

BRADFORD ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

November 2019

Founded 1910
Presidents' Letter

Charity

By the time you read this I hope to be running on all cylinders: the morning after our Annual Lunch I tweaked my lower back, which drastically limited all activity for two days and it is only now (Thursday) that I have dared to sit at my computer to write.

I am looking forward to the November Meeting – “The President’s Event” – which is mine to do with whatever I fancy! I hope that you will enjoy your part in the proceedings, but you will have the “Food and Socialising” in Gilstead Church Hall to anticipate.

One cannot help but notice the surge of activity of late from Harrison & Harrison. It has been uplifting to read or hear of the large numbers of organs being restored or worked on. I was taken aback, when I walked into Salisbury Cathedral earlier this month, to see scaffolding where the organ should be, and a huge display – with real pipework – of what is being done and why, which included a digital keyboard and an invite to “play the organ!”

But, in contrast, I was saddened to read this morning that Kildwick Church, the “Lang Kirk o’ Craven” is liable of closure unless there is more active support from the locality.

The C of E is having to face a reality which our Methodist, Baptist, URC and RC friends faced up to decades ago – congregations are shrinking and aging. It is hard to realise that many churches and chapels were built in Bradford and district because the existing churches were packed – even Bradford Parish Church had to install balconies on North, South and West sides of the church (which were bought from the Vicar of Bradford at the time, but then passed on in wills, or even sold at ever-increasing prices). Sadly, from the point of view of organists and lovers of beautiful, deep rooted, symbolic liturgy, the only growth we see is that of worship bands, worship songs, and repetition, repetition and an almost total absence of Eucharistic Worship in the anamnesis, the presence of the Son of God. We cannot look to Education for help. Gone are the days when a Jesuit priest could say “Give me the boy for seven years and I will give you the man”! Religion barely gets a look-in; where is the daily act of worship, or school assembly? But what has happened to corporate singing? What has

happened to Music as a GCSE subject? Only the Public Schools are doing their bit – and there is now a move to make paying for education illegal. All we can do is to do what we can in our own area, in our own church or chapel, to make music and worship beautiful and enriching; to encourage children to discover the joys of singing and making music; to get young people “hooked” and “caught” by the excitement of playing the organ. The more young people we can encourage and support to become enthusiastic about the organ the greater the chance of building a future which will preserve the best of the past in whatever the future of Christian Worship is like.

Ron.

Reports

Members’ recital – St. John’s Clayton

The members’ recital was not very popular.

At first only Kenneth Taylor offered to play and for a while it looked as if Kenneth was destined to do a solo performance.

I was very grateful to David Walker, Edward Scott and our president, Ron Fletcher for adding their names to the list. Now we had a programme!

Thank you to all the players.

Sheila

Annual dinner

On 19th October it was the annual BOA dinner attended by 28 members this year and held at the West Bradford Golf Club off Haworth Road Bradford which is tucked away behind a housing estate off Chellow Grange Road. On approaching the entrance one is confronted by iron gates which at first seem very unwelcoming but on driving up close they suddenly open for you although a code is required to get out again. This venue was chosen as it was on a bus route unlike the previous dinner at Northcliffe Golf Club. It proved to be a good choice of venue as the food was excellent with well cooked meat and vegetables as well as good soup and dessert. All this was only £17 which was very good Yorkshire value.

After the usual formalities there was a talk by guest speaker Paul Fisher who is a retired Anglican priest now living in the Yorkshire Dales beyond

Settle. He retired early as a priest so he could concentrate on composing for choir and solo voice which he began during his time as a Bass Lay Clerk at Bradford Cathedral. He is a freelance organist and his talk was based on various elements associated with the pipe organ namely air wind fire and water. Whilst we can appreciate the need for air and wind to make the pipes work water and fire are perhaps less obvious. However I am sure some of us have experienced water getting into the organ through leaky roofs and of course we all viewed with horror the recent terrible fire at Notre Dame and I am sure we were all relieved to learn that the organ had miraculously escaped the worst of the devastation.

On the conclusion of Paul's talk we were offered the chance to purchase one of his CDs entitled 'The Mystery of Things' recorded in Worcester Cathedral in 2017.

Thanks are due to Sheila for her superb organisation of the dinner at such an excellent location. I would certainly vote to return there next year!

Peter Mann

St John the Evangelist, Cullingworth.

I hope that many of us will take advantage of the opportunity to hear the newly installed 64 draw stop Phoenix Organ at the Inaugural Organ Concert which will be given by David Lowe at 7.30pm on Friday 6th December.

Our Treasurer, Robert Smith is doing all he can to publicise this event – I hope we will support him with a church full of organists and organ lovers.

Ron Fletcher