



Holst Birthplace Trust Newsletter



Keith James (1933-2011)

Keith James was one of the first people I met once I had been encouraged to join the 'Holst family' in late 2000. It was quickly apparent that he was the leader of a small but dedicated group of Volunteers whose energy and commitment ensured the Museum's survival through some challenging times. It was Keith who took responsibility for recruiting, training and organising the Volunteer network, particularly when the Museum had no Curator: it was Keith who drove through torrential rain to check and secure the building in 2006 - and try to save the ceiling in the Regency Drawing Room. Thanks to his engineering background, he was qualified and prepared to act as our own Clerk of Works for three major repair and refurbishment projects, including the 2007 work on the roof. He was also delighted to put on a suit and greet some of the distinguished visitors who passed through 4 Clarence Road.

My personal memories are of a big, handsome man with old-fashioned values of honesty, diligence and hard work, loyal service and commitment. His high expectations were occasionally frustrated by the reluctance of others to rise to the same level of his vision and commitment but loyalty to the end was his watchword.

After his retirement he bore increasingly poor health with courage, fortitude and optimism - which is why I think some words of Rudyard Kipling (a contemporary of Holst's) might be appropriate. Keith could indeed 'talk with crowds and keep his virtue' and 'walk with kings, nor lose the common touch'. He definitely 'filled the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance run'. He will be missed but not forgotten.

Marjorie Imlah

Holst Discovery Space Update

Phase 1 of the HDS project has now been successfully completed, and has been totally funded by the generous grants already received. The former toilets have been stripped out to create a valuable new space, which will form the Discovery Space. A new 'outside loo' has been created in part of the coal store, and the necessary external repainting has taken place. All this work has been ably undertaken (and completed well before the end of the contract period) by AM/PM Builders, overseen by Robert Wilson, the Museum Trustee who has taken on the important responsibility for the maintenance of our building.

Plans for Phase 2 are well underway. Sara and Laura (who is using her monthly 'keep in touch'

day to contribute to the project) have been busily preparing our bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. We hope to submit our application at the end of February, in which case we will know the outcome by early May. Meanwhile, work on securing the necessary match funding is continuing.

Assuming that we are successful in obtaining further grants, the first stages of Phase 2 - comprising the installation of storage and display cabinets, and the transfer to them of the Holst collections - should take place during May and/or June. So do watch this space for further updates on this important and exciting project.

Steve Blake

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Chairman's Message

In the difficult economic times of today many need to adapt lifestyles to the conditions. For a Museum such as ours, adaptability is a criterion to which we must aspire all the time, but this has to be within limits. One ambition must be to meet the standards of display which the visitors of today, especially the younger ones, can reasonably expect, but the limit is to retain the integrity of the 19th century house. The Holst Discovery Space has been planned to meet the ambition and observe the limit. Visitors will find most of the Museum unchanged except for one room in which they will have the chance to see more of our collection attractively displayed, to hear music and see moving images and to be interactive – all the things expected of Museums today.

Adaptability is also a key part of another aspect of the Museum's activity. In the grey days of December the house was enlivened by a succession of school parties enjoying activity related to the season. Sara, supported by the enthusiastic Volunteers in the learning team, did a great job to ensure that the pupils had a lot of fun and that teachers went away impressed. But repeated success will require new ideas and awareness of the changing school curriculum and special interests. Sara is actively planning accordingly.

We must also adapt by adopting new channels of communication through which we can advertise our core activities, promote our own events and support those of other individuals and organisations whose activities are relevant to ours. This applies to musical performance too. The success of the music project with Balcarras School in 2009 showed the real benefit of being ready to adapt Holst's music in order to capture the interest and enthusiasm of young people. This was achieved by the rescoring of *The Planets* for a wholly different ensemble of instruments while preserving the integrity of the original. The coming event, being presented by Neil Arthur Williams in Birmingham (see page 4), can be seen as a similar worthwhile endeavour to convey the thrills to be found in Holst's music, in a new manner to new audiences.

Adaptability and integrity are also admirable human qualities and it is hard to think of anyone who displayed these better than our former Trustee and Volunteer, Keith James, who sadly died recently and to whom Marjorie Imlah pays fitting tribute on the front page. He set us a standard to which we, his successors at the Museum, should aspire.

Graham Lockwood

The Family of Matthias von Holst

Peter Holst, one of our Members, has been researching the family of Gustav Holst's great-grandfather, Matthias von Holst (despite the fact that Peter turns out not to be related to the family). This article is intended to be the first of a short series based upon his work.

Matthias von Holst and his wife Katerina Rogge married before moving to England around 1802. They had 5 children. The oldest, Gustavus, was Gustav Holst's grandfather, and was born about 1800, before the family arrived in this country. The other children were Benigna (1801), Constantia (abt. 1805), Theodor (1810) and Carolina (1815, in Danzig).

Peter has been looking at what happened to the children other than Gustavus, whose history is reasonably well known. This article focuses on Constantia and her family.

Constantia Eleonora von Holst married Jean Furcy Tourrier in St Pancras in 1833. Jean was an artist and professor of literature, born in Paris in about 1799. They went on to have no fewer than 9 children, of whom three died at birth or in infancy,

and another one, probably two, in childhood. There were 4 children who are known to have survived into adulthood.

The oldest was Turban Holst Alfred Tourrier, born 2nd Jan 1835. He became an artist like his father; he was generally known as Alfred Holst Tourrier, and had work exhibited at the Royal Academy. He married in 1880 and died in 1892, it seems childless. Ida, born in 1841, married Alfred Millett, a bookseller, in 1864 and had a family of 2 children. Ida was a twin whose other unnamed sister died at birth. Then Eleonora, born about 1845, married Anthony Charles Jellicoe, a military man, at St Matthew's, Brixton in 1874. They had 4 children. Lastly there was Gustav Leon Furcy Tourrier, born 1849, another artist who also exhibited at the Royal Academy; he married in 1904 and died in 1922 aged 74.

A number of the family are buried in Kensal Green Cemetery in London. Matthias and Katerina are there, and in a separate unmarked grave are Constantia Eleonora Tourrier, Jean Furcy Tourrier, Carolina Helena Maria (Fredricks), Alfred Charles Millett and Alfred Holst Tourrier.

Events

The new calendar of events is included in this Spring Newsletter mailing. I would ask Members to study the new programme with diaries to hand in order to make a note of the dates to reserve!

The first event on **Friday March 9th** will be an opportunity to be re-acquainted with the work of another Museum very near to us – the Elgar Birthplace Museum. We are delighted to welcome Cathy Sloan, the Museum Director, and her colleague Wendy Hill to speak on the Heritage of Elgar and also the working life of the Elgar Museum itself. This will certainly be of particular interest to our Volunteer Members. There will be parking available in front of the Victory Club in Lypiatt Road for this evening event.

We have chosen once again the elegant setting of the Thirlestaine Gallery for the Concert on **Friday April 14th**. Michael Bochmann has an international musical reputation and we are delighted that his Trio, which also includes Nella Hunkins (cello) and Carol Hubel-Allen (viola), will perform for us a beautiful selection of music featuring the Holst String Trio and works by Sibelius, Beethoven and Dohnanyi.

On **Monday May 21st** there will be a unique opportunity to hear Holst's trombone played together with Holst's piano in the Museum. Sue

Addison is a professor of trombone with wide experience as a player in nearly all the major National Orchestras. Her recent project includes recording on Elgar's trombone. Sue is fascinated by the story of Holst's trombone and delighted to share with us the experience of uniting Holst's trombone, normally housed at the Royal College of Music, with his piano preserved in his childhood home in Cheltenham. Sue has kindly offered to give two talks in the Museum to allow for more people to attend. Advance booking at the Museum is essential for this event due to limited space.

In July we can look forward to some rather special concert opportunities as part of the 2012 Cheltenham Music Festival which, in recognition of this Jubilee year and the London Olympics, will be featuring English Composers. There will be more details of these events in our next Newsletter.

Please do join us at the events coming up in the Spring. The Museum benefits from the ticket sales but it is important also to bring together present Members and recruit new Members to support the valuable work of the Holst Birthplace Trust and ultimately preserve the Holst Museum.

Liz Auster

Setting the Standard

Most museums comparable in size would give their eye teeth (presumably a museum of dentistry!) for the enhanced profile which is inevitably linked to the heritage of a significant person's birthplace. However, the fact that the focus of our Museum, Gustav Holst, generates international as well as national and regional interest can be a mixed blessing. It means that our Museum is on a bigger stage than many and what we offer to visitors, as well as how we operate, is visible to a potentially greater audience. We can celebrate our successes but, equally, we cannot hide our failures.

One way of ensuring we're 'up to scratch' is by being part of the Accreditation scheme, which is currently administered by the MLA (Museums, Libraries & Archives) and sets nationally agreed standards for museums. It is regarded as one of the most innovative and effective developments in the museum sector, has raised standards in the UK and has been used as a model for museums overseas. There are currently over 1,800 participating in the scheme. The Holst Birthplace Museum is one of these, having achieved and

maintained full Accreditation Standard since 2006.

Accredited museums must adhere to certain standards which affect the care of collections; governance and management and quality of information and services. Being part of this scheme means that the way the Museum operates is endorsed and there is an acknowledgement that it is committed to maintaining and improving its standards. The scheme also aims to give greater emphasis on the needs and interests of those who use museums, making sure that they have an opportunity to enjoy and learn from collections and ensuring, by consultation, that any development in the Museum takes these needs into consideration: the latter is a pertinent issue for the Holst Birthplace Museum as we embrace the future with the new Holst Discovery Space.

The fact that we have achieved and maintained Accreditation Standard simply states that no matter the size of our Museum, its quality can be assured.

Sara Salvidge

The Coming of Christ

A first recording of Holst's choral work *The Coming of Christ* has just been released. The CD, which has been very well reviewed, has been produced by EM Records, the recording arm of the English Music Festival. Hilary Davan Wetton conducts the Holst Orchestra and City of London Choir, with the actor Robert Hardy.

The work was composed in 1927 for performance in Canterbury Cathedral at the request of the Dean, then George Bell.

The CD is available for purchase at the Museum shop at the reduced price of £9.50. Alternatively, if you wish to purchase a copy by post, please send a cheque for £11.00 to the Museum, made out to the Holst Birthplace Trust.

Space Opera Double Bill in Birmingham

Gustav Holst's Space Opera

A stunning 360° voyage across the Solar System featuring music from *The Planets* by Gustav Holst. This amazing new digital planetarium show will be preceded by an illustrated lecture:

Gustav Holst's The Planets: from Hollywood to Bollywood and Beyond!

An incredible tale of how one of the most cherished works of the classical concert hall has gone on to inspire and influence worldwide popular culture in television, movies, sci-fi, sport, multimedia and rock, pop & jazz. Written and presented by HBT Life Member Neil Arthur Williams.

At **Thinktank, Birmingham**, on **Saturday 24th March 2012 at 7pm**. See tinyurl.com/ghso12.

Congratulations...

... to our Curator Laura Kinnear, and her husband Andy, on the birth of their daughter Mhairi last year. Laura will be on maternity leave until later this year; meanwhile Sara Salvidge is acting for her.



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Holst and Folk Song

Readers might like to know that a copy of HBT Member Martin Graebe's article *Gustav Holst, Songs of the West, and the English Folk Song Movement*, published in the 2011 *Folk Music Journal*, is now available online. See tinyurl.com/Holst-SoW.

Join the Trust

If you are not already a subscribing Member 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 £15, Joint £20, Family £25, Overseas £25, Corporate £50, Benefactor £60, Joint Benefactor £100, Corporate Benefactor £300.

For further details, please contact the Membership Secretary, Catriona Smith, on 01242 578172; or email holstmembers@randc.me.uk.

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

Email

We would be grateful if Members would keep Catriona informed of their **email addresses**. This will help her to ensure that you continue to receive emails concerning Holst events, particularly if notice is short.

We would also like to be able to deliver this Newsletter 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 Catriona at holstmembers@randc.me.uk.

The Trustees are most grateful to the following:

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