



That's (ten) grand: (left to right) Diane Pary, Fundraising Development Manager, Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, Simon Gerrard, Managing Director of Martyn Gerrard, and Conal Presho, Head of Fundraising and Communications, North London Hospice

Happy hospices

Noah's Ark Children's Hospice and the North London Hospice were delighted to receive a £10,000 donation from Martyn Gerrard director Simon Gerrard. The north London-based estate agency has been supporting both charities during 2010 and through various sponsorship and challenge events, management and staff have raised £10,000 for these two very good causes.

Review: See How They Run!

By Daphne Chamberlain

And did they run! Through the vicarage and its garden, upstairs and downstairs, through the French window and out to a fantasy lily pond, wearing long johns and each other's clothes, waving sticks, brandishing a gun, and pushing a drunken lady into a cupboard.

Who were they? A bishop, a vicar, a visiting clergyman, an actor turned soldier, a policeman and an escaped prisoner of war. But who, out of all the real and bogus clergymen on stage at the end, was actually the vicar? He knew, we knew, the all-seeing maid knew, but why was his new, ex-actress wife not telling?

The Guild Players knew a thing or two when they chose the classic 1940s farce, Philip King's *See How They Run!* It was a great example of the genre: tightly written, full of action, and with each crazy development following on naturally from the one before. However good the vehicle, though, it has to be driven, and the company rose to the occasion.

Acting, direction, stage management, sets and costume were all excellent, and the front of house people added to the atmosphere with their World War 2 clothing, sandbags and posters in the foyer.

The audience who braved last month's biting cold really enjoyed this production, and the company must have been rewarded by their reaction. When I saw it on the first night, the title could have been rewritten to "Hear How They Laughed!"

The Guild Players meet and perform in Finchley Methodist Church, Ballards Lane, but welcome members from throughout the local community and further afield. Find out more at www.guildplayers.org.uk or from Betty Robertson on 020 8441 7696.

Well done, East Finchley Library!

By Daphne Chamberlain

THE ARCHER has seen loan statistics for all Barnet's libraries for the 12 months up to September of last year, and East Finchley has performed extremely well. In fact, it was out of its league. Not only did it easily top the loans table in the group of libraries with the lowest number of opening hours, but it also recorded more loans than four other branches which are open for longer. It was the same story when assessing the number of visits to the library.

Virtually all Barnet's branches recorded increasing usage and loans, but it raises the question again of why East Finchley is in the lowest league for opening hours.

Consultation

Last month *THE ARCHER* asked Barnet why paper forms of the questionnaire were not readily available in libraries, why notices advertising the survey were not put up immediately, why publicity emphasis was on participating online, and

why there was confusion over when the survey would end. Readers' letters have asked the same questions.

Barnet's reply arrived too late for us to print last month, but did not directly address our questions, saying that posters were up, and residents were encouraged to fill in the consultation online, as this is quicker, more convenient and more cost effective.

Strong response

A council spokesperson said

that 1,390 paper copies had been sent to all Barnet's libraries at that time, with more available. Almost a tenth had gone to East Finchley.

Barnet told *THE ARCHER* that they had received "a very strong and positive response rate from East Finchley Library". Of 743 online responses to the consultation questionnaire received by 22 November, 252 had come from frequent users of East Finchley library. Proof indeed that we care about our library service.

Review: Catching Father

Christmas

By Steve Cannon

If you want to find out all about Santa, what do you do? Kidnap him, of course. This was young Amy's fool-proof plan in Gomito Theatre Company's Christmas show at artsdepot.

The studio space was perfect for this play; intimate enough to involve the young audience, but large enough to create an imaginative spectacle celebrating the everyday objects that exist in the home, turning them into amusing, and sometimes frightening, characters.

In *Catching Father Christmas*, Amy's attempt to capture Santa set off a stream of events that threatened the whole festive season. She failed to catch her prey, but netted a star-carrying elf instead. Her home then came to life. A hairdryer became a parrot, sock patrols stalked the staircase and Amy's duvet developed an identity crisis, believing itself to be a



Where trees talk and duvets think they are snowmen... Amy and The Secret Agent in *Chasing Father Christmas*. Photo by Tom Allen.

snowman. These and many other characters were voiced and puppeteered by Sophia Sibthorpe and Stuart Conlan with suitable energy, while Catriona Mackenzie successfully played Amy as a little girl who prefers rockets to roses.

In a narrative that paid homage to tales as diverse as *The Jungle Book* and *The Snowman*, Amy battled against gremlins, a pirate and her own naughti-

ness. Plot and action developed at speed and, despite the frantic pace and some relatively complex dialogue, the children in the audience were focused throughout.

My five-year-old co-reviewers were frustrated, however, that the title character of the show never put in an appearance. After all, he has become the hero of Christmas for most children nowadays.

Artsdepot competition

Our December competition for a family ticket to see *Catching Father Christmas* at artsdepot was won by Pamela Toledano, of Park Hall Road, N2. Thank you to artsdepot and to everyone who entered.

Driver wanted to distribute

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THE ARCHER is looking for someone who could spare a small amount of time once a month to distribute the paper to some of our network of deliverers.

If you have your own car and could take copies of the paper to a handful of local addresses, please contact us at the-archer@lineone.net or leave a message on 0844 579 6949, then mailbox number 63450. Thank you.

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