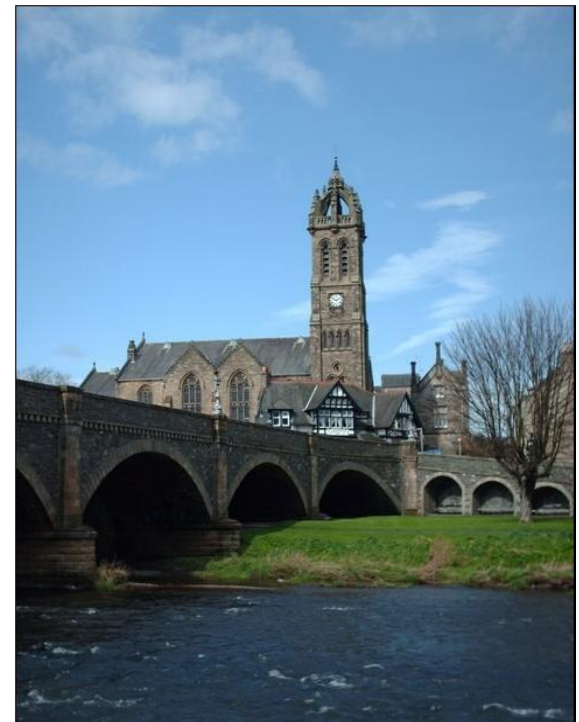


BORDERS GUILD OF ORGANISTS &
CHURCH MUSICIANS

NEWSLETTER NO 34
SPRING 2013



President's Letter February 2013

Dear All,

The beginning of the year, or at least close to it, is a good time to look back over the past months for the Borders' Guild of Organists.

We are one of the smaller organists' societies in Britain and we have had a fairly busy year, which seems to have flown by. I write this just after our Social Lunch in the Lodge at Carfraemill, where we had a very generous meal with good

conversation and a highly illuminating talk on Louis Armstrong by Ian Gilmour, Minister at St Andrew's and St George's West in Edinburgh. His enthusiasm for Jazz did find a real echo with us organists.

We can look back on a successful Advent Service in Lauder at the beginning of December, which brought a good number of singers together. Hymns, readings, seasonal organ music and choir pieces helped to prepare all of us present for Christmas. A big thank you must go to Mary Shields, who organised such a splendid tea afterwards.

Earlier in November we met in Peebles Old Parish where a good number of interested youngsters as well as the young at heart had an introduction to the organ by Karen Kitchen and Sarah Brown. It was for some of our visitors the first real contact with the instrument.

For the remainder of the syllabus for this session we can look forward to an Organ recital as part of the AGM in Stenton Kirk and a trip to Durham to visit the workshop premises of the organ builders Harrison and Harrison, which Karen Kitchen is organising for us. Details and an outline of the day are found in this newsletter.

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BGO syllabus 2013

AGM 27th April

This year the AGM is taking place at Stenton starting at 2pm with a recital by Brigitte Harris

2.45pm refreshments will be provided

3pm AGM

Durham Trip 17th June

Our social outing this year will be a visit to Durham City on Monday 17th June. After arriving by train or car, our day will start with free time to explore the City and its wonderful Cathedral. We will gather for lunch and then travel by bus or car to the workshop of Harrison & Harrison Organ Builders for a tour of their premises. The afternoon will conclude with a visit to St Brandon's Church in

Brancepeth where we will have an opportunity to play their c1870 Henry Willis organ, restored by Harrison & Harrison in 2005.

Harrison & Harrison have requested that we limit the number of people attending the tour to twelve people, so reserve your spot soon to avoid disappointment. Also, there will be a fee of £5 per person to cover the cost of our visit to St Brandon's Church.

For more information, contact Karen Kitchen on 01573 440533 or karenkitchen59@gmail.com.

This year marks one hundred years since Dr Albert Schweitzer departed from Europe to Lambarene in the Gabon, equatorial Africa, to start his medical work.

For much of my professional life I have been involved in the work of the British arm of the Schweitzer Hospital Fund and later The Friends of Albert Schweitzer (Reverence for Life UK).

As many of you will know, Schweitzer was also a famous organist and Bach scholar, and the Schweitzer foundation used to run organ master classes in his home village in Alsace, where Schweitzer actually advised on the installation of the instrument in the local church. I met my husband there, when we both attended the master class taught by Daniel Roth.

This year the anniversary was marked by a recital by Daniel and also a masterclass in St John's College, Cambridge in March.

It was a memorable event, which brought back many memories and also gave much food for thought, both in terms of organ performance practice and the message of Albert Schweitzer one century later.

It remains for me to thank all Committee members of the Guild, without whose efforts the smooth running of the Guild would not be possible.

I am looking forward to meeting all of you in the course of this year.

Yours sincerely,

Brigitte Harris

Raise Your Game!

An RCO Workshop in Edinburgh on 29 September 2012

On a bright Saturday morning some thirty students and teachers came together to spend a day around the organ. This was organized by the energetic James Parsons from the Royal College of Organists, who is keen to develop outreach events around the country. I am pleased to say that we had one youngster from the Borders taking part in the activities.

Students were aged nine to “saga”-age and keen to discover the organ. Instruments all around the city were played, among them the fine Frobenius organ in Canongate Kirk, the organs of St Giles’ Cathedral, Palmerston Place Church, Old St. Paul’s Episcopal Church and St George’s West Church.

We had workshops, demonstrations as well as a fine lunchtime recital by Freddie James, a young player, who won a performance prize in 2011. The day closed with a composite recital given by participants.

It is true to say that everyone learned a lot and improved markedly during the day, which was very gratifying for the tutors to observe.

This has been the second RCO event of this kind and must be called a resounding success.

It is a good way of recruiting players, who experience not only fine instruments but also meet many like-minded musicians.

Brigitte Harris

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PIECE OF MUSIC?

My favourite piece of music is JS Bach's *Musikalisches Opfer* (Musical Offering) BWV 1079. My favourite interpretation is by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields with Sir Neville Marriner conducting, and Nicholas Kraemer playing the organ and harpsichord (1974) - probably because it was the first time I heard this music.

WHICH PIECE OF MUSIC WOULD YOU TAKE WITH YOU TO A DESERT ISLAND?

The piece of music I would take to a desert island would be *Musikalisches Opfer* - it expresses joy, sorrow, serenity, longing, energy, order, chaos, sometimes in turn, sometimes together. Ah, if I could play that!

WHAT DOES MUSIC MAKING MEAN TO YOU?

My whole life I have had access to some sort of keyboard. I make music 'for myself', I love deciphering a new piece of music, working to get the fingering right, moving from one bar to another, bringing everything together until it hums. Making music has helped me a lot in difficult times. It also has made me meet new friends. As I gently move towards old age, I also believe that the *gymnastique* that my brain needs to do to coordinate hands and feet and keyboards and pedals and stops is an excellent antidote to the onset of Alzheimer's

The interview was conducted by Brigitte Harris

January 2013

The Profile

Maggy Stead

WHO OR WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO TAKE UP MUSIC AND SPECIFICALLY THE ORGAN?

My father considered that to be able to read and play music was as essential as reading, writing and arithmetic. I was brought up in Luxembourg, where there was a 'conservatoire' for all, Tuesday's and Thursday's afternoons. I took piano lessons; there was no organ. I was a fervent church goer (Catholic), and from very young I was enchanted by the music that came from the loft - angels making music. I never saw the organ, I just saw the pipes;

WHERE DID YOU FIRST PLAY THE ORGAN?

In my twenties I acquired a spinet, in my thirties I acquired a harpsichord, in my late forties I realized I could learn to play the organ.

The first organ play I had was in a church in Kelso with Molly Pringle. By some extraordinary coincidence Brigitte Harris was just starting the Borders' Organ School as part of the Borders' Guild of Organists, giving lessons in the Borders; and thus I was privileged to get lessons from her.



Discover the Organ

Our opening meeting of the new session took place on 3rd November in the Old Parish Church in Peebles. This was the perfect occasion to "discover the organ".

We numbered a dozen or so people, with BGO members, pupils and relatives, plus two folks brand-new to the organ – the ideal bunch.

We started with a talk from Karen on registration, explaining which stops to use to make particular sounds, how these were produced, then explaining the system of pipes and how they worked. This included a trip upstairs to the gallery to view the choir pipes, and a look at the room behind the organ which was a mass of huge pipes, not unlike the boiler room of a ship! In all this instruction Karen was ably assisted by Sarah, who played hymns beautifully to illustrate the sounds made by the different registrations.

The young people were then given the chance to try for themselves, some with Brigitte teaching, some on their own and there was a good response to this; it was very encouraging to see them giving it a go.

There was also, in another part of the Church, a DVD set up, showing the building of a Rieger organ from start to finish, fascinating to see.

We finished with tea and buns in the Church Hall, plus lots of enthusiastic discussion on what we had just experienced. Feedback was extremely positive, so much so that the two newcomers decided to have lessons with Brigitte, an ideal ending to an excellent day.

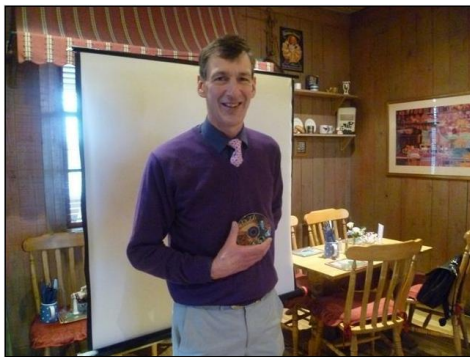
Mary Shields

Social Lunch

Our annual social lunch was held on Saturday 9th February at Carfraemill Hotel, Lauder. Always a popular event, this year we again were pleased to see so many members and friends in attendance. Following a three-course meal, this year's guest speaker was introduced. Previously minister at South Leith Parish Church, Rev Ian Y Gilmour has been minister of St Andrew's and St George's West Church in Edinburgh since 2011.

Rev Gilmour chose for his topic an area that interests him very much, namely Jazz. In particular his talk focused mainly on a man that he describes as one of his heroes, Louie Armstrong. Armstrong, more than any other Jazz musician of his era, represents the Jazz age in America. He established the role of the soloist in Jazz music, affirmed that a fundamental element of Jazz is Blues, and, most importantly, invented Swing. Socially, he changed the perception of black and white through music. Armstrong was also a kind and generous person, giving away half of his income and helping friends such as King Oliver.

After an in depth and very interesting talk, Rev Gilmour showed us a ten minute section relating to Louie Armstrong from the film series done Ken Burns about the history of



Jazz. Not only did this include footage of Armstrong and his bands, it also gave an interesting glimpse back in time through film. We were delighted by the images of life in America from the early 1900s.



French Pyrenees) in the background. It is a baroque building, although there are traces of a church dating from the 10th

century. The belfry, rebuilt in the 19th century, has a carillon of 16 bells, ranging from G to D, plus a bell for the C and the F sharp.

The organ dates from 1722. The case was created by one Jacint Morato, a local builder, and the pipes were the work of the Dominican Pascal Cervello. It is said that it is the only catalan organ of the 18th century built in the Roussillon.

The pediment shows the coat of arms of Ille-sur-Têt, and on the bottom panels you can see fine carvings with the busts of King David on one side, and St Cecilia playing the harp on the other.



The organ is in a space locked by iron doors, to prevent noisy children gathering there during Lent, disturbing the dignity of the church services – a practice which seems to have occurred frequently in those days.

Maggy Stead



beautiful contrast to the power of Willan. The programme combined real musical substance with virtuoso playing culminating with Henri Mulet's 'Tu es Petra' the music finished with a whirlwind display of arpeggios flying up and down the keyboard and a positively acrobatic final chord. Stunning!

It was a great privilege to be there with a packed audience and naturally enough she received several standing ovations.

Lynda Jeffrey

Les Orgues de l'Eglise St Etienne de Ille-sur-Têt

Languedoc-Roussillon, South of France

The French word for 'church organ' is 'orgues d'église'. When you google 'orgues de Ille-sur-Têt' you get this:



The photo shows 'les orgues', amazing rock formations produced by more than 5 million years of geological history- natural chimneys, or organ pipes, made up of columns of soft rock, eroded by rain, and overhung by

harder rock which has resisted erosion. The combination of earth, water, wind and sun has given birth to a stunning symphony of forms and colours.

You will find the other famous 'orgues' in the church of St Etienne, or as it is called in Catalan: St Esteve.

The belfry stands proud with the Canigou (the highest 'Ben' in the

All in all, it was an afternoon enjoyed by all who attended. Our thanks to Rev Gilmour for such an interesting and informative talk about the history of Jazz.

Karen Kitchen

Advent Sequence 1st December 2012

Lauder Kirk, Lauder

On a wintry picturesque Saturday afternoon members along with family and friends gathered together for our yearly Advent sequence at Lauder Kirk.

Before the service we enjoyed listening to music provided by Maggy Stead, Lynda Jeffrey and Mary Shields. The three pieces played on the organ were Grand Jeu, Recit, Petit Cornet by Jacques Boyvin played by Maggy Stead. This was followed by *Gottes Sohn ist kommen* by J.S.Bach played by Lynda Jeffrey and finally *Song of the Shepherds* by Max Oestern played by Mary Shields.

To help lead the hymn singing during the service members joined together to form a small choir, led superbly by Brigitte Harris. The hymn playing was shared between four organists which was great!

You don't normally get as many organists as that to play during a service- a real treat!

Another lovely touch to the service was the reflective music played after each reading. Lynda played a Prelude on O Come, O Come Emmanuel and Adrienne Campbell played Chorale *Vom Himmel hoch* op 135a.

At the end of the service Brigitte Harris played *God rest you, merry Gentlemen* - a most uplifting and exciting voluntary piece by Wilbur Held.

Overall the sequence of Hymns, readings and organ music was a perfect way for Advent to begin.

There were refreshments afterwards which was fantastic. A big thank you to all who helped and organised this.

May I also give a special mention to Maggy Stead's Christmas cards which were on sale that afternoon— they were just brilliant. Thank you very Maggy!!

Sarah Brown

Dame Gillian Weir gives her Final Public Performance

On Wednesday the 5th of December I travelled to London to attend Dame Gillian Weir's Final Public Performance at Westminster Cathedral. She gave her first recital there in 1964 while still a student at the Royal College. The Cathedral has been a favourite venue through the years so it was fitting the final public concert of her 48-year long career should take place there.

Programme

Jeanne Demessieux (1921-1968) *Te Deum* Op 11

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685- 1750) *Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot* BWV 678

César Franck (1822-1890) *Grand Piece Symphonique* op.17

Interval

Frank Martin (1890- 1974) *Passacaille*

Healey Willan (1880- 1968) *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue*

Maurice Duruflé (1902- 1986) *Scherzo* Op.2

Henri Mulet (1878-1967) *Tu es Petra* from *Esquisses Byzantines*

The Cathedral has the Henry Willis III Grand Organ. It was built by Henry Willis and Sons Ltd. between 1922 and 1932. It occupies the whole of the West Gallery of the Cathedral. In 1984 it was overhauled by Harrison and Harrison and then again in 1996.

The legendary French virtuoso Jeanne Demessieux was the first woman ever invited to play a recital at Westminster Cathedral in the late 1940s. Her 'Te Deum' was a brilliant start to the evening full of wonderful contrasts. It was followed by Bach's *Dies sind die Heiligen zehn Gebot*. I find the beautiful sounds of Bach so comforting.

The *Grand Piece Symphonique* is the second of the Six Organ Pieces that Franck composed soon after his appointment to Basilica of Sainte-Clotilde in Paris. He was so thrilled with the new Cavaille-Coll organ his response was ' My new organ is an orchestra.' The work falls broadly in to three linked sections;

Introduction and Allegro – Andante, with a Scherzo in the middle – Introduction (recalling the previous themes). . The music by Franck was exciting with powerful sounds echoing around the building.

The highlight of the concert for me was the music by Healey Willan in the second half. The programme notes said he was " English by birth, Irish by extraction, Canadian by adoption, and Scotch by absorption". His Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue had been inspired by the German tradition of Bach and Rheinberger and Max Reger' Although, I would say there was a hint of Elgar in the music as well. The music is an undisputed masterpiece.

The magical qualities of the Duruflé like a 'fluttering of wings' was a