

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

February – March 2024 Newsletter

December - Christmas Event

Around eighty members, including the performers, attended the Christmas event at the Powerhouse, Christ Church.

Roy and Heather Harris provided an instrumental accompaniment as members settled down prior to the main event. The new Singing for Fun group then entertained us with their rendition of the 'Gloucester Wassail Song'. Members then joined in as Chris Woolven, playing his guitar, sang Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer.

Following the musical entertainment came Dawn Miller. With the aid of Braille, she read two of her own poems. They were both moving and thought provoking.

Back to the singing, everyone joined in with 'The 12 Days of Christmas', a variation including amongst other things anti-wrinkle cream, stair lifts, Fixadent and an extra super duper scooter. Volunteers and audience participation made for an enjoyable activity.

Alan Brocklehurst followed this with two short fairy tales. His captivating story telling kept everyone enthralled right to the end. Detailed stories with twists in their tales.

After a short interval a group of volunteers, organised and primed by Diane Woolven, performed a pantomime with a difference. Actors' lines including only single phrases or sentences. The hilarity increased as the volunteers 'grew' into their parts.

The poem 'On the 13th day of Christmas...' was read by Bridget Thompson who also read excerpts about 'presents'. David Harmer read two of his own poems relating to Christmas followed by a short excerpt from Dylan Thomas' 'A Child's Christmas in Wales'. David's Welsh lilt made the reading even more enjoyable.

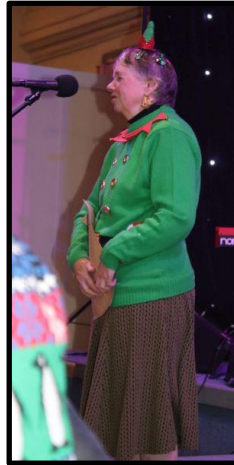
To end the event members sang a selection of seasonal songs accompanied by Chris Woolven on his guitar.

A fine spread was laid on for the members and drinks were available. There were also many raffle prizes to be won. Thanks must go to the committee, volunteers and performers. This event was a great success due to their commitment and the giving of a lot of time and effort involved in its organisation. Members should also be thanked for joining in so enthusiastically throughout the event.

Well done everyone.

Bridget Thompson





We were, once again, entertained by acoustic musicians Carol and Steve Robson, also known as 'Fool's Gold'. They sang and played instruments, including various recorders, various guitars, flute, ukulele, and whistle, whilst projecting visuals on screens to accompany stories about songs. We watched various seasonal cartoons alongside photographs of historical events and beautiful landscapes.

We learnt about 'Tomte', a mythological creature from Scandinavian folklore. These creatures cause mischief if their 'treat' of risengrod (rice pudding) is not left out for them on Christmas Eve. If Tomte receives his pudding or porridge, he might reward you with gifts. This may be one of the origins of leaving food and drink for Santa.

We were shown photographs of the WW1 Christmas truce, with British and German soldiers playing a football match in No Man's Land on 25th December 1914.

We sang along with Carol and Steve when they sang 'Only you' by the Flying Pickets, the Christmas number 1 in 1983.

We were told about the disappearance of tea towels in homes around the country when the 'Nativity' was being performed. This was accompanied by a delightful movie clip of 'The Star - The Nativity'.

We joined in with many songs, the final one being, of course, 'White Christmas'.

The spectacular lighting and video setup in Christ Church was thanks to Richard (Powerhouse, Christ Church). Diane Woolven and her sub-committee decorated the hall beautifully and provided festive food and drinks and, thanks to Peter Hermes, many members went home happy with raffle prizes.

A very big thank-you to everyone concerned with creating this most congenial meeting that raised the spirits.

Bridget Thompson





February – March 2022 Newsletter

Christmas Meeting cancelled due to Covid – Omicron variant

February – March 2021 Newsletter

Virtual Christmas Performance

On the 21st December we were very lucky to be entertained by members of the Doncaster U3A to a wonderful virtual Christmas show and what a success it was! The variety performance displayed all the latent skills held within the organisation with stunning performances.

Many musicians participated with various instruments, among them a ukulele, saxophone, melodion, and guitar, not to mention the excellent singing. Among them was Chris Woolven strumming the ukulele and ably singing the tune to 'I'm leaning on a lamp post', Vanessa Whaley treating us to some of the traditional Christmas carols on the saxophone, and we were extremely lucky to have the presence of Ian Cross, the son of Marian Cross who played a lovely piece on his guitar. The melodion played by Richard Benson was a real treat where members could wave their handkerchiefs and really get into the party mood. The surprise of the show was Jane Page and Mike Bowser singing 'I got you babe' complete with costume and wigs which was presented excellently.

As if that was not enough of an extravaganza, to make it even more entertaining we also heard John Betjeman's poem 'Christmas' which was very well read by Marian Cross, poetry readings by David Harmer who read one of his own poems, and a recital by Alan Brocklehurst of the poem 'Twas the night before Christmas', which is one of my favourites from when I was a child. George Kirk gave a very entertaining reading of an excerpt about a Messiah Concert. As the show was nearing its end we were presented with a Christmas quiz by Diane Woolven with some interesting and challenging questions and very apt illustrations, and not least the Morris dancing all interspersed with funny Christmas jokes read by Wendy Hattrell.

Finally this wonderful extravaganza was completed with Christmas carols led by David Allen and thanks and wishes of a very Happy Christmas and New Year delivered by Chris Woolven completed the event.

For those who missed this wonderful event I would really encourage you to try Zoom as it can deliver wonderful events such as this.

Many thanks to all the participants and well done on such a successful event under quite difficult circumstances.

Christine Curtis





February – March 2020 Newsletter

.....The entertainment was very appropriate as the 'Glummer Twins', our own David Harmer and his friend Ray Globe, told us tales of coming to terms with getting older - interspersed with 'silly songs'. The Christmas Raffle was bigger and better than ever with two Christmas hampers, two boxes of chocs and an M&S voucher.

Wendy Hattrell



February – March 2019 Newsletter

At what stage and which stage?

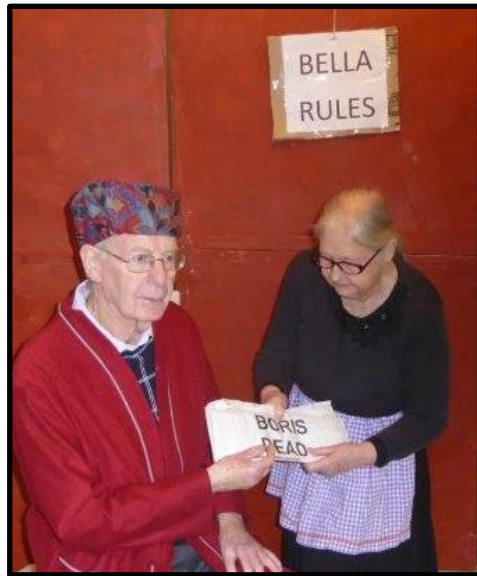
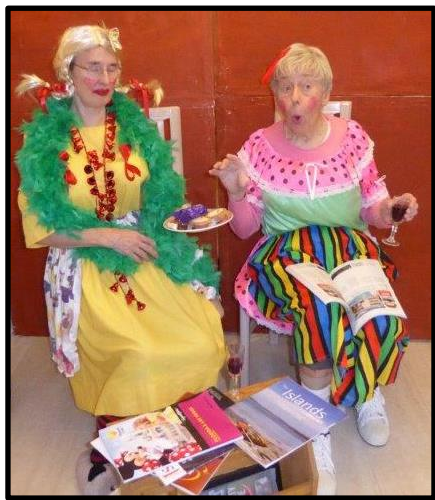
The sudden closure of The Trades Club not only created problems for our Chairman and Committee but especially our Drama Impresario, Chris Woolven. He had been visualising the regular stage for his third pantomime when a rewrite was forced upon him by the change of venue. The Catholic Club is darker than the Trades, with different access points to the stage. The regular team of U3A thespians gave bravura performances involving their usual zany characters.

It is a pity that we have been unable to find a pianist among our members or associates when we could form a choir and music could be included into our Christmas Extravaganza, and possibly even a demonstration from our Scottish Country Dancing group.

Thanks should be expressed to those members who arranged the tables and supplied the food and crackers, and cleared up at the end.

David Allen





February – March 2018 Newsletter

What a great bunch of people we got together for this year's Pantomime.

I was quite uncertain about how we would get on, with so few people coming forward to take part and to some extent I had to write the script around the people we had.

After the success of last year's "Little Old Granny Riding Hood" Diane and I decided that this year we would give it a rest. However when we were approached and asked to produce something for this year I forgot all that, foolishly agreed and came up with a plot for "Oldilocks"

After the initial casting and rewriting we all got together and started to work it through bit by bit. Always open to suggestions we did manage to adapt things as we went along, including some brilliant gags and suggestions made by members of the group.

One problem I did find was that of reproducing on stage what I originally imagined when I wrote it! For example, the more observant in the audience will have noticed the abundance of chairs that appeared on the stage for the last scene. This became necessary when we realised that the script demanded that the cast should each fall to the floor as a spell was cast on them one by one. Unfortunately I had failed to foresee that most of the cast were of an age where falling on the floor was a major difficulty and that even if they did manage to get down, it was still impossible for most of the cast to get up again unaided.....hence the chairs!

In the event though the hours and hours of rehearsals and props, set and costume making were rewarded by an unforgettable performance that was well appreciated by cast and audience alike.

I must say a big thank-you to everyone who took part and helped us with the show.

Chris Woolven



