

Join Us

If you would like to be involved in the world of theatre, why not join us as a Member.

Club Membership – Benefits

- ✓ The right to participate in club activities, including putting on shows
- ✓ A say in the running of the club through voting rights at the AGM and in electing the Board of Trustees
- ✓ Access to our members' website and receive a regular club newsletter by email
- ✓ Full credit to your account for booked tickets to Questors productions if you let us know that you can't make the show
- ✓ Priority booking for courses or special events
- ✓ Meet new people and learn fresh skills as part of the Questors team
- ✓ Feel great about being a member of one of Europe's largest community theatres with over 90 years of contribution to the arts

Note that this new, lower-priced membership does not include ticket discounts.

We have a wide range of opportunities for you to become actively involved throughout the theatre. Volunteer help is always needed for selling programmes, stewarding or serving behind the bar, and training is provided if you'd like to work in Box Office with our computerised system. Backstage staff including stage managers, prop makers, set builders, sound and lighting designers and operators, painters, wardrobe and costume and set designers are always welcomed, whatever your skills. We also have courses for those wishing to direct. The Questors has a high standard of acting and, to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – call the Theatre Office for details of forthcoming auditions.

Season Pass – Benefits

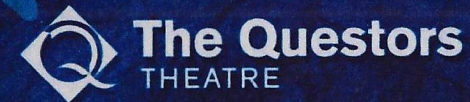
A Season Pass is also available to both members (the combined cost is equivalent to that of the old-style membership) and non-members, which gives the following benefits:

- ✓ Ticket discounts for every Questors production (except the pantomime):
an adult ticket at a 50% discount for the Season Pass holder
£2 off ANY number of additional adult or concession tickets
up to FOUR child tickets at 50% discount
- ✓ Will receive other *audience loyalty* special offers from The Questors or other organisations performing at The Questors
- ✓ Available to all – you do not need to be a club member

Further details and pricing of Club Membership (and enhanced Supporter Memberships), the Season Pass and Questors Youth Theatre can be found on the Questors website: questors.org.uk.

The Questors Theatre
12 Mattock Lane, Ealing, W5 5BQ
Registered Charity No. 207516

Programme: Nigel Bamford
Theatre Office: 020 8567 0011
Box Office: 020 8567 5184
Email: enquiries@questors.org.uk



DRAGON'S TEETH

by Shirland Quin

The Studio
20-28 October 2023

Fields at The Questors

Fields at The Questors serves Italian coffee, fine teas, snacks and handmade cakes, and is the perfect spot for a pre-theatre café stop or interval ice-cream.

Place your interval order before the show to beat the crowds.

Open before and during the interval of all Judi Dench Playhouse evening and matinee performances.

Find **Fields** on **Facebook**.



The Grapevine Bar

The Grapevine is our friendly club bar open to Members of The Questors Theatre and their guests, as well as audience members on show nights.

The club is open six nights a week and Sunday lunchtimes, and is managed and staffed entirely by volunteers.

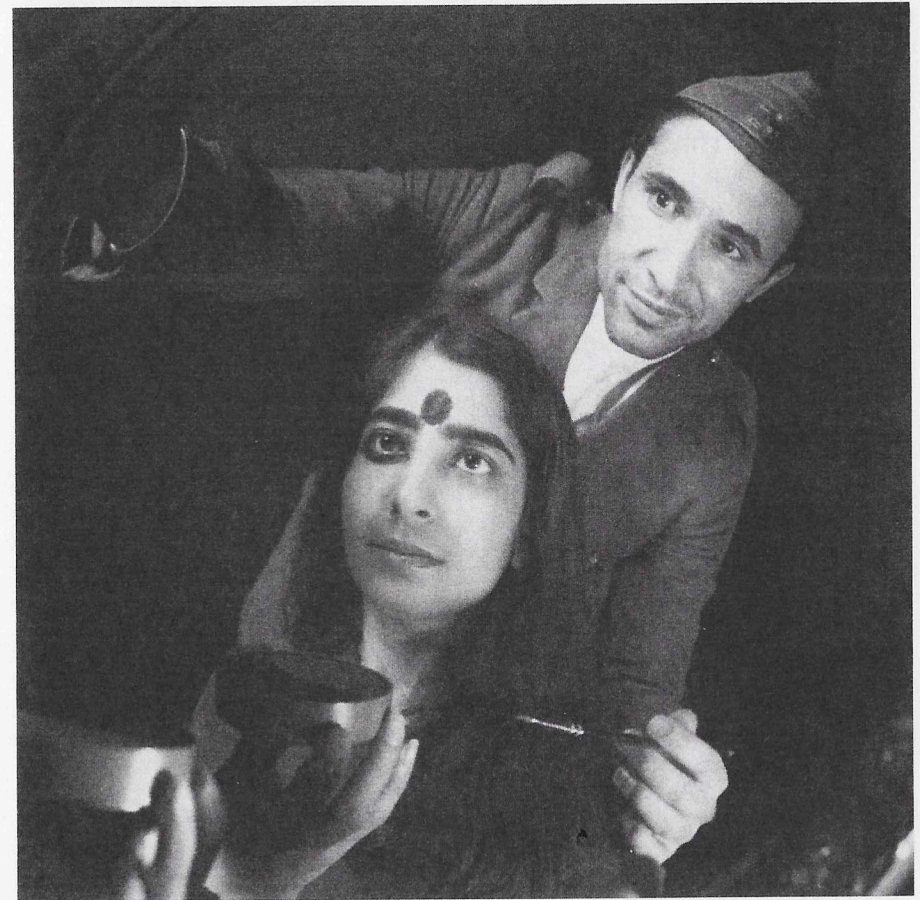
We are the proud holders of a Cask Marque award for the quality of our real ales, we appear in the 2024 edition of The Good Beer Guide and we are **CAMRA West Middlesex Club of the Year**. A choice of at least three real ales is usually available, including Fuller's London Pride. We also provide a range of draught lagers and ciders, as well as wines, spirits and soft drinks – all at very reasonable prices.

Opening Hours (subject to change):

Monday – Saturday: 7:00 pm – 11:00 pm

Sunday lunchtime: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

See questors.org.uk/grapevine for more details.



Dragon's Teeth

by Shirland Quin

The Studio

20 – 28 October 2023

DRAGON'S TEETH

It all started with Cornelia Parker blowing up a shed. Wondering how to update Shirland Quin's 1930's play, I came across Parker's extraordinary installation, which is the remains of a shed, exploded by the British Army, suspended in mid-air and lit by a powerful light bulb. It was the intact pre-exploded shed that interested me, though. Why not make a shed the primary feature of the set and make everyone gravitate around it? Quin's play is set in the hallway of a house in the grounds of an arsenal. I wasn't sure exactly what an arsenal was and, discovering that it is a place where weapons are made and tested, I wanted to set the play in the arsenal itself.

The most well-known arsenal in this country is the Woolwich arsenal, of which nothing much remains. In my research, I came across the numerous munitions factories that were set up during the First World War (the result of a government act to offset a shortfall in weapons), in which women were the primary workers. Most were demolished after the war, but some remained into the mid-1920s, primarily to decommission explosives.

Another change I made to the original play was the result of casting an Indian actress in the role of the 'heroine' of the piece, Lydia. Instead of being an artist, she became an actress/dancer. And, because the third act of the play is Lydia's dream, I decided to use Lydia's background in Kathakali theatre to become the environment in which characters interact.



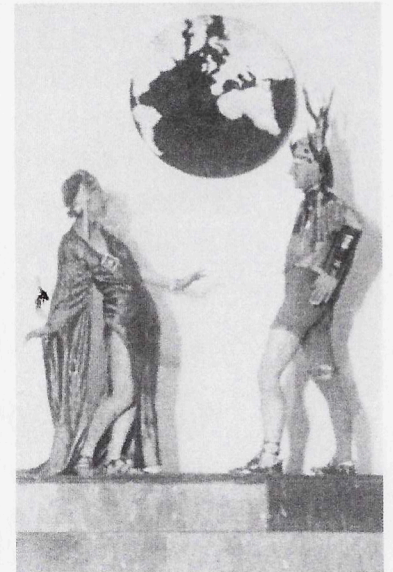
Google Shirland Quin and nothing much will come up, although there is a photograph of her sitting between George Bernard Shaw and Charlie Chaplin. It's hard to work out whether she's having a chat with them, or she

just photo-bombed their meeting. She lived, most of the time, in Honolulu. Apart from a few plays and a best-selling book, she disappears from view; which is a shame, as *Dragon's Teeth* is a fascinating play, which eerily anticipates the Second World War and even predicts a machine akin to a drone and its use in war.

Part of the problem with *Dragon's Teeth* is the dream sequence in the last act. As originally written, it goes on forever, requires hundreds of extras, is incredibly melodramatic and, oddly, comes across as more dated than the other acts. So what you will see is a very condensed version of a very elaborate stab at surrealism stroke Brechtian theatre. And using Kathakali theatre to express Lydia's dream was one way of creating something very odd and confusing. Kathakali theatre is a form of storytelling that uses dance in order to tell the story. It uses lots of different hand movements and facial expressions as a form of sign language. The costumes and make up are extremely colourful and stylised.

As for that first production of *Dragon's Teeth* in 1933, I can do little more than quote the account given in Gwenan Evans' fine history of *The Questors*, *A Few Drops of Water*.

"The first production in the Mattock Lane theatre opened on 6th December 1933 and with the choice of play, *The Questors* served notice of things to come – by presenting the English première of an experimental new play by Shirland Quin, ***Dragon's Teeth***, "undoubtedly the most experimental work done by a London society in recent months, if not years", according to *The Amateur Theatre*. This had an elaborate and expressionistic dream sequence in the last act, involving around 70 characters, which obviously meant doubling, trebling, quadrupling and even quintupling of parts. It was not staged without some considerable difficulties; Alfred Emmet, who directed, remembers particularly that two cast members, playing nine parts between them, dropped out actually on the afternoon of the first performance, necessitating furious re-rehearsal, even while the first act was in progress. There had been no time to rehearse costume changes, and several times, the actors discovered that by the time they had changed, the scene they had changed for had already finished! Despite all this, the show was very well received and is remembered by those who saw it as a most exciting production."



I can only hope that this production will not be beset by such problems.

David Hovatter, Director

DRAGON'S TEETH

by Shirland Quin

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 20 October 2023

CAST

in order of appearance

Private Higgins **Jolyon Houghton**

Darrell Marston **Omar Aga**

Hugh Oliver **Pascal Orzabal**

Captain Marston
(older brother of Darrell) **Alex Hunter**

Lydia **Sweta Gupta**

Air Commander Kempe **David Hovatter**

Nellie Marston
(older sister of Darrell) **Millie Jewry**

Maud Featherstone **Ruby Barry**

The play lasts approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes
including a 15-minute interval

Please turn off all mobile phones and similar electronic devices. The use of cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited.
Thank you.

PRODUCTION

Director **David Hovatter**
Set Designer **Katarzyna Kryńsk**
Costume Designer **Russell Fleet**
Lighting Designer **Andrew Whadcoat**
Sound Designer **Russell Fleet**

Stage Management / Properties **Christopher Benson**
Rehearsal Prompter **Carole Swan**
Headdresses **Shaan Latif-Shaikh**
Lighting and Sound Operator **Colette Green**
Lighting Rigger **Terry Mummery**
Set Constructors **Toby Burbidge,**
Michael Groves
Set Painters **Jolyon Houghton,**
Maya Jagger,
Pascal Orzabal
Get-In Assistance **Daniel Cawtheray**
Photographer **Evelina Plonytė**
Thanks to **James Connor,**
Jamie Gould,
Joanna Mludzinska,
Harriet Parsonage,
Derek Stoddart

Biographies

Omar Aga – *Darrel Marston*

This is Omar's third Questors production, having previously appeared in *Haunting Julia* and *Little Dorrit*. Omar studied acting while at university in Canada where a very special teacher told him the secret to good acting is to 'always find your light, know your lines and love your scene partners'.

Ruby Barry – *Maud Featherstone*

Ruby has acted in two Questors productions before: a horror with *Haunting Julia* and a workshop musical *Good Times with the Everly Brothers*. She's excited to make it a hat trick with *Dragon's Teeth*, a historical drama ripe with topics still as relevant as they were 90 years ago. She studied drama at the University of Essex and now works as a copywriter.

Sweta Gupta – *Lydia*

Sweta is a trained actor from the renowned Asmita Theatre Group, New Delhi, India. *Dragon's Teeth* is her second production with The Questors after *Little Dorrit*. Her other plays include *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Musafir*, *Amritsar Aa Gaya*, *Ramkali*, *Gandhari Ka Shaap* and many more.

Jolyon Houghton – *Private Higgins*

Jolyon was first at The Questors when he was a timid teenager in the Youth Theatre. After completing Student Group 62, he went on to study acting at Central School of Speech and Drama. His favourite roles at The Questors include Brandon in *Rope*, Sidney in *Absurd Person Singular* and Fleaman in *Potter's Amazing Fleas*.

David Hovatter – *Air Commander Kempe* / *Director*

David joined The Questors in the mid-1980s, but most recently he has acted in *Murder on the Nile* and directed *Little Dorrit*.

Alex Hunter – *Captain Marston*

Alex is a 27-year-old actor living in Ealing. He has been acting since he was nine, with roles such as Puck, Edward Lyons in *Blood Brothers* and the 10th Juror in *Twelve Angry Men*. This is Alex's first Questors production and he is excited to throw himself into the limelight!

Millie Jewry – *Nellie Marston*

Dragon's Teeth is Millie's Questors debut. Having grown up working in different areas of theatre, Millie went on to study drama at the University of Exeter. She is thrilled to be back on the stage in London, and is hoping that the audience enjoy the play as much as her character Nellie likes complaining.

Pascal Orzabal – *Hugh Oliver*

After a ten-year hiatus from acting after studying at Drama Centre London, Pascal has recently returned to theatre. This is his first show at The Questors after joining in September and he looks forward hopefully to being involved in many more productions.

Russell Fleet – *Costume Designer* / *Sound Designer*

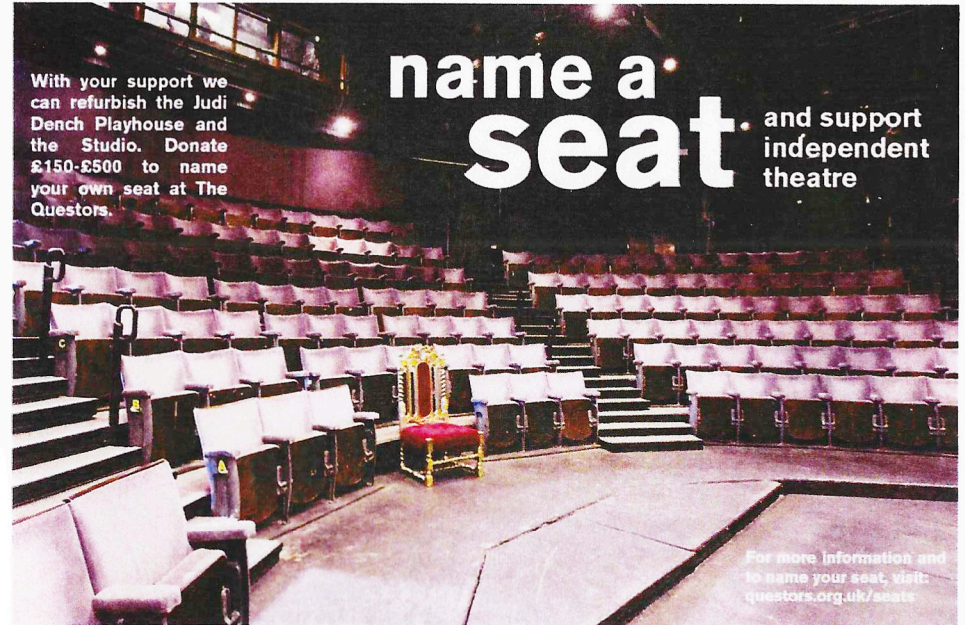
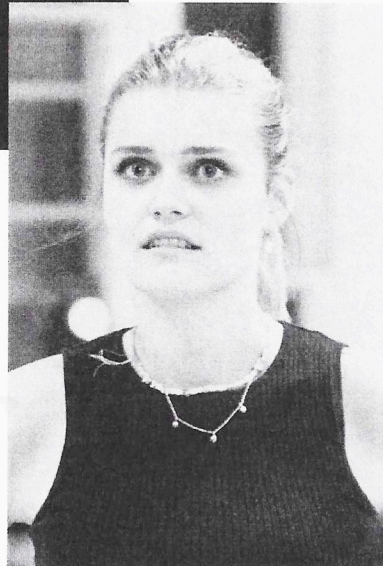
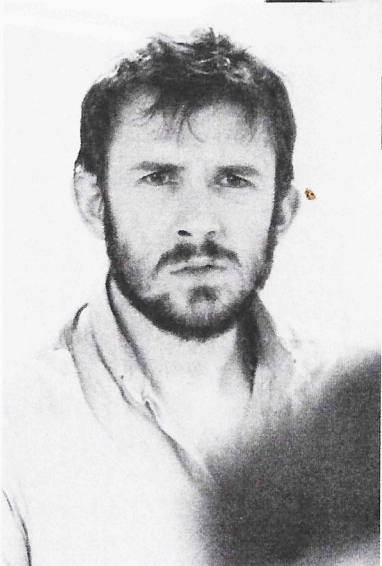
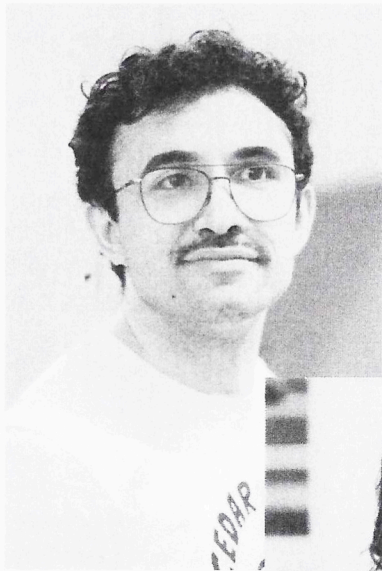
Russell has been a member of The Questors since 2006. In that time, he has been actor, stage manager, sound designer and director on over 50 shows. *Dragon's Teeth* is his first full foray into costume design, and he particularly enjoyed the challenge of doing the sound design alongside it.

Katarzyna Kryński – *Set Designer*

Katarzyna is a graduate of Fine Art, Painting and Printmaking from Glasgow School of Art. Since then she has exhibited at the Leadenhall and Portobello galleries and also worked as a photographer. Her involvement in theatre began in 2015 and she joined The Questors earlier this year, helping out as a set painter and builder and as an assistant designer. *Dragon's Teeth* is her second production as set designer, following *The Contingency Plan*.

Andrew Whadcoat – *Lighting Designer*

Recent lighting designs include *Not About Heroes*, *The Dog & the Scarf*, *The Ghost Train*, *Peregrine Proteus*, *Little Dorrit*, the Caryl Churchill double bill, *A Doll's House*, *Murder on the Nile* and *The Herd*. Andrew has also designed for AppEaling Theatre, Idle Discourse, Orange Moon and PlayGC Theatre at The Questors and other venues.



With your support we can refurbish the Judi Dench Playhouse and the Studio. Donate £150-£500 to name your own seat at The Questors.

name a seat and support independent theatre

For more information and to name your seat, visit: questors.org.uk/seats

Next at The Questors

ALBION

by Mike Bartlett

3 – 11 November 2023

The Judi Dench Playhouse

Grieving a tragic loss, Audrey, a successful businesswoman, uproots her family and moves to rural Oxfordshire. Her aim, to resurrect its once-famous gardens as a memorial to those who have sacrificed their lives for their country. But at what cost to the living – to her family, her community, and herself?

Originally produced in the aftermath of the Brexit vote, Bartlett's fascinating drama holds a mirror to the complex face of Middle England.

THE REHEARSAL

by Jean Anouilh

17 – 25 November 2023

The Studio

Witty, sophisticated aristocrats are rehearsing an 18th-century play all about love. But during rehearsals, real love breaks through the social conventions to cause heartbreak and chaos.

First performed in London in 1961 with the young Maggie Smith bursting onto the scene, this is one of Anouilh's most enticing dramas.