

**DISTRICT 1**

**SOUTH DERBYSHIRE**

**KEITH SCOTT-SAVAGE**

## RED RIDING HOOD

Review by: Keith Scott-Savage  
Presented by: **THE WATSON PLAYERS**  
Produced & Directed by: Margaret Icelly and Gill Swift  
Musical Director: Lynne Dickinson  
Choreographer: Sharon Harding  
Venue: Guildhall Theatre, Derby  
Performance Dates: 22<sup>nd</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> January 2010

An excellent and entertaining evening by The Watsons. This was a good pacy pantomime with super laugh lines throughout. With a talented cast led superbly by Patricia Church as Granny Knott, and Liam Mulvey as the Wicked Wolf, who both gave faultless performances. The supporting cast of Angela Barradell as Patches, Regina Repton and Sean Beeston as Mr Hyde and Mr Seekum were equally on form, extracting the comedy side to the limit. Carl McGarrigle as Squire Bullymore was an admirably Greasy Baddie, and with the love aspect being well handled by Kimberley Durrant as Peter and Jade Brookes in the title role of Red Riding Hood. This strong principal line-up made for a fine evening. I was impressed by the rarity nowadays of a chorus of youngsters equal in numbers of 'Boy and Girls', who supported the principals very well.

A bouncy band, good set and costumes. The audience were well entertained. Thank You Watsons and I look forward to your next production 'Rehearsal for Murder'.

## PUSS IN BOOTS

Review by: Keith Scott-Savage  
Presented by: **ST NICHOLAS PLAYERS**  
Director: Ellis Turner  
Musical Director: Phil Wensley  
Choreographer: Jade Mitchell  
Venue: St. Nicholas Church Hall, Allestree, Derby  
Performance Dates: Jan 22<sup>nd</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> Feb 5<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010

This in-house production had plenty of audience participation through-out, which certainly was lapped up by the local following. A predominantly young enthusiastic female chorus gave their all in supporting the main players. Mark Holland as Jacques and Martin Leonard as Kenny both gave eye catching performances, supported by Melanie Jones, Lynda Boyes and, with Grant Stone and Lindsay Adcock as Edwin Lizard and Davina Miller, "The Baddies". Puss in Boots provided a nice performance from Heather Slonimski, but the act of the night came from Colleen Pratt and Donna Shaw as Twitter and Blog, in an over the top impersonation of characters from "Allo Allo".

The scenery was a great credit to the construction and stage crew and costumes were good, the Players always give their audiences what they want, long may it continue.

**DISTRICT 2**

**NORTH DERBYSHIRE**

**JOYCE HANDBURY**

## JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Review by: Joyce Handbury  
Presented by: **BOLSOVER DRAMA GROUP**  
Venue: Moorfield Hall Theatre, The Bolsover School  
Performance Dates: 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
Director: Mick Whitehouse  
Co-Director: Leanne Whitehouse  
Producer: Wendy Blunt  
Musical Director: Chris Davis  
Choreographer: Leanne Whitehouse

On this first night the audience was small in number but was soon totally involved and participating in the usual pantomime repartee. Dale Shaws natural talent for comedy made him a perfect choice to play Simple Simon, Jacks silly brother, and his interaction and many ad libs with the audience were a delight. Paul Holland was a wonderful Dame Dotty Dibble and her son Jack was ably played by Paula Bargh. The hisses and boos were in abundance for Piccalilli, the bad fairy played by Hannah Bradford and Ray Hall was terrifyingly evil as Rancid the Ratman. Chris Peck and Lyndsey Whitehouse as Snatchet and Scarper the Brokers Men were a very funny tall and short comedy duo. A very regal, royal family were King Hubert (Ian Brady), Queen Hyacinth (Pam Moseley) and Princess Primrose (Keyleigh Hulett). Buttermilk, the cow, was in the capable hands and feet of Julie Clifford and Wendy Blunt, weaving her magic was Janet Koszegi as Fairy Sugardust and Leanne Barlow sang very sweetly as the Harpist. Some notable highlights were the Bakery scene with the Dame, Simon and the King, the colourful UV scene and a lovely feathery dance routine. An imaginative beanstalk, good choreography, a lively chorus and lovely colourful costumes all added to make this a very enjoyable evening and whilst a good script, and this certainly was, gives the raw material for fun and laughter you need a good cast to deliver it and once again Bolsover Drama Group definitely succeeded in doing just this - well done to everyone involved.



**DISTRICT 3**

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

**PHIL WILLIAMS**

## **THE SNOW QUEEN**

Review by: Phil Williams  
Presented by: **WORKSOP LIGHT OPERATIC SOCIETY**  
Venue: The Worksop Regal  
Performance dates: 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
Director: David Taylor  
Musical Director: Paul O'Leary  
Choreographer: Kristi Chambers

This was not completely traditional but certainly enjoyable Pantomime, written as well as directed by David Taylor. There was plenty of comedy and action which was all well directed, making the most of the traditional aspects including audience participation. Lots of popular songs were included and these were nicely handled and well sung, with good interpretation. The fine team of principals all rose to the occasion with very good performances and good character interpretation, especially Kristi Chambers and Katie Gledhill with super performances vocally and dramatically as Prince & Princess, Karen Osman with a very "wicked performance" (again) as Arctania, and David Taylor providing us with a very good Dame. Good chorus work supported the principals with nice singing especially in "One Voice". Excellent choreography and dancing from the Society dancers and the young Donna Pressley Dancers, they were all a joy to watch, especially in the "Putting on the Ritz" number which was superb. Good costumes, props, lighting and back stage work all helped to set the background. Very good family entertainment which was certainly enjoyed by the audience.

**DISTRICT 4**

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE**

**ANNE KEY-HUCKERBY**

## **DICK WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT**

Review by: Anne Key-Huckerby  
Presented by: **PENFOLD PLAYERS**  
Venue: Washingborough Community Hall  
Performance date: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
Directors: Chris Hayes and Maggie Ashley  
Musical Director: Marc Hayes  
Choreographer: Rachel Dodson

Congratulations to those responsible for the glorious costumes and also the superb rats' and cat's make-up. Not only those, but the set, including an excellent cloth depicting old London Town, was really good. Well done, too, to the six-piece band which was never over-loud and accompanied well. All the main characters were nicely portrayed with newcomer to Penfold, Ross Milnes, relishing being thoroughly evil as King Rat. His Rat Pack was good, too. Grisabella {the Cat} was delightful, there was plenty of comedy from the Broker's Men and Allison Altoft's Suet the Cook was notable. Chorus participation was fine with some enjoyable dance routines. This was a fun-filled panto with much for the audience to enjoy.

## **CINDERELLA**

Review by: Anne Key-Huckerby  
Presented by: **LOUTH PLAYGOERS**  
Venue: Riverhead Theatre, Louth  
Performance Date: 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
Director: Sue Hamilton  
Musical Directors: Richard Weedon and Gareth Weedon  
Studio 2000 Choreographer: Nicky Wright  
Cast Choreographer: Frances Brindle

This was an enjoyable production. An excellent cast included Emma Hamilton (Dandini), Ceri Royston-German (Prince Charming) and Felicity Haslehurst in the title role. All were vocally strong as well as looking right. Buttons (Melissa Smith) was delightful while Jane Briggs revelled in being thoroughly evil as the Baroness. Mike Corden and Richard Lyon (the Ugly Sisters) and the Brokers' Men ensured there was plenty of comedy. There was pleasing support from the rest of the cast and the chorus. The dance routines provided both spectacle and variety. My only regret was that the horse didn't perform a tap dance! The costumes were stunning, the lighting and sound effects were equally good and the set was superb. The transformation from pumpkin to coach was amazingly ingenious. Well done, everyone.

## JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Review by: Anne Key-Huckerby  
Presented by: **HORNCastle THEATRE COMPANY**  
Venue: The Lion Theatre, Horncastle  
Performance Date: 28th January 2010  
Directors: Vicki Head and Nancy Byrne  
Musical Director: Chris Hinkins  
Choreographer: Nancy Byrne

The script by Dominic Hinkins followed pretty much the lines of the traditional story but included some interesting novel ideas. Becky Bradley played the dashing Jack Anori of the title with panache. Her voice blended well with that of Rachel Yates (Jill). Gareth Bates (Simon the Town Crier) and Jess Elton (Suzy) worked well together, Jon Cooke was great as the Dame while Chris Liversidge was strong as the Baron. The rest of the named characters played their parts well and the chorus participation was pleasing. Over twenty young dancers performed attractive routines that had been well-rehearsed. The costumes were delightful and so was the set. This was a highly amusing, entertaining show.

## CINDERELLA

Review by: Anne Key-Huckerby  
Presented by: **WADDINGTON D.S.**  
Venue: Waddington Village Hall  
Performance Date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
Director: Nick Blakesley  
Musical Director: Helen Wiles  
Choreographer: Miya Wright

Excellent sound effects, a great set with good attention to details, superb costumes and excellent, well-rehearsed dance routines, all these were there in plenty for this production of this popular panto. There were some excellent portrayals among the principals with good support from the chorus. All this went down extremely well with the audience which was very vocal the night I saw the show. This performance was entertaining and amusing with two very different-looking Ugly Sisters providing plenty of comedy and receiving their fair share of boos. I would have preferred a simpler song for the audience to join in with, but this is a very minor criticism. A good time was had by all, and I can't wait for the next pantomime at Waddington

**DISTRICT 5**

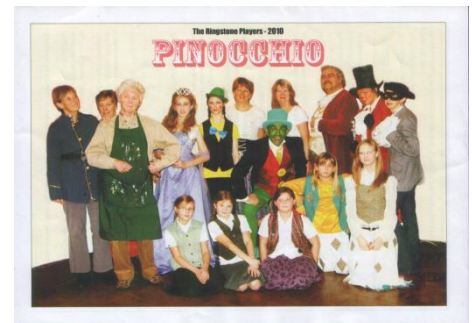
**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE**

**PETER BREACH**

## PINOCCHIO

Review by: Peter Breach  
Presented by: **THE RINGSTONE PLAYERS**  
Venue: Edenham Village Hall  
Performance dates: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
Director: Cheryl Anderson  
Choreographers: Robert Anderson, Jasmine Berry, Karen Holtom

Ringstone Players chose John Morley's dramatisation of this well-known children's story as their pantomime production because it is different. Different it may be but it contains all the essential constituents of a traditional pantomime, i.e. a strong story line in which good triumphs over evil with characters to boo and some to cheer, plus jokes, songs and dances; it certainly proved to be a sound choice judging by the audience reaction that I witnessed. The identification of the characters at the start of the show was most useful in helping to explain their place in the story for those less familiar with the tale. The cast wore costumes that were both colourful and appropriate and the action took place on well-designed and constructed sets. All the players worked hard at their parts and there was some excellent characterisation from Pinocchio (Lauren Aicken), Gepetto (Ruth Osborne), and Mr. Fire Eater (Nigel Kuhn), Mr. Cricket (Nik Willerton), Mr. Fox (Kelly Winterton) and Miss Cat (Amy Morrish), these and all the other principals were supported by a capable chorus. Nik Willerton's interaction with the young audience was especially a joy to witness. There were innovative stage and lighting techniques, which were warmly appreciated, and the well-organised choreography enabled the large cast to move freely on the small stage. This was first-class family entertainment, well done all concerned.



**DISTRICT 6A**

**NORTH LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND**

**MARTIN TAILBY**

No reviews available.

**DISTRICT 6B**

**SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE & LEICESTER**

**CHRISTINE CLARKE**

## **PUSS IN BOOTS**

Review by: Christine Clarke  
Presented by: **THE PANTOMIME COMPANY**  
Venue: Concordia Theatre  
Performance dates: 13<sup>th</sup> January to 6<sup>th</sup> February 2010

As a regular last-nighter to Hinckley Concordia's pantomime it is the first time I have had the opportunity to review it. It lived up to its expectation in that the costumes and scenery were outstanding. All the characters were well played but special mention must be made of Matthew Wilson brilliant as Puss, Amy Reader as Queen of Catland and Alice Baxter as Princess Isabella. The Choreography by Carol Lacey was well drilled with the younger set particularly pleasing to watch. Make sure you get to see Mother Goose next year.

**DISTRICT 7**

**NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**KEVIN SHEEN**

## **CINDERELLA**

Review by: Kevin Sheen  
Presented by: **KETTERING YOUTH THEATRE GROUP**  
Venue: The Lighthouse, Kettering  
Performance dates: 29<sup>th</sup> Dec 2009 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2010  
Director: Julie Brown

Julie Brown extracted some lovely performances from the young cast and added some panto magic with the inclusion of the pony and the snow. Impressive stuff.

A nice bright opening from Emily Bunce (The Fairy) set the tone for the night and the show kept a nice pace throughout. Though the first company number was a little quiet they soon picked up the volume.

Buttons (Stuart Henderson) quickly endeared himself to the audience and he took them on a comic ride for the duration of the show; especially when pitted against the ugly sisters who were extremely well played by Lewis Thompson and Benjamin Jervis.

Danni Payne made a loveable Cinderella who stole the heart of Prince Charming who was, in turn, very well played by Emily Darling (very well cast). Ashleigh Hammond (Dandini) was superb. Her accent, comic timing, delivery and stage presence was faultless throughout. I made notes when I attended last years production and I have to say Ashleigh showed no sign of the nerves that affected her performance a little then. Very well done.

The support crew were near faultless though there was one moment when voices could be heard via off-stage mics. Shhh!

Once again Shirley Walker did a phenomenal job with the costumes and rightfully deserves recognition for her efforts. Very well done!

## **DICK WHITTINGTON**

Review by: Kevin Sheen  
Presented by: **BOZEAT PLAYERS**  
Venue: Church Hall, Bozeat  
Performance dates: 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
Director: Roxanne Kennaird

Barbara Devini (The Spirit of London) opened the show with aplomb and kept her delivery to a nice pace throughout...even when her lines escaped her and she ad-libbed with the prompt. Roxanne Kennaird (a last minute stand-in for King Rat) performed admirably under the circumstances but, at times, her slow delivery had an impact on Liam Garcia and Jenna Mayfield as Nip and Tuck. This tended to slow down some of the scenes but it is to their praise that characters in the following scenes picked up the pace again with some ease.

JoJo Coles as Barrow Boy Billy had an exuberant air about her and this too kept the show rolling along. Glenn Mansfield (oh good lord!!) makes an excellent Dame and seems to revel in the ad-lib and audience interaction. Once again, very well done. Charlotte Kennaird made a very good Principal Boy and seems to have grown in confidence since last year.

Jayde Whitehead (Alice) and Leslie Smart (Alderman Fitzwarren) seemed to thoroughly enjoy their parts and, though Jayde was a little quiet at times, came across convincingly. Emma Kirschner (Tiddles the Cat) just doesn't stop performing. Very well done.

However, and there's always a 'however', there were two others who I feel are more than worthy of praise. Jared Newbery (Long John Tin Foil) was the quintessential Pirate Captain and, though his accent tended to drift from Norwich to Taunton and back again with consummate ease, he played the part extremely well.

The other worthy of mention has to be Joe Houghton who just came across as having the time of his life. He was out of step during the dances; he mouthed the words during one of the songs; he forced his way to front and centre when he had the opportunity and he SMILED constantly. What a joy.

## SNOW WHITE

Review by: Kevin Sheen  
Presented by: **RUSHDEN AMATEUR THEATRICAL SOCIETY**  
Venue: The Pemberton Centre  
Performance Dates: 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010  
Director: Sandra Mead

Bearing in mind the physical constraints of the performing and back stage areas, and, having spoken to Sandra Mead before the show, being mindful of the external influences that impacted some of the rehearsals, this was a very enjoyable, well constructed pantomime. The company (though a little quiet in the opening number) supported the principals extremely well and, like the dance troupe, looked like they were enjoying themselves throughout. The same can be said for the Dwarfs. Jasmine Bayes, Sophie Brawn and Alex Oliver in particular seemed to revel in the spotlight and each in turn brought their character and personality to the fore.

Nicola Smithers (Snow White) looked like a principal girl should whilst Jessica Bond (Prince Rupert) seemed the quintessential principle boy of old. Tony Woodward (Nurse Daisy Chain) looked like.....well, only as Tony could and, despite the tickly cough that afflicted him throughout the performance, gave a sterling performance. Indeed all three played their parts extremely well and are worthy of praise. Well done.

Knuckles (Nicola Pott) and Nasty (Ele Saunders) grew on me as a comedy duo and rightly received cheers from the audience on their walk down.

As for the Wicked Queen? (Debbie Draycott) She was excellent. Using fantastic facial expressions and vocal dexterity she epitomised the character without making her too scary. Very well done.

Once again I must give praise to the backstage crew. There is no room at all backstage yet the crew managed some impressive scene changes in double quick time and in total silence. Very well done to Roger Kendall and his team.

## ALADDIN

Review by: Kevin Sheen  
Presented by: **THE NOMADS**  
Venue: The Masque  
Performance dates: 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2010  
Director: Mark Walker

This was a Panto that grew on me with the Company and Widow Twankey being points in case. I felt the opening company number was a little weak but they rallied themselves and delivered in subsequent scenes. Widow Twankey (Ian Stark) seemed too laid back and droll to me at the start but the characterisation proved to be right and I was soon won over. His delivery (Eddie Izzard meets Captain Jack Sparrow) worked really well and his ad-libbing, especially with Wishee Washee (Lester Cooke – they work exceptionally well together), had the audience in stitches. However, whilst some feel it fits the part I still remain sceptical about a Dame with a beard.

Alan Galway (Abanazer) seemed to relish his role and his experience shone through. He was able to incite the audience into the expected booing and hissing but was always in control. Very well done.

Jane Coombes (Slave of the ring) seemed a little nervous at times as did, surprisingly, Jenny Tymon (Aladdin) but both delivered performances befitting their respective roles. The same could also be said about Andre Anthony (Emperor) but he too came good in the end. Pep-Si (Jane Cox) and Ko-La (Maxine Anthony) simply had a ball. Though Maxine seemed a little lost in the demands that accompany the comic duo roles at times Jane was able to pull her through when it was needed and together they gave comic performances to be proud of.

Suzzane Lewis (So-Shi) and Gabby Baciu (Genie of The Lamp) were excellent. They were constantly acting, extremely funny and are both worthy of praise. Well done.

The whole show was very well directed by Mark Walker and I particularly liked the twist in the slapstick scene and the working, or otherwise, of the Flying Carpet. Very well done. Indeed Mark also showed his acting skills in a cameo role in a scene that saw both him and Leisa Cooke prove the company has strength in depth.

All in all a very enjoyable show.

## **THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE**

Review by: Nanette Lovell  
Presented by: **THE NORTHAMPTON GILBERT AND SULLIVAN GROUP**  
Venue: Royal and Derngate Theatre  
Performance Dates: 25<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
Director: Marjorie McCaskie  
Musical Director: David Chambers  
Choreographer: Liesl Sexton

What better way to spend a cold January evening than with a group of lusty pirates and a bevy of beautiful ladies all by the seaside: Phill Abbott made a suitably love lorn Frederick wondering if he would ever get to marry his Mabel - a superb performance by Lynnette Turner-Parry whose bell like soprano voice was a joy to listen to although I did feel that the orchestra was a little loud in some scenes. Good performances from Simon Crask (Major General), Mike Gray (Pirate King) and Sue Holt (Ruth). It was a pleasure to see the Majors daughters being played by young ladies of the right age group who showed lots of promise (Jessica Sadd, Samantha Buckland and Petrina Oliver). Special mention to Adam Harilaou as Samuel, who worked his socks off all through the show: I'm sure we shall see more of him in the future. The chorus numbers were great to listen to with confident singing throughout. David Chambers had brought together a talented group of musicians which all added to the enjoyment of the evening.

The set, although simple, was most effective and the show beautifully costumed all adding to the enjoyment. Well done to everyone involved. I look forward to your next production of "Ruddigore".