

## FRIENDS TOE THE LINE



after a few minutes the patterns made sense and all were able to dance to the music with bravado and style.



Fortified with picnics and drinks from the café-bar, around 50 dancers filled the floor from eight until late. Proceeds go directly to support the Electric Theatre and with ticket sales and an excellent raffle the evening raised about £300. To enthusiastic applause, Friends Secretary Rita Rowland undertook to organise a similar event for 2010.

A stomping good time was had by all when the Friends held their second fund-raising Line Dancing event in September. Most of the participants had no previous experience, but this was no barrier to having a really great time, and soon all were performing grape-vines, shuffles, kick-ball-changes and shoulder-shaking shimmies with panache!

There was plenty of hip-shaking, toe tapping and heel stamping, too, as the dancers joined in with 'The Freeze', 'Cowboy Twist', 'Cowgirl Waltz' and other dances. Laughter was never far away, especially in the early stages of each dance as seemingly impossible steps involving challenging changes of direction were carefully tried out under Andrea's expert tuition. But



*Friends Treasurer, Keith McDonald, leads the way in trying out some fancy footwork*

**FRIENDS SUMMER  
FUN FUND-RAISING  
TREASURE  
HUNT  
REPORT AND  
ANSWERS SEE  
PAGE 2**

**Join the Friends**  
Support the Electric  
Theatre. Benefits  
include:



**THURSDAY 10 DEC  
AT THE ELECTRIC THEATRE  
SPECIAL FRIENDS  
CHRISTMAS EVENT**  
hosted by the Electric  
Theatre management to  
thank the Friends for  
their support

# Friends Treasured

## Membership update

So far more than £2,000 has been raised in 2009/10 membership subscriptions and voluntary donations with new members joining all the time. This shows real commitment to supporting the Electric Theatre and provides much needed funds for the Friends to carry on their work with that support.

## Volunteering opportunities

The most visible volunteering opportunity is that of joining the theatre's team of voluntary ushers. The ushers play a valuable and necessary role in assisting Front of House Manager Sarah West with corralling audiences and ensuring their safety.

New volunteers are always welcome. Please call the theatre Box Office if you are interested in helping out in this way. (It's a great way to see shows for free!) Jennie Cousins, volunteer usher co-ordinator, will be delighted to hear from you.

Marketing Manager Emma Terry also finds Friends an invaluable support with publicity campaigns. A team of Friends volunteers helped hand out literature in Guildford High Street recently, and this was a really rewarding experience.

## Social events

The Friends of the Electric Theatre are a sociable bunch and organise a number of social events throughout the year.

Following the AGM in July, there were refreshments and a screening of the enchanting and award-winning film *The Red Balloon* which was greatly enjoyed.

## Treasure Trail

New for this year was a walking Treasure Hunt throughout the afternoon of Sunday, 2 August with proceeds from ticket sales going towards funds to support the work of the Electric Theatre.

The sun shone and everyone who took part reported that it had been very enjoyable. Some friends of Friends enjoyed themselves so much that they signed up for Friends membership there and then. Everyone finished the trail, which had clues of varying difficulty and required participants to walk around hidden corners of Guildford along some pleasant backwaters as well as the main streets. Even those who had lived in Guildford all their lives were delighted to discover things they did not know.

The average time taken was around two hours, as expected, but the winners collected correct answers to all the clues in a record time of one hour and one minute. The team was led by Trish Lambert and her fellow team members were Pat Barnard, Kris Benjafield and Pauline Read. The prize was a bottle of wine and two tickets for a show of their choice at the Electric Theatre.

The event was so well received that it has been decided to repeat it (with different clues, of course!) next year.

## Treasure trove of interesting facts

In the meantime participants can check their answers here and the rest of you can see how well you think you would have fared.

*Treasure Trail answers:*

The date on Lucien Simon's sculpture outside the Electric Theatre café-bar is **1997/98** and **Utopia Forge** made The



Bargeman sculpture on the Town Wharf. Nearby is the usually unremarked Tread-wheel, which is a scheduled monument. The plaque identifies its last load as stone for **Guildford Cathedral**. A **lion** lies in front of the castle on the coat of arms on the town bridge and Alice's sister is reading **Down the Rabbit Hole** down by the river. **Dr John Monsell**, rector of St Nicolas, wrote *Fight the Good Fight*. **Riverview** Lodge is next to Porridge Pot Alley. Not everyone found the quotation on the sundial in Westnye gardens: *Time reveals all things*. The National Trust notice reveals that fishing is permitted within **50m** of the locks. **Clear Skies** helped fund the renewable energy Hydro project between Yvonne Arnaud and Mill theatres. Everyone counted the **29** steps up Rosemary Alley correctly. Local architect **Ralph Neville** designed the museum gallery opened by Mayor WT Patrick in 1911. *Alice Through the Looking Glass* was sculpted by **Jeanne Argent** (1990). Tutors were at **8 Milkhouse Gate**, but the telephone number was also accepted.

*Answers continue on page 4*

# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Francis Griffin

Guildford Opera is delighted to welcome Francis Griffin as its new Musical Director. He succeeds Kevin John, who completed his five year tenure with a highly-successful production of *Magic Flute* at Holy Trinity Church in March. No stranger to the company, Francis stepped in to conduct *A Masked Ball* when Kevin took on the shared role of Gustavus at short notice in 2007.

A student of The Royal College of Music, Francis brings a wealth of experience to the company, having worked with societies and orchestras throughout England and conducted at the South Bank and Barbican centres. Performances have ranged widely, with an emphasis on opera: *Turandot*, *Cav and Pag*, *Così fan Tutte* and much acclaimed productions with White Horse Opera in Devizes: *Tales of Hoffmann*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Force of Destiny* and *Merry Widow*. He has also conducted several premières of works by local composer Joe St Johanser and recorded excerpts of his opera *The Tempest* with the London



Sinfonietta.

Francis is looking forward to the challenges of his new appointment and is already well into rehearsals for the November production of *Faust*—a new English translation by Peter Melville. A feast of well-known music (*Jewel Song*, *Golden Calf*, *Soldiers' Chorus* and the famous *Waltz*) this timeless story of the ageing, disillusioned scholar who sells his soul in exchange for youth combines colourful exuberance, thrilling drama and emotional poignancy with just a whiff of decadence: "irresistible!" says Francis.

*Gounod's 'Faust', Electric Theatre, 25-28 November 2009, 7.30pm (6.30pm 28 Nov.) Tickets £15 (£14 25 Nov). Concession for Electric Theatre Friends applies.*

*Artistic Director Jackie Shearer will be talking about Faust on 23 September at Guildford Institute, 2.45 to 3.45 pm. Call 01483 562142 or see [www.guildford-institute.org.uk](http://www.guildford-institute.org.uk)*

**Beryl Miles, GOC publicity**

## Review

### *Lark Rise*

#### **Pranksters Theatre Co**

The Pranksters' summer show was simply charming, beautifully presented with tenderness and humour. Returning to the Castle Grounds after their innovative promenade production last year, the company was keen to try something different. They successfully rose to the challenge and evoked nostalgia for a bygone age, albeit it a time when living was hard and people were keenly aware that change was coming. The play ends with a brutal reminder of what 1914 would bring.

Director Jenny Haynes peopled the village of Lark Rise with a delightful cast of real 'characters', and although the action takes place over just one day, we found ourselves really involved with the people we met there. With a few simple props and some admirable

mime, the whole world of the village in a farming community was created before our eyes. At one point, so convinced were we that the actors were really looking at a bird, that we all craned to see – a magical moment.

The whole company is to be congratulated on a great piece of ensemble work, but special mention must go to Philip Hutchinson, who demonstrated versatility in a number of roles and was Musical Director. The simple setting of the songs, sung lustily by the whole company (and some of the audience) made this a really special production.

**Jane MacIntyre**

### *The Crucible* **Compton Little Theatre**

Walking into Compton Village hall laid out as theatre in-the-round, I knew I was in for a good evening's entertainment and I was not disappointed. Compton Little Theatre's production of Arthur

Miller's *The Crucible*, superbly directed by Alison Hough, was slick, passionate and staged with effective simplicity.

The girls played well as an ensemble and key moments were enhanced by effective use of lighting. Abigail was skilfully played by Jessica Payne, who exuded evil throughout, and Emma Hough was particularly convincing as Mary Warren. John Sherringham was almost ideal as the sexy, passionate John Proctor. The final scene in which he firstly confesses to seeing the devil to save himself from hanging, and then finds the strength to die honourably was extremely moving. Katherine Perrin, as the emotionally repressed, morally upright Elizabeth Proctor, provided the perfect counter and my heart went out to her as she struggled with her conflicting desires for Proctor to live and to maintain his integrity.

**Jane Martin**

## Treasure Trail answers continued from page 2



The date on the clock is **1683** and there were **five** windows above the white hart on Sainsburys. **Eric Parker** described Guildford as a beautiful city on the Guildford Society plaque and the **Onslow** family crest is above Holy Trinity's clock-face. Edith was winged warrior Geoffrey Brook Parnell's **sister** and Mrs Ryle's dedication stone was dated **October 14th**

**1909**. The Royal Oak's Griffin Brewery was founded in **1845**. The two archbishops **Runcie** and **George Abbot** are commemorated on the latter's statue and a plaque

## News in brief

### Missing sleuth!

### Good Holmes wanted for Bramley Players *Hound of the Baskervilles*

Bramley Players have their magnifying glasses out and are on the trail of the missing actor. They seek someone with charisma and good acting skills to take on the role of Sherlock Holmes when they present F Andrew Leslie's rare stage adaptation of Conan Doyle's atmospheric and mysterious novel. What omen does the mournful howling of a monstrous dog portend for Sir Henry Baskerville? Potential Sherlocks should contact [jenny.wren27@hotmail.com](mailto:jenny.wren27@hotmail.com)

*Hound of the Baskervilles* runs from Wed 2 to Sat 5 December at the Electric Theatre Tickets £10, £9 concessions including Friends of the Electric Theatre, available from the Electric Theatre Box Office 01483 444789 or online booking. Buy 9 tickets and get 10th FREE!

nearby names **West's Picture Palace** as Guildford's first cinema. The date on the Royal Grammar School's Latin inscription is **1552**. If you read the story of the Proud Duke of Somerset carefully you will discover that he bought his own Somerset House for overnight stops between London and **Petworth** after he had quarrelled with every innkeeper in the town. The East Gate sheep dog guards **three** sheep. Opposite the library there is a sign for **Relaxation** rooms above Multiyork and **VR** are the royal initials that grace Laura Ashley's shop front. Guildford Friary housed a maximum of **24** friars and last, but not least, the Masquerade inscription outside the theatre tells us that Darran Lloyd was a visionary **Friend** of the Electric Theatre.



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## Treasure Island

*The Panto* : by Richard Lloyd  
Curtain Raisers : Onslow Village Hall

21-23 January 2010 : 7.45 & 2.30 Sat  
01483 568023 [bookings@curtainraisers.org.uk](mailto:bookings@curtainraisers.org.uk)



## Top Girls need top men!

And women, too, of course. The Herald Players are presenting Caryl Churchill's great play with an all female cast with men and women providing backstage support at the Electric Theatre 21-24 April 2010. Realism and surrealism combine in this fascinating piece of theatre with many enjoyable roles for the cast of seven women with doubling and trebling. Further details will be posted at [www.heraldplayers.org.uk](http://www.heraldplayers.org.uk) and [www.gata.org.uk](http://www.gata.org.uk)

## Join the In Crowd Friends of the Electric Theatre

Discounts available for many shows  
10% discount at Electric Theatre Café-bar  
Social events—quizzes, dances, beetle drives  
Above all support the Electric Theatre

**All for just £10 a year!**

To join pick up an application form from the Theatre  
or e-mail [janemacintyre@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janemacintyre@hotmail.co.uk)

## G A T A news

Guildford Amateur Theatre Association  
[www.gata.org.uk](http://www.gata.org.uk) is an umbrella organisation  
that works towards advancing public education  
in the dramatic arts in and around Guildford.  
Member groups perform at the Electric Theatre.

**AGM & booking meeting for 2011  
at the Electric Theatre  
8pm, 9 December 2009**

**Electric Theatre Friends** are individual supporters of the Electric Theatre who support the theatre's work. To join e-mail **Membership Secretary** Jane MacIntyre, [janemacintyre@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janemacintyre@hotmail.co.uk), visit the Friends website via the Electric Theatre link or fill out the form available at the Electric Theatre .

### The Electric Theatre programme

The Electric Theatre- check the **website** at [www.electrictheatre.co.uk](http://www.electrictheatre.co.uk), pick up a **brochure** from the foyer or call the **Box Office 01483 444789**

### Items for next newsletter

If you have any news or ideas for items please e-mail [janemacintyre@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janemacintyre@hotmail.co.uk)