



## We'll be back— on June 23rd! by Phil Price

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The LGQ committee has set Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June as the day for our return to live, in-person singing. It comes just two days after the Government's intended date for the relaxation of all restrictions, and is obviously subject to that actually going ahead. At this stage that looks promising, but, as on several previous occasions in this crisis, we won't know for sure until we get there and a last-minute change is always possible.

Subject to that risk, there is much pleasurable anticipation of seeing everybody once again, and raising our voices live, in real-time and—importantly—in the same room, for the first time since Wednesday 2nd September last year.

For the nation, the key message has been:

**Hands Face Space**

Now that London Gallery Quire is about to meet once more, *Upbeat* would like to suggest these additional requirements, especially for us:

*Notes Subs Consonants*



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### *Congratulations*

*To Jenni and Dan Hall on the recent arrival on 2nd March 2021 of the youngest member of the LGQ academy—Finn Alexander, a brother to young Matthew.*



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Well, I have had my first jab. If the advice of the manufacturer, Pfizer, were to be followed, I'd have had my second one a day or so ago. But the "government" knows so much better, and three weeks and twelve weeks are really much the same. So here I sit, a little safer than I was, but still effectively under house arrest, as so many of us are. My article elsewhere tells you what I have been doing with my time.

And what we all need more than anything is something to break up the monotony, and to look forward to. So hearty thanks to Jill, Stella, Brian, and Phil and all concerned for giving us just that. As I sit here tapping on my keyboard I am waiting for it to be 7.30, when our next Zoom sing starts. Huzzah! And Phil's massive international recordings are truly a wonder. One thing that lockdown has taught us all is so much more about what can be done on line. I feel slightly sad that we only see about half the quire at our Zooms, but I suppose that they are not everyone's cup of tea. What I hope the non-attenders might think is that it is good to see and chat with friendly faces, regardless of whether you find singing or playing along on your own satisfying.

I have an external monitor, so I have two screens available. The larger monitor screen is where I put the Zoom faces, and on the smaller laptop screen I can bring up the score of whatever LGQ number we are singing. So I have no need to get all the scores ready in advance. People may notice me looking sideways; that is because my camera is in the laptop, not the external monitor.

It falls to my lot to plan the repertoire for each Zoom. I am working more or less numerically through the LGQ list; we are already in the early 500s. I am limited to those pieces of which our recording engineer Brian has a track. What happens when we have sung all those I have yet to decide!

It is getting on for a year since we first locked down the quire, apart from one memorable meeting during unlockdown. What will happen when we are finally able to meet again? Will people flock back? Will some still be wary about coming out? Shall we be inundated with new members desperate for a sing? Who knows?

Until that happy time, keep safe, keep singing, and wassail to all.

SPRING 2021  
by Alan Franks

Up it comes again, the spring breeze sprung  
From under the sky's winter bedding, bearing  
something.  
From this hill you can see it edging into eyeshot,  
Ever the fresh traveller from round the world's corner,  
Full of tales and prophesies he passes off as new.  
Still, he's truly welcome, when you come to think  
How, since he last passed through, the trees you see  
about you,  
Ashes, elms and such, turned so calamitous  
They took, bare-knuckled, to brawling the wind with  
one another,  
Flinging it on like slingshot, aimless in the slaughter;  
Showy as old catapults; casualties past counting.

Little wonder then if we revert to prayer  
Or its grounded counterpart, high-hoping the air  
For some evidence of repair, abatement, settlement.  
The signs from here are promising: see this breeze  
appear  
To comb the partings of the middle-distance  
meadows;  
Gently touch the forested forelock of that ridge;  
Sweep these rising grasses and do so, yes,  
orchestrally.  
So breeze, passing over, spot this infant season  
Cradled, shining dawnlike from her yawning shell.  
Visit a caress, here, on her untouched forehead,  
Acknowledging her promise as your own best  
blessing.

# Epiphany Party with a difference brings a musical end to a difficult year

by Ken Baddley, Bedford Gallery Quire



This Zooming business is something which—in different times—I would not have chosen to do, but Stella’s invitation to attend London Gallery Quire’s online Zoom Epiphany party was too tempting. We began it with Samuel Stanley’s well-known long metre tune ‘Wilton’, edited by LGQ’s musical director Francis Roads, who had also provided a cheerful symphony in a West Gallery style. This was set to Charles Wesley’s familiar words ‘O Thou who camest from above’, from a recording of London Gallery Quire in performance at St. Mary’s Church, Bromley in 2017.

‘Wilton’ was a joyful and an appropriately seasonal start to the proceedings, and would have made the precentor of Carr’s Lane Congregational Church, Birmingham—for such Samuel Stanley was, from 1787 to 1818 and later on a different site—very proud indeed. This combination of tune and words is still in print in the most recent of non-conformist hymn books (including the Methodist Church’s ‘Singing the Faith’) despite having failed to make the natural succession from ‘Congregational Praise’ to its distant direct descendant the United Reformed Church’s ‘Rejoice and Sing’. If a URC congregation were ever to sing it, they’d wonder why they hadn’t before, but Congregational Federation churches still do sing it, of course. A small handful of Stanley’s tunes also found their way into Hymns Ancient and Modern (it is reassuring to know that *they* approved!) though not ‘Wilton’.

We moved on to Thomas Clark’s setting of Thomas Sternhold’s metrical version of Psalm 23, one familiar to most members of West Gallery quires today, though always novel and delightful (those pretty interludes, and that bouncy little final symphony) to singers and players new to this kind of music; it’s a good piece to start a concert with! This was a live concert recording of LGQ from 2019, and it was good to see (though not to *hear*; the signal latency problems which are the result of a whole range of technical issues and differences make it impossible to co-ordinate live singing / playing on the Zoom platform) the instrumentalists among us enjoying their playing of Thomas Clark’s lively music. The human ear can detect a delay of about 30 milliseconds, and Zoom is known to generate signal delays of up to 135 milliseconds. Of a specimen 20 plus of Bedford Gallery Quire members in my Zoom rehearsals, I see no two singers or players who could be considered to be ‘in synch’ with each other. LGQ members and others will be aware of Phil and Jeremy Price’s sterling efforts in this direction, spending hours editing many individual track of recording to come up with a presentable ‘joint effort’ of a recording.

The text of ‘Remember, O thou man’ is given in LGQ’s ‘Your Voices Raise’ as ‘Anon., 16<sup>th</sup> Century’, and the tune is attributed to ‘Thomas Ravenscroft’. It appeared in his collection ‘Melismata’ in 1611, and is one of few tunes of that period to have remained in use (as we know it did) into the time of the West Gallery quires and bands. The text is clearly ancient, with its clumsy ‘Old Version’ style inversions, and the subject / verb mis-matching (‘the shepherds amazed *was*’) to achieve a rhyme. It was good to be able to hear again from the recording how well and how sensitively LQG had performed this piece, as I was in the audience at the recording of it, during their annual concert at St George’s German Lutheran Church, in Alie St, East London, in 2016. It can be a nine-verse dirge, but Francis’s considered treatment of it provided dynamic interest and variety. I am sure that it was a matter of great regret to the people who were once the congregation at Alie Street (when the church was still in use as a place of worship) that there was no 2020 concert, especially as they have so much appreciated London Gallery Quire’s continued support in bringing their little *Gemeinde* back together with a concert every Christmas. It is a sad reflection that there remains a flourishing German church (St. Bonifatius) five minutes walk from Alie Street, in Adler Street—which could hardly be a more German name for a street—though of a different religious persuasion. This church was founded almost fifty years after St. George’s, and has been separated by only a few hundred metres for almost two hundred years, yet the two have remained—sadly—worlds apart.

I know that—in singing and playing together Isaac Tucker’s ‘Devizes’ tune to Psalm 53—many singers and instrumentalists will think of Thomas Hardy, and his (fictional, but so ‘real’ as to be almost embarrassing to read,

even today) account of the bass singers in ‘Two on a Tower’ and the difficulty they had in clearing their throats before singing. I shall not quote it here but do read it again. There are other instances in Hardy (Tess, for instance) where I wonder at Hardy having managed to get his subject matter past his publishers, but the crudely-described throat-clearing of the bass singers seems no longer to have been an issue in 1882. There were around fifty participants for our LGQ Zoom performance of it, and—scrolling through the Zoom screens—we all seemed to enjoy singing and playing it.

I see that the recording engineer’s notes for ‘My voice shalt thou hear in the morning’ state that the audience (at St. Peter’s, Belsize Park, London) was noisy during the performance of this piece of music, so I was surprised at the very positive reaction of several members of London Gallery Quire to this anonymous setting of Psalm 5. I didn’t care for the piece, but this is one person’s opinion, of course, though I *did* care about the background noise (children’s voices excluded, of course) from the good folk of Belsize Park, or ‘South Hampstead’ as they seem to prefer it known.

‘Arise and Hail’ will be known to many West Gallery singers and players, and is found with various attributions, which Francis Roads has wisely circumvented with the only attribution (almost) guaranteed to avoid conflict, namely ‘Anon’. It is a very well-known piece, in West Gallery circles, and a great sing, with its ‘Awake, Awake!’ chorus. We need to return to Hardy to understand why all of these carols began with incipits such as ‘Arise!’ (Arise and Hail the glorious star), ‘Behold!’ (Behold! The Grace appears!) and ‘Hark!’ (Hark the herald angels sing!) which was because the singers could not begin their Christmas carols until the stroke of midnight on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, which marks (and continues to do so, outside shopping centres, where it starts in September) the beginning of Christmas, a time by which all their hearers (a ‘Hardy’ term) had been asleep for several hours. Though Hardy’s singers set out to sing during Advent (ending at 23:59 on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December for clarity) they dared not sing until Christmas (at 00:00 on the 25<sup>th</sup>), but then loudly, and with the full expectation of rousing their hearers from their beds, to receive from them the happy greetings of the season. With the notable exception of the irascible Farmer Shiner, almost none of Hardy’s fictional householders seemed perturbed. Were Hardy’s forebears this close to the mediæval ‘first sleep’ of a two-sleep night? Discuss, though not—thank you—with me.

From an anonymous traditional source, we turned our attention to Francis’s edited and harmonised setting of ‘The Shropshire Carol’, to the words ‘This is the truth sent from above’. This was another recording from an Alie Street concert, made in 2017. The melody is well-known, and I hope that we sang and played it as sensitively—and as well—as LGQ did on the recording.

The tune ‘Portsmouth’ is found—as Francis Roads points out in a footnote to the piece in ‘Your Voices Raise’—in many printed sources, both as ‘Portsmouth’ and ‘New Portsmouth’. This particular edition is one which Francis transcribed (by hand, with very, very, very many others) from the Isle of Man Colby manuscripts, and which formed the core material for his PhD research. This version is interesting, in that, as his footnote also points out, the thinness of the texture of the first section gives the impression of the piece having been expanded from three part into four.

We then returned to the St. George’s German Lutheran Church (Alie Street) recordings for a version of ‘The Holly and the Ivy’, in this case the version collected by Cecil Sharp in the early years of the twentieth century. Sharp dismissed this piece as not rightly belonging to the folk tradition, and perhaps also sanitised it in the process. There is almost no modern hymn book which does not have a (duly sanitised) version of ‘The Holly and the Ivy’, to the credit of Cecil Sharp.

It is an indication of the breadth of the repertoire of London Gallery Quire that a Zoom event happening before Epiphany did not have to offer apologies for including several settings of Nahum Tate’s ‘Whilst Shepherds Watched’. We sang and played only one: William Knapp’s tune ‘Leicester’, which is for me one of the very best of the many common metre tunes associated with Luke II vv. 8—14, and was admirably suited (though opinions differ; see below) to accompanying this single instance of the ‘WSW’ text during our Zoom event. Francis’s setting of the text to ‘Leicester’ is perhaps more difficult to sing than other settings—especially for those more familiar with said other settings—because he makes a point (as the LGQ website copy of the piece shows) of ‘Amending the word underlay to avoid word-splitting’, a practise which he explains in his introduction to his 1999 publication ‘West Gallery Music: General Service Music. Volume 1’ (published by Kevin Mayhew Ltd. £12.99).

This publication is (as the title states) intended for general service use, and is set in the short score format familiar to *church* choirs, rather than West Gallery quires, and Francis’s accurate description of a process associated (for metrical reasons) with this style and period of vernacular church music echoes the complaints of the clergy of the time, *but*—as with other elements of it, including the ‘robust open-throated style of singing’ to which he also refers—many of us we have come to accept these instances of the mangling of texts as a defining feature of this music, and one which we rather cherish.

At some time in the long-distant future, a researcher looking back at the twentieth century work in ‘our’ field will pounce upon Francis’s setting of the anonymous tune ‘Auspicious’, and cry out ‘Ah, the Dancing Vicar!’ There can be almost no-one in West Gallery circles who has not now heard this sprightly little tune, and the delightful tale of the fully-robed vicar who (while LGQ were *actually performing* ‘Auspicious’ as a postlude to a church service) broke free of the post-service procession, and—grabbing a lady worshipper as he passed her pew—danced her the rest of the way down the aisle! “Would that we could all do that!” as some sermonist—at some future time—will doubtless exclaim. I am convinced that ‘Auspicious’ will survive long into the future, with some anonymous (and dare I say ‘woke’) theorist stepping forward to offer possible explanations (as people still do with the tune ‘Spanking Roger’) perhaps entitled ‘The Dancing Vicar: Mindful Meaningness in the early 21st century’ (colon obligatory, of course) and what a pity that such research proposals no longer attract the funding that they once did! It is a joy to sing and / or play, and we enjoyed it as much as did LGQ in the recorded performance of it, but I really do fear that the affectionate nickname will finally obscure the real title.

Our Zoom meeting ended all too soon, as all good things do, and ended as all London Gallery Quire rehearsals still do, unless I am mistaken, with the singing and playing of a setting of Psalm 111 vv. 1–4 (plus the lesser doxology) to Samuel Webbe’s composition ‘Oldham’. This is the result of Francis’s enlightened (and experienced) view that all rehearsals must end on a positive note, and on something that all participants can perform well, and—with its neat little syncopations and the quick pick-up into the repeat—it is as joyous a psalm setting as one might wish to sing. I could not forget (having sung this with some who are still LGQ members, and at their first ever rehearsal) the gaps in the ranks left by those who, over the years and also more recently, are no longer present to sing or play. It was very moving indeed, and, if you will permit me, I dedicate my singing of it on this occasion to the late LGQ member Mike Spittall, as good a man as one might hope to meet.

Our Zoom event was periodically leavened by what Phil Price introduced to us as ‘Party Pieces’. David Furber trod the virtual boards first, changing his backdrop (an elegant Edwardian drawing room) to a silhouetted African landscape complete with elephants, which caused some ribaldry in the LGQ ranks; I certainly heard a reference to ‘trunk calls’ in the jumbled jollity that is the result of too many people trying to talk on Zoom at the same time. David’s poetry was well received, and we applauded as we left the dry Savannah behind us, regaining instantly the splendour and comfort of his luxurious drawing room. A confession: I was a little confused as to where David might have been Zooming from, given how much lighter it still was in his drawing room by about 5pm than it was here in Bedford! We had the pleasure of the company of WGMA members from New England, a good five hours behind us (and therefore singing / playing with us in the middle of their day) but where could David have been, for the sun to be shining quite so strongly? I realised only as we began our way back from the dusty fruitfulness of the Transvaal that it was a backdrop, though I see backdrops every week at my own quire’s rehearsals; David must simply be someone for whom the Edwardian drawing room is the perfect natural background.

Fi Dunn then sang for us; lightly, confidently, and very well, to the obvious enjoyment of all. Regular Zoom users will be aware that the software is volume sensitive; a little algorithm senses which member of the small group of people (the company board of directors or marketing meeting around which Zoom was originally designed) is speaking the loudest, and highlights in yellow (in ‘gallery view’) the profile picture of the loudest speaker. It is the perfect software for the popularist times in which we live; s/he who can shout the loudest is heard, but no one shouted, and no yellow flashes surrounded Fi’s performance; the response from all sides was a soft and deeply appreciative ‘Mmmm’.

Phil Price and Jeremy Price then performed for us an arrangement of an old Christmas song from Germany, ‘Morgen, Kinder wird’s was geben’, which is still well enough known, but less frequently heard as a result of a rather heartless 20<sup>th</sup> century parody. Phil sensibly sang it ‘straight’ (and in perfectly pronounced and un-accented German) as the gentle and happy song for children that it originally was. I know that he will not mind my singling out for special mention the guitar accompaniment played by his son Jeremy; I do so because it was so very good. I assume it was his own arrangement (and it seemed indeed a modern arrangement) but one which he had consciously fitted to the piece, rather than the piece to the instrument, and which he had played fluently and delicately on a modern steel-strung acoustic / semi-acoustic instrument; not the easiest on which to exercise the gentle touch required for this piece.

Jannette and Brian Stewart performed twice for us, Brian playing flute (including on some of his own compositions) and Jannette her recently-acquired (though obviously much and *diligently* practised) tenor viol. The transition from cello (tuned in fifths) to viol (fourths with a third in between, like a renaissance lute) is a difficult one, complicated by the requirement to think in terms of playing *across* the neck, rather than up and down it, but Jannette played well. I wish her much enjoyment of the extensive English division viol repertoire for her instrument, and, of course, of the chance to play lovely broken consorts (I’m here, with lutes and citterns!) with Brian’s flutes and recorders.

These party pieces provided something which (experience has shown) is a necessary component of any Zoom gathering, namely ‘something different for a while’, which really needs to be less difficult than trying to concentrate

on making music together in what is essentially a very difficult way. The two forms of ‘something else’ chosen for us were just right; the element of humour and some different music during the party pieces, and the opportunity to relax and chat, which we did with a will during what Zoom refers to as ‘breakout groups’, breaks in the proceedings for nothing more than the happy socialisation which characterises West Gallery quire rehearsals. Let us wish together fervently that Zoom release 5.0.1. will provide an upgrade to tea and cake, to go with the conversation.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the amount of background work which must have gone into the staging of this new variant of the London Gallery Quire Epiphany party. There would have been no party without your musical director’s music, of course, though it is easy to take such long-term contributions for granted. Thanks to him, and to LGQ’s administrator Stella Hardy for the many hours of thinking and planning. Thanks to Phil Price for all that he did in presenting and managing the live event; we were in capable hands, and to Jill Holland for her work in playing the necessary recordings for the event. We look forward to next year’s party, in whatever form it takes.



## Hymns of Youth

by Alan Franks

The other day I found myself looking at a list of the “the UK’s top 100 hymns.” I put the words in quotation marks as this did not claim to be some official ranking of their quality, but rather of their popularity.

These two things may be linked, but they are not synonymous, unless you take the view that a hymn’s main purpose is to be sung by as many people as possible. Running my eye down the list, I was surprised to see *All Things Bright And Beautiful* coming in as low as 33, just above *The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want*, but just below *Blessed Assurance*, which, to my shame, I’d never heard of. Surprised, but also rather relieved as I’d always felt that *All Things Bright...* was unspeakably dull and insipid. To have said as much at whatever age I was when I first heard it—six or seven, I suppose—would have been an unthinkable heresy. Not any more.

The nationwide survey was conducted by the *Songs of Praise* TV programme, and the number of respondents was in the tens of thousands. *How Great Thou Art* came top, with *In Christ Alone* and *Be Still, For The Presence of the Lord* in second and third place respectively. There were some results which surprised me. For example, I would have expected to find *He Who Would Valiant Be* and *O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing* higher than 59 and 60; never mind *O God, Our Help In Ages Past* languishing at 81.

It made me reflect on my own experience of hymns as I was growing up; the ones which, for all their magnificence, didn’t move me, and those whose sometimes plain power found their way through my scepticism. With the (always invaluable) benefit of hindsight, I guess my criteria were already what you might call West Gallerian, without my knowing it. Something to do with a hymn’s capacity to be simultaneously rousing and tender; assertive but awed. Heaven knows how these things happen, but then so do the great hymn-writers.

What I remember from very early on are the good tunes’ capacity to make me feel...here words become even more inadequate than usual ...contented, fulfilled, balanced, safe, plain OK. It was the shape of the things that did the trick; the repetition of a line, the venturing-off into a new idea, perhaps a difficult one, followed by a returning and, crucially, resolution. Like going up a proper hill, savouring the view and coming down safe. Much, much later in life, I had comparable sensations with the experience of overtone-chanting, but that really is another story.

I find myself thinking of certain tunes that I haven’t thought about for...too many decades to mention. Two tunes in particular, with no intrinsic connection to each other, as far as I know. One is *Quem Pastores*, a melody popular in sixteenth century Germany and four hundred years later used by the English priest and hymnodist Percy Dearmer for his *Jesus, Good Above All Other*. The other is the thoroughly secular *Westering Home*, to a tune apparently based on that of the traditional *The Muckin o Geordie’s Byre*.

Our music teacher—I think she also taught English and Scripture—played and sang them lustily from the piano, and along we all went, blissfully unbothered by not having the foggiest idea what we were singing

about. “Where are the folk like the folk of the west?” we could just about get the gist of. But the line that followed had us stumped: “Canty and couthy and kindly, the best.”

Many years later these tunes, and many more, would find their way back into my head, often unexpectedly but always welcome. Old friends never quite forgotten. At some point, when trying to figure out why they lodged themselves so firmly, I realised that in each case the first and third lines of the music were identical. Blindingly obvious, I admit, and yet, looking back now—or rather, listening back—I realise that this was somehow crucial to their appeal, and to the way in which the verses evolved and carried their words with them.

There was something about this process which, though you couldn’t quite call it “safe,” brought with it a certain reassurance, a manner of plain-dealing. It also seems to be an explanation—one of many—of the reasons why there has been such a fruitful and continuous trade between English folksong and hymnody, like some informal pooling of resources between the sacred and the secular. Take, most famously, *He Who Would Valiant Be* (a rather lowly 59 in the Top Hundred), with John Bunyan’s words modified by Dearmer for the 1906 *English Hymnal*. The tune was taken by Ralph Vaughan Williams from the much earlier and stridently anti-war song, *Our Captain Cried All Hands*: “What makes you go abroad, fighting for strangers When you could stop at home, free from all dangers?”

Then there was, again famously, *When This Lousy War Is Over*, which poignantly borrowed the tune written for *What A Friend We Have In Jesus* by Charles Crozat Converse in 1868. Also, the bitterly jovial *Onward 15 Army Group*, to the tune of *Onward Christian Soldiers*. There’s plenty more in this vein on the collection of recordings titled *Come On Lads...* produced by Tim Healey, whose late father Denis, the prominent Labour politician, had been a beach master at Anzio during the Second World War.

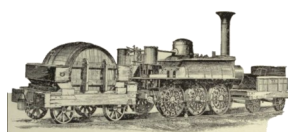
My own father had been a paratrooper—even wrote a book about it—although his post-war career was that of dance critic and editor. We lived just down the road from the Star and Garter home for disabled ex-servicemen, which then housed veterans from conflicts as far back as the Boer War. He and his ex-service friends would join them in the pub on Sunday lunchtimes, help them with their pints, wheel them back in the afternoon, generally reminisce and join in those old songs.

Because of his work, and his love of music, we had a load of records in the house – stiff old LPs that would land with a thud on the turntable of the Pye Radiogram. One of these was Holst’s *Planets* suite. If *Jupiter* sounded like a hymn, that’s because it was, since Holst had adapted it in order to accommodate a poem written before the First War by an intensely patriotic British diplomat, Sir Cecil Spring Rice. This was variously entitled *Urbs Dei (The City of God)* and *The Two Fatherlands*, eventually becoming better known by its first line, *I vow to thee, my country*.

Though the depth of its feeling was almost certainly lost on me, it had a cracking tune, stirring, building, climbing, and resolving in a way perhaps best described as victorious. I was so smitten with the thing that I suggested to our music teacher we should try it. She knew the piece, and she gamely brought in the music for it. We gave it a try, but we were all over the place, me very much included. I think we took a couple of runs at it, but were thrown off by what was, I realised, its relative complexity. She said something along the lines of best-keep-it-simple. It wasn’t a put-down, more a helpful suggestion. Then we were back to *West-ering Home* and a welcome place of safety.

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## A Brief Guide to Railways



by Brian Stewart



One Sunday in January I went for a snowy walk in Lloyd Park. Whilst there I met Phil Price and during the course of the (distanced) conversation he suggested that I write an Upbeat article on Railways. My problem then was to write less than 3 volumes on this interesting subject.

Railways have been around for at least 400 years, the last 200 of them have used steam power. The origi-

nal railways were used in mines and to transport coal from a mine to the nearby ports. The advantage of rails rather than roads is that they were a lot smoother so a single horse could move more weight. The original rails were strips of wood fixed together by wooden sleepers to keep them at the correct spacing. On the route from the coal mines down to the river Tyne, the track ran downhill. Horses were used to pull the empty trucks back up to the mine. The horses' hooves damaged the sleepers so they were protected by a layer of stone. The most convenient stone had been used as ballast in the ships on their return to the Tyne. This is why the stones on a railway are called ballast.

Why are the rails set at 1435mm apart? George Stephenson was tasked with setting a standard gauge for the increasing number of railways that were proliferating in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Based on his work for the mines in County Durham, he selected 4' 8". This gauge was used for the Stockton and Darlington railway which opened in 1825. This was the first public railway to use steam locomotives. After 15 years of operation the gauge was widened by an extra ½" to stop wheels binding on curves. Hence the standard gauge is 4' 8½" (1435mm). Over 55% of the world's railways are to this gauge.

Why do railway workers wear orange high visibility clothing? Principally because railway signals use yellow and green. Also yellow clothing does not stand out so clearly in green countryside.

The standard voltage in overhead electrification is 25,000 volts. You should keep yourself, or anything that you are carrying, at least 3m away from it. Otherwise you may get a (very) nasty electrical shock, which you won't survive. The overhead wire (catenary) does not run straight down the track, but zig-zags along it. This prevents it wearing a groove in the pantograph (pick-up thing on the top of the train). The catenary is tensioned by weights so that the tension remains constant even if the wire expands in hot weather.

Modern rails are welded together (continuously weld rail, CWR) to improve smooth running and reduce wear on the wheels. When the continuous rail heats up in the summer, it cannot expand and there is a possibility that the rail may then buckle if the ballast does not adequately restrain the sleepers from lateral movement. To reduce this risk, the rails are tensioned before being finally fixed, but there is then a risk that the rail may break in the winter as it tries to contract. The correct setting tension reduce the risk of either failure. A rail break has less severe consequences than a buckle as the train can pass over a gap, whereas it is more likely to derail at a buckle. Also a rail break can be easily detected by the signalling circuits.

With faster trains on high-speed lines some problems have been found with "bridge resonance". If the natural frequency of the bridge matches the timing of bogeys crossing it, the amplitude of each deflection under the load will increase. This was observed in one of the French high speed lines. This caused the ballast to start shaking loose leading to a loss of stability of the track. Fortunately this phenomenon is sufficiently understood that bridges are designed against it.

Railways in this country are much safer than road travel. On average around one passenger is killed each year through train accidents, whereas approximately five people die on the roads each day.

Can I justify an article on railways in Upbeat?



Picture Jeremy Price

Maybe railways contributed to the decline in West Gallery Music. The development of passenger carrying railways from 1825 (opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway) enabled a greater movement from the countryside to the towns. Was this the cause of the downfall of the village quires?



# “Good Singing Still...”

## 26. Who taught West Gallery musicians?

Reproduced with kind permission from ‘Good Singing Still’ by Rollo Woods

Nearly all musicians are also teachers. Professional training in the WG period, outside the Universities and some cathedrals (both barred to non-conformists) was by apprenticeship.

Instrumentalists whose aims were not so high—like members of a WG band—would learn from members of the family (musical ability is often inherited), from neighbours, from members of a band with a vacancy (records of urging a musical boy to take up the clarinet or flute occur in more than one source), or from peripatetic teachers. The travelling teachers had a bad press, being charged with vanity and ignorance by London professionals, but some did an honest job. Sir Roger de Coverley was well satisfied with the results in his church.

Members of the choir were also trained locally. Churchwardens’ Accounts in northern Hampshire show that the going rate in the 1770s “for instructing the Singers” was between £1:1:0 and £1:10:0 a year. This did not change with inflation, nor with the arrival of the barrel organ, when band-leading became an unskilled occupation. By the end of the WG period we find the salary has become “Christmas gift for the Singers”, and within a few years it stopped.

Where no instructor was available, simple text books could be used. For woodwind, this might be little more than the rudiments of music and a fingering chart:

*‘The Bassoon requires a pretty strong Breath to blow it, but it is not at all difficult to learn to play upon, all the Instructions, belonging to it, being only a Scale of its notes.’* (Arnold, *The Compleat Psalmodist*, 1761.)

Many tune books included some kind of Introduction to the Grounds of Music, intended especially for Young Psalm-Singers. Several of these were collected by Bernarr Rainbow in: *English Psalmody prefaces; Popular methods of teaching, 1562-1835*, 1982. He did not include the entertaining version by William Knapp, in his *A SETT OF NEW PSALM-TUNES AND ANTHEMS* (1738; 7 later eds. and now reprinted.)

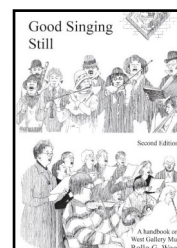
John Wesley simplified the standard instructions in *SACRED MELODY*, so that would-be singers could learn to read music without a master.

Some WG printed sources include over 1000 hymns in 100+ different metres, and the associated tune books contain over 700 tunes. WG manuscripts often contain more than 100 tunes, far more than a band could memorise. Bandsmen had to be competent sight readers, especially if many fuguing tunes were used. The singers might get by without being musically literate, as a modern congregation does, since they sat or stood near the instrument(s) playing their parts. Hardy left a sketch of the Stinsford gallery showing the choir organised in this way. They might have found it more difficult to sing in parts to an organ accompaniment, and would have needed more training. Significantly, tonic sol-fa came in, to make sight-singing easier, just as the bands went out.

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published by The West Gallery Music Association in 2017 (2nd Edition)

‘Good Singing Still’ 242pp is available for £5 + £2 p+p  
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# A MOTLEY CREW, THE LGQ?

by Claire Wilson

These up-and-down, uncertain days  
Can bring to light the varied ways  
In which our individual lives  
Are structured. Each of us survives  
By strategies which fit our own  
Particular requirements. Lone  
“Indoor confinement” suits some folk.  
“At last! Some peace and quiet!” they joke.  
“With nowhere else I need to be.  
I read, I sleep, drink lots of tea.”

Many, of course, can't stand that style  
Of life. It's been too long a while  
Since they could meet up with a friend  
Or see their kids. When will it end?!

Still others, reckless, like to break  
The rules a bit. One day they take  
A bus to somewhere they don't know.  
Appropriately masked, they go  
To Golders Green or Haringey,  
Start wandering, and lose their way!  
“Well, what the heck, I've had my jab.  
For me, this life-style's simply fab!”

As members of the LGQ,  
We are a mixture. But we do  
Have one desire in common. We  
All yearn for “real life” company,  
Gathered within a church to sing  
Our hearts out, make the rafters ring.

That day will dawn. Meanwhile we thrive  
Via skills which keep our Quire alive.  
We're grateful for technology  
Whereby we practise “virtually”.  
Launched into twenty-twenty-one  
We'll find new ways of having fun!

Claire Wilson (who wishes to be identified with the  
“reckless.”)



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## *Provisional Dates for 2021*

*Zoom sings April 7th & 21st, May 5th & 19th, June 2nd & 16th*

*St Michael Paternoster Royal June 23rd, July 7th & 21st*

*September 8th & 22nd, October 6th & 20th, November 3rd & 17th, December 1st*

*Christmas Concert Alie Street December 8th*

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LGQ Upbeat—The Newsletter of the London Gallery Quire

Edited by Phil Price Copy Editor Nicholas Markwell

If you have news, a viewpoint, or an interesting musical activity or story,  
your contribution is very welcome.

contactphilprice@yahoo.co.uk. Non electronic submissions welcome on paper at any rehearsal.