

Christmas offerings in the community

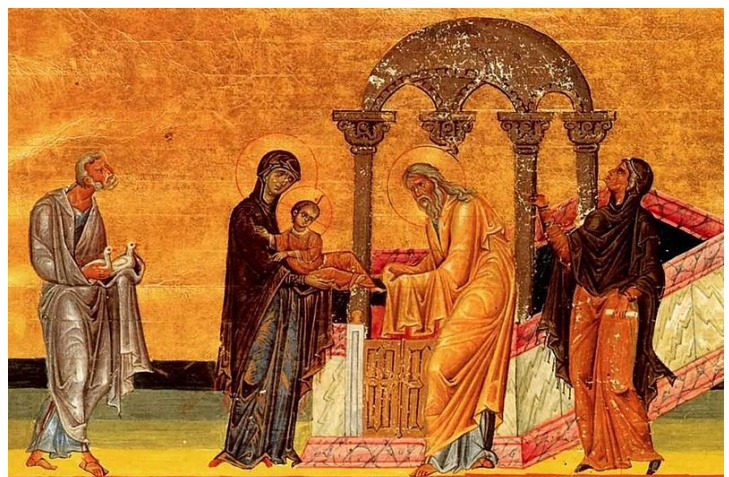
A very happy occasion

'Let Us Be Merry' was held on the evening of 3rd December in the Charlton Kings Junior School. An enjoyable evening was had by all, with many musical numbers for the audience to sing also. Below in rehearsal are those in the pantomime item.



© CKCP

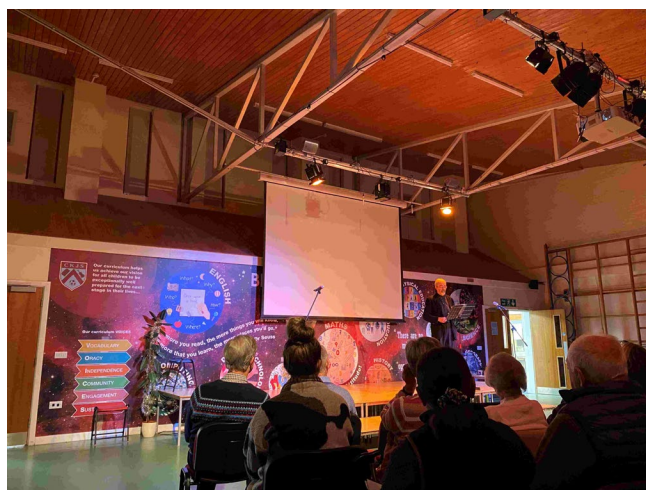
Members of the Players and St. Andrew's URC in Cheltenham provided a Christmas video available from the Players' YouTube channel which has been well viewed by various people locally and in the wider community. This was based on the story of the prophetess Anna and the holy man Simeon who met Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem in the period after the birth.



Menologion of Basil II – public domain Wikipedia

Let Us Be Merry - a celebration of the Christmas Season (a welcoming affair with refreshments in the interval)

Thanks to Charlton Kings Junior School for use of their Assembly Hall



Alison and Geoff sing



Jack and the Beanstalk – a deadpan panto



Musical Director, Technical crew, and performers wait in the 'wings'

© Peter Ryan

Carol singing at Charlton Kings Care Home

The Players' were very pleased to be invited again to sing carols in the Charlton Kings Care Home - the first time we have been able to do this since Christmas 2019 in those pre-Covid days.

We had a lovely time singing **nine** carols and doing **eight** readings. This really was a special concert for a most appreciative audience.

The residents joined in with many of the carols, knowing the words by heart and the readings were very well received. It was a lovely occasion and all who participated enjoyed the experience. My thanks go to all who came along to take part. *Jane Jones*

LUBM 2022 - Reflections

Held at CKJS in their hall, LUBM 2022 was a very happy occasion. A varied mix of readings, sketches, songs and carols, the show was very well received by the audience who donated generously to the refreshments.

**This enabled us to donate
£100 to Open Door..**

Many members of the audience commented on the venue - describing it as very welcoming - and my thanks go to Fiona Connor and the school for enabling us to use it. My thanks also go to all who helped to make the production possible. *Jane Jones*

Parish Council Health & Well-being directory

The Players are listed in the Community directory hosted by the Parish Council at

<https://www.charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk/ck-health-and-well-being-directo.html>

You will find the detailed entry against Creative Arts and Activities which provides contact details.

CKCP AGM 2023

Please come along to our 2023 AGM and get involved with the Players.

Future plans will be discussed and it is your chance to help influence what we do as part of our programme of events for the year.

The AGM is to be held on Zoom at 7:00pm on Tuesday 28 February. If you have responded to say that you will be attending you will receive a Zoom Meeting invitation via email.

Agenda

Welcome and Apologies
Minutes of the previous AGM & Matters Arising
Chair's Report
Treasurer's Report
Election of Officers
CKCP Website
Future Plans
Any Other Business
Date of Next Meeting

Please register your attendance at the AGM by emailing the Secretary at fab_connor@yahoo.co.uk and you will be sent an invitation on the day of the meeting.

All very welcome!



For more information see on the Players web site.

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

Sleeping Beauty

**Pantomime 2nd, 3rd and 4th November
2023 (two evenings and a matinée).**

There will be a taster afternoon in March when there will be a read through of scenes and review of the songs. We've researched two different scripts from which to make a choice. Dates of this event and auditions will be notified through the Players' mailing list.

CKCP Committee

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

The Players' history

The Players' web site has a comprehensive library of photo storybooks about previous productions which may be downloaded as pdf files.

In particular is a three-part set of the Players' Performance Record which not only provides detail of some thirty years of 'doing' in the community, but also scans of the programmes and a selection of photographs.

Were you part of any show?

'New Slants On The Word'

This publication, by Tony Jeans, Lynne Glover, Peter Grainger and John Palmer, of readings and sketches has just been updated. Its content is for use in staged productions or in church worship. This new Edition 3 is available in electronic form and may be obtained from jeanstda@jeanstda.plus.com



*Messages from Bethlehem
Performed at 'Let Us Be Merry' 2015*

Are you aware of the Players' comprehensive web site?

The link is shown on the bottom of the pages of this newsletter. It's also the usual practice to provide links to it from our regular email communication service.

What has been done is shown through our 'Past Events' menu and there is also various information about the Players' history. Forthcoming events are notified and how to get in touch.

The Players have also moved into the world of video and there is a growing library of videos put together by various members.

Players' video Library

Walk of Witness & related:

'**Josh on Trial**' – Charlton Kings Churches Good Friday 'Walk of Witness' street theatre in Church Piece Precinct. Full video 4.28 mins
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kkj-VX6gK0&t=36s>

'**Good Friday Conversation**' - Charlton Kings Churches Good Friday 'Walk of Witness' virtual street theatre. Full video 13.45 mins
<https://youtu.be/h1DHVI5fpz8>

'**Ruth's Story**' - Charlton Kings Churches Good Friday 'Walk of Witness', virtual street theatre. Full video 16.30 mins
<https://youtu.be/Vd8yUEJq4YA>

'**The Other Wise Man**' - whose travels ended in Jerusalem on the day of the crucifixion of Jesus. Full video 13.59 mins
<https://youtu.be/rJBRCQBvu18>

Let Us Be Merry Christmas Show & related

'**Let Us Be Merry 2020**' – A Christmas Celebration virtual production
Full video 57.06 mins
<https://youtu.be/TO2WNBtJocI>

'**Let Us Be Merry 2021**' – A Christmas Celebration virtual production
Full video 58.54 mins
<https://youtu.be/tPIVcQqfzn4>

'**Melissa's Dress**' – a story of how three wise women were involved at the birth of Jesus
Full video 8.21 mins
<https://youtu.be/Hj3dcfiOPyE>

'**The Stable Door**' – An incident in Bethlehem – an innkeeper and his wife tell their stories
virtual production. Full video 7.36 mins
<https://youtu.be/HZaCbVPQgpU>

'**Anna and Simeon**' – A Nativity Encounter - Anna and Simeon were to be among the first to recognise the light of the world
Full video 12.54 mins
<https://youtu.be/r3q78U9j9no>

Specials:

'**Pride and Prejudice**' - Audio recording
Full video 2 hrs 35 mins
<https://youtu.be/WHsFNEoLw1k>

'**Gwilym Davies**' – The stick dance from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' 2008.
Full video 1.13 mins
<https://youtu.be/bOQnC8UigHE>

A Salute to two ladies of the WRNS who served in World War 2



Sue Vickers and Anna Young salute after giving their readings during a performance of 'Some Sunny Day'



It took about a year to collect wartime stories from local people in Charlton Kings, or from people who live here now but were living elsewhere during WW2.

Some thirty-six people contributed to the collection which is available in electronic form. This was used to develop the script for the show. Even when it was opening night more anecdotes continued to be shared, and display books were quickly put together and were available 'front of house'.

Six local people in particular were featured especially and were introduced to the audience in the interval on each night of the performance.

Sadly three of these are no longer with us and in this newsletter we pay tribute to two of them – the ladies of the WRNS (the 'Wrens'). Beryl served at Bletchley Park on code breaking, and Harriet in on the Orkneys as part of the support for the dangerous mission looking after the convoys to supply Russia.

Script extract from Beryl's story:

"We were told that the messages we were helping to crack were from the Japanese who were stationed in Berlin. They were describing what the Germans were planning to do to combat our invasion along the French Coast. This gave us a great deal of information as we planned to invade. We knew where the German Forces would be and their plans. We were the Japanese Naval Unit in Hut 7 attached to Hut 8 (*Enigma*). Apparently the Japanese used our alphabet for their codes.

We worked in shifts, days, evenings or nights. Our machine arrived and was housed in its own room. All the plugs had to go in a certain order and only a few of us did the plugging. We always wore uniforms. I remember the white shirts and separate collars rather stiff-starched."

Celebrations in London VE Day

"We celebrated VE Day by hitching to London. We spent the night in the park after celebrating in Leicester Square, and visiting Buckingham Palace where the King and Queen came out on the balcony to wave to us. It was May and a very warm night. We were given three days off."

Celebrations in Cambridge on VJ Day

"As we were cracking Japanese codes we had to carry on until Japan surrendered. Then, my colleague Harry and I celebrated by going to Cambridge. Harry stayed at his College - Trinity and I at the YWCA.. We spent the day punting on the Cam – the weather was excellent – it was August."

Script extract from Harriet's story:

"We Wrens were on Orkney operating the switch boards. My fiancé was on the escort carrier HMS Trumpeter. Another escort carrier the HMS Nabob, was torpedoed off the coast of Norway – 'tin fished' we called it. The Captain decided to limp back to Scapa Flow with a skeleton crew - over a thousand miles – they made it – I watched them come in."

© The Storybook of the Production (2016) -CKCP publication, stories reproduced with permission of each author. Not for commercial resale.

© Script CKCP publication, authors Tony Jeans, Martyn Fry, Sandra Jeans



Beryl Middleton



© family of Beryl Middleton

This photograph was published in the programme for the show 'Some Sunny Day' (2017)

'Some Sunny Day' – performed by the Community Players in February 2017 – was based on the wartime experience of Charlton Kings villagers in WW2. Beryl Middleton, whose death we are sad to be recording in this issue, was one of those villagers who shared their experiences of the war.

Beryl was a Wren who served in Bletchley Park, code breaking messages from the Japanese who were based in Berlin. The messages described what the Germans were planning to do to combat the invasion along the French coast. She remembered the uniform – 'white shirts and separate collars rather stiff-starched'. She recalled the celebrations for VE Day and VJ Day and saw the King and Queen on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, having hitched to London to join in the celebrations of VE Day in Leicester Square.

Not only was Beryl a contributor to **'Some Sunny Day'** though. She was a supporter of the Players from the start, taking part in special events in the Residential Homes and at Harvest Suppers in the village, and performing in **'Whose birthday did you say?'** as an Egyptologist.

Beryl was one of a dwindling generation whose recollections of WW2 are so important as a record of that time and we are very grateful that she shared her memories with us. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Jane Jones (Chair CKCP)

Harriet Wright

Harriet Wright, WRNS, 1943



© family of Harriet Wright

This photograph was published in the programme for the show 'Some Sunny Day' (2017)

It is with great sadness we record the passing of Harriet. She came to local shows and was so pleased to feature in the Players' community-led production of **'Some Sunny Day'**. It was a great privilege to have not only one but two former serving members from the WRNS as part of the show. Thus this tribute not only reflects their support of the Players, but also the important rôle that they played in the drama of those times.

For Harriet it was being stationed and operating from what was a most dangerous part of the world. The station was part of the Scapa Flow complex, the main home base for the Royal Navy in WW2. **"The worst journey in the world"** is how Winston Churchill is quoted as describing the Allied convoys to Russian from 1941 to 1945.

We spent many hours with Harriet, listening to what she had to tell us and looking at all her memorabilia of those times.

Harriet was an invited guest at the service for WW2 veterans at Westminster Abbey commemorating the 70th anniversary of VE Day and was part of the parade.

Tony & Sandra Jeans

Intrigue, rebellion, love!

Cast your mind back to 2003 and hilarious evenings at a Players' production called '**Sunset House**'. Written by Joe Kinane, this was 'all about how we treat the elderly, but it was far from being the sad little story you might expect'.

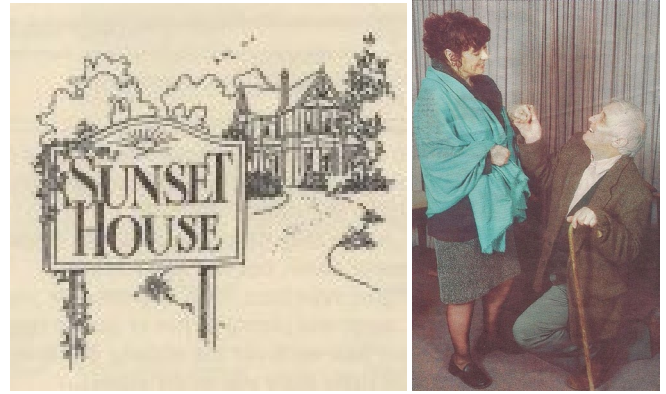
The first treat for the audience was the programme itself which asked a series of questions to add to the intrigue, and to be introduced to a range of characters, which we might all recognise as hilarious stereotypes. However, it still sent out the message of the fears of those who change their lifestyle of living in their own home to being reliant on a residential environment. The audience was with the residents all the way as they plotted and challenged those who attempted to acquire the property by, shall we say, less than 'honest means'.

Well, we met a variety of characters during the production from Daphne Juliet, who read a lot of Barbara Cartland, to Jack Prendegast, a former associate of Del Boy, to Oscar Romero, the George Clooney of Cheltenham. I expect by now you have got the drift of the characterisation which was expected by the Players' usual high standard of acting. There were also those who were the visitors including a Howard Aitken, MP who was a 'friend' of matron, an Aerobics teacher and the dreaded 'Acquisition Executive' who was very much a Cruella-de-ville type. Who was **she** working for one might ask. Then there were the hard working staff.

So very much one of the Players' successes, providing entertainment in the community, affording opportunities for people of all ages to perform and carry out the essential tasks necessary to mount a successful show. The Players have donated widely to charities and local projects over the years at this time the total stands at over Thirty Thousand pounds.

The photographs in the opposite column have just come to light and have been added to the Players' historical record. If you have any photographs, we would be pleased to have copies. *This applies to any production.*

Sandra Jeans



*Romance in the Home –
Oscar proposes to Daphne*



Residents plot their strategy



Residents learn some particular skills.



Residents confront the 'Acquisition Executive'