

The Galpin Society

For the Study of Musical Instruments



Newsletter 47

February 2017



**John Webb Collection of brasswind
On display at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**

CONTENTS: ::2:: *Contacts; New Members* ::3:: *Editorial;* ::4::
Brass exhibition at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, AGM Notice ::5::
Musical Instrument Resources Network ::6:: *From the Archives* ::9::
Whitechapel Bell Foundry::10:: *Mystery Instrument, Lisbet Torp* ::11::
Centenary of Instruments at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts ::12::
Conference 2017

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The Galpin Society Newsletter is edited and produced by Andy Lamb.

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

Website: www.galpinsociety.org



<https://www.facebook.com/Galpinsociety/>

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

Christian Breternitz, HALLE, Germany

Al Rossin, ST ANDREWS, U K

EDITORIAL

For me, and I hope many fellow Galpinites, it is almost certain that the major organological event of this year is going to be the joint conference of the Galpin Society and the American Musical Instrument Society in Edinburgh in June (see page 12). The response to the call for papers was, if anything, somewhat overwhelming so it is safe to assume that this aspect of the conference will make the trip to Scotland worthwhile and that is without all the other delights which the organisers are planning: concerts, the banquet, museum visit, etc.

Monday 2nd January 2017 was a bad day for many players and collectors of musical instruments but a good day for some of the world's rare and endangered trees, particularly those of the species *Dalbergia* which includes those which we know by their common names African blackwood, rosewood, and numerous other names. On this day these woods came under the protection of Appendix II of the CITES* regulations. These regulations are not as draconian as for items made of materials on Appendix I such as modern ivory and rhino horn but it will mean that many musicians will be faced with applying for licences before they travel to certain countries. Instrument makers will probably have to consider using woods other than the traditional ones. It will be interesting to see how many, particularly amongst the woodwind makers, turn to plastics. Man-made materials have, of course, been used in woodwind manufacture for many years but tend to be associated with cheap student instruments. This has not always been the case. Rudall Carte, for instance, charged the same for ebonite flutes as they did for their cocuswood (*Brya ebenus*) ones. Ebonite might still be being used as it does not crack and holds its temperature well but has the disadvantage that the surface oxidises to a rather nasty khaki colour. There are now a myriad different types of plastic which could be investigated for their acoustical properties. If you feel it will salve your conscience to play a plastic instrument you may also have to give up your mobile 'phone as many of the trees which might have been used in instrument making are still being felled, mostly illegally, to allow the mining of Coltan, an ore whose constituent minerals are employed in the production of electrical capacitors particularly those used in mobile 'phones. Are there ever to be any answers to all these conundrums that modern life sets us?

Finally, the Committee is delighted to announce that Margaret Birley, Keeper of Musical Instruments at the Horniman Museum, has been asked to become a Vice President of the Society and has graciously accepted. Many of you will know Margaret and be aware of the inestimable work she has done in the field of organology both for her own Museum and for associated organisations, not forgetting her expansive knowledge of ethno-organology.

Graham Wells

* I doubt whether there are many involved in the field of musical instruments who are not already familiar with these initials but for the record they stand for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species



Brasswind Exhibition in Glasgow (See cover image)

An exhibition of important and interesting brass instruments has recently been mounted by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. The Conservatoire's Collection of Historic Musical Instruments, started early in the twentieth century, was lifted to new heights by the acquisition of the John Webb Collection of brasswind and woodwind in 2012. The current exhibition of Stars from the RCS Collection shows the thirty most significant instruments of this acquisition, all of which have received professional museum protective treatment from the Scottish Conservation Studio. Highlights include one of only two known examples of the Cornutum, a fourteen-key serpent by Thomas Key (believed to have the highest number of keys on any serpent), a quinticlavé and an ophicleide by inventor, Halari (or by his son, who used the same name), a Lohengrin trumpet, and Thomas Harper Junior's slide trumpet by Köhler of hallmarked silver, with original mouthpieces, bits and set of crooks.

The remainder of John Webb's collection of 291 brasswind and 126 woodwind includes good examples of nineteenth-century brass instruments which are made available to players more freely enabling and informing historical performance and supporting research.

The exhibition is in the public area of the Conservatoire's main Renfrew Street building, and can be visited at any time the building is open (normal office hours plus the many occasions in evenings and weekends when performances are being given). It runs for several months and will be a feature of the excursion to Glasgow following the Society's conference in June.

Arnold Myers

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Galpin Society will be held on Saturday 3rd June at 3.00 p.m. in St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh. The full agenda will be available on the day but will include the election of the following Officers: Chairman, Reviews Editors (both UK and USA), Archivist, Secretary, Administrator, Newsletter Editor, Advertising Manager; and replacements for retiring Committee members. Nominations should be received 14 days prior to the Meeting.



Musical Instruments Resource Network_{UK}

The **Musical Instruments Resource Network**, or **MIRN**, promotes understanding of issues surrounding the care and display of musical instruments and collections within the United Kingdom. A Subject Specialist Network (formerly known as MISSN), it disseminates information and expertise in accord with current best practice, and advocates for the wide accessibility of public collections.

Subject Specialist Networks (SSNs) exist for a large variety of museum objects, from paintings and natural history collections to human remains and fire heritage. A complete list of SSNs can be found on the Arts Council [website](#). The idea behind the establishment of these networks was to offer a forum for sharing expertise, research and mentoring, and for developing best practice. Some of these networks are well-established and have been around for a long time. The creation of a musical instrument subject specialist group followed on from a working party, convened in the mid-1990s by the then Museums and Galleries Commission, to create a set of standards for the care of musical instruments in museum collections. Following the publication of the standards (now available [online](#)), a small MGC grant helped get the musical instrument subject specialist network on its feet.

Past events have included an education day at Oxford's [Bate Collection](#), an event focussing on a clavichord restoration and more broadly on the care of playing instruments at [Fenton House](#) (London) and a meeting in London at the Institute for Musical Research addressing environmental issues including the impact of the museum conditions required for the well-being of vulnerable musical instruments within collections.

The current impetus to reinvigorate the musical instrument group came initially from an invitation to all SSN officers to meet for discussions at the Royal Free Hospital (Hampstead, London) in April last year with a view to contributing to an article in the Museums Association Journal. From this meeting, it emerged that other SSNs share the basic aims of MIRN, including offering assistance to collections, especially those without in-house specialist expertise. It also became clear that continuing to fulfil their remit posed similar challenges for many SSNs, but those that were most successful could often rely on the support and encouragement of a major public collection.

The [Horniman Museum](#), with its large and diverse musical instrument collection and two full-time specialist curators, has now enabled MIRN to re-launch itself and to begin to fulfil its remit of offering more systematic and consistent sector support. Since last April, MIRN has established an active [website](#), attended the Museums Association Conference in Glasgow, and reported to members (through its website) on that conference and a workshop held in Cambridge on *Music and Material Culture*. MIRN members also received an exclusive invitation to attend the special opening of the [Robert Spencer Exhibition](#) at the Royal Academy of Music. A MIRN-sponsored event is being planned for autumn 2017 and will be announced on its website soon. MIRN's membership is growing

with over 50 members from more than eleven different countries. To keep abreast of developments, join [MIRN](#). It's free!

MIRN's officers are drawn from collections throughout the UK including Chair, Mimi Waitzman (Horniman Museum, London), Secretary, Jenny Nex (Musical Instrument Museums, Edinburgh), Membership, Marie Kent (Junior Research Fellow, Cambridge) and Treasurer, Anna Wright (Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester). MIRN welcomes enquiries on its webpages and suggestions and feedback from everyone.

From the Galpin Society archives **Diana Wells, Hon. Archivist**

The archives are currently stored in about 20 large storage boxes in a spare bedroom at the top of our house where they can be easily consulted and are not - hopefully! - at risk of flood or extreme temperatures. From the official inception of the Society in 1946 there was a continuous production of minutes, accounts, records of exhibitions, correspondence of all kinds, photographs, leaflets, books and, of course, Journals. These were accumulated by a succession of officers, including the longstanding secretary, Pauline Holden, until William Waterhouse became the first specific archivist, the main requirement being a house with a large enough space to accommodate them! When they came to us, the first step was to make a full digital list of contents which has ensured a relatively quick search when needed by ourselves or an enquirer. Most of the documents are typed and hand-written, often on foolscap sheets and stored in brown envelopes, and only in the last 20 years or so produced digitally, with the challenges that both kinds of document throw up in terms of permanent retention, storage and retrieval.

It is hoped that a reasonably regular item in the Newsletter may be achieved with a focus on items of interest from the Archives, starting with Bulletin No.1 from September 1947, from which extracts are included here. The three typed foolscap pages were presumably run off on a Gestetner spirit duplicator by the secretary Eric Halfpenny, with no introduction or signature, as follows (with slight editing):

Galpin Society Bulletin No. 1 September 1947

Inaugural meeting: This was held at Trinity College of Music ... on May 17th 1947 by courtesy of Dr Greenhouse Allt. About 80 members and visitors were entertained to afternoon tea in the College Library before proceeding to the Lecture Hall where an excellent display of rare musical instruments from Members' collections were in view, under the care of Messrs. R. Morley Pegge and Maurice Vincent.

Mr Philip Bate, Chairman of the Founders' Committee, then opened formal business by calling upon the President, Professor J. A. Westrup, to address the meeting.

Professor Westrup said how pleased he was to be associated with a Society bearing the name of Canon Galpin, and expressed great approval at the fact that the proceedings were to be marked by practical demonstrations of musical instruments in performance, which he regarded as most essential in a Society devoted to this branch of musical research. He

extended ... an invitation to the Society to regard the Benton Fletcher Centre, 3 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, as a headquarters for future activities.

Committee and Officers: The Founders' Committee, having served the purpose of forming the Society, was dissolved, but was unanimously elected by the meeting to form the Committee of the Galpin Society for the first year...

Hon. Secretary: Eric Halfpenny

Hon. Treasurer: Lyndesay G. Langwill

Concert: The meeting concluded with a recital of early music for various instrumental combinations, which had been arranged by Messrs. Anthony C. Baines, R. Thurston Dart, Edgar Hunt, and Eric Marshall Johnson, all of whom appeared as performers, assisted by the following:

Guests: Cecily Arnold, Marylin Wailes, Frederick Thurston, Francis Bradley

Members: Eric Halfpenny, Edward Pogson, Kenneth Rutherford, Maurice Vincent
Amongst other original instruments used were a set of 18th century Wood-winds (sic).

Vice-President: The Committee takes pleasure in announcing that Mr Christopher J. Galpin, D.S.O., has kindly accepted their invitation to become a Vice-President of the Society ... the Society thus directly linked with the eldest son of the late Canon. Mr Galpin, who is at present serving with the Allied Control Commission in Berlin, has specialised in Electronic (sic) musical instruments, on which subject he advised his father in the preparation of the "European Textbook" 1937. He has recently, and almost literally, succeeded in unearthing the remnants of the Berlin Hochschule Collection from neglect and oblivion ... ¹

Overseas and foreign representative: The Committee have co-opted Mr Thurston Dart, Faculty Assistant Lecturer in Music at Cambridge University, to represent the Society in the field of international scholarship. Mr Dart has already done invaluable work in publicising the Society by announcements in the Foreign Musical Press ...

Journal: Work on the first volume of the journal is well advanced, though problems of printing remain rather acute. No date can yet be announced for publication but it should be possible for it to appear early in the New Year if not before. (There follows the list of proposed contents.)

Benton Fletcher Centre: The official opening took place on July 14th last under the joint auspices of the National Trust, the Chelsea Society and Trinity College of Music. The Centre is to be developed as a school for the study of old music and instruments ... the collection of Keyboard Instruments having been bequeathed by Major Benton Fletcher to the National Trust. ²

¹ A tantalising reference to Christopher Galpin's involvement in early electronic instruments and the Berlin Hochschule Collection at this date! Berlin played a central role in the development of these instruments in the Twenties and Thirties and a special exhibition "Good Vibrations" is in preparation

² Major Benton Fletcher pioneered the idea of collecting keyboards and allowing them to be played. In 1938 he donated his collection along with Old Devonshire House in Holborn where they were housed to the National Trust as well as further funds for their support. In 1941 during the bombing of London the house was destroyed and some of the instruments were also lost, although he had fortunately removed most of them to Gloucestershire to avoid just such an occurrence. He then purchased 3 Cheyne Walk in Chelsea and gave it to

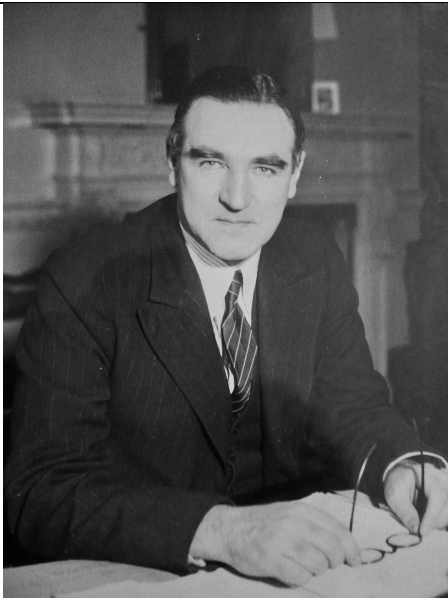
Horniman Museum: The Carse Memorial Collection is now installed and awaits the official opening ... on October 29th 1947. A handbook by Mr Adam Carse ... will be published by the London County Council ... possibly the first catalogue of its kind to be published in England. ... Mr Carse's latest book "The Orchestra from Beethoven to Berlioz" ... will appear in due course.

Luton Museum: A Music Exhibition is being arranged in this Museum during the month of November by the Luton Music Club. ... Loans of instruments would be much appreciated ... Contact the Secretary Mrs Frances Morton.

Non-European musical instruments: The original idea of the Society was that it should exclude the study of instruments in extra-European cultures. As the influence of these cultures cannot but be felt in the European field, however, the views of members are sought on the extension of the Society's activities to take in this study, and the inclusion of papers on Ethnographic and Folk Instruments in the Journal....

Acoustics Group: Members are advised that they may enrol as members of this recently formed group of the Physical Society at the special rate to affiliated societies of 10/6d.... It is hoped that a strong liaison may be established between the two Societies. A Journal of Applied Physics is in contemplation by the parent society ...

Bibliography of printed papers: Members are again invited to send in particulars of papers which they have contributed to other periodicals, for the above compilation. Spare copies of reprints can now be accepted, to form an archive of such papers for the use of the Society. All communications to the Hon. Secretary.



Christopher (1892-1964) was the eldest of Canon Galpin's four children. He was the father of His Honour Judge Brian Galpin.

the National Trust to house the collection. They were moved to Fenton House in 1952 where they remain today as a playing collection.

WHITECHAPEL BELL FOUNDRY TO CLOSE.

The managers of Whitechapel Bell Foundry **have** announced that **the foundry** will close by May 2017. The Bell Foundry has been at its current site on Whitechapel Road since 1738, and has existed elsewhere since 1570, making it [Britain's oldest manufacturing company](#).

Amongst its output is the Liberty Bell, a noted symbol of United States independence. Another of its famous products is Big Ben bell in 1858. It remains the biggest bell the foundry has cast to this day.

Little more is currently known about the closure beyond the [statement on the company's website](#), which states that it will honour all outstanding contracts but won't take any more on for the time being.



The template for Big Ben



The Liberty Bell



The Bell Foundry has been at its current site on Whitechapel Road since 1738

THE MYSTERY INSTRUMENT



In the last issue of the GS Newsletter we asked readers to help in the identification of a mysterious instrument used at a Celtic music festival.

We have had a number of responses. Al Rice writes: "The instrument on page 10 being played in Brittany has the shape of a brass "ophicleide" bass clarinet, but without the clarinet keys. It is possible that it was converted to play with a brass mouthpiece, which appears to be what the player is using."

However, alert reader Derek Tearne has managed to find the instrument in use: *"It turns out it was conceived by the player and is really a sophisticated didgeridoo. He calls it a Kornbass. I had assumed it must be a traditional instrument as Bagadou competitions must have rules about using non-traditional instrumentation."*

It can be seen in action on the following link:
[Vimeo.com/155294735](https://vimeo.com/155294735) (1min 55secs in)



It is with regret that we have to report the retirement of Lisbet Torp from the post of Head of Collections of the Danish Music Museum. During her professional life, Lisbet worked tirelessly in the field of musical instrument studies and published many books on instruments and folk-dancing. Her work with CIMCIM provided great leadership and inspiration. We wish her all the best in her retirement.



The Boston Museum of Fine Art

Centenary of the Musical Instrument Collection at the MFA

As many members of the Galpin Society know, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is home to the majority of musical instruments collected by Canon Francis W. Galpin in the late 19th and early 20th century. And this year marks the 100th anniversary of his collection coming to Boston, which arrived in two shipments in January and February of 1917, constituting some 560 instruments. The rather tragic circumstances behind this transaction began with a twenty-eight-year-old Bostonian named Leslie Lindsey, who in 1915 married Stewart Mason, an English-born merchant who also served as fourth rector of Boston's Emmanuel Church. In spite of warnings in the newspapers, the newlywed couple set sail on their honeymoon aboard the *Lusitania*. As is well known, a German U-boat torpedoed that ship off the southern coast of Ireland, killing over a thousand passengers, among whom were Leslie and her new husband. Leslie's grief-stricken father, William Lindsey, was a prominent local businessman and supporter of the Museum. We know little of his particular interests in music, but the history and arts of England fascinated him. In one of various ways that he commemorated his daughter's untimely death, Lindsey purchased most of Galpin's historical and ethnographic instruments and donated them to the Museum in memory of his daughter. Galpin's collection contained numerous fine European instruments, but also many Chinese, Japanese, African, Middle Eastern, and Native American examples.

Between 1917 and 1955 only about twenty musical instruments were added to the Museum's original Galpin/Lindsey collection. But over the following decades, Narcissa Williamson, the MFA's first keeper of musical instruments, began to selectively acquire instruments to fill certain gaps. The collection has since essentially doubled in size to over 1,200 instruments, encompassing examples from throughout the world and dating from ancient civilizations to the early 21st century. It is virtually impossible for any instrument collection to be truly encyclopedic in its scope, but the Museum strives for balanced coverage, while also seeking to acquire the most significant examples of instruments that are available.

As part of its celebration of this important anniversary, the Museum has posted over two dozen videos on Youtube that show a range of musicians performing brief pieces on selected instruments from the MFA's collection, including a number that formerly belonged to Galpin. Photographs and basic data for nearly all of the Museum's instrument collection can be found at its website (www.mfa.org), along with brief audio clips for numerous examples.

Darcy Kuronen, Pappalardo Curator of Musical Instruments
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The Galpin Society and the American Musical Instrument Society

CONFERENCE ON MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

1-4 June 2017

The response to the Call for Papers was gratifyingly strong, and there will be a very full programme including over 40 papers reporting recent musical instrument research as well as concerts, social events, and the banquet. There will be an opportunity to see items from the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments gorgeously re-displayed in the newly refurbished Musical Instrument Museums Edinburgh at St Cecilia's Hall and a specially mounted exhibition of rare organological books and manuscripts in Edinburgh University Library. For Galpin Society members this will be a good occasion to meet kindred spirits from the American Musical Instrument Society. For details visit: <http://www.euchmi.ed.ac.uk/gxsp.html>

to see a preliminary programme and information about the Gibbon Award for student travel, and about satellite events. In the next few weeks the website will give a more detailed programme, abstracts of papers, accommodation arrangements, and booking procedures.

For further information, please e-mail mimed@ed.ac.uk