

MINUTES of the Eleventh Annual General Meeting of the British Clavichord Society

*held at 2.30 pm on Saturday, 6 May 2006,
at the Church of the Christian Community, Glenilla Road, London NW3*

Chairman: Garry Broughton. Secretary: Judith Wardman. Treasurer: David Hitchin

PRESENT 25 members

1. Apologies for absence had been sent by 33 members.
2. Minutes of the 10th Annual General Meeting, held on 16 April 2005, were circulated and were taken as read. Their approval and adoption were agreed by the meeting, and they were signed by the Chairman.
3. The Chairman gave this report:

After the many splendours of our tenth anniversary year I suppose it was inevitable that the last twelve months have shown lower levels of activity and enthusiasm – indeed, as many of you will know, the last AGM struggled to raise a quorum – whence the proposed changes to the constitution on the agenda paper before you.

We are faced with the continuing problems of rising hire fees for venues, dwindling audiences and what seems to be a trend away from historical keyboard instruments in favour of a return to the modern grand piano in Baroque repertory. Examples of this are: all the keyboard recitals at the Lufthansa Baroque Festival (currently taking place) on the piano; Angela Hewitt recording Couperin for the Hyperion label on the piano; less and less harpsichord on Radio 3 (and the only clavichord I heard during Radio 3's Bach week was broadcast at the same volume level as the preceding item on a large Baroque organ); and there is no clavichord recital at Hatchlands this summer. Perhaps what we need is some sensational news item to raise the clavichord profile such as: 'Recent research into Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks has revealed a sketch for a clavichord with a fretting system that spells out a coded message about Mary Magdalen'.

Casting gloom aside, there were many positive and enjoyable clavichord events in the last twelve months: Kasia Tomczak and Julian Perkins played delightful duets at our AGM in April 2005, and then at the end of that month eight clavichords were assembled at our first event in the West Country, a clavichord day organized by Richard Ireland and Paula Woods (to whom many thanks) and directed by Paul Simmonds, whose final recital included two works from our recent composition competition in the presence of the composers, Graham Lynch and Peter Nickol. A major event was Gustav Leonhardt's recital in the Holywell Music Room, Oxford (where I heard my first clavichord recital 50 years ago): most notable was his playing of Bach's *other* set of variations (the *Aria variata alla maniera Italiana*). In December there was an educational event at Trinity College, Greenwich, with John Henry and Terry Charlston, and in March this year Francis Knights (our archivist) gave a recital in Cambridge which included another work from our competition (Mark Argent's *Osterley Suite III*). Francis has recently resigned from the Committee and we thank him for all his work over the last nine years.

BCS members were involved in a variety of other activities during the past year: talks and recitals at the Seventh International Clavichord Symposium at Magnano were given by Messrs Bavington, Brauchli, Hogwood, Ledbetter, Ruys, Simmonds and Vermeij; Paul Simmonds directed a course on Bach's 48 at West Dean College and also recorded the Polonaises of W. F. Bach, whilst Christopher Hogwood's recording *The Secret Handel* has been released. Sadly Virginia Pleasants (recipient of a BCS award in 2004) went back to the USA. Committee member Darryl Martin was appointed Curator of the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments (which includes the Russell and now the Mirrey Collections – more about the latter later in this meeting). David Hitchin took over from Sheila Barnes as treasurer, and after his protracted battle with the banks to effect this changeover deserves a special vote of thanks for his efforts – our financial future is in safe hands. He also became the second officer of the Society to complete the construction of a clavichord in 2005.

Special thanks also to our secretary for editing a new and enlarged edition of our *International Clavichord Directory*, the essential clavichordist's vademecum, and thanks also to Peter Bavington for all his work as membership secretary and editor of our Newsletter – the inclusion of good-quality illustrations and music supplements greatly appreciated.

Future clavichord events will include: on July 22nd a Handel Day (talks and recitals) at the 'Handel' church of St Lawrence at Canons Park; Bridget Cunningham and Byron Mahoney (former and present committee members) playing clavichord and flute at William Morris's Kelmscott House, Hammersmith (23

September); two educational events, at the Birmingham Conservatoire on 1 October (thanks to Micaela Schmitz for organizing) and the Yehudi Menuhin School, Stoke d'Abernon, on 6 October (thanks to Richard Ireland). On 27-29 October there will be a Clavichord Symposium and Weekend at St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh, and on the 2nd of December a BCS Clavichord Day in Ealing, West London. I am hoping for a William Byrd Day in 2007.

There has been progress this year on the BCS's Clavichord Database, started some years ago by Michael Daniels in consultation with Peter Bavington among others. Mike is now joined by Simon Field, who is planning to offer a paper on the subject to the Edinburgh weekend.

By the way, I think I detect a growing interest in the clavichord's successor the square piano - should we become the British Clavichord and Square Piano Society and embrace square pianists as well?

Our television screens are full of programmes about people trying to alleviate the terrible stresses of modern life by redecorating their homes, moving to the country or to some remote foreign location, and ending up even more stressed in the process - it would be much cheaper and more rewarding to buy and play a clavichord as a soothing therapist, or as they said in the eighteenth century:

'Du Echo meiner Klagen
Mein treues Saitenspiel'

Finally I must express heartfelt thanks to my fellow officers and all the members of the Committee for their hard work and support over the past year.

4. Annual accounts and Treasurer's report.

The independently examined accounts for the year 2005 and the following report from the Treasurer were circulated:

It is only near the end of my first year in office that I have understood how much work other officers do on behalf of the Society. The Secretary and Membership Secretary do much of the work which in other societies is left to the Treasurer.

The change of signatories on the Bank and Building Society accounts was a very slow and frustrating business, and even an ex gratia payment of £100 hardly compensated us for the inconvenience and the delay in dealing with some of our work.

In most respects I have followed the conventions of the previous Treasurer, in particular attributing all income and expenses relating to an activity to that activity, so, for example, the publicity for a recital would be attributed to that recital and not to the general heading 'publicity'.

In earlier years we had Receipts and Payments Accounts, i.e. the transactions which were made during the calendar year. This has the disadvantage that when there are early or late payments the accounts do not present an accurate description of the year's business. In some years late payment of expenses resulted in their being attributed to the following year, and it was difficult to compare income and expenditure year by year. The alternative is an Income and Expenditure Account which analyses the obligations entered into during the year, even when payments are made early or late. I have moved towards this, and there are no longer lists of items paid after 31st December; they have been included in the analysis for the year, and their totals are now listed as creditors and debtors. In order to maintain continuity I have continued to list subscriptions in advance as income for the year in which they have been received, but they have been shown separately from the general fund in the balance carried forward. I am hoping that in future we will be able to include other assets, such as bookshop stock, on our balance sheet.

Brian Blandford has examined our accounts, and I am grateful to him for his work, as I am also grateful for the clear documentation which I received from our previous treasurer.

The carried forward balance at the end of 2003 was £10,802, at the end of 2004 was £9171 and at the end of 2005 was £8479. Remembering that last year we spent £975 on the directory and that this will probably not be repeated for several years, the present financial position is satisfactory.

We hold a larger balance than is strictly necessary for our present level of activity, but this may be necessary to fund future activities. The committee is eager to undertake new initiatives at the suggestion of members and when volunteers are available to implement them. Some officers are burdened with purely administrative work, and, if volunteers do not come forward to assist, the committee will have to consider whether to pay for assistance. The committee will consider these factors when deciding the future subscription rates.

The Treasurer clarified a point of detail in the accounts (the exclusion of the membership subscription to the 'Making Music' society from the heading 'Subs to other bodies' because it includes an element of insurance), and invited questions. There were none; the accounts were approved unanimously, with a vote of thanks to the Treasurer and Examiner.

5. Motions for amendments to the Constitution.

The following motions for amendments to the Constitution had been circulated to all members, as required by the Constitution:

a. That clause 8, section b., should be replaced with the following:

b) the members present may consider all the business of the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting but may not approve it, make any appointments, or hold any elections unless the meeting is quorate, where a quorum is sixteen members or ten per cent of the membership of the Society, whichever is the greater.

b. That a new section d. should be added to clause 8, as follows:

If the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting is inquorate on the appointed day, the existing Committee and Officers shall arrange a postal ballot allowing all eligible members to vote on all matters that would have been decided or put to a vote at the inquorate General Meeting. Voting papers for the postal ballot, with a copy of Reports and all other necessary information, should be dispatched within 30 days of the inquorate General Meeting. Conditions for the postal ballot shall be determined by the Committee and Officers on the model of an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting (see clauses 6–8). The existing Committee and Officers shall continue in office until the results of the ballot have been declared.

c. That clause 13 should be replaced with the following:

13. When an Officer of the Society resigns, becomes incapable, or ceases to carry out the duties of the post, the Committee may appoint any member of the Society to act in his or her place until the post can be filled by election at the next Annual General Meeting, in accordance with clause 9.

It was explained that these changes were proposed by the Committee because the existing Constitution did not specify what should be done if an Annual General Meeting were inquorate; further changes to the Constitution might well be put forward following a full-scale review during 2006-7.

The acceptance of these amendments was proposed by Garry Broughton, seconded by Derek Adlam, and agreed by a unanimous vote.

6. Election of committee members and officers

The following nominations had been received before the meeting:

Garry Broughton (Chairman), proposed by Karin Richter, seconded by David Hitchin
Judith Wardman (Secretary), proposed by David Hitchin, seconded by Paula Woods
Peter Bavington, proposed by David Hitchin, seconded by Karin Richter
David Griffel, proposed by Judith Wardman, seconded by Paula Woods
Byron Mahoney, proposed by Garry Broughton, seconded by Micaela Schmitz
Darryl Martin, proposed by Karin Richter, seconded by Julian Perkins
Julian Perkins, proposed by Peter Bavington, seconded by Micaela Schmitz
Karin Richter, proposed by Paula Woods, seconded by Peter Bavington
Micaela Schmitz, proposed by Garry Broughton, seconded by Paula Woods
Paul Simmonds, proposed by Micaela Schmitz, seconded by Garry Broughton
Kasia Tomczak-Feltrin, proposed by Peter Bavington, seconded by Judith Wardman

The Chairman mentioned that these elections would leave one vacancy on the Committee (the maximum number of members, under the Constitution, being fourteen). Further nominations were invited, but none was made. All those nominated were elected unopposed. The Chairman welcomed new committee members and thanked the existing committee members and his fellow officers.

7. Election of Examiner of the Accounts

Brian Blandford had agreed to serve for another year. He was proposed by Peter Bavington, seconded by Paul Simmonds, and elected unanimously.

8. Any other business

1. The Chairman's suggestion that the Society should be re-formed as a Clavichord and Square Piano Society was debated.

2. Judith Wardman proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, which was carried unanimously.

The Annual General Meeting ended at about 3.05 pm, and was followed by the presentation of the British Clavichord Society Awards 2006 to Dr Rodger Mirrey and Mrs Lynne Mirrey. Dr Mirrey was regrettably absent through ill health; his award was presented to Mrs Mirrey by Derek Adlam. Garry Broughton presented Mrs Mirrey with her own award. Both presenters gave speeches in honour of the recipients, and Mrs Mirrey responded on behalf of both recipients.

At 4pm a public clavichord recital was given by Neil Coleman.

For more about the BCS Awards to the Mirreys, with photos, click [here](#)

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updated 2 September 2008