





THE SOUTH DEVON PLAYERS THEATRE & FILM COMPANY

AUDITION & ORGANISATION INFORMATION.



www.southdevonplayers.com

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WELCOME TO THE SOUTH DEVON PLAYERS THEATRE & FILM COMPANY

“The power of the final scene was such that the audience sat transfixed in silence, barely able to comprehend the beauty of what they’d just witnessed ”

Rick Stone – Audience member, 2019.

The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company offers a new approach to theatre-making.

Involving people of all levels of experience, from beginners to seasoned professionals, the Players create full scale dramatic productions primarily focussing on historical events and classical texts, which have attracted national awards and international nominations, as well as glowing audience feedback both online and in person, for the productions performed at a variety of venues centering on, but not limited to, the region of South Devon, in the United Kingdom.

The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, offers a truly unique experience; taking a pride in creating excellent productions working to the strength of the venues and team members.

With painstaking research and attention to detail in perfecting costumes, props and performance, the shows often have a strong interactive element, making the audience feel part of the action.

Based in the beautiful setting of South Devon, our use of performance space allows us to create breathtaking, world-class theatre, with our own unique style, while not compromising the production itself. We bring together talented performers, writers, technicians and costume makers, with enthusiastic, loyal audiences and together, we create magic.



What We Do



At the The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, we make theatre from some of the world's most powerful history, legends and classical texts; stories that help us see the world in new and unexpected ways, while revisiting both much loved classical texts and known historical events, coupled with also exploring commonly overlooked historical events which are invaluable insights into pivotal events which made our community, and world, as it is now.

With a rehearsal base at Chestnut Community Centre, on the edge of our hometown Brixham, we tour our shows out to a variety of exciting performance spaces, mostly to local theatres, but also to museum spaces, church halls, and even open-air venues, facilitating accessible, approachable opportunities for people to experience theatre.

Our team members are welcomed regardless of initial experience, sexuality, religion or national origin. What we look for is the desire to create powerful new theatre productions in line with our fundamental values of excellence in performance, alongside personal empowerment; mutual respect between team members and the public; learning and improving new skills; and collaboration.

Over the course of a typical year, we produce two to four productions, as well as also collaborating with other theatre & film production companies to help our team members find further work in the area, in the creative industries. We also take our community responsibilities very seriously and support external community events, amateur groups, historical and cultural events with our skills, wherever feasible through time and our team members availability. As we are able to build funds and the organisation, the number of productions and collaborations will be able to increase.

We also seek to build an educational, training arm to facilitate accessible training to local people, of a wide range of diverse backgrounds, enabling them to develop strong performance skills to seek employment in the creative industries, and alongside that, develop excellence in transferable skills in communication, self-presentation, self-confidence, teamwork, literacy, and technical skills.

Our productions have won national and regional awards including the all-England Epic Award 2017, the Torbay Together: Creativity In The Community Award 2014, with national and international film festival nominations for our film and video projects, including the Los Angeles Cinefest, Miami Epic Trailer Film Festival, UK Screen One International Film Festival.

We are passionate and determined to create high-quality theatre featuring local and regional performers, proving that local people can put on world-class performance.

“Consistently high-quality shows and films created by a powerhouse of up and coming local talent ” Gerard Christiaans - 5 star Google page rating 2018

“It was educational, and entertaining in equal measure ”

Simon Parks – 5 Star Google page rating 2018



PRODUCTION SYNOPSIS

This is a full length theatre production, using the original novel of *Les Misérables*, by Victor Hugo, as the basis for our own dramatised production (an in-house script), performed first on tour to sell-out venues in 2013

The convict Jean Valjean is released from a French prison after serving nineteen years for stealing a loaf of bread and for subsequent attempts to escape from prison. When Valjean arrives at the town of Digne, no one is willing to give him shelter because he is an ex-convict. Desperate, Valjean knocks on the door of M. Myriel, the kindly bishop of Digne. Myriel treats Valjean with kindness, and Valjean repays the bishop by stealing his silverware. When the police arrest Valjean, Myriel covers for him, claiming that the silverware was a gift. The authorities release Valjean and Myriel makes him promise to become an honest man. Eager to fulfill his promise, Valjean masks his identity and enters the town of Montreuil-sur-mer. Under the assumed name of Madeleine, Valjean invents an ingenious manufacturing process that brings the town prosperity. He eventually becomes the town's mayor.

Fantine, a young woman from Montreuil, returns to her home village with her daughter, Cosette. On the way to Montreuil, however, Fantine realizes that she will never be able to find work if the townspeople know that she has an illegitimate child. In the town of Montfermeil, she meets the Thénardiens, a family that runs the local inn. The Thénardiens agree to look after Cosette as long as Fantine sends them a monthly allowance.

In Montreuil, Fantine finds work in Madeleine's factory. Fantine's coworkers find out about Cosette, however, and Fantine is fired. The Thénardiens demand more money to support Cosette, and Fantine resorts to prostitution to make ends meet. One night, Javert, Montreuil's police chief, arrests Fantine. She is to be sent to prison, but Madeleine intervenes. Fantine has fallen ill, and when she longs to see Cosette, Madeleine promises to send for her. First, however, he must contend with Javert, who has discovered Madeleine's criminal past. Javert tells Madeleine that a man has been accused of being Jean Valjean, and Madeleine confesses his true identity. Javert shows up to arrest Valjean while Valjean is at Fantine's bedside, and Fantine dies from the shock.

Valjean escapes and heads to Montfermeil, where he is able to buy Cosette from the Thénardiens. The Thénardiens turn out to be a family of scoundrels who abuse Cosette while spoiling their own two daughters, Eponine and Azelma. Valjean and Cosette move to a run-down part of Paris.

Marius Pontmercy is a young man who lives with his wealthy grandfather, M. Gillenormand. Because of political differences within the family, Marius has never met his father, Georges Pontmercy. After his father dies, however, Marius learns more about him and comes to admire his father's democratic politics. Angry with his grandfather, Marius moves out of Gillenormand's house and lives as a poor young law student. While in law school, Marius associates with a group of radical students, the Friends of the ABC, who are led by the charismatic Enjolras. One day, Marius sees Cosette at a public park. It is love at first sight, but the protective Valjean does his utmost to prevent Cosette and Marius from ever meeting. Their paths cross once again, however, when Valjean makes a charitable visit to Marius's poor neighbors, the Jondrettes. The Jondrettes are in fact the Thénardiens, who have lost their inn and moved to Paris under an assumed name. After Valjean leaves, Thénardier announces a plan to rob Valjean when he returns. Alarmed, Marius alerts the local police inspector, who turns out to be Javert. The ambush is foiled and the Thénardiens are arrested, but Valjean escapes before Javert can identify him.

Thénardier's daughter Eponine, who is in love with Marius, helps Marius discover Cosette's whereabouts. Marius is finally able to make contact with Cosette, and the two declare their love for each other. Valjean, however, soon shatters their happiness. Worried that he will lose Cosette and unnerved by political unrest in the city, Valjean announces that he and Cosette are moving

to England. In desperation, Marius runs to his grandfather, M. Gillenormand, to ask for M. Gillenormand's permission to marry Cosette. Their meeting ends in a bitter argument. When Marius returns to Cosette, she and Valjean have disappeared. Heartbroken, Marius decides to join his radical student friends, who have started a political uprising. Armed with two pistols, Marius heads for the barricades.

The uprising seems doomed, but Marius and his fellow students nonetheless stand their ground and vow to fight for freedom and democracy. The students discover Javert among their ranks, and, realizing that he is a spy, Enjolras ties him up. As the army launches its first attack against the students, Eponine throws herself in front of a rifle to save Marius's life. As Eponine dies in Marius's arms, she hands him a letter from Cosette. Marius quickly scribbles a reply and orders a boy, Gavroche, to deliver it to Cosette.

Valjean manages to intercept the note and sets out to save the life of the man his daughter loves. Valjean arrives at the barricade and volunteers to execute Javert. When alone with Javert, however, Valjean instead secretly lets him go free. As the army storms the barricade, Valjean grabs the wounded Marius and flees through the sewers. When Valjean emerges hours later, Javert immediately arrests him. Valjean pleads with Javert to let him take the dying Marius to Marius's grandfather. Javert agrees. Javert feels tormented, torn between his duty to his profession and the debt he owes Valjean for saving his life. Ultimately, Javert lets Valjean go and throws himself into the river, where he drowns.

Marius makes a full recovery and is reconciled with Gillenormand, who consents to Marius and Cosette's marriage. Their wedding is a happy one, marred only when Valjean confesses his criminal past to Marius. Alarmed by this revelation and unaware that it was Valjean who saved his life at the barricades, Marius tries to prevent Cosette from having contact with Valjean. Lonely and depressed, Valjean takes to his bed and awaits his death. Marius eventually finds out from Thénardier that Valjean saved Marius's life. Ashamed that he mistrusted Valjean, Marius tells Cosette everything that has happened. Marius and Cosette rush to Valjean's side just in time for a final reconciliation. Happy to be reunited with his adopted daughter, Valjean dies in peace.

REHEARSAL AND SHOW DATES

Show dates are currently being arranged with venues, and are Fridays (evenings) and Saturdays (matinees and evenings) in June 2019. There will be no performance on Saturday June 15th due to a number of our people being away, and a large annual festival in Brixham making it very unlikely to get significant local theatre audiences on that day.

In the first rehearsal, which is mandatory for all, we will distribute printed scripts, sort out actors agreements, and have a full-team readthrough.

Due to this production involving French names and places, the first read through will be a session where everyone who needs assistance with pronunciation or meanings, can get requisite help.

We do expect a high amount of attendance at rehearsals, 75% or above. This is because not only is it important for you to perfect your performance, but other people need to practice with you. Everyone learns at different speeds and in different ways, so even if you have your role perfect, it is still your duty to attend to assist your fellow cast (we are a team!).

Sometimes things happen, and you cannot make it (someone is ill, the car or bus broke down...) in which case it is common courtesy to let us know. If you no-show more than once, or are missing a high percentage of rehearsals, we reserve the right to re-cast the role without further consultation

With most of us being professional or aspiring professional actors, we understand that sometimes you may need to be at another performance or film shoot. If this is the case, please let us know as soon as you can in advance.

Attendance at the performances, is of course mandatory.

We love to promote what we are doing – in fact it is necessary in order to get shows out and about, and the audiences in, but please do not share the scripts outside the team without permission, or production/ rehearsal images other than those shown on our public social media.

Rehearsals take place at Chestnut Community Centre (where you came to audition) . Doors are always open half an hour before so that you can arrive and get ready for the start!

Rehearsal times are

Wednesday evenings – 6.30pm – 9.30pm

Sunday afternoons – 12.30pm – 5.00pm

Coffee, tea, squash and biscuits are available at all rehearsals. .

The centre has toilets, a small kitchenette with fridge, and outside parking spaces.

Free wifi access is also available (please ask committee member for the passcode).

Rehearsals are at

Chestnut Community Centre, 1-3 Poplar Close, Brixham, Devon TQ5 9NJ.

ROLES BEING CAST

The current roles are still (at the time of publication) open for casting. All of these are male roles. Since we have passed the time of our main auditions, these are now being auditioned by arrangement, and as soon as possible. All of these roles, regardless of size are pivotal to the story.

Other than Thenadier, Marius and Grantaire, it is possible, with costume/ makeup changes to play more than one role. We also all take on minor “one line” roles elsewhere in the production. We state a wide playing-age range, in order to be as flexible as we possibly can.

Thenadier

Thenadier is a main character who appears through the production (see synopsis). A cunning, scheming but less than successful crook, Thenadier also has a mildly comedic aspect. Age 30-60

The Bishop

Bishop Myriel appears in the first half of the production, a smaller but pivotal role (see synopsis), he forgives Valjean for robbing his house, and in so doing, inspires Valjean to live a life of hope and kindness. Age 40 - 80

Brevet

A tough, brutal convict, who is overshadowed in prison by Valjean, Brevet is harsh, violent appearing twice in Act 1, and once in the early part of Act 2. Age 30-60

Champmanthieu

A vagrant with severe learning difficulties, who is mistaken for Jean Valjean. Appears in one scene in Act 1. Age 30-70

Marius

An idealistic young student in Paris, Marius joins the student uprising, but falls in love with Valjean's adopted daughter, Cosette. Marius appears in Act 2 only. Age 18-25

Grantaire.

Another of the students and revolutionaries, Grantaire is essentially a drunken cynic, and is killed at the barricades with Enjolras and a number of the other rebels, Appears in act 2 only. Age 18-30

WHAT HAPPENS ON AUDITION DAY

NOTE: Once you have read the character list above, please email us on southdevonplayers@gmail.com for audition sides, from the script, for the characters which interest you. Please note that we will also have copies available at rehearsals if needed. We do not expect you to learn the script, but are making the sides available in order to allow interested cast to prepare before the audition day, if they wish. We also welcome people who want to cold-read from the script on the day. (either is fine).

Free tea, coffee, squash and biscuits are on hand for all.

You are more than welcome to audition for more than one role. (in fact, we prefer it). Do note that if you were not selected for one role, but we feel that you would be excellent in another, you may be offered that other role. If you have any specific preferences with regard to types of role, please add them on your audition form so that they can be taken into account.

We are casting the entire production. We do not “pre-cast” or have “hidden castings”; therefore all stated roles are available to be cast. If you cannot attend the stated audition, please contact us to arrange an audition during the week before.

We do not accept video auditions, or IMDb links, we like to meet you, and for you to meet us. This is also so that we can look at how you work with other actors in scenes where you may be cast together.

Auditions begin at the stated time. We will start with a brief discussion about the production, where you have the opportunity to ask any questions about the production and team. You will also get to meet the admin team, and director .

The auditions will run in reading in groups from script excerpts. We may ask you to read in as well for other roles.

If you are concerned about visiting and meeting new people, you are welcome to bring a friend to the auditions. Actors aged under 16 are required to attend with a parent or legal guardian.

Please keep phones switched off at auditions, so as not to distract yourself or others.

Key things that we look for in auditions

- 1) Timely arrival
- 2) Bringing diary, and pen, and completed audition form.
- 3) Reading the script with expression. (you do not need to second guess what we might have in our minds eye,) only read with expression as you interpret it. Expressionless reading, treating the script as a list of words, is something that will take down a lot of marks.
- 4) Being pleasant and civil to everyone. In our team we often have everyone from complete beginners who have never acted before, through to actors who have appeared in named Hollywood roles. We all work together as a pleasant team. We also have a strong ethos of appropriate social behaviour both in our team and when out and about among the public.
- 5) Enthusiasm.

We audition everyone who attends , so please be aware this could take any amount of time.

We expect to be able to inform you of your success or otherwise , within a couple of days.

We decide on the same day so you are welcome to wait and find out there and then.

Rehearsals are at

Chestnut Community Centre, 1-3 Poplar Close, Brixham, Devon TQ5 9NJ.

EXPECTATIONS OF CAST & CREW

(stated after past misunderstandings as to what we can accept in the organisation)

We cast on ability, quality of audition, enthusiasm & commitment, and looking at good pleasant social / professional skills.

Regardless of your previous experience, we look for your enthusiasm and ability to participate in a professional quality production.

You will need to be able to learn your role, including script, characterisation, cues, and movement/ action etc, as required for the character. You will also be expected to wear provided costume in the productions.

Timely attendance at the vast majority of rehearsals, excluding unexpected emergencies, is also a requirement. We rehearse and perfect the show as a team and cannot achieve that if people miss rehearsals on a regular basis.

We also require a good standard of acceptable social behaviour; respect and kindness between cast and crew members (in a nutshell, treating others as you wish to be treated), respectful treatment of the public, and of performance/ rehearsal venues (being polite, keeping places neat).

We do not permit actors or crew to rehearse or perform while under the influence of behaviour-altering substances (alcohol, drugs, etc), and we also have a strict ban on bullying in any form, and sexual impropriety.

PAY/ RENUMERATION

Photos, videos, audio recordings (available as soon as possible, still images are on ongoing basis)

Watermarked promotional photos and videos used on our public social media can be used for the portfolios and demo reels of those persons in the images. These are made available on an ongoing basis.

We will get the theatre show filmed and photographed, with the footage not only being added to our site and social media, but also being available to you.

Images, and recordings provided for portfolio use, are for the use of those people depicted in them, only, and may not be used by any other company or organisation, with the sole exception of a performer's regular casting agent, and must at all times be credited to the photographer or videographer who created the image, and The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company.

Other

We are happy to provide references, upon completion of the production, for your ongoing work/ shows/ college & University.

We also make every effort to invite reviewers and representatives of the press to our shows, and you will be provided with copies of, or online links to, all press, or reviews mentioning your performance.

Profit-share: Theatre

Profit shares are the ticket-take for the shows, less the venue hire. This will be made available to the cast, as soon as we have received our money from the theatres/ ticket-sales sites, in an equally shared amount between all cast. Sales reports will be made available as soon as received.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT.

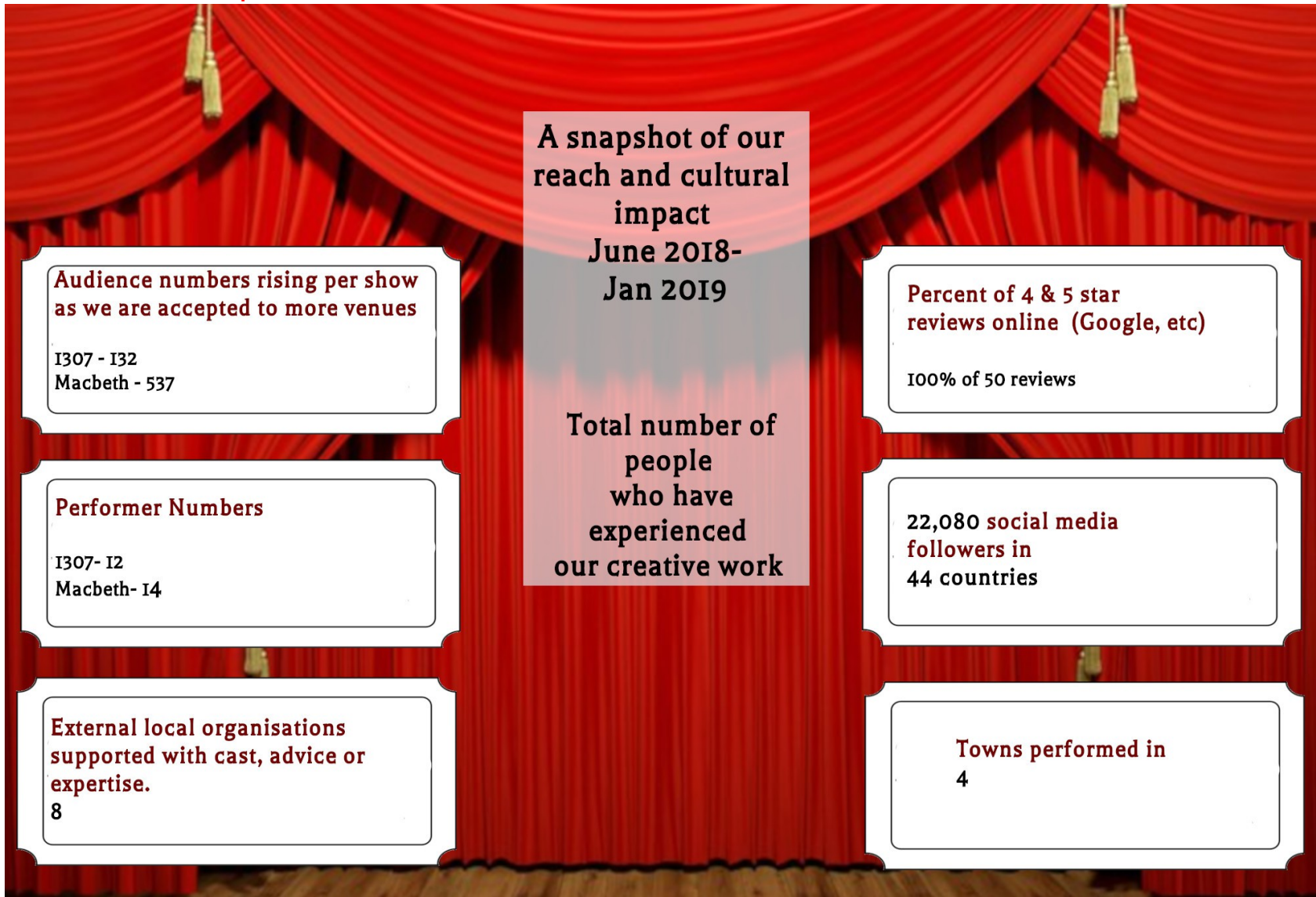
Unless stated in a specific character description, we welcome people of all backgrounds to audition, and to be considered on an equal basis.

SENSITIVE CONTENTS

We always state upfront what content in the script may cause concern, or offence, or which some people may wish to know in advance.

- Description of and on stage depiction of violence (actors taking on those roles will be expected to attend scheduled training for action scenes)
There are no nude or sexual scenes in this production. There are, however, scenes of physical violence, confrontation, and some mild verbal sexual innuendo.

Stats, Facts & Impact



Where it all began: Brief history & Background of the South Devon Players

We were founded during the winter of 2005-2006, by four local actors. Struggling to find opportunities beyond those offered by annual amateur musicals, we decided to try to start our own.

We started with very little; one of us, who owned a car was recruited to transport as much as the rest of us could “clear out” at home to a car-boot sale. This gave us starting funds of £80. In the meantime, we also found a small rehearsal space at the local Royal British Legion social club. Researching local history and discovering the court records of a 17th Century scandal in the nearby town of Totnes, provided material for our first script. And thus we began our journey.

Over the years we have encountered many challenges. Despite good reviews for our work, we found it very difficult, as a new organisation, to find good venues, and were heavily limited by public perceptions of what the quality of a show in a church hall would be like, thus finding ourselves usually performing to audiences of around 10 or 12 people, and unable to attract the programme managers of actual theatres so that they could see our work.

The first big change came in 2013, when we first performed our production of *Les Miserables; The Memoirs of Jean Valjean*; a script we wrote ourselves, based on Victor Hugo's novel. During our tour to local church halls, a producer from London came to see our show. Within 24 hours, he had emailed us, telling us how impressed he was with the show and how more people should see it. He paid for us to take the show to the Palace Theatre in Paignton. We reprised the show, to excellent audiences who now willingly came, now that they could see us in a theatre instead of a church hall.

The glass ceiling of finding venues was broken. We were slowly able to move away from church halls, and into theatres. More and better venues began to accept us, although some continued to avoid us until more recently, due to our small beginnings, and we continued to slowly grow.

While we have never been able to successfully obtain grant funding to expand as we would have liked, we have survived and managed to slowly grow with scrimping and saving from having stands of plants & bric a brac at table top sales, sponsored activities, etc, and learning how to recycle and repurpose clothing and items obtained from charity shops and on websites such as Freecycle.

We have worked on films, creating our own Arthurian feature film centring on the “dark knight” Mordred, which is now in post-production, and have now completed our production of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, to unfailingly strong reviews, some likening the quality of our productions to those at the Globe Theatre.

We have won national awards such as the All-England Epic Award winner in 2017, a national award which celebrates innovation in grassroots arts, as well as local awards like Torbay Together's Creativity In The Community award.

We have worked with a number of other local organisations, providing actors, historical recreations, photographers, voiceovers, and anything that we could help with, towards a shared goal of increasing participation and opportunity in the local arts.