

Join Us

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 Club 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):
up to 50% discount on an adult ticket for the Season Pass holder (to a minimum ticket price of £10, £8 concessions)
£2 off ANY number of additional adult or concession tickets
up to FOUR child tickets at up to 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

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

The Questors
THEATRE

The Anniversary

by Bill MacIlwraith



Meet the mother-in-law from hell

17 - 25 January
The Studio



NAME A SEAT

AND SUPPORT INDEPENDENT THEATRE

Write your name into the history books of our theatre by sponsoring one of the new seats in the Judi Dench Playhouse. Find out more and name your seat: questors.org.uk/seats

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 proud of the quality of our real ales, we appear in the 2025 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

The Grapevine Wassail – Friday 31 January

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



image: Jane Arnold-Forster

THE ANNIVERSARY

by Bill MacIlwraith

The Studio

17 – 25 January 2025

THE ANNIVERSARY

Born in London to Scottish parents, Bill MacIlwraith (1928-2016) trained as an actor at RADA and worked in repertory during the 1950s, performing around the country. MacIlwraith eventually concentrated on his writing career and, by the early 1960s, had begun to develop a career as a screenwriter.

While MacIlwraith could fairly be described as a one-hit wonder in the theatre – he had no other successes on stage after *The Anniversary* – his stock rose steadily on television throughout the 1960s and 70s. Early successes were eight episodes of *The Human Jungle* (1963-64) starring Herbert Lom and several scripts for *Armchair Theatre*. He consolidated his reputation with *Justice* (1973-74), starring Margaret Lockwood as a barrister, and with *Beryl's Lot* (1973-74), with Carmel McSharry playing a character inspired by the story of a below-stairs servant, Margaret Powell, transforming her life of domestic service into that of a writer. He followed these successes with *Two's Company* (1975-79), in which Elaine Stritch's brash American thriller writer and Donald Sinden's old-style, deferential British butler, proved Shaw's adage of two peoples divided by a common language; and *Seconds Out* (1981-82), in which Robert Lindsay became a boxing champion over 13 rounds (or episodes).

The Anniversary was first performed at the Theatre Royal Brighton in 1966. It then had a long run at the Duke of York's Theatre in the West End with Mona Washbourne in the lead role of Mum and a young Sheila Hancock in the role of Karen. Hancock went on to play Karen in the 1968 film version starring Bette Davis as Mum and, in what seems like coming full circle, took the role of Mum in the 2005 revival at The Everyman, Liverpool, later transferring to the Garrick in the West End.

The play takes place in Mum's house on the evening of the anniversary of her marriage to Dad, now dead some seven years, but Mum won't let a little thing like death stop her from having her fun. Using what would seem to be a typical family gathering, the play delves into the dysfunctions lurking beneath the surface, combining biting wit with moments of genuine pathos. It is also interesting that MacIlwraith has chosen not to tell us what Mum's name is – although she is given a surname in the film. Does this mean she is supposed to be a cipher for all mothers? Did MacIlwraith have 'mummy issues' that he wanted to work out here?

However, the play is a comedy despite its dark heart. In his introduction to the acting edition, MacIlwraith says of his decision to write it thus: "I have

purposely used a farcical technique, not in order to make the play more palatable to an audience, but in the belief that through laughter a facet of family truth can be accepted without the loss of sanity. Perhaps I'm wrong. You're the judge."

The Anniversary holds a distinct place in UK drama of the 1960s, an influential period for British theatre, characterised by bold experimentation, boundary-pushing themes and a shift away from traditional norms. *The Anniversary* was one of the mid-60s West End black comedy sensations – others were Joe Orton's *Entertaining Mr Sloane* and Frank Marcus's *The Killing of Sister George* – and reflects themes of control and independence. MacIlwraith's writing feels like a synthesis of Orton's sardonic wit and sharp social commentary, satirising the moral hypocrisies of British society; Pinter's tension, themes of power dynamics and communication breakdowns; Osborne's portrayal of working-class disillusionment and rebellion against the establishment's constraints; and lastly Bond's critique of oppression and the impact of a dehumanising environment on individuals. While MacIlwraith may not have gained the same level of fame as Orton, Pinter, Osborne or Bond, his play echoes the period's thematic concerns. His portrayal of power struggles within a family unit, combined with dark humour, aligns with the era's broader theatrical trends of exploring psychological and social conflicts with a sharp, often unsettling lens.

In essence, *The Anniversary* shares common ground with the works of these other playwrights through its examination of power, control, and rebellion against authoritative figures. Yet, MacIlwraith's play also carves out its niche by focusing specifically on the interplay of familial relationships within the setting of a seemingly ordinary but deeply flawed family structure.

MacIlwraith deftly balances humour and emotional depth, allowing the audience to laugh at the absurdity of the characters while empathising with their plight. The dark humour serves as a coping mechanism for the characters, and perhaps for the audience, as they navigate the complicated landscape of family relationships.

The Anniversary has remained a staple of dark comedy in theatre due to its sharp wit, memorable characters and timeless exploration of family dynamics and power struggles. Bill MacIlwraith's keen observations on the human condition ensure that the play resonates with audiences across generations. Today we would recognise Mum for the narcissistic sociopath that she is and empathise with her sons for the years of emotional abuse they have endured at her hands – or more correctly, her tongue. We hope you will enjoy watching it as much as we have enjoyed producing it.

Russell Fleet, Director

THE ANNIVERSARY

by Bill MacIlwraith

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 17 January 2025

CAST

in order of appearance

Tom	Ed Clements
Shirley	Caitlyn Vary
Henry	Craig Nightingale
Terry	Mike Hadjipateras
Karen	Sherralyn
Mum	Despina Sellar
(Dad – in the portrait	David Sellar)

London, November 1966

The performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes
including two 15-minute intervals

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	Russell Fleet
Set Designer	Mobolaji Babalola
Costume Designer	Jenny Richardson
Lighting Designer	Andrew Whadcoat
Sound Designer	Mike Wyer
Stage Manager	Bernie Brady
Deputy Stage Manager	Gemma McDonald
Assistant Stage Manager	David Sellar
Properties	Russell Fleet, Mobolaji Babalola
Portraiture	Geoffrey Moore
Prompter	David Sellar
Wardrobe	Karen Latimer
Make-Up	Sonian Marimuthu
Lighting Assistant / Tech Op	Hayley Lee
Set Constructors / Painters	Afoma Adekobi, Tomiwa Adeyemi, Vanessa Enson, Phyllida Hickish, Drew Iheoma, Kiyah Johnson, Yann Konan, Brierley Mongini, Michael Rufai
Get-In Assistants	Roger Brace, Ignatius Crean, Stephen Souchon, Doug Willis
Photo/Videographer	Jane Arnold-Forster
Thanks to	Nigel Worsley, Kall Kwik Chiswick
Karen's costume and look designed and created by Russell Fleet	

Biographies

Ed Clements – Tom

Ed trained as an actor at LAMDA, London and The Atlantic Acting School, New York City, graduating in 2016. He has recently been seen in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* as Cymbeline at The Bridewell Theatre and as William Mansfield for SKY TV in *World's Most Evil Killers*. Other notable credits include Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at The Etcetera Theatre and he has appeared on the BBC. This production marks his company debut at The Questors.

Mike Hadjipateras – Terry

Mike has been a member of The Questors since 2003. His favourite roles include Trigorin in *The Seagull*, General Kotov in *Burnt by the Sun* and John Proctor in *The Crucible*. He has also mounted his own productions, playing Mark Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra*. He teaches History and is rather obsessed with the film *Jaws*.

Craig Nightingale – Henry

Craig took part in the Student Group in 1983 and went on to study acting in England and France. He then spent a decade working in theatre and television in the UK and Austria. Craig rejoined The Questors in 2023, and this is his fourth show following *The White Carnation*, *The Physicists* and *Single Spies*.

Despina Sellar – Mum

Despina's first appearance at The Questors was in Peter Whelan's *Sleepers in the Field* in 2018, followed by *Rutherford & Son*, *Things I Know to be True*, *Peregrine Proteus*, *The Contingency Plan*, *Sara Sampson* and *The Slaves of Solitude*. Productions with previous companies include *Gaslight*, *Outside Edge*, *Private Lives* and *A View from the Bridge*. Directing credits include *Shirley Valentine*, *Stones in his Pockets*, *Moonlight and Magnolias* and *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Sherralyn – Karen

Sherralyn has worked with a plethora of theatre companies over the years. These include Frantic Assembly, DV8, The Rambert Dance Company, Apple and Snakes, Putney Arts Theatre and The Endpaper Theatre Company. She graduated from Student Group 63 in 2010. Sherralyn has continued to tread the boards on over 20 Questors productions and with several outside companies.

Caitlyn Vary – Shirley

Caitlyn joined Questors Youth Theatre at the age of eight and continued until the age of 18. Since then, she has trained at East 15 Acting School and is currently in her second year of a BA Acting course at Drama Studio London. Whilst training, Caitlyn enjoys her role as a teaching assistant for Questors Youth Theatre and performing in Questors productions. Most recent work for The Questors includes the pantomimes *Robin Hood* (2019), *Snow White* (2022) and QYT's *Disintegration* (2022).

Mobolaji Babalola – Set Designer

Mobolaji is a mechanical engineer and set designer, although this is her first design and build for The Questors. She has really enjoyed the whole process, and thanks Russell for his humour and the cast and crew for their support. Outside of working at The Questors, she also designs and builds sets for music videos, fashion shows, editorials and more.

Russell Fleet – Director

Russell trained as an actor in the 1990s and joined The Questors in 2006. He has since taken on other roles as a Stage Manager, Sound Designer, Costumer and Director in over 60 productions. This is his seventh outing in the big chair and he is pleased to have had only the one job on this show! He holds an MA (Actor Training and Coaching) from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Jenny Richardson – Costume Designer

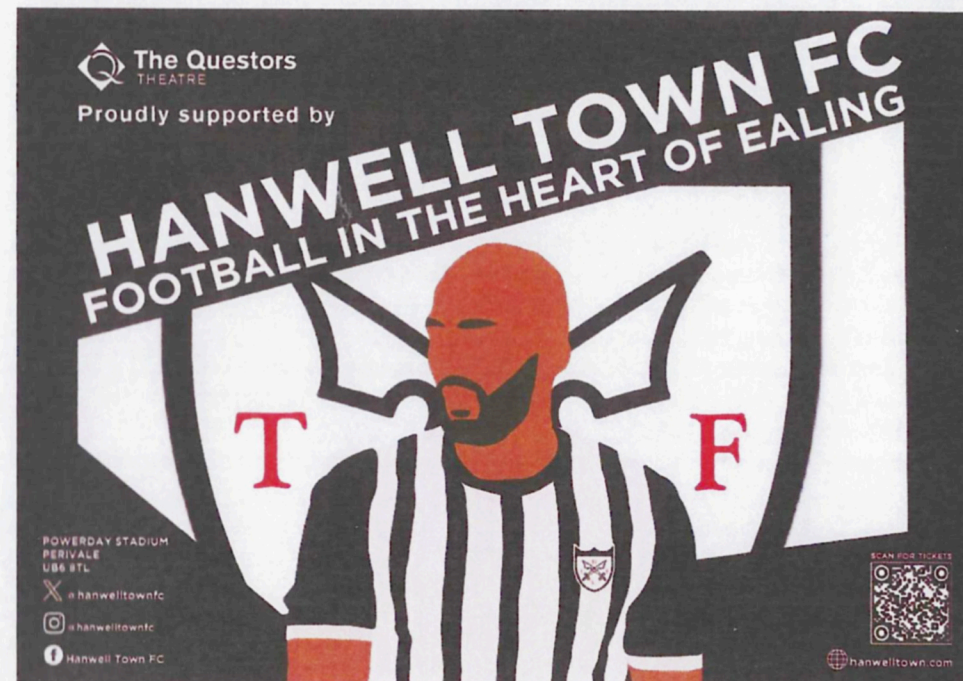
After many years working in stage management, props and set design, Jenny enjoyed a change of direction to costume design, recently for *The Cane*, *The Pillowman*, *Medea*, *The Slaves of Solitude*, *Whispers in the Wings*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *Albion*, *The Herd*, *The Contingency Plan*, *Murder on the Nile*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Little Dorrit* and *Peregrine Proteus*. Jenny is also frequently in demand as an upholsterer.

Andrew Whadcoat – Lighting Designer

Andrew joined the lighting team in 2013 and enjoys lighting shows in the Studio and Playhouse and training new members. Recent lighting designs include *The Ghost Train*, *Peregrine Proteus*, *Little Dorrit*, the Churchill double bill, *Murder on the Nile*, *Dragon's Teeth*, *The White Carnation*, *Find Me*, *London Wall*, *How to Disappear Completely* and *The Mystery of Fellstone Manor*.

Mike Wyer – Sound Designer

Mike joined The Questors in 2023, fifteen years after using the Studio for the Edinburgh preview of *Plague! The Musical*. Previous sound design credits for other companies include the London premiere of Alan Ayckbourn's *Life and Beth*, as well as productions of *Flare Path*, *Calendar Girls* and *King Lear*.



NEXT AT THE QUESTORS

POSH

by Laura Wade

24 January – 1 February 2025

The Judi Dench Playhouse

An exclusive Oxford University secret society, The Riot Club, is gearing up for a lavish night at a countryside pub. This clique of silver-spoon boys is ready to let loose after a former member's scandal landed them in hot water with the press. As they vow to make up for lost time with the messiest of celebrations, arrogance and entitlement give way to chaos. From Olivier Award-winning playwright, Laura Wade, *Posh* is a witty satire on the Bullingdon Club and classism in Britain.

A REAL RACE

AROUND THE WORLD

by David Hovatter and Company

14 – 22 February 2025

The Studio

This is a true story, with embellishments, live music and dancing. In November 1889, *The New York World* newspaper sent Nellie Bly on an assignment: to beat the record of travelling the world in 80 days set by Jules Verne's fictional character, Phileas Fogg. Unbeknownst to her, a rival publication sent a female writer later that day to try to beat her. One went east and one went west, using steam trains and steamships. But who won? A fun new show for all the family.