

WALBERSWICK AMATEUR THEATRICAL SOCIETY'S REPORT
For WALBERSWICK ANNUAL PARISH meeting~Village Hall ~ 14th May 2022

How the world has changed over the last two years!!

I said at the end of my Parish Council report for 2019 – 2020/2021
“I did not attend the last play as I was ‘up and away’ to Perth in Western Australia for a month, arriving back at London Heath Row in the early hours of 23rd March 2020” having been there for five weeks, and the beginning of the first serious Lockdown.

None of us could ever have foreseen or expected the recent times we have all lived through and are continuing to do!! And now we see War for Ukraine from Russia; huge devastation and such huge numbers of dead and evacuees. Unprecedented events in my lifetime!! How our world has changed!

The Committee decided for this last rather scrappy Season that we would be better to meet here at the Village Hall during this difficult time of uncertainty. This would give us adequate space for distancing as necessary through the pandemic.

During the years we have sadly lost one of our dearest friends and long-standing members. Margot Godbold died in a period of Lockdown/temporary lifting of Covid rules. We remember her with great affection as a most capable and gifted reader and producer and her expertise on the stage.

Our longest surviving member, Mary Nuttall, is not able to join us now in her late 90s, but she is still most interested in the group. We do recognise her wonderful play writing for us when we couldn't find an entertainment for the Parties and up would come another lively piece; which, when put on the stage with scenery and costumes always amused our audiences.

We are also missing dear Erica Donnellan; a great friend and village worker; always helping in whatever capacity was required, and now living in East Bergholt nearer her family. Such an able reader and helper. Her friendship is much missed on a daily basis.

All three of these friends worked hard and generously for WATS.

We have welcomed one new Member, Christine Collie who lives at the end of Lodge Road. We have also had some contact with Karen & Martin who now have the house on the green "Hedgley". Martin sings with the church choir.

The original idea of WATS was a gathering of friends who enjoyed reading plays together in each other's homes. This worked perfectly for many years; growing in numbers of members, and rose to 40 members before Covid; almost too many for most houses. Both Margot and Erica were splendid hosts at home over the years.

We did manage to have a Reading on 11th October 2021, which was "The Browning Version" an old favourite and produced by myself at the Village Hall. Members taking part were: Mark Waller, Bill Willison, Pam Webb, Peter Austin, Clive Brynley-Jones, and Alvin and Viv Hunt.

We thought we were back to our normal Season, however the next Covid Lockdown arrived, and although Jill and Bill Willison had planned their Play "Tomb with a View", we had to take the decision to abandon this. The Music and Drama Library agreement is to send the books back promptly, and off they had to go, to perhaps be re-ordered at some future time.

Sadly, our Christmas reading had also to be cancelled. Edward Wright had written a most suitable play for the occasion which we hope can be brought out again for Christmas 2022.

The January reading and party, and also the February reading were abandoned. We made all our arrangements to hold our party on Saturday 26th February, when at the very last minute our caterer, Sharon telephoned to say that Toby, her husband, had been taken into hospital quite seriously ill. It was far too late to find another caterer at such short notice (24 hours) so the party was re-planned for Saturday, 7th May which we have all just enjoyed. An entertainment was organised by Doris & Clive Brynley-Jones, and written by our dear Mary Nuttall a decade ago, entitled "Skullduggery in the Forest".

In March things looked a bit brighter and we were able to much enjoy the three short plays which were presented by Wendy Mantin and Pam Stewart. Their team of readers presented:

"The Ugly Duckling" by A A Milne

"Cindy & Julie" by Bruce Cone

And "Waiting for a Bus" by Peter Barnes

The readers were: Doris and Clive Brynley-Jones, Bill and Jill Willison, Jackie and David Neeves, and Diana and Edward Wright.

Again, this year, the members were in agreement to keep the present Committee which is: Judy Morton ~ Chairman (Secretary), Doris Brynley-Jones ~ Vice Chairman and Members, Mark Waller ~ Treasurer. Committee members: Clive Brynley-Jones, Peter Austin, Diana Wright, Alvin Hunt. Jill and Bill Willison have been ex-officio over the last months since Angela Vaughan and Erica Donella left us, and were voted to now be part of the Committee officially.

We have agreed that our readings for the next year will take place on the second Monday in the month. During all the switching around, I am not sure if this conflicts with Parish Council Meeting?!

W.A.T.S. are always pleased to welcome new members.

I would like to sincerely thank every member who has quietly taken the changes we have had to make over the months. Thank you, all of the Committee members who have also put their best efforts, into 'Making the best of things', Jill and Bill Willison for organising the Village Hall, changes and all, and the Producers who have come up trumps with a play or two.

Judith Morton

Chairman of Walberswick Amateur Theatrical Society May 2022.