



## Chairman's Message

Since the last Newsletter we have held our **Annual General Meeting**. It took place on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July at St Matthew's Church Hall and it was gratifying to see a good turnout of Friends, Volunteers, Vice-Presidents and other supporters. Having served the full permitted term of six years **Keith Woodman** left the Board of Trustees and stepped down as our Treasurer. I would like to thank Keith for his long and diligent service, keeping our accounts in good order. Hopefully we will continue to see him at the Museum.

We welcomed as our new Treasurer and Trustee **Liz Giles**, who is very well qualified to take on the stewardship of our finances and is fast getting to grips with all that it involves.

Also elected as a Trustee was **Sarah Steele**, who will oversee our PR and marketing activities. **Meurig Bowen** was re-elected for a second term and we are delighted that we will continue to benefit from his knowledge and experience.

At the end of the AGM we had a brief discussion about the possibility of changing the name of the Museum. It was clear, to me at least, that several of those who spoke have significant reservations about dropping the 'Birthplace' element of the name and, before reaching any conclusion, the Trustees will take these views into consideration. As I mentioned in my last Message, our ambition is to attract more visitors to the Museum from as broad a spread of interests as possible and we will continue to seek ways to do this.

Following the AGM we had an interesting and stimulating presentation from **James Grasby of the National Trust**. He told us about his and the Trust's work at and plans for the Elgar Birthplace Museum following their taking a lease on the property in December 2016. He gave us much food for thought and I am sure that many in the audience felt as I did: that a visit to the Firs, as the Museum is now named, is a must once it re-opens in September.

Shortly after the AGM we said goodbye to **Sara Salvidge**. Sara has secured a permanent, full-time job as Operations Officer at the Battle of Britain Bunker at RAF Uxbridge. Sara spent eight years with us as Learning Co-ordinator and also had two terms as Acting Curator during Laura's periods of maternity leave. We thank Sara for everything that she has done for the Museum and for leaving our learning offering in such good shape.

Our 2017 exhibition '**Gustav's Gramophone**' opened on 1<sup>st</sup> July and will run until 20<sup>th</sup> December. At a private view for invited guests on 2<sup>nd</sup> July Laura spoke about the exhibition and the items on display. **Neil Arthur Williams** followed this with a talk about early recordings and gramophones, which was particularly appropriate as many of the records and documents in the exhibition were loaned by Neil from his private collection. The exhibition has been very well received, as evidenced by the many favourable comments made. We are grateful to **John Baker, Toni&Guy** the hairdressers and **Elan Homes** for their sponsorship, which made the exhibition possible.

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## Chairman's Message continued

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We will soon be having work carried out on the windows at the Museum, to repair them where necessary and to improve draught-proofing. This work will be funded by a grant secured from the Summerfield Trust. We are seeking further funding amounting to **£20,000** to repaint the façade, front door and railings, to redecorate the front and rear music rooms and to improve external signage. The quest for funding remains never-ending.

Steve Wood

## Manuscripts Discovered in New Zealand

In July two Holst manuscripts were discovered in New Zealand. *Folk Songs from Somerset* and *Two Songs Without Words* were found in the town of Tauranga on the North Island. They were unearthed from the archives of the **Bay of Plenty Symphonia** when they were having a clear-out. Justus Rozemond, the BOP Symphonia's music director described how he and the librarian Gloria Pheasant were "throwing away tons of old photocopies and found these handwritten scores. We didn't really believe we were holding genuine Holst manuscripts but there was just enough of a tingle of excitement not to throw them away."

What do we know about these pieces? According to Imogen Holst's 1974 *Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst's Music*, *Folk Songs From Somerset* was first composed in 1906, but reworked in 1907, becoming *A Somerset Rhapsody*. She writes that the 1906 version of the manuscript "has not survived, but several pages were incorporated in the version of 1907." According to Imogen the original 1906 version had seven additional tunes: *Dicky of Taunton Dean*, *The sweet primroses*, *The trees they do grow high*, *The little turtle dove*, *Bruton Town*, *The sign of the bonny blue bell* and *Let bucks a-hunting go*. The work is founded on folk songs collected by Cecil Sharp in Somerset and is dedicated to Sharp. Holst conducted the first version on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1906 at the same concert as the first performance of the *Selection of Songs of the West* in the Pump Room, Bath with the City of Bath Orchestra.

The other rediscovered manuscript is *Two Songs Without Words*, a work for small orchestra, again composed in 1906. Imogen Holst notes in her *Thematic Catalogue* that the manuscript's whereabouts is "unknown". However, unlike the other manuscript this one was published in 1907.

The mystery is how did the manuscripts end up in a cupboard in Tauranga? So far away from the address written by Holst on the front of *Two Songs Without Words*: 31 Grena Road, Richmond, Surrey. The Holst family lived in this house for four years and it was the birthplace of their daughter Imogen. However, at some point the manuscripts found their way across the other side of the world, whether it was during Holst's own lifetime or after he died. There is a theory that the manuscripts were brought over by Stanley Farnsworth who conducted in the Bay of Plenty in the 1960s.

The Bay of Plenty Orchestra has said that they would like to perform the pieces in a concert in the near future. After this has happened it may well be that the manuscripts will make a return journey to England. Certainly it would fitting if the manuscripts made their way to Cheltenham.

Laura Kinnear

## Volunteer News

We warmly welcome the following Volunteers who have joined us at the Museum: **Rosemary Armitage, Penny Liddiard, Valerie McCoy, Terry Noade, Graham Ross** and **Jo Thompson**. This recent surge of new recruits is partly due to Volunteer Week which took place in June. However, we always have room for more, so if you know of anyone who might be interested please pass on my contact details on page 4. We are also pleased to announce that **Mandy Rowlands** will be taking on the role of running the schools' sessions following the departure of Sara Salvidge.

Jenny Fortescue

# The Holst Society

When I decided to set up a Holst society, a number of people expressed their astonishment that such a society did not exist. When you consider the number of English composer societies, it is amazing that no-one has previously set up a Holst Society.

The Holst Society was launched at the English Music Festival over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend in May 2017. The Society is in the process of registering as a charity and we hope that our website ([www.holstsociety.org](http://www.holstsociety.org)) will be up and running in early September. We have also appointed four Vice-Presidents, namely Colin Matthews (executive administrator of the Holst Foundation), Michael Short (Holst's biographer) and the Holst scholars Raymond Head and Alan Gibbs.

The Society intends to do two things. Firstly, we will promote and sponsor the **live performance of works by Holst** and his contemporaries by amateur - and in due course professional - orchestras, choral societies and other groups of musicians. The Society will be approaching good amateur orchestras and choral societies urging them to perform Holst's music and to apply for a grant.

The second principal objective of the Society is to promote and - where funds permit - sponsor the **recording of music by Holst** which has either not been recorded before or, where previously recorded, such recordings are no longer available. The Society is already making good progress with regard to four future recordings.

It is intended that the Society will work closely with the Holst Birthplace Trust and Holst Foundation. I am regularly in contact with Laura Kinnear, Colin Matthews and the other three Vice-Presidents. Nevertheless, the objectives of the Society can be distinguished from those of the other organisations.

The objectives of the Society will need funding and we shall rely upon subscription income, donations, legacies and grants. The annual subscription (the year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> June) will be **£25 for individuals or £40 for couples**. However, I am pleased to report that Laura and I have agreed that present members of the HBT will be entitled to a 40% rebate on their membership subscription. For HBT members the annual subscription will be £15 for individuals or £25 for couples.

If you would like to become a member of the Society, please telephone me on **01769 581581** or send me an email to [chairman@holstsociety.org](mailto:chairman@holstsociety.org) and I will send you an application form for membership.

Chris Cope  
Chairman, The Holst Society

## Recent Events

On 24<sup>th</sup> June our former Treasurer Keith Woodman conducted a guided walk along the **Gustav Holst Way**. Keith expertly led us from Cleeve Hill Golf Club to Belas Knap and back again in what was a most enjoyable walk in perfect weather. Keith shared with us fascinating information about the history and topography of Cleeve Common and about the Belas Knap Neolithic chambered tomb.

The recent **Car Boot Sale** benefited from glorious Bank Holiday weather and raised a splendid total of **£360**. Many thanks to those of you who contributed items and to the Volunteers and Trustees who helped run the event on the day.

Sue Walker

## Sir Malcolm Sargent and Holst

As a footnote to this year's Prom season, Alan Gibbs has commented on Holst's debt to Sir Malcolm Sargent in the repetition in July this year of his 500th Promenade Concert, highlighting his work as a champion of English Music: "The ballet music from *The Perfect Fool* was an excellent choice then and still wears well now!"

Editor

## Future Events

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 7.00pm at All Saints' Church:** The Birthday Concert - The Holst Singers  
The London-based Holst Singers, under their distinguished conductor Stephen Layton, will perform Holst's *Six Folksongs* for mixed voices, the third group of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda* and Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G Minor*. The programme will also include the *Prelude for Harp* by Herbert Howells.

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October 7pm at St Luke's Church Hall:** Quiz & Supper evening

Come and be entertained and challenged by our exciting general knowledge quiz! We will have an interval in order to rest the brain cells and enjoy fish and chips or a choice of two vegetarian meals. A cash bar will be available and there will also be a raffle in aid of Museum funds.

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November 7.30pm at Christ Church Harwood Hall:** *'Bogs, baths, basins.....and the kitchen sink: Victorian Domestic Technology'*

David Eveleigh, Director of Collections and Learning at the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust, will give us engrossing insights into the intricacies of Victorian kitchens, privies and bathing arrangements. Our appreciation of HBM's kitchen and scullery will be much enhanced!

The Events Committee is now working on events for 2018 and 2019. Any suggestions are welcome.

Sue Walker

## Membership of the Friends

We welcome new members **Michael & Elizabeth Jones** from Cheltenham and **Colin Clark** from California.

Annual subscriptions fall due on 1<sup>st</sup> October and we hope you will continue your support for the Museum. Please check any bank Standing Order because our rates were changed last year: see below.

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 contact me at [membership@holstmuseum.org.uk](mailto:membership@holstmuseum.org.uk) or 01242 227720.

If you would like to become a **Volunteer** at the Museum, and thus a Volunteer Friend, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Jenny Fortescue, at [volunteers@holstmuseum.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@holstmuseum.org.uk) or 01242 514627.

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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