

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
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 The Questors
THEATRE

BOUDICA

by Tristan Bernays



2-10 MAY 2025
THE JUDI DENCH PLAYHOUSE



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

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



image: Carla Evans

BOUDICA

by Tristan Bernays

The Judi Dench Playhouse

2 – 10 May 2025

An amateur production by arrangement with Nick Hern Books

BOUDICA

IN HISTORY AND ON STAGE

Like most British children, I guess, I first heard about Boudica at school – though she was then introduced as Boadicea, the name given her by the Victorians. She was portrayed as a British heroine, and we learned that she was a queen of the Iceni tribe and that in 61 AD she led a rebellion against Roman occupation. But I think that's about as far as our history lessons went.

But there is more information available than that. The trouble is that everything we know about her comes from Roman, not British historians, so there is likely to be some bias. And none of the history we have is contemporaneous. The major sources are Tacitus, who was writing about 40 years after the event, and Cassius Dio, nearly 200 years later. But Tacitus's father-in-law was an eye witness, having served under Gaius Suetonius, so it is reasonable to assume that there is some accuracy in his account.

Julius Caesar first invaded Britain in 55 BC, but Roman occupation really only began in 43 AD under the emperor Claudius. So the events of this play were only 18 years later, and author Tristan Bernays has not followed the timeline too strictly. However, he has included a lot of known history, and several real characters.

The Iceni occupied what is now East Anglia. Boudica's husband Prasutagus did indeed make a pact with Rome, which allowed the Iceni to govern themselves, though under Rome's yoke. On his death he left his land and wealth half to Rome and half to his two daughters; but Rome demanded everything, and that inflamed Boudica to claim what was rightfully hers. As a result she was flogged at Camulodunum and her daughters raped.

We know that she did indeed have two daughters, though their names are not recorded: Bernays has named them Blodwynn and Alonna. Catus Deciamus is real, he was the Procurator of Britain; so too is Gaius Suetonius, who was sent to Britain to quell an uprising of the druids in Anglesey, which is where he was when Boudica destroyed Camulodunum (modern Colchester).

He had to hurry back to Londinium to confront her. But he arrived too late: Boudica's army, comprising about 120,000 warriors from the Iceni and Trinovantes had already decimated the 9th legion (Rome's crack troops), destroyed the city, and indeed Verulanium (St Alban's) too. So he pursued her up Watling Road to the east midlands where he finally defeated her, though heavily outnumbered.

The Romans were of course professional soldiers, while the Britons were a collection of untrained fighters. It seems Boudica did manage to instil some discipline, but they had no strategy, and they became trapped in a narrow valley. The death toll was about 80,000. Boudica is known to have died; we don't know how, though poison and suicide are mentioned.

After the rebellion, Emperor Nero recalled Suetonius and Catus to Rome, and installed more diplomatic, conciliatory governors and commanders. As a result, Rome's occupation of Britain was cemented for several hundred more years. There is no doubt that Boudica did cause massive upset to Rome, and changed the course of its imperial history.

Another historical character is Cunobeline, king of the Trinovantes (Shakespeare's Cymbeline), though he had in fact died in 40 AD. Also real in the mythological sense is Andraste, a British goddess. Another place mentioned in the Epilogue is Durnovaria, modern Dorchester. The level of brutality we see in the play has a historical basis: neither side held back when it came to destruction, slaughter and rape. Boudica cannot be seen only in a virtuous light; and Alonna's pacifism is surely Bernays's invention.

Boudica's story was almost entirely forgotten until it was rediscovered in the 16th century from the works of Tacitus and Cassius Dio. John Fletcher wrote a play about her, *Bonduca*, first acted in 1613; and Richard Glover wrote *Boadicea* in 1753. These plays, and other writings portray her in vastly different lights. She was seen at times as a bold mother fighting to avenge the wrongs done to her and her daughters; at others as a barbaric savage battling against the civilising influence of Rome. It was only in the 19th century that she came to be seen as a role model for British women and an inspiration for the British Empire. She was adopted as a heroine by the Suffragist movement.

Watching the play, it is easy if we want to see political messages, and parallels to what is going on in the world today. It's a story about resistance to an occupying force, invasion of a foreign country, the oppression of its people, and the rights and wrongs of violent rebellion. We have to confront the moral dilemma of innocent civilians being killed in furtherance of what may be a just cause. We are reminded that Britain is Silvia's country of birth just as much as Alonna's; it is where she feels she belongs.

But there are no specific references. If we want to see parallels with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Israel's occupation of the West Bank, the fighters of Hamas and Hezbollah, or even Donald Trump's threat to annex Canada and Greenland, we are free to do so. But believe it or not, when the play premiered at the Globe in 2017, everyone thought it was a play about Brexit.

To me it is simply a very exciting story, told mostly in Shakespearean verse, with several oblique references to Shakespeare's plays (see how many you can spot), containing a strong moral debate about the rights and wrongs of war, and leading in the end to a deeply moving epilogue.

Perhaps appropriately for the theme of the play, I am delighted to have assembled a multi-national cast. On stage tonight you will see actors not only from England, but also from Wales, Ireland, Sweden, Estonia, Ecuador, Italy and Sri Lanka, all coming together in a tightly knit and dedicated ensemble.

David Emmet, Director

BOUDICA

by Tristan Bernays

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 2 May 2025

CAST

BRITONS

Andraste, Goddess of Victory
Boudica, Queen of the Iceni
Blodwynn, her elder daughter
Alonna, her younger daughter
Cunobeline, King of the Trinovantes
Clothen, a Trinovantian Lord
Badvoc, King of the Belgics
Waylen, a tribal king
Gunnervik, a tribal king
Druid, in Anglesey
Belgic Warrior 1
Belgic Warrior 2
Iceni Warrior

ROMANS

Catus Deciamus, Procurator of Britain
Gaius Suetonius, Roman General
Lucius, soldier
Cato, soldier
Sestus, soldier
Messenger
Centurion 1
Sejanus, Roman official
Silvia, Citizen of Camulodunum
Roman Woman, Citizen of Londinium
Centurion 2

All other roles, Britons and Romans, played by members of the cast

Time: 61 AD

Running time: about 2 hours and 35 minutes including an interval of 15-minutes

PRODUCTION

Catherine Luff
Hannah Victory
Sophie George
Kerala McGrail
Anthony Curran
Catherine Luff
David Erdos
Phoebe Fitzgerald
David Erdos
Darren Chancey
Xander Turian
Peter Easterbrook
Phoebe Fitzgerald

Director **David Emmet**
Fight Director **Catherine Luff**
Assistant Fight Director **Xander Turian**
Set Designer **Alex Marker**
Associate Set Designer **Bethany Faith Nyas**
Costume Designer **Carla Evans**
Lighting Designer **Alasdair Graebner**
Sound Designer **Robyn Backhouse**
Composers **Robyn Backhouse, Dennis Dracup**

Stage Manager **Eleanor Wilson**
Deputy Stage Manager **Steven Hyndman**
Assistant Stage Managers **Michalina Czapiewska, Millie Hildreth, Christie Southwick**

Properties **Eleanor Wilson**
Costume Makers **Jane Arnold-Forster, Helen Cooper, Caroline Gibbon, Delia O'Rourke**

Wardrobe Assistants **Kath Cooke, Anne Gilmour, Helen Karasiewicz, Jenny Richardson**

Choreographer **Anna Francis**
Lighting / Sound Operator **Ben Hart**
Lighting Riggers **Megan Bostock, Mike Chislett, Ben Hart, Jon Hart, Hayely Lee, Andrew Whadcoat**

Set Constructor **Alex Marker**
Set Builders and Painters **Chloe Coxhill, Paula Hopkins, Nikoleta Stefanova, Derek Stoddart**

Photographer **Carla Evans**
Videographer **Rory Victory**
Questors Captioner **Eleanor Wilson**
Weapons Hire **ID Fight**

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

Biographies

Darren Chancey – *Catus Deciamus / Druid*

Darren trained at the City Lit and joined The Questors in 2023. This is his Questors debut. He has previously appeared in *Apologia* at Putney Theatre, *The Real Inspector Hound* at The Tower Theatre, and *Mother Courage and Her Children* and *A Man of All Seasons* at South London Theatre.

Anthony Curran – *Cunobeline*

Anthony joined The Questors in 1992 as a member of Student Group 47, graduating with performances in *The Sisterhood* and *Hindle Wakes*. Since then he has appeared in numerous Questors productions, including *The Recruiting Officer*, *A Servant to Two Masters*, *Macbeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Blithe Spirit* last October.

Peter Easterbrook – *Centurion / Belgic Warrior*

Peter joined The Questors only in March this year. Previously he had lead roles in *Volpone* at Network Theatre; *The Seagull*, *God of Carnage* and *The Duchess of Malfi* at RSS; *Art* and *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* at TTC. He wrote and directed *[DEL]* at the Edinburgh Fringe and was a member of the Oxford Revue.

David Erdos – *Badvoc / Gunnervik*

Since 2019 David has been cast in a variety of villainous roles at The Questors, but he is also an internationally renowned poet, playwright, director, critic and editor. He championed a lot of The Questors' online content during lockdown and is the Head of QExtra. His new book on Pinter is Amazonable.

Phoebe Fitzgerald – *Waylen / Iceni Warrior*

Phoebe first moved to Ealing to train at The London College of Music. In recent years she has worked in professional pantomimes and theatre-in-education as well as facilitating drama and singing classes. She joined The Questors in June last year and played in *A Real Race Around the World*. Credits elsewhere include *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Legally Blonde* and *Evita*.

Sophie George – *Blodwynn*

Sophie trained at the Guildford School of Acting. She joined The Questors in 2024 and has since appeared in *Tom Jones* and *The Welkin*. Since graduating, Sophie has also worked professionally in touring pantomime, children's theatre, and most recently in a short run of a new play at The Network Theatre in Waterloo.

David Hovatter – *Gaius Suetonius*

David has been an actor at The Questors since 1983, appearing in numerous productions, including five directed by David Emmet: *The Reward*, *Night of the Soul*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Pride* and *Nell Gwynn*. His last appearance was in *The Physicists*. He is also a director and writer, specialising in devised work: most recently *A Real Race Around the World*.

Rochana Jayasinghe – *Silvia*

Rochana comes from Sri Lanka and joined The Questors in December 2024. Her previous experience is all in Sri Lanka, where she played Dolly Clandon in *You Never Can Tell*, Cassandra in *Hecuba* and wrote and directed the runner-up in a national theatre competition. She is passionate about socially engaged theatre and enjoys collaborating across cultures and disciplines.

Kennet Kärema – *Lucius*

Kennet comes from Estonia and joined The Questors as a member of Student Group 76, performing in *Find Me* and *London Wall* last season. He has also worked backstage on *Murder on the Nile*, and is a wine connoisseur in the Grapevine. He is passionate about cinema, both as a film maker and watcher.

Catherine Luff – *Andraste / Clothen / Fight Director*

Catherine graduated from DSL in 2021 and joined The Questors in 2023, acting in *Julius Caesar* and *The Welkin*. She has also performed at Volcano Theatre in Swansea in improvised and devised theatre. As a physical actor she works with stage combat and interns for ID Fight and the BASSC with their combat classes. She currently has five weapon systems and is working her way to getting all qualifications with the BASSC.

Kerala McGrail – *Alonna*

Kerala joined a year ago and is so excited to be appearing in her second Questors production, after her debut in *How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found*. The *Boudica* cast and show mean so much to her and she feels so honoured to perform amongst them. A huge thank you to everyone who has made this experience so lovely.

Rafael Merchan – *Sejanus / Messenger*

Rafael is an Ecuadorian actor who graduated from the MA Acting for Screen Programme at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and joined The Questors in January this year. His London stage debut was in *Delta P* at the Vaults Festival 2023. He starred in the short film *Animals*, screened at The Courthouse Hotel in Soho.

Katie Russell – *Roman Woman*

Katie comes from Wales and started acting in various productions, including pantomimes and *Matilda*. She is currently a second-year student at DSL, training on the BA acting course, where she has played in *The Cherry Orchard*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelve Angry Men* and *Girls Like That*. This is her first production at The Questors.

Soju Sanna – *Cato*

Soju comes from Italy and has performed and toured for seven or eight years as a singer-songwriter. He is now taking a break from music and focusing on acting. He joined The Questors in November 2024 and this is his first production. He has also been part of the London show *You, Me, Bum Bum Train*, taking acting and directing roles.

Xander Turian – Sestus / Belgic Warrior / Centurion / Asst. Fight Director

Xander is an award-winning Swedish actor, director, musician and stunt performer. He studied theatre in Stockholm and film at Prague Film School. In 2022 he graduated from Raindance Film School in London with an MA in filmmaking. He has worked in film as an actor and director and as a musician, touring between acting jobs with his band Our Untold Story.

Hannah Victory – Boudica

Hannah is an actor-musician and circus aerialist. Credits include: *The Welkin*, *Tom Jones* (Questors); *Gentleman Jack*, TARO, *Three Sisters* (Brockley Jack); *Richard II* (Bread & Roses); *The House of Bernarda Alba* (London Theatre); *Julius Caesar* (V&A); *Barge Baby* (Courtyard & EdFringe); *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead* (Wright Theatre); and *The Seagull* (Jarman Theatre).

Robyn Backhouse – Sound Designer / Composer

Robyn's previous sound designs include *The Welkin*, *The Slaves of Solitude*, *Tom Jones*, the Slack Captains and the QExtra plays *Hat's House* and *What's My Gilbert?* She also loves rigging and programming lights, and running live sound events. She is branching into composition for the first time with *Boudica*, using natural vocal palettes to create mystical nature-inspired music.

Dennis Dracup – Composer

Dennis has worked at The Questors for over 20 years as a designer, scenic artist, painter, sound designer and composer. He composed the music for David Emmet's productions of *Further than the Furthest Thing* and *Night of the Soul*, and designed the set for *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Outside The Questors he is an audio-visual artist and live music performer.

David Emmet – Director

David trained as an actor in Student Group 28, but is now known more as a director. *Boudica* is his 63rd main production. His most recent productions were *Sara Sampson*, *The Contingency Plan*, *Whipping It Up*, *Things I Know to be True*, *Nell Gwynn*, *Daisy Pulls It Off* and *Scarborough*. David is also Course Director for the Student Group and teaches acting in the Foundation Year.

Carla Evans – Costume Designer

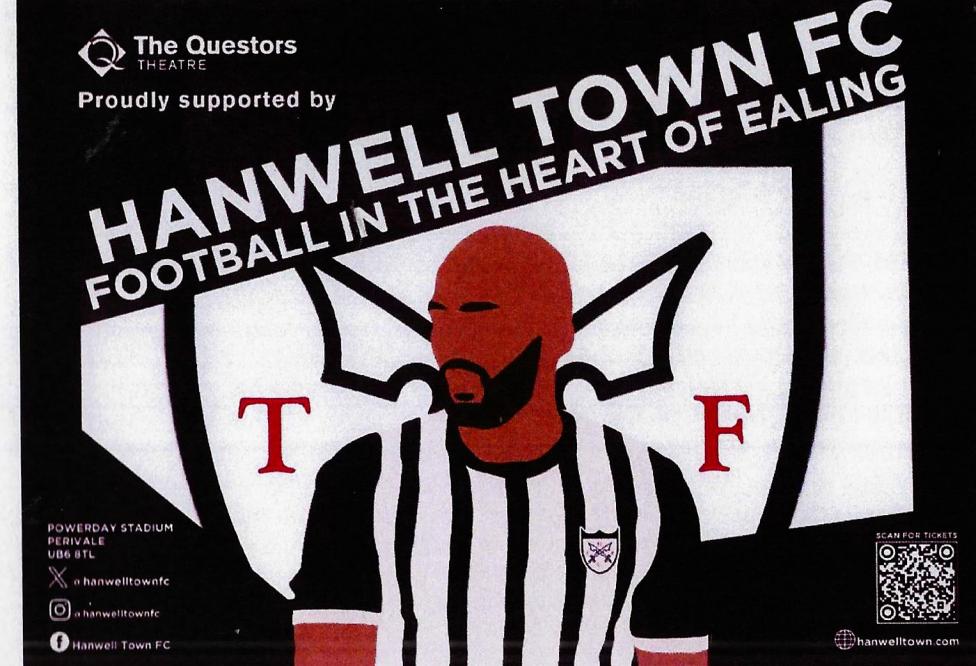
Carla joined The Questors in 2013 and has since worked on over 60 productions as a set and costume designer and maker, photographer and poster illustrator. Her most recent work this season includes costume design for *The Welkin*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Lionboy* and *My Fair Lady*.

Alasdair Graebner – Lighting Designer

Boudica is Alasdair's seventh lighting design for The Questors, having returned to stage lighting after a 20-year break. Previously he lit *Posh*, *The Welkin*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Physicists*, *Neville's Island* and *Shelia's Island*. Previous lighting designs have been at Mountview Theatre School, Aletta Collins Dance Company, Unicorn Theatre Company, New Music Oldham and others.

Alex Marker – Set Designer

Alex is the Artistic Director of The Questors. He has designed many sets for The Questors including *Blithe Spirit* and *Jack and the Beanstalk* this season. He also acts in productions, most recently playing the King in *Jack and the Beanstalk* and Squire Alworthy in *Tom Jones*.



NEXT AT THE QUESTORS

RELATIVELY SPEAKING

by Alan Ayckbourn

9 – 17 May 2025

The Studio

It's the 60s and Ginny and Greg are rapturously in love. Greg has decided it is the right moment to pop the question, so when Ginny announces she's off to visit her parents, he sees it as the perfect opportunity to dash there first and ask her Dad's permission. Off he goes to Buckinghamshire where he finds Phillip and Sheila enjoying a peaceful Sunday morning breakfast in the garden. But the only thing is – they're not Ginny's parents. The play that made Ayckbourn's name in 1967.

UNDER MILK WOOD

by Dylan Thomas

6 – 14 June 2025

The Studio

"It is spring, moonless night in the small town, starless and bible-black." So begins *Under Milk Wood*, Dylan Thomas's celebrated play for voices. Meet a whole host of eccentric characters on their poetic journey through a night and a day in the fictional seaside town of Llareggub (read it backwards!). Beautiful, bawdy, laugh-out-loud funny and reach-for-your-hankie sad, *Under Milk Wood* is one of the masterpieces of 20th century drama.