Thanks to all the committee for all their diligent work last year. It was a pleasure to work with them and in my honest opinion Belmont has been well served in the last year. We have certainly honed our admin, with reliable marketing, publicity, email hits, substantial work to the website, our efficient Box Office and especially very good records of our audience attendances and where our audience gets to hear about us. I doubt other groups have such meticulous records.

It has been a busy year especially as, in preparing this report, I looked back over my diaries. Many social and promotional events in addition to our ongoing programme of plays.

I intend to go through the year setting out and commenting briefly on our years events.

Immediately after the 2014 AGM, Belmont manned one of their promotional stalls, where we go out and meet the public, telling them about our hobby, handing out leaflets. The first of our stalls was at the Radlett Family Day. Others we did throughout the year were the Roxeth Show in July followed by Pinner Village Show and Carters Steam Fair in September. These are hard work to set up and organise, but can be great fun, and we’d love to see more people involved.

In June, we took our production of “The Lamp” to the Welwyn festival where it was favourably received. A nerve racking experience for Mary and I. The light relief was Mel, totally out of his comfort zone, operating the lights. I don’t know who was more nervous

Also in June we participated in the “Watford Live” event in the High Street where we supported the Pump House day. The weather was horrendous but luckily the sun shone on our performers. Thanks to those that took part with monologues, guitar playing, singing and dancing.

In August the group were saddened at the death of Johnny Ansell who had been an active member and patron over many years. Belmont was well represented at his funeral in Leighton Buzzard. John was always lovely to meet up with and over the years, especially in our Harrow days, he helped with lighting and sound.

October saw our lively musical “Musical of Musicals” directed by Mike and Maggie. Thanks.

I personally thoroughly enjoyed being part of this fun show but unfortunately it didn’t quite hit the mark with our audiences. It was a parody of famous well loved musicals, very tongue in cheek. We achieved 64% audience figures which surprised us and was a wakeup call for the group. After a great run of audience figures, over 90% this made us think.

A dedicated team has worked hard throughout the year putting together a series of workshops to engage with the membership and hopefully attract new members and audience. The first of these was a lively Belly Dancing workshop in November 2014 run by Dawn.

Belmont had its usual 2 Christmas get-togethers organised by Mary, thanks. Both well attended and really got us in the festive mood.

January was launched with a story-telling workshop. A different venture, to explore if this could be a regular social event that we could carry forward. It was an absorbing evening, thanks Britt for organising this. We are keen to progress this. Watch this space.

“Remembrance” was our February 2015 production directed by Frankie. Thanks. This was a triumph, well received by our audiences and a very different play from our usual mould. It proved that our audiences are not as conservative as we might believe. There were no adverse comments or reactions to the ripe language or the themes of the play. We achieved 64% audience figures which, considering the controversial subject matter, was very creditable.

This play was our entry into the Barnet Festival and we are delighted to report that we won the award for the most ambitious choice of play plus Mary was nominated in the category of best actress and Judi was nominated in the category for best actress in a supporting role We were also nominated in the category of best set design and construction. So congratulations all round. Remembrance has been nominated for a NODA award under the category of best set.

At this point I’d like to say how well served Belmont is by our meticulous and hard work backstage and technical side.

In March we had our monologue workshop headed up by Mel. Thank you very much for your work and enthusiasm.

Hardly taking breath we held our unique “Focus Event” in April. This was an attempt to illicit from some of our audience and prospective members their views on how our society is run, ideas for the future and in some way hope that they can put their finger on ways we can expand and flourish. The members have loads of opportunities throughout the year to make their views known and come up with ideas. This would give us hopefully a different perspective. I’ll report on this Focus Event in a few moments.

Thanks to Mary for organising our annual Blue Bell Walk in April.

Our “Introduction to Shakespeare” workshop was very well attended and our thanks to Linda Hampson from East Lane Theatre Group for fronting this so professionally and to Mel for the organising. Maybe this might have changed some of our perceptions about viewing the Bards’ work as no-man’s land for Belmont?

Recently we promoted Belmont sat a packed U3A meeting, over 180 people attended and Bill R and I gave a power point presentation giving people an insight into our hobby and hopefully convincing people to come along and see us. We are always looking to give more such presentations so if you know of any leisure groups, colleges, social groups please let me know.

The group have just completed “Relative Values”, extremely well received by our audiences with nothing but praise. We achieved 81% audiences so we are well on the way back. Thanks Laurence for all your hard work. It was great to see new people onstage. I always believe audiences need to see new faces intermingled with the “oldies”

So, a very busy year for the group. Again thanks to the committee and members of the group who have really pitched in throughout the year. By feeding some of the organisation down to specific groups more people get to realise the amount of work involved in running such an organisation.

Another important development for the group is that we have become supporters of the Peace Hospice Care in Watford. This is at a very embryonic stage but we are hoping to develop this over the next few months. We have made a one donations to –date and as our relationship grows we will be getting more involved. Their chief executive took me on a conducted tour of their facilities and I came away feeling pleased and uplifted that Belmont, in some small part, is supporting such a worthwhile organisation. I hope the group feel the same.

We now look forward to the next show, for which the sold out signs have been dusted down. Please get your heads around publicity and start to sell the show to family and friends plus on social media.

There are more workshops planned, one on Musical History (November 2015) and then a lighting workshop in the auditorium on lighting design and rigging the lights for a show. More details to follow.

We are planning a garden party on Sunday 26th July so we can all relax in Estelle’s lovely garden.

That’s it folks 2014 to 2015 chairman’s report.

I hope this has been an honest precise of what the group has undertaken in the last year.

Inevitably we may have had the odd hiccup, things not going strictly to plan. We are only fallible but I and the committee will continue to work as diligently as we can for the group.

Next year there will be major changes which no doubt we will discuss in more detail in “The future of Belmont” towards the end of the evening.

Thanks