

## The MUMMERS PLAY 2025.2

### The Players

The Guiser  
Saint George  
Saint George's Mother  
The Dark Night  
Doctor Goode

### Additional Players

Beezlebob  
Johnny Jack  
Old Father Christmas  
The Queen of Egypt's Daughter  
Bold New Year  
Johnny Jack  
Old Father Time

#### Father Christmas:

In steps I – Father Christmas  
Welcome, or welcome not –  
I surely hope that Father Christmas will never be forgot!

Now Winter, that Ragged Rascal  
Pays his annual visit  
And ruin follows in his wake  
And all is lost – or is it?

The players shall come in once more:  
Greyer of hair, looser of teeth  
And duller of wit than before -  
And yet they seek to please....  
And perhaps it is the same story that's in store:  
But like the vicar's annual pantomime  
They hope yet not to bore.

**[Aside]**

(And that's the very thing:  
For that was now – but this is then  
And do recall:  
In the land of the stupid  
It **is** the halfwit which is king).

**[\$weeps passage open with broom]**

And so it's "Back! Back!"  
Passage for the Players make...  
A little space to let them in.  
I ring the bell  
They play their tune  
So let the play begin.

**[Rings bell]**

**Beezlebob:**

You may wonder *what is* the Mummer's play, and what is its meaning.

This is what there was before there was Christmas.  
The Winter Solstice and the Turn of the Year was then celebrated by a play of ritual and symbolism.

Here we have the fight between Summer (St. George) and Winter (The Dark Knight). You shall see Summer killed by Winter and then Summer's rebirth by extraordinary means. And then you will see the death of Winter. This is the story of the seasons.

There *is* (supposedly) humour in this play but its true meaning lies much deeper.

For, now we are in the midst of winter.....

**Guiser:**

And there can be no Green Winter -  
All things have a Time and Place and Order.  
So,  
Now that winter's here again.....  
Come around and gather in,  
We wish your favour for to win.  
This 'handsome' band is come today  
To re-enact the famous play.

A story now of Winter's Finest Hour,  
Of Good's defeat, of Evil's evil Power.  
But this triumph of Night  
And this exile of Summer  
Shall be puts to right  
By the hand of the Mummer.  
So step on and see the Fight, the Death,  
the Victory.  
And it's 'Room, room, a little space' -  
Let saint George come show his face !

Now in steps Saint George and his crew so bold  
Their dreadful pageant to unfold.  
And whether they'll stand  
(or whether they'll fall)  
They'll do their best to please you all!

**The Mummer's Carol**

And the cock he crew,  
and the winter drew his name upon the land.  
And all the leaves in the jolly, jolly greenwood fell  
by God's almighty hand.  
The frost, the snow, the winter's glow,  
the place beside the fire.  
And with a rat-a-tat-a-tat 'Old Jack Frost's back',  
calls Cocky from the spire.

And young Jack be green, Old Jack be brown  
now Jack is dead and gone.  
But in pretty spring all hearts will ring  
to see him dance again.  
Here is Saint George at Winter's door,  
Here are five rascals more.  
And with a sing-a-ling-a-ling let all the Mummers bring  
Glad Tidings to you all.

**Saint George:**

In steps I a brave and fearless Knight:  
The champion of good, the arm of Right.  
To my great deeds there is no end  
When 'gainst dark and death my will I bend.

I keep England safe, do I,  
( And that's a useful thing to know),  
Against great strife fight I,  
And I'll give you blow for blow.

**Guiser:**

Welcome brave Saint George,  
And welcome.  
Travailled far to be here now?

**Saint George:**

Aye, far and further still,  
From Nursery door to window sill.  
Over the hills and far away,  
There's not a dragon nor a giant  
as is not afraid of me.

Been to all five corners of the Globe-  
From the Towers of Tartary  
To the Gates of Old Babalonio-  
And back again.  
(And I'm blimmin' tired now).

**[ rubs feet ]**

**Guiser:**

Fought the serpent *and* the worm?

**Saint George:**

Aye, the Lords of the Hill,  
The bold of heart, the strong of will.  
Tyrants young and old.  
Giants big and bold.

Nabob, Magog, Gog and all,  
I've slashed them all and seen them fall.

'Twas I who fought the fiery dragon,  
And brought it to Great Slaughter,  
And by this deed didst win the hand  
of the Queen of Egypt's daughter.

**Guiser:** And fought the Night before?

**Saint George:** Aye, many and many a time more.  
He and I likes a nice set-to or two, it's true.

**The Queen of Egypt's  
Daughter:** I am the Queen of Egypt's Daughter.  
For me Georgie Porgie did great slaughter.  
(Though my heart's as weak as water,  
And I be no better than I ought to be).

I like that Rascal over there.  
I like his bold and sexy stare.  
For a crown, a coin, a penny bare,  
I'll let him see my underwear.

**Saint George's Mother:** And I am Saint George's loving mother,  
A force for good, as you'll discover.  
And what a happy scene do we three make  
This winter's day in 'Merrye Eynglande',  
*Oh, but wait!*  
By the pricking of my thumbs,  
Something Evil this way comes.

**Dark Night:** In steps I, black heart, black eye.  
I swear Saint George and good shall die.  
I, the Evil knight from Evil lands  
Shall dark and death cast by my hand.

**Saint George's Mother:** Just as we were getting nice and cosy.

**Queen of Egypt's  
Daughter:** Now our future don't seem so rosy.

**Saint George's Mother:** To see his [indicates Saint George]  
guileless smile gives me a fright.

**Queen of Egypt's  
Daughter:** Oh George defend us from all perils,  
and dangers of this knight.

**Saint George:** Well in my time I've been a fighter,  
I'm not afraid to show this blighter.

**Dark Night:** Come, 'Brave George', you don't bother me,  
Surrender all and bend thy knee,

Give up thy lands to Winter's might,  
And I'll let you off without a fight.

**Saint George:** Never shall you bother me,  
I'd rather die than see thee free.

**Dark Night:** Step up Saint George and meet thy fate,  
A blade of wicked steel shall split thy pate.

**Saint George:** Now, now Dark Knight, don't talk so hot,  
For your threats I give no jot,  
For True Defender of the right be I,  
And I says old King Cold must die.

**Saint George's Mother:** Always scrapping - what a lad!  
Perhaps (with luck) he'll kill this cad.

(Have a care my son -  
This cuckoo will have your nest).

**Saint George:** Hold fast, mother, and hurry home,  
And make the bed for where I lie,  
For I fear no man,  
And fear not the man by whom I die.

Let him come, that ragged thief of precious time,  
And bid farewell to the King,  
For if my heart will bear the wounds of love,  
My flesh will bear the sin.

**[Both take off excess props & load them onto Mother]**

**[The Dark Knight takes up his swords]**

**Dark Night:** To arms, Saint George:  
Now is the time to say goodbye.

**[St. George takes up his swords]**

Draw forth your sword and fight,

**Saint George:**

Draw forth your purse and pay

**Dark Night:**

Satisfaction I shall have before I leave today.

**Both together:**

**[They cross swords]**

**Guiser:** So, know you now this fellow is very winter,  
All before him die, or flee or falter.  
Summer's revenge shall come with  
time and tide and token,  
But not before this winter's siege is broken.

One slash, one blow,  
On your marks: ready, steady, go!

[They fight]

[Play 'Man in the Brown Hat' half speed]

[Saint George is mortally wounded]

**Saint George's Mother:**

[Mother throws props onto ground]

I fear the poor lad's light has failed him,  
Oh, Corblimey, Winter slays him.

[G falls to the ground]

**Dark Night:**

One and two and through and through,  
My vorpal blade goes snicker snack!

[Dark Knights inserts swords under St G's arms]

Die Saint George all nice and good,  
Triumph death and dark and black.

**Saint George:**

Oh! Oh! I am dead - **Oh!**

[He falls]

**Saint George's Mother:**

Oh cruel man what hast thou done,  
Thou's wounded and slain mine only son.  
How can England now be saved  
When my poor son lies in his grave?

**Guiser:**

[Approaching mother licentiously]

Why there's ways and means good mother.....

**Saint George's Mother:**

But I'm too old to have another!  
Oh Saint George you *must* recover!

Oh for a pill or magic potion  
To stir his carcass into motion.

[thinks]

Is there a doctor to be found?

[louder]

Is there a doctor to be found?

[cautiously, looking in purse]

For a doctor I'd give a good ten pound.

[Doctor springs in]

[Holding a hip flask: he is a fool, and a drunken fool at that]

**Doctor Goode;**

In steps I,  
A doctor rare and true.  
Why all this grieving woman -  
What can I do for you?

[Mother points to Saint George]

[Doctor starts!]

Why this man is .....ill!

[draws swords from St G's body & tosses them aside]

But no matter what the problem is  
I'm sure to have a pill.

For I've a little something up my sleeve,  
A balm to calm, a pill to ease  
The cholic heart, the urge to heave -  
Let me all your ails relieve!  
What old girl - no need to grieve,  
Before Old Nick his soul does seize  
I'll prestidigitate a cure!  
Believe that I, Doctor Goode,  
Can cure his disease.

**Saint George's Mother:** His disease?  
His DISEASE?  
But he's **stabbed through the guts**, good doctor!

**Doctor Goode:** His disease or his decease  
I can cure with equal ease.  
**[wisely]**  
Stabbed through the guts  
Is sure a great disaster -  
But in me bag I've many a magic plaster!

**Saint George's Mother:** Can you cure a broken heart?

**Doctor Goode:** Aye, and a broken head - **[gestures to his hip flask]**  
I've the very stuff that's sure to raise the dead.

**Guiser:** And just what can you cure, good doctor ?

**Doctor Goode:** I can cure:  
The hipsy, the pipsy,  
the palsy and the gout,  
(and if the Devil's in a man  
I'm sure to fetch him out).  
The warble, the gorble  
the rumbling of the tubes,  
The itch, the stitch,  
the rotting of the pubes,  
The migraine, the peabrain,  
the stutters and commotions,  
The pox, vox, strangulion,  
the torpor of the motions,  
Not a one will stand the test  
Against my famous potions !

**Guiser:** Then to thy work, 'good' Doctor!

**Doctor Goode:** Into thy hands I commend my spirit  
**[hands hip flask to Guiser]**

This man's state is very grave,  
And only the best physic can him save.  
From my bag I take.....

**[A lot of rehearsed ad hoc humour here – withdrawing all manner of objects from the bag]**

From my bag I take.....

From my bag I take.....  
...a bottle of the Friary Quaker lotion,  
And from my hat .....a box of Tintantation pills.

**Guiser:** What's all this then?

**Doctor Goode:** It's Allygumption Lotion!  
(A hointiment of mine own connicoction!)

**Guiser:** What's innit?

**Doctor Goode:** Narwalgarwal,  
Pikespike,  
Onionbunion,  
Oilboiltoilsoil,  
Beebalm, bones and borage.....

**Guiser:** Enough of this humbuggery!  
Does it work?

**Doctor Goode:** Nalways: see - upon his tongue I place the pill,  
And upon his brow I place the lotion,  
Now stand back and  
watch carefully for signs of motion.....  
*Oh merciful God,  
Grant that the old Adam in this child  
May be so buried  
That the new man may be raised up in him.....*

**[All pray]**

**[All watch for signs of motion, of which there are none]**  
**[Disappointed the congregation disperse]**  
**[the Doctor kicks St. George's leg]**

See - he moves one leg already!

**[all return to observe.....motionlessness]**  
**[Disillusioned they disperse]**  
**[The Doctor kicks St. George's ribs]**

See - the pulse of life returns!

**[Approach and again disappointment]**  
**[again a dispersal]**

**[The Doctor furtively draws a £10 note from his pocket]**  
**[He waves it over St. George's feet, which quiver]**  
**[He waves it under St. George's groin, which moves]**



**Dark Night:** The pulse of life *does* return!  
(horrified)

**[He waves it under St. George's nose, his head rises]**  
**[St. George revives.....but not quick enough to catch the note]**

**Guiser:** Arise Saint George and play thy part !  
**[He pulls St. George to his feet]**  
Thou art reborn with saintly heart!  
**[St. George takes a bow]**

**Doctor Goode:** There - I've done something to do him good!  
(I never doubted that I could!)

**Guiser:** **[Guiser takes Garland from his head and crowns saint George]**  
With all my worldly goods I thee endow.  
**[All pray, a moments silence]**  
**[Mother takes Moor by the ear & pushes him to his knees]**

**Saint George:** I should renounce the Devil and all His works,  
The pomps and vanities of this wicked world -  
But I won't!  
Thanks old quack - hoblidged I'm sure  
Now Dark Knight – you'll feel my sword  
**[He takes up his sword (stick) & the Black Knight kneels]**

**Dark Night:** It is now I who bends the knee,  
And with your leave I shall flee.  
But in a season, month or more  
This Winter's son shall come once more  
**[ He steels St. George's sword & flees]**

**Saint George's Mother:** Oh Doctor, how shall we ever repay you?

**Doctor Goode:** The ten pounds you promised is all I need.

**Saint George's Mother:** That's a lot for an old woman indeed.

**Doctor Goode:** What you say *is* very true.....  
I'll settle for nine pounds ninety two!

**Saint George's Mother:** I'm a poor woman,  
(That's what you'll find!) **[ in a rough voice]**  
You'll have to take the cash in kind!  
**[ She advances on the Doctor]**

**Guiser:**

So, brave people gathered round,  
Saint George is now made whole and sound.  
All know this - that good's reborn,  
The hurt is mended, *Evil's web is torn!*

But - if you don't believe what I say  
Come in you others to end our play.

**Beezlebob:**

In comes I, Old Beezlebob,  
And in my hand I carry a clob,  
In my hand a dripping pan-  
Don't you think I'm a funny man?

For I've travelled all day  
through the land of night,  
Down a long, short, narrow broad old way,  
and be so far off I be now here.

I ate nothing 'til I was fully stuffed,  
and starved in the land of plenty.

I talked with a man who was fully dumb,  
and sang for al the deaf.  
I've been shown the way by the blind,  
and took wise council from fools.  
I sheltered in a house with no walls,  
from a clear sky with no stars.  
From a jealous God who cared not  
and a strong king all weak and wan.

I humbly hope for the whole wide world,  
and shall own all that's in my empty 'ead.

So I'll want no more  
than a glass of bread and a bag of beer  
To wish you Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year.  
And now I've come I'll go away  
but for that pleasure you'll have to pay!

**[Advances on audience with collecting bag]**

**Little Johnny Jack:**  
**[Enter, children**

In steps I, Little Johnny Jack,  
With all my family on my back,

**clinging to his coat]**

And though they're all but very small  
They eat the lot - and leave bugger all!

My pockets bare, my hair turns grey  
I slave and toil through night and day.  
I've sold my hat, my coat, my breeches,  
They cling to me like sucking leeches.

I toil from dawn, I toil till dusk  
The tattered wallet ever thinner  
While the roof above holds back the rain  
They devour the humble dinner.

Ah!  
But to see the smile on each rosy face  
A grin from ear to ear **[left to right of children]**  
My kin each year they grow apace  
They spread both far & near.

The child today's tomorrow's treasure.  
They need your gold a plenty.  
Dig deep – give well.....

**[aside]**

(They'll come amongst you presently)

**Bold New Year:**

For now you've raised your Festive Glass  
And every cracker's pulled.  
Gifts unwonted and disliked -  
Happy Christmas? I am fooled:

The cheery bottle's running dry  
And queasy as the vintage flies -  
The wrapping ripped,  
The turkey stripped,  
The weight-watched waistline gone awry,  
And broken toys in corners lie  
For Santa's come and gone  
(And Jolly Rudolph's left a gift  
...In it I trod this morn)

And as I gaze upon the scene forlorn  
I'll make my New Year's wish:

For now steps I: Bold New Year -  
Rehearsed and not yet play'd.  
As Lazarus upon the stage  
I'm seen to walk again.

Please come - come, with me, again  
As the whirligig revolves:  
And let this discontent of winter

In glorious summer be resolved

The buds will burst  
The leaves will fall  
The players come and go.  
So learn your lines  
And play your role  
Into next year we go.

**Old Father Time:**

Whistle up the Devil  
And his name it is mine  
For as you can see  
I am Old Father Time  
(And Time it is to end our mime)

While all the world's asleep  
Not a sage nor soul dare squeak nor peep as I pass by:  
For I, the most unwonted guest,  
Have yet to make my call  
On those who would make excuse  
Or would feign forestall  
The knock upon the door  
The shadow in the hall.

I shall not be halted nor thwarted.  
For there shall be a Day of Judgement  
And a very ending to it all:  
The step upon the stair,  
The surprise and the fright!  
(For Death shall come as a thief upon the night).

See - I turn the hands of Time  
As I turn the handle of the door  
When you shall once more meet  
All those who've gone before.

And all know this:  
As you are now  
Then once I used to be  
As I am now

**[lower hood to reveal face]**

Then will you one day be.

This idiot told tale signifies nothing  
If not to say:  
Now is the time to kill Time  
Before it is Time that kills you.  
And for your time my thanks.  
And with my thanks adieu!!

**Guiser:**

So, Let us celebrate this Christmas Time,

All good to all in all good rhyme.  
The circle's whole his new year's dawn -  
**Farewell to all that's been and gone!**

**[All bow]**

**All SING:**

Joy, Health, Love and Peace,  
Be all here in this place.  
By your leave we will sing  
Concerning our King.

Our King is well dressed  
In the silks of the best.  
In ribbons so rare  
No King can compare.

We have travelled many miles  
Over hedges and styles  
In search of our King,  
Unto you we bring.

Old Christmas is passed,  
Twelfth Night is the last.  
And we bid you adieu,  
Great joy to the new!

**[During the song five of the players circle Saint George ]**

**[who holds six long swords, ]**

**[They draw the swords and form into a set of two rows of  
three]**

**[They dance to the tune 'Somer is icumen in']**

**[At the end of the dance a 'knot' or 'lock' is formed]**

**[The black Knight kneels]**

**[The Knot is lowered around his neck and the five dance  
around]**

**[The swords are drawn and The Moor from the Knot  
and all dance 'in' with a shout]**

**[The Players bow and the play is ended]**

Dance

Tune – first line twice

No clash – Dance round. Single step.

Chorus:     Slow: O R

Fast: O R L O (back) L R O

Back to Back

Chorus

Basket: Left arm over, Right sword under partner to right

Star: continuous music phrase. Moor on knees in centre

Star lowered. All (ex Moor) dance round

8 Bars dance round (tune lines 1-4)

slow on bars 9 - 12 (tune lines 5 & 6)

Draw on last beat of 12

Caper round left bars 13 – 16 (last tune line)

#### EXIT SONG

So Farewell, Farewell – Fare/well for one more year

And until we meet again Fare/well for one more year

Rise again, Rise again – our /son shall rise to fight again

We /turn our face toward the sun, fare/well for one more year.

And /so Adieu, Adieu – to you and you and you

A/dieu to all that's been and gone and hail to all that's new

May /health and wealth and kindness and long years be with you all here

We /look to George our only son, farewell for one more year

So, so long, so long, and /now we must be gone

So /long the road we travel on, so /short our humble song

Our /words are spoke, the stage is bare, and now again our play is done

Our /son shall rise on Albion, fare/well to one more year.