

Presidential Address

Welcome to the 2020 AGM of Wheathampstead Dramatic Society . Who could have predicted that , one year after the last AGM with its reports of the growing use of our website and social media links in the Society's affairs , this year's meeting would actually take place via Zoom ? !

As the Society's financial year runs to the end of March 2020 , the Treasurer's Report you'll shortly hear contains details of the three productions from that period, The Herd, Wait until Dark and Love from a Stranger , all of which were not only financially successful but also did enormous credit to the Society , The Herd having already picked up several nominations and indeed a couple of awards in our local NODA district. The other Reports that accompany this AGM from the Secretary, Membership Secretary , Play Selection Committee and the Chair are all witness to the vision of the Committee , the hard work that goes on behind the scenes and the enthusiasm and support of the members.

These are troubled times for all theatre – and Sarah will say more later about the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on the Society's productions and other activities. There have been disturbing reports in the Press from companies like the Old Vic and the Globe questioning how theatre can survive in the restrictive conditions that must apply in the period before a vaccine is found for this dreadful virus. But survive it will and already in both the professional theatre and amateur dramatic societies plans for the future are being laid as innovation and adaptation become the order of the day.

Some of you may have seen an article in The Stage entitled “If social distancing becomes the new normal, how will that apply to theatre and performance ? “ It asks us to imagine people going to the theatre wearing masks and gloves, sitting in seats that are separated by 2 metres, actors required to perform from opposite ends of the stage and intervals extended to 45 minutes because getting a drink will take a lot longer! Onstage kisses - as well as flirting in the Wings - will be banned ! No doubt the Committee has already discussed its own plans but I'm not sure they will go as far as the proposal to put a sink on the stage so actors can give themselves a mid -show wash- can you picture Kenneth Branagh giving his “to be or not to be“ speech while smothering his hands in soap.?! However we are all confident that “ the show must go on “ for as Hamlet himself said “the play's the thing“.

Graham Field