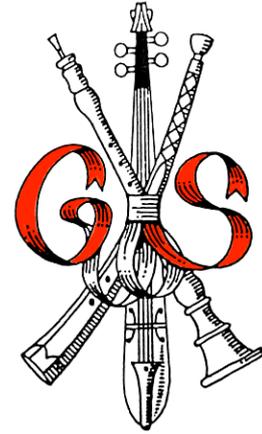


# The Galpin Society

For the Study of Musical Instruments



Newsletter 41  
February 2015



**Welsh Rock Cannon**  
(see p.11)

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## THE GALPIN SOCIETY

Registered Charity no. 306012

Website:	www.galpinsociety.org	
President:	Jeremy Montagu	jeremy.montagu@music.ox.ac.uk
Vice-Presidents:	Friedrich von Huene, Charles Mould, Arnold Myers, The Master of the Worshipful Company of Musicians	
THE COMMITTEE		
Chairman:	Graham Wells, 24 Gloucester Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 0NU grahamwhwells@aol.com	
Administrator:	Maggie Kilbey, 37 Townsend Drive, St Albans, Herts, AL3 5RF administrator@galpinsociety.org	
Editor:	Lance Whitehead, 3 Hazelbank Terrace, Edinburgh, EH11 1SL editor@galpinsociety.org	
Journal Editor:	Michael Fleming, 13 Upland Park Road, Oxford, OX2 7RU journal@galpinsociety.org	
Reviews Editor (UK):	Mimi Waitzman, Horniman Museum, London Road, Forest Hill, London, SE23 3PQ MWaitzman@horniman.ac.uk	
Reviews Editor (USA):	Bradley Strauchen-Scherer, Dept of Musical Instruments, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10028-0198, USA Bradley.Strauchen-Scherer@metmuseum.org	
Advertisement Manager:	Andy Lamb, The Bate Collection, Faculty of Music, St Aldate's, Oxford, OX1 1DB andrew.lamb@music.ox.ac.uk	
Archivist:	Diana Wells, 24 Gloucester Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 0NU dianaswells@aol.com	
Other committee members:	Bruno Kampmann, Ben Marks, Arnold Myers, Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, Owen Woods	

The Galpin Society Newsletter is edited by Graham Wells and sub-edited by Maggie Kilbey.  
Opinions expressed by authors in the Newsletter are not specifically endorsed by The Galpin Society.

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

Elise C Bonhivert, USA

D Keith Bowen, WARWICK

Conservatorio di Musica 'G Pierluigi da Palestrina', ITALY

David Donovan, CANADA

David S Knight, LONDON

[Cover: Half We House cannon of 28 holes, Bethesda. *Photo: the late Griff R Jones, reproduced with the permission of his wife*]

## EDITORIAL

Over the months I have been trying to follow the machinations of the US federal and state authorities as they try to impose restrictions on the ownership and sale of ivory and other material taken from endangered species in an attempt to save those species from extinction. I have to admit that this has been largely unsuccessful. There seems to be an endless flow of contradictory information from both official sources and interested parties. It seems that somewhere deep down at the root of this problem is the Lacey Act, a piece of US legislation instigated by Representative John F Lacey in 1900 and signed into law by President William McKinley. This is a conservation law that prohibits trade in wildlife, fish, and plants that have been illegally ‘taken, possessed, transported or sold’. The Act was amended in 2008 at which time the number of species covered was extended. It apparently now covers all those species listed under the CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Much of my information on the progress of the legislation is derived from correspondence on the AMIS-L-List. To give an indication of how ludicrous the situation is potentially becoming, in a recent communication on AMIS-L-List it was pointed out that varnish resins such as shellac and copal could get themselves swept up in the general obsession to ban anything remotely suspicious. To the best of my knowledge no living organism is harmed in the production of either of these materials. They are harvested in exactly the same way as milk or latex.

Another alarming disclosure from the same source was that someone wishing to import a fortepiano kit into the US was asked to provide for customs a full list of all woods used in its construction. As our President, Jeremy Montagu, pointed out on the AMIS-L-List if, as is not entirely impossible, such measures were to include historic instruments this would preclude any American museums from acquiring any further historic musical instruments and probably prevent any non-US citizen from entering the States to perform professionally or otherwise. One can only hope that eventually common sense will prevail.

This issue contains the call for papers and information pertaining to this year’s conference in Cambridge (see p.16). While we hope that you will at least note the dates in your diary it might be wise to do more than this by actually signing up for the conference. The venue at the Faculty of Music has limited space, so admission to the conference will be strictly on a first come, first served basis.

Graham Wells

### NOTICE: Back issues of *G SJ* and *Early Music*

A Galpin Society member wishes to dispose of a complete run of the *Galpin Society Journal* up to and including 2014, of which only Journals I and II are reprints. A run of *Early Music* journals from 1973 to 1994 is also available.

‘Buyer’ collects from north Lincolnshire or Hertfordshire. A small donation would be appreciated, if possible.

If you are interested please contact [administrator@galpinsociety.org](mailto:administrator@galpinsociety.org) as soon as possible.

The editor is grateful to Christopher Nobbs for supplying the follow commentary on Christopher Hogwood's collection of keyboard instruments which is due to be offered at auction by Gardiner Houlgate on 12 March 2015. For further details concerning the sale please refer to their website [www.gardinerhoulgate.co.uk](http://www.gardinerhoulgate.co.uk).

## **The Christopher Hogwood Collection**

The last few years have been marked by the sad loss of several of the most significant figures in the early music revival of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most recently Christopher Hogwood, who died in September last year aged 73.

It was his wish that the collection of instruments built up over 40 years should be sold, and the proceeds will be part of his residuary estate to be divided equally between five charities: The Royal College of Music, The Royal Academy of Music, Jesus and Pembroke Colleges in Cambridge, and The Academy of Ancient Music. The bequests to the conservatoires and colleges will support postgraduate scholarships.



**A single-manual harpsichord by  
Jacob Kirckman (London 1766)**

The breaking up of such a distinguished and personal collection does inevitably prompt regret, especially the fine array of eleven playing clavichords, which it would be hard to match in quality or variety in another public or private collection, but however dispersed they can still be persuasive advocates for Christopher's favourite instrument.

The first antique clavichord he owned is by Johann Adolf Hass of Hamburg and dated 1761. It is a large five octave unfretted instrument with octave strings in the bass, and the case decorated with chinoiserie. Christopher acquired it in 1976 from Sir Humphrey Noble and there is evidence from the Noble family that it may once have belonged to their ancestor, Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Christopher Clarke restored it at the beginning of the 1980s and he also made a highly detailed plan. This has been of great significance in enabling other makers to produce copies, both strict and free, so that in the revival of more historically-oriented clavichords since the 1980s it has been one of the most influential – in effect a return to Dolmetsch's starting point; his first seven clavichords of 1894-7 were based on a Johann Adolf Hass instrument of 1763. This was in many ways Christopher's favourite and can be heard on five of his recordings. A fine example of his rapport with this clavichord and the inspiration it gave him can be heard on the CD *The Secret Bach* (Metronome MET CD 1056) recorded in 2004, particularly in the Partita in A minor (after BWV 1004, arranged by Lars Ulrik Mortensen).

Two clavichords represent the other great school of German clavichord building by the Dresden makers Johann Heinrich Gräbner and Johann Gottlob Horn. The latter is inscribed *Nom 321, Johann Gottlob Horn, instrumentmacher in Dresden 1789*. Unlike the other relatively plain surviving clavichords of this maker the casework is a beautifully executed ensemble of veneering, crossbanding, and marquetry in mahogany, maple, yew, and boxwood that evokes some of the styling of early square pianos. The two soundholes hold handsome roses of layered pierced card in the style found on other Saxon keyboard instruments. It is unfretted with a compass of FF to  $g^3$ , strung in brass with open wound strings from FF to A, and combines a particularly wide dynamic range with a sustained and singing timbre.



**An unfretted clavichord by Johann Gottlob Horn  
(Dresden 1789)**

The Gräbner was only revealed to be by this famous maker during restoration in 1982, when the pencil inscription *Johann Heinrich Gräbner Dresden 1761 Num 100* was found on the underside of the soundboard. It is a *reiseklavier*, or travelling clavichord, just over three feet long, plays at octave pitch and is fretted. The compass is C to f<sup>3</sup>, and it is strung in iron with open wound brass strings in the bass. Unique features are the wrest pins of brass and an original tuning key also of brass with a ring handle in the style of a clock-key. The practical plainness of the oak casework belies the subtle richness and deft workmanship of the interior. To complement its role as an itinerant keyboard, what looks like the usual moulding at the bottom edge of the case is in fact the front of a full-width lockable drawer. The evenness and strength of tone are impressive for a clavichord of such small dimensions.

There are two other fretted clavichords in the collection, one an antique, the other a modern copy. The antique is by Johann Jacob Bodechtel of Nuremberg, c.1790 and it almost rivals the J A Hass as a model in its influence on recent clavichord making. It truly is modest in materials, decoration and execution but the result is most attractive in sound and very ingratiating to the player in terms of touch and responsiveness. It is strung in brass with open-wound strings in the bass. The compass is C to f<sup>3</sup> and the fretting commences at d sharp/e with unfretted d's and a's. It is among the clavichords that can be heard on the CD *The Secret Handel*, Metronome MET 1060 (2005).

A modern copy by Adlam Burnett dates from 1979 and reproduces a clavichord dated 1807 by Georg Fredrich Schmahl of Ulm. It can be heard on the CD *The Secret Bach* (Metronome MET CD 1056). It is strung in iron and brass and the compass is C - f<sup>3</sup>. From C to c one string of each pair is at the octave while the other is an open-wound unison string. Fretted from g, the notes a and d are unfretted in each octave, and e<sup>3</sup> and f<sup>3</sup> are a fretted pair. The instrument from which this clavichord is copied is preserved in the collection of Richard Burnett at Finchcocks.

The clavichord by Johann David Schiedmayer dates from 1791. This is another workmanlike oak case concealing design and craftsmanship of a very high order. It is the only surviving instrument by this member of the Schiedmayer dynasty. Fret-free with a compass of FF to g<sup>3</sup>, it has iron and brass stringing on a divided bridge. This and other characteristics do suggest the qualities of the early piano interacting with the aesthetic of the clavichord. It can be heard to great effect on the CD *The Secret Mozart* (Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 82876 83288 2), especially in the duet Sonata in D K381 played by Christopher with Derek Adlam.

A last antique clavichord, by Per Lindholm, at nearly seven feet in length leaves modest dimensions and sonority well behind. Built in Stockholm in 1794, it represents the Scandinavian clavichord tradition that in building and playing had a historic continuity reaching almost to the revival of the clavichord at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The compass is FF to c<sup>4</sup>, with octave strings in the bass, and this powerful instrument develops the tradition and aesthetic of the earlier Hamburg makers.

After building his first clavichords in the 1890s Arnold Dolmetsch's next batch of clavichords was built between 1906 and 1910 while he had a workshop at Chickering's in Boston. Christopher's example is dated 1909 and once belonged to the harpsichord builder William Dowd. The hitch plank has the inscription *Made by Chickering & Sons under the direction of Arnold Dolmetsch Boston USA MCMIX N<sup>o</sup> 51*. Here Dolmetsch bases his design on a clavichord by Christian Gotthelf Hoffmann, built in Ronneburg, 1784, now in the Yale University Collection of Musical Instruments. The compass is FF to f<sup>3</sup> and the stringing is in brass with close wound strings in the bass. The décor is the rich and confident blend of motifs from various traditions which Dolmetsch had evolved at this period. The vermilion interior of the lid carries his almost trademark motto in gold: *PLVS FAIT DOUCEUR QVE VIOLENCE*, but *douceur* will not be the characteristic that first strikes those who only know the later small clavichords of Dolmetsch, and it has a more extrovert voice than his somewhat veiled Hass-derived instruments of the 1890s. This clavichord, and those by Schiedmayer and Lindholm, have been restored by Peter Bavington.

Like so many of his generation, Christopher's first encounters with the clavichord will have been with the small clavichords by Arnold Dolmetsch and the many similar instruments they inspired. These can all trace their origin to a *reiseklavier* designed and made for Violet Gordon Woodhouse. As Mabel Dolmetsch wrote, 'It was at Violet's suggestion that he produced, in 1913, the smaller model of clavichords, having a compass of four octaves, in place of the large five-octave instruments which had prevailed hitherto (...) Violet's desire for a smaller instrument arose from a wish to be able to transport her clavichord to the houses of friends, tucked away safely on a shelf, specially constructed in the front of her carriage'. Christopher owned two of these clavichords, from 1922 and 1929, and they are almost identical. The earlier one is another built for Violet Gordon Woodhouse and has a soundboard decorated with flower painting by Mabel Dolmetsch.

Violet later changed her allegiance to Tom Goff whose instruments further exaggerated the characteristics of the small Dolmetsch clavichords; the touch became yet more 'elastic', both to reduce the chances of tangents 'blocking' or chattering on the string and to make it easier to exploit the clavichord's speciality, the *bebung* or vibrato. And they became quieter still, with the initial transient of the tone less assertive and the rate of decay slower, so that the tone developed a sustained 'humming' quality rather than the more percussive pungency of the historical instrument.

Christopher's Goff was made for the pioneer harpsichord and clavichord player Charles Thornton Lofthouse in 1952. It is a typical example with highly wrought neo-Georgian casework and metalwork by Joseph Cobby in contrast to Dolmetsch's Arts and Crafts decorum. This is the sort of clavichord played and recorded by Thurston Dart, one of the strongest early influences on Christopher, and he always retained a great loyalty to Dart's memory.

Apart from a few years in the early seventies Christopher did not own a modern harpsichord, and that was also the only period when he possessed an instrument with two manuals. But he would have known from his earliest days in Cambridge a very fine and very large historic harpsichord: a 5 ½ octave Shudi Broadwood of c.1775 which belonged to his teacher Mary Potts, another strong influence in his life and music.

In 1972 he was able to acquire a fine 18<sup>th</sup>-century London-built harpsichord of his own, a single-manual Kirckman of 1766. The specification is 8', 8' and 4' and harp stop, and the compass is FF – f<sup>3</sup>, (without FF#). A machine stop is an early modification that takes off the 4' and then the front 8' sequentially. At the same time the stop levers were changed from the usual lateral movement to a drawstop arrangement. This harpsichord is said to have spent part of its life in an academy for young ladies, and certainly the natural key covers bore witness to much hard usage, being played through to the wood in places so that the front portions of the ivories had to be replaced. Another clue to this episode was an additional lock, later removed, to fasten the second flap of the lid so that no young fingers could venture beyond the keyboard to the mechanism. It is the continuo instrument on many of Christopher's recordings and can be heard alone in sonatas 1, 2, 5 and 6 of Arne's Eight Harpsichord sonatas (Decca L'Oiseau-Lyre DSLO502, 1974, reissued by Eloquence ELQ4805583, 2013).

His other 18<sup>th</sup>-century London harpsichord is a Longman and Broderip built by Thomas Culliford in 1782. The specification is 8', 8', Lute stop, 4' and harp stop, plus machine stop and swell. The compass is FF - f<sup>3</sup>. It has a sumptuously decorated marquetry keywell and the typical engraved and symmetrical arrangement of stop knobs found on Culliford's instruments. A swell is effected by the right pedal raising a lightweight inner lid, instead of the *louvres* of Shudi's Venetian Swell or Kirckman's Nag's Head system. This harpsichord had an extremely busy life in the studio and featured on many of Christopher's recordings, including volumes 1-7 of the pioneering recordings of the Mozart symphonies on original instruments.

Christopher's Italian harpsichord is an anonymous instrument in an outer case and various characteristics suggest it is Florentine in origin and from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The name

'Francesca da Picinani' under which it is entered in Boalch is written on the inside of the lid flap, and is thought to refer to an owner not a maker. In fact for many years, ever since it belonged to Colin Tilney, it has always been known simply as 'Fred' – the joke of the local vicar that for some reason stuck. Referring to an anonymous instrument can be cumbersome and nicknames are useful.

Colin Tilney bought it from Michael Thomas in 1962 and sold it to Christopher in 1972. Then it was sadly truncated, though what remained produced an intriguing sound. In 1984 it was returned to what is conjectured to be its original length, and it is possible to be fairly confident about this as the implied symmetry of the surviving painted panels of bentside decoration suggested the length of the original with some precision. It was also possible to reconstruct the strikingly bold and colourful décor from the bentside and remnants surviving on lid and cheek. The case and soundboard are all of cypress wood and the outer case of poplar. As restored the compass is GG - d<sup>3</sup> and there are two 8' registers strung in brass. The registers can be moved via an opening in the spine side of the outer case. It can be heard on a 1985 recording of Italian Cantatas by Handel with Emma Kirkby and the AAM (Decca L'Oiseau-Lyre 414 473-10H), and also in a solo recital of 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century Italian music played by Aapo Hakkinen on *The Medici Harpsichord Book* (Deux Elles DXL1083).

Other plucked keyboards are a bentside spinet by Thomas Hancock of 1732 and a Flemish Muselar Virginal of 1772 by Adlam Burnett. Its model is a Johannes Couchet instrument of 1650 and the compass is C to c<sup>3</sup>, with a short and broken octave and an *arpicordum* stop. Apart from its musical excellence it carries through the decorative scheme of the Flemish originals with great assurance. These were among the first instruments built by the Adlam Burnett workshop under the direction of Derek Adlam, and were a sensation, revealing a previously unappreciated harpsichord sound-world and setting a crucial example of how less could be more as builders and players reacted against the multicoloured complexities of the harpsichord of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Gustav Leonhardt wrote in conclusion to his *In Praise of Flemish Virginals of the Seventeenth Century* in 1971, 'When treated well, its peculiar character is a continuous delight for the player, who soon forgets that his instrument has only one manual, only one stop, and only a four-octave compass'. The Hancock spinet can be heard on *Purcell: Songs and Airs* with Emma Kirkby, Anthony Rooley, Richard Campbell and Catherine Mackintosh (Decca L'Oiseau-Lyre DSDL 713). It is strung in brass and the compass is GG to g<sup>3</sup>. Casework is of walnut with some cross-banding in ash and the handsome keyboard has skunk-tail accidentals.

One of the most formative influences on Christopher's life and music was his year in Prague on a British Council Scholarship, and Czech friends and music both ancient and modern were a continuous thread in the rest of his life. I think this gave him a particular fondness for his Joseph Brodmann fortepiano of c.1815 that belonged to the most celebrated of all Czech singers, Emmy Destinn / Ema Destinová (1878-1930). There is a tradition that before her it belonged to Carl Maria von Weber in Prague when he was Director of the Estates Theatre from 1813 to 1816. We do know of Weber's regard for Brodmann from a letter to his brother describing his purchase of another Brodmann piano now in Berlin, *'I have bought two marvellous instruments, one from Streicher and one from Brodmann. In one day I must have seen at least 50 different ones by Schanz, Walter, Wachtl etc, none of which is worth a shot of powder in comparison to these'*. It is trichord throughout with an undivided bridge, and there is a single iron brace between notes f<sup>1</sup> and f<sup>#1</sup>, lying below a dummy choir of strings. The compass is FF to f<sup>4</sup>, and there are four pedals operating (from left to right): Keyboard Shift, Bassoon stop, Moderator, and Dampers. In addition there is a knee-lever also operating the Moderator. The case has the severe simplicity and elegance of early Biedermeier styling, and is veneered in walnut that was originally stained to resemble mahogany, and the lyre, bridge, damper-holder, and some other components, are ebonized. It can be heard on a CD of music by Weber played by Duncan Cumming. He plays the *Variations on an Original Theme* Op. 2, and *Piano Sonata* No. 1 in C Op. 24, and is joined by Christopher in *Six Pieces for Piano Duet* Op. 10 (Centaur Records CRC 3231).



**A grand piano by  
Joseph Johann Brodmann  
(Vienna c.1815)**

Another Viennese-action grand is more mysterious. Again with connections to Prague, it may be by a builder from that city. It has the same compass and pedals as the Brodmann (but not the knee-lever) and a similarly simple and elegant décor. The workmanship and style of the keyboard is particularly pleasing. The tone is brighter and more assertive – less romantic – than the Brodmann.

A last Viennese-action piano is an upright by the innovative maker Martin Seuffert which he calls a *Schrank-formiges Forte Piano* on his handsome trade card pasted on the wrest plank, which also depicts the other forms of upright that he produced. The compass is FF to  $f^4$  and the four pedals operate (from left to right), Shift, Moderator (two pedals; *piano* and *pianissimo*), and Dampers. The casework is of cherry with ebonized frets in the doors backed by fabric. The void to the right of the bentside within is fitted with a shelf and lined with *sprenkelpapier*.

Christopher's collection contains one square piano by Johannes Pohlmann from 1773, a simple Zumpe-action instrument with three hand stop levers to control treble and bass dampers and buff stop. It can be heard in lively conversation with a Zumpe square, in music by J C Bach on a 1996 CD of duets and concertos played by Christophe Rousset and Christopher (L'Oiseau-Lyre 440 649-20H).

A typical fabric-fronted Broadwood cabinet upright of 1823 in mahogany completes the list of antique stringed keyboard instruments. The Broadwood books tell us that it started life as a hire instrument. Tantalizingly the first hiring was to J B Cramer, and it was to be sent to 'Captain Cramer of his Majesty's 30<sup>th</sup> Regiment' stationed at Portsmouth. It has the usual sticker action and a compass of FF to  $f^4$  and two pedals for *una corda* and dampers.

The earlier of the two modern fortepianos was built in the Adlam Burnett workshop in 1976 and is after an instrument of c.1785 by Matthäus Heilmann of Mainz, in the Colt Clavier Collection, Betherden, Kent. It has a compass of FF to f<sup>3</sup> and three knee levers operating dampers, moderator, and bassoon, and the casework is of walnut with a frame and panel lid. It can be heard on a great many recordings played by Christopher and others.

The other was built by Derek Adlam in Welbeck in 1987 and is after a piano by Anton Walter, c.1795, in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, no. MINE 109. The compass is FF to g<sup>3</sup>, and there are two knee levers controlling moderator and dampers. It will be familiar to many players and concert-goers from its life as a hire instrument in the care of Simon Neal. It can be heard in the 1988 recording of the Beethoven Piano Concertos by Steven Lubin with the Academy of Ancient Music (Decca L'Oiseau-Lyre 421 408-10H3).



Two organs, one German and the other Dutch, complete the collection. The German bureau organ resembles the small bureau organs of Snetzler in appearance though it has a more modest specification and all the pipes are of oak. There are two ranks: 8' *gedacht* and 4' *flöte*, both divided at a/b flat and controlled by two stop levers at the bass end of the keyboard and two at the treble. The keyboard is retractable and hidden by the topmost false drawer front. There is an electric blower but it can still be blown by a treadle. The pitch is a'=460Hz

**A five-stop chamber organ  
(Dutch c.1760 and later)**

Thurston Dart discovered the Dutch organ in 1956 in a cottage just north of Cambridge. It is said that when found the upper part protruded through a hole cut in the ceiling into the bedroom above. One of my earliest memories of a radio broadcast concert featured Dart playing this instrument. After introducing it he said there would be a short pause while 'I fiddle with the beer handles at the side' and that is a good description of the stop changing arrangements. The general appearance is dramatic; Dutch chamber organs usually seem to incorporate themselves into the form of a domestic bureau or cupboard, but in this case the flamboyant front of a church organ has been evoked in miniature with flats and towers in white and gold, topped with trophies and urns. The compass is C to d<sup>3</sup>, and the seven levers control *Holpijp* 8vt bas/diskant, *Prestant* 8vt diskant, *Fluit* bas. *Prestant* 4vt diskant and *Octaaf* 2vt bas/diskant, divided at b/c<sup>1</sup>. It now has an electric blower and the pitch is a'=440Hz. The restorations of both organs were done in the workshop of Martin Goetze & Dominic Gwynn.

**Christopher Nobbs**

## Rock cannon – are they musical instruments?

I always recall my dear friend and DPhil supervisor H el ene La Rue telling me a very long time ago that ‘if it makes a noise it is potentially a musical instrument’. To exemplify this she included amongst the musical instruments on display in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, of which she was the musical instrument curator, a standard domestic kettle with a whistle. More recently I have had cause to consider this hypothesis in relation to an interesting source of noise which I first read about in *The Oldie*.<sup>1</sup> In an article entitled ‘What were...rock cannons?’ by Allan Barham he describes this curious noise-making contrivance. The most exhaustive source of information on rock cannon is contained in *The Rock Cannon of Gwynedd* by Griff R Jones (Blaenau Ffestiniog 2002). Much of the information in this short article is gleaned from this source.



**Right: Part of the Cae Ifan Gymro cannon of 153 holes, Llanllechid, Bethesda**

Closely associated with quarrying and mining, particularly in the area of Gwynedd in north-west Wales,<sup>2</sup> rock cannon (known in Welsh as *Cerrig Cannan* or *Craig Cannan*) came into their own when an excuse could be found for a celebration. They consisted of a boulder or rock face drilled with a series of shot holes ranging from 25 to 32mm in diameter and approximately 125mm in depth. These were joined by shallow channels chiselled between them. The shot holes were charged with black powder topped by crushed stone known as stemming. Similarly the channels between the holes were filled with black powder covered by stemming. An earlier method of joining the holes involved smearing a line of goose fat sprinkled with black powder, again covered with stemming. Before safety fuses were introduced the detonators were formed from goose quills blocked at the narrow end with a small ball of paper and filled with black powder. On ignition each charge would explode in succession. The timing between explosions was governed by the length of the channels between them. The charge needed to be enough to produce an acceptable explosion but not so much that the rock itself would be split.

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<sup>1</sup> The issue in question was published in July 2013. For overseas members and those UK members unfamiliar with this periodical it is a magazine containing many short articles usually fairly light in nature plus some more serious reviews somewhat similar to the much-lamented *Punch*. It was launched in 1991 by Richard Ingrams, former editor of the satirical magazine *Private Eye*. As its name suggests it was primarily aimed at an older readership

<sup>2</sup> The old post-Roman Kingdom of Gwynedd was subjugated by the English in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Its boundaries have changed twice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century owing to local government reorganization

The number of holes varied enormously, from just two or three to approaching 200. The average seems to vary between 20 to 40. In Barham's article he suggests that a degree of pitch could be achieved by varying the depth of the hole, with deeper holes giving a deeper bang. Curiously Griff Jones does not mention any similar tuning system in his book.

The cannon were the work of quarrymen who were of course adept at drilling shot holes and handling explosives. The earliest reference to rock cannon is possibly 1761. A further reference in a lease dated 1777 seems more secure.<sup>3</sup> I have not been able to establish just how recently cannon have been employed but Griff Jones records the firing of the Craig Gyfyng cannon, Cwm Pennant, to celebrate the Millenium on 1 January 2000.



The excuses to detonate rock cannon vary widely including national occasions such as the Coronations of George IV and Queen Elizabeth II. Another popular justification was the birth of an heir to a local landowner, probably the owner of the quarry where the quarrymen who built the cannon worked. The coming of age of this heir also seemed to be another opportunity. Even the turning of the first sod in the building of a railway would qualify as a reason. All these events tended to inspire reports in the local press so the occasions when the cannon were used are well recorded. The visit of Queen Victoria to Palé, Llandderfel, Meirionydd on 23 August 1889, where she stayed for four days, would have been one of the grandest occasions. Not surprisingly her arrival was an event which was marked by the detonation of a number of cannon on the surrounding mountains.

**Left: Bryn Bella cannon of 168 holes, Llanllechid, Bethesda. Made to celebrate the coronation of Queen Victoria 28 June 1838**

Griff Jones has identified the sites of well over 200 cannon. These are mostly in the Gwynedd area but also included are examples in Cornwall (where they are known as Merriment Holes), in Galicia, Spain (where they are referred to as 'bombs') and even in far away Malta (where they are called 'mortars').

I do not profess to be an expert on the Hornbostel-Sachs system of musical instrument classification, but I am certainly challenged to envisage under what heading this particular 'musical instrument' (if that is what it is) should be placed. Hopefully someone or preferably lots of people will write in to me with their suggestions.

**Graham Wells**

*[Photos: the late Griff R Jones, reproduced with the permission of his wife]*

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<sup>3</sup> Abstract of Vaenol leases, Carnafon Record Office

## **Terence Pamplin Award for Organology and Musicology 2015**

Closing date for applications: 3 July 2015

The Terence Pamplin Award is made every other year to encourage excellence in research in organology (the science and history of the development and construction of all acoustic musical instruments and their use) and musicology as it links to acoustic music instrument technology. It consists of a cheque and certificate confirming the award. In 2015 the award will be worth £1200. The award is organized and administered by the Worshipful Company of Musicians through their Charitable Fund.

### **Aims**

Within Western music there are many aspects of classical and folk music traditions that remain unresearched. More widely, ethnic musical traditions are under threat of extinction in many parts of the world. The award is designed to encourage research into early organology and playing techniques of acoustic instruments within the mainstream of Western musical tradition and oral traditions in world ethno-organology at any period of history, and record them before they are lost to scholarship for ever. The geographical scope of the award is global. The research project can include making, playing or recording musical instruments. The award specifically excludes electronic or computerised digital instruments and electrical amplification.

Previous award winners have used the award to provide an additional aspect to their research by making an instrument to test the methodology of an earlier well-known instrument maker; travel to measure and photograph instruments and/or analysis of original archive material/documents; acoustical analysis; application of research techniques.

### **Previous Award Winners**

- Helen Leaf (London University): research into medieval bone flutes which included making
- Eugenia Mitroulia (Edinburgh University): research into the acoustics and early history of saxhorns
- Melanie Piddock (Edinburgh University): research into the woodwind maker Lotz
- John Milnes (London Metropolitan University): research into 18<sup>th</sup>-century cello makers
- Shem Mackey (London Metropolitan University): research into the construction methods of the English school of viol makers
- Lisa Norman (Edinburgh University): acoustical, ergonomic and musical analysis of 18<sup>th</sup>-century horns
- Rachel Durkin (Edinburgh University): further research into the writings of Randle Holme (1627-1700) in respect of musical notation and musical instruments

### **Terence Pamplin (1941-2004): Organologist and musicologist**

Dr Terence Pamplin gained all his qualifications the hard way, and left school at the age of fifteen without any. His main interest at school had been woodwork in which he excelled; at the age of fourteen he built a garden shed whilst the other boys were making key holders. At the same age he showed immense musical talents, but these were not developed academically until relatively late. While working full time and supporting a young family, he obtained a BA, a Diploma in Management Studies, LTCL Degree at Trinity College of Music and LRAM at the Royal Academy of Music and in 2000 his PhD from Kingston University with a thesis on his favourite instrument – the Baroque Baryton.

On leaving school, he worked his way up from being a piano tuner at Baldrey's, to becoming a director of Arnold Dolmetsch Ltd., makers of early music instruments. His academic career began in 1977, when he first became a lecturer and then from 1983-1993 Head of the Department of

Music Technology at the City of London Polytechnic and later Reader in Music Technology at the London Metropolitan University.

He was involved with many committees and societies too numerous to mention but including: committee member of the Galpin Society, President of the Early Music Instrument Makers' Association, Founder and Chairman of both the Nonsuch Guitar Society and the International Baryton Society, and until his death was the Junior Warden of the Worshipful Company of Musicians and a Freeman of the City of London. Their work in assisting young musicians was very close to his heart and he had great plans for when he was to take over as Master in 2005/2006.



**Terence Pamplin**

Dr Pamplin was an accomplished performer of many instruments including the violin, viols, baryton, flute and guitar. There were in fact few instruments that he couldn't play well enough to get a tune from! He lectured worldwide on music, spoke on television and radio; his knowledge of music was encyclopaedic. Only three weeks before his death he had delivered a paper in Japan at the ISMA conference. He died shortly after giving an 'enthusiastic and energetic' lecture in Newark on the History of Violin Making. Musicology and organology were a particular passion in Dr Pamplin's life as well as being the focus of his professional career.

For further information about the award see:

[www.wcom.org.uk/awards/the-terence-pamplin-award-for-organology/](http://www.wcom.org.uk/awards/the-terence-pamplin-award-for-organology/)

## **Visit to the Rubin/Nicholson Collection**

9 May 2015

The Society is most grateful to Alan Rubin and Linda Nicholson for their kind invitation to visit their collection of musical instruments on Saturday 9 May 2015. For those unfamiliar with this collection, it is arguably the finest private collection of all types of musical instruments in Great Britain. Its particular strength is, not unsurprisingly, in its keyboard instruments on which Linda is an acknowledged virtuoso. As part of the visit Linda has agreed to perform on a selection of these instruments. The collection is housed in an impressively restored Georgian house in Clapham, South London. Members and their friends who wish to visit the collection are asked to register with Graham Wells ([grahamwhwells@aol.com](mailto:grahamwhwells@aol.com) or 020 8943 3589) who will supply the precise location and suggest transport possibilities. Numbers may have to be limited so an early application would be advisable. The visit will commence at 3.00 pm and is expected to end around 5.30pm. A charge of £5 for members and £10 for non-members will be made to defray costs which will include refreshments.



**Linda Nicholson**

## Cambridge Conference: Musical Instruments in Science and History 27-30 September 2015



Between Sunday 27 and Wednesday 30 September 2015, the Galpin Society, in association with the Institute of Acoustics and affiliated with the Royal Musical Association, will be running a conference on all aspects of Musical Instruments at the Faculty of Music of the University of Cambridge. We warmly invite all members of the Society to attend this exciting event.

The call for papers is now open for papers of 20 minutes duration and a limited number of posters. Subjects include, but are not limited to, woodwind instruments, keyboard instruments, instruments in early music, musical instrument acoustics and musical instrument building, but papers on all aspects of musical instruments will be considered. Every prospective speaker should send the title of their presentation or poster, plus an abstract (maximum 200 words), to Technical Liaison at [gsconference2015@gmail.com](mailto:gsconference2015@gmail.com); these must be received before the end of March 2015. We are pleased to announce that papers will be considered for a debut paper award upon application. We are aiming for a large cross-section of delegates, so we hope that instrument makers and performers as well as professional and independent scholars will be keen to present and to attend.

This conference is in association with the Musical Acoustics Group of the Institute of Acoustics, and Tuesday 29 September will be devoted to Musical Instrument Acoustics. Day tickets are available for the Acoustics sessions at a reduced cost.

The conference will be held in the Recital Room of the Faculty of Music on West Road and we will have access to other rooms within the complex for tradespeople or exhibitions. Tickets cost £110 for Galpin Society members (£150 for non-members) for the entire conference. This ticket price will include a three-course Conference Feast at Selwyn College (see above) and will also include lunch and refreshments during the proceedings.

We are also pleased to announce a collaboration with Cambridge Woodwind Makers, who are intending to recognize the life of the late Sir Nicholas Shackleton. On Saturday 26 September, the day before the conference opens, an exhibition and concert in Sir Nicholas' memory will take place at Stapleford Granary. Conference delegates will be eligible for reduced price tickets to this event. The first day of the conference will be dedicated to Sir Nicholas and will include papers on clarinets and an appropriate keynote speaker. In a similar manner, the Conference Recital will be dedicated to the memory of Christopher Hogwood CBE, who died earlier last year. Further details on this event will be announced nearer the time.

The conference website at <http://gsconference2015.wordpress.com> will have more information as planning progresses. The call for papers is already open and registrations will open soon.

We look forward to welcoming you to Cambridge in 2015!