‘EDWARD HERON-ALLEN AND MUSIC’: PROCEEDINGS OF THE 6th HERON-ALLEN SYMPOSIUM, 2006

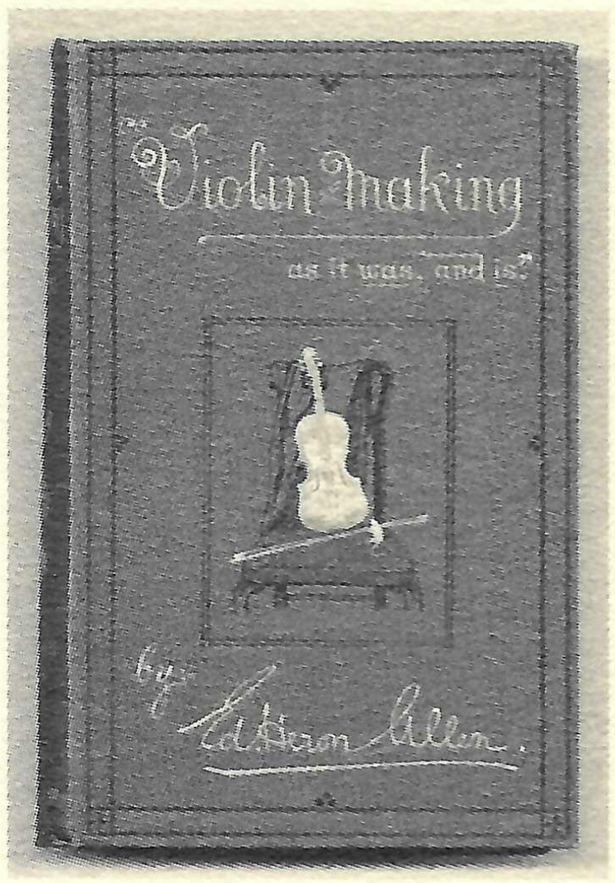
Edited by

PETER HORTON

TALKS DELIVERED AT THE SIXTH HERON-ALLEN SYMPOSIUM, AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC, LONDON, JULY 2006

BY

BRIAN HARVEY, PAMELA THOMPSON, PETER HORTON, JOAN NAVARRE AND GARRY GARRARD



Opusculum IX
Heron-Allen Society

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'Edward Heron-Allen and Music': Proceedings of the 6th Heron-Allen Symposium, 2006: Talks delivered by Brian Harvey, Pamela Thompson, Peter Horton, Joan Navarre and Garry Garrard at the Sixth Heron-Allen Symposium, The Royal College of Music, London, July 2006.

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This is number 47

Peter Horton

Cover: The cover of Violin-Making, as it was, and is

CONTENTS

Introduction — Peter Horton

Edward Heron-Allen – Violin Historian and Maker Extraordinary — Brian Harvey

The Edward Heron-Allen Collection in the Royal College of Music Library — Pamela Thompson

Edward Heron-Allen and the Royal College of Music — Peter Horton

'An Afternoon with Chanot': Remembering Georges Chanot, Edward Heron-Allen, and 157 Wardour Street — Joan Navarre

Edward Heron-Allen and the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam — Garry Garrard

THE SIXTH ANNUAL HERON-ALLEN SYMPOSIUM AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC, LONDON

By PETER HORTON

When I first joined the staff of the Royal College of Music Library over twenty years ago one could not be unaware of the Heron-Allen collection. It was housed at that time in a handsome mahogany bookcase in the Parry Room – the Reference Library reading room – yet for all its physical prominence it was rarely consulted and it was not until some years had passed that I began to appreciate just how rich its holdings were. Even now, after further investigation in preparation for the 2006 Heron-Allen Society Symposium and its accompanying exhibition, I feel that I have done little more than scratch the surface – a sentiment which I know is shared by my colleague Pam Thompson. But even that scratching, combined with browsing through Heron-Allen's two catalogues, one for the main collection, the other a detailed index to his 20 volumes of *Miscellanea*, has not only revealed what an amazing body of material he gathered together, but has also provided ample evidence of the single-mindedness with which he approached his task. It was thus very appropriate that members of the Society were able to gather in the Donaldson Room – the current Library reading room – in July 2006 to hear about Heron-Allen's work as a violin maker, bibliographer and collector of books on the violin and other stringed instruments, links with the College and interest in its first Professor of Violin playing, Henry Holmes, and work as an editor of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam. And even the last revealed a musical link as his sister-in-law, Liza Lehmann (the

sister of his wife Marianna) was one of the first composers to set its verses to music in her well-known song cycle *In a Persian Garden*. But perhaps the most exciting part of the day was the opportunity to hear Katie Littlemore, accompanied by Ashley Fripp (both students at the RCM Junior Department), playing one of the two violins made by Heron-Allen under the guidance of Georges Chanot. The instrument was kindly lent for the occasion by its current owner, Pat Naismith, to whom the society is extremely grateful.

EDWARD HERON-ALLEN – VIOLIN HISTORIAN AND MAKER EXTRAORDINARY

By PROFESSOR BRIAN W. HARVEY, FRSA

PRELIMINARIES

Such fame as the name Edward Heron-Allen has (and that is more than most of us will have nearly 65 years after our death) is likely to be primarily attributable to his book *Violin-Making as it Was, and Is.* There are no doubt coteries of admirers amongst students of Omar Khayyam or of other Persian literature or amongst proto-zoologists, or horror story addicts, or local historians or even, for all I know, amongst cheirosophers, and this list is not exhaustive. But this is to say no more than that he was a polymath who did not feel that he had got to the bottom of a subject until he had written and published the definitive work on it. I have encountered *Violin-Making* in obscure workshops in rural Denmark, Stellenbosch (South Africa), and Australia and it is to be found in almost any English-speaking jurisdiction which maintains classical orchestras or a tradition of string playing – bearing in mind that violin-making is essentially a solitary occupation! It is rare to find an owner or user of the book who is aware of EH-A's other interests and accomplishments, despite the best efforts of members of this Society to educate the public.

It was through that route that I came to EH-A myself, aided and abetted in my research though I was by the consequences of Jan Morris's innocently made query about this mysterious character 'Heron-Allen' in a weekend supplement of *The Times* (3 August 1991) - all neatly summarised in Timothy

McCann's Opusculum III, *The Quest for the Heron-Allen Society* (2001), and see also my *The Violin Family and its Makers in the British Isles.* (OUP 1995, ch 14).

What are the main sources of information about this aspect of his life – I will deal with sources first, because the growth of legend can be like a growth of ivy on a wall – it soon swamps reality unless one is very careful. Carol and I soon found this out in our recent investigations into aspects of the life of EH-A's distinguished contemporary Sir Edward Elgar and the ghosts that he found at Brinkwells, in Sussex. I will deal with the question of sources, and their reliability first.

Sources

1. EH-A himself provides much interesting detail of his early life and considerable achievements in the violin world in highly obscure places. One of these is a revealing interview with the Rev. W. Meredith Morris, faithfully transcribed by Morris before the publication of the first edition (now scarce) of his *British Violin Makers* (1904), i.e. circa 1900. The less scarce second edition of 1920 entirely omits most of this material and EH-A's name appears in a very abbreviated entry in the list of British Violin-Makers. (Morris respected EH-A's judgement that his first edition was too indiscriminate in its grading of British makers and accordingly cut down the text.)

2. EH-A's Preface to his *Violin-Making* book explains that the practical part of the work was originally written for the periodical *Amateur Work Illustrated* over the period 1882-4. The first edition was published at the end of 1884 when EH-A had reached the advanced age of 23. The second edition was produced in 1885 incorporating 'many valuable suggestions' from readers and incorporated 'the results of many years (sic)

of assiduous study of the history of stringed instruments'. Thereafter the book was constantly reprinted but, as Morris remarks, having been vouchsafed remuneration for his periodical articles of 7s./6d. per page to include all copyrights and the right of the publishers to republish in book form, Ward Lock 'have never made him any payment in respect of the many editions [sic] they have issued since 1884. Indeed, a few years ago, when the author offered to revise the book for a small fee, they stated that they did not feel justified in incurring the expense!'

EH-A's *Violin-Making*, though technically not quite the first published treatise on the useful details of how to make a violin (an honour belonging to the eccentric Peter Davidson with his *The Violin*, 1870) carries a truly mind-bending amount of information, both in the first, historical, part and in the practical part. Of course, after so many years this all really needs revising and conversion from imperial measurements into their metric equivalents, etc; but the book remained in print consistently, with its elaborate pull-out charts, until about 2000 when Cassells, who now own Ward Lock, told me that that they had no further interest in it and were content to let it expire. I was surprised and delighted therefore to hear that the respectable Dover Publications had taken it on in the USA.

3. Meanwhile EH-A began to publish in signed limited editions a series of 9 short 'opuscula' on violin matters, his *De Fidiculis Opuscula*. The first of these is on the ancestry of the violin and its derivation from the Greek lyre via the Welsh crwth. This was the subject matter of his embarrassingly overlong first ever talk to the Odd Volumes at Bernard Quaritch's invitation when EH-A was aged but 20, and the start of a fruitful violin book acquisition programme with

Quaritch's unselfish help. Despite EH-A's self-confessed youthful 'cockiness', the formidable B.Q. had obviously taken a shine to the precocious lad! As Morris says: 'To-day his fiddle bookcase is ten feet high by six, and full to overflowing. As long ago as 1893 he refused an offer of £2000 for his library made by Mr P. W. Pickup, the enthusiastic amateur violinist and colliery owner of Blackburn'. Morris states that since 1885 EH-A continued to amass violin books and possessed a good many works not in the British Museum or the Bibliotheque Royale in Brussels. He published a catalogue of them in 1891-94 in two quarto volumes under the title *De Fidiculis Bibliographia*, comprising about 1400 items (available now, I was told recently, in Germany in German, at a steep price!).

Incidentally, Morris says that EH-A was also the possessor of the largest collection of unpublished autograph letters of celebrated violinists in England. 'He was fortunate enough to secure nearly all the letters written by violinists to Louis Spohr at his sale some years ago'. EH-A was obviously a born and discriminating collector of objects which interested him and one wonders what happened to this particular cache. His stamps and other treasures were largely sold off by Sotheby's shortly after his death, but I am not sure whether these letters, some of which appear in facsimile in the pages of the *Violin Times* (for example, specimens from Paganini and de Beriot in the 1894 issue), were among the objects sold.[1]

4. A further very useful autobiographical source of his early life and writings on the violin (and the source of information on the apparent plagiarism from EH-A's youthful researches on the violin by the villainous Carl Engel, Curator of Musical Instruments at the V & A,) was EH-A's Inaugural

Address to the Sette of Odd Volumes in 1927, reprinted in their Yearbook. This was almost the high-water mark of EH-A's life and is full of how lucky he had been and optimism for the future, somewhat misplaced as it unfortunately turned out – but a marvellous example of EH-A's oratory, with some self-deprecating humour thrown in.

5. EH-A's one year joint editorship 1893-94 of the *Violin Times* yielded many invaluable autobiographical snippets, including the astonishing results of a visit to a Turin violin forger (reproduced in my monograph *Violin Fraud* (1st edn. OUP 1992, p. 71).

6. His *Great War Journal* ed. Harvey and Fitzgerald (published 2002 by the West Sussex Record Office and Phillimore's) was written between 1914 and 1920 and contains much invaluable autobiographical information about his life up to that point. EH-A also contributed in a significant way to the second edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1904-10) and to the *Dictionary of National Biography* with articles on violin-makers and astrologers! This reminds us that during the period 1882-3 he developed his interest in cheiromancy, or the science of the hand, and published 'the first complete and scientific work on the subject which has since been been through innumerable editions' (see *Notes on the Activities* of EH-A by Christopher Blayre, E-HA Society, Opuscula I, 2000) and in 1884 he obtained his first microscope and developed his interest in and collection of foraminifera. What with frequent visits to the Chanot workshop nearby in Soho as a sort of illegal sub-apprentice, to make two heavily supervised violins (with copious notes subsequently put to good use), how did he manage to pass his law exams too?

His two violins

EH-A put the question of whether he had really made any instruments beyond a peradventure (sceptics were already doubting his word) when he wrote in the *Violin Times* in 1894: 'I worked hard for two years and produced two violins. One of these, copied exactly from the late Prosper Sainton's Guarneri, has been more or less continuously played upon ever since, and – it may be from parental pride – I would rather play today upon this instrument than upon any other that has passed through my hands, not being one of the master violins... During the last two years my violin has been played upon and submitted to every tone test by Joachim, Wilhelmj, Piatti, Simonetti, and Wolff, among other virtuosi, and they have unanimously volunteered the highest encomia upon this "amateur fiddle"'.

Heron-Allen might have gone on to explain that this is the model made on an inside mould (or form) as explained in chapter 21 of his book, and his Opus 2. His Opus 1 was made on an outside mould to typical Stradivari dimensions as described in his chapter 14.

What happened to these two instruments which Morris says Heron-Allen would not part with 'for any consideration'. They were left by his Will to the Royal College of Music, which also received his magnificent library of books and articles on the violin. Unfortunately the violins were sold off after the Second World War when the College was in economic difficulties.

When writing the *Violin Family* I was able to trace and inspect the Strad model which is illustrated in my book, its handsome back being clearly shown (plate 30) and whose

exceptional tonal qualities were demonstrated to a pleasantly surprised audience at the Society's meeting in the RCM in July 2006. The Guarneri model, has also been traced subsequent to the publication of my book and, being put up for auction, was illustrated and critically assessed in an article by the distinguished American maker Gimpel Solomon in *The Strad* magazine (February 2003, p. 160). The instrument, in poor condition, was later withdrawn.

Was EH-A a Musician?

He was clearly well taught at Harrow but I do not get the impression that his musicianship was particularly profound. He went on to learn the viola under the tuition of William Henry Hill, of the distinguished firm of dealers W.E. Hill and Sons, and then played either second violin or viola as required. He learned his musical grammar well enough to compose a published ditty and obviously enjoyed 'light' music suitable for the London amateur dramatic club-type orchestras in which he liked to play. He co-founded, and clearly took pride in, the Strolling Players Amateur Orchestral Society which had a large complement of women participants for those times, until, finding Law and Science left no time for orchestral playing he ceased to attend in 1885, accepting the post of honorary life member. He no doubt continued to enjoy playing chamber music during his Selsey houseparties before the Great War and intermittently thereafter. Enigmatically he records in his *War Journal* that he took a set of violin strings (but no violin) with him to the Front in 1918. Later, I recall Ivor Jones saying that EH-A was disappointed that his grandchild was not taking up the instrument. Neither of his two children demonstrated any recorded interest in the violin, though his godchild Veronica Gotch became a professional

viola-player. We do not know whether EH-A also played the piano, though he had a good grand, probably a Bechstein, in the Library. Otherwise to assess his commitment to music we have to rely on straws in the wind.

In his otherwise well-crafted short story 'The House on the Way to Hell' he brings readers up short by a howler involving reference to 'Beethoven's Unfinished Symphony' when he clearly means Schubert's! This is a solecism too gross to ascribe to mere inadvertence and may indicate that he was not as well informed about music as he liked to give the impression.

There is virtually no evidence of concert-going to hear professional orchestras. From such holiday and travel journals (plus the *War Journal*) as I have inspected he enjoyed a good revue when in Paris or elsewhere abroad but I cannot recall a single serious concert programme being preserved in the meticulous way that he had. In the *War Journal*, on leave in Paris on 27 October 1918, he writes that after dinner he went to the Theatre Michel to see *Plus ca Change*, the French original of the English Pavilion Review which he had seen and preferred. He adds, 'The French version however is the nakedest performance I ever saw, even in Paris.... And so to bed at 12 midnight'... (!)

But these are indeed straws in the wind. Violin-makers do not have to be brilliant executants or musicians and few are. EH-A's youthful interest in and deep research into the acoustic miracle that a well-made violin represents is remarkable. He is owed tremendous respect from the violin-making world for his published work on its history, aesthetics, and the secrets of its construction. He practiced what he preached. As Gimple

Solomon, in the 2003 *Strad* article already mentioned, remarks à propos of EH-A's Guarneri copy: 'As far as we are aware, he never did take up the gouge again. Had he done so, judging by his second violin, among his many and varied talents he would have become a first class maker'.

[1] A collection of over 220 letters from violinists once owned by Heron-Allen was offered for sale by the antiquarian dealer Hans Schneider in February 2007 (catalogue no. 423, item 473)

THE EDWARD HERON-ALLEN COLLECTION IN THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC LIBRARY

By PAMELA THOMPSON

Writing in November 1890 an introductory note to the first volume of his great bibliography *De Fidiculis Bibliographia*, Heron-Allen describes how the process of researching and checking the entries in that work led to the development of his collection. Of course, whether the collecting had always been as important to him as the information the collection provided is a debatable point, but the results were indisputably important, as he acknowledges: 'The result of these labours has been that I find myself the possessor of a library relating to the violin, larger, I believe, than any in the whole world – the British Museum Library, the Conservatoire Library of Brussels, the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris not excepted – and I am consequently today in possession of the sources of more varied and exact information relating to the instrument than are to be found in any private or public institution at the present time'. This was – and may well still be – the significance of the Heron-Allen Collection.

The collection came to the Royal College of Music in 1943, although we have been unable to find the precise date of its arrival, which is perhaps understandable if one considers the disruptions to normal life in wartime London. One can guess that the collection would not have come to us before probate had been obtained in October 1943. Edward Heron-Allen had died on March 28, and had already stipulated that his works on the violin should come to the RCM in the tenth

(of eleven) codicils to his will, made in 1940. I am grateful to Celia Clarke for obtaining a copy of the will and the codicils for us. The codicil instructed:

> …I give and bequeath the two violins made by me and described in my book "Violin Making as it was and is" to the Royal College of Music in London for preservation in their museum, and I give and bequeath the whole of the works relating to the violin and all other books and other documents in print or in manuscript relating to the history and practice of music in general which are contained in the bookcases numbers thirty and thirty one and also in bookcase number sixteen, in my library at Selsey, and also the autographs and other documents relating to the violins and Viotti in bookcase number nine (lower part) to the Library of the Royal College of Music…

We must assume that the collection came to us complete, although Heron-Allen's original will had appointed Sydney Hewitt-Pitt and Vyvyan Beresford Holland 'to examine all my private letters, papers and books … and at their absolute independent discretion destroy or otherwise dispose of them … as they shall think fit'. We can be fairly certain that they did not exercise their discretion so far as the collection on the violin is concerned, as we have Heron-Allen's catalogue, which lists everything in full, and little is missing – losses which could be due to later events.

While the collection was certainly accepted by the College, we can only speculate as to why, barely two years later, the Heron-Allen Collection, together with the C. S. Terry collection of works relating to J. S. Bach, was dispatched to

A

CATALOGUE

of

Books Pamphlets and Miscellanea

relating to the

= VIOLIN =

forming part of the library

(Sect: Music; sub-sect: Violin.)

of

EDWARD HERON-ALLEN. F.L.S., F.R.M.S.,

Honorary Member (Socio Benemerito) of the

Accademia di Santa Cecilia, in Roma.

London

E. Heron-Allen

3, Northwick Terrace, Maida Hill.

1900.

Fig.1 Title page of Heron-Allen's Catalogue of his collection of violin literature.

the Library of the Faculty of Music in Oxford, not to return to the College until the early 1960's. One could certainly surmise that the collections would be more easily accessible to scholars in Oxford and that they returned when the College felt more confident that it too could provide the appropriate facilities for their study. The loan to Oxford did, however, result in some longer-term difficulties, as the collection's residence in Oxford resulted in the Faculty of Music Library including in contributions to RISM, the great international inventory of musical sources, some Heron-Allen items. This means that the printed volumes of RISM still to this day list Oxford as the location of some of the works, Oxford reports them to scholars as now missing, and only by chance are they subsequently traced to the RCM. There was another somewhat unfortunate outcome to the sojourn in Oxford: when the collection was checked upon its return, eight items were missing. A search of the Oxford catalogue does not reveal them, so they have probably not resurfaced there, but in fact we have no way of knowing whether they were missing before their loan to Oxford. A note in the Heron-Allen catalogue does, however, reveal that the RCM Library had by that time eight (different) items relating to Heron-Allen, outside his own collection, so that was some small recompense for the loss.

While the collection, as will be revealed, is extraordinary in both volume and range, perhaps even more extraordinary is the age at which its precocious collector began his encyclopedic work, while also committing himself to learning the craft of violin making. His interest must have begun while he was still a schoolboy at Harrow School, for by 1878, when only 17, he had begun collecting, and by 1879, when only 18,

he was already embarking on his great work: a gargantuan bibliography of works on the violin. Despite that, he also found time to publish by 1885 various shorter works, such as *The Ancestry of the Violin* in 1882, as well as by 1885, at the age of 24, the book for which he is most widely known: *Violin Making as it was, and is*, itself 366 pages of detailed instruction, commentary, information and illustration.

His 'attempt towards a bibliography of the violin', as he subtitled the two-volume work *De Fidiculis Bibliographia*, contains a lengthy dedication, nine pages long, to His Royal Highness the (then) Duke of Edinburgh, and is highly revealing of Heron-Allen, the young man, his painstaking efforts and obsessive nature. The entire work, completed in 1894 was fifteen years in the making, by the end of which he still considered it 'an incomplete and imperfect whole' and felt a 'full sense of the inadequacy of the result of my labours, and of the many faults, both of commission and omission, that are to be found in every part of it'.

He goes on to describe the process of its compilation, which is indeed also the process by which the collection was built up: 'It is hardly necessary to say that the compilation of this work has been a labour of love, and a labour of a very arduous character, the most unremitting attention to the book market, and the most persistent endeavour to track down certain books, having been the first essential towards a fortunate issue. When in the new year of 1879 I first entered upon my task I thought that in a year or two at the outside I should have reached the ultimate goal of my ambition, and that a twenty-page pamphlet would represent all the possible effort in this branch of Bibliography. Today I have before me a quarto of over five-hundred pages, containing over fourteen

hundred items, and I know that I am practically as far from the end of my labours as I was when I wrote the first sheet of my manuscript'. He goes on to explain that it is the renaissance of interest in the subject of the violin, amid increased interest in music in general, which has led him to this conclusion. But, he is also enlightening on the process of works slowly becoming collectors' items and on the process of acquisition itself: '…in Germany the works of Bachmann and Wettengel stood practically alone – and forgotten on the top shelves of their publishers' store-rooms… Today these volumes command enhanced prices, and when a work published prior to 1800 reaches the hands of a bookseller, if it ever gets into his catalogue, it must be ordered by telegraph by the would-be purchaser, and even then it is only the constant and favoured customer who can hope to obtain it'. It seems fairly certain that Heron-Allen must have risen to the ranks of the constant and favoured, as the sheer volume of materials he acquired provides evidence of his determination and others' willingness to beguile and satisfy him.

If Heron-Allen's own words testify to the growth of the collection as a response to his needs as a bibliographer, then the collection itself is equally revelatory of his all-encompassing treatment of his subject matter. Anything and everything with any connection to the violin or other instruments of the string family is there: instrument making, history, instructional and illustrative material, sale catalogues, patents, cuttings, the most academic, the most practical – and the most ephemeral of ephemera. But, apart from instructional material, what is not there is the music, which is actually very curious. Was he not interested in what the violin could do, in the end-product of all that craftsmanship and historical and

technical development? His interest extended to the performers and performance in the biographical and technical senses, but very little to what they performed. Was it something to which he intended to turn later, after collecting materials and accumulating data for his magnum opus of bibliography? Or did that prove to be more than enough? Or was he simply side-tracked (as seems so often to be the case with him) by new, quite different interests and pursuits? Whatever the case, what is missing is the music itself, and there is no evidence of a collection of music and little if any evidence that his musical interests as a listener were in any way exclusively confined to string music.

In fact, of course, the bibliography's publication in 1894 by no means marked the end of his work in the field of the violin, as he still had the catalogue of the collection to complete, a work which he reveals in the dedication in the catalogue also took 15 years of his life. It was completed in typescript in 1900, but even that did not mark the end of the work or the collecting, as there are additions in manuscript which reveal that he added at last 58 items, some published in the 19th century, one as far back as 1659, but the majority new publications which arrived after the catalogue had been completed. The last date of publication recorded is 1906. It must be at that point that we can assume that his attention was finally diverted elsewhere.

The detailed records preserved in the bibliography and in the catalogue give clear indications of Heron-Allen's meticulous nature and encyclopedic tendencies. The bibliography, in particular, is remarkable in providing abstracts for every work recorded. But, more of the man is revealed in his dedications and prefaces. Both the bibliography and *Violin*

Making as it was and is have dedications to the Duke of Edinburgh. By the time of the catalogue's completion in 1900, the dedication takes on a far more international character. He had by then been made an honorary member (socio benemerito) of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and it is to that august body that he dedicates the catalogue, in Italian: 'I dedicate this work, the result of more than 15 years' work, to the Chairman and the Board of Directors and to the members of the Royal Academy of Santa Cecilia in Rome, as a small token of the great pleasure I had when they asked me to be part of this illustrious historical society'. He was still only 39 and understandably proud of the honour.

The exhibition which you can see in this room [the Donaldson Room in the Royal College of Music library] will, I hope, give an idea of the sheer variety of the material collected, but it represents but a fraction of the whole collection. The catalogue contains entries for 659 items, but this is no way reflects the true quantity of materials collected. In the volumes catalogued as Miscellanea, for example, there are eighteen volumes which contain at least 258 items, as well as 10 volumes of cuttings from newspapers, journals and other sources which amount to 1,598 separate items. We are actually talking about a collection of at least 2,500 items – hardly the 20-page pamphlet which Heron-Allen had envisaged.

I have consistently referred to the collection as containing works relating to the violin, as this was the way in which Heron-Allen himself described it. It does, however, encompass much more. While the focus is firmly on the violin, other stringed instruments, and indeed other families of instruments, not forgetting even the concertina, are represented, as is to a certain extent music in the broadest

sense. So very varied within these parameters is the collection that it might well defeat description, were we not fortunate enough to have the categorisations which Heron-Allen himself made in *De Fidiculis Bibliographia*. These were:

1 Books and pamphlets wholly devoted to the violin:
   - Its construction
   - Biographical works and biographical advertisements
   - Works on varnish and varnishing
   - The history of the violin
   - The guild of musicians
   - Works on violin music and violin playing
   - Theoretical works, including bibliographies of
   - Treatises on, or music for, bowed instruments

2 Sections and extracts from books on the same subjects

3 Periodical publications – musical and miscellaneous – again, on the same subjects

4 Belles letters: romances, short stories, poems, dramas, chap-books, children's books, tracts

5 Methods and instruction books for stringed instruments

6 Miscellanea – catalogues of violin collections, trade catalogues, patent specifications, and many other extracts and miscellaneous items.

These miscellanea are described by Heron-Allen himself in the introduction to Section 2 of his catalogue of the collection: 'anything that has ever been printed concerning the violin, which is not either a book or a pamphlet with pretensions to literary or artistic merit as a separate and independent bibliographical item. It has been my object ever

since 1878 when I began this collection, to preserve and bind into volumes every scrap of printed matter I could find concerning the violin without any regard for its literary or artistic merit. Thus I have amassed a quantity of newspaper cuttings, pictorial and other scraps and advertisements, trade catalogues and leaflets, articles from magazines (including short stories and poems), programmes of interesting performances, collections of 'opinions of the Press', in short, everything connected to the violin. The way in which these elements have been coordinated can only be described by the classic expression: "higgledy-piggledy", it having been my practice to amass for a year or two and then have my amassment bound in volumes according to the sizes of its component parts…'.

I will end once more with Heron-Allen's own words on his collection and his bibliographical work: 'To bibliographers, historians, collectors and others who it may concern I offer – in perfect confidence that they will understand me – this apology: If anyone had done this a hundred years ago, his collection would have been of surpassing interest today. I commend my volumes of "Miscellanea" to the musical collector and historian of the year 2000 AD'. Well, looking more closely at this collection of late has convinced me that now in 2006 AD we should ensure that its significance should be communicated and underlined to every string player, every string teacher – and, indeed, any serious researcher of music and musical instruments. It may well still be the best collection of works on the violin in the world.

EDWARD HERON-ALLEN AND THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

By PETER HORTON

Writing in 1893 in the Epistle Dedicatory to his *De Fidiculis Bibliographica* Heron-Allen noted how much the world of string playing had changed since he had begun collecting books on the violin in 1879. Then, he wrote

> …books on the subject were few, and not highly valued. The works of Sandys and Forster, of Hart, of Davidson, and Dubourg, were the only well-known native works, and these were easily obtainable at their published prices… To-day these volumes command enhanced prices, and when a work published prior to 1880 reaches the hands of a book-seller, if it ever gets into his catalogue, it must be ordered by telegraph by the would be purchaser, and even then it is only the constant and favoured customer who can hope to obtain it.[1]

Today we might wonder how much this change was due to his own collecting and writing on the subject, but to Heron-Allen himself a major cause was the recent great growth of interest in violin playing, due not least to the work and example of Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Victoria's second son. That the Duke also happened to be the book's dedicatee doubtless accounts for the tone of the following passage!

> …the renaissance of the violin is mainly due to your Royal Highness's leadership of the Royal Amateur Orchestral Society, and to Lady Hallé [the

violinist Wilma Norman-Neruda]. Since you, Sir, have led "the Royal Amateurs," and since Lady Hallé has shown that women are not debarred from the highest positions in the violin world, the study of the instrument has gained new live; add to this the great influence that has been exercised by the Countess of Radnor upon the study of instrumental music by ladies, and to-day there is, I believe, hardly a family with any pretensions to culture, in Great Britain, one of whose daughters or one of whose sons does not "play the fiddle."[2]

Drawing on one of the pamphlets in Heron-Allen's collection it is possible to find links between this renaissance of the violin and the new Royal College of Music, founded in 1883 and moving to its present building in 1894 – i.e. beginning its work at exactly the time that Heron-Allen was working on his bibliography. Indeed, Heron-Allen's gift of a small collection of books to the RCM on the day of the state opening of the new building, 2 May 1894, suggests that he was among the invited guests. And the other connections? Henry Holmes, first Professor of the Violin at the RCM, and Heron-Allen's dedicatee, the Duke of Edinburgh.[3]

At this point I should declare a personal interest in Holmes, the remnant of whose musical library was donated to the RCM by his son in 1964. The material remained uncatalogued for some twenty years, but when I came to list it in the mid 1980s I was immediately intrigued by several of the works in manuscript and wanted to know more about their composer. And here too serendipity played a part, as while browsing the shelves of the Heron-Allen collection I noticed a slim pamphlet by Holmes, *Man's Faith: His God-Given Attributes.*

The Creed of an Artist, published pseudonymously under the name 'Ilex Illuminati', and given to Heron-Allen by Arthur F. Hill in 1895. But before looking at that and the circumstances behind its publication, we must look at Holmes himself. Born in London in 1839, he and his elder brother Alfred (born 1837) made their professional debut in a concert at the Haymarket Theatre in July 1847, and began to make their mark as violinists of outstanding ability in the early 1850s. European tours in 1855 and 1856 included a visit to Spohr at Kassel who, in recognition of their performance of his music, dedicated to them his *Grand Duos*, opp. 148, 150 and 153. In 1864 they settled in Paris, but while Alfred remained there for the rest of his life, Henry moved to Scandinavia the following year before returning to London where, in 1868, he began a series of highly popular chamber music concerts, his 'Musical Evenings'. Bernard Shaw, not among the most sympathetic critics of English performers and composers, was never rude about Holmes. Reviewing a concert in February 1877 he had this to say:

> Mr Holmes is always welcome at chamber music concerts. He plays with feeling, and generally in tune: qualities which are frequently conspicuous by their absence from the quartets at St James's Hall.[4]

Fourteen years later he heard Holmes conducting the RCM orchestra and was equally complimentary:

> After hearing Mr Stanford last season driving them mechanically through a Berlioz score of which they had not mastered a single bar, it was pleasant to see Mr Holmes, as the head of a happy family of musicians, leading them through Cherubini's Les Abencérages

overture with all the fine taste and genuine musical feeling which distinguished him when he was the almost the only English violinist whose praises could be sounded without the tongue in the cheek. They responded to him with affectionate goodwill, and achieved a really excellent performance.[5]

When the RCM was founded in 1883 Holmes was an obvious choice for principal Professor of Violin, to which the post of Professor of Orchestral Conducting – a job he shared with Charles Stanford – was added. One of the unwritten agendas behind the founding of the College, and one fully supported by the first Director, Sir George Grove, had been the encouragement of orchestral music. Earlier in his career Grove had been secretary to the Crystal Palace Company whose Saturday orchestral concerts, given at Sydenham under the direction of August Manns, had become established as the best of their kind in London. Given his own enthusiasm for the orchestral music of Beethoven, Schubert and Mendelssohn, it was entirely natural that Grove should have seen the provision of a supply of talented orchestral musicians as one of the RCM's principal aims. In this Holmes, as both violin teacher and orchestral conductor, played a major – and as Shaw's review demonstrates – successful role. What was less widely known, however, was that as well as being a gifted violinist and composer, Holmes was also a radical freethinker, and it was this that would prove his undoing, and provide the genesis for his pamphlet.

It was in the summer of 1890, while the RCM was still in its original home to the west of the Albert Hall – a building

that would later house the Royal College of Organists – that Grove received an anonymous letter warning him of Holmes' conduct with one of his female pupils, Isabella Donkersley. They had been seen walking across the park together and, as Grove reported to another student, the letter hinted 'very darkly at improprieties'.[6] Despite being reassured by Holmes that all was above board, Grove discovered him and Donkersley alone together:

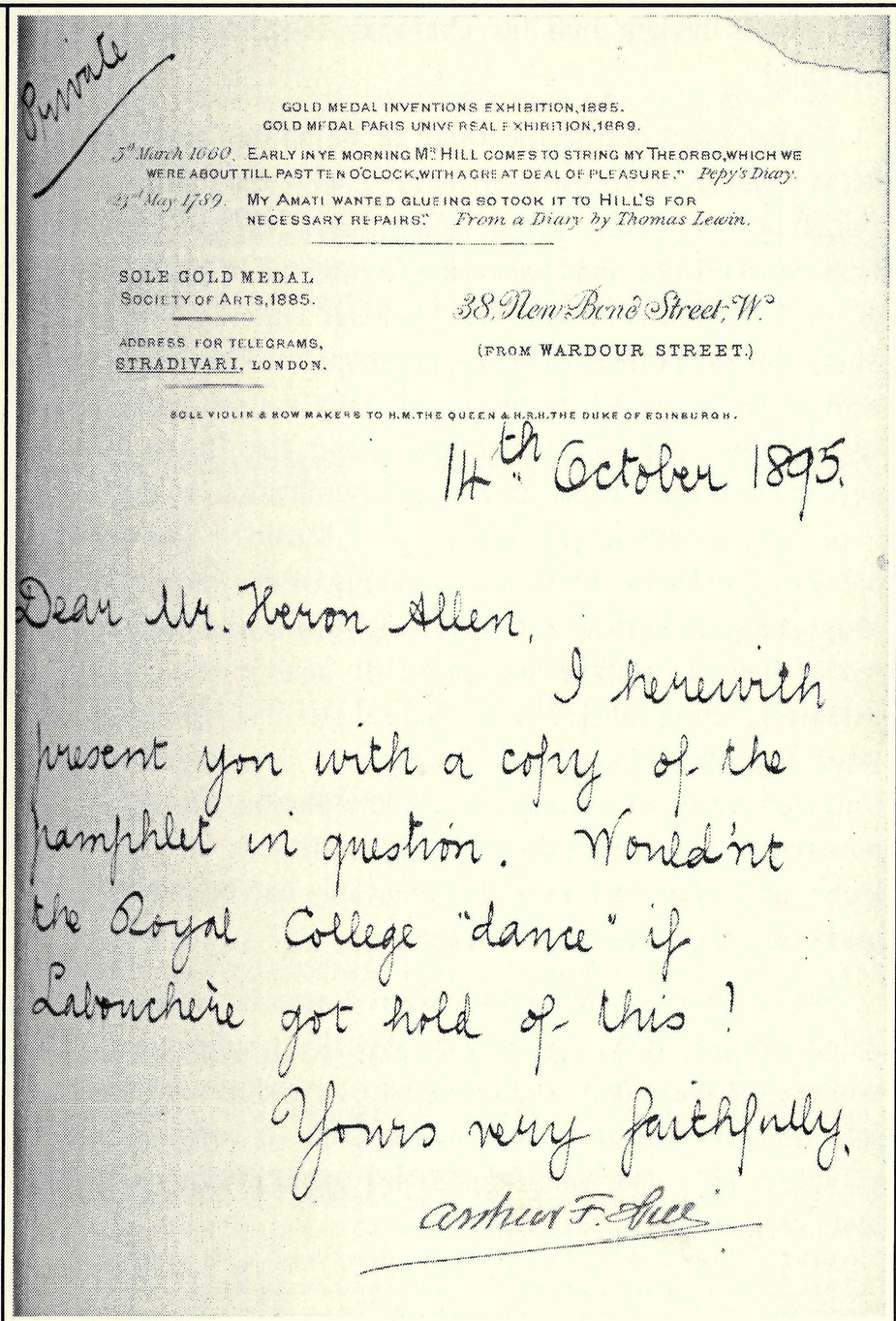
> Then came note no 2 from Holmes; how much he appreciated my good feeling, and everything should cease, &c. By Jove! Yesterday, I go up between 1 and 2 to consult H. as to having a junior orchestra, and if I don't find him and B.D alone in the room together! Isn't it foolish & absurd? And also very unfair to D. herself.[7]

There matters remained for two years until December 1893 when it was brought to Grove's attention that Holmes had been lecturing his pupils on atheism and socialism and 'matters which no man ought to talk to any woman about', and that he had done this 'in the presence of several girls'.[8] Further confirmation came from the guardian of one of the girls who told Grove that Holmes 'was in the habit of committing, and enticing to commit the grossest immorality with his female pupils'.[9] Faced with no alternative Grove immediately dismissed Holmes who wrote back

> … not denying – not defending – but saying that he thought it expedient to resign!… He seems to have attempted 3 (and probably many more) and to have actually succeeded in ruining 4. Those I know of but there may be dozens. His wife and children are all in

the same way of thinking! … He tried to represent it as a necessary accompaniment to music & art, and to freedom in Politics and everything else.[10]

Although in the short term Grove's primary concern was to protect the RCM's reputation, he was also faced with having to find a new teacher – and his comment 'And imagine what a teacher we have lost!' says it all.[11] For under Holmes the College had made a considerable contribution to that renaissance of the violin that had so struck Heron-Allen. But what would Heron-Allen have thought of Holmes' extra-musical conduct? Given the presence in his collection of the latter's pamphlet, written during his self-imposed exile in the Balkans and expounding his radical artistic and personal philosophy, with its repudiation of many tenets of Christianity in favour of a 'licentious brand of hedonism',[12] it is a question worth asking, but one I feel unqualified to answer. Yet the presence of a pasted-in cutting, 'The Re-Appearance of Henry Holmes' from the May 1896 issue of the periodical *Truth*, suggests a continued interest in the case. Edited by the radical Liberal MP Henry du Pré Labouchère, *Truth* was dedicated to the exposure of social fraud and in this instance drew attention to a notice Holmes had placed in London papers, announcing his return to the city and advertising for pupils; he was, *Truth* declared, 'the last person to whose influence any youth or maiden should be entrusted'.[13] Effectively hounded out of the city he moved to San Francisco where he died in 1906. There remains one other unanswered question: in the letter accompanying his gift of the pamphlet to Heron-Allen Arthur Hill wrote 'Wouldn't the Royal College "dance" if Labouchère got hold of this'. I had originally speculated that Heron-Allen might have been responsible for Labouchère obtaining a copy,


Pepys

GOLD MEDAL INVENTIONS EXHIBITION, 1885.
GOLD MEDAL PARIS UNIVERSAL EXHIBITION, 1889.

5th March 1660. "Early in ye morning Mr Hill comes to string my Theorbo, which we were about till past ten o'clock, with a great deal of pleasure." *Pepys's Diary.*

3rd May 1759. "My Amati wanted glueing so took it to Hill's for necessary repairs." *From a Diary by Thomas Lewin.*

SOLE GOLD MEDAL
SOCIETY OF ARTS, 1885.

ADDRESS FOR TELEGRAMS,
STRADIVARI, LONDON.

38, New Bond Street, W.
(FROM WARDOUR STREET.)

SOLE VIOLIN & BOW MAKERS TO H.M. THE QUEEN & H.R.H. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH.

14th October 1895.

Dear Mr. Heron Allen,

I herewith present you with a copy of the pamphlet in question. Wouldn't the Royal College "dance" if Labouchère got hold of this!

Yours very faithfully,

Arthur F. Hill

Fig.2 Letter from Arthur Hill accompanying his gift of Henry Holmes' *Man's Faith.*

but greater insight into his character suggests that this is unlikely!

Earlier I referred to the Duke of Edinburgh's part in the RCM – Heron-Allen equation and it is with that that I want to conclude.[14] A keen, if not particularly skillful, amateur violinist, the Duke had chaired the Committee of Management of the RCM's predecessor, the National Training School for Music during its short existence and continued his association with its successor where he occasionally led the orchestra.[15] Was it this, perhaps, which accounted for Heron-Allen's decision to present copies of his early publications to the RCM – but not to the Royal Academy of Music – and for his presumed invitation to the state opening of the new building? Might he have seen in the fledgling RCM an institution that would indeed promote the cause of instrumental, and by extension, string music? Was it indeed this that led him many years later to bequeath his library and instruments to the College? This, of course, is all speculation, though it is possible that further research on the collection, not least the letters and other documents he invariably had bound up with his books, might shed light on this.

While some of the links I have drawn between Heron-Allen and the RCM can only be described as tenuous, it is nonetheless clear that he did have a connection with, and by inference, an interest in the College during its early years. It's good that 111 years after he probably stood in this room that that connection has been renewed.

Notes

1 *De Fidiculis Bibliographica* (London: Griffith Farran & Co., 1890-94), p.xv-xvi.

2 Ibid., p.xvi.

3 Heron-Allen also presented copies of his first two *Opuscula Fidicularum*, *The Ancestry of the Violin* (London: For the Author, 1882) and *Hodges v. Chanot* (London: For the Author, 1883) to the Duke. His own copies, now in the Heron-Allen Collection at the RCM, contain letters of acknowledgement from the Duke's Private Secretary.

4 Bernard Shaw, *Shaw's Music* (London: Bodley Head, 1981), vol. 1, p.87.

5 Ibid., vol. 2, p.373.

6 See the letter dated 26 October 1890 from Grove to Edith Oldham, RCM MS 6864/93.

7 Ibid.

8 Letter dated 10 December 1893 from Grove to Edith Oldham, RCM MS 6864/358.

9 Letter dated 17 December 1893 from Grove to Edith Oldham, RCM MS 6864/359

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 G. W. E. Brightwell, 'One Equal Music' (PhD thesis, University of Durham, 2007), p 309.

13 *Truth*, 14 May 1896.

14 A further link between the Duke of Edinburgh and Heron-Allen is noted in Joan Navarre's paper – Georges Chanot. While Chanot instructed Heron-Allen in the art of violin making, he was also violin-maker to the Duke.

15 The Duke was apparently surprised to be told by a musician that 'he would never play the fiddle if he only practiced once a month (see John Van der Kiste and Bee Jordaan, *Dearest Affie ... Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1984), p.100). During the early months of the College's existence the Duke played the violin obbligato in a performance by Emma Albani of Gounod's 'Ave Maria'; the accompanist was Arthur Sullivan (harmonium). (See Arthur Jacobs, *Arthur Sullivan: A Victorian Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p.173. The Duke later told a member of the Royal Amateur Orchestral Society that he was 'so offended at the criticisms passed upon his violin-playing by the Press that he has determined not to play any more solos in public'. (See the paragraph from *The Star* of 9 March 1892 pasted by Heron-Allen into his *Miscellanea*, vol. 17, p.34).

'AN AFTERNOON WITH CHANOT':REMEMBERING GEORGES CHANOT, EDWARD HERON-ALLEN, AND 157 WARDOUR STREET

By JOAN NAVARRE

This paper emerges from my work on the life and times of Edward Heron-Allen as well as from my work as a volunteer and trustee at The Museum of Soho. I have spent many memorable hours in this reading room at the Royal College of Music, pouring over Heron-Allen's violin collection and picking up pieces that shed light on the past. One important yet little-known piece is an essay entitled 'An Afternoon with Chanot'. Heron-Allen describes Georges Chanot and 157 Wardour Street, and his personal impressions have inspired me to track down records of Chanot's shop, to verify that it is still standing, and to encourage others to go to Wardour Street. Although there is as yet no English Heritage blue plaque, 157 Wardour Street is an important historical landmark.

Over one hundred years ago, Soho was known and celebrated as the violin making centre of the British Isles, and Wardour Street became a byword as the headquarters of curiosity shops and violin dealers. In 1898, the violin dealers located on Wardour Street included Beare and Goodwin, Hart and Son, Edward Withers, and Georges Chanot. Today, they are all gone. However, vivid reminders of this illustrious past remain. While we are all familiar with Heron-Allen's *Violin-Making, As It Was and Is* (1884) and what it says about lessons learned while at Chanot's, his unpublished essay 'An Afternoon with Chanot' (1890) offers a fresh perspective. Heron-Allen paints a portrait of Chanot and his unique shop and, as a result, today we are able to look at 157 Wardour Street, as it was and is.

The *London A-Z* will help you find 157 Wardour Street. From Piccadilly Circus, walk up Shaftesbury Avenue and turn left on Wardour Street. As you walk down Wardour Street, look to your right in order to see the garden and remains of St. Anne's Church, where Heron-Allen married Marianna Lehmann on the 1st of July, 1891. Keep walking down Wardour Street, and you will soon see 157 Wardour Street on your left. We were here as part of the Heron-Allen walking tour I conducted a few years ago (14 June 2004).

The first photograph is of Georges Chanot at 157 Wardour Street. Chanot is standing in the doorway, next to his window full of violins, stringed instruments, and curiosities. Normally, he would be inside: wearing a sleeved waistcoat, a black apron, and a green and black velvet cap over his long white hair; working at his bench; and performing, as Heron-Allen records in his essay, 'miracles of the violin-makers art'.

The sign hanging over the doorway advertises that this is a violin maker, while the coat of arms puts the crowning touch on the word quality: Chanot was, by Royal Warrant, a violin maker to H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh.

The youngest son of an eminent violin maker, Georges Chanot III (1831-1895) left France in the late 1850s and set up shop in Soho. He worked with Maucotel in Rupert Street. After Maucotel's retirement in 1860, Chanot took over the business and eventually moved to Wardour Street (Heron-Allen, 'Violin Dealers of Soho', *Two Centuries of Soho, Its Institutions, Firms and Amusements*, 1898, p. 227). His first location was 86 Wardour Street, and by 1862 he was at 103 Wardour Street, which, by 1879, was renumbered 157.

Fig.3 Chanot's shop at 157 Wardour Street *circa* 1880s.
Photograph reproduced courtesy of Charles Beare, J&A Beare.

Fig.4 157 Wardour Street today.

It was here that Edward Heron-Allen spent numerous hours talking to Chanot, looking at violins, and studying the art and science of violin making under the guidance of the master himself. Chanot's shop is near 17 Carlisle Street, Soho Square, the headquarters of Allen & Son, Solicitors, well-known in Soho for nearly two centuries, and one can imagine Heron-Allen walking briskly through the narrow passage of St. Anne's Court in order to arrive at 157 Wardour Street.

What magic and mysteries awaited him!

Heron-Allen composed 'An Afternoon with Chanot' in November 1890. He documents the dates of his apprenticeship and describes Chanot and his shop. According to Heron-Allen, he first worked at Chanot's shop on the 20th of April 1882, and on the 15th of September 1883 he took away two violins, varnished and finished. 'Since then the old shop has been a favourite haunt of mine & I have spent many an hour in the late summer or winter afternoons, sitting on the ledge at the back of the counter with my feet on the fender talking to the old man, or in the back-shop where his son Joseph Anthony Chanot works, pulling over his treasures & luring him with nicotine to talk of his multifarious experiences in the trade of old violins.'

Thanks to the keen observations of Heron-Allen and his concern for documenting and preserving Soho's history, we have been given an opportunity to time travel. The shop we are shown – the House of Chanot, 157 Wardour Street – is a kaleidoscope of images, a world reminiscent of *The Old Curiosity Shop* of Dickens. Here are some passages from Heron-Allen's essay, courtesy of Mr. Ivor Jones and the Royal College of Music.

I suppose that today, Chanot's shop is quite unique, that is to say that it is the last old *Atélier de lutherie* left in the world...

It is a wonderful place, is Chanot's shop. The window glazed with small dingy panes in the manner of a century ago is heaped up with masses of every kind of old & new bow instrument, English & foreign.

. . .

The promise of the window is amply fulfilled by the shop. The instant you enter it you can see that its owner is not a tradesman but an artist. Every inch of wall surface not covered with instruments in cases and out of them is occupied with photographs of ancient fiddles, etchings & engravings of great fiddlemakers and players. In a corner stands a magnificent cabinet of ebony inlaid with ivory of the best renaissance works, this and another behind the counter inlaid with tortoise-shell is full of fittings old & new, rubbish of all kinds such as a collector loves to gather round him, & bundles of papers which if I mistake not would entrance the eyes of any fiddle-lover. Sometimes when Chanot is particularly good humoured, I have hunted in these cabinets & found manuscript notes in the writing of Vuillaume, & Maucotel that hold secrets coveted throughout the fiddlemaking confraternity.

. . .

In this rear workshop, under the skylight, stands the great glass case in which Chanot exhibited his instruments in Paris (1878) & London (1885), almost

entirely filled with his monster double bass made with his own hands on the perfect pattern of the finest Stradivarius violin, & priced by him at a hundred guineas. I believe that if anyone insisted on buying it & taking it away, it would simply break the old man's heart.

. . .

It is a wonderful place this *atelier* of Chanot's. Every time the spirit moves him to unlock some new or unexplored drawer or one of the dusty cases piled in heaps all over the place, he discloses some new & unique treasure. A matchless bow, an inlaid viol, the violin of some dead master, one never knows what is coming to light next. He sometimes has said to me: "Ah! Monsieur, if only I could come back after my death and see these things sold – lots of them are waiting for me to go away – waiting for 'Chanot's sale'!" He chuckles delightedly as he speaks, but the minor key seems to suit the place. The old man is bright & erect as a man of forty though he confesses to sixty two winters – I, for my part, pray that at fourscore years he may still be here...

The next time you are strolling through Soho, head for Wardour Street, with 157 Wardour Street as your destination. Consider the street, as it was and is; observe Chanot's shop, then and now. Today the windows are empty, and the workshop is gone. Gone too are the violins, the photographs, etchings and engravings of great fiddlemakers and players, the inlaid cabinet, the tortoise-shell counter, and the 'rubbish of all kinds such as a collector loves to gather round...' However,

Georges Chanot was here. He wore a black apron, and a black and green velvet cap over his long white hair. He quietly performed miracles of violin making. And he made significant contributions to the history of the violin, to Heron-Allen's life, and to Soho. Rest in Peace, Georges Chanot - violin maker, teacher, historian, collector, bohemian, friend and mentor to Heron-Allen, and, above all else, an artist.

Acknowledgments: Heron-Allen's essay 'An Afternoon with Chanot' is housed at the Royal College of Music (Heron-Allen Collection). Excerpts have been made available with the kind permission of Ivor E. Jones, grandson of Heron-Allen and copyright holder, and the RCM. The photograph of Chanot (*circa* 1880s) is reproduced thanks to the generosity of Charles Beare, J&A Beare. I am grateful to Roy Harrison, City of Westminster Archives Centre, for helping me with my research.

EDWARD HERON-ALLEN AND THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

By GARRY GARRARD

It would be impossible to explain just how significant EH-A's contribution to our understanding of some of the most familiar and best loved poetry in the English language was, without first telling you a little about Omar Khayyam. Just who was he, what was his Rubaiyat, and why did it become so important?

Omar Khayyam was a Persian philosopher, scientist, astronomer and mathematician who lived in the 11th and 12th centuries. To put that in a British context, he was born during the reign of Edward the Confessor and died during the time of Henry II at the ripe old age of 83. This time was the tail-end of the Golden Age of Islam, but Omar Khayyam was no tail-ender, he was one of the most notable products of that age. He posed mathematical problems that would challenge western mathematicians up to the 19th century, and derived solutions to other problems using techniques that would not become generally accepted for a similar timeframe. His best known achievement was to lead a team of astronomers that developed a new calendar, more accurate even than the Gregorian Calendar – and that would not be introduced by the Catholic Church for another 500 years.

So what was his Rubaiyat? The word 'rubaiyat' is simply the plural of 'ruba'i', and a ruba'i is a Persian verse form consisting of two couplets – translated into English, a ruba'i is usually presented as four lines. You may have noticed that

nowhere in my brief sketch of Omar Khayyam did I mention that he was a poet, and that is almost certainly the case. The ruba'i was an informal verse form, the sort of thing that an educated gentleman in polite Persian company would be expected to improvise to suit the occasion (although many of the improvisations were doubtless well-prepared like so many of the *bon mots* attributed to more recent wits such as Oscar Wilde). The status of a ruba'i was perhaps close to that of a limerick, although its punch line normally had a deeper meaning and was often highly philosophical.

There is no surviving contemporary manuscript of Omar Khayyam's verses, and it seems unlikely that he ever committed them to paper at all. It wasn't just that they were informal, and not considered worth recording; more significant was the fact that many of the ideas they expressed would have been viewed as downright heretical – Islamic fundamentalism is not a modern phenomenon. As a scientist, Omar Khayyam had a hard enough time in any case, since even the pursuit of such knowledge was seen as blasphemous, and writing down heretical verses could have provided his enemies with enough ammunition to remove his head.

Rubaiyat were transmitted as an oral tradition, and it was many years before it became fashionable to compile written collections of verses that were ascribed to Omar. The earliest that has been identified is a collection of 158 verses that was written by a scribe in Shiraz in 1461, a very small but exceptionally beautiful manuscript that must have been prepared for someone very rich. We don't know what happened to the little book for the next three and a half centuries, but it was eventually bought by William Ouseley, an English Orientalist. When he died in 1842, his entire

collection of manuscripts was bought by the Bodleian Library in Oxford where it languished on the shelves for 12 years.

In 1856 a young graduate, Edward Cowell (1826-1903), was allotted the task of cataloguing the Ouseley collection. Cowell was a linguistic prodigy; he had taught himself Persian and by the age of 16 knew it so well that he had articles published in learned journals, and he could already translate at least another six languages. The manuscript of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam attracted his attention, initially almost certainly because it was so beautiful. However, it was the content that fascinated him, and he laboriously made a transcription of the entire manuscript. He made another copy, which he gave to his great friend Edward FitzGerald (1809-83), known to his many friends simply as 'Fitz'. Cowell's role in this tale is often minimised, but from EH-A's point of view he would play a vital role.

Cowell and FitzGerald had first met when the former was 18 and the latter, nearly twice his age, had been attracted by a handsome young man – not for the first time. It was Cowell's intellect that really appealed to Fitz however, and gradually Cowell became not just his friend but tutor, mentor, critic and inspiration. With Cowell's encouragement, Fitz translated from Spanish and published the resulting *Six Plays by Calderon* (1853), following which Cowell persuaded him to learn Persian – 'I'll teach you the grammar in a day'.

The two read Omar Khayyam's verses together, then Fitz set about translating them into English – the work provided a welcome diversion at a painful time when his short-lived marriage was disintegrating. Fitz consulted Cowell regularly on all sorts of points concerning the finer points of Persian,

usually by letter, and the correspondence continued after Cowell departed for a professorship India in July 1856 – the two men remained friends until Fitz died.

In 1859, Fitz had 250 copies of his translation of the Rubaiyat printed at his own expense. Most of them he gave to Bernard Quaritch, an oriental bookseller. If Quaritch sold any at all the number was small, but he did lose many of the copies, and eventually the remainder were put outside his shop in a cardboard box, priced 1d. The box was found by Whitley Stokes, a minor member of the Pre-Raphaelite circle; other members soon followed him in buying themselves copies of the verses. Very soon, an eminent group of people including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, Algernon Swinburne and John Ruskin were all extolling the virtues of Fitz's verses to each other. That did not, however, mean immediate success, which was slow in coming, and didn't really happen until after Fitz died in 1883. Then its popularity really took off, and the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam became one of the greatest publishing phenomena ever. The Macmillan 1890 edition was reprinted 13 times in 10 years; its successor was reprinted 24 times – and that was just one of many, many editions. By now I estimate that there have been about 1500 different editions, and several new ones still appear every year. You can judge the extent to which FitzGerald's version of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam has entered the English consciousness by the fact that no fewer than half of the verses are included in the Oxford Book of Quotations – a higher proportion than any other work or author, including Shakespeare.

However, it seems that there is something in the English psyche that can never simply accept success without

attempting to sabotage it. Almost as soon as FitzGerald's version of the Rubaiyat appeared, rumours began to circulate that he had not produced a faithful translation of Omar Khayyam's verses; he had taken too many liberties, and the result did not reflect the Persian original. A number of people started work to produce their own translations; some intended to produce a version that was as near literal as possible, others simply (and mistakenly!) thought they could do better. As the success of the verses grew, so did the level of the associated controversy and by 1890 it had become an important issue, and not only in literary and linguistic circles. No-one who considered himself well-informed could fail to be aware of the debate – and EH-A was certainly well-informed.

However, unlike most people who were content merely to be well-informed, EH-A's character moved him to do something positive about it. He had no axe to grind when, in 1890, he set out to establish, as far as possible, whether or not FitzGerald's verses were faithful versions of Omar Kháyyám's originals. EH-A didn't speak or read ancient Persian of course, but he wasn't going to let a little matter like that stand in his way, and set about learning it. He also approached Edward Cowell, now Professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge University, to elicit his assistance. Much younger than FitzGerald, Cowell provided not only a link to his late friend, but the best possible source of insight into his work. Cowell himself had been in India from 1856 to 1864, before taking up his current post in 1867. Surviving letters suggest that Cowell co-operated fully with EH-A and, presumably, willingly – 'Professor Cowell has honoured me with a good deal of information on this matter of Fitzgerald's methods' EH-A wrote in 1898, quoting from the many letters exchanged with him.

From Cowell, EH-A established that FitzGerald had not used solely the Bodleian manuscript for his translation. He also had the benefit of a transcript of a second, longer, manuscript that Cowell had discovered when he was in Calcutta, and Fitz had read other Persian sources widely. The correspondence with Cowell also enabled EH-A to understand the process FitzGerald had used to develop his version. Had he started with a big idea, and fitted the words into it, or had he built it up verse by verse? Cowell was quite clear on that point 'I am quite sure that Mr FitzGerald did not make a literal prose version first; he was too fond of getting the strong, vivid impression of the original as a whole… He was always aiming at some strong and worthy equivalent; verbal accuracy he disregarded.'

EH-A published his analysis in detail in a book in 1897, some seven years after he had started his investigations – during that time, his Persian studies seem to have been his primary pre-occupation. He concluded that:

> 49 verses were indeed 'faithful and beautiful paraphrases of single quatrains in either the Ouseley or the Calcutta manuscripts or both'
>
> 44 were composites, with elements from more than one of Omar's verses
>
> two were inspired by verses found in the French version by Nicholas
>
> two reflect the 'spirit' of the original poem
>
> two can be traced to verses by Attar
>
> two were inspired by the Odes of Hafiz.

Fig.5 Cover of Heron-Allen's edition of
the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*.

Fig.6 Frontispiece of Heron-Allen's edition of
the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*.

EDWARD FITZGERALD'S

RUBÂ'IYÂT

OF

OMAR KHAYYÂM

WITH

THEIR ORIGINAL PERSIAN SOURCES

COLLATED FROM HIS OWN MSS., AND LITERALLY TRANSLATED

BY

EDWARD HERON-ALLEN

LONDON

BERNARD QUARITCH

15 PICCADILLY, W.

1899.

Fig.7 Title page of Heron-Allen's edition of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.*

This comprehensive set of conclusions soon became recognised as the definitive analysis and justification of FitzGerald's version, and remains so to this day. It put an end to the controversy over his translation, which became recognised as 'the work of a poet inspired by a poet; not a copy, but a reproduction; not a translation but the re-delivery of a poetic inspiration.' Now there was a new controversy – did Omar Khayyam actually write the verses that he has been credited with?

In 1898, EH-A published a second book, a facsimile of the Bodleian manuscript with his own literal translation of each verse. He also brought out an enlarged edition of the original volume that included his analysis. When I first came across these two books, I knew nothing about EH-A. However, the two books are written so authoritatively that I concluded that he must be an academic, and set about finding him in the lists of professors at Oxbridge (obviously unsuccessfully!).

While EH-A was working on his analysis of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, his sister-in law, Liza Lehmann, was also drawn to the Rubaiyat. After her singing career was brought to a premature end by an attack of Bell's Palsy (she had already retired from the concert platform on her marriage in 1894), she turned to vocal composition and sought a subject for a major challenge. It is perhaps surprising that the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam was suggested to her not by EH-A, but quite independently by her husband Herbert Bedford (I am grateful to Joann Navarre for drawing my attention to that fact). Liza composed an intimate song cycle that includes 34 verses from the Rubaiyat. One of the songs, *Ah Moon of My Delight*, became very popular and was recorded by John McCormack and Mario Lanza among others. The most recent recording was made in 2000 by the Cantabile Quartet.

There are several footnotes to this story. After EH-A published the results of his analysis, he became a popular speaker and authority on the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. As a sort of swan-song on the subject, before he moved on to fresh fields and pastures new, he decided to publish a pamphlet *Some sidelights upon Edward FitzGerald's Poem.* It would consist of the substance of a lecture delivered at the Grosvenor Crescent Club and to the Women's Institute. He thought it would be a nice gesture to dedicate the pamphlet to Cowell as a small recompense for his co-operation, so he wrote to the aging professor, now in his late seventies, to ask approval for the dedication. To EH-A's surprise and, no doubt, chagrin, Cowell politely refused on moral grounds, seemingly regretting that he had ever introduced Omar Khayyam's philosophy to the world: 'I yield to no one in my admiration of 'Omar's poetry as literature, but I cannot join the "*Omar Cult*" and it would be wrong of me to profess it...I admire Omar as I admire Lucretius, but I cannot take him as a guide... I prefer to go to Nazareth, not to Naishapur.' EH-A was forced to publish the pamphlet without the dedication Cowell undoubtedly deserved.

In spite of its thoroughness and rigorous approach, EH-A's analysis was treated somewhat grudgingly by academics. In 1959, Professor Arberry referred disparagingly to 'Heron-Allen's complacent boast' of his co-operation with Cowell and, patronisingly, to his 'surprisingly erudite pamphlet'. If the volume of correspondence with Cowell was not enough to demonstrate his level of co-operation, the fact that Cowell presented EH-A with his own, priceless, personal copies of the transcripts from both the Ouseley and the Calcutta manuscripts suggests a relationship that went far beyond co-operation.

There is one more postscript to this story. We could call it 'How EH-A became an accomplice to one of the greatest literary frauds of the 20th century'– but that tale will have to wait for another time.

Note: Garry Garrard's biography of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, *A Book of Verse*, will be published by Sutton Publishing in early summer 2007.

Opusculum I. Notes upon the Literary, Scientific, and Artistic Activities of Edward Heron-Allen, F.R.S. Extracted from his Diaries and other Documents by Christopher Blayre (2000).

Opusculum II. Edward Heron-Allen. A Talk delivered by his grandson Ivor E. Jones at the first Heron-Allen Symposium, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, July 2001 (2001).

Opusculum III. The Quest for the Heron-Allen Society. A Talk delivered at the first Heron-Allen Symposium, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, July 2001, by Timothy J. McCann (2002).

Opusculum IV. "The Beauty and Mystery of the Foraminifera". The Foraminiferal research of Edward Heron-Allen FRS, with an assessment of his scientific career. Based on a talk delivered on the beach at West Street, Selsey, to members of the Heron-Allen Society and guests of the West Sussex County Council, following the unveiling of a plaque in honour of Edward Heron-Allen by Ivor Jones, 15 July 2002, by Richard L. Hodgkinson and John E. Whittaker (2003).

Opusculum V. Reflections on Heron-Allen's War Journal. Talks delivered at the second Heron-Allen Symposium, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, July 2002, by Brian W. Harvey and Carol Fitzgerald (2003).

Opusculum VI. 'Portraits and Persia: Bookplates and Bognor': Proceedings of the 3rd Heron-Allen Symposium, 2003. Talks delivered at the third Heron-Allen Symposium, The Allen Room, Dean Street, London, July 2003 by Bryan Burrough, Claire Powell, Peter Allpress and Timothy J. McCann. (2004).

Opusculum VII. 'Edward Heron-Allen FRS: Scientist': Proceedings of the 4th Heron-Allen Symposium, 2004. Talks delivered at the fourth Heron-Allen Symposium, The Natural

History Museum, London, July 2004, by Richard L. Hodgkinson, Michael A. Kaminski, Clive Jones and Andrew S. Henderson & John E. Whittaker (2005).

Opusculum VIII. 'Edward Heron-Allen and Friends': Proceedings of the 5th Heron-Allen Symposium, 2005. Talks delivered at the fifth Heron-Allen Symposium, The Allen Room, Dean Street, London, July 2005, by Timothy J. McCann, Joann Fletcher and Richard L. Hodgkinson (2005).

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