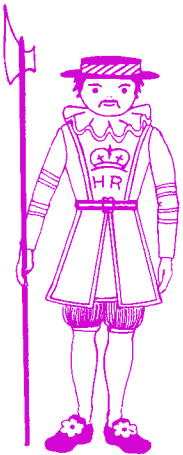
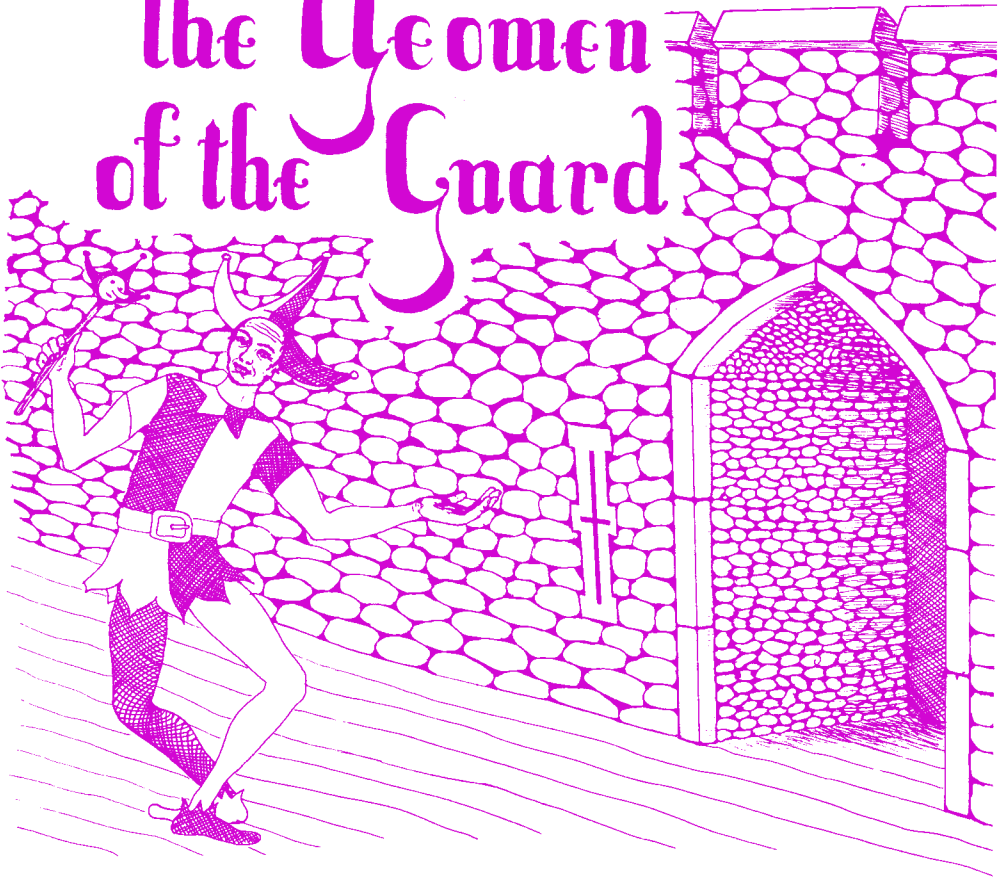


the Yeomen of the Guard



by
W. S. GILBERT
and
ARTHUR SULLIVAN





IMPERIAL COLLEGE OPERATIC SOCIETY

Grand
Anniversary Celebration

**Public Hall,
Budleigh Salterton
Saturday, 6th August, 1977 at 7-30 p.m.**

As we all know 1977 is an important year for the Nation, being the Silver Jubilee year of Her Majesty, The Queen. It also marks the 21st 'birthday' of Imperial College Operatic Society, and further coincides with its tenth visit to Budleigh Salterton. To commemorate these occasions the Society will stage a Special Anniversary Performance on Saturday 6th August. The evening's programme is being kept a closely guarded secret but we can reveal that several familiar faces will be returning to join our ranks in performing some memorable excerpts from past years' shows together with other lesser known items.

If you would like to join us in our celebrations you can obtain tickets at the door as you leave, or from the Argosy Gift Shop in Station Road. Tickets cost £1 each and proceeds will be donated to the Queen's Silver Jubilee Appeal Fund for the Devon Area.



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presents

The Yeomen of the Guard

or

The Merryman and His Maid

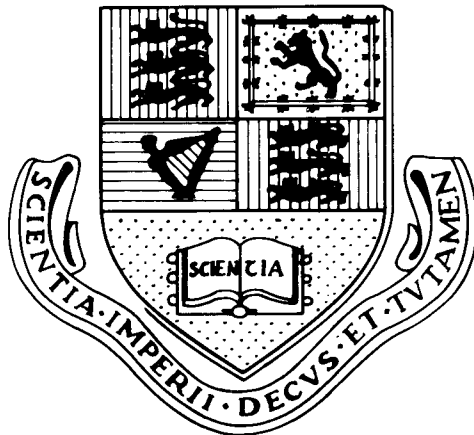
by W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan

Produced by WILF JUDD

Musical director MICHAEL WITHERS

in the

PUBLIC HALL, BUDLEIGH SALTERTON



OPSOC COMES OF AGE

Back in 1956 some members of Imperial College Musical Society staged what records describe as a "Victorian Melodrama" in the Concert Hall of the Imperial College Union building in South Kensington. The success of this venture was sufficient to encourage these 'pioneers' to give a performance of "Trial by Jury" the following year, and of "The Mikado" in 1958. Since those early days the Opera Group of the Musical Society has become 'fully fledged' as Imperial College Operatic Society, lovingly known as 'Opsoc' to its members and associates.

The company is now about 80 strong and includes in its numbers the full range of students of science and engineering that one would expect of a College of Science and Technology, plus musicians, linguists and secretaries from neighbouring university colleges, and a variety of young professional people. Although the average course lasts only three years many of our members become so addicted to the social and musical life of the Society that they continue their association beyond their student days. A growing number have managed to achieve over 100 performances.

This year marks not only the 21st anniversary of our founding but also our tenth visit to Budleigh Salterton. By way of a double celebration we have decided to provide an extra evening's entertainment on the present tour, details of which are printed earlier in this programme.

In the 1960's several productions were taken to theatres in Folkestone, Bristol, Salisbury, Pinhoe before, in 1968 "Iolanthe" achieved such a good reception from the Saltertonians that South Devon has been our summer home ever since. Recently a crisis over accommodation arose, threatening the viability of the 1977 tour. However, our many friends in the area rallied round, offering spare rooms or tents in their gardens, until the problem was solved by a kind offer from the Managers of St. Peter's School. Such friendliness and consideration, as has endeared South Devon to all members of our company for the last ten years, is tremendously encouraging to those of us responsible for organising a group of amateurs performing on a shoe-string budget many miles from their home base.

A pilot audience survey carried out last year and processed on the College computers showed that about 25% of those who answered had attended 5 or more of our productions, while a few stalwarts professed to have seen every one. If you think that you might well fall into the latter category you will have seen "Iolanthe" (1968), "The Mikado" (1969), "The Pirates of Penzance" (1970 and 1976), "The Gondoliers" (1971), "The Sorcerer" (1972), "Ruddigore" (1973), "H.M.S. Pinafore" and "Trial by Jury" (1974), "Patience" (1975), and also "The Zoo" (1976). We were pleased to learn that we have regular visitors from all over Devon, a sizeable number from Somerset and Dorset, and a group of devotees from such places as London, The Home Counties, Leicestershire, Birmingham and even Cologne in Germany, who arrange their holidays to coincide with our performances. We are proud to announce that last year, for the first time ever, we achieved our target of 100% ticket sales. In order to perpetuate this success we would be interested to know of any ideas for improving our publicity and also any suggestions for future shows. In past years we have generally 'played safe' by choosing from the more popular G & S operettas for our tour productions. Meanwhile, for our February offerings in London, we have 'spread our wings' somewhat to successfully stage works such as "Utopia Ltd.", "Princess Ida", "Orpheus in the Underworld" (Offenbach), "Dido and Aeneas" (Purcell) and "Venus and Adonis" (John Blow). While we enjoy a chance to extend our repertoire we are conscious of factors such as cost, difficulty, the amount of chorus work, and what the audience would like to see.

Together with your programme you will find a "Subscribing Members" form and an "Audience Survey" form. If in filling in either, or both, you would like to state your preferences for future year's shows please do so. In general we like to receive any feedback from our audiences, so do not hesitate to write to us (Operatic Society, Imperial College Union, Prince Consort Rd., London S.W.7.) or call in at St. Peter's School on Moor Lane during our stay. Perhaps now that 'Opsoc' has 'come of age' next year will find us breaking new ground with a production not seen before in Salterton. Either way we will be looking forward to another successful decade, as I hope you will too.

Roger Nicholls (Tour Chairman 1977).

THE YEOMAN OF THE GUARD

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

| | |
|---|------------------|
| <i>Sir Richard Cholmondeley</i> <i>(Lieutenant of the Tower)</i> | David Pollard |
| <i>Colonel Fairfax (under sentence of death)</i> | Brian Parsons |
| <i>Sergeant Meryll (of the Yeomen of the Guard)</i> | Richard Stockton |
| <i>Leonard Meryll (his Son)</i> | Stephen Chaytow |
| <i>Jack Point (a Strolling Jester)</i> | Roger Nicholls |
| <i>Wilfred Shadbolt (Head Jailor and</i> <i>Assistant Tormentor)</i> | Tim Johnson |
| <i>First Yeoman</i> | Steve Bodle |
| <i>Second Yeoman</i> | John Barratt |
| <i>First Citizen</i> | Andy Bell |
| <i>Second Citizen</i> | Tony Moorby |
| <i>Elsie Maynard (a Strolling Singer)</i> | Sally Heslop |
| <i>Phoebe Meryll (Sergeant Meryll's Daughter)</i> | Deborah Kemp |
| <i>Dame Carruthers (Housekeeper to the Tower)</i> | Edna Burrow |
| <i>Kate (her Niece)</i> | Jane Capper |

Chorus of Yeomen of the Guard

| | |
|--------------|----------------|
| Tim Frain | Ellis C. Pike |
| Jeff Jenkins | Mike Tripp |
| | Richard Wilson |

Chorus of Citizens, Gentlemen, etc.

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Ann Alderson | Angela Fairhead | Lucille McAllister | Anne Otworowski |
| Jo Bickford Smith | Catherine Fetherston | Keith McClurey | Barbara Tansey |
| Elizabeth Clark | Andy Hoskins | Ian Morrison | Jane Turner |
| Hilary Coates | Bethan Howells | Cecilia Nevill | Christine Withers |
| Alan Crewe | Paul Leonard | Pat Nuttall | Cecily Woods |



SCENE

Act One — Tower Green by Day

Act Two — Tower Green by Night

Date — 16th Century.



There will be an interval of fifteen minutes between the acts. Refreshments will be on sale

Musical Director:

Michael Withers graduated from Imperial College two years ago and since then has filled every spare minute with musical ventures ranging from the mediaeval to the modern. His first contact with I.C.O.S. was in 1973, when he played the violin in the orchestra for 'Ruddigore'. However, he did not become the Society's Musical Director until 1976 when he took charge of 'Utopia Limited' at College. He conducted 'The Zoo' and 'Pirates of Penzance' in Budleigh Salterton last year.



Michael Withers

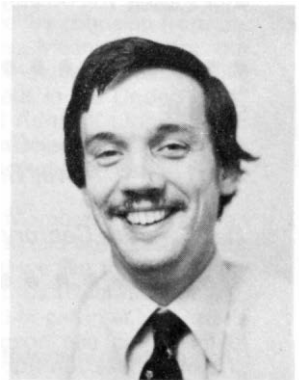
**Producer:**

Wilf Judd, a graduate in English, spends his winters touring England and Wales as Assistant Producer with the London Opera Centre's 'Opera for All' company. He has worked with several other companies including the York Festival Opera and the Royal Ballet. Having recently been married and moved to a new house he has little spare time, but enjoys gardening and music making (playing the clarinet, bassoon and piano) whenever possible. This is his first production with Imperial College Operatic Society.

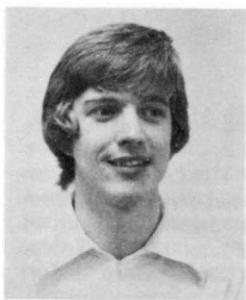
Wilf Judd

Stage Manager:

Born in Manchester, Andy Potter moved to London in 1973 to study Physics at Imperial College. Although he became more involved with the Dramatic and Operatic Societies than with 'science', he graduated last year and now works for a theatre lighting company in London. He became I.C.O.S. stage manager in 1975, responsible for all back-stage activities including, more recently, set designing. Prior to the run of a show he tends to forsake sleep and puts in a great deal of unseen effort instead, building the scenery, props, etc. with the aid of the untiring stage-crew. This is his fourth visit to Salterton.



Andy Potter



Brian Parsons



Sally Heslop



Roger Nicholls



Tim Johnson



Deborah Kemp



Dick Stockton



David Pollard



Edna Burrow



Stephen Chaytow



Steve Bodle



Jane Capper



John Barratt

THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD

by Michael Walters.

"The Yeomen of the Guard" was first produced at the Savoy Theatre, London on 3rd October 1888. The idea for the plot of "Yeomen" is said to have come to Gilbert when he saw an advertising poster for the Tower of London on the platform of Uxbridge station, and the opera had such titles as "The Beefeater", "The Tower Warder" and "The Tower of London", in its early stages of draft before Gilbert settled on the title that we know.

A number of cuts have been made in the opera since Gilbert first conceived it. Several songs which appear only in very early manuscript draft were abandoned, probably before Gilbert had even written the dialogue to the opera. Of the songs which Sullivan set, the first casualty was one for Shadbolt which was cut well before public performance. A second song, for Sergeant Meryll, was performed on the opening night only, and thereafter omitted. There also exists an earlier, very florid and quite unsuitable setting of "Is life a boon?", famous by repute for many years as the one occasion in the entire collaboration where Gilbert intervened on the musical side and asked for a song to be reset.

Both Gilbert and Sullivan considered Yeomen to be their greatest joint work, and Sullivan is said to have been bitterly hurt when somebody disagreed with him. It was certainly very successful. The years which have rolled over its head, however, have made its obvious Victorian sentimentality a little less palatable; the timid, clinging, virginal Elsie Maynard must seem far less the symbol of model womanhood than she did when Gilbert created her. Gilbert and Sullivan did not always reach their individual peaks of perfection at the same time; "Yeomen", which may not be Gilbert's best libretto, is one of Sullivan's finest scores. The main reason for this seems to be that it was Gilbert's first departure from topsy-turveydom, and he was feeling his way with uncertainty over the unknown ground of a serious story with real people — thus we have the somewhat Gilbertian situation that the alleged "serious" plot is in effect the most badly organised and confused of all. Gilbert's avowed intentions were always to create a plot which, however absurd, was coherent within itself. In "Yeomen" alone, he failed to achieve this. No explanation is offered, for example, as to how Sergeant Meryll and Phoebe proposed to get poor Leonard back out of exile once Colonel Fairfax's life had been saved. If no reprieve had ever arrived, Fairfax would have had to impersonate Leonard for the rest of his life!

However, whatever the shortcomings of the plot, Gilbert was to endow "Yeomen" with one of his most lovable soubrettes, Phoebe, and with one of his finest and most moving creations, Jack Point the heartbroken jester, probably the most genuinely human character in the whole of Gilbert; and why not? — for Gilbert wrote more of himself into this part than into any other. Perhaps that is why he was so touchy of criticism of this piece.

Gilbert may have written a muddled libretto but Sullivan set it to music which must rank among the best he ever wrote, and converted it into a fine and stageworthy opera. The main inexplicable virtue of "Yeomen" is that its dramatic shortcomings are not obvious in a stage production, such is the power of Sullivan's music (in this instance) to triumph over Gilbert's libretto. Almost all the parts, even the smallest, have been endowed with music which is worthwhile to listen to and challenging to sing.

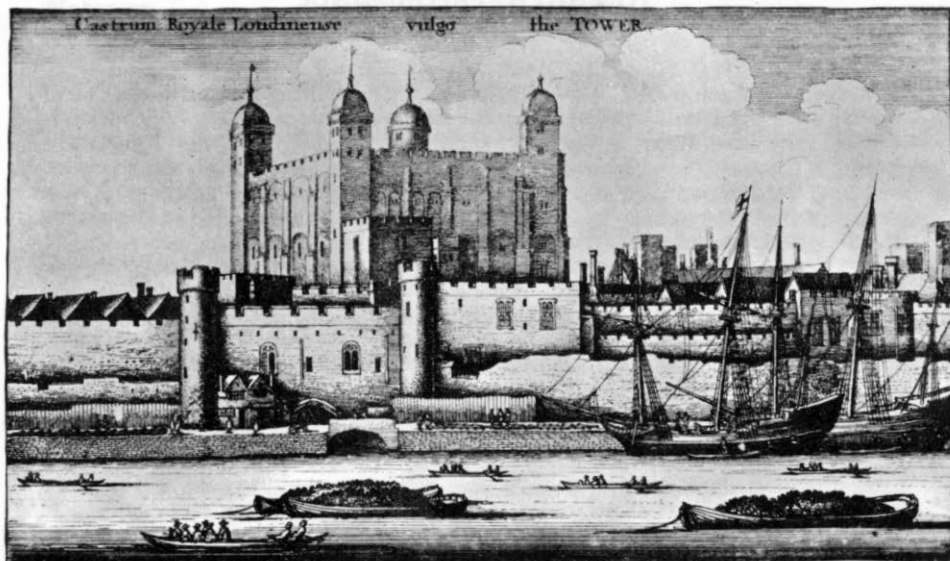
TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE

"The Yeomen of the Guard" is unquestionably the most moving result of the Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration. The main characters of the piece are only distantly related to the stock types, in for example, "Pinafore" of "The Mikado". Sullivan's score has a cohesion and intensity of mood, without any of his usual slack or fill-in numbers; the plot, while embellished with the superbly frivolous satire which has to carry other Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, is far more involved in the real complexity of human feelings and relationships.

Gilbert's main asset as a compiler of plots is his extraordinary ability to extricate himself from the impossible situations his fairy-tale imagination sets up. Other than in "The Yeomen" all his plots depend upon a single stroke of improbable, but undeniable, logic in the last scene. But in tonight's work, Gilbert, the notorious tier-up of loose ends, chooses to centre attention on a single thread — the most powerful of his emotional creations — the Jack/Elsie/Fairfax confrontation. In tonight's presentation we have chosen to accentuate, in design and production, the artificial aspects of Gilbert's creation, in order to explore the contrast between the frivolity of the piece and the crescendo of human emotion within this conventional superstructure. Jack Point epitomises this dichotomy between the wit and the wisdom of W.S. Gilbert, the court jester and the feeling man. However, having said all this, "The Yeomen of the Guard" is hardly a profound work of art, but it touches upon a profundity of raw feeling not to be found elsewhere in the works of Gilbert and Sullivan.

It must have seemed a great pity to many audiences of "Yeomen" over the years that characters such as Shadbolt and Sergeant Meryll contribute no solo songs to the opera. Indeed it appears that poor Wilfred Shadbolt never really has a chance to establish his personality before being cast into the tangled web of the action, and Meryll, despite his central role in this drama, is never given a moment of reflection. It was, therefore, of great interest when we discovered just how much the now accepted version of "Yeomen" differs from its original conception. Some scenes envisaged by Gilbert got no further than rough draft versions, whilst two songs were completed and set by Sullivan, but were removed from the production at a later date. These solos, one each for Meryll and Shadbolt, will be performed this evening, and we hope to demonstrate that their removal was unconnected with their musical or dramatic qualities. These two songs complete the most concise, varied and dramatic of Sullivans' scores.

*Wilf Judd
Michael Withers*



The Tower in Stuart times, from an etching by Hollar.

ORCHESTRA

Violins

Linda Bill
Chris Holmquist
Jenny Hoskinson
Madeleine Mitchell
Alison Rutty
Mitchell Shaw
Peter Whitfield

Cellos

Elizabeth Andrews
Andrew Quick

Percussion

Andrew Fairhead
Brian Steel
Nick Woodfine

Flutes

Stina Wilson

Oboe

Andrew Round

Clarinets

Joy Farrell

Bassoons

Amanda Jones
Christine Barson

Horns

Barry Dwyer
Fred Shaub

Trumpets

Susan Coates
David O'Connor

Trombones

Hilary East
Stephen Verrall

Rehearsal Accompanists:

Andrew Fairhead
Pat Nuttall
Annette Curtis

FOR THE COMPANY

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Stage Manager and Set Designer</i> | Andy Potter |
| <i>Assistant Stage Manager</i> | Paul Jarvis |
| <i>Lighting Designer</i> | Neil Pielou |
| <i>Properties Manager</i> | Derek Paul |
| <i>Stage Assistants</i> | Jane Andrews |
| | Richard Austin |
| | Chris Byard |
| | Ian Lacey |
| <i>Front of House</i> | Pete Totterdell |
| | John Nevard |
| | Jonathan Salzedo |
| <i>Wardrobe Mistress</i> | Ann Alderson |

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The Society wishes to acknowledge and thank all those who have given any assistance including

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Membership will run from September 1977 - 1978. For further details write to the Members secretary, I.C.O.S., 22, Crescent Court, The Crescent, SURBITON, Surrey.

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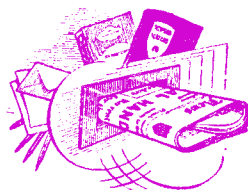
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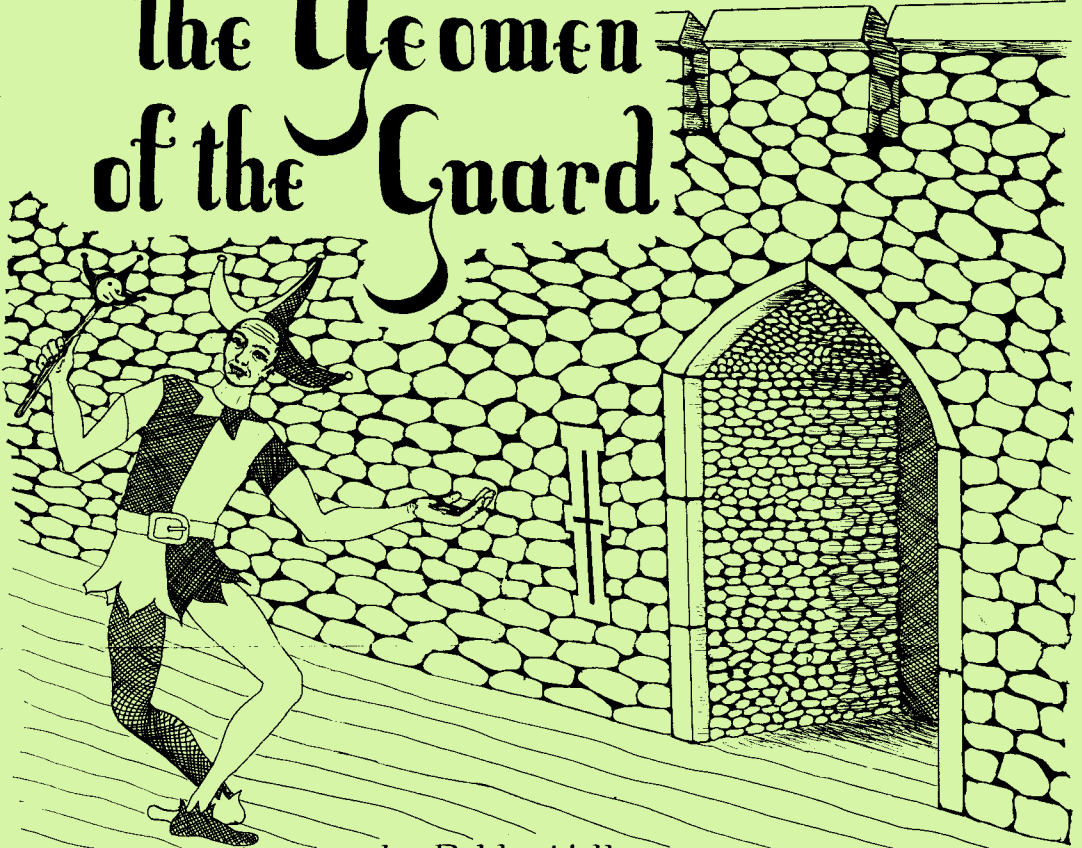


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presents

the Yeomen of the Guard



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