



## ***TACET TIMES – 6***

Well, I think you would agree that we have moved TPS into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, with our AGM and ExCo meetings held on Zoom. This has been a new way of communicating for some of us, but it means that we can stay in touch with colleagues, friends and family and feel just a little less detached from normality.

It's cooler today, for which I am rather grateful. One can feel guilty at sitting indoors stuck to the computer when the sun is brightly shining – I can still hear my father saying *what are you doing with your nose in a book on such a lovely day?* But there are things to do, there are always things to do, that are so easy to ignore but catch up with you in the end.

I have been outside a lot of the time, though, and I have to echo the thoughts of a number of my friends and family, which is that the garden looks wonderful at the moment. There has been time to get out there and pull up those weeds or plant those new shrubs, but I'm not sure that we will be permitted to carry on watering each evening, certainly not from the hose which makes it so much easier.

This edition of *Tacet Times* is rather fuller than normal – we have added a summary of what happened in the AGM prior to the usual distribution of the formal Minutes. If you have any questions about what is reported, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Joanna Mace**

[secretary@tonphil.org.uk](mailto:secretary@tonphil.org.uk)

© 2020 Tonbridge Philharmonic Society

## News update:

- **AGM:** here is a summary of what happened – look out for the Minutes in full to follow later -

### Summary of AGM 2020 for Tacet Times

We can report to those who were not able to join us last night that the meeting went very well. Steve Minton hosted the meeting and commented that everyone was exceptionally disciplined in their ways of asking questions etc. Big thanks are due to Steve and to Stewart Dearsley for making it happen. The minutes of the meeting will be circulated to you all once agreed by ExCo, but this is a taster of what was discussed and agreed.

This was Rosie's last meeting as Chair (our Constitution only allows for 2 terms of three years in the same role), and she expressed her thanks to everyone for their hard work during what can only be described as possibly the most challenging period in the Society's history. She told us that she had accepted the post with a determination to play her part in maintaining and developing this amazing organisation. Given what has transpired, I think we can fairly say she more than achieved her goal. Robert Skone James thanked her for putting her skills, knowledge and energies at our disposal and said that he was jolly glad to have been on the panel rather than as an interviewee when we were recruiting our new MD. As an HR professional, Rosie drew up an exemplary matrix for the recruitment, and provided a searching list of questions!

Voting took place by means of the Zoom facility of 'raising hands', monitored by Steve and Stewart. Votes took place to:

- Agree the Minutes of last year's meeting
- Accept the Accounts 2018/19 and the re-appointment of our independent reviewer
- Appoint the following to ExCo:
  - Society Chair: Robert Skone James
  - Treasurer: Graham Bignell
  - Orchestral Deputy Chair: Sue Gray
- Appoint an interim Deputy Chair to the Society for one year, pending Adrian Twiner's return:
  - Rosie Serpis was appointed

The newly appointed members will take up their responsibilities from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

In addition voting took place on proposals for subscription levels for the season 2020/21. The proposals were that:

- a) In the (unlikely) event that normal activities resume, the subs level should be maintained at £165.00, with the usual concessions

- b) For the period of disruption, and in order to ensure that we can continue to offer work to Ben Westerman and, we hope, to Jong-Gyung Park, the subs will be payable as normal.

However, ExCo appreciate that this is a time of financial challenge for some people, so have acknowledged this by reducing the subs to £30 per term for those who need a lower sub while we are not doing face to face events. The subs will rise to the normal level once our face to face activities resume.

- c) The meeting was reminded that under both provisions there remains the option for members to apply to the Morrish Fund. This money was given by our President to help Members remain part of the Society should they be in financial difficulties. Applications should be made via the Chair, Treasurer, Orchestral or Choral Chair and are treated in the strictest confidence. The only people who will know if someone has applied are the Chair and Treasurer, and either the Orchestral or Choral Chair if they are the recipient of the application.

All of the above motions regarding the Minutes and Accounts, the appointments to the Executive Committee, and the proposals regarding subscription levels were passed unanimously with the exception of one abstention on the matter of retaining the subscription level at £165.

As with any Society, there are lots of people working behind the scenes to make everything happen smoothly and enjoyably, but these people move on and so volunteers have to be sought to replace them. This time we are looking for:

- A replacement for the Friends and Patrons Secretary, as Graham is taking over the role of Treasurer
- Assistance for the Marketing Team – which now comprises just Philippa! We need someone to take over the provision of printed media (programmes, flyers etc) as Saskia has decided to stand down in order to take an intensive course of study, and someone to focus on social media now Victoria has moved away. Either of these roles could be taken by someone who does not actually sing or play, a partner or a young person studying or working in marketing, but we do need two people urgently before things pick up again
- Additional members of the Social Committee: this is particularly important at the moment as we are hoping the Social Committee will be very involved in some of the virtual activities that we want to get going over the summer (we don't intend to have the usual break from TPS for the summer – since these are not 'usual' times!)

Ben Westerman was present for the meeting and he and Rosie put forward some of the ideas that we have for music content going forward. We want to do the Verdi *Requiem*, since it was performed in our 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> seasons, and would like to include the Duruflé *Requiem*, as members were very much enjoying the work we did on it (in spite of a fiendish viola part!). Of course we can make no firm decisions yet, especially in the light of the scientific reports on the increased risk of transmission when people are singing, as the breath is expelled with more energy than usual. Ben will, however, be

putting together some singing that can be done on Zoom, with which all members will be welcome to join in – especially those from the orchestra.

Stewart Dearsley and Steve Minton will soon be contacting section and voice reps in order that they can channel ideas for activities that we might consider helping to take place in the future – so watch this space!

The Executive Committee would like to thank the almost 80 people who joined in the meeting and took part in the voting. This number is only slightly down on the normal attendance, and we feel that the requirements of our Constitution were more than adequately met on Wednesday evening.

- **Ben Westerman** – Ben's latest video – this time on the History of Music will hit your inbox very soon, and I can commend his explanation of the first steps in the development of music as we know it. The short extracts are very short, but he has added a playlist so that you can go back and explore a little more if you should wish to do so.



## Memories are made of this .....

*Brian has sent another thought on our current circumstances:*

### Handel in Bloom

There being no choir practice has meant I have had more time to water our garden. It has been very dry, and I can only remember one or two wet days in April and May. The sunshine has made the roses especially prolific, and the bush with most blooms on it is called 'For your Eyes only'. It must have about 80 flowers on it, more than ever before - and perhaps it is aware that there will soon be an 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in our family!

Red 'Dublin Bay' is enjoying our pergola and is heading for the summit. 'Handel' is also by the pergola, but so far has only produced four flowers. It faces across towards 'Dublin Bay', which we think is appropriate as it was on Dublin Bay that 'The Messiah' was first performed. 'Handel' is a shimmer of pink on white, and as the summer progresses it will flower more and more.

Do you know of any other roses named after composers? Mozart may have been the first chosen in the 1930's. When I have been to the Chelsea Flower Show I stagger from the Great Marquee along to the open air picnic space and listen to the bands and music groups. On occasion I have heard Handel played by a military band; something from 'The Water Music' or the 'Royal Fireworks' suite. It is delightful on a hot day with your Pimms under the Ranelagh trees as you think *shall I buy more tulips?* The variety 'Carmen' is very bewitching.





## Poetry Corner

*Rosie says: I always loved this poem (and the film for which it was written) as a child - I think I was captivated by the combination of words and rhythm. Having re-watched it as I thought about my choice of poem, I realise that parts of it are a great rhythmic, diction practice for us singers. It reminds me of getting to grips with that much loved, fiendish piece we did with Matthew! Additionally, during these really tough times, I have picked up my pen, chosen cards for friends and family (particularly my sister at Nutley Hall and Mum whilst she was in hospital) and been so grateful for our brilliant postal service. I also very much look forward to the postie's daily visit! I like getting letters and cards as much as I like sending them.*

### The Night Mail

WH Auden

This is the night mail crossing the Border,  
Bringing the cheque and the postal order,

Letters for the rich, letters for the poor,  
The shop at the corner, the girl next door.

Pulling up Beattock, a steady climb:  
The gradient's against her, but she's on time.

Past cotton-grass and moorland boulder  
Shovelling white steam over her shoulder,

Snorting noisily as she passes  
Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.

Birds turn their heads as she approaches,  
Stare from bushes at her blank-faced coaches.

Sheep-dogs cannot turn her course;  
They slumber on with paws across.

In the farm she passes no one wakes,  
But a jug in a bedroom gently shakes.

Dawn freshens, Her climb is done.  
Down towards Glasgow she descends,  
Towards the steam tugs yelping down a glade of cranes  
Towards the fields of apparatus, the furnaces

Set on the dark plain like gigantic chessmen.  
All Scotland waits for her:  
In dark glens, beside pale-green lochs  
Men long for news.

Letters of thanks, letters from banks,  
Letters of joy from girl and boy,  
Receipted bills and invitations  
To inspect new stock or to visit relations,  
And applications for situations,  
And timid lovers' declarations,  
And gossip, gossip from all the nations,  
News circumstantial, news financial,  
Letters with holiday snaps to enlarge in,  
Letters with faces scrawled on the margin,  
Letters from uncles, cousins, and aunts,  
Letters to Scotland from the South of France,  
Letters of condolence to Highlands and Lowlands  
Written on paper of every hue,  
The pink, the violet, the white and the blue,  
The chatty, the catty, the boring, the adoring,  
The cold and official and the heart's outpouring,  
Clever, stupid, short and long,  
The typed and the printed and the spelt all wrong.

Thousands are still asleep,  
Dreaming of terrifying monsters  
Or of friendly tea beside the band in Cranston's or Crawford's:

Asleep in working Glasgow, asleep in well-set Edinburgh,  
Asleep in granite Aberdeen,  
They continue their dreams,  
But shall wake soon and hope for letters,  
And none will hear the postman's knock  
Without a quickening of the heart,  
For who can bear to feel himself forgotten?



## Short Story

Here is another of the 'Hopper' stories:



### The Long Reach

It was late September, that stage of the year when the day's hold on the heat is slipping, and the fine edge of the wind catches you by surprise with the ghost of a shiver. There'd been no problem with taking the kids out of school for a few days, and no-one in the office would think it odd that I should be away that week. We were always quiet until after Columbus Day, mid-October. That's when everyone realised that their tax returns would be due very soon, and then we all had to really knuckle down. This was compensation for later on when we had to work well into the evening and, as the filing deadline approached, through the night when necessary.

We'd had torrential rain for the last week, but now the weather had improved a bit and I needed to have some time to think, somewhere away from my wife and children, none of whom knew the meaning of quiet. I decided the weather was good enough to allow me to take the boat out one last time before we closed up the cottage the next day and retreated to the city for the winter.

I left Daisy and the girls packing up the things we wanted to take back to the city with us and walked down to the dock. *Swallow* was a twenty-four foot gunter rig yacht, a bit of a handful for one guy on his own, but manageable as long as the weather didn't cut up too rough. I was fit enough, even at my advanced age of forty-three, although the grey was beginning to show if you looked carefully among the blonde hairs. I had bought the boat three years before from someone I knew; he was heading out west for a while to set up a branch office in California and wouldn't be back often enough to make it worthwhile keeping her. That afternoon I needed the tranquillity I found when sailing. I had a decision to make.

There was no-one around when I got down to the waterfront. I wasn't surprised, the city folks who summered around that area had been moving out for the last couple of weeks and the guys who worked there were hunched over cups of coffee in the black-tarred hut to one side of the jetty. I jumped down onto the boat from the boardwalk and set about clearing off the covers, then opened up the hatch and went down into the cabin. It smelled musty in there, it had been shut up for a couple of weeks from when the weather had deteriorated, but was dry in the bilges when I looked. No leaks that year; the work the maintenance team on the dock had done over the previous winter had done the trick. Well, it was just as well it had, it sure cost enough.

It took me about twenty minutes to make ready and cast off, then I brought her round into the wind and set off at a steady rate. It felt good, sitting in the stern with my hand on the tiller, the movement of the hull through the water sending a vibration up through my feet as we passed over the slight swell. For the moment, all I could do was to concentrate on the boat and where I was going. I had decided to make for Bonnet Sound, around the headland from the bay where the boat was kept, travelling out of the wide open river mouth with a bar that you had to watch for just before you get out into the open sea. The tide had just turned against me, and I had to be mindful of the time if I wanted to get back before the lowest water. I had a couple of hours to stooze around and I knew at the end of the day my face would feel tight from the sun and wind.

There was not a soul to be seen out on the water. Just the faint smudge of a couple of ships away on the horizon, plying their trade between New York and Boston. There was not as much shipping as there used to be; at one time the area around here was busy with fishermen, small coasters and bigger freight and passenger vessels but they'd long gone for the most part.

The wind was set just right, even though I was punching the tide as I made a long reach down the line of the river. The sails were full above me, creaking and straining as I pulled on the sheets and then flapping slightly at the edge when I spilled the wind out, trying not to ship water. Heeled over like I was, I had difficulty keeping my balance and grimaced as a wave sloshed up over the freeboard and into the well of the deck in which I was standing. I was going to have wet feet for the rest of the trip.

I was tracking parallel to the shore but not so close that I would catch on the shallows. It was a nice line between holding in where the tide is weaker and staying far enough off to avoid scraping the bottom and maybe getting stuck.

The sun was still warm even though it sat lower in the sky now. I tightened the hat strap under my chin as I knew the wind would get stronger as I got out round the headland. Looking up I saw the old lighthouse with its cottages clustered like young around a parent. They said it had been built in the 1890's and had served the community well when their living was made from fishing and their boats were the only reasonable means of transport to the nearest town of any size.

Out into the choppy waters and I reefed in some of the sail to give better control. If only life were this easy! Too much wind, slacken off a line; not enough, tug the sheet tighter to hold the air in the sail. Wind in the opposite direction to the course you want to follow, tack across and back until you get there. It's not so simple in real life, though, is it?

I'm a simple guy. You wouldn't notice me if you passed me in the street. I love my wife and family, I'm good to my mother (my father died four years ago), I go to church regularly and give to charity. I coach junior basketball at the school. I studied evenings to get my accountancy qualifications and was working my way up through the firm. Would I become a partner? Probably not. I wasn't one to shine, I just kept my head down and turned in my assignments on time. I was thorough in my reports and would never set the world on fire. So why should it be me this was happening to?

As I turned the nose in toward Bonnet Sound things got quieter, and it wasn't long before I was able to drop anchor in the lee of the shore. I watched to make sure I wasn't drifting, marking my position against that of the wooden church, the bell outlined in the tower black against a deepening blue sky. There were clots of cloud massing on the horizon, building up for the evening's release of all that heat and energy. I looked at my watch. Four twenty-five. I would give myself an hour and then I would up anchor and run for home.

All was silent now, sails down in a heap on the foredeck, no breeze here to slap the rigging against the mast. I sat back and uncapped the beer that I'd brought with me. Always think best with a beer in my hand, but just one. Didn't want to take any chances with the return journey.

I thought back to where it had started. Just an ordinary day in the middle of last week - the end of August, and hot as hell. I was working on the audit of Jensen's Mills' three ledgers of accounts for that year, and had only to complete the management summary and turn it over to the girls in the pool for typing up. I don't think I'd have noticed anything odd, but for the fact that the paper in one section of the final ledger felt different from the others. Now, I'm interested in paper, owing to the fact that my father was in that business when I was a child. I loved it when he'd bring home samples and share them out between us children. He explained to us how rags made a finer product than wood chip, but was more expensive, of course. He showed us how some was deckle-edged, an irregularity that imitated the finish of hand-made paper. And then there were all the different shades of cream and white – he didn't approve of coloured papers, said that people of breeding would never use such a thing.

The outside binding of the last ledger of the three was just the same as the previous two, but inside I could see that the middle pages were a slightly whiter, bleached colour than those at the beginning and the end, and if you ran them through your fingers, you could feel a roughness that the others didn't have. We always recommended the best ledger books, it meant that there was less likelihood of the ink not holding on the paper or bleeding through.

I sat and considered what I seemed to have found. I was sure that there must be a good explanation. Perhaps the original ledger had been damaged in some way. But why had Jensen's' head book keeper not advised us that this was the case here?

I started to analyse the situation. It was the final ledger of the year, covering just the last three months. I looked at the writing inside this and the previous volumes. At first glance it was identical, then I began to notice slight anomalies on those central pages. I don't know if you're familiar with accounting ledgers, but since they're handwritten – and even book keepers make a mistake occasionally – they are rarely without crossings out. (Errors are not erased, you know, it's good practice to leave them visible even when they are struck through.) I looked through the twenty or so central pages and could only see

three errors. Then I observed the figures and saw that, while most of them were the same – the product of the American education system – there were small variations. You wouldn't have seen them if you hadn't been looking real carefully. In the pages in that part of the third ledger, the foot of the numeral 'two' extended a bit further than in the others. And the top loop on the 'eight' was a little squeezed in the most recent records. The pages that seemed different covered around the final four weeks' trading. The pages after that were blank.

Was I imaging this? I took a deep breath in, and let it out slowly. I would sleep on it. I put the ledgers into my desk drawers. They wouldn't all go in one, so two went into the top drawer and the third, the one that I was worried about, in the bottom. I turned the key in the lock and picked up my coat.

Of course, I didn't sleep much that night. I was hot and bothered, tossing and turning and keeping Daisy awake too. Every time I could feel myself drifting off, I saw numbers in front of my eyes, twos and eights, and all the variations they can come in. In the end Daisy couldn't bear it any longer and insisted I go sleep on the couch. Where, of course, I didn't sleep at all.

With sunrise I felt as if I had a layer of sand between eyeballs and lids. I took a long time showering that morning, trying to delay my departure for the office, so long that Daisy called up to ask if I was okay. In the end I couldn't linger any more, so I kissed her and the kids goodbye like always and left.

I sat on the subway going down town and tried to get things straight in my mind. I would go into my office, unlock the drawers and examine the books once more. I had taken the precaution of collecting up a magnifying glass from a shelf in the rumpus room that one of the kids had been given for Christmas. I purchased my usual bagel and coffee from the stand across the street from the office.

What did this feel like? A bit unreal, to be honest. Let's face it, I was no Philip Marlowe. I was just a plodding accountant who went about his day's work doing a solid job. I wasn't cut out to be a private investigator. Problem was, just at that moment I didn't know quite what to do next. Obviously I needed to talk to someone, but who would be best?

I should have talked to Art Sherman, my boss, but he was a bit older than me, with attitudes to work that wouldn't have been out of place in a Mark Twain story. Junior staff, or anyone junior to him, should be seen and not heard by his reckoning. I knew what his reaction would be:

'Mr Denton, you are thinking above your salary level. Now please return to your desk and complete your assignment.' After all, Jensen's had been a client of our firm for over sixty years. In the end I just asked him for the next week off. He raised one questioning eyebrow and when I didn't respond just grunted:

'You make sure there's not going to be any problems with your assignments while you're away.'

As the day went on I worried at the mystery. Obviously I couldn't talk to Daisy, so I racked my brains for someone who was likely offer a sympathetic ear. I settled on Dan Salentino, who worked downstairs in Accounts Payable. I called him up and suggested a beer after work. Luckily it was Friday, so it wouldn't seem odd. I chose the Lantern Tavern, a place that I knew would be good and quiet, even at that time of the week in early September when most everyone was back at work.

Once we had found a table and ordered our beers, Dan asked what the mystery was all about.

'Well,' I replied, 'I just want to run a hypothetical situation past you, just to see what you think.' I could see he was intrigued.

'Go ahead, bud,' he responded.

'See, there's this guy, has suspicions that something is going on, something not quite straight, you know.'

'What sort of 'not straight'?' he asked.

'Not straight as in crooked.' I was beginning to think this was a bad idea. Dan is a great guy, a good drinking buddy, but he has a career to make too. Could I tell him what I thought without him telling anyone else?

'Go on then,' he said, breaking into my thoughts.

'This is just hypothetical,' I reiterated. He looked at me oddly but said nothing.

'What would you do... well, this guy does not know what to do, he thinks he has found something odd in a ledger, one that is in sequence with two others.'

'Come on, Larry, cut the crap and tell me all the details.' I could see that he was not for one moment convinced by the suggestion that it was anyone else but me we were talking about, but he was interested in the dilemma. I told him all that I'd discovered, why I thought I could tell the difference in the paper and so on. I told him why I couldn't go to Sherman. At the end of the explanation he let out a long breath, and then stayed silent while the waitress wiped the condensation off the table and put down two more ice-cold beers.

'I can see you are in a tricky situation,' he said, and then went on 'but you can't leave it there. Your professional duty is at least to let someone higher up know of your suspicions.'

My heart sank. It was what I'd known all along, but wanted to avoid. I knew it was right, and there were very few times in my life when I had done something that was not right. But this was one hell of a problem to deal with.

I met Daisy at night school, nearly seventeen years before all this took place. We were both studying book keeping, although she decided not to go on and try for the accountancy qualifications. I was so taken with her, and managed to persuade her to come for coffee. Then she joined a group of us when we went to Coney Island for the Mardi Gras parade. When she said she would marry me I thought my feet would never touch solid ground again. We moved out to the suburbs when the girls came, so that we could have a bigger lot with some grass, a swing and so on. We've been the happiest of families all along.

Why do I tell you all this? Because Daisy was one of Jensen's' senior book keepers. She'd worked there for four years, and they'd always been so good when she had to take time off for the kids. It's a family firm that likes to look after the families of the employees, even if my boss is not the friendly sort.

Now you can see why I couldn't talk to her about what I suspected. So you'll understand why I was sitting on *Swallow* in Bonnet Sound one afternoon in September, drinking my beer and trying to decide what to do. Was I going to make my suspicions public

and possibly risk her position? Worse still, but surely it wasn't possible, could Daisy be involved in some sort of fraud?

I sat for a long time there, lulled by the gentle thump of water on hull, watching the gulls wheel and scream overhead, breathing in the sun-warm, salt-sharp air. I balanced the potential damage to my employment – and earning power and therefore ability to look after my family – if I were to be proved wrong with the chances, surely impossibly slim, that Daisy was implicated with this. My mind ran over conversations we'd had about money. Sure things were tight, but we weren't in any great difficulty. We had loans for the house and Chevy, but that was all. We couldn't afford holidays in those years, but we made up with trips to the beach and into the city to see museums and such. We spent days in Central Park, picnicking and watching the parade of humanity that passed by.

But then it occurred to me, maybe Daisy kept secrets from me, maybe she had debts that she'd never talked about to me. No, absolutely not. I closed my mind to that sort of thinking.

So who else could it have been, and why? And even if it weren't Daisy, was there a chance that she'd be touched by the scandal that would ensue? Round and round went my thoughts, back again and again to pick at suppositions like a child at a scab, wanting to reveal the raw truth but fearing that it would hurt.

Suddenly I looked at my watch and leapt up. I had been there for almost too long and needed to get back into the river or the water would be too shallow. I hoisted the sails and set course for home, too concerned to get onto the mooring in one piece to think of anything else. The breeze had dropped a bit from earlier on and I had to get all the sail out that I could, even the spinnaker which is tricky to do alone. In the end *Swallow* didn't let me down and I was soon tying up to the jetty.

I was silent on the drive back home to the city the next day. Daisy looked at me curiously but said nothing. The sharp ears in the back seat would have picked up anything odd. Once we'd got everything and everyone into the house we had a quick supper. I said I would turn in early, the sailing had exhausted me. She didn't challenge me then or over that weekend, knowing that it was best to leave me until I was ready to talk. The city air was so heavy, humid and threatening, that I wasn't surprised to be woken around three in the morning on Saturday by a huge clap of thunder and a torrent of rain.

On Monday morning I looked at myself in the mirror as I shaved. *To thine own self be true* was something my mother had quoted often, but how could I follow that instruction? I don't think I ever went to the office with less enthusiasm. The subway was packed and someone poked me in the back with his hard briefcase. The coffee stand had no bagels, so I was hungry. Then I nearly got run over by a yellow cab as I crossed the road.

I only noticed that something was strange as I walked around the corner and up to the door of the office building. There were guys that I knew and lots that I didn't all standing around drinking coffee and talking, looking up to the top of our six storey building. When my eyes followed theirs up I saw canvas hoses, the sort the fire service use, hanging out of windows on the top three floors. I worked on the fifth floor. I tried to find out what was happening, and then I saw Dan.

'What's up, Dan?' I asked.

'Hey, Larry, you're back, and just in time for some fun. You'll never guess what happened Saturday.'

‘Tell me, and what’s going on up there now?’

‘You were back in the city Friday night? When the storm hit?’ I nodded. ‘Well, looks like the weight of water coming off the roof was too much for the internal downpipes to cope with.’

‘Those pipes they boxed in when they last painted the office?’

‘Yeah,’ Dan replied, ‘and they were cast iron, made last century. They should have been re-routed outside when they converted the building. Looks like they just split and poured water all over the top two floors. Your office is two foot deep in water and has been since early Saturday.’

‘Oh, my goodness,’ was all I could say. As I looked up at the hoses full of water being pumped out, I visualised my desk. Anything on top should be all right, I thought, but anything in the two drawers ..... the bottom drawer ..... where I had put the ledger that appeared to have been tampered with. What state would they be in?

It was just before midday when the fire service declared that their work was done and we could go in. Mr Sherman had sent a couple of the typists out to buy mops, buckets and things we could use for clearing up, with the order that they were to *mind you bring me back the receipts or you’ll pay for the things yourselves.*

The office was in all sorts of a state when we pushed the door open. Luckily the partners had been too mean to buy carpet for us staff, so the floor was damp but not too bad. The wooden housing for the downpipe was hanging off and it must have been like a fountain when the water gushed out of it, clearing the nearby desks and creating a mush of paper on the floor where it had lain for two days. I pushed through the gawping bunch of people and went over to my desk in the far corner. All looked like it had when I had left for the night on the Friday before we went away, although the documents on top had a damp feel to them. I opened the top drawer to check if things were dry. They were. I opened the lower drawer and took a sharp intake of breath. As I pulled the drawer from the desk a trickle of water came from one corner. I put my hand down into the drawer and could feel a couple of inches of water rise cold up my fingers. The cover of the ledger was spongy to touch. I opened the book to the centre and realised that just about all of the writing was unintelligible, ink floating away with the water that ran off the page. My fingers were dark with pigment but my heart was suddenly lighter than it had been for days.

**Joanna Mace**

If you would like to see more of Hopper’s paintings there is an online exhibition by a Swiss gallery at <https://www.fondationbeyeler.ch/en/exhibitions/edward-hopper>



## Help to keep TPS going for another 75 years!

*A message from the Treasurer, Robert Skone James:*

Did you know that you can help our Society by doing your shopping online – as well as protecting your health and that of others? And it doesn't cost you anything! There are a number of ways to do this, including **The Giving Machine** (<https://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk/sign-up/>) and **amazon smile** ([www.smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk)). The sellers will make a small donation to TPS every time you place an order, and with nearly two hundred members, lots of little amounts could add up to quite a lot. If you need more information, refer to *Tacet Times* No. 4 or contact the Secretary



**There are lots of opportunities to carry on making music and listening to it. Here are just a few together with some other things to interest you:**

- **Wigmore Hall:** [www.wigmore-hall.org.uk](http://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk) for lots of live-streamed concerts. Chris Brooks (bass) particularly recommends the masterclass by Thomas Quasthoff
- **Royal Opera House:** streaming of past performances on particular dates, find the list on [www.roh.org.uk](http://www.roh.org.uk)
- **National Theatre:** look out for 'live' streaming of performances: *Coriolanus* is available on YouTube
- American classical station MPR is streaming concerts online [www.classicalmpr.org](http://www.classicalmpr.org)
- **Time Out** – now rebranded TimeIn! – has a list of virtual Museum Tours
- Stephen Hemsted has been busy transcribing piano trios into Sibelius (music notation software) and then generating audio versions with one part missing, so that you can play along. For the link you'll need to contact the Secretary, at [secretary@tonphil.org.uk](mailto:secretary@tonphil.org.uk), and then you will find everything you'd need to take part in an isolation version of Beethoven's Trio Op 1 No 1, Haydn's Trio No 21, Mendelssohn's Trio in Dm Op 49, or Schubert's Bb Trio No 99:

**I'm sure that there are lots more like this – if you send them to me I'll add them to the list – [secretary@tonphil.org.uk](mailto:secretary@tonphil.org.uk)**