

# Charlton Kings Community Players Newsletter

## April 2020



### *The performing arts during lock down...*

Life during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) lock down is challenging, but communities are working together to give support wherever it is needed. This is a particularly very difficult time for the performing arts whose income streams have dried up, but plays, operas, and concerts have been made available for free on-line and people have continued to enjoy recordings of popular productions. *As they say, the show must go on...*

Amateur dramatic groups have had to halt planned productions with the hope that it will soon be possible to put on their usual community programmes. By now the Players would have chosen, and have in rehearsal, their next offering following their highly successful *'almost a pantomime'*, ***'Treasure Island'***, but there is still a chance there will be entertainment on offer by the Autumn. Then it is to be hoped that the usual Christmas show, ***'Let Us Be Merry'***, will be on offer in December.

Play reading has been possible via video link, and a group of people enjoyed a very successful virtual reading session recently. The dates of future sessions will be notified through the Players' email subscription system. At Easter the Charlton Kings Churches provided a virtual *'Walk of Witness'* for Good Friday, hosted on the St. Mary's web site. It included a link to the YouTube video of ***'Josh on Trial'*** which the Players presented as the street theatre in the library precinct (Church Piece) in 2012. This was two scenes from the Passion Play performed in Holy Week in 2013 by the Players titled ***'A Man for This Season'***.

In 2000, Churches together in Cheltenham were responsible for a Passion Play in the centre of Cheltenham, which involved various people from Charlton Kings and the full videos of this were made available through YouTube just before Easter. These appear to have attracted a large number of people viewing them. The Players lent costumes for the play. These had been made for the production ***'Whose Birthday Did You Say?'*** (February 2000). *So a good time to revisit history and revive memories perhaps?*

***Please stay safe and well and keep an eye on the Players web site for future events.***

### ***'Treasure Island'*** *almost pantomime*



It's hard to believe how many months have passed since this most enjoyable show was put on and well supported locally.

There's a 38 page photo storybook available from the Players web site at

<http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Treasure-Island-photo-storybook-201910.pdf>

Auty's play is a subtle twist on the classic story of ***'Treasure Island'*** by Robert Louis Stevenson. The play opens with Bill Bones hiding in a refuge for bloodthirsty female pirates. He gives the secret of buried treasure to Jim Lard, which a lot of nasty pirates are after, especially those of the one legged, one armed and one eyed variety. Although there are no traditional pantomime dames present, there is plenty of laughter, songs and audience participation. *Just what the doctor ordered perhaps?* And yes, there is a Doctor Livesey who holds some rather interesting clinics with some novel remedies.



*The Forge window display*

The Players were able to secure a prime lunchtime slot on BBC Radio Gloucestershire in October. Jane and Debbie were interviewed by Mark Smith and spoke about the show.



*A Jolly bunch*

This was the perfect opportunity for promotion of the activities of the Charlton Kings Community Players as well as telling everyone about the current production. It's just the kind of reporting by local radio which supports amateur dramatic groups and the wider local communities. It would have been heard across Gloucestershire and beyond. It encourages people to find out what is happening in their areas and to become involved.

Debbie explained that '*Treasure Island*' was '*almost a pantomime*' and that it was chosen as an early '*glimmer*' to the pantomime season leading into Halloween. In response to questions about the rehearsal time needed, both explained rehearsals had been on-going since April to ensure people were '*secure in their roles*'. Different ages were involved, and particularly youngsters who needed time out for exams. The aim was not to put people under pressure.

Jane described how putting on productions was a challenge as the location used at St. Edward's was empty space. Staging, set, lighting, and sound systems had to be brought in from various locations and put together over one weekend. Items were recycled from other productions and the set builders had always been inventive – someone's radiator cover had been used to make the bar, for example. A wonderful ship's wheel had been made for the scene on-board ship and people had helped on a regular basis if they were free at the time.

When asked to pinpoint a favourite bit, the dramatic start was nominated as a major highlight.

*'It's so atmospheric' said Jane. "The pirates wander amongst the audience, with lights down, and then one of the principals who plays Billy Bones starts to sing the folk song **Admiral Benbow.**"*

### *Some photo selections*







*The action takes place in the Admiral Benbow Inn, on board the Hispaniola and on the Island.  
Production crews dressed in part and an enjoyable time was had building the set.  
Colourful and imaginative costumes gained much attention.  
The audience enjoyed the songs, which included well-known traditional sea shanties .*









## 'Let Us Be Merry' 2019



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.

### Carols and Readings 2019

Members of the Players provided a programme of carols and readings in Charlton Kings Care Homes. They visited Charlton Kings Care Home on 14<sup>th</sup> December at 3.00 p.m. and Grevill House on 16<sup>th</sup> December at 5.20 p.m. This was much appreciated by residents. They also joined other groups to sing carols at the Doubletree Hotel in the Cirencester Road on Christmas Eve.

### Vision 21 – Sustainable Gloucestershire

The Players were able to provide microphones for the Schools *QuestionTime* event in October 2019 with politicians on the climate change emergency. The speakers fielding the questions were local MPs and MEPs and other local politicians. This was a very successful event. This was held in St. Andrew's Church, Montpellier which offers booking space for the community. For more information:

<http://www.vision21.org.uk/news/climate-emergency-question-and-answer-session/>

### Open the Book Story Summaries



**Open the Book** (OtB) is a national project which offers primary school children the opportunity to hear key Bible stories. These are presented during assemblies (Acts of

Collective Worship) by a team made up of local church members. Various members of The Players are involved in the programme in the local schools. Different teams visit each school and use the presentations provided by the national scheme.

The Charlton Kings Junior School team has produced an additional resource of Story Summaries of the national material at the request of the school. These summaries have been written by Alison Talbot and have been used now for several years.

The Story Summaries are available as a pdf download at:

<http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/open-the-book-story-summaries/>

For further information contact us.

### Colin Roffe 1955 - 2019



Colin's death in June 2019 after a relatively short but extremely pernicious illness came as a great shock to his many friends, including those in the Players, in 'Puzzlejug' and in Gloucestershire Morris Men.

He had been a long standing member and contributor to the Charlton Kings Community Players through 'Puzzlejug' for nearly two decades. He first performed as part of the '*Let Us Be Merry*' Christmas Show in 2004 and joined many subsequent performances, memorably coaching the audience into singing '*Turmut Hoer*' in 2013! He was one of the many individual 'stars' in '*Some Sunny Day*' with his memorable performance of '*Leaning on a Lamppost*' and then '*Wish me Luck as you Wave me Goodbye*'. He had found the perfect pinstripe suit to wear with a flat cap and then walked off with a kit bag and put on a sailor's 'pork pie' ratings hat. When told he could be promoted to officer rank for the closing chorus, he said he actually was quite happy being a rating!

Colin was Squire of the Gloucestershire Morris Men for six seasons, over his many years of Morris dancing. A uniquely talented man in so many fields, he was a superb dancer, a great singer and a master of many musical instruments, from mandolin, guitar, banjo, ukulele, to mouth organ and melodeon.

A very highly regarded IT genius in his field of expertise, Colin is very sadly missed by all who have known him personally for so many years. He was well loved by all who knew him, as a kind, clever, generous man, a good and faithful friend, and a wonderful husband and father.

**Sandra Jeans**  
**Tony Poulter**



# Charlton Kings Community Players



**Are you on Players communication lists?**

**Have you been in past productions but no longer receive information about current productions and activities?**

**Make contact through the Players web site to check your membership status.**

**<http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/contact-us/>**

**The Players try their best to keep in touch, but information may be lost for various reasons over time.**

## **Membership Matters**

Any person involved with productions and other activities over the preceding 2 years automatically becomes a Member of the Players. Involvement includes acting and practical support backstage, front of house or in other ways.

Alternatively, any person who qualifies under the definitions in the Players' Constitution may apply for membership.

See the Players web site for full information on Membership.

**<http://charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/>**

**If you don't wish to be a Member but would like to receive information about events there is a subscriber scheme available.**

**<http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/contact-authorization/>**

## **Some Facts about Membership**

There is NO annual Membership fee to pay as the Players support all its Members through the money generated by its productions. That is a decision made through the Constitution and approved at Annual General Meetings of Members.

The Players carry the required insurance cover for Members taking part in productions.

The Players operate to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), operate from policies for Safeguarding children and adults, and for the safe working environment for everyone. See web site for detail.

## **Do you know about the Players Alison Luna Bursary Scheme 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. A form is available at

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

## About Players Publications

**Did you know that the Players have put together their performance history?**

**These publications are available to you on request and some as downloads from the Players web site.**

**Were you part of a production? You might find some interesting photos from the past.**

***'Performance Trilogy'*** being Production Details, Photographs, Programmes, from the earliest roots in the 1980s until December 2019.

Photo storybooks for the productions

***'The Rivals'*** (2013)

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

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

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

***'Bunkered'*** (2018)

***'Treasure Island – almost a pantomime'*** (2019)

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

***'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. Contact: [jeanstda@jeanstda.plus.com](mailto:jeanstda@jeanstda.plus.com)

## Memory Lane

*The enjoyment of rehearsals!*



***'Oliver' 2006***



***'A Midsummer Night's Dream' 2008***

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