

YEOVIL AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 22 OCTOBER 2018 AT EDWARDS HOUSE, BUCKLAND ROAD, YEOVIL COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM

1 (a) Present: 57 members

Members present: R Bartlett A Harris P Perry J Bailey W & M Stainer M Ross-White C Nicholls C & P White R Howell T Dyke C & J Jesty S Hughes D & M Burke M & J Rudd N Leveridge R Chatwin F McLoughlin E Darling-Finan M Parker H Long J Westaway S Andrew L Gage K & M Nichols B Rees C Bray L Crane J Burt J Bradford C Owen S Burgess M Hyde T Wilson D Jamieson N Mountjoy F Pamplin G Pamplin F Beecher L Whitchurch V Whitchurch A Leadbitter A Hamilton D Wright D Bourne S Matthews A Enticott K Pankhurst M & L Francis P Budzynski G Thresh Lorna Murphy-Durran

Patrons present: R B Knight

Visitors: C Doyle K Taylor A Matthews J Capes

(b) **Apologies** were received from: R & G Bullock S Driver E Cresswell N Bussell E Thomas J Holland-Brewer K Smyth L Lee-Brown C Riglar A Thresh S Hansford S Symcox L Thomas

2 INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW PRESIDENT – CHARLES CLIVE-PONSONBY-FANE

Chairman, Geoff Thresh, offered grateful thanks to retiring President, John Curry, for his help and support over the last 3 years.

Geoff then introduced new President, Charles Clive-Ponsonby-Fane – a great friend of the Society. Charles said a few words about how delighted he was to be the Society's President for the next 3 years.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 23 OCTOBER 2017

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (23 October 2017) had been previously read, confirmed and agreed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising.

5 SECRETARY'S REPORT

Paula Budzynski was celebrating 30 years in the post of Secretary!

Appointees/Members/Friends

She thanked long-standing member, John Curry, for his support and help as President over the last 3 years and said it was now an honour and a privilege to welcome Charles Clive-Ponsonby-Fane as the new Society President for the next 3 years.

On the Officers' and Committee front, the post of Business Manager had now been ably taken by Lorna Murphy-Durran in place of Jean Rudd, who had now stood down. The Committee had worked well this year and a good mix of young and older members had been extremely beneficial for the Society.

Sponsorship/Charities

In the Spring the Society supported 'naming a seat' at the Octagon – the Society seat being G30.

The chosen charity for the 'Top Hat' season was the Freewheelers and Beatnik Theatre Group had also made bucket collections during 'Top Hat'.

Awards

Congratulations went to Shaun Driver who had recently won the Rose Bowl Award for his part as Jerry in 'Top Hat'.

NODA awards presented during the evening went to – Russell Chatwin (70 year pin); Roger Howell (60 year diamond bar); Marian Stainer, Patricia Perry and Ernie Thomas (55 year pin); Sheila Driver (40 year silver bar); Sally Matthews and Jean Rudd (25 year medals plus silver bars); Derek Bourne (35 year silver bar); Mark Rudd (25 year medal) and David Burke (10 year badge).

Edwards House

Edwards House continued to thrive under Nick Mountjoy's leadership; the premises had recently been painted and everything was looking spick and span. Bookings continued to come in and the hall was in continual use.

Shows – 'Top Hat' and 'Sweeney Todd'

'Top Hat' had not been a financial success. Despite superb costumes (very expensive), great dancing and wonderful music, it only sold 49% resulting in a huge loss.

Particular thanks were extended to Sheila Driver for everything she had achieved with the show.

'Sweeney Todd' – a fantastic and explosive piece of theatre which was superbly cast but, once again, did not sell well possibly because of the subject matter involved.

Paula made comment that the Society had lost on the previous 4 shows and wondered what the answer was to stop the rot! She felt it was very difficult to judge what would or would not sell – costs were spiralling and the need to sell tickets was absolutely vital.

The Future

Hopefully the planned show for Autumn 2019 – 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' would appeal to young and old and sell well. This show would be directed by Jeremy Tustin, with Kat Stevens as Musical Director.

Old favourite 'The Sound of Music' was the chosen show for Spring 2020 and hopefully audiences would be flocking to see this show once again!!

Finally, Paula thanked everyone – appointees and assistants for everything achieved during the year.

Paula was thanked for her report and for all her hard work during the year.

6 TREASURER'S REPORT

Paula read the Treasurer's Report in Hal's absence. Ken Nichols reported an anomaly in the expenditure figure on page 2.

Balance Sheet

Net assets were shown as being £172,594.

General Income & Expenditure

The General Income and Expenditure account showed a surplus of £2,285.

Edwards House

The Edwards House account showed a small deficit of £2,353 mainly as a result of increased repair and maintenance expenditure.

The Performance Accounts

Unfortunately, 'Top Hat' was literally a box office 'flop' despite being a well produced and enjoyable production. The weather certainly did not help (the 'beast from the East') but the loss of £13,000 had dented the Society's reserves.

In Autumn 2017 '9 to 5' sold less well than 'White Christmas' the previous year but control over costs, including costumes and orchestra meant that there was a deficit of £4119 for the show.

There was discussion regarding where savings could be made. Jay Westaway felt that some directors the Society used did not always have a professional quality of work – eg they just 'set' and there was not sufficient 'directing' – he felt this was not £4,000 (a fee) worth of directing. There were members (assets) in the Society who were very able to do the job of directing. Geoff made comment that a professional director did more than just direct but gave his experience through sound, lighting and everything else to do with bringing a show together.

Fred McLoughlin hoped that ticket prices for 'Chitty' would not be increased, thinking that this would put people off from going to the theatre? Lorna replied that a family ticket was being discussed and she was looking at 'tickets' in general with the Octagon to see where sales could be increased. The comment was made that it was better to put the

membership subs up which had remained the same for over 10 years. (The Committee was looking at increasing subs but needed to take into account young people who found it difficult to find £20).

There was an opportunity to reach out to local schools with 'Chitty'.

Concession/Companion seats were also discussed along with wheelchair users.

7 ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS (2016/2017)

It was unanimously agreed that this set of accounts be adopted (proposed D Burke, seconded K Nichols, unanimous).

8 ELECTION OF AUDITOR

It was unanimously agreed that Hugh Tayler (Chalmers & Co) be, once again, elected as the Society Auditor (proposed N Mountjoy, seconded D Wright, unanimous).

9 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

All Officers were elected en bloc, unopposed. Geoff Thresh – Chairman; Mark Rudd – Vice-Chairman; Paula Budzynski – Secretary, David Hallett - Treasurer, Lorna Murphy Durran – Business Manager and Nigel Bussell – Stage Director.

10 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

The retiring committee was thanked for all their help and support over the year. The following were elected to stand for the ensuing year:

Sarah Andrew	Guy Burgess	David Burke
Lucy Crane	Clive Jesty	Nick Mountjoy

11 EDWARDS HOUSE REPORT

Edwards House Manager, Nick Mountjoy reported. He said it had been an honour to take over from Wreford Stainer. Maintenance was ongoing – the fire door would be replaced soon and next year would see the hallway and Green Room decorated.

The online booking system was working well and Nick thanked Lauren Francis for overseeing this. Ann Harris, as Edwards House Treasurer, was doing a great job ensuring all the bills were paid on time. Nick thanked Daisy Reid (cleaner) and Julie Burt and Maureen Hyde for refreshments. Tracey Wilson was also thanked for 'turning her hand' as and when needed!

In conclusion, Nick said he was always on the lookout for help and if anyone had any free time then please contact him!!!

Nick was thanked for his report.

12 OLIVE EDWARDS AWARD

The Olive Edwards Award was now one that members could apply for if they wished to further their abilities in a particular field of the arts. The recipient was then chosen by the Committee. Paula was therefore delighted to announce that this year's award was given jointly to Hannah Long and Sharon Read.

13 THE ANNE BAYES YOUNG PEOPLE'S AWARD

Paula was delighted to announce that this year's award recipient was Matt Parker.

14 THE JOHN CURRY UNSUNG HERO AWARD

John Curry was delighted to announce that this year's recipient was Ken Nichols.

At this point Charles Clive-Ponsonby-Fane presented the 2018 Long Service Awards to the recipients named under Secretary's Report.

15 TO DISCUSS THE CHOICE OF FUTURE PRODUCTIONS

The comment was made as to why the Society was performing 'The Sound of Music' after only 7 years – was there a show equal to the 'Sound of Music' the Society could do and would 'Oliver!' have fitted the bill?? Geoff replied that the Society was trying to recoup loses and 'The Sound of Music' always sold well. The comment was made that it was hoped 'Chess' had not been completely discounted. Lauren Francis suggested another G & S and 'Cabaret'/'7 Brides for 7 Brothers' although it was thought the licence for 'Cabaret' was unavailable at the present time. Jay Westaway suggested 'Footloose'.

A comment was made that singing in a show was as important as the dancing.

Charmaine made comment that everyone must take responsibility for marketing.

Annette asked if there was any way of raising money by undertaking small shows or bingo evenings etc?

Finally, Clive felt the £1 ticket levy on Octagon seats was the difference between profit and loss on a show.

16 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION BY THE NEW COMMITTEE

(a) New Members' Auditions

Luke Whitchurch felt that the New Members' Auditions were quite harsh, lowering people's confidence and esteem, and that it was also unfair for people to undertake 2 auditions – the New Members and the Show audition.

(b) Promotion of Shows

Lorna was looking at new ways to promote shows and asked people to come forward if they had any new ideas for selling tickets.

(c) Absenteeism

Discussion took place on the high degree of absence from principals in 'Sweeney Todd'. Attendance needed to be better – if people wished to be considered for a part they needed to be available for rehearsals.

(d) Jay Westaway's Comments

Jay made comment about the negative personal remarks made during 'Sweeney Todd' – people went to rehearsals to have fun not to be discredited.

(e) Rehearsals running over

Rehearsals running late ('Sweeney Todd') were unacceptable particularly when people had a long distance to travel.

(f) Casting/Auditions

The comment was made that if a director, when casting, wanted to see something specific from auditionees, then he should ask for it – ie a shorter song (or part of a song only) and shorter lib.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm