



The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of SA Inc.



G&S Newsletter

www.gandssa.com.au

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Guys & Dolls is here!

The Gilbert and Sullivan
Society of South Australia
Established 1937 ABN 45 510 475 165
PO Box 306
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Vale George Heap

President's Report

As I write we are in the final stages of preparation for *Guys and Dolls*. I can report that it is shaping to be a first class show, and I look forward to meeting many of you during the season. For tickets please call Paula Pamment on 8447 7239.

It is many months since our AGM, but for those of you unable to attend, may I summarise the main aspects of my report on the night.

Board deliberations in 2014 began with some uncertainty, as you will remember we did not elect a secretary on the night of the AGM, but rather Meg Doherty stepped in to act. Shortly after the AGM, our treasurer began lengthy periods of interstate work which culminated in her resignation and a process began for the selection of both treasurer and secretary led by David Williams – to whom I remain extremely grateful. David also acted as Minute Secretary on more occasions than he cares to remember. His knowledge of the financial processes of the society was also of great value early on.

As 2014 progressed we appointed Kathryn Smiles as Treasurer and John Hochwald as Secretary. In recent times we have appointed Sue Franks as Minute Secretary to provide John and others fulfilling the minute taking role with some relief.

G&S Fest

As I mentioned in an earlier newsletter, I strongly believe that *G&S Fest* was an excellent concept, executed very professionally, but in an era where G&S remains hard to sell. I don't see that situation changing. I also pay clear and appreciative tribute to the excellent production team for *G&S Fest* led by Louise Gillan.

Board Operations

A concept raised by John Hochwald soon after he joined the board has been that of board 'portfolios'. We commenced its introduction, firstly with John Greene's appointment during 2014 as ex officio board member managing our George Street property, and to concentrate initially on fire safety and security. Earlier this year we appointed new board member Helen Snoswell to the role of costume coordinator, and similarly, Alex Wiedenmann as web coordinator. Most recently the board has appointed Elizabeth Olsson to an ex officio position as publicity and marketing coordinator. In my view these appointments, together with the minute secretary position, will provide for a much more efficient board structure. Unfortunately John Greene has moved interstate at very short notice to care for an ill family member, so the property role is unfilled at this time.

Future productions

Gilbert and Sullivan, conventionally performed in a large theatre for a week or two weeks doesn't work financially. We have proven that several times now. Our planning for *G&S Fest* had a requirement to sell 65% of seats at an average price of \$22 to cover production costs and 50% of annual Society general expenses. We sold 44% at about \$26 which contributed nothing to Society general expenses. My view is that we must continue to mount two major productions a year to have any chance of providing the money (now not far short of \$30,000 per year) we need to run the society, but one of them can't be a fortnight season of G&S on that record.

There are other options for the performance of G&S, and I'm pleased to be able to announce that the Society will join with *Co-Opera* in early 2016 to stage *The Mikado* in Adelaide, in country South Australia and interstate in the well-known *Co-Opera* mould. You will receive more information on this production shortly. Your support for it will be very much appreciated.

In addition we are in the final stages of negotiation with key personnel for the second production for 2016. This will be a conventional two week Arts Theatre production of a very well known musical. More information shortly!

Thank you again for your support, and I do hope you enjoy *Guys and Dolls*.

Brian McLauchlan

President



Guys & Dolls

Our second show for 2015 is the much loved Broadway hit and 1950 Tony Award-winner for Best Musical, *Guys and Dolls*.

With music and lyrics by Frank Loesser and the book by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows, this crowd favourite is now in the theatre, with opening night on 1 October 2015.

The production team of Karen Sheldon as Director and Martin Cheney as Musical Director are joined by Kerry Hauber as Choreographer.

It all begins with a bet.

Nathan Detroit bets high-rolling gambler Sky Masterson that Sky cannot persuade Save-A-Soul Missionary Sister Sarah Brown to accompany him on a trip to Cuba. While the worldly Sky works his charms on a wary Sarah, Nathan is doing his best to stay outside the matrimonial clutches of his long-suffering fiancée, Miss Adelaide.

Guys and Dolls is a fable about what happens to gambling men and the women who long to tame them. Set in the colourful world of New York City in the mid-20th century, the romantic and funny *Guys and Dolls* is populated with gangsters and gamblers, missionary dolls and scantily clad showgirls, and one of the great musical scores in the history of American musical theatre.

Tickets are now on sale via www.gandssa.com.au or they can be purchased by calling Paula on 8447 7239



2015 Board

The Current Board is comprised of:

President: Brian McLauchlan
Vice-President: Ric Trevaskis
Treasurer: Kathryn Smiles
Secretary: John Hochwald

Ordinary Board Members:

Anne Doherty
Louise Gillan
Sarah Nagy
Marsha Seebohm
Helen Snoswell
Alexandra Wiedenmann

Ex-Officio

Elizabeth Olsson
Paula Pamment

John Greene served as an ex-officio member but recently retired from the Board to move interstate. We thank him for his service.

Minute Secretary

Sue Franks

Letters

Priceless Princess Ida: Perfection At Its Best!

John Lanigan-O'Keeffe tells of a unique experience with a UK production of the operetta.

Dear G&S Soc,

I went across London to see this. I was so impressed I just had to put pen to paper.

It's wonderful to have directors of sufficient genius to resurrect and improve the uninspired works of those 19th Century mediocrities Gilbert and Sullivan.

Princess Ida opened not with the overture but with a new character Sophie Bryant, lecturing us in song about 19th attitudes to women's education. Then the show began with *Search Through out the Panorama*. The massed men's chorus of five dispensed with Sullivan's unnecessary harmonies. During his introduction, ritornelli and playout Hildebrand vigorously danced with a couple of chorines, possibly unnecessary because, when not dancing, he had choreographed himself to throw his arms out to the sides on the downbeat of almost every bar he sang.

The medieval costumes proved the highlight of the show, red predominating. Once I wore a medieval costume made from a sofa. Here the Cyril looked like a sofa.

To say that Hilarion's tone reminded me of toothpaste squeezed through a hole in the dried bit not wiped off from the last brushing would be totally cruel so I won't.

Suddenly, Act I was departed for Act II in Castle Adamant. The stage hands lifting the blocks believed in "Don't lift if you can drag" so we were spared hearing Sullivan's dull overture, while the audience was able to use this welcome break to exchange news about the day.

After the scene change another brilliant new character, Lord Tennyson, came before us to fulminate against what Gilbert had done to his poem. In her tirade, the Lady Psyche's face began blank and then transformed to a smile. The Princess Ida, with a voice ideal for Norina in *Don Pasquale*, showed us why *Minerva!* is an ideal song for a Wagnerian dramatic soprano.

Lady Blanche reminded me of my first girlfriend, a thirty a day girl (cigarettes that is), in the role for Sydney University Musical Society in about 1971. In *Come Mighty Must* today's Blanche epitomised the company advertisement, "a musical", by bringing to her aria the resonance, depth, vibrato and legato of Angela Lansbury as Mrs Lovett. She enhanced Gilbert's dialogue by pausing prior to each punchline, letting the listener know there was a joke coming, shedding that silly surprise element in humour.

The scene changed back to Act I with more noise from the delighted audience and the hardworking stage hands scraping the blocks, freeing us from forgettable Sullivan. Of course we then enjoyed another lecture to music with those endearing new characters Bryant and Tennyson, singing together in tune throughout.

At last Arac appeared. In *We are Warriors Three*, on "like most sons are we, masculine in sex", the giants all pointed to their penises. One, two, three. Overwhelmed by this comic inspiration I feared the hysteria would harm my heart and I fled.

I regret not staying for the next two acts, two intervals and the two more intoned interpolated introductions but I'm an old man and haven't got that much longer to

Ouch!



Also In the UK...

Honorary Life Member James Dodds writes:

Staging a full G&S operetta is no longer 'box office' for the Society. That was the message at the AGM.

Fortunately, for G&S enthusiasts, all is not lost. Googling 'G&S Appreciation' reveals that G&S in the UK continues to flourish.

Access to the main website is by:-

www.gsfestivals.org/

Even better news for those who miss full productions, just go to link G&S Shop for a whole range of G&S DVDs.

Guys and Dolls—A Sneak Peek!

Thanks to the photography of Thomas Wiedenmann of Timeless Wedding and Event Photography we are pleased to give you a sneak peek of the show!



Vale George Heap

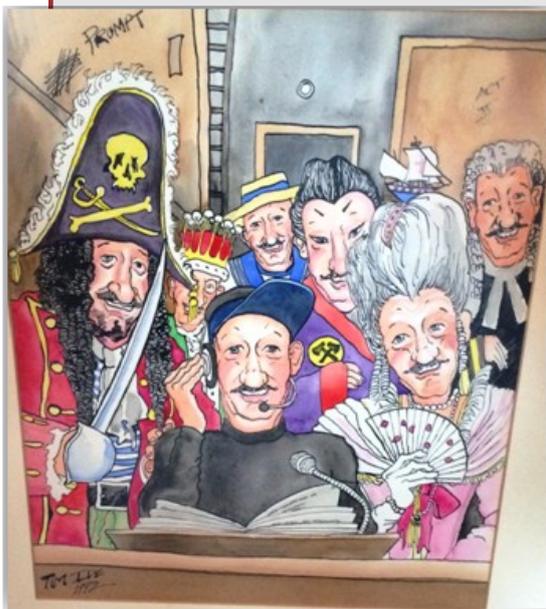
George Heap — Honorary Life Member, Board Member, Production Manager, Stage Manager, Set Construction Manager, Props Maker, Shed Manager and Gentleman, passed away on 31 March.

His funeral was attended by Society members past and present as well as his numerous friends from other parts of his life. In pride of place were a variety of the props that he had made for the Society over the years, as well as a portrait by Tim Ide depicting George as characters from the various G&S operettas that George had stage managed.

A member of the Society for 48 years, George stage managed over 60 productions for the Society before retiring from the role in 1997. He continued to make and manage the props for another 10 productions. During this time he had acted as Set Construction Manager and continued to manage The Shed until his retirement from active involvement with the Society in 2005. In all that he did he was supported and assisted by his wife of 61 years, Claire. They continued to attend productions until each was too infirm to do so and neither lost their interest in the Society.

George's passing marks the end of the era for the Society. We shall not see his like again and he will be missed.

Thank you George.



The Heap Family Remembers

George was born on 12th July 1925 in Adlington, Lancashire. He grew up with his parents who owned a butcher shop, his brother Paul, who he lost in July 2013, and his sister, who is at Warrina Park Nursing Home and is not in good health.

In summer 1938 George won a scholarship to Wigan Technical College. This was a three year course leading to tertiary education. In 1941 George went into Senior College to study chemistry.

In early 1941 the ATC was formed in the UK and George joined immediately and became very involved at the expense of his studies at College. This time with the ATC made George very determined to enter the RAF asap.

George signed up to train for pilot, navigator or bomb aimer and 3rd May 1943 was instructed to go to the attestation centre in Lancashire.

George was very pleased when told he was suitable to train but not so impressed when told he had to go on the reserve for 10 months deferred service, but on call at 7 days' notice. Posted to number 25 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) Wolverhampton. George enjoyed this part of his service and loved flying the Tiger Moths.

Later George's instructor confirmed that the RAF had all the pilots it needed, so he was unable to complete his training. George returned to Scarborough and was told pilots were not required but that they could re-muster as wireless operators, or air gunners. George opted for wireless operator. This training did not start until early April 1945 but this was short lived. They were offered training in a trade of their choice in the RAF. George's choice was a motor transport mechanics course. After the 3 month course he was deemed qualified to work on RAF vehicles.

In January 1946 George was sent to the Middle East organising for vehicles to be transported for repair in Tel Aviv and supervising the repair progress.

George officially left the services in September 1947, having applied and been accepted to emigrate to Australia via the High Commission in Cairo.



Vale George Heap

Arriving in Freemantle in 1948, George came to Adelaide later that same year. He was joined by his family who had applied to emigrate from the UK.

George's first job in Australia was with Department of Agriculture for a whole 2 weeks - fruit fly eradication.

George's parents had bought a poultry farm on Parsons Road at Paradise and whilst living there George met Claire. They married 19th April 1952. George bought a block of land at Dernancourt and built their home. It took George about 7 years to complete. Claire and George had 2 sons, Peter, born in 1954 and Roger in 1959.

George was working at City Motors as a motor mechanic as a trainee. He saw an advertisement by ANA offering to train qualified motor mechanics as aircraft engineers. He applied and was accepted to begin work at Parafield, obtained his Aircraft Maintenance Engineers licence and was endorsed to work on DC3's. George's dream was to fly, so to work on planes was the next best thing. However, the work at Parafield was shift work and that was hard when having a young family.



George commenced working for the Public Service in November 1957, starting as a clerk with technical knowledge in the stores branch at Thebarton — arranging to have tractors and parts sent for repairs and ordering parts. George was a senior clerk but wanted to obtain a classified position to advance his career. A position came vacant as Records Officer in the Department of Tourism - George applied for it and was successful. George made his way up the ladder over his years with the department. This led him to travel and see this great state and country.

George became very involved with backstage work with amateur theatre and in 1967 invited to join the Gilbert and Sullivan Society and for many years was their stage manager. George also spent many hours with stage construction.

In 1967, with 3 members of the Public Service George formed a group to buy and bottle red wine which became known the IDS Bottling Group. They would meet 4 times a year at a member's home. The last one George attended was in 2014 - as we know, George loved his red wine!

George lost Claire on 1st June 2013 and this was a very big loss as they had been together for over 60 years.

George had glaucoma and in early August 2014 needed a small operation on this eye to help reduce the pressure or he would have been blind within the year.

After the procedure George could not see well enough to be left at home on his own. In August George moved into Warrina Park Nursing Home where Claire had previously been cared for. Things were looking up and George was enjoying his time at Warrina.

In February 2015 we learnt that George was a very sick man with the Cardiologist telling us that George's heart was only working at about 40%. Over the next couple of months we could see the evidence of this with George experiencing bouts of breathlessness and confusion. In the last 2 weeks of George's life this was very evident and we were with him till he passed as peacefully as could be expected. A huge loss to his family as he was just one of a kind.



Coming in 2016

The G&S Society is very pleased to announce its first production for 2016—a collaboration with Co-Opera to present Gilbert & Sullivan's timeless classic *The Mikado*.

Directed by Society Vice-President Richard Trevaskis with Musical Direction by Co-Opera General Manager and Artistic Director Brian Chatterton, this will be a revival of the Society's 2010 production as designed by David Lampard, but with a twist!

The Adelaide production will be staged in a Cabaret style format in the Thomas Edmonds Opera Studio in May 2016 and a touring version of the production will travel around Australia for the first part of the year.

This is something very different for the Society and we are very excited to be a part of this venture.

More information will be available soon via our newsletter and the G&S Website. If you want to be placed on the waiting list for tickets please contact Paula on 8447 7239 or email paula@gandssa.com.au

Details of the Society's second production for 2016 will be released in the near future. Keep an eye on the Society's website for more details—www.gandssa.com.au



Are you on our email list?

To make sure that you keep up to date please let us know your current contact details and in particular, your email address. Although we will continue to send regular updates by "snail mail" you will receive more regular information by email. Please contact our secretary John Hochwald on the email secretary@gandssa.com.au to provide your contact details.

Happy 70th Birthday June!

Long time Honorary Life Member June Stephenson recently celebrated her 70th birthday—in June.

A birthday party was held at the Marion Hotel where June was joined by many past and present Society members. It was great to catch up with so many people who have been part of the Society's life.

A slideshow of June's life featured many photos from Society productions and brought back many happy memories.

June was a performer with the Society for many years and served on the Board for 10 years from 1992—2002. Whilst ill health forced June to step back from active participation in the Society, she and her husband Brian regularly attend performances.

