

**Roger's Random Notes & Reminiscences on Sheffield University Music
Department over the course of half a century from his arrival in 1949**

Degree set-up when I came in October 1949

- a) *General Degree* – four subjects in first year [curiously called “Intermediate”], three subjects in second and third years.
- b) *Honours Degree* –as above, but only two subjects – frequently French or German in remaining years.
- c) *B Mus Degree* – “in the book”, but Professor Deas would not allow anyone to take it. He appeared to believe that music was not an education in itself.

The attempt to close the Department

In 1968, a determined attempt was made to close the Department. This was rather a “Doctor Beeching” era with universities – I believe Leicester lost its Music Department and even Cardiff suffered, though I’m not at all sure how much survived. Sheffield lost its Italian and Russian was constantly threatened, though I believe it survived.

As with the railways, the assumption was made that closure should take place unless convincing evidence could argue otherwise.

Professor Deas retired in 1968, so that year could have been deemed to be a convenient time for closure.

The idea was to appoint a *Director of Music*, who would probably conduct the choir and orchestra and arrange concerts. There would be no academic study of music. Presumably the other members of staff would have to leave.

Opposition to the closure was mainly in the hands of two people: Professor Eric Laughton, Professor of Latin and Dr Eric Mackerness, Senior Lecturer in English Literature,

In my own, purely personal, opinion the efforts of these two gentlemen seemed not nearly bold enough [!]

However, the Department was saved and Professor Basil Deane was appointed in 1968.

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People connected with the Department

Denis Arnold

was a student at Sheffield before I came in 1949. He was an expert on Monteverdi and his contemporaries. He edited the *Oxford Companion to Music* [1983 edition] and was appointed Professor of Music at Oxford. He continued to sustain Sheffield connections, particularly with the Aston Madrigal Group that gave a number of performances of the Monteverdi *Vespers* at a time before choral societies in general caught on to the work. [1926-1986]

Dr Alan Brown

was appointed, I believe, on the death of Philip Lord. He lectured for long in the Department and was for many years Accompanist to Sheffield Bach Choir, the choir of Sheffield Bach Society.

He is an exceptionally fine pianist, harpsichordist and organist. In a Bach Festival of some years ago, he played the whole of Bach's *Goldberg* Variations on the harpsichord, I think from memory. He is also a most distinguished scholar, having edited music of William Byrd for *Musica Britannica*.

David Harold Cox

not to be confused with plain David Cox who is also a composer – was appointed by Professor Basil Deane. He was a composer of consequence. The Bach Choir performed, I think, three of his choral works. He went in 1994 to Cork University as Professor, and then retired. He died in Cork 18.8.20

Roger Fowler

Still quite a prominent figure in Sheffield when I arrived. He did take the “new” post-graduate B Mus when it became available. He became a Lecturer at the University of Southampton as well as a distinguished authority on the music of Tchaikovsky.

Teddy [Professor Edward Garden, also a “Tchaikovsky man”] would know more.

Peter Hill Professor Peter Hill is a most distinguished solo pianist. He worked for many years on the composer Messiaen [1908-1992] and has performed most, if not all, his works. At one stage there was a plan to award Messiaen an Honorary Degree of the University, but apparently some muddle occurred in the administration. Peter

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has also specialised in the music of Stravinsky. With other pianists, he has taken part in works of fiendish difficulty such as *Les Noces* and *The Rite of Spring*.

Colin Lawson

Dr Colin Lawson is an expert on the history of the clarinet and its predecessor, the chalumeau. He is also a professional clarinettist of the highest standards and his name frequently appears on broadcast concerts and recordings. A point of interest is that he has restored the original version of the well-known Mozart Clarinet Concerto, composed for an instrument different from the standard one usually heard today. The restored original is now "in the repertoire". **Currently Director of the Royal College of Music, London**

Dr George Linstead

was a prominent figure in Sheffield's musical life. He was Music Critic of the Sheffield Telegraph, a paper that then covered all Sheffield concerts of any consequence. The *Telegraph* was a morning paper, something the City has not had for many years. He also wrote the programme notes for the City Hall concerts; some of these, I believe, are still used. Although Dr Linstead was a fully qualified musician, Professor Deas would not allow him to be a full member of staff – he had to content to be part-time.

Phillip Lord

was appointed by Professor Deas in the mid-1950s. He was a composer of some distinction, particularly in lighter music. A serious choral work of his was performed by Sheffield Bach Society and another serious work was given in the City Hall. Philip settled with his wife in Sheffield, but, sadly, he died suddenly at the age of, I think, 39.