

The Galpin Society

For the Study of Musical Instruments



Newsletter 37
October 2013



Lunchtime picnic at the Oxford 2013 conference

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THE GALPIN SOCIETY

Registered Charity no. 306012

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Opinions expressed by authors in the Newsletter are not specifically endorsed by The Galpin Society.

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members into The Galpin Society:

Miss Tereza Berdychova, CZECH REPUBLIC
Mr Jean-David Blanc-Rambø, SWITZERLAND
Mr Stephen Cadney, MANCHESTER
Ms Isabelle Carré, OXFORD
Mr Edward Dewhirst, EDINBURGH
Ms Sally Horovitz, LONDON
Ms Tomoko Ishidate, JAPAN
Mr Charles Pardoe, RADWINTER
Mr Adrian v. Steiger, SWITZERLAND
Miss Olga Zajackowski, NOTTINGHAM

[Cover: Lunchtime picnic at the Oxford 2013 conference. *Photo: Graham Wells*]

EDITORIAL

I must apologize to anyone expecting a report in this newsletter on this year's Oxford conference hosted by the Bate Collection. I can say that it was an outstanding success and thank all those involved in organizing it, singling out Andy Lamb, Lance Whitehead and Michael Fleming for particular mention and not forgetting all the many people who presented papers. Especial mention must be made of Owen Woods, the recipient of the Society's inaugural Début Paper Prize. Readers will have to content themselves with the picture gallery on pages 9 and 10 to get a flavour of the event. I should also like to mention that at the Society's AGM, which took place during the conference, our President had the pleasure of presenting this year's Anthony Baines Memorial Prize to Eszter Fontana.



Jeremy Montagu presenting the Anthony Baines Memorial Prize to Eszter Fontana

[Photo: Diana Wells]

There are a number of events which the Society is planning both for next year and indeed the one after. Although they are all in the early stages of planning members may wish to take them into account. Firstly there is the planned trip to Berlin in April 2014. The intention is for this to follow on from the symposium on valved brasswind instrument organized by the Berlin Musikinstrumenten-Museum and scheduled for Saturday 26 April. Galpin Society members are warmly welcomed to offer papers for this symposium. The following days will include visits not only to the aforementioned museum but also the Ethnologisches Museum in Dahlem and several private collections in Berlin. We are also investigating the possibility of making an additional visit to Musical Instrument Museum in Leipzig. It would be useful if members who feel they might be interest in making this trip but without commitment at this stage could let me know so I can keep them advised as plans develop. More detailed information will appear in the February newsletter.

Although not an event organized by this Society, I would like to remind members of the conference 'Roots of Revival' being organized by the Horniman Museum and Gardens 12-14 March 2014. This conference will be a forum for presenting research on the lives and work of collectors, enthusiasts, craftsmen and musicians who had an impact on the course of the 20th century early music revival. See the Horniman website www.horniman.ac.uk/ for further details. Any queries can be referred to rootsofrevival@horniman.ac.uk

The Royal Musical Association has contacted the Society in the hope that we could forge greater links between our two organizations. Initially the suggestion is that we might take part in a panel discussion at the RMA's conference in Leeds in September 2014. More information on this should be available for the February newsletter.

Finally plans are already afoot for a Galpin Society conference in 2015, this time in collaboration with the Institute of Acoustics Musical Acoustics Group. We already have a date for this event which is 21-23 September 2015, and a venue which is the Faculty of Music at the University of Cambridge. If you have already purchased your 2014 diary now is the time to make a note in the page set aside for happenings in the following year.

Graham Wells
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Another good reason to visit Oxford: a Système-Romero Clarinet



This term Oxford's Bate Collection welcomes the extraordinary fruit of the collaboration between Antonio Romero (1815-86) and Paul Bié, owner of the Lefevre instrument making firm in Paris. Romero was the musician in the collaboration, and a clarinet player from an early age, starting on a pre-Muller clarinet, progressing to the 13-key Muller instrument, and then adopting the Klosé/Bufet 'Boehm' clarinet in the 1840s. His concern was to improve the tuning and solve the technical problems of playing through the throat register from the chalumeau register (fundamentals) to the clarinet register (over-blown twelfths) of the instrument. Paul Bié was the craftsman-mechanic, having been Lefevre's foreman before purchasing the business, who made it reality, but only after Romero had been rejected by Buffet. Bié's contribution was significant, as the patent of 1867 was granted jointly to him and Romero.

The basic instrument which Romero set about improving was what today we know as the 'Boehm system' clarinet, and which was itself the fruit of a collaboration between musician Hyacinth Klosé and designer-maker Auguste Buffet *jeune*, patented in 1844. Early examples of these clarinets were not considered to be particularly well tuned, and the Albert business in Brussels was able to compete with them very effectively with a development of the Muller clarinet often known today as the 'simple system' or the 'Albert system' which, while no longer in common use in Europe, is still made in India. Maybe Buffet did not take kindly to the suggestion that his clarinet might benefit from 'improvement'; maybe he could see no simple or reliable way of achieving Romero's objectives. Buffet's legacy to wind players includes the needle-spring, the rod/tube clutch mechanism for keywork and the modern 'Boehm' clarinet.

Romero set out to improve both the tuning and the ergonomics and acoustics of crossing the break from the chalumeau to the clarinet register. There is a serious acoustic issue besetting the clarinet which does not affect the other woodwind: it over-blows at the twelfth rather than at the octave. For an instrument derived from the classic woodwind configuration with six finger-holes this presents a problem, because there is a gap in the scale between the open note in the fundamental register and the twelfth of the fundamental of the tube with all holes closed.

Filling this gap can be approached in two ways, by adding extra holes at the top of the instrument to extend the fundamental register upwards, and by lengthening the tube and adding extra holes at the bottom to make lower fundamentals available to be over-blown to the twelfth. Clarinet designs generally do both, and Romero's design is no exception, it retains the lower extension of the Klosé/Bufet clarinet, though modifying the ergonomics of the keys controlling it, but revises the approach to the upward extension in a more radical way, clearly visible in the illustration, where a number of tone-holes are aligned along the axis of the instrument.

He did this by providing a hole per note upwards from the thumbhole, for G, G#, A and B♭, and two more trill keys above that, for B and C. The ergonomics were simple too, the ring around the thumbhole familiar to all players of the Boehm system clarinet keeps all of these holes closed, and releasing it allows all but the two trill holes potentially to open. These are released by a key for L1, roughly where the a♭ key is on the Boehm clarinet. The means for controlling which ones open (apart from the f# hole immediately above L1) is logically very simple, and controlled by the right hand.

An ascending scale is played as normal up to the point at which the three holes for the left hand fingers are open, but the thumbhole is still closed. This is the top of the scale of classical 6-holed woodwind, and the player is about to enter the territory where extraordinary means have to be found to fill in the gap before the over-blown twelfth of the classical six fingers closed note can be used.

Before the thumbhole can be opened, all that is necessary is to put down the first three right hand fingers, conceptually as if starting the next harmonic series on a classical instrument which would over-blow at the octave, then the thumb-ring may be released for the next semitone, G, and the magic starts. The throat tone holes will remain closed, because the right hand fingers are down. Open R3, R2 and R1 and the semitones appear in succession. Close the thumbhole, open the speaker key, and the player is back in the familiar territory of the clarinet register of over-blown twelfths.

So why did it not catch on? Sadly, while the concept is very simple, the mechanics necessary to make it work are anything but. There are no fewer than 15 adjusting screws, and they all have to be exactly right so that everything works as expected and there are neither notes that don't speak, nor embarrassing squeaks. Lefevre had the model on their catalogue from its patenting in 1867 until the start of the 20th century, at 360 Fr in boxwood, and 400 Fr in rosewood, and went through a couple of mechanical simplifications along the way. Probably Buffet was right not to get involved.

The Bate's example is among the earliest, not quite as complex as the late Geoffrey Rendell's example, but more so than a similar boxwood instrument in the Shackleton collection, and a more simplified and later rosewood version, also in the Shackleton collection. These three are all housed in the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments.

Jolyon Fearnley

Mechanical Musical Instruments and Historical Performance Conference 7 & 8 July 2013, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London

In the 21st century, musicologists are very concerned about performing music from earlier times as near as possible to how the composer would like to have heard it. Consequently academic papers are produced using the manuscripts and conducting scores with annotations, to try to understand the composer's intentions. Yet we all know that what appears on paper is only the outline of an instruction to a musician who would have been thoroughly trained to turn the squiggles on paper into a musical performance. Today's musicians, however 'authentic' the instruments used (I don't speak here of singers, as this is another whole subject), cannot be certain that they are reproducing the performance practice of past times.

Fortunately there still exist devices that would have played music from the 16th century up to the 19th, before the invention of acoustic or electronic recording devices, where it is possible to hear music with embellishments and tempi as the composers would possibly have heard them and from which we are able to inform ourselves in order to perform early music appropriately.

In 1983, *Early Music* devoted a substantial part of an issue to papers on the subject.¹ There were four significant papers by Arthur W.A.G. Ord-Hume, David Fuller, Rachel Cowgill and William Malloch, and two items of correspondence. Since 30 years had elapsed it was thought that there was enough interest to revisit the subject.

With the help of Guildhall Research Works, the research area of Guildhall School of Music and Drama, a conference of 12 papers plus two keynote addresses was put together in the Lecture Recital Room and followed by a visit to inspect musical clocks and musical boxes in the British Museum collection not normally available to the general public. We were given an excellent tour by the Curator of Clocks at the British Museum, Mr Oliver Cooke, which started with a demonstration of several fine clocks on public display. The visiting scholars were then shown the musical clocks and music boxes in the storage area where the Curator has his office. Mr Cooke explained that the policy of the BM was not to restore clocks and other devices, but to ensure that as far as possible

¹ *Early Music*, Vol.11, no. 2 (April 1983)

no further deterioration took place. One of the most impressive exhibits was a very large music box which, although not in tip-top condition, played an arrangement of *Casta Diva* as Bellini would have been able to hear it.



A carillon clock with automata by Isaac Habrecht, Strasbourg (1589), The British Museum [courtesy of The British Museum]

The keynote speakers, Arthur W.A.G. Ord-Hume and Peter Holman, provided two contrasting addresses. The first gave an historical background to the subject, and the second a scholarly description of the literature and research sources for further study.

The papers were very wide-ranging, from 17th century carillons where Dr van Eyndhoven and his colleague produced the ‘pinning scores’ and sound clips from music from the time of Lassus and beyond, with implications for other more

conventional keyboard instruments, to Mr Rex Lawson, an impassioned champion of the pianola, now very much out of fashion, but a valuable record of music from the early 20th century. This was to some extent supplemented by Inja Davidovic studying the work of Vladimir de Paschmann (1848-1933) from piano rolls and early acoustic recordings.

Rebecca Wolf from the Deutsches Museum, Munich, described a digitization project converting paper rolls into notation. This included descriptions of a machine dating from 1790 built by Joseph Merlin from London.

Some papers were very practical, for example John Norrback and Prof Jan Ling from Sweden described a restoration project of a magnificent 18th century flute clock where the external parts were in good condition but the mechanical parts had been removed. Others moved to the exotic: Dr Jon Banks from Anglia Ruskin University described Turkish tunes on English clocks from the 18th century.

Odile Jutten from The University of Evry concentrated on analysing Handel’s *Organ Concerto in F*, Op.4 no.5 from the Holland barrel organ in the Colt collection. It had originally been intended to pay a visit to this collection in Bethersden (Kent) on the afternoon of the second day, but sadly through indisposition of the curator this had to be cancelled.

Participants were asked to pay a small fee and funding was provided by the Institute of Musical Research and The Handel Institute. The Guildhall School of Music and Drama were very generous in providing the well-equipped venue and doing publicity and conference packs and also lunch and tea at minimal cost. With some assistance from NEMA all costs were covered.

The conference was very much enhanced with a display of fascinating instruments in the foyer put on by The Musical Box Society of Great Britain curated by Alison Biden. Their website www.mbsgb.org.uk/ is well worth a look.

In due course the papers will be available on the National Early Music Association’s website www.earlymusic.info/

Mark Windisch

The Piper's Whim:

A celebration of British bagpipes and the story of one that nearly got away

**A general view
of the Bagpipe
Exhibition**
[Photo: EUCHMI]



As yet there has been no serious attempt to produce a catalogue of all the many and varied bagpipes which are played throughout the world. A figure of as many as two hundred and fifty varieties has been suggested, but this can only be a guess. The complexity of their nomenclature and their tendency to hybridize probably makes them as difficult to catalogue as fungi or orchids. Bearing this in mind it is a curious fact that to the majority of people there is only one bagpipe – the Great Highland bagpipe, the only bagpipe with militaristic rather than pastoral connections. Hopefully the exhibition previewed in the last newsletter and held throughout the month of August in St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh, will have done something to acquaint some of those people with the variety of bagpipes played throughout the British Isles and not, of course, excluding the Highland variety.

The exhibition was notable for the quality of its display. Bagpipes are probably one of the worst nightmares for anyone organizing a display of musical instruments. Laid out flat there is a tendency for them to look like roadkill. Suspending them from nylon line, which was common practice in the past, rarely gave a successful effect and put the instruments at risk. It was also an understandable disincentive to curators to take them off view for study owing to the complexity of putting them back afterwards. The Edinburgh

University exhibition used relatively unobtrusive metal poles and clamps which made it possible to set the instrument up into approximately the position it would be if held by a player, giving much more life to the display. Admittedly the fragility of old instruments with original bags meant that not all instruments could be displayed in this way.

The exhibition was supported by three concerts and a colloquium. The latter gave a rare opportunity for specialists in the field from the farther reaches of the British Isles to meet up, listen to papers and view the exhibits, many of which would have been entirely new to them. The exhibition had been the culmination of a 5-year project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) under their 'Collecting Cultures' scheme. Concomitant with the exhibition was the publication of a new catalogue of Edinburgh University's holding of bagpipes, in which most of the newly-acquired bagpipes are illustrated in colour.

It was no small irony that just as the HLF project was coming to an end and most of the funds spent, news came that a particularly spectacular set of British bagpipes was about to be offered at auction. This was a set of pastoral pipes entirely in ivory dating from the last quarter of the 18th century. In normal circumstances this set would have made a

splendid finale to the project, but now there was the double problem of whether the extra funds could be found, let alone the fact that with an auction there is no guarantee of making a successful acquisition.

At this point a digression would probably be in order to explain to anyone not steeped in bagpipe lore the origin of pastoral pipes which later transmogrified into the Union pipes and finally the Uilleann pipes. They are a bellows-blown pipe which seems to have appeared around the 1720s. They have a conical chanter with a bore and external turnery not unlike the oboe of the period. At first it seems not to have been confined to any one particular country within the British Isles, so could be a contender to be the only true 'British' bagpipe. In 1743 a tutor for the instrument was published in London by John Geoghegan in the Preface of which he indicates who he expected to be playing this instrument: '... young gentlemen who had not only a fine taste for all sorts of Music but also a fine Genius to have a great desire to play the Bagpipes ...'. These pipes are thus 'drawing room' instruments intended for the amusement of the gentry. Geoghegan's tutor is the first source to refer to the pipes as the 'Pastoral or New Bagpipes'. At some stage the very long bass drone depicted in the frontispiece of the Geoghegan tutor was, for reasons of practicality, doubled back on itself while to the drone stock was added one and

later two or more 'regulators', these being stopped conical pipes with keys which could provide a variable harmony to the chanter. Eventually the foot joint was omitted, enabling the chanter to be stopped against the knee thus giving the possibility of playing staccato. In this form the instrument is now known as the Union pipes. Eventually becoming one of Ireland's national instruments they acquired the name Uilleann pipes after the publication in 1911 of Gratton Flood's book on bagpipes. An ardent nationalist he objected to the term 'Union' despite the fact that no one knew how it had originated. Interestingly the new name, which means 'elbow' in Gaelic, stuck.

From the above it may be seen that the pastoral pipes have an important place amongst the assemblage of British bagpipes and that the ivory set in the auction were a particularly fine example, probably the work of the Edinburgh maker Hugh Robertson (fl. 1775-1800). It is good to be able to report that with the remaining HLF money and donations from the Friends of St Cecilia's Hall and Museum, the Lowland and Border Pipers' Society, and from other University funds, EUCHMI were able to place a successful bid on the bagpipes. The pastoral pipes are being added to the exhibition which will continue, albeit without the extended opening hours, until September 2014.

Graham Wells and Arnold Myers



Ivory pastoral pipes probably by Hugh Robertson, Edinburgh, last quarter of the 18th century
[Photo: EUCHMI]

Oxford Conference Photo Gallery, July 2013



This page (from top):

Left: Graham Wells opening the conference; Right: Laurence Libin and Michael Fleming
Jeremy Montagu, Francis Wood and Joanne Kopp

Left: Arnold Myers and Andy Lamb; Right: On the balcony of the Music Faculty

Opposite page (from top): Pembroke College chapel organ

Left: Bradley Strauchen-Scherer, Eric De Visscher and Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, punting; Right: Nick Pyall, Mathew Dart, Darcy Kuronen and Jim Westbrook

Lydia Kavina performing on the theremin during the gala dinner at St Cross College

Left: Gamelan lesson for Lance Whitehead and Diana Wells; Right: Anneke Scott and Simon Desbulais with their 'awards': the 'Cor d'or' and 'Tromp l'oil'



[Photos: Anna Borg Cardona, Marie Kent, Maggie Kilbey, Elizabeth Wells, Diana Wells, Graham Wells]