

IPSWICH ARTS ASSOCIATION with CHRIS GREEN

“Mr Grimsdale Mr Grimsdale!”. Anyone of my vintage will remember the cries for help coming from the mouth of Norman Wisdom. Mr Grimsdale (played by Edward Chapman) was his boss and together they would appear in a succession of Rank films. Now I always thought that Mr Grimsdale derived his name from a Victorian Pile in Southwest Hertfordshire. Grim’s Dyke was built in the 1870s and later occupied by W.S. Gilbert who also met his death there whilst attempting to save a girl from drowning in the lake. The house, now an hotel has been used by many film companies for films like The Avengers, and I and my wife were last there for a wedding reception for one of our nephews some years ago.

The link. Well, the Rank Studios were not far away, and Grimsdale and Grims Dike are very



Grims Dyke - home of W.S.Gilbert. Credit: Great Western Hotels.

similar. Oh well, maybe not. Either way, the history is a fascinating one and W.S. Gilbert’s name together with his partner, Sir Arthur Sullivan is to the fore this week as the Ipswich Gilbert and Sullivan Society perform *Iolanthe* at the Seckford Theatre in Woodbridge. The production opens on 30 October and runs until 2 November featuring local performers in the cast, chorus and small orchestra. It is a timely choice given the debate currently taking place about the future shape of the House of Lords, and given the fact that *Iolanthe* was premiered in 1882, that debate seems to be endless. James Hayward directs the production, with Sue Wightman in the pit directing the music.



Some fairies from Ipswich G&S rehearsing Iolanthe. Credit: IG&S.

The Ipswich Chamber Music Society commence their new season of five concerts on Saturday 26 October at 7.30pm in their usual venue, the Great School at Ipswich School when the Trio Boheme will be playing music by Reicha, Schubert and Shostakovitch. The series has an eclectic mix of works making it very appealing, but no Beethoven! Usually a Beethoven Quartet is included, but maybe I have been influenced by currently reading Harvey Sachs fascinating books about the Year 1824 when Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was premiered, and the role that Beethoven quartets were to play. So, to remember Beethoven's absence in the series I have been immersed in Volume 1 of the complete string quartets played by the Doric String Quartet and recorded at Potton Hall, Dunwich (Chandos CHAN 20298). The five quartets presented in this double-CD album date from the turn of the nineteenth century and reveal how the composer was developing his skill in this genre, one that had been so exploited by Haydn. It was also the time when Beethoven's deafness began to manifest itself.

The Suffolk Poetry Society holds annually its Crabbe poetry competition. Named after George Crabbe, poet, surgeon and clergyman a contemporary of Beethoven, and born in Aldeburgh. This is an annual competition which will open again in the New Year. The Society has announced the 2024 winner as Esther Morgan, who was recently presented with the cup by Luke Wright. Members of the public can buy the anthology with all the comments on each



Esther Morgan, winner of the 2024 Crabbe Award. Credit: Sue Wallace-Shaddad.

I understand from my colleague Dr Graham Platts, organiser of the Sunday afternoon concerts at the Church of St Andrews, Rushmere that the audiences for the series this month have been good, and so I hope they continued for the visit next Sunday of Mark Blatchly who will give an organ recital. Mark brings his extensive musical experience to Rushmere, starting as a chorister at Guildford Cathedral and later holding a variety of organ posts at St Paul's, Christ Church Oxford, St Marylebone, Gloucester Cathedral and St Edmundsbury. He is now very active locally with various musical groups. Catch him on YouTube!

If you have a story to share with other organisations, please email IAA chairperson, Professor Chris Green at: cjc.green@talktalk.net
