



Journal of the British Viola Society 2014

A publication of the British Viola Society

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Introduction

The British Viola Society Journal is published annually. It provides an opportunity to share research on the viola; assess the influence and styles of violists over time, and review new sheet music and other publications.

For 2014 we are delighted to provide access to the individual articles listed in the Contents page online.

Below you will find an introduction to each chapter, which gives a taste of the content. Click on the article to read the full document.

We wish to thank all the players and academics that have contributed articles. Relevant biographies can be found in Chapter 8.

If you would prefer to read the journal as a paper copy, please contact Sue Douglas, secretary@britishviolasociety.co.uk. A pdf version is also available on this web site.

The British Viola Society welcomes submissions of well-written articles that are interesting, informative, or entertaining on all aspects relevant to the viola including pedagogy, repertoire, biography, lutherie, history, etc. Please contact Sue Douglas, secretary@britishviolasociety.co.uk for submission deadlines.

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Chapter 1. BVS President's Annual Report 2013/14

It was with great sadness that the Society and the Viola world received the news of the passing of John White, on 1st December 2013. John founded the English Viola Society and enthusiastically supported its transition as it became the British Viola Society in 2012. He remained our Honorary President up to his death.

Michael Freyhan has written a Tribute to John in this Journal, so do make sure you look this up.

A big thank you to all on the BVS Committee, who have been simply wonderful over the year helping with membership, journal, website and absolutely everything.

Our BVS Team is below – do look up a little more about the team on our website.

Ian Jewel – Patron

Louise Lansdown – President

Martin Outram – Vice-President

Sue Douglas – Secretary

Michael Freyhan – Treasurer

Janet Pazio (Executive Secretary – Membership)

Ben Lawrence (Executive Secretary – Facebook)

Laura Sinnerton (Executive Secretary – Twitter)

The BVS Team has been working hard to enhance our membership perks, discounts, gifts and involvement. Every member receives an e-newsletter each month in which we promote and advertise violistic events and news of interest to our members

The BVS membership has increased steadily throughout the year, including members from overseas. We have very strong connections in very specific parts of the UK and are building up our contacts in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. It is a pleasure to find so many interested violists from across the country keen to get involved and help us with our viola mission.

Due to the efforts of Ben Lawrence (Executive Secretary – Facebook) we now have over 500 members on the BVS Facebook Group and this is steadily growing. Laura Sinnerton keeps us in the public eye with regular Twitter ‘Tweets’.

Ben has also organised Viola Ensemble Days in Huddersfield and we held an amazing Viola Day at the Birmingham Conservatoire in January 2014.

Our next big event is the Cecil Aronowitz International Viola Competition for violists aged 21 years and under. This is a new Competition in memory of Cecil Aronowitz, the South African violist and long-term collaborator with Benjamin Britten, who made many famous recordings with the Amadeus Quartet, Melos Ensemble, Janet Baker to name just a few.

The semifinals and final rounds will take place at Birmingham Conservatoire from 24-26 October 2014. It has been a requirement of entry to the competition that the entrants must be members of the British Viola Society.

The BVS is a section of the International Viola Society and we pay 7% of the dues we take from our members to the IVS each year. This privilege permits us to offer presentations at every International Viola Congress. These congresses are held once a year in a different part of the world.

The Society was represented at the 41st Congress in Krakow, Poland in 2013 and we will also be attending the 42nd Congress in Porto from 26th-30th November 2014. Two proposals from the British Viola Society will be presented to this Congress.

The BVS Team all hope that you enjoy our diverse and action-packed

viola journal! Many thanks to all who have contributed and we look forward to the continuing support of violists across the UK!

Dr Louise Lansdown

BVS President

Chapter 2. John White – 1938 to 2013



The passing of John White on 1st December 2013, at the age of 75, has left an unbridgeable chasm in the world of viola playing, teaching and research. He was entirely self-made, following his instincts and gifts to pursue a life radically different from that which might have been expected from his early upbringing in a small Yorkshire mining community. He was known and respected throughout the world through his books, his editions of rare viola music, his teaching, his adjudicating, his meticulous organisation of major international and national viola events and his playing, especially of the British repertoire.

A common thread runs through the many tributes which have poured in, celebrating his work and character. He is remembered above all for his integrity, his loyalty to friends, his unfailing commitment to his students, his unselfishness professionally and socially, his personal work ethic and insistence on high standards, his impatience with superficiality and overblown egos. These qualities were brought out in the eulogies delivered at his funeral and in the obituaries published in The Daily Telegraph and The Strad.

Below are some excerpts from what has been said and written about John, including tributes published in the BVS Newsletter of March 2014.

Many will remember, too, the touching words spoken by friends after his funeral, some of whom had known him for 60 years or more, or worked with him, like the clarinettist Martin Ronchetti, as a colleague in the early years of his career. John maintained long-lasting friendships, kept alive by letter and telephone rather than by scorned electronic communication!

The quotations have been selected to reflect not only John's personal relations with his friends and former-students-turned-colleagues, but also the unforgettable qualities for which he was so deeply cherished.

Michael Freyhan

MARTIN OUTRAM'S tribute to John White

I will always remember John as an incredibly generous, loyal and supportive friend and colleague . . . Here was someone who had an inexhaustible knowledge of all things relating to the viola – its history, personalities and repertoire . . . As a teenager it became something of a game for me to burrow away to find what seemed to be the most obscure pieces and mention them in my next lesson in the hope that John might not have heard of them. However, I was always thwarted as I never managed to catch him out and on many occasions he had played the pieces himself, had a recording of them and ALWAYS copies of the music in his vast library. It really seemed as though there was no viola piece with which John did not have an acquaintance!

John was a brilliant teacher who possessed in huge measure one of the most inspiring qualities of any great pedagogue – infectious enthusiasm . . . He had a great gift in knowing how to lift his pupils, how to set the right height for the bar and, equally important, he knew when to stop . . . to this day in my own teaching the question 'how might John have approached this?' is a frequent refrain for me.

John corresponded widely all the time with violists and musicians from across the world. He was someone to whom so many turned for advice or off whom they bounced ideas – his feet were always on the ground and his opinions always valued.

John was a great inspiration in so many ways. A man who never forgot where he came from, able confidently to speak to anyone and able to put anyone at their ease . . . He was always a tremendous supporter of young musicians and in all his dealings he demanded the highest standards of conduct, commitment and dedication to the music. All of us who had the privilege to know him were inspired and affected by his love, loyalty and support.

Martin Outram

SARAH-JANE BRADLEY'S tribute to John White

I first met John in about 1983 at a Hertfordshire County Music Viola Day with Harry Danks; little did I know at that point what a lasting influence he was to be later in life . . . He saw me through a formative time with National Youth Orchestra, as my teacher at the Royal Academy of Music and viola section coach with the European Community Youth Orchestra, offering constant help, support and encouragement throughout. John was also responsible for suggesting I form a duo with the violinist Marianne Thorsen which was later to become the basis of the Leopold String Trio. So, I have an awful lot to be thankful to John for. After my time at the RAM John became even more of a mentor, advisor and friend, often giving invaluable advice about the profession, viola matters and always being supportive about the tribulations of life in general. John was always modest and humble with impeccable Yorkshire values . . . One of his most memorable attributes was his utter integrity in all that he did. I often think what an incredible achievement he made, coming from a humble coal-mining family background, and what utter dedication and drive he must have had to achieve what he did. He often said himself that he could not have done so without the fantastic support from his family, and in particular his wife Carol.

For me, it is impossible to separate out John the person from John the musician as he was so passionately devoted to the cause of the viola. His enthusiasm and positive energy were infectious and a huge inspiration to many; he must have touched the lives of thousands of people and we all owe so much to him.

Sarah-Jane Bradley

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH – Obituary

John White, born May 28 1938, died December 1 2013

John White, who has died aged 75, was the leading authority on the viola. He was a founder member of the Alberni Quartet and taught at the Royal Academy of Music for more than four decades, where his enthusiasm and kindly manner inspired generations of players.

His knowledge of Lionel Tertis (1876-1975), one of the first viola players to achieve fame, was unrivalled and after Tertis's death White helped to establish a festival and competition in his name. Meanwhile, for composers writing for the instrument, White was often the first point of contact, helping them to understand its capabilities. An Anthology of British Viola Players (1997), his magnum opus, gave a comprehensive account of just about everyone associated with the instrument over the past century . . . During his National Service with the Coldstream Guards he was based at Wellington Barracks and played for state events at Buckingham Palace. On one occasion he had a clarinet thrust into his hands and was ordered to march in Trooping the Colour.

While still in uniform White won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied with Watson Forbes, whose scales and arpeggios he later arranged. With three of his fellow students he established the Alberni String Quartet, giving the premieres of works by Frank Bridge, Alan Rawsthorne and Nicholas Maw. They took lessons from Sidney Griller of the Griller Quartet, while Benjamin Britten coached them in Shostakovich; on one occasion they sought advice from Tertis himself . . .

He coached the violas of the European Youth Orchestra and the Gustav Mahler Chamber Orchestra and was the first British viola player to give masterclasses in Beijing; he also served on the juries of several competitions.

The World Viola Congress in London in 1978, which White organised,

proved to be a seminal moment in his career. His knowledge of its history and repertoire helped to establish him as an authority on the instrument . . .

In 2010 White was the first British viola player to receive the Silver Alto Clef from the International Viola Society.

In his final book, *Those Were the Days: a Yorkshire Boy's Cricket Scrapbook*, published in October, White revelled in his passion for cricket and his knowledge of Yardley's career, illustrating it with more than 800 items from his vast collection.

John White married Carol Shaw in 1964. She survives him with their son and daughter.

TULLY POTTER'S tribute to John White

Tully Potter's comprehensive obituary, containing many details of John White's professional life and achievements, was published in the *Strad* on 5th December 2013 (see <http://www.thestrad.com/latest/news/viola-player-and-pedagogue-john-white-dies>). He made his personal tribute, however, in the eulogy he delivered at John's funeral.

"I imagine everyone in this congregation will have had the experience of picking up the phone and hearing the words 'John White here'. It always struck me as typical of John's modesty and thoughtfulness that he never assumed you would know which of the many Johns in your life was calling you . . .

It is only when a friend has gone that you realise how many ties have bound the two of you. Because of his illness, John has been retreating from me for some time and I have lost count of the occasions over the past months when I have thought: 'John would be just the person to help me with that, but I can't really bother him with it.'

I think John's most outstanding attribute was his enthusiasm, for the viola, for music in general, including light music, and for cricket . . .

Every few years, Jill and I would spend a week with John and Carol at the Lionel Tertis Competition on the Isle of Man. John made an immeasurable contribution to the workshop activities, not just in his visible role, conducting the ensemble classes and introducing the masterclasses, but beavering away in the background to ensure that everything worked smoothly and no one's ego endangered the good atmosphere of the event.

John could be very singleminded but he never let anything obscure the essential warmth of his personality . . . He was meticulous in writing to thank Jill and me for any small thing we did for him, and if he promised to do something for us, he kept his word. I constantly find scraps of paper on which John noted down facts he knew would help my researches.

John's generosity was something that usually showed in his eyes. But sometimes, as so often happens with people who suffer from chronic ailments, you could see from John's eyes that he was in pain with his back, the legacy of playing too large a viola and slipping on an icy winter pavement. He obviously had very bad days but he rarely complained.

In all his multifarious activities, John was fortunate to have Carol faithfully by his side. They made an ideal team and it is sad that death contrives to split up such devoted couples . . .

John's passing is still too recent for any kind of summing up. But I am sure that over the coming years, we shall find out just how much of himself he has left behind, and how many people's lives he has touched in so many ways. I feel proud to have known him, and I bless the lucky chance that threw me into his path. I wish I could still have the living John in my circle of friends, but I am left with countless reminders of his unselfishness and kindness."

Tully Potter

Chapter 3. Cecil Aronowitz and his Legacy

In celebration of Cecil's contribution to the Viola, Birmingham Conservatoire launched a new International Viola Competition in his name in 2014. Open to young viola players up to the age of 21 from across the world, 14 talented young players have been invited to Birmingham for the semi-final and final rounds, taking place over the weekend of 25th to 26th October 2014.

Nicola Grunberg, Cecil's widow, and a member of the Jury for the 2014 Cecil Aronowitz International Viola Competition reflects on Cecil's life and her personal reminiscences.

Cecil Aronowitz: reminiscences

Cecil Aronowitz was born on 4 March 1916 in King William's Town, South Africa, to Russian and Lithuanian parents; He was the youngest of three children all showing remarkable musical talent. Each in turn won the overseas scholarship to come and study in England.

Cecil came to the Royal College of Music in 1935 to study the violin under Achille Rivarde. During his student years Cecil played in major London orchestras under some of the finest conductors of the day.

In 1939 war interrupted Cecil's studies and he spent the next six years in the army. When he returned to the RCM he decided to concentrate on the viola. In 1947 he won the Cobbett Prize for chamber music.

He left the RCM in 1948 and embarked on his extensive career in chamber music. He was a founder member of Musica da Camera (1946), the Melos Ensemble (1952) and the Pro Arte Piano Quartet (1965). For thirty years he played with the Amadeus Quartet as second violist in the string quintet and sextet repertoire and performed on many occasions with Yehudi Menuhin. He had a long association with Benjamin Britten, playing in every Aldeburgh Festival from 1949 until his death. He led the violas of the English Chamber Orchestra from 1949-73 and played regularly with the London Mozart Players as their viola leader.

Cecil was a renowned viola and chamber-music teacher. He taught at the Royal College of Music for twenty-five years before taking up the

position of Head of Strings at the newly created Royal Northern College of Music in 1973. Four years later he joined the Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies in Snape as their first Head of Strings. He died in on 7 September 1978 after suffering a stroke whilst performing on the stage of Snape Maltings.



Nicola Grunberg writes:

I knew Cecil for the last fifteen years of his life, eleven of those as his wife. Not a long time in the grand scheme of things, but the largeness of his personality and his enormous energy and sense of fun, not to mention his superb musicianship, have had a lasting and profound effect on my life thereafter.

It has been a source of great joy that first Eric Rycroft, a pupil of Cecil's, then Louise Lansdown, friend and pupil of Eric's and both from Cecil's

own country of South Africa, have chosen to own and play Cecil's viola ever since his death over thirty years ago. Equally thrilling has been Louise's decision to instigate the 2014 Cecil Aronowitz International Viola Competition. Inevitably this has caused many memories of the past to be awakened and so I have set down some personal reminiscences of a wonderful partner and friend.

Recently my 11 year-old granddaughter, Natasha, has taken up the viola after six or so fairly painful years on the violin. The transformation has been astonishing. What seems to appeal to her is the *sound* of this most beautiful of instruments.

Looking back, what I remember most about Cecil's playing was his beautiful sound. It was a unique and instantly recognisable sound. I never heard him as a violinist (I don't even know if recordings exist anywhere – I'd certainly be fascinated to hear them if they did) but I suspect he took to the viola as naturally as his granddaughter has all these years later. Having taken up the viola Cecil never – as far as I'm aware – touched the violin again. Natasha's violin remains firmly in its case, there to stay until her younger sister needs it or it is sold on eBay.

Cecil did indeed love the viola but over and above all he loved music and this love was reflected in both his playing and his teaching. He also had a huge zest for life and this too was reflected in everything he did, whether it was partying, travelling, performing, teaching, lecturing. It didn't matter – he gave himself 1000% and never seemed to be tired, at least not in his younger days.

He had an acute ear which served him well as both performer and teacher. It also meant you could get away with nothing if you were his student! As a teacher he could be quite demanding and not everyone could cope with his super-energetic and sometimes bombastic style. He would sing copiously in the lessons – his singing voice was terrible but you got the idea of what he was after. As he became older and

tired of the ceaseless round of playing and touring he turned more and more to teaching and guiding young talent. He was delighted to be invited to become the first Head of Strings at the newly formed Royal Northern College of Music in 1973 and accepted the post with alacrity.

At the same time he had his eye on what was going on in Aldeburgh where there were moves to develop a music school and where singing and string classes were already happening in the back rooms at the Maltings Concert Hall.

Cecil had had a long and fruitful association with Benjamin Britten, taking part in every festival from 1949 until his death in 1978. He got to know Britten well as composer, conductor and pianist – even violist on occasion. He was involved in many premieres of Britten's works, notably the War Requiem and the three Church Operas. Everyone loved going to Aldeburgh and it was a highlight of every year taking up residence in June for the Festival. In 1970 Britten invited Cecil to give an 'Artist's Choice' recital at the Jubilee Hall. This meant that Cecil had carte blanche to play what he liked with whom he liked. He chose me to accompany him for the bulk of the recital but he asked Britten to play 'Lachrymae' with him.

Britten had composed 'Lachrymae' for the great violist, William Primrose and together they gave the first performance in 1950. But as Britten and Cecil were rehearsing 20 years later and just a couple of days before the concert, Britten expressed dissatisfaction with the ninth variation. Overnight he rewrote the viola part – the piano part remained unaltered – and this version was given its premiere at the Jubilee Hall on the morning of 22nd June 1970 with Britten at the piano. Several years later, when he was gravely ill and nearing the end of his life, Britten rescored 'Lachrymae' with strings accompanying the viola and he dedicated this version to Cecil. Always self-deprecating Britten used to joke that the best part of 'Lachrymae' was the ending when the voice of Britten gave way to the beautiful voice of Dowland.

Britten's respect for Cecil also manifested itself in his loan to Cecil of his own viola which had been bequeathed to him by Frank Bridge.

Cecil had bought his viola for £25 from the Royal College of Music just after the war. In spite of the fact that nobody could ever quite agree as to what this viola might be Cecil loved it. Cecil would bring Britten's viola out of politeness when performing in Aldeburgh, but he remained faithful to his own instrument right up to the end of his life. His viola is now owned and played by Louise Lansdown – Head of Strings of the

Birmingham Conservatoire and founder of the Cecil Aronowitz International Viola Competition in 2014.

Eventually Cecil's dream of a school in Aldeburgh, or Snape, came true and in 1977 the Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies was founded. Sadly it was a short-lived triumph for him – the following year he died, in harness at Snape as he would have wanted. The building wasn't even complete. Just seven months later the School was officially opened by the Queen Mother.

I am, of course, deeply honoured to be on the jury of the 2014 Cecil Aronowitz International Viola Competition. What Cecil would have made of it I'm not sure. His attitude to competitions was ambiguous, considering them a 'necessary evil'. In 1978 he was on the jury of the first BBC Young Musician of the Year and found the experience not altogether positive. But he recognised the difficulties young players have getting started in their careers. A competition is one way of breaking into a cutthroat profession. I think he would have been proud and moved but nonplussed – he was always modest about his achievements.

So maybe we have come full circle and one or both of Cecil's grandchildren will carry the torch for him in years to come. I am sure they will enjoy their music almost as much as he did even if they do not become professional musicians. Times have changed enormously since his day – the advance in technology and communications has been quite breath-taking. He would be quite lost if he were to reappear in today's world and although he might not have a clue what a computer was (he would have loved mobile phones) the language of music doesn't change and he would have just as much musical wisdom to impart to today's students as to all those who knew him half a century ago.

Nicola Grunberg (Aronowitz)

Chapter 4. Lionel Tertis and Ralph Vaughan Williams' Suite for Viola and Orchestra

Bernard John Kane, shares his doctoral dissertation on Lionel Tertis and Ralph Vaughan Williams' Suite for Viola and Orchestra. Published in 2007, the thesis is titled "From manuscript to publication : aspects of Lionel Tertis' style of viola playing as reflected in his 1936 edition of Ralph Vaughan Williams' suite for viola and "orchestra" and includes unpublished letters regarding the suite, and many other interesting details regarding Tertis.

Bernard John Kane. Doctor of Musical Arts Thesis – 2007

From manuscript to publication : aspects of Lionel Tertis' style of viola playing as reflected in his 1936 edition of Ralph Vaughan Williams' suite for viola and orchestra

Abstract

The Suite for Viola and Small Orchestra (or Piano) by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) was commissioned by and dedicated to the British violist Lionel Tertis (1876-1975).

The premier occurred on 12 November 1934; Lionel Tertis was the soloist with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Sir Malcolm Sargent.

The work was first published by Oxford University Press in 1936 in an edition for viola and piano. In this edition, the viola part contains many inconsistencies with the manuscript, which is held at the British Library (Add. MS 50386).

Between the first performance in 1934 and the publication of the Suite in 1936, Tertis made considerable editorial changes to the viola part. These changes involve fingerings, bowings, phrasing, articulation, and dynamics; at times the notational substance is altered as well. It is the aim of this thesis to demonstrate why Lionel Tertis' 1936 version differs from the manuscript.

Bernard John Kane's thesis demonstrates that the differences which do exist between the manuscript and the 1936 edition are the result of

Tertis' idiosyncratic style of performance, the most notable aspects being Tertis' emendations concerning his use of articulation and phrasing.

Chapter 1 discusses aspects of Lionel Tertis' life that led to his international recognition as one of the greatest violists of all time and the relationship he had with Ralph Vaughan Williams, one of which led to the composition of the Suite for Viola and Orchestra.

The following two chapters demonstrate that the differences made between the manuscript and the 1936 edition are reflections of two aspects of Tertis' own style of viola playing.

These are, generally speaking, Tertis' use of articulation to create a bigger sound in passages of a louder dynamic and his use of connected, sustained cantabile phrasing in passages of a softer dynamic.

There are also examples from his own arrangements of other music where he makes similar changes which reflect this general philosophy.

Original discovery by William A. Everett, discussed in "Ralph Vaughan Williams's Suite for Viola and Orchestra," *Journal of the American Viola Society* 13, no. 2 (1997): 9-19.

Chapter 5. Clifford Hoing: English Violin and Viola Maker

British violin and viola maker, Clifford Hoing lived and worked all his life in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. Born in 1903 he followed in his father's footsteps as a Furniture maker. Violin repairing was a hobby, which developed into a passion for instrument making. Michael Dewey, has researched the Hoing story for an article for the Bucks Free Press, published in March 2014. The article is published here with their permission.

Clifford Hoing 'an artist in violin-making'

How was it that a little-known maker of violins and violas, who many people consider to be a modern-day Stradivarius, was born in a quiet market town in South Buckinghamshire? The town is High Wycombe and the craftsman is Clifford Hoing. He was a resident of Wycombe all his life and became a world-famous maker of violins and violas. Here is his story.

Clifford was the son of Alfred and Alice Hoing. Alfred worked in the chair-making industry as a chair-framer and married Alice Clara Cline early in 1902. Clifford, who was their only child, was born on November 21st 1903. After his education in local schools he followed his father into the furniture industry, becoming a wood-carver. He even worked for a few years with Eric Gill the famous sculptor.

His father Alfred, who had been making violins as a hobby, was made redundant in the deep recession of the early 1930s. He and Clifford then began to work together by repairing violins. 1935 Clifford decided that his experience of repairing violins enabled him to begin making them. He then decided to take this up as his life's work.

Even at that time most violins were mass produced by the thousand, but it was known that the instruments with the best tone were always made by hand. Clifford borrowed books from Wycombe Library in order to study the traditional methods of making violins and also acquired some older instruments to examine their construction. This, together with his deep knowledge of different timbers, enabled him to produce violins of exceptional quality. Like other English craftsman he believed that his craft was to produce a work of art. Each instrument contained over 70 separate parts and took around 6 weeks of labour to construct

and perfect. The total manufacturing time was in fact nearer six months because Clifford would only allow each of the 12 coats of varnish applied to the instrument to dry naturally. This varnish was to a secret formula, known only to Clifford himself, which contributed to the tone of the instrument when played. His output was therefore restricted to around 8 instruments each year.



Beginning with wood weighing more than six pounds, the finished instrument weighed in at around 14 to 15 ounces. Clifford used a number of different woods. He toured the furniture factories in Wycombe to find the very finest examples of thoroughly seasoned pieces. The finger-boards and tail-pieces were fashioned from ebony, and from rosewood for the pegs. He used willow for the linings, 'figured' English sycamore for the backs of the instruments, and spruce for the sounding board or front. His success depended to a large degree on his deep knowledge of these woods, obtained solely through many years of handling them as a wood-carver, getting to know their 'feel'. This enabled him to perfect a system where each component part was in harmony with the whole.

In order to develop the business he established contact with a dealer friend in London, who attracted by his work sent examples to a Scottish dealer and to Arthur Richardson in Devonshire. Richardson was generally regarded as one of the country's leading exponents of violin-making at that time. These were well received and Hoing violins began making their way into some of the foremost orchestras of the day.



Clifford agreed to take part in an experiment arranged by Dr Ernest Whitfield, a blind violinist and connoisseur of the instrument. For this experiment violinist Dr Stanislav Frydberg was asked to play behind a screen each of 10 violins. These violins included three famous Stradivarius, a Gabrielli, a Guarnerius, and others by modern makers. An audience was asked to judge the sound and tonal quality of the violins and to rank them 1 to 10. The Hoing violin was placed second, and Dr Whitfield asked if he might be allowed to take the instrument to his colleague Albert Sammons, a world-famous violinist. Sammons verdict on the instrument was "I tried your violin and found the quality very good. There is also a good deal of power, a combination very difficult to get." He added to the tribute by sending to Clifford Hoing an autographed photograph, addressing it to 'an artist in violin-making'.

One of his greatest achievements which gave Clifford most satisfaction was to construct a miniature violin and bow, two inches in length, perfect in every detail so that it really could be played.



At the time this was first displayed, at the High Wycombe Trades Exhibition in October 1938, it was claimed to be the smallest real violin in the world. He made another miniature violin for the Queen's Dolls House.

At the same exhibition Clifford was awarded both prizes in the Carving Section. These were for tiny cameos in boxwood, the colour of old ivory, and a statuette of a woman. He carved graceful figures from single blocks of wood, and then added reliefs where the different colours of different woods was used to produce the natural colouring of the subject. An example of this technique was a relief portrait of Sir Henry Wood in

sycamore. He developed this into a technique for producing coloured wood-carvings, where each detail of the carving was in a different wood. The cream colour of natural sycamore would be used for a delicate face, rosewood for the warm tint of lips, walnut for the eyebrows, and so on, all combining to make an image of rare beauty. The technique was the subject of a British Patent for Relief Marquetry.

As his fame grew Clifford began to produce violas and gradually these became the dominant instrument in his workshop, Being somewhat larger than a violin, they were also heavier, weighing around 20 ounces. A Hoing viola won a Diploma of Honour at an exhibition in The Hague in 1949. He also produced other related instruments. These adorned the walls of the family home. They included a copy of a Welsh harp, the crwth, a viola d'amore, and a little 'jig', which was used over 150 years ago by street-musicians and would be slipped into a pocket when they were asked to 'move-on'. He also made guitars.

In 1950/51 Clifford and his parents moved from their modest house in Upper Green Street, High Wycombe to a larger residence in West Wycombe Rd. The house still stands and older local people still remember that a full-sized violin was displayed in the front bay window of the house. This was about the only advertising that he did, preferring that his reputation grew by recommendation. He did not even install a telephone in these premises, and any urgent message for him would be

taken by a relative who would relay it to Clifford.

In 1974 at the Phillips Auction Rooms in London a Hoing violin achieved a then record price for a modern instrument of £1,300 pounds. It had been sold by Clifford in 1963 for £100.

When Clifford retired he concentrated on oil-painting and became a member of the New Wycombe Art Group, whose membership was limited to 60. He could reflect that during his career he had been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA) and had gained more awards than any other English musical instrument maker.

These awards included eight diplomas and a special silver medal which was awarded in Ascoli Piceno in Italy. This was for a viola which took the prize for the Outstanding Artistic Character of the instrument, beating 130 makers from 16 different countries.

Clifford's father Alfred died in October 1954 aged 84, his mother Alice in April 1974 aged 93, and Clifford himself passed away on July 9 1989 at the age of 85. At that time he was living at 14 Copners Drive in Holmer Green and his funeral was held at the local parish church on July 17th. Unfortunately his fame had by then diminished and merited only a very short obituary in the local newspaper the Bucks Free Press !

This article originally appeared in the Bucks Free Press and resulted in several readers writing to the newspaper extolling the virtues of Hoing violins/violas which they had personally owned. They included Keith Oliver, who was a member of the Royal Air Force Music Services for 27 years. For many years he was Leader of their string orchestra. Keith was born in High Wycombe and his interest in violins was stimulated by visits to the Hoing workshop. He bought a Hoing violin in 1955 for £50. In the RAF this travelled the world with him and was played at many important functions. These included a concert at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington to celebrate the 80th birthday of Frank Whittle, inventor of the jet engine. A few years ago Keith sold the violin for £2,500. He has regretted it ever since !

Other readers to contact the newspaper were Pam Abbott and her daughter Muriel Carpenter. Pam wrote "I was fortunate to own a Hoing violin for most of my professional playing life. A violinist friend of mine

had purchased it from Clifford Hoing but as the friend had a number of instruments he never got round to playing it in. I purchased it in 1968 for £80. It was made in 1947 but had spent most of the intervening time at an exhibition, so it was never played. I retired from playing about four years ago but my daughter Muriel who also trained as a violinist at the Guildhall always liked the sound that it made. She also found that it was much easier to play than other violins and so Muriel now has it.”

Michael Dewey

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The **Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester** has several Clifford Hoing Violas available to loan to students. Two former students reflect on playing these instruments:

Kate Moore, now resident in Johannesburg, South African, writes:

“I had the privilege of using a Clifford Hoing viola for the majority of my two years of post graduate studying at the Royal Northern College of Music. Having the opportunity to study in Manchester was an amazing experience, and made so much more special and memorable by being able to play this wonderful instrument. The viola had not been played in a number of decades if I remember correctly, so it was a very interesting journey discovering and developing the unique sound and character of it. I had previously preferred smaller violas as I found the larger ones unmanageable, but even with this Hoing’s generous size, I found it very easy to negotiate, especially in the higher positions. The range of character I found in the strings, from the warm, sonorous, make-my-heart-melt C string to the lyrical and responsive A string, made the viola an absolute pleasure to play and perform. The 20 odd months that I got to play this viola were very special, and even though I will probably never get to play a viola of this calibre again, I will cherish the memory of this wonderful viola.”

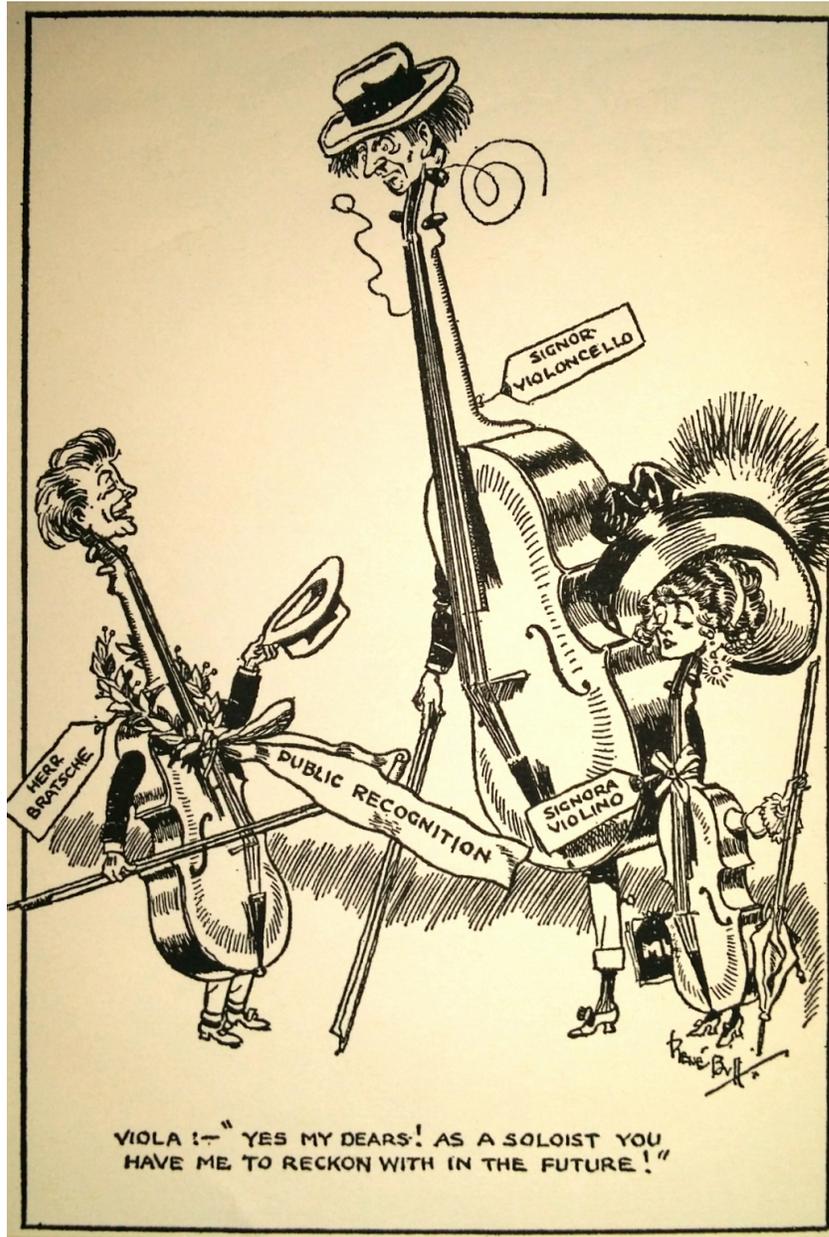
Alistair Vennart writes:

“A rich lower register with a crisp A-string sound, this is a real ‘all-rounder’ for Orchestral players and Soloists alike. Also, it is a strong, durable instrument that is completely fine to travel around with; some older instruments don’t fare so well being taken on planes and exotic locations, however the Hoing had no trouble travelling to Italy in July! It served me very well while I was at the RNCM and I was sad to see it go! “

Chapter 6. The Electric Viola

Graham Oppenheimer has strayed from the traditional viola to play an electric instrument, and shares his experiences.

My Electric Viola and I



It is just over 100 years since this famous cartoon (for violists anyway...) appeared in the programme for a Wigmore Hall recital given by

Lionel Tertis. The cartoon, and his autobiography "*My Viola and I*", in which it appears on the inside cover, had a formative effect on me as a young viola player. Since his 1911 recital, the development of modern music technology has been gradual but transformative. This even applies to the viola, well, more particularly the electric viola! Over the last few years there has been further significant development in the quality of pick-ups, the standard of the electronics and even the change from the user being attached via an ungainly lead to an amplifier to the freedom of a Wi-Fi transmitter attached to their belt.

Up until a few months ago, I could never have imagined myself playing an electric viola in public. I can recall when teaching at Dartington Summer School, watching students on an electric violin improvisation course perform complete with smoke effect and thinking how far that world was from my own. So what was the initial spark? Leaving my position as Head of Strings at Repton School in order to develop other areas of my playing and teaching, led to an outdoor drinks reception at the school, where tradition has it that departing staff give a speech. Public speaking is definitely not one of my strong points. Then I remembered some music given to me by a pianist friend and former duo partner to Nigel Kennedy and Sandor Vegh amongst others, just before a recital we were to give at the Purcell Room. This excellent encore piece entitled "*Bach Jazz on the G String. Perpetrated by Peter Pettinger*" seemed perfect for the occasion. But how to give it a successful outdoor performance in a very open garden?

It was my wife who suggested investigating an electric viola, although it is probably best not to note down my initial response here. I began to research which viola to use, and to my surprise I found myself looking on the web at Amazon and E-bay before spotting the distinctive Yamaha outline. However, other electric violas are available, including models from Reiter, NS Design and Vector. I found myself dealing in phrases like WMS 40 Pro Mini, dual mode pre-amp, and other terms that were somewhat alien and new to me. Well, it was a kind of 'love at first sight' seeing a Yamaha Silent Viola SVV 200 and its sleek minimalist body, or rather lack of body. This was my model of choice, purchased over the internet from online giant Normans Musical Instruments.



Now being the proud owner of something that made the heads of my children and their friends turn, I

adapted an old electric guitar stand left over from one of my offspring's brief experiments. And there it was, sitting in pride of place in my study, sparking interest and "wow" from visitors. Suddenly, instead of feeling the need to buy a motorbike, sports car or even get a new wife, here was the answer to my midlife crisis. The opportunity for viola jazz not viola joke.

But what about the actual playing? During the sound check for that first performance the Headmaster's secretary had to ask us to stop, as there had been a complaint from an exam venue in the school which was almost a quarter of a mile away! My feeling of being involved in something really different had started. The performance I took in my stride, but in my mind I was already well beyond this. I could almost feel new elements to my playing at this stage of my career. The concept of an electric viola as a solo instrument became clearer – more Brian May on the roof of Buckingham Palace, than backing quartet on Strictly Come Dancing. I am not quite sure what Lionel Tertis would have made of it however.

I discovered I had to control the sound in a new and different way, being prepared to float much more, or to use an exaggerated *son file*. Furthermore, even the slightest of touches on the strings can produce a massive sound, so great care is needed. Another entirely novel element is the sound coming from the amplifier behind you, somewhere near the knees, rather than the immediate results from the bridge and f holes I am so used to turning my ear towards as I play.

From a technical stand point, my playing was challenged in a new way. As one American website put it “now the violist can shed the constraints of the acoustic”. However, as I quickly discovered, technique is laid bare as a single blemish within the playing can be heard clearly with the amplification. This realisation was emphasised when listening to some of the takes from a shortly to be released jazz track, and the learning process continued. Ultimately I discovered that this all feeds back into my classical technique and musicality, and the whole experience has, and continues to, enhance my playing and teaching.

I realised that other people might feel the same way, and that my students could find all of this very interesting. I proudly took along my chic new possession to my classes at Chetham's School of Music. My students had already tried a baroque bow, learning about the different types of bow weight and speed. Now they would be able to go in the other direction with something really modern. I could really understand where my students were coming from when they started describing their responses to playing it. “It makes me shift differently” was one response. “I am trying to find totally different sounds and colours” was another. They were trying to go for different bow weights as the instrument responded, and the simple fact that it was different from what they were used to with an acoustic instrument meant they wanted

to try all sorts of different ways of playing. They felt no boundaries and were much more prepared to experiment, mentally relaxing and varying their expectations.

During the summer this year teaching at international summer schools in Astona, Switzerland and Taggia, Italy I found myself thinking that the freedom of playing an electric viola would enable even the most advanced students steeped in tradition and technique to refresh and enhance their continued development.



My experience with the electric viola to date then, has begun to open new doors in my teaching, sparked my musical imagination afresh, and even shaped new perspectives on the scope of our instrument. Could even Tertis have been persuaded to try one eventually?

Graham Oppenheimer

Chapter 7. Versatility in Viola Performance.

Research and observations from the 41st International Viola Congress in Krakow, September 11-15 2013.

Versatility in Krakow: observations from the 41st International Viola Congress



Performance, and Performance Styles

While the majority of events were held at Krakow's Academy of Music (pictured to left), the Congress featured two evenings at the Florianka Hall, a beautiful and resonant venue with intricate faces carved atop pillars looking down at performers and listeners from the high ceiling. In this venue Andra Darzins and Kim Kashkashian graced the first evening with a recital, and in the second evening, Darzins, Lech Bałaban, and Nokuthula Ngwenyama performed concertos with the Sinfonia Carcovia.

Thula Ngwenyama with Sinfonia Carcovia,



pictured to the right.

These were all received warmly by an audience comprising of both Congress attendees as well as members of the public.



Kashkashian's performance (left) was undoubtedly the jewel of the Congress, with György Kurtág's *Signs, Games and Messages* – a part of her Grammy for Best Classical Instrumental recording only earlier this year. While her viola playing was sublime, as one would expect, it was also the 'big picture' elements of her as a performer that garnered Kashkashian's palpable sense of presence on the stage. She provided context to the work, not only in analysis and history, but also in personal anecdotes of working alongside the composer. This made some very detailed nuances, such as the four types of silences ("with resistance, with freedom, looking forwards, and looking backwards") clear in the variety of their intents, and what could potentially been overly complex music instead quite accessible. Part of her versatility was in the vast palate of colours she displayed, reminding this reviewer of what she said in an interview with *Stringover* a decade ago. When asked about the stereotype of the viola being a 'sad' instrument, she said: ""Sad? An instrument can't be sad. An instrument can become anything, depending on the hands and the imagination of the person who's using it." In the Florianka Hall, Kim Kashkashian certainly displayed what an imagination could do, in an evening culminating in the award of this year's Silver Alto Clef.

Kim Kashkashian receiving IVS Silver Alto Clef from IVS President Carlos Maria Solare, pictured below



The wide array of repertoire ranged from a Klezmer ensemble led by a violist, to a contemporary music evening that featured the use of electronics. There were several new works, including Donald Maurice's première of Boris Pigovat's viola sonata, Emile Cantor's arrangements of movements from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, and seven Paganini caprices arranged for two violas by Elias Goldstein and performed with Sally Chisholm, without any discounts from the requisite level of virtuosity. Additionally, Stefan Kamasa premiered his transcription of Lutosławski's *Bukoliki* alongside Congress host Bogusława Hubisz-Sielska.

A variety of performance styles graced the concert stage: the exclusion of a chin rest by Ewa Guzowska, and Elżbieta Mrozek's unusual bowhold, being well away from the frog but nonetheless maintaining a solid tone in her execution of the Shostakovich viola sonata.

Bogusława H-Sielska and Stephan Kamasa,



pictured left

Partnerships with other instruments included the Ditterdorf viola-double bass duo, and several violin-violas combinations, the most notable being

that of violist Krzysztof Tymendorf with violinist Arnaud Kaminski, whose performance displayed vibrancy, precision, and a natural connection, even on the level of similar physical gestures. Jutta Puchhammer-Sédillot provided a recital of two early 20th-century works, which displayed a commanding presence, and a firm tone accentuated at times by clear consonant starts to bow strokes.



To the left are Christine Rutledge and Marek Kalinowski

To the right is Jutta Puchhammer-Sedillot



Research and Performance

Versatility at the Congress was further demonstrated with performers who are deeply engaged in research. In some cases research and performance remain independent pursuits, as with ***Błażej Maliszewski's***



(pictured to left) translation of Poniatowski's book *Viola. Art and Heritage* and his skilful performance of his arrangements of Bacewicz. In discussions following the lecture, it was mentioned by a delegate that the translation had the potential to expand knowledge that up to now has been the sole purview of Russian speakers.

It is hard to think of a project that would have more international connections than that of the presentation by Claudine Bigelow and Donald Maurice on their recording of *Bela Bartók's 44 duos*, entitled *Voices from the Past*. The project brought Bigelow to New Zealand under a Fulbright fellowship, and dealt with Hungarian and Slovakian sources for the composer's wax cylinder recordings, followed by text analysis of the lyrics, as well as musical analysis of the inflections and nuances of the folk songs. They performed half a dozen of the duos, which were presented alongside the field recordings and lyrics.

Pictured below are Claudine Bigelow and Donald Maurice



Some international research was connected to the host country, most notably Carlos María Solare's research on selected works of Telemann that had a particular stylistic influence of Polish music. Others served to showcase the continually expanding connections of the International Viola Society, including Orquidea Guandique's research on the viola concerto of Costa Rican

composer Benjamin Gutiérrez within the wider context of the country's economy and its effects on the development of the orchestral scene. American Danny Keasler represented the Thai Viola Society, and presented perspectives on the melodic capabilities of etudes by Austrian musician Alfred Uhl, vis-à-vis its technical functions.



To the left is Orquidea Guandique



To the right is Danny Keasler

Performance and Pedagogy

The traditional connection of performance and pedagogy was certainly present at the Congress. In some cases they proved to be a useful preview of events to come, such as Jerzy Kosmala working with a student on Penderecki's *Cadenza*, which was a component of an upcoming recital. In the contrasting case of Andra Darzins's masterclass, it was interesting to have a further appreciation of the performance philosophy seen on stage earlier in the week. Both of these events had interesting insights. Kosmala emphasized that while avoiding stiffness in the wrist, there were drawbacks in having an overly flexible wrist at the expense of the value of natural movement of the right arm. He used the simple act of turning a page on the music-stand as a model of this wrist-arm relationship. Darzins proposed a most unusual approach of having weight on the right leg – with the left leg

practically suspended from the ground – in order to adjust the balance of the left and right arms. She also placed an emphasis on avoiding counterproductive movements of the scroll and provided general advice on finding angles on the stage that provided more contact to the audience. These were aspects of being a performer, beyond the specifics of playing the viola.



To the left is Andra Darzins



To the right is Jerzy Kosmala

Both Darzins and Kosmala displayed versatility not just with being on the concert stage, but with Kosmala playing his own transcriptions, and with Darzins playing in both recital and concert formats, including Britten's *Lachrymae*, in a nod towards the centennial anniversary of the composer.

Concluding Comments

Perhaps the clearest sign of the multi-faceted role of the violist today could be seen in the range of repertoire performed, researched, and celebrated: from Max Savisangas's exposition of extended techniques, to Anna Śliwa's fascinating recital that featured the fidel, lira da braccio, viola d'amore, and baroque viola, expertly accompanied by Andrzej Zawiska on harpsichord.



While there were some issues of scheduling, and sounds from practice rooms at times breaching the Academy's concert hall, the event as a whole was a success. This is particularly when one considers that the Polish Viola Society is only four years old. With lectures, recitals, concerts, and masterclasses, the 41st International Viola Congress served to fuel new ideas, provide new perspectives on works and performance styles, and provide the meeting of minds of violists from all corners of the globe.

Chapter 8. Biographies of the contributors to the 2014 BVS Journal

Dr. Louise Lansdown: Louise is the founder and President of the English Viola Society (now British Viola Society), which started in September 2007, and was appointed Secretary of the International Viola Society in 2010. She was appointed Head of Strings at Birmingham Conservatoire in July 2012 after working as Senior Lecturer at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester from 2001-2012. Louise is Assistant Artistic Director of Pro Corda, the International Chamber Music Academy based at Leiston Abbey, Suffolk and Director of the Musical Encounters and Viola Courses. Louise was awarded a PhD from the University of Manchester in 2008 with the title: 'The Young Paul Hindemith: Life, Works, Relationships, Influences and Musical Activities until 1922.' She is a member of the Manchester based Pleyel Ensemble and plays on an eighteenth century French Viola, formerly belonging to Cecil Aronowitz, the first Head of Strings at the RNCM.

Michael Freyhan studied piano with Denis Matthews and violin with Manoug Parikian, while acquiring a music degree at Cambridge. He performs as a pianist and harpsichordist, but in former years also worked as a freelance violinist and viola player, touring and giving concerts and broadcasts in five continents. His special interest is in chamber music. He has been a coach at Pro Corda for many years and was the first Director of Music at the Purcell School. He has contributed to the inauguration of new courses at the RAM, has worked in opera, as a répétiteur at Glyndebourne, and has written and lectured in Europe and America on his musicological researches.

Nicola Grunberg started piano lessons at the age of five. She spent some years as Fanny Waterman's pupil before going to the Royal College of Music where her teachers were Lamar Crowson and Kendal Taylor. After graduating from College she continued her studies with Professor Enrique Barenboim in Israel.

She has performed extensively as soloist, chamber musician and accompanist, appearing in all major venues in London and throughout the UK. She was married to the distinguished violist Cecil Aronowitz with whom she had a busy duo, performing at Concert Societies throughout the British Isles and broadcasting frequently for the BBC. They also performed as the Pro Arte Ensemble with Thea King, clarinet, and Terence Weil, cello. In 1976 Cecil and Nicola gave the first British performance of Shostakovich's last work, the Sonata for Viola and Piano, at the Aldeburgh Festival in the presence of the composer's widow.

After Cecil's death Nicola continued her career as freelance musician. For several years she worked as official accompanist at the Britten-Pears School, the Mayer-Lismann Opera Centre in London, Stowe Opera, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama as well as for competitions, auditions, exams and diplomas. For many years she taught at the Purcell School of Music in London, and privately has taught at all levels from beginners to diploma standard. She now lives in Brighton.

Bernard Kane comes from Cardiff, Wales and began his musical studies as a chorister in the Metropolitan Cathedral of St. David, Cardiff. Bernard began playing the violin at the age of twelve, changing to the viola three years later. At the age of eighteen he won a place to study viola at the Royal College of Music in London where he was awarded an exhibition scholarship and later earned his B Mus (hons) degree.

After applying to Graduate Schools in the United States, Bernard was offered a full scholarship to study for a Masters Degree at Yale University which he completed in 1997.

Bernard became the first string player to be awarded the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver in July 2007, and the first person in Canada to be awarded a Doctorate of Musical Arts with a major in viola performance.

Michael Dewey. After working as a research metallurgist Mike was appointed Managing Director of a company providing research, development and testing services to industry and government agencies. He retired in 1999 and since then has developed interests in family and local history research. He writes a weekly Nostalgia page for his local newspaper the Bucks Free Press. He also gives talks about the recent history of his home town High Wycombe and about local villages in the Great War (WWI).

Graham Oppenheimer studied with Atar Arad at the RNCM and at Eastman School of Music, and with Alberto Lysy at the Menuhin Music Academy, Switzerland. He also worked under Thomas Riebl at the International Musicians Seminar, Prussia Cove and the Salzburg Mozarteum. He was former principal viola of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe under Claudio Abbado, a member of the English Chamber Orchestra and violist of the Schidlof Quartet. Graham continues to appear in numerous chamber music projects and has performed with many of the world's leading quartets as guest violist for quintets from the Vermeer to the Pacifica. He makes regular visits to overseas festivals and has taught at International Summer Schools in the UK, Switzerland, Italy and the USA. He was invited to record Debussy Sonata for flute, viola & harp on RCA Red Seal with the legendary James Galway. Graham is Viola & Senior Chamber Music Tutor at Chetham's School of Music and has his own International Viola Summer Course at Repton School. He plays on a fine example of a Southern German viola and uses bows by Sartory and Noel Burke.

Andrew Filmer presented research on Bach's fifth cello suite at the 41st Congress, and launched the Comus edition of the suite co-edited with Donald Maurice. He was a New Zealand International Doctoral Scholar at the University of Otago, and is due to graduate with a PhD in musicology this December. Andrew holds a Master's degree in viola performance from Indiana University.
