

*Winchester*  
*Amateur Operatic Society*

(30TH SESSION)



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THE  
GUILDHALL  
WINCHESTER

MAY 8th, 10th, 11th  
14th and 15th, 1954

Matinee  
Saturday, May 15th

MAY 6TH AND 7TH: SECONDARY  
AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

MAY 12TH: WINCHESTER COLLEGE  
AND ST. SWITHUN'S SCHOOL

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## Foreword

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FOR the third time the members of the Operatic Society are presenting to their many patrons and friends the well-known Gilbert and Sullivan Opera "Ruddigore", the first production being staged at the Guildhall in 1924, and the second time ten years later, in 1934.

Under the skilful direction of Mr. Lawson Mackay as Producer and Mr. John Sealey as Musical Director, every effort has been made during the last few months to prepare the Opera in all its faithfulness to tradition as laid down by Gilbert and Sullivan in January 1887, the date of the first production.

The laudable desire to preserve the great heritage of Gilbert and Sullivan operas is practically shared by every responsible Amateur Society throughout the Kingdom, who one and all realise that the Savoy works are a great national possession entirely worthy of preservation and pardonably prized as the most important feature of the English Victorian stage.

Fidelity to tradition has always been the keynote and aim of the Winchester Society, and all patrons who eagerly look for this quality in the production of "Ruddigore" will not be disappointed.

A curious and unusual note of "Ruddigore" when first produced in London, 1887, was the resentment displayed by the French people to the vocal number of the seaman, Richard Dauntless, who sings the rollicking song "Have pity on the poor 'Parley-voov'". For a time the number occasioned a rather bitter feeling, and there were even critics at home who held that it reflected also on the British Navy. The storm passed over, although international complications were for a time feared; but the lively hornpipe by the singer which followed the debatable song soon put everyone in a good humour, and trouble was averted.

It will be remembered by many that the Opera provided the late famous Savoyard, Sir Henry Lytton, his first opportunity to act the part of Robin Oakapple in place of Grossmith, following the sudden illness of this great actor. It proved the stepping-stone to fame for Lytton and he never looked back.

The story of "Ruddigore" is of a distinctly macabre character, a change indeed from the usual type of opera conceived by Gilbert and Sullivan during the many years of their long association. Not for the first time, Gilbert gave full rein to his vivid imagination, the idea of a terrible curse on all the Baronets of the House of "Ruddigore" being something entirely new and arresting, and yet despite its horrific character it is relieved by a remarkable fund of jollity and humour by the characters that make up the cast.

It is on record that a good lady in the early history of the Opera found fault with the naming of "Ruddigore" as being not only unworthy but almost immoral. Such a view found little encouragement from the rank and file of opera lovers, and Gilbert in characteristic fashion dealt with the criticism in a manner that was expected of him.

In regard to the music of the Opera, Sullivan contributed many examples, grave and gay, of his genius in composition. From the opening Chorus of Bridesmaids in praise of Rose Maybud, "Fair is Rose as bright May-day" to the dramatic spectres' song by Sir Roderic, "When the night wind howls in the chimney cowles", and the mirth-provoking duet by Sir Despard and Mad Margaret, "I once was a very abandoned person" in their quaint garb of all black, the Opera teems with musical numbers of great excellence and charm, illustrating the many scenes as the story unfolds. "Ruddigore", or "The Witch's Curse", provides a real fund of entertainment from first to last, and the many friends of the Society will, we hope, find real enjoyment in this the third production.

A. C.

# The Story of the Opera

## “ RUDDIGORE ”

OR “ THE WITCH’S CURSE ”

**I**N the days of long ago the wicked Sir Rupert Murgatroyd, Baronet of Ruddigore, spent all his leisure and wealth in the persecution of witches, and the more fiendish his cruelties the more he enjoyed this ruthless sport. There came a day when he was roasting alive an old witch on the village green who uttered a terrible curse, both on the Baronet and all his descendants.

Every succeeding Lord of Ruddigore was doomed to commit one crime a day, and if he attempted to avoid it or became satiated with guilt that very day he would die in awful agony. The prophecy came true. Each heir to the title inherited the curse and came in the end to a fearful death. Upon this strange and rather blood-thirsty plot Gilbert wrote his clever burlesque on what might be called the drama of the virtuous peasant girl in the clutches of the bold and bad baronet. Amongst the many characters he introduces the tragic figure not unlike Shakespere’s “ Ophelia ”, to wit, “ Mad Margaret ”.

The opening scene is laid in the pretty Cornish fishing village of Rederring. A bright and merry gathering of villagers, amongst whom are included a quaint institution in the form of professional bridesmaids who are bound to be on duty from ten to four every day in readiness for any wedding for which their services might be required. They are seldom called upon, but they are eagerly looking forward to the rumoured betrothal of the belle of the village, Rose Maybud, a very shy and precise little maid whose every action is, strange to say, regulated by the advice given in her extraordinary “ Book of Etiquette ”, which gives in amusing detail every problem that a bride-to-be may meet in her wedding outlook from day to day, a book written by no less an authority than the wife of a Lord Mayor. Rose has many suitors, but as yet her heart is free.

Early in the Opera old Hannah relates the story of the terrible curse on the house of Murgatroyd, but in her story she adds that she knows of a very attractive young man, Robin Oakapple, who “ *combines the manners of a Marquis with the morals of a Methodist* ”, and who would make a most suitable husband for her ward Rose.

As it happens, this same Robin Oakapple turns out to be the real owner of Ruddigore, but 10 years ago he so dreaded the frightful curse that he fled from his ancestral home, assumed the style and name of a simple farmer and is living unsuspected at the village of Rederring.

Only two people, Robin’s faithful servant, Old Adam, and his younger sailor foster-brother, Richard Dauntless who has just arrived from the sea, know his secret.

Robin is a terribly shy man and he cannot pluck up enough courage to make love to Rose Maybud. He accepts the offer of his foster-brother Richard to be his proxy, who succeeds only too well, Rose falling in love with him because of his gift as a singer and horn-pipe dancer. Richard Dauntless turns out to be a firm believer in the old adage in Robin’s song that if you wish to advance even in love-making “ *You must stir it and stomp it and blow your own trumpet* ”. He does this in first-class fashion.

Mad Margaret appears on the scene madder than ever for she has been jilted by the reigning baronet, Sir Despard Murgatroyd, and she sings a quaint song while hunting for her old lover. A brighter note is soon provided by the entry of the Bucks and Blades in all the glamour of their regimental colours of Wellington's time, the period to which the Opera is supposed to belong. There is great excitement in the village, particularly by the professional bridesmaids who scent a possible wedding or even more than one. Rose Maybud is the favourite belle, but plans are already in hand for her marriage to Robin. The advent of the bad and gloomy Baronet, Sir Despard Murgatroyd, whom they all shrink from and who reveals Robin's real identity. He has to give up Rose who turns to Richard Dauntless, while Robin faces a fateful existence as Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, the next victim of the terrible witch's curse.

The second Act moves to the haunted Picture Gallery of Ruddigore Castle, a most dramatic scene for it shows us Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd (Robin), who now wears the haggard aspect of a guilty *roué*, while Old Adam, his servant, now declares that "*he is the confidential adviser of the greatest villain unhung*". Such is the loyalty of the trusted old servant. They both discuss the likely best crime for the Baronet's first and following days. Left alone, the unhappy Baronet addresses the portraits of his ancestors, reminding them of the time when they themselves welcomed death at last as a means of freedom from a guilty existence.

The stage darkens for a moment, and then it is seen that the pictures in the famous gallery have become animated, representing the long line of the accursed race who have stepped from their frames. Sir Roderic Murgatroyd, the last of the baronets to die, sings an arresting spectral song of the ghostly revelries by night—

*“ When the night wind howls in the chimney cowles,  
And the bat in the moonlight flies ;  
Then is the spectres' holiday,  
Then is the ghosts' high noon.”*

The Opera draws to its close with much amusing business and plenty of laughter and fun. Robin, having found a week as holder of a title ample enough, marries Rose Maybud and determines to earn a modest livelihood on the farm, while his foster-brother, Richard Dauntless, soon picks out one of the prettiest professional bridesmaids, Zorah, for a sweetheart, and is quite satisfied.

As is usual in opera, “ all ends happily ”, Sir Despard and Mad Margaret leaving for Basingstoke with the good wishes of everyone for their happiness.

A. C.

*Gilbert and Sullivan's Opera*  
**“RUDDIGORE”**

OR THE WITCH'S CURSE!

(By permission of Bridget D'Oyly Carte)

**Dramatis Personae**

Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd ( <i>disguised as Robin Oakapple, a young farmer</i> )	-	-	-	-	-	CHARLES FRYER
Richard Dauntless ( <i>his Foster-Brother—a Man-o'-Wars-man</i> )	-					BERTRAM DOBSON
Sir Despard Murgatroyd ( <i>of Ruddigore—a wicked Baronet</i> )	-					HORACE TAYLOR
Sir Roderic Murgatroyd ( <i>the Twenty-first Baronet</i> )	-					ROBERT WILTON
Old Adam Goodheart ( <i>Robin's faithful servant</i> )	-					JOHN O'GRADY
Rose Maybud ( <i>a Village Maiden</i> )	-					PATRICIA KNIGHT
Mad Margaret	-					DOROTHY CROSBY
Dame Hannah ( <i>Rose's Aunt</i> )	-					RITA OWTON
Zorah	}					VERA PORTSMOUTH
Ruth	}					MURIEL FISHER
<i>(Professional Bridesmaids)</i>						
Chorus of Officers, Ancestors, Villagers and Professional Bridesmaids.						

ACT I - THE FISHING VILLAGE OF REDERRING, IN CORNWALL  
 ACT II - PICTURE GALLERY IN RUDDIGORE CASTLE

*Chorus of Professional Bridesmaids :*

QUEENIE BIRD	JOAN MARSTON	STELLA ROBERTS
BRENDA CARTER	MARGARET MORGAN	BARBARA SACREE
MARY HARRIS	HAZEL PONSFORD	MARJORIE WRIGHT
	CLARICE PORTSMOUTH	

*Chorus of Villagers :*

MARGARET ELTON	IRENE HAYNE	DOREEN PUNTER
WINIFRED GOSLING	IRIS O'GRADY	MARJORIE WILLIAMS

*Chorus of Officers and Ancestors :*

RONALD BAVERSTOCK	GERALD HARDING	WILLIAM JONES
ROLAND BELCHER	COLIN HARRIS	HARRY RICKMAN
PETER BRYANT	MERVYN HAYNE	CECIL SACREE
BRYAN CAVILL	AUSTIN HOOKER	STEPHEN SIMMONS
LIONEL CHEW	RAYMOND HUTCHINS	GEOFFREY SMITH
JACK DOUGLAS		DAVID WALDIN

*Producer and Stage Director :*  
 LAWSON MACKAY

*Musical Director :*  
 JOHN SEALEY,  
 B.MUS., F.R.C.O., A.R.C.M.

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

### OVERTURE

#### ACT I

1. CHORUS OF BRIDESMAIDS (Solo Soprano,  
*Zorah*) - - - - "Fair is Rose"
2. SONG (*Hannah, and Chorus*) - - "Sir Rupert Murgatroyd his leisure"
3. SONG (*Rose*) - - - - "If somebody there chanced to be"
4. DUET (*Rose and Robin*) - - "I know a youth"
- 5-6. CHORUS OF BRIDESMAIDS AND SONG  
(*Richard*) - - - - "From the briny sea"
- 6A. HORNPIPE
7. SONG (*Robin*) - - - - "My boy, you may take it from me"
8. DUET (*Rose and Richard*) - - "The battle's roar is over"
9. ENTRANCE OF BRIDESMAIDS - - "If well his suit has sped"
10. TRIO (*Rose, Richard and Robin*) - - "In sailing o'er life's ocean wide"
11. RECIT. AND ARIA (*Margaret*) - - "Cheerily carols the lark"
12. CHORUS - - - - "Welcome, gentry"
13. SONG AND CHORUS (*Sir Despard*) - - "Oh, why am I moody and sad?"
14. DUET (*Richard and Sir Despard*) - - "You understand? I think I do"
15. FINALE - - - - "Hail the bride"

#### ACT II

1. DUET (*Sir Ruthven and Adam*) - - "I once was as meek"
2. DUET AND CHORUS (*Rose and Richard*) - - "Happily coupled are we"
3. SONG (*Rose, with Chorus of Bridesmaids*) - - "In bygone days"
4. CHORUS OF ANCESTORS (*with Solos, Sir  
Ruthven and Sir Roderic*) - - "Painted emblems"
5. SONG (*Sir Roderic and Chorus*) - - "When the night wind howls"
6. CHORUS - - - - "He yields"
7. DUET (*Margaret and Despard*) - - "I once was a very"
8. TRIO (*Margaret, Sir Ruthven and Despard*) "My eyes are fully open"
9. MELODRAME
10. SONG (*Hannah, with Sir Roderic*) - - "There grew a little flower"
11. FINALE - - - - "Oh, happy the lily when kissed by the bee"

# *Winchester Amateur Operatic Society*

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<i>Make-up</i> - - - - -	JULES MARTEN	
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**£2,163**

*The above sum is the total amount given to various charities since the formation of the Society*

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## ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE

The Society is holding its Dinner and Dance at the Guildhall on Monday, May 17th, and a cordial welcome is extended to all friends who would like to be present.

Tickets for same (price 15s.) may be obtained from any member of the Committee or from the Chief Steward.

## PAST PRODUCTIONS

“ The Pirates of Penzance ”	-	1913	“ The Yeomen of the Guard ”	-	1932
“ The Mikado ”	-	1914	“ The Pirates of Penzance ”	-	1933
“ Iolanthe ”	-	1920	“ Ruddigore ”	-	1934
“ The Yeomen of the Guard ”	-	1921	“ Princess Ida ”	-	1935
“ The Gondoliers ”	-	1922	“ The Mikado ”	-	1936
“ Patience ”	-	1923	“ Iolanthe ”	-	1937
“ Ruddigore ”	-	1924	“ Tom Jones ”	-	1938
“ Trial by Jury ” and			“ Monsieur Beaucaire ”	-	1939
“ H.M.S. Pinafore ”	-	1925	“ Merrie England ”, Concert Version		1947
“ Princess Ida ”	-	1926	“ Iolanthe ”	-	1948
“ The Mikado ”	-	1927	“ Gondoliers ”	-	1949
“ Iolanthe ”	-	1928	“ Patience ”	-	1950
“ Merrie England ”	-	1929	“ Trial by Jury ” and		
“ The Gondoliers ”	-	1930	“ The Pirates of Penzance ”	-	1951
“ Utopia ”	-	1931	“ Princess Ida ”	-	1952
			“ The Mikado ”	-	1953

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## A Licensed Bar and Buffet

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will be available to patrons during the Intervals  
and Tea will be served at the Matinee