

# Get moving if you want to be in their gang

PREPARATIONS are well and truly underway for next year's St Albans Scout and Guide Gang Show, taking place at the Alban Arena in January.

Now in its 20th year, the show continues to captivate audiences with its action packed programme of song, dance and comedy sketches.

The show's cast of 125 scouts, guides and explorers are now immersed in their gruelling rehearsal schedule, giving up their spare time twice a week to learn the 40 songs and dance routines lined up for the show.

Beaumont School pupil Thomas Ivory, 15, already has two shows under his belt and is looking forward to his third. He said: "I decided to get involved because I had been going to see it for years wishing I could be in it. I had to audition - there were a lot of people there and I think about half got through."

"I like it because you get to meet new people and have a great laugh - my friends from school always come to see me in it as well."

One of the younger cast members is 12 year old Sophie Reeves, who loves the feeling of

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being on stage. She said: "I do dance and drama at school and like being in lots of shows. I had been to see it before as I had a friend who was in it, so I decided to audition and I was really happy when I got through."

"I only knew two people in it when I started but I've made lots of friends now. It's a mixture of feelings being up on stage, I do get quite nervous but it's great fun and so exciting."

The show is being produced by David Barker, who was invited to take the helm following many years of involvement with the event.

He said: "We have an amazing team of people - the cast is obviously important but we have a really talented group of people who help out. In show week we have over 100 adults who help with sound, lighting and set building."

"It's all about what the youngsters get out of it, the friendships and the amazing sense of achievement."

"It's not every day that peo-

ple that age perform in front of 350 people.

"People who come to see the show for the first time always go away saying they didn't realise how good it was going to be."

"They have an image of something taking place in a draughty scout hut but they're always gobsmacked by the variety and how professional it is."

Assistant guide leader with the 13th St Albans pack Kirstie Allen, 20, has gone back to performing in the show after a gap of six years. She said: "I was in it for three years from about 11, and after that I would go and watch it every year with my guides."

"Now that I'm back in it I don't understand why I ever stopped doing it, it's a lot of hard work but show week is amazing. You get to know so many people and you make really strong friendships."

Tickets are selling fast for the show.

To grab one, telephone box office manager Nicola Wells on 01727 890397. Seats are priced from £5 to £10.50, with discounts available for children and senior citizens.



Scouts and Guides rehearse for the forthcoming Gang Show.

Picture: Y186003; SIMON JACOBS