

The Galpin Society

For the Study of Musical Instruments



Newsletter 43

October 2015



Galpin Society delegates at Selwyn College, Cambridge (see p.3)

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THE GALPIN SOCIETY

Registered Charity no. 306012

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[Cover: Conference dinner at Selwyn College, Cambridge. *Photo: Graham Wells*]

Galpin Society Conference 2015

This year's conference was held in Cambridge in association with the Institute of Acoustics, affiliated with the Royal Musical Association and supported by the Music Faculty at the University of Cambridge. There was a particular focus on the life and work of the late Sir Nicholas Shackleton and the late Christopher Hogwood CBE, as well as a session on organs dedicated to the memory of Martin Goetze who sadly passed away more recently.

The weekend began with a clarinet day on Saturday hosted by Cambridge Woodwind Makers at Stapleford Granary. Those who came a day ahead of the main conference were offered a warm welcome by the Stapleford team under Daniel Bangham. A display of instruments from Sir Nicholas Shackleton's collection and others owned by Keith Puddy was presented, which included the clarinet and basset horn used by Daniel as models for his copies. A delightful concert of wind chamber music, sometimes accompanied by a piano, was performed in memory of Nick. This was followed by a fabulous high tea enjoyed in the late summer sunshine. Each day of the conference began with a keynote lecture given by Ingrid Pearson, Derek Adlam, Jim Woodhouse and Daniel Bangham in turn. Ingrid gave an overview of Nick Shackleton's work as a geoscientist as well as how he supported and mentored both scientists and musicians. His collection remains as a substantial legacy in the care of the University of

Edinburgh, where the redevelopment of St Cecilia's Hall will see highlights from Nick's collection freshly displayed from the autumn of 2016. Derek offered a warm and heartfelt tribute to the life and work of Christopher Hogwood, a scholar and performer whose legacy in part lies within the many musicians and students he encouraged and supported. Daniel Bangham described the work and ethos behind the Cambridge Woodwind Makers, where individuals from any walk of life have the opportunity to experiment with and explore how wind instruments are constructed. Having a place where makers can try out ideas, and find out in practical terms which elements of instruments play the most significant part in how they sound, is central to the ethos of the workshop. Live music formed a central part of the conference. As well as the Nick Shackleton Memorial Concert, we were also privileged to attend a concert given by Florilegium in memory of Christopher Hogwood at Great St Mary's Church and an organ recital at Queen's College Chapel by highly skilled young musician Laurence Lyndon-Jones. Delegates had the option of a tour of the University's instrument collection with demonstrations by Dan Tidhar as well as a recital on one of David Rubio's harpsichords by Johan Brouwer followed by a tour of Rubio instruments in College chapels. Even tea and lunch breaks were accompanied by music, with David and Christa Liggins presenting their work on and with ocarinas.

Johan Brouwer
demonstrating the
David Rubio
harpsichord in
Robinson College
chapel





Clockwise from top left: David and Christa Liggins, Cassandre Balosso-Bardin, delegates make their way to Clare College Chapel, Raffaele Pinelli

The conference papers themselves were varied, interesting and well presented. Many speakers had musical examples, a high proportion of which were played live. We heard music played on an incredibly wide range of instruments from a 2,000-year old ocarina to a bassoon made of recycled scrap, via the bagpipe, recorder, basset clarinet, oboe d'amore, cornett, accordion and electric violin. (Abstracts of all papers are posted at: gsconference2015.wordpress.com/conference-information/conference-documents/)

The variety of approaches to the study of musical instruments demonstrated just how lively the field of organology in its broadest sense has become. Traditional connoisseurship is still a much-used and productive approach, and was applied to great effect by a number of speakers (David Liggins, Jocelyn Howell, Darryl Martin, Geerten Verberkmoes). Some researchers use new digital imaging techniques to explore the hidden aspects which it is not possible for us to see in any other way (Karen Loomis), while others are always reviewing and questioning which scientific techniques are useful and applicable in different contexts (Stewart Pollens). Archives of many kinds have been trawled and new information found to illuminate aspects of making and business operations as well as the cultural context of musical instruments and their design (Marie Kent, Hayato Sugimoto, Jenny Nex, Lance Whitehead, James Westbrook, Allison Alcorn, Mike Baldwin, Tula Giannini, Nicholas Pyall, Elisabeth Weinfield, Cassandre Balosso-Bardin). Importantly, many fields contribute to organological debates, including practicing musicians (Jamie Savan on cornetto design and fingering)

and anthropologists (Gabriel Aguirre on dispersion and typology of panpipes, population genetics and 'cladistics', a form of decision tree analysis based on parsimony and logic).

Of course one of the strongest crossovers is that of physics and acoustics, to which we dedicated a whole day. Modern techniques are being put to good use in understanding how instruments work through analysis, simulation and emulation, with examples being real-time computed physical model generating sounds for the traditional clarinet (Kuriijn Buys) and real-time digital signal processing managing the output of conventionally bowed electric violins (Patrick Gaydecki). We can also use acoustical measurements to categorise instruments, such as the work being done by Murray Campbell, Arnold Myers and others on the 'brassiness parameter' and 'spectral enrichment parameter' of brass instruments, which can help us understand the differences between brass instruments in particular. A theme which came up at various points was the role of museums and how they display and allow access to collections. There will always be a dichotomy between playing and preserving instruments: of course musical instruments are made to be played and we can only fully understand their significance if we can play and hear them. But on the other hand, by playing instruments we risk breaking them and are in fact gradually destroying them (due to tension, sudden changes in humidity, corrosion, the need to replace broken parts), something museums are understandably reluctant to permit. The balancing act museums undertake on a daily basis rests between the poles of conservation and access, and it is not possible to please everyone all of the time.

Tony Bingham, Al Rice, Marie Ross,
Jon Swayne and Graham Wells





Jim Kopp (left) and Richard Smith (right)

As ever, one comes away from such a conference having learned surprising and unexpected things. Everyone will have their own personal favourites, but mine are: the number and range of different bassoon embouchures demonstrated by Jim Kopp; Alessandra Palidda on the obsessive and extreme collecting habits of singer Evan Gorga; the effect shown by Richard Smith on the pitch you get if you squeeze a plastic tube whilst playing it like a trumpet; how amazing it is to be able to see inside the wood of musical instruments demonstrated by the work Karen Loomis has done scanning harps; and the problems experienced in the house band of the Marquise of Breadalbane described by Lance Whitehead, notably the ‘indifferent triangle player’.

The social life of the conference was busy and fruitful, with informal discussions over tea, coffee and the ample lunches being an important part of proceedings. We were treated to the conference dinner at Selwyn College, just around the corner from the music department, when Owen Woods was thanked for his fantastic work making the conference run so smoothly. He was assisted by a team of stewards who helped with daily operations, as well as the scientific committee who read all the submitted proposals, and other members of the Society who did sterling work behind the scenes – thanks to all of them, to all the speakers and to everyone who attended for a very successful conference!

Jenny Nex

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[Photos: Graham Wells, Jenny Nex and Maggie Kilbey]

The Grotesques of Heckington Church

St Andrew's, Heckington is a Grade 1 listed Anglican parish church in Lincolnshire. It is of cruciform plan and in a complete 'decorated' style representative of English gothic architecture. Dating from the early 14th century, the church was acquired by Bardney Abbey in 1345.

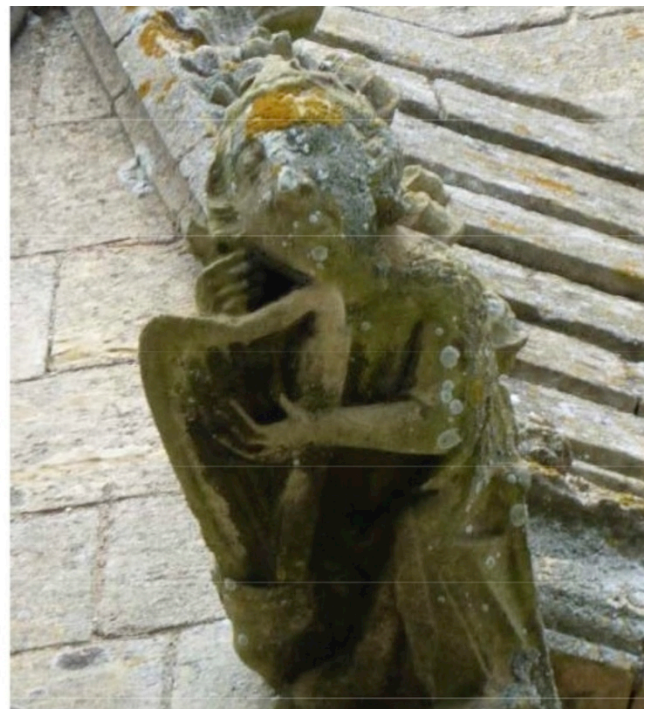
The church's greatest glories are due to the generosity of two men linked with King Edward II, Lord Henry de Beaumont and Richard de Potesgrave (c.1275-1349). Beaumont's coat of arms once appeared in many of the stained-glass windows, and Richard de Potesgrave was in 1309 both rector of Heckington and the King's chaplain.

Among these medieval glories are a series of finials carved in the form of grotesques from limestone ashlar. These adorn the outer sections of the spire, and many have been crafted playing musical instruments. That these figures have lasted for nearly seven hundred years without extensive weathering is a remarkable testament to the dedication of the original stonemasons. As decorative features they are certainly striking. More importantly, from our point of view, they present a historical document, illustrating a number of historical musical instruments and the manner in which they might have been played.

The musicians can be seen playing pipe-and-tabor, bagpipes, whistle, harp, medieval fiddle and a number of less-identifiable items. It is evident that the characters portrayed are not meant to be representative of sacred subjects, rather they were the idiosyncratic features of the common man.

Background information

You might wonder how a church of this scale and grandeur happened to be built in Heckington, a farming community on the edge of the Lincolnshire fens. The short answer is 'royal patronage'. The longer answer is a little more complicated: in 1305 (or thereabouts) work began on constructing a new church, funded by the Lady of the Manor, Lady Flora de Gant. In 1309, Lady Flora died leaving no heir, so her estate reverted to the crown. Also in 1309, the incumbent rector of the church died. The new rector would normally have been appointed by the Abbot of Bardney Abbey, but at that time Bardney was without an Abbot, so the appointment of the rector fell to the King.



King Edward II then gave the de Gant estates in the Heckington area to his bellicose supporter Henry de Beaumont and appointed one of his own chaplains, Richard de Potesgrave as the new rector. The village was therefore placed in the hands of two very rich and powerful men. Between them, along with their cultured and influential womenfolk, they funded and oversaw the construction of a magnificent, decorated gothic church in Heckington.

The crowning glory of this ‘state of the art’ place of worship was the tall, highly decorated chancel, thought to be the vision of Richard de Potesgrave himself, which would have rung with the sacred singing of men and boys, several times each day. There may even have been an organ to augment the singing and give the singers intervals of instrumental music in which to rest their voices. The singing would have been of professional standard and may well have been influenced by the music of the Chapel Royal, with which Richard de Potesgrave and Henry de Beaumont would probably have been familiar. So much for the ‘highbrow’ music of the chancel ...

Edward II was instrumental in the development of this church through the patronage of his supporters, Potesgrave and Beaumont: there are stone heads in the church considered to be portraits of the king. Edward II is also thought to have enjoyed secular musical entertainment and is known to have paid individual minstrels, possibly at a location quite close to Heckington. Edward II met a bad end (probably) in 1327. In 1330, his son, Edward III visited Heckington for several days, just before he took the reins of power from his mother, Queen Isabella, and Mortimer. Richard de Potesgrave continued as chaplain to the new king and, around this time, Henry de Beaumont returned from exile to support Edward III.

After a life of battling and intrigue, Henry de Beaumont died in 1340. In 1345, Heckington church reverted to Bardney Abbey but Richard de Potesgrave remained as Rector until he died in 1349, aged about 75, possibly from the Black Death. Their beautiful church remains at the heart of the community of Heckington.

Andy Lamb

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[Photos: Pete Banks and Mary Cummins]





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

Mr Jeroen Billiet, TIELT, Belgium
Dr M.C.J. Bouterse, ALPHEN AAN DEN RIJN, The Netherlands
Dr Helen Crown, ROSS-on-WYE
Dr Margaret Debenham, CAMBRIDGE
Mr Alexander Diacos, UCKFIELD
Mr Sam Girling, WITNESHAM
Dr Lis Lewis, WINCHESTER
Ms Alessandra Palidda, CARDIFF
Mr Raffaele Pinelli, FORMIA, Italy
Dr Helen Rees, LONDON
Ms Marie Ross, KÖLN, Germany
Dr Alessandro Sanguineti, BECKENHAM
Dr Jamie Savan, MORPETH
Mr Taro Takeuchi, LONDON
Mr Fan-Chia Tao, HUNTINGDON, U.S.A.
Dr Dan Tidhar, CAMBRIDGE
Ms Elizabeth Weinfield, NEW YORK
Miss Eve Zaunbrecher, LONDON