



Newsletter

Autumn

2016

Welcome to the second of our occasional newsletters to keep you in touch with what's happening at Stewartby Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society.

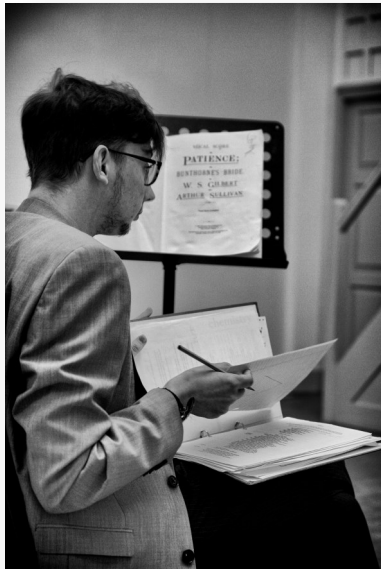
This is an electronic newsletter which can be delivered automatically to your email inbox or downloaded from the website. To sign up go to www.saods.org.uk, scroll to the bottom of the page and enter your email address. We promise that we will not use your email address for any purpose other than the delivery of the newsletter.

Patience

It's not long to go now until the November performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Patience". Tickets are available from our business manager Mike Cocke at rehearsals via any cast member, by direct contact on 07557 670703, by email at boxoffice@saods.org.uk and online through our website at www.saods.org.uk. Please note that tickets purchased online will be subject to a processing charge. With so many ways to get your tickets it will be difficult to think of an excuse not to come to see the show!



Rehearsals now also take place at Stewartby Village Hall so that the cast can get used to performing on, and not falling off, the stage.



For those of you who might like to have some idea of the story of "Patience" there follows a very brief synopsis.

In a world gone mad with languid ladies and affected gentlemen - including the entire 35th Dragoon Guards - the lovesick maidens of Castle Bunthorne pursue poet, aesthete and fake, Reginald Bunthorne. He



loves the village milkmaid, Patience, who does not like poetry or understand love. When she finally discovers what love is it is Reginald's rival, Archibald Grosvenor, whom she decides to marry. By the end of Act Two everybody agrees to wed except

Reginald who has to content himself with devotion to a lily!

Grand Jumble Sale

On 1st October the doors of Houghton Conquest Village Hall opened to welcome members, friends and anybody else who was willing to pay the 40p admission fee to rummage for jumble and enjoy the refreshments.

With thanks to Pam Massey and other members of the Society for their work in coordinating this event and raising £138 for Society funds.



George Thompson

It was a very sad occasion at the end of August when many of the Society's members attended the funeral of George Thompson. He was 97 years old when he died on 3rd August. The funeral service was held at Christ Church in Bedford and was conducted by Reverend Canon Richard Hibbert. The Anthem "Ave Verum Corpus" was sung by Bedford Choral Society of which George had been a member and members of Stewartby Operatic Society sang "The Long Day Closes" by Arthur Sullivan to accompany the withdrawal of the coffin.



George had been active with Stewartby Operatic Society from its very early days having joined the Society in 1956. He was musical director on many occasions including the 1959 and 1974 productions of Patience, appeared on stage, took the publicity photographs, was an honorary life member and had been a Vice-President of the Society for many years. His last performance was in

Iolanthe in November 2008 but he continued to attend rehearsals and see the shows until quite recently.

George lead a very full life including serving in the RAF during the Second World War and working as photographer at the Bedfordshire Times. In 2005 he gave an account of his life in the RAF to Bedford Museum and this appears in two parts on the BBC website as part of "WW2 People's War: an archive of World War Two memories - written by the public, gathered by the BBC". You can find the accounts by following these links: [part one](#) and [part two](#).

He was a true gentleman and George's smiling face and cheerful comments will be missed by members of the Society. Our thoughts and sympathies go to his family. The Society has made a donation of £250 to Agate House in Ampthill in George's memory.



Dates For The Diary

Saturday 25th February 2017: Grand Jumble Sale

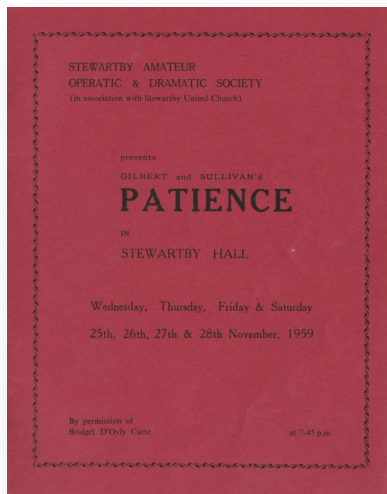
Thursday 9th March 2017: Annual General Meeting

Saturday 11th March 2017: Dinner

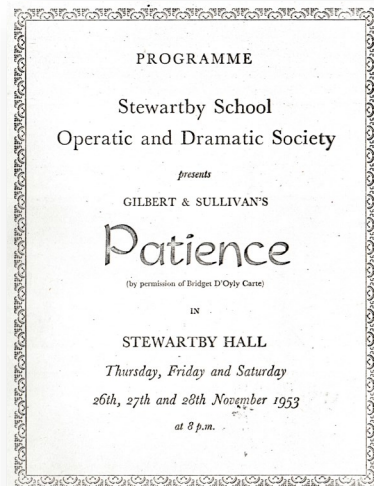
Friday 5th and Saturday 6th May 2017: Spring Concert

Patience

Patience was first performed by the Society in 1953 and since then in 1959, 1974, 1984, 1997 and 2007. The programmes from each of those performances are, or soon will be, available to view on the Society's website at www.saods.org.uk on the "Past Shows" pages.



The six previous productions have had six different producers - and this year's production will add a seventh - but only four different musical directors with both George Thompson and Allan Thomas having directed twice.



It is noticeable looking through the programmes how the numbers of chorus members have changed over the years: In 1953 there were 16 ladies and 12 gentlemen in the chorus and by 2007 these numbers had declined to 11 ladies and 4 gentlemen! This reflects the Society's increasing difficulties in attracting men, in particular, to join in with the performances and leads to our regular invitations to anyone, male or female, to join us.



In 1953 the role of Colonel Calverley was taken by John Kitchiner who also played Archibald Grosvenor in the 1959 production. On the website at www.saods.org.uk there is a photograph from 1959, provided by the musical director, George Thompson, who comments "I am conducting a performance of Patience in which John Kitchiner is playing Archibald. He was an excellent baritone who went on to sing professionally with Benjamin Britten and went on to sing principal parts with Sadlers Wells (which I think became National Opera)".

Also of great interest in the programmes are the advertisements. Do you remember "Braggins - The House Of Good Values" (1953), "Frasers - For Everything Musical" (1953), "Shopping is a pleasure at The Dudeney and Johnston Supermarket" (1959)?



Planning is already well advanced for the concert next spring. This will take place in Stewartby Village Hall on Friday 5th and Saturday 6th May 2017. There will be a wide variety of songs of different styles, fitting in, somehow, with the ABC theme, from “There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly” to “What A Wonderful World”, made famous by Louis Armstrong; from “My Secret Love” from Calamity Jane to “We’ll Gather Lilacs” by Ivor Novello; from Pinocchio’s “When You Wish Upon A Star” to “Land Of Hope And Glory”. As with last year’s concert the music will be led by Colin Jones and the choreography by Carol Wallman. Also, by popular request - a couple of people mentioned that they liked it last year - there will be a quiz running through the evening with prizes to be won.

If you would like to take part the first rehearsal will be at 7.30pm on Thursday 12th January at Stewartby United Church Hall, Park Crescent, Stewartby and every Thursday thereafter.

If you would prefer to sit back and enjoy the entertainment and the interval meal look out for news of when tickets go on sale.

Vice-President

Prue Gardiner has accepted the Committee’s invitation to become a Vice-President of the Society. For many years, including the last time we staged *Patience*, Prue put the cast members through their paces producing the November Gilbert and Sullivan shows and choreographing the spring concerts. She has expended a good deal of energy and demonstrated great commitment to the Society over the years and it is an honour and a pleasure to see her in the more sedate and relaxed position of Vice-President.

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Information about Stewartby Operatic Society can be found at our website at www.saods.org.uk and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/stewartbyoperaticsociety. Queries about tickets should be sent to boxoffice@saods.org.uk. Any other queries should be sent to information@saods.org.uk.

