



Chairman's Message

Issue 60

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As mentioned in the February Newsletter the Trustees have reviewed our list of Patrons and I am pleased to report that two very eminent people have accepted our invitation to join that list. Firstly we are delighted to welcome **Adrian Partington**, Director of Music at Gloucester Cathedral. Adrian is a keen supporter of Holst's work and is clearly a major force in the musical life of Gloucestershire and indeed further afield. Our second new Patron is **Jeff Wayne**, best known for his composition *The War of the Worlds*, inspired by the H G Wells novel of the same name. Jeff also has a huge number of other compositions to his name and his support for the Museum is much appreciated. He has offered us advertising space in the programme for his forthcoming arena tour, which should bring the Museum to the attention of a group who would perhaps not normally have us on their radar. We are hopeful of attracting one or maybe two more new Patrons.

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In addition to reviewing our Patrons' list, we have been seeking new Trustees. We were very pleased at our March meeting to be able to co-opt **David Addison** to the Board as Collections Trustee. David will stand for election at the AGM in July. We are also delighted that **Alan Parker** has agreed to become our Events Trustee. Alan will take over from Sue Walker when Sue steps down at the AGM. Sue will be staying on as a member of the Events Committee. Towards the end of April our staff numbers were doubled by the arrival of **Lucy Wilson** as Learning and Administration Coordinator. Lucy has already made an impact and will prove a great support for Laura.

The Trust's **AGM** will take place on Monday 2nd July at 2.30pm in St. Matthew's Church Hall. I encourage as many Friends as possible to attend the AGM, which will be followed by a talk by our new Collections Trustee David Addison about how the Museum came into being, a subject on which David is, perhaps uniquely, well placed to speak. On the agenda will be a resolution to increase the maximum number of Directors of the Trust - and thus Trustees - from 9 to 12. We feel that this will provide more flexibility and allow for more roles to be covered by the Board.

On Friday 27th April 37 supporters and their guests gathered at the New Club in Cheltenham for the 2018 Planets Circle Dinner. As well as raising funds for the Museum this was a very enjoyable social event and provided an opportunity for us to update those attending about some of the things happening at the Museum. In particular, after dinner Laura Kinnear gave a very interesting talk on the background to the upcoming exhibition '*Gustav Holst's WW1: With the Salonika Forces*'. The exhibition will run from July until December, with an 'official' opening on 13th July. A whole host of related activities are planned around the exhibition itself. Do please watch out for announcements about these activities and support as many as you can. Laura writes about the Salonika project on page 2.

One very exciting event to look forward to is the arrival of the lost **Holst manuscripts** discovered in New Zealand last year. **The Bay of Plenty Symphonia**, in one of whose cupboards the manuscripts were discovered, have now performed the works - *Folk Songs from Somerset* and *Two Songs Without Words* - and have decided that the manuscripts should be returned to the UK. We were delighted to hear that they had chosen to donate them to the Holst Birthplace Museum and orchestra member **Bronya Dean** will be delivering them by hand on 16th July. We will be putting the manuscripts on display at some point and are looking to arrange a performance of the works in Cheltenham.

Steve Wood

'Holst in Salonika' Project

This summer sees the launch of our very special project, 'Holst in Salonika'. It marks 100 years since Gustav travelled to Salonika and Constantinople with the **YMCA** as Director of Music during WW1. The central element of the project will be the exhibition '*Gustav Holst's WW1: With the Salonika Forces*' which runs from 10th July to 15th December. It brings together for the first time letters, diaries, notebooks and photographs relating to the eight months he taught music to soldiers in modern-day Greece and Turkey. The Museum will have items on loan from a number of public institutions and private individuals, such as the **Britten-Pears Foundation** and members of the **Salonika Campaign Society**. The Museum has been working closely with the Society since the Art Fund gave a curatorial grant for me to travel to Greece and FYROM (Macedonia) in September 2017.

His time in Salonika is a significant part of Holst's story, but is also one which arguably has been overlooked. This is due in part to Salonika's role in WW1 also being relatively unknown, often overshadowed by histories of the Western Front. The Salonika Campaign Society has provided much background information which has helped to illuminate Holst's story and will enable it to come to life in the Museum exhibition room in July. Letters on loan from the Britten-Pears Foundation will also be used to breathe life into Holst's words. His description of his music room at the **YMCA Hut GH2** will inspire a replica within the Museum – one in which visitors can sit and write their own YMCA missive.

There will also be an extensive events and activity programme which will help to interpret the theme for visitors. To place Holst's role in a wider context there will be a **special outdoor exhibition** of 25 hand-printed letterpress posters of the 25 men from Cheltenham who died in Salonika. Each poster will have the name and regiment of the individual soldier. They will be pasted together on a wall in Cheltenham in June – please check our website for news about their location.

Other activities include two separate WW1 Ration Cookery 'Bake Back in Time' events, the first on Saturday July 14th. Fancy Potato and Apple Pudding? Or perhaps Macaroni Mock Tripe? There will be several dishes available for visitors to try – some of them delicious, others less so...

Specifically for families there will be four different **drop-in craft activities**, taking place as usual on Tuesdays during the school holidays. Children will be able to make a range of things on a WW1 theme from 'Home Front' rag rugs to model aircraft. There will also be a WW1 themed trail around the Museum and a 'Colour-in and Cut-out' activity every day in the Learning Space. Excitingly, this room will be transformed into a YMCA Hut, complete with WW1 dressing up, role play activities and board games so children can get an idea of what life was like in these special huts away from the battlefield.

There are many other events and activities taking place so as ever please check the website, Facebook and Twitter for more information.

The Museum is very grateful to the following individuals and organisations without whom the project would not have been possible: The Heritage Lottery Fund, The Art Fund, The Honourable Company of Gloucestershire, The Rowlands Foundation, Toni & Guy, The Regency House Dental Practice, Mr John Baker, and a generous anonymous donor.

Laura Kinnear

Volunteer News

We welcome the following new Volunteers: Mike Darlington, Rosie Evans, Catherine Martin, Asuka Okishio, Annie Payne, Rabinder Samra and Haruka Yoshio. Rabinder and Haruka are students at the University of Gloucestershire and are volunteering as part of their degree courses. Asuka is studying music at Birmingham University.

We are also delighted to announce that the Museum recently received a **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service**. As part of this we were able to send two representatives to a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace where Mike Jenkinson and Velia Stevens flew the flag for the Museum. We will say more about the award in the next edition.

Jenny Fortescue

Speaking out for Holst

I can thoroughly recommend being a Volunteer at the Holst Birthplace Museum, as a quick route to lots of varied and interesting experiences - as I am still finding.

When I retired to Cheltenham and signed up with HBM, I joined the Front of House team and later combined that with chairing the Events Committee. Then in 2014 I felt that I should try to fill a 'gap in the market' for HBM. So, taking a very deep breath and with much trepidation I offered to try giving talks about Gustav Holst and the Museum to local groups and societies.

You can imagine the host of doubts that went through my mind. I am neither an academic nor music expert, so would I be up to researching and organising the right sort of material? Would anyone even be interested in booking me? Could I hold audience interest, or might I even dent some people's potential interest in the Museum? And the biggest worry: could I master the necessary technology?

But life coaches all say that it's important to put yourself outside your comfort zone; so I pressed on.

I put together a 50-minute general biographical talk (*'Music, Friendship and the Cotswold Hills: a life of Gustav Holst'*) with the focus on Holst as an interesting local man, hoping that this would appeal to the widest range of people. I included sections on the Museum and the Holst Way and, using images from the Museum's collections, I learned to do a PowerPoint presentation.

My plan was to try and raise some income for the Museum from the speaker's fee, to widen HBM's outreach and publicity, and to help encourage more visitors. It's hard to be sure on linked numbers, but we have definitely had some bookings for guided group tours on the back of some of the talks and anecdotally I believe that there has been a little boost to overall totals. Rather unexpectedly, sales at the end of talks of our Help Holst mugs and the Holst Way books also help to swell funds a bit.

It has been quite a roller-coaster experience. However, to the amazement of those who know me well, I have become much more confident with the mysteries of laptop, projector, cables and microphone, and I am proud - and hugely relieved - to say that I have had no technology meltdowns (so far!).

I have visited over 30 venues, predominantly across Cheltenham and Gloucestershire, from Chipping Campden to Dursley, Tewkesbury to Lechlade, and even over to Stratford; for meetings in church and village halls, hotels and pubs. I have met so many delightful people from Local History Societies, Probus, Rotary, U3A, civic, social and dining clubs. It still gives me a thrill when someone shares personal memories: for example of Imogen working with local choirs, or an anecdote about widowed Isobel's devotion to her dog. And so far the audiences and their questions have been very friendly!

To date I have concentrated on the 50-minute PowerPoint talk, but with enormous help from our own **Jenny Buckland** and **Dr Kevin Menzies of Stroud Valleys Music Society** I can now offer a 2-hour programme incorporating 13 recordings of Holst's music. So, if you know of any groups or societies who might be interested in either option, please invite them to contact me through the Museum.

One last thing. If anyone either knows of a basic projector looking for a good home or could guide me on a suitable modest purchase, it would be wonderful to have a spare! I have been unable to source a cost-effective replacement bulb, and as most venues do not have their own built-in digital projector, my recurring nightmare is that the bulb on our elderly model fails just as I get to my feet!

Angela Applegate

'Food for Thought' Project

This spring we are working with St Paul's residents with the aim of getting more people from the neighbourhood into the Museum. Over the May bank holiday weekend residents were invited to a free Victorian baking workshop: cakes were then displayed on a street cart where passers-by were given a cake in exchange for a 'thought' about eating in St Paul's. The weekend was a great success and the 'thoughts' will be on display in the Museum during June. I will say more on this in the next Newsletter.

Laura Kinnear

Future Events

Monday 4th June: trip to the Battle of Britain Bunker Museum, Uxbridge

The Bunker played a crucial role in defence of the UK during WW2 and is now a fascinating museum, where our former Learning Coordinator Sara Salvidge is their Operations Officer. We will be able to visit the new Visitor Centre and exhibition, join a tour of the Bunker and enjoy walks in the local area.

Late July: Car Boot Sale

Now an annual event, this is your opportunity to give the Events Committee your no-longer-needed treasures and thus raise a significant sum of money for the Museum. Please contact Sue Walker: 01242 224459 or susanwalker893@btinternet.com.

Saturday 29th September: The Birthday Concert

This year's concert is a joint event with Cheltenham Choral Society, who are celebrating their 80th anniversary. It will be held at St Andrew's Church, Montpellier and will feature James Gilchrist and John Wright. Publicity and ticket sales will start in late June.

Sue Walker

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.

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 or 01242 227720.

Please note that we have a reciprocal arrangement with the **Holst Society**, whereby Friends of the HBT are entitled to a 40% discount on membership of the Society. More details can be found on their website at <http://www.holstsociety.org/>.

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 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.

Many thanks.

Tom Clarke



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