

It is important to understand what Sterts means and has meant to our children, families and school community over the years. Sterts offers exciting opportunities for our rural children to access live theatre as well as become involved with community theatre.

In Upton Cross we have a high number of disadvantaged families who would find it too costly to travel to Plymouth or Truro for such things, and as a school we would struggle to get our children to a theatre due to distance, cost of coaches, ticket prices, etc.

Sterts has enabled our children to perform on its stage to our children's families and friends. It is so exciting for children to perform on a real stage in front of a real live audience, the impact of this is immense.

Self-esteem, independence, group work and talent thrive in this environment. Having this opportunity for our children is invaluable and promotes lifelong learning and memories.

Emily Goodey

Head Teacher,
Upton Cross Primary School

Sterts has been enjoyed by three generations of my family and friends. I began attending as a teenager with my parents when it first opened. I now bring my children.

We've seen more performing arts at Sterts than at any other venue. It has enriched their education and their lives.

It is massively important to young people and also to the wider community. It is exactly the kind of cultural 'hub' that a rural area like ours needs, more now than ever.

Tamsin Kando

I remember going to Sterts to see Kneehigh's Peer Gynt. It had no roof back then. That production obviously had an impact on me. Sterts was a local, accessible, affordable option for me as a school student in the 1990s.

Had it not been there, I may not have realised theatre could be so elemental. I did a week's work experience there, chopping onions in the cafe, cleaning exhibition pieces, sorting shoes in the costume store, and went on to stage manage Miracle Theatre shows there.

I definitely credit Sterts with opening my young eyes to working on theatre outside of a black box.

My current job is Deputy Head of Production at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. Partially open to the elements, partially covered - it shares similarities to Sterts.

It is vital to keep these small venues alive, to offer local choice, keep creativity diverse.

Fay Powell-Thomas

Deputy Head of Production,
Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

I am ninety years old now, and I am so grateful to Ewart and Sterts for introducing me to the joys of theatre. But Sterts wasn't just a theatre - it was an arts centre, with a chance to discover a talent in music, dance, painting. Encouraging children and teenagers to achieve was always a priority and I am pleased to see that continues. I am proud to have been a part of it since the beginning.

Being a member of Sterts has been such a pleasure for me for so many years, and I feel I have achieved so much. It has been an important part of my life and I have made so many friends.

Dorothy Bricknell



FUNDERS

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Adrenalin Quarry • WH Bond • Coodes Solicitors • Cornwall Council • Cultivator,
Dainton • Feast Cornwall • Harlequin Cleaning • Hillfort School • Clare Milne Trust • Puckator
Real Ideas • Roddas • SITA Landfill Tax • Viridor Credits

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IMAGINE • CREATE • INSPIRE



40 Years of Nurturing Creativity in The Community

WITH TRURO 40 MILES TO THE WEST and Plymouth 25 miles to the east, Sterts serves a vast rural community of small towns and villages for whom no other similar facilities exist.

Over a period of 40 years there have been more than 100 Community Productions, with thousands of local performers taking part, and enjoyed by audiences from across the South West.

Our Audiences

Hundreds of visiting theatre and dance companies, bands, orchestras, comedians, schools performances and weekend festivals have attracted enthusiastic audiences.



I am a professional actress. Sterts was integral for discovering my passion for performance. From 2001-2013, I took part in various Sterts summer shows and attended many workshops and classes over the years. The people I met there gave me confidence in myself and my skills but also became life-long friends and mentors. Not only did I develop as a performer, but I grew as a person too. I learned how to work alongside others, be a leader, communicate successfully and find a voice.

Sterts is a unique and incredible asset to the South West, and I really don't think I would have pursued a career in the arts without its existence.

Eleanor Toms

Sterts Theatre Company

PRODUCTIONS TO DATE

A Bunch of Amateurs
A Flea In Her Ear
A Midsummer Night's Dream
A Night On Broadway
A View From The Bridge
A Voyage Around My Father
A Winter's Tale
After Miss Julie
Aladdin
Alice's Adventures In Wonderland
Amadeus
And Then There Were None
Annie
Arsenic & Old lace
Bedroom Farce
Blue Remembered Hills
Breakfast With Emma
Brother Jacques
Bugsy Malone
Calendar Girls
Children Of Eden
Cider With Rosie
Cold Comfort Farm
Company
Cornish Phoenix
Daisy Pulls It Off
DNA & It Snows
Don Giovanni
Educating Rita
Elegies For Angels
Fantastic Mr Fox
Fiddler On The Roof
Guys & Dolls
Habeas Corpus
Hamlet

Hi-de-Hi
Honk!
Into The Woods
Jamaica Inn
Jesus Christ Superstar
Joseph & His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat
King Charles III
King Lear
Lady Windermere's Fan
Les Misérables
Little Shop of Horrors
Lord Arthur Saville's Crime
Macbeth
Masterclass
Matilda
No Exit
Oh! What A Lovely War
Oklahoma!
Oliver
Othello
Our Country's Good
Peter Pan
Punks & Raging Queens
Return To The Forbidden Planet
Romeo And Juliet
Round And Round The Garden
Rumpelstiltskin
Scrooge
Season's Greetings
Shadowlands
Shrek
Sitting Pretty
Some Enchanted Evening
Stangers On A Train

Steel Magnolias
Stepping Out
Sweeney Todd
Tess Of The D'Urbervilles
The Accrington Pals
The Addams Family
The BFG
The Bords
The Crucible
The Darling Buds Of May
The Importance Of Being Ernest
The Ladykillers
The Lion In Winter
The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe
The Magic Flute
The Merchant Of Venice
The Pied Piper
The Railway Children
The Recruiting Officer
The Rivals
The Shearing Gang
The Sound Of Music
The Wind In The Willows
The Witches
The Wizard Of Oz
The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband
Threepenny Opera
Top Girls
Twelfth Night
Uncle Vanya
Under Milk Wood
Veronica's Room
Wendy & Peter Pan



This special place is part of what makes Upton Cross and its wider community somewhere good to live in, good to work in and, perhaps most important of all, somewhere good to grow up.

At a time when the development and maintenance of activity-based communities has never been more important, the availability of live theatre, music, dance and other artistic experiences is a resource to be protected and nurtured.

Peter Woodward,
former Centre Director



Talented Young People

2016: Cornwall Community Foundation funded eight outstanding musicians under their Young and Talented Cornwall scheme to perform in a professional setting in *Some Enchanted Evening*.

Youth Theatre

Sterts runs three weekly theatre sessions for different age groups aged 7 to 25 and a dedicated singing group for all ages of children and young people.

In 2020, *Hell's Mouth*, a play by Nick Darke, was rehearsed virtually with the youth theatre and was then one of the first live shows to be performed in the country as venues reopened post-covid.

Many of the participants said the Zoom rehearsals had "kept them sane" during lockdown.

Visiting Professionals Use The Theatre

Midsummer Dance

Choreographer Lois Taylor relocated to Sterts in the 1980s because of the facilities and the potential to develop dance in the area.

Notably the Midsummer Dance Festival ran for five years (2016-2021), bringing national touring companies, professional local dance companies, community dancers, recent dance graduates of University of Falmouth and youth groups from Devon and Cornwall to the centre.

Bodmin Moor Poetry Festival

Bodmin Moor Poetry Festival ran for seven years (2012-2019), featuring local, national and international poets, including former Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy. The events attracted enthusiastic audiences to both performances and participatory workshops.



Scary Little Girls, a Cornish production company that celebrates the voices of women and tells diverse stories to diverse audiences, needed a unique venue to support it with rehearsal, production and performance space and give it the invaluable benefit of its staff, volunteers and experience to allow it to evolve.

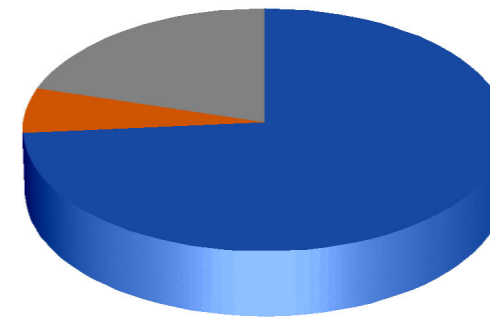
Sterts made this to happen, supporting two landmark shows that went on tour nationally and changed our profile in the industry as a whole; it was game changing for us.

We are now able to take on jobs of any scale, in a wide variety of communities and environments which has given us a more robust business model and helped us to blend our income streams. We are hugely grateful to Sterts.

Rebecca Mordan
Artistic Director, Scary Little Girls

Since 2013 Sterts has earned 73% of its income from tickets and related sales. Grants have in the main enabled improvements to site facilities to improve community usage.

Income 2013 - 2022



■ Earned Income ■ Donations ■ Grants

*Sterts holds a special place in my heart. As a young actor just starting out, I was fortunate enough to land a lead role in *Gonamena*, directed by Kneehigh's Simon Harvey. It was an incredible opportunity to work with some of Cornwall's finest actors and hone my skills. Sterts also introduced me to a warm and supportive community of performers and helped me build valuable connections.*

Thanks to the confidence and experience gained at Sterts I was able to join the National Youth Theatre. Performing at the 2012 Olympic Games was just the beginning - I went on to earn a first class drama degree and eventually started my own award-winning interactive studio, Megaverse.

I'll always be grateful for the formative experiences and unforgettable memories I had at Sterts. It's a place that truly nurtures talent and fosters a sense of belonging.

Ben Carlin



USING GRANTS TO IMPROVE THE SITE

Improving Accessibility

Changing Places Award 2019

www.changing-places.org

Sterts was awarded grants of £20,000 from Cornwall Council and the Claire Milne Trust to install a "changing places" toilet which is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

This is part of a national scheme for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities or with physical disabilities, who often need extra equipment and space to allow them to use toilets safely and comfortably.

Audiences, performers and the community all benefit from this facility.



Backstage Improvements

Sterts invited Access Theatre, a company of disabled actors, to advise on how best to improve backstage facilities.

In 2016, with £143,000 of grants from Viridor Credits, Cornwall Council and individual donations, new showers, accessible toilets and dressing rooms were installed.

A More Accessible Box Office

2019: Cornwall Council gave Sterts a grant of £15,000 for the new Box Office, re-purposing the redundant cricket pavilion from Looe as the basic structure.

A Replacement Canopy

With grants from SITA Landfill tax, Cornwall Council, and a Supporters' 100 Club, a new canopy was installed in 2014, enabling all-weather, year-round performances to continue in a beautifully sculptural space.

Sterts Volunteers

2022: 200 community performers/members, 100 volunteers, 40 Sterts singers, 80 Youth Theatre members.

A team of 100 volunteers is the backbone of Sterts' operations. With an average of 90 nights, Sterts volunteers donate around 15,000 hours of their time per year, covering every task, from selling tickets to running the bar, showing people to their seats, keeping them safe on site, selling drinks & ice-creams during intervals and cleaning the theatre after a show.

In addition, there are chaperoning duties, work days, fundraising events and covering the reception desk. Volunteers undertake online training in safeguarding, manual handling, Covid management, slips and trips, food hygiene, customer service, and duty manager.



Volunteer Cornwall Awards



Sterts volunteers have been either nominated or runners up every year since 2012 and won three times in 2017, 2018 and 2019.



I started as a front of house volunteer at Sterts in 2009. I had never done any volunteering before, but soon found my feet and enjoyed interacting with the audience members and enjoyed the feeling of being part of the Sterts family. I discovered a small talent for being able to chat to complete strangers and hopefully make them feel really welcome at Sterts. When time allows I also enjoy working in the grounds, helping to keep them tidy. There is an enormous wealth of amateur talent in our area which must be nurtured in every way possible and Sterts is so very good at doing that - it really has become a centre of excellence.

Sue Vernon



On a foggy, soggy September evening on the wetter side of the equinox and the wrong side of Bodmin Moor for some of us, we came a fair old way for our first visit to Sterts Theatre at Upton Cross - and drove home happy and glad we made the effort. The setting is beautiful; the small but vibrant village perched above those deeply wooded valleys to the east of Cornwall which us westerners miss, perhaps more than we realise.

The auditorium itself is a triumph of design, beautifully tucked into a scrape in the hillside, covered with industrial tent material, stretched taught over a heavy-duty girder frame. The acoustic is also excellent.

The whole vibe is friendly and community driven.

Dave May, Poltreen 2021

The Hall Gallery

In the early 1990s the Hall family donated the cost of building what is now known as The Hall Gallery. Works by local professional, national and international artists, makers & photographers have been exhibited, including Picasso and Paula Rego prints. Gallery sales have provided an income stream, as have annual Christmas Craft Fairs.



My daughter is home educated, and Sterts has provided her with a brilliant opportunity to be involved with a large-scale community youth production, something ordinarily hard to achieve in a home education environment in rural Cornwall.

I have been delighted to see her growing in confidence, making new friends, developing a love of performance, learning about how a theatre production materialises, and last but not least having a great deal of fun. It has clearly been a very positive experience for her. Sterts plays a vital part in the wider community - bringing together children and young people of different ages, and uniting them with a real sense of group identity and belonging.

Holly Strawbridge



Community Uses of The Site

Wild Tribe www.wildtribeoutdoors.com

Sterts is a regular training venue for Wild Tribe leaders. Learning outside can enhance the health and wellbeing of children, as well as encouraging them to be more active. The course runs up to ten times per year, delivering practical and theory sessions on health and safety, site development, and linking outdoor learning across a range of curriculum subjects. It teaches the skills of fire lighting, cooking outdoors, use of tools, knots and shelter building.

Weddings & Funerals

With its proximity to St Paul's Church and F.D. Hall & Son Undertakers, Sterts is a regular venue for the community to hold big parties, community celebrations and wakes.



Young People: Schools

Upton Cross, St Cleer, Coads Green, Pensilva, Hillfort and St Martin's primary schools, along with Liskeard and Callington community colleges regularly attend Sterts family show matinees at reduced ticket prices. One or two relaxed performances for vulnerable audiences are also offered each year. As an example, 1400 young people saw matinee performances of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat in December 2022. Small, local rural schools such as Upton Cross and St Cleer sometimes need a large creative space for their whole-school productions. Sterts facilitates work experience opportunities each summer to local students and hosted an internship funded by Real Ideas and Cultivator in 2018 and 2019.

Home Schooling

Three informal groups of home-schooled children regularly take part in Sterts Youth Theatre and productions.