

## **Newsletter January 2008**

**Welcome to the ninth e-newsletter of the British Harpsichord Society.**

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### **Editorial**

The Early Music Shop has moved to new and splendid premises, the Bruges Competition and the Early Music Exhibition at Greenwich have been and gone. I have at last a beautiful instrument on which to play, having waited almost forty years to take the plunge. I am intrigued and delighted to note that all the harpsichord makers so far featured in the newsletter make instruments that are beautiful to look at. I am also intrigued that there must have been hundreds of instruments made since the early twentieth century. Where are they now?

We are all immensely grateful to the various contributors to this issue.

### **Changes**

After 18 months of sterling administration of the Society, John Erskine has decided to retire. We are now pleased to introduce our new Membership Secretary, Edna Lewis, and Diary Secretary, Claire Randall. They can be contacted at [memb@harpichord.org.uk](mailto:memb@harpichord.org.uk) and [diary@harpichord.org.uk](mailto:diary@harpichord.org.uk) respectively.

Please let Edna know if you are changing your email address and Claire is waiting to hear of any Events you would like publicised.



Edna – Membership



Claire – Diary

We would still welcome further help with Events and the Newsletter. If you would like to help, in whatever way, please get in touch.

## Andrew Garlick

[Andrew Garlick](#) has been making harpsichords for twenty six years. He came across the harpsichord first at [Lyme Park](#) near Manchester. As a teenager he played the instruments that used to be on the top floor of Forsyths. He studied Art and Architecture at Bristol and like Andrew Wooderson he attended the Goldsmiths Furniture Course.

He won a scholarship to Paris to study the French and Flemish traditions and discovered the voluptuous Goujon.



He regularly exhibits at Bruges, most commissions come from recommendation and personal experience. He continues to be involved in architecture and museum restoration.

*Ed: I apologise for the rather terse tone of this résumé. Andrew kindly entertained me to tea in the summer, and the notes I took then seem rather meagre now. The Goujon he had then was a most gloriously decadent instrument, honeyed and bewitching.*

## Forthcoming BHS Events at the Handel House Museum

### Tuesday February 12th Pawel Siwczak European Inspirations



**Composer list:** Frescobaldi, Froberger, Jan Podbielski, Piotr Żelechowski, Anonymous (Warsaw Tablature), Couperin, and Bach  
**Description:** Pawel Siwczak, current holder of the first prize in the prestigious Broadwood Harpsichord Competition, presents a balanced programme of music from across Europe - ranging from fine earlier works (by Frescobaldi and Froberger) to great pieces from the high baroque by Bach and Couperin, and introducing some music from Poland.  
**Programme:** Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643) - Toccata X (from the First Book of Toccatas), Canzona I (from the Second Book of Toccatas); Johann Jacob Froberger (1616 - 1667) - Toccata in A minor FbWV 112, Lamentation faite sur la mort très douloureuse de Sa Majesté Imperial Ferdinand III FbWV 633; Jan

Podbielski (c.1680 - 1730) - Praeludium in D; Piotr Żelechowski (1st half of 17C.) - Fantasia del Primi Toni; Anonymous (Warsaw Tablature ca. 1680) - Praeludium Primi Toni, Canzona; François Couperin (1668-1733), Treizième Ordre; Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750) - Partita No 1 in B-flat

### Tuesday March 11th Maggie Cole Harpsichord Reflections



**Composer list:** Frescobaldi, JS Bach, Dodgson and Scarlatti  
**Description:** Maggie Cole is well known for her recordings, of Bach in particular, and for recital programmes that include recent works for the harpsichord: she offers us one such musical journey from the Renaissance (Frescobaldi), through the high baroque (Scarlatti sonatas and Bach's Second Partita), to the contemporary composer Stephen Dodgson.

### Programme:

JS Bach - Partita no 2 in C minor BWV 826  
Frescobaldi - Partite sopra l'Aria della Romanesca  
Dodgson - 3 Inventions from Book 5  
Scarlatti - Sonata in D minor K 213, Sonata in D major K 145, Sonata in B minor K 87, Sonata in B minor K 27

SATURDAY March 15th     Gilbert Rowland & other harpsichordists     Exploring Handel

**Initial Ideas:** Handel - a different suite from each harpsichordist; perhaps also Chaconne

**Composer list:** Handel

**Description:** Gilbert Rowland, a highly-experienced performer of baroque repertoire and well-known to Handel House audiences, will offer insight into aspects of Handel's harpsichord music. He and other harpsichordists will each play different works.

### Tuesday April 8th     Michael Maxwell Steer Music from the Reigns of Two Elizabeths



Tallis - Felix Namque  
Bull - In Nomine (1 1/4)  
Byrd - Ut Re Mi & Ut Mi Re  
Gibbons - Lord Salisbury's P&G  
Purcell - Suite in Gm  
Beckford - short keyboard works  
➤ Howells  
➤ Dodgson - 5 movements from Inventions

**Description:** Michael Maxwell Steer is a harpsichordist, composer and producer, who has an affinity with English keyboard music, and has recently edited the music of William Beckford. His programme includes Tallis, Bull, Byrd, Gibbons, Purcell, a few trifles by Beckford, and concludes with a selection of Dodgson's pioneering Inventions, some of which Michael premiered in the 1970s.



### Seixas in the Sunshine

Over the past ten years, Penelope Cave has been taking some of her students abroad to study the harpsichord music of the host country. This year fifteen of us went to Portugal.

As always the week was excellently organised by James Anderson who each year brings the harpsichord he built, after an original by Ruckers dated 1640, across from Majorca for use at the workshop. We stayed in Portimão (an old port in the Algarve) in a splendid 16<sup>th</sup> century villa complete with balcony, a beautiful courtyard, antique furnishings and Pepé, the resident dog with cabriole legs and a

great liking for harpsichord music!

Although the workshop centred around the harpsichord music of SEIXAS and SCARLATTI, we started the week with the earlier Portuguese composers: Antonio CARREIRA, Manuel Rodriguez COELHO, Francisco Correa de ARAUXO, Pedro de ARAUJO and some early Portuguese counterpoint exercises from a manuscript entitled “Tencao de João da Costa de Lisboa.” Because of the Tregian connection with Portugal (Francis TREGIAN the Elder died in Lisbon in 1608 and is buried there), Penelope also suggested an early English session with pieces from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. We finished with the later Portuguese composers Frei JACINTO, Alberto José Gomes DA SILVA, Francisco Xavier BAPTISTA, Francisco Xavier BACHIXA, João de Sousa CARVALHO and João Cordeiro DA SILVA.

We still need a complete published edition of José Antonio Carlos DE SEIXAS. Over a hundred harpsichord sonatas (toccatas) are known to have survived. It was said that he wrote more than 700 but the majority of them were destroyed in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake. The 24 pieces we chose to play came from the following editions (some now out of print):

- Alte Portugiesische Klaviermusik Volumes 1 & 2 (Ed. M.S.Kastner), published Schott ED2382 & EOD4050
- Organa Hispanica – Carlos Seixas XVI-XXX Vol. VIII (Ed. Doderer), published Willy Muller
- Carlos Seixas Tocatas e Minuetes (Ed. Jorge Croner de Vasconcellos e Armando José Fernandes), published Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa (1975)
- Portugaliae Musica Carlos Seixas 80 Sonatas Para Instrumentos de Tecla (Ed. M.S.Kastner), published Gulbenkian Foundation (1965)
- Internet downloads (no longer available)

We compared these with the *Essercizi per Gravicembalo* 1738/9 (Sonatas K1 – 30), Domenico SCARLATTI’s only published work written under the auspices of João V of Portugal, (<http://icking-music-archive.org/ByComposer.php>) as he met and admired Seixas while at the Portuguese court of King João V from 1719 - 1729. We also looked at the Sonata in A major (Lisbon) newly discovered in Lisbon *Libro di tocate* edited by Richard Lester, published Peacock Press P217.

Scarlatti v. Seixas. Who influenced whom with their Italian and Iberian styles? Our interest of these two composers had already been awakened by Penny’s CD “From Lisbon to Madrid with Scarlatti” <http://www.tutti.co.uk>. The Seixas minuets we played were galant entertainment pieces and the simpler, more Italianate sonatas, selected from the internet downloads were, we thought, written as teaching exercises. We especially liked the more virtuosic Iberian ones and felt Seixas worthy of a “Kirkpatrick” to catalogue and publish all his known harpsichord works or is this, in fact, in progress? Maybe the difficult pronunciation of his name, has prevented him from becoming a British household name – how many “sh’s” **are** there in Seixas?!!

There was something magic about studying Portuguese composers in the country where they composed their music. The intensity and focus of the course, hearing others play and seeing how they approached the pieces and discovering a new repertoire left us all feeling we had learnt an enormous amount. We could not help but be influenced by Penny’s infectious enthusiasm for the music. Her inspirational and creative teaching demonstrated valuable practice techniques, enabled us to master

some of the detailed articulation and complex Iberian rhythms and encouraged us to put some fiery southern sunshine into our playing.

The week included a day trip to Lisbon where we discovered the musical instruments museum, Museu da Musica, [www.museudamusica-ipmuseus.pt](http://www.museudamusica-ipmuseus.pt) with its fine collection of musical instruments including an Antunes harpsichord. There was no mention of this museum in any of our guidebooks and we had great difficulty finding it, even with detailed directions. It is worth knowing that the entrance is underground in the “Alto de Moinhos” Metro station on the blue line.

The City Museum, Museu da Cidade, is also well worth a visit for those interested in the history of Lisbon and the earthquake of 1755 in which the Royal Library was destroyed (and, it is believed, many of the works of Seixas and Scarlatti). It is housed in the impressive Campo Grande Palace built in 1750 by King João V for his mistress.

As well as all the music during the week, the group had time to enjoy the local Portuguese culture, food and wine, including some delicious, traditional Algarvian meals that James cooked at the villa.

We will certainly be returning to Portuguese music and Seixas and, hopefully, some of us to Portugal itself too.

October 2007.

## **A warning and advice on building a harpsichord from scratch.**

By Glenn Modrak

About 16 years ago I found a book in a non-chain bookstore on making musical instruments. In that lovely book was an article by Michael Johnson on building a French double manual. Wow!

You may be thinking I went right out and bought a kit and built it in 5 weeks, and you would be wrong. 16 years later and I am finally making a move on the project; here's perhaps how not to do it.

My usual method in building anything is to find out all about it, so I found and bought “Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making,” and “The Modern Harpsichord” (before Amazon and the internet). I very carefully left these lying around so my wife would see them and get interested in the prospect of dust in the house. MusicMaker's Kits had plans and all the action pieces and wire for a Flemish-style single manual, and lo, I got them for Christmas, 1992. Then we had children.

Fifteen years later, Musikmaker's Kits doesn't have anything to do with harpsichords, but they got the plan and most of the equipment from The Instrument Workshop. I could not make head nor tail of their website, and figured out I was using Firefox web-browser in an Internet Explorer world.

### The Case

Along the way from 1992 to now I picked up some fine pine to use as the case, so it may actually work, provided it hasn't split down the length. We shall see.

### The Wrist Plank

Apparently only Instrument Workshop sells laminated hard maple planks, and hopefully the right length; one cannot tell from their very brief description.

### The Keyboard

Michael Johnson recommends lime. Find lime in this country, I dare you. There is a website called woodfinder.com. They have a search by species, and will present a list of suppliers of said wood. The indicated website, however, either don't have lime, or only in turning blocks of 6 inches length. More research is required.

### The Soundboard

Sitka Spruce. Spruce in the United States is a Christmas tree. Period. The local chain home store had never HEARD of Sitka spruce. They called me back: too expensive by the time it got to me. Zuckerman Harpsichords International sells spruce at \$30.00/ board foot for 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch. Expensive. Instrument Workshop sells it for \$28.00/ board foot. Woodfinder.com indicated businesses that have spruce, and I looked for places near my home state of New York. Did you know that spruce does not grow in Ohio?

Other searches on the web found sites that sold spruce for guitars, but only in 2 to 3 foot lengths. Finally I found a site that recommended Aircraft Supply Company. They have spruce at \$4.60/board foot. Time to resaw a lot of wood, but may be worth it.

How much does a band saw cost?

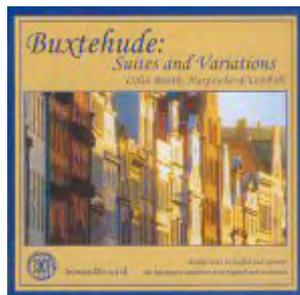
So, in retrospect, I should have bought all this 15 years ago when I had money, and there seemed to be a readier supply of materials than now.

Still interested in building from scratch?

*Ed: I'm sure Glenn would appreciate any information or help. Please email me and I shall send it on.*

## Recordings

### Colin Booth plays Buxtehude



I can recommend a recital of Suites and Variations by Buxtehude played by Colin Booth on a Vaudry copy of his own manufacture. The sound of the instrument is fascinating and characteristic, his playing immaculate, and the music is stunning [www.soundboard-records.co.uk](http://www.soundboard-records.co.uk)

## Paul Simmonds plays W F Bach



Paul Simmonds has been in touch to let us know of his latest CD, of the Polonaises and Fugues of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, played on an original Pehr Lindholm clavichord of 1780. The CD can be purchased from [him](#) directly at the cost of £10 plus post

and packing (UK £0.50, Europe £2.00, elsewhere £3.50).

Payments can be made with sterling cheque or via Paypal.

Alternatively, the CD should be available from most good music shops, or directly from the label's website; [www.london-independent.co.uk](http://www.london-independent.co.uk)

## The Ackerman Virginals

In the last issue I described finding an Alex Hodsdon virginals, and the instrument was about to be restored by Edmund Handy. I haven't driven for some years now, but I hired a small van and with great trepidation transported it to the [Bexley Harpsichord Workshops](#). Six weeks or so later I made the return trip, and I was still terrified driving. Needless to say, Edmund has done a superb job. It has been restrung and the rather dodgy original jacks replaced with Swainson jacks. I find it difficult to play, because the lightness of touch demands that decorations are more precisely articulated than I have ever articulated anything before. So it's very good for me!

Hodsdon is described as a 'shadowy figure'. Maria Boxall and I have attempted some research, but there seems precious little about him either in the standard text books or on the web. Here are two quotations that I gathered from the web:

'His harpsichord works was on the Bury Rd adjacent to his home which was an old house moved from Washmere Green. He was an analytical chemist, but his wife Margaret's uncle founded the musical instrument museum at Fenton House, Hampstead. His other great interest was steam cars, and I was delighted to go with him one year on the Brighton Run in a 1904 Gardner Serpollet steam car.'

'He began building harpsichords in 1930.'

If anyone has any further information, I'd love to hear from them.

## Your BHS

We now have over 800 members, just over half of whom live in the UK. While we keep members contacts confidential, we have been looking for away to allow members to communicate with each other. As a result, you can now find BHS as a Group on Facebook, one of the leading online social networking sites. There you can announce events, ask questions, start a discussion and more. Facebook is no longer the sole preserve of school and college kids and many organisations now have a presence there. It will supplement the existing website, newsletters and emails from the Society and not replace them.

Come and join us on [Facebook](#). It's free. We will send out invitations by email to make it easier to find us when you join.

[www.harpsichord.org.uk](http://www.harpsichord.org.uk)