



Market Menu: Monday - Friday (lunch) & Monday - Wednesday (supper)

2 Courses £10 - 3 Courses £12.50

Thursday Supper

2 grill meals & wine £25

Sunday Lunch

1 course £9

2 courses £12.50

3 courses £16



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HILLTOP
THEATRE COMPANY
WWW.HILLTOPTHEATRE.CO.UK

Proudly Presents
In association with Samuel French Ltd

Willy Russell's

BLOOD
Brothers
The Play

DID YOU HEAR THE STORY OF THE JOHNSTON TWINS?

Thurs 27th - Sat 29th March

PROGRAMME

COMMITTEE MESSAGE

Welcome to Hilltop's production of Willy Russell's '*Blood Brothers*' the Play, directed by Linda Coombes and assisted by Sue Gambarini. This will be Hilltop's thirty-fifth full production, including 16 different directors who have produced shows ranging from comedy/farce, melodrama, costume drama, pantomime and musicals! We have also held over fifteen fundraising events, including murder mysteries, comedy sketches, quizzes, one act plays and cabaret evenings. There have been over 200 actors tread our boards, with a total audience of over 10,000 attending our productions over the past 12 years.

Linda Coombes, along with her daughter Amy organised and appeared in Hilltop's very first fundraiser in 2002, before Linda appeared again on our stage as Edith in the very popular comedy 'Allo, Allo' the following year (Nov 2003). Linda was Musical Director for our first Pantomime 'Rumpelstiltskin' and went on to play Miss Hannigan in 'Annie' (Nov 2005), Vera in 'Stepping Out' (Mar 2007), Joyce in "Trivial Pursuits" (Jun 2011), Cora in "Calendar Girls" (Jun 2013), and has also appeared in many of our fundraisers. Over the years Linda has also Musically Directed 'Fiddler on the Roof' (Mar 2010), 'Jekyll & Hyde' (Apr 2011), 'Godspell' (Mar 2012), 'Guys 'N' Dolls' (Mar 2013), and 'A Christmas Carol' (Nov 2013). It is clear to see that Linda is a real asset to the company, someone multi-talented, who can sing, dance, act and is musically gifted, something every group dreams of. Linda joined Hilltop's committee in September 2013 for the first time to add to her ever growing credentials and to cap it off, here tonight we proudly present her debut as director of 'Blood Brothers' the play.

We would like to thank Linda Coombes, Sue Gambarini, the cast and production team for all their hard work during rehearsals and show week.

Looking ahead to our summer production, Sue Gambarini makes her directing debut with Neil Simon's comedy 'Plaza Suite' from the 19th - 21st June 2014, assisted by Helen Rees-Page & Brenda Slaughter.

We hope you enjoy this evening's performance and we thank you for your continuing support.

Management Committee

SUMMER PRODUCTION

Thurs 19th - Sat 21st June



Directed by Sue Gambarini,
Assisted by Helen Rees-Page &
Brenda Slaughter

Tickets Adults £8 - £7

Brief Synopsis

This comedy play is composed of 3 acts, each involving different characters, but all set in Suite 719 of New York's Plaza Hotel.

The Creative Kitchen

Caterers based in Cardiff

Completely bespoke catering created with imagination and style



Please contact us on 07717101156
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We welcome you to
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Monday (closed)
Tuesday 10 - 6
Wednesday 10 - 7
Thursday 12 - 8
Friday 9 - 6
Saturday 9 - 4

Additional appointment times may be available on request. Gift Vouchers are available

CAST PHOTOGRAPHS



Pentyrch Village Hall's
Upcoming Events

6th June: Quiz Night, 7:30pm

For Further info contact Anthony Smith: 02920 891568
Or Email: pentyrchvillagehall@gmail.com



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BLOOD BROTHERS

Willy Russell was commissioned to write this play for Merseyside Young People's Theatre Company in 1981, and it was first performed at Fazakerley Comprehensive School, Liverpool. The story takes as its starting point a traditional idea in literature...the separation of twins at birth...but treats it in a contemporary way. Mrs. Johnston is a working-class Liverpoolian...a deserted wife and mother of seven children, who is again pregnant with twins. She cleans for the middle-class Mrs. Lyons, who cannot have children of her own, and so suggests that one twin be given to her... so that the child could grow up and "have everything". Mrs. Lyons is determined that the two boys should never meet, but fate intervenes and they ironically swear to become "blood brothers". However, their contrasting environments take them to opposite ends of the social spectrum. They both fall in love with the same girl, and tragedy ultimately occurs because their upbringing prevents a proper understanding of each other.

Willy Russell spent the whole of 1982 turning this small scale production into a full scale musical...revising the book, writing the lyrics and composing all the music himself! "*Blood Brothers*" opened at the Liverpool Playhouse in 1983 and then transferred to the West End, where it won the *Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Musical*. After a year-long national tour it returned to the West End in 1988 and stayed for more than 24 years! Since it closed in the West End in November 2012 it has been on national tour, and that is why only the play version can be performed by amateur companies.

The central role of Mrs. Johnston has been played by...among others...Barbara Dickson, Stephanie Lawrence, Kiki Dee, Petula Clarke, Lyn Paul, Marti Webb, Helen Reddy and Melanie Chisholm. Past narrators have included the former boxer John Conteh, Carl Wayne, David Soul, Marti Pellow and Willy Russell himself!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Willy Russell left school with an English Language O level as his only qualification and worked for 6 years as a hairdresser before going to college.
- *Blood Brothers* is the 3rd longest running West End musical of all time.
- Four of the Nolan Sisters (Denise, Bernie, Linda and Maureen) have all played the role of Mrs Johnston, earning recognition in the 2007 Guinness Book of World Records.
- The original Broadway production (1993) was nominated for 6 Tony Awards.
- The first Australian production in 1988, featured Russell Crowe in the role of Mickey.
- Russell's play *Educating Rita* was commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company and his screenplay for the film was nominated for an Academy Award in 1981.
- Willy Russell has become famous for his performance readings, and won an award for *Best Supporting Actress* for his reading of *Shirley Valentine* - the one woman play!

NODA REVIEWS

'A Christmas Carol' 27th - 30th November 2013

Directed by Tim Driscoll & Assisted by Liam Daly, MD Linda Coombes

I am always impressed by actors who take on such challenging roles as Scrooge or Fagin. The dedication and commitment needed to pull these parts off is self evident, however to direct the show as well is a major achievement, so well done Tim Driscoll!

Hilltop are one of the most welcoming companies I visit on my travels .

Tonight's production opened with a full company number

"Half a Day to Christmas" which epitomises the ethos and excitement this company exude on the stage. A full and receptive audience were treated to fine performances from Liam Daly, Phil Davies and Mike Beavan who doubled up as The Ghost of Christmas Present and wine swigging school master, a part he adopted just three days before opening night ! Well done!

The set was very well thought out and managed, and while there were issues with the sound in the first act, this did not distract from Hilltop's delivery of a very festive production. As a show it was the first time for me to see James Wood's adaptation and I felt musically the book is lacking, it is Charles Dickens' text and humour which carries this version.

A fine band under the direction of Linda Coombes, who will direct Hilltop's next production "Blood Brothers", don't miss it! Are there any limits to her talent? I thoroughly enjoyed the show which moved at pace. The Cratchit's Kitchen scene was well executed so well done one and all! Thank you for the festive kick off of 2013.

God bless you every one! *Ralph Thomas*

Calendar Girls 27th - 29th June 2013

Directed by Jan Stapleton, Assisted by Sue Gambarini

Author: Ralph Thomas

Pentyrch or the sunny dales of Pentyrch will never be the same again! The rolling hills of Caerphilly Mountain and the local rivalry with Radyr WI, all had a part to play in this cleverly indigenous interpretation of Tim Firth's wonderful script.

The production is a fantastic opportunity to explore the talents and wiles of the mature female element of the society and the ladies of Hilltop did not disappoint. How can any company fail to be excited in having the opportunity to perform such a work? The announcement that "our next production is Calendar Girls", in any society sends would be participants into a tailspin of activity including, what to wear, re-enrolment in the diet class, endless miles on the treadmill.....and that's just the men, who all played their respective roles well especially an incredibly cheeky Lawrence from James Randell.

Hilltop thoroughly enjoyed performing this piece and the resultant camaraderie that ensues during and following the rehearsals. Brenda Slaughter commented "tai-chi and a picnic in the garden", ladies who lunch and sheer enjoyment for all who are involved.

The well presented home-grown set certainly struck the right chord and the cast committed to the "art of concealment" wholeheartedly and with aplomb. In the role of Ruth, Tracy Richards was delightful and it was great to see Linda Coombes coming into bloom and away from the orchestra pit, such a talent and a rocker to boot! Congratulations cast on a job well done and in preserving the standard we have come to expect from a Hilltop production! Thank you for a thoroughly entertaining evening.

ABOUT HILLTOP

We opened in September 2002 with the intention of performing three good-quality productions a year, including plays, pantomimes and musicals. We currently meet every Thursday and Sunday at Pentyrch Village Hall from 7.30pm to 10pm. If you are interested in theatre and fancy trying your hand at it, either on stage or in the many backstage activities, all you have to do is turn up and introduce yourself. You can also make yourself known to one of our front of house staff after the show or email us

info@hilltoptheatre.co.uk

Please visit our website @:

www.hilltoptheatre.co.uk
APPEAL FOR BACKSTAGE

Technical & Backstage Properties & Costumes

Acting not for you?

Why not come & lend a hand to the Hilltop technical team? For every show we need people to stage manage the productions, design, build & paint scenery & operate the lighting & sound desk. If this does not appeal to you, then how about helping with properties or costumes? Please make yourself known to any of our Front of House staff if you are interested in joining our team. Thank you



CAST PHOTOGRAPHS



BLOOD BROTHERS CAST

NARRATOR.....Tim Driscoll
MRS. JOHNSTON.....Judy Harry
MRS. LYONS.....Siân Williams
MICKEY.....James Randell
EDDIE.....Tom Addiscott
LINDA.....Lauren Mair Harris
MILKMAN/DOCTOR.....Iain Campbell
POLICEMAN.....Harry Bate
SAMMY.....Richard Jones
DONNA-MARIE/SECRETARY.....Carla Gambarini
BRENDA.....Anna Constantinou
TEDDY JOHNSTON.....Steve Williams

Ensemble of Kids, Neighbours, Friends, Debt Collectors,
Workers; *Played by members of the Company.*

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director.....Linda Coombes
Assistant Director.....Sue Gambarini
Production Manager.....Rhys Stapleton
Stage Manager/Sound.....Wayne Brewer
Lighting Design/Construction.....Crispin John
Properties.....Jan Stapleton, Laura Thompson
Wardrobe.....Sue Gambarini, Jan Stapleton
Business/Marketing.....Richard Jones, Rhys Stapleton
House Manager.....Laura Hallas
F.O.H.....Members & Friends of Hilltop
Box Office.....Brenda Slaughter, Hayley Dunne

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Having appeared in, and been Musical Director for several Hilltop productions I jumped at the chance of directing my first play for them. I have always loved the musical version of “*Blood Brothers*” and have seen it many times, in the West End and on tour. I was afraid that this original play version would miss the inclusion of the well known songs, but it remains a fast-moving, entertaining and thought-provoking piece of drama–funny...yet ultimately tragic. Although written for a small principal cast, I have taken every opportunity for members of the company to participate and enhance certain scenes. I have also chosen to underpin some of the dramatic moments with atmospheric music, especially when the sinister Narrator figure (who acts as both a commentator and a conscience) reminds the audience of the themes of fate, destiny and superstition.

“*Blood Brothers*” is a very simple story that has appealed to all ages and nationalities for more than 30 years! It looks at the differences and conflicts of the upbringings of twin boys separated at birth, their relationships with each other and with their real and adoptive mothers. As the action moves swiftly from the 1960’s to the 1980’s, the cast have had to develop their characters at break-neck speed, and I must thank them for all their hard work since beginning this project in January. I would also like to thank the whole backstage department, box office, marketing and FOH team for their invaluable work in making our productions so successful. As residents of Pentyrch, both myself and my assistant director Sue Gambarini appreciate the importance of bringing quality yet affordable entertainment to the local area...and so special thanks go to you...the audience...for continually supporting us at Hilltop.

So sit back and be ready to shed a few tears of joy and despair, as we tell you

“The Tale of The Johnston Twins”.

Linda Coombes

