

Chairman's Report – The Repertory Players AGM, 19 April 2015

Good morning Ladies and gentlemen

2014 was an interesting year for me personally, as having started the year as vice Chairman, I found myself in the Chair a great deal sooner than anticipated.

It was to be something of a baptism by fire and I thank my committee – Tim Garrard, Mike Blackburn, PJ Smyth, Kyla Render, Larry Greeff, Marc Thomas and Sue MacMillan for their support and assistance at the time. Sue and Tim have subsequently resigned and I would like to thank them both for their contribution to the committee and their support to me in a somewhat tumultuous time.

Natalie Bolingbroke took over the chairmanship of the Bar and Social Events Committee – my sincere thanks to her for stepping up to the plate.

2014 was a difficult year for the country as a whole and Reps was not spared. We struggled to stay alive with reducing audience numbers, increasing costs (don't let anyone tell you that there is no inflation in Zimbabwe!) and the general malaise among the population. Sadly some of this rubbed off on our membership and we saw a drop in numbers of people renewing their membership, attending shows and generally getting involved with Reps.

From a financial perspective, the relatively low number of shows in the theatre resulted in a reduction in show income and bar income. For all that, we survived 2014 and managed to get through the year.

To paraphrase a comment from the Chairman's report last year, we are the custodians of our society – we must understand that it is OUR society – run for and by the members. We have a very important role to play in the social fabric of the Harare community and to Zimbabwe as a whole. We cannot let theatre die – a community without culture in all shapes and forms is not a complete society.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the society in the last year – as performers, crews, bar member, sponsors, donors and partners, box office operators, front of house teams, staff and everyone who set foot into any or both of our theatres. Every contribution counts, no matter how large or small. I am grateful for the support of you all.

Let's make 2015 a good year – it won't be easy, but if we talk to one another and share ideas and suggestions, we can make this society work.

Sue Bolt
Chairman – The Repertory Players