



Christmas in December 1952

TOWN HALL THEATRE
VENTNOR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27 and
MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1952
at 7.45 p.m.

The Ventucky Minstrels present
ALL BLACK PANTOMIME
"BABES IN THE WOOD"

Prices within the reach of all!

ALL SEATS BOOKABLE — — 3/- and 2/-
(Children Half-Price)

Book early at Nash's Garage, Pier St. Ventnor 173/4

Ventnor's own newspaper, the *Isle of Wight Mercury* was still going strong in 1952, published each Friday, and by then in its 97th year. The leading article on 19th December took to the topic of 'helping the Christmas spirit', observing how some traders in the town had made an excellent job of their windows. In what were otherwise dimly-lit streets, many had been decorated and illuminated, including Sharpe's department store and Gibbs the outfitters, both with their extensive frontages. However, pride of place had to be accorded to Spiller's fruiterers, whose premises had been decorated outside as well as inside, for immediately above the shop frontage were a series of illuminated Christmas trees that appear to have stolen the show.

Another trader who had enlivened the look of the town was Mr W. Gee of Spring Hill Nurseries who had opened a shop on the High Street, just for the Xmas period, to display his chrysanthemum blooms. Whilst many gardeners had struggled to bring their plants through the earlier cold spell, Mr Gee had produced a fine array for Xmas sale, along with some azalea blooms that also took some beating.

For entertainment, you could do no better than go along to the Town Hall on 27th and 29th December and see the locally famous 'Ventucky Minstrels' present the 'all black' pantomime 'Babes in the Wood'. However, if that did not appeal, the Rex Cinema was open daily, except Christmas Day, with an array of some of the latest film releases. The most popular was almost certainly 'King Solomon's Mines', with its star cast of Stewart Granger and Deborah Kerr.

Finally, there was that ever-present conundrum of what to buy as Christmas presents. For the busy mum in the house, or the aspiring teenage daughter, there was always the gift pack from a leading perfume house. Warne's Pharmacy at 92 High Street, pictured here behind a charabanc about 1930, had a grand selection of famous names: Arden, Rubinstein, Chanel, Lenthéric, Yardley and many others. No doubt a few of these packs would linger in a dressing-table drawer, unopened, for months or even years. This was in sharp contrast to the many Christmas chocolate selection boxes (or stockings) for kids. These would be consumed within days.



Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre



Ventnor & District Local History Society is a registered charity, working to preserve and record the history of our area and make it available to the public in the Ventnor Heritage Centre.

The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

www.ventnorheritage.org.uk / telephone 855407

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