**Beanstalk a gigantic hit - Newmarket News, Wednesday, January 16th, 2013**

A remedy to combat the winter blues could be found in the King’s Theatre, Newmarket with the Nomads annual pantomime - this year it was Jack and the Beanstalk.

Written by MacKelvie Nelson and directed by Sarah Wilsher, it tells the story of Jack, who lives with his impoverished mother and decides that the cow has to be sold to bring in some money.

Jack is tricked and instead of a bag of gold is given a bag of beans, which aren't as worthless as we might think, and here begins the story of the giant Beanstalk and Jack’s quest to slay the giant.

You always have to hand it to Nomads pantos for sticking to the storyline and, unlike the “professional” large-scale extravaganzas which can go on half the night, the Nomads plot was clear, the scenes snappy and succinct and never ever laboured.

Nomads pantomimes also always have that traditional essence, with the spirits of good and evil, this time in the hands of Pam Daish as Fairy Cowslip and Alan Coogan as the dreaded Squire Snatchi, who stirs up loads of hisses and boos.

Steve Beach took on the role as Dame Trott, and had some brilliant scenes with Colin Scott as Simple Simon, and Vicky Ward and Michael Stokes as Daisy the Cow.

These three characters have nailed it with great audience participation. Steve is consistently funny with some “off the cuff” humour with the audience.

Karen Thorpe is superb as Jack Trott, with the thigh slapping principal boy routines, matched beautifully by Laura Jolley as Princess Hermione.

The music is outstanding with Mark J Checkley as musical director. The stooges scene is without fail a winner and this year is no exception.

Richard Clarkson, as the voice of the giant, is magnificent. David Sherfield (King Herbert), Chris Day and Dani Swanson as Tom and Harriet complete a brilliant line-up.

The costumes were outstanding, in particular Dame Trott’s unbelievable amount of changes, and the chorus numbers with young Nomads are so enthusiastic and energetic with Andy Thorpe as choreographer.

**Jancis Harvey**