

Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual General Meeting of the British Clavichord Society
held at 2.15pm on Saturday, 5 June 2010
at the Oxford Quaker Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW

Present: Derek Adlam (President), Susan Alexander-Max, Peter Bavington (elected Chairman during the meeting), Alex Bell, Garry Broughton, David Derrick, John Erskine, Christopher Gold, David Griffel (retiring Chairman), David Hitchin (Treasurer), David Millard, Lynne Mirrey, Jillian Mitchell, Roger Murray, Karin Richter, Huw Saunders, Micaela Schmitz, Mimi Waitzman, Judith Wardman, Paula Woods

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Rosemary Andrew, Sheila Barnes, John and Tessa Belling, Brian Blandford, Terence Charlston, Neil Coleman, Jeremy Crouch, Frank Field, Simon Field, Sally Fortino, Claire Hammett, John Henry, Richard Ireland, John Irving, John Lake, John Lester, Byron Mahoney, Charles Mould, Simon Neal, Jacky Peacock, Duncan Preston, Veronica Read, Geoffrey Allan Taylor, Douglas W. Spence, Michael Telford, Mary Wetherick, Anthony White, Paul and Kati Willis, Margaret Woodbridge

2. Minutes of the 14th Annual General Meeting, held on 11 July 2009, were circulated and taken as read. Their acceptance was proposed by Paula Woods, seconded by Derek Adlam, and unanimously approved, and they were signed by the Chairman.

3. The Chairman, David Griffel, gave this report:

'I think it has been a good year for our Society, and I'd like to remind you of some of the things we have done over the last year or so.

'Starting immediately after the last AGM in July: Paul Simmonds' recital demonstrated, amongst other things, how brilliantly some of Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* can work on the clavichord. Paul told us that Mendelssohn's grandmother is thought to have had clavichord lessons from Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, and that her clavichord might have stayed in the family – and then two months later, at a clavichord symposium in September, evidence surfaced, in the form of a picture, if I remember rightly, showing a clavichord in Mendelssohn's room. That was an exciting moment!

'By the way, that was an International Symposium held in Italy, and by my calculation 13 of the 42 participants were BCS members; and though it wasn't a BCS event, a fair amount of the organisation during the symposium was done by people who happen to be BCS members.

'In November we had a visit to Christopher Hogwood's collection of early keyboard instruments. This event was run jointly with the British Harpsichord Society; it was extremely successful, and I hope that we will have more collaboration with the Harpsichord Society in future.

'Also in November we supported John Henry's harpsichord and clavichord masterclass at Greenwich.

'In March we put on a superb recital in London by Linda Nicholson, who brought her magnificent clavichord by Hass.

'And to bring us up to the present: we are looking forward to Susan Alexander-Max's recital later this afternoon.

'Not everyone can come to recitals, of course, so we do other things that benefit all members, such as producing the Newsletter, and sponsoring clavichord recordings. Two CDs have appeared recently: Julian Perkins's CD of Stephen Dodgson, and Carole Cerasi's CD of Haydn on clavichord and fortepiano. We are supporting a recording of Ilton Wjuniski playing Wilhelm Rust which is scheduled to appear soon – and if the CD conveys a fraction of the excitement of Ilton's live performance of Rust sonatas, it will be worth waiting for.

'We occasionally sponsor individual advanced students or young professionals to study the clavichord. We are arranging to fund some clavichord tuition for a brilliant young harpsichordist (recently heard on Radio 3); and we funded another young harpsichordist to attend Paul Simmonds' clavichord course last weekend. I think he learnt a great deal, he is very enthusiastic, and promises to become an outstanding clavichordist.

'Last year was a major Haydn anniversary, which we celebrated in Oxford. This year too there are some notable anniversaries. Wilhelm Friedemann Bach was born in 1710; in the UK his tercentenary has been celebrated from the clavichordist's point of view with a recital by Paul Simmonds recently, and Paul's course at West Dean which focused on W. F. Bach, Wolf and Türk. This year is Thomas Arne's tercentenary, and he made an appearance at West Dean too. Antonio de Cabezón has a quinquacentenary this year and we are thinking about including some Cabezón in an event that we are planning for later in the year.

'Another BCS development over the last few months has been our new website – the address is at the end of the AGM letter that you were sent recently. I think it looks excellent, and we hope it will attract people who are interested in the clavichord but are not yet BCS members.

'I hope that all this shows that a BCS subscription is well worth-while. And if you know anyone who is not a member but might be interested, please encourage them to join, and tell them about the website. Membership numbers are still quite strong - just over 200 paid-up members at the end of last year, and at present 168 paid-up members and 30-odd who have not yet renewed their membership. We have recruited 5 new members so far this year, but we do need more, not only for the sake of their subscriptions, but also to increase the pool of members who are willing and able to help in the running of the Society.

'You will have had my recent letter asking for volunteers, and if you have diligently read the agenda that was handed out this afternoon (and you've got to do *something* during tedious speeches like this), you will know that we now have nominations for all the vacant places on the Committee, so that we are in a good position to continue our work in support of the clavichord and its music.

'I am most grateful for the support I have received from committee members over the last year; and especially from our Secretary Judith. You will know that she has played a leading role for many years in arranging BCS events, and although she is stepping down as Secretary, I am delighted that she has agreed to remain on the Committee and to continue organising BCS events. I am confident that with the new shape of our committee, and under the leadership of a new chairman, BCS will continue to flourish.'

4. Annual accounts and Treasurer's report

The independently examined accounts for the year 2009 were circulated with the following report from the Treasurer, David Hitchin:

'There is really very little new to report this year. After a long series of years in which our General Fund had been reduced from more than £11,000 to just over £5,000, at the end of 2008 we had a surplus of £327.20, and at the end of 2009 the surplus was £1378.49. Subscription levels are decided by the committee each year in the early autumn, and now that our income is in balance with our expenditure, it is unlikely that we will need to consider increasing next year's subscriptions.

'Most of the income and expenditure were in line with previous years. We are pleased that we have been able to support educational events and sponsorships. The one substantial increase that members may note is in committee expenses. This is accounted for partly by the number of members who travel very long distances to attend meetings, and partly by the loss of what seems to have been the last convenient cheap venue in the London area.

'Bookshop sales were much higher than in 2008. Although the cost of purchases was much lower, it must be remembered that we hold quite a lot of stock in books, CDs and sheet music, as well as copies of the Newsletter. We don't prepare formal bookshop "trading accounts", but we note the estimated purchase and sale values of the stock, and it is good to see that we have been able to provide a good service at a reduced stock level. There is a steady flow of requests for back copies of newsletters, and it is most economical to reprint them in batches rather than on demand.

'At the end of the year we held a balance in our General Fund of £6,625.24. This is a comfortable amount, and we may find in subsequent years that a slightly lower balance would be adequate. It is sufficient to cover any losses from "risky" events, and, although this report relates to 2009, it may be appropriate to record that the expenses of the recital on 20th March 2010 very much exceeded our income from ticket sales.

'Committee members have to think very carefully each year about the organisation of events. Some members appreciate them very much, and they help to support performers and introduce the clavichord to members of the public. Nevertheless, the fact remains that there are no locations convenient for all of our members, and even in the larger centres, such as London, costs are high and there is no certainty that we could sell enough tickets to cover at least a substantial part of the costs.

'The cost of *Clavichord International*, as expressed in Euros, has remained the same for many years, and we hope that it will continue unchanged. The exchange rates at the time that we pay can't be predicted, and postage and packing costs have increased. It is our policy that those members who subscribe to *Clavichord International* should, in the long term, pay what it costs to the Society, but there will be some years when there is a surplus and some when there will be a deficit. We increased the annual cost by £2 from the beginning of 2010, and we hope to avoid further increases for some time.'

The Treasurer gave further explanations of some of the points in the report. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Karin Richter, seconded by Peter Bavington, and unanimously agreed, with thanks to the Treasurer. He then introduced the following motion:

When new Officers are elected, their predecessors shall retain their authority as signatories for bank and building society accounts until the bank and building society have completed the formalities to recognize the new signatories.

This was proposed by Roger Murray, seconded by Derek Adlam, and unanimously accepted.

5. Motions for amendments to the Constitution

The Chairman introduced and explained the background to the following motions for amendments to the Constitution:

- a. *In the first sentence of item 15 of the Constitution, the word 'four' should be replaced by 'three'.*
- b. *The second sentence of item 15 of the Constitution should be deleted.*

The motions were respectively proposed by Huw Saunders and seconded by Micaela Schmitz (Motion a), and proposed by Karin Richter and seconded by Paula Woods (Motion b). Both were unanimously agreed.

6. Election of Committee members

a. Chair

The Secretary conducted the election of a new Chair, giving an appreciation of the retiring Chairman (David Griffel). The only nomination was Peter Bavington, proposed by David Griffel, seconded by David Hitchin, and unanimously elected. He then took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

b. Secretary

David Griffel, the only nomination, was proposed by David Hitchin, seconded by David Millard, and unanimously elected.

c. Committee members

The following nominations had been received before the meeting. Those marked with an asterisk had come to the end of their two-year term as committee members and were eligible for re-election.

John Collins,* proposed by Judith Wardman, seconded by David Hitchin
David Millard,* proposed by Karin Richter, seconded by David Hitchin
Julian Perkins,* proposed by Peter Bavington, seconded by Karin Richter
Karin Richter,* proposed by Peter Bavington, seconded by Judith Wardman
Micaela Schmitz,* proposed by David Millard, seconded by Huw Saunders
Ulla Kite, proposed by Karin Richter, seconded by Judith Wardman
Judith Wardman, proposed by Karin Richter, seconded by David Millard
Anthony White, proposed by Judith Wardman, seconded by Peter Bavington

There were no further nominations. Those nominated were unanimously elected *en bloc*.

7. Election of Examiner of the Accounts

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

8. Any other business

The President, Derek Adlam, spoke in appreciation of the work of the retiring Secretary, Judith Wardman, and the Chairman announced that the committee had awarded her honorary life membership. She expressed her thanks to them for this unexpected honour and to the members of the BCS for much kind support in the shared work of the society.

At 4pm, Susan Alexander-Max gave a public clavichord recital.