

# Happy party panto at Chideock

AN elderly gentleman roared with infectious laughter practically all the way through Chideock Players' "Snow White" — even at the serious bits. He had spotted one of his on-stage chums in unaccustomed garb of skin-tight hose and feathered headgear.

His laughter echoed the kind of warmth that only a home-spun village panto can offer. The audience were drawn into the fun, resulting in a happy party atmosphere.

## Liberties

Ingenious writer-producer Trixie Higham took a few liberties with the favourite fairy tale, introducing a gaggle of witches bent on conservation and a ludicrous panto dame "foil" for the wicked step-mother.

The result was a highly entertaining evening for one and all in this attractively staged pocket panto.

Young Catherine Kingscott was a perfect "Disney" Snow White in dress and appearance, giving an unblemished performance.

Jean Humphries was a superb tongue-in-cheek, thigh-slapping Prince with a charming soprano voice to match. Her droopy, satin-clad flunkey of a bodyguard was amiably played by her husband, Adrian.

At times though, he looked as though he had absent-mindedly wandered out of his Bridport Homestyle store.

## Glacial

Audrey Skinner was a glacial Wicked Queen only occasionally melting into giggles on Friday at the sight of her "mother" — pantomime dame Kenny Bodycombe.

This wasn't surprising. Towering Kenny, more accustomed to romantic hero leads, was way over the top with his "Julian Clary/Edna Everidge" style harpy.

Natalie and Karen Cheesman had a nice set of topical jokes and excellent timing as a comic double act pair of foresters.

Feather-capped Verdie Skinner (cause of all the hilarity) was as wooden as Pinocchio as the soft-hearted huntsman but highly popular with the audience.

Disneyland dwarfs, played by actors ranging from primary school age to pensioners' age, looked as rustic as garden gnomes and were duly solicitous over the care of Snow White.

## Miracles

They worked miracles with her "recovery" from acts of poisoning and stifling by the Wicked Queen.

A cackling sextet of witches headed by Sylvia Maskell were a startling addition to the fable with some timely cracks about building schemes around local beauty spots. Their coven scene, run like a council meeting, was a clever touch.

A final word for the behind-the-scenes "voice of the mirror" Richard Fowler — most impressive.

Bridport Operatic Society veteran Dora Thornhill provided piano music and striking scenic effects showed just what wonders can be wrought in a small village hall.

In all, a highly palatable foretaste of Christmas revelry.

Supporting players were: Edith McKechnie (lady in waiting); Deirdre Coburn (Nanny); Heather Knight (Queen Floribunda); Alf Way, Ceri Fisher,

George Borrett, Billy Balson, Shawn Creed, Andrew Barnes, Adam Grainger (dwarfs); Sylvia Maskell (Witch of Har-down); Edith McKechnie, Vivienne Bansal, Pat Hussey, Deirdre Colburn, Diana Swann, Louisa Tuck (witches); Caroline Humphries, Sarah Tuck, Donna Handers, Abigail Warren, Tessa Wicks, Lucy Sellick, Colin Sellick (Palace maids and pages); Abigail Bansal, Stephanie Humphries, Jessica Burge (rabbits).

Production: Jane Panter (assistant producer); Ceri Fisher (stage director/designer); Ceri Fisher, Verdie Skinner, Alf Way, George Borrett, Jim Pettifer, Don McKechnie (stage crew); David Everidge (lighting); Daphne Zaiger, Clare Hill, Susan Pettifer, Kate Pettifer (props, wardrobe and make-up); Christine Everidge (publicity); Elizabeth Fowler (box office); Vera Reddy (floor manager).

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**Hissss. . . Audrey Skinner (right) and Kenny Bodycombe as the Wicked Queen and her mum in "Snow White" presented at the weekend by Chideock Players.**