

BRADFORD ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

1910-2020

Newsletter

October 2020

President's letter

Dear Fellow BOA Member,

I hope that you are all well, being “safe” and keeping your distance. It seems an exceedingly long time since we could slip into something warm, pick up the music case and totter round to church and blow the dust out of the organ pipes – Oh. . . that sounds like ‘maintenance’ !! Isn’t ‘maintenance’ one of the few things that can be done in churches? now, under which mat does the Vicar/Minister hide the key???

No! Of course, that would never happen – we are too well behaved. I am, like Edward, pleased to own a digital organ (with headphones to spare the neighbours), but I miss the organ as a significant creational contributor to the liturgical action of a worshipping congregation. Eucharist via Zoom does its best, but

For some of us, the enforced isolation imposed on those of a certain age, or with specified medical conditions, seemed heavy handed – one is reminded of those words to Peter . . .

“When you were young you put on your own belt and walked where you liked; but when you grow old you will stretch out your hands, and somebody else will put a belt around you and take you where you would rather not go.”

We have not yet reached that stage. In fact many of us have used the Lock-in to advantage: in doing things that have been back-burnered for years; discovering books one has been going to read for years; getting some exercise (because *they* say it helps!); learning to “Zoom” or “Skype”; the freedom to wear what one likes – since no one can see us; even the delights of day-time TV, with its 100+ channels, which, if you have U Tube, has the delights of organ recitals.

I have, at long last, finished my “Organs in Bradford” – all that remains is the practicality of the publication procedure! My researches have resulted in an “**Info**” file of 223 entries and a “**Pics**” file of 500+. The final achievement was identifying the organ in Cottingley Town Hall, which resulted from the discovery of a “Short History of Cottingley” by Mr Ellis Heaton, (which reads like a ‘talk’) in 1914. He describes the effort to provide an organ for the new Hall and how, early in 1868 Thomas Baines, for his efforts as chairman of the trustees, was awarded a purse of £33 to buy an oil portrait, but he added £17 and gave it to

the “Organ Fund” – which later, on the 10th January 1868, held a two day Bazaar which raised £182.5s, making a grand total of £232.5s – the equivalent of £20,761.56 in 2020. The organ, built by Radcliffe & Sagar of Leeds, was Opened by George Hirst, *Professor of Music. Liverpool*. Finding his details was hampered by his name – I had forgotten that George Hirst was also the name of a footballing legend – but from a Liverpool site I not only found that George was the organist and musical director of St George’s Hall and a Professor in a Music School, but, from a lady in South Africa researching an ancestor called Ira Hirst, also Music Professor, in the same period. We worked out that my George was the older brother to Ira, who left to go the South Africa for his health, but who died at the age of only 46.

The internet makes the world a much smaller place!

Looking forward to the next time we can meet – until then keep safe and make the most of all the free time we think we have.

Blessings, Ron.

This letter was written in June.

Ron’s book is available from Amazon, price £10.

Apart from the specifications, Ron adds snippets of interesting information. We are able to see how the organ was appreciated at the time.

Thoughts on Lockdown

Locked in – Confined to barracks – Kept in

I think all the above titles could be interpreted as ‘Lockdown’.

We have all been remembering other experiences of feeling isolated. Here are some of mine.

Locked in. A gust of wind locked me in the coal place when I went to recycle some papers! Edward was out and didn’t miss me when he came home thinking I was gossiping at a friend’s house (as if I would!) Over an hour in a coal place with nowhere to sit --.

Confined to barracks. I was kneeling on a chair looking out of the window, watching my school friends pushing decorated prams and tricycles up to school. My decorated pram was by me, but I was going nowhere. I had chicken pox.

Kept in. I was at Belle Vue High School. I forgot my hymn book and had to spend my break copying out the hymn. *What good did that do?*

My feelings at the start of Lockdown were much the same, frustration because I couldn't alter the situation, upset because I was away from family and boredom because I wasn't able to do the things I normally did.

I'm sure your feelings were much the same. How did you cope?

I decided it was a good time to finish off all those projects that had defeated me.

Unfortunately, many of them are still works in progress seven months on. Sadly, I must admit that my father was right when he said that I 'put off 'til tomorrow what I should have done yesterday'. There are so many interesting things to do and never enough time to do them all.

I am sure that twenty-four hours a day should be enough for 'the likes of me'.

Do let me know how you are.

Zoom possibility

Those of you who have home organs will, no doubt, have been learning new pieces.

Maybe we can have a members' recital via Zoom. Do let me know if you would like to take part.

Syllabus

At the moment we have no meetings arranged, but I am listing a lot of possible mini-trips for when we are able to enter churches. Mini-trips usually attract between six and ten members so should soon be a possibility.

Secretary's notes

A newsletter was prepared during 'Lockdown', but could not be completed as my computer decided that it needed treatment!

Your Council has approved the following propositions: -

1. That the subscription for 2020/2021 will be £0.
and

2. That the IAO Capitation fee will be paid from the General Fund.

Members paying by Standing Order have been contacted by the Treasurer.

