

Newsletter at a glance

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Items from the Board

As we enter our new programme year, we can look back upon a very successful past programme year. Our events enjoyed record attendance, so we believe that we are responding to your needs, be you member or friend. Our final event of the year was the Princess Ida Sing-Along in June, for which you will find a review below. Financially, we remain on a sound footing. We had a small surplus at the end of the year. Although we aspire to larger things, we continue to live within our means.

Apropos aspiring to larger things: the only disappointment, if you will, is that our membership numbers have stabilized at a level that the board does not consider to be sufficient to keep the Society sustainable over the longer term. Therefore, building membership will continue to be a priority. The larger things we aspire to? A full scale production of one of the Gilbert & Sullivan operas would one of them.

If you were a member of the Society during the last programme year, which ended on 30th June, you will have received our annual membership letter by post within the last week or two (assuming that we have your postal address on file – otherwise you should have received it via email, which is our standard means of communication). In this letter, there are 2 important messages (1) its time to pay dues for the upcoming year and (2) you are cordially invited to attend our annual general meeting (AGM).

For those readers who are not yet members, and those members who might have missed the annual membership letter, please read on for a short recapitulation.

The AGM will be held in the Centrepoint Library on Friday 18 September 2009 from 19.00 – 21.00 hrs.

We would appreciate your registering for the meeting (contact@savoyards.ch) to help with the planning for food and drink. Walk-ins will not be turned away however! The AGM is typically the least well attended event of the year, but one that has never been boring. We conduct our business very seriously, but enjoy at the same time something that could also be called our Annual Fall Apéro. The cost of admission is being a member! By the way – non-members are welcome to join us for the AGM and become members then.

We have learned through surveying you, that our most effective means of building membership and event attendance is word-of-mouth. So please help us to grow by telling others about us and the good (and affordable) times you have had at our events, and perhaps by giving the gift of membership to someone. Membership costs CHF 40 per person and year (CHF 20 for students 25 years of age or younger). Joining or renewing is as easy as transferring your dues to our postal account 40-333742-6. Full contact information for the Society is included at the bottom of this page.

Bernie MacCabe, president of the Gilbert & Sullivan Society

Contact information

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Forthcoming Events

AGM

Centrepoint Library
Friday 18th September
19.00-21.00



Please refer to "Items from the Board" (above) for more details about the AGM.

Autumn Event



An Evening with Meinhard Saremba at Bergli Books

Date: 30th October 2009
Time: 19.00
Admission: CHF 20 (members)
CHF 25 (non-members)

Location: Bergli Books
Rümelinsplatz 19, Basel
(www.bergli.ch)

Meinhard Saremba is a name that may be familiar to many of you from our newsletters. Those who have been with us for several years will recall the memorable and successful "Gilbert & Sullivan Discovery Evening" we had with him in 2006.

Meinhard Saremba is a writer, lecturer and broadcaster and is an expert in matters G&S but he is particularly partial to the Sullivan side of the equation. Most recently he has co-authored the new *Cambridge Companion to Gilbert & Sullivan*. We are very pleased that he has kindly agreed to present again to us in a Lecture Apero held at Bergli bookshop at Rümelinsplatz 19 from 7 to 8:30pm on Friday October 30th 2009. His theme for the evening will be "Sullivan and Rossini", who were contemporaries and knew each other. What contact did they have? Did one influence the

other? Are there parallels in their works? Mr. Saremba will answer these and other intriguing questions.

Light snacks and wine will be served, and copies of the new *Cambridge Companion to Gilbert & Sullivan* will be on sale at the event. We are thrilled to have Bergli Books as our partner in this endeavour.

Space is limited to 40 persons. Tickets are available on first-come first-served basis (CHF 20 for G&S Society members/ CHF 25 for non-members). Tickets may be reserved by sending an email to us (events@savoyards.ch) or via Bergli Books (info@bergli.ch). Please see websites www.savoyards.ch or www.bergli.ch/shop/event page for details.

Summer Apero Review

The final event of our year was a combined Singalong and summer apero, held at the Alterszentrum Weiherweg on June 12th. Our conductor was Monica Buckland, who last year came all the way from Dresden at the last minute, to step in and lead the Singalong.



Since 2009 is Darwin year, Princess Ida was a natural choice for this year's opera, interestingly reflecting contemporary public reaction to both the theory of natural selection and to women's higher education, ideas evidently found in their time to be about equally outlandish. Hindsight being a wonderful thing, we were able (led with some relish by Monica) to enjoy the fun without being too bothered by attitudes which now seem as merely risible. Certainly the audience/chorus threw themselves into their numbers, and very much enjoyed the solos and duets by Sarah Huntriss, Ann McClymont, and Barbara Laurie and David Laurie. The orchestra was ably represented by Monika Schute-Knecht at the piano.

The Summer Aperitif rather wrapped itself around the Singalong than merged with it, and the social part of the entertainment continued, in the best traditions of our society, until the liberal amounts of wine provided had been drunk dry.

Many thanks to Monica Schute-Knecht the accompanist and the soloists and to all who organised this very enjoyable evening.

Many thanks for the review by Joanna Lonergan

This month's song "I have a song to sing O" from Yeoman of the Guard



*I have a
song to sing
O!*

Point.

I have a song to sing, O!

Elsie.

Sing me your song, O!

Point.

It is sung to the moon
By a love-lorn loon,
Who fled from the mocking throng, O!
It's a song of a merryman, moping mum,
Whose soul was sad, and whose glance was glum,
Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye.
Heighdy! heighdy!
Misery me — lack-a-day-dee!
He sipped no sup, and he craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!

Elsie.

I have a song to sing, O!

Point.

Sing me your song, O!

Elsie.

It is sung with the ring
Of the songs maids sing
Who love with a love life-long, O!
It's the song of a mermaid, peerly proud,
Who loved a lord, and who laughed aloud
At the moan of the merryman, moping mum,
Whose soul was sad, and whose glance was glum,
Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!
Heighdy! heighdy!
Misery me — lack-a-day-dee!
He sipped no sup, and he craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!

Point.

I have a song to sing, O!

Elsie.

Sing me your song, O!

Point.

It is sung to the knell
Of a churchyard bell,
And a doleful dirge, ding dong, O!
It's a song of a popinjay, bravely born,
Who turned up his noble nose with scorn
At the humble mermaid, peerly proud,
Who loved a lord, and who laughed aloud

At the moan of the merryman, moping mum,
Whose soul was sad, and whose glance was glum,
Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!
Heighdy! heighdy!
Misery me — lack-a-day-dee!
He sipped no sup, and he craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!

Elsie.

I have a song to sing, O!

Point.

Sing me your song, O!

Elsie

It is sung with a sigh
And a tear in the eye,
For it tells of a righted wrong, O!
It's a song of the mermaid, once so gay,
Who turned on her heel and tripped away
From the peacock popinjay, bravely born,
Who turned up his noble nose with scorn
At the humble heart that he did not prize:
So she begged on her knees, with downcast eyes,
For the love of the merryman, moping mum,
Whose soul was sad, and whose glance was glum,
Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!

Both.

Heighdy! heighdy!
Misery me — lack-a-day-dee!
His pains were o'er, and he sighed no more,
For he lived in the love of a ladye!
Heighdy! heighdy!
Misery me — lack-a-day-dee!
His pains were o'er, and he sighed no more,
For he lived in the love of a ladye!



Karaoke, sing along with "I have a song to sing O"

http://diamond.boisestate.edu/gas/yeomen/web_oper_a/yg_midi/yg107.mid

Yeoman of the Guard Trivia

The Yeomen of the Guard, or *The Merryman and His Maid*, opened October 3, 1888, at the Savoy Theatre and ran for 423 performances. The darkest of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, *Yeomen* ends with a broken-hearted main character and at least two reluctant engagements, rather than the usual armful of marriages. However, Gilbert's "pointed" satire and punning one-liners abound, there are plenty of topsy-turvy plot complications, and many believe that the score is Sullivan's finest. Indeed, some enjoy *Yeomen* particularly because of its ever-changing emotional balance of joy and despair, love and sacrifice.



Article by Bryan Stone

Article for Savoyards, August 2009: Oh, the Doing and Undoing The Yeomen of the Guard, or, The Merryman and his Maid

In January 1887 'The Mikado' ended its run at the Savoy Theatre before a full house. Immediately 'Ruddigore' opened after a frenzy of last-minute



composition (Sullivan's friend Hamilton Clarke wrote

the overture for him). A seven-hour dress rehearsal was followed by dinner for the whole cast at Rule's on Maiden Lane (it's still there, with one of the best dinners in London). The first night was a major social event; the performance started well with encores but

the last 20 minutes fell rather flat. A hasty conference next day changed the title to Ruddigore and within a week substantial changes to libretto, and a new song, were being performed.

'Ruddigore' ran 300 performances, and was a relative failure, although Gilbert liked to say that having earned £7'000 from it he could live well with such failures. However a new opera was needed quickly, although a 'Pinafore' revival in November kept crowds rolling up. Gilbert had seen a furniture poster with a 'Beefeater'. The idea was born and on Christmas Day 1887 Sullivan greeted 'with immense pleasure' Gilbert's new libretto. It is often mentioned, correctly that Sullivan the classical musician was tired of the trivial and the 'topsy-turvy' to which Gilbert was always drawn, the magic potions, switched babies etc., but in fact Gilbert was also reflecting on his work. He wrote at this time 'I don't want you to judge me by the... nonsense with which my name is now associated'.

Remember this for although the resulting 'The Yeoman of the Guard' is often very and delightfully funny, it is a human tragedy. In many ways it is Gilbert's tragedy. And yet it is unmistakably still a comic opera with buffoonery, comic lines and 'business'. It would fail to satisfy Sullivan who would write to Gilbert to regret how his music was simply the accompaniment to comedy; he still sought a libretto for his grand opera which would 'develop more complex musical effects and ...musical construction of the libretto' (Sullivan's diary, Jan 9 1889). But both thought it the best of their joint works; Sullivan had indeed excelled himself. 'Yeoman' ran for 425 performances, and its music and its scale of drama set it aside from all other works of 'the Partnership'.



It opens with a real overture the only one Sullivan wrote as such, the dramatic 'Leitmusik' of the Tower leading towards the romantic melody of Phoebe's mischievous 'Were I thy bride', and the poignant 'When a wooer goes a-wooing'. This is music to remember. And so it continues, with a simple thread of plot from Tower Green through the story of Colonel Fairfax, of betrayal and loyalty, of danger, escape and rescue, delicately interwoven in the lives of simple people, the Warders, Sergeant Meryll and daughter Phoebe, wandering player Jack Point, his

companion Ethel, and a number of sympathetic scoundrels. So far analogies with Shakespeare come to mind. But as the opera moves on it becomes clear that this is Jack Point's story; the jester and player, his is the fate so movingly being portrayed and we suspect that Gilbert is writing of himself the 'wit, who only has to say 'Pass the mustard'', for people to laugh. Sullivan's music is in turns grandiose, romantic, poignant, sinister and tragic. We know that trouble is brewing even in the funniest bits as when the Fairfax escape plot is all 'a tale of cock and bull'. Sullivan knows how to honour Gilbert's grand scheme and the musical integrity continues up to the final curtain when Point falls, 'insensible' as the libretto says (dead in the interpretations of later years). Point's and Ethel's haunting love song, sung in happier times has become a torment of betrayal the music a whirling frenzy as Point bereft and alone collapses on the stage and the curtain falls. Let's go back and look closer. The time is that of Henry VIII; plots, betrayal, gallantry and death are part of public life; the Tower stands for timelessness but also for cruelty. However the people around the green are simple, joyous even, thought worldly-wise. The opera opens uniquely, not with a chorus, but with a solo; Phoebe is sitting spinning singing the gentle and sad 'When maiden loves'. The opening lines show that Fairfax falsely to die is the unsuspecting object of her pining. Alas, she hopes in vain. But in comes the chorus of Yeomen although Gilbert made a rare error here. The Yeomen of the Guard did not guard the Tower; this was the task of the Tower Warders established after Henry VIII in 1548. Never mind. Around Phoebe's brother Leonard, a new warder, a plot is forming to help Fairfax escape. Knowing nothing preparing for execution, he asks 'Is life a boon?', 'Is life a thorn?', to show why death will always find its own time.



Into this unfolding drama comes the jester Jack Point, with Elsie chased by the crowd. They offer a song the sub-title of the opera and suddenly we know why: 'The Merryman and his Maid'. It is a song form not unusual in 15th and 16th C. English, in the style of 'Green grow the Rushes – O!' or 'The twelve days of Christmas'; each verse repeats varies and adds more lines, until the whole story is told. Gilbert catches the

mood but Sullivan surpasses himself with a subtle drone accompaniment, rising and falling with the telling of the tale until good triumphs over evil and the lovers are reunited. It will come back to haunt us. The fantasy of Gilbert now runs loose as Fairfax asks before execution to marry someone – anyone – to avoid his estate falling in the wrong hands. Elsie agrees thinking he will be dead within the hour giving rise in Act II to a splendid madrigal, 'Strange Adventure' which we have all sung at some time. The irony is that Phoebe, who loves Fairfax is just then plotting his escape. It comes as it must; Fairfax now married to Ethel escapes and the Tower is in uproar, Phoebe and Point are distraught. So in Act II Point sings his bitterly ironic but funny song on a jester's profession, one of this writer's all-time favorites: 'Oh! A private buffoon is a light-hearted loon, if you listen to popular rumour...' But – 'there are one or two rules, half a dozen maybe to observe if you love your profession'. In four verses Gilbert reckons up with his critics and loses no relevance today. Even when all seems hopeless 'They don't blame you as long as you're funny'.... On with the motley, indeed.



Now Point and the jailer Wilfred must cut their losses; they tell a comic liar's tale of having shot Fairfax attempting to escape though we know otherwise. But the tragedy goes on; Fairfax wins the heart of Elsie with the rollicking trio, 'The man who would woo a fair maid', and they declare their love. The story is quickly ended; all the buffoonery ends as it had to the secret of the clumsy plotters is out, and Fairfax' reprieve arrives; he and Elsie, married are now free. There is no going back. All the others accept their lot finding their ways out of their predicaments in good Gilbertian style. All that is except for one. Point has lost Elsie. The Merryman has lost his maid for ever. The repeat, poignant and sorrowful of their song, once sung so happily lets even Elsie cast a last tear for him; but the crowd go on unfeelingly, and Point is left to collapse alone, broken-hearted and insensible.

Very many thanks to Bryan Stone for this article

Deutsche Sullivan Gesellschaft

The aim of the Deutsche Sullivan Gesellschaft is to promote performances, the knowledge and understanding of the complete works of Arthur Sullivan especially in German-speaking countries. If you or friends of yours are interested you can download the application for membership form from



<http://www.sullivan-forschung.de/>



Deutsche Sullivan-Gesellschaft e. V. i. G.

www.sullivan-forschung.de

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Ehrenpräsident: Sir Roger Norrington

The Gay Sally Lunn

On my desk this afternoon is a leaflet picked up in a Bristol hotel in January. It advertises 'Sally Lunn's, Bath's Oldest House, 1482'. This it claims is 'Home of the World Famous Sally Lunn Bath Bun'.

It is in the North Parade arcade in the heart of Bath a few paces from the Abbey. Sally Lunn it appears was a young French refugee named Luane or Loane of over 300 years ago.

That would make her perhaps a Huguenot. Her 'rich, round, and generous bread' became a popular delicacy in Georgian England. However, much remains unclear. No record of such a person exists, the house is not as old as is claimed, and other explanations such as it is a form of brioche or of a 'Soleil et Lune' cake from Alsace, are all around. Even the overlapping confusion between the Bath Bun and the Sally Lunn makes unclear what is intended. But in the Bath Chronicle in 1796 the Sally Lunn is prized and Dickens in his short Christmas

story 'The Chimes' describes a night best spent by the fire with crumpets or... the Sally Lunn.

All this makes all the more fascinating Gilbert's mention in 'The Sorcerer' which except for the lost 'Thespis' of 1871 and overlooking the cheerful but brief 'Trial by Jury' of 1875 was the first true Gilbert and Sullivan opera. It was performed on November 17th 1877 to run 178 performances at the Opéra Comique Theatre off Strand and it introduced John Wellington Wells, the sorcerer of No 70, Simmery Axe. Act 1 concludes with a rustic tea party on the village green at which the company rejoices in anticipation over eggs and ham, mustard and cress, 'and now for the strawberry jam! Now for the tea of our host, now for the rollicking bun, now for the muffin and toast, and now for the gay Sally Lunn!'

Ian Bradley's 'Annotated G&S' here describes the Sally Lunn as a 'plain, white tea cake usually split, toasted and served with jam'. It was named after an 18th century street vendor in Bath'. So you see you take your choice. Gilbert used it twice elsewhere in his Bab Ballads, in 'Jester James' and in 'Pantomimic Presentiments'.

But enough of culinary history; its tea-time so now for the muffin and toast, and now for the gay Sally Lunn!

Once again, thanks to Bryan Stone for this interesting article

TEATIME

Now to the banquet we press;
Now for the eggs and the ham;
Now for the mustard and cress,
Now for the strawberry jam!
Now for the tea of our host,
Now for the rollicking bun,
Now for the muffin and toast,
And now for the gay Sally Lunn!
Now for the muffin and toast,
And now for the gay Sally Lunn!



The eggs and the ham, and the strawberry jam!
The rollicking bun, and the gay Sally Lunn!
The eggs and the ham, and the strawberry jam!
The rollicking bun, and the gay Sally Lunn!
The eggs and the ham, and the strawberry jam!
The rollicking bun,
The rollicking bun, and the gay Sally Lunn!
And the strawberry jam!
Jam, — Bun,
Jam, — Bun,
Oh, the strawberry, strawberry jam,
Bun ,— Jam,
Bun ,— Jam,
Oh, the rollicking, rollicking bun!

from 'The Sorcerer' (1877)
William Schwenck Gilbert (1836-1911)
(Gilbert and Sullivan)

Puzzles and Anagrams

Su's Mystery Anagrams

The anagrams below are scrambled versions of titles of two Gilbert & Sullivan Operas:

TELIOHON =
EALOC S&G SEBSITY

The answers to the anagrams in newsletter 17 are:

SSPNIREC ADI = PRINCESS IDA

ETH NEOMEY FO EHT DRAGU = THE
YEOMAN OF THE GUARD

Val's brainteasers!

Here is a list of nine colours.

red
denim
green
violet
purple
tangerine
cinnamon
turquoise

Take the first letter of one of them, 2 second letters, 3 third letters,
1 fourth letter, 1 seventh letter and 1 ninth letter to make up the name of a G&S operetta.

(Hint: there are nine letters in the name and you can easily find out the last letter!)

Riddle me Ree

My first is in orange and also in pear,
My second's in earring - one of a pair.
My third is in dog but not in cat,
My fourth is in those but not in that.
My fifth is in purple and also in green,
My sixth is in actor who loves to be seen.
My seventh's in ink but not in pen,
My eighth is in now and also in then.
My last is in grumble and also in grouse,
My whole is a village - not a house.
A colour is there and a letter is missing
From what men may catch when they go fishing!