



Chairman's Message

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Since my August message, life at the Museum has been concerned almost exclusively with the aftermath of the **flood** on 14th June. The Museum remains closed but we are very nearly at the end of the long road to returning Holst's birthplace to its former glory.

As I write these words new wallpaper is being applied to the walls of the Victorian Bedroom and very splendid it looks too. The Museum will reopen on Saturday 10th December when we will hold our magical **Family Christmas Event**. Full details of this event and the other December dates when the Museum will be open can be found on the website. It will be great to hear the building alive with the sound of visitors again.

It is fair to say this may not have happened without the donations to the 'Help Holst' fundraising campaign. We set a target of **£30,000**, principally to cover the loss of income during closure and the cost of improving the rainwater drainage system. I am delighted to report that - taking into account all donations received, pledges made but not yet received and applicable Gift Aid - we will have achieved our target. I am immensely grateful to everyone - individuals and organisations - who have made donations to the campaign. The level of support has been most gratifying and a great encouragement during a very difficult period. I would also like to thank Laura and Sara for the work that they have done in organising the refurbishment and everything that has involved. Thanks are also due to all those Volunteers who have helped in a variety of ways, including 'museum-sitting' when neither Laura nor Sara were available. An article by Laura on the redecoration can be found on page 2.

Whilst we will reopen to visitors in December, the official **Grand Reopening Event** is planned for the evening of Friday 27th January. Amongst the invited will be those who have made donations of £500 or more, as stated in the 'Help Holst' promotional material. When we reopen some work on the drainage system will remain, which we hope will not cause too much disturbance for visitors.

'Holst life' has continued away from the Museum during the closure, with the Events Committee arranging some splendid functions. The September **Birthday Concert** featured no fewer than three Holst compositions played superbly by the Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra. We are again grateful to Graham Lockwood for undertaking the lion's share of the organisation: see his report on page 3. The October **Promises Auction** was a great success, raising over £1,300. The star lot was a bottle of House of Commons Whisky signed by the Prime Minister. This was donated by Cheltenham's MP **Alex Chalk**, who turned up on the evening to offer his encouragement; we are grateful for his continuing support. In November Gustavus von Holst's harp came home to Cheltenham when it was played at the Ladies' College by its present owner, **Katie McClaughry**. In addition to Katie's wonderful playing we were treated to further performances by Cathy White, the current harp teacher for CLC, and three of her pupils. Laura Kinnear gave a talk on Gustavus and archivist Rachel Roberts presented material relating to him from the College archives. A marvellous evening was enjoyed by all.

Children's events took place as usual over the summer and the October half-term and were held at the Pittville Pump Room and Boathouse in Pittville Park. We are grateful to the Cheltenham Trust for making the Pump Room available to us, and to all the staff at the Boathouse.

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Chairman's Message

(Continued from page 1)

We are delighted that the **Cheltenham Choral Society** has very kindly chosen to support the 'Help Holst' campaign by choosing us as the nominated charity at their Christmas Concert. The concert, 'The Tapestry of Christmas Music', will be held at Pittville Pump Room on 6th December at 7:30pm.

Before the next Newsletter, Christmas will have come and gone. So I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Friends a very merry festive period and the Museum a successful and less traumatic 2017!

Steve Wood

Redecorating the Museum

The water ingress in June ruined three of the Museum's rooms. Two of these - the Victorian Bedroom and Regency Sitting Room - were the most richly and authentically decorated. A lick of paint would not have sufficed. Instead their interiors required careful reconstruction, with any decisions about their redecoration based on research into what 4 Clarence Road may have looked like all those years ago ...

Both rooms had been wallpapered when the Museum was originally opened. Therefore it was felt important to replicate this, although not to slavishly replace 'like with like', but because wallpaper was integral to 19th century decorative schemes, and therefore there was a good chance it would have been used by the Holst family during their time in the house.

The wallpapers used in the 1970s and the early 1990s, when the Victorian Bedroom and the Regency Sitting Room were both recreated, recalled the techniques used in the 19th century, namely **block printing and surface printing**. Thus the wallpaper for the latest reconstruction had to reflect these techniques as well. One of the largest and most significant wallpaper design archives is housed at **Cole & Son**, the London-based wallpaper manufacturer. Their archive consists of approximately 1,800 block print designs and so it was to this library of authentic patterns that the Museum turned. Working closely with the staff at the archive and bespoke service, two designs were chosen: *Quatrefoil* for the Regency Sitting Room and *Marigold* for the Victorian Bedroom. Both would be produced using the same techniques employed in 1830 and 1870 - the periods which the two rooms aim to show.

Quatrefoil is a two-colour printed paper, with the pink-red ground containing mica in order to produce what is a shimmery 'jaspe' effect. Papers with a 'jaspe' were particularly popular in the early 19th century as they suggested the expensive silk wall hangings favoured by the wealthy. On top of this 'jaspe' a darker red print was hand blocked. The result is a paper which is changeable in different light sources - imagine what such a paper would have looked like by candlelight!

Marigold, again a two-colour print paper, was produced using the very same roller created in the 19th century. The ground chosen in this instance was a dark olive green with an off-white used to form the floral *Marigold* pattern. In the 1870s, **Cassells Household Guide** told its readers that bedroom wallpaper should be: "Pretty and unobtrusive, yet bright enough to make the rooms pretty". As the paper has been pasted onto the walls it is clear that *Marigold's* design follows this formula: it is a bold, attractive print, unfussy in its design of interlocking petals and leaves.

Of course wallpaper has only been one element of the repair and redecoration, which has encompassed the complete replacement of the lath and plaster ceiling in the Victorian Bedroom, as well as the re-flooring of the attic where the water initially flooded in. The upgrading of the rainwater goods will continue into the New Year, with the Museum working with the builders and conservation in order to prevent such incidents happening again.

Although a disaster, the water ingress has offered us the opportunity to pause and reflect on what we want the house to look like, now, in the 21st century. So expect other changes and improvements in the next year or so, each one honouring the incredible history and heritage held within its walls!

Laura Kinnear

Lucy, Ralph and Mr Holst

This is the title of an extensive article that has been written by our good friend **Alan Gibbs** and published in the 2016 edition of the British Music Journal. Alan describes it as the chronicle of a friendship as seen through the diaries of **Lucy Broadwood**, a descendant of the piano manufacturer John Broadwood who, from the late 18th century, had a major influence on the range and price of pianos suitable for home use. Lucy's diaries are held in the Surrey History Centre and cover the years 1882 to 1929 and thus a significant part of Gustav Holst's musical career.

Alan has made a detailed study of the diaries and his article offers many insights into the musical life of Lucy and her circle of friends during those years. The background of **Ralph Vaughan Williams** ensured that he was a member of that circle and, because of his own close friendship with Holst from their student days in the late 1890s, Gustav was also included although, unlike Ralph, he was never referred to solely by his first name.

In the words of Alan Gibbs "The two young men owed much to the older woman; a pioneer in the collection, edition and arrangement of folk song, an editor of Purcell, translator of Bach cantatas and lover of Tudor choral music. Her interests also embraced mysticism, world religions, art and opera and, like them, she was imbued with a passionate desire to share her experience with amateurs and the inexperienced". There was thus much common ground here, as well as some distinct differences such as when the purist Lucy did not welcome arrangements and additional instruments introduced by Holst in performances at Morley College of Purcell and other early composers. Conversely Holst must have welcomed the opportunities that Lucy provided for his music to be played in concerts she organised at her home and elsewhere and pleased whenever she sang in any of his compositions.

The article gives fascinating insights into the relationship between Holst and Vaughan Williams and the wider scene such as the music making that continued despite the constraints of the wartime conditions between 1914 and 1918. Alan also intersperses into the narration other milestones in the story of Holst and his music: the **Thaxted Festivals** and the first private and public performances of *The Planets* in 1918 and 1920 respectively. He wonders if Lucy ever heard this work in its entirety.

The full text of this absorbing article will be retained in the library of Holst-related books kept in the Museum and Curator Laura Kinnear will be pleased to arrange access for those who wish to share my own appreciation of this story.

Graham Lockwood

Birthday Concert

Our annual Holst Birthday Concert has at least three purposes. Naturally it is a celebration of his birth on 21st September 1874; it generates funds for the Trust, especially important in this 'Help Holst' year; and it is an opportunity to arrange live performances of both popular Holst compositions and music which is rarely played. So each year we invite different soloists or ensembles to programme suitable concerts for the occasion.

In recent years we have had a piano duo and a string quartet and this year we were very pleased that the **Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra** collaborated with us on a splendid concert in St Andrew's Church, which was full for the occasion. Conducted by **Alissa Firsova** - also an accomplished pianist and composer - the orchestra played three works by Holst, as well as by Ravel and Haydn. As Alan Gibbs wrote in his excellent programme notes, these were composers that Holst admired.

As well as Gustav's own familiar *St Paul's Suite* and *Brook Green Suite* there was an excellent performance of his *Double Concerto for Two Violins* composed in 1929. It was played on this occasion by two young violinists one of whom, **Roberts Balanas**, studied violin from a very young age in Riga, where Gustav's musical family originated.

Sue Walker and her Events Committee ensured that the Museum had a good presence at St Andrew's in what was a very happy collaboration with the Orchestra's own committee.

Graham Lockwood

Events

Friday 10th February, 7.30pm at St Luke's Church Hall: 'Personal lives - the family side of Holst & Vaughan Williams'

Hugh Cobbe and Laura Kinnear will give us a fascinating account of these two great friends and provide insight into the impact of this friendship on both their music and their personal lives.

Friday 7th April, 7.30pm at Bishop's Cleeve Tithe Barn: An evening of Medieval Music by Waites of Gloucester

Waites are modelled on a band of musicians run by the City in the 16th and 17th centuries. They play a variety of strange instruments: crumhorns, curtals, hurdy gurdy and renaissance flutes. They will also talk about the instruments and the context in which they would have been played in days gone by.

Sue Walker

Composed at the Front

Like Holst's friend Cecil Coles, another Morleyite found time to pen his own music between battles during WWI. **Sydney Bresse**y had won prizes as a member of Holst's Harmony Class and wrote a setting of Shelley's *Music, when soft voices die* in his pocket-book while in a dug-out in the firing line. Back home with a wound which earned him a Military Medal, he was honoured by Gustav with a Morley performance of the song by **Lilian Twiselton** on 27th January 1917: it "caused a sensation" Holst told his friend Whittaker. Unfortunately, like so many Sydney was returned to the front and was killed - curiously enough on Holst's birthday in 1918. Bardic Edition have now published the song: a copy has been sent to the HBM and you can obtain your own from info@bardic-music.com.

Alan Gibbs

Membership of the Friends

We welcome new member **Mrs Zarina Mambery**.

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 enjoy many other benefits. The Museum leaflet contains an application form.

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 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.



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