

THE SOUNDPOST

Newsletter of the Pacific Northwest Viols – A chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society of America
 On the web: WWW.PNVIOLS.ORG

The President’s Message

Lee Inman



Six years, five Play Days per season, five SoundPosts. By my own rough reckoning, this must be around the thirtieth or thirty-first “President’s Message” I’ve composed for the newsletter. And, as many of you already know, it’ll be my final one.

At such moments, one is tempted to take a look backward to see what, if anything, has changed since this word-stream began its flow. And I can only conclude that much has changed, for both the better and the worse.

In looking at the ‘worse’ side for a moment, it might initially appear that life too frequently offers us more lemons than lemonade. For example, it’s obvious that we’ve unfortunately lost a number of people who used to attend Play Days and workshops frequently. A few have simply left the area; others have sadly found it increasingly difficult to travel to Play Days, or even comfortably to play the viol. Our venue for so many years, Saint James Cathedral, was unable to prioritize Pacific Northwest Viols into its music program, or to accommodate our meetings any longer. And, most heartrendingly: Margriet Tindemans, our beloved teacher and mentor, tragically succumbed to her illness after a long battle.

There is, though, a ‘better’ side. Play Days increasingly bring us new faces, both in the students’ seats, and at the podium in the morning. Especially in the last couple of years, the outstanding quality of our visiting presenters encourages us to take on greater challenges. And, in my humble opinion, the general skill level among Play Day attendees is increasing in a remarkable way, a testament to everyone’s diligent practicing and attention to their coaches.

Our new venue, Queen Anne Christian Church, has offered us a hearty and warm welcome, and a very comfortable facility, indeed. Our members often express their delight to me at the opportunities the church offers us to play for

Play Day Schedule

- 9:30 am - Check in, sign up for consorts, tune
- 10:00 am - Grand Consort Presentation
- 11:30 am - Annual Meeting
- 12:00 pm - Lunch Break
- 1:00 pm - First Consort Session
- 2:30 pm - Second Consort Session
- 4:00 pm - Clean up

\$20 Fee per participant
A = 415

Saturday, October 8th: Chris Briden

Play Day Location
Queen Anne Christian Church
 1316 3rd Ave. W
 Seattle, Washington



Sunday services. Margriet's teachings and love of the musical arts lives on in all her students. She may have left us, but her excellent teaching continues to motivate us to explore the breadth of possibilities and pleasure we can all find in making music together.

In balance, I believe I can say it's been a satisfactory six years or so, and I know for certain that we can look forward to an equally satisfying period after the next President of the chapter takes the helm. As of this writing, I don't know who that individual will be – the board will determine that when we assemble to meet on September 18. My final request to all of you is that you support her or him as faithfully as you have me. For that support, I thank all of you.

Our first Play Day of the 2016-17 season, on October 8, will find us under the guidance of our good friend and colleague Chris Briden. There will likely be details about what he's planned for us for the day elsewhere in this newsletter. Other presenters for the season are underway to being determined, and we should be able to announce them to you at the October meet.

I look forward to seeing all of you on October 8.

[Editor's Note: Lee, your selfless service is greatly appreciated – I am sure I am speaking on behalf of our membership in simply saying thank you for all you have done for us!]

Chris Briden to lead October 8th Play Day!

Photo courtesy of Chris Briden / Lee Talner. Bio courtesy of Chris Briden.



PNV's own Chris Briden will be kicking off our 2016-2017 season with a play day with the theme of Renaissance Hits! Chris Briden began studying viola da gamba with Margriet Tindemans in Seattle, WA. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Early Music at Indiana University where he studied with Wendy Gillespie and had opportunities to take lessons from Mary Springfels and Wieland Kuijken. After returning to Seattle, Chris earned an Artist Diploma from Cornish College under the tutelage of Stephen Stubbs. When not practicing the viol, Chris studies Lushootseed, the Native American language of the Puget Sound, and tries to finish making a violin that he's been working on for half a decade. He has two cats named Molly and Anastasia.

[Editor's Note: Chris is also a member of the Tahoma Viol Consort and per notes from a recent program -- Chris' day job is as a violin repair man, and in his free time he pets cats, studies linguistics and raises orchids." I am sure he does much more than that – a renaissance man indeed!]

Notes from The 54th VdGSA Conclave

Tess and Joan Roberts

[Editor's Note: Joan and her daughter Tess (a student of our own Lee Inman) attended Conclave, which was held at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon from July 24-31. Tess had the privilege of being the youngest player in attendance (she's 14!) and her mother Joan, who was planning on simply catching up on some work and reading while her daughter played was 'gently nudged' into joining the Beginning Viol class which was led by teachers including Elisabeth Reed. Below are some highlights from Tess and a great article by Joan.]

Tess' Reflections on Her Week at Conclave

1. Getting to play with so many great people; late at night, just listening to all that playing
2. Amazing buddy: I wish I could have the same buddy every time!
3. Everyone is so friendly!
4. Surprising "fun-ness" of the banquet
5. Great teachers
6. [It was] a little strange being the youngest person
7. The sheer number of instruments is shocking
8. Amazing, overnight-fret-changing, magic-working viol doctors
9. The faculty concert was inspiring!

Joan's Conclave Experience

I didn't plan to play viol this summer; I planned to accompany my daughter to conclave since she is 14. I thought I would go to some quiet corner of the campus and catch up on some work that I never get to and read under a tree.

What actually happened was the very first night welcome party was so full of enthusiasm for viol music, that before I had even left the meeting, there were multiple voices inquiring "are you in the beginner class then?" since it would not be comprehensible to be at conclave and not part of viol music! Within minutes, kind strangers had found me an instrument, a teacher and a plan!

The beginner classes had simply amazing teachers to work with about 8 students. We started at the very beginning, how to hold the bow, how to hold our instruments and then presto, making some sounds. Not always very nice sounds, but at least we were all in there laughing at our mistakes together. We quickly moved through exercises to our first song! Our class had a variety of "beginners" with various amounts of music experience, but I can confirm that it was perfectly fine to only know what the viol is supposed to sound like from listening to your child practice!

An amazing thing happened next: the beginners had time and viols on our hands so...a practice group formed that let us play songs together so excruciatingly slowly we could all find the notes. We had a lot of fun making mistakes and laughing at ourselves and our sounds.

Finally, the student concert arrived and our little group waited nervously to play our songs in front of some of the best viol players out there, and for me, in front of my daughter. We played

our best and then enjoyed the rest of the show. What I took home from conclave was a chance to make a little music, find some remarkable new friends and share in the sense of appreciation that beauty is alive in the world. Thanks, VdGSA!

The Dartington International Summer School & Festival 2016

Noreen Jacky

Between July 30 and August 6, 2016 my husband and I attended week one of the Dartington International Summer School in England. The summer school is four weeks long with different courses each week. Some courses are geared to advanced students and emerging professionals. These courses required separate application and sometimes a recording. Other courses are open to all. One can select up to four classes per day. Each class lasts the whole week. I took two viol consort courses, one chamber music course and a course titled 'Music in Shakespeare's time'.

There are different levels of accommodation at Dartington. This year Jon and I were fortunate to stay in the medieval courtyard close to most of the classes. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were included in the accommodation package. There were also dorm type accommodations about a ten-minute-walk away, and even camping sites. Some local people were able to pay the 'course only' fee and commute to the classes each day.

As a bass viol player and cellist, one thing that I really appreciated was that I was able to borrow instruments. Dartington had viols available that I could use, and I was also able to borrow a cello thanks to the chamber music coordinator. It was very nice to not worry about transporting my bass viol.

After breakfast, I went to my first two courses which were viol consorts. The viol consort course had a mix of amateurs and music students, younger players and older players, all with varying levels of experience with consort music. We were very fortunate to have Fretwork personnel to coach the viol courses. Richard Boothby, Reiko Ichise, Asako Morikawa, Sam Stadlen, and Emily Ashton were all a pleasure to be coached by. Each session the coaches would figure out groups, and divide us up. I also appreciated that all the coaches were easy to talk to. I had brought the music for a sonata for three basses by Nicolai. One session during the week was devoted to that piece. We had a chance to explore a lot of consort literature. I don't have many opportunities to play six-part consort music, so it was an absolute delight. I also enjoyed a talk by Sam Stadlen on French Music and ornamentation. As the consort groups were somewhat different each day, it gave me the opportunity to meet more musicians. I also loved some unplanned incidents. For example, I was able to ask one of gamba players (who was also a string maker) to read a Simpson division with me – and it led to an unplanned and joyful session when one of the coaches walked in.

After lunch, I attended the class 'Music in Shakespeare's Time'. I was not sure what to expect. Musician William Lyons of the City Music Consort and dramatist Peter Oswald of the Globe Theater had prepared a script of the story of Cupid and Psyche. They divided a group of 25 students into five groups, and each group was to take one scene from the play. We also had to

think of music for our scenes. I ended up being one of Psyche's sisters, and playing treble viol. This was the first time that I spoke a few lines in front of an audience in the great hall.

My last class was chamber music. For the chamber music course we were organized into groups ahead of time. I ended up in a piano trio playing cello. We worked on a Haydn piano trio, and we were able to perform one movement at the chamber music showcase at the end of the week.

The chamber music groups were coached by the personnel of the Brook Street Band. I especially enjoyed myself when I had a coaching session with Tatty Theo, the cellist in the Brook Street Band. I learned that her grandfather was William Pleeth (Jacqueline du Pré's teacher). After dinner, one could attend up to 3 concerts per evening! There were concerts at 5:30, 8:00 and 10:00PM. Some of the concerts that I especially enjoyed were played by the Brook Street Band, Fretwork, and Richard Boothby, who had a group perform 'In C' by Terry Riley during one of the 10:00PM concerts. At the end of the week there was a 5:30PM concert where students could perform what they had worked on during the week. My only regret was that I was not able to listen to all the concerts that I wanted to!

On the last night at the 8PM concert the main feature on the program was the Monteverdi Vespers. After a memorable performance there were festivities in the White Hart Bar/Restaurant. Some of the viol players gathered for one last session of consort music although it was about 10:30PM. Ahh – late night Jenkins – with thanks to Reiko Ichise of Fretwork for arranging. Wonderful!

The final morning, we enjoyed our last breakfast, said some goodbyes, and then it was time to take the train from Totnes to Reading. We had to smile when we saw a Starbucks in the Reading train station. Then from Reading we took a bus to Heathrow. We are already making plans to return to the Dartington as soon as we can!

[Editor's Note: Wow! What a fabulous week! I hope we'll all be able to enjoy a pint with you at the White Hart and play some late night Jenkins at a future Summer School!]

The Viol Curmudgeon: Two Takes on Pegs

Bill Monical, courtesy of Bill Monical and Cascadia Viols

1. Lubricating Conventional Instrument Pegs

Ease of tuning stability is closely linked to the accuracy with which pegs are fitted to your instrument. There is a normal "tightening" of pegs in seasons of higher humidity, and "loosening" of pegs in seasons of dryness. To provide tuning reliability during seasonal expansion and contraction, peg dope provides a flexible cushion between the peg and pegbox hole to which it is applied.

The W. E. Hill Peg Composition is inexpensive, easily available, and by far the most successful to use for easily maintaining year-round tuning reliability.

To use: Removing a peg will show two shiny bearing points on the shank; these must be heavily covered with the lubricant. Then place the peg again in the pegbox and turn several times to apply the lubricant material directly to the pegbox hole walls. This process should be repeated for at least two applications until you see an absolutely even layer of lubricant in the pegbox hole, and some lubricant material is squeezed out on the sides of the pegbox. You have now created a fitted thickness of lubricant that can expand and contract during seasonal changes. Extra lubricant material can now be wiped from the hole edges and the peg itself, and the string reinstalled. Under normal playing conditions, application need only be repeated as needed, once a year or less. However, lubricating the pegs will only work if the pegs fit perfectly accurately in their pegbox holes. Chalk, which is an abrasive, must never be used, as it enlarges the hole and reduces the peg diameter. Before using peg lubricant, be sure there is no residual chalk on the peg or pegbox holes.

2. Pegheds

Pegheds are a successful and reliable alternative to conventional tuning pegs. They can be fitted to any existing instrument or ordered and installed on an instrument that you may commission, and are available for all viols in a variety of materials and head styles. Some details: Their patented design provides smooth and precise micro-tuning that is not affected by temperature or humidity. Since they are self-lubricating, they are maintenance free when accurately installed. Despite playing conditions, they will not slip and only require minor re-tuning from string stretching. This stability will extend string life and diminish wire windings becoming loose on covered strings when kept at a single tuned pitch. To work well, all strings must be shortened to about two inches in length beyond their respective pegs. Traditional extra universal lengths of viol strings will clog Pegheds.

It will be helpful to add a very small wire cutter to your musical accessories. An internal brake mechanism allows tension of the peg while tuning to be completely adjustable: Tighten a slipping peg by turning the head while gently pressing toward the pegbox wall. Loosen a tight peg by gently turning the head while pulling only very slightly away from the pegbox wall. For further information, see the Peghed website: <http://www.pegheds.com>.

Pacific Northwest Viols Membership & Renewal Reminder

Olga "What the Dickens?" Hauptman, PNV Poet Laureate and Membership Custodian

I'm a member! Who are you?
Are you a member too?
Then there's a pair of us
(well actually about seven pairs of us)
Do tell!

How dreary to have lapsed members!
Are we going to the dogs?
Please pay your dues today, and
I'll admire you more than frogs.



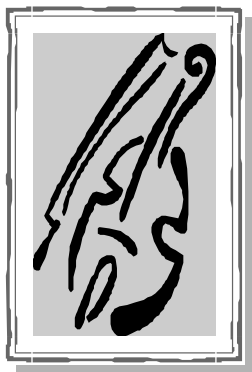
Farewell to Paper Editions of the Soundpost

Michael King, Soundpost Editor and Communications Chair

It was proposed during our last PNV board meeting that we discontinue printed distribution of the Soundpost to our members to save a few trees and to save on printing and postage expenses, which are considerable and could be put to better uses such as purchasing music for our library, maintaining our rental instrument collection, etc. The motion carried, and as such, this will be the last paper edition of the Soundpost! Future editions will be sent to the e-mail address we have on file for our members / subscribers. Please make sure that you provide us with current contact information when renewing your membership for 2016-2017 and ensure that we have your e-mail on file!

Pacific Northwest Viols
2328 233rd Ave. NE
Sammamish, WA 98074

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Pacific Northwest Viols - 2016-2017 Season

PNV Play Day Dates (Saturdays):

*\$20 Fee per participant
A = 415*

- ❖ **October 8, 2016: Chris Briden**
- ❖ November 19, 2016: Joanna Blendulf
- ❖ January 21, 2017: Tim Scott
- ❖ March 4, 2017: Lee Inman
- ❖ May 6, 2017: To be announced

Play Day location:

Queen Anne Christian Church
1316 3rd Ave. W
Seattle, Washington

Pacific Northwest Viols, Board Members (2016-2017)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ❖ Bill Warren, President | ❖ Chris Briden, Outreach |
| ❖ Jon Brenner, Secretary, Programs | ❖ Michael King, Communications & Member at Large |
| ❖ TBD, Venue Coordinator | ❖ Vicki Hoffman, Programs |
| ❖ Michael LaGaly, Treasurer | ❖ Olga Hauptman, Instrument Rental & Membership Roster Custodian |
| ❖ Janet Slack, Member at Large | |

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*The **Soundpost** welcomes reader contributions of any kind: articles, commentary, personal stories, event reportage. E-Mail is preferred, but postal mail or napkin scribbles are all gladly received, as well.*

Email: miking@microsoft.com