



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

I can't believe that we are heading towards summer, doesn't time fly. We have already had two excellent events this year which have been very successful.

Your committee are working together to produce an annual programme of all the wonderful concerts we have in store for you in 2024/25. From the ticket sales, we have assumed that the members prefer concerts rather than tea and talk. Therefore it is proposed that we will not put on a tea next year but we will discuss this further at the AGM in July.

I look forward to seeing you all at our next concert.

Thank you all for your continued support.

Sylvia Nixon (Chairperson)

As Sylvia has said, since our last newsletter, we have had two very successful meetings, one in January and the other in February.

The January meeting was the re-arranged meeting of The Eastbourne Entertainers with their "Afternoon of Modified Rapture!" Richard, Rebecca and Russell presented us with a superb afternoon and selection of items including an opportunity for some audience participation with "A Policeman's Lot".

The February event was our Afternoon Tea with guest speaker Michael Heyland, former Director of Productions for the D'Oyly Carte, talking about his 1970s revival of *The Sorcerer*. Illustrated with relevant visual and audio clips, Michael brought to life the challenges he faced in developing a new stage production. Mention must also be made of the wonderful tea that was "masterminded" by Sylvia, our Chairperson, including the delicious home-made scones.

Further details of both these events can be found on our website <https://www.gilbertandsullivantoday.org.uk/>

Future events include:

14th April

Godalming Operatic Society bring us a semi-staged concert version of their latest production, *Patience*.

This will be held at Wivelsfield Village Hall rather than the Adastral Hall due to on-going construction work in Hassocks.

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14th July

The Society's AGM preceded by a "Come and Sing *HMS Pinafore*".

29th September

Simon Gray will present a concert version of *The Zoo*, a musical folly by Arthur Sullivan and Bolton Rowe and a selection of G&S favourites.

17th November

The Godalming Consort will give us a festive concert of G&S songs and seasonal carols (including some of Sullivan's) to get us in the Christmas mood – as always, mince pies will be the refreshment of the day!

And finally in January 2025, the main principals from Opera Anywhere will be talking to us about how they stage their productions.

Do check out our website for more details and your email inbox for the Society's updates giving you booking details, etc.

Our Publicity and Membership Secretary, Pennie Ingram, attended a performance of *Humbug* given by the Eastbourne Gilbert & Sullivan Society in December last year. This is what she thought:

"With a song in our heart and tear in our eye (with sweet Tiny Tim pulling on our heart strings), there was something for everyone (including audience participation) when the Eastbourne Gilbert & Sullivan Society added a new twist to their production of *Humbug! A Musical Christmas Carol* (written by Fraser Charlton), by pairing Dickens' words with the songs of Gilbert and Sullivan, interspersed with traditional Christmas carols.

Performing to a packed audience, the cast whisked us through the evening, like the ghosts who whisked Scrooge (wonderfully played by Paul Eccles) through his life. With costume and clever prop changes, Patrick Birdsall and musical director Russell Ablewhite superbly guided the narration and music.

Easily recognisable G&S songs, some with adapted lyrics to fit the show...Tit Willow became Bah Humbug! and Iolanthe became Ebenezer.

This lovely evening had too many people and memorable moments to mention, but I have to say Marley's (aka Richard Woodall) dance, joined by Scrooge, had the audience in stitches."

In addition to the International G&S Festival in Buxton, for which general public booking is now open, there are two other main non-Society G&S offerings on the table. Both are at the wonderful Wilton's Music Hall in East London.

11th to 15th June – Charles Court Opera – *The Sorcerer*

27th to 31st August – Opera della Luna – *The Parson's Pirates*

Both of these are certainly worth considering attending if you are able.