

SIXTY YEARS OF PANTO - OH YES IT IS!

2005

From Stuart Horner's Roundabout

For the past six decades the Birchington Guild of Players has entertained Thanet with home-grown pantomimes. "Puss in Boots" is their choice for 2005 and the Village Centre promises to be filled with screams of delight from children of all age, many of whom are the children and grandchildren of the original players and audiences.

It all started in 1945. The Guild, then known as the All Saints Guild of Players, was started back in 1936 by the then vicar the Rev Granville Sharp. Members had to be regular communicants. Their first venture into the topsy turvy world of panto in 1945 was "Cinderella" produced by the Curate David Reeve, with the Vicar as Dame and Elaine Miles as principal boy. The tradition continued with the Rev Christopher Donaldson, all productions being held in the old Church House until it was demolished in 1970. The last panto presented there was Sleeping Beauty. The company's name was then changed to Birchington Guild of Players. Until the new Village Centre was built in 1974 pantos were performed at King Ethelbert School.

RAY'S FORTY THREE YEARS

Ray Marsh, who is producing this year's production "Puss in Boots" has been associated with Guild pantos for 43 years. Ray has appeared in 37, produced 10, and some of which he both produced and played in. His experience will guide a strong cast of old and new members. True to time-honoured tradition there will be loads of audience participation, music, dancing and fun. The cast for this year's fun and frolics is made up of a large group of the Guild's junior members along with Richard Taylor as the King, Jim Porter as Edam, Laura Hamilton as Glen, Lisa Kenney and Lauren Abel as Millers cat, Pat Dixon as Magic Cobbler, Patrick Folkard as Blackleather Vicky Harley as Queen of Cats, Zoe King as Princess, Rita Taylor as Queen, Vanessa Burt as Arthur, Geoff Kirk as Max, Marc Hamilton as Puss in Boots, Toby Joyce as Frankenstein and David Cooper as Clonk Nutbolt.