



The Berkshire Guitar Society

www.berkshireguitar.freemove.co.uk



Newsletter No 117

May 2003

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April meeting

The meeting on Sunday 13th April provided an opportunity for those attending to explore the world of alternative tunings for the guitar.

Needless to say some of us were more adventurous than others, although the penalty paid for this was time spent in tuning or retuning strings which led to a number of rather exotic sounds along the way. However this was also very informative.

The session started with Steve Tucker playing us two traditional Irish tunes, Blind Mary in "dropped D" and The Donegal Pilgrim in DGDGAD. I then had a go at a Scott Joplin piece, Bink's Waltz, ("dropped D") which although one of Joplin's lesser known works is one that I do enjoy.

Richard played us a piece by Dowland - Sir John Smith's Almaine - with the 3rd string tuned down to F# and a capo at the 3rd fret which according to Richard provides an authentic lute tuning.

This was followed by Terry who played two pieces by his favourite composer, Sainz de la Maza, firstly his Bolero (sorry Terry, but I lost track of the strings that were being changed) and an arrangement of an American cowboy song in dropped D which according to Terry the composer did not consider to be worthy of publishing but it's difficult to understand why as the piece sounded highly effective at least to me.

Andy gave us 2 pieces in "dropped D" - Sons de Carrilhoes (Sound of Bells) by the Brazilian Pernambuco and a Catalan melody arranged by Llobet, Canco del Lladre (Robbers Song), followed by John playing Scarlet Ribbons - keep at it John, I don't think I was the only one to see signs of progress with those nerves. Peter having recently returned from a period of travel abroad played us Barrios'

Mazurka Apasionata, and James and June then wound up the first half of the session with an arrangement for 2 guitars of Charles Gounod's Funeral March of a Marionette.

After some liquid refreshment we returned to hear George play us 3 Irish pieces in a variety of tunings - The Gudgeon of Maurice's Car (where do these song titles come from?), Dunphy's Hornpipe and The Laird of Drumblair.

It seems that Celtic music is such a rich source of tunes in "alternate tunings" because of the nature of the instruments used - Turlough O'Carolan (1670 - 1738) was a harpist, and this and many of the other instruments used in Celtic music favour the keys of D, G or related cross keys, leading guitarists to seek to emulate these.

The entertainment continued with further contributions from Terry and Steve until the attractions of the bar or home could no longer be resisted.

An excellent evening.

BGS News

NEXT MEETING

The theme for the next meeting on Sunday 11th May is "Spanish music". This is also by way of preparation for Friday 23rd May when we play for the Spanish Circle at Caversham.

This evening with the Spanish Circle is something of an annual event and we can only assume that we must be doing something right as we keep getting invited back!

The "Spanish" theme should not be interpreted too strictly - feedback from last year's successful session with the Spanish Circle was that pieces of a "Latin" or "folk" nature were appreciated at least as much as pieces from the straight "Classical" repertoire.

Even if you don't fancy playing in front of the Spanish Circle, bring along some music anyway and join the fun on Sunday 11th May at the South Hill Park Centre.

Other news

Doesn't seem to be much happening (at least that I'm aware of) this month so perhaps I could fill this slot with a plea for more contributions to this newsletter - I do get suggestions from one or two folks but it wouldn't half help to have something from a few more of you!

Web site of the month

Thanks this month to George MacDonald for pointing me in the direction of the Guitar Pro software and sites offering files in this format.

Guitar Pro is a "multi track tablature editor" for guitar with plenty of features. As such, it is not dissimilar to Tabledit which has been mentioned in this newsletter before (www.tabledit.com) in the functions it seeks to perform but needless to say there are differences in the way the software operates and the features offered. I am not going to attempt to review of either product as no doubt both have their strengths and weaknesses but my intent here is simply to point up the existence of these resources so that readers can make their own assessment if they are so inclined.

The software is available as a download from <http://www.guitar-pro.com/>. The demo version provides for 30 days evaluation, after which you will need to order the software (cost \$54) if you wish to continue to use the

software. The demo version allows you to make pretty much full use of the software, except that you will not be able to save files you have created in Guitar Pro that are larger than 24 bars, or to print scores. Importing of midi files is also limited.

The Guitar Pro web site points you in the direction of www.mysongbook.com (see link to '000's of Guitar Pro files) as the main source of files to play. This lives up to the promise in terms of the quantity of available files. See the list under "Browse styles" and go as your fancy takes you. Under the "classic" heading there is a long and impressive list of composers - but there are many possibilities in other styles as well. Clicking on a composer brings up a list of files which can be downloaded by clicking on the download icon. Double clicking on the downloaded file wherever you have saved it on your hard disc will open it up in Guitar Pro and you can go from there.

It is only fair to point out that if you visit www.mysongbook.com you will need to put up with the presence of advertisements some of which are more intrusive than others. There are other sources of Guitar Pro files however which do not suffer from this problem. You could try www.tablature.it/index.htm, an Italian site some pages of which (including the "classic" section) are still under construction. Having selected the English translation, from the Tablatures link, follow the pointers to Celtic music and Country and Delta blues for a good selection of files under those styles (this is where George obtained the music he played at the April meeting - see above). Another possibility is www.guitare33.com which has been previously featured in this newsletter and which offers Guitar Pro (select the Ressources GTP/GP3 link) as well as Tabledit files.

Happy browsing and playing!!

And Finally

See what you make of these.

"You know, somebody complemented me on my driving today. They left a little note on the windscreen, it said "Parking Fine" so wasn't that nice?"

A man walked into the doctors, he said "I've hurt my arm in several places". The doctor said, "Well, don't go there any more".

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were getting chilly. They lit a fire in the craft, which sank. Which only goes to prove that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.

A man takes his Rottweiler to the vet. "My dog's cross-eyed, is there anything you can do for him?" "Well" says the vet "let's have a look at him". So the vet picks up the dog and examines his eyes, then checks his teeth. Finally the vet says, "I'm going to have to put him down". "What? Because he's cross-eyed?" "No, because he's really heavy".

"Doc, I can't stop singing The Green, Green Grass of Home." "That sounds like Tom Jones Syndrome." "Is it common?" "It's not unusual".

So I was getting into my car, and this bloke says to me "Can you give me a lift?" I said "Sure, you look great, the world is your oyster, go for it."

Ireland's worst air disaster occurred early this morning when a small 2 seater Cessna plane crashed into a cemetery. Search and Rescue workers have recovered 1826 bodies so far and expect that number to climb as digging continues into the night.