

THE WAITS

by F. A. HADLAND

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Scanned to text and [annotated] by me. I apologise for any of the numerous errors introduced by the process that remain uncorrected. Please report them to me or Chris.

This article appeared long before the Early Music Revival. Therefore, Hadland, although more in touch with living memory of the waits in their last days and their reincarnation as The Christmas Waits, did not have the broader understanding we are privileged to have today (though that may yet prove to be no less rudimentary). By and large, this is one of the better essays about the Waits, and while there is much in here that is worth reading, please do not believe everything Hadland wrote. As with Bridge and Langwill, apply a little 'salt'.

James Merryweather, 13th March 2006 www.merryweather.me.uk

The Waits.

By F. A. HADLAND.

I.

To obtain a complete and adequate idea of the origin of the Waits would not only involve a vast amount of historical research, but also the examination of various theories which have caused much controversy in times past, and about which no absolute certainty seems to be attainable. It would be necessary to investigate the customs of most European countries; and ecclesiastical, civil, and military usages would have to be brought under review.

Before proceeding to offer a few notes on the subject, it may be observed that a purely religious origin has been claimed for the Waits. It is held by an old writer¹ that their nocturnal pipings may be traced to the custom of rousing people to participate in the worship of the Druids [He evidently doesn't think much of that - a good sign]. Be this as it may, it is certain that their employment as watchmen in a civil capacity is of considerable antiquity, and also that they have at various dates discharged the duties which are now associated with a military band. It is the writer's design to leave aside questions which are purely antiquarian, and to gather in a small compass a few interesting facts concerning the Waits as they existed in England, until their final disappearance within living memory. [Hadland's approach is very wise]

In dealing with our subject care must always be taken to keep separate the 'Waits and Minstrels; for, although they often discharged the same functions, they were for centuries hostile. On the one hand there were the trained musicians who had served apprenticeships to their art and who received official recognition and enjoyed special privileges, and on the other a host of itinerant minstrels, some of whom were capable, but most of whom were mere vagabonds. [A sensible analysis. {Yes, though I often wonder whether it is entirely the fault of W S Gilbert that the term "wandering minstrel" ever gained currency at all. Not that it's his fault – Nanki-Poo was only wandering because he'd left his position as second trombone in Titipu Town Band (or should one say second sackbut in the Titipu Waits?) to seek out his love, Yum-Yum.}] The laws regarding them, which now seem harsh were, in fact, directed against a public nuisance. Andrew Fletcher, of Saltoun, states that in 1698 there were 100,000 wandering mendicants in Scotland; not robbers by profession, but wanderers from place to place, extorting by force or insult food and alms wherever they went, and many of these were doubtless {that word again!} minstrels of a sort. Without stopping to discuss the probability of Fletcher's estimate being correct, or to speculate on what the number in England may have been, it is evident that a grave social scandal existed, and the attitude of the competent musicians who were approved members of guilds under the auspices of royalty, nobility, or municipalities, can be easily understood.

¹ Cleland, 1766

It is hardly worthwhile to go back earlier than 1314, when Hugh the trumpeter was enrolled in a guild at Leicester. Originally the waits were mainly watchmen, sounding or piping signals on such instruments as they carried. As the signals became more varied, the Watch began to assume something of a musical character, and to play such simple tunes as were in Vogue. [Reasonable speculation. Can we - do we need to - get nearer the truth? {I don't see how we can ever know, but it's the most likely explanation for Waits being called Waits, surely?}]

In the *Liber Niger Domus Regis* [1467-(1471-2)-1472?] quoted in Rymers *Fœdera* is an account of the musicians of the household of Edward IV. Mention is made of "A Wayte that nightly from Michaelmas to Shrove Tuesday pipe the watch within the Court fowere tymes - in the summer nightes iii times, and maketh Bon Gate² at every chamber door and office as well for feare of pyckers and pillers." [Watchman, not musician] Edward IV, kept thirteen minstrels and a wait. One of the minstrels was a verger or chief "that directeth them all in, festival days to their stations to blowings and pipings to such offices as must be warned to prepare for the King and his household at meals and suppers to be the more ready in all services and all these sitting in the hall together whereof some use trumpets some shawms and small pipes."

[See separate discussion of previous quotation of the wayte text from the *Liber Niger* which are fraught with differences.]

The year 1469 is an important date to note, for in that year the war between the regular minstrels and the hordes of incompetent players came to a head. King Edward IV granted to his own beloved minstrels a charter which gave them the control of all such guilds throughout the kingdom, except those of the City of Chester. In 1604 we hear of the Society of Minstrels in London, who petitioned the Crown for a new Charter of Incorporation. This was granted by James I. on July 8th of that year, thereby constituting the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

Among the numerous references to the Waits in the archives of London and other cities, the names of the instruments employed are often met with, but the names of the pieces played are generally undiscoverable. [We're finding a few more now] This is not to be wondered at, as set programmes were not in use till near the end of the seventeenth century, when Banister introduced them. In 1681, at a Lord Mayor's banquet, we are told that a performer "being endued with a melodious voice, doth in a proper posture extend his jawes and chanteth out this madrigal to a pleasant tune." In 1613, at the marriage of Frederick Count Palatine and Elizabeth daughter of James I., "the five trumpeters with their trumpets presented him with a melodious sound of the same, flourishing so delightfully that it greatly reioyced the whole Court, and caused thousands to say at that instant time, 'God give them ioy, God give them ioy.' "

The Waits were requisitioned whenever Royalty came to the City, and were stationed at various points of the route. They were in constant demand for weddings and all social functions. Serenading ladies appears to have been a lucrative branch of their work, and the eighteenth century would seem to have been their golden age. In *The Tatler* of September 9th, 1710, the writer says:-- "Scarce a young man of any fashion in a corporation who does not make love with the town music. The Waits often help him through his courtship; and my friend Banister has told me he was proffered £500 by a young fellow to play but one winter under the window of a lady that was a great fortune, but more cruel than ordinary. On a lady's birthday she was often serenaded with a "hunt's up," or "good morrow," and the custom has perhaps not quite died out.

In addition to their activities in social and municipal functions the Waits were often called upon to assist in the Service of the Church. In London they were occasionally associated with the choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral; and entries in the Fabric Rolls of York Minster refer to their assisting in the choir on more than one occasion. In 1599 a London comedian named Kemp, speaking from personal experience of the Norwich Waits, says that few cities in the realm had the like, and that they were capable of acting as choristers in any cathedral in Christendom. The splendid minstrels' gallery in Exeter Cathedral displays in its carvings representations of players on various instruments, and numerous other examples are extant.

² Bon Gate = Bon Guet. *Guet* expresses either watch or the person, or persons entrusted with the duty of watching.

They were sometimes in request for martial duties, and five of the Norwich Waits accompanied Sir Francis Drake to Cadiz in 1589, "went to the front," in fact, but only two returned.

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II.

I propose now to give the result of researches which I have been permitted to make in the records of the Corporation of London.

Various matters pertaining to the Waits were frequently before the Court of Common Council from an early date. By an order dated in the sixteenth year of Henry VIII., compensation was ordered to be given to them for the loss which they had sustained by the discontinuance of the ceremonial observance of dedication days of churches. In the same reign two of the King's Minstrels laid a complaint against certain persons who had infringed their rights, and the alleged offenders were ordered to appear before the court.

Permission was given to the Waits that each of them may take two apprentices (2 Ed, VI.).

"The Fellowship of Parish Clerks and Minstrels and the Juristers of Paul's shall be divided into sundry companies to sing and play in certain places to be settled at the next court," (3 Ed. VI.)

"Ordered that the whole fellowship of Parish Clerks and Minstrels shall sing and play this afternoon at the King's Matie's [probably Ma^{tie} or Ma^{ties} in the original, i.e. Maiesties = Majesty's] coming through the City according to the orders here taken at the last Court Day for the same in the sundry places hereafter expressed, viz., at the Bridge foot, Minstrels - at St. Magnus Cornhill, singing men - at St. Margaret's Church, Minstrels - at the Conduit at Gracechurch, singing men - against the Falcon there, minstrels at Leadenhall, singing men - at the Conduit in Cornhill, minstrels - at St. Mildred's at the Stock, singing men - at the Great Conduit in Chepe, Minstrels - at the Bow Church, singing men - at St. Peter's Church³ there, the Waytes - at the Little Conduit there, minstrels - against Pawles Scole, the children of Paul's - at Ludgate, minstrels - at the Conduit in Fleet Street, singing men - at St. Dunstan's Church there, minstrels - Temple Bar, singing men - and agreed that every of the said places shall be honestly garnished with Arras⁴ and other decent hangings." (3 Ed. VI.)

"Act of Common Council lately made concerning minstrels and interludes shall be proclaimed to-morrow." (7 Ed. VI.)

In the reign of Mary I. it was agreed that the Chamberlain shall buy a sackbut, which he brought into Court, at a cost not exceeding twenty-five shillings.

In the same reign it was ordered that the Waits of the City do attend upon the Mayor and Sheriffs on Candlemas Day at the Mansion House as they did in the Christmas holidays.

Also in Mary's reign under date 7th March, 1554, there is a precept by the Mayor directing that "all Vintners, Keepers of taverns, ale-houses, and other victualling householders, and all keepers of dancing houses, and keepers of unlawful games and plays called white and black and such other like Not to allow any minstrel or minstrels or any other whatsoever person or persons to sing any manner of song or songs or play any instrument or make or play any manner of interlude or play in their house,"

³ St. Peter's, Westcheap, was destroyed in the Great Fire of London, and the parish was afterwards annexed to St. Matthew's, Friday Street. When that church was pulled down in 1886, St. Vedast's, Foster Lane, became the church of the united parishes. There is a fine plane-tree on the site of St. Peter's which enjoys legal protection, and the surrounding buildings cannot be raised while the tree lives.

⁴ Tapestry, so named from the town of Arras, long famous for its manufacture, especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

There are numerous references to our subject in the reign of Elizabeth.

Jeffrey Foster, one of the City Waits, surrendered his office and also the chain of office which he received when appointed, and Walter Lowman was appointed in his place. (3 Eliz.)

All such common minstrels and dancing masters as were not free of the fellowship of minstrels were summoned before the Lord Mayor and warned to be obedient to the Wardens. (4 Eliz.)

Sundry persons keeping dancing schools were forbidden to keep the same. (5 Eliz.)

Richard Oker, a flute-player, to be paid 20s. yearly the first quarter's instalment to be paid at the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel. (12 Eliz.)

Committee appointed to allow or disallow as many of the company of minstrels as they shall think meet and expedient to keep dancing schools, and thereafter make report. (16 Eliz.)

It was ordained by the Court that the Chamberlain shall pay and deliver to the Wayts the sum of £10 in money as a free gift of this Court to buy certain new instruments withal to serve for the honour of the said City. (18 Eliz.)

Ordered that Lodovic Luk, a stranger, shall forthwith remove out of the City and liberties an instrument lately shown within the City called a multatude, and that the said Lodovic or any other stranger or foreign from the Freedom of the City shall not at any time make, set up, utter, sell, mend, nor tune, any kind of musical instrument within the same City or Liberties. (22 Eliz.)

The Chamberlain shall presently buy and provide the several instruments called a double saggbutt, a single saggbutt, and a curtal, for the musicians of the city at the charge of the city. (1597.)

Arnold Pinckley was admitted to be a drumster of the City, and to have such allowance as other drumsters have had, and to pay a certain allowance to the retiring player, Christopher Wayte. (1597.)

Edward Tydden, Cloth worker, was admitted to be a "ffife" to the City during the pleasure of the Court. (1598.)

John Molde, Draper, was admitted to be a drome to the City during the pleasure of the Court, and his good and honest demeanour. (1598.)

At the request of several Captains lately appointed for leading and training of the soldiers for Her Majesty's service, William Hoddesdon, Merchant Taylor, was granted and admitted to be drum maior of this City, to have hold exercise and enjoy the same with all fees thereunto due and accustomed during the pleasure of this Court and his good behaviour therein. (1599.)

Ordered that Andrew Bassanye, Arthur Bassanye, and Jeromy Bassanye, gents professing music, or any two of them, shall try and examine whether Arthur Jupon or Thomas Parkyns be the more skilful expert and sufficient musician in all manner of musical instruments, and to report thereon to this Court. (1601.)

Petition of the late Master and Wardens of the Musicians' Company that they may be made a brotherhood by the name of the Master Wardens and Society of the Company of Musicians for that their Letters Patent of Incorporation by the name of Musicians London granted in the second year of King James now called in. It is ordered that a Committee shall peruse a copy of the said Letters Patent and examine the cause of calling in the same, and also the said Petition and what is fit and requisite to be done therein. (1635)

"Ordered that the City Waits shall cease to play at the Royal Exchange on the Sundays as heretofore hath been accustomed, but shall perform the said service every holiday hereafter at and for the time accustomed." (1642.)

"Upon the humble Petition of Master Wardens and Assistants of the Company of Musicians London shewing that the Petitioners have been exposed to a great charge and troubles by the execution of His Majesty's Musicians for using their profession and the privilege of their Co. within this City and liberties and now at last have sued a Quo Warranto against them aiming wholly to destroy their society and government and to subject them to their own rule and authority forasmuch as the said Company of Musicians are an ancient member of

this City and have all the qualifications and do bear and perform all common charges and services as other companies of this City and are therefore to be varied and maintained in all their just rights and liberties. It is ordered by this Court that the City Counsellors and Solicitor of this City be advising and assistant to the petitioners for their defence in the said cause and that anything further be done and declared by this Court which shall be fit and advisable in their behalf. (1665.)

“John Gwillim Junr. admitted City Wayte loco Charles Ballot this day John Gwillim the yr. Citizen and Musician having produced Mr. Chamberlain’s receipt for the sum of £121 agreed by him with the Committee for letting the City Lands to be paid into the Chamber of London for the City’s use for the place or office of one of the 8 City Waytes of this City pursuant to a resolution of the Court of Common Council of the 6th February 1777 is by this Court admitted one of the 8 waytes of this City in the room and stead of Charles Ballot deceased to uphold exercise and enjoy the said place with all fees profits and commodities therunto due and of right belonging so long as he shall well and honestly use and behave himself therein.” (1802.)

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III.

In the foregoing entries reference is made to the Parish Clerks, and the following extracts from the Diary of Henry Machyn is of great interest in that connection. Machyn was a citizen of London, and his diary, which has been printed by the Camden Society, throws much light on some of the City customs :-- “The 6 of May [1554] was a goodly evensong at Yeldhall College⁵ by the Master of the Clarkes and the Fellowship of Clarkes with singing and playing as you have heard. The morrow after was a great Mass at the same place by the same Fraternitie when every Clarke offered a halfpenny. The Mass was sung by divers of the Queen’s Chapel and children. And after Mass: was done every Clarke went their procession two and two together, each having a surplice a rich cope and a garland. After them 4 score standards streamers and banners and everyone that bare had an alb or else a surplice and two and two together. Then came the waits playing and then between 30 Clarkes singing *Salve festa dies*. So there were 4 quires, Then came a canopy borne by 4 of the Masters of the Clarkes over the Sacrament with a twelve staff torchis burning. . . .”

From Machyn we also learn that “the Parish Clarkes were there and then using and doing after such order as the Companies and Fraternities of this City do use to doo.”

On the 27th May, 1555, “was the Clarkes’ procession from Yeldhall and there was as goodly a Mass as has been heard and every Clarke having a cope and garland with a hundred streamers borne and the Waits playing round Chepe and so to Leadenhall unto St. Albro⁶ Church and there they put off their gayer [gear] and there was the Blessed Sacrament with torchlight about and from thence to the Barbers’ Hall to dinner.

“1554.--The xxv day of Juin, anoder masse kept at the Gray-frers for the sextons of London and after pressessyons, with the Whettes plahyng and Clarkes syngyng thrug Chepesynd unto Soper Lane and agayn thrug Powlles chyrche yard by Master denes [place] and thrug Warwyke Lane unto the Gray-frers and so to dener unto the Kukes-hall.”

In the same year, when the Lord Mayor’s Company returned by water from Westminster and landed at “Powlles Warff,” they were met by a goodly pageant, including the “Wettes of the cite.”

⁵ The Chapel at the east end of the Guildhall, pulled down in 1822, called London College at one time, and dedicated to Our Lady, St. Mary Magdalen, and all Saints. It was built about 1299. The Mayors attended the weekly services, and on the occasions of their Elections and Feasts.

⁶ St. Ethelburga, Bishopsgate. The name of this Saint has appeared in many different forms; Alborough was the medieval spelling, and Ethelborough that of the Reformation period.

1556. "The first day of September was Sant Gylles day and there was a goodly proressyion about the parrych with the Whettes and the Canepe [canopy] borne and the sacrement and there was a goodly masse songe as bene hard"⁷ after which was "a grett dener". . . and the Whettes playng and divers odur [d = δ, therefore other as ledder = leather] mynstrelles."

The "Whettes" are again mentioned in the Lord Mayor's procession this year, and again in an ecclesiastical procession the next year. We also find it noted that in 1557, in the "Sextons' proressyion," the "Westes" took part, playing, while there was goog singing. In 1561, at 'the Grocers' Feast, there were "Mony worshipfull men and mony lades and gentyllwomen and grett chere both the whettes and clarkes syngyng and a number of vyolles playhyng."

The following extracts from contemporary writers concerning the association of the Waits with City festivities are of interest.

1558. 14 January. At the Queen's progress through the City "Upon the porch of St. Peter's Church door stood the Waytes of the Citie which did give a pleasant noyse with their instruments as the Queen's Mat^{tie} did pass by."

In 1566, when Sir Wm. Draper was Lord Mayor, 28 "wifelers" were in the procession. The music for the Barge consisted of 2 trumpets, 1 drum, 16 basses, half of which were double, and one solitary flute.

As we continue to peruse the records we come upon such entries as the following :-- "A sett of hautboits playing, and certain wyfflers in velvet cotes and chaynes of gold with white staves in their hands the xvi trumpeters viij and viii in a company"; and at Soper Lane end "a sweet voice was married to a very dull song."

At the opening of the New River in 1613 music was much in evidence, and there can be little doubt that the Waits took part. A contemporary writer who describes the ceremony thus alludes to music as an incentive to exertion :-- "The warlike music of drums and trumpets liberally beats the Aire--sounds as proper as in battell, for there is no labour that man undertakes but hath a warre within it selfe, and perfection makes the conquest."

On the 5th July, 1660, the City Waits appeared in their gowns and silver chains "with one quartermaster, one conductor."

In 1671, Sir George Waterman, Mayor. "His Lordship attended by the Wayts of the City is accommodated with variety of excellent musick, both loud and soft, vocal and instrumental, amongst which this ensuing song in parts receives the regard of his attention."

In 1672, Sir Robert Hanson, Mayor. "A hearty cup of wine is set round the table, in the mean time the music express their skill in playing divers new sprightly Ayres, whilst another musician with a cup of sack puts his pipe in tune to sing the melody called The discontented cavalier."

Sometimes we gain some knowledge of the favourite instruments.

In the mayoralty of Sir Joseph Sheldonil, in 1675, there were several pageants shepherds, &c., with Pipes, Recorders, Flagellets, Bag-pipe and Tumberley Bass.

In 1677. Sir Francis Chaplin, Knt., Lord Mayor. "The several companies adorned with streamers and banners, and fitted with Hoe-boyes, Cornets, Drums, and Trumpets, moved by water towards Westminster. . . . His Lordship and the guests being all seated, the City Music are in preparation to exercise their delightful science and finger their instruments with good skill and excellent humour, but (after some suits of Ayres being played) a person of good fancy with a well composed voice begins a new song of entertainment, one of the City Musicians being attired like to New-Bedlamite with appropriate action and audible voice singeth the second song to the tune of Tom-a-bedlam."

At the Lord Mayor's Banquet in 1678 "His lordship and the guests being all seated, the city music after a little consideration and consultation one with another conclude to habit themselves for the performance of a song in 3 parts in stilo recitativo or a musical interlude presented by 3 persons--Crab a West Countryman, Swab

⁷ As has been heard.

a seaman, and Self a citizen.”

“Crab sings a few notes of the Canarys and danceth to it,”

1679. Sir Robt. Clayton, Lord Mayor. “His Lordship and the guests being all seated, the City Music began to touch their instruments with very artful fingers, and after a Consort Lesson or two being played, and their ears as well feasted as their Pallets, an accute person with good voice, brisk humour, and audible utterance (the better to provoke digestion) sings this pertinent frolic called The Coronation of Canary.”

On one occasion “The music strikes up a Borée-like a whistle to dancing cubs in a Polish Forest.” Two drums beating The Switzer’s March are mentioned at another banquet, and the performance of “two or three sutes of airs” in 1671 is referred to. At another feast they sound a lesson on the” ho-boys, cornets, and sackbuts.” A separate payment of £12 11s. to the Drummers, Pfiffes, Auncyents⁸ and flourishers marks the distinction between the Waits and other musicians and functionaries.

The following refers to an entertainment given in 1680 by the Merchant Taylors’ Company to the Lord Mayor, Sir Patience Warde :- “. . . and to augment the delight there are several persons properly habited playing on sundry loud instruments of musick one of which with a voice as loud and as tunable as a treble hoboy chanteth out a ditty in commendation of the Merchant Taylors’ Trade. Then follows a song, The Protestant’s Exhortation.”

At the coronation of James 11. there was a band of six Waits in a balcony at Paternoster Row, and on an arch in Fleet Street 12 Waits, 6 Trumpets, and 3 drums.

When Sir John Fleet was Lord Mayor in 1692 the entertainment was furnished with three sets of musick. Their Majesties’ private musick on a scaffold over the Hustings, the King’s and City music in the gallery of the Hall, and the trumpets and kettledrums, &c., on a stage at the lower end of the Hall.

At one time there were nine of the City Waits, and it was said that this number was fixed upon to correspond with that of the Muses. In 1789 there were eight, and in 1802 they were replaced by trumpeters. These in their turn were the subject of economy, and in 1854 it was decided to fill up no more vacancies. In 1914 they were abolished, and it was decided to employ the trumpeters of the Household Cavalry in future.

(To be continued.)

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IV.

The frequent occurrence of the term” Whiffler” in describing pageants and processions down to the eighteenth century requires elucidation. They were originally pipers, a whiffle being a fife or small flute, and in course of time the increased number of players in a marching band necessitated the placing in front of one of their number to direct their movement in marching, and to give the signal laying or ceasing to play. Some of the functions of a modern drum-major were, in fact, discharged by the whiffler. After a time he ceased to be a player, and carried a wand. In the City pageants several of them appear to have walked in front to clear the way, and this duty sometimes devolved on the junior members of the Livery Companies. The Norwich Corporation retained their whifflers until 1832. Their costume was a relic of the Tudor period, and consisted of white stockings gartered below the knee with crimson ribbons, capacious trunk breeches of blue plush, a doublet of white cotton with full sleeves trimmed with light blue ribbon and ornamented with gilt buttons, a hat made of crimson cloth and edged with white ribbons, having a large blue bow and white feathers, and the shoes were decorated with large white rosettes. There were four whifflers employed, and each held a sword, broad and short in the blade, but having a long handle grasped by both hands. It was blunt at the point, and without edge, and with this harmless but dexterously flourished weapon, which they frequently threw up into the air and

⁸ Banner-bearers.

caught in its descent with unerring precision, they effectually kept the crowd back, and no one ventured to dispute their authority. [see York Music & update, also REED York for description of 1584 procession which included two sword flourishers one of whom rent the *auuncient*. Repair cost 1s]

On the disbandment of the Norwich Waits in 1731, among the items which were disposed of occurs the entry, "Five habits for the wiflers £2 12s. 6d."

Shakespeare employs the term whiffler once:

"Behold, the English beach
Pales in the flood with men, with wives, and boys,
Whose shouts and claps outvoice the deep-mouthed sea,
Which, like a mighty whiffler 'fore the King,
Seems to prepare his way." --K. Hen, V., Act V., *Chorus*.

The high efficiency of the Waytes at the end of the sixteenth century is evident from the fact that Thomas Morley, who was organist at St. Paul's, gentleman of the Chapel Royal, and a composer whose name is still honoured amongst musicians, dedicated his "Consort Lessons" in 1599 to the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London. The words of the dedication are :-- "But as the ancient custom hath been to retain excellent and expert musicians to adorn your Honour's famous feasts and solemn meetings, to these your Lordship's Waits I recommend, the same to your servants' careful and skilful handling.", The Consort Lessons in the book referred to are for 6 instruments, viz., 2 viols (1 treble and 1 bass), one flute, a cittern, a treble lute, and a Pandora.

Orlando Gibbons, the chief ornament of the vocal polyphonic school in England, was the son of a Wait at Cambridge, and John Banister, who was a leading musician of Restoration period, and the first to give regular concerts in London, was the son of a Wait of the parish of St. Giles in the Fields. In fact, the connection of the Waits with the best music of the day was of long continuance, and they seem to have represented the high-water mark of performing excellence.

Of course, there are numerous references to such an established institution in literature.

In "The Famous Historie of Promos and Cassandra," a play by George Whetstone (1578), are these lines:

"Let you men at Saynt Anne's Cross out of hande,
Ereck a stage that the Wayghts in sight may stande."

In "The Coxcomb" (Beaumont and Fletcher, 1610) occurs this passage :--

"Where were the Watch the while? Good sober gents they were like careful members of the City drawing in diligent ale and singing catches while Mr. Constable contriv'd the toasts -- these fellows would be more severely punish'd than wandering gipsies that every statute whips. . . ."

In "The Knight of the Burning Pestle," by the same authors, is a passage which seems to imply that the Southwark Waits were of special excellence. [Hadland doesn't quote it, but here it is]

CITIZEN: What stately music have you? Do you have shawms?

PROLOGUE: Shawms? No.

CITIZEN: No? I am a thief if my mind did not give me so. Rafe plays a stately part, and must needs have shawms; I'll be at the charge of them myself, rather than we'll be without them.

PROLOGUE: So you are like to be.

CITIZEN: Why, and so I will be. There's two shillings; lets have the waits of Southwark. They are as rare fellows as any are in England ; and that will fetch them over the water with a vengeance, as if they were mad.

In "The Witty Fair One," by James Shirley (1628), we find the following:

"We will be married here, but keep our wedding at my own house at Croydon. We will have the City Waits down with us, and a noise⁹ of trumpets. We can have drums in the country, and the train-band, and the

⁹ A band

Spaniards come an they dare.”

Matthew Bramble, in Smollett’s “Humphrey Clinker” (1771), was serenaded on his arrival at Bath; and the practice of so welcoming strangers continued for a long time. As recently as the early part of the nineteenth century, at Whitehaven, mariners were met and played in by the town musicians on their return from long voyages.

The custom of “Setting the Watch” on St. John’s Eve and St. Peter’s Eve must have been remarkable, and, as far as numbers are concerned, few pageants of modern times could vie with them. The Marching Watch, which was distinct from the Standing Watch, perambulated the streets of London and Westminster, every house being decorated with green birch, long fennel, St. John’s wort, orpin, lilies, and all manner of beautiful flowers, with festoons of oil lamps burning throughout the night.

In the first year of his reign Henry VIII. witnessed the procession, accompanied by Queen Catherine and a noble retinue. It is also said that on other occasions he was also present in the disguise of a Yeoman of the Guard. We are told that no less than 15,000 persons joined in the procession -- an enormous number, which should be received with caution.

Charles I. granted a Charter to the musicians of the City of Westminster; but it appears to have lain dormant for many years until immediately after the Restoration, the members who were still living “determined to rescue music from the disgrace into which it had fallen, and exert their authority for the improvement of the science and interest of its professors.” Fifty-two musicians, consisting of the King’s Band and other professors, natives and foreigners, the most eminent of the time, were enrolled in this Charter as the King’s Musicians. They hired a room in Durham Yard, Strand, and their first meeting was on the 22nd October, 1661, Nicholas Lanieri then being Marshall. They proceeded to summon, fine, and prosecute the first professors who dared to “take any benefit or advantage of Musique in England or Wales without first taking out a license from their fraternity” (Burney). On 13th January, 1663, it was ordered that Matthew Lock,¹⁰ Christopher Gibbons,¹¹ Dr. Charles Colman,¹² and William Gregory¹³ do come to the Chamber at Durham Yard on Tuesday next at 2 of the clock in the afternoon and bring each of them £10 or shew cause to the contrary.

But the meetings came to an end in 1679. Burney observes that as they were involved in lawsuits and incapable of enforcing the power they assumed and penalties they threatened, it was thought advisable to leave the art and artists to the neglect or patronage of the public.

As a set-off to the artistic music of the Waits may be noted the making of music(!) on the tongs “and other antique instruments.”

In the year 1719 the Ironmongers’ Company have this entry in their books:- “Paid John Healey for playing on the tongs on Lord Mayor’s Day, 10s.,” which seems to have been very ample remuneration for such a performance.

(To be continued.)

The Waits.

By F. A. HADLAND.

(Continued from page 178.)

V.

¹⁰ Matthew Lock (1630?-1677). Famous as a composer in his day, and the fine music to Davenant’s adaptation of “Macbeth” was for long attributed to him. He composed the music for “ye King’s saggbutts and cornets” for the progress of Charles II. through the City in 1661.

¹¹ Christopher Gibbons (1615-1676). Second son of Orlando Gibbons. Chorister of the Chapel Royal, and afterwards of Exeter Cathedral. Organist of Winchester Cathedral, 1638. Joined the Royalist Army, 1644. Organist of Westminster Abbey, 1660, and private organist to Charles II. Some of his compositions are extant.

¹² Dr. Charles Colman (d. 1664). Chamber Musician to Charles I. and Composer to Charles II.

¹³ William Gregory (d. 1663) was a musician in the households of Charles I. and Charles II. Composed sacred and secular music.

So far we have confined our attention principally to London and Westminster, but every town of any importance possessed Waits, and they often attained to a high reputation. Chester is in some respects of the greatest importance to a student of the subject. There it was the custom for a procession of Minstrels to go to the Church of St. John the Baptist annually on the Patronal Festival, and to play several pieces of sacred music kneeling. A feast followed. The Chester Minstrels were from an early period placed under the control of the Dutton family, and every minstrel in England or Wales coming into the county had to pay duty to the Master of the Minstrels or forfeit his instrument at the shrine of Our Lady. At the Chester Pageant of 1910 a book was issued under the musical editorship of Dr. J. C. Bridge and published by Messrs. Novello, which is still obtainable, and which contains much highly interesting matter, including four Waits' tunes, viz., "Chester Waits," "Iechyd o Gylch" (healths all round), "Namptwich Fair," and "Cheshire Rounds." The Recorders at Chester are a complete set, and Nuremberg is believed to be the only other town which possesses such. The Chester Recorders are the property of the Chester Archeological Society, and they may be seen in the Grosvenor Museum. The Waits also played on hautboys, cornets, and Violins. Each Wait had an attendant apprentice; so the traditions were carried on and efficiently maintained. A paper on the Chester Recorders was read by Dr. J. C. Bridge before the Musical Association on the 12th February, 1901, and this should be consulted by those who wish to know more of an interesting subject.

Norwich, as has already been mentioned, enjoys the honour of having sent musicians to "the front." At a Court held on 21st January, 1589, "This day was redd, in the Court a letter sent to Mr. Maiour and his brethren from Sir Frauncys Drake whereby he desyreth that the waytes of this citie may be sent to him to go the new intended voyage¹⁴ whereunto the waytes being here doo all assent. Whereupon it is agreed that they shall have vj cloakes of stamell cloath made them ready before they go. And that a wagon shalbe provided to carry them and their instrumentes and that they shall have iiij^{li} to buye them 3 new hoboyes and one treble recordour and x^{li} to beare their chardgys., And that the City shall hyer the wagon and paye for it. Also that the chamberleyn shall paye Peter Spratt x^s for a saquebutt case and the waytes to deliver to the chamberleyn before they go the cities cheanes."

In 1536-7 there was a "Triumph ffor the concepcion of the Queen's grace."¹⁵ "Paid to the iiij Waytes for their labor blowynge upon the crosse time of the p'cession xij^d."

1688, February 6th, "Charles English musitian apptd one of the Waytes and musitians of this city, and upon his and Robert Bryant's security by bond in xl. The silver chayne formerly Sandlyn's is delivered to him and a Hautboye and Flag of Sylke and a cornet. Feb. 13 Chas. English one of the Waits of the City had an old Hoboye lent him for a month to practice with. Matthew Stanton one other of the Waytes had an old sackbut lent him about a month since."

The reputation of the Norwich Waits was evidently high and Kemp's testimony to that effect has already been noticed (p. 107).

All the Norwich Guilds were abolished by Statutes of Henry VIII. and Edward VI., except St. George's Company, and they dissolved in 1731. They were originally founded in 1385, being a society of brethren and sisters in honour of St. George. They provided a chaplain to say Mass every day in the Cathedral for the welfare of the living members of the Guild and the repose of the souls of those who had departed. They were in debt in 1731, and were, in fact, "sold up."

York furnishes us with considerable material for our subject. The Waits there formed a Guild [they were members], and the names of many of them appear in the Freeman's Roll, several of them having been admitted to that honour without fee, showing that their services were well appreciated. They performed in the monasteries and in the houses of rich merchants. The tenure of "Waytemete," or providing for the food of the Waits or watchmen, was in force in the thirteenth century [not specifically a York thing, and I don't think mentioned in York sources].

¹⁴ The Portuguese and Spanish Expedition.

¹⁵ Jane Seymour, the mother of Edward VI.

Their participation in the services at the Minster at Pentecost and other seasons is recorded, and has been already alluded to.

The Feast of Corpus Christi, with its procession, was celebrated in York with much splendour, and the Waits had their place in the ceremonies. In 1546 11s. is ordered to be paid for a base shalme [that's what it says in the records, but was it the same instrument as the 17th c. bass shawm described by Praetorius?]. The rules of the Guild appear to have been very strict, and incompetent outsiders were kept at a distance. An examination before the Master and whole Fellowship of the Guild was necessary before admission.

The Commonwealth suppressed the Minstrels, but in the eighteenth century they again appear on the page of history.

The following quaint lines were written early in the eighteenth century, and are not without interest: [The words have not been correctly copied. Some corrections are inserted]

“In a winter’s morning,
Long before the dawning,
Ere the cock did crow,
Or stars their light withdraw,
Waked by a hornpipe pretty,
Played along York City;
By th’ help o’r night’s bottle,
Damon made this [a] ditty;
In a winter’s night,
By moon or lanthorn-light,
Through hail, rain, frost, or snow
Their rounds the music go;
Clad each in frieze [frize] or blanket
(For either Heaven - be thanked!) [no () in original]
Lined with wine a quart,
Or ale a double tankard.
Burglars send [scudd] away,
And bar-guests dare not stay,
Of claret snoring sots
Dream o’er their pipes and pots,
Till their helpmates wake ‘em,
Hoping music’ll [Musick will] make ‘em
Find our [y^e] pleasant Cliff,
That plays the Rigadoon;
Candles four in the pound
Lead up the jolly round,
While [Whilst] cornet shrill i’ the middle,
Marches, and merry fiddle;
Cortal [Curtal] with deep hum, hum,
Cries out, “We come, we come!”
Theorbo [Theorbe] loudly answers,
“Thrum, Thrum, thrum, thrum, thrum!”
But their fingers frost-nip’t
So many notes are o’erslipt,
That you’d take sometimes
The waits for Minster chimes;
And then to hear their music
Would make both me and you sick;

And much more, too, to hear

A roopy fiddler call

With voice as Moll would [like her that] cry, [I wonder if he used an alternative version?]

‘Come, shrimps or cockles buy!

Past three, fair, frosty morn!

Good morrow, my masters all!’”

In 1835, when the Municipal Corporation Act was passed, the City Waits were abolished, but a small company of musicians continued to perambulate the streets for the gratification of a few old citizens who wished to keep alive an ancient custom which called up happy memories of bygone years. The last Waits were 2 violins and 2 violoncellos, and the practice was only discontinued in 1902 [Three were dismissed at the very end - 1902?! Is he still discussing York?].

John Camidge, who was born at York in 1735, was appointed organist of the Minster in 1756, and held that post until 1799. He was a pupil of Greene and Handel in London [It was alleged, apparently by his grandson Thomas Simpson Camidge who, it is acknowledged, had aspirations.]. He composed some harpsichord Lessons, but his name is best remembered by the fine march dedicated to the Duke of York, which was composed for the York Waits, and which is now played almost daily at the changing of the King’s Guard at Buckingham Palace when the Old Guard marches out.¹⁶ [Simple arrangement in *York Music*. Apparently, he also wrote other music for the waits which found their way into the archives of the York Masonic Lodge. I failed to track them down.]

Here are printed four bars of a simple piano arrangement which scanned as gobbledegook.

In Leeds the last of the Corporate Waits, a Mr. Thomas Crawshaw, died in 1858 at the age of seventy-four, and musical honours were paid to his memory at the funeral in Burmantofts Cemetery.

Before quitting Yorkshire, Ripon claims our attention on account of the survival of an ancient and unique custom.

The first governors of Ripon were styled *vigilarii* or Wakemen. The office of the Wakeman was originally a life tenure, but subsequently the appointment was made annually from the twelve “eldermen.” An offspring of this epoch still survives in the performance of the ceremony of sounding a large horn every night as the Cathedral clock chimes nine. A civic officer in antique uniform proceeds to the market cross, and there gives three blasts “loud, dismal, and long,” after which he hastens to the principal door of the Mayor’s residence and repeats the toots. The original purpose of this custom was to denote setting the watch or guard over the town. [the tradition continues today]

Early in the nineteenth century the Corporation of Northampton had a band of musicians called the Corporation Waits, who used to meet the Judges at the entrance into the town at the time of the Assizes. They were four in number, attired in long black gowns, two playing on violins, one on a hautboy, and the other on a “whip and dub,” or tabor and pipe.

In Bristol the Waits do not appear to have employed wood-wind instruments, always giving preference to brass. In 1585, when a Spanish invasion of England was threatened, the militia marched to the sound of drums and fifes; but it is thought likely that the Waits were merged in the military music.

That Waits’ music was appreciated and encouraged three centuries ago is evident from an entry dated 1611 in the records, concerning the purchase of a new Saggbutt for the Waits at a cost of £4, which, allowing for the difference in the value of money, would probably represent the price of a very good instrument.

Eight years later, in 1619, the Corporation engaged “a fifth man to play with the other musitions of the City, on the saggebutt, to make up a fifth part.”

The two brothers who now discharge the functions of Corporation Trumpeters may be said to be the modern

¹⁶ In the British Museum, in a collection of MS.’ music once in the possession of the Egerton family, is an arrangement of this march (without the Trio) for the harp.. The name of the once popular composer, Louis von Esch, is placed over it. He was probably the arranger, certainly not the composer. (Addl. MSS. 25077.)

representatives of the Waits. They wear short cutaway coats of dark blue plush, knee-breeches to match, a scarlet waistcoat, and buff gaiters, with jaunty jockey caps.

It is somewhat difficult to distinguish in the City Annals, between the *bona-fide* Waits and the other bands and musicians who evidently had a large share in the civic rejoicings; but they were undoubtedly a distinct and important guild of their own in days when every Bristolian belonged to one guild or another.

Four silver badges and chains were purchased for the Waits in 1683. The chains, as they now exist, preserved in the Council House, are doubtless of that date; but the dimidiated rose and pomegranate of Queen Mary on the superimposed shields warrant the supposition that they date from the middle of the sixteenth century.

The Bristol Waits were disbanded in 1686, but they appear again in 1700, when we find them officiating at public ceremonies and engaged as serenaders.

In 1715 two, at any rate, of the sackbuts appear to have been replaced by silver trumpets at a cost of £21 17s. 6d., and these instruments are still played on.

The Civic quartet held their position in Bristol until 1835, when the passing of the Municipal Reform Act, and the economies thereby effected, brought their harmonious career to an end.

(To be concluded)

The Waits.

By F. A. HADLAND.

(Continued from page 200.)

VI.

Although the Waits were in existence at the beginning of the nineteenth century, their days were numbered, and the various guilds were gradually disappearing. In Westminster in 1822 the appointment of Waits rested with the Court of Burgesses, and the *Times* of that year contains a report of a case heard, in which Munroe, the authorised principal Wait, took proceedings against certain men for infringement of their rights; but the prosecution failed, partly because the law against minstrels had become obsolete through omission to mention them in the latest Act against vagabonds, and partly because one of the defendants produced proof of having served seven years' apprenticeship to the Chief Wait.

In 1829 a notice was issued by six persons calling themselves the Regular Christmas Waits cautioning the public against supporting unauthorised players. The instruments were :- Octave, 1st clarinet, trombone, French horn, 2nd clarinet, and, violoncello.

In 1832 the magistrates granted a licence to four men "to play the Waits" in the parish of St. Mary, Lambeth.

By 1835 touting seems to have quite invaded the profession, and a notice sent out in that year is such an amusing specimen of composition that it is worth while to give it in full.

Circular sent out in the parishes of St. John and St. Margaret, Westminster.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,--With sensible recollection of bygone patronage, your melodists the Christmas Waits beg to offer their best compliments on the approaching festival on this occasion, as heretofore, as been numerous and select, and trust to merit the kindness of your favors, which has enlivened our homes and cheered our hearts for a series of years with our sprightly notes of melody, *awaking sweet Echo* on the dull ear of Night has stolen away and again lulled you to repose with *the soothing Cadenza* of the lullaby. Musicians--J. Wormald 1st violin, 8 Gardners Lane, Westminster. J. Hawkins 2nd violin, 60 Monument Street; J. Tompson, Clarinet. W. Batman, Violincello. In respectfully taking our leave, we beg to remind you that as some who are pretenders to the *magic wand of Apollo* would attempt to impose on your liberality and defraud us of your favors it may be necessary to say we hope you will not give your donations to any but the above-mentioned musicians as being the original Waits."

The appropriation in modern days of the name Waits by wretched street-players and singers at Christmastide is unfortunate, as it has thrown contempt on the memory of a worthy institution. It seems curious that in England, where the cultivation of music has been advancing for many years, a good thing has been allowed to decline and finally to die out, while hordes of incapable foreigners are encouraged.

A number of tunes are in existence which were identified with the Waits of particular towns [Caution! See comments inserted in Bridge & Langwill. We need a full appraisal of these tunes and the likelihood of each of them being played by waits.], such as "London Waits," "Bristol Waits," &c. Four of these have been alluded to when dealing with the Chester Music. Through the long period during which Corporation Musicians flourished, they doubtless played and sang the music which enjoyed current popularity, and their *répertoire* must, generally speaking, be sought for in the songs, dance tunes, and marches, and in later times in the Lessons and Suites, which figured largely in musical performances.

Perhaps the best known of these special Waits' tunes is the beautiful little Fal, lal, la, known as "The Waits," by Jeremiah Savile (1673). It is to be found in "Playford's Musical Companion," and it has for long been a favourite with the Madrigal Society and other similar bodies. The late Henry Leslie's Choir used to perform it 'with great distinction.'

A short description of the obsolete instruments mentioned in these articles may be useful to some readers:

Cittern.--Sometimes called the English Guitar. Strung with wire.

Cornet.--Of course not the modern cornet-à-pistons, which is a nineteenth-century invention. It was a reed instrument somewhat resembling a hautboy, but larger, and of a coarse quality of tone [So wrong, and not so different from what Bridge thought it was, in the presence of Canon Galpin!]. In use for a long time for sacred and secular performances.

Curtal.--A wood-wind instrument having a reed. It was of the bassoon type, and it formed a bass to the hautboy.

Lute.--An ancient stringed instrument which underwent many modifications until its disappearance about two centuries ago. The performer used the fingers of his left hand to press the strings on the frets, and plucked the strings with his right. Three centuries ago it enjoyed as great popularity as the piano now does. [Shows how, in some respects, people such as Hadland had a lot to learn in 1915, before the Early Music Revival. We are privileged to live now.]

Pandora.--A large instrument of the Lute kind, but, like the Cittern, strung with wire instead of gut. [Bandora]

Recorder.--The flute-à-bec. They were choice and expensive instruments, and were made in sets. The Flauto traverso displaced them about the middle of the eighteenth century. Dr. J. C. Bridge's paper on them has been already mentioned, and it is probably the best description extant.

Sackbut.--The old English Sackbut or Sagbut was a bass trumpet with a slide like the trombone.

Shawm.--A wind instrument with a double reed; It was made in different sizes from bass to treble. Sometimes called a Wayght, from the players' designation.

Whip and Dub.--The Tabor and Pipe, sometimes called Whittle (*i.e.*, whistle) and Dub. A combination of instruments not quite extinct yet in some remote places. The Tabor, a small drum, was hung on the left wrist, and beaten with a small stick held in the right hand. The pipe was held and fingered by the left hand. It was often employed for Morris Dances.

In conclusion, I desire to tender my grateful thanks to the following, who have kindly rendered me valuable assistance in the compilation of these notes :--

The Corporation of the City of London, for permission to search the Archives at Guildhall, and for the personal assistance rendered to me in the work.

Dr. J. C. Bridge, organist of Chester Cathedral, for much original information respecting the Waits of the City of Chester and the instruments on which they played.

Mrs. Green-Armytage, of Clifton, for permission to use the information in her lecture on the Bristol Waits.

F. Johnson, Esq., Deputy Archivist to the Corporation of Norwich.

I have also obtained useful information from Mr. T. P. Cooper's excellent work, "Christmas Waits and Minstrels of Bygone York," published by Mr. Story, of Micklegate, York, which contains much of interest in a

small compass.