

Club News

Volume 9 Issue 4

email: information@westsussexguitar.com
web site: www.westsussexguitar.com

July 2004

Richard Durrant Concert

Sussex guitarist Richard Durrant treated a packed audience at the Regis School of Music to an unforgettable recital that the West Sussex Guitar Club had never heard the like of before. Richard presented a more informal approach to the recital. He wore just a T shirt (with trousers) instead of the customary shirt and bow tie. With his laid back jovial quips between each piece, he enthralled us with his technical ability and relaxed manner.

The programme began with a *prelude* in E major by Bach. Leaving everyone out of breath by the end of it due to the speed that he played (and from cold) and with his technical control, we knew that we were in for the male equivalent of a Galina Vale concert.

The prelude was then followed by a Japanese piece *Sakura* by Yocoh. Richard had excellent control of the tremolo, producing a strong and even tone throughout. He also explored many different colours that his cedar-topped David Whiteman guitar could produce, providing a wonderfully rich and varied tone.

Richard then swapped guitars for an electro-acoustic nylon stringed guitar. This guitar was also made by David Whiteman with the aid of D.I. boxes and just a tap of his foot to



Honey I shrunk the guitar

a foot pedal, he was able to add different effects like echo and chorus which enhanced an African piece of music written for Richard called *Atikatika*. This was based on a Ghanaian roof builders' song and a children's street game. Richard captured the African influences perfectly with the rhythmic and repetitive harmonies.

We were then transported to Latin America for a short medley of two *Venezuelan waltzes* by Antonio Lauro and a *Mazurka* by Augustine Barrios. This was followed by Richard's own

composition *The Early Learning Sonata* that was dedicated to his young daughter Daisy. The first movement called *First Steps* was very bright using ascending and descending arpeggios and pentatonic scales. The second movement *The Awakening* was more reflective using frequent major and minor 9th keys. In the final movement, *Into the Forest*, there was evidence of Villa-Lobos techniques by using the same open chord shapes up and down the fretboard with great effect and he was also able to use his excellent tremolo.

Westway by the bass guitarist Herbie Flowers from the band Sky concluded the first half. Richard again with the aid of his electro-acoustic guitar and gadgets managed to emulate Herbie Flowers' bass and even Tristan Fry on drums by using *golpe* and *tambora* effects. It certainly brought back memories of the early 1980's for many of the audience present.

After the interval Richard
(Continued on page 2)

Gary's Magic

Gary is no stranger to the West Sussex Guitar Society, being a very welcome performer and adjudicator in our competitions. This time he held a workshop which consisted of a number of sections. Fourteen of us formed an impromptu orchestra and Gary took us through 4 pieces during the course of the day. Three pieces went well, but a fugue required more work. There were regular breaks which meant that the day was not at all strenuous. This was particularly so, since Gary is a good comedian and we all had a lot of fun. Gary also gave 3 public half hour master classes where Gary was able to tell immediately how the braver member's

(Continued on page 2)

New Members

We extend a very warm welcome to the following new members:

Mary Stephens,
Chichester

Tony Poullett, Emsworth

We hope you enjoy many happy evenings with us.

Inside This Issue

WSGS Top 20	page 3
Hago News	page 3
New Pro Arte Trio	page 4
Stephen and Sherrie Frith	page 5
Gunfight at Soundhole Saloon	page 6

Richard Durrant...

(Continued from page 1)

commenced with the *Chaconne* in D minor by Bach. It was interesting to note that Richard, particularly in this piece, used predominantly thumb and index finger only, rather than walking fingers (index and middle). His interpretation may not have been to everyone's taste but, as with any baroque composition, does the guitarist perform it as written on the original score with limited or no dynamic contrast or perform it how he or she believes Bach would have interpreted it, had he had the modern instruments of today?

After the Bach, another composition by Richard followed called *At Buriton*, which he played on the ukulele. Here he changed the usual tuning for that of the mandolin/violin, which gave a totally different character to that usually associated with the ukulele. Richard then swapped instruments again for a steel-strung guitar with unconventional tuning to DADGAD. He played *Exploring the Deep*, which he dedicated to Herbie. The four movements required a capo in various positions. In the second movement called *Engines* Richard used a capo for

just five strings, leaving the bass D open. The resonance particularly in the bass was very good for a steel-strung guitar and the intonation was excellent even when using the capo the guitar stayed perfectly in tune.

The recital finished with a sensitive rendition of *Nortena* by Gomez Crespo. The programme certainly had plenty of variety and met the approval of a very appreciative audience.

John Mason

Gary's Magic...

(Continued from page 1)

performances could be enhanced and within no time at all we all saw improvements in the playing – truly as if by magic. Three of us also had private 10 minute 'tonic' sessions where again pointers were given in the limited time available which were of great help. Everyone, performers and audience learned a great deal from the day.

Gary does not believe in unnecessary barre and proposed a levy of £1 each time one was used. He demonstrated that strings plucked at 90° can sound harsh, but strings plucked at 45° can be mellow. He advised that the first thing a singer or wind instrument player does when confronted with a piece of music is to determine when it is possible to breathe. The first thing a guitarist does is determine how to finger the piece, which is fair enough, but guitarists must also look when to pause for breath. Do not be afraid to stretch the music – particularly in a difficult section. Some pieces can be likened to a cyclist struggling up hill, but once at the top, freewheel down the hill in a relaxed manner. Above all relax, relax, relax when playing and only



grip the guitar when the piece needs to be loud.

The workshop was held on Gary's birthday and Julie Angus aided by Nicola Fry kindly made a decorative birthday cake based on the Wild West which was the theme of the guitar suite *Scenes from the Wild West* which he wrote last year.



After the workshop we were treated to a performance of Gary's playing – a truly wonderful rendition of *Sakura* and a preview of Gary's most recent composition *Scenes From Brazil*. The 1st movement – *Sugar Loaf Mountain* looked fiendishly difficult to play and yet Gary played it so smoothly and fast despite running all over the length of the fingerboard like a four legged spider. If you closed your eyes you would swear there were at least two guitars playing.



Gary is always willing to give tips on how to improve your playing – he holds back on no trade secrets. He is great fun and moreover is a superb player and composer. Make sure that you do not miss his concert on the 9th October. It really is a privilege to have performers of that stature come and play for us. Write the date in your diary today!

WSGS Top 20

I have been asked on many occasions which concerts were our most popular and so I list our top twenty in order of attendance. Please note that

attendance figures are only available for concerts since November 1996.

Jonathan Parrott

1	April 2002	Gala Night with the Eden-Stell Guitar Duo & Amadeus Duo
2	February 2004	Fabio Zanon
3	February 2001	Amanda Cook
4	June 2001	Fabio Zanon
5	September 2001	John Mills
6	March 2003	Xuefei Yang
7	March 2000	Fabio Zanon
8	January 2002	Craig Ogden
9	May 2004	Richard Durrant
10	March 2001	Gary Ryan
11	November 1996	Nicola Hall
12	January 2000	Shuko Shibata
13	January 1998	John Mills & Despina Homatidou (Harpsichord)
14	July 1999	Fabio Zanon & Marcelo Barboza (Flute)
15	February 2003	Emanuele Segre
16	June 1999	Charles Ramirez & Helen Kalamuniak
17	April 1997	John Mills
18	November 2002	Amanda Cook
19	January 1999	Amanda Cook
20	April 2000	Hezy Levy

Hago News

Havant Area Guitar Orchestra - hago - recently held an Open Rehearsal. Billed as a chance to give local guitarists a chance to find out how hago works, it combined a free evening out with a recruiting drive. With attendees from as far away as Basingstoke, the evening gave everyone a chance to take away five free ensembles and to try all of hago's different sizes of guitar, from alto to contrabass, and our efforts produced some excellent music in five octaves. Everyone who came was very positive on their feedback questionnaires, and even better than that, hago is pleased to welcome two new members.

On July 10th we had close on fifty guitarists playing at All

Saints Church, Portsmouth, when hago and Cambridge Guitar Orchestra teamed up for a Guitar Orchestra concert with items by the Crofton Children's Guitar Ensemble too.

Those who want an excuse to travel further and wider and who are looking to combine guitar and sightseeing will find hago in Bath on July 31st, playing at the International Guitar Festival there. We can promise you the cheapest concert you'll ever go to - IGF have priced the tickets at just £1!

Derek Hasted

For more details on hago events, see www.hago.org.uk, or ring Derek on 023 9247 9200

A Challenge

Recently, I had a very strange experience at the guitar club, which provoked me into pondering over "what makes a friendly club?"

I have been a member for about a year, have played at three or four club evenings, and have enjoyed about the same number of concerts. The last time I played I deliberately played a piece I was just learning, and played it badly (anyone remember Louis Milan?). My intention was to start a discussion about encouraging beginners to take the stage and do their best, irrespective of how "badly" they played.

Then the strange thing happened. When I finished there was a token clapping, and then... silence. Suddenly everyone was busy talking to someone else. For the rest of the evening only the ever-gracious Sasha spoke to me. To everyone else I was invisible!

Now I must ask, "Is there such snobbery at the club that only those who play well are acceptable?" Or perhaps, "Is there a clique of members who do

not want to invite outsiders into their circle?"

Either way, I challenge each who reads this, "Do you personally ignore strangers, or make the effort to greet them? Do you accept only those who play well?"

My experience... I have found two or three members of the West Sussex Guitar Club friendly, the others very insular. Consequently, I am struggling with whether or not I want to remain a member.

Roger Ainley

I was sorry to hear of Roger's experience. As a non-committee member but as someone who wants to see the club succeed, I was very disturbed and surprised to read the comments. I am a member of a number of clubs and without reservation, I find the WSGC to be the most friendly - right from the outset. Last year a visitor who I knew from a previous existence said to me that as soon as they entered the hall they sensed how vibrant and friendly the club was.

The club has a whole range of abilities

from non-players (who love guitar music) to concert standard performers, however, there is no elitism in performing and all grades and ages have a go. I find the audience is always rooting for the player and the applause is genuine. Naturally, we all wish we could play as well as we do at home. Roger tried to start a discussion on encouraging beginners to perform, but I do not feel a club evening when members are getting geared up to perform is the right time for such a discussion.

As for no one welcoming newcomers, I am sorry if this appears so, but members are just a typical cross section of the public from all walks of life. Some are shy, some have difficulty holding a conversation in a crowded room (poor hearing) and others may not have met members for some time and seize the opportunity to catch up on one another's news - however, by definition, this probably constitutes forming a clique. I must admit to being guilty to all three of the above.

The committee are currently considering how to make new members more welcome. They are clearly doing a good job because I think with over 100 members the WSGS is among one of the biggest guitar club in the country. That is not to say there is no room for improvement. Does anyone have any ideas how we can make newcomers more welcome?

Editor

The New Pro Arte Trio

Our final concert of the season ended with a cracking performance by the Pro Arte Guitar Trio - Raymond Burley, Cornelius Bruinsma and Arne Brattland. The highlight of the evening for everyone must have been the suite from Leonard Bern-

stein's *West Side Story* arranged for the trio by Raymond. Other well known were *Grieg's Norwegian Dance Op35/2* and the *Albeniz Cordoba*.

Although it usually takes a few hearings for new pieces to 'grow on you', some

pieces were instantly likeable like the three Spanish pieces by Chick Corea inspired by *Rodriquo's Aranjuez*. The Trio performed a very clean, accurate and melodic performance all round which was well received by an appreciative audience.

Wanted

Many photographs were taken during the Summer Party but I was unable to capture all that was going on. If you have one or two prints suitable for the Club's Photo

Album I should be most grateful if you would contribute copies as, I am sure you will agree, the party was well worth representing in pictures. Please send prints in your own time to me at the

Club and help in recording a very memorable evening.

With thanks

Pam Davis, Librarian

A Fistful of Quavers

A colourful and exuberant atmosphere prevailed throughout the Club's Summer Party. The Theme "A Fistful of Quavers" inspired a variety of Cowboy and Indian costumes amongst both adults and children and, during the entertainment, everyone took part along with the performers either singing or beating time to the music.

Sasha was almost unrecognisable as the Town Mayor in the Soundhole Saloon. Richard made an impressive Sheriff who became involved in a riotous gunfight with a tall intruder (Ian); guns were everywhere and

cowboys and cowgirls joined in the shoot out. This was followed by the undertaker (Sid the Lid) doing the rounds with a tape measure estimating the length of the resultant bodies!

Performers in the Soundhole Saloon included: Jack and Francesca (guitars); Linda, Tamzin and Zoe (guitars and vocals); Debbie and Ellen (guitar and recorder); the Gala Guitar Quartet (guitars); John, Pam and Patrick (guitar and mandolins); Terry (guitar); Nina and Richard (piano and vocals); Debbie and Nina (piano); Sally with a very appealing rendering of "The House of the Rising Sun" and Helena

with an exciting and energetic Can Can dance. The stage, decorated as an attractive bordello, made an excellent setting for these activities.

The evening was preceded by a "magic lantern" show of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody played by Galina Vale, representing another successful year of concerts. As usual, food was plentiful and delicious, thanks must be given to all those who contributed to this and the high spirits expressed during the evening, resulting in a memorable and most enjoyable party.

Pam Davis

Stephen and Sherrie Disclose Trade Secrets

On a club evening in May, Stephen and Sherrie Frith kindly came along to demonstrate their guitar making skills. Stephen has made some 200 guitars now and is passing on his skills to Sherrie. He brought in a number of guitars they had made for us to try together with the hardware used to construct the instruments.

We were treated to a slide show showing the techniques of construction. Some time ago Stephen went to Austria and along with 2 friends bought a very ancient (from before the time of Mozart) spruce trunk some 3 foot in diameter. The tree was harvested from Bohemia at an altitude of 4000ft. At these altitudes the trees grow very slowly giving rise to a very close grained wood which is strong and can be cut thin for

maximum vibration. Stephen's share of the tree was shipped to his home in Crawley where they set about cutting the trunk into 2 foot lengths and splitting the wood into planks by hand with a 'froer' (a sharp blade which is hammered into the wood). These planks become the soundboard which is actually clamped and pressed into a 'solera' which is plywood former which is slightly dished. The dish can be seen by the perfect contours of symmetry cut through the thickness of the ply. Stephen uses the traditional Spanish method of construction pioneered by Antonio Torres some 150 years ago. Stephen studied in Spain under the luthier Jose Romanillos who told him everything and held back no trade secrets.

As part of the traditional construction,

Stephen uses animal glue and French polish. The animal glue crystallises when set and gives a better tone than the more modern flexible adhesives. The French polishing involves a labour intensive job of putting on some 9 coats of French polish, then rubbing down. This entire process is repeated some 6 times. Stephen believes these techniques give the guitar a unique sound. The process also means that in the event of an accident, the guitar can be easily dismantled for repair which would not be so easy with modern adhesives and polyurethane varnishes.

The quality of the wood joints - which fit exactly- was most impressive. Stephen makes his own rosettes which consist of up to 10,000 pieces of

(Continued on page 6)

Editor's Note

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. Please, please keep writing.

This Newsletter brings to a close yet another wonderful season. We have seen some amazing new performers - who I hope will return - and some old friends who continue to inspire us. Our festivals last November and February were well

attended with record numbers of participants. We have all learnt much from the friendly advice of the adjudicators. The Gary Ryan Workshop was a great success with a full quota for the orchestra, the master and tonic classes, although there was room for more spectators. The Christmas and Summer parties were great fun. In particular the recent Summer party will take some

beating, but I am sure the committee will pull yet another rabbit out of the hat for next year. Have a great Summer and please come back refreshed for another exciting season commencing on September 11th when there will be a short AGM - come and have your say - followed by a club evening..

Terry Woodgate

Stephen Frith...

(Continued from page 5)

mosaic made from Toblerone like spills of different coloured wood. These are joined together to form a stick of rock which is repeatedly cut and the shorter sticks of rock joined to make the rosette pattern from the end grain.

In contrast to handling such delicate pieces, Stephen and Sherrie have just finished constructing a large wooden workshop where they can make and house their instruments. Regardless of the method of construction, the proof of the pudding is in the sound of the final product. Stephen was able to amply demonstrate the volume and vibrant quality of his instruments



Guitar in the making



Stephen Frith

with an informal mini concert performance at the end of his talk. If you are

looking for a new quality instrument give Stephen a ring at Crawley on 01293

543055 and try some out.

Gunfight at The Soundhole Saloon

IF from the moment you walked through the bat-wing doors of the Soundhole Saloon you knew that this was no ordinary bar and you were in for a very special evening. Whereas most saloons demand you hang up your shooting irons on entering the premises, at this saloon you picked up your irons as soon as you went in. You knew you were in a low dive with all the wanted posters on every wall. This town attracts a lot of varmints all guilty of nefarious crimes. Whereas most critters leave their horses hitched to the rail outside the saloon, the Kelsall-Barnett's from the nearby big city brought their's into the bar. Why tarnation, Zoe's horse called Coconut was even heard clip clopping around the stage while their perform-



The Mayor and Sheriff

ance was going on.

The crowd was mighty rowdy that night and the mayor and sheriff had some trouble keeping order before the show started. But as soon as Jake & Fran started playing, the noise mel-

lowed, but there were raucous whoops and gun shots when they finished. The Gala Quartet then gave a rendition of Apache and the Magnificent Seven. Old timers amongst us will remember that that Indian Tribe made us all want to play guitar long before we even knew the difference between a gee-tar and a yeeha. The gee-tars did not have it all their way however. Debbie and Ellen gave us a tune on guitar and recorder. Then the trio of Pam, Patrick and John played two mandolins with guitar accompaniment.

The proceedings were then brought to an abrupt halt when one low down pesky varmint came in looking for trouble, but the sheriff was having none of it. There was pandemonium as the audience dived for cover under

(Continued on page 7)

Gunfight at The Soundhole Saloon...

(Continued from page 6)

the tables as the sheriff and Dick Crotchet had a shoot out. Thankfully the sheriff shot the varmint good and proper. The good services of 'Sid the Lid' the local undertaker were required. He soon had the ventilated body measured and boxed up to 'Boots Hill' –just across the road from Saloon. The entertainment continued, but everyone (including Tel Boy the finger picker) was kinda edgy after that.

The good times rolled on with some entertainment from the young ladies with Sal the Gal singing about her life and family in New Orleans. That Rising Sun sounds a swell place and I

really must visit there next time I am that way. After that we had Helena dancing one of those energetic new fangled dances from France, Yoorup called the Can-Can and she certainly Could-Could. This was followed by the Kittens on the Keys – Nina and Debbie played *Black and White Rag* and other syncapatin' tunes to gamble by. The great evening finished with a singsong.

Since that night the mayor, the sheriff and his posse have cleaned up the town. The varmint's on the wanted posters have all been rounded up and served their debt to society and are now reformed characters. The bullet holes have all been plugged and to

give an air of respectability. The saloon's bat wing doors are being replaced with more conventional doors. The mayor has booked some great shows for your future entertainment and there will also be some excellent homespun acts. Make sure you mosey on down when the Soundhole Saloon (now renamed the Regis School of Music) opens again in September. The tables will have gone but there will still be moonshine (red, white or orange) for all you good folks. Sid the Lid is going to find business pretty slow from now on. Alas, there will be no more rootin', tootin' or shootin' in this town, but plenty of good ol' guitar music will be served up.



The Mandolin Trio



The Gala Family



Jake and Fran



Sid the'Lid' and John



Sal Sings of New Orleans



Sid the Lid samples the hooch

Dates for your Diary

Sept 11th Short AGM and Club Evening

Oct 2nd Club Evening

Sept 26th Teacher's Concert

Oct 9th Gary Ryan Concert

Advance Notice: The West Sussex Guitar Festival will take place on 13/14 November and 20/21 November. Start Practicing now!

Most events take place on Saturdays at 7.30pm in the Regis School of Music, 46 Sudley Road, Bognor Regis. For details phone 01243 866462. For concert tickets phone 01243 528573 or visit the **Ticket Hotline** at www.westsussexguitar.com

Please send copy for the next edition of Club News by **30th Oct** to Terry Woodgate, 75 College Road, College Town, Sandhurst, Berks GU47 0RA
Tel: 01276 34042 or e-mail to: terry_woodgate@btinternet.com

West Sussex Guitar Club is grateful for the continued support of:

