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Barn News

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Blood Brothers Charity Night

Blood Brothers plays at the Barn Theatre from Thursday 18th to Saturday 27th March. The more astute reader may notice that we are dropping the usual Preview Night in favour of opening a day earlier than normal, and the February issue of *Barn News* briefly mentioned this. Now we can bring you full details of this special one-off event.

The opening night performance on the 18th has been added on behalf of a local charity, the Diabetic Association of South Hertfordshire (DASH), in order to raise money for vital blood glucose monitoring equipment for local hospitals.

The event has been organised by Sophie Washington, one of our Junior Youth members, who is appearing for the first time in one of the Barn's main house productions, *Blood Brothers*. Two months ago Sophie, whose family has been involved with DASH for about five years, approached us to ask if the Barn would be able to support her in her fundraising efforts to buy an iPro continuous glucose monitor for the QEII and Lister Hospitals. After discussions in Council and consultation with the director, Joan Goodwin, we decided that, provided the Barn costs were met, we would be willing to help by putting on an additional performance of the play.

DASH is a voluntary group, run by local people to provide support for families with children affected by types one and two diabetes, and is affiliated with Diabetes UK (Charity No 215199). Their aim is to provide such families



Sophie Washington

with opportunities to meet and share experiences with each other, and also to raise funds for a much desired cure for the rarer type two diabetes. Their children range in age from toddlers through to late teenagers. More information about the charity can be found at <http://www.dash-uk.org>.

The glucose monitor, which automatically records a person's blood sugars over a few days, is used to tailor treatment programmes for patients who suffer complications arising from their diabetes control. Sophie knows how

important this can be for people like herself who simply wish to carry on with their normal day-to-day activities and hobbies; Sophie's favourite being, without question, attending Christina's youth group and treading the boards here at the Barn!

Last year, the rather old and obsolete constant glucose monitoring system that the QEII and Lister hospitals had to share broke down, and there were no funds with which to replace it. Sophie was spurred on to start actively raising funds in order to help others like herself by replacing this medical device. A new machine would normally cost £2,550 to replace, but Sophie has already spoken to the suppliers and agreed a special rate of £2000 – not bad negotiating for a girl of only fourteen!

Sophie's current tally, raised through donations, bake sales, organising discos and school mufti days, stands at just over half of what is needed for a single machine, although she is constantly on the lookout for more opportunities to raise funds to help others with this chronic and life-threatening condition. Sophie has no intention of stopping at purchasing just one machine. Once she has ensured that both our local hospitals have their own vital equipment she wants also to provide a system for University College London Hospital. All three hospitals have been responsible for treating her own diabetes and complications. Any leftover funds will go to Bluebell children's ward at the

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Audition Notice The History Boys by Alan Bennett

Audition Dates:
Sunday 7th March at 2.30 pm
Weds 10th March at 8 pm
Sunday 14th March at 2.30 pm

All in Room One

Alan Bennett said recently that he'd "never had so much fun as rehearsing *The History Boys*" and I anticipate that the Barn *History Boys* team will have a similar experience. This is a wonderfully entertaining, funny, sad, thought-provoking play, and putting it together should be a rewarding experience for all concerned.

I need a cast of four teachers and eight, plausibly sixth form, boys.

THE TEACHERS

Hector: the maverick teacher. His educational and personal aspirations may be somewhat questionable, but the depth of his humanity makes him intensely lovable. Close to retirement age.

The Headmaster: ambitious for his school. Much comedy to be derived from his stiff pretentiousness. Middle aged.

Dorothy: a traditional history teacher but with an acerbic wit and intelligent heart. Close to retirement age.

Irwin: the new teacher brought in to shake up history teaching in order to give the boys a better chance of Oxbridge. In some ways more naive than the boys, and looking young enough to be mistaken for one of them.

THE BOYS

The professional production of *The History Boys* turned out to be a star maker – every one of the boys went on to great things, so there are clearly lots of challenges and opportunities here. The eight are essentially a team who, between them, should be able to deliver intelligent, witty dialogue, sing, play the piano, recite poetry from Larkin to Shakespeare, speak French and mimic the stars of 1940s films. (So no pressure!) I hope to cast the eight from the auditions, but not necessarily to allocate the specific parts until after the early workshop rehearsals, when we'll do some exploratory work on the above areas – you won't be expected to produce polished performances at the auditions! Here are a few pointers:

Posner: the least mature and probably the most sensitive. Jewish. Gay. Sings solo.

Dakin: the most mature and the sexiest. Is having it off with the Head's secretary but also has a passing interest in Irwin.

Scripps: Dakin's confidant. Also mature. A writer in the making; at present in a religious phase. (He is Bennett's pianist, but the pianist could be one of the other boys.)

Rudge: a sportsman, apparently the slowest of the boys but with hidden depths and a surprise up his sleeve (as well as the funniest line in the play).

Timms: the class clown, perhaps.

Aktar: Asian, but if we don't have an Asian actor, he'll become Atkins.

Crowther: confident, cheeky, wants to be an actor.

Lockwood: witty, intelligent; will become a magistrate.

As indicated above, I plan to do some intensive rehearsal with the boys during the Easter holidays, so if you need time off rehearsals for exams in May, this should be manageable. If you would like more details or a copy of the script, please phone me on 01707 266688 or email sylviapepper35@hotmail.com

Charity Night (continued from page 1)

Lister Hospital. Plans are also in place for a quiz night and a "school's out" gig at the end of the school's summer term.

Sophie's mum, Lisa, who some of our long-standing members will remember from her own debut on the Barn Stage, when she was only eight years old, in *The Miracle Worker* (also directed by Joan Goodwin), said: "Tim and I are enormously grateful to Lynette, Bob, Joan and everyone involved who has made possible this wonderful opportunity to boost Sophie's fundraising endeavours. Sophie is a wonderful daughter, of whom we are immensely proud. She has been through a great deal over the past few years but remains cheerful, positive and extremely determined to live life as fully as possible."

Joan Goodwin has been very supportive of Sophie's ventures into the fundraising arena: "Sophie is a joy to have in my cast, she is always bright and smiling and ready to help in any way. She is a great example for our Barn Youth Group. We are very proud of her."

DASH will also be holding a raffle, with tickets to be sold in the foyer throughout the run of *Blood Brothers*. The draw will take place on the last night at the after-show party, with winners contacted soon after. There will be a variety of prizes on offer, and you can see what has already been pledged on posters displayed around the Barn. If anyone has a raffle prize they would like to donate for this event, please contact Lisa on 01707 391340.

Tickets for the extra performance will be sold in the usual manner via Campus West, at the regular price (member discounts will be available only for the Friday 19th performance, as per usual arrangements). Thanks are given to Campus West, as they have agreed to halve their commission in order to help raise funds.

Sophie, her family, DASH and the Barn Theatre Club would like to thank all our members for their support in this venture, and we hope you enjoy the show!

If you have any questions or comments, please direct them to Lynette Reeves or Bob Thomson..

Sylvia Pepper

Lynette Reeves