



Registered Charity No 1105153  
Affiliated to the National  
Operatic & Dramatic Association  
and Kent Drama Association

**The Cranbrook  
Operatic &  
Dramatic Society  
Newsletter**

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**New Members**

Welcome to : Grace Butler  
(junior) and Andy Cook

Welcome back Richard  
Vernon, who we last saw in  
Communicating Doors

**Did you know  
we are on  
Facebook?**



For all you computer minded  
people, CODS has its very  
own group page on Face-  
book with lots of information,  
news and photographs.

Visit [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

'Cranbrook Operatic and  
Dramatic Society CODS  
(official page)'

Or speak to Sarah Hutchings,  
James Hammond or Steph  
Beeken for more information.

# Codswallop!

**December 2010**

**Oh Yes, It Is!**

**Panto Time in Cranbrook !**

*See the back page for more details*

Showtimers' Charity Pantomime 2010



What the President would have said next...(had dinner not got in the way)

**My response to the Toast:  
"Ninety Glorious Years"**



I blame the superb display of our history in the upper room  
at Raffles....

If it hadn't been so good, the visitors to our 90th  
Anniversary Dinner would have been down in time for me  
to complete my catalogue of triumphs and stalwarts. I  
wanted to make sure I did finish it off here because it is  
important to acknowledge the work of today's heroes as  
well as those of the past - so here goes.

The "cornerstones" that I referred to are  
not only individuals and families but also  
the many organisations without which the  
life of the Society would be very much the  
poorer. One thinks of the goodwill we  
have received and still enjoy from Peter  
Jones, Phillips Man's Shop, Cranbrook  
and Angley Schools, Raffles, DCPS, our  
Patrons and Advertisers and our Auditors,  
St Dunstan's and the Parish Council.

I now come to those members without  
whose sterling work over many hours we  
could not present the shows which so  
many of us have enjoyed acting and  
singing through over all these years. It is  
that list of names that appear AFTER the  
one of the cast's but which usually  
exceeds it in numbers. Our last show  
listed 40 cast but 49 in the Production  
Team! My memories of great Producers  
and Directors include Olive Lea, Wyatt-  
Joyce, Dinah Chamberlin, Lesley  
Whitwood, Sue Wightman, Pat Smith,  
Angela Woodcock, Andy Chesters and of  
course Annie of that name. Conductors  
include Frank Eling - he died this year

aged 100 - Susan Hutton, Steve Pusey,  
Bryan Gipps and Sue who did such a  
great job with 'Kiss me Kate' travelling  
from her home in Banbury!  
Choreographers have trained legions of  
dancers over the years - Louise Dixon,  
Rachel Elliott, Steph Beeken and Vicki  
King, our Stage Managers like Peter  
Gray, Peggy Latter and Andrew White.  
Ruth Roberts has been a most reliable  
and sympathetic rehearsal pianist for so  
many shows. Clearing up after a big  
production makes one realise just how big  
a job it is to handle the Wardrobe and Rita  
and Marilyn excel in this most demanding  
task. Ian Wookey and Mo are the latest in  
a long line of Property people without  
whose reliability there would be many  
embarrassing moments for the performers  
reaching for non-existing mandolins - yes  
it did happen to me in 1959 .The  
wonderful sets designed and built by the  
Flishinghurst Gang (aka The Thursday  
Gang) of Bill , Bernard, Dennis, Maurice,  
Alan, John and Andy mean that the likes

**Continued on Page 3...**

## The 'White Experience' 2 - at the CODS 90th Anniversary Gala Dinner

To conclude the 90th Anniversary celebrations of the Society, it was decided to hold a Gala Dinner after our production of "Kiss Me Kate" had concluded. The date was set for Saturday 13th November and Raffles the location.



A week before, several members gathered at Charlotte's house to help prepare the many display boards of the society's productions, which would form an exhibition at the dinner. Those present were able to have a sneak-peek at a brochure that Annie had been preparing, featuring photographs of all of the society's productions to date.



Clearly Annie had put a lot of work had gone into the preparation of the brochure, which was remarkable bearing in mind that it had only been a week since "Kiss Me Kate" had ended. Well done Annie! After several cups of tea and a few After Eight mints, the display boards had been completed.

On the afternoon of 13th November, Charlotte's merry band of helpers gathered in the upper dining room of Raffles to prepare the exhibition, which was named "Faces In The Wings" and clearly appreciated by all attendees at the dinner. Well done Charlotte and all helpers!

Black tie and posh frocks was the dress code for the dinner and upon arrival at Raffles, it was great to see so many members of the society, past and present, dressed in their finery. After several glasses of wine, those present sat down to enjoy the meal from a menu specially prepared for our dinner.



Andy Chesters acted as 'MC' for the evening, which started with a formal toast to The Queen. Joan Eade and Barbara Gray described many highlights and anecdotes of the last 90 years, to which our President, George Hudson responded.



Sadly George's speech had to be edited at short notice as the

dinner had to be served, into which all members tucked with enthusiasm and laughter, with many good stories emanating from all the individual tables.

After dinner had been consumed, with more wine en route, Glyn delivered his views regarding the future of the society, to which Sarah Hutchings responded. Both speeches contained a common message, in that for the society to continue to flourish, changes need to be made and, at the same time, the core principles that have led to the success of the society need to be maintained.



A large celebratory cake, organised by Marian Cumberland, was unveiled and duly cut, with many members being able to enjoy a slice or two. As a finale to our dinner, we were treated to Tom Foy's magic tricks. Overall, it was a super event and particular credit should be extended to the staff of Raffles who acted as wonderful hosts to us all once again.

In concluding this article, I would like to thank all members past and present who have contributed to the success of the society over the last 90 years - long may it continue!

**Thanks to Andrew White for writing this article and selecting the photographs**

## What the President said next—continued

of Derek Moore, David Beeken, Gavin Hogben and all their colleagues are able to create the wonderful atmospheric sets which so often win awards from NODA. Front of House has long been well-organised by Louise Dixon and Marian Cumberland and we must thank them for organising this very important element of our shows with those regular and reliable helpers. Not to forget the Kents and their work in keeping the more computer literate of us informed via the excellent website.

The final list that needs recording is the variety of venues which the society has enjoyed over the years. Whilst the Vestry Hall saw CODS' birth in 1920 and our much appreciated Queen's Hall is our present comfort zone, we have performed outdoors at Baker's Cross Garden and Angley School, at the Regal Cinema, in Southborough, Hastings and Maidstone and memorably in Lelystadt, Holland after which we repeated Angela and Sue's

"There'll Always Be An England" in several other villages around Cranbrook.

We can be proud of the very creditable sums raised for various charities by CODS over the years and these have been greatly added to by our sister act "The Showtimers" which does a wonderful job in augmenting the impressive entertainment we in the society have afforded Cranbrook and district over these ninety years. In my 54 of those I recollect the very enjoyable play-readings which we used to hold during close-seasons! We don't seem to have any of those these days with all the months of rehearsal and preparation put in by so many members but they are worth considering.

At the party I really enjoyed Sarah's impromptu response to "The next ninety years" as, like her, I'm really enthusiastic for that time and with the present liking for live entertainment in what a certain person has called

"that all-singing all-dancing Cranbrook" (?) we should be able to look forward to many more super shows to come. Our next two are quite adventurous and I know that they will be anticipated with much eagerness by our audiences - especially if ALL of you can make a special effort to get the large audiences that they will deserve.

We should also not forget all the other members of the executive committee, who continue the work of all those stalwarts today and in the future.

Finally, let us remember the crucial role that dear old Gilbert and Sullivan played in our formative years and hope that it will not be too long before we have the audiences tapping feet and mouthing words which our wonderful casts can inspire. Is there a Mikado in the house? There was in 1920.

*I also toast:  
The next ninety years.*

*George*

## The 3 Cs from the Chair: Confidence, Change and Commitment

So CODS 90th Anniversary Year draws to a close. And what a fantastic year it has been. Two successful productions and many enjoyable celebratory events, culminating in an excellent Gala Dinner. Thanks to everyone involved in making this year possible.

As we look back on a successful year (and for that matter 9 decades), we must not forget to look forward as well. As I said during the dinner, I am confident that the society is healthy, as we continue to attract new members who share our love for the theatre. We have many talented and enthusiastic people who are keen to get on stage and perform.

But as both George and Andrew have mentioned in their articles, society would not function without a number of individuals who play a less obvious role in the society. I would like to highlight some of these

roles that need our urgent attention.

Firstly, Michelle has served us heroically over the last few years as Honorary Secretary. She has decided she needs to relinquish this role at the AGM in March. This essential role needs to be filled, as without it the society is unable to operate, not just practically, but legally as well, so **we need someone** to come forward **urgently**.

Secondly, the Flishinghurst Gang are still doing us proud, creating the wonderful sets that we take for granted. But they would probably not disagree with me that they are all no longer spring chickens, so we need to recruit people who can learn what the gang knows and help them out. No Gang = No Set!

We also need to find more people who are willing and able to direct, particularly musicals. Again, without directors, you won't have any shows.

And while we sort ourselves out, we must not forget that the world is changing around us. Tough economic climates, changing tastes and demographics mean that our audiences are shrinking dramatically. Apart from the financial strain that this creates, it is not rewarding playing to empty houses. So we need to find our new audience or be more creative about what we do to attract people to come and see us. Yes, you've guessed: No Audience = No Show.

So, to maintain the confidence we have in our society, we need to embrace the change and that relies on your commitment. Please think whether next year you can be a more active part of all our future.

And with that, it only remains for me to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and All the Best for 2011.

*Glyn*

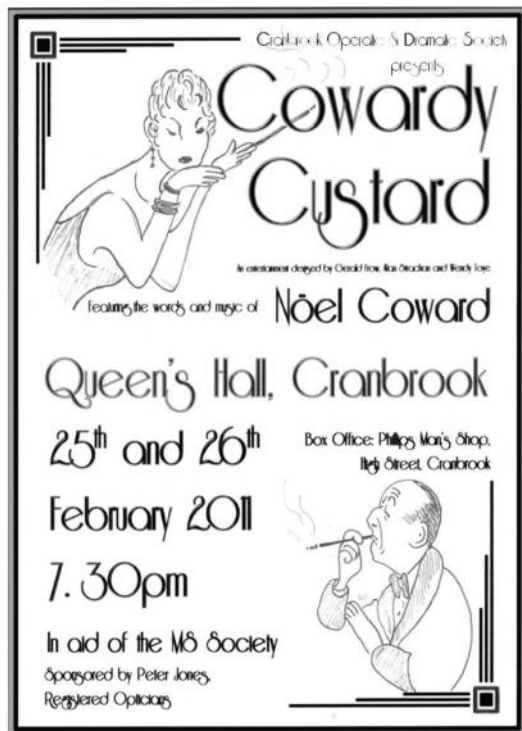
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## Advance notice: AGM

Please put **15th March** in your diaries for the AGM. It will be in Cranbrook School Lecture Theatre, with snacks afterwards.

7:30 for an 8pm start.

Hope to see many of you there



Cranbrook Operatic & Dramatic Society  
presents  
**Cowardy Custard**  
An excellent play by Cyril Frankenstein and Frank Lee  
featuring the words and music of **Noël Coward**  
Queen's Hall, Cranbrook  
25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>  
February 2011  
7.30pm  
Box Office: Philips Man's Shop,  
High Street, Cranbrook  
In aid of the MS Society  
Sponsored by Peter Jones,  
Registered Optician

Any questions about what you have read?  
Please contact:  
Michelle: 01580 752802, michellesandys@yahoo.co.uk  
or  
Glyn: 01580 893863, ghroberts@tiscali.co.uk



**Showtimers' Charity Pantomime 2010**  
**Jack and the Beanstalk**  
by David Williams  
www.limeightscripts.co.uk  
**Queen's Hall Theatre,  
Cranbrook**  
27<sup>th</sup> December 5.30pm  
28<sup>th</sup> December 2.30pm  
29<sup>th</sup> December 5.30pm  
30<sup>th</sup> December 7.30pm  
31<sup>st</sup> December 2.30pm  
**Box Office:**  
**Lambert & Foster,**  
**High Street, Cranbrook**  
Evenings 'phone 01580 713706  
**In aid of Hospice in the Weald**

## CODS Charity Walk - Sunday 13th March 2011

Back in March 2009, we organised a Charity Walk to boost the sum raised for the February Charity Concert. In so doing, we had a lot of fun, improved our health for a few hours, enjoyed an excellent pub lunch and raised £600 for charity !

Once again we will be organising a similar Charity Walk to help swell the funds raised from the forthcoming Cowardy Custard Spring Concert; the date has been set for Sunday 13th March and we are looking at an 8 to 9 mile circular walk from Cranbrook to Benenden and back, with a pub lunch in Benenden. This event and/or the pub lunch is open to all members, friends, families and dogs, and we are looking to have yet another good time as well as beat the commendable sum we raised last time.

Further details will follow in the next edition of Codswallop but if anyone is interested and/or requires further information, please contact either Marian Cumberland ( 01580 715580 ) or Andrew White ( 01424 718328 ). We look forward to seeing you on 13th March !