

BRADFORD ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

A Musical Fellowship

Founded 1910

Newsletter March 2018

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE

The meeting on 17th March is at Northcliffe Church, Shipley at 2.15 pm

Some members will know this church as Hall Royd Methodist Church

Vice-President's letter

Dear Friends,

I hope it isn't too late to wish you a happy New Year! In my professional life I used to make the start of February the time to stop wishing clients this.

It still came as a surprise to see huge banks of Easter eggs for sale in Tesco some weeks ago, yet, as I write this, snow is again steadily falling on Arctic Allerton. But the climate has changed and now we have a cycle of snow-thaw-freeze, so there's no chance to get your sledge out.

The climate is also changing within the Royal College of Organists and, whilst in their research they found that many thought of it as too elitist, there were others that felt it was not elitist enough. So how do you please all the organists all of the time? This was the basis of Philip Meaden's talk last month (read more about it elsewhere).

A quite surprising trend for the RCO is in reaching out to children and this month's presentation by David Pipe from Leeds Cathedral is exactly about that, they doing some pioneering work to encourage children to become interested in the organ.

We as an association have had special events aimed at children, and it has borne success too. I, for one, am seriously hoping that it will spur us on to invest time, energy and resources into the next generation of organists.

The passing of resident organists, such as Jim Mitchell, continues to leave huge deficits in the availability of either replacements or itinerant/freelance organists to fill in. In a week's time I'll be playing for my second choral evensong at St. Barnabas (where Jim was Organist and Choirmaster) since Jim left us.

Inevitably, this must result in falling standards since it's not easily possible to establish an ongoing work of development in the music at any one church. Those of us that play as freelance organist or pianist know that there are almost certainly regular Sundays when the churches cannot find an organist and have to resort to an iPod. In other words, there are not enough organists and pianists to go around any more. Yet many of us will remember days when becoming an organist was a competitive business, and when very many churches had assistant or deputy organists.

We could, of course, state reasons for this: the declining number of regular church-attenders, the poor state of the organs (so discouraging people from both learning the organ and fulfilling an organist post), and the demise of choirs, from whence came many organists. I suppose we could argue that if organists and choirs had been able to sustain a high quality of music in a certain church, then such churches would be well attended. Recollections of a packed choral evensong at Kings College Chapel serve to remind me here.

But, as an association, we need to look into reaching out not only to the young but to all, to bring the organ and its music into more prominence, with a view to developing an appreciation and a desire to learn to play. Before I pass on the reins to Valerie Mitchell this is something that I'll be seeking support and action from our Council and, if my reader has any suggestions on this topic, I'd very much welcome them (j.d.chapman@virginmedia.com or 01274 541758).

This will most probably be my last letter before our AGM and I'd like to encourage you all to consider serving the Association in some way (should you not already do so). Currently, we shall be needing a President Elect and a Council Member and, if you'd like to serve in either of these posts, please ask someone to nominate you.

I look forward to seeing you at David Pipe's talk on 17th February at Haworth Road Methodist Church at 2.15pm.

John.

Last call.

If you're thinking of going on a trip to Cambridge, please contact me soon.

There is no fixed date yet and we hope to find a date that suits all that want to go.

Henry has already told us that we would be welcome to come up to the organ console at King's College, though we're not currently sure about other venues. Almost certainly, Wesley Methodist, the home of the former Eastbrook Hall organ, will be happy to welcome us.

Although this would work best as a two-day event (staying one night at the same excellent hotel as before) please let me know if this should be a problem or if you'd prefer to make a single day's journey.

So please contact me soon on j.d.chapman@virginmedia.com

or 01274 541758.

Meetings reports

January

Saturday 20th January at St. James' Church, Charlestown, Baildon was the venue for our first meeting of 2018 when around 18 persons were present to welcome Mr.PhilipMeaden : Director of The Royal College of Organists for his talk entitled 'My work with the RCO'.

The talk was elaborated under the following headings:

1. Background
2. Vision and aims
3. Progress to date
4. Plans for the future
5. Your engagement

Quite recently there has been a 'stock taking' of the RCO's objectives so as to ensure that future progress is both challenging and achievable. A sectoral survey during this time had been returned with both highly supportive and highly critical comments of the organization's current functioning.

February



Haworth Road Methodist Church

Working with young children

David began by describing his background as a boy at Reigate Preparatory & Choir School: unique in being the only member of the Choir Schools' Association unconnected to a cathedral or college. As well as being a chorister, David was enthused by the sound of the organ at the Tuesday & Thursday choral matins services. He had piano lessons from the School organist, but had his first organ lessons from the organist of the URC church which he attended, who had spotted his interest and invited him to be a page turner. After A-Levels he took time-out, before going up to Cambridge as Organ Scholar at Downing College, and spent some time at All Saints, Margaret Street.

David stressed here the need for organists to give opportunities when they spot interest and curiosity – and if they can give a youngster a role and a title – so much the better.

He was fascinated by gadgets as well the sound of the organ – and the organ is full of gadgets!

After University he was Organ Scholar and Director of the Merbecke Choir of Southwark Cathedral, before his appointment as Assistant Director of the Music Department at York Minster. He came to Leeds as Director of the Organists' Training Programme and Cathedral Organist in the Catholic Diocese of Leeds in May 2016.

Why should children play the organ?

1. To make music in an inspirational building – maybe using music the children know.
2. To give opportunities for public performance – congregations value these. It is a good thing to offer these opportunities to schools.
3. Playing for Weddings is financially positive.
4. Musical skills can help in gaining a University place.
5. Develops musicianship to a high level.

6. Develops skills and practice such as discipline and patience.
7. An obvious way to be involved in group music-making.

Schools are now often poorly provided with musicians. The Catholic Diocese of Leeds Training Programme offers what might be thought of as the old fashioned approach of real teacher contact – singing and instrumental lessons and music reading. But schools are also invited to bring their children to St Anne’s Cathedral where they can explore the building and look inside not just a piano, but the organ as well.

There is a difficulty of access to churches – the priest at Huddersfield has persuaded his congregation to sponsor organ lessons for 5 children, but finding churches where the children can practise near to their homes is proving difficult even including other denominations’ buildings! “Safeguarding” comes with its own issues – 2nd adults have to be present at teaching sessions (often a parent has to be present at every lesson, and at practice time).

Few schools these days have organs, but schemes are being developed: Viscount Organs have given organs to schools to give more children the opportunity to learn. The fact that practising can be done using headphones means that the rest of the schools is undisturbed.

Why might children not be learning to play

The attitude of some organists is un-welcoming.

Most organists are white middle-class males.. How do we encourage girls?

Children have never heard or been encouraged to hear an organ – or play one!

Children are not taught to read music in schools.

We need to introduce “pedals” to pianists.

Tutor Books are important – need to be attractive to the modern child.

Selective use of Sanger’s was recommended, as were Corinne Hepburn’s Books 1-3 and the Pedals book.

The RCO is now producing good teaching guides etc., using on-line/youtube/computers which is making the organ relative to this modern generation.

David rounded off his presentation on a positive note stressing that more and more is being done to excite children with the thrill of the organ – particularly when

performances of, for example, "Peter & the Wolf" or silent films are given with an organ accompaniment, and we must do our bit!

The presentation ended with a question and answers session followed by the President's call for the Members to show their appreciation – followed by Sheila's Lemon Drizzle and Rock Cakes etc.

RF

Website

Bill Slessor is still trying to overcome the difficulties accessing the site on line. It should be possible to access the site by entering the web address in the top line (WWW.) of your server. Please let me know whether you succeed or not.

www.slessor642.wixsite.com/bradfordorganist

Ushaw Organ Weekend – 5 miles outside Durham. Friday 4th to Sunday 6th May

Cost - £175, Students £95. Arrange own accommodation. Further information from Sheila 01756 792136

RCO Summer Course is in London. 30th July to 4th August , Cost - £560, RCO members £510 Details www.rco.org.uk/events

Music for sale

There is a list of music for sale. All in good condition and most priced from 50p to £12. Please contact John Hammond for more information. 01943 600175 or

john-hammond@supanet.com

Recitals

Bradford Cathedral – Wednesdays at 1 pm

March	21 st	Alex Berry	Bradford
	28 th	Nicholas Morris	London
April	4 th	Jack Spencer	Cambridge
	11 th	Simon Headley	Leicester

18th Callum Alger Birmingham

25th Timothy Byram-Wigfield London

Buffet lunch from 12.30 pm – 12.55 pm £4

Retiring collection

Christ Church, Skipton – Bank Holiday Mondays at 11 am

April 2nd Nigel Holdsworth St. Columba's United Reformed Church, York

May 7th Jason Lowe Assistant Organist, Durham Cathedral

Refreshments from 10 am

Retiring collection

Halifax Minster – Thursdays at 1 pm

March 22nd Alan Horsey Hipperholme

29th Graham Gribbin Halifax Minster

April 5th Simon Russell Nantwich Parish Church

12th Simon Lindley Leeds

19th Nigel Duce St. Michael's, Beckwithshaw

26th Charles Edmondson St. Paul's, Grange-over-Sands

May 3rd Kai Krackenberg Husum, Germany

Lunch £4 from 12.15 pm.

Retiring collection