



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

Chair chat

What an exciting year we have had so far with all the fabulous concerts, meeting with The Princess Royal at the D'Oyly Carte Island and the re-introduction of the Isabel Jay Competition, all of which are covered in either our Newsletter or the G & S News.

If anyone has a desire to place an article relating to G & S in one of our forthcoming Newsletters please let one of the committee know and we will do our best to get it into the next edition.

We are continuing to maintain a steady membership at around 70 people but are always looking for new members, so if you would like to introduce any of your friends, family or neighbours to our Society please ask them to come along you know they will have a very warm welcome.

Enough from me, now you can read the wealth of goodies we have in store for the rest of the year.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sylvia (Chair)

Recent Society happenings

On 23rd March Godalming Operatic Society (GOS) entertained us with a concert version of their recent production of *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Those of us who had seen this full production knew we were in for a treat and were not disappointed. GOS gave a very spirited performance under the musical direction of David Wright and with great accompaniment from Judith Flint. Richard Arthur provided an effective, succinct and amusing narration while the singing and diction throughout the concert was outstanding.

The Yeomen of the Guard was the first production of GOS when it formed in 1925 and we were delighted to be part of their centenary celebrations. In addition, 25th March 2025 was the 150th anniversary of the first production of *Trial by Jury* and we enjoyed a beautifully decorated cake to mark this auspicious occasion.

Our summer event was a fun afternoon on 22nd June with our General Knowledge and G&S quiz. We had five teams battling it out and it was fascinating watching the faces of the players with relief when a straightforward question came up and then the look of bafflement that a couple of questions created. This was then followed by one of Sylvia's delicious cream teas and finally the afternoon finished with the Society's AGM.

Thank you to our membership for your continued support for the Committee and Officers, all of whom were re-elected.

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Future Society events

We very much look forward to our next event on Sunday 28th September when White Knight is joining us to perform *The Mikado*, a semi-staged production with professional principals (including Bruce Graham in the title role). The chorus will be made up of members of the audience – a good opportunity to have a fun “sing-along” (or just sit back and enjoy the experience!) White Knight perform on behalf of various charities so they will be passing their fee on to a worthy cause.

And finally, we will end 2025 with our meeting on Sunday 30th November. We have been lucky to secure Richard Suart, one of our Vice Presidents, to visit us and talk about his long and varied life performing G&S and the talk will be illustrated with recordings of the roles he has played. Hopefully he will include some tracks from the newly released recording of Scottish Opera's *Utopia, Ltd.*

The Isabel Jay Contest 2025

We had a glorious day at D'Oyly Carte Island on Friday 4th July for the D'Oyly Carte Island Summer Concert which featured the Isabel Jay Contest and a performance by Godalming Operatic Society.

There was a capacity audience for this event and our own Laurence Leng acted as the Master of Ceremonies. The entrants for the Isabel Jay Contest had been tasked with presenting a 15 minute extract from a Gilbert and Sullivan opera and for this extract to include some dialogue as well as singing. We were certainly not disappointed in their performances: Grosvenor Light Opera Company from London presented a section of Act 2 from *The Mikado*; Simon Gray Presents from Brighton gave a performance of part of Act 1 from *The Gondoliers* and Tutte Theatre from Cambridge a scene from act 1 of *HMS Pinafore*.

The Judges of the event, Bruce Graham, Richard Suart and our own Chairperson, Sylvia Nixon, had a difficult task but provided very helpful and encouraging feedback to each group. They certainly appreciated each group's attention to the music, libretto and interpretation. It was Tutte Theatre, a small group of recent graduates from Cambridge University, who were selected as the award winners for 2025.

We were delighted that three grandchildren of Isabel Jay (Isabel Broom, Fiona Dunn (both children of Celia) and David Farmiloe (son of Pamela, daughter from second marriage)) attended the event and presented the Isabel Jay Cup along with our Life Member, Kay Tarran.

We are indebted to Andy and Sheila Hill who sponsored this competition.

The Godalming Operatic Society (GOS) then gave a triumphant presentation of songs from each of the G&S operas, linked together by Richard Arthur's fascinating narration which gave context for the songs and included some interesting history about the Society.

That day we also had an opportunity to view an impressive exhibition of Gilbert and Sullivan memorabilia from the collection of our founder Melvyn Tarran, which was on display in Eyot House, the main property on D'Oyly Carte Island.

D'Oyly Carte Island is an idyllic setting and it is wonderful to see it being renovated by Andy and Sheila as well as used again to celebrate all things Gilbert and Sullivan.

Other Productions

We continue to be fortunate in having a number of G&S productions being presented in the south-east. We would usually offer up a couple of reviews but we wanted to dedicate most of the space in this newsletter to the re-launch of the Isabel Jay Contest. However, Pennie has written a number of reviews for the shows she has visited and they are available for you to read on our Facebook page (Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Sussex).

If you haven't visited our Facebook page yet, it is worth doing so. Every day, Pennie adds a new G&S nugget for your delectation.

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D'Oyly Carte Interviews

With the better weather on the horizon, I got out my rail card and started planning my trips to meet up and interview former members of the D'Oyly Carte to add to the thirteen interviews already completed.

I am still editing the recent ones undertaken but they should be available on YouTube over the next few weeks. The interviews you can look forward to are ones with Jean Hindmarsh, Alistair Donkin, Joy Mornay (Jon Ellison's widow and member in her own right), Pamela Field and Paul Seeley (orchestra manager and member of the DC management team). In addition to those, there are three more with dates firmed up and another couple that need to be finalised.