

# SAVOYARDS NEWS

JANUARY 2009

ISSUE NO 88

“Bottoms up! - Ding Dong - Cheers!! “ and a very warm welcome to 2009. Flushed with success after the splendid performances of “ The Magic Lozenge” way back in the Old Year we look forward to various celebrations of 30 years of our existence in the year to come. As the person without whom Sheringham Savoyards would not exist is our President it is appropriate that his should be the first voice to be heard on the subject.

## **PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

I’m writing this almost exactly 30 years after the Inaugural Meeting in January 1979, and I very pleased that The Sheringham Savoyards are still going strong, and are mounting new productions which I think are better than ever. I don’t know what pleases me most –the faithful handful of (not all that ancient) members who continue to participate who were in those early shows, or that new and enthusiastic friends arrive constantly and find us worth sticking with. “I am so proud” (to quote Pooh-Bah), and so grateful to be your President.

Alan

## **Memories of things past.**

There will be many of these spoken, written about and possibly performed during the year but firstly to the more recent past.

### **November.**

Our two performances of “The Magic Lozenge” attracted much favourable comment both from members of the audience and the invited luminaries from NODA to wit Sue Dupont and John Warburton. They were both full of praise for performance and production as well as the dialogue and music. That we attracted 65 % Box Office over the 2 nights for a completely new and unknown work says much for the Society’s reputation and capacity to entertain.

### **December.**

Some 20 Savoyards braved the cold, wind and rain on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> to sing carols in Sheringham town centre. We raised the magnificent sum of £210, which has been given to the East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices.

### **January.**

Rehearsals for “**The Sorcerer**” started on the 9<sup>th</sup> under the “baton?” (not yet!) of Karen Smith combining for the first (scheduled) time the tasks of repetiteur and Musical Director. Karen has been instrumental in securing the Society a valuable new contact as her understudy on the piano as and when necessary. Lester Shaw played the piano for the Auditions and willingly turned out on the Saturday morning to give auditionees the chance to go over their pieces with him before their actual performances in the afternoon. We are very pleased to welcome him “on board”.

Karen was part of the panel, also containing Producer Malcolm Poore and Assistant Producer Moira Weller, who auditioned members for Principal parts in The Sorcerer on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>. The results of those Auditions is this Cast List:

Sir Marmaduke Pointdextere (an Elderly Baronet).	Keith Swetman
Alexis (of the Grenadier Guards, his Son).	Patrick Monk
Dr Daly (Vicar of Ploverleigh).	Andy Weston
Notary.	t b c
John Wellington Wells (of J W Wells & Co., Family Sorcerers).	Jonathon Starling
Lady Sanguzure (a Lady of Ancient Lineage).	Pam Warren
Aline (her Daughter).	Bev Baker
Mrs Partlet (a Pew Opener).	Kath Whiting
Constance (her Daughter).	Gennie Plunkett

After our most junior Honorary Members performed with such distinction as Rupert's "Demons" in The Magic Lozenge we are pleased to be welcoming them back as John Wellington Wells' "Sprites" in The Sorcerer – are they in danger of being type cast at such an early stage of their careers I wonder?

### **Little Theatre Concert**

The Sheringham Savoyards are combining with Sheringham Players and The Cromer and Sheringham Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society for an evenings entertainment at The Little Theatre on Jan 31<sup>st</sup> as a fund raiser for the Theatre. We are performing various solos, duets etc,(hardly any G&S !) as well as our favourite G&S choruses .

### **February**

Do not miss the Ceilidh on 14<sup>th</sup> (by all means bring your Valentine!! and any other friends and acquaintances –there is plenty of room!) The band Rig-A-Jig-Jig has a proven track record of providing a thoroughly entertaining evening. Gresham Village Hall has all mod cons and is large enough for all the dancing to be done in comfort. Tickets are £8 but do not include your food & drink which is in the famous Savoyards Plate & Bottle tradition. The evening starts at 7.30pm but in Cinderella fashion we have to back in our pumpkins by midnight. Contact Val Williams for tickets 01263 860499 It has to be said that at the time of writing ticket sales have not come up to expectations so please commit to this evening – it really is a case of the more the merrier apart from any financial implications. We do really need to know numbers by Feb 6<sup>th</sup> latest to establish the viability of the event.

**May** Our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Boat Trip is on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>. Val awaits your deposits for this <£5 pp> Details were in the last NewsLetter and will be repeated in the April edition.

### **June**

## **THE SORCERER**

Performances are Wed 10<sup>th</sup> to Sat 13<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm and at 2.30pm on Sat 13<sup>th</sup>- our first ever Matinee!! We hope to get the set up on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> in time enough to allow for a technical rehearsal later that day. Costume + orchestra rehearsal will be on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> with a full Dress Rehearsal on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>. So put all this in your diaries now at an early stage!!

Guest Night will be Wednesday 10th when we welcome other society representatives, and of course any Friends who wish to join us, for drinks and nibbles post performance in The Hub. Friends are also welcome to join us at our Saturday Night Post Show Party, also in the Hub, –those of us still conscious after two performances will also attend!

## Mannington Hall.

The Little Theatre Society has asked us to give a Concert performance of The Sorcerer outside in the grounds of Mannington Hall as a fund raising venture for the theatre on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> .at 6.30pm. As it is the Longest Day we hope to complete the performance in daylight!! - ? including the 2<sup>nd</sup> Act at Midnight??? The backdrop of a real hall will be well in keeping with the author's specification of the action being outside Sir Marmaduke's Mansion .The concert will be in full costume but with Karen accompanying and not the orchestra used in the theatre. We have asked our old friend Alan Spoons to write and deliver a narration between the musical numbers. A whole new experience beckons -for many of us have not performed al fresco before- well – not in words & music anyway.

## November

Our Autumn Show is to be a celebration of 30 years of Sheringham Savoyards - being a medley of all the G&S shows we have performed over the years including as many people as possible who took part in them – even if they no longer regularly appear on stage with us. Pam Warren is to be our Producer for this but will enlist the aid of other notable personages along the way. We are pleased to welcome back Sarah Chadwick as Musical Director for this show – evidently her experiences guiding us through Yeoman have not scarred her too much!! ( either that or she is a closet masochist! ) Karen has also agreed to accompany us again for this show we are pleased to say. Pam would welcome any memorable anecdotes of the last 30 years, that can be told in public, from members of the Society. No doubt they will form part of the between musical numbers entertainment.

**Any Other Business** 1) As one of the theatre's resident Amateur performing Societies we “do our bit” in helping The Little Theatre with fund raising by performing for their benefit – January & June for instance- but volunteers on an individual basis are always helpful. At present The Little Theatre is very short of volunteers to fill the Coffee Bar rota. The Coffee Bar is an excellent source of revenue but has lost a number of volunteers recently for differing reasons and may have to cut down on its opening hours if the rota cannot be filled. If anyone can find a few hours to spare to help out please contact Front of House Manager Steve Williams by e-mail: [steve@sheringhamlittletheatre.com](mailto:steve@sheringhamlittletheatre.com) or on 01263 822117

2) Kath & Maurice Whiting have a cottage in a village 5 miles from the Med. It is available for holiday lets between May and September . Sleeps 4. Very reasonable rates . Contact them by e-mail : [kandm.whiting@virgin.net](mailto:kandm.whiting@virgin.net) or on 01263 821185.

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The following is the first of an occasionally produced series (depending on interest and further contributors' willingness to provide copy) of recollections as to how the person concerned “found” G&S . Who better to start than the fellow who was instrumental in bringing G&S to Sheringham on a regular basis? – so over to you Mr Stables.

## INTRODUCING A B S TO G&S

“ A ten inch 78rpm record, played on a wind-up gramophone”- how many of you know just what that means? This was how, as a very young boy(I'm talking 1930s), I heard a brass band in selections from IOLANTHE- starting with a truncated March of the Peers, and turning the record over for the Sentry's song among others. (It's still my favourite G&S opera). About 10 years later the D'Oyly Carte came on tour and I saw my first

professional show (GONDOLIERS) at Sheffield's Lyceum Theatre, a milieu not very different (I think) from London's Savoy fifty years earlier, and followed in successive years by YEOMEN, IOLANTHE, MIKADO etc. The Ko-Ko parts were sung by Graham Clifford who came after Martyn Green and before Peter Pratt ( we've reached 1939-1945 now). I began learning the piano about then, and eventually borrowed scores from the City Library to annoy the neighbours with (not true!) not just G&S, but lots of musical comedies in that tradition from the early 1900s- The Arcadians, Maid of the Mountains, and incidentally Toad of Toad Hall.

At school I met a fellow enthusiast or two and began to appreciate the social bonds this could help to form. I remember a lecture-recital on MIKADO, still on 78s -12 inch now-gramophone still needing winding! After the war came "austerity". The many amateur societies for which the provincial cities had been famous had not yet resurfaced. I do recall a good PRINCESS IDA at the local College of Education (as it would now be called). I moved to Essex when "long-playing" vinyl records(33rpm) were just coming in. By then I was married and starting a family. We were near enough to London to visit its shops and theatres – I saw SORCERER just after D'Oyle Carte took it back into their repertoire. John Reed was John Wellington Wells and I remember his coming on downstage left for a curtain-call, surprising us all as we were all looking upstage right where a magic firework had just exploded.

Then to the land of Music, Wales, where I witnessed a local IOLANTHE a few miles up the River Severn from our home. Later I took our children to a matinee PIRATES at a cinema-with-a-stage in Shrewsbury, about an hour's train journey away "over the border" Thomas Round was a memorable Frederic in this D'Oyle Carte tour. The kids sat very quietly(!) through it, but once home in the early evening poured out all the details (plot, costume etc.) to their Mum, who had stayed at home with our youngest, aged about four.

It was in 1967 I came to Norfolk to look after the Holt & Sheringham Libraries, and only then approached the possibility of "doing it myself". I was by now an Associate Member(sort of 'Friends of D'Oyle Carte') and actually got my name into the correspondence column of their magazine, called (yes!) "The Savoyard." My latest contribution was an appreciatory poem following a feature in the previous issue which carried photographs of nine soprano chorus ladies each with a brief C.V. and so on. These had all included the phrase "Not married", which I think would not be stressed nowadays. Even in 1971 I felt it called for comment. As I began my ode "Come all you lonely bachelors, who seek the marriage mart, See the new Savoyard number from the press of D'Oyle Carte! " and went on to extol the girls' attractiveness. The heading was "By all that's marvellous..." (young Frederic again). Well, they printed it, members received their copy by post, and that very day I was rung up by one Michael Sanders of North Walsham -some of you will remember him- and "the rest is history". The Choral Society in NW did a concert version of IOLANTHE and I was in the chorus of peers. Next year came a full-scale MIKADO, (costumes, scenery, piano accompaniment). I auditioned for Pish-Tush and to my intense surprise was offered Ko-Ko. Then we gave TRIAL BY JURY (Centenary year 1975) and guess who was the Learned Judge. All these were presented in NW Community Centre and "toured" to Sheringham Little Theatre. Eventually as you may have heard, a local society was formed and, greatly daring or "with bated breath" put on a PINAFORE in 1979 .

A B S

