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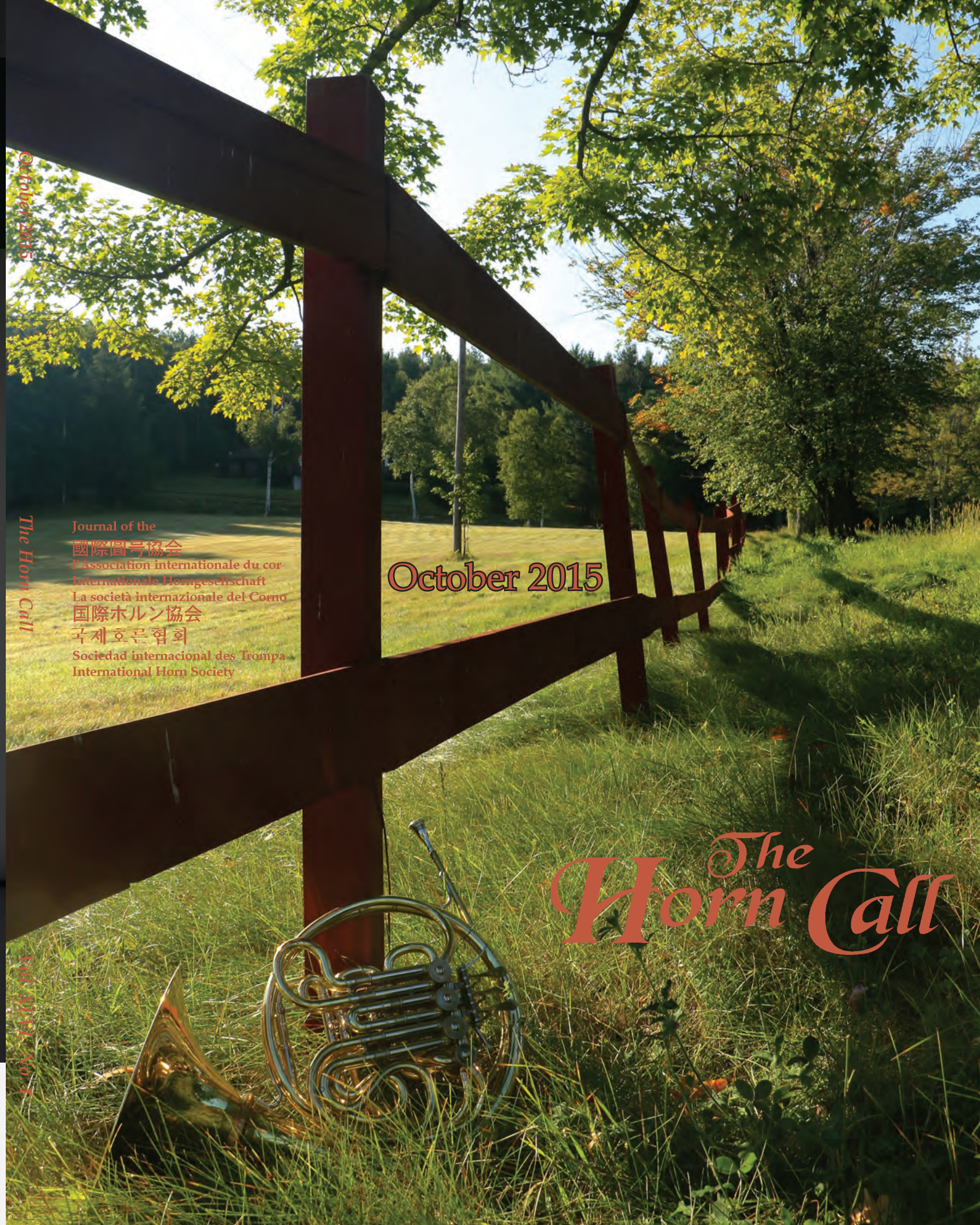
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October 2015

The Horn Call

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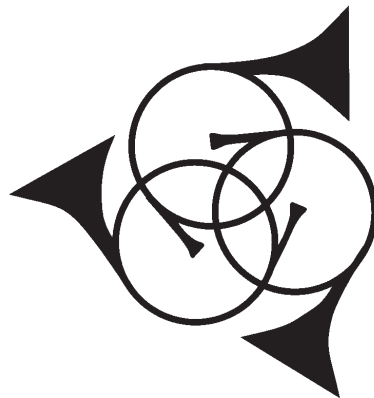
The
Horn Call

October 2015

The Horn Call

Journal of the International Horn Society

Volume XLVI, No. 1, October 2015



William Scharnberg, Editor

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On the cover: a photo sent by Karel J. Raska of his Yamaha horn in Upstate New York

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Alfred Edwin Brain Jnr (1885-1966)

Prince of Horn Players

The Forgotten British Horn Virtuoso

Part I

by Leighton Jones

Introduction

I was invited to write a book on Alfred E. Brain Jnr (Alf to all who knew him in the UK and Al to all friends in the USA) by Stephen Gamble (*co-author of Dennis Brain: A Life in Music*), and I was extremely honoured. This invitation from Stephen was the result of my articles in the *British Horn Society Journal* and *The Horn Call*.

As I proceeded to acquire the necessary information about Alf, I became more and more aware of the fact that Alf was indeed both a phenomenal horn player and a natural, courteous, and genuine gentleman. The more I delved into Alf's career and achievements, I became absolutely convinced that the title to my original magazine articles was indeed very justified: "The Forgotten British Horn Virtuoso."

The UK is an island, and I firmly believe that an "island mentality" spreads into all aspects, including horn playing. Indeed we have had many great British players including Alfred Brain, Aubrey Brain, his son Dennis Brain, Alan Civil, and Ifor James. Due to the increase in recordings Dennis and Alan became famous the world over. Their craft is now carried on by Frank Lloyd, Richard Watkins, David Pyatt, and Michael Thompson. I have not included Barry Tuckwell here because he is an Australian who earned his fame in the UK – no disrespect is intended to his amazing ability.

In general the British horn fraternity tend to forget about the horn players from the UK who have become well known abroad. Frank Lloyd is probably the exception, as he gained fame as a soloist before he moved from the UK (some years ago) to the position of horn professor at the Folkwang-Hochschule at Essen in Germany.

Forgotten in the main are the horn players who have left the UK to become principal horn players in Europe and elsewhere:

- Jonathan Williams, principal horn of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe



- Nigel Downing, principal horn of the Tonhalle Orchestra, Zurich.

- Greg Cass, recently retired principal horn of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande

Then, when I read the following whilst browsing through information on some horn players:

To say that Alf held a position of dominance, as the universally acknowledged greatest horn player in the world is to underestimate the immense respect the man so justly deserved. A man truly deserving of the sometimes clichéd phrase "a legend in his own lifetime." One word often used carelessly, seems to have been invented especially to describe Alfred Brain. The word is GENTLEMAN. (Part of the obituary notice by the editor of *Overture*, a monthly local magazine in Los Angeles, of the American Federation of Musicians).

And:

"Dennis Brain, his nephew, insisted that his uncle was the greatest horn player of the whole family" (John Warrick, *Gramophone*. March 2003).

At some point, I realized that Mr. Alfred Brain Jnr had fallen into this "forgotten" category, so I decided to put pen to paper in order, hopefully, to rectify this glaring omission on the life and history of one of the greatest horn players that has ever lived. When you look at and truly appreciate the curriculum vitae of Alfred Brain you can see what I mean:

- Co-principal Horn of the London Symphony Orchestra,
- Principal Horn of the Queen's Hall Orchestra,
- Founding member of the London Wind Quintett, and their pioneering recordings with Edison-Bell,
- Principal Horn of the New York Symphony Orchestra (before its amalgamation with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra),
- Principal Horn of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra,



- Principal Horn of the Cleveland Philharmonic Orchestra,
- Principal Horn of the 20th Century Fox Studios,

It is interesting to read the brief bio written about him for a concert by the America Operatic Laboratory, Inc. It is interesting to learn about Alf's interest in teaching – something I personally only came to know about as a result of this quote:

Alfred Brain, A.R.C.M

Studied horn at the Royal Academy of Music from 1898 to 1901, where award of A.R.C.M. was received. Private study of horn with Adolf Borsdorf, London, from 1898 to 1901. First horn with many major symphony orchestras, including the following: Scottish Symphony, Glasgow, 1901-1904; Queens Hall Symphony, London, 1904-1921; New York Symphony, 1921-22; Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, 1922-1934; Cleveland Symphony, 1934-1935; major film studios since 1927. Taught horn at the Guildhall School of Music, London, from 1904 to 1921. Horn instructor at Julliard Institute of Musical Arts from 1921 to 1922. Teacher of horn in Los Angeles since 1922

I also came across what the American bassoonist Donald Christlieb (a highly regarded studio player) had written in his book *Reflections*: "Alfred made Los Angeles the capital of horn playing in the country."

After reading the above quotes, noting all his achievements, his huge influence on both his nephew Dennis and the Los Angeles studio horn players, I think you will agree that my sentiments were justified – that Alf really is the "Forgotten British Horn Virtuoso." Hopefully this work of pleasure will rectified that injustice.

His Family

Alfred Edwin Brain Snr was the first horn player in the Brain family, that we know of, who achieved distinction as an orchestral horn player and soloist. His father was William Brain and his mother, Sarah Ellen Brain (formerly Brown).

Here is information that we have from a certified copy of a birth entry:

Registration District. Brentford 1860
Born in the subdistrict of Chiswick in the County of Middlesex, PC 755085. No.163.
When and where born: 4th February 1860. 17 Militia Stores, Turnham Green.
Name of the boy: Alfred Edwin.
Sex: Boy.
Name and surname of the father: William Brain.
Name and surname and name and maiden surname of mother: Sarah Ellen Brain, formerly Brown.
Occupation of father: Chelsea pensioner,
Signature, description and residence of informant: William Brain, father, 17 Militia Stores, Turnham Green.
When registered: 25 February 1860.
Signature of Registrar: Charles Lawrence, registrar.
A. E. Snr (as he later became known) began his musical training as a Band Boy in the Scots Guards. He entered service

on 27 November 1872, at the age of 12. From 1872-1874 he was categorized as a Musician: 27 May 1874 to 23 December 1887, Lance-Corporal; 24 December 1887 to 3 July 1889, Corporal; 4 July 1889 to 3 April 1891, discharges to modify pension 30 April 1891. Total Service: 18 years 155 days. (Information supplied by Major Hughes Records Officer, Head Quarters, Scots Guards, Bird Cage Walk, London SW1 to Stephen Pettitt on 3rd February 1972).

Alfred Snr was engaged by the Royal Academy to play in concerts and "practice" sessions in 1893, about two years after he had left the Scots Guards. The following letter describes this appointment:

Royal Academy of Music
Tenterden Street
Hanover Square
W London

26th Sep. 1893

My Dear Sir,

I have much pleasure in offering you an engagement as 2nd Horn at our Orchestral practices on Tuesday afternoons at 2 o'clock prompt lasting till 5 o'clock. Terms 10/6 for each practice.

The first practice will take place on Tuesday Oct. 10th. You will be expected to play 1st Horn if Mr. Mann should be absent, and to take his place on Fridays should he be away, of this, he will notify you; the Terms for Friday practices are 5/- each.

Practice commencing at 3.30 and terminating at 5 o'clock. There are 3 Orchestral Concerts in the year. Terms £1.1.0 each, and sometimes works are done at Chamber Concerts for which your services will be required.

I remain dear Sir
Faithfully Yours,
H. A. Chapman
(Librarian)

A. E. Brain Esq.

He normally played fourth horn, and occasionally played second or third in various London orchestras. For example, he played second horn at a Queen's Hall concert on June 15 1898. The concert programme lists the "honorary quartet" as "Borsdorf, A. E. Brain, T. R. Busby (second principal), and G. Wright 4th horn."

In 1904, some of the members of the Queens Hall Orchestra, under Sir Henry Wood broke away from that orchestra, and established the London Symphony Orchestra. The horn section of the LSO in 1904 was: "A. E. Borsdorf (first principal), T R Busby (second principal), A. E. Brain, and H. van der Meerschen." Edric Cundell, writing in 1958, recalled this fine quartet as "God's Own Quartet" due to the perfection of their ensemble.

The orchestras that "Papa Brain" played for included the Royal Philharmonic Society (from 1894), Queen's Hall Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra, and, according to Frank Probyn, the horn section of the Royal Opera Orchestra, Covent Garden, included: "Paersch, Baggs, Busby, and A. E. Brain," and that these four players were engaged



by Hans Richter for several seasons at "The Garden." (Covent Garden).

The approximate date of this particular section would probably be within the first decade or so of the 20th Century. Probyn, in 1910, became a lodger with A. E. Brain Jnr (Alf Brain and his first wife), and probably remembered this information about the section "second-hand," rather than from his personal experience of playing with them.

Affectionately known as "George IV," A. E. senior's military training from his youth instilled in him the importance of discipline, and this is reflected in the strict manner in which he, and his wife Letitia, brought up their family of seven children: three girls and four boys. Whether Letitia was musical, we do not know, but certainly all the children had musical talents. Both Alfred senior and his wife had very strong features, including a solid jaw structure. Their children inherited these characteristics in various degrees. The photograph of Letitia shows a very handsome woman in middle age. An early photograph of about 1896 shows Alfred Snr, with Alfred Jnr and Aubrey. The similarity in appearance of Alfred Snr and Alfred Jnr is conspicuous, especially later in life. The 1901 Census for Hammersmith, lists the following in the Brain household:

- Alfred Brain, 41, Head, born at Turnham Green. Musician.
- Letitia Brain, 41, Wife, born in the Haymarket, London.
- Helena Brain, 19, born Pimlico, Musician
- Letitia Brain, 17.
- Alfred Brain, 15, born at Pimlico.
- Hugh Brain, 12, born at Pimlico
- Arthur Brain, 8, born Hammersmith
- Aubrey Brain, 7, born Queen's Park

Arthur, known affectionately as "Eddie" Brain, is listed as the youngest child in the family (Stephen Pettitt, 1989, p.19) and this is confirmed by the Royal Academy's student register, which gives his date of birth as 9 June 1901. The 1901 Census, therefore, has incorrectly entered Arthur's age. Rebecca Brain, a sister of Alfred Brain Jnr, played the double bass in the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam. Her absence in the 1901 census is probably owing to the fact that she was playing in Amsterdam by that date. Helena went on to become a virtuoso on the long F trumpet.

Frank Probyn, recalling his early life and career, remembered A. E. Brain Snr as a typical bluff guardsman, "a substantial Fourth horn player," but, "with no musicality," and that by 1916, he had "faded out." This last statement appears to tally with another by Alexander Penn, corresponding with Dr. Norman McDougall, in which he said that Grandfather Brain left the LSO because of health.

Probyn's statements regarding Alf Snr seem contradictory and a little too harsh, but they may perhaps have been more accurate of Alf Snr's playing in his latter years, rather than his prime. If we are to judge him by the highly taxing works that he performed during his long career – the Brahms Horn Trio, and the Beethoven Sextet Opus 81b (no recordings are known), then it seems unlikely that he could have been without musicality. He performed the Brahms Horn Trio and Thuille's Sextet on May 27th 1896, and Beethoven's Sextet Op. 81b (other

horn not mentioned) with the Newbury Amateur Orchestral Society, conducted by J. S. Liddle on 13th May, 1906. In the same concert, he also performed in Beethoven's Septet Op.20, a favourite with the public.

Considering Probyn's critical opinion of A. E. Brain's talents, one must bear in mind that Probyn had first heard him when he was about fifty years of age. A. E. Snr was, however, considered to be distinguished enough to be chosen to play at the Coronation of George V and Queen Mary at Westminster Abbey on 22 June 1911. The Brain family has preserved the documents that he received concerning his part in the Coronation. Here are some extracts:

Orchestral Secretary:

Dr. J.E. Borland,

To whom all correspondence about the Orchestra should be addressed.

81 Bromley Road

Catford S.E.

May 13th 1911

Sir,

I have the honour to offer you an engagement in the orchestra at the approaching Ceremony of the Coronation.

Three full band rehearsals will be held:

- Tuesday, 13 June, Royal College of Music, Kensington, 9.30 a.m.
- Monday, 19 June, Westminster Abbey, at 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, 20 June, Westminster Abbey, probably at 10 a.m.

You will also be asked to attend a special rehearsal for Brass and Percussion instruments in the Abbey in June, of which due notice will be sent.

It is understood that you hold yourself ready for any necessary change of date or time, and undertake to stay for the whole of each rehearsal, however long it may be.

On the Coronation day it will be necessary to reach the Abbey very early, probably at 8 o'clock, and it may be late in the afternoon before you can leave.

Porterage of heavy instruments will be undertaken by Mr. Alfred Mapleson, 60 Haymarket, and S.W., to whom notice must be sent by each player who desires his services. These instruments must remain in the Abbey from the rehearsal on 19th June until after the Ceremony. Only small portable instruments can be admitted to the Abbey when carried by their owners

Fees will be paid in the Practice Room, in the Little Cloister, immediately after the Ceremony.

If you accept this engagement, please sign the enclosed Form and return it to the Orchestral Secretary, Dr. J. E. Borland. I may state, to save unnecessary correspondence, that the Band list is now quite complete, and that no alteration can be made in any of the above conditions.

Yours truly,

Director of The Music

To Mr. A. E. Brain

Instrument: 4th Horn

Fee £4.4/-



Coronation of Their Most Gracious Majesties
King George and Queen Mary.
— WESTMINSTER ABBEY, JUNE 22ND, 1911. —

Orchestral Secretary:
DR. J. E. BORLAND,
to whom all correspondence
about the Orchestra should
be addressed.

81 BROMLEY ROAD,
CATFORD, S.E.

May 18th, 1911.

Sir,

I have the honour to offer you an engagement in the orchestra at the approaching Ceremony of the Coronation.

Three full band rehearsals will be held:-

9.30

Tuesday, 13 June, Royal College of Music, Kensington, 7.30 a.m.
Monday, 19 June, Westminster Abbey, at 10 a.m.
Tuesday, 20 June, Westminster Abbey, probably at 10 a.m.

You will also be asked to attend a Special rehearsal for Brass and Percussion instruments in the Abbey early in June, of which due notice will be sent.

It is understood that you hold yourself ready for any necessary change of date or time, and undertake to stay for the whole of each rehearsal, however long it may be.

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Coronation of Their Most Gracious Majesties
King George and Queen Mary.
— WESTMINSTER ABBEY, JUNE 22ND, 1911. —

Orchestral Secretary:
DR. J. E. BORLAND,
to whom all correspondence
about the Orchestra should
be addressed.

81 BROMLEY ROAD,
CATFORD, S.E.

May 18th, 1911.

The Special rehearsal for Brass and Percussion is now fixed to take place in the Norman Undercroft, Westminster Abbey, on Friday, 9th June, at 10 a.m. Please acknowledge this also when replying.

Alexander Penn, who had joined the Beecham Symphony Orchestra in its early days prior to 1915, knew A. E. Brain Snr quite well. He recalled him being strict with his sons, "shutting Aubrey in a room for half an hour's long notes when his playing was unsatisfactory," and that Brain Snr drank a pint of Bass Special before concerts. Prior to a performance of the Brahms *Requiem* at Southwark Cathedral, Penn remembered meeting Brain Snr coming out of Shepherd's Bush underground. In his hurry to make his way to the orchestra, Brain had forgotten his false upper teeth and, as a consequence, he had to play fourth horn instead of second in the show. Two other occasions Penn also remembered was a concert at Tooting when A. E. Brain Snr played first horn – brilliantly, plus a great performance of the *Mignon Overture*. These recollections put into perspective Probyn's comments. Penn also recalls a concert, probably about 1915, in which he played with the three Brains: Alfred Jnr first, Penn, second, Aubrey third, A. E. Brain Snr, fourth. Interestingly Penn recalls Alf as a very fine player, especially in Strauss.

Another who recalled A. E. Brain the father was Handel Knott. Handel was playing second horn to A. E. Brain, the father, in a performance of the Haydn Symphony No. 40. After the concert, Alfred turned to Handel and said, "Well played, Handel my lad, not even my boys could have played it better!" Handel Knott also remembered Alfred Brain Jnr and his superb playing of the Strauss Concerto with the Scottish Orchestra. In another section he recalls A. E. Brain Snr playing, but the date must be a few years later than Alfred's years with the Scottish, which ended in 1908, because Aubrey Brain receives a mention:


Also at that time, father Brain was still playing. I used to join him and Aubrey at the People's Palace and other concerts in and around London. Father Brain was a fine 4th horn player in the Queen's Hall and London Symphony Orchestras when the quartet was: Borsdorf, Van der Meerschen, Busby, and Brain.

The date for the above would be no earlier than 1911, when Aubrey was appointed principal horn of the New Symphony Orchestra.

Porterage of heavy instruments will be undertaken by Mr. Alfred Mapleson, 60 Haymarket, S.W., to whom notice must be sent by each player who desires his services. These instruments must remain in the Abbey from the rehearsal on 19th June until after the Ceremony. Only small portable instruments can be admitted to the Abbey when carried by their owners.

Fees will be paid in the Practice Room, in the Little Cloister, immediately after the Ceremony.

If you accept this engagement, please sign the enclosed Form and return it to the Orchestral Secretary, Dr. J. E. Borland. I may state, to save unnecessary correspondence, that the Band list is now quite complete, and that no alteration can be made in any of the above conditions.

Yours truly,

DIRECTOR OF THE MUSIC.

To Mr. A. E. Brain

Instrument..... 4th Horn

Fee..... £4.4/-

The following additional note, concerning a rehearsal at Westminster Abbey, is mentioned in the above letter:

The Special rehearsal for Brass and Percussion is now fixed to take place in the Norman Undercroft, Westminster Abbey, on Friday, 9th June, at 10 a.m. Please acknowledge this also when replying.



A photo from 1920: Alfred Snr (principal horn on the right).

The Titanic Concerts

We all know of the tragedy of the sinking of the Titanic, and on Friday 24th May, 1912 (Empire Day) at the Royal Albert Hall, a memorial concert was held. All the main orchestras in London took part, along with the major conductors of the day.

ROYAL ALBERT HALL.
Manager - HILTON CARTER.

Under the Auspices of the Orchestral Association.

THE "TITANIC" BAND

MEMORIAL CONCERT

FRIDAY, 24th MAY, 1912 (Empire Day) at 3 p.m.

THE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA.
THE QUEEN'S HALL ORCHESTRA.
THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.
THE NEW SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.
THE BEECHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.
THE ROYAL OPERA ORCHESTRA.
THE LONDON OPERA HOUSE ORCHESTRA.

(By kind permission of their respective Managements).

Conductors.

SIR EDWARD ELGAR, O.M.
(Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra).

SIR HENRY J. WOOD
Conductor of the Queen's Hall Orchestra).

Mr. LONDON RONALD
(Conductor of the New Symphony Orchestra).

Mr. THOMAS BEECHAM
(Conductor of the Beecham Symphony Orchestra).

Mr. PERCY PITT
(Musical Director of the Royal Opera House).

M. FRITZ ERNALDY
(Conductor of the London Opera House).

and
Herr MENGELBERG

Vocalist:
Madame ADA CROSSLEY.

Programme.

Funeral March	(Arranged by Sir HENRY J. WOOD.) (Conducted by Sir HENRY J. WOOD.)	Chopin
Overture	"In Memoriam" (Conducted by Mr. PERCY PITT.)	Sullivan
Variations for Full Orchestra Op. 36	(Conducted by Sir EDWARD ELGAR, O.M.)	Elgar
Aria	"O rest in the Lord" ("Elijah") Sung by Madame ADA CROSSLEY. (Conducted by Mr. PERCY PITT.)	Mendelssohn
Third Movement (Scherzo) from Symphony No. 6, in B minor ("Pathetic")	(Conducted by Mr. LONDON RONALD.)	Tchaikovsky

INTERVAL.

Prelude	"Die Meistersinger" (Conducted by Herr MENGELBERG.)	Wagner
Aria (for strings)	(Conducted by Sir HENRY J. WOOD.)	Bach
"The Ride of the Valkyries" ("Die Walküre")	(Conducted by Mr. THOMAS BEECHAM.)	Wagner
Vorspiel	"Lohengrin" (Conducted by M. FRITZ ERNALDY.)	Wagner
Overture	"Tannhäuser" (Conducted by Herr MENGELBERG.)	Wagner
Hymn	"Nearer my God to Thee" (Orchestrated by Sir HENRY J. WOOD.) (Conducted by Sir HENRY J. WOOD.)	Dykes

GOD SAVE THE KING.

In Memoriam.

W. THEODORE BRAILEY
ROGER BRICOUX
JOHN FREDERICK P. CLARKE
WALLACE HARTLEY
JOHN LAW HUME
GEORGES KRINS
PERCY C. TAYLOR
J. WESLEY WOODWARD

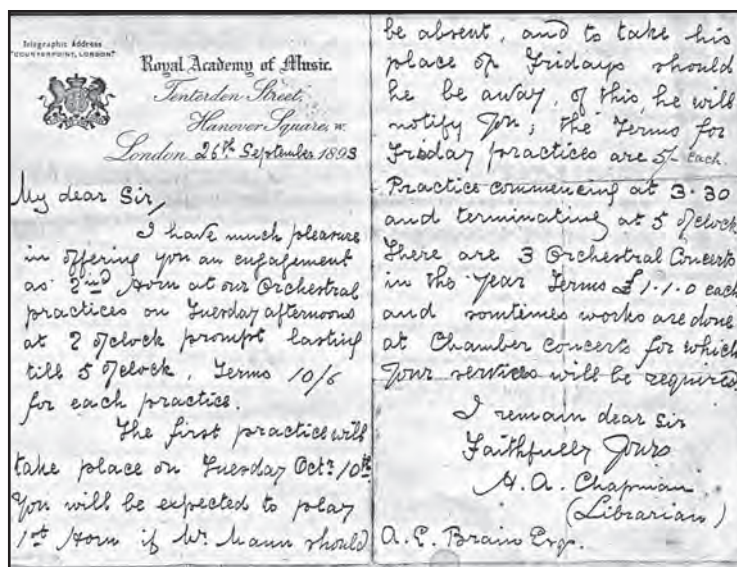
Who perished on the "Titanic"
15th April, 1912.



HORNS.		
OSKAR BOESDORF	C. CLINTON	ALEX. PENN
A. E. BRAIN (Sen.)	R. W. DOUGLAS	FRANK PROBIN
A. E. BRAIN (Jnr.)	SAM ESDAILE	F. W. SALKELD
AUBREY H. BRAIN	FRED GUTTRIDGE	G. W. SMITH
W. C. BREETHOFF	H. G. HAMBLETON	H. F. THORNTON
T. R. BUSBY	GEORGE MANNERS	H. VAN DER MEERSCHEN
E. A. BUTTON	B. J. MUSKETT	E. A. WRIGHT
WALTER CLEGG	F. PAERSCH	G. WRIGHT

The above – the top horn players in London at the time, were in the Titanic Band at the concert. All the Brain family was involved.

The Royal Academy



It is not clear from this letter whether Alfred Snr had teaching duties at the Academy or merely performed in concerts there, but it does seem that, whatever his role, his performance in concerts and in the practices described, would have had a didactic purpose. Unfortunately, the Royal Academy's archives do not preserve any other evidence of his involvement. No doubt, he was fully occupied with his duties in the various orchestras and ensembles in London and the provinces.

The Brain Family: Helena, Letitia, Rebecca, and Arthur

Most, if not all of the Brain family, were musical. Helena became a virtuoso on the long F trumpet and performed as soloist with her father at Reading on May 17th 1899 in a newly formed Society, established by a Mrs. Arkwright, - this was the "English Ladies Orchestral Society."

Helena was chosen to play for Maud Powell on her South African Concert Tour in 1905; Ms. Powell was "supported by a complete Concert Organisation."



MAUD POWELL will be supported by the following Artists who have been specially engaged in Europe:

MAY MUKLE, 'Cellist.
HELENA BRAIN, Trumpet.
ANNIE VISSER, Soprano.
ANDERSON NICOL, Tenor.
WALTER CREIGHTON, Baritone.





Letitia (daughter) played the violin, Rebecca the cello and double bass.

Regarding Rebecca, Vincent De Rosa recalls a time when he invited Alf and his wife to spend some time with him and Mrs. De Rosa on Balboa Island [a man-made island connected by a bridge from Newport Beach on the Pacific coast south of Los Angeles]. One day Vince noticed a girl painting portraits and asked her to paint a portrait of the friend he had staying with him – Alf. The girl agreed and, when she was painting Alf, she asked what he did. He replied that he was a horn player. Then she said, “I was in Amsterdam and I roomed with a woman with the name Brain who played bass in the Concertgebouw Orchestra, and she would ride her bicycle with the bass on her back.” “I know,” said Alf, “that was my sister.”

Three of the sons studied horn with celebrated horn player, Friederich Adolf Borsdorf, at the Royal Academy: Alfred Edwin junior (1885-1966), Aubrey Harold Brain (1893-1955), and Arthur, (the youngest), born 9 June 1901. Of the early years, our knowledge of the education and training of these musicians is sketchy, and most of what is known concerns the careers of two of the horn-playing brothers: Alfred and Aubrey, who both successfully pursued professional careers before as well as after completing their musical training.

Before moving on to look in detail at the life and achievements of Alf, it is appropriate here to mention what little is known about Arthur Edwin Brain’s training at the Academy. He enrolled as a student in September 1919, and his principal study was the horn with Borsdorf, and his second study, the piano, was taught by a number of professors, including R. Robertson Moreton, Miss Frost, and Mr. A. W. Roberts.

During his time at the Academy, he distinguished himself, so it appears, as much as his brother Alfred, when he gained a bronze for horn in the summer of 1920, and silver for horn in the summer of 1921. After a few years of professional horn playing in London, he decided to join the City of London Police. We can only guess at his motives for such a radical change of profession – it might be that he found the competition for engagements with his successful brothers was too much, so he pursued a career change.



Letitia – Wife of A. E. Brain Snr

Letitia, the wife of A. E. Brain Snr, died on the 31st of July 1923, aged 63. In the funeral card he sent to all his children, A. E. Snr wrote a very sad and moving poem. The funeral card reads,

A tender Mother, a Wife most dear,
A faithful friend to all sincere;
In loves he lived, in peace she died,
Life was desired, but God denied.

In his letter to his children he speaks of her “long and terrible suffering, in the end it was a Happy release.”

Obviously, Alf had written to his father on hearing of his mother’s death. Alf Snr writes to his son stating he was “pleased to receive your letter this morning 1st October,” then goes on about Alf’s drive across the USA, “that you had arrived alright, it was rather daring thing to do going through a strange country but glad you arrived quite safe. You must have had a time of it – I envy you at that ride. Poor Olga – what an experience for the poor child – she will never forget that journey. I hope you had good weather.” He then informs Alf Jnr that, “you will be pleased to hear Aubrey had a good series at the Proms, he played the Mozart concerto, had nice notice in the *Times*.”

(to be continued)

In his youth, after only a brief period of study, Welshman Leighton Jones became solo horn of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales. At nineteen, he began to play and broadcast with the BBC Orchestra of Wales. He studied with Keith Whitmore (Principal Horn of the LPO) and Alan Civil. Due to family commitments, he returned to West Wales and is a freelance hornist with chamber and orchestral groups, including The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, City of Birmingham, The National Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and The Orchestra of Welsh National Opera.

