



Sir Richard with Anita Manning and the Bargain Hunt team

Antique visitors

During the fortnight that we opened to visitors for our Christmas 'Beauty & the Beast' exhibition in early December we received a film crew from the BBC1 programme 'Bargain Hunt'. Tissington has featured on the show before when former host Tim Wonnacott commented on various items in the house and library as a filler between the bargain-hunting couples. This time the Hall was to feature as the backdrop for the opening

and closing sequences of the Christmas Special and host Anita Manning was filmed not only sleeping in Belle the Beauty's bed but also encountering a special visitor at the library fireplace later on that evening. The auction part of the show was filmed at Charles Hanson's emporium at Etwall but the real value of the appearance is that the series is broadcast all over the world and repeats are good news for us!

IN THE NATIONAL NEWS

The news that local gun dealer, Spencer Booth, has been sentenced to a 12-year term in prison for illegal possession of sawn-off shotguns and tampering with the serial numbers came as a huge surprise to those of us who frequented his workshop off Shaw Croft in Ashbourne. In all the years I have always known him as a cheerful unassuming expert who took great satisfaction in the completion of his work. After the trial at Birmingham Crown Court his family made the following statement: 'Spencer was approached by an unknown man demanding to be supplied with guns. He refused, and was then threatened at gunpoint. The man said he would kill him, his wife and family if he didn't cooperate or if he talked to anyone. Spencer kept quiet and did as instructed. His family knew nothing of his ordeal until several weeks after his arrest. The identity of his attacker still remains unknown.' If this is the case, I do hope that the likeable Spencer will not serve the full sentence. Newspapers have been saying how could this happen in Ashbourne? Well it did... right under all our noses!

Belle 2017 and guess who'll be flying in next year

The huge success of our *Beauty & the Beast* exhibition before Christmas meant that we have hosted a great many princesses and jesters at the Hall during the 14 days when we turned the house into the Castle of the Rose. I personally greeted visitors in the Main Hall and recited the part of the story as the merchant is looking for his lost daughter Belle in the huge castle and, on finding no one at home, settles down to a sumptuous meal set for the Beast! The tiara was well used throughout the duration and in fact had to be replaced half way through owing to various coronet parts falling off! All castles need good jesters and his hat caused great merriment, as can be seen in the photos. We are already planning ahead



Jesters all!

for 2018 when our home will become Neverland from A M Barrie's *Peter Pan*.

With the dressing of Tissington for Christmas we were fortunate to have actors David Frederickson and Stephen Coates address audiences on six nights in the run-up to the festivities. Each recited different half-hour 'ghostly tales' to the assembled throng over six candle-lit evenings ably abetted by mince pies and mulled wine. The evenings were such a success that we plan to schedule more in 2018, so for those who attended, please don't tell 'Whodunit'!



David Frederickson recites ghostly tales



Patrick and Joanne with Sir Richard and James Stafford

SCOUTING FOR STARS

The avid reader will know that we have an observatory in the village. Patrick and Joanne Poitevin are dedicated astronomers and, providing we have a clear night, constantly view the constellations in the skies above Tissington. Patrick is keen to impart his knowledge to a wider audience and has teamed up with Derbyshire Scouts to distribute a number of telescopes that he has kindly recommissioned. His aim is to encourage children from all over Derbyshire to take a greater interest in the planets and he is available to give talks on the subject. This photo shows the couple presenting myself (as President of Derbyshire Scouts) and County Commissioner James Stafford with a telescope outside the Hall in the autumn.