



Left: Jesus (James Burke-Dunsmore) with the woman who washes his feet (Phoebe Jeffrey); right: Mary (Zoe Skinner) and Martha (Rosalie Cuthbert) show their delight as Lazarus (Raymond Youngs) is raised from the dead

Open-air play is a creative triumph

HUNDREDS of people watched spellbound as Christians told the story of Jesus in an open-air play.

Churchgoers from across Havant staged 'Jesus in the Park' in Havant Park three times over a weekend – re-enacting some of Jesus's parables, healing and miracles for crowds of passers-by.

They saw Lazarus being raised from the dead, watched as one loaf was transformed into enough bread for 5,000 people, and saw a real horse, sheep and goat used to tell well-known parables. The play ended with Jesus's crucifixion, performed as we heard his words about the Good Shepherd laying down his life for his sheep.

Worshippers from 12 different churches across Havant, Emsworth, Leigh Park, Rowlands Castle and Waterlooville came together for rehearsals and workshops over the past few months. They improvised scenes from Jesus's life under the direction of James Burke-Dunsmore, who also played Jesus.

Bill Floyd, who played Caiaphas and worships at St John's Church, Rowlands Castle, said: "I really enjoy acting, and it's marvellous that all the churches can come together like this."

And Martin McGranaghan, from St Michael and All Angels RC Church in Leigh Park, said: "It gives so many people an opportunity to hear the story of Jesus, people walking past who are wondering what it going on. And re-enacting the story helps my faith as well. It really brings the



Jesus (James Burke-Dunsmore) begins the play by telling the Parable of the Sower; right: preparing for crucifixion

New Testament to life."

In August 2015, James Burke-Dunsmore directed the first Havant Passion Play in the same park, and also played Jesus. He returned again this year to lead the cast of volunteers through rehearsals and workshops in the weeks before the three performances.

Cast members were quick to praise him for his vision, as well as the gentle way he gave them confidence to perform,

Lizzy Gradidge, from St John's Church, Rowlands Castle, said: "James is unbelievably positive and will see something positive in what you've done, however bad you think you were! He is an amazing director and so creative."

And James himself said: "It is quite something to spend weeks and weeks reading Scripture over and over again, and you keep finding new things. Then when you perform it in front of an audience, even if you've been doing it for 20 years as I have, something different comes out of it again.

"In the rehearsal room, we don't know who goes to church and who doesn't, which denomination they might be, who has read the Bible or not – we just read Scripture, experience it together and perform it. And one of the other things about these kinds of community plays is that they build bridges between churches – Anglicans perform alongside Roman Catholics and



so on.

"Last time we performed here there were some people who had never even spoken in public before. They spoke perhaps one line last time and then a few lines this time. It has been a privilege to see them develop in confidence."

For more photos of the performances, see www.portsmouth.anglican.org

Bells rung for those who died in war

THE lives of two former bell-ringers are being commemorated to mark 100 years since their deaths during the First World War.

Corporal Frederick Burrow and Corporal Herbert Hoptrough both served in the Second Portsmouth Pals Battalion, part of the Hampshire Regiment, and were killed in action in 1917.

They lived only a few doors apart in Cranleigh Road, Buckland, and bell-ringing records show that they often rang the bells of St Mary's Church, Fratton, together before they joined the army.

Cpl Burrow was reported killed in action on August 1, 1917, during the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, during Passchendaele. He is buried in the Wytschaete Military Cemetery near Ypres.

On August 1, 2017, eight ringers rang at St Mary's for three hours non-stop to mark 100 years since his death. The new combination of changes was named 'Pilckem Ridge' after the battle in which he lost his life.

Cpl Hoptrough was killed on September 20, 1917, during the Battle of the Menin Road Bridge, also during Passchendaele. His body was never recovered.

So on September 20, 2017, the ringers at St Mary's will attempt the Menin Road Ridge Surprise Major in his honour.

For further details about bell-ringing at St Mary's, contact David Mattingley on davidmattingley@hotmail.co.uk.

Discover our future plans

CLERGY and PCC members will find out more about plans to implement our 'live pray serve' strategy this autumn.

Meetings will happen in each Archdeaconry. Those who worship in the Meon will meet from 7pm on September 27 at St John's Church, Fareham.

The Isle of Wight meeting is on October 3 at All Saints, Ryde, from 7pm. And those from parishes in Portsmouth and Havant will get together on October 4, at St Mary's Church, Fratton, from 7pm.

Details are on www.portsmouth.anglican.org/liveprayserve