



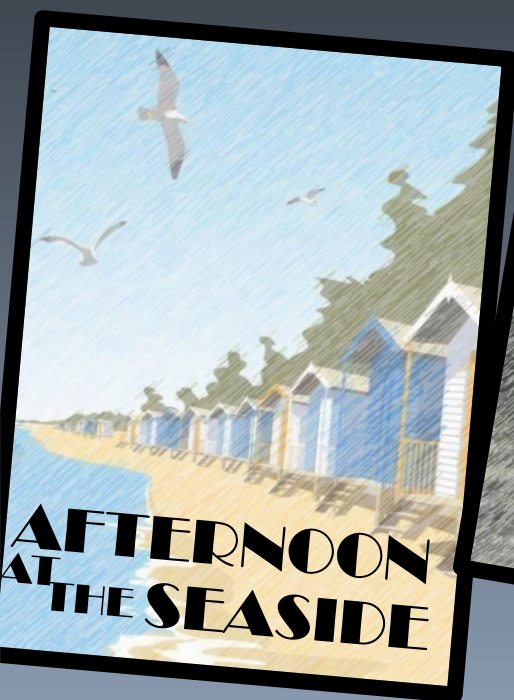
# ST. MARTIN'S PLAYERS



present

*Agatha Christie*

# THE RULE OF THREE



**THREE ONE-ACT PLAYS**

directed and produced by Steve Morley

**Fri. 29 September 2023, 7:30pm**

**Sat. 30 September 2023, 2:30pm, 7:30pm**

at the Huxtable Hall, St Martin's Church, Erith Road, Bexleyheath

**PROGRAMME**

**50p**

# THE DIRECTOR WELCOMES YOU

Welcome to our 93<sup>rd</sup> production! When I have directed plays in the past, I always liked to do something different, working with period pieces and thrillers (*Jekyll And Hyde*, *Frankenstein*, etc) rather than the farces and mysteries we had been known for. This time, I thought it would be worth trying something even more different. We hadn't done an Agatha Christie play for a while (previously performing *A Murder Is Announced* in 2005 and *And Then There Were None* in 2010), and there had only been one occasion when we had performed shorter plays on the same night (*Pride And Joy* and *Last Tango In Barnehurst* in 1999), so I thought about bringing both ideas together with our compilation of Agatha Christie plays.

The idea was to get more people involved – with 25 characters in total, we could encourage those that prefer smaller roles in panto to come up on stage in a play, and perhaps try something different behind the scenes and having flexibility over what we rehearse and when, but an ambitious project means more potential problems. Firstly, we needed a large cast: we knew some of the cast would need to play more than one role, but it is clear that our group needs to recruit more men – six out of the nine men taking part are playing two roles, but only one of the women (initially!) With the summer holidays and ill health, we have not been able to rehearse with all of the cast together; along with word rehearsals on Zoom, we have also tried using video calls on stage, with a spare cast member holding a phone with the correct actor joining us from another part of the world. In spite of this, we were saddened that Victoria had to drop out, therefore would like to thank Marion for stepping up to take over the role of Mrs Gunner a few weeks ago, and Sydney for taking her place as the Mother.

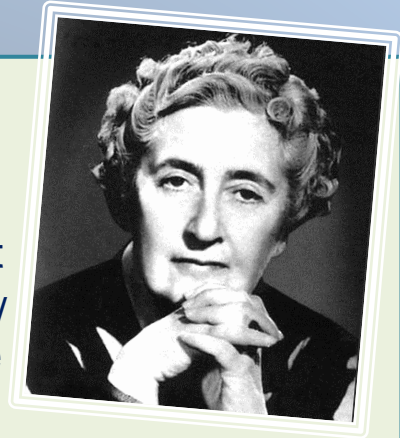
The other challenge (besides cramming so much in our biggest ever programme!) was the set: the two interior sets were not a problem (just change some of the decoration and furniture), but combining this with a seaside set, with three huge beach huts and a boardwalk dominating the stage (and needing to be partly removed during the interval) required much thought and teamwork. Along with those involved in costumes and props, lighting and sound, thank you to everyone who has helped to make the production look spectacular.

We hope that you enjoy all three plays and look forward to seeing you in Pantoland.

**THE 'USUAL' SMALL PRINT...** Please note that smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building. As a courtesy to those on stage and in the audience, please turn off your mobile 'phone and refrain from using flash photography. Fire exits are located at either side of the stage and at the rear of the hall; in the unlikely event of an emergency, please leave the hall by the nearest safe exit and assemble in the car park. Thank you.

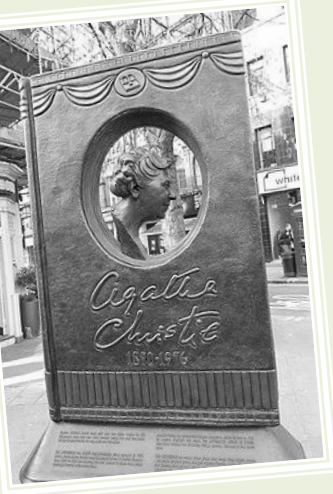
# THE WRITER AND THE PLAYS

**Dame Agatha Christie** (1890-1976) is one of the best-known British writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, often referred to as the 'Queen of Crime'. Most people will know that she created the characters of Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot, but you may not know that, with a total of 66 detective novels and 14 short story collections to her name, she has only ever been outsold by the Bible and Shakespeare.



As well as her novels and short stories, Christie wrote over 25 plays, with *The Mousetrap* being the most successful, having been performed at the St Martin's Theatre over 29000 times since its debut in 1952 – a world record.

**The Rule Of Three** is a collection of three one-act plays, which initially toured the UK in 1961 before debuting at the Duchess Theatre in December 1962; they are among the last plays she had written.



**Our programme is as follows:**

## PLAY ONE – AFTERNOON AT THE SEASIDE

This will be followed by an interval, during which refreshments will be available in the Small Hall

## PLAY TWO – THE RATS

This will be followed by a second, shorter interval, during which the raffle will be drawn

## PLAY THREE – THE PATIENT



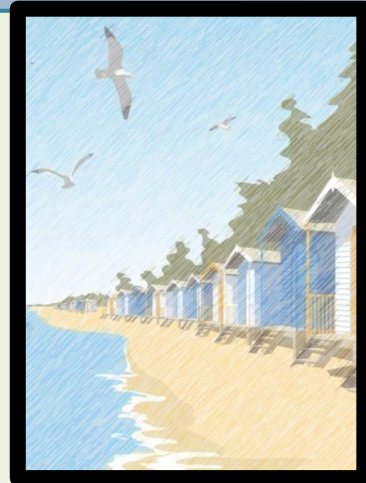
**If you would like to take advantage of our hearing induction loop system, please adjust your hearing aid to the 'T' setting.**

# AFTERNOON AT THE SEASIDE

**“A whimsical day by the sea at a British resort.  
An emerald necklace has been stolen and the Inspector  
has to investigate an extraordinary mix of characters.”**

*This is Agatha Christie’s only comedy play, based on her short story, ‘The Rajah’s Emerald’.*

The action takes place on a summer afternoon at the beach at Little-Slippyng-On-Sea.



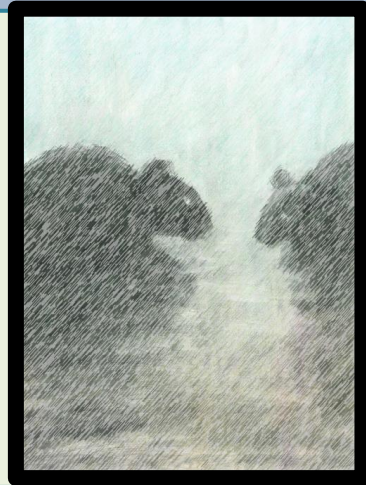
<b>Bob Wheeler</b>	<b>STEPHEN BRODY</b>
<b>Noreen Somers</b>	<b>CIARA COGLEY</b>
<b>Mother</b>	<b>SYDNEY BAKER</b>
<b>Young Man</b>	<b>HARRY KINGMAN</b>
<b>Mrs Crum</b>	<b>JULIE EXELL</b>
<b>George Crum</b>	<b>RICHARD PERCIVAL</b>
<b>Beach Attendant</b>	<b>DAVE BARNETT</b>
<b>Arthur Somers</b>	<b>BARRY GAVIN</b>
<b>Mrs Gunner</b>	<b>MARION BIRAM</b>
<b>Percy Gunner</b>	<b>JAMES BELSHAM</b>
<b>The Beauty</b>	<b>LINDSEY CLAYTON</b>
<b>Inspector Foley</b>	<b>MARTIN STONE</b>



# THE RATS

“Adulterous lovers Sandra and David are called to the Torrance’s flat for evening drinks. However no one is home. What first appears to be a simple mix-up of dates turns into something far more sinister when the pair are locked in and, all at once, framed for murder.”

The action takes place in Michael Torrance’s flat in Hampstead, on a fine summer evening, about 6:30pm.



**Sandra Grey**    **RAE CALNAN**  
**Jennifer Brice**    **DEBRAGAVIN**  
**David Forrester**    **PAUL BERGMAN**  
**Alec Hanbury**    **STEPHEN BRODY**



# THE PATIENT

The Patient, known as Mrs Wingfield, has been horribly injured in a fall from her balcony. Unable to communicate, it could have been an accident, attempted suicide or worse still a cold-blooded murder. As relatives gather round her hospital bed the tension builds as an ingenious device helps Mrs Wingfield to convey a message that could solve the mystery.”

The action takes place in a private room of a nursing home.



<b>Dr Ginsberg</b>	<b>CIARA COGLEY</b>
<b>Lansen</b>	<b>DAVE BARNETT</b>
<b>Nurse</b>	<b>MONICA CANE</b>
<b>Inspector Foley</b>	<b>MARTIN STONE</b>
<b>Bryan Wingfield</b>	<b>RICHARD PERCIVAL</b>
<b>Emmeline Ross</b>	<b>CHRISTINE BELSHAM</b>
<b>William Ross</b>	<b>BARRY GAVIN</b>
<b>Brenda Jackson</b>	<b>SYDNEY BAKER</b>
<b>The Patient</b>	<b>WENDY BARNETT</b>



**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT A STROBE LIGHT SEQUENCE  
WILL BE USED AT THE END OF THIS PLAY**

# THE PLAYERS

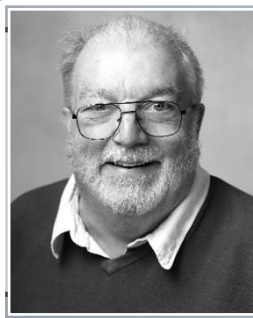


## SYDNEY BAKER

Sydney is one of our youngest members, first appearing in *Cinderella '22* in many minor roles, before progressing to one of our wild-west newsreaders in *Who Shot The Sheriff?* and Princess Esmerelda in *Puss In Boots '23*.

## DAVE BARNETT

Dave has appeared in more productions than any other member of the group, debuting in *See How They Run! '91*. He has finally managed to remove all of the green make-up after playing Ogre Grimgrab in the last panto – but will he play Abanazar for the fourth time in the next one?

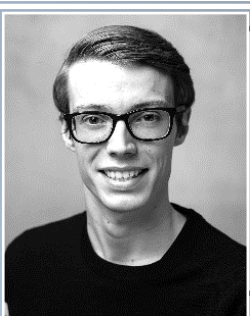


## WENDY BARNETT

Wendy is one of our most valued members (she usually makes the tea and brings nice biscuits!) Having supported the group for many years, she first trod the boards in our first musical play, *The End Of The Pier Show*; her last major role was as Frau Frankenstein in 2019.

## CHRISTINE BELSHAM

Christine has taken numerous smaller roles and chorus parts since 2009; larger roles have included the vicar in *Murder At The New Vicarage*, a nagging wife in *Key For Two*, one of the fairies in *Rapunzel* and even the front of the horse in *Beauty And The Beast* (with husband Mark behind).

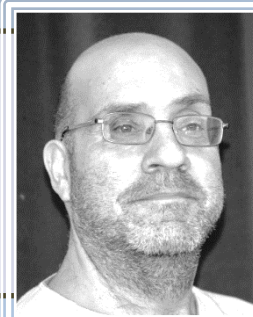


## JAMES BELSHAM

Since joining us at ten years of age for *Little Red Riding Hood*, James has proved that he can learn huge parts in very little time and is best remembered as Puss, Buttons and Dr Frankenstein. Most recently, he co-directed his first production, *Move Over Mrs Markham*.

## PAUL BERGMAN

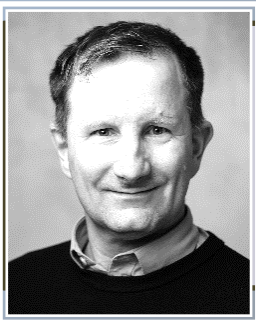
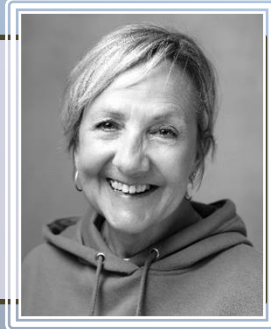
Paul first appeared in the chorus of *The End Of The Pier Show* in 2004; while he no longer living nearby, he is happy to help out when we need him. His more recent appearances include Dame Dotty in *Jack And The Beanstalk '20* and lodger Norman Bassett in *Cash On Delivery*.



# THE PLAYERS

## MARION BIRAM

First appearing in 2008, Marion has appeared in roles of varying size, from pantomime choruses to leading roles. Most recently appearing in *Puss In Boots* and *Cash On Delivery*, she supports almost every production sourcing the props we use on stage.



## STEPHEN BRODY

Since our 2020 pantomime, Stephen has appeared in every production, often in somewhat eccentric roles, and this production is no exception (as he is in playing these two parts – look out for his Egyptian sand dance!) Very soon, Stephen is going to try something new, with plans to direct our May 2024 play.

## RAE CALNAN

Rae, our group's Chair, has appeared regularly since 1995, recently appearing in *Move Over Mrs Markham*, *Puss In Boots* and *Who Shot The Sheriff?* She is particularly interested in crime and mystery plays: having directed one of our previous Agatha Christie plays, she is excited to perform this time.

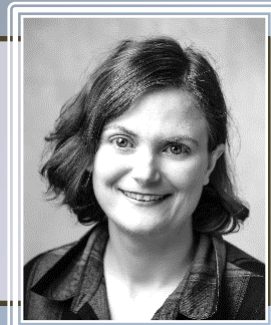


## MONICA CANE

Though Monica tends to take smaller panto roles nowadays, she has been actively involved in the group over the last three decades, from performing to costuming to directing. More recently, she appeared as Sister Gloria Excelsis, the moonshine-loving nun in *Who Shot The Sheriff?*

## LINDSEY CLAYTON

Lindsey has played a range of parts since joining us in 2016, from Wishee-Washee to princes, a male butler to a deputy sheriff, to suffering wives in various farces. She directed *Rapunzel* and is in the process of writing another pantomime and is always ready to lend a hand backstage if needed.



## CIARA COGLEY

Ciara has taken leading roles in our last two pantomimes (the title role in *Cinderella* '22 and Jack Miller in *Puss In Boots* '23) and co-directed *Move Over Mrs Markham*, however this is her first appearance in one of our plays (well, two actually), playing one of our holidaymakers and the doctor.



# THE PLAYERS

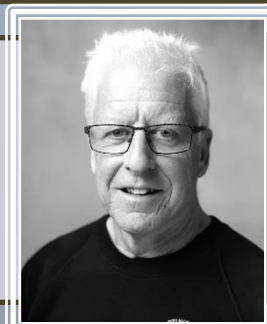


## JULIE EXELL

Another long-serving member of the group, Julie most recently appeared in *Who Shot The Sheriff?* and *Puss In Boots*. She is one of our wardrobe experts, having spent many hours recently organising our stock of costumes and is always ready to make sure we all look fabulous.

## BARRY GAVIN

Barry is one of our leading set builders, meeting new challenges and taking on more adventurous designs each time. He has regularly appeared in a range of plays and pantomimes since 1995, appearing as a baby in a pram in *Babes In The Wood*.

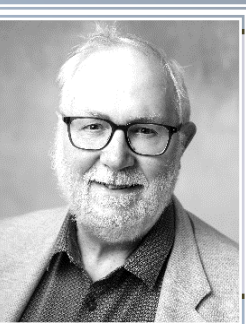


## DEBRA GAVIN

Debra mostly takes part in our pantomimes and musical productions, both on stage and leading as a director / producer. Her first appearance was in *Cinderella* thirty years ago, and she is about to embark on directing our next pantomime with husband Barry.

## HARRY KINGMAN

Harry has appeared on stage with DAODS and is appearing in his first production with us, having been invited to take by his Scout Leader (our Director). His step-sister has previously appeared as the front end of two pantomime animals, and we look forward to them both joining us again soon.

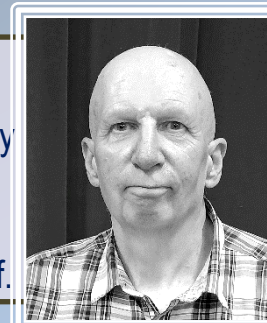


## RICHARD PERCIVAL

Richard first appeared in *Pride And Joy* in 1999; more recently, he is only one of two members who has appeared in every production since lockdown. Most known for playing panto dames, barons and kings, he has committed many murders: he killed most of the cast in our last Agatha Christie production.

## MARTIN STONE

Martin is our group's Secretary and though he has been with the group for many years, this is his first time on stage since 2017. Martin has been known for breaking new ground, directing our first musical plays, our Danson Festival shows and directing our last pair of one-act plays, writing *Pride And Joy* himself.



# THE CREW

<b>Prompt</b>	<b>HAZEL BERGMAN</b>
<b>Stage Manager</b>	<b>MARK BELSHAM</b>
<b>Stage Crew</b>	<b>JAMES BELSHAM, STEPHEN BRODY, BARRY GAVIN, HARRY KINGMAN <i>et al</i></b>
<b>Properties</b>	<b>MARION BIRAM <i>et al</i></b>
<b>Wardrobe</b>	<b>JULIE EXELL, DEBRA GAVIN <i>et al</i></b>
<b>Make-Up</b>	<b>RAE CALNAN</b>
<b>Set Construction</b>	<b>DAVE BARNETT, DAVID BATCHELOR, JAMES BELSHAM, MARK BELSHAM, BARRY GAVIN, STEVE MORLEY, CHRIS SUGGITT, 4<sup>th</sup> BARNEHURST ESPINOSA SCOUTS</b>
<b>Backdrop Artist</b>	<b>DAVID BATCHELOR</b>
<b>Lighting &amp; Sound</b>	<b>DAVID BATCHELOR, CHRIS SUGGITT</b>
<b>Box Office</b>	<b>DAVE BARNETT</b>
<b>Front Of House</b>	<b>SUE ADAMS, VAL COATES, DARYL O'SULLIVAN <i>et al</i></b>
<b>Refreshments</b>	<b>VICTORIA WHITEHEAD <i>et al</i></b>
<b>Poster and Programme</b>	<b>STEVE MORLEY</b>
<b>Special Thanks to</b>	<b>NEIL BRAZIER LONDON BLIND COMPANY, for the Venetian blinds DOMINIQUE UCHAN TOWNLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL PHYSICS DEPT. for the beach binoculars and electrical apparatus RAE CALNAN for arranging 'virtual presences' at rehearsals</b>



# PLEASE SUPPORT OUR RAFFLE

*As usual, we will hold a raffle for charity at each performance. Tickets will be on sale before the performance and during the first interval; the draw will take place and winning numbers will be drawn during the second interval.*



## 4<sup>th</sup> Barnehurst (St Martin's) Scout Group

Registered Charity No. 303502



Just next door, young people gather throughout the week for a wide range of exciting activities to help them achieve their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potential. The 4<sup>th</sup> Barnehurst Scout Group offers Beavers (ages 6-8) on Monday nights, Cubs (ages 8-10½) on Wednesday and Thursday nights and Scouts on Monday nights (ages 10½-14); all of whom complete a variety of badges and take part in visits and camps throughout the year. So far this year, members of the Group have had the chance to spend a week on a narrowboat, gone rock climbing, tried various water sports, completed science experiments and learned outdoor survival skills. The Group are always looking for new members, so please feel free to tell anyone you know who may be interested (email [espinosascouts@hotmail.com](mailto:espinosascouts@hotmail.com) or call 07950 650401); they are also hoping to recruit more Leaders and supporters to help aid further expansion and return the Group to its former pre-lockdown strength.



By purchasing raffle tickets (and any other donations you care to make), you will be supporting members of the Scout Group in their upcoming international visit: they will be visiting the West Flanders region of Belgium over a weekend in November, helping the young people to reflect on the significance of remembrance. They plan to visit various sites linked to World War One, including the Ijzer Tower, the Menin Gate, Passchendaele, Tyne Cot Cemetery and the trenches at Hill 62 (and, of course, a Belgian chocolate shop!) – certainly a worthwhile weekend.

COMING SOON TO ST MARTIN'S



**ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH**

**QUIZ  
NIGHT**

**£6**  
per person

**7 OCTOBER**

**6:30PM (7PM START)**

St Martin's Church Hall,  
Erith Rd, DA7 6LE

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Teams of up to 8

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Book your place:

[fundraising.stmartins@gmail.com](mailto:fundraising.stmartins@gmail.com)

# COMING SOON TO ST MARTIN'S



*Come and see*

**Swinging  
The Lead**  
Maritime Folk Band  
Resident Shanty Singers on  
the famous Cutty Sark



CANCER  
RESEARCH  
UK

*Playing at*

St Martin's Church Hall, Erith Rd, Barnehurst, DA7 6LE

**7.30 Saturday 28 October 2023.** Doors open from 7pm

Tea/coffee/snacks available - bring your own grog

**Charity Concert for Cancer Research**

Entrance £10 per person: to reserve a place contact:  
Dave 07963 760813 [davewebb681@gmail.com](mailto:davewebb681@gmail.com)



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# OUR PAST PRODUCTIONS



- 1991 **Sleeping Beauty, See How They Run!**
- 1992 **Snow White And The Seven Dwarves, Virtue Triumphant**
- 1993 **Cinderella, Continental Quilt, Surprise Package**
- 1994 **Aladdin, Laugh! I Nearly Went To Miami, Post Horn Gallop**
- 1995 **Babes In The Wood, Keeping Down With The Joneses, Play On!**
- 1996 **Dick Whittington, When We Are Married, The Roses Of Eyam**
- 1997 **Jack And The Beanstalk, Pardon Me! Prime Minister, Murder In Company**
- 1998 **Puss In Boots, Pull The Other One, Blithe Spirit**
- 1999 **Mother Goose, Bedroom Farce, Pride And Joy, Last Tango In Barnehurst**
- 2000 **Peter Pan, See How They Run!, My Friend Miss Flint**
- 2001 **Treasure Island, Shock Tactics, Outside Edge**
- 2002 **Cinderella, The Murder Room, Running Riot**
- 2003 **King Arthur, Party Piece, No Time For Fig Leaves**
- 2004 **The Sleeping Beauty, Kindly Keep It Covered, The End Of The Pier Show**
- 2005 **Bluebeard, A Murder Is Announced**
- 2006 **Aladdin, How The Other Half Loves, Noah's Animals**
- 2007 **The Three Musketeers, Murder Weekend, Out Of Focus**

# OUR PAST PRODUCTIONS

- 2008 Little Red Riding Hood, Murder In Play,  
Toad Of Toad Hall
- 2009 Jack And The Beanstalk, The Day God Died,  
Barbecues 'R' Murder, Lady Lollipop, Jekyll And Hyde
- 2010 Dick Whittington, And Then There Were None,  
Over My Dead Body
- 2011 Snow White, Alice In Wonderland,  
Murder At The New Vicarage
- 2012 Cinderella, Panic Stations
- 2013 Robin Hood, Crazy Capers, Dodgy Deals, The Ghost Train
- 2014 Mother Goose, Henry The Tudor Dude, Murder Backstage
- 2015 Sleeping Beauty, The Wizard Of Oz, See How They Run!
- 2016 Aladdin, Key For Two, Hound Of The Baskervilles
- 2017 Beauty And The Beast, I'll Get My Man, It's Never Too Late
- 2018 Rapunzel, Free And Easy, Love Begins At Fifty
- 2019 Treasure Island, Agatha Crusty And The Murder Mystery Dinner,  
Frankenstein
- 2020 Jack And The Beanstalk
- 2022 Cinderella, Cash On Delivery, Who Shot The Sheriff?
- 2023 Puss In Boots, Move Over Mrs Markham



# OUR NEXT PRODUCTION

## ALADDIN

*A Pantomime by Alan P Frayn  
Directed and Produced by Barry and Debra Gavin*

**26 – 27 JANUARY 2024**

**2 – 3 FEBRUARY 2024**

Readings and auditions will take place  
on Fri. 13 October and Wed. 18 October in the Small Hall.

# COME AND JOIN US!

We always welcome new members (over 18s, with opportunities for young people to join our pantomime chorus): whether you want to tread the boards in a leading role, have a few lines or fill in the background, our panto will have a part for you.

Alternatively, there are plenty of ways to get involved behind the scenes, from costumes to props, building to lighting, we'd love to hear from you.

We meet on Friday evenings in the Church Hall – why not come along to one of our rehearsals? Why not contact us online – we look forward to hearing from you!

