

Group: Kingsclere Players  
Show: Babes in the Wood and Robin Hood  
Venue: Fieldgate Centre, Kingsclere  
Date: 6 December 2024  
Director: Jo Batson

**BABES IN THE WOOD AND ROBIN HOOD** written and directed by KP member, Jo Batson, this story has all the ingredients of a fantastic panto and more: two kings, two queens, the hapless pair and also a pair of fairies. There's the wicked baddie, romance in the air, scheming, corny jokes, local references and water pistols to soak the audience! On top of that, there was a cracking story, music and dancing and colourful costumes.

**PROGRAMME:** The A5 colour programme had information about the production with a synopsis, crew list and cast list and information about the Kingsclere Players as well as information about future events, special thank yous and details of how to be involved, via social media.

**SCENERY/SET/PROPERTIES:** These were all excellent. The set had been cleverly designed to maximise the available space and depicted the various locations: the castles, the woods, and the props were amazing, varied and numerous! The picture frame was particularly impressive as were the thrones, various market stalls with goods, bows and arrows. There was clever use of a tape for the race scene and blackboard showed amusing horse names including: Shifty Sheriff, Hoof Hearted and Honourable Hood.

**COSTUMES/HAIR/MAKE UP:** The costumes were amazing ranging from floaty, fairy (and contrasting) dresses of Fizz and Wizz to the forbidding black of the Baron. Maid Marion, Robin Hood were dressed in traditional clothes for the period. Nurse Prickle-Prickum modelled some eye-catching and vibrant dresses and Sue The Soothsayer wore a gorgeously colourful skirt.

**SOUND AND SPECIAL EFFECTS:** The sound was excellent with taped music and live keyboard accompaniment. Voices were clear and in time with the music. The use of lighting enhanced the production, especially the use of Ultra violet light for the creatures dancing in the woods sequence. There were some lovely solos as well as a rousing opening to the second half with 'Eye of the Tiger' being belted out.

**THE PRODUCTION:** This show was full of hilarity and fun for all ages. Written by KP member Jo Batson this show offered a modern twist to the familiar folk tale, such as characters Queen Bianca and King Ricky (not Richard!) and Robin Hood playing a large part of the action. There were local references and everyone was totally engaged throughout the performance apart from the lobsters seated on the edge of the stage, who were, intentionally, sporadically involved when they needed to hold up their 'Boo' or 'Yay' placards to encourage the audience participation! The baddie of the piece was Sheriff Brutus Botox of Burghclere played by Mike Stokoe with wildly exaggerated expressions

and Keith Bennett as Nurse Prickle-Prickum was a master of double entendre and clearly relished the role, wearing an assortment of big and bold outfits. The hapless duo, Sid Down and Stan Dup, played by Charley Henkey and Amelia Hicks had great chemistry and made friends with the audience. They were hugely entertaining with their slapstick style chaos and perfectly timed mishaps. Liberty Watters as Robin Hood was confident and engaging and had great stage presence. All elements of traditional panto were present, the pace was good and a highlight for me was the 'horse' race through the audience, well thought out and choreographed. Everyone in this production, cast and crew worked hard to deliver the fun that was had during this polished and hugely entertaining production. Well done KP!

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