

The Players Celebration of the Christmas Season for the Community



The Charlton Kings Community Players have been providing a special celebration at Christmastide for many years. For the last eighteen years it has taken the form of a one night production called ***Let Us Be Merry***, which was originally put on in Charlton Kings Junior School and then moved to Sacred Hearts Hall as its regular venue.

Its origins go back to the original formation of the Players when a celebration of Christmas was taken into the local residential homes. Songs, music and readings were a main feature of programmes put on at Grevill House, Nazareth House, Coopers Court, Bafford House, Gilbert Ward Court and the Harper Clinic as early as 1991 and through to the end of the 1990s. *Community theatre was taken out into the community and was well supported.*

A series of developmental workshops was organised by The Players in 2000 and 2001 to support and encourage even wider participation by people interested in working together in the performing arts. At the same time the initiative was taken to create a regular Christmas production available to the wider community. The Charlton Kings Senior Citizens' Welfare Committee minibus was available to bring residents to the entertainment. Funds raised from a modest entrance fee each year are donated to charities or local community projects. Carol singing continues to be taken each year into the residential homes.

The programmes for ***Let Us Be Merry*** each year are varied showing the wealth of ideas and talent available. They have used published material, original plays and other works by members of the Players, and others who share their work within the wider community. Monologues and poems are read; solos are sung; musical instruments are played and singing groups invited to perform. Key musical anchors for the shows have been the ***CKCP Singers*** and the folk group ***Puzzlejug*** (the latter also appearing in their medieval guise of ***Waytes & Measures***).



The local community is encouraged to contribute to the programme each year and to become members of the Players through a regular contribution to the productions and associated activities. The ***Let Us Be Merry*** star has become a regular identifier for the Christmas Show on posters and other literature and a welcome sight in local shops and on church notice boards.

CKCP Publications: The 'Performance Record' (production detail, programmes, photographs) <http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com>