



YPC

The Young People's Committee.

January 2026

Welcome to our New Year Newsletter!

Reported by Roger Tinker.

The Young Peoples Committee at the Pantomime - December 2025

On a cold December lunchtime Julie, Karen and four other YPC committee members stood under the canopy of the 20 Stories restaurant at the junction of Quay Street and Byrom Street. Why? Their mission. To meet the families supported by the MCF/ELMC and allocate them their tickets for the pantomime at the Opera. Oh yes it was!!!! After everybody had arrived Julie, Karen and the "fab" four joined the families in the theatre to enjoy the pantomime, starring for the fourth successive year Jason Manford and Ben Nickless. This year's pantomime Robin Hood.



Jason had lost weight to get into his green tights for this year's performance, but his rapport with Will 'Silly Willy' Scarlet, Ben Nickless, has lost none of its magic.

The story of Robin Hood, stealing from the rich, giving to the poor, and fighting against corruption and tyranny could, loosely, be compared to the ethos of Freemasonry if you exclude the "stealing from the rich". Masons are more adept at persuasion and conscience to alleviate the rich of their disposable riches. However, they are pretty good at supporting a wide range of good causes.

The Robin Hood story in the pantomime is speedily outlined in the opening scenes to alert the younger ones in the audience whom to cheer or boo. For the rest it is a vehicle for the comedy duo of Jason Manford and Ben Nickless to cause endless mayhem, laughter and fun. Caution, if you sit in the first ten rows of the stalls you will get wet. Every opportunity is taken by Robin and Silly Willy to soak the audience with a variety of water pistols, super soakers and a flying fire engine! Wisely, Karen had booked our tickets in the mid-section of the stalls out of reach of the deluge.

The storyline gives the duo licence to include all the favourite sketches, ghosts, updated versions of the twelve days of Christmas and everybody's favourite "in the flippin gap"





In this all singing, dancing, sword fighting production the comedy duo are ably supported by Landi Oshinow - The Spirit of Sherwood, Sarah Vaughan - Maid Marion, and Adam Strong - The Sheriff of Nottingham (Boo).



All too soon the pantomime had ended, and it was time to leave the theatre and walk through the Spinningfields Quarter to Manchester Hall, guided by Julie, Karen and the “Fab Four”. The Fab Four were surprised by how many passersby spoke to them as they walked through Spinningfields in their pink hi vis vests.

At Manchester Hall the group were welcomed by DJ Paulski and Balloon Modeller Lee. After slaking their thirsts on the cordials set out on the tables the festive meal was served.

The food was excellent. Time to get the party started and join in the games, a Christmas themed quiz, musical bingo, musical paper squares (a frenetic version of musical chairs), re-enact the epic fight scenes from the pantomime with the balloon swords made by Lee. Then on with the dancing.

What was TLC up to at our Christmas outing?

Having waited outside Twenty Stories for a while TLC was happy when the first family to arrive took him into the theatre with them. Warm at last. He enjoyed the pantomime, especially the two chocolate ice creams he managed to eat at the interval. The ghosts were frightening. He enjoyed the finale and the defeat of the evil sheriff.

It might seem a short distance to us from the Opera House through Spinningfields to Manchester Hall, but for a bear of limited stature and short legs it can be a marathon. Luckily his newfound family friends carried him on the journey.

At Manchester Hall the impressive dining room and the throng of excited guests was a little overwhelming for TLC, and he tried to hide in the Christmas Tree.



Fortunately, Ray, a member of the Fab Four, persuaded him to join the party and meet the guests.





Encouraged by the warmth of his welcome TLC decided to show the assembled guests one of his many talents when he took over the mix deck and played his Christmas playlists. Great tracks TLC.



A big thank you to Karen and Julie for handling the admin work involved in organising the event. Julie, Karen, and the Fab Four for ensuring that we did not lose any of our guests on the walk through Spinningfields and assisting those guests with limited mobility. Paulski and his wife for the music, quizzes and games. Lee Reilly for his superb balloon modelling skills. The staff at Manchester Hall for the service and food and being able to weave through the Young People re-enacting the sword battles from the pantomime.

After TLC's fantastic set it was time to give out the presents to our younger guests, say our goodbyes and best wishes for the New Year, and make our weary way home.

On TLC's route back to the car park he saw an old friend from Peru and decided to share a marmalade sandwich with him before the drive home.

