

The Annual Theatrical Romp

What does one say about "Troy", revived after more the ten years to re-appear as this year's annual February pantomime? Only that it creates a good deal of pleasure both sides if the proscenium and I am sure fostered feelings of neighbourliness and community. And that is what it is all about.

As usual the production looked good; a clever set by David Rance and amusing and colourful costumes by the ever inventive Frances Musker, aided by Sheena Ross and Jeanne Solomons. The band, under Debbie Snowball played tunefully and the actors sang bravely.

The show, a swift journey through the Trojan Wars, had one or two interesting things to say. The Immortals were clearly the villains manipulating the Greeks and the Trojans according to their whims, sometimes helping or destroying.



Troy: Jan Musker, Miles Ash and Simon Ramsay

Love's Labour's Lost in the wood

This year's outdoor summer production from the Garden Suburb Theatre will be William Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*.

The play centres on Ferdinand, King of Navarre, and his three closest friends whom Ferdinand manages to persuade to join him in a pact to study hard, fast one day a week, sleep only three hours a day - and not speak to women.

Unfortunately, they have forgotten that the Princess of France is about to come for a state visit. When she arrives, bringing three beautiful friends with her, the men all fall more or less instantly in love and inevitable mayhem arises as they try to pretend to each other that they have no interest at all in the women...

There are of course various subplots involving clowns, clerics, scholars, policemen and country wenches as well as a fantastical Spaniard and his pageboy.

With a talented and experienced cast, set in the atmospheric surroundings of Little Oak Wood Open Air Theatre, and with beautiful 17th-century costumes, *Love's Labour's Lost* promises to be very enjoyable production indeed.

Open air theatre refurbished
The open air theatre in Little Oak

Zeus was splendidly bearded fellow (Jacques China), who had a hard time keeping Hera, Athena and Aphrodite (Lynne Radnedge, Lorraine Finnerty and Sara Robinies), in control.

The Greeks were a rather dimwitted lot and Menelaus had a dreadful lisp. Achilles cut a dashing figure in the shape of Rusty Ashman.

The Trojan Royal Family were for some reason portrayed as a music-hall joke Jewish family with Liz Amiel the standard Momma.

As the pawns in the game of the Gods, Ciaus Julian made a personable Paris and Lillie Mead a pretty and pleasant voiced Helen.

The producer, Terry Rogers, and his assistant Mary Musker, kept the whole thing going at a good rate and once again one marvelled at how many such a small stage can hold.

Wood is being extensively refurbished this Spring, as a result of a fund-raising campaign over several years by the Garden Suburb Theatre. Most noticeable to an audience will be the elegant stone terracing which has replaced the tarmac, and the replanting and returfing of the acting area itself. Less obvious, but equally exciting (and novel) for the actors and backstage staff themselves, is the building of a small scenery store/dressing room, and the provision of water and electricity supplies.

The complete programme is costing around £36,000. Part of this money has been raised by the hard work of members through a gala show, quizzes, a car boot sale, a Hundred Club and tree sponsorship scheme. We have reached the total amount by the kind donation of grants from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts (£18,000), the New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust (£2,500), the Millie Aphorpe Trust (£2,500), the Hampstead Garden Suburb Charitable Trust (£1,000) and British Gas (£1,000). The Borough of Barnet has also contributed with much assistance on the terracing and planting.

So come along and see the results and a delightful play into the bargain! Please see *What's On* for dates.

Debbie Lane

Institute & Henrietta Barnett School site

The following facts and points are mentioned in the 76 page judgment of The Hon Mr Justice Carnwarth in the case heard in the High Court last year:

1906 Garden Suburb Trust established.

1907 onwards; buildings commenced, schools founded etc, Mrs Barnett's intention to provide "education for all from four to fourscore".

1920 Grant by Middlesex CC of £20,000 towards building for Barnett Secondary School for Girls; priority for places to be given to residents in the County.

1938 Site of 5.35 acres occupied by junior school (250 pupils), senior school (380 pupils), adult enrolments 1200. Institute Council responsible for all three activities through committees.

1944 Education Act revolutionised public education. Senior school become "voluntary aided". A partnership; Institute provides premises and 50% (now 15%) cost of repairs: in return can appoint majority of Governors to preserve character of school, which gains greater power than other schools in pupil selection BUT senior school and Institute become separate bodies.

1965 Increased numbers and educational requirements cause pressure on space. Another site, outside Suburb, considered for senior school.

1970 Alternative course followed: junior school moves away from site. Other buildings, not on site, hired for Institute classes

1980 Major repairs necessary; £3.8m required. Dept of Ed contributes nearly £3m, Institute £420,000. Joint appeal by school and Institute £230,000 (of which £135,000 from school parents) remainder by Local Education Authority and Governors.

1990 Institute concerned about its deteriorating financial position; reduction in adult education grants and lower income from courses due to recession.

1991 Joint Institute/school working party fails to find a solution.

1993 Institute seeks legal advice: told to give school notice to quit "without delay" so that when the notice expired the Institute could receive rent for the school premises. Also told failure to do so will "result in a consequential loss... for which the Institute Council could be held responsible" and that in view of the deteriorating financial position only six months' notice should be given. Notice served on the school to quit by the end of the

year. As Mr Justice Carnwarth said in his judgment "in the light of that strong advice, it is not surprising that the Institute Council felt that urgent action had to be taken."

1995 Case heard; judgement given. 1944 Act meant Governors of the school were independent. The school had a licence which

majority of the Governors appointed by the Institute. That school became one of the best state maintained schools in the country in its own right. It is operated on a selective and not a community basis. The net result is that the Institute has become more identified with, and identifies itself with, the adult classes.

a long time. The money needed to solve the problem by accommodating both school and Institute on the same site (as both wish) may be £6m. This must primarily come from central government (either as rent or a lump sum) - which is doing all it can to restrain public expenditure. On the other hand further procrastination will only mean more money wasted on public inquiries, legal proceedings and the like, further uncertainty for the school and the Institute and the possibility that either may have to move from the site.

What is not in anyone's interests is to vilify the present officers of either the school or the Institute or to blame them for the present position. On the contrary let us sympathise with all those involved with both organisations for it cannot be easy to manage a school under a notice to quit or an Institute threatened by a compulsory purchase order. Let us also encourage them to continue to work together on a day to day basis and to show the flexibility that they obviously show in that relationship in dealing with, in the words of the judge, this intractable problem. Let us hope that the same flexibility will be shown by the councillors and relevant officers of Barnet Council and the ministers and officials at the Department for Education and Employment.

Without doubt everyone involved will need a great deal of determination to find a solution; the dust must not be allowed to gather and the responsibility for the delay passed to someone else. All those involved - including residents, staff, students and parents - have had enough of this problem.

Hugh Hamilton

Enough is enough

The Central Square site, perhaps the most important in the Suburb, may shortly be acquired by Barnet Council. The Institute may move elsewhere. Hugh Hamilton, a member of the executive committee of the Residents Association, has read through the judgment of the recent High Court case, explains the position and urges action.

could be terminated by notice giving a reasonable period for other arrangements. Six months not reasonable. Suggested 2 years 3 months. Each party responsible for own costs; those of the Institute about £300,000.

The following summarises the events since the judgment:

1995 Institute serves further notice on school to expire on 31/8/97 in line with the judgment.

1996 Parties' valuers reach agreement on rent of £300,000 p.a. which would be payable on 31/8/97 if school remains in the same building on the present occupancy. Barnet Council issues compulsory purchase order to buy the site which it considers necessary to give security to school.

March, April. Talks to try to reach agreement to defer effect of notice to quit by say 15 months to 31/11/98 and to withdraw the compulsory purchase order, to give the parties time to settle the issue.

Institute commissions plans for development of site to cater for needs of both bodies. Estimated that a further 55,000 sq ft required and that each body will, at different times, need use of 3/4 of total premises.

It should also be noted that: Presently school has 664 students (with about 110 living within the Suburb) and 70 staff; Institute about 6000 students (with, it is stated, about 4000 living within the Suburb) and 200 (mostly part time) staff with 750 students attending each day.

Throughout the period of the case the Institute and school staff have continued to work together in close proximity sharing the use of many parts of the buildings.

No rent has yet been paid to the Institute.

There is without doubt a long list of other relevant facts which supporters of a particular point of view may be put forward but perhaps those mentioned above are sufficient to enable us to gasp the essentials. What are they?

First, it must be said that the original objectives of the Institute - that it should cater for the educational needs of those in the area "from four to fourscore" - proved to be impossible to attain. The very success of the enterprises concerned caused their expansion; also in 90 years the Suburb and society has changed considerably. Schools became larger and a wider (national) curriculum requires more space. The buildings were not large enough. School education on the site is now restricted to a secondary girls' school only.

Second, unity of the three bodies on the site, through the Institute, could not be maintained. The junior school had to leave the site (and eventually closed). The Education Acts forced the remaining senior school to become an independent body and not simply part of the Institute, although with the



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