



Birthday Concert

Rupert Luck, a young violinist who hails from Cheltenham, will be performing in this year's Birthday Concert to be held in All Saints' Church on Saturday, the 22nd of September at 7.30pm.

Rupert brings not only his versatile and sensitive playing, but also a viola that once belonged to Gustav Holst. He will use the instrument to play works by Holst and by Holst's great friend Ralph Vaughan-Williams. Works by Bliss, Britten and Parry will also feature in the concert.

A grant by the Bliss Trust will enable the Museum to offer generous discounts to secondary-school students in keeping with our aim to attract a younger audience to the music of Holst and his contemporaries.

Tickets for the concert are available from the Museum, 4 Clarence Road, Cheltenham GL52 2AY at £20 each (£15 for Friends). Cheques should be made payable to the Holst Birthplace Museum. Please enclose an SAE if applying by post.

Issue 16

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Chairman's Note

I am happy to report that the roof has withstood the recent heavy rains, that all the bills have been paid and that our insurance claim for the Regency Room ceiling has been met. The final bill was approximately £24,000, against which we received £10,000 from CBC, nearly £7,000 from the Friends' Appeal and just under £3,000 from the insurance claim.

We are still left with a £4,000 deficit on the essential refurbishments, but of more concern will be the £10,836 deficit on our general financial year ending 31st March 2007 (Expenditure £35,011, Income £24,175). The Trust's Accumulated Fund stands at £61,380 so can serve immediately as a cushion, but the Trustees will undertake an urgent review of the Museum's 2006 - 09 Forward Plan.

I am pleased to report that some new volunteers have joined us recently, to fill some of the gaps left by those who have moved or retired. Joyce Moira-Thomas, Caroline Priest, Claire Mills and Clarissa Lloyd are rapidly proving themselves invaluable members of the museum team. Alison Hall has generously agreed to take on some duties as a Press Officer and Pat Ellaway some PR work.

And so to Amelia, our Curator, who has achieved a great deal in the last three years, setting up excellent working systems, working with the volunteers and marketing the Museum. She is now moving on to a new appointment worthy of her excellent organisational and artistic talents. As Keeper of Art at Torre Abbey, she will lead the largest museum re-development programme in the country at present, with grants from HLF, English Heritage and Torbay Council totalling 15 million pounds!

We are losing an essential constituent in the success of the Holst Museum but Torre Abbey are gaining an outstanding employee - we will miss her greatly but wish her every success in the future.

Marjorie Imlah

Research @ HBM: Imogen Holst

This year marks the centenary of the birth of Imogen, the only child of Gustav Holst and his wife Isobel. Born on 12 April 1907 at Richmond, Surrey, Imogen was surrounded by music as a tiny child, and from her earliest years was taught to be still and quiet when music was being played. By the time she was five she was having piano lessons, and she delighted in dancing. Her hopes of becoming a professional dancer were dashed by illness, but her love of dance never left her; she showed this in the way she moved, the word "dancing" frequently being used of her.

She became a pupil at Eothen School, Caterham (where she later taught for a while in the 1930s), and then went on to St Paul's Girls' School, where her father taught. At both establishments she took a full part in musical life. She proceeded to the Royal College of Music in 1926, and on graduation, after travelling in Europe, she taught at Roedean and Eothen, and worked at Cecil Sharp House, the headquarters of the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

In 1940, early in World War II, Imogen was asked to become one of six "Music Travellers", appointed by the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, forerunner of the Arts Council. She had the task of encouraging musical activities from Oxford to Cornwall, and travelled about setting up choirs and other music groups – all very much in her father's style of work at Morley College. It was extremely tiring, with all the wartime difficulties of travel, and in 1942 Imogen happily agreed to go to Dartington Hall, Devon, training rural music teachers and arranging musical activities for estate workers, wounded soldiers, political refugees and others, work which she loved and which she continued for nine years, with an interval for a sabbatical in India.

Among the visiting musicians at Dartington was Benjamin Britten, who invited her to Aldeburgh to be his musical assistant. Imogen began this work in 1952, and from 1956 she also became a director of the Aldeburgh Festival. This was very demanding, and the administration particularly weighed heavily on her.

From 1964 Imogen devoted her time to preparing her father's manuscripts for publication and generally furthering interest in his life and music. All these activities left her little time for her own compositions – the music critic John Amis refers to her as "music's handmaid" – but she did write a string quartet, string quintet, Five Songs for women's voices, and Variations on an Elizabethan Theme for orchestra. She also founded and conducted the Purcell Singers, active during the 1950s-60s. She had published a biography of her father in 1938, and a second edition followed, along with several books on music during her retirement. Her work was recognised in 1975 by a CBE, and she was awarded a number of honorary doctorates and other honours.

Imogen Holst died in Aldeburgh in 1984, and is buried in the churchyard, near the graves of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears. She is remembered with affection and gratitude by many who were taught by her or worked with her.

Imogen was enthusiastic when the Holst Birthplace Museum was being set up in 1974, giving generously of her father's possessions, including his piano, to furnish it, and attending the opening in the following year.

We are marking the centenary of her birth with a small exhibition illustrating her life and work, which includes the opportunity to hear recorded extracts of an interview with her. Maurice Juggins, who made and donated the fine bust of Gustav Holst a few years ago, has now also given us a bust of Imogen, which is on show in the Regency Drawing Room as part of the exhibition. Made of ciment fondu, it is an excellent likeness and a lovely addition to the Museum. We are most grateful to Mr Juggins for his continued generosity.

The exhibition will run until December. Do try to visit it and learn more about this remarkable woman, who served music well and enthused and encouraged many.

Sue Fletcher

Toy Appeal

The Museum is launching a toy appeal. During the recent roof repairs the lovely nursery, here at the Museum, was completely redecorated. But now it needs lots of Victorian or Edwardian toys, games and school-room equipment like an abacus or even a little desk. Can you help? We would love to accept donations of genuine period pieces

(1830-1910) in good condition. Please contact Marjorie Imlah at the Museum if you think that you have any items that may be suitable, or if you would like to make a donation, which would enable us to purchase some items at auction.

Amelia Marriette, Curator.

Archive Additions

Three new letters written by Gustav Holst – two entirely in his hand and one typewritten and signed by him – have been acquired by the Museum. These interesting letters illustrate several sides of Holst's character.

Thanks to a grant from the Friends of the National Libraries, the Museum was able to buy two letters at Sotheby's music sale in May. Both were written to Katherine Eggar (1874-1961), a pianist, fellow composer and founder member of the Society of Women Musicians. The autograph letter is an invitation to the first public performance of *The Planets* in 1918, which makes it particularly attractive. The typewritten letter is a discussion of a proposed article about Morley College. Eggar was a journalist and writer as well as a musician. (She spent much of her life gathering material for her theory that Shakespeare's plays were written by Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, although she died before she was able to publish her findings.)

The letterhead on the second letter is that of the Y.M.C.A., suggesting another facet of Holst's career. Disappointed that his health prevented his enlisting in 1914, he was pleased to be asked by the Y.M.C.A. to become the Musical Organiser for the troops in Salonica.

The Friends of the National Libraries granted the entire £864 price of these two letters, illustrative of Holst the composer and Holst the educator.

A third and even more fascinating letter (reproduced on the right) was acquired with the generosity of Keith Imlah, the husband of our chairman, Marjorie Imlah. It is written on a letter-card to Raymond Bantock, the son of the composer Sir Granville Bantock. In the letter Holst's interest in astrology is delightfully illustrated. Holst scholar Raymond Head has interpreted Holst's message in astrological signs for us. Raymond writes: *The astrological signs represent Jupiter in the 10th (House) trine Venus in Gemini. It is a lovely message of hope that Raymond will have good fortune (expansion/Jupiter) in whatever he is trying to do (10th House of career) trine/blessed by harmony and ease of communication in all his dealings.*

Music Sale

The Museum will be holding a Music Sale on Sunday 5th August, from 10 until 4. Donations of sheet music, CDs, instruments etc may be left at the Museum, and do then come along on the day to fill those gaps in your collection!

These three letters, each in its own way, add to our understanding of Gustav Holst and represent a major contribution to the Museum's growing archive.

St Pauls Girls School
W 6
Sep 15

Dear Raymond (I'm not going to 'mister' anyone who sends nice astrological greetings on the back of an envelope) Please thank your father very much. I'd love to ~~spend~~ spend Sat night with you. I shall come by the 1.40 from Exeter. I think it arrives at 4.40.

Wishing you $\text{J in X} \Delta \text{♀ in II}$

Gustav Holst
I go back by the midnight train on Sunday

Raymond Burley Entertains

Friends and supporters of the Museum, along with guitar aficionados, enjoyed an evening of guitar music, played for us by guitarist Raymond Burley in the delightful surroundings of St Andrews' Church in Montpellier on the 28th of April. Dinner in the Garden Room followed.

Raymond played a fascinating and instructive programme ranging from Baroque works to modern compositions and including selections from J S Bach, Manuel de Falla, Heitor Villa-Lobos and the young Roland Dyens (born 1955), whose *Tango en Skai* provided a stirring finale. The excellent acoustic of St Andrews' meant that we were all able to appreciate every nuance of Raymond's sensitive performance.

Salmon and profiteroles with suitable accompaniments and plentiful wine closed a delightful evening which was great fun for those who attended.

The Friends' Page

Cheltenham Circular Challenge

We believe that at least fifteen Friends, or friends of Friends (including Martin Horwood, our MP, to whom we are particularly grateful), started out from various locations to walk part of the famous Cheltenham Circular Challenge on Sunday 24th June in aid of the finances of the Museum. We are trying to ascertain just how many muddy miles this group completed as a whole; every-one did at least one leg and doubtless there was some extra walking on unexpected detours. Between us we certainly walked the entire course in one direction and quite a lot of it in the reverse direction. We have heard no reports of anyone still slithering around in the mud or sheltering from the rain and must assume that despite the weather, all found it a worthwhile experience.

Certainly worthwhile was the result. So far we have counted over £1,000 in pledged sponsorship money. An excellent result. Many thanks to all who took part - and particular thanks to Tony Checksfield for his persistence in ensuring that a good number of Friends walked.

It would be good to see photographs of the day so if any of you have them, how about pinning them to the notice board in the Museum with a suitable caption!

Friends' AGM

The Friends' AGM will be held on Saturday 29th September, at 2.00 pm in the Garden Room of St Andrew's Church, Montpellier St, Cheltenham GL50 1SP. All are welcome. The AGM will be followed by an illustrated talk to be given by local film maker David Reynolds, who has used Holst's music in one of his films. Refreshments will be served. If you intend coming, it would be helpful if you could let Sue Adlard know on 01242 579334 or holstfriends@dsl.pipex.com.

Not a Friend yet?....

....You can help the Museum by becoming a member of the Friends - simply fill in the form on this page, arrange your payment and return to the membership secretary.



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APPLICATION FORM

I/we would like to support the Holst Birthplace Museum and apply to join the Friends

Name(s):

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Membership options (*please tick your choice*)

	Category	Annual	Life
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single	£15	£250
<input type="checkbox"/>	Joint	£20	£350
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	£25	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	Overseas	£25	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	Corporate	£50	£500

I/We enclose a cheque for:

I/We prefer to pay by Standing Order:

To The Manager

plc

Address:

Postcode:

Name(s) of Account Holder(s):

Branch Sort Code:

Account Number:

Please pay to the credit of Friends of the Holst Birthplace Museum's Account (number 11851012) at HSBC Bank, Cheltenham Promenade Branch, 2 Promenade, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 1LS (Sort code 40-17-10) the sum of: now and thereafter on the same date annually until further notice.

Signature(s)

Date:

GIFT AID

I wish my payments to the Friends of the Holst Birthplace Museum to be treated as Gift Aid donations. I expect to pay an amount of income tax at least equal to the amount that the charity reclaims on my behalf.

Signature(s):

Date:

Please return this form to the Membership Secretary at the Holst Birthplace Museum, 4 Clarence Road, Cheltenham GL52 2AY