

Frodsham Players AGM 2022 Chairman's Report

2021 proved to be a return to (almost) normal for the Players as we managed two very successful productions in July and November with "Wind in the Willows" and "The Lady Vanishes" directed by Iain Bennett and Carole Shinkfield respectively. Both productions received favourable reviews from NODA and the CTG but, perhaps more importantly, thoroughly enjoyed by the audiences. Both shows also returned a healthy profit, meaning that our financial position remains very good. Performing in Castle Park (Wind in the Willows) as Covid-19 restrictions were just beginning to be lifted proved both challenging and rewarding. Using twin casts to minimise the possibility of cancellation was a bold decision which paid off very well. Our focus on pre-promotion of performances continues to pay dividends as was seen when Mr Toad took his motor car through the streets of Frodsham and into Castle Park. Special tribute is also due to Clare Prebble for producing a boat, car, barge and steam train and to Chris Burrows for devising & constructing the gaol. Andrew Rudd added characteristic musical flair and it was great to see James Stratton operation the sound system.

Returning to the community centre for The Lady Vanishes also provided challenges in terms of staging - how could we bring to life a convincing depiction of a train carriage? Creative staging, authentic costumes, fabulous props, lighting and sound all contributed to creating the illusion of a moving train. A strong cast, with some new faces delivered an excellent performance to sell-out audiences every night. The incorporation of live music (Daniel Axworthy) again proved to be a masterstroke. A well-worked promotional video (Clare, Ian & Wynford) shot on location at the East Lancashire Railway was well received on all social media platforms and led to approaches from other drama groups interested in performing the show.

We attracted some new members to the group during the year, which was good to see. However, there is still much to be done in this area. As a group, we must continue to attract new members in all areas (acting, directing, technical, props, costumes and promotion) or face the prospect of being seen as a closed / repertory group.

We continue to have the support of local businesses, who provide raffle prizes and spaces for our banners / posters etc. Special thanks are due to Bene Gelataria for providing ice-cream for the Lady Vanishes.

It was also good to broaden our range of suppliers of promotional materials with Hawk Publications producing excellent posters and banners.

Sadly, our quest for storage space proved bitterly disappointing as two bids for MCBF funding were rejected. Work continues, however, to find a suitable solution.

Our finances remain in very good health and we should look to make capital purchases in the year ahead.

As we return to normality, it is also vital that we re-establish a long-term (i.e >2 year) plan for productions.

I would like to thank all members of the committee for their continued support and hard work over the last year. It is sad that we say goodbye to Derinda and Murray, who are both stepping down from the committee. Thank you both for all of the hard work and support over the years.

Ian Lancaster
8 March 2022.