The 14th Annual Pantomime Fundraising Lunch

For 14 years this special occasion has been part of the Cathedral's calendar. For the first 7 years it was in the hands of the 'founder', Muriel Allen, who 'Seeing the excitement of a neighbour's child, about the forthcoming visit to the Kings Theatre Christmas pantomime, prompted me to offer the same opportunity to the children held in temporary accommodation and their families cared for by the Roberts Centre, which has strong links from its beginning with the Cathedral'. Then in 2012, after much soul searching and Muriel's persuasive powers, Renee and Gerry Chilton took it over, and as a fundraising event it became known as The Pantomime Lunch. It is held in September, and supported by the Abarbistro in Old Portsmouth, when 50 diners meet in convivial surroundings and learn more about the Roberts Centre and the families it serves. There is always a raffle with substantial prizes, donated by local businesses. Gerry recaptures his childhood, and in the interval joins the children and carers, as they enjoy an ice cream, 'It is a real privilege and joy to see that they are all having a great time'. Muriel sums up that 'the happy combination of Christmas, children and the pantomime, have 14 years later, become a heart-warming and rewarding tradition, which serves the children and those caring for them'. Gerry will be very happy to receive donations to the event, which will also support the Christmas party hosted by the Roberts Centre.

N.B. Records show that 400 diners have supported this event during the past 7 years and with donations of approx. £5,300 has been raised.

Gerry Chilton