

**THE CHARING GUILD OF PLAYERS
PRESENT**



**Adapted by Phil Willmott from the
novel by Robert Louis Stevenson**

Directed by Gill Magson

**The Church Barn Charing
Wednesday to Saturday, February 3rd to 6th at 7.30pm
Matinee Saturday February 6th at 2.30pm**

Souvenir Programme £2

• THE CHARING GUILD OF PLAYERS •

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The Guild is always pleased to welcome new members, whether interested in acting or in backstage work. Further details can be found on the website at:

www.charingguild.com

The Guild would like to take this opportunity to thank all the local businesses that have supported this production by advertising in the programme.

Thanks also to Karin of 'Wood You Like' for kindly agreeing to run the box office on The Guild's behalf.

❖ About This Play ❖



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This is the first adaptation of *Treasure Island* with great parts for both male and female performers. Inspired by real-life female adventurers, Phil Willmott has changed the gender of several of the central characters without compromising the spirit of Stevenson's classic novel.

First produced to great acclaim as part of London's Free Theatre Festival on The South Bank in 2005, this swashbuckling stage adaptation brings out all the comedy and adventure of this ever-popular story.

The adaptor, Phil Willmott, is an award-winning playwright, director and actor. His other plays include *Uncle Ebenezer*, an adaptation of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and three episodes of the acclaimed *Dick Barton - Special Agent* series. He has also adapted *Dracula*, Germaine Greer's *Lysistrata* and Monk Lewis' *The Castle Spectre*.

'A delightful blend of the salty and the silly' *Independent*

'Jolly, swashbuckling pantomime-like fun' *Evening Standard*

❖ About Robert Louis Stevenson ❖

Stevenson was 30 years old when he started to write *Treasure Island*, and it would be his first success as a novelist. The first fifteen chapters were written at Braemar in the Scottish Highlands in 1881. It was a cold and rainy late-summer and Stevenson was with five family members on holiday in a cottage. Young Lloyd Osbourne, Stevenson's stepson, passed the rainy days painting with watercolours. Remembering the time, Lloyd wrote:

'Busy with a box of paints, I happened to be tinting a map of an island I had drawn. Stevenson came in as I was finishing it, and with his affectionate interest in everything I was doing, leaned over my shoulder, and was soon elaborating the map and naming it. I shall never forget the thrill of Skeleton Island, Spyglass Hill, nor the heart-stirring climax of the three red crosses! And the greater climax still when he wrote down the words 'Treasure Island' at the top right-hand corner! And he seemed to know so much about it too; the pirates, the buried treasure, the man who had been marooned on the island, "Oh, for a story about it", I exclaimed, in a heaven of enchantment'

Within three days of drawing the map for Lloyd, Stevenson had written the first three chapters, reading each aloud to his family who added suggestions. Lloyd insisted there be no women in the story which was largely held to with the exception of Jim Hawkins' mother at the beginning of the book. Stevenson's father took a child-like delight in the story and spent a day writing out the exact contents of Billy Bones's sea-chest, which Stevenson adopted word-for-word; and his father suggested the scene where Jim Hawkins hides in the apple barrel. Two weeks later a friend, Dr. Alexander Japp, brought the early chapters to the editor of *Young Folks* magazine who agreed to publish each chapter weekly. Stevenson wrote at the rate of a chapter a day for fifteen days straight, then ran dry of words, partly due to his health. He had never earned his keep by age thirty-one, and was desperate to finish the book. He turned to the proofs, corrected them, took morning walks alone, and read other novels.

As autumn came to Scotland, the Stevensons left their summer holiday retreat for London, and Stevenson was troubled with a life-long chronic bronchial condition. Concerned about a deadline they travelled in October to Davos, Switzerland where the break from work and clean mountain air did him wonders, and he was able to continue at the rate of a chapter a day and soon finished the storyline.

The character of Long John Silver was inspired by his real-life friend William Henley, a writer and editor, who had lost his lower leg to tuberculosis of the bone. Lloyd Osbourne described him as 'a great, glowing, massive-shouldered fellow with a big red beard and a crutch; jovial, astoundingly clever, and with a laugh that rolled like music; he had an unimaginable fire and vitality; he swept one off one's feet'. In a letter to Henley after the publication of *Treasure Island*, Stevenson wrote 'I will now make a confession. It was the sight of your maimed strength and masterfulness that begot Long John Silver; the idea of the maimed man, ruling and dreaded by the sound, was entirely taken from you'.

Stevenson had never encountered real pirates: the 'Golden Age of Piracy' had ended more than a century before he was born. However, his descriptions of sailing and seamen and sea life are very convincing. His father and grandfather were both lighthouse engineers and frequently voyaged around Scotland inspecting lighthouses, taking the young Robert along. Two years before writing *Treasure Island* he had crossed the Atlantic Ocean. So authentic were his descriptions that in 1890 William Butler Yeats told Stevenson that *Treasure Island* was the only book from which his seafaring grandfather had ever taken any pleasure.

The effect of *Treasure Island* on our perception of pirates cannot be overestimated. Stevenson linked pirates forever with maps, black schooners, tropical islands, and one-legged seamen with parrots on their shoulders. The treasure map with an X marking the location of the buried treasure is one of the most familiar pirate props, yet it is entirely a fictional invention which owes its origin to Stevenson's original map. The term 'Treasure Island' has passed into the language as a common phrase, and is often used as a title for games, rides and places.

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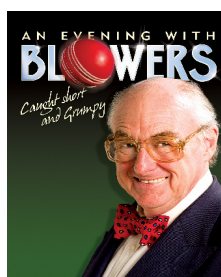
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PIPPA LOWEN (Jim Hawkins) is studying performing arts at Canterbury College and plans to study drama at university. She has lived in Charing for 8 years and has been a Guild member for many of those.



ALISON HOWE (Lady Jaqueline Trelawney) returns to acting after a break of 18 years. Her previous roles include Sybil in *Daisy Pulls It Off* and Polly in *The Boyfriend*. Alison works in the financial services sector and lives locally with her husband and 3 year old son.



KAREN WRIGHT (Miss Lucinda Livesey) Karen joined The Guild at the start of 2008 and is now in her fourth production. She is also a member of the Tenterden Operatic and Dramatic Society (TODS) and has recently appeared in a Tom Stoppard comedy.



MICHAEL HEADLEY (Capt. Obadiah Smollett) Michael first appeared on stage at The Barn in 1968. Since then he has learnt (and forgotten) parts in about 60 Guild productions and directed a dozen others. His previous experience as a captain is limited to his rôle in *The Sound Of Music* at Westwell.



GLADYS LOPATO (Meg Trueblood) As a recent British citizen Gladys is happy to settle into the thespian groups of Kent; previously seen as an English doctor and American news reader in *Bolt from the Blue* and Lady Windermere in *Lord Arthur Saville's Crime*. Thrilled this time to take on the part of Meg Trueblood and to do the choreography for *Treasure Island*.



NICK HAWLEY (Gentleman Jack) is returning to the stage after an enforced absence of 34 years. Nick enjoys 'treading the boards' and last starred as The Rabbit in the *Mad Hatter's Tea Party*.

❖ Meet The Cast ❖



MICHAEL COWDRY (Blind Pugh/Ben Gunn) has been associated with The Guild since 1966. He has been involved latterly with the box office and organising the front of house during performances. In recent years, Michael has starred as the dame in The Pluckley Panto.



JOHN WEST (Black Dog) John has been 'on and off' with The Guild for around 7 years. His appearances include parts in *Cinderella* and *Mr Wonderful* as well as a special guest spot as the dame in the Ashford police charity panto.



GARETH BROWN (Israel Hands) This is Gareth's first time in amateur dramatics since leaving school and a role in *Rumplestiltskin*! His eventual ambition is to win two Oscars, he's not greedy!



MARIAN WHITE (Cheng I Sao) This is Marian's third play in an acting role since *Heatstroke* in 2006, but she has been busy in many other ways with The Guild acting as stage manager, assistant director and prompt on many other productions. Marian is also The Guild's chairman.



CLIVE WOODWARD (Old Joe) Clive has lived in Charing village for 22 years but this is his first appearance behind the footlights with The Charing Guild of Players. However, he has performed many times in Ziggies and the Oak as one of the Three Musketeers.



IAN AVERY (Nathaniel Crisp) This is Ian's debut with The Guild and his first stage role since playing the US Ambassador in a school production of Peter Ustinov's *Romanoff & Juliet*.



PETER LILLEY (Harry Flash) This is Peter's first journey into the world of am dram although he appeared in the world premiere of *Dr Syn* many years ago at school. Peter is 43 and works in the treasury department (quite apt for this production) at Brake Bros.



KEITH ORAM (George Merry/Billy Bones) Keith is another new recruit to The Charing Guild of Players. His only previous 'thesping' was over 50 years ago in a village play in Gloucestershire.



CAROLYN BANHAM (Piccadilly Poll) Carolyn joined The Guild in 1981 and, apart from the odd year having babies, has been involved every year since! She has recently directed several plays which gave her many sleepless nights of pain and anguish!



MARGUERITE MORRIS (Nightingale Nell) Marguerite began acting in Cyprus at a performance of *The Taming Of The Shrew* in the Greco-Roman amphitheatre at Curium; a highlight of her life! She has performed with four other drama groups; Berengaria Players in Cyprus, Ashford Associates and FHODS, before joining The Guild.

Meet The Cast



KEN DA SILVA-HILL (Long John Silver) Ken and his wife Grace arrived in Charing 11 months ago and instantly fell in love with the village. He couldn't resist the challenge of taking part in this production of *Treasure Island*.



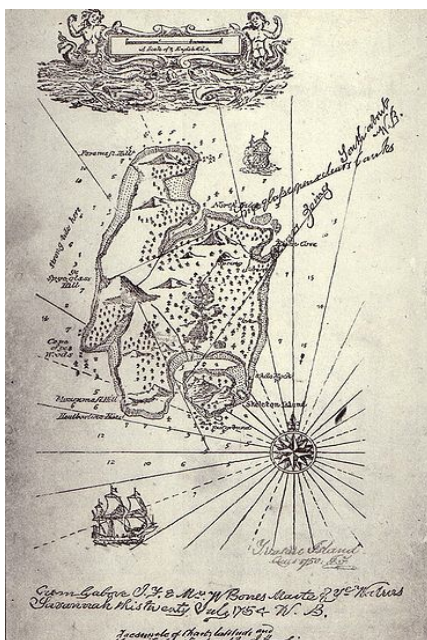
NINA SEEZ (Captain Flint) New to The Guild and comparatively new to Kent, Nina was born and grew up in London. With a strong desire to see how other people live, Nina travelled overland to Australia, arriving with just £6 before returning to London 18 months later to go to art school.



NATASHA GUDGE (Shoreditch Sal) Natasha joined The Guild in September 2009 and this is her first performance on stage since playing the Wicked Witch in the *Wizard of Oz* as a child.



COLIN BURDICK (Hardy) Previous lead roles include Lifer in *At His Majesty's Pleasure* with the Princetown Players and Houdini in *Behind These Walls*. Also much acclaimed for his moving portrayal as Disneyo Hislines in 'The Scottish Play'.



The original map, drawn by Lloyd Osborne, that inspired Robert Louis Stevenson to write *Treasure Island*. There are a number of islands that could be the real-life inspiration for *Treasure Island*. One story goes that a mariner uncle had told the young Stevenson tales of his travels to Norman Island in the British Virgin Islands; this could mean that Norman Island was an indirect inspiration for the book. Close to Norman Island is Dead Man's Chest Island, which Stevenson found in a book by Charles Kingsley.

There are a number of inns which claim to have been the inspiration for places in the book. In Bristol, the Llandoger Trow is claimed to be the inspiration for the Admiral Benbow whilst the Hole in the Wall is claimed to be the Spyglass Tavern. The Pirate's House in Savannah, Georgia is where Captain Flint is supposed to have spent his last days and it is said that his ghost haunts the property to this day.

In 1883 Stevenson had also published *The Silverado Squatters*, a travel narrative of his honeymoon in 1880 in the Napa Valley, in California. His experiences at Silverado were kept in a journal called *Silverado Sketches* and many of his notes of the scenery around him in the Napa Valley provided much of the descriptive detail for *Treasure Island*.

The map of the island also bears a vague resemblance to that of the island of Unst in Shetland and The Unst island website claims that Stevenson wrote *Treasure Island* following a visit to the island.

The Cast

<i>Jim Hawkins:</i>	<i>Pippa Lowen</i>
<i>Lady Jaqueline Trelawney:</i>	<i>Alison Howe</i>
<i>Miss Lucinda Livesey:</i>	<i>Karen Wright</i>
<i>Captain Obadiah Smollett:</i>	<i>Michael Headley</i>
<i>Meg Trueblood:</i>	<i>Gladys Lopato</i>
<i>George Merry/Billy Bones:</i>	<i>Keith Oram</i>
<i>Blind Pugh:</i>	<i>Michael Cowdry</i>
<i>Black Dog:</i>	<i>John West</i>
<i>Israel Hands:</i>	<i>Gareth Brown</i>
<i>Cheng I Sao:</i>	<i>Marian White</i>
<i>Gentleman Jack:</i>	<i>Nick Hawley</i>
<i>Old Joe:</i>	<i>Clive Woodward</i>
<i>Harry Flash:</i>	<i>Peter Lilley</i>
<i>Nathanial Crisp:</i>	<i>Tan Avery</i>
<i>Piccadilly Poll:</i>	<i>Carolyn Banham</i>
<i>Shoreditch Sal:</i>	<i>Natasha Gudge</i>
<i>Nightingale Nell:</i>	<i>Marguerite Morris</i>
<i>Hardy:</i>	<i>Colin Burdick</i>
<i>Long John Silver:</i>	<i>Ken Da Silva-Hill</i>
<i>Captain Flint (his parrot):</i>	<i>Nina Seez</i>
<i>Ben Gunn:</i>	<i>Michael Cowdry</i>

Directed by Gill Magson

❖ *Production Team* ❖

Set Designer: Ann Blandford

*Set Builders & Painters: Ann Blandford, Allan Bone, Jean Latter,
& Brian White*

Wardrobe Mistresses: Marguerite Morris & Val Parsons

Costumes: Disguise & Gowns & Maddin Costume Hire

Tife & Drum Music: Dave Hutton

Choreographer: Gladys Lopato

Fight Arranger: Terry Quarterman

Stage Manager: Val Parsons

Assistant Stage Manager: Grace Da Silva-Hill

Sound Editor: Michael Headley

Sound Operator: Allan Bone

Lighting: Dave Hutton

Box Office: Karin at Wood You Like, Charing

Front Of House: Jean Latter

**PIC TO GO HERE OF
ANN, BRIAN AND ALLAN
(UNSUNG BACKSTAGE HEROES!)**

• DEDICATION •

This Guild production is dedicated to the memory of Joffre Deegan who worked tirelessly backstage on so many Guild productions. Joffre and his wife Helen joined

The Guild in 1979 and both remained committed members for over 25 years.

From the outset, Joffre showed a keen interest in set building and his skill and enthusiasm, working alongside Bert Banham and George Hutchinson, consistently provided the actors with the perfect backdrop against which to perform.

Sadly, Joffre died in September last year and both Joffre and his talent are deeply missed.

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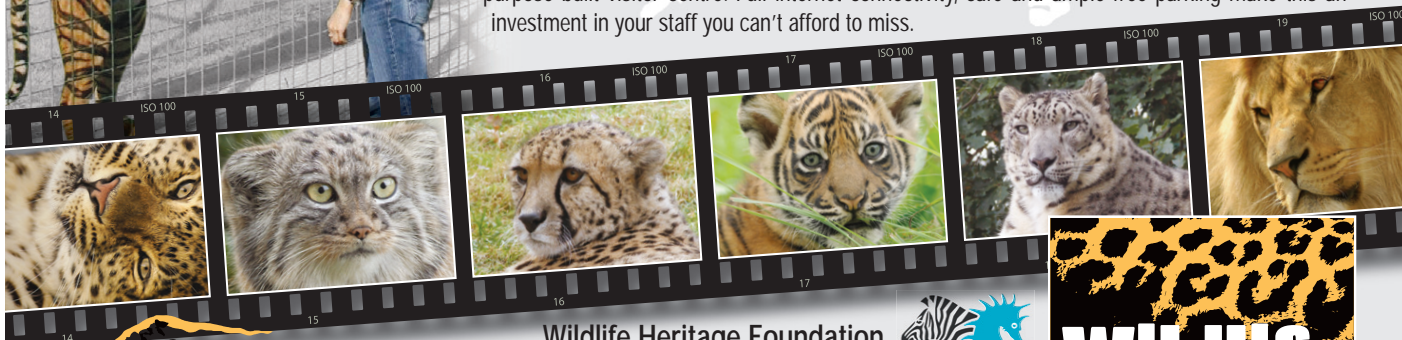
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