

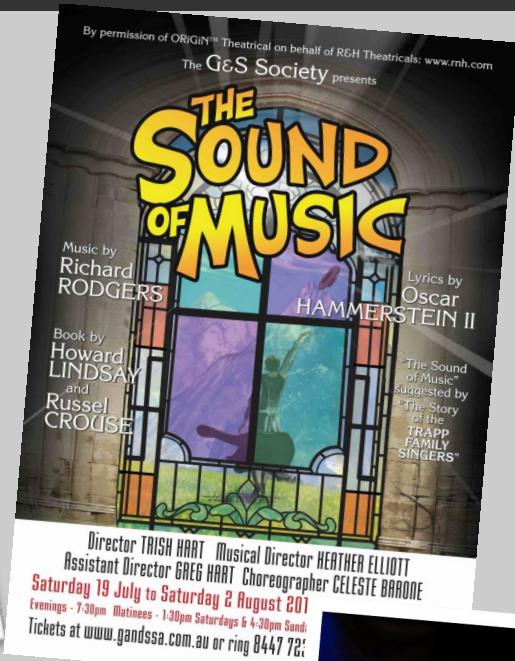


The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of SA Inc.

# G&S Newsletter

[www.gandssa.com.au](http://www.gandssa.com.au)

No. 5 July 2014



## The Society is Alive With *The Sound of Music!*



### In this Issue:

- *The Sound of Music*
- A new Board and President
- *The Grand Duke*
- Vale Harold Berrett and Barbara Worley
- Opening Night Party

The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of South Australia

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# President's Report

Thank you for taking the time to access the latest newsletter. The Society's AGM brought some new faces to the Board – my own included, although some of you will remember me from many years ago. I was treasurer for 12 years (1977 – 1988) and president for 9 years (1990 – 1998). I have recently retired so with time on my hands and a regard for the Society that has not diminished over the years, I agreed to the nomination.

I extend my very warm thanks to Paul Talbot, Kate Warren and Jan Hooper, who retired at the AGM, for their years of dedication to the society. To that list I must now add Dee Dhawan who very recently resigned as treasurer owing to work pressures.

In becoming president again the one thing I will not be guilty of is attempting to pick up where I left off. I knew that the performing world had changed immensely and I am now finding out just how much. The days of us performing two profitable week-long G&S seasons a year are well and truly gone. Even the trusty favourites cannot be guaranteed to turn a profit for the Society – and we don't survive without a profit. The cost of simply ensuring that the Society continues to exist is in the order of \$23,000 a year. So every season we present must be carefully planned and delivered to provide not only production costs, but the appropriate share of the \$23,000 before we can even contemplate any other activities or developments.

That the Society has survived into its 77th year is a remarkable achievement. but as indicated above the Board constantly grapples with financial issues – as we know do other amateur theatre groups these days as well. Our challenge is to maintain a focus on the lives and works of Gilbert and Sullivan, but to do that we must find a range of ways to provide the wherewithal to achieve it. I hope I can contribute to that process and thus ensure that the works and memory of these two great Englishmen live on.

If you would like to contribute to the ongoing debate about the Society's direction, remember that you are very welcome to attend our occasional morning tea discussion gatherings, and I welcome your email contact via [president@gandssa.com.au](mailto:president@gandssa.com.au).

Brian McLauchlan

## The New Board

### Executive

President: Brian McLauchlan

Vice President: Ric Trevaskis

Acting Treasurer: Jan Hooper

Acting Secretary: Megan Doherty

Production Managers: Paul Talbot (*Oliver! The Return*); Louise Gillan (*The Sound of Music*)

### Board Members

Megan Doherty, Louise Gillan

Manik Meah, Sarah Nagy

Paula Pamment (ex-officio), Jessica Snow

David Williams



# **Don't Miss Seeing The Sound of Music!**

The Opening Weekend of *The Sound of Music* was a great success with both performances sell outs!

Tickets continue to sell fast with both upcoming matinees also being sold out, making *The Sound of Music* one of our most successful seasons for some years! And audiences and critics alike have lauded the show for the performances and production values!

*"That's one terrific production in The Arts Theatre. And this is a rave review. The G&S Society has a track record for classy shows but this one, stepping away from G&S and into Rogers & Hammerstein, may just have created a new benchmark. From the opening moment, it is a voyage into excellence."* said Samela Harris in The Barefoot Review.



*"To stage such a well loved and known musical as this runs an obvious risk, and to give it conventional treatment often can compound that. It can only succeed if the company gets all the elements right. Well, Director Tricia Hart and the G&S Society did just that."* said Dave Smith of Theatre Association of SA.

The talented Trish Hart as director with the assistance of Greg Hart as assistant director, Heather Elliot as musical director and Celeste Barone as choreographer has led the cast and creative team to success. Audiences are raving about the high level of talent in this production and we want you to see it! Don't delay and book your tickets before they sell out!

**Tickets can be purchased by**

- Calling Paula on 8447 7239
- Email [tickets@gandssa.com.au](mailto:tickets@gandssa.com.au)
- Or via our website [www.gandssa.com.au](http://www.gandssa.com.au)

Please note that the website is experiencing some technical difficulties so ring Paula if in doubt.

## **Remaining Performances**

Thursday 31 July – 7:30pm  
Friday 1 August – 7:30pm  
Saturday 2 August – 1:30pm  
**SOLD OUT**  
Saturday 2 August – 7:30pm

*Photography by Daniel Salmon  
Claire McEvoy as Maria with Salzburg Cast  
The Vienna Cast  
Bronwyn Palmer as Elsa and Ric Trevaskis as Max*





# The Grand Duke

or

## *The Statutory Duel*



### ***The Grand Duke is alive and has been seen in London...***

Your editor asked Board member David Williams for further and better particulars. He reports...

On holiday in 2012, over a coffee in St James Park and reading the theatre reviews in *The Times*, as one does in London, I chanced upon a very favourable 'must see while it lasts' review of *The Grand Duke* presented by the New Actors Company for Finborough Theatre. It was held to be the first professional company production in London since it bombed in 1896 and closed after 123 performances.

Rather pleased that I would be back in London three weeks hence for the last Saturday and Sunday night, I rang at once for seats - only to be told the season was sold out, and that returns were possible but uncommon. Undaunted, come the Saturday I set out early for the Finborough Theatre - a theatre specialising in reviving obscure and little known works.

Tube to Earls Court then a reasonable walk past the West Brompton cemetery, where Sullivan wished to be buried alongside his mum until Queen Victoria had a better idea and put him in St. Paul's Cathedral, finds it. The theatre has a very civilized take-a-ticket-number queuing system for returns and the queue sorted itself into ticket number order when the window opened 20 minutes before curtain up. I was fifth in line. Alas only three returns. The next and last night I set out for the theater even earlier. So apparently did others, but third in line this time. Only two tickets returned. Heart sinks. But wait. The person second in line wanted two tickets. The first guy having got his, the second guy who wanted two retired hurt and yours truly moved up and got the lucky last.

Off West End might describe it. The theatre occupies the top two floors of a typical London three story, long residential row building. Seats sixty, on tiered bench seating. The cognoscenti know to bring cushions. With a stage half the size of the platform in the G & S shed accommodating a cast of twenty-two plus two keyboards on stage as backing, it was a bit squeezy with no room for much movement, nor for sets.

I have grown up with the conventional wisdom that end of collaboration exhaustion plus *fin de siècle* was its downfall and was pleasantly surprised at the strength and vitality of Sullivan's music. The satire was sharp but the book and the dialog were Gilbert at his most laboured and then some. "I'm not at all a proud Mother, and I never want to see this ugly misshapen little brat again," Gilbert famously said of the piece. I thought it was better than that. And so did the review.

The Finborough Theatre's business model has a lot going for it. The ground floor is a wine bar open all year serving the locals, with profits paying the rent. On show nights, profits are improved greatly by the theatregoers having a wine or two on the way in to the show and, afterwards, one or two on the way out when the cast and crew join in and mingle. It all seemed very convivial.

I was chatting in a group that included the MD, who was on stage on one of the two keyboards. (I later Googled John Owen Edwards and found he has a very strong pedigree including West End blockbusters and as Musical Director of the then (1988) D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and the present Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company.) He picked my Australian accent and upon discovering I came from Adelaide enquired whether the Arts Theatre in Angas Street was still going as he did his first gig at the Arts Theatre in 1964. He then went on to ask if Ditters was still there, as he remembers their extraordinary dried fruit fondly and their figs to die for. As it still then was, I promised I would send him a selection when I got back. So I did.

The company took the Finborough Theatre presentation full-scale, with sets and orchestra to the International G & S Festival at Buxton later in the year.



# The Notice Board!

## Congratulations!

The Society has received two nominations for Awards in the Adelaide Theatre Guide's 2014 *Curtain Call* Awards in the Amateur Division. The winners will be announced at a Gala Dinner on August 16.

And the nominees are:

Best Show—Musical: *Oliver!*

Best Technical: David Lampard and Mark Wickett  
Set and Projection Design, *Oliver!*



## *Oliver!* Merchandise

There have been many enquires about when the *Oliver!* photobook will be produced.

My apologies that it has taken so long.

The final photos of the first season were not fully received by me until late December, just before I went overseas.

With the second season so close, I decided to include those photos too. However, those photos were not received until April when I was heavily involved in another production and then my various roles in *The Sound of Music*. That disc contains 500 photos taken over 3 nights which I now have to sort into order.

I prepare the books in my spare time of which there has been little of late.

Thank you for your patience and I will be hard at work finishing the books after *The Sound of Music*.

The photobook for *The Sound of Music* will be prepared by Alex Wiedenmann who will have the photo disc before the end of the production.

Photo discs of *Oliver 2* are ready for collection on payment for the disc. Please contact Jan on [treasurer@gandssa.com.au](mailto:treasurer@gandssa.com.au) to do so.

## Best Wishes

To long term member Joy Burgess and Honorary Life Member Julian McCabe who have both been under the weather of late. We hope that you are both well on the way to recovery!

To members

Victoria and Nick Coxhill on the arrival on 18 May 2014 of Evan Neil Coxhill and to

Tim and Gemma Wilson on the birth of Hugo John Wilson on 8 March 2014.

## Can You Help?

We are missing the following newsletters from our Archives:

July 1993—November 1995

November 1995—August 1998

Editions 1, 3 and 5 from August 1998—April 1999  
2011 and 2012

And photographs of productions or publicity photographs from 1968—1978

If you have any items meeting this and are willing to donate or allow copying please contact our Archivist on [lizo@ozemail.com.au](mailto:lizo@ozemail.com.au) or 0414 866 952

## The G&S Shed

With two seasons of *Oliver!* and then straight into *The Sound of Music* the Shed has been a little neglected of late.

A team led by Ric Trevaskis has been slowly but surely sorting through the Costume Room but the rest of the Shed is very full and needs a de-clutter.

At the recent Cup of Tea morning it was agreed that work was needed to bring the Shed into a ship shape and Bristol fashion state.

If you would be willing to donate some of your time to help, please contact us on [contact@gandssa.com.au](mailto:contact@gandssa.com.au) and we will be in touch.

## Let Us Know!

If you have any news of Society members, interesting anecdotes or things that you want mentioned in the newsletter, please forward them to the Editor.

Either by email [liz@gandssa.com.au](mailto:liz@gandssa.com.au) or 0414 866 952

# 'His foe was folly, and his weapon, wit'

## Harold George Hartley Berrett 1921-2013

In a newspaper preview of *The Pirates of Penzance* in 1971, a journalist wrote "baritone Harold Berrett has already made a name for himself as the little man who sings the patter songs and will continue to delight audiences." And so he did for some 25 years as a member of the G&S Society of SA.

Harold joined the Society in 1945 and was in the chorus of the Society's first full production in November 1948—*The Mikado* at the Australian Hall. Both Harold and Margaret Clarke, who was to become his wife were in the chorus of the November 1949 production of *The Yeomen of the Guard*. They married in 1950 and had two sons, Peter in 1951 and Robert in 1952.

After serving his apprenticeship in the chorus, Harold was selected for his first principal role—Adam Goodheart in 1964's *Ruddigore*. Advertiser theatre critic, Harold Tidemann wrote that Harold "gave an excellent performance."

Over the years, Harold's many roles included Ko-Ko and Pish-Tush (*The Mikado*), The Duke of Plaza-Toro (*The Gondoliers*), Major-General Stanley (*The Pirates of Penzance*), Jack Point and Sergeant Meryll (*The Yeomen of the Guard*), The Lord Chancellor (*Iolanthe*), King Gama (*Princess Ida*) and Sir Joseph Porter (*HMS Pinafore*).

The News critic described Harold's 1973 Lord Chancellor thus, "his patter songs were fast enough to amuse yet maintain his diction so not a word of the light-hearted script was missed. Ideally cast, his feet were youthful, his face ancient."



Harold was named in the shortlist of 11 for the actor giving the most convincing performance for his portrayal as Ko-Ko (*The Mikado*) in Lee's Theatre Club awards for 1972-73. In February 1983, Harold was elected an Honorary Life Member of the Society.

At the age of 69, Harold appeared in his last principal G&S role, again as the Lord Chancellor in the 1990 production of *Iolanthe*. Reviewer, Phil Thornton wrote "the crusty old Lord Chancellor was played to perfection by Harold Berrett." Harold did appear in the old comic cameo after that time.

Harold also appeared in many of Bill Youde's Mayfair Light Opera Society's productions, including *Showboat* as Captain Andy Hawks, *Camelot* as Merlin, *The Land of Smiles*, *The Song of India* and *Oklahoma!* He was also cast as Merlin and Captain Andy in Ric Marshall's Cottage Theatre productions of *Camelot* and *Showboat* and as Lord Longbottom in *My Sainted Aunt* at the Q Theatre.

In 1979, Harold played one of the lead roles (Mullah Abdullah) in Robin Levinson's film *The Battle of Broken Hill*. The film reenacted the attack by two Turkish patriots on a train crowded with 1200 New Year's Day picnickers on their way from Broken Hill to Silverton in 1915.



## A Tribute

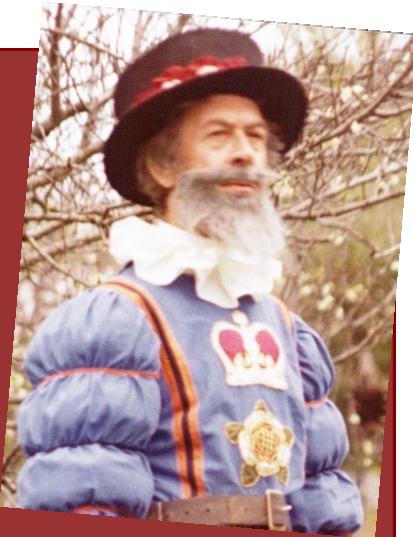
Greetings. I'm saddened to learn from a nice obituary in the "Advertiser" of June 7, 2014 (today) of the passing of Harold Berrett. I want to add my condolences and pay tribute to this lovely and accomplished artist.

He was (possibly) the last Savoyard of the old, inherited, classic style in SA. The last of a kind who served the Savoy Operas superbly. He was ideal. A fine, beautifully observed comedian.

He lifted every show he was in. He belonged. He helped secure the Savoy style and make it so popular and enduring for two generations of admirers. He never gave a bad performance and was eternally memorable - particularly as the Lord Chancellor in *lolanthé*.

Harold Berrett was, and I use the ultimate compliment for show folk - a great trouper. May I join with members of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of SA in celebrating his life and work and I'm sure he rejoiced in the longevity and success of your redoubtable society.

*Yours Goers*



Away from the theatre, Harold played football for the Eastwood Football Club beginning in 1938. He was a member of their 1946, 1947 and 1948 premiership teams and was Captain of the team in 1949. At one time Harold was invited to train with the South Adelaide Football Club and played trials there but decided to stay with his mates at Eastwood. In 1947 he received Life Membership of the Club.

Like most footballers of his time, Harold's career was interrupted by the Second World War. He joined the RAAF in May of 1942 and attended a fitter's course at Brunswick Tech. He was posted to Batchelor in the Northern Territory, where he was involved in the maintenance and servicing of Lockheed Hudsons and B25 Mitchell Bombers. Later, while at Tocumwal, New South Wales, he played football with the RAAF team which included a number of Victorian and Tasmanian League footballers.

Harold was employed for most of his working life at Southern Western Manufacturing Company, makers of folding furniture at Lyons Parade, Forestville by the railway line near Goodwood Station. He was factory foreman for a number of years before his retirement and then lawn bowls became his passion.

Harold joined the Sturt Bowling Club and over the years won several club singles and pairs championships, was President for the 1987-88 season and was elected as a Life Member in 2012.

Sadly, Harold passed away at the Ashford Hospital, aged 92, in November 2013 after a period of ill health.

*Peter Berrett*

## Vale Barbara Worley

Society members were saddened to hear of the passing of Barbara on 1 May 2014.

The Worley family — Don and wife Barbara and Grant and his wife Marilyn and son Kim were involved in the Society for many years as playing members (Marilyn still sings in the occasional concert). After a car accident left Barbara a paraplegic, she could no longer appear on stage but she was a faithful attendee at Society productions.

Our sincere condolences to Don and his family and to the extended Worley family.



## *Opening Night Party — The Sound of Music*

