course.

Ukraine Jazz concert made £ 2613 which was sent to the Ukraine appeal.

Sound Equipment has also been purchased this year.

The SP Drama committee continues to support innovative ideas whilst giving thought to the financial implications and they are also pleased to discuss social and other ideas for fund-raising which needs to continue.

Hopefully even more of our audience will return to the Corn Exchange and we look forward to a great year with financial, dramatic, and social success in the forthcoming year.

Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd

Annual Meeting with Shareholders

Monday 5 September 2022 7pm

Present

Directors: Gloria Wright (Chair), Julie Grimshaw, John Evans, Caroline Malnick. **Secretary:** Katie Price

Trustees (for Sinodun Players): Martin Parr, John Jeskins, Christine Blackburn

Apologies: Greg Ryder, Ken McCrea, Elaine Hornsby (directors)

Also present: John Wright, John Warburton, Keith Yapp, Chris Storey, Mike Simmons, Sue Lovegrove

The Sinodun Players are the sole shareholder in Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd. Annual meetings between the shareholder and the company are a requirement of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Sinodun Players and Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd. The Sinodun Players are represented at these meetings by the Trustees.

Report from the Chair

Gloria Wright presented her report on the 2021/22 year.

Financial report

Ken McCrea (Finance Director) was unable to attend the meeting. Gloria presented his report on the 2021/22 year.

Director appointments

In the year Gloria Wright stood down as Chair of the Sinodun Players Committee at the Sinodun Players AGM and therefore as director representing the Sinodun Players. She was subsequently appointed Chair (and Director) of Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd. Caroline Malnick became Chair of the Sinodun Players Committee at the Sinodun Players AGM and therefore Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd Board member for the Sinodun Players.

Elaine Hornsby became a Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd director on 3 May. Graham Gilglass has agreed to join the Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd Board as Front of House Director, effective November 2022.

Both Ken McCrea and Greg Ryder resigned from the Board with effect from end August 2022. Roger Dewell resigned in 2021.

The MOU between the Sinodun Players and the Corn Exchange requires a third of directors to stand down each year – they have the right to indicate that they wish to continue as a director. Given the resignations of Ken and Greg there was no requirement for other directors to stand down. This concluded the formal business of the meeting which was followed by an Open Forum.

Open Forum

Matters covered included communication within the building, use of the Club Room, energy conservation, promoting the Corn Exchange to newcomers to Wallingford (particular in new housing developments), façade lighting and the Lloyds Bank building. The meeting closed at 7.30pm

Peter John Utley

Following a brief service for family only we would like to invite you to celebrate Pete's life.

Please join us at the Corn Exchange Wallingford, 2.30pm Saturday 17th September 2022.

We hope you will be able to attend and share in lots of happy memories, and raise a glass to Pete.

Dress joyous!

If you would like to attend, we would be grateful if you could use the link below to book a seat.

[Booking for Pete Utley Celebration](#) OR [Corn Exchange Book Now page](#)

We look forward to seeing you there.

Julie, Caroline, Mathew, Jenny, Diane and David

A special thank you from me and my family for all the lovely cards and kind words about Pete.

Thank you

Julie



Short plays!! An exciting theatrical project.

First, two dates hopefully for your diaries. Both are Wednesdays in October: on the 19th in the Curtis Room and on the 26th in the Studio, both from 7.30. There *may* be coffee and biscuits.

The Society's officers are keen to re-launch two activities in the first part of next year: the use of our splendid Club Room for small-scale performances, which were often successful there in the past; and entry into local Drama Festivals, typically at Maidenhead, Henley, Abingdon and – or so we hope – our own Corn Exchange. Two or three short pieces might go together for the former, whilst one (or conceivably two) might 'tour'. This latter is a splendid experience which of course we have missed during the pandemic. I'll explain its virtues when we meet. If stage management, construction, sound and light and/or wardrobe is your thing, you will be as welcome as directors and performers.

So do come along and discuss all this, contribute ideas... and probably read some short plays. You are welcome to come on spec of course; but it would be helpful to me if you were able to let me know in advance. I'm on 01491 598365, at cdharrisox10@gmail.com and at 10 Wittenham Close, OX10 8JY. (Also mention if you can sing, just a little bit. But that's a secret!)

Chris Harris, pp the Artistic Committee.

RIP Audrey Maple

It was with sadness I learned of Audrey Maple's death. She and her late husband, John, were loyal supporters of the Sinodun Players.

We know each other as neighbours and she also taught both our children at St. John's School. She was a proficient sewing lady, very practical and a wonderful support with my first panto as wardrobe mistress. She undertook the task of making twelve panto blouses and that pattern and style is still in use today; always there to help the department.

In later years she nursed her husband but still managed 9 holes of golf at Haddon Hill and took an interest in the town and our theatre.

I will miss her, knowing she is no longer 'just up the road' but memories will make sure she is not forgotten.

Jan Castle

Vice President

The Last Copy of the Corn Exchange Times?

NO, but it is the last paper copy that will be produced as a matter of course.

The SP committee believe that (in line with the Chair of Trustees' recent article highlighting the need to 'tighten our belts') we should no longer afford the cost, in excess of £1,000 per annum, to print and distribute paper copies each month.

We believe that the majority of recipients now have access to email facilities and therefore we should make strenuous efforts to persuade anyone who is able to receive their 'News' via this means.

SO, if you currently receive a hard copy of the Corn Exchange Times, either via Royal Mail or hand delivery, but are able to accept a soft version via a private email address then please supply that address to the editor so that you can be added to the distribution list next month. Of course, you can always print off a copy if you prefer to read from a paper document.

HOWEVER,

IF, you genuinely have no access to email or are unable to read one for any reason then please contact the editor and she will endeavour to meet your needs.

PLEASE, reply by 1st October 2022 to:

Jean Simmons
Editor, Corn Exchange Times
Corn Exchange
Market Place
Wallingford
Oxon OX10

Tel: 07787132046

A Special Thank you ...

... to Andrew for the brilliant idea and donation of the Eric Ravilious print in aid of Corn Exchange funds.

We raised £580.00 on the raffle which was won by ticket #46.



Twelfth Night 1974, 2004 & 2022

A look back at previous productions of this classic Shakespeare Comedy



The 1974 production was given within the grounds of Castle Priory and featured our oldest member, Pat Napper and our late president, Dennis Wood, along with stalwarts such as John Howe and Julia Dray.

September 2022

Twelfth Night 1974, 2004 & 2022

A look back at previous productions of this classic Shakespeare Comedy



And this month we welcome Keith Ralph's with his first direction at the Corn Exchange (although he has taken roles in several SP productions, perhaps most notably as Mr. Tom in the 2013 production of Goodnight Mr. Tom). This time, the play is set in the Art Deco period of the 1920s and offers another view of this classic comedy. We invite you to come along to the 'Hotel Illyria' and see for yourselves.



September 2022



If music be the food of love...play on

The Sinodun Players present at

The Corn Exchange Wallingford

Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare

BOOKING NOW OPEN

Online at cornexchange.org.uk

SHOW DATES, TIMES & PRICES:

OPENING NIGHT – Wednesday 28 September at 7.30pm

SPECIAL OPENING NIGHT TICKET OFFER £9.00

FOLLOWING PERFORMANCES:

Thursday 29 September to Saturday 1 October at 7.30pm

Tickets: £12.00

Shakespeare's classic comedy of love and deception is transported to the Art Deco period of the 1920s and set in the sumptuous Hotel Illyria on the Italian Riviera.

Romance, intrigue, deception and revenge are all in the air as shipwrecked twins struggle to regain control of their lives and passions amongst strangers with their own desires.

Twelfth Night is one of Shakespeare's most accessible and thought provoking works. He deals with the spectrum of human emotions and motivations around love, loyalty, deceit and vanity. Originally intended as an end of year entertainment for the masses, it portrays elements of us all that are very recognisable!

In this sleek and stylish new production, salted with comedy, romance and especially composed songs, tempers flare as passions rise under an unforgiving sun, leading to conflict, confusion and humiliation.

And be assured *'we'll strive to please you every day'*

Booking open now online at cornexchange.org.uk

Trailer available to view on SP website.

Wardrobe Warriors



Taking up the baton from Jan Castle is a newly formed team who, keen to continue providing the excellent service offered by Jan over so many years, are currently beavering away in the Corn Exchange 3 or 4 days each week. Here's what they've been up to so far:



The Sinodun Players Wardrobe Department Report Sept 2022

We have run a very successful table sale at **Bunkfest**, which raised just under **£1,500**. Many thanks to everyone who came to help.

We are booked into the **Great Big Green Week** happening in the Market Place on Saturday, 24th September to sell some of our materials as 'fat quarters' for patchwork, some home-made tote/gift bags and also more costumes/clothes. Please come and support us.

We have a table booked for Saturday, 8th October at the Saturday market in St Mary's Church. Again, support would be welcomed.

We are hoping to run a sale of Christmas *glam and glitter* costumes to coincide with the Sunday afternoon shopping day in December.

We have purchased over 250 hangers and two new hanging rails, plus some new storage boxes.

We are preparing to sell some of our vintage/special costumes on-line, as we feel they deserve a more exciting life! The income raised will be very well spent ensuring our wardrobe continues to function and support all our actors and directors.



We have managed to select a lot of pantomime costumes and also costumes for 'Chess' as we have been sorting out.

We have had two cleaning sessions; thanks to our charwoman!

We are liaising with the 'Twelfth Night' costumiers to see what assistance we can offer them.

We are working alongside the Props department to see how we can all fit into the available Wardrobe space.

We have visited the Lesters storage facility to assess how much time will be needed to sort what is in there and what space we might need in the future.

We are sorting through all the boxes of costumes, to reduce the size of our wardrobe in light of the Health and Safety report. This will be a long job and we don't foresee our finishing until early December. Therefore we will not be hiring out costumes/fancy dress this year, nor are we accepting any costume contributions from SP members or from the public.

We would welcome visits from Sinodun Players to see what we're up to and you might even want to stay and help. We are there on Monday afternoons, Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons. We really appreciate the time and effort some members have already put in to help us.

We appreciate your support and also expect your understanding that, in future, access to costumes, accessories and props will be arranged solely through one of the wardrobe team.



Wardrobe Warriors: Maz, Jean, Wendy, Ruta, Janet & Anna (props

Special assistants: Clare, Val (props), & Sue L (props)

All enquiries please contact :

Maz at marilynleadbetter@icloud.com

or Jean at jeansimmons1@yahoo.co.uk



ITS TIME FOR PANTOMIME!!!!

OH YES, IT IS!!!

13TH – 28TH JANUARY 2023

I am delighted to be directing my 3rd Pantomime for the Sinodun Players next January. And I hope to have lots of people auditioning, whether it's for principals, chorus or dancers.



Auditions for Principals & Chorus will be held from 2nd October over the week and weekend as follows:

Sun 2 nd Oct 2pm	All welcome
Mon 3 rd Oct 7:30	Principals
Tues 4 th Oct 7:30	Principals
Thurs 6 th Oct 7:30	Singing auditions for those who haven't been heard already
Sat 8 th Oct 2:00	Call backs and Dance auditions

There will also be singing auditions on all the dates. More info about song audition piece soon.

AUDITION FOR PRINCIPALS – All can be Male or Female

Jack – bright plucky young man (Principal boy/girl)

Dame Dotty Dimple – Typical Dame, Jack's mother

Simple Simon – Jack's daft brother

Piccalilli The Witch

Fairy Sugardust

Rancid the Ratman – Local rat catcher who becomes the Giant's Henchman

King Crumble – henpecked and ditherer

Queen Apricot – in charge!

Princess Charlotte (Principal Girl)

Snatchet & Scarper – The Broker's Men comedy twosome.

Humphrey – The King's Equerry - a bit of a twit

Buster Gut-Bucket – The Giant. Could be just a voice and may not appear on stage.

Buttermilk – The Pantomime Cow – requires 2 people

CHORUS: Villagers, Fayre Goers, The Giant's Minions

AUDITIONS FOR ENCORE WILL BE HELD ON WED 21ST SEPT 2022 at the Methodist Church Hall.

Enquiries to Ric Harley 07798911734 erica.harley@sinodunplayers.org.uk

Ric Harley – Director

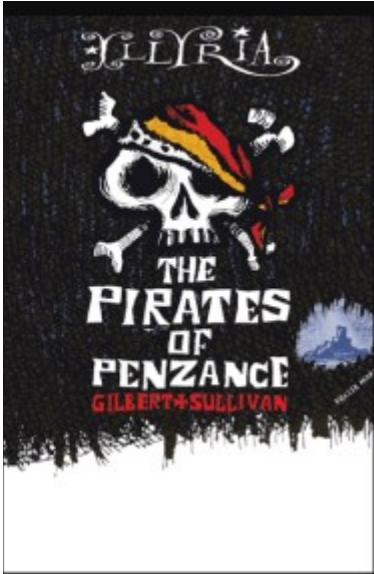
Sue Huntingford-Ledger & Gaby Clements – Musical Directors

Ginny Chell - Choreographer

Illyria's Pirates

Our SP social event to see Ed Simpson in Pirates of Penzance.

Thanks to everyone who made it to Stoke Row to see Ed. We all had a very enjoyable evening with lots of laughter. A very talented cast.



SP groupies enjoy a picnic at the venue



Ed (r), a fine performance!



Multi-talented Ed Simpson



Ed(wina?) and partner,
'gaily tripping'



The Cleverleys attempt to keep warm



The entire cast

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Copy date for the October issue...

All entries for inclusion in the next edition of the Corn Exchange Times to newsletter@sinodunplayers.org.uk by **Sunday 16th October 2022** (or preferably, earlier please).

Ed