The Business of Pantomime: Regional Productions 1865 to 1892

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

January 2005

Abstract

Whilst in recent years the study of nineteenth-century popular theatre and culture has expanded into the music hall, fairgrounds and 'minor' theatres, embracing melodrama and spectacle, the Victorian pantomime has attracted little attention. More especially, the widespread and dynamic productions of the English provincial theatres have been largely excluded in discussions that repeatedly focus on the London stage.

My thesis is centred on the Theatres Royal of Nottingham and Birmingham, two towns sited in the English Midlands, but with markedly different population sizes, socio-economic structures and national status. My argument, however, is not predicated on comparison but rather on siting the pantomimes within the very specific local contexts of each town. The relationship between the pantomime and the town engages with a notion of audience, identifiable through textual and promotional materials. The argument in my thesis moves from an overview of production styles at the two theatres to a specific analysis of the the financing and promotion of the pantomime at Nottingham in the mid-1860s. Using extant financial records, I have established how the pantomime was produced in times of local hardship, and how a production affected by low expenditure and falling revenue was promoted to its potential audiences. The emphases of advertising and the promotional techniques engaged by the theatre managements, together with those of the local newspapers also enable a reassessment of the role of the pantomime author. The traditional understanding of authorship as related to ownership of the text is re-considered in relation to the role the pantomime author played in the promotion of the production, and his real and construed relationship to the theatre and town for which he was writing. Moreover, the available empirical evidence has served to foreground the pantomime text as an expression of local concerns and political interests that were particular to each town and displayed an acute awareness of issues of regional identity and status.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people for their help, guidance and support:

My supervisors Professor Josephine Guy and Dr Joanna Robinson
The University of Nottingham for a fee-waiver scholarship, awarded for the duration of my research, as well as two library grants that enabled necessary travel to London and Birmingham. Also, the Department of English Studies for awarding me the Barry Brown Bursary in 2001.

Library staff at:
The John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford
Birmingham Central Library, Local Studies Library
Birmingham City Archives
British Library, Colindale
British Library, St. Pancras; more especially Kathryn Johnston and her colleagues in the Manuscript Department
Bromley House Subscription Library, Nottingham
Hallward Library, University of Nottingham
Nottingham Central Library, Local Studies Library
Nottinghamshire Archives
Public Records Office, Kew

My father for his endless support, and my late mother who would have been so proud
All my friends and converts to the joys of pantomime
Colleagues and sympathetic managers at City of Nottingham LEA and the Healthy Schools Programme Team
Ursula Holman for her hospitality on my visits to London

To those who have helped answer my questions by letters and emails, at:
Manchester Central Library
Liverpool Public Library
The Theatre Museum
The Mander & Mitchenson Collection
Helen Whybrew at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham

And for advice, help and information that I have received from the following people:
Colleagues in the Department of English Studies, University of Nottingham
Professor David Mayer, regarding pantomime, and for the loan of selected books of words
Dr Shaf Towheed
Dr Ann Featherstone
The Trustees of the Malt Cross Music Hall, Nottingham
and the many helpful recommendations and comments that I have received from fellow delegates at conferences in England and America.

Abbreviations used in this thesis.

In footnote references, the titles of the following local newspapers have been abbreviated as follows:

The Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express	*Express*
The Nottingham Daily Express	*NDE*
The Nottingham Daily Guardian	*NDG*
The Nottingham Journal	*NJ*
The Birmingham Daily Post	*BDP*
The Birmingham Daily Gazette	*BDG*
The Birmingham Daily Mail	*BDM*

The pagination of nineteenth-century newspapers can be inconsistent. I have therefore provided page numbers for all references. The front page of a newspaper is referred to throughout as p. 1, to avoid confusion.

Twenty-first century journal titles that feature regularly in this thesis are also abbreviated in footnote references:

Theatre Notebook	*TN*
Nineteenth Century Theatre	*NCT*
New Theatre Quarterly	*NTQ*
Theatre Survey	*TS*

Nineteenth-century pantomime titles were often rather lengthy, therefore to avoid cumbersome footnotes I have adopted the shorter versions of all titles throughout. The full titles are given in Appendix A.

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Introduction

At the beginning of February 1886, the *Birmingham Daily Post* carried an advertisement for the pantomime at the town's Theatre Royal. Other than the title, times of performance and seat prices, the central feature of the advertisement was a quote from '*The Theatre*, London Magazine for February, 1886'. The quote read:

> 'Robinson Crusoe,' at the Birmingham Theatre Royal is, in my estimation, far and away the best of the provincial pantomimes in general excellence of scenery, costumes, and acting, to say nothing of its music, which surpasses that in all other productions in point of melody and liveliness. Let me advise such of my readers as care to see a brisk, well-constructed, amusing, and thoroughly enjoyable pantomime, to lose no time in finding their way to Euston, and travelling thence by the well-ordered, fast, and punctual trains of the London and North-Western Railway to Birmingham, there to see 'Robinson Crusoe' at the Theatre Royal. I will answer for it that the pantomime at the Birmingham Theatre Royal is the best to be seen in the country this year.[1]

In this thesis, I intend to extend the study of Victorian pantomime and draw critical attention, like the Euston passengers, out of the metropolis to the provincial towns of Birmingham and Nottingham. The focus of my study will be the Theatres Royal of each town, and the means by which the individual theatre managements attracted local audiences to their Christmas pantomimes. Such research is necessary to foreground the regional identity of provincial theatre and to broaden critical understanding of nineteenth-century pantomime.

The Times in the mid-1860s was able to report on the increased number of pantomime productions in the provinces, and there was some critical awareness of the standards of productions at regional theatres, as emphasised in the opening quotation.[2] However, those emphases have not attracted twentieth- and twenty-first century critics, whose work on the pantomime has remained focused largely on the London stage, more

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[1] Advertisement, *BDP*, 1 February 1886, p. 1. Part of this quotation is cited in Gerald Frow, *"Oh Yes, It Is": A History of Pantomime* (London: BBC, 1985), p. 163.

[2] Comments on the increase in provincial productions were made in *The Times* in 1867 and 1868. The excerpts are cited in Derek Salberg, *Once Upon a Pantomime* (Luton: Cortney Publications, 1981), p. 58.

especially the late nineteenth-century pantomimes of Drury Lane.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, provincial theatre managements gradually ceased to engage regular stock companies and, increasingly, local theatres hosted touring versions of London productions.[3] This changing pattern of production, that occurred during the 1870s (1877 at Nottingham and 1880 at Birmingham), has perhaps led to a perceived homogeneity of provincial touring houses, but such a viewpoint belies subtle differences and practices that were manifested in the production of the annual pantomime. More specifically, the content and promotion of pantomimes in Nottingham and Birmingham drew on notions of regional identity and status that were unique to each house. The two towns are in the same geographic region of the Midlands, but they had very different socio-economic structures and political status in the second half of the nineteenth century. My thesis is not intended as a comparison of rival theatres; rather, it is a comparative study of the strategies of pantomime production in two theatres that were subject to very different local factors. The managers and writers drew on specific features and preferences that were influenced by the local socio-economic and political clime; more so than the main season of programming.

The siting of the pantomime production in the local context has influenced my choice of the Theatres Royal rather than other venues in each town. Both theatres were built in the late eighteenth century. Despite rebuilding and, in Nottingham, being re-sited, by the mid-nineteenth century they had become established houses. In Nottingham the Theatre Royal was to remain the sole legitimate theatre until the 1880s, whilst in Birmingham, rival theatres were beginning to be opened by the 1860s. However, the promotion of the two Theatres Royal drew on their own history and the fact that both theatres had been producing pantomimes since the 1840s: the Theatre Royal at Birmingham was frequently advertised as the 'home' of pantomime in the town in the 1880s, and the Theatre Royal, Nottingham was also contextualised as the 'old house' as compared to newer establishments in the same period.

[3] Michael R. Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), p. 18.

It is not my intention to attempt a recreation of nineteenth-century pantomime productions, nor is my argument overly concerned with the performance of pantomime. Indeed such an attempt would be fraught with difficulty as the genre was (and is) by its nature mutable: surviving scripts are only indicative of what happened on stage, as, in performance, lines were cut or changed, topical references were updated, and there was a vast amount of ad-libbing and unrecorded stage 'business'. This essential problem, which threatens to undermine any reading of the pantomime script, has been highlighted by the notable theatre historian Michael Booth. In his 1981 work, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*, Booth stressed that in order to understand Victorian pantomime more fully, it was necessary to draw on additional evidence from the contemporaneous newspaper reviews, whose descriptive passages of the first night performance frequently give a clearer indication of elements such as the *mise-en-scéne*, than is apparent from the scripts.[4] Booth's recommendation is invaluable, but an engagement with the nineteenth-century newspaper reviewer also offers alternative ways of studying the Victorian pantomime than simply establishing the visuals of performance.

Central to my argument in this thesis is the use of promotional materials in the nineteenth century and the evidence they contain of regional business practices. Therefore, throughout my thesis, I have addressed the review as integral to the promotional strategies employed by the theatre management. In his 1987 book *The Rhetorics of Popular Culture: Advertising, Advocacy and Entertainment*, Robert L. Root stated that '[r]eviewing is a rhetorical act'; whatever the subject matter, 'the critical review always involves a recommendation, whether implicit or explicit, and an attempt to convince readers of the reliability of that recommendation.'[5] According to Root's definition, there is a subtle difference between reviewing and criticism. The former contains description, evaluation, substantiation, and recommendation, whereas the latter allows for a more personalised 'analysis and interpretation'.[6] Root establishes the

[4] Michael R. Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre 1850-1910* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 86.
[5] Robert L. Root, *The Rhetorics of Popular Culture: Advertising, Advocacy, and Entertainment* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 63.
[6] Root, p. 64.

rhetoric of the reviewer as one of advocacy, which seeks to provide reassurance for the reader in his expression of artistic knowledge. Certainly, the pantomime reviewers often incorporated a brief history of the genre, or specific terminology as regards the ballet, for example. I am less concerned with this aspect of the critic's writing than with the relationship between his role as advocate, and the promotional materials organised by the theatre management. Root separates the advocacy of the critical review from advertising, but during the run of a nineteenth-century pantomime, the distinction could become much less specific. Several of the newspapers that I have researched (notably the *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express* and the *Birmingham Daily Post*) continued to review the pantomime after the first night performance. In this matter, the role of the reviewer could become almost as mutable as the production itself; the emphasis of the reviews could change to promote particular aspects of the production or to realign public perception and expectation.[7] Often a second review would be printed after two or three days, to reassess changes in performance and, even if the initial review has been disapproving, those later reviews would invariably be much more positive. Indeed, negative reviews were not sustained throughout the run. In turn, the reviews printed during the pantomime season could become little more than extended advertisements, containing anticipatory comments regarding the length of the run, additions to the cast, or new costumes for the ballet. Those promotional reviews ran in tandem with the advertisements, both featuring the predominant elements of the production. Indeed, the reviewers could pre-empt the advertisements, suggesting that such and such a change might be forthcoming, to be followed a few days later by a front page advertisement promoting that very change.

As I have already intimated, production of the annual pantomime was integrally linked to the local socio-economic clime, and in this respect, my research encompasses a wide range of archive and primary materials. My argument is supported by evidence

[7] The combined influence of the theatre manager and the reviewer in altering aspects of a production, is the subject of Joel Kaplan's article 'A Puppet's Power: George Alexander, Clement Scott, and the Replotting of *Lady Windermere's Fan*', *TN*, 46 (1992), 59-73.

from extant scripts, newspaper reviews and previews, advertisements and playbills. together with financial records of income and expenditure from the Theatre Royal. Nottingham. This thesis therefore draws heavily on textual evidence, not as a substitute for lost performances, but as a means to re-evaluate the importance of provincial pantomime for local theatres. A central element of this re-assessment is the pantomime script, which has survived in the form of 'books of words'. These books contained a version of the script that was on sale to the theatre audiences. The majority of those from Nottingham and Birmingham remain in local library collections and, where none have survived, the Lord Chamberlain's Collection of manuscript plays at the British Library contains some manuscript versions in addition to the copies of those printed books of words that were submitted for licensing. The fact that both the books of words and the manuscript copies were not entirely representative of the production during the run does present a methodological problem, as Michael Booth has established. However, whilst the extant versions of the scripts may not constitute an accurate definition of the production in performance, they do provide extremely important evidence as to the potential audience at whom the production was being targeted by theatre managers. More specifically, the topical referencing (both in terms of style and subject matter), even allowing for cuts and changes, represented a specific range of interests and affiliations, particular to the town and theatre. To establish those interests, as well as to evaluate production trends, I have studied all the available books of words, manuscripts and licensing copies for the period 1865 to 1892. Of a twenty-six year period, there are only three years in which some version of a script has not survived: 1868 at Birmingham, and 1867 and 1872 at Nottingham. In contrast, there are a few years (1874 at Birmingham and 1887 at Nottingham) for which several books of words chart alterations to the script in re-printed versions. A full study of the period allows for a coherent overview of trends and preferences and, consequently, a more substantive analysis of local productions at the Theatres Royal.

The framing dates of my thesis have been chosen in relation to local and national influences. As I have mentioned, both theatres were established venues by the mid-nineteenth century. Furthermore, 1865 marked the opening of a new Theatre Royal in Nottingham and a new era of pantomime production that was to blossom in the 1870s and 1880s under particular and lengthy managements and the long term engagements of specific, local authors. At the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, the pantomime of 1865-66 was the second written for the theatre by Charles Millward, an author who would continue to provide pantomimes for that theatre for the next seventeen years, forging a business relationship with the manager, Mercer Simpson, that defined productions at the Birmingham theatre.

The period 1865 to 1892 has also been chosen in relation to two Parliamentary Select Committee hearings that featured evidence on pantomimes and the provincial theatres: the Select Committee on Theatrical Licences and Regulations in 1866, and the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment in 1892. During the course of the evidence heard in 1866, it was asserted that for the provincial theatre manager the annual pantomime was financially crucial, a 'sheet-anchor' for the entire theatre season. Such sentiments had been expressed before, but in 1866 they were brought into focus by a contemporaneous national economic depression that would affect regional theatre-going.

Those present at the 1892 Select Committee heard evidence once again of the importance of the pantomime for the provincial manager. At this later hearing, the Manager of the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, Mr. Mercer Simpson, gave evidence that included further emphasis on the role that pantomime played in the provinces, and its financial importance. Furthermore, the 1892 Committee members heard evidence and discussed the issue of censorship in relation to the pantomime: the practical issues surrounding control by the Examiner of Plays, and the suggested monitoring of performances by local audiences. The implications of the evidence regarding finance and censorship frame the argument in this thesis. The following chapter by chapter

breakdown will contextualise this decision and illustrate how I intend to establish my argument.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the established and published research on nineteenth-century pantomime. It highlights the paucity of work on the Victorian and provincial pantomime, and identifies the potential reasons underlying the restricted study of the genre to date: principally concerns of ideology and definition. As I establish in this first chapter, my research does not aim to replace studies of the London pantomime; such an attempt would be self-defeating, as the London productions were important and evidently set national trends. However, neither should it be accepted that the provincial theatres were somehow second-best. Instead, my emphasis is on the parallel study of provincial theatres, and the need to shift rather than replace the critical perspective.

This shift forms the basis of Chapter 2, which begins by providing an historical and socio-economic background to the two towns and their Theatres Royal. In turn, I will discuss the genre and present an outline of the structure and traditions of pantomime. The second half of the chapter combines both the economic context and the developments of the genre in a discussion of spectacle in productions at the two theatres, both before and behind the scenes.

As I have mentioned, pantomime was judged to be the financial lynch pin of the provincial theatre season. Following on from evidence established in Chapter 2 regarding the style of production at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham, Chapter 3 is a detailed discussion of the actuality of such claims. In the mid-1860s, the town witnessed economic fluctuations and yet the management of the Theatre Royal continued to produce pantomimes that ran for between six and nine weeks. Drawing on financial records from the two seasons 1865-66 and 1866-67, I explore how the theatre management provided pantomime in seasons that had witnessed both relative affluence and the novelty of a new theatre, and, conversely, economic difficulty and dwindling audiences. In particular, this chapter places the empirical evidence alongside the concurrent newspaper previews and

reviews to examine how the theatre management promoted a pantomime in times of local hardship.

The visuals of pantomime were a crucial part of its success, but elements of the script could be cut, altered or added to both at the rehearsal stage and during the run of the production. It is partly for that reason that the role of the author has often been sidelined in favour of spectacle; nineteenth-century critics sometimes referred to the script as simply providing a series of 'pegs' on which to hang the scenery and ballets. In Chapter 4, I reassess the role of the pantomime author. It is not my intention to try and realign the artistic merit of the pantomime script, nor to make any claims regarding the cohesion of the script in performance; there is sufficient evidence that contemporaneous newspaper reviews commented on changes and necessary cuts to the script, either to make it funnier or to reduce the overall running time of the show. What is significant is that particular writers were engaged by the provincial theatre managements, often for a number of years. This chapter presents some biographical details of four authors engaged at the Nottingham and Birmingham theatres. This evidence is presented together with promotional materials that sited the authors and their work in very specific relationships to the local towns and theatres for which they were writing.

Chapter 5 continues to examine the textual evidence of those authors and argues that their work – more especially their satirical input – incorporated a specific and relevant knowledge of local issues, whether social, economic, civic or political. The chapter concludes that, even with the rather large caveat in place regarding the mutability of the script, the fact that certain references and subject matter were addressed in the scripts is crucial in an understanding of local pantomime production.

Although several of my chapters are predicated on the need to view the provincial pantomime over a number of years, in order to chart the various developments and trends, a case study provides an opportunity to examine those claims in detail. In 1880 both theatres were presenting productions of the story of Dick Whittington and, in Chapter 6,

the details of the two productions, established from the scripts, reviews and advertisements, demonstrate aspects of production and promotion discussed in the preceding chapters.

At the end of this thesis I have included a Glossary of pantomime terms used in my argument. These terms will have been addressed in the course of my discussion – largely in Chapter 2 – but the Glossary will hopefully provide a quick point of reference for the reader. There are four Appendices to my thesis, which provide examples and further reference. Appendix A details the pantomime titles, authors and theatre managers and lessees for the entire period, at both theatres. Appendix B complements information provided in Chapter 3 and comprises a table of income, expenditure and profit and loss figures for the September to April theatre season at Nottingham in 1865-66 and 1866-67. This information will provide an immediate overview of the box office fluctuations experienced over the period, which I address in detail in the course of my main chapter. Appendices C and D also complement a specific chapter, this time Chapter 5. Appendix C is a list of identified references that occur in the extant books of words and manuscript copies of selected pantomimes. There are a considerable quantity of references over the period and a full list would create an unwarranted demand on the reader. I have therefore provided a selection from five yearly intervals at both theatres. References from the pantomimes of 1866, 1871, 1876, 1881, 1886 and 1891 encompass both the principal and occasional authors engaged by the theatre managements, as well as a timespan that charts changing local concerns and subjects of deemed importance. Many of the national and international references are self-evident, but I have provided details, where necessary, that should illuminate more localised and less well-known references.

As I discuss in Chapter 5, the topical song became a popular and much expected feature of the pantomime, especially at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham. Although one or two of those songs occurred in each pantomime, the nature of their subject matter meant that the song content changed frequently and, in many instances, little has survived

beyond the title. A few examples can be found in the manuscript copies of pantomimes written for the Theatre Royal, Nottingham in the late 1870s. I have reproduced one of those songs as Appendix D, to give a flavour of the style and material. Once again, I have, where possible, provided explanatory notes for the local references.

Chapter 1: Review of Secondary Sources

> Every body 'pooh-poohs' the pantomime, but every body goes to see it. It is voted 'sad nonsense', and played every night for two months.[1]

In undertaking an initial survey of contemporary research on the Victorian provincial pantomime, it would appear that a *Times* reviewer of as long ago as 1823 pre-empted many of the late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century critical attitudes to the genre. The sparsity of academic analysis available suggests that the provincial pantomime has indeed been 'voted "sad nonsense"', and yet its importance – the fact that 'every body' went to see it, and that it ran for 'two months' (sometimes longer), and continued to do so throughout the nineteenth century – should not be underestimated. This observation is particularly valid at a time when theatre historians are recognising the social and economic importance of popular theatre genres and extending the methodologies of nineteenth-century theatre research.

Pantomime itself has not been completely ignored. Study of the developments of the genre up to the early nineteenth century has been dominated by David Mayer's *Harlequin in His Element: English Pantomime 1800-1836.* In more recent years, Jane Moody's *Illegitimate Theatre in London 1770-1840* has provided a broader contextual base for the pantomimes of Georgian London, and June 2004 saw the publication of John O'Brien's *Harlequin Britain: Pantomime and Entertainment 1690-1760*, which addresses the eighteenth-century pantomime as a locus of cultural change. The principal monograph that engages with Victorian pantomime remains Michael R. Booth's *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century V: Pantomimes, Extravaganzas and Burlesques.* This work, together with Booth's *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*, and Mander and Mitchenson's *Pantomime: A Story in Pictures*, provides an informed background to the genre. Furthermore, in recent years, Jim Davis has written on the ideology of pantomime at Drury Lane, Peter Holland

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[1] 'Review', *The Times*, 27 December 1823. Cited in David Mayer III, *Harlequin in His Element: The English Pantomime 1806-1836* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 17-18.

has discussed sexuality and gender, also in the Drury Lane pantomime and Tracy C. Davis and Diane Purkiss have commented valuably on the social and economic role of both women and children employed in pantomime productions.[2]

However, in terms of the nineteenth-century pantomime, the works of David Mayer and Michael Booth are cited frequently as the principal sources of historical information and definition by other writers, and this critical reliance would suggest a closure of discussion in the field. In addition, those critics who do write about the pantomime have frequently based their research only on the London stage, with particular reference to the Augustus Harris/Arthur Collins pantomimes at Drury Lane in the 1880s and 1890s. Indeed, the impression left is that Victorian pantomime can be summarised according to one or two seminal works and that those statements will suffice. Despite the occasional nod in its direction, there is a sense that the genre has been sufficiently dealt with by the academic world. Moreover, the continuing and developing studies of nineteenth-century theatre and popular culture, music hall, revue and variety, as well as non-theatrical entertainments such as the fairgrounds, circuses and film, serve merely to highlight the absence of further studies of the Victorian pantomime, notably that produced in the provinces.

Since the 1970s, studies of theatre history have made a gradual move, not only into the sphere of popular culture but also, in terms of theoretical approaches, beyond the footlights towards the contextualising of theatre performance within its social, economic and historical environs. There has been a decisive move away from placing drama within a literary tradition to a more sociologically based study of the theatre, in which cross-disciplinary work has become more evident, particularly in the last ten years. This progression – in subject matter and methodologies – can be identified particularly, albeit

[2] Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London 1770-1840* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), John O'Brien, *Harlequin Britain: Pantomime and Entertainment 1690-1760* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2004), *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century V: Pantomimes, Extravaganzas and Burlesques*, ed. by Michael R. Booth (London: OUP, 1976), Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, *Pantomime: A Story in Pictures* (London: Peter Davies, 1973), Jim Davis, 'Imperial Transgressions: The Ideology of Drury Lane Pantomime in the Late Nineteenth Century', *NTQ*, 12 (1996), 147-155, Peter Holland, 'The Play of Eros: Paradoxes of Gender in English Pantomime', *NTQ*, 13 (1997), 195-204, Tracy C. Davis, 'The Theatrical Employees of Victorian Britain: Demography of an Industry', *NCT*, 18: 1 and 2 (1990), 5-34, and Diane Purkiss, *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (London: Penguin, 2000).

not exclusively, in editorials and book reviews in leading journals such as *Nineteenth Century Theatre*.

In a 1977 review of recent research, David Mayer, alongside an overview of annotated play texts, 'theatrical biography, accounts of acting, and discussions of scene design and theatrical iconography', discussed recent academic work on the Victorian popular theatre. He noted a shift of 'popular theatre genres' into the academic arena, including 'melodrama, extravaganza and pantomime' and expressed concern that a work such as *The Revels History of Drama in English 1750-1880* had omitted popular genres such as the pantomime.[3] In conclusion, Mayer applauded the work that had been produced on popular theatre, but drew attention to the need for further and wider research into the areas of theatrical iconography, popular entertainments beyond the theatre, 'the growth of spectacle, of the Drury Lane and Adelphi melodrama and the pantomime extravaganza', as well as the '"minor", East-End, and provincial theatres'.[4] Mayer's call was complemented by the publication of conference proceedings that highlighted developing research interests: *Western Popular Theatre. The Proceedings of a Symposium sponsored by the Manchester University Department of Drama,* which included papers given at a 1974 symposium, and *Performance and Politics in Popular Drama: Aspects of Popular Entertainment in Theatre, Film and Television.*[5] The latter conference took place in 1977 and the papers were published three years later. Both of those collections foregrounded some of the subjects that Mayer had found missing in his review: for example, the equestrian and water dramas, spectacle, and, notably, provincial theatre addressed in Douglas Reid's essay 'Popular Theatre in Victorian Birmingham'.[6]

During the 1980s, there was a continued interest in popular theatre research, most notably into the music hall. In a 1992 overview of research in the preceding decade,

[3] David Mayer, 'Some Recent Writings on Victorian Theatre', *Victorian Studies*, 20 (1977), 311-317 (pp. 312 and 314).
[4] Ibid., pp. 316-317.
[5] *Western Popular Theatre. The Proceedings of a Symposium Sponsored by the Manchester University Department of Drama*, ed. by David Mayer and Kenneth Richards (London: Methuen, 1977) and *Performance and Politics in Popular Drama: Aspects of Popular Entertainment in Theatre, Film and Television 1800-1976: Papers Given at a Conference at the University of Kent at Canterbury, September 1977*, ed. by David Bradby, Louis James and Bernard Sharratt (Cambridge: CUP, 1980).
[6] Bradby et. al., pp. 65-89.

Michael Booth enthusiastically reviewed Peter Bailey's *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure* and Jacky Bratton's *Music Hall: Performance and Style*.[7] In 1985, a book review in *Nineteenth Century Theatre Research*, once more by David Mayer, also drew attention to recent work that had moved beyond the theatre auditorium, this time to regional fairs and circuses.[8] Cary M. Mazer's 1994 review of recent scholarship continued to note 'the rising interest [...] in nineteenth-century theatre, along with other middle- and low-brow forms of cultural production'. However, at the same time, Mazer suggested a redirection of theatre studies back into the theatre, highlighting the necessity of understanding 'minor' East End theatres (and, presumably, by implication, provincial theatres) 'before we can generalise about the relationship between the dramatist, the performer, and the theatre-going public'.[9] In general, the trends of theatre research have tried to move away from the theatre building, as evinced in Jane Moody's survey of 2000. In her essay, 'The State of the Abyss: Nineteenth Century Performance and Theatre Historiography in 1999', she charted the development and range of work within theatre studies, in particular 'performances which actually took place beyond the boundaries of the professional theatre: parlour melodrama, public readings and recitations'.[10]

The methodological approaches to theatre studies have also changed in order to engage with the new research interests in both popular theatre and culture. David Mayer's 1977 critique suggested that popular theatre genres had been neglected in 'our effort to chart the growing acceptance of "society drama"'.[11] In particular, Mayer identified what he perceived as a key problem in contemporary theatre research, principally a limited canon ('an express journey between Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Henrik Ibsen or George Bernard Shaw, with infrequent grudgingly brief stops at Douglas Jerrold and Dion Boucicault and Sir Arthur Pinero') created in part by a lack of alternative methodologies. He commented that '[t]he persistence of the express [...] is explained in

[7] Michael R. Booth, 'Studies in Nineteenth Century British Theatre 1980-1989', *NCT*, 20:1 (1992), 46-57 (p. 56).
[8] David Mayer, 'Book Review', *NCTR*, 13:1 (1985), 40-44 (p. 44).
[9] Cary Mazer, 'Loose Cannons: Recent Scholarship on Victorian Drama', *NCT*, 22:1 (1994), 56-72 (pp. 57 and 65).
[10] Moody, 'The State of the Abyss: Nineteenth Century Performance and Theatre Historiography in 1999', *JVC*, 5 (2000), 112-128 (p. 112).
[11] Mayer, 'Recent Writings', p. 316

part by the yoked notions that nineteenth-century drama cannot be appreciated through conventional literary criticism and that, anyhow, there is little of value in the theatre of that century for the serious scholar'. Mayer particularly highlighted the perceived problem of understanding popular culture in terms of 'orthodox criticism'.[12] In 1994, Cary Mazer was able to observe a significant move away from 'the question of the Victorian drama's "literary" status'.[13] Similarly, in 2000, Jane Moody pinpointed the restrictive approaches that had limited early work on the melodrama. In 'State of the Abyss', she highlighted the dominance of the 'evolutionist theatrical history' in studies of the nineteenth century, much as David Mayer had foregrounded the whistle-stop 'express journey' of the nineteenth-century canon in 1977.[14] In turn, Michael Booth commented in 1992 that:

> One can read some recent works of theatre history [...] without knowing such things as society and culture exist, so divorced are these works from any sense of the larger world of which the theatre is only a part, and from any understanding that the theatre itself is subject to social and cultural determinants quite outside its walls.[15]

By contrast, in his review of Martin Meisel's *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth Century England*, Booth noted the changing emphases of research in the 1980s, in which 'one of the major trends of nineteenth-century theatre research' had been 'the consideration and evaluation of the relationship between theatre and its society and culture'.[16] Similarly, in 1989, R. W. Vince in his essay 'Theatre History as an Academic Discipline', identified the influence of New Historicism as enabling a break from more traditional forms of theatre research.[17] In 1990, Tracy C. Davis suggested greater interdisciplinary work, and promoted an engagement with new

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[12] Mayer, 'Recent Writings', p. 311.
[13] Mazer, p. 57.
[14] Moody, 'State of the Abyss', p. 113.
[15] Booth, 'Studies 1980-1989', pp. 49-50.
[16] Ibid., p. 50.
[17] R. W. Vince, 'Theatre History as an Academic Discipline' in *Interpreting the Past: Essays in the Historiography of Performance* ed. by Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), pp. 1-17.

kinds of data, (she herself employed New Historicist methods in her research) as well as suggesting new approaches to established material.[18] Davis's 1996 'Editorial' for *Nineteenth Century Theatre* similarly encouraged a break from 'classic modes of enquiry' to research culture in the widest sense of social interactions.[19] Such moves have noticeably influenced theatre history research in the last few years and by 2000, Jane Moody could clearly identify a new contextualisation of theatre in a wider social and, more particularly, political discourse.[20] Theatre historians have also sought to re-evaluate available archive and secondary material, for example, in Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow's discussion of the writings of the early twentieth-century critic Macqueen-Pope.[21] Similarly, Jacky Bratton in her recent work, *New Readings in Theatre History*, has also offered a new perspective on the reading of playbills; she resists the research attractions of what Tracy Davis referred to as the 'alluringly tidy bundles of playbills', to reuse and reassess textual materials.[22] Jane Moody has also re-established the 'textual and visual' theatre ephemera to its rightful place of study, although she defined the usage within the study of melodrama: 'the rhetoric of nineteenth-century playbills [...] played a vital paratextual role in shaping audiences' expectations'.[23] The role of the audience as reader follows the re-examination of audiences that has been undertaken in two influential works: Dagmar Kift's *The Victorian Music Hall* and Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow's *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing 1840-1880*.[24] These studies have employed empiricist and sociological methodologies to readdress the socio-economic contexts of, respectively, regional music halls and theatre production at the London minor theatres. Such revisions and New Historicist methodologies have complemented the development of research into theatre as a commercial enterprise. In relation to this

[18] Tracy C. Davis , 'The Theatrical Employees', pp. 5-34.
[19] Tracy C. Davis, 'Editorial', *NCT*, 24:1(1996), pp. 36-41.
[20] Moody, 'State of the Abyss', pp. 120-121.
[21] Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow, ' "Wistful Remembrancer": The Historiographical Problem of Macqueen-Popery', *NTQ*, 68 (2001), 299-309.
[22] Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), pp. 38-40.
[23] Moody, 'State of the Abyss', p. 122.
[24] Dagmar Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class and Conflict* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996) and Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001).

particular aspect of the nineteenth-century theatre, one of the most valuable remarks was made by Michael Booth in his book review of 1992. In his overview of the 1980s, he included John Pick's *The West End*, which was concerned with the social and financial policies of West End managements. Booth noted that the most important element of Pick's work was the study of the '*business* of theatre, a subject too often scanted in nineteenth-century theatre history'.[25] Eight years later, Jane Moody recognised the need to address the theatre audience as consumers, and highlighted the lack of work on the economics of theatrical production, admitting that: 'it is tempting for theatre historians [...] to regard numbers of all kinds [...] as tedious details to be swept off into historical oblivion wherever possible.'[26] Moody's confession was soon to be overshadowed by Tracy C. Davis's *The Economics of the British Stage: 1800-1914* which was also published in 2000 and which not only addressed theatre business practices but also, and valuably, sought to engage with regional archive material.[27] Certainly, critics have attempted in recent years to widen and address notions of popular culture beyond the conventional theatre building, but in this process pantomime has, on the whole, been omitted. In speculating why pantomime, and particularly provincial pantomime, has attracted so little critical comment, three issues may be suggested: cultural attitudes; an inherited dependance on material about the London pantomime, particularly Drury Lane; and archive locations.

In 'State of the Abyss', Jane Moody made a crucial point when she stated that '[i]t is disconcerting to realize that many of the authoritative surveys of theatrical forms, published over three decades ago, have never been succeeded, let alone challenged.'[28] Foremost amongst those surveys, she argued, was David Mayer's *Harlequin in His Element: The English Pantomime 1806-1836.* However, in her proposed extension to the range of genres studied, Moody did not promote the exploration of pantomime beyond

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[25] Booth, 'Studies 1980-1989', p. 53. Booth's use of the phrase the '*business* of theatre' (original emphasis) has influenced the title of my thesis.
[26] Moody, 'State of the Abyss', pp. 123, 116.
[27] Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000).
[28] Moody, 'State of the Abyss', p. 124.

the time range established by Mayer.[29] The emphasis of research remained implicitly on the Georgian pantomime. This curtailment of study has been further implicated in the recent publication of John O'Brien's *Harlequin Britain: Pantomime and Entertainment. 1690-1760.* Although, by O'Brien's own assertion, it is not a history of pantomime, but rather, a study of 'the relationship between [pantomimes] and the culture that produced them', the publication nonetheless foregrounds the early pantomime as a more valuable area of study than that of the later period.[30] In *English Drama: A Cultural History* by Simon Shepherd and Peter Womack, their discussion of pantomime is contained within the chapter on melodrama, and emphasises the place of eighteenth-century pantomime amongst the legitimate and non-legitimate theatrical forms.[31] George Speaight's recent work on the accessories of pantomime, such as the 'turn-ups' and juvenile theatre sheets, have also focused attention on the early nineteenth-century form of the genre.[32] Even a work written for a general readership, Norman Robbins's, *Slapstick and Sausages: The Evolution of the British Pantomime,* published in 2002, expended five chapters on the origins and early history of the pantomime to the 1800s.[33] The early history of pantomime is interesting and the work by Mayer and O'Brien in particular has established and developed valuable evidence for our understanding of the genre. However, the critical resistance to moving research into the Victorian period is perturbing and rests, I would suggest, rather too heavily on an uncritical acceptance of nineteenth-century judgments about the pantomime.

For example, in 'The Lost Art of Pantomime', the critic Clement Scott mourned the harlequinade that he thought 'lost for ever'.[34] He remembered the Georgian pantomimes of his youth and, in particular, he recalled the acting of Grimaldi, who had revitalised the role of Clown in the early part of the century.[35] Scott was not alone in

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[29] Ibid., p. 125.
[30] O'Brien, *Harlequin Britain: Pantomime and Entertainment*, p. xix.
[31] Simon Shepherd and Peter Womack, *English Drama: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 190-192.
[32] George Speaight, 'New Light on "Mother Goose" ', *TN*, 52 (1998), 18-23, and George Speaight, 'Harlequinade Turn-Ups', *TN*, 45 (1991), 70-84.
[33] Norman Robbins, *Slapstick and Sausages: The Evolution of the British Pantomime* (Tiverton: Trapdoor, 2002).
[34] Clement Scott, *The Drama of Yesterday and Today* 2 vols (London: MacMillan, 1899) ii, 164.
[35] Scott, pp. 164-187.

recalling Grimaldi's acting talents; in 1872, J. R. Planché also remembered the early pantomimes: 'there was some congruity, some dramatic construction [...] and then the acting! For it was acting, and first-rate acting'.[36] Planché was quoted by Leopold Wagner in *The Pantomimes and All About Them* in 1881; the latter additionally saw the acting of the harlequinade as good training for the 'legitimate drama'.[37] Finally, Edwin E. Eigner, in *The Dickens Pantomime*, quotes J. Wiston who had been the Manager of Drury Lane theatre in the early nineteenth century. According to Wiston, 'Grimaldi was a better clown. He made it a more intellectual performance.'[38]

In *New Readings*, Jacky Bratton has succinctly outlined the nineteenth-century concept of the 'decline of the drama' and the critical separation of popular theatre and dramatic literature in the early nineteenth century. Bratton acknowledges that such divisions can still influence theatre history, identifying melodrama as having been particularly susceptible to dismissal by exponents of the dramatic integrity of theatre.[39] Simon Shepherd and Peter Womack, in *English Drama: A Cultural History*, have referred to the re-definition of pantomime in the eighteenth century as an art form.[40] The specifics of mime and its inheritance in the Italian *comedia dell'arte* lent pantomime an historical and cultural authenticity, and it is this perception which underlies the reminiscences by Scott, Wagner and Planché about Grimaldi's acting abilities. However, the incorporation of spectacle and song after the 1840s epitomised for many critics not only the perceived degradation of theatre but also, and crucially, the degradation of the genre, an attitude which, as I have noted, seems to have influenced modern studies of the genre.[41] By

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[36] J. R. Planché, *The Recollections and Reflections of J. R. Planché: A Professional Autobiography* 2 vols (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872) ii, 139. Planché's reminiscences are also cited in R. J. Broadbent, *A History of Pantomime* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, 1901), p. 172.

[37] Leopold Wagner, *The Pantomimes and All About Them: Their Origin, History, Preparation and Exponents* (London: Heywood, 1881), p. 51.

[38] Edwin M. Eigner, *The Dickens Pantomime* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989), p. 143.

[39] Bratton, *New Readings*, pp. 12-13. Such concerns have also been described by Russell Jackson, who discusses pantomime alongside melodrama. See: Russell Jackson, *Victorian Theatre* (London: A & C Black, 1989), pp. 2-3 and 5-6.

[40] Shepherd and Womack, pp. 192-193.

[41] A brief but succinct outline of those nineteenth-century expressions of regret regarding the perceived decline of pantomime are given in: Robert Cheesmond, 'Oh No It Isn't: A Functionalistic Re-definition of Pantomime', in *Popular Theatres? Papers from the Popular Theatre Conference*, ed. by Ros Merkin (Liverpool: Liverpool John Moores University, 1996), pp. 220-239 (pp. 220-222). See also a reference to nineteenth-century critical attitudes in 'Introduction to Volume Five' of *English Plays*, p. 2 .

contrast, pantomime producers have always accepted the intrinsic variations of the genre. Indeed its survival throughout three hundred years has hinged on its adaptability and on theatre managers' awareness of changing tastes and expectations. As John O'Brien has pointed out, such maneuverings had been at the root of pantomime's success a hundred years earlier.[42] The inherited nineteenth-century perception of pantomime as a degraded art form has been allowed too great a voice in the twentieth century; as the writer Gerald Frow has stated, 'pantomime has *never* been what it was'.[43] Ironically, there were plenty of other critics in the nineteenth century (often in the regional newspapers) who applauded the evolutionary nature of pantomime, recognising that change was needed in order to *stop* pantomime declining. However, such vitality via adaptability has failed to impress late twentieth-century critics.

In addition to being affected by nineteenth-century judgments about artistic worth, I would also suggest that Victorian pantomime is (and has been) regarded in the same critical light that for many years fell on melodrama and the music hall. Those genres were rediscovered and re-valued as a result of the post 1960s growth in cultural studies; so in his 1977 review of recent work on the music hall, David Mayer was able to claim that the nineteenth-century music hall 'is moving toward academic respectability'.[44] However, Victorian pantomime – and more especially, its provincial productions – has remained in the dark. There is a sense, perhaps, that the Theatres Royal in particular, especially in the provinces, have a limited research value when set against the changing politics of the working-class music hall. In 1997, Peter Holland briefly referred to 'a cultural contempt for the [pantomime] form' in contemporary society, which is, possibly, an additional reason for the limited academic comment to date.[45] There exists, therefore, a curious tension: of pantomime being interpreted in the nineteenth century as commercial, popular (vulgar) and therefore inartistic, and a later twentieth-century interpretation of it as

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[42] John O'Brien, 'Harlequin Britain: Eighteenth-Century Pantomime and the Cultural Location of Entertainment(s)', *TJ*, 50 (1998), 489-510 (p. 399).
[43] Cited in Marie Kruger, 'English Pantomime: Reflections on a Dynamic Tradition', *South African Theatre Journal*, 14 (2000), 146-173 (p. 147).
[44] Mayer, 'Recent Writings', p. 314.
[45] Holland, p. 196.

popular, mainstream and therefore politically uninteresting. Victorian pantomime has effectively been caught in a cultural pincer attack from the nineteenth and twenty-first century.

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, as far back as 1977 David Mayer had called for further research into popular and provincial theatre. Despite being able to mention selected work on regional entertainments in the Midlands, Lancashire, Oldham and Tyneside in his book review of 1985, by 1992 Michael Booth was still reiterating the general lack of research in this area, highlighting the fact that in the 1980s 'almost everything written has centered upon London'.[46] Booth discussed the development of the regional theatres in *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, and even cited Leopold Wagner's 1881 comment on the importance of provincial pantomime centres such as Birmingham.[47] Booth does not engage with this latter statement – indeed Wagner simply lists towns and theatres with no further exploration of the subject – and there is an implied and continuing assumption by many writers that London set the theatrical trend. Shepherd and Womack have succinctly addressed this issue of 'metropolitan domination' in the introduction to *English Drama*. In this work they argue that, '[s]ince the late sixteenth century, theatrical production in Britain has been organized in an increasingly unitary system whose centre, socially, economically and politically, is London'. The authors appreciate that while 'this hierarchy has been continually deplored and resisted' and that 'there are times [...] when theatre is more inventive, popular and energetic at the edges than it is at the centre, that fact doesn't shift the structural relation in itself.'[48] This 'hierarchy' in relation to pantomime, is evident in works throughout the twentieth century. More especially, it is a hierarchy that invariably devolves to a single theatre: the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, and which depends on inherited assumptions. For example, in 'Imperial Transgressions', Jim Davis quotes a nineteenth-century review in *The Star* newspaper, which described the Drury Lane pantomime as a 'national institution'.[49] Similarly, Michael Booth in his

[46] Booth, 'Studies 1980-1989', p. 56.
[47] Leopold Wagner, *The Pantomimes and All About Them*, pp. 32-3, cited in Booth, *English Plays*, p. 53.
[48] Shepherd and Womack, p. x.
[49] Jim Davis, 'Imperial Transgressions', p. 148.

'Introduction to Volume Five' of *English Plays*, states that 'Drury Lane [...] dominated English pantomime in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century' and cites the *Theatre* of 1882, which claimed that 'Drury Lane pantomime is an English Institution'.[50] However, the most interesting comments on this topic were made by A. E. Wilson back in 1934:

> The history of pantomime must inevitably resolve itself into a history of Drury Lane. It was on the boards of the 'national theatre' that some of the first pantomimes appeared and earned the support of the public, and it was there that pantomime assumed the character of a fixed institution. Pantomime was looked for there as a matter of course [...] and it was from there that it drew its peculiar character. The principal changes effected in its form nearly all emanated directly or indirectly from it, and consequently the feeling that this historic theatre is the national home of pantomime has descended from one generation to another [...] I make no apology, therefore, in dealing with the subject of pantomime generally for dwelling so much upon the history of Drury Lane.[51]

Wilson also cites a contemporaneous report, this time from the manager of the Britannia Theatre in Hoxton, who claimed that '[t[he other theatres of London and the provinces were influenced by Drury Lane'.[52] Wilson's work, alongside that of David Mayer, is cited by Michael Booth in 1991 as one of the two principal works on nineteenth-century pantomime to date and Peter Holland refers to Wilson as 'the most important critic of panto in the middle of this century'.[53] Wilson's work is certainly valuable and contains extremely useful information about the structure of pantomime, certain performers, and performance traditions. However, his promotion of Drury Lane has placed an unnecessarily large foundation stone for later twentieth-century approaches to the pantomime. Works such as Wilson's *Christmas Pantomime* have a direct lineage to nineteenth-century publications on theatre history, in particular, Leopold Wagner's *The Pantomimes and All About Them*.[54] The breadth of coverage suggested by Wagner's title

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[50] Booth, *English Plays*, p. 54.
[51] A. E. Wilson, *Christmas Pantomime* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1934), p. 174.
[52] Ibid., p. 202.
[53] Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* , p. 209 and Holland, p. 197. See also Alan Ruston, 'Richard Nelson Lee and the Victorian Pantomime in Great Britain', *NCTR* 11:2 (1983), 105-117 (p. 105).
[54] See also A. E. Wilson, *Pantomime Pageant: A Procession of Harlequins, Clowns, Comedians, Principal Boys, Pantomime-writers, Producers and Playgoers* (London: Stanley Paul, 1946).

belies the fact that the book was in fact dedicated to Augustus Harris, then the Manager and pantomime producer at Drury Lane.

The Drury Lane theatre was influential and important, but that fact should not be allowed to overshadow the pantomimes produced at other theatres, especially those in the provinces. Although Drury Lane set a benchmark for production trends, those trends were not slavishly followed and provincial theatres, such as the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, actively strove to establish their own unique identity. Michael Booth, in *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, highlighted the fact that improved transport in the nineteenth century meant that audience members could and did often visit the theatre in more than one town.[55] If economic conditions were favourable to audiences visiting more than one theatre, managements would have endeavored to offer different fare. It is far more useful, therefore, to regard Drury Lane as a setter of national trends that were subject to regional differences and influences and, more especially, were tailored to the taste of local audiences. I will return to this point later in this chapter.

The third and final issue that may have contributed to a lack of work on provincial pantomime is the practical problem of imperfect archive records. Just prior to theatre historians realising the importance of empirical evidence such as box office receipts and management ledgers, provincial theatres were being destroyed or refurbished and many of their records discarded. As Philip A. Talbot stressed, in his 2000 essay on the finances of the Macclesfield Theatre Company, '[s]uch records were until recently held to be of little value, and may have been lost or destroyed.'[56] In undertaking my own research for Chapter 3, I discovered that many of the financial records from the Theatre Royal, Nottingham were destroyed when the theatre was restored in the 1970s.[57] Although, as recent theoretical approaches have emphasised, there will, rarely, be a complete archive and even the notion of a 'complete' archive is illusory, such absences can be

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[55] Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, pp. 14-16.
[56] Philip A. Talbot, 'The Macclesfield Theatre Company and Nineteenth-Century Silk Manufacturers', *TN*, 54 (2000), 24-42 (p. 37).
[57] Established in conversation with Helen Whybrew, an administrator at the theatre, in 2000.

disheartening.[58] Furthermore, until the *Backstage* online project was set up in 2000, there was little in the way of a centralised archive for provincial records. The Theatre Museum, in London has remarkably little regional material from the nineteenth century (indeed, only one programme from the Theatre Royal, Nottingham), the emphasis in the past having been to preserve London's heritage.[59] The provincial city libraries have become the repository for most records, but the variable nature in which extant collections have been maintained and catalogued may be another factor in the avoidance of regional pantomime study. A telling comment was made by Alan Ruston in 1990: his survey of pantomimes by the authors Richard Nelson and Nelson Lee Junior led him to conclude that, although he had managed to identify all the London productions,

> The same cannot be said for those performed elsewhere; there are undoubtedly others performed in provincial theatres that could only be located by a blanket search through local newspapers and playbills for many towns and cities covering a period of nearly twenty years.[60]

In spite of a reluctance by many critics to engage with the Victorian provincial pantomime, important work has been published on the Victorian pantomime and, separately, provincial theatre. What follows is an overview of the arguments and opportunities for further research that those works have presented.

Amongst the source details for his 1991 work, *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, Michael Booth stated that 'there is no scholarly monograph on Victorian pantomime'.[61] Whilst it has not been the sole subject of an academic work, Booth's own *English Plays*, published in 1976, does in part negate his comment. In this book, Booth detailed the developments, interrelation and influences of the three genres of pantomime, burlesque

[58] In addition to the practical considerations of potential loss or destruction, exponents of New Historicism have emphasised that archive collections are gathered and displayed as a result of partial or subjective decision-making, which may influence the way in which they are viewed and interpreted. See, in particular, Stephen Greenblatt, 'Resonance and Wonder' in *Literary Theory Today* ed. by Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-Ryan (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990), pp. 74-90. Joseph Donohue also addresses the issue of archive collections and their perceived significance in 'Evidence and Documentation' in Postlewait and McConachie, pp. 193-194. See also R. W. Vince, whose essay highlights the 'incomplete' nature of 'historical data' (p. 13).

[59] Established through correspondence with the Theatre Museum, London during the period of research.

[60] Alan Ruston, 'Richard Nelson Lee and Nelson Lee Junior, Authors of Victorian Pantomime: A Biographical Checklist', *NCT*, 18: 1 and 2 (1990), 75-85 (p. 75).

[61] Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, p. 209.

and extravaganza, discussing how the two other genres influenced and shaped pantomime from the 1850s. Pantomime was also a central feature of Booth's *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*, published in 1981 and again in *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (1991), although the latter drew largely from his earlier works. John Charles Morrow's PhD 'The Staging of Pantomime at Sadler's Wells, 1828-1860' is a detailed discussion of tricks and transformations, whilst Mander and Mitchenson's *Pantomime: A Story in Pictures*, published in 1973, offers an outline and pictorial overview of the development and staging of pantomimes in the nineteenth century, although their discussion of pantomime, extravaganza and burlesque has been superseded by Booth's *English Plays*.

In the final chapter of *Harlequin in His Element* ('Harlequin Out of Place'), David Mayer outlined changes in the pantomime structure and content after 1836. Such changes – particularly in the harlequinade – have been the subject of debate in critical works of both the nineteenth and twentieth century. Mayer's own argument rested on the innovation of the Georgian pantomime and, in his final chapter he chose, naturally, to support those nineteenth-century critics who mourned the lost talents of Grimaldi and felt that there was no adequate successor. Without his inventiveness and particular humour, the pantomime was impelled, it was argued, to absorb aspects of the extravaganza and burlesque as second-rate replacements. Such responses have been cited by twentieth-century critics other than Mayer (for example, Michael Booth and A. E. Wilson), but other arguments have also been foregrounded. For example, it was felt by some that the humour of the Georgian pantomime had an edge of cruelty that was disliked by later audiences; this theory has been preferred by Marie Kruger in her article 'English Pantomime: Reflections on a Dynamic Tradition'.[62] Robert Cheesmond, in 'Oh No It Isn't: A Functionalist Re-definition of Pantomime', also cited the anti-violence and immorality argument of the nineteenth century, but for him such conclusions formed the basis for his argument concerning the 'psychosocial' function of the clown.[63] The

[62] Kruger, p. 161, citing Frow.
[63] Cheesmond, p. 230 (in relation to arguments of immorality). The 'psychosocial' function of the clown specifically referred to in his footnote 10, pp. 238-239.

judgements concerning changes to the genre and the perceived popularity of such moves must invariably be inconclusive: as I suggested earlier, there were as many critics in the nineteenth century that were in favour of the changes made to Victorian pantomime, as there were against. More importantly, Booth's *English Plays* documented such changes within the wider context, and presented a crucial argument for the survival of theatrical genres through alert responses by theatre managements to changing fashions. I will return to this point later in the chapter, in relation to recent studies on the economics of theatre.

A number of articles have addressed the Victorian pantomime, but the focal point that links them is the search for a classification. Pantomime is a shifting, changing, partially unscripted genre, but there has been a sustained need amongst some critics to define it within sometimes overly restrictive arguments. In some senses, those theories relate to the 'decline of pantomime' argument that I referred to earlier, but, rather than addressing notions of artistic decline, they relate to nineteenth-century concerns about a decline of morality in the pantomime. Peter Holland in his article, 'The Play of Eros', quoted W. Davenport Adams's concerns (expressed in 'The Decline of Pantomime' in 1882), regarding

> the sexuality of pantomime performance. He singled out the female chorus [...] 'not the sort of spectacle to which it is judicious to introduce the "young idea" [...] Over and over again must mothers have blushed [...] at the exhibition of female anatomy to which the "highly respectable" pantomime has introduced their children.'

Davenport Adams was also quoted by Holland with regard to the

> effect of the importation of music hall artists into the casts of pantomimes. Music-hall songs would, he wrote, 'not be tolerated by pater-familias in his drawing-room, and yet, when he takes his children to the pantomime, they are the most prominent portion of the entertainment. No doubt he and his children can stay away; but in that case it must be openly avowed that pantomime is not

> virginibus puerisque, and if it is not, what, then, is its reason for existing?'[64]

In 'Imperial Transgressions', Jim Davis also raised the issue of impropriety in the pantomime performance. It is ironic that although nineteenth-century concerns regarding children and moral standards have influenced some works on pantomime, the definition of the latter as a children's entertainment may have also acted to curtail a wider discussion. In the opening chapter of *Harlequin in His Element*, Mayer commented on the critical disregard for nineteenth-century popular theatre and, particularly, pantomime. He stated: '[t]he very titles of the pantomimes [...] suggest a swift return to the nursery or the childhood hearth'.[65] Whilst Mayer did not offer further comment, it is an interesting example of the 'cultural contempt' that may have affected further research in this area. Similarly, although he explored the influences and flexibility of the genre, Michael Booth, in his Introduction to *English Plays*, charted the development of the pantomime as a children's genre, noting the increased simplicity of plots and 'moral boundaries', a 'fixed moral pattern became apparent in the opening, in both characterization and scenic effect'.[66] In addition, in discussing the Drury Lane pantomimes, he not only referred to the presence of children in the cast, but also stated that '[r]eferences to children in the audience, to the necessity of pleasing them, and to their real or alleged loyalty to Drury Lane abound in the texts'.[67] However, Peter Holland clearly stated that the consideration of pantomime as a children's entertainment is little more than 'a convenient fiction' and many nineteenth-century reviews of the pantomime commented that it was as popular with adults as with children.[68] In turn, although contemporaneous reviews offered no such classification, twentieth-century critical works have also tried to define the pantomime in relation to class interests. For example, David Mayer, in *Harlequin in His Element*,

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[64] Holland, p. 203. The concerns of Davenport Adams, regarding the 'atmosphere' brought to the pantomime by music hall stars are quoted by Jim Davis in 'Imperial Transgressions', pp. 147-148, and in Mander & Mitchenson, pp. 35-36.
[65] Mayer, *Harlequin in His Element*, p. 1.
[66] Booth, *English Plays*, p. 46.
[67] Ibid., p. 55.
[68] Holland, p. 203.

referred to pantomime as a middle-class entertainment for middle-class audiences, but, in stark contrast, John McGrath claimed pantomime as a working-class entertainment, alongside variety and the music hall.[69] In 'Imperial Transgressions', Jim Davis referred to the tone of the pantomimes at Drury Lane, which, he claims, were 'distinctly middle class, in so far as they tended to mock both the idle rich and the irresponsible poor'.[70] Although Davis foregrounded a coherent ideology of national identity and imperialism in the Drury Lane pantomimes of the late nineteenth century, he recognised the problem of identifying the composition of the Drury Lane audiences, and the systems of belief they represented.[71] Although he allows for the possibility that pantomime 'had a wide influence in endorsing or confirming social attitudes and prejudices', Davis admitted that the audiences 'would have represented a range of perspectives, so that far more evidence is needed before we can be certain of the transactions taking place between performer and spectator'.[72] His recent work, *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing 1840-1880*, co-written with Victor Emeljanow, moves away from earlier definitions of audiences and, in relation to my own work, more usefully addresses pantomime production and the use of local topicality at the transpontine theatres. Davis and Emeljanow's work has suggested a wider range of interest groups at the London minor theatres, providing a useful starting point for my own research into the topical referencing of provincial pantomimes.

Whilst feminist theory and gay/gender studies are not central to my thesis, discussions of gender and particularly cross-dressing in the nineteenth-century theatre are a seemingly popular area of study in relation to the pantomime. In a 1994 book review, Kathy Fletcher, for example, highlighted Tracy C. Davis's essay 'The Actress in Victorian Pornography'. Fletcher noted the essay as being 'especially perceptive on Victorian audiences and the variety of their sexual gazes [which] is particularly relevant

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[69] Mayer, *Harlequin in His Element*, pp. 191-192 and John McGrath, *A Good Night Out: Popular Theatre, Audience, Class and Form* 2nd edn (London: Hern Books, 1996), pp. 28-29, 56.
[70] Jim Davis, 'Imperial Transgressions', p. 149.
[71] Ibid., p. 148.
[72] Ibid., pp. 154-155.

for nineteenth-century scholars analyzing burlesque, extravaganza, and pantomime – the forms which relied most heavily upon display of the female body'.[73] Gender studies, that emerged in the 1970s, have instigated interesting research into the Victorian pantomime and concerns regarding the theatrical presentation of the female form have led again to the question of children in the theatre and the suitability of pantomime content. Tracy C. Davis and Diane Purkiss have both discussed the issue of children as theatrical employees and the dual notion (particularly in Purkiss's work) of children as representatives of the ideal child (as pantomime 'fairy') and also as working children (in the presumed less than ideal environment of the theatre, reflected in contemporary concerns about child prostitution). Peter Holland's essay 'The Play of Eros: Paradoxes of Gender in English Pantomime', raised the issue of cross-dressing and expressions of sexuality in the theatre. Principally a discussion of twentieth-century pantomime, he also engaged with the nineteenth century particularly in terms of the development of the characters of Principal Boy and Dame and costuming. More recently, Robert Cheesmond's essay 'Oh No It Isn't: A Functionalistic Definition of Pantomime', with Sarah-Jane Dickenson's companion essay, 'Oh Yes It Is: A Practical Exploration of the Validity of the Role of Pantomime' explored the implications of cross-dressing. This particular emphasis has formed the core of other articles, notably the oft-quoted essay from 1974, 'The Sexuality of English Pantomime' by David Mayer, but Edwin M. Eigner's 'Imps, Dames and Principal Boys: Gender Confusion in the Nineteenth-Century Pantomime' and Sharon Aronofsky Weltman's 'Pantomime Truth and Gender Performance: John Ruskin on Theatre' have also addressed the perceived problematic boundaries of gender in pantomime. However, I would argue that all of these articles are limited by their concern with gender, sexuality and cross-dressing.[74]

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[73] Kathy J. Fletcher, 'Book Review', *NCT*, 22:1 (1994), 73-79 (p. 74).

[74] Sarah-Jane Dickenson, 'Oh Yes It Is: A Practical Exploration of the Validity of the Role of Pantomime' in *Popular Theatres? Papers from the Popular Theatre Conference*, ed. by Ros Merkin (Liverpool: Liverpool John Moores University, 1996), pp. 240-251; David Mayer, 'The Sexuality of English Pantomime', *TQ* 4 (1974), 55-64; Edwin M. Eigner, 'Imps, Dames and Principal Boys: Gender Confusion in the Nineteenth-Century Pantomime', *Browning Institute Studies* 17 (1989), 65-75; Sharon Aronofsky Weltman, 'Pantomime Truth and Gender Performance: John Ruskin on Theatre' in *Ruskin and Gender*, ed. by Dinah Birch and Francis O'Gorman (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 159-176.

Readings of the Victorian pantomime have not only been preoccupied with class and gender; as I suggested earlier, the search for a definition of pantomime itself has perplexed some critics. Douglas Reid, in his survey of Victorian theatre in Birmingham, dismissed pantomime outright as 'sui generis', and omitted it from his discussion of the Theatre Royal, although what exactly he meant by this usage is unclear.[75] In his essay 'Oh No It Isn't', Robert Cheesmond clearly stated that there is 'no other theatrical genre of which the "definition" has been such an obsession of critic, practitioner and audience alike.'[76] There has been, as Cheesmond continues to assert, a constant search to define 'proper' pantomime, largely contained within 'outbursts of sentimental regret'.[77] In part, this argument of 'regret' relates back to earlier concerns regarding the perceived decline of pantomime, but it also, in Cheesmond's eyes, links to notions of tradition. Cheesmond, sadly all too briefly, suggests that the issue of definition is defied by the individuality of productions.[78] This suggestion is crucial, especially in relation to regional theatres, but Cheesmond's argument is deflected by the attractions of gender and masquerade, in which he is concerned to define the 'central matrix' of characters (Dame, Principal Boy, etc.) as containing the 'significance of pantomime', rather than issues of plot or structure.[79]

Sarah-Jane Dickenson's article 'Oh Yes It Is!' focused on a university based experiment in pantomime production, which sought to re-examine the genre within the 'cultural climate' of late twentieth-century Britain.[80] At the start of the article, Dickenson criticised the perceived 'tradition' of pantomime which, she claimed, have made the genre 'redundant as part of a cultural theatrical context'. Dickenson cited Peter Brooks's relation of 'tradition' to 'frozen' and, subsequently, obsolete.[81] In defining pantomime by 'tradition', Dickenson argued that the genre 'has not been allowed to

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[75] Reid, 'Popular Theatre in Victorian Birmingham' in *Performance and Politics in Popular Drama: Aspects of Popular Entertainment in Theatre, Film and Television 1800-1976*, ed. by David Bradby, Louis James and Bernard Sharratt(Cambridge: CUP, 1980) pp. 65-89 (p. 77).
[76] Cheesmond, p. 220.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., p. 223.
[79] Ibid., p. 231.
[80] Dickenson, p. 240.
[81] Ibid.

develop and renew itself, consequently divorcing itself from an everchanging culture.'[82] I accept the fact that the term 'traditional' can be used in the sense of becoming established and subsequently expected by audiences, and indeed use the term with that implication throughout my thesis.[83] However, Dickenson's conclusions deny the essential adaptability of pantomime which has ensured its survival since the 1700s. Certainly, and as I noted earlier, newspaper reports from the late nineteenth century regularly commented on the changing preferences and novelties in the annual production, in response to consumer demand. The papers by Dickenson, and more especially, Cheesmond, have perhaps voiced the concerns of others. Judging by the lack of work on the Victorian pantomime, since their work was published in 1996, the problem of definition potentially still exists to detract from other routes of study in the genre.

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the study of popular culture has led to an increased interest in the music hall and non-theatrical entertainments. On-going research at Royal Holloway, University of London, is further extending the remit, by studying provincial circuses and fairs. The subject matter of the 'Shifting Scenes' conference held at the University of Manchester Drama Department in September 2003, was posited on the need to identify and encourage research interests in regional theatre and entertainment. In addition, published work, such as Dagmar Kift's *The Victorian Music Hall*, has successfully extended the survey beyond London, offering a new perspective on regional hall audiences in Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Sheffield. Similarly, Ann Featherstone's unpublished thesis of 2000 explored the music halls and fairgrounds of Nottingham and Ilkeston, Derbyshire. However, as Featherstone has identified, there is comparatively little work on theatre and entertainment in the Midlands, and she has suggested that work in this area has been retarded by a perceived lack of cultural traditions, such as those that typify the North of England. This point echoes similar

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[82] Ibid.

[83] I am also aware that the term 'traditional' can be used in relation to 'high' art – in other words traditional as approved – in comparison to 'low' or popular (and disapproved) art forms. I do not subscribe to this distinction, and would recommend Robert L. Root's re-evaluation in *The Rhetoric of Popular Culture: Advertising, Advocacy and Entertainment*, pp. 4-5.

claims made by Jeremy Crump in a 1986 article on the music hall in Leicester.[84] Such assertions have been partially dismantled by the work of those writers, and my own research seeks to preclude ideas of non-regionality.

In terms of the provincial Theatres Royal, the work of Kathleen Barker is frequently cited: her 1982 thesis, 'The Performing Arts in Five Provincial Towns 1840-1870' is held as a leading example of research into provincial theatre.[85] Within this work is a survey of the Theatre Royal, Nottingham in which Barker provided initial guidelines for the study of the theatre. She discussed pantomime production during the period and offered some interesting contextual references. Similarly, John E. Cunningham's *Theatre Royal: A History of the Theatre Royal Birmingham*, is a useful piece of research that, in 1950, effectively established the remaining archive records of the theatre as a prominent source of empirical evidence.[86] His chapter on pantomimes at the theatre, however, is marked by an apparent dislike of the genre and some factual inaccuracies. For example, he assumes that the pantomime author Charles Millward was a local man, although my own research has established that Millward hailed from Liverpool (I discuss the provenance of 'local' writers in more detail in Chapter 4). An unpublished M.Phil thesis from 1987 offers further evidence of research interest in provincial theatre. M. J. Law's work on *Aspects of Theatre in Liverpool, 1850-1900* highlighted potential 'changes in theatre administration, in audience provision, and in the manner and kind of professional presentation.'[87] Law argued that these developments were directly related to changes in the theatre licensing laws and the growth of theatre building in the second half of the nineteenth century. The writer's main concern appears to be in locating appropriate guidelines for a methodology and the work appears to retreat from placing theatres in their

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[84] Ann Featherstone, ' "Crowded Nightly": Popular Entertainment Outside London During the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2000), pp. 166-167, and Jeremy Crump, 'Provincial Music Hall: Promoters and Public in Leicester, 1863-1929', in *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure*, ed. by Peter Bailey (Milton Keynes: Open UP, 1986), pp. 53-72 (p. 53). See also Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1991) in particular, Chapter 13 'Stages of Class: Popular Theatre and the Geography of Belonging'.

[85] Kathleen M. D. Barker, 'The Performing Arts in Five Provincial Towns 1840-1870' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 1982).

[86] John E. Cunningham, M.A., *Theatre Royal: A History of the Theatre Royal Birmingham* (Oxford: Ronald, 1950).

[87] M. J. Law, 'Aspects of Theatre in Liverpool, 1850-1900', abstract, <http://www.theses.com/idx/036/it036006918.htm> [accessed 16 December 2000], 1.

social context into a direct comparison with London theatres and the biographical study of local actors. Douglas Reid has examined the theatre audiences in Victorian Birmingham (although, as I have already mentioned, he avoids pantomime). Recent archive discoveries at the Opera House in Leeds have also motivated new research, as outlined at a one day conference at Leeds University in 1999. The methodologies of regional theatre research have, importantly, also begun to recognise the business structures of the provincial house. Jeremy Crump's essay, 'Patronage, Pleasure and Profit: A Study of the Theatre Royal, Leicester 1847-1900', discussed the financial life of a provincial theatre. Crump's emphasis was, principally, on the role of the shareholders and their political and economic backgrounds. He usefully pointed to the effects of local trade on theatre income and noted that in the 1860s, 'pantomimes with striking effects' underlined the improved fortunes of one of the theatre's managers.[88] Philip Talbot's essay on the *Macclesfield Theatre Company and Nineteenth-Century Silk Manufacturers* is extremely valuable. Written from the perspective of an accountant, turned historian, Talbot emphasised the financial records and administrative processes of the nineteenth-century provincial theatre. He confronted the figures that Jane Moody claimed theatre historians prefer to ignore, and presented relevant information that contextualises many of the errors and incoherencies of theatrical book-keeping in the mid-nineteenth century. Tracy C. Davis's work extended beyond London to address theatrical employment in 'The Theatrical Employees of Victorian Britain: Demography of an Industry', in which she drew on evidence from Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Liverpool, as well as London. In the influential *The Economics of the British Stage* (to which I referred earlier), she engaged with regional finances, including those of the pantomime, although her emphasis was on the national frameworks of provincial pantomime circuits in the later nineteenth century. Davis briefly referred to the archive records of the Theatre Royal, Nottingham: to the fact that both local and London suppliers were used, and to the setting up of a joint stock

[88] Crump, 'Patronage, Pleasure and Profit: A Study of the Theatre Royal, Leicester 1847-1900', *TN* 38 (1984), 77-88 (p. 83).

company in 1866, but she did not engage with the fascinating records of pantomime production at the theatre, the full extent of which provides the basis for Chapter 3 of this thesis.[89]

The locally published work on Victorian Nottingham by Richard Iliffe and Wilfred Baguley include three volumes of relevant interest: Volume 3, which includes a short history of The Grand Theatre; Volume 7, on the history of the St. Mary`s Gate theatre and the Theatre Royal in the period 1837-1901, and Volume 16 on the Victorian Christmas.[90] Although these volumes do not offer any critical analysis (they are intended for a general readership), they are valuable indicators of primary sources, both in relation to the theatre and social history research. Similarly Geoffrey Ashton's essay 'The First Two Hundred Years' gave an introduction to the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, together with brief and uncritical mention of pantomimes at the theatre, and R. Crompton-Rhodes provided an affectionate overview of Birmingham productions in *The Theatre Royal, Birmingham, 1774-1924: A Short History.*[91]

Whilst Victorian pantomime exists largely on the periphery of theatre research, and regional theatre is being slowly rediscovered, the combination of Victorian provincial pantomime has only been allowed to peep out from behind the drop curtain. Mander and Mitchenson in *Pantomime* briefly referred to national circuits and the interchange between provincial theatres of scripts and sets, but there was no discussion of how those developments and influences affected or responded to local patterns of theatre-going. Nor did the authors address those productions that took place prior to the domination of the national businesses at the end of the nineteenth century.[92] In the Introduction to *English Plays*, Michael Booth drew attention to the importance of regional and 'minor' theatre pantomimes. Although the issue of provincial pantomime was not dwelt upon at length, Booth highlighted two aspects of interest: the maintenance of the harlequinade element,

[89] Davis, *Economics*, p. 319.
[90] Richard Iliffe and Wilfred Baguley, *Victorian Nottingham: A Story in Pictures*, 20 vols (Nottingham: the Nottingham Historical Film Unit, 1970-1983), iii (1971), vii (1972), and xvi (1976).
[91] Geoffrey Ashton, 'The First Two Hundred Years', in *The Theatre Royal Nottingham 1865-1978: A Theatrical and Architectural History* [no publication details], pp. 3-14, and R. Crompton-Rhodes, *The Theatre Royal, Birmingham 1774-1924: A Short History* (Birmingham: Moody Brothers, 1924).
[92] Mander & Mitchenson, p. 41.

beyond the West End; and the fact that

> the provinces [...] preserved a vigorous and often independent theatrical life of their own, till the breakdown of the local stock company and the reliance [...] upon the touring company put an end to any such independence and any native dramatic flowering.[93]

However, the regional stock companies declined at different times and, in terms of the annual pantomime, there was not an immediate loss of local identity, nor was there a clear, comprehensive demarcation between the regional pantomimes of the pre- and post-1870s. This is an aspect of regional pantomime (the local as opposed to West End/Drury Lane influences) which needs close attention, particularly if both sorts of theatres had equally strong reputations. There have been glimpses of a critical recognition of this fact, but the most succinct comments have been made by Derek Salberg, former director of the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham. In *Once Upon a Pantomime*, a work aimed at the general reader and written in 1981, he highlighted the nineteenth-century provincial pantomime which

> had invariably been a local product specifically tailored for that particular theatre and town [...] devised and often produced by the local manager, who catered for the special taste of his town and audience.[94]

A. E. Wilson also, briefly, insisted on the value of provincial productions:

> If I have mentioned but little of the provincial theatres, it is not deliberate. A whole volume might be written about their pantomime achievements. In the past they have been as productive and have had their own individuality, their own producers, and their own favourites [...] often drawing admiring visitors from London.[95]

Wilson commented on the local flavour of regional pantomime and, like the other writers.

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[93] Booth, *English Plays*, p. 53.
[94] Derek Salberg, *Once Upon a Pantomime* (Luton: Cortney Publications, 1981), p. 60.
[95] Wilson, *Christmas Pantomime*, p. 237.

lamented the passing of this into the mass produced touring circuits towards the end of the nineteenth century. As I mentioned earlier, Davis and Emeljanow briefly mentioned a possible relationship between pantomime referencing and the local theatres in London's East End. In *Reflecting the Audience*, they noted the local places referred to in the pantomimes at the Pavilion Theatre, London, in 1844 and 1859: 'None of this proves conclusively that the theatre was attracting a primarily local audience, but it does suggest that managements were aware of the drawing power of depicting local settings on stage.'[96] Booth also offered a brief insight into the East End pantomime. In *English Plays*, he stated that they were produced for 'neighbourhood audiences' and had 'their own distinctive pantomime traditions.'[97] Such comments relate directly to Salberg's reference to the local tailoring of productions, and also provide indications of potential research areas. Indeed many of these comments are extremely illuminating, pointing as they do to the mid- to late nineteenth century as a period of independent pantomime production in the provinces. Despite the hints and indications in all these works, there is no single piece of academic research on the Victorian provincial pantomime. The work on pantomime in general, and the current interest in provincial theatre, provide a validating context that is ripe for development. In the chapters that follow I will illustrate the quantity of archive information that can be found in relation to provincial theatre and the evidence it contains that establishes the provincial pantomime as an independent and flourishing entity that drew not simply on the London influence, but on established notions of regionality.

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[96] Davis and Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience*, p. 68.
[97] Booth, *English Plays*, p. 54.

Chapter 2: 'such an odd compound'[1]

An Introduction to the Genre and an Overview of Local Production.

The history of pantomime and, in particular, the evolution of the genre in the first half of the nineteenth century has been charted in a number of works.[2] As I discussed in Chapter 1, however, that critical history draws heavily on the records of London theatres and the sometimes biased biographical writings of figures such as J. R. Planché. Whilst those works are all valuable and while it is important to take note of developments in the London theatre productions, attention also needs to be given to the local variations in the provincial theatres. In this chapter, then, I will give only a summary outline of general developments in pantomime structure up until the mid-1860s, in order to concentrate on the specificities of pantomime production at the Theatres Royal of Nottingham and Birmingham from 1865. Firstly, in order to provide a context for my discussion, I will give some brief details about Nottingham and Birmingham and the local theatres.[3]

Both towns are situated in the English Midlands, which was a region of established agriculture and developing industry in the nineteenth century. By 1861, Nottingham, in the east of the region, was a small town surrounded by villages and hamlets, with a population of 75,000.[4] To the south were the agricultural districts of the Dukeries and to the north and west, the mining communities of Mansfield and district and

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[1] 'Christmas Amusements: *Beauty and the Beast* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1881, p. 2.

[2] The most cited work on the Georgian pantomime and its inheritance is David Mayer's *Harlequin in His Element: The English Pantomime 1806-1836*, which, together with Jane Moody's *Illegitimate Theatre in London 1770 - 1840* (particularly Chapter 7: 'Illegitimate Celebrities'), provides a comprehensive discussion of the structure of pantomime at this period. The best and most informative work on the structure and development of the Victorian pantomime are Michael R. Booth's *English Plays* and *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*, plus A. E. Wilson's *Christmas Pantomime* and *Pantomime Pageant*. See also: Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, which summarises information on pantomime from his earlier work, and Raymond Mander & Joe Mitchenson's *Pantomime: A Story in Pictures* for interesting pictorial evidence.

[3] The principal secondary sources drawn on for the local histories throughout this chapter are: G. C. Allen, M. Com, PhD, *The Industrial Development of Birmingham and the Black Country 1860-1927* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1929); J. V. Beckett, *The East Midlands from A.D. 1000* (Harlow: Longman Group UK, 1988); John Beckett, *The Book of Nottingham* (Buckingham: Barracuda Books, 1990); Asa Briggs, *History of Birmingham* 2 vols (London: OUP, 1952), ii *Borough and City 1865-1938*; Roy A. Church, *Economic and Social Change in a Midland Town: Victorian Nottingham 1815-1900* (London: Cass, 1966); Duncan Gray, *Nottingham, Settlement to City*, 2nd edn, (East Ardsley: S. R. Publishers, 1969); *Nottingham in the Eighteen Eighties*, ed. by Helen E. Meller (Nottingham: University of Nottingham Department of Adult Education, 1971), and Chris Upton, *A History of Birmingham* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1993). Douglas Reid also gives a useful overview of the socio-economic basis of Birmingham and its theatres in 'Popular Theatre in Birmingham', pp. 66-68, and Kathleen Barker provides some similar contextual evidence for the Nottingham theatre, in 'The Performing Arts'.

[4] The figure recorded at the 1861 census. B. R. Mitchell with the collaboration of Phyllis Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge: CUP, 1962), p. 26.

the Erewash Valley, which stretched into Derbyshire. The Great Northern and the Midland County Railway Companies had developed rail links to Nottingham from the 1840s, and by the mid-century, potential pantomime audiences could be drawn from a radius that encompassed the local villages and small towns as well as the nearby principal towns of Leicester, Derby, and Chesterfield, the theatres of which had formed part of the Nottingham circuit in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[5] Playbills from the late 1860s onwards detailed special train excursions to the Nottingham pantomime from Burton on Trent, Derby and Chaddeston, Ilkeston, Chesterfield, Staveley and Woodhouse Hill, Leicester, Grantham, Loughborough, Lincoln, Collingham, Newark, Finkerton, Thurgarton and Lowdson, Sheffield, Rotherham, and stops along the Mansfield line: Sutton, Kirkby, Annesley, Linby, Hucknall, Bulwell, (with Newstead and Basford by 1883). Further extensions of the railways in Lincolnshire in the 1850s and 1860s enabled trips to be made from Boston, on routes that included Hubbert's Bridge, Swineshead, Heckington, Sleaford, Ancaster and Honington.[6]

Industry in Nottingham centred on the production of hosiery and lace, the latter evolving in the early nineteenth century as a result of technical innovations in knitting machines. The different levels of skills required, depending on the product, led to a considerable disparity in wages: skilled lace operatives working in the town's factories could earn up to 35*s*. per week when trade was good, as opposed to an average of 10*s*. for the hand-frame hosiery workers, and as little as 4*s*. for those hosiery makers working in

[5] Beckett, *The East Midlands*, p. 265. The local railways are also discussed in Church, pp. 170-175, 237-238. The Nottingham theatre circuit from the 1840s is defined by Geoffrey Ashton in 'The First Two Hundred Years' in *The Theatre Royal Nottingham 1865-1978: A Theatrical and Architectural History*, ed. by Robin Benyon (Nottingham: Nottingham City Council, [n.d.]), pp. 3-14 (p. 5). The early nineteenth-century theatre circuit is also discussed by Barker, pp. 12, 92 and 98.

[6] A trip from Derby and Burton on 1 February 1868 was promoted on a playbill for the 1867-68 production of *Beauty and the Beast*, and the same route, including Chaddeston on 11 February 1871, in an advertisement in the *Express*, 8 February 1871, p. 1 (the same newspaper carrying an advertisement for trips from Ilkeston and district and from Grantham). A train from Sheffield and Chesterfield on 21 January 1871 was advertised in the *Express*, 17 January 1871, p. 1, and from Leicester, including stations at Newark and Thurgarton, in an advertisement on 28 January 1871 in the *Express*, 23 January 1871, p. 1. Trains from Rotherham and Sheffield on 18 January 1875 and from Leicester and Loughborough on 23 January were promoted on a playbill for the 1874-75 pantomime *Little Bo Peep* (also on 23 January 1875). Trains from Newark on 21 and 28 February 1891 were promoted on a playbill for the 1890-91 pantomime *Robinson Crusoe*, 26 December 1890. The Mansfield line calling at Sutton, Kirkby, Annesley, Linby, Hucknall, Bulwell was promoted in an advertisement for a trip on 1 February 1871 in the *Express*, 30 January 1871, p. 1, and also on playbills during the run of *Little Bo Peep* (1874-75). Late trains to Mansfield, calling at those same stations and also including Newstead and Basford on 9, 16, 23 and 30 January 1884 were promoted on a playbill for the 1883-84 production of *Little Bo Peep* (26 December 1883) and to Boston and district during the same run, on 19 January 1884. All playbills held in a loose collection at Nottingham Local Studies Library, accession no. L79.8.

their homes.[7] Both products, however, were particularly susceptible to the vagaries of fashion and foreign competition, and it was not until the 1880s that the range of local production started to expand, noticeably into the alternative industries offered principally by the Raleigh bicycle factory, John Player tobacco products, and Jesse Boot's pharmaceutical supplies and shops, all of which ensured a wider and more varied economic base for the town.[8]

The physical expansion of Nottingham had been impeded until the mid-1840s by the desires of the town fathers to protect their meadow land beyond the ancient town boundaries. Despite the growth in population, residential and factory building had had to remain with the boundary, leading to the creation of some of the worst slums and tenemented areas in provincial England.[9] Local industry was therefore spread between the town and nearby villages that grew as workers moved out of the overcrowded town. The Nottingham Enclosure Act of 1845 finally paved the way for town development and improvements. Thirty years later, the local Borough Extension Act of 1877 created the 'consolidation of the industrial parishes for administrative purposes', making the later growth of Nottingham the result of incorporation rather than the development of suburbs witnessed in other towns of this period. This growth can be seen in the population figures recorded in the census of 1871 and 1881. The 1871 census figures recorded a population of 87,000 for the town, with an additional figure of 52,000 for the environs. After incorporation (and population growth), the 1881 census recorded an inclusive figure of 187,000.[10]

The growth of Birmingham and its neighbourhood parishes had not suffered from such constrictions and by 1861 the town parish of Birmingham was almost four times the size of Nottingham, with a town population of 296,000 plus 55,000 in the 'environs' of 'Aston, Handsworth, King's Norton, Northfield and Yardley'.[11] The size and growth of

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[7] Female factory workers earned less, between 10-16*s*. per week. See Church, pp. 89, 266, 268 and 295.
[8] See Church, p. 195 and Meller, p. 11.
[9] Beckett, *The Book of Nottingham*, p. 11.
[10] Church, p. 236, also Beckett, *The Book of Nottingham*, p. 11, Gray, pp. 66-71 and Beckett, *The East Midlands*, pp. 225-227. The census figures are taken from Mitchell and Deane, pp. 26-27.
[11] Mitchell and Deane, pp. 24, 27. The census figures were inclusive at 1911.

Birmingham and its nearby parishes made it one of the largest urban centres in the country, what the historian Simon Gunn has referred to as one of the 'provincial metropolises', alongside Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds.[12] To the west of the town was the mining and iron producing district of the Black Country, consisting of part of South Staffordshire and North Worcestershire and stretching from Wolverhampton in the west up to Walsall in the north and south to Stourbridge.[13] The mines of the Black Country provided the basic materials for the manufacture of finished metalware products in many townships in the West Midlands. However, those towns tended to concentrate on a specific product, becoming, over time, particularly vulnerable to trade fluctuations. By contrast, Birmingham had established an extremely varied trade base and although local production was dominated by the four main manufactures of guns, brassware, jewellery and buttons for much of this period, the variety of individual products within those classifications, and a propensity for innovation and adaptability, ensured that there was always some successful branch of trade even in periods of national depression.[14]

Although Nottingham and Birmingham had individual trade concerns, the fortunes of both towns were of course affected – in varying degrees – by periods of boom and depression in the national economy. The overarching patterns of economic activity between the 1860s and early 1890s began with a depression in the mid-1860s that was principally due to the American civil war and the subsequent loss of much of the American market as well as the curtailment of cotton supplies to the textile related industries in England. After a brief upturn in the British economy in 1865, a severe financial crisis in 1866 was followed by three years of depression to 1869. The peak years of national and local economic growth were between 1870 and 1875 but that success dipped dramatically in 1875 and what is generally termed the Great Depression lasted from 1873 to 1886. After this extended period, a very altered economy began improving

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[12] Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority and the English Industrial City* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 12. See also the reference to 'visitors to the Midland Metropolis' in 'Christmas Entertainments: Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 26 December 1872, p. 8.

[13] Allen, p. 3.

[14] Allen, pp. 33-34, 43.

slowly and continued until the next downturn in the early 1890s.[15] Whilst pantomime and the national economy may seem unlikely partners, those patterns of economic growth and decline provide a necessary background against which to examine pantomime production in Nottingham and Birmingham. As I outlined in the Introduction to this thesis, for many provincial theatres a successful pantomime was crucial in providing the necessary finances for the rest of the theatre season. The failure of local trade and high levels of unemployment, particularly in a duo-industry town such as Nottingham, would naturally have affected theatre attendance and box office income. This issue, in relation to the pantomime productions of the mid-1860s, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

The population sizes of Nottingham and Birmingham, together with their comparative economic fortunes, were reflected in the development of theatres in each town.[16] The Theatre Royal at Nottingham had originally been built in St. Mary's Gate in 1760 but by the early 1860s both the building and the area had become unfashionable: as early as 1834, it had been remarked that the building looked more like a 'prison than a place of entertainment'.[17] Two lace manufacturers, John and William Lambert, financed the new purpose-built Theatre Royal, which was opened in September 1865 and licensed on an annual basis by the local magistrates.[18] The new theatre had been designed by the architect C. J. Phipps and had an auditorium capacity of 2,200, apportioned predominantly to the pit (800 seats) and gallery (850), with a dress circle of 250 seats, an upper circle also of 250 seats and eight private boxes with accommodation for 50 persons. The seat prices for the opening season were, for the boxes, £1.1*s.* to £2.2*s.* each, the dress circle 2*s.*6*d.*, upper circle (sometimes referred to as the upper boxes, although in practice

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[15] The British trade cycle is discussed comprehensively by: G. C. Allen, pp. 175, 197, 208, 211; J. D. Chambers, *The Workshop of the World: British Economic History 1820-1880* 2nd edn. repr. (Oxford: OUP, 1974), p. 1 and R. S. Sayers, *A History of Economic Change in England 1880-1939* repr. edn. (Oxford: OUP, 1973), p. 32 (Table 5). All of these authors address the issue that the term Great Depression was not comprehensive, as shown by the survival of trades in Birmingham.

[16] The three principal sources of information about the Nottingham theatre are: Kathleen Barker, 'The Performing Arts', *The Theatre Royal Nottingham 1865-1978*, ed. by Robin Benyon, and Richard Iliffe and Wilfred Baguley, *Victorian Nottingham: A Story in Pictures*, vii.

[17] Church, p. 16, citing W. Dearden *Historical and Topographical Directory of Nottingham* (Nottingham, 1834). See also Barker, pp. 13, 49.

[18] Licensing details in 'Local and District News: Licensing the New Theatre', *Express*, 16 September 1865, p. 5. Variations of possible theatre licences are detailed by Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, p. 16.

the tier was not partitioned), 1*s*.6*d*., pit 1*s*., and gallery 6*d*.[19] The theatre was located at the top of Parliament Street, close to businesses and the vibrant Market Square and Long Row, an established area of shops and a fashionable promenade. The narrow Sheep Lane, which linked the theatre site with the market was specifically widened to provide better access, and was initially renamed Theatre Street.[20] In 1866, the old St. Mary's Gate theatre re-opened as the Alhambra Music Hall, which provided some competition to the Theatre Royal in the form of spectacular Christmas entertainments. In turn, a range of smaller music halls and two permanent circuses, together with the Mechanics Hall and Institute, and, from 1876, The Albert Hall (a concert hall), provided alternative and varied entertainments, but for twenty-one years, from 1865 to 1886, the Theatre Royal was the sole legitimate theatre in Nottingham and thus the only venue licensed to perform pantomime.[21] Whilst the variable fortunes of the old theatre in St. Mary's Gate had permitted only sporadic Christmas productions, at the new Theatre Royal in Parliament Street, pantomime was produced nearly every year from 1865 into the twenty-first century. The only exception (in the period under discussion) was in 1888 when, as an experiment, Thomas W. Charles, the Manager of the Theatre Royal, engaged Wilson Barrett and his company. The lack of pantomime at the theatre was a mistake however – 'a rude break in the succession' according to the *Nottingham Daily Guardian* – and, on advertising for the 1889 production of *Sinbad the Sailor*, Charles 'appeal[ed] to the public for that large-/hearted support they have hitherto given to the Nottingham [pantomime]'. He also instigated a reduction in ticket prices for the pantomime, a rare move and the only

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[19] For a contemporary account of the dimensions of the new theatre, see 'Opening of the New Theatre Royal', *Express*, 25 September 1865, p. 3, partly reproduced on the inside cover of Benyon, *The Theatre Royal Nottingham 1865-1978*. The capacity details can also be found in Barker, p. 311.

[20] Long Row is discussed in Gray, p. 93. For the controversy regarding the street name, see Barker, p. 313. Letters to the local press were concerned at the perceived infringement of the theatre into the renaming of Sheep Lane and a lively correspondence was entered into suggesting alternative names. 'Theatre Street' in fact had a short existence and the route was renamed Market Street, the name it retains today. See for example the correspondence entered under 'Letters to the Editor' in the *Express*: 13 September 1865, p. 4; 14 September 1865, p. 4 (four letters) and 15 September 1865, p. 4 (two letters).

[21] The date of the Albert Hall is taken from Meller, p. 65. For details of the music halls and circuses in Nottingham, I have drawn on Iliffe and Baguley, *Victorian Nottingham: A Study in Pictures*, xii, as well as records at the Malt Cross Music Hall in Nottingham (courtesy of the Board of Trustees). For a detailed discussion of the local fairs and music halls, see Ann Featherstone, ' "Crowded Nightly": Popular Entertainment Outside London During the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries'.

example from the whole period.[22]

There had been several attempts to re-open the old St. Mary's Gate theatre as a minor theatre in the 1870s, but it was not until the mid-1880s that Nottingham had a second theatre that could legitimately compete with the provision of pantomime.[23] In 1886, The Grand Theatre was opened in Hyson Green, one of the former villages, which by that time had become a suburb to the west of the town. The management of The Grand, however, did not produce pantomimes every year; the Christmas programme alternated between drama, opera and pantomime, the last frequently provided by a touring production which only played at the theatre for a few weeks.[24] In only one year, 1889, did The Grand and the Theatre Royal have identical pantomime runs over the Christmas period (a further incentive for the Theatre Royal ticket prices to be reduced). Other than that, the management of The Grand either did not produce pantomime (as in 1886 and 1888), or had a short run of two weeks towards the end of January or February. Those latter occasions, in 1887, 1890, 1891 and 1892, occurred when the Theatre Royal pantomime was at the end of its run.[25] The Nottingham population had expanded (as illustrated above) and the topographical range of potential audiences had increased with suburban development and improved travel networks. However, in comparison to the growth of other towns, the local population was still relatively small (larger than Leicester but less than a town like Sheffield and a fraction of the populations of towns like Birmingham, Manchester or Liverpool).[26] In the face of a comparatively circumscribed

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[22] 'Christmas Bank Holiday: Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 27 December 1889, p. 8. Appeal to the public made on the Boxing Night Playbill for the pantomime and repeated on a second, undated playbill [Jan 1890 added in pencil], both in the collection of loose playbills held at the Nottingham Local Studies Library.

[23] Letters written to the Lord Chamberlain suggested that the local magistrates had undue political and economic interests in the Theatre Royal, and that the opening of a second theatre had been actively prevented. The provincial theatre was outside the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction and His Lordship did not appear to be particularly moved by the appeals. Lord Chamberlain's Register of Letters LC3/93, letters number 152 and 167. The original letters in Lord Chamberlain's Letters Received LC1/342, letters 152 and 167. See also LC 1/418, letter 195. Held at the Public Records Office, Kew.

[24] Details of The Grand pantomimes in a clipping from the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* dated 2 October 1937, in loose collection of papers about The Grand held at the Nottingham Local Studies Library, accession no. L79.8. I have verified the details against advertisements in the main local newspapers.

[25] The length of run at The Grand in advertisement, *NDE*, 22 December 1887, p. 4; 'Music and the Drama', *NDG*, 16 February 1891, p. 8; 'Music and the Drama', *NDG*, 8 February 1892, p. 8, and 'Grand Theatre', *NDG*, 24 January 1893, p. 6.

[26] The population figures at 1881 were recorded as: Nottingham, 187,000; Leicester 122,000; Sheffield 285,000, Birmingham 401,000 (excluding environs later incorporated), Manchester 341,000 and Liverpool 553,000. (Source: Mitchell and Deane, pp. 24-26).

local audience, the variable nature of production at The Grand Theatre reflected a hesitancy to try and rival the Theatre Royal with a regular pantomime. A further factor may well have been the attitude of the local press, which appeared to give preference to the Theatre Royal in their pantomime reviews. Critics highlighted when The Grand was 'importing' a pantomime from another theatre (as opposed to the locally produced versions at the Theatre Royal), and referred to The Grand as the 'other place' or 'the Hyson Green House', firmly locating it in its suburban address and distance from the town centre; that area was dominated by the Theatre Royal, the familiar 'old house'.[27]

The topography of potential audiences for pantomime in Birmingham can be gleaned – as with the Nottingham pantomimes – from playbill promotions of special train trips. They included: towns and villages on the Stour Valley line between Birmingham and Wolverhampton and Dudley, Great Bridge and Wednesbury; from the outskirts of Birmingham from New Street Station to Lawley Street and Bloomsbury, the suburbs of Aston, Perry Barr, Hamstead and Great Barr, Newton Road, Bescot, Walsall, James Bridge and Willenhall; from New Street to Aston, Gravelly Hill, Erdington, Chester Road, Wyld Green and Sutton Coldfield, and from Snowhill Station to Hockley, Soho, Handsworth, Westbromwich, Swan Village, Wednesbury, Bradley and Moxley, Bilston, Priestfield, and Wolverhampton.[28] Further trains ran from Snowhill Station to Small Heath, Acock's Green, Bordesley and Solihull, and from New Street Station to Tamworth, Burton Junction and Derby.[29] Special excursions were advertised during the pantomime of 1874-75, from Stafford, calling at Colwich, Rugeley, Rugeley Town, Hednesford, Cannock, Wyrley and Bloxwich, and for the 1885-86 pantomime of *Robinson Crusoe*, trips to the pantomime could be made from Hereford (Barr's Court), Withington, Stoke Edith, Ashperton, Ledbury, Colwall Malvern Wells, Great Malvern, Malvern Link, Bransford Road, Henwick, Worcester, Fernhill Heath, Droitwich,

[27] Reference to The Grand 'importing' a pantomime in 'Grand Theatre', *NDG*, 26 January 1892, p. 6. Reference to the 'other place' in 'Music and the Drama', *NDG*, 16 January 1893, p. 7. Reference to 'the Hyson Green House' in 'The Christmas Holidays', *NDE*, 27 December 1892, p. 5. Reference to the Theatre Royal as the 'old house' in 'Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 20 January 1891, p. 8.

[28] All advertised on a pantomime playbill dated 4 February 1865. Held in a bound collection of playbills for the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, 7 vols (1865-1896), Birmingham Local Studies Library, accession no. 57566.

[29] Advertised on a pantomime playbill [no day] 1865.

Hartlebury, Kidderminster and Stourbridge Junction.[30]

The much larger population in Birmingham and the surrounding district had two main theatres to choose from in the 1860s: the Theatre Royal and the Prince of Wales Theatre, as well as a range of music and concert halls, the two largest being Day's Crystal Palace Concert Hall and Holder's Concert Hall.[31] The Theatre Royal was originally built in 1774 and had risen from the ashes of two fires in 1792 and 1820, achieving a twenty-one year renewable licence by Act of Parliament in 1806.[32] The theatre frontage was situated on New Street but, unlike the theatre at Nottingham, the Theatre Royal at Birmingham stood on a site that also contained businesses, shops, the post office and the Shakespeare public house.[33] Despite those potential limitations on development, the theatre manager, Mercer H. Simpson, extended the pit in 1876, doubling its capacity. This move was indicative of his commercial awareness; when giving evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Theatres in 1892, Simpson was to emphasise the importance of the pit as the 'mainstay' of provincial theatres.[34] I have found that the exact capacity of the whole Theatre Royal auditorium has been unusually difficult to establish, as both nineteenth- and twentieth-century records offer very different figures. John E. Cunningham's *Theatre Royal: A History of the Theatre Royal Birmingham* provides the most comprehensive use of empirical evidence, but although he cites the pit extension as having doubled the pit capacity from 600 to 1,200 (a fact verified by announcements in the contemporaneous playbills), he does not verify the total size of the

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[30] The trips are advertised on a playbill for *Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross*, 23 January 1875, and a playbill for *Robinson Crusoe*, 26 December 1885 (for trip on 6 March 1886).

[31] Cunningham, pp. 18-19, R. Compton-Rhodes, *The Theatre Royal, Birmingham 1774-1924: A Short History* (Birmingham: Moody Brothers, 1924), p. 49, Reid, pp. 68-69, and Upon, pp. 43, 129.

[32] The dates of building and rebuilding are taken from R. Compton-Rhodes, pp. 6, 9, 18, and Reid, p. 66. For the granting of the licence in 1806, see Upton, pp. 43-44. The renewable patent licence for twenty-one years identified from the Letter Patent of Licence for 1861 (Lee Crowder Collection, 406. This collection contains copies of the Act of Parliament of 1806 as well as various 'Letters Patent of Licence'. Collection held in the Birmingham City Archives). Mercer Simpson, in his evidence to the 1892 Select Committee, stated that his theatre was a 'patent theatre' under the Lord Chamberlain's authority, and that it could be renewed after twenty-one years. *Report from the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment* [1892]; *Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, and Index* repr. edn (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1970), p. 182, in answer to question 2538 and p. 190, in answer to question 2709 (IUP pagination).

[33] 'Plans of the Theatre Royal and Property Belonging to the Theatre'. Lee Crowder Collection, 427.

[34] *Report from the Select Committee* (1892), p. 195, in answer to question 2859 (IUP pagination). Booth also refers to the importance of the pit in the provincial theatres in *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, p. 17.

auditorium after 1820.[35] Douglas Reid, in 'Popular Theatre in Birmingham', cites an 1824 treatise to claim a capacity of 2,250.[36] However, a handwritten entry in the Theatre Royal Committee Minute Book for 1853-1871 detailed a total capacity of 2,068, with room for 316 in the Lower Tier, 402 in the Upper Tier (including private boxes), 350 in the pit and 1000 in the gallery.[37] Written in 1879, after the pit extension, John Alfred Langford's *Birmingham: A Handbook for Residents and Visitors* stated that the Theatre Royal auditorium was 'of the horse-shoe shape, capable of holding 2,500 persons.'[38] Other sources, such as *Showell's Dictionary of Birmingham* (1885) and the memoirs of Phyllis and Lois Rodway (daughters of a later manager at the theatre) have offered figures as disparate as 1,950 and 3,500.[39] Given the restriction on any external expansion of the theatre, I would regard the numbers cited by Reid, Showell and Langford as being closer to the actual figure; the auditorium capacity of the second half of the nineteenth century was probably between 2,000 to 2,500. The seat prices in 1865 were: private boxes, £1.1*s*, lower boxes (dress circle equivalent) 3*s*, upper boxes 2*s*, pit 1*s*, and gallery 6*d*.

Formerly the site of the Birmingham Music Hall, the Prince of Wales Theatre in Broad Street had opened as such in 1866 and the new theatre had an auditorium capacity of 3,500.[40] The large catchment area available to both the Theatre Royal and the Prince of Wales Theatre meant that any rivalry between the two appears to have been a healthy one. The one main conflict was in December 1882, when both theatre managers produced pantomime versions of *Sinbad*, much to the chagrin of James Rogers, Manager of the Prince of Wales, who claimed that he had announced his intention of staging *Sinbad* 'in the

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[35] Cunningham, p. 36, although he gives the wrong year, 1875 not 1876. The announcement on the playbill promoting the new season and re-opening of the theatre, dated 9 September 1876.

[36] Reid, p. 66.

[37] Details on reverse of frontspiece, headed 'Theatre Royal Birmingham 1857' in 'Theatre Royal Birmingham Minutes of Committee 1853 to [1871 scratched in]'. Lee Crowder Collection, accession no. 389.

[38] John Alfred Langford, *Birmingham: A Handbook for Residents and Visitors* (Birmingham: The Midland Educational Co., [1879]), p. 204.

[39] *Showell's Dictionary of Birmingham* (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1885), p. 299, and Phyllis Philip Rodway and Lois Rodway Slingsby B.A. (hons), *Philip Rodway and A Tale of Two Theatres. By His Daughters* (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1934), p. 77 (recalling the theatre prior to 1903). I have also checked the 1902 Sale Catalogue of the theatre; although seating is listed, area and house capacities are not given. Accession no. 168275, in bound volume of assorted documents entitled *Birmingham Institutions*, held in the Birmingham Local Studies Library.

[40] The Prince of Wales Theatre capacity is given in Reid, p. 69, Langford, p. 205 and Ward and Lock's *Illustrated Guide to, and Popular History of Birmingham and Its Vicinity: Its Institutes, Manufactures, and Chief Public Buildings* (London: Ward, Lock, [1892]), p. 20.

Newspapers, Bills, Posters, and Programmes of the Theatre on the 6th March [1882]'.[41] Some of the local newspaper critics were amused by the occurrence; the *Birmingham Daily Mail* suggested that it might even prove a 'convenience' to the local '*paterfamilias* [...] seeing that it may give him a loophole for escaping from a little expenditure at the box office'.[42] Rogers continued to make accusatory claims in his advertisements, but neither theatre appears to have suffered by the competition. The *Birmingham Daily Guardian* reiterated the 'friendly' nature of the rivalry and, allowing for the initial wit of the *Daily Mail*, each production was promoted for its individual qualities, and both theatres maintained lengthy runs for their pantomimes.[43] A third theatre – The New Grand Theatre – was opened in Corporation Street in 1883.[44] Andrew Melville (the Proprietor) must have perceived that there was a sufficiently large wage earning population locally to be attracted by another theatre, even in the midst of national economic depression. This was confirmed by the fact that all three theatre managements continued to produce pantomime for the remainder of the period to 1892.

At both of the Theatres Royal of Nottingham and Birmingham the pantomime (also sometimes referred to as the Christmas Annual) season began on Boxing Day or the closest weekday to 26 December and ran through to the early months of the following year.[45] (References throughout my thesis to a pantomime season therefore cover two year dates, for example a pantomime that opened in December 1882 would have run throughout January and February of 1883; that season would be referred to as the pantomime season of 1882-83).[46] On rare occasions the pantomime was opened on an earlier night in Christmas week, but, invariably, those performances were poorly attended. Boxing Day was so named due to the tradition upheld throughout the country of

[41] Advertisement, *BDP*, 18 December 1882, p. 1.
[42] 'The Pantomimes', *BDM*, 21 December 1882, p. 3.
[43] 'The Pantomimes', *BDG*, 22 December 1882, p. 5.
[44] Location of The New Grand Theatre identified from Ward and Lock, pp. 20, 364. After 1886 it was known as The Grand Theatre.
[45] For references to the 'Christmas Annual', see 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 26 December 1872, p. 4 ('Mr. Simpson's "Christmas and New Year Annual"'), reference to 'Mr. Simpson's [...] previous "annuals"' in 'The Pantomimes Critically Considered', *BDM*, 31 December 1877, p. 2, and reference to *Cinderella* 'as the subject of the Christmas annual at the Theatre Royal' in 'The Pantomimes: *Cinderella* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1886, p. 2.
[46] The pantomime started on December 27th in 1869, 1875, 1880, 1886. Identified from p. 1 advertisements in three Birmingham newspapers, *BDP*, *BDG* and *BDM*.

presenting extra wages, in the form of Christmas 'boxes', to staff and workers.[47] The availability of additional income that could potentially be spent on entertainment had long been recognised and exploited by theatre managers and the Boxing Day performances of the pantomime were always reported as being 'packed in every part'.[48] Over time, the date of the opening performance became perceived as a tradition, 'a time-honoured custom' in itself and the continued observance of 26 December therefore combined both economic practicality and a sense of social occasion.[49] Despite the level of attendance on Boxing Night, the opening performance of the pantomime tended to be regarded by critics and public alike as little more than a rehearsal. Frequently, lines were missed, trap doors failed to open and the scenery stuck, and yet this was accepted as an idiosyncrasy of the genre. Whilst such errors would have been harshly criticised during a production of the opera or drama, the failure of the pantomime fairy to glide elegantly through a trap was deemed perfectly acceptable in the first few performances. In December 1869, the Birmingham Theatre Royal transformation scene, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', was politely referred to as being 'evidently destined still to attain considerable development' and, in 1874, the first night production of *Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross* was praised, '[b]arring the hitches necessarily incidental to a first performance'.[50] Subsequent newspaper reviews continued to promote the pantomime. They highlighted the improved features and, effectively, encouraged their readers to return to the theatre in later weeks to view the production, 'all working as smoothly as possible'.[51]

At the Theatre Royal, Birmingham the pantomime season usually ran until mid-

[47] A brief reference to the tradition of giving 'gifts to tradesmen' on Boxing Day is made in J. M. Golby and A. W. Purdue, *The Making of the Modern Christmas* (London: Batsford, 1986), p. 76.
[48] 'Bank Holiday: The Pantomime', *NDG*, 28 December 1886, p. 8. For further references to crowded houses, see for example: 'The Pantomimes: Theatre Royal', *BDG* , 1 January 1870, p. 7; 'Christmas Amusements: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 28 December 1874, p. 8; 'Christmas Amusements in Birmingham: The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDG*, 27 December 1878, p. 5; 'The Pantomime: *Blue Beard*', *Express*, 27 December 1877, p. 4; 'The Theatre Royal Nottingham: The Pantomime', *NJ*, 29 December 1871, p. 5, and 'Boxing-Day in Nottingham: Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 28 December 1891, p. 8.
[49] 'The Christmas Pantomime', *Express*, 28 December 1868, p. 3.
[50] 'Christmas Holiday Amusements: Theatre Royal. *Blue Beard*', *BDP*, 28 December 1869, p. 5 and 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime at the Royal', *BDM*, 28 December 1874, p. 2. See also: 'Theatre Royal: *Goody Two Shoes*', *BDP*, 27 December 1887, p. 5; 'The Theatre Royal Nottingham: The Pantomime', *NJ*, 29 December 1871, p. 5, and 'Boxing Day Amusements: The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1876, p. 2.
[51] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 6 January 1871, p. 6. For other examples of this style of promotion, see for example: 'Public Amusements: The Theatres', *BDP*, 2 January 1868, p. 8; 'Amusements: Theatre Royal', *Express*, 8 January 1878, p. 4; 'Local Amusements: Theatre Royal', *Express*, 30 December 1879, p. 3; 'Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 4 January 1887, p. 8, and 'Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 3 January 1888, p. 5.

or late March, continuing into the first days of April in the seasons of 1867-68 and 1880-81.[52] The final week or ten days of the run was usually given over to benefit performances for the cast. An increasingly outmoded method of payment, the benefit as a supplement to the weekly wage continued into the 1880s and 1890s, principally in the provinces and some of the smaller London theatres. St. Vincent Troubridge in *The Benefit System in the British Theatre* highlights the fact that the provincial pantomime was '[o]ne of the last remaining strongholds of the [benefit] system'.[53] (Specific pantomime benefits will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.) The sustained run of between ten and twelve weeks for much of the period, and particularly during times of national depression, such as occurred in the late 1870s and early 1880s, underlines both the large population and the wide catchment area available to the Birmingham theatre, and the strength of the local economy that I referred to earlier. By contrast, at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham, a comparatively shorter pantomime run – usually to the third week of February, and culminating in benefit performances as at Birmingham – was more usual throughout the period.[54] To achieve even that length of run, it was vital that audience members made more than one visit to the pantomime. As I have mentioned, promotional reviews of the pantomimes encouraged local people to return to see the production once the initial flaws in the performance had been remedied, but it was not sufficient for the Theatre Royal management at Nottingham to rely on the novelty of the new pantomime for too long. In each pantomime season, around late January or early February, a 'Second Edition' was

[52] The final performances at Birmingham occurred on the following dates: 1865-66 season: 17 March; 1866-67 season: 25 March; 1867-68 season: 4 April; 1868-69 season: 13 March; 1869-70 season: 5 March; 1870-71 season: 29 March; 1871-72 season: 20 March; 1872-73 season: 22 March; 1873-74 season: 28 March; 1874-75 season: 18 March; 1875-76 season: 18 March; 1876-77 season: 24 March; 1877-78 season: 16 March; 1878-79 season: 15 March; 1879-80 season: 13 March; 1880-81 season: 2 April; 1881-82 season: 18 March; 1882-83 season: 1 March; 1883-84 season: 22 March; 1884-85 season: 21 March; 1885-86 season: 13 March; 1886-87 season: 5 March; 1887-88 season: 25 February; 1888-89 season: 16 March; 1889-90 season: 22 February; 1890-91 season: 21 March; 1891-92 season: 20 February, and 1892-93 season: 18 March. Identified from advertisements in the *BDP*, *BDM* and *BDG*.

[53] St. Vincent Troubridge, *The Benefit System in the British Theatre* (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1967), p. 90.

[54] The final performances occurred on the following dates: 1866-67 season: February 23; 1867-68 season: January 28; 1868-69 season: February 13; 1869-70 season: February 9; 1870-71 season: March 4 ; 1871-72 season: 17 February; 1872-73 season: March 1; 1873-74 season: February 21; 1874-75 season: 20 February ; 1875-76 season: 19 February; 1876-77 season: 10 February; 1877-78 season: February 16; 1878-79 season: February 29; 1879-80 season: February 21; 1880-81 season: February 19; 1881-82 season: February 25; 1882-83 season: March 3; 1883-84 season: February 16; 1884-85 season: February 28; 1885-86 season: February 20; 1886-87 season: February 19;1887-88 season: February 25; 1889-88 season: February 22; 1890-91 season: February 21; 1891-92 season: February 20, and 1892-93 season: February 18. Identified from playbills and advertisements in *NDG* and *Express*.

promoted at the Nottingham theatre, which incorporated 'NEW SONGS, NEW DANCES, NEW DRESSES, [and] NEW FUN'.[55] Not only were the newspaper reviewers quick to emphasise the differences between the old and new versions, but the Second Edition was always lauded as an improvement. Return visits to make the comparison were actively encouraged and reviews carried the inference that multiple trips to the pantomime were an established local habit. In 1882, the *Nottingham Daily Express* explicitly stated that:

> those who have seen the pantomime pretty often will probably enjoy a change in the interpretation of the respective parts [...] No opportunity should be lost by those who have seen the pantomime in its early career of witnessing the changes which have taken place, and those who have not yet made the acquaintance of *Robinson* [*Crusoe*] should no longer deny themselves that pleasure.[56]

The introduction and promotion of a Second Edition at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham occurred with such frequency that it must have been considered essential to extend the run and to, in effect, provide a new pantomime for the same, limited audiences. By contrast, although the manager of the Theatre Royal at Birmingham introduced new features during the run of three pantomimes (in 1879-80, 1886-87 and 1891-92), those elements were promoted only as additional specialities. In February 1880 the engagement of two new actors, Fred Gould and J. H. Milburn enabled 'New Songs and Altered Libretto' to be included in the pantomime; the 'Celebrated Bicyclist/Kaufman' was engaged in February 1887 and 'NEW DANCES, NEW SPECIALITIES' were promoted in February 1892.[57] The Birmingham pantomimes did not undergo an entire re-working of the production and the phrase 'Second Edition' never occurred in relation to pantomimes at that theatre. The

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[55] 'NEW SONGS, NEW DANCES, NEW DRESSES, [and] NEW FUN', advertisement, *NDG*, 16 February 1888. See also, for example: advertisement, *NJ*, 22 January 1877, p. 2; advertisement, *NJ*, 15 February 1878, p. 2; advertisement, *NDG*, 14 February 1882, p. 1, and advertisement, *NDG*, 3 February 1885,p. 1.

[56] 'Local Amusements: Theatre Royal', *Express*, 21 February 1882, p. 4. For references to return visits and encouragement to return to see the Second Edition, see also: 'Local Amusements: Theatre Royal', *Express*, 20 January 1880, p. 3; 'Local Amusements: Theatre Royal', *NDE*, 22 January 1884, p. 5; 'Local Amusements: Theatre Royal', *NDE*, 5 February 1884, p. 8; 'Local Amusements: Theatre Royal', *NDE* 2 February 1886, p. 5 and 'Local Amusements: Theatre Royal', *NDE*, 9 February 1886, p. 4.

[57] The promotion of Gould and Milburn occurred in an advertisement, *BDP*,16 February 1880, p. 1; the Kaufman promotion in an advertisement, *BDP*, 19 February 1887, p. 1, and the 'NEW DANCES, NEW SPECIALITIES' in an advertisement, *BDP*, Monday 1 February 1892, p. 1.

management of the Theatre Royal, Birmingham were evidently confident in the continuing appeal of the original production, and, presumably, with the larger population, there would have been a sufficient number of people who had yet to see it.

During the 1860s and 1870s, the performance would often begin with a short opening play, usually a comedy or farce, and this practice lasted until the discontinuation of the stock company at each theatre (after 1876-77 at Nottingham and 1879-80 at Birmingham).[58] By 1880 the pantomime took up the entire bill at both theatres, and three to three and a half hours appears to have been the accepted length of a performance. In 1890, the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* commented that a rehearsal of *The Forty Thieves* had been 'compressed into a little over four hours'. The reviewer suggested that 'with a judicious cut here and there, we fully expect to see it squeezed into the usual three and a half hours'.[59] By 1860, the basic structure of the pantomimes followed a specific format.[60] The performance began with an opening, culminating in a transformation scene, followed by a short harlequinade, and concluding with an optional finale, sometimes a ballet or a tableau such as 'Shadow and Sunshine' or 'Flora's Home Amid the Honey Bouquets in the Garden of the Fairy Queen'.[61] The opening dominated the pantomime and consisted of between ten and twelve scenes; it was invariably based on a well known story or fairy tale and recurring popular titles at the Nottingham and Birmingham theatres in this period included *Dick Whittington, Robinson Crusoe*, *Aladdin*, and *The Forty Thieves*.[62] By the 1860s, the first two scenes of the pantomime often followed a specific pattern: Scene 1 featuring evil magicians and ogres plotting to thwart the hero, and a second, contrasting scene (usually immediately following or even interrupting the first) wherein the Fairy

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[58] Stock company dates are established from playbills, plus Mercer Simpson's statement at the 1892 Select Committee hearing, in which he claimed that his was the last theatre to engage a stock company. (*Report from the Select Committee* (1892), p. 185, in answer to question 2623.)

[59] 'Christmas Amusements: *The Forty Thieves* Rehearsed', *BDG*, 25 December 1890, p. 8. See also Booth, *English Plays*, p. 43, in which he states that a pantomime production of this period could last for three to five hours.

[60] The following discussion of the structure of pantomime in the second half of the nineteenth century, its traditions and developments, draws on Booth's *English Plays*, although his work is largely informed by patterns established at the London theatres.

[61] 'Shadows and Sunshine' was the closing scene for the Theatre Royal, Birmingham pantomime *Harlequin Sinbad the Sailor or, the Red Dwarfs, The Terrible Ogre, and The Old Man of the Sea* (1865-66) and 'Flora's Home' appeared at the end of *Robinson Crusoe*, also at Birmingham, in 1867-68. Details taken from the books of words, held in a single bound volume *Birmingham Theatre Royal Pantomimes 1856-1892*, accession no. L28.1. 4401948C.

[62] See Appendix A for a full list of the productions at both theatres.

Queen counterplotted to aid the hero. Such oppositions established the moral outcome of the story, with the attributes of the demons and fairies being sustained by the characters in the main plot: the hard working and virtuous hero and heroine, and the profligate baron or wicked uncle.[63] This scene order had been established in the pantomimes of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and was regarded by the newspaper critics as traditional, but, as Michael Booth has noted, the sequence could be reversed in pantomimes produced after the mid-nineteenth century.[64] By 1881 Leopold Wagner in *The Pantomimes and All About Them* stated that many librettists had stopped including an opening demon scene.[65] Evidence from Birmingham and Nottingham displays a wider range of alternatives that were already in place during the 1860s and 1870s. The tradition of an opening demon scene was upheld at Birmingham in only six pantomimes of this period: 'Slumber my Darling, Sleep While You May' in the 1865 production of *Sinbad the Sailor*; 'The Magician's Study in the Temple of the Thundering Winds' opened the pantomime of *Aladdin* in 1866; 'The Magic Forge' in 1869 opened with a purely visual scene in which demons made the key to Blue Beard's secret chamber; in 1871 'A Blighted Oak on a Dismal Heath' included both the antagonistic and protective elements of *The Fair One With the Golden Locks*; in 1874 the 'Cave of the Dragon and Home of the Cow' opened *Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross*, and the first scene of *Robinson Crusoe* in 1878 was 'The Storm King's Lair under the Deep Blue Sea'. Alternatively, in 1867, the opening scene to establish the pantomime story of *Robinson Crusoe* was interrupted by 'Mischief' and the first, celebratory scene in *The Fairy Fawn* (1872) was similarly interrupted by the uninvited bad fairy 'Argentina'. Equally, the ill-will of demons could be enacted by mortal villains such as Idle Jack in the *Dick Whittington* of 1870, or the family solicitor in *Puss in Boots* of 1875. Above all, the opening scene of the pantomimes at Birmingham rapidly became the opportunity for referring to past successes at the theatre and, more particularly, relating topical events. Scene 1 of the 1873 pantomime

[63] The inferred morality of the Victorian pantomime is discussed in Booth, *English Plays*, pp. 20, 45-48, and in *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, p. 200.
[64] Booth, *English Plays*, p. 46.
[65] Wagner, *The Pantomimes and All About Them*, p. 28. See also Booth, *English Plays*, pp. 55-57.

Beauty and the Beast contained a lengthy exchange on current political matters, with the transformation of the prince into a beast included almost as an afterthought at the end of the scene. In the 'Abode of Old Father Time' in 1875, topicality filled the entire scene, with comments on the current state of trade and Joseph Chamberlain's town improvements. In 1876, the demon 'Kremotartar' and the fairy agent 'Bon Accord' busily debated the positive and negative effects of British home and foreign policies before briefly introducing the story of *Sinbad*, and by 1879, the opposing forces of the first scene were economic ('Mammon' and 'Credit') within a prevailing discussion on local trade in *The Fair One With the Golden Locks*.[66]

At Nottingham, the employment of an opening demon scene was maintained for four pantomimes in this period: a 'Cavernous Cavern of Incantation and Freizchutzian Diablerie' in the 1866 production of *Aladdin*; the 'Office in the Subterranean Dwelling of Demons' in *Babes in the Wood* (1868); a 'Demoniacal Den' at the start of *Little Red Riding Hood* (1873), and 'The Laboratory of the Magician Abracaboso' in *Jack and the Beanstalk* (1879).[67] In the 1869 and 1876 pantomimes, the demon and fairy scenes were reversed and in *Blue Beard* (1877), the 'The Abode of the Goblin King' was moved to Scene 2 whilst the pantomime opened in Toyland, populated by a selection of topically well-informed and disgruntled dolls. Topical discussions and scene setting also took place in the first scene of the pantomimes in 1870 (*Robinson Crusoe*) and 1871 (*Forty Thieves*). In 1865, the opening scene introduced the villain 'Time' against the setting of 'The Banks of the Trent, as Seen at Trent, and Near Clifton', but the scene was interrupted by the hero and a lengthy speech on local affairs, while in 1874, the wicked magician Bosco

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[66] Evidence established from the books of words for *Sinbad the Sailor* (1865-66), *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp* (1866-67), *Robinson Crusoe* (1867-68), *Blue Beard* (1869-70), *Dick Whittington* (1870-71), *The Fair One With the Golden Locks* (1871-72), *The Fairy Fawn* (1872-73), *Beauty and the Beast* (1873-74), *Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross* (1874-75), *Puss in Boots* (1875-76), *Sinbad* (1876-77), *Robinson Crusoe* (1878-79) and *The Fair One With the Golden Locks* (1879-80) contained in *Birmingham Theatre Royal Pantomimes 1856-1892*, L28.1 440194.

[67] 'Freizchutzian' drew on *Der Freischutz* by Weber, which had been burlesqued by F. C. Burnard and H. J. Byron in 1866. Source: W. Davenport-Adams, *A Book of Burlesque: Sketches of the English Stage Travestie and Parody* (London: Henry, 1891), p. 185.

invaded the mortal setting of 'Dame Crump's Cottage' in *Little Bo Peep*.[68]

The remaining eight or ten scenes of the pantomime opening pursued the story of the title, culminating in another 'dark' scene where the hero and heroine were trapped (recalling the Georgian and early Victorian harlequinades in which Harlequin customarily lost his magic bat and had to be rescued).[69] Once again the fairy appeared, to release the heroes and punish the wrongdoers, and the transformation scene followed, marking the end of the opening. Whereas in pantomimes at the beginning of the century the short, spoken opening was a prelude to the long, mimed activity of the harlequinade, by mid-century, the opening contained full dialogue, portions of which were printed and available to the audience as books of words, on sale in the theatre for 1*d.* at Nottingham and 2*d.* at Birmingham.[70] The opening did not simply tell the tale; it was an opportunity for scenic display, grand ballets, music, and comedy. Much of the last involved burlesque, so much so that the opening was often referred to as the 'burlesque opening'.[71] A popular genre, that had emerged in the 1850s and 1860s, burlesque 'was a compound of music hall, minstrel show, extravaganza, legs and limelight, puns, topical songs, and gaudy irreverence.'[72] In particular, burlesque was predicated on parody and satire, and pantomime plots increasingly included liberal imitations of well-known plays and operas. The pantomimes at Nottingham, in particular, included parodies of Shakespeare's *Othello* in *Little Red Riding Hood* (1873-74), Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* in *Babes in the*

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[68] This evidence is taken from the following book of words: *The House That Jack Built* (1865-66), *Aladdin; or, Harlequin and the Geni of the Wonderful Lamp* (1866-67), *Babes in the Wood; or, Harlequin Cock Robin, Prince Charley and His Pretty Bluebell* (1868-69), *Little Goody Two-Shoes! and Her Queen Anne's Farthing; Or, Harlequin Old King Counterfeit and the World of Coins* (1869-70), *Harlequin Robinson Crusoe or, Man Friday, Jack Frost, and the King of the Carribee Islands* (1870-71), *The Forty Thieves or, Harlequin Open Sesame and the Enchanted Home of the Arabian Nights* (1871-72), *Little Red Riding Hood; Or, Harlequin Neptune, the Wehr Wolf, Old Dog Tray, the Fairy Gossamer, and the Wonderful Head* (1873-74) and *Little Bo Peep and Boy Blue; Or Harlequin Jack in the Box, Tom Thumb, and the Norfolk Giant* (1874-75), held in a loose collection, accession no: L79.8.T.R. MSS copies held in the Lord Chamberlain's Collection at the British Library, St. Pancras: *Sinbad the Sailor* (1875-76), Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 53160G; *The Fair One With the Golden Locks* (1876-77), Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 53180B; *Blue Beard* (1877-78), Brit. Mus. Add MS. 53197R and *Jack and the Beanstalk* (1879-80), Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 53229D.

[69] Mayer, *Harlequin in His Element*, p. 30.

[70] Prices advertised on front covers of the books of words of *Aladdin! or Harlequin and the Geni of the Wonderful Lamp*, held in the loose collection at Nottingham, and *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp! or Harlequin and the Genius of the Ring and the Fairy of the Garden of Glittering Jewels* in *Birmingham Pantomimes 1856-1892*.

[71] 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime at the Royal', *BDM*, 24 December 1870, p. 8. See also, for example reference to the 'burlesque edition' in 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime at the Royal', *BDM*, 28 December 1874, p. 2.

[72] Booth, *English Plays*, p. 38.

Wood (1878-79) and *Ruddigore* in *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88).[73] By 1891, the version of *Robinson Crusoe* at the Nottingham theatre mercilessly parodied the conventions of melodrama and pantomime throughout:

> Atkins. I am the villain, but of course you know so.
> They shot a blaze of lime-light on to Crusoe.
> Lights up for heroes – that's the only way;
> Red fire and discord for the villain of the play.[74]

The opening concluded with the transformation scene, followed by the harlequinade. Whilst in pantomimes of the early nineteenth century, the transformation scene indicated the crucial transformation of opening figures into the harlequinade characters (achieved by the removal of outsized masks and costumes), by the 1860s this aspect of the scene had become a token gesture, with the emphasis instead falling on the transformation of the scenery.[75] The relationship that had existed in early nineteenth-century pantomimes between the characters of the opening and those of the harlequinade had disappeared. The hero of the opening no longer became Harlequin, nor the heroine Columbine; her father or guardian did not become the tottering Pantaloon and his servant no longer emerged as the anarchic Clown. Michael Booth in *English Plays* dates this change from the mid-1850s and emphasises the gradual division that had occurred in the London pantomimes by the 1860s, between the company who performed in the opening and the separate group of pantomimists who played in the harlequinade.[76] To a large extent, this was also true of the provincial theatres but, although the correlation of characters no longer existed, the

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[73] *Little Red Riding Hood*, book of words Scene 9, p. 24. The parody of *Trial by Jury* in *Babes in the Wood* noted in a review, 'Notes on Amusements', *NDG*, 28 January 1879, p. 3. The parody of *Ruddigore* in the 1887-88 version of *Babes in the Wood*, can be found in the book of words Scene 8, p. 37. Burlesque and its absorption into pantomime has been discussed by Booth in *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, p. 196. See also *English Plays*, Appendix B 'Criticism of Burlesque', pp. 470-484. The parody of Shakespearean plays also occurred in burlesque, as illustrated in *Plays by H. J. Byron*, ed. by Jim Davis (Cambridge: CUP, 1984), p. 3.

[74] A. L. Maddock, *Robinson Crusoe; Or, the Good Friday Who Came on Thursday Half-Holiday* (1891-92), book of words, p. 8. This feature was not unique to Nottingham however. In *English Plays*, Michael Booth notes that pantomime could be burlesqued and cites early nineteenth-century productions (p. 30, footnote 2). See also his discussion of the burlesquing of melodrama villains (p. 32).

[75] In *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, Booth states that this structure – of the dominant opening and 'vestigial' harlequinade – had become established by the 1840s and 50s.

[76] In *English Plays*, Booth notes that in the shift to separate companies, there were examples of part exchanges (for example, just one or two characters). However, he states that, insofar as the London pantomimes were concerned, the clear division between the two companies was evident by the mid-1860s (p. 43).

separation of the different groups of performers at the Nottingham and Birmingham theatres was less specific even after the 1860s. Pantomimists were engaged, and the Clown in particular (played by established performers such as Little Levite, Little Laffar and Wattie Hildyard) was always highly promoted, earning a benefit performance throughout the period. A. E. Wilson in *Pantomime Pageant* states that during the stock company years, Clown and sometimes Harlequin were special engagements, but both during and after the cessation of the stock companies at Nottingham and Birmingham, the performers who played Clown and Harlequin often took on other roles in the opening.[77] For example, Mr. Jean Stanley, who played Harlequin at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham in the 1880s, also played 'King Octopus' in *Little Bo-Peep* of 1883-84, and 'Wehr Wolf' in *Little Red Riding Hood* of 1885-86.[78] Very occasionally the traditional links between the opening and harlequinade characters were recalled: in the Nottingham pantomime of *Aladdin* in 1886-87 for example, echoes of the traditional link between the clown and the disreputable servant of the opening were revived when the Clown, Harry Collier, also played the Emperor's Vizier, Jin Sling, in the opening.[79]

In addition to the separation of characters, the harlequinade, formerly the principal part of the pantomime had by mid-century been reduced to just three or four scenes. As I outlined in Chapter 1, the structural changes to pantomime have been the subject of debate in critical works since that time, in particular the perceived stagnation of the format of the harlequinade, which relied on routines and jokes 'as old as the hills'.[80] Despite the critical *ennui* (expressed from time to time by the provincial reviewers as well as those London critics cited by Michael Booth and A. E. Wilson), there were recurring attempts at the local theatres to revitalise the harlequinade, and the latter did in fact survive much

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[77] Wilson, *Pantomime Pageant*, p. 54.

[78] Evidence from a playbill for *Little Bo-Peep*, 26 December 1883 and a playbill for *Little Red Riding Hood*, 26 December 1885.

[79] Playbill for *Aladdin*, 27 December 1886. See also the 1876 version of *Sinbad the Sailor* at Birmingham in which Mr. F. Newham played 'Stevedore' in the opening and Clown in the harlequinade. 'Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 27 December 1876, p. 5.

[80] 'The Pantomime', *NDG*, 30 December 1884, p. 8. Expressions of boredom occur in Planché, pp. 136-137, and are reiterated by Wagner, p. 52. Writing in 1881, Wagner pointed to the lack of originality in harlequinades as the reason audiences were tiring of them. The *Illustrated London News* of 1877 had also commented on the lack of 'originality' in the harlequinade. The latter is cited in Wilson, *Pantomime Pageant*, p. 59. See also Frow, pp. 87, 103.

longer in the provinces in the nineteenth century than in the principal London theatres.[81] It is evident from a study of the Nottingham and Birmingham pantomimes of this period that that survival was linked to a combination of the traditions of the harlequinade (the comic policeman, the stolen baby, sausages and butter slides), together with fresh and innovative features, and the individual abilities of particular Clowns who, by their re-engagement at the provincial theatres, could be promoted as local favourites.[82] Local reviewers at Birmingham were also quick to promote new features in the harlequinade. In 1871 the *Birmingham Daily Mail* remarked that 'Mr. Bibb makes a capital clown, introducing several clever tricks. The Alexander family are also a great acquisition' and in 1873 the same paper applauded the fact that '[t]he harlequinade introduces lots of new tricks – regular side-splitters'.[83] The attempts to revitalise the harlequinade continued into the 1880s. In 1887, a review in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* commented that 'Mr. Simpson has gone in for a revival in the shape of a merry harlequinade of more than average length' and in 1890 the pantomime of *The Forty Thieves* included 'a very clever harlequinade, with Little Levite as Clown.'[84] At Nottingham, new comic scenes (i.e. the scenes of the harlequinade) were a regular feature of the Second Edition, and a succession of established Clowns and the occasional novelty were promoted in advertisements and reviews throughout the period. In 1876, front page advertisements unusually promoted a 'costly' 'BUDGET OF FUN' in that year's harlequinade and the expenditure was complemented by an extended review in the *Nottingham Journal*. The Clown, Mr. J. M. Jones, displayed 'a fertility of invention, which while preserving the time honoured but mischievous proclivities of clown and pantaloon, imparts to the fooleries enough of novelty to keep them abundantly alive'.[85]

In general, the resources of the two theatres were reserved for the opening of the

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[81] Wilson, *Pantomime Pageant*, p. 45. According to Wilson, the survival of the harlequinade was also a feature of the London 'minor' theatres in this period.
[82] The traditional elements discussed in Wilson, *Pantomime Pageant*, pp. 38-39.
[83] 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1871, p. 4, and 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime at the Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1873, p. 2.
[84] 'The Pantomimes: *Goody Two Shoes* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM* 27 December 1887, p. 4, and 'The Pantomimes: *The Forty Thieves* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1890, p. 2.
[85] 'Theatre Royal', *NJ*, 3 January 1877, p. 4.

pantomime and the transformation scene. Prior to the opening night, the Birmingham newspapers offered insights into individual pantomime productions in a selection of articles describing backstage visits to the Theatre Royal. In those articles, the critic, as a guest of the theatre manager, wandered through the paint rooms, wardrobe and property-man's rooms, describing artifacts that attracted his attention and expressing constant amazement that a dazzling pantomime would, in only a few days time, rise out of the chaos that he saw. The articles acted as an additional promotional tool for the theatre; the items that the critic chose to describe were frequently those that featured in the later advertising and reviews. Pieces such as 'Behind the Scenes' also provided illuminating details of costumes and scenery, together with descriptions of the production processes of some of the properties.[86] For example, although masks no longer marked the difference between the opening and harlequinade characters, they were worn by supernumeraries in the crowd, comic and processional scenes of the opening.[87] In the 1874 pantomime *Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross* '[t]he stage [was] thronged in the various scenes with retainers and cooks of grotesque physiognomy – the art of the property-man' and, in the 1876 pantomime of *Sinbad the Sailor,* the reviewer of the *Birmingham Daily Mail* drew attention to the 'red dwarfs [...] curiously masked' and to the 'masks of the sailors who are rushing about at the port' as being 'wonderfully comic'.[88] The article 'Behind the Scenes at Pantomime Time', which appeared in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* in 1873, included the following description of the process of making such masks:

> The grotesque faces suggest that the designer supped heavily and dreamed hideously. The front face is modelled in clay, and on this cast the workman pastes his layers of paper, shapes, hardens, and dries them, until they are ready for the Munchausen-possessed brush of the artist [...] A [...] Sphynx too – a masterpiece of the 'property-man's' strange craft. The eyes work, the big mouth opens and grins, the hair lifts, and the fat cheeks rise [...] On all sides great, goggling misshapen heads leer at us [...] A most eccentric brass

[86] 'Behind the Scenes at Pantomime Time. By "the Odd Man Out".', *BDM*, 20 December 1873, p. 4; 'Pantomime in Plain Clothes [by the Odd Man Out]', *BDM*, 27 December 1875, p. 2; 'Christmas Stories: A Pantomimic Workshop', *BDG*, 26 December 1876, p. 6; 'Preparing the Pantomime', *BDM*, 26 December 1888, p. 3 . See also a useful account of the audition process in 'The Penetralia of Pantomime', *BDG*, 26 December 1891, p. 5.
[87] Mander & Mitchenson, p. 30, and Frow, p. 105 (citing *Theatre*, 1883).
[88] 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime at the Royal', *BDM*, 28 December 1874, p. 2, and 'Boxing Day Amusements: The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1876, p. 2.

> band has been devised. The unique performers are fashioned in quaint shapes of many instruments. One gifted being has a drum head, which he beats; another has ears which are large and brazen, and serve as cymbals; a third has a twisted body, and this walking trumpet blows his own dejected looking head out of the mouth of his instrument.[89]

The remarkable band of instrument masks featured in the subsequent newspaper reviews, which promoted the scene as amongst the 'spectacular effects' of the production and 'one of the most outrageously funny things we ever saw.'[90] The Birmingham articles are crucial in that they accentuated the importance of the provincial theatre and its ability to be inspected at close quarters. Such articles did not simply act as a promotion for the forthcoming production (although this was very effectively done in terms of foregrounding particular scenes and effects) but also celebrated the local artistic achievement and workmanship, intimating the ample resources available to the theatre. The practice of including 'behind the scenes' style articles was also used by the London theatres.[91] In encouraging such articles in the Birmingham newspapers, the management of the Theatre Royal was implicitly establishing the theatre both before and behind the scenes as a worthy equivalent to London and other major pantomime centres.[92]

The changes to the format of the pantomime and the emphasis on the visual splendours of the production, reflected a contemporary cultural fascination with spectacle. In industry, technological innovation had led to increased output and the development of mass production. In turn, as Thomas Richards has succinctly established, the increase in goods and a broadening sense of commercial awareness led to the emergence

[89] 'Behind the Scenes at Pantomime Time. By the "Odd Man Out".', *BDM*, 20 December 1873, p. 4. See also M. J. Moynet, *French Theatrical Production in the Nineteenth Century* (1873), trans. and augmented by Allan S. Jackson with M. Glen Wilson, ed. by Marvin A. Carlson (New York: The Max Reinhardt Foundation with the Center for Modern Theater Research, 1976), p. 156 for a brief description of mask making using papier-mâché; the partly fictional account of a mask maker, reproduced from 'The Mask Maker' (1868), in Russell Jackson, *Victorian Theatre* (London: A & C Black, 1989), pp. 178-182, and Booth, *English Plays* 'Appendix C: Pantomime Production, Rehearsal and Performance', pp. 485-518.

[90] 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime at the Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1873, p. 2.

[91] I am here referring to those London examples that have been cited in secondary sources. For example in Mander & Mitchenson, pp. 26-28 (citing the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* of December 1874), also by Booth in Appendix C of *English Plays* (citing Augustus Sala's article 'Getting Up a Pantomime' from *Household Words*), pp. 487-497. See also contemporary reports such as 'The Reading of the Pantomime' in *Comical Fellows; or, the History and Mystery of the Pantomime: With Some Curiosities and Droll Anecdotes Concerning Clown and Pantaloon, Harlequin and Columbine*, ed. by Andrew Halliday (London: Thompson, 1863), pp. 52-72, and Wagner, pp. 54-60.

[92] The emphasis on the time, cost and preparation of the pantomimes at Birmingham also featured in the previews. See for example, 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime at the Royal', *BDM*, 24 December 1870, p. 8

of the commodity and the associated advertising that promoted desire over need for the aspirational middle classes.[93] In the theatre, spectacle had come to fruition via the two strands of art and technology. It is not my intention to engage with theories of stage design of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, other than to note the gradual development of scene painting, from creating a simple backdrop for the poetry of the actor's lines, to a more prominent expression of naturalistic detail and integral mise-en-scéne.[94] In the nineteenth century, that shift also incorporated changing technologies, more especially in stage lighting, which allowed scenic detail a greater prominence.[95] The development of spectacular theatre links directly into the promotion of the commodity; the instigation of the concept of the consumer and the growth of aspirational advertising engendered a cycle of desire and production. In the theatre, as Richards states,

> [t]he primary result [...] was to instigate a continual escalation of representation. This escalation had its own logic of one-upmanship: everything had to outdo what had come before it, and in turn, everything had to be outdone by what came after it. The spectacles of the early Victorian stage conditioned their audiences always to expect more.[96]

Whilst acknowledging the incorporation of industrial technology into stage productions (in terms of special effects and machinery, and nowhere more effective than in the machinery of the pantomime transformation scene), Richards does not in fact class theatre performance as a commodity (unlike Tracy C. Davis's direct correlation of the two).[97]

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[93] Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle 1851-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990). Richards draws on Booth's *Victorian Spectacular Theatre* and, more especially, Guy Debord's thesis in *Society of the Spectacle* regarding the integral nature of spectacle in a capitalist society. See also Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola* (New York: Methuen, 1985), in particular her discussion of the commodity and the department store in the 'Introduction', p. 2, and Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, English translation, (London: Sage Publications, 1998). For discussions of the processes of theatrical production, see Moynet, plus Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial and Theatrical Arts of Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), and Percy Fitzgerald, *The World Behind the Scenes* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1881).

[94] For a detailed discussion of this subject, see Michael S. Wilson, 'Columbine's Picturesque Passage: The Demise of Dramatic Action in the Evolution of Sublime Spectacle on the London Stage', *Eighteenth Century*, 31 (1990), 191-210. Also, Moynet, for the early developments of spectacle in the European theatre, and Booth's *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*, pp. 13-14, for a discussion of historical and archaeological accuracy as a significant contributory factor in spectacular theatre.

[95] Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*, pp. 24-26.

[96] Richards, p. 56.

[97] Davis, *Economics*, p. 335, although her concept underlines much of Chapter 10 'Theatre as Cultural Capital'.

His concept of spectacular one-upmanship was integral to pantomime production, both in terms of the whole performance as a commodity (purchased by the theatre goer) and also in relation to the overt display of the actual production processes, evident in the behind the scenes articles cited above. This emphasis on production extends Richards's argument; whilst he presents the isolated and applauded commodity at the Great Exhibition as divorced in its presentation from the production processes, the pantomime producers in Birmingham actively encouraged those processes to be viewed as spectacle in their own right. The audience and critics did not necessarily want to see the mechanisation of the transformation scene obstructing the stage in performance, but they were allowed to 'visit' backstage to applaud the creative skills responsible for it. This was particularly relevant for the industrial context and local pride of Birmingham: pantomimes at the Theatre Royal also celebrated specific commodities produced by the town in the actual performances and I will discuss this issue, in relation to local topicality, in more detail in Chapter 5.

The productions at Birmingham incorporated the spectacle of elaborate scenes. The settings for pantomimes such as *Sinbad the Sailor* and *Little Red Riding Hood* did not merely illustrate the well-known stories; the cottages, castles and forests of the pantomimes for much of this period were interspersed with extravagant scenes such as 'The Sunflower Grove in the Kingdom of Yellowland', 'The Beast's Bower of Roses' and 'The Realms of the Moon', or more authentic illustrations of scenes such as 'Warwick Castle and Old Bridge over the Avon' or 'Constantinople and the Golden Horn'.[98] For much of this period, the culmination of spectacular effect in the pantomimes was the transformation scene. As I mentioned earlier, by the 1860s the transformation scene had developed from the simple costume changes that revealed the players of the harlequinade, to a dramatic transformation of scenery that incorporated a multitude of fairies and special

[98] 'Sunflower Grove' was Scene 3 of the 1872-73 pantomime *The Fairy Fawn* (book of words, p. 8); 'Beast's Bower of Roses' was Scene 6 of the 1881-82 pantomime *Beauty and the Beast* (book of words, p. 14) and 'The Realms of the Moon', Scene 4 of *Goody Two Shoes* (1887-88, book of words, p.15). See also: 'Illuminated Gardens of the Palace' (1879-80 *Fair One With the Golden Locks*, books of words, Scene 7, p. 17 and Scene 9, p. 20); 'The Pavilion of King Gold' (1887-88 *Goody Two Shoes*, book of words, Scene 6, p. 21). 'Warwick Castle' featured in the 1874-75 pantomime *Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross* (book of words, Scene 6, p. 13). The scene of Constantinople in the 1882-83 pantomime *Sinbad the Sailor* (book of words, Scene 2, p. 4)

effects. This re-invention of the transformation scene had been primarily influenced by William Beverley, resident scenic artist at the Lyceum Theatre in London. In 1849 Beverley had designed a concluding scene for J. R. Planché's fairy extravaganza *The Island of Jewels.* This scene had featured 'the novel and yet exceedingly simple falling of the leaves of a palm tree which discovered six fairies supporting a coronet of jewels'. Planché described in his autobiography how Beverley was subsequently required to produce ever more spectacular scenery: 'Year after year Mr. Beverley's powers were tasked to outdo his former out-doings. The *last* scene became the first in the estimation of the management.'[99] Planché noted how this aspect of the extravaganza was quickly incorporated into the transformation scene of the pantomimes, thereby turning the formerly simple transition, into 'the great feature of the evening'.[100] At the Theatre Royal, Birmingham the effects of the transformation scene dominated promotional reviews into the 1870s; lengthy descriptions extolled the extravagance of scenes such as 'Halls of Shadows and Sunshine', the title of the transformation scene in the 1867-68 pantomime *Robinson Crusoe*:

> This latter scene is, of course, a marvel of splendour. Its chief component elements are golden bulrushes of every hue and size, arranged in a series of receding quatrefoil frames. [...] The central group consists of a silver clad fairy, in mid-air, supported cariatyd fashion by a number of inferior spirits who gradually float downwards in an expanding circle. Behind the central figure is a huge sun, consisting of a silver globe emitting substantial golden rays but its glories are presently eclipsed by the intervention of a huge golden trellis work, rising nearly to the flies, and decorated with living fruit, in the shape of lightly clad fairies. In the wings and foreground other fairies are attitudinising, some in stationary and others in revolving clusters of bulrushes, upon which the many coloured electric light plays with dazzling and ever changing effect. The production of this spectacular triumph, yesterday, was hailed by the large audience present with immense enthusiasm, and the manager and Mr. Roberts, the artist, were summoned forward to receive the public felicitations.[101]

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[99] Cited in Booth, *English Plays*, p. 48. Michael Booth has stated that Planché's comments are 'well-known' and very frequently quoted. See also: *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*, p. 80; Mander & Mitchenson, p. 29 (citing Planché from Fitzgerald's *World Behind the Scenes*), Wagner, p. 11, and Broadbent, *A History of Pantomime*, p. 184 (citing Wagner's quotation of Planché). Fitzgerald also details the machinery of the transformation scene (pp. 90-91) and is cited by Russell Jackson, pp. 193-194, and by Booth, in *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*, pp. 80-81.

[100] Planché, ii, p. 135.

[101] 'Christmas Holiday Amusements: Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 27 December 1867, p. 3.

In 1868, the transformation scene 'Queen of Night and Her Maids of Light' was reported by the critic of the *Birmingham Daily Post* to be 'a scene of dazzling splendour'. Despite doubting his own abilities to describe the scene, the critic continued:

> the general form of the tableau is a series of Persian arches fringed with large bell-shaped flowers, and flanked by cabriole-shaped wings. In the distance is a rustic arcade through the arches of which naiads appear against a glittering green background. The extreme distance is occupied by a huge revolving sun in fret work, and the wings are enriched with metallic revolving stars whose radii reflect the hues of the electric light. The centre space is occupied partly by a descending group of fairies supporting a huge golden crescent, which remains poised in mid air, and from beneath by the leading fairy figure richly clad, ascending out of open trellis work bower. The foreground is occupied by banks of flowers, and all the vacant parts of the design are filled up with richly attired fays in sculpturesque attitudes and draperies. The effect of the whole under the glow of the coloured fires and electric light is resplendent beyond conception.[102]

The transformation scene was an integral aspect of pantomime spectacle at the theatre; in 1875 an article in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* referred to the fact that the transformation scene of that year had cost the manager 'some hundreds of pounds', but after the mid-1870s the descriptions became noticeably shorter as attention was drawn to other features in the annual production.[103] The reviews continued to be complimentary – in 1892 the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* stated that '[t]he transformation scene [...] worthily upholds the reputation of the Royal Theatre for brilliant spectacle' – but the gradual relegation of the transformation scene in reviews perhaps highlighted the limitations of its format.[104] Even in the 1860s, there were some comments that the scene was 'somewhat conventional in form'.[105] The transformation scene had never been the only spectacular feature in the

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[102] 'Christmas Holiday Amusements: Theatre Royal: *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*', *BDP*, 28 December 1868, p. 5. See also lengthy descriptions of the transformation scene of the 1869-70 pantomime, *Blue Beard*, reported in 'Christmas Holiday Amusements: Theatre Royal. *Blue Beard*', *BDP*, 28 December 1869, p. 5, and of the 1871-72 transformation scene 'The Peri's Home in the Palace of Pearls' in 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 6 January 1871, p. 6.

[103] 'Pantomime in Plain Clothes. [By the Odd Man Out.]', *BDM*, 27 December 1875, p. 2.

[104] '*Cinderella* at the Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 27 December 1892, p. 5. See also: 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 22 December 1881, p. 6; 'Christmas Amusements: *Beauty and the Beast*', *BDM*, 27 December 1881, p. 2 ; 'The Pantomimes: *Cinderella* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1886, p. 2, and 'Abdalla and His Naughty Forty Thieves', *BDP*, 27 December 1890, p. 5.

[105] This phrase is taken from 'Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 27 December 1876, p. 5, but similar comments were made during the 1869-70 reviews. See: 'The Pantomimes: Theatre Royal', *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 1 January 1870, p. 7.

Birmingham pantomimes. In 1870 for example, it was promoted alongside 'The Verdant Valley', 'sparkling with pendant jewels and coloured foil', and a Lord Mayor's show with 'gilded chariots [and] its cavalcade of richly attired attendants'.[106] However, by the late 1870s the splendour and complex stage machinery of the unfolding transformation were being more overtly displaced, in advertisements and reviews, by other scenes in the opening, that provided novelty and spectacular display, and could be shown to good advantage on the large stage of the Theatre Royal. As the theatre's resources were increasingly re-distributed to creating alternative features, the transformation scene became one of several spectacular features rather than the climax of the evening. There appears to have been a concerted effort to revive the fortunes of the transformation scene in the 1883-84 pantomime, when the 'Wedding of Cupid and Psyche' was described as being 'on such a scale as Mr. Simpson has not attempted since, more than a dozen years ago he made the Theatre Royal famous for productions of the kind', but extended descriptions of the scene in reviews were increasingly forfeited for admiration of other sets.[107] The first sign of this shift was during the 1874 pantomime of *Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross*, in which the 'GRAND PROCESSION OF THE MONARCHS OF/ENGLAND' included 'Dresses from Authentic Drawings' and 'Armour and Regalia by Messrs. Kennedy of Birmingham'.[108] The reviewer of the *Birmingham Daily Mail* promoted this scene thus: 'Nothing more costly or effective has ever been seen in Birmingham [...] So far as the spectacular element is concerned, this scene eclipses everything else in the pantomime'.[109] The scene became a feature of advertisements; by the beginning of January, an additional front page advertisement offered 'A LESSON IN ENGLISH HISTORY/FOR CHILDREN/THE MONARCHS OF ENGLAND/Correct and Magnificent Dresses and Regalia.'[110] For the 1878-79 pantomime of *Robinson Crusoe*, despite eleven scenes, including a woodland with moving trees, and a warrior

[106] 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime at the Royal', *BDM*, 24 December 1870, p. 8.
[107] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 20 December 1883, p. 5.
[108] Advertisement, *BDP*, 24 December 1874, p. 1.
[109] 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime at the Royal', *BDM*, 28 December 1874, p. 2.
[110] Advertisement, *BDP*, 7 January 1875, p. 1.

procession, the ship 'The Lively Sally', from which Crusoe was shipwrecked. was predominant in previews and reviews of the production.

> It is an unusually fine stage property; an enormous amount of labour has been expended on it. We see the vessel in the block, as it were, with masts stretching as high as the top of the proscenium .[..] A chorus is given and we see the ship lurch and roll and at length move away across the stage [...] The effect of the vessel moving in this way is exceedingly good, especially when taken in conjunction with the scenery at the back, which stretches nearly to the full length of the stage.[111]

The previews emphasised the fact that it had taken 'several men' five months to construct.[112] By late January, this single prop had become the metonymic focus of advertisements, and front page advertisements in the *Birmingham Daily Post* announced that 'THE "LIVELY SALLY" SAILS AT 7.00.'[113]

Scenes were augmented by numbers of elaborately costumed supers and dancers. In *Sinbad* (1882-83), Scene 6 of the 'Rocky Serpents' Glen' not only featured 'a real waterfall 25 feet high' but also over 200 'red dwarfs' that 'throng[ed] down the sides of the glen like an army of ants'.[114] The 1876-77 production of *Sinbad* had included 'The Valley of Diamonds', in which 124 dancers in dresses of 'white satin fringed with gold and ornamented with stage gems' were incorporated into an illusion of perspective:

> [They] start at a height above the gallery [...] but when we look from the house to the point at which they first appear, and when the real distance is heightened by the tricks of the stage artist, the effect is bewildering. It appears as if we were looking at a picture through the wrong end of a telescope, but that it gradually came nearer until the actual reality was seen in all its force.[115]

Each production was interspersed with grand ballets of sailors, flowers, precious stones,

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[111] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1878, p. 2.
[112] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDG*, 23 December 1878, p. 5. See also, 'Amusements for Boxing-Day: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 26 December 1878, p. 5.
[113] Advertisement, *BDP*, 27 January 1879, p. 1.
[114] 'Boxing Day in Birmingham: Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1882, p. 2. Other examples include the promotion of 'a cataract of real water' in 'The Pantomimes', *BDM*, 21 December 1877, p. 3, and 'a cascade of real water' in the scene of 'The Butterfly Ball and the Grasshoppers' Feast' in *The Queen of Hearts*, reviewed in 'Boxing-Day Amusements: The Pantomimes: Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1883, p. 4.
[115] 'Boxing Day Amusements: The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1876, p. 2.

moonbeams, dolls, and powderpuffs.[116] Revels. processions, regal, ceremonial and celebratory scenes punctuated the stories, for example the 'Cannibal Festival' in the 1878-79 production of *Robinson Crusoe*, which included a 'procession of Amazons, the dancing of demon bats and cocoa-nut dancers' together with the 'ballet troupe, arrayed as birds of different plumage'.[117] The human element of spectacle was complemented on occasions by the incorporation of live animals of varying co-operation. The 'TROUPE OF PONIES' from Sanger's Amphitheatre in London in the 1874-75 pantomime of *Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross* appear to have caused few problems, but the use of real lambs to accompany juvenile shepherdesses in the 'Highgate Hill' scene of the 1884-85 pantomime *Dick Whittington and His Cat*, and an inquisitive fawn for the transformation of the Princess into the titular *Fairy Fawn* of the 1872-73 pantomime, were a source of amusement for the critics.[118] In the Theatre Royal pantomime of 1886-87, *Cinderella*, real fox hounds were used in the hunt scene at the end of Scene 1, although at one point they strayed out of the theatre and Mr. Simpson had to place an advertisement in the *Birmingham Daily Post* for their recovery.[119] Animals were also created by specialist performers, adept in what were termed 'skin parts' and provided in the scripts with sequences of comic business and interaction with other actors, for example the donkeys in the 1877-78 production of *The Forty Thieves*, 'styled Edward and Emma who [...] make

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[116] 'GRAND NAUTICAL BALLET' in *Robinson Crusoe* (1878-79, book of words Scene 2, p. 9), 'Grand Ballet of Flowers' in *Beauty and the Beast* (1881-82, book of words, Scene 6, p. 14), 'GRAND BALLET/ of Precious Stones' (1882-83, book of words, Scene 8, p. 19), 'Ballet of the Moonbeams' in Goody *Two Shoes* (1887-88, book of words, Scene 4, p. 15), 'Dolls Ballet' in *Robinson Crusoe* (1885-86, book of words, Scene 3, p. 4), and 'Powderpuff Ballet' in *Cinderella* (1892-93, book of words, Scene 5, p. 23). See also, for example: 'GRAND FLORAL BALLET in *Beauty and the Beast* (1873-74, book of words, Scene 5, p. 11), 'SKIPPING ROPE BALLET in *Robinson Crusoe* (1878-79, book of words, Scene 5, p. 13), 'Grand Ballet of All Nations' in *The Fair One With the Golden Locks* (1879-80, book of words, Scene 9, p. 20), 'Ballet of the Flame Fiends' in *Robinson Crusoe*, (1885-86, book of words, Scene 6, p. 5), 'BALLET OF BARBARY BEAUTIES' in *Dick Whittington* (1888-89, book of words, Scene 8, p. 24), 'Grand Ballet of the World of Jewels' in *Aladdin* (1889-90, book of words, Scene 5, p. 18), 'BALLET OF SLAVES' in *The Forty Thieves* (1890-91, book of words, Scene 1, p. 6), and 'GRAND BALLET OF DIAMONDS' in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1891-92, book of words, Scene 5, p. 16).

[117] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1878, p. 2.

[118] The troupe of ponies featured in the advertisement for *Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross*, *BDP*, 24 December 1874, p. 1. The lambs referred to in 'Boxing-Day in Birmingham: Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 27 December 1884, p. 5. The reviewer in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* was impressed that 'Mr. Simpson has, somehow or other, at this unseasonable period of the year managed to get hold of a few ewes with young lambs' ('Boxing Day Amusements: The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1884, p. 3). The fawn discussed in 'Christmas Amusements: Theatre Royal. *The Fairy Fawn*', *BDP*, 27 December 1872, p. 8.

[119] The 'real pack of foxhounds' was promoted in the preview of the pantomime: 'The Birmingham Pantomimes. Theatre Royal: *Cinderella*', *BDP*, 25 December 1886, p. 5. The missing hounds were advertised as 'STRAYED. – Two FOXHOUNDS. – Please Return/them to Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 5 January 1887, p. 1. The advertisement remained in the paper for only a few days so presumably the scene was complete for the remainder of the run.

manifest their appreciation of humour by a series of kicks and lively jigs.'[120] Often the 'animals' on stage were examples of the property-man's craft, as for example in the 1876-77 pantomime of *Sinbad the Sailor*, during which an 'immense sea serpent' 'crawl[ed] along the floor of the stage – a wonderful piece of stage mechanism' and a 'life-sized elephant' that could 'move his trunk, his eyes, and legs in a way that is wonderful to see'.[121] The scenes were further complemented at Birmingham by the structural spectacle of large or 'heavy' sets in the opening that took up most of the stage. The newspaper reviews promoted the production of such elements as well as their visual effect. The *Birmingham Daily Mail,* in previewing the 1881-82 production of *Beauty and the Beast*, focused on the fact that '[o]n one scene alone, on which the scenic artist and stage carpenters have been engaged for several weeks past, more money has already been spent than has sufficed to produce many a pantomime.'[122] This scene was 'The Hall of Splendour' and the preview expanded on its early hints:

> Then we are introduced to the great feature of the pantomime, the hall of splendour in the Beast's Castle [...] Every inch of the stage is taken up with this gigantic set. The lights of hundreds of jets are reflected in plate-glass pillars and beautiful mirrors; statues are arranged along the sides and in niches at every turn; the ceiling and walls are literally a blaze of rich colour; massive chandeliers hang in lavish profusion; and when everything is complete, and the gorgeously-attired nymphs come trooping down the sumptuously carpeted staircase, reaching from the middle of the stage to the bottom of the flies, we shall be certainly surprised if it does not open the eyes of the audience a little to what can be accomplished.[123]

Later advertisements in the season encouraged the public to see the 'HALL OF SPLENDOUR' before the 'greatest scene ever produced on any stage in Pantomime'

[120] '*The Forty Thieves*', *BDM*, 27 December 1877, p. 2. See also the 1878-79 pantomime of *Robinson Crusoe* in which 'the performance of two sham bears [...] ke[pt] the whole house in roars of laughter' ('The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1878, p. 2). The history of skin parts is usefully outlined in Frow, pp. 175-80.
[121] 'Boxing Day Amusements: The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1876, p. 2. See also reference to a 'property horse of most miraculous proportions' and 'a huge property lion' in a review of the 1881-82 pantomime, 'Christmas Amusements: *Beauty and the Beast* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1881, p. 2.
[122] 'The Pantomimes', *BDM*, 23 December 1881, p. 3. See also: advertisement, *BDP*, 16 January 1882, p. 1, which cited other papers in praise of this scene: '[t]he great scene', which had 'been provided at an enormous cost' cited from the *BDP*, and 'magnificent spectacle' quote attributed to the *BDG*.
[123] 'The Pantomimes', *BDM*, 23 December 1881, p. 3. A lengthy description was also given in 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 22 December 1881, p. 6. The advertisement, *BDP*, 16 January 1882, p. 1, cited other newspapers' praise of this scene. See also reviews of heavy sets in other productions at Birmingham in 'Boxing Day in Birmingham: Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1882, p. 2 and 'Boxing-Day in Birmingham: *Cinderella* at the Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 27 December 1892, p. 5.

became 'a thing of the past.'[124] In 1883, the 'Card Palace of the Four Suits' drew similar attention and the reviewers lavished their praise on the palatial set:

> The next scene – the card palace of the four suits – is one of the biggest, if not the biggest set in the pantomime. It occupies the entire stage, and is built up entirely of imitation playing cards of Brobdignagian dimensions. All the four suits are arranged in perfect order, the handsome Court cards lending colour and life to a most beautiful and ingenious stage picture. Everything is in perfect harmony. The floor right away to the extreme end of the stage is covered by a carpet displaying in correct rotation the cards of the pack, and the magnificent dresses of the principals and dancers are quite in accord with the surroundings. Beautiful candelabra, resting upon dice, and five crystal chandeliers, hanging from the ceiling, shed a rich and dazzling lights upon the scene. Tyler's silver band – each instrumentalist being dressed up in imitation of a Knave of Hearts – precedes the corps de ballet – 52 in number – as they march in martial procession down the stage. The dancers furnish in themselves another complete pack of cards. They are dressed as knights in superb armour, and with helmets with crimson plumes and blue cloaks, and instead of a shield each one holds proudly in front of him a card of the pack.[125]

The ability to produce a selection of spectacular features in each production highlighted the financial and physical resources of the Birmingham theatre and, even in the context of a friendly rivalry, the pressure of competition from other theatres in the town. Whilst spectacular theatre as a whole was predicated on scale, its promotion at Birmingham was deeply indicative of the rising status and economic success of the town. Once again, this related to the broader concept of spectacle and, as Thomas Richards has emphasised, the persistent image of surplus in society as an inference of plenty, and thereby contentment.[126] The crowded stage, with large sets and casts provided both satisfaction for the audience in realising their expectations, and implied wealth for the theatre (and the town) in being able to provide that level of spectacle.

The management of the Theatre Royal in Nottingham also promoted the

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[124] Advertisement, *BDP*, 1 March 1882, p. 1.

[125] 'Boxing-Day Amusements: The Pantomimes. Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1883, p. 4. The lengthy section continues with a description of the card ballet and court dances in this scene, including an inventive game of 'nap' which the King and Queen 'play' with the 52 dancers. See also: 'Boxing-Day in Birmingham: The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 27 December 1883, p. 5. For earlier descriptions of such scenes, see the review of the 'old Baronial Hall' in 'Christmas Amusements: *Puss in Boots* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 28 December 1875, p. 2.

[126] Richards, p. 28.

spectacular features in their pantomimes and the progression from an emphasis on the transformation scene in the 1860s and early 1870s, to more varied spectacle, was similar to the shifts at Birmingham. However, the scale and approach to staging spectacle differed, reflecting the comparative size and economics of the town and the theatre. In 1865 the transformation scene was clearly of import, promoted centrally in the playbills and advertisements, and supported by complimentary reviews in the local papers.

> it was a really magnificent piece of scenic art [...] Fairies in every attitude of graceful repose [...] appeared in the midst of flowers, while the brilliant and ever-changing hues of the limelight seemed to transform the whole scene itself.[127]

The promotion of the transformation scene at Nottingham followed a similar pattern to that at Birmingham. The scene continued to be central to the advertisements into the 1870s, although lengthy detailed descriptions tended to be the exception rather than the rule. An unusually detailed description of 'The Fairies Nest in the Radiant Home of Beauty' appeared in the *Nottingham Journal* in January 1875:

> The first stage shows a fernery with rich bordering and grapes suspended from the top. Presently a row of Passion Flower leaves ascend, and as each is unfolded a pretty fairy is displayed. Other minor developments are made after which an opening is effected, so that a large passion flower may be seen at the extreme rear. These leaves gradually open and reveal the queen of the fairies at whose back revolving many coloured wheels are set in rapid motion. Two quartettes of fairies then descend and make up a very pretty group. As each phase of the transformation is produced more overhanging vinery is presented, and this, combined with the hundreds of luminous pendants which are brought into requisition for optical illusion, gives the whole scene a very pretty effect.[128]

In general, comments in the reviews were brief and continued so until the mid- 1870s. By that time, as at Birmingham, other scenes in the Nottingham pantomimes began to attract the attention of the reviewers, such as the Harvest Scene in the 1874-75 production of

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[127] 'The Christmas Pantomime', *NDG*, 27 December 1870, p. 3.
[128] 'The Nottingham Pantomime', *NJ*, 2 January 1875, p. 6. See also: 'The Theatre Royal, Nottingham: The Pantomime', *NJ*, 29 December 1871, p. 5, 'The Nottingham Pantomime', *NJ*, 28 December 1872, p. 8 and 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime', *NDG*, 27 December 1876, p. 3.

Little Bo Peep. This scene was described in the *Nottingham Daily Guardian* as 'the most artistic and successful scene in the pantomime' and front page advertisements placed the scene above the transformation, drawing attention to the incorporation of 'A FLOCK OF SPLENDID SHEEP' and a 'CASCADE OF REAL WATER' not once but twice in the same advertisement.[129] In the 1876-77 production of *The Fair One With the Golden Locks*, 'the most successful scene of all' was 'one which represents ice-bound regions "inside the moon"' and incorporated the 'novelty of a snow shower at the conclusion'.[130] Although the reviews approved of novelties in the spectacular element of the pantomimes, there is little evidence in the advertisements and reviews that the Nottingham theatre staged 'heavy' sets or large, complex properties such as the 'Lively Sally' of the Birmingham productions. In turn, it is evident from reviews of the transformation scene in those 1874 and 1876 pantomimes, that the financial resources of the theatre of the Nottingham theatre were not unlimited. The transformation scene in 1876 for example was prudently described in the *Nottingham Daily Guardian*: '[t]hat this is the most beautiful production of its kind we have ever had in Nottingham we should hesitate to aver.'[131] The theatre management at Nottingham provided spectacular elements in each pantomime, but the limited descriptions in reviews and the repetitive nature of some of the advertisements suggest that the emphasis of production and expenditure was limited to one principal feature rather than several in each production.

In 1876 a new manager, Thomas W. Charles, took on the Theatre Royal at Nottingham, and instigated a new era at the theatre. Charles was an experienced manager, who was simultaneously responsible for the Grand Theatre in Glasgow. This dual management placed him at an advantage in terms of production resources, and the provenance of scenery and scenic artists in the books of words and reviews indicate that scenery was alternated between the two theatres. The *Nottingham Daily Guardian* referred uncritically to the '*quid pro quo* principle' in 1885; the Nottingham scenery of

[129] *NDG*, 28 December 1874, p. 3. Advertisement, *NJ*, 30 December 1874, p. 2.
[130] 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime', *NDG*, 27 December 1876, p. 3. The snow shower featured in 'Theatre Royal', *NJ*, 3 January 1877, p. 4.
[131] 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime', *NDG*, 27 December 1876, p. 3.

1884 by Mr. Potts was being used at Glasgow, whilst Mr. McLennan of the Glasgow theatre was promoted in the Nottingham papers as the principal artist for the local production of *Little Red Riding Hood*.[132] Charles was aware of regional standards of pantomime – he later managed the Prince's Theatre, Manchester – and the promotion of his pantomimes at Nottingham displayed a desire to increase the spectacular element and the status of productions.[133] In *Blue Beard* of 1877-78, the opening scene of 'Toyland' consisted of a central, large dolls house and wings consisting of outsized toys.

> At a given signal in this scene the interior of the doll's house is disclosed, the tremendous dolls begin to move their exaggerated arms and legs, the elongated sails of the extra-sized windmills spin round and a couple of giant monkeys begin to solemnly climb up to the summit of wonderfully big sticks.[134]

In Scene 3, the 'Grand Turkish Procession' marked Blue Beard's entry:

> children with red and white turbans, silver scimitars, and crescent-shaped shields [...] After the procession of children came a train of women playing some very Oriental-looking bells [...] followed by soldiers clothed in yellow jackets and steel armour and helmets. The children were then massed in the centre, the musicians and soldiers flanking them, while behind the children were standards bearing the crescents and Bluebeard's bodyguard of misshapen gigantic monsters. Then seated on an elephant, in came Bluebeard to fetch Fatima.[135]

This particular review also gave an extended description of the transformation scene, and concluded by praising the production which 'redounds to the credit of Mr. Charles as a manager and an artist.'[136]

1878 and 1879 were years of bad trade and hardship in the town. However, during the 1878-79 season the *Nottingham Daily Express* commented that 'whatever may be the amount of distress in the town from insufficiency of work, there yet remains in the pockets of the people money enough to purchase seats in what is after all their favourite

[132] 'The Pantomime', *NDG*, 26 December 1885, p. 8.
[133] Charles's management of The Prince's Theatre in *Who's Who in the Theatre: A Bibliographical Record of the Contemporary Stage*, ed. by John Parker (London: Pitman, 1912), p. 275.
[134] 'The Pantomime: *Blue Beard*', *Express*, 27 December 1877, p. 4.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.

place of amusement – the Theatre'.[137] The implications of the economic downturn were evident in reviews of the pantomime which only detailed the stage effects of the opening demon scene, emphasising instead the activities of the supernumeraries and dancers. For the next few years, critical descriptions of Charles's pantomime spectacles were very similar, praising the sets without really detailing them and instead highlighting the ballet and processional scenes. In 1884, Charles had the stage of the Theatre Royal enlarged, and that year, the pantomime *The Forty Thieves* was previewed as being of a 'splendid and stupendous scale', the larger stage providing 'a scope for the arrangement of spectacles and effects that could never have been ventured upon a year ago.'[138] Charles also oversaw the installation of an electric room under the stage, which enabled the principle feature of the pantomime: 'golden-jewelled, electric armour' for the forty thieves. This feature, comprising armour, dresses, batteries and appliances had apparently cost Charles in excess of £1,000.[139] The entire production had cost £5,000 making it, according to the *Nottingham Daily Guardian*, 'the most costly pantomime [...] in the history of the Nottingham theatre'.[140] Subsequent reviews of the opening night continued to promote the cost and effect of this scene and the procession of the forty thieves. Significantly, that year saw the first 'behind the scenes' style article in the local press. In the *Nottingham Daily Guardian*, a reviewer presented a 'stroll' backstage, commenting on the technicalities of grooves, flies and gridiron, naming the scenic artists Mr. Potts and Mr. Camus, and stating that '[u]pwards of fifty persons' were employed in the Wardrobe. The emphasis in the article was one of scale, stating that '[a] modern pantomime is a huge "manufactured" piece of work', but the specifics of production, such as occurred in the Birmingham articles, were not provided.[141] In preparation for the following year's pantomime *Little Red Riding Hood*, a second 'behind the scenes article', highlighted the work of the scene painters, ballet, wardrobe, property man, and masks,

[137] 'Theatre Royal', *NDE*, 14 January 1879, p. 3.
[138] 'The Nottingham Christmas Pantomime', *NDE*, 22 December 1884, p. 8.
[139] Advertisement, *NDE*, 24 December 1884, p. 1.
[140] 'The Pantomime', *NDG*, 30 December 1884, p. 8.
[141] '*The Forty Thieves*: Preparing the Pantomime', *NDG*, 24 December 1884, p. 6.

but essentially the article created a sense of awe and mystery that shrouded any details of production: 'Everywhere things incomprehensible to the uninitiated are being done'.[142] Unlike the descriptions at Birmingham, this viewpoint exemplified the prevailing tone of the Nottingham reviews in the period, which contained an inference that the spectacle was not on such a scale as to warrant a closer inspection. For example, in a review of the 1889-90 production of *Sinbad the Sailor*, the *Nottingham Daily Guardian* praised the Palace Scene but simply drew attention to the fact that 'a vast amount of constructive skill and design has been lavished' on the scene 'and the stage is a mass of gleaming gold and silver, the effect of which can hardly be described.'[143]

The larger stage was instead perceived as an opportunity for spectacular scenes in the sense of incorporating bigger processions and ballets, but not necessarily for an increased use of 'heavy' sets and spectacular scenery. Scale had always, and continued to be, achieved in the Nottingham pantomimes through the use of people. The above remark, regarding the employment of fifty people in the Wardrobe, highlighted the recurrent emphasis at Nottingham on quantities of elaborately dressed extras, in ballets, crowd groupings and processions; by the 1880s the large casts could incorporate 150 or 200 artistes.[144] The use of crowds of supernumeraries instead of large sets was not criticised by the Nottingham reviewers. Indeed, such a feature reflected changes occurring in the London pantomimes, more particularly those produced by Augustus Harris at Drury Lane. In December 1882 the *Nottingham Daily Guardian* predicted that the forthcoming 'ball-scene' in *Cinderella* 'will, of course, be made by Mr. Charles one of his chief opportunities for display [...] the opportunity for one of those elaborate processions without which no pantomime would be complete.'[145]

If theatrical spectacle was predicated on the notion of surplus and satisfaction, then there is the suggestion of a palpable tension between cultural expectation and the

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[142] 'Pantomime Preparations [By One Behind the Scenes]', *NDE*, 23 December 1885, p. 6.
[143] 'Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 31 December 1889, p. 8.
[144] See for example the promotion of 200 artistes in an advertisement, *NDE*, 24 December 1883, p. 1, and 'over 150 artistes' in an advertisement, *NDE*, 24 December 1884, p. 1.
[145] 'The Approaching Pantomime at the Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 18 December 1882, p. 3.

amount of spectacle that the Nottingham theatre could realistically provide. The situation at Nottingham highlighted what Thomas Richards (drawing on the work of Jean Baudrillard) describes as the 'myth of the abundant society', in other words, the suggestion through the promotion of quantity, of the notion of plenty.[146] Whilst the Birmingham theatre was located in a wealthy town and could partake of that wealth, expressing it in an excess of spectacle (that in turn mirrored the production success of the town), Nottingham, with its more defined economic fluctuations could not, at times, uphold that cycle. Instead the sparser sets were filled with people and attention was deflected to other embellishments. The Nottingham theatre management, together with the newspaper promotions, were indeed partaking of the 'myth'; Baudrillard's definition of profusion as 'the magical, definitive negation of scarcity' was, albeit ironically, upheld.[147]

Spectacle was clearly of import at both of the Theatres Royal in Nottingham and Birmingham and the response by the respective managers, in providing that spectacle in the pantomime, shows that regional producers were alert to changes in taste and style. However, as I have illustrated, the practicalities of the theatres' resources meant that there were certain differences in the style and promotion of the pantomimes. In *The Economics of the British Stage*, Tracy C. Davis has argued that the smaller (non-West End) theatres felt a pressure to provide spectacle and that that economic pressure was part of the impetus behind the success and rise of spectacular theatre.[148] That the managers of both theatres felt that pressure is incontrovertible, but the presentation of abundance took a slightly different form at each theatre. For the Nottingham theatre, with a smaller catchment area and a more variable local economy, the theatre management were unable to provide the level of spectacular sets that the Birmingham managers achieved. The use of supernumeraries at Nottingham suggests a compensatory rather than complementary gesture, but it was never criticised locally; instead it was applauded and formed part of the local pantomime tradition. Managers such as Thomas W. Charles successfully

[146] Richards, pp. 58-59.
[147] Baudrillard, p. 26.
[148] Davis, *Economics*, p. 213.

engaged with a range of production and promotional strategies that they knew, through experience, would appeal to their specific, local audiences and that had become accepted practice for the local theatre. It is those traditions and promotional strategies that I will explore in the following chapters, beginning with a detailed study of the financing of the Theatre Royal productions in 1865 and 1866.

Chapter 3 : 'the sheet anchor of the drama at the present moment'

Managing the Pantomime.

The pantomime productions at both the Theatres Royal at Birmingham and Nottingham were founded on the same basic structure, that of the opening, transformation scene, harlequinade and finale. A study of the advertising and promotional reviews over the period 1865 to 1892, however, shows that the style and content of those elements varied over time and between the two theatres. Those differences of emphasis are crucially important indicators of the economic underpinnings of production; as I argued in Chapter 2, the managers of the Theatre Royal at Birmingham were more able to produce the lavish spectacle that its audiences expected (and funded through box office receipts), than were the managers of the less affluent theatre in Nottingham.

In providing an annual pantomime, provincial theatre managers had to balance the demands of local expectation with the practicalities of financing a production that would run for two months or more each year. In turn, it was widely recognised that whilst a pantomime was expensive to produce, the box office income it generated would provide the funds for other productions during the rest of the theatre season.[1] Throughout the nineteenth century, critics and, increasingly, provincial theatre managers reported on the financial necessity of staging a Christmas pantomime. This attitude was crystalised at the 1866 Select Committee on Theatrical Licences and Regulations, at which John Knowles, the proprietor of the Theatre Royal, Manchester, commented that 'in most country towns, pantomime is [...] the sheet anchor of the drama at the present moment.'[2] In this chapter then, I will extend the overview of pantomime style into an examination of the

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[1] This fact was quoted, for example, by Andrew Halliday in *Comical Fellows*, p. 96. The financial importance of pantomime has also been discussed by twentieth-century critics. See for example: Tracy C. Davis, *Economics*, pp. 342-343; John Russell Stephens, *The Profession of the Playwright: British Theatre 1800-1900* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), p. 31 (in relation to Covent Garden in the 1820s); Booth, *English Plays*, p. 1 (in relation to the early nineteenth century) and p. 55 (in relation to the mid-century); Frow, p. 11, and Mander & Michenson, p. 34 (citing comments by W. Davenport-Adams). A brief mention of the fact is also made by Eigner in 'Imps, Dames and Principal Boys', p. 65 and by Booth in *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*, p. 76.

[2] Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, p. 18. Knowles identified in *Report from the Select Committee on Theatrical Licences and Regulations* [1866]: *Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1970), pp. 246-247 (IUP pagination).

finances of production: more particularly, I will investigate how the managers of the Theatre Royal at Nottingham addressed local cultural expectations of the genre while being subject to local economic forces. As I discussed in Chapter 2, the new Theatre Royal in Nottingham was built in 1865, although in the mid-1860s Nottingham was entering a period of economic depression accompanied by much under- and unemployment. The new theatre therefore revitalised the provision of entertainment in the town, but had to attract audiences from a local population with considerably less spending power. The theatre management continued to produce and promote pantomime each year, but extant financial archives from this period show that different strategies were engaged in order for the theatre to cope with the changing socio-economic climate.[3]

The archival evidence covers the period from autumn 1865 through to the summer of 1867 and comprises invoices, account ledgers, salary books, the stage doorman's book, box office and door receipts.[4] The collection as it stands appears to be deficient; there is a 'Salary Book No. 2' (covering the period September 1866 to April 1867) for example, but no record of a salary book 'No. 1'.[5] Similarly, whilst the available records display valuable and compelling evidence, they also highlight the vagaries of human nature. Although I have noted identifiable mistakes and contemporaneous corrections as they occur, some handwriting is unreadable and, as with such material, there may well be errors that, at this distance and without the available evidence to correct them, have gone unnoticed. In turn I should add that while a comparative study of the Theatre Royal in Birmingham would have proved extremely useful, no similar material survives for that theatre. The Birmingham City Archives contain the 'Diary of Robert Littlehales' (a money taker at the Theatre Royal), which records some of the pit takings for part of this period, and there are occasional references to theatre and pantomime income in the minute books of the theatre proprietors, but the financial records for the Birmingham theatre are

[3] For a general discussion of the issue of national and local economic influences on theatre profits, see Chapter 6 of Davis, *Economics*, particularly pp. 202-206, although she does not address the Nottingham records in this respect.
[4] Accession numbers M8806-M8822. Held at the Nottinghamshire County Archives.
[5] 'Salary Book. No. 2', accession no. M8814. This book contains stock company and theatre staff wages for the period stated.

predominantly related to rental, lease and insurance income and expenditure and the profit sharing notes of the aforementioned proprietors.[6] There are, unfortunately, no production invoices or more detailed house and box office records such as have survived at Nottingham.

When the new Theatre Royal in Nottingham opened in September 1865, the managers presented a strong stock company of thirty-eight actors and actresses and twenty ballet dancers, drawn from the London and provincial theatres.[7] During the 1860s, and in common with other provincial theatres, the stock company season ran from September to April.[8] At Nottingham there was a two week interlude in March 1866, during which the stock company transferred part of the programme to theatres in Derby and Chesterfield whilst the Theatre Royal, Nottingham hosted the Covent Garden Opera Company (5-10 March) and pantomimists The Brothers Payne (12-17 March).[9] The full stock company season at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham resumed on 19 March until 28 April 1866.[10] After the end of the season in April many of the actors left to take up other engagements; Clara Denvil, the principal boy of the 1865 pantomime at Nottingham, for example, joined the stock company at Manchester for the 1866-67 season.[11] Over the summer, the theatre hosted a series of hires, such as the Pyne and Harrison Opera Company, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Matthews, Arthur LeClerq (Dramatic Burlesque and

[6] 'Diary of Robert H. Littlehales, doorman of the Theatre Royal, 1862-1866'. Held at the Birmingham City Archives, accession no. 378723 [IIR 21]. The '5 Minute Books of the New Proprietors 1820-1854' (accession no. 388) and '8 Minute Books of the Committee 1820-1954' (accession no. 389) are held in the Lee Crowder Collection at the Birmingham City Archives (full accession nos. 387-1004). This collection originates from a local firm of solicitors, hence the predominance of those financial records related to legal issues, such as property leases and insurance policies.

[7] 'Stage Door Book 1865-1867', accession no. M8817. This book also records names and addresses of members of staff at the theatre. Twenty-five of the leading actors and actresses were promoted at the beginning of the season. See for example the advertisement in the *Express*, 19 September 1865, p. 1.

[8] The development and decline of the stock company in the nineteenth century are discussed in Booth's *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (see especially pp. 18-19 and Chapter 4 'The Actor') and Davis in *Economics* pp. 212 - 215.

[9] Evidence of the performances at Derby and Chesterfield taken from a selection of invoices and receipts in 'Receipted Bills Mounted (December 1865 to August 1866)', accession no. M8807. See for example: a booking invoice for the Derby Exchange (p. 70); a receipt for payment to the Dramatic Author's Society for the right to perform *Not a Bad Judge*, the burlesque of *Aladdin*, *Still Waters Run Deep* and *Loan of a Lover* at the Derby and Chesterfield theatres, at a total charge of £3.13*s*.0*d*. (invoice dated 22 March 1866, p. 89): various invoices for advertising in Derby and Chesterfield newspapers and bill posting in Derby (pp. 84, 129, 70, 71), plus invoices for staff travelling expenses and the provision of props (pp. 66, 78). See also other invoices included at intervals in pp. 70-90.

[10] Production details from advertisements in the *Express*, p. 1.

[11] Denvil details are taken from 'Provincial Theatricals: Nottingham', *Era*, 3 February 1867, p. 14. Additional evidence from advertised farewell benefit performances: Miss Reinhardt's on 16 April (advertisement, *Express*, 10 April 1866, p. 1); Miss Raymond's on 13 April (advertisement, *Express*, 11 April 1866, p. 1); Mr. Vollaire's on 18 April (advertisement, *Express*, 18 April 1866, p. 1).

Ballet Company) and Corri and Thirlwall's Grand English Opera Company.[12] This period saw reduced staff costs at the theatre. For example, neither the gas man nor the property man recorded any payments for assistants over the summer and the number of carpenters engaged fell to three or four men as compared to twenty or more in the main season.[13] This fact, together with the varying percentages of house receipts that were paid to the visiting companies (for example, three-quarters (Corri and Thirlwall) or two-thirds (Wood in July) of the house receipts), provide very different sets of figures to the comparatively consistent patterns that existed in the main season.[14] In this chapter, therefore, I will be examining the theatre finances for the two main seasons that ran from September 1865 to April 1866 (the pantomime running from December 1865 to February 1866) and from September 1866 to April 1867 (the pantomime running from December 1866 to February 1867). Engaging with the full stock company season enables the most coherent picture of the pantomime finances but for clarity I will present the two seasons and sets of figures separately.

1865 - 1866.

In the first season at the new theatre, the pantomime, *The House That Jack Built*, ran in full from 26 December until 3 February, a total of six weeks. Each performance began with an opening play such as *Where There's A Will There's a Way*, *The Maid of Croissey*, or *Secret Service*, unless the occasion was a Juvenile Night. On those occasions, special ticket reductions for children were promoted and the pantomime was played first, as for example on Saturday 30 December and Wednesdays 10, 17 and 31 January 1866.[15]

For the three weeks following the formal end of the pantomime run on 3 February, the

[12] Pyne and Harrison were advertised on a playbill for 4 May 1866; the Matthews details established from payments detailed in the 'Day Book of Accounts for Administration of Nttm. Theatre Royal 1866-1867', accession no. M8809 (£57.17*s*.6*d*. for six nights); Arthur LeClerq was advertised on a playbill for 21 July 1866 and Corri and Thirlwall on a playbill for 29 May 1866.

[13] Evidence of reduced staff numbers and wages can be found in the ledger 'Receipted Bills Mounted 1865-66', accession no. M8807, for example: pp. 111, 116, 146.

[14] Eleven Corri and Thirlwall payments, from 29 May to 9 June 1866 and six Wood payments, from 16 to 21 July 1866 are detailed in the 'Day Book of Accounts for Administration of Nottingham Theatre Royal 1866-67', accession no. M8809.

[15] The source for opening plays: *Express* p. 1 advertisements. *Where There's a Will* was described as a 'petite comedy', *The Maid of Croissey* as a 'petite Drama' and *Secret Service* was a drama.

pantomime opening and/or the transformation scene were included in the programme, alongside dramas and comedies, until 22 February.

In sourcing the production expenditure for the Theatre Royal, I have used the 'Ledger' and the 'Day Book', which contain the expenditure figures for the periods September to December 1865 and January 1866 to July 1867 respectively.[16] These ledgers I have cross referenced with invoices and receipts collected in the two 'Receipted Bills Mounted' ledgers, dated 25 September to 31 December 1865, and from 31 December 1865 to August 1866.[17] (To avoid confusion, I will refer throughout to these last two ledgers by their accession numbers, M8806 and M8807 respectively). I have given priority to the 'Ledger' and the 'Day Book' as these also contain income and banking figures, together with cumulative profit and loss totals. The invoices and receipts in the other two ledgers have been used, where possible, to provide a supplementary narrative as to supplies and wages. However, establishing the precise details of the expenditure involved in pantomime production, as opposed to the rest of the season, has been in part, problematised by the lack of specification in some of the invoices. Whilst Tracy C. Davis cites the exemplary accounting and inventory system used at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, which specified not only deliveries but what and who they were for, the Nottingham records can be rather more cryptic, particularly in regard to props and supplies.[18] Whilst it is tempting to assume that two suits of armour purchased in November were for a production of *Macbeth* in the same month, or that quantities of metal and foil also delivered in November were for the pantomime transformation scene currently in production, such assumptions could be completely inaccurate.[19] Regarding the pantomime, therefore, I have limited my contextual argument regarding props and supplies to what is specified in the invoices. In general, the pantomime expenses

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[16] 'Ledger of Accounts for Administration of Nottingham Theatre Royal Sept-Dec 1865', accession no. M8812. 'Day Book of Accounts for Administration of Nttm. Theatre Royal 1866-1867', accession no. M8809.
[17] 'Receipted Bills Mounted', accession no. M8806 and 'Receipted Bills Mounted', accession no. M8807.
[18] Davis, *Economics*, Chapter 9 'Labour and Labourers', for overview see p. 309.
[19] Armour purchased for £3.0*s*.0*d*. against stock (no supplier name and undated but amongst other invoices dated from November 1865) M8806, p. 84. Foil and metals supplied by James Philpott, for £45.11*s*. 0*d*., invoice dated November 1865, p.123.

(especially in terms of extra staff) were usually detailed as such on invoices and in the ledgers, which gives a particular status to the financial records for the pantomime, underlining its seasonal importance. More importantly, those invoices marked 'for the Pantomime' emphasise the investment in spectacle – costumes, scenery and properties – that was necessary to a successful pantomime in the mid-1860s.

In the 1865-66 season, costumes were hired and made, with occasional purchases. The quantity and variety of fabrics delivered to the Nottingham theatre from suppliers in London and Nottingham, indicates that costumes were made on the premises throughout the first season. Those fabrics included coloured velvet, damask, satin, merino, tarlatan, muslin, calico and twill, and the total costs (approximately £80) were divided between stock and income expenditure. Around £47 worth of the deliveries were paid against stock, which indicates that the created costumes were retained for the theatre wardrobe.[20] The invoices submitted by Mrs. Sexby, the Wardrobe Mistress included costs, principally staff wages, washing and small purchases such as tape, cottons, braid and buttons. One invoice, submitted during the pantomime run, detailed 'Hat for Miss Henderson', '1 Dozen buttons for Miss. Denvil' and 'Shapes for Comic Business' (i.e. the harlequinade).[21] A small selection of invoices describe costumes that were made or bought specifically for the actresses Madge Robertson (a pair of satin boots from Williams of Covent Garden for 16*s*.6*d*.), Clara Denvil (two costumes including a dress

[20] Identified invoices include: M8806, p.12, invoice dated 7 Oct 1865 from John Watson of Nottingham (£1.14*s*.0*d*. paid against income in the 'Ledger'); M8806, p. 63, invoice dated 19 Sept to 3 Oct from Thompson and Proctor (£9.0*s*.0*d* on invoice, but as £9.4*s*.0*d* against stock in the 'Ledger'); M8807, p. 21, invoice dated December from Timpson (Thompson?) Brothers (£7.16*s*.0*d* paid against expenditure in the 'Day Book'). See also invoices from John Kemp of Nottingham dated 28 Sept (M8806, p.16, £0.19*s*.7*d* entered against both income and stock in the 'Ledger'); Foulkes of London dated 11 October (M8806, p.60, £6.3*s*.3*d* on invoice but as £6.3*s*.0*d* against stock in the 'Ledger'); Thompson Brothers of Nottingham for October and November deliveries (M8806, p.105, £3.5*s*.8*d* on invoice but as £3.5*s*.6*d* against stock in the 'Ledger'); Thompson Brothers for deliveries dated 4-15 December (M8806, p.136, £3.16*s*.0*d* paid against stock in the 'Ledger'); Blackwell dated 24 October (M8822/37, £11.5*s*.6*d* paid against stock in the 'Ledger'); Thompson Brothers dated 10 February 1866 (M8807, p. 55, £1.10*s*.2*d* paid against expenditure in the 'Day Book'); M8807, p.64, invoice dated 24 February from Thompson Brothers (£2.5*s*.7*d* paid against expenditure in the 'Day Book'); Thompson Brothers for deliveries in March and April 1866 (M8807, p. 135, £19.7*s*.0*d*. paid against expenditure in the 'Day Book'), and Burnet of London for December supplies of fabrics (M8807, p. 36, £13.18*s*.6*d* paid against stock in the 'Ledger'). The last deliveries of the season were in April; there were no further deliveries until September 1866.

[21] Sexby invoice for hat, buttons and shapes dated 29 December 1865 at a total cost of 15*s*.9*d*. in M8806, p. 121 (£15.9*s*.0*d* on invoice but corrected in the 'Ledger'); an undated invoice for items including 3*s*. for cottons and 1*s*.6*d*. for 'Braid/3 caps for helmets' (M8806, p. 115, included in Wardrobe invoice dated 23 December 1865 and paid against expenditure in the 'Ledger'), and an invoice dated 12 January 1866 for items including tape and cotton at 2*s*.6*d*. (M8807, p. 11, paid against expenditure in the 'Day Book').

coat and trousers supplied by John Richardson of Nottingham, for £1.1*s*.0*d*.) and May Travers (a dress coat and trousers also from John Richardson and a 'Venus' dress for the burlesque of *Aladdin*).[22] Two further purchases were labelled as being specifically for the pantomime: a pair of patent shoes at 11*s*.1*d*. from Mr. Moore of Nottingham and twelve pairs of boots, costing £1.16*s*.0*d*., provided by L. Gilbert.[23] Lizzie Gilbert was the leader of the local ballet troupe of twelve girls engaged for the pantomime; the boots would no doubt have been retained by her after the pantomime, and were therefore paid against income not stock.[24]

In addition to those items made at the theatre, costumes were hired in from Samuel May, a London costumier. Over forty separate deliveries from May, in boxes, parcels and hampers arrived regularly by train and the costs of carting them to the theatre were detailed in the Stage Door Book.[25] The May hires were listed in the account ledgers, at £10 per week hire charge (paid against income) from 11 October 1865, until Christmas, and from the week ending 2 February until 28 April, the final week of the main season.[26] For the pantomime, the costumes were hired in at an agreed but higher charge of £15 per week from 30 December to 27 January (plus an extra £5 for the two day performances on 30 December and 8 January), at which point the weekly charge reverted to £10. Samuel May specialised in making Harlequin costumes, a process described in detail in Andrew

[22] Robertson's satin boots invoiced by 'WILLIAMS, Theatrical Boot, Shoe and Sandal MANUFACTURER, 20 BOW STREET, COVENT GARDEN', dated October 1865 (M8806, p. 30 , verified against the 'Ledger'). Denvil's costumes supplied by JOHN RICHARDSON, TAILOR, LADIES RIDING-HABIT MAKER &c.' of 32 Park Street, Nottingham, dated October 1865 (M8806, p. 28, the cost of £1.1*s*.0*d* was paid against income and verified against the 'Ledger') and p. 134 (£4.13*s*.6*d* paid against stock and verified against the 'Ledger'). The Denvil and Travers costumes are billed together at £9.7*s*.0*d*, entered in the 'Ledger' as £9.0*s*.0*d*. Travers's 'Venus' dress may have been made or ordered from the theatre wardrobe by the actress herself: a receipt dated 24 February 1866 acknowledges £3.0*s*.0*d* received from the Messrs. Lambert, proprietors of the theatre 'for my Venus dress & pink satin trunks' and signed by May Travers. (M8807, p. 60, verified against the 'Day Book'. The entry notes 'Paid Wardrobe for Dress and Trunks for Aladdin £3.0.0.')

[23] The patent shoes from Moore are invoiced on headed paper from the Sheridan Club, Nottingham and are listed in M8806, p. 122 (paid against stock). The boots are listed in M8806, p. 122, both are verified against the 'Ledger'.

[24] For evidence of Lizzie Gilbert's troupe, see: 'Sixty Years of Stage Life. Memories of Early Days at the Nottingham Theatres: How Vesta Tilley Got Her Name', *NEP*, 15 November 1930, p. 7. The first of a series of articles written by Clara Becque who was one of the twelve girls in Miss Gilbert's troupe from around 1870.

[25] Full address for May on invoices: 35 Bow Street, Covent Garden, London WC. (See for example M8806, p. 55.) May details in the 'Stage Door Book', pp. 3-22.

[26] Samuel May invoices and receipts for payment in M8806, M8822/12, M8822/15 and M8807. As ledgers include a mix of invoices and receipts, payment details are taken from the 'Ledger' and the 'Day Book'. There were two weeks in which the theatre paid less: the invoice of 17 February (five days at £8.6*s*.8*d* in M8806 p. 56) and invoice of 5 May (three nights at £5.0*s*.0*d*, in M8807, p. 112). It is not clear from the invoices why there were reduced costs and whether it related to reduced need for hired costumes, or fewer performances in a particular week.

Halliday's *Comical Fellows* and, presumably, May raised his prices for the pantomime season to cover his own increased expenses at a time of heightened demand from both the London and provincial theatres.[27] Halliday detailed how each harlequin costume was made up from 308 pieces of fabric covered with thousands of 'spangles', and the additional charges in the Nottingham invoices included 'making to order' three pairs of spangled tights at a cost of £9.9*s*.0*d*.[28] In total, the additional hire charges for the pantomime (in excess of the normal weekly charges) came to £25.16*s*.8*d*., plus £9.9*s*.0*d*. for the 'spangled' tights; a total of £35.5*s*.8*d*.[29] As I mentioned earlier, the pantomime in full ran until 3 February, with the opening and/or the transformation scene being included in the programme until 23 February. As the harlequinade at Nottingham was dropped from the programme after 3 February, the relevant costumes (and consequently the extra hire charges) would not have been required. One full performance of the 'ENTIRE PANTOMIME' was advertised for 12 February, but there is no indication that extra costumes were hired for this occasion.[30] It appears from the records therefore that May was called upon to provide costumes, including specialist items, throughout the season, with the theatre wardrobe department providing the remainder of the costumes that would be retained for the theatre wardrobe stock.[31] During the main season, Mrs. Sexby the Wardrobe Mistress was normally assisted by two or three other women, and those numbers sufficed for the creation and maintenance of the Wardrobe. However, prior to and during the pantomime run her staff increased to between five and ten women each week, including extra dressers. This was of course in proportion to her workload and the

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[27] Tracy C. Davis, in *Economics*, also makes the suggestion that May increased his staff prior to the pantomime season (p. 320).

[28] Halliday, *Comical Fellows*, pp. 83-85. Halliday claimed that each harlequin costume was covered in '48,000' spangles and his detailed description of the manufacture of spangles, how much they weighed and how they were sewn to the costumes suggests direct information from May's. The tights for Nottingham were detailed on an invoice dated 15 January 1866 (M8807, p. 9. Total amount of invoice (£57.12*s*.0*d*) entered in the 'Day Book').

[29] Breakdown from invoice in M8807 and entries in the 'Day Book': £4.3*s*.4*d*. for five nights from 26-30 December, £5.0*s*.0*d*. for the weeks ending 6, 13, 20 and 27 January and £0.16*s*.8*d*. each for two day performances on 30 December and 8 January. Worked out on the basis of difference between the usual hire charge for one week (six performances) being £10.0*s*.0*d*., i.e. £1.13*s*.4*d*. per performance, and the increased rate of £15.0*s*.0*d*. per week/six performances (i.e. £2.10*s*.0*d*. per performance).

[30] Playbill for *The House That Jack Built*, for performance on 12 February.

[31] See also Davis's discussion in *Economics*, pp. 317-321 and 323-324, regarding theatre wardrobes, hire companies and the specialist suppliers of Clarkson, May and Simmons.

increased number of costumes; one handwritten invoice details washing twenty dresses.[32]

Nineteen separate deliveries of wigs from William Clarkson of London were received at the Theatre Royal from 29 September 1865 to 30 April 1866.[33] As with May, there was a regular agreed payment against income of 12*s.* per week (although there were three weeks in which payments were not recorded).[34] A cluster of deliveries, including 'One Crate of Wigs' were delivered in December just prior to the pantomime run and, in January 1866, £21 was paid for 'masks on a/c' which had been delivered at the end of December.[35] The masks had been specifically ordered: the wording on the invoice from Clarkson notes that 'I have only sent the masks as ordered/they are purchased not hire' and they were paid for against stock rather than income. From the evidence in a later invoice for the balance of payment, it appears that some of the wigs/masks had been hired and some bought and, from the same invoice, I have calculated that £21 would have covered the cost of approximately twenty-eight masks.[36] As I discussed in Chapter 2, elaborate masks were worn by supernumeraries in the pantomime opening, and while the masks from Clarkson were not specified as being for the pantomime, it is highly unlikely that such items, in that quantity and at that time of year were for any other production. In buying the masks, the theatre could reuse them in future pantomime productions, hire them out or sell them on to other local theatres.

The extra masks, wigs and costumes would have been for the enlarged cast of the

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[32] Names and numbers of wardrobe staff detailed in invoices in ledgers M8806, pp. 6, 24, 39, 44, 69, 75, 81, 87, 99, 103, 105, 111, 115, and 121, and in M8807, pp. 3, 11, 32, 38, 48, 57, 68, 83, 88, 91, 94, 95, 101, 105, 110, and 114. For the Christmas period, see for example, M8806 pp. 115 and 121, the latter of which details the washing of twenty dresses.

[33] The deliveries, dates of delivery and cartage costs from the railway station were noted in the 'Stage Door Book'.

[34] William Clarkson 'Theatrical Wig Maker' was based at 45 Wellington Street, Covent Garden (for address details see invoice in M8806, p. 4). Payments listed in the 'Ledger' and 'Day Book'. The three weeks for which no payment was registered were: weeks ending 18 November, 9 December, and January 20, although there are invoices for the weeks ending 18 November and 9 December in M8806 (each for 12*s.*). Similarly, although there is no payment recorded for the week ending 10 February, an increased payment of £1.2*s.*0*d.* for an eleven night hire was recorded on 17 February ('Day Book'). An extra 2*s.* was paid for the week ending 30 December, presumably to cover the single performance on December 18, and the final payment on 5 May 1866 was only 6*s.*

[35] The crate was delivered on 21 December, 'one box' on 25 December, a parcel on 26 December and a further box on 9 January ('Stage Door Book'). The payment of the masks against stock recorded in the 'Day Book', and the 'purchase not hire' reference in invoice dated 29 December, M8806, p. 118.

[36] An undated invoice refers to an earlier invoice (not found in the extant records) for £30.15*s.*0*d.*, less 'Six Common Wigs/[Faces]' that had been returned (M8807, p. 48, undated). For this, £4.10*s.*0*d* had been deducted, leaving a balance total of £5.5*s.*0*d* on the second invoice. This leaves £21 to be accounted for which must have related to the 'masks on a/c' delivery. If six of those masks cost 15*s.* apiece (assuming them to be similar in style), then £21 covered approximately twenty-eight masks. The payment of £21 is recorded in M8809.

pantomime which included supernumeraries ('Extras'), Miss Gilbert's Juvenile Troupe (who played 'the Hours' in the opening) and the pantomimists engaged for the harlequinade (Mr. Raffal who played Pantaloon, Miss Henderson, Columbine and Mr. Raymond, Harlequin).[37] Ballet dancers, including the premier danseuse Rosina Wright, her '*accomplished Coryphees*', and extras were engaged as necessary throughout the first season.[38] As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, twenty dancers were engaged at the beginning of the season, and they were paid a total of £7.10*s*.0*d*. for the first week in September. Their largest wage payments (approximately £14 per week) were made during October and the run of *Ixion*. In November, the weekly cost of dancers fell to £6.8*s*.0*d*., rising again in December. During the run of the pantomime, the weekly wages for the ballet totalled £7.18*s*.0*d*., from the week ending 30 December until the beginning of February at which point the payments fell to £7.13*s*.0*d*., until late February, with no ballet payments from March to the end of the season. Rosina Wright was granted a benefit performance on 2 February for which she received £24.10*s*.0*d*. (a quarter share of the house receipts).[39] The number of ballet dancers engaged for the pantomime was therefore similar to that for the beginning of the season: around twenty girls. Although that number does not seem large for the pantomime – a larger *corps* had been engaged in October – the pantomime cast was enhanced by Miss Gilbert's troupe of twelve dancers and a number of supernumeraries, who were only engaged for the pantomime.[40] Ledger payments show that from the end of December 1865 to early February 1866, extras were engaged for a total sum of between £28.19*s*.0*d*. and £32.15*s*.0*d*. per week, adding

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[37] The character details are taken from a playbill for performances on 22 and 23 January 1866. In those performances, there were two Columbines, but the second, Miss Helena Smith, was a member of the stock company (verified against opening season advertisement, *Express*, 19 September 1865, p. 1, and the Stage Door Man's Book which detailed all the company names and addresses).

[38] Wright, 'the Premier Danseuse of the London Theatres', was promoted at the beginning of the season (advertisement, *Express*, 19 September 1865, p. 1). '*Coryphees*' from description in book of words for *The House That Jack Built*, Scene 2, p. 8, accession no. L79.8T.R.

[39] Costs, including Wright's benefit payments, taken from the 'Ledger' and the 'Day Book' and allowing approximate costs for the week ending 20 January for which no ballet/extra wages were listed. This, as with other missing entries for that week (noted elsewhere) must have been an error as full performances were run throughout that week. I have not allowed for £3 of dancers' wages which were paid against stock in the weeks ending 9, 16 and 23 December .

[40] Miss Gilbert's troupe were not listed separately in the 'Ledger' or the 'Day Book'. In the salary book for 1866-67, the troupe were paid £4.10*s*.0*d*. per week during the pantomime. It is unlikely that that figure in 1865-66 was included in the ballet payments and therefore the amount must have been included in the payments for 'Extras'.

£152.12*s*.0*d*. to the overall pantomime company costs. This raised the average weekly expenditure on actors and ballet to around £110 compared to the costs for the period September to December (about £80).[41] A smaller number of extras continued to be hired after the main pantomime run, when the opening and transformation scenes were retained on the bill as an afterpiece to other plays, but weekly costs for those extras fell to £12.11*s*.10*d*. for the week ending 10 February (four performances of the 're-arranged and compressed' opening and the transformation scene) and £9.0*s*.2*d*. for the week ending 17 February (one performance of the whole pantomime, one of the opening and one of the transformation scene). A payment to Mr. King, the Stage Doorman, on 24 February included the cost of 'extra Ballet & supers' (total amount £10.16*s*.0*d*.), but there were no further specified wages for extras after this date. The week ending 24 February had featured four performances of the transformation scene, the last of the season.[42]

Whilst in performance the spectacle of pantomime was enhanced by the incorporation of many supernumeraries and dancers, the visual spectacle of the scenery and effects drew on the theatre resources from a much earlier date. From early November, the invoices submitted by Mr. Long, the Property Man and, in the Carpenters' Department, by the Head Carpenter Mr. Ellis, or his colleague Mr. Jones, itemised the extra staff and materials required in the creation of the all-important transformation scene, 'The Jewelled Hall of the Amazonian Queen'.[43] Early indications appear in an invoice from Mr. Jones, dated the week ending 4 November 1865. In detailing the hours worked by the theatre carpenters, Jones notes the time spent in 'Making, prepairing [*sic*] and fixing Work for Production of Pantomime &c.'[44] During the same week a separate team

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[41] Paid against income. The total figure calculated from 'Extras' entries in the 'Ledger' and the 'Day Book' although there is no entry for the week ending 20 January. The pantomime was still running in that week so there was no reason not to be paying Extras. Therefore there may have been an extra £29 to £30 to add to the total, raising the amount for this period to around £182. Details of performances taken from advertisements in the *Express* and playbills. As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, there may well have been a 'Salary Book No. 1' that gave similar breakdowns of staff and cast payments for the 1865-66 season which has not survived. Without knowing exactly how many ballet and extras were engaged, it is impossible to work out the wage allocations in the accounts ledgers for 1865-66, other than the groupings ('Actors', 'Ballet', 'Extras') given.

[42] Costs for ballet and Extras detailed in the 'Ledger' and the 'Day Book'. There are no figures available to work out exactly how many Extras and ballet were retained in February.

[43] The title of the transformation scene can be found in the book of words for *The House That Jack Built*, p.23.

[44] M8806, p. 68 (included in a weekly carpenters invoice and therefore paid against income and entered in the 'Ledger').

was engaged specifically to make the transformation scene, and an invoice of 4 November detailed the 'Wages Due to Women Employed in making molds for the Pantomime transformation scene'. Eight women were thus employed, each working four days initially and earning a total of £2.4*s*.10*d*. in the first week. (Throughout November and December, Mr. Long's invoices for props detailed materials for molding and modelling, including 'paste for pantomime' at 2*s*.3*d*. and 'Flour for Pantomime transform' at 2*s*.4*d*.)[45]

The eight women (joined by Godfrey Hunt in the week ending 18 November) continued to mold, model and gild the transformation scene, but by early December the team had been joined by carpenters in the construction not only of the transformation, but 'other scenes' and 'Tricks &c.' for the pantomime. By Christmas the creation of the pantomime scenery and effects was the sole concern of twenty-two people, and included 'Modelling Moulding Gilding, [...] Basket Work [...] Tricks, [and] Properties'.[46] The basket work which was used as frames for masks, as well as for props, was supplied by Thompson of Nottingham. An invoice marked 'Pantomime Basketwork' listed items such as a cock, a goose, a 'head and neck', policeman's staff, umbrellas, mop and pail, fish baskets and cups and saucers, totalling £9.8*s*.0*d*.[47] A selection of other properties, specified as being

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[45] Women's wages on invoice in M8806, p.71 (paid against stock in the 'Ledger'). The 'paste for pantomime' is listed on an invoice for the week ending 4 November 1865 (M8806, p. 67 and paid against income in the 'Ledger'), also flour and paste for pantomime mouldings on an invoice for the week ending 7 November (M8806, p. 80), flour on an invoice dated 25 November (M8806, p. 86, paid against income in the 'Ledger'). Flour, soap and oil are listed regularly on property invoices in November and December but not always specified as being for the pantomime.

[46] In addition to the invoice specified in footnote 45 (above), the later invoices are as follows: week ending 11 November, eight women (most working six days), invoice total of £2.10*s*.4*d*. (M8806, p. 77, £2.10.6 paid against stock in the 'Ledger'); week ending 18 November, six women and one man working on molds for transformation scene, invoice total £3.2*s*.0*d*. (M8806, p. 83, paid against stock in the 'Ledger'); week ending 25 November, six women and one man working for six days 'Moulding and Gilding', invoice total £3.2*s*.0*d*. (M8806, p.88, paid against stock in the 'Ledger'); week ending 2 December 'Wages of persons Employed in Moulding – Gilding the Transformation Scene for Pantomime', eight people including one man - Godfrey Hunt, invoice total £3.19*s*.7*d* (M8806, p.98, paid against stock in the 'Ledger'); week ending 9 December 'Wages of Persons Employd in Moulding, Gilding, Modelling [...] Transformation & other scenes in Pantomime' including two gilders and two carpenters, invoice total £7.4*s*.10*d*. for ten people (M8806, p. 102, paid against stock in the 'Ledger'); week ending 16 December 'persons Employed in Modelling, Moulding Gilding Transformation Scene, Making Tricks &c. for Pantomime', thirteen people including a carpenter, Mr. Rowbottom, invoice total £8.4*s*.8*d*. (M8806, p. 110, paid against stock in the 'Ledger') and 'Hunt' for 'Comic Scene' paid £1.0*s*.0*d*. (paid against stock in the 'Ledger'); week ending 23 December 'Wages Employd in Modelling Moulding Gilding, [...] Basket Work, Carpenters for Tricks, Properties', twenty-two people for various hours, up to eleven days, including William Wood the Property Assistant, invoice total £14.19*s*.0*d*. (M8806, p. 109, paid against stock in the 'Ledger'); week ending 30 December 'Wages of persons Employed in Modelling, Moulding Gilding &c Transformation Scene, thirteen people including 'Carpenters for Properties' and 'Women etc. for Pantomime', invoice total £14.5*s*.1*d*. (M8806, p. 119, included in stock payment of wages and props. Staff payment in this comes to £12.0*s*.1 1/2*d*.). The Property Man's invoice for the week ending 6 January 1866 included William Wood's wages of 18*s*., which were paid against stock ('Day Book').

[47] Invoice dated 10 January 1866 in M8807, p. 28.

for the pantomime, such as a drum, panes of glass, fabrics including `white wadding` and 'grey calico' and an assortment of items such as six wooden bowls and spoons, eight pairs of stockings, one dozen hammers, thread, buttons, powder, flour, oil and soap and the 'carriage of pie' from Manchester also featured in the Property department invoices. The total cost of those additional properties, including the basketwork and the specified paste and flour, came to £18.11*s*.2*d*.[48]

Staff from other departments had by this time been transferred to the pantomime construction team, such as Mr. Rowbottom from the Carpenters department and William Wood, the Property Assistant. In addition, a local decorator, R. Brown, 'Dealer in Paper Hangings, Painter, Glazier, &c' of Goldsmiths Street, Nottingham, provided men to help in the pantomime preparation at a cost of £16.19*s*.5*d*.[49] During the run of the pantomime, a team of staff – again incorporating workers from other departments – ensured that the pantomime effects ran smoothly and that necessary repairs, such as 'mending needlework' were made. In addition, extra labourers and 'cellarmen' were engaged to assist underneath the stage with the working of the transformation scene as well as the tricks and traps of the harlequinade 'Comic Business'.[50] The majority of the workers who were engaged on the pantomime construction, whether transferred from other departments or specially engaged, were paid against stock; a total of £79.15*s*.7½*d*.

In addition to the extra staff engaged in creating the transformation scene and working the pantomime tricks, the number of carpenters also increased at Christmas. For most of the September to April season, the weekly invoices for carpenters listed between twenty-one and twenty-six men. However, the numbers rose in December to between thirty-four and forty-five, falling again in January to thirty-two, twenty-nine and twenty-

[48] William Wood charged 10*s*. for the drum (M8807, p. 86, verified against the `Day Book`), thirty-two panes of stained glass for the pantomime, cost £6.2s.7d. (M8807, p. 85. The amount was paid in two installments, £3.6*s*.7*d*. on 12 March 1866 and the balance of £2.16*s*.0*d* paid on 21 March in the `Day Book`). The other properties, which came to £2.6*s*.2*d*. were purchased on 23 December, M8806, p. 115 (£2.6*s*.0*d*. paid against stock in the `Ledger`). Plus the aforementioned paste and flour.

[49] Invoice dated Christmas 1865, for various work, including `men's time with Mr. Marston preparing for pantomime` at £16.19*s*.5*d*. (M8807, p. 5, paid against stock in the `Day Book`).

[50] For example, the Property Man's invoice dated 30 December included 'Extra labour in Cellar for Comic Business etc.' at 3*s*. (M8806, p. 119 and listed under stock in the `Ledger`), and an invoice for 6 January was for `Wages of persons Employed in [obscured] Pantomime repairing &c. Scenic & [Pro]perty Depts.` Total £3.10*s*.8*d*. (M8807, p. 2, paid under stock in the `Day Book`).

six (weeks ending 6, 13 and 20 January). Averaging at around twenty to twenty-four each week in February, the numbers after that continue to decline from between twenty-one and fourteen for the remainder of the season to April. From the week ending 9 December to 6 January, between ten and twenty extra carpenters were taken on, creating an additional staff cost for the carpenters department of £230.7*s*.7*d*. This additional amount was, once again, paid against stock, the invoice totals split between payments against income for the usual core team of carpenters and payment against stock for the additional men hired for the pantomime.[51] In total, the cost of extra staff involved in the pantomime preparation and production – carpenters, the transformation scene moulders and decorators, as well as extra wardrobe staff – came to £316.11*s*.6½*d*., all of which was paid against stock.[52] The division of wage payments relieved the pressure on expenditure against income, especially during the week just before Christmas, when the theatre was shut for pantomime rehearsals. More importantly, it would also have related to the investment being made in the sets, particularly the transformation scene. As with the masks purchased from Clarkson, the transformation scene could be reused in part, sold or hired out after the pantomime had finished.[53]

After the week ending 13 January, staff involved in 'Working the Pantomime' were paid against income, and were included in the invoices for the scenic and property departments as per the usual staff wages.[54] The pantomime was running smoothly and good income levels had produced clear signs of a profit. By early February the extra staff

[51] See: invoices submitted by Mr. Ellis, for the period week ending 2 December 1865 to week ending 6 January 1866, M8806, pp. 97, 101, 107, 116, 120 and M8807 p. 1. Split allocation of costs entered in the 'Ledger' and the 'Day Book'.

[52] The extra wardrobe staff wages came to £6.8*s*.4*d*. The total figure of course excludes any additional materials purchased, as they were not specified in any supplies invoices. Extra men were also engaged in the gas and lighting department, but those were paid against income; there was no investment in this expenditure and the extra numbers were far fewer than those in the departments already detailed (one or two including extra nightmen).

[53] The sale or hire of transformation scenes were accepted procedures by which theatre managers could recoup some of their initial investment. This feature, of 'selling on', has been discussed in detail by Davis in *Economics*, pp. 345-348. There are, however, no records at Nottingham of such a transaction having taken place.

[54] Invoice for week ending 13 January, for 'Wages of persons employed in Working the Pantomime. Property & Scenic Artists' Departments' Total £4.3*s*.1*d*. (M8807, p. 12,) seven staff in total listed; invoice for 27 January. 'Wages of persons Employed in Working the Pantomime Property and Scenic Departs', William Wood (18*s*.), with J Taylor (15*s*.) and G Hunt (formerly of the transformation scene team) and 'Cellarmen Extras' at a total cost of £2.19*s*.0*d*. (M8807, p. 39); invoice for week ending 3 February 'Wages of persons Employd in Working Transformation Sc. Property Dept for Pantomime' Hunt, Taylor and Wood, plus cellarmen and labourers: a total of £2.19*s*.0*d*. (M8807, p. 48). All paid against income and listed in the 'Day Book'.

numbers had been greatly reduced; the pantomime was in its final weeks and, as I have mentioned, the harlequinade was no longer included in the programme. Therefore, for the week ending 10 February, Mr. Taylor's and William Wood's wages, for working the pantomime, were paid by the property department but, for the following week, their wages were specified as being for 'persons Employed in Property Department', with no distinction of working on the pantomime.[55] The staff figures for the period November to January, support evidence quoted by Tracy C. Davis in relation to the Drury Lane pantomime of 1865. Although comparative staff figures are disproportionate, her claim that 'employment increased [...] at Christmas time, in proportion to the lavishness of the spectacle' is undeniable.[56]

Ensuring that sufficient audiences provided not only the income to cover that expenditure but also the profit essential to the rest of the season depended largely on advertising and promotion. The theatre management advertised its programme in a series of bills, posters and advertisements, largely produced by local printers and publishers. The principal printer used by the theatre was Richard Allen & Sons who also held the box plan.[57] Although Allen, by his own admission, 'very rarely attended the theatre', his firm had a long business connection with the theatre, dating back to the old theatre in St. Mary's Gate in the mid-1840s.[58] Allen's printed handbills, day bills, long bills and posters on a regular basis throughout the theatre season.[59] The day and hand bills were printed per performance and were available for sale in the theatre (income from them was generally included in the house receipt entries for each performance), and for posting around the town. Posters were produced in various quantities and the costs depended on the sizes and colours used. Not all the poster printing details are performance specific in

[55] Invoiced wages for 10 February: £1.13*s*.0*d*. (M8807, p. 53) and invoiced wages for 17 February: £1.7*s*.0*d*. (M8807, p. 56). Both verified against income payments in the 'Day Book'.
[56] Davis, *Economics*, p. 313.
[57] Richard Allen & Sons full address, Caxton House, Long Row, Nottingham. Evidence for holding box plan from playbills, e.g. playbill for pantomime dated 12 December 1865, and financial evidence in accounts ledgers 'Ledger' and 'Day Book'.
[58] Clipping entitled 'A Tribute of Respect to Mrs. Saville and Family', a letter to the editors of the *NDE*, dated 8 April 1870 from 'Richd Allen. Caxton House. Nottingham', pasted into the Saville Family Scrapbooks, 3 vols, accession no. FL79.8, ii, p. 1.
[59] Allen invoices in M8806, pp. 64, 126, and M8807, pp. 35 and 118. Some invoices have been pasted on top of each other, so not all details are legible.

the invoices, although productions that can be identified were *John Bull*, *Hamlet*, *Othello* (although those were not used), *Ixion* and the pantomime. A total of seventy-five posters were produced during the pantomime season: twenty-five double demy posters for 'Pantomime Day Performances' were printed on 30 December at a cost of 6*s*.6*d*, and another fifty for the Cricketers Bespeak of the Pantomime were printed on 7 February (costing 15*s*.). An additional 100 posters had been bought from Robert Arthur, printer, of Glasgow: '50 copies of [...] Pantomime Poster [and] 50 copies of [...] Clown Poster' at a total cost of £5.10*s*.0*d*.[60] This was the most that was spent on any one delivery of posters in the whole season. The Robert Arthur posters may have been overprinted locally (although there is no evidence of that) or they may have been general, pictorial, posters that could have been left on display throughout the pantomime run. If that was the case, it may well have been cheaper than continually printing posters to promote specific performances. It is unclear why Allen's were not used for those posters: the firm may have been unable to produce the required work, for reasons of time or cost (the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* were approached to print 500 bills at 15*s*. for Walter Montgomery's benefit performance in December 1865, and 2000 circulars in March 1866), or it may have been the case that Allen's were used principally for text and that illustrative work had to be bought elsewhere.[61] A second and well established Nottingham printing company, Stafford & Co., were used later during the main season for posters (175 at £2.19*s*.0*s*.) but, again, there may have been practical reasons why Stafford's were not used for the pantomime posters.[62]

In addition to day bills and posters, the printing costs for the pantomime were increased by the production of the twenty-four page stitched and bound book of words. On sale for 1*d*. in the theatre, the theatre management initially had 5000 books of words

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[60] Invoice dated 9 December 1865, M8806, p. 133. Paid 18 January 1866 in 'Day Book'. Robert Arthur advertised nationally: advertisement for 'NEW COLOURED/PANTOMIME POSTERS', *Era*, 24 November 1867, p. 15.
[61] The *Nottingham Guardian* invoice dated December 1865, in M8806, p. 111. Circulars charged on invoices for advertising between 26 February and 22 April 1866. M8806, p. 120.
[62] Stafford & Co. Invoice dated March 31st 1866 (M8807, p.122) for printing in February and March. See also, invoice dated 30 June 1866, for ninety posters totalling £3.2*s*.0*d*., M8807, p. 158. Paid 25 August, and entered in the 'Day Book'.

produced at a cost of £13 (£10.5*s*.0*d*. for printing the text and £2.15*s*.0*d*. for the pink covers with advertisements), with a further 500 printed on 30 January at an additional cost of £1.5*s*.0*d*.[63] Type would probably have been left standing from the first print run, therefore making the second lot of books cheaper to produce. The second order may have been in response to demand, but it is possible that the smaller quantity was an altered version for the 'Grand revival of the opening of the Pantomime as re-arranged and compressed' which ran for only six performances, from 6 February 1866.

The total cost of £14.5*s*.0*d*. was paid against income, but it was offset by charging seven local businesses to advertise in the book of words. Mr. Hart 'Wine and Spirit Merchant' of 14 Peck Lane, Nottingham (who also rented the theatre refreshment rooms and warranted a reference in the pantomime script) advertised on the cover at a charge of £5; Dick's Boots and Shoes, Pelham Street and John Player, Tobacconist, of Market Place, advertised on the inside front cover; Blackwell's Upholstery Warehouse and Allen advertised on the inside back cover, and Henry Farmer (music and instrument shop) and A. Everington's jewellery shop advertised on the back cover. Other than Hart, all the other businessmen paid £2.10*s*.0*d*. for half page advertisements. The income from those advertisements provided £20 for the theatre, amply covering the cost of both print runs.[64] Whilst the additional expenditure could be confidently undertaken by the theatre management, it is clear from the number of businesses placing adverts, that the pantomime was recognised as a useful medium for advertising.

In terms of advertising the actual pantomime, the siting of the posters and bills does not appear to have differed from other productions in the season. The range of advertising sites included newspapers, railway stations, bill boards, an advertising board at 'The Leather Bottle' (for two years from 21 March 1866), the distribution of 'large red

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[63] First invoice dated 6 January 1866, M8807, p. 35. Paid 26 January 1866 and entered in the 'Day Book'. Second invoice dated 3 February 1866, M8807, p. 58. Payments to Allen in the 'Day Book' tend to be grouped together, but the amounts paid on 26 January and 17 February 1866 look to include these two payments.

[64] Evidence of the placing of the advertisements taken from the book of words for *The House That Jack Built*.

posters' at 'hotels &c.', and even, on one misguided occasion, a perambulatory cart.[65] The growing predominance of advertising boards and specific, formalised sites for playbills, over the occasional, experimental method, was typical of mid-nineteenth-century advertising techniques.[66] At the beginning of the season, in September 1865, forty-six advertising sites were booked with an advertising subsidiary of W. H. Smith at railway stations, from late September for a period of one month.[67] Although not specified in the invoice, forty-six sites must have extended beyond the two railway stations at Nottingham (the Midland Railway Company station at Station Street and the Great Northern station at London Road), to cover other regional stations. A second payment was made to the Railway Advertising Department in April 1866 for the sum of £12, although the period of advertising and the number of sites are not given.[68] W. H. Smith's had loaned the advertising frames for posters at the railway stations (specified to be double demy or double crown in size), but the theatre managers had also paid for John Redgate, iron founder of Nottingham, to make sixty bill board frames.[69] In addition, the theatre management engaged the services of a local bill posting company as well as sending out members of the theatre staff to put up bills. Bill posters Eley and Priestley, 'Members of the United Kingdom Bill Posting Association' rented fifty-three advertising stations '*In all the Principal Thoroughfares in the Town and Suburbs*', which ranged from the slums of Drury Hill, and Broad Marsh to the lace making districts of Hollow Stone and Stoney Street. The theatre records show that Eley and Priestley posted a total of 3,550 bills and eighty-four posters between the end of September and 28 October 1865,

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[65] The agreement with the owner of The Leather Bottle in M8807, p.89. The posters sent to hotels by Allen & Sons in September 1865, invoice dated October 1865, M8806, p. 64. The perambulatory cart, booked for a week at the beginning of the main season, was a failure: Mr. Montgomery, the Director, wrote on the invoice 'ridiculous went out one day only and that we paid a cabman.' (M8806, p. 81).

[66] Richards, pp. 45-46.

[67] An invoice and receipt from the Railway Advertising Authority dated 21 September 1865 acknowledged payment of £5.15*s*.0*s* for forty-six advertisements at the railway stations for one month. Loose invoice, accession No. M8822/38a.

[68] Receipt for payment of £12 to The Railway Advertising Department for advertising at railway station (dated 12 April 1866, M8807, p.103). Entered in the 'Day Book', as payment to W. H. Smith (£12, paid 19 April 1866).

[69] Invoice for £30.9*s*.6*d*. (including discount), dated 30 September 1865, M8806, p. 58. Paid against stock in the week ending 11 October 1865, and entered in the 'Ledger'.

and a further unspecified selection in mid-April 1866.[70]

It is clear from the extant records that the railway and hotel advertising was somewhat sporadic, with the emphasis tending towards the opening of the main season and the October programme, which would have included Goose Fair week. Railway advertising may have been too expensive – W. H. Smith's charged 2*s.* per advertisement – to subscribe to on a regular basis, and the advertising appears to have been sustained principally via the bill posting in the town and immediate district, and the local newspapers for much of the season. Despite the sparsity of payment records for Eley and Priestley, bill posting evidently continued (as indicated by the Allen & Son's print runs over the season), but it must either have been undertaken by members of the theatre staff, or the payments to the bill posting company were made under different headings in the account ledgers. In the 1866-67 salary book, for example, bill posters were listed under 'band &c.' for the whole season. The bill board frames purchased from Mr. Redgate also remained in use; they were repainted over the following summer in preparation for the next season.[71] If those sixty frames were in addition to the two railway station sites and the fifty-three rented sites belonging to Eley and Priestly, then over 100 bill posting stations which had advertising boards were available across the town.

The Theatre Royal programme was advertised in three local newspapers: the *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express*, the *Nottingham Journal*, and the *Nottingham Daily Guardian* (including the weekly edition). The papers had a circulation that extended beyond the town into the outlying districts and neighbouring Midland towns. For example, editions of the *Express* listed outlets where the daily paper could be purchased, in towns and railway stations in Nottingham and throughout north

[70] Invoices: 30 September, 700 bills and thirty posters at a cost of 16*s.* (M8822/16, but not listed in the 'Ledger'): 7 October, thirty posters and 200 day bills, at a cost of 16*s.* (M8806, p. 8, verified against the 'Ledger'); 14 October, thirteen posters and 1,400 day bills at a cost of £1.11*s.*6*d.* (M8806, p. 25 and verified against the 'Ledger'); 21 October, 1,200 day bills, fifty bills and four posters at a cost of £1.1*s.*0*d.* (M8806, p. 41 and verified against the 'Ledger'). October 28 (no invoice but entry in the 'Ledger' for £1.11*s.*6*d.*). Final record in ' Stage Doorman's Book', payment to Eley and Priestley of 5*s.* paid on 14 April, p. 22. (This would have been included in petty cash details in the main ledgers.) Areas detailed on an invoice dated 30 September 1865 (M8822/16).

[71] This evidence is taken from petty cash payments in the 'Stage Doorman's Book'.

Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire: at the railway station bookstand at Newark, at George Dilks Booksellers at Ripley, from Mr. Kirk at Sutton Bonington, Samuel Allen's, bookseller in Sutton-in-Ashfield and the newsagent John Williamson (who supplied the paper to Eastwood, Langley Mill, Heanor, Losco Codnor, Ripley, Batterley Works 'and intermediate places'). The double issue of the *Express* (Wednesday and Saturday) could be bought in Swanick, Codnor Park, Somercotes and Riddings, and in the Mapperley and New Basford districts and by 'applying to the Station Master at Swinderby and [...] at Carlton, Lincolnshire'.[72]

In terms of the style of advertisements submitted, the *Guardian* (which promoted a circulation of 40,000 per week) had daily entries of the theatre programme, which cost 2*s.* to 5*s.* per daily or weekly entry throughout the theatre season, including the pantomime.[73] Similarly, the *Journal* had regular advertisements on its front page at 3*s.* per 'daily notice' entry, 2*s.*6*d.* for additional 'special notices' or, occasionally, 5*s.* for an extended notice, again for the whole season. The *Express* also carried advertisements on the front page of its daily and double editions, with a further, brief listing on page 3.[74] The average cost of a daily advertisement in the *Express* was between 4*s.* and 5*s.*6*d.* (for example if the advertisement included several days' listings), but longer advertisements could cost up to 7*s.* or 8*s.* each (for example, 'Grand Special Nights' on 23, 24 and 25 October, or the Oddfellows Bespeak on 21 November). During the pantomime, the costs remained fairly consistent: 4*s.* per entry, with the exception of the initial advertisements on 23 December (two at 8*s.* each) and for the advertisement for the Cricketers Bespeak on 9 February, which cost 5*s.* According to those costs, not much more was spent on the advertising for the pantomime than on the rest of the season, and the phrasing of the daily entries were bordering on the sparse. With the exception of specific occasions (which are discussed below), the front page advertisements, after the first week, offered little more

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[72] Advertisements, *Express*, 1 September 1865, p. 1, and pp. 2, 3, and 5.
[73] The *Guardian* claimed that as of the 1st July 1865 it had a circulation of 40,000 per week (receipt in M8806, p. 56).
[74] Invoices for the *Nottingham Journal* in M8806, for example pp. 12, 26, 47, 70; also, M8807, pp. 19, 41 and 58 for pantomime season costs.

than the title of the pantomime and the supporting play. Despite the extra expenditure on the transformation scene, costumes and ballet, none of those features were promoted in the newspaper advertisements. This fact suggests several things: that newspaper reviews and previews were more effective forms of promotion (and which did not cost anything in financial terms); that the additional investment in posters had more impact in the local surroundings and/or that the tradition of pantomime was so entrenched locally that extra advertising, in the first season, was extraneous. Certainly, the Saville family had started producing pantomimes during the 1840s at the old theatre but, in 1865, the combination of a new theatre and a stock company that had proven itself in successful productions of burlesque in the autumn, would have raised new expectations.[75]

The new theatre was promoted as a worthy establishment. In a preview report on the new theatre, written in September, the writer insisted that the theatre management would be 'providing the most refined and classical pieces' in 'an air of order and decorum and of respectability'.[76] When, in the following year, the theatre owners, John and William Lambert, created a joint stock company, the standards of the drama continued to be promoted in their initial prospectus: the building of the new theatre had been 'actuated by a desire to elevate the popular taste' and to encourage 'moral and intellectual culture'.[77] The theatre director for the first season was the actor Walter Montgomery, who had made his name in the provinces playing classical and Shakespearean roles. In her 1982 thesis, Kathleen Barker discussed the programming at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham, and drew heavily on that early promotion by the theatre and Montgomery's directorship to conclude that the Autumn 1865 repertoire was comprised largely of Shakespearean productions. She cited nine productions of Shakespeare's plays in a nine week period and claimed that, after Montgomery's departure in April 1866, 'the repertoire became markedly less prestigious.'[78] However, although Shakespeare did feature in the company

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[75] In 'The Performing Arts', Barker cites a pantomime from the 1846-47 season (p. 94).
[76] 'Preview Report of the New Theatre Royal', *Express*, 25 September 1865, p. 3.
[77] *Prospectus of the Nottingham Theatre Royal Co. Ltd.* Accession no. M8824, p. 2.
[78] Barker, p. 314.

repertoire and was a particularly popular choice for benefit performances, Barker's picture of declining artistic standards is misleading.[79] During the 1865-66 season there were thirteen productions of Shakespeare over thirty-three performances together with twenty-five dramas (eighty-three performances), thirty-two comedies, comediettas and farces (107 performances), fifty-six performances of six burlesques, four ballets and the Covent Garden opera company for one week in March (ten performances of six operas) and two performances of the opera Guy Mannering, a total of eighty-seven productions.[80] This varied programme for the first season suggests an audience that was only partly concerned with serious drama, instead demanding entertainment and variety. Moreover, the two most successful productions in terms of takings were the burlesque of *Ixion, or The Man at the Wheel*, (which had thirty performances, twenty-two of them consecutive) and the pantomime, *The House That Jack Built*, which ran for thirty-five performances from 26 December to 3 February (plus the aforementioned extracts).[81] The run of *Ixion* occurred over the week of Goose Fair, an ancient and annual fair held in Nottingham Market Square each October, that attracted many visitors from the surrounding towns and country districts.[82] Each year, the management of the Theatre Royal presented a spectacular production during the week of Goose Fair, to rival the attractions of the fairground, circuses and portable theatres.[83] The success of *Ixion* in terms of house receipts reflected not only a receptive local and regional audience for burlesque, but, implicitly, an established audience for pantomime, which as I outlined in Chapter 2, contained elements of burlesque and extravaganza. It is more than likely that the success

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[79] For example: *Julius Caesar* for Mr. Sinclair's benefit on 6 December 1865, *Henry IV* for Mr. Vollaire's Benefit on 13 December 1865, *Richard III* for William Montgomery's benefit on 18 December 1865, *Romeo and Juliet* for Mr. Clifton's benefit on 7 February 1866, *Cymbeline* for Miss Reinhardt's benefit on 13 February 1866, *Hamlet* for Mrs. Saville's benefit on 16 February, and *Much Ado About Nothing* for Mr. Nelson's benefit on 9 April 1866. All advertised in *Express*, p. 1.

[80] The identification of genres has been made from advertisement and playbill announcements, together with Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900* 6 vols (Cambridge: CUP, 1952-1959) *v Late Nineteenth Century Drama 1850-1900* 2nd edn (1959) *Appendix B: Handlist of Plays 1850-1900*, pp. 229-776.

[81] Evidence for the full programme has been gathered from newspaper advertisements and, for the pantomime, from advertisements and playbills. Booth, in *English Plays* presents a brief but interesting discussion on the burlesque of *Ixion* and its popularity in the 1860s (pp. 37-38).

[82] Goose Fair has been the subject of several works, most recently the thesis by Ann Featherstone, ' "Crowded Nightly".'

[83] See also for example the playbills for 2 October [1874] 'SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE GOOSE FAIR', 7 October 1876, and for the week commencing 30 September [1878].

of *Ixion* both encouraged and enabled the new theatre management to increase expenditure on the pantomime preparation during November and December.

Theatre tickets could be bought at Allen & Sons (who, as I mentioned earlier, held the Box Plan for the theatre) or on the doors, where money takers were positioned at the gallery, pit and box entrances of the theatre.[84] Appendix B shows the income (house receipts including the sale of bills and books of words in house), expenditure against income, and the subsequent profit and loss figures for the 1865-66 main season, including the pantomime. The records of income for the season, as with those for expenditure, have certain idiosyncrasies. Box office (Allen's) sales in the 'Ledger' are given for the period 25 September to 2 December 1865. In this ledger, there are several dates under which no income entries are made for Allen's.[85] Such occurrences do not seem to have been unusual: other 'Treasury' and 'Income' accounts in this particular ledger give the 'received at doors' figures, and those dates that have no advance ticket sales often had low house receipts (between £11 and £15 total). Box office receipts in this period were rarely equal to door receipts (the only exception being the opening night of the new theatre in September 1865, which saw advance sales of £92.12*s*.0*d*. against house receipts of £53.1*s*.5*d*.), so it can be fairly assumed that the non-entries are valid no-sales rather than omissions. However, there are no separate entries for Allen's receipts beyond the week ending 2 December, or in the following ledger ('Day Book'), which started in January 1866. The possibility that advance sales detailed for November may have included ticket sales for the Christmas 1865-66 period seems unlikely as the profit and loss figures in the ledger were based on the weekly income as given for specific dates, and there is no indication of sales being accounted for later periods. In addition, the door income for December matches those figures used in the profit and loss account summary of the ledger and therefore does not appear to be missing the additional box office receipts. It seems

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[84] Invoices for making the money takers' boxes, submitted by the Head Carpenter, are included amongst a selection of loose invoices, accession no. M8825/13.

[85] For day performances on 2, 3 and 4 October and for evening performances on 17, 26 and 31 October, 4 and 9 November 1865.

unusual for there to have been no advance sales for the pantomime, as on playbills and in advertisements Allen & Sons continued to be advertised as the holders of the box plan for the theatre, but as this accounting system was continued into the following year, it must be assumed that the door and advance income figures were combined after the beginning of December 1866. Even if there were no advance ticket sales, the house receipts were listed daily, with corresponding figures of banked income, and can be accepted as the correct figure.

To recapitulate on information from Chapter 2, the usual ticket prices were: £1.1*s.* to £2.2*s.* for a box (there were eight tiered boxes, four on either side of the stage), dress circle 2*s.*6*d.*, upper circle 1*s.*6*d.*, pit 1*s.*, and gallery 6*d.* On the opening night of the theatre in September 1865, the dress circle and upper circle seats were charged at 5*s.* and 2*s.*6*d.* respectively. Stall seats were also installed for that occasion although there is no record of how much they cost. During the main season (but *not* for the pantomime in the first year) reduced prices were available at 9pm (1*s.*6*d.* to the dress circle, 1*s.* to the upper circle and 6*d.* to the pit).[86] During the pantomime, there were selected occasions on which children were admitted at reduced prices: a Grand Day Performance on 30 December and 8 January, for which children under twelve were admitted at 1*s.*6*d.* to the dress circle and 1*s.* to the upper circle (no reductions for the pit or gallery), and 'Grand Juvenile Nights' on 10, 17 and 31 January for which children (again, under twelve) were admitted at half price to all parts of the house (dress circle 1*s.*3*d.*, upper circle 9*d.*, pit 6*d.*, and gallery 3*d.*).[87]

In terms of ticket sales, the first two weeks of the 1865-66 season were exceptional. The first week included the opening night of the theatre and the second week was the Goose Fair week (2-7 October) for which the theatre had three extra afternoon performances; a total of nine performances in the one week.[88] In general, there is a

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[86] Reduced prices for 9pm were advertised to start on 13 November, *Express* 11 November 1865, p. 1. 'No second price to the pantomime' in advertisement, *Express*, 11 December 1865, p. 1.
[87] Advertisements, *Express*, 10 January, 17 January and 31 January 1866, p. 1.
[88] Advertisements, *Express*, 19-22 September 1865 (opening night), p. 1, and advertisements, *Express*, 2-7 October 1865, p. 1.

discernible overall pattern throughout the main 1865-66 season, with Mondays. Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays providing the higher takings. This pattern appears to have related in part to local working patterns and in part to special occasions. Saturdays, although described as 'always a holiday with the classes who frequent the pit and gallery' had high but not usually the highest takings of the week; Monday and Friday night ticket sales were usually higher (although relative to that week's trend rather than exceptional).[89] Whilst the Friday ticket sales could be influenced by Grand Fashionable Nights, the Monday takings may well have been linked to the regional tradition of 'St. Monday'; Mondays were regarded by many workers in Nottingham and Birmingham (and possibly Leicester) as an unofficial holiday.[90] In as late as 1886, a reference in the Nottingham pantomime of *Aladdin* likened making 'a twisthand go to work on Monday' to the labours of Hercules.[91] In general, during the main season, theatre ticket sales tended to peak in relation to occasions: bespeaks, performances with particular civic patronage, fashionable nights and benefits.[92] Tuesdays and Thursdays, which were rarely chosen for special occasions, frequently produced lower income figures.[93] In general, during the pantomime run, those weekly income patterns were maintained, with Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays predominating. The positioning of Grand Juvenile Nights in particular maintained good income figures for Wednesdays. Mondays, however, normally a good income night in the main season, became one of the lowest income nights during the

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[89] 'The Nottingham Pantomime', *Express*, 22 December 1866, p. 5.

[90] Reference to 'St. Monday' in Birmingham in Reid, pp. 72-73, Allen, p. 166 and Upton, p. 69. St. Monday is also mentioned in J. M. Golby and A. W. Purdue, *The Civilisation of the Crowd: Popular Culture 1750-1900* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), p. 169. In his essay on the Theatre Royal, Leicester, Jeremy Crump noted that the pit and gallery 'were always fullest on Monday and Saturday evenings.' 'Patronage, Pleasure and Profit', 83.

[91] George Dance, *Aladdin* (1886-87), book of words, Scene 6, p. 30.

[92] Grand Fashionable Nights on Friday 29 September, Friday 6 October (Earl of Chesterfield), Friday 20 October, Wednesday 1 November (the Robin Hood Rifles), Friday 9 February (the Cricketers Bespeak), Friday 16 February (farewell benefit of Mrs. Saville), Wednesday 28 February (the Race Committee Bespeak). Grand Special Nights on 25 October (presence of the Duchess of Newcastle and Sir Arthur Pelham Clinton), 22 November (aristocratic presence and Oddfellows Bespeak) and 9 January (Masonic Night with aristocratic patronage). Patronised evenings (not advertised as 'Fashionable' or 'Special') 16 October (Mayor of Nottingham), 6 November (Mayor of Nottingham) and 10 November (Sir Robert and Lady Clifton). Although stock company and pantomime benefits were not advertised as Grand Fashionable Nights, they usually had civic or aristocratic patronage.

[93] One playbill from November [1865] promoted reduced prices for children on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings. There is no supporting evidence in the newspaper advertisements and only this one playbill, which although it is not printed with the year, does correspond in terms of other details. This may add a new perspective on income for those evenings (which do tend to be the lower income evenings of the week) and, by implication, attendance, but the lack of supporting evidence as to whether this system was fully instigated and for how long, has meant that I have not included it in my calculations.

pantomime, and I have not been able to establish why that might have been. During the run of *The House That Jack Built* there was only one Grand Fashionable Night, the Cricketers Bespeak on 9 February, and one Grand Special Night by behest of the Grand Masonic Lodge on 9 January. The former took only 1*s*.2*d*. more than the unpatronised Saturday evening performance that week and income from the latter (£44.3*s*.0*d*.) was donated to charity. For that occasion, seat prices had been raised, but even so, the figure was low, only a couple of pounds more than the day performance on the 8th.[94] Status and patronage did not appear to inspire potential pantomime audiences, but the benefit performances of the Clown, Little Laffar and the Premier Danseuse, Rosina Wright, proved a much bigger draw. As I outlined in Chapter 2, despite the reduction in the harlequinade, the provincial theatres continued to promote it, engaging established Clowns and encouraging novelty in that portion of the pantomime. The benefit may have been an established and negotiated method of payment either in addition to or instead of weekly payments. According to David Mayer, the Clown's benefit was traditionally supported by those tradesmen that he had promoted in the harlequinade.[95] The pantomimists and the premier danseuse were guest artistes in the 1865-66 season and the only performers to have benefits during the pantomime. (Members of the stock company took their company benefits much later in the season, in April.) The Clown, Little Laffar took his benefit on 26 January. That performance made £67.14*s*.7*d*, the second highest figure for that week, for which Laffar received one third of the house receipts. Rosina Wright's benefit was on 2 February, for which she received one quarter share of the house receipts. The latter performance recorded the third highest benefit income of the whole season: £98.2*s*.2*d*.[96] To set these figures in context, during the stock season, company benefit

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[94] Income recorded in the 'Day Book'.

[95] Advertising in the harlequinade discussed in Mayer, *Harlequin in His Element*, pp. 221-227. See also Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre*, p. 219.

[96] The pantomimists' wages were not listed separately in the 'Ledger' or the 'Day Book'. In the 1866-67 season (discussed below) the pantomimists were sometimes listed under 'Band &c.' in the 'Salary Book No. 2' and it may be that the payments in 1865-66 were grouped under another heading. The Laffar benefit payments were noted in the main list of entries in the 'Day Book'. On 26 January 1866, £62.13*s*.0*d*., plus tickets that Laffar sold himself (£5.1*s*.0*d*.), making total house receipts of £67.14*s*.7*d*. 'Less books and bills' 15*s*.1*d*., left £66.19*s*.6*d*. One third of that total – £22.6*s*.6*d*. – was paid to Laffar (worked out from entries in the 'received in cash', 'expenditure', 'a/c debit' and 'income a/c' columns).

performances averaged at half of house receipts less expenses.[97]

During the run of the pantomime, the emphasis of newspaper advertisements shifted from Fashionable Nights to promoting Grand Juvenile Nights of which there were three, on Wednesday 10, 17 and 31 January 1866. There was little that was 'Grand' about those nights, simply the fact that the pantomime was usually played first and there were reduced prices for children. There was an attempt to promote a 'Grand DAY PERFORMANCE for Children' on 30 December 1865, but that promotion failed to engage local audiences, possibly due to the fact that reduced prices were only advertised for the dress and upper circles, as compared to full house reductions for the Grand Juvenile Nights.[98] The performance on 30 December took just £27.13*s*.5*d*., the lowest house receipt for the opening week of the pantomime. By contrast, the heading 'Grand Juvenile Night' (for Wednesday performances on January 10 and 17), together with the guarantee (not always the case with the reduced price heading) of the pantomime being played first in the programme, had much better takings: £78.0*s*.10*d*. on January 10 (the highest that week) and £57.7*s*.0*d*. on the 17th (second highest after the Saturday performance). The Grand Juvenile Night on the 31st took £53.3*s*.11*d*., one of the lowest takings for that week. However, an influential factor here was the presence in the pit of 'the Union Children', a large group of children from the local workhouse who attended 'by invitation of the Messrs. Lambert'.[99] The attendance figures for that evening would not therefore have been comparable with income levels.[100] Advertising only three Grand Juvenile Nights (plus the day performance for children on 30 December) seems disproportionate for a six week run of the pantomime; the Birmingham Theatre Royal, by contrast, ran weekly 'Grand Juvenile Nights' during their pantomime of *Sinbad the Sailor* as well as regular juvenile performances during the main season. An obvious answer to

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[97] For example: Miss Reinhardt took half of the house receipts 'after house deductions' for her benefit. £35.14*s*.9*d*. which was paid on 13 February (plus a second benefit in April taking a 'share', 12.7*s*.9*d*. paid 16 April); Sinclair received a half share, £38.12*s*.6*d*. paid 7 April, and Nelson received half the house receipts, 'after deductions' of £20 expenses, £11.15*s*.9*d*. paid April 9. Detailed in M8807 and in the 'Day Book'.

[98] Advertisement, *Express*, 27 December 1865, p. 1.

[99] Advertisement, *Express*, 31 January 1866, p. 1.

[100] There are no records of payment for the seats.

this lies in the comparative population sizes of each town, but the emphasis of advertising at Nottingham also highlights a dependence on audiences from outlying and rural districts. For example, a 'grand Day Performance' was also promoted for 8 January, but the emphasis in newspaper advertisements shifted from promoting the event as being for children (as it had for the performance on 30 December), to promoting the 'Special Excursion Trains' that would be available from outlying districts. That performance produced better figures, £42.0*s*.7*d*., which was only 1*d*. less than the evening performance that day. In addition, special performances of the pantomime were advertised for the populations of other towns: 'A GRAND EXTRA NIGHT,/By special desire of the inhabitants' of Derby and Burton-on-Trent on 3 February 1866, and a 'Bespeak of the Inhabitants of SHEFFIELD & CHESTERFIELD' (organised by Palmers Excursions) on 12 February.[101] Takings for those performances were: £77.0*s*.5*d*. for the Derby bespeak (the third highest taking for that week after a staff ticket night and Rosina Wright's benefit) and £35.9*s*.6*d*. for the Chesterfield bespeak, also the third highest taking in a variable week, after benefit performances for Miss Reinhardt and Mrs. Saville (each actress taking one half of their nightly receipts).[102] Despite the two bespeak performances being supposedly run for country visitors, the pantomime was not played first on either evening, but train times accommodated the performance start and finish times (although letters of complaint were received by the *Express* stating that the departure trains on the 3rd had left before the end of the performance, an accusation that was strongly denied by both the theatre and the railway).[103] Derby, Sheffield and Chesterfield had been part of the early nineteenth-century Nottingham theatre circuit and a sense of allegiance between the regional towns may well have been maintained after the decline of the circuit in the 1840s. The Sheffield pantomime was promoted in Nottingham newspapers, and, as I mentioned earlier, in March 1866, the Nottingham stock company took a two week engagement at venues in Derby and Chesterfield, whilst the Nottingham

[101] Advertisements, *Express*, 3 February and 12 February respectively (p. 1).
[102] Benefit payment details are given in the 'Day Book' for the 13 and 16 February respectively.
[103] The letters can be found in the *Express*, 3 February 1866, p. 8, with further responses on 5, 6 and 7 February.

Theatre Royal hosted visiting pantomimists and a ballet company. The link between the regional towns became an even more prominent feature during the 1866-67 season, as I will discuss later in this chapter.

Although the pantomime (and indeed most spectacle at the Nottingham theatre) did well, the reintroduction of individual features of the pantomime later in the year were not always so successful. Despite the success of the 1865-66 pantomime, neither a revival of the transformation scene in late February nor a later engagement of ballet dancers and pantomimists at the Nottingham theatre was very profitable. The Birmingham theatre had also re-run its transformation scene at Easter 1866, so adding the scene to a later programme was not unusual. It may simply have been that with a more circumscribed audience, the Nottingham transformation scene had run its course and did not add financially to the March programming. Each of the three extra weeks in which the transformation scene appeared ran at a loss of between £27 and £54. In March 1866, whilst the stock company were on tour in Derby and Chesterfield, pantomimists the Brothers Payne appeared at the Nottingham theatre together with the Covent Garden ballet but takings were very low (£89.1*s*.5*d*. against the weekly expenditure of £169.1*s*.3*d*.), sustaining a loss of -£80 against income. The failure of this booking may simply have been as a result of the worsening economic climate in the town. In general, the theatre takings took a downward turn from this point until the end of the season, with the exception of the week ending 7 April in which *The Colleen Bawn* and supporting burlesques of *La Sonnambula* and *Lurline* produced a profit of +£151. However, the fate of the Paynes does suggest that pantomime may have been regarded by some theatre audiences as an exclusively Christmas event, acceptance of the traditions not extending into later seasons.

The playbills for *The House That Jack Built* stated that the pantomime would 'be presented at a cost of £2,000'.[104] This was an accurate forecast: so far as I can surmise, the final expenditure total actually came to £2,110.2*s*.0*d*. This amount included the

[104] Playbill for *The House That Jack Built*, 11 December 1865.

weekly expenditure, paid against income (£1,682.0*s*.6*d*.), plus the expenditure against stock, including the pre-production costs, of £428.1*s*.6*d*. Furthermore, that stock expenditure accounted for 18% of the total stock expenditure for the season September to April (£2,367.8*s*.0*d*.).[105] Spending that much of the season's capital on one production underlines pantomime's importance as a, if not the, principal source of income.

Appendix B shows clearly the patterns of profit and loss over the 1865-66 season. (Most weeks ran with six performances, the exceptions being the week ending 7 October, which had nine performances, and the week ending 23 December, which had only one performance.) In terms of establishing profit and loss, the weekly expenditure (against income) throughout the season also included the staff and cast wages, advertising, police attendance, hires and washing etc. Of course invoices could be paid late and there were additional costs in the form of water, gas and poor rates and property tax, all of which could increase expenditure in certain weeks. Therefore, invoices paid in any one week could be related to both the production running during that week and more general expenditure related to the running of the theatre. Although the weekly expenditure figures in the ledgers are those used to calculate the profit and loss for each week, it is very difficult to retrospectively locate weekly expenditure more accurately to set it against specific production income: the expenditure against income each week was not necessarily specific to that week's production. For example, the week ending 20 January (week four of the pantomime) does show a loss of -£111, although this loss was due more to increased expenditure, including the late payment of bills, than to poor houses. The takings for the week were £295.11*s*.8*d*., the lowest of the run but not dramatically so. In *Economics*, Tracy C. Davis notes that in calculating profit or loss on the pantomime season, allowance should be made for when the theatre is closed for the pantomime rehearsals (usually the week immediately before the production opened), and that the potential losses of income for that week have to be accounted for against the final profit

[105] The calculations for this have been based on figures in the 'Ledger' and the 'Day Book'.

figure for the pantomime.[106] Davis does not explain how this figure can be adjusted: whether for example by using the week's income before closure for comparison, or by selecting an average week's takings from the pantomime itself? Using the first recourse would surely have depended on the programme and comparing the week of closure to a full week's run of the pantomime offers a distorted comparative figure. The extant financial records at Nottingham do show that the theatre management appears to have tried to take the potential loss of income into account. Ostensibly the week of the rehearsal, there was a single performance on 18 December 1865, which was the Director, Walter Montgomery's benefit. That performance took £97.18*s*.1*d*., over half of the previous week's takings (£161.3*s*.2*d*. for six performances). Montgomery's own share of the takings was £50, which was paid against income in the week ending 20 January 1866; this contributed to the loss of profit in that week, but kept the immediate takings available for any pantomime expenditure in the week before Christmas. Similarly, the allocation of some of the staff and stock company costs and wages during the rehearsal week were split between stock and income, thus reducing any loss.

According to the available figures therefore, the 1865-66 theatre season ended with a +£956 profit, £431 of which was made during the six week run of the pantomime, from 26 December to 3 February. The pantomime therefore produced a significant portion of the whole season's profit, validating contemporary and critical claims for its financial importance. Those financial rewards had been achieved despite minimal advertisements in the newspapers, no second prices at 9pm, fewer fashionable performances and not many juvenile nights. As I mentioned earlier, in relation to the newspaper advertising, local traditions of pantomime, together with the new theatre may have been sufficient in the first year to attract audiences. The expenditure on spectacle must have responded to established local expectations, but in the second year those expectations and the viability of such expenditure were sorely tested.

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[106] Davis, *Economics*, p. 344.

1866-67

Between September 1866 and April 1867, the theatre management billed eighty-nine different productions, with a similar distribution of genres and turnover as in the 1865-66 season. This programming appeared to be in response to demand (and very probably the expectations raised by the first season) but, at the same time, income levels suffered as a result of worsening trade in the town. The *Express* reported on the 'depressed trade' in the town, and the *Era* remarked on the 'scantily attended' performances at the theatre.[107] The highlight of the autumn season in Nottingham, *The Streets of London*, was presented to co-incide with the Goose Fair in the town. That week had once again produced a profit – of +£274 – for the theatre. The theatre management, however, had decided not to run extra performances that week, which would have affected the overall income level in comparison to October 1865. In turn, the comparative income figures for the first eight weeks of the season were very much lower than the previous year: £1,377.6*s*.0*d* in 1866 compared to £2,449.2*s*.8*d*. in 1865 (a difference of £1,071.16*s*.8*d*. with, even more importantly, a profit difference of £557). A profit figure of £186, as opposed to £743 by mid-November cannot have boded well for the pantomime, for which preparations were due to start.

Establishing expenditure figures for the second season is complicated by the fact that all the expenditure in the accounts ledgers was placed against income. Mr. Sinclair, William Montgomery's successor as Director, appears to have also taken on the role of Treasurer. As Philip Talbot in his essay 'The Macclesfield Theatre Company and Nineteenth Century Silk Manufacturers' notes, accountancy was not a profession in the mid-nineteenth century and there were at that time no set procedures for book-keeping. Similarly, he notes that for the books to have been kept by a member of the theatre company or general staff, would not have been that unusual.[108] However, Mr. Sinclair was apparently particularly ill-suited to the task and a lengthy entry in the 'Day Book' in

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[107] Cited in Barker, pp. 314-315.
[108] Talbot, p. 35.

June 1867 highlighted 'errors and ommissions [*sic*]' in his book-keeping that had been made between January 1866 and May 1867. Those included omitted expenditure of £99.7*s*.3*d*, over the Christmas period, including a £5 payment to the costumier and a poor rate payment of £45.[109] The evidence from June 1867 indicates that expenditure may indeed have been wrongly attributed against income, but more specific corrections cannot be made, partly because the June entry is partially illegible and partly because, as I have already mentioned, profit and loss figures in the ledger were based on the figures for individual weeks, rather than individual productions. Crucially, however, the highlighting of the financial errors raises the issue that, unless specific and unrecorded decisions were made about expenditure allocations, the profit on the pantomime in particular could have been greater. In other words, although the income levels for *Aladdin* were indisputably low, the payment of items such as the creation of the transformation scene and properties against stock rather than income (as in 1865), would have lessened the margin of loss against income. One further, but less problematic, point is that all salary entries in the 'Day Book' were grouped under a single heading. The breakdown of department (stock company, wardrobe, property etc.) costs can be found in a separate 'Salary Book No. 2', which also includes payments for wigs and costumes. This book, together with a third collection of individual invoices (accession no. M8808), adequately expand the available information in the 'Day Book'. Taking the entries in the latter as read therefore, the total weekly costs for the pantomime in the 1866-67 season came to £1,480.12*s*.8*d*., with an additional £75.7*s*.4½*d*. spent on pre-production.

Throughout the season, there is far less evidence of materials having been purchased for costumes. A total of £20.9*s*.11*d*. was spent on fabrics such as tarlatan, fancy lace and book muslin, but an additional £4.6*s*.10*d*. was invoiced specifically for the pantomime: assorted fabrics from Clubley and Brown (of Stockport and Nottingham), and

[109] Entry in the 'Day Book', dated 4 June. This left around £40 that may have related to the pantomime itself. Unfortunately, the entry is very difficult to decipher. I am also aware that Sinclair's mismanagement may have had implications for part of the pantomime season in 1865-66, but only the Christmas season 1866-67 was specified in the entry of 4 June 1867 as having incorrect expenditure allocations.

ten yards of lace for the Harlequin costume, purchased by Wardrobe (two separate purchases of lace that may have been for repairs).[110] Presumably, many of the costumes made in the first theatre season were being re-used, but the hire charges were also reduced. The costume supplier was changed from Samuel May to John Simmons, also of London, who charged only £5 per week throughout the season, including the pantomime.[111] In theory this would have halved the weekly charges in comparison to 1865-66, but the cost cutting exercise was affected by the additional hire of pantomime dresses at a cost of £56, which were paid for in March 1867.[112] The excess cost of pantomime costumes (made and hired) therefore came to to £60.6*s*.10*d*., £25.1*s*.2*d*. more than was spent on additional pantomime costumes in 1865-66.

William Clarkson continued to supply wigs to the Theatre Royal in the 1866-67 season at the same, agreed cost of 12*s*. per week. There is no indication that pantomime masks were hired, although Clarkson did supply a quantity of 'Horse Hair (for pantomime)' at an additional cost of 2*s*.6*d*.[113] Presumably, some of the masks that were purchased in 1865 were re-used, and there is substantial evidence that masks were being made locally for *Aladdin*. Mr. Long, the Property Man, submitted invoices for molding supplies from late October: clay, plaster of paris, paste and linseed oil, as he had done in 1865, and between four and six extra staff were employed between the end of October and early January to create the molds, and to paint and decorate the masks as well as 'needlework' for the covering of masks, hats and fans.[114] In November and December of 1866, Thomas Thompson, 'BASKET MANUFACTURER of Long Row' Nottingham, once again submitted a detailed invoice, this time for providing: '14 Masks (opening)', '14

[110] Fabrics were purchased from Dickinson & Fazarkerley (6*s*.3*d*., M8808, p. 66), Waghorn (3*s*., M8808, p. 72), B. Burnet (£1.9*s*.10*d*., M8808, p. 72), Thompson Brothers (£17.9*s*.4*d*., M8808, p. 84), and Robert White (£1.1*s*.6*d*., M8808, p. 109). Clubley & Brown and lace purchases detailed in M8808, p. 68 and p. 61 respectively. Payments listed in the 'Day Book'.

[111] John Simmons invoices in M8808 and payment details in the 'Day Book' and the 'Salary Book No. 2'.

[112] The cost of the 'pantomime dresses' was paid on 4 March 1867, listed in the 'Day Book'. The invoice in M8808, dated 3 March.

[113] Invoice dated 27 April 1867, M8808 p. 118. Included with weekly payment in the 'Salary Book No. 2'

[114] Invoices submitted by Mr. Long for staff, dated 9, 16, 23 and 30 November, 7, 14, 21 and 28 December and for one extra wage (in addition to the Property Assistant) between 4 January and 1 March, after which, only the Property Assistant J. Kirk was listed (M8808). Prop purchases and wages are grouped together under 'Long's Bill' in the 'Salary Book No. 2', so a precise cross-reference with the invoices is not possible. The entries in the salary book for Long are however often for a greater amount than the invoices, so there is a likelihood of further costs, for which there is no more detailed evidence.

hats ditto', '2 Extra large Hats', '1 Mask opening' and nine 'Extra Mask' on 30 November, and four extra large masks on 5 December at a cost of £3.0*s*.6*d*. The invoice also included comic props: a tray for the 'comic fishwife', two baskets, six flower baskets, one drum, '1 Plate Very Large Comic', one 'Oyster Comic', one 'fishes Head Comic', a brush and a 'pie dish', all provided between December 5th and 18th, and bringing the total invoice (marked 'Pantomime Property') to £5.3*s*.6*d*.[115] The total amount that can be specifically identified as having been spent on pantomime props and wages prior to the start of the run came to £15.0*s*.6½*d*.[116]

The time and materials used to make masks and properties marks the first of several major production differences between *The House That Jack Built* and *Aladdin*. While care and attention was paid to the appearance of performers for *Aladdin*, there is sparse evidence of a similar preoccupation with the transformation scene. The weekly staff invoices, submitted by Mr. Pryce, the Head Carpenter during the 1866-67 season, accounted for fourteen to fifteen men from September to early November. From the beginning of November, the invoices detailed ten to twelve carpenters plus three or four joiners, the number rising to five and six until the start of the pantomime run. During the first weeks of the pantomime, the invoices detailed flymen, stage men and cellar men, the total staff employed by the department numbering between twenty-three and twenty-five. Numbers dropped to nineteen for the week ending 10 January, and eighteen for the remainder of the run. At the beginning of March (and until the end of the season) the numbers dropped again to twelve. The numbers of staff in the carpenter's department were therefore far fewer than in the previous year, but the increase in men working the stage, traps etc. during the run of *Aladdin*, was relative to the overall staff levels during the second season. Similarly, the wage payments – with the exception of the week ending 22 December – were not dramatically increased in the run up to Christmas: £13 to £15 per

[115] Included in a composite invoice for Thompson in M8808, p. 95.
[116] Including the Clarkson and Thompson invoices and property department invoices in M8808, dated 26 October, 9, 16, 23 and 30 November and 7, 14 and 28 December (two invoices plus an invoice from W. H. Butler of Long Row for slippers for 'Mr. Rennell (Aladdin)'. There are other invoices in this particular collection, but only this one is specified as being for the pantomime).

week in December, compared to £9 to £13 for the rest of the 1866-67 season (with the exception of the first week of the season in September, for which the carpenters invoice came to just over £15). More important, despite the additional joiners. there was no mention of any of that work being exclusively expended on the transformation scene.[117]

According to reviews of the pantomime, the scenes of *Aladdin* were populated by an augmented cast of up to sixty people.[118] A 'Supers Wages No. 2' book detailed wage payments for extras from Saturday 5 January 1867 to 27 April 1867. The book lists around fifty names per week, including dressers (who may have been extras who helped as dressers, as per the ballet girl who was given an extra 3*s.* in the 1865-66 season). According to this ledger, the March to April figures for extras came to between £6 and £11 (there are no figures for the autumn season), whereas the amount spent on extras for the pantomime season was around £19 to £20 per week.[119] The theatre management did engage a principal dancer, Mdlle. Alida 'of the Grand Opera, Paris', but after spraining her ankle early in the run, she was replaced by Miss Ritta of the stock company.[120] The pantomimists, who performed the harlequinade, were paid as a group: £14 per week (£7 for the rehearsal week), and the Clown, Mr. Morelli, was given a benefit performance on Friday 8 February 1867, for which he received £7.11*s.*0*d.* (one third of house receipts less deductions).[121] Mdlle Alida may have been included with this group, as part of her engagement had been to play Columbine; alternatively, she may have been promised a benefit performance, like Rosina Wright in 1865, but, due to her injury, was obviously unable to complete her engagement. According to the financial evidence, however, no payments were made for any ballet in the 1866-67 season. Instead, the theatre re-engaged Lizzie Gilbert's Troupe for the pantomime, which, at £4.10*s.* per week, cost less than the

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[117] Carpenters invoices in M8808, pp. 1, 5, 8, 18, 20, 22, 29, 34, 37, 45, 51, 57, 60, 61, 64, 71, 76, 79, 82, 84, 88, 90, 97, 101, 104, 107, 110, 113, 116, 118, and verified against 'Pryce's Bills' in the 'Salary Book No. 2'.
[118] 'The Christmas Pantomime at the Theatre Royal', *NJ*, 24 December 1866, p. 3.
[119] 'Supers Wages Book 1867' Accession no. M8815.
[120] Wages for 'Miss Gilbert's Troupe' listed in M 8814, pp. 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 and 44. The report on Mdlle. Alida's replacement in 'The Pantomime at the Theatre Royal', *Express*, 10 January 1866 p. 2.
[121] Pantomimists wages are listed in the 'Salary Book No. 2', pp. 30-44 and the rehearsal week payment in the 'Day Book' (22 December). Other weekly payments in the 'Day Book' grouped within 'Salaries'. Morelli's benefit details are given in the 'Salary Book No. 2', p. 40, but not listed separately in the 'Day Book'.

full ballet engaged the year before (£7.18*s*.0*d*. per week for the run of the pantomime). Presumably intended to cut costs, the extended run of the pantomime in 1866-67 meant that this arrangement in fact only saved the theatre management about £7.

The processes of advertising the pantomime were similar to those employed in 1865-66. The theatre continued to use the printers Richard Allen & Sons throughout the season to produce regular quantities of bills and posters, and to distribute advertising via bill posters and the local newspapers. Staffords & Co. were also used to print posters for both the main season and for the pantomime; a total of 250 posters were produced for the latter, costing £6.10*s*.0*d*.[122] Allen's again produced 5000, twenty-four page books of words, 'folded and stitched' with 'numerous alterations' at a cost of £10.[123] Although there was no repeat order later in the run, 5000 pantomime bills were printed in a folded, four page format, at a cost of £5, which, presumably, sold at a lower price than the book of words. The theatre management had advertised for prospective advertisers for the 'BOOKS and BILLS' during the first week of the pantomime and evidently received a good response. The total cost of £15 was covered, as in 1865, by charging five businesses a total of £14.10*s*.0*d*.: A. Everington and Dick's advertised once more, together with Baldwin Brothers and Greens at a cost of £3 each, and B. Abrahams, who paid £2.10*s*.0*d*.[124]

Appendix B gives the income for the 1866-67 season. However, as with the 1865-66 figures, attention needs to be drawn to certain differences in the records. Amongst the archive collection, and in addition to the main income and expenditure ledgers, is a 'Nightly Receipts 2' book for 1866-67.[125] This book contained the door ticket sales for the different parts of the auditorium at first and second prices as well as

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[122] Invoice in M8808, p. 69.
[123] Both items included in an invoice for work done on 29 December 1866. M8808, p. 92.
[124] 'Amount due for Xmas advertising', in 'Day Book', paid on 6 May 1867. The advertisement for advertisers appeared in *Express*, 18 December 1866, p. 1. There are no details in the ledgers, nor has the cover of the book of words survived in order to identify all the advertisers. The only Baldwin Brothers listed in *Wrights Nottingham & Suburban Directory and Red Book for 1866* are a Rupert and John Octavius Baldwin 'wine, spirit, ale and porter merchants' of St. James's Street, Nottingham ('Appendix', p. 62); B. Abrahams was possibly Barnet Abrahams, china and glass dealer of Beastmarket Hill, Nottingham (p. 59). I have not been able to identify Green.
[125] 'Nightly Receipts 2', accession no. M8816.

the Allen & Son box office receipts for the main season, and the handbills sold inside the theatre. The Allen figures, as in 1865-66, continued to be unequal to the door receipts but unfortunately did not specify which auditorium areas were principally sold in advance. From 1 November 1866, newspapers advertised a 'new arrangement', which effectively allowed group bookings (including a discount) for the dress circle.[126] By the 5 November, the *Express* was emphasising this attraction in its review: twenty tickets could be purchased in advance for 30*s.* (a saving of 20*s.* on this number of seats at 2*s.*6*d.*). In addition, those tickets were 'not only transferable but available for any evening up to the expiration of the term for which they [were] issued.'[127] This move highlighted the low attendance of the dress circle clientele (a feature of the Theatre Royal audience throughout the period to 1892) and the 'Day Book' entries for 'tickets (new arrangement)' show some initial enthusiasm for the idea. However, there are no entries between 11 December and 4 February, which may have meant either that the offer was unavailable or that the tickets booked in October and November included advance sales for *Aladdin*.[128]

The 'Nightly Receipts' book does offer up interesting evidence and cross-references fairly accurately with the 'Day Book', but there are certain and important differences. The accounts ledger includes rather random entries with regard to the sale of books of words and handbills. There was only one specific entry for handbill sales in the 1865-66 season, so it must be assumed that other sales were included in the general house receipt entries for each performance in both seasons. As with the 'Salary Book No. 2', it is more than likely that there were other ledgers or 'Nightly Receipts' books, in which bill and book sales were recorded in 1865-66 that have not survived. Similarly, the 'new arrangement' sales were not recorded in the 'Nightly Receipts' book. Because of these slight variations between the two documents, and to try and maintain a consistency in my evaluations, I have continued to use the 'Day Book' as the basis of my discussion of the

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[126] Advertisement, *Express*, 1 November 1866, p. 1.
[127] 'The Theatre', *Express*, 5 November 1866, p. 2.
[128] 'Day Book' entries for 31 October, 1-13 November, 19-20 November, 1 and 3 December, 7 December and 10-11 December. The next entry was made on 4 February, the last for the season.

1866-67 season income. Not only do the entries in this journal follow on from those for the 1865-66 season but it also contains the banked income figures, which must have been used to calculate profit and loss. The 'Nightly Receipts' book lacks both the sequence and the banked income figures.

As in 1865-66, there was a shift from advertising fashionable evenings, to promoting Grand Juvenile Nights (of which there were five) and four benefits during the run of the pantomime. There had been an attempt earlier in the season to promote juvenile nights but with little success. Three Grand Juvenile Nights had been advertised during the run of *The Streets of London*, on 9, 11 and 13 October. In terms of takings, the first two performances were sparsely attended, neither achieving receipts of more than £20, although the Saturday performance proved rather more successful, taking £23.9*s*.7*d*. The *Express* reviewer noted the absence of children in the audience on the 9 October, and the experiment was not repeated outside of the pantomime run during the season. During the run of *Aladdin*, the pattern of improved takings for the Grand Juvenile Nights that had become established the previous year, continued to boost box office takings for five of the six promoted occasions. Interestingly, the annual visit of the Union children to the pantomime did not take place on a Grand Juvenile Night, as it had done in 1865-66, but instead occurred on Thursday 1 February.[129] That evening once again recorded one of the lowest income figures of the week, just £17.14*s*.4*d*.

Whilst the run of *The House That Jack Built* had included just two benefit performances, the *Aladdin* season promoted four. Those were, of course, for Mr. Morelli, the Clown on 8 February, which made £36.18*s*.6*d*. (the highest takings for that week), Jennie Long, the Principal Boy, on February 12 (the second highest takings that week at £29.1*s*.1*d*.), Mr. Radford, the Pit Money Taker, on 21 February (£38.13*s*.0*d*.), and Mr. Simkins, the Box Keeper to the Dress Circle, whose benefit on Friday 22 February was promoted as a Grand Fashionable Night and took £53.2*s*.8*d*., the highest takings for that

[129] 'Treat to the Workhouse Children'. *Express*. 30 January 1866. p. 2.

week, eclipsing the last Saturday night of the pantomime (£12.15*s*.2*d*).[130]

To promote the pantomime and the special occasions, the theatre management continued to advertise in the three main local newspapers. In the 1865-66 season, the pantomime advertisements had been very brief, but for *Aladdin*, the advertisements were much more descriptive. The poor autumn season, and a financial dependance on the pantomime, meant that it was vital to attract audiences throughout the run. As I discussed in Chapter 2, the Theatre Royal was the only theatre in the town, but in December 1866, the Alhambra Music Hall presented *Mirza, or the Amazon's Revelry*, featuring a Drury Lane 'danseuse', Annie Claremont.[131] Although music halls were not permitted to perform pantomime, this 'Comical, Musical, and Terpsichorean Spectacle' featuring 'FORTY AUXILIARIES' presented significant competition to the theatre. The lengthy – up to twenty-five lines – descriptive advertisements that were placed by the Alhambra prompted the Theatre Royal management to respond, promoting the traditions of the legitimate pantomime: the transformation scene, the harlequinade cast, and the Grand Ballet, in similarly long advertisements. Ironically, that emphasis, particularly on the transformation scene, did not reflect the production expenditure involved. The theatre management had to promote the spectacular element of the pantomime but in reality the scene was very different to the lavish display that the scene title, 'Haunt of the King Fisher, Retreat of the Wood Nymphs and Water Fays in the Dell of Golden Ferns', appeared to promise.[132] The co-existent newspaper reviews praised the scene, however, effectively encouraging an appreciative response to a different style of transformation scene. In a preview of the pantomime, the *Express* wrote that:

> On previous occasions the principal outlay has been expended upon the 'transformation' scene, but in the present pantomime we have a succession of

[130] These figures have been established from entries in the 'Day Book'. There is an additional breakdown of Morelli's payment in the 'Salary Book No. 2', p. 40. Mr. King also had a shared ticket benefit on Friday 16 February. That evening took £14.16*s*.4*d*., but, unlike the other benefits, it was not promoted in advertisements .
[131] Advertisement, *NJ*, 22 December 1866, p. 4. Annie Claremont featured in an advertisement in *NJ*, 17 December 1866, p. 2.
[132] The title is taken from advertisement, *Express*, 17 December 1866, p. 1.

> tableaux, the production of each of which would be equal to the accomplishment of a highly successful 'transformation.' The [tableaux are] quite triumphs of scenic beauty.[133]

The theme was continued in a review of the opening night performance:

> It is not, indeed, so refulgent of glitter and sparkle as transformation scenes sometimes are, and on this account probably it may not at first be fully appreciated; but if carefully examined, and allowed to take possession of the mind, the *coup d'oeil* will be found very imposing and gratifying.[134]

This emphasis on a subtlety of painting was apparent in reviews of later pantomimes at the theatre. As I discussed in Chapter 2, the transformation scene frequently achieved a positive response from newspaper reviewers, but very little detailed description. The 1866-67 transformation scene can therefore be said to have initiated an alternative approach for the Theatre Royal, to achieving spectacle and praise for the creative processes of production, but within the financial constraints of the theatre.

The ballet, like the transformation scene, was predominant in newspaper advertisements but, as I have already established, Miss Gilbert's Juvenile Troupe were engaged, rather than a full *corps de ballet*. This engagement may have been an attempt to cut costs, which, as I stated earlier, proved to be of little success. What was perhaps even more important in terms of attracting people to the pantomime, was the way in which the dancers were promoted. In the previews and reviews, a great deal of emphasis was placed on the fact that the dancers were local to Nottingham, and that they had been highly praised for earlier performances. The *Express* highlighted the fact that Miss Gilbert's 'skilful training of juvenile troupes in picturesque movements and measures has been frequently proved in this locality.'[135] The *Journal*, again in preview, recommended the pantomime cast to prospective audiences, in particular 'the juvenile Ballet Troupe, whose

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[133] 'The Christmas Pantomime', *Express*, 24 December 1866, p. 3.
[134] 'The New Pantomime', *Express*, 26 December 1866, p. 2.
[135] 'The Nottingham Pantomime', *Express* 22 December 1866, p. 5.

diminitive [*sic*] appearance and rustic dances excited so much interest last year.'[136]

As in 1865, the theatre was closed for the week before Christmas for pantomime rehearsals and, again, the theatre management attempted to compensate for income lost during that week. Public dress rehearsals were rare, but, throughout the period, open dress rehearsals were held to enable the newspaper critics to preview the production. In December 1866, however, playbills appeared announcing a Grand Dress Rehearsal of *Aladdin* on Saturday 22 December, which would be open to the public. The critic of the *Express* found this surprising, although he noted that the actors would probably be grateful for an extra evening of wages.[137] (According to the available records this does not appear to have happened.)[138] The main argument for the early opening that was put forward by the theatre management was that the pantomime was ready by the 22nd (certainly that date was printed on the books of words) but it seems more than likely that the earlier opening was, once again, a response to the rival entertainment at the Alhambra, which also opened on the 22nd.[139] The idea of a dress rehearsal was unsuccessful, achieving a door income of only £12.13*s*.10*d*. Even the tradition of opening on Boxing Night was eschewed, with the first proper performance taking place on the 24 December. The takings for that evening were rather better, at £50.11*s*.0*d*. Old habits died hard in Nottingham and the tradition of Boxing Night as the opening night of a pantomime was upheld by local people, and the takings for the 26 December were £92.16*s*.1*d*.[140]

Although the theatre management placed longer advertisements in the local newspapers for the 1866-67 pantomime, the charges did not differ greatly from those in 1865-66: the *Journal* continued to charge 3*s*. for daily listings; the *Express* charged only a few pence more (4*s*. to 5*s*. per entry as compared to between 4*s*. and 4*s*.6*d*.); and the daily entries in the *Guardian* were slightly lower, 3*s*. to 4*s*. (3*s*. to 5*s*. the previous year).

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[136] 'The Christmas Pantomime', *N.J.* 21 December 1866, p. 2.
[137] 'The Nottingham Pantomime', *Express*, 22 December 1866, p. 5.
[138] The 'Day Book' has three entries for the 22nd: 'Pantomimists 7.0.0.', 'Band &c. 54.19.10.' and 'Salaries 6.0.0'. According to a corresponding entry in the 'Salary Book No. 2', the only salaries that were paid were Mr. Coleman and Mr. Sinclair ('Salary Book No. 2', p. 27). It appears that, unless they were paid under another heading, the actors did not receive an extra evening's pay.
[139] Advertisement, *N.J.* 22 December 1866, p. 4.
[140] Income for those evenings recorded in the 'Day Book' for each date.

In the light of the increased content of the 1866-67 advertisements, I have not been able to establish – beyond the fact that standing type would have reduced some costs – why the charges were not more disproportionate.

The most noticeable feature of the 1866-67 advertisements, that had not occurred in 1865-66, was the placing of advertisements for train trips to see the Nottingham pantomime. Those advertisements did cost considerably more: 9*s.* for one advertisement placed on 5 January in the *Journal* and 6*s.* each for train advertisements placed between 5 and 10 January in the *Express*. Those promoted train trips highlight a significant feature of advertising during the 1866-67 pantomime run; the style and geographical radius of advertising for *Aladdin* was markedly different than that employed for *The House That Jack Built.* Whilst the 1865-66 pantomime had included two performances that were promoted as being 'by special desire' of the inhabitants of Derby and Burton on Trent (on 3 February 1866) and, more specifically, a bespeak for the people of Sheffield and Chesterfield (12 February 1866), there are no specified records regarding advertising in those areas, or specific train trips.[141] By contrast, the 1866-67 production of *Aladdin* was actively promoted to a much wider audience. Bill posters distributed posters and playbills beyond Nottingham into the surrounding towns and villages; in the previous season this action had only featured in preparation for the tour to Derby and Chesterfield that took place in March 1866. In December 1866 and January 1867, Mr. Simkin, of the Theatre Royal, booked a bill poster in Boston, Lincolnshire and Burton (presumably Burton-on-Trent, but it may have been Burton Joyce in Nottinghamshire), a fare to, plus bill posting in Newark, 'a Horse and Cart for delivering and posting Bills in surrounding villages', a fare and bill posting in Mansfield, Chesterfield and Loughborough, and fares and bill posting in Burton and Derby. The total cost of this was £1.14*s.*9*d.* and was invoiced by Simkin.[142] The amounts were not entered in the 'Day Book', but appear to have been included in the petty cash account maintained by the Stage Door Man, Mr.

[141] Advertisements, *Express*, 2 February 1866 and 12 February 1866, p. 1.
[142] Invoices in M8808, pp. 56, 63 and 78.

King. His own ledger recorded carting bill boards during the pantomime season as well as carting and sending bills locally and to Boston, Grantham, Burton on Trent, Loughborough, Chesterfield and Derby (at a total cost of £1.1*s*.10*d*.).[143] The *Derbyshire Times & Chesterfield Herald* also arranged bill posting in Sheffield, Eckington, Chesterfield, Pye Bridge, Odnor Park, Langley Mill and Ilkeston at a cost of 17*s*.6*d*.[144] The increase in bill posting corresponded to the greater number of posters (250) produced by Stafford & Co., to which I referred earlier.

The altered advertising strategy ran in tandem with a series of eight 'special trains' that were run for excursionists to visit the pantomime. Those trains were: from Lincoln, Newark, Burton Joyce and Lowdham on 10 January; from the Erewash Valley and colliery district on 12 January; from Grantham on 16, 19 and 26 January; from the Mansfield area on 21 January; from Burton on Trent and Derby on 2 February, and from Sheffield and Chesterfield on 10 February. Additional advertisements were placed in other regional newspapers: the *Sheffield & Rotherham Daily and Weekly Independent* contained advertisements on the 10 and 12 January for the performance on the 12th, advertisements were placed in the *Derbyshire Times & Chesterfield Herald* on the 5 and 12 January and 2 and 9 February (the proprietors of this paper also arranged advertisements to be placed in the *Ilkeston Pioneer* on 5 February), and the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* had advertisements placed on the 2, 5, and 9 February, all at a cumulative cost of £6.5*s*.0*d*.[145] The presence of large numbers of visitors from the other towns was reported in the Nottingham press. The *Journal* reported 'a considerable number of persons' at the performance on the 12 January; 'about 500' from Mansfield and intermediate stations on 21 January and 'from 500 to 600 excursionists' from Burton and

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[143] 'Stage Door Book', pp. 33-34.

[144] M8808, p. 131, entered in the 'Day Book' as paid 23 May 1867.

[145] Details from invoices received from the relevant newspaper offices. The *Sheffield & Rotherham Daily and Weekly Independent* advertisements cost £1.4*s*.0*d*. (M8808, p. 129), the *Derbyshire Times & Chesterfield Herald* advertisements cost £2.8*s*.0*d*. and the *Ilkeston Pioneer* advertisements, 5*s*. (M8808, p. 131). The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* advertisements cost £2*s*.0*d*. (M8808, p. 129). Payment details for all three in the 'Day Book', dated 23 May 1867.

Derby on 2 February.[146] How accurate the actual attendance figures were is unclear, particularly with the liberal repetition of '500' in the reviews. However, in the main, those evenings did produce much higher income levels than others during the same week, even when in competition with Grand Juvenile Nights. The additional regional advertising proved successful in attracting extra audiences to the Nottingham pantomime, but, overall, the run was not a financial success. Whereas *The House That Jack Built* had run for six weeks, with a profit in five of those weeks, the pantomime of *Aladdin* struggled on for nine weeks, producing a profit in only four of those weeks. Kathleen Barker asserts that *Aladdin* had a 'record run'.[147] Certainly, the pantomime was run in full for nine weeks plus the first performance on the 22 December, but the financial records show that the ticket sales for the production were poor (generally over £100 less per week than the previous year's pantomime) and that for much of the Christmas season the pantomime was running at a loss.[148] Despite a lengthier run, *Aladdin* produced only +£9 profit, and the whole 1866-67 season ended with a loss of -£84. Even the *Journal* which had charted the production with enthusiasm, was forced into using terms such as 'tolerable houses', 'not so large an attendance' and, ultimately, a 'beggarly account of empty benches'. It certainly seemed to be the country visitors that drew the 'large attendance'.[149]

Appendix B clearly illustrates that for the first three full weeks of *Aladdin*, local people did go to the pantomime and, although income levels were far lower than for *The House That Jack Built*, there was a clear profit of +£255. Whilst, as Tracy C. Davis points out, it is difficult to make retrospective judgments about historical business decisions, the situation in Nottingham must have presented a dilemma to the theatre management.[150] The pantomime initially produced a profit and, with the profit produced

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[146] 'The Theatre', *NJ*, 14 January 1867, p. 2; 'The Theatre', *NJ*, 22 January 1867, p. 2, and 'Excursionists at the Theatre', *NJ*, 4 February 1867, p. 2. See also: 'The Pantomime', *NJ*, 28 January 1867, p. 2 and 'The Pantomime', *NJ*, 12 February 1867, p. 2.

[147] Barker, p. 315.

[148] See Appendix B for a full list of the income figures.

[149] The 'tolerable houses' in 'The Theatre', *NJ*, 5 January 1867, p. 2, and 'tolerably good house' in 'The Theatre', *NJ*, 14 January 1867, p. 2; a 'beggarly account of empty benches' in 'Theatre Royal', *NJ*, 19 February 1867, p. 2. The 'large attendance' reported in 'The Pantomime', *NJ*, 12 February 1867, p. 2.

[150] Davis, *Economics*, p. 196.

by *The Streets of London* in October, the season must have looked as if it was following a similar pattern to 1865-66, even if, overall, income was lower. Theatre managements, as I have stressed elsewhere, depended financially on the pantomime season and it must have been too tempting to keep the production running rather than to change the programme and risk losing further audiences. At Easter, the theatre ran the burlesque of *Black Ey'd Susan* for two weeks; whilst in other years, the pantomime would have funded the later holiday spectacle, the burlesque may have been seen as an attempt to recoup some of the losses of *Aladdin*. *Black Ey'd Susan* did quite well in the first week and made a profit of +£6, but losses in the second week meant that the takings for the production could not compensate for the pantomime.

Significantly, the theatre proprietors asked Mrs. Saville (the Lessee of the old Theatre Royal) to return as Lessee to the theatre in 1867. Kathleen Barker claims that the return of Mrs. Saville was for reasons of 'popularity', but I would argue that that was only part of the reason. Mrs. Saville had managed the old theatre during the local economic crises of the late 1840s and 1850s, wisely shutting the theatre at times of severe depression. Her perceptive management (as Barker points out) allowed the theatre to survive at a time when other provincial theatres were floundering.[151] To bring back such an astute lessee with knowledge and awareness of the local economic climes was a practical as well as popular move in the mid-1860s. In the 1861-62 season, at a time of particular hardship in the town, Saville had run the pantomime for a month only.[152] Her first pantomime in the new theatre, *Beauty and the Beast* (1867-68), also ran for just one month and, although Barker argues that it was a failure, it is far more likely that Mrs. Saville, in not extending the run, was cannily avoiding the losses incurred in 1866-67.

This detailed study of the Theatre Royal finances clearly shows the financial importance of pantomime for regional managers, but also the impact of the local economic clime, which could affect pantomime as much as other genres. In the second, less

[151] Barker cites several examples of Mrs. Saville's careful management, on pp. 202, 256 and 257.
[152] Barker, p. 257, although she does not note the similar impetus in 1867.

successful season of 1866-67, the fact that audiences remained low for the pantomime related to local income levels rather than the genre. What is important to note is that pantomime continued to be produced and that shifts in the promotional emphases and advertising locations highlight the strategies used to try and keep the pantomime afloat. In later years, those financial strategies were accompanied by a more defined sense of local identity in the pantomime, which became of increasing relevance and importance as the social, economic and municipal face of the town changed and developed. That identity was largely forged by the long term management and author partnerships that occurred in the 1870s and 1880s. Such identity was already prevalent in the Birmingham pantomimes, and in the following chapters I will explore this aspect of the regional pantomime by studying the engagement of particular authors and the role of topicality in pantomime production.

Chapter 4: 'Written expressly for this Theatre'

Pantomime Authorship

Chapters 2 and 3 have dwelt on the spectacular elements of the mid-nineteenth-century pantomime: the emphasis on and financial requirements of the visual impact of scenery, costumes and masks. In turn, I have shown how differing local economic contexts affected the production of spectacle and, at Nottingham, some of the alternative strategies employed by the theatre management to try and ensure audiences in times of hardship. The next two chapters will further explore the production and promotional strategies that were used at the Theatres Royal in Nottingham and Birmingham, beginning with the role of the author.

As I outlined in Chapter 2, by the 1860s, the lengthened pantomime opening, of between eight and ten scenes, told a specific tale, whether of *Robinson Crusoe* or *Aladdin*. The change in emphasis, from the largely mimed action of the early Victorian pantomime to the predominant use of dialogue, 'tilted the dramatic balance' in which greater verbosity and more detailed storylines made the engagement of an author/script a basic necessity for the theatre manager.[1] (I have here separated the author and script because sometimes an author was engaged by the local theatre and sometimes a script, originally created for another theatre, was bought in. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in the ensuing chapter.) Nineteenth-century critical works on pantomime were generally dismissive of the pantomime author, regarding his work as little more than a 'peg' on which to hang the comic business, songs and special effects.[2] Accordingly, a tension emerged in which the pantomime author was regarded as a necessity, while at the same time often treated as someone whose work was essentially dispensable, to be cut or altered as and when the producer or star performers required. Satirical articles in the *Era Almanack* and *All the Year Round* presented the perceived plight of the author: his literary pretensions

[1] Booth, *English Plays*, p. 44.
[2] Booth, *English Plays*, p. 51, footnote 1, citing Wagner, p.11. See also, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*, pp. 75-76.

subjugated to the demands of the actors and the task of providing suitable cues for spectacle.[3] The contributor 'Byron Blank' humourously described the first read through of his script: '[o]nly one man was perfectly satisfied, and thought the pantomime the best he had ever read – that was the man who played the dragon; but then he was not ambitious, and was killed off in the first scene'.[4]

Subsequent, twentieth-century critical works have done little to readdress those perceptions regarding pantomime authorship and, as a result, only passing references have been made towards the work of the pantomime author in the provinces. In this chapter, then, I will re-examine the role of the writer and discuss his relationship to the town and theatre for which he wrote. (Throughout this thesis I refer to the author in the masculine; none of the pantomimes under discussion were written by female authors, and I have not discovered any reference to female pantomime authors in my research.) By focusing on the authors Charles Millward and James J. Blood, who wrote for the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, and F. R. Goodyer and George Dance at Nottingham, I will show that the decisions made by the theatre managements to engage certain authors were not arbitrary, but were instead based on specific rationales, related to status and regionality. Firstly, in order to provide a context for my discussion, I will outline the contemporaneous situation regarding copyright and the legal status of the author.

Although the fictional manager in *All the Year Round* reassured his author that 'Lord bless you, sir, when we have played it for a night or two you won't know it again', the pantomime author did have a certain amount of copyright protection available to him.[5] In the nineteenth century pantomime was classed, by Act of Parliament, as a stage play or 'entertainment of the stage' alongside 'tragedy, comedy, farce, opera, burletta, interlude

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[3] In *English Plays*, Booth addresses the collaborative nature of the production of the pantomime opening, between the 'dramatist, manager, scene painter, machinist, and gasman', whilst at the same time acknowledging the infringement on the author's work (pp. 50-51).

[4] Byron Blank 'My Pantomime', *Era Almanack*, 1878, p. 36. See also: [unattributed] 'My Pantomime', *All the Year Round* 10:14 (1863), pp. 272-276 (this article is cited in Eigner, *The Dickens Pantomime*, p. 3, who identifies the author as Andrew Halliday), and the complaints made by W. S. Gilbert in 'Thumbnail Studies: Getting Up a Pantomime', *London Society*, 13 (1868), pp. 56-57, cited in Booth, *English Plays*, p. 51. Gilbert's complaints are also cited in Frow, pp. 134-135.

[5] 'My Pantomime', p. 275.

[and] melo-drama [*sic*]'.[6] Consequently, the authors of the Christmas pantomime were theoretically protected by the same copyright regulations as writers of the other legal genres.[7] Those rights had been defined principally by the Dramatic Copyright Act of 1833 and the Copyright Act of 1842.[8] The 1833 Act importantly established a legal distinction between print and performance, and gave authors the 'sole rights in any unpublished play and the "sole liberty" of permitting its representation.'[9] The 1842 Act (Talfourd's Act) reiterated those rights, further stating that 'the first public representation or performance of any dramatic piece or musical composition shall be deemed equivalent [...] to the first publication of any book' providing that:

> in case of any dramatic piece or musical composition in manuscript, it shall be sufficient for the person having the sole liberty of representing or performing, or causing [the same] to register only the title thereof, the name and place of abode of the author or composer thereof, the name and abode of the proprietor thereof, and the time and place of its first representation or performance.[10]

Registration was not compulsory, but omitting to register did not, under the provisions of the 1842 Act, affect copyright (which would have been established by the first performance or publication); it would only be detrimental if copyright infringement was pursued in the courts.[11] (This was reiterated at the hearing of the Royal Commission on Copyright in 1875, whose members proposed that registration should be made

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[6] *Report from the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment* (1892), in answer to question no. 2832, p. 194. For a summary of legitimate genres after 1843, see Davis, *Economics*, p. 63.

[7] Information regarding copyright legislation has been taken from the following sources: John Russell Stephens, *The Profession of the Playwright: British Theatre 1800-1900* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992); Catherine Seville, *Literary Copyright Reform in Early Victorian England: The Framing of the 1842 Copyright Act* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999) and John Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain* (London: Mansell, 1994).

[8] The two Acts were not infallible in their protection of dramatic copyright, and, as the historians John Russell Stephens and Catherine Seville have highlighted, there remained certain 'grey areas' of interpretation. The legal standing of the playwright continued to be aided and abetted by a series of test cases, and it was not until The Copyright Act of 1911 that a definitive clarification was made of the various issues surrounding dramatic copyright. See Russell Stephens, *Profession*, Chapter 4 'Piracy and the Defence of Dramatic Property' for a detailed discussion of the legal position in the nineteenth century. Catherine Seville, in particular, notes the problems of legal interpretation surrounding the 1842 Act, p. 251, footnote 86.

[9] Russell Stephens, *Profession*, p. 91.

[10] Quoted in Seville, p. 270. Seville cites the full Act as an appendix in her work: 'The Copyright Act 1842 5 & 6 Vict. c. 45', pp. 258-273.

[11] Seville, pp. 271-272.

compulsory, although none of the Commission's recommendations were enacted.)[12] As detailed above, in order to register copyright on manuscript, or in the case of re-assigning the copyright on his work, a playwright had to enter details with the Stationer's Company. Registration with the Stationer's Company, as proven in the evidence presented to the Royal Commission, was somewhat lax, and the procedure was not helped by the 'chaotic and ignorant state' of the Company's administration.[13] Even allowing for low standards of administration and the absence of compulsory registration, the Stationer's Company Books of Registration contain remarkably few pantomimes entered for copyright (either in manuscript or as a reassignment). A sample check of the December to February period in ten registers showed that only six pantomime titles from across the country were registered, with none at all from the writers of the Nottingham and Birmingham pantomimes.[14] The lack of registration raises a question: was the sparsity of entries a result of poor administration, or did pantomime authors simply not deem it worthwhile to register their work. Was the critical attitude towards the dispensable pantomime author in fact true? At the Theatre Royal, Nottingham in the late 1860s, two members of the stock company wrote dramatic pieces: Frederick Haywell and W. J. Thompson. The latter wrote the pantomime for the 1868-69 season, *Babes in the Wood; Or, Harlequin Cock Robin, Prince Charley and His Pretty Bluebell,* but there is no record of the script having been submitted to or registered with the Stationer's Company. By contrast, Haywell, also a member of the 1868-69 stock company, wrote a three act tragedy, *Anne of Bavaria*, and *Found*, a four act drama, both of which were submitted for licensing by Mrs. Saville, the Lessee, and Haywell also entered his manuscript plays for

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[12] 'The Report of the Royal Commission on Copyright [1875]', in *The Royal Commissions and the Report of the Commissoners* (London: HMSO, 1878), pp. xxii-xxiii. For the lack of action on proposals, see Russell Stephens, p. 100.

[13] John Palgrave Simpson, Secretary of the Dramatic Author's Society, *Royal Commission on Copyright*, p. 123.

[14] PRO, Stationer's Company Registers of Performance and Representation, COPY 3. I initially made a full check of the Registers for the period 1873-1893 (COPY 3/221, COPY 3/222 and COPY 3/223). Of the thirty-nine pantomimes registered, twenty-two (fifty-six per cent) were registered between December and February. In addition, the Lord Chamberlain's Day Books of licensed productions, contain pantomimes largely submitted and licensed between December and January. I therefore decided to use the period December to February in my search of the sample copyright registers.

copyright.[15] This disparity – of tragedy but not pantomime being registered – suggests that the authors did regard their dramas as the more worthy artistic products requiring long term copyright protection. In turn, what this issue highlights is the ephemeral nature of pantomime. Tracy C. Davis, in *Economics*, suggests that the nineteenth-century pantomime script was intrinsically linked to the individual production. Davis raises the question of whether the words may have had a limited commercial use without the accompanying sets and costumes; that a pantomime had to be produced or sold wholesale, as it were, to be effective.[16] Similarly, if the original pantomime script was altered on a regular basis to include new novelties or the latest topical references, it could indeed become dated; some of the references in the original author's work would be unlikely to have the same impact or even relevance in later years. That so few pantomimes appear to have been registered for copyright reflects the limited shelf life of the script, and the recognition of that fact by the authors themselves. What may have been more important for the pantomime writer was the registration of the rights of representation, which were linked to performance fees.

According to the 1833 Act, and in addition to copyright, an author also controlled the performance rights of his work (unless he re-assigned them, again via registration, as stated in the 1842 Act). As with copyright, an author could register his rights of representation with the Stationer's Company. A check of the 'Registers of Performance and Representation' for the whole period 1873 to 1893 has shown that a total of thirty-nine pantomimes were registered for representation.[17] Several of the pantomime

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[15] *Agnes of Bavaria* mentioned in Barker, p. 318. *Agnes of Bavaria or Love and Love's Vision was* submitted for licensing at the Lord Chamberlain's office on 4 November 1868 (licensed 9 November). BL, The Lord Chamberlain's Day Books, iii, Brit. Mus. Add. MS 53,704, p. 3. The play was entered for copyright on 18 June 1868 in PRO, Stationer's Company Copyright Registers , xiv, COPY 3/15, p. 8. *Found* was licensed by the Lord Chamberlain on 10 April 1869 (submitted 8 April), BL, Brit. Mus. Add. MS 53,704, p. 42. It was entered for copyright in PRO, COPY 3/15, p. 236. Both plays were in manuscript form. The June entry for *Agnes* lists a Kent address for Haywell, but the April entry for *Found*, made during the stock company season, gives a Nottingham address. Haywell was listed as the 'Proprietor of Copyright' for both plays.

[16] Davis, *Economics*, pp. 345-348.

[17] All the relevant Registers of Performance and Representation for the period 1873 to 1893 were checked. These are included under the collection PRO, COPY 3 (piece numbers 221 to 223). In total there were thirty-nine pantomimes entered for representation in these registers. A sample cross-check was undertaken for the period December to February with five of the corresponding copyright registers. In this, entries in the latter were still fewer (five entries compared to eleven in the registers for representation).

authors listed in the Registers repeatedly registered their work. For example: George Conquest of the Grecian Theatre in London, Fred Locke of Glasgow and Geoffrey Thorn of London. Locke's and Thorn's pantomimes were produced throughout the country, including Nottingham and Birmingham in the late 1880s and early 1890s. The records also include a pantomime by a Frederick Haywell (*Red Riding Hood and Little Bo Peep*, written for the Theatre Royal, Manchester in 1875).[18] Although the figure is still not high and cannot have been comprehensive in relation to the number of pantomimes that were written and produced throughout the country, the evidence in these particular registration records does suggest that authors who did register – like Haywell – may indeed have been more concerned to protect their performance rights than the copyright on their work. However, registration did not guarantee the payment of performance fees; that process had been overlooked in the provisions of the 1833 Act. A partial remedy was sought by the founding of the Dramatic Author's Society in July 1833. The DAS took responsibility for collecting performance fees from theatres around the country, ensuring that member authors were paid (membership was not compulsory).[19] In the financial records of the Theatre Royal, Nottingham there is evidence that during the period 1865 to 1867, the theatre management purchased plays from London publishing houses (to whom copyright would have been reassigned). The opening season pantomime of *The House That Jack Built* was purchased from Lacy's: 3*s.*1*d.* was paid for six copies of the pantomime in October 1865.[20] The records also show that the theatre managers were scrupulous in paying fees to the DAS for the use of scripts and music.[21] Both *Little*

[18] The Haywell entry was recorded on 23 January 1875. Haywell was recorded as the author and as the 'Proprietor of the Liberty of Representation or Performance' and the first performance took place on 19 December 1875 at the Theatre Royal, Manchester. PRO, COPY 3/221, p. 11.

[19] Russell Stephens, p. 91 (and his subsequent discussion of the Society in Chapters 4 and 7), and Daniel Barrett, 'The Dramatic Author's Society (1833-1883) and the Payment of English Dramatists', *Essays in Theatre* 7:1 (1988), 19-33 (p. 19).

[20] Invoice dated 18 January 1866 for plays purchased in October 1865. The delivery also included copies of *La Sonnabula*, *John Bull* and 'Magpie', presumably *The Maid and the Magpie* burlesque which was run during the first 1865-66 season. Nottinghamshire Archives, M8807, invoice, p.44. Payment recorded in M8809, 'Day Book' for the week ending 31 January 1866.

[21] A DAS receipt dated March 1866 was for £3.13*s.*0*d.* for representations during the stock company's visit to Derby and Chesterfield in Spring 1866, including two performances of H. J. Byron's burlesque of *Aladdin* at 12*s.*6*d.* Similarly, the theatre manager paid £4.0*s.*0*d.* for the use of opera music (receipt dated 29 May 1866). Nottinghamshire Archives, M8807. Barrett states that the DAS charged in advance for set periods (p. 24). The theatre managers were charged £20 on 25 September 1865 for payment in four months' time and a second block payment of £20 was recorded in the 'Day Book' in September 1866. Nottinghamshire Archives, M8809.

Goody Two Shoes (1869) and *Robinson Crusoe* (1870) were written by John Strachan, a member of the DAS; the title page of the 1870 book of words for *Robinson Crusoe* carried the legend 'FOUNDED ON H. J. BYRON'S BURLESQUE OPENING,/BY JOHN STRACHAN,/*MEMBER OF THE DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S SOCIETY, LONDON*'.[22] By contrast, the 1866-67 pantomime *Aladdin* was bought direct from its authors, Thomas Chambers and W. S. Hyde of the Theatre Royal, Manchester, for £10.0*s*.0*d*. (There is no evidence that copyright or rights of representation were formally reassigned.) The charge also included the 'loan of music for the same for use at the T.R. Nottingham during the present season'.[23] This transaction highlights the third option for payment, which was, of course, for authors to negotiate terms directly with the theatre management.

As I indicated in Chapter 3, between 1865 and 1871 there were frequent changes of management at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham. The actor William Montgomery was Manager from October 1865 to April 1866, with Mr. G. F. Sinclair from the stock company taking over as Director for the remainder of the 1866 and 1866-67 season. Mrs. and Miss Saville became joint managers and lessees from September 1867 to June 1870, and Lady Don (formerly the actress Emily Saunders) was Lessee from September 1870 to summer 1871.[24] Each manager naturally had a different approach to the production of the pantomime. Consequently, from 1865 to 1871, each pantomime script was obtained from

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[22] Strachan was not advertised as the author of the 1869 pantomime; evidence has been established from the previews of the following year's pantomime. Allardyce Nicoll lists John S. Strachan as the author of *Little Goody Two Shoes and Her Queen Anne's Farthing; Or, Harlequin Old King Counterfeit and the World of Toys*, which was licensed to Sadler's Wells Theatre in December 1872 (Nicoll, p. 585). The title is very similar to the Nottingham pantomime, but there is no evidence that that version was submitted for licensing. Strachan's 1870 pantomime of *Robinson Crusoe* was promoted as having been based on H. J. Byron's burlesque opening. However, according to Allardyce Nicoll, Byron wrote three versions of the story: one burlesque and two pantomimes (*A History of English Drama, v.* 296-297). The Lord Chamberlain's Day Books list *Robinson Crusoe* as a burlesque licensed to the Haymarket Theatre on 30 June 1867. BL. Brit. Mus. Add. MS 53,704, p. 114. According to Nicoll, the full title was *Robinson Crusoe; or, the Injun Bride and the Injured Wife* (Nicoll, p. 297). The pantomime version that Byron wrote for the Princess Theatre, London in 1860 has a closer title to that used by Strachan: *Robinson Crusoe; or, Harlequin Friday and the King of the Caribee Islands* (Nicoll, p. 296). The fact of it being described in the Nottingham book of words as Byron's burlesque opening, does relate more to pantomime structure (opening and harlequinade). Nicoll lists the pantomime as having been submitted for licensing but also as having been available as a French's Acting Edition, which may have been how the Nottingham manager purchased it.

[23] 'Chambers – for Pantomime 10.0.0' payment entered on 25 January 1866, in M8809, 'Day Book'. Handwritten receipt for the loan of music and acknowledging payment, 'received from Messrs. Lambert ten pounds for Copy of "Aladdin"', in M8808, p. 75. An entry for postage/carriage in the 'Stage Door Book' noted 'March 13th [1867] Parcel to T Chambers Manchester 0 1 0', presumably the return of the loaned music (M8817, p. 36).

[24] Barker, pp. 314, 320-321. Also evident from the title pages of books of words, reviews and playbills, in the collection at the Local Studies Library, Nottingham. Information on Lady Don taken from R. J. Broadbent, *Annals of the Liverpool Stage, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Liverpool: Howell, 1908), p. 166.

a different writer/source, hence the variety in the methods of payment. By contrast, from the early 1870s until the late 1880s there was only one change in the management. Frank Musgrave was Lessee from 1870 to 1876, at which point Thomas Charles took over as Manager until 1889. During this period there was a significant shift in policy to engaging local authors to write the Christmas annual: F. R. Goodyer from 1873 to 1885 and George Dance from 1886 to 1889. Neither author promoted membership of the DAS and, because they were both local men and worked with the theatre over a period of years, it seems logical that they would have arranged terms with the theatre management. That financial investment by the managers may have been a contributory factor in the authors' names appearing on the pantomime playbills. However, it seems unlikely that the amount paid for the pantomime scripts was on a par with the expenditure on scenery and costumes, thus warranting playbill space, and the naming of an author on promotional materials was not in fact a legal requirement.[25] What is of far greater relevance is the way in which the authors were advertised. The phrasing and contextualisation of their promotion went beyond the immediate production to engage with their local standing and reputation. In this respect, the author became an important element in the promotion of the local pantomime.

At Nottingham, the pantomime of 1872 was *King of the Peacocks; Or, Harlequin, the Cantankerous Kings, the Pretty Princess, the Lively Monkey, and the Treasures of the Animal, Vegetable and Mineral Kingdoms* by F. W. Green, and was '[l]ocalised by Mr. F. R. Goodyer'.[26] Goodyer lived in Nottingham and had been writing in the town since the 1840s. By 1872, his reputation had been established through his satirical verse and extravaganzas, in which he had made local topics, whether historical or contemporary, the subject of much of his writing. Goodyer's poems included: 'The Queen's Page, A Legend

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[25] John Palgrave Simpson, of the DAS stated that he wanted theatre managers to be legally obliged to list the author's name on playbills. (*Report of the Copyright Commission*, p. 122). As Russell Stephens states, none of the recommendations of the Committee were carried out (*Profession*, p. 100).

[26] Advertisement, *NJ*, 26 December 1872, p.2. In 1882 Green's *Sinbad the Sailor* was produced at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, and he is listed as the author 'of numerous pantomimes' in W. Davenport Adams *A Dictionary of the Drama: A Guide to the Plays, Playwrights, Players and Playhouses of the United Kingdom and America, from the Earliest Times to the Present, Vol I, A-G* . (London: Chatto & Windus, 1904), p. 607.

of Nottingham Castle' (c.1844); 'A Lyttel Geste of Robin Hood Wythe Ye Sheryffe of Nottinghame; An Ancient Ballade to Suitte Moderne Tymes' (1848): 'Robyn Hoode and Ye Tanner' (undated) and 'A Bridge of Sighs' (1847). The last named was a satire on the new bridge built between Carrington Street and the Meadows district in Nottingham. (The bridge was apparently taken down soon after the poem was published in local newspapers.)[27] Goodyer's plays, all produced at the Theatre Royal, included *Once Upon a Time; or, A Midsummer Night's Dream in Merrie Sherwood, A Fairy Extravaganza* (1868), a farce, *Goose Fair* (1874) and *The Fair Maid of Clifton: A New and Original Extravaganza* (1872).[28] This seems to have been the second version of the story by Goodyer. In 1912, the local historian Everard L. Guilford noted that Goodyer had co-written a burlesque – *Ye Fayre Maide of Clifton* – with William Bradbury in 1848, and, more recently, Kathleen Barker has confirmed that Goodyer's burlesque of *Fair Maid of Clifton* was the most successful play of the Theatre Royal season of 1848-49.[29]

An overview of the playbills for Goodyer's pantomimes offers little indication of his local standing. 'Written by', 'The Opening by' or 'The Libretto by' are cursory tags, possibly restricted by available space on the playbill.[30] More enlightening are the statements in the books of words. In those, reference was made to his wider body of work in Nottingham, and he was described as the 'AUTHOR OF/"ONCE UPON A TIME", "FAIR MAID OF CLIFTON,"/NOTTINGHAM CASTLE." &c., &c.'[31] By 1882, his provenance in the book of words for *Cinderella* also included '*the pantomimes at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham and Grand Theatre, Glasgow.*'[32] These statements raise

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[27] Details from printed copies of the poems pasted in to Goodyer's collection of works, *Odds and Ends* (unpublished), accession no. L80.2.GOO D1. Local Studies Library, Nottingham.

[28] *Nottingham Castle* was produced in 1873. It was submitted for licensing on 27 September and licensed on 29 September. BL, Brit. Mus. Add. MS 53, 705, p. 80. *Once Upon A Time* details from a playbill dated 27 April 1868 and from title page of printed text included in *Odds and Ends*. *Goose Fair* is listed in Allardyce Nicoll, p. 384. There is one playbill for *Goose Fair or, What a Day We're Having*, dated 2 October [1874], although no author is listed. All playbills and books of words relating to Goodyer are in the collection of the Local Studies Library, Nottingham.

[29] Barker, p. 98. Details of Goodyer and Bradbury in *Memorials of Old Nottinghamshire*, ed. by Everard L. Guilford, M. A., (London: Allen, 1912), p. 220.

[30] See for example: 'Written by' on the playbill for *Little Red Riding Hood*, 26 December 1873 and *Little Red Riding Hood*, 26 December 1885; 'The Libretto written by' on the playbill for *Little Bo Peep*, 26 December 1883; 'The Opening written by' on the playbill for *Little Bo Peep*, [no date] 1874-75 season.

[31] See for example: the books of words for *Little Red Riding Hood* (1873-74) and for *Little Bo Peep* (1874-75).

[32] Title page of the book of words for *Cinderella* (1882-83).

several issues. Firstly, Goodyer's plays were not listed with their full titles. There is a suggestion that his work was well known and that partial referencing would suffice to remind local readers of his writing; more important, the titles reiterated his local interest. Secondly, the '&c., &c.' in the first example implies a body of work almost too large to mention in the given space, and thirdly, Thomas W. Charles, the manager of the Nottingham theatre, was also the manager of the Grand at Glasgow; the fact that Goodyer's pantomimes were staged at both theatres substantiates a working relationship. That relationship was further endorsed by Goodyer appearing at the local magistrates court to support the manager's application for a renewal of the theatre license in September 1873.[33] Furthermore, in January 1879, Goodyer gave evidence in support of Thomas Charles's appeal against a local circus who had attempted to produce a stage play (as with music halls, this practice was forbidden in venues other than theatres).[34]

Goodyer's reputation as a local writer was recalled in the promotional previews and reviews of his pantomimes. His localisation of F. W. Green's 1872 script was particularly highlighted by the *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express*. An early review delighted in 'the felicitous allusions to local topics made in the libretto [...] by our clever townsman, Mr. Goodyer'.[35] A later review anticipated that:

> there being a local 'poet laureate' to deal with current topics – passing follies as they fly – there can be little doubt that the Christmas piece of this year will attract visitors from all the neighbouring towns and districts, as well as all the play-goers and yule merrymakers of Nottingham and its suburbs.[36]

The following year, the *Nottingham Journal* praised a 'capitally written' script which 'was to be expected from so clever a writer of pieces of this character that Mr. Goodyer has before proved himself.'[37] Goodyer was also called upon to add a local flavour to other productions. A playbill for the week commencing 11 May 1874 promoted H. J.

[33] 'Local and General: Renewal of the Theatre Licence', *NJ*, 17 December 1873, p. 3.
[34] The report on the hearing is featured in the *NDE*, 11 January 1879, p. 5.
[35] 'The Pantomime', *Express*, 2 January 1873, p. 3.
[36] 'The Pantomime', *Express*, 6 January 1873, p. 3.
[37] 'Christmas Amusements: The Pantomime', *NJ*, 27 December 1873, p. 5.

Byron's burlesque of *Orpheus and Eurydice*, stating on the same bill that it was 'LOCALISED BY MR. F. R. GOODYER' and 'Specially localised for this Theatre by **MR. F. R. GOODYER**'.[38] The 1873-74 season was particularly successful for Goodyer. his pantomime of *Little Red Riding Hood* had been highly praised in all the local newspapers, and on 15 May 1874, he was given a complimentary benefit by the theatre management.[39] According to John Russell Stephens, the author's benefit as a method of payment had 'survived into the early years of the nineteenth century at the Haymarket' and '[o]utside the patent theatres, [the practice] continued for decades longer in the provinces and in some minor theatres'.[40] From extant records it appears that Goodyer's benefit was only one of two author's nights in the whole of the period of study at Nottingham, and the only one promoted as being complimentary. The other author's benefit was given in 1869 for W. J. Thompson, who had also been a member of the stock company.[41]

In 1875 and 1876, the Nottingham theatre manager, Frank Musgrave, had used different authors for the pantomimes: John Strachan's *Sinbad the Sailor* in 1875, and Alfred Davis's *The Fair One With the Golden Locks*, that had previously been performed 'in one of the London theatres'.[42] Goodyer's pantomimes for 1873 and 1874 had been highly praised in the local papers and there is no record of why he was not engaged to write the 1875 and 1876 pantomimes; his absence, however, may have been due to reasons of availability or ill health. The pantomimes for 1877 (*Blue Beard*), 1878 (*Babes in the Wood*) and 1879 (*Jack and the Beanstalk*) were co-written by Goodyer and a Mr. Hain Uthermann. Reviewers were attracted and intrigued by the partnership of 'our local collaborators', referring enthusiastically to 'the "Beaumont and Fletcher" of the Midlands', and to the fact that the pantomimes were 'written by pens familiar to

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[38] Playbill for the week commencing 11 May [1874].
[39] Playbill for the 'COMPLIMENTARY BENEFIT TO MR. F. R. GOODYER' dated 15 May 1874.
[40] Russell Stephens, *Profession*, p. 27. Even allowing for this, 1874 seems to be very late.
[41] Evidence for Thompson's benefit in advertisement, *Express*, 7 February, 1869, p. 1.
[42] 'The Nottingham Pantomime', *NJ*, 23 December 1876, p. 5.

Nottingham and practised in giving local point and piquancy to the dialogue'.[43] The *Nottingham Daily Express*, in a review of the 1878-79 pantomime, remarked that the two authors had produced a libretto 'admirably adapted to the taste and capacity of a Nottingham audience.'[44] The identity of Goodyer's writing partner, however, appeared to have been something of an enigma. In the late 1840s, Goodyer had been a member of a convivial society which met in the town; the 'mysterious Hain Uthermann', 'the gentleman with the strange device upon his literary banner' may also have been a member of 'The Society', the minute books of which were decorated with a fictitious coat of arms.[45] In the Society minutes for 1848-49, an entry describes how members of the society attended the theatre to see *Ye Fayre Maide of Cliffe towne* 'the joint production of Grini and another gentleman'.[46] That gentleman, as identified by Guilford, was William Bradbury, also a member of the society; there may well be a link between the Hain Uthermann who co-wrote Goodyer's pantomimes in the late 1870s and the 'another gentleman' who co-wrote *Ye Fayre Maide*. Although this is supposition on my part, the phonetic similarity between 'Hain Uthermann' and 'another man' is tantalising.

Goodyer resumed sole authorship of the Nottingham pantomimes in 1880 and continued as such until 1885. His local standing as a writer was again the focus of previews in the newspaper reports of the early 1880s:

> The libretto, we may say at once, will, as on so many former occasions, be the work of that veteran pantomime-writer Mr. F. R. Goodyer, whose efforts are certain to be heartily welcomed by our townsmen [...] That his work will have the usual allowance of puns and allusions, local and political, goes without saying.[47]

[43] Goodyer and Uthermann as 'local collaborators' in 'Footlights', *Nottingham Review*, 24 December 1879, p. 4. The 'Beaumont and Fletcher' comment in 'Theatre Royal: The Pantomime', *NJ*, Saturday 27 December 1879, p.5.
[44] 'The Pantomime', *NDE*, 27 December 1878, p. 4.
[45] 'that mysterious Hain Uthermann' in 'Theatre Royal: The Pantomime', *NJ*, 27 December 1879, p. 5. The review which bestowed praise upon Goodyer and 'the gentleman with the strange device upon his literary banner' was 'Theatre Royal – Bluebeard', *NJ*, 27 December 1877, p. 3. Manuscript copies of each of these pantomimes are in the Lord Chamberlain's Collection and there are clearly two sets of handwriting in each, with a third hand marking changes to stage directions. Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53197R (*Bluebeard*), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53212R (*Babes in the Wood*) and Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53229D (*Jack and the Beanstalk*).
[46] Four volumes of 'The Society's Books' are held at the Nottinghamshire Archives, accession nos. M358, M359, M360 and M361. An inserted paper in M360 identifies some of the members, including F. R. Goodyer (as 'Grini') and William Bradbury. The theatre visit is mentioned in M360, p. 69.
[47] 'The Approaching Pantomime at the Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 18 December 1882, p. 3.

A preview in the *Nottingham Journal* of *Little Bo Peep* in December 1883, applauded 'our old friend F. R. Goodyer, whose experience in such matters and ability as a writer inspire confidence in the success of any of his productions'.[48] The promotion of Goodyer's work had moved beyond recognition of his *œuvre* to placing him within a sense of fellowship in the town. There were genuine grounds for such expressions. In attempting to trace Goodyer, local directories provide a continuity of detail that charts the commercial career of Frederick Richard Goodyer, from a chemist and druggist, with an outlet in High Street, Nottingham in 1844, to 'wholesale drug agent' in 1869, to a 'commission agent' with offices at Imperial Buildings, Victoria Street, Nottingham, to 'sugar &c. commission agent' in 1885, based in Attenborough, Nottingham.[49] Goodyer did not just write the annual pantomime in Nottingham, he lived and worked in the town. He was an established local figure through his commercial dealings and his membership of the Society, as well as being known for his poems and plays. This evidence also implies that, as Goodyer had an established occupation and salary, he would probably not have depended on the income from his pantomimes. Certainly, there is no evidence that he registered his work for rights of representation. He himself stated in the covering letter to *Odds and Ends* that he regarded his pantomimes as 'so much padding'. However, whilst he regarded his pantomimes lightly, the theatre management drew heavily on his reputation and local standing. Goodyer's fellowship in the town and his knowledge of local matters were promoted as an intrinsic element of the annual production.

His last pantomime for the Theatre Royal was *Little Red Riding Hood* in 1885-86. The book of words, unusually for Goodyer, contained several speeches and part scenes from the 1873 version of *Little Red Riding Hood.* The text was unsuccessful; the *Nottingham Daily Express* went so far as to blame a 'trashy libretto' for the poor opening

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[48] 'The Forthcoming Pantomime at the Theatre Royal', *NJ*, 24 December 1883, p. 3.

[49] Francis and John White, *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County and of the Town and County of the Town of Nottingham* (Sheffield: Blurton, 1844), p. 226; *Morris & Co.'s Commercial Directory and Gazetteer of Nottinghamshire with Grantham, Chesterfield, and Gainsborough* (Nottingham: Morris, 1869), p. 82; *Morris & Co.'s Commercial Directory and Gazetteer of Nottingham and District* (Nottingham: Morris, 1877), p. 96, and William White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Nottinghamshire* 2nd edn (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1885-6), p. 100.

night performance, and later reviews of the 1885 pantomime commented on the amount of editing that took place during the run.[50] It is unclear whether this was the reason that Goodyer stopped writing pantomimes for the theatre. His style of writing, of which it was said that '[t]here is more of good-nature than of bitterness' may have become outdated by the mid-1880s.[51] Alternatively, he may have left the area that year (the lease on his house had expired in May 1885).[52] Goodyer had not lost his allegiance to Nottingham; he wrote lyrics for the song 'Under the Greenwood Tree' that was used in the 1887 pantomime of *Babes in the Wood*.[53] Writing from a London address in 1892, he sent a collection of his work to be held in the Nottingham Free Library, and dedicated it to 'the dear old town I loved so well, and within which so many happy hours of my life were spent'.[54]

For the pantomime of 1886-87, Charles engaged another local writer, George Dance. The career of George Dance (later, Sir George Dance) has been reasonably well recorded, notably by W. Macqueen-Pope, who was Dance's private secretary in London between 1908 and 1914.[55] However, emphasis has usually been given to Dance's musical comedies and to his work as a West End impresario; the brief period spent writing pantomimes for the Nottingham Theatre Royal has been – whether by his personal choice or that of others – largely ignored.[56] Macqueen-Pope, for example, mentions that Dance wrote pantomimes for the Prince's Theatre Manchester, but does not mention Nottingham.[57]

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[50] 'The Pantomime at the Theatre Royal', *NDE*, 28 December 1885, p. 5.
[51] 'The "King of the Peacocks"', *NDG*, 4 January 1873, p. 3.
[52] Notice was sent to an F. R. Goodyer from Mr. Bradbury in March 1884 to inform him that the lease on his house in Attenborough was due to expire in March 1885. 'Notice from C. F. Bradbury to F. R. Goodyer'. Nottinghamshire Archives, accession no. M3022.
[53] Book of words for *Babes in the Wood*, 1887, Scene 6, p. 30. '"Under the Greenwood Tree."/Written by F. R. Goodyer. Composed by Thos. W. Charles.'
[54] Cover letter in F. R. Goodyer, *Odds and Ends*.
[55] Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow, '"Wistful Remembrancer": the Historiographical Problem of Macqueen-Popery', *NTQ*, 17 (2001), 299-309 (p. 302). This article first drew my attention to W. Macqueen-Pope's *Shirtfronts and Sables: A Story of the Days When Money Could be Spent*, (London: Hale, 1953), which I have used for further information regarding Dance.
[56] Details of Dance's musical comedies can be found in Macqueen-Pope, *Shirtfronts and Sables*, pp. 63 and 89-90, also Parker, *Who's Who in the Theatre*, p. 127.
[57] Macqueen-Pope, *Shirtfronts and Sables*, p. 88.

Dance was born in Carter Gate, Nottingham in either 1857 or 1858.[58] Like Goodyer, he had commercial links with the town; his father had been a clay pipe maker, and George worked in the family trade after his father's death in 1880. By 1885 he was listed as a 'hop merchant' of Chaucer Street, Nottingham.[59] (Macqueen-Pope skirts this issue by commenting that: 'It was rumoured that he [...] had commenced his career as a commercial traveller, with some commodity in demand with brewers'.)[60] According to local journalist John Brunton, Dance wrote his first piece, aged 17, for the Alhambra Music Hall in St. Mary's Gate, a 'play, based on the life of the popular Nottingham MP Sir Robert Clifton'.[61] It is evident from other biographical works that Dance also wrote songs for the local music halls, establishing himself as a song-writer for celebrities such as Vesta Tilley.[62] In 1886, Dance wrote the burlesque *Oliver Grumble*, which was produced at the Theatre Royal. In previewing his first pantomime for the theatre later that same year, a critic in the *Nottingham Daily Express* wrote that 'Mr. George Dance, the author, a resident of Nottingham, has already met with some success as a writer of stage pieces.'[63] Dance wrote three pantomimes for the Theatre Royal: *Aladdin or the Wonderful Lamp* (1886-87), *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88), and *Sinbad the Sailor* (1889-90). (As I mentioned in Chapter 2, there was no pantomime in 1888.) Thomas W. Charles maintained his practice of using the Nottingham authors to provide the pantomimes for both the Theatre Royal and the Grand Theatre at Glasgow. Dance wrote the pantomime of *Babes in the Wood* for the Glasgow theatre in 1886, but he had also written pantomimes for the Prince's Theatre, Manchester (*Sinbad the Sailor* in 1888) and the

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[58] John Brunton, 'A Dance to the Music', *Bygones: Nottingham Evening Post Special Publication* 17 (1998), 20-21 (pp. 20-21). His article was based on research undertaken by Dance's great-great grandnephew, Alan Dance of Nottingham, and in this article Brunton claims Dance was born in 1857. Macqueen-Pope states a birth date of 1858 (*Shirtfronts and Sables*, p. 86), and both 1858 and 1865 are offered in *American and British Theatrical Biography: A Directory*, ed. by J. P. Wearing (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1979), p. 276.

[59] Brunton cites *Wrights Directory* for evidence of Dance as a hop merchant, p. 20. This fact, plus the address are listed in White's *History, Gazetteer and Directory* for 1885-6, p. 427.

[60] *Shirtfronts and Sables*, p. 87.

[61] Brunton, p. 20. Brunton states that the piece was a play for the Alhambra theatre, but as the Alhambra was a music hall and not a theatre, it is more likely that the piece was a sketch. Full length dramatic pieces were not permitted to be performed in music halls. Similarly, Brunton states that Clifton had just died; the MP actually died in 1869 at which date Dance would have been only eleven or twelve. It is more likely that it was written a few years after Clifton's death; Dance would have been about 17 in 1875.

[62] Parker, p. 127 and Macqueen-Pope, p. 88.

[63] 'Theatre Royal', *NDE*, 27 December 1886, p. 8.

Theatre Royal, Manchester (*Dick Whittington* in 1889), each under the management of Mr. T. Ramsey.[64] Indeed, when Thomas Charles left Nottingham in 1890 to take over the management of the Prince's Theatre in Manchester, Dance wrote the first of Charles's pantomimes for that theatre (*Little Bo Peep*).[65]

The pattern of Dance's promotion in Nottingham was similar to that of Goodyer. The books of words contained reference to Dance's earlier works: the book for 1887 cited *Oliver Grumble* and '*Aladdin* &c.'[66] Here, the '&c.' was used more strategically; whilst Goodyer had been writing in the town for the best part of thirty years, Dance's local achievements were written close to the start of his career and several of his pieces had been written for London theatres. In January 1886 the *Nottingham Daily Express* reported that Dance was writing a burlesque for the Novelty Theatre in London.[67] Irrespective of his work elsewhere, Thomas Charles, in promoting the pantomime, restricted Dance's *œuvre* to those items written locally, thus implicitly placing him alongside Goodyer as an established figure of the town. The *Nottingham Daily Guardian*, in previewing Dance's first pantomime, similarly picked out his earlier work for the Nottingham theatre: 'Mr. George Dance, of Nottingham, author of "Oliver Grumble" and other pieces', reiterating later that same week that Dance was 'a local writer'.[68] As with Goodyer, local reviewers recalled Dance's work and his localness; critics aligned him to the town, he was a 'townsman', a 'resident of Nottingham', and a 'local writer'. His engagement by the Theatre Royal highlighted the central tenet of the Nottingham productions: the importance of local knowledge, by the author of the town, and by the town of the author.

Dance had a more physical presence in the theatre than had Goodyer, appearing

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[64] Evidence from photographs of the front pages of each of the relevant book of words, including theatre, manager, author and pantomime title, featured in Brunton, p. 21. The Theatre Royal pantomime by Dance is also recorded in a list of the books of words kindly supplied by the Manchester Public Library.

[65] This pantomime is mentioned by Macqueen-Pope, p. 88. Additional evidence from a photograph of the cover of the book of words, featured in Brunton, p. 21.

[66] *Aladdin*, 1887, book of words, front cover and title page. All playbills and books of words relating to Dance are held in the collection of the Local Studies Library, Nottingham.

[67] 'Music and Dramatic Notes', *NDE*, 12 January 1886, p. 5.

[68] 'The Pantomime', *NDG*, 24 December 1886, p. 8, and 'Bank Holiday: The Pantomime', *NDG*, 28 December 1886, p.8. See also: 'Music and Drama', *NDG*, 20 December 1886, p. 6

on stage to take calls on the first night of *Aladdin* in 1886. The *Nottingham Journal* reported that Dance appeared with Charles and the scenic artist Mr. Harry Potts, and was 'greeted with resounding cheers'.[69] Dance also instigated and enacted the duties of Honorary Secretary for the Theatre Royal Pantomime Sports Day. In February 1887 and 1888, these public events were held at Long Eaton, with members of the cast competing for prizes.[70]

Again, in marked contrast to Goodyer, Dance was actively pursuing a career as a writer, and by 1891 he was listed in the Nottingham census as 'dramatic author'.[71] Dance's burgeoning career could not be ignored; at Charles's benefit night at the end of the run of the 1886-87 pantomime, the manager had told the audience that *Aladdin* 'was the first pantomime written by Mr. Dance, a townsman who might be expected to become one of the shining lights of the literary world'.[72] In 1889, in a preview of the pantomime *Sinbad the Sailor*, the *Nottingham Daily Express* commented that 'Mr. George Dance, our local celebrity, has provided a coherent and capitally-constructed story'.[73] *Sinbad* was his last pantomime for the Theatre Royal, but in March 1895, his drama of *Scotland Yard* was given its first performance at the Nottingham theatre. (According to entries in the Stationer's Company books of registration, several of Dance's plays and musicals were premiered at provincial theatres.)[74] His career progressed rapidly, with a succession of musical comedies such as *The Nautch Girl* (written for Richard D'Oyly Carte), *The Lady Slavey*, *Ma Mie Rosette*, *A Modern Don Quixote*, *Chinese Honeymoon*, *The Gay Parisienne*, *Buttercups and Daisies*, *Lord Tom Noddy*, and *The Gay Grisette* and by the late 1890s, Dance had moved from writing to taking over the management of his London and touring productions.[75] Many of those productions were entered at Stationer's Hall,

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[69] '*Aladdin* at the Theatre Royal', *NJ*, 28 December 1886, p. 6.
[70] According to the *Nottingham Daily Express*, for the second sports day, Dance presided as 'clerk of the course' 'Theatre Royal Pantomime Sports', *NDE*, 15 February 1888, p. 7. but was listed as the Honorary Secretary in 'Theatre Royal Pantomime Sports', *NDG*, 15 February 1888, p.7.
[71] Brunton, p. 20.
[72] 'Theatre Royal: Mr. Charles's Benefit', *Express*,18 February, 1887, p. 8.
[73] '*Sinbad the Sailor* at the Theatre Royal', *NDE*, 27 December 1889, p. 5.
[74] PRO , COPY 3/223, p. 64 (*The Gay Parisienne*, first performance at the Opera House, Northampton), and p. 75 (*Scotland Yard* and *Lord Tom Noddy*, first performance at the Theatre Royal, Bradford).
[75] Macqueen-Pope, pp. 89-90. See also Nicoll, p. 335 for a list of Dance's plays.

for performance and representation rights; by 1901 Dance was the sole proprietor of *A Chinese Honeymoon*, *The Gay Grisette*, *The Lady Slavey*, *The New Mephisto*, and *The Ladies Paradise*.[76]

Despite their different careers, Goodyer and Dance shared one important feature: neither entered their pantomimes for performance rights at Stationer's Hall. As I suggested earlier, Goodyer perhaps did not need or want to establish himself as a writer, and was not concerned to protect his legal rights. Dance, however, actively pursued success as a writer and manager, and whilst he protected the rights to his West End productions (*A Chinese Honeymoon* 'was one of the longest running musicals ever to be staged' in London), his early pantomimes were, perhaps, little more than a means to an end.[77] Whatever low opinion he may have had of his pantomimes, the promotion of his work in Nottingham in the mid-1880s, as with that of Goodyer, was founded on his provincial identity. Once Dance's career had been put more firmly on a national footing, the local newspapers continued to comment on his career in relation to the town. The promotion of Dance shared him with the wider world, but alongside the knowledge that he was a local man. In a report on his early work for D'Oyly Carte, the *Nottingham Daily Guardian* had reported how 'the local librettist' was 'assuredly making his way in the profession'.[78] Dance had become the town's celebrity; his burgeoning career was charted by local reviewers, but his growing national status was still interpreted in relation to his origins.

From 1865 to 1881, the Birmingham manager Mercer Simpson engaged Charles Millward to write the Theatre Royal pantomimes. Originally from Liverpool, Millward wrote plays and pantomimes for the Royal Amphitheatre, the Royal Park Theatre, the Rotunda and the Prince of Wales Theatres in Liverpool, and the Theatre Royal,

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[76] PRO, COPY 3/222, p. 48 and COPY 3/223, p. 150.
[77] Brunton, p. 21. According to Brunton, the musical ran for 1,075 performances.
[78] 'Music and Drama', *NDG*, 22 December 1890, p. 6.

Birkenhead.[79] He also wrote pantomimes for the Adelphi Theatre in London, and he co-wrote pantomimes with the prolific writer Nelson Lee, and with W. S. Gilbert.[80] Millward had moved to London in the mid-1850s and was a founder member of the Savage Club, whose membership also included the writers E. L. Blanchard and Andrew Halliday and the actor E. A. Southern. Millward was well known in London theatrical circles, and his daughter, the actress Jessie Millward, recalled his friends and associates such as Henry Irving, the Kendals, the Bancrofts, J. L. Toole, Barry Sullivan and Tom Robertson in her autobiography.[81]

Unlike the emphasis made at Nottingham on the localness of Goodyer and Dance, it was openly acknowledged by the Birmingham critics that Millward was a 'London literary gentleman'.[82] Millward himself joked about his absence from the town in the opening scene of *Robinson Crusoe* (1867) in which the following exchange took place:

> ENTERPRISE. Where is your author whilst his work is undone?
> STATUE. Revelling amidst the fogs and joys of London.
> ENTERPRISE. Tell him, at once, to set to work, for here Comes one who will provide our Christmas cheer.[83]

The Birmingham theatre management did not pretend that Millward had any kind of local provenance; if anything, the phrasing of promotional materials for his pantomimes

[79] Millward's work for the Liverpool theatres included: *Columbus* (1869) at the Royal Amphitheatre, Liverpool; the pantomimes *Ye Siege of Liverpool; or, Harlequin Prince Rupert, and Ye Fayre Mayde of Toxteth* (1852) and *Little Red Riding Hood; or, Harlequin Dicky Sam and the Wolf of Toxteth* (1857) for the Royal Park Theatre, Liverpool; *Ormshead the Great; or Harlequin and Jenny Jones, the Flower of Snowdon* (1853) at the Royal Park Theatre; *The Fair One with the Golden Locks* (1877) for the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool; *Dick Whittington* (1879) for the Rotunda Theatre; *The Jolly Miller of the Dee; or Harlequin Bluff King Hal and the Fair Maid of Leasowe* (1864) for the Theatre Royal, Birkenhead. Sources: R. J. Broadbent, *Annals of the Liverpool Stage*, pp. 267-268, 288, 298 and 383, Nicoll, p. 489, and from details kindly supplied by the Local Studies Library at Liverpool Record Office.

[80] Millward wrote *Little Snow White* for the Adelphi in 1851 (earlier produced at Liverpool). Source, Jessie Millward, in collaboration with J. B. Booth, *Myself and Others* (London: Hutchinson, 1923), p. 27. Charles Millward co-wrote *Hush a Bye Baby* for Astley's Theatre with W. S. Gilbert in 1866 (Booth, *English Plays*, p. 52) and *Harlequin Jack and the Beanstalk; or, the Spirit of the Mersey* with Nelson Lee for the Royal Park Theatre, Liverpool in 1855. Details of the latter kindly supplied by the Local Studies Library at Liverpool Record Office. Millward also wrote pantomimes for the Sadler's Wells Theatre in 1864 and 1865, and for the Park Theatre in Camden Town in 1877 (Nicoll, p. 489).

[81] Jessie Millward, pp. 31-46.

[82] 'Christmas Amusements: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 28 December 1875, p. 5. See also reference to 'Mr. Millward's London practice' in 'Christmas Amusements: Theatre Royal: *The Fairy Fawn*', *BDP*, 27 December 1872, p. 8.

[83] *Robinson Crusoe* (1867) book of words, Scene 1, p. 4. All playbills and books of words relating to Millward are held in the collections of the Local Studies Library, Birmingham.

claimed Millward as a contributory factor in the status of the Theatre Royal. In 1878, for example, the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* referred to the 'sixteen or seventeen years during which [Millward had] been so successfully identified with the Christmas productions at this theatre.'[84] Between 1865 and the mid-1870s, Millward's place on the pantomime playbills was accompanied by the titles of the preceding pantomimes he had written for the theatre. Unlike the '&c., &c' of Goodyer's and Dance's works at Nottingham, all of Millward's pantomimes were listed and by 1876, that list occupied two lines on the playbill. In addition, all of his pantomimes were described as 'written expressly for this theatre'. In the satirical article, 'My Pantomime' that I mentioned earlier, this phrase was treated lightly, implying that 'written expressly' simply meant that the long-suffering author had managed to produce a script 'in a fortnight'.[85] Whilst at some theatres that may have been true, at the Theatres Royal of Nottingham and Birmingham, the phrase was used with intent. Few of the Nottingham pantomimes were described as 'written expressly for this theatre', and the phrase generally appears to have been used in relation to those pantomimes that were specifically localised.[86] The implication here was that as Goodyer and Dance were local men then of course the pantomimes were written specifically for their local theatre. By contrast, the phrase was used for every single pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham throughout the period to 1892. The issue became one not of defining localness or local input, but of emphasising the exclusivity of productions *at* the Theatre Royal, as opposed to *for* the local Birmingham theatre. This concept was extended in the mid-1870s. On the playbill for the 1876-77 production of *Sinbad the Sailor*, the pantomime was announced as having been:

WRITTEN EXPRESSLY FOR THIS THEATRE BY CHARLES MILLWARD. AUTHOR OF THE ROYAL PANTOMIMES OF

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[84] 'Christmas Amusements: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 23 December 1878, p. 5.
[85] Byron Blank, 'My Pantomime', *Era Almanack* (1878), p. 35.
[86] For example, the pantomimes for 1866, 1871, 1890, 1891 and 1892. All of those pantomimes were written by nationally established authors and localised by members of the stock companies or local writers. See Appendix A for a full list of the pantomimes and authors.

THE LAST TWELVE YEARS.[87]

This style of promotion continued for the next few years. A playbill for *The Fair One with the Golden Locks* (1879-80) carried the legend, '**Written and Invented by the old Theatre Royal Author, CHARLES MILLWARD**' and by the 1880-81 pantomime season, he had become '**The "Royal's" old Author, Charles Millward**'.[88] In those statements, Millward was not only the exclusive author, but an integral part of the pantomime tradition at the theatre. The Theatre Royal itself had become, simply, 'The Royal', and this label together with the tradition evoked by Millward's name created an air of familiarity. Although the Theatre Royal was not the only legitimate theatre in Birmingham, the diminutive set it apart: an establishment so much a part of life in the town that it could be referred to informally, on playbills and in the newspaper reviews. For example, in 1868, the *Birmingham Daily Post* referred to 'The Royal, in virtue of its old reputation'.[89] Yet the Theatre Royal had a status beyond that of the cosy familiarity of a provincial theatre; it was in the first tier of regional theatres and its pantomimes were increasingly noted as being on a compatible scale to those in London. In a review of Millward's 1868-69 pantomime, *Forty Thieves*, the *Era* commented on his style of writing – 'funny without being vulgar' – adding that '[f]or this happy quality Mr. Millward and Mr. E. L. Blanchard are particularly famous'.[90] This critical pairing of Millward and Blanchard was not the whimsical and romantic description of Goodyer and Uthermann as the 'Beaumont and Fletcher of the Midlands' but, instead, a comparative in a national paper, based on contemporary competition and standards of production. The self-awareness of the Birmingham management, in creating pantomimes that could be compared to those in London, suited the prominence of Birmingham as the second largest

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[87] Playbill for the Boxing Night (26 December 1876) performance of *Sinbad the Sailor*.
[88] Playbill for *The Fair One with the Golden Locks*, dated 26 December 1879, and playbill for *Dick Whittington* dated 25 March 1881.
[89] 'Public Amusements: The Theatres', *BDP*, 2 January 1868, p. 8, See also: 'The Christmas Pantomime at the Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 23 December 1874, p. 5; 'Amusements for the Christmas Holidays', *BDP*, 23 December 1882, p. 6; '*Robinson Crusoe* at the Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 26 December 1885, p. 4; '*Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM* 27 December 1888, p. 2 and '*Aladdin* at the Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1890, p. 2.
[90] 'Birmingham Theatre Royal', *Era*, 3 January 1869, p. 11.

town in the country. There was a specific attraction and cosmopolitan appeal for Birmingham audiences in claiming a London author for their theatre.

Millward's local reputation extended beyond the annual pantomime. A playbill for the benefit performance of J. C. Smith the Stage Manager, on March 26, 1877 details the main programme for the evening, which highlighted that, 'an ADDRESS, written expressly for the occasion, will be spoken by/**CHARLES MILLWARD, ESQ.,**/Author of "SINBAD THE SAILOR," and the Royal Pantomimes for the last 12 years'.[91] This inclusion not only foregrounded Millward's provenance, but also indicated a good working relationship with the theatre management. That relationship importantly extended to supporting the stage manager himself, an individual whose production responsibilities could quite easily have included altering Millward's pantomime scripts as per the complaints of Blanchard, 'Byron Blank' and company. It seems unlikely that Millward needed the money for this Address – he was a successful writer and a part of the London literary scene – so it appears to have been given from a genuine sense of interest and loyalty.

Millward's career was severely affected in 1881, when he suffered a 'paralytic stroke'.[92] For the Birmingham pantomime of 1881-82, he co-wrote *Beauty and the Beast* with T. C. Clay, but the following year, his illness prevented him from writing and the production for 1882-83 (*Sinbad the Sailor*) was an F. W. Green pantomime. The Birmingham newspapers charted Millward's illness with sympathy, but there was no reference in either those reports, or his daughter's memoirs, that Charles Millward wrote any other theatrical pieces up to the time of his death in 1892, aged 62.[93]

The Queen of Hearts and Her Wonderful Tarts, the pantomime for 1883-84 was co-written by Frank Hall and J. J. Blood. Blood was a local man, and had already written

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[91] Playbill Monday 26 March 1877.
[92] Jessie Millward, p. 49.
[93] Jessie Millward, p. 171. Millward's age at death recorded in John Parker, *Who's Who in the Theatre* (1912), p. 715. For reports in the local papers on the state of Millward's health, see for example 'The Pantomimes: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 22 December 1882, p. 5.

Jack and Jill and an operetta, *The Maid of Arcadee*, for the Curzon Hall in Birmingham.[94] After the first pantomime, written with Hall, Blood continued as the sole author of the Theatre Royal, Birmingham pantomimes until the 1890-91 season, the last Christmas production before Mercer Simpson's retirement in 1891. However, although Blood was a Birmingham man, his localness was only briefly referred to; the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* praised 'our talented townsman' in a review of *Dick Whittington* in 1884.[95] More telling was the fact that the promotion of his work was quickly incorporated into the tradition established for his predecessor. The playbills for 1884 to 1887 each listed Blood's *Maid of Arcadee* and *Jack and Jill*, preceded by a full list of his pantomimes. From 1888, just his pantomimes were listed as per Millward's, and by 1888 Blood too was being described as 'Author of all the recent "Royal" Pantomimes'.[96] There appears to have been no differentiation between the promotion of Millward, the Liverpudlian author who resided in London, and Blood, who was a Birmingham man. However, Blood was a prolific author who wrote across the theatrical genres. W. Davenport Adams, in *A Dictionary of the Drama,* listed Blood as a dramatist and author of three plays in the 1880s and Allardyce Nicoll noted him as the author of six works: a musical comedy, a comedy, a comedy drama and two dramas.[97] Evidence from the Stationer's Hall Registers shows that Blood wrote even more. In addition to the two works already mentioned, he wrote *Faust in Three Flashes or More Light from Laughing Gas* first performed at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Birmingham in 1884; a burlesque of *The Queen of Hearts with her Wonderful Tarts redished and served up a la ruse* (Sanger's Amphitheatre); *Cut Blooms*, a comedy in three acts (Royal Theatre, Southampton); *Our Lodger*, also a comedy (Theatre Royal, Brighton); *Her Trustee*, a drama (Vaudeville Theatre, London); *Twixt Kith and Kin* (Prince of Wales Theatre, Birmingham); *Kitty*, a farcical comedy in

[94] Titles from playbill for *Dick Whittington and His Cat*, 26 December 1884. All playbills and books of words relating to Blood are held in the collection of the Local Studies Library, Birmingham. The genre of *Maid* and the Curzon Hall details from PRO, COPY 3/221, p. 97.
[95] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDG*, 25 December 1884, p. 5.
[96] Undated playbill from the 1888-89 pantomime season of *Whittington and His Cat*.
[97] Davenport Adams, *A Dictionary of the Drama*, p. 174. This is the only bibliographical reference in J. P. Wearing's *American and British Theatrical Biography* (p. 115). See also Nicoll, pp. 265-66, who also lists Blood's 1890 Birmingham pantomime in the supplementary notes, p. 779.

three acts (New Theatre, Richmond), and *Fate and Fortune or the Junior Partner* (Royal Princess's Theatre, London).[98] With the exception of *Kitty*, Blood was registered as the sole proprietor of the rights of representation on all the other works, but only one pantomime. That particular entry was the 1883-84 version of *The Queen of Hearts*. Although promoted as co-written with Hall, the Stationer's Company records show that Blood was entered as the sole proprietor in 1884. It may well have been that he provided the larger proportion of the script, very possibly reworking it for his burlesque, which was performed at Sanger's Amphitheatre in August 1884. Therefore, Blood, like Millward, was a national writer, but his promotion by Mercer Simpson at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, sustained the integration of a national reputation with the status of the local theatre.

Engaging Goodyer and Dance to write the Nottingham pantomimes drew on a genuine sense of of local association and knowledge. The promotional emphasis on their affiliation to the town reflected the necessity of creating a sense of local identity for the pantomime productions at the theatre. By contrast, the overtly paternal advertising of Millward to an audience who knew he was not local, foregrounded an ownership not by the town but by the theatre. Millward's promoted reputation reflected the success and status of the Birmingham pantomimes and of the Theatre Royal. It was, I would suggest, for that reason that James J. Blood was promoted in exactly the same way. Although he was a local man, it was his part in the production that was being advertised, not his relationship to the town. The management of the Theatre Royal at Birmingham was ultimately concerned with having a successful house which ran admired pantomimes, equal to if not better than London. The Theatre Royal, Nottingham – a smaller town and potential audience – depended on a real as well as a promoted localness and local recognition to draw its audiences.

The prevalent critical attitude towards the provincial pantomime author as

[98] PRO, COPY 3/22, pp. 102, 109, 120, 121, 150, 158, 234 and 245.

unimportant, is clearly a misplaced interpretation of the role of the writer. Studies of the nineteenth-century author have traditionally emphasised the importance of the playwright in terms of the personal ownership and increasing control of the text. It is evident from archive records that such concerns were not prioritised by pantomime authors. However, it is more useful to reassess the importance of such authorship in relation to the regional identity and promotion of the pantomime. In this sense, the authors played a different role to that normally allotted to the playwright, and became part of the very specific relationship between the pantomime and its local context. Indeed, the evidence from Nottingham and Birmingham displays a clear investment by the theatre managers in the reputation and provenance of the writers that was commensurate with the status of the theatre and towns. In the next chapter I will show how the authors' use of topicality demonstrated an even more specific social and political engagement with local audiences.

Chapter 5: 'local hits and topical allusions'

At the Theatres Royal of Nottingham and Birmingham, pantomime authorship was defined by affiliation. The promotion of writers such as F. R. Goodyer and Charles Millward, however, was based on more than a desire for recognition by local theatre-goers. The choice of particular authors drew on a commercial awareness, by the theatre managers, of the relevancy of localness and status. The lengthy association that those authors had with the individual theatres was also, crucially, based on their knowledge and expression of local and locally relevant events in the pantomimes. In this chapter then, I will address the core of the pantomime author's work: the 'sly hits' and 'political and social allusions'[1] of pantomime topicality which, together with visual references and caricature, located the theatre managements' notions of their local audiences.[2]

In order to clarify my aims in this chapter, it will be helpful to begin by defining what exactly what is meant by topicality. The Oxford English Dictionary definition of 'topical' is: 'Of or pertaining to a place or locality; local', also 'Of or pertaining to the topics of the day; containing local or temporary allusions'.[3] Topicality therefore engages with the 'topics of the day', 'temporary allusions' and a 'place or locality'. Using these definitions, 'place or locality' can be established fairly easily. References to local places, such as Snow Hill in Birmingham, or Beeston in Nottingham, occurred in virtually every pantomime at either the Birmingham or Nottingham Theatres Royal in the period 1865 to

[1] 'Christmas Amusements: Theatre Royal: *The Fairy Fawn*', *BDP*, 27 December 1872, p. 8.

[2] Pantomime topicality at the London theatres has been addressed in occasional works since the 1920s. See: A. H. Dodd, 'History in Pantomime', *History* 12 (1927-1928), 215-226; Ralph G. Allen, 'Topical Scenes for Pantomime', *Educational Theatre Journal* 17 (1965), 289-300; Mayer, *Harlequin in His Element*, particularly Chapters 5 to 8; Booth, *English Plays*, pp. 60-61; Jim Davis, 'Imperial Transgressions', 147-155, and Holland, 'The Play of Eros', 195-204. More recently, Davis and Emeljanow have addressed the local relevance of topical references at the transpontine theatres (*Reflecting the Audience*, pp. 36, 68, 120-121, 141). With the exception of the last work, little has been done to engage with topicality in relation to its local context. In *Theatre Royal: A History of the Theatre Royal, Birmingham*, John E. Cunningham's chapter on pantomimes at the Birmingham theatre presents a selection of topical references from the books of words (pp. 113-124). However, his argument is purely descriptive and lacks more detailed analysis and contextualisation.

[3] Examples of the first definition are cited from 1588 to 1870, the latter from 'LOWELL *Among my Bks.* Ser. 1. (1873) 177 Their truth is not topical and transitory, but of universal acceptance.' Examples of the second definition are cited from 1873 to 1905, including '1873 *Punch* 15 Mar 111/1. The popular 'topical' song which delights music-hall politicians' and '1881 Daily *News* 8 Nov. 5/2: A great many 'topical' allusions to events of the hour, and rough political hits.' Cited uses of 'a topical allusion' are given from the following: '1904 *Longm. Mag.* Nov. 93. The Beck case gives the subject a curious topicality. 1905 *Westm. Gaz.* 10 June 2/2 fair actresses recite, and Pantomimes Rattle with Fiscal topicalities.' All references: http://dictionary.oed.com. 27.3.3. 12.26 p.m.

1892.[4] '[T]opics of the day' would be those that engaged with political, social or economic events and people that were current, or of current interest at the time of writing/performance and which included local, national and international events.[5] So, for example, when the proprietors of the Overend and Gurney bank were charged with attempting to defraud their clients, the trial that had commenced in December 1869 was referred to in the pantomimes of that year. The Nottingham version of *Little Goody Two Shoes*, by John Strachan, included the following dialogue in which 'Goody' tried to buy a pair of new shoes from the disguised witch 'Spiteful':

> GOODY. – Sell them to me on trust
> You shall be paid safe as the bank
> SPITE. – Just so,
> But then, banks are not always safe you know,
> You'd run away or something of that sort,
> Slip through an alley or *go through the court*.[6]

By contrast, the concern of the Lord Chamberlain, the Marquis of Hertford in the early 1870s, regarding the decorum of dancers' dresses, was referred to in a Birmingham pantomime of 1871: 'As for our Chamberlain, he's only active/When *ballets* are considered too attractive'.[7] Scattered references to Fenianism in the pantomimes of 1865 to 1867 were all topical, because the issue – Irish nationalism – was a source of ongoing debate throughout the same period.[8] '[L]ocal or temporary allusions' included those references of a more immediate nature, both in geographic terms and in response to something that may have occurred immediately prior to the opening night, or once the

[4] Snow Hill was the site of the Great Western Railway terminus in Birmingham (Upton, p. 96). Beeston was a village, later a suburb to the south-west of Nottingham.
[5] Although not related to pantomime, the distinction between general and specific knowledge is usefully addressed in Richard D. Altick's essay, 'Past and Present: Topicality and Technique', in *Carlyle and His Contemporaries: Essays in Honour of Charles Richard Sanders*, ed. by John Clubbe (Durham: Durham University Press, 1976). In this he presents an interesting discussion of the range of references – from the national and well-known, to more personal references known only to a few – in the work of Thomas Carlyle.
[6] *Little Goody Two Shoes*, book of words, Scene 3, pp. 7-8. The Overend and Gurney trial was reported in the *NJ*, 14 December 1869, p. 2, on 23 December, p. 2 and again in '1869 – A Retrospect', *NJ*, 31 December 1869, p. 2.
[7] The Lord Chamberlain's concerns discussed in John Russell Stephens, *The Censorship of English Drama 1824-1901* (Cambridge: CUP, 1980), p. 22. The quote is taken from *The Fair One With The Golden Locks* (1871-72), book of words, Scene 3, p. 5. There is no evidence that this pantomime script was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office for licensing.
[8] Fenianism was a militant movement concerned with Irish nationalism that was particularly active between the late 1860s and the 1880s. For historical evidence, see for example Edwards, pp. 204-205, and the brief discussion on Fenianism in Birmingham in Upton, p. 105.

pantomime run had commenced.

The extant manuscripts and books of words contain a wide variety of references that indicate different interest groups, knowledge and perspectives, including local, national and international references, as well as various cultural, slang and everyday references that would have meant different things to different people in the audience.[9] (I have included a selection of those references in Appendix C.) In surveying the range of references, it soon becomes clear that the terms 'local' and 'topical' are far more complex: what exactly constituted 'local' or 'topical' for people living in the two towns in this period, not necessarily in terms of the literal and geographic but in terms of knowledge? Was there an apparent demarcation of knowledge in the Nottingham and Birmingham references that defined the appeal to each audience? More specifically still, for whom exactly, amongst the potential audience members, might a subject have been topical? These are important questions in terms of the relationship between the pantomime author/theatre managers and their clientele. With these additional considerations in mind, I have opted to use another, more general concept, that of *social referencing*. This term allows for greater flexibility in the interpretation of what was relevant to whom, and encompasses references to aspects of mid-Victorian culture that, whilst they may not have been topical in the immediate temporal or spacial sense, still act as indicators of potential audiences and their various experiences and understanding.[10]

The sheer variety of social referencing apparent in the pantomimes can not be subsumed into any simple class or ideological distinctions. Nevertheless, it is clear that, at one level, there had to be an overarching appeal to local knowledge. Indeed, the importance of local and locally relevant issues being included in provincial pantomime lay in them reflecting some shared interests, some sense of community, even if perspectives

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[9] I am aware that there will be references that at this distance and without the necessary supporting evidence, cannot be identified. Similarly, there is always the danger of misinterpretation, as Clifford Geertz has established in his succinct definition of constructed data. See: *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), p. 9. See also Richard D. Altick, 'Past and Present: Topicality and Technique', 112-113, in which he addresses the problem of assessing the impact of the historical use of topicality.

[10] The issue of audience perspectives draws principally on the work of Susan Bennett, in particular her re-evaluation of Susan Suleimann's theory of the audiences' horizons of expectation. Her discussion features in *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1994), Chapter 3.

and individual experiences differed.[11] So, for example, many of the references in the Nottingham pantomimes – primarily in the text, as well as in the topical songs – charted the patterns of economic trends and municipal developments in the town. Major issues such as poor trade and unemployment were acknowledged and discussed: the only surviving portion of the 1867-68 pantomime is an extended speech advocating new business practices in the local trades, whilst the 'wretched' state of trade was a source of reference in the 1884-85 pantomime.[12] At that time, the local lace trade was faced with competition from Germany as a result of free trade policies, and from Derbyshire as a result of local strikes, both of which provoked antagonistic comments in the pantomimes of the mid-1880s. In the 1886-87 production of *Aladdin*, the Widow Twankey comments on the Emperor's laundry:

> And if to pay fair prices he ain't sweet on,
> Why let him send his orders to Long Eaton,
> (*She throws the shirt at Vizier*)
> Their price is less than ours is – very true,
> You know the adage – cheap and nasty too.[13]

Whilst Nottingham underwent a series of town improvements, including those connected with sanitation, ongoing concern regarding industrial pollution and the state of the Rivers Trent and Leen, were sources of referencing in the pantomimes of 1877-78, 1886-87, 1887-88, 1888-89, 1889-90 and 1891-92.[14] By the mid-1870s, the civic provision, financing and upkeep of amenities was under constant scrutiny by the pantomime

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[11] See Davis and Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience*, for a discussion of the relevance of local issues being addressed in pantomimes at the Sadler's Wells theatre (pp. 120-121).

[12] The 1867 reference occurred in 'The Grand Comic, Christmas Pantomime', *Express*, 27 December 1867, p. 3. The 'wretched' state of trade in *The Forty Thieves* (1884-85), book of words, Scene 1, p. 4. This extract is also quoted by Benyon, *The Theatre Royal Nottingham 1865-1978*, p. 8. All Nottingham books of words held in a loose collection at the Local Studies Library, Nottingham.

[13] *Aladdin* (1886-87), book of words, Scene 3, p. 19. Comments about competition from Germany and Long Eaton also feature in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1889-90), book of words, Scene 6, p. 26 and *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88), book of words, Scene 4, p. 23. (There are two copies of this pantomime in the collection at Nottingham, this one which is a photocopy of an original, and an extant book of words. This speech occurs in both.) For further evidence of the issue of trade competition, see letters regarding free trade in the *NDG*, 21 December 1887, p. 3, 22 December 1887, p. 6, 24 December 1887, p. 8, and 27 December 1887, p. 6.

[14] See for example: *Blue Beard* (1877-78), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53197R, in verse 3 of a topical song in Scene 7, p. 46; *Aladdin* (1886-87), book of words, Scene 3, p. 18 and Scene 6, p. 30; *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88), book of words, Scene 4, p. 22 (both copies); *Sinbad the Sailor* (1889-90), book of words, Scene 4, p. 21, and *Robinson Crusoe* (1891-92), book of words, Scene 3, p. 17.

authors. In the 1874-75 production, the proposed rebuilding of Nottingham Castle was addressed ('But yet I see arising in its place/A noble building, perfectly designed./The home of literature and art combined.'), as was the re-opening of the Castle as an art gallery in that of 1878-79.[15] Attention later shifted to public entry and entrance prices at the Castle and the Art Gallery.[16] In the pantomime of 1887-88 the admission charges to the Baron's castle in *Babes in the Wood*, struck a chord with local audiences (You all are welcome who live in the town;/Come in thousands (*cheers*). Admission half-a-crown/ (*groans*)'.[17] Disgruntled comments were made against moves to shorten the traditional Goose Fair and the local races. Reference to the annual fair occurred in pantomimes such as *Little Red Riding Hood* in 1873-74, and comments against curtailment (Goose Fair had been reduced from a week to three days by 1879), were made in the pantomimes of 1881-82, 1883-84 and 1891-92.[18] References were also made, in the last pantomime, to the attractions of popular outings and ferry trips to places such as Clifton Grove and Colwick Weir.[19] In addition, day to day issues, such as overcrowded trams, buses and dirty streets peppered the scripts.[20] In *Aladdin* of 1886-87, the titular character was supposed to have been one of those responsible for the local election riots that had occurred in central Nottingham that year. After being shut in a cave by the wicked magician, Aladdin

[15] *Little Bo Peep* (1874-75), book of words, Scene 2, pp. 9-10 and *Babes in the Wood*, Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53212R, Scene 8, p. 44.

[16] For comments on visiting the Castle, see: *Sinbad the Sailor* (1889-90), book of words, Scene 1, p. 9; for Sunday closing of the Art Gallery, see *Babes in the Wood* (1878-79), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53212R, Scene 10, p. 65, *Sinbad the Sailor* (1889-90), book of words, Scene 1, p. 14, and *Aladdin* (1886-87), book of words, Scene 4, p. 30; for the Castle being closed to the public because of it being used by the Corporation, see *Aladdin* (1886-87), book of words, Scene 3, p. 18. See also the letters regarding the Sunday opening of the Museum in *NDG*, 5 January 1880 p. 2 and *NDE*, 29 December 1879, p. 2.

[17] *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88), book of words, Scene 2, p. 12, and reference also in Scene 4, p. 23.

[18] References to Goose Fair in *Little Red Riding Hood* (1873-74), book of words, Scene 6, p. 20; *Little Bo Peep* (1874-75), book of words, Scene 2, p. 9; *Blue Beard* (1877-78), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53197R, Scene 1, p. 3; *Jack and the Beanstalk* (1879-80), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53229D, Scene 5, p. 22. For comments about the curtailment (proposed and actual) of Goose Fair, see *Babes in the Wood* (1878-79) Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53212R, Scene 8, p. 44; *Jack and the Beanstalk* (1879-80), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53229D, Scene 1, p. 5; *Little Bo Peep* (1883-84), book of words, Scene 2, p. 6, and *Robinson Crusoe* (1891-92), book of words, Scene 8, p. 31 (both Goose Fair and the races). For letters regarding temperance and Goose Fair, see *NDE*, 17 February 1880, p. 3, and also a letter regarding the race course in *NDE*, 6 January 1881, p. 3.

[19] *Robinson Crusoe* (1891-92), book of words, Scene 1, p. 10 (Colwick Weir and Clifton Grove). See also a reference to Colwick Weir in *Aladdin* (1886-87), book of words, Scene 4, p. 22.

[20] Comments on the overcrowded buses can be found in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1889-90), book of words, Scene 4, p. 22. Comments on trams are in: *Aladdin* (1886-87), book of words, Scene 4, p. 22 and *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88), book of words, Scene 4, p. 24. (Both copies.) Supporting evidence for these issues can be found in the local papers. For example: a letter regarding crowded tramcars in *NDG*, 3 February 1891, p. 2. Comments on the state of the roads in *Aladdin* (1886-87), book of words, Scene 4, p. 30 and *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88), book of words, Scene 4, p. 24 (both copies). Letter regarding the state of the St. Ann's Well Road in *NDG*, 29 December 1881, p. 2 and *NDG*, 17 January 1888, p. 2. See also a letter regarding rates and the condition of the streets in *NDE*, 31 December 1878, p. 2.

regrets that he will not be able 'about election time,/To chase poor bobbies like in pantomime'.[21] Local humour and cynicism were roused by statuary and the new university buildings. A statue in memory of Sir Robert Clifton had been erected in the town in the late 1870s, and references to its ugliness appeared in the pantomime of 1878-79, and in all of George Dance's pantomimes from 1886-87 to 1889-90.[22] The structural problems that (literally) undermined the new university building were a source of amusement in the pantomimes of 1886-87, 1887-88 ('You're never satisfied, you're ever mumbling,/Like the University wall, he's *always crumbling*') and 1890-91.[23] More serious issues such as the effects of agricultural depression were also discussed; such references engaged audiences from the rural areas to which the theatre management advertised. After the rages of Cattle Plague (mentioned in *Aladdin* in 1866-67), the good harvests of 1868 were featured twice in the pantomime of that year (*The Babes in the Wood*), and the farming difficulties of the late 1870s and early 1880s were highlighted in the pantomimes of 1879-80 and 1883-84.[24]

References in the Birmingham pantomimes also featured town based issues that ranged from social occasions to criminal acts. Examples of the former were general references to the Cattle Show (the Birmingham equivalent of Goose Fair that had been established in 1849) in the pantomimes of 1873-74, 1874-75, 1883-84 and 1885-86.[25] In stark contrast, the Murphy Riots of June 1867, ignited by the anti-papal lecturer, were

[21] *Aladdin* (1886-87), book of words, Scene 4, p.22. See reports on the 1886 election riots in *NDG*, 15 February 1886, p. 6, and on 17 February 1886, p. 6.

[22] References in *Babes in the Wood* (1878-79), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53212R, verse 15 of a topical song in Scene 4, p. 31; *Aladdin* (1886-87), book of words Scene 3, p. 18; *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88) book of words, Scene 4, p. 24 (both copies), and *Sinbad the Sailor* (1889-90), book of words Scene 10, p. 44.

[23] *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88), book of words, Scene 8, p. 38. See also Scene 3, p. 16. Plus *Aladdin* (1886-87), book of words, Scene 2, p. 12, and *Robinson Crusoe* (1891-92), book of words, Scene 12, p. 47. As mentioned above, there are two copies of the *Babes in the Wood* pantomime, this one which is a photocopy of an original, and an extant book of words. Neither of these speeches regarding the university appears in the extant copy, which was presumably a reprint for the altered performance later in the run. For supplementary evidence, see letter on the state of the university building in *NDE*, 26 December 1882, p. 2.

[24] Cattle Plague in *Aladdin* (1866-67), book of words, Scene 2, p. 9. The good harvests in *Babes in the Wood* (1868-69), book of words, Scene 2, p. 10 and Scene 4, p. 20; the poverty of farm workers in *Little Bo Peep* (1883-84), book of words, Scene 2, p. 9 and Scene 13, p. 44, and also in *Jack and the Beanstalk* (1879-80), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53229D, Scene 2, p. 8.

[25] *Beauty and the Beast* (1873-74), book of words, Scene 1, p. 5 (there are three books of words for this pantomime and the line reference is the same in all of them. All Birmingham books of words are held in a single bound collection at the Birmingham Local Studies Library); *Ride a Cock Horse* (1874-75), book of words, Scene 4, p. 11; *Queen of Hearts* (1883-84), book of words, Scene 7, p. 18; *Robinson Crusoe* (1885-86), book of words, character list inside front page, and Scene 9, p. 8. Date of the first Cattle Show in *Showells Dictionary of Birmingham* (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1885), p. 31.

condemned in the pantomime of 1867-68, although the Aston Riot of 1884 – in which a conservative demonstration was disturbed by a group of Liberals – was treated rather more humorously ('Got at the fireworks "over the garden wall."/And mobbed the Tories in the Rink and Hall.').[26] There was praise for the successful capture of a Fenian terrorist in the 1880s, and the heroes of the hour, Inspector Black and Mr. Farndale, the Chief of Police, were recalled in the pantomimes of 1883-84, 1884-85, 1888-89 and 1890-91. In the 1888-89 production of *Dick Whittington*, the hero escaped capture by the London police:

> DICK. Escaped – and not a difficult affair.
> London police are never anywhere.
> We Brums can well afford a quiet smack at 'em
> And only have to *look* Detective Black at 'em.[27]

By 1890, Farndale had been immortalised as 'Inspector Ferndale' who aided the good fairies in *The Forty Thieves*.[28] Also featured in the Birmingham pantomimes were the local prison at Winson Green (1884-85, 1888-89 and 1889-90), plus the running of the town asylums, in the productions of 1882-83 and 1889-90.[29] As in Nottingham, provision was made for public recreation, and the founding of an Art Gallery and the donation of recreation grounds by Middlemore, a local philanthropist in 1877, featured in the pantomimes of 1881-82 and 1877-78 respectively.[30] Similarly, there was criticism of statuary to local dignitaries, for example: 'Oh, it's vile,/It's something of the Dawson

[26] The Murphy Riots in *Robinson Crusoe* (1867-68), book of words, Scene 1, pp. 4-5 (supporting evidence in *Showell's*, p. 272 and Upton, p. 104). The Aston Riot in *Dick Whittington* (1884-85), book of words, Scene 1, p. 3. The latter took place at Aston Lower Grounds on October 13, 1884. According to *Showell's*, the Liberals 'breached the walls, spoilt the fireworks', which echoed the lines of the pantomime (*Showell's*, p. 272).

[27] *Dick Whittington*, book of words, Scene 4, p. 12.

[28] The success of the Birmingham police praised in *The Queen of Hearts* (1883-84), book of words, Scene 1, p. 3; Black in *Dick Whittington* (1888-89), quote taken from book of words, Scene 4, p. 12; Farndale in *Dick Whittington* (1884-85), book of words, Scene 10, p. 30, and as 'Inspector Ferndale' in *The Forty Thieves* (1890-91). His name was presumably changed to 'Ferndale' in the pantomime to correspond with the fairies' woodland setting. Supporting evidence regarding Black and Farndale in *Showell's*, p. 168.

[29] *Beauty and the Beast* (1881-82), book of words, Scene 1, p. 5; *Sinbad the Sailor* (1882-83), book of words, Scene 5, p. 15; *Dick Whittington* (1884-85), book of words, Scene 9, p. 27; *Dick Whittington* (1888-89), book of words, Scene 6, p. 18 and *Aladdin* (1889-90), book of words, Scene 6, p. 21. Information about Winson Green and the asylums in *Showell's*, p. 139, plus Upton, pp. 40, 142.

[30] The founding of the Art Gallery in *Beauty and the Beast* (1881-82), book of words, Scene 2, p. 8. Supporting evidence in *Showell's*, pp. 10-11. Middlemore's gift detailed in *The Forty Thieves* (1877-78), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53197P, Scene 1, p. 4.

statue style' in the pantomime of *Sinbad the Sailor* in 1882-83.[31]

As I have already established, periods of bad trade in the national economy were not comprehensively experienced in the town, as evidenced by the pantomime remaining on the bills for so long each year. The pantomime authors did not ignore those who were affected: unemployment in the late 1870s and mid-1880s, as well as trade unrest in certain branches of local industry did feature amongst the social referencing. Brief references were made to 'hard times' in the production of 1878-79, and to the unemployed in that of 1885-86.[32] More specifically, unemployment in the nail industry, and free trade competition featured in *Goody Two Shoes* (1887-88), plus the Bedsteadmakers' lockout in *Aladdin* (1889-90).[33] Throughout the period, even in those years that experienced some form of difficulty, there was a sustained and celebratory tone in the Birmingham pantomimes. This tone was particularly evident during the 1870s and 1880s as a result of the significant town improvements instigated by Joseph Chamberlain. For example, the plans for 'model dwellings' in 1872, and the town improvement plan which came to fruition in 1875 and which was the subject of a lengthy speech by 'Time' in the pantomime of *Puss in Boots*:

> Artizans' dwellings too – just what we want.
> Trees in our streets, pure air, and ruddy health
> For those hard toilers who bring you your wealth.
> I frankly own that Birmingham has lately
> Made rapid strides – in fact has improved greatly.[34]

The subsequent Corporation debt was, however, the subject of humorous comment in the

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[31] *Sinbad the Sailor* (1882-83), book of words, Scene 4, p. 12. Details of the statue in *Showell's*, p. 292. Dawson was a leading figure in the local Council (Upton, p. 149). For criticism and lampooning of other statuary, see *Beauty and the Beast* (1881-82), book of words, Scene 6, p. 16, and *The Queen of Hearts* (1883-84), book of words, Scene 1, p. 3. Satirical comment regarding the Chamberlain Memorial is discussed in Chapter 6.

[32] *Robinson Crusoe* (1878-79), book of words, Scene 3, p. 9 and *Robinson Crusoe* (1885-86), book of words, Scene 2, p. 3.

[33] Reference to the nailmakers and foreign competition in *Goody Two Shoes* (1887-88), book of words, Scene 2, pp. 5, 7, and to the bedsteadmakers in *Aladdin* (1889-90), book of words, Scene 4, p. 16. See also reference to foreign competition in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1891-92), book of words, Scene 2, p. 5. Information about the nail industry in Allen, p. 227, and to the bedsteadmakers in Upton, p. 179. A lengthy discussion of foreign competition and the effect on various trades in Birmingham and the West Midlands in the 1880s can be found in Allen, pp. 211-237.

[34] Model dwellings mentioned in *The Fairy Fawn* (1872-73), book of words, Scene 1, p. 6 and the town improvement speech in *Puss in Boots* (1875-76), book of words, Scene 1, pp. 3-4.

pantomime of 1884-85.[35] Self-referential praise of the town, and particularly the use of the affectionate derivative of 'Brum', occurred frequently throughout the period. References such as 'dear old Brum', 'busy Brum', and 'Brum's brave citizens', extended the celebratory emphasis on the town and reinforced the local identity of 'our city'.[36]

The author set the tone of social referencing, picked out the primary contemporary concerns such as those listed above and he could also provide topical songs for the production. From the 1870s, the theatre managements increasingly engaged prominent comedians from the burlesque stage and music hall for the pantomime opening, and the topical song became their domain during the run. Songs such as 'Don't Let It Go Any Further', 'Would You be Surprised to Hear' and 'In the time to come' provided ample opportunity for an immediate response to recent events, that was reflected in encore verses being added in performance.[37] A pantomime review in the *Nottingham*

[35] In the 1884-85 pantomime of *Dick Whittington*, Fitzwarren was obsessed about the increased cost of the rates. See for example: book of words, Scene 1, p. 2; Scene 1, p. 3 (song) and p. 5, and Scene 2, p. 9.

[36] *Beauty and the Beast* (1873-74), book of words, Scene 1, p. 3 ('Busy Brum'); *The Forty Thieves* (1877-78), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53197P, Scene 1, p. 4 ('Busy Birmingham'), and Scene 11, p. 28 ('this busy town'); *The Fair One with the Golden Locks* (1879-80), book of words, whole of Scene 1, including song 'Workshop of the World' and character of 'Brum' (for further discussion, see below, p. 169); *Beauty and the Beast* (1881-82), book of words, Scene 2, p. 8 ('Brum's brave citizens'); *Sinbad the Sailor* (1882-83), book of words, Scene 3, p. 7 ('Brum'); *Dick Whittington* (1884-85), book of words, Scene 7, p. 24 ('dear old Brum', and 'Brum is a wond'rous town'); *Cinderella* (1886-87), book of words, Scene 6, p. 21 ('dear old Brum'); *Dick Whittington* (1888-89), book of words, Scene 4, p. 12 ('We Brums', as per footnote 29, above, plus 'good old Brum' in Scene 10, p. 29 and 'dear old Brum', Scene 11, p. 31); *The Forty Thieves* (1890-91), book of words, Scene 3, p. 11 ('Brum').

[37] Songs in the Birmingham books of words: 'TOPICAL SONG' in *The Forty Thieves* (1877-78), book of words, Scene 10, p. 21; 'What could be nicer than that' in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1882-83), book of words, Scene 3, p. 10 (one verse printed in the book); 'Hush, Hush, now mind what you say' in *The Queen of Hearts* (1883-84), book of words, Scene 6, p. 18, and a topical duet 'What! Again!' in *Robinson Crusoe* (1885-86), Scene 10, p. 9. Additional topical songs at Birmingham that were noted in the reviews included: 'I would if I could but I can't' in *The Queen of Hearts* (1883-84), mentioned in 'Boxing-day in Birmingham: The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 27 December 1883, p. 5; 'S'velp me good goodness, good gracious' in *Goody Two Shoes* (1887-88) mentioned in 'The Christmas Amusements: *Goody Two Shoes* at the Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 24 December 1887, p. 5; 'Oh what we have to put up with' in *Dick Whittington* (1884-85) mentioned in 'Boxing-day Amusements: The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1884, p. 3, and 'That's the latest' in *Dick Whittington* (1888-89) reviewed in 'Boxing-Day Amusements: *Dick Whittington* at the The Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1888, p. 2. Songs in the Nottingham books of words: 'Topical Song' in *Little Red Riding Hood* (1873-74), book of words, Scene 8, p. 23; 'When Trade's So Bad' in *Babes in the Wood* (1878-79), Brit. Mus. Copy Add. Ms. 53212R, Scene 4, pp. 27-31; 'Topical Song' in *Little Bo Peep* (1874-75), book of words, Scene 7, p. 25; 'Topical Song' in *Jack and the Beanstalk* (1879-80), Brit. Mus. Copy Add. Ms. 53229D , Scene 7, p. 32 (one verse written on facing page); 'And that's where it is, don't you know' in *Cinderella* (1882-83), book of words, Scene 11, p. 33; a topical duet, 'Fact, I assure you' in *Little Bo Peep* (1883-84), Scene 10, p. 33; a topical duet, 'Nonsense! Yes! By Jove' in *The Forty Thieves* (1884-85), book of words, Scene 14, p. 43; 'Because it ain't built that way' in *Aladdin* (1886-87), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53371L, Scene 7, p. 33 and 'Yes! No! Nonsense!' in the book of words for that production, Scene 9, p. 40; for *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88) there are two books of words, each with a topical song title in Scene 8, p. 37: in one the topical song is titled 'Johnny Bull's Concert Hall' and in the other, 'Auld Lang Syne'; 'Don't Let It Go Any Further' in *Robinson Crusoe* (1891-92), book of words, Scene 9, p. 40, and the topical duet 'Not a Bit' in *Cinderella* (1892-93), Scene 7, p. 55. Additional topical songs noted in the reviews included: 'Would You be Surprised to Hear' in *The Forty Thieves* (1871-72), noted in 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*', *NDG*, 28 December 1871, p. 3, also, in same Scene 'a capital local song, full of good points' sung by Hasarac (Mr. Maskall); 'In the time to come' mentioned in 'Music and the Drama', *NDG*, 28 December 1885, p. 3; 'sold, sold everywhere' mentioned in 'The King of the Peacocks', *NDG*, 4 January, 1873, p. 30, and 'Nobody Knows', a new topical song introduced during the run of *Sinbad the Sailor* (1888-89) reviewed in 'Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 31 December 1889, p. 8.

Daily Express, in late January 1884, reported that '[t]he topical allusions are worked up to date, and encores for "Oh, what a fibber that boy must be," and the "Nonsense – Fact. I assure you," duet, are plentiful enough'.[38] The Nottingham reviews in particular emphasised the importance and expectation of good topical songs as well as the allusions contained in the script. One such song even became the subject of a brief exchange of letters in a Nottingham newspaper, when a member of the audience felt that the song length fell short of expectation ('two or three verses [...] is only playing the fool with an audience').[39] The content of such songs was only very occasionally printed in full in the books of words, although the reviews sometimes gave an example of a verse or two.[40] In Appendix D, I have included an example from the manuscript copy of the 1877-78 production of *Blue Beard* by Goodyer and Uthermann, although it would, of course, have been added to during the run.

In terms of expenditure, social referencing rarely featured in paid advertising with the sustained emphasis of those elements in which the theatre management had invested large amounts of money, such as the scenery or principal artistes.[41] However, for the piquancy of various allusions, the promotion that referencing received in the previews and reviews was far more effective. References and allusive speeches were reprinted extensively in the local newspapers; a review of the 1872-73 pantomime *The King of the Peacocks* at Nottingham expended an entire column to detailing the references that F. R. Goodyer had supplied.[42] Reviews could also include a summary of selected subject matter and, occasionally, the newspaper reviewer's own allusion to expected responses to a particular comment.[43] A reference to the recent knighthood of Sir Josiah Mason in the Birmingham pantomime of 1872 was cited in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, whose reviewer

[38] 'Local Amusements: Theatre Royal', (a review of *Little Bo Peep* pantomime of 1883-84), *NDE*, 29 January 1884, p. 7.
[39] The letter appeared in the *NJ*, 12 February 1879, p. 3. The response, in which the singer John Chamberlain pointed out that he had in fact sung seven verses, was printed the following day: *NJ*, 13 February 1879, p. 2.
[40] Topical verses were quoted in 'Theatre Royal', *NJ*, 11 February, 1879, p. 3.
[41] Only on one occasion was a topical song a principal feature of a paid, front page advertisement. The song 'In 1901' in *Robinson Crusoe* (1881-82). Advertisement, *NDE*, 14 February 1882, p. 1 and advertisement, *Express*, 13 February 1882, p. 2.
[42] 'The Pantomime', *Express*, 2 January 1873, p. 3.
[43] For examples of reviews that contained a summary of some of the topics, see 'Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 28 December 1875, p. 5 and 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 22 December 1881, p. 6. See also 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 22 December 1881, p. 6, which both encouraged and reported appreciative responses.

commented that the line was 'sure to bring down the house'.[44] Such directives were rare: quoting the actual lines was, naturally, a sufficiently simple way to direct the audiences' attention. Reviewers at both towns highlighted the occasions on which there would be 'some funny local references that most people will appreciate' or noted if references were lacking.[45] The principal difference between the previews at Birmingham and Nottingham was the level of expectation surrounding local referencing. The reviewers at Nottingham expressed a stronger sense of tradition in the expectation of local issues featuring in the scripts. In 1879, the *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express* listed the vital elements that were required in a successful pantomime in Nottingham, including the fact that the author should not 'fail to consult the popular taste for an admixture of local topics and allusions.'[46] Ten years later, the *Nottingham Daily Express* carried a review of *Sinbad the Sailor*, in which the reviewer stated that '[p]antomime characters are expected to be possessed of omniscient powers, and to be thoroughly versed in topics of local causerie and town councildom'.[47] One reviewer in the *Express* criticised some of the allusions in the pantomime of 1878, but he recognised that '[l]ocal topics and references must be introduced into local pantomimes, if the prevailing fashion in such matters be followed.'[48] Whilst I do not wish to argue that Nottingham was insular in its referencing (there were, in addition to local issues, other references to national and international events), it is evident that the pantomimes catered for audiences with a specific range of local knowledge and expectations of their inclusion in the productions. Although train trips were advertised, and the theatre management promoted visitors from larger towns.

[44] 'Christmas Amusements: *Fairy Fawn*. The Pantomime at the Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 24 December 1872, p. 3. The line featured in the book of words, Scene 4, p. 16.

[45] 'Boxing Day Amusements: The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1884, p. 3. For similar remarks concerning the presence of local allusions, see also: 'Boxing-Day in Prospect: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 24 December 1881, p. 5. For other examples of reviews drawing attention to local referencing in the pantomimes, see: 'Boxing-day Amusements', *BDG*, 26 December 1883, p. 5; 'The Pantomimes: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 22 December 1882, p. 5 and 'Boxing-day in Birmingham: Theatre Royal *Aladdin*', *BDP*, 27 December 1889, p. 5, and for the Nottingham pantomimes: 'The Pantomime', *NDG*, 28 December 1886, p. 8, and 'Music and Drama', *NDG*, 9 January 1893, p. 8. For comments on the lack of allusions, see: 'The Birmingham Pantomimes: Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 22 December 1873, p. 8 and 'Boxing-Day Amusements: *Cinderella* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1892, p. 2, and in Nottingham: '*Cinderella* at the Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 26 December 1882, p. 2 and 'Theatre Royal: *Puss in Boots* Pantomime', *NDG*, 27 December 1890, p. 5 (although the same newspaper reported that a topical song had been added in during the run: 'Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 20 January 1891, p. 8).

[46] 'Theatre Royal: The Pantomime', *Express*, 27 December 1879, p. 5.

[47] '*Sinbad the Sailor* at the Theatre Royal', *NDE*, 27 December 1889, p. 5. See also the comments in 'Theatre Royal', *NDE*, 27 December 1886, p. 8.

[48] 'Theatre Royal: The Pantomime', *Express*, 31 December 1878, p. 3.

such as Manchester and Birmingham, there was a strong sense of localised concerns. By contrast, and in keeping with both its provincial and national status, many of the references at Birmingham, regarding the town's affairs were invariably addressing concerns that had a far wider application. Whilst localised issues were important, they could be subsumed by the desire to celebrate Birmingham`s status and its place on the national political and economic stage.

Evidence from the extant books of words and manuscripts, such as those highlighted above, displays not only a knowledge of local and locally relevant issues, but also a pertinent awareness of the impact of national issues on a provincial town. As an illustration of this engagement, I will now turn to the effects of the 1870 Education Act, the local School Boards, and the representation of related local concerns in the pantomimes at Nottingham and Birmingham.

After several years of campaigning by the National Education League, the Act was passed in September 1870.[49] It was an attempt to provide schools in those areas that were under-represented by local voluntary schools, and it 'created a new type of local authority, the school board, directly elected by the ratepayers, to provide and run [the] new schools'.[50] Prior to 1870, the only reference to national policy in the Nottingham pantomimes was a brief explication in the 1868 production: 'Our rulers seek to educate the masses'.[51] Whilst fairly accurate, there was no sense of a local engagement with the issue, although, as in many towns, there was a disparity of educational provision. In turn, this expression identified education as an external force, imposed upon the town, and between 1865 and 1873, the Nottingham pantomimes contained no further references to the national processes, nor to Nottingham's own branch of the Education League. Similarly, although the 'first Nottingham School Board was elected on 29 November

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[49] Gillian Sutherland, *Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London: The Historical Association, 1971) p. 28 and Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working Class Children in Nineteenth Century England*, (Manchester: MUP, 1994), p. 235. These works, together with David Wardle, *Education and Society in Nineteenth-Century Nottingham* (London: CUP, 1971) and Gretchen R. Galbraith, *Reading Lives: Reconstructing Childhood, Books and Schools in Britain, 1870-1920* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997) have provided the factual evidence for this part of my discussion.

[50] Sutherland, p. 28, reiterated in Hopkins, p. 235.

[51] *Babes in the Wood* (1868-69), book of words, Scene 3, p. 7.

1870', the initial workings of the board and the funding difficulties its members faced, were not addressed in the pantomimes.[52] In 1873, the first thematic reference to education was made in F. R. Goodyer's version of *Little Red Riding Hood.* The first intimation appeared on the playbill, in which it was stated that Red Riding Hood was 'no scholar/(School Boards not then in existence)'.[53] In this pantomime, the heroine was a somewhat uncouth character whose Prince was constantly correcting her grammar and language. The repeated references to the importance of grammar, to verb conjugation and nouns together with correct speech style, continually highlighted the importance of education in order to succeed.[54] For Little Red Riding Hood, her improvement – applauded by the prince in her use of puns – gave her literary status and a royal wedding. However, in comparison to an emphasis on the value of education in a general sense, the critical references in the pantomime of the following year were far more specific.

Although the 1870 Act encouraged school building, and a greater number of places to be made available, no provision had been made to actually enforce attendance, nor was it to be a free provision.[55] Therefore, once local need had been identified and the schools built, one of the foremost problems facing the local authorities was that of truancy, although local school boards did have the discretionary powers to create by-laws to enforce attendance.[56] The Nottingham School Board appears to have taken this option and established compulsory attendance for children for a period between the ages of five and thirteen.[57] However, even with the by-law in place, truancy remained a problem in Nottingham; the local historian Helen Meller has referred to a 'local standing tradition of child employment' in Nottingham that discouraged attendance.[58] In *Little Bo Peep* (1874),

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[52] Wardle, p. 82. Historian Roy Church claims that the first Board School was not built until 1874 (pp. 317, 357), but evidence from David Wardle, as well as the evidence from the pantomime texts, suggests that Board Schools were already up and running by that date.

[53] Playbill for *Little Red Riding Hood* (1873-74), dated 26 December 1873. Held in a loose collection in the Nottingham Local Studies Library.

[54] *Little Red Riding Hood.* For example: Scene 3, p. 10, Scene 6, p. 19.

[55] Sutherland, pp. 33-34.

[56] This instigated a mixed provision: 'there were areas with no boards and no by-laws; areas with boards but without by-laws; areas with boards and by-laws, but also with considerable variety in the standards set for exemption.' (Sutherland, p. 34.)

[57] Sutherland, p. 34, although Hopkins states twelve, 'with exemptions (full or part time) from the age of ten, dependent on the child's educational attainment' p. 235.

[58] *Nottingham in the Eighteen Eighties*, ed. by Helen E. Meller (Nottingham: Nottingham University Department of Adult Education, 1971), p. 38.

the wicked Giant hunted down children who were playing truant from school. This may be considered a positive attitude – insisting on a child's education – but the Giant was demonised in this particular pantomime. He promoted learning over food for children and spoke out against those who truanted to help out at home.

Historian David Wardle, drawing on the results of an 1872 survey, has shown that whilst 'poverty was only given as the reason for absence in about twenty cases' (out of 1,232 children), 'it is very apparent that sheer indifference was the most common reason.'

> Recalcitrant parents were prosecuted, but [...] the bench showed little interest in enforcing attendance. The usual fine for a first conviction was 2*s*.6*d*., which was quite inadequate in view of the earnings open to a truant. Since a child's income went into the parent's pocket it was well worth while for a parent to keep his children at work and risk the occasional fine, and it is quite clear that many did this.[59]

The issues that featured in the pantomime, of truancy and the problem of children being kept away to look after babies, reflected real problems in Nottingham that prevented children from being educated. How widely disseminated the 1872 report was is unclear, but the pantomime references promoted the issue of poverty rather than indifference as the main cause of truancy. By the end of *Little Bo Peep*, King Arthur, who presided over the rewards and punishments at the end of the opening, decried the Giant as a 'School Board Blockhead', suggesting that he be made 'Minister of Education,/There's scope for harshness in that situation;/As when a starving urchin's craving bread,/He'll cram his maw with A B C instead.'[60] The Giant's lack of empathy (learning rather than food for poor children) and direct character linking to the School Board and Government, suggests that the pantomime was criticising the education system rather than education *per se*.[61] As presented at the Theatre Royal, the Giant was deaf to the underlying (local) problems

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[59] Wardle, p. 89.

[60] *Little Bo Peep* (1874-75), book of words, Scene 9, p. 29.

[61] In *Civilisation of the Crowd*, Golby and Purdue briefly address the function of pantomime and melodrama in relation to authority figures, arguing that it is 'not authority *per se* which is derided but the *wicked* squire [who has usurped and misused his power]' (p. 71). Their argument is presented in relation to theoretical notions of carnival, rather than empirical evidence.

behind truancy. In 1876, Lord Sandon's Act was an attempt to resolve the issue of attendance. The Act 'declared that it was the duty of parents to send their children to school', but, again, provision was not uniformly applied.[62] The problem remained in Nottingham as evinced in a brief reference in the 1877 pantomime: 'I never played the truant like a fool,/Because they never let me go to school.'[63]

By the late 1870s there still remained a deficiency of school places in Nottingham and from 1877 there was a concerted effort by the authorities to build more board schools.[64] The boards had the authority to draw on the local rates for the money to provide schools, but they could also be financed by grants and by fees paid by the families of those children who attended.[65] The increased building projects in Nottingham lasted until the early 1890s, and the related costs, and effect on the local rates, became the focus of comment in the annual pantomime.[66] The 1877-78 pantomime of *Blue Beard* featured a number of dolls in the first scene who complained at the excess of educational provision in the town, in a humorous yet back-handed compliment to municipal achievements, that encompassed further, and technical as well as primary education.[67] Board school attendance did rise slowly in the town, from an average of 68.7% in 1873 to around 75% in the late 1870s, and in the 1878-79 version of *Babes in the Wood*, the Baron, explaining the disappearance of the babes, claimed that 'The School-Board – took 'em – much against my wish'.[68] By 1883, however, the issue of poverty and attendance once again featured in the Theatre Royal pantomime.

The 1880 Education Act (Mundella's Act) made school attendance compulsory between five and twelve, 'with partial or full exemptions from the age of ten, dependent on the attendance record of the child and his or her educational attainment.'[69] Not many boards actually took up the option of making attendance compulsory, 'but pressure was

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[62] Hopkins, pp. 238-239.
[63] *Blue Beard* (1877-78), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53197R , Scene 5, p. 34.
[64] Wardle, p. 87.
[65] Sutherland, pp. 28-29.
[66] Wardle states that the building work continued over 'fifteen years', p. 87.
[67] *Blue Beard* (1877-78), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53180B, Scene 1, pp. 3-6.
[68] *The Babes in the Wood* (1878-79), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53212R, Scene 9, p. 57. Attendance statistics in Wardle, p. 90.
[69] Hopkins, p. 239.

increasingly exerted on parents to make their children attend` and a School Attendance Officer could check on suspected truants.[70] Parents who allowed their children to truant, or who did not pay the fees, could be taken to court, and whilst school fees `could be excused on account of poverty [...] recourse to the Guardians could be a humiliating experience and forfeited the right to vote.'[71] The Education Department was well aware that 'if many parents refused to send their children to school, local authorities were dilatory about prosecuting them.'[72] Particular problems were faced by poorer parents during the depression years of the 1880s, and significant changes in the fees were only achieved by the Education Act of 1891.[73]

In the pantomime of 1883 – again *Little Bo Peep* – the school room examination session included the following question, set by the schoolmistress `Dame Gamp`:

> [*Gamp*] If a widow woman has a family of five small
> children, and her income is only four shillings and
> sixpence per week, what amount of education would
> be necessary to keep them from starving?
> You surely ought to have an answer, pat.
> *Simon* Mister Mundella couldn't answer that![74]

At the end of the scene, a truant child, Johnny Stout, was brought in by Ben Boosey the Beadle, who remarked that the child 'says he's forced to stop at home and nuss,/Because his mother's got a job o'washin'. At this Dame Gamp retorted:

> You can't expect the law to give you bread,
> It kindly gives you A B C instead.
> Poor people`s brats are shockingly neglected
> *Boos.* I'll hunt them up – the law must be respected.[75]

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[70] Hopkins, p. 237.
[71] Ibid. The Poor Law Guardians had taken over this aspect of administration from the School Boards as a result of legislation (Lord Sandon`s Act) in 1876.
[72] Sutherland, pp. 39-40.
[73] Hopkins, p. 240.
[74] *Little Bo Peep* (1883-84), book of words, Scene 3, p. 15. Mundella was a Nottingham M.P., who was also the instigator of the 1880 Education Act.
[75] *Little Bo Peep* (1883-84), book of words, Scene 3, p. 16.

The first speech in particular, attracts attention by its use of prose rather than couplets (the traditional format for pantomime speech, as seen in the second example) and appears to be very directly attacking the inadequacies of the system. By referring to the conflicts of education and work, in speeches that are not intended to amuse (Dame Gamp is often drunk in other scenes but not in this one), the author, Goodyer, again sought to address issues that were extremely relevant to Nottingham.

Getting the children into school sometimes ignored other, more pressing issues of poverty. In addition to attendance, the above speech also addressed contemporary concerns regarding children and nutrition. There was a sustained argument between reformers concerned about the undernourishment of poor children and those who did not accept that the Education authorities had any responsibility in that area.[76] Curiously, the pantomime speech quoted above pre-empted an official report that was made to the Education Department in 1884 in which,

> Dr. Crichton-Browne emphasised strongly the undernourishment of some schoolchildren, remarking sarcastically: 'These children want blood, and we offer them a little brain-polish; they ask for bread, and receive a problem.'[77]

The national issue was not resolved until The Education (Provision of Meals) Act of 1906, but in Nottingham, an 'unofficial measure was the provision of "penny dinners" which was started in 1884 by Mr. Peacock, a radical member of the Board'.[78]

The principal concerns of Goodyer's pantomimes regarding enforced attendance and provision were not continued after he ceased writing for the theatre. Those particular issues may have become less marked in the town: school attendance in Nottingham had risen to 80% by 1885, although these figures varied between schools in the town.[79] By contrast, the historian David Wardle states that the 'extensive building of the 1880s forced

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[76] Hurt, p. 108. The excuse was used that it was the responsibility of the parents and that intervention would undermine parental rights.
[77] Hopkins, p. 244
[78] Wardle, pp. 109-110. Such provision was also made in Birmingham. Reference is made to the 'Birmingham Schools Cheap Dinner Society', established in October 1884, in Hurt, p. 117. For a contemporaneous reference, see the article entitled 'A Cinderella Treat at the Town Hall', *BDG*, 22 December 1892, p. 4.
[79] Wardle, p. 90.

up the education rate in Nottingham.[80] It was this aspect of education – increased building and the subsequent effect on local rates – that featured in the pantomimes after 1885.[81] A less than subtle approach to the subject occurred in the 1887 pantomime of *Babes in the Wood*:

> *Tab.* Well, sir, I've been
> To our school board meeting – there *was* a scene!
> They're going to build a school in every street,
> You'll have a thumping District Rate to meet.[82]

At Birmingham, the focus of references regarding education was apparent in pantomimes much earlier, and effectively charted the development of educational provision in the late 1860s. The Birmingham Education League had played a prominent part in the creation of the 1870 Act, a fact echoed in pantomime references of the late 1860s. In *Aladdin*, the pantomime for 1866-67, the Widow Chow-Chow appeared as the school mistress of a ragged school, and exchanges between her and her pupils underlined the low standard of teaching available to poorer children from unqualified teachers:

> [WIDOW] First class in front, for lesson number one.
> C-A-T?
> CHILDREN. Dog!
> WIDOW. D-O-G?
> CHILDREN. Cat!
> WIDOW. Well done!
> If thus, *unsiezingly*, they *grasp* at knowledge,
> I soon may raise the charges at this college.[83]

The Birmingham Education League was the central player in the move to establish a national elementary education scheme and to provide education beyond the poor provision of the ragged school. Furthermore, the League fought for school places to be

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[80] Wardle. p. 85.
[81] There are two copies of Goodyer's *Little Red Riding Hood* of 1885-86. In the longer of the two copies (presumably the opening night text before cuts were made), there is a reference to the costs of the School Board (Scene 14, p. 45).
[82] *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88), book of words, Scene 2, p. 15 (both copies). See also, Scene 4, p. 21.
[83] *Aladdin* (1866-67), book of words, Scene 5, p. 14.

free (unlike Widow Chow-Chow's 'college'), although that was not a feature of the 1870 Act.[84] By 1869, the proposed Education Bill became the focus for references in the pantomime of *Blue Beard.* A topical song sung by Blue Beard's fiancé, Fatima and her sister in Scene 7 envisioned the future, including:

> ANNE. And can I believe my eyes –
> FATIMA. Say, what is this new surprise?
> ANNE. An *education scheme* – and not too late.[85]

More specifically, in Scene 9, Oberon insists that 'this scheme for *education*/Must first be *forstered* by good legislation.'[86] In 1873, the same year that the Nottingham pantomime expressed concern at attendance issues, the Birmingham pantomime briefly applauded the work of the School Board system:

> Well, there's no denial,
> That modern notion now is on its trial!
> We've had a fight – a popular election,
> A move, I fancy, in the right direction.
> The men we've sent to do the work, I guess
> Will do their utmost to achieve success. [87]

Both the Nottingham and Birmingham pantomimes featured references to School Board elections and funding, and the Nottingham productions also included brief, yet humorous references to cramming in 1877 and 1884; in the latter a talking donkey was compared to a school board pupil ('all his standards won-/They'll turn out lots like him before they've done').[88] This method of teaching was criticised more fully in the Birmingham pantomimes and followed national concerns. Sophia Jex-Blake had written to *The Times* in 1880 complaining about the system of cramming at the Board Schools. The term referred to a style of learning by rote, but Jex-Blake was also concerned about the

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[84] See Briggs, *The History of Birmingham* (pp. 101-103) for a detailed discussion of the League prior to 1870.
[85] *Blue Beard* (1869-70), book of words, Scene 7, p. 20.
[86] *Blue Beard* (1869-70), book of words, Scene 9, p. 22.
[87] Reviewed in 'The Birmingham Pantomimes: Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 22 December 1873, p. 8.
[88] *The Forty Thieves* (1884-85), book of words, Scene 5, p. 17.

increased number of subjects taught in schools.[89] In 1883, the opening scene of the pantomime *The Queen of Hearts* featured a witches' brew that contained ''mongst other ills./The code of "cram" the School Board child that kills.'[90] Two years after the system had featured in a witches' brew, the theme was continued in the Birmingham pantomime of *Robinson Crusoe*. In a comparative depiction of the ragged school mistress in 1866, the 1885 pantomime contained a similarly disparaging picture of teaching. Dame Crusoe was described in the book of words as a 'School Board Mistress (Certified) who knocks Knowledge into her Pupils, and takes it out/of them also.'[91] Knowledge with a capital 'K' epitomised the current debate, and Mrs. Crusoe lamented her responsibilities in Scene 3:

> DAME. A School Board Mistress! What a lot – to
> teach.
> The young idea to shoot – beyond their reach;
> To pass examinations 'ere they toddle,
> And cram with knowledge every little noddle;
> Until so closely packed, their little brains
> Resemble crowded cheap excursion trains.
> For little baby *buntings* can't be lagging,
> But pass their *standards* with a zeal un-*flagging* [...]
> Beside my troubles thick and threefold flurrying,
> For my opinion folks are always worrying.[92]

This speech represents the school mistress as an acknowledged figure in the local community, respected for her views, but who, at the same time, holds deep reservations about what she does. The curriculum, with which she was so concerned centred on the 3Rs at infant level, then Standards I, II, and III (Object Lessons), which, after 1875 included 'class' subjects such as history, geography and grammar. 'Specific' subjects were taught for Standards IV and V, of a higher level, for example, 'algebra, animal

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[89] J. S. Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul and Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 106. For an earlier expression of concern regarding cramming, see: John Morley, 'The Struggle for National Education', *The Fortnightly Review* 14 (New Series: July -December 1873), 143-162, 303-325 and 411-433. His argument is printed in three parts, and the issue of Standards and cramming occurs in 'Part III', pp. 411-433.

[90] *The Queen of Hearts* (1883-84) book of words, Scene 1, p. 3.

[91] Detail taken from the cast list on the inside front page of the book of words. See also the description at the beginning of Scene 3: 'A BOARD SCHOOL Under the gimlet eye of Mrs. Crusoe – Cert-/fied Mistress.' (book of words, p. 3).

[92] *Robinson Crusoe*, book of words, Scene 3, page 3.

physiology, physics and domestic economy'.[93] The emphasis that Mrs. Crusoe places on the quantity of information is interlinked in her speech with infant ability: 'The young idea to shoot – beyond their reach'. This concern also related to a contemporaneous debate regarding the negligence of the physical health of children in favour of academic work, and debate on the matter led to the instigation of exercise in schools. Furthermore, the twentieth-century writer, Gretchen R. Galbraith, states that there was an associated debate in the mid-1880s regarding illness amongst London Board School pupils, and a concern that illness and fatigue were due to the fact that the brains of working class children were not capable of excessive learning.[94] From the sentiments expressed by Mrs. Crusoe ('For little baby *buntings* can't be lagging,/But pass their *standards* with a zeal un-*flagging*') it is evident that the problem was not restricted to London.

In terms of truancy, although the Black Country and Birmingham had a tradition of child labour, issues of attendance were not addressed in the pantomimes.[95] The only reference to poverty in relation to schooling was in a song sung by Jenny Hill in the 1891 pantomime of *Sinbad the Sailor*, which included a verse about 'the difficulties of an indigent mother in paying the School Board pence for her child.' The reviewer in the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* remarked that such sentiments were 'a trifle after date to relate' although the occupants of the gallery 'seemed [...] to think it all right.'[96]

Although the text of the 1885 reference centred on specific educational concerns, in performance the sentiments were displaced by the *mise-en-scéne*, which the *Gazette* promoted as 'an elaborately set scene of a Board School, copied from one of the buildings erected by the Birmingham School Board.'[97] In turn, the reviewer of the *Birmingham Daily Mail* previewed the scene as potentially being 'one of the great hits of the pantomime':

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[93] Hopkins, p. 255.
[94] For her discussion on exercise in schools, see Galbraith, pp. 94-96, and Chapter 7, 'Overpressure in London's Board Schools, 1883-1884' for a full discussion of the health issues that concerned the authorities in London.
[95] Hopkins, pp. 221-224.
[96] 'Boxing-Day in Birmingham: *Sinbad the Sailor* at the Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 28 December 1891, p. 8.
[97] 'The Birmingham Pantomimes: *Robinson Crusoe* at the Theatre Royal, *BDG*, 23 December 1885, p. 5.

> It is a realistic representation of the interior of a Board school, the graduated rows of desks, the wainscotted walls, and all the mural accessories being represented sometimes with fidelity, and in some cases with much humour of caricature. The maps and school appartus [*sic*] are in some cases utilised for comic effect. England and Scotland are painted so as to look like Mr. Gladstone in a Scotch cap.[98]

A later review added that, in addition to Gladstone 'Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain also figure in an exaggerated form'.[99] The scenery and the way in which it was reviewed, therefore, made a broader political statement than any immediate concerns of teaching methods. The author's lines were further ignored by the *Birmingham Daily Post* which simply noted that Mrs. Crusoe '[a]fter bewailing the trouble she has with her own and other people's children, [...] sings a rather good topical song'.[100]

The scenic impact of the schoolroom was a prime example of the use of visual allusions in the local pantomime, which was another outlet for social referencing that could vary from scene settings to political caricature. The former, for example, was used to good effect in Birmingham in the late 1870s and 1880s, in expressing the economic power of the town. In 1879, the entire first scene of *The Fair One With the Golden Locks* depicted Birmingham as a 'Workshop of the World', with extras dressed in pasteboard versions of local products; the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* previewed the parade which consisted of 'a teapot, pins, pans, cannon, gun, bell, needles, buttons, bayonet, and coins.'[101] The *Birmingham Daily Mail* expanded the description: 'great imitations of [...] almost every article of Birmingham manufacture are brought on by active youngsters, who must be well nigh smothered in their pasteboard prisons.'[102] In the 1884 production of *Dick Whittington and His Cat*, the Lord Mayor's celebrations included a 'GRAND PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS/Bearing the Arms of the various Towns of the Midlands and/Workmen with the Emblems of their Manufactures'.[103] The *Birmingham Daily*

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[98] 'The Christmas Pantomimes: *Robinson Crusoe* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 26 December 1885, p. 3.
[99] 'Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 28 December 1885, p. 4.
[100] '*Robinson Crusoe* at the Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 26 December 1885, p. 4. The sentiments may have been transferred into the song but there is no reference to the song's content.
[101] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDG*, 24 December 1879, p. 5. See also 'Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 27 December 1879, p. 5.
[102] 'Christmas Amusements: The Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1879, p. 3.
[103] *Dick Whittington* (1884-85), book of words, Scene 9, p. 29.

Gazette described this scene:

> A grand procession of knights takes place, each knight bearing a banner on which are the arms of some town in the Midlands and accompanied by a juvenile representing the workmen of the town, and carrying emblems of the local manufacture. Amongst the towns thus represented are Wolverhampton, Walsall, Willenhall, Leamington, Coventry (with a tricycle as an emblem), Droitwich (with a square of salt), Worcester (a bottle of sauce), Redditch (with a huge needle), Dudley, Tipton, Northampton, Tamworth, Burton-on-Trent (with a barrel of beer), Derby, Gloucester, Nottingham, Stafford (with a pair of boots), Kidderminster, Shrewsbury, Crewe, Rugby, Stratford-on-Avon (with a Shakespeare bust), Hereford, Birmingham, Sheffield (knife and fork), &c. The idea is very good and well carried out.[104]

The procession celebrated the whole of the Midlands, but it was significant that the celebration took place at the Birmingham theatre. That theatre by implication had the resources and was representative, as the Theatre Royal, of the regional capital. Furthermore, the procession was celebrated in 'London', but the national capital was a static setting for regional spectacle, underlined by the inclusion of 'a highly successful parody on the well-known song of "Old England," the chorus beginning with the words, "Honour old Brum".'[105] Birmingham was here celebrated as a metropolis, drawing in the other towns beneath its spectacular wing. In 1888, another version of *Dick Whittington* also culminated in a spectacular scene, this time set in 'London in the Olden Times', in which a '**Procession of Emblems of the Industries of the Midlands**' celebrated Birmingham's newly acquired status as a city.[106] The *Birmingham Daily Gazette* expanded, appropriately noting 'the modern Midlands', and the shift in representative trades:

> Here takes place a grand procession of beefeaters, knights, and trumpeters, and an emblematic processional tableaux of all the trades of the modern Midlands. A series of banners bearing the names of the different towns are brought on one after

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[104] 'Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDG*, 27 December 1884, p. 5. See also 'Boxing Day Amusements: The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1884, p. 3.
[105] 'Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 27 December 1884, p. 5. Although not concerned with the theatre, Simon Gunn presents a useful discussion of the public displays of civic authority and status in the major provincial cities of the mid-nineteenth century, including Birmingham. See: *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, pp. 163-186.
[106] *Dick Whittington* (1888-89), book of words, Scene 9, p. 29.

> the other, in each case followed by a model representing the trade of the town introduced. Burton, for instance, is symbolised by a huge barrel, Coventry by a watch, Banbury by a cake, Redditch by a case of needles, the Potteries by a teapot, Cradley by an anvil, Crewe by a locomotive, and Northampton by a boot.[107]

Yet again, in 1887, in the opening scene of *Little Goody Two Shoes*, local production and business were foregrounded in the presentation of a coin press in 'King Gold's Mint'. The coin press featured in the production was a stage property, but it warranted particular attention from the local newspapers as it had evidently 'been suggested by a visit to Messrs. Ralph Heaton & Son's famous local establishment' and was 'an exact facsimile of one of Mr. Heaton's presses'.[108] In Chapter 2, I discussed the concept of spectacle and the way in which the production processes of the Birmingham pantomimes were celebrated in local newspaper articles. In performance, although all of the above items were stage props, their relationship to actual production (whether by linking products to towns or reproducing a coin mint with exactitude) again extends the idea of spectacle and the commodity. Thomas Richards's explication of the isolated commodity at the Great Exhibition as necessarily divorced from production is overturned in evidence from the Birmingham pantomimes, in which the very celebration and admiration of the commodity depended upon its correlation with labour: the coin press for example was set to work, albeit pantomimically, to produce 'coins' as part of the action of the first scene.[109]

In addition to locality and local economics, political referencing was also enhanced by spectacle and visual effects. I have already given one example: that of the School Room scene in the 1885-86 pantomime. A further illustrative example occurred in the Birmingham pantomime of 1881-82, in which one scene was interrupted by 'the appearance of a huge lion'. After being successfully destroyed and cut in half by the Page

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[107] *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 27 December 1888, p. 5. See also a shorter description in 'Boxing Day Amusements: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 26 December 1888, p. 2.
[108] 'The Christmas Amusements: *Goody Two Shoes* at the Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 24 December 1887, p. 5, and 'The Pantomimes: Theatre Royal: *Goody Two Shoes*', *BDG*, 22 December 1887, p. 5. Ralph Heaton & Son's Mint was in Warstone Lane, Birmingham (*Showell's*, p. 314).
[109] Richards, p. 57.

'the severed portions then turn round to the audience and display[ed] – one a portrait of Bright and the other one of Chamberlain'.[110] In Nottingham, a 'panorama of celebrities' featured in the 1882-83 pantomime of *Cinderella*; the wide range of national and local figures, included Gladstone, the Prince of Wales, Henry Irving, Sir James Oldknow (the Mayor of Nottingham) and Mr. Tarbottom (the Borough Surveyor). However, it was not well received, not because of what it represented but because 'the artist has not been happy in his elaboration of it.'[111] More pointed – and successful – references could be made through caricature; the masks that I alluded to in Chapter 2 were not only worn by supernumeraries to represent demons, comic cooks, and sailors, but they could also be worn by the principal players to lampoon leading figures and politicians. As John Russell Stephens states, there were 'strict rules' issued by the Lord Chamberlain's office 'outlawing the portrayal of notable personalities'.[112] There is no evidence, however, that those warnings were heeded at either of the two theatres: the Property Man at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham continued to make detailed masks of leading statesmen. A behind the scenes article in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* had even described the process of making such masks, promoting their appearance in the 1873-74 pantomime of *Beauty and the Beast*:

> Out of a box come some capital masks of the immortal countenances of Messrs. Disraeli, Lowe and Gladstone and on a modelling board lies the pale clay face of a local dignitary.[113]

In performance, the opening scene of the pantomime introduced,

> The Mayor of Birmingham, the Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Robert Lowe, the Right Hon. John Bright, and Mr. Disraeli [...] The representation of Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Bright were not so good as might have been the case, but Mr. Lowe and Mr. Disraeli were capitally caricatured. After various

[110] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 27 December 1881, p. 5.
[111] '*Cinderella* at the Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 27 December 1882, p. 8. Tarbottom identified from Beckett, p. 77.
[112] Russell Stephens, *Censorship*, pp. 10 and 116.
[113] 'Behind the Scenes at Pantomime Time. By "the Odd Man Out".', *BDM*, 20 December 1873, p. 4. For an additional and descriptive account of clay mask making, see 'Getting Up a Pantomime', cited in Booth, *English Plays*, Appendix C, p. 494.

> comments [...] they join in the 'Conspirators' Chorus,' from 'La Fille de Mdme Angot,' finishing with a can-can in the most ludicrous style.[114]

Similarly, in reviewing the 1877-78 pantomime, the *Birmingham Daily Mail* was able to report that in the opening scene, 'Monsieur Lesseps, the Foreign Secretary, and the Prime Minister further enliven the proceedings with a grotesque dance and breakdown.'[115] The feature was reviewed with relish in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, which highlighted the fact that, once again, the 'political caricatures' took part in a can-can.[116] Again, in 1883, Gladstone was caricatured in *The Queen of Hearts*. One of the principal characters was 'Farmer Radish', who was 'made up to represent the "Grand Old Man," so familiar in modern politics [...], and wearing the cartooned collar, which amusingly increases in size as the pantomime goes on.'[117] I have found only one example from the Nottingham theatre, that of a 'political *pas de quatre*', which took place in the 1890-91 pantomime of *Puss in Boots*. According to the *Nottingham Daily Guardian*, the dance was 'of a most diverting character'.

> Four of the male members of the company 'made up' to resemble eminent statesmen, but wearing abbreviated skirts as affected by ladies of the *corps de ballet*, burlesque [...] the well-known Gaiety dance which became so universally popular last pantomime season. The new *pas* was twice re-demanded last night, and evidently suited the taste of the house.[118]

As a result of the 1843 repeal of the Theatre Licensing Act, all theatres were required to submit new or adapted scripts (including details of any stage 'business') for inspection and licensing. Evidence from the Lord Chamberlain's Day Books shows that several of the pantomime texts submitted by the Nottingham and Birmingham theatres were indeed licensed with a '[g]eneral caution against offensive "gag" & caricatures of living

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[114] 'The Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 27 December 1873, p. 5.
[115] 'The Pantomimes', *BDM*, 21 December 1877, p. 3. The scene was again described in '*The Forty Thieves*', *BDM*, 27 December 1877, p. 2. M. de Lesseps was the architect of the Suez Canal, a prominent feature in British foreign policy in the early 1870s.
[116] 'Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 27 December 1877, p. 5.
[117] 'Boxing-Day Amusements: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 27 December 1883, p. 5.
[118] 'Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 3 February 1891, p. 7.

persons'.[119] The Birmingham pantomime of 1877-78 was one of those that had been cautioned and yet, as evinced in the review cited above, the warning went unheeded. The conflicting evidence of the official memoranda and the inclusion of masks in the local pantomimes has been partly resolved by John Russell Stephens, who has highlighted a more moderate and variable tone in the application of censorship to caricature. Despite the written warnings, the Examiner of Plays, Edward Piggott (in office between 1874 and 1895), 'believed that many prominent individuals actually revelled in the thought of stage caricature, and, if there were no direct political intent, [he] was usually prepared to let the matter pass'.[120] Whilst the caricatures in some of the pantomimes may not have made overt political comments, the 'appearance' of such luminaries as Disraeli and Gladstone dancing the can-can was hardly a brief salutation to their work. Furthermore, the inclusion of caricature was not necessarily mentioned in the submitted texts. The warning sent to the Theatre Royal at Birmingham in 1874 would have responded to character names in the book of words, which actually detailed 'Lesseps', 'Lord D–y' and 'Earl B–d'.[121] (The other examples from this pantomime I have identified from the newspaper reviews.) Therefore, although warnings could be sent and leniency could be practiced, there was little that could be done if caricatures were not brought to the attention of the Examiner of Plays. Russell Stephens acknowledges that even though the authorities were perfectly aware of the actual and potential referencing in pantomime, the productions 'proved very difficult to control by means of pre-production censorship, since [they] relied on being up-to-date'.[122]

The caricatures and visual imagery occurred, of course, alongside spoken

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[119] BL, The Lord Chamberlain's Day Books, v, Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53, 706, p. 13: Theatre Royal Nottingham production of *Blue Beard* (1877-78) licensed with a 'general caution, also as to personalities', and, on p. 15, the production of *Babes in the Wood* (1878-79) licensed with a 'usual caution', also regarding personalities and caricatures. Similarly, a license accompanied by a 'usual caution' was provided for the Nottingham pantomimes of *The Fair One with the Golden Locks* (1876-77), p. 84; *Jack and the Beanstalk* (1879-80), p. 96, and *Robinson Crusoe* (1881-82), p. 178. Usual cautions were also sent to the Theatre Royal, Birmingham for the following pantomimes: *Beauty and the Beast* (1882-83), p. 19; *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), p. 46; *The Fair One with the Golden Locks* (1879-80), p. 65. A general caution was sent regarding *The Forty Thieves* (1877-78), p. 64. Russell Stephens also reproduces a selection of the Lord Chamberlain's cautionary memorandums in Appendix C of *Censorship*, p. 160 and in footnote 12 (to Chapter 7), p. 183.

[120] Russell Stephens, p. 117.

[121] *The Forty Thieves* (1877-78), Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53197P, p. 1.

[122] Russell Stephens, *Censorship*, p. 117.

references, also subject to the Examiner of Play's inspection. Russell Stephens, in his discussion of nineteenth-century censorship, notes that in textual references,

> [t]he list of personalities whose names were proscribed on the stage is extensive. It ranges down from the Queen and the royal family to members of the government, foreign sovereigns and dignitaries, contemporary theatrical personalities, indeed, to anyone whose name was a topic of public interest. All references to Queen Victoria were ruthlessly excised even if they were complimentary. So, too, with members of the Cabinet.[123]

It may be thought that if the visual references escaped the Examiner, the text would not. However, as I noted in Chapter 4, there was considerable variation in the regularity with which pantomime scripts were submitted. According to the Day Books, there is no record of submissions from the Nottingham managers for the whole period 1866 to 1874, nor for 1876 or 1890. Similarly, there are no records of submissions from Mercer Simpson at Birmingham for 1866, 1868 to 1873, 1886 or 1888. Russell Stephens highlights the fact that manuscripts are missing from the Lord Chamberlain's collection, as they may have been loaned out to theatres for copying.[124] This fact has been corroborated by Kathryn Johnson of the British Library who has additionally commented that some scripts may have been lost, due either to the original storage methods at St. James's Palace, or during later, twentieth-century reorganisation. Importantly, she has also suggested that provincial theatres simply did not submit, but instead loaned out scripts, with the license, to other provincial theatres for re-use.[125] If that was the case, in addition to my own observations, then not only was the Examiner becoming less rigorous in applying censorship to visual representations, but provincial theatres were quite clearly withholding pantomime scripts from examination. Of those texts that were submitted, only three – all from the Theatre Royal, Birmingham – had specific omissions made by the Examiner of Plays: the 1875-76 pantomime of *Puss in Boots*, the 1876-77 version of

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[123] Russell Stephens, *Censorship*, p. 116.
[124] Russell Stephens, p. 2.
[125] Kathryn Johnson, Curator of the Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library. Information relayed in conversation, March 2002.

Sinbad the Sailor and the 1877-78 pantomime of *The Forty Thieves*.[126] As I mentioned earlier, the caution against caricature was ignored in the performance of *The Forty Thieves*, but the manager had also been instructed to 'omit sc. 1 from "Enter Alde Lesseps" (stage direction) to (Prime Min) "She will have her way".'[127] However, this speech regarding Lesseps and foreign policy survived in the book of words and featured in performance despite the official sanctions. The *Birmingham Daily Mail* reported that, in the first scene, 'Monsieur Lesseps, Lord Derby, and the Earl of Beaconsfield appear [..] and indulge in a little bantering chaff'.[128] Yet again, official censorship had failed to curtail the pantomime.

The leniency of the Examiner had perhaps turned to weariness towards the end of the century. At the hearing of the 1892 Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment, Edward Piggott related his decreasing concern with pantomime censorship; with particular reference to topical allusions he stated:

> To tell you the truth, I never interfere with them now in pantomimes. That was in former years. It was done on account of certain disloyal allusions. It was done, and there was an end to it, and the thing has never been done again.[129]

Russell Stephens has argued that, by the end of the century, the censors were more concerned with controversial plays in the West End than the pantomime, although they were still aware of the license that could be taken in the performances. Insofar as the censorship of pantomimes was addressed at the 1892 Committee hearing, William Archer, who was called as a witness, regarded a shift of emphasis from official watchfulness to that of the general public to be more reliable; in other words, of relying on the audience for

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[126] *Sinbad the Sailor* 'Omit in representation/Scene 7 (Sinbad) from "They're fit for" to "diamond Earl" 2 lines'. BL, The Lord Chamberlain's Day Books, v. Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53, 706, p. 112. In the 1875 *Puss in Boots* licensing manuscript (typed), the lines, 'As in a royal family we know/A marquis is considered - well, de *trop*.' are accompanied by a double 'II', 'X' and 'omit', written in pencil alongside. The speech 'He's not Lord Darnley, and this is not Kent!' also has 'omit' written in (*Puss in Boots*. Add. Ms. 53160D, pp. 2 and 7). A third speech has pencilled lines and a cross against it but no 'omit'. It is not clear whether this was to be omitted, and the notes were not entered in the relevant Day Book.

[127] BL, The Lord Chamberlain's Day Books, v. Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53, 706, p. 64.

[128] 'The Pantomimes', *BDM*, 21 December 1877, p. 3. The scene was again described in '*The Forty Thieves*', *BDM*, 27 December 1877, p. 2.

[129] *Report of the Select Committee* (1892), in answer to question 5211, p. 333.

moral control of the pantomime. According to Archer, audiences were 'the only really effective censor, because the only censor who is always on the spot, and always hears and sees the intentions of the actor and the author.'[130] In theory this seemed practicable: the provincial theatres were outside the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction, but if a complaint was made to him, he could issue a formal warning to the theatre manager.[131] From a study of the Lord Chamberlain's correspondence with provincial managements, I have not found any evidence of complaints being made to the Lord Chamberlain by members of the public about references in the pantomimes at either the Birmingham or Nottingham Theatres Royal.[132] Occasionally, disapproving comments were made by reviewers in the local newspapers, but, invariably those reflected the political stance of the paper. Other newspapers, for whom the references had appeared to support their political views naturally had no complaints to make. For example, whilst the Liberal Birmingham papers highlighted the praise of Chamberlain and 'Brum' in the 1879 pantomime of *The Fair One With the Golden Locks*, the (Tory) *Birmingham Daily Gazette* interpreted a reference to Chamberlain's local economic policy as containing 'pointed sarcasm'.[133] The Liberal *Birmingham Daily Post*, however, praised the song 'Birmingham, the Workshop of the World', commenting that it 'was well-received, especially the encore verse, which is devoted to the praise of Mr. Chamberlain.'[134] Audience responses could be equally mixed; a report on the 1868 pantomime in the *Birmingham Journal* noted both 'cheers and counter-cheers' in response to an illustration of 'leading personages' including Disraeli, Gladstone and Bright.[135]

Whilst members of the public may not have deemed it worthwhile complaining to the Lord Chamberlain, their opinions could be voiced through letters to the local

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[130] Ibid., in answer to question 3946, p. 237.
[131] Mander & Mitchenson (p. 24) briefly refer to the fact that unscripted 'gags' could be reported by the 'common informer', although they do not offer any supporting evidence.
[132] Search undertaken in the Lord Chamberlain's Registers of Letters received and sent, accession nos. PRO, LC3/80-109 (1865-1893).
[133] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDG*, 24 December 1879, p. 5. See also the partisan responses to the caricatures in the 1873-74 pantomime, and complaints about the praise of Chamberlain in 'Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 27 December 1873, p. 5.
[134] 'Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 27 December 1879, p. 5.
[135] 'Christmas Amusements: Theatre Royal, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*', *Birmingham Journal*, 2 January 1869, p. 5.

newspapers. There are, however, very few examples of such complaints being made, and certainly none that I have found in Birmingham. In relation to the Nottingham pantomimes, only two – those of 1865 and 1868 – were criticised for their political references. In the 1868 pantomime, *Babes in the Wood*, the author had included a lengthy reference to the 'late election' of 1867 and the successful Tory candidate, Sir Robert Clifton.

WEL Oh yes; Sir Robert Clifton's safely seated!
QUEEN So old a general couldn't be defeated.
If the esteem he's held in don't secure him,
His lovely aide de camp must still ensure him.
BUSY B Pray who is that?
QUEEN The question makes me frown;
Go ask the good folk living in the town
who 'twas with winning smile, their homesteads visited,
And gained their votes almost before solicited:
And if consent some few still had a doubt of it:
Ask who's bright eyes, completely 'witched them out of it!
From whom, life's way, the poor oft get a lift on;
You'll get but one reply - 'Twas Lady Clifton![136]

The reason behind the complaint was that Clifton, although a popular local figure and Tory MP, had been at the centre of allegations regarding electoral corruption. Clifton had stated publicly that he wouldn't stand at the 1867 election, but had entered at the eleventh hour. On the day of the election, voting went against him but, according to letters in the *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express*, free beer had been supplied in the town centre by Clifton to influence voter's decisions. The *Express*, a Liberal paper, condemned the pantomime reference in its first review of the production on 28 December. On the following day a letter was printed in the same paper from the pantomime author W. J. Thompson, who claimed a misinterpretation had taken place:

[136] *Babes in the Wood* (1868-69), book of words, Scene 2, p. 11.

> The policy of introducing political allusions in public entertainments is justly questioned, and in the speeches complained of I have studiously avoided doing so. But taking advantage of the license of pantomime, I have merely endeavored [*sic*] to pay a *personal compliment*.[137]

The exchange of letters in the *Express* continued throughout the first week of the run between the author and his anonymous critics. One, signing himself 'ARISTIDES', remarked that he had been '[v]ery glad [...] to hear the nauseous toadyism about Clifton unmistakably hissed when I was present [at the pantomime].'[138] Importantly, the complaints were only from one part of the audience and from the one Liberal paper. The same paper had complained about similarly supportive sentiments for Clifton in the 1865 pantomime, but on that occasion had acknowledged that both cheers and hisses had been heard in the audience. The 1868 speech was specifically reprinted in the newspaper because the audience were being noisy (although the type of noise was not explained; was it therefore the noise of complaint or approval?)[139] Eventually, the matter was settled by a letter from the theatre lessees stating that in their 'desire [...] to please *all* and *offend none*' the lines had been removed from the production.[140]

Although the party politics of local newspapers could be offended, there is no evidence, from Nottingham or Birmingham, that there were issues that were unanimously complained about in all the local papers, nor, more especially from other members of the audience. Apparently, even the most daring comments about civic figures did not seem to perturb the vast majority of local theatre goers. It follows, therefore, that the pantomime audiences were to some degree complicit with and that there was considerable flexibility in the perceived boundaries of subject matter and acceptable satire.[141] In turn, the fact that both the theatres in Nottingham and Birmingham retained certain authors for long periods of time, does strongly suggest that their work suited the local context. If authors

[137] The letter, signed by W. J. Thompson, was printed in the *Express*, 29 December 1868, p. 4.
[138] The letter appeared in the *Express*, 31 December 1868, p. 4.
[139] For an illuminating discussion of theatre noise, see Douglas Reid 'Popular Theatre in Victorian Birmingham', pp. 74-77.
[140] The letter, signed by J. F. and K. Saville, was printed in the *Express*, 1 January 1869, p. 4.
[141] In *Reflecting the Audience*, Davis and Emeljanow briefly address the potential complicity of the transpontine theatre audiences (p. 80). Although their argument relates this complicity to the fact that many of the actors lived locally and were known by members of the audience, it is a valuable indicator of the potential for other kinds of complicity, as evidenced in my argument.

highlighted certain topics above others, they were presumably not only responding to available information and local knowledge, but also working within demarcations of satiric approach and public approval particular to that theatre and the audience that the management were aiming to attract. In 1874, an article entitled 'Politics of the Pantomime' appeared in the satirical journal, the *Hornet*.[142] Its opening sentiments are worth quoting in full.

> One would naturally suppose, if Mr. Disraeli's definition of the Liberal policy be correct, that the Politics of the Pantomimes would be decidedly Liberal; for 'plundering and blundering' by Clown and Pantaloon make up most of the fun. But, in fact, the sentiments uttered by the characters in the Opening are often very different from this. If we consider the subject for a moment, it will be seen that the Politics of the Pantomimes are most important indications of the Politics of the People. Whatever is said in the Pantomimes must be popular, or it is promptly hissed, and as promptly cut by the manager. As we shall presently notice, the author must put aside his own opinions and try and reflect as nearly as possible the opinions of his audiences. Then, being played for many nights, before thousands of persons, the Pantomimes become a Political Power, and every now and then a weak government attempts to control them. Our readers will not have forgotten the efforts of the present maudlin Ministry to protect Mr. Lowe from the clowns. Those efforts failed, as they always must fail in a free country; and now the pantomimes are as Political as ever.[143]

It was not necessarily the case that an author had to 'put aside his own opinions'. As the article continued to discuss, the work of Charles Millward, 'a Radical,' was particularly appropriate for the Liberal tendencies of the Birmingham Theatre Royal (Millward was also a friend of the *Hornet*'s proprietor, Stephen Fiske).[144] Similarly, James J. Blood, Millward's successor, was a member of the Birmingham Arts Club, a local political group, of which Joseph Chamberlain had been the Chairman.[145] Blood even introduced

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[142] 'Politics of the Pantomime', *Hornet*, 24 January 1874. The whole, long article is a cutting but seems to be complete and is in the collection entitled 'Newspaper Cuttings, Birmingham Drama. Vol. 2', p. 67, held in the Birmingham Local Studies Library, accession no. LF28/1866-1876. The journal title and date are handwritten on the cutting. I have been unable to locate an original copy of the journal at either the Birmingham library, or the British Newspaper Library at Colindale.

[143] Ibid.

[144] In her memoirs, Jessie Millward recalled Fiske as 'the proprietor of a very lively journal called *The Hornet*', who was a frequent visitor to the Millward household. *Myself and Others*, p. 47.

[145] Chamberlain's association with the Arts Club in Langford, p. 184. In *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, Simon Gunn quotes the purpose of the Arts Club, which 'was to facilitate "the daily social intercourse of gentlemen holding Liberal opinions, who are interested in the public life of Birmingham".' (p. 99).

membership of the Arts Club as an aspiration for one of his characters in *The Forty Thieves*:

> ABDAL. What are you doing here?
> CASSIM. Oh! – don't *you* know:
> I want to join the Arts Club.[146]

The praise of Chamberlain that resounded throughout Millward's and Blood's pantomimes was a specific response to local expectation at the Theatre Royal: as the *Hornet* article stated, whatever was said must have been popular. For example, although Birmingham politics underwent something of a Tory revival in the 1880s, the political expressions in the Theatre Royal pantomimes remained true to the Liberal principles. In 1882, the local Tory MP, Henry Hawkes, had opposed housing measures instigated by the Caucus; the former was aligned in *Sinbad the Sailor* to a bird of prey pecking malignly at the Liberal body. The antagonism of the Tories was reiterated in 1883, and in 1887, the villains of *Little Goody Two Shoes* were specifically Tory.

The politics of local writers at Nottingham has been less easy to establish. The praise of Clifton in the 1860s may have been motivated by Tory support, but equally, it may have been in response to Clifton's patronage of the theatre. Similarly, Goodyer's attacks on the school board system could be read as attacks on Liberal policies, but there is no single point of reference, such as the Caucus in Birmingham, with which to foreground the overarching political tendencies of the theatre managers or the writers. Furthermore, a recurrent comment regarding F. R. Goodyer was in relation to his tact. A review of *The King of the Peacocks* in the *Nottingham Daily Guardian* praised this quality:

> Mr. F. R. Goodyer [...] is known to command an apt and skilful pen, and his reputation will not suffer from his share in *King of the Peacocks*. While he has continued to shoot folly as it flies – to hold up sham and pretense to ridicule – he

[146] *The Forty Thieves* (1890-91), book of words, Scene 7, p. 21.

> has done so in a spirit which will leave no sting behind. There is more of good-nature than of bitterness in all he says, and in no instance has he allowed his playful muse to carry him beyond the limits of good taste.[147]

A subtle approach to local politics apparently suited the pantomimes of the 1870s, and, in fact, the smaller catchment area of local audiences may have actually precluded overt political statements. By the 1880s, however, Nottingham was witnessing municipal growth as well as the local effect of the 1884 electoral reform act. The new appointment of George Dance as writer of the annual pantomimes may well have been in response to growing demands for municipal and political accountability. According to Macqueen-Pope, Dance 'had an unutterable contempt for all officials of every kind [...] He warred with bank managers, town and county councils, and all those dressed in a little brief authority.'[148] Dance's pantomimes contained a vast amount of references – up to forty or fifty in each production – that satirised and lampooned every aspect and individual of local importance. Whilst the 1885 school room scene at Birmingham had been displaced by political imagery, Dance's school-room scene in the 1887 production of *Babes in the Wood* was the setting for a quick fire question and answer session encompassing the full range of municipal affairs.[149]

The social referencing in provincial pantomime therefore represented a range of local interest groups, and provided an arena in which local and locally relevant subjects could be addressed. What has also emerged is that politics and the boundaries of satire could be individual to the particular theatre, and that because of this perceived appropriateness, by the audiences for that theatre, little complaint was voiced.[150]

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[147] 'The "King of the Peacocks"', *NDG*, 4 January 1873, p. 3.
[148] Macqueen-Pope, *Shirtfronts and Sables*, pp. 86-87.
[149] *Babes in the Wood* (1887-88), book of words, Scene 4, pp. 21-24.
[150] The question of whether pantomime was inherently conservative or subversive has been addressed in a few works. Golby and Purdue, *Civilisation of the Crowd* (p. 71, also cited above, in footnote 60), present an argument for the essentially conservative nature of the genre. Their argument, however, is grounded in theoretical notions of carnival rather than empirical evidence. Lawrence Senelick, in 'Politics as Entertainment: Victorian Music-Hall Songs', *Victorian Studies*, 19 (1975), 149-180, also argues for the conservative element in the topical song, although his argument principally relates to those songs sung in the music hall. Jane Moody in *Illegitimate Theatre* argues for the potentially transgressive nature of the Georgian harlequinade, although she also links pantomime with carnival (pp. 106-108). Similarly, Davis and Emeljanow (*Reflecting the Audience*, p. 80) usefully, albeit briefly, question the conservative 'discourse of control' in pantomime suggested by Janice Carlisle's reading of Dickens's visit to the Britannia theatre. However, their promotion of the 'transgressive' harlequinade again suggests a concern with the Georgian and early Victorian pantomimes.

Together with the variation in submissions to the Lord Chamberlain's office and the leniency of the latter towards pantomime, it is unsurprising that the *Hornet* championed the political role of the provincial pantomime:

> it is not in London theatres, where the Lord Chamberlain or his officials may drop in any night, that we need expect bold speeches [...] it is when we get into the fresh air of the Provinces that we find the real Politics of the Pantomime [...] London is a big place, but it is a very weak helpless place [...] compared to the provincial towns.[151]

The claims made in the *Hornet* article are tremendously important. The sparsity of critical work on Victorian provincial pantomime suggests that there is little of interest to encourage further research into the genre and, in turn, the concentration of work on the London – more specifically the West End – pantomime productions has focused on general and national ideologies apparent in the scripts. If, as the *Hornet* article stated, those London theatres were, of necessity, more responsive to the requirements of the Lord Chamberlain's office, then it follows that the political comment would have been more circumspect, and the subject matter more limited. By contrast, the references and comments in the Nottingham and Birmingham pantomimes appear to have been far less inhibited, which, in turn, offers a new perspective on regional productions. The Christmas annual depended not simply on engaging Miss Gilbert's troupe of dancers and providing some 'local colour' in a selection of unconnected references.[152] The provincial pantomime crucially represented the local and regional ethos, and promoted a coherence of local identity, whether through the taste and provision of spectacle, or the expression of social and political concerns.

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[151] 'Politics of the Pantomime', *Hornet*, 24 January 1874.
[152] The phrase 'local colour' is used by Benyon, p. 8.

Chapter 6: 'THE GORGEOUS CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME'[1]

Case Studies: *Dick Whittington* 1880

In 1877, a brief article entitled 'The Decay of Pantomime' was printed in the *Birmingham Daily Mail*. The writer, citing *The Times*, noted that far fewer of the London theatres were producing pantomime, 'in deference partly, as is to be presumed, to the public taste, and in a measure probably out of regard to their own convenience.' The writer presumed that the rising costs of other productions made removing them in favour of the pantomime a risky financial move. More importantly, perhaps, the article continued to assert that:

> The taste for pantomime is by no means so keen or so universal as it once was in the history of our stage. There is enough of it still, and if more were wanted, more, we may be sure, there would be. The day has, however, long gone by when it was considered an indispensable property of the Christmas holidays, or when, indeed, the public would have been scandalised had any theatre neglected to mark with at least some kind of special significance the advent of the Christmas-time.[2]

In the Birmingham paper, this small piece was placed alongside the lengthy review of the Theatre Royal pantomime. The co-existence of the two articles on the page must have seemed ironic to the *Mail*'s readership, for pantomime production was as prominent as ever in Birmingham. In turn, the perceived decline of productions in London was not related to issues of artistic merit or moral rectitude, such as I outlined in Chapter 1, but to the inextricably related pragmatics of supply and demand. The partial shift in public taste and an unwillingness to remove other expensive productions from the stage over the Christmas period that was being experienced in London did not reflect the pattern of production in the provinces. The review of the Theatre Royal pantomime, for example, promoted the staging, scenery and costumes of the production: elements that, at that theatre, invariably bore the hallmark of abundant expenditure. Three years after the

[1] Advertisement, *NJ*, 27 December 1880, p. 1.
[2] 'The Decay of Pantomime', *BDM*, 27 December 1877, p. 2.

'Decline of Pantomime' had been printed in the *Birmingham Daily Mail*, the same newspaper carried an article entitled 'The Reign of Pantomime', in which provincial productions were celebrated, for 'nearly everyone goes to see the pantomime'. More especially, the article reiterated the fact that:

> Every succeeding year more money and artistic enterprise are lavished upon its production. Nor is this to be wondered at when we remember that in nine cases out of ten his pantomime is the theatrical manager's sheet anchor.[3]

For the annual pantomime to be the provincial manager's 'sheet anchor', it had to respond to public taste, which, according to this article, craved lavish productions. Similarly, at Nottingham, expensive productions were promoted, particularly after the appointment of Thomas W. Charles as Manager in 1877. However, as I have established in earlier chapters, the regular staging of pantomime in the provinces had, additionally, to respond to the specifics of local traditions and expectations. Those influences, composite elements and regional variations, that defined the pantomimes at Nottingham and Birmingham, can best be illustrated by individual case studies. This final chapter, then, focusses on the reviews and the promotional materials of two versions of *Dick Whittington and His Cat*, presented at the Theatres Royal of Nottingham and Birmingham in 1880, according to local resources, traditions and preferences.[4]

The late 1870s had witnessed poor trade in Nottingham, but, in a review of the 1879-80 pantomime *Jack and the Beanstalk*, the *Nottingham Daily Guardian* had applauded 'a management, which in spite of bad trade and dark forebodings, has had the courage to launch out into so costly an enterprise'.[5] Although such emphasis may have had more to do with puffery than actual expenditure, the promoted cost of pantomimes were a feature of reviews from the late 1870s and typified the managerial approach of Thomas W. Charles. Charles was clearly ambitious for the theatre; in 1878, just prior to

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[3] 'The Reign of Pantomime', *BDM*, 29 December 1880, p. 2.
[4] Both the Nottingham and Birmingham pantomimes were entitled *Dick Whittington and His Cat* (hereafter referred to as *Dick Whittington* in both instances).
[5] 'Notes on Amusements: Theatre Royal', *NDG*, 14 January 1879, p. 3.

staging a production of *Sardanapalus*, he had announced that it was his 'first attempt to bring Nottingham into the front rank of Dramatic Towns'.[6] Charles's ambition for the theatre in terms of productions was matched by his plans to improve the physical features of the theatre building. Such developments were more easily accomplished in the face of reinvigorated trade in the town in 1880 in which, according to the *Nottingham Journal*, the 'staple trades' in Nottingham had 'witnessed an improvement [...] shared in by employers and employed'.[7] Just prior to the pantomime in 1880, and at Charles's suggestion, the proprietors of the Theatre Royal invested in improvements to the public facilities of the theatre. The early advertisements for the pantomime included the details of how the Messrs. Lambert had

> expended over £2,000 in altering and improving the Building, constructing/New Systems of Ventilation and Sanitary Arrangement, and [in]/erecting New Pit and Pit Stall Entrances for the greater com/fort and convenience of the public.[8]

The opening night review in the *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express* began with further details of the alterations to the entrances to 'these popular parts of the house'.[9] Such improvements were a shrewd move and were to be followed in 1884 by improvements to the stage facilities. Charles was clearly a businessman: as manager of two theatres (at Nottingham and Glasgow), he could presumably save costs by interchanging and re-using his pantomimes. He was also alert to the expectations of his pantomime audiences in Nottingham. Whilst there were clear signs of increased expenditure in some aspects of his pantomimes, there remained features of production that demonstrated the inherited traditions and necessary financial circumspection that had influenced the Nottingham Christmas Annual in earlier years.

The 1880-81 pantomime was the first time that the story of Dick Whittington had been produced at the Theatre Royal. The basic story of *Dick Whittington* follows the

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[6] Playbill for 12 August 1878. Held in the loose collection of playbills at the Nottingham Local Studies Library.
[7] '[part damaged] Events of 1880', *NJ*, 1 January 1881, p. 2.
[8] Advertisement, *NJ*, 27 December 1880, p. 1.
[9] 'Theatre Royal', *Express*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.

exploits of a young lad who travels from the country to seek his fortune in London, yet who, initially, fails to make his mark. On leaving the capital, he believes he hears the bells of Bow church telling him to turn again and return to London, where he will be Mayor not once but three times. Naturally, the pantomime plot extended and enhanced the original story and previews set out the principal features. Drawing on local expectation and Charles's ambitions, the reviewer in the *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express* began his preview with a summative account of the production, initially praising F. R. Goodyer for a witty libretto and 'highly pleasing songs' and then proceeding to comment on the spectacle of the production:

> the scenery and dresses have been got up on a scale of magnificence which may be fairly considered to surpass anything ever done on any previous occasion at this Theatre. Messrs. Harry Potts and Charles Gibbons, aided by their assistants have done their work most admirably, and several of the scenes should in themselves be sufficient inducement to the public to visit the Theatre. The artists have carefully avoided that excessive gaudiness which so often spoils the scenery in pantomimes, and have kept within the limits of excellent taste. They have fully realised the fact that the great point in pantomime performances at the present day is the *mise-en-scéne*, and have evidently determined to set up to that fact, and to do their share of the work with all the talent that they had at their command. The dresses are superb, and the general effect, more especially in the processions and groupings, is exceedingly brilliant.[10]

The principal features of this paragraph foregrounded those elements that characterised pantomime production at Nottingham during this period: magnificent yet tasteful scenery, superb dresses, and 'brilliant' processions and groupings. As was usual, further details of the scenery were not forthcoming, although the writer of the preview highlighted the 'splendid scene' of the 'prismatic home of the sea nymphs', the 'magnificently painted scene' of the seashore and the transformation, 'The Birth of Flowers' 'which is quite a triumph of art, and is sure to elicit ringing applause'.[11] As I discussed in Chapter 2, by 1880 the transformation scene was becoming less important in pantomime productions and one reviewer was evidently uninspired by that year's offering: 'the composition, as

[10] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *Express*, 27 December 1880, p. 3.
[11] '*Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *Express*, 27 December 1880, p. 3.

gradually revealed [was] full of very charming ideas, very charmingly carried out, and with the effect of exciting universal admiration. Great originality is not now possible in this form of art'.[12]

The preview in the *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express* also acknowledged that an 'excellent' company of artistes had 'been got together'.[13] Those artistes were prominent in early, front page advertisements of the pantomime, which promoted the specially engaged company within a provenance that provided recognition and implicit recommendation to potential audiences. While the Theatre Royal remained the sole legitimate theatre in Nottingham, the late 1870s had seen an increase in potential competition for local audiences. I have referred to The Alhambra music hall in St. Mary's Gate elsewhere in this thesis; in addition, in 1876, the Palace Theatre of Varieties had opened on Market Street, close to the Theatre Royal. Twentieth-century critics, such as A. E. Wilson, have observed that from the early 1870s, there was a significant shift by theatres to engaging music hall artistes for their pantomimes and, certainly, this seems to begun to have happened in both Nottingham and Birmingham by the end of that decade.[14] However, it was not a comprehensive move; rather, as Wilson himself acknowledges, the music hall stars were engaged alongside performers from burlesque and comic opera, as well as lead comedians from the legitimate theatre.[15] The attractions of the music hall and variety theatre, although they provided competition, did not therefore overtly influence the pantomime engagements at the Theatre Royal in 1880. The promoted cast for *Dick Whittington* was headed by Miss Grace Armytage 'Who made so successful an impression in Nottingham in "Robin Hood"', Miss Haidee Crofton, from the Opera Comique, Miss Emily Keane from the Alhambra, London, Miss Eugenie Vernie from Astley's Theatre, Miss Kate Searle from the Prince of Wales Theatre in Liverpool, and Miss Katie Tremayne from the Criterion Theatre. Miss Lucy Read was engaged from the 'Cloches de

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[12] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington and His Cat*', *NDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.
[13] '*Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *Express*, 27 December 1880, p. 3.
[14] Wilson, *Pantomime Pageant*, p. 57. This particular change to pantomime is discussed in his ensuing chapter entitled 'The Music-Hall Invasion', pp. 57-61.
[15] Ibid., in particular his discussion on p. 58. Although Wilson addresses the fact that stars had other provenance, they are, in his chapter, subsumed within the music-hall argument.

Corneville' Company, as well as Mr. F. Solomon, 'The celebrated Opera Bouffe Artiste, from the "Madam Favart" Company'. Other artistes were engaged from the Theatre Royal, Belfast, the Princess Theatre, Glasgow, and the Theatres Royal of Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Certain artistes were described in terms of their reception at Nottingham and other towns. Mr. Harry Fischer was 'The popular Burlesque Actor, from the Prince of Wales' Theatre, Liverpool' and Mr. E. M. Robson was 'The favourite Comedian, from the chief provincial Theatres'. Last but not least on the bill was Mr. J. W. Hanson 'The great eccentric Burlesque Actor, of the Theatre Royal,/Nottingham', who played Clown and Captain Boobyhatch.[16] As I outlined in Chapter 2, although the principals of the opening were no longer transformed into the correlative characters of the harlequinade, artistes could and did appear in both. In addition to Mr. Hanson, Charles Lawrence who played Pantaloon and Fred Artelli who played Harlequin, both performed as shipmates in the opening.

Beneath the list of artistes and before the cast list of 'mortals', 'immortals' and harlequinade players, another announcement promoted 'THE NOTTINGHAM JUVENILE CHOIR':

> TWENTY-SIX IN NUMBER, who will sing a New Juvenile Chorus, written by THOS. W. CHARLES as a Companion to the popular Villagers' Chorus in 'Babes in the Wood,' this year creating so great a sensation in Mr. CHARLES' Pantomime at the Royal Princess Theatre, Glasgow.[17]

The Juvenile Choir recalls the pragmatic engagement of the Juvenile troupe of dancers in the mid-1860s, and, implicitly, the cost saving exercise that I outlined in Chapter 3. However, the phrasing of this particular promotion was more complex. The Chorus itself was a novelty ('a New Juvenile Chorus') but was intrinsically linked to an earlier production, that of the 1878-79 *Babes in the Wood*. In so doing, a line of tradition was

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[16] Advertisement, *NDE*, 27 December 1880, p. 1, and advertisement, *NJ*, 27 December 1880, p. 1.
[17] Ibid.

established, encouraging potential audiences to confidently recall past pantomimes at the Theatre Royal. The new pantomime of *Dick Whittington* was therefore subtly aligned to 'popularity' and past success. Similarly, the script was referred to in relation to its authorship, the name of F. R. Goodyer carrying an implicit recommendation. In a review of the first night in the *Nottingham Journal*, the writer commented that,

> when we knew that the libretto was written by Mr. F. R. Goodyer we felt confident that it would be witty and abounding in amusing situations and incidents, and our confidence has not been misplaced.[18]

In the extant book of words for *Dick Whittington*, the plot began with a dark scene. Malevolentia, the bad fairy, and 'her attendant Elves' gathered in 'A Weird Forest' to give a report, which celebrated disruptive elements in the world.[19] The list began with reports from Russia, Turkey, Europe and Ireland ('Thanks to his fondness for assassination/He stands the foremost in our estimation.)'[20] England, naturally, was praised, and as for events in Nottingham:

> What's this? From Nottingham? – yes – I remember,
> A special messenger sent last November
> Our business here has been somewhat neglected.
> Matters are not so good as we expected.
> The striking upshot of a late election,
> Affords us food for serious reflection;
> When Nichol's gold is robbed of half its force,
> It follows, surely, as a thing of course,
> Corruption's falling off – now this is sad,
> And must be seen to – still we're very glad,
> To find some solace in another case,
> Officialism's rampant in the place,
> The rates are high, thus tending to forment,
> A gratifying state of discontent.
> The town accounts have likewise caused a ruction,
> Mellers and Sellars meet with great obstruction [...]
> Fred Bell has been too quiet in his teaching;

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[18] 'The Pantomime', *NJ*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.
[19] In the manuscript version submitted for licensing, this scene was 'A Gloomy Cave'. *Dick Whittington* Brit. Mus. Add Ms. 53246B.
[20] *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, Scene 1, p. 3.

> The wily Silverton has left off preaching.
> The Guardians too get in no fresh hobble;
> The School Board hasn't had a single squabble.[21]

According to one retrospective review, the preceding year had indeed 'not been an eventful one'. The principal feature of the year had been the general election in which, in the local Trent ward, 'Mr. NICHOLLS was defeated by a comparatively unknown man'.[22] The review provides no further clues, but the inference in the pantomime speech of a decline in effective corruption marked the end of a long period in which such electoral practices had been all too common in Nottingham (as evinced in the 1868 elections, that I discussed in Chapter 5).[23] Whilst the manuscript for *Dick Whittington* was licensed, it was accompanied by a caution from the Examiner of Plays regarding personalities, but, as was usual in the period, the speech remained in the pantomime. Fred Bell and the Rev. E. J. Silverton, for example, were local preachers about whom regular and unsympathetic comments were made in the Nottingham pantomimes, with no complaint from audiences or reviewers.[24] The references to officialism and an increase in the rates also marked changes that were occurring in the town. The Borough Extension Act of 1877 had necessitated an enlargement of the municipal offices, and in 1880, the Corporation had purchased the waterworks, gasworks, the sewerage farm, town estates and recreation grounds.[25] According to the *Nottingham Journal*, the increase in rates was due to the development of higher education in the town; as I mentioned in Chapter 5, this provision and related new buildings had also been a feature in the pantomime of *Blue Beard* in 1877-78.

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[21] *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, Scene 1, p. 3.
[22] '[part damaged] Events of 1880', *NJ*, 1 January 1881, p. 2.
[23] Although effective corruption may have been dwindling, its practices were not unheard of. The local satirical journal *Jackdaw* had suggested that local Conservatives had attempted to bribe voters 'with dinners and teas to support' their candidates 'Messrs. Isaac and Gill'. *Jackdaw*, 30 January 1880, cited in Richard Iliffe and Wilfred Baguley, *Victorian Nottingham: A Story in Pictures*, 20 vols (Nottingham: the Nottingham Historical Film Unit, 1970-1983), xi (1973), p. 41.
[24] Fred Bell had left for America in 1879 (hence 'too quiet'). 'Farewell Fred Bell "*Here's Another One Off to America*"', *Jackdaw*, 21 March 1879, cited in Iliffe and Baguley, *Victorian Nottingham in Pictures*, xi, p. 20. Silverton was a Baptist preacher and, according to the *Jackdaw*, a quack. Evidence taken from the 'Extract from the issue of the *Jackdaw* for 11th April 1879', Iliffe and Baguley, *Victorian Nottingham* , xi, p. 33.
[25] '[part damaged] Events of 1880', *NJ*, 1 January 1881, p. 2. The Borough Extension Act and the increase in rates after 1877 are discussed in Church, p. 351.

After relating contemporary events in Scene 1, Malevolentia planned to thwart Cupid's plans for Dick Whittington. The most noticeable feature of the Nottingham version of *Dick Whittington* was the fact that Dick was not made Lord Mayor at the end of the story. The protecting fairy Cupid, instead of helping Dick to pursue his traditional goal, protected the romance between the hero and Alice; it was affairs of the heart that framed this pantomime story and which were outlined in the remainder of Scene 1. Scene 2 was set in 'Fitzwarren's House at Cheapside' – an 'excellent exterior' according to the *Nottingham Daily Guardian* – which heralded the appearance of the juvenile chorus that had been promoted in the early advertisements. A 'troupe of juvenile dustmen, sweeps, and dairy-maids' entered and took 'part in a very tuneful chorus which, rapturously received last evening, had to be repeated from the beginning.' The reviewer re-emphasised the early promotion of the chorus, assuring its readership that 'this portion of the pantomime will prove to be one of the most popular of its features.'[26] This scene was also the setting for the arrival of Dick into London; he had arrived from 'Mudslush in the Marsh', which for local audiences must have had an associative resonance with the slum areas of Narrow Marsh in the town.[27] His arrival was accompanied by 'a troupe of citizens [...] who, charmingly attired, favour us with a semi-rustic dance, and then form themselves into a picturesque group'.[28] Dick meets Alice Fitzwarren with whom of course he falls instantly in love, and she ensures that her father, a mercer, offers Dick work. In Scene 3, the latter began work in the 'Office' of Fitzwarren's house, where he struggled with maths in Fitzwarren's counting house in a reference that may have carried inferences in relation to the town accounts mentioned in Scene 1:

> Three times naught's a naught that's dot and carry one,
> And four is six and six and five is ten,
> That's put down naught and carry one again.[29]

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[26] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington and His Cat*', *NDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 3. Attention was also drawn to the group in 'Theatre Royal', *Express*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.
[27] *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, Scene 2, p. 7.
[28] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington and His Cat*', *NDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.
[29] *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, Scene 3, p. 12.

Accused of poor work by Alice's admirer, Idle Jack, Dick was sent off in disgrace to join Captain Boobyhatch's ship, the 'Mary Jane'. Unwilling to be a sailor, Dick left London and Scene 4 found him and his cat on 'Highgate Hill', from where he heard the legendary Bow bells. At that point, however, Dick was kidnapped by the press gang. The Nottingham pantomimes, more so than those at Birmingham, often included references to the local newspapers, and in Scene 3, a pun was made on the press gang and the local press:

Fitz. But the Press is free
To take all sorts of liberties, no doubt.
Dick. I have no *Guardian* to kick up a rout.
But if my liberty you thus abuse
I'll keep a *Journal* and *Express* my views.[30]

The next scene opened on 'The Docks of Queenhithe', 'painted with much realism, yet with much imagination, by Mr. Harry Potts, who would be gratified by the applause showered upon his work last evening'[31] Dick was finally forced to join up with the crew of the 'Mary Jane', but the journey at sea was halted by shipwreck. Although the *Nottingham Journal* promoted the latter as 'Mr. Charles's splendid dioramic effects of thunder and lightning, and awful shipwreck', the reviewers in the *Express* preferred to reiterate their earlier comments and to draw attention to the panorama, from docks to 'Sunset at Sea' to 'Storm', to 'Wreck', to 'Moonlight' and finally to 'Prismatic Home of the Sea Nymphs'.[32] The feature suffered from mechanical problems on the first night, but, assured the reviewer, it 'will no doubt prove in time one of the greatest attractions of the pantomime', and applauded the work of the artists: 'The "Sunset at Sea" is especially praiseworthy, being very delicately painted' and 'The Prismatic Home' is very pretty and the working out is skilful'.[33] The latter was also the setting for a ballet, whose dancers

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[30] Ibid., Scene 3, p. 13.
[31] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington and His Cat*' in *NDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.
[32] 'In the Gallery on Boxing Night (by Percy Vere)', *NJ*, 30 December 1880, p. 4. Scenes detailed in 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington and His Cat*', *NDE*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.
[33] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington and His Cat*', *NDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.

were 'attired in a dazzling glory of indescribable material, on which the vari-coloured light, thrown at sudden and effective intervals of the dance, exercises an admirable effect'.[34] The promotion of the costumes, that had been asserted in the previews, were reiterated after the first performance. The reviewer in the *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express* commented of the costumes that, 'this is a department in which our local pantomime invariably shines, and for which it will always earn enthusiastic praise.'[35] The provenance of the ballet was not promoted and it appears to have been composed of local dancers, trained and led by Miss Collier. The reviewer made allowance for their hesitancy, stating that the 'young ladies are not yet quite perfect in the treading of the saltatory [*sic*] maze [...] but it is easy to see how skilful they will be anon. Miss Collier herself contributes here a *pas seul* of great agility and grace.'[36]

Dick and his cat, as well as the other principal characters, survived to land on a 'Seashore with a Rocky Coast', but, captured by natives, they were all taken to the King's palace. In Scene 9 'Interior of the Palace', the King and his subjects complained about the infestation of rats on the island; the play on rats and rates recalling the local complaints in Scene 1 ('Our subjects daily grow more irritated./[..]No wonder, when they're so much over-rated.').[37] Dick's cat instantly solved the problem, and the captives were released. In reviewing this scene, the *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express* writer drew particular attention to what he perceived as the 'great feature of the scene': 'the assembly of the *Beeri's* slaves, attendants and the rest, who, brilliantly attired in dresses which defy description but which succeed in greatly impressing the spectator, go through a variety of quaint and interesting dances'.[38] After Dick had been amply rewarded, the chief characters returned to the ship to sail to England. However, the 'Mary Jane' was not promoted in terms of its set or construction, but as the setting for 'the much expected topical song to the refrain of "I shall never be happy again".' 'We find

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, Scene 9, p. 23.
[38] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington and His Cat*', *NDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.

that their happiness depends upon many contingencies.' remarked the same reviewer: 'They will not be happy again, they say, till "Boycottin'" is "forgottin," till Gladstone with his axe cuts down the income tax, till England and Prussia come down upon Russia, till the University Buildings (they are told) are opened by King Leopold, and so on.' 'the melody is a good one [...] the singers make their meaning excellently clear, and they are of course encored again and again'.[39] The *Nottingham Daily Express* reviewer concluded that 'it is one of Mr. F. R. Goodyer's cleverest and most amusing pantomimes', but it was this topical song in Scene 10 that was forecast to undergo the most additions during the run.[40] The *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express* reviewer had commented that '[o]nce more we have to note the recurrence of a decided "feature," which will no doubt "grow in beauty" night by night.'[41]

Back in London, the character of Fitzwarren had fallen upon hard times, but on his return, Dick offered to go into partnership to help his former employer. News of Dick's success overseas had travelled before him, and on 'London Bridge' in Scene 11 – 'an exceedingly clever and effective "set"' – he was welcomed back to the city as a wealthy man.[42] The focus of this scene was a procession, described as 'one succession of brightly-attired men and maidens', which 'affords one of the most striking tableaux of the evening.'[43] Scene 12, set back in Fitzwarren's house, reunited Dick and Alice. Scene 13, set in a 'Crypt under Guildhall' was the setting for Malevolentia to bemoan her lack of success in trying to foil the romance between Dick and Alice. In Scene 2, Idle Jack had claimed to have taken the 'pledge' and the final scene found him and the Cook in confessional mode:

Jack. We did our best to injure that young man;
for doing which my conscience did alarm me,
And so we joined the great Salvation Army
Cook. That changed us quite, were better now, and wiser

[39] Ibid.
[40] 'Theatre Royal', *Express*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.
[41] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington and His Cat*', *NDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

Jack. We've seen our folly,
Cook. Thanks to happy Eliza.[44]

The founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth, was a Nottingham man, and his work was often referred to in the local pantomimes, not always in complimentary terms. 'happy Eliza' was a reference to Eliza Haynes, a captain in the Salvation Army, who hailed from Leicester and who had travelled to Nottingham in 1879 `in order to convert` local folk to temperance.[45]

In the initial advertisements for the pantomime, and in addition to the promotion of the children's chorus, Thomas Charles also had

> the honour to announce that he has
> been permitted to introduce into the Pantomime (by special
> permission of Messrs. Randall and Williams) a Selection of
> the music of the most successful Comic Opera now playing in
> London, entitled *Billee Taylor*, composed by Edward Solomon.[46]

Charles's predecessor at the Theatre Royal, Frank Musgrave, had instigated a level of musical quality into the pantomimes. The productions incorporated popular songs but also a variety of operatic and original music. Such a variety of sung and orchestrated music also become a feature of Charles's productions and, in addition to three excerpts from *Billee Taylor*, the pantomime of *Dick Whittington* included new arrangements as well as songs from the halls. The newspaper reviews detailed all the music and songs, including, 'When the bells are sweetly chiming' sung by Haidee Crofton as Alice, the choruses from *Billee Taylor* (sung in Scene 5 by 'sailors in new and bright costumes`), the medley sung on the 'Rocky Coast' which was `encored last evening at least three times`, and the `overture and the accompaniment to the transformation 'that had `been especially well done.'[47] The *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express* review was uncritical

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[44] *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, Scene 13, pp. 31-32.
[45] 'The Salvation Army: *Or "Happy Eliza" leading on her Geese and Donkeys*', an extract from the *Jackdaw* for 7 November 1879, reprinted with an illustration in Iliffe and Baguley, *Victorian Nottingham*, xi, pp. 28-29. The extract also refers to Bell and Silverton.
[46] Advertisement, *NDE*, 27 December 1880, p. 1.
[47] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington and His Cat*' in *NDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.

of the inclusion of music hall songs, although its writer commented that 'if there is a good deal of music-hall melody it must be admitted that that is just what audiences like.'[48]

As was usual in Nottingham, the newspapers continued to review the pantomime into January. A brief review in the *Nottingham Daily Express* encompassed later additions, pointing out that 'the libretto is subject to interpolation which is frequent and more or less laughter moving', and referred to the additions to the topical song, stating that the local allusions 'repeatedly "brought down the house"'. The references to Councillor Walter Gregory 'and other public men were well received'. However, 'on the introduction of the slang cognomen of the late Premier there was quite a political demonstration, hisses and applause being for some little time indulged in.[49] (There is no evidence that official complaints were made by any of the audience present.) The reviewer continued to emphasise the spectacle of the production. The children in Scene 2 were again promoted as 'among the most conspicuous features, and as to the *ballet*, decidedly the most splendid scene is laid in "The Prismatic Home of the Sea Nymphs"'. The principals were praised, and as if it had only just occurred to the writer, 'It is worthy of note that [Fred Solomon's] song "All on Account of Eliza," which has been so often encored in so short a time, is from his brother's comic opera of *Billee Taylor*, produced in the metropolis with a great amount of success.'[50]

The *Nottingham Daily Guardian* review of 5 January 1881, started with a promotion of scenery, although the recommendation was achieved simply by listing scene titles – the view from Highgate, the Docks, the panorama and the 'Prismatic Home' – and noting the artistic achievements which, the reviewer added, were 'altogether above the average of such productions, not only in provincial but in London theatres.' The second feature highlighted was the 'richness and ingenuity of the dresses' and also the 'groupings in the Cheapside, Palace and bridge scenes' which were noted as being 'remarkably

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[48] Ibid.
[49] 'Local Amusements: Theatre Royal', *NDE*, 4 January 1881, p. 4. The late Premier presumably referred to Disraeli who had left office in 1880. This information is taken from J. R. Edwards, *British History 1815-1939* repr. edn (London: Bell and Sons, 1977), p. 243.
[50] 'Local Amusements: Theatre Royal', *NDE*, 4 January 1881, p. 4.

striking and agreeable'. The third principal feature promoted in this particular review was the fun of the pantomime. The reviewer highlighted the topical song in Scene 10, which was 'now fuller than ever of mirth-provoking local "hits," and which the audiences seem inclined to go on encoring till the "crack of doom".' It was not until this review in January that the harlequinade was noted, although it was 'not very long in duration or very fresh in treatment, but Mr. Hanson has some clever "gags," and there is some spirited dancing.' The review concluded with further comments on the improvements to the theatre, applauding the changes and adding that 'the whole theatre is, more than ever it was, one of the handsomest and most graceful to be found in the provinces.'[51]

The front page advertisements in the Nottingham papers grew steadily shorter after the first few nights of the pantomime. By 30 December, only the theatre departments were listed, and by 5 January, they were comprised of only a few lines. The brief statements were, however, indicative of the principal elements of the production: the names of Thomas Charles and F. R. Goodyer. Charles's name figured as the creator of the production and, implicitly, of a new era at the theatre, whilst Goodyer's name epitomised a regional tradition that had provided the foundations of local expression and particular standards in the Nottingham pantomimes.[52]

By 1880, Mr. Mercer Simpson, the manager of the Theatre Royal in Birmingham, had established his pantomimes as successful and lavish productions. Simpson's effective use of promotional tools had ensured a reputation for the theatre as the local 'home' of pantomime, with an established author and a keen insight into the demands of his clientele. The subject of Dick Whittington had been used once before in 1870, a fact highlighted in the opening lines of the *Birmingham Daily Mail* preview, printed on 22 December 1880. In it, the writer commented that '[i]t would be difficult to hit upon a tale more wholesome in the moral it points', but the Liberal newspaper owners cannot have been unaware of the political and civic inferences of the tale of the lad who was three

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[51] 'Notes on Amusements', *NDG*, 5 January 1881, p. 8.
[52] See, for example, advertisement, *NDE*, 5 January 1881, p. 1.

times Mayor of London.[53] Since the last version of *Dick Whittington* had been produced ten years earlier, Joseph Chamberlain had been Mayor of Birmingham three times. His sometimes controversial local reforms had changed the civic face of Birmingham and the mid-1870s had seen significant improvements in, for example, local housing, streets, and sanitation.[54] As I discussed in Chapter 5, celebration of the industrial success of Birmingham had featured in the opening scene of the 1879-80 pantomime, but the 1880 pantomime allowed additional scope for honouring the town's political achievements.

The 1880-81 season at the Theatre Royal was the first for which no stock company was engaged and, as at Nottingham, the pantomime company drew on performers from the music halls and the legitimate stage. The production had a core of eleven leads, with the Brothers Twell, the Brothers Victorelli, Mddle Nellie, and the Pirate Troupe.[55] The character of 'Dick Whittington' was played by Lottie Harcourt, who was noted by the *Birmingham Daily Mail* as having 'previously made her mark in burlesque'.[56] A review of her performance proclaimed her to be 'an accomplished dancer, a very fair singer, and capable of delivering her lines with clearness and expression'.[57] It has not been my intention in this thesis to dwell on the role of music hall in pantomime, nor to engage in detail with the contemporaneous critical debates regarding the presence of music hall artistes in the pantomime, but it is worthwhile highlighting one feature that was very apparent in the provincial theatres. A principal argument against music hall stars being engaged in pantomime centred on the unsuitability of their material; the perceived coarseness and *double entendres* of their songs, and a critical sense of the performers encouraging an unfamilial atmosphere in the legitimate theatre. Whilst such arguments do on occasions occur in reviews of the Nottingham and Birmingham pantomimes, there was also a great deal of praise for the performances of such artistes, in particular their ability to sing well and to be effective burlesque performers. Criticism of the 'music hall

[53] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 22 December 1880, p. 2.
[54] A lengthy speech applauding this work had been made in the 1875-76 pantomime of *Puss in Boots*, which I discussed in Chapter 5.
[55] Advertisement, *BDP*, 25 December 1880, p. 1.
[56] 'The Pantomimes: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1880, p. 2.
[57] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 28 December 1880, p. 2.

element' tended to be reserved for any excessive quantity of novelty acts – held to unnecessarily hold up the story-telling – rather than the performances of the singers. Such entertainments did feature in *Dick Whittington* in two scenes: an 'acrobatic entertainment' by the The Brothers Victorelli and Mr. Pete Dwight who 'execute[d] a most sensational dance' in the Chinese scene[58], and in the following scene, 'CHIRGWIN'S ENTERTAINMENT', which comprised a minstrel act.[59] G. H. Chirgwin (the 'White-Eyed Kaffir') played Idle Jack, whose poverty towards the end of the pantomime story had conveniently forced him to take up minstrelsy. However, the *Birmingham Daily Mail* emphasised that although it was Chirgwin's first pantomime, 'he acquits himself very well, and is by no means dependent on his special entertainment which he gives towards the close of the piece'. The *Mail* also noted '[o]ne satisfactory feature in the pantomime is that the music-hall element is not allowed to obtrude itself to the exclusion of more legitimate exponents of pantomime.'[60] The article, 'The Reign of Pantomime', that I alluded to earlier in this chapter, complemented this aspect of the performance, the author indicating that:

> Already there are faint signs of the regeneration of pantomime. The music-hall element has had its day, and there is an indication that acting is once more to take its proper place in the opening burlesque.[61]

In turn, the pantomimes were not drowned in a sea of unsuitable music hall ditties. As at Nottingham, in the Birmingham version of *Dick Whittington*, '[t]he songs of the period [were] liberally drawn upon, and some pleasant concert pieces [were] given by a well-trained choir.'[62] A preview in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* noted that in Scene 5 ('Wapping Old Stairs and the Shipping Office of Fitzwarren and Co.') 'we are glad to see that Mr. Simpson has introduced the "Mariner's Chorus" from the *Sultan of Mocha*'.[63] The front

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[58] Ibid.
[59] Capitalised announcement in *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, p. 20.
[60] 'The Pantomimes: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1880, p. 2.
[61] 'The Reign of Pantomime', *BDM*, 29 December 1880, p. 2.
[62] 'The Pantomimes: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1880, p. 2.
[63] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 22 December 1880, p. 2.

page advertisement in the *Birmingham Daily Post* promoted 'charming music' as amongst the attractions of the production, and, in a review in the *Birmingham Daily Mail*, the writer highlighted the Chinese scene in which 'a number of ladies' sang 'a pretty air from *Le Petit Duc*, as they recline in dainty hammocks'.[64]

The early advertisements for the production emphasised the cast list, but the promotion of the resources of the Theatre Royal, even though they had moved in the initial billing, still carried the weight of the theatre's reputation: 'the whole produced on the usual grand scale of completeness which usually characterises this Theatre.'[65] The tone appeared weary in the repetition of 'usual', as if further recognition were not really necessary, the theatre's reputation having been established for so long. The preview in the *Birmingham Daily Post* emphasised the features of the Chinese scene, Hampstead Heath and the Lord Mayor's procession in the final scene, and by early January, spectacle had resumed a more prominent billing.[66] In a preview in the *Birmingham Daily Mail*, the writer had drawn immediate attention to the fact that '[a] more elaborate piece in point of scenic arrangements and stage effects has never been put upon the Theatre Royal stage.' In highlighting the pantomime's 'chief points of interests', the following were featured: the scene of 'Cheapside in the Olden Time', which contained 'solidly constructed houses being quite 25 feet high' and which, 'in one part of the scene more than 100 persons are on the stage', 'a peal of bells specially purchased by Mr. Simpson', and the scene of 'Hamstead [*sic*] Heath' which was:

> a wonderful example of perspective painting, enabling the eye to wander in imaginary bliss over miles of delightful landscape. The scene changes from evening to dawn, when some surprising effects are introduced, such as the miller strolling up to his miniature [mill] and setting it at work, the busy shepherd driving his flock of sheep, and other charming illustrations of rustic life.[67]

The preview also highlighted the Chinese scenery, the novelty entertainments and the

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[64] 'The Pantomimes: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1880, p. 2.
[65] Advertisement, *BDP*, 25 December 1880, p. 1.
[66] 'Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 27 December 1880, p. 5.
[67] 'The Pantomimes: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1880, p. 2.

Lord Mayor's procession on the Thames. In particular, the writer drew attention to the construction of a 'between decks' scene. Once again, the ingenuity of the stage mechanics incorporated a ship into the visual spectacle. Whereas in the 1878-79 production of *Robinson Crusoe*, the 'Lively Sally' became the focus of attention, in 1880-81, the ship became a large comic prop:

> Instead of the old-fashioned representation of a sinking ship on some very stagy waves we get a view between decks. By an ingenious contrivance the sleeping berths are made to rock in a fashion that almost provokes the qualms of sea-sickness by simply glancing at it. The notion is exceedingly comical.[68]

The dismissal of 'old-fashioned' sets and 'stagy waves' effectively discounted the 'Lively Sally' of 1878-79. Although the latter creation had been anything but 'old-fashioned', the phrasing of the current preview withdrew it from public memory, to be replaced by the newer offering. In the true spirit of spectacle and consumption, the individual features of *Dick Whittington* had to be seen to be new and different, and an improvement on whatever had gone before. Not only did the new 'ship' offer a (literally) different perspective, but it was the setting for a different focus of performance; the 'Lively Sally' had been the setting for dance and the strategic positioning of supernumeraries along the rigging, but the new 'ship' was incorporated into comic business. The swaying berths, and the reactions of the characters, enabled the interaction of physical movement with the mechanical movement of the set, in much the same way that the characters of Clown and Harlequin played with and within the complementary sets of the harlequinade. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the shift of much of the comic business from the harlequinade to the opening of the pantomime had been a cause for concern amongst traditionalists, but by 1880 elaborate comic business in the opening had become established practice. The above scene in performance, was described in the *Birmingham Daily Mail*:

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[68] Ibid.

> we get a glimpse of the sleeping-berths violently rocking; the unfortunate occupants, in addition to undergoing the pangs of mal-de-mer, are jerked from their cosy quarters and mixed up in extricable confusion.[69]

After the first performance, the reviews continued to draw attention to the visual and spectacular features of the production, complementing the front page advertisements. In the *Birmingham Daily Post*, beneath the opening announcement of performance times, the pantomime title was accompanied by a familiar categorisation: 'New and elaborate Scenery[...] Magnificent/Costumes, Properties and Appointments,
Charming Music/Astounding Mechanical Effects', but the advertisement was extended by a succession of ten discrete advertisements which listed the principal scenes and features along with the foremost performers in each of those scenes:

> **D**ICK WHITTINGTON. – HAMSTEAD HEATH,
> AND DISTANT VIEW OF LONDON BY NIGHT AND DAY .
> FAIRY BALLET.....Mdlle. NELLIE.
> BEAUTIFUL BELL CHORUS.
> FLOCK OF SHEEP, AND TROUPE OF DONKEYS.[70]

The impact of a succession of advertisements in the same column, each with a bold capital 'D' at the start, promoted the variety and scale of spectacle (both visual and performative) and managed to infer that these were only examples, highlights of a production crammed with effects. As was usual, the features reflected those items that had been promoted in the newspaper reviews and which, by implication, had entailed the greatest cost.

The pantomime tale followed a similar outline to that at Nottingham, but with subtle differences that emphasised both the greater resources of the Birmingham theatre, and the political nuances of the plot. For example, in addition to large mechanical properties, the production incorporated a locally made feature. In the opening scene of the

[69] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 28 December 1880, p. 2.
[70] Advertisement, *BDP*, 6 January 1880, p. 1.

1879-80 pantomime, *The Fair One With the Golden Locks*, the parade of Birmingham made products had included pasteboard bells. In 1880, the local company of *Barwells* were commissioned to provide real bells for *Dick Whittington*, which featured in both the visual and spoken elements of the pantomime. The bells had been promoted in early previews of the production, the *Birmingham Daily Mail* noting that 'A peal of bells has been specially hung for the pantomime'.[71] The bells were a significant feature and their presence and promotion were woven into the performance. In Scene 1, the belfry of Bow contained large property bells which presided over the set and the machinations of King Rat. A variation of the traditional opening demon scene, the plot was interrupted by Rosebell, Queen of the Bell Fairies, emerging along with her attendant, from the bells. In Scene 2, set in 'Old Cheapside':

> From the church tower, seen in the background, proceed the musical tones of the bells, the first intimation the audience receive of a very important provision for their delectation, for the chimes, be it said, are real chimes from real bells, cast expressly for the pantomime, and destined to be used in later scenes with charming effect.[72]

This scene provided the setting for Alice's first meeting with Dick Whittington, and the latter's engagement by her father. In this version, Dick was hired to work in the kitchen at Fitzwarren's house, but, after spoiling the dinner, he was dismissed. On departing Fitzwarren's employ, Dick began his journey out of London, but, according to the legend, only went as far as Hampstead Heath. Not only did the reviewer of the *Birmingham Daily Post* detail this next scene as containing 'perhaps the most striking and successful piece of painting in the pantomime', but the *Birmingham Daily Mail* had directed the attention of prospective audiences by promising a scene 'in which live sheep and other novel effects will be introduced.'[73] In performance, the scene 'presented a beautiful perspective of the level country between Dick's resting place and London, the buildings

[71] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 22 December 1880, p. 2.
[72] 'Christmas Amusements: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 5.
[73] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 22 December 1880, p. 2 and 'Boxing-Day in Birmingham: The Theatre Royal', *BDP*, 28 December 1880, p. 5.

of which city are just seen in the distance.'[74] After Dick's sleep, and the sound of the bells,

> the day dawns and country life begins to stir. First appear two or three tiny milkmaids [...] then an equally tiny ploughboy, whistling to the tune of the 'Merry little ploughboy' then a shepherdess driving a flock of real lambs, which exhibit some aversion to leaving the stage at the right moment; and finally a number of real donkeys, which with exemplary docility walk off into the wings as if they had perfectly practised their parts. The sails of an adjacent windmill give token that the wind is up also by beginning lazily to revolve.[75]

In the scene the moral tone, referred to earlier, was emphasised in a speech by the fairy Rosabel, quoted in the preview of the production: 'The lad has spirit, but, the fact is clear,/In his pursuits he will not persevere'. She cast a spell and 'His lethargy has vanished. In its place/A love of enterprise I now can trace'. On awakening, Dick recalled the bells and made one of many references to the former Mayor of Birmingham:

> Lord Mayor *three* times! And it may be my fate.
> To be an M.P. and Minister of State!
> The thought of that makes me so gay and *bright*,
> I might have in a *chamber lain* all night![76]

To achieve his ambitions, Dick decided to go to sea but, unlike the Nottingham version, he was unaided by the press gang. In Scene 5, 'Wapping Old Stairs and Shipping Office of Fitzwarren & Co.', Alice made up her mind to accompany him, disguised as a sailor. The initial exchange between her and the captain allowed for praise of Birmingham, a prominent feature, as I have mentioned, in the Theatre Royal pantomimes.

> CAPTAIN. A very clever boy.
> Where do you hail from?
> ALICE. Birmingham.
> CAPTAIN. Hooray.

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[74] 'Christmas Amusements: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 5.
[75] Ibid.
[76] *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, Scene 4, p. 12. This speech is also quoted in 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 22 December 1880, p. 2.

That is the place to learn the time of day![77]

The Conservative *Birmingham Daily Gazette* picked up on this praise of the town, although the reviewer studiously avoided the references to Chamberlain that littered the script, preferring instead to focus on those references that raised the issue of Home Rule and Irish unrest.[78] According to the *Birmingham Daily Mail*, Scene 6, ('Between Decks') 'should be provocative of plenty of merriment' and included the aforementioned swaying berths and the subsequent shipwreck, caused by King Rat knawing through the rotten planks of the ship. In Scene 8 Dick and his cat arrived safely in Moonshi, China where the faithful cat rid the land of rats, a pre-arranged plot according to the fairies: 'It's all been settled at, as you know well,/A private meeting at the Queen's Hotel' (a local establishment in Birmingham).[79] The success of Dick, allowed for a celebratory scene at the 'Summer Palace at Pekin' in which a 'magnificent procession of jewels and china ware' took place. As in the Nottingham version, on becoming wealthy Dick returned to London, where Fitzwarren had been reduced to poverty. In this scene – Scene 10 – reconciliations were achieved and Fitzwarren was knighted, to resume his role as an Alderman. However, on hearing that he was to be honoured in the town, Dick had his doubts:

DICK. Oh, lor!
A drinking fountain, perhaps, whose feeble jets
Will never drench us with their *heavy wets*!
Save me from *that*.[80]

The reference was to the recently erected Chamberlain memorial in the centre of Birmingham. The *Birmingham Daily Gazette* chose to quote a different passage in its preview. Pointedly highlighting the 'sly allusion', the writer continued:

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[77] Book of words, Scene 5, p. 14, and cited in 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDG*, 23 December 1880, p. 5.
[78] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDG*, 23 December 1880, p. 5.
[79] *Dick Whittington*, book of words, Scene 8, p. 17. Cited in 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM* , 22 December 1880, p. 2.
[80] *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, Scene 12, p. 23, and previewed in 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDM*, 22 December 1880, p. 2.

CAPTAIN.– Is water then so dear? Why one would think
You couldn't spare a drop to wash or drink.
JACK.– So much is used that water rates are mounting,
To serve the Chamberlain Memorial Fountain.
CAPTAIN.– That cannot surely be: with judgement curt,
The people say *that's* like a penny squirt.[81]

In the final scene of the opening, all three Birmingham newspapers had anticipated the spectacle of 'The Lord Mayor's procession on the River Thames, showing the Tower, Old London Bridge and St. Paul's'[82] In performance,

> the eyes of the audience are feasted by a panoramic representation of various scenes on the banks of the Thames [...] and as the last portion of this moving scene, showing illuminated buildings, clears away from the stage, there is disclosed a grand structure of golden barges upon the summit of which stands Dick and his bride.[83]

As was becoming usual for the theatre by 1880, the transformation scene attracted little attention in previews, beyond its title 'The Seasons', and in performance it was only noted as having suffered 'some hitch in the carpenter's department.' A 'strong' harlequinade was promoted, with Mr. Paulo as Clown although the book of words detailed just two scenes for the harlequinade: 'Pawnbrokers and Cheesemongers' and 'Dr Whackham's Boarding School'.[84]

The author of *Dick Whittington* was Charles Millward, and it was to be his last solo venture for the theatre before his stroke in 1881. A reviewer in the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* remarked that, in general, pantomime scripts 'afforded plenty of pegs upon which to hang effective scenery' but noted that Mr. Millward's libretto was 'brilliant of itself and full of smart local allusions [which] formed the basis for a series of admirable scenes and scenic effects'.[85] However, the reviews did not dwell on the locally specific

[81] *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, Scene 10, p. 21. Quoted in 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDG*, 23 December 1880, p. 5.
[82] 'The Pantomimes: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1880, p. 2.
[83] 'Christmas Amusements: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 5.
[84] 'The Pantomimes: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 27 December 1880, p. 2. Scene titles in book of words, p. 24.
[85] 'Christmas Amusements: Theatre Royal', *BDG*, 28 December 1880, p. 5.

allusions, unlike those at Nottingham. For example, although Scene 5 featured 'a talking topical song, containing a number of local allusions', they were not detailed in any reviews.[86] Similarly, no details were given of the 'rather good topical song' sung by Arthur Wyndham as the Emperor Hi Ching.[87] No further clues are available in the script submitted for licensing; as was so often the case, this version was simply a copy of the already printed book of words, in which the songs were not detailed. The license had been granted, with a 'usual caution', although references to the Reverend Dale and inferences to political interest and promotion in the judiciary made in Scene 1 were left intact (both by the Examiner of Plays, and, presumably in performance).[88] Similarly, in Scene 3, Dame Margery interrupted a fight between Idle Jack and Dick, complaining that, 'You angry pair are always letting words fly,/I almost think you go to church at Bordesley.'[89] This allusion to the Rev. R. W. Enraght of the Holy Trinity Church at Bordesley who had displayed contempt of court in November 1880, remained in the book of words and was not commented on in the reviews.[90]

As I discussed in Chapter 2, the Birmingham Theatre Royal was renowned for the spectacle of its pantomimes, but, as the reviewer of the *Birmingham Daily Mail* highlighted in 1880, spectacle was not provided at the expense of 'every other important element'.[91] The production of *Dick Whittington* responded to other traditions in providing 'pretty music, popular songs, and effective ballets' together with 'some original comic business – rather a novelty, it may be thought, in pantomime now-a-days.'[92] By early January, the front page advertisements contained a public message from Mercer Simpson, who 'gratefully proffer[ed] his Thanks to/the Press, the Public, and his numerous Friends for their kind/appreciation' of the pantomime. Morning performances were promoted for each subsequent Thursday, as well as on Monday 10, 17, and 24 January, for which the

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[86] 'Boxing-day in Birmingham', *BDP*, 28 December 1880, p. 5.
[87] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 28 December 1880, p. 2.
[88] *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, Scene 1, p. 2.
[89] *Dick Whittington* (1880-81), book of words, Scene 3, p. 10.
[90] The information about Enraght can be found in *The Birmingham Red Book and Reference Almanack for 1881* (Birmingham: Hall and English, 1881), p. 84. Bound into a single volume, *The Birmingham Red Book 1877-1881*.
[91] 'Christmas Amusements: *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 28 December 1880, p. 2.
[92] Ibid.

doors would be open at half past one, to commence at two o'clock.[93] For the 104th night of the pantomime in April 1881, a playbill announces ' **NOTICE**.- This Evening [...] An original Epilogue will be spoken by the Characters, written/expressly for the occasion, by Mr. Charles Millward.'[94]

The production of *Dick Whittington* was a huge success for the theatre, the run continuing into the beginning of April. The promotional materials used by the Theatre Royal management had established a self referential tone in which the theatre appeared to exist within its own cultural context. Previews frequently commented on previous versions of pantomime stories at the Theatre Royal, recalling earlier successes, memories and revivals of local theatre traditions. In a review of *Puss in Boots* in 1875, the writer commented that '[o]ld Birmingham playgoers will remember that some ten or fifteen years ago the boards at the Royal were trodden by this same active and mischievous Puss in Boots'. The review continued to remark that although the style of pantomimes had changed ('gaining in splendour and losing in simplicity') the current production 'by no means compares unfavourably with its predecessor'.[95] Similarly, a preview of *The Forty Thieves* in 1877 opened with a reminder that '[n]ine years ago Mr. Simpson produced [...] *The Forty Thieves*' stating that the current production 'will assuredly be as popular as others which have preceded it.'[96] The 1880 version of *Dick Whittington*, however, was perceived as having set new standards of production and continued to be recalled in later years. The following year, the *Birmingham Daily Post* previewed the expectations of the 1881-82 pantomime, remarking how, in '[r]emembering [...] the exceptional excellence of *Dick Whittington*, it will be readily understood that the manager of the Theatre Royal has found himself [...] face to face with an extremely difficult task.'[97] A preview of the 1886-87 pantomime of *Cinderella* stated that the production 'ought to be as popular as the famous *Dick Whittington* a few seasons ago'.[98] The success of *Dick Whittington* made it a

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[93] Advertisement, *BDP*, 6 January 1881, front page.
[94] Playbill for 2 April 1881. Ibid.
[95] 'Christmas Amusements: *Puss in Boots* at the Theatre Royal', *BDM*, 28 December 1875, p. 2.
[96] '*The Forty Thieves*', *BDM*, 27 December 1877, p. 2.
[97] 'The Theatre Royal Pantomime', *BDP*, 27 December 1881, p. 5.
[98] 'The Birmingham Pantomimes: Theatre Royal *Cinderella*', *BDP*, 25 December 1886, p. 5.

more regular choice for pantomimes, with other versions produced in 1884 and 1888. Although those did well, none matched the success of the 1880 pantomime. It had combined a winning format of spectacle and an apposite expression of civic pride and political sentiment.

Such an expression of political status distinguishes the Birmingham production from its counterpart in Nottingham, and exemplifies one of several major features that characterised pantomime productions at the two theatres. In addition to the relevance of local referencing, the different emphases on spectacle reflected the financial and physical resources available to each theatre. Within this feature can be seen the accepted local practice at Nottingham of using people rather than a multitude of large sets or special effects, and the promotion of local singers in the newspapers, which served to support such decisions. Conversley, at Birmingham, the locally-produced commodity of the cast bells emphasised a different kind of localness: one that drew instead on economic status. Furthermore, this study of the two productions of *Dick Whittington* has shown clearly that, although visitors from each of the towns may have visited other productions, there is no sense of rivalry between the two theatres. Indeed, what this case study underlines is the importance the two theatre managements placed on promoting the local pantomime within its own self-referential history, the traditions established by the individual theatre, and the recurring features of local production that had been evident fifteen years earlier.

These case studies emphasise that a reading of archive materials need not be confined to an attempt to re-establish a lost production as it may have appeared in performance. Instead such evidence can instead be used to define the business practices of provincial theatre managements; more especially, the ways in which a local identity was created and the strategies by which it was promoted.

Conclusion

> Though in London spectacle goes a long way towards making a pantomime a success, in the provinces something more is required by audiences.[1]

The preceding chapters have presented an overview of regional pantomime at the Theatres Royal of Nottingham and Birmingham in the period 1865 to 1892, together with a study of specific aspects of production. In the light of contemporaneous and cited claims regarding the financial importance of the annual pantomime, the purpose of the thesis has been to examine how theatre managers in the provinces tried to ensure the necessary house receipts; in other words, how they attracted audiences to their local theatres. It is clear that the pantomime was not always financially successful. In a small town that was undergoing hardship and poor trade, such as happened in Nottingham in 1866, a lack of income at the theatre could severely affect the preparations for the pantomime as well as the door sales of the actual production. My examination of the financial records and advertising at Nottingham has clearly shown how the theatre managers adapted their resources in times of hardship; how they responded to local expectation and adapted traditions of the genre according to their means.

My argument, then, has been posited on the financial, and the promotional and textual aspects of local pantomime, rather than any attempt to recreate productions or to empirically challenge the various claims regarding the composition of pantomime audiences. Instead, my thesis, where necessary, has engaged with a notion of audience as presented in the promotional and satirical elements of the productions. In this respect, I have revised critical assumptions regarding the pantomime author and his work and have drawn on and developed work on the role played by satire in pantomime. Pantomime authors have suffered at the hands of critics who have sought to judge their work according to the standards of other dramatic genres. It is, as I have shown, of far more value to consider the choice of author, particularly those who formed long-term working

[1] 'Pantomime Songs', *NDE*, 23 December 1887, p. 6.

relationships with the theatre managements, as being predicated on an appropriate local knowledge, and satiric style. The Theatres Royal of Birmingham and Nottingham were not the only provincial theatres that demonstrated such specific and significant alliances. In *English Plays*, Michael Booth cites Joe Graham, who, from 1898 until 1910, produced pantomimes at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Birmingham. Graham's recollections of pantomime production were based on specific management decisions. He stated that '[c]ustom exacts that some more or less known accepted playwright shall father the production [...] the scribe you think best suited to the task.'[2] Similarly, in *Annals of the Liverpool Stage*, R. J. Broadbent referred to a Mr. H. B. Nelson, the 'sole proprietor and manager' of the Prince of Wales's Theatre in Liverpool from 1896 to 1900. According to Broadbent, all of Nelson's pantomimes were written by one author, J. James Hewson.[3] If, in the provinces, there was a widespread practice of single author engagements for extended periods, the rationales behind such engagements are worthy of further investigation. Around 1900, many provincial theatres came under the control of national enterprises. Derek Salberg, a pantomime producer in Birmingham in the early twentieth century, commented on the decline of the individualised local production after those national circuits came into being.[4] Further research would establish whether and how this change affected the regional identity of local productions. Certainly, from my own experience of the pantomime in the twenty-first century, the independent regional theatre, such as the Playhouse in Nottingham, and amateur repertory pantomimes have continued to thrive on their engagement with the local identity.[5]

The arguments that I presented in Chapters 4 and 5 place the Victorian provincial pantomime far more clearly in its local and national context. Moreover, the *Hornet* article, that I cited extensively in Chapter 5, contained additional comments regarding local political satire. According to its author, not only did the Theatre Royal at Birmingham

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[2] *An Old Stock-Actors Memories* (1930), p. 163. Cited in Booth, *English Plays*, p. 59.
[3] Broadbent, *Annals of the Liverpool Stage*, p. 292.
[4] Similar comments were made by Wilson in *Christmas Pantomime*, p. 121.
[5] Berwick Kayler, who has written, directed and played the Dame in pantomimes at the Theatre Royal, York since 1978 emphasised the importance of local knowledge and referencing in his productions. His views were recorded in a radio series: 'Oh No It's Not!', BBC Radio 4, a 5 part series transmitted 23/12/03 - 02/01/04.

promote Liberal politics in its pantomimes, but the Prince of Wales Theatre in Birmingham – the Theatre Royal rival in terms of pantomime production – promoted anti-Liberal politics in its references. Therefore, not only did pantomime productions vary between towns, but, according to this, they varied between theatres in the same town, potentially attracting audiences with different regional and political interests. Such demarcations have important implications, not just for pantomime, but for regional theatre as a whole, and provide the basis for future research in this area

As I stated in Chapter 1, the recent developments in theatre research and new interest in regional entertainments, offer a timely and invaluable opportunity to explore the Victorian provincial pantomime. My research has established that the provincial pantomimes cannot be viewed as simply trailing in the wake of London trends, but neither can they be treated as a homogenous group. The argument that I have begun in this thesis is that the local elements of provincial pantomimes were not cosily representative of small country communities, but represented changing and independent tastes and, in their social referencing, a far ranging commentary that reflected the town's status and its citizens` perception of themselves.

GLOSSARY OF PANTOMIME TERMS REFERRED TO IN THIS THESIS

Annual

The Christmas pantomime was sometimes referred to as the Christmas Annual.

Book of Words

The book of words was a small booklet which contained a version of the pantomime script. It was on sale in the theatre during the pantomime season in addition to programmes. Sometimes the book of words was illustrated and, nearly always, they contained front and back page advertisements placed by local businesses.

Demon or Dark Scene

The Victorian pantomime frequently began with a scene in which wicked magicians, bad fairies or demons would plot their revenge on the hero. In the following scene (or as an interruption to the demon scene) the good fairy would appear to foil their plans. By the mid-nineteenth century these scenes were recognised as traditional but were not always adhered to in terms of sequence. Similarly, a concluding dark scene was sometimes employed, just prior to the transformation scene.

Harlequinade Characters

The main characters were Harlequin, Columbine, Pantaloon and Clown. In addition, extra characters such as comedy policemen, swells, or sprites could make appearances, especially if a troupe of pantomimists were engaged for the season.

Licensing Copy

The script that was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office for licensing. These could take the form of the book of words, or handwritten manuscripts. The script had to be approved by the Examiner of Plays before it could be licensed for performance. Often, therefore, scripts were accompanied by cautions as regards impersonations or references to public figures. A few of the licensing copies from this period contain specific omissions.

Masks

In the Georgian and very early Victorian pantomimes, large masks or **big-heads** were worn by the characters in the opening, which were then removed in the transformation

scene, along with the costumes, to reveal the harlequinade characters. By mid-century different performers played opening and harlequinade characters and this removal of costumes and masks became unnecessary. However, masks were still being made and worn well into the later part of the century and it appears that they were worn by the supernumeraries playing demons or characters in the crowd and processional scenes.

Pantomimists

Specialist performers who played the acrobatic parts in the harlequinade. Sometimes they also performed speciality acts in the opening, particularly **Skin Parts**, or animal roles such as Dick Whittington's cat or Ali Baba's donkey.

Pantomime Structure

Essentially, the **Victorian Pantomime** was comprised of a sequence of different parts. These were the Opening, followed by the Transformation Scene, followed by the Harlequinade and closing with an optional Finale.

Opening

The first half of the pantomime, which told an elaborated fairy tale or nursery rhyme such as Cinderella, The Forty Thieves, Little Bo-Peep, etc.

Transformation Scene

Traditionally the scene in which the opening characters would be transformed into the characters of the harlequinade. By mid-century, the opening and harlequinade characters were usually played by different performers and it was the scenic spectacle of the transformation rather than the change of characters that became more important.

Harlequinade

Originally the principal part of the pantomime, by mid-century it had been overshadowed by the opening and was reduced to two or three scenes. Originally telling the story of thwarted lovers Harlequin and Columbine and their pursuit by the parental Pantaloon and his servant, the comic Clown, by mid-century the scenes were simply comprised of acrobatic chases and fights ('run and pelt'), interspersed by dances ('trips').

Finale

The harlequinade often ended with a second but less extravagant transformation in which

the scenery would change to a magical bower or palace to close the pantomime. By mid-century this appears to have been optional.

Season

The theatre season in the early part of this period ran from September to April, although after the demise of the stock company and the increase in touring productions, the theatre season ran for most of the year. The **Pantomime Season** ran from Boxing Day (or the closest weekday) until the early months of the following year (usually February at Nottingham and March or occasionally April at Birmingham).

Second Edition

The Second Edition of the pantomime was more predominant at the Nottingham theatre and was a revised version of the pantomime, that was usually staged in February, for the last few weeks of the run. The Second Edition could incorporate new songs and comic 'business' as well as new costumes and, very occasionally, cast changes.

Stock Company

A company of actors and dancers engaged by a theatre manager for the theatre season (usually September to April).

Verse

Pantomimes were usually written in rhyming couplets, although there are instances of prose or blank verse being used in some scenes.

APPENDIX A: AUTHORS AND THEIR PANTOMIMES
THE THEATRE ROYAL, NOTTINGHAM 1865 to 1892

(* = 'written expressly for' the Theatre Royal, Nottingham)

DATE	TITLE OF PANTOMIME	PANTOMIME AUTHOR(S)	MANAGER/LESSEE
1865	*The House That Jack Built*	No author listed	Walter Montgomery (Director)
1866	*Aladdin! Or, Harlequin and the Geni of the Wonderful Lamp*	Thomas Chambers, W. S. Hyde and E. V. Sinclair*	G. F. Sinclair (Director)
1867	*Beauty and the Beast; Or, Harlequin and the Fairy of the Golden Waters in the Mystic Valley*	J. F. Finlayson	Mrs. J. F. Saville and Miss Saville (Lessees)
1868	*Babes in the Wood; Or, Harlequin Cock Robin, Prince Charley and His Pretty Bluebell*	W. J. Thompson*	Mrs. and Miss Saville (Lessees)
1869	*Little Goody Two Shoes! and Her Queen Anne's Farthing; Or, Harlequin Old King Counterfeit and the World of Coins*	John Strachan	Mrs. and Miss Saville (Lessees)
1870	*Harlequin Robinson Crusoe or, Man Friday, Jack Frost, and the King of the Carribee Islands*	John Strachan (based on H. J. Byron's burlesque) & Mr. Sidaway	Lady Don (Manager)
1871	*The Forty Thieves or, Harlequin Open Sesame and the Enchanted Home of the Arabian Nights*	F. Hughes*	Frank Musgrave (Lessee)
1872	*King of the Peacocks; Or, Harlequin, the Cantankerous Kings, the Pretty Princess, the Lively Monkey, and the Treasures of the Animal, Vegetable and Mineral Kingdoms*	F. W. Green & F. R. Goodyer	Frank Musgrave (Lessee)

1873	*Little Red Riding Hood; Or, Harlequin Neptune, the Wehr Wolf, Old Dog Tray, the Fairy Golden Gossamer, and the Wonderful Head*	F. R. Goodyer	Frank Musgrave (Lessee)
1874	*Little Bow Peep and Boy Blue; Or, Harlequin Jack in the Box, Tom Thumb, and the Norfolk Giant!*	F. R. Goodyer	Frank Musgrave (Lessee)
1875	*Sinbad the Sailor*	John Strachan	Frank Musgrave (Lessee)
1876	*Harlequin Graceful and the Fair One with the Golden Locks, or The Dame Who Lived in a Shoe, and the Little Old Man in the Moon*	Alfred Davis	Frank Musgrave (Lessee)
1877	*Bluebeard Blue Beard; or, Harlequin Toyland and the King of the Goblins*	F. R. Goodyer and Hain Uthermann	Thomas Charles (Manager)
1878	*Babes in the Wood, or Harlequin Robin Hood and the Merry Men of Sherwood*	F. R. Goodyer and Hain Uthermann	Thomas Charles (Manager)
1879	*Jack and the Beanstalk; or Harlequin and the Monster, the Magician, and the man in the Moon*	F. R. Goodyer and Hain Uthermann	Thomas Charles (Manager)
1880	*Dick Whittington and His Cat*	F. R. Goodyer	Thomas Charles (Manager)
1881	*Robinson Crusoe and His Man Friday*	F. R. Goodyer	Thomas Charles (Manager)
1882	*Cinderella*	F. R. Goodyer	Thomas Charles (Manager)
1883	*Little Bo Peep*	F. R. Goodyer	Thomas Charles (Manager)
1884	*Forty Thieves*	F. R. Goodyer	Thomas Charles (Manager)
1885	*Little Red Riding Hood*	F. R. Goodyer	Thomas Charles (Manager)
1886	*Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp*	George Dance	Thomas Charles (Manager)

1887	*Babes in the Wood*	George Dance	Thomas Charles (Manager)
1888	No pantomime performed		Thomas Charles (Manager)
1889	*Sinbad the Sailor*	George Dance	Thomas Charles (Manager)
1890	*Puss in Boots; Or, the Marquis! The Miller! And the Mouser!*	T. F. Doyle*	C. T. Burleigh (Manager)
1891	*Robinson Crusoe; Or, the Good Friday Who came on Thursday Half-Holiday*	Arthur L. Maddock*	C. T. Burleigh (Manager)
1892	*Cinderella and the Little Glass Slipper*	Fred Locke* and A. Jay-Penne	H. Cecil Beryl (Manager)

AUTHORS AND THEIR PANTOMIMES
THE THEATRE ROYAL, BIRMINGHAM 1865 to 1892
(* = 'written expressly for' the Theatre Royal, Birmingham)

DATE	TITLE OF PANTOMIME	PANTOMIME AUTHOR(S)	MANAGER/LESSEE
1865	*Sinbad the Sailor or, the Red Dwarfs, the Terrible Ogre, and the Old Man of the Sea*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1866	*Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp!*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1867	*Robinson Crusoe*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1868	*Forty Thieves*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1869	*Blue Beard*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1870	*Dick Whittington and His Cat*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1871	*The Fair One With the Golden Locks*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1872	*The Fairy Fawn*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1873	*Beauty and the Beast*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1874	*Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1875	*Puss in Boots*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1876	*Sinbad the Sailor*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1877	*The Forty Thieves*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1878	*Robinson Crusoe*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1879	*The Fair One With the Golden Locks*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)

1880	*Dick Whittington and His Cat*	Charles Millward*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1881	*Beauty and the Beast*	Charles Millward & T. C. Clay*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1882	*Sinbad the Sailor*	F. W. Green*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1883	*Queen of Hearts*	Frank Hall and J. J. Blood*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1884	*Dick Whittington and His Cat*	J. J. Blood*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1885	*Robinson Crusoe*	J. J. Blood*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1886	*Cinderella*	J. J. Blood*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1887	*Goody Two Shoes*	J. J. Blood*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1888	*Dick Whittington and His Cat*	J. J. Blood*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1889	*Aladdin*	J. J. Blood*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1890	*The Forty Thieves*	J. J. Blood*	Mercer Simpson (Manager)
1891	*Sinbad the Sailor; or, Harlequin, The Wreck, The Roc, and The Diamond Valley*	Geoffrey Thorn*	Charles Dornton (Manager)
1892	*Cinderella*	Fred Locke*	Charles Dornton (Manager)

APPENDIX B:
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FIGURES FOR NOTTINGHAM THEATRE SEASON 1865-66

Week Ending	Income	Expenditure	Pr/Loss[1]
September 30	352.4.7	239.1.4	+113
October 7	604.11.4	211.19.6	+393
October 14	210.18.3	232.7.4	-21
October 21	340.3.0	178.7.3	+162
October 28	286.7.6	201.10.6	+84
November 4	190.4.10	196.13.5	-7
November 11	189.19.4	241.9.8	-51
November 18	274.13.10	204.17.4	+70
November 25	213.4.2	160.7.10	+53
December 2	240.11.4	210.15.7	+30
December 9	218.6.9	202.19.5	+15
December 16	161.3.2	236.7.5	-75
December 23	97.18.1[2]	111.3.9	-13
December 30	391.12.0	187.10.5	+204
January 6	298.12.8	181.16.5	+117
January 13	369.10.11	318.15.11	+51
January 20	295.11.8	406.10.2	-111
January 27	301.19.8	280.9.5	+22
February 3	455.3.9	306.18.2	+148
February 10	173.6.11	227.9.9	-54
February 17	236.0.4	277.12.11	-42
February 24	177.14.7	205.9.2	-27
March 3	238.6.8	231.10.7	+6
March 10	445.10.7	373.18.1	+72
March 17	89.1.5	169.1.3	-80
March 24	79.8.9	160.2.4	-81
April 7	397.12.2	246.16.6	+151
April 14	160.14.2	233.2.8	-72
April 21	166.8.9	208.19.1	-43
April 28	114.10.10	173.2.5	-58

[1] In calculating the profit or loss figure for each week in both the first and second season, I have rounded sums, for simplicity, either down if under 10*s*. (e.g. week ending April 21 income of £166.8*s*.9*d*. becomes £166) or up if over 10*s*. (e.g. week ending April 28 income of £115.15*s*.2*d*. becomes £116).

[2] In the ledger there is an income entry for December 17 of £67.15*s*.10*d*. However, this date is a Sunday and there is no supporting evidence that this is income from house receipts. I have therefore not included it in the totals.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FIGURES FOR NOTTINGHAM THEATRE SEASON 1866-67

Week Ending	Income	Expenditure	Pr/Loss
September 22	172.19.6	134.19.7	+38
September 29	92.4.8	153.19.2	-62
October 6	398.1.1	123.14.5	+274
October 13	164.9.8	241.15.10	-78
October 20	177.18.4	164.11.4	+13
October 27	110.13.7	121.2.6	-10
November 3	123.4.3	117.14.3	+5
November 10	137.14.11	132.1.5	+6
November 17	119.18.1	167.7.5	-47
November 24	123.15.4	150.3.1	-26
December 1	99.12.8	134.8.6	-34
December 7	122.0.1	173.0.6	-51
December 15	228.8.4	171.15.5	+56
December 22	12.13.0	71.19.0	-59
December 29	274.14.1	139.6.0	+136
January 5	181.1.6	146.19.3	+34
January 12	222.16.7	138.6.8	+85
January 19	161.5.2	211.12.1	-51
January 26	175.13.8	185.2.8	-9
February 2	130.10.4	177.6.1	-46
February 9	120.0.8	141.3.10	-21
February 16	134.13.4	205.5.5	-70
February 23	146.1.11	135.10.8	+10
March 2	373.1.3	274.10.4	+98
March 9	107.14.7	342.5.8	-234
March 16	111.13.9	105.19.4	+6
March 23	84.3.6	120.7.10	-36
March 30	133.2.5	153.0.7	-20
April 6	181.12.9	149.5.7	+33
April 13	125.8.8	142.17.1	-18
April 20	72.18.6	89.14.2	-17
April 27	126.18.3	116.9.1	+11

APPENDIX C: PANTOMIME REFERENCING.

A Sample Table of Identified References from Pantomimes Produced at the Theatres Royal of Nottingham and Birmingham

PANTOMIMES PRODUCED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, NOTTINGHAM

1866: ***Aladdin*** by W. S. Hyde, Thomas Chambers and E. V. Sinclair

Scene Page	Reference	Definition
[Sc. 1] p. 7	Souchong tea	
[Sc. 1] p. 8	Phantoscope	a magic trick, currently being shown at the Mechanics Hall
[Sc. 1] p. 8	'Peter Piper' rhyme	
[Sc. 2] p. 9	Cattle plague/Rinderpest	a national concern in the mid-1860s
[Sc. 2] p. 9	The price of meat	related to the above
[Sc. 2] p. 9	Marriage on £300 a year	the subject of a recent book, advertised in the local papers
[Sc. 2] p. 9	Ruskin	
[Sc. 3] p. 10	Children's games 'marbles, tops, tip cats and kites'	
[Sc. 3] p. 10	'box of fuzees'	a slang term for matches
[Sc. 3] p. 11	'infantry in square'	a military manoeuvre
[Sc. 3] p. 13	Sub-soil farming	an irrigation technique
[Sc. 3] p. 14	Cribbage	a card game
[Sc. 4] p. 15	Mr. Snider and the Government	Snider, inventor of the breech loader, whose patent was ignored by the Government
[Sc. 4] p. 16	Lack of street sweepers	
[Sc. 4] p. 16	Frisettes and chignon	a fringe of false hair/hair piece
[Sc. 4] p. 16	Crinolines - as out of fashion	
[Sc. 5] p. 17	The Three Graces	
[Sc. 5] p. 18	The Alabama claims	British naval claims against America
[Sc. 5] p. 18	Fenians	an Irish nationalist movement
[Sc. 5] p. 18	Bridging the Atlantic/submarine telegraph	transatlantic cables currently being laid under the Atlantic
[Sc. 5] p. 19	Brummagem jewels	paste jewellery
[Sc. 5] p. 20	Prussian annexation	
[Sc. 7] p. 21	Explorers: Livingstone, Grant and Baker	
[Sc. 7] p. 21	'Drink is worse'	the temperance movement

1871: *Forty Thieves* by Frederick Hughes

Scene	Page	Reference	Definition
Sc. 1	p. 3	Tussauds	wax works
Sc. 1	p. 3	Railway accidents	an ongoing issue
Sc. 1	p. 3	Dunville's whisky	
Sc. 1	p. 4	Couvoisier's brandy	
		Grimaldi	the famous Georgian Clown
Sc. 1	p. 5	Disraeli	
Sc. 1	p. 5	Miss Braddon	a contemporary author
Sc. 1	p. 5	Countess D'Anois	the eighteenth-century author of fairy tales
Sc. 2	p. 7	Hypnosis	
Sc. 2	p. 7	Vaccination against distemper	
Sc. 2	p. 8	Band of Hope	a children`s Christian group
Sc. 2	p. 9	Searle's wherries	a local ferry company
Sc. 2	p. 9	swells as MPs	a possible reference to Disraeli
Sc. 3	p. 11	the Income Tax	
Sc. 3	p. 13	Resorts (Brighton, Ramsgate, Margate, Hastings, Scarborough)	
Sc. 4	p. 14	Everington's grand shop	a shop in Nottingham
Sc. 4	p. 15	Gilbey's cellar	a London supplier
Sc. 4	p. 15	Frank Musgrave	Lessee of the theatre
Sc. 4	p. 15	'Carey's suits at two pounds ten'	the advertisement phrase of a local shop
Sc. 4	p. 16	Income tax repeal	
Sc. 4	p. 16	'May the Trent run sweet'	the first of many references to the polluted local river
Sc. 5	p. 19	Mortimer's Hole	a cave underneath Nottingham castle, reputedly used by Roger Mortimer to try and escape his assassins
Sc. 6	p. 24	freedom of the election/the ballot	
Sc. 8	p. 27	Grace Darling	
Sc. 8	p. 27	Joan of Arc	
Sc. 8	p. 28	Phillipe & Canaud	producers of tinned foods
Sc. 8	p. 28	Bass/Allsops	Derbyshire based brewery
Sc. 8	p. 28	Trent	the main river of Nottingham

1876: *The Fair One with the Golden Locks* by Alfred Davis

Scene	Page	Reference	Definition
Sc. 3	p. 8	scene 'A View of Old Wilford'	a village near Nottingham
Sc. 3	p. 8	burlesque of 'to be or not to be' speech from *Hamlet*	
Sc. 3	p. 9	Income tax	
Sc. 4	p. 16	lengthy speech regarding the ability of a prime minister to break promises	
Sc. 4	p. 16	Foreign policy - Russia and Constantinople	
Sc. 6.	p. 19	children's games, including 'cup and ball'	
Sc. 8	p. 22	Jim Crow	an American vaudeville performer
Sc. 8	p. 24	'Der Freizschutz'	*Der Freischutz* by Weber

1881: *Robinson Crusoe* by F. R. Goodyer

Scene	Page	Reference	Definition
Sc. 1	p. 4	Goldschmidt	the Mayor of Nottingham
Sc. 1	p. 4	Bradlaugh's oath	an MP, who refused on religious grounds to take his oath as an MP
Sc. 1	p. 4	Obstruction	related to the Irish Home Rule issue
Sc. 1	p. 4	Lord Trevor's jewels	a recent society theft
Sc. 1	p. 4	Hatton Garden thefts	
Sc. 1	p. 4	Parnell's divorce	
Sc. 1	p. 4	Industrial schools (mismanagement)	possibly the situation in Glasgow, where pupils were found to be near starvation
Sc. 3	p. 15	Whitechapel	
Sc. 3	p. 16	'waterspouters [...] to rob us of our beer'	related to the temperance movement, but also to the early closing law
Sc. 4	p. 18	Land leaguers	Irish tenancy issue
Sc. 4	p. 20	Saturday half-holiday	
Sc. 7	p. 25	Rates and taxes	
Sc. 7	p. 25	Board of Guardians	
Sc. 7	p. 25	Sneinton Market	a Nottingham market place but also a site for preachers
Sc. 7	p. 25	School Board 'squabbles'	the recent elections
Sc. 7	p. 25	Council extravagance / public debt	
Sc. 7	p. 25	'canting crew/To scowl at Goose' Fair, and look black at races'	ongoing campaign against Goose Fair and the local races
		Wilfrid Lawson: 'local option'	an MP who campaigned for increased licensing laws with a local control over licensing
Sc. 7	p. 29	Battle's Vermin Killer	
Sc. 9	p. 29	Women's rights	
		Ireland	
		Oscar Wilde - Aesthetics	
		temperance groups	

1886: ***Aladdin*** by George Dance

Scene	Page	Reference	Definition
Sc. 1	p. 6	Erewash/Derbyshire people	strikes in Nottingham had led to companies using weavers in Derbyshire (and the subsequent antagonism)
Sc. 1	p. 9	Samuel Morley	local MP and benefactor
Sc. 2	p. 12	University wall/soft stone	construction problems with the new university
Sc. 2	p. 12	'Derbyshire bred,/Strong i'th'arm, and weak i' th' yed'	as above
Sc. 2	p. 13	Lace trade/Stoney street	Stoney Street was an area of lace factories and warehouses but this was also a pun on poor trade
Sc. 3	p. 15	University foundations	as above
Sc. 3	p. 15	'Corporation's chief officials'	
Sc. 3	p. 15	Colonel Seely	a local MP who changed political parties
Sc. 3	p. 18	the Nottingham Time Ball	a copy of the Greenwich time ball (that didn't work)
Sc. 3	p. 18	Central Station	the new railway station
Sc. 3	p. 18	Nottingham Castle - closed	limited public access
Sc. 3	p. 18	Clifton Statue	Sir Robert Clifton, a former local MP
Sc. 3	p. 18	Leen (sewer)	the tributary river, polluted by local factories
Sc. 3	p. 18	Stoke Farm (sewage)	the new sewage works at Stoke Bardolph
Sc. 3	p. 18	'penny bus	
Sc. 3	p. 19	'*booze* in moderation'	the temperance movement
Sc. 3	p. 19	Rock Ale	a Nottingham brewery
Sc. 3	p. 19	Long Eaton prices	the recent trade dispute and competition from Derbyshire
Sc. 4	p. 20	Nottingham roads badly paved	
Sc. 4	p. 20	Thursday closing	
Sc. 4	p. 22	'chasing police at election time'	recent election riots
Sc. 4	p. 22	Blocking Market Square	recent election riots
Sc. 4	p. 22	Throwing a boulder at the Exchange Clock	recent election riots
Sc. 4	p. 22	Colwick Weir / 'Whitty's Sunbeam`	a local ferry company
Sc. 4	p. 22	Overcrowded trams	
Sc. 5	p. 26	Expenditure of the workhouse Guardians	
Sc. 6	p. 30	`purify the Leen`	again, local concerns about

			river pollution
Sc. 6	p. 30	the state of St. Ann's Well Road	
Sc. 6	p. 30	Sunday opening of the Castle	ongoing concerns about limited public access
Sc. 6	p. 30	making a 'twisthand' work on Mondays	the tradition of 'St. Monday'
Sc. 6	p. 30	'noisy' Guardians	
Sc. 6	p. 30	Alderman Turney	a local manufacturer, and owner of a tannery
Sc. 6	p. 30	Queen's jubilee	due to take place in 1887
Sc. 7	p. 33	'Play up/Notts'	the local football club
Sc. 8	p. 35	puns on play titles, for example, *Harbour Lights, In the Ranks, Lights o' London*	
Sc. 8	p. 36	Benzoline	
Sc. 8	pp. 36-37	Building contractors/corporation	criticism of the corporation not using Nottingham contractors
		Darley Dale	a Derbyshire stone quarry
		Nottingham Gas Company	
Sc. 9	p. 39	India, Russia and General Roberts	British foreign policy
Sc. 9	p. 39	Fred Bell	a local preacher
Sc. 9	p. 39	Joseph Chamberlain	
Sc. 9	p. 39	Charles Dilke 'talking to that girl in silk'	a Liberal MP recently cited in a divorce case
Sc. 9	p. 39	Ironclads	a new type of warship
Sc. 9	p. 40	Trent: smell	the ongoing pollution issues
Sc. 9	p. 40	Alderman Turney's perfumery works'	as above
Sc. 9	p. 40	Statue to Samuel Morley	erected near the Theatre Royal
Sc. 9	p. 40	Broadhurst	a local MP
Sc. 9	p. 40	Seely	a local MP
Sc. 9	p. 40	Finch Hatton	a local MP
Sc. 9	p. 40	Arnold Morley	a local MP
Sc. 9	p. 40	Smith Wright	a local MP
Sc. 9	p. 40	A Primrose Dame	the Primrose League
Sc. 9	p. 40	Wheeler Gate / lion and lamb	recent opposition to council building (lion) by a Mr. Lamb
Sc. 9	p. 40	John Robinson / feeding the poor	a local brewer and benefactor
Sc. 9	p. 40	Silverton	the Baptist preacher
Sc. 9	p. 40	Douse	a preacher in Sneinton Market

1891: Robinson *Crusoe* by Arthur L. Maddock

Scene	Page	Reference	Definition
Sc. 1	p. 3	Thursday afternoon half-holiday	
Sc. 1	p. 3	'the Slavery of Drink'	the temperance movement
Sc. 1	p. 7	'our leading actors, off abroad'	
Sc. 1	p. 10	picnics at Clifton Grove	a local beauty spot
		Beeston	a suburb of Nottingham
		tea at Hazleford	a local beauty spot
		trips to Colwick on the 'Sunbeam'	the ferry at Colwick
Sc. 1	p. 11	'doing the Long Row'	a fashionable parade in the town centre
Sc. 2	p. 13	'Randy'	Lord Randolph Churchill
Sc. 2	p. 13	Board of Guardians' meeting (rowdy)	
Sc. 3	p. 17	'Just off the coast of the silvery Leen,/ Somewhere near Bobber's Mill or	
Sc. 3	p. 17	Hyson Green'	ironic reference to the ongoing pollution issue and suburbs of Nottingham
Sc. 3	p. 17	Lenton / Lenton Sands and smells	the same issue
Sc. 5	p. 21	insufficient trams and 'shank's pony down St. Ann's Well Road'	
Sc. 6	p. 24	bleak Skegness	
Sc. 6	p. 24	the Football 'Pink'	a new newspaper
Sc. 6	p. 24	The Evening Post	a new newspaper
Sc. 6	p. 24	Notts and Forest	local football clubs
Sc. 6	p. 25	'Tories made all education free'	
Sc. 6	p. 25	Eight Hours Bill	
Sc. 7	p. 26	'as lively as Gotham'	a village in Nottinghamshire
Sc. 7	p. 27	Oakum factory in John's Street	the workhouse
Sc. 7	p. 27	Music and dancing licence	a new legal requirement
Sc. 7	p. 28	Football league	
Sc. 8	p. 31	Poor and district rates	
Sc. 8	p. 31	Income tax	
Sc. 8	p. 31	School Boards 'squabbles'	
Sc. 8	p. 31	Town Council 'always getting into hobbles'	
Sc. 8	p. 31	Colonel Seely	the local MP
Sc. 8	p. 31	'cants who with long faces,'Would kill Goose fair and have put down the races'	ongoing disputes (see also 1881)
Sc. 8	p. 32	Queens not often seen in England Queens more often found in Scotland	a reference to Queen Victoria at Balmoral

Sc. 8	p. 32	Guardians as 'rowdy'	
Sc. 8	p. 32	The Castle as 'an assessment machine'	probably the issue of entrance charges at Nottingham Castle
Sc. 8	p. 32	Income tax 'a fraud'	
Sc. 8	p. 32	'as empty as Leen Side School'	a new and unsuccessful school in the town
Sc. 8	p. 34	A Cook's Excursion	Thomas Cook
Sc. 8	p. 35	Lengthy speech regarding the faults of the Army and navy:	
Sc. 8	p. 35	The Mansfield militia	a town in North Nottinghamshire
Sc. 8	p. 37	'twopence coloured, penny plain'	reference to the villain: looking like a toy theatre figure
Sc. 12	p. 47	'the district rate's still four-and-six	
Sc. 12	p. 47	'The College yonder's tumbling to pieces'	again, the problems with the university building
Sc. 12	p. 47	Second reference to Notts and Forest football clubs	
Sc. 12	p. 47	Fitzhugh	the new Mayor of Nottingham

PANTOMIMES PRODUCED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, BIRMINGHAM

1866: *Aladdin* by Charles Millward

Scene	Page	Reference	Definition
Sc. 1	p. 3	burlesque of song 'Twinkle. Twinkle, Little Star'	
Sc. 1	p. 5	Ragged school	charity schools for the poor
Sc. 2	p. 7	Slang term, 'rhino'	money
Sc. 2	p. 8	New Street/clothes	a shopping street in central Birmingham also the site of the Theatre Royal
Sc. 2	p. 8	Early closing	
Sc. 2	p. 8	'Bobbies'	slang term for police
Sc. 2	p. 8	'For cavalry! and form a hollow square'	a military manoeuvre
Sc. 2	p. 10	Electro-plate	a form of silver plating produced locally
Sc. 3	p. 11	Overend and Gurney	a bank whose owners had ben charged with embezzlement
Sc. 3	p. 12	Maximillion/Mexico	The King of Mexico
Sc. 3	p. 12	Promotion of gas lighting	
Sc. 5	p. 14	Scene set in the ragged school	
Sc. 5	p. 14	Pun on Bass and beer	a Derbyshire brewery
Sc. 5	p. 17	Reference to paste jewellery	
Sc. 7	p. 20	Counterfeit coinage	historically a problem in Birmingham
Sc. 8	p. 23	The Great Eastern	ship designed by Brunel
Sc. 8	p. 23	Transatlantic cables	as at Nottingham
Sc. 8	p. 23	Rare appearances of royalty	
Sc. 8	p. 23	The Cattle Show	an annual event in Birmingham

1871: *The Fair One With the Golden Locks* by Charles Millward

Scene	Page	Reference	Definition
Sc. 5	p. 9	American refreshment bars	
Sc. 5	p. 9	Linking the Queen with increased taxes	
Sc. 5	p. 9	taxes and Mr. Lowe	the Chancellor of the Exchequer
Sc. 5	p. 10	Professor Darwin and evolution	
Sc. 9	p. 19	photography	
Sc. 9	p. 21	Mrs. Allen's Hair Restorer	a brand name, advertised in the local papers

1876: *Sinbad the Sailor* by Charles Millward

Scene	Page	Reference	Definition
Sc. 1	p. 2	Lengthy speech regarding British foreign policy and Turkey, references to Disraeli, the Earl of Derby, Lord Salisbury and Bismark	
Sc. 1	p. 2	Local MPs Cross (Tory) and Chamberlain (Liberal)	
Sc. 1	pp. 3-4	verbal and visual reference to Disraeli's foreign policy regarding the Eastern Question: Russia, Montenegro and Servia and the potential war	
Sc. 1	p. 4	Samuel Plimsoll and the Board of Trade	
Sc. 2	p. 5	Brigham Young	the American mormon
Sc. 2	p. 7	T. P. Cooke	the actor
Sc. 4	p. 10	Ironclads	
Sc. 6	p. 15	Birmingham MPs keeping their seats	
Sc. 6	p. 16	Imported American beef (and the price of)	
Sc. 7	p. 18	'Dizzy's Empress of Hindoo'	Queen Victoria
Sc. 7	p. 18	'Dudley's coal black diamond Earl'	the Earl of Dudley, a mine owner
Sc. 8	p. 18	Arctic exploration	

1881: ***Beauty and the Beast*** by Charles Millward and T. C. Clay

Scene	Page	Reference	Definition
Sc. 1	p. 4	'Rumours of war'	
Sc. 1	p. 4	School Board rows	
Sc. 1	p. 4	poorly managed Industrial Schools	possible reference to the school in Glasgow (as at Nottingham)
Sc. 1	p. 4	building an arcade	currently being undertaken in Birmingham
Sc. 1	p. 5	Winson Green	the site of the Birmingham workhouse
Sc. 2	p. 6	character called 'Aestheta'	the aesthetic movement
Sc. 2	p. 8	affairs in Eygpt	
Sc. 2	p. 8	founding an art gallery/'Brum's brave citizens' and concerns over the Corporation gas spoiling the pictures	a new art gallery had been opened above the offices of the gas department
Sc. 2	p. 8	Tangye	a local company
Sc. 2	p. 8	Nettlefold	a local company
Sc. 2	p. 8	ill fortune of Withinshaw & Co	a local company
Sc. 4	p. 11	Christmas waits	carol singers
Sc. 6	p. 16	lengthy speech regarding statuary and the artist Woolner	Woolner had recently created a disliked statue in the town
Sc. 8	p. 19	'pugilism now is all the cry'	prize fighting was generally denounced in Birmingham

1886: *Cinderella* by J. J. Blood

Scene	Page	Reference	Definition
Sc. 1	p. 2	Character, the Baron de Birmingham known for his 'Liberal ways'	
Sc. 3	p. 15	The rates and taxes	
Sc. 3	p. 17	The local cab company	
Sc. 3	p. 18	Aston Lower Grounds	an ancestral hall and the site of public pleasure grounds
Sc. 6	p. 21	The Queen's Jubilee	due in 1887
Sc. 6	p. 21	'friends from dear old 'Brum'	
Sc. 6	p. 23	Mrs. Grundy	a fictional moral campaigner

1891: *Sinbad the Sailor* by Geoffrey Thorn

Scene	Page	Reference	Definition
Sc. 2	p. 5	Burlesque of 'Horatio' speech from *Hamlet*	
Sc. 2	p. 5	'Die! bloated button stitcher, die!/ Made in Germany'	trade competition from imported goods
Sc. 2	p. 6	the telephone	
Sc. 2	p. 8	Home Rule	Irish nationalism
Sc. 3	p. 10	the Hagley Road	in Birmingham
Sc. 4	p. 14	Randy Churchill	Lord Randolph Churchill
Sc. 4	p. 14	Corporation Street	recently redeveloped in central Birmingham
Sc. 5	p. 15	Hypnosis	
Sc. 7	p. 21	high rates	
Sc. 8	p. 23	brief burlesque of the banquet scene in *Macbeth*, and of *The Bells*	
Sc. 9	p. 25	Home Rule and the Liberal Party	
Sc. 9	p. 27	taking the pledge	the temperance movement
Sc. 10	p. 30	Aston Park	the local pleasure grounds
Sc. 12	p. 31	'knowing police' in 'Brummagem'	reference to the recent success of local police officers in foiling a fenian attack

APPENDIX D: TOPICAL SONG: 'When the World Turned Upside Down'.

The topical song 'When the World Turned Upside Down' was sung by the titular character in the 1877 pantomime of *Blue Beard*, by F. R. Goodyer and Hain Uthermann, produced at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham. The following verses (2-9), from scene 7, pp. 46-47, can be found in the handwritten manuscript, submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office for licensing, Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 53197R.

'When the World Turned Upside Down'

2.

We'd never have any bribery, elections would be pure,
We'd ne'er have any taxes, nor troubles to endure.
There'd ne'er be any lawyers, or bailiffs in the town
There'd be some most peculiar things when the world &c.
When the world &c
When the world &c
They'd whitewash the roof of the Market place
When the world &c

3.

The Castle would be altered in a proper sort of way
The Trent would run with new milk and honey every day
And Narrow Marsh would be the finest place in the town
And Millstone Lane a paradise when the world turned &c
When the world &c
When the world &c
There'd be a Clifton Statue
When the world &c[1]

4.

To Sylverton's large Chapel our betting men would flock
Inside the Council Chamber they would put a new Clock
A pound of Mutton Chops would cost less than half a crown
And 'Bung' would stop the Beer tap when the world &c
When the world &c
When the world &c
Then Annibal would turn Good Templar
When the world &c[2]

5.

About a new Stipendiary there'd ne'er be a stir,
They'd make a Lord Chief Justice of Mr Petti - fer

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[1] Nottingham Castle was in the process of being reopened as a museum.
The Trent was the main river supplying Nottingham; there was an ongoing problem regarding sanitation and pollution of the river. Narrow Marsh and Millstone Lane were two of the poorest slum areas of Nottingham. The Clifton Statue: money had been raised for this in 1879 (Iliffe and Baguley, xi p. 11, citing the *Jackdaw*, 16 May 1879).

[2] Sylverton (*sic*) was a baptist preacher. The Council Chamber Clock, according to other pantomime references at this period, rarely worked correctly.

And Goldsmith he would be a king and wear a splendid crown,
And Bentley'd be a bishop when the world turned upside down
When the world &c
When the world &c
They'd finish the building of Smith's bank
When the world &c[3]

6.

The Mayor would dance the Can-Can and Gilpin do a fling
While Billy Nicholl loudly The hundreth Psalm would sing
And Robinson would never give away five hundred pounds
And Mundella would be in the House of Lords, when &c
When the world &c
When the world &c
Then Trevitt would be an alderman
When the world &c[4]

7.

All Yeomanry reviews would take place in the rain
Saull Isaac would be member for Nottingham again,
Mark Meller's long orations would be at once put down,
And Jolly Death would be Town Clerk when the world &c
When the world &c
When the world &c
David Heath would be in Parliament
When the world &c[5]

8.

Walter Gregory, in the market every Sunday night would preach
And Thackeray would never try and make another speech
While dear old Captain White, I'll bet you fifty pound,
You'd find no change in him at all when the world &c
When the world &c
When the world &c
Then Foster would take in figaro
When the world &c[6]

We'd ne'er have any debtors who their creditors would do
We' d ne'er have appreciative audience like you
We'd never have a singer of such wonderful renown
As I, who thank you one and all – when the world &c
When the world &c
When the world &c
I'd pr'aps be able to sing you some more
When the world &c

[3] Smith's Bank was in the Market Place in central Nottingham.
[4] Billy Nicholl was a converted gambler who preached in the town. John Robinson was local businessman and philanthropist who provided an annual dinner for the poor. Mundella was an MP, the principal protagonist behind industrial arbitration and the 1880 Education Act. Trevitt was a local lace manufacturer, and had been a Councillor (Iliffe and Baguley, xi, p. 10, citing a comment in *Jackdaw* for 16 May 1879).
[5] Jolly Death was a private investigator of 4, Brighton Street, Peas Hill, Nottingham (from placard dated 1879, in Iliffe and Baguley, xi, p. 35).
[6] Captain White of the Robin Hood Rifles.

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