

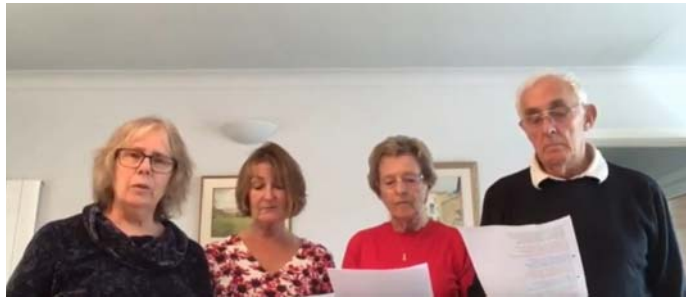
Charlton Kings Community Players Newsletter

February 2022



The local community had a double treat this Christmas as the Players put on its first live show since the start of the pandemic. Its regular Christmas Show was held in St. Mary's Church, Charlton Kings, and people were able to enjoy its usual programme of carols, readings, and sketches. To support people who could not attend in person, a video was made which was released after the show, and also supported those who wished to participate from home to contribute. The video is a mixture of home recordings and some made during the live performance. The overall theme this year was the Nativity centred on the stable and the journey to Bethlehem.





Melissa's Dress

a story of how three wise women were involved at the birth of Jesus

Storytellers Sandra & Tony Jeans



*Then they met a talkative but friendly old Jew,
a night watchman who told them that the men
had come that way before.*

The videos released continue to be available from the Players web site as part of its library of productions and other events. The published programmes include detail of the items sung, read and performed. Photographs above are screen shots from the Players videos. The charities supported by both the live and videos were Charlton Kings Guiding, Cheltenham Samaritans and Shelter. Very supportive comments were received from those who watched the videos, and the opportunity for attending a live show was really welcomed by those who came.

Let Us Be Merry 2021 - live or digital?

Desperate to get back to live performing, the CKCP Committee watched with great interest the COVID-19 pandemic, the big question being 'Would we be able to perform live, or would we need to produce a video again as we did in 2020?' The situation was still so uncertain in September 2021 when we held our meeting to discuss content that we decided we would have to do both!

The call went out to the mailing list asking performers to come forward to join a choir and to perform sketches and readings, and we soon had a great programme lined up. A socially distanced carol singing session held in October in St Mary's Church, Charlton Kings, to record the audience carols reminded us of the joy of getting together to perform, and enthusiasm for a live performance built up.

Throughout October, the performers and compère (Martyn Fry) recorded their pieces and sent them to Peter Ryan who put together the digital version of the show, and thanks must go to Peter Ryan and Martin Grinter who facilitated and manipulated the recordings to ensure the quality of the production, and to Keith Mead for accompanying the singers and choir, and providing the incidental music.

Thank goodness Omicron didn't gain momentum before our first live performance of LUBM for two years and, with great excitement, we gathered at St Mary's Church on 4th December to perform.

For the first time, the show was held in the afternoon rather than the evening, and feedback from the audience on this change of timing would be gratefully received.

We were pleased with the audience numbers and, with over 40 performers taking part, the decision to go ahead with a live show was the right one. The video was released a little over a week later accompanied by a recording of '**Melissa's Dress**' produced and performed by Tony and Sandra Jeans.

Following the live show and the release of the digital production, donations have been sent to **Cheltenham Samaritans, CK Guiding**

and **Shelter**, and I would like to thank everyone who donated to these worthy causes.
Jane Jones (Chair, CKCP)

Tony Poulter - a tribute



We are very sorry to hear of the death of our beloved friend Tony Poulter after a long illness. Tony had had a long career as a police officer and after his retirement he delighted in his family and his music. A member of the group 'Puzzlejug' since 1989, Tony took part in our recordings and in many of the 'Let us be Merry' Christmas concerts with his strong expressive singing. He was a warm caring friendly man, very loyal to his friends, and an adoring and adored father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He will be greatly missed.

Gwilym Davies



LUBM 2017 – Puzzlejug – Gwilym, Geoff, Carol, Tony



LUBM 2000 – Puzzlejug – Gwilym, Geoff, Tony

Tony was part of the very first performance of '**Let Us Be Merry**' in 2000. This was in Charlton Kings Junior School. This long-

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

established Christmas Show has now been running for over twenty years, attracting regular supporters and bringing good cheer to people far and wide. It was so good that the Players were even able to provide digital versions during the on-going pandemic. Also it has responded to the need to recognise that an aging population needs a choice and that it is important to produce both live and digital shows. For those who do not know, the show name **'Let Us Be Merry'** originates from the carol **'A Virgin Unspotted'** which is regularly sung by Puzzlejug and is part of their CD recordings..

*'So let us be merry, put sorrow away
Our Saviour, Christ Jesus, was born on this day.'*

Sandra Jeans

New Video released 2022

The Players' video library has a new video available. This is a joint production with St. Andrew's Church, Montpellier, and reflects contributions from Players' members from Charlton Kings. The link is

https://youtu.be/PFKgQXgo_i8

The **'The Stable Door'**, written by Lynne Glover, has been combined with **'The Coventry Carol'** sung by singers from St. Andrew's URC. Traditionally performed in Coventry as part of a mystery play 'The Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors', the carol refers to the *'Massacre of the Innocents'*, when Herod ordered all male infants in Bethlehem to be killed.



Engraving of **'A Pageant in Coventry'**, by St Michael's Church with the spire of Holy Trinity Church in the background.

2001, Alfie-C, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license

Good Friday 'Walk of Witness' street theatre 2022

Live street theatre is under consideration for Easter 2022, which this year falls in April. However, it's planned to produce a video also in case this is not possible, and to provide an opportunity for those who cannot attend to

have access to the Players' regular contribution to Good Friday observances. The Players have been providing street theatre on Good Friday since 1992. Videos were made available for 2020 and 2021 as a result of the pandemic and continue to be available for viewing from the Players' web site..

A dramatic start to play reading evenings 2022

These have had a dramatic start with one of the alleged best comedies ever written! This was **'The Government Inspector'** by Nikolai Vasilyevich Gogol. The group read Act One and Act Two on separate evenings building up the tension to the revelation of all the misunderstandings and *'dodgy doings'* in the play. There is a very comprehensive article (fully referenced) on Wikipedia if you are interested in reading about this famous play. Copies of the script are available for download from Project Gutenberg (free use), against its alternative title **'The Inspector-General'**.

Contact from former members

It's always good when former participants of the Players' production get in touch.

Over the recent months two contributors from the very early days of the Players have made contact. The Players' web site is providing a vital means for people who have moved away from Charlton Kings to maintain links and even look at photographs from productions with which they were involved. So please pass on our web site link whenever you can and encourage people to fill in a Contact Form so that they may receive regular email communications about what the Players are doing.

The Players' history

The Players' web site has a comprehensive library of photo storybooks about previous productions which may be downloaded as pdf files. For electronic copies of the full performance record contact Sandra Jeans at sjeans@jeanstda.plus.com

Advance notice of AGM

The AGM will take place on 27th April 2022 beginning at 7.30 pm. The venue will depend on the Covid situation and will be announced nearer the time. If necessary, it will be held on Zoom.

A Pianist's Complaint (Or is your Czerny really necessary)

I find Handel too hard to get hold
And I cannot unravel Ravel,
The jumps in Scarlatti are driving me scatty
My hand doesn't span enough to tackle
Rachmaninov
And Heller is quite simply, hell.

In Chopin I'm choppin' and changin'
My Beethoven's worse than my Bach,
And Schumann I keep rearrangin'
While Grieg's not a walk in the park.

The problem with Mozart is **too many notes are*
Too rapid to properly play.
The jumps in Scarlattti are driving me scatty
And Schubert takes up the whole day!

In Haydn, my hands keep collidin',
Arthur Bliss - 'tis much better when (m)issed,
For dealing with Brahms I need much
stronger arms.
As for Liszt - I get cramp in my wrist.

I'm not up to coping with Copland
And with Gershwin I never can win.
The silence of Cage simply fills me with rage.
All American music's a din.

I'm not smitten with Benjamin Britten
VW's stuck in the mud(!)
With Henry Purcell I just don't seem to gel -
Really British composers are dud-

Edward Elgar - too *large* and too *regal***
I struggle with Poulenc and Franck.
A catalogue of failures occurs with Sibelius-
I'm shutting the lid with a plonk.

(I thought I'd Finnish with Sibelius)

Footnotes

* Quote from Peter Schaffer's play, "*Amadeus*"
purporting to emanate from Emperor Joseph II

** Anagrams in italics

Fiona Wild, Charlton Kings
from her recent collection of poetry
(with permission)

Future plans for the Players

We are hoping to do two one act plays in October 2022 if we can find suitable plays and directors. The committee will be meeting in March and we will be focusing on this at that meeting. Everything depends on COVID of course! It's hoped this will also be a focus of discussion at the AGM in April.

The Players' web site

Are you visiting the web site regularly?

If you've taken part in any way in previous productions, you will find photo storybooks to relive your memories.

If you have only just discovered this active community group, there are plenty of things to look at and perhaps some faces you may recognise.

The challenge of the last two years has been to keep in touch with everyone in the community by whatever means has proved possible. The two key ways have been to produce videos uploaded to the Players' own YouTube channel, and to hold regular play reading evenings using Zoom.

The growing video library

Links to the growing video library are available through the web site. At the time of this email the Home page provides you with an easy way to access the two videos released in December 2021 for the Christmas season. Currently the library offers a choice of seven videos to watch.

Play reading evenings

Those enjoying the play reading evenings have been able to hone their characterisation skills on a variety of classic plays as well as have fun with a range of comedies. Everyone has had a chance to take on a leading rôle or to try out some bit parts to add to the interest.

So far some eighteen different plays have been explored with one being done every month. *If you are on the Players' email contact list you will receive invitations to join the evenings.*

