



Helena Rubinstein and Edward Tilt, as played by Cathie Poole and John Nash of Creditor's amateur dramatics society

The queen of make-up is celebrated in a musical

A collection of 2,000 letters between make-up pioneer Helena Rubinstein and her salon manager has formed the basis for a musical which has been developed by a Westcountry producer.

The correspondence reveals an insight into the world of the Polish woman whose empire spanned the UK, Europe and America, and sheds light on everything from product formulas and the impact of the First World War to her rivalry with fellow cosmetics guru Elizabeth Arden and her heartbreak at her husband's affairs.

She also witnessed the horrific injuries suffered by soldiers as she battled to help them with early forms of cosmetic surgery.

The letters were inherited by James Bulmer, who lives near Chawleigh in North Devon, whose mother was close friends with Rosa Bird, the manager of the London salon to whom Mrs Rubinstein wrote.

Mr Bulmer, an experienced film maker, initially wanted to turn them into a feature film, but received no interest from financiers in America. Instead, he has created a musical called *Powder and Paint*, which will receive its world premiere in the Westcountry.

Mr Bulmer said: "This correspondence is incredibly revealing about the period between 1914 and 1923, the most important period of the Rubinstein empire."

In one letter in April 1923, Rubinstein refers to Elizabeth

Arden's, advertising as "ridiculous", and wrote: "It is funny, I wonder if she 'gets away with it' as they say in America." In another, dated 1915, she writes tongue-in-cheek: "Life is very hard and my tax bills are high. Please put my 27 fur coats into storage."

Mr Bulmer recruited his friend, retired Brigadier Ant Stevens, to the project. He has a track record in directing musicals and operas, with a CV including Gilbert and Sullivan grots such as *The Pirates of Penzance and Patience*.

'It is revealing about the period between 1914 and 1923'

James Bulmer, music producer

He worked alongside retired Major General Mike Heath, who wrote much of the music.

Helena Rubinstein established her business in 1899 after she borrowed £250 from a friend to set up her salon. She was a millionairess by 1907 and, in 1923, she sold the American side of her business for £7.5 million to the bankers the Lehman Brothers, buying it back two years later.

Powder and Paint will be performed by COOS, Creditor's amateur dramatics society, from October 21 until November 3. For more information and to book tickets, visit www.creditor.com or www.powderandpaintthemusical.com

What could your group do with a share of £20,000?

Calling all groups who do vital work helping people in their communities. The *Western Morning News* has joined forces with Devon and Cornwall Community Foundations to launch a campaign distributing much-deserved funds to Devon and Cornwall-based groups.

The £££s for People campaign is asking residents of the region to nominate their favourite community groups for a chance to win a share of our £20,000 prize fund.

The campaign, in association with Cornwall Glass and Glazing, will benefit 60 community groups in total - 30 in Devon and 30 in Cornwall. There is £10,000 available to distribute in each county to worthy projects.

Examples include youth groups, mental health support groups, playgroups, carer support groups and help for homeless people.

With the recession, many more people are in need of help in various ways - food banks being a growing area supported by the Devon and Cornwall Community Foundations.

"Without the community

groups in Devon and Cornwall, the local area would not function," said Martha Wilkinson, chief executive of the Devon Community Foundation. "£££s for People offers *Western Morning News* readers the chance to really make a difference and show their support for the groups they are involved with, and have their voice heard."

This money is particularly vital, because the smaller voluntary and community groups are the ones that tend to miss out from public donations to charities. Figures show that 65% of donations to charity are targeted at the most well-known 5% of charities.

The campaign, which starts today, gives our readers a chance to redress the balance by highlighting worthy causes on their doorstep, who could do great things with even a small grant.

"You can give a small group £500 and that might make a difference in helping 40 people's lives, but if you give a big charity £500 that will be spent in minutes and won't even help people," said Carolyn Boyce, chief executive of



"This is a chance to show your support for the group you are involved with and really make a difference"

Martha Wilkinson

the Cornwall Community Foundation.

She added that the £££s for People campaign was a chance for groups doing vital work to become better known, "and gain support for their work in the wider community".

There are thousands of voluntary and community groups across each county that are suitable for nomination.

They need to be based in, and benefit the people of, Devon and Cornwall and could include anything from your local youth club to those helping the homeless or unemployed. Once all nominations have been made, 60 groups will be selected to go through to the final voting stages and are each guaranteed a minimum of £100 to put towards the work they do.

The remainder of the fund will be allocated based on the number of votes received for each group - the more votes collected the more cash the community group will receive. It is as simple as that!

The campaign starts today and your nominations need to reach us by October 30. See page 20 for full details of how to enter.