

Drama 13 AGM 12 April 2016

Chairman's Report

a) Drama activity during the year April 2015 - April 2016

We began the acting year on July 10th and 11th with "An Evening of Entertainment" starting with "Family Album" by Noel Coward, directed by Patricia Howarth, assisted by Martin Shuttleworth. The one-act comedy was set in the late nineteenth century, with five male and four female actors. We were delighted to welcome back Nigel Blakey, a former member, who played the part of Charles Winter. After a refreshment interval, the play was followed by a set of recitations and performances by eleven individual members, organised by Matthew Gough, and ended with a sing-song of popular choruses. The evening was well received and enjoyed by the audiences. It also gave an opportunity for every available member to be involved. Some people commented that it was a pity the play didn't have a second act as it ended rather abruptly. It was also suggested that we should sing each chorus twice to give the audience a better chance of joining in.

Following requests from St Mary's Moseley and All Saints Bromsgrove, a "Murder Mystery" was written by June and Patricia, and performed on the 19th and 26th September at the two churches respectively. It was "A 1930s Celebration Party" for the launch of a new book by one of the nine characters. The evening went very well in each venue. However, the attendance at St Mary's at 45 was below the capacity of 60 due to inadequate publicity. The attendance at All Saints was 110. The two churches contributed £100 and £150 to Drama 13 respectively. There is possibly another church near Bromsgrove interested.

The final dramatic event of the session was "This is NOT a Pantomime" or "TINAP", written and directed by Sarah Weir, and performed on 17th-19th March 2016. Sarah proposed the idea in July 2015 following the "Evening of Entertainment". It has an original plot in which performers audition in front of three judges in a manner similar to the X-Factor. However, in the second act they reappear as Pantomime characters that are recognisably similar. The show contained original songs, written by Sarah and Charlotte Robinson, as well as some standards. Patricia assisted Sarah in the direction, which was quite challenging in terms of the coordination of music and movement to make good use of the stage. The outcome was a clever, funny, well-acted show that was thoroughly enjoyed throughout all four performances from the very start. Sarah has to be congratulated for the originality of the work and for adapting it to fit the available talent, with Matthew contributing to the script. A new technical feature was the use of a star-cloth at the rear of the stage, suggested by Charlotte who also contributed other items. Bernadette, with Annette, Matthew and Joy organised the costumes, which were excellent. Appearing for the first time in Drama 13 were Matt Dix and Jim Bell who we welcome to the group. There were 15 actors and 11 supporting people which included Sam Logan, participating for the first time. The show was well attended at all performances

A bi-product of TINAP was our response to a request from Jean and Roger Cunnington to fill a slot in Birmingham's Festival of Acting and Musical Entertainment (BFAME) at the Hall Green Little Theatre on 20th February that had

been vacated at the last minute. Sarah adapted the script to provide a 25 minute performance which was well received. It was non-competitive.

b) Stage development and equipment storage

An important improvement to the access to the stage has been made by Tony, a friend of Annette. He has rebuilt the folding stairs at the rear of Stage Right and improved the other steps that are used to access the stage during performances, making them safer. We still need to sort out the stage lights, which are too many, and to improve the storage in the back-stage room and corridor. There is also a damp problem to address.

There have been two sessions at the Friends Meeting House, on 18th and 29th August 2015 to sort out costumes with a view to what to retain in the room we rent there. We have also considered and rejected offers of costumes from others. The situation regarding storage is improving slowly, but we could do with more space.

c) Other functions and fund raising activity

Quiz Nights on 16th May and 14th November at the Windermere Club were very successful. The questions were set by Andy and Matthew, and Patricia as usual organised and ran the Tombola, which on the second occasion raised £49, with a profit of £50 from admissions. Members are reminded that people who contribute £5 or more worth of food do not pay the £5 admission fee. Contributions lower than £5 will entitle people to a reduced fee.

Thanks to Matthew, we have continued to secure sponsorship and in-kind contributions, this time in support of TINAP, £50 from the Kings Heath Business Association, four chickens from Johnstan's butchers, four £5 vouchers from Wilkinson's, four £10 vouchers from the Loco Lounge, and Precision Imaging printed 100 programmes without charge, which were used in the raffle. In addition, Esme Tapp knitted four cows.

A new feature was a collection at the Dress Rehearsal for TINAP, which was donated to charity. Twenty pounds were given to "Targeting Ovarian Cancer" following a suggestion from them.

Again we have made greater use of the Vestry and the upstairs room instead of the Main Hall for our meetings to reduce cost.

Our final meeting of 2015 on 15th December was a social occasion in the Church Hall to which Patron's and Guests were invited, which included light refreshments and a 'non-alcoholic' fruit punch prepared by Patricia. The evening ended with a sing-song including carols. The event was enjoyed by all who attended, but some members were unable to attend. The exchange of Christmas cards, accompanied by a donation, raised £40 for charity. This was donated to "Crisis", a charity supporting the homeless.

d) Plans for the future

The Committee has discussed future plans in outline. As we have just completed a major production, there is nothing in the rehearsal phase at the moment. We are encouraging members to put forward ideas, which is beginning to happen.

The proposal is to find a suitable Play to start rehearsing, to be performed in late September. This would be followed by a Pantomime to be performed near to Christmas. Work on selecting and casting the Pantomime would have to overlap with the production of the Play.

Work has already begun on a "Murder Mystery Evening" by June and Patricia, to be performed on Saturday 16th July in the Masonic Hall. Patricia is collecting the names of people wishing to participate. Other venues are being investigated.

On the social side, there will be a Quiz Night, with questions set by Andy and Matthew, at the Windermere Club on Saturday 16th April.

We will also be improving communication with Patrons during the next session.

As well as thanking all the members of the Group and the Committee who do so much, we extend a special thank you to Ron and Joan Hallmark. Ron stepped down from the committee last year, but continues to act as Front of House, as well as looking after ticket sales. Joan sends out cards on members' birthdays, but is best known for providing our weekly refreshments. We are also deeply indebted to Esme Tapp, Ian Laurensen and Olive Shannon for their help with refreshments at productions. The most recent example was TINAP for which Esme organised the whole refreshment rota and obtained the ingredients, with Ian and Olive assisting in serving.

Finally, we note with great sadness that Joan Taylor passed away in September 2015. Joan was responsible more than anyone for creating "Drama 13" when it began in the St Mary's Youth and Community Centre in School Road, which was renamed "Centre 13", giving rise to our present name. This was in the late 1960's when we had a permanent mini-theatre with stage, lighting and sound. Patricia was asked by the family to give a tribute to Joan at her Memorial Service.

John Dowell 12-4-2016