

## Leisure



□ **BOSOM pals** — Bonnie the cook and Clyde the butler in a scene from Chideock Player's Dick Whittington. Pictured are Jim Pettifer (left) and Vivienne Bansal.

# Village panto at its best!

**BEHIND** you! Behind you! The pantomime season is upon us!

And presenting village hall panto at its best last week were Chideock Players with an original version of Dick Whittington.

Scripted by Trixie Higham, Jim Pettifer and Herbert Winter, the traditional tale was peppered with topical and local in-jokes, much appreciated by the capacity audience.

By **ROSEMARY LEWIS**

Pantomime is for "kids" of all ages, so it was great to see lots of children in the multi-purpose and well-rehearsed chorus line. Obvious stars in the making were Caroline and Stephanie Humphries with a delightful duet.

The accent was on youth throughout. Natalie Cheeseman's cheerful, heroic Dick grew in confidence and found her ad libbing like a trouser when faced with the odd hiccup.

There was a sleek performance from Laura Miles as Sooty, Dick's faithful feline, and Catherine Kingscott was a pretty and spirited Alice Fitzwarren, well worthy of Dick's devotion.

Full marks, however, go to Karen Cheeseman as Sebastian Seatown, an obnoxious little wimp played with scene-stealing camp and style.

The adults had to go some to compete with all this young talent. Laying it on thick were Jim Pettifer and Vivienne Bansal as Bonnie and Clyde.

Big Jim's cook was the perfect pantomime dame, all bosom and eyelashes, while Vivienne's boozy butler made blatant trips to the prompt corner with hilarious effect.

Their cake-making scene was in the best slapstick tradition and will stay long in my memory.

The romantic duo of Henry and Rosie, played by John Challis and Jean Humphries, made a nice contrast to all the mayhem going on around them.

John's silent movie star face coupled with Jean's delicious dimples blended into a well-matched pair, whose duet deserved its encore.

Adrian Humphries made a swashbuckling Fish Finger, keeping the young sailors in line, and Richard Fowler was suitably nautical as Captain Birdeye.

Local celebrities Ceri Fisher and George Borrett brought the house down as Chide and Ock, a sort of blacked-up Tweedledum and Tweedledee, ambassa-

dors of the King and Queen of Wight.

Ben Bansal and Sylvia Maskell hammed these regal parts beautifully, while Derek Taylor made a happy, hippy cameo of the laid-back Prince.

Alderman Fitzwarren was solidly played by Verdi Skinner, and Dierdre Coburn and Ron Boshier were Cherry and Charlie, a cheerful Cockney couple.

Best scenic effect came from a walk-on boat anchoring off an idyllic palm beach as Dick sailed in to seek his fortune. An ambitious project on a tiny stage that came off well.

The orchestra, composed of Herbert Winter, Phillip Goodall and Tim Rex, accompanied solos, duets and singalongs with equal aplomb.

Bow bells rang out, Dick triumphed — and so did Chideock Players in an evening of good, wholesome family fun.

Also in the cast were Audrey Skinner and Heather Knight, as two ladies, and Bryony Wicks as a Rat. London children, sailors and natives were played by Abigail Bansal, Jessica Burge, Becky Ford, Caroline and Stephanie Humphries, Max Latham, Pippa Norris, Lizzie and Nicholas Phillips, Naomi Turner and Bryony Wicks.

Others involved were: producers, Diana Swan and Jim Pettifer; choreography, Ron and Chris Boshier; stage manager, Sarah Burge; prompt, Margo Fisher; props, Sue Pettifer; lighting, David Everidge; scenery design, Don McKechnie; make-up, Daphne Zaiger, Claire Hill and Kate Pettifer; costumes, Gwyneth Winter, Jean Humphries, Chris Boshier and cast members.

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