



Ali Baba and the Naughy Thieves, Mere Lecture Hall

CHRIS Wood wrote, and then the cast of Mere Amateur Dramatic Society re-wrote, the script for Ali Baba and the Naughy Thieves, on last week in the Lecture Hall, and the audience was also treated to original songs.

Based very loosely on the familiar 1001 Nights story, our Ali, son of Lady Baba (not the least big gaga), wanted to marry the daughter of the Suntan of Mere, but first he had to find enough dosh to send the penurious parents off to sunny climes.

Luckily, he was bright enough to outwit Silliman the Chief Thief and his band of light-fingered teenagers - daughters and sons of the villagers to judge by their names.

They nicked the booty, the cops arrested the wrong culprit, Ali and his cat Rumpelstiltskin foiled the robbers and, with a bit of

sleight of hand, the treasure went back to the rightful owners and the naughties were nabbed. Or something like that.

The show was full of good ideas, like the running joke of everyone having to dash home to watch East Knoylers, the hilarious policemen Bill and Will (Paul Scaife and the ever-funny June Hewett), and lines that actually made sense of the command Open Sesame.

It all started with an original and tuneful song called Goodnight, and the song to greet the Suntan and his Sun Cream was another memorable melody.

It is a pity that the Chief Thief didn't have a better handle on his lines. Taking a prompt on a single word command does slow the momentum.

The youngsters, Oliver Cooper as Ali, Elysia Cooper as his sister Sali and Roxie Brown as the princess, showed that MADS has a rosy future.

And Howard Smith's Lady Baba was a really poignant sight, imprisoned in the clock tower and having to write down all of George's long and tall stories. Local jokes abounded, just as they should in village pantomime.

And the big bad wolf sequence was quite the oddest I have seen in this long 2010-

2011 pantomime season. GP-W