

*Decorative flourish*  
**Penny Plain  
 Theatre Company**

*Insist you see next summer's  
 Monstrous production:*

**“THE  
 BARGUEST”**

*An experience you'll never  
 forget -  
 no matter how hard you try!*



[www.pennyplaintheatre.co.uk](http://www.pennyplaintheatre.co.uk)  
**Telephone: 01756 752695**

*Gentlemen and Ladies,*  
**HARDCASTLE'S  
 CHRISTMAS BREW**

*will be served at the places  
 hereinunder described*

*Fri. Dec 4<sup>th</sup> Grassington Square 7pm*

*Sat. Dec 5<sup>th</sup> Grassington Dickensian  
 12.30 & 2.15pm*

*Sun. Dec 6<sup>th</sup> Piece Hall, Halifax  
 3 shows over the day*

*Fri. Dec 11<sup>th</sup> Old Hall, Threshfield 8pm*

*Sat. Dec 12<sup>th</sup> Grassington Dickensian  
 12.30 & 2.15pm*

*Sun. Dec 13<sup>th</sup> Piece Hall, Halifax  
 3 shows over the day*

*Thurs. Dec 17<sup>th</sup>  
 Tempest Arms, Elslack 7pm*

*Fri. Dec 18<sup>th</sup>,  
 The Clarendon, Hebden 7pm  
 Craven Arms, Appletreewick 8pm  
 New Inn, Appletreewick 9pm*

*Sat. Dec 19<sup>th</sup> Grassington Dickensian  
 12.30 & 2.15pm*

*Christmas Eve  
 Red Lion, Burnsall 7.15pm*

*Decorative flourish*  
**Penny Plain  
 Theatre Company**

*gives you*  
**HARDCASTLE'S  
 CHRISTMAS  
 BREW**



*Being a melange of seasonal  
 delights, viz. Carolling, Mummers,  
 Dance & sundry items, all to  
 entertain You.*

*“ Now that our beloved company, the Mighty Excelsior Theatre has come to rest for the Winter after our production of Hamlet, described by discerning audiences as the most Tragic play ever perform’d, with our horses, Rosypants and Gildedstern, stabled and thus content, we approach the Festive Season with Customary Relish.*

*Allow us to share with you, some of the quaint English songs, dances and folk plays that we have garner’d from the length and breadth of Merrie England whilst on our travels.”*

*Sudbury Spooone*

*Hunt the Wren* is a ditty of rare antiquity, referring to the barbarous custom, upon St Stephen’s day, of capturing, killing and parading one of these diminutive birds for the general amusement of all.

*We’ve been Awhile a-Wandering* is one of many variations on the Wassail song. This one, appropriately, is the Yorkshire Wassail.

*Clementsing* is a relic of times when blacksmiths would go from door to door on the feast day of their patron saint, St Clement, on 23<sup>rd</sup> November. They would sing this to beg for alms. Odd, how many of these songs revolve around scrounging money.

*Shepherds Arise* is a fine old carol from Sussex, and we heard it sung by a Waggoner,

John Copper, and his son, James, a few years ago. They don’t know we’ve purloined it yet.

*The Carnal and the Crane* existed in broadside versions from the mid eighteenth century, but an early version has been found in a chapbook in York from 1590. It is 30 verses long but we spare you most of them. A conversation between a carnal (crow) and a crane, it relates the tale of King Herod being convinced of the coming of the Christ child by the miraculous crowing of a roasted cock on his table.

The customary *Calling-on Song* introduces the Mummers’ Play. Ours is from Bellerby, near Leyburn. It was called a sword dance play, but they don’t seem to do any sword dancing to it! We’ve put that right with a bit of Rapper dancing thrown in. A dance with flexible swords it seems to have started about 1850 among the miners of the northeast.

Mummers’ Plays are a mystery, too. They have been performed in Britain since the middle ages, and are usually about a fight, a death and a resurrection - taken to mean the old year dying and a new one beginning. They probably had a pagan ritual significance originally, but have become scraps of buffoonery and a chance for local apprentices to run riot.

*Who’s the Fool Now* is a grand drinking song,

first noted in 1588, but probably derived from an older Scottish version “Wha’s fou’ now?”, meaning “who’s drunk now”.

*Personent Hodie* goes back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century too - we sing it in English as “On this day, Earth shall sing”. You can have too much Latin, you know.

And of course *Gaudete* is a lot of Latin!

**WE WISH YOU ALL A FINE  
CHRISTMAS and A  
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.**

