

Quarterly No. 127, June 2014

FoMRHI Quarterly

BULLETIN 127

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2010 The Harp-Lute in Michael Praetorius's *Theatrum Instrumentorum*:

Interpretation and Reconstruction – A Practical Report

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The next issue, Quarterly 128, will appear in September 2014. Please send in Comms and announcements to the address below, to arrive by September 1st.

Fellowship of Makers and Researchers of Historical Instruments

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This is the third *Q* of the current subscription period (nominally 2013). For those who haven't already paid their 2014 subscriptions in advance, a subscription form will appear in the next issue. The 'man of the match' in this issue is Sheldon Gabriel, who has supplied a very fully illustrated report of his Master's project at London Metropolitan University (incorporating the College of Furniture Making, as was). Remember that you can see all the pictures in colour in the PDF version of this *Q*, moreover a version with even more colour pictures will shortly appear on the Lute Society website (Sheldon gave a presentation at a Lute Society meeting) www.lutesociety.org on the hints and tips page. And at the end of the year this more lavish version will go up on our own website, www.fomrhi.org. It has always been the 'unique sales proposition' of Fomrhi *Q* that it shows you how to actually do things in the workshop, and Sheldon's paper is exemplary in this regard, even warning us of painful lessons of experience. Does anyone else have or know of similar projects or reports we might print?

The attractive new membership leaflet (of which you should have received a few copies with the last *Q*) has not tempted as many new members to join as we would have wished – so do keep pestering instrument-making friends to join, and above all to send in Comms!

AGM

Under our new constitution we need to fix a date for an AGM, where we will elect a committee, amongst other things. An obvious date would have been the Saturday of the Early Music Exhibition in Greenwich, that is 15th November, but since this clashes with a Lute Society meeting, the Secretary, and very probably the Treasurer and the Webmaster will be otherwise engaged. One wonders if the preceding Friday evening, after the close of the exhibition, would be a possibility. Views will be canvassed from the membership by email – or you can write with suggestions.

Volunteers for the committee

You are hereby reminded that under Clause 3 of our new constitution (see pp. 3-5 of *Q* 126) we seek volunteers / nominations to the committee, a ballot for which will open not less than a month before the AGM, at which meeting the ballot will close. The current body of Fellows are free to stand, but may not all choose to do so; we need at least ten on the committee. So please volunteer, or nominate if you feel you have a contribution to make to the work of the Fellowship.

Welcome to new members

We welcome A.F. Bolt, Stephen Pegler, Peter W. Hawkey, and Malcolm Potter as new members of Fomrhi.

Sad news

The Spring of 2014 has brought some very sad news: two of our Fellows have died, both great pioneers of the early music revival. Stephen Gottlieb (1945-2014) died on 25th April after a long illness. The funeral, on 12 May, was marked more by a sense of celebration of a life well lived than by mourning. A memorial concert is planned for the autumn, and an obituary will appear in the next *Quarterly*. On the same day as Stephen's funeral, John Cousen died. He was a founding member of Fomrhi. We are grateful to Stephen Turner for this obituary (with small additions from Martyn Hodgson and Jeremy Montagu).

John David Cousen (29th July 1926 – 12th May 2014)

John was born and lived all his 87 years in Huddersfield. His interest and ability in music clearly did not come from his parents. The most likely source would be the distinguished composer, Charles Wood, to whom John's extensive researches into his family history revealed him to be linked.

Like the best significant figures in Music (at least according to legend) John had a spinet in his bedroom in Abingdon Street. Unlike others however he had made this himself.

In the late 1940's he began a medical course at Leeds University where he met Mary who was to be his wife and playing partner of over 60 years. After two years he changed direction and trained as an optician at Bradford College of technology (now the University). In 1952 John and Mary were married and Mary was introduced to the delights of 'Early Music', as was son Christopher when he came along. The early music world was a lot smaller in those days; in Mary's words 'Everyone knew everyone else'. Joseph and Carl, Natalie and Cecile [Dolmetsch], Dietrich and Jane, Eph and Djilda [Segerman], Bill [Waterhouse] et al all were on first name terms and Christmas card lists.

When David Munrow wanted the largest recorders for his recording *Musical Instruments of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* he borrowed them from John (he bought the smaller ones!). When he wanted the Northumbrian pipes demonstrating for his radio programme *Pied Piper* he turned to John.

With his friend John Lunn John delved into the wind instruments appropriate to early music and began to make them, setting up a workshop in his cellar. He showed a talent for making not only the instruments but the ancillary equipment necessary where it did not exist or was prohibitively expensive. Together they researched existing specimens in various national and international collections.

John was aware that specialist makers did exist but were difficult to contact, had long delivery times or were very expensive. He set about making a range of early music instruments and was firm in his conviction of the correct way to carry out each step of the involved process.

When Richard Wood visited him to ask about obtaining such instruments John was able to point him to a range of sources from which Richard obtained instruments to start the Early Music Shop at Woods in Bradford. John appears in early (1973) editions of the *Early Music* magazine as 'Maker-early woodwind'.

The bandora John made was, rather like his more celebrated large renaissance recorders, one of the very first to be made in modern times and I believe appears on many early recordings made in the 1960s/70s played by various people.

He was a founder member of the Fellowship of Researchers and Makers of Historic Instruments; which started as a result of a meeting with Jeremy Montagu, Ephraim Segerman, and Djilda Abbott when they were all staying London on the eve of the Early Music Exhibition at the Royal College of Music in 1975.

To my imperfect knowledge John made:

Recorders to medieval, renaissance and baroque patterns in every practical size from a wide range of different hard woods

Renaissance Flutes in several sizes

(the pick being a velvet cased set (duly lined with green) of flutes and recorders in a range of sizes according to one of Henry the Eighth's inventories)

A pipe organ, a harp, several sets of Northumbrian pipes

Curtals in 4 sizes, Chalumeaux in 4 sizes, Cornamuse, Kortholt, Sordun in more than one size

A Rommelpot

A Bandora

Rebecs

A Symphony

Serpent (getting an original x-rayed and making a former from which several were made by others)

A Mute Cornet, A Clavichord, A Spinnet

Gemshorns, an experimental double pipe ETC!!

He also repaired historic instruments, in some cases producing complete replacement joints for wind instruments and rebuilding damaged items, including a hurdy gurdy.

His instrument collection, including the wonderful anonymous 18th century German bass viol, is extensive and virtually defies enumeration. House guests sleeping in his music room at his legendary Christmas parties sometimes tried to get to sleep by counting his instruments, but never counted them all. His treble curtal is on loan to the Bate Collection.

What this does not say, and no one person can adequately catalogue, is the contribution John made to the early music world in terms of encouragement, support, the loan (gift!) of instruments, the provision of music to play and in many, many other ways.

During all this time John served the wider world as an Optician at Huddersfield Infirmary in same supportive and caring way.

Steven Turner

STANDING CALL FOR PAPERS

The Fellowship of Makers and Researchers of Historical Instruments welcomes papers on all aspects of the history and making of historical musical instruments. Communications or 'Comms' as they are called, appeared unedited (please don't be libellous or insulting to other contributors!), so please send them EXACTLY as you wish them to appear – in 12 point type, on A4 paper with a 25mm or 1 inch border all round, or to put it another way, if you are using non-European paper sizes, then the text area must be 160 x 246 mm (or at least no wider or longer than this). Our printers make a good job of scanning photos.

In naming your Communication, remember that people will search for it online using keywords. So if you are discussing, say, a Ruckers harpsichord in Paris, call it 'Observations on a Ruckers harpsichord in Paris', rather than 'Observations on a curious old instrument.'

You can send contributions EITHER on paper, OR as a Word-compatible or PDF attachment. If you *really* do not have access to a word processor of any kind, we may be able to retype typed or handwritten submissions. The address to send them to is:

FoMRHI
c/o Chris Goodwin
Southside Cottage
Brook Hill
Albury
Guildford GU5 9DJ
United Kingdom

and the email address for Comms sent as attachments (and other email correspondence) is Lutesoc@aol.com or secretary@fomrhi.org

Non-members will be given a year's free subscription if they send in a Communication to the Quarterly.

If your interests have changed, and you don't now want to be a member of FoMRHI, please let us know, to save postage costs.