

Jeremy Montagu

RANDOM MEMORIES

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Gwen and I at a Wadham Family Party
(photo: Mary Moser)

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Gwen and I at a Wadham Family Party (*Mary Moser*)

Two of my great-grandchildren, Zac and Leah

Introduction

I was asked to write this by Diane Greenberg, who thought that I might have some ‘entertaining memories’ of playing and collecting. From that it grew, with the encouragement of my children, who remembered enjoying my father’s and mother’s typed memories.

It is indeed random – I have not looked through diaries or any other notes, for all that the diaries would say was ‘Studio 1 10 am’, with no information of what we may have played or who was carving (our slang term for conducting). Sometimes I might remember who conducted a concert or broadcast, more often I would not (though I never got quite so far as the player who, when asked who had been conducting, replied ‘Dunno – I didn’t look’). Nor are they in any chronological order. Also, although dividing these memories into rough categories, I have not hesitated to skip between them when one memory led to another, so random indeed they are.

My memory is poor, and I thank my children and my sister for many corrections, especially of dates and sequences, and for their many ‘But what about...’, as well as requests for amplifications in some areas.

I hope that all who see them, may find interesting these random memories of someone who began as a typical upper-middle class boy, became an itinerant musician, ‘a rogue and vagabond’, wound up as an Oxford don and Emeritus Fellow of his College, and a world-recognised authority of his subject.

Jeremy Montagu

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Because *Random Memories* is indeed Random and without any chronological order after the second chapter, it seems sensible to provide some basic facts which I hope will provide some threads as guidance through the maze that follows.:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 1927 | I was born. |
| 1948 | After I was demobbed from the Army and some vicissitudes, I became a music student. |
| 1950 | I joined the Musicians' Union and became a professional musician, conducting, and percussing. |
| 1951 | I became interested in early instruments and joined the Galpin Society. |
| 1952 or so | I turned my student orchestra professional as the Montagu String Orchestra. |
| 1955 | I married my beloved Gwen and we had three children, Rachel, Sarah, and Simon. In the same year I published my first Journal article. |
| 1956 | For financial reasons I disbanded my own orchestra and started conducting amateur orchestras and operatic societies. |
| 1958 | We moved down to Dulwich Village and I started teaching children in schools as a visiting teacher of brass and percussion in the gaps between playing jobs. |
| 1960-61 | I worked for a year as Curator of Musical Instruments at the Horniman Museum and became interested in ethnographic instruments. |
| 1961 | I continued to work as an orchestral and Early Music musician, conducting amateurs, taught, started collecting instruments seriously, and started lecturing on them, first in schools and music clubs and then in universities. |
| 1970 | I was a Visiting Professor in America. |

- 1975-80 I wrote my first books.
- 1981 I was appointed Lecturer and Curator of the Bate Collection in the Faculty of Music of the University of Oxford and we moved to that city.
- 1995 I retired but remained an Emeritus Fellow of Wadham College, and restarted writing books.
- 2003 I lost my beloved Gwen.
- Since then I have remained here in Oxford, researching, writing, attending conferences, enjoying the company of my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and so forth.

Chapter 1

Beginning and Family

I was born into what is known as the Cousinhood, the upper echelons of Ashkenazi Anglo-Jewish life, in 1927. I became a ‘rogue and a vagabond’, a strolling minstrel if you like, and wound up as an Oxford academic, a museum curator, and a world expert on musical instruments.

It really was a Cousinhood. Whether Chaim Bermant invented the term for the title of his book or whether it was already current in this connexion, I don’t know, nor do I know how accurate his chapters are on other families, but that on ours is full of errors. All married their second, third and fourth cousins because who else was there to marry? The Sephardim, the old aristocracy of Anglo-Jewry, who had been readmitted to England by Oliver Cromwell in 1656 (Edward I had expelled us from England in 1290), were too grand to marry these upstart eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Ashkenazi immigrants who regarded themselves as a new aristocracy, though there were some exceptions – we do have some Montefiores, or at least Sebag-Montefiores, in the family tree. Equally the newly-established Ashkenazi aristocracy wouldn’t marry the new immigrants who flooded into the East End in the late nineteenth century. So one way or another, they were all cousins, often distant, but cousins all the same.

Great-grandpa, Samuel Montagu, had not been permitted to rent a seat at the Sephardi synagogue in Bryanston Street (their West End branch, which later moved to and became the present-day Lauderdale

Road), though they said that a seat would always be available to him and did later allow him to rent one. They were then fully Sephardi and they were descendants of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews who had emigrated to Holland and elsewhere after the Expulsion from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal a few years later, and we were Ashkenaz (descendants of German, Polish, and Russian Jews). Our family had come from Silesia – was it in Poland or was it in Germany then? Was it called Breslau or Wroźław in the late eighteenth century? Things are different now at Lauderdale Road and Francis Treuherz, my Ashkenazi son-in-law, has a seat there and has been one of the Parnassim, their equivalent of the Ashkenazi Wardens, and is now the *shamash*, the general organiser of all services.

A few years later Great-grandpa was a founder of the New West End Synagogue in St Petersburg Place, presumably because it was a much shorter walk from his house in Kensington Palace Gardens than to Bryanston Street, which is just behind Marble Arch. Why he had initially preferred the Sephardi *minhag* (customs or practices) over that of the Ashkenazi Bayswater Road Synagogue, of which he was also a member, nor why having done so, he then founded the Ashkenazi New West End, we do not know. Maybe it was just the common Jewish habit of having one shul (the Yiddish word for a synagogue, commonly used by the Ashkenazi because it's shorter and easier to spell than 'synagogue') they'd never go to, as well as one they would.

Perhaps there was something in the family genes, attracting us to the Sephardi *minhag*, as my son Simon followed his example and, while shul-hopping in his student days came to prefer the Bevis Marks services and he still takes an active part in services at their Jerusalem off-shoot, the Istanbuli Synagogue in the Old City, and he and his wife Heftsiba are now among the prime-movers of a Sephardi orthodox egalitarian congregation.

Great-grandpa's original name was Montagu Samuel, but before he came to London from Liverpool he had turned it round and became

initially Montagu Samuel-Montagu and eventually dropped both the hyphen and the forename Montagu other than within the family. I was once introduced to some young sprig of the English aristocracy who asked me where my name came from. After all, I wasn't a Beaulieu or a Douglas Scott or any of the other *real* Montagus whom he knew. So I said 'We stole it' – that sort of insolence merits that sort of response. When he was awarded a peerage, Great-grandpa did ask Lord Montagu of Beaulieu whether he might be permitted to share his title and become Lord Montagu of somewhere else, but Beaulieu's riposte was to say that if SM would share his money with him, he'd allow him to share his title! So Great-grandpa had to become Lord Swaythling, the name of the nearest village to his country house at South Stoneham.

Great-grandpa had eleven children, among them a Secretary of State for India and also the founder of Liberal Judaism, with the result that we have a multitude of cousins, Myers, D'Arcy Harts, Franklins, Waleys, and others, with most of whom we have nowadays lost touch. He was MP for Whitechapel, a prominent merchant banker (Samuel Montagu Bank is now part of HSBC, after a take-over by the Midland in 1974). Among his many activities he founded the Federation of Synagogues, to bring together under one umbrella all the small *stieblach* and other congregations of east London.

The same need to form a cousinhood had happened earlier on, to an eighteenth century group. The ancestors of my father's mother, whom we called Granny-mother, the Goldsmids, were highly respected Jewish bullion dealers in the latter part of that century (they were the founders of Norwood, a major Jewish charity), but their next generation all converted to Christianity. This was how the first Albert Goldsmid became a colonel in the army and was at the Battle of Waterloo, using the picnic set from which we still have the silver-plated cups and goblets, and his brother James Goldsmid, whose portrait hangs on the half-landing in my house, was also an army officer. No Jew could

then have become a high-ranking army officer, nor enter most of the professions. The Goldsmids weren't the only ones who converted, and they and these other families, while accepted as quasi-Christians and quasi-gentlemen, were not usually sufficiently accepted to marry into English society, so again they all married cousins. One member of English society who did marry one of them was Hortense Littler. She was the daughter of Major General Sir John Hunter Littler, Deputy Governor General of Bengal, whose portrait hangs in my hall and whose face is almost identical with that of my father, Ewen. The 'De Littlyer' family had come over with William the Conqueror, but nevertheless Hortense married Frederick Hendricks, one of the Goldsmid descendants. Their daughter, Ida, not only married but eloped with a later Albert Goldsmid.

It was this second Colonel Albert Goldsmid, our Gran-Bertie and Granny-mother's father, who came back to Judaism, and who said 'I am Daniel Deronda,' but whether, as family legend has it, he was the origin of George Eliot's character, or whether he meant that he had done what Deronda did, we do not know, though certainly the way he met his wife, and her family background, were very different from Deronda's. *Daniel Deronda* was published in 1876 – when did Gran-Bertie convert? If it was after that, then the legend vanishes! If before, the legend remains 'maybe'. He was commissioned as an officer in 1866, according to Wikipedia, so he must still have been a Christian then. Ida also converted to Judaism, just in time for Granny-Mother to be born. Her sister, Aunt Carmel, who became Carmel Haden-Guest, was one of Edward VII's paramours, allegedly again, but then Edward who, as the Kaiser said, went boating with his grocer, was keener on a pretty face than on snobbery and anti-Semitism. Gran-Bertie worked for Herzl and tried to establish a Jewish colony in Argentina, and he also founded the Jewish Lad's Brigade and the Maccabean Society.

And of course our nineteenth-century Cousinhood all had vast families for whom wives and husbands had to be found somewhere. My

mother, Iris, knew who everyone was, on both sides of the family, but the memories have lapsed with my generation, and I've no idea what has happened to many of the cousins on Iris's side, such as the Makowers, the Sproats, the Franklins, and others, with whom I used to go to Anglo-Jewish functions and parties in my youth. All the cousins on my father's side will be found in the pages of (cousin) Ronald D'Arcy Hart's book *The Samuel Family of Liverpool and London* (published by Routledge Kegan Paul – who then were also cousins). Ronald's brother, Walter, was the family solicitor who tied everybody up into interlocking trusts and who, legend says, went straight to shul to say *kaddish*, the mourner's prayer, when any of his clients had to pay any income tax. There are hundreds of them – Iris's side is just as manifold and some of the Franklins, for example, are closer to her side than to Ewen's, though cousins both ways and to each other.

The Bentwich family are on Iris's side, and they are one of our claims to respectability in Israel. When people say 'Montagu – they're the people who turned Herzl and Weizman down' (Great-uncle Edwin, an MP and Cabinet member, was a rabid anti-Zionist), we then talk about Norman Bentwich, who was Attorney-General of Israel under the Mandate and who was one of the founders of the Hebrew University, and of Gran-Bertie, who was involved with the El Arish Expedition, and of course of (cousin) Herbert Samuel, who was High Commissioner under the Mandate. It's been a great pleasure to get to know his grandson David through the Rose Archive of Shenkar College in Ramat Gan, to which we gave my late wife Gwen's collection of embroideries. I'd only met him once very briefly in London just after the War, but I remember Cousin Herbert well in the New West End. Once on Yom Kippur, he had an *aliyah* and the whole congregation rose to its feet to honour him. He used to go to the Great-Aunts on Friday nights, but I never met him there.

Those Great-Aunts! As children we used to think of them as Macbeth's three witches, Aunts Netta (Henrietta Franklin) and Lily and

Mamie (the latter Marian; both remained Montagu). Aunt Netta's son Sidney was in hospital once in his late seventies, and said to his nurse 'My mother's coming to see me today,' and the nurse rushed to the Matron saying 'My patient's delirious – he thinks his mother's coming to see him!' And a couple of hours later, Aunt Netta came stumping in, 98 years old, wooden leg and all. Aunt Mamie was almost totally deaf and she had a box on her chest, an early form of hearing-aid, with which she was always fiddling so that it would start to whine with feed-back. We never forgot that once, after the end of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement and, after the end of the all-day Fast, a traditional occasion for family visits), we were taken to see Aunt Netta, and there she was in bed with a very negligé night-dress.

But she gave wonderful children's parties for all the families. One time she had donkeys for us to ride in her garden. Another time she had a Walls ice-cream man on his tricycle from which we could all get whatever we liked, something we were never allowed to do when we saw one in the street. She gave a dinner once for us young grown-ups not long after the War, when rationing was still tight, and came in partway through, saying how much she envied us our delicious nut outlet when she had only had a small piece of chicken! We would all have much preferred the chicken! Later on Gwen and I got to know Aunt Lily very much better, both at West Central Synagogue and at the Maud Nathan Home for Children, which was near us in South London.

So far as I know nothing has been published about the ramifications of Iris's side, but I know that George Rigal has worked on it (and has shown that he's a distant cousin on that side, too). Still, we have the dining room chairs that came from one of the great-aunts on that side and we still have some contacts such as Rabbi Sybil Sheridan, who is a cousin of the Simons, who were cousins of Iris's. Her grandmother was a cousin of Sybil Ehrlich who married Arthur Simon, and he was a cousin of Iris's, so any good mathematician can work out what sort of cousin Sybil Sheridan is of ours. I still use the gold cufflinks Arthur

and Sybil gave me when I was a pageboy at their wedding, dressed up in a white satin suit. Sybil Sheridan married a fellow-Rabbinical student of hers and of my daughter Rachel, Rabbi Jonathan Romain, so he is a cousin by marriage, and that's how cousinhoods grow. And once I was greeted in the National Library in Jerusalem with 'I'm a cousin of yours' – she was a Bentwich, though Jose Bentwich (Norman's youngest brother) said he'd never come across her, and her husband Alan Tschaikov, a clarinettist in the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, was the brother and son of two people with whom I'd often played in London.

And when my other daughter Sarah, who was interested in coins, went to the British Museum as a schoolgirl and asked to see some coins, she was about to be turned away until she gave her name and was then welcomed with open arms. But that was Iris's mother's father, Hyman Montagu, well-known as a numismatist (and an entomologist), who was a quite different Montagu whose father had been a Moses. And recently, Sarah, who ran the Association of Radical Midwives, was astonished to find another Sarah Montagu signing up – she was a descendant from one of that other Montagu family, so again a distant cousin.

Grandpa Montagu (Iris's mother's father) died long before I was born, but I well remember his widow, Grandma Montagu, who lived with her companion, Miss Aileen (though I'm guessing at the spelling) on one of the streets that ran north from the Bayswater Road, parallel with Queensway. The Inner Circle ran almost under her house and every time a train went by the whole house shook. She had a nef that fascinated me, a silver model of a sailing ship on wheels that carried salt, pepper, and so forth round the table. Her daughter, Ella, married the artist Solomon J. Solomon (he always signed his paintings SJS so that's how I refer to him below, or as Pop, as my father called him). He always used that signature to distinguish himself from Simeon Solomon, a wastrel and drunkard painter (and no relation), who was

always badgering people for 'loans'. SJS and Ella became Iris's parents, and Grandma Montagu's and SJS's parents' other children were the parents of all the great-aunts and great-uncles on Iris's side whom I have forgotten, save for Pop's sister Lily, also a painter and a prominent Suffragette, who married the architect Delissa Joseph, who claimed to have designed more buildings in London than anyone since Nash. It was SJS's sister who married Herbert Bentwich, so that is how all the Bentwicks became our cousins.

So it really is a Cousinhood and I'm glad that my children are better up in it than I am and were able to give me corrections to what I'd originally written above.

Chapter 2

Childhood and Young Life

I was born in December 1927 at 14 Bedford Gardens, off the west side of Kensington Church Street, but we moved from there before I was three and I have no memories of it. Ewen was then a struggling young barrister with little money and one story from that house that I remember was a tragedy – they had been given some smoked salmon, then a great luxury, and the cook had boiled it! They may have been poor, by their standards, the children of a well-established portrait painter and of a successful banker, but of course they had a cook! Probably the smoked salmon had cost as much as or more than her wages for a month, things were so different in those days. In my childhood we had both cook and housemaid, as well as a nanny. The cook was Mattie – she came from Machynlleth and so I knew how to pronounce that name properly long before I ever went to Wales. It was up to her to find a suitable maid (maybe a cousin, for the Welsh keep track of their cousins just as we do) and the one I remember best was Ronnie.

When my sister Jennifer was on the way we moved to a larger house off the other side of Church Street, 5 Vicarage Gardens. The street, a very short one, had originally been called Alma Terrace, so it must have been built just after the Crimean War, and it was genuinely Jerry-built, by the man who was the origin of that term; I was not named after him, but after the boy in Hugh Walpole's book, *Jeremy and Hamlet*; I also had a dog called Hamlet. The house was solid enough

by modern standards, but it shook whenever Hamlet, scratched himself too vigorously. Hamlet was a Shetland collie, one of the original breed before the brains had been bred out of them, and an ideally well-tempered dog for a child.

I remember being woken up one night at home in 1936 to see the sky outside my window all red – Crystal Palace was burning down. We were on the north side of the street, and my window overlooked the road, so I was facing south towards Sydenham whither the Palace had been moved after the Great Exhibition closed down. We children were on the top floor with a large day nursery with horizontally barred windows so that we shouldn't fall out, but from which we could throw pennies down to the organ grinder with his monkey. In front of the windows were deep window seats that were the tops of toy cupboards. In them we kept all our toys, my lead soldiers – often they got bent and when Iris tried to straighten them they always broke – my Hornby clockwork train set, even a small coal cart with real sacks with real coal in them, Ewen's old teddy bear and elephant – I still have the elephant and the bear is still beloved by the children of a friend of Jenny's. Next to the day nursery was the small room into which I moved when I was too big to share with Jenny in the night nursery at the back, overlooking the small brick-paved garden – that became Jenny's room after the war. Another small room, also at the back but with a washbasin like the night nursery, was Nanny's room, and I took that over when I was grown up, later using my old room as the drum store after I became a musician. When Jenny was born, my Aunt Joyce, Ewen's sister, gave me a rocking horse which we called Happy, so that I shouldn't be jealous of less family attention. Rachel has it now, and after my childhood it went round many branches of the family before it came back to me when my children were born.

We originally had a nurse, of whom I have only a very vague memory, but Nanny, Alice Randall, came to us by the time Jenny was two or three, and took us for walks in the Park, Kensington Gardens, as well

as generally looking after us. I had my dog, Hamlet, and Jenny had a marmalade-coloured cat, Toots. It was strictly forbidden to take cats there, but she had special permission to take Toots into the Park, with a harness and lead just like Hamlet had. It must have been the result of some squabble with Nanny and Jennifer that I ran away one day. Where I went I can't now remember, but I do remember being on the Embankment by Waterloo Bridge and I must have had some coppers in my pocket for I remember, too, buying a large bun from a coffee stall when I got hungry. It was probably being hungry again that drove me home in the evening. I think I did most of it on foot, but buses in those days cost only a penny – they were still open-topped with an open spiral staircase at the back, and taxis had drop-down hoods, like a perambulator, that could be opened on sunny days. One of SJS's paintings is of Ewen and other members of the family sitting on the top deck of an open-topped bus – maybe that was still horse-drawn, but by my time they were all motor-buses. Of course I always made for the front seat on top.

My parents started life with horses and carriages and long before they died Concorde was flying and men had walked on the moon; Iris had always been taught by Mops, Grandma Solomon, to sit up straight in a hansom cab in case the pole of the cab behind came through the back. It was fun to walk round with Iris in her old age and being shown where they had kept the horses and where Pop's studio, later Jacob Epstein's, had been.

Pop was well-known as a portrait painter and we still have many of the paintings of the family, pre-eminently his one of Iris that hangs in my hall. It is called 'Waiting' because when they were first engaged my father always arrived late, and there she is looking somewhat forlorn as she waits for him to come. I saw that painting at the Ben Uri Gallery when they put on a retrospective display of Pop's paintings and remembered it from my youth, for it used to hang in the dining room at Vicarage Gardens, though I'd not seen it for years. I asked Iris

who had it now, and she said ‘I do’ – it had spent years hiding behind a wardrobe in their flat in Montrose Court, to which they moved when they sold the old house after Jenny and I had moved out. I’d fallen for it and asked her if I could have it, so she gave it to me, and now every visitor to our Oxford house falls for it too, for it’s a beautiful picture of a beautiful woman – all the Montagus are good pickers of wives! Granny-mother was beautiful, so was Iris, so was Gwen, and so is Heftsi, Simon’s wife. My daughter Rachel points out typical male bias here! As she says, Joyce’s husband Frostie was good looking, so was Sarah’s Mark and Abigail’s Mark, and so too her own husband, Fran. So the Montagu women were also good pickers!

Ewen changed during the war under the stern discipline of Admiral Godfrey, head of Naval Intelligence, and would thereafter arrive at a station in time to catch the train before the one he was travelling on, a habit that I inherited, partly due to the theatre custom of always being in by the ‘half’, thirty-five minutes before curtain-up.

Pop also painted many large works, including ‘King Charles Demanding the Five Members,’ one of the paintings on the walls of the Royal Exchange – it was commissioned by Great-grandpa (Swaythling) and painted by the grandfather on the other side. I have the sketch for it in my hall, for it had always been a favourite of mine and Iris bought it for me when it came up at auction. There is another of his in the Houses of Parliament, on the wall of the staircase leading up to the Committee Rooms, of Queen Elizabeth at Deptford. The two little pages looking over her shoulder at the back are Iris and her brother Dorian. That was commissioned by Grandpa, and he too appears in it with, to suit the Elizabethan period, the beard that he never had, unlike his father who had a long one. Another well-known painting is ‘Samson and Delilah’ in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool. At one time it hung in a room that they used for chamber concerts, and once, in the days that I was working for Boyd Neel, he conducted a concert there with his eponymous string orchestra. Facing it throughout rather

put him off, for his taste was very much otherwise than for half-naked women. Maybe he complained, because next time we were there, a large Stubbs with a groom holding a horse confronted him instead.

Like most artists, Pop went in for what I call High-Art pornography, paintings, mostly allegorical, of scantily covered beautiful female models. One, 'The Birth of Eve' (Adam, poor chap, is hardly visible), was recently sold, for a very considerable sum, by Ealing Council, to whom his widow, Mops, had given it 'in perpetuity', disgraceful behaviour (by the Council, not Mops) and somewhat condemned in the Press at the time. It is now in Australia but came back not long ago for an exhibition at Leighton House, where all the family went to see it. It is a beautiful painting and we all hope that it will be more appreciated in Australia than it was by the ungrateful burgesses of Ealing.

As a Jewish family we were pretty non-, or anyway mini-observant. Ewen had been strictly brought up and as a result had rebelled against it as soon as he was able, and ate everything and anything. He was thoroughly Jewish and was very involved within the Jewish community, but he had a phobia against formal observance in synagogue and preferred private prayer. He became President of the United Synagogue, and after meetings he'd go to Wheeler's for a dozen oysters or a lobster. Once, just as he was settling what he'd eat, another member of the committee came in and said 'Oh I must sit with my President,' so Ewen had to conceal his fury and have a sole. I asked Iris once whether her parents had kept a kosher household. 'Of course,' she said, 'but father always had his oysters.' We were what are often called twice-a-year Jews, going to synagogue on Pesach (Passover), first day only of course, Rosh haShanah (the Jewish New Year, ditto), and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), arriving, as was the custom, in time for the Reading of the Law. When Simon was going to be married (his first wedding) to Judy Lowy, the daughter of the *chazan* (cantor) of Hampstead Synagogue, and we arranged to go to a Shabbat service there to meet him and his wife for the first time, I asked what time

the service started, and we were firmly instructed to arrive at 10.45 – ‘nobody comes for Shachrit (the main morning service),’ so the arrival for the Reading of the Law was then still a normal custom there, as indeed it still is for some people here in Oxford. Once in my teens I thought I’d go on Shabbat, and I could hear the whispers all round ‘What’s he doing here today?’ and so on – enough to put any boy off, and I was indeed put off and never tried it again until I was in the army.

We had a teacher come in, I suppose once a week or so, to teach us Hebrew. Whether the New West End Synagogue, the family *shul*, didn’t have a *cheder* or religion school in those days I don’t know – perhaps it was more convenient to import a teacher than to take us to a religion school there. We were taught, of course, the old Ashkenazi pronunciation which I think is the origin of twentieth-century cockney – if you compare what Dickens wrote (It’s a wee, Mr Veller) with the twentieth-century version with all its eyes, ois, and ows, they’re quite different. We sang at the Seder (‘eye’ as the body part you see with and ‘ow’ as when hurt) ‘Eyell beneye, eyell benei, beneye beyesechow beychowrowv’. Jennifer still uses that form, but I changed to the modern Israeli Sephardi pronunciation when the children started to learn, so as not to confuse them. So when they were small I sang the modern ‘El bene, el bene, bene betecho bechorav’, Jenny and Ewen sang the other, and the children giggled. I still sing that the old way at Seder today – there’s always a new generation of children to amuse.

My upbringing was fairly normal for the time, place, and background. My mother taught me to read (*Reading Without Tears: The Cat Sat on the Mat*, etc) before I was three. I went first to a Montessori school, where I learned to put square pegs into round holes, and then to a pre-prep school nearby, King Alfred, where we made date boxes into Viking ships – we must have had some normal lessons as well but I have no memory of them. Then to a prep school, South Kensington Preparatory School. It was popularly known as South Kensington Pork Sausages especially by our deadly rivals, the boys from Gibbs

School which, I think, was slightly more up-market, and where we did have proper lessons, amo, amas, amat, etc. And then at eight and three quarters to Boxgrove, a very happy boarding school with only about 40 boys and one girl, the daughter of one of the headmasters, just outside Guildford. By that time I was already wearing glasses, due, it was claimed, to reading on my side with a torch under the bedclothes. It was a good school with three headmasters who, I presume nowadays, must have opened it as joint partners. It had a double playing field with a strip of woodland in between in which we could play. I became the scorer for the school cricket team (i.e. not much good at batting or bowling, though I enjoyed the former) and learned to work out the averages and all the esoterics that go with that post. We also had a good library with all the Henty, Haggard, and Biggles books etc. I remember a fight with one friend, a Scot, who habitually wore a kilt – I still have the scar on my leg where his kilt pin got me! He stayed with us for part of one vacation and enjoyed travelling up and down escalators, a form of travel that did not then exist in Scotland. Holborn, then the highest, and I think still so in a single flight, was the favourite.

I remember being taken out of Boxgrove in 1938, presumably for the Holy Days, and was taken to the Henry Wood Jubilee Concert at the Albert Hall – all three London orchestras and massed choirs. I still remember the blaze of sound of the Sanctus of Bach's *B minor Mass* and Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance March no.1* with its 'Land of Hope and Glory' during which the whole audience, Queen Mary and all, rose to its feet, and the Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music*, written for the occasion with solo singers, each of whose name is still printed in the score today, plus Rachmaninov, a tall saturnine figure, playing his *Second Piano Concerto*.

Granny-mother had a box there, in the upper tier – her step-father or one of his family, the De Vere Beauclerks, had been one of the original subscribers. Jenny still has the box and it must be one of the few boxes still in the hands of the original family, perhaps the only

one (she thinks there may be one other). I remember hearing Kreisler there, too, and of course I often used it once I became a music student. Granny-mother never sat in one of the five seats, but always on the sofa at the back – it was a box sofa and in it she kept a supply of sweets, dating back to the Boer War according to family tradition. All such private fittings have been swept away now. I remember too hearing Elizabeth Schumann singing there – a small, beautifully controlled voice, audible all over the Hall (I walked round to check). She said ‘Such a beautiful place to sing – you just float your voice across.’

Granny-mother had been one of Queen Mary’s friends, and the Queen often came to visit her in 28 Kensington Court. There was a rush then to put little valuables away, especially lace of which both Granny-mother and Queen Mary were very fond, for the Queen was next best thing to a kleptomaniac, and when she admired something it had to be given to her. I was once invited to meet her and carefully taught how to bow – I must have been five or six at the time, dressed in a white satin suit. I met her again when I was grown up – she came to the reopening of the Pioneer Health Centre in Peckham, of which my parents had been two of the founders. Ewen showed her round and when she pointed with her umbrella at one of the cupboards and asked what was in it, Ewen replied, fearing that it was probably full of mops and buckets which had been hastily pushed out of the way, ‘Our overdraft, Ma’am,’ a reply that fell flat for of course she didn’t know what an overdraft was.

I have, naturally, many other memories of that period, the late ’30s, among them being taken by Granny-mother to St James’s Palace to hear the Proclamation of King Edward VIII in 1936. He abdicated soon afterwards because he wanted to marry a commoner, an American, and worst of all, a divorced woman. No way in those days could the titular head of the Church of England marry a divorced woman. I don’t think that he was cited as the co-respondent, though I think she was still married when they started their affair; that was probably quietly

arranged (in the manner satirized by A. P. Herbert – her husband gallantly went to somewhere like Brighton with a lady who specialised in that sort of trip). Anyway, we should all be grateful that he did abdicate because he liked Hitler, and if Edward had still been King in 1940, it's probable that he would have pressed for surrender after Dunkirk and the Fall of France, and there would have been an offshoot of Auschwitz here.

We had holidays, sometimes with our parents but also often either with grandparents or with our nanny, while they went off skiing or whatever. One year Granny-mother took a house in Cromer where her chauffeur, Stratford, whom I remember as a slow and sedate driver in contrast with Ewen, taught me to play bowls. Mabel Ponder had been Joyce's nanny, and in the old tradition she had been kept on as a sort of cross between an upper servant and a family friend when Joyce grew up. Her father, who lived in Kensington Court during the War, taught me to play dominoes when I was staying there once during a school holiday. After Joyce married, Mabel moved to Joyce's home in Ogbourne St George and lived out her life there as a companion and friend. We often went for holidays to my other grandmother, who still had the house in Birchington, White Cliffs (one of the first bungalows built in Britain), with Solomon J Solomon's studio overlooking the sea. There were steep steps down to the sea wall which were alleged to have been the origin of John Buchan's 39.

Christmases we went to my Uncle Stuart, who still had the house Townhill outside Southampton that his father had built not far from *his* father's house at South Stoneham. There we had the traditional Anglo-Jewish Christmas, the best of both worlds, combining Chanukah and Christmas, with stockings (and pillow cases) by our beds for Father Christmas to fill, turkey, Christmas pudding with sixpences and little silver charms wrapped in greaseproof paper so that they weren't so small that they might be swallowed, and a Christmas tree with presents for all the staff under it. Two days later, my cousin David and I used

to beard his father, saying ‘Daddy, it’s Jeremy’s birthday today,’ at which of course Stuart, as my godfather, had to reach into his pocket and cough up. When I was born he had given me £100 of India stock – when I sold it after the War it fetched 70 devalued pounds. I don’t know what arrangements Stuart had at Townhill, but when his father Louis had big shooting parties there in season, the guests could carry away their bag, but every pheasant served at his table had been killed by a Southampton *shochet* (kosher slaughterer). There was always bacon and eggs for breakfast, but the bacon was mutton bacon, again fully kosher.

A great treat was a short holiday on Ewen’s boat, *Peradventure* (a free translation was ‘wind and weather permitting’), moored at Buckler’s Hard on the Beaulieu River and going for day sails in the Solent. The Beaulieu Montagus were old family friends and once Edward came sailing with us – I found it difficult to believe that a boy my age or a year or so older could be a Lord – Lords were Uncle Stuart’s age (I never knew Grandpa, he and Pop both died a few months before I was born). Ewen used to do the cooking on board, and one time the petrol-fuelled stove caught fire, and Ewen rushed up the companion way into the cockpit and threw it overboard – it gave me a fear of fire that has lasted all my life. We used to take the dinghy ashore to shop at neighbouring farms. Once Joyce, Ewen’s sister, came back from such a trip and held up a paper bag, calling out ‘I’ve got the eggs,’ but the bag had been in the bottom of the dinghy where it had got damp, and the bottom fell out, so they had to row back ashore and get some more.

Another holiday I remember was at Studland Bay, just round the corner from Swanage, where we were just with Nanny, who acquired a nice young man as an admirer. We used to watch the lifeboat go rushing down its slipway sometimes, and watched the coastguards practising with a breeches buoy, which they used to rescue sailors from ships that had wrecked themselves on the rocks at the base of

the cliffs, and rockets at the top of the hill between there and Swanage. We went over to Corfe Castle once and enjoyed rolling down its steep hill. Another holiday was at Totland Bay on the Isle of Wight, where we saw the donkey in a treadmill bring up water from the deep well at Carisbrooke Castle and filled little glass tubes with coloured sands from Alum Bay. Another time we were at Eastbourne with Mops (why there and not at Birchington I've no idea unless perhaps it was after she'd sold White Cliffs) and Iris was with us, and I learned to do the Times crossword puzzles with her.

We used to go beagling with Ewen, the Westland Park and Buckland beagles, in what was then countryside south of Croydon, with the treat of boiled eggs for tea in the pub afterwards. I still have the paperknife in which a hare's pad was once set – the mask that was awarded to Jenny on another occasion disintegrated a few years ago. Once the meet was at the Master's house and I ate too much rich dark fruit cake after the hunt and was sick in the car on the way home, to Ewen's annoyance. I still love such a cake, and Gwen used to make me a birthday cake called a pound cake (a pound of eggs, a pound of raisins, a pound each of every other sort of dried fruit, not quite a pound of brandy, and enough flour to stick it all together), and Sarah still makes it for my birthday, even better than Gwen. It keeps, too (if given the chance) and last year I finished it only two or three weeks before the next birthday – a pleasure throughout the year.

In 1938 we went foreign for the first time, going to Begmeil, near Concarneau in Brittany, with two other families, one of them Peter Bevan's, a legal colleague of Ewen's and my godfather (I still have the silver pint mug he gave me when I was born, but beer doesn't taste nice in it so I use it for water by my bed – I also have the pewter quart mug that was Grandpa's Second Prize for Junior Swimming at school – what size was the First Prize I've always wondered (a half-gallon mug? – and what on earth did they give for Senior Swimming?); the other a family was the Haskells who lived near us in London. In later years,

Peter was one of the first to be open about cancer, with acceptance and openness, a very brave act in those days. Ewen and Arnold Haskell, the famous ballet expert, had been at school together at Westminster, and when Ewen came to collect us from their house when we'd been there for tea, Arnold's wife Vera always used to say 'Of course, you and Arnold were at school together so I'm sure you've lots to talk about.' Not a great success, because Ewen, being an outdoor type, used to bully Arnold who was already then a ballet enthusiast. When I arrived at Oxford, Francis Haskell, who was Professor of History of Art, greeted me as his oldest friend in the world.

We drove from London to Begmeil, and I remember seeing the car winched up on the dockside and lowered into the hold – no drive-ons in those days. I can't remember how often we had to stop for one of us children to be sick as we went, but it was a number of times. Once there, I remember walking across the gravel in bare feet and stepping on a wasp, with the obvious result. We ate crêpes in Quimper, going up there by sea and river via Benodet on the sixpenny-sick, and visited Concarneau to see the tunny-men come in with their *filets bleu*, and visited a *pardon* in a nearby village where the saint slid down a wire from the church tower. We children weren't taken to the famous restaurant at Portmanec, though – not to be wasted on the children! A sixpenny-sick was a term used in those days for the small boats that tourists chugging round the harbour to look at all the boats, and also for small ferries like that one – sixpence in old money was a common fare for these.

Ewen by then was a successful barrister and took silk that year or the next, becoming the youngest KC of his time (KCs are now QCs of course – it'll be strange to go back to KC one day after QC for so long, just as it must have been when Edward VII mounted the throne in 1901). Towards the end of the Second War he was offered the post of Chief Justice of Bombay, but Admiral Godfrey wouldn't release him. He made up for it later by becoming Judge Advocate of the Fleet

as well as Chairman of Middlesex Sessions, whose court room is now that of the Supreme Court.

Ewen used to go off ocean racing with Mike Mason in *Latifa*, doing the Fastnet Race and others. Years later, when he was in America during the War, he was greeted by someone, 'I know you – you're the bloke who shaved in the cockpit going round the Fastnet Rock,' because there was a photo of him, with the Rock in the background, using his electric razor for which he had a very large flat dry-cell battery – there were no rechargeables or wind-ups in those days. Another member of the crew was 'Ducky' Endt (Endt means duck in Dutch) who used to shout 'Let down the fock,' for that was the Dutch for sail. It was he who taught Ewen his taste for the best Dutch gin, Bokma Oude Genever, a taste that we still all share. When I went to America to be a Visiting Professor in 1970, I was on a Dutch ship and gained great kudos with the barman by asking for Bokma, rather than the common brands such as Bols or de Kuyper, which are not of the same quality, nor reputation among connoisseurs.

In 1939 Ewen bought an ocean racer himself, *John Dory*, too small for the Fastnet but big enough for the Plymouth to La Rochelle ocean race (Ewen was then and later a stalwart of the Royal Ocean Racing Club and often used to go there for lunch when he was in Naval Intelligence at the Admiralty). That year Iris took us to Begmeil by herself while he was racing, travelling from St Malo by train and bus. The idea was that he'd sail up there from La Rochelle and we'd then sail gently up the French coast and back to England. But the day he arrived, after coming first in his class of boat-size, Ribbentrop and Molotov signed their pact, so it was a quick rush home, from Begmeil to Falmouth and then up the south coast to Southampton. Jenny and I were very sick for the first rush across the Channel, but we had a nice sail up from Falmouth to Southampton, with porpoises playing round the bow and lines out for mackerel. One of the porpoises had a white patch on its shoulder and stayed with us most of the day. I

still have the silver cufflinks with a John Dory enamelled on them, which Ewen gave me as a souvenir of that voyage – he had had great difficulty in finding a picture of the fish for the yacht's burgee instead of Peradventure's burgee of an unbacked brief tied with a band of pink ribbon. Once back in the Beaulieu River, we were dumped at Townhill while Ewen rushed off to report to the Navy – he was in the RNVR, the Supplementary Reserve to be called up on the declaration of war. We heard the Declaration over the wireless there. Then London and back to school.

One night at school in those first months of the War we were woken up (I had to be rolled on to the floor to wake me, being a sound sleeper) and taken down to the shelter because the sirens had gone off. We all had to carry our gasmasks, of course – that was the great fear during the War, especially in the early years, for everyone remembered the dreadful casualties caused in the First World War by poison gas. Everyone went around with their little square cardboard boxes until gradually more elegant carriers came on the market (mine was a yellow-painted tin canister). Air-Raid Precaution Wardens all carried a football rattle to warn of a gas attack (I have one in my collection – it has a khaki metal resonator on the side to amplify the sound). We heard the thuds of bombs and the master looking after us tried to guess how far away they were – we were much disappointed after the all-clear to be told that the thuds were the gas-tight doors closing. We spent the Christmas holidays that year with other friends, the Rossiters, in their house at Aldworth, up the steep hill from Goring. I missed most of it because I'd had chicken pox and one spot persisted – I've still got it, nobody had noticed previously the mole on my bottom. But I remember one Sunday, once I was there, hearing a shot – someone shooting on a Sunday! Unheard of in those days, but manners and customs were already changing.

In the summer of 1940, Ewen felt we should leave. He knew that he was high on the to-be-shot list of the Gestapo as a leading member

of the Jewish community, and also he believed in the reduction of ‘useless mouths’ as food would be becoming short. We had family friends in Boston and they were willing to sponsor us and to put us up – American generosity can be endless. So we, Iris, Jenny, and I, sailed on the *Georgic*, along with Lisa Rossiter and her daughter Gillian. We spent the next couple of years with Mrs Bancroft, then already a widow and an elderly lady, whose father, Clarence Baron, had founded the *Wall Street Journal* – he had been a friend of Great-grandpa and Grandpa, who were also bankers and had also been one of my godfathers. He had given me a child’s set of bowl, mug, and so on, with reliefs of children playing round it, rather ugly and in that rather dull-looking American silver, a generous gift but one that I sold after the War. Another godfather (Ewen and Iris did very well by me) was Lord Shaw of Dunfermline, a law-lord who had refused to retire until he was given a real peerage; he gave me a silver porringer and spoon, with his signature in facsimile on the bottom of the porringer, which is still our sugar-bowl. My daughter Sarah, who was then still a midwife, found herself delivering a baby for one of his grandchildren who was thrilled to see the signature on the bowl! A godmother was Addie Cohen, wife of the judge, Lord Cohen of Walmer – I was obviously intended for the law from birth! I still have the cufflinks she left me.

Once settled in America, I spent a year at the Boston Public Latin School and was then moved by Howard Goodhart to his old School, Hotchkiss, at Lakeville in northern Connecticut, right up near the New York State border, a leading private school (in American terms equaling our public school), at his cost, more of that wonderful American generosity. His daughter sent Jenny to her old school, Brearley, in New York.

During my first term at Hotchkiss, Ewen and Iris came up to visit me and take me out to the traditional visiting parents’ Sunday steak lunch. Those American steaks were massive, especially in the railroad dining cars, where they overlapped the edges of the plates. He had been sent

over on Naval Intelligence business (for which see his book, *Beyond Top Secret U*, now available as an ebook). On the way back to school in the taxi, the driver had his radio on – it was December 7, 1941, and the first reports of the attack on Pearl Harbor were coming in. So to the fury of Admiral Godfrey, Ewen stayed on for a week or two to help his American intelligence counterparts get on to a war footing.

In the meanwhile, Iris had discovered that instead of coming in as visitors, we had by mistake come in on the immigration ‘quota’, meaning that she was able to get a job, rather than just earning tips for pocket money while working unofficially and on the quiet as a hat-check girl in a seafood restaurant, which she’d been doing to avoid being too much beholden to Mrs Bancroft. Ewen got her set up in New York at the British Consulate in the Passport Control section, the cover name for Intelligence, under Little Bill, as William Stevenson was known. She rented an apartment on 57th Street, just beyond 2nd Avenue which in those days still had an El, the elevated railway, running down it. We were on the top floor (only three floors if I remember rightly, not a sky-scraper) so we had access to the flat roof which was good in hot weather and provided a fine view of the New York skyline, from the Skylon and Perisphere left over from the World’s Fair on one side to the Rockefeller Center, where Iris’s office was, and the new Empire State building on the other.

Hotchkiss was on the banks of a lake. When it froze, as it did every winter, it was thick black ice, wonderful skating, and we could skate all the way down to the local town, Lakeville – in those days I never knew that Wanda Landowska, the first great modern harpsichord player, lived there. We also had a golf course which I managed to go round in only 108 – not as good as it sounds as there were only nine holes. I also tried my hand at skeet shooting (shooting clay pigeons as a way to learn to shoot), but didn’t get as far with my .410 as bigger boys did with their pump-action repeating 12-bores. While on holiday with the Bancrofts and Coxes at their holiday home in Cohasset (Bill Cox

had married Mrs Bancroft's daughter Jessie), I'd met a gun buff who introduced me to pistol shooting, including an old frontier-model Colt, a wonderful weapon, for its curved grip meant that there was no kick in the normal way: the muzzle just flipped up, allowing, on the original model, the percussion cap to fall off the nipple, clear of the action. I built up a small collection of cartridges of old models (I couldn't afford guns), but after we got home again, Ewen made me dump them in the sea, and also mechanical drawings of different types of rifles, etc.

Jessie Cox bred Shetland ponies and I think also trotters for racing with the light chariots they use in the trotting races. I rode one of those but had never before experienced the very rapid trot of those horses and fell off and broke my wrist. We had learned to ride in the Row in Hyde Park before the war, but this was a very different action to that which I'd met there – one couldn't post while trotting at that speed. First I lost my stirrups and then off I came.

There was a horse show in the summer, and I sold raffle tickets with great success, for our English accents were then a novelty, so much so that I was even asked to make a broadcast on the Boston radio station. A good many of the people gave me the tickets they'd bought and Jenny and I hoped to win the prize, a champion poodle, but whether due to a conspiracy to make sure we didn't burden Mrs Bancroft with it, or just normal bad luck, I didn't win – I never do win raffles.

Summers, I worked in the American style, one year caddying on a local golf course, another on a farm – I was never very good at either, but quickly realised how stupid hens were. The shorter school holidays we spent at Cohasset till we moved to New York. Once there, we also had holidays for two summers on a lake in New Hampshire where we could swim and go horse riding on full-day trips. I learned there to ride in the American style, with much longer stirrup leathers than we use in England, so that one's legs are almost straight. Their saddles are better designed than ours, too, for long journeys rather than for

elegance. We spent the shorter holidays in Central Park, then a safe place for children and anybody else to walk – when I was in New York in 1970 I was told never to walk across Central Park for fear of being mugged, though today I believe it's safe again – and in the Metropolitan Museum, only a short walk away.

By 1943, the air raids had eased at home and there was no longer any fear of German invasion, and thinking that I should not only spend some of the war years in England but should also take School Certificate, Iris suggested that we should come home. We decided, while waiting for a ship, to visit Washington. We dropped in at the Embassy there to try to discover when we were leaving, and they said 'What are you doing here? Don't you know you're sailing tomorrow?' No, we didn't. So we had a quick spin round the main sights, the Lincoln Memorial the most impressive, and then belted back to New York, packed quick, and were ready next day.

We came back, just Jenny and I (Iris followed a couple of weeks later), on a fleet tender with a catapult for a plane. The Royal Navy sailors were wonderful with children, as always, teaching us to knot and splice (still both very useful skills), but never allowing us a taste of the rum that was carried past us each day, with its wonderful smell. We docked at Liverpool, where Ewen met us. The Customs said 'You've nothing to declare have you?' I started to mention my shotgun, and the man said 'You've NOTHING to declare HAVE you?' so I shut up. We stayed, as Ewen did along with refugees from France and Belgium, with Granny-mother at her house, 28 Kensington Court. One of the residents was Faith Napier (was she a daughter of Field Marshal Napier of Magdala, whose statue on a horse stands at the top of Queen's Gate south of Hyde Park?) who had been spending her last years at Nice or one of the other towns on the French coast. She pronounced queue (a constant feature of wartime London) as though it were still a French word. A Belgian one was Didi van Rael who, when Gwen and I visited her in Antwerp many years later, introduced

us to the ouija board. There were others also, but it is those two who have stuck in my memory. Whether Didi was a relative of the Wieners, our Belgian cousins, I don't know. Gwen and I didn't keep in touch with her for long; as we became more observantly Jewish, we came to disapprove of ouija boards and such things.

Schools had to be arranged. They had always thought of Bryanston for me, outside Blandford Forum in Dorset. Plenty of sport, which Ewen wished he had had more of at Westminster – parents always want the education for their children that they wished they'd had, whereas Westminster would have suited me better, not being a very sportive type. Since in wartime, Blandford was as inaccessible as anywhere else, they thought that Gordonstoun would be better, for Bryanston had been an English-style derivative when Salem, the original form of Gordonstoun, had still been in Baden in Germany. They'd originally ruled it out because it was away up in Scotland, on the Moray Firth, north of Elgin. But by now it had been evacuated to mid-Wales and thus was as easy, or as difficult, to get to as Bryanston.

Gordonstoun really didn't suit me at all. Cold showers, obstacle runs, and similar activities are really not my line and never were. But as years have gone by, I have realised more and more what I owe to Kurt Hahn and his ideas of justice and morality. Of course I had imbibed much the same ideas from Ewen and Iris, but Hahn had reinforced them and they are still very much with me. The whole school was imbued with his philosophy, and it was run on an honour-based system. If you had done something against the rules, you were expected to own up to it without being accused or caught. It's very difficult to pin anything definite down, as I have found when Simon asked me to be more specific about Hahn's ideas. They were just there and we imbibed them from the atmosphere and his occasional talks to the school so that one knew more or less instinctively what was the right thing to do and that this or that, whether of government policy or anything else, was morally right or wrong (a fascinating sentence to reread while

first revising this text in the middle of the *Daily Telegraph* revelations of the financial skull-duggery among members of Parliament!). He often used to talk to the school, and this, I suppose, was the result of the things he said. This, I'm sure, is one of the reasons that I once became a signatory of Independent Jewish Voices, for however much one wishes to support the State of Israel, as I do, one should not necessarily accept the present practices of the government of that State, and, however much one does support Israel, as I do, one should never be afraid of 'rocking the boat' and of refusing to follow majority opinion when it is clearly morally wrong to do so. More recently, IJV has been captured by Palestinian voices, so I have left it.

At Gordonstoun life wasn't all lessons. We each in turn went off for a week or so at an Outward Bound course (one of Hahn's other foundations), in my time at Aberdovey, where we spent time sailing on Gordonstoun's sailing ship which was based there. My knowledge of knots and splices came in useful there, though it was very different from the yachting I'd done before the war. We also went on Expeditions over a weekend, a small group of boys with map and compass and two conditions, one that we must find our way back to school by Sunday evening and the other that we must not sleep in a house but must sleep under a roof, which meant barns on heaps of hay or straw – we quickly learnt of the advantage of the former and the disadvantage of the latter, for hay is warm whereas straw, being hollow, draws the heat out of you. I led one expedition and learned how to shepherd smaller boys over difficulties of terrain even when they frightened me. I've no head for heights but had to get the other boys round them on Plynlimon, which was very good for me.

I was moved from one school 'house' to another, starting under Dr Meissner, a good amateur painter in the German semi-modernist style, who was a strict disciplinarian, always accompanied by a large white Samoyed dog, and then, after a spell in the Brooder (which my parents thought was Brüder, a commendable idea but actually a converted

hen house), and then further away down the valley. Cycling thence to school one day I made the mistake of using the front wheel brake while going round a bend – I still have the scar. I was a member of the local Home Guard and invented a mortar to fire thunderflashes, a fairly innocuous firework that we used to represent hand grenades, and learned to shoot a .303 rifle on the range. The mortar was a length of iron water pipe with a nut brazed into the bottom and a six-inch nail brazed into that so as to stick into the ground, with an old bicycle front brake fork as a rest to control its angle and thus its range. I struck one thunderflash, dropped it in, and then struck and dropped another on top. The top one sailed through the air and, if one's timing when lighting the second had been right, it went off with a good bang as it landed. Monty's mortar was quite a success. The blacksmith, who did that work for me, was also the local bicycle repairer and his main motto was 'Give it a bash'.

Llandinam was a nice friendly village, even though I made myself unpopular one night when I fused all the lights in the whole valley. I was doing the lights for the school play in the village hall, and I had invented and made a set of rheostats as dimmers. They were large earthenware jars full of salted water, with a lead plate at the bottom and lead weights, all of which I cast myself from old bits of piping – there were no Health and Safety regulations in those days – that could be lowered by ropes on wheels to increase or decrease the power gradually. There were screws so that I could control which wheels turned with the axle and which ones could remain on full power when others were dimmed, and of course vice versa. Instead of switching off the lights one by one when we were closing down at the end, like an idiot I pulled the plug out of the light socket to turn them all off at once – there was a six-inch blue arc that burnt my fingers, and the fuses in the local powerhouse cut out. The hall fuse box, which was mostly teaspoons and knife blades instead of fuse wire (they didn't

want any fuses to blow, of course) hadn't blown, so the powerhouse did, and blacked out the valley.

When the war ended in Europe, we celebrated with huge bonfires up on the hills above the rhododendron-filled valleys.

Holidays were spent with Joyce at Ogbourne St George. I joined the local Home Guard there, too, and had much more fun, for I was allowed to shoot with their Bren gun and also with a Sten gun, toys that school boys were not issued with. The Sten was the sub-machine gun that was so useful with the French Maquis and other resistance groups, for, unlike the American tommy-gun, which used .45 pistol ammunition, the Sten was designed for 9 mm ammunition which could be captured off the Germans. Of course by then, from the second half of 1943 to 1945, there was no real fear of an invasion, but the Home Guard kept up just in case.

From Ogbourne we had the treat of first and last days of the holidays with Ewen and Iris at their little flat in Oxford Mews, off the Edgware Road. This wasn't really safe because it was the top floor of two with a roof not much more than tar paper, and the doodle bugs, as Hitler's V-1 flying bomb was called, were sailing over – one listened to the engine pop-pop-popping along, and when it cut out as it ran out of fuel, one waited for the bang. Vicarage Gardens had been let for the duration to Dod and Innes Pierce, who had run the Pioneer Health Centre in Peckham, of which as I've said my parents had been among the founders.

We had one holiday at Simonsbath on Exmoor, when Ewen had a leave. I cycled there from school, thinking that as it was down the River Wye most of the way (the school was between the sources of the Wye and the Severn, and the Wye ran though our village of Llandinam) it would be mostly down hill. Unfortunately roads don't stick as closely to the river bank as that and my bike, with its Sturmey-Archer gears, was stuck in top gear. I stopped the first night at a Youth

Hostel halfway down the river, but when I went into the dormitory the smell was such that I thought better of it and finished up under a haystack (Youth Hostels have changed a lot since then!). The second night was spent in a fire-watcher's bed in Wells – he only wanted it in the daytime. And the third in a beach shelter in Minehead – I didn't fancy Exmoor in the dark, the police wouldn't lend me a cell, and there was nowhere else. But it was a good holiday. We each had a bicycle, though we pushed them more than we rode them, for the hills were too steep to pedal up and too dangerous to ride down. So there were frequent pausers (pronounced powders) to catch our breath. We got some riding, too, including a day with the Somerset and Exmoor Stag Hounds – they didn't catch anything. I think it was on that trip too that we visited Beggar's Roost, the notorious hill climb that Ewen had driven up in the old London to Lands End Trials, which he took part in, in the earlier days of motoring when you spent as much time rebuilding the car as driving it.

It was part of that school holiday that I spent hop-picking in Kent. Farm work had been done by Italian prisoners of war, but once the doodle bugs started Kent had been the destination of many of them (I didn't know till long after the War that that had been due to Ewen's work – he had managed to convince the Germans that they'd been over-shooting London, so now many of them landed well short of the built-up area and fell on to empty fields instead of crowded city streets). That had been one of the many successful deceptions that he'd carried out against the Germans, like his famous *The Man Who Never Was* (aka *Operation Mincemeat*). But the Geneva Convention says that you must not keep prisoners of war in a war zone, so they had insisted on being moved. A lack of hops, the main flavouring agent for beer, would have been catastrophic for morale, so the government advertised for school boys and others too young for the army to take on the harvest. I volunteered and, being able to read and write, was put in charge of one squad. They were all much better equipped for the

job than I, but we enjoyed ourselves, being taken by lorry from camp to farm. They sang all the way and by the time the job finished I knew all the words for songs such as *Roll Me Over in the Clover*, none of which are repeatable here (but you can find them on Google!).

One farmer, after we'd cleared his field, gave us some of his special cider, not very different from Normandy calvados – the gang had to carry me into the lorry and then to my bunk. But I enjoyed the local beer. Ewen had introduced me to the famous Withypool home-brew, which I was too young to enjoy, during an earlier holiday on Exmoor before the War, when we had stayed with cousin Robert Waley-Cohen at their house near Simonsbath. We had helped to build a point-point race course, for Cousin Bob was master of the Devon and Somerset stag hounds – I made a spectacle of myself by spiking myself on the bottom with a pickaxe. I had swung it up over my head to get a good attack, but it was too heavy for me and went on backwards and downwards!

My last term at Gordonstoun we moved back up to Scotland because the war was over – the school had been evacuated to Wales because there were several RAF aerodromes nearby the original site, and a school full of Germans, even if they were refugees, was not a popular neighbour. So at least I had one term at the real Gordonstoun. I remember exploring some of the tunnels in the walls of the main house, winding up in Hahn's study rather to his surprise. I also remember one of our teachers, newly back from the War, popping frequently out of the classroom in the Round Square into his study next door, and coming back with a smell that I only later recognised as brandy – I don't think we were that difficult to teach! In northern Scotland a 'square' is a farmyard, and ours happened to be circular, and thus it was a round square.

I didn't take Higher School Certificate, for with only one term to play with before I'd be called up, it was decided that I should take a chance for an Oxford scholarship, which I didn't get. Ewen had

arranged for me to sit for one at Worcester, where the Provost was J. C. Masterman, a fellow Intelligence worker during the war (I'd met him once at the Royal Ocean Racing Club with Ewen). I was tutored with special lessons by Mr Brereton, our senior English master, who used to entertain the school on the last day before the Christmas holidays with a wonderful Norfolk legend of Tom-tit-Tot, all recited in local dialect; he also read Chaucer in what purported to be Early English pronunciation. So having failed to get into Oxford as a scholar, until I got there as a don, when they had to give me an MA as my licence to teach, the only academic qualification I ever had was School Certificate with exemption from Matric (i.e. top marks). My MA was much scorned by my children, for they each had a real degree – Gwen didn't, though, till much later, for in her day at Cambridge women weren't allowed to have a degree – they had a licence to an entitlement of a degree. I think it was on the fiftieth anniversary of the first women's degrees that they had a ceremony and all those surviving licensees were invited back to Cambridge, an occasion that Gwen much enjoyed.

Chapter 3

Army and Beyond

I was called up immediately on my 18th birthday, as I'd already volunteered for the Gunners (a ploy to avoid being sent down the coal mines or into the Merchant Navy, which my age group had as equal a chance at as one of the armed services). I did my initial infantry training in January 1946 at Crimmond, north of Glasgow. It was a cold winter, the parade ground sloped, so when we were called to attention there was a good chance of the whole squad falling over as our hob-nailed boots slid over the ice. Those boots! They were issued with a dimple-finish on the toe caps, but the army ideal was a smooth high-gloss mirror polish. Heated teaspoons, spit and polish, elbow grease, and a lot of time did it. The bottoms, hobnails included, also had to be polished each day, and so did the backs of our buttons as well as the fronts, and the cap-badges, too.

Having been at boarding school, I was the only one who'd ever spent a night away from home, so the squad took some time to settle down. My bunk mate (we had double bunks, above and below, with straw palliasses) was a not-very-retired burglar – I wrote letters home for him. When we went into Glasgow on a pass, we were recommended to carry a sheathed bayonet in our pocket, the small spike bayonets we were issued with, not the older sword type that I'd known in the Home Guard. Glasgow was a pretty tough place in those days, especially the Gorbals.

I came adrift once on rifle shooting. I was OK most of the time, but not the one time we had to shoot wearing our gas masks. I am left-eyed – I had been shown how to tell that by the gun buff in Cohasset: point at a spot with both eyes, and then shut one eye and look first with one and then with the other to see which eye leaves you on the spot – that one is your master eye. So you have to shoot at anything with a gun on that shoulder or in that hand. With the old Lee-Enfield .303 that we were issued with, it meant reaching over to operate the bolt, but that's not difficult. Trickier was the Sten gun, which I'd fired with the Ogbourne Home guard. I had to make sure my right little finger didn't stray into the ejection slot and get chopped off or my wrist hit with hot empty shells as they were ejected. The army gas masks were no longer the ones with a tube coming out of the middle into a bag on your chest, but those with a canister sticking out from the left cheek – I couldn't get my left eye nearer than 6 inches to the back sight so where those shots went I have no idea.

When that training was over, I went to the Gunners. Our motto on our cap badges, and our only battle honour was *Ubique*. Other regiments had as their honours the names of the main battles they'd fought in, whereas we had fought in every battle since artillery was invented at the Battle of Bosworth, where Richard III lost his horse and his kingdom, so we couldn't list them all; hence the one word 'Everywhere'. At first I was near Catterick, the Aldershot of north Britain, with a chance to get to know the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle with its wonderful Sèvres blue porcelain, French furniture and a magical El Greco. All else that I remember of that town was that the main street seemed to alternate a pub and a fish and chip shop all the way down, and very good fish and chips they were, even though we had to skulk in doorways to eat them – we were forbidden to eat in the street in uniform. From there I went to Marske-by-Sea, outside Redcar.

It was at Marske that I got into the habit of going to synagogue on some Sabbaths. It was, of course, after the war by that time, so a pass for that was easy. Saturdays in camp were bull-shit days, polishing the guns and so forth. It was no good pleading Shabbat – if you were in camp you worked, but you could get a pass for religious purposes. Not every week, of course – that wouldn't have been fair on my mates, but once, sometimes twice, a month was OK. The trouble was that the nearest shul was in Middlesborough, a train ride away. I once asked the Rabbi, who had kindly asked me back for lunch (one could always hear the whisper going round 'Who's going to ask that soldier to lunch?' for they were always very kind and hospitable) which was better, to spend Shabbat polishing, or taking a train to *shul*, an unkind question that he could not answer – he had tutored my cousin David for his barmitsvah. While at Catterick I had once or twice gone to shul in Darlington, where it was just the front room of a house, with a Rav with a good bass singing voice, very different from the high tenor voice I was used to at the New West End.

We were medium artillery, 4.5 and 5.5 inch shells, which were so heavy that I could only just pick one up, and when we fired them, the targets were always over the hills and far away. I became a lance-bombardier, the equivalent of a lance-corporal in the infantry, the lowest form of non-commissioned officer, and I learned how to do the trigonometry to work out aim and elevation to an invisible map-reference target. I was sent to WOSBE (War Office Selection Board) as a potential officer, but failed abysmally – not only obstacle runs again, worse than Gordonstoun, and ferrying logs over imaginary rivers without boats or bridges, but also taking apart and putting back together a door lock. Why door locks were important for officers to repair I have no idea, but equally I had no idea how a door lock worked.

So I put in for transfer to the Education Corps, as a better life in the peacetime army, where the lowest rank was sergeant. I started just outside Leicester, whence I was sent on a course at Welbeck Abbey,

with its famous long underground passages and roadways, to learn to teach illiterates, of whom we had a number in the army. They'd been evacuated as children in small towns and villages with over-crowded small country schools and some had spent their days in the back row not listening. Mind you, many of them were bright enough and could do the necessary mental arithmetic at darts, to see what score you needed next, far faster than I could. Others were what we called semi-literates because since school they'd never needed to read and had forgotten how. They lived at home, they worked down the road, the girl friend lived round the corner, they met their pals in the pub, news came over the wireless, and they could recognise the shapes of the names of the football teams on the pools panel in the paper, where otherwise they only looked at the pictures and the undressed antics of Jane, and other cartoon characters, and they were well up on the odds at the dog track – what did they need to read for?

Fortunately I only ever had to teach one, a sergeant-major who had worked out a system of nipping down to town to get a pal to read the order sheet for him, until he got caught out one day by a short-notice one. The CO wanted him taught as quickly as possible because he was too valuable to lose by demotion, and he was bright enough and keen enough that it didn't take much effort to teach him. It was on that course that I met my first girl friend, but neither she nor I knew anything about such things, so we didn't get very far, even if we'd had the time or space to do anything.

After that I was sent down to the big Royal Engineers depot at Long Marston, outside Stratford on Avon, with the chance to see some plays. I had a little two-stroke James motorcycle there, which my aunt Joyce's husband, Frostie (Oliver Frost), had given me. I also had, for army use, a 350cc BSA. When I collected that one, they asked if I could ride a motorbike. Sure, I said, and much to their entertainment stalled it three times getting it away, for its clutch was much fiercer than that of the James. I still have the heavy leather gauntlets I was

issued (we didn't bother with helmets in those days) and they're very useful when cutting back brambles in the garden. Even though we had a sub-unit just outside Beaulieu Road Station, only a few miles from Warren Beach, my parents' cottage on the Solent, I could never organise a Friday and Monday class there, so I wasn't allowed to use the BSA to go down to them on free weekends, and had to use the James two-stroke instead. My weight was too much for a 125cc engine going up Broadway Hill and I had to stop twice each time to let the engine cool down and the cylinder go back to cylindrical. But there was a good lorry drivers' pull-in near the Rollright Stones on the road to Oxford where one could get fried egg sandwiches, a great treat, for eggs were still fairly short in those days, early 1946, when rationing was still tight.

I think it was on the transfer to there that I lost ten days' leave – they'd been almost due at Leicester but of course were not entitled at Long Marston as I was a new arrival. It was gently pointed out to me, when I voiced my disappointment, that leave was not a right but a privilege. A useful principle to remember in many circumstances in after life.

There were two of us running education there because it was a huge unit, a Brigadier's command. He and I were both interested in old guns and we used to go into the gunsmith's quarter of Birmingham, where one could pick up old weapons and black powder and percussion caps. I remember buying a Martini rifle, the sort of weapon that Kipling wrote about, and an Arab matchlock *jesrail*. That's what we wanted the black powder for – I can't remember which of us had the percussion-cap gun – the police wouldn't allow me to buy a beautiful Colt .36 percussion-cap revolver I found cheap in an antique shop, still in its original case with all the bits. The matchlock was rather fun to shoot. One pulled the trigger and the fork with the slow-burning match came down to the priming pan. There was then a pause while that sizzled, and a second or two later the gun went off. How anybody ever shot

a moving target with a matchlock, as Kipling's Afghans did, I can't imagine. Of course Afghans use Kalashnikovs nowadays, which are much easier to shoot people with.

I remember one short leave (a long weekend maybe) from there when we went to Newark. Sharing a bed (all that was available) was the only time I had to fend off an unwanted homosexual encounter. We'd never had anything of that sort at my schools, despite all the legends about public schools and he'd never tried anything in the camp. We went over to Southall Minster, one of the most beautiful churches in England with wonderful stone carvings of flowers and foliage. I remember, too, sitting outside the hut at Long Marston, cleaning the motorcycles with tri-chlor-ethylene, which in those days we didn't know was highly dangerous.

But all good things come to an end. My Brigadier in Leicester, of course, was keen to get as much education going as possible, and he got together with the Long Marston Brigadier, who also became keen. Unfortunately, the Colonels under him, who were responsible for getting all the engineering work done as fast as possible, were very reluctant to take men off the work to be taught about the aims for a new postwar Britain. That was our main task in the Royal Army Education Corps in those days, with lots of booklets and wall-charts. Presumably I wasn't tactful enough at telling the local Brigadier that his Colonels weren't doing what he told them in releasing men for classes, and I got posted to the Canal Zone in Egypt.

The army camp was just outside Port Said on the other side of the canal but the Education headquarters was in the centre of town, in an old house in the tin-smiths' *shuk*, so we were well away from the local commander's eye, and we weren't going to complain about the noise of hammering stove pipes and other things and the perpetual Arab music from the loud speakers. We only had to go to the camp on pay day (10/6 a day we got, a marked improvement on a lance-corporals pay, plus a free tin of 50 cigarettes or the equivalent in pipe tobacco, and

as much more as one wanted at very low prices, so I quickly learned to smoke) and to give regular lectures in the NAAFI cinema – good for voice training that was, as it was a great barn of a place. We did have to go on parade once on some formal occasion, maybe the King's Birthday. It was a long time by then since any of us had done any drill and we had to brush it up quick, and also to learn the slow march.

That has been a useful accomplishment ever since, when taking a Sefer back to the Ark, especially at the Istanbuli synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem, where there is only about five yards to go, and the whole of *Mizmor leDavid* (psalm 29) to spend over it, often with Ben Abu singing it as slowly as possible, until, in the last sentence of that psalm, you can finally hand over the Sefer on the word *yitein* (which means 'give', so that's when you should give the Sefer to the man who puts it back). The tradition there, and I use it in Oxford also, on the rare occasions that I've led that part of the service, is to start to move right at the beginning of that psalm, and not to wait till halfway through as most people do. With the slow march it works.

I used to run music appreciation classes at our centre in Port Said for a small group of enthusiasts, for we had a good record collection there, and I also used to do them for some of the local Jewish community, mostly French-speaking, a language that I was sufficiently newly out of school to be able to manage.

It was also there that I realised my capacity for alcohol was rather limited, as it is for many Jews. Locally brewed Stella was a lot stronger than war-time English beer, and a litre is a lot more than a pint!

It was also there that I learned some things about thought transference, which had considerable influence on my understanding of how conducting an orchestra and accompanying soloists works, as I recount in the next chapter.

Port Said was where I first became interested in ethnomusicology, not that I'd ever heard that word then, not till I was at the Horniman

in 1960. I was interested in all those funny noises coming from the loud-speakers and I liked them. So when I was on leave in Cairo, passing a building with Institut Fouad Premier de Musique Arabe (or words to that effect) on the door, I knocked and went in and asked if they could tell me anything about Arabic music. They were a bit nonplussed at seeing a British sergeant in uniform, but they gave me a Belgian professor, who spoke very rapid French (it took a little while to work out what a very fast *quarditon* meant), and he took me into various class rooms where people were playing 'ud and *qanun* and other instruments, and he showed me the quarter-tone piano that had been imported from Germany; he said there were only three ever made.

They also gave me an introduction to Hans Hickmann, the great authority on Pharaonic music and instruments, who was then living in Cairo, who taught me a great deal more and showed me his copy of the magnificent *Recueil des travaux de congrès de musique arabe* that had been held in Cairo in 1932, and who told me of the fiasco of its publication. It was published by one Ministry and the stocks were held by another, so when anybody ordered it from the first Ministry they had no copies available, and nobody was ever told about the second Ministry, so that they never sold any. As a result they were all pulped or burned, and that's why I've never been able to get hold of a copy. He showed me, too, the copies that he'd had made of the Tutankhamun trumpets.

It was in Egypt that I bought my first ethno instruments, a *zummara* and an *arghul*, those pairs of parallel pipes with a single-reed mouth-piece that little boys hawk in the streets of every *shuk* of the Arab world. They're on loan now at the Bate Collection, the former with two parallel pipes, both with fingerholes, the latter with one pipe with fingerholes and the other pipe a drone without fingerholes.

Like a lot of the army, we used to drop into Shepheard's Hotel for coffee in Cairo, where I learned to ask for it without sugar – at home during the War one got only enough sugar on the ration that one could

either put it into drinks or make jam, but not both, and Iris liked to make jam, so I got out of the habit of having it in tea or coffee. We also marvelled at the eggs, plenty of them unlike in England, but about the size of pigeons' eggs, and the bananas, too, (unheard of then in England) but about the size of one's middle finger.

It was on that or another leave that several of us took the train up to Karnak and did the full tour of the Valley of the Kings. On one of those leaves I was in Cairo at the time of the 1948 war, and we used to drop in to the office of the Egyptian Post, or Mail (I can't remember which it was called), where the editor was Jewish and let us look at the Reuter's tape, which had a quite different story each night from what was printed in the paper. The one in the paper spoke of the glorious advance westwards of the Egyptian army (ie retreating hard homewards), whereas Reuter told us what was really happening.

I think it was because I was Jewish that I never got sent any nearer to Palestine, as it then was – the Irgun had recently hanged a couple of British sergeants, and it might have been embarrassing if they hanged a Jewish one. The nearest I got was when I was moved to El Qantara, the railhead for Palestine on the banks of the Canal, halfway down. We were based there on a gypsum marsh, an old RAF aerodrome, which was eyeball-shattering in the sun. I was there until my number came up for demobilisation in the middle of 1948.

We sailed back on a troopship where I was disconcerted to find that, since I was a sergeant, I was made one of the troop-deck sergeants. I'd never been in charge of troops before – our lowest rank was sergeant just in case there was any indiscipline among troops we taught, but there seldom if ever was; they were happy enough to doze off in the comfortable seats of the NAAFI cinema while we yattered at them. But on the troop deck it was quite another matter. Almost everyone was going home on demob, so there were no effective disciplinary sanctions, and it was just 'F– you, sarge' and 'Up yours'. It was a lively time.

Once home, Ewen wangled me a place at his old College, Trinity, at Cambridge, to read a year of economics to be followed by a year of law (it was a two-year Tripos in those days). My tutor there was Maurice Dobb, and perhaps it was his old friendship with Ewen (they'd been contemporaries there in the 1920s) that inhibited him from inducting me into the Communist Party as he'd done to a number of others, as transpired in the Anthony Blunt débâcle. It may also have been because he didn't see much of me, because I neglected economics in favour of music, as recounted later. I was also very involved with Peter and Tony Shaffer, who ran *Granta* in those days, a very different magazine from what it is now, and with generally enjoying myself in civilian life after the restrictions of the army. I spent one weekend with the Shaffers at their family home at Birchington, the same house, White Cliffs, that had belonged to my grandfather, Solomon J Solomon, that I'd known as a child.

I became, then, more involved with the Jewish world. Not at Cambridge, where the shul in Thompson's Lane was super-observant (*me-shuggah frum* we used to call it – madly over observant) and strongly Zionist, an atmosphere wholly repulsive to my then sort of Anglo-Jewry, but instead with Rabbi Louis Jacobs at the New West End Synagogue, where he organised a regular discussion group for those of my age range. I was also a member of the younger members group of the Anglo-Jewish Association, of which Ewen was President as well as of the United Synagogue. This got a bit boring, since it was a purely social group, and we young adults were not encouraged to join in any serious discussions. However, there was of course the advantage that one met many others of one's own age, both male and especially female.

I also got some sailing, first with a small twelve-foot dinghy with a lug sail off the beach at Warren, and then with a Sharpie in the creek at Needs Ore, a few hundred yards away, sailing in the Beaulieu River and out into the Solent. That stopped, though, once I became

a musician, for it was mostly a weekend sport because Ewen and Iris were only down at Warren at weekends and during law vacations, and weekends are when musicians work – we give concerts when other people aren't working and that prevents us from joining many of the sports that they enjoy also when they're not working.

I had, naturally, a range of girl friends. In my army days these were very ephemeral – one during the two-week course at Welbeck Abbey, another visiting Stratford for the plays while I was at Long Marston, neither leading to anything. Within the Jewish community one had to be very circumspect – the rumour factory was efficient and lethal. One of my Jewish Cambridge friends had a non-Jewish girl friend. Thinking (probably hoping) of something perhaps more permanent, she wanted to visit a synagogue to see what it was like. I agreed to take her. We were careful, parting on the steps outside and meeting down the street after the service. Nevertheless, my grandmother (who hadn't been there) telephoned my mother shortly after lunch that day to ask who was the girl that I had taken to shul! But more of such things later.

As I said, I spent most of my time at Cambridge playing music rather than on economics. I had learned the horn at school. When I was at Hotchkiss the music master asked one day whether any of the new boys would like to play an instrument. I'd learned some piano when younger, at first with Iris and then with Ella Ivimey, who was famous as a teacher, and at Boxgrove, but had never been any good at it – I was classed at Boxgrove as a non-singer, which may not surprise anyone who has heard me, and was relegated to pulling the organ stops in and out for the music teacher in Chapel. Chapel of course was compulsory in those days at a boarding school. I did sing in the choir at Hotchkiss, and even once sang a solo, as a treble before my voice broke (Mendelssohn's 'Oh for the Wings of a Dove'). The music master also used to invite us into his room on Saturday afternoons to listen to the broadcasts from the New York Metropolitan Opera,

which began at this time, and which I still listen to today, in Oxford on Saturday evenings.

I thought it would be fun to play that thing you pushed out and pulled in, but they said that as the war might end at any time, and as it was difficult to learn how far to push it and pull it, and I'd go home before I'd learned enough to be useful, it would be better to play the baritone, which is easier than the trombone, with just three knobs to push down and plays much the same range. They said I could always swap over to the trombone if I was around longer than expected, so I did what they said.

It *was* easy, and the American baritone, nearer to our euphonium than to our baritone, is a nice instrument to play. Once you had learned to blow a raspberry, all you had to do was learn which knob to push down, and within a couple of weeks I was playing easy tunes. But after one term they said 'We've a baritone too many and a horn too few – you *would* like to change, *wouldn't* you?' Well, when school masters talk like that, you don't have the option, so I took up the horn, and of course it's as well that I did, for the horn is an orchestral instrument, which led to the rest of my career, and the baritone wouldn't have done.

I became a reasonable horn player even though it's a murderous instrument to play on the march, all off-beats, as horns do in those circumstances, and because of its small mouthpiece and very long tube, with harmonics close together in the central playing range, it is more difficult than most to control while marching. So I marched with the school band up and down the football field, playing off-beats all the way. All such schools, and Colleges and Universities, in those days had a marching band to play on the field for football matches, showing off the quality of their drill, before the games and during the intervals.

When I got to Gordonstoun, I was lent a horn that belonged to one of the masters who'd gone off to the war (Freddie Spencer-Chapman,

who had a lively time in Burma; I've got a copy of his narrative of it). Unlike my Hotchkiss instrument, which had been a rotary-valve German-style model, this was a French-style horn with separate crook and piston valves, but it played the same way. But more about playing at Gordonstoun later.

While in the army I bought a similar French-style horn by Mahillon in a Darlington junk shop, and on that I played wind-octets and other chamber music with Cambridge friends, and in the College orchestra. Hubert Middleton, who ran the orchestra one day asked if anyone would like to conduct – I'd always wanted to and grabbed the chance. So between the two, that was more or less the end of economics, which didn't seem to make any sense anyway, as it was taught then at Cambridge, compared with what was going on in the financial world, and was dead boring the way it was taught there. So at the end of the year, I did so well in Schools that they gave me a Special (a mark well below a Third) and said that either I stopped this music nonsense and did law properly, or went down. They didn't give me the option of switching to music, which I'd not wanted anyway, since it was all theoretical and what I wanted to do was conducting (though Raymond Leppard, who was a contemporary, did manage to do both).

So there followed a somewhat strained summer. Partly it was that music wasn't a very respectable career, and Grandma Solomon said that she'd remember me very handsomely if I gave it up for that reason – her husband had been an artist, so that was respectable, whereas a musician wasn't, but also that it was a precarious career financially. I think it was more the security as well as not following family footsteps that made my parents disapprove, even though it might have to be as a solicitor, since beginning barristers are notably impoverished for several years. I was offered a place in the family Bank, Samuel Montagu's, but only if I worked hard and successfully enough to become a partner – there was no place for a Montagu on the shop floor as one might say, nor was there any way to carry a semi-drone, as there

had been in the palmy days a generation back, when Grandpa (Louis) had spent more time breeding cows than banking. But I didn't see that as a lifetime career. I was talked into taking a course of Roman Law, then and maybe still an essential preliminary to a legal career, with a law crammer at one of the Inns, but Justinian didn't attract me any more than economics had.

I did have some support from two friends in particular, Beatrice MacDermott, an artist friend of my parents, and even more Elisabeth Furse, a cousin by marriage. Her first husband had been Peter Haden-Guest, the son of Aunt Carmel, Granny-mother's sister; Elisabeth always referred to Granny-mother as Aunt Gladys. And I do have to say that my parents weren't being coercive – persuasive yes, but never coercive. Eventually, when I started conducting concerts, Ewen took pride in what I was achieving and, as I said, they had never tried to oppose me.

Both Beatrice and Elisabeth were a refuge, Beatrice always peaceful, and Elisabeth's house anything but, but always warm and welcoming, full of lodgers and children. One of the lodgers was a repetiteur at Covent Garden, Maurits Sillem, and over the years I bought many older edition Eulenberg miniature scores from him as he updated his own library. It was Elisabeth, too, who later ran a famous bistro in Ebury Street behind the Royal Court Theatre. Both Beatrice and Elisabeth encouraged me to make up my own mind, as eventually I did, and went on helping and encouraging me through my first years as a music student.

I wrote to the Royal College of Music, asking for an audition – this was early September, close to the beginning of term. 'Yes, very nice,' they said. 'Come for an audition in April and start next year.' So then I wrote to Royal Academy. 'Yes, very nice,' they said. 'Come for an audition in November and start next term.' So then I wrote to the Guildhall (I'd never heard of Trinity) and they said 'Yes, very nice, come for an audition on Thursday and start next week.' So I took my

horn and played them the Mendelssohn 'Nocturne'. Edric Cundell, the Principal, asked why I'd picked that. He said that, as a horn player himself, he thought it the most difficult piece in the repertoire. I explained that while I could play most of the Beethoven Sonata, the batteries of arpeggios towards the end defeated me, whereas I could play every bar of the Nocturne. Despite that he accepted me and I was in.

Chapter 4

A Music Student and Conducting

As I've said, I had started on the horn at school and had made reasonable progress on it at Gordonstoun, with some nasty shocks on the way. The first time I played in the orchestra, we were doing the *Egmont Overture*, and just as we got to the final coda, with its fortissimo horn arpeggios, the fire alarm went off. The first horn, who was in the school fire service which covered all the local neighbourhood, shot from his seat, and there was I left alone to cope with them as best I could. Another time we were playing Schubert's *Fifth Symphony*, and in the slow movement I could see this black patch at the end getting closer and closer (I was first horn by then), and it's not an easy transposition, that one, but I sailed through it OK, rather to my, and Frau Lachmann's, surprise.

She was the music mistress and she taught all the instruments, and very well, too. She taught singing, too, and I seem to remember her singing a good baritone when we performed *Elijah* with the local choral society – they sang in Welsh from tonic solfa and the school choir sang in English from staff notation, but it went well. This was when the school was evacuated to Llandinam in mid-Wales.

I had got my start as a conductor at Trinity, when Dr Middleton had asked if anyone wanted to try conducting. I did, very much – as a child I'd been chased away from the bandstand in Kensington Gardens for imitating the conductor and putting the band off. The first work I did was Mozart's *Titus Overture*, and the second Gluck's *Alceste Overture*,

much more difficult to handle, and then some other works. Then I had a chance to conduct CUMS Junior Orchestra, and did *Egmont*, which came off as a performance, and after that there was no turning back – I was going to be a conductor.

So that was my first subject at Guildhall, initially with Joseph Lewis. Second was horn, with Alan Hyde, and third, because some knowledge of string playing was thought essential for a conductor, was viola, which I was never any good at – I was too old, over 21 by then, to learn to bend my wrist into position. Later on, I had one go on the cello with Christopher Bunting, and that was so easy, the wrist in a natural position that I wished I'd chosen that, but it was too late by then. Ky Bunting had a nice party trick, playing 'The Swan' with an orange in his left hand, moving the orange up and down the fingerboard.

Joseph Lewis had been a BBC Staff conductor in his time and a friend of Henry Wood and Adrian Boult, and he knew his stuff, especially with choruses. One of the things he emphasised was the importance of a clear beat (based on Boult's excellent little handbook) and on practising, practising, and practising, never listening to a piece of music on wireless or gramophone without a stick in your hand, until beating patterns became totally automatic and never had to be thought about – mine still are today. He told me that when he visited Henry Wood as he was dying, Timber said to him 'I'm still practising my beats.' He did use to tease Boult, though, about his long sticks, which sometimes looked like a punt pole, though never stiff in his hand. Boult had little sense of humour and once when he and Joe were visiting Beatrice Harrison, who used to accompany nightingales on her cello, she said 'But you must come back in summer and see my blue tits' – Joe could hardly suppress his giggles, but Boult didn't see what was funny. Joe taught by conducting gramophone records, and I already knew better than to do that – when one of his other pupils got his first go with the second orchestra, they got slower and slower and slower, because he was following them, just as he had always followed the

records, and they were following him. So Joe and I spent most of our time talking and I owe him a lot. He taught me to ‘sing down the stick’ and because of that performance of *Egmont* at CUMS, I knew what he meant – you have to project the music mentally to the orchestra. He said, ‘Breathe with your soloist,’ and ‘Tie your stick to the fiddler’s bow,’ and I knew what he meant by those, too, from my army days in Port Said. I was once going to do the Tchaikovsky *Violin Concerto* with a fellow student in Second Orchestra, and I went into his lesson on it with his teacher, Bratza, with my fellow student’s girl friend playing the piano reduction of the score. Bratza stopped him at one point, and said, ‘No, play it like this,’ and the moment Bratza started to play I knew exactly what he was going to do several bars ahead. Whether you call it thought-transference, telepathy, or whatever, it’s there and it works.

Playing music together *is* telepathy – if you can’t project it, on the one hand, and receive it on the other, you’ll never get anywhere. One may not be conscious of it, but that’s the only way great performances happen. After Beecham died, Felix Aprahamian asked me what was it about him that worked like that, and I told him about ‘sing down the stick’ – that’s what Tommy did, and what some conductors, for example Anatole Fistoulari, who often conducted the Royal Phil, couldn’t do. He could beat time clearly enough and no doubt he looked romantic enough to be popular with the audience, but that’s as far as it went. Oh, we played all the notes, but it wasn’t a performance. Furtwängler had the same magic as Beecham – he had a notoriously vague way of starting a work, so much so that people used to ask his players how they knew when to start. One answer was ‘We wait for the thirty-second wiggle on the right and then begin,’ but the truth was that there was never any doubt – he projected something like a mental lightning flash. Some conductors are curiously limited in this respect. Malcolm Sargent had it with choruses – they loved him and were immediately receptive to what he wanted, but he didn’t have it

with us, and there was seldom any rapport with his orchestras. This was partly because he never really accepted us as fellow-professionals – we were his serfs, just there to serve his ambitions. But back to the Guildhall.

We formed a small conductor's orchestra, three or four of us, getting a few players together who were happy to get a chance to play more, each of us getting a score and parts out of the Westminster Public Music Library and taking it in turns. I got a lot more than my share, because the others would say 'Jeremy, I've not had time to look at this – would you like to do it?' Well, I reckoned that if I couldn't sight-read a Mozart or Haydn score quicker than a student orchestra could play it, there was something wrong with me, so I did. That led to me forming a small student orchestra to give concerts. I offered the New West End Synagogue free concerts if we could have the hall free, and they were happy with that. In those days students were happy to play for nothing because it meant learning the repertoire. Those synagogue concerts were the beginning of the Montagu String Orchestra that I later turned professional.

While I was a student, I got myself a job as orchestral factotum with the Boyd Neel Orchestra and I got to know a lot of professionals through that, and some of them used to come and help stiffen my own student orchestra. One of them was Cecil Aronowitz, and he was magical. When he came into a rehearsal where we were already playing, the whole standard went up just like that – he had that presence, and his own sound was wonderful. He had been almost self-taught in South Africa, trying to produce the quality of sound on his viola that Fritz Kreisler made on his violin, and he succeeded. He was playing for one of my most disastrous concerts in those days. We were doing *Brandenburg 6*, and in the slow movement I got lost, the orchestra got lost, and altogether it was a terrible performance. Meeting on the stairs afterwards one of my old friends from Cambridge who'd been in the audience, I said 'Wasn't that awful?' and he said 'Oh I thought it was

rather good,' so after that I never paid any attention to what 'musical' people said – we performers know how we do, good or bad. Telling one of my grandchildren that story the other night, it reminded me that I was not the only conductor to have such an experience – there was an occasion once when Beecham was conducting one of the big French impressionist works, Debussy or Ravel, can't remember which. Windmilling away, he called out 'Where are we, boys?' – I think it was Alan Civil who saved that occasion by putting in a forte horn passage that we all recognised. Who saved me in the Brandenburg I can't remember – Cecil probably, or maybe Brigitte Geiser on cello.

Cecil used to give wonderful parties (I used to mix a punch for him), to which all the best chamber and other musicians came. I remember the first time Julian Bream came, still then a young soldier in uniform, and he played guitar transcriptions of the Bach solo fiddle sonatas – all the violinists there were twitching their fingers with envy as he sailed through them. Then he went on to the cello sonatas, and all the cellists were in the same boat. Gwen was often with me there, and once, just before Rachel was born, people asked when she was due; Gwen said 'Yesterday' and there was a rush for a chair. Another time she met there Miron Grindea, who founded and edited *Adam*, the arts journal, who had taken her out to dinner once when she was on holiday in Paris, before she met me, an entertaining re-encounter. They were good days.

Alan Hyde was with us on one of the Boyd Neel tours, and of course I was on first name terms with all the orchestra, including Boyd, but Alan was my teacher, and in those days one addressed one's teachers as 'Sir' or 'Mr Hyde'. So I'd call the rest of the band Maurice (Maurice Clare, our leader) and Boyd by those names, and everyone else similarly, but him as Mr Hyde. At our first lesson afterwards, I said to him, 'Do you know, Sir, I didn't know what to call you on that tour,' and he said 'Yes, I noticed that,' so after that I called him Alan. He used a screw-bell

horn that packed flat like a suitcase, with the bell facing upwards, the first of those I'd seen, and he kept his clockwork razor inside the bell.

Once I was asked to ferry Josef Krips, the well-known Austrian conductor, from his hotel in Kensington to a rehearsal with the Boyd Neel at the People's Palace in the East End. As we slowly bucketed across London in my little Ford 10 car he gave me a long disquisition on the importance of conducting everything from memory. One advantage of working for that orchestra was all the interesting people that one met, members of the orchestra, visiting conductors, and soloists such as Leon Goossens. He came into the Bate Collection once, not long before he died, and not only was it a pleasure to see him again, but I was able to reunite him with one of his ex-students, John Warrack, who he had not realised was then one of our lecturers. John had been one of my first soloists, when he was a student at the Royal College, playing the Cimarosa-Benjamin *Concerto*.

I was switched from Alan Hyde to Raymond Bryant as my horn teacher, for Alan only took first instrument pupils, and my first study was conducting. Raymond was famous for starting the Ring Cycles at Covent Garden – he played fourth Wagner tuba and eighth horn, and it's the eighth horn that plays the first notes in *Das Rheingold*. I upgraded my instrument by buying a Kruspe single-F horn from Tony Tunstall, an ex-fellow student and by then first horn at Covent Garden, who was upgrading to an Alexander double. That Kruspe was a lovely, free-blowing horn and I've always regretted selling it to Christopher Baines (Tony's brother) after I left Guildhall, thinking then that I'd never play horn again. When I started teaching horn to school children I tried to get it back, but he'd passed it on to someone in Glasgow and it had vanished.

I began to acquire an interest in earlier music and its instruments through the Galpin Society, to which I'd been introduced by Eric Halfpenny while playing in amateur orchestras to learn the repertoire, as recounted in the next chapter. My knowledge of music history

was increasing, too, and I became aware that the horn I was playing on wasn't what Mozart and Beethoven had written for. While I was touring with the Boyd Neel during the Festival of Britain in 1951, I went into a music shop in Wisbech and asked if they had any old instruments. Well, there was a horn upstairs, they thought; someone had ordered it in 1870 and never collected it. There was indeed, a Besson handhorn in its original fitted box with a full set of crooks plus a two-valve tuning slide. There was no way I could carry the box, plus all our music, plus all our music stands, so they put the horn and its crooks in an old tea sack and I left the box – like an idiot I did not think to take it to the station and have it shipped to London by rail.

Eric introduced me to Reginald Morley-Pegge, and Morley played me a written C major scale on the hand, without the slightest tonal difference between the stopped and open notes. He had been trained on the handhorn in Paris in the days when it was still taught there. We all called him Morley, incidentally, only Brian Galpin (and Morley's wife) calling him Reg. He showed me how to tune the handhorn: play the 7th partial (written as a B flat but much flatter than that) to whatever note that would be on a piano, depending on what crook one was using, with the hand in the normal valve horn position. Then bring the hand over, part stopping the bell, to bring all the other harmonics into tune. And so one played 'open' notes about a third stopped, and the 'stopped' notes about two-thirds, opening a bit for the written E and closing a bit more for the semitones between the harmonics, and thus, with the help of the lip, it was possible to keep the tone quite even, and that was the French tradition. I'm not good enough (or didn't practice enough) to do that – I can do it from the G (6th partial) up to C (8th) with G, A, B, and C even in sound, but not the F and D below the G, both of which need more stopping than the A and B.

A year or two before that, I had wanted to get into first orchestra but they had their quota of horns. So they said, 'Why don't you learn percussion, it'd be very good for your rhythm as a conductor.' So I

did, and I had six weeks to learn to play a side drum because we were going to play for the first acoustic test of the newly-built, but unfinished, Royal Festival Hall. Each of the London Colleges played for a test, and we were the first. In those days every concert began with the National Anthem, so I became the first player ever to play under a conductor in that hall, for of course the National Anthem begins with a side drum roll. A pretty dreadful roll it was too, for one can't really learn to do that in six weeks however much one practises. And worse was to come: we had Rimsky-Korsakov's *Caprice Espagnol* on the programme, and that has a long side drum roll, starting fortissimo and dwindling to pianissimo when it accompanies the solo fiddle. I couldn't hear Leonard Friedman, our leader (the acoustics were terrible), so I kept trying to get quieter and quieter, and the roll kept stopping because I couldn't do it any quieter. Cundell wasn't too pleased.

Len was my closest friend at Guildhall and he said that perfect pitch was an essential tool for any conductor (he had it – so did Alan Hyde and Alan said that it was a curse because whenever he had to play with a slightly different tuning pitch he had to transpose mentally every note a little flat or sharp). Len told me to sing the very C major opening of Mozart's *Jupiter Symphony* whenever I walked past a piano, and then hit middle C to check it. It didn't take long to acquire it like that, though I doubt whether I still have it – it needs practice to keep it up. He gathered a small orchestra at my and Elisabeth Furse's request to play a concert of music by Fania Fenelon, which I conducted, with Len playing her *Violin Concerto*. Fania had been a concentration camp prisoner, who had survived by running an orchestra there. The concert was in Granny-mother's drawing room.

Switching to percussion was of course a considerable impetus to instrument-buying. The Guildhall's stock of percussion was pretty antiquated. The side drum was a poor-quality military-style drum, not a full-size Guards' drum but something around half-size, of boys' band

quality, and apart from that being not of concert quality I needed my own to practise at home. My first was a Hawkes Snapper, brass-shelled, single tensioned and old, but an excellent drum – so much so that I used it years later to get the sound that seemed to be wanted in the first performance of a work by Walton with the BBC. The Guildhall's cymbals were first rate, pre-war Zildjians, to my mind still a better sound than the modern Boston-made Zildjians. The bass drum wasn't bad but its beater was a hard felt nineteenth-century military band one, the sort that whacks instead of booming. The tambourine wasn't bad either, but nothing like as good as the Salvation Army one that I bought from their depot in Judd Street and I still think theirs are better than most of the modern ones that produce a sort of rustling sound – maybe OK for *Forest Murmurs* but not what you want for big concert works. The tambourine is almost a trade-mark for the Salvation Army, so they should be good! The Guildhall triangle had a definite pitch which made a harmonic clash in some works, and the glockenspiel was a little keyboard-operated horror by Chappell – Teddy Rushforth, who was the percussion teacher, sold me a beauty which is now on display in the Bate, a home-made frame with black steel bars by Stubbs, dated 1912. There wasn't a xylophone or anything like that. The tims were OK for their period, provided you didn't need to play anything modern, because they were hand-tuned of course, but the heads were clapped out.

Teddy Rushforth, who taught percussion at the Guildhall, was getting very elderly and really not up to it, so I asked Jimmy Blades to teach me – I'd met him on various Boyd Neel gigs. Jimmy, who became a life-long friend, would never charge me a penny, bless him, and when I needed a lesson or any help I'd ring him up and either go down to him in Ewell or he'd say 'Meet me in the Piccadilly Studios' or wherever, and he'd give me a lesson after the broadcast or recording.

Jimmy sold me a good pair of tims that had belonged to his brother Tommy which served me well till I bought my first pedals (through him

again) for the José Limón tour. Later I swapped that first pair for my eighteenth-century double drums. Jimmy had found them in a school and he tipped me off about them. The school wanted an ordinary pair, which would be far more useful to them, so he arranged a straight swap for me, and I wound up with the only known surviving pair in Britain of the sort of drums that Handel used to borrow from the Royal Armouries for special occasions. I played them in the Sheldonian Theatre here for a *Messiah* on the fourth centenary of his birth, and I used them once for a *Fireworks Music* with two pairs of the ordinary eighteenth-century size. That's why they're called double drums – they are almost double the diameter of the ordinary drums of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They were sometimes also called Artillery Drums because they were too big to use on horseback in the cavalry, but could be carried in chariots that were part of the Train of Artillery along with the guns. Jimmy didn't want them himself for the larger of the pair was almost as wide in diameter as he was tall. I chose suitable heads for them from H. Band in Brentford, top quality calf but much thicker than modern heads, and lapped them myself, and I turned a pair of sticks of suitable size and weight from a couple of mahogany chair legs, because the weight of the sticks must match the characteristics of the drum. Like all my other timpani, they're on loan in the Bate now, as are the sticks. I used them again recently for a run-through of *Israel in Egypt* with the Thames Valley Early Music Forum – they had asked me whether as their President I'd join them as their guest, but I said you can't be both President and guest and paid up like everyone else. It meant getting back into practice, but it was good fun.

As I became a more advanced student, my conducting teacher changed to Aylmer Buesst, who was a much more systematic and serious teacher. He was a Wagnerian and had written a good book on *The Ring*, a copy of which I still have with his dedication in it, having succeeded in buying a second copy so that I could rescue the original from my son Simon, and Aylmer had been conductor of the Moody

Manners Opera Company and others. As one came into his room he would call out *Magic Flute*, or *Beethoven Second*, or any of the other really tricky openings, and one had to be instantly prepared to show that one could indicate them clearly. He never used records to teach, of course, but always played piano, following one's beat so that one could hear what one was doing wrong. He also often had two of us at once, so one could see all one's fellow student's mistakes or awkward beats far more easily than one could see one's own.

Eventually I turned my own orchestra professional because all my old players had finished their studies and were also professionals, and I wanted to carry on with the players whom I knew and who were friends, rather than starting again with a new lot of more junior students whom I didn't know. I was able to do this because I was still living at home and had no rent to pay, and many meals were also free. So I could use what I earned as a drummer to cover the loss on my own concerts in public halls instead of the New West End Synagogue Hall. My leader, Jimmy Barton, a left-handed violinist who was later very successful in the Allegri Quartet because all four instruments could face outwards, felt that he wasn't up to leading it as a professional orchestra (or maybe he'd got tired of me!) and someone introduced me to Tessa Robbins. She led for me thereafter, except for one concert at which Hugh Bean deputised for her. Our first concert was at Kensington Town Hall, with Leonard Friedman playing Gordon Jacob's *Violin Concerto* and a friend, Harold Truscott, playing the Bloch *Concerto Grosso no. 1*. I'd asked Gordon to be our patron because he'd written several excellent works for string orchestra, and he was one of the few composers of whom you could be certain, before opening the score, that every note would be playable. I reckoned there were only three, then, of whom that could be said: Britten, if only by the players of his opera group; Malcolm Arnold, by players of LPO standard, and Gordon by any competent players, like mine, so far as his orchestral parts went. His solo parts could be demanding, though. John Warrack, who'd been one

of his students, told me of the first performance of the *Horn Concerto*. As Dennis Brain came to the cadenza, Gordon leant forward in his seat, and as Dennis sailed through without a qualm, Gordon sank back with ‘Strewth.’ With other composers one always had the worry that looking through the score one might find a low B for the violas or some other silliness, as in a work described below.

I decided to ask Norman Del Mar for private conducting lessons. Aylmer Buesst was a good teacher, but better on the classics and the standard repertoire than on some of the modern works I was beginning to conduct. I had a policy of planning concerts that were first half Baroque and early Classical, played as authentically as we could in those days, with harpsichord continuo, and once in a Handel *Concerto Grosso*, with Julian Bream on lute as continuo for the concertino and Jane Clark, my normal player from whom I learned much, on harpsichord for the ripieno. We added ornaments, altered note values, and so forth, as they did in the Baroque. There was in those days no supply of early violins and other instruments like there is now, so we were doing the best we could on modern instruments – this was in the early 1950s when we were one of the very few orchestras doing this – Bob Dart may have been the only other one in London. My pioneer work in that field is all forgotten today, over sixty years later.

But the music we had then! There were no Urtext editions in the early 1950s. The scores in the, Bach-Gesellschaft, the various Gesamp-tausgaben, the Ricordi Vivaldi, they were all reasonably clean, but the band parts! Full of late nineteenth-century markings: bowing marks, slurs, dynamics, hairpins, you name it – it was all there. It took hours to clean them up, Tippex (if anyone remembers what that was) and before that was available white ink or a scalpel when the parts were my property, soft 6B pencil when they were hired. I had bought Dannreuther’s and Dolmetsch’s books on ornamentation in my student days, so even then I was beginning to have some ideas on what was done in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and on what

wasn't, those periods being the main fodder for a string orchestra. As time went on, I learned more and more from Jane Clark, who went on playing harpsichord continuo for me after I'd turned the orchestra professional, and from talking to others. We once played a Vivaldi concerto, one of the non-solo ones, where the slow movement was just a progression of chords, very beautiful, but clearly with something missing. I asked someone (I wish I could remember who) what was missing. 'Improvisation,' he said, but none of us, except maybe Jane, had learned how to do that in those days. Same problem arises in *Brandenburg 3*, of course – what do you do between the two movements? I took Tovey's advice, back in the student days, and scored out a few bars from something else of Bach's that ends with the right chords. It didn't sound very convincing, but at least it was something, and it wasn't just the two chords, which is how it was usually played in those days – even as a student I could recognise a cadential ending when I saw one.

The second half always included a first, or very early performance of something newish because that was the way to attract the critics and ensure a review, favourable one hoped, and thus publicity. But even an unfavourable review was worth having because at least one's name was publicised and with luck it would be the music, rather than the performance, that got slated. As I've said, Len Friedman played Gordon Jacobs's *Violin Concerto* with us, for example, I think its second performance, and we performed Howard Ferguson's *Piano Concerto*, the first performance that hadn't been played by Dame Myra Hess for whom he'd written it. Another wasn't new but was little known: Hindemith's *Trauermusik* with Cecil Aronowitz as soloist, written when George V died (allegedly the BBC locked Hindemith in a room until he'd finished it). There were many others.

When the work was slated it was sometimes unfairly. I once had two first performances in the programme, the first one by an ex-fellow student for strings and percussion (with Jimmy Blades on the latter),

a work that was melodic and showing good promise of future ability. The other was atonal and incomprehensible – the finale was a fugue at the semitone, and the rhythmic complexity was such that Norman had quite an effort showing me how to handle it. We couldn't understand what the composer (who'd better remain anonymous) was getting at, and according to the orchestra nor could he. They told me that the expression on his face at rehearsal could only mean 'So that's what it sounds like.' There'd been one horrible noise at the first run through – he'd written octave F flats, second fiddles on the top line and the firsts an octave above. The seconds had taken the easy way and played an open E string, whereas the firsts had played an F flat, which isn't the same as an E. I said the seconds had better suffer and play it properly, but Tessa said why didn't the firsts play an open E harmonic, so that's what we did. I had asked his publisher if he had anything available because I had seen some interesting works of his, and he was quite an established figure, well-known as an author for his writings on contemporary French music. This work arrived in the post, superscribed 'For the Montagu String Orchestra', which made it very difficult to send it back, even though his manuscript parts were almost unreadable as well as unplayable! Another reason that I couldn't send it back was because I hadn't opened the packet of string parts until we were getting ready for the concert and had already advertised the programme, because I'd been ill with mumps (I've had children since then). But the review of the student work was headed 'The Bang' and scoffed at it, and the review of the other was duly respectful – after all, the critic had to show that he had understood and appreciated it.

It can be quite difficult to persuade amateur orchestras, or even some young and budding professionals, that E sharps aren't F naturals nor B sharps Cs and so on (we don't meet F flats very often but the others turn up quite frequently). In many harmonic contexts they can be quite a long way apart, a good eighth of a tone, the well-known wolf tone, so called because it howls like a wolf. In one of the Bach violin concerti

there are some B sharps and they're way above C natural. For that matter with the cycle of fifths, if you start on C you wind up on a B sharp quarter of a semitone above C – hence all our problems with tuning and temperament. I learned that the hard way in one rehearsal when we were playing the Mozart *E flat Piano Concerto, K.449*. It's one of the three that can be played without the oboe and horn parts, just on strings (you have to add a few notes to the viola part to complete the harmony in one or two places). We had played through the opening tutti, and when the piano came in for the first solo entry it sounded quite revolting. We realised that the strings had gone quite a long way away from equal temperament and I had to tell them to remember at the concert that the piano was going to join us. I suspect that that is why Beethoven provided a figured bass part for his piano concertos – if the soloist played a simple continuo throughout the tuttis, the strings would keep in equal temperament and be in tune with it.

Norman was a first rate teacher – he could show how one could cope with every possible complexity and the effect and influence of every slightest flick of the stick. He was also, having been a successful orchestral player himself, a mine of information on what would work and what would not. For example, to me the obvious way to conduct the 5/4 movement of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* is in two beats, the second longer than the first, but he knew that orchestras wouldn't like it, even though that gives much more feeling of a limping waltz than beating it out in a quick five. I also suggested doing that tricky rhythm in Copland's *El Salon México* in three beats – two long and one short, 3+3+2 and 3+3, but he insisted that it should be done in four across the rhythm, and indeed when a while later I played it under Copland with one of the BBC provincial orchestras, he did it in four. There were many other such examples of his teaching. The odd thing was that sometimes he didn't follow his own advice. I once played Khachaturian's *Violin Concerto* under him (that was after he came to the Guildhall to teach conducting and I'd returned there, at his

suggestion, so as to pay less for his lessons), and in the finale he went into windmill mode, making it very difficult to follow him or know where we were.

Like me, he conducted a lot of amateur orchestras (his a higher class than mine) and he often called me in as his peripatetic percussion player – such orchestras often feel that any fool can play the timps, often putting the conductor's or somebody else's girl friend on that, but realise that the side drum, or even a tricky timpani part, can be another matter. Occasionally, too, I deputised for him, conducting a rehearsal when he was conducting somewhere else. Once I was playing timps for him in the Three Hospitals Orchestra and we were doing the Beethoven *Violin Concerto* – a nerve-wracking part for the timpanist because however carefully one tunes, one wonders whether the orchestra will have the same D as me when they come in on the fifth note. Anyway, I played those first five notes with one hand, for I am sure that that is the best way to keep them absolutely even. Norman stopped me. 'Jeremy, did Beethoven say to play them with one hand?' 'No, Norman,' I replied. 'So don't play them that way,' he said. So I didn't because whatever you're playing the conductor is always right – at least then, if not in the pub afterwards.

Another conductor that I often deputised for, once for a year at a time while he sorted out a new orchestra and got its regular day changed so it didn't clash with his others, was Roy Budden. He had two orchestras, one in Hendon (though it met nearer to Golders Green) and the other at the Working Men's College in Camden Town, as evening classes, both of them quite good and nice to work with. He also had a small professional touring orchestra for school concerts and music clubs that I usually played for. We'd take my smaller drum into the body of the coach and the whist players would use it as a card table while the bigger drum went with the bass in the boot.

The conductor has the most expensive instrument of all, for he can't play a single note without paying the band. That's why we all cut our

teeth on amateur orchestras that will either play for us for free, or, if they are established, even pay us a modicum to conduct them. With my own string orchestra, once it was professional, it was another matter – I had to pay them. Some aspiring conductors are lucky enough to find a sponsor, someone who will cover the almost inevitable losses of concerts as Mrs Hunt did for Harry Newstone and the Haydn Orchestra, or find someone to provide them with an orchestra, as June Hardy did for Colin Davis with the Kalmar Orchestra. I wasn't so lucky, but I had the inestimable advantage that I was living free with my parents, and later with Gwen on her salary, so that what I earned as a drummer I could lose as a conductor. I always budgeted my concerts so that they would break even: if we sold every seat, that would cover player's fees, printing and publicity, hire of music (I had a fairly big library of my own for the standard works, but much could only be hired), hire of hall, and so on. But of course we never did sell out, usually not doing much better than half full.

So I decided to sell concertos. A solo appearance in a concerto with an orchestra was much more likely to draw the major critics than a solo recital in the Wigmore Hall that a soloist would have to pay all the costs to put on, so it was quite a good deal for the player. I told them that I knew I could half-fill the hall and that if they could fill the other half with their friends it wouldn't cost them a penny, but if not they would have to pay for whatever size half their friends hadn't covered. In return they could have two concertos, one in each half, or of course they could split it with a friend, taking one concerto each. This was quite successful, and one soloist was ambitious enough to insist on doing concertos that had wind instruments and was willing to cover the additional costs to pay for them, so I had the fun of conducting, at her expense, the Mozart *G minor Symphony* (the oboe version since her concertos didn't need clarinets, and anyway I have a slight preference for that resulting acidity of tone colour) and I can't remember what else, maybe an oboes-and-horns Haydn symphony. I used colleagues from

the Royal Phil for the wind. It was at another of those concerts that another soloist (a distant cousin), playing the Haydn *Piano Concerto*, took the wrong fork at a T-junction, and we found ourselves back in the exposition instead of the recapitulation, a rather hairy moment, but we got back together somehow.

Odd things happen at concerts for different reasons. I once did a concert at Central Hall, Westminster, the big Methodist church just off Parliament Square, for some Jewish organisation, can't remember what. The acoustics there are a bit weird and in *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* there are three big chords. I had to wait between each for the echo to die away. Two of the orchestra had their bags pilfered from the green room during the performance – apparently Central Hall is notorious for that but nobody had warned us. The Wigmore Hall used to have that latter problem, too, and so does the Holywell Music Room in Oxford.

There've been entertaining moments, too. I was once doing a concert in the cloisters of Beaulieu Abbey (Charles Groves was in the audience and was complimentary afterwards and maybe that's how I got the Bournemouth date). There's a long walk on there, from the green room down the cloister wall to the corner where the orchestra plays, and that was already a slight problem for me for this was the day after I'd married Gwen, and I was in fear that the orchestra would break into the 'Wedding March' at my first appearance, but we'd kept it secret and luckily they didn't. The second work was a Haydn Horn Concerto, and I'd gone off to collect Dennis Brain. As we walked back together, there was a man crouching, taking a photograph, running ahead of us, crouching again, and so on. Dennis muttered to me 'Who's that idiot?' 'My father,' I muttered back – I still have a print of one the photos. Gwen came to the rehearsal, as well as the concert, but for the rehearsal she'd taken off her wedding ring and strung it round her neck just in case anyone noticed. She put it back on for the drinks after the concert and we announced the wedding then.

I'd first met Dennis Brain many years before. Granny-mother had asked him to lunch so that I could meet him when I began studying the horn seriously. He asked me to research the fourth Mozart concerto, K 495, because different editions of that work have considerably different numbers of bars in them. Despite help and encouragement from Alec King, Music Librarian at the British Museum (long before the library split away and became the British Library) I couldn't come to any conclusion save for a suspicion that the longer version had been written in by Hermann Kling, one of the editors. Manuscripts have become available since then (there's an excellent facsimile of all four horn concertos), but I've never bothered to check it. But it meant that we gossiped whenever we met thereafter. Once I asked him why in his later performances of the Britten *Serenade* in the prelude and postlude for natural horn he had stopped using the 13th partial for the written A and switched to the 14th (a written B flat). 'Ben preferred it,' he said. No doubt there's many other points of musical history, otherwise unknown, that would have been solved if anyone had written down similar snippets of casual chat. But it also meant that I could ask him to play a couple of concertos at that Beaulieu concert. Similarly, it was the many people I'd got to know in the Early Music world that allowed me to run the Bate Weekends and, through running FoMRHI, of which more later that I got to know most of the people who made reproduction instruments and so could find people who'd be willing to measure and draw a plan of our instruments. In many professions, contacts are everything.

It was at a concert at Hampstead Town Hall just after we'd married that I was conducting some works that Max Hinrichsen had published, including some very attractive piano pieces by Serge Lancen that Serge had arranged for string orchestra for me. He found Gwen and I laughing together after the rehearsal, and when I introduced Gwen he asked us how long we'd been married. 'Three weeks,' we said, and he replied 'And you are still so happy?' Poor Max, he'd had a difficult

life, but he was very nice and very kind. That remark of his became something of a catch-phrase between us.

But after Gwen produced Rachel, that all came to an end. She had had to stop work in the last stages of pregnancy, so what I earned now had to feed the family, and except for one last concert, probably via nepotism, and a single engagement with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the rest of my conducting career has been with amateurs.

The nepotism appearance was to provide background music for the banquet at Guildhall in the City of London to celebrate the Tercentenary of the Resettlement of the Jews in this country in 1656. As Ewen was one of the organisers, I always assumed that he had suggested me for this. I don't suppose anybody heard us – we were a smallish string band right up in a gallery at one end of the hall. I was firmly instructed that under no circumstances were we to play the 'Grand March' from Handel's *Scipio* – this was the Lord Mayor's private tune, and as he wasn't going to be there (I've no idea why not – but perhaps he was there as a guest rather than officially) performance of it was forbidden. We did play the National Anthem for the Duke of Edinburgh. As we were a string band, and playing mostly classical music, I scored out the theme from Bach's *Variations on God Save the King* – the London Bach, of course, Johann Christian, not Johann Sebastian. It's a nice version, with an on-the-beat appoggiatura on the fourth note and some other ornaments. Gwen brought Rachel to the rehearsal, only three or so months old, so that she could be admired by the orchestra. Several of my Jewish friends asked for a place in the orchestra so that they could be there for the occasion – Yfrah Neaman, a well-known solo violinist, was one of them.

I'd accompanied Yfrah once in the Bach *E major Violin Concerto* at a concert for the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St John's Wood, and he'd been very complimentary about my accompanying, which was something I owed to old Joe Lewis with his 'tie your stick to the fiddler's bow.' He'd become a family friend and I once turned over

for him at a BBC broadcast with Howard Ferguson on piano. Turning over for a fiddler is more difficult than for a pianist because one has to keep well out of the way until the moment one turns, which meant taking of my shoes and stepping to and fro in my socks on a splintery parquet BBC studio floor so that my to-and-fro footsteps would not be picked up by the mike. I turned over once for Rostropovich at a Bar Musical Society concert (I'd been one of its founders) when he accompanied his wife, Galina Vishnevskaya. I think it was her first London appearance, and I was stunned by her singing, and told him I'd never heard singing like that. When she used vibrato she controlled its speed and width as the expressive ornament it should be, unlike so many others who just kept it the same all the way through, like a goat bleating.

The Bournemouth concert wasn't as successful as it might have been. It was on Boxing Day, and cold enough (the heating in the hall had been turned off all over the Christmas break) that even some of the string players played the rehearsal in gloves. One of the works was both the Malcolm Arnold *English Suites*, and another the Sibelius *Karelia Suite*, all popular pieces suitable for a bank holiday concert. The spare cymbal player they'd called in couldn't count, so I had to devote more attention to him than to the music – fortissimo cymbal crashes in the wrong place can be disconcerting for everyone. So I wasn't asked back. Anyway, I wasn't a conductor in Charles Groves's class – he was then their permanent conductor.

Not that that was my only disaster. I've already mentioned my first *Brandenburg 6*. We were doing the Tschaikovsky *Serenade for Strings* once at a Bar Musical Society concert in Middle Temple Hall with the Queen Mother in the front row (she was an Honorary Bencher there). There's a climatic scale up in the Tschaikovsky, followed by a triumphant return of the main theme. At the end of the scale I gave a crashing down beat, and absolutely nothing happened (I still don't know why). Tessa gave me a horrified look and slashed in a

down bow and all was well – I don't suppose anyone noticed the split-second delay except the orchestra. In the same concert I conducted *Brandenburg no.6* much more successfully than at my first disastrous performance of it, with Cecil Aronowitz again leading first violas and Pat Ireland leading seconds, a wonderful team, though I can't remember the names of the other violas, save for Kay Hurwitz. It was for that *Brandenburg* that Norman and I had long arguments about the trills in the slow movement. In Bach's period, trills started on the upper auxiliary, usually with a longish appoggiatura (a sort of eee-yah...), but today all trills start on the main note. I couldn't convince Norman that the period way was right. There's also the question of should the trill end with a turn or not. I then thought not (now I'm not sure) and asked the players not to. However by force of habit, at least once Cecil did add the turn. We grinned at each other – chamber orchestras and concerts are, or should be, always such friendly affairs.

There may have been other disasters, but they're *perdue dans les brumes d'antiquité*. Just as well, too. Oh, there was one other, but it wasn't my fault that time. I was doing *Così fan Tutte* with an amateur operatic group (the woman singing *Fiordiligi* was superb – she could cover the whole range of 'Come Scoglio' and had the breath control to sing the first part really slowly, too). But between the final rehearsal and the concert they listened to the Karajan recording and decided to sing it his way rather than mine, so we were at cross-purposes most of the way through. I'm not saying I'm better than Karajan, but every conductor has his own ideas and expects singers and players to accept them even if only for that once. That's about the only time I broke a stick in a concert.

I built up quite a connexion with amateur orchestras and choral societies, with several orchestras and at least one amateur operatic society each week, all under the Inner London Education Authority in different schools around London. The ILEA paid so much an hour as the instructor of further education evening classes, usually two hours,

7.30 to 9.30, though in term time only. These became an established part of my income once I was married and had children to feed, like my teaching in schools. It was always a worry, though, whether the orchestra or choir would get enough members to be recognised each year – I can't remember what the number was, twenty or so I think, to cover a conductor and an accompanist. I never wanted a pianist for the orchestras, even if there were gaps in the orchestra and thus some parts missing, so I used that position to employ an advanced student as a leader, which made all the difference to the standard of the string playing. There was one school at Battersea which, as I relate later, I was teaching at and conducting the school orchestra. The boys were so keen to play that I started an evening orchestra for them. One of the amateur operatic societies was also in Battersea. They were an odd lot. One of the chorus singers told me with some pride that he'd never learned to read music, apparently not even realising that when the notes went up and down on the page, so should the voice, or that some notes were different colours than others, so one had to teach them their parts note by note. But we did some successful Gilbert and Sullivan operas and a *Merry Widow*, as well as bits of *Fledermaus* in Battersea Town Hall. Another was in Croydon, again with Gilbert and Sullivan. All good fun, and all keeping me conducting as well as eating.

Once I got to Oxford I was occasionally asked to conduct a local amateur group, but as a matter of deliberate policy after one or two rehearsals, I introduced a student in my place – that's how I got my start, and I thought it incumbent on me to do the same for others. I also ran an unofficial conducting class, for most students hadn't a clue how to do it properly and hadn't realised that there's as much technique required in conducting as there is in playing their instruments (nor have some professional conductors), and I was the only professionally-trained conductor on the Faculty. Unofficial because we don't teach our students how to play their instruments at Oxford – we're a musicology

Faculty, not a Conservatory, something that American friends, where both are almost always combined, find it difficult to understand. I had to resist the impulse to offer some training to some of my fellow Faculty members.

This early part of my life was not confined to study, conducting, and playing, although they were of course the main part. Once I became a music student, some girl friends were longer lasting than those I've mentioned before. We were all in London, for one thing; no more moving from one army base to another, nor up in Cambridge one moment and back in town the next. We kept similar hours and there was more understanding at short-notice cancellations due to the standard free-lance musician policy of never refusing a gig, for I very quickly started playing as a professional, stiffening amateur orchestras; I'd joined the Musician's Union back in 1950. But only one or two of these were that serious on either side. One was a dancer (the Guildhall was a School of Music and Drama) and a very pretty girl, but she came down with TB and had to go to a sanitarium, and that was the end of that.

One, not a fellow student but the niece of a family friend met socially, led to an interesting professional development. She was a ballet dancer, working in modern dance, and her teacher, Audrey de Vos, was interested in improvisation and in working with drum rhythms. So I was asked to take a drum or two to her classes, when I was free, and play for her students, either playing rhythms she dictated, or sometimes asking the student to design some steps and then dictate an appropriate rhythm for me to play – it was interesting how seldom the rhythm they dictated was ever really close to what they wanted. Mme de Vos's most impressive student, still studying with her from time to time, although she was well-advanced in her career and world-famous, was Beryl Grey – it was fascinating to watch her at close quarters and to play for her. I went on playing there whenever I could, long after that girl friend had returned home to America.

Eventually, I met Gwen, as described later, and the others soon faded away, partly because she was even more understanding than the others about short-notice cancellations. They really could be short notice, for sometimes one was called up in the morning to do something that evening, because a fellow player had gone sick or whatever.

Chapter 5

Orchestral Playing

Like most students, as I became competent as a percussion player, I played in amateur orchestras every night of the week. That's how I got to know a lot of the repertoire that I'd later play as a professional with all the confidence that familiarity with the notes can bring. Later, students stopped doing that, and one whom I'd invited to come in at home and play wind octets for fun actually asked what the fee was! He was the son of a well-known professional, too, and he should have known better. And one or two catastrophes at rehearsals in later years with younger players showed that they'd never bothered to learn the repertoire. I remember one Royal Phil concert with an American guest conductor when we were doing Rimsky-Korsakov's *Caprice Espagnol*, and a couple of extra percussion had obviously never heard or played it and never seen a score, for they rode over the long cadenza pauses. What's more, because the conductor was a professional percussion player himself, he must have known exactly what was going on. There is no substitute for experience of the repertoire, and every aspiring orchestral musician should get as much as they can before going into professional bands.

While playing in some of those amateur orchestras I'd met Eric Halfpenny, and under his influence, and of other Galpin Society people whom I had met through him, I had become interested in instruments generally, and I picked up an alto trombone, I can't remember where, that I played occasionally in the Guildhall second orchestra.

I had also started to play percussion professionally, often stiffening, as it's called, local amateur orchestras. I did one pantomime season for the local players in Oxted, and on the last night, rolling up the King, I split my batter-head and had to whip the side drum over quickly and finish on the snare head. I was invited to return the following year, and I conducted that performance from the drums. Because I had to go down regularly for rehearsals I got to know them all well and acquired a rather nice girl friend there. One local orchestra that I played for as a professional (the Croydon Philharmonic, conducted by Arthur Davidson whom I knew as a violinist) had an elderly Frenchman on the double bass who'd played in professional orchestras in Paris before the War. We were playing the Schumann *Piano Concerto* and he looked over to me and said 'You no count bars, do you?' I said yes, and he said 'When you next play?' I said 4 bars after Q or wherever it was. 'We never count bars in Paris,' he said, 'I give you Q.' And as we got to Q, he produced a loud Pssst! Another orchestra I played in for fun was the Morley College Symphony Orchestra (we were all playing as amateurs and students there), a leading light of which was Gerard Hoffnung on tuba. One night Lawrence Leonard allowed him to conduct *Colas Breugnon Overture*, and we all got lost because he could not conduct bars but only the music, which he knew by ear, but he was enormous fun to work with – I still think I may have been the origin of his Tum-Drum cartoon, for my figure has never been svelte. Another night Frankie, as Leonard was known, put on the Nielsen *Fifth Symphony* so that I could play the side drum in it – the part is written out to begin with and then goes 'play on as though you want to stop the orchestra' – good fun to do. Another night Hermann Scherchen came in as a guest conductor, and I was in disgrace because I was next to a broken window and it was raining outside, so the smaller drum couldn't hold a high F.

Before the days of pedal timpani and plastic heads (which never sound as well as calf skin) climate could be a perpetual trial. I once

played for a televised programme with the Northern Sinfonia in Newcastle as a deputy for Charlie Stewart – he was a good drummer but genetically challenged in height and spent a lot of time in hospital and I deputised for him there several times. In those days the television lights put out a lot of heat, so the timps with their calfskin heads rose in pitch almost between every note. I wound up with a bucket of water beside me and kept wiping the heads with a sponge to keep the timps in tune. But that came later in my career as a freelance.

When I was asked to play my first professional pantomime, a *Cinderella* at the Arts Theatre in Cambridge, Jimmy Blades made me a tubular bell, because you can't do *Cinderella* without a bell to strike midnight, sending me off to buy a few feet of brass tube from a metal stockist and a cap from Boosey & Hawkes, and soldering the cap on and then sawing off the end of the tube, bit by bit till we got the pitch right, calling in Joan Goossens, his wife and a professional oboist with perfect pitch, to check it.

I got that job at a few days' notice, on the recommendation of Bill Mann, the *Times* music critic, because the man they had booked, without audition on the assurance that he could read music, proved unable to do so. He accompanied the entry of the well-brought-up little girls of the chorus, who came from local dance schools, with thud, thud, thud, on the bass drum, not Cambridge Arts Theatre style, though maybe OK in Blackpool. The book was new, specially written by V C Clinton-Baddeley, full of witty jokes, with music, if I remember rightly, by Gilbert Vinter. It was a very pleasant run and nice to be back in old haunts. That was an occasion when I didn't meet my wife – we found out years later, after we had married and were reminiscing, that she'd been in the audience one night.

Jimmy put me into various jobs that he was too busy to do, including a Stravinsky *Soldier's Tale* under Jack Samuel (a cousin!), with Colin Davis, soon to become famous as a conductor, on clarinet – I can't remember who all the others were, though I remember that it was the

first time I saw a tenor/bass trombone in B flat and F. Jimmy made me a few gadgets for that, including a fitting for a cymbal on the rim of the bass drum, which is best laid flat in that work, and told me how to make some of the necessary beaters, because often there isn't time to change between pairs and all you can do is flip them over and use the other end. He had played it under Stravinsky and knew what was wanted. He also made me write out some of the movements because the printed parts were quite impossibly laid out in some of the pieces. Since those days there's a new edition with all Jimmy's modifications in it.

Jimmy had a lot of useful tricks to get round sticky parts. Beethoven *Eighth*, for example, with its rapid paired octaves in the finale, is easy on three drums, either two low or two high Fs, and it's also not difficult with only two drums if one uses a low arc between them with one hand, and a high arc between them with the other, turning one's wrists with the two hands almost above each other, both his recommendations. He solved many other problems for me, too, such as a tricky passage on three drums in the second movement of E. J. Moeran's *Sinfonietta*. It becomes easy if you keep one hand on the Es on the middle drum and arch the other hand over for the low As and high Fs on the outer two.

I became fully professional in the early 1950s, playing for Beecham in the Royal Phil, playing in the BBC Symphony, and for anyone else who asked me, as one of the London freelance percussionists. We got together and formed a protest group, asking the Musicians' Union to establish a decent portorage rate to cover the cost of carrying all our gear to concerts, and also to secure Principal Rate for each of us. Orchestral musicians are paid as principals, sub-principals, and rank and file, with in those days a five shilling step between each, £3.10s, £3.5s, and £3 for one rehearsal and concert on the same day. We are trained as sight-readers and one rehearsal is usually enough. When I played as timpanist in the BBC Concert Band around 1956, we'd play one work for the engineers to get the balance right, and then we'd play

straight through the programme, which was always pre-recorded rather than going out live, and then go home. Gilbert Vinter knew exactly what he wanted and his beat was crystal clear and we could all read music, so why play it twice?

Those rates might be fair for string players, and for woodwind, but whether you played bass drum, side drum, or xylophone, you were always playing a solo like the first flute or oboe. I'd been elected secretary, and after a brief struggle we won all our points, and percussion players have been treated as Principals ever since, though managements still scream a bit about portorage, despite it costing a lot more to cart a set of timps and all the other gear around than it does to carry a double bass or a tuba. Gwen, who often helped me, used to ask why I'd never taken up the piccolo instead of the drums.

I've mentioned the quality of the Guildhall's percussion kit, and the Guildhall wasn't alone in this matter. Whenever an outside orchestra was doing a studio broadcast, the BBC expected us to use whatever timpani were in the studio and they were seldom of the same quality as one's own. They would never expect a violinist to play on whatever trade-quality fiddles might be knocking about the studio, but timps were another matter. I remember once being expected to play Reger's *Mozart Variations* on a studio pair of standard size, but that's got a forte low E flat in it, and there was no hope of getting that on a 27-inch timp. I insisted on being allowed to borrow the larger BBC Symphony drum, and after they heard the sound I was getting on the 27-inch they reluctantly brought it in from Studio One. I did in the end win the battle and they agreed to let me bring my own timps in, and to pay portorage for them. Even among professional bodies like the BBC and the Academies there was, in the late 1940s and early '50s, a general attitude that percussion didn't really matter and that any crap kit would do for that. It wasn't helped, either, by the attitude of some players who expected kit to be provided – violinists mortgaged their lives to buy a decent fiddle, but some drummers were reluctant to kit themselves out.

There are sometimes cases where one is grateful for local kit, though. When a composer (Elgar was one) asks for a gong or a cymbal to be hit forte by a triangle beater or some other inappropriate tool, the reaction of the careful player is ‘Not on my kit, mate.’ Similarly for side drum sticks on timpani; we do have proper wooden timpani sticks (e.g. for ‘Mars’ in Holst’s *The Planets*) and they won’t hurt timpani skins, but a *forte* stroke with a side drum stick can go right through. This is why many of us do buy rough old instruments when we see them – it can save damage to one’s proper instruments. For the same reason many string players carry an old bow for the occasions when composers demand *col legno* – who wants to damage the varnish on a £10,000 Tourte bow by banging the stick on wire-covered strings? Rossini’s *Il Signor Bruschino Overture* is a good example of where the use of a cheap old bow pays dividends.

I can’t remember how I got the Northampton pantomime job, which became an annual regular – I suppose the usual grapevine of who knows a drummer? We were two pianos and percussion and the lead piano was Ian MacIntyre, and the three of us did a number of different things together after that, as well as returning for that pantomime in several succeeding years. One was a touring review which included late-night performances at the Edinburgh Festival. One of the advantages of being a drummer is that one does every type of music, with far more variety in one’s life than an oboist, say. About the only thing that I’ve never done is a circus, and that I’m very grateful for, because a circus is a really hard slog for the drummer, long, long side drum rolls while everybody is waiting for the acrobat to fall off the trapeze. And of course one has to watch the horses like a hawk – everyone says how clever the horses are to keep time with the music, but actually the music is keeping time with the horses; it’s often the same in ballet music too, but ballerinas are prettier to watch than horses.

During that late night review, I told the *Jewish Chronicle* that I was going to Edinburgh and asked if they’d like reviews of concerts – I’d

already done a number of reviews for them (two guineas a time, very useful, and of course a free seat) and I knew that they didn't normally cover the Festival. They were happy, so I had a press pass and the use of the Press Club. In those days that was the only place in Edinburgh that you could get a drink on a Sunday, so this was a great advantage. There was a ring of pubs around the periphery of Edinburgh, at whatever was the statutory distance to make one a *bona fide* traveller, for only such persons were then entitled to drink on a Sunday, and these pubs of course were open all day, not just in licensing hours, for one could never tell when such a traveller might arrive, but the city was dry as a bone and only the Press Club was alcoholic. We did a week in Chester once with the Boyd Neel, playing for operas, Cimarosa's *Secret Marriage* and Wolf-Ferrari's *Susannah's Secret*, and the pubs there were packed on a Sunday with thirsty Welshmen from across the border, for there was then no Sunday drinking in Wales either – they booked James MacGillivray, our hard-drinking first oboe and a staunch Galpin member, into a temperance hotel, which caused much laughter and teasing. And so in Edinburgh I got free tickets to any concert I wanted to hear, as well as to the Tattoo, provided I got to my own theatre on time. So I heard a lot of music and picked up an extra couple of guineas for any review I wrote, in addition to my fees for the show.

I think it was on that tour that I first had to work on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement which is a 25-hour Fast Day that one normally spends all day in synagogue. The music was all improvised so that I couldn't put in a deputy, even if I knew a reliable one in Liverpool where we were at that date, and one couldn't let the show down. It was a Saturday that year, so it meant two shows and then pack up the kit. I couldn't break the fast till I was on the night train back to London, with food I'd prudently bought the day before. The second time was in Berlin, during the José Limón modern dance tour, of which more later. The scores were far too complicated to put in someone to sight-read

them, and anyway Germans are not trained to sight-read like we are. I had hoped that the programme would give me the day off, but there was a last minute change and I had to play. If it had just been timps my second would have done it, but in those days Maggie Cotton didn't feel safe playing side drum rolls and the programme change put in a work that included the rolls that I played for her. Whether it's a Holy Day or not, one has a duty to one's employer and one's colleagues as well as to God. But Berlin so soon after the war (it was 1957) was a strain, especially over the Holy Days of New Year and Day of Atonement, not least because we had to catch the metro line whose terminus was Oranienburg (one of the notorious names from the Holocaust) on the way back from the theatre to the hotel.

The longest timpani roll I ever did, even longer than *Finlandia*, was for a storm in an early Elizabethan play (I can't remember which one), twelve minutes continuous on timps with occasional whoops from the pedals, and intermittent slashes at a cymbal, a very old and battered Chinese crash, one of those crap instruments that one keeps for such occasions, with a long threaded steel rod for lightening flashes. Jimmy Blades tipped me off to that idea, and he'd taught me how to cut a thread so I was able to make that. This was at the Mermaid Theatre and Bernard Miles was pleased enough to ask me back for another play later.

I only once got the sack from a show. That was a magician's act, with the music written in luminous ink so that we could read it during the black-outs – we had to hold it under our music-stand lamps to charge it up. Anyway, I was told to play exactly what was on the parts, and I did so, but they weren't happy with it. After a couple of nights, they called in another player, and he played entirely differently from what was on the music, busking it all the way and just what they wanted. This was early in my career and he knew the traditions for that sort of music, and I didn't, the exact reversal of what had happened with the Cambridge *Cinderella* that I've already described, for on that occasion

they didn't want someone who would busk it but someone like me who would read all the notes. Not that one did so all the time – at last once in every *Cinderella* the clock should strike 13 instead of 12, and even if the coach was pulled by horses, a motor horn should sound for its appearance. I bought a good one in Northampton in its original box that said 'As fitted to Rolls Royce'. The rubber bulb wasn't as reliable as it had been when it was made, so I usually took it off and blew it by mouth.

Reviews, in the theatrical sense, and pantomimes, were not my only non-orchestral jobs. After the run of the *Threepenny Opera* was over (it was so successful that it ran for over six months, moving to the Aldwych to allow the Royal Court to go on with its regular programs. I did have occasional nights off – one was for the premiere of the film of Ewen's book *The Man Who Never Was*) I was asked a couple of times to deputise for a week or two in the Hungarian gypsy band at the Lyons Corner House in the Strand while the regular drummer was ill and recovering. The first time I wasn't allowed to touch the *cimbalom* but the second time, after word of my reliability got back to the regular chap, I was invited to do so, but since I didn't know how to tune it, still less how to play it, I thought it safer to leave it alone. The leader was a genuine Hungarian gypsy, with a number tattooed on her arm to prove it. She would call out tunes to play, or diners would call out requests, and I relied on the second fiddle, a nice chap from Czechoslovakia, to tell me what to play. We got tips, drinks or cigarettes, for requests, and there was a standing arrangement with the head waiter that all these would be converted into cash and shared out at the end of the evening, so we did quite well in extra money on top of our regular fees. We wore green shirts and yellow boleros (or vice versa – can't remember which) and a straight black tie – I got permission to wear a bow because otherwise every time I leaned forward to turn over a page of music, my tie would be left draped over the side drum. We used to have a break halfway through the evening and would go round to a

snack bar in Northumberland Avenue for a meal. They had pictures and such like for sale round the walls, and I bought, for a fiver, the mobile that now hangs over my bath and still gives me great pleasure – it was one of the first presents I'd bought Gwen after we married. The second fiddle, incidentally, was very complimentary about Gwen's first attempt at a sourdough rye bread.

I got home very late each night, for I think we went on till around midnight, just as Rachel, then very new, was waking up for her night feed. After she'd fed I played with her and, I fear, blighted her life, for even today she says that if she's awake after a certain hour, she is fully wakeful again, all the result of this early imprinting.

Most of my playing, however, was more respectable (I think I was only once recognised by someone I knew socially in the gypsy band). One long-standing engagement was the Festival Ballet, for whom I played on many tours. Gwen used to complain that I got her pregnant and went off on thirteen-week tours. They were always thirteen weeks because any longer the Ballet would have been responsible for our National Insurance, holiday pay, and so on. Geoffrey Corbett, the conductor, and I had an arrangement that the Ballet would travel one of my drums at his risk (I didn't have pedal timps in those days and I needed four to cover works such as *Witch Boy* and *Bolero*). He would then sit on a cushion on the floor where the car seat had been removed to make room for the drum, and I'd drive him home on Saturday night after the show so we could both have a Sunday at home. Monday mornings I'd pick him up in Highgate and we'd go off to the next town. There were no seat belt rules in those days.

The Festival Ballet were nice people to work for – our only grumble was that we were never asked to play for their London season at the Festival Hall. Presumably we were not prestigious enough, and they used the LPO instead, so we were out of work. To be fair, this may have been at the insistence of the RFH management, because when the ballet was there the LPO couldn't play any concerts and *they*

were therefore out of work, and I think they had a contract with the RFH for so much work a year. There were two of us to share the work, me on timps and a colleague on percussion whose name I can't remember. Whenever I had to put in a bit of percussion because he was already fully occupied (we each have only two arms, whereas some composers, and some managements, seem to think we are as well-equipped as an octopus) they paid a doubling fee for that performance. This was in stark contrast with the Royal Ballet, for whom I did one tour. I was expected there to play by myself what a timpanist and four or five percussion players covered at the Garden. And when I said 'What about doubling fees?' they said 'What's that?' so I wouldn't do another tour for them. The Union insists on such fees because otherwise managements, like the Royal Ballet did, would get away with cutting numbers.

The Union insists on extra payments for over-dubbing, too, putting additional tracks on top of the first one for recordings, films, and television, because they'd prefer the management to book extra players, and of course so would we, for we're all in favour of jobs for the boys. I only got caught on that once. I was asked to go to a tiny studio in Neal's Yard to lay down some base tracks. These are rhythm parts over which other musicians will later add melodic parts. Having done one, I was asked if I'd put another on top. I said OK provided they paid the over-dubbing fee. They said they would, so I went ahead, and at the end they refused to pay any extra money, pleading poverty for a small experimental company, so weakly I gave in. If I'd known the success that *Life of Brian* was going to be, I'd have been a lot tougher, and maybe reported them to the Union and got them and that show black-listed.

Where we did best on over-dubbing was on film scores for Maurice Jarre. He was a fan of my collection and used to ask me to bring a wide variety of instruments, both wind and percussion, long trumpets to make Tibetan noises, for instance, for *The Man Who Would be*

King. We were playing for a film, *The Message*, a life of Mohammed, and there was a march in the desert. We did the usual sort of march rhythms, about five or six of us. Maurice went into the box to listen and came out saying ‘Not enough – we do an overdub.’ So we did, and then another one, and maybe a third on top of that, to sound like a huge army of drummers. Well, Union rates were then, if I remember rightly, 105% of the basic session fee for the first overdub, and 120% for succeeding ones, penal rates deliberately set to encourage the use of more players, but you can’t suddenly call more players out to Denham in the middle of a film session.

Maurice was good at running over the three hours allowed for a session, too, and for exceeding the 20 minutes we were allowed to record in that time, so there was often a second session fee. And I charged a fairly hefty hire fee for all my instruments. Film sessions were usually paid in cash on the day, because nobody ever really trusted film companies not to fold up between session and release, so I’d get home in the evening and peel off a roll of fifty pound notes, one after the other, to Gwen – good money in the 1970s.

I did several other films for Maurice, the television series of *Jesus of Nazareth* (I still get residual fees from that, every time the series is sold to another station), *The Lion of the Desert* on the Libyan resistance leader who was invited to take a walk out of an aeroplane a few hundred feet up by the Italians, and *The Magician of Lublin* for which I made him a Polish devil’s fiddle. He was a delightful man to work for, always fun and always appreciative of what we did and interested in the sounds we made. Once we each had to wander round the studio, hitting everything in sight, to see what would produce the effect he wanted for John the Baptist’s head falling off. I think one of the rostrums bashed with a large wooden mallet was the answer in the end.

We had good times during his films. For *The Man Who Would be King* we had several Indian musicians, including the great *sarangi*

player Ram Narayan, and they'd often improvise music during the lunch break, which I could listen to while eating my picnic. We also had Yvonne Loriod with her Ondes Martenot, for Maurice liked its sound and often wrote for it, and I got to know how that instrument worked from her. For the *Lion of the Desert* we had a group of Libyan musicians and I bought an excellent *bendir*, the ubiquitous North African frame drum, from one of them when they went home. They also had a set of giant *darabukkas* that I'd have loved to have had, but they gave them to the museum at Kneller Hall, the Royal Military School of Music, where they can still be seen.

I didn't do many other films for I wasn't a regular member of the mafia as the drum squad for film and TV sessions was known, and only really when special effects were wanted, such as the squeaks as a trained spider tried to steal a diamond for Peter Sellers or the voice of *Alien* (I was asked to produce a chromatic scale of conch trumpets for that one) or a Tibetan trumpet for *Passage to India* or a set of tuned Chinese tea bowls for another one. The composer and I for that one (I can remember neither his name nor that of the film) went round all the stores in Soho's China town armed with a tuning fork, and by the time we got to the third one, word had obviously gone round that there was a couple of lunatics loose who were hitting all the tea bowls they had in stock.

One weird one was after I was rung up one day and asked what I knew about the sounds of Wales. So I mentioned triple harps, crwth, and pibcorns, but no, they said, they meant whales. They'd play me recordings of sounds made by real whales, and could I reproduce them in the studio. They had a sob-story of a mummy whale who was caught by the cruel whalers, and had a miscarriage, and daddy whale rescued her, or the baby's dead body, and carried it to some sanctuary, and then wreaked his revenge on the evil whalers. And they wanted suitable whale noises for all this – I've no idea why they could not just use the real sounds – films are like that, but it was a well-paid session for

me. So I did what I could (my son Simon came with me to the studio to help carry the gear) with superballs on timpani and a number of other gadgets and they seemed happy with it. I saw the film, *Orca*, and it was terrible. There was another dreadful film about King Arthur called *Dragon Slayer*, but as long as we got paid and the producers were happy, everything was fine. I was mug enough to lend them some instruments as props for *Dragon Slayer*, and they broke one of them, which cost them enough to buy some useful instruments for lecture demonstration from Tony Bingham's junk drawer, but I resolved never again to lend an instrument as a prop.

A much better film was the Zeffirelli *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* about St Francis of Assisi. For that we had the whole of Musica Reservata in contrast with the orchestra, and I remember there were also three keyboards, clavichord, harpsichord, and piano, each individually miked so that they balanced each for sound, very effectively. I've been trying to remember the composer's name but can't – he wrote a lot of very clever advertising jingles, too. Another film that Musica Reservata was involved in was about Martin Luther, in which we did both the sound recording and also the dummy sessions, dressed as monks to appear on screen with their instruments. The only trouble was that monks in those days apparently didn't wear beards, so that I couldn't be used for the dummy sessions. I lent my nakers, those pairs of small kettledrums that hang from one's belt against the lower part of the body, to Edgar Fleet, our tenor, for his appearance, and apparently they'd asked him to pretend to play some extra music on them. I was then called down again to Shepperton to dub in the music that he seemed to be playing, something that was quite extraordinarily difficult to do. A normal drummer would lift the stick as an in-tempo upbeat before bringing it down on the drum, but he didn't – he went straight down on to the drum, and I had great difficulty catching that moment. It worked in the end.

I've mentioned the Galpin Society before, and it was probably membership in that that had more influence on my career than anything else. It was at a Galpin Society meeting that a friend, Michael Morrow, came up to me and asked if he could give me a leaflet for the first concert of his new mediaeval ensemble. I asked him who his percussion player was, and I played that first concert of *Musica Reservata* on jazz tom-toms, modern tambourine, tenor drum, and so on. One of the other players, John Beckett, I already knew – we'd played together in his music for a mime by his cousin Sam at the Royal Court Theatre. It was performed as an after-piece for *Fin de Partie*, which was commonly called the Dustbin Play because two characters, each in a dustbin, talked to each other, with a long-suffering servant called Clov. The music for the mime, *Chant sans Paroles*, was fortissimo crescendo throughout, and when Jimmy Clubb did a whoosh up his xylophone, ending with a clang on the heating pipe that ran round the side of the pit, John called 'Keep it in!'

This mediaeval music was rather different. Everyone else was playing lute, rebec, recorders, portative organ, and so on, and there was I playing on modern percussion. So I started to research mediaeval percussion instruments. I kept getting a short distance with everyone I talked to about it, and then they'd say 'Well, the only people who can help you further are the Galpin Society' but the trouble was that by then I was the Galpin Society's expert on mediaeval percussion. So I looked at the pictures in the manuscripts and at the church carvings, and using the knowledge that I had of percussion instruments around the world, I made instruments that looked like them, and hoped that might sound like them. No originals survive, so nobody could tell me I was wrong.

I published an article about them in the *Galpin Society Journal* (and later a book, *Making Early Percussion Instruments*) because I've always believed in passing knowledge on as soon as I've finished using it. Similarly, when I'd finished my first book, *The World of Medieval*

& *Renaissance Musical Instruments* in 1975, I published in *FoMRHI Quarterly* a list of all the mediæval manuscripts I'd consulted and listed all the musical instruments that were illustrated in each folio of them. I did this as much to protect the manuscripts as anything else because it would save other people having to plough right through them, as I had done, to find the particular instrument of which they wanted a picture. I'd asked a colleague, who I knew had already searched them, for similar information, but she refused to help me even though I'd said that I wouldn't use any that she didn't want me to. She said that even so she might want to use them some day. If she'd helped me, her book when it appeared years later, wouldn't have had so many of the same pictures as mine, for I'd have chosen different ones. Different people have different ideas about their intellectual property and passing knowledge on.

Later on, a player, Paul Williamson, asked me why his big tabor didn't sound like mine, which he'd tried to copy. I introduced him to the concept of the snare bed. If the edge of the shell isn't lowered at the point where the snare crosses it, the snare will stand proud of the drumhead instead of lying flat on it and rattling against it. Tony Bingham (from whom I've bought a great many instruments over the years and who has been enormously helpful to the Bate) commissioned Paul to make all the mediaeval percussion instruments and me to check them, in return giving me one of each model. Paul made much better instruments than I did and he could learn from all my initial mistakes, especially mine of making nakers in two sizes as though they were timpani, whereas all the early illustrations show them as the same size, so I used many of his instruments, as well as mine where he didn't make an equivalent, such as the big tabor that I used in so many performances and recordings. I also preferred my timbrels to his. He used heavy cast brass jingles which give a rather bell-like sound, but I preferred thinner ones of heavily hammered brass – hammering

hardens them and improves the sound, and I think that sort of clattering is better for tambourines than ringing.

I played for Musica Reservata in all their concerts, recordings and broadcasts from around 1959, until I came to Oxford in 1981. As well as all our London concerts, broadcasts and recordings, we did quite a bit of touring. Our manager was a railway fan, so we had some interminable journeys where flying would have been a lot more comfortable and probably cheaper once one factored in time and meals. One was a night boat and trains from Harwich to Holland for a broadcast concert in Hilversum. Few of us slept, for there was also a raucous football crowd on the boat, and one of the players (not me) had to be woken up to play his piece on the concert platform. Another Dutch trip was for a concert in Amsterdam, in the Concertgebouw itself, and I took the opportunity to have a good look at their bell-plates, which make a much more realistic sound than the normal tubular bells. All that I could discover was that they had been made from the armour plating of a First World War British battle-cruiser. When a Sheffield steel-master conducted the Royal Phil (he tried to take it over after Tommy died) I tried to persuade him to take an interest in them, but without success.

Another tour was to Russia, Moscow, Leningrad, and the three Baltic States. This was when the Soviet repression of the Jews was at its height so Gwen, who was very active in the 35s, the women's protest group against that, sent me round to June Jacobs. Because I was going to be in Israel for a conference shortly before the Russian tour, June gave me some contacts and with the help of Joachim Braun, an ex-Latvian musicologist in Jerusalem, I was able to collect letters from Vladimir Slepak wife's family in Israel, and then visit him and his wife in Moscow and deliver them, waiting in their flat for them to write replies which I posted to Israel after I got back. June sent me to a number of other families during that trip. I also took prayer books and so on to give to people, only taking one of each so as not to cause any trouble at Customs that might derail the tour. In fact, once we'd

arrived and gone through the interminable immigration process, with a Border Guard staring at us, then at our passports, then us again, for about ten minutes each, our KGB escort met us in the Customs Hall and said ‘We’re late, no time, no time’ and rushed us through with not a single bag opened. When I thought of the amount of religious appurtenances I could have slipped into my drum cases, I was rather cross.

We had two guides, our KGB guide and our Gosconcert agent (she was KGB, too, of course), but other members of the group kept them busy enough, with all the usual silly questions that tourists ask, that I was able to slip away and deliver June’s messages. Gwen and I visited some of the same people, and a lot of new ones, a few years later on a Galpin Society Russian tour. The Slepaks were very grateful for a visit again and I was always rather disappointed that we never heard from them once they’d escaped to Israel, but I suppose that they’d had many visitors over the years and couldn’t keep in touch with all of them.

One chap did get away with more Jewish kit, prayer books, Hebrew bibles, kippot (the skull caps) and so on, on a different visit. He was going in through one of the minor crossing points, not flying into Moscow as we did, and he took a dozen of everything, explaining to Customs that we have to pray everyday, so he needed one of everything for each day – he got away with it, too!

We did a number of concerts around the British Isles as well, including a television programme in Dublin, where I was able to see the famous harp in Trinity College. The Guinness in Dublin is very different from the stuff we get under that name in England! One of our jobs was playing for a mediaeval mystery play, the *Raising of Lazarus*, for the opening of the new Basil Spence Cathedral in Coventry, a really wonderful building. At the end of the performance we processed out towards the west end with the actors singing the *Te Deum*. The great Graham Sutherland tapestry behind us was reflected in the John Piper windows in front of us, with the ruins of the bombed old Cathedral

visible in the moonlight beyond, a quite magical sight. It was there, dressed in thin monk's robes and waiting outside for our cue to enter, that I caught a really horrible cold, so bad that I didn't want to smoke for a fortnight, and I never started again, just kept to the snuff which I was already taking because it was cheaper than smoking. We took the performance on to Bath Abbey and to the King's Lynn Festival. The Queen Mother was in the audience there, and she came round to meet us afterwards. She tapped with her gloved fingers on my nakers and said 'What charming little things' – luckily she didn't ask me what they were called! But Brian Trowell, who was our conductor for that (he'd reconstructed all the music), never let me forget the occasion after he became our Professor in Oxford.

Talking of nakers and their name, there was a television thing on early music, with interviews by Clement Freud, whom I'd known as Clay when he was running the restaurant above the Royal Court Theatre while I was working there, with many of the leading London early music players (we didn't know at the time that the intent of the programme was to glorify David Munrow or many of us wouldn't have done it). First run through was fine, but next day the producer, Paddy Foy, said 'What did you call those things?' so I said 'Nakers.' 'Why are they called that?' she asked, so I explained about the Arabic origin as *naqqara*. 'Couldn't you pronounce it in a more Arabic way?' she asked. Presumably she'd never met the slang use of the word, and her husband or someone had enlightened her overnight. The survival of that word for an intimate part of one's anatomy, which the drums resemble in large format as they hang down from one's belt, is a fascinating element of the English language, for nobody had seen a pair of nakers between the sixteenth century, when their use died out, and when I revived them in the mid-twentieth, and yet the slang use has lived on for four hundred years. There's another such survival in Oxford: the path outside the city walls between Christchurch and the Botanical Gardens is still called Jews' Walk, because that was the route

that Jewish corpses were taken, from the area they lived in around St Aldate's to the cemetery, which was where the Botanical Gardens are now. Jews were expelled from England in 1290, but the name for the path has survived all that time, over 800 years, with nobody except our local community knowing why it has that name.

The Limón tour I've mentioned above was an American modern dance company that picked up an orchestra in London for a season at Sadlers Wells and then a State Department tour all round Europe, as we'd be a lot cheaper than flying over an American orchestra. My parents lent me the money to buy my Leedy pedal timpani for that tour – Jimmy Blades found them for me, from a retired player who had bought them from Paul Whiteman's drummer after their 1929 British tour – he must have known that Leedy were about to bring out the model that Potter later reproduced here, and so got rid of his old ones before going back to the States. I preferred my older model to the later one, for on mine the pedal was set over the space between two of the three legs and therefore had a much longer available travel than the later model, where the pedal is set above one leg. I could get almost an octave at a pinch, instead of the fifth of the later ones, very useful when in a pit with no room for three drums, for it meant I could cover much of the range of three hand drums on the two pedal drums. We did that Limón tour mostly in chartered planes, though with one long train trip when they commandeered the dining car to treat us all, English and American alike, to a Thanksgiving Day dinner.

We started in Berlin – this was in 1957 before the days of the Wall, and we were taken on a bus tour round Berlin to see all the devastation with the guides telling us about all the terrible things the Russians had done to them. They got a fairly frosty reception because several of the orchestra and of the dancers were Jewish, and all had lived through the War years, and there was in those days a feeling of serve them right and reaping the whirlwind. We went on to Poland, where much of Warsaw was already rebuilt, including the monstrous wedding-cake

of the Palace of Culture, and at one point, maybe from Katowice, we were offered a day sight-seeing to either Krakow or Auschwitz. The majority opted for the latter. It was a shattering experience, as I believe it still is, but all the more overpowering then only just over a decade after the end of the war, with the Nuremberg Trials still fresh in the memory. While we were in Poland we were on full board at the hotels but were given 100 zlotys a day as pocket money (then the equivalent of one US dollar). I bought a silver cup which we still use as a kiddush cup, as it may have originally been, and saw many shops with Torah crowns and other loot from Jewish communities. We played in Poznań, too, where there's a good instrument museum. We were also in Wrocław but it didn't occur to me to see if there was any surviving trace of our family.

It's difficult to remember all the other places we went to on that tour, but Lisbon was one stop, where we had extra players from their local theatre orchestra drafted in because one of the works we played Villa-Lobos's ballet *Emperor Jones* (a very powerful and impressive score) and the Portuguese regard him as one of their national composers because he was Brazilian. It's a good score but it wasn't at its best that night because it's not an easy one, and the Portuguese were not good sight-readers, having had only one or maybe two rehearsals. The audience was really impressive, though, more diamonds and beautiful dresses than I've ever seen in one place, far more than one ever saw in London then. We went to Paris and back to various bits of Germany and then on to Holland and Belgium, and Gwen joined me there as we didn't know how much longer the tour was going to last – there was talk of running on into January or February; Iris paid her fare and Gwen's mother looked after Rachel.

We were based in Scheveningen, playing in the Casino, and Gwen arrived very early one morning at The Hague station. I'd been told by a Dutch friend that Holland was a very small country and that everyone spoke English – not on a tram at 6 am they didn't, and I

couldn't remember the Dutch for station, and having just come from Germany I had *Bahnhof* stuck in my mind, but speaking German in Holland was not popular then. I got there OK and while I was waiting for the boat train from the Hook, part of the Orient Express came in. A man got out and started raising hell – the train had come all the way from Istanbul AND IT WAS TWO MINUTES LATE – and they grovelled. It was a novel experience for me, for our trains were then habitually twenty minutes or half an hour late and nobody ever thought to complain. We had the best steak I've ever had in my life in a restaurant in Scheveningen that also sold 24 ways of preparing mussels – this was in the days before we became more Jewishly strict, so we tried as many of them as we had days there.

We went on to Amsterdam where Ewen had given us the name of the man who had arranged his tour for the premiere there of the film of his book *The Man Who Never Was*, and he arranged us a private visit to a cinema to see it, which was rather fun. Gwen had missed it in London because it had been on when Rachel was too small to leave and I was still with the *Threepenny Opera* and couldn't babysit for her to do so.

In Belgium we did a television performance in a studio, and they took so long setting up each shot, and then repeating it because they'd got the camera angles wrong, that our conductor uttered the immortal phrase 'Amateur night in Dixie.' He was Jewish, too (I can only remember his first name, Simon), and he found his command of Yiddish invaluable all round eastern Europe. Gwen went back on the night boat to Harwich, heavily pregnant with Sarah, with a pair of wooden tims in one hand that I'd bought in Poznań (one inside the other) and all the orchestra's Christmas presents for their families inside them, for we didn't know whether we'd be back in time for that, and a huge teddy bear that I'd bought for Rachel in Poland under her other arm, and the Customs were so sorry for her at 6.00 in the morning that she wasn't asked a single question. It was lucky because she was carrying quite a lot of jewellery for the orchestra and my silver *kiddush* cup and

a beautiful silver bowl that I'd bought in Oporto and that we use for *charoseth* at the Passover Seder. We went on to Yugoslavia, where I bought my fur hat in the shuk in Sarajevo (or was it Skopje?) – I'm still using it in cold weather over fifty years later, and then we did come back in time for Christmas after all, so it was a quick few days with her and Rachel, and then off to Northampton for the pantomime.

The Royal Phil called me one day, after I'd become of their regular extras, and asked was I busy? I said 'no' and they said to come up to Kingsway Hall quick as someone hadn't turned up for a recording session. So I got there for the break and found we were recording *Rite of Spring*. When I walked in, some of the others in the gang were saying 'It's the *Rite of Spring*, Jerry,' obviously worried about it, for it was a work with rather a fearsome reputation among the older players in those days, with its different number of beats in each bar, but I'd met it before in various amateur orchestras, and provided the conductor gives us a downbeat in every bar (and not all did), it's not difficult, for unlike for some of the other instruments there isn't anything difficult to play down our end, provided you count your bars, except at one point where the timpanist is expected to play on three drums simultaneously. Customarily, the bass drummer reaches over and lends a hand.

Recordings are never rehearsed in Britain unless the conductor is both very fussy and carries enough clout for the record company to cover the extra expense. MU rules are that you can record 20 minutes music in a three-hour session, and that gives plenty of time to rehearse and record. It's a very rare work that we have to learn the notes – as I said, we are trained to be sight-readers – so all we have to learn is how the conductor wants us to play them, as distinct from how we played them last week for someone else.

Once the Royal Phil were recording Tschaikovsky's *1812* at EMI's Studio 1 in Abbey Road, with Sargent conducting. The orchestra was on the floor and I was on the platform at the back with the large bass drum. Just as we got to the point where the cannon come in, Sargent

stopped us and said, 'Bass drum by yourself, please', so I gave it a good whack. Sargent turned to the nearest mike and said, 'How was that?' Back from the control box came, 'A little louder, please, Sir Malcolm.' 'Louder please,' he said to me. *Whoof* I went. 'A little less, please, Sir Malcolm,' came the response, and so on. All the boys at the back on the floor, with their tubular bells and other clobber, were turning round, 'Go on, Jerry, give it a whack' and so on. We got it right in the end.

Beecham never used to decide what he was going to record until he got to the session. He had a list of what he was going to cover over the series of sessions of course, so that all the necessary players could be booked and the sets of parts got out, but what he was going to do this morning would depend on what he felt like. So we would all arrive for a ten o'clock start, get set up, and then he might say, 'Strings and woodwind, please,' and we'd be told to come back after the break or even after lunch. We'd be paid, of course, whether we played or not – we'd been called.

Freddy Harmer, the principal percussion and in those days, the late '50s, one of the only three in the country who could sight read any xylophone part put in front of them (Jimmy Blades and Steve Whitaker were the others), always made a beeline for the pub. Gin and tonic was his choice but I couldn't take that at ten in the morning even if I was willing to drink before performing, which I never am. The trouble was that Freddie didn't like to drink alone, so I'd wind up awash with tomato juice. He started to believe I was teetotal until we had a concert in Newcastle when we were only on in the first half, and then I matched him pint for pint until it was time to get back on the coach.

Tommy liked his percussion and sometimes he took us on tour just in case he wanted to play an encore, so quite often I'd not play a note till the main programme was over. I'd tease Freddie by picking up a bass drum beater at the start of the concert for the National Anthem, which I wasn't needed for, because the Queen only has side drum (Freddie)

and cymbals (Harry Eastwood) – Davey Johnson and I just stood by. ‘No bass drum,’ Freddie would hiss at me. We were a good gang. Titch Pocock was on timps (his wife hated to hear him called that – his name was Lewis) and Freddie, Davey, and Harry were the regular percussion players and, for Tommy’s last years, with me as the regular extra. I missed his last concert. I’d taken a job with someone else when the RPO rang me to go down to Portsmouth. I said I couldn’t but they said, ‘But Sir Thomas particularly asked for you.’ So I said I’d ask the other chap if he would release me. He very properly said I’d taken his gig, which was fair enough. If I’d known that it was going to be Tommy’s last concert I’d have ditched him, but of course one never does know that. Anyway he never booked me again so I might just as well have done so, except that that would have been unprofessional conduct, for if you’ve accepted a date you are expected to keep to it. But they had fun that day – they played a few notes, enough to get the feel of the hall, and then they wheeled in a giant TV and settled down to watch the Cup Final. So that was all the rehearsal they had.

The best concert I ever played with Beecham was the Berlioz *Requiem* in the Albert Hall. We were fully up to the strength that Berlioz specified, unlike a good many performances of that work, with nine of us on timps (I was number 9) plus percussion. The choir was smaller than Berlioz had asked for, but every one of the singers was a trained professional, so they were far more precise than any much larger amateur choral society would have been. There were brass bands all round the galleries for the first part. The performance was fantastic, the ‘Tuba Mirum’ hair-raising as can be heard on the CD of the performance that the BBC has published, for it had been recorded as an outside broadcast and put out some days later. One thing that wasn’t in the score, in the tenor aria, the ‘Sanctus’ with Richard Lewis, we each, every one of us timpanists and percussionists, instead of Berlioz’s just three players, had a pair of cymbals. We played them pianissimo and it was an extraordinary effect. The BBC booked us to repeat it at the

Proms later that year, but it wasn't with Beecham (I think it was John Pritchard, or maybe John Hollingsworth, of whom it used to be said that conductors are Bourne and not Hollingsworth) and it wasn't with that choir but with the BBC Chorus. It was exciting of course, for that work can't be anything else, but the difference, without Beecham, was like chalk and cheese.

It was Harry Eastwood who taught me how to play cymbals. We were both playing them at different points in one concert and I said to him, 'How do you get twice the tone out of these than I do?' 'Oh you just do it like this,' he said, leaving me to work it out. Relaxation was the answer when I watched him carefully, complete relaxation of the wrists and hands as the plates came together, and keep your fingers off them (but don't let go!). Many players press their thumbs to the leather discs on the handle-straps, and that can kill the tone for it presses them against the plates. Harry was a Yorkshireman, and an ex-army bandsman.

It was another Harry, Harry Taylor, who taught me to lap drumheads. We were on tour with the Royal Phil in Munich, and chatting over a litre of the best product of that city, he was horrified to hear that I didn't know how – every good timpanist of his generation lapped their own. His description was so clear that I've done it ever since. Not that Gwen approved – soaking heads in the bath for half an hour and then monopolising the kitchen table, plus nicking three or four soup plates to put underneath the head so as to get a collar, was unpopular. I've published a description that I hope is as clear as Harry's in my *Making Early Percussion* book and in my *Timpani & Percussion*.

At least making my own timp sticks was done in my own room. Jim Bradshaw, another Yorkshireman, had told me how he made his. I'd asked him for lessons for he was the finest timpanist of my time, even better than Titch. He produced a wonderful sound on his timps and he was the only player I knew who could play with a full arc of his beaters whether the music was forte or pianissimo – he knew to a fraction of a

millimetre exactly where his drumheads were (calf of course – so far as I know he never used plastic heads. The rest of us play a crescendo, starting with the sticks moving an inch or less, the arc increasing as we get louder, but Bradshaw could keep the arc the same all the way. He asked me who had been teaching me and I said, ‘Jimmy Blades, Sir.’ ‘Ah very nice,’ was all he said. Jimmy worked with Jim’s brother Bill, and Jim and Bill had been at loggerheads for years. But at least he did tell me about his sticks, balsa-wood heads and covered with a double layer of split piano-damper felt. Jimmy Blades used cork for the head on his sticks, and to my ear it was too hard; balsa is softer and because the two layers of felt had been split from a half-inch thick sheet, they had air between them, caught in the fuzzy surface of the split layers, enough to make them far better than a thicker single layer. I cut out the length of felt from the sheet (I used to buy it from H J Fletcher Newman, a firm of piano factors in Covent Garden, a fascinating place because you could buy every part of a piano there, take them home, and build it yourself), split each in half and then in half again so that the two inner layers gave me pieces that were fuzzy on both sides – I sold the two outer layers with only one fuzzy side to my pupils, making sure that they always finished with fuzzy on the outside for good tone. When I started teaching kids to play timps, I sold them a kit with an instruction sheet, to make their sticks the same way as I did.

I used aluminium shafts that I like better than cane for they’re always the same diameter, allowing me to bore holes in the balsa with a cork borer of the correct size. I stole the idea of aluminium shafts from the timpanist in the Copenhagen Tivoli Gardens orchestra. When, in the audience, one sees a player using something different, it’s often worthwhile going behind and having a chat. The other end of the sticks have one of those small rubber knobs that they make for iron furniture legs, and these can be useful as an emergency side-drum stick in complex parts when one is playing both timpani and percussion.

It was on that Royal Phil visit to Munich that we nearly had a strike. One of the violins was an Indian and the hotel refused to give him a room. 'Either a room or next plane home,' we said. They did in the end, but it was clear that the Bavarians hadn't much altered their spots since their 'great' days as the first home of the Nazis. The Indian chap was a nice guy and also made a reputation as a good composer.

That tour was conducted by Pierre Monteux. He was always kind to us. He'd start rehearsal with the heaviest work and let us go as soon as we were finished. Just once, because it was an outside broadcast and there were some special problems with it, he had to start with a Mozart fiddle concerto (Raymond Cohen, then our leader, playing the solo part) and he was so apologetic to us and the heavy brass, for keeping us waiting while he did the Mozart – he who had conducted the first performance of the *Rite of Spring* and was one of the all-time greats, apologising to us!

Another great was Georges Enescu. I never played for him, but he conducted the Boyd Neel while I was with them on some Bach broadcasts. One was some *Brandenburg Concertos*. They must have been fixed at short notice because neither of the only two trumpeters who dared to play *no. 2* in those days was available, so they got Michael Krein to play it on a soprano sax. That sounds like vandalism today, but neither in the concert hall of Broadcasting House, nor in the control box could I tell any difference from the sound Micky produced and that of the sort of trumpet it was played on in the early '50s, usually a piccolo trumpet in D or the tiny B flat alto. The real trumpet that we commonly hear today in the early music bands sounds very different. Enescu wasn't happy with the idea of George Malcolm playing *no. 5* on a harpsichord; he wanted a piano so that the long solo in the first movement could be a steady crescendo. George proved that he could do it on a harpsichord – he had either a Tom Goff or a Robert Goble, and with judicious use of the pedals it was crescendo all the way. They did things differently then from the way we do them now.

Enescu was very old by then, a small hunched figure, but like Beecham he produced magic from the orchestra. Despite his age, mid-80s I think, which doesn't seem so very old to me now, when he wanted to relax between sessions, he'd find a piano and play through Beethoven symphonies from memory.

One of the broadcasts was the *B minor Mass*. Kathleen Ferrier singing the 'Agnus Dei' had us all more or less in tears. We all knew that she was dying – it may even have been her last broadcast – and she sang it so beautifully.

I played for all sorts, all round London and the provincial orchestras including all the local BBC orchestras as well as the main BBC Symphony, some conductors great (Barbirolli for instance), some dreadful (no names, no pack-drill, as we used to say in the army), and some mediocre. I remember Fistoulari trying to follow Gwydion Brooke and pretending that he was leading him in the bassoon solos in *Scheherazade*. They'd recorded it with Tommy not long before, though regrettably before I'd become his regular extra (I always wished I'd done that one), and Tommy had kept Gwyd under some control. Not Fisty – Gwyd pulled him all over the place and we had trouble trying not to laugh. It was an interesting bassoon section because Gwyd played a German system and Eddie Wilson played a French one, two very different styles of bassoon, and yet they blended perfectly together. Gwyd was the son of Joseph Holbrooke, the composer of Wagnerian operas based on Welsh legends, but they weren't on speaking terms which was why Gwyd had shortened his name. Jack Brymer was principal clarinet and I had to keep with him in some work where we both had to play quintuplets. Jack played them as two and a triplet instead of as an even five, and I wasn't going to argue with someone of his stature, and the conductor didn't seem to notice. The trick, incidentally, is to count them as 62345 instead of as 12345 – it keeps them even and avoids the risk of a slight delay between 5 and 1. I remember once playing *The Perfect Fool* as a student at Guildhall

and the conductor couldn't stop the bass players from playing the first quaver of the 7-in-a-bar motif as a crotchet. Made it very difficult down our end – we ended up with a quaver rest in each bar!

We often played for Sargent of course, both in the RPO and in the BBC symphony. He was a right bastard, but he was also a real pro. We did a first performance of something – can't remember what and I don't suppose it was ever heard again – and first rehearsal he was just beating time, head in the score, following us. Next morning he had the whole thing right at his fingertips.

I knew that he was a bastard from my student days, for my horn teacher Alan Hyde had a number of stories about him. Once before a *B minor Mass*, as they reached the 'Quoniam', Sargent turned to him and said, 'And now Mr Hyde, how can we make sure this goes alright tonight?' One can't think of a more off-putting remark before that notorious solo. And with Alan it always did go alright because he played, muted and very quietly, through the previous number so that he was always well warmed up – otherwise you come to it cold with a stiff lip after sitting there for a long time. Another time they were doing the Beethoven *Ninth* and at the slow movement Sargent said, 'Mr Hyde will you play the fourth horn solo, please.' 'Certainly not,' said Alan. Of course if the fourth had asked him to do it, that would have been another matter, but no conductor can tell one player to take over another player's part. Tactful suggestions from a conductor, such as 'I don't mind which of you plays that tonight,' is one thing, and so is one player asking another to take over a nasty bit, but orders are a direct slur on the player concerned. Players often do help each other out, for instance in *Fidelio Overture*, the first will sometimes put in the bottom note at the end of the second horn solo, to avoid the wide jump between the last two notes.

We did the first performance of a Roberto Gerhard *Symphony* with the BBC, with some really tricky rhythms, each of the squad against the others, and all of us on a series of Chinese and Korean temple

blocks, all different sizes (the Korean are bigger than most Chinese) – Gilbert Webster, the BBC principal percussion, had spent a week choosing them all at Len Hunt’s hire store. That’s one of the problems of many modern works, for no two performances, when special instruments are called for, can sound the same, especially if the composer has supervised one of them and not the other. The Britten *Spring Symphony* was an exception because Boosey and Hawkes kept the specially made cow-horn with the hire set of parts and sent them out together. It was at that performance, too, that Gerhard came over to me and handed me what looked like a brass ashtray and said, ‘That’s what you hit at letter P’ or wherever it was, so what was used for that in subsequent performances I’ve no idea. I can’t remember who the conductor was, one of the BBC’s Central-European imports whose stick was mostly over his shoulder, behind his back, or under the music desk, where we couldn’t see it. But I saw Gerhard halfway back in the Concert Hall at Broadcasting House beating time quietly with a pencil in his hand, so ‘Watch Roberto,’ I whispered to the gang, and we got through it OK.

It’s odd how incompetent some conductors are. Scherchen produced the most detailed of all books on the technique of conducting, something that Aylmer Buesst had made me sweat over. But when we played Varèses’s *Ionisation* for a large group of percussion with him, he showed none of those techniques that might have helped us. Theory is one thing, but practice may be different. He was perfectly competent and we had no trouble with it, but he didn’t show any of the technique he taught. Some of the BBC’s foreign conductors were dreadful and we wondered where they’d dug them up – after all, as Beecham said, we had plenty of bad ones of our own. So too were some of those who picked up small orchestras for provincial or school concerts. Leonard Rafter was one that I used to work for, and any new string player was always seated next to an inconspicuous lady violinist and if any derogatory remarks were made about the conductor, he or

she was never booked again, for that lady was Leonard's wife. He was a nice man and he gave me his rostrum when he retired, but just a poor conductor (one unkind saying was 'If it's laughter you're after...'). So were many who conducted the amateur choruses we played for at their annual concerts. One had so vague a beat that word went round the orchestra 'Watch his left foot,' for that was always clear as he tapped it on the floor in strict time with the music. Most of them had rehearsed their chorus from the vocal scores and had no real idea of what was in the full score, so never gave us any cues or other help.

Many professionals were competent enough but never hit the big time. Sometimes it was that there wasn't the magic there; sometimes it was that performances were never quite as good as rehearsals. We once did *Sacre du Printemps* at the Proms with Basil Cameron and the rehearsal was brilliant, one of the best performances of it I've ever done, but the concert was just ordinary. We were somewhere out in the sticks with him for one Royal Phil concert. I always carried a picnic lunch on those occasions, not trusting what one might be able to pick up and not wanting to go to a pub between rehearsal and concert (you couldn't just get coffee at a pub in those days – it was beer or nowt, and to my mind even half a pint takes the edge off your timing and concentration, but then I've got a weak head for alcohol). As I was eating back-stage, Cameron wandered in and asked if I knew where he could get coffee or tea. I hope I offered him some out of my thermos, but I can't remember. But I did think that if it had been Sargent he'd have been lunched by the Mayor at the Town Hall – poor Cameron never carried that sort of clout.

We played some horrible music as well as working under some horrible conductors, though luckily not often both at once. In those days there was never a hope of getting a new work broadcast unless it was atonal. Any hint of a tune and the music was binned straight away by the BBC Music Panel. We had to do our best with it – our duty is always to the composer, to play his work as best we can and to

make it sound as good as possible, and usually we succeeded. There were accidents occasionally. We once played something for brass and percussion at St Pancras Town Hall (it was part of some New Music Festival), and as we came off the platform after the concert, the concert not the rehearsal, one of the trumpets turned to the other and said, 'That was a C part wasn't it?' and the other replied, 'No, I was playing it as a B flat.' And neither conductor nor composer had noticed that the trumpets were playing a tone apart all the way through. The conductor was an old friend, so I'm afraid I told him the story – 'Oh but we did get the right effect in it,' was all he could think of to say. Who the composer had been I've no idea – nobody I'd heard of then and have probably never heard of since.

I've often thought that one of the reasons that the Early Music movement was so successful back in the '60s and '70s was because of the insistence in the upper echelons on atonal music. With *Musica Reservata* we'd have a sell-out concert in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, and next door the Festival Hall would be three-quarters empty, simply because of the insistence on music that the public didn't like. The enthusiasts for it would turn up of course, but they couldn't fill the RFH. Not that a concert there would pay for itself anyway. The only hall in the country that can make a profit is the Albert Hall, and even there it's only if they take away the boxes and stalls from the freeholders, as the management is entitled to do a certain number of times in the year. It's the eternal problem that an orchestra, conductor, and soloist cost more than the number of seats in the hall can pay for.

That was one reason why they started to build concert halls in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The old music rooms weren't big enough to pay for a Beethoven-size orchestra. But then the orchestra had to get bigger to be heard in the new halls, and they didn't have enough seats to pay for the bigger orchestra, and so on, an eternal vicious circle.

But we did quite often play some good music, too, and under some great conductors.

A peripheral job in playing is fixing. Most of the small orchestras are ad hoc affairs, using the same players as often as possible, and filling the gaps from the pool of London freelance players. Somebody has to arrange this for every concert. I'd always fixed my own orchestra, drawing them from the players I knew, and taking advice from people like Tessa and Cecil when I had to go beyond this, with Gwen doing most of the telephoning for me when I was out on a gig. Denys Darlow asked me to do the same for his Tilford Bach Festival Orchestra, giving me a list of the players he knew and liked and leaving me to find any extras needed, and paying me so much per head for each concert. This was normally quite easy, though there were some blips. Once a player went missing between rehearsal and a broadcast, so I telephoned him in case he was at home. Indeed he was for he'd gone home for lunch, so I said, 'Kelly, have you got the wireless on?' 'No,' he said. So I said, 'Well turn it on and you'll hear us playing.' He'd got confused over the time for the broadcast. Another player who got confused I'd booked for rehearsal as usual for ten to one. At ten o'clock he wasn't there, but at 12.50 he turned up – since all normal rehearsals did start at ten am and finished at one pm, it was an extraordinary mistake for him to make. The difficulty in booking for Denys was that he'd hire the orchestra out to choral societies for Passions, and sometimes it wasn't easy to find multiple flutes and oboes for two or three simultaneous Passions, all accompanied by different versions of the orchestra in different parts of the country on the same day. Finding enough cellists was also always a problem. Gwen, again, did a lot of the necessary telephoning for me. I also used to play for him, using those small wooden timpani that I'd bought in Poznań – Bill Mann once referred to them as my biscuit tins in a review in the *Times*, for they had a small clear sound, just right for a chamber performance of the *B Minor*. Later I replaced them with my McConnell cavalry timpani, which were the right size and shape for

the period although mid-nineteenth century in date. I'd bought them specially for this purpose, at which point Denys promptly dropped me as his timpanist! Ah well, these things happen.

Chapter 6

Marriage, Homelife, and Other Work

As a freelance one did all sorts of odd jobs. One day I was rung up by a composer who had been given my name by someone. He had written some *Chinese Cantatas*, to words by Ezra Pound, for five percussion players, chorus, soprano, the charming Ilse Wolf, and either lute or guitar, I can't remember which, but played by Julian Bream (it may have been he who gave Bill Bardwell my name), and this was to be performed at a Society for the Promotion of New Music concert and would I form a percussion squad for him. This was quite easy, for most musicians are happy to help struggling composers even unpaid; as well as being kind, we have an eye to the future: no composers means no music and thus no work. But after the first rehearsal the chorus went on strike. If Bill was conducting, they weren't singing. It was quite a tricky score, with one movement in 10/4 that could only be conducted in two very slow beats because of all the cross rhythms going on. So Bill asked me to take over conducting and find another drummer to take over my part. It was a pretty weird score, and all that Ilse had to do was to emit high-pitched squeaks spasmodically. I must confess to not remembering much more about it than that, except for the fact that a beautiful young lady who lived in a room on the top floor of the building in which Bill had the basement, came down to help make the tea for the break in rehearsal. All rehearsals are three hours, by routine, with a 15 minute break in the middle – if there's no break after the first hour and a half is very little past, players start to shuffle their feet. She

used to drop in on Bill quite often after that to see if he had any visitors, and I used to drop round for the same reason. The problem was that I'd not caught her name, which was a difficult one to remember (and I'm hopeless at remembering names, just like my father), and so I couldn't telephone to see if she was around. In the end we did get together, when Bill asked us both round to listen to Beecham's recording of the *Magic Flute* on his big EMG gramophone, one of those with a huge papier maché horn. EMG (founded by E M Ginn) had a record shop in a side street at the top end of Shaftesbury Avenue where you could listen to any records you wanted to for hours on end in one of their soundproof booths. I bought quite a lot from them and got to know people like John Amis, who worked there, and I bought one of their heads, with its triangular bamboo needles, to put on my small HMV wind-up portable gramophone, for I could never have afforded one of their big machines – it improved it considerably. So eventually I did meet Gwen properly, and I cemented our relationship at Bill's next SPNM concert, a *Little Suite for piccolo, xylophone and mandolin*. I can't remember who played the picc, though I found him for Bill, but Hugo D'Alton played mandolin and, because I'm no xylophone player, I got Pat Brady from one of the BBC orchestras to do that. I got there early and got a good seat at the back. Gwen came in late, from work, and by then the room was almost full, so I gave her my seat and sat on the floor at her feet. And that, as you might say, was that.

At that time she had left the Social Survey, a government department that conducted all sorts of polls to find out whether people were happy with policies, or were getting all the rights to which they were entitled, or behaving in all the ways that governments like people to behave, and so on. She'd had a senior position in their West Country base in Bristol, covering all that area and the Welsh valleys, and was training in London for a senior staff position with Marks & Spencer, I think looking after the welfare of all their female employees – she didn't get on very well with that and soon took a job instead with Mass Observation, who were

doing very similar work to the Social Survey but on a commercial basis. Tom Harrison, who had founded MO during the Depression between the Wars, had left the organisation by then, and the firm had become a smaller version of Gallup. She had been at Cambridge during the War (she was five years older than I, which nobody ever believed for I went gray early and she always looked young), having won a County Major Scholarship from her local grammar school in Derbyshire, and then having taught at schools in Scunthorpe where she ran the local junior football teams. Her father, Jack, had been in the Navy (he fought at Jutland in his late twenties in the first World War). Soon after he married Nellie his ship was sent off to the China Station, which was why there was a three-year gap between Gwen and the next daughter. After he retired from the Navy he became an attendance officer in the Derbyshire Education Department, looking after children who weren't going to school and similar work. During the Second World War he went back into the Navy, though only for shore-based work, and was stationed in Liverpool, leaving Nellie and their daughters at home, listening to the Germans flying over Derbyshire on their way to bomb Liverpool. One of Gwen's sisters, Jean, died in her teens and of the others, Esmé is in America and Mary is no longer with us.

At first she wasn't my only girl friend, but the trouble with the freelance world, as I've said before, is that gigs come in at very short notice, often for tomorrow or the next day, and girls get a bit fed up when you ring and say, 'Sorry ducks, can't take you out tomorrow because I've got a concert'. But Gwen used to say, 'Well come in to dinner on your way home', for she lived only round the corner from me. And she was a first rate cook, too. Not only is the way to a man's heart through his stomach, but much more important for me was that sort of attitude to the priorities of a difficult profession for social life. I'm sure this was due, not only to her nice nature, but to her mother's and father's example, for the Navy allows nothing to get in the way of duty, and in his later years Jack must often have been called out

at short notice to help a child or a family in trouble. So we ‘went steady’, as they say, for a couple of years or so, and then decided to get married.

Our wedding day was a bit traumatic – this was our first wedding, in the registry office. As a good start my best man, Leonard Friedman didn’t turn up and Jennifer had to substitute for him. He arrived just as we were leaving the Registry Office. We went back to my parents’ house for a drink, and they then took her down to their cottage, Warren Beach near Beaulieu, where I was to conduct that concert with Dennis Brain next day. She went in their car because I was going to collect the harpsichord plus Jane Clark in my car and take them down so that Jane could tune the harpsichord at the Abbey on the way. I drove round to the garage, filled up with petrol, and, when I tried to restart the car, water poured out of every possible aperture and some that one wouldn’t believe existed. The AA came and said it was hopeless, so I left it to them to take it away and took a taxi to Harrods, where Jane, who’d been Gwen’s support at the wedding and had shared her flat for some time, was waiting for me in the piano department with the harpsichord and wondering what on earth had happened to me. We tried every car-hire firm in the evening paper, but as it was the Friday of August Bank Holiday there was no chance at all. So I took the harpsichord back home in a taxi and rang Warren.

‘OK where are you?’ said my father who was fairly used to old cars of mine breaking down. I explained what had happened, and Iris called Gwen to the phone, with some trepidation, fearing that she’d burst into tears at this happening on her wedding day. But, being Gwen, she laughed. So I took Jane out to dinner (after all it was my wedding day, too, and I felt some celebration was called for!) and we went down next day in the coach with the orchestra, after I’d sworn Jane to secrecy about the wedding, for fear of that Wedding March. After the concert was over, we stayed on at Warren for a short honeymoon, and all was well.

It was a pity about the car; it had been one of our first joint purchases, a 1929 Morris, two years younger than me, that had cost us £40, licensed and insured, with a big enough body that I'd carried the whole percussion kit for Constant Lambert's *Rio Grande* in the back, plus the other percussion players. We drove it to St Albans once, and it took us all day to get there from Kensington, for it wasn't designed for speed. Anyway it got our marriage off to a good start, for plenty of laughter is the ideal recipe for a happy marriage.

Jane's and my dinner had been at the IMA Club, which was funded for a number of years by a rich woman who just wanted to keep musicians happy. Iris and Ewen gave me my membership as a birthday present each year for as long as it lasted. The food was wonderful and very inexpensive (I once took André Simon, a famous gourmet and wine expert, to dinner there) and one met all sorts of people there, eminent musicians and famous composers. I remember once seeing Malcolm Arnold there, very drunk, on his birthday. But of course it didn't last, for when she died the funding stopped and it could never have paid its own way.

When we married, I moved into Gwen's flat, where we had two rooms on the first floor of 44 Palace Gardens Terrace, a living room with a cooking alcove and a bedroom, plus the usual plumbing facilities. It was convenient because it was round the corner from my parents and I could store all my playing kit in my old bedroom there, for there was no room for it in the flat. Also Iris could easily slip round and do the odd babysit, and so could her cook-housekeeper Mrs Wilson who, when Gwen was pregnant, first with Rachel and again with Sarah, had all sorts of wonderful old wives' tales of pregnancy – Gwen was much too sensible to be frightened by them. While Gwen was having Rachel, I was working in *The Threepenny Opera* at the Royal Court Theatre, the English version of Kurt Weill's *Die Dreigroschenoper*, one of the few long runs that was a pleasure to play night after night, for it's a fascinating score, but it made it very difficult to keep to visiting hours

at the hospital. Luckily St Mary Abbot's was very sympathetic and let me come in when I could – it was a longish birth (it seemed to go on for a week) so I was in day after day in the afternoons except matinee days, and ringing up each morning to ask, 'Hasn't it come yet?' 'It' because we didn't know which it was going to be. People used to ask, 'Don't you hope it'll be a boy?' but we said, 'No, we hope it'll be a baby.' I can't remember what we called it (though Sarah was called Sputnik, when she was on the way, for that first satellite was then a recent phenomenon in the sky). At last Rachel arrived and all was well, though because she had taken so long, they wouldn't let Gwen have Sarah at home as she'd hoped to.

Gwen allowed me to grow the beard that Iris had always refused to permit (a moustache was OK), coincidentally at about the same time that Iris had made Ewen shave his off (he hadn't been allowed to have it for long), so I claimed to have inherited it. It was a small one, chin only (the full one came later when we were camping in a field in Wales, for I used an electric razor and the sheep weren't wired for power), but Rachel liked it – she found it a useful handhold when I carried her downstairs to the pushchair we kept in the hall. The shepherd that we met on that camping trip had come from Yorkshire but he'd had to learn Welsh so that his dogs would understand his commands!

By the time that Sarah was on the way we had been threatened with eviction because of a take-over of the house and the effects of the Rent Act, but even without that the flat would have been too small for us. We had to look at cheap areas, so musical districts like Hampstead were out of the question, and at those with good schools. South of the River was the obvious area, and Wimbledon, Blackheath, and Dulwich were the first choices. We found a nice house in Wimbledon, tipped off to it by Joe Castaldini, a bassoon player who lived in the same street (he was one who had stuck with the French-system bassoon when everyone else had moved to the German-system Heckel), but our surveyor pointed out that it was gently sliding down the hill, so that

was out. Then we found 7 Pickwick Road in Dulwich Village, and that was ideal. Like all the properties in the Village it was leasehold (the whole area was the property of Dulwich College). And it was cheap! Just to make you jealous, in 1957 we had over 70 years of lease for £2,990 for an eight-room, two-story house with a small garden. And a few years later we were able to buy the freehold. We had to do some work on the house – Mr Sprackling, the local builder, was excellent, though I shocked him by insisting on plain glass for the lavatory window. I saw no reason why not, for it was at my head height and meant that I could see out while standing there and nobody could see anything obnoxious from outside even if they had a telescope, for the opposite houses were over a hundred yards away – their gardens were much longer than ours. I entertained him, though, by asking for a long chain for it so that Rachel, then less than three, could learn to pull it for herself. Later on it was a popular treat for all the small children in the street – they couldn't pull the chain at home, but at our house they could! He also fully floor-boarded the attic, cut a large hole in the bedroom ceiling with double flap doors, and fixed a block and tackle centrally above the hole, so that things like tims could be hoisted up. All the instruments could be stored up there. He also sold us timber so that I could build my own bookshelves.

The Village was then very quiet, for the whole area was owned by Dulwich College and they had refused to allow buses on the Estate, and there wasn't much through car traffic either, for although the main road ran down to the South Circular Road, which was the main reason for what through traffic there was, one couldn't go further south without going through a tollgate, probably the only survivor of those in London. It meant a five to fifteen minute walk to the nearest bus stop, depending on where one was going, or to the railway stations. This was before the Victoria line tube was built down to Brixton, and so the quickest way to the Central London was by rail from West Dulwich or Herne Hill to Victoria or the number 3 bus to Westminster and Oxford Street.

When visitors were told to take the train from Victoria, they would arm themselves with books and magazines to read on the journey, only to find they had to get off the train ten or twelve minutes later!

Dulwich Village was a good place to live. There were nice Georgian houses to look at (they had the disadvantage of having to look at our 1930s terrace ones), there were real village shops, two greengrocers, our Mr Bartley round the corner and his brother in the main Village shopping street, a good fishmonger, butcher, and book shop, excellent schools in every direction, and an internationally famous Picture Gallery almost on the doorstep. Mr Bartley was always slipping a child an apple or whatever. He always knew when Gwen was away on one of her trips later on, for then I'd go in and buy an avocado which he knew she didn't like then but I did. He had been in Jaffa in the army, a real sink-hole in the 1940s, and he couldn't think why the Israelis used that name for their fruit! He also had contempt for the South Africans' efforts to produce citrus fruit, not a patch on the Jaffa, he'd say (and how right he was!). I got to know the proprietor of the local toyshop, too, for he was the son of the famous flautist, Albet Fransella, of the old Crystal Palace concerts. Most of the shops have gone now, for the Village has become very fashionable and the present shops are mostly boutiques. Where the residents get their food and other common necessities I've no idea.

The front room was my study and workshop. It was known as Daddy's dirty room to keep the children out because there were sharp tools on the bench, and often metal shavings and such things on the floor. Jimmy Blades had taught me many tricks for making gadgets for drum kit, including how to cut a thread on rods as bolts. The back room, with double doors on to the garden, was the living room, and in between was the kitchen, with a small scullery off it, with another door to the garden and to what had been the old outside lavatory. In that lavatory we had the drain stopped up, because rats were liable to come up through the pipes, and, with the lavatory removed and the

floor concreted over, it became a small garden shed. There was a small concreted area leading to the garden between the living room and the wall of the next-door house on the other side,, so it was easy to turn that into a Succah by stringing ropes across between the two walls. Sarah does the same thing at her house here in Oxford. The scullery we turned into a kitchen, with stove and sink, and what had been the kitchen became our dining room. The boiler that provided hot water and ground-floor central heating (each bedroom had its own small gas fire) stood in what had been the fireplace, with, in the recess between that and the wall of the front room, a built-in dresser, something I wish we still had in Oxford. The boiler was coal-fired, and when that became forbidden with the smokeless zone regulations, it had to be converted to coke (a small coal cellar between the kitchen and the hall, had a door recording all the children's heights and I was sorry we had to leave that when we moved here). We also tried some other smokeless fuel, but it burned far too hotly and one day set the chimney on fire – the fire brigade came very promptly and no damage was done.

I had my piano in the front room and the children were only allowed to play on it after washing their hands. When they started to ask for a television, I bought them their own piano instead – £4.10 delivered upstairs. It was an old wood-frame one that my tuner wouldn't touch, so I had to learn to tune it myself.

It was a good street with little enough traffic that all the children could run into each others' houses, and good neighbours all round. Rachel ran all the children in the street and she, Sarah, and Simon were especially friends with the Lammers' children across the road. They were an Austrian family and Freddy Lammer was world-famous for his photographs of stained glass, a particularly difficult art form to photograph properly. Punzi (Benedicta), his wife, lives not far from us now, and Sarah sees her from time to time. Their son, Peter, has been the saviour of many of us, for he developed and ran Sophos, one of the best computer security programs. Our next door neighbour drove

a Jaguar and complained about the engineering of the newly-built M1 motorway – he couldn't take the bends at 100 mph and had to slow down for them. This was before the days of the 70 mph speed limit. Another neighbour was Ron Dore, professor of Japanese at London University, and he brought me some instruments back from Japan and also translated the inscription on my Japanese resting bell. Other neighbours included Ron Kitaj, the artist, up the other end of the road, and his wife Elsi who died so tragically, and Neil Black, the oboist, was just round the corner. Our house was a nice house, too, warm and friendly, and Simon was born in it – the one birth I was there for, and as he came out I was able to tell Gwen, halfway out, 'It's a boy.' I think we were all sorry to leave it when I came to Oxford. Rachel was especially sorry because she was studying for the Rabbinic in Jerusalem at the time, and her home had vanished from under her. I sent her a set of keys for the Oxford house and that made her feel better.

We had many visitors there from all round the world, for Gwen never minded when I rang up and said 'Can we stretch dinner tonight?' for someone I wanted to bring home, and with hotels so expensive it was always good to be able to invite a foreign colleague to stay for a night or two. One, Karl Erik Larsson from Göteborg's Etnografiska Musikmuseet, was very popular with the children because when they were reproved for using their fingers to eat with, he pointed out that where he had worked, in Fiji, there was only one dish that people used a fork for – human flesh. We'd offered a bed as usual to another one to whom the British Council had asked me to show my collection of instruments. I didn't hear anything from them or him, so a day or two before he was to arrive, I rang up the Council to ask where he was staying, 'Oh didn't you know? He's staying with you.' And when he arrived, after the children had gone to bed, he had his girl friend with him, and as he wasn't sleeping with her, we having moved Simon in with Rachel to make room for him, we had to move them both out and

in with Sarah! He complained about his British Council contact – she was called Marigold and was exactly what one would expect with that name. But it was always fun to get to know people better that way, and of course we received reciprocal invitations with them. Recently I was able to help that last one to sell his collection of instruments to a museum in America run by an old student of mine, thus pleasing both of them.

All three children started at the village school, an excellent Church of England Primary, only two minutes walk away with very little proselytising of non-Christians from the local catchment area. Just one teacher tried to do that, but I told the children that that was the way some Christians felt they should behave, and not to worry about it. As they grew out of that school, Rachel and Sarah went to Mary Datchelor, a first-rate ILEA grammar in Camberwell (alas, long gone), an easy bus-ride from Herne Hill, though the bus was so crowded in rush hour that they soon preferred to walk all the way. They're both strong walkers to this day. Simon got a scholarship to Dulwich College, a much shorter walk. I was teaching at Westminster School at the time, but even with the help of the 50% discount on fees available to the staff there (including to visiting teachers like me) we couldn't afford that, not even if he'd won a scholarship there.

One of my evening class orchestras met at the local comprehensive school, and Simon became a regular player there, on double bass and/or percussion. He's one of those people who can pick up almost any instrument and make sense of it very quickly, but those were his main two in addition to piano. It so happened that his piano teacher at Dulwich was also teaching piano at Westminster, so I got weekly comments on his failure to practice his set pieces (a familiar story to all teachers), but also on his excellence at sight-reading when they played duets together instead, to my mind a more generally useful accomplishment.

The teaching at all the schools was good enough, and the children bright enough, that they all went on to university, both girls to Gwen's old College, Newnham in Cambridge and Simon to Queen's in Oxford. When I got a job at the Horniman Museum, on the top of the hill before one goes down to Forest Hill, that was an equally short journey. So Dulwich had been a good choice all round.

The children have all grown up now, of course, Rachel is a Hebrew and Jewish Studies teacher with a husband who's a homeopathic practitioner, Sarah was a midwife and is now Building Manager at our shul, and Simon is a software engineer in Jerusalem. They have children of their own, ten grandchildren for us in total: Eliezer and Isaac for Rachel and Fran; Jacob, Abigail, Kate, and Saul for Sarah; Avital, Aviad, Ahinoam, and Ellat for Simon and Heftsi. All but Saul are grown up, and two of them are married (Avital and Gilad. and Abi and Mark), and now even three great-grandchildren (Zac and Leah for Abi, and Eitan and another on the way for Avital).

Homelife for a freelance musician can be a bit traumatic for a spouse, and it says much for Gwen that for us it never was. Income is precarious because you never know where the next gig will come from, nor when and where it will be, nor how much it will pay. Because it's often at short notice it can muck up social plans as well, and one's spouse's commitments if it means that he or she has to be at home for the children when they come back from school. And it can also mean long-term loneliness for both parties, especially the one at home when the player goes off on tour. Tours in this country are usually for thirteen weeks because if they are any longer than that the management has to pay National Insurance, holiday money and so on – up to thirteen weeks these are the player's responsibility (regulations may have changed now, but that's how it was in the 1960s and 70s).

So I'd go off with Festival Ballet or whoever, leaving Gwen alone with the children for that long except, when the geography of the tour allowed for it, an arrival after midnight on Saturday from one town

and departure to the next town early on Monday morning to be on time for the get-in and seating rehearsal at the next theatre pit.

We had a lodging allowance for these tours, of course, as well as our pay for playing, but we had to find our own accommodation in each town, if possible near the theatre. All the towns on the touring circuits had landladies who were accustomed to the vagaries and hours that theatricals kept, and would provide us with a room, breakfast, and a late evening meal after the show and often after the pub, a cold one in some but a hot one in the better places.

As well as the ballet tours, I did the odd pantomime, usually a four or five week run, the Northampton one for years on end, and one at Stratford-on-Avon, as well as a couple of stints there for week or two for the Shakespeare plays when the local drummer was ill or on holiday. Hamlet always produced mixed feelings – it goes on so long that we got overtime pay, but that was counterbalanced by the fact that the Mucky Duck, as the Black Swan pub was known, was shut by the time we finished. The resident oboist there was Terry Macdonagh, who had been one of the most famous players in London till drink had made him unreliable, but he could still play like an angel on his good days. And there was the Edinburgh Festival, too, sometimes the odd two or three days for concerts, but also the late-night Review that I've already mentioned, or a play like *The Wallace*, usually three or four weeks at a time or longer, what with rehearsals and then the run.

On orchestral tours abroad, like the ones I did with the Royal Phil and Musica Reservata, the management booked us into hotels of varying quality. With the Limón tour, being American State Department run, these were usually good and would provide a meal after the show, but with the others, not being used to people like us who prefer not to eat a full meal before a performance, like the theatrical landladies were, we often had to fend for ourselves for dinner, hoping that somewhere would be open. When I mounted an exhibition in Sheffield for the University Student Union in 1967, museum hours at the Mappin Art

Gallery were unusual. They closed at 4.30 or 5.00 but then opened again from 7.00 to 9.00 pm or later so that the working people of the town could visit the Gallery, a very sensible arrangement. But none of the restaurants in that part of Sheffield served meals after that hour – there weren't any fish and chip shops in the respectable part of town. The only place I could find was the local Indian restaurant, so it was curry almost every night. And the University Hall of Residence, where they billeted me, had very restricted hours for breakfast, so that sometimes, especially on a Sunday, it was Indian for breakfast too! However much one enjoys good curries, it's not a welcome early morning smell, and even if they'd had any you can't really put marmalade on chapaties.

Orchestral out-of-town concerts were usually one-day coach trips. Meet at Baker Street or on the Embankment, depending on whether it was going to be north or south, early in the morning, and late back at night, hoping buses were still running to get home. One night in one of the northern cities, the driver got confused and drove further north for an hour – we were very late back and there was an early morning call next day to go down to Brighton or somewhere. Not fun.

So sometimes I felt that Gwen and the children might wonder who this stranger was who appeared at breakfast and then vanished again, but they were all much too sensible for that. On the other hand, if one wasn't working or had a morning rehearsal and an evening concert, then one saw more of the children than a lot of people who had regular nine-to-five jobs, especially when the children were still at Primary School round the corner and came home for lunch. So it meant that I could often give them their lunch and their tea when they came in after school and Gwen could go off on her own ploys and shop or do anything else she wanted, such as researching the embroideries that she was collecting or go to the salerooms to look at and sometimes buy there. She was an excellent embroiderer and knitter herself, and also made all her own clothes as well as those for the girls. She also

embroidered things like our Shabbas table mats and *challah* cloths, and later, after we moved to Oxford, curtains for each of the arks for our shul here, and reading desk covers and scroll covers.

When the children were still small, we were able to dump them on my parents at their holiday cottage on the Solent, where the sea was just outside the door (it was sometimes all round the house too in winter storms – the house sometimes had its own bow wave when the tide and wind were high). It meant that we could go off to wherever we wanted, round instrument museums and archaeological sites on the Continent or round churches in Britain looking for carvings of musical instruments – that led to one my earlier *Early Music* articles, on the carvings of Beverley Minster, for which Gwen wrote the historical part and I the musical, and also led eventually to our joint book, *Minstrels and Angels* on English church carvings of musicians. We built up a considerable photo archive. She was also a keen archaeologist and spent one summer digging at the Roman period palace of Fishbourne. Rachel followed her on this and dug at Cadbury Congresbury and worked at an archaeological project at the museum in Sparta.

One year we walked the Ridgeway, the oldest road in Britain, dating from Neolithic times, which runs from the flint mines at Grimes Graves in East Anglia to the great stone circles at Avebury and beyond. We picked it up in Berkshire after it leaves the Chiltern escarpment and walked the Berkshire Downs section. We found an excellent pub, the White Horse, near the chalk carving of that animal, where the food and drink were so good (we were asked at breakfast what vegetables we'd like for dinner, and they were picked that afternoon from their own garden, which now, alas, is tarmacked over as a car park) that we stayed more than one night, walking on for a section and then taking a bus back, and then picking up where we'd stopped the day before, going on another length and bussing back again. The Ridgeway then was all walking on turf – no motorbikes or four wheel drive cars, and it was fascinating because at every bend in the track there was a group

of barrows or a clump of trees, or both, to mark the next sight point on the track.

It meant, too, that Gwen could come with me on some of the Galpin Society's Foreign Tours, the first one, which she had organised, to Budapest and Prague, and a later one to Moscow and Leningrad, as it still was then. In Budapest the man in charge of the instruments had prudently gone off on leave (very wisely, judging from some of his labels) and so we could only see what was in the showcases, but in Prague we had a wonderful time, for everything was open to us and we were free to examine everything in the stores, then in the Bertramka Villa where Mozart had lived while writing *Don Giovanni*, as well as in the Museum itself. I asked Dr Buchner, the curator, what had happened to one of the two Bressan treble recorders that he had illustrated in one of his books. 'Ah, das ist eine probleme,' he replied. We had a local guide in each place of course, as was the rule then in all Communist States, a charming girl in Budapest whom I think we subverted somewhat, teaching her how to play musical glasses with the wine glasses at dinner. In Prague the guide was a rather dour student, who was badly shocked when on leaving the Bertramka one day we sighted a small local bar, and headed for it with shouts of 'Ah, pivo.' Not suitable for tourists, he said and wouldn't let us go in. So we had to wait for our beer till we got back to the city centre. The bars had the habit there, whenever they saw an empty litre mug, plonking a full one beside it. When it was time to pay, they simply counted the empty steins.

In Leningrad I decided to skip the Hermitage first day (I know, I know) and went to prospect at the instrument museum. Just as well because the Intourist guide wanted to take us to a factory farm, but I knew the way to the museum and could direct the coach driver, so we got there, and were greeted with great friendliness. They were so short of equipment there in those days that I left them some of my

measuring tools, which I could replace when I got home, including a small electronic pitch meter.

Later the children got bigger and wanted to be with us in the summer holidays, still keeping to my parents' Warren Beach, which they loved so much, for Easter holidays and as many half-terms as possible, so we took to camping. A large tent for Gwen and me and for everyone in the day time, and a small one-person tent for each of them to sleep in, plus later a lavatory tent, for we came to prefer the wilder sites, asking a farmer for permission to camp in one of his fields. One summer, Simon was camping with his scout troop in the Brecon Beacons, so we camped a couple of miles away and on open day came walking over the hill to visit him – for a year two after that, on their open days, the troop would look out for the Montagus walking towards them. One wet day we went from there to Hay on Wye and did well in the bookshops, buying among other things a Polyglot Bible, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and English on one page, and German, French, Italian and Spanish on the facing page. It had the Syriac New Testament in the back and Simon taught himself to read that when rain kept us in our tents. Each tent, incidentally, and except for the lavatory, had a *mezuzah* (the small scroll that Jews fix on their door-posts) stitched to its doorway – our encampment really was *Ma tovu* – How lovely are thy tents O Israel.

Another year we planned to go to Scotland but never got further than Exmoor. Rachel was digging at Cadbury so we dropped her there and went on to Exmoor where the others got their first chance to ride horses. Rachel wanted to go on digging and the others, and I, wanted to go on riding, so we stayed on there, and we never got to Scotland. It was a good campsite – wild strawberries in the hedges and fresh cream from the farm.

Another place we went on holidays was Jerusalem. I went by myself the first time in 1976, and liked it so much that we both went the following year. I got to know some of the local colleagues, and we began to think of making *aliyah*, of settling there. The biggest problem

with such an idea was the collection of instruments, by then a couple of thousand or so, plus the library that went with it. The trouble was that, unless one has a great deal of money, everyone in Jerusalem lives in a flat, and what you can keep in a London house won't fit in a Jerusalem apartment, and it was Jerusalem that fascinated us. We had the feeling that it was a magical city, that everything had happened there, and that that was where we wanted to live. Other places might have been possible to find a house, though pretty well everywhere it would probably have been too expensive, and we didn't want to live down on the Plain, with the hotter and more humid climate (Jerusalem can also be very hot, but it's dry). The Negev might have been possible – we rather liked Beer-Sheva, but only as a very second best. So there were three potential choices: sell the collection and go; set up a museum in Jerusalem; give up the idea of going.

I didn't want to sell the collection – it was a working tool for my writing and lecturing, and what would I do without it? Take up golf? And we didn't want to give up without at least trying. So we opted for the middle one, where there was certainly interest, and the children, who were by then grown up, very generously said that the collection was mine, even though it was part of their inheritance, and I could do what I liked with it. So we offered it as a gift to the City, and/or the Rubin Academy of Music (which had some collections already, including that of Serge Koussevitzky, though rather neglected), and/or the Hebrew University, which has a good music department – not the Israel Museum because mine is a teaching collection rather than a display one. All three were interested. The Iriya (City authorities), yes if I could provide the funding for the building and its running costs, which of course I couldn't. The Rubin Academy went so far as to commission an architect to draw plans for a new building in the garden behind their main building and the next street to the south, but they couldn't find funding, and then they moved up to join the University on Givat Ram. The University also had funding problems. The Iriya

even went to so far as to suggest a site near the Science Museum up beyond Givat Ram (those parts of the University that had not moved back to Mount Scopus after the reunification of the City in 1967), but again only if I could raise the funding.

There were all sorts of other suggestions, including cooperation with Steve Horenstein, a modernist composer with big plans for teaching projects, but all fell by the wayside over funding. This all went on from about 1978 up to the time that I was appointed to the Bate, with the option, even then, of reviving the idea when I'd come to retirement. But once I did retire, at the age of 67, I didn't feel that I had the energy to start a new museum (which would inevitably take a number of years to complete) in a foreign language (all the labelling, guides, catalogues etc even if I could teach in English) and, worse, a foreign bureaucracy, which combines aspects of the obscurantism of the old Ottoman with the more arcane of the English (not me, old man, try my partner), all overlaid with Middle Eastern delays. So it has never happened, and the collection and I are still here in Oxford. I go to Israel once or twice a year (I have children and grandchildren there) for two or three weeks at a time and have many friends there, but that's as far as it goes today.

All this time I was playing, teaching, and later university lecturing, and also writing. It was the knowledge that I gained in the research on early percussion instruments for *Musica Reservata* that led to my second and third books. Jimmy Blades had asked me to write a draft for the mediaeval chapter in his book, *Percussion Instruments and their History*, and OUP asked us both to write a couple of small books on the subject, together on the first one, he on the history and I on the techniques required, and I alone the second, on how to make them, a greatly expanded version of the article that I'd written for the *Galpin Society Journal* (that book, *Making Medieval Percussion Instruments*, is still available from me and from the Bate because I bought up the remainder stock). And it was that knowledge that had also led the year before to the commission for my first major

book, *The World of Medieval & Renaissance Musical Instruments*, which sold well enough that the publishers commissioned three more. Unfortunately the third of the series, *The World of Romantic & Modern Musical Instruments*, didn't sell as well as *Medieval & Renaissance* or *Baroque & Classical*, so they cancelled the fourth, *Antiquity & Ethnographic*. However, my then agent, A. P. Watt, made them pay for it!

It was also being Honorary (ie unpaid) Secretary of the Galpin Society, which I was for six years or so, that got me as well known round the organological world as I already was as an early-music player – at the first Early Music Conference at the Purcell Room in the Festival Hall complex, we'd been asked to say who we were, and when I got up and started to ask a question, Howard Brown said 'Jeremy, identify yourself,' and there was a roar of laughter round the room. Everyone there had seen me laced into a huge tabor or a pair of nakers at concerts there.

As Galpin Hon. Sec. I followed my predecessor Eric Halfpenny's example (he talked me into doing the job by saying 'Time to give back') by issuing a very informal bulletin, written as though it were a personal letter to each member. All that our foreign and far-from-London members got for their subscription was this Bulletin and the annual Journal, and we wanted to make them feel that they were members of a Society rather than just subscribers to a Journal. After five years, a couple of members of Committee (Philip Bate, I think mainly under the influence of the other, Keene Ridley, a Treasury Solicitor) felt that something so informal wasn't consonant with the dignity of the Society. I said that Eric and I had both held the Bulletin as the Hon. Sec.'s preserve, to write it just as we liked, telling them why we did so, and if they didn't like the way I wrote the Bulletin, they could write it themselves. So I didn't offer myself for re-election after my five year term was up in 1971. A long time later, while I was at Oxford, they made me a Vice-President ('About time, too,' Gwen

muttered), and more recently the President, a great honour that I much appreciate, and I try to be as hands-on as possible, helping to man our stand throughout the Early Musical Instrument Exhibition each year, and so on. When Graham Wells, the Chairman, phoned to tell me, I was almost in tears, thinking how pleased Gwen would have been to know of it.

A few years after I'd resigned as Hon. Sec., when I was feeling somewhat cut-off from the instrument community, Ephraim Segerman and Djilda Abbott told me of their idea for a Fellowship of Makers and Restorers of Historical Instruments (we later replaced Restorers with Researchers, but that's another story that is on my website as a download, *FoMRHI History*). They talked me, quite easily, into being Secretary for it, and I photocopied membership forms next morning and took them up to the Early Musical Instrument Exhibition, then held at the Royal College of Music (nowadays it's at the old Royal Naval College in Greenwich), and started to sign up members, about 20 on the first day alone. With that I could make my Bulletin as informal as I liked. I published an annual List of Members, too, something that the Galpin Society only did spasmodically, with an update in every quarterly issue, and with both an instrumental and geographical index for I believed that members should find it easy to be in touch with each other, ask advice from each other, and visit each other when travelling. We ran FoMRHI on a shoe string, nobody paid for their time, the *Quarterly* issued as photocopies from the typed text that members sent in, reduced from A4 pages to A5, thus four original pages on front and back of one sheet of paper, so no typesetting and minimal printing costs and a very low subscription price. As I say elsewhere, being in touch with so many makers, and also players, was an enormous help when I wanted anybody to do anything for me at the Bate. I ran FoMRHI from that autumn, 1975, till I thought it was time to retire in 2000. I'd run it for 25 years, we'd issued 200 *Quarterlies*, and it was time for someone else to take over.

One less usual spin-off from my early music knowledge was when the BBC was filming their series of *Living in the Iron Age*. They'd asked a group of families to live an Iron-Age life for a year, cut off from the rest of the world (though with emergency phone lines). They asked me to go there and show them something about the instruments that would have been used in that period. Their location was secret, but we were given a rendezvous at an isolated pub and then guided to the site, an isolated spot in the middle of Cranborne Chase in Dorset – Gwen was with me and of course she had a one-inch OS map in the car so we had no trouble getting there for a second trip to see how they were getting along with it. So I took down a lyre, made by George Higgs, a FoMRHI member, and a cow horn or two, and showed them how to make a drum out of one of their cooking pots and the skin of a deer that they'd cooked in it. One of my standard lines in my music club lectures, and later my university ones, was the surmise that the first drum was the pot in which dinner was cooked covered with the skin in which dinner had lived, and here was the opportunity to put it into practice, and it worked, too! I had been asked not to influence them too much but I've always regretted that I didn't introduce them to the concept of the bard, for they could have made up many poems and ballads about their exploits. They were of the generation brought up on records, cassettes, and radio and had lost any ideas of making up their own music and folk songs.

By this time I was doing much less playing, other than in early music, playing for *Mus Res* and playing timpani in Baroque and Classical orchestras, and still conducting amateur orchestras and choral societies, but doing more writing and academic work. I'd started University lecturing, as I've recounted in another chapter, I'd had a semester as a Visiting Professor in America, I'd acted as external examiner for various doctoral candidates, both in UK and in America and Europe, and I was also doing music club lectures all round the country as well as still doing some instrumental teaching. So when Tony Baines retired

and the Bate job was advertised, I decided to go in for it, and got it as I recount elsewhere.

While I was working at the Bate there was no time to write anything as big as a book; catalogues, guidebooks, articles for periodicals, sure, but nothing like a book. After I retired, I had the time. Gwen was very pleased to see me busy rather than bothering her all the time, even if it meant I was under her feet in the house. It did mean buying another computer, though, so that we had one each. We wrote one book together, *Minstrels and Angels*, and I then wrote several more, *Instruments of the Bible*, a catalogue of my *Reed Instruments*, and my own magnum opus, because I'd been asked if I'd revise Curt Sachs's great book *The History of Musical Instruments*. I refused to touch the Sachs, saying that although badly outdated, it was a classic and should be left alone, but offered to write a new one instead, my *Origins and Development of Musical Instruments*. I also wrote a stream of *Early Music* and *Galpin Society Journal* articles, and now, after three years as a Section Editor for the revised edition of the *New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, for which I was responsible for all the ethnographic material plus specialised areas of my own, I've written three new books, a worldwide survey of trumpets and horns of all sorts, *Horns and Trumpets of the World*, following that with a book on *The Shofar*, and most recently one on *The Conch Horn*, for which I'm looking for a publisher.

After I was appointed to the Bate, I asked if I could check the safety of the instruments, because the Faculty was moving into a new building in St Aldate's, instead of the old one in Holywell Street. So they said 'Would you like to start on 6 July,' their moving date, instead of the conventional 1st October. Being out of work at the time, of course I said yes. We had nowhere to live, but they billeted me in a guest room at Wadham for a few days, and then offered us a caretaker's flat until they appointed a caretaker for the beginning of term. So we camped there, mattress on the floor, camping stove, and a borrowed fridge.

I had to open the building each day for the builders (of course they hadn't finished on schedule), and keep an eye on the instruments (80% humidity, and too many windows), while Gwen chased round town looking for a house for us to live in, if possible within walking distance of the Bate. She also had to look for someone to buy the house in Dulwich and, once she'd found us a new home, to organise moving everything, all of which of course she managed without turning a hair – indeed she was a wife beyond rubies.

She had found the house I still live in, more or less just as term began. It meant camping again, for we had to leave the Faculty caretaker's flat that we'd been camping in, again mattresses on the floor and the camping stove for cooking, while the builders worked on it, because it had been a student pad with disastrous wiring, floods in the basement, a communicating swing door as a fire exit on the top floor into the next house, with which it had been twinned (we still have the door because it gives us a swing door between kitchen and dining room).

Between contract and completion, squatters had moved in, but very kindly they withdrew into the other house, so the first job for the builders was bricking up that connecting door. The state of the wiring meant only one electric cable running from top to bottom of the house – a concession by the Electricity Board so that the builders could see what they were doing. We moved our campsite from floor to floor, as the builders finished work on one and started the next. Sarah was with us because she wanted her first child to be born in England – she and Mark had been living in Essen while he was researching on postwar German history. Eventually the builders left, and Jacob, our first grandson, was born in the spare bedroom next day with his *brit* (circumcision) a week later, a good start for a house and for our life in Oxford.

Like the house in Dulwich, it had a good friendly feel to it, and we have been very happy in it, with visitors coming to see us and often staying for a while. When I became Senior Member of the student

Jewish Society (all student societies in the University have to have a Senior Member of the University to take the can back if there's any breach of University Student Regulations) we used to invite them for the Sabbath third meal at least once a term and I used to incarcerate and invigilate them for exams. We still have exams in Oxford on a Saturday, and of course a Jewishly-observant student can't write on Sabbath, and even some less observant ones feel that it's taking an unnecessary risk to do so. So the student has to be kept away from everybody once the exam begins. They'd bring a bag of clothes before Shabbat came in on Friday evening, because exams have to be taken in black suit, white shirt, white tie, gown and cap, what we call *sub fusc*. Saturday morning we'd meet at synagogue at the hour that the exam began, take them home to lunch and dinner, and then on Sunday I'd invigilate their exam in the dining room, all dressed up like them, plus my MA hood and cap (they were allowed to take off their gowns and cap once I'd seen them arrive in them, but I wasn't!). It was always a nice weekend because they were always nice people, and it was a pleasure to be able to help them in this way.

Initially I was without College affiliation – Colleges are very careful about giving Fellowships, and a museum curator isn't much use to a College. After five years or so, in a University-wide mopping-up operation (there was quite a number of us in the same boat) Claus Moser invited me to become a Fellow of Wadham, where I was elected by special-election (a formula for non-tutorial Fellows). It's a very nice friendly and informal College, and one where I've been very happy.

This went on until one year we were on holiday in Istanbul. On our third day there, Gwen came out of the bathroom and simply dropped to the floor. After the struggle to get a doctor (more concerned about assurances that he would be paid than about Gwen) and getting her to hospital (where again they wouldn't move her to A&E until I paid – American Express were notably unhelpful over this and refused the

card, and Zurich Insurance were pretty sticky initially, too – if I'd known that our insurance with Bradford and Bingley was really with them I'd have gone to another firm, anyway, with memories of Swiss insurance firms' treatment of Jews during and after the War). She began to recover over several days but then died in the night from a thrombosis. By sheer good fortune the daughter of Mike Sauvage, then Wadham's Domestic Bursar, worked in the Consulate and he had given us her phone number. Nicole was a tower of strength – she had visited Gwen in the hospital and had given them her phone number, and she and her Turkish husband came to wake me at three in the morning when they were told that she had died. They drove me to the hospital, and then helped enormously with all the horrendous formalities. I am glad to say that this helped her also, for when, on being interviewed for appointment as a Vice-Consul, she was asked about whether she could cope with such emergencies, she was able to hark back to this occasion and show that she had already done so with great efficiency, so some good came out of Gwen's death. Sarah was able to drop everything and come out to hold my hand, for she had no teaching commitments like Rachel did. While she and I were waiting in Istanbul to be able to bring Gwen home, Rachel, in London, was able to arrange the funeral, negotiate with the coroner and doctor to make sure we did not have to wait for an inquest, and to sort out all the necessary formalities at the UK end, a very considerable task which she carried out with great efficiency.

Since then, I have lived here and gone on with my writing and other work. I'm still alone, save for an enjoyable couple of years with a very nice lady, almost my own age, in London. We met through a traditional *shidduch*. I was travelling back from Israel, once, and got talking to my neighbour who said, as we were approaching Heathrow, 'I know a nice lady whom you ought to meet and whom I think you'd like.' He nagged us both until eventually we did meet and we did like each other, so we were grateful to him and had dinner with him and his wife

from time to time. Once she had greatly improved my sartorial habits and appearance (which was much praised by family and friends here, who were very impressed once I started turning up to shul in a suit and tie) she introduced me to many interesting people both in London and in Israel, for which and for many other matters I'm very grateful. I'd spend something like Mondays to Thursdays with her in London and Fridays to Sundays in Oxford for Shabbat, with variations to allow for College and other events here and for events in London. Similarly, when we were on holiday in Israel, travelling or with her sister, who was in a retirement home in Netanya, I'd go up to Jerusalem to be with Simon and Heftsi on Shabbat. She very kindly got broadband in her flat so that I could spend time working on Grove, etc, with the laptop, and we were happy together. Unfortunately, in the end, we were too different in some ways and in many interests for it to last, but we remained friends and are in touch from time to time.

Oxford is a good place to live, with Sarah and my College and all my friends there nearby, a good and very friendly local Jewish congregation, and other friends and members of my family coming to visit, I am reasonably content, however much I still miss my Gwen.

Chapter 7

Collecting

I've mentioned the Galpin Society several times, and as I've said, it was membership in that that had probably more influence on my career than anything else. For one thing it started me collecting instruments and learning about them and that was what led me to where I am now. For another, it was Eric Halfpenny's influence that got me a job for a year, 1960-61, during Jean Jenkins's year of leave, at the Horniman Museum as curator of instruments, and it was that that really got me into the non-European instrument field. I already knew a fair amount about European instruments, but save for my Army encounters in Egypt, I knew very little, if anything, about the non-European, especially those from further afield than the Middle or Near East.

I got on very well with the curator, Otto Samson, helped by the fact that we were both Jewish – once when I wanted to buy an instrument for the collection, he asked me '*Mah nishtana?*' ('Why does it differ?', the leading question read by a child that kicks off the Passover home service, the Seder, the whole rest of the Seder being the answer) and I had to explain why it was different from anything else we'd got. He was also, like many chiefs, open to the 'You remember that idea of yours, Sir?' suggestion. He took me to the Royal Anthropological Institute for their Symposium on Ethnomusicology, where I met all the big guns in that field, and recommended me for Fellowship there – later I was elected on to their council and eventually ran their Ethnomusicology Panel with Nazir Jairazbhoy and Raymond Clausen. And of course it

was my time at the museum that gave me the experience and know-how to mount my own exhibitions at Sheffield in 1967 and later at Durham, and to mount the Galpin Society's 21st Anniversary Exhibition in Edinburgh in 1968 on to the walls and into the display cases, and eventually to get the Bate Collection post here in Oxford.

After my year at the Museum, I was invited back to give a lecture there on instruments, which was fairly dire because it was lights up to look at an instrument, and lights out to see a slide, not helped by the slides that Mac put into the machine upside down or with his fingerprints all over them – I glazed all my slides thereafter, both so that I could clean off fingerprints, and also for their safety. Have you ever seen a slide burn up from the heat of the lamp if it's left in for too long? It's a horrifying sight: first a small brown spot appears in the centre, and then it rapidly expands to a ring, and the whole slide vanishes. A glass cover on each side prevents that and also makes it easy to clean off fingerprints without damaging the slide. Of course nowadays nobody uses slides – it's all PowerPoint, but I've still got boxes full of the things, for I used them in many of my lectures at the Bate so that students could see what the instruments I was talking about looked like, especially the ethnographic ones.

It was that lecture that made me start collecting hard – I was determined to lecture thenceforth only with instruments with the lights full on so that they could be seen, so I had to get enough instruments to do it with. I had a few already (this was in 1961), especially some brass and some woodwind, in addition of course to the fairly wide range of funnies that is every percussion player's stock-in-trade. People think of us as drummers but we're known in the trade as the kitchen department because that's where you find all the odds and ends. Anything hit, blown, or scraped that the gentlemen (and ladies) of the wind and strings are too grand to make a noise with comes to us. You want a devil's fiddle? Call a drummer. Or a nightingale or a cuckoo? Call a drummer again. I can't remember in which opera I had to blow a

cuckoo off stage, but I can remember doing it. And there's a good nightingale solo in Malcolm Arnold's ballet *Sweeney Todd*. The only trouble with that one is that it goes on long enough that the whistle may blow dry before the end, especially if you start laughing while doing it, and it's hard not to in that one, especially if the trombonists sitting in front of you get the giggles. But the collection was only a hundred or two, not enough to illustrate a real range of instruments. So I began to collect seriously. And when you start to do that it's surprising what you find. I still find things here, in Oxford, on the weekly open market. Often they're quite small, whistles and so on, though quite recently I found a superb Tibetan trumpet of human thigh-bone, heavily encased in silver, along with a small conch encased in silver and malachite, and a week or two later a French *cor trompette*. A fortnight ago I found that rare beast, a posthorn folded into bugle shape, and two days ago as I write a mediaeval jews harp found by a metal detectorist in Cumnor, a village just outside Oxford.

Houses get cleared all the time, all that rubbish that grandpa brought back from wherever, and it winds up on market stalls, in junk shops, the better stuff, often too expensive, in antique shops, and back in those days when I started collecting there were some inexpensive ethnographic dealers as well, especially Fred North in Crawford Street. I got quite a lot off him, whereas I couldn't run to the prices of the famous dealers in the West End of London whom I'd met with Dr Samson.

And then one goes on holiday, sometimes with good results, other times not. We went to Brittany once to walk the *Alignements* of Carnac, but also in hope of finding the *vrai biniou*, the old traditional bagpipe, now replaced by Scottish pipes, and its accompanying *bombarde*, but without success, though I did buy a modern *bombarde* in Quimper. We went to Agadir in Morocco several times and there's an open market there once a week. One man, a Berber, who are often nice people, had an instrument stall, mostly tourist quality but not all. We got on to

good terms when I offered him a pinch of snuff and he sold me some good things on various visits, even coming round to the hotel we were staying in to present me with a flute that he'd made specially for me after I'd given him a spare tin of snuff. I particularly wanted a *rebab andaluz*, a fiddle that had been used in Spain in the thirteenth century and was the ancestor of the European rebec, and whose bow had been used on the vihuela to create the viola da gamba in the mid-1500s. It had survived in Morocco after the Reconquista and it is still used there. The ones he had on his stall were rubbish, tourist quality, but he thought that his cousin in Marrakesh had a good one. We were going there anyway for a couple of days sightseeing, so I asked him for the address in the *shuk* there and a rough idea of the likely price.

In Marrakesh we were on a two-day guided tour, but we had a map of the *shuk* and so broke away from the tour party and Gwen navigated us unerringly to the right place. Again what he had in the shop was tat, but yes he thought he had something better in another shop, so would we look after his shop while he went to fetch it. He came back after ten minutes or so with a good instrument, and then the bargaining began. The Agadir dealer had said he thought it would be around \$30 – the Marrakesh cousin wanted \$300! I explained that I hadn't got that much with me, and the price gradually came down, bit by bit, but still by not enough. So eventually we gave up and left, and fifty yards or so away, he suddenly appeared in front of us (the *shuk* is like that, a maze of streets and interlocking alleys) and said 'Come back, come back.' So we did and I eventually settled for \$35 and two blank cassette tapes. Today it is on loan with its bow to the Bate Collection.

Over the years visiting different places in Morocco, a nice country where Jews are welcome, I got quite a lot of instruments, in Agadir, in Essaouira (a lovely Old City), and in Tangier. I'm sorry not to have been able to go to some other Muslim countries, too, for many of our instruments derive from that culture, and there are differences of style between them, but some won't admit Jews (a policy the British

government blandly ignores, treating them as friendly allies) and others won't let you in if you have Israeli stamps in your passport, whatever your religion (and our government ignores that, too). Yes, I could get a second passport, and I could deny my religion, but be damned to that – I can do without them if that's how they treat us. I do have several Palestinian instruments, for the Palestinians are only a stone's throw (too often literally) from the Israeli parts of Israel. Back before the Intifada, but after the reunification of Jerusalem, in the days when it was safe to wander through the alleys of the Old City between Shar Shechem, the Damascus Gate, and the Temple Mount, which I'd be reluctant to do today (main streets such as the Via Dolorosa are OK, but back alleys best avoided), I passed an open-fronted room with what appeared to be a wall of pottery drain-pipes end-on at the back, with a man stitching something in the front. Suddenly I realised that these were the bodies of *darabukkes*, full size professional goblet drums, and that this was the work shop of a *darabukke* maker who was stitching the heads. So I bought one and carried it home on the plane with great care and trepidation – it now has its own foam-lined case. I used it professionally many times for Maurice Jarre and others. To my mind, the pottery *darabukke* with a good goatskin head has an incomparable tone quality – the ones with a metal shell and plastic head that you see all over the *shuk* and in our drum shops have a sharper sound and can seem louder, but they have none of the depth of tone of the pottery ones. I also have a Bedu fiddle, the usual double pipes, bought at the source of the Jordan up in the Gallil, and so forth.

Then, once one becomes known as a collector, people get in touch: 'I've seen this, are you interested?' or 'I've brought this back, would you like it?' and so on. I got quite a lot that way, for sometimes people who'd brought back souvenirs either got tired of them or wanted the space, or more often needed to raise some money. That's how I got my *kora* from Sierra Leone, for example, from a girl who no longer had room for it, and also how I got a batch of East African instruments from

a collector who'd run short of money, and a pair of professional quality Dalmatian flutes as a gift from a visitor, among many other things. And also, if I know someone is travelling, or is coming to visit me, I often ask them to keep an eye open for small and inexpensive odds and ends – one can't ask them to bring back bass tubas or *sitars* for instance, but one can sometimes give them the name and description of some smallish instrument that I don't have from that country.

Even I couldn't cope with bass tubas. We were in Prague on the Galpin Society's First Foreign Tour (see my article of that title in *Galpin Society Journal XXI*) and Joe Wheeler and I found a shop full of helicons, dirt cheap, about £7 at the then rate of exchange, but no way could we see ourselves getting on to a British Airways plane draped in helicons so we had to leave them. Besides, we already, or I anyway, had a fair number of instruments to bring back, so many that I couldn't see any way to bring back some Bohemian wine glasses we saw, and Gwen never really forgave me for refusing to cope with them, too. During my Sheffield Exhibition, a visitor offered me a Giorgi flute that I was very glad to buy, just as many times visitors to the Bate have offered us instruments for that Collection.

Then also, Laurence Picken and I had a policy of buying inexpensive odds and ends that we saw in duplicate, one for him and one for me. We were both interested in children's musical toys for, as Curt Sachs pointed out many years ago, children's toys often preserve the oldest strata of artefacts of a culture. I continued the same practice with Maria Antònia Juan i Nebot and she also helped me to get many instruments in Barcelona and nearby when I was lecturing there. When seeing instruments cheaply in a *shuk* or market I have almost always bought things in duplicate or triplicate, for not only does this allow for subsequent breakage, but something to swap is often useful to have in stock. For a while, I used to buy cheap Chinese flutes from the shops in Gerrard Street in London, the local China Town, and leave one as a gift in a school I'd been lecturing at.

When one has a regular teaching schedule, for example one school in the lunch hour and another at 3.45, one builds up a regular run between them, dropping in at the same junk shop every week at the same day and time. So they get to know you and your interests and put things by for you. One regular stop was Aladdin's Cave in Croydon on a Friday and I bought many ethno odds and ends from him until he moved to the West Country.

Another Friday stop, just up the road in Lavender Hill in Battersea from my lunchtime school, was an old lady with a very small shop. One afternoon I looked in and there was a man trying to sell her three or four ivory flutes. I asked if I might have a look at them, and saw the mark on one: Stanesby Ir, the first English flute-maker in the early eighteenth century – he and his father both made recorders and oboes and bassoons, but so far as we know, only the son made transverse flutes, the first since Pierre Bressan had introduced the instrument from France, and Schuchart from Germany. Of course it would have been bad manners to make the man an offer, so I asked her in a whisper, if she bought them, could I buy that one? And there I had to leave it to get to Croydon High School. The result was a weekend on tenterhooks. I could not go back on Shabbat, she was shut on Sunday of course, and on Monday I was teaching all day at Westminster School. So I asked Gwen to go in on Monday and see what she could do. When I got home Monday evening, there it was – it had cost £50. A few cracks, a shortened head joint and an enlarged embouchure to play at around 430 Hz, but a Stanesby and immediately the most important instrument in my collection. Many years later when Yamaha brought out their plastic Stanesby, a very accurate copy of an original, their head on my body brought the pitch back to the original at 415. Rod Cameron had offered to make me a new ivory head (this was before the days of CITES), but even though he generously offered it at a very low price, I couldn't afford it.

I already had some good flutes, including a Delusse, for when, in the usual collector's gossip, I told Morley Pegge that I'd just paid £2.10s for a one-key flute, he was horrified – he'd never paid more than 7/6d. So, bless him, he gave me a handful, that Delusse among them – I'd put it in on loan at the Bate because they didn't have a Delusse, and when Hélène La Rue (my successor) died so tragically early, I made it a gift in her memory. I started collecting too late for those prices – James MacGillivray had a good story of picking up an ivory recorder for half a crown from a barrow in Edinburgh, and I never dared ask Edgar Hunt what he'd paid for his Bressans. But even in my time it was extraordinary what one could get for a fiver – my two-key Milhouse oboe, for example.

Gwen became good at buying me instruments and was as quick to spot them as I was. When I was up in Sheffield, doing the exhibition there in 1967, she was walking up Kensington Church Street, and saw in a shop some African ivory horns, three real beauties, two of them a pair, male and female (Bill Fagg, Keeper of the Ethnographic Department of the British Museum, told me that, and he identified their source as Mangbetu), plus a third from the same people with a human head finial and its original carrying strap. She also always kept an eye out for me on her ICJW and other foreign trips and always found something to bring back. In Johannesburg she got me some genuine Airport Art – this was a phrase coined, I think, by Bill Fagg for tat made specifically to sell to tourists in airport shops, but local work, rather than Brummagem-ware imported for people to take back to its source. When she was in Nairobi for the UN Decade of Women, she found some good folded iron cattle bells. She bought three, and the woman selling them asked, 'Mama got three cows?' Maybe she said, 'Only one bull'! Things in Beijing at the follow-up conference there a decade later were rather more tightly controlled and I don't think she found me anything else there.

While I was doing some lectures in Barcelona once, on a trip up to Vic in the foothills of the Pyrenees, I saw some tiny versions of their type of cowbell, about half an inch high, so I bought them and made them into earrings for her, but they weren't popular for they made too much noise near her ears. I did also get a full size one, wooden collar and all, from a stall on the market there that sold them to farmers – first you chose your bell and then selected the right size of collar, and the man put them together. That trip, and many others to markets in and around Barcelona, were through Maria-Antònia Juan i Nebot. I remember, too, the dish of delicious young goat cutlets we had for lunch in Vic. I can't think why we never see goat in our butchers, including the kosher ones, now that they are farmed here so frequently, for it's often delicious meat.

What was important then as now, was never to pass a junk shop. Once I was driving Philip Bate down to Stoke D'Abernon in Surrey to lunch with Morley Pegge. I picked him up at Clapham Common and it took us over two hours to get to the bottom of South Croydon, normally a half-hour drive or less, but we stopped at every such shop we passed. We found only one instrument, a small shell with other shells tied to it, so that it could both be blown as a conch and shaken as a rattle, said to be Samoan. I also saw a pair of timps that I thought might suit one of my Croydon pupils and passed word on to her about them.

Similarly I was once going to Ware in Hertfordshire to play with their choral society. I had Gwen and the children with me because it was rather a family affair – I'd been doing it for many years, once a year. The conductor was nice chap and very competent and he got excellent results from his chorus, and from us. Once he allowed me to use Simon, still quite a small school boy then, to put in a small triangle part that I'd otherwise have had to leave out. The first time, before I had a car, was by rail and I borrowed the porter's trolley to get the timps from the station to the rehearsal. But this time we were in the

car and driving up the Lea Bridge Road I saw a junk shop. I went in, the man said, 'Can I help you?' 'Have you any musical instruments,' I asked. 'Oh no,' he said, but I looked round, and there was the end of a boxwood flute sticking out. The head was a bit banana, but it's my best-blowing one-key flute, boxwood with ivory mounts and a silver key by Phipps (that was the one that I told Morley had cost me £2.10s). I also bought from him an African *sansa* and I think one or two other instruments. When he said he had no musical instruments, what he meant, like many such dealers, was that he had no violins or pianos. But Gwen used to say that when I went into a junk shop, instruments came crawling out from the walls. It was at one of the Ware performances that I heard a quite extraordinary noise coming from the clarinets, and there was Georgina Dobré playing a C clarinet – the sound was quite different from that of the B flat, and it confirmed, if confirmation was needed, the importance of using the instrument that the composer had specified if you want to get the right sound.

Another regular date was the Christmas pantomime at the Northampton Repertory Theatre, a real traditional family pantomime without pop stars, with Lionel, the chap who ran the Rep, doing a superb Dame. They were all a very friendly cast, too, with none of the actor-musician snobbery that one sometimes finds in the theatre. As always with pantomimes, one rehearses up to the day before Christmas Eve, and then goes home for Christmas. Driving up one year early on Boxing Day to get ready for the first performance that day, the car broke down on the way. The AA man was rather resentful at being called out that morning to some idiot tourist, but once I'd established that I was on the way to work he became much friendlier and got me back on the road smartly. The only instrument I ever found there, as I've told above, was an old-fashioned bulb motor horn, still in its original box, which said 'As fitted to Rolls Royce'. I also bought there a heavy cast iron frying pan which I've used from that day to this, for in that year I was in self-catering digs where I had the use of the kitchen and the

landlady had one of those abominable thin metal frying pans whose base over the years had distorted into a well-rounded dome, making it very difficult to cook anything. One year Gwen brought Rachel up there to join me – she must have been just under three, but she enjoyed the show. Gwen, introduced me to her old boss at Mass Observation, Jo Hastings and her family, who lived in Towcester, nearby. They were *sardana* enthusiasts and introduced me to that Catalan national dance and to the sound of the *tiple* and *tenora*, the traditional shawm and brass band that accompanies it, the real survivor of the old mediaeval Alta Band. Jo and her husband Steve were keen rally drivers and were sure that one developed an ESP facility and could predict whether there was an approaching car round a blind bend. I was fascinated to see that the local music shop was called Abel's, and I wondered whether it was run by a descendant of the famous viol player who was a partner of Johann Christian Bach's in putting on concerts in London in the second half of the eighteenth century. Apparently the original Abel didn't have children, so either there was no connexion or maybe he was a collateral, but it was still an interesting name to see over a music shop. One does sometimes meet such names. When I taught at a school in Honor Oak in South London I used to pass a music shop called D'Almaine's, and he was a descendant of the early nineteenth century woodwind instrument dealer.

Meeting the descendants of instrument makers is always a pleasure. It has often happened to me in the museums in which I've worked, and in a private capacity. Someone comes in and says their name is Astor, or whatever, and that they believe that their great-great etc made musical instruments and can we tell them anything about him. It's a pleasure then to show them what we have and to fish out the relevant reference books. One called Cahusac came into the Bate once and was very keen to get an example of his ancestor's work, so I kept an eye on the saleroom catalogues for him and told him when one was coming up – whether he ever found one that he could afford I don't know.

Another example was an email from a man in Australia who said that he had visited the Bate and only while reading some of our Guides on the way home in the plane did he realise that we had a square piano by an ancestor of his, Adam Beyer. He had been visiting grandchildren in London and could they please come up and see it. Of course, I said, and I was all the more willing when it turned out that the grandparents on the UK side were old friends and professional colleagues of mine, Anita Lasker and the late Peter Walfisch. So Anita brought them up from London and I let the boys have a brief play on their ancestor's piano.

Sometimes it is more difficult to help a museum visitor. One came into the Horniman once, in the days when I worked in the Library and as Officer in Charge at weekends, and asked what we had on concertinas. I could show him one, of course, but back in the 1960s I didn't know of any literature on them, and told him that perhaps he should do the research. He did, and Neil Wayne built up a superb collection on the things, much of it recently deposited in the Horniman, and he became the leading authority on the instrument and its development. He's not the only one that I encouraged in that way.

I mentioned just now that it would have been bad manners to make the man an offer for his ivory flutes. This applied in the shop, where it would have been dishonest to deprive the good lady from her profit from buying from him and then selling to me, but it doesn't apply outside in the street. I had one day been round the antique supermarket that used to be in a small square in London just behind Selfridge's, which was a fairly regular haunt of mine and where I'd picked up a number of things including my large Tutsi trough zither. As I was coming out, I saw a woman coming in with a wooden box that looked rather musical. So I asked her whether it was a musical instrument that she was going to sell, and indeed it was. It was an Adolphe Sax model bell-over-the-valves cornet, marked by Ebbelwhite of the East End of London, in its original box with all its crooks and other bits. So I asked

her what she wanted for it, and we did the deal in the street. Whether it's a genuine Sax or an English copy one can't tell – it doesn't have the *A/S autorisé poinçon* that it should have, but that isn't necessarily indicative, and it is exactly as the relevant illustration in Kastner's *Musique Militaire*, a book that was written as a puff for Sax and that illustrates all his models. One of the problems is that one says that all Sax model instruments by other makers have the *poinçon* because so many do have it, but how does one know whether some didn't have it? Only by guessing that an instrument like mine might have been one. I also have a saxhorn baryton, unmarked but said to be possibly by Sax, but I don't think that one is, for the stays are not quite the same as in Kastner's engravings, and I think that that is just a pirate copy, but it's a nice instrument all the same, with Berlin valves (which Sax had pirated himself from Moritz).

It's also fair to trade outside an auction room, and many of us have done deals in the streets there – it is more polite to go out into the street rather than doing it inside the rooms! I got an interesting Russian clarinet that way as well as a few other things.

Sometimes things that were overpriced in the auctioneer's catalogue don't make their reserve and then one can always make an offer through the house, and if the vendor wants to be rid of it, one's in luck. I got one nice Ecuador panpipe after the third time it had appeared at Bonham's, with a smaller estimate each time it had come up. It had been misidentified, too, said to be West African, whereas that type of panpipe is instantly recognisable because the pipes are arranged in zigzag order instead in steadily diminishing succession from one end to the other. Misidentification, very common when any of the auction houses is dealing with ethnographic instruments, is often a good way to get a bargain. Sotheby's once listed a 'Chinese jade transverse flute, damaged', so nobody bid. But it wasn't a flute missing its head but a *guanzi*, and nothing was missing, except the reed, which one would

never expect to have with an antique, so I got it for £30 – it’s a lovely pale green jade.

Going back to the street sales and other private sales such as things brought back from wherever, one thing that one does have to be careful of, in such circumstances, is to try to avoid the question of ‘What will you offer me?’ One must always try to get them to say what they want and then dicker from there. Where it gets really difficult is when one has been asked to value something and then asked if you want to buy it.

It’s better never to value things, because if you’re wrong you can be in trouble. I usually recommend that they go to one of the auction houses or to one of the dealers who do it professionally, though when I have got a good idea of what something’s worth, I have sometimes given a ballpark figure to protect them, on the lines of don’t accept less than £xxx, for some dealers, sensing that they probably want to sell the thing, are quite unscrupulous at valuing low so as to be able to make a low offer. Some auction houses, on the other hand, value high so as to encourage them to leave the instrument with them for auction, and then the estimate in the catalogue will be higher than anyone wants to bid and it won’t sell, as with the panpipe above. There are no easy answers in disposing of unwanted antiques or curios.

Values are extraordinarily difficult. Ultimately it’s what the richer of two people will pay at an auction, but they do both have to be there. Imagine a six-key boxwood flute with a cracked head joint by William Henry Potter. Now suppose that A collects W. H. Potter flutes and the only one he hasn’t got is a six-key, and that B collects six-key flutes and the only one he hasn’t got is a William Henry Potter, and that both A and B have money to burn (OK, this is a silly example since both maker and six-key flutes are common enough, but it’ll serve). If both are at the auction, it’ll be a ding-dong and the price could rocket. But if A misses his train and can’t find anybody to bid for him at short notice, B may get it on the first bid, at or below the reserve price. And

if B trips on a kerb and can't walk to the sale, then it may not sell at all and the vendor will get it back, minus the cost of insurance and the cost of the photo in the catalogue. The only thing he can do then is to sell it into the trade if any dealer is mug enough to buy a common flute with a cracked head. So the value can vary from a thousand or more when both were there, to a hundred or so if only one was, to ten or twenty quid if neither were. So what's its value?

I used to write the Sale Room Reports for *Early Music*, and I once got a pathetic email from a woman in America who said she'd sent in a bid at the upper catalogue figure for an instrument that had been priced at x to y, and she hadn't got it and why not? I had to try to explain to her how auctions work and that the catalogue figures were only estimates of what the auctioneers thought the thing might fetch. She wasn't the only person who doesn't understand how auctions work, so I wrote an explanation like the one above for *Early Music* one quarter when there hadn't been much in the sale rooms worth writing about. When my mother died we had to have everything valued for probate, which Christie's did for us. There was a collection of Japanese lacquer that none of us wanted, except for one memory piece each. So we put the rest into Christie's for auction. A couple of pieces sold much better than expected, and the Revenue came down like a ton of bricks. They wanted to know why they had sold for so much more than the probate value, and of course they wanted their bite. I tried to explain how auctions work, as I've done above, but I'm not sure they were ever fully convinced that we and Christie's valuer hadn't been in a conspiracy to cheat them by producing low figures for probate. And of course they didn't want to know about any of the things that had sold well below probate value.

More seriously, someone who'd dropped into the museum on the day a catalogue arrived, once offered to bid for an instrument that had caught my eye in it for the Bate, and save me a London trip, so I gave him a figure. I rang the auction house after the sale, and that was what

it had sold for, so I checked with the chap, and he said, ‘Oh yes, it had gone for that but we knocked it out afterwards.’ What he meant was that several dealers had made a ring, agreeing not to bid against each other, bought it cheap, and then re-auctioned it among themselves, a strictly illegal procedure. I never asked him to bid for me again, and also passed word round some colleagues, not that it did any good, for he already had a reputation for such goings on.

All such happenings are part of the fun and frustrations of collecting.

One of the bugs of auctions is their habit of putting things together in lots, quite often several quite incompatible objects. One such lot was a Milhouse two-key oboe with a cracked bell plus a Basque tabor pipe. I couldn’t afford the price for the oboe, a thousand or so and anyway as I’ve said above I only paid a fiver for mine, and I already had that one, but I asked the buyer whether she wanted the tabor pipe, and as she didn’t, I bought it off her for a fiver. Another time there was a saxophone plus a small single-reed pipe that I recognised as a red-hot fountain pen, a very small keyless clarinet popular among jazz players in the 1920s and ’30s – E. O. Pogson had once shown me one, though Poggy wouldn’t part with his. Luckily, the chap who bought the saxophone didn’t want it and was happy to be rid of it.

Another was a small New Guinea drum that I wanted but that came with various items, a rather pretty paddle, I think Fijian, a couple of spears, and various African odds and ends such as currency bracelets. It was all fairly cheap, and as well as the drum I kept the paddle for fun and gave the rest to the Pitt Rivers Museum for their handling collection, the things they let the kids loose on.

One time I did do well on multiple lots was when the things that hadn’t been wanted to include in the Age of Islam Exhibition were sold off at Sotheby’s. Nobody else wanted them either, so I got a quantity of very good stuff cheap, for they sold them in lots of half a dozen or more at a time. One of the oddities was a pair of single-reed

pipes, said to be Iranian, wooden and not the usual bamboo ones that children sell in the *shuks*. And then a year later a couple of gourds for the Indian snake-charmer's pipe appeared, one made of gourd and the other of wood. I don't know what made me try, but the wooden pipes fitted the wooden 'gourd' like a glove, and there was a rather unusual wooden Indian *punghi*.

I mentioned a Basque tabor pipe above. I got to know well Sabin Bikandi Belandia, for I helped him get to Goldsmith's to do his doctorate. He was the City piper of Bilbao, an official position, playing pipe and tabor for all civic ceremonies. After I wrote a *Galpin Society Journal* article on tabor pipes, he invited me to come and stay with him and go to a conference of pipers and read a version of it. He said he'd meet me at the airport and drive me to his home. As I came out into the public area, there was a burst of music, and I stood there, covered with embarrassment while everyone else stared at me, for what seemed like ten minutes while he played what he afterwards said was a traditional Basque greeting piece on pipe and tabor. It was a good trip, for he took me to see a number of makers, from whom I got various things, as well as to the conference and a couple of other gatherings where I was encouraged to join in with the local players, for they also use a side drum. He has also very generously given me a number of instruments as well as a copy of his thesis.

Many of us collectors pass things round among ourselves, either selling them or often swapping them. Philip Bate was a systematic collector whereas I wasn't, so sometimes I'd find something he hadn't got and we'd do a swap. One that I'd found was a soprano saxophone in alto shape instead of the usual straight pattern, and I got one of his duplicate Triébert oboes in exchange. I was very pleased to be reunited with the sax when I arrived at the Bate, once I'd managed to get it back from the chap who had spent several years not repairing it. Another one that I was glad to see again was an Italian flute with the extension to the low A, a rather interesting metal instrument with a double tube

so that the body was the same thickness as it would have been if it had been made of wood. I was a bit narked to see, though, that he had an almost identical wooden instrument, whereas I now didn't have a flute to low A! Another friend, John Sothcott, the recorder player with whom I played in *Musica Reservata*, he on a diminutive recorder and I on my biggest tabor (the *Times* reviewer referred to us as 'two bearded gentlemen of unimpeachable sobriety') offered me a two-key Milhouse bulb-top oboe at the price he'd paid Eric Halfpenny for it many years earlier. I was very happy because it meant that I had a Milhouse flute, a Milhouse oboe, and a Milhouse clarinet – I never did get a Milhouse bassoon to complete the set – mine is marked Goulding and was perhaps made by John Hale, but very recently I got a Milhouse straight-top oboe cheaply after an auction because it had a cracked bell and was rather banana and so hadn't sold, which meant that I could illustrate the two main types of English oboe c. 1800, side by side. The Milhouse clarinet I bought in a junk, quasi antique, shop in Reading in the break between rehearsal and performance of a *Messiah* there. Milhouse bassoons are risky because the woodworm seem to have an especial fondness for them, much more than those by other makers, and they are often very badly riddled with little holes, so that when a good one appears, as one did a fortnight ago, they fetch a high price.

Serpents also attract worms, appropriately enough perhaps, and one that I found in an antique shop in my early days, round the corner from the Theatre Royal in Bristol where I was playing, was so badly wormed that I left it – I didn't think it was even worth the £4.10 they wanted for it. But I never found another at a price that I could afford, so that's a gap in my collection, rather a pity because when I was doing music club lectures it was an instrument I was often asked about, as indeed I was just a week ago when members of the Oxford Civic Society visited me to see my Collection. I did quite often think of getting one of Christopher Monk's reproductions (I have two or three of his cornetts), but every time I had enough spare money to think

about it seriously, he'd put the price up. Anyway, it's not an instrument I could play properly – the mouthpiece is the wrong size for me.

We used to play together occasionally, Chris Monk and I. The sessions for *Alien* put him and me and Alan Lumsden (from whom I bought my good German alto trombone years ago and quite recently swapped it with a fellow-player for an English one), in a little booth by ourselves on the edge of the orchestra, Chris and Alan with serpents and suchlike and I with a battery of conches – they'd asked me to gather a chromatic scale of conch trumpets for that, which meant searching around, including buying shells from Friedlein in Ilford and boring an embouchure or cutting off the end of the spire and then seeing what note I'd got. Between takes we did a fair amount of gossiping and trying each others' instruments, as one does on such occasions. I have also tried David Harding's fibreglass serpents, but they were pretty rough in the early days, though rather better, using better moulds and a better plastic later, but also more expensive. Chris's cornetts are also plastic, though he did too make wooden ones, and the resin ones are excellent for beginners, though he and I always argued about mouthpiece rims. I think his were too wide, even his standard ones as distinct from those made for trumpeters to double on, and I've turned mine down to nearer the knife-edge found on some early ones. I believe that the cornett mouthpiece should be set into the red of both lips (German *einsetzen*) since that gives one the relaxed embouchure necessary if one is going to attempt to get anywhere near Mersenne's terrifying account of blowing '*quatre-vingt mesures à chaque soupir*' or even 120 as he says one player could.

I think this is also the way to blow the shofar, for it produces a much freer tone than when one is trying to force the air into the tiny embouchure through closed lips. When I'd been blowing the shofar in shul for a year or two I put a letter into the *Jewish Chronicle* asking other blowers if they'd let me come and interview them about how they blew it. I got some interesting responses from across the Jewish

spectrum and a great deal of information including recordings of what they blew. No two produced the same notes for the calls, something that few of us realise, for most of us go to the same shul each year and hear the same *baal tekiah*, the shofar blower, and therefore we think that what he blows are the proper calls. But there is a vast range of what is 'proper', and all are valid. Manuel Cansino, from Lauderdale Road, was my best informant for he gave me many Sephardi variants, and through him and a chain of contacts I was able to get a good Moroccan shofar in Casablanca. I have well over a dozen now from many parts of the world.

It was during a *Messiah* somewhere out of town on an Easter Saturday that I was told by one of the trumpeters about a nice looking cornet he'd seen, but wasn't interested in for himself, in a junk shop outside Clapham Common railway station, and that led to another tenterhook weekend. Of course they were closed on Sunday, and would be on Bank Holiday Monday as well. But on Tuesday I was there and got it, a Courtois with Stölzel valves in a non-original wooden cornet box, but with all its crooks and bits. Years later Bruno Kampmann told me where to find the Courtois serial number, under the valve cap. Almost all other makers put it on the bell or wherever else that it will be visible near the maker's name; Courtois was one of the few that hid it. Serial numbers are very useful for dating instruments, and when, as Arnold Myers and Kelly White have done with Boosey & Co, one can get access to a maker's archives, one can sometimes discover who made it, the exact date (day, month, year), how long it took the craftsman to make it and what he was paid for doing it at so much per hour! They have been very generous with their information, and have provided me with those details for all my Boosey instruments, and it's all in my catalogues and now in my recent book, *Horns and Trumpets of the World*.

One often gets tip-offs like that with the Courtois. It was during a dummy session that I was told of a recently deceased trombonist

nearby whose widow was selling off his instruments. Dummy sessions are those where one pretends to play instruments for a scene in a film, though the music that is heard, and that we are pretending to play, will be recorded much later – we do usually play something because otherwise it won't look convincing on screen. Not that it looks convincing to anyone with ears because the studio orchestra for the recording is always much bigger than the small number of musicians that they're willing to pay to sit there and be filmed, and also with quite different instrumentation. The dummy sessions have long, long pauses while they set up the next shot, and we gossip among ourselves. I went round to where he'd lived in the lunch break and bought a bass-contrabass trombone, a G-bass with a plug in the back-bow to lower the pitch either to D or C, depending on which tuning slide one used. It was a good instrument, though not really adequate for Wotan's spear.

Going back to swaps, I had an unusual cornet, coiled like a miniature French horn, with four string-controlled rotary valves, plus a turn valve to A – turn valves are those that one has to turn manually, instead of with the normal lever, and are used to transpose to a different key, usually for a whole work or movement. Cornets and trumpets were often made in B flat and A because military band music is normally in B flat or other flat keys and dance band music is more often in sharp keys for which the A is more useful, and the makers can then sell them into both branches of the trade and players can use them for both, B flat on parade and A for the light music in the Officers' Mess. Ed Tarr wanted it off me because it looked enough like a french horn that he could use it to play the 'Quoniam' in the *B minor Mass*, and with the A transposing valve it would be in a reasonably convenient key, but I didn't want to sell it because it was so unusual. It didn't look American, though that's the only place that one normally sees rotary valves controlled by a string instead of by a metal link bar, and four valve cornets are also unusual, the fourth valve to avoid using first

and third in combination with its associated tuning problems. But Ed lives in Switzerland, and one thing I wanted was an alphorn, so I said that I might be willing to do a swap for one. So Ed found a retired alphorn player and bought his horn. He told me that he took it up the nearest alp and blew Brandenburg 2 on it, to the consternation of those below – it's almost in the same key, though an octave lower than Bach's trumpet. It was fairly easy to transport from Basel, where Ed is based, to London, for there was a joint in the middle of its length where it unscrews. Edith Gerson-Kiwi told me that when she'd bought an alphorn before the War, she flew it back to Israel strapped to the underside of the wing of the aeroplane – you couldn't do that on a modern jet! But it was another bone of contention with Gwen, for she'd liked the little cornet and just where did I think I was going to put a full-size alphorn? It did hang on the wall in London and here in Oxford for a while but it's now sitting on top of a case in the Bate, where it's on loan. It's one of the instruments I played for the Microsoft CD of Musical Instruments – I was the technical editor for that whole project with Dorling Kindersley and they used a number of my and the Bate's instruments. I played it once in the Festival Hall, for a concert in aid of the Malcolm Sargent Cancer Charity – I've no memory at all of the composer or the title of the music, faking it slightly by using a french horn size mouthpiece, for its own is trombone size and too large for me to play comfortably in the upper register.

My only real fieldwork expedition was in search of lowland alphorns. That was an expedition with Arthur Briegleb, a horn player in Los Angeles – I 'd stayed with him and his wife Ann in Los Angeles when I lectured there, and he was equally curious about the Dutch *mid-winterhoorn*. Since it's a lowland instrument, rather than a highland one like the Swiss, it doesn't need to be close-wrapped against air leakage because it can be dropped down a well (this was the traditional procedure before playing, with all sorts of symbolism involved) or today put in the bathtub, to swell the wood and seal the joint between

the two longitudinal halves of the tube – alphorns are made by cutting down a young tree, splitting it in half, hollowing out each half, and then reuniting them. Because all older glues are hygroscopic, blowing warm air down them leads to leakages, and also the wood shrinks when it dries out between uses, so that the seam opens; hence the close-wrapped cover of bark or whatever on all mountain alphorns. Midwinterhoorns are used traditionally between Advent and Epiphany, in one small district of Holland, the Twente, a Roman Catholic enclave up near the German border. They have also been used out-of-season as alarm signals, for instance during the olden days when Catholics were persecuted by the Protestants, and more recently to warn of Gestapo intrusions during the German Occupation in World War II. Nowadays they are the subject of folklore competitions and festivities, still mainly during the season. Ernst Heins had first interested me in them, and a friend, Sylvia Moore (I can't remember whether I'd supervised or examined her) and her Dutch husband Bernard Broere had got me a tourist one. I took the car to Holland (with a couple of handhorns in the back so that Art and I could play some duets, which caused some trouble with customs at The Hook) and we spent the first night with the Broeres. They took us to dinner in an Amsterdam Tunisian restaurant. I saw a couple of flutes and a bagpipe in the window, so asked if they were for sale, and got them quite cheaply, rather to the annoyance of the Broeres who'd never thought to ask. The bagpipe is on loan in the Bate and is rather nasty to play because there's no non-return valve which means you have to put your tongue over the end of the mouthpipe to stop the air coming back into your mouth, and when it does it tastes revolting.

They'd found us a local player, Everard Jans, who knew all the midwinterhoorn people, and he took us round the Twente to meet makers and players and helped to translate all our questions, about who made them and how, who played them and when and why, and so on, and their answers, for few of them spoke any English and most spoke

Twentsche rather than Dutch. I have all the interviews on tape, and there are constant interjections, from over our shoulders of 'Kaffee?' for they were very hospitable. We got a lot of information, much of it new to Everard for it was answers to questions he'd never thought to ask, and he used much of it in his later book on the instruments. I bought three, including one made of *blik* (stove-pipe metal), which had become the norm in the early twentieth century, much easier to make and cheaper than the traditional method of chopping down a tree, sawing it in half, hollowing it out, and tying it back together again (nowadays sometimes gluing it instead). The *blik hoorns* had been abolished by folklorists after the War, who insisted on everyone using 'proper' ones of wood. Thus to promote and preserve a folk instrument they had abolished the one that had become a real folk instrument and insisted on a revivalist version instead! But this maker had used to make them and remembered how, and was willing to make me one. I wrote it all up in *Galpin Society Journal*, 28 (1975) where much more information can be found (and still more in Everard's book, but that's only available in Dutch) and was later congratulated (for the *Journal* appears in April each year) on a brilliant April Fool spoof, but it really is a genuine instrument with very interesting history and connexions, perhaps to the Iron Age *carnyx*.

On one of our visits we met a group of players who allowed me to try their instruments. What they blow is arpeggios from the third partial to around the 7th or 8th in smooth curves, G-c-G-c-e-g-b flat-c', and down again. When I tried one of them, I went over more of the range, as one does to see what an instrument would blow, and went down to the bottom C, a note they'd never used – later I heard a young boy experimenting and getting that low second partial himself, and I hope I've not contaminated the tradition! It was my first fieldwork and since then I've been passing this on a warning to others, not to do something in the field that might distort a traditional practice.

Recently I've been doing more fieldwork in Portugal, working with a local musicologist, Patricia Lopes Bastos, to try to catalogue all the instruments in the small, local Portuguese museums. We've found a good deal, town by town and village by village, and it's a continuing project. We've even started a Society (ANIMUSIC: Associação Nacional de Instrumentos Musicais) as the Portuguese equivalent of the Galpin Society, with an international conference each year, and a Journal, occasional so far, *Liranimus*. Before or after each conference, I stayed with her for a week or two to continue our local research.

I've mentioned Tony Bingham several times, and he's been a good friend for many years for he knows my interests, and keeps an eye out for me. He once brought me back a superb 20-inch K Zildjian cymbal from Istanbul – I used it once, suspended, in the Albert Hall and it filled that great rotunda with sound. I've already told how he allowed me to ferret through his junk drawer when I got some spare money from *Dragon Slayer*, and I got then a conical Boehm flute, a German Reform flute and a Boehm system oboe, none of them of the quality that he could sell to one of the museums but good enough for me to show the system in a lecture. When he was in Australia (his wife is Australian) he found a whole lot of New Guinea instruments, and when they got back here, a whole container load of them, he rang me and gave me first pick. Wonderful things. I got a couple of the great secret spirit flutes, eight foot long, things you don't often see in museums even, though their carved wooden end-stoppers are often displayed as art objects, and a couple of shorter ones, as well as a carved wooden side-blown trumpet with a woman's figure on the top (why are trumpets side-blown only in Africa, New Guinea, and Ireland in the Bronze Age?), a conch, a small slit drum, a couple of jews harps, and an ocarina.

One even more wonderful thing that he had was a Khmer pottery conch from Cambodia, eleventh century or so. Every time I visited him, I'd have a look at it but I could never have afforded it, and anyway

he loved it too. But Jennifer went up to see him, and he agreed to sell it to her as a present for my eightieth birthday, so bless them both.

Recently I took it and my Mochica pottery conch up to the John Radcliffe Hospital, and Steve Turnbull put them through an MRI scanner. I'd wanted an X-ray to see whether they really had the full shape of a natural shell inside, as indeed they both do, and also to see just how much of the Khmer one was blocked inside, for the mouthhole was certainly blocked up. The results are wonderful, and Steve has done some extraordinary further things with the results, which one hopes will be useful for their medical work with the scanners. One sequence is a flight right through the Moche conch, starting at the bell and coming out of the mouthhole, seeing the walls all the way. One day, I must take the Khmer one to the conservation people at the Ashmolean, with the scans, and seek advice on how to remove the blockage, for it would be even better to be able to sound it after a thousand years or so of burial in the earth. I can sound the Moche one, and also the tiny coiled pottery trumpet that I bought with it at the same auction. That was another multiple lot, and I've still got some fairly low-quality Mochica pots as a result.

Collecting is still exciting! And I am still collecting, though on a pensioner's income not as expensively as in the past. But things still turn up, as I've said, on the Oxford market and elsewhere, so that one of these days my children are going to have the considerable slog of getting rid of it all, unless I manage to find it a good home first. I'm looking for an University that wants to start an organology department and wants a collection and a library to work with it. I've asked that a few things that Morley Pegge gave me should go to the Bate as gifts, to join the rest of his collection there, and the copy of an Hotteterre flute that Felix Raudonikas made for me to take to Jerusalem when I was hoping to establish a museum there – he couldn't get elephant ivory for the mounts in Leningrad, as it was then, so he used mammoth ivory instead – he gave me a small piece of it to show people. I've

asked, too, unless I do find a home for the whole collection first, that the Bate should have first offer of all of mine that's on loan there, and of anything else they want, including the gubbage that I've made as teaching aids, but the rest may have to go back into the salerooms so that others should have the fun that I've had in collecting it all.

Why does one collect? Initially it was, as I've explained, to illustrate lectures, but of course it becomes a bug that infects one. I see an instrument, 'Oh, I've not got one of those', and so the collection expands. And more recently it has been an invaluable resource, for I was able to use it to illustrate my book *Origins and Development of Musical Instruments* really comprehensively. When you get a photo from a museum, you get one instrument in it, or with difficulty two, and since publishers always limit the number of illustrations, you can't show very much. But photographing my own instruments I could put a whole developmental or otherwise connected group into each photo, and thus show vastly more than if I'd not had them myself.

And one thing leads to another. When you've got a collection this size, now over 2500 instruments, it does have to be catalogued. That first became a problem in 1967 when I was asked to mount an exhibition in Sheffield. It was at the Mappin Art Gallery but the invitation came from the local Student Society of the University for a special week or two. There was no way that I could produce a coherent exhibition unless I catalogued the collection so that I knew what I had! So I bought some ledgers (Minute Books, actually) and got down to it, numbering each instrument by the volume number, in Roman numerals, and the page in normal numbers. The first two and half volumes are more or less room by room as they were housed in Dulwich, but thereafter it's in roughly chronological order of acquisition, roughly because cataloguing tends to be done in batches rather than immediately. Now of course it's all on computer as well, and copies are available to those interested, though only as a pdf (except for the *Reed Instruments*, which was published by Scarecrow, and the Brass

instruments which have been published as *Horns and Trumpets of the World*) because I can't afford to print it. Anyway, it's much easier to update on computer.

Another result is that it becomes a resource (it is recognised by ICOM as a private museum, accessible to anyone interested even if only by appointment), and people do come from all over to see it, mostly individually but occasionally in groups. Once the children had begun to migrate, off to university and so on, we could offer visitors a bed, which saved them hotel costs, allowed for much more talk on our mutual interests, and led to lasting friendships. Even if they weren't staying we often fed them, leading to the remark that it was the only museum where one got dinner as well as a viewing!

And a further result is that a collection is of limited use unless it has a supporting library, for without that one cannot know what the instruments are, nor, often, where they come from (one of the snags about buying from junk shops and market stalls) and what they were used for.

Disposal of my library is going to be a bigger post-mortem problem, for it's one of the best organological libraries in this country, built up to help research my collection, with many foreign books and museum catalogues not available elsewhere in Oxford, and of course all my research notes and archives, so it really should be kept together. Any established museum or library will have a fair amount of it already and so would have to be allowed to dispose of duplicate material. The ideal, to keep it together, would be some newly established museum, and they of course might take all the instruments in one swell foop (as my father used to say) with the library as well, but whether such a place could be found, I do not know, though there is one that is nibbling slightly as I write. Anyway, it's not my worry, or at least not unless I decide to cease all activity and retire!

Chapter 8

Teaching and Writing

Looking back over the years, I seem to have done quite a wide variety of teaching. About the only sort I've not done is basic class teaching, and the one sort at which I'm conspicuously unsuccessful is teaching little ones, primary school kids.

When work gets scarce many musicians turn to teaching their skills to school children, and I was no exception. Freelance musicians lead a precarious life at the best of times, and if Beecham was away and the BBC busy with Beethoven and other classics, there was sometimes little work for an extra percussion player. We had to eat, so I began to build a school connexion. I had the advantage that as well as being a professional percussion player I had been trained up to professional level as a conductor and as a horn player, though that last I'd never practised professionally. So where a school had insufficient need for either, they might and often did, have enough demand for both to make employing me worthwhile. I built up a string of ILEA schools, for the Inner London Education Authority was then, the mid-1950s to early '70s, enthusiastic about encouraging kids to play music and the schools provided them with both instruments and lessons at public expense. Indeed my Battersea school gave me carte blanche to buy any junk-shop violins I saw up to (if I remember rightly) £15 because they could get them repaired free at the ILEA workshops and then issue them to the kids. I also had three independent schools, Westminster, and two GPDST (the Girls' Public Day Schools Trust) schools, Sydenham

and Croydon High Schools. So I could teach one ILEA school in the lunch hour and get down to another or to the High Schools in the afternoon and teach there after school had finished. There was also for a while Epsom College, which I didn't really like because it was too militaristic and soon left, and the Rudolf Steiner school in East Grinstead, where I taught for a year, deputising for David Rycroft while he was in Africa doing fieldwork.

Westminster, which allowed boys to come out of class provided it was a different class each week, was an all-day job with lunch provided. One boy did manage to avoid Latin for almost a whole term but that was firmly sat on when his teachers realised what was happening. Each of us teachers had a boy as head of instrument appointed by the music master, David Byrt, and it was up to that boy to sort out a timetable. It was, naturally, that boy who had arranged his own timetable to avoid Latin. I had an interesting succession of pupils there, including two who later became well-known as composers, Richard Blackford and George Benjamin. George first came to me from the Under-School, before he was old enough to get to the main school. I taught him some conducting, too. I lost him after a while because his father, as mine had been, was strongly against music as a suitable profession for a good Jewish boy, and he refused to go on paying for music lessons. As we all know, George got his own way in the end. Richard went on with me throughout his school career and later asked me to provide him with a variety of sounds for an opera that he wrote for the Royal College of Music centenary celebrations after his time there. Another, Peter Khorosche (if I remember correctly how he spelled his name) was already a considerable scholar of Central Asian languages and we had many interests in common. Neither of us worried that sometimes we strayed off the field of percussion – so long as I was teaching him something, we were both happy, and so, I hope, were his parents. One other pupil was a nasty shock – he was the son of one of my earlier girl friends, something guaranteed to make one feel old.

Only a few of my High School girls have stuck in the memory. One, Penny Gooch, was a very promising timpanist and I got her into an amateur orchestra and found her a pair of timps in a junk shop, as recounted in the Collecting chapter. This orchestra met on a farm in Croydon every Sunday. It had been going for many years and had never given a concert; it just went on playing different works every week for enjoyment. Tony Baines had conducted it in the past, after he came back from the War, and a number of eminent musicians, among them Bill Waterhouse, had had their first orchestral experiences in it. It was run by Dorothy Crump, mother of two well-known professional musicians under other surnames. She was by then very old, and much bowed by arthritis, and could not sustain a whole rehearsal as conductor, so Joe Wheeler (a trumpeter and fellow Galpinist) asked me to come down and take as much rehearsal as she didn't want to do, while she played oboe and cor, and when she wanted to conduct, I played horn or timps.

Another Croydon High School pupil was a trumpeter who didn't want to play the modern valved instrument but preferred natural trumpet. So I lent her one and photocopied pages of Bendinelli's tutor of 1614 for her. She made good progress; one who didn't was the daughter of a colleague of mine, a trumpeter with whom I worked in a number of different orchestras. She had tried every instrument the school could provide, with no success at any of them, for she wanted to please Daddy by playing something. Finally she came to me, on the basis that surely anyone could hit a drum. Not with any perception of rhythm nor time keeping in her case. I used to meet her father on occasional gigs, and told him that she was wasting her time and his money. But he was willing to go on paying so long as she enjoyed trying. Fair enough – some pupils we're paid to teach, and some we're paid to suffer. We do suffer – half an hour of out-of-tune notes and flabby rhythm can be almost agonising, but it is always a good thing for children to play an instrument, and it's always good to encourage them to go on at it as

long as they are keen to do so. Learning how to play an instrument is of considerable benefit to a child's mental and physical development, so we are willing to put up with it, and we share their triumph when they do achieve a success. There are, too, always some pupils who are a wonder to teach, and they repay us for the struggles with the others.

I've been happy to pay for instruments for any children and grandchildren who wanted to play anything. Rachel was a cellist at school and her younger son, Isaac, has followed her on it and makes good progress and enjoys it; he composes, too. His brother, Eli, has played cornet but seems to have little time for it now because of other interests. Other grandchildren also play, Abi played oboe, d'amore, and cor to a good standard and her son Zac has started piano, Ahinoam played flute for a while, Kate plays guitar and saxophone and now banjo (I'd lent her one and she now has one of her own), Ellat plays guitar, and Saul was drumming on anything he can find, so I looked for something for him, hand-played rather than stick initially; he's now a promising bass-guitarist. My daughter, Sarah, when she was at Mary Datchelor, the ILEA girls' grammar school, wanted to play the harpsichord but they wouldn't let her till she was grade 8 on piano – the trouble was she didn't like the noise the piano made, any more than I do (too many out-of-tune upper overtones) but she did like the harpsichord. Some schools can be very hidebound in their ways and it's crazy – why should a harpsichordist be a grade-8 pianist? All it means is that they have acquired a lot of habits, good for a pianist and wholly unsuitable for a harpsichordist. I couldn't afford a harpsichord but I did buy her a clavichord, a Morley from a Channel pilot in Deal. Simon has it now, something she rather resents, but I've told her she can have my John Rawson one out of the Bate where it's on loan, any time she wants it. It's a better instrument but more limited in repertoire because it's triple-fretted, fine for Bach and earlier but not so useful for anything later, whereas the Morley is fret-free.

One of my ILEAs was notable. It was in back-street Battersea and the headmaster, Mr Rudd, knew that none of the boys was ever likely to pass any exams, so he made sure that they had other things to look on with pride. He had an active theatre department – one of his boys went into the original production of *Oliver* – and he encouraged music, so much so that he let boys come out of class for a music lesson. I was also encouraged to establish an amateur orchestra as an evening class in a nearby school to give the boys more chance to play. He asked me to get the school a set of steel drums, long before these became fashionable in education. I found a Camberwell bus conductor who ran a steel band and who wanted a new set of pans for it. If I'd give him £10 with which he could buy a new batch of oil drums that he could make into the steel drums, I could have the old set. I still have one of the pans (it's in the Bate on loan), for I did this on condition that I could house one of them when not in use. The maker came into the school in his off hours and taught the boys to play them, and the music master wrote a suite, *Ode to the West Wind*, for chorus, orchestra and steel band.

Van Bueren was a good teacher but he didn't like conducting, so when he got a group of schools together for a joint concert, I conducted it. As well as his Ode we did the *Prince Igor* 'Polovtsian Dances', full choral version, some bits of the Mussorgsky *Pictures from an Exhibition*, and movements from Orff's *Carmina Burana* – the publishers were so impressed with the idea of a school doing it that they allowed us to drop it a tone, so as not to exhaust the trebles and tenors. However, that work cost us one of the schools – the local Catholic school pulled out because they taught Latin (this was in the days when the Mass was still read in Latin) and their kids would understand the somewhat blasphemous words. But the concert was a great success, and I'd invited Sir Robert Mayer to attend – he'd founded the Children's Concerts, which were my, and many others' introduction to orchestral music, and he was very impressed with what we'd achieved. Eventually Mr Rudd came

to retirement age, and he was replaced by a doctrinaire headmaster – every boy must pass exams, so he shut down the time-wasting drama and music, and the whole thing collapsed. And I don't suppose any of them did pass any O-Levels.

There were incidents of note. That Battersea school was one of the old-fashioned ILEA buildings, three stories high with high ceilings, so that the upper floors really were quite a way off the ground. So it was not surprising to be greeted with badly battered mouthpieces if they'd been dropped from an upper floor on to the asphalted playground. More surprising was one with a flattened stem: 'Please, Sir, I dropped my mouthpiece in the street and a car ran over it' (he'd probably trodden on it himself, but never mind – it still had to be got back into shape). I got into the habit of carrying an agate burnisher to deal with scratched rims, and a couple of centre-punches of different diameters to cope with battered stems. All my brass players had my phone number to call me if they'd jammed the mouthpiece into the instrument, because the extractor was bulky enough that I only carried it when warned of necessity. It was a common habit among the boys to put the mouthpiece into the instrument and then give it a sharp slap with the palm of the hand to make sure it was seated – but the result was that it was jammed in. A once-only event was with a french horn that was shared by a pair of twins. One day, they arrived for their lesson with it looking more like an umbrella, the bell bent back right over the tubing. After the usual 'Oh, no Sir, it was my brother,' we established that one twin had been standing just inside their room, with the horn under his arm in the usual way and his back to the door, and the other twin came into the room in a hurry – result a door-bashed horn bell.

One day there I was greeted by boy after boy with 'Saw you on the telly last night, Sir.' I'd been doing a televised concert with the BBC and we'd been playing the *Háry Janós Suite* and I was on cymbals. There's one big solo clash and I was pretty certain that I'd be on camera,

and sure enough I had been – but interesting that so many boys in a back street Battersea school, had watched a concert of serious music. Television was one of our bugbears as teachers: ‘Couldn’t practice, Sir, Dad wanted to watch the telly,’ was a common excuse.

A more serious case was at a different comprehensive school where my wallet was stolen from my jacket while I was teaching. It was a small group of half a dozen kids learning side drum, each playing in turn, and one of them must have slipped behind me to where my jacket hung on the back of a chair. The school was quite angry that I reported the theft to the police in the hope of getting my wallet back even without the money, which in the event I did. I was even angrier when I was expected to teach the same group the following week even though one of the kids already had a record for minor peculation, and the school expressed surprise when I refused to do so. Apparently teachers in Forest Hill in South London were expected to put up with such losses – I was not.

My most successful percussion pupil was at Upton House school in Hackney where the music master was Lionel Sawkins who is now well known for his editions of music by the French masters of the Baroque. Ray Cooper took to percussion like a duck to water, so much so that he got into trouble with other teachers to the extent that I used to be asked couldn’t I please encourage him to do some school work as well as drumming. He became a family friend as well as a pupil and has had a successful career in the profession. Lionel put on Britten’s *Noye’s Fludde* – I played timps and trained the rest of the squad with Ray as their leader. I did this and Britten’s *St Nicholas* with a number of schools, sometimes with children I’d taught and sometimes with just a couple of rehearsals in different schools. Both are very satisfying works to play with schools, just as they are with professionals. I remember doing a good *St Nick* once at the Three Choirs Festival with the Royal Phil. We also did the Britten *War Requiem* at the Three Choirs, a work that I played with the RPO several times.

Eventually I stopped my ILEA work because the National Union of Teachers forced through a rule that if any trained teacher were available, they had to replace the untrained ones such as I. I said that if a maths or geography teacher had a fancy to teach drums and he was then to be preferred over a professional musician, I wasn't interested, and so I left them all. I was teaching a professional craft to individual pupils, not doing class teaching, and that needs wholly different skills from conventional teacher-training.

By that time I had built up a lecture circuit, going round music clubs and such like organisations. Jimmy Blades had tried to persuade me to take over his lectures, when he wanted to retire, but that was not something I could do. I couldn't talk about how I played, as he had, the V-signal that was broadcast all over Europe during the War, nor show them the gong that he had played as the signature for all the J. Arthur Rank films – the gong you heard was not the gong that we saw on screen, for that was made of *papier maché* and 'struck' by the champion boxer, Bombadier Billy Wells. Jimmy's gong had been loot from the Imperial Palace in Peking after the suppression of the Boxer rebellion, and I think it was the last survivor (alas it has died since, developing a small crack that makes a buzz). The BBC had had one, too, till Alfie Dukes put a bell hammer through it. Now everybody uses the Paiste gongs from Switzerland, which are much the best available today.

Also I wanted to introduce people to non-European instruments as well as to ours, both to show how universal music and instruments are, and also to show how so many of ours had developed out of those from other lands, especially North African ones. So I preferred to do my own lecture, and anyway I could never be compared with Jimmy – his lectures were brilliant.

For my basic lecture I took over a hundred instruments, laid them out in a long line across the platform, and talked and demonstrated them from one end to the other as the *Development of Musical Instruments*.

This was adaptable as either an hour or under for schools or a full evening for the adults' music clubs. I had two or three other lectures, *Instruments of the Bible* was one, and *Instruments in the Time of J. C. Bach* was another – he lived through the period when all instruments changed from their Baroque to the Classical forms, and the lecture covered that change. Sometimes these lectures were one-offs, belt out somewhere and a long night-drive back, but more often my agent, Terry Slasberg, put a short tour together, half a dozen venues not too far apart, often with a school in the day time and a club in the evening and, if I was lucky, hospitality provided for the nights.

The only problems with these was packing all the instruments up at home and unpacking them when I got back, and persuading the venues that I would need an hour to get set up before the audience arrived, and half an hour afterwards to pack. It took an hour to set up because everything had to be carried in out of the car, all the cases and trunks had to be unpacked, the instruments set out in exactly the right order so that one subject would lead smoothly to the next, slides greased and sprayed, reeds put into water to soak, my lip warmed up, and so on. Despite warning the organisers of this, the hall was often not available in time, and afterwards the caretaker always wanted to lock up as soon as the audience had left. Still, it all paid, and paid better than ILEA teaching. I always charged in guineas as that paid half of Terry's ten per cent.

As I got better known as an authority on the history of instruments, I got asked to do more serious lecturing, much more formal teaching. Thurston Dart asked me to do a series of lectures at King's College, part of London University. I prepared these in detail, timing them each to take the hour he'd asked for, but on the first day Bob Dart shattered me by saying, 'You do realise that this is a University hour, don't you? It starts five minutes after the hour and ends five minutes before it.' No, I hadn't realised that, nor had I realised that his lecture preceded mine and that he *never* finished five minutes before the hour. The students

commented that they'd never had so much information pushed at them so fast! Each year I took them home after the last of the series so that they could see all the rest of the instruments I had, and also see those that I'd only shown them as slides. I had some really strong students there, Lucy Durán, for one, Ian Woodfield for another, and others who've become equally well known since those days, and it was a great pleasure to teach them.

After a few years at King's, I was asked to give the lectures at Goldsmith's instead. This was another College of the University, and easier really because it was in South London, where I also lived, and it had easier parking than round the Aldwych where King's was. Ethnomusicology was strong at Goldsmith's, with Stanley Glasser (whom I'd known as an aspiring composer in my student days – he was a pupil of Ben Frankel's) as Head of Department, and Bert (A. L.) Lloyd and Rosemary Josephs, whom I later met again here in Oxford, as colleagues. Spike Glasser had led to a memorable concert when we were students. We were going to play a new work of his but the trouble was that he hadn't finished it. So we sat up all night while he finished the score, snatching each page from him as he finished it so that we could copy out the parts. I think we did that concert, which included Hindemith's *Kleine Kammermusik no. 1*, in our sleep. But student days were like that, and at least, unlike that concert in Hilversum, nobody dozed off on the platform, though I can't speak for the audience.

As one so often does as a percussion player, I had to make an instrument for the Hindemith, a pair of sand-paper blocks. We do have to learn to make things. I was once doing *Die Fledermaus* with an amateur operatic society on the Isle of White (that was quite fun, trundling around the island on their miniature train on non-matinee days), and the percussion part there asks for *Sporen*. I didn't have a pair of spurs with me, so I got some bits of metal and some metal washers, strung them together, and everyone was happy. In the Limón

tour, the *Emperor Jones* score asked for something I'd never heard of. So I asked the conductor what it was and Simon said it was large metal maracas. So I went round from the Wells to the big plumber up on the main road, got a pair of those copper cistern floats that one puts in a water tank, had the nut in the end melted out, dropped in a handful of hexagonal nuts, had the plug soldered back in again, and bought a couple of carriage bolts that fitted the plugs as handles, and there we were. Another time I needed an iron chain for *Gurrelieder* and that meant a trip to a scrap yard.

Before Spike came to England from South Africa, he'd been one of Percival Kirby's students, like two other colleagues of mine on the Ethnomusicology Panel of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Raymond Clausen and David Rycroft. I was always glad that I was able to get Percival the big annual lecture at the RAI one year. We'd been in correspondence and of course I knew his wonderful book on *The Musical Instruments of the Native Races of South Africa*. He suggested that I should go out there and re-catalogue his own collection of instruments, but unfortunately he died before this became possible. At least I was able to help to persuade his daughter Nan not to sell the collection abroad after his death but to keep it in South Africa, and I was very glad to see the collection recently with its new curator, Michael Nixon, when I was in Cape Town for grand-daughter Abi and Mark's wedding, and to help him by identifying some of the European instruments that he didn't know, while he sorted me out on some of the South African ones. Another of Kirby's pupils, Harold Steafel, came to see me once and kindly brought me a *lesiba*, the blown musical bow, though neither he nor I, nor David Rycroft, could make it work. Michael Nixon said he'd never been able to, either. I didn't keep in touch with Steafel afterwards, though, because he was a staunch apartheid supporter, not an attitude that I was in sympathy with.

Spike remained one of the mainstays when we formed the UK branch of the International Folk Music Council after Maud Karpeles retired

– Klaus Wachsmann had invited me to succeed her but I couldn't afford to as it was an unpaid post in those days and there was a lot of travel involved (Maud had paid all her own expenses), and so the management went abroad, which was why we wanted to establish a UK branch. We (I say we, but it was Gwen who did all the work) ran a number of successful conferences and Gwen was more entertained than annoyed when at the end of each one John Blacking thanked me for its success, rather than her – she knew that that was just the way John was, a classic male chauvinist.

Raymond Clausen taught me some of the conch-blowing codes used for the Maki feast on Malekula, the island in the New Hebrides where he had done his fieldwork, and I blew some of them at his wedding to Tandy. David Rycroft, with Joe Wheeler whom I mentioned above, and Eric Halfpenny were the trumpet players in the Guild of Gentlemen Trumpeters, led by Teddy Croft-Murray (Keeper of Prints in the British Museum) on timpani. It was they who initiated the recovery of the natural trumpet and who showed that it could be played (much better now by people like Crispian Steele-Perkins) without any adventitious aids such as fingerholes or other harmonic vents. I played with them a few times, both *ontrompe de chasse*, which is near enough to a *corno da caccia*, and on slide trumpet, which is still a natural trumpet, though able to use its slide to tune the 11th and 13th harmonics instead of having to depend on the player's lip. Once we blew the Wagner *Lohengrin* fanfares, each pair of us crooked into the correct key, showing that one can differentiate between each nobleman's arrival by the tone colour as well as by the pitch of his fanfare, an effect totally lost when these are all played on valve trumpets. Another time we played the Mozart divertimenti for flutes, trumpets, and two pairs of timpani, and I played second timpani. I conducted them once, too, in the recreation of one of Canon Galpin's Paraffin Concerts at Hatfield Broad Oak where he had been the vicar – the concerts were originally held to buy

oil for the street lamps and so protect the virtue of the village maidens and the safety of the elderly.

I had also become involved in examining PhD students as the external examiner. There was a wide variety of subjects over the years, from Bronze Age lurs (Peter Holmes at Middlesex, who later made me my copies of Tutenkhamun's trumpets) onwards. One of them was at Göteborg in Sweden where I was Opponent to Nancy Benvenga's thesis on timpani. An Opponent is just that, rather than an external examiner – the candidate has to defend the thesis in public. I had to ask for details of procedure, and I was told that one no longer had to wear white tie and tails, and that I should frighten her but eventually pass her. They have the rather lunatic system in Sweden of publishing the thesis in print (at the student's expense) *before* the defence, rather than afterwards, so that all the Opponent's comments and corrections are known only to those who attend the event. But the Opponent is a very distinguished visitor, very well entertained and so on. I was treated as an honoured guest in the home of Professor Jan Ling with very kind hospitality. I was taken for a trip to Stockholm, and all the eminenti from there, such as Ernst Emsheimer, came over to Göteborg to hear the exam, a somewhat frightening experience for me as well as for Nancy.

I had the same experience once in Jerusalem, when I was invited to lecture at the music department in the Hebrew University. It was at 8 am, which is bad enough for an Englishman, and there were all the top local scholars in my field sitting there looking at me. It was very fruitful, however, because Bathya Bayer asked if I knew of the bells in the museum of the Monastery of the Flagellation down at the lower end of the Via Dolorosa in the Old City. I didn't, so she took me there next day and showed me also the organ pipes which had been found with them, near the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and which may be of Latin Kingdom date – those I have published and the latest version is on my website as a download (*The Oldest Organ*

in Christendom) and was also published in a Festschrift for Jeannine Lambrecht. On the way back she also introduced me to the Jerusalem Pottery, a bit higher up the Dolorosa, and I have been buying tiles and plates from them ever since – they are the best of all the Armenian potteries in Jerusalem. She also introduced me to what was then the best Yemenite skewers restaurant in Jerusalem (it's now not as good as it used to be then), and she told Stanley Sadie that he must ask me to write new entries for the biblical instruments in the *New Grove Dictionary of Instruments* (they've been rewritten again by Joachim Braun), so it had been a lecture very well worth giving!

This trip to Göteborg wasn't the first time I'd been there. Gwen and I went once to look at the instruments in the Ethnographic Museum – the travel agent was a bit surprised at our choice of a holiday destination, for not many people choose to holiday in Hull, for example, the English equivalent. But it was a great visit. Karl Erik Larsson got out the card files and said 'Anything you want to see, take out the card from the file,' (! unheard of in other museums), 'leave it on the table and the instrument will be there tomorrow.' Fantastic kindness, and Karl Gustav Izikowitz came back from holiday to say hello and gave me a copy of his great book on *The Musical Instruments of the South American Indians*. A colleague of Karl Erik's gave me a couple of books on snuff-taking in South America, and Karl Erik gave me a copy of his book on *Fijian Studies* with the descriptions of the only known conch trumpet with a fingerhole. A city of which I have very fond memories.

We often had interested people coming to the house in Dulwich to see my collection, Karl Erik among them as I told above, and one unwary American asked me why I had gathered it all. 'To illustrate lectures,' I told him. 'So why not lecture in America?' he asked. 'Invite me' I replied, and he did. James Wyly was Professor at Grinnell College in Iowa, a Liberal Arts College that was the first to be established west of the Mississippi, though of course it has been overtaken since by others

further west. After a good deal of correspondence I was appointed Heath Visiting Professor at Grinnell for a semester at the end of 1970. It was an interesting trip. I went over by sea, which gave me time to plan the lectures and sort slides to illustrate them, as well as being able to carry instruments to demonstrate, far more than would have been possible by air. I was met in New York by a student from the College and we then drove halfway across America, picking up a few extra instruments in a Chinese shop in Cleveland on the way. I lectured on history of instruments, established a Collegium Musicum, playing much of the *Musica Reservata mediæval* repertoire (with Michael Morrow's permission), making and teaching the students to make a number of the appropriate percussion instruments. I found one student who made an excellent job of sounding very like Jantina Noorman, our lead singer in London, and another has had a successful career as a New Grove editor and later as a fund-raiser.

I had persuaded the College to buy a couple of Meini and Lauber 'baroque' trumpets for the Collegium, and when in my inaugural lecture I demonstrated what one could do with a hosepipe, the principal asked why I had put them to all that expense when a hosepipe and kitchen funnel would have done the same job! We also played Baroque music in original styles, and, because I was able to buy a set of parts of a work I am very fond of, Ernest Bloch's *Concerto Grosso no. 1*, as well as some Haydn symphonies. While I was there, I also lectured in several other universities, such as Missouri in Kansas City, where the Professor, Paul Levitt, was so impressed with my description of a Mexican folk-made violin of his that still had features of the baroque type that, very generously, he gave it to me. There was also a lecture at a university whose name I forget, just outside Ann Arbor, where the professor was Alex Murray, the flautist whom I'd known well in London, and I was able to spend time in the Stearns Collection at Ann Arbor with Bill Malm as well as lecturing for him. Another was in Chicago, for Howard Brown, which gave me the chance to visit the

Field Museum with its wonderful ethnographic collection. I was able to go to Seattle for a Society for Ethnomusicology conference and give a paper (and gorged on fish, a food wholly unobtainable in Grinnell – I also found some interesting Philippine instruments there). The paper was on a new classification system for instruments, which John Burton and I had devised, based on the Linnean system, which the Society later published in their *Journal* (I've abandoned it since and reverted to the Hornbostel-Sachs *Systematik* despite its problems). On the way back I was invited to stop off at Los Angeles by Ann Briegleb (with whose husband I later did fieldwork on the Dutch midwinterhoorn) and gave a more general lecture there, and also spoke to Mantle Hood's Ethnomusicology Seminar at UCLA on the classification scheme, and also gave a general lecture at Santa Barbara for Peter Racine Fricker, who was then Professor there. At first, Peter was the only one who laughed at some of my more humorous asides – American audiences, students anyway, don't expect distinguished lecturers to lighten their lectures with the odd joke, but they caught on after a while. While in Los Angeles Peter Crossley-Holland took me on a fruitful visit to Topanga Canyon where there were shops selling Bolivian and other South American instruments. Coming back I flew over the Grand Canyon, which is quite a sight! I also flew over Vermillion in South Dakota, but the Shrine to Music (now the National Music Museum) hadn't then been established. One of the curators there later, Margaret Banks, I'd met in London, for she came to see me, like many others who needed to discuss instruments, when she was doing her thesis on the Greek island lira.

Two or three of us used to take a car trip from Grinnell to neighbouring towns in search of antique shops and my collection of instruments grew considerably.

I appeared also on local radio and television in Grinnell and somehow I was heard of in New York and one day I got a phone call inviting me to appear on the *Today Show* in New York. It seemed to me crazy to

fly halfway across the country just to turn up at 6 am in a television studio and go on air at 8.00, especially as they were not prepared to pay my fare or hotel, and I was about to tell them ‘No way,’ when the College phone operator broke in and told me to wait. I’d no idea of the clout of that show (I didn’t have a television there, any more than I have here) and she was so impressed at someone getting a call from them that she’d been listening in, and was horrified at the idea of anyone turning them down. So was the College and they decided to pay all my expenses for the honour and glory of one of their professors appearing on a prime-time show. In the end they didn’t even see it because that bit of the show was cut when it was aired in the Mid-West. It rolls across the country, going out live in New York, the second hour live in the next time zone followed by the first hour recorded, then in the original order, all recorded, in the next zone and so on. It was an interesting experience, meeting all the horrors of television in America, just like those in England. I did well, though, actually being able to play the handhorn creditably and talk sense at that dreadful hour of the morning. They’d dressed the set with some folios torn from a mediaeval psalter (so appropriate for my subject!) and gave them to me at the end – Sarah has them on her wall now. And I was able to spend a day with Josef Marx and see his collection of oboes, as well as tour some of the music shops with him, fruitfully again.

I had appeared on television a number of times before in this country, talking mostly about my own collection, so I was well accustomed to steering interviewers back to the planned sequence of subjects when, as almost always they did, they veered off on a tangent which would take us away from whatever I had my hand on to talk about next. If one has instruments carefully laid out in a planned order, it can be distracting to the viewers, and confusing for the camera operator, if one has to zigzag across the studio floor when the interviewer gets muddled up.

When my time at Grinnell came to an end, once again we drove to New York, but this time with a U-Haul trailer attached to the car, full of crates and trunks of instruments, arriving there just ahead of the first snow. I spent the night, as although I could load the instruments we couldn't board till next day, with Ed Ripin who worked in the instruments department at the Metropolitan Museum, and got him into trouble because he was showing me round the stores when Emanuel Winternitz came in – nobody was then allowed to spend more than twenty minutes in the stores! The Holland-America line had agreed to take me out with no charge for excessive luggage, and the German line that took me home had to accept the same agreement even though the load was now a great deal bigger. Gwen met me at Southampton Docks with a Ford Transit van that she'd arranged to have delivered there by a hire firm, as she didn't drive, and we loaded everything into it, after a longish session with the Customs. We set off out of Southampton, stopping at the first convenient layby for a more extended greeting – six months was a long time to be apart.

My next sort of teaching was different. Instead of being face to face with my students it was at long range but to a wider constituency. This was by writing books, as I've told above.

My first article had been written when I was quite a new member of the Galpin Society, for that *Journal* on the pair of wooden timpani that I'd bought in Poznań. Eric Halfpenny had encouraged me to write that, and Bill Fagg encouraged me to write one for *Man*, then the lesser journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, when I complained to him about some of his labelling (as well as editing *Man*, he was Keeper of Ethnographic Instruments at the British Museum), on 'What is a Gong?' He had made the point that I shouldn't really complain but be grateful that there were any labels at all. A number of other articles and reviews followed but I'd hesitated to write anything bigger until, when being asked to write a book on mediæval instruments, I was persuaded that one could only write on what one knew NOW –

it was no good waiting until one knew everything because one never would.

The World of Medieval & Renaissance Musical Instruments was typed three times, top to bottom, on my old manual typewriter, and it sold well enough that, when they asked me to follow it up with another, I could afford to buy an electric machine, which made writing *The World of Baroque & Classical Musical Instruments* three times, again, much easier. There was a misunderstanding over *The World of Romantic & Modern Musical Instruments* – I had understood a length but they wanted it a third shorter, so Gwen and I sat down with the text, cutting word by word till we got it right. I think we lost only one instrument (the heckelphone if I remember rightly) in the process. It had to be done in a great hurry, so we kept a word count and stopped as soon as we'd lost the right number; as a result, the first two thirds of the book is rather more concise than the last bit!

Those books and the number of articles that I'd written by then in the *Galpin Journal* and *Early Music* had established my reputation as an authority on instruments and their history, and I presume that it was they that got me the post in Oxford as I told in a previous chapter, as well perhaps as my year of museum experience at the Horniman back in 1960.

Writing the Medieval and Renaissance book had got me involved in the iconography of that period, and that has led to a number of articles in *Early Music*, and having started in that periodical with a duet with Jimmy Blades on mediæval percussion in its second issue, I'm now its longest-standing contributor. I am very pleased, and also honoured, that I have so often had the front cover illustrating one of my articles. Writing for them also has the additional advantage that they are one of the very few periodicals in our field that pays its authors! Not only do they do that but they also then obtained the photographs to illustrate the articles and negotiated and paid the reproduction fees – alas no longer. Most other periodicals expect the author to pay all

those costs themselves. My only regret is that the subscription price is now so high that many of my colleagues, and thus potential readers, can no longer afford to buy it. It costs over three times what the *Galpin Society Journal* does, has a much larger readership to libraries and other institutions, and carries a mass of well-paid advertising, so its price does seem to be unnecessarily high. But then, it's a commercial publication by OUP and I suppose they price it at whatever figure they think the market can stand.

At the end of the interview for the Bate Collection in Oxford they asked if I had any questions, so I asked if they knew that I didn't have any degrees? (Laurence Picken, a very dear friend who had honoured me by asking me to read through his superlative magnum opus *The Folk Musical Instruments of Turkey* pre-publication – it's the best and most precise book ever written on instruments – had offered to supervise me for a PhD at Cambridge, but by then I was too busy teaching in other universities to accept). And they laughed. That showed the difference between Oxford (and Cambridge because they'd have taken me for the PhD without a base degree) and the ILEA, for when Gwen asked David Boston why I'd not been called for interview as Curator of Instruments at the Horniman Museum when Jean Jenkins left, considering how well I knew that collection, how long I'd worked there, and all the expertise I had by then, all he said was, 'I never knew Jeremy didn't have any degrees.'

I regretted not getting the Horniman, for it was local to where we lived and we could have stayed on in that Dulwich house, and of course I had hurt feelings and was somewhat depressed by it, but once I'd got Oxford I was grateful for having missed the other, for at Oxford I could teach and that is something I've always enjoyed. The Bate position is a Lectureship in the Faculty of Music, with the added responsibility of being Curator of the Collection. Teaching is what I've missed most since retiring, though I still do quite a bit, either face-to-face in short

bursts, or on line, answering all the questions that come to me by email, or dealing with visitors who come to me for information.

I had applied to Oxford when the Bate position was first established. I was short-listed but I knew I wouldn't get the job as soon as I heard that Anthony Baines had also applied – he was the greatest expert we had on woodwind instruments and the collection initially was only woodwind. At breakfast before I went up for the interview, I said to Gwen, 'You know if they're unkind, they'll ask me, 'Mr Montagu, as Secretary of the Galpin Society (as I was then), who do you think should get this job?'' and the only possible answer would be Tony Baines. Well, they didn't ask me, but they did give Tony the job. When the post for his successor was advertised I thought I was too old for them, but H el ene La Rue said I was just the right age – they wouldn't want anyone who would stay in it for more than the 13 or so years that I had, and when I retired she'd be the right age to apply for it herself. So I did apply, and she did succeed me, tragically for only a short time before she died of cancer.

I had told Oxford, to be honest with them, that I was trying to establish a museum with my own collection in Jerusalem. We were going there on holiday the following week, and during the days before we left, I was rung up from Oxford and asked what my plans were. I told them that while I was there I would decide definitely and would tell them as soon as I got back. So I called on the Vice-Chancellor of the Hebrew University and told him that he had a fortnight to make a definite commitment to establish a museum within a reasonable period (not straight away of course – I knew Israel better than that! – but as a matter of principle), for a wink is as good as a nod and I knew I'd got the Bate if I wanted it. Of course, it wasn't possible to make any decision in that much time in Israel, and he said, 'We think you'd better go to Oxford and perhaps try the scheme again when you leave there.' So when I got home I rang the Faculty Secretary and told her, and also asked, as I knew that the Faculty and the Bate were moving into a

new building, whether I could come up and see that the instruments were safely stowed in their new home. So, as I've recounted above, they asked whether I'd like to start the job in July when the move would take place, instead of waiting till the normal date of October. Of course I said yes, work being thin at the time, and after a few nights in a college guest room (Wadham, as it happened), I was offered the use of what was going to be the caretaker's flat. We camped there, mattresses on the floor, camping stove, and a borrowed fridge, while I looked after the Bate and Gwen house-hunted and started to close down and find a buyer for our Dulwich house.

When we first moved the Faculty to St Aldate's, it was a building site. It was supposed to be ready by 5th July, but of course it wasn't. Still, our Administrator, Anne Roberts, had determined on that date as moving day, and she stuck to it. The Bate area was bare plaster and concrete, with a relative humidity of 80%, large windows round the room with no ultraviolet protection, and radiators under each window with no control over the heat levels that came on full blast in the morning and went off at night, the worst possible conditions for a museum. So I asked if I could go and see the University Surveyor. They gave me a big industrial dehumidifier, with a tray that had to be emptied more than once a day and asked what I wanted to do about the windows. 'Bricks,' I said. Eventually I blocked all but one on the ground floor with showcases and got anti-UV film for the others, but in the meanwhile I covered them with newspapers, which are surprisingly good UV filters – I think that it was the copies of *Pravda* that Tony Baines gave me that accelerated their decision to approve the new showcases. The Ashmolean Museum's Administrator, Robin Winter, was a tower of strength throughout these struggles. Garry Thomson's *Museum Environment* was my bible through this – I'd asked the Surveyor whether he knew it, for no one should design a museum space without referring to it. 'Oh Mr Thomson's a friend of ours,' he said. Since the University Surveyor is a very important

person, I managed to restrain myself from saying ‘Well why the bloody hell didn’t you ask him?’

The Bate wasn’t the only disaster in that way – the Pitt Rivers extension into what eventually became the Balfour Building was far worse and it was several years before they got that one sorted out. Museums and concert halls are architects’ disaster areas – they never have any idea how either of them work and they never listen to any of the people who are going to have to use them. Concert hall acoustics are nearly always catastrophes at first – at that first trial in the Festival Hall, none of us could hear each other, and for years afterwards one felt that the notes one played came out of the instruments and plopped on to the floor at one’s feet – it is a bit better now, but still not really sympathetic to play in. When they were building the Lincoln Center in New York, some of us were invited to the American Embassy to hear how wonderful it was going to be (I’m not sure why I was invited) – they showed us slides of how awful every other modern hall was and how superb theirs was going to be. It wasn’t. The only really good concert halls are those like the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Leipzig Gewandhaus, the Philharmonie in Vienna, our own Holywell Music Room, halls that were built empirically.

We played once in the small hall at the Philharmonie with *Musica Reservata*, the *Brahmsesaal*, a beautiful white and gold small concert hall across the passage from the main hall. I was interested to see that the *Wagnersaal* was a plain, undecorated room, used as a cloakroom. That showed what the Viennese thought about the two composers.

Once the showcases were in at the Bate I got everything on the walls, first with hooks and nylon line, and then with permanent fittings. I like to use natural hessian (sackcloth) as a background to the showcases because it’s neutral in colour so that any colour of instruments looks well against it and any holes that one makes in it are easily lost by scraping with a fingernail if one needs to move an instrument. It was sheer good luck that there was a CIMCIM Scandinavian tour at that

time (CIMCIM, the Comité International des Musées et Collections des Instruments de Musique, is the musical instrument committee of ICOM, the International Council of Museums). We went round all the instrument museums in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark divided into three groups: pedagogic – were we teaching visitors anything? aesthetic – did our museums and displays look beautiful? and security – was everything going to be nicked and would it fall off the walls? I opted for the last. Cary Karp showed us the room in the Stockholm Musikmuseet that they had labelled the Treasure Chamber and then were surprised that things had got stolen from it. And Bob Barclay pointed out that the way things wanted to fall was *that* way ↓, and so we should support them *that* way ↑, from underneath. I remembered a display of woodwinds that I'd seen in the Gemeente Museum in The Hague, each suspended with a nylon line round the top joint, hanging from the top of the case, just waiting for each joint to drop off, one by one as they dried out. Bob also introduced me to shrink tube, a very useful plastic that one could put round a metal support and then shrink on to it with heat so that no metal touched the instrument. So I was able to embody all this advice in what I did. Because, once the new cases were paid for, there were minimal funds for display, I was able to design and bend up supports of common garden 2 mm galvanised wire, cheap, easily bent and shaped, and I covered it with shrink tube, so that every instrument could be easily lifted off and handed to an enquirer (only one defeated me, and that required undoing one screw). I believed as Tony had that every instrument should be available to be examined, and, if required, to be played so long as it was in playing condition and there was good reason to do so.

I was never quite as extreme as Tony had been. When a visitor came in he'd take something out of a case, thrust it into their hand and say, 'Play that!' – I usually waited to be asked, but then I almost always said yes, and I did normally spot those who were too shy to ask and then

invited them. I remember one school-girl who came in with her parents to look round because she was coming up the following year. She was gazing with wide open eyes at the oboes so I asked if she played them, and when she said yes, I got out a two-key oboe and invited her to have a go. Abigail Graham became a mainstay of our *Harmonie* and became a professional baroque oboist in Holland. Many other early music players got their first experience at our hands, and Tony and I'd often lend them an instrument, sometimes for months at a time. Things are different today in many museums, but this was one of the stipulations that Philip Bate had made when he gave his collection to the University – the instruments were there to be played.

I got some stick over this from other museum colleagues, who were against ever playing anything. I said that a Potter eight-key flute, for example, was a very common instrument, found in pretty well all collections, and if one of ours cracked because it was being played, well, there were plenty of others. But their attitude was that every instrument is an unicum and should be treated as such. I also believe that keeping keyboards tuned to a pitch at which they are happy and stable is much better for them than leaving the strings slack, and certainly far better than leaving them so and suddenly tightening them up for some prestige concert or recording. I was of course very careful about letting our rarest instruments be played, and only allowed that for a very good reason.

One of the best reasons was to allow a maker to play them briefly, for how can one make a reproduction of an instrument if you don't know what the original sounds like? I also extended the hours of the museum, for whereas Tony had opened the museum once or twice a week in term time (more often for specialist enquirers), I had it open Monday to Friday afternoons throughout the year (mornings were for teaching or specialist visitors), and I also did a teaching weekend at least once a term.

When makers came to try an instrument it was very interesting, especially if they had made a really accurate copy, for then I sometimes suggested mixing the joints, putting the original Bressan recorder head on their body, for example – it always sounded better than with their head, for however accurately you measure an instrument, it is never completely exact – the slightest modification to the windway, a few microns here and a few there, makes a surprising amount of difference. And then we could look at the differences in really minute details. Another that I remember doing this with was the Galpin oboe, the earliest English oboe in existence. Bruce Haynes had asked Toshi to make a copy and they came in with it – there were differences, despite Toshi's expertise, for the original had a depth of tone that Toshi hadn't quite caught even when both were played with the same reed. It does show that those who say that one should never play originals but should use reproductions instead, because they can be accurate copies, are wrong, for they never are accurate and I have never heard a reproduction that did reproduce the sound of the original, so it is essential to hear the originals from time to time. Yes, I know all the arguments that the originals didn't sound like they do now when they were new and so a reproduction may be more accurate than the original, but try telling that to a violinist with a Strad – he won't believe you any more than I believe those arguments. If you want to know what an original instrument sounds like, the only way to find out is to play the thing.

I labelled all the instruments and also wrote master labels for each group. I wanted to produce guide books and catalogues to teach our visitors about instruments and the Collection but there was no money to have these professionally produced. I knew how I wanted to do them, the same way that we'd been producing *FoMRHI Quarterly* since 1975, reducing A4 pages to half size so that two pages went on one side of an A4 sheet and two on the other, and then photocopying on the Faculty office machine, folding, and stapling them into booklets.

With one page for a cover, there were then 3, 7, 11, or 15 pages for text, but the idea of typing that many pages and finding oneself with one line too many was inhibiting.

Amstrad came to the rescue with the first cheap home computer, complete with printer. I bought myself one and produced *Bate Guides* at home, amplified versions of the master labels. And with the computer there was no problem with slight over-runs of text on to an extra page because one could edit until it fitted without retyping the whole thing. So I printed off a top copy and then took them into the Faculty to photocopy them, a dozen or so copies at a time. Small runs like that meant that it was easy to revise them as we acquired a new instrument. The result was many detailed catalogues and guides to sections of the Collection. Not only was this a way of teaching our visitors and students, but it also made us a little money to build up a purchase fund, for we had no other money to buy new instruments.

I showed our Administrator, Anne Roberts, what I'd done at home and she bought me a second Amstrad for the Bate so that I could go on doing it there. This was the first computer in the Faculty and of course it meant that as everybody else gradually got computers, I was left with the most old-fashioned one in the building! It was a good computer in its way, with a wide range of fonts, but it was incredibly slow and its disks were its own size and couldn't be exchanged with any other machine, nor could its operating system be read on anything else, something that created problems when I changed to a more modern machine. The University Computing Service came to the rescue and managed to convert almost everything successfully to WordPerfect, a far better program for serious writing than Word for Windows and, unlike Word (try typing any language east of the Rhine on that!), with almost as great a range of easily accessible fonts as the Amstrad. Some programs are really horrible for serious writing – does anybody remember WordStar? Nowadays I use OpenOffice on a Linux platform, Ubuntu, which I find good and friendly in most respects, and I can

save things for .doc for those, like Grove, who can't read .odt, though my editor at Scarecrow says it's hell to convert it to what he needs.

I was teaching in other ways too. As I've said, the Bate position is a University Lectureship in the Faculty, with a slightly reduced lecture stint to allow for the time spent on curating. In fact I did more than my stint, doing three lectures a week. I did one eight-week series on European instruments, one on ethnographic instruments, and one on some other aspect for the first two terms each year, and in the summer I did rather more random ones, subjects that interested me and might interest our students. There were also tutorials for any who were going to take the instrument option in Finals. And of course I was out on the desk invigilating the museum every afternoon as well as dealing with all the correspondence that comes into an internationally renowned museum. I did eventually get an ex-student who wanted to stay on for an extra year as an invigilator, which gave me more time to work on the Collection and to research (one of the contractual commitments of an Oxford lecturer).

I was going to conferences, too, and giving papers there. One outstanding one, when I was first at the Bate, was in Belfast, where I had often been in the past to lecture on organology for John Blacking. This was the inauguration of his European Seminar in Ethnomusicology of which he, of course, became president, a post in which I later followed him. I'd not only been to Belfast to lecture there in the past, but he'd sent me several of his students to spend more time with me for detailed work on instruments and especially on their classification. One who became a family friend was Chinyere Nwachukwu, but, like some others, she gradually drifted out of contact, due I think to problems in Nigeria (she was an Igbo).

Edgar Hunt had offered Tony his collection for the Bate if he could raise the money to buy it, and he very kindly extended the time limit so that I could continue the endeavour. When time was running out with no success, I asked if I could go to see the Vice-Chancellor to tell

him what we were going to lose. This is a very formal occasion – one has to go gowned. I described the splendours of Edgar’s collection of recorders and other instruments to Geoffrey Warnock and the Registrar, who sat in on the meeting, and he said, ‘Yours is a teaching collection isn’t it?’ I said yes, and he went on ‘Well have you tried the Equipment Fund?’ So I did, and the Faculty chipped in also, and the National Art Collections Fund gave us Michael Morrow’s renaissance tenor recorder, with the double plume mark that may have been used by makers at Henry VIII’s court, and we got Edgar’s collection.

We got far more than he had offered Tony, for when I drove over to collect the instruments he showed me other things he had and kept on saying ‘Have you got one of these?’ and whenever the answer was no, he added it in, all as a very generous gift. The star of the collection of course was his Bressan recorders, the only ones in this country that haven’t been Dolmetsched and so still have their original windways. I got Fred Morgan’s permission to publish his drawing of the treble and so could add that to the stock of measured drawings I was beginning to build up.

An Australian FoMRHI member had come up with the idea of coming over here and drawing a number of our instruments so that makers could produce copies of them. Eventually he got a grant to do this because there was no stock of original instruments in Australia for makers to work from. Ken Williams was a professional draughtsman as well as a viol player and flute maker and he spent over six months with us drawing beautiful measured plans. Over the years I added more by others such as Charlie Wells, who’d come down for a weekend, especially over a bank holiday, staying with us and drawing an instrument or two, until we and Edinburgh had the largest collection of published plans in this country – they’ve wound up with the largest because they’ve gone on adding whereas my successor, Hélène La Rue, didn’t continue the programme. The provision of plans is an invaluable resource for instrument makers and it also preserves the

instruments because it means that they don't have to be measured by each maker who wants to copy them. It also helps the museum because we sell the plans for money with which to buy more instruments, and, finally, it is also another way of providing teaching.

Also teaching was my Bate Weekends. These were on a different subject each term, such as bow-rehairing with Andrew Bellis – we had a bow-making week with him each summer, too – or oboe playing and reed making with Paul Goodwin, Dick Earle, and Lorraine Wood, recorder making or tuning with Alec Loretto (he was very generous to us with gifts of recorders), or recorder playing with Alan Davies, and many other subjects. Through FoMRHI and my own professional contacts I could find people for any subject connected with our instruments, either on how to play them or how to make them or other relevant details. And as we had a spare room at home in which we could put the teachers up, we could save hotel and other costs, and so they were pleasant social occasions with old friends as well.

I put on a Special Exhibition each term, too, with its own little three-page plus cover catalogue. I can't remember all the subjects, but they were usually drawn from my own collection as a way of getting some of my instruments into the museum that there wasn't otherwise room for. *Tibetan Instruments* was one exhibition, *Instruments of the Bible* another, *Tuning and Temperament* a third. I wrote a small handbook for that one which we went on selling, outlining the reasons why temperament is necessary. The handbook for it is sufficiently useful that I've put it (*Tuning and Tempering*) on my Web Page as a free download for anybody to use. I also had fun comparing the accuracy of a variety of free-reed tuners for one on *Musical Scales* – hopeless most of them were. I put that one on in association with Oxford's Science Week. *Hausa Nigerian Instruments* was another, anything that I had enough instruments to make a coherent exhibition in the one showcase that I kept for that purpose. About the only one that I drew on Collection instruments for, because otherwise doing that left gaps

in the permanent exhibition, was my old lecture subject, *Instruments in the Time of J C Bach*. There were dozens of others – one a term for over ten years.

Then too we had regular weekly playing sessions such as the *Harmonie*, playing wind octets and sextets on our or my instruments, for which there is a huge repertoire. Tony had left his playing library with us and I had many more, acquiring more all the time. I also had almost the entire mediæval and renaissance sets of music that Bernard Thomas published as London Pro Musica Editon, and those and the wind band music now belong to the Bate. One year there was a group of students keen to try nineteenth-century brass-band music, so I got several of my brass instruments into playing condition so that, added to those in the Collection we had enough cornets, altos, and tenors to go round. And of course there was a regular gamelan evening each week, so that I was in the Bate after the end of opening hours almost every night of the week.

I was in the museum over the Easter vacation one year, alone in the building, and three Javanese walked in. ‘Would you like a gamelan?’ one of them asked. After my initial ‘Glug’, I asked whether it was pelog or slendro, which surprised them that I knew the difference. ‘Both,’ their leader said with a roar of laughter (there’s always laughter round the Javanese), and ‘Javanese or Balinese?’ I asked. ‘Java,’ he said, and I said ‘Good,’ for I prefer that music. ‘All you have to do if you want it is write to the Ambassador today – I have it in my pocket,’ he said. I asked, ‘Why us?’ for the Pitt Rivers is the ethnographic museum here, and he said that they thought it would be more likely to played with us, with a strong implication that while the Pitt might be full of funny instruments, this was their *music* and so it belonged in the Music Faculty. He insisted that I had to make an immediate decision which put me in a very difficult situation. There was no question over whether I wanted a gamelan – of course I did. I’ve loved gamelan music ever since Ernst Heins had introduced me to it

in Amsterdam. But did the Music Faculty and the University want one? Well, I couldn't lose a chance like that, so I wrote, and was then on tenterhooks till Denis Arnold, our Professor, came back from Venice where he had, as usual, spent the vacation working (vacations are seldom holidays for university lecturers and professors – they're when we have the chance to get some research work or writing done, and Venetian music was his area). When he did, I went up to see him and told him, very nervously, what I'd done. 'Oh good,' he said, and 'Whew' was my reaction. So they flew us one over, a very fine one from Klaten in Central Java, dating from the beginning of the twentieth century and therefore well played in and ripened – it can take fifty years for a new gamelan to settle down. The Faculty agreed to pay for a regular weekly teacher for the first year, after which the members of the Gamelan Society would have to pay for him or her, and it's been an enormous success ever since, with a weekly rehearsal and regular concerts. Hélène moved it up to the Pitt, where there was more space until they closed down the Balfour Building and where it could also be regularly used by children's groups, but it has now come back to us and it's our own once more, though with considerable space problems because since my time they have rearranged the keyboards I'd managed to acquire into where I kept it.

I wrote a catalogue of the gamelan with a brief description of each instrument with my own poor line drawings, and also a complete table of the pitches, which few if any other museums have done. It's interesting because it shows that they stretch the octaves in the treble and bass exactly like our piano tuners do, and also that there is a built-in vibrato, for few of the instruments are at exactly the same pitches – they're out of unison just enough to create a vibrato sufficient to keep the sound moving.

The keyboards came from Michael Thomas and I got into a great deal of trouble over that. The Development Office knew that I was seeking funds to buy what Michael had offered us, and when they

told me that they had a potential donor, Lawrence Pilkington of the glass-making family, I went ahead, but apparently I should also have sought permission from higher up in the University. However, by the time they told me that, the deal had been done, and we now have some wonderful harpsichords and clavichords to join those deposited in the Faculty many years ago by Mr Taphouse, who ran the old music shop in Oxford, which were a Shudi-Broadwood harpsichord, a Hass clavichord, and a spinet. After Mrs Taphouse died I had to raise the money to buy the Hass, and now the Collection has recently succeeded in raising the money to buy the other two. I had acquired other keyboards as gifts, a harpsichord that may have belonged to Handel and Arnold Dolmetsch's first clavichord, among them.

Not, of course, that we got exactly the same instruments from Michael Thomas as were on the initial list that he had offered us. He wasn't like that. He was a real wheeler-dealer and instruments went into and out of his collection like yo-yos. But what we got were wonderful enough, and included a really systematic sequence of clavichords, showing their development from the first evidence we have, the drawing in Arnault de Zwolle's manuscript down to Dolmetsch's revival.

Fund-raising was a constant problem – we were always being offered wonderful instruments, such as a superb Richters oboe with beautiful ornamentally-turned ivory mounts, and the Simon Beale 1657 trumpet, the only Stuart trumpet known that is not already in captivity (I got the latter on loan and Hélène managed to raise the funds to pay for it when the owner decided to sell). I nearly always succeeded, due to very generous help from the National Art Collections Fund and from the University Hulme Fund, sales of postcards (I did a lot of photography for them), plans of instruments, my guides and catalogues, appeals to our Friends which I'd founded, donations in our collecting drum (an old Egyptian camel drum of mine), and great patience and generously

low prices from vendors, especially Tony Bingham who was very kind to us.

Loan objects can be a Damoclean sword for museums. We house, insure and look after them for years, and then the owner decides to sell them. If we want to keep them, we have to raise money, often very quickly. Unlike major museums like the National Gallery, who've had a horrendous time over the last few years over this, involving millions of pounds, our instruments were comparatively cheap and I and my successors have almost always been successful.

What with all this, including further gifts from Philip Bate and Edgar Hunt, and loans and gifts from me, as well as others, the Collection grew very considerably during my time as Curator. There are about 200 instruments of mine on loan in the Collection (a future problem for my successor when I die), including all my timpani but one, which makes life much easier at home, and when Tony Baines died I gave my Adolphe Sax alto saxophone as a gift in his memory – Heather Graham had given it to me as a memento after her mother, Dorothy Crump, had died and this, because of Tony's earlier connexion with that Croydon orchestra and the fact that H  l  ne, who had succeeded me by that time, had also played in that orchestra as a girl, made it seem an appropriate gift. Tony and Patricia bequeathed all his instruments, many of which had been on loan there from the beginning, to the collection, and Patricia has been very generous since then with a bequest, as was Yvonne Bate after Philip died and later when she died.

Another project was recordings. Martin Souter recorded several of our harpsichords, which sell well, and Peter Holtslag came up with the idea of recording the Bressan treble recorder. It meant flying it over to Germany, and I was in considerable trepidation till it came back safely, but it did and we now have an excellent recording of it on sale. The harpsichords had to be taken off elsewhere to record them, for there is far too much traffic noise from the main road to do it in situ. One of them, when it came back, told us that it hadn't liked being moved –

the treble went sharp and the bass went flat, whereas normally when an instrument goes out of tune it all moves in the same direction – this was a clear statement of unhappiness. Another was far too fragile to move, so we stuffed foam mattressing into the windows, hung up blankets, and tried to record it at three in the morning, but traffic never stops for long enough to record a whole movement, even at that hour, so we had to give up. But the recordings that we have sell well, teach people what they sound like and how wonderful they are, and slowly add to our purchase funds.

As I mentioned above, I started a Friends of the Bate and this is a very considerable help to us, with subscriptions outweighing the cost of running it and with very generous response from Friends to occasional appeals for extra funds. After Charles Mould, our first Chairman, retired, I took over the post (I'd retired by then) – Martin Souter succeeded me, and after he had to retire due to pressure of business and then of ill-health, I took it up again at least until we found someone younger for it. Then we did – he was a whole year younger than me! And since then, my daughter Sarah has taken it over.

And of course as well as all this, I was doing other normal teaching, not only the regular lectures and tutorials, but also supervision of graduates doing a DPhil. This last I usually did at home because my own library was bigger than the Bate's and included many books and museum catalogues not otherwise available in Oxford, and at home I could reach them off the shelf as they became relevant instead of having to take them into the Bate 'tomorrow'. Paul White, who produced a good thesis on the early bassoon, was a very promising graduate, so much so that I left him in charge of the Collection when I took a six-month sabbatical (one term and the vacation on each side). But in the end he dropped out of the field because he could not get a job in the museum or university worlds, where there are very few vacancies. I tried to convince him that it was worth continuing with research and writing, for many of our major organological studies have

been written by non-professionals and non-academics. Galpin was a Canon of the Church; Bate was a television producer; Rendall a librarian; Langwill an accountant; Pegge, Baines, Waterhouse, and I professional musicians, all working in our spare time because of our fascination with the subject, and there were many others like us. But it was no use; he was imbued by the American idea that you can only work in a field if you are a professional academic in it. So last heard of he was selling wine in New Zealand and a loss to the history of instruments.

I also had a few temporary students from outside, people who would come to me for a while to learn things that I could teach, especially the systematic classification of instruments. Ewa Dahlig was one, and another, who went on longer than most, was Maria Antònia Juan i Nebot from Barcelona. She eventually published translations in both Catalan and Castilian of the Hornbostel and Sachs Systematik with my suggested modifications, a full English version of which of my own has appeared in the papers of the 2008 ESEM Seminar in Warsaw and now forms the basis of the MIMO system and is in the revised edition of the *New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*.

Since I retired, teaching, other than a stream of books and articles that I had had no time to write while I was working, has been more spasmodic, though I still give papers at conferences. Graduate supervision continued for a while, especially with Bradley Strauchen and Brenda Neece at Oxford, and was followed with one for the Open University with Lynda Sayce who has been more than generous with time in editing my books since Gwen died, though she was never as strict as Gwen in saying, 'You can't say that.' She set up my website for me, too. And now my daughter Rachel edits me, just as toughly as Gwen did, and all thanks to her for editing this. Otherwise teaching has tended to be one-off, as I've said, helping people short-term and by email and correspondence, conference papers, and so on. Books and articles continue, among them my *Origins and Development of*

Musical Instruments, and several others noted above, as well as other projects.

Horns and Trumpets of the World was well under way when Laurence Libin asked me to be one of the Senior Editors for the revision of the *New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, responsible for all the world's ethnographic and folk instruments, and for the non-European art music instruments. The only area outside my remit was the Americas, but also within it was all the percussion instruments of our culture, since I've published on them, plus classification of instruments. *Grove* occupied most of my time for three years and more. I put the Brass book aside (much to the annoyance of my publisher, Scarecrow) to take on *Grove*, because I thought that of such greater importance for the community as a whole. I had to find writers from all over the world to cover their specific areas of local knowledge, and where I could not find them, or where they were unable to take the time to work for us, I had to call on my own knowledge and the resources of my library to try to revise entries from the old 1984 edition as best I could. It had been an enormous task, particularly since I am bad at editing, throwing much of that work back on Laury, who has become a very dear friend, often staying with me here when he's been travelling from America. It was a very great privilege and honour to be asked to undertake it, and I'm very glad that I did it.

As that work tailed off, with all our entries in and waiting for editorial queries and proofs, I was able to find the time to finish off the Brass book, *Horns and Trumpets of the World*, for Scarecrow (by then re-absorbed into their parent firm of Rowman and Littlefield) were willing to renew the contract. I was much helped in the final stages with the photographic work, by my grand-daughter Kate Roseman, and that book was published in 2014.

What came next? I have other writing projects in the back of my mind, so I don't suppose I shall ever stop. There've been two more books since, *The Shofar* with Rowman and Littlefield, a very detailed

study of the ram's horn of the Bible, including an attempted geographical and morphological typology and a study of the different traditions of blowing worldwide, and one on *The Conch*, for which I'm still trying to find a publisher. And now the revision of this Autobiography, plus several articles and encyclopedia entries. Once a teacher, always a teacher, and writing is a drug addiction, a habit as impossible to eradicate as my snuff-taking. If I'm away from the keyboard for more than a few days I get twitchy! Ideas pop into my head and there's another book or article started.

Chapter 9

Religious Life

I have already told something about my initial upbringing in Judaism. We were members of the New West End Synagogue, and when Louis Jacobs became our rabbi he ran a young people's discussion group, of which I was a member. I regarded Louis as 'my rabbi' ever after and occasionally wrote to him for advice even after coming to Oxford. Ewen was one of his strongest supporters during the 'Jacobs Affair', as it was known, and he and Iris followed Louis to the New London Synagogue, even though Ewen was in a difficult position because he'd not long stopped being President of the United Synagogue; Louis and Shula never forgot his and Iris's help.

When Gwen and I decided to marry we had to discuss religion, for we were both certain of its centrality in family life. Like many women, she was more religious-minded than I was. I wanted to continue in my ways, eating anything and going to shul from time to time, though not only on the Holy Days – little did we know that one day we would become seriously observant.

Of course we didn't become too religious initially. We did indeed go on eating everything and anything. We had a wonderful holiday, that time we walked the *Alignements* of standing megaliths near Carnac in Brittany, with so good a *plat de fruits de mer* in Concarneau that we asked the hotel, whose restaurant we'd had lunch in, whether they had a room for the night. No, they said, they were full up, but when we explained how much we'd enjoyed the lunch and wanted as good

a dinner and lunch next day, they found us a small attic room. Once Gwen cooked a porterhouse steak for Ewen's birthday – a large, thick piece of meat, sliced open and stuffed with oysters! And she had a delicious dish she often cooked for me when we were first going together of lamb's kidneys slowly cooked in butter with mushrooms and garlic. All totally unkosher. Oysters, and all shellfish, are forbidden in the Bible and so is meat from animals that were not ritually killed for kosher eating, as is even kosher-killed meat from forbidden parts of the animal such as their hindlegs and some innards, and Jewish tradition, deriving from biblical verses, forbids cooking meat with milk products and, for safety in keeping the rule, so is serving meat and milk products at the same meal. So both those dishes are as non-kosher as they could be!

It was the children who changed us. One day I was cooking lunch for them. We were having bacon sandwiches and the children said, 'If we're Jewish, why are we eating this?' Well, there really isn't an answer to that. So gradually we became more observant, initially just not eating the forbidden foods. Simon at one time became so strict that he wouldn't eat in our house, but eventually, by having his own plates, cutlery, and so on, and washing them up separately himself, he came back to us. In the end Gwen got someone to come and blow-torch our stove, and the dishes and cutlery were kashered, and our kitchen and eating became fully kosher with the advantage, once we were here in Oxford, that we could invite our friends for meals without any worries for them or for us.

As I've said above and as is so often the case, Gwen was far more religiously minded than I. I am happy to thank God for all the happiness I've had, particularly for Gwen, the children, grandchildren, friendship, and so on, to praise him for all his works, to recite prayers. *Modim anachnu lach* is a good mantra if one wants, or tries, to meditate – I use it every night to relax and get to sleep; it means, word for word, 'Thanks we to you' and, in the prayer with which it begins, is followed

by the name of God. I try to observe most, at least, of his Law. For me, electricity is not fire – the power is there in the wires just as the water is in the pipes, and clicking a switch is no different from turning a tap (lighting the gas would be another matter – that *is* making fire). So before Shabbat I turn on the Shabbas kettle, and make coffee with *botz* (the Israeli mud coffee made from very finely ground beans and thus tasting much better than any of the dried imitation coffees) instead of grinding beans and putting them in a saucepan on the gas. And while I keep a kosher kitchen, equally I reckon I can at my age take a bus as far as it goes, part way to *shul* – the bus is running just like the kosher Shabbat elevators that one sees in hotels in Israel and, with my bus pass, I don't have to handle money – I would not take a taxi to get transport all the way, for that would need cash. What I shall do in that respect as I get even older and become decrepit, remains to be seen when and if it happens – maybe open an account with a taxi firm so that I don't have to pay the driver at the time.

My favourite psalm is 148, where all creation praises God, a lovely concept, so much so that I've asked that it should be read at my funeral. And I've never had any trouble over the first chapter of *B'reishit* (the Book of Genesis – *B'reishit* is the first word in the Bible and means In the Beginning). The beginning is as good a description of the Big Bang as any nomadic group of tribesmen could conceive (and, thanks to Haydn, the arrival of light can only have been in C major). And, since 'A thousand years is but a moment in thy sight,' nor do have I any trouble with the succeeding days even if the order of things is a bit muddled in the text. Equally, and on the same basis, there was plenty of time for the dinosaurs to have died out before Noach might have been expected to fit them into his ark (what *was* gopher wood anyway? One of my co-Fellows at Wadham, David Maberley, a tree man, asked me that once). I like, too, the Hebrew lexical quirk that the first day is, in the Hebrew, Day One, whereas the second is the Second Day – it could not be the 'First' day for first is a comparative, and at

that stage there was nothing to compare it with. Nor am I too worried about 'biblical scholarship' – was every word of Torah, the Pentateuch, dictated by God, word by word, to Moses our Teacher, or was some of it interpolated later? Rabbi Norman Solomon, a much valued member of our *kehillah* (community) here in Oxford, has recently written a brilliant book on that subject. God speaks to all of us who'll listen, so whether the somewhat contradictory stories of the creation of Adam and Eve, for instance, were both written by Moses or not, and whether other such variations are originals, doesn't really matter to me. So I observe religion and endeavour to carry it out, without worries about details; soon enough I shall also find out whether hopes and prayers are answered, that I'll be with Gwen again.

I also believe that all children, including all Jewish (and Muslim and others), should be taught about Christianity and should have at least an adequate knowledge of the New Testament. Having gone through the English public school system, and the American equivalent, I am as well as, often better than, versed in it as my theoretically Christian contemporaries. We live in a Christian world, despite the increase in secularism, and one can have no real knowledge of English literature, nor understanding of history, without this basic information. As, when, and if any knowledge of Muslim literature comes into the mainstream as it's beginning to do, it may become equally necessary to know the Koran to the same extent, and other religions similarly, but English literature is now a world-wide resource for teaching and in general culture, and how can any of it be understood without knowing its historical Christian basis? It's easy enough in the home to point out the absurdities of Christianity in Jewish eyes; every religion finds every other religion absurd and often blasphemous – if it didn't, it would not be a religion – and so safeguard children from any risk of conversion. And, too, if you don't know enough about Christianity yourself, you won't know enough to explain the differences between Judaism and Christianity to your children from their contact with it at school and

in the world outside the home, another reason for the importance of learning about it. What also is really absurd is the present idea that Christmas trees (now often Winterval trees), check-in workers at Heathrow wearing a cross, hospital nurses offering to pray for patients, and so on, might offend Muslims and Jews. Most of us are glad to see that other people practise their religion. Allah and HaShem (a Jewish term that avoids using the name of God in common conversation) are only other names for God and each of us welcomes other believers and are happy to accept their prayers for our well-being.

I'm also entirely with the last Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (before he was censored on this and compelled to recant by his own constituency, a willingness to deny his own beliefs that has done much to diminish his moral and academic authority in many eyes) that there is much shared truth in other religions also – God didn't speak only to us. The rigidity of the United Synagogue does do a great deal of harm in the general community. We were very badly hurt when at Ewen's memorial service at the New West End Synagogue not one representative of the US turned up, even though he'd been their President for many years; that was because he'd been cremated, at his insistence, and his ashes scattered in the Solent where he'd been so happy (a hateful task for me, especially with an onshore wind, but how else could one honour him when that was what he wanted?).

Back to history. We went to shul much more often than I had done in the past, and were reasonably regular attenders at Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St John's Wood, allowing for my life as a musician, and then when we moved down to Dulwich we changed to South London Liberal Synagogue in Prentis Road, Streatham. I blew shofar for them on Rosh haShanah, the Jewish New Year when the sound of the shofar calls all Jews to repentance, and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement when we repent for all our sins and pray for forgiveness) for I had responded to an LJS appeal for people to learn to blow. One year Aunt Lily asked me to come up to West Central Liberal, her own synagogue,

and blow for them, for the blower they had was getting old and they all feared that he would do himself a mischief from all the effort when he blew. So I taught Clifford Cohen, one of the older children at South London, to blow in my stead – in due course he became a rabbi.

Kol Nidrei that year (the Eve of Day of Atonement), we went to South London where we had a new rabbi who had better remain nameless. He gave an appalling sermon, very nastily done. So next morning up at West Central, where we went for Yom Kippur so that I would blow out the Fast, we said, ‘We’re refugees – can we join?’ and of course the answer was yes.

The children went to *cheder* (religion school) there as they became old enough, though after a while there were too few children so the classes were closed, and then the children went to South London instead – by that time that rabbi had left again, for we were not the only ones who disapproved of him. So sometimes we went to Prentis Road for Shabbat in the morning, and then to West Central in the afternoon, for that had been started by Aunt Lily as an offshoot of the West Central Girls’ Club and, because working people in those days usually had to work on Saturday mornings, it held its services in the afternoon, an arrangement that allowed Aunts Lily and Mamie to attend LJS in the morning and be with their club members and their families in the afternoon. That had been the original Liberal practice anyway, deriving from the original idea of people going to an Orthodox service in the morning, with something more comprehensible, because it was mostly in English, in the afternoon. When Julia Neuberger became the rabbi of South London as a student, she encouraged us and others to take an active part in the services.

Gradually I got pushed into doing more at West Central as Aunt Lily and Mr Asher, who took the services, got older and eventually I became Chairman and later President, and Gwen also became very active, both there and in the wider community. We were both members of Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues Council where, more

than once, we delighted in telling Sidney Brichto, the ULPS executive director, that he was talking nonsense. On one occasion he had heard that Simon was going to Jews' College, with the intent of becoming an Orthodox rabbi, and he expressed his strong disapproval of this. I said to him, 'What are you worrying about, Sidney? He's still Jewish isn't he?' – I thought it showed a very blinkered attitude on his part. He didn't really approve, either, when Rachel eventually became a Reform Rabbi rather than a Liberal one, even though both were trained together at Leo Baeck College.

I was also asked to serve on Leo Baeck College Council, and eventually I became Honorary Treasurer there and then Vice-Chairman. I was on their Council while Rachel was training there and became something of a thorn in the Council's flesh because, through her and her friends, I knew of some of the difficulties our more observant students were having. We had cases of student rabbis going into communities and wanting to stay overnight within walking distance of the shul, or not wanting to be driven to the chairman's house for lunch on Shabbat because of the rules of observance on Shabbat, and so on. Albert Friedlander, the Dean, and Jonathan Magonet, the Principal, wanted to be strict with them and make them conform to the more liberal customs of their communities, but I stuck up for them, insisting that we could not train them and then forbid them to be as fully Jewish as they wished to be.

I was also unpopular for saying that we really could not give *s'micha* (ordination as a rabbi) to any student who, after their full five years with us, still could not read Hebrew, but I was over-ruled on that one, on what is still to me the invalid argument that because we had taken their money for five years, we could not refuse it. We take students for three or four years here, at Oxford, depending on their subject, and we charge them, and if they won't learn and so fail their exams, they don't get a degree. And the same with graduates – if their thesis isn't up to scratch, we won't give them a DPhil. So what's the difference?

Even Rachel thought I was going too far when I said that part of their final exam should be to be stood in front of a *Sefer Torah* (the parchment scroll on which the Pentateuch is written without any vowels, punctuation, or singing marks) and be told, 'Read that'. I do still think that it was reasonable – surely a trained rabbi should be familiar enough with Torah, and Hebrew grammar and biblical vocabulary, to be able to read at sight one of the more practicable, even more familiar passages – there are many parts that one would not choose for this test, and they only had to read, not to chant. If Israelis can read a newspaper without vowels, why can't a student rabbi read Torah? One of the proudest and most moving occasions of my life was when Rachel received her *s'micha* – I was in tears with emotion, and she had to pat me on the back and comfort me.

The only reason that I didn't become Chairman of the Leo Baeck was that, after I moved to Oxford, the College administrator disliked making trunk calls, as out-of-London phone calls were called then, with their pip-pip-pip every three minutes to remind you just how much the call was costing. I had found the distance no problem in attendance at meetings, for it was a shorter journey in time, though further in mileage, from Oxford than it had been across London from Dulwich to the College, which by then had moved from Upper Berkeley Street to the Manor House in Finchley.

Gwen too was also moving in higher echelons, having been chairman (she was never a chair! Indeed, she was never one to be sat on) of the Liberal Jewish Women's organisation and then of AJWO, the Association of Jewish Women's Organisations, a group that covered almost the whole spectrum of Jewish practises, and eventually working with the League of Jewish Women and very much with ICJW, the International Council of Jewish Women, where she was sadly missed, for not only was she a good and enthusiastic worker, editing their newsletter and doing other jobs, but she had a great gift for easing tensions and defusing potential crises. She was also active in the 35s,

the group of mainly women actively protesting at the Soviet repression of Jews. She was also on the National Council of Women and other bodies, and worked for women's rights everywhere. She went to the Nairobi United Nations Status of Women conference for ICJW, and ten years later to the next one at Beijing. She had by then taught me enough cooking that I could look after myself, baking my own bread if I ran out and coping with any meals. The Oxford *kehillah* is very good at looking after members who are left alone for any reason, and I have always been very grateful to such people as the Elbaz family who regularly invite me to Shabbat lunch when I am alone. By then I had a Fellowship at Wadham College and could usually dine there on a Friday night, something that became very important after Gwen died, when Friday nights were especially lonely until Sarah so kindly moved to Oxford to keep half an eye on me. Bless her, she feeds me both Friday nights and Shabbat lunches. Sarah was then an independent midwife (she later went back into the NHS) and therefore in a position to be able to move, whereas Rachel, with all her and her husband Fran's London commitments, was not, so I had never expected her to do so.

I had become a Fellow of Wadham after five years here without a Fellowship, although my position entitled me to one. I had in the meanwhile been elected to a Fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries in London, which gave me some status, but being without a college fellowship in Oxford means that you are cut off from a great deal of expertise – almost anything you need to know about can be provided by one Fellow or another or by one of their departmental colleagues. I described above taking my pottery conches to the MRI scanner – that was achieved through a co-Fellow.

As recounted briefly above, there were quite a few of us in similar circumstances without fellowships, and we had started to get stropy and agitate a bit, so the University decided to stage a mopping-up arrangement. Three Wise Men were appointed to allocate us to col-

leges, and we were told that while we could pick a College, and while colleges were told that they could pick and choose from amongst us, the Three Wise Men would decide who went where. Claus Moser invited me to come to Wadham, so I put that down as my choice, and then Geoffrey Warnock, whom I'd gone to see about the Edgar Hunt Collection while he was Vice-Chancellor, invited me to go to Hertford, so I put that down as my second choice, and then we were each called to a ten minute interview with the Wise Men. They spent the first nine minutes or so telling – I assume to each of us, but certainly with me – that They in Their Wisdom (the capital letters were implied at all times) would make the decisions, and that if we refused it we wouldn't have a second chance, and then did we have any questions? No? Thank you, good afternoon. Anyway, they did allocate me to Wadham and I've been very happy there, a very informal and a very friendly College that suits me well.

I was not a great deal of use on Governing Body, for it met at 2.00 in the afternoon, which was difficult because the Bate was open from 2.00 to 5.00 and in the days before I had an invigilator, if I wasn't there the museum wasn't open, and if a specialist visitor was coming I had to be there anyway, for the invigilator wasn't allowed to open showcases. Even being seen at College for lunch was difficult, for as I lectured from 12.00 to 1.00 three times a week, and packing away the instruments I'd used to illustrate the lecture, getting to Wadham and back in time to open up the Bate for visitors, was impossible. So not wanting to be too much of a deadhead, when Claus asked me if I'd edit the College *Gazette*, of course I said yes, and I did so for about thirteen years. When I retired they made me an Emeritus Fellow with full dining rights; that's never a foregone conclusion when one retires, so it is an honour I'm conscious of.

I did follow the advice of a friend at shul that if one's going to be the Fellow of a college it is tactful, if one can square it with one's conscience, to be willing to eat non-kosher food. One could, of course,

eat vegetarian, though even then one would be eating it off plates used for all foods, and probably cooked in pots and pans used also for other foods. However, I don't really feel that vegetarian food is a meal, with some exceptions such as pizza or the delicious spaghetti with olive oil, garlic and mushrooms that Gwen used to make, and some of Sarah's and Miriam Elbaz's excellent meals, so I eat meat, though only from permitted animals and fishes, without asking how it was killed or cooked, and the SCR Butler and Chef know to have a substitute for me when non-permitted animals or fish are on the menu. In term time, when a menu is posted in advance, I do avoid dining when something unsuitable is listed, but in vacation, when they don't post the menu in advance, one has to take a chance. It seems to me that it would not be reasonable to ask a college to provide fully kosher food, for that would mean special plates, cutlery, etc, as well as special food imported from London at considerable expense, though they'll always do it for a visitor.

When I first became a Fellow, Cliff Davies, the sub-Warden, stressed how important it was to dine fairly regularly, for we were fellows as well as Fellows and should preserve a collegiate atmosphere – College was a Domus and we were members of a family. It is a pity that so many younger Fellows do not keep up this tradition, but I know that it can be difficult if they live outside Oxford (and how many young people can afford to find a house or flat in Oxford today?), and have young families.

Kashrut can be a problem in Oxford, for we have no local suppliers, and shop bread is both nasty (unless you go to a specialist baker) and full of unknown chemicals as well as perhaps baked, even by specialists, in tins greased with who knows what. So we always baked our own, as I still do, including Shabbat plaited loaves, *challot*. Gwen began doing it long ago for the sake of quality and then continued it for kashrut as well. We did have a butcher who came down from Birmingham fortnightly or so (now that he's gone out of business,

there's an online firm that delivers instead), which is useful for some things, but on whole I prefer to go occasionally to Golders Green and stock up the freezer with chops and sausages from Menachem – I like to see what I'm buying, and anyway his quality is higher.

In the meanwhile, long before our move to Oxford, our congregation at West Central had been getting older and dwindling in numbers. It became clear that the time would come that we could no longer afford to pay a rabbi, so I asked Julia to give me a crash course in Hebrew, for I was well aware that my reading was weak. I'd never been to synagogue classes as a child (how could I when I'd been at boarding school all my school days?) and had never had much chance to improve it. She came to West Central three times a week for a summer, and, with the aid of a lot of homework between the lessons, by the end of it I was confident enough to take any part of the service and to read from the *Sefer*. Remember that Liberals don't chant – they only read, and that only a small section of the *sidra* for the day (the Pentateuch is divided into sections, *sidrot*, some of them very lengthy, so that the whole of it can be read each year), and Liberals translate it as they go, and the *haftara* (prophetical portion that follows) is read only in English.

So when I got the Oxford job, we were immediately roped in to help with the monthly Liberal services that Michael Cross and Alan Curtis had been running. We had, on arrival, established the custom of going to shul every week, whether it was Liberal or not. On our first Friday night, we were immediately snapped up by Henry Posner and taken home for dinner, a custom that we tried to emulate thereafter even while we were still camping in the Faculty flat. I quite enjoyed being back with the Orthodox services, and Gwen liked them, too, but we always went to the Liberal monthly service instead. We did, however, eventually get tired of going to the Oxford service on Saturday morning and then belting down to London with a picnic lunch in the car, to help take the West Central service in the afternoon, and in the end I

resigned my Presidency there. When a new Liberal prayerbook came in, we weren't over happy with that, and so we started to drift away from the Liberal services in Oxford.

I had been asked to help improve the singing at those Liberal services, and at one session one of the group rather rashly said, 'I wish we understood more of what we're singing', so I turned the sessions into a class for forgotten Hebrew – having been through exactly that process myself and then relearning with Julia, I knew what it was like. Several of them, especially Kathy Shock, became so good at it that I felt that I could leave the Liberals in good hands to look after themselves, and could stay with the Orthodox – it would not have been right to throw all the burden on to Michael and Alan again. When that relearning group came to its end, the members very kindly clubbed together and bought me an enormous dish, still our fruit bowl, and four mugs that we still use for after-lunch coffee on Shabbat, from the potter, Ken Mills, who was then a regular on the Oxford Thursday market. I liked his work so much that I often took one of his bowls instead of a bottle of wine or a bunch of flowers to people who entertained us to meals, and they make ideal wedding presents.

I also ran, for a while, a more general 'forgotten Hebrew' class for the congregation, and I also taught potential Liberal converts for Michael Cross – he taught them Liberal Judaism and I taught them Hebrew, somewhat subversively ensuring that they also learned something of mainstream Judaism as well. I taught a few other people on an individual basis, and also taught one non-Jew, one of my graduates who had been brought up with no religion and had a yen to learn the language. Brenda Neece said that Gwen and I had brought her to appreciate that religion was something worth having. She eventually decided on one that suited her, Catholicism rather than Judaism, and did me the great honour of asking me to be her godfather. The priest at St Aloysius very kindly stretched the rules wide enough to allow me to be so.

Before that, though, I had already started to lead the first part of the service for the Orthodox – quite often Gwen and I were the first arrivals at the service, and if there was no one there to start reading, the service was late in starting, and then the late-comers would complain that it was late in ending and that they were late for lunch! It never seemed to occur to them that if they had turned up on time the service wouldn't have begun late. The opening psalms of praise are a very good part of the service (better to my mind, than some of the bits about angels at the beginning of the morning prayer proper) and also are easy to read because, while I like to read as much aloud as I can (and I was taught that one should speak every word in one's mind even when reading silently), this is not essential, and one can read aloud just the first and last lines of each psalm or other passage – many people do that, topping and tailing, as it is called.

The Oxford Jewish Congregation is unique in having all sorts of Jewish services going on under the same roof – Gwen led Orthodox women's services so the Liberals were not the only 'different' service (she also worked hard to get Orthodox women's services going elsewhere), and Sarah has followed her in this. We had tried to start Reform services, thinking there might be a need for these among the students, but they never really took off, for there wasn't a constituency among the resident members. This was all possible because we are a D-I-Y congregation and chiefly because we don't have a congregational rabbi – if we had an Orthodox one he would not be permitted by his controlling authority to allow such goings-on, and if we had a non-Orthodox rabbi of any variety, he wouldn't be acceptable to the students and to the more right-wing members of the community. So sometimes I led for the Orthodox from 10 to 10.30 and then went into the other prayer hall (we have two fully set up and can produce a third when necessary) and led the Liberal service – nowhere else could one do that!

We are, in Oxford, all Jewish together, regardless of status in Orthodox eyes, the basic criterion being whether we are acceptable within the eyes of each movement. We have our separate services, but whoever finishes first waits for the others, and we all have *kiddush* (the post-service communal nibbles and chat) together. The only restriction is with marriages, for to conform with secular law, these do have to be licensed by the London Bet Din (rabbinic court). So Reform, Liberal, or Masorti marriages have to be conducted by a rabbi from the relevant movement and recorded on the ‘books’ of one of their synagogues unless both parties are Jewish in the eyes of the Bet Din.

I have a couple of times been invited by Malcolm Weisman to speak at one of his ‘Quests’, one-day conferences for leaders from small communities, with my ‘Musical Instruments of the Bible’ talk as light, or anyway lightish, entertainment. Malcolm is an extraordinary man – he’s a full-time barrister who is also employed by the Jewish Memorial Council (of which Ewen used to be President) to act as a minister for all the small communities, and also for the armed forces – I don’t know if he ever gets a weekend at home, and he’s always available at home on the phone for advice and help. At the Quests, he used to ask Gwen and me to join the other groups at discussion sessions during the day, and when we told them about our ecumenical arrangements here, they were full of envy.

So often in a smallish town there are barely enough Jews to make a viable *kehillah*, and yet they are split between Orthodox and Reform, or Liberal, or Masorti, with none having enough members for things to work properly. There is need for a basic number of members for a shul to operate successfully, to pay for a building, to run viable classes for children and to pay for someone to help with reading when no one else is available, even if there are some members educated enough to lead service normally (people do go on holiday or fall ill). Even in Oxford, blessed as we are with a number of people who can do all these things and with students who help us, even here we have to

get outside readers from time to time in the summer vacation, I doubt whether our Orthodox, Liberal, and Masorti groups could each survive on their own, especially because so many members go to services of more than one of these. Certainly we could not afford a building of our size, nor could we look after our students from the two universities as we do, providing a kosher meal every day.

If only the other small communities could get together like we do, they'd have a working community. Some of their problem is innate custom ('I wouldn't be seen dead with that lot') but more problematic is that many of them come under the United Synagogue, which strictly prohibits so sensible an option. To the dayanim (judges) of the Beth Din (rabbinic court), in London and even more in Manchester, any such contact between Orthodox and non-Orthodox is supping with the Devil and leads their congregants to apostasy. There is a small number of isolated communities where unofficial cooperation does go on, but, as yet, none to the extent of ours. It will come, it will have to, or else some provincial communities will die out.

I never had a proper barmitsvah because of being an evacuee during the war, so had never learned to read *haftara*, the conventional task for a bar mitzvah boy. While OJC is, as I said, a do-it-yourself congregation, during the summer when all the students, who are often a great help in leading services, and some of our regular readers may be away, we import someone to *lehn* (read from the Sefer Torah with the proper chant) from London. Michael Gillis, who did this for us for many years, encouraged me to read *haftara*, and very kindly taped one for me to learn from. The *haftara* is much easier to read than the Torah passages because you read it from a printed book with all the vowels, lexical corrections, singing marks, and punctuation on the page. He was pleased with the result, but I felt that it was silly to be able to read only one and that I should be able to read any one that came up, so I asked Jonathan Webber if he would teach me fully, and we had several sessions until I became confident enough to do it. Now I can read more

or less anything (I would still prefer not to read as long a one as that for Shabbat Shirah, with Deborah's song in it) and enjoy doing it, and the congregation seems to like it enough that I get asked from time to time as one of the regular panel of *haftara* readers, as well as volunteering occasionally. I've not yet been asked to sight-read one, like a couple of others in the congregation do, but a day or two's notice is OK, though a week is better. I do try each week to anyway part-prepare the *haftara* just in case I might get called on. Since then I have also learned to chant the Torah (the singing marks imply somewhat different melodic phrases from those of the *haftara*), taught by Adèle Moss who has taught many others of the Masorti, feeling again that it's silly not to be able to do so, but memory is the problem. *Haftarot* are easy because it's all there on the page, but remembering both the vowels and the notation for the chant I do find very difficult. So I can do a small section at a pinch, but could never do a whole weekly reading, which is several chapters long, and this isn't much help when our regulars are away.

There was a small group of people here, with a couple of them speaking out strongly, who felt that we should also have Masorti services. Masorti is equivalent to the American Conservative Movement, with services very similar to the Orthodox but practices more consonant with modern life, including gender equality; there are Conservative female rabbis in America, though not yet in Britain. Although they talked and talked about it, nothing happened until I said, 'Let's do one next month'. So we did, and it was successful enough that it's gone on ever since, once a month like the Liberal – they're on the second Shabbat of the month and the Masorti are on the last, with a children's service on the first, leaving the third free for a women's service, which my Sarah now organises in place of Gwen. Other women had said that they were determined to continue those after Gwen died, but they never did, so Sarah's arrival has made as big a difference as Gwen's did – she also does many other things for the shul.

The shul council felt that we should have an imprimatur from the Masorti rabbis before these services became a recognised part of Oxford custom, so three of them came to visit us and to hear what we were doing. We were firm that we wanted to be completely egalitarian, all sitting together and women counting for *minyan* (the quorum for communal prayer), able to say *kaddish*, the mourner's prayer, though that is also permitted in many Orthodox communities, including ours in Oxford, taking any part of the service and being called up to say the blessings over the reading of the Torah and indeed to read it for themselves and for us. I had to ask the questions about whether this was acceptable several times to get an answer, and it took quite a lot of pushing to pin them down, but eventually they said that each of these things happened in one Masorti congregation or another, and that even though no congregation, at that time, did all of them, there was no reason why we should not. So we got our approval.

I have subsequently dropped out of them because I felt that the services were getting a bit clap-happy, with more attention on the singing than on the content, and also often using repetitive musical settings even though we were running later than the Orthodox and so keeping them waiting for *kiddush*. Our Masorti readers are mostly slower than the Orthodox, especially with people like me trying to chant the Torah (Gwen was much better, but also not as fast as some of the Orthodox), and, as I've said, one of the features of services here is that whoever finishes first waits for the other before starting *kiddush* so that we are all together as one community at that stage. In a congregation like ours, consideration for others is essential, and for one group to keep another waiting twenty minutes or more for *kiddush* is simply unacceptable, for it means that some people give up and go home and thus it destroys the social life of the *kehillah* as a whole.

It is a good *kehillah* with a great deal of support for its members, as I found when I lost my beloved Gwen in Istanbul. Rachel worked essential wonders from London, spending two days on the telephone

talking to all the necessary authorities, and managing to persuade them that no inquest was necessary – delays would have been horrendous without all her efforts. As we have seen so often with the Afghan war, all overseas deaths have to be investigated by a British coroner, but she managed to convince all of the authorities that a Turkish death certificate would suffice, and so she avoided what would have been a very long and distressing delay. She also tried to convince Lionel Wollenberg, the member of our congregation who supervises funerals, that she had succeeded in doing this at such speed, something he did not believe, knowing from experience how slow all the bureaucracy could be! But they got it arranged for after we got back, with just one day in between. As a result, was done with the minimum effort needed from me – I was very touched how many people came to the funeral from both *kehillah* and College, even more that my god-daughter, whose conversion I described above, flew over from America, and still more that Gwen was honoured as a learned woman by the number of old prayer books and other religious books no longer usable from the shul that were interred with her (religious books cannot just be thrown away, they must be interred, as opportunity arises, with the remains of a learned member of the congregation). And then our friends and neighbours organised the *shiva* (traditional week of mourning) for us. That is a tradition that I also found a very great comfort, a week without any material worries, when the family can talk and reminisce together and everything is done for us – how other religions can manage without such an institution I cannot think, but it does need as good a *kehillah* as ours to be fully effective.

We are very fortunate in Oxford.

Chapter 10

Envoi

My work, research, teaching, and writing, has concentrated on instruments, both because it is the instruments that play the music and because it is they that drive the music. Over the centuries, instruments change, and music changes accordingly.

In the 800 or so years for which we have detailed iconography (the only fairly, and I emphasise ‘fairly’, reliable evidence we have) within our own culture, and later the instruments themselves, there have been five, perhaps six, periods of change.

The first was in the early thirteenth century, when there was a flood of new instruments, all deriving from the Arab world. Whether these were brought home by Crusaders or whether they derived from the Maghribi conquest of parts of Spain, and thence crossed the Pyrenees, is debatable, but the result was the same. The *‘ud* led to our lute, the *rebab* to our rebec, the *qanun* to our string keyboards, the *ghaita* or *zamr* to our shawm, and eventually to our oboe, *al nafir* (Spanish *añafil*) to our beme, the early English name for trumpet, the *naqqara* to our nakers, the *bendir* to our tambourine, and so on. The same influx also had a profound influence on European life in general, with carpets replacing rushes on the floor, glass in the windows, plus many of our sciences. This has been the subject of some of my lectures, and it is why it is so important to study the instruments of the Middle East, from Persia to Morocco for that is the direction in which most of them travelled and then came to us.

At much the same period, the mediaeval industrial revolution, with the introduction of hydraulic power and new mechanical processes such as the pole lathe and improved wire drawing, helped the European development of these instruments, as detailed in my *Origins and Development of Musical Instruments*.

The second, after gradual changes and improvements, came in the Early Baroque period of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, from Monteverdi to Purcell, when our instruments were developing from their Renaissance forms into those of the Baroque, lira da braccio and rebec into violins, rebab and vihuela into viola da gamba (these were a little earlier), flutes and recorders radically changing in design, shawms into oboes, curtals into bassoons, trumpets coming in from the battlefield and court ceremonials, horns coming in from the hunting field, nakers turning into timpani. All these changes resulted in the formation of the orchestra, and again all have been detailed in my lectures and books.

The third came in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and this time it may have been the music that drove the changes in the instruments. Music evolved from the Baroque into the early Classical styles and demanded greater flexibilities in performance. It was either that way round, or that musicians were demanding greater ease and convenience in playing their instruments, and the music then evolved to explore and exploit those changes. Keyboard designs changed, with clavichords becoming fret-free, either wholly fret-free with a pair of strings for each note or with not more than two notes sharing a string (called fret-free in the period even though not wholly so), the introduction of expressive harpsichords allowing changes of register and thus of tone colour as well as the adoption of a greater range, the improvement of the piano and the introduction of smaller sizes such as the square piano, leading to greater domestic use, the preference for the louder sound of the Stradivarius model of bowed string instruments over the sweetness of the Amati and Stainer model,

added keywork to woodwinds to accommodate greater chromaticism, and the introduction of hand-stopping to the horn to allow a diatonic range in the middle octave. Johann Christian Bach, along with Johann Sebastian's other sons, lived through this period of change, and because of this I pegged one of my public lectures to his name, partly because he did live through these changes, partly because it was he who introduced the piano to London's concerts, and partly because he had been a pupil of his father in Baroque style and taught Mozart as a child in London in Classical style.

The fourth came as a result of the second industrial revolution in the late eighteenth century (notice how these changes are coming closer together). The vast industrial innovations fuelled major changes in all instruments and the ways in which they were made, such as valve mechanisms for brass instruments and the resulting invention of all the low brasses (detailed in my *Horns and Trumpets of the World*).

This revolution also led to considerable changes in society which resulted in the creation of large public concert halls all over Europe. Because of their size all instruments had to become louder, for the new halls were far larger than the old music salons of the nobility and of the public music rooms of the Early Baroque. As a result, violins were radically modified to increase the tension of the strings and produce more sound, and the bow was also changed to draw out greater volume from the modified violins, the iron frame was introduced to pianos allowing greater tension and thus more sound, woodwind bores and designs were altered, the use of valves allowed horn players to draw their hands out of the bell to make more sound, and valves also allowed trumpets to move into the middle octaves and abandon the old clarino technique, and the mechanical skiving of timpani skins allowed these to be thinner and players thus to change to felt-headed beaters instead of the older wood or leather-covered sticks. This was the subject, also, of a series of lectures I gave at the Music Faculty here in Oxford. And

it led to the radically different music of Weber and Wagner from that of Haydn and Beethoven.

The fifth came in my lifetime or a bit earlier, with the introduction of exotic instruments and an adaptation of the musical styles that came with them. The introduction of jazz and its evolution into swing and all the ramifications of pop music, much of it percussion driven, has changed not only all music, but has led to a deep divide between classical and popular music that never existed in earlier times.

Bach and his contemporaries, and many of his predecessors had introduced dance movements into their serious works. Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, and Schubert all wrote music for ballrooms and dance halls. The Strauss family wrote their waltzes and polkas for much the same orchestra as Brahms. The music of these composers was enjoyed by all strata of society. But today there is a divide. Many of the devotees of popular music scorn all contact with classical music. Many of the devotees of classical music abominate the sounds that emanate from their children's rooms. Yes, there is a fair amount of cross-cultural contact, with orchestral players providing backing tracks for the Beatles and so on, and I enjoyed playing jazz in my pantomime days, and many of us do listen to popular music as well as classical. Elements of popular music creep into our orchestral music, jazz musicians such as Duke Ellington composed an orchestral suite, *Black, Brown and Beige*, George Gershwin composed an opera, *Porgy and Bess*, Leonard Bernstein wrote *West Side Story*, and stage musicals derive from both cultures, but it is cross-cultural, the members of one culture engaged with the music of another.

Maybe we shall come together again one day, as many of us hope, for such separation is unhealthy.

And finally, are we now entering a sixth change, with the introduction of electronic instruments? Musique concrète seemed to open up vast possibilities but then hit a brick wall and vanished. So did sam-

pling (one of the more successful electronic organ-making techniques), though it has led to the abandonment of many pipe organs as in our own Sheldonian Theatre here in Oxford, perhaps temporarily, for we cannot know how long such mechanisms will last, whereas the basic mechanics of pipe organs remain constant through the centuries even if always evolving, from tracker to electro-pneumatic and back again.

Electronics allow the sounds of all existing instruments to be modified – to some extent, at least, they allow those sounds to be imitated and replaced. They allow also different types of music, different types of sound (that began with the *thérémin* over a hundred years ago). Will they allow one man to replace an orchestra, not as a disc-jockey but as a creator of whole ‘orchestral’ music? Stockhausen worked towards it and so has a number of others. And what will that music be like?

Always it is the changes in instruments that open up the potential for the changes of music, that allow the composers of one generation to supersede the musical styles of previous generations.

And that is why I have devoted much of my life to the study and description of instruments.

It’s been a good life, always interesting. I’ve never made a fortune, but we’ve never starved. I’ve been blessed with loving parents and sister, a wonderful wife, good children, grandchildren and their spouses, and great-grandchildren, all of whom look after me well in a variety of respects. I have much for which to be thankful. As Haydn said at the end of every symphony, *Laus Deo*, and as we would say *baruch HaShem*, praise God.

