

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

held at 2.15 pm on Saturday, 11 July 2009, in the Garden Room, Grosvenor Chapel, 24 South Audley Street, London W1K 2PA

Chairman: Garry Broughton. Secretary: Judith Wardman

Present: Susan Alexander-Max, Peter Bavington, Dr Alex Bell, Brian Blandford, Garry Broughton (Chair), Neil Coleman, John Collins, David Derrick, Frank Field, David Griffel, David Helliwell, Jean and Monty Herman, Richard Ireland, Mr and Mrs David Medhurst, David Millard, Lynne Mirrey, Jillian Mitchell, Roger Murray, Karin Richter, Huw Saunders, Peter Stephens, Judith Wardman (Secretary), Anthony White, Elizabeth Witts, Paula Woods

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Derek Adlam (President), Sheila Barnes, Ivan Black, James Brinsford, John Erskine, Sally Fortino, Andrew Gibbs, John Henry, David Hitchin (Treasurer), Adrian Lenthall, Dr J. P. Lester, Patricia Murdoch, Simon Neal, Claire Randall, Julian Perkins, Micaela Schmitz, Paul Simmonds, Mary Wetherick, Paul and Kati Willis, Akihiko Yamanobe.

2. Minutes of the 13th Annual General Meeting, held on 12 April 2008, were circulated and taken as read. Their acceptance was proposed by Peter Stephens, seconded by Huw Saunders and unanimously approved, and they were signed by the Chairman.

3. The Chairman gave this report:

‘2009 being a year of anniversaries (as Paul will demonstrate at 4 p.m.), I thought I might mention that 150 years ago in 1859 Anton Bruckner composed a large-scale setting of Psalm 146 for soloists, double chorus and orchestra. Now this is not just a gratuitous invocation of my favourite composer after Antonio Soler, but it seems that some of the ideas from which nine huge symphonies grew may have begun life as the young Bruckner, deep in the Austrian countryside in the tiny village of Windhaag, in 1842, sat and improvised at the clavichord lent him by a kindly neighbour.

‘This year the gentle sound of the clavichord has been drowned out by the Berlioz-ian din of crashing Banks, Markets and Businesses, the sinister slithering of vanishing funding and the desperate raising of fees in compensation.

‘Despite all this the BCS, with a slightly reduced programme, has survived and even prospered: our most recent big event even made a small profit. This has all been due to the skills of our secretary Judith Wardman, our treasurer David Hitchin, membership secretary David Griffel and Newsletter Editor Peter Bavington, ably supported by our committee of John Collins, David Millard, Julian Perkins, Karin Richter, Micaela Schmitz, Paul Simmonds, Kasia Tomczak-Feltrin and Paula Woods. Francis Knights has kept our Archives, and we are very grateful to Lynne Mirrey and others for recent donations.

‘Mention of Paul Simmonds leads me to remind you that Paul has been awarded a well-deserved Honorary Life membership of our Society, of which he was a founder member back in 1994, in

recognition of the huge contribution he has made to the lives of clavichord enthusiasts in his many roles as recitalist, scholar, inspirational teacher, leader of educational events, judge and performer of new compositions, the first secretary and Newsletter editor of the BCS, and also lender and tuner of clavichords. With regard to the latter, I have to say that Paul's departure to Switzerland has exacerbated the problem facing the BCS of finding enough lenders and tuners for our events: our secretary will welcome any proposals for help in this area.

'So, what has the BCS been up to since the last AGM whilst the financial indices have been dropping like Alberich plunging into the depths with the stolen gold of the Rhine? (This reminds me of another anniversary: 50 years ago the Decca Record Company issued its famous first complete recording of Wagner's *Das Rheingold* – 18 anvils in stereophonic sound in the Nibelheim scene . . . no, I don't think Wagner had a clavichord.)

'Our president Derek Adlam, who has been our august and authoritative figurehead since the inception of the Society, led with the way with his recital 'Handel and the Georgian clavichord', quickly followed by recitals by Paul Simmonds in the Workshop, Lewes (the last in the series of concerts there organized over the past 14 years by Paul and Marianne), and by BCS member Terry Charlston at Hatchlands on the Bavington-restored 1784 Hoffmann. Later, in July, Terry also led a clavichord and organ study day organized by the St Giles Organ School, London, with support from the BCS.

'The BCS also lent support to the Dolmetsch celebrations at Finchcocks in Kent, where Richard and Katrina Burnett have built up an important early-keyboard collection and where Derek Adlam built the Hass-inspired clavichord which he has played for us many times. Twelve clavichords were displayed on this occasion and Steven Devine gave the demonstration recital. In October several BCS members gave lectures and recitals at the Early Keyboard Symposium in Edinburgh – they included Neil Coleman, Sally Fortino, Charles Mould, Francesco Nocerino, Micaela Schmitz and Darryl Martin.

'The harpsichord and clavichord masterclass at the Greenwich Early Music Exhibition was given, as usual, by John Henry (supported by the BCS) and he brought one of his students from Trinity College, Petra Hajduchova, to the second masterclass in this last year to be supported by the Society: this was organized by Terry Charlston and the Royal Academy of Music and enabled us to hear once more (I vividly remember his BCS Müthel recital in 1996) the mastery of Menno van Delft in recital (demonstrating that the clavichord is really the best instrument for Mozart) and as an inspired and inspiring teacher.

'Our big event in spring of this year (in conjunction with the Friends of the Bate Collection in Oxford) was Carole Cerasi, partnered in one item by James Johnstone, playing Haydn Sonatas and Variations in the Holywell Music Room, where Haydn himself rehearsed his 'Oxford' symphony in 1791. It is good news that Carole has since recorded a Haydn CD using fortepiano and clavichord.

'A few days later in Paris the French discovered the clavichord! (enfin, you may say). BCS member Gerard Vila reported 'La découverte du clavichorde' in the June Newsletter.

'An illustrated lecture by our president brought Haydn and the

clavichord to the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester in May. Just before that, Paul Simmonds' Easter weekend course at West Dean in Sussex was centred on the same theme.

'Amidst all this Haydn, J. S. Bach has not been forgotten: Carole Cerasi played Book One of the 48 on the clavichord in the Bath Festival in May, and BCS committee member Julian Perkins will do the same in three late-night recitals this coming Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at the St Albans Festival. Also next Wednesday Carole, busy lady, will be playing the Hatchlands Hoffmann with music by C.P.E., Mützel, and Haydn (Sonata 48 in C).

'Micaela Schmitz will be busy too including the clavichord in her keyboard workshop and masterclass in Worcester in August and organizing the BCS's second visit to the Birmingham Conservatoire, where Terry Charlston will initiate a new generation of students in the mysteries of the clavichord. This will be in early October; later that month, members of the BCS who are lucky in the ballot for places will be able to visit Christopher Hogwood's collection of early keyboard instruments. Also in October the clavichord will be heard in Cambridge and Bristol thanks to committee members Julian Perkins and David Griffel respectively. There's also the Ninth International Clavichord Symposium at Magnano in September and the Early Music Exhibition (with John Henry's clavichord masterclass) in November.

'I am pleased to report that a lot of work on the BCS website has been done by John Dobson and Micaela Schmitz, overseen by David Hitchin; the new site is due to be launched soon.

'The launch of the CD of instrumental music by the BCS's senior composer member Stephen Dodgson, which includes Julian Perkins's recording of the Clavichord Suites, has been delayed at the factory – in the meantime the music is available from our bookstall. In fact an increasing number of clavichord recordings and publications of clavichord music seems to have appeared over the last year and has been noted in the pages of Clavichord International and the BCS Newsletter, and here I must praise Peter Bavington's immense efforts in ensuring that the Newsletter covers all aspects of the clavichord world: it is, after all, the one benefit of membership that reaches everyone, no matter how distant they may be from most of our events which may be inaccessible to them. As the recession continues to bite one solution to the problems of accessibility and rising costs may be the D.I.Y. approach outlined in Paula Woods' article in the June Newsletter.

'In the present situation it is possible to be both optimistic and despairing about the future – I have just heard a rumour that closures are about to affect London Metropolitan University, the former London School of Furniture and Instrument-Making where many of today's best keyboard makers and technicians were trained.

'However, the BCS has fifteen years of splendid achievement behind it, is in good financial shape with a fairly constant membership of about 195, including nine new members this year, and a good fund of voluntary effort to call on – I have very much enjoyed (mostly) my eight years as Chair, taking over from Edmund Handy at the 2001 AGM in Leicester, and hand on the task to my successor with great confidence in the future of the Society.'

4. Annual accounts and Treasurer's report

The independently examined accounts for the year 2008 were circulated with the following report from the Treasurer (read to the meeting, in his absence, by the Secretary):

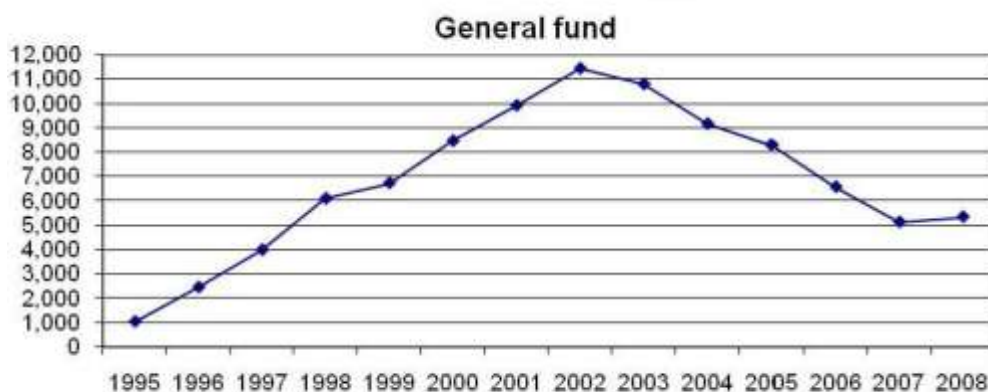
'For the first time since 2002 we have reached the end of the year with a surplus; deficits from 2003 to 2007 were £645, £1631, £864, £1723 and £1449. Although some of these deficits were intended to reduce the excessive reserve of £11,448 that we held at the end of 2002, we were reaching a point where further large deficits might have left us with inadequate funds.

'The more satisfactory outcome at the end of 2008 is partly the result of the increased subscription which brought in an additional £446.50 (although we haven't had any benefit yet from those who paid their 2008 subscription a year in advance), and partly that the deficit on meetings and recitals was only about a third of what it had been in the two preceding years.

'Committee members have been thinking very carefully about the planning of events, and ways to increase the benefits that members receive from the Society. There are no venues convenient for the majority of our members, and even the events in London have not attracted large enough audiences to cover more than a fraction of our costs. Public events have played an important role in encouraging new music, encouraging recitalists and promoting our instrument, so there are some indirect benefits even for the members who cannot attend.

'We can neither predict nor avoid the consequences of the present global financial situation. The committee will need to decide later this year about future subscription levels. It is possible that we may be able to hold membership subscriptions at the present rate. *Clavichord International* is more difficult to predict, as we pay for this in Euros. The exchange rate has been very volatile, and at the end of the summer we will have to quote a price based on our estimate of the exchange rate in April 2010.

'At the end of 2008 we held £5,348 in our General Fund. We should not allow our resources to drop below £4,000, so we have scope for some over-spending, but in limited amounts and only for a limited period. It is unfortunately the Treasurer's job to be cautious, and to remind members that income and expenditure must be kept in balance, but I have great pleasure in ending with a chart which shows a welcome change of direction. '..



Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Karin Richter, seconded by Frank Field and unanimously agreed, with thanks to the Treasurer.

5. Election of committee members and officers

The following nominations had been received before the meeting:

Neil Coleman, proposed by Julian Perkins, seconded by Paula Woods

David Hitchin (Treasurer), proposed by Judith Wardman, seconded by Paula Woods

Huw Saunders, proposed by Paula Woods, seconded by David Griffel

Paula Woods, proposed by John Collins, seconded by David Millard

The Chairman explained that these nominations (together with his replacement as Chair) would leave one vacancy on the Committee. Further nominations were invited, but none was made. Those nominated were unanimously elected unopposed. The Secretary then conducted the election of the new Chair, giving an appreciation of the retiring Chairman and of his proposed successor. David Griffel had already been proposed by Peter Bavington, and seconded by David Hitchin, and was unanimously elected unopposed. He then took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

6. Election of Examiner of the Accounts

Brian Blandford had agreed to serve for another year. His re-election had been proposed by Paul Simmonds, seconded by Micaela Schmitz, and was unanimously approved, with thanks for his work.

7. Any other business

None.

At 4pm a public clavichord recital was given by Paul Simmonds.

[Back to top of home page](#)