



# Newsletter

## Spring (4th)

### 2020

**Welcome** to our fourth spring 2020 newsletter, keeping you in touch with what's happening at Stewartby Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society and our friends in other societies.

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#### Annual General Meeting

Unable to meet in the flesh because of the coronavirus restrictions, the AGM went ahead on Thursday 21st May courtesy of the Zoom online platform. Nineteen people joined the meeting on video and two more via telephone link.

The Annual Report for 2019/2020 was presented by the Chairman, Colin Jones, recapping the events and achievements of the period since the last AGM. These included the spring concert in 2019 which helped to celebrate 100 years of the Bedfordshire Women's Institute. In May Hazel and John Daniels were deserving recipients of the NODA Certificate for the Best Technical Achievement in the District in 2018 for the scenery for our production of Ruddigore. During the summer, stalls at Stewartby Fest, Wootton Fun Fest

and Kempston Fun Day helped to raise awareness of Stewartby Operatic Society and in September members helped to raise over £800 at a charity concert in support of EVC Uganda (Empowering Vulnerable Children). The November production of Pirates of Penzance had been



enjoyed by all and it was noted that there had been a big increase over 2018 in the number of tickets sold through the web site. In January this year concert rehearsals started, in March another successful jumble sale was held at Houghton Conquest Village Hall and then everything came to a halt! The coronavirus emergency lockdown restrictions came into force and all rehearsals and concerts were cancelled.

The Chairman thanked his fellow committee members for their support and hard work over the 15 months since the 2019 AGM and finished by saying that considerable challenges lie ahead in 2020 and beyond but that he had every confidence that the Society will enter its 70<sup>th</sup> year next year with a determination to pull together, to re-form when it is safe to do so and to bring the joy of music and performance to as many of the public as are willing to listen and watch.



The Treasurer, Mike Cocke, presented and talked through the accounts which showed that, despite our major performances consistently running at a loss, the Society's bank balance remains healthy, bolstered by income from the spring concerts, other fundraising and the generous backing of our patrons. As well as supporting particular charitable causes with one-off concerts, during the period of the accounts the Society made donations directly to Bedford Hospital, Sue Ryder, Royal British Legion and Bedfordshire Festival of Music.

*the committee* There was unanimous support for the election of the committee. The Chairman thanked Bill Hall for his service on the committee as he stepped down. Jessica Hallett was welcomed to the new committee.

Chairman:	Colin Jones	Treasurer and Business Manager:	Mike Cocke
Deputy Chairman:	John Epton	Publicity:	Wendy Field and Carol Wallman
Secretary:	Hazel Daniels	Social Secretary:	Pam Massey
Committee:	Shirley Hale, Jenny Hall, Jessica Hallett, Richard Hull and carol Urwin		

The meeting also agreed the appointment of Lady Skeet as President and of Prue Gardiner and Allan Thomas as Vice-Presidents of the Society.

It was confirmed that the planned production of The Gondoliers in November 2020 has been cancelled due to coronavirus restrictions but that the concert and the production of The Mikado in 2021 will go ahead subject to conditions and regulations at the time. Both John Epton and Wendy Field have offered to direct The Mikado and Alana Thackray has agreed to be the musical director.

In Any Other Business there were messages and comments of support for the Society and a desire to get back together as soon as conditions allow.

### Greetings from Juliet and Colin Jones

This heron was spotted on one of our daily lockdown-permitted walks by the river in Bedford.





## Greetings from Jenny Hall

We have a bird nest box with a camera and derive huge pleasure at watching the birds nest so we watched fascinated how the blue tits brought all the nesting material in and then formed the nest over many days. She then laid 10 eggs, one each day. I was rather alarmed at this number as it is quite a small nest and then there is the feeding. However we watched while she diligently sat on the eggs to incubate them while her mate fed her from time to time. Eventually the chicks hatched and both parents set about feeding them. However two days later, tragedy struck when the male bird flew into our big window and died, despite my efforts to try to revive him. I was distraught. Now the poor little mum had to feed them all and also try to keep them warm! As



fishing was banned due to lockdown I wondered how we could get grubs to help her but a friend found a place in a magazine which sold live mealworms and sent them through the post. I ordered these but luckily my daughter found a pet shop in Bedford which sold them and brought me some over. Blue tits only feed their young on live food! Now we had to find somewhere where the starlings would not be able to get them. I spent a whole day chasing them away and obviously that was not on.

We found a cage and rigged up a tray

inside it and hung it underneath the box. It took quite a while for mummy bird to find them and then to pluck up enough courage to go in, but when she did we were absolutely elated.

Over the days she and the babies (9 of them) have got through 700 grams of mealworms and now as the shops are open once more for bait, we have bought a supply of grubs which they are going through at quite a pace! The chicks are very healthy and very big now and I think they will fledge soon. It has been wonderful to watch this saga unfold and I know I will be bereft when they fly the nest, but very relieved and happy that between us we have managed to get a happy ending.

Regards. Jenny.



## Greetings from Pam Massey

*Pam recently had a fall in her garden and hurt her leg. On your behalf the Society sent flowers and best wishes.*

Thank you so much for the beautiful flowers you all sent to me. I was so pleased to receive them and for your kindness in thinking of me. They made such a difference to my day when I was feeling so low.

I send my good wishes to all in the Society and hope we can all meet again soon.

Sincerely, Pam

## More Greetings from Juliet and Colin Jones

More signs that nature is continuing as normal: these families of geese and goslings were seen on the riverside in Bedford.



## Find the Committee

All your committee members have hidden themselves in this word search. Can you find them?

COLIN JONES CHAIRMAN  
JOHN EPTON DEPUTY  
HAZEL DANIELS SECRETARY  
MIKE COCKE TREASURER BUSINESS MANAGER  
WENDY FIELD CAROL WALLMAN PUBLICITY  
PAM MASSEY SOCIAL  
SHIRLEY HALE  
JENNY HALL  
JESSICA HALLETT  
RICHARD HULL  
CAROL URWIN

Please note that there are two Carols on the committee but the name only appears once in the word search.

H	U	A	C	I	S	S	E	J	T	N	A	N	S	P
T	R	E	A	S	U	R	E	R	T	D	A	T	Y	U
H	W	Y	N	N	E	J	T	C	I	M	U	S	A	B
A	I	E	E	R	I	C	H	A	R	D	L	F	Z	L
Z	N	L	R	L	B	U	S	I	N	E	S	S	B	I
E	L	R	E	G	A	N	A	M	I	P	T	T	N	C
L	A	I	C	O	S	H	A	N	A	U	M	A	N	I
M	U	H	S	D	C	S	A	M	Z	T	V	N	R	T
L	R	S	W	L	S	D	E	L	L	Y	I	N	I	Y
F	S	F	E	E	P	T	O	N	L	L	U	H	H	N
D	Q	M	Y	I	N	R	N	E	O	E	A	P	C	U
S	X	T	P	F	A	D	M	C	K	J	T	W	H	V
V	S	J	R	C	H	H	Y	C	Q	I	O	T	S	S
X	P	S	L	V	Q	L	O	Z	G	P	M	H	M	J
P	H	J	Y	K	O	C	U	K	E	E	G	A	N	O

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