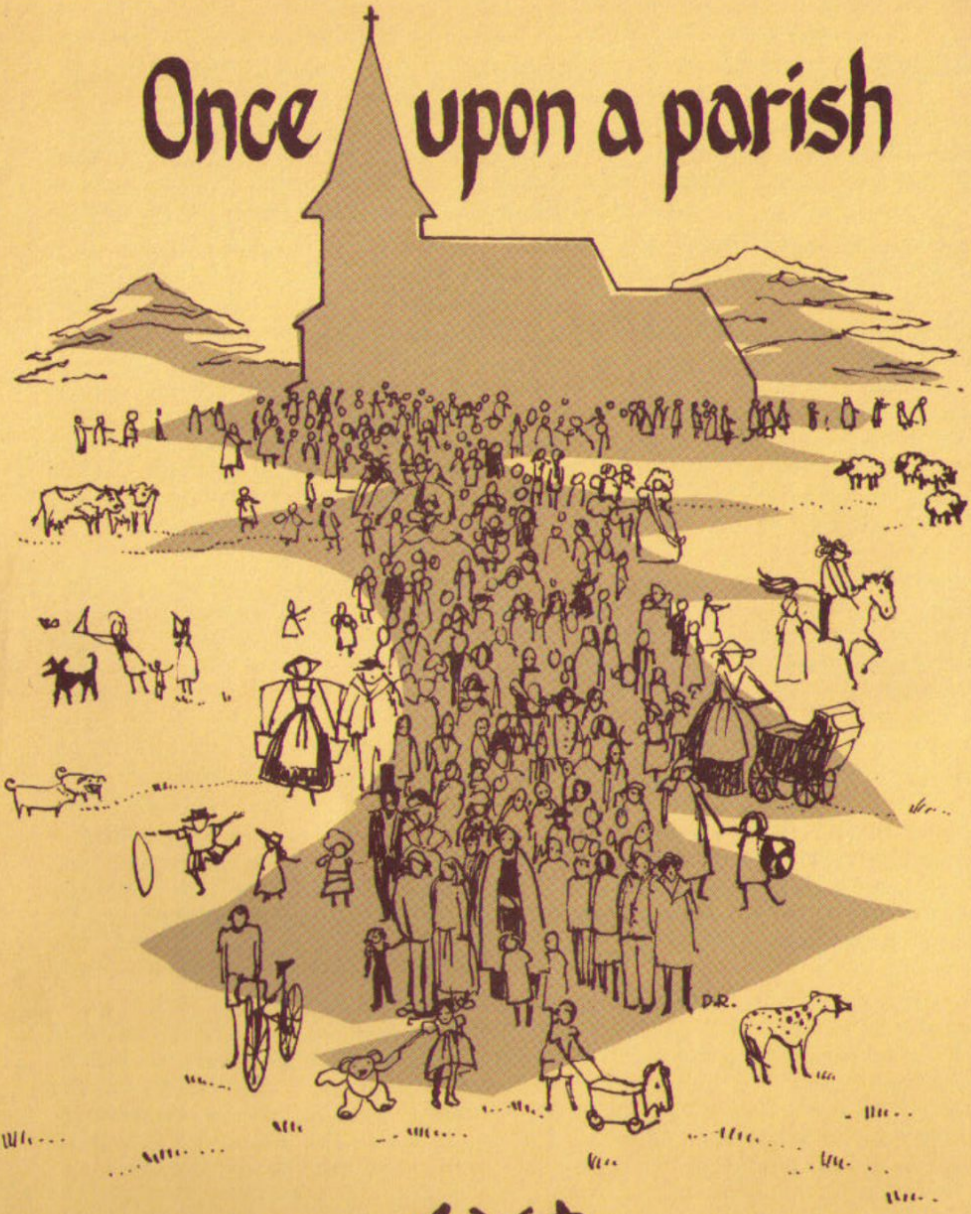
Sanderstead Dramatic Club

Once upon a parish



Script by
Mavis Pickles

Directed by
Nora Herbert

This Production is a salute to history - our own and the nation's. It is a special dramatic entertainment in light and sound, people and music, prose and verse, in exciting cameos and joyful cavalcades - a unique pageant to mark the 750th anniversary of the present Parish Church of All Saints, Sanderstead.

It is a birthday present from a Dramatic Club seven-and-a-half decades young to a place of worship seven-and-a-half centuries old.

The Club's contribution to the All Saints' Celebration Year has been a challenge, for this entertainment is unique, a pioneer 'Made in Sanderstead' product from beginning to end, the difficult and dedicated work of many hands, but done with joy. Never before has the Club put on a play in a church.

'If stones could only speak!' Well, here they almost do: the scenes are set all around the walls, not upon one imposed stage; and the audience sitting in the pews will not be gazing fixedly eastward throughout the tale.

It happens that this little hilltop church of Alhalon, as All Saints was called in the Anglo-Saxon form, was being built at the same time as the rebuilding of Westminster Abbey was beginning at the command of King Henry III; and by this token - though there are others - the story of an English hamlet called Sanderstead is told in the setting of great national events. So the eras of the Plantaganets and the Tudors, the Stuarts and the Hanoverians are in turn reflected. Those were the years of Crécy and Agincourt, Cromwell versus King Charles, Victoria versus the heralding of the Twentieth Century, and, in modern times, the perils brought upon us by a Kaiser and then a Hitler.

Essentially our story here concerns the impact of the years upon Sanderstead and All Saints, ancient place of worship and focus of village life. We recall eminent families: Ownsteads, Atwoods, Greshams, Audeleys, Wigsells and Arkwrights. Remarkable Rectors too. But not only the knights and squires and clerics. Lords of the Manor do have a place in 'Once Upon a Parish' of course, but much of the action comes through the characters of humble villagers, peasant housewives, happy minstrels, craftsmen, soldiers, smugglers - men, women and children of the centuries from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth, the present day with its commuters and cub scouts and all.

Sanderstead does not exactly blaze through the nation's history books, but it has made its mark. Among those who knelt to pray within these walls was John Ownstead, for forty years a key courtier in the working Household of Elizabeth the First; and, much later, there were the Smiths of the manor house, the family whose Frances Dora became thirteenth Countess of Strathmore and paternal grandmother of today's Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

As to this present Parish Play of ours, I am inclined to call its witnesses a congregation rather than an audience. Not that the Dramatic Club is conducting a service or presenting a prim, pious piece! But the coming-together of all of us, players and people, in this lovely little church which for so long has been a haven of Christian worship and the heart of a community does perhaps bring a sense of local fellowship and unity. At any rate, it is good to be reminded of our own 'once upon a time', and to have pride in the heritage of the still-green corner of England in which we live.

The spread of Greater London has not engulfed us. Outer suburbia though we may seem to the cursory glance of the passing traveller, Sanderstead has an indelible identity. A good long history too.

Let us therefore listen and look - and enjoy ourselves. And afterwards we shall maybe go out of church saying: 'It was fun finding-out.'

GODFREY TALBOT

THE CAST

NARRATOR — IAN SMITH

SALLY ALDERTON
GODFREY CHAPMAN
HAZEL COOK
DOT CRUMP
KATE DESBOTTES
JOHN DESBOTTES
KATE FLANAGAN
LOUISE FULLARD
SANDRA FULLARD
HUGH GRIFFITHS
HAROLD HERBERT
SALLY HIGINBOTHAM
ANNETTE HOBLEY
AMANDA JONES
TIMOTHY JONES
SALLY MARKS
ROBERT McDUFF
MOYA MEYERS
CHRISTOPHER PARNELL
CORINNA PRESTON
VICKI RAYNER
MICHAEL SAVAGE
COLIN SCOTT
JANE SHACKEL
MARK SHACKEL
SHEILA SMITH
HARRY THOMPSON
FIONA THORPE
NANCY WHITE
PETER WHITTLE
PAULA WILKES

Prologue and Epilogue — Spoken by GODFREY TALBOT

Musical Director ..... ROBERT SOPER
Production Assistant and Choreographer ..... MAVIS PICKLES
Children Trained by ..... MARY SHACKEL
Stage Manager ..... TIM CRUMP
Assistant Stage Managers ..... BRIDGET CROOK and SUE FULLARD
Lighting Design and Manager ..... IAN BARLOW
Assistant Electrician ..... GILLIAN SEAMANS
Wardrobe Mistress ..... KATHY TILNEY
Assistants ... MOLLIE IBBETSON, WYN PETERS and ALISON WILKINSON
Recorded Sound ..... TIM CRUMP
Front of House Manager ..... IAN SPRING
Properties ..... DI RELF and ANN WILKES

SINGERS and MUSICIANS

ROSALYN BROWN
MARIE ISZATT
BARRY NICHOLSON
KERRY MORLEY
ALLISON PRICE
CHRISTOPHER SEARS
MATTHEW SMITH
ALEXIS STAFFORD
RICHARD WEEKS

Conductor — ROBERT SOPER
Pianist, Organist ..... NORMAN BECKETT

The Committee also wish to thank members and friends who have kindly loaned properties, and assisted in many ways with the production.

Smoking is not permitted

All doors available as exits for the audience and artistes shall be available for egress during the performance

Refreshments will be available in the Small Parish Hall after each performance

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS for assistance in the preparation of the script to the following publications - The Story of Sanderstead by Basil H. Tripp, The History and Guide to Sanderstead Parish Church, Gresham Primary School's Centenary Booklet, History of the Atwood Family, The Bourne Society Records. Also thanks to John Bulbeck and all members of All Saints Church; and Miss Sandra Fullard for World War 2 'Dear Diary' scripts.

The Club always welcomes new members and meets socially on the first Tuesday of most months in the Small Parish Hall at 8 pm for a varied programme of entertainment. Details and application forms for membership are available from the Hon. Sec. Mrs. Sue Fullard, 110 Purley Downs Road, Sanderstead. Telephone No. 657 8000.

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