

Chairman's Notes

Welcome to our first Good Vibrations Newsletter of 2021, and the first Newsletter since September 2020.

After some 16 years, Terry Woodgate and Moyria his wife, have retired from being editor and photographer respectively of Good Vibrations, and grateful thanks to them for their excellent work over that long stint. They continue to be members of the Club.

No need to repeat that it seems, and is, a long time since March 2020 when the Club as we know it, went into lockdown, with no live performances, no orchestra, no ensemble and no 'live' Club Evenings. Thanks to Sasha's perseverance, we had our AGM by Zoom in September, a virtual Club Evening in October, a video concert by the 'New Stars' - Sam Brown and others - in November, and a virtual Christmas Party



appropriately in December. The Club's committee is planning a programme for 2021 - see below.

Further good news is that by way of Zoom and video recordings, the Club continues to flourish, with new members joining and the benefit of a great new Website, thanks to Jez Rogers, Leigh Boyle and other club members. The Website was launched in September 2020. The Club is also trying to support professional guitarists, inviting them to play at performances, and I hope

our members will contribute to their fees, which the Club pays them out of our own funds. We very much depend on our members to contribute to further Newsletters with articles, pictures, news, comments or suggestions. Please send them to me at jgbobak@btinternet.com

Best wishes for a better year!

Julian Bobak, Chairman

The Interview - Sam Brown, guitarist & lutenist

Our Hospitality Officer, Angela MacTavish, talks to Sam Brown - one of the performers and organisers of our first virtual professional recital

AM Hello Sam and welcome!

SB *Hi Angela! Thank you for the invitation.*

AM Well, you've played a major role in helping to release the grip of the corona virus on the lives of members and friends of the West Sussex Guitar Club! That's by the video recording which you and your friends Jonatan Bougt, Laura Snowden and Ioannis Theodoridis have jointly contributed to, in place of the planned live professional concert. Ioannis carefully collated each individual video clip into a continuous performance, Sasha provided the finishing touches and distribution and this virtual recital has brought the greatest pleasure and relief to many of our members, restoring and renewing our sense of community. We thank you all again!

SB *It's a pleasure, and it's been lovely inviting my best friends to the WSGC family. It's been a long time but the club never feels too far away.*

AM There's a great sense of interest and curiosity among those who have shared in the progress of your musical career, appreciating the development of your own talent, and you have very kindly agreed to answer a few questions which might illuminate your path. First of all, was the guitar the first musical instrument you encountered as a child and were you immediately attracted to it?

Yes, I was originally given a guitar as a Christmas present – I forget how old I was. My aunt showed me some tunes. I liked it, but it wasn't till I met Sasha and the Club that I took it seriously.



Perhaps you could recount the almost magical way in which this first meeting took place.

I started going to a guitar ensemble at Chichester Music Service, which Mitch Callow ran. (I usually strummed chords.) On my thirteenth birthday, mum gave me a copy of Recuerdos de la Alhambra which she'd heard on the radio. Mitch heard me giving it a shot, realised I was serious about the guitar, and gave me Sasha's number. It was a fantastic coincidence.

You have always been grateful to your tutors for nurturing your gifts, including Charles Ramirez at the Royal College of Music, Lorenzo Micheli in Lugano – and naturally Sasha, whom you describe as your 'inspirational' first teacher. Could you describe the ways in which he inspired you?

Sasha's love for music is profound and infectious – it's as though he's just discovered it for the first time. I'm constantly inspired by his skill and understanding as a teacher. And, for a teenager without a dad, he was a terrific role model.

So while still studying at South Downs College, you obtained a bursary to study part-time at the Junior Department of the RCM - which you have described as moving from our 'bijou' School of Music in Bognor Regis to the very imposing world of the RCMJD in London. Was it difficult to adjust?

Very! Junior Department was a challenge, especially for somebody with such poor self discipline.

How did you make the transition from being a part-time to a full-time student of guitar under Charles Ramirez, and were you immediately introduced to the lute by Jakob Lindberg?

I didn't get along so well in my first year of College– RCM hit me like a sack of lit fireworks, and I reacted like a scalded cat. Things got easier as I went along. I met Jakob and the lute in my first year – you get the option to take up a related instrument another bit of fate. And I took up again with Charles Ramirez in my second year. I found him an impressive teacher.

What qualities constitute for you the genius of Dowland, and what fresh pleasures did you find in playing his works on the instrument for which they were originally composed?

Some composers of his time are a little affected, but Dowland always feels true. You get the impression that he deeply knew life's joys and sorrows. It's paradoxical that, when you meet such bitterly melancholic music, you feel

strangely relieved. It's wonderfully cathartic – music for dark times. Dowland's music feels like it could have been written yesterday; like all geniuses, he somehow gets through the idiom of his day to say things that ring universally true. And he's a matchless songster and virtuoso to boot. Dowland feels right on the lute, which was admired for its brittle, spoken timbre. This and the technique make much more sense of his music. By comparison, the modern classical guitar is like a grand piano – we forget how huge and how rich a sound it's designed to make.

When did you join the group *Dowland Works*, and how has it enhanced your understanding of your favourite composer, whose renown stretched far beyond England? Just as one example he became court lutenist to Christian IV of Denmark in 1598.

Well, Emma Kirkby and Jacob Heringman founded Dowland Works in 2012 as a kind of lute song club. I first met Emma when I auditioned for her with a soprano friend. I'd celebrated my 20th birthday in some style the night before, so it wasn't my best work. But Emma heard us play for the Lute Society some time later and invited us to join in. We all meet – that's mainly young professionals - round a kitchen table in the club and sing lute song, and give a few concerts off the back of that. Last year we joined Emma at Wigmore Hall, which was wonderful and terrifying. I've learned so much and Dowland's four-part songs are glorious – they're not heard nearly enough. Some day I'll record the lot. Accompanying singers is my favourite thing; I love the energy, the rhetoric. It's endlessly satisfying. Last year I set up Dowland Youth Works with a baritone friend – we run lute song workshops for teenagers. Watch this space!

Your own successes after the Royal College have included several invitations to play in international venues as varied as Seville, Beijing and Nairobi. Did you feel any need to adapt the style of your performance or choice of repertoire anywhere, and in which setting was the audience most responsive?

Travelling is a joy, and every performance is different, of course. I've never enjoyed a show like Kenya – Concierto de Aranjuez with Nairobi Symphony. The enthusiasm that orchestra has is electric. And last year I found myself at Vienna Konzerthaus, completely awestruck and scared out of my wits. But nowhere feels more like home than the RSM. I feel like I've never left that stage.

You are always very frank about your own capabilities or limitations, when in London commenting that ‘teaching is a skill that I haven’t acquired yet.’ Which aspects of teaching the guitar and lute now give you the greatest pleasure, and might you ever venture into the world of composition?

I adore teaching, though at one time I never thought I would. You learn so much. While I perform mostly as a lutenist these days, I keep the guitar close to my heart and I teach both. The last few years I’ve coached the music scholars at the University of Bath, which is incredibly rewarding. Online teaching has been better than I imagined – I have students in America and New Zealand now. I only ever compose little pieces for my students – I don’t think I’d take it up properly. But never say never.



Photo by Angela MacTavish

Finally, an appreciative burst of virtual applause for your participation in this interview and for the many insights you have given us. We have enjoyed the easy and relaxed way in which you have introduced many young and gifted musicians to our School, lifting our spirits in these testing times and creating a warm, genuine internationality to replace the old. We look forward to featuring your friends in future interviews!

Angela MacTavish

Membership matters

Despite the fact that Covid has prevented us from running our usual mix of live concerts, club evenings and our own Guitar Festival, the majority of members have continued to support the Club by renewing their membership in September. We are extremely grateful to you all for your support, which will help us to keep the Club in good shape for a resumption of activities as soon as the Covid danger has subsided. We welcome to the Club two new members, James Crompton, from Billinghamurst, and Mark Jones, from Bognor Regis. We look forward to meeting them when we are eventually able to get together again. Sadly, two of our members have passed away recently, Peggy Carrott and John White. Peggy had been a member for 11 years and John for 21 years, and both were regular attendees at our events, so they will both be sadly missed. We currently have 93 memberships in the Club, 22 of which are Family Memberships, which all



include at least two members, sometimes three or four. So we know that there are at least 115 of us enjoying the benefits of belonging to our wonderful Club.

Baz Boxall Membership Secretary

The club in the time of Covid

During the past year, musicians everywhere have had to find ways of continuing to perform in the face of cancelled concerts and recitals due to the Coronavirus pandemic which has changed our lives in so many ways. Professional musicians have turned to technology to reach their audience, using Zoom and Skype, YouTube and Facebook, resulting in a huge rise in “virtual” concerts funded by online ticket sales and donations. The same technology is being used by amateur musicians to meet and perform online. To date, our club has adapted to these changes by hosting a recorded recital by New Generation artists on YouTube and, thanks to Sasha’s hard work, producing videos to take the place of our usual club evenings, parties and festivals. More events are in the pipeline. All this has been planned by the committee meeting online using Zoom. There’s no real substitute for live performances at the club but without the technology that’s available today, the club would have ceased to function during the pandemic. Another of the club’s ongoing activities is the fortnightly performance practice sessions over Zoom on Monday evenings at 8 o’clock. Currently, about six or seven of us meet to play solos, which is a good opportunity to have a chat and practise performing the pieces we’re learning while the club is closed. If you’d like to join us, please let Sasha know and we’ll send you the link for the meeting. We look forward to seeing you. On behalf of the committee, I’d like to thank those members, and non-members, who made donations towards the cost of the New Generation recital video. We’re pleased to be in a position to pay artists for their performances but, in the absence of ticket sales on the door, we rely on donations to recoup some of our costs. There are more professional video recitals being planned this year, which we hope everyone will watch, so please consider making a small donation (large donations also gratefully received, of course) to help us support the artists who perform for us. We all hope that the current situation will improve this year and that, at some point, the club can operate normally again. In the meantime, I’d like to wish everyone a belated Happy New Year and look forward to better times to come.

David Clarke Treasurer



New Members

We extend a very warm welcome to:

Mark Jones Bognor Regis
James Crompton Billinghamurst

We hope you enjoy many happy events at the Club!

**PEGGY CARROTT**

Photo by Julie Insull

Sadly Peggy died in December. She had become housebound in the last couple of years and despite not being in good health always stayed cheerful and positive.

Throughout her life Peggy was first a Guide and went on to become a Guider until she had to retire at the age of 65. She loved Guiding and everything connected to it, so continued to support the movement in any opportunity that came along.

Not her only way of life. Peggy had many interests and I believe, made a difference to many people.

A love of walking and nature led her with friends, to walk the entire length of the South Downs Way. At the same time she could pursue her interest in bird life and for many years belong to the RSPB.

Photography featured large and being a member of Bognor Photographic Society had an outlet for this hobby.

Peggy loved her garden, growing vegetables as well as flowers. Belonging to the Bognor Regis Horticultural Society she would exhibit there regularly. Bringing photography, horticulture and Bognor History (another pastime) together, she delighted us one evening with a slide show and talk about Bognor Gardens.

Over the years Peggy volunteered at her local surgery and drove many people there who would otherwise have found it difficult. She was happy to fill in where needed.

Now we come to how most of us came to know Peggy – for about 14 years she was a member of West Sussex Guitar Club. Not that she played, she just loved music, so came to most Recitals, Club Evenings and events put on by Friends of the Music School. At Festival times she helped out and loved to see the progress the children made.

All in all I think Peggy would say she'd had a happy life and a very varied one.

Julie Insull

JOHN WHITE

John was the youngest but one of a family of eight children. A loving husband of 63 years, father of three, grandfather and great-grandfather, and friend of many.

Born and spending his formative years in the hamlet of Bignor John never lost his love of or affinity for the area. His childhood was spent in roaming and exploring the local downs and woodlands.

At the age of 15 John left school and became an apprenticed electrician until called-up for the obligatory National Service where he served in the army. It was after demob from military service that John went to Art College where he specialised in water-colours.

After his marriage to Carol he went to work at the RHS Crops Research Facility from which he took early retirement from his supervisory role after 34 years service. He now had the freedom to pursue his many interests including art, music, his garden and walks in the countryside. John joined the WSGC and began to explore the guitar (he could already play the ukulele, banjo and harmonica). He was bemused by the fact that he could not read staff notation but could understand tablature easily. His great enjoyment was to play duets inasmuch as one person would play the main melody and John would improvise, instinctively creating another voice in harmony. He also composed his own material drawing on his experience of life. Particularly poignant is



John playing at West Burton House, a place that was special to him.

Photo by Debbie Burford

the piece he wrote for his daughter while she was in hospital having treatment for Leukaemia – he called it ‘Coming Home’. He never lost his love for the flora, fauna, wide-open spaces, the sea and dwellings of his beloved countryside which is so evident in his art and music.

A gentle, honest, and caring man with a great sense of humour, a good friend. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

Alison Stonestreet



John’s watercolour of West Burton House

Coming Home (Opus 2)

John White

Lento (♩ = 60)

a piacere *mp* *cresc.* *dim.*

5 *CV* *mf* *gliss.*

8 *1.* *2.* *mf* *piu rall.*

11 *CVII* *CII* *molto mosso*

14 *CII* *CV*

17 *rit. (2nd time only)*

Hours into Minutes – a Secretary's Tale

A book of the title “Hours into Minutes” really does exist as a guide to producing documents for committees. Although I don't own a copy, I must say the title very much appeals to me, having written notes at many meetings lasting over three hours! Therefore, when the pandemic struck I was not too disheartened at the thought of a short break from the meetings, note-taking and typing and with only a very old computer, no microphone or camera, there was not much prospect of my taking part online. Two events then changed everything 1) I gained access to a “tablet” 2) Zoom came along to enable committee meetings to take place virtually. My joy knew no bounds! I have now had the pleasure of several online meetings, including the AGM, and taking the minutes now involves peering at a tiny screen to see who is speaking and concentrating very hard due to the often poor sound quality. At first Zoom meetings were limited to 40 minutes but then “luckily” David purchased unlimited time to enable longer meetings. So my job has changed not so much - I still type the minutes and agendas and send them out by email to the committee and as Julian commented at the last meeting “Come plague, hell or high water we still have the minutes!” (which I suppose is a complement of sorts). Seriously though, it is very good to see everyone at this difficult time and to keep in touch.



Debbie Burford, Secretary

The New West Sussex Guitar Club Website

It is interesting how the pandemic has brought together people as well as dividing them! For me personally, two of the highlights of lockdown have been to meet Jez in New Zealand and to have the time to learn and apply new skills. The product of the genius work from Jez, some material and ideas from Sasha and some slog from me has been the new West Sussex Guitar Club website. I hope by now you have found this wonderful new website – if not just follow the link www.westsussexguitar.org or simply search online for “West Sussex Guitar Club”. The mastermind Jez kindly spent quite a few hours in the summer patiently teaching me how to add links, news items and calendar events, and to add webpages and paperwork such as club policies and newsletters, so that the website is a record of past as well as present events. Tuition was by Zoom, early morning for Jez and late evening for Sasha and me, with Jez sharing his screen as he whizzed about doing things on the website in New Zealand as Sasha added splashes of creative ideas, and I watched and took notes from Bognor. This website is very much for club members, so please do take a good look at its many pages and let me know if there is anything you think I should add/delete/correct or expand. If you have any ideas that are beyond my skills, then I will ask Jez for advice!



Leigh Boyle

Looking for a Silver Lining...

In the last ten months, we have experienced a different world. For many social groups, societies, and clubs life came to a halt, and, sadly, some may have not been able to continue even after the restrictions were lifted. We, at the WSGC, were very fortunate in being able to adapt our activities and managed to stage all the events planned in our diary. Thanks to the internet and the video, we continued to communicate regularly with our membership, by creating virtual club evenings, parties and even staging a virtual professional performance by four talented musicians of the new generation. All these events encouraged the Club's guitarists to practise and share their new repertoire, and all our members to continue enjoying music and the company many other members... even though on the screen but, having real (not virtual) fun! The last live event we held at the Club was a recital by Amanda Cook; no public celebrations were allowed to follow this as we have entered the 'new era'. Initially, organizing a virtual meeting with the *Dorset Classical Guitar Society*, we asked members from both clubs to film their performances and email the video clips to us, which were then assembled into a video and published on YouTube and on both Clubs' websites, where it continues to be available to watch and is still gathering viewings. The success of this first production encouraged us to stage our *Summer Party* in a similar way. With its imaginative theme 'Life on the Ocean Waves,' it has attracted many 'rowers' and plenty of 'seafarers' who can still enjoy the journey in the Club's 'corvette' drawn by Julie Insull.

The experience and confidence gained by our members in video recording ensured even more contributions to the next two virtual events: a *Virtual Club Evening* in September and the *Virtual Christmas Party* in December.

Our super new website, launched at the beginning of the season, has all our videos – available to watch again if you are feeling a bit lonely and would like to see your Club friends again: you will definitely notice how much everyone has improved since the first video production during this time!

There are also regular fortnightly ZOOM meetings offering a performing opportunity to everyone present. It takes place every other Monday between 8.00 pm & 9.00 pm and is hosted by Jay Huff.

Many thanks to all the contributors to our virtual events! Despite the unprecedented limitations of the present time, our Club is enjoying a very active life, by continuing to support our members' interest in music, attracting new audiences, encouraging the new generation of young guitarists to participate and perform, and, in our modest way, trying to support the work of professional musicians.

It looks as if, for this season, our meetings will still be virtual events. Watch our calendar and please visit our www.westsussexguitar.com website regularly! "Every Cloud has..." – we are all lucky to share the inspiration & joy of the silver sound of the guitar strings!

PS One of the important musical events in our area – the **Chichester Festival for Music Dance and Speech**, also had this year to adopt the Virtual format and is going ahead! The guitar section of the festival which our Club has supported for many years will take the form of a number of ZOOM meetings during Saturday 6 February. Below is the time-table of the classes. Please email me (recital@tiscali.co.uk) with the request for a link to join the meeting at any time during the day. With this link you will be able to watch and listen to any classes. The link to join the 'Festival by ZOOM' will also be published on our website - to access the link please click on the date of the Festival in the "Diary".



Sasha

Sat 6th February. Venue: Virtual Festival by ZOOM Adjudicator: Christopher Stell

10:00 801 GUITAR SOLO NOVICE

- 1 Genevieve Binskin
- 2 Max Gayle

10:30 802 GUITAR SOLO BEGINNER

- 1 Iten Elbahei
- 2 Theo Nichols
- 3 Anna Swain
- 4 Isaac Meyer
- 5 Cameron Franklin
- 6 Lucy Carson

11:10 805 GUITAR SOLO GRADE IV & UNDER

- 1 Cody Dunning
- 2 Robert Cartwright
- 3 Daniel Callow

11:40 807 GUITAR SOLO

- 1 Milly Orr
- 2 Hazel Swain
- 3 Kit Dunning
- 4 Sofia Carson
- 5 Elsa Dinham-Peren

12:15 808 JUNIOR BACH CLASS

- 1 Cody Dunning
- 2 Vakaris Silaikis

12:15 814 TECHNICAL PERFECTION CLASS 1

- 1 James Connolly

12:15 815 TECHNICAL PERFECTION CLASS 2

- 1 Evelina Kisliak
- 2 Sofia Carson

14:00 810 GUITAR SOLO OPEN

- 1 Seth Swain
- 2 Darcey Morey De La Cruz

14:00 811 JUNIOR RECITAL CLASS

- 1 Seth Morgan
- 2 Vakaris Silaikis

14:45 812 INTERMEDIATE RECITAL CLASS

- 1 Ben Ward
- 2 George Koumellis
- 3 Evelina Kisliak
- 4 James Connolly

14:45 813 ADVANCED RECITAL CLASS

- 1 Maya Solly

16:00 818 SOLO INTERMEDIATE 1

- 1 Harri Goldsmith

16:00 819 SOLO INTERMEDIATE 2

- 1 Leigh Boyle

16:30 821 GUITAR SOLO ADVANCED AMATEUR OPEN

- 1 David Clarke
- 2 Barry Boxall

16:30 822 GUITAR SOLO BACH CLASS OPEN

- 1 David Roe

16:30 823 GUITAR SOLO RECITAL CLASS OPEN

- 1 Linda Kelsall-Barnett

Composer of the month

Who loves not music and the heavenly muse, That man God hates.

- John Dowland



AZ QUOTES

A favourite composer of the early period for guitarists of the West Sussex Guitar Club, **John Dowland** was born in the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1, in 1562, and was a contemporary of William Byrd, and who died in November 1626. He was probably Irish, and was by profession a lutenist and a composer mainly of madrigals, and songs with lute accompaniment.

Dowland was essentially a musician of the Renaissance, when music, both in its theory and playing, became central to the culture of the age. He performed in the courts of England and Denmark but though he failed to get a job in the Court of Queen Elizabeth, he did become a lutenist in the Court of King James 1. Dowland is best known perhaps, for many melancholic songs, such as Galliard to Lachrimae, Flow my Tears, I saw my Lady Weep, and In Darkness let me dwell, to name just a few of his hundreds of compositions. At the WSGC, our members perform - on guitar - some of his Galliards, such as the King of Denmark's Galliard, and My Lady Hunsdon's Allemand (aka 'puffe'). When lockdown is over, please visit the Club's Library at Recital Hall, which has a good selection of his sheet music that you can borrow.

Julian Bobak, Librarian

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 6 February	<i>Guitar section of Chichester Festival for Music Dance & Speech</i> by ZOOM
Saturday 6 March	<i>Virtual Club Evening</i>
Saturday 24 April	<i>Virtual Recital by the members of VIDA QUARTET</i>
Sunday 16 May	<i>Virtual Meeting with the Dorset Classical Guitar Society</i>
Saturday & Sunday 12, 13 June	<i>"Composers Festival"</i> Dedicated to the music of Gary Ryan and Vincent Lindsey-Clark
Saturday 17 July	<i>Virtual Summer Party (May be a real one!)</i>

The West Sussex Guitar Club is grateful for the continued support of:

Ackerman Music

