

MORE SUPPORT from the profession for THE REDGRAVE THEATRE



EXCITING NEWS!

FTA had a meeting with eminent actor, DAVID SUCHET, world famous for his portrayal of POIROT, who has agreed to be yet another high profile supporter.

THANK YOU, David!

David Suchet as the inimitable Poirot

On hearing that Waverley Borough Council had once again (for the sixth time) approved Crest Nicholson's plans to demolish the Redgrave Theatre, **Simon Callow** sent us this stirring message:

"This is heartbreaking news about the destruction of the Redgrave, which has done noble work and served the town and the theatre at large so wonderfully over the years. It is inconceivable that a community as civilised and a town as beautiful and welcoming as Farnham cannot sustain a modest-sized theatre. The exchange between audience and actors is one of the most enjoyable and nourishing things that can happen: Britain has proved to be a world-beater at that particular thing. Surely Farnham deserves to be part of that wonderful relationship?"

Simon Callow

Our grateful thanks to you, Simon for your valued support.



The irrepressible **Simon Callow**

....However, on an optimistic note we can remind readers that Farnham is raising funds to fight Waverley Borough Council in Law through a Judicial Review. Action is to be taken to challenge the Council's decisions to award further concessions to Crest Nicholson for their deeply unpopular scheme (for more detail see: www.farnhamsociety.org.uk). For how to donate see overleaf.



Here are Frances O'Connor who starred in *Mr Selfridge*, Stephen Spielberg's film *AI* and Gemma Jones, famed for her roles in *Harry Potter*, *Bridget Jones* and *The Duchess Of Duke Street*, to name just a few showing their support for FTA's campaign by holding a Save The Redgrave



Frances O'Connor and Gemma Jones proudly supporting our Redgrave campaign.

Is this exchange below not a vivid demonstration of the persistent blinkered view taken by Waverley Councilors on all East Street/Brightwells matters?
In response to the last FTA newsletter, we received this email from Councillor Nicholas Holder:

Dear Mr Silver

I always read your newsletter with interest but I'm afraid this last missive is incredibly depressing and negative that I really now believe we are doing something positive in redeveloping this run down area of Farnham.

Regards

Nicholas Holder
Waverley Councillor, Witley and Hambledon

To which we replied...

Dear Nicholas Holder

Thank you for your email; I am very glad that you read our FTA newsletter. You will readily appreciate that it is sometimes hard not to be depressed about the state of the East Street/Brightwells area although we do try hard to remain positive and there are genuine grounds for this perspective as summarised at the end of this email.

May I, however, point out to you that it is Waverley that has created a derelict, run-down site at East Street, not the people of Farnham and that you, as the Heritage Champion for Waverley must know that the Crest Nicholson scheme would utterly destroy the heritage of Brightwells which was given for the leisure and recreation of the townspeople.

You also ignore the incredibly high reputation that the Redgrave Theatre held before Waverley installed a man to run it that knew nothing about theatres! Please take a look at the attached document: "What Happened to the Redgrave."

Reasons for us to be positive do include:

- Farnham Town Council's recent decision to seek legal advice on CN's activities on East Street plans
- The Farnham Interest Group's intention to

challenge Waverley's actions re favouring the developer.

- Potentially a legal challenge is to be mounted.
- And, we have an alternative plan ready to put to Waverley if the circumstances are right.

Mike Silver
Director, Farnham Theatre Association

As expected, there was no reply. How many times do we need to repeat this truth that the Brightwells area has been shockingly left untouched by Waverley Council even though it has a duty of care, especially to the Grade II Listed Brightwell House?

And at a recent full Council meeting at Godalming, before they passed the plans to continue with the East Street development, a number of councillors pontificated that actors at the Redgrave only played to sparse audiences. These councillors' mindsets are fixed and immutable; they fail to realise that it was Waverley themselves who installed a Theatre manager who had no experience of theatre but came from the TV world. The choice of productions and cast and the way in which the company was managed led inexorably to its decline. Cause and Effect.

These councillors completely sidestep the truth which was that the Redgrave in its prime was very successful indeed; its interior design and acoustics becoming a paragon that other architects copied.

The theatre company's decline was mirrored by many similar theatres across the country as the Repertory system began to fail. But only the Redgrave was singled out, seemingly with a sign from Waverley: Do Not Resuscitate.

The failure here in Farnham was that of Farnham Theatre Productions - put in by Waverley and The Arts Council - not the building, but it is the building that Waverley wish to demolish.

FIG and the Judicial Review

Farnham Theatre Association is totally supportive and much involved in the Farnham Interest Group's pleas for donations to support their intention to take Waverley Borough Council to Judicial Review, over the East Street/Brightwells scheme. May we thank you all who have already donated or are considering donating.

We were absolutely delighted to receive this message of support from Stephen Spence, Assistant General Secretary of Equity.

Dear Mike,

I support Farnham Theatre Association's campaign.

I will on a personal basis make a donation to the judicial review.

Best
Stephen

Stephen Spence
Assistant General Secretary
EQUITY

A reminder of the donation details: Thank you for your support and generosity.

Please EITHER send your name, address, postcode and email address plus your cheque, payable to The Farnham Society, to : FIG, c/o 13 Lickfolds Road, Rowledge, GU10 4AF Please write the reference FIGjr on the back of your cheque.

OR donate by BACS transfer to The Farnham Society at Sort Code 30-93-20 account number 00119575. Give the reference FIGjr and also email sfbrads@btinternet.com giving your name, address & amount donated to confirm that the transfer has been made.

WOODPECKER REPORT JULY 2016



'A little bird' has told me that works may not commence at Brightwells quite as soon as Waverley Council expected! It looks as if those sewage works may not be dug this summer after all. Maybe us birds and our friends the bats will have a bit more peace and quiet for the time being – that is, until the lawyers have come to some agreement over the plans for the new development.

Meanwhile, in the green fields around the town there are plans a-plenty to build over grass, hedges and even into woodland. A lot of this development can apparently go ahead on the basis that more dog-walkers will choose to take their exercise in Farnham Park – although why that should be is never clear to me! In wet weather (which is often these days) people dislike their great big dogs romping about in the wet, muddy clay in Farnham Park and prefer the dry, sandy areas of heath land which surround the town, both to the north and south. This is where the Dartford Warbler, the Woodlark and the Nightjar nest, but these very rare birds are more concerned about the cat invasions which are rapidly increasing as the human population goes up with more and more houses. And that means more people, cats – and dogs! Brexit for us birds means taking an exit flight FROM Britain as we become refugees when our homes are threatened by the developers' diggers.

Yours in haste tap..tap...tap....

REMEMBERING the REDGRAVE THEATRE by David Delve

"The latest show *Thark* is a well constructed play, enormously funny and enjoyable – and the current Redgrave bonhomie spurred it on to become an unashamed romp!"

So the critic wrote in the early 80's after our First Night; and so it continued for the run.

The same happened for my next comedy *Let's Get a Divorce*, playing to relatively packed houses nightly, with an audience of all ages. I loved my time there.

David Horlock, who ran the Redgrave then, was a man of genius in the theatre, but also importantly, a wonderful 'man of the people'. Most of the Farnham residents he got to know, and tried to serve them plays, musicals, workshops, community shows etc, which would appeal, attract but stretch limitations too. To me he was successful in this. And the People thought so too. I remember getting accosted several times in the supermarket, or in the street, by grateful patrons fulsome in their praise of what they had seen, and loving the company asking: "What are you playing in the next one?"

Since my Farnham days I have continued to work for 30 years in most repertory theatres around the country, and found the communities they serve, ardent and appreciative, inspiring young and old alike; keen for more too. When the 'crash' came, and suddenly councils could or would not support the Arts, it seemed unbelievable that the repertory theatres I had played in to 80-90% ...

...business should suddenly have none, be closed, or even demolished.

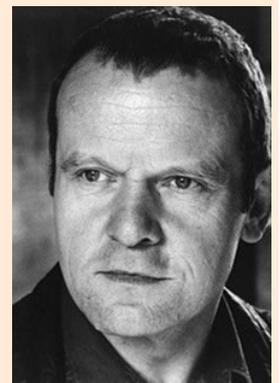
Now – in 2016 – some are 'reviving'. Last year I played in a successful season at Dundee Repertory Theatre, and it was warming to see audiences truly appreciating the shows: "Live theatre at its best", as one punter put it. And to me 'Live' is still the best. Audiences universally seem to agree, and even the youngsters do, when they can be torn away from their mobiles!

The Redgrave was built by the People. For the People, with the People. I believe passionately the People need it still. Please save it. As John Drinkwater, the playwright wrote in 1935, and which applies even more now:

"The future of English drama depends on the standing of the provincial repertory theatres as much as on any form of theatre now open."

David Delve 2016

Thank you, David for these wonderful memories of your time at The Redgrave Theatre - and thereafter.



We are always happy to receive further recollections from actors, directors, costumiers or technicians who were involved in mounting performances at the Redgrave or Castle theatres.



I was delighted to be asked to the 40th Anniversary of the Olivier Awards party at the magnificent Victoria And Albert Museum recently. I was lucky enough to have been nominated twice in 1983, for Best Newcomer for Jackie Coryton in Noel Coward's *Hay Fever* starring Penelope Keith and also in the same year for Best Supporting actress as Celia in *As You Like It* at the Regent's Park Open Air theatre.

Abigail McKern; Director of Farnham Theatre Association, here in a serious moment for Spotlight!

I also won an award from the London Theatre Critics for Best Newcomer, so it was a good year for me! Anyway in the end I got the Olivier for the Shakespeare which made me very happy!

There was a jolly good turnout at the party although because it was a Monday evening many of the actors invited would have been onstage! I did see Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart though. I travelled there with my close friend Sarah Woodward.

She is the daughter of Edward Woodward and both our fathers had worked together in a play called *The Wolf* with Judi Dench in the 1970's. We were both at the RSC together 24 years ago and have remained close ever since. She has recently done a year's stint in the West End on *The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Nighttime* and she won a Best Supporting Olivier for her role in Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing* at the Donmar Warehouse starring Jennifer Ehle.



The party took place in the Courtyard garden of the V and A and there was live music and it was all very twinkly and candle lit! Such a pleasure to wander round with a glass of champers chatting to actors I hadn't seen for decades including the wonderful Marcia Warren who played my Mother in my first ever professional job, *Time And The Conways* directed by Alan Ayckbourn.

The whole evening was pleasant and relaxed without the usual tension you get attending Industry "do's".

Thanks so much Abigail and congratulations too! Abigail will shortly be appearing in A Room With A View directed by Adrian Noble, who used to run the RSC. This production will be touring the country.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP

May we remind you about your FTA membership which, if you haven't yet paid, became due on 31st March. Please help support your FTA .

Membership charges are:
Single person £10
Family £20
Group £20

Please send your details, as below, with cheques payable to Farnham

Theatre Association to: The Treasurer
c/o 4 Nutshell Lane, Upper Hale,
Farnham, Surrey GU9 0HG .

Details required please:

Full Name,

Address plus Post Code

Email address

Phone number

Here are more messages from supporters received with their renewal cheques:

I do hope somebody will be able to instil some sense into Waverley Council & make them admit that people are NOT in favour of their plans. Not everybody has a car & is able to afford to go to Chichester, Guildford or Woking theatres. MEH

Don't live in Farnham but would like to support your efforts. BM

How I would love to see the Redgrave Theatre restored – many happy memories of productions there. JKH



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