



The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Sussex

President: Valerie Masterson C.B.E.

Vice Presidents: Stephen Brown, Simon Butteriss, Barry Clark, Bill Colbourne,
Bruce Graham, Donald Maxwell, Cynthia Morey, Michael Simkins, Richard Suart.

Honorary Members: Christine Colbourne, Kay Tarran.

NEWSLETTER

From The Chair

As we head towards Autumn, haven't we had some fabulous concerts?

Many of you enjoyed our last event which was HMS Pinafore from scratch where the audience were the chorus, and some of our friends and members took the principal roles. It certainly was a fun afternoon leading into our AGM.

We have now received our Programme for 2024/25 from the printers and if anyone would like a copy to pass onto their friends please let me know.

I look forward to seeing you all at our next event on the 29th September – 2.45pm at the Adastral Hall where Simon Gray presents a concert of G & S favourites and a performance of the Zoo, a musical folly by Bolton Rowe and Arthur Sullivan and featuring amongst others Fenton Gray and Matthew Clark.

I hope you all enjoy the rest of the Summer and look forward to meeting again in September.

Thank you all for your continued support.

Sylvia Nixon (Chairperson)

The G&S Society Centenary Convention

A number of members of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Sussex were fortunate enough to attend the recent convention commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society which was held at Grim's Dyke from the 24th to 26th May. There was a packed and very interesting programme including a talk from our Treasurer, Laurence Leng, on Isabel Jay, a D'Oyly Carte principal soprano at the turn of the 19th and 20th Century. Laurence drew on the slides from John Cannon's collection for this presentation which featured many rarely seen images as well as recordings and it was very well received by the audience. Lawrence Olsworth-Peter and Eleanor Jane Moran, who have previously performed for us at the Adastral Hall, also sang at the convention to much acclaim as did Opera Anywhere in a highly entertaining production of Iolanthe and we look forward to hosting representatives from this company in Sussex in our forthcoming season. It was fascinating to hear reports from each of the Affiliated Societies represented at the convention including one about the Sussex Society given by Laurence Leng who emphasised how helpful it had been to build links between our Societies. The convention was, in every respect, a most enjoyable event in an idyllic setting.

The D'Oyly Carte Interviews

Many of you will, hopefully, remember the Melvyn Tarran tribute concert, Topsy Turvy 2, last October when we had a number of former D'Oyly Carters on stage talking about their life touring with the Company.

These stories were so powerful, they inspired me to undertake a project to record as many of these people as possible. The first two are now complete and uploaded onto YouTube and our website. Recording dates are now set with four more former members for August and September. Who can they be? Watch this space! Their names will be announced as soon as the recordings are complete.

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If you haven't already seen them, the links are shared again below:

The first one is with David Mackie who was the Chorus Master and Associate Conductor with the Carte from 1975 to 1982.
<https://youtu.be/npv9MMGO3EY>

The second is with Vera Ryan who was in the chorus and was a principal understudy from 1959 to 1961 and then 1966 to 1967. She was also married to the D'Oyly Carte baritone Alan Styler.
<https://youtu.be/aEV4Vuv3oJo>

These links can also be found on our web site:
<https://www.gilbertandsullivanstoday.org.uk/copy-of-topsy-turvy-two-2023>

Below are some reviews of local G&S events you may have seen.

The Eastbourne G&S Society concert: "G&S Abridged", 8th June

This enjoyable concert took us on a Savoy-age, giving us a taste of the entire G&S canon (even *Thespis!*), which went down well with an appreciative audience. The scenic backdrop switched to depict the opera; and with hats, wigs, quick-change costumes and an array of props, the stories of the operas were told (with some funny moments) from the perspective of a character from each.

Godalming Operatic Society concert: "Here's a How-De-Do!" 9th June

In celebration of the start of their centenary year, we were treated to a wonderful "sold out" G&S concert from our friends at Godalming Operatic Society. Narrated by Richard Arthur and Nora Price, they guided us through a fascinating GOS 100-year history. With laughing song and merry dance (and a few props!), the ensemble, accompanied by their 20-piece professional orchestra under the leadership of MD David Wright, were in fine voice.

After the final curtain, Kay Rowan from The National Operatic and Dramatic Association presented a "congratulations on reaching 100 years" certificate to Vice President Linda Scanlon.

Where it all began: A Day of G&S, D'Oyly Carte Island, 14th June

What a fabulous day we had at D'Oyly Carte Island, where Godalming Operatic Society performed four sets: *Patience*, *HMS Pinafore* & *The Pirates of Penzance*, then reprised their recent concert, with a medley from all the G&S operas. Everyone was in fine voice and MD David Wright introduced the passages, along with a few quips, especially as planes and helicopters flew overhead – why would the house be built on a flight path!

With the variable weather, we had the ladies sing "winter" instead of "summer", when it came to "Climbing over Rocky Mountain". And during the Major General's "Sighing softly to the river, Comes the loving breeze" we heard boats and ducks on the Thames.

The nearly 500-strong audience joined in with the Act 2 finale of *Pinafore* and the Policeman's song from *Pirates*. Well done to everyone and to Judith Flint, who took on the task of being Godalming's full orchestra with just her one piano.

Between times, it was also lovely to access Eyot House and to see some of Melvyn Tarran's G&S museum collection on display.

Charles Court Opera: *The Sorcerer*, Wilton's Music Hall, London, 15th June

We were treated to a top-notch performance of *The Sorcerer* by Charles Court Opera (the masters of G&S in small spaces). Directed by John Savourin, it was slick and very funny, so that the packed audience were laughing throughout. The talented, youthful and enthusiastic principals doubled up as the chorus and everyone was in fine voice, under the guidance of David Eaton, MD.

Special lighting and a freeze-frame of the action worked well, particularly in the Incantation by JW Wells (excellently played by Richard Suart) and his disappearance / "death" at the end ... and not a trap door in sight! Pure magic!