

## Charlton Kings Community Players welcome the Christmas Season

Local people were able to enjoy an evening of songs, readings and sketches at the Players' 2019 production of **'Let Us Be Merry'**. This has become a local tradition, is increasingly popular with audiences of all ages and a means for local groups to perform together. The programme always includes well-loved carols so that everyone may take part. People arrive early and production teams work hard to get everything ready in time for the evening performance. This year was no exception as people took up their seats and arrived with family and friends.

**Long John Silver** from the recent production of **'Treasure Island – almost a pantomime'** was the Master of Ceremonies. The programme for the evening was lively and varied, and items were chosen to portray the many aspects of Christmas and the winter season. It is always developed through open invitation in the community, and planning takes place during the summer. The theme which emerged this year was 'the star' and 'the stable'.



The Ladies choir sang a most entertaining piece dressed as Christmas cooks following the first audience carol. Members of the Charlton Kings Junior School choir then took the stage, accompanied by guitar, for the well-known **'Cradle Song – Away in a Manger'**. Their fast-paced singing of favourite **'Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer'** increased the buzz in the audience and they left the stage to much applause. The seriously funny sketch **'No room at the stable'** created much laughter as the travelling salesman got cross about there being no room in the stable to park his donkey, and complained about the crowds of rowdy shepherds in the town.



People who sang various popular Christmas songs as solos, duets or with others harmonising, were much appreciated by the audience as well as those sung by the a local community singing group **'The Wednesdays'**. The readers told various tales associated with the Christmas story from sheep who made their way to the stable by themselves then followed by an anxious shepherd boy, to a Norwegian tale about an old Advent calendar, to the barn where the Nativity took place and to a visit from St Nicholas. A locally written pantomime was the focus of much laughter and involvement from the audience, especially since it featured the problems of getting the right people to play particular parts!

**'Puzzlejug'**, who have featured in various guises in the Christmas shows over two decades, rounded off the evening with a range of traditional local folk songs. A good time was had by all with hot drinks, mince pies and shortbread available in the interval.

Thanks to Sacred Hearts Church for use of the Hall and running the bar.  
Thanks to all Players' members and supporters who participated on or offstage in this production.

Images: Wikimedia Commons - Neal Herbert; Murillo (1650) Museo del Prado  
A detailed history of LUBM and all Players' productions may be found in its 'Performance Record' trilogy publication. <http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/>