

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT for W.A.T.S. **April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018** (and for Parish Meeting)

Memory has taken on a new meaning for me. Whereas memory and loss of it was something which came with senior years; memory and memories have heightened for me over the last few months as you can imagine.

My happy memories are what keep me going on dark days; meaningful songs and words come strongly into your head and particularly in the quietness of being alone.

In making an effort to tidy up the study and piles of books, I came across a little book of poems which we have had for some years, by Rev. Oliver Rooke. I read a few of them and then came across one which reminded me of an occasion some years ago.

A memory which always makes me smile is when Felicity (a WATS member for many years) and Rob Jelliff ran MARY'S Restaurant for many years. The Restaurant, for those who do not know, was the Old Manor Farm House on the main street between The Tuck Shop and the entry to Manor Close, and the opposite "Sunningdale" the home of Julia Joseph. Felicity and Rob had a wine tasting function one evening for the members of the Aldeburgh Festival Club. Brian and I were invited and the wine flowed! There were many wines to sample and many courses at dinner to accompany them. Mine host was most generous, and as the evening went along the company became more and more jovial and noisier and noisier. In the quiet village of Walberswick at nearly midnight, the parting company was decidedly rowdy.

This little poem of Oliver's was probably written in the late 1970's. Nothing much has changed about the sentiments:

**Time gentlemen!**

When you go home along the street  
It isn't the unsteady beat  
Of wavering footsteps on the road  
That make me wish that I could load  
A gun, and loose it off at you:

It is another thing you do.  
Why can't you talk, instead of shout,  
Upon your evening walkabout?  
For I had just dropped off to sleep  
And now a wakeful vigil keep.

The loudly voiced patrolling cat  
Romantic deeds is surely at,  
And I can understand the joys  
That lie behind its uncouth noise;  
Yet we must share your foolish cheer  
Because you've drunk a lot of beer,

And, crowning ill, you stand and prate  
Not far beyond my garden gate.

Be off, be off! I'll add my voice  
To yours with something really choice!  
And when, at last, you move away  
I'm left to wait the coming day.  
O loud mouthed boors, whom I wish ill,  
I'll have to take a sleeping pill.

Brian and I began to walk home, giggling helplessly and shushing each other at the tops of our voices!!!

Oliver's sister-in-law Elizabeth Rooke was a member of WATS until she died.

I must mention the deaths of two of our long time and beloved members; my lovely Brian and Margot's lovely Maurice. They will both be much missed by WATS.

Our season from October 2017 got started on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> with a series of miniature plays, entitled "Matchbox Theatre". These were chosen and produced by Mark Aldridge. The evening was moved to Hoist Wood House at the last moment as Edward and Diana were both sick with the 'flu'. The items were most amusing and were read by one or two reader, and I believe we may have read seven.

On 13<sup>th</sup> November the play "Local Affairs" which had been chosen, cast and rehearsed by Judy Morton, was performed at "Seven Acres" by kind invitation of Bill and Jill Willison. The play was presented on behalf of Judy as at this time Brian was in hospital and Judy was visiting him.

Sadly, Brian died on 29<sup>th</sup> November and it was decided by the Committee that the December (Christmas) evening should be cancelled. However, I thank Ben for his preparation of "Talking Heads".

Our Annual Party was held at the Village Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2018 with the entertainment being some more of the items ~ "Vignettes from Michael Frayne's Matchbox Theatre", again produced by Mark Aldridge who selected the pieces and cast the readers. The Village Hall was decorated appropriately and members and guests dressed to illuminate, and the colour scheme to reflect "flames".

On 12<sup>th</sup> February our reading was held in the main hall of the Village Hall and included refreshments. Val Anderson selected three BBC plays: "Daisy pulls it off on the Ghost Train"; "The Holiday Money", and "Famous Five at Seventy". These three plays were delightfully amusing.

On 12<sup>th</sup> March we met at "Wickstead" by kind invitation of Erica Donnellan. The play was "Murder in Play" by Simon Brett, produced by Moira & Peter Austin. The evening was well attended and all enjoyed the play.

I am afraid I have lost touch with the exact numbers of ladies and men reading, but as we have had such a selection of plays and pieces, I believe we have achieved a lot more readers this year and anyone who wished to read has been able to. I would like to thank all of the Producers for selecting plays, carrying out the casting and rehearsals, and to all of the readers who have given us great entertainment.

Producing is quite a task. It entails getting a copy of several scripts from the Library, reading these through, and hoping that one of them will be suitable for a play reading. Sometimes a Producer has knowledge of a suitable play already and this makes the task easier. He/she must then cast the play and hope that the selected readers are available for rehearsal and on the night.

Of course, I must thank our kind hosts and hostesses for their continued hospitality each year. It is quite an upheaval to change your home around to accommodate up to 40 guests.

Thank you too to the chair and crockery movers; Mark and Wayne without whom we would be very inconvenienced.

This season we have held three events at the Village Hall. We had our Annual Party, our February meeting when by error we were able to use the main hall which we much enjoyed, and tonight for our Annual General Meeting.

Here I pose a discussion point to you all for your consideration. WATS has historically had our readings in members' homes which is a great privilege and lovely for us all. However, if we are unable to find sufficient hosts and hostesses willing to continue to invite us into their homes we may need to have more readings at our Village Hall.

Thank you Val, very much for allowing us to place our Notice Board on your gate, and to Rosie for putting up a poster in the Tuck Shop.

Our Committee meetings have been in exceedingly short supply this year. Doris and Clive were out of circulation for some months whilst Clive was having his treatments. Of course we all rejoice in the fact that he is well again and firing on all cylinders.

How useful it is to be able to contact each other via emails to get a view on some point which has been raised. We have only had two meetings I believe; one to start the season off, and one recently to discuss the AGM procedures.

Thank you Ben for keeping us on the straight and narrow with our accounts, paying the bills and getting the money in. Ben will deliver his Treasurer's report shortly.

You will hear from Doris on our current membership, and Julia on theatre outings. I thank them both for their continued work for our membership. Doris to be coupled with Peter Austin who has been a great backup for collecting subscriptions and keeping a membership list. Thank you very much Peter.

This season we have had a new secretary, Angie, who has done a great job of keeping the Minutes of our meetings, and helping with the preparation of the party. Thank you very much Angie.

And our other Committee members Val and Clive, for your wise counsel when required and your support of all that we plan; and indeed all of the committee; I sincerely thank you.

We have all had concerns throughout the months for Ann Easterbrook, Mary, Di Kingshott, Marjorie Gordon-Potts, and others who have not been too well.

I thank you all for your warm and kind friendship shown to me over the last weeks; the uplifting telephone calls, the cards, the flowers, the invitations, and the hugs. I was particularly touched by Peter's invitation to help at the pantomime ~ just what I needed; to be amongst friends and the youngsters who were all so excited to play their parts.

Another observation of Oliver Rooke:

SNAP!

When I am leaving Walberswick, it seems to me I always stick  
Behind a scarcely travelling car, with someone's Granny and Grandpa  
Who bumble on, so fearfully slow. One wonders how the thing can go.  
We could have hoped the Highway Code, would ban such people from the road,  
For he has got a wrinkled neck and looks to me a tottering wreck,  
Topped with a cap, he's glasses too; such cautious drivers always do!  
And Gran is chattering away; it's plain that they can spare all day.  
But when, at last, I get the chance, to leave him in his partial trance,  
In my side window, as I pass, I might be looking in a glass.  
For oh! Deflation! what I see  
Is someone looking much like me.

Long may WATS continue and go from strength to strength. Thank you.

JUDY MORTON April 2018

