



AGM 09 June 2020

Chairman's Report April 2019 to March 2020 and beyond

This report is for the year up to March 2020, before the ravages of coronavirus and COVID-19 really hit us - more of this later.

- **Highlights**

STC was set up to put theatre back in Streatham, and we continue to meet that aim. We provide an opportunity for anyone interested in theatre to get involved on or off stage whatever their level of experience. Our regular workshops help develop and improve people's skills, and our shows give them a chance to perform, in a safe environment.

In October 2019 some of us went to City Hall to receive an award as winners of the Culture and Creative London Team category in the Mayor of London's Volunteering Awards. There are photos and the citation on our website, itself recently rebuilt with volunteer help from member Joel.

I would like to give a big thank you to all those who contributed so positively to all our productions, events and other activities during the year, which I'll now summarise.

- **Events**

We have held our regular events on the second Tuesday of the month, supported by local theatre practitioners who have willingly given their time and expertise. These have covered a wide range of workshops, seminars, talks, visits and readings - we have more details from Helen our events secretary later.

Repeated very successfully this year was our Streatham Shorts programme, offering writers the chance to present their new writing for reading and feedback, and the opportunity for performances of some of the new writing at the December *Streatham's Got Talent* event. In fact, we had so many submissions this year, a second reading session was run.

We also had our regular stall at Kite Day 2019, staffed by volunteer members, attracting much interest and growing the mailing list. We are always looking for volunteers to help staff the stall and chat to those who are interested in theatre (or don't know they are interested yet). Unfortunately, this year's Kite Day was a victim of COVID-19.

- **Productions**

Our productions this year have been great fun and well received by all. Once again, we have had a wide variety of shows in different styles. There's more on our website about these, with links to photos and some videos.

- Our *Alice in Wonderland* pantomime at the British Home in April was also great fun (although hard work) and was enjoyed by children of all ages. Oh yes it was! Unfortunately audience numbers were lower than hoped.
- A rehearsed reading of *Sunday Morning at the Centre of the World* for the Streatham Festival in October. This is set in Earlsfield and has been described as 'Under Milk Wood for South London'.
- Scripts from *Streatham Shorts* were showcased as part of the annual *Streatham's Got Talent* Christmas event.
- Our production of the UK premiere of *Sisters in the Snow* was approaching opening night when COVID-19 forced a postponement. Instead the production team adapted the play and recorded an audio version over the internet whilst in self-isolation. The completed audio-play, with a visual slide show, has been successfully premiered online for the author, cast and production team and we hope to release it to a wider audience shortly.
- Since then we have not been able to stage anything further, but plans are underway for a resumption. More about that later.

- **Members and Friends**

Membership hovers at around the mid-50s, with members from a diverse range of ages and backgrounds. Some members are completely new to theatre and several have made their stage debut with STC. Others have amateur and professional experience which they share with others through our activities and shows.

Our online community continues to grow, through our email list, Facebook friends and Twitter followers.

Terry, our Membership Secretary, will say a bit more shortly.

- **Finances**

We will have a full report from Liz our Treasurer shortly but I wanted to give a quick overview of our approach to finances.

During COVID-19 we have no income from shows, and we decided to freeze subscriptions by extending expiry dates by the length of the lockdown period. We still have some fixed outgoings to cover though.

We keep subs low (still only £10 p.a., unchanged since 2013) to encourage membership take up, and so far, have not had to charge fees to be in shows unlike some other groups. The subs are intended to cover the overheads of the company (insurance, bank charges etc.), so as mentioned above please do renew yours when they fall due. We expect to subsidise our events from other income, mainly from shows, so our shows need to at least cover their costs, then bring in some more.

Our turnover is normally around £3000-£4000 a year, with income and expenditure roughly equal. As a non-profit organisation we don't plan to make a profit! When we do have a

surplus, such as on a really well-attended show, any extra cash goes into our reserves to support us over any future bad patches - like now! We like to keep around a year's turnover in reserve.

- **Moving on**

- We are constantly looking ahead to our future programme of productions, and welcome proposals. While open to any kind of production, we need shows which we can realistically deliver given our constraints in venues, budgets and availability of participants! We also need directors/producers to drive forward these ideas and turn them into reality.
- We usually aim to stage 3 or 4 productions a year and like to maintain a rolling programme for the next few shows. At the moment though, we have nothing in production or rehearsal, but we are looking at what might be done later this year, as COVID-19 restrictions change. For example, something virtual for the Streatham Festival in October 2020, outside performances at Palace Road Gardens, a show at St. Leonards Church, and maybe a musical in 2021.
- We are continuing the regular second Tuesday events and other extra events, currently online like this one, which are important to maintain an ongoing community. In lockdown, these online events are particularly popular!

- **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I'd like to express great thanks to everyone who provided support and encouragement from all around Streatham, and all those who have provided their time and expertise to stage our shows and run our events programme. Plus of course our committee, members, patrons, followers, and audiences and anyone I've left out.

You have all continued to help put theatre into Streatham. Thank you

David Harvey

Chairman, 09 June 2020