

IN BRIEF

Performance of wartime play

PURLEY: A local theatre group and a writer are joining forces to present a new perspective on the Second World War.

St Gertrude's Theatre Company will stage the first-ever performance of *This War*, penned by South Croydon writer Jim de Paula Hanika.

The cast is drawn from the local community with strong links to St Gertrude's Catholic Church, in South Croydon, and a number of local schools.

The production will be staged from February 19 until 22, at Oakwood School, in Godstone Road, Purley.

Jim said: "It's a familiar story, but told in a completely new way."

"We use technology to deliver the epic scale of the war, but then focus back in on the actors to capture the emotion and day-to-day drama real people experienced."

■ Visit www.stgertrudes.com or theatrecompany.co.uk for tickets.

Exams success

SHIRLEY: A head teacher has welcomed her school's excellent performance in meeting a new education target.

Coloma Convent Girls' School came top of all Croydon schools in the Government's new English Baccalaureate (EBacc) target.

The English Baccalaureate was introduced as a demanding performance measure for all schools where pupils have to secure a C grade or better across a core of academic subjects.

At Coloma, 81 per cent of pupils passed the EBacc – the highest percentage of any school in the borough and in the top five per cent nationally.

Head teacher Maureen Martin said: "We are delighted with the results and particularly pleased with the EBacc pass rate, which confirms our commitment to offering our pupils a demanding academic curriculum."

Get it valued

CROYDON: A free Collectables Road Show is being held by Warwick and Warwick Ltd at the Hilton Hotel, in Waddon Road, on Tuesday, from 10am to 2pm.

Visitors are invited to bring a variety of items to get valued, including stamps, coins, banknotes and medals.

Former colleague recalls sergeant's tragic murder on duty in 1994

'Police officers cried at news of Derek's death'

THIS Sunday marks 20 years since the murder of Sergeant Derek Robertson. Reporter Rachel Millard spoke to one of Sgt Robertson's former colleagues, who recalled a tragedy which shocked Croydon...

ON FEBRUARY 9, 1994, Sergeant Derek Robertson was sent to what he thought was a routine call.

It ended in him being stabbed to death by armed robbers holding up a sub-post office in New Addington.

The 39-year-old married father-of-two was fatally wounded as he attempted to arrest one of the men trying to rob the post office in Calley Down Crescent.

PC Robert Brown was part of the second unit following Sgt Robertson, responding to a call to police from the worried wife of the postmaster.

Barbara Britton told police her husband sounded 'strange' during a routine phone call and had answered only 'yes' when she asked if she should call police.

Knifepoint

Unbeknown to her, John Britton was being held at knifepoint by three men who had broken in, overpowered him when he arrived, and were waiting for the safe timed locks to disengage.

PC Brown, still a serving Croydon police officer, told the Advertiser this week what happened when he arrived at the crime scene.

He said: "PC Stephen Wilson was at the front of the shop looking through the window and Derek was round the back."

"All of a sudden we heard Derek coming through the radio saying very, very clearly that three men were coming out with knives."

"So Steve and I ran towards the parade of shops and as we came onto the parade we saw the two other men coming round towards us."

"Steve – I don't know what made him do it but he shouted out 'armed police' [they were not armed] and both men went to the



STABBED: Sergeant Derek Robertson was murdered 20 years ago

ground. And we got to the ground and handcuffed them.

"Then the postmaster came up on Derek's radio and said Derek was seriously injured."

"We went and assisted with the first aid and watched open heart surgery take place in the back garden."

"The helicopter doctor decided to cut him open in front of us and do an operation on his heart."

"Then he was put in an ambulance and taken away."

PC Brown said that, when the news Sgt Robertson had died reached his colleagues, the reaction was one of shock and

immense sadness. He added: "Police officers were crying at the station. The man was such a popular man."

"Derek had a wit and charm about him – he was always joking."

"He used to take the mickey out of me all the time and everyone else."

"He was a very nice guy and very approachable as a superior, and very good."

PC Brown said Sgt Robertson's murder showed up the potential dangers police officers face every day they go to work.

He continued: "I think it made us more determined [as police]. It brings home the dangers."

"It brings home the situation where you go out in the morning and think, 'What am I going to come up against?'"

Tradition

"And what he came up against, he dealt with in the finest tradition possible."

"He relayed accurately what was going on, faced up to someone with a knife and covered the scene on his own knowing there was an armed robbery going on."

"He knew exactly what was going on, and he faced up to it in the best way possible."

Three men were jailed over the sergeant's death after a trial at the Old Bailey in January 1995.

Robert Eades, aged 32 at the time, was found guilty of murder and jailed for life with a recommended minimum term of 25 years.

His two accomplices, aged 38 and 32, were found guilty of manslaughter and jailed for 12 years.

All three had previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit robbery and false imprisonment.

Looking back



SHOCK: How we reported the murder in 1994

A MEMORIAL service is to be held on Sunday outside Addington Police Station, in Addington Village Road, to mark the 20th anniversary of the murder.

Sergeant Robertson's widow Christine and PC Brown are both due to attend.

The three other officers who attended the armed robbery; Stephen Wilson, Andrew Parr and Graham Nash, all retired, have also all been invited.

The murder shocked the nation back in 1994, sparking calls for better police protection and even some demands for the death penalty to be brought back.

Writing in the Advertiser on February 18, 1994, former South Norwood chief superintendent George Crawford said: "His only protection was a wooden truncheon, some 16 inches in length, a blue barthea jacket, and the majesty of the law, none of which saved his life."

The community in New Addington and beyond also rallied round to raise money to help support his widow and two young children.

Some 800 people attended Sergeant Robertson's funeral in Redhill.

Stamp and Coin Roadshow

Warwick and Warwick, the leading stamp, coin and collectables auctioneer, will be visiting your area shortly and look forward to meeting you at:

HILTON HOTEL

Purley Way, Croydon CR9 4HH

Tuesday 11th February 2014, 10am – 2pm

We will be pleased to advise on the sale of stamps, coins, banknotes, postcards, cigarette cards, medals and die-cast toys and model railways. We will be accepting material for valuation and sale by our team of experts in Warwick. There will be no fee for valuation; all that we ask is the cost of returning the collection, fully insured, to your door, if you decide not to sell.

Please **phone or e-mail for an appointment** if you have a large or valuable collection. Car parking available. Home visits may be possible for exceptionally large collections.



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ISI Inspection Report 2012

Missing boy, 7, found safe after travelling eight miles on tram

A SEVEN-year-old boy who went missing was found about eight miles away after a police helicopter search.

It is believed the youngster boarded a tram in New Addington, travelling 18 stops before he was found safe and well at Mitcham Junction by British Transport Police.

Appeals

The Met Police helicopter started searching over New Addington last Friday afternoon and appeals were made to the public for help in the search for the boy, who was wearing a blue coat and grey trousers.

After about an hour and a half they said he had been found safe and well and thanked those who had helped publicise the search.

Both the Met Police and British Transport Police were unable to give more details at the time.