

NEWS FOR CELLISTS – JANUARY 2006

Guadagnini Cello Copies

We are happy to announce the imminent completion of two cellos by Robin Aitchison which are both faithful copies of a 1755 Milan period Guadagnini cello.

Guadagnini's cello model can be seen as the final destination of the classical Italian school of cello making which evolved from the very large scale cellos made c.1650 to Guadagnini's small instruments c.1750. This evolution was in response to continuing developments in string making and to an increasingly virtuosic cello repertoire.

For much of his working life G B Guadagnini was the greatest surviving violin maker in the world. He was familiar with earlier masters' work and had a close relationship with the influential Italian cellist Carlo Ferrari who needed a comfortable instrument due to a damaged leg. We can imagine Ferrari's brief: "Give me a comfortable instrument which is quick to respond, projects well and has a complex tone colour." Guadagnini's answer was to design an incredibly efficient model: a reasonably broad but short cello with a quick response due to its light weight and with arching and thickening designed to allow maximum vibration from every square inch of its diminutive front.

An article about Guadagnini can be found at: www.aitchisoncellos.com/articles

Taming Wolf Notes

On page two we explore the thorny issue of wolf notes. Should you try to suppress a wolf note or do you automatically lose too much resonance when you resort to fitting suppressors or resonators to your cello? We introduce a new wolf suppressing device and explore traditional methods of taming the wolf.

Exploring Ely

For those yet to discover the delights of our home city of Ely, we give a brief guide to the easiest ways to travel here and what to do and where to stay when you arrive (page 3).

Cello Exchange

The Cello Exchange continues to help people who are trying to buy or sell an instrument. The Exchange has recently found homes for cellos by William Forster (Senior), George Craske, Lockey Hill and Otto Gütter and we are delighted to welcome instruments by William Forster (Junior), Henry Jay, Furber, Caussin school, and R Murrell.

A list of cellos and bows currently in stock can be found on page four. Further details of instruments and bows, and information about the Cello Exchange can be found at: www.aitchisoncellos.com

KEEPING THE WOLF FROM THE DOOR:

Wolf notes and how to tame them

The most common haunt for the seriously inconvenient wolf note is 4th position on the G string, somewhere between E and G. A more ferocious manifestation of this wolf note will appear at the same pitch high on the C string and a milder version may dog you in first position on the D string. If you're really unlucky, a ghostly wolf can also appear in 4th position on the A string.

Changing the set up of your instrument could be one way to resolve or reduce a wolf note. Generally, the harder the instrument is set up (perhaps with an inappropriately set sound post, a rigid bridge design, a high bridge or high tension strings) the more 'wolfy' it will become. Sensitive adjustments to the sound post or bridge can help to minimise a wolf note problem on some instruments without sacrificing the tone and response you are seeking from your cello.

An alternative solution is to fit a wolf note suppressor or resonator to your cello. It is well known that suppressing wolf notes can lead to a reduction in resonance across the whole range of the instrument. However, each cello and cellist is unique and the use of resonators or suppressors is a good solution for many cellists.

We are all familiar with the traditional wolf note suppressor – a rubber tube encircled with brass and tightened onto the string with a small screw – which is fitted to the G or C string between the bridge and tailpiece. To find the optimal position for the suppressor, bow the string between the bridge and suppressor and move the suppressor until the pitch of the string below the bridge matches the pitch of the original wolf note (or its harmonic).

A more subtle answer to wolf note elimination has recently arrived on the scene in the form of the New Harmony range of wolf note suppressors. These are little cylinders of solid brass which fit onto the string by means of a

curved groove on one side. The absence of rubber in the design means that there is far less of a dampening effect on the string; the other major advantage is that the suppressors come in a range of weights, (3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13 grammes) which allows you to select the lightest weight necessary to control the wolf note, thus minimising undesirable side-effects.

To fit the New Harmony suppressor, just loosen the G or C string and fit the suppressor onto the string between bridge and tailpiece and re-tune the string. Find the optimal position for the suppressor as described above for fitting traditional suppressors.

As an alternative to the on-string suppressor, you could try fitting a Resonator - a small, sprung mass - to your cello front. If you are lucky, you will find a position for the resonator (usually below the f hole on the bass side) which will dramatically reduce the wolf note. The resonator can be fixed to the outside of the cello with harmless putty but if you want to commit yourself long-term you can have the resonator glued to the inside of the cello front. The only drawback is that, once glued in, the resonator can only be removed when the front of your cello is taken off!

For some players, the cost of wolf note suppression is too high in terms of the loss of overall resonance and tone. Here are some tried and tested ways to accommodate wolf notes:

Experiment with different strings or use a lower tension version of your current strings.

Experiment with different bows; some bows will, as if by magic, play right through a wolf note as if it were not there.

Use less bow hair tension.

Bow more lightly on the wolf note.

Modify your vibrato to control wolf notes.

Squeeze the lower bouts with your knees to dampen the cello as you play a wolf note.

VISITING ELY

ELY is a relaxing and refreshing city to visit. Famous for its 11th Century cathedral and medieval architecture, Ely also has a wealth of small local shops, cafés, restaurants, art galleries, riverside walks and parks to explore.

Our Victorian workshop home is just a five minute walk from the cathedral and the city centre. If you are planning to visit us we would warmly recommend that you allow enough time to explore Ely while you are here – or even take a short break in Ely if you are travelling a long distance.

HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

Ely Cathedral (11th Century)
Stained Glass Museum, City Museum
Oliver Cromwell's House

FOOD:

The Almonry (*east end of Cathedral*)
Old Fire Engine House (*opposite Cathedral*)
Peacock's Tea Rooms (*Riverside*)
The Boat House, Riverside

WALKING

In Ely: Riverside, Public parks
Outside Ely: Thetford Forest, Wicken Fen, Welney Wildlife Trust

GALLERIES:

Old Fire Engine House (*near Cathedral*)
The Wall (*Fore Hill*)
Ronald Pile Gallery (*St Mary's Street*)
Babylon Gallery (*Riverside*)
Haddenham Galleries (*4 miles from Ely*)

WHERE TO STAY:

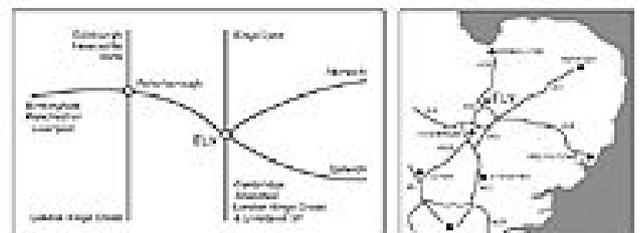
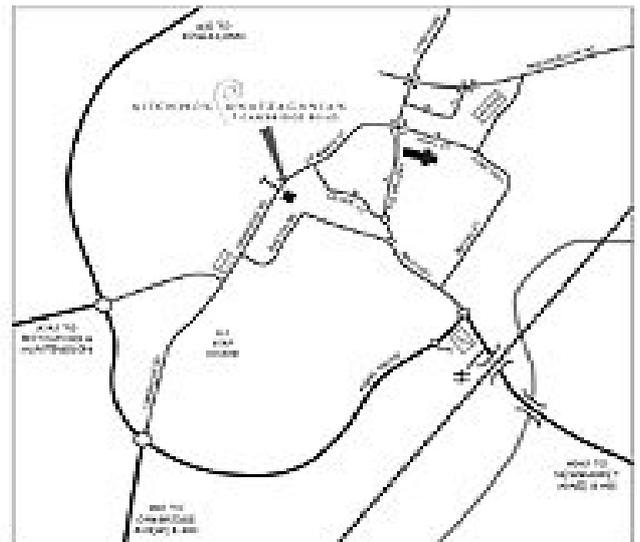
BED & BREAKFAST with Mrs Jenny Burgogne at 25 Forehill, a beautiful 200 year old townhouse in the centre of Ely. One double and one twin room. Children are welcome. Rooms from £25 per night. Telephone: 01353 668747; website: 25forehill.co.uk.

HOTEL: The Nyton, Barton Road, Ely: a quiet country house hotel in large gardens with licensed restaurant. Rooms cost from £30 per night. Tel: 01353 662459.

TRAVELLING TO ELY

BY TRAIN: Ely is 15 minutes from Cambridge, 65 minutes from London King's Cross, 2 hours from York, 2½ hours from Birmingham and 3½ hours from Manchester. Direct trains from King's Cross to Ely (destination King's Lynn) depart at 45 minutes past each hour.

BY CAR: The easiest approach from the south, west or north-west is via the A14 and the A10. If travelling from the north, it is best to travel down to the A14 and then up the A10 avoiding the slow cross country roads (A141, A142) between Huntingdon and Ely. If travelling from the south on the M11, continue north up to the A14, go east towards Newmarket and then take the A10. Avoid the A11 round the east side of Cambridge which is very slow except in the early hours!



CELLOS AND BOWS

WILLIAM FORSTER CELLO 1807

Length of back: 734mm; String length: 680mm
Price on application (Cello Exchange)

This cello by William Forster (Junior) has a powerful, open sound and beautiful dark orange-brown varnish. Signed Wm Forster J 1807 No.35.

HENRY JAY CELLO c.1760

Length of back: 757mm; String length: 688mm
Price: £26,000 (Cello Exchange)

A rare Henry Jay cello in very good condition with a particularly beautiful tone. The varnish is a transparent orange over a warm golden ground.

FURBER CELLO c.1820

Length of back: 758mm; String length: 698mm
Price: £18,000 (Cello Exchange)

This cello is in exceptionally good condition and has unusually beautiful, rich red varnish. It is a joy to play with a rich, open, colourful tone.

ROBIN AITCHISON GUADAGNINI COPY

Length of back: 715mm; String length: 668mm
Price: £12,500

A faithful copy of an exceptionally beautiful Milan period Guadagnini cello (1755). Offering rich, complex tonal qualities and a quick response.

WILFRED SAUNDERS CELLO 1988

Length of back: 755mm; String length: 695mm
Price: £12,000 (Cello Exchange)

One of the few cellos made by the late Wilfred Saunders MBE. The cello has a bright, open tone and is very responsive.

CAUSSIN SCHOOL CELLO c.1860

Length of back: 735mm; String length: 673mm
Price: £10,000 (Cello Exchange)

This beautiful cello is in excellent condition. It has warm red-brown oil varnish and the tone is powerful, open and colourful.

WAMSLEY CELLO c.1740

Length of back: 745mm; String length: 685mm
Price: £10,000 (Cello Exchange)

An exquisitely made cello by the fine English maker Peter Wamsley, with a rich, colourful tone, excellent projection and deep red Italianate varnish

GERMAN CELLO c.1850

Length of back: 751mm; String length: 689mm
Price: £9,000 (Cello Exchange)

A mid-nineteenth century German cello of fine quality, with an attractive red-gold varnish and an even, open tone.

R. MURRELL CELLO 1979

Length of back: 758mm; String length: 685mm
Price £8,000 (Cello Exchange)

This attractive contemporary cello was the second instrument of a fine orchestral player for 25 years. It is in immaculate condition and has a very warm, open and pleasing sound.

DAVID RUBIO BAROQUE CELLO 1985

Length of back: 700mm; String length: 650mm
Price: £6,000 (Cello Exchange)

An ideal baroque instrument for the smaller player, this appealing instrument has a warm brown varnish laid over a golden ground.

MODERN CELLO BOWS

W E Hill & Sons bow	£6,000
E. F. Ouchard bow	£4,000
John Norwood Lee bow	£1,995
Good German bow	£1,600
Albert Nurnberger bow	£1,500
David Tempest bow	£1,500
Nurenburger bow (nickel)	£900
Spliced Nurenburger bow	£900
Garner Wilson bow (gold)	£850
Old English bow	£800

PERIOD CELLO BOWS

Philip Davis	French Baroque	£800
Philip Davis	Flemish Baroque	£830
Andrew Dipper	French Baroque	£1,220
Christopher English	Transitional	£1,030
Gerhard Landwehr	Baroque c. 1700	£870

*For more information see
www.aitchisoncellos.com/antique*