

present . . .

Programme

The Guild Players are part of Finchley Methodist Church but we also have many people connected with us from the surrounding community. New members are always welcome, whether you are interested in acting or backstage roles. If you would like further details of the Players, or would like to join, please contact our membership secretary Betty Robertson on 020 8441 7696

For more information about us, including photos of past productions visit our extensive website at www.guildplayers.org.uk

To receive details of forthcoming productions, join our mailing list, either via our website, or by sending a text message starting GUILD LIST followed by your name and address to 83248 (standard text charge)

Our next production . . .

Good Night Mrs Puffin

a comedy by Arthur Lovegrove

Thursday 4th May at 7.45 pm
Friday 5th May at 7.45 pm
Saturday 6th May at 7.45 pm

Finchley Methodist Church Hall
Ballards Lane, London N3

Tickets £7
Box Office 020 8346 6337

The Fordyce family are looking forward to the wedding of their eldest daughter when a strange woman arrives on their doorstep. Mrs Puffin claims to have premonitions in her sleep and is adamant that she knows what lies in store for the household.

Her predictions are not what the family want to hear, and while the younger Fordyces are intrigued by her astonishing stories, Mrs Puffin doesn't prove to be quite as popular with their parents.

How will the family deal with their uninvited guest?

Will her visions become reality?

Will she ever take the hint and leave them in peace?!

THE SOLDIERS TALE



a short modern
'Mystery Play'
for Holy Week

by Mike Sparks

Tuesday 11th April 2006

7 pm Emmanuel Church, Lyncroft Gardens, West Hampstead NW2

Wednesday 12th April 2006

8 pm St John's URC, Mowbray Road, New Barnet EN5

Maundy Thursday 13th April 2006

8 pm Camden Road Baptist Church, Hilldrop Road, Holloway N7

Good Friday 14th April 2006

3 pm St Cuthbert's CofE, Fordwych Road, West Hampstead NW2

8 pm Finchley Methodist Church, Ballards Lane, Finchley N3

THE SOLDIERS TALE

SETTING

A barrack room in the Roman garrison of Jerusalem

CAST

Cleaner	Paola Burgess
Soldier 1	Nick Drewry
Soldier 2	Paul Sparks
Temple Police Officer	Catherine Walker
Woman <i>wife of soldier 1</i>	Penelope Nachir
Centurion	Stephen Sewell

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	David Constable
Technical	Martin Higgins Andy Higgins
Costume	Jenny Sparks
Script	Mike Sparks

Mystery plays date back to medieval times, when groups of local people would perform sets of popular religious plays, telling key bible stories from creation, Jesus' life and death, to the last judgement.

From about the eleventh century, plays on biblical subjects were acted out in church by the clergy. These plays became very popular, and eventually moved out of the church into streets and marketplaces, to be performed in English, by lay people, on religious holidays.

The performers who took over from the clergymen were mostly members of craftsmens' guilds which were commonly known as 'mysteries', from the Latin 'mysterium', meaning 'handicraft' or 'office'. Thus, the plays they performed came to be known as 'mystery plays'.

The plays evolved to include topical social themes and comic scenes and jokes, with wildly extravagant costumes and special effects, although the emphasis remained on the message of God's relationship with man and on the promise of salvation through Christ.

The mystery plays would often be performed around the feast of Corpus Christi, which normally falls in mid-June, in an atmosphere of great festivity. The guilds performed on decorated carts called 'pageants', with each play being performed by a particular guild, on a separate cart. On the day of the festival the pageants travelled in procession through the town. Each pageant stopped at each street to perform its play, and then moved on, to be replaced by the next pageant, performing the next episode in the sacred drama. Although each play was fairly short, the complete cycle of plays took a very long time, sometimes more than three days!

A separate subgroup of plays telling the Easter Passion stories developed, and were often performed in Holy Week.

Alongside mystery plays, there is a tradition of country drama 'mummers' plays. These folk dramas also involve travelling bands of local performers, and the stories, although at first glance appearing to be more secular, share the themes of resurrection and the triumph of good over evil with the passion and mystery plays.

Mike Sparks' modern language piece draws on these traditions - a folk drama of the Easter story, acted by local people, travelling to different venues, and combining performance, celebration and worship.

Here in Holy Week we deal with one of the major planks of the Christian religion. The mystery play format enables us to look at what went on around the main events and how the ordinary people who had been involved, perhaps only on the fringes, might have viewed what was happening. How did it affect them, their lives, and the lives of those around them? Can we add to the understanding of events by looking at them through different people's eyes? *"The Soldiers Tale"* follows last year's production, *"An Inn Keeper's Tale"*, in trying to do this in a straightforward and accessible way, without losing the impact of the story.