

MUSIC MAKING IN WALDEN AND BEYOND

by Old Scholar Archivist Roger Buss May 2005

An appraisal of the main stages and events in music teaching and performance at the Friends' School.

In the year 2005 it is perhaps fitting to reflect that it is not only 125 years since the first music lessons were available at the school but also that it is now 70 years from the appointment of Stanley Thorn as the senior teacher of music and 60 years since he was succeeded by Richard Sturge.

INTRODUCTION

This study examines and summarises the introduction and subsequent teaching of music at the Friends' School and the concerts and performances given by orchestras and choirs formed principally of scholars and staff of the school. In particular, it outlines the events that took place outside the school premises, in parish churches, nonconformist chapels, cathedrals, Friends House in London and major concert halls. This report builds on the interesting chapter written by Mary Mileson in "The School on the Hill" [the book for the 300th anniversary of FSSW] recording her experiences of teaching and performing music at the school during 50 years at the end of the twentieth century.

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The information for this paper comes partly from the established archives of the School including copies of the school magazine, "The Avenue", and the Old Scholars' Association's annual reports. A summary of musical events from 1945 to 1979 by the former archivist, Richard Wright, has been of special value. Mary Mileson (music teacher 1952-1955 & 1962-2002), Joy Dupont (Ashford) (music teacher and later deputy head 1951 -72), Francis Whittington (Staff: chemistry 1968-94), John Dickinson (English and drama 1977-97) and Edward Dodge (head of music 1979 - 2001) have also contributed significant tranches of information and corrected some of my errors. Michael How's article in the 2003 Old Scholars' Report /Magazine about the School Choir provided additional 'information on the immediate post Second World War period. I am also particularly indebted to those who kindly responded to my request for pictures, programmes and information. These letters etc have been invaluable. Special thanks are also due to Margaret Brinkworth for allowing me to have access to the School's archives.

ERRORS AND.OMISSIONS

Readers of this article who have first hand knowledge of the events and personalities described may spot mistakes. I apologise in advance for these; but please tell me. The information that has reached the archive on music matters is rather sparse. This has limited the content of this article. If readers of this have information, programmes and/or photographs that they do not wish to retain, or they are prepared to have copied, please send them to the School Archives

THE START OF MUSIC TEACHING

The introduction of music was first approved, after "protracted consideration", by the Friends' School governing body in 1879. This was the year that the School moved from Croydon to Saffron Walden. It was not studied prior to this. Indeed, before that date the enjoyment of music had been rejected up to the latter part of the 19th century. This was a part of the Quaker requirements regarding on the way of life of its members. Compliance with some other aspects of the code of ethics adopted by the early Quakers, which forbade worldly pleasures such as

theatre, dancing, music, singing and cards had already been relaxed (such as the dress rules) but others (such as objection to forms of gambling) still apply today. Even in the last quarter of the 19th century, as David Bolam¹ explains, music was only added to the curriculum as a "voluntary subject," because "girls who leave this school frequently have difficulty in obtaining situations as governesses in families of Friends in consequence of their ignorance of Music". So piano-playing was available for the girls, for an extra charge. Prior to this, it is recorded that, in 1860, hymns were studied, but this was only the words.

Piano teaching commenced in 1880. A few years later (1885) a further teacher was employed to teach boys music. Following the introduction of music teaching for girls "whose parents desire it", the School Annual Report in 1880 stated that the yearly charge was £4 -4s, and in 1881 recorded that 22 girls had received instruction during that year. In 1886 13 boys were being taught but the learning and practice were "not being allowed to interfere with ordinary school work".

Separate groups of music practice rooms were erected for the boys and girls at opposite ends of the main building at the turn of the century [1898]. In 1914 there were three music teachers. By 1950 the number of full-time music teachers was four and additional part -time staff subsequently increased to six.

After the introduction of piano teaching the range of music soon widened with annual concerts of instrumental and vocal items during the last years of the nineteenth century. In 1908 a new school song was printed in the Old Scholars Annual Report. Incidentally, it was entitled "The School on the Hill", a phrase chosen by the author, Hilary Halter (Hockley), for the title of the Tercentenary book, without knowing this. The more familiar school song, "Mother School of Walden..." which was contained in the "Trampers Song Book", was first printed in "The Avenue" in March 1912. Also in 1908, a new form of Sunday evening meeting for worship in the School was introduced. which included hymn singing. Music had by then become part of the life of the community.

OLD SCHOLARS AND A GRAND PIANO

Interest in music resulted in the OSA arranging for one of their annual Lecture Weekends to be on the subject of "Music Appreciation". On this occasion, in March 1925, three lectures were given; one of which was attended by all the pupils. Dorothy Holttum LRAM (at school 1911-12) and Ina Farnell LRAM (1907-12) made the arrangements for this event. These old scholars were not exceptional. Since the introduction of music teaching there has been a steady flow of pupils going to the principal music colleges. An early example is Sarah Ellen Wright (1884-87) who attended the Trinity College of Music to attain an Associateship.

Three years after the Lecture Weekend, following a successful piano recital, Lillian Wright (at School 1911-14), sent five guineas to the treasurer of the Old Scholars' Association. This was to form the nucleus of a fund to purchase a grand piano. She and Ina Farnell, with assistance from music teacher Helen Radley (1910-15 & 1927-43), gave a further recital on 1st April 1930 for this fund. The Association in March 1932 presented the resulting Bechstein Grand Pianoforte to the school. This is still in use. The cost was £154.1s.0p. The School's governing body ("The Committee") gratefully accepted this gift and loaned the donors sufficient money to enable the piano to be available at the Old Scholars weekend function. However, some of the Committee members criticised the cost. The instrument was first used and kept in the central Lecture Room (now the Library), as the Assembly Hall had not been built. Another grand piano was purchased second-hand in 1962 for £240 but the Bechstein remained the best instrument. A side bay was added to the assembly hall, which would accommodate the pianos, when not in use. The

¹ In "Unbroken Community" The book published to mark 250th years from the founding of the school

Bechstein piano was thoroughly overhauled in 2001, with financial assistance from the Saffron Walden Music Club and the OSA.

Cicely Purves (n. Rawlings 1922-30) recalls that Noreen Wright joined the staff in the mid 1920's to teach pianoforte and it was her ambition to see the first orchestra for the school. She persuaded some pupils to take up musical instruments. With very little experience behind the pupils the orchestra was formed in about 1928. Farrand Radley and Ralph Erskine were also members of this new orchestra. Cicely states that the orchestra did accompany the school and played pieces by well known composers, but she cannot remember if they performed for the OS or other outside bodies while she was there. They did so in the 1930's.

Until the assembly hall was completed, late in 1936 (officially opened on 13 February 1937), performances of music or drama were given either in the lecture room or in the dining room if not outdoors. The new hall with a capacity of about 500 seated, with stage and orchestra pit, provided much more convenient facilities for drama and music.

In the early 1930's pupils studying music gave recitals as soloists or in a string orchestra but there was no choir according to Jean Cox (Sleight at school 1931-35). The teachers then were Miss Anne Wright (piano), Miss Noreen Wright (violin), Mrs Helen Radley ('cello) and Miss Gladys Bird who taught the boys. Although there were few outside concerts Jean Cox played piano and viola at school and also at the Cambridge Musical Festival. She was a prize-winner at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) and married a fellow student who was to become its vice-principal. She then played chamber music and in semi-professional orchestras and was a founder of the Junior Orchestra Summer School.

GERALD LITTLEBOY'S HEADSHIP

Gladys Bird who had taught music since 1916 retired in 1935. For her replacement (according to David Bolam in "Unbroken Community") it was decided to appoint a "Director of Music" a higher profile job. Stanley Thorne (ST) was appointed in 1935, but only with the title "Music Master". The salary, based on the Burnham Scale was. £306 p/a. On ST's appointment the School Committee stated that it hoped that music would receive a considerable impetus in the general life of the School as well as for the avowedly musical pupil. ST formed a choir of pupils and staff who together performed at School functions. School orchestras entered local festivals. The highlight of the pre-war activities was a concert at Friends House in London given by the choirs and orchestras of four Friends' Schools (SW with Leighton Park, The Mount & Sibford) on 14 May 1938. The concert comprised items from the individual schools as well as a joint performance.

There was an upgrading of the status of music in the school at this time. It coincided with the start of Gerald Littleboy's headship [in 1934] and this could have been the result of his influence; particularly bearing in mind that he was to play the viola in the school orchestra and sometimes sing in the choir. It is also recorded that Gerald Littleboy together with Miss Wright and Mr Baldwin played admirably at a concert in the school at the October Games Week-end in 1935.

The replies to a 1969 (OSA centenary) questionnaire sent to old scholars indicated a great affection for the orchestra and music generally and for the teachers, Anne Wright, Gladys Bird and Noreen Wright, helped by Helen Radley. Mention is made of Sunday evening concerts and concerts in the town in the pre-WW2 period. The school's entrants in the May 1936 Clare (Suffolk) Competitive Music Festival were awarded first prize in two classes, namely orchestral: strings and piano, and orchestral: advanced.

Music also formed part of dramatic performances in this period. Alan Carlton Smith in an article in the Old Scholars' Magazine for 2002, on his reminiscences of the 1930s, recalls the production of Gilbert and Sullivan's early opera "Trial by Jury". This was the first show in the new hall (November 1937). The headmaster played the judge. Old Scholar, Molly Glover (Palmer) recalls the surprised reaction of the pupils at the sight of the headmaster and pupil, Judith Lockspier,

behind a newspaper. Roger Browning (1931-38) was a juror in that production and still has some of the first photographs taken in the assembly hall. BB ("Barney") Jacob, geography teacher, also had a part.

Following "Trial by Jury", Gilbert and Sullivan's "Pirates of Penzance" was performed, again with the headmaster taking an important role, in the Spring Term 1938 and "HMS Pinafore" was presented on 17th and 18th March 1939. Gerald Littleboy playing Captain Corcoran. In addition to this, Alan Carlton Smith recalls taking part in performances of "The Messiah" (Handel) and "The Peasant Cantata" (JS Bach) as well as "Trial by Jury". He comments that Gerald Littleboy encouraged Stanley Thorne to produce musical events. Stanley King Beer (history teacher from 1917), who died suddenly in 1939, was also an enthusiastic producer of music and drama entertainments at the school.

Pamela Dalton (Richards) who was at school at this time [1937-40] recalls being in the chorus of "The Pirates of Penzance"-. "which was tremendous fun". She also remembers a good school orchestra, under ST, regular concerts and visiting musicians.

It is interesting to note that in his presidential address to the Old Scholars' Association in 1953, Gerald Littleboy started his talk by referring to the role of music during his time as a pupil at Bootham Friends' School. He mentions that there was little opportunity for school music apart from an occasional recital to the School and some very mediocre performances from a diminutive school orchestra and that his own musical memory was of short weekly sessions when the School gathered for "Community Singing" at 8.25 am prior to Meeting for worship.

RICHARD STURGE'S ARRIVAL

Richard Sturge [RLS], who came from a Quaker family, had as a child learned singing. He had just spent the wartime years with the Friends' Ambulance Unit, when he was appointed to succeed Stanley Thorne as Music Master in September 1945. At the start of RLS's teaching at Walden, scholars were encouraged to enter local music festivals and he formed a senior choir that sang many times at Sunday evening Meeting during his first term. This was to continue for many years. From the start the choir probably included most of the pupils in the upper forms. Some of the other pupils would have been in the school orchestra. RLS, in addition to his dedication to music, had a keen interest in Ancient Greece.

Judith Foster (at the school 1946-53) recalls being in a third year girls' choir which won a cup and other prizes in the Chelmsford Festival in 1949. She suggests that was the only time in that period that a "team" was entered. A few years later, however, Margaret Shepherd, playing piano or cello, and others competed in this festival. Some pupils were chosen for the Essex Youth Orchestra at this time. In 1972 three pupils played at the Essex Musical Association's Chelmsford Instrumental Day. They were Helen Pitstow, Caroline Bush and Mark Steele. They were awarded 88 points in the class for violins and piano

From 1949, Wednesday evenings were established as regular choir practice sessions. The first major works studied included Palestrina's "Stabat Mater". In parallel, carols were prepared and were performed in local churches. These recitals, in places such as Abbey Lane (Congregational later URC) Chapel in Saffron Walden, and Newport, Wimbish and Finchingfield Parish Churches, were sufficiently well established for the 1949 Old Scholars' Association Annual Report to state that the choir had repeated its outside recitals as last year.

Michael How recalls (see article in the Old Scholars' Annual Report / Magazine for 2003) the arrival of RLS and the institution of sectional rehearsals between breakfast and morning assembly as well as for the whole choir on Wednesday evenings. At this time, hymns were regularly sung at morning assembly and at Sunday evening meeting by the whole School. "Songs of Praise" was the hymn-book used. John Woods, then a pupil (1941-49) and later as Head (1968-89) sang in the School choir and also played the double-bass.

A special performance by the choir and orchestra was given at Saffron Walden Parish Church, in 1948, in aid of their organ restoration fund. This was one of many performances given by pupils and staff during subsequent years.

Other events included:-

In 1949, in co-operation with Newport Grammar School, recitals were given in Saffron Walden Parish Church and Town Hall. The programme included Bach's "Sleepers Wake".

A performance was given in December 1955 and in subsequent years beside the Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square. This involved pupils on their way home at the end of term. Performances on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral were later added from 1961.

In 1952, to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the School, a pageant (written by Reg Reynolds an old scholar) was performed. This contained motets especially composed for the occasion by Dr Edmund Rubbra. The motets were later performed at Friends House and also broadcast on the BBC Home Service.

There was another joint project, this time with the Friends' Schools at Leighton Park and Sidcot, in performances of Handel's "Israel in Egypt" at Saffron Walden Parish Church and Friends House in May 1955.

Old Scholars at the Whitsuntide reunion in 1958 were able to hear the School choir sing on the Sunday evening at Saffron Walden Parish Church in a concert arranged as part of the Saffron Walden Festival. The choir performed some C17th motets and the three motets written for the School's 250th anniversary.

On 5th June 1957 various works were performed, at Friends House, with one of the solo parts in Handel's Dettingen Te Deum sung by Rosemary Scott a pupil, the other by Kenneth Plant a teacher of biology. There was also a performance in SW Parish Church.

In 1960, Old Scholars attending their Whitsuntide reunion were able to hear the School choir sing in the SW Parish Church. This was part of a choral festival in connection with the town's jubilee celebrations.

Tony Weatherhead (195x-1961) remembers an inspiring performance of Schubert's C Major Quintet at Friends House in c1960 with Ivan Cane playing the cello.

During the last weekend of the Easter holiday in 1963, singers from the school welcomed others from Leighton Park and Sidcot to join them in performances of Verdi's Requiem Mass first at Thaxted Church and then at Friends House.

In addition to the established round of carol singing, the choir sang at Great St Mary's Church in the centre of Cambridge (between the market place and Senate House), in 1963, attracting a large crowd.

At the beginning of November 1966, the school choir made a recording of excerpts of Donald Swann's "Perelandra" with the composer playing the piano. (Copies of the 45rpm recording are still available from the School).

In 1968, members of the choir (over a quarter of the School's pupils) returned early from their Easter holiday in order to prepare for a performance of Handel's "Messiah" given at Friends House to mark 50 years of the Friends' Service Council

The School Choir joined other local choirs to perform in "A Concert for Peace" at the Cambridge Guildhall in October 1985. This featured Paul Tortelier and Maria de la Pau.

THE MUSIC TEACHING STAFF

Instrumental teaching to individuals along with class teaching and choir practices filled RLS's time. He was well supported by other full-time music teachers who in addition to individual instrumental teaching participated in class-work and directing the school orchestras, playing in the orchestras and as soloists. Part-time/peripatetic music teachers also carried out similar duties. Other subject teachers and staff of the School took part as members of the choirs, instrumental players in the orchestras, and sometimes as soloists.

The other music teachers who taught at the time when ST and RLS were the senior teachers,

included (not in any particular order) Helen Radley (originally Howells) served as full-time piano and cello teacher in two periods (1910-15 & 1927-43) and subsequently helped on occasion. Joan Ormerod (1942-51) and Barbara Comber (1943-56) were in post when RLS arrived. Joy Ashford (later Dupont) (1951-72) was to become the Head of the Girls' side in 1965, and then (1968) Headmistress, as well as music teacher.

Mary Noyce (later Mileson) arrived in 1952 left in 1955, resumed part-time in 1962 and full-time in 1968 until retirement in 2002. Ivan Cane taught the cello 1956-65, Alison Reynolds (Johnson) taught the violin 1956-60, Charles Woodhouse a former pupil (1934- 38), who was married to another former pupil, taught from 1965 to 1987. Giulia Rowland taught from 1966 (piano), Ben Rivers from 1966 to 68 (cello), Eric Hoare from 1970 (oboe), Susan Betts from 1971 (class music), Susan Hembry taught from 1973-93, Dudley Wilkins came in 1972, Helen James (violin), Rosemary Hughes, Ruth Clarke (violin), and Susan Collins (piano). Other teachers were Brenda Brown (violin), Judy Cousins (class music), John Catchpole from 1986 (clarinet etc) and Sybil Collings (piano) from 1970.

Ivan Cane, who taught at the school for nine years, remembers his colleagues of that time and considers that it was a valuable educational period in his life. He considers that RLS "brought the dedication and the thrust that achieved exciting performances of the Verdi Requiem', with the addition of singers from two other Friends' Schools. - I marvelled at the organisation". He refers to the way in which RLS assembled the orchestra with good players from Cambridge etc...

PUPILS AS PERFORMERS

Until the beginning of the 1950's, individual music lessons were an optional extra activity which had to be ordered and paid for by parents. Then a policy of introducing some initial instrumental tuition for all was started. This was to give greater opportunities for many pupils, help to sustain school orchestras and support a choir of pupils who could read music. This was a significant measure. Teaching of music has resulted not just in the enjoyment of pupils taking part in and listening to great classical works and also to various forms of "pop" music, but also in the development of gifted pupils who have talents that enable them to make a career in this field.

The achievements of those who were selected to attend recognised music colleges are not readily available, but in some of the OSA Annual Reports there are a few listed. For instance it is recorded that, in 1916, Mary Dowson distinguished herself as a violincellist by winning the Bonamy Debree Prize and a silver medal at the RAM. Many others have followed this attendance at music colleges. Anthony Miller, whilst a pupil, sang the bass solo in Bach's "Sleepers Wake" in 1949. Jose Pogson (Stubbings), an old scholar, sang the solo parts in the Rubbra Motets in connection with the pageant staged in 1952. Later, in one year (1956), two former pupils obtained professional music qualifications: Olga Sheeran, LRAM for teaching singing and Christine S Brown: GRSM. Sisters Margaret and Rosemary Shepherd also obtained GRSM in 1958 and 1962 respectively.

EXPERIENCES OF MUSIC AT SCHOOL AND AFTER These are as follows: (only a selection)-

Naomi Sargent was first at school when ST was head of music and returned after RLS took office. She had lessons on the school's double-bass and continued to play while at university (Bedford College). Another current governor of the school, from the same era, Paul Honigman, was also a member of the school orchestra.

One of those who did not follow a professional music career, but who credits the school and music teachers with a lifetimes interest in performing in choirs and orchestras was Donald Bush. His time at FSSW bridged the regimes of ST and RLS. He recalls being allowed to use a gramophone and 78rpm records to listen to classical music. In particular he mentions fellow pupil Michael Flatow, who had a major influence, and Barbara Comber who was very helpful and got him started. Donald played the violin at FSSW and subsequently at Bootham

School. Following this, he sang with the London Bach Society and learned to play the recorder and French horn. He played the latter at Thaxted Church for the 1972 performance of Brahms Requiem by the school. He has been a member of the Nottingham Bach Choir for many years and has written the 50 year history of this society

Margaret Shepherd (later Collison) [at school 1949-55] was to make a career of teaching music. She states that she is "in no doubt that the music at FSSW set her up for life and enabled me to broaden and deepen my knowledge and passion long after I left school".

Other pupils at school at or near the 250th anniversary who have retained memories of the Rubbra motets and of the strong influence of RLS in instilling/inspiring a lifetime's love of music. These include Jill Verran who joined a choral society after leaving school and has continued singing. Christopher Noble recalls being in the choir for the first school performances of the motets and Brahms' Requiem. Adrian Smith remembers hymn singing as well as the orchestra and choir and the staff involved (and kept programmes). He went on to sing in a choir at Kings College Chapel whilst at Cambridge and has continued with other groups. Alan Sillitoe who also sang in 1952, after a gap of some years has taken up choral singing again.

Amongst those who were at school at about the same time who had special qualities was Malcolm Harvey. He was a violinist who was also a keen footballer, an extremely talented pupil (including being leader of the school orchestra and a soloist) who attended the Royal College of Music, from 1954, where he was leader of their first orchestra, a major achievement. He became a professional musician (a versatile fiddle player), initially as a peripatetic instrument teacher in London and for nearly two decades, before his early death (in 1995), he was head of a secondary school music department.

Nedda Bradbury was one of the three alto soloists (others were her sister Nuala and Joyce Coffin) in the May 1955 performance at Friends House of "Israel in Egypt". She comments that RLS was always inspiring as a music teacher and at his encouraging, she had voice training and subsequently entered competitions.

Merren Gray (1950-56) was in the choir and took lessons in piano (Mary Mileson) and 'cello (RLS), and sometimes had solo parts in the orchestra. Then she attended the Leeds Institute of Education, to attain a teacher's certificate. After that she studied at a Music, Art and Drama College [Bretton Hall] and she took up rural studies. Following her studies she spent over forty years enthusiastically teaching music, mainly to teenagers up to 'A' levels, organised prize-winning youth orchestras and is now with adult orchestras.

Rosemary Scott (at school 1952-57 and married to OS John Edwards) who was the contralto soloist at the concerts given by the choir in 1957, after a period with the George Mitchell Singers won a scholarship and attended the Guildhall School of Music. She continues to sing, including solos, with the English Baroque Choir. She comments that her great love of classical music originated at FSSW under Richard Sturge through piano and choir and Mary Mileson through 'cello tuition.

A member of the school choir in the 1960's, Frances Hurd (Condick), who has retained an interest in music, sang in the May 1968 performance of the "Messiah". She considers that "RS himself really came alive on the podium, a completely magnetic figure who galvanised everyone to a very high standard of performance". After school, she was for five years a member of the Portsmouth University Choir and has run musical activities for children and a small church choir. She states that all her "interest in choral singing was created and fostered by Richard Sturge's dynamism and enthusiasm". Martin Ellis (1963-70) also sang in the "Messiah" and two years later in the "Mass in B Minor" and has similar views about RLS. He learned to play the 'cello and later played in the Heddingham Orchestra and, with the Isle of Wight Symphony Orchestra, he has played in about one hundred concerts over twenty

years.

Jon North, who was at the school from 1957 to 1964, states that he benefited from RLS's inspirational guidance in music. He still sings as an amateur. He was a soloist (soprano) in the SW Parish Church in a performance of the Rubbra motets in 1958. He sang bass in the Verdi Requiem at Thaxted Church in 1962 and was part of the small choir performing at St Pauls and Trafalgar Square. He remembers singing hymns at assembly and considers that the musical background was probably his strongest positive legacy from his years at FSSW. He particularly cherishes the influence of RLS.

Others who attended the RAM in the 1970's were Helen Burgess (piano and viola) who took up musical administrative work. Also Celia Pitstow/Redgate (flute) who attained a teacher's ARCM for the violin and a performers LRAM for the flute as well as winning prizes including the Countess of Munster Award. She is a freelance concert performer. Despite the range of recitals she has given, two moments stand out from the school. These are, first, an occasion when performing the B Minor Mass, under RLS, the noise of the audience sitting up abruptly "on those flip-up chairs -it was electric!". The second was when she returned for "The Dream of Gerontius" when "the Kyrie just after the start sounded so heavenly with the young voices...No performance since has quite matched up to it."

Helen Pitstow (violin) also studied at RAM and played in the English National Opera Orchestra at the Coliseum for many years.

Another Helen, - Whittington, -(1980-86) who learned the violin at school and was a member of the choir is now a professional singer, having studied Performance Arts at Middlesex Polytechnic. She was part of the Leaveners Quaker Youth Theatre with performances in Birmingham Symphony Hall etc. and has sung all over the country in a variety of solo roles. She was a founder member of a recently formed women's cabaret opera group.

Rose Balantine (n.Eggleston) (1972-77) found that her most memorable musical experience at school was singing in York Minster with the combined Friends' Schools choirs, Verdi's Requiem. In particular the sound of the trumpets. She commented that RLS was "without doubt the most inspirational music teacher I ever had and I often think of him still." She adds "He made me see how music enriches life and taught me how to interpret its glories".

Also taking part in the York Minster performance was Julie Harris (n.Foster) (1971-78) who has retained her 1977 recording of the Verdi "Requiem" (York Minster) and signed programme. After School she sang with the Medical Schools Joint Choir (including performances in the Royal Festival Hall etc) and still sings occasionally in a group of small local parish churches

Stalin's grand-daughter, Olga Peters, attended the School during the 1980s. She was one of many pupils from different parts of the world who have taken lessons and enjoyed learning to play musical instruments to high standards.

Simon Brown (at school 1981-88) had piano lessons with Susan Hembry and Edward Dodge. He also took music at "O" level and sang in the school choir. He recalls the concert given at Leeds Town Hall in 1986 by the combined Friends' Schools. He also took part in "Godspell" which after performances at school, in December 1985, was repeated at Thaxted Church. He still plays the piano a little and sings in a local choir. The ability of Mary Mileson to accompany choir rehearsals was, he now realises, most impressive.

Janet Phipps was at the school from 1996 to 2001. She participated in the production of "Little Shop of Horrors" in 1999. This was staged by Pat Lawson with Edward Dodge the musical director. Before that she played the violin in the school orchestra at the 1998 performance by the combined Friends' Schools at Thaxted Church of Verdi's Requiem. She was the leader of the orchestra for a time and the commitment of Edward Dodge to his pupils has been

acknowledged. Attendance at Exeter University studying Sport and Exercise Science has not dampened her interest in music.

On the other side of the music scene, Tom Robinson (at school 1961-67) with many others of his contemporaries, started groups/bands. He was to become an inspiration as a composer, singer, guitarist etc., travelling all over the world, yet returning to Walden on numerous occasions to generously give his time and talents to help in a variety of ways both the school and the Old Scholars Association including, as its President in 1995/6, organising and performing at a most successful reunion. More recently he has become a regular and frequent BBC radio presenter.

WILLING STAFF

Amongst the staff that participated in making music at the school and at other events but were not part of the music department were Kenneth (biology) and Jean [formerly Alderson] (Latin) Plant (both 1954-67). He sang the solo bass part in Handel's "Dettingem Te Deum" in 1957...Prior to this Kelvin Osborn (French teacher) had played the flute in the orchestra and as a soloist. Agnes Horlick (English) was to play the violin for many years. Lenon Beeson (Mathematics) sang in the Choir. He remembers RLS as "a great trainer, enough good humour and patience, but enough discipline to hold to the purpose". Jean Plant recalls that when she joined the staff she soon joined the choir. The main performance that year (1955) was Handel's "Israel in Egypt" at Friends House. Women staff in the choir were asked to wear school uniform so that no one would be conspicuous and she obediently borrowed the appropriate clothing. The performance was enjoyed by performers and audience alike and she felt "proud to be teaching in a school with such a fine choir". At the end there was the usual "crush" of audience and performers greeting one another. Jean, still in uniform, was approached by a smiling unknown couple who said "You must be the Norwegian girl in the second form - a friend of your mother's asked us to look out for you". She comments "a fine instance of how to deflate a self important young teacher without trying". Francis Whittington (Chemistry) sang regularly in the choir and small choir and on occasion played the bassoon during the times of both RLS and ED. He was one of many staff who were prepared to spend time with scholars outside the working day in order to enrich their time at school and in later life.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

A highlight amongst many high quality performances of choral works was the presentation, directed by RLS, by the combined choir and orchestra drawn from all nine of the English Friends' Schools, of Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius". This was held at Thaxted Parish Church in March 1974. This church, which is of cathedral proportions, has a tradition of musical events including an annual festival [as well as the association with Gustav Holst] and the School has been a part of this. The "Dream" was also performed at Friends House. Prior to this, in 1972, when RLS was President of the Old Scholars Association, a performance of Brahms' "German Requiem" was given at Thaxted Church with former pupils augmenting the choir and orchestra. Old scholars also participated in a "farewell concert" to mark the retirement of RLS in 1979.

A piano, for the new music school, purchased in memory of RLS was dedicated, belatedly, at a recital on 19 November 1994. This occasion included the music department, old scholars and pupils. There were fine performances by a pupil, Cindy Chong, twins, Claire and Toni Cann, concert pianists, (one of whom was teaching at the school then) other talented instrumentalists from staff and old scholars and by selected old scholars who formed a choir. This small choir was under the direction of Joy Dupont

100 YEARS OF TEACHING MUSIC

It was just a century after music teaching was approved for introduction into the School that RLS

retired. Members of the School Committee could not have imagined in 1879 that a great many Friends' School pupils would be performing frequently in local churches and within 100 years at a major venue like York Minster (in 1977) or that they would perform a musical show with the subject matter of "Oh What a Lovely War" (in 1979).

EDWARD DODGE'S ERA

Edward Dodge (ED) succeeded RLS in 1979 and the choral tradition was continued and developed. A diversity of music making and appreciation was encouraged. ED composed many pieces, including a "Gloria" to commemorate 750 years of the Charter of the town of Saffron Walden (1986). There was also greater emphasis on composing by pupils in his time as Head of Music.

The musical dramas enacted have been of more recent date than the Gilbert & Sullivan productions of the 1930s. Also anthologies of music in the form of "Songs from the Shows" have been presented to parents and old scholars. The production of musicals has been the result of collaboration between many different departments of the School. An example of this is the production of "Star", a musical, in 1992. The book and lyrics were written by John Dickinson (English teacher) and the music composed by ED.

Following the initiative of RLS, a pattern of concerts of major choral and orchestral works involving performers from all or most English Friends' Schools, at a major venue every three years, was subsequently established. The host school provided accommodation for the combined rehearsal and performance period and also usually the musical director. Saffron Walden has been the host, in addition to 1974 (see above) in 1998 for a very well received performance of Verdi's Requiem, directed by ED, at Thaxted Parish Church.

COMBINED FRIENDS' SCHOOLS CHORAL CONCERTS were as follows: -

| <i>Year</i> | <i>- Venue -</i> | <i>Principal Work</i> | <i>- [Host School]</i> | <i>Conductor</i> |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 1974. | Thaxted Parish Church, | - Elgar's Dream of Gerontious | [SW] | Richard Sturge |
| 1977, | York Minster - | Verdi's Requiem | [Bootham] | John Hastie |
| 1980, | Colston Hall, Bristol - | Mendelssohn's Elijah | [Sidcot] | Lionel Boulton |
| 1983, | Durham Cathedral - | Handel's Messiah | [Great Ayton] | Martin Essex |
| 1986 | Leeds Town Hall - | Brahms' German Requiem | [Ackworth] | Richard Ellis |
| 1989 | Friends Ho. | Orff'-C.Burana + Faure'-Requ. | [Leighton Park] | Andrew Forbes |
| 1992, | Coventry Cathedral - | Handel's Israel in Egypt | [Sibford] | Mark Paine |
| 1995, | York Minster-Mozart's Requiem & Poulenc's Gloria | | [Mount] | Derek Chivers |
| 1998, | Thaxted Parish Church - | Verdi's Requiem | [SW] | Edward Dodge |
| 2001 | Ripon Cathedral - | Britten's War Requiem | [Bootham] | Alisdair Jameson |
| 2004, | Wells Cathedral - | Mendelssohn's Elijah | [Sidcot] | Sue Freestone |

MUSIC AND DRAMA

In contrast to these choral works, but following the pre-war tradition of presenting musical plays, the School staged "Lark Rise to Candleford" in November 1986 and "Grease" in 1989. The School Annual Report for 1978 states that Mary Mileson and Katherine Seymour coached the 2nd form into a fine team to perform "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat".

There was a production of "Godspell" in December 1985. This was given a very favourable critique in the SW Weekly News. Members of staff given special mention included John Dickinson, Edward Dodge, Mary Mileson, Michael Collins, Ann Foxley, Janie Stagg and Tessa Brown. As a result of demand this production was repeated at Thaxted Church. Senior productions were "West Side Story" on 28&29 February 1996 and "The Wilde Night" in 2001. In the production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream", directed by John Dickinson and other drama

performances the incidental music was composed by ED.

NEW MUSIC SCHOOL

Music teaching and practice at the school had for historic reasons been divided between various locations on the campus for 100 years. The construction of the Music School attached to the Assembly Hall, which was completed in 1984, concentrated the resources conveniently into a single suite, with accommodation for teaching, rehearsal, and practice. The building was designed by architects Jolly and Millard. The main room is named after Helen Radley who taught music for many years. It replaces a wooden building which had been restored and re-erected in 1968 in her memory.

RESIGNATION OF EDWARD DODGE

Edward Dodge left his post at the School after 22 memorable years, in 2001, to have more time to pursue his many other musical activities but also, following a traditional practice amongst former school music teachers, continued part-time at the school as a teacher and performer. Indeed he played the organ in the parish church at the school's recent annual Concerts of Seasonal Words and Music held in December.

Ian Rowe (2) (appointed 2003) is the present Head of Music. He conducted the Seasonal Concerts in 2003 and 2004. He succeeds Raymond Lau and Janet Wheeler.

JUNIOR SCHOOL

The Friends' Junior School (also known as Gibson House), founded in 1992, has a strong music element in its wider curriculum including instrumental tuition, small orchestral groups and choirs. Mary Mileson, on a part-time basis, has taught the piano there. Under their Music Director since 1994, Martin Wilson, its pupils have performed a variety of works and in different ensembles at the Schools' Friends' and Families Days in recent years and contributed to recent annual December concerts at SW Parish Church.

CONCLUSIONS

*It is probably unnecessary to state what was well known already about music at FSSW, but is brought out by this outline of events and personal experiences. This is: **that the school has been extraordinarily well served by its senior teachers of music, the many other music staff, full and part-time, the School Heads and the many other teachers who sang or played instruments.** There are well established ongoing traditions and the continuing trend, which is well supported by the junior school, suggests that musical education in a variety of forms will remain a major feature of the character of FSSW.*

It would not be right to end this article without giving proper recognition to Mary Mileson, the current OSA President, a most caring person, who has done so much over a period of fifty years for music and the pupils. She has given her time and support to four heads of music and taken a leading role in teaching music, in scholars competitions, in concerts and in connection with many very successful dramatic productions.

END

Roger Buss -- modified version of study : Nov 2005
There have been some changes in staff since May 2005

Footnote- 2 Ian Rowe left in July 2005 and Gavin Greenaway was been appointed to succeed him.