



A blues filled evening

Another musical event from the energetic Akili fundraising team was held in October at the Free Church Hall.

A local vintage Blues band, The Blues Filled Saucepan, hosted an exciting and successful evening of Blues in aid of the Akili Trust. The versatile musicians played music ranging from Down Home Delta, through Chicago and Boogie

Woogie to West Coast Jump and Rock and Roll generating an enthusiastic reception. The Free Church Hall was transformed into a blues club, packed to the brim with a lively audience who sat and chatted, ate a two course supper and danced and drank until closing time.

The group, formed in the 1960s by three school friends

(Mark Beedle, Richard de Friend and Al Cohen) cut their teeth at Oxfam benefit dances and have always found time to play together alongside their busy careers. They have been joined more recently by Adrian Pietryga and Laurie Harper and at times by Tym Manley on acoustic blues. The evening raised £3,000.

Says Ruth Beedle, Akili trustee and organiser, "We would like to thank all those who were involved, with a special mention to the minister and congregation of the Free Church for their help and support."

Giraffe on Hampstead Heath

Poem by Peter Phillips

A giraffe glides through Central Square, thinks *Where's Regents Park, the canal-side morning view?* She reaches

to munch a hedge, spreads her wig-wam legs to prod a tennis ball, stares at the long necked Lutyens' spire.

But where are the chugging barges, the man with bananas and hay? Across Meadway into Heathgate, down

the steps in one gangly stride. *Where's that fragrant casserole of smells: elephant, tiger, reptile and the wolf?*

She snuffles the breeze, treads lightly through the daffodils onto the Heath, nods at the Superintendent.

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GST playing away

Garden Suburb Theatre again journeyed north out of the Suburb to put on their Autumn show Steel Magnolias, at the Bull Theatre. It is not always possible now to stage our shows locally at the school when we want and we regret that some locals will have been deterred from attending. Suburb residents who made the journey will have been rewarded by the poignancy and humour, provided by the talented cast of six women, under the sure hand of director Catherine Lemmon, who delighted Suburb residents with her performance as Maureen the hairdresser in Time of My Life 18 months ago. Steel Magnolias is our third play in a short period to feature hairdressers, and this one tells the sad tale of Shelby, a young diabetic who ultimately dies despite her mother giving a kidney.

Wonderful performances by Rebecca Bunting as Shelby and by Mary Musker as the mother and Debbie Lane as the wise-cracking hairdresser in whose salon the show is set made this production memorable.

We return to the Suburb in Spring and Summer, with Honk! 25-27 February and 3-5 March 2010. Box office 020 7723 6609.

Later on we will be staging The Merry Wives of Windsor in Little Oak Wood in July.

We recognise and appreciate the support of Suburb residents for our shows, but do need to seek wider audiences when we cannot stage shows locally – we hope our supporters will understand this and come with us. We can arrange lifts for anyone who is actually a member of the GST and getting the ticket price benefits.

Send us messages through our web site if you have comments www.gardensuburbtheatre.org.uk.

TONY NEWTON

What It Feels Like To Be Me

Who can forget the famous Groucho Marx quip? "I wouldn't want to be a member of a club that would have me as a member." The great American comedian was applying a touch of irony in assessing and analysing himself.

What It Feels Like To Be Me, is an anthology of introspection edited by Suburb resident Jenny Salaman Manson. She has brought

together a variety of articulate contributors to provide their views on this intriguing question.

From troubled teenagers to distinguished patriarchs all are asked how they live within themselves, relate to others, cope with tragedy and triumph and just survive.

It is a fascinating exercise in self discovery that increases their

awareness of others, as well as themselves. The book has an amusing forward by Jonathan Miller, poems by Dannie Abse and Peter Philips and several essays by eminent psychiatrists.

In short, Jenny Manson has produced an enlightening adventure of the human mind. Available at the Gallery.

LEN BAKER

Confused.com

On my walk towards fitness and along the streets of the Suburb as well as the Heath my thoughts always enjoy the sense of freedom. The last of the winter sunrays are slowly receding behind the roofs of the Suburb. In front of me lies the beautiful autumn scenery. The wonderful display of lime green leaves mixed with other leaves of dark green shade accompanied by shades of yellow and browns. Then there are the tiny ruby red leaves of a type of Berberis shrub planted along the short hedge on the small green towards the junction of Hampstead Way and Willifield Way. All together it creates a wonderful

painting of seasonal colours and mood.

Along the way I noticed a Viburnum flowering with heads of tiny white and pink flowers. Of course they adorn the garden of a well known garden expert. All along I thought Viburnums are meant to flower on the other side of Christmas; early in spring but who knows – perhaps they are confused with the new classification of micro climate?

I always take an interest in other peoples' front gardens (or even back gardens if allowed access) and admire the simple beauty of nature and its secrets. Walking along I spotted two

flowering roses that must have dared the cool weather of late and opened up in the past few days. They looked like sisters clinging on to each other in the cold but showing off their pretty pink frock in the disappearing light of the afternoon. Continuing my stroll I was awarded with a real surprise; a pretty group of tall snowdrops in full flower winking at me from under a small deciduous shrub that had shed all its leaves simply to reveal the simple beauty of the snowdrops.

Confused.com? Perhaps, but beautiful and inspiring enough for me to scribble these few lines.

GERLINDE CROSSLEY

Journey's End at the gatehouse

The was plenty of energy and commitment in the Suburb Theatre's production of the World War One classic Journey's End, but for my money the production missed the point of the play.

Journey's End sits amid the lexicon of Great War dramas, stretching from Birdsong to Black Adder, in which a collection of doomed young Englishmen await their fate in the trenches of the western front.

It was written in the 1920s by Randal Sherriff, drawing on his own experience of the war, but he was a canny enough playwright to make it more than just a tableau of suffering and desperation.

So he gave the play a point. And that point is the arrival in

the underground bunker that is the scene of the action of an innocent young Lieutenant, Raleigh, (Christopher Georgiou) fresh from England.

Raleigh has requested to be posted in the unit commanded by Stanhope (Nikhil Navare), a captain who he idolised at school and who is in love with his sister back home.

For Stanhope this is a disaster: Until now he has coped with the horrors of trench life by being ruthless, and downing a bottle of whisky a day. Now there is the fear that Raleigh will tell his girl back home what a wreck he has become.

This crisis is at the heart of the play but Navare struggled

with what is a demanding role. As a result, the first half of Fred Griessen's production lacked some of the tension that needed to be conveyed.

There were compensations in a strong supporting cast: Having reported from various wars I can testify that Peter Panayiotou's portrayal of an army batman was achingly authentic, and the ironic zingers he aims at the officers provided the necessary humourous counterpoint to the unfolding horror. Andrew Farrer injected gravitas into the role of the sergeant major; in his silences you could read the knowledge of the disaster that looms over them.

CHRIS STEPHEN



The story must have been enacted in St Jude's almost a hundred times but it never loses its freshness as the cast changes year by year. The church was packed once again to see the youngest members perform.

