



Mediaeval memories... all the way from 1952

By Ann Bronkhorst



John Purchase's children ready for the Middle Ages, c. 1952.
Photo Robert Andrewes

On the back page of September's *ARCHER* we carried still photos from an intriguing All Saints' Church publicity film made in 1953. Looking directly at the camera in one photo are two boy scouts, brothers Robert and Richard Andrewes; behind them, helping Robert to carry a huge basket, is Christopher Gray (later a poet). And inside the basket?

The contents might have remained a mystery had Robert not stayed all his life in East Finchley. The eldest of three sons of a local vet, he still worships at All Saints' and has vivid memories of the church fetes and fairs, one of which the film was advertising. Above all, he would love to track down another short film publicising the 'Mediaeval Fair' of 28 June 1952, held in the Vicarage gardens and organised by the talented John Purchase.

Witches and wimples

John worked in the film industry and was the presenter in each 'newsreel' shown at the

Rex cinema before each fair. He had a talented wife, too, as the press discovered when they objected to the dancing bear, a main attraction at the Mediaeval Fair. It was *not* a mangy, maltreated animal but Mrs Anne Purchase in a life-size bear costume.

The Andrewes boys played their part by running a puppet theatre. People dressed up in appropriately mediaeval style,

there was an archery display and the alarming-sounding 'Burning the witch'. Tantalisingly, Robert remembers little of this event but does remember that 'Judgement on the Organiser' entailed throwing rotten tomatoes at the unfortunate Mr Purchase who was in the stocks.

The fair was followed by an evening of square dancing (not quite so mediaeval) in the Parish Hall.

And inside that basket, a year later? Probably dressing-up clothes, he thinks. The 1953 'newsreel', as John Purchase called it, is a wonderful find which has brought back many memories for Robert but the one advertising the Mediaeval Fair of 1952 would be treasure trove. Does anyone have a copy?



'Scouts' honour: from left, Richard and Robert Andrewes, and Christopher Gray' Photo courtesy of the BFI.

Esso farewell

So farewell then Leopold Service Station,
A victim of deflation?
You used to get your petrol from Esso,
Now I get my petrol from Tesco.
Lawrence Robinson,
aged 64 ¾

Volunteer at home

Home-Start Barnet is a local charity offering emotional and practical support for families with at least one child under the age of five. Trained volunteers visit a family in their own home once a week, offering support for many families who are struggling to cope with such things as isolation, depression, multiple birth and disability.

They also provide support for individuals aged 25 or under who are experiencing multiple disadvantages. As part of their holistic approach, other services include a family group, parenting programmes, domestic violence support groups, money-smart support for low income families, and trips and outings. Home-Start also has a charity shop to enable volunteering experience in retail.

If you would like to become a volunteer or feel you would benefit from support please contact Home-Start Barnet office on 020 8371 0674 or email admin@homestartbarnet.org. For more info on services visit www.homestartbarnet.org

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Trying, very trying

Just when you thought it was safe to turn on the TV without hearing a load of jingoistic rubbish about plucky England, the men with oval balls hit town. Yes, folks, after the football, the cricket, the darts and the tiddlywinks it's rugby's turn. And what a World Cup it's going to be. If, that is, you like mud, blood, licensed violence and beer which, apart from the beer, I don't.

I was forced to 'play' it at school and being pushed face down in the mud by the class bully while the standard issue sadistic games master looked on put me off for life. It's not character building, it's dangerous. Boys getting paralysed when scrums collapse or former players dying from dementia after being knocked out too many times is not character forming. And, weirdly, the whole edifice is built on a lie about a schoolboy cheating at football.

William Webb Ellis was the son of an army officer whose mother did the middle class thing and moved so that he could get a place at Rugby School. He was good at cricket, but a bit of a cheat and, so the story goes, cheated at football by catching and running with the ball. He became a vicar and died in France in the same year as the first FA Cup Final. Four years later, some local historian came up with the 'story'.

In 1895, the Old Rugbeians 'investigated' and decided the story was 'true'. They forgot that the first boy to make a habit of running with the ball was one Jem Mackie, but he got expelled so that didn't count.

It took until 1987 for rugby to get the World Cup bug. Back then very few countries had signed up to rugby's version of FIFA. Since then another 80 have leapt aboard the bandwagon. Even places like Georgia and the USA have joined in. This year 20 teams will spend over a month kicking balls and each other in such wonderful places as Leicester and Milton Keynes, all hoping to lift the William Webb Ellis Cup.

And the cup itself? That confection of silver gilt and bad Victorian design was made in 1906, dumped in a vault and rescued from oblivion when it was bought second hand in 1986. But never mind, if rugby's what you like and you think that drunken Aussies doing drunken wallaby impressions is fun then you'll spend October in seventh or eighth heaven, probably with a pint.

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Sunday masses at 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m.

Weekday masses at 10.00 a.m.

(Coffee served after mass on Sunday and Thursday)

Join us for our Feast of Title
All Saints' Day
on 1st November:
Parish Mass at 10.00 a.m.
followed by a finger buffet lunch

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020 8883 9315.

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Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>