



Cambridge Szeged Society



Newsletter Winter 2011-2012



Kecskes Ensemble play traditional Hungarian Music on traditional instruments ,
Fitzwilliam College Chapel,
September 2011

(also reported in Dél Magyar
and local Szeged Newspaper)

Chair's Report

We have had a very busy, if somewhat turbulent year. Starting with the visit of the previous Deputy Ambassador, Klara Breuer, a great supporter, for her talk in the spring, through to the unexpected visit by the new Ambassador—for whom I was asked to organise a day's programme to include meetings with Hungarian students—some 30 of whom attended a successful meeting & some academics. He also enjoyed a visit to the Cambridge University Library & to King's College.

We also heard from Nora Berend, on the medieval ability of different religions to co-exist peacefully in the Danube basin. A large group attended Bridge Fair in May. For concerts we had the Cambridge Chamber Ensemble, and two piano recitals—partly in honour of the Liszt bicentenary, but also some exceptionally vigorous Bartók in the last, wonderful concert of the season, from Érvin Nagy. The October one was kindly contributed, by our member, Lindesay Dixon.

In a totally different vein, we also had the marvellous experience in September, of the Kecskes Ensemble pictured here—excellent musicians playing traditional instruments. The additional duo performing with them, pictured ,on p.4 came from Szeged. The pictures of the concert, supported by Mayor, Ian Nimmo-Smith, also appeared in the local & national press in Hungary. We hope for a similar concert in the future—Szeged has also another trio doing performances of this kind.

We have also been fortunate in these 2 years & the one prior, to have great support from the respective Mayors. The 3/4 cut in our grant which we were to suffer, was, fortunately restored, but emphasised our reliance for finance on the Guildhall's twinning budget. We can attract performers of the highest calibre and run this aspect of twinning better & more economically than they could—and keep up the liaison with the Embassy & Hungarian Cultural Centre now established.

The Committee works hard—often without the media & others being aware of how much activity actually takes place. More Membership engagement would be helpful; whoever can offer their skills and/ or time to assist—do get in touch! We welcome the new Cambridge University Hungarian Society, a fledgling at the moment, but we hope will prove to be a good collaborative body.



Mayor Sheila shows her chains of office to Szeged school children



and enjoys planting Paprika , May 2011

(cont.)

We have achieved much—with the local artists taken to Szeged, the art exhibitions, the regatta. Next year will see more opportunities, in film, in science & I hope again in sport. I strive always to break down barriers—between town & gown, between the 2 universities, between arts & sciences. These have been built up over centuries—but are artificial. Think what we could all achieve working together! In times of austerity, intelligent collaboration is the way forward. See what you can suggest for the special year which 2012 brings—the 25th anniversary of twinning. Some planned activities are on p.4.— let me know what more **you** want to do.

Julia Seiber Boyd

Treasurer's Report

The Society receives a significant proportion of its income from Cambridge City Council as a grant from their twinning budget. In the future this may change to funding from the Leisure budget, on which the City Council conducted a consultation between May and August. The Society made a submission, pleased to see that our activities meet many of the objectives for those organisations that will qualify for funding.

This year as before, the City Council grant was reduced, in this case while planning for a formal visit by a delegation from Szeged in 2012 was debated. However following a revision of the City's budget for this visit, assisted I might say by some useful cost saving suggestions from our chair, we were awarded the remaining grant.

With no end in sight for economic troubles we are more mindful than ever of the need to find other sources of funding. We continue to investigate alternative grant making bodies but as always hope we can rely on our membership and others attending events and to keep the income & donations coming in.

Suggestions from members for future funding or activities are always welcome. The AGM will provide a good forum to propose and discuss these. What we constantly lack is a few more active members willing to help organise and run events. This is a non-financial benefit to the society that I believe far outweighs the grants and donations received.

You will find full details of our activities elsewhere in this newsletter. Of those I am pleased to say we made a small profit of about £50 each on the September and October concerts which is encouraging. We have concluded that presenting a more specialist programme particularly of concerts which tend to involve greater outlay, can be beneficial in terms of attendance.

Marketing our events effectively remains hard work, I am delighted to report that we have been approached by a student from Anglia Ruskin University who has offered to conduct marketing research project as part of her degree course, we hope to receive the completed work soon. The project will remain the property of its author and the University, not of the Society.

As reported at last year's AGM the committee decided to set aside a sum of £600 as a reserve to cover approximately one year's expenditure for the society, this has now been implemented.

It is likely that 2012 will see some higher than usual expenditure given the plans we have for celebrating 25 years of twinning we hope this will also bring opportunities to increase the awareness of the society's many activities and Cambridge links with Szeged.

James Oram, Treasurer



Tim Penton shows the Ambassador items in the Cambridge University Library during his October 2011 visit



Érvin Nagy plays Bartók November, 2011

Local Artist Deanna Tyson—also enjoyed her trip to Bridge Fair..

What a wonderful experience, delightful people, and beautiful city! I feel so fortunate to have been chosen as the artist to represent the Cambridge Szeged Society at Bridge Fair 2011.

A colleague had described with great affection, the warmth of the people, lovely venues, carefully planned itinerary, but until I actually experienced Szeged's incredible hospitality, I really couldn't envisage it! We were transported between venues, experiencing delightful visits to schools from kindergarten to secondary level. We were entertained by 4 year olds who sang to us in both Hungarian and English, learning about lonely dragons – of whom we received little drawings. We heard, in a traditional Hungarian classroom, about the UK - a somewhat Disney tourist view - but completely conducted in English. At a secondary school I sat in on a biology lesson - again conducted in English - on the Reproductive System – like re-visiting an A level Biology lesson from many moons ago!

The pre Bridge Fair open-air concert was wonderful! Traditionally costumed Hungarian dancers twisted and twirled whilst an orchestra in full evening dress played magnificently in the mid day sun. Choirs sang, speeches were made, chocolate box soldiers bedecked in gold frogging emerged from under brightly coloured flags fluttering in the gentle breeze. We all processed to the Bridge, various dignitaries in their chains of office leading the way, none with more splendid chains of office than our own mayor, Sheila Stuart.

We attended receptions, meals, a wonderful choral church concert. We visited a restored traditional farm house museum, a tram depot, the municipal gallery, the University, a working paprika farm & Museum attached, a coin & medal factory, a wine festival - all in 4 days! My own special highlights included the private view of an exhibition by Finnish artists in the beautifully restored Jugendstil style municipal gallery –a very inspiring venue, where I would love to exhibit, and the visit to the paprika farm - inspiration for a piece of work I hope to create and display in the gallery. There I sat entranced, furiously taking notes about the fascinating history of this bright red, fiery edible "shoe"! I have, sadly, lost my notebook recording the origin, the wealth it created at it's height, the effects of Communism on production and slow demise. I still have my photographs to refer to and aid my memory.

If anything, we were too well looked after, with little time to contemplate real life. It was a privileged "chauffeured" life style - but that itself was a novel experience.

I do hope to visit Hungary again; a truly magical experience and I would very much like to thank, not only the wonderful Hungarians with seamless organisation skills but those who made my visit possible, namely Julia who organised the whole trip and Nicholas who put my name forward. Thank you so much.

Deanna Tyson - 2011 artist.



Szeged duo—performing with the Kecskes Ensemble Sept 2011

Members listen to Klara Breuer's talk March 2011



2012 - Challenges ahead & the 25th Anniversary of Twinning

The reluctance of some—citizens, councillors & the press— to spend on twinning is perhaps understandable in times of austerity, but it ignores all the benefits which can flow from an exchange of cultures & developing better relations with other countries. Our Society works endlessly to promote more interest in Hungarian culture—in many shapes & forms.

The freedom of the city is to be granted by Cambridge to Szeged in recognition of the 25th anniversary of twinning and we are working on a programme to honour the anniversary as well. A delegation from Szeged has been invited to visit Cambridge—the dates & programme are still to be fixed. Anyone wishing to assist or meet the delegates, please let me know.

February will see the start of a season of collaboration with **Anglia Ruskin University**—with a showing of **Polish and Hungarian films**. During the rest of the year, we hope to have a **Coin & Medal exhibition**, put on by **Erem Verde** from Szeged and an exhibition of **Hungarian Embroidery**. Anyone wishing to display items they may have for the Embroidery event, please let me know.

The launch of the coin & medal exhibition will be the opportunity for another reception & short recital—planned to include Judit Katona of Harmonia consort, who gave us lovely concerts in 2008.

Venues are still being sought—good space & good location seem not to go together!

Another local artist, Katie Maynard, will be visiting **Szeged Bridge Fair** in May. Professor **Rowland Wymer** (ARU) is to teach at Szeged University & also give a paper at the Shakespeare conference in Timisoara (another of Szeged's twins).

The **choir of Queens' College** is due to visit Budapest & Szeged in the summer. The **Garden Party** is always well-attended & will be repeated as usual. The **Uprising Supper**— will be repeated if enough people want to. The turnout this year could have been better.

Space in the **Great Court in the Grafton Centre** has been offered to us for 4 days in October—to display Hungarian goods, have a wine tasting & possibly demonstrate Hungarian cuisine— please let me know what you would like to do and how you might partake in this special activity—our chance to raise the profile of all good things Hungarian!

We shall be putting on **concerts & talks** as usual—please watch the website & the

Facebook “friends of Cambridge Szeged Society” slot for updates on forthcoming events.

The collaborative concert with **Cambridge Chamber Ensemble** is proposed for 4th May.

Financial times are hard—but we aim to provide a rich & varied programme to welcome the anniversary in adequate style! Let me know your ideas!

T. 01223 506064;

E: jmseiberboyd@aol.com