

FROM THE GARTON ARCHIVE
PICTURE OF THE MONTH 66 JULY 2017



This photograph was taken on 15th June, 2017, during the BBC Radio Lincolnshire programme, 'Melvyn in the Morning' by Catherine Forbes, Promotions and Display Manager at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School (LCHS).

BBC Radio Lincolnshire was playing its part in celebrating the BBC Music Day in which forty-seven 'blue plaques' were being unveiled to celebrate the achievements of pioneering musicians and music venues around the UK.

Lincolnshire had nominated a number of local artists and venues, and two were selected by the judges; Lincoln-born and educated Sir Neville Marriner, the world-renowned conductor who died last year, and the Boston Gliderdrome, which hosted several well-known musicians over the years. Among them were famous artists such as Stevie Wonder, T Rex, Elton John and Tina Turner.

The BBC Radio Lincolnshire programme took the form of appropriately chosen musical items, including part of Sir Neville's recording of Mozart's Requiem with his chamber orchestra of St Martin in the Fields, interspersed with interviews and phone-ins from its listeners. One special highlight was a performance by two fledgling musicians from LCHS, twin sisters, Molly and Lexie Hanson. In the friendly environment of the Lincoln Arboretum café, they gave a charming performance of two songs, *Valerie* and *Stand by Me*, with guitar and cajon (box drum) accompaniment, to the delight of the few observers, and no doubt also to the many radio listeners (photograph by Catherine Forbes).



During the three-hour programme, presenter Melvyn Prior interviewed a number of guests including Sir Neville's son, Andrew, principal clarinettist with the London Symphony Orchestra, and two of his nieces. He also interviewed Mark Edgar, Head of the Sixth Form at LCHS, one of the governors, John Males, and myself in the role of archivist.

One of the main sources of evidence in the Garton Archive at LCHS are the admission registers for pupils who attended Lincoln School before it amalgamated with Lincoln Christ's Hospital Girls' High School and the two St Giles secondary schools in 1974 to form LCHS.

The 1926-35 register recorded that Neville Marriner was born in Lincoln and attended Boultham Park Elementary School before being admitted to Lincoln School on a scholarship in September 1934. He left in July 1940 having been awarded a place at the Royal College of Music, on a major scholarship of £60 per annum. His father was a joiner, but also an amateur musician, who was organist and choirmaster for many years at the Portland Place Methodist Church, which has since been re-named the Central Methodist Church.

When Neville was born, the Marriner family lived in a terraced house at 9 Grafton Street, off Monks Road, but later moved to a property in St Andrew's Street. The photograph, taken towards the end of the 'Melvyn in the Morning' programme, was taken in front of the house on Grafton Street, where the plaque was unveiled by the recently appointed Mayor of Lincoln, Chris Burke. Left to right are one of Sir Neville's nieces, his son Andrew, his daughter Susie, the Mayor of Lincoln, the Sheriff of Lincoln Jo Rimmer, Mark Elder, John Males and Peter Harrod, archivist at LCHS.

Above the assembled group is the blue plaque celebrating Sir Neville's career, and marking his place of birth (photograph by Catherine Forbes).



There was an amusing moment when the time came for the Mayor to unveil the plaque. He is fairly small in stature and was unable to reach the cord. Finally, with a hop, skip and a jump, he managed to reach the cord, but unfortunately it was the wrong one, and the curtains closed more tightly! Whilst a set of household steps was hurriedly requisitioned from a neighbouring property, Mr Mayor made a suitable joke of it all! I doubt whether Sir Neville would have suffered similar problems with 'chords'!

I have written about Sir Neville in previous articles, but it is appropriate here to provide a potted summary of his distinguished career. He was certainly one of the most celebrated sons of the City of Lincoln, and one of the most accomplished alumni of Lincoln School. After leaving Lincoln School he attended the Royal College of Music in London, and also studied at the Paris Conservatoire. His main instrument was the violin, and in the early stages of his career he played with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra. During that period he played under such conducting legends as Toscanini, Furtwangler, and Karajan.

His potential as a violinist was recognised in the July 1938 edition of *The Lincolnian*, the School magazine. The School Notes recorded that '*N Marriner continues to do well as a violinist; he was second with 87 marks in the open violin class at the recent Skegness Music Festival*'. The July 1941 edition celebrated his being awarded the Morley Scholarship at the Royal College of Music for the second successive year.

Neville was a bit of a lad, however, and his name appeared in the Prefects' Detention Book on a number of occasions, for such heinous crimes as persistent cheek and fooling about in the library! His sense of mischief was also recorded in an interview in the 8 April edition of *The Times*. During the 1950s, when he was a young musician, he recalled that he larked about with the best of them, and bombed the London Symphony Orchestra bus with a load of flour bags dropped from a friend's Tiger Moth plane on the road from Brussels to Ostend. Oh, Sir Neville!

Sir Neville's musical career took on a new dimension when he founded the Academy of St Martin-in-the Fields chamber orchestra in 1959. He began as its leader, but later became its conductor for many years. During that time he made many recordings with the orchestra.

Sir Neville was known throughout the world for the quality of his music-making and recordings. He was the first Music Director of the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra from 1969-86, and went on to become Music Director of the Minnesota Symphony Orchestra, and later the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra. He was also in demand as a guest conductor around the world.

Following his success in supervising the Mozart selection for the 1984 film, 'Amadeus', Neville Marriner was knighted for his services to music. The Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields Orchestra is in fact the most comprehensively recorded

chamber orchestra in the world, and if you tune in to Radio 3 or Classic FM for any length of time, the chances are that you will hear one of his recordings being played.

It is fitting that Sir Neville was awarded the Lincoln Civic Award in 1998, and as a result of a chance meeting at the Guildhall, had a rose named after him, described in *The Lincolnshire Echo* (12 February 1997) as ‘...beautiful, subtly coloured, sweet-smelling and very elegantly shaped’. He was also awarded an Honorary Doctor of Music from the University of Hull at the Bishop Grosseteste College (now a university) graduation ceremony in July 1998.

With such a pedigree, few would dare to challenge Sir Neville Marriner’s right to the prestigious ‘blue plaque’ award.



Sir Neville Marriner conducting the LCHS Orchestra in 1990 with a pencil!

Peter Harrod

Archivist for the Pre-1974 Archives at LCHS

