



CAAPA NEWSLETTER JUNE 2021

Dear CaAPA members

We hope this Newsletter continues to find all our members with your families, friends and loved ones healthy and safe as we continue to enjoy the easing of the lockdown. And especially for anyone who finds themselves alone: we hope that you are finding the courage and resilience to live with the changing guidelines, and able to keep spirits high despite the challenges. Summer is here and a new sense of hope!

The appeal for playlets on our theme **Action for the Church in Need** continues and we welcome any submissions. We also always welcome any news that members would like to share:



Are you involved in online projects – theatrical, musical, hobbies?

What are your future professional plans?!

How have you kept yourself busy during the lockdowns?

Have you learnt new skills?

Please do write!!



(for this Newsletter we are indebted to Michael Slater and, again for her formatting skills, Nadia Ostacchini)

We begin by remembering the past members of CaAPA whose anniversaries occur at this time. This includes those who have made an invaluable contribution to the life of our predecessor, **The Catholic Stage Guild**.

IN MEMORIAM (JUNE)

1998 WILLIAM (BILL) IGOE: VICE-PRESIDENT

2000 CARDINAL BASIL HUME, O.S.B.: PRESIDENT

2002 MARY ALLEN

2009 DANNY LA RUE: VICE-PRESIDENT





**Michael Slater recorded these memories of several of our past members:
(Obituary originally printed in the 3 July 1998 issue of the Catholic Herald)**

WILLIAM JOSEPH IGOE - Bill Igoe, a former news editor of the *Catholic Herald*, but far more widely known and remembered as a prolific and deeply knowledgeable drama critic, died on June 18. He was 88.

Born in 1910 in Glasgow into an Irish American family, he was educated at **St Mungo's Academy** and began his long career in journalism with the **Scottish Catholic Times**.

He joined the **Royal Army Medical Corps** in the last war but was soon invalided out on medical grounds and became features editor and columnist on the **Glasgow Observer**. In 1944 **Michael de la Bedoyere**, editor of the Catholic Herald, the parent paper in **Fleet Street**, offered him the post of news editor. He agreed to go for six months specialising in foreign news and assignments. However, he fell in love with Fleet Street and London and stayed for the remainder of his life.

He became *chief drama critic of the Catholic Herald continuing for more than 20 years to contribute in-depth articles on the London theatre scene*. Although he was associated with the Catholic Herald for some 25 years, he was a only member of staff for under three years.

In 1952 he joined **Books of the Month magazine** chaired by Robert Maxwell who appointed him editor. The same year he married **Eithne O'Brien**, a graduate of the **Atholl Crescent School of Domestic Science**.

On the demise of Books of the Month the Igoes emigrated to the USA where Bill joined the staff of the **Encyclopedia Britannica** in Chicago. He did reviews for the **Chicago Tribune** while continuing to contribute weekly articles on the theatre to the Catholic Herald. As **The Tablet** correspondent in the US, he covered the presidential election of 1960. Later that year the family returned to England when Bill became editor of **Oldbourne Press**, the *Beaverbrook Publishing Department*, travelling through Europe and the Middle East on behalf of the company.

On the death of **Lord Beaverbrook** and the sale of Oldbourne, Bill moved to the **Greystone Publishing Company** supervising production of **The World and its Peoples**, an encyclopaedia for the American market.

His next move, at the invitation of **Sir Thomas Blackburn**, chairman of **Daily Express Newspapers**, was to become deputy director of the **Beaverbrook Library** under its director **Professor AJ Taylor**.

He retired in 1975 but continued for a short period as drama critic for **The Universe**, then as drama critic for **The Month, the Jesuit Review**.

A long-standing member of **The Keys, the Catholic writers' guild**, Bill became chairman in 1954 and served as vice-master under several subsequent masters of the guild.

After his wife's sudden and tragic death in 1974 the family moved from Loughton in Essex to Mortlake.

In 1997 Bill was made a **Knight of St Gregory** for his work in Catholic journalism. Already a vice president of the **Catholic Writers Guild**, he was also elected a vice-president of the Catholic Stage Guild.

In later years, although his sight failed and he was registered as a blind person, he continued a very lively interest in Church affairs, the theatre and the Catholic press,



Fleet Street in 1944





However, above all was his pride in his family - his son Nicholas, a chartered accountant in the *City of London*, and his daughter Dierdre, a nurse, who is married and mother of his three grandchildren.



CARDINAL BASIL HUME - was the most supportive and loved *President* of the **Catholic Stage Guild**, and we were very fortunate in knowing his *Private Secretary Mgr. Jim Curry* who over the years was a great friend to CSG. He had a great love of the theatre, was brought up in the East End and was a great mimic. He played **Bill Sykes** in **Oliver**.

Father Jim paved the way for us to hold the reception in the Throne Room in honour of our President.

I was fortunate during one of my first **Westminster Diocese pilgrimages** to **Lourdes**, which Cardinal Hume asked **Mgr. Vlad** to form, to experience first-hand the guiding hand of Mgr. Vlad keeping the Pilgrimage together.

I was asked to be an *Acolyte* on the *Blessed Sacrament procession* which Cardinal Hume led.

There were three Acolytes, two on thurible and one on boat, which I looked after. This meant going to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and kneeling in front of the monstrance with Cardinal Hume. You were very close and the power of prayer from the Cardinal was something that will live with me as a very treasured memory.

www.cardinalhumecentre.org.uk/

DANNY LA RUE (*this moving story came to light at Danny's funeral*)

It is nice to hold on to memories. Once during **Hello, Dolly!**, he became very philosophical. 'Dan,' he said, 'I am so sorry. I have one deep regret now.' God, I thought, what have I done wrong now? 'You will never see what I see,' he continued. 'How you are always there. How you never let up, that makes me so proud.'

Nowadays, when I have a decision to make that will affect my life or my career, I have to keep asking - 'What would Jack have done?'

When **Jack Hanson** died, somebody cut away part of my body. I died a little too.

A short time after he passed away, I was going through some of the many items he had given to me as presents for birthdays or anniversaries during our time together, wallowing in the memories each one brought back. I was particularly fond of a beautifully crafted and ornate box that had been a gift for my fiftieth birthday in 1977. I had always marvelled at Jack's exquisite taste. He had a rare ability to find the ideal present for each special occasion and obviously spent a great deal of time choosing each gift.

I opened the box carefully and found it still contained the tissue paper I had wrongly assumed had been put there to protect such a delicate object. Yet, on a much closer inspection, I came across a cassette tape nestling underneath the paper, which had remained undiscovered for over seven years. I simply couldn't understand how I had missed finding it all those years before.





Catholic Association of Performing Arts

With trembling fingers, I placed the cassette on the tape recorder and switched on, not really knowing what to expect. There was a short pause before a warm and familiar voice came over the speakers. It was Jack. I shivered; it came as a tremendous and emotional shock to hear him again. My body went cold. In his deep, velvet voice he recited a poem he had composed specially for me on my fiftieth birthday:

Half-way: My Gift for Danny on a Very Special Birthday,

*There are beginnings, There are endings,
There are long, long in-betweens,
There are good times, There are bad times But life is what life means,
But life I have had, my friend, from you For almost half my years,
In every good or bad disguise, With all the hopes and fears
That crowd our onward journey Towards our final goal,
And life for me has been a thing of beauty, Rounded whole.
For this I give you all my thanks And all my deepest love,
To last through times, Through every change, Until the final move,
And after that in memory, When you, I hope, survive,
You know that thanks to you, my friend, I knew I was alive.
Thanks, Dan.*



(John Hanson was for many years the manager and close friend of Danny La Rue)

Below, a photo of Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor at the Garrick Club with Danny La Rue.

In 1964 he opened his own nightclub in Hanover Square. La Rue appeared in dozens of TV shows, including *The Good Old Days*, *Tonight With Danny La Rue* and *Royal Variety Performances*. He was also one of Britain's most established panto dames.

La Rue made theatrical history by being the first man to play a female role in a major musical when took on the part of Dolly in *Hello Dolly!*

He was the first female impersonator to appear at the Royal Variety Performance before the Queen was awarded an OBE in 2002. La Rue was named Theatre Personality of the Year in 1970 and Entertainer of the Decade in 1979.

Much loved by other entertainers, Noel Coward called him 'the most professional, the most witty and most utterly charming man in the business', while Bob Hope hailed Danny as 'the most glamorous woman in the world'.





Catholic Association of Performing Arts

Diana, Princess of Wales has been in the news lately, following the revelations concerning *that* TV interview, **Michael Slater** unearthed this letter from the CaAPA archive. It refers to CaAPA's support of a cause very close to Diana's heart, that of **AIDS**.



ST. JAMES'S PALACE
LONDON SW1A 1BS

From: The Private Secretary to H.R.H. The Princess of Wales
19 November 1992

Dear Mator

Thank you for your letter of 31st October which I have taken early opportunity to lay before The Princess of Wales.

Her Royal Highness was interested to learn of plans for the AIDS Awareness mass on 24th November and has asked me to send you her best wishes for a successful and enjoyable evening.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Jephson

Patrick Jephson

And now several reminders: Jeremy Rowe's interesting writing initiative –

CaAPA PLAYWRIGHTS

The 'playlet evenings' (of which we hope to see another before long) have made a strong impression. There are Catholic writing talents which could go beyond the membership circumference, if people so desired. The evenings have also opened up the possibility of a new dramatic form.

We are seeking scripts of between 5 and 20 minutes in length, in order to create a single drama for professional and amateur presentation.

The subject chosen for the first experiment is the life and career of Constantine the Great. Differing views of his actions and personality will be welcome.

Royalties will be divided between the playwrights.

If you are interested in collaborating in this project, please email:
collaborative.direct@btinternet.com

I will then send more details, together with a first draft of an initial play as an example

You do not need to be a historian. In the first instance, writers can find plenty of material and references on the internet.

Collaborative Dramas

ed. Jeremy Rowe.



And in case you missed the listings in last month's Newsletter:

FUTURE DATES FOR THE DIARY

(assuming - and hoping - the government's roadmap to recovery doesn't change!)

Wednesday 6 **OCTOBER** 7pm at CAA Covent Garden: book launch: *Beth* by Julia Scott

Tuesday 26 **OCTOBER** 7pm at CAA: CaAPA playlets evening: Action for the Church in Need

Tuesday 16 **NOVEMBER** 7pm at CAA: CaAPA AGM

Tuesday 14 **DECEMBER** 7pm at CAA: CaAPA Christmas Dinner

Please do send in any items you have written, or think may be of interest to members, for inclusion in future Newsletters to kennethmichaels@hotmail.com

Until next month, may you all remain safe.

God Bless.

Kenneth Michaels
(Hon.Secretary).

[@Wearecaapa](https://twitter.com/wearecaapa)



www.catholicassociationofperformingarts.org.uk/



Our diverse group of members, whom are comprised of actors, directors, writers, singers, musicians and other entertainers, share in a creative community where they can also grow in their spiritual values. We also aim to serve the wider community by presenting productions for charitable causes or by taking productions on tour to schools, local theatres, parishes and elderly