

North West Early Music Forum
Annual General Meeting Minutes

Saturday 5th April 2025, beginning at 1pm, Bolton Parish Church Hall

- 1 Kirsten Flores (Chair) welcomed all *Present*: John Greenhalgh, Martin Godden, John Huthnance, Elizabeth Dodd, Bryan Au Yeung, Anne Shepherd, Peter Syrus, John Insole, Alan Jones, Rhoda Bramhall, Phil Parkinson, Dorret Conway, Sarah Boardman, Anna Wright, Alicja Chawluk, Philip Gruar. *Apologies* for absence: Janet Evans, Morris Davies, Andrew Mayes, Roger and Susie Greenwood, David Allen, Claire Valentine, J Edward Rigg, Tim Gannicliffe, Maire and Roger Gibson, Martin Steward.
- 2 *Minutes* of the AGM held 13 April 2024 were approved.
- 3 *Matters arising* from those Minutes: none.
- 4 *Chairman's Report* had been circulated. Kirsten thanked all for their contributions to NWEMF.
- 5 *Treasurer's Report* had been circulated. There were no comments.
- 6 *Election of Officers*:
 - a. Chair – Kirsten Flores' re-election was agreed *nem con*.
 - b. Secretary – John Huthnance' re-election was agreed *nem con*.
 - c. Treasurer (vacancy; Anna Wright was nominated by Kirsten Flores, seconded by Martin Steward and elected *nem con*). Martin Steward (previous Treasurer) and Bob Foster (standing down as Membership Secretary) are thanked for all their fine book-keeping and contributions to NWEMF over many years.
- 7 *Election of Committee Members* (up to eight positions available)
 - a. Elizabeth Dodd, Phil Parkinson, Peter Syrus and Tim Gannicliffe were willing to continue to serve and were re-elected.
 - b. Bryan Au Yeung as student representative (proposed by Kirsten Flores, seconded by Phil Parkinson) was elected *nem con*.

North West Early Music Forum

Chairman's Report 2025

When I was first asked to consider standing for a committee post last year, there were concerns that NWEMF wouldn't be able to continue without extra help from members. However, after looking back through all the Chairman Reports and AGM Minutes from the last 14 years, what is clear is that although NWEMF has faced ups and downs over the years (and 2020/21 was particularly challenging), it has always bounced back through the hard work and commitment of its members – quite simply, we all want to keep performing this glorious music!

What follows is the report of the Committee summarising the various steps taken over the past year to achieve this end using new systems, processes and technologies. I am very grateful to the Committee for all their help with implementing these changes.

Kirsten Flores
Chair

1. Committee Matters

At the last AGM on 14 April 2024, the following Committee was elected:

Chair - Kirsten Flores
Secretary - John Huthnance
Treasurer - Martin Steward
Member - Bob Foster (Membership Secretary)
Member - Elizabeth Dodd (Newsletter editor)
Member - Peter Syrus
Member - Tim Gannicliffe

Phil Parkinson was co-opted onto the Committee at a meeting on 7 May 2024.

Over the course of the past year, the Committee met 10 times by video conference. All meetings have been very helpful in working through the implementation of the various changes made during the year, and have also resulted in our workshop programme being agreed at an early stage.

Key Committee documents are now stored centrally online and will help ensure a smooth transition for new Committee members.

We have created the post of Student Representative on the Committee to help encourage more students and young people to come along to our workshops.

Martin Steward is standing down after many years of service as Treasurer – he leaves our accounts in very good shape, and we are indebted to him for his thoroughness, diligence and insight over the years.

Bob Foster, our membership secretary is also standing down at this AGM. He has played a key role on the committee for many years, and has started many of the processes which we have built on over the past year. Again, we are all very grateful to Bob for his time and commitment to NWEMF.

2. Membership

At the date of this report, we have 152 members, up from 116 this time last year. This is very welcome news indeed, and comes about as a result of some of the new measures implemented in the past year including:

- Increased contact with members (monthly NWEMF Digest, regularly updated website and Facebook page, more communication before and after workshops, in addition to our usual members' Newsletter published five times a year).
- It is now possible to book online for workshops, and there is an online application form for new members.
- Brief reports of workshops are now posted on the website and Facebook page with photos (and sometimes recordings) made on the day.
- The password-protected Members' area on the website now includes a Members' Offers section.
- Workshop participants are invited to give feedback on workshops and any other matters through forms available at workshops, or via an online form on the website.
- Members' questionnaire – our first questionnaire has been sent out in advance of this AGM, and hopefully will be a good way of finding out how we can best help members make the most of their membership.

Membership and workshop fees, along with our reserves policy, are set out in the Treasurer's Report. At a meeting on 17 March 2025, as a result of increasing costs for both tutors' fees and venue hire, the Committee agreed to reduce the members' discount for workshops from £10 to £5 with effect from 1 September 2025, which results in the cost of workshops for members increasing to £20 (the cost for non-members remains unchanged at £25). The additional income generated will also be put towards the costs of our 50th anniversary year in 2027 (see section 8).

3. Publicity and promotion

Alongside more contact with members, we have also instituted a number of changes to how we promote and publicise our workshops.

- We have a mailing list for members and subscribers. There are currently 192 subscribers, 148 of which are members with email addresses. We send out a monthly Digest to the mailing list with workshop news and a list of early music events for the month ahead. Past Digests are archived on the website.
- We have printed colour leaflets to help promote NWEMF generally for distribution in libraries, museums, churches, etc. (do let me know if you'd like any to give out locally).
- We contact local choirs and orchestras to promote upcoming workshops in their area, with reciprocal promotion of concerts and events on our website and Facebook page.
- Leaflets for future workshops are available at each workshop – the 2025 workshops leaflet has been particularly popular (this can be downloaded from the website).
- We have a YouTube channel where videos taken at workshops are hosted.
- Word of mouth – many new members have come from local choirs and other groups who have been encouraged to come by existing members. The best publicity is a well-run, enjoyable workshop that will encourage people to recommend us to friends and colleagues.

4. Workshop Venues

Over the course of the year, we have held workshops at two new venues - Wilmslow URC (15 February 2025) and Bolton Parish Church Hall (5 April 2025). We are also revisiting some venues we haven't used for several years – St Martin's Chapel in Lancaster (17 May 2025) and St Agnes & St Pancras Church in Liverpool (13 September 2025).

We are always keen to hear from members who may know of venues that might be suitable for workshops.

5. Past workshops – 2024/25

The following workshops have taken place so far over the past year:

| Date | Topic | Tutor | Participants (booked) |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 3 March 2024 Liverpool | <i>"I am troubled on every side!"</i> Music by Tallis and his contemporaries VOICES & INSTRUMENTS | Lisa Colton | 26 |
| 20 April 2024 Preston | <i>'O What Evil is War'</i> – War and Peace in 17th Century Germany VOICES & INSTRUMENTS | Gawain Glenton | 24 |
| 11 May 2024 Didsbury | Handl <i>Opus Musicum</i> VOICES & INSTRUMENTS | Stephanie Dyer | 20 |
| 15 June 2024 Sale | Polychoral music to include works by Lassus, Scheidt, Hassler and others VOICES & INSTRUMENTS | Peter Wendland | 34 |
| 21 September 2024 Didsbury | <i>Palestrina plus</i> VOICES | Peter Syrus | 38 |
| 19 October 2024 Sale | <i>'Apt for voices and viols'</i> – Music from Jacobean England VOICES & VIOLS | Elizabeth Dodd | 27 |
| 9 November 2024 Lancaster | The Music of Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla VOICES & INSTRUMENTS | Clive Walkley | 26 |
| 16 November 2024 Chester | Music of Gabrieli and his European contemporaries RECORDERS | Polyphonica Recorder Trio | 18 |
| 25 February 2025 Wilmslow | Music and Ritual in a 16th Century Florentine Convent UPPER VOICES, RECORDERS & VIOLS | Laurie Stras | 38 |
| 22 March 2025 Didsbury | <i>Missa Diligam Te Domine a 12</i> by Giovanni Valentini VOICES & INSTRUMENTS | Philip Thorby | 60 |

Overall, feedback from members for all workshops has been very positive. Tutors have been similarly impressed by the high standard of sight-reading and musicality

shown by those attending. Participants are finding the online booking forms easy to use, and forms have been up on the website well in advance of each workshop, which has helped encourage early booking. We had our largest attendance for several years at Philip Thorby's recent workshop, which hopefully indicates a healthy upwards trend for workshop numbers in the future. Name badges at Philip's workshop also seem to have worked well.

We would like to thank all members who have helped make these workshops such a success, whether bringing home-baked treats, helping out in the kitchen and tidying up at the end of the day, or writing a review which forms part of NWEMF's history.

6. Forthcoming workshops 2025

Online booking is open for the workshops in April, May and June, and we plan to open online booking for the last three workshops of the year before our summer break.

Please note the change to our November workshop with Gawain Glenton, who will now be doing a workshop on Stadlmayr, instead of Palestrina.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 5 April 2025 Bolton | Music for the Chapel Royal VOICES & STRINGS | Christopher Roberts |
| 17 May 2025 Lancaster | The Secret Spirituality of Prioris, Pomponio and Palestrina VOICES & SOFT INSTRUMENTS | Deborah Catterall |
| 14 June 2025 Chester | <i>The 'Full Moon' Mass</i> – an exquisite Italian rarity from the mysterious Giuseppe Corsi da Celano VOICES & INSTRUMENTS | George Parris |
| 13 September 2025 Liverpool | The music of Lusitano and other Portuguese composers VOICES | Rory McCleery |
| 11 October 2025 Manchester | Renaissance Italian canzonas VIOLS & RECORDERS | Alison Kinder |
| 8 November 2025 Sale, Manchester | <i>'The Sound of Power'</i> – Johann Stadlmayr's Polychoral Music for the Habsburg Courts VOICES & INSTRUMENTS | Gawain Glenton |

7. Workshop programme 2026

We have made good progress in booking tutors for our 2026 workshop programme, although topics and venues remain to be decided. We encourage members to get in touch if they would like to help organise any of these workshops, with the support of the committee. This is a great opportunity to work with some of your favourite tutors to create a successful day for all participants.

14 February 2026 – Lisa Colton

21 March 2026 – David Allinson

11 April 2026 – Rory Wainwright Johnstone

May 2026 – TBC

13/20 June 2026 – Peter Wendland

12/19 September 2026 – Stephanie Dyer

17 October 2026 – Lizzie Gutteridge

14/21 November 2026 – Peter Syrus

8. NWEMF 50th Anniversary year

In 2027, NWEMF will celebrate 50 years since its inception in October 1977. The Committee is looking at ways to mark this milestone, which include:

- A high profile workshop programme over the course of the year, possibly including joint workshops with neighbouring EMFs.
- A residential weekend workshop in the summer of 2027 with dinner and keynote speakers held at the NCEM in York.
- A publication of NWEMF's history, including a review of early music in the community throughout the UK over the past 50 years, with contributions from guest authors from the early music world.

Again, we would welcome help from our members in planning and arranging these events – it promises to be a very enjoyable and memorable year.

9. Archive Project

We are keen to document NWEMF's history and make it more accessible. There are a number of ways we are doing this:

- Peter Syrus has compiled a comprehensive document charting all workshops and other events in NWEMF's history based on a detailed review of all NWEMF newsletters, both printed and online. This document will be made available in due

course, and will form the basis for the publication referred to in section 8.

- We are making available on the website past workshop reviews, articles, obituaries, etc. from NWEMF newsletters. The first phase is extracting these from the online newsletters from 2011 to date, and the second phase will be scanning reviews from the printed newsletters. Janet Evans has been working with us on this project, and we are very grateful to her for all her help. For more information see [From the Archives](#) page on the website.

10. Collaborating with others

- [Joint EMF Meetings](#) - The first online quarterly joint EMF (Early Music Fora) meeting was held in December 2024, attended by the chairs and other officers from the other eight EMF committees. These meetings are a chance to share ideas, inspiration and resources, and are already proving very useful. We also plan to set up a database of all EMF workshops going back at least 10 years to help with workshop planning.
- [National Centre for Early Music](#) – At a recent meeting with Chris Roberts of the NCEM, we discussed the possibility of creating a page on the NCEM website dedicated to the EMF network to include a list of upcoming workshops. The NCEM will also share details of touring professional ensembles so these can be factored into our workshop programmes. We also plan to work in collaborative partnership with the NCEM for our residential weekend workshop in 2027.
- [National Early Music Association](#) – NEMA was formed in 1981 and has since produced a large number of academic publications focusing on early music matters. It is in the process of launching a new website and membership structure, enabling all their publications to be freely available. I have been co-opted to their committee to work with David Allinson to look at ways in which NEMA can help the EMF network as an umbrella organisation. They have a temporary website where more information can be found (<https://nema3.webnode.co.uk/>)
- [Others](#) - We are working closely with Lisa Colton, Head of Music at the University of Liverpool, who is running a course for students interested in early music. Last year we donated some the NWEMF viols on perpetual loan for students to use. We are also in contact with Alex Patterson, Director of Music at Salford Cathedral, and we will continue to reach out to relevant organisations, charities, churches, schools and universities to discuss ways of working together to further our charitable aims.

Conclusion

This has been a year of building upon all the excellent work done by successive committees over the years by using new methods to promote NWEMF, putting systems in place for continuity planning, and collaborating with the EMF network and other organisations to help keep early music in the community alive and thriving. The next few years promise to be even better - if our plans inspire you, please get in touch and help make them happen.

NWEMF Committee
March 2025

Treasurer's report

Below you will find a summary of NWEMF's accounts for the 2024 calendar year together with figures for 2023 and 2022 for comparison.

The year started with a balance of £12,047 in the general account, and £1,603 in the Joan Wess Educational Fund, which provides bursaries and grants to help younger members and full-time students attend workshops, courses and summer schools.

Income from membership subscriptions, currently £10 per person per annum, increased by 10% compared with the previous year.

All eight workshops planned for 2024 went ahead and ran successfully. Average attendance (approximately 27) was slightly increased compared with the previous year, but has still not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. The cost of running workshops increased by 12% compared with 2024, mainly due to increases in venue hire charges.

Other expenditure included our annual subscription to Making Music (who provide insurance cover and other services), printing and postage costs for members who receive the Newsletter by post, and recurrent website costs.

Overall, expenditure exceeded income by £1,485 and the closing balance in the general account fell by this amount to £10,562. This is in line with the intentional trimming of our accumulated funds to a minimum of around £6k, which would be equivalent to a year's expenditure, as required by our reserves policy. This has been achieved by the reduction in the workshop attendance fee from £20 to £15 for members since September 2022. Once we reach our target it will probably be necessary to raise the workshop attendance fee slightly in order to break even.

A single bursary of £250 was provided from the Joan Wess Educational Fund to enable a young instrumentalist to attend a series of cornetto and sackbut workshops and masterclasses at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in January 2025. A report on her experiences there will be published in the February edition of the Newsletter.

Martin Steward
Treasurer
6 January 2025

NORTH WEST EARLY MUSIC FORUM

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2024

| | 2024 | 2023 | 2022 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| INCOME | | | |
| Subscriptions | 1,612.50 | 1,464.50 | 1,447.50 |
| Workshop fees | 3,375.00 | 2,525.00 | 2,360.00 |
| Instrument hire | 45.00 | 0.00 | 25.00 |
| Donations | 10.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Miscellaneous | 0.00 | 200.00 | 0.00 |
| | 5,042.50 | 4,189.50 | 3,832.50 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| Workshop venue hire | 1,579.75 | 1,116.00 | 662.50 |
| Workshop fees & expenses | 4,351.18 | 3,578.39 | 2,716.63 |
| Committee expenses | 62.40 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Subscriptions & insurance | 221.00 | 213.00 | 197.00 |
| Website | 91.20 | 62.40 | 51.00 |
| Printing & postage | 221.91 | 28.86 | 32.34 |
| Instrument repairs | 0.00 | 0.00 | 250.00 |
| Miscellaneous | 0.00 | 200.00 | 1,000.00 |
| | 6,527.44 | 5,198.65 | 4,909.47 |
| Surplus for the year | -1,484.94 | -1,009.15 | -1,076.97 |
| ASSETS | | | |
| Accumulated funds at year start | 12,047.41 | 13,056.56 | 14,133.53 |
| Surplus for the year | -1,484.94 | -1,009.15 | -1,076.97 |
| | 10,562.47 | 12,047.41 | 13,056.56 |

JOAN WESS EDUCATIONAL FUND

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2024

| | 2024 | 2023 | 2022 |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| INCOME | | | |
| Bank interest | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| Bursaries | 250.00 | 200.00 | 0.00 |
| | 250.00 | 200.00 | 0.00 |
| Surplus for the year | -250.00 | -200.00 | 0.00 |
| ASSETS | | | |
| Accumulated funds at year start | 1,853.09 | 2,053.09 | 2,053.09 |
| Surplus for the year | -250.00 | -200.00 | 0.00 |
| | 1,603.09 | 1,853.09 | 2,053.09 |
| Accumulated funds at year end | 1,603.09 | 1,853.09 | 2,053.09 |

Martin Steward
Treasurer
 6 January 2025