

Chairman's report for 2003

Another year has passed and we are now looking back at 2003. The year has been one of hard work and determination. It has been one of consolidation of finances and finishing of projects.

The year has seen Dougie Brinklow busy writing begging letters and preparing bids for any monies for which we could be eligible. Hopefully I will be reporting next year of his successes in this field. We should continue to look forward to improving The Playhouse – we must never be content to sit back – we must be adventurous and forward thinking.

We have succeeded in raising the profile of The Playhouse within the local Community to the extent I have been informed we will receive a proportion of the proceeds from the sale of the Axiom. Please do not raise your hopes too high as I am led to believe there are strings attached – so – watch this space.

During the past few months we have been forging links on an informal basis, with other small theatres in the area – The Kings Theatre, Gloucester & the Cotswold Playhouse, Stroud. Of the three we are the largest but we have looked at how each Theatre runs and the facilities available in each venue. It has been quite interesting and informative.

The Green Room has become the scene for great music nights in the guise of Calmer, who hire the Green Room on the last Sunday in the month. They have provided some excellent entertainment.

If you have not been, you should come along one evening they are playing – you could even join them this evening after this meeting has finished.

As a result of the 'Calmer' nights, there has been the formation of a new production company about which the Treasurer will explain in her report.

Several fund raising events have happened during the year including productions of Lady Windermere's anorak!!! (as I lovingly called the two pieces by Paul Scott and Simon Young) and Up 'n' Under directed by Dave Wheeler. Caroline Young has also continued to donate monies raised from her Acting Up classes. These projects were undertaken by members of the Playhouse anxious to do their bit to help. I offer a huge 'Thank you' to all involved on your behalf.

I must report the deaths of three people who have played a large part in the history of the Playhouse namely Jo Wheeler, Patrick McGiven and last but not least Jack Critchley. They will be sadly missed by all those who knew and loved them and the Playhouse Theatre has lost three stalwart, long-standing members.

It is at this time of year I usually thank the merry band of souls who have given of their time and effort to enable you and me to enjoy the smooth ? Dare I say that? Smooth running of the complex – my committee, Ian Chandler, George Whitford, box office staff etc. However, this year I have introduced an evening of celebration which is two fold in its intention. One is to raise our profile again

and the other is to thank those who have given of their time and efforts in the previous year. It is intended that representatives from all societies will be attending and all in all I hope it will be an enjoyable yearly event.

However the rest of the membership are invited to a more informal, intimate Summer bash later in July as a thank you for being members and supporting us – refreshments et al – so be sure to come.

I must also gently remind members that subscriptions for Playhouse Theatre membership are due from the 1st January each year. I know it has become traditional to pay on the night of the AGM – indeed in years gone by the chairman's husband has done that very thing, However, it is one of the rules of the club and with the production of the bar rota, it has become increasingly difficult to produce this accurately when members have not renewed. Thank you for your forbearance and I am sure you will bear this in mind in January 2005.

Looking forward to the future we have started well with at least three fundraising events since the New Year – Playhouse Company's Old Time Music Hall, Friends and who needs enemas and the Savoyards concert. Let's carry on as we mean to go on. I am able to report we seem to be attracting a few outside bookings for the coming year, which can only be good news.

One regret I have this year, is that the running and manning of the bar is still not operating on an ideal system. I am sure you will join

me in thanking firstly Peter Harrison for his sterling efforts as Bar Manager; and secondly to thank Lesley for the hard work she has put in to try to accommodate you all for bar duty, trying to ensure it is as convenient for you as possible. However, there continues to be no – shows and my Committee continue to lock and open. I am completely convinced that the reason we have had only one nominee is because no-one wants the responsibility and commitment that involves. I would like to ask you all to give your serious consideration to providing a solution to this problem, given the constraints of security and finance. Please **chat !** to me, send a note, email, telephone, write on slate. But do see if you could solve this on going problem.

The Committee and I are well aware that the some small companies are finding it increasingly difficult to fund shows, with room hire, royalties and hire of the Theatre etc etc. However, the Playhouse **has** to be run as a business and so our rents must be realistic. We subsidise considerably the hire fee. Our true costs of running the building are in the region of £5k plus per month. We are not in a position to be able to be more generous to these societies. We are very lucky to have this complex. We have made investigations and we offer an extremely good deal in comparison with other local venues.

Finally, this coming year will be my 10th year as your Chairman. I feel you should be aware that, with the best will in the world, I cannot continue for ever!!!! I would be lying if I said the last nine years were a bed of roses but overall I have loved it. I am very grateful to you all for giving me the opportunity to steer the Theatre

forward. BUT – is it time for someone else to come forward next year – is it time for me to give up the mantle?

This Theatre is coming to perhaps a very exciting period in its history – who will be there to guide the process? I know I could carry on but **should I?** Should it be a younger, newer person with new ideas? Members need to consider these thoughts over the coming year.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen for your continued support and encouragement.

Sue Bennett