

HARDEN PLAYERS PRESENT...

Beauty and the Beast



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19th-21st and 26th-28th March 2026
Harden Congregational Church | hardenplayers.org.uk

With special thanks to Bingley Little Theatre for supporting Harden Players' production of *Beauty and the Beast*

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Help Harden Players to buy a new lighting rig!

Money raised from sales of this programme will go towards replacing our old lighting rig. If you would like to make a discretionary additional donation, you can do so by scanning this code. Thank you for your support!



Beauty and the Beast

A Word from the Director

Well despite saying “never again” after the last two times I directed... here I am again! And I’m very glad I talked myself into it. Directing an entire production is a lot of work, especially an all-singing all-dancing pantomime with a cast of nearly thirty, but it’s one of the most rewarding things I’ve ever done.



My favourite part of the process is definitely watching the cast bring my script to life, and seeing how they make the characters their own. I had a particular idea in my head when I created characters like Jacques, Monsieur Croque, Pierre and Henri, but seeing what the cast did with them made them feel like real people who had become old friends by opening night.

Huge thanks to all those folk who stepped in this year to help in off-stage roles. There was a period of panic when it looked as though we would struggle to pull in enough volunteers to fill all the necessary positions, but some wonderful people stepped up in answer to my plea for help and ensured we could get this year’s panto off the ground. These roles are often invisible, but we couldn’t put on a show without the diligence and hard work of those who perform them.

We’ve had an absolute blast rehearsing this year’s panto and we hope our audiences will too! And if you feel you might like to sample the joys of community theatre for yourself, whether on stage or off, we’d love to hear from you. You can find out more at hardenplayers.org.uk, drop us an email on hardenplayers@hotmail.co.uk or search for Harden Players on Facebook.

Finally, since the cast were all asked to tell a joke for the programme, it seems only right I do too! this is my favourite panto joke: “There was a terrible time in my life when I got addicted to the Hokey-Cokey. But I turned myself around and that’s what it’s all about.” 😊

Lisa Firth
Director, Beauty and the Beast



Gallery

Visit our website for galleries of past productions: hardenplayers.org.uk





Cast

We asked the cast to answer three questions: what was the first Harden Players panto you appeared in, what's your favourite role you've ever played, and tell us a joke!



Danielle Stephenson-Reid - Belle

First Harden panto: My first panto with Harden was *Cinderella* in 2020, and I was lucky enough to play the title character (it was a great experience).

Fave role: This is a tough one. I played Beth in *Little Women*, which holds a huge place in my heart because I got to make the bestest friends who were my stage sisters.

Fave joke: Why's Belle so smart? She's always one page ahead 😂

Adam Butt - Beast/Prince Claude

First Harden panto: My first panto role was Bootstrap Bob in *Treasure Island*. It was really exciting being part of a trio of dim-witted baddies on my first outing.

Fave role: It's been so hard to narrow down to just one. I had so much fun acting out as rebellious Jonno in *Shine* and flirting my way through the *Alice in Pantoland* as Puss In Boots, but if pushed, I'd probably have to say playing the Beast - the character has an interesting story arc which has been motivating to play out.

Fave joke: Two muffins were in an oven. One muffin says: "Gosh, it's hot in here", and the other muffin says: "Wow, a talking muffin!"



Nick Parker - Jacques

First Harden panto: I joined Harden Players in October 1997 and my first panto was in February 1998. It was *Jack and the Beanstalk* and I was the Giant's butler at the top of the beanstalk.

Fave role: Baddies are always fun to play but it is probably a toss-up between Richard Hannay in *The 39 Steps* or Felix Unger in *The Odd Couple*. They were both great parts to get your teeth into and had a range of emotions.

Fave joke: A policeman told me that crime was on the increase in multi-storey car parks. That's just wrong on so many levels 😂😂😂😂

Ashley Judge - Babs de Baguette

First Harden panto: My first panto at Harden Players was *Mother Goose* in 2023, where I played the Fairy Queen.

Fave role: My favourite part I've ever played was Eddie Lyons in *Blood Brothers*.

Fave joke: People are usually shocked when they find out I'm not a very good electrician.



Vicky Foster - Malevolent

First Harden panto: My first show I believe was *Sleeping Beauty* in 1984, when I was two years old. I then joined the children's chorus. The first show I remember was 1986, when I was a rat led by the Pied Piper.

Fave role: I think my favourite part was playing Beth in *Shine*. That particular show became special to all of us in it. We developed our characters in much more depth than normal and it was such a special show that it created some fantastic bonds in the group. I cried real tears every night at the thought of my friend Ivy/Jane dying.

Fave joke: What did the husband pen say to the wife pen? You are always write.



Kate Ainsworth - Fairy Snuff

First Harden panto: My first with Harden Players was as part of the children's chorus. I think it was *Cinderella* in 1991.

Fave role: My favourite role was Gladys in *Hi-De-Hi*. Very fun role and I loved the Welsh accent.

Fave joke: This joke was my Grandma's favourite... Two hippopotamuses sitting in a swamp. One says to the other, "I keep thinking it's Tuesday" 😊

Sarah Whistlecraft - Hooray Henri

First Harden panto: *Mother Goose* in 2023. I may have been in one as a child but can't remember! I played Cora, a named villager with a few comedy moments.

Fave role: My favourite role ever was definitely Queenie in *Blackadder*. "I may have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a concrete elephant!" I also really enjoyed making her dress and boat hat. Close second was Prudy Pingleton in *Hairspray*, just because it was a fun show and she was such a crazy character.

Fave joke: What do the French call a sandal? Phillipe Fillop!



Piers Hill - Count Pierre de la Poshe

First Harden panto: *Puss in Boots* in 2000, when I played a policeman.

Fave role: Jeffrey Fairbrother in *Hi-Di-Hi* because he did everything from pompous professor to drunken idiot, with a bit of performing without his trousers on in between.

Fave joke: I'm up in court tomorrow for telling too many tongue-twisters and I fear that the judge might be planning to give me a very tough sentence.



Kathryn Sullivan – Botly

First Harden panto: *Puss in Boots*. I played Puss!

Fave role: I can't choose between Mrs Lyons in *Blood Brothers* and Cora in *Calendar Girls*.

Fave joke: Why is an elephant large, grey and wrinkly? Because if it was small, white and round, it'd be an aspirin.

Lorraine Tempest – Cristal

First Harden panto: My first pantomime with Harden was *Alice in Pantoland* in 2025.

Fave role: Favourite for me was Miss Flannery in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. Lovely character role with lots of comedy.

Fave joke: Why did the scarecrow win an award? Because he was outstanding in his field. 🥳🥳🌹



Antony Shenton – Monsieur Croque

First Harden panto: My first pantomime was *Aladdin* and I was in the chorus.

Fave role: Very difficult to choose but playing the Colonel in 'Allo 'Allo was great fun. Attaching the "wiglet" on stage was a highlight!

Fave joke: This was told to me by a six-year-old boy. Why did the bus stop? Because there was a zebra crossing 🦓

Barrie Tempest – Crimsworth

First Harden panto: *Alice in Pantoland* in 2025, as Knave.

Fave role: The one that sticks in my memory is my first ever show, *The Sound of Music*. I played Rolf and had to sing "You are 16 Going on 17" then kiss Liesl. I was 18, very shy, first time on stage, never sung and didn't know anyone. She was older and her husband was at the rehearsal. I was scared to kiss her until the director shouted, "For God's sake, kiss her, man!" Women still scare me.

Fave joke: There was a fight at a chippy in Denholme. Two fish got badly battered.



Jane Gerdes – Blue Nun

First Harden panto: The first show I was involved in with Harden Players was *Dreaming Can Make It So* in 1983. I was in the children's chorus.

Fave role: My favourite role was the Duchess in last year's *Alice in Pantoland* because it was a fun character to play.

Fave joke: Why was six afraid of seven? Because seven ate nine!



Gemma O'Hora - Teri the T-Rex/ Catherine the Swot (week 1)

First Harden panto: My first panto at Harden Players was *Mother Goose*. I was in the chorus and had just come along to see what it was all about. Now this is my fourth panto!

Fave role: My favourite was being the Narrator in *The Flint Street Nativity*, but I did have less lines to learn when I was Daisy the Cow. This year I'm playing a terrifying dinosaur.

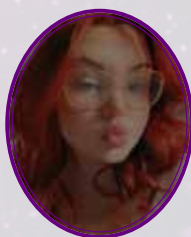
Fave joke: Why can't you hear a pterodactyl in the loo? Because the "p" is silent.

Sophie Chapman - Catherine the Swot (week 2)

First Harden panto: My first ever panto was *Cinderella*, where I played a gorilla (I wasn't sure where the gorilla in *Cinderella* was either but somehow they made it work!).

Fave role: My favourite role to play was Nick's backing singer/cheerleader in *Mother Goose*. Watching Nick walk in those boots was a treat!

Fave joke: What do you call a blind dinosaur? Do-you-think-he-saurus. What do you call his dog? Do-you-think-he-saurus Rex.



Musical Director: Sheila Shenton

Sheila has been involved with Harden Players for thirty-eight years as musical director, and kindly stepped into the breach once again this year to get the cast to their tuneful, toe-tapping best.



Chorus

Lily, Meredith, Sabrina, Libby, Hannah, Elliot, Lucie, Gracie, Poppy, Liam, Dominic, Loretta, Emily, Alex



Crew

Stage manager	Jackie Smith
Lighting	Angela Butt
Sound	Mark Anslow
Choreography	Jane Fenwick (with help from Libby Difiori)
Set construction/props	Dill Butt, Giles Whistlecraft
Backdrop design	Heather Lumley
Costume lead	Sarah Whistlecraft
Musicians	Charlotte Nutter, Sheila Shenton, Alfie Walls-Shaw
Prompts	Laura Campbell, Billy Pennington
Publicity	Ksenia Butt, Lisa Firth
Programme design	Lisa Firth
Box office	Ksenia Butt, Harden Post Office
Stagehands	Paul Addy-Armitage, John Hamilton, Jenny Heath, Sam Robinson
Chaperones	Charlotte Revill (lead chaperone), Lisa Firth, Laura Hopton, Nicola Roberts, Giles Whistlecraft
Producer	Ksenia Butt
Director/scriptwriter	Lisa Firth
Musical director	Sheila Shenton

We would like to thank:

Sue Crowther for kindly hemming the backdrops
Emma Lumley for her help painting the scenery
Harden Post Office for ticket sales
Harden Congregational Church for their continued support
Bingley Amateur Operatic Society for loaning some of the costumes
Everyone who has helped with refreshments and front of house

Fun and Games

You can colour in this picture of Belle discovering Beast's castle at home.



Can you find the name of every *Beauty and the Beast* character in the wordsearch?

O F K X M G R B J Z E U N I B
J A H X A K J B O L L Y N H A
A I C S L M X V D K P R U T B
C R R Y E Q I Y F C E O J A C
Q Y I B V V Q I K D C L Y E A
U S M E O T F P I E R R E R H
E N S L L V B H Z L I S X C P
S U W L E C N M O O S D S M B
Q F O E N Q Y N V N T Y O M W
Z F R L T Y B Y V K A B U B J
U A T H K B A C M T L J D O A
H H H S K E B F H Z H E N R I
G F F G U A S U L V Y N D S S
R N L D H S V U Q H L E K P D
K D G J Z T G I E K G Z G C U

BELLE
BEAST
HENRI
JACQUES
BOLLY
CROQUE
FAIRY SNUFF
CRIMSWORTH
CRISTAL
BABS
MALEVOLENT
PIERRE

Riddle Me This

Q: I sometimes run
but I cannot walk.
What am I?

A: Your nose!



Find the Roses

There are ten roses
hiding in the pages of this
programme. Can you find
all of them?



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