

BORDERS GUILD OF ORGANISTS AND
CHURCH MUSICIANS

NEWSLETTER NO 39
SUMMER 2016



President's Letter
June 2016



Dear all,

After a slightly longer gap this newsletter is very much a review of the past year. We have had a variety of events, which you can read about on the following pages. The interview with Rebecca Poon, one of my organ pupils, shows that there is a young generation coming. It is so rewarding to see that the organ has still got pulling power across all ages!

In the context of this I would like to point you to the weekend of Friday 28 October to Sunday 30 October, when the Royal College of Organists will run an Organ course for youngsters. Young pianists will find this interesting and inspiring. For early information please contact me (mharris@waitrose.com).

Looking ahead our next year is going to be very interesting. The BGO is going to host the SFO conference, which will take place in Abbotsford and Melrose. Please keep this date free in your diary: Friday 5/May and Saturday 6/May.

More details will follow!

With all best wishes for a music-filled summer.

Brigitte Harris

The Big Sing

On 31st October last year, some of our members, along with many other choir people, met in Peebles Old Parish Church for a day's singing practice under the expert tuition of Ian McRorie MBE. We started at 11am, had our packed lunches an hour or so later, then continued until three in the afternoon, finally putting on a sterling performance for any interested parties! This performance was made up of a selection of the top 20 hymns from Church Hymnary 4, some well-known, some not so, and was also preparation for the Saints and Singers Service to be held the following day at 10am.

Ian McRorie, who was on the Church of Scotland Panel for many years, was a member of the committee that compiled CH4. He is a very enthusiastic leader and in no time he had us all totally involved in singing our hearts out, accompanied by Sarah on the organ.

It was great fun and I would certainly recommend it, should the opportunity arise in the future.

Mary Shields



The Old Parish Church, its steeple towering over Peebles

Social Lunch

On Saturday 5th March on a rather cold, wet day around 15 of us met for our Annual Social Lunch at MacDonald Cardrona Hotel.

The lunch was of its usual high standard and the staff made us feel very welcome and comfortable during our time there.



Steven Griffin

Our guest speaker was Steven Griffin, Assistant Director of Music, George Watson's College, Assistant Conductor of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Singers, Composer, Singer, Rock and Jazz Musician and many other wonderful talents. Steven is a familiar face to many of us through his work at George Watson's College, conducting of several choirs within and out with the College, singing solos with various Choral Societies and Opera groups in Scotland and stepping in as a Double Bass player when required in any situation.

Steven spoke with sensitivity, passion and enthusiasm about his variety of experiences in his field. Along with musical examples, he provided a very informative and thought provoking power point presentation which gave us a fascinating insight into how music can affect us all in many different and surprising ways. His speech was highly entertaining, from the heart, and he transported us into a huge spectrum of different musical styles which had helped to shape his own career path. We all had plenty to share and talk about, and some of us were still sharing our musical experiences for days thereafter!

Maggy's warm vote of thanks reflected the mood of those present and we all came away inspired to reflect on our own musical "coincidences" and how they affected us.

Steven himself commented on how much he enjoyed meeting BGO members and was delighted with the welcome he received. Before we left for home, we conveyed our thanks to the staff of the hotel for the excellent lunch and service provided.

Mairi and Robin Leach

Organ Recital

Following our Annual General Meeting on 16 April in Lauder Old Parish Church, we were treated to an organ recital by our new President, **Brigitte Harris**. There was a very good turnout of members, plus some of the congregation, all looking forward to hearing something spectacular, nor were we disappointed. I was one of two “stop-pullers”, standing right beside the organ and it was absolutely fascinating to observe the skill of the performance at close hand.

Brigitte’s programme, which was largely chorale-based, was as follows:

Allegro moderato maestoso
Voluntary *Largo staccato - Fuga*
O Welt, ich muss dich lassen
Hymn Prelude *Rhosmydre*
All’Offertorio
Aria Sebaldina
A Scottish Carol
Farewell to Stromness
Fuga in E flat BMW 552.2

Felix Mendelssohn
John Stanley
Johannes Brahms
Ralph Vaughan Williams
Domenico Zipoli
Johann Pachelbel
Alexandre Fuilmant
Peter Maxwell Davies
J.B. Bach



Of course, it was a great pleasure to listen to such a varied programme of music. How lucky we are in the Borders to be able to claim Brigitte as one of our own! However, her prowess extends far and beyond teaching aspiring organists, myself included, as Brigitte is Director of Music at St Andrew's and St George's West in Edinburgh, having graduated from the Hochschule für Musik in Detmold, Germany with an A-Exam (Master) in Church Music having studied organ with Helmut Tramnitz and Gerhard Weinberger, and choral conducting with Alexander Wagner. Her career in Britain has involved her in instrumental teaching and performing, both as an organist and as a specialist teacher of recorder. She has always been active in the field of organ education and has a busy organ teaching practice in and around Edinburgh, reaching as far as Midlothian, Fife and beyond. Brigitte's organ teaching scheme here in the Borders, in association with The Borders Guild of Organists (BGO), was established back in 1999.

Brigitte is a Lecturer in Harmony, Keyboard Skills and Improvisation at the Ian Tomlin Academy of Music at Edinburgh Napier University. She has taught at the Vicenza Music Conservatoire as part of an Erasmus exchange and has been an organ tutor on RCO Academy courses. She also teaches the organ at George Watson's College. She has served on the Committee of the Edinburgh Society of Organists and has been a regular member of the teaching staff of the Edinburgh Organ Academy. In addition she is much involved in advising and training musicians in organ and choral skills. Recently she has co-published two practical organists' hymnbooks (Hymns for Lent and Easter and Fifteen Christmas Hymns).

All of this talent and she has just become our President for the second time!

It was a wonderful afternoon of music, much enjoyed by everyone, as expressed in the comments overheard at tea-time. The Committee had baked their hearts out and loads of goodies were offered with tea, a fitting end to a lovely day.

Mary Shields

Interview: Rebecca Poon



Rebecca is in her last school year at George Watson's College in Edinburgh and is one of the organ scholars there. From autumn 2016 she will be the junior organ Scholar at Peterhouse College Cambridge, where she will read Natural Sciences.

The photo shows Rebecca at the organ at George Watson's College, which is used for teaching and practising.

What is your favourite hymn?

"Let all mortal flesh be silent" is rather good.

Which of the organ pieces you have played so far is your favourite one?

The *Pasticcio* by Jean Langlais is great: it has a stately feel and is good fun to play.

What made you play the organ?

One of the music teachers at Watsons', who is also involved in the junior music at my church, told me about the organ scholarships at Watson's. I had some transferable skills, as I also play the piano. So I had a couple of taster sessions at church, before I started the organ at school, where I receive free lessons. I figured out that I could also make some easy pocket money with my playing. "What is there not to like?"

In terms of music making, where do you see yourself in ten years' time?

I hope to be still playing the organ, possibly at weekends. I do not think that I will have an established post, as I am not pursuing music as a career. But I hope to be able to be on call and help.

Congratulations to your appointment to Peterhouse College, and all good wishes for your future.

*The interview was carried out by Brigitte Harris
(March 2016)*

Office Bearers 2016/17

Honorary President

Lord Steel KT, KBE, PC

President

Brigitte Harris
8 Eyre Place Lane
Edinburgh EH3 5EH
tel: 0131 556 1750
mharris@waitrose.com

Secretary

Mairi Leach
11/6 South Groathill Avenue
Edinburgh EH4 2LL
0131 332 4698
robmairidaisy@gmail.com

Joint Treasurers

Eileen Merchant
19 Mauricewood Rise
Penicuik EH26 0BL
01968 673 634
ewm@edinburghfire.co.uk

Sarah Brown
16a Cross Street
Peebles EH45 8LE
07597 394059
sarahbrown@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Maggy Stead
Blainslie
TD1 2PR
01896 860266
maggystead@btinternet.com

Membership Secretary

Mary Shields
12 Eden Park
Ednam
Kelso
TD5 7RG
01573 229 015
Mary.shields118@btinternet.com

Committee Members

Diana Miller
15 Forestfield
Kelso
TD5 7BX
01573 224 220
igamiller@btinternet.com

Eric Marchant
19 Mauricewood Rise
Penicuik
EH26 0BL
01968 673 634
ewm@edinburghfire.co.uk

www.bordersorganists.org.uk



OrganFest

28–30 October 2016 in Edinburgh

The third annual BIOS/IAO/RCO OrganFest.

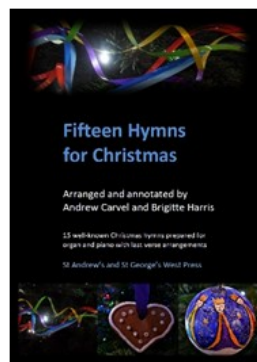
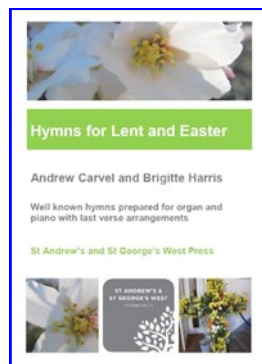
Details of the programme and how to book will be available soon. Meanwhile save the date and look forward to a feast of organs, and organ and choral music in the Scottish capital.

Friday 28 October,:

The organ recital in St Giles' Cathedral will be given by Ullrich Boehme, Leipzig

And for your diary 2017:

SFO ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017
Friday May 5 & Saturday May 6
ABBOTSFORD HOUSE AND MELROSE



*Hymn books available
from mharris@waitrose.com*

Price £7.00 + P&P

Cover: Abbotsford House - photo M Stead