



Chairman's Report for NEEMF AGM 2014

Over the past year North East Early Music Forum has continued to present an impressive range of workshops covering a wide range of music. This, despite ever increasing economic and social and cultural pressures that remain a serious threat to our cultural life.

As I write this we are preparing for the fourth HISS (Historically Informed Summer School). We are returning to Scarborough Campus, which has its advantages but also presents us with a challenge this year. The success of last year's course has prompted Scarborough to raise their conference offer, and have developed a fully commercial operation. Thus, whilst we have secured a considerable discount on the charges this year, they are still significantly more than last year, but this was not communicated to us until after our brochure had been published. This means that the course, despite a small rise in attendance numbers this year will produce a deficit, as the accounts will show. The course itself continues to be highly regarded, and is still bucking the trend amongst this type of summer which has seen several more established operations shrink or disappear. We are pleased this year to welcome back participants from all three previous courses, as well as a wider range of participants from across the country, and indeed maintaining our international status. We are grateful to those who have contributed to the Bursary Fund enabling us to provide 4 or 5 subsidised student places, and to Early Music Shop for support towards our losses this year.

Reviewing the past year's workshop programme, we have enjoyed the usual mix of new and unfamiliar, and old and young in terms of workshop leaders. September and October were led by Alex Kyle and Patxi del Amo, representing the newer practitioners in early music. November and December were taken care of by Robert Hollingworth, in the guise of his Gesualdo 400 Conference at York, with workshops led by Bo Holten and Justin Doyle, then December at NCEM with David Skinner. January and February were closer to home with the now regular dance workshop, and a madrigal session led by Clive McLlland. March and April also fell into routine with Eileen Silcocks and the Temple Newsam playing day. The success of some of these "open to all" workshops means that we are able to offer, on occasions, more specialist workshops for a smaller group of participants. Such was the case with the lute song day with Jacob Heringman and Faye Newton in June. Similarly in July the workshop presented jointly with IMC, for the more specialist medieval interest was with Jon Banks.

The number of larger polychoral workshops held this year open to man singers and players has certainly maintained the accounts in healthy order, and it is interesting to see plans for next year including, for instance, music by Biber and a baroque day on Vivaldi. It will be equally interesting to see how these events turn out in practice.

I would like to thank the committee for their support and enthusiasm again over the year, and especially to Edna for her time as Treasurer. Also to add my thanks to Chris Roberts, who took on the role of administrator for HISS last year, and whose gain in experience and expertise has enabled him to be offered the post of administrator for the Cambridge Early Music Summer Schools, which he takes up in January. I am certain he will execute those duties with the same quiet, assiduous, efficient and cheerful disposition that has marked his time with HISS. He hopes to be able to continue to be administrator for HISS.

I hope you will continue to support NEEMF in the coming year, and as always, encourage you to encourage your friends to join us at our workshops whenever possible!

Graham Coatman

signed: _____

Chairman, NEEMF

1 August 2014