

## Chairman's Report on the 2010 year

Welcome everyone.

2010 was a year of celebrations – Riverside Players celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> year as did Old Windsor Carnival and I had to find an equally large number of candles for my last birthday cake – all in all it was a great year. It is amazing to think that during these past years' members have produced 149 shows across all genres. So Alan and Sam as you are responsible for our 150<sup>th</sup> show please make it one to remember – I can only urge everyone to come and see it – a truly hilarious affair from start to finish.

2010 started with the TV classic **'ALLO 'ALLO** directed by Susan Pickles – the show which is well known required a large cast and production team which we achieved with a great mix of new, existing and lapsed members. The familiarity of the show and the large cast resulted in great ticket sales – over 400 - which helped to bolster the society bank account. This has given us the flexibility to tackle some outstanding jobs which Simon can explain in more detail later.

The best laid plans however can go a bit awry and our summer show **SING ON** had to be abandoned due to lack of members auditioning. What to do – nothing was an option – but as usual the members came up trumps and Vicki, Alan and others came up with a cunning plan – what about a celebration of everything that Riverside Players does best – **A GOLDEN CELEBRATION** was conceived. The format was a short play and pantomime in the style of course acting both directed by Alan Payn, two music hall sections and a rousing finale of songs and dances from a variety of musicals directed by Vicki Arnold. 16 people took part in this melange of entertainment including Kay Smith and Marjorie Teal both of whom have been part of, and supported, Riverside Players for many years. I must say that I have never worked so hard in my life and I am sure the rest of the cast can understand where I am coming from. It's true to say that ticket sales were not earth shattering, which in my opinion was a shame as we put on a great evening's entertainment, but with no major royalties to speak of no real losses were incurred.

While all this was going on a stalwart group of members represented Riverside Players at the Old Windsor Carnival – the theme was 50 years – and our walking party received 2<sup>nd</sup> prize for “50 years of Pantomime”

**ALADDIN** finally made his appearance - written and directed by “Jock” Cooper - which was a fitting end to our 50<sup>th</sup> year as “Jock” is one of our longest serving members - although rumour has it that he has now officially handed back his Director’s chair!! A great cast was assembled – once again a new Dame in Jason and a whole host of new members including Sam, Katrina and Celeste and in our youth section Sarah, Elizabeth, Isabell and William – we hope to see you all in many more Riverside Players productions in the future. The show was lively and colourful and played to over 700 people throughout the run. We are not back to the good old days where we packed the hall to the rafters but we are getting there and every great show we put on hopefully encourages our audiences to come back for more – they are at the end of the day vital to our continued survival.

Members performed two community shows in 2010 – the first in October in Dedworth and the 2<sup>nd</sup> for our very own Old Windsor Ladies Society – the OWLS. While none of us have that much time to spare everyone involved pulled up their sleeves and made both these occasions really enjoyable not just for the audiences but for the performers as well. Thanks must go to Vicki for putting the shows together and to the production team – Jonathan, Roger L and Mark.

2011 is now well underway with a host of shows to hopefully delight both our members and our audiences – we start with **DARLING MR LONDON** directed by Alan Payn and newbie Director Sam Sommerville at the end March, followed by another TV classic **HI DE HI** at the end of June directed by Susan Pickles – this show needs a lot of people of all ages so I hope that you will all be digging out your white shorts and blue suede shoes ready for the auditions – and the year rounds off in usual pantomime style as Simon Arnold and Jonathon Stacey in his first co-directing role takes us into the world of **SCROOGE THE PANTO** in early December.

To make sure that Riverside Players continues to thrive then we must encourage new members and also new audiences. Amateur Dramatics is a massive tradition in this country and there must be literally thousands of societies doing what we do – they offer so much to all of us but especially to our children and young people – and I for one hope that we can continue for the foreseeable future. To make that happen we need ideas and willing volunteers to direct our 2012 calendar which at this moment remains a blank canvas – it cannot remain so for too much longer – please don't just wait for someone else to come forward - make that commitment now.

In recent times we have gained a more youthful perspective to the Committee which aims to represent everyone in the society. However, a committee cannot stand still and as a society we must look to new ideas, shows, technology and methods. I hope that some of you might consider joining the committee to take a more active role, and as we will be voting on this issue later on in the evening it is not too late to put yourself forward for election.

On a personal note I have really enjoyed being Chairperson in 2010 and I am happy to put myself forward again – but I am all in favour of others taking on responsibilities so never think that just because so and so has done the job for ages that you cannot take part. There is always scope for change or the sharing of duties and the worst thing that can happen is a long standing member leaves and all their knowledge and experience goes with them. So if you aspire to be the Chairperson, secretary or treasurer of the future - take that first step and get elected.

I would like to thank the current committee for all their work during 2010 – it is always a pleasure to be involved in the committee meetings and the level of commitment is very inspiring. A final thank you to all the non-acting members of our society involved in the production side of things – Val, Roger L, Roger B, Mark, Margaret to name a few – we would not be who we are without your commitment to Riverside Players. Thank you.

**Susan Pickles – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011**