

**Wells Operatic Society Ltd.**  
**AGM and Members Social Evening**  
**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

**7.30 Reception** of wine and nibbles in the bar (GE and TE), meet and greet - The Mayor, our President, Cllr Gordon Wilson

**8.15 AGM held** in the theatre auditorium, 41 voting members attended

**1 Apologies for Absence.** – Anne and Peter Beechey, Peter Wild, Carol and Kevin Phillimore, Marcel Wills and Jackie Young, Mark Hutchinson, Doreen Grant, Jeanne and John Clogg, Dick and Julie Makin, Frank and Penny Bonetti, Alan Hooley, Rob Rogers, Sheila Ross, Terry Ricketts, Angelo Giannetti, Sharon Upham, Kate Lynch, Roger Reeson, Nick Creaser,

**2 Minutes of the 2015 A.G.M.** held on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015, agreed as a true record

**3 Matters Arising –none.** Proposer Chris Spray   Seconder Mike Scammell. The Chairman signed the minute book

**4 Chairman's report** This is the 114<sup>th</sup> year of Wells Operatic Society Limited. The Society is registered at Companies' House (registered number 1377655) and is also a registered charity (number 276308). For a couple of years the society operated without a Chairman. This year the Society has operated with a Chairman and I am therefore presenting the Chairman's report. For twenty years I have assiduously avoided being a 'committee' member at the theatre believing that helping to organise things would get in the way of my enjoyment of doing things. And I was right. I have never felt so miserable in all my life. However, there have been silver linings and the major one is witnessing at first hand a group of passionate, dedicated and creative people who voluntarily give up their precious time to make this theatre work for the community of Wells. I have been privileged to be a part of that and remain awestruck at their commitment and tenacity. We still need more trustees/directors/committee members – call them what you will, to ensure the society and theatre thrives, so please step forward and lend a hand. Do it now or at the end of this AGM, or come along to watch what we do, then decide. The Chairman thanked members of the committee for their hard work throughout the past year. In addition he thanked those members who take on extra responsibilities; Jo and Mike Scammel are instrumental in ensuring the bar is stocked, Chris Spray continues for help with the website, Tina Eyers as guardian of the wardrobe key and has ensured that our many costumes are kept in an orderly state. Sometimes we take for granted that shows happen as if by magic but without someone taking on a responsibility we would fail miserably. So thank you Tina for accepting that responsibility, Angelo Giannetti for his continued DIY help throughout the year. No job is too big or small. The sub-committee who have been responsible for guiding us through the proposals to extend the orchestra pit and improve the stage. Nick Furze, Dave Collyer, Gina Cleverley and Sheila Ross, Nick Barlow, and Richard Wright, and with great help from Mark Wall from time to time.

Noda awards this year were presented to;

**Nick Barlow** 10 year badge. Billy Lawlor in 42<sup>nd</sup> street, Lun Tha in The King and I, Samuel in Pirates of Penzance, Captain Jeremy Campbell in Our Country's Good and Napoleon in Animal Farm. In 2008 he won the Eddie Bowler trophy at the Cinderella awards for outstanding performance of the year as Herman in Sleeping Beauty. More recently he played Jack in Into the woods and a most *revealing* portrayal of Ralph in Accrington Pals. He not only graces the stage but is a talented and committed musical director; MDing both pantomimes and shows including Jack the ripper, Good Gods, Rumpelstiltskin and Goldilocks and the three bears. Most recently he musically directed Little Lights Up 3 a show full of complicated show stopping numbers that he not only taught and helped bring to life but painstakingly orchestrated by ear to suit the company. However it was his musical direction of Dick Whittington that earned him the Cinderella award for best musical director in 2010. He is also more than happy to put in time back stage and has helped with, amongst other things, props for many productions, his construction of the dragon with Vicky Orman for last year's panto was particularly notable and no doubt worthy of mention at the Cinderella awards this year.

**Kate Lynch** 10 year badge. We are incredibly lucky to have Kate as part of our Theatre. She is one of those people who is happy to muck in wherever she can. She played Dandini in Cinderella back in 2006. She was incredible as Anna in the King and I. Amazing in My fair lady a part I know after chatting with her equally talented Mum, was one that she had always wanted to play and quite rightly too. As well as her amazing singing she is a fabulous actress and has taken part in many plays here and, on more than one occasion, briefly becoming my husband's wife, including in Rumours in 2013. Something again for which I am eternally grateful.

The brilliant thing about Kate is that, along with her, you also get a whole family! Her wonderful Mum and Dad, Frank and Penny and amazing children Ben and Pheobe. On more than one occasion we have had all three generations on the stage at the same time. This attracted particular attention from BBC Somerset when Kate starred in 'A Little Night Music' in 2012, alongside Penny and Phoebe.

**Frank Bonetti** 10 year badge. In the 10 years since Frank joined the society he has been involved with 27 shows. Both on stage and off he is just as like to be seen (or hopefully not seen) helping out the crew or helping to build the set as he is to be seen (definitely seen) on stage in a performing role. He began in Honk! Taking the principal role of Greylag and things took off from there. He was kept hanging around as Purdue in Habeas Corpus as well as helping to build the set. He has appeared frequently in pantomime as the King in Sleeping Beauty and Captain Smollet in Avast Behind. It is not just principal roles that he has taken on however as he has been in the company for My Fair Lady and Pirates Of Penzance as well as a variety of roles in Little Lights Up 2.

I have shared the stage with Frank on several occasions, most recently in Little Lights Up 3 and he is always a reassuring presence on the stage, always dependable, always gives a great performance, however big or small the role. It is not just comedy, he gave a very touching performance as Benjamin the donkey in Animal Farm, one that stayed with me for a long time. I think my favourite role, however, was a comic one, when he played Kevin the Wasp in Goldilocks and the Three Bears with such lovely comic timing.

**Sarah Briton** 10 year badge. December 2005 she was dresser for her husband's production of Jack and the Beanstalk, and also maker of original costumes (along with Sue Scott, Aileen Thomassen and Julie Perry). Actually, the programme for that production does not specify who she dressed, but I am sure whoever it was will remember it very well. In her bid to topple the powers that be (or were) in this fortress of theatre she then took over the props department for Oh What A Lovely War! In September 2006, as well as dealing with the wardrobe alongside Sue Scott. Clearly a two-pronged attack this time. In the costume department for shows such as HMS Pinafore (2007), 42<sup>nd</sup> Street (2008), Sleeping Beauty (2008), My Fair Lady (2009), Seussical and Avast Behind (both 2009).

But not entirely stifled, Sarah ventured into set painting in 2008 (Habeas Corpus, when her husband was Throbbing) and in 2011 (Pirates of Penzance when her husband swashbuckled)

Clearly not satisfied on the production side, she became an actress, singer and dancer (Pirates of Penzance), quite obviously with a view to absolute control of artistic work, A Little Night Music (2012) Animal Farm (2012) Mort (2013) and George and The Dragon (2014)

**Garry Marke** 10 year badge – The Chairman praised the dedication and commitment of Garry who has been on stage for many productions, recently in panto - Goldilocks and the Three Bears, George and the Dragon, Snow White and the seven Dwarfs, and in his earlier years - Anything Goes (as the camp boson) and Robin Hood - complete with Green tights. He has had a short break, but now returns with his unique humour and gregarious nature.

**Lisa Cope** 25 year award The Chairman praised Lisa's commitment to the society over many years. Serving on the committee and taking on the responsibility of Patrons Secretary for 3 years. Most recently she has been heard but not seen as the body in the production of Inspector Hound. She has been involved with many plays and musicals including My Fair Lady, A Murder has been arranged and Hello Dolly.

**Jeanne Clogg** 60 year diamond bar. The chairman spoke with *Jeanne last night and she is unable to get to the AGM. She sends her apologies. Sarah and I are going to call round to her on Sunday morning so I will do a little presentation and take some photos and let the website have them.*

**Marcel Wills** 65 year pin. Marcel has given his apologies, but won't be able to attend the AGM for the first time in many, many years – he has had a hip replacement so I guess we will let him off! The Secretary will present Marcel with his award at his house tomorrow. Marcel continues to be a constant and committed member of the society.

**Roy Bevan Award**, presented to someone within the Society who has made an outstanding contribution to theatre life during the year and whose efforts have been thought to be worthy of singular merit and praise. This year the sub-committee of previous winners were unanimous with the committee in identifying a winner – Marcel Wills. Marcel has been a constant support to all new and old members and up until recently would have been at every show. At each performance lines well-rehearsed, each show would not open until the lines were said 'Please can all mobile phones be turned off and no photographs to be taken, along with all the niceties to go with it. Marcel Wills is very much a well-deserved winner of this award, one Roy himself would very much approve of. The Secretary will present the award to him tomorrow.

The Chairman then concluded 'we continue to be extremely successful as a competitive society, both in terms of nominations and winners, in each of the three county competitions (Phoebe Rees, David Beach and Cinderella). Places on the committee are open for election. The committee is not some sort of secret society, working in the background. It should be representative of the membership. So please tell us what you want, read the noticeboard and look at the website, Facebook and so on. To repeat myself, come and join us.

## **5 Members' Reports**

### **i Past and Forthcoming Productions – Sharon Edmonds**

**Deckchairs**, this was a great evening with fabulous performances that everyone enjoyed and it showed the flexibility and talent we have and hopefully the potential do so more. I really hope we can do this again soon and that those of you who 'had a go' for the first time will not make it their last.

**Spend Spend Spend** we welcomed Brian Epps and a small team who defected briefly from Strode over to our humble Theatre who, in turn, were backed up by a stalwart team of WLT regulars including Catherine, Sheila and Richard. Did you know, we had 5 yes 5 props people for that show!!

**Little Lights Up 3** Light Up shows are a show case for everything that we love about the Theatre all wrapped up in one show. A tour de force of talent lead by Tina and Nick. It's great to see the sense of theme developing with these shows and setting it in an Antique shop was a brilliant idea. Kate has never looked more glamorous and Gerald's change from one generation to another was incredibly effective. Stand outs for me were the singing monks, the airmen sketch and Super cali.....whatever.

**Panto George and the Dragon** directed by Mathew Maisey with an original script and original song choices to go with it! Many of his original ideas were swiftly taken and moulded to the Little Theatre mould, by the ever talented Vicky, and the result was a new and exciting show.

**Inspector Drake!** Doreen Grant bought a wonderful play to our stage and, along with a superbly funny cast and amazing production crew it was up there with the best productions we have ever done. It was hilarious, slick and perfectly pitched.

So what's coming next I hear you say?

**Return to the Forbidden Planet in May**, directed by Lois Harbinson. Great fun, great music and fab team involved. Richard Wright is bringing some culture to our boards with a show from the bard in September with **Twelfth Night**. Apparently we will be having real minstrels on stage which, at first, I was worried about but apparently they melt in your mouth not in your hand so they should be OK under the lights. Vicky is busy writing Jack and the Bean Stalk ready for December.

2017... well to be honest, it's looking a little sparse. What we really lack is an input of ideas and directors. Suggestions for shows are always really welcome and what we'd like to see is more of you having a go at putting those shows up here. Have a go! We can't afford to be lazy and expect the same people to keep the Theatre producing shows. It's a great opportunity....use it!

**ii Publicity report** – Ken Edmonds please encourage and push the show via social media, always check the website for details and send out reminders to all your friends. Any other ideas and volunteers are always welcome.

**iii Entertainment and Social report** – Alisa Creaser Apologies from Lou Baker. Last June saw the annual dinner dance at the Swan which was smaller in numbers but none the less a great evening of eating, socialising and dancing. Due to the reduced numbers in attendance at the dinner dance in recent years we decided this year to change the venue and go to the White Hart which provided us with a more intimate dining experience and generated a great party atmosphere. The food was delicious, the dancing and dressing up hilarious and the alternative raffle organised by Nicky, Kate and Gina was a great success and raised a few more pennies for the stage and pit project.

October we celebrated Halloween with a fancy dress party at the theatre, the theatre band, Back Stage Pass, played a couple of sets and there was themed food, spooky cocktails and Halloween games to play. Thanks go to Nick Barlow and Vicky Orman for their help in staging this event.

In November we opened the bar to Carnival watchers and again there was a really nice atmosphere here. I'd like to say a big thank you to all the people who worked behind the bar and supervised the door on this evening and at all the other social events throughout the year.

It has been a fairly social start to the year with a well-attended social night in January and the dinner dance in February. We will continue to host a social night once a month on a Friday night and would welcome your suggestions as to how this is organised effectively.

Forthcoming events that we are hoping to organise are a family and friends picnic in July and an old favourite the quiz night with fish and chip supper.

### **iv Patrons report** – Lyn Jones

There are currently 38 patrons of the society who attend the Little Theatre's productions. We have welcomed a few new patrons and some have decided not to continue their patronage for a variety of reasons. Most attended the spring show, for the Civic Evening, when they enjoyed a glass of wine and canapés which were again prepared and served by catering students from The Blue School. It would be good to welcome more patrons, so please spread the word and encourage friends and family to support us in this way.

### **v Stage and Orchestra Pit Improvements Project** – Richard Wright

The stage and pit project has as its aim the extension of the current pit out into the auditorium by 1.6 metres, providing a false floor so that the whole of the current pit can be covered, or all of the current area and the extended area, or just the extended section, or half of the extension, or any combination of those options. The seating over the false floor will be removable, and a second entrance/exit door will be built to accommodate the audience when the extended pit is open. The job went out to tender towards the end of last year. This was for a possible start in May this year. We had disappointing reaction. Only two serious estimates were received, and the only realistic one was from D'Ovidio Brothers. Another firm, Brick Peers, was specifically invited, but did not show any interest.

We were keen to contract with a larger operation rather than a one man band, and very keen to work with a company who had appropriate credentials and insurance. We researched further and contacted A.M.Howe Ltd of Ashcott, and Adrian Howe inspected in the early part of this year. His estimate was better, and he was keen, and impressive. He has quoted for 2016 and alternatively 2017.

By then we were running a very tight schedule for works to be carried out this year. The Arts Council grant would not be decided for 12 weeks minimum i.e. not until April at the earliest, and a May start was needed. This, and the complications being caused for Gerald in taking or rejecting theatre bookings for the Summer without knowing whether we would have the funds to begin work this year or not, meant that the obvious thing to do was to aim for a Summer 2017 project build.

The application to the Arts Council is now ready to go, literally at the push of a button (as it is all done on-line). But we are waiting for the 2015 accounts to be formally accepted by this AGM before pushing that button, because we have to submit up to date final accounts.

We should therefore know the outcome of the application by about 1<sup>st</sup> July.

#### **DETAILED BUDGET BREAKDOWN**

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Indiegogo funding	£ 2,384	Construction, electrical	£28,500
C&J Clarke Ltd pledge	£ 5,000	VAT on the above	£ 5,700
Community Matters	£ 300	Building Regulation Fees	£ 700
Fundraising events	£1,800	Structural Engineer (Inc. VAT)	£ 1,600
Direct donations	£2,116	10% contingency	£ 3,650
DEFICIT/grant	£28,550		
	<b>£40,150</b>		<b>£40,150</b>

#### **ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE TIMETABLE**

20th Dec	2016	£ 3,000
1st May	2017	£ 8,000
1st August	2017	£28,000
1st September 2017		£ 1,050
		<b>£40,150</b>

#### **6 Treasurer's Report and Appointment of Accountants**

- i. Recommend that Webb & Co remain as our accountants and business advisers. Proposed by Richard Wright and seconded by Mike Scammell
- ii. All accounts are in credit and the general financial situation is healthy with our general unrestricted fund increasing by £7431.
- iii. Monies raised for the Pit and Stage Development Fund are listed in the accounts as restricted funds. So far we have raised £6306, with a further £5000 promised if we are awarded an Arts Council grant. Costs to date for undertaking this project total £4019.
- iv. In 2015 we staged 4 of our own productions which, thanks mainly to the pantomime, made a profit of £9682. Theatre hire brought in a further £6342, an increase of £1215 on 2014, but subscriptions were down by £207 to £4636.
- v. The overall bar profits were slightly up but the percentage gross profit has decreased and so I think we must revisit our pricing structure!
- vi. The general cost of running the theatre (heat, light etc), excluding the bar and not taking into account any production costs, is about £15000 and this is the absolute minimum amount we have to cover with subscriptions, theatre hire and profit on productions before we can begin to think about any expenditure on general improvements to the building or our equipment.
- vii. 7. Full details of the accounts are on the noticeboard in the bar and members are encouraged to read them
- viii. 8. I commend the accounts to the meeting and propose that they be adopted. Proposed Pauline Perrin, Seconded Chris Spray

#### **7 President's address.** The Mayor, our President, Cllr Gordon Wilson

The Mayor gave a few words of encouragement and support thank the society for all that we do for the community. He claimed to be an actor playing Herod in his school play, then 60 years later reviving the role in the is cathedral at the children s Christmas service! He reflected on the recent Dimpleby lecture held at the Shard, saying he was looking forward to our Shakespeare production. He complimented the Dragon in panto, and the Hearts and Flowers evening. Thanks for you for the contribution to the life of Wells.

#### **8 Election of officers and Committee**

The following nominations to serve on the committee have been made, there has been one nomination for the post of –

Chairman	– Chris Briton
Vice-Chairman	– Richard Wright
Treasurer	– Pauline Perrin
Secretary	– Gerald Eyers
Theatre Administrator	– no nomination
Patrons Secretary	– Lyn Jones
Publicity Officer	– Ken Edmonds
Stage Representative	– Graham Brown

Four Committee members - Alisa Creaser, Sharon Edmonds, Dave Collyer, Mike Scammell

The President read the nominations and Chris Spray proposed and Richard Wright seconded that the nominations were accepted.

#### **Date of the next committee meeting**

**Monday April 18th 7.30pm in the Little Theatre Bar**

- 9 Any Other Business** There were no issues raised in writing to the secretary. Matters raised on the evening were -  
Nick Furze – thanks for fund raising support to Hearts and Flowers, Talent show and the fish and \chip Quiz  
Lyn Jones – Wells Comedy Festival – coming soon

**The meeting finished at 9.10, many thanks for your attendance.**