

## Aladdin; the 2020 SHADDO pantomime report

Preparations for the pantomime started a little later this year. Aladdin was nominated as the pantomime of choice at the AGM, but it took longer than usual to confirm the script and the cast.

Pre-Christmas readings and rehearsals took place in the Church Rooms on a weekly basis between October and Christmas. As in previous years, some cast members found it difficult to attend all the rehearsals due to work/prior commitments. It was also clear that we were not where we should be with learning lines. However, set design and prop making was ahead of the curve.

After a break for Christmas/New Year, the rehearsals recommenced on 6 January 2020 at the Memorial Hall. We had three intensive weeks to get things right. The actors pulled together, attending extra rehearsals and developing their characters. Many people gave up their weekends and evenings to put together an amazing set. The music, costumes, lighting, sound, stage management transformed the production.

So, after a faltering start, things came together. The pantomime was publicised in the Henley Standard, Shiplake Village Website and poster. Tickets sold well for all performances ("oh yes they did!") and before we knew it the last show came and went.

In the weeks after the pantomime we asked members for feedback. We summarise the key points below:

- Several people had misgivings about the lead up to the performances and were unsure whether the pantomime would be up to the usual standard. However, they said it all came together when needed.
- People thought the slapstick nature of the pantomime made it more difficult to learn the lines, but it was effective. They also noted that there was more audience participation and felt this added to the pantomime.
- Many commented on the high quality of the set and props. "*It was a great spectacle*".
- People liked the music and dancing. Not too many songs, but well sung. The version of Bohemian Rhapsody was well received.
- People commented on the commitment and good performances from the younger actors.
- The Chinese theme in the foyer and the hall was praised.
- The costumes were described as colourful, lovely variety with great accessories.
- The sound/lighting was, as usual, considered to be great. Particularly during the dances.

The pantomime is usually the biggest SHADDO production of the year, bringing together many people in the community. We tried to say thank you to every individual involved in Aladdin. We are sorry if we missed some people out. Most importantly, we hope that you enjoyed yourselves and that you want to be involved again.