

Charlton Kings Community Players Newsletter

September 2021



The Players have expanded their portfolio of recordings during the year. A new video has been produced and an audio recording. These have involved various members. The Covid-19 virus pandemic has not stopped the Players from doing what was possible following the rules imposed by Government.

Virtual Street Theatre for the annual Good Friday 'Walk of Witness'

Good Friday 'Walk of Witness' virtual street theatre



<https://youtu.be/h1DHV15fz28>



From *'NEW SLANTS ON THE WORD'*

A collection of dramatic materials for use in staged productions or in worship by **Tony Jeans, Lynne Glover and Peter Grainger**

Second edition in electronic format published 2016

'Good Friday Conversation'

© Lynne Glover

Street Theatre recorded as a virtual performance for 'Good Friday' 2021.

The Players normally provide street theatre for the Charlton Kings Churches **'Good Friday 'Walk of Witness'**.

© Charlton Kings Community Players production



Christ before Pilate 1881

Mihály Munkácsy 1844 - 1900
Hungarian National Gallery
Wikimedia Commons – public domain

The video involves participants from Charlton Kings churches and St. Andrew's URC Montpellier and was widely shared around further afield. It includes a sketch, a reading and a prayer. The Players have been providing street theatre on Good Friday in Charlton Kings since 1992 and many of the sketches have been written by local people. This video may be accessed through the Players' video library. See the Players' web site for **'Past Events'**. The background to the **'Walk of Witness'** and the street theatre is given and photographs of walks through Charlton Kings.

<http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/walk-of-witness-2021/>

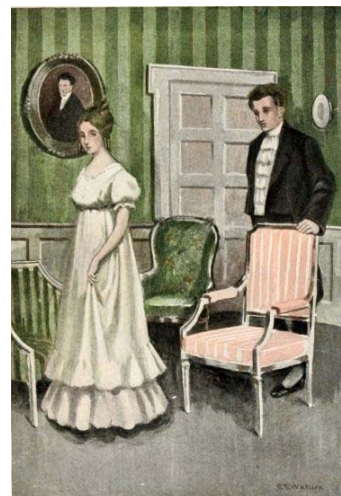
Pride and Prejudice

The audio recording released at the end of August, followed a very successful lockdown year of providing opportunities to participate in on-line play readings. Various plays have been enjoyed by a regular group of participants. It was decided to record Mary Keith Medbery Mackaye's 1906 adaptation of Jane Austen's famous novel. She was married to James Morrison Steele Mackaye who was an American playwright, actor, theatre manager and inventor.

The Reading group first read the play in August 2020 and the experience was considered by all as something they needed to share with the regular supporters of the Players' productions. So it was decided to record it and add to the video library. *Who knows - it might be that the Players' eventually perform it live!*



"Mr. Darcy, I have never desired your good opinion, and you have certainly bestowed it most unwillingly."



The script is made available through the support of The Project Gutenberg. It was produced from scanned images of the original publication which is now out of copyright.

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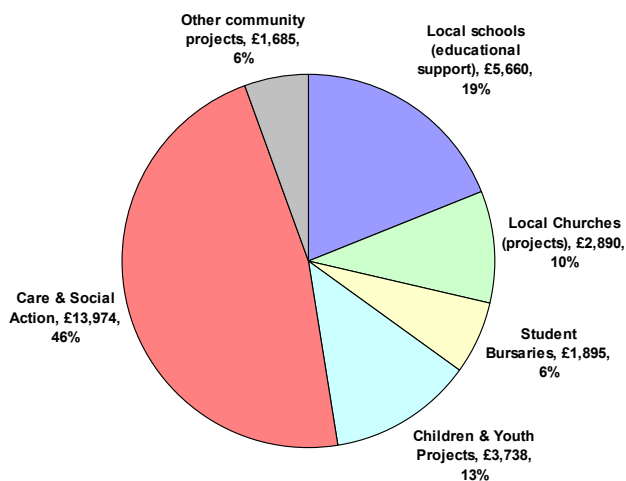
CKCP Players' AGM

24th February 2021

This was held using the Zoom Platform and was quorate being well supported by members. The committee was re-elected for 2021-2022. They were thanked for their work during 2020-2021 in keeping activities running for the benefit of the community. A full report of activities were given in the February 2021 newsletter by Chair, Jane Jones. The Treasurer, Derek Palmer, presented a healthy financial position which continues to support regular donations to community projects and charities. Copies of reports may be obtained by Members from the CKCP Secretary, Fiona Connor.

The Players have donated nearly £30,000 to a range of local and national good causes, as shown below. This includes the donations made through 'Just Giving' for the virtual performance of '**Let Us Be Merry – a Christmas Celebration**' released at the beginning of December 2020. It remains available for viewing from the Players' web site as part of the Players' video library..

CKCP Charitable and Community Donations 1992 - 2021
Total £29,841



Players' History Performance Record

The Performance Record Trilogy has just been brought up to date and is available on request electronically. The set gathers together a record of the works performed, and those who took part in the wide range of rôles which are needed to mount a production.

Its purpose is to provide a record for reference purposes; to ensure that the detailed history of The Players is not lost, and to complement the comprehensive pictorial record in The Players' archive.

One of the publications contains scans of the programmes of the plays, musicals and reviews performed and another a selection of photographs of the productions or special events.

This Trilogy and the individual Photo storybooks provide over 1000 A4 pages of material for browsing.

If you wish for electronic copies contact: sjeans@jeanstda.plus.com

The Players' web site has various publications available for download from this collection.

Luke raises funds for Sue Ryder Hospice

Over £1,300 raised so far

Luke Drinkwater - a long-standing member of the CKCP as actor, singer and part of the Technical team - has been unable to pursue his career in the theatre during the last year because of the Covid 19 pandemic. He has been employed at the Sue Ryder Hospice in Leckhampton and, now he is able to return to the theatre, has decided to raise some money for them. Luke explains in his own words:

"Sue Ryder Leckhampton Court Hospice has taken a chance on employing me, not once but twice, over the pandemic while theatres and events have been closed. They're a vital service and I'm not sure I know anyone in my area that hasn't had some experience with them.

I've just put myself through a Tough Mudder along with fellow Leckhampton Court employee, Grace, in the hope that we will raise funds for the Hospice. It is Gloucestershire's only palliative care in-patient unit, it also provides hospice at home care and a day hospice service, as well as counselling and emotional support.

I've never heard a bad word said about the place and the commitment of their supporters speaks volumes about the quality of care and

love they provide. Working there has dramatically changed the way I view death and the end of life process; it's been one of the most educational and important periods of my life. One of my many 'take aways' is how expensive dying can be. Sue Ryder provides these services completely for free, not only helping the patients and their families but also saving the NHS money and strain.

The donation page remains open for a little while still. I would greatly appreciate any further help you can offer in returning the support they've given me and others over the pandemic, and invest in all of our futures."

Just Giving Page.

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Luke-Drinkwater2



Luke and Grace stand the test

Luke's thanks go to the many people, including the large number of Community Players' members, who supported this fund raising event.

From the archives: In 2001 the Players' gave the Sue Ryder hospice at Leckhampton Court £500 towards their Prayer Room and also donated a wooden lectern and candlestick.

Alwyn Sampson - "Sam"

Our 2013 production of **"The Rivals"** was set in Cheltenham in the 1850s. Each scene was illustrated by a projected line drawing of its location in Cheltenham. We were privileged to be allowed to use the work of Alwyn Sampson – always known as "Sam". Sam died earlier this year and we are including this article as a tribute.

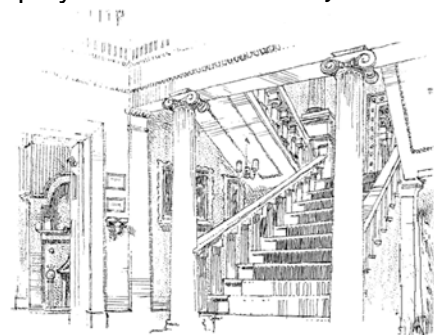


Montpellier – used for beginning and interval

Sam was a talented artist and story teller. For many years, he had a regular column in the Gloucestershire Echo called **"Scene by Sam"**. The piece would consist of a beautiful line drawing of a building or location in Cheltenham or its surroundings with a short commentary about the place and people associated with it.

Sam also wrote about other towns and published various collections of his pictures and essays. Sam had been a member of staff of the Art College, (subsequently part of GlosCAT and now of the University of Gloucestershire).

Sam and Mrs Sampson came to our first night. We will be ever grateful for the support and generosity of an exceptional artist who enabled us to mount a unique production of a classic play. *Tony & Sandra Jeans*



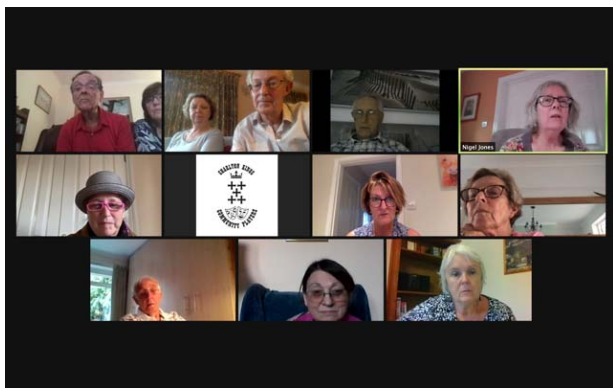
Alma House – Mrs Malaprop's Lodgings

© Aylwin Sampson 'Sam' – author, artist and local historian. Images of Cheltenham used with his permission

New writing play reading

Early in 2021, CKCP put out a call for new writing on the theme of **'Summer'** and a play reading was held to read through the pieces submitted. Two members of the Players, Lynne Glover and Geoff Ramshaw, submitted sketches which we really enjoyed reading, and look forward to using in a future production. Geoff's was titled **'Frozen Chips'** and Lynne's **'Saving Summer'**.

A third play was also read at the play reading - a new one act play by author Ben Nicholson called **'Napoleon's shoe'** which was very much enjoyed by the readers. This play hasn't been published yet and we are hoping to get the chance to perform it in our next live production - hopefully in 2022! We have been in email communication with Ben and he was delighted to receive an audio version of the reading and to hear our obvious enjoyment of his humour. Thanks must go to Peter Ryan for processing the Zoom recording, converting it into the audio version which he sent to Ben.



Screenshot Ray Talbot

The Players have held fifteen virtual play reading sessions since April 2020. They have issued a special recording for one of them being **'Pride and Prejudice'** by Mary Keith Medbery Mackaye (see separate article).

Jane Jones

Celebrating the NHS

In 2018 the Players lent Anne Springett a 1940s nurse's uniform for her display in Deerhurst Priory Church for the biannual Flower Festival, which has been raising funds for Deerhurst and Apperly churches since the 1980s. The theme that year was **'A Moment in Time'** and Anne chose to recognise the importance of the creation of the National Health Service in 1948. Since that time the

Covid 19 pandemic has brought home to us all how important our NHS has proved to be.



The Festival should have taken place again in 2020 but it has not been possible, but organisers plan it will run for August 2022.

The Players have lent costume and props when requested to support community activity.

© photos Anne Springett

A Glimpse of Entertainment from the Past

A little 'lockdown' reading by a member of the Players resulted in the discovery of some interesting activity in the local community in the 19th century. Whilst reading David A O'Connor's very interesting publication **'Troubled Waters – The Great Cheltenham Water Controversy'** she came across the following fascinating account in relation to the digging by some 200 navvies of Dowdeswell Reservoir, reported in the local newspaper **'The Examiner'**.

The journalist reflects that *'Charlton Kings represented the nearest thing to the bright lights for the men at Dowdeswell'*. It appears that St. Mary's Church led the delivery of a series of three entertainments for them. An evening on 15 March 1884 in the Mill Lane Schoolroom is described in detail. The then Vicar of St. Mary's, the Reverend Thomas Moore, started off the proceedings which included lantern shows and talks of all kinds on a range of serious and comic subjects. The second half of the show was musical and included songs delivered by individuals or

duets, and those which encouraged audience participation. It would seem to have been a most enjoyable evening for the men, some of whom had their families with them lodging locally.

You'll find the publication listed on the Charlton Kings Local and Family History Society web site (2007 publication date).

<http://www.charltonkings.org.uk/publications.htm>

'Let Us Be Merry 2021'

Early September saw the beginning of our preparations for LUBM 2021. After much deliberation, we have decided to produce a digital production again this year, with the option of a live show if we can find a suitable venue and restrictions allow.

We are so fortunate to have so much talent in Charlton Kings! Already we have poems, sketches and musical items to go into the programme. The production will be released around the beginning of December – the release date being dependent on whether or not we are able to do a live show as well.

So, for LUBM 2021, it will definitely happen - and look out for the emails with details of the release dates of the digital version and, hopefully, the venue and date of a live show if it can be achieved.

The video produced for LUBM 2020 remains easily accessible from the Players' web site against '**Past Events**' menu item. So you can revisit your favourite reading or song.

<http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/let-us-be-merry-2020/>

Street Theatre for Charlton Kings 'Walk of Witness'

While it is to be hoped the street theatre may be performed live in 2022, the Players are planning to produce a video for general release.

The plan is also to continue recording videos so that people who are not able to see the live performances can view. This will also mean that other interested organisations may access the videos for their own use via the Players' web site.

Sue Ramshaw



It is with great sadness that we record the death of Sue Ramshaw in August this year. Sue supported the Players through performance and Front of House. Her last appearance for the Players was with a small group who entertained the Baptist Church Lunch Club before Covid struck in 2020.

Sue also sang with **Puzzlejug** members in Hailes Church in their recording for LUBM 2020 digital production. Sue had a beautiful soprano singing voice.

She will be greatly missed and our thoughts go to Geoff and his family at this time.



The Players during the pandemic

The Players were very keen to keep activities going throughout the pandemic and it is clear that this has been very much appreciated (more details in this newsletter and also in the last - issued February 2021).

<http://www.charltonkingscommunityplayers.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CKCP-newsletter-February-2021.pdf>

Many thanks to all who have made it happen.