

SHAWFORD PARISH HALL CENTENARY



REVIEW

The Beanstalks

3rd and 4th January 1997

A Pantomime again!

One of the particular delights of the excellent celebrations to mark the centenary of the Parish Hall for those of us of mature years was the fact that there was once again a 'Shawford Pantomime', and what a double delight to have one ~ the witty and topical script of Simon Theobalds' *The Beanstalks* – the real story behind the building of the M3! A view clearly shared by the large enthusiastic audiences who enjoyed this lively production.

A joy also to welcome back some familiar stalwarts to the pantomime scene. Di Threlfall looking just as she always did, the prefect principal boy, singing sweetly and bringing an ingenuous charm to the role of Jack Beanstalk. Ian Streat providing an assured and solid core to the production as Jack's Mother; a remarkable theatrical transformation this, because in a previous production he played Di's Father!

If you ever wondered what was the inspiration for the MacDonald's logo, or for the D.o.T.'s bumpy road sign (who hasn't), you need look no further than Roger Thomas' multi-appendaged, cheery, blousy dame, played with confidence and brio (sometimes without the benefit of lines!). No pantomime is complete without its Fairy Godmother, but in this contemporary version we had Simon Jones' splendidly camp and comic Fairy Stockbroker, more intent on flogging bonds than waving wands.

All brought to the production the assurance and confidence of experience.

Not that the newcomers were upstaged. The action was punctuated by the lively, witty interventions of three predatory and opportunistic elves, played with style and panache by Sue Bickley, Sarah Hawkins, and Simon North, and providing the additional visual delight of three elegant pairs of legs – especially Simon! Flamboyantly suited Jon Hawkins was convincingly sycophantic, and duplicitous as the ingratiating 'man from the council'.

We had a youthful chorus in the tradition of the Shawford Pantomime, together with a large production team of local residents. This is the first one that I can remember with a giant-size giant. A special word of praise is due to Pat Hamilton for so admirably providing the essential music at short notice.

A good time was had by all, and as always we were left marvelling at the talents available in our community.

BOB EMMERSON

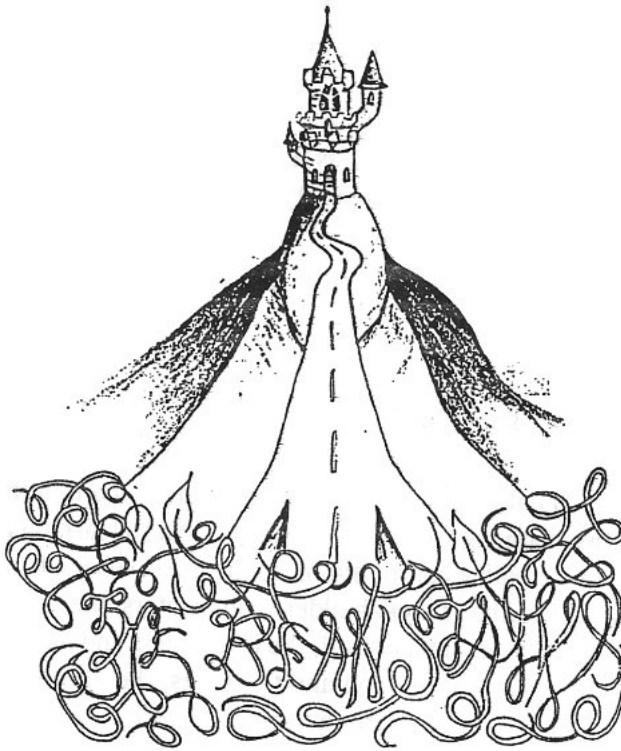
AND NOW

The Beanstalk Productions...

would like to thank everyone who laboured over the months to make the production happen, from the actors who had to learn their lines and make their own creative contributions, to the ticket sellers, front of house and punch makers, the scenery builders and painters, the constructors of the biggest boots seen in Shawford, the costumiers and make-up artists, the chorus and music, the sound and the lights, the photographers and programme printers, not forgetting those who performed miracles at the last minute, as well as the residents, dongas, drivers, ogres, elves and at least one fairy who all helped to turn a feckless idea into rip roaring reality and most of whom enjoyed it hugely for most of the time.

The production also owes a debt of gratitude to the Parish Council for encouragement and the use of the Hall and to Vanessa Smith for her patience.

SIMON THEOBALDS



Taken from the Parish Hall Centenary Celebration Review booklet