

IN MEMORIAM ANTHONY BAINES: 1912-1997

Jeremy Montagu

Tony Baines was a man of many facets and many skills. He wound up as a museum curator, somewhat unconventional perhaps, though well within the older English tradition of such posts. He had been a school teacher. Before that he was a professional conductor and also a bassoonist and contra-bassoonist, a career which had been interrupted by service as a soldier and a spell as a prisoner of war. Before that again he was a music student, an undergraduate at Oxford, where he studied chemistry, and before that a King's Scholar at Westminster School, where he was one of the half dozen or so most gifted boys at one of the most prestigiously academic schools in Britain, a school whose boys have a traditional role to play in royal coronations and have privileged access to debates in the Houses of Parliament, which are just across the road from the school.

Anthony Cuthbert Baines was born in 1912 and spent much of his childhood in Oxford. After his time at Westminster he went back to Oxford, again with a scholarship, to Christ Church, the grandest of all the Oxford colleges and, quite coincidentally but perhaps an augury of the future, the college which still possesses the two cornetts which it purchased for the ceremonial visit of King James early in the seventeenth century. At school and at Oxford he was already playing the clarinet in his spare time. He went back to London to study at the Royal College of Music, and there he became a bassoonist. I have never heard what caused the change, but I suspect from my own experience when a student at the Guildhall School of Music ("We've too many horns but we're short of percussion—you would like to play that, wouldn't you?") that it may well have been a purely pragmatic decision. He was sufficiently successful that in 1935, long before his studies were supposed to be completed, he was already playing in the London Philharmonic Orchestra, which Sir Thomas Beecham had founded three years earlier. He remained with the LPO until the outbreak of war, when he served in the tanks in the Eighth Army in North Africa and Italy. He was wounded and captured but made several temporarily successful attempts to escape, and in after years, he remained proud that the Germans had set a price on his head for his recapture.

It was while he was in the prison camps that he started conducting. He formed an orchestra of all the heterogeneous instruments he could accumulate, in due course expanding it somewhat with the help of instruments provided by the Red Cross. He arranged the music for them to play, writing out from memory the band parts of such works as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. This was a work popular with his fellow prisoners, if anathema to the German guards, because of its opening four notes whose rhythm was the same as the Morse code for V, a signal for victory which plagued the German occupiers throughout Europe.

He returned to the LPO after the war, but kept up his conducting, often taking rehearsals for an amateur orchestra which met on Sunday afternoons on a farm in South Croydon, an orchestra which never gave a concert in all its sixty years, but one which I also conducted some thirty years later. He also conducted an amateur orchestra that met at the Mary Ward Settlement, which was where I first met him. This training led him to the International Ballet, where he became associate conductor, and it was there that he met, wooed, and won his wife, the oboist Patricia Stammers.

He had also at some stage come into contact with Canon Francis W. Galpin who, while at the same time a full-time parish priest, was a leader in the initiation of the Early Music Movement, a collector of instruments, a writer on them (his *Old English Instruments of Music* was published in 1910), and above all a player of music on the instruments for which it was written and a believer that instruments were there to be played, not just to be looked at. The Canon had gathered a group of younger disciples, Tony among them, and after he died in 1945, eleven of those disciples founded the Society still known by the Canon's name. Tony's first major article appeared in the first issue of their Journal, his transcription of the entries for wind instruments in the Talbot Manuscript, a document of great importance, for it was compiled just at the moment that the new baroque instruments were coming into England, and the manuscript itself lies in the library of Tony's old college, Christ Church.

In 1954 Tony moved to Uppingham School as Music Master, and it was in the following year that he became editor of the *Galpin Society Journal*, the first of his two stints in that post. It was also while there that he wrote his *Woodwind Instruments and their History*, a book that it is fair to say, forty years later, is still unsurpassed as the best possible introduction to the subject. Tony was immediately acknowledged as the world's leading expert on woodwind instruments, so it was not surprising that when the Bate Collection of Historic Woodwind Instruments was finally established in the Faculty of Music of the University of Oxford, Tony was appointed to be the first curator.

After Philip Bate generously offered his collection to the University, Horace Fitzpatrick spent a number of years raising the money to establish the post of Lecturer/Curator (it was, from the beginning, a teaching post with the Lectureship the prime position and the curatorial responsibility of the Collection an adjunct). When he finally succeeded and the post was advertised in 1968, once Tony Baines applied for it, the result was foreseeable. I had applied myself and, when about to leave to catch the train to go to Oxford for the interview, I said to my wife "You know, if they're really unkind they'll say to me: Mr. Montagu, as Honorary Secretary of the Galpin Society [a post I then held], who do you think should have this job?," to which the only possible answer is "ACB." Well, they weren't so unkind, but they did have the sense to appoint Tony. It was while he was at the Bate Collection that he wrote the book perhaps of greatest interest to our members, *Brass Instruments, their History and Development*. This was a masterly survey, one on which much subsequent work by many people has been based, though it never quite had the same hands-on feel to it that had been so wonderful with the Woodwind book. Not surprising, perhaps; Tony had been a professional woodwind player but never more than an amateur on the brass. It is, in that respect, remarkable how successful he was in his understanding of how brass instruments

worked, how they feel and felt to play, for the book is never a prosaic history. As with all his writings, Tony comes through as a musician and a professional player.

It was also while he was at the Bate that he was responsible for the instrument articles in the *New Oxford Companion to Music*, a work that he followed, after his retirement, with the *Oxford Companion to Musical Instruments* which, along with his *Woodwind* and his wonderful museum within the covers of a book, *European and American Musical Instruments*, are likely to be his most lasting memorial. It was also then that he served his second stint as *Galpin Society Journal* editor, winding up as the longest-serving and most successful of all its editors. His time at the Bate was a wonderful flowering. He was inspiring as a teacher, infectiously enthusiastic as an organizer of Bate Bands and other ensembles. It's always said that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. Tony could. If a musician came into the Bate, Tony would thrust the eighteenth-century equivalent of his modern instrument into his hands, and willy-nilly he or she would find him- or herself playing the thing. In more than one case this has led to a successful career as a professional musician in the early music world. It was this behavior, among other aspects, which led me to say, at the beginning of this memoir, that he was somewhat unconventional as a curator. Not many today are so willing to pull things out of the cases for people to try, though I remember some others of the older generation of almost equal enthusiasms, Tom Penniman at the Pitt Rivers, for instance, Bill Fagg at the British Museum, Geoffrey Bushnell at the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, Otto Samson at the Horniman Museum, to name only a few.

Where Tony was certainly exceptional was in his willingness to lend instruments, not only to the students within the university, but to musicians of all sorts and from many other places, a custom which I was glad to be able to follow when I succeeded him. As a result, Bate instruments have been heard in many concerts and on many recordings, and they have inspired many modern makers to produce instruments based upon them.

Tony was always enormously helpful. I could never have produced my *Baroque & Classical* and *Romantic & Modern* books without his kindness in allowing me to photograph all the instruments I wanted, and giving up his time to help me to do so. Nor, very certainly, am I the only one whom he helped in this and other ways. He helped the Bate Collection, too. Many of his own instruments he gave to the Collection, and most of the rest he put there as loans, and these and more he has now bequeathed to the Collection in his will. Tony, in his shirt sleeves, with his pipe in his mouth, and usually with an instrument in his hands even if wishing it were a pint of beer, is someone whom few of us who knew him will ever forget. Those of us who remember him, and those of us who learned from him, whether or not we ever met him in the flesh, may like to know that his widow, Patricia, has asked that anybody who wishes to do so should make a donation to the Bate Collection in his memory, so that the Collection may continue to grow and its work to flourish. If you would like to do so, the address is Bate Collection of Musical Instruments, Faculty of Music, St. Aldate's, Oxford, OX1 1DB, UK.