



The 2026 colloquium of the Cambridge Cohort for Guitar Research was held in-person over the course of three days – Thursday 17th to Saturday 19th September 2026 – at Emmanuel College, Cambridge and focussed on the theme of 'The Guitar and Pedagogy'. Proceedings began at 5pm on the Thursday in the college chapel with a public keynote lecture given by Prof. Christopher Page, entitled 'Lodgers, Lessons, and Lifelines: The Professional Guitar Network of Earlier 19th-century London', which was followed by a service of Anglican evensong, featuring canticles set by Cesare Morelli for guitar and voice, taken from the Samuel Pepys guitar books and performed by Peter Elliott. Both events were well attended by members of the public and stimulated conversation amongst the colloquium's Cohort and Consortium delegates over Thursday's three-course formal dinner in Emmanuel's Robert Gardner Room.

The colloquium sessions themselves took place in one of Emmanuel's new, purpose-built seminar rooms, commencing at 9am on the Friday. The first session saw Katalin Koltai give a fascinating paper demonstrating the expansive musical possibilities of her OpenFrets guitar, which was paired with a brief presentation given by James Westbrook on the technical and timbral affordances of different 19th-century guitars. In the second session, Nicola Pignatiello delivered a rich paper on the pedagogy and performance of *partimento*-based improvisation on the guitar, which sparked much discussion. Following a light sandwich lunch, the third session began with Stephen Kenyon performing several of Catharina Pratten's pieces, before Johan Löfving continued the Pratten-theme by considering the effect upon listeners of speaking her poetic epigraph to 'Twilight' aloud, either before or throughout the piece's performance. The fourth session saw Steven Watson give a paper comprehensively examining nail- and flesh-playing trends and justifications in guitar methods c.1800-1950, which was paired with Declan Hickey's provocative and persuasive paper arguing that the 19th-century guitar primarily functioned as an accompaniment to the voice. The Friday concluded with Daniel Marx's riveting public performance of pieces from the Munich Guitar Society Manuscripts in Emmanuel's chapel, followed by a relaxed dinner at Pizza Express for delegates.

The fifth and final session of the colloquium took the form of an open, round-table discussion on the Saturday at 9am, drawing together insights from the preceding papers and performances. Following this discussion, at 10.30am, delegates were treated to a tour of the Old Library and a viewing of the Samuel Pepys guitar manuscripts at Magdalene College – kindly facilitated by the Pepys Librarian at Magdalene, Jane Hughes – before departing Cambridge. All in all, the colloquium was a great success and the roughly even-split of Cohort and Consortium members in attendance imbued the exchange of ideas that took place with an especially notable and welcome combination of scholarly energy and expertise.

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