



FINZI FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 36, Number 2, October 2019



Bust of Gerald Finzi
In the Royal Academy of Music
By Sculptor Jemma Pearson

Contents:-

Foreword

1. News from the Committee
2. AGM Report
3. Report on Ludlow 2019
4. Report on Chosen Hill 2019
5. Future Events



Gerald Finzi

Foreword

We are fresh from our very successful event at Tardebigge on 13th October when Members and friends were invited to an impromptu musical and social event. The musicians were the Members themselves and regardless of ability, were invited to sing or play. This was an opportunity for Members to air their talents, something, perhaps, they would not otherwise have a chance to do, and we were thoroughly entertained and had an enjoyable afternoon with friends. Full report and photographs in the spring issue of the Newsletter.

We are also pleased to report that we are re-establishing the Committee following Jennie's and Jim's retirement and in addition to Clare's appointment last year we are now also pleased to welcome Gavin Roberts. We give more details in the following section but are pleased to have secured another active and well-established performer through his appointment.

We are heartened that the new *Friends* Website www.finzifriends.org.uk is now fully operational and that interest is being shown. The site continues to be updated and improved and we invite you to review the contents and offer any helpful suggestions or useful material for inclusion. In addition, we would once again like to remind you that attracting people to the Society and to the music of Gerald Finzi in the form of an active website doesn't come without its financial obligations and if, therefore, you felt able to support us and our attempts to promote Finzi, any donation would be more than welcome. Most of all we would be grateful if you encouraged your friends to review the site and hopefully join the *Friends*.

We continue to encourage any Members who had experience of, or encounters with, Gerald, Joy or the boys and who would be prepared to recount those memories to contact us with a view to publication. Some have already, or are about to, and we are concerned that those memories are not lost and that the Finzi legacy is kept alive.

We look forward to the Ludlow English Song Weekend early next year but other events are planned including our return to Ashmansworth on 11 July 2020. See Section 5 for current proposals.

Eric Hazelwood

1. News from the Committee

Recent Proceedings

Welcome to Gavin Roberts

We are pleased to inform you that following the recent fortunate addition of Clare McCaldin to the Committee, we have been equally fortunate to adopt another young established artist on to the Committee and in September Gavin Roberts was unanimously appointed. This has broadened our access to the music fraternity through these enthusiastic forward thinking young people and the *Finzi Friends* is becoming more widely known through their work.



Gavin Roberts enjoys a varied career as a piano accompanist. He has partnered singers in recital at the Wigmore Hall, the Barbican Hall and the Royal Festival Hall, and is Artistic Director of the recital series *Song in the City*. He has appeared at *The Cheltenham Festival*, *Dartington International Festival*, *The Ludlow Weekend of English Song*, *The Ryedale Festival* and *The Oxford Lieder Festival*. He works regularly with soprano Lucy Hall, with whom he was the winner of the *Oxford Lieder* Young Artist Platform, and actor Rosamund Shelley, with whom he performs her one-

woman shows *Novello & Son* and *War Songs*.

He has played for The BBC Singers, The Joyful Company of Singers, Constanza Chorus, The Hanover Band, Tiffin Boys' Choir, and as a repetiteur for Sir Roger Norrington and the late Richard Hickox. Gavin has appeared regularly on BBC Radio broadcasts as a soloist and accompanist, often giving premiere performances of new works. He has made numerous recordings for the BBC, ASV, Guild and Priory Records. His most recent project is a CD recording of London-themed song commissions for *Song in the City*.

Gavin studied piano with Andrew West and Eugene Asti at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where he is now a Professor. He previously

read Music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he also held the organ scholarship. Following this, Gavin gained a Master's degree from King's College London. Gavin is Organist and Director of Music at St Marylebone Parish Church. More details: www.gavinroberts.org & www.songinthecity.org

The New Website

Our first review of the New Website www.finzifriends.org.uk has been very encouraging and we are pleased to report that we have had many new members sign up on-line since its launch. One of our aims in making this change is to bring the Society in line with current technological trends and at the same time save costs. As a consequence, we have taken the conscious decision to circulate the Newsletter electronically to those Members for whom we have email addresses. This will naturally save on printing and postage costs and we hope that you will generously embrace this decision. In addition, if there are still Members who have not yet informed us that they would be willing to allow us to contact them by email we would welcome your confirmation.

We are also very aware of the Data Protection regulations and we will of course keep your information secure in line with our privacy policy, and will not disclose your email address to anyone else without your permission. You will have the option to ask us to cease sending electronic correspondence at any point.

We hope as many of you as possible would be willing, such that we can be more immediate with our information dissemination in future.

Grants Allocation

The Resource Deployment Working Party subcommittee have had a steady influx of applications and have been conscious to uphold the principles of the Society's aims in making funding decisions. For this reason some applications have been gently rejected but as a consequence, for this current financial year, £2,420 has so far been allocated. In particular, a decision has been taken to support the Beverley Chamber Music Festival, under the umbrella of New Paths Festival next year. This would take the form of a co-commission by New Paths and Presteigne for a new string quartet by composer Emma-Ruth Richards, performed by the Carducci

Quartet. In addition, Beverley would also offer to include Finzi's *By Footpath and Sile*, performed by Roderick Williams and the Carducci Quartet, in the final concert. It was agreed we should therefore support this with a grant of £500 believing this would raise our profile as it did when we supported the 2017 Festival.

Obituary

John Pooley

It is with sadness we have to inform you that John Pooley, Elizabeth Pooley's husband, has passed away. Liz has been the Administrator of the Finzi Trust for many years and Robert Gower has described how stoical she has been in her loss.

John Pooley died on 3rd July 2019. He was a distinguished trumpet player and Head of Brass at Hereford Cathedral School. He played freelance with various orchestras but mainly the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Welsh National Opera. He will be sadly missed.

2. AGM Report

The AGM was held at our summer event at Chosen Hill on 1 June 2019 and was consequently well attended. One of the duties at the AGM is to nominate the Committee and once again there were no new immediate nominations (although interest had been expressed) and fortunately the current Committee Members were willing to stand again. The Committee consequently continues to be represented by the following members:

Martin Bussey	Chairman	Clare McCaldin	Member
Paul Ives	Vice -Chairman	Geoffrey Alan Taylor	Member
Adrian Williams	Treasurer		
Eric Hazelwood	Secretary		

Chairman's Report

Our Chairman Martin Bussey was keen to once again welcome Members to another action packed event at Chosen Hill and eager to deliver a positive Report as follows:

“Welcome to our AGM here at Churchdown. It’s a great pleasure to be here once again at a venue which suits our style of day so well, including the chance, shortly to go ‘up the hill’ to St Bartholomew’s. I would wish to express particular thanks at this point to *Finzi Friends* Members John and Sue Risdon who are a key point of contact in coming here and have supported today in many and varied ways.

I welcome, in advance, our guests today: Professor Jeremy Dibble; and Gareth Brynmor John and Gavin Roberts.

And I would wish to note the stepping down from the Committee of Jim Page and Jennie McGregor-Smith in September 2018 with immense gratitude for everything they have done for *Finzi Friends*, and continue to do.

This is our main event in 2019, but by no means all that is happening currently for *Finzi Friends*. Indeed this is not the only event today, for this is the day when our website is relaunched, as promised last year. I am excited with the complete change that has taken place in our online

presence. As well as a new look, though with the well-known *Finzi Friends* logo intact, the website enables us to do many new things:

- Offer online membership, as trailed at last year's AGM
- Offer a dedicated members' area, including a forum for idea, news and comments about Finzi and the work of *Finzi Friends*
- Offer online CD sales
- Provide the Newsletters electronically and, in a shorter format at times, more regularly
- Provide an archive of Newsletters and Journals
- Provide, hopefully, an interesting introduction to Finzi and his music which will prompt newcomers to wish to learn more and sign up to be a member of *Finzi Friends*.

I am grateful to all the Committee, who have contributed in various ways to the content, but our special thanks must go to Clare McCaldin who has piloted this project through with our very efficient web designer. Clare has devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to the new website – I'm sorry that rehearsals prevent her from being here today to receive our thanks in person. She will continue to develop the website, with contributions from the Committee and, critically, ensure that we keep it up to date.

At last year's AGM I highlighted that the number of *Finzi Friends* members is declining. With some rationalisation of our records we now have a clearer picture and it is still very encouraging that we sit comfortably over the 200 mark for members. As I said we would, we have continued to consider how best to move forward in retaining interest in Finzi and support for *Finzi Friends*. As I mentioned last year, interest groups increasingly exist through Facebook and other social media, or via website interest. The new website launched today enables us to go out to attract new membership amongst younger music enthusiasts and indeed professionals who are attracted to Finzi and his music. We now have 550 followers on Twitter and can use this base to encourage enthusiasts to visit the new website and, as agreed last year, sign up to be online members. Over time, this should enable us to maintain a healthy number of attendees for our events, where, of course, online members will pay to attend like everyone else. They will receive the Newsletters electronically but receipt of the most recent Journal on publication will remain the right only of subscribing members. As suggested at last year's AGM, when online

members join they will be invited to make a financial contribution to the running of *Finzi Friends*.

This scheme won't blossom overnight. Two things are important:

- The first is for us all to encourage people we know to visit the site and, with a few clicks, join as an online member. Then we can communicate with them directly and develop their interest in the group.
- The second is to target new online members directly, and here we come to the additional events proposed.

We hope to hold informal events in London and Manchester aimed at attracting interest from University and Conservatoire students. These will be relatively low cost events because I shall be calling in favours from a number of students and ex-students to perform some *Finzi*, be enthused by a few words from me and, more important, hopefully the enthusiasm of some current members who will join the audience. Then, in all likelihood we shall head for the nearest pub, rather than tea and cakes! These two events will simply say that we exist and promote both interest in *Finzi* and interest in British music, including current composers. And will make younger musicians aware of our website and online membership. But we also want to extend the range of our events and to this end, on October 13, we have our Members' Event at Tardebigge where the performers will be *Finzi Friends* members, in some cases playing their own compositions. This is very important for the Committee: to join together as both performers and audience in a social setting, without formality. So please think about joining us that afternoon as a performer or as audience. Once the website is firmly established in terms of the inter-activity it offers and the opportunity to communicate with members more directly we shall work to extend awareness to the US, Australia and New Zealand and elsewhere, as Diana McVeagh suggested last year. But we are already a point of contact! Only this week, on Ascension Day, a Roman Catholic Church in New Orleans performed 'God is gone up' and thanks to the Stanford Society, *Finzi Friends* was tagged in their tweet about the event. We are not alone!

I will review other areas of our work briefly as we all want to get up the hill on time. The 2018 Journal again included several new contributors and I am enthusiastic about the range of topics they offered to cover in an interesting and diverse publication. I'm again grateful to Jennie McGregor-

Smith for continuing to set the journal and to Jim Page for help with posting out even though they no longer sit on the Committee.

Many members again attended the Ludlow Song Weekend and enjoyed a very varied programme devised by our President, Iain Burnside. Our funding towards the event continues, this year with a substantial grant which funded the commission from Alex Woolf, firmly in line with our aims.

You will see that the CD stall lives on: now you can see what we have in stock on the new website and send me orders for CDs directly via an email link. To celebrate this I have slashed prices of existing stock, so please go and take advantage of some real bargains. One of my other aims is to add to the stock regularly with the latest releases of British 20th century music, so there are on the stall today some very recent CDs including of Bax piano music, the songs of Cheryl Frances-Hoad and the recording of Stanford's *Mass Via Vitrix*, hot off the presses. And there are 4 copies of *By Footpath and Stile* sung by Marcus Farnsworth and previously only available as a download. This isn't released until Monday and we're cheaper than online so I'm hoping all four will go!

This is a good point at which to thank all the Committee members, especially the other officers, Eric and Adrian for their unstinting work.”

Martin Bussey - Chairman

Treasurer's Report

Our Treasurer, Adrian Williams, began by highlighting a significant feature of this year's Statement of Accounts: in contrast with last year's statement that showed a surplus, it recorded a deficit, of £5,897.59. This outcome was a natural consequence of the *Friends'* policy of giving financial support by way of grants to deserving projects. The deficit need not be seen as a cause of concern; rather, it was the outcome of a conscious decision by the Committee to reduce our reserves in pursuit of the *Friends'* charitable objectives.

On points of detail:

The Gift Aid tax refund of £1,734.40 recorded for the year ending 31 March 2018 covered two years, whereas the latest refund of £757.04 covered just one year.

Since September 2018, the Committee had met in London instead of in the home of a Committee member – leading to the appearance, for the first time, of an amount for Committee expenses to cover room hire and travel.

The current project to redesign the *Friends'* website was the reason behind the substantial increase in expenditure on this aspect of the *Friends'* operations.

In summary, the Accounts showed that the *Friends'* financial health continued to be strong.

Adrian Williams - Treasurer

Finzi Friends

Charity No. 1089033

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2019

	2018	2019
	£	£
INCOME		
Subscriptions	4,934.47	4,539.62
Donations	692.00	554.63
Event income	1,382.00	1,710.00
Gift Aid – tax refund	1,734.40	757.04
Bank interest	55.73	85.96
Sales	1,625.40	764.50
TOTAL INCOME:	10,424.00	8,411.75
EXPENDITURE		
Committee expenses	-	218.10
Newsletter and Journal	2,783.26	2,841.78
Event expenditure	1,819.48	2,702.00
Purchase for sales stock	1,180.38	450.50
Insurance and Performing Rights fee	193.56	245.12
Grants and disbursements	2,902.00	6,703.00
Website maintenance and development	120.00	1,020.00
Postage, printing, stationery and miscellaneous	563.46	128.84
TOTAL EXPENDITURE:	9,562.14	14,309.34
Surplus/(deficit) of income cf. expenditure:	861.86	(5,897.59)
	10,424.00	8,411.75

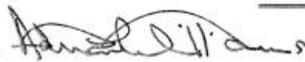
Balance sheet at 31 March 2019

Assets	£	Represented by	£
Lloyds Bank current account	5,811.17	Operating reserve	10,000.00
Paypal	249.53	Reserve for sponsorships	4,500.00
COIF Charities Deposit Fund	15,295.93	General reserve	6,856.63
TOTAL:	21,356.63		21,356.63

Cash flow: 1 April – 31 March

	2018	2019
	£	£
Accumulated Fund at 1 April	26,392.36	27,254.22
Surplus or (deficit) across the year	861.86	(5,897.59)
Accumulated Fund at 31 March	27,254.22	21,356.63

Adrian Williams, Treasurer

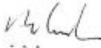


Date:

1 May 2019

I have examined the above Statement of Income and Expenditure and the Balance Sheet, and confirm that they are in accordance with the books and information supplied and the information given to me.

Ronald P.J. Sanson, Honorary Examiner



Date:

19 May 2019

3. Report on Ludlow English Song Weekend 2019

The Ludlow English Song Weekend (LESW) continues to hold its usual attraction and is building on the success of its development into an annual event under an autonomous company framework 'Ludlow Song'. This has enabled its Artistic Director Iain Burnside to theme and direct a cohesive programme, this year looking to the future in the form of young up-coming talent and living composers, a feature of the whole weekend.

The weekend is programmed to offer a treasured English Song experience to all tastes including burgeoning contemporary composition on the cutting edge. But you have to be part of it to capture the atmosphere, the mood and the sheer talent. Don't take my word for it but grasp the opportunity to indulge in it yourself in congenial, like-minded, enthusiastic company.

The Finzi Influence

Finzi continues to have a significant impact on this event and by no means limited to composition. Both the Finzi Trust and the *Finzi Friends* gave measurable support as usual and the Finzi legacy is affirmed. The family influence in the late cousin of Gerald, Jean Finzi, was brought to bear following her generous bequest to the Trust and their subsequent generosity with the legacy towards the LESW, something Jean herself would have wished. As reported in Newsletter issue 33 No. 2 October 2016 and in issue 34 No. 2 October 2017, Jean was a staunch Trustee always eager to support enthusiastic and dedicated young talent and ensuring the Trust met this challenge.

The Trust was therefore able to commission virtually the whole of the first evening's performance which featured an eclectic mix of early nineteenth century composers through to the present, delivering a broad range of style and composition, something for everyone. Contemporary talent was not neglected, however, to complement the traditional. This is where the *Friends* were able to offer support and commissioned a new composition by Alex Woolf, one of the UK's freshest composing voices.

The programme was entitled 'When smoke stood up from Ludlow' to reflect the fact the first half of the concert was settings of Housman. Individual songs were sung by Rowan Pierce, soprano and Elgan Llyr Thomas, tenor, accompanied by Iain Burnside, piano and Michael Foyle,

violin. The standard of the performances were unquestionable as usual but we are privileged to have the experience of Iain in his choice of hand-picked artists, and his own accomplished talent of course.



Alex Woolf is interviewed by Ian Skelly from Radio 3.

And below with Philip Lancaster



Burgeoning Talent

We are grateful to the Ludlow Song Company (LSC) for continuing to encourage new and young talent, part of the ethos of the Finzi tradition for this event, something Finzi would have approved of, welcomed and instigated himself. Talented young artists looking to advance their careers in a masterclass and in performance; and young composers feeling their way into a new world of composition but who obviously come well equipped and perceptibly beyond the experimental stage already.

Their mentor was Eleanor Alberga, a highly regarded mainstream British composer with commissions and premieres already aired by the BBC Proms and the Royal Opera. The young composers, Sam Buttler; James McIlwrath; Amy Summers; and Luciano Williamson offered variety and talent but were responsive to Eleanor's suggestions and guidance. They were naturally glad of the exposure and we welcomed the fresh talent. It will be interesting to see how they develop and we will continue to offer encouragement.



*Andrew Burn
talking to
Eleanor Alberga*

Later in the weekend the young talented vocal artists from the Royal Northern College of Music willingly experienced the rigors of a Masterclass led by Susan Bullock. It was a privilege to have Susan, one of the words most sought-after British dramatic sopranos, whilst she has a heavy operatic schedule in performances abroad and in the UK. On the Sunday afternoon the vocal students, Eliza Boom, soprano; Molly Barker, mezzo; James Berry, baritone; and Aaron Breeze piano, showcased the compositions the young composers had prepared to great acclaim. We

were appreciative and wish them well with all the encouragement Finzi would have wished them himself.



The young Artists flanked by the young Composers and Eleanor Alberga



The young Artist

Panel Discussions

The weekend was peppered with panel discussions enthusiastically led by Katy Hamilton whose research ensures an in-depth understanding of each subject and that all views and opinions are aired.

Panel 1 - Transcendence

Panel –Tony Palmer, Edward Rushton, Katy Hamilton, Alex Woolf and Benjamin Goodson



This discussion developed the theme of how the musical establishment encouraged people into music. Tony Palmer opened by explaining how Vaughan Williams (RVW) said we claim a choral tradition in the UK and consequently singing in a choir was a good musical education. He was on an educational committee following World War Two which was concerned about the way forward for music in schools. Thus was established the National Youth Orchestra. Parents were amazed saying ‘You’ve changed my child’s life’. Interestingly his close friend Holst started the ‘Can’t Sing Choir’ in the east end of London. He gravitated there because he was very left wing and even distributed the ‘Workers Union’ newspaper. Benjamin Britten’s War Requiem, was first performed in Coventry Cathedral and the clergy chose the choir from local choral societies not recognising that they couldn’t read music, such was the enthusiasm of choirs in those days although lacking in ability somewhat. Britten had to change the choir as a result.

It was Tony Palmer's first time at LESW and he described the Ludlow Festival as a treasure. He went on to explain how he ventured to see RVW and as a consequence discovered and was influenced by him. He said how RVW was labelled with the folk tradition until his fourth symphony which he believed then changed his image abroad. On another occasion Tony asked Britten what he thought his occupation was and he replied, 'To be useful and to encourage choirs'. Peter Grimes became popular abroad and therefore established an English music influence overseas. Tony then went to Cheltenham to experience the place where Holst grew up. Interestingly, it was the location where people had chosen to live on their return from service in India and they brought their servants with them. That was the reason so many curry houses emerged in Cheltenham and Holst was influenced by this and therefore explored eastern cultures and languages which influence some of his music.

Edward Rushton came to the festival from his present home in Switzerland but explained that he was a chorister at school in the UK and this indeed had influenced his upbringing. He also felt that English music has an emotional appeal abroad, particularly the folk tradition. In addition he felt that English music was bigger abroad due to its innovative style e.g. Vaughan Williams' fourth symphony, Benjamin Britten etc. Katy said how she felt that music was on the move across continents which give music, and our perception of it, its colour.

Alex Woolf, who premiered a composition in the Friday evening concert explained how his mother was a singer in the West End, meaning he was steeped in music as a child and was particularly influenced by Sondheim. Picking up on the Britten theme he suggested he is now a much more revered composer both at home and abroad, perhaps because of his variety and inventiveness and its colour and differences.

Benjamin Goodson started playing the piano at seven, influenced by his grandmother, and very quickly found a liking for jazz. He naturally sang at secondary school, including Evensong, and whilst not religious, he loves the music and the Church atmosphere. His opinion was that England has a wealth of poetic tradition, the English language being very descriptive and influential making it ideal for setting to music. In addition, Benjamin had an interesting theory that the English tradition is leaning towards women

composers more than the continent and this has influenced more women to take up composition.

Panel 2 - Selling Song

Panel – Paul Baxter, Fiona Maddocks, Katy Hamilton, David Jackson and Dr Clare Taylor.



Each of the chosen panellists works in a different field in aspects of selling Song and it was interesting to hear how the different stages are managed.

Dr Clare Taylor represented the City Music Foundation – Turning talent into success for young people from Conservatoires. The Foundation teaches them business; mentors them; and helps them develop their profile with promotional tools. They also provide them with a network of contacts and help them with their choice of style without forcing them down avenues. She does help artists to widen their appeal and suggests artists shouldn't try and emulate historic performances but must be themselves to make it fresh. David Jackson worked on giving them exposure to peers and established artists. Paul Baxter is equipped to give them the opportunity to make a CD but believes social media is the market now and people are streaming classical music in greater quantities outselling CDs, downloads etc; Fiona Maddocks reviews CD's in the press. Interestingly, she was able to tell us that the press can't give full coverage to all repertoire and consequently the big new works normally get priority but she also selects works and performances that are likely to be destined for a wider audience.

The panel generally agreed that when students submit a video, the best are chosen and those that are likely to develop the most are given that lucky break but they are conscious also of serving the public's interest as well when they originally choose students

Katy posed the question of what we mean by song? David suggested we perceive it as words to music, singer and pianist, but we must be aware of other instruments, even the orchestra and opera has song. He also believed that song is a powerful contact with or approach to the audience. Clare suggested song is often replaced with an instrument as we move away from song e.g. the new Finzi disc 'Introit' of songs set to saxophone. She also felt that religion held all the cards for music across the centuries and now we had to work on how to overcome that.

Katy suggested that song in one's own language is more powerful or attractive and if it is after all largely the singers own language. The singer is singing to you with nothing in-between, no language barrier although other languages carry a mystique because we don't understand it.

Panel 3 - Changing perceptions of English music

Panel –Edward Rushton, Andrew Burn, Katy Hamilton, Ceri Owen, Patrick Gale.



The panel felt that songs are becoming more popular after the symphony concerts dominated for decades and Andrew Burn suggested song cycles are more attractive as they came within the genre of larger works. For the amateur musician, however, individual songs are available to take home and learn for oneself, you don't need to play an instrument for instance; you don't have to get together with a choir or need an orchestra to get results. Song is poetry and music and it must become more intimate, performed in small places as pre-twentieth century music was performed in people's front rooms.

In addition, we are of course influenced by what music is available i.e. what the industry decides to promote or what influential people decide to promote. It is possible also that copyright, and its continued restriction after someone has died, is withholding music from the public. The Swedish government, interestingly, pay the copyright so that music is available to everyone. Alternatively, in the UK, Trusts make money through the copyright but then they decide where the money goes and very often this may be to a worthy cause or student researcher.

Andrew Burn, a founder member of the Finzi Trust, set up in 1969, explained that Finzi was little known after his death and his wife Joy set up the Trust to try and have Gerald represented on disc to create revenue to spread the knowledge of Finzi. The Finzi Trust originally supported young people who couldn't afford instruments. Gerald's works are relatively easy for people or choirs to perform. Also, being on the Bliss Trust, Andrew suggested that they are not doing so well because his music is difficult to play and perform. However, Finzi is now being performed around the world.

Ceri Owen is currently writing a new biography of Vaughan Williams and explained how hungry people are for more previously undisclosed information requiring the researcher to make more contact with people who knew these composers. She went on: new books are now being written about these composers without the emotional attachment those original authors, who personally knew the composers, had when they wrote about them. So now, in addition, we are developing a clinical view around the enormous output these composers had. Ceri is reviewing Vaughan Williams's life in greater detail rather than the overview a readable book can give in one volume. We are still trying to unpick these composers' lives she said.

Edward Rushton believed that foreigners are now trying to open up borders and therefore embracing English music in the process. Andrew felt that as a result it was important for conductors and solo performers to explain what is about to happen in the concert. Equally, this would also help us to understand foreign compositions. Performers must engage with their audience he suggested and not remain aloof otherwise they will be alienating themselves and reducing their popularity. Roderick Williams, for example, is a good communicator and therefore he is very popular.

Aspects of the Weekend's Performances

Whilst we were pleased that Finzi was more than adequately represented throughout the weekend, we were also glad to hear our Chairman, Martin's composition *The Windhover*, a setting of Gerald Manley Hopkins' poem, aired once again, sealing the experience in our musical psyche and reassuring the establishment of his position in the hierarchy of contemporary English composers.



Martin Bussey acknowledges the applause following the performance of his composition.

On Saturday afternoon we were privileged to be entertained by the prize winning choir of the Bath Camerata directed by Benjamin Goodson. Within the programme our Vice-President Roderick's composition *Love Bade Me Welcome* featured, compensation for him not being present as one of our favourite soloists during the weekend this time.



An additional feature during the Saturday evening concert was the inclusion of the guitarist Sean Shibe, praised as one of the foremost guitarists of his generation. His flawless performances of Dowland, Arnold, Nicholas Maw and Britten, were greatly appreciated and welcomed enthusiastically.

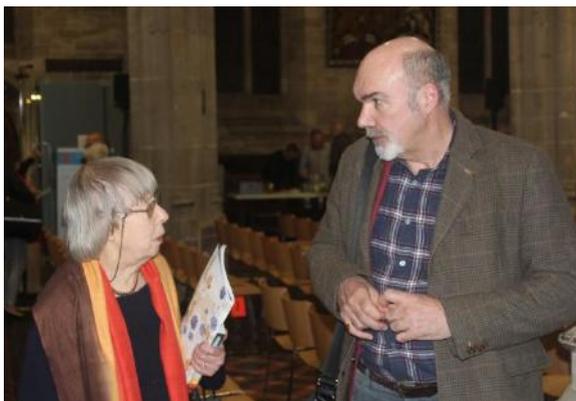
Enterprising as ever, the LSW ensured the weekend, in collaboration with BBC Radio Three, was broadcast soon after the event. We welcomed one of BBC R3's presenters, Ian Skelly, once again as he compared concerts in his inimitable and distinctive style.

Due to the refurbishment of the Ludlow Assembly Rooms, all our concerts were accommodated in St Laurence's Church and it was there that the weekend concluded with Evensong dedicated to our Festival, the music and Responses being English twentieth century compositions, a fitting end to another successful and thoroughly enjoyable weekend.

*Guests at the
Welcome Reception*



*Diana McVeagh talks to
Martin Bussey*





Sadly, Aileen Morrison, the LESW Administrator, comes to the end of her tenure with the Event and will be giving way to Steve Catanach who is already immersed in Ludlow 2020.

Aileen was presented with a gift in recognition of her valued contribution to the LESW over the last few years.

4. Report on Chosen Hill 2019

Chosen contemporaries in a chosen location. Chosen Hill was attractive to our 'Composers in Time' and so it is, equally, to our Members.

Encouraged by our former success we embraced the significance of this location, so appreciated by both Gerald Finzi and Herbert Howells, confirming the synergy we are forming with this historical compositional influence on two sensitive composers.

The day, as usual, was action packed and the good weather helped the intrepid trekkers scale the hill on foot for the talk in St Bartholomew's Church on top of Chosen Hill. Those of us less able were transported in automobiles.



*Martin introducing
Jeremy Dibble in
St Bartholomew's
on Chosen Hill.*

However, it all began with our AGM in St Andrew's at the foot of the hill and details of the proceedings are given in Section 2 of this Newsletter. As we were spared few questions (we must be getting something right) we took to the hills and gathered at the top of Chosen where in the Church we had the privilege of hearing a talk from Professor Jeremy Dibble on aspects of our 'Composers in Time'. Jeremy is one of the leading authorities on twentieth century British composers and his in-depth knowledge of Howells, including some aspects of his unpublished works, was evident. Jeremy has allowed us to publish his fascinating talk and it is going to be published in the forthcoming Journal in December.



Martin Lee-Browne, Jeremy Dibble and Anthony Boden after the talk

As usual, the sexton's cottage in St Bartholomew's Churchyard was open for us to visit and many took this opportunity. You will recall the significance it had to Finzi and the welcome the Sexton and his family gave to him as a young man and again with his wife Joy during the Gloucester Three Choirs festivals. Finzi's experience on the hill on a frosty New Year's Eve was also the inspiration for *In Terra Pax*.



The remainder of the day took place in St Andrew's and being mid-day, continued with a sit-down sumptuous buffet lunch interspersed with the social aspect of catching up with and re-cementing friendships.



Guests at lunch



The afternoon was serenely concluded by Gareth Brynmor John giving a baritone solo accompanied by our own Gavin Roberts on the piano. It was essential we included our ‘Composers in Time’ and we were delighted with the smooth tones of Finzi’s *Let us garlands bring* and Howells’ settings of Walter de la Mare. Gavin also gave a solo performance of Howell’s Clavichord settings before the programme concluded with Gareth’s stunning interpretation of Vaughan Williams’ *Songs of Travel*.



Ian Venables with Gavin Roberts and Gareth Brynmor John prior to the afternoon’s performance

We were once again pleased with the success of our return to Chosen Hill as confirmed by those Members supporting the event. The location offers a unique connection to a period in Finzi’s life and, together with such well-appointed facilities, is becoming an event location of choice, something we intend to repeat in 2021 following our return to Ashmansworth in 2020. For those who haven’t yet indulged in the Chosen Hill experience we thoroughly recommend you take the opportunity next time.

5. Future Events

We continue to plan the future based on our successes and the feedback we receive from the Members. As a consequence, we believe we are providing the right mix of event and location and will continue to target the most popular and the most sought after. For this reason Ashmansworth is on schedule for next year. However, should any of the Members have ideas or particular preferences for future events we would be most interested in hearing from you. We are always conscious of being cost effective in our endeavours, and are largely successful, but this is balanced by always attempting to make it attractive to Members. The programme below has both fixed key dates and some future aspirations and you are invited to watch this space as ideas develop.

a) Ludlow English Song Weekend 3 – 5 April 2020

Iain Burnside, along with the Ludlow English Song Directors, are developing the programme for next year's event and we wait with eager anticipation for further details. Many of the events will again be in St Laurence's Church. Please keep in touch by visiting their website at appropriate intervals: *ludlowenglishsongweekend.com*

The *Finzi Friends* intend to continue supporting this event financially through a commission or Artist fees as in former years. We are also heartened that many of our Members are faithful supporters and it is always stimulating to join with those *Friends* on these occasions.

b) Ashmansworth 11 Jul 2020

Arrangements are already in place to schedule the return to our roots and we look forward to another day of acquaintance with the Finzi tradition. Once again, we are currently establishing the programme and artists and hope that Iain Burnside will be able to feature in next year's programme with others in support. More in the next Newsletter or, of course on the New Website you are encouraged to visit.

c) Manchester February 2020

Martin is organising a promotional concert in Manchester to feature *Finzi Friends* and including Finzi's Part Songs. Martin will largely promote this concert himself and will be emphasizing and drawing attention to the *Finzi Friends* website.

d) Chosen Hill June 2021

We have our sights set on Churchdown once again following our former successes. Ideas are still in formulation but it was felt the relationship between Finzi and Vaughan Williams may make an attractive focus this time. Vaughan Williams was taken to Chosen Hill by the Finzis during the Gloucester Three Choirs Festivals.

Ideas worth exploring are a concert in the afternoon with Martin Bussey's Chester Bach Singers again following its success at the same venue in 2017. This two-centre day, St Andrew's at the foot of the hill and St Bartholomew's at the top, has proved to be an attraction. St Andrew's is very well appointed and provides a wonderful atmosphere for socialising, dining and a concert.

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