



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's Chat

As usual all of our concerts for this year have been excellent as described by Laurence below.

As well as all the exciting things we have in store for you in the next 12 months, Andy & Sheila Hill at D'Oyly Carte Island are opening their home to us again on the 3rd July 2026 from 11am to 4pm. (ticket prices from £15 to £35.00). He said he intends to show much more of Melvyn's memorabilia this year and the concert is to be a Miscellany of Gilbert & Sullivan favourites from The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. This is a date for your diary not to be missed.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sylvia (Chair)

Since our last newsletter we have had three really entertaining meetings.

Our November 2025 meeting saw a welcome visit from one of our Vice Presidents, Richard Suart. Richard has the distinction of being one of the few people to have played professionally all the comic roles in the G&S operas. We learnt that as well as G&S, Richard had a wide repertoire of other operas, performed both at home and abroad.

We were highly entertained by various stories of Richard's time with The New D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and ENO and especially by his anecdotes of his work with Sir Charles Mackerras both on stage and in recordings. We are sure that none of those present will forget his account of performing the role of King Gama whilst being suspended in mid-air, wearing a snorkel as well as flippers! Richard was certainly a superb raconteur.

Then in January, we enjoyed a superb afternoon's entertainment when Elinor Jane Moran, Philip Lee and Emily Leather gave a highly memorable musical performance, much of which was based on the work of Gilbert and Sullivan but other pieces were included too in recognition of the concert taking place on Burns Night. This exceptionally talented trio covered an impressive range of pieces including old favourites, some of which we joined in with, but also a number of less well known items including *Mary Morison*, a poem by Burns set to music by Sullivan. Each piece was delivered with great charm as well as skill and contributed to this being a most uplifting occasion overall.

The last event for mention is Godalming Operatic Society's annual visit to us – this time with a concert version of their latest fully staged production, *Utopia, Limited*. It was presented with the usual high standard that we expect from Godalming and it was a great opportunity to enjoy the music and comedy of this rarely performed opera.

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April sees the start of our financial year so a big thank you to all of you who have renewed your subscriptions for another year. Your Committee have been working hard to ensure we have a series of first rate entertainments for you into 2027.

Listed below are the dates to the end of 2027 along with details of the planned entertainment where known at this stage. Get these dates in your diary now so you don't miss out!

Sunday 14th June 2026 will see our AGM but before it will be a concert from "A Merry Band", a group that visited previously under the name of The Godalming Consort comprising former and existing principals from Godalming Operatic Society on the theme of garden parties!

N.B. This event will start at the slightly earlier time of 2.30pm so we can get a full concert and AGM within our allocated timeslot.

4th October 2026. We welcome Simon Gray on a return visit when his group will present a varied concert in the first half whilst the second half will consist of one of our now famous "sing-along" events when the audience will become the chorus – this time it will be *Trial By Jury*. It is anticipated that a number of the soloists who performed with Simon last year when he presented *The Zoo* will be with him again.

29th November 2026. To close the year, we hope to have a special concert with two well-known individuals. We are just finalising details – watch this space!

31st January 2027. A concert from a new London-based G&S group called Twisted Cue comprising students studying music.

21st March 2027. Godalming Operatic Society are booked to return to us with a concert version of their latest staged production, *The Gondoliers*.

27th June 2027 will be our AGM along with a concert yet to be finalised.

The two remaining dates for 2027 are 26th September and 28th November. White Knight, who gave us a "Sing-along *Mikado*" last year, will be with us on one of these dates and we will announce the performers for the other one once White Knight have confirmed.

Manchester G&S Society Convention 2027

Our colleagues in Manchester are still at the planning stage for their convention to be held over the weekend of 21st to 23rd May 2027 at The Pinewood Hotel in Wilmslow, Cheshire. Please make a note of the date. Residential and non-residential options will be available. I will let you have details of the programme of events once they are published.

G&S Festival in Buxton 2026

We have recently been spoilt with many G&S presentations in the south east and we hope this will continue. If we look further afield, the main item of note is the annual International G&S Festival in Buxton from 1st to 15th August 2026.

<https://gsfestivals.org/>

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.