



The Old Southendian Organ Society (OSOS)



COMMITTEE REPORTS TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

20 April 2021

Chairman's Report

For all groups and societies, especially musical ones, the past year has had no precedent and, like others, OSOS has been severely inhibited by pandemic regulations which have tested our stamina to the extreme. Nevertheless, appreciable momentum has been maintained despite the ban on face-to-face meetings of any kind: the virtual performances which you will hear about in the following reports were well received and made possible due to our success in securing ongoing professional tuning and regulation for the School Organ despite the restrictions and access problems which have kept thousands of others silent all around the UK. Inevitably, though, our instrument has not enjoyed quite enough use to keep its components running as sweetly as one would have liked, so we are fortunate in having the services of Richard Sheppard and Les Ross to call on when mechanisms need coaxing back into operation. It may take a while to get back to 100% reliability but we are heading in the right direction and the organ is sounding at its best in the series of video recordings now being released, an extremely attractive programme devised and performed by our own Warren Symes and which seems guaranteed to bring acclaim. I am grateful to my committee colleagues for their work in keeping the Society on course to deliver an ever more exciting future and we will now hear their individual progress reports.

Gerald Usher

Treasurer's Report

Income

Over the year from April 2020 to March 2021, donations received amounted to £1,839.16 including Gift Aid. Total donations have now exceeded £60k since fundraising began in 2014. This is an incredible achievement and something we should celebrate as a society.

There was no direct income for events in the form of ticket sales. However, £173.52 donated through CAF was as a direct result of the online event in December 2020.

Expenses

The Society's plan for tuning and tonal finishing took place safely whilst respecting Covid-19 restrictions and this work has had a positive impact on the organ. These invoices totalled £2,663.00 across the financial year.

The other main expense was a payment of £500 to Richard Brasier for his virtual recital in December. This was the Society's first virtual concert. The fundraising against this expense was unfortunately much lower than standard tickets sales and this will be an important consideration for future virtual engagements.

Summary

2020—2021 has resulted in an operating loss of £1,402.36. It continues to be important that we retain appropriate funds in the account to be able to support any future emergency maintenance. The bank balance is healthy, and I have no concerns about this loss.

Although below the official income threshold, we will continue to have our accounts reviewed by a third party and submit them to the Charities Commission.

Based on the Society's achievements to date, I would recommend a minimum income target (donations and events) of £4,000 for the financial year 2021—2022.

Jon Roberts

**OLD SOUTHENDIAN ORGAN SOCIETY
BALANCE SHEET**

Income	20-21	19-20	18-19	17-18	16-17	TOTAL
Membership	90.00	110.00	150.00	210.00	260.00	1070.00
Donations	1480.49	6693.35	1521.82	39289.26	4425.00	59393.26
Events	173.52	1656.60	2060.60	425.00	426.84	5032.56
HMRC	95.15	-	137.85	-	-	233.00
Total Income	<u>1839.16</u>	<u>8459.95</u>	<u>3870.27</u>	<u>39924.26</u>	<u>5111.84</u>	<u>65728.82</u>
Expenses						
Maintenance	2663.00	-	4611.00	38190.47	1580.52	47467.38
Trips/Music	-	100.00	-	-	100.00	200.00
Marketing	578.52	374.88	332.38	305.49	93.99	1685.26
Equipment Hire	-	-	284.72	-	-	284.72
Venue Hire	-	229.00	172.50	130.00	135.00	801.50
Gifts & Donations	-	73.37	102.58	-	-	175.95
Total Expenses	<u>3241.52</u>	<u>777.25</u>	<u>5503.18</u>	<u>38625.96</u>	<u>1909.51</u>	<u>50614.81</u>
NET INCOME	<u><u>-1402.36</u></u>	<u><u>7682.70</u></u>	<u><u>-1632.91</u></u>	<u><u>1298.30</u></u>	<u><u>3202.33</u></u>	<u><u>15114.01</u></u>
Float	160.00					
Cash in account	14954.01					

Secretary's Report

Committee meetings

Due to the exceptional circumstances of the past year, last year's AGM was held some months later than planned, in October. Consequently, there has been only one meeting of the committee since then. Under discussion were:

- plans for online engagement with members, including the next series of videos of Warren Symes playing the School Organ and plans for a future online concert
- plans for a weekend open morning to demonstrate the Organ to visitors when circumstances allow
- continuing maintenance and improvement of the Organ
- support for School organists.

In addition, the Society's finances have been kept under review by the committee.

At each meeting, every member of the committee gives a report on their activities on the Society's behalf during the preceding months. The minutes of committee meetings give a clear indication of the actions to be taken by the committee to further the work of the Society and these are reviewed at the following meeting. The committee also remain in regular contact by email between meetings to ensure that all trustees remain fully apprised of significant developments in the Society's work.

Membership

The restrictions on our activities forced by the Covid-19 pandemic have made recruitment of members increasingly challenging. The committee plans to hold a meeting with the sole focus of discussing issues of recruiting and retaining members in the near future and I will be able to report further on this issue after that has taken place.

Brian Fletcher

Publicity and Communication Officer's Report

Following my report for the year ended March 2020, a period which saw a great variety of concerts from the Society, we have faced very different challenges and opportunities, but we have learned to adapt to connect with our supporters — wherever they are.

From the start of the lockdown in March, it quickly became evident that the planned AGM for late April 2020 was not going to be possible. Instead, the committee held an “online update”, bringing the reports that were prepared for the AGM to a more informal setting. We enjoyed the discussions and chance to chat with some of our supporters in this way, and it was great to welcome attendees from up and down the country, and beyond — including from the USA!

In early May 2020, we were pleased to share a report from Ben Perryman as he concluded his time as School Organist, including his thoughts on learning and performing on the organ, highlights from the year, and the role of the organ in the School today. Thank you to Ben for producing such an interesting read, which may be found on the OSOS website via the “News” page.

With restrictions continuing, we turned our attention to bringing music to our supporters online. Through May and June 2020 it was great to be able to share a programme performed by Warren Symes on the War Memorial Organ, piece by piece, week by week, via YouTube. Our thanks to Jonathan Roberts for filming and producing this first “live recordings” series of six pieces, which included everything from Karg-Elert's popular Nun danket alle Gott and Handel's Hallelujah Chorus, through to more contemplative items by J.S. Bach. It was brilliant to feature in the series an Aria by John Dixon, an Old Boy from the School and one of our supporters who was due to give a concert in July 2020 — we do look forward to re-arranging this event when things are safer and travel is permitted! The recordings were publicised via Facebook through our OSOS page and the Old Southendian Association's group, and through local and national musical and organ groups. Our supporters on our email list also enjoyed the series, with numerous positive comments received, mostly welcoming the much-needed musical sustenance and the familiar, impressive sight and sound of the organ at the School.

Further pieces were released (and similarly well-received) to mark 270 years since the death of J.S. Bach on 28th July and the School's Harvest Festival in October (with Hugh Blair's brilliant and appropriate March for a Harvest Festival).

Following updated advice from the Charities Commission, we held our first online-only Annual General Meeting in October. Feedback from this was positive, and we will continue to offer online attendance via video-conference going forward, regardless of public health considerations, in order to permit greater access by and contributions from our supporters from all over the world! Thank you to everyone who joined us for this meeting.

On 11th November, in remembrance of all those fallen in two World Wars and other conflicts, and as the School observed its 2 minutes silence at 11am, we offered a recording of Elgar's Nimrod as a poignant tribute. Despite not being able to gather as one community of Southendians Past and Present in

the School's Main Hall with the War Memorial Organ and Rolls of Honour as normal, we do hope this facilitated a sense of connection, remembrance, and reflection.

December brought a new innovation for the Society: our first full-length virtual concert. We were delighted to have concert organist Richard Brasier offer a recital ahead of Christmas, pre-recorded at the School, featuring a programme of music from across the repertoire, with items by Buxtehude, Reger, Messiaen, and others. We created a new concert streaming page for our website, on which the hour-long recital was first broadcast on 19th December 2020 at 7.30pm. A donations facility was added to the page, and we made a modest collection towards the recitalist's fee and the costs of tuning the organ for the recording. Thanks to our super recitalist for sharing his music with our virtual audience, and thanks too to Warren Symes and the School for facilitating the filming. We are grateful to all of you who tuned in: across YouTube, Facebook, and our new website page, around 100 people watched some of the recital "live" on the evening, with a good number sustained throughout the broadcast. Further viewers have enjoyed the recital "on demand" over the Christmas period (and beyond!). We will continue to explore new ways to offer such events going forward to reach you all at home, including an online musical showcase event planned for the summer (postponed from November 2020).

Just after the year end, in April 2021, we have been delighted to share the start of our second series of live recordings of the organ, with Warren Symes returning to the console once more. This series will run through to the end of May and will feature nine videos. We hope you will enjoy seeing more of our organist and the organ in the recordings, with extra photography of the hall and wider School included over the music. The 2021 series has been expertly filmed and produced by Craig McGarrigle, a friend and supporter of the Society, to whom we are extremely grateful. Do like us on Facebook, subscribe to our channel on YouTube, and sign up to our mailing list via www.osos.org.uk to be notified of new videos as they are released. Our Videos page on our website also contains the full collection of current and past recordings, interviews and other videos, for your interest.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to offering more high quality events for our supporters, both virtually, and in person (as soon as that becomes safe and practical for attendees, performers and your committee alike). Stay tuned via our website, mailing list and Facebook for more on the Society's activities for 2021 and beyond.

Joe Zammit

School Liaison Officer's Report

Due to the school closures and the in-school Covid-19 restrictions, there is, unfortunately, very little for me to report this year. As the pupils have not been permitted to mix with other year groups since September 2020, it was not possible for the Organ Society to meet on a weekly basis. Instead, I met the students for individual lessons and after the period of internal examinations, intend to organise an individual rehearsal schedule for the boys who play the organ.

School Organist

The School Organist, Emmanuel Oke (Year 13) was recently commended by the Headteacher, Dr Bevan, for his dedication to learning the organ, despite not having any opportunity to perform in public this year. Emmanuel is a competent pianist, who relished the challenge to learn the organ. He is innately musical and he enjoyed learning to improvise at the organ. I feel very sorry for Emmanuel, as he did not get play the organ at weekly assemblies or perform at concerts, due to the Covid-19 restrictions. However, I'm confident that he will continue to learn the organ at university and I'm sure he will return to perform at a concert for OSOS in the future. Besides Emmanuel, there are two other boys who are currently learning the organ: one is in Year 12, while the other is in Year 8. Both boys are very enthusiastic about learning the organ and show good potential.

Organ Tuning and Recordings

As the member of staff responsible for the organ, I continue to facilitate visits for tuning and maintenance by the organ builder, Sheppard & Cross Pipe Organ Services. During the February half-term, the organ was tuned by Les Ross. With the organ sounding at its best, I took the opportunity to record a number of pieces of music. The recordings are currently being published on the OSOS website and YouTube Channel on a weekly basis. I hope that these recordings will raise spirits, raise the profile of the work of the Society and hopefully raise funds too!

Warren Symes