

## **THE UPWOOD VILLAGE HALL PANTO : ROBIN HOOD AND THE BABES IN THE WOOD**

**Director : Martin Muir**

The achievements of Societies performing in difficult village venues never cease to surprise and impress me. The limitations of Upwood Village Hall are obvious but quickly forgotten when confronted with the positive enthusiasm and commitment of this community group celebrating their fifteenth anniversary of annual pantomimes.

The pace was fast, the humour infectious and the scenery and presentation effective. I liked the special touches such as the spinning head, the archery contest, the use of strobe and the varied dance routines. The relatively small cast, of all ages, created a large sound musically and the number opening Act 2 was particularly effective. This is a good choice of story for a pantomime containing all the necessary ingredients and focussing on the plight of relatively helpless children at the hands of their uncle, the wicked Sheriff of Nottingham, played with great panache by Director, Martin Muir.

At the forefront of all the action were Dee Smith as a very versatile Nurse Nora and Carole Spibey as a heroic Robin Hood. Both of these performers created very strong and likeable characters with great good humour. They were well supported by David Honour as the sympathetic but dim Herman and Hannah Butson as a charming and melodic Maid Marian. Once again, Doug McLeod and Geoff Dudley had some memorably funny moments and Sam Richter and Emily Howard also impressed. The two Babes at the performance I attended were Hanna Flisher and Harry Butson who provided plenty of the aaah factor combined with a keen sense of humour and stage presence Altogether a very enjoyable experience.

Michael G Williamson  
Noda Rep : District 1



Robin Hood and friends: With Carole Spibey as Robin are Harry Butson, Nikki Meacock, Hannah Butson; front, Hanna Flisher and Gabrielle Clements.

## THEATRE: MEET ROBIN AND HIS MERRY BABES

THE good people of Upwood will be in double trouble when the village's hugely popular panto season gets underway.

Upwood Pantomime Society is presenting Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood

Written by Peter Denyer, the panto will run over several nights next week in Upwood village hall.

The parts of Janet and John – the Babes – will be taken on alternate performances by Hanna Flisher and Harry Butson, and Gabrielle Clements and Nikki Meacock.

The show is directed by Martin Muir, who also plays the part of the evil Sheriff of Nottingham, with Hannah Butson as Maid Marian and Carole Spibey as Robin Hood.

Just what will happen when Robin Hood, the Babes in the Wood, the nasty sheriff and a whole load of other colourful characters bring some fun and magic to the Upwood stage.

Calls of 'he's behind you' may take on a new meaning deep in the darkest bits of Nottingham Forest!

But for the real double story you'll need to see the panto – but hurry for tickets as they are selling out fast.

The popular Upwood Pantomime Company, which is affiliated to the National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA), was formed in 1994 by Geoff Dudley and Doug McLeod.

The panto fun began all those years ago with the main purpose of raising money for improvements to the village hall which was badly in need of repair.

From small beginnings the company has gone from strength to strength, performing to sell-out audiences each year.

Performances for Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood are on Wednesday, January 28 until Saturday, January 31 at 7.30pm, with a matinee on Saturday, January 31 at 2pm.

Tickets are £8 for adults and £6 for children. Call the box office on 01487 814114 – there are only tickets left for the performance on Wednesday, January 28.