

Draft Minutes of the Twenty-Third Annual General Meeting of the British Clavichord Society

***Held at the Art Workers Guild, 6 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AT
on Saturday, 30th June 2018, 2.15pm***

Members present: Derek Adlam (president), Peter Bavington, Alex Bell, Brian Blandford, Garry Broughton (chairman), Terence Charlston, Alan Choate, David Derrick, Christopher Gold, Christopher Griffiths, Richard Ireland, Nicholas Lane, Allan Leroy, Richard Miller, Jillian Mitchell, Ruth Muffett, Roger Murray, Sarah Noble, Anthony Noble, Stephen Read, Nigel Reed, Karin Richter (secretary), Chris Sansum, Eileen Vasey, Patrick Vasey, Mimi Waitzman, Judith Wardman (treasurer), Elizabeth Wells, Katie Willis, Paul Willis, David Wilson, Paula Woods

1. Apologies for absence had been received from:

Carey Beebe; Grant O'Brien; David Butcher; Clare and David Griffel; Claire Habbershaw; David Hitchin; Martha Leigh; John Lester; Audrey and Brian Mattinson; David Millard; John and Julia Morley; Patricia Murdoch; Julian Perkins; Eve Richards; Huw Saunders; Chris da Silva; Peter Stephens; Frances and Paul Swain; Geoffrey Allan Taylor; Godfrey Twitchen; Janet and Philip Wardle; John Weston; Beverly Woodward.

2. Minutes of the 22nd AGM, held 17th June 2017. Christopher Griffiths proposed and Derek Adlam seconded that these minutes represented a true record of that meeting; the minutes were agreed unanimously and signed by the chairman.

3. Chairman's Report

"As you all know, the officers and committee of your Society have spent the last twelve months debating the future of the Society and have reluctantly come to the conclusion that dissolution must come before evolution, 'reculer pour mieux sauter' perhaps, or as T.S. Eliot put it: "... to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from."

I must admit it is difficult to be positive amidst the growing shadows of what seems to be a 'clavi-dämmerung', with the dispersal of public and private instrument collections (Victoria & Albert Museum; Hogwood collection; Finchcocks; Colt collection), the retirement or death of makers and collectors (Jürgen Ammer; Luigi Tagliavini; Kenneth Mobbs), lack of tuners and technicians, lack of interest from BBC Radio 3, etc. etc.

Nevertheless there were enough clavichord events during the last twelve months to inspire some hope for the future, beginning with Marcia Hadjimarkos' recital here last June which demonstrated that it is possible to devise original programmes expanding the repertoire, with Bartok, Prokofiev, and Nicolas Slonimsky stirring up the standard Bachian fare. A week later, committee member Adrian Lenthall played a Telemann programme in Cambridge, reminding us how enjoyable Georg Philipp Telemann's keyboard overtures and fantasies are to play and hear on the clavichord. Another BCS stalwart, David Griffel, put the Oxford Bate Collection's 1743 Hass through its paces in two recitals in October, sharing a survey of the domestic voice-plus-clavichord repertoire with his wife Clare.

A long time ago, November 2001, the BCS organized an educational clavichord weekend at the College of Music and Drama in Cardiff. My report in the BCS Newsletter said:

“Masterminded by Richard Ireland (BCS Educational Initiatives Co-ordinator), this was probably the first and definitely the most comprehensive clavichord event in Wales.” I am afraid the Welsh had to wait 16 years for a follow-up event, but Steven Devine’s clavichord workshop (with financial support from the BCS) at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama last November proved to be worth waiting for.

November also brought Herbert Howells celebrations involving three BCS members: Francis Knights and Dan Tidhar gave a complete performance of the clavichord suites at St. John’s College, Cambridge, where Howells was organist 1941-45; and Julian Perkins’ complete recording, using clavichords by Dolmetsch, Goff, and (Silber-)Bavington, was issued on two CDs. The booklet includes a photo of the 1939 Goff clavichord with a painting by Rex Whistler, but does not refer to the instrument’s disappearance the day after Goff’s death in 1975.

The BCS autumn recital in Oxford also took place in November with Carole Cerasi rising from her sick bed to give superb performances of music by C.P.E and J.S. Bach including the latter’s madly obsessive A minor Fantasia BWV 922.

2018 began with the annual clavichord and harpsichord recital at the ‘Handel & Hendrix’ in Brook St. This year the dual keyboardist was Timothy Roberts, and his programme included music by Weckmann, Cabanilles, and Sweelinck. A few days later Carole Cerasi was at the Workshop in Lewes, playing the item she had been too ill to prepare for the Oxford recital: Gustav Leonhardt’s arrangement of Bach’s solo violin Partita in B minor.

It has always seemed to me that the square piano was a direct descendant of the clavichord. How appropriate therefore for the BCS to be invited to join the Friends of Square Pianos at their meeting in April when the playing of clavichords, square pianos, and spinets was interspersed with conversational interludes in which David Hackett, FOSP’s tireless organizer, elicited reminiscences from our president Derek Adlam.

Over the last two months David Griffel, Julian Perkins, and Francis Knights have been giving recitals in Oxford, Cambridge, and Aldborough: before you all start celebrating the fact that the humble clavichord has reached the almost royal heights of the Aldeburgh Festival, I should point out that Julian was playing in Aldborough, North Yorkshire. Its music festival was born in 1994, the same year as the BCS. There were no clavichords at the other Aldeburgh.

Julian, our most peripatetic performer, will next be found at the Petworth Festival in West Sussex in August; his programme includes two of his specialities: Howells and Stephen Dodgson. This brings me to Dodgson’s widow, the UK’s François Couperin expert and BCS member Jane Clark, who will join Francis Knights, Dan Tidhar, Penelope Cave et al in a dawn to dusk complete Couperin marathon, celebrating his 350th birthday on harpsichord, organ and clavichord. Francis has promised further ‘complete works’ marathons for the anniversaries of Beethoven (2020), Sweelinck (2021), Tomkins and Kuhnau (2022), Byrd (2023), Weckmann (2024), and Orlando Gibbons (2025).

The BCS’s major autumn event will be a recital by the distinguished Swiss player of clavichords and early pianos, Pierre Goy. Members who enjoyed his previous recital for us or who know his recordings of Müthel and Mozart will need no persuading to be in Oxford on November 17th. Today’s recitalist Adrian Lenthall will end the year with Christmas Music for Clavichord on December 15th at St Mary’s, Studham. As for 2019, peering through a glass darkly, I can see only one definite event on the BCS horizon: what will be either an AGM or EGM, marking our 25 years of striving to promote the study and appreciation of the clavichord and its music by encouraging the exchange of ideas and information, and the

sheer enjoyment of hearing the best performers on the best instruments. I think we have achieved many of the aims set out in our constitution. Despite the fact that a small formal society such as the BCS is no longer economically or organisationally viable, I think there is an increased awareness of the clavichord compared with 25 years ago, and that today's exponents of the clavichord, many of whom were in the past helped or encouraged by the BCS, will continue to expand this awareness of what the clavichord can offer as an antidote to the din of clashing ideologies.

Finally I must express my thanks, and that of the membership, to my colleagues Judith Wardman, Karin Richter, Adrian Lenthall, Christopher Gold, Ulla Kite, Jillian Mitchell, Roger Murray, Anthony Noble, Paula Woods, David Hitchin and Huw Saunders."

Karin Richter added thanks to our chairman to this list.

4.a) Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report. The independently examined accounts for the year 2017 were circulated along with a written report from the Treasurer, Judith Wardman, and introduced by her. She thanked David Hitchin and Brian Blandford for their support in preparing and examining the accounts.

Richard Ireland proposed and Derek Adlam seconded that the meeting should accept the Treasurer's report. Carried unanimously.

b) Amended 2016 Treasurer's Report. Peter Bavington proposed and Anthony Noble seconded that the meeting should accept the amended Treasurer's report for 2016. Carried unanimously.

5. Vote on the Future of the BCS.

The chairman read out the notice which had been sent out to members: *As you may be aware, we have been trying for years to attract members to join the committee and play a more active role in the running of the BCS. While we have had some changes to the committee, and are grateful for the support all committee members give to the officers, we have not been successful in recruiting anyone able and willing to do that bit more and take responsibility for particular areas of our work. This situation has become untenable, and it is with huge regret that we therefore put the following motion to the AGM:*

"That the BCS should be dissolved on 31st July 2019, and that remaining assets should be disposed of in accordance with the constitution (clause 23) at the discretion of the committee; and that the current subscription period should be extended to cover the period up to 31st July 2019"

He also made the meeting aware of clause 23 of the constitution: *'The Society may, by a resolution passed at a General Meeting and by not less than three quarters of those members present and entitled to vote, decide to dissolve itself. Any assets remaining upon such dissolution after satisfying the debts and liabilities of the Society shall be transferred only to another organization approved by the Committee.'*

Allan Leroy asked about a potential future for the BCS. Garry Broughton responded that all members are invited to come forward with suggestions and ideas; while the committee had discussed different ways the BCS could potentially reinvent itself at length, we remain open to discuss all issues. A suggestion to put the Newsletter online was made from the floor, and the chairman confirmed that this had been considered. Karin Richter added that with any of the ideas the committee had considered, the main sticking point was the question of who is actually going to do the work, going forward.

Karin Richter added that the very least we could hope to do was to start a new mailing list, independent of BCS membership, to enable those interested in all things clavichord to keep in touch. Such a list would have to be independent of the BCS, meaning members would actively have to sign up to it, as the new GDPR rules will not allow us to transfer any data from the existing membership data base. Derek Adlam asked whether people signed up to this list would be able to communicate directly with each other. Karin Richter responded that this will depend on the wording and privacy settings; at the moment this is just an idea which will be further discussed at a committee meeting. She assured the meeting that we will keep members informed of any developments.

Mimi Waitzman asked whether the website could continue. Karin Richter said we could not keep the existing website if the BCS were to be dissolved; however, we would be looking into ways of keeping the information accessible, if possible. Judith Wardman stated that a website comes with associated costs, both financially and in terms of manpower, which we would need to bear in mind if we were to start a new 'post-BCS' website.

Peter Bavington said this was a moment of sadness; he had said at the inception of the BCS that we need about 200 members for the Society to be viable, but we never quite reached that target. He stated that the members present must vote in favour of the proposed motion unless they were willing to step up and help in the running of the BCS. He read out a sonnet by Michael Drayton, which is attached at the end of the minutes.

One member asked for clarification on Clause 23 of the constitution; could we use remaining funds to continue funding a website? The secretary responded that this was not possible, as the BCS would no longer exist, and there is no 'New BCS' to whom we could potentially hand over any funds; legally there is no way we can continue spending money on our own purposes once the BCS has ceased to exist. Judith Wardman added that liabilities relating to BCS activities before 31/7/19 could still be discharged after that date, but we could not fund anything new. Derek Adlam confirmed that it would be the officers' and committee's responsibility to deal with liabilities after the date of dissolution.

Richard Ireland wondered what would be possible with more members; the answer was that it would only make a difference if it resulted in more people coming forward to take responsibility for the work that needs doing.

Mimi Waitzman said she is the chair of the Musical Instrument Resource Network, which is running a website costing £60 per year, 2 email addresses, and they run one event each year for which they charge, and it covers their costs. Elizabeth Wells mentioned the Musical Collection Forum. The chairman and secretary thanked them and said that the current committee would be keen to encourage any follow-up organization if there are enough people enthusiastic to set it up.

The question was raised what voting No today would actually mean. Garry Broughton said if the AGM votes against the chairman's proposal, in theory at least he ought to resign. While this would not happen immediately, it was the likely outcome later on in the coming year. Derek Adlam stated it would leave the BCS 'like a ship without rudder or engine'. As you can't compel officers and committee to carry on if they have come to the conclusion that we had come to, it would mean a messy end of the BCS as opposed to an orderly end.

The above resolution was then proposed by Garry Broughton, and seconded by Karin Richter; an anonymous vote on voting slips returned 30 slips, of which 27 were in favour and 3 against.

6. Election of Chairman and Secretary

Both chairman and secretary had come to the end of their term of office, and had agreed to stand for re-election. Karin Richter took the chair for the chairman's election: **Garry Broughton** was proposed by Karin Richter and seconded by Jillian Mitchell, and was re-elected unanimously. For secretary, **Karin Richter** was proposed by Adrian Lenthall and seconded by Anthony Noble, and re-elected unanimously.

7. Election of Committee members.

The following committee members had come to the end of their term of office, and had agreed to stand for re-election:

Christopher Gold was proposed by Anthony Noble and seconded by Jillian Mitchell

Ulla Kite was proposed by Christopher Gold and seconded by Judith Wardman

Jillian Mitchell was proposed by Karin Richter and seconded by Judith Wardman

Roger Murray was proposed by Adrian Lenthall and seconded by Christopher Gold

Anthony Noble was proposed by Adrian Lenthall and seconded by Christopher Gold

All were re-elected unanimously.

8. Election of Examiner of the Accounts. **Brian Blandford** had been proposed by Adrian Lenthall and seconded by Karin Richter and was elected unanimously.

9. AOB. Derek Adlam expressed thanks from him personally and on behalf of the BCS members for the work that has been done by officers and committee members past and present.

The meeting closed at 3.15pm and was followed by a recital by **Adrian Lenthall** at 4pm.

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Michael Drayton: Sonnet 61  
(from *Idea's Mirror*, 1594)

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part.  
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;  
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,  
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.  
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,  
And when we meet at any time again,  
Be it not seen in either of our brows  
That we one jot of former love retain.  
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,  
When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies;  
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,  
And Innocence is closing up his eyes—  
Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,  
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover!