

**December
2006**

PTC News

The Panto goes ahead

Due to the difficulties in casting the pantomime we decided to have a further audition and publicise this as much as possible to highlight the risk there might not be a pantomime this year. There was a really good response on the audition night and a talented cast has been assembled. Rehearsals are now well under way and seem to be going very well, the script is proving to be very funny and under Archie's expert direction we will undoubtedly be able to put on an excellent show. There is a long way to go with a lot of hard work and not much time but with the whole club pulling together we are going to not only get there but put on a fantastic show to boot.

Also a warm welcome to those new faces who have got involved for the first time with the pantomime – we hope you enjoy taking part.

**Pantomime dates 19th, 20th, 26th & 27th January
at Prestwood Village Hall**

December Clubnight

At the Chequers on Monday 4th December at 8p.m. The evening will be our Christmas quiz with loads of prizes including a prize for the best Christmas hat. Archie will be quizmaster with Boyd as his "samantha" All welcome.

January Clubnight

As per usual due to the rigours of the pantomime and the aftermath of the festive season there will be no club night in January

Elvis & Priscilla Auditions

For the murder mystery will be held at the end of January – if interested please speak to Archie Wilson

Pantomime 2007

1001 Arabian Nights and a matinee

To be directed by Archie Wilson

The third audition was very well attended and as a result Archie has been able to get a cast together and rehearsals are now ongoing. The cast is as follows

Princess Jasmina – Abi Halligan

Ali Barber – Naomi Sage

Bob – Natalie Aves

Singbad – Jo Jarvis

Dame Barber – Rob Aldington

The Grand Vizier – Richard Higham

The Henchmen – Jo Welch & Tim Owen

The Genie – Marley Higham

Humpy the Camel – Sandra Aves and A.N.Other

Handmaidens - Sophie White and Sophie Tanno

Townsfolk – Dan White, Daisy Patten, Hannah Jones, Laura Jones, Olivia Eastman,

Angharad Owen, Mandy Durrell, Sandra King, Neville Lawson

Other roles are as follows

Director - Archie Wilson

Business Manager – Richard Higham

Stage Manager – Vic Rance

Box Office – Crispin White

Construction coordinator – Chris Sage

We will also have the dancers from the Chiltern Academy performing as part of the show

A few things we still need

A Costume coordinator

Front of House Manager

Assistant stage manager

Half a camel (the back half!)

All of a camel costume (number of humps irrelevant)

And of course lots of help with the construction both on the relevant Sundays in January and beforehand. And tickets to be sold

Schedule

Rehearsals are being held every Thursday night at 8p.m. and every Sunday night at 6.30p.m. (note the later time) at Prestwood Village Hall.

Construction Sundays are 7th and 14th January

Performances are Friday 19th, Saturday 20th, Friday 26th and Saturday 27th January with both matinees and evening performances on the Saturdays.

Demolition Sunday – 28th January.

I think it is worth mentioning that there was a really good attendance of people on the Sunday before and after Womberang which made everything so much easier – a big thank you to all the helpers – and please can you help again for the Pantomime.

The 2007 PTC Murder Mystery Dinner Saturday 10th March

Elvis will be in the village hall

A Christmas Carol

This is the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserable but wealthy old man. Scrooge works in his counting house with his clerk, Bob Cratchit.

Bob writes out records of accounts and Scrooge oversees the business but we don't know (it's not important) what it exactly does. It is Christmas Eve, and Scrooge receives several visitors.

One is his nephew, Fred, who invites Scrooge to dine with him for Christmas. Then come two gentlemen who are collecting for charity. We learn here that Scrooge had a partner, Jacob Marley, who died on Christmas Eve seven years previously.

Scrooge refuses to give the gentlemen anything, saying he helps the poor already through supporting prisons and workhouses. Scrooge allows Bob to have Christmas Day as a holiday, but insists that he be back at work all the earlier next day. (Boxing Day was not usually a holiday in the 19th century, but was the day when tradesmen collected their Christmas "boxes" - gifts from their customers.)

When Scrooge returns to his lodging he is visited by the Ghost of Jacob Marley who is weighed down by a massive chain, made up of cashboxes, keys and padlocks. The ghost says that any spirit which does not mix with other people in life must travel among them after death. Marley tells Scrooge that he, too, wears a chain, larger than Marley's. Marley has often sat by him unseen. Now he warns him of three more spirits which will visit to help him change his ways.

First is the Ghost of Christmas Past - Scrooge's own past. The ghost has a strange changing form and gives out brilliant light. With it Scrooge revisits the scenes of his earlier life.

We see him as a boy at school (a boarding school) on two occasions. First, he sits alone in a cold schoolroom - but as the spirit touches the arm of the child we see the characters of whom he is reading: Ali Baba and the parrot in Robinson Crusoe. Later we see him with his (slightly) older sister, Fan, who has come to bring him home for the holidays. We learn that his father (who seems once to have been unkind) become "much kinder than he used to be". The ghost notes that (unlike Scrooge so far) his sister had a "large heart". She has died, but her son is Scrooge's nephew, Fred

A summary of the real Dickens tale before TV & Hollywood mangled it – Merry Christmas

Next we see Scrooge as a young apprentice working for Mr. Fezziwig, in his warehouse. At seven o'clock on Christmas Eve, Mr. Fezziwig tells Scrooge and his other apprentice, Dick Wilkins, to make the warehouse ready for a party. Everyone is welcome at Mr. Fezziwig's ball, and the young Scrooge enjoys it immensely. The Ghost tells Scrooge that Mr. Fezziwig has done nothing special, only spent a little money he can easily afford. Scrooge replies that it is impossible to add up things like words and looks, but "the happiness" Mr. Fezziwig gives "is quite as great as if it cost a fortune".

The ghost then shows Belle, Scrooge's ex-fiancée. Scrooge is now in the prime of life. His (reasonable) fear, when younger, of being poor has now become an unreasonable love of money. Belle releases Scrooge from his engagement because she can see that he no longer loves her. He has not asked her to break the engagement but does not object to her decision. Another glimpse of Belle follows. Some years later - seven years before the present, she sits with her daughter. (At first Scrooge thinks the daughter is Belle, but she is now older. She has other children, too. Her husband tells her how he saw Scrooge that day, working alone in his office, while his partner, Marley, was lying "upon the point of death". Scrooge contrasts his life with hers and her husband's. While they have a happy Christmas together, he is working alone. They are not wealthy as he is but not poor financially. In other ways they are far richer than he. Scrooge thinks of how good it would be to have a daughter like Belle's to look up to him.

Next up is spirit is the Ghost of Christmas Present. It is a great giant, dressed in a green robe (a little like a green version of our Father Christmas) and surrounded by piles of food.

This spirit shows Scrooge how Christmas is celebrated by his clerk's family, by strangers near and far, and by his nephew, Fred. The spirit carries a torch and everywhere it goes this torch sprinkles incense or water on people and makes them become kinder to each other.

Scrooge has never been to Bob Cratchit's house. Here he sees how the Cratchits, despite being very poor, can be happy at Christmas. Bob and Mrs. Cratchit struggle because their family is large: there are six children. (Martha, Belinda, Peter, two unnamed "young Cratchits", and Tiny Tim.) Scrooge sees how frail Tiny Tim is, and asks the Spirit if he will live. The ghost tells him that unless something changes in the future, the child will die. When Scrooge protests he is reminded of his words earlier "If he be like to die he had better do it and decrease the surplus population

The ghost takes Scrooge magically to places outside London: he sees a family of miners in a hut on a barren moor, two lighthouse keepers and sailors on a ship: all know what day it is and celebrate it as far as they can. All of them are made more aware of other people and feel more kindly towards them because it is Christmas.

Fred (Scrooge's nephew) is having a party, and Scrooge is brought by the spirit to see and hear it. Scrooge's nephew explains that Scrooge is to be pitied, not despised. He is rich but his money does him no good, and, as Fred says, "his offences carry their own punishment". The guests play a guessing game, to find the identity of a thing, in which questions can be answered only with Yes and No. Everyone is amused when Fred's wife's sister guesses that the mystery object is Scrooge.

The chapter has a strange ending. The spirit ages and shrinks as midnight draws near (because he lives for, and represents, one year only - he has had more than eighteen hundred brothers). Now Scrooge sees, under its robe, two horribly dirty and ugly children. The ghost tells him that they are not his but "man's" and that "This boy is Ignorance this girl is Want". Scrooge is told to beware of them both. When he asks if nothing can be done to help them the ghost again quotes his earlier words: "Are there no prisons? Are there no work-houses". He feels deep shame, as the ghost disappears, and he sees, coming towards him, the last of the spirits.

Now Scrooge is again taken to places he does not know. The spirit is more like the kind of ghost we meet in conventional ghost stories. It is a hooded phantom, its face is unseen and it points at things but does not speak.

We are puzzled by a group of wealthy men, discussing someone who has died. This person seems very unpopular. In another poor and squalid part of London a pawn-broker, Old Joe, buys stolen property from three people: a laundrywoman (Mrs. Dilber), a charwoman (a cleaner) and the undertaker's assistant. All these poor people have taken things from the dead man - even the curtains from his bed and the shirt off his back.

Scrooge asks to see some "emotion caused by this man's death". He sees two scenes. First, a young couple who owed the man money. The wife (Caroline) fears they are ruined but her husband says there is hope now their creditor is dead. The debt will be transferred to someone else, but no-one else could be so merciless as the man who has died.

Next Scrooge returns with the ghost to the Cratchits' home. They, too are talking about death and preparing for a funeral. They all try hard to comfort and support each other. It becomes clear that they are grieving for Tiny Tim, who has died. He is to be buried in a beautiful green churchyard. Bob comes home from work and goes to sit with his son, who has obviously only just died.

Scrooge is horrified but still has to learn the identity of the mysterious dead man. He is shown to an ugly churchyard "overrun by grass and weeds" in the town, and here sees on the gravestone his own name. He realizes that he is the man about whom the others were talking.

Scrooge begs the spirit to tell him whether he has seen what will be or is it what may be. He thinks the spirit is showing pity to him and promises he will change.

The final chapter is very short. Scrooge wonders how much time has passed while he was with the spirits, and calls to a boy from his window, to ask what day it is. The boy is surprised by the questions as it is Christmas Day. Scrooge pays the boy to go to the poulterer (like a butcher but specializes in poultry) and order the prize turkey for Bob Cratchit. Out in the street he meets one of the gentlemen he earlier sent away. He whispers to him, but the reader guesses that he promises to give a lot of money to the charity, as the gentlemen doubts whether he is serious. Scrooge explains that his donation includes "a great many back-payments".

Scrooge goes to Fred's house and enjoys his party immensely. On Boxing Day he arrives early at work and ambushes Bob, pretending to be very angry with him for his being so late at work. He tells Bob that he will not "stand for this sort of thing any longer" as if he is about to sack him. Then he tells Bob, he is therefore going to raise his salary. Bob at first thinks Scrooge has gone mad, but is convinced when Scrooge tells him to put more coal on the fire rather than work, and that he will discuss his affairs over a drink that afternoon.

The story ends with an account of how Scrooge becomes a "second father" to Tiny Tim "who did NOT die" but receives no more visits from the ghosts. He changes his way of life entirely. Some people laugh at him, but he lets them laugh and is happy with his new outlook on life. Dickens ends by repeating Tiny Tim's Christmas blessing: "God bless Us, Every One!"

The Pantomime Celebrities

One of the things I cannot understand about getting older is that my memory for things obviously has to increase due to there being more memories to remember. I remember all the old memories and am sure I don't forget the new ones, it is just things now seem less memorable. Back in the old days pantomimes and shows always seemed to have lots of stars, and people I had at least heard of, now I have no idea who most of the so called celebs in the jungle are, especially the ones who only seem to have christian names. As for the celebs in Panto's locally they seem quite thin on the ground a far cry from the days when the Swan Pantomime starred the likes of Wendy Craig and Chris Tarrant , Frank Bruno and surely even Chuffer Dandridge at some point

Peter Pan at Wycombe Swan is billed as featuring Nigel Havers, Sophie Lawrence, Mark Jones, Louise English and Penny Tovey, whereas Aladdin at Aylesbury Civic Centre stars Mark Wingett "from ITV's The Bill and BBC's Eastenders"

Having to actually tell the audience what the star has done is probably an admission of a lack of celebrity. As for the Wycombe crew only Nigel Havers has a face I can recognise without the name.

There are of course many other pantomimes being produced by groups locally and if you are quick you may still be able to catch the Ubiquitous touring production of A Christmas Carol starring Richard Worland.

<i>Nov 30th</i>	<i>Thurs evening</i>	<i>Speen Village hall</i>
<i>Dec 1st</i>	<i>Fri evening</i>	<i>Speen Village hall</i>
<i>Dec 2nd</i>	<i>Sat evening</i>	<i>St Augustines School PTA</i>
<i>Dec 8th</i>	<i>Fri evening</i>	<i>Littlewick Green Village hall</i>
<i>Dec 9th</i>	<i>Sat evening</i>	<i>Naphill Village hall</i>
<i>Dec 10th</i>	<i>Sun afternoon</i>	<i>Hughenden Village hall</i>
<i>Dec 10th</i>	<i>Sun evening</i>	<i>Pinder Hall – Cookham</i>

Elsewhere I have seen a poster for the Wendover Theatre Society who are putting on a production of Frankenstein the Pantomime which sounds interesting but I cannot find out any more info on the web about them. The production itself is on around the 12th January

We welcome any info on other groups if anyone wishes to send any in.

Advert – Hay for sale

One of my sidelines other than working, writing this stuff and exercising my bull terrier is a bit of low level farming – hence this year I have a big stack of the best sweet meadow hay this side of the Bucks border. If anyone needs any for horses, rabbits, or you just feel a bit peckish yourself please let me know on 01494 862327 or vicrance@hotmail.com big sacks are £2 and a full size bale is £3 – local delivery is also possible – better value than Hildreths!

Collective nouns

A mob of kangaroos
A murder of crows
A murmuration of starlings
A muster of peacocks
A nest of rabbits
A nest of vipers
A pace of donkeys
A pack of wolves
A paddling of ducks
A parliament of owls
A plague of locusts
A pod of whales
A balance of accountants
A break of winds
A change of addresses
A coffin of necrophiliacs
A compulsion of gamblers
A confusion of organisers
A conglomeration of businesses
A couch of trick-cyclists
A coup of dictators
A gossip of wives
A gross national product of economists
A grudge of sportsmen
A hang of judges
A harvest of farmer
A hub of wheelwrights
An idle of technicians
An inactivity of offices
An indication of pointers
An infusion of teacups
An interest of bank managers
An interface of computers
A jam of cars
A metre of traffic wardens
A gnash of teeth
An over of maidens
A pat of cows
A percentage of agents
A perch (rod, pole or) of anglers
A twist of arms
A vat of tax collectors
A vertigo of steeple-jacks
A waffle of salesmen
A wait of buses
A want of specifications
A wave of sailors
A web of letters
A writ of solicitors
A yank of Americans
A harley davidson of mid life crises
A fraid of ghosts
A cramp of writers
A crash of bugs
A crook of shepherds
A crop of barbers
A deceit of politicians
A delusion of directors
A display of terminals
A dividend of shareholders
A drip of taps
A droop of brewers
A dry of marker pens
An erasure of disks
An error of appraisements
An excuse of trains
A failure of negotiators
A fairytale of planners
A fart of colanders
A field of fine legs
A filter of coffee cups
A flesh of strippers
A flush of johns
A frock of transvestites
A pregnancy of silences
A progress of pilgrims
A promise of suppliers
A prompt of cursors
A pull of birds
A quandary of implementations
A query of Queens
A reduction of enlargers
A reek of underwear
A ring of telephones
A riot of soccer fans
A run of laxatives
A seam of tailors
A search of bushes
A shelf of projects
A silence of signalling systems
A slip of girls
A slop of canteens
A snip of vasectomies
A sombrero of Mexicans
A squeak of blackboards
A stagger of drunks
A stand of commuters
A strike of unions
A sty of male chauvinists
A suit of cases
A summons of policemen
A surprise of clairvoyants
A suspension of stockings
A sway of bars
A swindle of embezzlers
A torture of racks

Old joke of the month

A clergyman was walking down the street when he came upon a group of about a dozen young boys surrounding a dog. Concerned that the boys were hurting the dog, he went over and asked "What are you doing with that dog?"

One of the boys replied, "This dog is a poor stray. We all want him, but only one of us can take him home. So we've decided that whichever one of us can tell the biggest lie will get to keep the dog."

Of course, the reverend was taken aback. "You boys shouldn't be having a contest telling lies!" he exclaimed. He then launched into a ten minute sermon against lying, beginning, "Don't you boys know it's a sin to lie," and ending with, "Why, when I was your age, I never told a lie."

There was dead silence for about a minute. Just as the reverend was beginning to think he'd gotten through to them, the smallest boy gave a deep sigh and said, "All right, the vicar gets the dog."

The PTC Horrorscope - Sagittarius

23rd November to 21st December

You will have a recurring dream that Gordon Brown, dressed up as a pantomime wolf will try to blow your house down because you failed to declare that free sachet of ovaltine which came with your prescription garlic on your tax return. It seems too realistic to be a dream however. The planets have too much time on their hand and Pluto with his eccentric orbit decides to fill your house with custard. Spotted dick no longer has any appeal. Red the basset hound from next door takes to lounging in your external hot tub and will start inviting the neighbourhood mutts around to practice the doggy paddle for the 2012 games. You cannot blame him as the nearest dog swimming pool is in Reading.

Your newly acquired crosscut shredder refuses to be switched off and proceeds to shred your world, including that antique Persian rug you bought from Bovington market. The cat disappears. The miseries of life can be soothed away at the carol concert however your song sheet has the words in Serbo-Croat. The Chuckle Brothers reappear in your dining room and have been fitted with new Duracell ultra batteries - they cannot be stopped until twelfth night.

Contacts

To submit articles to PTC News, Please send articles to Vic Rance, Llanberis, Moat Lane, Prestwood, Bucks HP16 9DF or via e-mail to vicrance@hotmail.com **Deadline 22nd December**

For other enquiries please contact club Chairman Carol Williams on 01296 622277

Website www.prestwoodtheatreclub.co.uk **PTC Box Office - 0709 201 5796**