

## BAD PLAYERS AIN'T 'ALF GOOD PLAYERS



The village is buzzing with talk of the BAD Players recent Pantomime "Jack and the Beanstalk" which was performed at the Margaret Harker Hall, Blofield on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> and Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> February. In her directorial debut, Aicha Plamer stirred our emotions with an eclectic mix of comedy, music and Drama. Aided by a cast of superb and experienced actors and actresses from the surrounding village this was a show not to be missed.

The story began with an introduction from our favourite comedy duo "Sue and Barb" with the former as a more experienced and worldly sprite and the later her clueless apprentice. The Evil Mrs Plunder played by veteran actress Joan Gibb was enough to scare even the bravest of audience members; she set knees-a-trembling as she stormed onto the scene declaring she would pillage and destroy the peaceful panto land making everyone food for her husband the giant! Our hero Jack, played by the stunning Jo Tottingham burst onto the stage in the first musical number full of the energy and grace we

have grown to expect from her. Jo was supported on stage by Helen Ingram playing Jacks clueless brother 'Silly Billy,' however Helen proved she was no fool as her excellent timing and quick thinking bought the play together. It was clear the audiences warmed to Silly Billy very quickly as Helen portrayed the gentle and vulnerable side of the character superbly.

Other pantomime favourites were soon introduced: the hilarious Richard Morton as Dame Trott, Jack and Billy's Mother, had us rolling in the aisles with laughter. With many of the best puns in Pantomime history he played them to the greatest advantage and had the audience in the palm of his hand for most of the show. The Beautiful Katherine Woodburn, as Jacks Love interest the feisty Princess Rose was feminine and prim and melted our hearts with her rendition of Mariah Carey's 'Hero' during Act 2. There wasn't a dry eye in the house! And playing Princess Roses Father, Lionel Power, was the embodiment of the hapless King Bumble: with his gestures, posture and vocals he portrayed the Royal buffoon to full effect.

As the story develops we discover that unlike the

classic tale, Jack and his family live in fear of a Giant, who lives in the land above, not only has he taken all their money but now he's after their prize cow Daisy. Daisy was played beautifully by young actresses Isobella Coldham and Ruby Watson who probably had one of the most difficult roles dressed in a cow suit for most of the first act. Despite this they made it look effortless and even treated us to a little song and dance to the popular tune 'Daisy Daisy' which had the audience enthralled. Towards the end of the first act the Dastardly Mrs Plunder tricks Jack and Billy into selling Daisy for some magic beans, kidnaps Princess Rose and takes them to the giants Castle where our brave hero Jack must rescue them.

There aren't many shows in which you can see a beanstalk grow before your very eyes but this was the cherry on the cake, designed by Aicha Palmer this magnificent feat of engineering made this Pantomime stand out from the rest. This was complimented by an excellent set designed by Sarah Coldham which was both functional and appealing to the eye, much like the lady herself! The Giants kitchen in Act 2 had oversized furniture and

ingredients to match which led to slapstick comedy at its best, but the highlight of the show was the finale! After the rescue and all the characters are back on the ground, Jack sprayed the beanstalk with weed killer which not only shrank the plant but the giant himself. 9 year old Alexander Palmer as the shrunken giant was the surprise of the show,

running on in oversized clothes screeching at Jack, he had the audience in gasps of surprise and laughter and he deserved the big round of applause he received.

Before I finish I have to mention the amazing junior members led by the multi-talented Oonagh Johnson who supported the main

cast throughout the show with singing, dancing and some excellent acting proving that they are indeed the stars of the future. Also I was astounded by the amazing efforts of the behind the scenes crew who make all the technical bits and pieces look easy. I can't wait for next year's show!