



# The Berkshire Guitar Society

www.berkshireguitar.freemove.co.uk



Newsletter No 143

Nov 2005

## CONTENTS

BGS Meeting 9th October  
Web site of the month  
News  
And Finally .....

\*\*\*\* Next meeting: \*\*\*\*

November 6th - Woodley Festival preparation  
(note change of date)

### BGS meeting 9th October

I suspect that it's a long time since since those members who came along on Sunday October 9th for Graham Cooper's session on early music had to exercise their grey matter so hard at a BGS meeting.

As we were to be performing early tablature later in the evening, Graham thoughtfully commenced proceedings with an introduction to the subject on ye olde laptoppe.

Perhaps closest to modern tab was the English system, closely related to French tablature. This uses a staff, with letters representing the frets instead of numbers, starting with "a" for an open string. One aspect that is not so intuitive was that the letters are placed in the spaces of the staff, not on the line as we are use to with modern tab.

Italian tab does use numbers to indicate frets, these being placed on the line, but is completely different from what we are used to in being "upside down". Now whilst this reflects physical reality in that the lowest sounding strings are "on top" when playing the instrument, is very odd to modern eyes.

And then there's German tab - whilst this is at least "the right way up", it gives each individual fret / string combination it's own number, letter or symbol so that the player has the task of remembering all these codes. But fortunately Graham had forgotten to bring his book of German tablature so we didn't need to find an excuse for not giving this style of tablature a go on the evening!

One fascinating piece of historical trivia that Graham passed on was that when the lutenist John Dowland went on a long trip to Italy he was in the employ of Francis Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth's "spymaster", and openly acted as one of Walsingham's agents. Having recently

been watching Elizabethan drama on TV, it seems like there's a promising plot here for someone to pick up ...

After our introduction to the subject the hard work started as we each selected something to play from the material that Graham had brought along and gave it a go.

Inevitably this soon brought about the need for a break and suitably fortified, we then proceeded to demonstrate that we had all been paying attention before the interval by playing our selected pieces.

George started us off with a piece by that extremely long lived composer Anon by the name of "Woodicocke". Alan, Michelle and Cheryl gave us various "Toys" (Graham explained that a "Toy" was a little dance intended for children). Steve Tucker played a Pavanne by Cutting, and Yvonne and I played a few bars of "The English Hunt" by J Whitefield which Graham had helpfully arranged with a melody line that gave Yvonne an opportunity to play her flute while I grappled with the tabbed accompaniment. Finally Gary and Richard attempted to emulate "La Rossignol" (the nightingale, I'm told) but I think they admitted that the nightingale didn't have too much to worry about in terms of competition ....

This brought to an end an evening which although hard work at times proved most enjoyable. Now bring on that German tab ....

Thanks to Graham for his hard work which made it possible. Hopefully Graham's presentation will be appearing on the web site shortly for those of you wishing to be reminded of the session.

## Web site of the month

Thomas Koenig's site [www.thomaskoenigs.de/](http://www.thomaskoenigs.de/) has featured in this newsletter before, but I had occasion to revisit recently and was as impressed as I recall previously having been.

In addition to early music from the likes of Mudarra and Milan, the Baroque period is well represented and offerings run through to the likes of Albeniz and Granados, and unusually for a site of this nature include 4 Preludes by Claude Debussy, as well as the more popular works of Satie.

All of these are free to download, and are well presented in pdf format.

What caught my eye on this visit however was the new addition of a piece by Erik Satie, a transcription of the waltz "Je te veux", which I wasn't familiar with. A look at the pdf file and an attempt on the guitar revealed an attractive piece that looked playable but the question then arose as to whether to invest the time in pursuing the piece further?

One options in such circumstances is to go to Francois Faucher's site [www.classicalguitarmidi.com/](http://www.classicalguitarmidi.com/) where one can find a midi representation of works by 135 composers including probably the better part of the CG repertoire.

The limitations of the midi format are obvious but I'm probably not the only one to find this site helpful in getting an idea of what a piece should sound like - and yes there was a midi file of the Satie piece in question. End result, I think I will be having a go at "Je te veux" ....

## News

### NEXT MEETING

Note that the next meeting is on Sunday 6th November as South Hill Park are holding an event on our normal "2nd Sunday". This meeting is scheduled as advance preparation for the Woodley Festival in March 2006 - the plan is to enter some ensembles, but as entries have to be in well before the Festival it needs some sorting out, which is what we hope to do on the 6th. So if you'd like to give it a go then come along with your thoughts, but if not there's sure to be an opportunity to play at some stage during the evening.

The meeting may be on an unusual date, but will be starting at the normal time and place - 7.30 pm at the South Hill Park Centre.

### STUDENT CONCERT

Don't forget that on the afternoon of November 27th, we will be staging our Student Concert at South Hill Park, an opportunity for the new generation to gain playing experience in front of a friendly audience. At the time of writing I'm not sure of the start time, so watch out for an update by email prior to the event.

### CONCERT

We have arranged a concert featuring Virginia Pearson for 11.00 am on Sunday January 27th 2006 in the Recital Room at SHP. This is an unusual time, but we have been having great difficulty in arranging a suitable slot at the SHP, so please put it in your diaries now and be prepared to spread the word nearer the time.

More details about this over the next couple of months.

## And Finally ....

A C, an E-flat, and a G go into a bar. The barman says: "Sorry, but we don't serve minors." So the E-flat leaves, and the C and the G have an open fifth between them. After a few more drinks, the fifth is diminished and the G is out flat. An F comes in and tries to augment the situation, but is not sharp enough.

A D comes into the bar and heads straight for the bathroom saying, "Excuse me. I'll just be a second." Then an A comes into the bar, but the barman is not convinced that this relative of C is not a minor.

Then the barman notices a B-flat hiding at the end of the bar and exclaims, "Get out now. You're the seventh minor I've found in this bar tonight!"

The E-flat, not easily deflated, comes back to the bar the next night in a 3-piece suit with nicely shined shoes. The barman says, "You're looking sharp tonight, come on in! This could be a major development" This proves to be the case, as the E-flat takes off the suit, and everything else, and stands there au naturel.

Eventually, the C sobers up, and realizes in horror that he's under a rest. The C is brought to trial, is found guilty of contributing to the diminution of a minor, and is sentenced to 10 years of DS without Coda at an up-scale prison. On appeal, however, the C is found innocent of any wrongdoing, even accidental, and that all accusations to the contrary are bassless.

The barman decides, however, that since he's only had tenor so patrons, with the soprano out in the bathroom, and everything has become alto much treble, he needs a rest, and closes the bar.