

CODSWALLOP!

CELEBRATING CODS' 100TH YEAR!

APRIL 2020

CHAIRMAN'S
2019/20
REPORT

AGM
RESULTS

MOST
PROMISING
JUNIOR

OFFICERS

CODS 2020
SURVEY

BACK
PAGE

CODS

Cianbrook Operatic
& Dramatic Society
1920 - 2020



CONTENTS

<u>CHAIRMAN'S 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT</u>	3 - 5
<u>RESULTS OF THE 2020 REMOTE AGM</u>	6
<u>CODS 2020 SURVEY</u>	7
<u>CODS MOST PROMISING JUNIOR 2019/20</u>	8
<u>NOTICES</u>	9
<u>OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY</u>	10
<u>THE BACK PAGE</u>	



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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Dear Friends,

Life is rather strange at the moment. I do hope that you are all staying well and sane and that we will be back to normal as soon as we safely can.

Meanwhile, your CODS newsletter arrives as always with information and details of the society for your perusal.



Whilst you have a little more time on your hands, perhaps you could consider joining the committee—go on, you know you want to! Or certainly filling in our survey, with which we hope to gain a little insight into dwindling membership and audience numbers for amateur theatre groups.

Below you will find the report I would have given had we had an AGM.

Stay safe everyone and we will see you all soon! Annie xxx

CHAIRMAN'S 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT

Covid-19 has reared an ugly little viral head which means that you will receive this information by email or post.

The speech that I would have given as Chair of CODS, I will write to you here, and hope that you will contact the committee, using the details below, to vote on the various issues and to approve our new committee. We need a minimum of 20 people to respond in order to fulfil the quorum criteria laid down in the constitution and, as these strange times call for strange measures, we would ask that you respond as soon as possible with any comments or any other business which you may have wished to raise at the AGM to cods.secretary@gmail.com, or to Lee Hatcher, Ashleigh, The Hill, Cranbrook Kent. TN17 3AD.

Since the last AGM, CODS has staged *Anna Karenina* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, both of which were extremely successful and well received by audiences and all those involved on and off stage.

Anna Karenina was beautifully staged and acted with a haunting score and was a visual spectacle of the type never before staged by the society. We were all very proud to be involved in Jo Reader's production and look forward to an equally exciting show in *Arabian Nights*, later in the year.

The wonderful musical *Fiddler* brought us new members and old friends and was hailed as a huge success by all concerned. Marvellous performances and an amazing orchestra meant that, all in all, Heather Barnes could be extremely proud of her production of this well-loved classic.

As well as these major achievements we have managed a tidy-up day at Flishinghurst, a Quiz Night and a Queen's Hall sorting day. These were almost exclusively manned by committee members and their families – it would be lovely to see a few other faces!

CHAIRMAN'S 2019/20 AGM REPORT

2019 ended, and our centenary year began as the curtain came down on the Christmas panto. The rather last-minute change of plan meant we staged *Treasure Island* and we filled the Queen's Hall Theatre with fun and music, generating a good profit and making many people very happy!

I was so pleased to be able to put on this show with a cast consisting of many youngsters and some new and returning members, all of whom gave their all despite various medical and other problems. I would like particularly to mention Phil Mummery who followed up his starring role as 'comedy Christmas Tree' last year, with a walk on role as 'Robin the Robber' this year. I had to persuade Phil not to drop out when he was diagnosed with terminal cancer in November - he obviously did not want to drop out. He was so pleased to be in his last show for CODS and loved every minute. We lost Phil last week, after he had been made the first Mayor of Cranbrook a fortnight before. I made the decision to donate £500 of the panto profit to the Hospice in the Weald in memory of Phil.

We also donated £250 to Penny's pet charity Hypo Hounds, which trains dogs to alert their diabetic owners when they are close to a hypo, and £250 to FUM – Friends of Urambo and Mwanhala – a charity close to my heart having taken a group to Tanzania to do work with them in the past.

Our centenary celebrations kicked off with a great meal at the London Beach which brought together many members of the society, old and new and also generated a good sum of money for the society; even though the committee decided to subsidise the meal to enable more people to come along. It was lovely to see so many CODS' faces there and all seemed to enjoy finding themselves in pictures on our photographic display of a century of CODS shows.

Unfortunately, matters have now conspired against us and all is heading off down the Swanee. Our beautifully laid plans for 2020 have had to be put on hold, whilst we all try to avoid the Coronavirus. We have already had to postpone our *Sing 100* concert, which is such a great shame after all Alison's and John's hard work, but we hope to revive this in September, combining it with a celebratory high tea event in the heart of Cranbrook.

Arabian Nights, which was to be staged at the end of May, will now be pushed back to the Christmas Panto slot and we will leave *Kipps* in the present October half term slot until we have a better idea of what lies ahead. This might have implications on the *Kipps* auditions, but we will let you all know CODS' plans in plenty of time.

Meanwhile, we have a couple of vacancies on the CODS committee and would love to see a new face or two to replace those who are retiring.

The roles available are:

CHAIRMAN'S 2019/20 AGM REPORT

Vice Chairman – who would be available to take over as Chairman next year,

Hall Manager – in charge of locking up the theatre after performances. Maurice is retiring after many years on the committee and in his various roles (what will we do without him?) We wish him all the very, very best and thank him for his many unstinting years of devoted service to CODS. If we were at an AGM you would all clap and cheer at this point!

Member in charge of publicity – this would involve social media posts and interaction with newspapers and other media outlets to promote the shows, though not necessarily poster and publicity design, unless the new member wanted to do this.

Please consider whether you might be interested in any of these roles or whether you might just like to ease yourself in by being an ordinary committee member without any particular responsibility.

Life in Am Dram has changed in the past few years. No longer do people remain loyal to one society, but performers have the option to flit between groups and to pick and choose which shows they are interested in, rather than simply auditioning for the show that their local group is staging. With this in mind, the committee has been discussing changes in subscriptions and show fees and Glyn has a suggestion about altering these payments going forward to enable people to be involved in the shows that interest them without the expense of a sizeable subscription. Please read and consider his proposals and let us know your thoughts.

In this world, where strangeness is becoming the norm and where we cannot seem to anticipate the future with any certainty, we need to be adaptable and to move forward in terms of technology as well as catering for those amongst us who struggle to keep up with such things. This is one of the continuing challenges for the committee, who no longer simply choose a show and organise how best to put it on stage. We now have less commitment from a dwindling number of members, and we need to compete with a growing amount of competition both in live theatre, in video games as well as in the hundreds of channels available on the box. In order to thrive for another 100 years, we need to work in a spirit of cooperation and spread the load amongst the wider membership and ask you all to consider whether you might be able to join the committee and give just a few hours each month to help out.

On a more positive note, although we will need to alter all our plans for 2020, we can, at least be happy that we, unlike many societies, have no imminent production on which we have spent many thousands and which cannot be rescheduled.

As Gloria Gaynor so eloquently put it – 'We will survive!'

Annie

CODS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting for 2020 was, of course, cancelled due to the ongoing public health concerns. Rather than postpone the AGM when we had no idea when we may be able to hold that meeting we decided to carry out the business of the AGM via email and post (for those members who don't use email).

While we appreciated that this may be the last thing on our members' minds, and there are plenty other things to think about, we hope to hit the ground running as soon as we are able to; getting back to auditions, rehearsals, events and performances.

We sent out by email and post to all eligible members (fully paid members plus Vice-Presidents, Honorary Members etc) all reports and proposals that would usually be presented at the AGM. We asked those members to respond either approving all items or disagreeing any items, raising questions where necessary.

Any vote at AGM requires 20 members approving for it to pass and all items were duly passed. Details from these points can be found elsewhere in CODSwallop.

PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENTS, HONORARY MEMBERS, COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

The remote AGM has confirmed the roles of President, Vice Presidents, officials and Committee members per the '[Officers of the Society](#)' page of this newsletter.

We can also confirm the wonderful Rosemary Ettridge as an Honorary Member.

After the AGM the role of 'Hall Manager' remains vacant. Please get in touch with CODS.secretary@gmail.com if you are interested in this role and would like to find out more. Please consider coming to join us!

After the AGM the following committee roles remain vacant;

Vice Chairman

Show Recommendation Chair

Committee Member for Publicity.

These roles will be fulfilled by the rest of the committee or they will co-opt candidates from the membership.

A huge thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to the AGM email..

Hatch

CODS 2020 SURVEY

For the remote AGM Louisa Nelson Chambers raised a few questions regarding membership and, with the help and input of the committee, I have collated her points into a survey which I hope you will all take the time to complete and return to us in order that we can gain some insight into ways that we can boost our numbers and enthusiasm for our productions.

Louisa's query was as follows:

'I have a question regarding dwindling membership. Has any work been done to understand why this is the case? A mobile performer force is not necessarily a bad thing, but that may not be the only reason why numbers have fallen. The information in this survey (sic) is important; more so now, as a result of the current situation and the 'Dark' that this has been imposed on AmDrams.'

We cannot contact previous members because of the GDPR regulations, so perhaps you could contact former members of the society and gauge their opinions too. If you would rather complete this survey anonymously, the online version will enable you to do this. I have posted the list of questions below, and rather than wasting space with gaps for your replies, perhaps you could email us back with your answers on the following points. Annie

1. What do you like about the Society?
2. In which areas do you believe improvements could be made?
3. If you/someone you know has left CODS, what were the reasons that they have taken a break from the Society?
4. Which 4 things do you think would make ex-members consider re-joining?
5. How do we attract new members?
6. What is the best way to advertise for new members/for our productions?
7. What type of productions would you like the society to stage?
8. Please suggest at least one of each of the following:
A Spring play, An Autumn Musical A Panto
9. Who is the CODS' audience and do we need to target a new audience demographic?
10. Do you have any other comments to add?

Please email your responses to CODS.secretary@gmail.com or, if you/a friend would rather remain anonymous, complete the online survey which will not require your details to be returned.

Here is the link: <https://forms.gle/AGdNabCGHSdMs2oL9>

It would be great to know your thoughts.

CODS MOST PROMISING JUNIOR 2019/20

Former members of Staplehurst Dramatic Society have kindly donated to CODS the 'Tony Walker Shield for Most Promising Junior', which they awarded annually to their most promising member aged 17 and under.

As SDC is no longer running, CODS are pleased to be able to carry on this tradition. We asked Annie Hatcher and Heather Barnes - directors of 2019 CODS shows 'Treasure Island' and 'Fiddler on the Roof' - both of which included juniors - to tell us about each of the young performers. We then formed a small sub-committee (exec committee members with no connection to any juniors) who decided upon the recipient of the shield.

The CODS' Most Promising Junior 2020, is **Flora Wynn-Carter**.

Well done Flora!

We will arrange to present the shield to you at the earliest opportunity.

Can we just say that all of the juniors have been considered and it was a very difficult decision. All of them deserve merit of some kind for their commitment, dedication, hard work and enthusiasm. Well done to them all!



NOTICES

MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2020/21

The following was agreed by members from our remote AGM;

We maintain annual membership at its present levels of £40, £20 and £10 for adults, concessions/junior and child members respectively

We have introduced a 'per show' membership that lasts for the rehearsals and performances of an individual show/play of £20 for adults and £5 for others (this is separate from any 'show fees').

We will no longer offer monthly payments for new members or for the 'per show' option, only those that have paid a full annual membership for at least 1 year.

CODS NEEDS AN ARCHIVIST

We would love someone to take over the organisation of CODS' archives. We have 100 years of information, most of which has already been filed in plastic boxes. Posters and photographs of shows from the past few years however are waiting to be added, and we need someone who can continue to keep our records up to date. If you are interested in helping with this please get in touch. It would be lovely to have a society member getting involved.

Contact: cods.secretary@gmail.com

FLISHINGHURST HELP

CODS relies on a few long standing members to build the scenery for all of our shows, at all times of year, in all kinds of weather. They work really hard and are all past retirement age. They need much more help and we need other people to learn how to build sets for us. They currently work on Fridays but with enough help they could also work on other days. Can you help?

Without these chaps our scenery wouldn't exist, or it would be very expensive!

Let us know if you can help and when you can help. CODS.secretary@gmail.com

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President

Bernard Beardsmore

Vice Presidents

Pam Baker, Jeremy Cartwright, Dinah Chamberlin,
Peter Gray, Alan Hodge, George Hudson,
Peggy Latter, Alan Pickett, Dennis Russell,
John Tapper, Maurice Wilkins, Ian Wookey
Marian Cumberland, Rita Wilkins

Executive Committee

Chairman

Annie Hatcher

Business Manager

Guy Fillmore

Hon. Secretary

Lee Hatcher

Board Secretary

Jane Hurt

Treasurer

Glyn Roberts

Social Secretary

Jane Hurt

Committee Members

Bryan Hurt, Penny Tobin,
Alison Withey-Harrison

Contact details for the committee are
available via :

Website - cranbrookods.org.uk/committee

Email - CODS.secretary@gmail.com

Telephone - 01580 388716

Officials of the Society

Orchestral Secretary

Ruth Roberts

Wardrobe Mistress

Rita Wilkins

Properties Master

Lee Hatcher

Front of House Manager

John Tapper

Newsletter and Programme Editor

Lee Hatcher

Independent Examiners

Messrs McCabe, Ford and Williams

THE BACK PAGE

Any questions about what you have read?
Please contact your CODSWALLOP Editor

Lee Hatcher:

tel: 01580 388716

or email: cods.newsletter@gmail.com

If you have any news, views, or ideas as to what YOU
want to see in CODSWALLOP, let me know!



STAYING IN TOUCH

CODS is about a lot more than our shows.

Every member is family, every audience member a friend.

**It's so tough at the moment, not being able to see our lovely
CODS friends and family.**

**While we're all spending more time at home CODS are trying
to do what we can to share memories with everyone, and to
make new ones, staying in touch and looking forward to
when we can get back to rehearsals and sharing the results
with everyone.**

**On our CODS Facebook group we are regularly sharing photos
from previous shows. We are also starting to share on there
videos of members singing songs, reading poems or play
monologues and then sharing them more widely
with Cranbrook & Sissinghurst.**

Come and have a look, and give it a go!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/cranbrookods/>

HATCH

**DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR NEXT EDITION:
FRIDAY 22ND MAY 2020**