

## MERRIE SUBURB

"Masques, Monsters & Mushrooms—a glimpse of merrie England" by Colin Gregory and "Patchwork" directed by Mollie Cattle.

There are two cardinal sins the giver of a talk can commit: he can treat his subject with too much respect, or he can treat it with too little.

Either approach would have been fatal to Colin Gregory's talk, which took as its subject the huge open air pageants produced in the Suburb by its inhabitants in the early years of this century. Happily this was neither a sentimental and over reverential wallow nor a sneering gibe at late Victorian idealism. It was instead a thoughtful but lighthearted look at the pageants as an art form, but more importantly, as a manifestation of the socialist ideals upon which the Suburb was founded.

Indeed, and to emphasise this latter point, it transpired that a Russian observer at one of the pageants later claimed the experience as one of the great influences in his later work in post-revolutionary Russian theatre! A tenuous link, one might imagine, yet on reflection perhaps the ideologies of Dame Henrietta Barnett and Lenin differed in degree rather than substance. Certainly both believed in the essential goodness of hard work and those who undertook it, and both wished for good housing and healthy and productive lives for all.

For evidence of the failure of the Suburb to be the enduring model for the realisation of that dream, one need only recall the ironic laughter that greeted Colin Gregory's description of the "artisan" inhabitants of the Suburb. Yet there is no denying the uniquely

pleasant environment that the Suburb has created, and it was one of the strengths of the talk it highlighted the strong community feeling that these early experiments in the theatre of the people created.

Another commendation must be given for the scholarly research that so evidently underlay the talk. Apart from the wonderful collection of contemporary photographs we were shown (especially those of the "child-mushrooms" who in part gave the talk its title), the scripts of the pageants themselves were most entertainingly excerpted, and the historical origins of the genre in the mediaeval Mystery play Cycles of York and Wakefield eruditely explained.

At the end of the talk one's emotions were mixed: should one be scornful of the naivety, or admire the simplicity of spirit? Should one be sad that the pageants fell into desultory or glad that the dramatic conditions of the Suburb still live on with the Suburb Dramatic Society (who are still foolhardy enough to produce an open air show each year!)?

All in all, much to think about in this most professionally prepared and presented talk.

To follow, the pleasingly large audience was treated to a delightful 'pot-pourri' of songs and recitals such as must have graced early Suburb parlours on long evenings round the piano. The title—"Patchwork" tempts the reviewer to speak of it as well stitched together—and indeed it was—but there was a stronger theme to this



Colin Gregory, Jo Hann, Fiona Riem and others anticipate the evening.

Dickens with a pastoral idyll such as in part inspired Henrietta Barnett and thus the Suburb. It therefore provided a natural counterpoint (counterpane perhaps!) to the first half of this most enjoyable evening.

That theme was the contrast drawn in songs and recitals, of the ugliness and injustices of the unregenerate London so reviled by

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## INTERNATIONAL EVENING

The Garden Suburb School PTA's bi annual International Food Evening raised nearly £600 in June.

Food from many countries, prepared by parents, was enjoyed by all in a transformed Junior Hall colourfully decorated, as it was, with flags and posters of the nationalities represented including Switzerland, France, Kenya, Israel, India, USA, Italy, Japan, Iran, Brazil and England.



All smiles from Brazil.



Mady Impallomini on the Italian stand.



The Stars and Stripes was represented by Jill Butterfield and Peggy Sussman and Linda Connolly



Ruth Green and Joanna Atkin served food from Israel.



Dodie (above) and Tom provided the music. They're very good, and bookable on Harpenden 05827.

## HILL CLOSE FETE



Linda Davidson, of East Enders fame came west to open the Hill Close Fete. Success has moved it on to Central Square where it was as popular as ever.

## WHAT'S ON

RA MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETINGS: 1 Sept, 6 Oct, 3 Nov. 8.00pm. The Community Room, Bigwood House, Bigwood Road, N.W.11. VISITORS WELCOME.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PAVILION CHILDREN'S CENTRE, Lyttelton Playing Fields, N.2.

Mothers & Toddlers (0-3yrs) 10am-noon every weekday. 70p per session Enquiries Arlene Hyman: 455 5372.

Christmas Term Sept 7-December 18

3-5yrs Fun with Art. Every Monday

2.15pm-3.00pm

Fun with Dance. Every Weds.

2.15pm-3.00pm

Musical Fun. Every Thurs. 2.15pm-3.00pm

Christmas term starts Sept 14. Bookings and enquiries through Ann Spicer 349 3380

### HGS INSTITUTE

3 August - 6 September The Institute is closed. 7th September. The Institute is open for enrolments from now on 9am-4.45pm Monday - Friday.

28th September Institute Term begins for all courses except EFL.

### JULY

25 Free Church, Bible Society Annual Meeting 2.15pm Free Church Small Hall.

27-30 HGS INSTITUTE, Young People's Summer Workshops, Various subjects, Details on request. (455 9951).

30 HGS Floral Arrangement Club, 7.45pm Fellowship House. Demonstration by Mrs Rance "Pause for Thought."

### AUGUST

1 HGS Horticultural Society, Flower Show 3-6pm Free Church Hall.

### SEPTEMBER

3-6 HGS INSTITUTE CLOSED

6 RA FAMILY FETE, CENTRAL SQUARE NW11 2-5pm. Fun and games for all ages.

7 HGS Townswomen's Guild, St Jude's Church Rooms. 2pm. Speaker: Mr B. Wright "Discovering the Cotswolds" with music. Competition: Myself when young.

7 HGS Institute open for enrolments: 9am-4.45pm Mon - Fri.

12 HGS Institute Foreign Languages Advisory Session, Tea House, Northway. NW11 10am-12noon.

15-17 HGS Institute English as foreign language enrolment, Tea House, Northway NW11 am & pm (Tel 458 8176 for more details).

16 New HGS Trust Annual General Meeting. Bigwood Hall, Bigwood Road NW11 To be preceded by the Charitable Trust AGM at 8.00pm.

16 HGS Institute open for evening enrolments, 6pm-8.30pm Mon - Thur Foreign Languages Advisory Session, Tea House, Northway 7.30pm-9pm

17 HGS Floral Arrangement Club, 17th A.G.M Fellowship House, followed by slides of "THE ROYAL WEDDING" 1986 at 8.15pm, non-members £1.00.

19 HGS Horticultural Society: Flower Show, 3-6pm Free Church Hall.

21 HGS Institute English as Foreign Language - Term begins.

26 St Jude's Autumn Market.

27 Free Church, Harvest Festival Services, 11am & 6.30pm

28 HGS INSTITUTE. Term begins for all courses excluding EFL.

### OCTOBER

3 Free Church: Organ Recital, Graham Alsop. 8pm.

5 HGS Townswomen's Guild, St Jude's Church Rooms. 2pm. Speaker: Mrs Brand "Experience in China". Competition: Berries & Leaves.

17 Residents Association New Residents & Wardens Party 6-9.30pm Free Church Hall, Northway NW11

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

22, 23 & 24 October: HGS Dramatic Society Presents "Table Manners" Alan Ayckbourn in the Institute Theatre. 21 November HGS CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR 10-5pm Free Church Hall.

Deadline's for Whats On. Autumn Issue 19 September, SUBURB NEWS Publication dates: Autumn Issue 16 October, Winter Issue 14 January, Items for What's on column to Alan Lawson 68 Oakwood Road NW11.

Contributions and letters to the Editor will be welcomed by R.J. Wakefield at 26 Hampstead Way, NW11.

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