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# Upbeat

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*The Newsletter of the London Gallery Quire*

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**New Version - 2015 - No. 10**

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## Doctor's Notes:

One of the joys of leading London Gallery Quire is the amazing range of talents, musical and non-musical, that we have amongst our members. They will forgive me if I don't mention each and every one of them.

Perhaps most fortunate of all is the number of members able and willing to step in and take over leading the quire if I am delayed or absent.

They know that if I am not present at the start of a rehearsal for any reason, they are expected to start without me. Usually my Assistant Conductor Kathryn would take over, but failing her Nicholas, who leads a church choir elsewhere can lead, or Brian, our flautist, may leap up and lead from the flute. Anna too, when not kept away by her hospital duties, knows how to wave her arms about.

We are also fortunate is having plenty of instrumentalists. Some quires refer to these essential people as "musicians". I object to this term; we are all musicians, singers or players. At the time of writing we have the aforementioned flautist, three clarinetists, a fiddler, a bassoonist, and Kathryn on serpent. Lurking amongst the singers we have also a violin/viola player, a trumpeter, three recorder players and a viola da gamba player/drummer. These are all folks who are needed more as singers than as players, but it is good to have them available.

And their availability comes to the fore when The Garlickhythe Occasionals, our ceilidh band, led by Brian, performs. This happens at our concerts, as a change from the vocal items, and also when the band is booked to play independently for a folk dance. The name Garlickhythe comes from the street in which our rehearsal church, St James, is situated.

Yet another useful musical talent is that of researching and editing West Gallery music, so that I don't have to do it all. Tim and Nicholas give me stuff, and I also receive contributions from outside the quire. Nicholas is also the best proof-reader you could wish for; he will spot a misplaced comma. Jenni, a professional editor, also helps to spot all my editing mistakes.

And it doesn't stop there. Brian is also an engineer, who can repair a wonky music stand, and arranged our entry system. For security reasons we have to lock the church door while we rehearse, but latecomers can gain entry.

David is our IT expert; what useful people these are! He has shown us how to read our music from an iPad, so that it doesn't even need to be printed out. And we have no fewer than five doctorates amongst us, two medical, one physics, my own in West Gallery music, and most remarkable of all one in Renaissance Royal Funerals. We haven't actually made much use of that one yet.

And yet another musical talent was revealed at our most recent rehearsal; Barry plays the shawm. At our next service we are planning to sing William Knapp's setting of Psalm 98, including the text: "With trumpets also and shawms: O shew yourselves joyful before the Lord the King." We have a shawmist; we have a trumpeter (Anna) and I am currently pondering how to fit these into a piece intended by its composer to be sung unaccompanied.

O the joys of conducting!

**Francis Roads**

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## Occasional Notes

It's not often that you get a band consisting of: a serpent, bass viol, bass crumhorn, clarinet, fiddle and two descant recorders. But it happens Occasionally. Most recently, in March the Garlickhythe Occasionals played for Sarah's birthday barn dance in North London.

It's not surprising that West Gallery musicians enjoy playing for dancing, as the styles have much in common; plenty of rhythm, drive and enthusiasm (not to mention the occasional "interpretation", or wrong note).

Historic evidence, not just the writings of Thomas Hardy, shows that the original West Gallery musicians used to provide music for both "posh" dances and more vigorous "knees-ups". The majority of our musical repertoire is taken from the manuscript books of village players.



These books contain tunes copied out from other sources and this shows which were considered worth the effort of writing out.

Many of the tunes are still commonly played, though some deserve re-discovery and re-introduction in the modern folk dance world. However we do not stick rigidly to historic authenticity; dances frequently used to carry on for half an hour (or longer) without a break. Modern dancers can't last much longer than five minutes.

Most people at our dances are not concerned with the origins of the music, all that matters is danceability of it; though several people ask about our unusual instruments. As musicians, we are more concerned in getting people to enjoy the dancing, which in turn gives us more enjoyment.

Why "Garlickythe Occasionals"? The London Gallery Quire rehearses at St James, Garlickythe and we only play Occasionally, though we would love to play for more dances.

#### Brian Stewart

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Here is a picture of Richard, Adrian, Gillian, Nicholas and me at a singing day in London. The occasion was a day of singing Handel, led by the notable musician, ex-Kings Singer Brian Kay, in aid of the Coram charity. This is the same charity set up in 1739 by Sir Thomas Coram as the Foundling Hospital. Handel gave many benefit performances of The Messiah to support it.

We sang a number of well known and less well known Handel pieces, with support from two excellent soloists Robyn and Adam (My wife, Name-Rememberer-in-Chief in our household can't quite recall their full names). The day was held at the St Alban The Martyr, a notable seriously High Anglican church in Holborn.

Two friends of ours from Marlborough joined us as well, and we had a great day's sing, finishing with a brief 'concert' at 4.30.

Coram would like to make this a regular event, and I probably speak for all of us there when I say that we would very much recommend it!

#### Philip J Price

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#### In memory of Matthew Bettenson Died February 7<sup>th</sup> 2015



Matthew Bettenson is the gentleman situated on the back row right. George the serpent gives him away.

Matthew Bettenson joined LGQ early in the new century. He invariably arrived at rehearsals early, in order to assemble his contrabass serpent, with which he doubled our bass line at the lower octave. The sounds he made for us matched his ebullient personality.

In many ways he was a conductor's ideal quire member. Not only was he musically reliable, but arranged his life so that he never needed to miss either a rehearsal or a performance. He was a regular attender at West Gallery gatherings, and also played with the Chiltern West Gallery Quire for a period. His remarkable instrument invariably caused great interest, and was a wonderful advertisement for our music.

About five years ago Matthew contracted Parkinson's disease, and could no longer play. He passed on his regular serpent to our Assistant Conductor Kathryn Rose, who now uses it to support our bass line. During his illness he was always pleased to be phoned and to listen to a rendition of his favourite tune, *Devizes*.

During February he succumbed to his condition, and is with us no more.

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#### Dates for next Term

April 22<sup>nd</sup>  
May 6<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>  
June 10<sup>th</sup> 24<sup>th</sup>  
July 15<sup>th</sup>

Our Summer term begins with singing Evensong in Rotherhithe on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> there will then be two concerts, one in St George's Alie St on the evening of Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May the other at St Pancras Old Church on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July

Should Quire members be unable to make any of the above dates it would be very useful if you could tell Stella Hardy. Her telephone number is:- **0771 858 0815**