

Institute of Physics – London & South East Branch – Retired Members Section

Visit to The Musical Museum, Kew on Thursday 28th March 2019

This visit has been organised by John Belling.

Description

The Musical Museum was founded over 50 years ago by the late Frank Holland. He started with his own private collection of some half dozen reproducing pianos, and in 1963 he was given use of the former St George's Church, Brentford to get the collection under one roof. He was initially allowed use of the premises for only two years, but the Museum was still there 40 years later!

In 1966, the collection was formed into a Charitable Trust as The British Piano Museum, and in the early years, a number of famous pianists who had recorded rolls earlier in the century, came along to the Museum to hear themselves play.

In 1989, in line with modern museum practice, the old Charitable Trust was re-formed into a limited Company, with charitable status.

During its existence, the Museum's collection has grown steadily and it now enjoys an international reputation as one of the most important collections of its kind in the world.



The current building was specially designed for the Musical Museum, and was opened in June 2008. The shell of the building was funded by a Heritage Lottery Grant, and the transfer of the collection from the old building and the setting-up of the galleries was carried out entirely by volunteers. In addition to the instrument galleries, the Museum now includes a climate-controlled roll library (of over 20,000 music rolls), a workshop, concert hall, and cafe with views of the river.

The Museum houses a Wurlitzer organ, in a specially designed concert hall – the instrument can rise from the pit to the stage, in time honoured fashion, and there are projection facilities to enable the showing of silent films to Wurlitzer accompaniment. The Museum is also home to an impressive array of self-playing pianos, orchestrions, pipe organs and violin players.



On arrival, after refreshments, we will be given a short talk about the Museum's collection, with particular reference to conservation issues. Then will follow a private tour of the collection, focussing on how the instruments work – the technologies of the time.

After lunch, we will visit the music roll library, and we will have the opportunity to play a roll on a player piano. Following afternoon tea, there will be free time to explore the collection.

Where and when to meet: at the Museum, 399 High St, Brentford TW8 0DU. Refreshments served from 10:30, before an introductory talk 11:15.

Getting there: see area map, below.

There should be adequate car parking on site. Should the car park be full, ask at reception, and they will direct to a nearby overflow car park.

The nearest Main Line station is Kew Bridge. Train time suggestions (but please check on the day) are:

Depart Waterloo	Arrive Kew Bridge	Depart Kew Bridge	Arrive Waterloo
09:37	10:05	16:26	16:56
09:52	10:20	16:41	17:11
10:07	10:35	16:56	17:26
10:37	11:05	17:11	17:41

On leaving Kew Bridge station, turn right, walk past the Kew Water and Steam Museum (you can't miss its Victorian Tower) – you will then see a Jet petrol station a few hundred yards away, and the Musical Museum is just past this, on the right hand side of the road, about a 10 minute walk in all.

It must be said that the reliability of the service, operated by South Western Railway, leaves much to be desired, and that members intending to travel this way should be prepared to use alternative routes, tube/bus as below.

The nearest Tube station is Gunnersbury (District line, Richmond branch). It's about a 20 minute brisk walk to the Museum, but there are frequent buses, 65, 237, 267 which will take you from Gunnersbury station to right outside the Museum.

Lunch: served in the Concert Hall accompanied by some nostalgic music, see menu below. **Please let me know if you would like the lunch, and if so, your menu choices by Monday 11th March 2019** – email john.a.belling.secrems@gmail.com .

Timetable:

Time	Details
10:30	Meet at Museum for refreshments
11:15	Short talk about the collection and conservation of instruments
11:30	Private guided tour of the collection, featuring aspects of how the instruments work and problems that the conservators have overcome or need to consider.
12:45	Lunch: hot main, cheeses, desserts, with wine and beers, see menu below
14:15	Visit to the roll-library and the collection of over 20,000 music carriers (not usually visited by the public), followed by an interactive workshop focussing on music rolls with advice from a conservation volunteer.
15:30	30 tea/coffee/cake break, during which the Wurlitzer organ in the concert hall will be demonstrated, and the history and restoration of the instrument will be discussed
16:15	Finish - free time to look around if desired.

Size of party: Maximum 40, minimum 15.

Cost: £15.00 including refreshments. Lunch at cost, see menu below.

Contacts:

Tony Colclough on 020 8398 0766, tonycolclough@outlook.com , or
John Belling on 07986 379935, john.a.belling.secrems@gmail.com .

Late arrivals: Go to Museum and ask to be directed to our party – phone John Belling as above.

Lunch Menus: lunch will be served in the Concert Hall.

Newens *Maids of Honour* Pies, (**Choice** of steak, chicken or salmon in shortcrust pastry served warm)
Roasted new potatoes with herbs served warm,
Home-made winter coleslaw
Seasonal crisp leaf salad with a light lemon & olive oil dressing
£14.75 per head inclusive of VAT @ 20%

Selection of English & French cheeses, served with biscuits, grapes, celery & chutney
£6.00 per head

Selection of Desserts **£3.00** per head

House wine - £18.00 bottle Selection of bottled beers £3-4.00

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Area Map:

