



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

This has certainly been a year to remember with so many exciting things happening and as mentioned below it is not over yet, we still have a lot to look forward to.

I can't believe that Christmas is upon us once again, it seems to come around quicker each year and I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you all Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Sylvia Nixon
Chair

Recent Society happenings

On Sunday 28th September, we had a great afternoon's entertainment when the performing group White Knight treated us to a semi-staged production of *The Mikado* with audience members acting as the chorus. We were led by Peter Allansan, who conducted us in an exemplary manner, and Tim Smith providing great accompaniment. There was a very strong cast of principals whose most impressive singing and acting skills brought out all the humour, joy and musicality of the work, reminding us, if such a reminder was needed, why *The Mikado* remains such a well-loved opera. The audience participation, a popular element of many of our meetings, was also enthusiastic and added much to the occasion.

We are pleased that this performance raised important funds for the Disaster Emergency Committee and look forward to inviting White Knight back to us in the not too distant future.

Richard Suart

And finally, we will end 2025 with our meeting on Sunday 30th November. We have been lucky to secure a visit from Richard Suart, one of our Vice Presidents, to 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.*

Future Society events

25th January 2026

Elinor Jane Moran (soprano) and Philip Lee (tenor) will sing with accompaniment from Emily Leather on piano. As this concert is on Burns Night, I think we may be treated to a couple of songs that celebrate that fact. Many of you will remember an excellent concert given by Elinor back in 2022 when she was joined by Lawrence Oslworth-Peter and accompanied on that occasion by Elspeth Wilkes.

22nd March 2026

Godalming Operatic Society return to us with a concert version of their latest staged production of *Utopia, Ltd.* Don't miss this opportunity of seeing this rarely presented gem.

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14th June 2026

This Sunday will see our AGM but before it will be a concert from A Merry Band (a group 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.

International G&S Festival

A number of Society members from Sussex attended the International G&S Festival this year at Buxton. Due to various rail engineering works, the travel experience was a challenge but it was worth it being entertained with a number of excellent shows. The three professional shows from the National G&S Company were *Pirates*, *Iolanthe* and *Princess Ida*. The *Ida* was of particular interest for me, as a former school friend Philip Cox was reprising his role of King Gama from Jeff Clarke's 2009 production. Following the show, Philip and I spent a couple of hours reminiscing about our school days from 50 years ago!

Laurence Leng

Other Productions

We continue to be fortunate in having a number of G&S productions being presented in the south-east. We list below a few that may be of interest to our members – it's a shame that they are all so bunched together!

***Iolanthe* – Charles Court Opera**

17th to 28th February 2026 sees Charles Court Opera performing *Iolanthe* at Wilton's Music Hall in London. Wilton's is an amazing venue – it's worth attending just to experience the theatre!

***Utopia, Ltd* – Godalming Operatic Society**

Although you will have the opportunity of seeing a concert version of this opera in March, why not see it twice and take in the full glory of a fully staged production with orchestra. It will be presented at Godalming Borough Hall from 18th to 21st February and at the Leatherhead Theatre on 27th and 28th February 2026 (Saturday matinees are available).

***Ruddigore* – Utopians Unlimited**

Utopians Unlimited are presenting *Ruddigore* over three weekends:

21st February 2026, Carshalton Methodist Church, SM5 3DE

28th February 2026, St Mary's Church, Caterham, CR3 5RA

7th March 2026 – All Saints Church, Kenley, CR8 5DU

If any of the committee attends a local production, we try to write a review of it and these will be made 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.

Manchester Convention

It has just been announced that the Manchester Gilbert & Sullivan Society will be hosting the next National Convention for the Gilbert and Sullivan Societies.

It will take place on 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 have been co-opted onto the planning committee and we are currently working on the programme. If any Sussex members have suggestions of speakers, performers or activities please let me know.

D'Oyly Carte Interviews

Finally, I have put my suitcase back into the loft until the spring when I will start my travels around the country again. I have more people added to the list but I will wait for the warmer weather and the lighter days. There are now 23 completed interviews available and they can all be found on our website:

<https://www.gilbertandsullivantoday.org.uk/copy-of-topsy-turvy-two-2023>

However, I do have a couple of people to visit who live in Sussex and north London so they will be easier trips to manage. Watch this space for details.

Laurence Leng