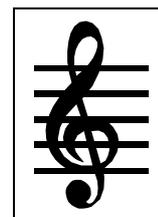


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### REGULAR FEATURES

FRMS Presenters Panel  
Anniversaries

Because of Tony Pook's unfortunate and sudden indisposition, the material for these items could not be prepared in time for printing and will be included in issue no 145. All good wishes to Tony for a speedy recovery.

by **Chris Harten** is of a prize-winning flower arrangement by **Diana Kitley**.

of the FRMS website is  
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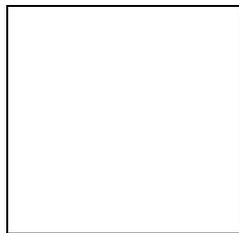
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## EDITORIAL

### A NOT-SO-NEW BROOM BACK IN HARNESS



After a break of seven years, I am very pleased to return as the go-between betwixt RMS groups and the Federation; in a word, as the *Bulletin* Editor. However, in the interim the Vice-President and I

were married and I now write under the surname of 'Shaw' instead of 'Mills'.

During that time, I have kept very much in touch with Societies and Federation affairs and, in common with most of us, am concerned that we must make every effort to keep things going and attract new members. A variety of factors makes this a far-from-easy task. We are an ageing movement and, compared to us when it all began 70 years ago, today's young are more affluent, more mobile and, quite naturally, have their own tastes and ideas when it comes to social activity.

#### ***Bridge the generation gap***

Therefore, the onus is on us to find out what would appeal to younger members. We should try to bridge the generation gap and modify our programmes and activities accordingly, but without throwing out the baby with the proverbial bath water! John Maidment's work on a regeneration policy, reported on page 15, contains many useful suggestions.

#### ***New logo but no sweeping changes***

Future issues of the *Bulletin* might undergo a few changes to reflect the idiosyncrasies of a different Editor but they will not be drastic.

The smart new logo is designed to mark the Federation's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and another change that is immediately obvious is the size of typeface; this is of necessity.

For various reasons, and not least because advertisers are turning to more modern methods of promoting their products, such as television or via the Internet, the *Bulletin* production costs now far outweigh income. There are two ways of reversing this trend.

The obvious is to obtain more advertisements – easier said than done. The other is to reduce the number of pages in the magazine. We can do this by either publishing less information or by reducing type size and increasing the amount of copy per page. I believe most readers would opt for the latter. However, if there is an overwhelming reaction against this move, then I must think again.

#### ***Keep in touch***

Whatever your views about the format of the *Bulletin*, remember that its aim is to keep you acquainted of everything that is going on at Federation, Regional and Society levels. Therefore, the more material I receive, the better informed readers will be.

#### ***How to send copy***

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*Thelma Shaw*

Wondering about a **Spring break**? There is **still time** to book for the

## **FRMS MUSIC WEEKEND**

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April, at the Daventry Hotel**

Pre-dinner reception at 6.0 pm on Friday followed by 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration dinner

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## OUT & ABOUT

### FEDERATION

*Editor's note: As all Societies are sent a verbatim report of the AGM Minutes later in the year, this account is an overview of the day as a whole, taking into account the social aspect of the occasion.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2005 was perilously close to Halloween and within spitting distance of Guy Fawke's Day. Cassandra would have forecast that the omens were not good for the 35 societies represented at the last AGM, held on this day at The Crown Hotel, Nantwich.

But she would have been sorely disappointed. Not a single broomstick in sight and not even the dampest of squibs to cast a shadow on what turned out to be a really splendid amalgam of business and pleasure.

**Formal Proceedings.** After a welcome by **Mike Moss**, Chairman of South Cheshire RMS, the formal agenda followed. **Mick Birchall** (FRMS Committee member) read the minutes of the 2004 AGM in full and apologised for their length.

He explained that it was necessary to record in detail a contribution made by a member after the end of debate. The member therefore was denied a right of reply.

However, there had been no response in any way to the matter and the minutes were approved unanimously and without dissent.

**Chairman's Review.** After introducing the members of the FRMS Committee, Chairman **John Davies** explained their respective responsibilities and summarised the following functions of the FRMS:

### 2005 AGM

\*Arrange PRS and PPL licences, Public Liability and Equipment insurance;

\*Organise the annual Music Weekend;

\*Facilitate links between societies

\*Operate a website on which societies can publicise their activities;

\*Publish a Bulletin;

\*Offer the advisory services of a Technical Officer on audio-video equipment.

The Chairman likened the FRMS to a trade association: membership is voluntary but confers many benefits.

He reported two resignations. **Ron Bleach** would not seek re-election as FRMS Vice-Chairman, because of his involvement in many other musical fields. His contribution to the Committee will be missed.

**Arthur Baker** had stood down after seven years as the *Bulletin* editor. The Chairman expressed his appreciation for Arthur's unbiased and fair editing. **Thelma Shaw**, a former *Bulletin* editor, has agreed to fill the position, with the help of FRMS Committee member **Tony Pook** as Production Manager.

John Davies ended with a statement of commitment to looking forward and the application of a Regeneration Policy. (*This is reported in detail on other pages.*)

**Treasurer's Report.** A report and statement of Annual Accounts had been circulated. **Graham Kitely**, Treasurer, elaborated on these and answered questions from the floor relating to taxation and Bulletin finances. The Report and Accounts were accepted unanimously.

**Secretary's Report.** FRMS Secretary **Tony Baines** reported that:

\*Copies of the revised Constitution had been circulated to all Societies;

\*Six societies closed this year but another has reformed;

\*He received 17 enquiries for information of nearest RMS groups from Devon to Dundee;

\*Handbooks of guidance in forming a new society were sent on request to E. Grinstead, the Suffolk coast and the Outer Hebrides;

\*A number of societies celebrate various milestone anniversaries: Horsham (75) and 60<sup>th</sup> jubilee for Croydon, Derby, Dudley, Newark, Norwich, Stockport and York;

\*Members of the defunct Bracknell Met. Office Society wish to maintain contact with the FRMS and the Mahler Society has enquired about affiliation.

\*Entries in various directories have been renewed.

The report was approved unanimously.

**Any Other Business** followed the election of Officers and Committee and appointment of independent examiners. **Roderick Shaw**, FRMS Vice-President announced the deaths in the past year of two longstanding supporters of the Federation:

**Tony Griffiths**, a former recording engineer with EMI and **Ray Burford**, who had worked for CBS and Sony. Both had been guest speakers at FRMS events.

The Treasurer outlined plans for the 2006 Music Weekend to be held in Daventry from April 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>.

## OUT & ABOUT

The close of formal business at 16.05 was the beginning of a happy social occasion, with entertainment and the renewal of old acquaintances.

**The Sound of Brass.** The tea break was the time for catching up with old friends, meeting new ones, swapping news and generally enjoying a good gossip before settling down to a simply first-class entertainment by the Midlands-based quintet **Second City Brass.**

This lively ensemble of young and highly accomplished musicians is well known to many RMS members and their appearance at the AGM was a popular return engagement after a very successful recital in 2004 at the music weekend.

The group consists of five freelance musicians who perform regularly with leading orchestras and jazz groups, thus giving the quintet a diverse and lively repertoire.

The members not only perform as concert artists but also give educational workshops in schools and colleges. It is no surprise that these enthusiastic young people are in great demand and their audiences include The Queen and Earl Spencer.

The quintet's high quality musicianship and versatility was demonstrated to the full on this occasion in a wide-ranging programme of works skilfully arranged for brass.

It consisted of well-known classics interspersed with the less familiar and ended with a hugely enjoyable jazz version of, perhaps appropriately, Lennon and McCartney's *When I'm 64!*.

The first part of the programme contained classical works as follows:

\* Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*

\* *The Prince of Denmark's March* by Clarke (or, if you prefer, *Trumpet Voluntary*)

\* J. S. Bach's *Air on a G String*

\* Elgar's *Chanson de Matin*

Holst's *Military Suite no. 2*

After the interval there were hints of nostalgia with:

\* Miller's *That's a Plenty*

\* *A Nightingale Sang in Berkley Square*

\* George Gershwin's *Love is Here to Stay*

\* Waller's *Ain't Misbehavin'*

*Chris Hickman, trombone; Jo Sweet, tuba; Steve Lee, trumpet; Gavin Lamplough, trumpet; Claire Dawes, french horn*

In response to the foot-tapping audience's demand for more the group gave a delightfully vivacious arrangement of the aforesaid *When I'm 64*. All this sent the 2005 delegates happily off to dinner.

**Wining and Dining.** There was an interesting break from tradition concerning the usual dining routine after an AGM.

In the past, the host society has provided a buffet meal, usually at the same venue as the meeting.

**The 64<sup>th</sup> AGM will be held in Kidderminster on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2006. Details to be published later in the year.**

This year delegates had been asked in advance to complete a form showing their preferences for either English, Chinese, Indian or Thai food and the names of people they would like to include in their group.

The organisers then booked tables at the appropriate restaurants, of which there are a great variety close to the Crown Hotel. There were mixed reactions to this experiment.

On the one hand it had the advantage of ensuring that everyone's culinary taste was satisfied in the company of known friends.

Also, because delegates paid their own restaurant bills in the normal way, managing the financial aspect was easier.

But, on the downside, it did give less time for socialising informally, catching

up with acquaintances that one sees perhaps only once a year, and possibly making new ones. It will be interesting to see what happens next year.

So ended the 63<sup>rd</sup> AGM. This year there seemed to be an air of added optimism and a certain spring in the step. Perhaps, having reached the proverbial three score years and ten and finding ourselves still in pretty good form made the occasion extra special.

We certainly all enjoyed ourselves enormously and left looking forward to the next get-together at the Music Weekend. After all, isn't camaraderie and enjoying music in the company of old friends what it is all about?

*Thelma Shaw*

# OUT & ABOUT

## TRMS – A SUCCESS STORY FROM TORQUAY

*A Brief History by John J. Davis*

*Editor's note: With a current membership around 80, TRMS seems to have found a recipe for success. This is encouraging when, inevitably, as times and attitudes change, fewer young people are attracted to replace the falling numbers in many RMS groups.*

### In the Beginning

We started as the Torbay Gramophone Society, formed in the early fifties by a group of enthusiasts; I joined in 1958 with a great friend George Johns who very soon became Chairman. Membership soared when he made meetings a social occasion. The original venue was Callards Café in Torquay but in 1964 we moved into the Pengelly Hall which is attached to the Torquay Natural History Museum. Membership continued to rise to and peaked at just over two hundred. With the expertise of a retired Marconi engineer, the late Jim Hathway, from an early stage we invested in high-quality sound equipment.

From the very beginning many loyal people have given countless hours of their spare time to our Society and we are thrilled that Rob Cowan, BBC Broadcaster and prolific writer, is our President.

### Outstanding Presenters

As well as regular visits from major record companies, we've had many outstanding presenters, including Lyndon Jenkins, Sir Malcolm Sargent's son Peter, George Hurst, Cormac Rigby, Richard Baker, Norman del Mar, Dr. William Boughton and Kathleen Ferrier's sister Winifred, who said that her sister's recordings had never sounded better; praise indeed!

Later, we became *The Torbay Recorded Music Society* and after spending 41 years at the Pengelly Hall we moved into the St. Matthias Church complex. This is in a delightful part of Torquay called Wellswood, where there are no car parking restrictions. This, and the splendid hall we now use, has helped to attract new members, which is just terrific in this day and age.

In 1971 we started the now famous Torbay Musical Weekend (TMW) in a small hotel. After three years, this event grew so big that we moved into the palatial Palace Hotel in Torquay. In the 80s we handed it over to *The Friends of Torbay*, led by the redoubtable Robert Hardcastle.

This annual TMW is still going strong in the same magnificent establishment and its guests include some of the world's top musicians, including Sir Georg Solti, Paul Tortelier, Sir David Willcocks and many others of equal standing.

### Outside Interests and Excursions

For many years TRMS members have attended live concerts by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in Exeter as well as co-ordinated excursions to concerts and operas over this country. As I write, I shall be taking a group to Britain's fine Symphony Hall Birmingham, for two concerts in the near future. The package includes all ticket bookings, hotel, dining and coach travel.

In 1981, when I was current Chairman, I began a project that changed the course of my life and that of several others. On my return from the USA as a guest of the Philadelphia Orchestra (having idolised Leopold Stokowski all my life) I told our members that I was going on a pilgrimage, with that as shrine number 1. Shrine number 2 was to hear the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra open the Prague Spring Music Festival with Smetana's *Ma Vlast*. Who would like to come with me? Twenty-eight members sallied forth. Since then we have been to:

- Vienna
- Twice to what was East Germany, going through Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin (all guns and concrete) on our way to Leipzig, Dresden and Halle
- Verona
- Moscow and Leningrad (as it was called then) for the 'White Night's' Festival
- La Chaise Dieu in the Auvergne
- Torre del Lago for the Puccini Festival
- Finland, which included a visit to Sibelius' house 'Ainola' at Jarvenpaa, utopia itself.

In the Autumn 2005 *Bulletin* the editor quotes from the West Wickham RMS: "*a recorded music society can be very successful when it provides a wide range of musical activity together with important social events.*"

With that in mind, I sincerely hope that readers will be interested in our many activities. We will welcome with open arms anyone in our area on Thursday evenings from late September until April, with a four-week Christmas break.

I am very proud to have been closely associated with the TRMS for several decades and I sincerely hope that there are many more glories to come in the future. *J.J.Davis*

## OUT & ABOUT

### MALVERN RMS CELEBRATES ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

At the last meeting of the 2004/2005 season Chairman **Mike Rafferty** ended his presentation on a nostalgic note when he played the same recording that ended the last meeting of the society's first season in 1965. That music was excerpts from the Mengelberg recording of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, recorded in 1939, heard in 1955 on LP and in 2000 on CD in a fine Naxos transfer.

#### Interest from the Press

The Malvern Gazette showed its interest in our activities and ran a feature on the Society. This included an interview with **John Garner**, founder member. John said the Society's appeal stemmed from meeting people socially and sharing an interest in recorded music.

#### Advantages of homely tradition

Throughout its history the MRMS (formerly Malvern Gramophone Society) has met in members' homes. This has engendered a more informal and friendly ambience than is often experienced in public meeting places.

The different reproducing equipment in the different venues often governs the choice of music, which now includes presentations on DVD and videocassette as well as the more obvious formats. Refreshment breaks give an opportunity for friendly conversation in a welcoming domestic situation.

#### Guess what's coming!

Another tradition of the Society is to provide cryptic titles for each presentation - some of considerable ingenuity. These cause the members much light-hearted head scratching in trying to anticipate the content of the programme - and provide a lot of fun into the bargain.

#### Surviving competition

Malvern is a very musical town with several choirs, chamber groups, orchestras, bands and music theatre groups all vying for custom. As a result, many activities clash and it is almost impossible to find a meeting day that can suit everyone.

Over the years we have lost members whose choir or other musical activity takes place on the same evening. Still, we are delighted to have achieved 40 years with a strong nucleus of dedicated members and we confidently look forward to continuing well into the future.

*Joseph Brand (Secretary)*

### GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION IN DERBY

Derby RMS might be one of the smallest societies in the Federation but, nevertheless, members decided to celebrate the Society's 60th anniversary in style. Anticipating the actual anniversary date by a few weeks, we organised a celebration lunch at a local hotel, with **Donald Rooksby**, the Society's founder, as guest of honour.

Donald is well known to many people in the Federation through his presentations for Hyperion Records, but other alumni of Derby RMS have also made their mark in the music world. These include the late **Ted Perry**, founder of Hyperion Records, and **Bruno Turner**, musicologist and director of Pro Cantione Antiqua. Bruno's message of congratulation was one of many received from former members and invited guests who were unable to attend.

In addition to present and former members, the Society welcomed visitors from the neighbouring Ripley RMS, and representatives of the Federation, both nationally and within the Central Region. FRMS Secretary, **Tony Baines**, brought the greetings and good wishes of the Federation.

After lunch Donald Rooksby was, metaphorically, cast away on a mythical desert island, complete with the regulation eight CDs.

Interviewed by Derby RMS member **Richard Wood**, Donald shared with us not only his choice of music but also something of his life. For many years he was in business on his own account, but his reminiscences included anecdotes of the early days of Derby RMS and his time as General Manager of Hyperion Records in the 1980s.

These junketings took place on a Saturday, and the anniversary celebrations continued at the Society's regular meeting the following Monday. With the help of the Society's programme archive The Society's Chairman, **Allan Child**, recalled some more or less significant events in the Society's history, illustrating them with music that was played at the time.

And the next 60 years? Although it is small, the Society is still active with a varied programme. In common with many other societies, we might have to put some effort into devising new ways of attracting more members, but we have no intention of giving up!

A. C

## OUT & ABOUT

### SCOTTISH GROUP WINTER JOINT MEETING

The 2005 Winter Joint Meeting of the FRMS Scottish Group was hosted by the Dunfermline RMS on Saturday 5 November. This year's venue, The Vine Church in Dunfermline, was ideal.

The main speaker was **Mr Kenneth Walton**, Music Critic of *The Scotsman* newspaper. His subject entitled *Mozart and Burns: Parallel Genius* was a most fascinating talk about the lives of these two famous figures who never met, although they were contemporaries.

Two members of Dunfermline RMS presented the other programmes. **Dennis Walker's** programme was *From the East*, featuring contemporary classical music from Japan – enhanced by a wonderful demonstration of the art of Origami!

**George Kinghorn** concluded the Conference with a well chosen and varied selection of music under the heading *Off the Beaten Track*, much of it unfamiliar perhaps but highly enjoyable.

The day was a huge success with three outstanding speakers in an excellent venue and it certainly brightened up a dull November Saturday.

*Stephen Gray FRMS Scottish Group Secretary*

\*\*\*\*\*

### CENTRAL REGION'S DAY OF ENGLISH MUSIC

The Central Regional Group held an English Music Day at Olton near Solihull on Saturday 15 October 2005. The format was similar to the successful Italian Day held at the same venue the previous year.

These events are produced entirely 'in house' in that the music presenters come from societies within the region and committee members do the catering. The emphasis is on fine food linked to the musical theme of the day.

#### Local fare for the inner man

On this occasion Regional Secretary **Mick Birchall** provided a ploughman's lunch, mostly sourced from Lincolnshire. This fine English lunch consisted of craftsman-produced bread and cheese, Lincolnshire Chine (from one of Rick Stein's food heroes) and real ale. Other drinks were cider, fruit juice, and red and white wine. For dessert there were wonderful cakes from Woodhall Spa bakery.

#### Quality of Englishness

The first presentation *Evocations of England* was given by **Gordon Williams** of Wolverhampton RMS. It was pointed out that many of us recognise and acknowledge a distinctive quality and sound in a wide range of many English composers and this property we call 'Englishness'.

This is particularly evident in descriptive works such as land- and seascapes, which convey sounds of great beauty and atmosphere often representing rural tranquillity. Two examples illustrated this: *Tintagel* composed by Arthur Bax in 1917 and *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* by Vaughan Williams. The latter work is a glorious spiritually uplifting work that sums up magnificently the essence of Englishness over the centuries.

Was there a quintessential English sound? Did this sound change and develop over time but still retain its essential Englishness? These questions were to surface time and time again during the day. Gordon thought we must move on unless we wished to stay in the land of the everlasting *Lark Ascending*. He emphasised his point with the third movement of the Sally Beamish *Cello concerto (River 1977)*, which captured the subject marvellously.

He also considered Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Silent Cities* (revised version) a work inspired by a visit to the cemeteries on the Somme and named after Rudyard Kipling's description of that same place.

#### From The Diary of Samuel Pepys

After lunch **Graham Ladley** of Oswestry RMS assumed some of the *persona* of Samuel Pepys, reading extracts from the famous Diary. Naturally many of these were about music, which Pepys described as "*the thing of the world that I love the most*". The readings were interspersed with music from the period - including Purcell although, as Graham explained, Purcell's career was not quite contemporary with the period covered by Pepys' diary. Pepys' comments on the music were often incisive and he was highly critical of some of the established musicians of his day. We also heard candid and highly entertaining accounts of Pepys' amorous adventures and, by contrast, a sombre description of an almost deserted London during the great plague. Graham rounded off the presentation with the record of another diarist, John Evelyn, written when he heard of Pepys' death.

## OUT & ABOUT

### Four Englishmen of 1905

**Graham Kiteley** of CMS Kidderminster and FRMS Treasurer ended the day with his extremely interesting and occasionally challenging accounts of William Alwyn, Alan Rawsthorne, Constant Lambert and Michael Tippett.

Graham opened, appropriately, with Alwyn's *Fanfare for a Joyful Occasion* and later played excerpts from his film music *The Card* and from his *Symphony No 3*. William Alwyn was a leading composer of British film music, notably *Odd Man Out*, *The Fallen Idol* and *The History of Mr Polly*; some of his other music reflects this genre.

Alan Rawsthorne also made a major contribution to film music. We listened to the vivid and percussive scherzo from his *Second Piano Concerto*, a work that deserves to be better known; an extract from his *Pastoral Symphony* and a *Divertimento* from his distinguished body of chamber music.

Constant Lambert was a great friend and drinking companion of Rawsthorne. He is best known for his original and jazz-influenced *Rio Grande* from which we heard a short extract. Much of Lambert's energy was consumed by his conducting, editing and work as a music journalist but he found time to compose the choral/orchestral work *Summer's Last Will and Testament* and *Horoscope*.

Michael Tippett was one of the most significant post-war English composers. He was both groundbreaking and a traditionalist and was thus open to a wide range of musical influences from baroque to jazz and blues. His compositions include operas, choral works, symphonies, concertos and string quartets. We heard excerpts from his early work *Concerto for Double String Orchestra*, *Sonata No 3* and *The Ritual Dances* from *The Midsummer Marriage*.

Graham concluded that the only commonality shared by these four highly talented composers was that they were all English and all born in 1905.

But what of the essence of Englishness? Some would conclude that it did emerge from time to time in the works of these composers. Others may echo the words of Constant Lambert who wrote in 1931: "*The slogan of nationalism will die as soon as it is realised that each nation is aiming at the same idea of mechanised civilisation*". This was a most illuminating and enjoyable day. *J.D; T.B; A.C*

### TMW AT THE PALACE

Friday November 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> last year saw some 170 old and new friends gather in time for the reception and dinner that started the 36<sup>th</sup> TMW meeting.

### Victoria and Merrie England

**Peter Gammond** was first off and musically demonstrated that in the Victorian age England was not, as often claimed, devoid of music. Conversely, it was rich in tuneful melodies – and not all composed by Sir Arthur Sullivan!

### Ray Remembered

**Ray Burford**, who died earlier in the year, was a founder member of TMW and well known and loved in the music business. Many RMS societies benefited from his lively and knowledgeable presentations. His three colleagues on the TMW Committee, **Robert Hardcastle**, **Peter Lymbery** and **Peter Gammond** ended the first evening with a tribute in which they exchanged memories about the man and his music.

### Presentations and Live Recitals

The next two days were each filled with food for musical thought and live recitals. On Saturday:

- \* **Celia Ballantyne** from Harmonia Mundi played outstanding examples from this distinguished international company's catalogue. Her presentation was a convincing reassurance that, in the precarious recording business, there are still publishers who maintain standards of excellence.
- \* **Peter Lymbery** gave a quizzical review of the output of CD producers in the past year. Paying as much attention to repertoire as to performance, his choice included re-issues and bargain issues.
- \* Historian, singer and speaker **Ted Maidment** took a fresh look at Puccini's *La Bohème* and explained why the composer usually associated with guns, cars and melancholy was such a great master of vocal melody and orchestration.
- \* The versatile young pianist **Iain Farrington's** delightful piano recital included pieces by Elgar, Coates among others. He ended with evergreen Gershwin tunes, arranged especially for TMW.
- \* **David Cairns**, co-founder of the Chelsea Opera Group, which began in 1960 (when its conductor was a then an unknown 22-year old called Colin Davis!), traced the history of the group, illustrating his talk with recordings from its early days.

## OUT & ABOUT

Sunday was another full day with musical fare that was no less varied:

\* **Christopher Fifield**, conductor, music historian and author, demonstrated that the works of Max Bruch include a wealth of compositions other than his first violin concerto.

\* **Alastair Aberdare's** entertaining audio-visual presentation was based on his translation of Hector Berlioz' extremely funny book *Les Grottesques de la Musique (The musical Madhouse)*.

\* **Arthur Boyd** recalled his long friendship with pianist Eileen Joyce with anecdotes and illustrations of her life and works.

\* **The Farrington Ensemble** is a talented and experienced group of three young musicians, all recording soloists in their own right: Peter Sparks, clarinet; Graham Walker, cello and Iain Farrington, piano. In their evening recital they showed their expertise, as a group and individually, in classical and contemporary works.

They played works by Mozart, Brahms and Bruch, de Falla's *Five Spanish Folksongs*, Iain's own composition *Elegy* and ended with his vivacious arrangement of two songs by Gershwin. This allowed the clarinet free range in a sparkling demonstration of jazz at its best and left the audience clamouring for more.

### Late-night Entertainment

The stalwart went to bed around the witching hour after late-night presentations. On Saturday, in a thought-provoking comment *Clouds over Hyperion*, **Robert Hardcastle** considered the decision in the Court of Appeal that was an almost-fatal financial

blow to the celebrated recording company and played some of its recent recordings.

On Sunday, **Kevin Ryland** produced a few surprises when he took us *Back to the Twenties* and ended another great weekend with an affectionate glimpse of music from the Charleston era.

If you would like to know more about the TMW, or be on the mailing list for details of this year's weekend from 17-20 November, please contact Friends of Torbay, Lawn Cottage, Camden Park, Tunbridge Wells TN2 4TN; tel: 01892 525020

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## ANNUAL DATES FOR YOUR MUSIC DIARY

There are three musical highlights of the year for RMS members. All have been going for many years and are always very well attended – some regulars arrange part of their annual holidays around the respective dates!

One such event is the **FRMS Music Weekend** in the Spring, usually at the end of April and currently held in the Daventry Hotel.

Also in the Spring, at the end of March or beginning of April, is the **Yorkshire Regional Group's Music Weekend**. This is held in the Spa Crown Hotel, Scarborough.

The other is the **Torbay Music Weekend (TMW)** organised by the Friends of Torbay in mid-November at The Palace Hotel in Torquay. All these events offer a real treat of good music, good food and good company in first-class accommodation – who could ask for more?

## Happy Birthday to You!

\* \* \* \* \*

This was the first song to be sung in outer space, by the Apollo IX astronauts on 8 March 1969.

As this is such a notable milestone year for the Federation and also for many RMS groups it seems appropriate to give a bit more information about the traditional greeting.

The music for the song was written in the 1890s by an American schoolteacher, Millicent Hill. Her sister Patti, also a schoolteacher, wrote the lyrics, originally *Good morning to all*. The song caught on in schools throughout the USA. Patti changed the words to *Happy Birthday to You* and this version was published in 1935. In 1988 the rights were sold to Warner Communications for a cool \$28 million (£19m)! Along with *For he's a Jolly Good Fellow* and *Auld Lang Syne*, the song is one of the three most popular songs in the English language.

# Respighi's Ladies

by Anthony Barker

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To say that a composer has a complex personality is hardly earth shattering. Respighi's was multifaceted and determined the way in which he shaped his operas and created characters of great depth and drama. It was the difference in the way he handled the rape of two of the heroines of his nine operas that made me focus on his portrayal of all these ladies. Sadly, only three fragments of his first opera *Re Enzo* survive, providing no real clue to its heroine.

## Semirama

In this, his second opera, Respighi has given us an anti-heroine recorded in history as the most beautiful, cruel, powerful and lustful of oriental queens. This was Semirama, Queen of Babylon, who reigned as regent in about 800 BC and about whom little else is known. This gave Respighi a broad canvas on which to portray her.

His story is of the triumphant return to Babylon of the young general Merodach, whom the lustful Queen Semirama decides to have for herself, displacing the Chaldean Princess Susiana, at whom she looks murderously. To marry Merodach, Semirama has to break her promise to share her throne with Prince Falasar (her husband's murderer and kidnapper of her son). At her wedding to Merodach, their kiss is interrupted by Susiana, to whom Falasar has revealed that Merodach is Semirama's lost son. Intending to kill Falasar, in the dark Merodach stabs Semirama by mistake. She dies at his feet, saved from incest but her lust and deceit cost her life.

## Marie Victoire and Lucrezia

These, his third and ninth operas, contrast the handling of the rape of two married women. They were written 22 years apart and each rape takes place in times of political upheaval; the sanctity of marriage being assaulted while the stability of the state was in question. Both women are highborn and, even under the threat of death, Marie Victoire remains an innocent throughout the story. Sinned against and having to bear alone the knowledge of her defilement; she is unable to call for help from her husband, whom she believes to be dead. Until the trial she never says that she has been assaulted, simply repeating how tired she is. With subtlety, Respighi allows the outrage to emerge gradually.

Lucrezia is altogether a stronger character. Calling for her husband, she quite openly tells him and others of her rape, demanding vengeance. Conscious of her defilement, unlike Marie, she kills herself; waiting only for the assurance that she would be avenged.

Marie Victoire is indicted as an aristocrat and taken into custody in the first year of the French Republic. While under sentence, she is raped by a childhood friend, only to be spared execution when Robespierre is assassinated. Believing her husband dead, she lives deep in the misery of her dishonour, tending her son, the result of the rape.

High drama comes when her rapist and Maurice, her returned husband, meet. At Maurice's trial for Robespierre's murder, Marie Victoire begs his forgiveness for allowing another to possess her. Shamed, the rapist stands and admits his guilt as assassin and ravisher, then kills himself.

*Lucrezia* is the well-known story of Prince Tarquinio, who doubts Collatino's claim of his wife's chastity. Tarquinio goes to Lucrezia, threatening her with death if she does not submit. When this fails, he ravishes her. Lucrezia tells Collatino and her father of her rape, and demands that they avenge her dishonour. Collatino swears that he loves her still, but, unable to bear the stigma, Lucrezia kills herself. Collatino and her father and their comrades swear to overthrow the Etruscan monarchy of the Tarquins. So rises the dawn of the Roman Republic.

## La Bella Dormente nel Bosco (Sleeping Beauty)

Completed in 1922, this opera was originally a marionette piece and the character of the princess is pure and predictable, the old romance being without surprises. Writing for marionettes was then fashionable, not least because the small forces involved permitted wealthy patrons of the arts to put on performances at their homes.

It is interesting that Manuel de Falla's *Master Peter's Puppet Show* was written in the same period, being first performed the year after *Sleeping Beauty*. Respighi was delighted to work in this genre because, unlike singers, the puppets did not complain or gossip. After a performance the lid of their box was firmly shut and there could be no hint of scandal to taint the heroine.

## Belfagor

In this, Respighi's only comic opera, Belfagor is an arch-devil sent by the powers of hell to determine whether marriage is truly the source of all troubles and sins. To test the nature of marriage, he offers a fortune to an old quack for the hand of one of his daughters. He chooses Candida, who is already engaged to Baldo. She fails to say 'I will' at the marriage ceremony, thus rendering the marriage null and void. She then refuses to consummate her forced marriage to Belfagor and elopes with Baldo, having outwitted the devil.

Candida is portrayed as a true and loving young woman, who yearns for Baldo even as she is sold into marriage. She descends into deceit at the wedding and, as Belfagor's wife, becomes unyielding and disagreeable. Then, dissembling, she goes to her true love, honouring her original pledge to Baldo. At the end she has to convince Baldo that she is the simple virgin he first loved, though it is clear that she is no longer either simple or trusting.



## La Campana Sommersa (The Sunken Bell)

Rautendelein, the water nymph in this fantasy, fascinated Respighi. Her character appealed to the romanticism within his own nature. He matches her and her fairy world against the solid reality of Enrico's loving wife and children. Rautendelein is a mischievous spirit, who falls in love with Enrico, using her wiles to nurse and then entrap him, paying no heed to warnings. She shows no mercy to his family in entrapping and

keeping him. Yet, at the end, having exhibited her frivolity, love, egocentricity and lack of care for others, as well as her cunning and magic powers, she shows him forgiveness and magnanimity as the sun rises on his death.

This is the story of Enrico, the bell caster, who is injured when elves cause the bell he is bringing to a new chapel to fall into the lake. Despite warnings not to meddle with humans, Rautendelein attends to him and uses her magic powers to persuade him to leave his family, to join her and make a fabulous bell for a pantheistic temple. Although the pastor anathematizes him, Enrico agrees to do so, provided the sunken bell does not ring. Deserted by him, Enrico's wife throws herself into the lake, causing the sunken bell to sound, whereupon Enrico abandons the fairy world and Rautendelein.

Finally, having lost his family, he searches for Rautendelein and she forgives his desertion of her. Only act two is staged as reality. Respighi directed that the rest be deliberately contrived to convey, visually and musically, a world of pure fantasy in which Rautendelein will flourish.

## Maria Egiziaca

Maria is a prostitute in 6<sup>th</sup> century Alexandria. She enjoys her profession until she meets a pilgrim bound for Jerusalem. Curious and adventurous, she goes too, paying the fare with her body. When they arrive at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the pilgrim, knowing her character, prevents Maria from entering. But her curiosity is transmuted into a desire for forgiveness. She confesses her sins and an angel directs her to the life of an anchorite. After receiving Communion she goes off into the desert.

Forty years later the monk Zozimus finds her and covers her nakedness with his cloak. She seeks his blessing and, recognising the light of paradise in her eyes, he asks for hers. Maria dies at his feet in a state of grace.

Maria is probably the most appealing of Respighi's heroines, with her progress from heedless hedonism through curiosity to faith and redemption. The calm and clarity in the music with its Gregorian melodies mirrors her progress and her plea for absolution has simplicity and great beauty; there is no need for dramatic orchestral effects.

The music sung by Maria grows progressively more beautiful, reflecting neither the decay of youth nor her advance to bent old age. Instead it shows the enlightenment of the harlot finding her painful way to salvation.

It is an amusing irony that Respighi's friend, the fastidious de Falla, tried to prevent this story of a prostitute being performed on the same bill as his *Master Peter's Puppet Show* at the International Festival of Contemporary Music at La Scala, Milan.

## **La Fiamma** (The Flame)

In this opera Silvana, second wife of Governor Basilio, changes from a suppressed innocent and kind guardian into a tormented soul who is fascinated and tempted by her mother's witchcraft. Silvana uses these inherited gifts to procure her stepson Donello. Her passion turns to love and she cruelly rejects Basilio's love. At the end of this melodrama, she falters in her assertion of innocence and is condemned.

Set in 7<sup>th</sup> century Ravenna, the opera shows the witch Agnese gaining refuge with Silvana. When dragged to the stake, Agnese accuses Silvana's mother of having used witchcraft to trap Basilio into marrying Silvana. When Donello returns from Byzantium Silvana is enraptured by him and charms him to become her lover.

The lovers are discovered and Basilio tells Silvana that he knows her mother used her skills to entrap him, but that now he truly loves her. She answers

that she wishes him dead, whereupon he dies before her. Accused of using witchcraft to procure his death, Silvana is tried and cursed as a witch by the bishop. The flame represents her mother's blood, the poetry of her finding true love and finally the torch, which will set alight the pyre as she is burnt at the stake.

## **The Eight Ladies**

Busoni wrote that the music of an opera should convey its psychological content and the moods and thoughts of the characters. This Respighi achieved. He was seen by some to have a complex personality, in which ascetic ideals, mysticism and worldliness coexisted.

Each of these characteristics was applied to his heroines, bringing to them an unusual depth and variety. We have the idealised extreme of fairy tale characters and innocence plunging through religious fervour and pantheism to worldly temptations and down to the depths of human lust, violence and murder.

Proving that he did not need brilliant orchestration to sustain his music and his characters, Respighi made use of unaccompanied arias in *Lucrezia*. However, he skilfully used this talent elsewhere to

# **CYLINDERS TO CDs**

## **A Weekend Course**

**If you enjoy nostalgia then you will enjoy this!**

### **With sessions on:**

How did it all begin? (1877/1888);  
Breakthrough! The microphone and the "talkies" (1925/26);  
Visit to the World of Mechanical Music Museum at Northleach;  
Commercial radio, disc-cutters and tape recorders;  
Music to measure: session composers, signature tunes and film music;  
Media mix and the latest in recording technology

### **Organised by:**

John Gilks and Gavin Mist (CLPGS board member)

### **Venue:**

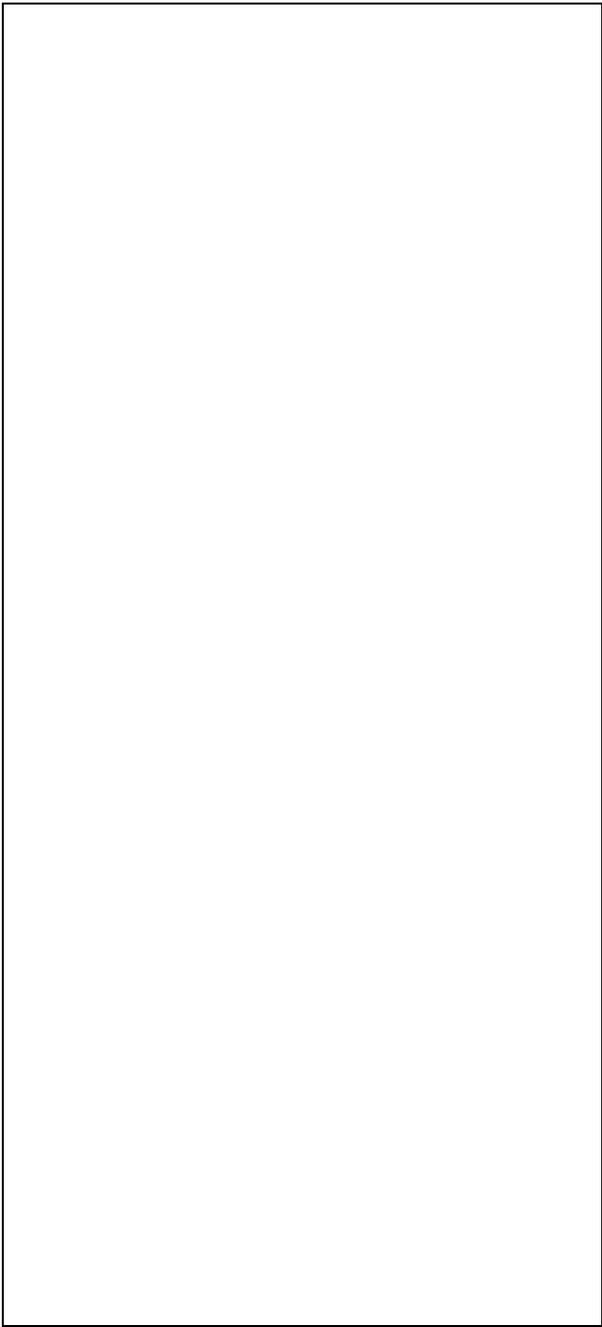
Farncombe Estate Adult Learning Centre  
Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7LJ  
Telephone: 0845 230 8590, Fax: 10386 854350 or  
E-mail to: enquiries@Farncombe Estate.co.uk

The course runs from dinner of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May until lunch on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2006

All rooms are en suite and most have views over the Vale of Evesham

**Please make bookings direct with the College**

enhance the plights of his heroines and the drama of the worlds in which they lived.



## REVIEWS

### East and West, Bach at its Best

From Select Music and Video Distribution come two very different but, in their own ways, equally fine issues of Bach works.

#### Cantata Series

In the last few years excellent performances of Bach have come from Japan and on the BIS label Masaaki Suzuki and Bach Collegium Japan (BCJ) perform the series of chorale-based cantatas with technical perfection. Bach wrote these in Leipzig, one for every Sunday in the 1724-25 church year, basing them on a popular hymn, rather than on the Gospel for the day. Volume 28 contains numbers 26, 62, 116 and 139.

Masaaki Suzuki began playing as a church organist at the age of 12 but also studied the harpsichord. In 1990 he founded BCJ with the aim of introducing Japanese audiences to baroque music played on period instruments. BCJ consists of a baroque orchestra and a 12-voice choir that has been acclaimed, not only throughout Japan but also worldwide.

In this sequence Suzuki makes frequent use of the harpsichord in place of the organ and the result is a dance-like interpretation, unlike some heavier versions. Although the overall effect is superb, with purity of tone from the choir and faultless playing from the orchestra, I found a lack of dynamic lyricism, tending to monotony in places. But this is personal carping and for those who go for impeccable performance and precision this is a must.

Bach Collegium Japan, director Masaaki Suzuki; Yukari Nonoshita, soprano; Robin Blaze, counter-tenor; Makoto Sakurada, tenor; Peter Kooji, bass.

**BIS SACD 1451 vol. 28 TMS**

#### Brandenburg Concertos

From the naïve catalogue is a sparkling new performance of Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* played with vibrant charm and the kind of romantic interpretation one expects from Rinaldo Alessandrini and the orchestral ensemble Concerto Italiano. Alessandrini's inspired treatment of the scores makes one sit up and take new notice of familiar music.

Each concerto is uniquely orchestrated and Alessandrini emphasises the individuality of the different works and their instrumentation.

The package contains two CDs and a splendid

DVD featuring glimpses of the recording sessions and interviews with Alessandrini who explains the progress of this remarkably scintillating recording. He also gives a comprehensive analysis of the works in the accompanying booklet. **naïve OP 30412**

**BBC Music Direct £22.99, p & p incl. TMS**

### World-first from Naxos

Ralph Vaughan Williams' little-known cantata *Willow-Wood* was written as a piece for baritone and piano in 1903 and first performed as an extended version in 1909 but, astonishingly, has not been repeated until this recording.

Scored for baritone, women's choir and orchestra, this setting of part of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The House of Life* is a fascinating amalgam of styles, folk-song simplicity blending with more complex scoring. The magnificent baritone, Roderick Williams, gives a beautiful performance with sensitive phrasing and superb diction.

Other Vaughan Williams rarities on this CD include the choral cantata *The Sons of Light* and *The Voice out of the Whirlwind*. A version of *The Variants of Dives and Lazarus* for strings and harp is rather bland compared with other performances but tantalising hints of the powerful *Sea Symphony* are given in *Toward the Unknown Region*. Lovers of British music will value this CD.

Royal Liverpool PO and Choir/David Lloyd-Jones; Roderick Williams, baritone.

**Naxos 8.557798. £5.99 TMS**

### British Composer Series, Vol.2

This latest CD in the series features orchestral works by Matthew Curtis, a composer who was born in 1959, holds down a day job and writes music in his spare time. *Romanza* and *Autumn Song* are included on this CD and reinforce a belief in their quality as orchestral showpieces. Between 1999 and 2001 Curtis composed his three-movement *Sinfonietta*. He modestly says that, in order to avoid comparison with the likes of, for example, Beethoven and Sibelius, (which could only end in tears!) he did not call it a symphony.

The first movement doubles up as an allegro and scherzo. The second, subtitled *West of Dingle*, is a romantic melody that lingers in the

## REVIEWS

memory. Curtis says it had its beginnings on a glorious July day on the Dingle Peninsular in Kerry and it can stand alone as a descriptive seascape. The final movement is a reminder of themes that have gone before until a rousing coda dominated by the trombones banish the earlier dark moods once and for all.

This largely self-taught composer has been developing a recognisable style of his own. I particularly like his use of the cor anglais and bassoon in his orchestration. If only he could give up his day job and compose full time!

All other works warrant repeated listening and both CDs in this series are a sound investment for any club that enjoys the works of other melody makers such as Tchaikovsky, Coates or Richard Rodgers – and, dare I say it, even Beethoven or Sibelius.

Royal Ballet Sinfonia, cond. Gavin Sutherland.  
**Cameo 2035** Murray Nash, Uxbridge RMS

### **Books from Elgar Editions**

#### **A Special Flame**

**The music of Elgar and Vaughan Williams**

*Edited by John Norris and Andrew Neill*

This book is based upon the proceedings of an International Symposium organised jointly by the Elgar and Vaughan Williams Societies in March 2003.

Superficially the two composers had much in common and dominated British music throughout the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most contributors found the two had a more or less indefinable ‘Britishness’ in common but, seemingly, not much else. The two composers knew each other, but not well and their relations were cordial.

Elgar was more or less self-taught and had not been exposed to the overwhelming influence of Stanford and Parry. At the time, they dominated musical academia and had a strong influence on Ralph Vaughan Williams (who had also studied with Ravel).

It seems strange now but, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, composers were classified as followers of either Brahms or Wagner. Here, Elgar was seen as a Wagnerian and Vaughan Williams as a Brahmsian.

The last chapter is perhaps the most interesting in that it discusses why the 11 symphonies of these two composers are not played more often

overseas. There was no clear conclusion except for the fact of taste on the part of concert promoters and conductors. However the recordings of these 11 symphonies sell quite well overseas! The book contains much fascinating material and will appeal to admirers of both composers.

*A. Baker*

**Elgar Editions, 185pp, HB, £15**

#### **Elgar in America**

**Elgar’s American connections 1895-1934**

*Author Richard Smith.*

“*Elgar hated America – much as he liked Americans*”. So wrote one of Elgar’s most respected biographers, Dr. Percy Young. In his latest book, Richard Smith uses the letters and diaries of Elgar and his wife Alice, many of them previously unpublished, to explore this seeming contradiction by Dr. Young. Not surprisingly, the picture that emerges is much more blurred than at first sight.

This immensely readable book describes the often humorous adventures of a thoroughly English couple confronting a culture – and climate- much more foreign than they expected. Often, their first encounters with Americans left both parties confused. While Americans saw Elgar as “*the typical Englishman, silent, reserved and unsocial – until after dinner*”, Elgar wrote home that Americans “*mean well and are most kind.....and do not see any fun in it but are deadly serious.*”

The author’s comprehensive account of the Elgars’ American connections includes not only the musical elite, such as conductors Walter Damrosch and Frederick Stock; soprano Corinne Rider-Kelsey; composer Horatio Parker and many others, but also the movers and shakers of American society. Among these were notables such as Andrew Carnegie, Julia Worthington and the President’s glamorous and vivacious daughter, Alice Roosevelt Longworth. The book ends with a review of Elgar’s trip up the Amazon and his friendship with the record producer Fred Gaisberg, who played a great part in Elgar’s later career.

Lavishly illustrated and with informative appendices, this meticulously researched narrative is essential reading for any student of Elgar and gives a fascinating insight into the American music scene before a world war changed society on both sides of the Atlantic forever. **Elgar Editions, 256pp, HB, £17.50 TMS**

## NEWS & VIEWS

### FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

In future issues of the *Bulletin*, from time to time and where it is an advantage to do so, there will be a small section under this title. This will give an opportunity to disseminate information to Societies in between more formal gatherings such as the AGM or the Music Weekend. We also hope it will serve to bring the FRMS Committee closer to its affiliates. My first message on these pages is on the lines of "Welcome home".

I would also ask you to study the following article on **Regeneration**. Its aim is to help struggling societies and promote new ones and is the result of much research and hard work by FRMS Committee member John Maidment.

#### Welcome

On behalf of the Committee, may I give a welcome or, should I say, a welcome back, to Thelma Shaw as our new Editor of the *Bulletin*. Thelma has served previously as Editor from 1992 until Spring 1999 and thus brings a wealth of expertise and journalistic know-how. We are indeed fortunate to regain her services.

We are confident that the *Bulletin* will continue to prosper under her wise leadership. Our Editor is assured that she has the full support of the committee and at the same time complete editorial freedom.

The *Bulletin* is the main source of communication within the Federation and for this reason I would wish to see an increase both in the number of readers and in the number of subscriptions. In an ideal world every member of all our affiliates would receive a copy. In the real world we would be happy if each society ordered two more copies. Maybe one of them could be used as a raffle prize.

As we welcome Thelma we say 'goodbye' to her predecessor, Arthur Baker, who was also her successor last time round! Not only did Arthur do sterling work on the *Bulletin* but he was also a valued member of the FRMS Committee. He was, as the saying goes, "his own man". As a man of political integrity and strong principle, his contribution to the Committee will be greatly missed.

We are also very sorry to learn that Brian Bishop has resigned from CD Selections. For many years he has presented its products in presentations all over the country and at music weekends. He has become well known to countless RMS members, from Land's End to John o' Groats; they will miss his cheery presence at various gatherings. We extend our very good wishes to him and hope that he will continue as a presenter in his own right.

*John Davies, Chairman*

FRMS

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## REGENERATION POLICY

*A summary by John Maidment*

### What the FRMS is doing

After much discussion over the past few months, the FRMS Committee has agreed an action plan to deal with:

- Societies in difficulties
- Promotion of new societies
- A structured publicity campaign to raise awareness of the existence of Recorded Music Societies on a national basis
- Maximising publicity for the forthcoming 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

## *NEWS & VIEWS*

### **Societies in difficulties**

The committee empowers the treasurer to offer financial assistance (up to a specified limit) to societies that are experiencing difficulties.

As a matter of policy, if a Federation committee member or Secretary hears that a society has a problem he will inform the committee. The committee member who is geographically nearest to that society will then offer help.

### **Promotion of new societies**

The *Bulletin*, the Newsletter and the Website will carry a small but prominent advertisement inviting people to form new societies. All replies to the Secretary. The *Bulletin*, the Newsletter and the Website will invite relatively new societies to give an account of their recent formation.

The total fees for a society's first year should be a fixed sum. This fixed sum shall be a proportion of the total cost for a 15-member society (say); the committee shall decide the proportion.

### **Publicity campaign**

The Committee has agreed to a publicity programme to raise public awareness of Recorded Music Societies.

A database has been compiled of newspapers within the UK. A letter that invites people who enjoy classical music to consider joining a Recorded Music Society has been drawn up and will be sent to the newspapers for publication. The letter points out that there are currently 214 local groups in the UK, from Thurso to Torquay.

This process will be carried out on as a rolling process, with each region targeted in turn. The locations of society or societies will be included in the letter as appropriate. The FRMS secretary's contact details will be given as the first point of contact for England and the FRMS (Scottish Group) secretary will fulfil the same function north of the border. The FRMS website is also mentioned. Any referrals will be passed on to societies quickly.

A list of magazines has also been drawn up and in due course these will also be contacted. The question of local radio stations is still under consideration.

### **The Bulletin**

I have arranged to have the FRMS *Bulletin* listed in Benn's Media. Benn's Media is seen as the definitive catalogue of newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations etc and is used widely by advertisers to target audiences. There is a copy in all reference libraries. It is hoped that by being listed in Benn's the *Bulletin* will attract more advertisers.

## **What Societies can do**

### **Raise awareness locally**

Existing Societies should give thought to raising their profile within their community. Much can be achieved through networking and building good relationships with the local media. If you are not already doing so, send press releases to the local press before every meeting, Local papers are usually glad to carry such reports. Many papers run features on winter activities. Try to avoid paying for publicity at all costs!

Invite speakers from other local music societies/groups and make a practice of sending a copy of your season's programme to them.

It is encouraging to see that some societies are already taking initiatives. West Wickham is an example and details of its activities are in the *Bulletin*, issue 143.

It is clear from experience that, although advertising can play a limited role in attracting new members, networking is a far more effective way of sustaining

## *NEWS & VIEWS*

your society. This means approaching other societies and organisations such as churches in your area.

### **Contribute to local festivals and events**

You could also think about a fund-raising event for a local charity. Apart from raising money for a good cause this also generates a lot of positive publicity and can also attract new members. The Carnoustie Recorded Music Society has held two events to date and raised just over £800 for a local cancer campaign. It was necessary to lower our sights artistically to attract a large audience; the first year the theme was *Seaside Comedians* (Max Miller *et al*) and the second year *Music Hall and Early Radio*. Nonetheless, all the members thoroughly enjoyed the evenings and did all they could to achieve success. This year the theme was *Musical Theatre*.

Recorded Music Societies can be perceived as cloistered and only for the real classical music buffs. This myth needs to be dispelled. Getting people through the door to prove that you don't bite could well be achieved through innovative programming - perhaps a jazz and swing night?

### **What Regional Committees can do**

I recently floated the idea of asking each regional committee to identify a 'Development Officer'. The principal role would be to identify communities within your patch where setting up a new society might be feasible. The FRMS have a starter kit for new societies, and funding for a new society is available through a number of sources. The committee and I will give all the help we can.

#### Classicalmania

**Finally, for those of you who are internet literate, MSN has a community called *classicalmania*.** This is a discussion board where you can join others to discuss any topic related to classical music; you can also initiate a discussion. The members are extremely knowledgeable and some members of the FRMS committee have joined already with a view to promoting Recorded Music Societies.

You will need to apply for membership (a formality) and chose a *nom de plume*.

The link is <http://groups.msn.com/CIASiCaLMaNiA>

### **Funding**

The National Lottery Awards for All is probably well known to you. It is worth mentioning that Thurso Recorded Music Society received a grant to pay for speakers' travel and accommodation.

[http://www.awardsforall.org.uk/england/england\\_main.html](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk/england/england_main.html)

Local Authorities in Scotland give Arts and Heritage grants and no doubt there will be an equivalent scheme in England.

Websites worth looking at are:

Guide to Arts funding in England –

[http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive\\_2003/arts\\_funding\\_guide.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2003/arts_funding_guide.htm)

VolResource

<http://www.volresource.org.uk/info/grantorg.htm#online>

British Arts

<http://www.britisharts.co.uk/artsfunding.htm>

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## *NEWS & VIEWS*

*John Maidment, FRMS Committee*

*YOUR idea for regeneration might be a winner!  
Let us know about it so that we can pass it on.*

### WHAT'S IN THE SECRETARY'S POSTBAG?

*Much of Tony Baines' work as FRMS Secretary deals with the various services we offer and involves contact with societies or individuals. In this account he writes of some of the enquiries that might be of interest to readers.*

#### **Just a Routine Enquiry**

During the year 2004-5 I had 17 requests from people searching for the nearest RMS group. Of these, 14 were sent by email. It is surprising how many of us wrinklies take up computing in our dotage - (profuse apologies to the minority of non-wrinklies!).

Although there are surprising gaps on the FRMS map, I can usually give information of societies within striking distance of the enquirer. But it is not always so. I once had to tell a gentleman in St. David's that his nearest society was 60 miles away in Port Talbot.

One particularly interesting enquiry was from a lady in a town in Sussex. She was trying to revive the local RMS which had closed down three years previously. I have not heard from her for some time but, if you need any more help, Gwen, please get in touch with us.

A more curious request was from a lady asking for contact details of all RMS secretaries because "she wanted to join but didn't want to be tied down."!. When told that we have over 200 societies, from Cornwall to Caithness and from Clwyd to the coast of East Anglia, she reluctantly settled for South London. I wonder if she was trying to sell us something?

Other societies are keen to make contact with others within striking distance, with a view to exchanging speakers. It is good to know that we can help the movement to thrive in this way.

And here's a coincidence. Two men had agreed to speak at a RMS but admitted to losing their instructions and contact details. One could not remember the name of the society but knew it was in East London. The other remembered the name of the society but not the place. Astonishingly, although, presumably, they did not know each other and their enquiries were some months apart, they were both looking for the same society, namely Forest RMS in East London.

The second person had looked on our website and discovered the Forest Music Club in Wiltshire but realised this was the wrong place and he should be in London. Incidentally, I have received an enquiry for the nearest society to Tower Bridge. Can it be Forest RMS?

Two of the more unusual requests illustrate the diversity of what we might be able to offer. One member was concerned in setting up a non-musical club and realised that our Handbook of Guidance might be useful, which I was pleased to send him. I think the club was devoted to a historical subject and I am pretty sure that the society involved was again the Forest RMS.

On another occasion, a member in the South wanted to discuss how to become a visiting presenter. I last heard that he had made good progress.

#### **Milestone Anniversaries**

Using information collected and collated by my hardworking colleague Graham Kitley, I have formed a database of when societies were formed. We have revived the practice of sending congratulations to societies on achieving significant anniversaries but, regrettably, the database was not complete in time for me to contact every group with an important anniversary in 2005. You will be hearing from us, with apologies and greetings that are belated but no less hearty. However, we did congratulate:

25 years: Wingerworth MC:

40 years: S Cheshire, Letchworth

60 years: Croydon, Derby, Dudley, Newark, Stockport.

75 years: Horsham (in 2004)

Rochdale *Gramophone* Society (good for them!) also celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> this year and wonders whether there are any older groups still in existence. In fact, Dulwich and Forest Hill RMS began in 1929 and the City of London Phonograph & Gramophone Society Ltd in 1919.

But the laurel for seniority at the great age of 116 goes to King's Lynn Music Club which, astonishingly, started in 1890 when Brahms, Tchaikovsky and co. were still alive and Teddy Elgar was a young man!

Spare a thought for Music Calling at Cheltenham YMCA. Because of falling membership and loss of venue the society folded in April, just before its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

#### **Can you help?**

We still have a few gaps in the database and we would be grateful if you could tell us the formation dates of societies in: Broadstairs, Chichester Arts, Duns Tew, East Barnet, Falkirk, Gatehead, Horsforth, Kempsey, Leicester, Malvern, New Dean, Newton Abbot, Rushton, Ryde, Scarborough, Southport. We also need to know dates for The Barbirolli and Berlioz Societies and Bristol U3A.

## Reflections and Recollections

Vice-President Roderick Shaw looks back over his long association with the FRMS

**Foreword from FRMS Chairman, John Davies:** *Some two years ago I first spoke to Roderick Shaw, FRMS Vice President about his reflections and recollections of almost 60 years. When he became Federation Secretary in 1950 he worked on committee with the founders of the National Federation of Gramophone Societies, which later became FRMS. I found his reminiscences fascinating and urged him to put pen to paper so that all members of the movement could share these experiences. Arthur Baker, the then Editor of the Bulletin, was keen to publish this account as soon as it was available. This edition of the Bulletin carries the first part of these memoirs and I am confident that you will be as enthralled as I was to read them.*

How does one start to recall accurately the experiences of 59 years involvement at local, regional and national levels in the NFGS, later to become the FRMS? Largely by trawling through literally hundreds of documents that I have often been tempted to throw away! Old Bulletins, AGM minutes and a wealth of assorted correspondence have all helped to jog my memory and throw light on what makes the recorded music movement tick. This hugely condensed account is a bird's-eye view of its gradual evolution and changing emphasis. In compiling it I have savoured again many happy meetings with the great personalities in the music world.

### **In the Beginning**

It all started in 1947 when, as a young man, I joined the Cambridge Music Circle. As I moved around the country I became a member of six other RMS groups: Ealing, Orpington, West Wickham, Bath, and Devizes, finally coming to settle in Norwich.

When I was elected as Federation Secretary at the AGM in 1950, I was young and untried and found myself among the founders of the Federation and others far more senior and experienced. The venue was the Decca Recording Studios in West Hampstead. Here was I, with mixed feelings of pleasure and trepidation, at one of the big centres of the recording industry, ready to embark on a new venture. And to add to the excitement there was the huge delight of seeing and hearing Wilhelm Backhaus and Kathleen Ferrier as part of the entertainment after the meeting.

### **Committee Responsibilities**

The Committee Report for 1949/50 recorded 253 affiliates and stated: *“the interest in the movement continues to expand and hardly a day passes without a letter calling for ‘the sixpenny-worth of information (often minus the sixpence) on how to form a society.’”* This is a fairly rare occurrence today. In 1950 many societies had taken umbrage

at the 1949 increase in the Federation fee and the Treasurer reported a surplus of £49. 6s 5d (£49.32  $\frac{1}{2}$ p). The duties of the Committee were much the same then as today, but with the addition of maintaining a record library. This was a well-used service for society programmes in the days when records were something of a luxury and not so widely available among members. But it was quite a task to pack and send off 78s in special boxes, receive them back and inspect them, set up and follow lines of enquiry about any that came back damaged and keep tabs on everything.

And postage was quite costly. Between 1947 and 1967 some 3,000 parcels containing nearly 7000 records were posted to societies. Eventually, the record companies were reluctant to offer discs for the library. Demand from societies also declined and the library service was withdrawn in 1969.

It is worth noting that the Officers and Committee elected at the 1950 AGM represented societies in Ipswich, Gillingham (Kent), Dulwich and Forest Hill, Orpington, Ealing, Weymouth, Acton, Cheltenham, Chelmsford, Ickenham and High Wycombe, a markedly southern orientation. Over the years this has shifted gradually north. In 1950 a suggestion to hold the AGM outside London was not favoured and the 1951 AGM was again at the Decca studios and attended by 240 delegates.

### **Bold Step out of London**

However, in 1953 the Committee stepped boldly into the unknown to hold the first AGM outside London, this time in a foggy Manchester. With considerable help from the Hallé Club, the meeting was held in the Lesser Free Trade Hall. Since then, AGMs have been held all over the country. At Leicester, in 1955, 330 affiliated societies were reported; the highest number of 372 affiliates was reached in 1959. It was also in Leicester, at the 1970 AGM, that it was first decided to have a buffet meal rather than a dinner, which had proved difficult from time to time.

## NEWS & VIEWS

The first stirrings for incorporation as a Company Limited by Guarantee began in 1958 at Cheltenham and at the 18<sup>th</sup> AGM in Southampton in 1960 the NGFS Committee became incorporated. Many moons later, at the 56<sup>th</sup> AGM in Derby, the FRMS as a whole was incorporated.

### **Ripples on the Water**

Sadly, the following years saw the first of two serious disputes within the Federation, both of which threatened its very existence. In both cases, the disputes revolved around individual Committee members making unilateral decisions and taking actions unsanctioned by Committee procedures. I will limit myself to saying that, as clearly indicated in the Constitution, the Federation's affairs are managed by a Committee and the Committee as a whole makes decisions.

Thus it was in 1963, when, after a difficult year and an indecisive Special General Meeting, there was an election for a Secretary at the AGM in Putney. Sir Adrian Boulton, our President was there, with 160 other delegates. The outstanding entertainment on that occasion is described below.

### **The Meeting went On...and On!**

It was a long meeting with eight motions on the agenda and also a surprising development over the election of the existing auditors. They had already been proposed and seconded when a delegate from the south, who felt that the north was not adequately represented on the national council, proposed two new nominations! They were two members of Scarborough GS, both chartered accountants, who were duly seconded and carried the vote, amid much acclamation. However, they reigned for only a year or two.

In its report for the AGM of that year, the Bulletin carried a note about societies that were failing. At Hurlingham there was concern that “*not everything was done by the Federation to assist societies in difficulties.*” But when asked to give suggestions on how help could be given, delegates were not at all forthcoming!

### **Dwindling Attendance**

Six years later, things seemed to have gone downhill and there was not a quorum for the 1969 AGM in Church House, Westminster, London. Thirty delegates were required and only 25 societies were represented. This despite the fact those societies in Greater London alone could have covered the quorum more than twice over. So, for the first time in history, the Federation

Committee were unsupported by an adequate number of either delegates or proxies. The following Bulletin carried a long and pointed article directed at ‘The Missing 275’. It fell on stony ground, however, for the following year, at Leicester, only 38 societies were represented and, as far as I recall, attendance has never picked up to what it was in those early years.

At the 1969 meeting the Putney delegate asked whether the words “Recorded Music” should replace “Gramophone” in the Federation's title. But it would be another 20 years (1989) before NFGS became FRMS.

### **A Wealth of Entertainment**

After every AGM that I can remember, there has always been excellent hospitality and entertainment, usually provided by the host society. However, I must mention three memorable occasions in particular. The one in Putney in 1963 was outstanding for the *divertissement* after the formal business. The 250 people at dinner, were entertained with highly amusing speeches by Hans Keller (BBC), Jennifer Vyvyan, Stephen Trier (bass clarinet) and Philip Hope-Wallace (*Gramophone* critic).

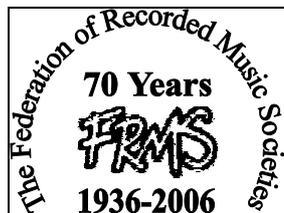
Then a short harp recital by Osian Ellis gave way to a rip-roaring selection of fun and games by Michael Flanders and Donald Swann, hot from their revue at the Haymarket Theatre. The witching hour was striking as the party broke up after one of the most successful (and costly!) meetings in memory. I wonder how many still remember that year?

Similarly, in London in 1973, there were 120 delegates among 463 members and friends at a performance of *Il Trovatore* by the Sadlers Wells Opera at the Coliseum. There is no doubt that the very helpful PR manager and the discount offered to us contributed greatly to this event's success. The seat prices ranged from £2.10 to £2.90!

And in 1995, the 53<sup>rd</sup> AGM in Birmingham was followed by a concert at Symphony Hall. A good number of delegates and friends heard the CBSO conducted by Simon Rattle give a wonderful performance of Beethoven works.

Those three instances are unforgettable. I wonder whether price and the necessary PR work beforehand limit any further such ventures?

*The next issue will carry Roderick's recollections of Federation Music Weekends and some of the memorable contributors.*



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