

**THE TRUMPETERS**

present

# **RIOT!**

the story of the Selborne & Headley Workhouse Riots of 1830

by

**John Owen Smith**



**October 2002 – performances ‘in the round’**

Sunday 6th	2.30pm	Rural Life Centre, Tilford (01252) 795571
Friday 11th	8pm	Phoenix Arts Centre, Bordon (01420) 472664
Saturday 12th	2.30 & 8pm	Selborne Village Hall (01420) 511454
Friday 18th	8pm	Thursley Village Hall (01252) 682744
Saturday 19th	2.30 & 8pm	Headley Village Hall (01428) 712892

General Enquiries – (01428) 712892

**[www.headley-village.com/drama/](http://www.headley-village.com/drama/)**

# THE STORY OF THE RIOT

After 22 years of war with France, the high taxation levied on the landowners led to raised rents and decreased wages for rural workers. High prices caused by trade interruptions and intermittent years of poor harvests coupled with the increasing use of mechanisation culminated in the Labourers' Revolt of 1830.

Stimulated, perhaps, by the earlier 'Bread or Blood' riots in East Anglia, the events spread rapidly through Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and up to the Welsh borders. The speed of the revolt confused the Government. Some suspected the French, some the hand of the mythical 'Captain Swing', others believed William Cobbett to be responsible.

Widespread anger over lack of work and low wages was fuelled by local frustration over high tithes paid to the Church, and the reliance on the existence of the Poor Rate to supplement insufficient wages.

## **The time for change had come!**

On Monday 22nd November 1830, a mob several hundred strong attacked the workhouse in Selborne, turned out the occupants, burned or broke the fittings and furniture, and pulled down the roof. The next day an even larger mob, containing some of the Selborne rioters, did the same to the workhouse at Headley, some seven miles away. The parsons in both villages were also coerced into promising to reduce by half the income they took from tithes.

Less than a month later, at a special court hearing in Winchester, seven local men were sentenced to transportation (commuted from a death sentence), and all but one sailed for the antipodes in the Spring of 1831, never to return.

These are the bare bones of the story. But why did the riot start? Why were the two workhouses attacked? And why were some of the supporters and leaders of the mobs seen to be not oppressed labourers, but relatively well-to-do artisans and farmers?

In this play we cover the dramatic events of the two days and their aftermath, piecing together the sometimes contradictory reports and legends which have grown up during intervening years around the names and deeds of those involved in the action.

For the full story of the Riot and its aftermath, read *One Monday in November ... and Beyond* (ISBN 1-873855 33-8) by John Owen Smith, or visit the Riot website at [www.headley1.demon.co.uk/riot](http://www.headley1.demon.co.uk/riot)

## **HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE MAIN CHARACTERS**

### **Aaron Harding (c.1789–1851) — brother of Thomas**

Labourer of Selborne – a widower with nine children (aged 2–20) – transported to NSW – married again there, and has descendants living in Australia today – died on his property in South Australia.

### **Thomas Harding (1798–18??) — brother of Aaron**

Labourer of Kingsley – unmarried – transported to Tasmania and gained his conditional pardon in 1836, but then absconded – no details of his life after that.

### **John Heath (1788–18??)**

Farm carpenter of Selborne – unmarried – transported to NSW – recorded as being in Bathurst at the time of his conditional pardon in 1837 – no details after that.

### **Robert Holdaway (1790–1853)**

Carpenter, wheelwright, hop-planter and ex-publican of Selborne parish – married to his second wife, Sarah – three children from first marriage (aged 12–17) and five from his second (aged 1–8) – transported to NSW – death recorded in Camperdown, Sydney, in 1853.

### **Henry James (c.1792–18??)**

Brazier, tinman, knife-grinder, soldier, native of Hampshire, ‘abode unknown, not from Headley’ – widower with seven children (ages unknown) – transported to NSW – assigned to an ex-convict in Castlereagh, and was there at the time of his conditional pardon in 1837 – no details after that.

### **John Newland (1791–1868) – ‘The Trumpeter’**

Labourer of Selborne – married with six children born before the Riot, and three afterwards – sentenced to six months with hard labour at Winchester – buried in Selborne churchyard in a grave marked with the ‘Trumpeter’s stone’.

### **James Painter (1793–1860)**

Labourer of Kingsley – sentenced to transportation, but never sailed – returned to his wife and family in Kingsley in 1833.

### **Matthew Triggs (1792–1853)**

Bricklayer of Headley – married with five children (aged 6 months–9 years) – transported to NSW – assigned near Maitland, we think as a bricklayer – died in Maitland Hospital 1853.

### **Rev William Rust Cobbold (1773–1841)**

Vicar of Selborne 1813–41 – Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford – the conflicts between Cobbold and his parishioners for several years before the riot are well documented – following the events of 1830 he acquired a mastiff dog with a neck ‘as thick as a lion’s’ for his protection; its collar can be seen to this day in the church – knocked down by the Oxford Mail cart on Ludgate Hill during a visit to London in 1841, and died six days later.

## **A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR / DIRECTOR**

This production marks my tenth anniversary as local historian/play writer. Before being asked to research this story by East Hampshire District Council in 1992, I had no thoughts of any such occupation.

‘Riot’ was performed under the title of ‘This Bloody Crew’ in October 1993, directed by Paul Roberts, with shows in Selborne, Bordon and Headley, and since then, I have been involved in writing and producing several other local touring productions, all with a local historical theme: ‘A Balance of Trust’ (1995); ‘Flora’s Peverel’ (1997); ‘Flora’s Heatherley’ (1998); and ‘The Broomsquire’ (2000 & 2001).

# THIS PRODUCTION

The casting of this play brings together a number of talents from across the local area. In the play, Robert Holdaway is told that his mob consists of people from ten parishes – and by coincidence, so does our cast, coming from Aldershot, Churt, Frensham, Four Marks, Headley, Hindhead, Liphook, Lindford, Selborne and Whitehill.

Over the years, since the first presentation of *Riot* in 1993, our touring community plays have aimed to build links between local actors and dramatic societies, as well as to satisfy a need for the presentation of local history in an enjoyable and accessible form

Some of our members in this production are working together for the first time, others have ‘been here before’. May the links we have forged grow ever stronger!

**The action of the play is continuous with one interval of 10 minutes, and takes place in various locations over a period leading up to, during and following the 22nd & 23rd November 1830.**

As in the days of street performers, you will be sharing space with the actors. Please feel free to use any of their benches, rostra and tables to sit, lean or perch on. If the actors need to use the space, you will either be moved by them, or incorporated into the scene. We hope you enjoy the experience.

**Please allow those most in need of seats to use them — thank you.**

## THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Author / Director ..... John Owen Smith  
Co-director ..... Nick Webb  
Wardrobe ..... Dil Williamson  
Musical Consultant ..... Dale Lodge  
Properties and effects ..... The Cast

## THE MUSICIANS

Jo Levy, Dale Lodge, Mike Measures, Jo Smith, Nick Webb, Dil Williamson – and the rest!

## THE CAST

Gaoler on the hulk <i>York</i> .....	Paul Kosinski
Robert Holdaway .....	Tony Grant
Aaron Harding, labourer of Selborne .....	Mike Measures
Thomas Harding, labourer of Kingsley .....	Daniel Radford
John Heath, carpenter of Selborne .....	Jamie Stickler
Henry James, ‘from the forest’ .....	John Millais
James Painter, labourer of Kingsley .....	Dale Lodge
Matthew Triggs, bricklayer of Headley .....	Simon Coyte
William Cobbett, radical author .....	John McGregor
Villager of Selborne .....	Nicholas James
Charles Fitt, farmer of Selborne .....	Stan Sharp
Timothy Loe, clerk to Selborne vestry .....	Rod Sharp
William Cobbold, vicar of Selborne .....	David Irwin
Maria Cobbold, wife of the vicar .....	Wendy Downs
John Harrison, master of Selborne workhouse .....	Martin Levy
Mrs Harrison, wife of John .....	Pru Harrold
Harry Harrison, son of John .....	Peter Daruvala
John Newland, ‘Trumpeter of Selborne’ .....	Peter Christopherson
Ann Newland, wife of John .....	Jean Vivian (née Newland)
Sarah Holdaway, wife of Robert .....	Rachel Whittaker
Housekeeper to the vicar of Selborne .....	Georgia Keen
John Cobb, labourer of Selborne .....	Nicholas James
Mrs Dowling, landlady of <i>The Anchor</i> .....	Georgia Keen
Captain of the 5th Dragoons at Liphook .....	John Millais
William Triggs, brother of Matthew .....	Paul Kosinski
James Shoemsmith, master of Headley workhouse .....	John McGregor
Mrs Shoemsmith, wife of James .....	Mo Cooke
John Lickfold, shopkeeper of Headley .....	Rod Sharp
Mr Tend, decorator from Kennington .....	Martin Levy
Eli Smith, farmer of Headley .....	Stan Sharp
Robert Dickinson, rector of Headley .....	Anthony Williams
Richard Rook, labourer of Headley .....	Paul Kosinski
Judge at the trials .....	Peter Christopherson
Usher at the trials .....	Nicholas James
Attorney-General at the trials .....	Anthony Williams

Narrators and other characters .....

members of the cast

## SCENES

The production takes place ‘in promenade’ — the space which is shared by actors and audience represents locations where the events took place.

**The action is continuous, and follows the following pattern:—**

1. On the hulk *York* at Gosport, February 1831
2. William Cobbett rides through Selborne, 7th August 1823
3. A meeting of Vestry members in Selborne, November 1830
4. In Selborne Vicarage, morning, Saturday 20th November 1830
5. At Selborne Workhouse, same day
6. A back room in *The Compasses*, evening, same day,  
— and at Selborne Workhouse, midnight that evening
7. In the Newlands’ Cottage, later
8. Inside *The Compasses*, next morning
9. At Selborne Vicarage, early, Monday 21st November 1830
10. The mob gathers in Selborne, later that morning
11. Outside Selborne Workhouse, later
12. Outside Selborne Vicarage, soon after
13. At *The Anchor*, Liphook, later that day
14. In Selborne, later that day
15. On the Road to Headley, morning, Tuesday 23rd November 1830

### \*\*\* Interval \*\*\*

16. Back on the hulk *York* at Gosport, February 1831
17. Outside Headley Workhouse, 8am Tuesday 23rd November 1830
18. Headley High Street, later
19. On Headley Green, soon after
20. At Headley Workhouse, 10am the same day
21. On Headley Green, soon after
22. At Headley Workhouse, midday
23. Outside the *Holly Bush*, at the same time
24. At Headley Workhouse, soon after
25. The Judge begins his verdict on the events
26. The Leaders of the Mob are Arrested
27. The Trial at Winchester, December 1830
28. Reaction to the Sentences
29. Epilogue

## CAST COMMENTS

**Peter Christopherson** [*John Newland, Judge at trial*] I don't want to blow my own trumpet, but it is a jolly good show. As for Holdaway, I say, "Hang 'im!"

**Mo Cooke** [*Wife of the Master of Headley Workhouse, Narrator*] From Fairy Godmother to Workhouse Matron in one easy movement.

**Simon Coyte** [*Matthew Triggs*] Yet another outing for the green cord trousers!!

**Peter Daruvala** [*Son of the Master of Selborne Workhouse, Narrator*] Hundreds of them, there were – and I'm only small.

**Wendy Downs** [*Wife of the vicar of Selborne, Narrator*] I should be getting used to being married to David by now!

**Tony Grant** [*Robert Holdaway*] How nice to play a decent citizen for once – ho, hum, another day, another workhouse!

**Georgia Keen** [*Housekeeper, Landlady of 'The Anchor', Narrator*] I may live in a pub and complain about gin, but I'm not an alcoholoc – honest!

**Dale Lodge** [*James Painter, solo singer*] A passing ballad singer, pressed to service – but down in the mob, rather than being the honest shopkeeper of 1993.

**Pru Harrold** [*Wife of the Master of Selborne Workhouse, Mrs Budd*] Community plays are great fun, both with a travelling troupe like this and static at Chichester.

**David Irwin** [*Vicar of Selborne*] After this run, I'll be playing panto in Churt. I'm promised a small part for my mastiff!

**Nicholas James** [*Villager of Selborne, John Cobb, Usher at trial*] This is the first time I've done serious acting, as before it's been all panto-mimes and comedy musicals. But I've really enjoyed it.

**Paul Kosinski** [*Gaoler on hulk, Will Triggs, Richard Rook*] No more Mr Nice Guy!

**Jo Levy** [*Musician*] I would have brought my piano, but the wheels fell off.



**Martin Levy** [*Master of Selborne Workhouse, Mr Tend the decorator*] Collecting money, yes – decorating the Rectory, not sure!

**John McGregor** [*William Cobbett, Master of Headley Workhouse*] Playing two parts, I have this awful fear of saying the wrong lines for the wrong character. But would anyone notice?

**Mike Measures** [*Aaron Harding*] Speak for yourself, Mister Holdaway!

**John Millais** [*Henry James, Captain of Dragoons*] A bit of a come-down after being in *Gladiator*, but at least I get some lines this time!

**Daniel Radford** [*Thomas Harding*] I just take orders from the boss – it wasn't my idea!

**Rod Sharp** [*Timothy Loe of Selborne Vestry, John Lickfold of Headley*] Oh, it was a mob! And I'm deuced glad I had something to do with it.

**Stan Sharp** [*Charles Fitt farmer in Selborne, Eli Smith farmer in Headley*] The purpose of my visits are simple – answering my cues.

**John Owen (Jo) Smith** [*Author/Director*] “I've done all in my power to try to dissuade the mob from doing this, but I've not succeeded!”

**Jamie Stickler** [*John Heath*] Looking forward to this year's panto — but first there's the small matter of a Riot to attend to!

**Nick Webb** [*Co-director, Musician*] ... and then the Director told me he was going on holiday a week before the production!!

**Jean Vivian** [*Mrs Ann Newland*] There's nothing like keeping things in the family!

**Dil Williamson** [*Wardrobe*] Size what!?

**Rachel Whittaker** [*Mrs Sarah Holdaway, Narrator*] I would have hoped by the end that one could have controlled one's husband, but you know he has a mind of his own! Brilliant fun though.

**Anthony Williams** [*Rector of Headley, Attorney General*] As acting is in my genes, courtesy of my maternal grandparents, I thought I had better resume a family tradition whilst I'm still young(!) However, judging by my ham acting, I think there must have been a butcher on my paternal side.

## WORDS TO THE SONGS

**Do please join in with the choruses of the songs –  
if you don't know the tunes now, you soon will!**

### **Gentlemen of Leisure** (*tune similar to 'Grand Old Duke of York'*)

*First verse—*

You géntlemen of léisure that ríde about at wíll,  
Look dówn on these poor péople it's enóugh to make you íll.  
Look dówn on these poor péople as yóu ride up and dówn,  
I swéar if there's a Gód above he'll bríng your pride right dówn.

*Chorus—*

You Týrants of Éngland your ráce may soon be rún,  
You máy be brought untó account for whát you've surely dóne.

### **Such a Mob!** (*Hampshire folk song 'The Owslebury Lads' from 1830, adapted for this show*)

*Chorus—*

The mob, such a mob, you've never seen before,  
And if you live a hundred years you never will no more.

### **Captain Swing** (*written by Graham Moore*)

*Chorus—*

All over Hampshire, the flames are leaping high,  
The ricks are burning, who's the cause?  
Captain Swing, not I.

# FOR YOUR FUTURE ENTERTAINMENT

## *LAMPS*

### **ROBINSON CRUSOE AND THE PIRATES**

Liphook Millennium Hall  
6/7/8 December 2002  
Enquiries: (01428) 722961

## *Selborne Players*

### **DICK WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT**

Selborne Village Hall  
17/18 January 2003  
Enquiries: (01420) 511462 – Box Office: (01420) 511426

## *Headley Theatre Club*

### **ROBIN HOOD**

Headley Village Hall  
17/18/19 & 24/25 January 2003  
Enquiries: (01428) 712892  
[www.headley-village.com/drama](http://www.headley-village.com/drama)

## *CADS*

### **THE HUNCHBACK OF NOSTRADAMUS**

Churt Village Hall  
31 Jan/1/2 Feb & 7/8 February 2003  
Enquiries: (01428) 605123 – Box Office: (01428) 714196

**Our thanks to:—**

**Graham Moore** for permission to use his song 'Captain Swing';  
**The Rural Life Centre, Tilford** for loan of the barrels.

# HISTORICAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## November 1830

Saturday 20th Shots fired into the Selborne workhouse at midnight.

Monday 22nd Selborne workhouse sacked & vicar mobbed.

Tuesday 23rd Headley workhouse sacked and rector mobbed;  
Kingsley threshing machine broken.

Thursday 25th Arrests begin.

## December 1830

Monday 20th Trials begin at Winchester.

Thursday 30th Sentences passed.

## February 1831

3rd – 10th Prisoners transferred to the hulk *York* at Gosport.

Saturday 19th Aaron Harding, John Heath, Robert Holdaway, Henry James and Matthew Triggs sail for New South Wales on the *Eleanor*, arriving 25th June 1831.

## March 1831

Thursday 14th Thomas Harding sails for Tasmania on the *Proteus*, arrived 4 August 1831.

### ***One Monday in November – by John Owen Smith***

– the full story of the Selborne & Headley Workhouse Riots of 1830.

### ***Echoes of a Trumpet – by Jean Newland***

– a novel by the gt-gt-granddaughter of the ‘Trumpeter’ of Selborne.

**Available at the Door and from local outlets**