

THE HISTORY OF GODALMING OPERATIC SOCIETY

Author's update to accompany "The History of Godalming Operatic Society", which was first published in 2012. It is intended for this update to be viewed via the Society's website and if required, printed as an insert for the book,

In chapter 17 of the book I wrote that: "The history of the Society was an unfinished story.....". Instead of writing a second edition, I am pleased to be able to contribute the following to continue the story. I have also included an update of the Society's Milestones.

www.godalmingoperatic.org.uk

Eddie Powlesland, March 2016

In 2012 (in the book) I had reached the point of our production of the **Pirates of Penzance** and our successful visit to Buxton to perform at the International G&S Festival.

In 2013 we performed **The Gondoliers**. This was another successful production under the stage direction of Pat O'Connell and Musical Direction of Robin Wells.

The Summer Concert **Animal Magic** took place at the Electric Theatre on 15th June 2013. The performance included a staged version of **The Zoo** (by Arthur Sullivan and Bolton Rowe) – directed by Pat O'Connell, with Robin Wells as accompanist.

On 29th June 2013 we gave a concert performance at Rake Court, Milford. The event, following the theme of our production of **The Gondoliers**, began with our host Alan Bott navigating the Duke and Duchess of Plaza Toro (Rev Canon Mervyn Roberts and Nora Price) and Casilda (Ruth Parr) across the beautiful lake towards their waiting audience. The evening continued in the fine surroundings of Rake Court with songs from G&S. In addition a staged production of **Cox & Box** (Arthur Sullivan and F.C.Burnand) was ably performed by Simon Cakebread, Richard Hales and Richard Arthur.

Christmas entertainment was performed at Eastlake Nursing Home on 13th December 2013 and again at Farncombe Day Centre on 18th December.

Our production for 2014 was **Princess Ida**. We were proud to be invited to perform the production at the International G&S Festival in the Royal Hall, Harrogate on 20th August where we won the award for best costumes. In addition we learnt at a much later date that we had also been awarded the NODA Accolade of Excellence for the best G&S production in the South East for **Princess Ida**. Once again the production was in the safe hands of Pat O'Connell and Robin Wells.

A concert version of **H.M.S. Pinafore** was performed at the Royal Naval Club and Royal Albert Yacht Club on 8th May 2014.

Also worthy of note for 2014 is, that upon the retirement of our long-standing Wardrobe Mistress, Geraldine Melhuish MBE she was awarded life membership of the Society for her dedication to the Society over 25 years.

On 18th October 2014 we performed a joint concert with Godalming Town Band at Charterhouse Hall in aid of the Mayor of Waverley's charity – Citizens Advice. The Town Band was directed by James Haigh and Robin Wells accompanied the GOS part of the performance, he also conducted both band and singers in a rousing finale of **Rule Britannia**.

A Christmas entertainment was performed at Busbridge on 9th Dec 2014.

The Mikado was our 2015 production with Pat O'Connell and Robin Wells directing.

A "**Mini-Mikado**" was performed at the Elmbridge Retirement Village, Cranleigh 22nd March 2015 and again at the Royal Naval Club in Portsmouth on 26th March 2015

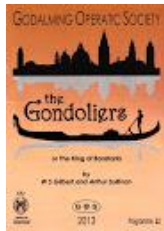
Also in 2015 we performed our **90th Anniversary Concert** at the Borough Hall, Godalming on 20th June. Unusually for a Summer Concert we had the benefit of a full orchestra and we performed songs from every G&S Opera, including **Thespis**, from a programme planned by Robin Wells and Eddie Powlesland. In addition we included a fully staged version of **Trial by Jury**. The whole evening was an immense success and due to an early sell out the intended afternoon dress rehearsal was turned in to a performance as well.

The Grand Duke was our main production for 2016. Stage production was by Pat O'Connell. Although Robin Wells had lead the music rehearsals he was, unfortunately, indisposed at the time of the performances. Robin's place as conductor was taken by Charterhouse colleague David Wright. David is currently Musical Director of Haslemere Town Band and Farnham Brass Band.

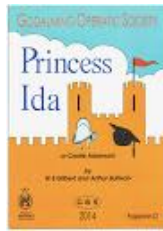
On 13th August 2016, to celebrate the refurbishment of the Wilfrid Noyce Centre in Godalming and as part of the town's Staycation event, we are performing a G&S Operetta from scratch – The Operetta selected is **The Pirates of Penzance**.

Last but not least for this update is the news that the Society has been invited to take part in "The Last Night of the Proms" at the Bandstand in Godalming on 10th September 2016.

2013



2014



2015



2015



2016



The Society's Milestones

19th February 1925	Our first ever performance " The Yeomen of the Guard ".
5th February 1947	Our first production following WW2 " The Gondoliers ".
15th March 1947	The first Steering Committee meeting for Godalming Music Festival.
26th February 1949	Society's first performance in Guildford at the Technical College " Iolanthe ".
15th February 1974	Our first performance at the Guildford Civic Hall " The Mikado ".
20th March 1975	Our Golden Jubilee Year, celebrated with a special dinner at the Hogs Back Hotel.
19th September 1981	A concert version of " Patience " was performed to celebrate Godalming's centenary as being the first town in the world to have a public electricity supply.
7th May 1983	Our first Summer Concert, " Upstairs – Downstairs ", Clandon House.
20th February 2004	Our first performance at the Leatherhead Theatre " The Mikado ".
22nd August 2005	Performed " Iolanthe " at the International G&S Festival, Buxton Opera House.
24th September 2007	Performed " Utopia Limited " at the Waterford International Festival of Light Opera, Theatre Royal.
20th February 2010	Robin Wells special presentation celebrating his 40 years as Musical Director after the evening performance of " The Yeomen of the Guard " Godalming Borough Hall.
10th July 2011	Presented with NODA "Accolade of Excellence" for our district for the 2011 production of " Patience ".
15th August 2012	Again at the G & S International Festival, Buxton Opera House performing " The Pirates of Penzance ".
20th August 2014	Performed " Princess Ida " at the International G & S Festival, The Royal Hall, Harrogate. The Society won best costumes award.
20th June 2015	90th Anniversary Concert including " Trial by Jury ". Performed at the Borough Hall, Godalming.
5th July 2015	Presented with NODA "Accolade of Excellence" for best G & S performance in South East England for our 2014 production of " Princess Ida ".