



YPC

The Young People's Committee.

January 2025

Welcome to our New Year Newsletter!

Reported by Roger Tinker.

YPC visit to the Pantomime - December 2024



We did it again; Oh yes, we did!

The YPC committee members began planning the Christmas outing in May 2024. We reviewed all the Christmas events planned for theatres in East Lancashire and the eateries local to them. After protracted deliberations it was agreed that we should return to the Manchester Opera House followed by a meal and party at Manchester Hall. We had been to the Opera House and Manchester Hall for the past two years so all the logistics were in place and lessons learned in the previous years could be included. The return of Jason Manford and Ben Nickless in the cast reinforced our decision. The previous two pantomimes had been huge successes enjoyed by all our guests.

That's why Karen and Julie were standing on the corner of Quay Street and Hardman Street on a cold, foggy, Friday between Christmas and New Year. They were joined by other members of the Young Peoples' Committee to distribute the tickets to the families who were able to join us.



After all the families had arrived it was time for the committee members to join our guests in the warmth of the theatre.



The Opera House has a long tradition of pantomime, and many stars of film, theatre and TV have trod the boards in the annual production. The casting of Jason Manford, Ben Nickless and Myra DuBois three years ago was inspirational. This was the third year the artists had appeared in the pantomime. Cinderella was the story being retold this time.



All the, now, traditional elements of pantomime are included, sweets thrown into the auditorium, water guns and soakers to drench the audience, and participation at every opportunity, “hello buttons”, cheering Prince Charming, booing the Wicked Stepmother and the Ugly Sisters, and “in the gap”. The pantomime is spectacular with a mixture of moments of wonderment for the younger ones, and older ones too, the transformation of Cinderella clothes into her ballgown and the coach and horses flying overhead on their way to the ball, magical. There are also moments of pure slapstick and comedy genius. Our party was laughing and enthralled throughout.

The highlight of the show, for our group, came in the segment where children from the audience are invited on stage to chat with Prince Charming and Buttons. One of our guests was invited and he took TLC the YPC’s mascot on stage with him to great cheers.



After the ball was over and the marriage had been celebrated it was time for the committee members to don their hi vis vests to guide our guests, through the murk and cold, from the Opera House to Manchester Hall for some much-needed refreshment (shouting makes you thirsty), a festive meal and more entertainment. On arrival at Manchester Hall our guests were greeted by David Dunleavy and his team and taken into the Goulburn Suite where our balloon modeller, Lee Reilly, and DJ Paulski were ready to begin entertaining them.



During the meal our guests were challenged by the quizzes at the table testing their knowledge of Christmas films and trivia. Who could score the most points? Because points mean prizes.



The festive board was enjoyed by all, especially the vegan committee member who had forgotten to order a vegan alternative. Karen hadn’t forgotten and had ordered one for him! A game of musical bingo was played after dinner with more prizes to win.



Dancing was next on the agenda with some young guests demonstrating their skills on the floor for even more prizes. Gary did a great job in leading our guests through a whole range of line dances, ably supported by Karen and Julie.



Then it was back to pantomime land, for many of our younger guests it was approaching the witching hour and time to be on their way home. After being given a selection box, it was to say goodbye to old and new friends.



Lee Reilly, his balloon modelling kept young and old amazed at his skill and creativity. Lee is the Communications Officer for the Eastern Area. Paulski and his wife, thank you for the music, quizzes and musical bingo.

David Dunleavy and the staff at Manchester Hall, thanks for the food, the service, and patience. It requires great skill to carry trays of food through numerous duels with balloon swords.

Karen, for making the bookings, sending the invitations, managing the responses, checking that we had the correct dietary choice and keeping the committee members in order.

Julie, for her assistance in planning the event and braving the cold and damp whilst waiting for our guests to arrive.

A special mention this year to Paul Doran who has chosen to retire from the YPC after twelve years of service. Thank you for your time and input in planning and delivering so many events during those twelve years.

And a special welcome to Stuart Taylor, our latest recruit to the committee. We are all looking forward to working with him.



The committee wish to thank the following for their help and giving their time to make this year's Christmas outing a brilliant success: