

## Behind the Scenes with The Curtain Raisers – Act 2



Old Mother Hubbard – 2009

Newcomers to the Village may not know it, but for more than 40 years there's been an active theatre club in our midst. It's called *The Curtain Raisers* and its first production was the brainchild of Alex Kerr, a then resident of Abbots Close, way back in the swinging '60s. Act 2 of our article is written by Amy Scott.

In the years that followed their formation in 1968, the

a core of people who come back time and again to perform or help out with shows or fundraisers. Without these people, of course, most of what the group does would be impossible, as money is a constant problem for small companies, particularly drama groups so heavily dependent on the availability and price of venues, lighting equipment, costumes and any number of other necessities that keep adding up. Far from being a guaranteed financial success, nearly all shows aim just to break even, and any profit is

*Dear Residents,*

We are in a new year for membership (see form overleaf) and because of increased costs for printing and events, we have had to increase the fees to £5 – the first increase in a number of years.

However, your £5 gives everyone in your household free entry to all the talks, with complimentary tea or coffee and biscuits; reduced ticket prices for social events; and four issues of the Village Voice – may I urge residents who have not joined to give us a try (at least as a visitor)!

Again we have a programme of interesting talks planned, starting with "Guildford's Forgotten Hero" on 13th April, plus social evenings. See below for more details.

Thanks to all members for their continual support – do attend when you can.

Finally, thanks are also due to our local shops, Budds, The Village Deli and Williams for their raffle prizes at the annual social. Do support your local shops.

See you at the next meeting on 13th April!

*Joe Pais*

Chairman

### OVRA SOCIAL CALENDAR

All events take place in the Village Hall:

complimentary refreshments are served from 7.15pm, talks begin at 7.45pm. Entry is FREE for OVRA members, non-members are welcome at £3 each.

*Tuesday 13th April*

#### **Guildford's Forgotten Hero**

Doug Scott will give a talk about Sir Richard Weston, who built the Way Navigation.

*Tuesday 11th May*

Curtain Raisers picked up the pace steadily, staging yearly shows for five years, before taking on two in 1973 and starting a trend that saw two, three or four shows a year becoming business as usual – the current count, glancing at the back of a recent programme, shows 90 productions in 40 years. It's an impressive total for a local, self-funded group, particularly taking into account the many expenses required to put on a show. It's something not everyone automatically considers: that shows might not be instant successes. All that struck me when I first began to attend Curtain Raiser shows was the amazing idea that *anyone* could get involved – dance and sing and act on stage, lit by stage lights, wearing real costumes far beyond anything in my dressing-up box – even children!

At this point, I was about ten – easily star-struck and vaguely envious of my friends who had joined before I had. I remember particularly well a performance of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* in 1996 that featured a number of children around my age – if they could do it, why not me? Having the opportunity to perform, regardless of age or training is extremely compelling for the latent showperson in anyone – and therein, perhaps, is the secret of amateur groups' success. The pantomimes, performed if not yearly, then at least regularly, at the Onslow Village Hall, were and still are bright, funny and hugely appealing even in their shakier moments; and the support of Onslow Village residents along with friends and family of the cast have ensured the continuing demand to stage them.

Although it remains our 'base camp' so to speak, and remains the venue for our semi-regular pantomimes, Onslow Village is not the only place that the group performs. In 1996, the Curtain Raisers joined other local amateur groups to raise money for GATA (Guildford Amateur Theatre Association) to provide equipment for a new local amateur theatre, and in 1997 the Electric Theatre opened in Guildford town centre. The following year, we made our debut there with an acclaimed production of the musical *Godspell*. With that success, we continued with various other plays and musicals, including the popular horror-comedy *Little Shop of Horrors* (2001) complete with life-size puppets, and the first amateur production in the country of *Copacabana* (2002). On the reinstatement of the Guildford Drama Festival, we entered an excerpt from *Shakers Re-stirred* (2002) and in 2003, the Curtain Raisers' production of *Spoonface Steinberg* won an award for 'Best Actress'.

Looking back over the last decade has demonstrated to me not only the staying power of amateur groups, but also the loyalty they can inspire – and how very necessary this is. Many people – actors, singers, directors – switch groups to take part in different shows, but the Curtain Raisers still has

the Barn in Onslow Village is in constant need of investment. All the same, we are determined to keep it going, as it is a valuable resource and central location in Onslow Village. For this reason, our shows and fundraisers are all vitally important to the group's stability, and cast and crew work extremely hard on each and every one. We remain grateful to all our friends, supporters and audiences that allow us to keep going even in adversity – last year we staged a well-received pantomime: *Old Mother Hubbard* and a very well-received production of JB Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, and this year's pantomime was *Treasure Island*.

We are a friendly group that welcomes one and all, on-stage or off, so if you'd like to be part of the Curtain Raisers, information can be found on our website:

[www.curtainraisers.org.uk](http://www.curtainraisers.org.uk), or call Rita Rowland, our Group Secretary on 01483 232961. We are also now on Facebook!

*Contributions for the two Curtain Raisers articles gratefully received from Peter Scurfield, Amy Scott, Angela Joule and Andy Morgan.*

## POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

We need your help to tackle the following issues affecting Onslow Village: your opinion is important, so please get involved.

### Onslow Arboretum

We understand that Guildford Borough Council plans to remove wire netting alongside the A3 as it has done along the fence on the Manor Way side. One of our members plans to raise a petition objecting to this on the grounds that the Arboretum needs to have secure fencing to keep children and dogs from straying into the roads. If you would like to sign such a petition, please let us know using the form overleaf.

### Potholes

Like so much of Surrey, our village roads have suffered badly for years from poor/hon-existent maintenance, but the snow and ice have made the situation even worse and some roads now need to be completely resurfaced, rather than just patched. Please make your feelings known by reporting potholes to Surrey County Council Highways Department on 0300 200 1003 or online at: [www.surreycc.gov.uk/](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/) and click on "Roads and transport" on the left of the screen.

### Curling Vale Traffic Islands

These have become overgrown and weed-choked: should we press the Borough Council to maintain them more regularly or would it be better if they were cleared and grassed—? Please let us know using the form overleaf.

## Yvonne Arnaud: Actress

The speaker Janet Hilderley is the author of a biography of the French-born pianist, singer and actress.

*Tuesday 8th June*

## Clandon Park and the Onslow Family

June Davey will give this talk, postponed from January.

*Tuesday 13th July*

## High Times at Heathrow

Sheila Kennedy's amusing talk describes her long career as a passenger agent at Heathrow Airport.

*Information is correct at date of printing, but may be subject to change – please look out for future issues of the Village Voice, posters and flyers or ring 07726 952466 to check.*

## The 'VILLAGE VOICE'

*...is published every 3 months or so and is usually only delivered to members, but once a year, just after the AGM, it goes to all houses in the village.*

*Onslow Village has an interesting history and a unique character, which OVRA has been helping to safeguard for more than 50 years. The Association is run by a committee of unpaid volunteers and provides information and advice; for instance how to maintain the hedges*

*and who to contact about potholes etc, but we also try to bring the community together by putting on talks and social events, such as the annual party in February, when we were entertained by Vic Cracknell and his band (left).*

*If you're new to Onslow Village, we'd like to welcome you and hope*

*you have many happy years here.*

*Our talks and social events are open to both members and non-members, so we hope to see you at one of them soon!*



# COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD

If you would like to tell Onslow Village residents about your group's forthcoming events, or issues that might interest them, please email [ovra.news@ntlworld.com](mailto:ovra.news@ntlworld.com) or ring 07726 952466. Next copy date: 11th June for publication end June/early July.

## RECYCLING NEWS

### Shredding group

In the Village we have a group of people who have the use of four shredders for their garden waste. The group has just completed its second year. Why not join, and enjoy the benefits of your own garden shredder without the hassle of having to buy, maintain and store it. Look out for the flyer to be delivered to your home and take advantage of the very reasonable cost of £15 per household per year.

### Bring and Take/Compost Heaven

The next Bring and Take will be in the Village Hall on Saturday, 24 April 2010 from 10.00am.

The next Compost Heaven will be in Guildford at Burchatt's Farm Barn, London Road on Saturday 8 May 2010 from 10am to 1pm. Come early and get a free compost bin and compost while stocks last.

For further information on any of the above please contact Lesley on 01483 533762

## Guildford Evening Decorative & Fine Arts Society at Onslow Village Hall

Our spring season of lectures includes:

Wednesday 14 April: **Pearls before Swine? The Long History of a Royal Necklace.** A wedding present from Pope Clement VII to his niece Catherine de Medici.

Wednesday 12 May: **Art Deco: High Style in the Roaring Twenties.** The lecture will explore the development of Art Deco and the impact of Modernism in the 1920s and 30s.

Wednesday 9 June: **The Shell Art Collection.** Young, talented early 20th century artists were commissioned to produce paintings for posters.

Wednesday 14 July: **Charles Darwin and the Voyage of HMS Beagle.** The influences upon Charles Darwin and Capt. Robert Fitzroy, commander of the Beagle, and their participation in the famous voyage from 1831 to 1836.

Saturday 15 May: **A visit to Henry Moore's home in Hertfordshire.** Please ring 01483 566190 or 833485 for

## Ninety Years Young



On December 21st 2009, Lesley Goode (OVRA Secretary), Angela Jule (OVRA committee member and neighbour of Edith Ford), together with another Windsor Close neighbour Joan Toone, braved the fresh fall of snow to surprise Edith with presents and cards on her 90th birthday. Edith had been an

extremely active and supportive member of OVRA for several years and in 1991 became Committee Secretary. The following year she became Chairman, Archie Anderson stepped down and Edith took on the role of Secretary. However, the position of Secretary remained unfilled and so for some considerable time Edith took on the responsibilities for both roles, finally stepping down from the committee in 2002 at the age of 82: surely an example to us all!

The OVRA committee decided to mark the occasion of Edith's milestone birthday by presenting her with a food hamper as well as an orchid which she wore that day at a celebratory lunch with friends from the Cathedral shop. In addition, her friends and neighbours in Windsor Close presented her with an M&S gift token.

Needless to say, Edith was both surprised and delighted with these tokens of appreciation and affection, joining us in a toast with Bucks Fizz to mark the occasion.

Her sitting room was filled with cards from her many friends and whilst we were there the phone rang constantly with congratulations from "absent friends".

We hope it will be a day Edith will remember for many years to come.

## Honey Cake

After this year's AGM, Mary Bentall not only introduced us to the fascinating hobby of beekeeping, she also brought along some delicious cake and biscuits, made with honey from her own hives. By popular demand, she has kindly provided the recipe for the cake:

### Ingredients:

7 oz SR flour  
5 oz butter/marg.



The Committee look forward to welcoming you to the Hall. Refreshments from 7.15 pm and talks start at 8 pm. New members and visitors welcome. Visitors' entrance fee: £5. Contact Membership Secretary Angela Logan on 01483 833485 or by email on [guildford.eveningfas@ntlworld.com](mailto:guildford.eveningfas@ntlworld.com)

## Onslow Village Garden Club

The Club was founded in 1946 as a follow up of the local "Chicken Club" run during the war.

The present membership fee is £10. This gives you free entry to the 10 talks on the third Wednesday of each month (except August & December) on gardening, in the very broadest sense, with a plant sale. There are three shows: March, June and Annual in September.

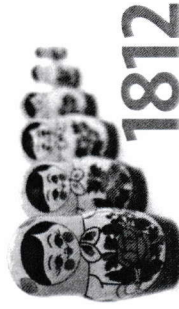
This year's outing is on the 3rd July to Merriments Garden (morning) and Great Dixter (afternoon). There are a few tickets left - cost £23 (phone 573107).

We intend to start a Junior member section this year for a nominal fee to encourage youngsters.

It is a very friendly Club with over 80 members, mostly from the Village. So do join us, or as a trial come as a visitor for one of our talks (phone 577035). Why not come to our Table Top Sale on Saturday 8th May 9.30 - 12.30 in the Village Hall where plants, cards, cakes, books etc will be on sale.

## Vivace Chorus

Saturday 22nd May 2010  
7.30pm Guildford Cathedral  
6.30pm Pre-concert talk



## An Evening of Russian Music

A night of fireworks, passion and high-octane excitement, à la Russe!

For our Russian extravaganza we present two classic masterpieces from the choral repertoire, paired alongside one of the greatest dramatic works Prokofiev ever wrote.

Tickets £11 - £22

**1812**  
OVERTURE WITH CHORUS  
**TCHAIKOVSKY**  
PROKOFIEV: Ivan the Terrible  
BORODIN: Polovtsian Dances



6 oz clear honey  
4 oz soft brown sugar  
1 tbsp water

**Method:**

Put sugar, butter and honey into a large saucepan, and melt over a low heat. Cool, add the eggs and water and blend in the flour.

Grease and line a 11" by 7" tin. Put in the mixture and bake in the centre of the oven at Mark 4 /350°F/180°C for approximately 30 mins until firm.

Turn out and cool on a wire tray.

**VILLAGE VOICE 20 REPLY SLIP**

Name: .....  
Address: .....  
Telephone No:.....  
E-mail address: .....

*You can unsubscribe at any time and we will not pass your details to any third party.*

**Membership (runs from 1 April '10 — 31 March '11)**

I would like to join/renew my membership and enclose £5 per household. (Please make cheques payable to OVRA).

**Onslow Arboretum**

Please contact me about signing the petition. ....

**Curling Vale Traffic Islands**

I'd prefer them ...  
to remain as they are, but better maintained .....   
to be cleared and grassed over. ....

Please hand this form in at any OVRA social event, send it to the OVRA Secretary at 68 High View Road, Guildford GU2 7RU or deliver to one of the following addresses, clearly marked for the attention of OVRA:

- 17 Abbots Close
- 15 Bannisters Road
- 28 Bannisters Road
- 17 Curling Vale
- 36 East Meads
- 9 Farm Walk
- 17 Friars Gate
- 41 Hedgeway
- 17 Litchfield Way
- 8 Manor Way
- 24 Queen Eleanor's Road
- 10 Vicarage Gate
- 16 West Meads
- 14 Windsor Close

Tourist Information 01483 444334  
Michael Taylor 07958 519741  
or purchase on our website [www.VivaceChorus.org](http://www.VivaceChorus.org)

Don't forget you can follow us on **Facebook** and **Twitter** and receive updates about our events and news affecting Onslow Village. Just search for "Onslow Village Residents' Association" on Facebook, and on Twitter, find us at [http://twitter.com/OVRA\\_](http://twitter.com/OVRA_) (Take care to include the underscore or you'll be following someone quite different!).

**IN MEMORIAM**

**John Birdsey**

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of John Birdsey at New Year. John served OVRA for many years as auditor of the accounts, only standing down in the last couple of years. The Association gratefully acknowledges his contribution.

**Sidney Holland – "Holly"**

Holly, who died recently aged 92, was born in Bournville and as a teenager joined the Territorial Army. At the outbreak of the war he was called up.

He saw active service in France but soon found himself on the beaches of Dunkirk awaiting evacuation. These three days spent on the beaches were the worst of his life. They were continually bombed and strafed by German planes. He existed on biscuits taken from an abandoned factory.

The first stop on the train from Dover, taking him north, was Guildford. He never forgot the welcome and hospitality he received from the VWS at the station. He was then sent on a recruitment drive to West Africa where he contracted severe dysentery and malaria which saw an end to his active service. After many months spent in hospitals in Gibraltar and England he was posted to the War Office.

On being demobbed he worked for some time in London before moving to Manor Way where he brought up his family. He is survived by a son and daughter, grandchildren and great grandchildren. His partner Pat in the last few years was a great comfort and strength for him. Pat is still in the Village but has moved to Thorn Bank.

Joe Pa

details.  
Saturday 5 June: **Supper and quiz with Christopher Hawksings: Objects from Another Cabinet of Curiosities.**  
Please contact Angela Logan on 01483 833485 for tickets.

**Number 18 bus under threat**

The Village bus service is under threat when the contract for it runs out in 2012. Surrey County Council needs to save money and they have identified our bus route as needing a heavy subsidy. The service is under-used and used mainly by those holding bus permits, etc.

The bus currently runs six days a week, usually leaving The Square at 25 minutes past the hour. In the next two years it is important to use the bus as much as possible or we will lose it, although there is no guarantee we will retain it even then. This could be of particular concern to the more senior Village residents some of whom rely on the service.

We will keep residents informed of any further developments as we hear of them.

**Henley Grove**

A meeting took place in January at which Guildford Borough Council (GBC) outlined its plans to manage Henley Grove and restore it to the managed wood it had previously been: a landscape with wood production (in the form of coppiced ash), preserving the historical and cultural aspects, recreation and allowing wildlife conservation. The outer limits of the wood would not be subject to tree felling so the view of the wood from afar should not change.

Some local residents voiced their disapproval of how many trees have been and are scheduled to be felled and said that all local residents wanted a quiet place to "walk the dog, etc"; which could be covered by the path being tidied and more "wild" flowers planted, possibly using the subscription method used in the Arboretum in Onslow Village.

GBC said it would have to do something as the trees have been traumatised by the previous heavy-handed work of their contractors seven years ago and they will be producing a new proposal giving dates and times for circulation to the group and taking their views into account.

A representative of the residents contacted OVRA to say "If the trees marked for cutting are removed then our wood will be sadly empty, taking years (decades) to recover. As the view from Onslow village will be affected, I feel you should have a chance to voice your opinions."

OVRA will monitor the situation and will try to publicise any further meetings.