



## CAAPA NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2021

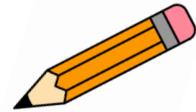
Dear CaAPA members

We hope that you all enjoyed a holy and peaceful Christmas and New Year, and your families and friends are safe and well. For those who find themselves alone, we hope that your faith is giving you the strength, courage and resilience to keep your spirits high despite all the challenges. It won't be too long before the spring is upon us!

*Are you involved in any theatrical or musical projects as we gradually emerge from the dark days of the lockdowns?*

*Did you learn any new skills or start a new hobby?*

*Don't be shy – please do write!!*



**(For this Newsletter we are deeply indebted to Michael Slater and Jane Garioni; and this would not be the Newsletter it is without the formatting skills of Nadia Ostacchini. Thank you all!)**

### PRAYER FOR THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENCYCLICAL LAUDATO SI'

Loving God, Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.

Open our minds and touch our hearts,

So that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult times,

Especially the poorest and most vulnerable.

Help us to show creative solidarity as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.



Make us courageous in embracing the changes required to seek the common good. Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent.

Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor. May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.

We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians.

Amen.

*(Pope Francis)*

**We begin by remembering the past members of CaAPA whose anniversaries occur during this time. This includes those who have made an invaluable contribution to the life and activities of our predecessor, The Catholic Stage Guild. Below we remember those who died during November and December.**

\*\*\*\*\*





\*\*\*\*\*

**IN MEMORIAM**

\*\*\*\*\*

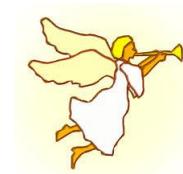
**NOVEMBER**

- 1987 Eamonn Andrews: Chairman & Vice President
- 1991 Ida Forbes-Robertson
- 1996 Dame Joan Hammond Dbe, Cmg: Vice President
- 1999 Ian Bannen: Vice President
- 2004 Derrie Hanly: Honorary Treasurer
- 2010 Pauline Sitwell
- 2015 Paul Randall
- 2018 Jeanne Mockford
- 2018 Canon John Mcdonald



**DECEMBER**

- 1992 Cyril Conway: Honorary Treasurer
- 1992 Michael Robbins: Vice President
- 1994 Vere Laurie
- 1995 Fr Francis Frayne
- 1997 George Walshe
- 1998 Jack Wilby: Honorary Northern Secretary
- 2002 Mgr George Tancred: National Chaplain
- 2003 J.Brian Faul: Honorary Treasurer
- 2005 Audrey Joyce: Vice Chairman
- 2006 Neil Macleod
- 2007 Thora Tolson: Committee Member
- 2009 Alan Martell
- 2010 Kitty Fitzgerald
- 2011 Phyllis Roe
- 2011 Hal Dyer



\*\*\*\*\*

***These reminiscences come from the extraordinary memory of Michael Slater!***

A memorial to **EAMONN ANDREWS** is at ***Our Lady of Grace in Chiswick***. It's to the left of the sanctuary in **St Edmund's Chapel**. The memorial consists of an icon created by a Russian artist known to **Monsignor Jim Curry**, who was parish priest of the church and a friend and supporter of the Catholic Stage Guild.

**DAME JOAN HAMMOND** was an Australian operatic soprano, singing coach and champion golfer.





*What follows is a letter from Ian Bannen's widow Marilyn, sent to Michael Slater:*

*I met Ian when I was 18; I loved him from that moment and knew he was the man with whom I wished to spend my life – the man with whom I wished to grow old. We grew 38 years older together, but not as old as I would have liked. Those years are irreplaceable, and I treasure them.*

*I have received many hundreds of letters...many from people he had met and helped in the course of doing what he felt to be the most important work in life – visiting the elderly, the sick, the dying and the bereaved – and doing so quietly and without fanfare. Supporting small unknown charities because they were small and unknown and lacked glittering support. A Samburu tribesman, in a remote village in **Kenya**, who had worked on the film Ian had made there in 1998, wrote simply and movingly, his pencil-addressed envelope a testament to Ian:*

*The Chief Wife  
Mr Ian Bannen  
Gentleman  
England*

*Last summer Ian received a letter via **This is Your Life** from a 92-year-old lady living in a nursing home. She recalled the day, almost 50 years before, when he had burst into the bank where she worked, with his first pay cheque for one line in a film. He had picked her up from her seat and waltzed her around the bank three times singing 'my first film, my first film!' She said she had followed his career from that moment and asked for an autographed photo. Ian at once dialled 192, got her number and phoned her; they talked for half an hour, and he arranged to visit for tea. That was the person he was.*

*Urgent letters from business people, invitations to grand occasions would lie unattended for weeks, but not so a letter from someone needing help or just cheering up.*

*The only way I can start each day is to search for and then count blessings – the blessing of instantaneous death at the height of his career, with 8 scripts waiting and never having to endure the pain and suffering which can accompany old age. The blessing of never having had to give up his work, which would have broken his heart, and the blessing of 38 years of huge happiness together. I am blessed to have been loved by him so absolutely. He lighted a candle in the heart of everyone he met, especially mine. Please remember him always in your prayers...*

**DERRIE HANLY** was not an actor but gave tremendous service to the **Catholic Stage Guild**.

**PAULINE SITWELL**, of the famous Sitwell family, was a very committed Committee member. **Michael S** recalls "I attended her funeral and realised I was completely ignorant of her life. Having heard of the life she led, I had such regret that I hadn't had more opportunities to speak with her. She was an inspiring lady – every winter, just before Christmas, she used to assist in taking disabled children skiing to Europe."

**PAUL RANDALL** was a committee member of the CSG for many years and a very dedicated amateur actor.





**JEANNE MOCKFORD**, an actress and a great friend of **Frankie Howard**. You could spot her in ***Up Pompeii***, carrying an urn, exclaiming 'Woe is me; woe is me!'

One of **CANON JOHN MCDONALD'S** favourite sermon topics was relating the story of his time in ***New York***; someone asked him how he could get to ***Carnegie Hall***. **Fr John** replied '*practise*'.

**CYRIL CONWAY**, father of ***Gabby Lister***; Michael states that no-one could have given more dedicated service to keeping the finances of the Guild in order. At an AGM, as he was delivering his Treasurer's report, his dear wife Louise roared "*Speak up!*" from the back of the hall. Dear Cyril carried on regardless.

**Michael S** first met **MICHAEL ROBBINS** in ***On The Buses***. Like many actors who had made their names in a TV series, he had actually had a distinguished career in the theatre before. He became most supportive and a dear friend of the CSG, attending many events.

**VERE LAURIE**, was a very popular BBC producer and everyone who worked with him appreciated his warmth and kindness.

**GEORGE WALSHE**, perhaps because of his Irish upbringing, always insisted on fish at the Annual Dinner held, of course, on a Friday!

**JACK WILBY** managed the CSG's Northern branch for many years.

**J.BRIAN FAUL** was for many years the administrator at ***Allen Hall***, the diocesan seminary. A delightful man, he and his wife Ann both shared a love of ***Paris***.

**AUDREY JOYCE** was a committed *Vice Chair* and, with her husband Richard, created many joyful evenings at the CAA.

**NEIL MACLEOD** travelled to ***Lourdes*** with the diocese and once gave a monologue that moved everyone to tears.

**THORA TOLSEN** was also a Committee member and lived in ***Covent Garden***. After her death she left Michael Slater the brass makeup mirror that had been used by Eileen Herlie (*famous in a West End production of **Jean Cocteau's** *The Eagle has Two Heads* and for playing **Gertrude** in **Olivier's** film version of **Hamlet***).

**MONSIGNOR GEORGE TANCRED** was a tremendous 'character'! When ***Miss Saigon*** was playing at the **Theatre Royal, Drury Lane**, the first question the Filipino members of the cast asked when they landed at Heathrow was '*where is the nearest Catholic church?*' The Monsignor's response? *He celebrated mass in the Theatre Royal for the company.*



# Catholic Association of Performing Arts



**ALAN MARTELL** was renowned for spending almost half an hour at an AGM chastising the Committee for using first-class stamps (when they used such things!)

**KITTY FITZGERALD** had been a member of the **CSG** since the days of the *Interval Club\** on **Dean Street, Soho**, where she rubbed shoulders with the likes of **Rex Harrison, James Mason** and **Joan Collins**. (\**The Interval Club was on the site of what is now the Soho Theatre*).

**HAL DYER** was a most distinguished actress and the wife of **Michael Robbins**. She will always be remembered for her brilliant one-woman show on the life of **Ellen Terry**, which she performed at the **old Theatre Museum in Covent Garden**.

\*\*\*\*\*

And now ... we are indebted to Jane Garioni for recording in pictures the antics at the CaAPA 2021 Annual Christmas Dinner, held at the CAA in Covent Garden in December. A good time was had by all! What larks!

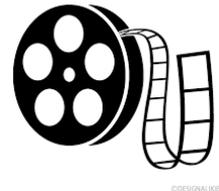




We owe so much to the organising talents, administrative patience and sheer tenacity of a few trusty souls for actually ensuring that the Dinner took place in a time of Covid. But none more so than our wonderful MC Michael Slater!

(Above you see Michael and Jane enjoying a cuddle, our esteemed chaplains enjoying a chat and a laugh and members of CaAPA enjoying an impromptu carol concert after dinner, masterminded so expertly by dear maestro Richard Codd who had travelled all the way from Winchester. A fitting 'theatrical' finale to the Catholic Association of Performing Arts' Annual Christmas Dinner.)

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend and celebrate!



\*\*\*\*\*

FILM: THE EYES OF TAMMY FAYE by Kristina Cooper Jan 16th, 2022

Tammy and Jim Bakker were a high-profile American televangelist couple, who ran the **Praise the Lord Television network**, and who came to grief in the 1980s in a celebrated fraud/misappropriation of funds scandal. Jim Bakker was jailed while Tammy, with her panda eyes and sequined shoulder pads, was pilloried in the popular press as much for her inexorable taste as her excessive lavish spending. The couple were an embarrassment to the serious church.

Thus, it is interesting that their lives and ministry should be the subject of a film produced by and starring award winning *Hollywood actress* **Jessica Chastain**, who plays **Tammy Faye Bakker**. It is a tour de force on Chastain's part as she plays Tammy from the moment she meets Jim (played by **Andrew Garfield**) at Bible college as a fresh-faced young woman, to the heavily made up rather grotesque woman at the end of her life. Despite the extravagant wigs and OTT outfits, (one of the delights of the film!) Chastain manages to preserve Tammy's essential sweetness and innocence underneath all this.

I was fascinated that the Bakker's lives would even be considered suitable material for a Hollywood film and interested to see how the couple and their Christian faith would be portrayed. To my surprise the film was surprisingly sympathetic to the couple and their faith was not mocked. The wrongs of their lives were not hidden, but because of the nuanced script and performances by Chastain and Garfield (who played the hero in Hacksaw Ridge), you went away from the film with less judgement and more understanding and compassion for the reasons they behaved the way they did.

Both Faye and Bakker came from poor backgrounds and simply wanted the lifestyles and success they saw among the established Christian leaders around them. The couple early on realised there needed to be a bit more fun in faith if they wanted to reach their contemporaries. Beginning with puppet shows, they moved on to chat shows, and tv specials with singing and dancing. The Gospel itself might have got a bit side-lined in the process but The Praise the Lord TV became the largest Christian network in the world. The couple then went on to develop USA Heritage a Christian theme park. But all this, together with their lavish lifestyles, was sucking up more and more money, and their debts mounted. Clearly out of their depth but unwilling to face reality they continued to behave like teenagers out on the town with dad's credit card.

A precursor to **Oprah Winfrey** and other chat shows where guests bear all, Tammy paved the way, sharing everything about her life and thoughts, without filter. This proved to be pure television gold, which her husband cannily





# Catholic Association of Performing Arts

realised and exploited to get viewers to phone in donations to keep their empire afloat. Thus, Tammy shared everything from childbirth experiences to infidelity on screen.

Their story is a something of a morality tale and a reminder how dangerous it is to try and serve God and mammon, as one will ultimately prevail. But from the film, based on a documentary about them, they were not evil people. The real villain of the piece emerges rather as **Jerry Falwell (Vincent d'Orio)** the leader of the religious right, who despised them as hicks and while pretending friendship, sets them up and manoeuvres things to take control, when everything collapses around them. An interesting and entertaining film with surely an Oscar for Chastain?

\*\*\*\*\*

**Nadia Ostacchini** and **Penny Culliford** featured in an article in *The Messenger of St Anthony* magazine last September 2021. The article includes profiles of **Tricolore Theatre Company's** founder, Nadia Ostacchini, and regular writer Penny Culliford, as well as the company's Catholic connections, links to the Italian Diaspora in London, current production plans and future project ideas:



Click on: [https://www.tricolore.org.uk/pdfs/article\\_a\\_labour\\_of\\_love.pdf](https://www.tricolore.org.uk/pdfs/article_a_labour_of_love.pdf)

Subscribe to *The Messenger of St Anthony* at

<https://www.messengersaintanthony.com/content/subscriptions>

\*\*\*\*\*



Please do send in any items you have written, or any article you find, and think may be of interest to members, for inclusion in future Newsletters to: [kennethmichaels@hotmail.com](mailto:kennethmichaels@hotmail.com)

Until next month, may you all remain safe.

God Bless.

**Kenneth Michaels**  
(Hon.Secretary)

@Wearecaapa



[www.catholicassociationofperformingarts.org.uk/](http://www.catholicassociationofperformingarts.org.uk/)



**Our diverse group of members comprise actors, singers, directors, writers, musicians and other entertainers who share their spiritual values in a creative community.**

