



# Show Report

Burtonwood AMADS

## Not So Sleeping Beauty

19 March 2026

## PRODUCTION INFORMATION

PRODUCTION	Not So Sleeping Beauty
SOCIETY	Burtonwood Amateur Music and Drama Society
VENUE	St Michael's Parish Hall
GENRE	Pantomime
CAST SIZE	34
WRITER & DIRECTOR	Mary Anne Gleeson
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	Izzy Nash
ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTOR	Jayne Harnick
CHOREOGRAPHER	Chloe Hughes
PRODUCTION TEAM	Ant Gleeson, Mary Anne Gleeson, Nathan Higham, Brian Maffitt, Izzy Nash, Leigh Nash, Mike Nash & Bianca Tranter
SOUND & LIGHTING	Nathan Higham, Izzy Nash & Mike Nash
STAGE MANAGER	Ant Gleeson
STAGE CREW	Gary Cunningham
COSTUMES	Rebekah Denton, Marie Gleave, Mary Anne Gleeson, Leigh Nash & Leah Turton
POSTER & PROGRAMME DESIGN	Hannah Smith & Mark Smith
LYRIC RE-WRITES	James Gleeson, Jim McMillan, Hannah Smith & Pauline Taylor
CHAPERONES & ADULT HELPERS	Colin Drinkwater
CHAPERONES	Debbie Hurst & Helena Pennington, Amy Hurst & Bianca Tranter
FRONT OF HOUSE	Janet Harnick (lead), Hannah Fenwick, Jayne Harnick, Harry Haynes, Jasmine Smith & Leah Turton

## CAST LIST

Dame Snuffs/Snoozie	Hannah Smith
Princess Aurora	Hannah Fenwick
Buttons / Zippy	Oliver Matthews
Wickes/Bee	Chloe Hughes
Fairy Nuff	Arran Abbey
Homebase/Queue	Bronte Tranter
Prince Gallant Sparkle Heart	James Gleeson
Mrs Tattle-Tell-a-Tale (The Narrator)	Pauline Carr
Sir Reginald	Herb Moore
Helping Hand I	Ant Gleeson

Fairy Lovely	Mia Hurst
Helping Hand 2	Gary Cunningham
Big Bad Wolf	Izzy Nash
Young Fairy Nuff	William Pennington
The Giant	Gemma Ewen
The Troll	Sally Tennant
The Dragon	Rebekah Denton

## ENSEMBLE

Fairy Pretty/ Billy Goat Gruff	Emma Bonnar
Billy Goat Gruff	Mary Anne Gleeson
Billy Goat Gruff	Marie Gleave
Queen Daffodil	Jayne Harnick
King Thistledown	Leigh Nash
Three Little Pigs	Lily Harnick Freya Turton Faye Cunningham

## YOUTH ENSEMBLE

	Emily Allcock Oliver Hankin Lotti Matthews Holly Ranson May Slater Jacob Smith Rosie Smith Lyla Turton Quinn Van Major
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DATE OF PERFORMANCE	Thursday 19th March 2026
DATE REPORT PUBLISHED	Monday 23rd March 2026
ADJUDICATOR ID	NSA1003
NSA LOGO ON POSTER	Yes
NSA IN PROGRAMME	Yes
PROGRAMME CLASS	Best Original Design

## THE REVIEW

REVIEW WORD COUNT: 1752

STRONGEST ELEMENTS

### Powerful Performances

- Hannah Smith (Dame Snuffs/Snoozie)
- Arran Abbey (Fairy Nuff)

### Bold, Intelligent Direction and Structure

- Mary Anne Gleeson, Production team

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Although we have very nearly reached Spring, (technically it is the last day of winter) we are still not quite there and let's be honest the weather has felt anything but Spring-like. So, what better way to sweep away the last vestiges of the winter blues, than with a trip to see a pantomime – on this occasion 'Not So Sleeping Beauty' performed by the Burtonwood Amateur Music and Drama Society at St Michael's Parish Hall.

I have not had the pleasure of seeing one of this Society's performances previously. I was met by Chair, **Bianca Tranter**, who gave me and my guest a lovely welcome and spoke with immense pride at how Burtonwood Amateur are at the heart of the local community. **Janet Harnick** and her Front of House Team were on hand with a smile and lovely conversation and made us and all the audience very welcome.

St Michael's Parish Hall is a lovely little venue to enjoy a performance. The stage is surprisingly large for a parish hall and the Writer/Director **Mary Anne Gleeson** and her production team made full use of the expanse. The staging was impressive with an effective use of a variety of backdrops and props – all handmade! – and the whole design and output had a superior feel. Sound quality was top notch too (something not always found in smaller venues). I was particularly impressed that there was not a single 'blackout' during the whole evening, even when the sets were being changed, with a good use of the characters performing in front of the curtain to achieve this.

The costumes (all handmade) were delightful and really brought the performance to life, especially on the younger performers.

The Lighting crew did a tremendous job, and the lights were often used to help tell the story, creating different shades and textures.

'Not So Sleeping Beauty' takes the traditional tale of the sleepy princess, turns it on its head (spoiler – she wakes up) and then cleverly blends several other Fairytale 'villains' into the story. It was an enjoyable romp through a list of characters, although as a complete piece, it may have benefitted from a little tighter editing to help it run expeditiously.

The show opened with an ensemble number of the whole cast that introduced the Fairy family and was the prologue to the main story. Special mention here must go to **William Pennington**

as 'Young Fairy Nuff' – playing the younger incarnation of the future villain that we would be introduced to later – who showed tremendous characterisation and emotion when being taunted by all the other fairies.

We were in safe hands throughout the evening with our Narrator, **Pauline Carr**, who appeared at regular intervals to update us on the story. She gave an assured performance, despite the amount of dialogue she had had to learn, often being able to ad-lib and react to events happening on stage with natural ability.

Our Leading lady, **Hannah Fenwick** (a newcomer to the society) played Princess Aurora with an effervescence and instant likeability that she kept throughout her performance. She was adept at all the required elements of singing, dancing and acting.

'Dame Snuffs/Snoozie', **Hannah Smith**, was one of the standout performances with an incandescent manifestation of the pantomime Dame. Traditionally, the Dame is played by a man, but any concerns that this variation would be considered a 'bold' casting choice were blown away with Hannah's iteration of the character which she maintained throughout. It was a joyful display that radiated enthusiasm for the role and an appreciation of both the genre and the audience.

Pantomimes are renowned for their slapstick comedy and Burtonwood has its own answer to the comedy double act. Step forward **Chloe Hughes** and **Bronte Tranter** as Wickes/Bee and Homebase/Queue. Perfect comic timing, from obviously well-rehearsed routines brought laughter from the audience whenever they were on stage. You always felt you were in safe hands, although not safe at all when the water pistols appeared in a scene of painting and decorating slapstick tour de force.

Our main Villain was Fairy Nuff, **Arran Abbey**, the other stand out performance. There is a fine line between Panto villain and 'cringe' – too little and you feel shortchanged, too much and you can quickly tire of the boos and hisses. Arran hit the sweet spot of hamming it up whilst being utterly entertaining. Characterisation and audience participation were both on display from an actor who commanded the stage whenever he appeared.

He was sometimes joined by his (in the story) sibling rival: Fairy Lovely, played by **Mia Hurst**. For every bit as 'goodly' as Fairy Nuff was evil, Mia played the Fairy with an excitable innocence for which the good fairy of any pantomime is depicted. It is great to see younger talent already making their mark in the main cast. I would love to see Hannah slow down the delivery of some of her lines in the future which I am confident she could do which would give extra finesse to an otherwise beautiful portrayal.

**James Gleeson** as Prince Gallant and **Herb Moore** as his long-suffering servant were the perfect foil for each other and the casting team should be given special mention for pairing these two actors together. They were always aware of how to play the roles on stage. Some of you may be a little too young to remember Lord Flashheart from *Blackadder The Third* and I have no idea if James is aware of the famous, boastful character played by Rik Mayall, but he was challenging all Lord Flashheart's tropes whenever on stage and I particularly enjoyed his

performance. Herb was strong as the servant, bringing a dose of world weary realism to the show, and even managed a few 'Dad' jokes during a change of scenery!

**Oliver Matthews** played a pleasingly understated Buttons, and I was impressed with his ability to bring the softer, caring side of the character to the fore and re-enforce the 'unrequited' love story element of the narrative.

There were two actors who remained off stage throughout the performance but contributed to a very amusing running joke. **Ant Gleeson** and **Gary Cunningham** were the 'Helping Hands' who consistently handed props to the cast from behind the curtains. It is the little details that make a big difference and during the final number the hands were both 'Reaching for the Stars' along with everyone else. A lovely touch.

All the Villains were both suitably menacing (for a family show) and funny at the same time. **Sally Tennant** as the Troll gave a memorable performance with good delivery of her lines and an enjoyable rendition of the Beatles' Help. She coped magnificently with a wardrobe malfunctioning eyebrow which would have stopped less assured performers in their tracks. **Rebekah Denton** hammed it up as the Dragon and (spoiler) provided a wonderfully acted plot twist with the Prince. **Gemma Ewen** provided the booming voice of the Giant to good effect.

Special mention must go to **Izzy Nash**, who of all the Villains, stood out as the Big Bad Wolf. She not only portrayed the character consistently – who knew wolves could be tempted to be vegan? – she maintained her Scottish accent too, to great effect.

The ensemble dancers were accomplished with boundless levels of energy, benefiting from good choreography from **Chloe Hughes**.

**Leigh Nash** appeared on the Troll bridge late on to sing 'C'mon Get Dancing/Tapping,' the standout vocal performance of the evening.

Burtonwood are blessed with a number of younger players coming through the ranks and already impressing with their professionalism and ability. The three Little Pigs showed a maturity beyond their age with a beautifully playful description of the titular fairytale persona. All the young actors were a joy to watch and none showed any of the nerves that might be expected of such young performers. This is especially true of the youngest – **Quinn Van Major**, just four years old, but every bit as polished as his fellow cast, and without a drop of nerves. Well done to them all.

The harmonies and singing were on point throughout the whole show, from all the performers. MD **Izzy Nash** is to be congratulated on the choice of songs and the adaptation of some well-known classics (old and new) with re-written lyrics by **James Gleeson, Jim McMillan, Hannah Smith and Pauline Taylor**.

The best example of this for me (and by the response from the audience they agreed) was also the best moment in the show – the duet between Fairy Lovely and the Evil Fairy Nuff. The two

appeared on stage with one half lit pink and the other half lit green, a nod to another famous magical pairing perhaps? **Mia Hurst** and **Arran Abbey** then belted out one of the best songs from one of the most popular of modern musicals – “What is This Feeling?” from *Wicked*. The duet suited the two performers, the theming of the pantomime as a whole and one of the key plotlines. It was a brilliant number; it is always dangerous to perform such a well-known song as comparisons with the original are unavoidable. The musical team and the two actors need not have worried with their version having enough originality to make it their own.

Having included all the traditional tropes (Act two included the classic “He’s behind you!” scene where a cast member is stolen from the stage by another character – on this occasion a ghost – one by one, with the audience getting more and more involved) the show ended with a traditional finale and a fantastic group number that really showed the sense of fun and enjoyment that the show had brought. I did however also appreciate the not so traditional ending, for once the Prince did not get his Princess – a nice twist!

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to see ‘Not So Sleeping Beauty’ and the community of Burtonwood AMADS could not have been more welcoming. Their next show is *Legally Blonde* in July, and I very much hope that I will be asked to pop over and see that too. Well done to all involved.

## PHOTOGRAPHS





## PROGRAMME

