

# Charlton Kings Community Players Newsletter

November 2018



## Special Edition for 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations

### An important milestone for the Players

Members, supporters and invited guests enjoyed an evening of chat and entertainment at a 'Bring and Share Supper' to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Players.

The entertainment included songs from the productions and there were solo and group performances of favourite pieces.



The Players earlier roots were in the 1980s when a group of people active in the local schools and churches came together to perform locally to raise

money for particular projects. This activity developed into an official community unincorporated group which came into being in 1993. Its work has grown from strength to strength providing variety in its choice of productions, street theatre, and opportunities for everyone to participate whether it is 'walking the boards', joining the technical crew, designing costume, 'front of house', promotional activities – indeed all aspects of what is necessary for any successful production. The Players have a distinctive logo which was originally designed by Ken Venus, and the crosses represent the five churches in Charlton Kings at that time.

From its earliest roots to today more than 600 individuals have been involved in its activities at different times and it retains a dedicated and active group of members. Generations of local families have been involved and talent has been developed in the performing arts.



Peter Grainger, a founding member of the Players, in his address explained the origins of the Players and provided both serious and amusing anecdotes. Peter has written and directed a significant number of The Players' productions which have captivated audiences in the community and involved people of all ages. He has been instrumental in encouraging new directors, producers and authors.



Jane Jones, Chair of the Players said: "As Chair of the Charlton Kings Community Players, it was a privilege to welcome over 50 people to the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration held in St Mary's Parish Centre. Our guests included local clergy and

representatives of local businesses who had supported the Players by selling tickets and advertising our activities, and it was a great opportunity to thank them for their efforts.

I have always felt that one of the great strengths of The Players is the community involvement and the willingness of the members to devote their time, energy and skills to our productions. Teamwork is vital to any production's success and The Players excel at teamwork in my experience and this helps to make our productions as good as they can possibly be. It is with great pleasure that we can note that our younger members are now taking on the important roles such as Stage Manager and Director, and we have a lot to look forward to in the future. I'd like to thank everyone who makes The Players what we are. We have raised over £25,000 for local and national charities in the last 25 years and have entertained out local community royally in the process."

Martyn Fry reflects: "Peter Grainger and I, together with a number of other local stalwarts, met in March 1992 at Charlton Kings Junior School, of which I was Headmaster at the time, to discuss the setting up of a new Music and Drama Group. The meeting was well attended and under the Chairmanship of the very enthusiastic Peter Grainger the new group was inaugurated and a committee set up. I was charged with the task of writing a constitution which has evolved as the Players grew. The whole idea came about following on a discussion between Peter, myself and several others having been inspired by Wendy Griffiths' work with people from the locality on two previous productions *'Rock Nativity'* and *'From Pharaoh to Freedom'* which were staged at Balcarras School.

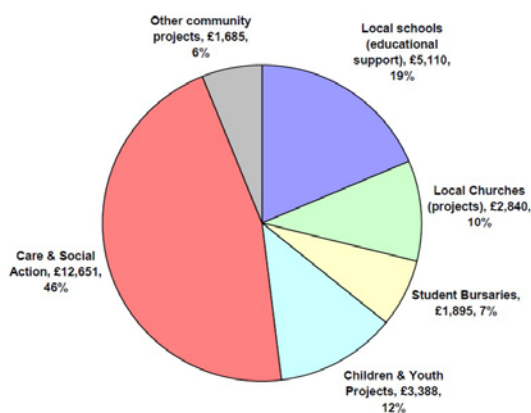
The group's aim was based on *'fun, faith and fellowship'* and was to be known as Charlton Kings Community Players (CKCP). We wanted to build on what Wendy had already achieved, and we had been amazed and gratified with the amount of talent the 'village' showed. We felt that talent needed a vehicle in which to show itself. A further aim was to encourage all ages and talents to take part: acting, music making, backstage work and front of house.

It was determined that our first production in the Winter of 1992 should be *'Toad of Toad Hall'* to be performed at St Edward's Junior School Hall. We felt this would fit the bill. It was a great success; a large cast of all ages 5 - 80, Mark Hockett starring as Toad, wonderful music

directed by Keith Mead, excellent lighting and sound arranged by Richard Mead, director Martyn Fry and Producer June Pearce." June was elected the first Chair of the Players at the AGM in April 1993 and Derek Pearce the first Treasurer.

The Players have now donated nearly £28,000 to charity (locally, nationally and internationally) and special local projects since their creation as a community unincorporated group. This represents the dedication and commitment of some 600 different people from Charlton Kings and Cheltenham over its 25 year history. Some of those people remain working with the Players from its very early roots in the 1980s prior to the adoption of its Constitution.

CKCP Charitable and Community Donations 1992 - 2018  
Total £27,569



### ***Lest We Forget***

***The WW1 Armistice:*** The Great War came to an end 100 years ago this November. The Players included a tribute in the programme for the anniversary evening. The Epilogue, *'After the Guns Fell Silent'*, was read from the 2014 production *'Let Us Remember'*.

### ***An important date for the Christmas Season 'Let Us Be Merry' 2018***

***To be held in  
Sacred Hearts Hall  
at 7.30 p.m. on  
30<sup>th</sup> November 2018***



A pot-pourri of Christmas songs, sketches, poems, readings & community carols. Featuring Charlton Kings Junior School Choir, The Wednesdays Singing Group, & Puzzlejug folk group.

**The charity this year is Charlton Kings Care Home to support their activities programme for the residents.**

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## The production challenges

**Bunkered** is a Cold War comedy by Lynn Brittney. A group of naval personnel who, during the Cold War, were monitoring the seas off the English coast, have been forgotten by the Admiralty and have carried on manning their bunker for twenty years drawing their pay and accumulating their pensions.

The crisis comes when the Chief Petty Officer decides the equipment needs to be in full working order before he retires, and brings in a handywoman to do the job. The equipment starts to send signals to the Admiralty and trainee marines led by a claustrophobic trainer are sent in. Chaos ensues.



There were a number of production challenges for the Production and Technical Teams to overcome

in putting on this play. All the action happens in the Cold War bunker, dating from the 1960s and the aim was to create a claustrophobic environment. We created a theatre out of the empty Performance Hall at St Edward's School by erecting staging kindly loaned by St Edward's School, Charlton Kings Junior School and CK Baptists Church. We used a large carpet from The Players' store on the floor to deaden the sound of the actors' feet on the wooden staging.

The set, used in the past for *'Murdered to death'* and *'Some Sunny Day'* was adapted to this production by putting grey trunking in for equipment, painting the door grey and putting up posters and a wonderful period map of the coast of Kent. All the furniture was grey to give the set a utilitarian feel. The floor area created was small, presenting challenges to the actors as a lot of action had to be confined to a small space. Black curtains on either side of the stage and curtains hung above it focussed the audience's attention on the bunker.



Props, the Stage Management Team and cast were able to wait behind the set.

During the performances, other challenges were presented to the Technical Team who had to create sound effects, lights had to come on and off at the right times, sonar equipment had to be shining in the actors' faces and make bleeping

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noises – all of which the Team provided admirably. The hurricane lamps proved a challenge to get working reliably. The Props Team had a large array of props to handle, including numerous trays of tea and biscuits which had to go on and off stage throughout the play. Costumes were enhanced by a few genuine accessories such as Wrens hats and handbag, authentic braid so that they really did look like naval uniforms.

Working on the Show was great fun – the cast, Production and Technical Teams worked well together to create the atmosphere of a period naval Cold War bunker, and I would like to thank all members of the Team who helped to create such a great space for the actors to work in and the back-up they needed to give brilliant performances.

**Jane Jones, Producer, 'Bunkered'**

Photostory book download at:

<http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Bunkered-photo-storybook.pdf>

## **Nazareth House, Charlton Kings Launch of residents' Poetry Book**

At the beginning of the year, Debbie Masling & I went along to Nazareth House to attend the launch of a book of poems entitled '*A Poet Tree*' that had been written by some of the residents with the help of their Activities Co-ordinator, Tim Drywood.

The Players had helped towards their project by passing on a donation that helped fund the publishing of the book.

We had a lovely time on a cold, wet January afternoon along with residents and their families, finding out from Tim how the idea had come about; how each poem had come together and listened to some of the poems being read.

From feedback received and the fun the residents had putting together the book, new poems have been written with plans underway to publish a further book in the near future.

This is just one example that shows how the Players can come together with other parts of the community in Charlton Kings in a creative way.

**Joyce Parsons and Debbie Masling**

## **WW2 Workshops for Schools**

A Workshop developed as part of the Production '*Some Sunny Day*', and supported by artefacts and materials collected for the exhibition mounted as part of the show, has been delivered as a contribution to St Edward's School History Day on 30<sup>th</sup> April and to St. John's Primary School on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

It was organised by Jane Jones and delivered by members of the Players.

### **Max Quick workshop**

Max Quick led a practical drama workshop for The Players on 21st March 2018 in the St Edward's School Drama Studios, Cirencester Road, Cheltenham. A group of people had an enjoyable evening.

**Linda Hurl organiser**



## **AGM**

The CKCP AGM took place on 25 April 2018 at the Baptists Church, Charlton Kings. The elected committee for 2018-2019:

**Chair – Jane Jones**

**Vice Chair – Geoff Ramshaw**

**Treasurer – Derek Palmer**

**Secretary – Fiona Connor**

**Publicity – Fiona Connor**

**Committee – Debbie Dundas,  
Jane Kane (co-opted), Debbie Masling,  
Joyce Parsons, Peter Ryan**

## **St Mary's Parish Profile**

A parish profile document has been produced which includes detail and links to ecumenical and other activity groups in the Parish.

You will find information recorded for the Players on pages 28-30.

## Street Drama 2018

### Walk of Witness

A performance of *'Veronica's Veil'* was delivered in the Precinct, Charlton Kings on Good Friday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

This was last presented in 2002. It is inspired by the legend of the woman who steps forward and wipes Christ's face as he is led to execution.



We were pleased to welcome to the cast some people who had not worked with us before. It was also gratifying to have a good age range represented. The format of a commentary over the PA system with action largely mimed worked well and we had a very positive response from the audience. We were also very grateful for the use of the Kings Hall as the late March weather this year was not good. This was the first time the Hall had been used for this event and proved to be a most suitable venue. Our thanks for its use go especially to Rob Reid representing the Charlton Kings Youth & Community Centre.

The cast and production team are listed in the photographic record of the event which may be downloaded from the Players web site.

<http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Walk-of-Witness-2018.pdf>

***Tony Jeans, author, Director & Producer***

## Community involvement

Members of the Players were involved in August as volunteers to support the Charlton Kings Senior Citizens' Welfare Committee *'Holiday at Home'*. This is an annual two day event held in the Parish Centre. Further information may be found on the committee's web site. <http://www.ckscwc.org.uk/>



### Alison Luna Bursary for Performing Arts

In honour of a dearly loved, distinguished and highly talented member of the Charlton Kings Community Players, who died in 2004, we offer each year one or more bursaries of £100-£150 to students of Performing Arts.

Applicants would normally be under 21, having been selected for a bona fide drama-related course which may include a backstage specialism. Exceptionally a more mature student, studying, say, writing or directing, could be considered. Priority will be given to residents of Charlton Kings or who were active locally but have moved away. Anyone who has acted or worked backstage effectively with the Players will have an advantage.

If you would like to apply for the Alison Luna Bursary, please include the following details:

1. details of your course and the location of your studies;
2. your reasons for choosing 'Performing Arts' and this particular course;
3. any future plans you may have for making use of the course after your studies;
4. your thoughts on how you may use the bursary.

A form is available at

<http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/contact-alison-lunar/>

### Play readings

The Players organise play readings through-out the year. You are invited to join us on these informal evenings and to help choose future productions. These are advertised on the web site and through the email contact list. Recent Play readings have been *'Treasure Island - almost a pantomime'* by Stewart Auty and *'Animal Farm'* by George Orwell (adapted by Ian Wooldridge).



## Support to other organisations

Elsie (tailor's figure form), who last appeared on stage in **'Bunkered'**, was loaned to the Deerhurst Flower Festival (August 2018). She was part of a display to commemorate the start of the NHS in 1948, and was dressed in the 1940s nurses' uniform worn by her in **'Some Sunny Day'**. The Festival raises money for the upkeep of Deerhurst and Apperley churches.

The Leckhampton Players were loaned various items from the CKCP costume store, and from personal collections, for their production for WW1 **'Lest We Forget'** (October 2018).

Charlton Kings Junior School was loaned Elsie wearing the Great War nurse's uniform worn in the commemorative production **'Let Us Remember'** (2014) for their project **'CKJS Remembers'** on the centenary of the end of WW1.

## CKCP Publications

Available on suitable media various CKCP publications (as pdf files)

Its **'Performance Trilogy'** being Production Details, Photographs, Programmes, from the earliest roots in the 1980s until April 2018.

Photo storybooks for the productions

**'The Rivals'** (2013)

**'Let Us Remember'** (2014)

**'Murdered to Death'** (2016)

**'Some Sunny Day'** (2017)

**'Bunkered'** (2018).

The local stories which underpinned the script for **'Some Sunny Day'**.

Contact Sandra and Tony Jeans at

[jeanstda@jeanstda.plus.com](mailto:jeanstda@jeanstda.plus.com)

## Other Publications

Available via email as a pdf file

**'New Slants on the Word'** which contains performance pieces by Tony Jeans, Peter Grainger and Lynne Glover. Some of these pieces have been performed as Street Theatre in Charlton Kings on Good Friday as part of the **'Walk of Witness'** organised by the local Churches, and as part of **'Let Us Be Merry'**, the annual Christmas Show put on by CKCP.

Contact: Tony Jeans [jeanstda@jeanstda.plus.com](mailto:jeanstda@jeanstda.plus.com)

## Fiona Mead

We are very sad at the death of Fiona Mead. The Mead family has been part of the Charlton Kings Community Players from the very beginning.

Fiona shared her home, for choir rehearsals, and her family: Keith our Director of Music and Richard with his involvement with acting, music, lighting and sound.

She supported our shows and plays and was background support for Keith in his commitment to The Players through the many varied and ambitious productions we have undertaken over the years.

At the Memorial Service held on 9<sup>th</sup> November in the Charlton Kings Baptist Church, Richard spoke of the book she researched and wrote, **'Pigs, Peas, and Poetry – How a Gloucestershire Village School gained International Recognition'**.

It was through that book that Fiona put together a number of smaller stories for a Players publication of local stories from WW2 and the 40s. This provided material for the script which was developed for the production **'Some Sunny Day'**, performed in 2017. The stories described boosting food production, blackout arrangements, air raid shelters, gas mask practice, helping on farms, fund raising for the war effort, the important taking-in of evacuees with the V1 and V2 threats and that most important activity in communities – *'the local pig and poultry clubs'* so essential to survival and good health at a time of war.

Fiona was a volunteer at the Gloucestershire Archives and came across the story of Maisemore school, the achievements of the headmaster and the children when undertaking some particular research on the village school's logbooks.

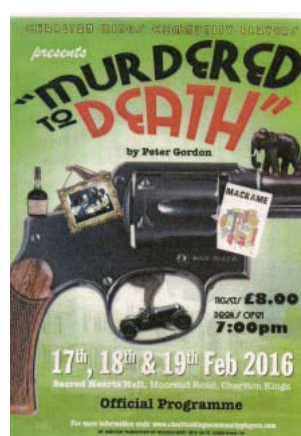
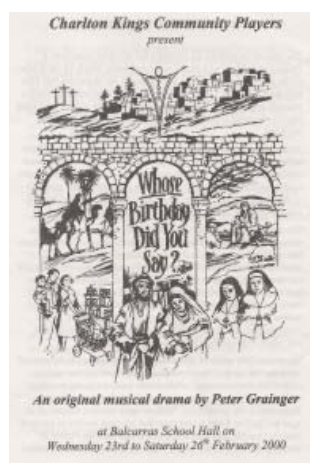
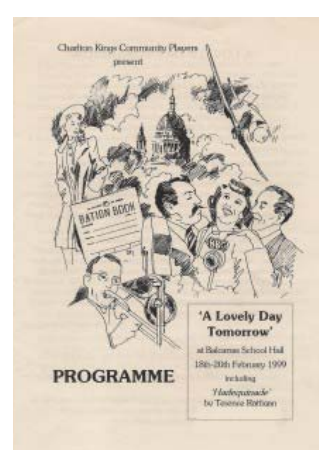
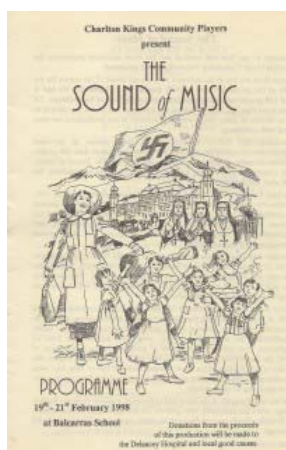
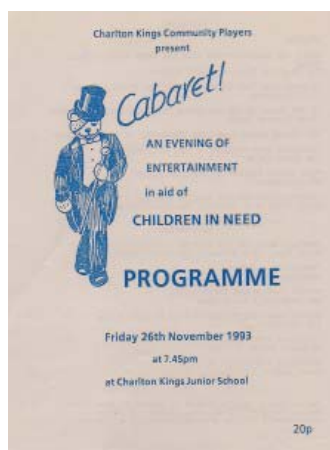
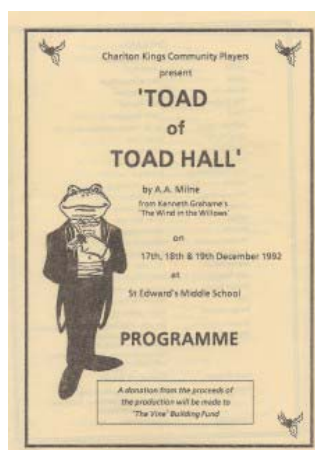
**Sylvia Fry and Sandra Jeans**

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**'Pigs, Peas, and Poetry – How a Gloucestershire Village School gained International Recognition'** is published by Amberley Publishing, Stroud (2011).  
ISBN 978-1-4456-0455-8

The book is out of stock on the Publishers web site, but copies may be found through Amazon.

# Looking Back - some programme designs



## CKCP Publications: The 'Performance Trilogy'

contains scans of all the programmes, a selection of photographs for each production and a distillation of the productions from the earliest roots to April 2018.

Available on request on 'memory stick' together with all photo storybooks.



# Looking Back - some of the productions



'Toad of Toad Hall' 1992



'The Vigil' 1994



'An Inspector Calls' 1996



'Sound of Music' 1998



'Whose Birthday Did You Say?' 2000



'Oliver' 2006



'Murder in the Cathedral' 2004



'A Midsummer Night's Dream' 2008



'My Fair Lady' 2010



'Let Us Remember' 2014