



St George's Players Chair's Report 2019

Hi all. Well what a year! As the country got stuck in a drama of stay or go, St George's Players got on with remaining one of the region's friendliest and most fun community theatre groups. 2019 saw us bigger, better and bolder with more new faces joining us and ideas for new projects galore. Our audience enjoyed two smash hit shows. Our spring show transported us back in time to Soldier Island off the Devon coast where a killer was on the loose in our dramatic reinterpretation of Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None". In the autumn we had plenty of laughs as we whisked ourselves to sleepy Suffolk for our hilarious production of "A Bunch of Amateurs". Both productions were of an exceptional standard where we brought in new talent alongside our more familiar, brilliant players.

I was fortunate enough to direct "And Then There Were None", supported by a brilliant cast and crew. With sell out audiences every night, the performance standard was fantastic, which many passed comment on - we even got a major shout out on Radio 2's Dermott O'Leary show (thank you Ben Sutherland). I loved the experience of taking on a classic by one of the world's best known writers and was so pleased that switching the killer from male to female added complexity and depth that the cast delivered with panache and pride.

In autumn, the brilliant Uli Wilfer took on the comedy "A Bunch of Amateurs" with ambitious effects and a bold stage design which our fantastic Ian Cooper and team took on with relish. Another brilliant performance saw audience numbers over the three nights reach 200. Well done all - you made St Georges Players proud!

And it's not just about the big shows. In August Rob and team produced our second scratch night. The evening gave the opportunity for our hugely talented play writing group to see their work performed. The diversity and creativity of the pieces made it a brilliant evening, a real success all round. Our reading nights have continued too and we're hoping to squeeze one last festive reading in before the year is out. Our finances have improved further (thank you Paul), with our big shows returning a surplus which we can invest into future plans.

Looking ahead, we'll be setting up more social gatherings (shout out to "Kitty's Committee") so we can talk new ideas as well as just get together and take time out together. We also plan to move performances into new venues (in addition to the main half term shows), we'll be performing full plays from our play writing group and maybe... just maybe taking our main shows on the road!

Finally, 2019 sees us turn 85 years young. We're having an evening party on 30th November (Ignition Brewery, Sydenham Road). In 2020 we'll continue the festivities with themed events and gatherings showcasing our talent. So we think we're good for (at least) another 85 years. Thank you for joining us tonight and for everyone who is St Georges Players. Happy birthday us!

Stephen Gaskell, Chair