

**WIMBORNE COMMUNITY THEATRE AGM**

**THURSDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2015 AT 39 NEW BOROUGH ROAD, WIMBORNE**

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

**Review of WCT activities in 2014**

This report covers activities between October 2013 and September 2014.

This year saw the final development and launch of the WCT website and some exciting theatre activities, including a small production.

We built on our successful fundraising efforts to continue to raise funds for the various projects.

**The Year's Activities:**

- **Letters to the Dead, Songs to the Living**

We staged a production of *Letters to the Dead, Songs to the Living* with two performances at the secret Forest Garden in Wimborne on July 19<sup>th</sup> 2014. Both performances were well evaluated by a small invited audience. These productions were the culmination of six workshops with Periplum Theatre and intended to showcase the experimental techniques we had been working on. Graduates from Bournemouth Arts University again assisted in designing and making costumes appropriate to the period. Both performances were enhanced by the inclusion of a scene by Allenbourn Middle School – the outcome of a series of workshops held at the school.

- **Periplum Workshops**

We were fortunate to be awarded a grant from the BBC Performing Arts Fund to work with Periplum, a professional theatre group based in Brighton. We had several planning meetings with Clare Raftery and Damian Wright from Periplum who then ran six Saturday all-day workshops on March 8<sup>th</sup>, April 5<sup>th</sup>, May 10<sup>th</sup>, June 28<sup>th</sup>, July 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. These workshops were based on site-specific activities in Wimborne locations within the context of the research we had developed about World War One. We learnt new and useful techniques, such as neutral walking, using sound and movement and the exploration and animation of locations and narratives. The workshops attracted new members some of whom have stayed with the group. One particularly exciting workshop involved a performance trail in the Priest's House Museum garden in a sequence of short symbolic vignettes.

- **WCT Workshops**

During the Autumn of 2013 two workshops on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and November 27<sup>th</sup> completed the Reminiscences programme, *Stories into Drama, The Drama of Story*, at St Catherine's RC Church Hall reflecting on materials related to World War One and exploring the stories through drama.

In the Spring and Summer of 2014, Wednesday evening sessions on March 26<sup>th</sup>, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, May 21<sup>st</sup>, June 25<sup>th</sup>, July 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> led by Tony Horitz further developed the ideas and techniques covered at the Saturday Periplum workshops.

- **School Workshops**

Our successful bid for funding to Dorset Community Foundation allowed us to mount a series of workshops, facilitated by Tony Horitz, involving three local schools: St Michael's Middle School, Allenbourn Middle School and Beaucroft School. It was particularly encouraging that the students from St Michael's and Beaucroft worked collaboratively and a presentation to parents took place in the school. The Allenbourn Middle School group performed their scene during the WCT July performance at the Forest garden.

- **The Bell in Blandford**

Several WCT members took part as volunteer performers in the Periplum production of *The Bell* in Blandford town square on Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup> with a rehearsal on the previous night. This was a spectacular event which gave us valuable experience of the logistics and challenges of working with a large audience.

- **Website Archive Project**

This year has seen the establishment of the WCT website. The web designers Rowena and Nathan Revill from Dorset Creative held two training sessions on 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December 2013 to enable interested members of the group to contribute to the website's creation and development. We formally launched the website on March 14<sup>th</sup> at the Priest's House Museum and Annette Brook, our local MP, pressed the button. Several followers of the group have remarked on the usefulness and creativity of the site which is now an extensive resource, chronicling the past productions of WCT and providing ongoing information to members and supporters.

Screen-Play, working with Allenbourn Middle School students, completed the short animation about Viola and Alice from our first production *Voyages* which was submitted to the Exeter Short Film Festival in December. The second film with St Michael's Middle School using scenes from *A Tale of Hours*, in particular the Saxon Nuns scene, was also completed. Both films are available to the public on the website.

Papers, photographs and videos telling the story of each of WCT's 19 past productions were loaded onto the website, indexed and collated by the group and then formally archived at the Dorset History Centre to ensure their preservation for future generations. Members of the group visited the History Centre on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014 to deposit the materials.

Throughout the year there was ongoing work in populating the website and ensuring that it was kept up to date with news and information for members.

- **Research**

Throughout the year, research into Wimborne during World War One continued. A second "Gathering Family Memories of World War One" drop-in event was held at the Priest's House Museum on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November which brought more local stories to light. Members of the group continued to investigate the period at the Priest's House Museum and at The Blandford Royal Signals Museum, as well as undertaking research at home.

- **Fundraising**

This year was again a successful one for fundraising.

- We held a Skittles Evening at the Coach and Horses pub on November 15<sup>th</sup> 2013. Everyone had a good time in spite of a power cut half way through the evening. We raised a total of £235 and were able to double this under the LocalGiving Grow a Tenner scheme to give us a total of £470 for WCT funds.

- We also held a Quiz Evening on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at the Colehill Sports and Social Club which raised £518, including LocalGiving Grow a Tenner receipts. We are grateful to John Billington for hosting both of these events.

· We are constantly looking for grant opportunities to support our work financially. East Dorset District Council awarded us £1500 which allowed us to run the series of workshops for the Reminiscences project. Successful bids to Dorset Community Foundation and the BBC enabled us to run both the school workshops and the Periplum workshops and production.

· We were awarded a further £1000 by EDDC in September 2014 which so far this year has funded the purchase of 3 mini-rigs and an I-pod for use in productions and four workshops on Dance, Music, Sound and Drama run in the Autumn and Spring 2014/15.

- **Mayor's Service**

Jeff and Barbara Hart and Tony and Gill Horitz represented the group at the Mayor's Civic Service at the Minster on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

- **Christmas Party**

An enjoyable Christmas party was held at Tony and Gill's house on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2013 which also raised funding through a raffle run by Clare.

- **Steering Group**

The Steering Group continued to meet regularly to plan events and development as well as ensure that the group's administrative affairs were in order, dealing with matters such as finance, insurance and Safeguarding for children.

- **AGM**

Last year's AGM was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 when officers were elected for the following year.

- **Communication**

The new website has now become the main means of keeping members and followers informed of our activities. Regular *mailchimp* newsletters are also sent out about specific events.

Thus 2013 - 14 was a successful year for the group, particularly in launching and developing the website. We also continued the work of the group through workshops and staging a small production in conjunction with Periplum Theatre and raised funds through two events to help finance the group.

We are grateful to supporters who come along to events and fundraising activities.

Gill Horitz continues to do a superb job in promoting the group's work and we are now reaping the benefits of her successful applications to HLF and the BBC. We continue to be extremely grateful to Tuppy Hill for her sterling work as our secretary and to Adrian Williams for keeping us on track as Treasurer.

Jeff Hart  
Chair WCT  
22.02.2015