

## Bodmin Play

The play is a revival of the Bodmin Mock Mayor custom translated into a modern mummings style. The Beast of Bodmin becomes the spirit of Cornwall who is hunted, captured and tried by a jury of Bodmin dignitaries (The Ragadaziow – forefathers) lead by Justice Jan Tregeagle, for crimes against the (English) establishment. Witnesses are summoned in the form of historical figures such as Flamank and Angove (leaders of the 1497 rebellion) and contemporary characters such as Miss Minx a television personality with a second home. The outcome, with the support of a vociferous campaign on the part of Bodmin children to “free the beast”, is the exoneration of Cornwall’s spirit in the form of the beast and the castigation of the establishment.

Although initially introduced with a detailed written script which was carefully rehearsed the play evolved over the six years to date to become much more communal in authorship with a series of improvised sketches within the framework of the original narrative. These improvised sketches can incorporate contemporary issues. Local people have grown into the characters and the social context of the play is also enhanced by the action of the Helliers, the hunters, played by young people whose task it is to chase the beast around the town with much shouting but little to rehearse.



Despite this modern interpretive creativity and vision of a future Cornwall, the play nevertheless has continuity with the traditions of the past and uses these as a medium for comment. In particular the use of masks, bizarre costume and the creation of large hairy pantomime “beast” are anchored firmly in Cornish Guize Dance tradition.

## Cast / Ragadaziow

worthies of the Borough:

**Justice Jan Tregagle** - wants eradicate beastliness

**Timmy Clark /Black Hunter** - meek and mild/transforms to 'devil'

**Tommy Trewartha** - everyman, drunkard, wise fool

**Alf N Safety** - jumped-up paper-pusher

**King Henry English** - King Athelstan/Henry etc combined

**An Gof and Flamank** - Cornish Heroes

**Sir Anthony Kingston** -reprisal-monger

**Oliver Crapwell** - roundhead

**Isabard Grimly Cunard**—capitalist

**Doctor Lazar St Lawrence** - analyse this

**Ms Meeja Minx** - celebrity bimbo

**St Petroc** - our man

Ragadaziow Piper



Helliers, Beast and Casket for St Petrock's Bones



## Synopsis 2018

**10:00 Bodmin and Wenford Line Station** Procession of Petroc's bones with Ragadaziow enters and Tregeagle creates alarm; The Beast has been sighted Ragadaziow send out the Helliers to hunt the Beast (promise beer as reward) Helliers hunt Beast around the town

Trial is enacted at various locations in Bodmin using puppet beast while the full size is hunted by the Helliers.

10.30 Military Museum

11.am Barnecutts

11.30 Hole in the Wall

1pm Masons Arms

1.30 Garland Ox

2pm Bodmin Jail

3pm Procession (via white Hart) to Mount Folly

15.49 Trial with full sized Beast on Mount Folly:(1549 is the date when the Mayor of Bodmin was hanged for his part in the Cornish rebellion )

Tregeagle delivers damning accusation Ragadaziow (the Jury) don masks to take part Black Hunter defends the Beast by showing scenes from the past The Beast is Attacked by King Henry, has its tongue ripped out, by Kingston is gelded by Cromwell and put to work by Cunard Helped by St Petroc (splinter out of eye) Black Hunter sums up Judgement is made Black Hunter demands due payment (Tregeagle's soul) Tregeagle is pursued instead Beast is 'freed'