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It's a habit in Farnham: battling to save theatres

Can this Holden Report come up with new survival strategy in long-running campaign?

potential developers, in Place in East Street and the Regal Cinema, a magnificent building constructed from locally-made bricks, which was demolished by Bass, the site's parking.



Even Royalty couldn't win...

PETITIONS and campaigns concerning the theatre in Farnham are nothing new - as long ago as 1905 local newspapers were filling their columns with such matters. Throughout November of that year, local residents signed petitions and the Farnham Urban District Council discussed the matter of the Royalty Theatre, which was operating in South Street.

Mr. Arthur West, proprietor of the theatre, was summoned by the FUDC to appear before the Farnham Petty Sessions, charged with 'having erected a new building of materials other than those required by the by-laws of the council, between August 28th and September 6th.'

Mr. R.W. Cass, the council's surveyor, said that the theatre was 21 feet wide, 81 feet long and 13 feet high and that when he had visited it, it had held an audience of approximately 200 people and that it was well maintained.

TWO presentations are to take place in June when Michael Holden's report and business study *A Theatre for Farnham* will be the subject.

The first, on Wednesday, June 7th, will take place in The Pavilions of St. Andrew's Parish Church, at 7pm for 7.30pm.

The second will be held on Saturday afternoon, June 17th, at 2.15pm in the United Reformed Church Hall, South Street, Farnham. Admission is by invitation only, but anyone other than those who have been invited but who holds a particular interest should contact the chairman, Anne Cooper.

Michael Holden's company has produced a report which sets out to establish the need for a purpose-built theatre in Farnham. The report has been occasioned by the threatened loss of the existing Redgrave Theatre and has been

proposed purpose-built theatre is additive to the facilities of the town and does not undermine activities in other venues either in Farnham or the surrounding districts. It also accepts the requirement that any theatre operation proposed must be self-sustaining in its revenue account. Mr. Holden's report investigates fully all the pros and cons for a theatre in Farnham and reaches the conclusions that: there is a latent, evidenced demand for a purpose-built theatre in this town. that such a theatre can be self-sustaining in the revenue account and protection can be offered to Waverley Borough Council against having to fund a default that the

Jottings for June

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Playing the qyl qiyak

ROOTED in the culture of Kyrgyz, nomads from an awe-inspiring mountain landscape will be visiting the West End Centre, Aldershot, on Wednesday, June 7th, at 8pm, to play what is billed as 'an extraordinary collection of stringed, whistle and ocarina-like instruments, including the sybyzgy, choor, chopo choor, qyl qiyak and both wooden and metal Jew's harp.' The group is also expected to play before Prince Charles later in June. To book or find out more please ring 01252 330040.

Open Day in the park

THE Farnham Park rangers are inviting members of the public to a special Open Day on June 17th, from 10am to 4pm, to discuss the future management of the park. Visitors will have a chance to view plans and information which includes ideas for improved access to the park, management of the grassland areas, locations for new ponds and the restoration of views. Please contact Helen Boulden on 01483 523392 for further details.

Sunrise, sunset...

GREAT songs plus humour and paths - *Fiddler on the Roof* has it all, states the publicity blurb for the latest production to come from the Farnham Amateur Operatic Society. The event runs from June 13th-17th at the Farnham Matings, box office 01252 726234. Evening performances start at 7.30pm and there is also a matinee on Saturday

THE Castle Theatre (now an Italian restaurant) where many now well-known performers began their careers.

evening economy mix in the town centre together with other social and educational gains and that the most economic use of public capital resources is the retention of the Redgrave Theatre building. In the early years of the 20th century, in addition to the Royalty

Get crafty with John

JOHN Hinchcliffe's work brings to the fore a lifelong interest in the texture and surface of the craft object. He is both an innovative weaver, a ceramicist, an expert on printed textiles and linocuts and an exhibition of his recent work can be seen at the Craft Study Centre, Falkner Road, Farnham, until July 1st. For further details please ring 01252 891450.

Pub's tuneful - all day!

IT'S music, music all the day at the Prince Alfred public house, Hale, Farnham, on Sunday June 11th. Music of all types will be included on this day, which is intended to interest all members of the family. Food will also be available. Please telephone Tina Aston for more information, on 01483 447754.

Trip on the Inca road

JOHN Pilkington, traveller and journalist, will take his audience on a route Exploring the Royal Road of the Incas, at the last of this season's Farnham Maltings Lectures. This lecture, on June 30th, begins at 8pm, the ticket cost is £5. Please call 01252 733550 with any further queries.

Farm fresh in Farnham

IN co-operation with Surrey Food Links - bringing quality local produce to market - the next Farmers' Market, in Farnham, will be held in the Central Car Park on Sunday, June 25th, from 10am to 1.30pm. Further details can be obtained via www.farnham.gov.uk/market or by telephone on 01252 712667.

Choir presents soirée

THE Rushmoor Choir will present A Summer Soirée on July 1st, at St. Andrew's Garrison Church, Aldershot, at 7.30pm. The conductor is Benjamin Wolf and tickets cost £10 (£7 concessions). For further information please contact Carolyn Ford on 01252 684601.

Lizzy does Thin Lizzy

LIMEHOUSE Lizzy, performing music by rock band Thin Lizzy, will be at The Maltings, Farnham, on Thursday, June 8th. Tickets, at £12 each, from the venue box office on 01252 718001.

Theatre Association. beneficial effects on (FTA) can be obtained from its chairman Anne Cooper email: anne@theatre.org

Theatrical/political dimension

IN March 1986, actor Paul Eddington, who played Jim Hacker in *Yes, Prime Minister*, said to the founders and friends at the 12th annual Redgrave Theatre lunch, which was held at the Frensham Pond Hotel: "I beg you to remember that the absolute bedrock on which our predominance as a theatrical nation rests is in repertory theatre. Whatever political opinions we hold we must press the Government in power to support theatres like the Redgrave."

Street. In 1939 this building became the Castle Theatre and remained as such until the Redgrave Theatre, built with enormous contributions from local people, opened in Brightwells Road.

A silent cinema once existed in Bear Lane, the town also had the Electric Cinema (later known as The County Cinema) at the end of

about either the plays performed or the conduct of the place, it was just that in his opinion 'the building was not constructed in accordance with the by-laws.' The theatre was closed down shortly after this conclusion.

BELOW: promoting the sale of bricks, in 1972, to raise funds for the new Redgrave Theatre, are the cast of *The Queen's Highland Servant*, by William Douglas Home, which was playing at The Castle Theatre at the time. Among those pictured are two Farnham actors - William Whymer and Chris Reeks. Doreen Andrew played the part of Queen Victoria and she can be seen in the background, riding a horse.

