



## Chairman's Message

Since 14<sup>th</sup> June all activities related to the Museum have been dominated by the consequences of the **water damage** that occurred on that day. I think all Friends will know by now that the torrential rain that fell in Cheltenham on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> caused a 'hopper' in the attic to become blocked and overflow. The hopper forms part of the Regency drainage system. It is designed to collect rainwater from the roof at the front of the building, channel it through an internal pipe in the attic and then pipe it down the back of the building. Overflowing water penetrated the ceilings in the Victorian Bedroom and, to a lesser extent, the Regency Drawing Room. There was also some damage to the Nursery and to a bit of coving in the Music Room.

As a result of the damage the Museum had to close and will probably not reopen until early December. The timing is in part governed by the lengthy, controlled drying process. The focus of recent work by the staff has been primarily on the aftermath: seeking quotes for repair and conservation, dealing with insurance loss adjusters, removing items from affected rooms and much more. Second, a lot of effort has gone into the '**Help Holst**' fundraising campaign which is aimed at compensating for **uninsured costs**. The biggest items are the loss of income during the six-month closure period and cost of external drainage work, recommended to reduce the possibility of future rainwater penetration.

Several fundraising activities have been organised, as described in my letter to Friends in mid-August. Special mention must be made of the **sponsored walk** undertaken by Laura and Sara together with Julie Reynolds, the Gloucestershire Museums Development Officer. This intrepid trio walked the 35 miles of the Gustav Holst Way over two days, camping overnight at Belas Knap. On the second day they were joined for part of the route by Friends and supporters, finally arriving at Wyck Rissington to enjoy refreshments at the Village Hall before completing the walk to St Laurence's Church. There the current organist played '*I Vow To Thee My Country*' on the instrument once played by Gustav Holst himself and told us about Holst's time working in Wyck Rissington. This was followed by the telling of three Gloucestershire Tales by Kirsty Hartsiotis and Anthony Nanson.

We are grateful to the people of Wyck Rissington for making their hall and church available for such an enjoyable conclusion to the walk. We are especially grateful to Laura, Sara and Julie for undertaking such a gruelling trek.

As a result of all fundraising activities the amount raised - including amounts received, pledges made and Gift Aid - currently stands at just over **£20,000**. This is a very large step towards our target of £30,000 and I would like to thank all those individuals and organisations who have donated. The support and encouragement received has been truly heartening at this most difficult time. I must just mention that 'Help Holst' bags and mugs are still available!

Whilst a huge amount of effort has been directed towards the water damage, work has continued on the **Sustainability Project** funded by the Arts Council. It is very important that we complete this work on schedule, not only to honour our commitment to the Arts Council but also because the outcomes are critical to our future sustainability.

**Issue 53**

**August 2016**

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# Chairman's Message

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Our Trust **AGM** was held as planned on 4<sup>th</sup> July. The formal business was followed by a very interesting and entertaining presentation by Em Marshall-Luck, Director of the English Music Festival, on the origins and history of the festival.

Full details of our events appear below but I would like to encourage Friends not to miss the following in particular. The Birthday Concert on 17<sup>th</sup> September is a joint event with the Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra and will feature three Holst compositions. At 'The Holst Harp Comes Home' on 12<sup>th</sup> November the harp once owned by Gustav's grandfather Gustavus - the first Professor of Music at the Ladies College - will be played by current owner Katie McClaughry: an opportunity not to be missed.

Finally, on 25<sup>th</sup> August we said farewell to **Sophie Roberts**. She is leaving us to return to university to qualify as a teacher. During her time with us Sophie has made a major contribution to the work and wellbeing of the Museum, for which we thank her, and we wish her every success in her future career. She has assured us that she will come and see us from time to time.

For my next message I hope and expect to report on the reopening of the Museum, fully restored to its former glory. In the meantime I would like to thank all Friends for their continuing support.

Steve Wood

## Future Events

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September, 7.30pm at St Andrew's Church, Montpellier:** The Birthday Concert

This year our Birthday Concert will be a joint event with the Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra. The programme will provide a rare opportunity to hear Holst's Double Violin Concerto, as well as other works by Holst, Ravel and Haydn.

Buy your tickets in advance and you get a free concert programme! Tickets are available from the Museum (but please ring first: 01242 524846), the Tourist Information Centre, and on the door.

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October, 6.30pm at The Beehive, Montpellier:** Supper Night & Promises Auction

A finger buffet will be served, followed by an auction of at least 30 varied and interesting prizes. These include family tickets to several local tourist attractions, theatre and concert tickets, numerous food and drink prizes, hairdressing vouchers, yoga classes, and much more - even a conducting lesson by our President Martyn Brabbins! The auctioneer will be our very own John Drywood. For those of you who shop early for Christmas, many of these prizes would make excellent gifts.

The finger buffet is £8 per head - numbers and money needed by Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October please.

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30pm at Princess Hall, Cheltenham Ladies College:** 'The Holst Harp Comes Home'

This is a joint event with CLC and it should be a truly unique evening. The harp belonging to Gustav's grandfather Gustavus is now the property of professional harpist Katie McClaughry. Laura Kinnear will first give us an introduction to Gustavus, who was the first Professor of Music at CLC. Katie will talk to us about the harp and give us a wonderful recital; further music will be provided by CLC's harp teacher and students. Archive material relating to Gustavus' time at CLC will also be on display.

Drinks & canapes will be served in the interval.

A **questionnaire** seeking comments on our Events was sent out on 31<sup>st</sup> August. Your responses to this will be most helpful to us in planning our programme.

Sue Walker

## Holst Way Walk

In the early days of planning the 'Help Holst' campaign the team decided that they needed a challenge to ignite the fundraising. What about a walk? We all agreed enthusiastically: a walk sounds nice, something gentle and pleasant - maybe the Holst Way? Perhaps we had all forgotten that the Holst Way is **35 miles**: indeed, a proper challenge would be to commit to walking the whole route from Cranham to Wyck Rissington. And what about sleeping? We couldn't really drive home for soothing baths and then return the next day - far too luxurious for a fundraiser. So I suggested that we could '**wild camp**', adding that people were bound to sponsor us if we dispensed with toilets! Naively perhaps Julie Reynolds signed up to the idea, deciding to join Sara and me on our trek.

The two weeks leading up to the walk were searing with heat and we nervously imagined ourselves expiring on Crickley Hill. Then, suddenly, rain was forecast - two whole days of it on the Friday and Saturday that the walk was planned. Sun cream was swapped for waterproof trousers.

The forecast turned out to be correct. We met at 8.30am in a rain-sodden **Cranham**, mud sliding under foot. We comforted ourselves with the knowledge that we would definitely not expire on Crickley Hill, our first scheduled stop. The rain began to ease as we approached the **Crickley Hill** viewpoint, although as we tramped on to the Devil's Chimney, ready for a photograph, a rain mist hurtled towards us. We reached Cheltenham at around 4pm and instantly felt like we had plunged into a teeming metropolis. We navigated the pavements slightly incongruously in our waterproof gear and, after a swift cuppa at the Holst Birthplace Museum, limped on to the Racecourse. At this point the sun came out and was beating down on our exhausted bodies as we made the ascent up to **Cleeve Hill**. This was one of the most beautiful parts of the walk so far, with Cheltenham receding behind us in the low early evening sunshine, and scraps of ancient woodland - and sheep - guiding us towards the highest point in the Cotswolds and the site of our bed for the night.

What our wild camping spot lacked in facilities it made up for in historical significance and atmosphere. We had arranged, courtesy of a local landowner, to pitch our tents next to the Neolithic long barrow **Belas Knap**, marking the 20-mile point of the walk. The walk from the Belas Knap sign (only ¼ mile - hooray!) to the mound itself seemed like another 20 miles. My feet did not want to act like feet, moving as effectively as lumps of lead. A wave from our welcoming party - who had handily pitched our tents - spurred us on, particularly as they had promised chips!

We rose the next morning rather stiff and apprehensive about the 15-mile walk to **Wyck Rissington**, where Holst had his first job as organist of St Laurence's Church. Apparently he sometimes walked there from Cheltenham which made us realise how much more used people were in the past to walking relatively long distances. It is difficult to know exactly what route he took but it is likely that - like us - he passed through the picturesque villages of Guiting Power and Naunton and then on to **Bourton-on-the-Water** which certainly had a lot fewer tourists in his day.

It was around Bourton - just a few miles outside Wyck Rissington - that we all began to really struggle. Julie, Sara and I were very grateful then for the walkers who joined us along the route on the second day. They all gave us a much needed boost, particularly former HBT Chairman Steve Blake with his never-ending bag of **jelly babies**! As we eventually stumbled into Wyck Rissington, we all had to admit that 35 miles over two days without a comfortable bed or toilet was definitely a proper challenge. It appears that many of our supporters thought so too, as the walk has raised approximately £2000 for 'Help Holst', as well as being a much-needed focal point for the campaign.

Laura Kinnear

## Subscription Renewals

Subscriptions to Friends of the Holst will rise from 1<sup>st</sup> October to £20 Single, and £30 Joint/Family, with all other categories unchanged. It would help our membership renewal process enormously if all Friends could change their bank's standing orders to reflect the small increases. Thank you.

Tom Clarke

## More Diary Dates

Friend of the Museum Peter Holst is part-sponsoring a lunchtime performance of Holst's *The Planets* transcribed for organ. This will be held on **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October** at St Michael's Cornhill, London at 1pm. It will be performed by two organists from St Paul's Cathedral, Simon Johnson and Peter Holder. Normally organ transcriptions of the work are only to be heard on CD, so this is a rare opportunity to hear a live performance. There will be a retiring collection but entry to the concert is free.

The Bochmann Trio will be giving a concert on **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October** at 7.30pm at the Thirlestaine Gallery. They will be playing Bach, Schubert, Holst and Beethoven.

Editor

## Volunteers Get Knitting

While the Museum has been closed Volunteers have been getting together for occasional 'Knit and Natter' sessions in the Victorian Kitchen. It has been a good way of staying in touch with each other and keeping up to date with the latest on the repairs and the fundraising campaign, not to mention being an excellent excuse to eat cake!

We have been knitting triangles to turn into bunting (inspired by the decorations at the Jenner Museum on our recent visit), turning rags into a knitted rug for the Learning Space, and generally rekindling our enthusiasm for crafts. More sessions are planned so keep an eye out for details via email. No experience is needed and there's no obligation to knit - just come for cake and a natter!

Rachel Tedd

## Membership of the Friends

If you are not already a subscribing Friend of the Trust, please do consider joining and also tell your friends. Not only would you have the satisfaction of giving financial and general support to the Museum, but you would also enjoy many other benefits. The Museum leaflet contains an application form, which can also be downloaded from the Museum website.

Annual Membership rates are:

Single £20, Joint/Family £30, Young £5, Single Benefactor £60, Joint/Family Benefactor £100, Single Life £300, Joint Life £400, Gift Membership £20.

For further details email [membership@holstmuseum.org.uk](mailto:membership@holstmuseum.org.uk) or contact Tom Clarke on 01242 227720.

If you would like to become a **Volunteer** at the Museum, and thus a Volunteer Friend, please contact the Learning Coordinator, Sara Salvidge, at the Museum (see below left for contact details).

We would like to be able to deliver this newsletter exclusively by email where possible, which would save us both postage costs and effort. If **any readers** (whether already on our mailing list or not) would like to take up this option, please email [membership@holstmuseum.org.uk](mailto:membership@holstmuseum.org.uk).



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Registered Charity No. 1078599

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